



Golden start to year for ex-pupil turned TV star

Ally McGilvray
allymcgilvray@archant.co.uk

A school in north Norfolk was on top of the world this week after one of its star pupils won one of the television industry's top honours - and then revealed they are still talking about her performance in a school production from 25 years ago.

Forty-two-year-old actress Olivia Colman, who revealed she discovered her love of acting at Gresham's Sixth Form in Holt, has won her first ever Golden Globe award for her performance in BBC One drama *The Night Manager*.

She was given the accolade, which are regarded as pointers to the Oscars, in the best supporting actress in a series, limited series or TV movie category for her work in the spy thriller.

But the Norfolk-born star, who beat *This Is Us* stars Mandy Moore and Chrissy Metz, Lena Headey of *Game of Thrones* and Westworld scene-stealer Thandie Newton to take home the trophy, chose not to fly to Los Angeles for the star-studded ceremony in order to prepare to star opposite Dame Judi Dench in Sir Kenneth Branagh's adaptation of *Murder On The Orient Express*, which is currently being filmed.

Gresham's Headmaster Douglas



■ Gresham's School, Holt.
Picture: ANTONY KELLY

staff and pupils at Gresham's. We are immensely proud of her successful career and watch with interest as it continues to go from strength to strength."

Colman, who adds her latest award to an impressive collection that includes three BAFTA awards and two BIFA awards, returned to her former school in 2014 to meet with pupils and to speak about her career and offer advice to those seeking to emulate her success.

Described as "divinely gifted" by the actress Meryl Streep whom she worked with on the film *The Iron Lady*, where she played Margaret Thatcher's daughter, Carol, Olivia has become a household name and one of Britain's biggest stars since she first appeared in *Peep Show* in 2003.

Drama, wrote in the Gresham's 1991-1992 yearbook: "Pupils are still talking about Colman's performance in *Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*" - a school House production.

Many other Gresham's pupils have gone on to achieve success in the performing arts including Miranda Raison, Ben Mansfield and Sienna Guillory.

This week's gong was Colman's second for her portrayal of Angela Burr and there could be more accolades to come as she has been nominated for further awards including an Emmy and a Critics' Choice Television Award.

Before her role in the global hit series, Colman was best known for playing DS Ellie Miller in the ITV drama *Broadchurch*, a role she will continue later this year as the show returns for its third series.

Colman said: "I can't believe I was not there but it feels like the wrong thing not being there for the first week of a new job.

"I'm playing Judi Dench's maid and I want her to be so impressed because she is my hero. I have to be good and I don't want to be that person who turns up jetlagged but now I sort of think they would have forgiven me.

"I had all these voicemails from the director Susanne Bier saying 'turn your phone on!' Now I'm so gutted I'm