

HAMMERSMITH

Academy

HAMMERSMITH ACADEMY

ALUMNI. *Magazine*

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Welcome



The HA Alumni Network reached a fantastic milestone in June with our very first Alumni Reunion.

It was a joy to welcome so many of you back through the Academy gates, to reminisce, reconnect, and celebrate how far our community has come since those early days. Not only did we welcome back alumni but also former staff who were delighted to see their former students. I am so excited to see this network continue to grow.

In this edition, we're pleased to feature alumna Ella Owen, who we caught up with in no less than the Houses of Parliament - a reminder of the diverse and exciting paths our former students are forging.

We're also launching our new '**Giving Back**' feature, starting with a call-out for alumni who can help provide or connect Year 10 with

work experience placements. You will remember the importance of this opportunity when you were at school yourself - it's such a pivotal moment for students. If you or your workplace can help, please do get in touch with us.

Looking ahead, we're thrilled to introduce a brand-new series: '**Careers Breakfasts with Alumni.**' These events will connect, our alumni, with current students in an informal and inspiring way. Students respond so well to young professionals who have walked the same corridors and sat in the same classrooms not too long ago - your stories and guidance really do make a difference.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our magazine, and I look forward to seeing even more of you involved in the months ahead. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Frederick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lucy Frederick
Alumni Coordinator

STAYING IN TOUCH

At Hammersmith Academy, we take immense pride in the accomplishments of our alumni, whose journeys beyond our school gates serve as a source of inspiration and aspiration for our community. In this section, we showcase the fantastic achievements of our alumni, catching up with them as they navigate their careers, personal endeavours, and contributions to society.

By maintaining ties with the Academy, alumni have the opportunity to foster professional networks, rekindle friendships, and see how former classmates and peers are thriving in their respective fields. More importantly, this connection enables alumni to play a pivotal role in supporting the next generation of students—whether by sharing their expertise, providing mentorship, or offering insights into life beyond school.

We encourage all alumni to stay in touch and be part of this vibrant community. Whether you're looking to reconnect, explore networking opportunities, or contribute to the development of current and future students, there is a place for you within Hammersmith Academy's alumni network.

To join us, simply scan the QR code. ■



ELLA OWEN

HA 2013-2020

Parliamentary Administrative Officer

ELLA OWEN

What professional role are you in?

I am a Parliamentary Administrative Officer for Jess Asato, MP for Lowestoft.

What does a typical day at work entail?

My days can be extremely varied depending on Jess' schedule. I usually start work around 9am, and the first thing I do is check the post Jess has received and make sure her diary is up-to-date and ready for the day. I then start catching up on emails from a wide range

of people - constituents, other MPs, public affairs agencies, and anyone else seeking Jess' attention. This typically involves arranging meetings and adding these into Jess' diary. Sometimes I help her on Parliamentary business, which can include submitting written or oral questions, and helping with her speeches. I normally get the chance to catch up with Jess and our colleagues at least once during the day. In the afternoons, we may have visitors, in which case I'll take them on a tour around Parliament and sometimes a visit into the Chamber to watch a debate. I might also help

with events Jess is involved in or attend relevant meetings or drop-in sessions on her behalf.

What is the best thing about your job?

Best thing about the job would definitely be meeting new and interesting people. Worst thing is the endless email correspondence!

Greatest achievement so far?

I've only been working for Jess for two months, so I feel I haven't had the chance to accomplish anything major just yet. However, my greatest achievement came whilst working in Parliament during my previous role for Joe Powell, MP for Kensington and Bayswater. For Joe, I coordinated and delivered a range of events and campaigns.

One of the most significant was the 'Safe and Healthy Homes' campaign - an ambitious initiative aimed at improving housing standards and giving residents a stronger voice in decisions affecting their homes. I was responsible for organising the launch event, which featured high-profile guest speakers, attracted a huge audience and gained widespread attention online and in the media. The event led to firm commitments from social housing landlords, and I was incredibly proud to have played a key role in such a successful launch.

What skills did you develop at HA that you have taken with you?

One of the most valuable skills I developed at HA was critical thinking. In my current role, problem solving and critical thinking are essential, as I'm constantly managing shifting priorities and juggling multiple responsibilities. Being able to think quickly and practically is crucial to staying on top of everything. I also gained strong communication and collaboration skills at HA, which have been vital in working effectively with people from a wide range of backgrounds and professions.

What do you look back fondly on during your time at HA?

I look back fondly on the time I spent everyday with my best friends! We are all so busy now and don't manage to see each other nearly as often as we'd like. I also have really fond memories of being taught

by some incredible teachers who genuinely went above and beyond for us. I'd love to give a few shoutouts: Mr Glavanis, Ms Harrowes, Ms Holland, Ms Suganthakumaran, Ms Moss - just to name a few - thank you for everything!

What advice would you give your younger self or the students at HA now?

I don't want to sound like an old lady, but the best advice I can give to current HA students is this: enjoy school whilst it lasts! Make the most of every chance to learn something new. Don't ever doubt yourself or what you're capable of - you have so much potential. Oh, and definitely pay attention in maths ... turns out, you really do end up using it in real life! ■

Be a feature!

We'd love to hear your story. Whether you're climbing the career ladder, pursuing your passions, or making a difference in your community, share your journey with us and inspire others. Don't forget that being able to share the problems and obstacles you have faced is also very real and helpful for our students. Life isn't always a shiny LinkedIn post!

Get in touch to be featured in the next edition of the Alumni Magazine:
alumni@hammersmithacademy.org

ALUMNI WINS ARCHITECTURE POSTGRADUATE AWARD

At our first Alumni Reunion in June, former student Nedal Harris (HA 2013-2020) invited two of his teachers - Ms Suganthakumaran (Head of Maths) and Ms Ferrell (Head of Arts Faculty) - to his architecture graduation show at the University of Westminster. Both had played an important role in his journey to university, and it was a proud moment to see their former student exhibiting such accomplished work.

Nedal's project, "Memories of the Untold," was inspired by his travels to Cuba and tells a speculative story of Havana through the eyes of Miguel, a Cuban farmer who guides us through the city's hidden layers. The project impressed both audiences and judges, winning two awards at the OPEN 2025 Student Awards

Nedal's success is a testament to his talent, creativity, and determination - and also to the encouragement and belief he received at Hammersmith Academy. We are thrilled to celebrate his achievements and can't wait to see what he builds next! ■



WORK EXPERIENCE



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We are asking our alumni to support the next generation in two ways:

- **Offer a placement:** Could your workplace host a Year 10 student for their work experience week?
- **Make an introduction:** If you're not able to offer a placement yourself, perhaps you can recommend a colleague, contact, or organisation that could.

You will remember the excitement (and nerves!) of Year 10 Work Experience - that first big step into the world of work. For many of us, our work experience placement was the moment when classroom learning connected with real life. Whether it was shadowing a professional, discovering the rhythms of office life, or simply learning the importance of turning up on time, those early experiences left a lasting mark.

At Hammersmith Academy, we know just how transformative work experience can be. For our current Year 10 students, it's a chance

to broaden their horizons, gain confidence, and start imagining their future pathways. But to make it meaningful, they need opportunities across a wide range of industries - and that's where our alumni community can play a vital role.

As someone who has been in their shoes, you understand better than anyone why this matters. You know that it's not just about building a CV - it's about sparking ambition, making connections, and seeing possibilities that students may never have considered before.

Every placement counts. Whether it's in tech, healthcare, finance, media, hospitality, or any other field, your support could open doors for a young person who is just starting to dream about their future.

If you are able to help, please contact Ms Harrowes by email on sharrowes@hammersmithacademy.org.

Together, we can make sure our students step into the world of work with confidence, inspiration, and the kind of experience you will remember from your own Year 10 days. ■

CAREER BREAKFAST

This academic year, we are excited to launch a brand-new initiative - Careers Breakfasts with Alumni.

Over a breakfast before the school day begins, our current students will have the chance to meet and talk with alumni about careers, university, and life after Hammersmith Academy. These informal sessions are designed to give students a space to ask questions, seek guidance, and hear real stories from people who have been in their shoes not too long ago.

Students connect strongly with young professionals who understand their experiences and can share insights

from the early stages of their career journey. Whether it's tips on applying to university, navigating first jobs, or choosing the right path in a particular sector, your voice and perspective can make a huge difference.

At the moment, we are collating a list of volunteers and the sectors they represent so that we can organise breakfasts with the industries that our students are most interested in. Whatever your profession or your seniority, whether things have worked out according to plan or not, you have something valuable to offer our students.

Together, we can ensure our students start each day inspired, informed, and motivated about their future. ■

Join a Breakfast

If you'd like to be part of the breakfast and contribute to the next generation's career journey, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch with our **Alumni Office** at alumni@hammersmithacademy.org to register your interest.

GREAT BIG REUNION!



Hammersmith Academy welcomed its first cohort of students in 2011 and since then well over 1,000 young people have passed through the school gates and into the world of university, apprenticeships and work.

This year the Academy formally set up the alumni network to keep in touch with former students and follow their career journeys.

To celebrate this we held the first ever Alumni Reunion event in June, welcoming back former students and staff, bringing together leavers from the Class of 2022 all the way back to our first 2011 cohort.

The evening's proceeding started with a speech from the Academy's founder, Tom Ilube CBE recalling how far the Academy has come since those very early ideas scribbled down on a napkin!

Headteacher, Mr Kynaston followed

by celebrating the achievements of our alumni and the important role they play in inspiring current and future students.

We then heard from four distinguished alumni, who reminisced about their time at the Academy and the skills they developed whilst at HA and have since taken with them into their professional careers.

Noor Saeed (HA 2013-2019), currently training to become a criminal barrister, reflected on the life-changing opportunities she received as a student. She shared how her time at HA sparked her passion for law and shaped her path into the legal profession.

Hamza El-Bakkali (HA 2013-2020), now working as a Commercial Manager at IBM, spoke warmly about the key members of staff who helped guide and support him, saying "Without those key members of staff,

I wouldn't be standing here today as the person I am."

Samia Hoque (HA 2014-2021), a software developer at Accenture, reflected on her journey from being a quiet, introverted student to someone confident in forging her own path. She credited her growth to the inquisitiveness she was encouraged to nurture and the way teachers at HA truly invest in each student's success.

Nadim Chowdhury (HA 2011-2018), one of HA's founding students and now an HR Manager at a Japanese bank, shared how the Academy shaped his aspirations and belief in himself, "Helping people to be the best they can be, that's what I do now, and it's exactly what HA did for me. I genuinely can't imagine my journey happening anywhere else."

To close the evening, Ms Harrowes, Head of Careers and Cultural

Connections, spoke about the exciting future of the HA Alumni network and the inspiration alumni continue to provide, not just to students but also to staff too, saying, "What you do now makes what we do so worthwhile."

Following the speeches, alumni had the chance to network, reconnect with old friends and familiar faces. One of the most heart-warming parts of the evening was seeing former students reminisce with past members of staff, many of whom had come along to share in the celebration. A particularly special moment was the warm welcome back for Dennis Woods, the Academy's much-loved former security guard, who greeted every student at the front gates during their time at HA. ■



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