



WALLPAPER

HEIRS OF THE PAST, MAKERS OF THE FUTURE

ISSUE 1 - AUTUMN TERM 2024



WALLINGTON HIGH SCHOOLS ALUMNI E-NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first edition of our alumni newsletter!

As we embark on a new chapter at Wallington High School for Girls and warmly welcome both returning and new students, we're delighted to bring you the freshest updates on school news, a reflective glance over the past academic year, and a dive into our cherished archives.

This edition is packed with highlights of student achievements, memorable events, and ways you can continue to support and engage with our school community.

Highlights include:

- Celebrating the class of 2024
- The return of the WHSG Alumni reunion
- Saying auf wiedersehen to a much loved teacher
- Alumni inspiring Year 12

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER



Welcome to our first Alumni newsletter for 2024 -25. I took up post as the new Headteacher last September and have thoroughly enjoyed my first year. I went to a Girls Grammar School myself, and when I came for a tour here, prior to applying, I had the same sense of community, academic aspiration and fun, that I enjoyed from my own time at school.

Our students continue to achieve some of the best outcomes in the country. We are very proud of all that they do, and we strive to recognise all the additional achievements. Our students enter a range of competitions and this year five students from Year 13 wrote code that was used in the International Space station!

We continue to have a fantastic sense of community, and this year we have held several discos, a CultureFest week, Fusion Showcase, the Gym and Dance Show, our music concerts, our Art show, and the list continues. There seems to be something every week where our students get the opportunity to come together to showcase their talents and have fun. Our Year 12 Prefects and the House Leaders do an excellent job galvanising the school into creating so many fantastic opportunities. We also have over 90 clubs and societies currently running - something for everyone.

One of our ambitions for next year is to develop our community links even further. We know and appreciate that so many of you come in to support us, whether for interview practice, or on our enrichment days, and we truly value your engagement. If you have any ideas about how we could support our local community more, please do get in touch. To show our appreciation of you all, please save the date - 31st January - for our Annual Alumni Reception.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter and I look forward to meeting with you over the year ahead.

Best wishes
Tracey O'Brien



ALUMNI NEWS

YEAR 13 INTERVIEW DAY

In the autumn term, Year 13 took part in our annual Interview Day, a crucial step towards their future in higher education, apprenticeships, or careers.

The event, supported by over 100 volunteers from our school community, including alumni, parents and employers, featured 700 interviews. Alumni involvement was notable, with past students offering career insights and reconnecting with teachers.

Reflecting on the day, alumni Elizabeth Andrews praised the students' enthusiasm and the event's alignment with Wallington's motto, 'Heirs of the Past, Makers of the Future,' highlighting its impact on student aspirations and alumni engagement.

CAREERS TALKS

On Monday, July 15th, we hosted our Makers of the Future Day for students in years 7 to 10. We were honored to welcome several employers, including many of our alumni, from various professions who generously shared their career experiences and provided valuable guidance on entering their fields.

Tanuja Thavarajah spoke about her path to becoming a medical trainee at King's college hospital, Ellie Begbie shared her university and careers highlights, and pathways to becoming a consultant at Deloitte and we also heard from Claire Adams who actively promotes and encourages women in tech and data industries.

This event offered students a comprehensive look into the daily demands and essential skills needed for success in these industries, helping them better understand potential future career paths.

MAKERS OF THE FUTURE

Earlier this year, we welcomed back Alisha Kasobya, Jady Abankwa and Emily Higgs who shared invaluable insights on their post-school journeys and the world of apprenticeships with our Year 12s.



Alumni Jady was selected as one of 25 unique and amazing apprentices and appeared in '[Amazing Apprenticeship A-Z Flashcards](#)' this year to mark International Women's Day and more recently, Alisha has been selected as one of the top 150 Black Future Leaders of the UK by Powerlist Magazine. Amazing and inspiring achievements!

ART FOUNDATION

This term, Mrs. Moore organised an engaging event that brought together four alumni to share their experiences in completing Art Foundation courses at prestigious institutions: Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon School of Art, Ravensbourne College, and The Kings Foundation.

The event provided a valuable platform for Year 10, 11, and 12 students to gain insights into the diverse world of art education. Each alumnus spoke passionately about their respective courses, shedding light on the unique opportunities and challenges they encountered. Their firsthand accounts offered a vivid picture of what aspiring art students can expect, from intensive coursework and project work to the vibrant communities and resources available at these renowned colleges.

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

THE ADAMS FAMILY



WHSG families enjoyed a brilliant performance of The Addams Family by our talented cast. We hosted local primary schools for a matinee and received rave reviews on opening night. The show was the result of hard work since September, featuring excellent portrayals by the principal performers, a lively chorus of ancestral ghosts, and a superb live orchestra of school musicians. The production was expertly organised by Mrs Borrageiro-Maier and supported by scenery painters, prop makers, lighting and sound technicians, costume and make-up artists, a publicity crew, and a precise backstage crew, who were all coordinated by our excellent stage manager.

FUSION SHOWCASE



During our annual Fusion Showcase event, we welcomed 200 guests including students, friends, family and teachers who were able to enjoy a variety of acts such as musical performances, poetry, gym and dance. The focus of these performances was to celebrate the vast range of backgrounds our students have. Students represented continents from all over the world including East Asia, South Asia, Africa and a range of European countries. In total 45 acts were showcased - a fantastic contribution from so many of our students. The event raised £868 for The Runnymede Trust - a charity supporting British race equality and civil rights.

SCHOOL SUCCESSES

Student Sophia, Year 11, is not only among the top 0.2% of young public speakers in London and Essex for her achievements in the Sutton Regional Final of the Jack Petchey speak out challenge but has also recently represented England at the Schools International Athletic Board championships achieving her first ever international medal.



Mugdha in Year 9 continues to impress as she has recently been awarded a 1st place prize in an ALevel Physics competition against Sixth Formers across the whole of the UK as well as won 1st place in the Data Science Olympiad against students from UK, USA, India, UAE.

Ashna, Year 8, had her story published in 'The Spook Squad: Grave Endings' and Eshika had her poem Winter Tapestry published for the Young Writers' Frosty Wonders anthology.

INSTITUTE OF CANCER RESEARCH VISIT

In the autumn term, Dr. Dalton-Griffin and a group of Year 12 students attended an open evening at the Institute of Cancer Research in Sutton. They enjoyed informative career talks on pathways into research science and medicine, followed by a fascinating tour of the chemistry labs where they learned about cancer drug development. The students saw advanced equipment like NMR machines and X-ray crystallography, and participated in hands-on activities such as pipetting and DNA extraction. The evening ended with networking opportunities with ICR staff, offering an inspiring glimpse into careers in cancer research.



EXCITING SCHOOL TRIPS

Exploring New York, Nantes, NASA, and More!

This year, students have had the opportunity to embark on a variety of unforgettable trips that have taken them to incredible destinations around the world.

Year 13 students kicked off the adventures with a thrilling Film Studies trip to New York City organised by Mrs Khan. Highlights included exploring Times Square, ice skating under the Brooklyn Bridge, and enjoying a Broadway performance of "SIX." The group also had the unique opportunity to work with the New York Film Academy, gaining hands-on experience in cinematography.

Year 10 GCSE French students visited Nantes, France with Dr. Wallis, where they immersed themselves in French culture, explored historic sites, and even had the chance to practice their language skills in a local school. Their trip also included a day at Futuroscope, a futuristic theme park that everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

Meanwhile, 22 Year 12 students and Mrs Copeland attended a Philosophy Festival in Hay on Wye, engaging in thought-provoking discussions with philosophers, politicians, and scientists.

Additionally, three Year 7 students travelled to Norway to compete in the European Lego competition, showcasing their robotics skills on an international stage. Their hard work and dedication earned them high praise in this challenging event.

Finally, Mr Pattison organised a once-in-a-lifetime experience of visiting NASA in Houston, where they witnessed a solar eclipse, built and launched rockets, and even spoke with real astronauts. The trip was filled with exciting excursions and hands-on activities that left everyone with lasting memories.

From the bright lights of New York to the wonders of NASA, these trips have provided students with extraordinary experiences and learning opportunities that they will cherish for years to come.



Ice skating under the Brooklyn bridge was a highlight of the trip



Students were lucky enough to visit NASA in Houston



Students boarded Nantes 12m high mechanical elephant

THROUGH THE ARCHIVES



In 1990, the whole school threw a Christmas party with a retro-chic 1960s theme. Students showed up in bold, funky outfits—pieces clearly cherished by their parents, who still remembered the heyday of Beatlemania!



Class of 2005 World Challenge trip to the Taj Mahal.



The 2001 cast of Grease the musical!



Year 8 July 1994 Watersports holiday to the south of France and Spain enjoying kayaking, snorkelling and sailing toppa boats.



Go team Seacole! Sports Day 2023.



Fiona Dunbar, a children's author and illustrator visited the school during Book Week October 2009, seen hear reading to a group of year 7s.



4 year 9 students pitched their 'Lunar Jigsters' at the 2019 Design Ventura challenge.



Class of 2012 World Challenge Trip.



The obligatory shirt signing tradition on the last day of term for the class of 2017!



The senior prefects of 2015.

FAREWELL CLASS OF '24



GOOD LUCK TO OUR NEWEST ALUMNI

At the end of May, we said farewell to our upper sixth “Class of 2024” in style with a day filled with festivities and nostalgia. Their departure was marked with a series of events including a bouncy castle, the traditional shirt signing, delicious pizzas and ice cream, and lively music - the field was buzzing with joy.

The highlight of the day was the heartfelt final assembly, where performances and speeches evoked cherished memories and celebrated the journey of our graduating class of 2024.

They have been an incredible year group – they have demonstrated energy and commitment towards each other and the whole school community. They have shown that they advocate for each other, supported younger students, been kind and polite, and the amount of effort they have put into school events, clubs, societies and charities has been amazing.



We are absolutely delighted to share the news that our class of 2024 achieved an impressive set of A'Level results with 56% of grades at A*/A and 80% of the cohort achieving A*-B.

We wish every member of the Class of 2024 the very best for all the future adventures that lie beyond!



PASTURES NEW

Here, we take a moment to honour and celebrate the remarkable career of Frau Fiona Walters, who has retired after an incredible 33 years of dedicated service. In this edition head girl Zara and Safeerah had the privilege of sitting down with Frau Walters.

After 33 years of dedicated teaching, Mrs. Walters is set to retire from our school, leaving behind a legacy that has touched the lives of countless students and colleagues. Since joining the faculty in September 1991, she has witnessed the school evolving in numerous ways. Despite its long tenure she remarks with a sense of nostalgia, “it seems like it was just ten minutes”.

When discussing her favourite aspect of working at the school, Ms Walters emphasises the joy she finds in both teaching and the sense of community among the staff and students. “After so long, what I enjoy most is that you can just teach and enjoy what you’re doing while having a laugh with the students,” she explains. This speaks to her love for the classroom environment, in which she has always prioritised not just education but also a welcoming space where learning is enjoyable.



Reflecting on her career, Mrs Walters finds it difficult to single out one favourite memory, which stands as a testament to the richness of her experiences. “To be honest, it all merges into one. My best memory in school... there are so many to choose from,” she says. She fondly recalls the early days of her career when the school used to host a Roman Day. “One year, a girl brought in a bucket of snails and cooked them according to a Roman recipe. It was such a bonkers thing to do,” she laughs. Not only does this illustrate the unique experiences of her teaching at WHSG but also her ability to foster a sense of enthusiasm among her students.

As Mrs Walters looks forward to her retirement, she has a clear vision of what she wants to do next. “I’m going to continue teaching Latin twice a week after school to soften the blow,” demonstrating her enduring passion for teaching. “I’m also looking forward to travelling outside of the school holidays, my husband and I want to do a big trip to India next year.” This aspiration is particularly meaningful to Ms Walters, as she and her husband have a meaningful connection to India, having travelled there for three to four months from 1989-1990. “We travelled around, and we want to do the bits we know we missed.”

Throughout her career, one particularly significant change she has enjoyed is the increasing diversity and expansion of the school – “I love that we all blend into a harmonious community,” she reflects. Ms Walters has played a crucial role in fostering this inclusive environment, ensuring every student has felt valued and respected, leaving an indelible mark on the community she helped build.

As Ms Walters prepares to leave, she offers heartfelt words to the school community. “I think the previous headteacher, Mr. Booth, always had a thing about running your own race. That’s the best advice I could give to students. Just in life, generally, do what is right for you. Just live your own life and be happy.”

Her legacy of compassion, inclusivity and dedication will continue to inspire both students and staff for years to come. WHSG will always bear the imprint of her unwavering support for her students. As we bid Ms Walters farewell, we do so with gratitude and love, wishing her all the best in her new adventures.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Science Laboratory Refurbishment

We have launched a fundraising campaign aiming to raise £130,000 over the next 12 months to refurbish four of our science laboratories during the summer holidays in 2025.

Science subjects are the most popular at A level, with 71% of our students studying at least one. This high demand has strained our current laboratory resources, impacting both the quality of practical education and our teachers' ability to deliver the curriculum effectively. We believe our students deserve top-tier practical education in well-equipped laboratories, enabling teachers to provide the best possible curriculum delivery.



The funds raised will be used to refurbish one of our oldest laboratories to inspire a love of chemistry in future students, and to reconfigure and update other unsuitable labs to better accommodate a variety of practical work. Providing modern, well-equipped science laboratories is crucial for preparing our students for higher education and future studies.

This **pack** details our fundraising campaign and how contributions can help us achieve our goal of upgrading our science facilities to provide the best possible educational experience.

We kicked off our fundraising campaign with the Wallington Walk, where over 1000 students joyously walked, skipped, and danced their way through an 8km route around the local area. The event was a vibrant spectacle, with students donning colorful face paint and fancy dress, and even the sun made a delightful appearance. It was a truly lovely community event that brought everyone together and raised an impressive £13,000. If you would like to donate, please click [here](#).



AFTER



STAY CONNECTED

INTERVIEW PRACTICE - WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We have greatly enjoyed welcoming back all the alumni who have supported students throughout the year, whether through career talks, the higher education and careers fair, or the Year 13 Interview Day.

This year, there are many exciting opportunities to stay connected to the school and to each other.

This term we are organising a special events to help the year 13 students develop a crucial life skill: interviewing. This is a key skill not just for applications but for effective communication, self-presentation, and confidence-building. Your support can give students the confidence they need when applying for higher education, apprenticeships, or employment.

Year 13 Interview Day

Date: Wednesday 20th November, 2024

Time: 9:30 – 15:00

Volunteers will conduct 30-minute face-to-face mock interviews, offering feedback and insights. Where possible we will match your specialism to an appropriate student but we may also ask you to conduct a generic interview or one broadly related to your field.

We are hoping for volunteers to attend the whole day; however, we would still welcome your participation if you are only available for part of the day.

If you are willing to volunteer please complete the form [here](#). Could you please complete this by the 4th November.

WHSG CAREERS FAIR

We are excited to announce that we are holding our annual Careers Fair, on the **26th March 2025 (13:00 - 15:00)**. The purpose of this Careers Fair is to provide students with valuable insights into various career paths and opportunities available to them. Exposure to industry professionals will greatly benefit our students as they explore potential career options and make informed decisions about their futures. Apprenticeships, Degree- apprenticeships, internships and graduate careers would be the focus.

If you would like to participate, you believe your employer would be interested or you have any questions regarding the event, please feel free to contact Mrs Lisa Parkinson lparkinson@wallingtongirls.org.uk



Dates for your diary

20 Nov	Year 13 Interview Day
31 Jan	WHSG Alumni Reunion
4-6 Feb	Whole School Production
19-20 Mar	Gym and Dance Display
26 Mar	Year 12 Makers of the Future Day - Careers & Pathways Talks and Fair
30 June - 11 July	Year 11 Work Experience
14 July	Lower school Makers of the Future Day - Careers Talks
14-18 July	Year 12 Work Experience

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THE RETURN OF THE ALUMNI REUNION!

The next - in what will hopefully be a long series of alumni reunions - will take place at the School on the evening of Friday 31st January.

The evening will start with tours of the school at 6pm, guest speakers, and a cheese and wine reception.

The evening will end at 8pm, allowing guests to carry on reminiscing more informally in various locations in the neighbourhood!

Click [here](#) to book your place or if you have any questions, please email whsgalumni@wallingtongirls.org.uk

Spread the word!



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It's always great to hear from WHSG alumni and friends of the school.

To share your ideas for the next issue of Wallpaper, think you can support the school or to direct alumni queries to the school - please get in touch!