INTRODUCTION FROM THE HEAD

It has been a real pleasure to have been able to meet with so many more Alumni than before over this last term. I have really enjoyed hearing your fond memories from school (as well as a few less fond memories!) and getting to know some of you a little more.

As you will remember, the fast pace of school life means that a lot happens over a term at Owen’s.

In September, I was given the honour of revealing a commemorative plaque to the family and close friends of Reverend Gareth Randall, a beloved past member of Owen’s teaching staff and Senior Leadership Team who I am sure many of you will remember.

On the sunny afternoon, past pupils and staff gathered on the lawn outside the school’s reception to listen to those who knew him best giving readings and recalling fond memories of Gareth, before the plaque was laid alongside a beautiful pink hydrangea bush, planted in celebration of his life.

The same evening, I attended the launch of ‘Show and Tell’, Owen’s alumnus Rob Biddulph’s latest children’s book (leaving year 1991.)

Rob has done an excellent job in making his illustration of the class teacher resemble another past member of Owen’s staff, who some of you are sure to be able to recall. See pages 6 and 7 to find out who.

During October half-term, I accompanied the Head Boy and Head Girl into central London for the Harold Moore Luncheon, an event organised by alumnus Sandyann Cannon (leaving year 1981.)

The annual luncheon, held at the Royal National Hotel, is a lovely opportunity for our alumni to reunite with fellow past students in a relaxed setting off of the school site, and to listen to guest speakers such as Dr. Adam Harris, consultant physician and gastroenterologist (leaving year 1981,) who spoke at this year’s event about his career and time at Owen’s. See p.9.

CONT’...
Back at the school itself, the new teaching block is now officially ‘open’ and it is fantastic! Thank you to all those who ‘bought a brick’ or sponsored a classroom or equipment. We look forward to welcoming you to the official opening of the block later next year. Even with the groundwork surrounding the block still underway, the school site is looking more impressive than ever, including the FE Cleary Sports Centre, with its newly covered all-weather pitch (see more on p.14)

As always, if you would like to have a guided tour of the school site and view our wonderful facilities up close, please do not hesitate to contact Anna Welsford, our Alumni Relations Manager, who will be pleased to arrange this for you.

We were delighted to celebrate another round of fantastic examination results this year, with 25% of all GCSE grades being awarded at grade 9 and an astonishing 50% awarded at grade 8 or 9 (higher than the old A*). At A level 61% of all grades achieved were A* or A meaning that the vast majority of our students have progressed on to their next stage of education or employment as they had hoped with an astonishing 23 taking up places at Oxbridge. We still have many students who are making an international name for themselves and since I last wrote, Aron Thomas (Year 13) has achieved a silver medal in the International Maths Olympiad. He is now ranked as the 65th mathematician in the world. We also have Oliver Almond in Year 10, who continues to represent Great Britain in Judo, and most recently won 10 of his 13 games in an international competition in the Netherlands before going on to win Bronze in an event in Alhmaar.

Swinging along nicely since its introduction to the school is Golf, and Owen’s has celebrated several notable successes this year, with the most satisfying win being that of the Morkill Cup (established by Tom Morkill, former Chair of Governors) where our team of students, governors and staff (past and present) beat Aldenham 3 - 1 to raise the trophy! With Golf going from strength to strength at the school, I am excited to announce that The Owen’s Alumni Golf Society is also launching in 2020, so if you are keen to hear more, please contact Anna on 01707 643441 Ext: 335, and she will gladly fill you in. The first match (Alumni vs. current students) is scheduled at Old Fold on July 3rd.

Owen’s music remains as strong as ever and we have been treated to a concert a week since the half term break. The department was fortunate enough to have been awarded a grant from the Nicholas Barnes Trust (leaving year 1993) which has allowed them to branch off into Jazz, providing yet another avenue for our musicians to explore. The culmination of this was a fantastic concert at The Bull Theatre recently, which was enjoyed by all.

As term draws to a close once again, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas and prosperous 2020.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the glamourous Alumni Members’ Club launch event, on Saturday 25th April (see p.7 for details.)
Since September I have been super busy making plans for Owen’s Alumni. 2020 will bring with it more opportunities to come together socially and to engage than ever before, so it is set to be a very exciting time.

In the summer, I anticipated that this newsletter would be somewhat lengthier than July’s, and I am pleased to say that it is.

Quite a number of you have been kind enough to provide us with your memories, news and information and, as Hannah has highlighted, we have lots of our own news to share with you too.

Over on p.4 and 5 read all about the re-brand of ‘Old Ow- enians’ and the new ‘Owen’s Alumni Members’ Club’ which is to be launched at the school on Saturday April 25th, with a fabulous evening of dining and dancing (and a few surprises thrown in, of course!)

On p.10 and 11 you will find one of our new regular fea- tures, ‘Spotlight’s on Alumnus...’, which this time around focuses on the work of Producer, John Brant, who I person- ally remember from school. It was so nice to reconnect with a fellow Owenian after twenty-two years, and doing so made me very feel optimistic about the future of Owen’s Alumni as a community.

I always enjoy hearing about Old Owenians’ pathways from school into the workplace, in many a varied field, and I know that our current students are inspired by them too.

This is primarily why we hold Careers Week at the school each year during March, and why we are planning to launch the first ever Owen’s Alumni Podcast soon.

I envisage that ‘Strive with a Will’ (the name of the Pod- cast) will, over time, become a sought after platform for past pupils to speak from, and an ideal way for the school’s current students and their parents, as well as prospective parents and the wider community, to gain a real insight into the many career and life choices available after life at Owen’s, and how the school has supported and developed its students’ interests and strengths over many, many years.

If speaking during the upcoming Careers Week is of interest to you, then you will probably be keen to read more about it over on p.8. And if you like the sound of the podcast, then perhaps you would like to be considered as a guest.

Whatever the case, I am always ready and waiting to hear from you, and in the meantime I hope you all enjoy a wonderful Christmas time.

Roll on 2020!

WE’RE SOCIAL!

@oldowenians @strivewithawill @DAOSAlumni

WE'RE SOCIAL!

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WE'RE SOCIAL!
For the past six years, I have felt myself turn green with envy every time someone in my presence has recalled, with a glint in their eye, the scenes from The Royal Albert Hall in 2013, as 5,000 people belted out “AND STRIVE WITH A WILL OWENIANS!....” And that is because, I wasn’t there. A choice I felt, at one point, I might regret forever.

So, when I was asked to come on board as the school’s new Alumni Relations Manager this summer, I could not wait to cast aside my regret and start to plan an abundance of new opportunities for fellow alumni to reconnect with our beloved school, and to give something back to the place that gave us our wings.

Having always been extremely proud to be an Owenian, one thing I was not sure of, as I started to reminisce in my late twenties about my time at secondary school, was how best to be of use now that I am no longer a student. And I started to think that I probably wasn’t alone.

I began to answer my query by checking the school website, and, finding my way to the alumni page, I signed up to the database and registered my interest in giving a careers talk. In 2014 I gave my talk, on advertising and events, and it was a great feeling, but I still felt the desire for something more social and inclusive.

Whilst I am aware of some alumni who have remained very close to the people they attended Owen’s with, I know that is not the case for everyone. In fact, I myself am now a friend or acquaintance of a good number of ‘Old Owenians’, across several year groups other than my own. I certainly didn’t make the effort to stay firm friends with anyone from school after I left in 1999, in fact I couldn’t wait to get out!!

But now, I feel strangely sad about that fact. There must be something quite wonderful about remaining friends with school mates from your year. The people you once laughed with about teachers’ dress sense and quirks, chewed the fat with (mainly off of those chicken burgers) at break times, or celebrated victories with on and off the sports field.

All that and what else is lost to the people who have not still got a firm group of Owen’s comrades?

And, even for those who have kept a school friendship group together, how many opportunities arise for them to revisit their old school as a group? To belt out the school song accompanied by a big-band after a few drinks together? Or to shake hands after forty years with that awe-inspiring teacher; the one who made us feel like anything was possible?

Cue, my vision for ‘Old Owenians’ 2020 …

Circa 2012, my predecessor, Mandy English, did an excellent job in building up a database of several thousand of us ‘Old Owenians’ (less of the old here though please!) But after the school’s epic 400th anniversary celebrations, opportunities for Owen’s to physically connect with its alumni began to trail off somewhat. In fact, when I came along in June this year we only had careers week and the annual Harold Moore Luncheon on offer. Yet it was plain for all to see, thanks to the whole ‘400th shebang’, that there is clearly demand for more. And we had to do more!

To this end, I have spent countless hours over the last few months, considering what it is Owen’s alumni (young and old) actually wants from the school, and of course, how it can best deliver that. The main theme which has replayed time and time again in my mind is ‘giving and receiving’. Apart from the education and opportunities we as alumni have already received from Owen’s, what else do we want from the school? What is actually going to make us want to give back? Why exactly should we part ways with our precious time or cash, or both? And, in answer to that, I have a plan.

It’s a bold one, and it definitely can’t happen overnight, but here we go…

My first project has been to plan and manage a full rebrand of ‘Old Owenian’s’, by initially renaming ourselves and having artwork for our very own logo commissioned. Accounts on social media platforms (including LinkedIn and Instagram) are now live, and a new, dedicated alumni website is currently under construction, with a monthly blog to follow which will eventually replace the bi-annual newsletter. But, perhaps most excitingly (for me anyway, with my interest in broadcasting and passion for events) is the soon to launch ‘Strive With A Will’ Podcast and the very fabulous ‘Members’ Club, which are both in the pipeline.

What a great day it will be when we can hear from inspirational alumni who are simply too busy or far away to physically get to school for a 30 minute careers talk during that one week each year, or those who simply couldn’t think of anything worse than speaking in front of a class, but who really want to share their experiences with our students.

And what an exciting evening it will be when we launch the ‘Members Club’, and you finally get to hear what’s in store for the alumni who decide to join!
What better way to celebrate the launch of Owen’s new ‘Alumni Members’ Club’ than a glamorous evening of good food, great company and mind-blowing live music?

This unique opportunity to reconnect with your old school, friends and teachers, as well as meeting new contacts, should absolutely NOT BE MISSED!

With ‘boys’ in black tie and ‘girls’ in cocktail/long dress, the evening will commence with a champagne reception at 7:00pm, in a transformed event space in the most memorable part of the school.

Once guests have been entertained by the majestic sound of strings and had the opportunity for ‘official photographs’, we will be seated for an exquisite three course dinner with more entertainment and guest comperes.

For after dinner dancing, not only have we managed to secure the incredible 24 piece ‘Soul Band’ (who many of you will remember sold out London’s Cadogan Hall in 2015), but we have also planned some high-end surprise entertainment, to will be announced closer to the date (or maybe even kept a secret!!)

Since the ‘Early Bird’ guest-list opened in November (publicised only via our new Alumni Instagram feed), we have allocated just under half of the 25 tables available.

Tickets will go on general sale w/c 27th January at the cost of £125 per head, so do look out for the official invitation in your inbox, and on our social media platforms, soon after the Christmas break.*

In the meantime, to make a £25 ‘Early Bird’ saving per head, register before January 24th via DM on Instagram or at:

alumnimembers@daos.uk

Further, if you want to ensure you are seated together with your very favourite alumni, why not get together with your old school friends and allocate a ‘lead’ to make a group booking (full tables of 10 are £1,000.)

There is even the opportunity to gain exposure for your business or personal brand by sponsoring part of the event.

For all group bookings, sponsorship packages and enquiries, please call Anna Welsford on 01707 643441 Ext: 335.

* Individually registered guests & partners will be seated together with other individually registered guests in the closest leaving year group to their own.
AN EVENING WITH ROB BIDDULPH

SCHOOL THEMED LAUNCH OF ‘SHOW AND TELL’ FIT FOR A … HEAD!

On Thursday 5th September, a beautifully warm late summer’s eve, the school’s Head; Hannah Nemko, Governor; Andrew Porter and Alumni Relations Manager; Anna Welsford, took a trip into the city to attend an appropriately school themed event marking the launch of ‘Show and Tell’, Owen’s alumnus; Rob Biddulph’s newest children’s book, published by HarperCollins.

Scattered around the venue were clever little nods to literature, and specifically to Rob’s book, including a ‘pick ‘n’ mix’ sweetie-table, complete with ‘candy chalk’ (remember those little white sticks we used to pretend to smoke with?!?) and tiny edible versions of other items featured throughout the story. There was even chalkboard signage, some potted sunflower brownies and the most incredible looking chocolate cake, complete with hand-painted alien!

The fizz was flowing as Rob gave a passionate speech about how his own time at school, as well as raising children impacted on his choice of career, and it was wonderful to hear how Owen’s had played a significant part in that.

Many of Rob’s old school friends were also in attendance (in fact, Andrew Porter went to both primary and secondary school with Rob) and it was most heart-warming to witness the bond between them all, which some might say can only come from having known people a long time.

Also in the room was one of the school’s very own Artists, Laura Grigson from the Art Department, who was even able to persuade Rob to take some time out of his super busy schedule after Christmas to come and talk to our students about his exciting career and the opportunities available to them in the field.

Rob is also hoping to attend our ‘Members Club’ launch party in April, for which he has donated an amazing auction prize that shall remain a surprise until the night itself.

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Rarely do I come across a children’s book that dazzles and delights, and makes me want to cry at the end (with happiness that is.) I often think “I could do better than that!”, as lots have nice illustrations but are lacking a decent story, or vice versa.

However, fellow Owen’s Alumnus, Rob Biddulph, has changed all that, with his absolutely astounding ability to write and illustrate an inspirational tale.

In his newest book, ‘Show & Tell’, Rob has delivered the perfect package. His ninth (yes, NINTH!) book is full of surprises, yet it is no surprise that he has been asked to illustrate many more, as his drawings are just gorgeous, with their almost luminous quality and cheeky characteristics. They have certainly grabbed my attention, and are even worthy of framing I’d say (in fact, prints of Rob’s work are available to buy on his website at www.robbiddulph.com)

But, as an Old Owenian myself, I was most excited by the fact the class teacher in this book is named after my old Physics teacher, Mr Lumsden, and Rob has drawn him to resemble another past member of Owen’s staff, Mr Espley. Although I am farrrrr too young to be able to recall Mr Espley personally (!!!), I am assured by those who are not, that his character really does come across in Rob’s clever illustrations.

The story itself takes its readers on a hilarious rhyming journey, through Class 2L’s ‘Show and Tell’ day, and as the items on display get larger and larger, and ever more outrageous, nobody knows what on earth (or even in space) might eventually impress Mr Lumsden enough to win ‘1st prize’.

By the last page of the book, which I first read to my eight and two year old in September, having been gifted a copy at the appropriately ‘school themed’ launch party, hosted by HarperCollins Children’s Books, I had a full on lump in my throat and found myself wiping away at least one tear from my eye. It was quite the unexpected, profound ending.

As an adult, I took from this book the moral I believe Rob meant to convey in his tale (hence the tears.) My eight year old daughter, fully aware of the compulsion children have to ‘top’ their peers, found the humour in it, and my two year old son just adored looking at the pictures and shouting out the names of all the objects. I think, ultimately, it was the lightsaber that had us sold!

With an illustration inspired by two Owen’s teachers, this beautifully colourful book is a ‘must have’ for every child’s bookshelf.
Dame Alice Owen’s Careers Week 2020
will run from Monday 2nd – Friday 6th March.
This is a fantastic opportunity to bring careers to
life for our current students.

Each year, we invite past pupils who are flour-
ishing in their chosen careers to come into the
school and give a short talk about their journey
from Dame Alice Owen’s to the present day.

Our pupils love hearing career stories and who
better to tell them than the alumni of their own
school?

We are now registering details of past pupils
who are interested in speaking during our up-
coming careers week, and who can make it
into the school on one of the above dates.

If this applies to you, then please send an email
to Carol Whiter with your name, leaving year
and career information at:
whiterc@damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk

We will also be sending a more formal request
for volunteer speakers out after Christmas, so if
you are unsure whether you can commit at this
stage, then please do look out for that.

Further, if inspiring our current students is some-
thing you would like to do, but you are unable
to attend on the specified dates for Careers
Week, you are not local to the school, or not
keen on public speaking, then worry not.

There will soon be many opportunities for our
alumni to speak about their career pathways,
inspirational life-stories and even promote their
own businesses, when the new ‘Strive With A
Will’ Podcast launches, alongside the exclusive
‘Owen’s Alumni Members’ Club’ next year.

If you are keen to be interviewed for the Owe-
en’s alumni podcast, or if you would like to ad-
vertise a product, service or brand on the plat-
form, then please contact our Alumni Relations
Manager, Anna Welsford on 01707 643441- Ext: 335.

As always, we will be delighted to hear from
you.

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It was a pleasure to welcome Dr Adam Harris (1974-81) to the annual Harold Moore Reunion Luncheon as our speaker. The event was held at the Royal National Hotel, Bloomsbury, on Thursday 31st October, and the 70 plus attendees praised Adam for his entertaining presentation. Here are a few of the comments from the day:-

"It was good to catch up with those Old Ow- enians I knew and the speaker was excellent."

"The Luncheon was a great success."

"Had a great time and met some very interest- ing people. One guy was at school during the war. First time in ages that I felt young! I really enjoyed Adam’s presentation. Fascinating."

"Dr Harris – terrific speaker (with some grue- some slides!!)."

"It is the first time that I have attended the Luncheon and I thoroughly enjoyed the oc- casion. I liked the calligraphically named badges and found the additional annotation, of the duration of attendance at Owen’s, to be particularly helpful. I found myself sitting at the same table as a first-year classmate of mine. I found a new/old friend and we look forward to pursuing the friendship."

"Thank you for today, the organisation was excellent and made the event."

If you would like to be added to the Harold Moore Luncheon database, please submit your details to

sandyannnc@annon.co.uk
SPOTLIGHT’S ON
ALUMNUS:

JOHN BRANT

The producer behind smash-hit musical ‘Come from Away’ is a leading figure in the world of theatre, but what many won’t know is, much of it began at Owen’s.

John Brant talks to Anna Welsford.

Born: Hornsey, 1981


Landmark productions:

Awards:
- Olivier for best new musical, Come from Away (2019)
- Olivier for best new musical, Memphis the Musical (2015)

Earlier this year, my best friend Elle, who was at Owen’s from 1992, mentioned to me that John Brant from her year (who I also recall fondly) had just got married, and that he was now working on some “theatre thing” in the West End called ‘Come From Away’. I’d heard of it, so, interested in finding out more, I Googled John’s name and was quite astounded by what came up.

Several weeks later, on a Friday in November, I managed to track John down and asked whether he would be happy to be interviewed for our ‘Spotlight’s on Alumni’ feature. He thank-fully agreed, and here’s what we got...

AW - So, firstly, of course we’d like to know how you feel Owen’s has played a part in your career success, if at all.

JB -Yes. Owen’s was great at letting you become your own person. The pastoral care was exceptional and I always felt like I was treated and taught as an individual.
It enabled me to trust in my instincts and become my own person, these are things that are vital as an actor and also when you run your own business. Separately I still have a strong friendship group from the school and I think that says a lot. Those guys know me so well, they support me and help me to remain true to myself. Plus, if I need to get a break from theatre and really switch off there’s no one better to do it with than people you have so much history with, it just makes everything so effortless!

AW—And were there any particular teachers that helped or inspired you?

JB - There were great teachers at Owen’s; young and dynamic. It was one of their strong points. I was particularly inspired by Alice Margetts who was my form tutor from year 8 through to when I left. I’ve tried to get in contact with her over the years but to no avail. Also Mr Squires (History) was great, and Mr Brown (English), who sadly passed away. Your dad (Mr Breeze- PE) was great too and I always had a great relationship with him.

AW—What is ‘John Brant’s Best Advice’ for budding performers?

JB - Talent shows have bred a feeling among young performers that those behind the desk are there to ridicule, that they are not your friends. That is not true. Every single person behind a casting desk, every time the door opens, all they are thinking is: ‘I hope this is the one, I hope this is the one.’ It’s really important for performers when starting out or when they’ve had a rough patch to remember that behind the table are a bunch of people who want you to be amazing and are rooting for you. So just go for it, because, frankly, three minutes of a bad audition? You’ll get over it. But it could be a three-minute audition that changes your life.

I remember John being heavily involved in drama at school and a great character to be around. In fact, it is no surprise to me that he has gone on to do great things and is now recognised as a leading figure in the world of theatre.

John has also been kind enough to donate two tickets for the smash-hit Broadway musical ‘Come From Away’ (now showing at The West End’s Phoenix Theatre) for our Alumni Member’s Club Launch Party Auction on 25th April, and yes, I have put the date in his diary!

If you’re doing something creative, musical or generally fabulous with your life and would like to appear in this feature please contact us using the details below.
“We’ve got us a two-turkey project then. The boss and the boys will be delighted. Thank you very much Sir.”

I looked across the meeting table at George’s twinkling grey-diamond eyes and could not help smiling. Even more so as I watched him bring out his legendary pad of yellow sticky post-it notes and write yet another one out to himself. For all his experience with stone and steel as a tunnel construction manager; the information technology train had shot past George’s platform.

He was comfortable doing things the old way, aided only by two sharp pencils and his ubiquitous post-it pad. He was rumoured to have so much pencil sharpenings in his pocket that he was a walking fire hazard. However; tender prices, rates, stage payments, tunnel machine chainage progress through London’s blue clay were different. George kept those numbers firmly locked inside his head. He represented JMS, the civil engineering contractors.

I represented London Electricity, the client. Jointly, our project was to construct a 3m-wide tunnel to carry 132,000V cables from Islington’s City Road basin to just north of Blackfriars Bridge.

I had just given George instructions to alter the tunnel’s route. Now, we were going to drive it under Smithfield Market, and then dive even deeper under Farringdon Road, to make absolutely sure that we did not collapse the Fleet sewer (helpfully prompted by the threat of an injunction if we did not). We knew though, that tunnelling though Clerkenwell’s deep water-laden gravel pockets had a tragic history, involving extensive lives lost during the London Underground’s construction. It was going to require special tunnelling methods involving working in pressurised air. Not helped by the site’s safety officer having already failed the medical.

But this scope change prepared the way to meet a future tunnel that would be driven from the Tate Modern site on the south side of the river Thames. Deep tunnels like these created our ability to supply a very significant amount of London’s financial centre’s critical power demand from supergrid substations in opposite corners of the Capital. Security and resilience were moving up the agenda, even before 9/11. George’s quip was driven by the project’s revised completion date, which we had now pushed back four months, taking it through a second Christmas.

I closed the project management meeting and jotted down some notes whilst the room emptied. Eventually, across a now empty room, I gazed out of a large window up the City Road towards the Angel junction. Then allowed my thoughts to drift back to the time I had first come to this part of London.
Twenty eight years before, I had been accepted into DAOS Islington for its last admission year. Once we finished our GCEs during the scorcher of 1976, we knew that most of us would be starting our sixth form years at the new site in Potters Bar. Dame Alice’s statue had already left the entrance hall of the old school. Now, she gazed over her charges in the main dining hall at the new site. After five fantastic years I believed, with many regrets, that I was done with Islington and Clerkenwell.

However, fate had decided that this part of London was not done with me. On leaving DAOS new site two years later, I was back in Clerkenwell and studying electrical engineering at the City University, on a five year power industry-sponsored degree apprenticeship. Our teaching block and laboratories looked out on Spencer Street. I remembered that street with a smile. It defined the southerly limit of where we used to chase each other to during lunchtimes at the old school. On finally leaving City University after a second five year stretch of pounding Clerkenwell’s streets, I was convinced that the area was finally done with me.

I should have realised that with Clerkenwell being derived originally from ‘Baggins Well’, and in keeping with Gollum’s ‘Precious’ in the Lord of the Rings, Clerkenwell was not quite ready to let me out of its clutches just yet. Now, as a newly qualified power engineer, I was assigned to a recently built operations base in the City Road by Wharf Road. And with it, another five year stretch followed...

But, now it was time to have some proper fun in the area. Licenced to operate the 11,000V network, I could do virtually anything in the name of restoring power. Blowing paving stones up into the air in the name of clearing cable faults became addictive. Nowadays they wear Formula 1 based Nomex 3 flame retardant suits and full face protection. We just covered ourselves with a donkey jacket to avoid molten copper spray. We lived - mostly. Going home in the early hours, reeking of charred cables and mineral oil, after yet another eighteen hour day in the area’s streets went with the territory. One phrase sums up the streets and their inhabitants in those days: ‘cheek by jowl.’ You really did not know who was around the next corner, nor their intentions in the early hours.

Finally, promotion offered me the opportunity to escape the Gollum of Baggins Well and I decamped to London’s West End; to take charge of the network which powered everything from Oxford Street to Her Majesty. But, the Gollum of Baggins Well eventually found me, and lured me back. This time to run the construction programme across London from my former engineering base on the City Road. The last line of ‘Hotel California’ ear-warmed its way into my head as I drove towards my old haunts again.

And that’s where I remained for yes - another five years. Until London’s property market made an offer to buy the site of my engineering base for a figure that my old company just could not refuse. Demolition followed and I finally consigned the Gollum of Baggins Well to walk through the dark corridors of my tunnel, accompanied by nothing other than the low humming of its cables as they powered London’s financial heartland. I was finally free of Clerkenwell.

‘Time is change’, the aphorism says. Dame Alice’s school left the district first. My engineering base has been converted into a high-rise luxury apartment block. My old school of electrical engineering at City University has closed. Its four-story high windowless concrete cuboid, housing the high voltage laboratory where we simulated lightning strikes, has been converted to a conference centre. Maybe I precipitated those outcomes when ‘Candice’, our tunnel boring machine, gently tickled those buildings’ foundations as it passed them under Spencer Street. My association with the Gollum of Baggins Well has finally ended and I have come to realise that I have left behind a part of my soul in (and under) that part of Islington. I felt that it has always been a very fair trade for the experiences, education, opportunities and insights that the area around the original DAOS site has given me.

But my association is ultimately just moments in time compared to a spirit that has existed in the area for over four hundred years. A timeless spirit in the form of our Foundress. Her name has returned to the area with the opening of the Dame Alice Owen public house in St. John Street and very close to Spencer Street.

Some things are timeless…..and precious.
Owenians young and old are among the first to benefit from an infrastructure fund, which will eventually see more than £800,000 pumped into Hertsmere community projects.

On Monday 7th October, councillors, school leaders and sporting youngsters gathered to watch the official unveiling of the newly refurbished Astroturf pitch at the school site in Potters Bar.

The new surface, which was installed over the summer, was part-financed by a £50,000 grant from Hertsmere Borough Council’s Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF), gained via a bid by the school’s Facilities Manager, and previous Director of Sport, Mr Ian Breeze.

As well as our own pupils and staff, Owen’s all-weather pitch is used by local junior football clubs, including Potters Bar United, Crusaders and Town. It also provides Potters Bar Hockey and Cricket Clubs a facility on which to play matches and train. Practice sessions for a local marching band are also held on the Astro’.

The new improved surface will not only help increase participation for current users, but will also enable more activities for older people, such as walking football to be run.

At the unveiling, Councillor Dr Harvey Cohen, Portfolio Holder for Planning, presented a plaque acknowledging that the project was completed in partnership with the council.

Cllr Cohen said: “Schools are at the heart of their community and Dame Alice Owen’s School is a prime example of that. These pitches provide sporting opportunities for a range of groups and clubs, which cater for men and women, young and old, from beginner to higher level.

“The previous surface was in a poor state of repair, and it was vital that they were reconditioned as soon as possible to ensure all the teams and community groups dependent on these facilities could continue to play and practice here.

“I’m delighted that Hertsmere Borough Council through our Infrastructure Fund was able to provide some of the funding needed for this project – and that the refurbishment could be completed in time for this term’s sporting events.”

The CIF is a pool of funding the council has collected from a levy on certain types of new development that can be used for improving local facilities and services.

It was announced at the beginning of the year that Owen’s, along with 15 other organisations, had been successful in their bid for funding.

Mr Ian Breeze, who led the school’s bid said:

“Dame Alice Owen’s School is so grateful to the Hertsmere Community Infrastructure Fund for enabling the completion of this sports project. This grant will enable the school to continue to develop community links through access to our facilities.”

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GIVING THE GIFT OF MUSIC

LILIAN LINDEN (nee Strong) 1957 - 1959

The LILIAN LINDEN Collection of Scottish Music

for piano, accordion or fiddle

I learnt Scottish Country Dancing and also played for dancing classes in Surrey and the south-east of England, as well as playing for the prestigious Summer School of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society at St Andrews’ for eight years until 2008.

While living back in the UK, I formed a Scottish Dance Band (the Invercauld Scottish Dance Band) and played for many dances, weddings and ceilidhs in and around London and the south-east and south-west of England, but also as far away as Belgium, Luxembourg and Norway. I have also enjoyed playing as guest pianist for many other well-known Scottish Dance Bands.

In 2003, I recorded a CD with fiddler Peter Macfarlane of our own compositions.

In 2009, I moved back home to Jersey and worked on a project for many years, culminating in recently publishing a book of my own Scottish music composed over the last thirty years. Details are on my website at www.lilianlinden.com.

I spent three happy years at Dame Alice Owen’s School and always enjoyed the music there. I had played the piano since the age of two, and while at DAOS, was privileged to be taught by the music teacher at the school, Miss B.A. Jones, who was a wonderful teacher and inspiration to me. I often played the hymns for assembly, and also accompanied the School Choir at Visitation.

After our move to Jersey, where I lived and then worked for many years, I had another great teacher, Stanley Sackett, ARAM, FRCO (Chm), ARCM.

Through the Strong family on my father's side, my Scottish ancestors have been traced back to the start of the Farquharson Clan in the 16th century.

The Invercauld Scottish Dance Band continues to play for Scottish functions, and has this year played for two very successful ceilidhs in Jersey. For the last year, I have also played for a gospel choir at St Andrew’s Church in Jersey, which is great fun!

‘The Lilian Linden Collection of Scottish Music’ is available for purchase directly from Lilian’s website and also from Amazon at the following link:

https://amzn.to/37KtrxY
The girls’ school uniform could only be bought at John Lewis on the Holloway Road (now Waitrose), there was a long list and it was very expensive.

**WINTER**
- A square-necked gymslip and a belt with a zip pocket
- 2 square necked blouses that buttoned at the back (the corners always tore)
- Navy blue cardigan
- A navy blue mackintosh, mine was bought for me to grow into but lasted through to age 18!!
- Velour panama shaped hat with a brown and gold band and/or eight-sided beret with a badge that had to be put on one of the peaks so that it stood up and could be seen
- A woollen divided skirt for hockey and netball (so long it nearly touched your knees)
- 2 pairs of navy blue knickers for PE (and I mean knickers, waist to top of legs)
- 2 aertex blouses for PE that your initials (large) had to be embroidered on so no one could borrow it.

**SUMMER**
- 2 navy blue cotton dresses with detachable white collar and cuffs that had to be starched and rubbed on your neck and arms
- Navy blue blazer with badge
- White panama hat with brown and gold band
- Sandals and long white socks

**ERRORS**
- Failure to wear the correct uniform…detention
- Failure to have the correct sports kit…detention
- Skirt too short, (you had to kneel in your uniform so that the skirt touched the floor) …detention
- Eating in your uniform outside school…detention
- Taking off your hat outside school…detention
- Wearing jewellery…detention
- Wearing nail varnish…detention
- Wearing make-up…detention

**CONT’…**
When we went past Holloway prison, Bus Conductors used to announce that it looked like we had arrived home! The female prisoners used to wear navy blue. The uniform was changed when Mrs Kisch became the Head.

She abolished the gymslip, blouse and summer dress. They became a blue check pleated skirt and white blouse and summer dresses in colours, we were asked to choose between pale blue, lilac and green, we all chose the blue so that choice was cancelled and we could choose lilac or green. Typical, asked to choose and then told no choice.

We were allowed to wear tights but you needed to keep your socks available as ladders in tights were not allowed!!

"... tights were easily laddered in those days!!"

I was not a fan of Mrs Kisch who was endlessly unilateral even when she claimed to be asking everybody, reminiscent of that word ‘consultation’ when you consult but fail to listen and do what you wanted to do anyway.

Did I like the uniform?
No, I just suffered it.
I had detentions for eating outside school when my name was called out on the first day of the new term as someone had seen me on the bus home!

I had detentions for nail varnish, not wearing my beret with the badge sticking up and forgetting my sports kit.

Did I like the petty rules?
No, I just tried to keep my head down even though my hair always let me down and tights were easily laddered in those days!!

Detention was writing out both the school songs and even though I wrote them out loads of time I can’t remember any of them. No mention in those days of giving warning of detention, you erred that day you went to detention that day.

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For a number of years now, fellow Old Owenian, Vince Sartori and I arrange to go on occasional days out in addition to other regular meet-ups in the course of a year. For various reasons, including our age induced declining stamina, the day out in effect usually lasts about five or six hours, but we enjoy ourselves.

We use the time to visit places, museums, explore open spaces in and around London and conclude proceedings with eating somewhere (even if we also enjoy a snack or more during our time out on the trail). As things have gone along, it happens that a practice for taking a snap or two while on our days out has progressed to the extent that I usually produce a photo flip book of a light hearted record of our endeavours annually.

So what? I can almost feel the grumbles of readers gathering in vibration. That’s all very nice but why would we be interested in what two sexagenarian Old Boys get up to?

I am moving closer to the purpose of this piece now.

A couple of months ago when we were trying to decide what and where our next experience would be, I suggested that we paid a visit to the Islington Museum. How many knew that it even existed?

Hidden away in a fairly constrained area below the Lending and Local History Library in St. Johns Street, just down from and on the other side of the road from City University.

We strolled down from the Angel tube on a sunny morning to find that the Borough’s Museum was a revelation. Not only did it include a display containing vital information on the origins of the connection of Islington with the famous Arsenal FC and the glory it has brought to the Borough and its residents across more than a century, there was much more. References to famous/notorious residents and visitors like Lenin and Joseph Stalin, for instance, including a bust of Lenin which ended up there it seems as a result of a sort of civic ‘pass the parcel’ due to it being vandalised at various times and places. I presume few really wanted to be seen admiring it after the end of WW2 and the emergence of the ‘cold war’.
Vince looked for and found an information board that was of particular interest to him about the inward migration of Italian families who made their homes in the borough in the Clerkenwell Green area, where his own family business had been established by his great grandfather before the First World War.

At the time of our visit there was also a special exhibition on Music Halls in the Borough and its cast of entertainers which identified much of interest. However, what was notably missing to my mind was any reference of any sort to Dame Alice Owen, the original Alms-houses or even the Schools. I found this incredible in view of what it must have contributed to the community throughout its 350 year presence in the Borough.

I brought this omission to the attention of the Museum staff with great alacrity during our visit and over the course of subsequent weeks I was in communication with the Local History manager.

I thought it might be appropriate to share his comments with Old Owenians as to my mind they were sympathetic to my concerns and clarified matters thus:

‘I completely agree with your comments about the importance of Dame Alice and the school. She still remains a significant historical role model, as does her legacy. While we do address schooling in Islington (Victorian period to Second World War), Dame Alice and her story isn’t featured.

I believe that when my predecessors designed the layout and content of the museum, focus was placed (in certain subjects) on the current school curriculum to allow pupils studying, e.g. the Victorians, to engage with objects and obtain a sense of schooling from the period. The availability of objects also dictated what was covered, and I do appreciate that Dame Alice Owen’s School was, of course, in full operation during this time and beyond.

However, in 2013, the 400th anniversary of founding of the Dame Alice Owen’s School was the subject of a front of house display, which also coincided with the 400th-anniversary of opening of the New River through Islington and Clerkenwell – also a display.’

In further subsequent exchange of emails, I was informed that the Borough Council, hoped:

‘to start the project to ‘revamp’ the museum in Spring 2020. The biggest issue, as always, is funding, so once this and the funding body is identified (and targeted) it will then inform our scheduling. Consultation proper probably won’t begin until Summer 2020 and I’ll be happy to get in touch then with more of a plan’.

So Old Owenians who may visit the Museum or live in Islington please take note and perhaps look out for details of the proposed consultation to encourage the Borough to ensure that Dame Alice and her endowment is properly incorporated into the museum’s information upgrade that presumably will go in tandem with its physical ‘revamp’ mentioned herein.

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It's amazing how the world of assessment has changed for the better these days - less opinion based and more objectivity plus standards stated.

The improvements came to light for me whilst clearing a loft out and coming across a wad of old school reports, I discovered the following gems:

'He appears to have given up',

'He has made some effort: perhaps he could manage a bit more',

'Rather disappointing',

'Quite satisfactory'

and

'Works fairly hard'.

Also, I noted six days late, such was the 73 bus service.

My favourite is;

'As soon as he ceases to regard himself as the class funny man he will do better' (see photo.)

I have never thought of myself as a ‘funny man’, although the grandchildren do laugh at some of the things I do. But - then again - they'd 'laugh to see a pudding roll', as my mum used to say.

No bad feelings towards the teachers involved, it was just how it was done back in the day.

It would be great if fellow Old Owenians were to submit their own assessment gems for publication in the Summer 2020 edition of the newsletter (the guilty could be anonymous if required!)

Regards to all Old Owenians who survived school reports and made decent lives for themselves.

JOHN ROGERS
So who - and you’d have to be of a certain age – can remember Oscar winning film star Jessica Tandy?

Married to film actor Hume Cronyn, she was born in 1909 in Hackney and died in the USA in 1994.

After an 8 year marriage to British TV and film actor Jack Hawkins, she and Cronyn were married for over 50 years until he too died in 1994.

Jessica appeared in over 100 stage productions in the USA and the UK, together with 60 film and TV roles.

In 1990, at the age of 81, she completed her collection of acting awards with the Best Actress Award for ‘Driving Miss Daisy.’ Her driver, when her son tells her she must give up, is played by Morgan Freeman. A close friendship ensues as the film deals with anti-semitism and racial prejudice in the South. Daisy and driver Hoke Colburn find they face similar hatreds.

A letter in our archives from Jessica, sent in 1990 to Jacqueline Gershon and passed on by her to the school, reads:

Dear Mrs. Gershon,

My memories of Dame Alice Owens School and Miss Parker, Miss Young and Miss Wilson are still very fresh in my mind. I was very glad to hear from you and I do hope you will see ‘Driving Miss Daisy’ as it is something I am very proud of.

The phenomenal success of the picture seems to tell us that audiences find a picture with less action and more feeling, satisfactory.

Most sincerely

Jessica Tandy

Photo credit: www.biography.com/actor/jessica-tandy
A chap I meet frequently near where I live in Woodford Green, Essex, has a strong connection with Scotland, which he visits frequently. This elderly gent is over 80 and is a former pupil of Highgate School (Old Cholmeleian).

I happened to mention to him that my elder granddaughter Isabella, along with my daughter Nerys, recently visited Edinburgh and St Andrews universities, one of which Isabella is hoping will accept her next year as a Philosophy student.

My chum knows I am an Old Owenian (1954/60) and, during our conversation, happened to mention that EH Burrough, Headmaster at Owen’s Boys School from 1955/62 and then Head of Bablake School, Coventry, lived in St Andrews in a cottage with his wife in his later years.

I always wondered what happened to EHB in his dotage; now I know!

Mervin Gilbert

The winning students’ designs on Owen’s Christmas cards

2019 STUDENT CHRISTMAS CARD DESIGN COMP’

This year there were lots of fantastic entries into the school’s House Christmas Card competition, and the Art Department thoroughly enjoyed looking through them all before judging the winning entry.

Eventually, it was decided that the artwork of two students, Edie Bower and Max Bhowmik both in Year 9, deserved to win, and both of their fabulous designs have now been printed onto cards which are being sold in school for Charity.

The proceeds will be going to The Rainforest Trust, a charitable organisation which does wonderful work in attempting to conserve the lungs of our planet.

Hannah Wakley

Artwork by Owen’s students (for illustrative purposes only.)
Malcolm Slaughter
Remembered (Leaving year 1959)

Malcolm Slaughter, 78, of Welwyn, Hertfordshire passed away after a sudden illness on Friday 29th March 2019 surrounded by his wife, children and close family.

He was born on 4th November 1940 and lived with his parents and two sisters in Enfield. He attended Dame Alice Owen’s in Islington where he developed a love of sport.

Malcom represented the school in the cricket, cross country and football teams and continued to be a part of local cricket and football teams all through his adult life. He was a keen golfer and played regularly with a group of like-minded friends. He also took up skiing in his 40s and would head off with the family for an annual trip to the ski slopes.

After leaving school, Malcom went to work in the Stock Exchange as a Blue Button before joining CD Pinchin (latterly known as Pinchin Denny & Co). He became a partner of the firm before its takeover by Morgan Grenfell.

Through his work, Malcolm became acquainted with the Stock Exchange Athletics Club where he became the first man to complete the London to Brighton walk with his father, in 1964, and his son, in 1991, in the same race. It is believed he is the only man to have achieved this feat.

Malcom played an active part of the local community and church, becoming a Scout Leader when his son’s troop were in danger of folding, and taking on various roles within the church.

He was always ready to help those less fortunate than himself, either by driving a van full of clothes, blankets and toys to a Romanian orphanage, or by visiting lonely and unwell friends.

He was also a proud member of the Worshipful Company of Turners and St Catherine’s Lodge, The Verity Lodge and Prince of Wales No. 4 Lodge. He devoted a lot of time to the charitable and mindful work of these lodges and travelled the country guiding other lodges on their endeavours as a Senior Visiting Officer of the Grand Metropolitan Lodge.

He was married for 55 years and is survived by his wife, June, his daughter, Alison, and his sons, Andrew and Jonathan, and five grandchildren.

They all feel great sadness at the huge gap in their lives that his passing has brought about.
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 (pictured right) in honour of the old Owen’s Girls’ School’s birthday on 29th September this year. The flowers are always a lovely reminder of the day for our current students and we are always proud to display them in our main Reception area for all to see. The Owen’s Girls School originated in Islington in 1886, and remained there until it merged with Islington’s Owen’s Boys’ School (founded in 1613) by relocating to our current school site in Potters Bar between 1973 and ’76.

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.”

**PRIZE DONATIONS**

Do you work somewhere fabulous, for a recognisable brand or high-end business, like The Ritz, White Company or Moet? Do you have something ‘celeb’ laying around, that you know others would LOVE to get their hands on but you’re no longer finding a home for, like gloves signed by Seaman?

Do you do something wonderfully exciting, like personally fitness train the stars, or produce a sought after show?

If so, are you able to make a prize donation to help us raise money for the ‘Owen’s Alumni Fund’?

With this fund, we ‘Old Owenians’ can make a real difference to current and future Owen’s pupils, by providing new state of the art equipment and facilities, and expanding the learning opportunities the school has to offer.

Those who donate prizes for any alumni event will have the opportunity to vote on how the money from the fund is allocated, and their names / company details will be clearly publicised at the ‘Members’ Club’ launch event in April by way of recognition. **PLEASE EMAIL OR CALL ANNA WELSFORD TO OFFER YOUR DONATIONS. THANK YOU!**
Nari Blair-Mangat

has appeared on stage at London’s Royal National Theatre, The Old Vic Theatre, The Vaudeville Theatre, Wyndhams Theatre, Leicester Square Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith, Chickenshed Theatre and The King’s Head Theatre.

Nari was the recipient of an Ian Charleson Award commendation for his performance in Macbeth directed by Sir Kenneth Branagh and Rob Ashford for the Manchester International Festival. The production transferred to New York’s Park Avenue Armory to critical acclaim.

Nari played the role of Othello during his training at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in 2010 and also in the heart of London’s West End in 2014. He is thrilled to be making his Czech stage debut with the Prague Shakespeare Company.

Nari has dedicated this performance to;
The mercurial voice teacher Claudette Williams and his passionate teachers Janine Barlow and the late Mr Greg Brown (Dame Alice Owen’s school) who encouraged him to pursue a career in acting.

SCREEN CREDITS:

• JAMES BOND - SPECTRE (2015)
• DISNEY’S LIVE-ACTION CINDERELLA (2015)
• MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS (2017)
• SKY ONE’S TEMPLE (current)
RESERVE YOUR PLACE NOW!

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THE LAUNCH PARTY

SATURDAY
25TH
APRIL

CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION ★ 3 COURSE DINNER ★ TRANSFORMED EVENT SPACE

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*‘EARLY BIRD RATE’ FOR GUESTS REGISTERED BEFORE FRIDAY 24th JAN (COST THEREAFTER: £125 P/H)
{REGISTERED ‘EARLY BIRDS’ & ‘LEAD TABLE BOOKERS’ WILL BE CONTACTED FOR PAYMENT W/C 27th}