

## Live orchestra inspires young musicians

YOUNG musicians from two schools learnt from some of the best musicians in the world. GCSE students from Burnt Mill Academy, in Harlow, and Epping St John's Church of England School, in Epping, attended a performance by the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall.

The concert featured a diverse range of pieces, including western classical and world music, encouraging pupils to reflect on where the music they listen to today comes from.

Cristin Casey, Burnt Mill Academy Trust director of performing arts, said: "This is an opportunity open to all students of all musical abilities. It is a chance to get out of their communities and into central London to upskill them as young cultural leaders. "For our GCSE music students, it was a wonderful opportunity



GCSE music students from Burnt Mill Academy in Harlow and Epping St John's CofE in Epping at the Royal Festival Hall

to engage with what they are learning about in class. We want to get them inspired by watching a live orchestra. "You can't engage in literature if you can't read a novel. By the same theory, you can't

fully access a depth of musical learning without experiencing a live performance.

"This trip enables them to get a clear understanding by seeing and hearing instruments played live."

# Gun crime at an eight-year high

## Police resources concentrate on knife crime

POLICE recorded hundreds of gun offences in Essex last year, new figures show.

It comes amid a national rise in gun crime with nearly 10,000 offences involving firearms across England and Wales.

Essex Police recorded 215 crimes with a gun in 2018-2019, according to Home Office data.

The incidents include offences where a firearm has been fired, used as a blunt instrument or as a threat.

Offences with low-powered weapons such as BB guns and pepper spray are included in police figures, alongside shotguns, handguns and rifles. However, with the data excluding crimes involving air weapons, the real number may be higher.

It means there were 12 firearms offences per 100,000 population in Essex – above the national average of 11.

Across England and Wales, 9,787 gun offences were recorded last year – nearly 60 per cent lower than the level recorded at its peak in 2003-04, according to the Office for National Statistics.



Crimes involving firearms are creeping up again

This is despite offences rising last year to the highest level nationally since 2010-11.

The Gun Control Network is campaigning for progressively tighter controls on guns in the UK.

Speaking about the national rise, Peter Squires, a member of the non-profit organisation, said: "Although gun crime has risen it is still nowhere near as high as it was 15 years ago.

"What police forces were doing between 2005 and 2015 was pushing gun crime down. Priorities have shifted towards knife crime and that's why gun problems pop up in a cyclical way.

"There are more guns in Europe than there ever have been. Gun ownership is rising.

"Evidence shows that a lot of gun crime is gang-related."

The Office for National Statistics said the rise in firearms crimes could be down to improvements in recording by police forces – with recorded stun gun and pepper spray cases seeing the biggest rises nationally.

The most common crime category involving a firearm last year was violence against the person, followed by criminal damage and robbery.

Kit Malthouse, Minister for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service said: "We are taking action to make our streets safer and protect people from violence.

"The Offensive Weapons Act introduces new laws which will give police extra powers to seize dangerous weapons."

## Database is reduced after reviews

LONDON'S controversial gang database is almost a third smaller than a year ago, after the Met acted on concerns raised by two reviews.

The gang matrix was set up in the wake of the London riots in 2011 to monitor people involved with criminal groups in the city.

But an investigation by the Information Commissioner's Office in 2018 found multiple

serious data breaches on the database.

It was not clear how people were added to or removed from the list – and a Mayoral review found a disproportionate number of those monitored were of black or minority ethnic (BAME) heritage.

The Met has now removed almost 500 people with little or no evidence of gang involvement, and says the ma-

jority have not committed a crime following removal.

Sadiq Khan said: "We are now seeing real progress with the Met acting on all recommendations. Our review showed that the matrix is a necessary enforcement tool for reducing violent crime in London, but it's also vitally important that the police continue to evaluate and communicate how it is used."



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