



End of Term Letter

Headmaster

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of Wallington County Grammar School,

Last week I, along with Mr Collins and Mr Robertson judged the *Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge*. Twenty or so Year 10 students had to speak for three minutes on a subject that was important to them, without notes, for a chance to enter the 2019 regional competition. They were sensational. Some spoke with a maturity and eloquence far beyond their years and addressed hugely significant issues such as domestic abuse, immigration and the importance of family. Others found it incredibly difficult, losing their way, feeling short of breath, hearts racing and feeling terrified. It was the latter that made me most proud. They refused to give up and showed such bravery that, when they at last delivered their final lines, the crowd erupted into rapturous applause. It was a microcosm of the values that are being so warmly embraced across the school community this term. The courage and commitment these students showed in speaking so openly to their peers and teachers about deeply emotional issues was staggering. The creativity that went into structuring such inspiring oratory was humbling as of course was the compassion that they showed in willing each other on to success. It was a wonderful experience for all involved and demonstrated perfectly what it is to be a Wallington student in 2018.

In other news building work on the DT and Music Block is now moving forward at pace following delays caused by the discovery of a number of unmarked gas pipes. The steels are being lifted in as I write this letter and the current estimate is that students will be able to access the new state of the art facilities in March. The PTFA have also agreed to look into funding an extension to the WCCGS Café in another act of great generosity. This will provide much needed space for students to eat and socialise during break and lunchtimes. This goes hand in hand with other developments in the café including making huge progress in cutting the amount of single use plastics being used and introducing far healthier food options to sustain students in both their hard work and exercise. In lessons, our new set of Chrome Books are in use at all available opportunities and teachers continue to work to provide Deep Thinking Challenges that are rigorous, targeted and prepare students for success in their examinations as well university entrance tests and interviews. Our co-curriculum is also being lifted to new heights with a reinvigorated Hutchins Society playing host to lectures and papers on a huge range of academic subjects, new links being forged with the London Cancer Hub, the Extended Project Qualification now being set up and a WCCGS Scout Troop being explored.

I would like to personally thank staff who have stepped up to support students during Mrs Owen's maternity leave and Miss Farlow's absence due to ill health including Dr Meek as acting Assistant Head Teacher, Mr Davies who is looking after the History Department, Miss Khan who is leading Biology, Mrs Farshori who is overseeing our Special Educational Needs provision and Mr Scola, an Old Boy, who is doing a wonderful job teaching history and geography lessons. We will be sorry to say goodbye to three members of staff this Christmas who are as follows:-

Mrs Browning who is in her third year at the school as a Teacher of Economics and Business Studies who is leaving to spend more time with her children.

Mrs Ibbotson who is in her fourth year at the school as a Teacher of Chemistry and is taking up a position as Teacher of Chemistry at Dulwich College.

Miss Gallagher who is Subject Leader of Chemistry and is in her sixth year at WCCGS. Miss Gallagher has previously supported students and staff as acting Director of Science and has fulfilled development roles in student performance data and on secondment to the Senior Leadership Team. She will be going on to Woldingham School as Subject Leader of Chemistry.

We have also said farewell to Mr Etherington this term who has supported the school as our caretaker for 18 years. He has now retired from work but has already been seen acting as an invigilator for the Year 11 mock exams, so it doesn't seem that we have lost him just yet! He, and all staff leaving, will be sorely missed and we wish them well for the future.

We also wish a very warm welcome to the following staff starting in January:-

Mr Avis will be starting his teaching career at Wallington in the Science Department having been a Curriculum Support Officer at Greenshaw High School. He is a graduate of the University of Leicester and an Old Boy of the school being of Woodcote House.

Mr Garrod will be joining us in the Economics, Business Studies, Government and Politics Department. He has been working as Head of the Economics and Politics Department at St Philomena's as well as being their Duke of Edinburgh coordinator. He is a keen runner and has competed to a national standard in Ultimate Frisbee.



Miss Morely will also be embarking on her teaching career in the Science Department having worked as a Faculty Support Assistant and Teacher of Science in St Gabriel's College Camberwell. She has also been an Assistant Manager in Lloyds Banking Group. She is a graduate of University College London having read Biological Sciences.

Mrs Rhodes will be joining us as a Teacher of Chemistry having previously worked in Nonsuch High School for Girls, Sutton Grammar School and Graveney School in Tooting. She is a highly experienced teacher and enjoys travel, learning other languages and studying theology.

Thank you to Mr Croft who will be acting up as Director of Science until the summer when Mr Cole will join us as Subject Leader of Chemistry. Thank you also to Mr Quaintrell who will be supporting him as acting Assistant Subject Leader of

Breaking news, I am delighted to announce that Wallington County Grammar School has been chosen as this year's winner of the Outstanding Academic Achievement award in the 2018 Evening Standard School Awards. The Award will be presented by the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Damian Hinds, on Thursday 24th January. Congratulations to everyone who worked so hard with last year's Y11 and U6th during their time in the school. It is the combined efforts of all staff, both teaching and support, over many years that creates such success and it is lovely to be recognised in such a way. Miss Ball and I will very much look forward to representing each and every student at the ceremony.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year, I look forward to a Spring Term full of the usual house events, fund raising activities, fantastic school trips, final exam preparations and engaging, innovative lessons.

Yours faithfully,

Jamie Bean

Headmaster

PTFA Update by Katherine Herrick,

Chair WCCGS PTFA

As always, the first term of the school year has been a busy one for the PTFA. The year 7 and 8 disco was a big success, with our boys being joined by girls invited from a number of local schools. Everyone, students and helpers alike, seemed to have a great time and particular thanks are due to our sixth formers who gave up their time to help make this event so much fun.

We also held our ever popular Murder Mystery event. This year the teachers staged 'Who Killed the Mad Scientist' which boasted not one, but two murders. A huge thank you goes to the fabulous cast of WCCGS staff for a tremendous and very funny performance as well as to everyone who came along and helped make it such a lovely evening.

As well as our social events and providing refreshments at School events such as the House drama and the carol concert our second hand uniform sales at parents evenings have been very popular. Please, if you have any uniform or sports kit in good condition that your son has grown out of, we would be very grateful if you could donate it by handing it into the School Office in a bag clearly labelled 'PTFA Uniform.'

We will once again be holding familiarisation tests in the new year. Test places will go on sale on our webpages on 1st January and in the spring we will start looking for volunteers to help out on test days. If you think you would like to volunteer to help please look out for more information coming soon or email, helpers@wccgsptfa.org

PTFA Annual General Meeting

We held our annual general meeting at the beginning of November where Mel Symes-Brown stood down as Vice-Chair, and Olga Koto was elected in her place. Enormous thanks go to Mel for all she has done for the charity over the years and also for her decision to remain as a trustee. The rest of the Committee was re-elected in post. We would also like to thank Lynne Francis who has stepped down as a trustee for her invaluable contribution to the PTFA over the years.

The Headmaster, Mr Bean, gave an update on the new DT and Music building project to which the PTFA is donating £150,000. Mr Bean also ran through some possible next projects that PTFA members and trustees will consider in the new year when we have more details.

Coming events

Our next PTFA meeting will be at held 7.30pm on 8th January at the School and we would love to see you and hear your views. If you can't make it to meetings (and not all of us can) but would still like to contribute to our activities in some capacity please just drop us a line at info@wccgsptfa.org

If you would like more details about the PTFA or to find dates for our uniform sales you can visit us online at,

<http://www.wccgs-sutton.co.uk/PTFA1>

The PTFA would like to wish everyone a happy festive season and New Year.



Big Red Box by Mrs Weddell

This term the Christian Society and friends have arranged to support the 'Big Red Box' charity once again in collecting food for the neediest families in South London. Their mission is to support those in the local community who might otherwise go without during the festive period. Over the past seven years they have distributed over 7000 food boxes to those struggling during the Christmas period.



Thanks to your amazing generosity, we have sent out at least 20 food hampers from students across the school. These donations will make a huge difference to those who are struggling to make ends meet and we are so grateful for every donation, big or small, that is offered. What a fantastic reminder of how we can share love and hope during this special time of year!

Year 7 Play in a Day, Thursday 22nd November

For two weeks, each year seven form had been set the challenge of reading a section of a script, designating roles, and organising props, costumes and publicity. Then the day came for the last rehearsals, the creating of the scenery and the final performances. It was a day of intense teamwork, organisational challenges, and it required every Year 7 to 'play their part.' They were also given the extra challenge of including a dance and trick to make it extra entertaining. Overall, a huge task lay ahead of them.



However, they rose to the challenge and they did not disappoint. The performances were exceptional. So much effort was put into costumes, scenery and choreographed dances (we even had some breakdancing, flips and even an incredible dancing alien). Each group performed and received a rapturous applause from their thoroughly engaged audience of Year 8s and Sixth form.



It was incredibly hard to choose a winning form, as there were so many highlights: Carew's dancing was incredible, Radcliffe's costumes and characters were brilliantly portrayed, and Woodcote's energy on stage was electric. However, Bridges were the house that reigned victorious and they should be incredibly proud of their excellent determination, drive and hard work.

However, a mention has to go to the outstanding Sixth Form that helped with the day. It was so heart-warming, encouraging and made us all so proud to see the older years nurturing the younger years with such patience, camaraderie and compassion. They were incredible!

Thank you to the Art Department who gave up space, time and resources, and The Drama Department for the same. Days like this really demonstrate the Wallington Community Spirit at its best and it really was an amazing day that will be remembered by the Year 7s always.

Miss Ball.

Head of Year 7





Year 10 students participating in the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge



Visit to the Institute of Cancer Research by Riyaad Ali

This term a group of students in Year 12 had the opportunity to visit and take part in activities at the Institute of Cancer Research in Sutton. We were able to look around labs where scientists are at the forefront of scientific discovery and breakthrough concerning the treatment and curing of cancer. We had the chance to examine equipment which we were unfamiliar with from our studies in the classroom but now have knowledge about which will help us when at University where it is likely we will be using these instruments.

Throughout the day we took part in activities such as extracting DNA from strawberries and learning about careers in Biochemistry and Genetics. We were fortunate enough to speak with professionals from different scientific fields, gaining valuable insight which can help us make more informed educational choices in the future. One of the most interesting parts of the day was when we were able to use virtual reality to map the structure of an enzyme that is heavily associated with cancer. We were able to control the viewer and move through the molecule helping us find and recognise different chemical groups throughout the molecule.

House Drama by Mrs Weddell

Each year we pick a different theme for House Drama - we've had 'Most Googled words', 'Opening Lines', lines from Shakespeare and this year we used the stimulus 'Planet Earth'. The judges were keen to see what outer-space adventures and eco-ambassador initiatives our students would dream up, and it was indeed an eclectic mixture of farcical adventure, journeys across the globe, and good versus evil.

In third place, Ruskin impressed us with a story about a group of school children who were facing the end of the world. Gene Fox-Harris played a nervous teacher who became the world's saviour and went on to win the Best Actor prize for his performance! In second, Mandeville impressed with an all-singing, all-dancing piece called 'Last Day on Earth' which also followed a team facing the end of the world.

But in first position, the worthy winners were Woodcote! Henry Silverstein's careful research and witty writing brought us a space adventure complete with extra-terrestrials and robots. It was a hugely collaborative piece with some golden moments of comedy. Well done Woodcote, but indeed to all of the Houses for creating a magical night of showmanship and imagination.





Year 13 Biology Field Trip by Mrs Burgess

In September our year 13 Biology students travelled to the Severn Sisters to work with staff from the Sussex Wildlife Trust on sampling methods. Students were split into three groups and each studied mark-release-recapture of snails in the pond in order to calculate the Lincoln Index and estimate the population size, a belt transect on the beach to establish the numbers of sea cabbages growing there and finally random sampling on a large section of grass to identify the plants and establish if grazing of sheep would have an affect on the type and number of plants.



This is an important skill for our biologists to understand and the trip highlights key techniques that they need to know for their course but are not always available to practice in school.

The Wildlife Trust commented on the enthusiasm and politeness of the students and would like us to return in the summer term with the current year 12 Biologists.





Wallington County Grammar School – The First Fifty Years

Brian Nicholls reports that sales of his book, which was published in April, have gone well. Nearly 150 copies have been sold to Old Boys to date. For those who are not aware the book is hard bound, has an attractive dust jacket and contains 540 pages. It charts the growth of the school from its beginning in Queen's Road in 1927 under the inspired leadership of Mr Hutchins, who from early days set the structure and standards, then oversaw the development of the new school and its grounds in Croydon Road and, by the time he retired as headmaster 32 years later, had established most of what has become tradition at Wallington. Mr Hitchen succeeded Mr Hutchins and remained as headmaster for 16 years.

With the exception of a single report on the very interesting and challenging time during the war years and the period shortly after, it proceeds on the basis of academic years. Within each year are recorded key events in the life of the school and its activities across the range of sports contested at school and house level, of clubs and societies (including the scout troop), and of school productions and excursions. Significant anniversaries and retirements are also covered. Items and issues spanning more than a single year appear as annexes. These include the articles on the eminent Old Boys as well as items on the origin of the school badge and the names of its houses; the names of school captains, house captains and long serving members of staff; details of the school's trophies; its buildings and the War Memorial.

Copies are still available and any Old Boy interested in acquiring a copy at £20, if collected, or £25, to cover postage and packing, is invited to contact Brian via email at bnicholls74@hotmail.co.uk

Additions to the list of eminent Old Boys

In addition to the twenty six articles on eminent Old Boys which were previously published in this newsletter and are now included as an annex to the book, two new candidates, John Perry and John Randall, are featured in this edition.

JOHN PERRY was a prefect and played for the 1st XV and 1st XI. He left the School in 1957 to read history at Brasenose College, Oxford. He then spent 44 years in the computer and systems industry.

He joined Burroughs in 1960 and, following several sales and marketing management positions in the UK, he transferred to Burroughs World Headquarters in Detroit to take up a marketing position in the Europe-Africa Division of the company. In 1978 he was appointed Group Director of Marketing and three years later he became Vice President of Strategic Planning for the Corporation. In 1983 he was appointed Vice President Programme Management for the Financial Systems Group with worldwide responsibility. Prior to his return to the UK he was Vice President and General Manager of the US Central Region.

He took up his appointment as Chairman and Managing Director of Unisys Limited in the UK and Ireland when Unisys was formed by the merger of Burroughs and Sperry in 1986. He was elected Corporate Officer in July 1990. Under his chairmanship, Unisys greatly expanded its sponsorship of the arts and sport as well as supporting local business creation ventures and educational and training projects. Prior to his retirement from Unisys in 1994, he was President Financial Systems Group reporting to the Chairman and CEO of Unisys Corporation. At the same time he was Chairman and Managing Director of Unisys Limited in the UK.

He was appointed a non-executive director of Trace Computers plc in October 1994 and became executive chairman in 1996. Having steered the group through a succession of improving and record results, he decided to stand down as chairman in 2001 but remained as a non-executive director until the end of 2004.

He was a member of the Institute of Directors, a member of the Board of Governors of the Polytechnic of East London and trustee of the Information Age Project. He was also a member of the Business in the Community's National Task Force.

He now divides his time between his homes in Bledlow, Buckinghamshire, and Chicago, USA.



JOHN RANDALL won his school colours for athletics and cross country before leaving in 1967. He went to York University and was tutored there by the Head of the Department of Education, Professor Ian Lister, who was also an Old Boy of the school.

Whilst at York he became President of the Student's Union and after graduating was elected President of the National Union of Students from 1973 - 75 (following in the footsteps of Jack Straw and preceding Charles Clarke). This led to a post as a trade union official with the Civil Service Union. He rose to the position of Deputy General Secretary of the Union, which he held from 1981 – 87, and then moved to the Law Society as Director of Professional Standards and Development. He was selected for the position as the Society wished to appoint a non-solicitor to bring a consumer perspective to that aspect of their work. In 1997 he was appointed as the founding Chief Executive of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Thus he effectively became the Chief Inspector of universities alongside Chris Woodhead, who was the Chief Inspector of schools. At that stage Wallington CGS alumni had regulatory oversight of a very substantial area of the UK's educational system.

Thereafter, and in his mid-fifties, he set about establishing a portfolio of consultancy and public appointments. The consultancy covered higher education quality assurance and accreditation and involved work in some 20 countries around the world, with major

assignments in Hong Kong, the Philippines and the Caribbean. His expertise remains in demand, with current and future commitments in Ireland and Barbados. He served for ten years as a trustee of the City & Guilds of London Institute, the country's major awarding body for vocational qualifications.

Public appointments included lay membership of the First Tier Tribunal, where he still sits in the information rights jurisdiction. He was one of the first lay members to be appointed following the passage of the Freedom of Information Act, and he sat on a number of the precedent-setting cases in the early days of the Act, as its scope was tested. He chaired the Sector Skills Council, Skills for Justice, which covered the police, prisons and probation services amongst others.

His main appointment, which was made by the Prime Minister, was to be Independent Chair of the Police Negotiating Board for the UK and as Independent Chair of the associated Police Advisory Boards for England and Wales, for Scotland and for Northern Ireland. These Boards dealt with pay and conditions of service for police throughout the UK. He held these positions for 11 years and was awarded the CBE on his retirement from them in 2015.

The Handmaid's Tale and Frankenstein Lectures Trip by Riyaad Ali, Year 12

Over two weeks, A Level English students attended a variety of lectures concerning their novels of study: *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Frankenstein*. The lectures were given by subject specialists who helped us understand the novels in a more contextualised manner, citing the social and political ambience that led to the conception of the core ideas of both novels.

The lectures covered a great variety of topics, from the impact of 'Second Wave Feminism' in *The Handmaid's Tale* to the use of 'Revolution' in *Frankenstein*. These helped us to gain knowledge of these novels that we may not be able to fully comprehend within a classroom and gave us an insight into what a University lecture may be like.

As A Level students we were very thankful for the opportunity to extend our studies outside of the classroom as it helped to widen our thinking about the novels we are studying.





Clubs and Societies

It has been a brilliant and revitalizing first term for clubs and societies at WCGS under the leadership of Mr. Barwick. The school year started with the clubs and societies fair and to say it was a success would be an understatement. This annual event is an established part of the WCGS calendar, where we open up the main hall to presidents to set up stalls and advertise their clubs and societies with in the school community. To the credit of our students, we had record number of 31 clubs and societies set up this year, covering every discipline from Engineering to Photography, providing our students with the opportunity to explore their interests in various different fields.

Now the first term has come to an end, I can truly say we are off to an incredibly strong start. There have been many great highlights, but one central to the school has been the re-establishment of the flagship Hutchins Society under a brand new leadership team. Every week, we aim for a different member of the student or staff body to present at the society, giving talks and presentations on academic topics of their interest. One to remember was the well-anticipated Brexit debate, where Mr. Jones battled it out with Mr. Flook as they talked about Britain's political situation. Hutchins Society eagerly waits for the New Year, where the first talk will be by Tom Brake, MP for Carshalton and Wallington.

To sum up this term, we have had great success stories from all our clubs and societies, and I have been so pleased with the level of consistent effort and pride with which our students have led their co-curricular endeavors. I look forward to the New Year and greatly encourage everyone to continue taking part and make full use of the rich variety of clubs and societies at school.

Niket Rajeevan

Vice Captain of School (Clubs & Societies)

Autumn Showcase by Mrs Weddell

On November 13th, students from across the Arts subjects collaborated to present our Autumn Showcase. With wine and nibbles provided by our Food Technology students, menus from the Art department, and an array of performances from both Music and Drama, the evening was a great success. We were particularly impressed by the Y7 choir's Pop medley, our budding stand-up comedians in Y8, and some very confident instrumental solos from students across all year groups. The event sold out, but we have plenty of wine left over for the next one!



School Trip to see 'ear for eye' by Oscar Sims, Year 9 Drama

We went to see "ear for an eye" (no capitals intended) at the Royal Court Theatre on 22 November 2018. The play was about the shocking injustice of racial discrimination and the never-ending treadmill of inequality.

At the beginning of the play a large box was placed on the stage centre. It had thick white mist within it and actors moved slowly from wall to wall so all we could see was moving shadows. It eventually lifted and revealed a still image of the characters in different positions. This was almost a physical metaphor, as it suggested how the coming story was one that is often hidden and not heard. The whole effect of this on the audience was one of palpable curiosity, and a desire to know more about the story in front of us.

Throughout the play, a key theme was the anger portrayed by the characters. In transitions, the actors would seize the chairs that stood scattered around the stage, and move them somewhere new, slamming them down in unison. This made it clear to the audience that although their stories are different, their emotions are the same, and allowed us to see their anger as a physical force.

Overall, the students were thoroughly challenged by this play, and are looking forward to their next live theatre performance!





Peers in Schools Programme: Lord Haskel visit,
Friday 2nd November

by Caitlin Rajan

Lord Haskel came into school to talk to Year 10 students about his role as a Lord and to explain how the House of Lords works. Lord Haskel has been a peer of the Lords since 1993 and represents the Labour Party in the House of Lords, he sits on many committees about trade and regulation alongside being a whip for the Lords during the first year of the 1997 New Labour government. During his peerage Lord Haskel has been on many select committees such as science and technology, the digital skills committee and subcommittees inside the EU committee with a focus on the internal market of the EU.

Lord Haskel spoke to students about the inner workings of the House of Lords discussing its composition of members from the parties that sit in the House, as well as the importance of the role of Lords and how it shapes the UK law making process. He explained how they hold the government to account on their bills, going into more scrutiny than the House of Commons does and ensuring that every element of a government's bill is put up to scrutiny before the bill is given royal assent. Dr Meek brought up the issue of royal assent and asked Lord Haskel about what would occur if the Queen did not give royal assent to a bill. Lord Haskel explained how this would lead to a constitutional crisis as the Queen could wish to say no to a bill though it would be likely that it would be the Queen that would back down if this situation were to occur, not the government.

The make up of the House of Lords was also brought into question, with Lord Haskel addressing how it has become more diverse as time has gone on, particularly due to the expulsion of many hereditary peers, as well as more women being appointed to the chamber; 25% of the House is now female. Additionally, Lord Haskel mentioned about how those from minority backgrounds and those with disabilities are considered and appointed as peers, allowing for representation of their issues inside the House of Lords.

As well as the racial and gender make up, the politics of the Lords was addressed with Lord Haskel explaining how Lords did not have to be affiliated with a party. Many appointed are independent Lords, with many of these coming from the Lords Spiritual; Lords who have been appointed as they are Anglican Bishops or Archbishops. The three main parties in the House of Lords, Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats, were also addressed with their current positions as members of the government and opposition party being covered. Lord Haskel emphasised, since it is difficult for a Lord to be deposed from their position, they do not need to follow party line, allowing for further scrutiny based on principles to come about in the Lords, unlike the House of Commons.



As well as this, the nature of the House of Lords as an unelected body was addressed and questioned. Lord Haskel explained that the fact the Lords are unelected allows for them to appoint specialists into the House for certain committees, such as the European Union committee or the Science and Technology committee. This led to Mr Jones asking Lord Haskel about the place of an unelected body in the modern British political system, with Haskel commenting that whilst the reforms of the New Labour government from 1997 to 2010 were effective at bringing the House of Lords into the modern era, further democratisation would be welcomed.

The significance of committees was brought up and like committees in the House of Commons, Lords committees are used to make sure that different branches of the government and specific ministries are held to account in the House of Lords. Moreover, committees can help with shaping the agenda of the Lords, with many of them helping with recent changes that were brought up in the House of Lords, making sure all areas of government are held to account.

Recent changes made by the House of Lords was also brought up, including that of stem cell research, ensuring that the UK has some of the best stem cell research facilities in the World. This allows for a greater advancement into the field that is beneficial to us all whilst also being ethical. The needs of special education children were also discussed with their legal protection being insured and guaranteed as well as that they are cared for effectively. The House of Lords banned smoking in cars whilst children are present ensuring that children do not have to deal with the consequences of an action they are not responsible for.

Many Year 10 students seized the opportunity to ask questions to Lord Haskel about being a Lord and around issues which concern them. One student asked what it takes to become a Lord, Lord Haskel commented that anyone can become a Lord and that all it takes is for you to be appointed by a specific party, or to be successful in an application as a cross bencher, though to do so would require you to have relevant skills or become an Anglican Bishop.



Naturally, the question of pay was raised and Lord Haskel responded that Lords are paid a daily allowance for every day they attend. However, many Lords take this position on a part-time basis alongside another job role meaning that many Lords are wealthy due to the well-paid Lord's salary and the other job which they hold.

Unsurprisingly, questions were asked on the matter of Brexit, with some of these being around the economy after Brexit. Lord Haskel admitted uncertainty on the matter yet he believes that there will probably be an improvement after the uncertainty dies down. A question about EU law was posed regarding copyright directive of Article 13, a law which heavily increases copyright law. Lord Haskel informed students that the government would be implementing all EU laws into British laws although it would be possible to remove certain laws if there was enough of a request to do so. Therefore, one could write to the government on any laws you disagree with, which would get raised to the European Union committee and debated upon.

As a member of the Labour Party one student asked if Lord Haskel felt Jeremy Corbyn was a force for good for the Labour party. Haskel said that Corbyn "ought to be building bridges" yet he did have the support of the party but was popular and led a Labour party Lord Haskel still recognised. He was also asked his views on whether he feels the British political system is fair, Lord Haskel replied, "I think it could do a lot more to make society fairer" and that improvements could be made to ensure that the British political system didn't overly favour the rich.

The issue of marijuana was also raised. With Lord Haskel bringing to light the fact that medicinal marijuana has been legalised in certain cases and that now doctors can give it as treatment since it has been proven to have benefits on those with certain conditions such as severe epilepsy.

Finally, the issue of work experience was also raised and Lord Haskel explained that it is possible to apply for work experience in the Lords, which would involve shadowing specific lords and sitting in on debates, allowing for a student to get an insight into what life is like inside the House of Lords, as well as the important issues it typically discusses and what the roles of a Lord are.

One student asked about contacting the House of Lords and members of the Lords in particular, Lord Haskel shared contact details of the lords on social media as they have a Twitter account, @UKHouseofLords and a website, www.lordsdigitalchamber.co.uk Lord Haskel commented that many Lords are active in the digital chamber and it is easy to raise issues to them by writing a letter or sending a message through the digital chamber. Additionally, the matters which the House debates and the debates themselves are posted to the House of Lords' YouTube channel and their Twitter page, allowing for the public to contact and scrutinise the Lords if they feel there is an issue that needs addressing.

Photograph courtesy of David Figueira Bourton.

School Trip to see 'The Play that Goes Wrong' by Noah Read, Year 10 Drama

We went to see 'The Play That Goes Wrong' at the Duchess Theatre on 27 November 2018. The play was a 'play within a play'. Nine actors played the roles of bad actors from an amateur theatre company, who were performing their own generic murder mystery named 'The Murder at Haversham Manor'.

At the beginning of the play there was a very effective pre-set, during which several pieces of the set appeared not to be working properly. These faults cleverly foreshadowed both the overall destruction of the set, as well as individual moments when the smaller pieces of set didn't work, interrupting and affecting the flow of the performance. This was all for the delight of the audience. For example, a door that would not shut properly in the pre-set turned into a door that would not open at all at the beginning of the performance. This caused the 'actors' to enter from the wings at downstage right. This event was only made more comical by the actors' obsession to stick to the script. Their fear of improvisation when things went wrong was greatly manipulated throughout the play.

In addition, props were used to create a confusing and humorous atmosphere. Towards the middle of the play, the inspector was supposed to discover a case-closing clue, but (predictably) the prop was not where it was supposed to be. The actor continued to repeat the words 'a ledger?!' again and again, with increasing volume and frustration. This was made funnier by the fact that the scene was supposed to be the climax of the action, so the fall to despair was much further.

The genius of the entire play was centred on the 'planned chaos' and how expertly executed it was. Watching the play, it felt as if it had been built to fall apart. This happened both figuratively, through the breakdown of the script, and literally in the final scene when the walls of the set actually collapsed.



It was a hugely enjoyable and hilarious night for all of us!