

Burford School Drama Block Opens

When Jane Edwards asked me to join the pupils and staff of Burford School at the official opening of the new Wysdom Drama Block I was delighted to accept.

It is many years since my own offspring finished their education, but my memories of the buildings 'round the back' of the main block are of a series of rather dilapidated 'temporary classrooms' and the old farm sheds and barns. How things have changed.

State of the Art Space

As I entered the wonderful new building, named after Simon Wysdom who founded the school in 1571, I was greeted by a pupil who proudly showed me round the eight new classrooms, used for drama, RE and for pupils with special needs. The highlight of the tour was a look into the 'state of the art' purpose-built drama studio (the perfect rehearsal space for The Wychwood Players!)

The gathered guests were soon seated and enjoying a show performed by students from Years 7 to 10. I recognised a few faces from our villages. If this is what they were able to produce in the short time since the drama block came into use, I cannot wait for the next full show that they stage.

The Head Teacher, Mrs Katherine Haig welcomed everyone, with a special mention for Robert Hardy who had taken time from his busy schedule to officially open the building.



Minister for Magic

He reminded pupils that they have a very bright future ahead of them, with the chance of a well-rounded education at this excellent school and went on to

say that, whilst at Oxford reading English he was taught by C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien and never dreamt that in their spare time they were busily writing classic novels!

I noticed that a few copies of 'Harry Potter' books were given to him for signing, because he is well known for his portrayal of The Minister for Magic in the films of the series.

Andrew Pitman, Chair of Governors told us how, when he joined the Board 12 years ago, he was charged with the job of asking Oxfordshire CC what they intended doing about the temporary buildings which had long passed their useful life. After more than 35 years of temporary use those buildings have all now been replaced with splendid new blocks at a cost of more than £5 million. Beyond those lovely classrooms though I still see what I always saw at the school - dedicated teachers giving our children the chance of a successful future in whatever they choose to do.

We should congratulate everyone involved in this extensive re-building programme and wish every success to the pupils and the staff for the future.

Christine Halliday