



# End of Term Newsletter

MARCH 31, 2017

EASTER 2017 EDITION 2

*Headmistress*

*Mrs Clare Wagner BA (Bristol)  
MSc (Oxon) NPQH*

*Watford Grammar School for Girls*

*Lady's Close*

*Watford*

*WD18 0AE*

[www.watfordgrammarchoolforgirls.org.uk](http://www.watfordgrammarchoolforgirls.org.uk)

## Letter from the Headmistress

Dear Parents and Carers,

The end of the Spring Term is always a joyful one, with the promise of warmer weather and longer days bringing a palpable sense of pleasure and relief that winter is over. Your daughters have once again excelled themselves this term; the older girls have prepared assiduously for their mock examinations and the younger girls have busied themselves with their studies, some of them producing extraordinary extended work in a wide range of subjects. Throughout the term, the girls have continued to find time for their extra-curricular activities, such as entering debating and Chemistry competitions and taking part in the West Herts Dance Festival. The Spring Concert that took place during the final week of term was a real highlight. The range of performances and genres and the standard of the music were breathtaking. My thanks and admiration go to all the girls who took part, as well as to the Music Department for working with the girls and inspiring them to perform to such extraordinary high levels.

The Head Girl Team has also been busy this term. I was delighted that they organised a 'Speak Up' workshop for the younger girls in order to teach them public speaking skills, a topic about which I am passionate, this being a key skill for girls to master. They also prepared the School's Birthday celebrations, which took place this week, culminating in a Mad Hatter's Tea Party. I had the great good fortune to be the judge for the School Birthday Cake Competition. Unfortunately this did not involve a taste test. I may have to change the rules for the competition next year. The Head Girl Team is preparing to hand over their responsibilities to the newly-appointed girls in Year 12. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Head Girl Team and the Senior Prefects for their enormous contribution to the school this year. Not only did they welcome me and give me an effective and informative induction to the school, but they have all worked tirelessly at school events such as Parents' Evenings and concerts, as well as giving tours to visitors and working with the younger pupils. Indeed all the Prefects have also been diligent in the performance of their duties. All the younger pupils I speak to admire these girls hugely and aspire to be like them. The strong bonds between the older and younger pupils at this school is one of the key features of our unique warm and inclusive community.

At the end of this term we say goodbye to Mr Stephen Fry, who is going to Dame Alice Owen's School next term to take up post as Deputy Head. I would like to congratulate Mr Fry on his well-deserved promotion and to thank him for all he has done for the school, both as a key member of the Geography Department and Assistant Head. In the Summer Term, Ms Kath Clark will be Acting Assistant Head and Mr Richard Carr is joining us on

secondment on a part-time basis from Watford Grammar School for Boys, also as Acting Assistant Head.

It remains for me to wish you all a very peaceful and relaxing holiday. Your daughters deserve a rest too. I know that many of them have revision to do in preparation for the public examinations, but I hope they will take some time to rest and catch up on sleep, as well as ensuring that they eat well and get some fresh air and exercise in the warmth of the sunshine.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clive Wager". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a light blue rectangular box.

### **End of Term Arrangements**

The last day of term is Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March. Providing that the girls' behaviour is of an acceptable standard, school will finish at 12.30pm. Please would you remind your daughters, as I do at the end of every term, that they are expected to behave in an orderly and considerate way once they have left the school premises. I shall still suspend any girl for unruly behaviour.

### **Start of New Term**

The new term begins on Wednesday 19th April. All girls should arrive at the normal time.

### **Study Leave**

Year 11 Study Leave begins on 12th May 2017.

Year 11 Historians will also have additional study leave on 3rd, 4th, 10th and 11th May (their IGCSE is early).

Year 12 have no Study Leave as they have internal exams. They make take the day off, the day before a Maths, Classics or Politics exam (except when the exam is on a Monday when they have the weekend. They are expected in on the preceding Friday).

Year 13 Study Leave begins on 19th May.

Year 10 have no Study Leave for their exams and will also undertake supervised private study in between exams.

## Founders' Day

This is one of the key dates in the WGGs school year. We mark the founding of the school in 1704, primarily by Elizabeth Fuller, although we remember the school's other benefactors too. We commemorate the founding of WGGs with a church service and a similar ceremony at school. Your daughter will attend one or the other, depending on her Year group. This year the Church service will be at St Michael and All Angels' church in Mildred Avenue; this is due to refurbishment work at St Mary's. The retiring collection will be for the Peace Hospice.

Registration will be later than usual and the girls will be dismissed after the services for a half day holiday in honour of our Founders. Full attendance in the morning is required as a visible commitment by girls and parents to our school's ethos, values and tradition. More information about the practicalities of the day will be sent to parents after Easter.

It is part of the Founders' Day tradition to ask every girl to make a donation from her own money (whether earned or given to her) to boost the WGGs Service Fund. This money is used by the Headmistress to help when parents find they cannot afford to pay for their daughter to take part in a school activity.

We will arrange for the youngest pupil in each family to receive an envelope in which to donate a suggested amount of £5 per family – it is envisaged that if possible it should be a donation from the pupil herself, rather than a parental donation.

## NEWS FROM DEPARTMENTS

### English

#### BBC News School Report

This term saw the exciting and - sometimes - frantic journalistic activities of our BBC News School Report team of twelve Year 8 students who spent a day finding, gathering, writing and, finally, presenting the day's news to the Year 8 cohort. This News Day (16th March) was a culmination of a 10-week masterclass programme run by Ms Irena Pearse, where students learnt a range of skills in workshops based on the BBC News School Report programme and included Ms Kate Dorsett-Bailey's inspiring film editing and article-writing masterclasses. In the preparation stages, students had the opportunity to report and interview teachers, students, neighbours, parents and friends about topical issues, as well as make a report and vox pop in Watford Town centre, live on the day of Graham Taylor's funeral (the much loved former Watford FC manager). News articles included coverage of the Sixth-Form run Mental Health Awareness campaign, an exclusive interview with Mrs Wagner on school funding and an investigation of people's views on the scientifically corroborated 5-second rule!



### **CILIP Carnegie Medal Shadowing - this Reading Challenge begins**

The CILIP Carnegie Medal shortlist of best Young Adult fiction has been announced and our WGGs shadowing team of keen readers came together just before the Easter holidays. They will take up the challenge to read as many of the eight books as possible and shadow the judges' process by deciding for themselves who they think should be the winner. Students have until June 19th to read, read, read and will meet up weekly for discussions, literary games, and website review writing on WGGs's own Carnegie Shadowing webpage. This is open to students and teachers alike.

### **Geography**

The good news from the Geography Department is that the Eco-Club is advancing ever closer to achieving the Silver 'Eco-Schools' Award, having completed a whole school environmental survey, hosted an Eco-committee meeting with parents and governors, as well as a deep clean of the school pond! There will be some exciting developments for school wide activities next term, so watch this space...

### **Music**

This term we took part in the National Festival of Music for Youth with our Big Band and Chamber Orchestra. This was a fabulous event where girls had feedback on their performances from top musicians and were given the opportunity to perform to a larger audience and connect with other young people across the country who, like them, love making music, as well as engage in a little friendly rivalry!

There was a Master class with one of today's leading international violinists Dr Tasmin Little. This was a very exciting event and Chamber, Senior Orchestra and more advanced violinists benefitted from her great expertise.

The Spring Concert was a sellout. It was a chance to say thank you to all the older girls, before they leave for university, who have given so much to the musical life of WGGs during their time here, as well as an opportunity to show parents what the girls get up to over and above normal lessons!



Soon after Easter we have Founders' Day, where again, choirs and ensembles take centre stage to keep up the wonderful tradition of life at WGGs.

## Physical Education

### Commonwealth Baton Relay Opening Ceremony at Buckingham Palace

On Monday 13th of March the opening ceremony for the Commonwealth Baton relay was held on the forecourt of Buckingham Palace; a group of six girls and Miss Dentandt attended having been asked to be flag bearers. To be there for an 8:15am start we met bright and early at Watford Junction station and on arrival made our way to the side of the Palace, where crowds had already started to form outside the gates. Our morning consisted of getting ready for the main event, where all 70 students from a range of schools were asked to stand in height order and then were handed flags – one for each member country of the commonwealth. We then took part in two rehearsals where we had to practise carrying flags twice our height without tripping over so that the whole ceremony could run smoothly.



Finally, (after what felt like hours struggling to keep our flags under control!) the main event began; it consisted of performances from Cody Simpson and Lucy Mason. Also featured were Kurt Fearnley who delivered the torch to the main stage and famous ‘rivals’ Anna Meares and Victoria Pendleton who had the honour of being the first baton bearers. The highlight of the day for all of us was when the Queen arrived, along with Prince Phillip, to place her message inside the baton and mark the very beginning of the batons 388 day journey. Some of us lucky enough to be in the front row came within metres of Her Majesty and also had a brief exchange with the Duke of Edinburgh, who asked us if we were “going to run around The Mall with our flags”?

We all loved our experience, thoroughly enjoyed our time at the Palace and were delighted to keep our complimentary waterproofs!

### Other news from PE

It has been another very busy term in the PE department, with 67 matches played in a range of sports. The Year 10 Badminton team have had another successful season, finishing second in the county league. There has been great improvement in the Year 7 hockey over the season, which was highlighted with a second place finish in the district tournament, losing out to RMS on goal difference. Throughout the season an indoor league has been run during lunchtime with a great turnout. The orange team is currently in the lead.

Unfortunately the weather has had a significant impact on netball tournaments this term with both the Year 7 and 9 tournaments being cancelled. Teams have been performing well in the leagues, with the Year 7s convincingly winning the majority of their matches. The Year 9 shooters have been on great form scoring 77 goals to date.

The Swimming teams have been involved in a number of friendly galas, as well as participating in the county league. We are one of only two state schools involved in the competition. The junior team worked incredibly hard to secure a fourth place finish with the inters coming fifth. Three students were selected to represent the district in the county gala in March and all performed very well.

In March we held our annual Gymnastics and Dance Show with over 150 students taking to the stage. A wide range of dance styles were performed on the evening. A group of 15 students were also involved in the Hertfordshire Dance Festival on the 15th March at the Alban Arena. We were one of 25 schools performing on the day and the students choreographed a piece using first lines of famous fictional books as their inspiration.

## Important Dates

Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	INSET
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	First Day of Term
Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	Year 7 Parents' Evening
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	FOUNDER'S DAY (Half Day) 10.00-12.30pm

Mon 29 <sup>th</sup> May – Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2017	Half Term
Mon 19 <sup>th</sup> – Fri 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2017	Activity Week
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Appraisal/INSET
Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Face the Future (L6 interviewing day) 12.00-4.00pm (School closed to girls except L6)

Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	Year 11 Induction
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	Year 6 Transfer Day
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	Sports Day
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	Middle and Lower School Prize Giving Middle: 1.45-3.00pm Lower: 6.45-8.00pm
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2017	End of Term

## Term Dates

Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September	Year 7 & Year 12 Induction only
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	First Full Day of Term
<b>Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> December	OCCASIONAL DAY (School closed)
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> December	Last Day of Term
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> January	First Day of Term
<b>Monday 12<sup>th</sup> – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> March	Last Day of Term
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> April	First Day of Term
<b>Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May – Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> July	Last Day of Term