



## Westcliff High School for Boys

# Alumni Network Newsletter

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## Issue 5 - Spring 2018

### WELCOME FROM THE HEADMASTER, MIKE SKELLY

I am delighted to welcome you to the fifth edition of the WHSB Alumni Network Newsletter.

It is two years since the launch of the School's Community Development Office (CDO) in 2016, and I am pleased to report excellent progress in terms of extending the School's connections with our local community and primary schools. WHSB has been at the forefront of a drive to encourage more local children to attend the grammar schools and we have seen an improvement in admissions of local children as a result of our work.

I am also pleased that our Alumni community continues to grow. You may be aware that we have recently begun holding Alumni Networking and Social events in both London and at WHSB and, with this, we need your support. The second of these events took place at Wilton's Music Hall in London in October last year. At that event, we welcomed former students spanning seven decades, as well as staff members. Our present pupils draw much inspiration from our Alumni, and we would very much appreciate your support at these events, as it helps to strengthen the community around them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those members of our Alumni community who have also participated in the School's schedule of careers and enrichment events, offered work placement opportunities to our students, made generous donations, and contributed to the School's growing archive of photographs, documents and memorabilia. Your contributions make such a difference to the present and future opportunities of our pupils. Please do not hesitate to make contact with myself or the CDO if you can offer a little of your time and support. We would be delighted to hear from you.

I have previously mentioned that we are beginning our countdown to the School's Centenary in 2020 and our Centenary Committee will meet shortly to agree the plans for our Centenary celebrations. Details of those plans will be included in the next edition of this Newsletter. Many of you will know Dr Alan White, a former teacher at WHSB, and I am delighted to report that Dr White has agreed to write a history of WHSB spanning 100 years. Dr White is an accomplished author, and we are excited that by the time we reach 2020 we shall have a wonderful record of the School's



history in a commemorative book. Copies of the book will, of course, be made available to you at that time.

Finally, please do keep an eye on the Westcliff Diary, as we would be pleased to see you at any of the forthcoming events listed, and you will also have the opportunity to read of our pupils' achievements at your old School. If you would like to visit the School, I would be very happy to see you at WHSB and you would be welcome to arrange this via the CDO or my PA, Mrs Robinson.

**The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui meets Big Band Night**  
Wednesday 28 February to Friday 2 March  
Tickets from <http://whsb.ticketsource.co.uk>

## ALUMNI PROFILE: ANUJ PATEL

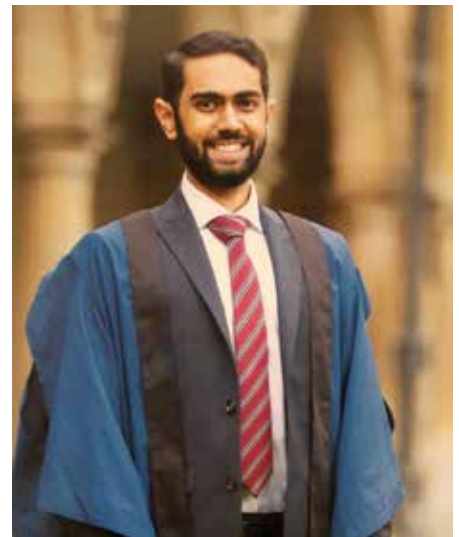
Old Westcliffian (2010 to 2017), former School Captain (2016-2017), WHSB CCF Company Sergeant Major (2016-2017) and Charity Week Chairperson (2015-2016), Anuj Patel is in his first year at Trinity College Cambridge studying for a BA (Hons) in Economics.

Anuj is involved in a number of Cambridge University societies including the Cambridge University Finance and Investment Society (CUFIS) and the "Marshall Society", Cambridge University's world-renowned Economics Society.

Having been a keen musician at WHSB, playing in the Sinfonia, Big Band, Concert Band and Choir, Anuj has joined a variety of musical groups in Cambridge. He continues to play the violin in string ensembles and the saxophone and bass in jazz bands.

Anuj is currently exploring the career options available to him post-graduation. Having previously undertaken placements at HSBC and Ernst & Young in 2016, he has secured an investment banking internship at JP Morgan later this year.

When not studying Anuj has been volunteering with Mind and fundraising for the Saroj Gupta Cancer Centre, by organising one of the biggest student Asian cultural shows in the UK called "Mastana". This show contains Indian twists on contemporary and classical Western Acts, classical Indian dance, music, comedy and much more. Anuj has been working on the marketing team for this event (and will be dancing himself). This year the show will take place on Saturday 24 February at the Guildhall, 2 Wheeler Street,



Cambridge CB2 3QB from 6.30pm until 9.30pm. Further information about this event can be found at <http://cuhcs.soc.srccf.net/mastana/mastana-2018/>.

## WHSB ALUMNI MEET IN LONDON'S OLDEST MUSIC HALL



Building on the success of the first London Alumni get-together in 2016, the School's 2017 London networking drinks for members of its Alumni Community took place in October at Wilton's Music Hall located between Wapping and Whitechapel in the heart of London's East End.

The event, organised by the Community Development Office, saw past students spanning seven decades and staff meet in the Mahogany Bar at Wilton's, the world's oldest and last-surviving grand music hall, close to the historic Tower of London and St Katherine Docks. A Grade II listed building, Wilton's has recently completed a four-year multi award-winning capital project with support

from The Heritage Lottery Fund and numerous trusts and individuals.

The 2018 Alumni Community's London networking event is planned for Thursday 18 October in Davy's Wine Bar the City Flogger, 60 Mark Lane, London EC3 – a stone's throw from Fenchurch Street Station. Our 2018 Summer Social will take place in School on Monday 16 July to coincide with the OWA AGM. Further information will follow in next term's edition of the Alumni Network Newsletter and on both the School's and OWA's social media feeds. We look forward to meeting more members of our Alumni Community, so please do spread the word.



## OWA ANNUAL REUNION DINNER 2018

Another 'save the date' for our Alumni Community is this year's Old Westcliffian Association Annual Reunion Dinner on Friday 7 September 2018. The event promises to be, as always, an extremely enjoyable evening with fine food and reminiscing. This year's speaker will be Old

Westcliffian Neil Harman, celebrated sports journalist, author and latterly Chief Tennis Correspondent for the Times (pictured on the right with Roger Federer). Further details will follow in the Alumni Network Newsletter Summer Term issue and the OWA Annual Newsletter.



# WHSB CENTENARY: THE SCHOOL'S EARLY BEGINNINGS

The First World War had ended in victory, peace had returned and with it, prosperity. From 1918 onwards and into the early 1920s, Southend saw a period of considerable growth. The County Borough's boundaries expanded to take in Leigh, with the Highlands and Marine Estates being established.

In 1919, as a result of the town's expansion and growing population, Southend's Education Committee decided a new Intermediate School was needed for boys and girls. "Belsfield" at 110 Victoria Avenue, a large house on a two-acre site, was purchased at a cost of £7,000 (the equivalent of £350,000 today). "Belsfield" had previously been owned by Thomas Brown, a director of the "Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Char-a-banc Company" (later Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services). Mr Brown's company founded the town's first motorbus service which ran between Southend High Street and Hamlet Court Road in Westcliff. This motorbus service commenced on 19 July 1920 with the route numbered 1, the designation still in use today.

Following the acquisition of the

Victoria Avenue site (seen below in the early 1960's) and the building being made ready for its new use as an educational establishment, "The Commercial Secondary School", as Westcliff High School was first known, opened on 27 April 1920 with 109 pupils (boys and girls) on the register. 1920 was a significant year for the town: Priory Park was officially opened by H.R.H, The Duke of York (later King George VI); Southend's War Memorial designed by Edward Lutyens (who was also responsible for the Cenotaph in Whitehall) was erected on Clifftown Parade; and the Royal Naval & Military Club in Royal Terrace opened its doors for the first time as a place for First World War veterans and their families to socialise and support each other following their experiences in the 'Great War'.

In August 1921, the school changed its name from "The Commercial School" to "Westcliff High School" (the original title having been somewhat confusing). By 1922, 372 children were on the School's roll and it was rapidly outgrowing its original site. Plans were, by this time, well underway to relocate to new, larger and purpose-built premises to the west of the

town. Westcliff High School for Boys in Kenilworth Gardens was officially opened in 1926 for 850 pupils to attend. The Girls School remained in Victoria Avenue until 1931. The School's original "Belsfield" site, which was adjacent to the Civic buildings in Victoria Avenue, was demolished in 1964 (it can still be seen in front of the Southend Technical College in the photograph below taken during the construction of the new Civic Centre).



If any members of our Alumni Community can shed light on what the original "Belsfield" Victoria Avenue site was used for following the Girls' School move in 1931 and its demolition in 1964 we would be delighted to hear from you. As the premises belonged to the County Borough of Southend we understand they may have been used as an annexe for the Southend Municipal College, its main building being located a short distance away at Victoria Circus, for students studying at night school. Please do email us in the Community Development Office if you know any more than we do!

*We would like to thank Mr P J Wren who allowed us to print the above photograph of the Civic Centre ([www.southend-on-sea.me.uk](http://www.southend-on-sea.me.uk)). Material for this article was sourced from the Essex Records Office, The Southend Timeline ([www.southendtimeline.com](http://www.southendtimeline.com)) and the book "Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Ltd: An Outline History" by Alan Osborne and JR Young.*



## SUCCESS IN SUNDAY TIMES 2018 GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE

We were delighted to be ranked 34th in the country (up from 51st position last year) and fifth in East Anglia in the list of State Schools in 2018's Sunday Times Parent Power guide, which produces rankings based on the latest academic results. Westcliff High School for Girls and

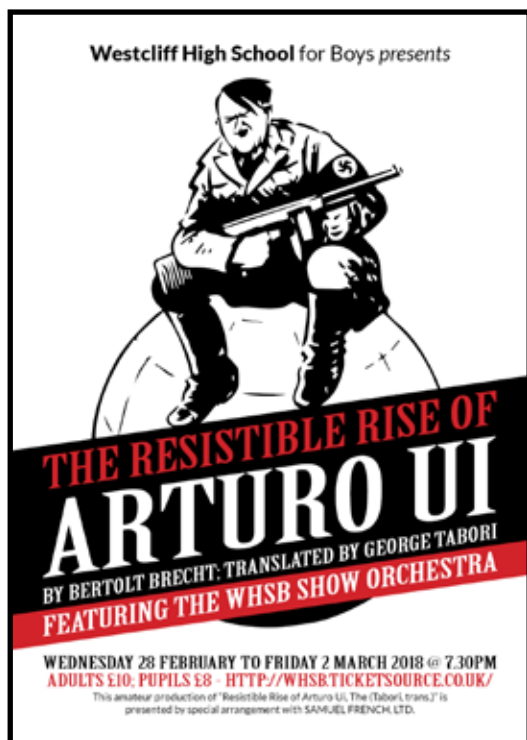
Southend's two grammar schools took the sixth, seventh and eighth positions behind us in the East Anglia region. Congratulations to everyone who contributed to this amazing achievement! The full results are available on The Times website.



# FORTHCOMING SCHOOL EVENTS FOR ALUMNI

## The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui meets Big Band Night From Wednesday 28 February to Friday 2 March in the School Hall, starting at 7.30pm

A Big Band/Gangster extravaganza rolls into town at Westcliff this February with the arrival of the Music and Drama mash-up. Bertolt Brecht's great drama The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui was created in 1941, just as Hitler's Germany was coming to the height of its powers. The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui compares the rise of Hitler in Nazi Germany to the rise of a gangster (Ui) in small town Chicago. Set in a 1920s style speakeasy, the evening will also offer the opportunity to listen to the very best of Westcliff musicians as the Bigger Band takes to the stage. Tickets are priced at £10 for adults and £8 for pupils.



## Parents' Association Annual Race Night Saturday 3 March 2018 - 6:30pm

The WHSB Parents' Association would like to invite members of our Alumni Community, their family and friends to attend this event. The Race Night is a regular, annual fundraiser for the School run by the Parents' Association and is an extremely popular family night out so early booking is advised. Doors open at 6.15pm for a 6.30pm start. Tickets are priced at £6 for adults and £3 for children and students. Bring your own drinks and nibbles, or for an extra £4.50 per ticket, you can enjoy a fish and chip supper (or vegetarian alternative). Deadline for ticket sales is 26 February 2018.

## Summer Sinfonia Concert Thursday 8 March 2018 - 7:30pm

Join the Westcliff Sinfonia on a world tour, starting in Wales with Grace Williams' Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes. From the Welsh valleys, the Sinfonia will jet to the Norwegian fjords where they will explore the local villages and towns through Grieg's Four Norwegian Dances. A rather sinister trip to a Parisian cemetery follows for the Orchestra to join Death himself as he wakes the spirit world with his solo violin in Saint-Saen's Danse Macabre. The tour ends with a jaunt to the Big Apple for Gershwin's exciting and jazzy Rhapsody in Blue, a work that never fails to evoke the bustle and bluster of New York City at the beginning of the 20th century. Ticket Price: £5 for adults, students free of charge.

*Tickets for all events are available to purchase at <http://whsb.ticketsource.co.uk/> or via the TicketSource Box Office on 0333 666 3366 (please note that a booking fee of £1.50 will be charged for telephone bookings).*

## LAST WORD

If you or someone you know would like to join the WHSB Alumni Network and/or join the OWA, please take a few minutes to register your details via the WHSB School website. Select 'Community' from the Main Menu followed by 'Alumni & Old Westcliffian Association'. You will then receive password information enabling access to the secure 'Alumni' area of the School website. For further information, contact Mrs Clarke or Mrs Weller in the Community Development Office on 01702 475443 or via email ([community@whsb.essex.sch.uk](mailto:community@whsb.essex.sch.uk)). The WHSB Alumni Network is completely free to join and we very much look forward to hearing from you.

In addition, you can follow Westcliff High School for Boys on Facebook and Twitter where you can find out about the latest developments and events taking place at the School. We would be delighted to welcome members of our Alumni Community back to the School to see what is going on. You can also network and keep in touch with other members of the WHSB Alumni Community on LinkedIn and the Old Westcliffian Association (OWA) Facebook and Twitter accounts.

We welcome your comments and contributions for future editions of the Alumni Network Newsletter which will be published termly, with the next scheduled for Summer 2018. Please contact Mrs Clarke or Mrs Weller in the Community Development Office on 01702 475443 or via email at [community@whsb.essex.sch.uk](mailto:community@whsb.essex.sch.uk). We look forward to hearing from you.



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