

William Ellis School News Update

Summer Term - 14th June 2024



Welcome to this week's newsletter with highlights of all kinds of extracurricular activities past and present - and a powerful reminder of how well established success is in our Music department!

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday at the WESPA International Evening, a brilliant celebration that brings the school community together. See below for more details.

Attendance Update

Last week three of our Year 9 students joined Fitzrovia Youth In Action and Camden Learning to take part in a project to support young people's attendance in schools across Camden.

Students will co-produce the campaign through script writing, filming, camera work and directing. They will also be trained as attendance mentors to co-facilitate PSHE lessons on school attendance and take part in peer mentoring at WES from September 2024. The sessions began last Thursday and will continue to the end of this academic year. A huge thank you to Jack, Taylor and Jayden in Year 9 for representing our school and taking such an enthusiastic part in an important initiative.



Our Duke of Edinburgh Award Students' Social Value Hours

Our D of E participants contributed 91 social value hours to the local community in the last year via their D of E volunteering section. This is a huge achievement all of the students involved should be really proud of their hard work and contributions - as are we.



Thank you

to

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award participants

from

William Ellis School

who spent

91 Hours

**volunteering between
1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.**

We are immensely proud of the dedication, effort and achievement of young people making an impact in their community.

The social value of these hours is

£479

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Marvel'.

Ruth Marvel, Chief Executive

WES Alumnus in the local press

The historic strength of extracurricular music at William Ellis featured in the Camden New Journal last week.

Richard Thompson, a former William Ellis School pupil, is celebrating his 75th birthday with a performance at the Royal Albert Hall. Thompson, a key figure in the folk-rock band Fairport Convention, has been instrumental in shaping the genre. Despite the school's traditional academic approach, Thompson honed his musical skills at Ellis,

jokingly claiming he was the "third best guitarist" there".



Richard Thompson's natural aptitude at fingers up and down a fretboard produced seven decades of joy for countless people – and was a key driver behind a whole genre.

Richard was the guitarist in the folk-rock band Fairport Convention, the 1960s north Londoners who turned a generation of music lovers on from British beat and rhythm and blues to a more lyrical and musically mature sound.

He celebrates his 75th birthday in June, and has gathered some favoured musicians to join him on stage at a gig at the Royal Albert Hall.

The former William Ellis School pupil, who grew up in Camden and then in Hampstead, founded Fairport (named after the house in Muswell Hill where they jammed) aged 18 and the band has, in one form or another, remained active.

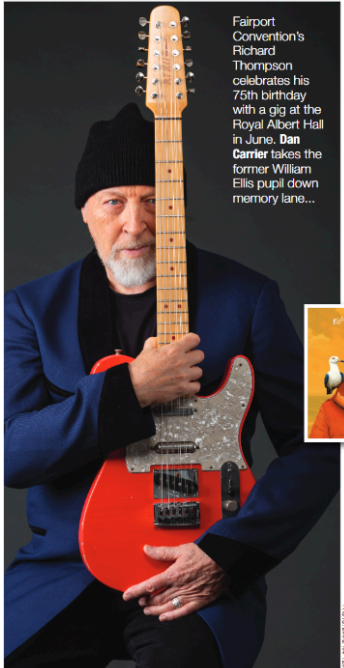
"The guitarist was at Ellis, then a grammar school, between 1960 and 1967. It was there he cut his musical teeth with friends, but the masters were the products of a different era.

"Music was not very high up on the agenda – it was a grammar school thing. They had a school orchestra," he recalls.

"We had an Austrian music master, who was only interested in teaching the history of Mozart. The guitar was not an instrument you would be encouraged to play."

Despite the traditionally academic approach – among his peers was the classical guitarist Carlos Benicelli, and Paul Lomas, who was good enough to showcase his skills on *The Tonight Show* aged 14.

"It was the third best guitarist at Ellis," Richard jokes. "This dangerous world of pop music – clashing with a grammar school head a few weeks. Hugh Cornwell, from The Stranglers, was in a band with me. We were the class of 67 and when I



Fairport Convention's Richard Thompson celebrates his 75th birthday with a gig at the Royal Albert Hall in June. Dan Carrier takes the former William Ellis pupil down memory lane...

WAXING LYRICAL

Left: Richard Thompson; below: his new album, *Skip to Shores*

look back a lot of my classmates do not take that road well travelled, the path to university. It was a time of psychedelics coming in and people considering the lives they wanted to live and alternative ways to do so."

His sister introduced him to rock and roll and trad jazz, while a friend's father was a music critic and awarded him a handful of singles he'd reviewed.

"We'd see what we could work out," he remembers. "We had rather interesting material for a school band, things like an obscure Kiki Dee B-side."

All these influences led to Richard being at the forefront of British folk-rock, which found traditional songs and reinterpreted them.

"Hues and Roll were massive but I didn't want to play just that," he remembers. "With Fairport, our heroes were the likes of Jon Mitchell and Leonard Cohen. We were a bit stoned and absent-minded and we wanted to be different. We decided to be a lyric-centric band."

They had plenty of places to listen and

perform in 1960s north London. "We'd go to clubs such as Koko's Cooze in West Hampstead, The Manor House in Finchley Park, the Cooksberry Inn on the North Circular and the Country Club in Belsize Park," he remembers.

"That most of all – the Marquee in Wardour Street. You'd see The Yardbirds and the Spencer Davis Group. The Who played every Tuesday."

Richard has spent a lifetime writing music. He composed with band mates in Fairport, wrote a duet in the 1970s when he teamed up with singer Linda Peters, and then enjoyed solo success.

"When I was 18, I'd have a few drinks and never be quite sure of what I have written. I never know if I'm being creative or not. Now I can have songs on the go in various stages of composition – you can jump in and out and that helps with writer's block."

Writing music is not solely a case of sitting in a studio. "I compose what I am walking down the street. It can feel much freer and easier not to be at an instrument," he adds.

"You think of the idea and develop it, and then bring it to the instrument. I love the fleeting element of this part of composition."

And using a piano, rather than his preferred guitar, helps.

He said: "Using a different instrument gives me a whole different way to approach notes and harmonics."

"The 65 years I have been a guitar player. My fingers fall into patterns, muscle memory is strong, and it is important you break that by going to another instrument."

Because he has such a huge back catalogue, his songs are regularly performed by others.

"Jan Mitchell said giving people your songs is like sending your children away to live with a strange uncle for a few months and they come back smoking and swearing. There's always a bit of that."

"Sometimes it is horrible – they can completely miss the point and it does nothing to you. Or they do not re-interpret it at all, then you think, why bother?"

"But it can also be wonderful. When someone does one of your songs differently, it can be so much fun."

Richard has a history degree and is fascinated by musical heritage.

A request from a journalist prompted a long-running research project. "I was 1999 and a magazine was planning its millennium issue," he recalls. "They said 'send us your top 10 songs of all time.' They didn't, of course, mean of all time. But I went back 1,000 years. I started with St Godric, religious peace, a warning about hell. I went

through the centuries. It was amazing what you find – what gets left by the wayside, forgotten about."

"They never published it – it was too eccentric – so I took it on the road with other musicians. We weren't really qualified to play quite a lot of it but we had a good go. We did everything from traditional music from the 1200s to modernists, Gilbert and Sullivan, the Ink Spots, right through to Britney Spears."

"Of course, music changes. That is its great strength but it also discovered some things never change. There were always love songs, political songs, and choral progressions, lones and lullabies."

"As a performer who broke the American market, he understands the UK's creative industries impact internationally."

"We do not recognise our own power," he said. "He believes we need to understand the world we live in – not just for the sake of it, but economically."

"Every now and then the government interferes in education and says 'we are not reaching targets – come on schools! Back up!'" he says.

"The schools shit themselves, say they are going to concentrate on maths and English."

"Music and I ain't get dumped. But I has been proven that it helps across the board. Both elevate your brain."

"And playing music brings vital lessons. It teaches you about making mistakes. You make a mistake and you move on, you move past it, you do not stop in the middle, and you go on to apply that to everything else in life," he states.

"That a wonderful thing to learn."

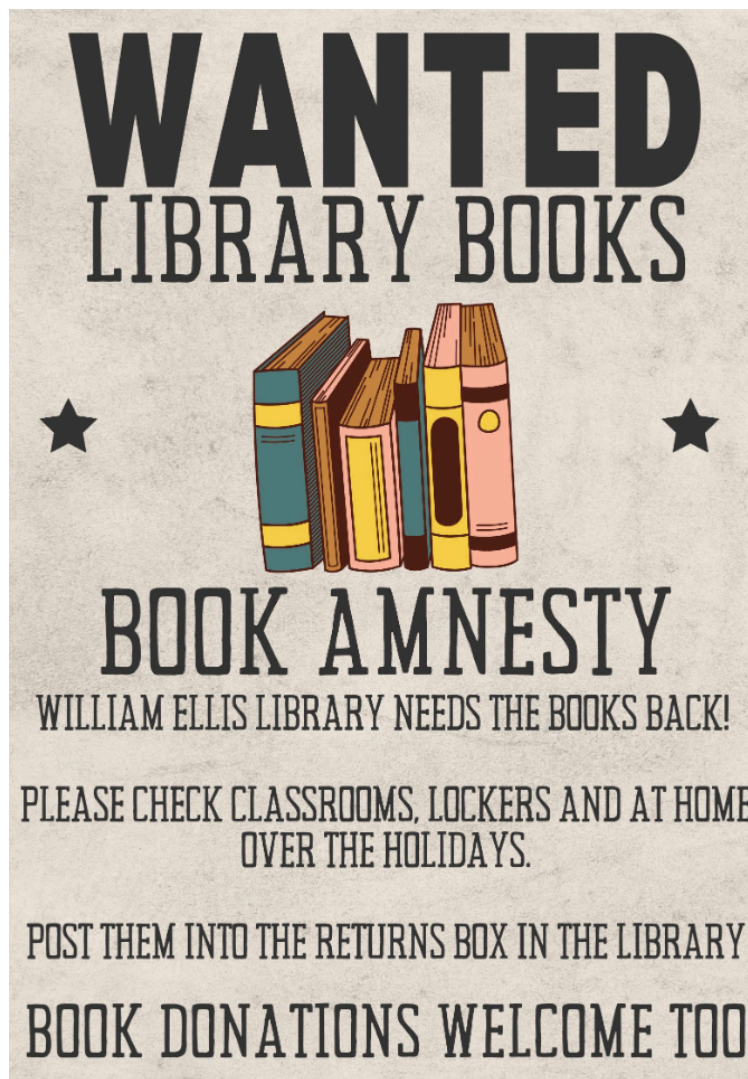
Richard Thompson's new album *Skip to Shores* is released on May 31. His 75th birthday celebration show is at the Royal Albert Hall on June 8. www.royalalbert.com/events/2024-richard-thompson

Thompson's time at Ellis, from 1960 to 1967, was marked by a clash between the world of pop music and the grammar school environment. This bred a few rebels, including Hugh Cornwell from The Stranglers, who was in a band with Thompson. Thompson's influences ranged from rock and roll to traditional jazz, leading him to the forefront of British folk-rock¹.

Thompson's story is a testament to the power of passion and creativity, demonstrating that the path less travelled can lead to extraordinary places. His achievements serve as an inspiration for our students at William Ellis School, encouraging them to pursue their passions and carve their own paths in life.

Article link: <https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/i-was-the-third-best-guitarist-at-ellis>

Library Book Returns



Ms King, Librarian, writes:

William Ellis School Library wants its books back! As we approach the end of the school year it is very important that books are returned to the library. Please check classrooms, lockers and at home for any stray library books and return them to the blue returns box next to the librarian desk. If you borrowed a book that has become lost please be responsible and let Miss King know so she can arrange for new books to be purchased.

Year 10 Market Garden

Ms Sinnott, Food Technology Teacher, writes:

Year 10's have been getting the weeding done to encourage the growth of crops so that they will be ready in time to take to market.

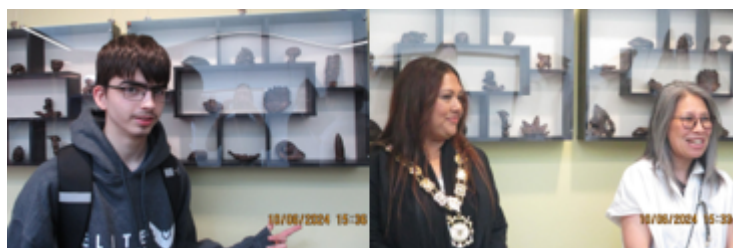


'Cabinet of Curiosities' Project Launch

Ms Kendall, Art Teacher, writes:

Year 10 Art & Graphics students spent 6 weeks during the Spring Term working with artist Alison Lam to create ceramic, bronze and Gelli print pieces. These were inspired by the collections of plants and artefacts of James Yates, a Victorian resident of Lauderdale House, as well as the natural environment of Waterlow Park. Their work is now on display in the Entrance Hall, the Courtyard, Sundial (Tea Lawn), and in the Tudor Knot Garden at Lauderdale House.

Miss Madsen & I attended the Private View earlier this week, where the Mayor of Camden, Councillor Samata Khatoon, opened the exhibition & praised the students involved.





Summer Activities for Camden Residents

The Camden Summer University programme runs from 25th July – 23rd August and offers free activities to young people aged 13 to 19 who are living or studying in Camden.

**Camden
Summer
University**

CSU are running their usual wide range of activities during all five weeks of the summer break, including courses ranging from *Documentary Film to Vegan Cooking, Bubble Tea Making, Spoken Word and Journalism*. There are also some new courses like *Vocal Performance and Manga Self Portrait*.

Enrolment opens on Wednesday, 17th June.

To find out more and sign up, please [click here](#).

The Young Camden Foundation's Holiday Activities and Food programme also have a schedule of events which are already available to book. These include craft activities, sports, music, coding, photography and courses hosted by Kentish Town City Farm and London Zoo.

Scan the QR code below or visit Young Camden Foundation to find out more and register.

FLY A DRONE. MAKE SMOOTHIES. CODING. MANGA ART. ZORBING. BAKING

Summer HAF PROGRAMME

BOXING. LONDON ZOO. ICE-SKATING. GAMES. COOKING. GO KARTING. DRAMA. GO APE. MUSEUMS. GARDENING

FENCING. DODGEBALL. KAYAKING. SWIMMING. LASERTAG. TRAMPOLINING. DJ WORKSHOP. TABLE TENNIS. CHESS

erises

MAKE YOUR SUMMER ONE TO REMEMBER

LOADS OF FREE ACTIVITIES... SCAN TO SIGN UP!

YOUNG CAMDEN FOUNDATION

MUSIC. DANCE. FOOTBALL. PHOTOGRAPHY. BOWLING. THEATRE. THEME PARK. ART

This weeks' WESPA Round-Up

WESPA Round Up | International Eve next week, Black Blazer Amnesty and a bit of Lycra

Dear families,

There is much to celebrate and join in with at this time of year. Here are the headlines for the next week.

International Evening 2024 - next Thursday

There is only one place to be at 5pm next Thursday and that is the WES Sports Hall for the highlight of the WES social calendar - International Evening. All families and friends are very welcome. The event is free but to be entered into the prize draw (including prizes like a £100 hamper from Rosella), you will need a ticket.

<https://www.ticketebo.co.uk/wespa/international-24>

Share food, be entertained and make some friends. See you there!

WESPA 5 and 10k Run

On Sunday 23rd June we'll be running to raise money for the WESPA Awards 2024 and Staff Room Fund. So whether you fancy pacing it like Mo Farah, a more leisurely run and a chat or just hanging out in Lycra, please come and join us. Here are the details:

- 10am start on Sunday 23rd June
- Meet by the Lido at the bottom of Hampstead Heath (Heath side)
- Adult runners only (boys will get their chance in the autumn term)
- 5k and 10k runs depending on what runners would like
- Minimum suggested donation £10

Whether it's a friend or family member sponsoring you or you are entering yourself, donations can be made here:

<https://www.givey.com/wespa510krun2024>

We'll need to know numbers so please join the WhatsApp group or email williamellispa@gmail.com to let us know you'll be coming. Route details to follow.

Calling all Year 11 families - Black Blazer Amnesty

We are very keen to encourage recycling of all blazers - a win for our environment. Last year we started the Black Blazer amnesty, an initiative where we collect unwanted school uniform and pass on to younger years. If your son no longer needs his blazer or any other items of branded WES school uniform, it would be hugely appreciated if you could donate the items to school.

Uniform can be handed in at the school office at any time or at the Leavers' Celebration on June 27th. A spin through the washing machine beforehand would be much appreciated!

Have a great weekend and to all our dads and grandfathers, happy father's day.

Best wishes,

Al

Chair WESPA

Coming Up...

<p>Year 11 GCSE Exams</p> <p>ALL DAY From 07 May until 21 Jun</p>	07 May
<p>Year 13 Exams</p> <p>ALL DAY From 13 May until 21 Jun</p>	13 May
<p>Year 10 DofE Qualifying Expedition</p> <p>ALL DAY From 15 Jun until 16 Jun</p>	15 June
<p>Year 10 Food Technology Trip</p> <p>ALL DAY</p>	18 June
<p>Year 8 Donmar Warehouse 'Macbeth' performance event</p> <p>2:00PM – 3:15PM</p>	18 June
<p>Year 10 Examinations</p> <p>ALL DAY From 19 Jun until 28 Jun</p>	19 June
<p>International Evening</p> <p>5:00PM – 7:00PM</p>	20 June
<p>Year 10 DofE Bronze Expedition</p> <p>ALL DAY From 22 Jun until 23 Jun</p>	22 June
<p>Year 12 Physics 'Space to Learn' Day</p> <p>ALL DAY</p>	25 June
<p>Year 13 Prom</p> <p>6:00PM – 9:00PM</p>	26 June
<p>Year 11 Presentation Evening</p> <p>5:00PM – 8:00PM</p>	27 June
<p>LaSWAP Taster Day</p> <p>ALL DAY</p>	28 June

