

Friends Newsletter 2016

An eventful year

"I hope you enjoy catching up on what the school has been up to this year, and get a sense of the vibrancy and energy that characterises our school - The Camden School for Girls.

Many of the articles are from the school's weekly newsletter. You will hear the many voices of the school in this publication, capturing something of the personality of our student body. Many items were written by students themselves. If you would like to get in touch, please email us – we would love to hear from you."

**Elizabeth Kitcatt,
Headteacher, Camden School for Girls**

Last August brought some **excellent exam results**. CSG has bucked national trends and again.

15 students went onto university places at Oxbridge or medical school, whilst 23 went on to art school. At GSCE, A record total of 20 students achieved only A* - A grades across all their subjects.

Camden School for Girls has been ranked 94th in the country's top 500 state secondary schools and 44th for the quality of our Sixth Form provision. We are very proud to see this, especially since all but a handful of the schools ranked above this school are entirely selective grammar schools. To see the tables, please refer to the Sunday Times edition dated 22 November 2015. Congratulations once again to students, teachers and parents for such success in 2015!

Camden School for Girls has also won national recognition for the achievement of girls in receipt of the Pupil Premium. 62% of disadvantaged students in Camden School for Girls (average over three years) achieved five or more A*-C grades, compared with 36% nationally. Please follow this [link](#) to read Sam Gyimah's letter in full.



Thanks to a very dedicated group of students, parents, and friends, has recently had solar panels installed on the roof of the Camden Building. In September, the school celebrated by thanking those who gave their time, expertise and money so kindly in the interests of the school and the environment. The group raised an astonishing £27,000 in total.

It was inspiring to learn that the solar panels will cut our carbon emissions by 9 tonnes a year and should generate about £3,400 in income and savings on electricity bills. We are the first school in the LA to have solar panels fitted, and Eleanor Palmer and Fleet Primaries are not far behind. We intend to incorporate learning about green energy into the curriculum to engage young people in this crucial development.



Particular thanks go to Keir Starmer, MP for this constituency, for supporting the event and joining us to speak in support of the Solar Panels' group's work at our celebration. Mr Starmer referred to the contribution that schools can make to tackling climate change by generating electricity on their roofs though he urged other schools in the borough to "pre-register" before the Government withdraws the subsidies. Thanks also to Camden Local Authority, the Ashden Trust (particularly trustees Sarah Butler-Sloss and Robert Butler) for its very generous donation of £5k in match funding towards the project, and those generously donated on the school's inspirational Crowdfunder page. And to parents Frances Butler, Isobel Pick and Penny Driver for keeping up momentum. Finally congratulations to the students' Green Club who did so much to make the fund-raising drive such a success and who learnt many skills in the process.



Dance Show

In February parents, students and teachers gathered for the Camden School for Girls Dance Show. The participants had been rehearsing for a lengthy period, practising their steps, co-ordinating group work and creating original choreography under the guidance of their excellent dance teacher, Becca Carter. There were a wonderful range of performances including street, contemporary and classically themed pieces. There were individual performers, pairs, small groups and Year Seven Tutor groups. The evening was thoroughly enjoyable; professional, beautifully presented and inspiring. The costume detail was very impressive & visually attractive.

A finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year Award!

A Camden student, Zak (Year 13), won a place in the prestigious BBC Young Musician of the Year competition. Zak is a wonderfully talented brass musician who is often performing in concerts and at events in the school. In November, he played 'The Last Post' for Remembrance Day. Members of the whole school community were moved by his rendition of this powerful and evocative piece of music.

Although Zak did not win the competition, he performed beautifully on television, and the entire school were rightly very proud of him.



Zak, Year 13 – Young Musician of the Year finalist
Photo credit: The Imaginal Eye

Nationally recognised mathematicians

Congratulations to all the Mathematics students who participated in the United Kingdom Mathematics Trust Intermediate Challenge this year – six students received bronze awards, six received silver, and one student received gold!

Speakers & Visitors

The school invites many speakers from a range of backgrounds in to meet our students. Students respond with great enthusiasm to writers, academics, politicians and people who have extraordinary life experiences to recount. The selection of articles below covers just a few of the guests we have welcomed into the school this year and provides an insight into students' perspectives on the issues raised in the talks.

Sarah Hayward

On Monday 7 September, the leader of Camden council Sarah Hayward delivered a short speech outlining the path her life has taken to date and gave us much beneficial advice. It was a mind-boggling reality check to be reminded that when she was growing up only a handful of people knew about the Internet and she emphasised how the pace of life now means that, whilst sixth form is undoubtedly important, many of our choices can later be altered and adapted.

Using her own experience of having taken a year out on account of poor academic results, she then trained as a journalist (a career she's not yet pursued). Sarah pointed out that life is what you make of it with the salient point that there is no shame in failing. This is particularly inspiring as (using the shiny new Internet) we could quickly see how much Sarah has achieved; among other things making Camden a Living Wage borough and championing 25 hours of free childcare.

Although in classic Camden style we bombarded her with questions about why she had backed Liz Kendall for Labour leader and whether Camden is a victim of its own success when it comes to budget cuts, she impressively held her own and we were very lucky to have such a passionate and morally driven speaker share her views. **Nina, Sixth Form Head Girl**



Mhairi Black & Jon Snow

This year, the school welcomed Mhairi Black, Britain's youngest Member of Parliament. She had been contacted by Hannah Morris, our Camden Youth MP, who asked her if she would come and speak to our students. Ms Black is extremely busy, and rarely able to take up such invitations, so we were deeply honoured that she agreed to come along.

Jon Snow also came with a Channel Four News team, and recorded a fascinating interview with Mhairi.

Mhairi Black visited our school as a star guest and articulately told her story of success. Her political career escalated from non-existent to magnificent in under a year. Mhairi was at a political conference on Scottish independence and happened to put up her hand. Her remark was so poignant, and her manner so warming, that she was requested to participate in an interview after the event, which went global overnight. At the age of 20 Mhairi Black defeated the Shadow Foreign Secretary to become Parliament's youngest MP for 300 years. She strives unpretentiously to tackle disengagement and persuade those who claim to be uninterested in politics that in fact the very air they breathe is enveloped in politics. "If you don't vote you are ignorant," she said, "and that allows you to be abused by politicians."

As she urged us to vote against cuts and austerity, shouts of encouragement seared through the crowd of teenagers aged 11 to 18. "They are not migrants they're refugees", she later explained when discussing the current situation in Calais. Mhairi's inspirational traits prompted Jon Snow and Channel 4 news also to attend the event and share Mhairi's positivity further. The piece recorded in CSG's Music Room was aired on Friday 18 September 2016 and can be watched at <http://www.channel4.com/news/catch-up/display/playlistref/180915>

Hannah Catinka (Camden Youth MP)

School Developments

The school community has been working hard in recent years to improve our learning facilities. Our new science laboratories are already very well used. Thanks to the generosity of the London Borough of Camden, soon scaffolding will go up to allow the school to undergo large-scale building improvements, the first for many years. The school has suffered from a lack of investment for quite some time, so is looking forward to long-overdue improvements and repairs to the communal areas of the school.

In addition to a new entrance foyer, the dining hall will be substantially extended, as will the sixth form building. All this will hopefully go a long way to ensuring that Camden School for Girls continues to be ready for the next generation of young women. We are raising funds to help furnish and decorate the new buildings. Please click [here](#) if you would like to help.

Sir Nicholas Blake, High Court Judge “An Introduction to the European Court of Human Rights”

On Monday 23 November, our assembly was led by Sir Nicholas Blake, a High Court Judge who offered us a brief introduction into the European Court of Human Rights, a subject which, for many of us, needed more than a little clarifying. Blake began by explaining to us the four main types of law: Common (as decided in local courts), Parliamentary (as debated on a nationwide scale), International (which helped in the passing of the Human Rights Act of 1950) and finally, European Union Law.

Blake opened up the floor to questions, which ranged from discussions about his own personal views on past human rights cases with which he has dealt, to the disenfranchisement of prisoners (interestingly, this has been a matter contested by Parliament for several years, with no clear response as of yet). The deeply controversial case of Abu Qatada was also brought up, not least to clarify the specifics and implications of a dubiously-sourced accusation. Qatada, as Blake told us, had been charged by an unfair military tribunal which used ‘hear-say’ evidence extracted via the torture of an accomplice. Though the works and teachings of the radical preacher are abhorrent, the circumstances behind his case are both fascinating and deeply unjust. It was interesting to be informed by the words of an official of the justice system, as opposed to having an opinion moulded by the media’s pre-established agenda. The disproportionate number of white privately-educated men in top roles in the judiciary system as opposed to women and those of ethnic minorities was another matter which was discussed, though Blake did seem quite contrite about it, if not hopeful. Now 25% of judges are women and though there is still a deficiency of judges from minority backgrounds, their numbers are increasing in local and tribunal courts. It would seem that there is indeed some hope.

Alannah, Senior Prefect



*From top:
The choir performs during the service,
Ms Kitcatt with the head student team,
Mr Byers conducts the orchestra.*

An Inspiring Founder’s Day Commemoration

On Thursday 24 March we celebrated Founder’s Day, our annual commemoration of the founding of the school by Frances Mary Buss. We welcomed many visitors who are real friends of the school – past students, support staff and teachers, parents and governors. All spoke warmly of the students and their active participation in the event, and came away full of praise for the school. The music and singing were of an exceptionally high quality, the Head Students gave inspirational and memorable speeches and everyone presented themselves beautifully and made the day an occasion of which Miss Buss would have been proud.

Would you like to attend Founders Day next year? Email friends@camdengirls.camden.sch.uk with your details and connection to the school.

“I can still remember the slow spoken chant of the school prayer ‘true, pure, lovely & of good report’, and I left in 1987.”

“I remember making posies and I could never get them to stay upright on my shirt! Good days.”

Rebecca O’Conner, via Facebook

Lucy Iliffe, via Facebook

Alumni News

We now have nearly 800 alumni who are using the school's Facebook page, and it is proving to be a good way to link up with old classmates and teachers. A number of old photographs have been posted and events and activities are being posted all the time. If anyone would like to help administer the page, please PM us via Facebook.

Alternatively, if you would like to let us know what you have been up to you can email us at friends@camden girls.camden.sch.uk.

Welcome back to our alumni with a stunning Shakespeare production!

In December, the school welcomed back no fewer than 30 of our past students. They came to a reception in the Founder's Library at which they met each other and a number of teachers, and they were offered a tour of the school with some of our current students. They then attended the sparkling production of *A Midwinter Night's Dream*, a thrilling version of *A Midwinter Night's Dream*, our own Year 12 and 13 student's adaptation of the Shakespeare comedy. They used four different parts of the main school building in an astonishingly inventive way, creating a range of atmospheres and dramatic effects as appropriate to events and interactions in the play. There were many brilliant performances and the audience was gripped right from the start.



It was lovely to reminisce with former students, hear their memories of the school and find out about their lives since leaving. The event had a strong 'Camden' feel – positive, confident and uplifting, and the hope is that this will be the first of many such renewals of contact. Our current students loved meeting them and were inspired by their enthusiasm and evident affection for the school.



Alumni Life Drawing Event

In addition to our December theatre event, alumni were also invited to a special life drawing class, taught by the school's very own former Head of Art, Mr Chris Livesey. The class was hosted in the beautiful old art studio, and was

very well attended. Guests enjoyed prosecco & croissants whilst they painted in a relaxed and informal setting.

The event raised £600, which (when added to another generous donation) ensured that the art department could purchase a brand new etching press! Thanks to all those who joined us.

The hope is to host a similar creative writing event in the autumn term. Please get in touch if you would like to attend by emailing friends@camden girls.camden.sch.uk.

Keeping in touch

If you want to register your details with the school you can fill out the [online form](#) available by searching 'Camden School for Girls Friends and Alumni' and clicking on 'Send Us Your News'. We would love to hear from you and find out what you have been up to. There are a number of ways you can get more involved with the school if you would like to, from speaking at assemblies to volunteering to facilitate a work experience placement if needed.

Raising funds for the future of Camden School for Girls

This year we received the sad news that our core funding has been cut yet again, and is likely to continue to decrease in the coming years. Despite prudent cost-cutting, the current levels of funding simply don't stretch to cover the facilities and resources we feel are necessary for an outstanding education.

Therefore, the school is raising funds for our future, to classrooms, arts provision, theatrical productions, speakers, and to support school trips. Your gift will ensure that all students, regardless of ability to pay, continue to have the depth and breadth of experience that makes Camden Girls so unique.

If there is a special area you would like to support or if you would like to fundraise for us, please contact us via email – friends@camdengirls.camden.sch.uk.

Every one of our students benefits from your support, so please give as generously as you can.



It's all Greek to me!

Generous contributions from alumni, families and friends have ensured that Camden

School for Girls will continue as

the only comprehensive in the country offering A Level Ancient Greek and the only local state school offering Ancient Greek at GCSE. Funding was secured to expand our GCSE program into a hub for Ancient Greek teaching and to support our AS level program. The goal of the hub is introduce Ancient Greek widely, and extends our popular GCSE Greek offer to students at other local schools. Out of hours classes in the autumn term featured a mix of CSG and external students, year 10s and sixth formers. The program is free for all students.

Thank you to the over 70 contributors, including *Classics for All*, the *Gilbert Murray Trust*, the *Jowett Trust*, Gavin Potter, Jane Brett-Jones and the many generous families, former staff and members of the classics community who have funded this initiative for the next three years.

CSG Anonymous Postcard Auction

A huge thanks to all those friends and alumni who bid in our inaugural anonymous art auction! A number of famous artists and celebrities generously contributed A5 postcards anonymously, and an online auction was held. Well in excess of £6,000 was raised, which is fantastic news – and will be hugely beneficial to the school.

Mary Kavanagh's contact with the school started when her daughter came here as a student. She quickly established herself as a very committed supporter of Camden School for Girls, and is still involved in CASCA today. Thanks Mary!

CASCA – raising funds to support the school community

Jumble & table top sales

These well run and familiar annual events were a huge success yet again, with the jumble sale alone raising over £6,500! The school entirely depends on volunteers for these events, and huge thanks are due to them all.

Book Fair

Yet again, the book fair proved a wonderful way to do some Christmas shopping when it took place in December.

CASCA Quiz Evening

The CASCA Quiz evening was a great success when it took place in March, providing an evening of entertainment, food, cocktails, competition and laughter. A skills auction took place too. Over £1,000 was raised on the night.

Summerfest

The Summerfest took place in June, and yet again was extremely successful. The postcards from the anonymous art auction were displayed, and there were all the usual entertainments you would expect.

Camden School for Girls on the RUN!

Camden School for Girl on the COLOUR RUN took place on 10 July. The day was wonderful, and teachers, parents and students all joined in the fun run in Regents Park. Over £16,000 has been raised so far, which is a fantastic achievement. Huge thanks to all those who participated.

CASCA have raised significant sums of money to support the school this year, so a huge thanks to them all! You don't have to be a current parent to get involved – if you'd like to know more email casca@camdengirls.camden.sch.uk