

EDITION 5

FRIENDS OF WBGs

NEWSLETTER



Andrew Lai

FRIENDS OF WBGS

Message from the Headmaster



It brings me great pleasure to welcome you all back to the start of a new term. As a new member of the community at WBGS I have been made to feel very welcome and I have really enjoyed my first few weeks, as indeed have the boys joining us in Year 7 and the Lower Sixth.

If there is any one thing I have learned in my brief time here, from conversations with alumni, staff, students and parents, it's this simple fact - WBGS gets into your soul. The School runs through many like lettering in a stick of rock. It defines you, motivates you, challenges you, drives you and will ultimately become one of the most significant defining touchstones in your life. As a new Headmaster of this great School, I am thankful and inspired by the responsibility and opportunities that lie before us.

We have much work to do in the year ahead. Our extended English Block is now open but we will work hard to achieve funding for a state-of-the-art STEM Centre and we will need to embed our changes to the curriculum. One additional task for me is to get to know all of our students - with a student population of over 1300, it's not going to

be an easy task but it's going to be an enjoyable one nonetheless. I have already had the privilege to visit over thirty lessons to see the School in action, so I have made a start at least.

We all know that student achievement improves when parents play an active role in their children's education, and that good schools become even better schools when parents are involved. I would therefore urge you all to support the excellent work of the Friends of WBGS and I look forward to meeting many of you during the social events organised by the Friends.

Finally, please find the time and opportunity to introduce yourself and your family to me as you make your way around the School over the coming months.

Ian Cooksey
Headmaster

Biography

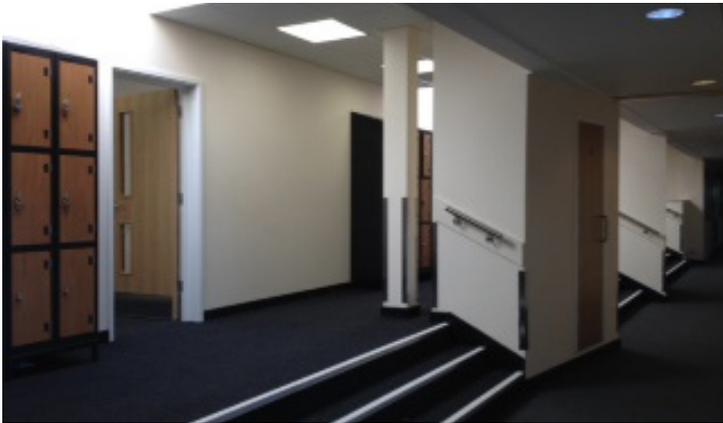
Mr Ian Cooksey was born in Sutton Coldfield in 1974. He attended Queen Mary's Grammar School and then went on to study Biological Sciences at Magdalen College, Oxford where he gained an MA in Biological Sciences and a PGCE in Science Education. More recently, he achieved an MA in School Effectiveness and School Improvement and a National Professional Qualification for Headship from the Institute of Education, University of London. He started his teaching career in 1998 at Tiffin Boys School in Kingston and rose through the ranks to become an Assistant Head at the school in 2003. In 2007, Mr Cooksey was appointed Vice Principal at Tomlinscote School (Surrey), and was later seconded as Head of College to Kings International College (Surrey). He was appointed Head of Dr Challoner's High School in 2011. Mr Cooksey enjoys travelling, mountaineering, opera and classical music. He is married and has two children.

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English Block Extension

During the summer work began on the extension of the English block.

Three new English classrooms (E7-E9) are now complete and they look superb. They are in full use, three weeks ahead of schedule. Final works to refurbish and cover the external stairs will be completed in the October half term.



Parental Contributions

The English block extension was funded by monthly parental contributions to the School's charity the Watford Fuller Foundation. These monthly contributions are key in supporting capital projects such as this and also in supporting the School's day-to-day running costs.

Over the next three years the government is reducing the grant to our School by 1.5%. The School currently receives a grant of around £7 million so our School will see a reduction of at least £105,000 per annum over the next three years meaning that our wider deficit is now predicted to be around £500,000 in three years time.

Please Contribute

Parents and carers are asked to contribute what they can to the School either as an annual lump sum or by a monthly standing order. The forms are on the School website or call the School Finance Office:

<http://www.watfordboys.org/ParentalSupport.aspx>

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Remember that if you are a UK tax payer you can make your contributions to the School go further through Gift Aid - for every £1 you donate the School gets an additional 25p through the government's Gift Aid scheme.



FRIENDS OF WBGS

Summer Events Roundup

Friends Fundraising Events

The fundraising target for the Friends of School last academic year was to raise money for a new school mini bus. Two major fundraising events took place in the Summer term.

The Summer Ball

The summer ball, which was organised by the Friends of School, raised nearly £10,000 towards the new school mini bus. The ball was held at the Watford Hilton and was an outstanding success. Thanks to everyone who attended, organised or supported this event.



Mr Allchorn's cycle ride to Mainz

Mr Allchorn cycled 800km from Watford Grammar School to Mainz in Germany on behalf of the school. Thanks to the generosity of school families and other sponsors he raised £11,000 towards the mini bus. Mr. Allchorn has now purchased the new minibus which was delivered on 14th October.



Friends & Family Events

Film Night

As part of Arts week, the Friends of the School hosted a Film Night in the Clarendon Muse. Watford Film Society, in association with the Palace Theatre, showed *Back to the Future* and a short film made by local Filmmakers called *Surviving*.

For a review of the Film Night please see page 8



Tim Swanick, Sam Moore and Sarah Swanick of the Watford Film Society which is now associated with the Palace Theatre Film Club



Newsletter put together by Kathryn Bourke, Nick Bush, Deborah Bush, Victoria Conquest, Luzia Lai and Amanda Rafferty

FRIENDS OF WBGS

Fun day

The Friends also supported the Year 7 Fun Day, which welcomes new Year 7 boys and their families to the school. The Friends organised the BBQ, snacks and Pimms stalls as well as selling starter bags of school equipment and second hand uniform.



Forthcoming events



The School Quiz Night takes place on Saturday 14th of November at 7pm in the main school hall.

This is the first major event of the school year for families and their friends. It is always a fun event and also raises money for the School. This year the quiz will be hosted by Mr Cooksey our new headmaster. The quiz is organised by Danielle Wright and tickets are available now. There is an early bird offer which gives a discount on ticket prices. Details can be found at www.watfordboys.org. The Quiz Night aims to raise £5000 for the purchase of a new IT trolley with 30 laptops which will be used by all of our boys during lesson time throughout their years at the School. This is an

essential and much needed piece of equipment for the School.

Andrew Lai

November

Saturday 14th Friends AGM, School Hall, 6:30-7pm

Saturday 14th Quiz Night, School Hall, 7pm

Wednesday 25th Autumn Concert 1, Clarendon Mews, 7pm

Thursday 26th Autumn Concert 2, Clarendon Mews, 7pm

December

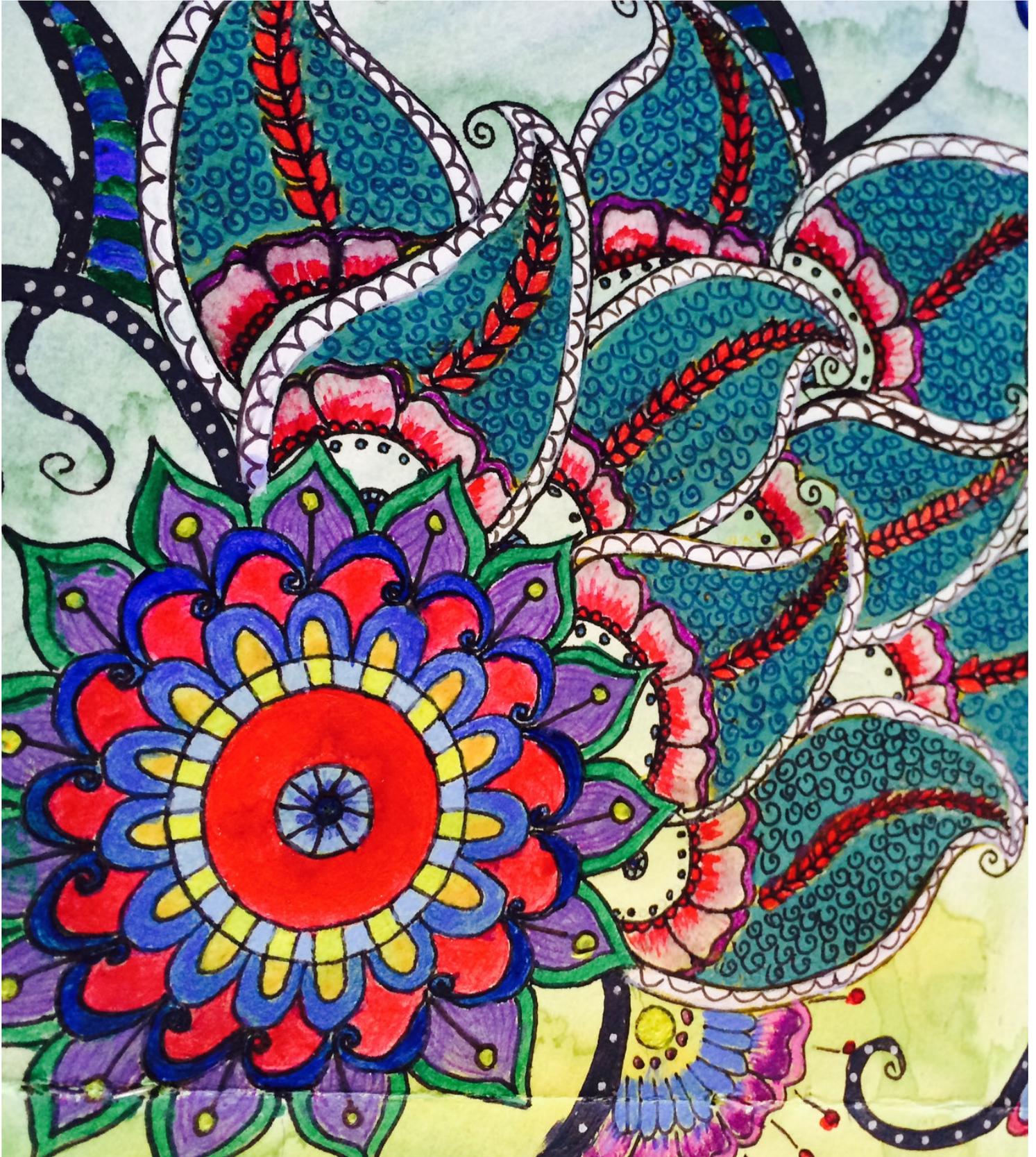
Tuesday 1st Year 11 parent evening

Wednesday 9th Year 13 parent evening

TBC Upper School play, The History Boys

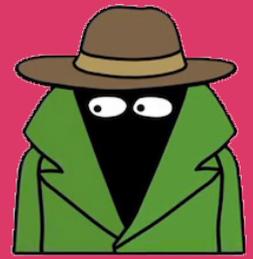
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ARTS & LIFESTYLE

Kristie Lai





Thai Marinated Chicken



Undercover Parent

Thai Marinated Chicken

For 4 people

Ingredients

- 4 chicken breasts
- 4 cloves of garlic finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon of black pepper
- 1 teaspoon of coriander
- 2 tablespoons of soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon of oil
- 1 tablespoon of honey
- 1 large pinch of salt

Method

Score the chicken pieces so that they will absorb the marinade sauce. Mix all the other ingredients together and add to the chicken. Leave for 1-2 hours then put on a barbecue, under a medium grill or in a moderate oven at gas mark 4 or 180 degrees Celsius until the chicken is cooked through.

From a recipe by Ampon Feeney

Undercover Parent 3 - Sibling Rivals

According to Supernanny there are only four types of sibling rivalry:

1. Boredom (siblings bug each other).
2. Parental attention (look at me!).
3. Issues (I'm the victim; it's not fair!).
4. Accumulated resentment (basically the parents fault).

All of the above are recognizable to me as a parent and because I was once a child myself and a younger one in a large family at that. Most of these problems seem to boil down to recognizing the underlying issue and giving time – something we often don't have as much of as we need or want.

But it turns out that Supernanny is wrong because there is a fifth type of sibling rivalry: gender rivalry between parents.

When my No. 1 offspring, **a boy**, was tiny, parents (the mothers of girls, if I'm being honest) offered veiled sympathy - "Wouldn't it be nice if you could buy pretty dresses! Its so hard to handle boys, they are much more trouble!"

When No. 2 offspring, **a girl**, was born there was generally more approval – "One of each,

isn't that perfect, you can stop now!" Presumably recognized by Royals as the "heir and a spare" mentality.

Now, once again, I'm facing parents who think I have an advantage because it's getting towards secondary school selection time. House prices in good catchment areas are rocketing, school open days are looming and parents are anxiously checking off how far they live from their preferred schools.

Here in Watford we have a system which generally allows boys and girls from the same family a better chance of going to the same mixed schools and currently a cross-sibling rule for the single sex schools. Given the fierce rivalry to get into these schools this does seem a distinct advantage. BUT...

Each child is an individual. They need to be in the right school for them. So it's time to visit, to read the prospectuses, to judge the "fit" of the school; to talk to your child. There are pluses and minuses to the automatic choice. So we'll be doing the visits and worrying about choices too. Just like everybody else.





FRIENDS OF WBGS ARTS & LIFESTYLE



Film night review

On the 28th of June, I, along with a number of others, attended the film night at Watford Boys. As a huge movie fan, and particularly a fan of *Back to the Future*, it was fantastic to be able to see the film on a big screen with an audience, just like it would have been 20 years ago in 1985 when it was first released. We were also given the opportunity to see a short film made by young people in Watford, *Surviving*.

We arrived to a warm reception of snacks and the obligatory popcorn and first settled down to watch the short film, about young people surviving through a zombie attack. The film was made with the support of the company FilmBox, and I was immediately impressed with its production value. Dark and gloomy cinematography was utilised well to reflect the mood and special effects were surprisingly believable for such a low budget production. It was played well by the group of teenagers, some of whom were also behind the camera. All in all the film was concise and impressively well put together. It served as a very good warm up to the main feature.

Although I have seen *Back to the Future* several times before, it's always a treat to revisit such a classic of 80s entertainment. There's not much to say that hasn't already been said hundreds of times before, but the film deserves all the praise it gets. It's the epitome of what 'blockbuster' should mean. There's little finesse to it but there really doesn't need to be. It's thrilling and compelling fun.

If you look closely it's true that there may be small plot holes, as is true with absolutely any movie involving time travel, but rewatching it, one thing that really stood out was just how tightly and cleverly it was scripted. It's directed by Robert Zemeckis, who has proved himself to be a master storyteller with other films such as *Forrest Gump*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and *Cast Away*.

It's been fifteen years since we've had such a universally praised film from him as those, but he's coming out with *The Walk* this year, which looks very promising and could be a return to form.

Overall, the movie night was a big success, at least from my viewpoint. As a film fan, I often imagine what it would have been like to see some of my favourite films at the cinema when they were first released, and there really should be more events like this that provide an opportunity to see classics on the big screen, as well as showcasing new, local talent. I'm sure that I, along with many of the others that attended, hope that it will happen again.

Orla Smith



Art Trip - Henry Moore Foundation



Year 10 and 11 visited the Henry Moore Foundation on Friday 11th September

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ARTS & LIFESTYLE

Arts Week Exhibition



Thank you to all those who attended our Cheese and Wine evening on 14th October. It was great to meet all the new Parents and get to know each other.

To submit an article to the newsletter, contact Deborah Bush:
bush.deborah@btinternet.com