



OW ESHOT - Lent Term 2021



Dear Old Wellingburian,

Welcome to this termly eshot. As we write, there finally seems to be a glimmer of light in the fight against the Global Pandemic. Here at the School the pupils finally returned to the site on 8th March, but it is far from 'business as normal'. The tennis courts outside Garne's are covered in a marquee where school lunches are served; there are white lines everywhere to ensure pupils walk on the left; and the Chapel has been transformed into a temporary testing centre. There are no assemblies or Chapel services, the Houses are

closed until further notice and the pupils eat in separate year groups, face masks at the ready.

Despite all the challenges of these past twelve months, pupil numbers (850) are higher than this time last year. This reflects very well on the Headmaster Andrew Holman and all the staff for delivering such excellent online learning. Now everyone keeps their fingers crossed that there will be no more Lockdowns and that work can finally begin this summer on building the new Sixth Form Centre above the roof of the Dining Hall.

There are four parts to this eshot – an update from the School, an update from the OW Club, 'Looking Back' with a trip down Memory Lane, and 'Looking Forward' with some thoughts on how we might be able to support our School in these challenging times.



Neil Lyon
Neil Lyon (80-85, W)
Foundation Director

Debbie Whittemore
Debbie Whittemore
Foundation Secretary / OW Liaison

News from the School



A message from the Headmaster, Andrew Holman:-

36 hours before staff were due to return to School this term, we were still expecting the pupils back, albeit with a mass testing system for which we had carried a not insignificant amount of planning. OWs will appreciate, then, that the Prime Minister's Lockdown announcement caused quite a lot of running around!

Nonetheless, our staff and pupils responded brilliantly. Children have, in the main, been learning from home through a mixture of video lessons and online resources, although up to 100 pupils have been onsite throughout, as the children of keyworkers. January and February seemed a lot longer than

Trinity 2020 when, perhaps, the shock of the new – and far better weather – led to much gusto at the concept of working from home. Despite the fatigue and boredom, our provision has remained excellent, as has our ability to support our pupils' welfare.

The recent Government announcement of the full re-opening of schools was, then, received with celebration and relief. Before their return, however, we needed to arrange for staff and Senior School pupils to be tested onsite, and that has all taken place in the Chapel, which looks like never before and is possibly an image that will be recorded forever in Wellingborough history.

OWs may also be aware of the cancellation of public exams this summer. Our staff are, therefore, busily preparing additional assessments for the students ahead of what are called Teacher Assessed Grades, a process that does look better than last year, but still puts the burden of all administration (and appeals) squarely with schools. Again, though, it is through more than good fortune that we find ourselves up to speed and ready to provide precisely what our older students require of us.

Oh, for a month without an update from the Department for Education!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'A Holman'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Andrew Holman



The Thatched Pavilion Appeal

The refurbishment of the Thatched Pavilion is now in its final stages. The iconic W.G. Grace Stone has been re-laid in the hope that cricket may again be played on The Grove next term, and we have erected a board honouring the names of all those who have so kindly supported the Appeal.

The School Today

As we mentioned in last term's eshot, those interested in the School as it is today might enjoy watching a 15-minute video that has recently been produced by the School's marketing department in conjunction with film maker James Ward (97-07, C). The video is geared towards prospective parents, but it will still be of interest to many OWs. It can be accessed by clicking on the link below:-

[James Ward video](#)

News from the OW Club

A message from the Club President, Julian Amey (57-67, G)

I send warm greetings to all OW Club Members in the UK and overseas as, at last, there are signs that the extreme difficulties we all have had to deal with in 2020, are lessening. In 2021, I and the OW Committee are focussed on ensuring that we recommence serving the OW community with high quality activities and events, as restrictions are progressively lifted. Dates for those already in the diary are included later in this Eshot.



There is no doubt that the Headmaster and staff have addressed the enormous challenges of the last year very successfully, and the students in their turn have risen to those challenges, including adapting to virtual learning.

Although the Club was not able to hold many of its sporting events last year, the Golf Society is already planning events in 2021, and the OW Club is providing financial support to all sports clubs to encourage new members to participate. The initiative by the Club to support school leavers into careers will continue in 2021 with virtual briefings during the period of restrictions. We also aim to launch a Debating Society this year.

The Governing Body has confirmed that work will begin during 2021 on the exciting new Sixth Form Centre. The Foundation Office and the OW Club will be actively working in support of this project. Several OWs and parents have already given generous contributions and, combined with the successful Thatched Pavilion appeal, this demonstrates how important these developments are in keeping the facilities of the School in good order and its reputation high.

I have been pleased to meet many of my contemporary OWs in different parts of the country over the last 18 months and the Club is encouraging each year group to extend connections with friends of their generation and thereby strengthen the OW community.

I encourage you to write to us with your news and any ideas you have about how the Club can be more effective in connecting with, and supporting you. The Club now has around 4,000 members, with 70% on email, and we are increasingly active on social media platforms such as LinkedIn.

Julian Amey

Forthcoming OW Club events

OW Summer Day – 26th June

The School's traditional Open Day (now called 'Family of Schools Day') and OW Summer Day is tentatively pencilled in for Saturday 26th June. A decision will be made nearer the time whether this goes ahead, and whether we can also hold the "Class of 2015" and "Class of 2016" Leavers Reunions on the same day.

OW Autumn Lunch – Saturday 25th September

We are hoping to be able to welcome you back to the School on Saturday 25th September for an informal lunch in the Dining Hall, as a way of celebrating the return to some sort of normality. This would be accompanied by a talk by Headmaster Andrew Holman about the School today. We would hold the Club AGM on the same day. If this event can go ahead then it would replace the OW Annual Dinner for 2021.

OW Club Annual Dinner – 2021

If our Lunch goes ahead on 25th September then there will be no Annual Dinner this year. If, however, the September lunch has to be aborted then we shall try to hold the Annual Dinner on 13th November. As you can appreciate, planning anything at present is fraught with difficulty.

OW London Drinks – Tuesday 30th November, 2021

We are hoping to arrange another informal Drinks Party for Younger OWs in London. As numbers can be oversubscribed, please can you email Debbie if you would like to reserve a space.

OW London Dinner – 18th March 2022

Fingers crossed, this is the date for the 2022 London Dinner at the House of Lords. Priority will be given to those who had booked for 2020.

Obituaries

We are sorry to announce the passing of several OWs since the last *OW Eshot*. These include Stephen Bacon (84-89, W, Staff 94-00), Robert Beaty (50-55, G), Peter Brawn (42-51, Pa), David Chapman (45-51, Pa), David Flint (54-61, Pa), Vincent Grove (42-50, Pa), David Hildred (37-44, Pl), Robin Livett (50-55, Pl), Russell Schrier (89-94, C), Malcolm Ward (52-59, Pa), William Ward (48-55, W) and Anthony (Tony) Temple (40-43, W). Obituaries for some can be found on the OW pages on the School website. Our condolences to their families and friends.

Your Committee

This year the OW Club Committee comprises Julian Amey (57-67, G; President, 2019-21), Peter Crisp (73-83, Pl; President-Elect, 2021-22), Richard Jackson (70-81, St; Treasurer), Neil Lyon (80-85, W), Simon Marriott (60-71, St), Jon Morris Smith (76-86, Pa), Peter Phillips (54-65, Pa), Joe Smith (98-05, PS), Sophie Timms (82-92, W), Rosie Turner (05-14, N) and Debbie Whittemore, with Clive Westley (59-64, F) in attendance.

The Committee meets six times a year, and until further notice all meetings are held online. We are always interested to hear from OWs who might be interested in joining the Committee.

Supporting the School with Careers Advice

Earlier this month we emailed all post-1979 leavers, asking if you might be able to help the School's Careers Department and today's generation of pupils with careers advice. As we write, more than 103 OWs have already offered their support. This is an incredible gesture – THANK YOU!

Looking Back

Wellingborough in Photographs

On the School website we have just posted 13 group photographs from the School Archives, covering every five years from 1946 onwards – 1946, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2020. Spot the different hairstyles!

You can access these by clicking on the following link: [Gallery](#)

Memory Lane

A pupil caught by the Dining Hall prefect in 1966 for bad behaviour. Made to write an essay about school food. Describes the fish cooked by the caterers [Mr & Mrs Bert Underhill] as follows: 'when cut open it smells like boiled wellington boots'.

Robert Britten (Master of the Junior School, 1940-56) asked one boy during his admission interview if he enjoyed the work of his elder brother, Benjamin Britten. 'I am only interested in serious music', came the reply, but the boy was nevertheless granted a place!

On a more sombre note, one 1960s OW remembers hearing a rumour that Mrs Matthews, the Platt's House matron, had been the first woman to enter Bergen Belsen concentration camp in 1945, and wonders if this is correct. If you heard a similar story and can shed any more light on this, do please let me know.

If you were taught Latin by Gordon Flex (1951-87), do you remember his ditty for a pentameter? 'Out of his mouth came forth, yesterday's dinner and tea'. This was surpassed only by the hexameter: 'Down in a deep dark dell, sat a cow munching a beanstalk'. How bizarre it is that things like this can stick in the memory.

OWs in the Spotlight

Football enthusiasts will be interested to know that in February the BBC football expert Martin Lawrenson was sharing his Premier League predictions with Dot Major from electro-pop band London Grammar, also known as Dominic Major (04-09, PS).

The band's latest album, 'Californian Soil', is being released this year.

Charitable Causes

In June Andrew Lock (87-97, Pa) will be cycling from Land's End to John O' Groats to raise money for The Faraway Children's Charity in memory of James Swallow (92-97, Pl), who died in 2017. Those who remember Jimmy can support this worthy cause by clicking on the link below:

[Andrew Lock's Fundraising Page](#)

Looking Forward

It's definite! Notwithstanding the Pandemic, work will begin this summer on building a new Sixth Form Centre above the roof of the Dining Hall. The aim is to provide a proper working environment for the Sixth Formers, and help prepare them for the world of work and Higher Education. As soon as the time feels right, the School will shortly be launching a major fundraising campaign, asking all of us to support our old school. This will be the first major campaign in over 30 years. As the School is a registered charity, donations will qualify for Gift Aid, and we hope many OWs will feel able to show their support in these extraordinary times – support for our old school, and support for future generations of Wellingburians. You can read more about the Project by clicking [Appeal Brochure](#) which was sent out to all parents in 2020.

Our thanks go to those OWs and others who have already pledged their support to the Sixth Form Centre Appeal:

The Headmaster (Andrew Holman), the Head of the Prep School (Kath Owen), the Bursar (Nigel Johnson), The President of the Old Wellingburian Club (Julian Amey), The Askham Family, Bob Bainbridge, Ollie Bevan, Graham Bond, Max Buckby, Rosalie Croft (Deceased), Barrie Dugdale, Nicholas & Christopher Dutton, James & Joanna Dutton, Bob Edwards (Deceased), Ian Firth (Deceased), Graham Garrett (Deceased), Marcus & Christian & Emilia Harper, Marcus Horrell, John Horrell, Sam & Fergus Howell, Philip & David Howells, The Leadsom Family, Nicholas Leighton, Neil Lyon, Stuart McWilliam (Deceased), Maud Elkington Trust, Nevill Trust, Richard Osborne (Deceased), Old Wellingburian Club, Peter Phillips, David Pilgrim, Will and Lawrence Simms, Anthony (Tony) Temple (Deceased), David Waller and The Westley Family.

Any amount of support will be appreciated. As a guide, we are inviting supporters to "Buy a Brick" for £425 (marking the school's 425th anniversary) or "Buy a Breeze Block" for £2020 (the year the appeal was launched). There are room naming opportunities as well. The names of all donors will appear on a Wall of Donors in the new centre, and all donations over £10,000 will be recorded for posterity on the Benefactors' Board inside the Chapel Porch.

There has never been a better time – or a more important time – to show our support for the School and its future. If you would like to register your interest now in supporting this Appeal, please email Neil Lyon at foundation@wellingboroughschool.org

