

October 2007

Dear Parents,

I hope that you and your daughters have had a good start to the new school year and are now enjoying a well-earned break.

Many **events and trips** have been enjoyed since the start of term. Two school parties have just set off abroad: a group of Sixth Formers studying German are visiting Berlin and girls from Years 10 and 11 have travelled with the Spanish Department to Barcelona and with the French Department to Montpellier. We wish them a safe journey. Girls and staff have already participated in two Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions, two Year 7 weekend trips to the Bowles Outdoor Education Centre and a Geography field trip plus numerous outings to the theatre and art galleries. Lectures and films have also been presented, including a most successful, very well attended History Society talk by Claire Wilcox (Senior Curator of the V and A) who has set up the current exhibition there on *The Golden Age of Couture 1947 – 1957*. Year 12 students benefited from a very useful half-day workshop on Study Skills just before the half-term break. **Book Week** saw a visit by author, Jennie Walters, who spoke to Year 7 pupils. Thank you to all who help to enrich our curriculum in such ways.

Public Examination re-marks in a variety of subjects are still trickling in, slowed by the intermittent postal strikes. We have received news of 12 more A* grades in GCSE Art, as the moderation statistics were incorrectly applied, and all of our GCSE English Literature GCSE papers are now being re-marked as inconsistencies have been found. There is grave concern amongst those working in education at the moment about the increasing unreliability of examination marking – not only because of the pressure caused by so many separate modules needing marking and the lack of well-qualified markers, but also because of the change to online marking of examination scripts. However, JAGS is about much more than Public Examination results and it is pleasing to see this recognised in publications such as the recent *Tatler Good Schools' Guide*. I am enclosing a copy of our **Annual Report 2006-7**, which contains a review of the year for the whole school and is the public report on all the activities of the JAGS charity. As ever, it makes a stunning read and we are exceedingly proud of our girls of all ages who contribute so much to the school and the wider community, supported by our staff and you, their parents.

We are continuing our series of occasional **seminars for parents**. We were fortunate to have four top professionals, Dr Geraldine Strathdee, Dr Ruth Garcia, Dr Peter Hollis and Sue Kelly address the evening on Adolescent Issues last week. This was a very well attended session and their expert counsel was much appreciated. The next seminar will be on 16 January on Internet Safety. Many thanks also to all of you who supported the

recent JPA AGM. The **Christmas Quiz** is the JPA premier annual event and this year we are fortunate to have Henry Kelly as Quizmaster on Saturday 1 December. Booking forms are enclosed in this mailing; book early to ensure your place at this very popular occasion.

Fundraising for our **South African Sports Tour** next Easter is gaining pace. Monies raised will go towards the 1st X1 and U14 hockey and netball tour and to providing much needed kit and equipment for Impendulo and Chatsworth Primary Schools in Khayelitsha. Many thanks to all who have purchased bulbs. We are also holding a **Race Night** in the Holst Hall at 7.00 p.m. on Friday 23 November. If you would like to join us please email julietgriffiths@aol.com for ticket information or check on the South Africa tour link on our website (www.jags.org.uk).

Our **netball, hockey and football** teams representing all different age groups have already played many matches this term and achieved some good results; these are posted regularly on our website. Once again our **Cross Country** teams are excelling. Both the Junior and Intermediate teams won the first round of the English Schools' Competition and now progress to the Regional round. Many congratulations to Elinor Webb (Year 8) who won the junior individual race and Ashleigh Campbell and Rebecca Stormer (both Year 7) who came 4th and 5th respectively and to Katherine Snowden (Year 9) who won the intermediate individual event.

We have some exciting **musical events** in the second half of this term. The Senior House Music Concert takes place in the Holst Hall on 22 November followed by a Choral Concert on 11 December at St Barnabas, where our JAGS Choral Society will be celebrating their 20th birthday. Please note the first event is free of charge and tickets can be bought for the second concert on the door.

Be sure to look out for details of our **Senior School Production**, *The Love of the Nightingale*, which will be performed in the Prissian Theatre from 5 to 7 December. This play is an exciting exploration by Timberlake Wertenbaker of the powerful ancient Philomele myth; it goes beyond the plight of women to examine the violence that can erupt when people have been silenced for too long. Tickets are now on sale from the Edward Alleyn Theatre at Dulwich College for *Upstart Crows* from 15 to 17 November. Senior girls from JAGS are involved in the world premiere of this newly commissioned play which is about Ned Allen and Christopher Marlowe in one of the most exciting periods of English theatrical history. This year's **Poetry Festival** will be held on the evening of Wednesday 12 December and our special guest will be Mary MacRae.

The Saatchi Gallery has provided an amazing opportunity for pupils to have their **artwork** exhibited alongside contemporary artists and JAGS pupils are some of the first to be invited to show their work. The site is an excellent source for sharing and celebrating the quality and diversity of work being made by our young artists. We plan to extend the gallery submission beyond the Sixth Form throughout all age ranges in the near future. The web-site is available on www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk. We have printed two greetings cards this year: one is a composite of pastel drawings by Isabel Addison, Anne-Marie Bartsch, Amelia Coe and Melanie Duncan from Year 9 and the other comprises colour pencil drawings by Helina Berhane, Emilie Cornelis and Marion

Errazuriz from Year 8. You will find the order form on our website with a direct email link to the Art Department. Paper copies of the order form will also be available in Reception and the School Office.

Healthy eating is now being widely promoted nationally. We take great care to follow the guidelines for our lunches; however, we have recently received a number of complaints about the tuck shop. We are in the middle of a full pupil consultation about this and are reviewing all the items which are on sale and whether we need to have a tuck shop. The advent of our new dining hall and cafeteria make this an opportune time for such a review.

The **building works** are progressing very well. We hope that all will be complete next September. We have now acquired a large supply of 'JAGS Umbrellas' which are stored at the entrances to all our buildings for rainy days. However, they are no substitute for a raincoat – I have been amazed to see girls arriving in pouring rain on chilly mornings without a coat of any sort and having to sit in class in a wet shirt or jumper. Similarly, girls are still travelling to school in flimsy ballet shoes. These are not acceptable and pose a real safety hazard. Please ensure your daughters dress appropriately. May also I remind you that there is no dropping off or **parking** at the front of the school. Unless there is a parents' evening or school event, the car park gates will be locked at 6.30 p.m. to protect the building site. Please be sensitive to our neighbours when you park on the street and do not block private driveways.

If your daughter loses anything please make sure she comes to the School Office to see Mrs Cottrill who is now charge of **Lost Property**. She always has a number of unnamed and named, unclaimed items, so please encourage your daughter to come and check. Please also discourage your daughters from bringing **mobile phones** and ipods to school as these items make them very vulnerable to assaults in the street. If they do have to bring in mobile phones or electronic equipment, these items must be handed into the School Office first thing in the morning and collected at the end of the day.

The JPA welcomes good quality **second-hand uniform** for sale. Uniform should be brought to the School Office, appropriately labelled. Sales take place on the first Friday of the month 8.00-8.30 a.m. in the Holst Hall. Details are on the Parents section of the website. Our **website** is being relaunched during November. It will be at the same address but will have a fresher feel and will meet the latest Disability Discrimination Act guidelines. The JAGS, JAPS and Sports Club websites will all be linked under one umbrella site. We hope that the new website will be even more user-friendly. We continue to aspire to a reduction in the amount of paper which we circulate!

As you may be aware, our **ISI inspection** will be taking place from 4-7 February (as listed on the school calendar). It is now 6 years since our last inspection and it will be good to have an up-to-date report. I am enclosing a copy of the parental questionnaire for you to complete and return in confidence in the attached envelope, addressed to our Reporting Inspector, by Friday 2 November. A sample of girls from all year groups will be completing pupil questionnaires when the Reporting Inspector makes his first visit to the school in early December.

Thank you for all your support. I hope you have a good break and look forward to seeing you at some of our many events during the next half-term.

Yours sincerely

Enclosures: ISI Parental Questionnaire
Year 8 Parents Evening Letter
Year 12 Letter
Year 13 Letter
Annual Report
Quiz Night Letter