

Alumnae Reunion Lunch - Year Group Reunions

Frances Eggo (May) is hosting a reunion for the **Year of 56**, since they have a special birthday coming up! Frances has written to all in her year, through the Development Office, including names of girls for whom we have no contact details. Hopefully, someone will know where they are! **Marilyn Sertin** (Wright), who last year organised nine former classmates from the **Year of 57** to come, is hoping for greater numbers this year. Also, **Liz Jones** (Ramsden) will be spearheading a reunion for the **Year of 70**.

If anyone else would like to run a Year Group Reunion, or put together a table at the lunch, please get in touch with Cindy Rutherford who will do everything she can to help.

Congratulations!

Hannah Barton (2003) has achieved a Double First from Hertford College, Oxford. She now has a Government-funded place to do a PhD in plant diseases in Edinburgh.

Janice Kirby-Smith (Kirby, 1960) has completed a professional doctorate in pharmacy (DPharm), the first such degree to be awarded by Portsmouth University. She also enjoys working full time for a regulatory consultancy.

Annis Lampard (2003) achieve a Distinction in her preliminary examinations and has now gained a First in Modern History at University College, Oxford.

Alexandra Parsons (2003) has been awarded a First in English at University College, London.

Joanna Smith (2002) has received a First in Medical Sciences with Speech Science and Communication from University College, London.

New Development Administrator

We are delighted to announce the appointment of a new member of the Development Team. Myles Rusak joined the department at the start of the summer.



Myles is from Thunder Bay,

Decade Reunions

At the next Alumnae Reunion lunch on Saturday 10 May, we should love to help you spearhead a reunion for your year, particularly if it ends in an 8! **Claudine Tyson** from the **Year of 48** is hoping to meet up again with many of her former classmates, and will be writing to them in the New Year. **Hilary Devonshire** will be writing to all the girls from the **Year of 58** before Cindy sends out the invitation to the lunch in the spring. Hilary will be writing to all the girls from the year of 58. Last year she achieved a table of 8 girls just by word of mouth, so hopes for even more next year.

So, we are looking for people to head up Reunions from the years of all the other 8's! Where are the Year of 1998? 10 years since they left – what are they doing now?! Come to that, what news of the Year of 1968? Last year a few girls came for the Reunion lunch from the Year of 1978. How about a full blown Reunion next May? And what about the Year of 1988?!

Do let Cindy in the Development Office know if you are prepared to help. The work is all done by the Development Office, and the 'host' kept informed of all acceptances as they come in. An opportunity to catch up and, sometimes, re-establish old friendships.

Photo of the Class of 1935

During the summer a photograph of the year of 1935 was brought in to JAGS Reception. Unfortunately, we don't know the identity of this kind person! Please let us know who you are so that we can thank you properly.

Ontario, Canada and has worked in development in his home country.

Myles has many talents! He was formerly a professional actor and a musician; he has also been a professional photographer (He designed this re-vamped *To Read and So.*) and a fire eater named Marcus The Magician! Yes, really! He found fire eating rather more dangerous than working in Development.

Myles' arrival has increased the Development strength back up to three, with Alison Evans, Head of Development, and Cindy Rutherford, Alumnae Liaison Officer.

For Your Diary

All alumnae, friends, former staff and parents are most welcome to our concerts. We hope to see many of you at JAGS for Founders Day later in the year too.

Choral Concert

Tuesday, 11 December
St Barnabas - 7:30pm
(Choral Society 20th Birthday Celebration)

The Programme includes Dvorak and Bruckner *Te Deums*, together with opera choruses from Puccini and Verdi.

A Level Recital Concert

Wednesday, 27 February
JAGS Holst Hall - 5:00pm
Come and hear our A Level musicians performing.

PopFest

Friday, 29 February
JAGS Prissian Theatre - 7:00pm
Showcase for Pop Musicians and Bands.

School Concert

Thursday, 6 March
JAGS Holst Hall - 7:00pm
Informal School Concert

Choral & Orchestral Concert

Tuesday, 18 March
St.John's, Smith Square - 7:30pm
Do come to our showcase concert!
Programme details in the Spring edition of *To Read & So...*

Alumnae Reunion Lunch

Saturday, 10 May
JAGS - 12noon

Founder's Day

Saturday, 28 June
JAS, FoJAGS, Alumnae Happy Hour
3.00 - 4.00 in the Careers Centre!

The James Allen Society lunch date is not yet fixed, but is likely to be during the summer term.

James Allen's Girls' School
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To Read and So...

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A Featured Article on Madeline Wright (Newcombe, 1933)

Madeline, coming from a long line of JAGS alumnae, is no stranger to the halls of JAGS. She has taken some time for us to reflect on her days spent within these walls.

"When I was a pupil the fees were five guineas a term. The Headmistress was Miss Belcher, and our games teacher was Miss Knott who played for England in the Ladies' Cricket Team."

Madeline recalls the school uniforms of the time: *"Whilst in the Lower School we could only wear socks. In the Upper School it was black stockings – even on special days, when we had to wear a white dress, it was still black stockings. Also, we always had to wear gloves when in school uniform, even in the summer. I was once given 'lines' as I was seen at the bus stop on my way home without my gloves."*

She goes on to speak of her mother, and aunt, both JAGS alumnae. *"My mother, Rosamond Newcombe (Cowderoy), and my aunt, Kathleen Cowderoy, were pupils in the 1890s and the only memorabilia I have is a prize that my aunt won, a leather bound book of Longfellow's Poetical Works . . . When my mother was at JAGS her music teacher was Gustav Holst, the British composer."*

Today Madeline, now 91, lives in Essex. She is described by her family as a *"very independent lady!"* Her recent adventures have taken her along with her family to Paris for her 90th birthday which included a drive around the city, lunch at the Eiffel Tower, a boat trip on the Seine and most unexpectedly, due to Armistice Day, a gridlocked city which resulted in a missed train and an extra night in Paris!

Madeline and her daughter Daphne regularly fly up to Scotland to visit her great grandchildren.

Madeline would like to get in touch with more alumnae from her year. Please contact Cindy Rutherford in the Development Office who will pass on Madeline's contact details.



Madeline Newcombe, Year of 1933 (Age 9)

Train Memories

An amusing story was brought to us recently by an alumna (1961). In the interest of saving a few reputations we've removed the names of the girls involved!

We've dubbed this one 'train memories'.

"I remember some of the girls from my year VERY well! Train journeys, jumping around in the carriages playing 'He' and getting reported by the signal box men to Miss Edwards! 'Would all the girls who travel on the train through Streatham Hill please stay behind after assembly?!'"

"Do you know - I can't remember if we were punished or just told off! As far as I recall just told off! Someone else has a story about boys throwing a train seat at someone and it flew straight out of the window! Angle and trajectory just right - you wouldn't think it would fit! Neither did they! Also we used to climb into the luggage racks but get down and sit demurely when the train got to a station."

"But my blazer button got entwined one time and the others had to hang out of the window to stop anyone"

getting in our compartment while I lay in the rack at Streatham Hill station and we untangled it before the next station! My father who went to Dulwich College also has the story of flashing your green English Hymnal if you forgot your season ticket - also green!"

Hats Off To Our Mystery Girl!

We are delighted to be able to share with you the identity of the girl in the velour hat on the front page of the May 2006 issue of *To Read and So...* No 21.

She is Vivien Ellis (Morris) and was here at JAGS from 1956 to 1963.

Vivien writes *"... I would like to lay claim to being the little eleven year old proudly being photographed in her new school uniform . . . I recall being so proud of my inside pocket in my blazer!"*



Do you have a story to tell about your time at JAGS? If so please write to us.
James Allen's Girls' School, East Dulwich Grove, London SE22 8TE
or email: cindy.rutherford@jags.org.uk

From the Headmistress



Much has happened here at JAGS since our last edition of this newsletter. As usual the summer brought a crop of splendid public examination results. In brief, now that most of our re-marks have been completed, at A level our girls achieved 81% of all subject entries at A grade, with 96% at A or B, while at GCSE 55% of all subject entries were graded A* and 88% A* or A. JAGS girls were also awarded 13 separate commendations from the Examination Boards for being among the top performers in the country in a variety of subjects at A level and GCSE – a magnificent performance. Particular congratulations are due to Katherine Carpenter who has won a special medal from the AQA Examination Board as the top candidate in the country in the Languages, Arts and Performance category, based on her A level Drama marks.

However, it is worrying that the quality of marking in public examinations seems to be declining; this year every single one of our GCSE English Literature papers was remarked at the Board's instigation after errors were discovered and discrepancies were found in a number of other subjects. The fact that examinations are now presented as a series of "bite-size" modules which can be infinitely re-taken has exacerbated the shortage of well-qualified and competent examiners. On-line marking is gradually being introduced and scripts

Food & Thought



It's been months in the making but the end result becomes closer by the day. Work continues on JAGS redevelopment of the Old Pool Hall. Concrete foundations have been laid through most of the site. The 'obelisk' of the lift shaft has risen, giving us

are being transmitted all over the world, but that presents its own problems. Anytime, anywhere examining seems to be the order of the day and it militates against broader education. But enough of complaining!

Working in the JAGS community is a continual source of pleasure; JAGS pupils are vibrant and enthusiastic and they are always busy. We are certainly endeavouring to fulfil our aims and our Founder's wishes. The media have recently been full of articles about independent schools desperately striving to justify their existence to the Charity Commission. Here at JAGS we are

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about to celebrate our 10th anniversary of providing our own James Allen's Assisted Places, which started the very year that Government Assisted Places were withdrawn. We have now had three cohorts of JAAP holders successfully completing their A levels and progressing to university. Currently we are able to offer 17 such places a year, means-tested up to 100% of tuition fees and including funding for uniform, lunches, travel costs and trips, if necessary. Ideally, we should like to increase this number substantially as funds permit.

Our building project continues apace and special blue JAGS umbrellas have taken up residence at every doorway

our first impression of the new building's final height. All the various floors will now be keyed into the shaft.

The steel frame components for the infill building between the theatre and the new dining hall have been delivered and a large crane is now on site putting together a 'meccano set' of girders.

We are greatly looking forward to the addition of state-of-the-art facilities. The conclusion of this redevelopment will have provided JAGS with a new drama studio, four very large classrooms, a number of smaller seminar rooms, staff offices, locker rooms, cloakrooms and a new kitchen

to keep staff and pupils dry as they move from block to block without the benefit of the Green Room Corridor. We hope to welcome many of you to our opening events in Autumn 2008. We are very much looking forward to enjoying all the new facilities, especially the dining hall in its superb setting of the 1930s old swimming pool hall. A more detailed progress report is elsewhere in this newsletter.

Music has been an important feature of life at JAGS throughout the years – the first music teacher was appointed in 1886 when Miss Bettany took charge of the school in its new building in East Dulwich Grove. I am constantly amazed by the variety and quality of our music-making: orchestras, wind bands, chamber groups, recorder consorts, flute choirs, saxophone groups, jazz bands, brass groups, rock and pop groups, chamber choir, madrigalists and gospel choir to name but a few, not to mention our community orchestra and the adult choir, JAGS Choral Society, which is about to celebrate its 20th birthday. Do join us, if you can, for some of our concerts, formal and informal. It was a great privilege to meet the alumnae who attended our music reunion in September and to sing alongside them in the opera choruses at the evening concert. Somehow, singing always makes me feel cheerful and exhilarated – music is indeed a great gift to share.

It is always a pleasure to meet alumnae and past parents and staff who visit the school: you are all most welcome. I look forward to seeing many of you in the coming months.

Maureen Gibbs

and two-storey dining facility. We still anticipate the dining hall and attached new block to be completed by the Autumn Term 2008 and we shall then gradually move into them. JAGS is fortunate in being able to carry out this project thanks to a generous one-off capital distribution from the Dulwich Estates. Without a doubt these new facilities will considerably enhance the school and will be enjoyed by pupils of all ages.

Alumnae E-network

In the last issue of *To Read & So...* we said that we would keep alumnae updated on the replacement programme for the JAGS e-network (Scholastica). This is on the stocks, but not up and running yet. We'll let you know as soon as it is available!

Musicians' Reunion

This year's Musicians' Reunion was a first time event for both JAGS staff as well as returning alumnae. Having in the past held themed reunions for Head Girls, Sports Captains and Scholars, we felt that it was time to give the musicians the stage, as it were!

It was a pleasure to welcome all our guests, including Miss Pamela Larkin, JAGS' first full-time music mistress from 1948, and her colleague Miss Heathcote (now Mrs Hazel Skinner).

As ever, the day gave opportunities to meet old friends, look around school, reminisce and enjoy a delicious lunch. A Musicians' Reunion demands

music, however, and we wanted to give JAGS musicians of all generations the opportunity to perform together. Our alumnae did not disappoint, many of them volunteering either to play in the orchestra or to sing in a chorus specially formed for the occasion. We are very grateful to them. Our musical partners for the evening were the JAGS Community Orchestra (JACO, of which more below), members of the JAGS Choral Society and JAGS Director of Music, Leigh O'Hara – our thanks go to them all.

Chorus rehearsals began in the late morning – the repertoire comprised Puccini's *Humming Chorus (Madame Butterfly)*, and Verdi's *Triumphal March (Aida)* and *Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves (Nabucco)*.

After lunch, guests were given a guided tour of the current Music School (actually a former sports pavilion converted for

James Allen's Community Orchestra

JAGS Community Orchestra (JACO) is a community symphony orchestra of some 60 players conducted by JAGS Director of Music, Leigh O'Hara. It brings together players from all over South London – current and former JAGS pupils and their parents, current staff, professional musicians and teachers living in the area, and other keen amateur musicians from all walks of life – for memorable concerts.

JACO plays major works from the symphonic repertoire of the 18th to 20th centuries – previous events have featured Tchaikovsky's complete ballet music from *Swan Lake* and Sibelius' Second Symphony. The next concert is on Saturday 5 January 2008 at 7.30pm at All Saints' Church, Rosendale

music some twenty years ago). JACO was rehearsing in the main music studio, a cramped experience that does not allow much bowing room when Shostakovich is on the programme! For those whose school musical experience focused mainly on class-singing, it was a revelation to realise how wide the music curriculum now is. Our current pupils were on hand to demonstrate the latest musical notation and sampling technology (Sibelius and CuBase). We were all impressed by their mastery, recalling our own days of laborious score-writing by hand.

The Reunion culminated in a fine concert in the

Great Hall of Dulwich College, in which the opera choruses were performed alongside Verdi's Overture to *Nabucco* and a stunning rendition of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony.

The Development staff would like to thank our colleagues in the Music Department (Leigh, Cecily Nicholls, Elinor Corp, Dan Monks, John Flinders and Caroline Davis) for all their preparation and hard work on the day, whether conducting, playing for rehearsals or hosting the Music School tour. Several guests commented on what a lovely time they had chatting with the staff and learning of the current facilities and plans for future development, as well as seeing current JAGS musicians at work.

Thanks also to those alumnae who, still being keen musicians themselves, had interesting ideas for future music reunions. Do let Alison Evans (Head of Development) know if you have any further ideas (020 8299 8410, alison.evans@jags.org.uk).

Road. Tickets are £5 and £3 (available on the door only). The programme will include Dvorak's Eighth Symphony and Saint-Saëns' Cello Concerto No 1 in A minor played by former JAGS Music Scholar, **Victoria Harrild**.

The orchestra performs three times a year in the Dulwich area, with short intensive rehearsal periods in the week before a performance. If you are interested in joining JACO and are current Grade 8 standard, please contact Leigh via the JAGS Music Department on 020 8613 6436 or music@jags.org.uk.

