

A STRONG & LASTING PARTNERSHIP

2020 marks twenty six years of unbroken partnership between the Lytham Schools (now AKS, Lytham) and the Gymnázium Boženy Němcové (Gybon) in Hradec Králové, the principal city of eastern Bohemia in the Czech Republic.

For all this time this partnership has been the only one between senior schools in the UK and the Czech Republic.

In October 2019 Lytham students travelled to the International Science Seminar in Hradec Králové which has taken place annually since 1997. AKS will host the seminar in Lytham in the autumn of 2020.



In 2020 three Gybon students will travel to the UK as winners of travel scholarships, funded principally by former Lytham staff.



How the partnership began

It was in October 1994, that Julian Wilde, Headmaster of King Edward VII School, Lytham, took up an invitation from Vladislav Král, the Headmaster of the Gymnázium Boženy Němcové to visit his school. From that single day visit and the very warm welcome received the partnership between the two schools began.



In the spring of 1995 Cyril Wildon and Gordon Grundy, Heads of Art at the then separate King Edward and Queen Mary Schools, took a group of four art students and an exhibition of work by all the pupils of the Lytham Schools to Hradec Králové. Later the same year King Edward's hosted the second leg of this exchange. Art students from Gybon, accompanied by English teachers Pavel Adámek and Milena Hálková and art teachers Zuzana Vebersiková and Iveta Jalůvková, spent a week in Lytham.

The International Science Seminars

In 1997 King Edward's was invited to form a triangular partnership with Gybon and with the Siebold Gymnasium in Würzburg, Germany for the annual international science seminar

For the first seminar six of the best Year 10 King Edward's science students, led by Simon Smith and Graham Finney, together with six Gybon students travelled to Germany for the week-long seminar. Two of the Lytham group are now doctors.



In 1999 King Edward VII School (founded in 1908) and Queen Mary School(founded in 1930) joined together to form the new co-educational King Edward VII and Queen Mary School (KEQMS) which enhanced the scope for the hosting of Czech and German students with families.

The ISS has continued each year, with each school playing host in turn. The seminar in Lytham in 2020 will be the twenty fourth consecutive event.

MUSIC and GEOGRAPHY EXCHANGES

There have been three trips for choir and musicians in each direction. The King Edward's choir, under the leadership of Director of Music Geoff Cassidy, pioneered the way in 1998.

Subsequently mixed KEQMS choirs, led by

Alastair Mackenzie and Andrew

Barratt, have also visited Hradec Králové with the highlight being the chance to perform in the 14th C. Cathedral of the Holy Spirit.



The Gybon choir, directed by Jaromír Schejbal, paid their first visit to Lytham in March 1999, giving concerts in St. Cuthbert's Church and at KEQMS. Mary Winterflood, Judith Denver and Liz Cole are

amongst those who have been involved in the choir trips.

A geography trip, led by Judith Cooper and Judith Rimmer and further art exchanges have taken place, with the Czech students (many of whom live in flats) particularly enjoying the chance to stay in an English home and the KEQMS students enjoying visiting a country where everyone wants to speak English.

On the retirement of Vladislav Král in 2002, Jan Šterba, the school's Head of ICT, took up the Headship and was keen to continue the partnership, attending the science seminar in Lytham himself.



Staff and student visits

In 2003 Julian Wilde, together with Ron and Miriam Naylor and Cyril Wildon were special guests at the celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of the opening of Gybon in 1978.



Jan Šterba stayed with Robert Karling, the second Principal of KEQMS, and his family during the science seminars in Lytham in 2005 and 2008 and Robert and Julia Karling accompanied an art group to Hradec Králové.



Gybon students Klára Mokr and Šimon Tejk were the first to work in Lytham in the summer vacation in 2007 and individual contacts and friendships between members of staff, parents and students have led to a number of private holiday visits in both directions.



Supporting the partnership

The partnership has always enjoyed the support of the Embassies of The United Kingdom and the Czech Republic. Pavel Seifter, the Czech Ambassador in London, was the Principal Guest at the King Edward's Foundation Day ceremonies in 1998 and two of his successors, Jan Winkler and Michael Žantovský (pictured), have both visited KEQMS.



Preston resident Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines – one of 669 “Winton children” rescued from Prague by Sir Nicholas Winton in 1939 - has lent her enthusiastic support to the partnership throughout. She celebrated her 90th birthday in November 2019.

In recognition of her promotion of international links and of music Milena has been awarded the M.B.E. by the Queen and an Honorary Degree by the University of Central Lancashire and is an Honorary Freeman of her adopted city of Preston.



At the invitation of Headmaster David Harrow and Head of Prep. School Amanda Ilhan, Milena visited AKS to tell senior and year 6 students about her experiences to mark World Holocaust Day 2019.



Travel Awards 2011 and 2014

In 2011, to mark the continuing cooperation between the two schools, former KEQMS staff funded a special travel award competition for Gybon students.

At a special ceremony in Hradec Králové, attended by Julian Wilde and Ron and Miriam Naylor, the three travel prizes were presented by Nick Groves, Head of the Political Section of the British Embassy in Prague. A silver plate was also presented to Pavel Adamek to mark his contribution to the partnership since its start in 1994.



The winning Gybon students, Johana Macková, Lenka Rejzková and Veronika Palmová, all enjoyed successful visits to the UK in the summer of 2011, with Johana subsequently returning for summer working visits to Lytham.

Travel Awards were again available for Gybon students in the summer of 2014, with a first prize of 12,000 crowns (£400) and two second prizes of 6000 crowns each.

The Judges – Ron Naylor, Liz Cole, Pat Nussey and Judith Denver - announced the three winners at the start of March and the awards were presented by Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines to Pavel Prokop, Marie Vosečková and Klára Novotná at Gybon early in June.



Science Seminars 2011 to 2019

In October 2011 the 15th seminar was held in Lytham, with the Czech group being led for the first time



by English teacher Petr Slezák and Steve Matthews masterminding the week.

In October 2012 Graham Finney and Sarah Hall accompanied the Lytham group to the 16th Seminar which was held in Würzburg and organised by Norbert Mantel. The 17th seminar was held in Hradec Králové in the first week of November 2013. Six Lytham students again attended – the first visit since the amalgamation of KEQMS and Arnold School (now AKS)

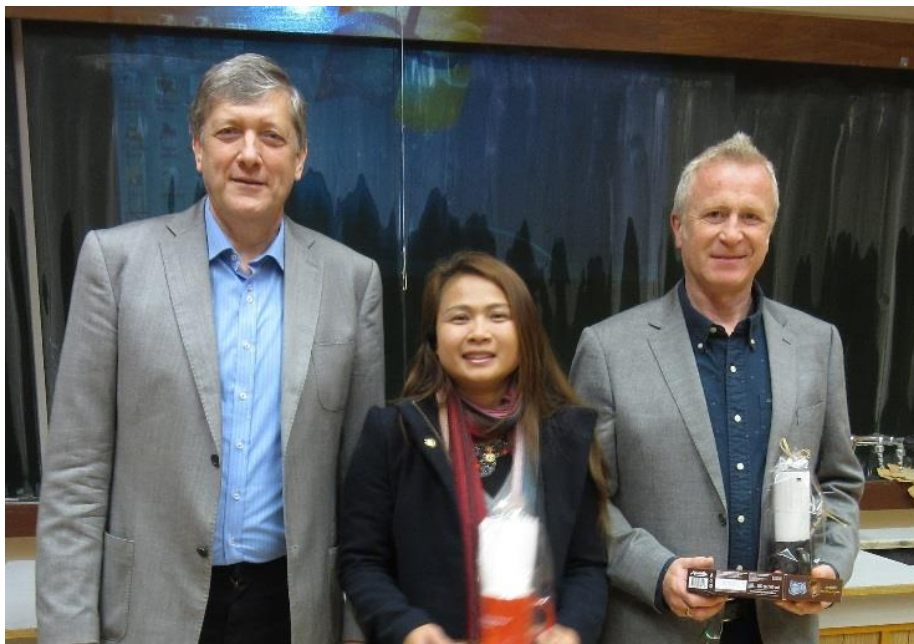


In the autumn of 2014 as Mike Walton became the new Head of AKS, the Science Seminar returned to Lytham, organised by Head of Science Chris Jessop.

The Czech group was again led by Petr Slezák, accompanied by Dagmar Dolejší who was making her first visit to Lytham, with Norbert Mantel leading the German group.



2015 saw the same five staff, with Chris Jessop and Fiona Burnett leading the Lytham group, working together in Würzburg, Hradec Králové in 2016 and in 2019 and Lytham in 2017. In 2020 the ISS will be at AKS, now led by new Headmaster David Harrow.



2016 saw the then AKS Headmaster Mike Walton and his wife paying a special visit to the 2016 I.S.S. in Hrádec Králové where he was especially impressed by the importance of the home-

stays for visiting students. This has been at the heart of the ISS for over twenty years now and gives visiting students the chance to experience family life in a different country.





2017



Travel Awards 2017

The third travel award competition took place during the winter of 2016/17, Ron Naylor again chaired the panel of judges who received thirteen top quality entries. Students in the final 'maturita' year were allowed to enter for the first time. |



The results were announced at the start of March with Adam Petr in first place and second prizes going to Vít Škoda and Andrea Větríčková.



The prizes were presented at Gybon at the end of May by Michael Žantovsky, former Czech Ambassador in Tel-Aviv, Washington and London.



Travel Awards 2020

The fourth travel competition attracted a record number of 23 entrants in the winter of 2019/2020, providing the same panel of judges with a challenging task.



The winners announced in March 2020 were
1st place
Herman Dušek (Kč 17000)
2nd places
Magdaléna Polehňová, Eliška Saiřrtová
(Kč10,000 each)

The Presentation Ceremony will take place at Gybon during the summer or autumn when the British Ambassador in Prague, H.E. Nick Archer, will present the awards and certificates of achievement to all entrants.



The Covid 19 pandemic means that the winners can undertake their journey to the UK at any time in 2020 or 2021

Destination UK

The value of these travel awards in encouraging Gybon students to have European horizons can be seen in the subsequent university choices by earlier winners.

Johana Macková, the first travel winner in 2011 and an earlier ISS attender in Lytham, graduated



in 2019 with First Class Honours in her degree course in Adventure Performance and Coaching at the University of the Highlands and Islands in Fort William, Scotland. Whilst there she has won the British and the Czech Ski Mountaineering Championships and taken the gold medal in the Ben Nevis Ultra Marathon.



One of the 2014 winners Klára Novotná (centre, front) is now on a degree course in Electrical Engineering at the University of Edinburgh.



She travelled to Cambodia as a volunteer in the Engineering for Change scheme and spent the third year of her course at university in France under the Erasmus scheme.

Excellence in English



In May 2019 Julian Wilde made his 16th annual visit to teach English at Gybon where the classes of all ages always exhibit a very high standard in speaking and understanding English.

The keenness of Gybon students to speak and improve their English and the excellent teaching of the English Department, under the leadership of Mr. Luděk Absolon, has been one of the keys to the success of the partnership from the very beginning in 1994.



Julian Wilde March 2020

