



**Friends' School**  
SAFFRON WALDEN

Dear Old Scholar,

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

I am delighted to be able to write to you once more with news from the Old Scholars and from the School and to enclose the latest edition of *The Avenue* which, as ever, gives a flavour of some of the events and successes that we have already enjoyed this academic year.

Looking back you will, I'm sure, be pleased to hear that last summer's exam results were very good, with 17% of 'A' level grades at A\* (ie marks of over 90% in the exam) and 42% of GCSE grades at A or A\*, easily our best ever. Last year's Year 11 were a talented group and most stayed on into our growing sixth form which now numbers 40 in the first year. The Senior School has 268 pupils, the biggest it's been for many years and finding enough classrooms is a problem – but a nice problem to have.

Building of our new Junior School has commenced and, as I look out of my window and down the Avenue, I can see the roof of the new Nursery/Reception building and the walls of the new Junior School hall rising to first floor level. To get to this point has taken a huge amount of time and effort and much work has been undertaken by ex-Clerk of Governors and Old Scholar, Tony Watson and so it is entirely fitting that the governors have agreed to name the Junior School hall 'The Watson Hall'.

Another major development has taken place in the form of the closer working relationship between School and OSA, which has now been formalised by both parties. This will see the school picking up the running costs of the Association with the OSA in return providing funding for bursaries and some capital projects.



*Head Graham Wigley, OSA President Julie Foster and President (Elect) Richard Haw sign up.*

Already we have had a super response from Old Scholars who have returned their forms either with generous 'one off' donations or indicating regular giving of an amount (gift aided) above the old subscription rate which is being phased out. I have taken the liberty of including with this letter a further copy of the relevant form and return envelope in case the original copy has been mislaid.

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An item of news that I would like to pass on is that two of our most recent Old Scholars, Leanne Kennerson and Georgia Rolls, who left after 'A' levels last year, have had their paintings chosen by the President of the Royal Society of British Artists to be exhibited at the RBA's 2012 show. A lovely touch is that the co-ordinator of the exhibition is Chloe Bevan, herself an Old Scholar.

As we move towards Christmas, with our traditional Christmas Dinners, disco and 'Christmas Words and Music' in St Mary's church, it is good to look back over a busy term. We have raised money for 'Children in Need', had a drive on energy conservation courtesy of the Eco Group, seen our GCSE historians visit World War One battlefield sites (including witnessing a very moving 'Last Post' at the Menin Gate) and our artists visiting major exhibitions both locally and in London. A wonderful highlight was the lecture given in Quaker Week by Shami Chakrabarti, Director of 'Liberty' and Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University. Her appearance was almost trumped by the participation of Nobel Prize winner Dr Mike Jeffs MBE, who joined a distinguished panel of guests at a 'Question Time' event which focussed on the environment.

No doubt next term will be equally as impressive and I look forward to keeping in touch with you again next Easter.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Graham Wigley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Graham Wigley  
Head