



Dear Parents

Since I last wrote to you at half-term, we have not only enjoyed many exciting events and successes, but we have also braved the snow and ice, making it difficult for some staff and pupils to get to and from school safely. However, we were able to keep the school open every day and to serve hot lunches, thanks to the indomitable spirit of the whole JAGS community. Thank you, especially, to the grounds, schoolkeeping and catering staff who helped to keep the school open and well supplied, and well done to all those who had to cope with the challenge of re-scheduling activities, including 'The Bacchae', concert rehearsals and controlled assessments. We are reviewing all our communication arrangements and how the three Dulwich schools co-ordinate with one another and the Foundation Coach Service.

Freezing temperatures and arctic conditions had already been experienced by pupils and teachers at half-term, both on the **Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award** practice expedition to Langdale and the Lake District, and on the Geography trip to Iceland; they



were well prepared. It was a spectacular opportunity to bring their Geography coursework to life. They visited glaciers and hot springs, huge waterfalls, saw the Northern lights, walked the Elborg volcanic



crater and viewed Iceland's most famous volcano, Eyjafjallajokull, which blazed into world news when it erupted earlier this year. The Sixth form Exchange trip to **Venice**, also over half-term, was equally breath-taking and the girls involved have written enthusiastically about their cultural opportunities, listening, for example, to Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' played by musicians in full period costume in his home town. The return programme for the Y10 Exchange group from **Montepulciano** introduced them to some of London's cultural highlights. Meanwhile those Spanish students who spent time in **Barcelona** returned with added confidence in both listening to and speaking Spanish at speed. Our hockey and netball squads came back even stronger from



a very successful half-term tour to **Malta**, having worked intensively to refine their technical skills.

A red-letter day for the whole school was hearing that we had been successful in achieving a **Green Flag Award**. Congratulations to everyone on all three sites, from the youngest pre-prep pupil to the oldest Y13 in the senior school, because this award is a reflection of the tremendous commitment we all make to looking after our environment. Announcing the prestigious Green Flag award, the assessor said, "I would like to congratulate you and your school for all the time and effort that has been invested in environmental education at your school. Students and staff work really well together and it is good that students are allowed to take off with their own ideas."



Science Week in November encouraged us all to enjoy looking around us through new eyes. Y11 heard about rainbows from Francisco Diego, senior research fellow at the Department of Physics and Astronomy at UCL, and Y10 saw the seemingly impossible made possible in the Air Show. We could all enjoy mixing potions with striking effects (bubbles, steam, exotic colours) in the lunchtime messy chemistry experiments. Y9 went hunting for dinosaurs, mammals and explored human biology, hazards and their impact in the Natural History Museum. Y8 were fascinated by sci-fi writer John Brindley who revealed a few secrets about his writing process. The whole of Y7 should now know the differences between Madagascan winged, leaf and other stick insects, scorpions and spiders following the visit of the Bug Man, Mr Martin Rapley. They handled the insects with great confidence.



Other experts in their field have enriched the learning of different groups this half-term. Apart from in-house talks on university finance and an introduction to careers resources, visitors to school have included: Rosie Palliser speaking about Operation Raleigh; James Madeley speaking on Metaswitch internships; Amanda Simoes, **PSHCE** speaker for Y10 and Georgie Calder, PSHCE speaker for Y12 on alcohol and drug awareness; Dean of Psychiatry, Dr Robert Howard, who spoke to the **Critical Thinking** groups from Dulwich College and JAGS about the credibility of evidence in drugs trials; and veteran war reporter Richard Lindley, whose video footage of the Vietnam war and personal anecdotes gave the **History and Politics Society** a fascinating glimpse into the career of a war reporter. **Spanish** students watched a powerful performance in Spanish of *'Bodas de Sangre'* (Blood Wedding) by Garcia Lorca. The **dance** group loved the war-time setting for Cinderella in Matthew Bourne's spectacular production at Sadler's Wells.

Leading discussions in **English Seminars** has given Sixth form students themselves the chance to pursue special areas of interest such as Eliot and Darwin, as well as interview technique at a stage when UCAS and other applications are being made. Sixth form Classical Civilisation students enjoyed a Greek Tragedy Study day.



The **Japanese** group learnt the art of ensemble drumming from a member of the Kodo Taiko drumming troupe in an exhilarating masterclass, which raised the roof of the Holst Hall. They were also inspired by Complicite's accomplished

performance at the Barbican Theatre, using actors and puppets to tell the story of Shun-Kin in Japanese.

The Y13 **art** group were excited by talks on the creative process given by installation artist Cornelia Parker, painter Chris Stevens, graphic artist Lizzie Finn and designer Rebecca Wright. Perhaps some of this fed into the excellent Y13 art exhibition held at the end of term.



Their Private View coincided with the first of two **book launches** of JAGS' latest new publication: **Writing Drawing Seeing**. This is a beautiful full colour book of 80 pieces of art and 80 poems by JAGS pupils, taken from 1986 (our first Poetry Festival) to 2010, to celebrate some of the superb creative work that emanates from JAGS. It is too good to be left on a coffee table, so I hope you will buy copies to support the **James Allen's Bursary Fund** and take pleasure in every

page. Congratulations to the contributors and to the editor, Head of English, Dr Matthew Edwards, and to Mr Andrew Carter from the Art department, who worked so hard on the design.



The **Poetry Evening** was another shining example of the quality of writing produced with the encouragement of the English department. Visiting poet, Stephen Knight, led a practical workshop showing what can be achieved in 4 minutes if you ask the right questions, and spoke of his admiration for the girls' on-going creative process.

Thank you to staff for making the extra effort to organise so many trips that girls find so rewarding. The **AS Politics** group went to the Westminster Conference, asked probing questions and gave leading politicians a run for their money! Sixth form **Design & Technology** students took inspiration from leading practitioners in product design; three designers from Vitamins, a young, innovative multi-disciplinary design consultancy, presented a range of their design projects and highlighted critical design issues relevant to A-level study. Annabel Parry (Y13) visited The **All England Lawn Tennis Club** to gather research for her A level DT project. She was given a special tour of Centre Court, the archive and grounds and the chance to talk to officials involved in organising Wimbledon fortnight. **Italian** students went to see the Estorick Collection. GCSE artists spent a day at the V&A Museum producing some great drawings that will feed into their coursework for the unit on Pattern and Form. Y12 & 13 **mathematicians** enjoyed a series of Maths in Action lectures, the **Medical Society** went to a talk by a member of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and Y10 **Geographers** visited London's Docklands and the Isle of Dogs. The **German** department organised a German Activities day and welcomed groups from Alleyn's, Dulwich College and Sydenham High to join JAGS students for a wealth of activities, including listening to rock music, answering quiz questions, reading poetry and

acting out murder mysteries - all in German. For the younger girls, learning about different Christmas customs on the German Christmas Markets trip, visiting historic towns and mountain villages, was as magical as always.



The **Spanish** department invited us to a traditional New Year celebration and challenged us to eat 12 grapes in 12 seconds, according to the Spanish New Year's Eve custom. It's harder than it sounds! The **Modern Foreign Languages** departments joined forces in a whole school assembly to tell us about the different beliefs and colourful customs associated with Christmas, and we sang carols in Russian, Spanish, French, Italian, German and Japanese.



There have been exhilarating opportunities for the whole school to come together in events and activities. The Holst Hall has been bursting at the seams with popular entertainment, including our annual **PopFest**, a brilliant opportunity for individuals or groups to perform covers of professional singers, or showcase their own original work. The lighting, sound and video effects in the live setting is as close as it comes to a pop concert.



The Head Girls, unable to choose between some wonderful acts, enlisted the help of the whole senior school to vote for the acts representing JAGS in the **Foundation Schools' Talent Show**. We may not have won overall but we were truly entertaining and came second with Morgen Evans' (Y9) great singing! Well done to all the performers.

JAGS is a school where girls can pursue their own ideas and initiatives and we were delighted to support Grace Brown and Rosy Murch who, drawing on personal experience of having soldiers in their family wounded in Afghanistan, organised an event, **Lest We Forget**, in aid of our wounded British



soldiers. They raised money for Help for Heroes, SW Scotland R n R and The Mark Evison Foundation, all of whom were represented on the night, and we had a unique opportunity to hear a personal

account from a soldier who fought in Afghanistan. It was a well-supported, very special evening of music and readings from JAPS and JAGS pupils, and raised £2000 for the charities.

Bettany House conjured up a Staff Fashion Show in aid of the charity, Beat. The Sixth form had designed and made clothes and beautiful accessories for teachers to wear, using touches of the house colour, purple. Never has the reception to any group of models on a catwalk been quite so deafening! It was magnificent way to raise over £1000 for the charity. Well done. Equally original was **Holst House's** 80's day, when we paid £1 each in aid of the Rockinghorse charity, for the privilege of wearing 80's gear and dancing to 80's music. For those of us old enough to have seen the decade the first time

round, all those leg warmers, plastic beads and headbands were strangely comforting. To cap it all, the staff sang a JAGS/Band Aid version of 'Do They Know It's Christmas' live, which brought the house down.

On a slightly more restrained but no less appealing note, the Music department presented strings players with the opportunity to perform in front of an adjudicator and audience in the Holst Hall at our **Strings Festival**. It was an impressive display of familiar, less well-known and even original compositions. Principal cellist, Mr Michael Kaznowski, had practical advice and encouragement for the aspiring players with all levels of expertise. He was struck by the performance skills, particularly of the advanced players.

In November, the **Autumn Concert**, a remarkable showcase of work from the Y7 choir, Bel Canto, and the Concert, Chamber and Symphony Orchestras, included works by Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Sullivan's Overture to 'The Pirates of Penzance' and Dvorak: 'Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, from The New World'. The **Choral Concert** at Blackheath Halls was a fitting climax to this term's calendar, with contributions from the Chamber Orchestra, Recorder Consort, Wonderbrass and the JAGS Choral Society, beginning with Armstrong Gibbs' 'A saviour is Born' and culminating in a tremendous performance of some wonderful and atmospheric pieces from Elgar: 'The Music Makers' and Vaughan Williams: 'Toward The Unknown Region'.



NOVEMBER 2010

'**The Bacchae**', our senior school production, could have been a tragedy in more than one sense, because of the snow. Instead, the company rose magnificently to the challenge of postponed performances and delivered a stunning

tour de force to two audiences. Directors Mr Alex Kerr and Ms Helen Adie found potent, modern messages in the ancient story, and sent the audience on a wild journey of mixed emotions. It was both startling and humorous at times; who could have expected to be laughing at the playfulness of the blind prophet Teiresias, masterfully portrayed by Rose Gleadell? Congratulations to the excellent Bacchae ensemble and especially to Daisy Gilbert whose dangerous Dionysus so gripped the audience.

At Dulwich College some of the JAGS Sixth form found new meaning to Sheridan's 'School For Scandal' in a boisterous interpretation from the Dulwich College English department directors, which linked 21st century social media with the networking of the 18th century. Earlier in November, we had enjoyed the excellent, collaborative production of John Godber's 'Teechers' from the newly-formed Ned's company, with designers and actors drawn from Y10 & Y11 pupils from both JAGS and Dulwich College. Some brilliant and affectionate characterisation rang very true, and a lot of the audience appreciated the iconic 70's soundtrack!

We are also proud of what our pupils achieve in sporting competitions. JAGS, including JAPS, having swept the board in our Invitational Biathlon earlier in the term, were confidently prepared for the 1st round of the National Biathlon Championships. It was wonderful that the Y7 - 10 teams came away with outstanding overall results both in the team and in the individual events.

Our Y7 and Y8 Cross Country teams convincingly won the Southwark Championships. Special congratulations to: Breagha Campbell, who was 1st overall in the Y7 race, and Victoria Picken, who was 1st overall in the Y8 race and ran the fastest time for the course out of all the boys and girls participating. Our Junior and Intermediate Cross Country teams are streaking ahead of the competition at the moment - both squads won the Regional Championships and now go forward to the National Finals in Northumberland in March. Many congratulations to the Junior team: Victoria Picken, Hannah Webb,



Breagha Campbell, Isabella Barber, Catriona McSorley and Phoebe Campbell, and the Intermediate team: Grace de Rome, Natasha

Sinha, Fiona Basham, Georgie Hay, Greta Sharp and Ashleigh Campbell. Congratulations to Victoria Picken, Georgie Hay and Katie Snowden who have recently been selected to represent Surrey in Cross Country.

Victoria Picken also finished very highly in the London Youth Games for her age group, coming in 4th place from a total of over 250 athletes. Many congratulations to Katie Snowden who won the girls' U17 race in the London Youth Games Cross Country event in November, having won the Mayor's Mile at the Lord Mayor's Show the previous weekend!

The Junior and Intermediate Swimming squads competed in the 1st round of the Bazuka National Relay Championships in November. The Junior Freestyle team came 1st, the Medley team 2nd and the Intermediate Freestyle and Medley teams both finished in 2nd place. All four teams now wait to see if they have qualified for the National finals in the New Year. Gold medals were presented to Breagha Campbell, Sarah Whitlam, Greta Sharp, Juliet Edey and Natasha Sinha, and silver medals to Grace de Rome, Sophie Parkes, Sarah Young and Ellie Mirchandani.

Well done to the U14 JAGS team who won the London Schools' Swimming and to the U13 team who came 2nd. Congratulations to Natasha Sinha who has been selected by London Swimming to represent the region in the 44th International Championships in Switzerland in January. She has also qualified, for the second year running, for the British Gas National Swimming Championships in Manchester in March. Natasha will be competing alongside the GB team who will be preparing for the World Championships.



We also celebrated the terrific achievement of another pupil, Bryony Gill, Y13, in an assembly. Bryony is an international gymnast, and it is remarkable that she has stuck to her rigorous training programme

throughout her busy time at JAGS. On 14 November Bryony came 3rd in the **British Gymnastics National Challenge** Competition, and before that, in July, she represented her club, Ladywell GC, and Britain in Malta, coming 1st on the floor exercises and 7th overall.

The U16 **Hockey** squad travelled to Woking for the finals of the Surrey County Championships in November. After a nail-biting 5 penalty flicks to decide the winners, the score was still even and the sudden death flicks showed how closely fought the title was. Eventually JAGS was awarded 3rd place. The U16 Indoor Hockey squad won the Surrey County round, narrowly missed getting through to the finals but are placed 3rd in the South of England Competition.

We have enjoyed success in netball too. The U15 and U16 teams won the Surrey preliminaries and go forward to the finals in March. Well done. Congratulations to those picked to join **Netball Academies**: Harriet Frizzelle, Y8, to join Kent Academy and Emily Travers, Phoebe Campbell, both of Y8 and Ashleigh Campbell, Y10, to join Surrey Academy. Lisa Peterson, Y8, is also part of the Elite Netball Squad in Surrey Academy. Well done to them all and to Y8 Emma Rosier for her place in **Surrey Hockey Academy**. None of this would happen without the skills' training pupils get from their dedicated PE teachers here.

JAGS is proud to have been selected to take part in the European-wide translation contest, '**Juvenes Translatores**', now in its 4th year, which promotes young people's thirst to learn foreign languages. All over Europe, at the same time, they aimed to turn text into perfect prose. Hundreds of schools took part. We are waiting to see how the 5 girls chosen to represent JAGS did.

Well done to the Economics team who put together a good presentation for the **Bank of England 2.0 Challenge**, and to the **Hans Woyda Maths** quiz team - Freddie Onslow, Lauma Kalns-Timans, Roshni Patel and Ana McKellar - who beat Ibstock Place School, Roehampton, by 30 points to 25. They qualify for the Plate knockout competition next term. In the **Senior Maths Challenge 2010** for Y12 and 13 mathematicians, over 65,000 UK pupils sat the challenge in November with roughly the top 6% receiving a gold, the next 13% silver and the next 21% bronze. Many congratulations to everyone involved. JAGS girls were awarded 23 Bronze, 14 Silver and Abi Richards, Claire Fretwell and Lauma

Kalns-Timans were awarded our 3 Gold certificates. Abi also receives the Best in School Certificate. Well done. We heard earlier that Constance Crozier had been awarded an **Arkwright Scholarship** for excellence in DT and during half term Constance was presented with a cheque for £250 as part of her scholarship. She is now mentored by KPMG.

Our older pupils show their creativity and initiative in the various clubs they run for the younger girls, from Debating to Language to Eco and Amnesty. They are great role models. The Christian Union group rounded off the term with original games, home-made cakes and a Christmas thought from the Rev Canon Dianna Gwilliams. We continue to have an active involvement in the local community and about 200 girls regularly contribute to a programme of working in primary schools, both special-needs and mainstream, running clubs after school, the Saturday Literacy Scheme and visiting the isolated elderly, especially important in the winter months. At half-term a group of Sixth formers contributed to the **National Community Action Conference** in Leeds. Earlier in the term, large numbers of Y10s were trained by Adventure staff in readiness for volunteering to holiday with disabled guests. Four Sixth formers help with a Resources for Autism group, which has started to meet here every Sunday. The Gospel Choir entertained visitors on a Traidcraft Day at Christ Church, Barry Road, and it was lovely to hear such a warm reception to their carol singing in the Lordship Lane Christmas Parade, and to see C5, their new community choir for local children, joining in so confidently; a valuable experience on both sides. On 16 December, 30 girls will be helping to wrap presents for 2000 of the disadvantaged children the charity, Kids Company, supports.



It was lovely to welcome friends and visitors to our 3rd **annual Art Fair**. Please look out for next year's date in November; an opportunity to view and purchase a stunning collection of quality

artworks in a variety of media. There are works to suit all tastes and pockets, and the proceeds go towards our Community Music Centre.

Our preparations for the Campaign to build a new **Community Music Centre** are gathering momentum and we hope to bring you news of the planning application after the end of term. Our application is being formally presented for decision at the Dulwich Community Council meeting on 15 December, with positive recommendations from Southwark planning officers.

The community is at the heart of everything we do at JAGS. It is right that we are planning the JACMC project to embrace the needs of potential community users of all ages, as well as giving our pupils the kind of facility they deserve. They have been playing in portacabins for too long. A note of caution: we want this project to be popular with our neighbours, but it is extremely hard to sustain good public relations if parents inconsiderately park across

drives of local residents in Gilkes Crescent, Green Dale, Great Spilmans or Calton Avenue, even worse if they are rude when asked to move. It does not matter how much good work is being done by pupils and staff if local people experience such selfish behaviour. Please do what you can to uphold our Good Neighbour Policy.

You can keep up with everything that is happening at JAGS by visiting our website, including the news and calendar sections, at www.jags.org.uk. Many thanks to all the staff who make learning at JAGS so productive and rewarding.

Good wishes for the festive season to you all.

Marion Gibbs



James Allen's Girls' School
registered charity numbers: 312750/1124853
www.jags.org.uk



Reminders

Mobile phones should remain switched off in school and may not be used during the school day. Please also remind your daughters of the dangers of sites such as Facebook and our school policy on Cyber-bullying. The school cannot be responsible for pupils' mobile phones unless they are handed in to the school office.

Dates for your diary:

Summer Term 2011 now begins on Tuesday 3 May (a change to the date originally published, because of the Royal Wedding Bank Holiday - see JagsPost 6.12.10)

Major Choral and Orchestral Concert, St John's Smith Square, 6.00 p.m. Sunday 8 May 2011

JACMC Patron Kids Company Director Camilla Batmangelidj will be speaking at JAGS on Monday 14 March on Teenagers in Britain. More details next term.