A message from our new Head…

"Dear Old Owenians

My first term here has simply flown by and I cannot believe it’s almost Christmas already! It’s been an exciting few months, with Owen’s students and staff launching themselves into the usual amazing range of activities, trips and curriculum challenges. I’m so proud to be able to lead this dynamic school, with all stakeholders committed to going the extra mile to provide or participate in a plethora of additional opportunities.

It’s this ethos and our outstanding results that have very recently been recognised by The Sunday Times Schools Guide 2017 in awarding us **State Secondary School of the Year**—the first time they’ve given a non-grammar school this honour! You can read the full article on pages 5-7. I look forward to sharing our continued successes with you as the weeks, months and years unfold.

May I welcome alumna Ellen Garlick (Class of 2013) as my leadership intern this school year—we’re already benefiting from her valuable contribution. As a reminder, opportunities to work here are posted on our website and tweeted on @DAOSAlumni (you don’t need an account to view)! I’m also delighted to announce that Stephen Fry BA (Hons) (Cambridge), currently Assistant Head at Watford Grammar School for Girls, has been appointed as our new Deputy Head. We’re very much looking forward to him joining us next Easter.

It was an honour to represent Owen’s and a pleasure to meet so many of you at the Harold Moore Luncheon annual reunion on the 31st October! Thanks to Sir Alan Parker (Class of 1962) for volunteering as guest speaker and Sandyann Cannon (Class of 1985) for organising this splendid occasion once again—you can read her report on page 7.

I’d also like to thank Old Owenians, Valarie Cross (nee Stubbs) and Pamela Mansi (nee Stubbs), two of the four sisters who attended Owen’s (1943-55), who once again sent us these beautiful flowers in honour of the old Owen’s Girls’ School’s birthday on 29th September.

Our remembrance service this year once again commemorated those Owenians who lost their lives in the two World Wars and was held at our newly refurbished War Memorial in the grounds—you can see photos of the new gold lettering on page 4. For those of you who remember our 400th Anniversary Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, you might be interested to know that 34 students headlined the Music For Youth Proms 2016 at the same venue on 15th November. James Widden conducted our Senior Strings, who due to their exceptional performance at the Music for Youth Festival in July, were selected to take part.

I hope you enjoy our Newsletter and am sure some of you will be catching up over the holiday period – please continue to let us know how you’re all getting on! Wishing you a happy holiday break.

Hannah Nemko, Headteacher
At the end of our summer term, we said goodbye to long standing members of staff with a Retirement dinner for Head, Alan Davison and Deputy Heads, Bob Pepper and John Godfrey. It was a lovely occasion organised by staff and after speeches from each other, they cut a delicious cake, made by parent, Karen Acosta, also our Payroll/HR Administration Officer.

Mr Hamilton-Hinds, our Administration Manager, who has also recently retired was the subject of a surprise assembly at the end of the summer term. Our School received an honoured guest, Gary Kemp, (Class of 1978), who spoke about the time he was a student when Mr Hamilton-Hinds taught Maths. He was presented with an elegant retirement clock, engraved with his name and school years, 1966-2016.

An article appeared in the Welwyn and Hatfield Times, which read: “An “amazing” member of staff at a Potters Bar School was surprised by a former pupil and pop star as he celebrated 50 years’ service. William Hamilton-Hinds has been associated with Dame Alice Owen’s as a pupil and staff for 61 years, and as part of a tribute assembly, ex-pupil and Spandau Ballet star Gary Kemp popped in to surprise his old Maths teacher.

Mr Hamilton-Hinds, 72, said, “He spoke about what it was like and how I helped him and also the fact that there was an occasion when I got the embryonic Spandau Ballet group to play at a party, and also at the School. Gary was a very nice lad, a typical working class boy from Islington who was very much into music and drama. He’s a very pleasant, genuine sort of guy. He spoke glowingly of me and I was very honoured.”

Roughly 600 pupils and Mr Hamilton-Hinds work colleagues crammed into the hall to appreciate his contribution to the Dugdale Hill Lane School, where he now works part-time in admin.

Mr Hamilton-Hinds, who has lived in Little Heath for over 40 years, said he was “very humbled” by the kind words from ex-pupils and colleagues and added Dame Alice Owen’s was “in the blood”.

Headteacher Alan Davison described him as an “amazing man” and added “every school should have a Bill Hamilton-Hinds”. “Bill has been an amazing teacher and colleague at the School having been a student at the School 61 years ago, and throughout that time has been dedicated to the success of the students. Students over the years have really appreciated him as a person who cares and someone who they could go to if they have needs, and would go the extra mile to support them.”
Mr Hamilton-Hinds continues to support school events and is managing our archives. He remains an active member of the Old Owen’s Lodge.

During his visit, Gary Kemp was also proud to unveil a blue plaque to commemorate the first time band members, Gary, Steve Norman, John Keeble and Tony Hadley played at the School in “The Cut”, as the group was first called. They held their first gig in the School’s dining room and have gone on to play some of the top venues in the world.

Our inspirational Head of Art, Mr Steve Willcock, also retired after spending 42 years in teaching (9 of them at Owen’s). His successor, Mr Petros Anastasi, designed this great card with some of our students work who’d used Mr Willcock as their subject! Mr Willcock was awarded Art Teacher of the Year in 2014 by the livery company, the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers (reported in our Old Owenians Newsletter March 2014).

**Michaelmas Day remembered!**

Old Owenians, Valarie Cross (nee Stubbs) and Pamela Mansi (nee Stubbs), two of the four sisters who attended Owen’s from 1943-55, once again sent us beautiful flowers (see photo front page) in honour of the old Owen’s Girls’ School’s birthday on 29th September. The flowers were a lovely reminder to all our current students and were displayed in our main Reception for all to see! The Owen’s Girls School originated in Islington in 1886 (photo left) and remained there until they merged with Islington’s Owen’s Boy’s School (originated 1613) by relocating to our site here in Potters Bar between 1973-6.

A former student from over 40 years ago recalled, “The annual School Birthday on 29th September (Michaelmas Day) was always a great event. The girls donned buttonholes made from Michaelmas daisies and every class was presented with an iced fruit cake and, after singing our two school songs ‘Our School is set at Islington’ and ‘Lift your hearts and lift your voices’, we walked in crocodile fashion for a Service of Thanksgiving at St Mary’s Church in Upper Street where Dame Alice is buried.” (School Newsletter February 2011).

**Generous Donation to the Music Department**

We’d like to extend huge thanks to Mrs Annie Cole (nee Lawton) - Class of 1954 - for her generous donation of £200 per year to our Music Department for the provision of sheet music. She herself benefited from financial prizes at the Old Girls’ School which enabled her to further her studies of music and wanted to give something back — she even studied with Dudley Moore at the Guildhall School of Music! Her stories of her time at school have been relayed with great enthusiasm and she’s very grateful for the education she received.

She was Deputy Head Girl and has followed a career in music teaching. Our Music Department know that updating our small library of sheet music is always extremely important. Playing music that is recognised and relevant to the pupils is necessary for their engagement and enjoyment in the ensembles. Currently we don’t have a large enough library of sheet music resources for our spectacular Concert Band and Second Band. Both ensembles cater, in weekly rehearsals and termly concerts, for a total of 80 and 60 pupils respectively. The chance to play this new music will be an invaluable opportunity for our pupils.
Mrs Cole has a reunion lunch every year with Old Owen's Girls at the Trattoria Verde near Russell Square and kindly sent in this lovely photo (names top right). She’s generously also added a codicil to her will to include a donation of £4,000 for the continued provision of sheet music to our School. We’d like to thank her once again for her foresight and on behalf of all those students that she’ll directly benefit in the many years to come. If you’re interested, you can find full details about ways to support us in a similar way, (including setting up a standing order and leaving a gift in your will/codicil/legacy pledge), at: http://damealiceowens.web-intouch.comfrmContextPage.aspx?t5m49mx.

War Memorial gets a makeover!
You may remember we told you in December 2014 that we were applying for a grant to the War Memorials Trust (WMT) Grants for funds to repair our War Memorial. We’re delighted to report that we were successful and our newly refurbished memorial was completed this summer (before/after photos right)!
A list of our alumni who appear on the Memorial can be found on our website at: http://damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk/about-us/our-history/war-memorials/.

In keeping with Owen’s traditions, a Remembrance Service was once again held by the War Memorial on Friday 11th November at 1.15pm, attended by senior staff and students. We also held a minutes silence for students and staff at 11am. Mr Hamilton-Hinds found a report in The Arrow Magazine 1916 about two of our alumni who lost their lives in the war, which was included in the Programme —see below.

From the Arrow Magazine November 1916—in remembrance

“L A Broughton (1904-1912), Middlesex Regiment, who left the School when he was in the Middle Sixth Form, was killed on September 9th. He was on advanced sentry duty in a crater a few yards in front of our trenches, together with his friend H G Higham, also an Old Boy, when a shell exploded between them. The explosion only buried Higham, but when he managed to get up and walk to the other side he found that Broughton was dead.

G C Tiley (1908-1915) 2nd Lieut., Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, was killed in the attack on the Regina trench near Thiepval. At School, he was in the Upper Sixth for two years, and was a prefect and Captain of his House – Colebrooke. He was a keen sportsman, being captain of the Third Football Eleven, Corporal in the Cadet Corps, and Life-Saving Captain of the School; but, besides his accomplishments in this sphere, there was a particularly lovable vein of simplicity and good humour in him that endeared him to all. From his bright, sunny soul there seemed to flow the joyousness of perpetual youth. Many, too, will remember his extraordinary keenness on architecture. George, as he was known to all, was a frequent and welcome visitor at School for months after he had left, and while he was training with the Inns of Court O.T.C. We saw him during the early weeks of this Term, happy as ever, though he had already taken part in the Big Push—had even “gone over the top”. With this recollection fresh in our memories, the news of his death on 21st October 1916 at the age of 20, following so swiftly, came as a very terrible shock to us all.”
At Dame Alice Owen’s students learn to grab opportunities and get over setbacks! In and out of the classroom, Owen’s teaches pupils to not give up and to develop self-belief!

Every year on the last day of the summer term pupils at Dame Alice Owen’s School receive a small amount of “beer money”. The gift, usually spent on ice cream or chocolate, marks its long association with the Worshipful Company of Brewers which has supported the school for more than 400 years through the legacy of its founder.

In the mid-16th century, Alice Wilkes, a teenager out walking with a servant, was watching a cow being milked in a field outside the village of Islington. Alice wanted to try it herself, but as she stopped a stray arrow struck her hat. She was uninjured – and vowed that when she was rich enough she would do something of lasting value for others to show gratitude for her narrow escape. Fifty years later, in 1613, she was a rich woman, having been widowed three times by a brewer, a mercer and Judge Thomas Owen. Her servant reminded her of the vow and she established a school in Islington for 30 boys.

Today Dame Alice Owen’s School is a voluntary-aided, co-educational secondary in Potters Bar and proudly upholds other long-held traditions, from the wearing of carnations on prize-giving day to its outstanding record for academic excellence.

On average, 90% of students go on to higher education, two-thirds to Russell Group universities, including 14 to Oxbridge this year. The record is 30 in a single year.

“We have an incredibly hard-working, academically rigorous environment which encourages intellectual curiosity,” says head Hannah Nemko, who took charge in September following the retirement of Dr Alan Davison after his 11-year tenure. She had been second-in-command for a year.

“The students are proud to be part of that and want to live up to the name that is Dame Alice Owen,” adds Nemko. The school has 900 applications for 200 places each year with 10 students vying for every external place in the sixth form.

“It is a school where it is cooler to be seen revising at break time than it is to not do well in your test,” says Nemko. “The students just rise to the challenges we set them. They aspire to do well for themselves and aspire to be the best they can be.”

This summer, 82% of A-level papers achieved at least a B grade while more than half — 55% — gained an A* or A. Pupils put in a stellar performance at GCSE, with 68.6% of entries reaching the top two grades.
These results, propelling Dame Alice Owen’s School into the top 40 AMC pse check from 58th position last year in our league table, are all the more impressive for the fact that the school is only partially selective.

Our State Secondary School of the Year selects just 65 pupils out of 200 year 7 places each year on academic ability and 10 on musical aptitude. In keeping with the school’s founding principles, 10% of places are reserved or children from Islington. The remaining 62.5% comprise siblings and children from the catchment area.

Dame Alice Owen’s, the first non-grammar school to win our award since Parent Power began in 1999, is comfortably ahead of the highest ranking fully comprehensive school.

“It does not matter how you got into the school,” Nemko says. “We try to do the best by every single child. We have fantastic teachers. They feel the responsibility for every child in their class.”

Most teaching is in mixed-ability classes, although within lessons tasks are differentiated so that students can be stretched while others can be supported.

“We try to take the students from where they are and help them get better,” says Nemko who teaches maths to a group of students who find the subject challenging. Maths is set after year 7.

Experienced staff teach across the ability range while nurture groups, homework clubs and maths and English breakfast clubs help boost students’ confidence and skills. Enrichment activities — from visiting lecturers to maths and science competitions — also develop confidence and intellectual curiosity. Ten places each year are reserved for children who demonstrate musical aptitude.

Inspectors described Owen’s as “outstanding” in all areas in their report in 2009, praising the school for its “exceptional” commitment to the personal development of both students and staff. In his letter to students, reporting inspector Brian Cartwright said: “There is a buzz about the school because your hard work is rewarded, and nobody is left behind.”

Offering opportunity for all, seeking excellence in everything, encouraging students to never stop learning and providing a supportive community is the Owen’s way. It also applies to teachers, who are on their own journey to self-improvement. Staff work in learning communities to continuously develop themselves and each other and are also involved in development networks with other schools.

“They are always reading something new or sharing ideas,” says Nemko, former deputy head of Yavneh College in Borehamwood, which she helped establish in 2006. “I knew what an exciting, forward-thinking educational environment it would be to work in,” says the mother of two, who had been involved with the school through its Advanced Learning Alliance (http://www.advancedlearningalliance.co.uk/).

Owen’s, an academy and a specialist in languages, science and music, offers opportunities and facilities many other secondary schools can only envy. The school opened on its current site in 1973, set in 34 acres of land, boasting its own lake and extensive playing fields. Recent additions to the estate include the Sir Alan Parker Building for drama, languages and learning support, opened last year by the film director and old Owenian.

A new science block was unveiled by the fertility expert and Labour peer Lord Robert Winston in 2014, with funds partly raised by the school’s 400th anniversary appeal.

Each year Dame Alice Owen’s benefits from more than £900,000 in extra funding from the Worshipful Company of Brewers, which goes towards building projects, IT upgrades, keeping the enormous sports grounds in tip-top condition and funding support programmes and extracurricular enrichment.
Pupils represent the school at district, regional and national level in sport, which is an integral part of life at the school. There’s something for everyone with options ranging from football, rugby and netball to orienteering, athletics, and gymnastics.

Art, drama and music are also part of the rich learning experience. More than 300 students receive instrumental lessons in school, and extracurricular activities include four orchestras and bands, five choirs, chamber music and an annual musical production. Earlier this month the school’s senior strings opened the Music for Youth Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. There are three drama productions a year and myriad clubs and societies including producing the school magazine, The Arrow, computing, debating and chess.

Opportunities such as these teach pupils about resilience, patience, focus, to be part of a team, that practice makes perfect, says Nemko. “They can find what they are good at, and do what they are good at, and get better and better at what they are good at, because that helps improve their self-esteem and helps them become more confident and well rounded.”

In and out of the classroom, Owen’s teaches pupils to not give up when the chips are down and to develop self-belief. Personal wellbeing and academic success are nurtured by a pastoral care system which includes form tutors, heads of student progress and assistant heads.

“We do lots around resilience,” says Nemko. “To help a child grow into the best person they can be it is not just about their education, it is their attitude to themselves. We try our very best to prepare students for the real world, to be successful adults. What you need to be a successful adult is the capacity and ability to learn and to deal with setbacks.”

Beyond the school gates, assorted trips locally and overseas add to the Owen’s experience with opportunities to travel to destinations from Spain and Russia to China and Tanzania, where students visit a partner school and help the local community.

Pupils fondly remember their days at Owen’s, as was evident in the turnout at the 400th birthday celebrations at the Royal Albert Hall, featuring performances from Old Owenians Gary Kemp, from Spandau Ballet, and former band member Steve Norman, young classical and jazz musician Tyler Rix, and soprano Susanna Hurrell.

Nemko is excited to be leading Dame Alice Owen’s into the school’s next chapter of life. “I am fortunate to work with outstanding parents and students who are both interested and interesting; supportive trustees and governing body, and the most dedicated staff I have had the good fortune to work with,” she says.

“I look forward to developing all that is good about Dame Alice Owen’s: our unashamedly academic values, our pursuit of excellence in the arts, music and extracurricular opportunities and our emphasis on personal development, social skills and moral values to ensure that every child leaves being the best person that they can be.”

Harold Moore Luncheon Annual Reunion 2016 —for all Old Owenians!

Thanks to organiser, Sandyann Cannon for this report: “This year’s Harold Moore Reunion Luncheon was attended by over 80 Old Owenians and guests. The event was held at the Imperial Hotel, London on Monday 31st October 2016.

The speaker, Sir Alan Parker, who was requested, gave a wonderfully witty speech about his career and his time at the school. He recounted being given detention for “excessive laughter” saying, “That summed up my time at Owen’s: “excessive laughter” and the best education anyone could ever have.” His anecdotes included: “...My old classroom at the Angel, Islington was, curiously, an empty pub next to the gym at the far side of the playground. Bizarrely, Mr Catala, our form master—‘Pussy’ Catala to give his correct name—had his desk where the bar once was and he kept his books on a shelf previously designed for holding bottles of scotch.. (This might explain why so many in the class became alcoholics!) The rumour was that the elegantly dressed Mr Catala — fluent in French, German and Spanish —was once a spy fighting for the Catalanians during the Spanish Civil War. He had a scar across his head, which they said was a sabre slash inflicted by General Franco himself. The truth was that it was a wound caused by a wayward discus, one sports day at Chandos Avenue.”

As is the custom, the afternoon was closed with a rousing rendition of the school song. Next year’s event preparations are already underway. Please contact the organiser at sandyannncannon@gmail.co.uk if you which to receive an invitation.”

Photo right (thanks to Bill Hamilton-Hinds) : Our Head Boy, Greg Young, and Head Girl, Emma Skelly, were pleased to support this event (pictured with Head, Hannah Nemko) and Maths teacher Richard Morley (Class of 1972) also attended.
Old Owenians Business Directory!

Find it on Old Owenians In Touch at: http://damealiceowens.wintouch.com/frmPrimesDisplay.aspx?S=67x85q2

We’ve had two requests for companies to be added to our Business Directory this term and thought we’d highlight all new entries here as listed on the website! If you’d like to add your company details to Old Owenians In Touch (publically available page), then please email Mrs Mandy English at english@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk —information follows a similar format so just provide key details as with other companies!

Captain Keith Godfrey - Class of 1960

Company Name: Flying Without Fear
Website: flyingwithoutfear.com
Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/Fearofflyinghelp
https://twitter.com/fixfearofflying
Address: Alton, Hampshire, GU34 4BH
Email: flyingwithoutfear@yahoo.co.uk
Main Phone: 01420 588 628
Mobile Phone: 07539 172 646

Flyingwithoutfear.com is the brain child of Captain Keith Godfrey. He has been a commercial pilot for over 53 years and brings his knowledge of flying and his expertise as a teacher to help you to overcome your fear of flying. You can book a range of courses at his venue in Hampshire - see his website for full details!

Captain Keith learned to fly in 1961. In 1964 he was the youngest pilot to hold a flying instructor’s rating in the UK. By 1965 he was the Chief Flying Instructor of the largest flying club in the UK. During a 28 year career with British Airways his training skills were recognised for their innovation, effectiveness and popularity. He is a senior training Consultant/Captain at one of the worlds' biggest Commercial Pilot training academies.

Brandon and Troy Sampath - Class of 2014

Company Name: Liberty Coffee Co
Website: http://www.libertycoffee.co.uk
Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/libertycoffee
https://twitter.com/_libertycoffee_?lang=en-gb
Address: Liberty Coffee Co, Unit A, Pearlgate House, 107 Mayes Road, Wood Green, N22 6UP
Phone: 07491 808 553
Email: customersupport-libertycoffee@btconnect.com

 Twins, Brandon and Troy, left in 2014 and have set up Liberty Coffee Co - Wholesale & Distribution of Tea, Coffee & Associated products – here’s their story on their website...

"Liberty Coffee was created by Two Brothers who have a passion for tea (& eventually Coffee!). When they were growing up, they’d always hate the coffee they tried because it was that instant coffee which is bitter and just something you have to drink for the caffeine, until one day they discovered how simple it was to make a home brew with just a cafetiere! After this, the Two Brothers fell in love with coffee; each coffee has a unique flavour which tells a story in a cup. They set out prove to every instant coffee drinker that they no longer have to settle for freeze dried coffee. It’s extremely simple to enjoy a cheeky brew at home without having to go to a chain store! Take a look at our articles written specifically so that you can make the best damn coffee at home with our helpful tips, tricks and guides!“ Their business is based in Wood Green, they carefully source their coffee and provide a quick delivery service within 7 days of ordering!
Former Parent, Nick Robinson, visits DAOS for talk on Democracy!

Students studying Government & Politics, Economics, other Sixth Formers and staff were privileged to hear from the presenter of the Today programme on BBC Radio 4, speaking about the issues facing democracy in light of recent events in the UK and America.

His key messages, encouraged them to challenge news reports they read on Facebook (“post-truth”?!), ask questions to understand why people behave in the way that they do and listen to and search out other people’s opinions when different from their own.

Finally he suggested they GET INVOLVED – the future is theirs to shape and influence! Many thanks to Nick for taking the session this November and inspiring our students to take a lead in developing our democracy over the next few decades!

Thanks also to Oriana Cornejo-Gutierrez, our Spanish & Politics teacher for arranging the event.

Old Owenian paints Head’s portrait!

Outstanding artist, Abigail Wilderspin, (Class of 2015) was commissioned to uphold the tradition of creating a portrait of the outgoing Head for our Dining Room gallery. Abigail was short-listed in the top 20 for the Saatchi Gallery, Art Prize for Schools Award 2015 from over 20,000 entries submitted by more than 30 countries from around the world. Her work was displayed at a special exhibition in April last year at the Gallery. She apparently spent “thousands of hours” producing this fantastic work.

The Arrow Magazine 2016

This exciting 117th edition is now available to purchase at our School events (see web link below) or by mail, selling for £4.

Our editing team chose the portrait of Alan Davison as this year’s front cover. They are: Sonal Mistry: Editor in Chief, Laura Gisseleire: Editor, Sophie Dale: Editor, Gabrielle Olowe: Editor, Roisin Billeter: Art Editor, Jamie Porrit: Layout Design.

Our team say, “Historically the Arrow has reflected the ever evolving nature of the student body, and we have strived to continue this tradition. The most significant change the school has faced this year is the retirement of Dr Davison and it has been a pleasure to speak to both him and Mrs Nemko about the changes. 2016 has been an eventful year for global politics and the Arrow offers an opportunity to express their various political beliefs and attitudes as well as a diverse range of opinion pieces. Not mention the outstanding level of Artwork and Photography that the school has to offer.” Contents include interviews with author, Charlie Higson, owner of Hatfield House, Lord Salisbury, previous Head, Alan Davison and new Head, Hannah Nemko!

Any profits from the sale of The Arrow go towards our partner school in Tanzania (school trip organised for 2017)!

Old Owenians are reminded that they are welcome to attend any of our school events! If you would like to purchase a copy of The Arrow (apologies, we have to charge postage on top), please email Mrs M English you’re your query and she’ll pass onto The Arrow team. http://damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk/news-dates/school-events/

Login Protection!

Just a reminder that if anyone forgets their login details on Old Owenians In Touch, they can request both their Username and Password via the Old Owenians In Touch login screen. Due to the amount of instances of internet fraud now being reported on in the media, we will no longer be including your login details in our emails. Thanks very much to Andy Pingram (Class of 1981) for being vigilant and pointing this out!
Old Owenian pub owner gets award!
Many congratulations to landlord, Tom Craig, (Class of 2002), for winning Pub of the Year for the 11th time! This report (left) appeared in the Welwyn & Hatfield Times this Summer!

Help us with our Foreign Coin Collection!
Our OSA (Owen’s School Association) has been running their Foreign Coin collection again which finishes on Friday 13th January 2017. If you live locally and need a good home for your old coins, please drop them into our Reception before this date! Since they started the collections a total of £1931 has been raised for the school.

Old Owenian lawyer also gets award!
Huge congratulations to Tabatha Mossman (nee Matthews), (Class of 1998), for winning the Law Society ‘Solicitor Of The Year In-House’ Excellence Award 2016.

Mrs Tish Matthews, her mother, who was a member of our administration team here for many years and only retired last year, said, “As a family we are absolutely thrilled by her amazing achievement as she manages to juggle her working life with Roche Products Limited and raising two children, Sophie and Max (8 and 5 years) together with her husband Geoff.”

New General Teaching Building
We’ve applied for a grant from the Government’s Condition Improvement Fund to help us provide the main funding for our 40-year old teaching building which is no longer fit for purpose. Our Head, Hannah, Nemko, says, “It no longer provides the standard of environment we feel is acceptable for our students to learn in or our teachers to teach in. It’s overly hot in the summer and many windows are now no longer safe to open. It’s also full of drafts and so difficult to heat in the winter, resulting in staff and students feeling excessively cold”.
Hertsmere Borough Council has given planning permission for our proposed three storey 18-classroom replacement building (on the site of the old Science Building—yes, Brewers Garden will be moving!), but it’ll cost several million pounds, and the internal fittings will have to be funded by our school and wider community. We’ll learn in the Spring whether our bid has been successful but construction can not start before January 2018, and will take at least a year.

We’re confident that the project will not affect any of our other buildings.
The Welwyn & Hatfield Times reported on this on 30th November. The proposed site plan (left) includes a possible outdoor amphitheatre.
DAWES FAMILY—all Old Owenians!
Thanks to Christopher Dawes for getting in touch. He and his wife have been active participants for many years in activities and exchanges with Potters Bar’s Twin Towns, Franconville (see left, Chateau Cadet de Vaux and the park) and Viernheim. Many individuals, families and clubs in the Towns want to find new contacts and make new friends here, and Chris would love to hear from anybody interested; please email him: pbtwintowns@hotmail.com.

As well as new friendships, the Towns offer many opportunities for sport and cultural activities as well as social events.

Chris was a member of our Owen’s School Association when David Bolton was Head and his three sons are all Old Owenians! Michael, (Class of 1991), works as a note taker for deaf university students at London City Lit, Roger, (Class of 1992), is Head of Fixed Income at Canada Life and Andrew, (Class of 1997), is Head of Region at Canada Life.

Old Owenians Cricket Club (OOCC) Winter Newsletter 2016
Shaun Flook, (Class of 1988, 1st XI cricket captain), and Honourable Secretary of the OOCC, has kindly provided us with the Old Owenians Cricket Club Winter Newsletter for our alumni to reference on this website – see PDF link on our Newsletter page! The OOCC warmly welcome Hannah Nemko as their President and are delighted that this season, the 1st XI were promoted to Division 1, which is by far the highest standing the club has ever had! They’re very keen to welcome any boys from the school that love cricket who feel they are ready for adult cricket of any skill level (no colts section available).

New Premises Manager!
We welcome Sonja Winborn as our new Premises Manager this term, who’s had a very thorough hand over from outgoing Manager, Carolyn Airey. Carolyn is relocating to Rutland and has supported our School brilliantly over many years in this role. She is parent of alumni Catherine, Lizzie and Alice. Sonja has connections to Owen’s already – she’s Shaun Flook’s sister-in-law (mentioned above)!

Golf at DAOS!
Old Owenian golfers watch out! We have some serious talent being developed at DAOS! Seven students were lucky enough to take part in the inaugural Morkill Cup at Denham Golf Club against Aldenham School in October. Despite narrowly losing the match by 2 ½ to 1 ½, the boys deserve a huge amount of credit not only for the quality of some of their golf, but also the way they conducted themselves throughout the day. Congratulations to Jonathan Boscott, Jimmy Blaskett, Louis Cullen-Dempsey, Sean Lovell, Ashay Dhingra, Jack Worrell and Bambo Makkofaides (pictured here with our Head of Spanish, Mr Tony Meekin) on their fantastic effort and positive attitudes!

Other exciting golf news is that the Chairman of Potters Bar Golf Club is very generously offering taster lessons to DAOS staff and students keen to try their hand at golf. We had around 50 students and teachers enlisted for their first lesson with the professional in November. We’ll keep you updated! If anyone’s interested in golfing with fellow Old Owenians, please get in touch with Brian Fry of the Old Owenians Golf Society via Old Owenians In Touch at: http://damealiceowens.web-intouch.com/.

Duke of Edinburgh’s Gold Awards!
Congratulations to our newest alumni (Class of 2016), Harry Anderson and Emma Page for completing their Gold DofE Award! We now have about 20-30 students enrol for the scheme at the Gold level each year, who each undertake a challenging programme of activities, expeditions and a residential course. Celebrating its 60th Anniversary this year, we’re proud to support this scheme, which is “...the world’s leading youth achievement award, giving millions of 14 to 24-year-olds the opportunity to be the very best they can be.” (DofE website)

If anyone’s a fan of the GBBO (Great British Bake Off), you might have picked up that this year’s finalist, Andrew Smyth, (Cambridge graduate), also has the Gold DofE!!!!!

Changes to A Levels at DAOS from September 2017
For those who were at school many years ago, you might also be interested to know that our Sixth Form students are returning to study 3 A Levels (not 4) from September 2017. We recognise and support the mind-set change for parents and students as everyone gets used to the new, tougher, more in-depth courses.
Old Owenian aid worker reports on Typhoon Haiyan

Alumnus, Laura Ouseley (Class of 2005), works as world news officer for the Catholic charity CAFOD (Catholic Agency For Overseas Development). She visited the Philippines to tell its supporters how the £5.4 million they raised is directly helping those communities who are rebuilding their lives after the devastating typhoon in the islands. The Barnet and Whetstone Press reported on December 3rd that their local girl visited the Philippine islands of Cebu, Leyte and Samar as they reached the three-year anniversary of the disaster.

In the article... She said: “Typhoon Haiyan was one of the most devastating storms to hit in decades and its storm surge – a wall of water 25 feet high in some areas – caused the most damage, wiping out everything in its path. The Philippines is hit by around 20 tropical storms a year and is also prone to earthquakes and volcanoes – thinks that thankfully we don’t have to worry about in Barnet.”

She added: “The thing that struck me most about people in the Philippines is they are very positive really about moving forward.” However she said emotions were never far from the surface as they marked the anniversary of the typhoon. Five million people were made homeless by the typhoon and the charity worked to rebuild homes and develop early warning systems – crucial when Typhoon Hagupit struck a year later. The charity is working with its partner Caritas Philippines to help people relocate out of reach of the storm surge. It has also been supporting people find alternative sources of income and to set up savings groups to give them a safety net for the future.

Laura said: “Many people were coconut farmer but the trees take eight to ten years to grow back. We’ve been working with people to find an alternative livelihood and ideally diversify their income.” She added: “It’s heartening that people in the UK will have supported them.”

Ms Ouseley, 29, grew up in Finchley, where she went to moss Hall Primary School, and then Dame Alice Owen’s School. She got involved in aid work after studying geography at Manchester University. She also did voluntary work reuniting families who were separated during the civil war in San Salvador before working in women’s rights in Latin America. She now lives in High Barnet and is involved in aid in Latin America, Asia and with refugees.

Recently, her work took her to the Greek island of Lesbos in January to work with families fleeing from conflict. She said, “I met people who had just arrived that day. We were giving them family bags of food and clothing and baby kits for people with young children who needed nappies,” she recalled. “Taking action, doing something whether it’s giving or doing something locally to show support to refugee communities around in your local area is positive.”

Thanks again to the Barnet and Whetstone Press for their permission to reproduce this article by Julia Gregory, which appeared online.

And now for your contributions...

CLIFFORD MCKIE – CLASS OF 1951

Thanks to Nick McKie (registered on Old Owenians In Touch as Clifford McKie) for this enquiry! He says, “I clearly remember being made aware of two supposed school traditions: I never experienced them in practice, and can’t for the life of me remember how they were communicated to me... I would hope that a fellow alumnus somewhere has the same recollection and that it’s not all a hallucination of mature years...” If anyone has any comments, validations or feedback, please email your editor at: oldowenians@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk, many thanks!

“Tradition One: New boys should be aware that older boys have the habit of demanding ‘Soap Money’ from gullible newcomers. This doesn’t feel so unlikely - a touch of folklore and older boys enjoying the privilege of unsettling newcomers.

Tradition Two: If a boy had to excuse himself from class for the lavatory, he should click his fingers to attract the teacher’s attention and ask for a/the ‘White Mark’. Historically this white mark was meant to be a stick or baton kept in class, so that only one boy could be absent at a time - the one with the stick. This all seems thoroughly unlikely, but has the tantalising feel of Victorian schoolroom and real history. Added to this it would be a thoroughly practical mechanism for stopping any mass exodus of students.”
MICHAEL SHIPMAN – CLASS OF 1965

Many thanks to Michael for sending us the scripts for “Summer Show” which are now part of the School Archives. Mr Bill Hamilton-Hinds started to catalogue our archives in the Old Library in October.

BRYAN MORRIS—CLASS OF 1955

Thanks to Bryan for joining Old Owenians in Touch and sharing these memories of Owen’s with us as he has so many family connections to the School!

“I passed my 11+ in (about) 1950 and went for interview, with my mother, (an old Owenian herself), with the then headmaster, Mr Garstang. At the time it was a voluntarily assisted Grammar School situated at the Angel Islington (when my mother who, into her late 90s could still recite the school register, went there in the late 1920s it was fee paying but she won a scholarship).

Before my interview I and my mother went for tea at Lyons Corner House, on the corner of the main road. Though still a number of years after WW II there were still food shortages. I was surprised to find sugar bowls on each table (till then only at restaurants etc.); one was asked “1 lump or 2 ?”"

Started in form 2B, Form Master was Mr Puddephatt who went on to be headmaster. During the spring/summer we went once a week to the school playing grounds in Chandos Avenue at Oakleigh Park. Apart from a sports pavilion there were also a number of huts there, we had lessons in the huts for part of the day and sports the other part. Four years later my younger brother Raymond joined me at Owen’s. For those who recall the names of cars in the period he became known as Morris Minor and I was Morris Major.

Many pleasant memories.”
Thanks to Jeff for this wonderful contribution and sharing his memories of early school days! He told us, “Having read with great relish all the issues of the Old Owenian Newsletter and recognising so many names (pupils and staff), I felt it my duty as an Old Boy to put pen to paper (or at least, fingers to keyboard) to share some of my memories from Islington from 1961 to 68.” He’s also promised further chapters which we look forward to receiving! So here’s his “Owens School Memories Part One”...

“I became an Owenian on 12th September 1961. I had an older cousin at the school and one of my uncles was an Old Boy who left the school in about 1956. Following my success in the “Eleven Plus” Owen’s was therefore my first choice. I obviously did well enough at my interview and I still recall my Dad’s delight when he received a letter from Mr Burroughs informing him of my successful application:

“The new term begins on Monday 11th September. Your son should not attend then but should attend at 9:30am on Tuesday 12th September”.

Before then I was taken by my mother to “Hope Brothers” in Ludgate Hill to get kitted out. That ancient shop was a bit like “Grace Brothers” in “Are You Being Served?” with rows of wooden drawers, racks and display cabinets containing gentlemen’s apparel in all shapes and sizes. I believe it was the official supplier of uniforms for a number of schools in central London. Needless to say it has long been demolished and the site is now occupied by an “All-Bar-One”.

Appropriately “suited and booted”, I turned up as directed and was escorted to Room 6 adjacent to the Armoury Door to meet “Flossie” Cutler and my new classmates in form 2WJC. There were two other second forms presided over by Dr. B.M.D. “Fanny” Cast (next door in room 5) and Mr. S.V. “Stan” George (room 20, ground floor beneath the art room).

For younger readers puzzled why we began in the “second” form, this was because the school still had a “Remove” (the third year). This was something my friends attending more modern schools could not comprehend. Those who had heard of such a strange term only associated it with the author Frank Richards and his tales of Billy Bunter – The “Fat Owl of the Remove” at Greyfriars School. It was a little strange after six years in my small local primary school, where I knew so many of the pupils, to find myself with 600 or so other boys, all of whom were older than me - some considerably so. One of my friends from primary school – Peter Smith – joined me in 2WJC but my cousin was by then in the Middle Sixth and our paths did not cross.

One of Flossie’s first tasks was to provide us with our timetable of lessons. I had assumed that all our lessons (apart from games, swimming, chemistry and the like which naturally required specialist locations) would be held in room 6 with the appropriate masters coming to us. I soon learned that every 40 minutes there were to be around 500 or so boys milling around the narrow corridors all heading in different directions for their next session, all getting in each other’s way, some scurrying back to their form rooms to collect a forgotten book. However, once we had mastered the geography of the school we soon knuckled down to the rigours of our grammar school education and the discipline that went alongside.

We were introduced by “Aenus” Reeves to the enchantment of Latin nouns of the first two declensions, though much of it puzzled me. I never quite grasped, for instance, having had explained to me what the “ablative” case was, why we might ever need to announce, in that ancient language, that something had been done “by, with or from” a slave (particularly as we had to guess the most appropriate preposition). In fact, I never envisaged including the word “slave” in my vocabulary at all, but “servus” had been chosen to demonstrate the second declension, so there it was.

The first conjugation of verbs was added to our ever increasing store of knowledge and “amo, amas amat, amamus, amatis amat” remains hard wired in my memory bank to this day. (This may go some way to explain why these days, when reaching the top of the stairs, I often cannot remember why I went up them. My memory needs to be emptied of Latin verbs!). “The Latin Way” was our text book and the red covers of many of the copies had been wittily modified by their previous custodians to transform them into a volume of “Athens Eating Way”. But Mr Reeves was a fine teacher and I can confirm the report from Les Gibbins in Newsletter No. 5 that he was indeed very dapper. He would arrive at school in his “Frog-Eyed” Sprite, with the top down whenever possible, and would often sport a polka-dot bow tie.

Meanwhile Mr George (“three fingers, one finger and a thumb”) tried to make craftsmen of us in the woodwork room.
My enduring (and almost only) memory of those lessons was of reducing a piece of wood to half its original size with a box-plane. This was done in an attempt to make it “square” enough to form the base of a precision-made bookrack (the prototype of which sat on a table at the front of the woodwork room). This seemed to take almost two terms and by the time my timber had passed Stan’s critical eye and set-square I had forgotten what the wood was for.

Mr Hall had the task of nurturing our artistic talents. Half a term was spent “wedging” a piece of clay to eliminate all pockets of air from within its bowels. Despite Mr. Hall’s frequent inspections, made by cutting our clay in half with a cheese wire, we obviously were not too proficient in that curious practice. Many of us found to our dismay that our “coil” pots that we had spent the rest of the term making had exploded in the kiln. Never mind, there was always painting to fall back on.

Flossie Cutler would teach us Maths. I took great delight in obtaining a “9H” pencil (when the recommendation was 2H) and the congruent and similar triangles in my geometry exercise book looked as though they had been scored into the page by a Stanley knife. “Danny” Kaye took us through our first year of Biology and for some reason which I never discovered there were rumours of an amorous association between him and Miss Cutler. Such is the mischief of eleven year old boys!

The diminutive Mr Williams began our history. As others have mentioned, he was indeed small in stature and seemed to have difficulty finding shirts with a small enough collar. But what he lacked in build he could certainly compensate for in terror. On many occasions a member of his form, 3W (that’s the second year, do keep up!) would sheepishly interrupt our history lesson with a polite request to retrieve a forgotten book from his desk. If he was in a good mood Mr Williams would simply bellow “No! Get Out!” On days when he was less pleasantly disposed, however, he would emphasise his displeasure by hurling a stick of chalk or even the board rubber or a book at the unfortunate interloper who would swiftly take shelter in the corridor behind the closed door to avoid injury.

His room (seven, on the ground floor) was the site of what seemed an over-elaborate panel of buttons which operated the bells spread throughout the school. These would signal the end of each forty minute period and it fell to Mr Williams to operate them. This he would do by pressing the buttons in pairs with what seemed a somewhat unnecessary flourish. With his back to us his oversized gown seemed to envelope him rather like Count Dracula’s would as he was about to ravish a virgin.

“Birdie” Sparrow (English), “Fritz” Banks (French), “Jack” Paul (Music), Mr Lloyd-Williams (Geography), “Jock” McGregor (Physics) and Mr Hamilton (Chemistry) were among those who strived to combat our ignorance of their specialist subjects. Some of them (and some of us) succeeded more than others. Each employed their own peculiarities in furtherance of their task. We discovered immediately that “Fritz” Banks spoke no English at all during his lessons – with one exception. Episodes of misbehaviour would see him call the miscreant to stand before him at the front of the classroom. There he would interrogate the suspect in English and, if he deemed the offence sufficiently serious and/or the explanation insufficient, he would administer a sharp slap round the cheek. I recall Ivor Levy being the first recipient of that rather strange punishment.

Les Gibbins amused me with his tales of the swimming galas and the mention of Ian Bagster (Newsletter No 8). Ian arrived at Owen Street on the same day as I did and was also in 2WJC. I believe that Ian, like me, was a member of Stoke Newington Swimming Club. But there - certainly as far as swimming was concerned – any similarities between us came to an abrupt end. Whilst I floundered about and did my best to swim a hundred yards (we still used old money then) in a reasonable time before finishing breathlessly, hanging on to the side of the pool to avoid sinking, Ian could outpace a dolphin. He was an absolute star in the water.

Our weekly trip to the baths in Northampton Square (no longer there but which the school used before transferring to Ironmonger Row) was often concluded with the type of handicap race described by Les – but only Ian would be subject to handicap. A two length race would be announced and we mere mortals would set off down the pool as quickly as we could manage; meanwhile Ian would be finishing off his maths homework. Only when the first of the also-rans had reached the end of their first length would Ian be unleashed by Reg Tricker. After he had put away his four-figure tables he would set off in hot pursuit. A racing dive and half a dozen strokes would see him level with the last of the stragglers and he would pass the returning leaders as they were about a quarter way through their second length. A quick “tumble turn” (which I tried once or twice only to succeed in propelling myself to the bottom of the deep end) and a mighty push off would see him level with the leaders half way down the second length. He would then cruise home to victory by the proverbial country mile.
I was interested to see Ian’s contribution in Newsletter No.11 (confirming his prowess in the water) but I was surprised to read that he left in 1971. That would have made him 21 at least! Perhaps he had taken lessons from Stan Merritt!

We were introduced to the delights of “The Field” in Chandos Avenue. Our games afternoon was Tuesday as I recall and Reg Tricker presided. It was only in recent years that I learned that he had played professional football for Charlton Athletic, Clapton (now Leyton) Orient and even Arsenal in the 1920s and 30s. I cannot imagine Wayne Rooney or David Beckham forging a successful second career as head of a PE department in a first-rate school!

A quickly taken lunch and the 609 trolleybus would whisk many of us silently to Whetstone High Street (though they were soon to be replaced by brand new Routemasters with the bus renumbered to 104). Others travelled by tube to Totteridge & Whetstone and a few more by British Railways to Oakleigh Park.

A football competition was held and each form selected two teams which they were asked to name. Form 2WJC fielded “The Cutlets” and “The Midwitch Cuckoos”. I seem to recall Peter (or was it Ian?) Franklin being the captain of that team and I imagine he had recently read John Wyndham’s sci-fi book of that name. Mr George’s form fielded “The Danes” and “The Martians”. Alas I cannot recall what Miss Cast’s form called their teams.

Football was not my forte and although chosen for “The Cutlets” I played only once as I sustained a fractured ankle during the winter (roller skating at Alexandra Palace). My career in the top flight was thus brought to a tragic and premature end and I was excused PE and games for most of the winter. I managed to secure a few “standard” points for Myddelton House in the spring and early summer and I enjoyed that time more because my ankle had healed and the mixture of cricket and athletics was more to my liking.

My ankle injury apart, my first year passed reasonably uneventfully. In year two the three second forms were mixed and matched into three third forms (still awake at the back there?). I was assigned to form 3CLW, looked after by Mr Lloyd-Williams, our first year geography teacher and our form room was room 15 on the first floor. 1962-63 was the winter of the “big freeze”. It snowed on Boxing Day 1962 and everybody was so sad that had not done so a day earlier. However, by the end of March 1963, when we had all been slipping around on snow, ice and slush for three months everybody was utterly sick of the stuff.

Having said that, I’m quite sure the school did not close at all and we were still expected to make our weekly forays to Chandos Avenue to play football when ice-hockey would have been more appropriate and a lot less dangerous. We’d have been better off playing on concrete.

It was extremely interesting to hear from Peter Lloyd-Williams in Newsletter No 3. I hope Peter will not mind me saying that as our form master and geography teacher his father seemed eager to enjoy a quiet life. He would set us some work (reading and compiling a precis from our text books) and then gently “rest his eyes” for the remainder of the forty minutes. Looking back now we should have realised that he may have been unwell because sadly he died part way through that year. We, as members of his form, and a representative from each of the other forms throughout the school attended his funeral service at the Welsh Chapel in Holloway.

The death of Mr Lloyd-Williams was obviously an enormous tragedy for his family and friends. However, the effect it had on them was but nothing compared to the changes that his untimely demise would unleash upon the unsuspecting hapless souls of 3CLW. For we were soon to learn that a certain Mr D. E. A. (“Gym”) Chant, Reg Tricker’s first officer in the PE department and “Baldy” Butler’s aide-de-camp in the school’s Army Cadet Force, was to take hold of our reins. “Gymbo” had a fearsome reputation and our lives – or at least mine - would never be quite the same again.

(Hopefully) to be continued….!!!!!

Thanks once again to Jeff – his comments about coil pots exploding in the kiln made your editor laugh and be fearful at the same time as I started a Ceramics short course at the University of Hertfordshire in October and we’ve yet to get our coil pots back!!!! Really great memories which I’m sure will be avidly read! We’re looking forward to Jeff’s next contribution.
Thanks to Mrs Day Edwards, daughter of Mrs Tomkins, who’s sent us these wonderful, colourful extracts from her nearly 80 year old mother’s autobiography to publish in our Old Owenians Newsletter.

Mrs Tomkins started writing it 20 years ago and is delighted to have had a few copies actually printed for family and friends. She left school when she was 15 and remembers her school days with fondness. She emigrated to Australia in 1968, is currently widowed and now lives in a retirement home in Perth, Western Australia.

Mrs Edwards told us, “The fact that others would be interested in her experiences at Dame Alice Owens’ will give her great pleasure. Below are the excerpts from ‘As I Saw It’ as she called her autobiography. I have included the chapters that commence when she took the scholarship exam until she left school and went to the Labour Exchange to get a job…”

The photos also sent are of Joan and her close friends (see top left—she is centre left and her partner in crime, June, is top row centre) and of the hockey team (see page 18, where Joan is front centre with a white top and bloomers—the reverse of the hockey photo has a list of the girls names)!

“CHAPTER 2”

“By now Renee had passed her Eleven Plus Examinations with enough marks for Tollington Park Secondary School. I understand this was known locally as the Tea Pot Scrubbers! She had a smart maroon uniform and many friends in her own age group, which rather left me out. A few months, before I was due to take my own Eleven Plus, I went with my mother on a school outing to a theatre to see ‘She Stoops To Conquer.’ During the performance, my mother sat next to my teacher and the forthcoming exam was discussed. The teacher confided in my mother that I would definitely get enough marks in this to gain a place at Grammar School.

I am glad I did not know of the burden placed on me at that time because I would not have wished to let either my parents or my teacher down. I passed the Eleven Plus with top marks for a Grammar School and I also had top placing for my school. When my grandparents were told, they showed no interest, so my mother was surprised when a family friend asked after the ‘clever granddaughter’ Nanny had boasted about.

I sat an examination to be admitted to Dame Alice Owens Girls School. Although this was a private fee paying establishment, a small quota of scholarship girls were admitted during the war years, due to government regulations. I passed this test with no problems but found late that I could have taken another one which might have given me a uniform grant. Sadly, my mother knew nothing about this, so had a constant struggle to find money for my uniform all the years I attended this school.

All my friends were going to other schools and many of them expressed how sorry they were for me because I would be all on my own at Dame Alice Owens, which was considered a snob’s school. School uniform consisted of navy un-pleated tunic with a cream square-necked blouse. There was a navy blazer with a badge in the pocket and a beret shaped like a three-penny bit. Summer dress was navy with a white collar and cuffs.

The school tailor was the only source of this uniform which tended to be of poor quality material. The blouses were very coarsely woven and both of mine disintegrated under the arms in a very short time. The result of this was that my mother always bought future ones at Marks and Spencer’s. These lasted a lot longer than the school issue and were cheaper. They were more white than beige and of a slightly different design, so were disapproved by some of my teachers, but they really could do nothing about it.
Further expenses were a hockey stick, a tennis racquet, a satchel, material for sewing class and items for cookery lessons. Somehow I managed with a second-hand hockey stick and tennis racquet. Other items had to await money allocation. It was much earlier than this when Renee and I went with Mum into a second-hand shop. We spotted two pair of used ballet shoes, just in our sizes and persuaded mum to buy them. For weeks afterwards we were both ballerinas and performed for our friends. I had the edge on Renee because my shoes contained trainer blocks of wood in the toes, which enabled me to stand on my points with ease.

Our family owned holiday bungalows at Jaywick. Fame came to the Hancy family the year we had a flood in Jaywick. There were many storms and the water rose in the avenues towards the raised front doors, set high for this very reason. During the night, the water crept upwards, leading the police to order an evacuation of the bungalows. My father declined to leave because we had an escape route via a large plank to higher ground. Nevertheless, he sat up all night to monitor the water level. It stopped an inch below the door. (Photo below from the Mirror, Gallery of The Great Floods of 1953).

Next day we were honoured with a visit from the National newspaper reporter who clambered along the plank to get an interview. We thought it very funny when he missed his footing and nearly got wet. The column appeared next day under the heading: “FAMILY STAY ON IN LITTLE VENICE. Children swim in Jaywick streets.”

We did just this. Swimming in the street instead of going down to the beach seemed wonderful to us children, although I and sure our parents did not feel the same. When the promenade was repaired, we used to have a game of jumping off the seawall, onto the sand some feet below. It was while playing this game with some boyfriends that I lost a necklace. I often wonder if anyone found it. The necklace was in fact a gold pendant given to me by my parents one birthday. Mine was a gold oval with blue stones around a pearl in the centre. Renee’s was similar but had a flower shape. She still has hers and I so envy it because I was so stupid to lose mine.

“CHAPTER THREE”

21 Dagmar Terrace. Our change of address came about after the end of the war.

The chimneystack at Coombs Street was declared unsafe due to bombing, and this meant my grandparents could get a grant to cover a large proportion of the cost to repair this. A large hole in the upstairs wall rendered our rooms uninhabitable so my mother applied for requisitioned housing. This comprised of empty rooms taken over by Government, during the war period, to house families made homeless by bombs or wartime problems.

The story at the time was that you were offered a maximum if three different lots of accommodation. If you refused all three, then you went to the bottom of the waiting list which was very long. My mother refused two and felt obliged to take the last one offered. It was a basement flat, still in Islington, in an old terrace house. The house was divided into two flats. The upstairs one was already tenanted by a couple with three children.
The two elder children were slightly younger than us but the youngest boy became the bane of our lives. His mother was always screaming and shouting at him and on one occasion, when he was locked out, he managed to climb in through our basement window, which caused a confrontation between my mother and his. We had two rooms on the hall floor which were used as bedrooms and two rooms in the basement. One of these was a living room and the other one a kitchen. A bathroom one flight up from the hallway was shared by the two families. An agreement was made for us to use the bath one day per week but otherwise our family washed in the kitchen.

Renee had a friend who came from a large family (five children). They lived in a block of flats several streets away from ours. I made friends with a younger sister and spent many summer evenings making paper models of children’s playgrounds. I expect most of our efforts went into the rubbish bin but we were very earnest and actually reproduced a playground from paper. At Christmas, I enjoyed making paper chains with the family. Of course, no one could afford to buy ready-made Christmas decorations and packets of coloured strips were very cheap. I think after the war you had to use gum on these but it wasn’t very long before you could buy them ready gummed. I know I envied this large family because there always seemed to be someone around to talk to.

Walking home from their house often proved to be a problem. I could take the short route or the long route. As I was usually past my deadline to be home, I took the short way, which went through a small passage between a bombed church and a small graveyard. There was not much lighting until I reached the archway leading to Dagmar Terrace, so I had the choice of walking or running. I always took the walking option because I felt I could look around slowly and convince myself nothing was lurking in the shadows. Nothing ever was, so I eventually became quite immune to any possible threat and I have never been afraid of the dark since then.

I started my new school in the third form. From there one rose though the lower and upper fourth, fifth and sixth form. Scholarship girls were in a great minority and it did not take very long to find out who they were as most lacked enough money to purchase sufficient uniforms and equipment. One of my later friends had parents who owned a jewellery shop and another girl’s father was a professional photographer.

The school was founded by Dame Alice Owen. One day as a young woman (I cannot remember which year) she was walking through a field when nearly killed by an arrow from a nearby archery practice area close by. The arrow pierced the crown of her tall hat and as well as thanking God for her delivery she also promised to endow a school on that very spot is she ever became a woman of wealth. She survived three rich husbands and a boy’s school was erected. I have often wondered why the girls school came much later, probably because there were no ‘women’s libbers’ in those days. One of her husbands must have been connected with the brewery trade as Barclays and Charingtons were named as the School Trustees. Two of the schoolhouses were named after those trustees and the other two were Armstrong and Wilson after previous headmistresses. I was assigned to Armstrong who sported green as their colour.

We had two school songs and Founders Day was on Michaelmas Day when we were all supposed to bring flowers from our gardens to decorate the hall. Lacking a garden, I was never able to make a contribution. Once a year all the pupils were marched into the hall to receive their beer money. Third formers were given two shillings and the amount progressed upwards to the Head girl who pocketed ten shillings. It seems this was a very old brewery custom passed on to us by the School Trustees. Our main school building was rather old with classrooms on three levels. The assembly hall doubled as a gym which meant we were continually erecting and dismantling all the sports apparatus needed for our P.T. classes.

All this gear was stored in a corner, which was very dark and had a low roof, rather like a cupboard without a door. This made a handy spot to meet with a few friends when we wished to keep out of the way of the teachers. Here we discussed the various merits of our teachers and the surprising things we had learnt in our biology lessons dealing with the subject of human reproduction or sex as it is now more commonly called. Sadly, one day we were discovered by a Prefect who pronounced the place “out of bounds” and thereafter maintained a daily patrol to ensure we did not disobey her.

Because there were too few classrooms in the main building to cope with the volume of pupils, several pre-fabs had been erected on the other side of the playground, which was asphalt. This only left space for a netball court which was marked out on the bumpy ground. Our netball games were made more interesting when the ball hit one of these bumps and veered off at a peculiar angle. The cloakroom was in one of the prefab buildings and I was often to be found there doing acrobatics on the metal struts holding up the roof. My favourite game was hanging by my legs upside down above the washbasins. The cloakroom had its own Prefect who eventually caught me and handed out punishment.
For our other sports tennis and hockey, we travelled once a week by underground train to Barnet, North London. The whole day was spent at the sports ground there including lessons in the demountable huts set in the grounds. The hedges round the grounds screened people’s gardens and we found two Pekinese dogs in one of these who would start barking whenever we peered through the hedge. This would bring the owner out to see what was causing the fuss. As we were out of sight by then the dogs would get a telling off. On the way home a group of us girls would often buy a fresh loaf of bread and pull it apart with our fingers to eat on the train.

Here’s the photo mentioned of the hockey team, where Joan is front centre with a white top and bloomers — the reverse of the hockey photo has a list of the girls names, also shown!

Our weekly swimming lessons were taken at the local swimming baths within walking distance of the school. There was a very strict rule in force that girls were not allowed to share change rooms.

None of the girls including myself, really understood the reason for this ruling which explains why my friend June and I found ourselves chatting to each other while dressing in the same cubicle after a swimming lesson. We suddenly noticed it had gone very quiet and emerged to find our teacher waiting for us together with our classmates, curious to find out if we would be punished. We both received the same punishment, no swimming lessons for several weeks. What upset me at the time was not knowing why we were being punished. We were far too innocent in those days to have heard of lesbians.

I was never a very good swimmer so when our Annual Swimming Gala was held I tried to avoid entering. Just putting your name down for and event earned one ‘house point’, so the House Captains bullied most of their members into entering. One year I entered the ‘egg and spoon’ race because it only required you to swim the width of the baths with a Ping-Pong ball on a spoon in your mouth. To my astonishment I won because all the other competitors dropped their balls requiring them to start from the beginning again.

Our weekly swimming lessons were taken at the local swimming baths within walking distance of the school. There was a very strict rule in force that girls were not allowed to share change rooms.

None of the girls including myself, really understood the reason for this ruling which explains why my friend June and I found ourselves chatting to each other while dressing in the same cubicle after a swimming lesson. We suddenly noticed it had gone very quiet and emerged to find our teacher waiting for us together with our classmates, curious to find out if we would be punished. We both received the same punishment, no swimming lessons for several weeks. What upset me at the time was not knowing why we were being punished. We were far too innocent in those days to have heard of lesbians.
I enrolled for the Lifesaving class, which lasted several months culminating in a final exam. Just before the final, I was in trouble with my form teacher for a minor misdemeanour and she refused to allow me to take it. It seemed very unfair after all my efforts, so I appealed to the Headmistress. She agreed I should take the test but it was too late. My name had already been taken off the list. I felt very bitter about it at the time because of all the time and effort put into my lessons.

Miss England was my history teacher and she was very popular with all the girls, being both strict and fair. I always earned good marks in her class. She gave me an outright distinction one day for my copy of a Tudor house on a large poster. I never handed it in for my House credit as I tried varnishing the poster to protect it from the elements and this ruined the picture. I was too ashamed to show anyone the picture after that.

In our second year, we had to choose between Latin and German. After much discussion, my parents chose Latin for me. I did not get on well with the Latin teacher and neither did any of the other girls. She was a small piggy faced spinster who picked on anyone she disliked and subjected them to verbal abuse. During one of these ‘sessions’ I was told I would end up in the gutter. I promptly told my parents who requested my removal from her class so I took extra French instead.

My own special friend was a girl called June. Her father owned a rag shop near the Angel markets. I had never heard of this occupation before but it seems it was quite a lucrative business as she always had more pocket money than I did. Obviously rag picking was not considered a suitable trade for the father of a Lady Owens Pupil. Special rules were in place, which applied while we were at the sports grounds in Barnet. One day June and I sneaked out one lunchtime to buy an ice cream at the local shops. When we got back a teacher was waiting for us. After pointing out the rules we had broken she ordered us straight back to school. We had:

- Left the school without permission.
- Without wearing our school beret.
- Been seen eating in public.

The Headmistress was informed of our transgressions and was waiting for us when we arrived back at school. I was singled out as the ringleader. We were informed that the only good thing was that because we were not wearing our berets at the time of our misdemeanour, it was possible no one had recognized which school we came from. I cannot recall our punishment but I know mine was more severe than June’s.

Our French teacher was a petite Mademoiselle who took a liking to me and chose me (against all odds) to play the part of Cinderella in her French play one year. I had managed to upset my English Teacher at the time and she tried to get me replaced in the part but it was too late for another girl to learn the script. My suggestion that this teacher need not attend the performance at all was taken as bad form on my part. I was forced into making a half-hearted apology so she could see the play.

I had been an avid reader from childhood and seldom went anywhere without a book. I read most anything I could acquire without cost. One day while crossing the playground with a book in hand I had to surrender it to the teacher on duty because of its lurid cover as most American private-eye novels always have. Strangely enough the contents of this book were fairly bland and I was at a loss to know the reason for the confiscation.

Most of the girls at our school ate dinner there, as it was too far to return home at lunchtime. School meals were rather stodgy with plenty of vegetables such as carrots, parsnips, beans and turnips. I could manage to eat most of these but always had trouble with carrots which I disliked intensely. Leaving food was frowned upon and a Prefect sat at the head of each table to make sure leftovers were kept to a minimum. One day I left my carrots and just as the Prefect gave orders for the table to be cleared for pudding, my Form Mistress came past and saw my plate. I was not allowed sweet until I ate my carrots. Everyone else ate their food and finally the table was dismissed.

I sat totally alone in the dining room with a few carrots on my plate, that I steadfastly refused to eat. Eventually the canteen staff asked permission to wipe the table, so I was told to take my plate down to the cookery room, where I sat for another hour by myself. I decided by now that I had had enough so I scraped the mess on my plate into the rubbish bin. Miss Welch came back and congratulated me on finally eating my carrots but I spoiled it by telling her I had thrown them away. I could not tell a lie even to avoid being punished. I cannot remember my punishment. Strangely enough the most hated meal at school was tapioca, which everyone called frogspawn. I cannot say I enjoyed this sweet but eating it was never a problem.
I had two navy blue tunics, which needed to be dry-cleaned. Quite often one of them would require cleaning before the other one had been returned. This meant I had to wear other clothes for school, which was frowned upon. One memorable day I wore my sister Renee’s maroon tunic, which caused quite a stir at Morning Assembly among a sea of navy blue. I queued up afterwards at the Headmistresses dais to hand her my mother’s letter explaining the valid reason for appearing out of uniform. I could see by her face that I was not too popular but she never said a word.

I was good at gymnastics and could climb ropes easily. I was given a place in the netball team but was a reserve more than a player.

We had now lived in Dagmar Terrace for almost three years.

My father had managed to obtain some light green American cloth from one of my Aunts who was making it up into tablecloths. He used it to re-cover our old brown three-piece suite, as upholstery fabric was unobtainable at that time due to war restrictions. He made a very neat job of it and finished it off round the arms with small chrome tacks. The whole family was delighted with the results.

Our rooms were badly ventilated, there was damp everywhere. Floorboards in the kitchen needed replacing and clothes hung in the wardrobes became mildewy within a few days. Every week when she went to the Housing Department to pay our rent she would complain to a Mr Nowers who allocated vacant flats as they became available. One day she put a pair of mouldy slippers and a Doctors letter on his desk. Another time she withheld the rent money until some repairs had been done. Poor Mr Nowers was a very decent man trying to do a difficult job as fairly as possible. Finally, we were offered another flat. Not just another flat but a brand new one never lived in before. Mum was given the keys and we all went to have a look at it. It was on the fifth floor with three bedrooms, a bathroom and a small balcony leading off the kitchen. There was an overpowering smell of paint from the cream walls. Everyone was delighted and so we moved into 55 Bennett Court.

“CHAPTER FOUR”

55 Bennett Court, Axminster Road. We moved into Bennett Court when I was fourteen years old.

The flats were built in an L shape with six stairways each which went up six floors. There were two flats on each floor and all the stairways had cream tiling for easy maintenance. Our flat was on the fifth floor. A small cupboard door set in the wall next of the front door provided access to our coal cupboard inside, but the coal still had to be carried up five flights of stairs by the poor coalman. Opposite the front door was the bathroom, with a window opening onto the small balcony, which was reached through the kitchen. Next to this was the living room.

Three bedrooms, one of them very small, ran off the other side of the hallway facing the front of the flats. Our kitchen window looked out over a large green lawn and beyond this was a block of maisonettes still under construction. Each maisonette was on two levels so this block only reached four levels when completed and were mainly two bedroom residences.

This was where I eventually lived before I married as my parents swapped their three-bedroom flat for a two-bedroom maisonette. Although a service driveway ran past the flats there were no garages and parking for any length of time was not allowed. I often rode my bike and children of all ages played there. It was there I taught my younger sister Marilyn to ride her first two-wheeler bicycle. Our overhead neighbours had three children. The two girls were named Barbara and Brenda. An odd choice to go with a surname of Bradley. We never had a great deal to do with them as they fell between our age groups.

By now Renee had left school and after a short stint in an office, which she disliked, she decided to train as a pattern cutter in a clothing factory where one of my aunts worked. When she started work I rather lost contact with her except when she brought her boyfriend home on several occasions. I, myself, left school at fifteen years of age. There was nothing to stay for and I was required to contribute some money to the household. I lined up with the other girls who were leaving to say goodbye to the Headmistress. She showed no regret at losing me.

A week later I was at the Labour Exchange with my mother looking for a suitable job. Because I had attended Grammar School I was offered three office jobs. Wages were two pounds ten shillings up to three pounds. I went for an interview at Samuels the Jewellers and was given the job at three pounds a week. I worked six days a week with Thursday afternoon off for early closing day. On Saturdays, we closed at 12 O’clock. I sat on a high stool in a small cashier’s office, where I was solely responsible for entering sales and expenditure in large ledgers. Giving change and balancing the till each evening were part of my jobs.”
Thanks to Peter for posting this great photograph on Old Owenians In Touch on his profile! On request he kindly told us this wonderful story, “Please do include the 1st VIII photograph in the December Newsletter. A remarkable set of circumstances lay behind its appearance: the previous day we had boated from Vesta RC at Putney, as usual, and because our coach was absent that day we went, for the first and only time ever, down river instead of upriver to Hammersmith and Chiswick.

When we were between Chelsea and Vauxhall bridges and with the Battersea Power Station in the background, a Daily Mail photographer saw us and took the picture. The next day (16th February 1951), there was much excitement to see this picture on the front page of the Daily Mail.

It also, to my intense surprise, then developed into the most important day in my whole life, because John Sutton, who stroked the VIII, and I went to the Daily Mail offices and bought lots of copies of the paper.

We came back into the school hall, where preparations for a play rehearsal were going on. A number of girls from DAOS had come across for the rehearsal and John went up to one, gave her a copy of the paper and introduced me.

I took one look at this vision, in her gymslip, with sparkling blue eyes, pointed chin and high cheekbones (being half Bulgarian) and decided instantly that I would marry her.

Since I had never even been out with one of those mysterious things called a girl, this could have led to difficulties, but obviously God was on my side and Brenda and I had fifty-eight years of fulfilling, exciting and adventurous marriage together until she sadly died last year.

So my gratitude to Owen’s knows no bounds!”

We are sad to report the death of Fred Whitham who passed away at the age of 86 on the 24th June this year. His wife told us, “He was at the school from 1964 to 1982, first as head of science then as deputy head, at the time of Gerry Jones’ headship. He was very involved with the transfer of the school from Islington to Potters Bar as senior master/deputy head. He had been suffering from dementia for the last four years, although when he visited the school on the open day 3 years ago he was still aware of all that Owen’s meant to him.”

His funeral was held at West Herts Crematorium, Garston, Watford on Thursday 14th July with a request for donations if desired to the Alzheimer’s Society, c/o Nethercott, Aldenham Road, Radlett, Herts WD7 8AX. An Old Owenian and former student of his, who highlighted his notice in the Daily Telegraph in July told us, “he was a committed and inspirational teacher of biology to many at The Angel. He completed his PhD just after starting at Owens and also acted as Headmaster during the move from Islington to Potters Bar. A wonderful man.”
Many thanks to Les for his valued regular contribution—he says, “When concluding a description of my form masters while at Owens in the 1960s in the last newsletter, I did say that I would elaborate on a love triangle involving one of them that lead to a landmark legal case that brought the Owen’s teacher national publicity.” So here is his elaboration…!

“The Fabulous World that an Owen's teacher shared”

“The News of the World [NoW] had built its reputation on tending to present published stories in as lurid a manner as possible. This was probably satisfactory for lazy Sunday’s when people seemed to enjoy reading such stuff over their breakfast and cursing or enjoying other people’s misfortunes as the mood took them.

For Margaret Gallagher, my form teacher for two years, it probably wasn’t the type of publicity that she craved. But for boys in her class in 1965, it was hard to avoid the article that appeared in the NoW and what follows is taken from the published words in that article attributed to Peter Earle.

Under the heading ‘The Fabulous World of Peter Fuld’ the report, focused on the outcome of a court case surrounding the estate of one, Peter Fuld, a German-Canadian who had been the head of a telecommunications business in Germany and who had died of a brain tumour in the March 1962 leaving some £6m (equating to approximately £100m today). According to the NoW, Fuld left a Will drawn up in 1961 to which he had made four codicils or amendments. It was these changes which caused the trouble leading to fourteen of his relatives and friends disputing the shares they were to receive.

This ‘sad dispute’ as the NoW described it, resulted in it becoming, at 91 days, Britain’s longest and costliest probate case up until that time . It employed 19 barristers (eight of whom were QC’s) at a cost of £20 per minute (more than an estimated £320 at current levels). So unique and expensive was the case that the Judge was insured for £300k (£5m today) in case he died or was otherwise unable to give judgement.

The NoW said that as the court ‘action’ proceeded it ‘revealed a moving story of the love Fuld found in the twilight of his young years’. The article described that Fuld had found happiness in his friendship with Margaret Gallagher whom it described as a ‘charming, intelligent woman of the same age who would have undoubtedly become his wife had he lived’.

It appeared that Miss Gallagher (as we called her while at school) befriended Peter Fuld after meeting him on a visit to London at Christmas 1959 while working in Paris. He had been married but a relationship subsequently ensued. Fuld had an intense love for the arts apparently and in particular painting, sculpture and above all, music. He allegedly sought refuge from his family problems in his ‘haven’ of art treasures in his Regent’s Park home.

When Miss G was living in London they spent their leisure time in each other’s company enjoying their shared love of opera often visiting Covent Garden. After Fuld was divorced, he proposed to Ms Gallagher but ‘any hope of marriage perished when there was a recurrence of a malignant brain tumour which was to kill him’.

The Judge said in his summing up that ‘despite her emotional involvement’ he believed Ms Gallagher to have told the ‘absolute truth’. It appeared that Mr Fuld had been subjected to his ‘jealous and possessive’ mother who had disapproved of Ms Gallagher and had used ‘her powers of persuasion to try to reduce the original provision…made for Margaret in the Will’ estimated by the NoW reporter to be an annual income of £2000 before tax (£33k today).

The Now reported Ms Gallagher as saying that she ‘never wanted any of the fortune’ but was pleased with the outcome as she felt ‘for the sake of his memory … justice has been done’. Poignantly she added ‘it is of no consolation to me to receive benefit from the will of the man who I so dearly wanted to live’.

So now you know….”
And finally...

**400th Anniversary DVD’s**

We still get the occasional request for our recording of the Royal Albert Hall and St Paul’s Cathedral events in 2013—unfortunately we no longer have the DVD’s available. However, you can see snippets of the concert on You Tube on this link—just search for others too! [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwN_YMSogZ4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwN_YMSogZ4)


**Old Owennians Careers Talks Week—Mon-Thurs 6-9th March—our seventh year!**

We’ll be mailing you in January 2017 with details of how you can volunteer for our Old Owennians Careers Week in March! We hold 16 lunchtime talks for students from Years 9-13 (aged from 13 to 18) over the four days as they consider their possible options for GCSE’s, A Levels, University courses and the world of work!

This event is held in conjunction with National Careers Week and our students are always inspired by our alumni sharing their work and life experiences. Pencil the date in your diary now—we are extremely grateful to our alumni who give up their time to visit us and offer afternoon tours of the School for a trip down memory lane for those that can stay!

**Old Owennians London Network Reception at Brewer’s Hall: Monday 8th May!**

Following this successful oversubscribed event in 2015, we’re delighted to be repeating the opportunity for those who work or study in London to attend an evening Network Reception in the City of London. Last year, our alumni enjoyed meeting and learning from each other, finding out what they’re all doing and exchanging business cards as well as sharing memories of school days! We hold a Champagne and Teddy Bear raffle and representatives from our governing body and the Worshipful Company of Brewers are present. Full details will be mailed to our alumni in March.

**Anticipating Christmas!**

Here at school, it’s a lovely time of year—we’ve the usual festive celebrations, including music, drama and sporting performances (Choir, Orchestral and Band Concerts, the Crucible, Let’s Dance), not to mention the Staff Panto and Christmas Lunch for staff and students. This year, our D&T (Design and Technology) Department have provided the decorations for our Foyer Christmas Tree with these neat plastic trees and snowflakes using our laser cutter! Yay modern technology!

**Seasonal Recipe Recommendation!**

Having previously recommended frangipane mince pies at this time of year, your editor just wanted to add a new treat—winter fruit salad—served warm with a dollop of Greek yoghurt it’s a really healthy alternative to the more traditional summer fruit version! Do give it a go! [www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/1056/winter-fruit-salad](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/1056/winter-fruit-salad)

Many thanks to our valued contributors in this edition once again and we look forward to hearing from others (or from the same!) next year—**deadline for articles Monday 12th June 2017** with publication online Wednesday 28th June 2017—simply mail me at englishm@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk. Remember you can contact fellow alumni direct via Old Owennians In Touch using our secure messaging system—have fun reconnecting and do tell us about any reunions!

Join Old Owennians In Touch at: [http://damealiceowens.web-intouch.com/](http://damealiceowens.web-intouch.com/)

See our tweets at (account not needed): [https://twitter.com/DAOSAlumni](https://twitter.com/DAOSAlumni)

Wishing you all a fabulous Christmas break and happy new year celebrations!

Mrs Mandy English, Alumni Relations Manager

P.S. If you know of other state schools who might be interested in finding out how to start an alumni programme, see my course at: [http://www.advancedlearningalliance.co.uk/professional-learning/building-alumni-relations--personal-07-2017](http://www.advancedlearningalliance.co.uk/professional-learning/building-alumni-relations--personal-07-2017)