

Spring Term 2010 • Issue 67

# Prep School

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# Prep School

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## Charity does not necessarily begin with the Tories

It has not been the best of years for independent schools but the troubles may not be over yet even if the recession lifts and it becomes clear that its effect on fee-paying parents has not been as dire as predicted. Let us hope that the optimists are proved right.

Rumbling along in the background is the continuing stand-off with the Charity Commission and in particular its chair, Dame Suzi Leather, whose message to the annual meeting of HMC seems to have got rather distorted. She certainly said that schools that failed to pass the public benefit test could be given up to five years to meet the demand. This had apparently always been the case, but nobody had bothered to tell the schools or the media; so it appeared as if she was giving a major concession. She was not. The big problem remains that the central litmus test is going to be in the quality of bursaries provided.

Some independent school heads will seek comfort by pointing out that there could well be a Conservative Government in the next few months and that Old Etonian David Cameron will look more kindly on independent schools. (I wonder, though, whether Mr Cameron may be slightly nervous about his educational history and be very careful before making life easier for independent schools.)

In any event, any incoming government is going to have enough on its plate without worrying about independent schools. I am sure that private conversations are taking place between Michael Gove, shadow education secretary, and the leaders of independent schools but I can find nothing of substance on the record to indicate the Conservative approach to independent schools.

There is plenty to be found on the Tory website about its approach to state education, with at its heart the desire to set up a large number of 'independent' state schools, which could be seen as being in direct competition with fee-paying schools.

The country that provides the closest model for what Mr Gove wishes to do is Sweden. Over the past 15 years, Sweden has introduced a new system that has allowed the creation of many new high quality state schools that are independent from political control. All parents have the power to take their child out of a state school and apply to a new independent state school. The money that went to the failing state school is transferred to the new 'independent' school. They are free and non-selective.

The upshot has been the creation of around 900 new 'free' schools educating about ten per cent of all the children in the country (not very much more than the seven per cent educated in independent schools in the UK). The schools cannot levy any further fee on top of the voucher but they are allowed, under the Swedish system, to make a profit out of running their schools. The British equivalents will not be allowed to make a profit.

With the exception of the introduction of the assisted places scheme, history suggests that Conservative governments have never been great promoters of independent schools. On the other hand, whilst New Labour did scrap the assisted places scheme, independent schools enjoyed relatively friendly relationships when Lord Adonis was schools' minister. (Things have cooled since Ed Balls became Secretary of State.)

So it would be wise for independent schools to raise only two cheers if the Tories do win the next election.

**David Tytler**  
Editor

# No more heroes in the head's study

By Paul Ainsworth

It is often fascinating to read the obituaries of prep school heads or listen to old stagers in the staff room describe the first head that they worked for. A common link between these fêted leaders of yore is the way that they led their schools as heroic head teachers by charismatic example.

We can all think of examples of heads, who could stand in an assembly hall and entrance the whole school, pupils and staff, with the power of their oratory. They could take command of the school and expect instant obedience. Hearing such a character in full flow could be an inspiring experience. It can be easy to attribute this style only to male leaders but I have worked for two hero Heads, the first a charismatic woman.

They both dominated the assembly hall or staffroom by the force of their personality alone. The female head, though, seemed far more approachable and easier for both staff and pupils to talk to.

Most heads believe that they take ultimate responsibility for their school and, as a result, we can see from where the heroic head style evolves. With such a responsibility on their shoulders, some will believe that they know how to move their school forward: if they have such a charismatic personality it can be very tempting to command staff and pupils so that they follow.

There are some circumstances where such behaviour can be the right course of action particularly at crisis points. What is more, many teachers will welcome such a style on occasions as they want to know where they stand and they may feel such forcefulness will improve pupils' discipline.

The heroic style has become increasingly old-fashioned in the world of business and some commentators have written that, in the eighties, we may have been attracted by the notion of heroic, charismatic, larger-than-life type leaders. Educationalists have also



Illustration by Linda Ashwell

begun to share this opinion and use caricatures to illustrate such behaviours.

Gerald Haigh memorably wrote of a hero head: "...roaring in, soliciting approval like a colonel." However, as time moved on cracks appeared and eventually no lasting improvement was made as middle leaders began to lose confidence in their own ideas and initiatives.

Some writers are harsher, referring to hero head teachers as macho and self indulgent with a style that is unsustainable. Further characteristics include a tendency or preference for hierarchical and coercive ways of working, a reluctance to share or develop relationships as a working tool or to use dialogue and open discussion, or to leave people space and to trust them to tolerate ambiguity or uncertainty, or to use genuine listening and understanding as ways of working. Some educationalists suggest heroic leaders do more harm than good as they may provide brief improvement, which can be followed by frustrated or

despondent dependency from their staff.

If hero heads are seen as a dinosaur in today's educational world, they are not extinct. However, the rise of parent power could see their final demise. In the current economic downturn, Heads, trying ever harder to maintain numbers, will feel they cannot afford to lose any pupils. Parents are used to being consumers and some first time buyers will bring a similar viewpoint to paying school fees as they do for other products.

So, if something is not to a parent's liking, they expect to be able to pick up the telephone, speak to the head and have it changed. This could range from a disciplinary punishment, to an extracurricular issue, to the arrangement of the curriculum. One director of studies I know, would plan a course of action with the head and find a complete *volte face* had been ordered as a result of one parents' phone call.

Hero heads can still exist in their own schools and many teachers enjoy working for them, providing they have excellent judgement and teachers feel respected and valued in the school. Against the pressures of the market place, however, it takes a very strong leader to hold their ground and stick to the decisions they have made. Heads are likely to assume a more consultative manner with parents. The hero head, therefore, needs to change their leadership style according to the audience they are working with. If they do not, the result could be that the hero head becomes an extinct breed.

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*This article draws upon his work as a research associate for the NCSL, which has been published as 'No more heroes: Does collaboration mean the demise of the heroic leader?' It can be downloaded from the NCSL website.*

# Back to the future

By Chas Cochand



It may seem a look backwards, but anybody who declines to look at what an active Scout Group can do in a prep school is missing an opportunity. The new look Scouts are now headed up by adventurer Bear Grylls, who takes over from the charismatic Peter Duncan, of *Blue Peter* fame, and the reality is that Scouting is a great addition to any prep school programme.

When Judy Cochand joined Forres Sandle Manor School in Fordingbridge, Hampshire, she not only brought the school a whole new look at special needs, but a career in the Scout Movement. The school was keen to have an active uniformed movement, seeing it as an added asset for children of military personnel serving abroad. And so it was.

The Scout Group at the school is all boys; the girls are catered for with a vibrant Brownie Pack. The philosophy behind the programme was simple. Put in all the Scouting and adventure you can while they are keen as most of the boys will not be Scouts at their next schools.

So though it is a Cub Pack catering to year threes through year six, the Cubs do almost anything they might have done in Scouts. The Cub programme is flexible enough to mix adventure with the fun safely.

Most years the Cubs camp outdoors under canvas in the New Forest, where the delights of yomping in England's newest national park are very real. The Cubs are able to enjoy all the flavours of cooking in the open air around a campfire, and all the noises of the Forest

at night. The group goes up to London in the autumn term for the 'Night in the Science Museum' and a look at London which is very popular. There are expeditions (on camping weekends) to the historic docks in Pompey, Hurst Castle, and the Army Air Museum at Middle Wallop and the spectacular High Ropes course at Brennscombe.

Every four years or less, a Scout Jamboree comes along. With Canada as part of their background, the 18,000 strong camp on Prince Edward Island in 2001 was quite an adventure, along with running the reversing rapids of the Schubenactady River, and camping near Louisburg, the restored 17<sup>th</sup> century French fortress in Cape Breton.

The older members of the group have just come back from a challenging two weeks in Ontario, linking up through the Scout Movement for home hospitality at Ste. Marie amongst the Hurons, a recreation of the Jesuit Mission built in 1639. There was time for Niagara Falls and a baseball game at the Sky Dome in Toronto, but the



highlight was the canoe tripping expedition into Algonquin National Park to do the Nunikani Loop with 6 x 16.5' Kevlar open Canadian canoes.

"It was a major expedition into the wilds, well beyond mobile phone range, and we went to some trouble to be sure the Scouts were confident on the water," says Jude. They had practice at the nearby Avon Tyrell Activity Centre in Hampshire before going. "The Scouts did really well and, of course, aside from the occasional mosquito and a torrential and terrifying thunderstorm, the weather was with us most of the time." The Loop took three days with five portages and some white water riffs. All the canoes, tents, food and equipment had to be transported at each portage and that on top of three hours paddling. It was a real challenge right up to suspending all the food high up in a tree in case of grazing racoons or bears.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Forres Sandle Manor Scout Group is the only school group in the District and fully involved locally with other Scout groups in swimming, football and other competitions. It is a really well rounded programme and it is great to integrate with the community. At Christmas all the Scouts in the area gather at a local campsite for carols round the campfire and the 1<sup>st</sup> F.S.M. are there.

Modern Scouting offers an extra dimension an open door to adventure and your community.

*The author runs Scouting at Forres Sandle School*

# Bringing languages to life

By Lee Perkins

Learning a foreign language abroad, rather than at home or in the classroom, is undoubtedly the quickest and most effective way to master a language and improve on accent. A trip abroad brings the language alive and enables pupils to put into practice what they have learnt at school. A total immersion in the language and culture of another country is an enjoyable and exciting experience for pupils and teachers alike.

Great memories are generated and the team spirit and group bond continue long after the inevitable post-tour buzz back in the classroom. The benefits of studying a language abroad, from academic and personal perspectives, both short and long-term, are numerous.

Speaking a language with local people and listening to it being spoken all around you is much more effective than reading from a textbook. Senses are heightened as the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of a new country are absorbed.

From an academic viewpoint, studying a foreign language abroad enhances a variety of skills, in particular communication; speaking, listening and understanding gestures and social behaviour. It promotes awareness and confidence in the correct use of English vocabulary and

grammar as well as augmenting knowledge in other subject areas such as geography, history and citizenship.

In today's increasingly multicultural and multi-ethnic society, foreign language study is extremely important as it provides a unique insight into other cultures and helps to build cultural competency skills. Whilst studying abroad, pupils can experience cultural differences first-hand and they begin to understand where the perceptions, beliefs and values of another nation come from. This gives them perspective on their own culture and way of life and the ability to assess it from a new viewpoint.

A language trip abroad also promotes tolerance between people, which enables the pupils to relate to the native speakers of the language. Dispelling preconceptions, stereotypes and myths, as well as recognising the differences among people, are important parts of the learning curve. On a personal level, pupils reap the benefits of learning a language abroad as it is an effective and fun way to improve rapidly academic performance and boost self-esteem before the all-important exams.

Language trips overseas are the perfect opportunity for young people to gain life experience and become self-

reliant whilst looking out for others and working as part of a team. Social and emotional development is inevitable. The pupils also gain an enormous amount of satisfaction out of making themselves understood in a foreign language and at the end of a trip everyone feels a real sense of personal achievement.

Teachers who wish to create the opportunity for young people to educate themselves through their own experiences in the real world, to a depth that is impossible to achieve in the classroom, will undoubtedly find the experience deeply rewarding in terms of personal development. Taking a group of young people abroad and interacting with them in a social, as well as an academic, environment often has the positive knock-on effect of enhancing the pupil-teacher rapport, something that will endure well past the trip itself.

Feedback from teachers who have led language study tours abroad often reveals that their enjoyment derives from seeing their pupils share their enthusiasm for the language and country. This not only renews their own passion for the language but also revives their pride in what they do. Witnessing the pupils' social, emotional and attitudinal development and

## Turning a lesson into real French

I'm just back from a school trip to Provence, a trip we run in alternate years for Years 7 and 8. The group dynamic is different each time: this year pupils seemed more interested than ever before, asking some excellent questions at each site.

One *maman d'élève*, who came with us, was impressed by the way pupils were happy to wade in using their French, for example, to find and buy their own lunch in Aubagne market. Sounds to me like a prime opportunity

By Andrew Davis

to replay, re-edit some of those CE role-plays we've all been rehearsing. A major part of our job as language teachers is to practise situations – but also to encourage our pupils to think about how they can adapt what they've heard/seen/read to make their new utterances.

So: does the present CE Modern Languages syllabus help pupils do something useful in a foreign language? My answer is, yes.

When pupils aged 12 to 14 travel, I would suggest that they would like to be able to chat fairly freely with children of their own age about life and work at school; where they live; how they spend their free time and holidays; and personal details about themselves and their family.

So: how can we teach our pupils to speak a little simple French/Spanish/German with their peers abroad? More importantly, how can we teach them to make new



knowing that their educational experience has been enriched is exhilarating. A language tour abroad undoubtedly brings education to life for all participants and the numerous benefits certainly outweigh the work involved in the planning process.

If you have been inspired to arrange a trip abroad for your school, it is

advisable to contact a reputable educational tour operator who is a member of The School Travel Forum and adheres to the rigorous code of practice and safety management policies outlined within the DCSF guidelines. Additionally, in light of recent airline industry and economic conditions, teachers should look for a

tour operator who is fully ABTA and ATOL bonded. This guarantee of financial security provides you with additional peace of mind when planning an enjoyable and rewarding tour abroad. *Bon voyage!*

*The author is Educational Tours Manager, Rayburn Tours*

utterances, instinctively adapting what they know to new contexts and purposes?

In my department, we teach the verb paradigm, quite explicitly, from Year 5. We teach it as two columns of three (singular and plural) rather than a single list of six bits. For our kinaesthetic learners, facing my class, I use my right hand pointing upwards whenever I talk about a JE verb. For TU verbs, I point to my right at hip height: IL/ELLE/ON – right hand points to floor. Left hand, obviously, is for plural (as you face the class). Top left: NOUS ... and so on.

When I see my older pupils running



through verb endings (e, es, e, ons, ez, ent; is, is, it, issons, issez, issent ...) while pointing to some putative verb shape, I

reckon we've given them a good basis for their future language studies.

Decades ago, my brother followed the Cambridge Latin course and seemed not to associate, for example, *sum* with *estis* as part of the same verb. Latin as she is spoke.

In our pre-prep, we talk about blue and red words. It is actually quite easy to inculcate the idea that in French things *must* be blue or red. In teaching nouns, the words themselves can appear in blue or red – or, for younger children, pictures can have blue or red backgrounds. Above all, I urge you to make it an issue: if pictures

**TURN TO PAGE 10**

# Spelling their way to triumph

By Linda Crook

About 800 schools around the United Kingdom entered *The Times Spelling Bee*, a highly entertaining competition for Year 7 pupils. When we entered St Martin's School, Northwood, for the competition, I don't think we realised at the outset how much momentum the event would gain, or appreciated the amount of work involved, including a mountain of paperwork.

Like many English teachers we have tried to encourage pupils to appreciate the importance of accuracy to reinforce their creativity. Spelling is taught at St Martin's through a structured scheme and we try to add new elements to make it exciting, so we thought the *Spelling Bee* might be fun.

The regional heat took place at the Uxbridge Odeon and was fairly relaxed. We had a few supportive parents with us and Andrea, our presenter, was gentle. Although we had checked *The Times* website we weren't totally sure what to expect. The competition was divided into two sections. The three pupils in the team had to stand at a podium at the front of the auditorium whilst the reserve sat in the audience.

The first section required each member of the team to spell fairly accessible words, which gradually



increased in difficulty. Although this was the elimination part of the competition, all contestants were allowed to remain in for the first round to steady the nerves. The difficult skill was to visualise the spelling without losing focus or concentration. In the second part, the team had two minutes to spell as many words correctly as possible from a choice of easy, hard or medium spellings, with points awarded according to difficulty.

I think we were all surprised to win the regional heat and even more so the semi-final in Norwich. When we reached the finals at the Odeon,

Leicester Square, the team was supported by a coach load of Year 7 pupils. By this stage even the teachers were spelling words in their sleep. The final was nerve-wracking and closely fought with excellent teams from all ten schools. Even though the St Martin's boys challenged the lexicographers to keep up, we were still overwhelmed at winning. The whole school took pride in the team's achievement and there was a celebratory mood at St Martin's.

*The author is head of English at St Martin's School, Northwood*

## The joy of speaking French

subsequently appear with a green background: who can remember whether it's 'le' or 'la', 'un' or 'une' – and that you need to know?

Maybe from Year 3 or 4 there will have been something about *grand/grande* being pronounced differently for 'blue' and 'red' words but from Year 5, we begin to talk specifically about adjectival agreement. We make a chain-link gesture with the thumb and forefinger of our right and left hands to focus on the process.

From the end of Year 5 we begin to present some simple mind maps of the material they are learning. It seems to me vital that from an early age children

should have some notion of the functions of the words they are using. I have a dictionary worksheet with three columns: an English word such as book and two blanks. Pupils use the dictionary to find two translations of the English word – but they *must* find two different parts of speech. *Livre* and *réserver* (noun/verb) would be fine – but not *livre* and *carnet* (two nouns).

Do children understand all this? Enough of them do to make it worthwhile. I have some free periods when a Latin teacher works in the classroom next to mine and it's often all I can do to stop myself shouting hooray when I hear what she says to children from my French classes.

Not all children will get it, of course – and the head of languages in a local senior school once told me that some of her A level pupils still didn't have a deep understanding of different parts of speech. But hooray for CE role plays and CE oral presentations: it was a joy to see our pupils trying out in restaurants, shops, at breakfast, what they had learned at school, adapting it to the circumstances in which they found themselves – and realising that it actually works.!

*The author is general secretary of satips and head of French, Marlborough House School*



# The life and times of Charles Darwin

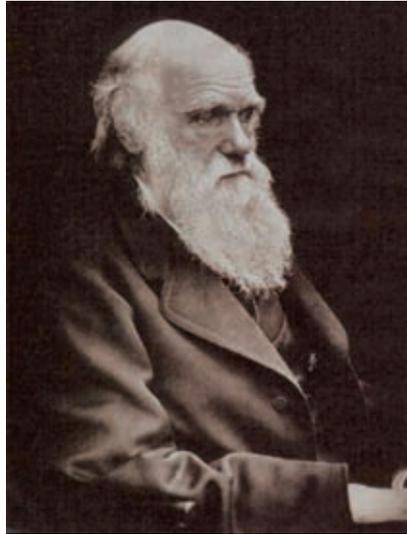
By Thomas Hill, The Hall School

**H**ow did life originate? Why is it so diverse? What is the purpose of our existence? For many intelligent people, Charles Darwin (1809-1882) produced the most credible answers to these questions and is therefore a man of huge importance to history.

Darwin initially studied medicine, but disappointed his father who sent him to study theology at Cambridge. Instead of being ordained, he then took a post as a naturalist on board *HMS Beagle*, which set sail to chart the South American coastline. He spent the five-year voyage collecting rocks, fossils, animals and plants, which he sent back to Cambridge.

The geologist Charles Lyell had already convinced Darwin that the Earth was much, much older than the few thousand years biblical scholars had suggested. During five weeks in the Galapagos, Darwin noticed differences in the shells of giant tortoises and between mockingbirds from different islands. They were clearly descended from a common ancestor and had spread to different islands where they had adapted to eat the food available.

In England, Darwin's collection was analysed by a team of experts. The ornithologist John Gould helped him notice the finches from the Galapagos. Some had stout beaks for eating seeds and nuts; others had beaks 'designed' to eat insects or fruit. It appeared that animals had evolved to eat what they could and had adapted to their diverse environments. Yet he still did not know



how evolution worked. The 'eureka' moment came in 1838 when he read an essay by economist Thomas Malthus on human population growth and food supply. Darwin suddenly realised that all life was a competition for survival. Characteristics that enhance the change of reproduction spread and those that are at a disadvantage die out. Just as a farmer selects certain characteristics when breeding livestock, nature applies a similar process, albeit a much slower one. He called this process 'natural selection'.

In 1842 the Darwins moved to Down House, Kent, where Darwin studied everything around him, from climbing plants to barnacles, from earthworms to fancy pigeons – all whilst bringing up seven children! Despite chronic illness, picked up in South America, he worked

prodigiously hard, building up evidence for 'transmutation', as he called evolution at the time.

He was in no hurry to tell the world of his vision, so at odds with religion. He feared for his friendships and for his devout wife, Emma, who feared for his soul. "It would be," he said, "like confessing to a murder." But he stopped attending church.

In 1858, Alfred Russel Wallace, another naturalist, sent him a similar idea about natural selection. Darwin now had to hurry to write *On The Origin of Species...* which was published in 1859.

Darwin's notable enemies included Richard Owen, the driving force behind the Natural History Museum, and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, who intervened to prevent him getting the knighthood recommended for him by Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston. However, when he died in 1882 he was buried in Westminster Abbey – 20 feet from Sir Isaac Newton.

Since Darwin, science has begun to reveal the mechanics of evolution. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Mendel discovered the laws of inheritance and in 1953 Crick and Watson discovered the structure of DNA, the genetic material. In 2003, a complete map of the human genome was completed. However, it is hard to imagine that any future scientific discovery will overshadow Darwin's Big Idea: the coherent explanation of life itself.

Brentwood Pre-Preparatory School celebrated History Day by going back to the sixties and seventies. Wearing clothes from the 60s and 70s, the children watched children's TV programmes from the time, including episodes of *Mr Benn*, *Button Moon*, *Camberwick Green* and *The Flumps!*

Parents were asked to bring in any 60s or 70s memorabilia in order to create a museum for children to view. The museum included old records, cameras, clothing, a telegram, coins and a variety of dolls and books. Children were asked to identify a range of objects within the museum and were told that there were no video games until the late 70s and that many children had no television.



# The sheer hard graft behind that

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2009, members of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister and other political leaders and representatives from the Armed Forces, congregated in St Paul's Cathedral for a national service to commemorate those who had died in Iraq since the beginning of hostilities there in 2003.

For those of us in the congregation it was an awe-inspiring and emotional occasion, but for the Cathedral Choir it was yet another important service at which they were in the spotlight and professionalism of the highest order was required.

The choristers relish these moments, but I was impressed by, and marvelled at, their calmness and sense of duty as I watched them prepare, processed with them past many dignitaries and heard them sing so wonderfully as television cameras moved around, often pointing in their direction. It is not every nine to 13-year-old who gets the opportunity to perform in public in this way or to be trained to such a high standard and in such a professional manner. It is a privilege for these boys but it is also a lot of hard work and involves a degree of sacrifice on the part of themselves and their families.

The choristers of St Paul's Cathedral lead a busy and exciting life that can, at times, be exhilarating, but can also be exhausting. Nevertheless, the boys who sing in this famous choir thrive on their existence; they have plenty of stamina and love what they do. They sing eight services a week, which includes three on Sundays, as part of the Cathedral's round of worship and prayer. On top of that they have to fit in their academic work and other activities at the Cathedral School. Many of them will go on to well known independent schools such as Eton and Uppingham when they are 13, often having gained music scholarships. This means that not only is the standard of their singing important, but their instrumental playing as well.

Typically, the boys' day starts with breakfast at 7.20am followed by a singing rehearsal with the Cathedral's Director of Music, Andrew Carwood. They will then join the rest of the school at 9.00am and work through an ordinary school day, with all the curricular and co-curricular activities you would expect, until 3.40pm. After a drink and a snack they are off to the Cathedral for another rehearsal before

Evensong. It is then back to school for supper, homework and music practice before a little bit of free time before bed. They get one day a week off from singing on Thursdays.

The weekends are different, with a rehearsal between 8.30am and 10am on Saturdays followed by the chance to go out with their parents until the next rehearsal at 3pm. For those who stay at school, there will be activities laid on and there is no shortage of those in the middle of London.

Saturday evening after Evensong is a time for relaxation and criticising the latest round of contestants on the *X Factor*. Sundays are the busiest days for singing and the three services they sing for include sitting through three sermons. Before they know it, Monday has come round again and the busy schedule starts again.

In my first few weeks as Head of the Cathedral School, I have been amazed at how the boys keep up their morale even when things don't go according to plan. They are rather stern critics of themselves and know when standards have slipped. Nevertheless, professionalism is always the order of the day, and they are soon back on

## Laurence named BBC Chorister of the Year

Laurence Kilsby, an 11-year-old chorister at Dean Close Preparatory School, Cheltenham, has been named as BBC Radio 2 Chorister of the Year.

Despite being the youngest competitor, Laurence, who sings for the school's Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum, beat 60 other boys from choir schools throughout the country to pick up the coveted title.

The final of the competition – presented by well-known Welsh singer and former chorister Aled Jones – took place in front of an audience of more than 2000 at St Paul's Cathedral with Laurence's renditions of the hymn *There's a wideness in God's mercy* and John Ireland's *It is a thing most wonderful* earning him the Chorister of the Year award despite some fierce competition. Benjamin Nicholas, choral director at



Dean Close and Laurence's vocal coach, said: "He is a remarkable musician, especially considering his age, and I am glad that the judges spotted his talent amongst all of the brilliant choristers in the competition."

The Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum, of Dean Close Prep School, has enjoyed worldwide success in recent years, undertaking five international tours and singing at the closing of the French Presidency of the European Parliament in front of President Sarkozy. On top of their blossoming international career, the choir has recorded for Delphian Records and regularly broadcast on a number of BBC Radio stations on top of their term-time duties singing Evensong in Tewkesbury Abbey on Mondays, Tuesday, Thursdays and Fridays of every week.

# t joyful noise...

By Neil Chippington



track if things have gone awry. The unwavering support of their parents is all-important: they often come to services and will make sacrifices to see their sons at the weekends. The boys also have a team of dedicated and supportive residential staff, who are always around to deal with their needs both day and night.

I believe that being part of a larger prep school, with all that it offers, is crucial in keeping the choristers well-rounded characters and helping them deal with the stresses and strains of a busy schedule. The 200 other boys and girls who are day pupils are fortunate to have the chance of being part of a historic institution where they see and hear music performed to such a high standard. In return, the choristers are lucky to be part of a school where their peers have other priorities and interests, which keep their feet firmly on the ground.

Above all, what the choristers learn during their time in the choir are skills that will be important throughout their lives. They have to be organised and self-disciplined; they have to be professional and maintain high standards; and they get to know what the pursuit of excellence is all about.

The cricketer, Alastair Cook, and the actor, Simon Russell Beale, both ex-St Paul's choristers, are shining examples of how such training can give one a firm foundation to pursue one's dreams, in whatever field one chooses.

*The author is Headmaster, St Paul's Cathedral School*



# Making singing fun

By Tim Williams

Rugby School was the inspiring venue for Songfest – a one-day singing workshop organised by SATIPS and masterminded by Tim Forest of Colet Court School, involving pupils from prep and primary schools across the country, following on from a similar workshop in St Paul's School, London.

The events were led by Lin Marsh, composer and arranger of a series of children's songs published by Faber, and Peter Hunt, editor of OUP's popular *Voiceworks* series and arranger of much of the material. They were a celebration of all that is possible with singing and the voice.

Positive affirmative direction is always essential to making these events a success; the approach of both Lin Marsh and Peter Hunt was appropriately enabling and educational. As all choir directors know, the critical moment happens when you stand before the children, even before you begin the warm-ups.

Since healthy posture and reflexive breathing are as much implicitly copied as explicitly learned, the first words are likely to generate the response in sound that will set the tone for all that is to follow. Lin Marsh got this exactly right at the start of the day: using her own voice in a warm and unaffected manner, both in speech and in song. The pupils could not help but copy, with impressive effect.

Finding the right exercises that form a physical, psychological and technical warm-up, while capturing the pupils' attention and helping them to



understand what is being learned, is similarly vital. One of the many memorable warm-ups used included raising and tensing shoulders and saying in an unavoidably tightened tone 'Ooh, that's really uncomfortable' before, all together, dropping shoulders and sighing 'ah'. Not only does this correct one aspect of posture, it also helps the singers relax into their space and breathe naturally.

The musical material used from Lin Marsh's collection, *Spooky Songs*, was ideal for Key Stage 2 pupils. Not only was it catchy and memorable with changes in tone between haunted and impassioned singing, but it also included harmonies that were quickly sung in an extremely convincing manner.

The clear presentation of material by both workshop leaders focused the attention of children for the whole day, with positive impact on the sound produced. Not a single note of music or

text was shown to the pupils at any stage in the day; teaching relied on good aural memory and a quick uptake.

A concert-style showcase of material concluded the day, including individual contributions from many of the participant school choirs. It was a testament to the positive atmosphere engendered that this felt like a sharing of work rather than a competition. It also highlighted many of the ranges of styles and possibilities for choral singing in schools.

Building on the wave of interest engendered in choral music by recent reality television programmes, it is clear there is a wider picture within which this successful day of singing fits. Children – and adults – from all sorts of backgrounds will sing and will do so with great energy, if only they are presented with a fun environment, are given accessible material for their range of ability, and are made to feel included and inspired.

It is vital that those of us who are involved in choral music build for the future by creating these environments, and by investing heavily in the training of our choristers and providing wider opportunities for them. In this respect and many others, days like these make an invaluable contribution to the musical life of our schools and to the wider choral scene.

*The author is director of music at Grantham Parish Church. He also works with the Grantham Prep School choir.*



# Taking a brass band to Italy

*The Portsmouth Grammar School Junior Brass Band tour of Italy included performances in Verona, Venice and local villages around Lake Garda. The band of 48 pupils, aged from seven to 13, led by musical director Graham Brown, performed a wide variety of pieces from original brass band pieces to classical, and film music to pop. Band members Tom Ross, Milly Trim and Robert Weekes report:*

**Friday 17 July:** everybody arrived at school, more excited than usual. After half an hour, all were assembled and the coach was ready for the 30-hour drive round France, through Switzerland to our destination of Lake Garda. The drive to Dover was pretty uneventful, arriving in time for the 4.25pm sailing. The crossing, from Dover to Calais was pretty rough, but we bought ourselves some chips and settled down. We then got back on the coach for the rest of the journey to Italy. We seemed to watch loads of DVDs – something to keep us occupied. Lights out was at 10.30pm and then we slept.

Waking up in the Alps on Saturday morning was lovely – all we could do was wonder at the beautiful country beyond the coach windows. The houses were gorgeous and the mountains amazing, but the very busy traffic was something we had not expected. Three hours later we were still queuing. Then, when we were nearly there, the coach drivers missed the turning to Lake Garda and we ended up going down an increasingly twisting and narrowing road, until it got to the point where we could go no further.

The locals thought this was very funny as we had to get out and walk the last half-mile to the hotel down a really steep path. The coach had to turn round (don't ask how) and then take a 65km detour to get our suitcases and instruments to us at the hotel, following the right road this time. At last we were there. We had our evening meal, which was really good, and then we went for a quick walk along the lake. Then bed.

**Sunday 19 July:** we went to Verona, where we saw a Roman amphitheatre. We climbed right to the top and went to

the Emperor's box. It was huge. Then we walked to Romeo and Juliet's balcony. This was hidden away in a courtyard – not the easiest place to find. We looked around the local market, before making our way, by coach, to the Parco Sigurta Botanical Gardens where we had a chance to play in the woods before giving our first concert, which was great fun. After the concert, Mr Brown decided that we had played so well he bought us all an ice cream.

**Monday 20 July:** we were woken at 6am because we were going to Venice. However, first we went to the glass factory in Murano. It was really cool seeing how the glassmakers worked. One of them blew through the tube, making a bubble that popped. We then had the opportunity to buy glass animals from the gift shop. Wandering around Venice was fascinating – it is full of famous sites. We went in Basilica di San Marco, which was beautiful. We then walked around the narrow streets. It was really crowded. We saw the Ponte di Sospiri and the Ponte di Rialto. We nearly got to go in a gondola, but the teachers decided it was too expensive. The shops sold lots, and I mean lots, of masks. We felt inspired to sing *Just one Cornetto* in honour of the gondoliers. It was a great day.

**Tuesday 21 July:** the opportunity to ride cable cars up Monte Baldo – great views over the mountains. The first cable car took us halfway up the mountain. We then swapped cable cars and got into one that rotated as we went up to the top; the view was amazing. We saw three paragliders launch themselves off the top. Not quite sure where

they landed. After lunch we went to Malcesine Castle, which was massive and had some lovely views over Lake Garda. We then went back to the hotel to have an early dinner because we were playing in the evening.

We performed our second concert in the Piazza Del Mercato, in the town of Dro. All the villagers came out to listen to us and they gave us a little party as a thank you. We were attacked by loads of flying bugs, because we had some bright lights lighting up the music. Had the concert been filmed, it could have been titled, 'Flight of the Mosquitoes'.

**Wednesday 22 July:** our last day and we went on a boat trip on Lake Garda. We saw waterfalls, valleys and forests. The views were beautiful. We visited the small town of Limone, where we spent any money we had left. We ate our packed lunch here and had more ice creams.

Twenty-six hours later we were back in Portsmouth. We had a fabulous time, thoroughly enjoying the sights and sounds of Italy.



# Create your own nativity play

By Charlotte Phillips

For music teachers, the autumn term can seem like one long roller coaster ride of nervous tension. It kicks in with harvest festival, builds during the run-up to the nativity play and ends, on a final G-force level emotional high, with the carol service. So why would anyone be mad enough to add to the pressure by going home-grown and creating their school's Christmas production from scratch? In the pre-prep at Newland House School, southwest London, we are veterans of the DIY nativity.

Over the past five years, parents have been treated to plots that take a tongue-in-cheek look at everything from literacy schemes to time travel. For our 2009 production, we've even lampooned teachers - something the children find more amusing than we do, though only just.

I would be lying if I said it was always plain sailing. We plan for Christmas even earlier than most retailers. In August, while everybody else is firing up the barbecue, we are already digging out those old chestnuts - the jokes, not the edible kind - and starting to talk turkey.

It can seem like an exercise in masochism when, late at night, I am yet again trying to crack the ultimate song challenge by coming up with a convincing rhyme for the word Christmas. Isthmus probably comes closest. However, I have yet to shoehorn a reference to a narrow strip of land connecting two larger areas into a barn - or manger - into a storming humdinger of a finale.

What keeps us going is the teamwork. My festive partners in crime are senior teacher Zena Chrystie and art and drama specialist Finola Kennedy. Creative types all, we achieve what many writers and musicians can only dream of - the chance to see our work performed live to a rapturous audience.

But there's no danger of ending up with an exercise in self-indulgence. Again, unlike most writers, we road-test our words and songs on Newland House's 120 four- to seven-year-old pre-



prep pupils, and they, as every adult can testify, can be the most devastating of critics. They do not have to tell us what works and what fails, miserably. You can read it in their faces before they have said a word or sung a note.

Many's the joke that's been axed during rehearsals when what I thought was a sure-fire Key Stage One winner has fallen flatter than a pancake stuffed with MPs' expense claims. Ultimately, however, humour remains a means to an end. At Newland House, we are all too aware of how easy it is to trivialise the Christmas message and go for cheap jokes at the expense of the story.

Instead, our aim is to give the play a spiritual dimension but in a way that is sincere without being heavy-handed.

Writer and composer Sheila Wilson confirms: "I always look for sincerity that will move an audience not just to have fun but give them something to think about. You don't want to come away feeling negative or that it was a meaningless exercise." Her nativity bestsellers - such as *Hosanna Rock!* - have been seen by upwards of a million parents round the country.

She believes that a good nativity play, especially in an increasingly secular society, can endorse what people think and feel but find it difficult to express. "I was once congratulated by a Head who said that, although he didn't personally have any faith, he felt he didn't want to communicate his lack of

faith to the children." When we get it right, the feeling is unbeatable. Last year's production, *Bethlehem's Got Talent*, featured Christmas characters auditioning in front of a strangely familiar panel of judges including Simon Scowl and Cherry Bowl. There were sheep singing *If you don't love me ba-a' now*; a bunch of Herods essaying that pop classic *I could be so evil* and donkeys attempting to conceal their facial whisker problem with a large powder puff. And, unlike their TV counterparts, everybody in our version got through the audition to play their parts for real in the nativity section.

Parents are undoubtedly appreciative of our efforts. But do staff feel it's worth all that effort? In a word, yes, says Pam Walsh, head teacher at Newland House Pre-Prep. "We end up with a nativity play that's very different from everybody else's. We make sure that the children enjoy it and have fun but that the traditional message is still delivered. Because it's not prescriptive, staff can have their input and adapt it to their own class."

And the ultimate proof, she says, is that everybody is prepared to do it again. "Everybody's fraught at the end of term but when it's over, we immediately start talking about next year."

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# Pearls of historic wisdom

Paul Sharpe retired in July from St Christopher's School, Hove, where he had been head of history since 1981. Here is a selection of his favourite prep and examination paper howlers, amassed over the past 28 years:

The Kubilai Khan was the grandson of the great Imran Khan.

It took the people who died in the Black Death three hundred years to recover.

Knights would never ride on a mayor, only a stallion.

The Reformation was when the church split into Catholics and Prostitutes.

The Frankenstein Friars first came to England in 1224.

Marco Polo was born in Venus.

Anne Boleyn had six fingers on one hand and was bee-headed.

When Scott reached the South Pole he found that the Amazons had already been there.

Magellan was the first sailor to circumsize the world.

After the Black Death people called flatulence went round wiping themselves.

A cog was a ship with a mast, square sail, crow's nest, castles and udders.

If it wasn't for Newton discovering friction and gravity we would all be floating about in space.

Elgar taught himself to play the violin, cello and baboon.

Jason and the Argonauts brought back the Golden Fleas.

William I died when he fell off his hore.

Thomas More was executed because he would not accept Henry VIII as Head of English.

The greatest achievement of Alfred the Great was that he burned the cakes.

Four knights all killed Becket at the same time so that he could not identify which one did it.

To fire a mangonel catapult you had to pull back on this wench and off it went.

People who had sinned went to pervitory to have their sins beaten out of them.

Shakespeare wrote Macbeth, Hamlet and Gilbert and Sullivan.

One of the greatest events of Elizabeth's time was the execution of Mary Queen of Scouts.

Jesuits, like other monks, took a vow of poetry, chastity and obedience.

The vows of a monk were poultry, chastity and obedience.

In a tournament if you capture a knight you can claim his whores, saddle, weapons and armour.

Cruel sports included bull baiting and cockle fighting.

During the Peasants Revolt a row broke out between Walt Whitman and the Mayor of London.

Edward III got his chance to claim the throne of France when the previous king died with no hair.

Wellington was known by his nickname, the Iron Duck.

Charles I's official painter was Dick Van Dyke.

Horatio Nelson's mother died at the age of nine.

At Sutton Hoo they found a belt buckle weighing a tonne. They also found some silver bowels.

The Protestants followed a man called Lex Luther.

Henry VIII was said to have written the song Green Sleeze.

Henry VIII had six wives. The first was his mother, Catherine of Aragon.

Nelson won the Battle of Trafalgar Square.

If a car runs you over and breaks your leg the driver has to give you constipation.

Wogan was king of the Viking gods.

Chivalry involved a knight being gallant, brave, protective of ladies and pies (pious).

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Atkinson...

The barons made King John sign the Magna Carta. They were angry because the taxis had gone up.

Question: What is this a picture of? (The class was shown a drawing of people dancing around a may pole.)  
Answer: Is it pole dancing?



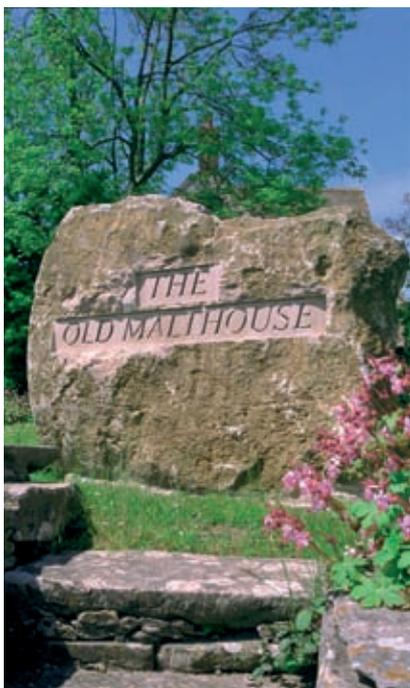
# Breathing new life into a small c

By Moira Laffey

The small prep school is one of the joys of British independent education, but in these days of sustainability it is becoming an endangered species. Some have managed to survive, even thrive, in a niche market; that is all to the good but others have had to close their doors.

One such was The Old Malthouse (OMH), founded in 1906 with six pupils, all boys who boarded. In its heyday, part way through the 1990s, there were 115 pupils, still all boys, but now with a minority of day pupils who attended Saturday school with lessons in the morning and sport in the afternoon. By the time of its centenary there were 65 pupils, boys and girls who were mostly day with a little flexi-boarding; Saturdays provided optional outward-bound activities.

Then, after 101 years, the governors decided that The Old Malthouse in Langton Matravers, Dorset, should close. The school had been established as a boarding school; in recent years there has been a marked national decline in demand for prep-school boarding and it was increasingly difficult to sustain the school on its day-pupil numbers alone. The



governors had attempted in various ways to adapt the school to changed circumstances. In the end, however, those efforts had not been successful in attracting pupils in sufficient numbers, owing in large measure to the school's spectacular but isolated location, ideal for boarding but offering a restricted catchment area for a day school.

Mindful of their obligations as charity trustees, the governors set about deciding the future of the site and, after many months of considering a variety of options, OMH became part of the Cothill Educational Trust. The trust had five educational establishments: Cothill House, Château de Sauveterre, Chandlings Manor, Kitebrook House, Mowden Hall and now it had a sixth. The aim is to provide first class preparatory education to children to the age of 14 through a mix of day and boarding, co-educational and single sex schools.

The trust believes in strength through partnership and the development of individuality, which extends parental options and enables the right choice to be made for each child. OMH will now be run in

affiliation with the Natural History Museum; Cothill will contribute its years of experience of providing first class education to children of prep school age and organising residential courses for particular study. The Natural History Museum, which needs no introduction, will be the research partner in designing and implementing specialist science courses.

OMH now has one central aim – to ignite and establish a real fascination for, and love of, matters scientific in young children. The Cothill Educational Trust will use this unique site to develop a pioneering programme in scientific education for young children. The decline of interest in science in schools has long been of concern to both scientific and educational communities. The widespread use of 'canned' experiments with known outcomes and the rote learning of fixed bodies of sterile scientific knowledge have failed to fire interest in science for many children.

The first topic studied at OMH will concern the identification of trees. This will be part of an international

# country prep school

undertaking, sponsored by the Alfred P Sloan Foundation in New York, to register all tree life on earth with the Tree-BOL (Barcode of Life) website.

The pupils will take part in this international scientific endeavour by identifying, gathering and uploading information from at least one individual tree through:

- traditional identification by morphology, using field guides that have been tailored to the locality;
- automated leaf-shape-based identification using advanced computer technology;
- DNA bar coding. This will focus on the extraction and amplification of DNA from the specimens, prior to dispatch to the Natural History Museum for sequencing. Each sample will be identified, processed and uploaded to the Tree-BOL database by the individual who has prepared it; thus each child will have made its own unique contribution to the Barcode of Life.

Courses will be residential, with children in groups of approximately 15 accompanied by a teacher from their

own school, staying for five days during termtime. Prep will consist of writing up the day's events in journal form in addition to scientist-led discussions on DNA and its many implications for life in the modern world.

Supervised recreational activities, organised by resident members of staff, will make use of the stunning coastal setting and extensive sporting and leisure facilities at the ex-boarding school site. The swimming pool, the natural rock pool at nearby Dancing Ledge that is replenished every day by the incoming tide, the tennis courts, the cricket pitches and the grounds will be maintained for the off-duty enjoyment of all.

The newly upgraded accommodation will owe little to ancient memories of school field trips, being designed to provide thoroughly modern comforts at the end of long days of scientific discovery. The next centenary for OMH beckons.

*The author, a former member of staff at The Old Malthouse, is currently Academic Director, The Beacon School, Amersham*



Picture by Ted Blackburn

It was a case of *All Creatures Great and Small* when Orwell Park pre-prep school, Ipswich, held a special outdoor service for the children's pets. Followed by a pets' day to learn about all the animals' needs and welfare. The congregation included three Alpacas, a donkey, several ponies, cats, dogs, rabbits, a small tortoise and last, but not least, a stick insect in a bowl. The service was led by The Rev Fr Peter McLeod-Miller, of Barrow, near Bury St Edmunds, and lasted for 30 minutes.



St. Martin's Ampleforth's new £25,000 science lab was opened by Mrs Erma-Jean Tracy in memory of her husband Tom. This new, fully equipped laboratory was made possible by a grant from the Tracy Family Foundation and is part of the ongoing £2m investment programme into the school.

# It is the fittest who survive

Paddy Heazell asks what connects Corunna, Wagrum, Darwin and Twyford?

Two hundred years ago, while Britain struggled with its war against Napoleon on the continent, the birth was celebrated of the man who was to give the world the concepts of natural selection and survival of the fittest. That same year, 1809, saw the modest emergence of a very English phenomenon when the Rev Liscombe Clark established the first recognisably typical preparatory school at Twyford, near Winchester.

Here is indeed an English native species that has proliferated and flourished over the succeeding two centuries. In Darwin bicentenary year, it is appropriate to reflect on the reasons why some schools have grown sturdily while others have flowered briefly only to wither and disappear without trace. In these days of economic pressure, it may be worth reflecting on how the forces of Darwinian survival of the fittest have affected the rise and fall of our schools.

World recessions are nothing new. Eighty years ago, pressures on the tender world of prep schools were acute, as Arthur Harrison recounts in his memoirs, *How Was That Sir?* During the 1930s, at least 80 schools had to close. Many were too small to survive. Harrison's Marlborough House numbered just 30.

There was little room for any economy of scale and no fat to live off. Most were privately owned and the proprietor head understandably needed to make a reasonable return on his investment, represented by the property he owned. If a school couldn't be made

to pay, there was no moral or legal imperative to keep it going.

Then came another war, this time Hitler replacing Napoleon of 130 years before.

This is the point in the story of the English prep school where my own education was to begin. I was to attend three such schools. The first, in Virginia Water, was later absorbed by a near neighbour and lost its

identity. The third, having made a smooth and highly successful merger with Forres (note, a school by the seaside), now flourishes, nearly six times bigger than when I attended. I left Sandle Manor in 1949, 60 years ago.

The ten years that followed the Second World War saw an unexpected but substantial expansion in numbers of pupils and schools. Some benefited by that wartime diaspora. Long Close arose from the evacuation of The Hall from Hampstead. Port Regis moved from Broadstairs (again, by the sea) to rural Dorset. It never returned to Kent.

Another new factor in ensuring survival was the move towards setting up educational trusts. The undesirability of offering education for profit was one of the thrusts of the 1955 Fleming Report. An example of a school anticipating this step as early as 1945 was Bilton Grange.

But no less significant was the very impact of expansion. Not only were our schools able to offer a broader-based education but also their size gave them greater security. The norm for a school now passed 100 pupils, and with the move to coeducation and a diminishing reliance on filling boarding places, these tender plants were evolving ever more sturdily. Sixty



years on, it is these post-war foundations that are now in the process of celebrating their diamond jubilees.

I select a single school in this jubilee group as the exemplar for them all, by which we can observe how survival of the fittest may be seen to have operated. It is the 21<sup>st</sup> and last of the IAPS schools with which I have had a personal link, either with a family connection (2), or as a pupil (3), as a gap student (2), as a head (3), governor (4) or adviser/inspector (7).

St Michael's, Jersey, opened its doors on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1949. It was a brave enterprise, welcomed, significantly, by its neighbouring senior school, Victoria College. There were just 15 boys that term, growing to 60 within ten years, very much the norm for the time. In 1952, the first major development in its history was a move from a far from ideal town house in St Helier to its present splendid site a mile into the country. Location is a key element in a school's prosperity. With its admirable buildings, both old and new, and an extensive spread of land, including the largest range of playing fields in Jersey, St Michael's can boast the best site on the island.

Two more elements that enable a school to survive must be plain good luck and handsome generosity. The importance of the first is not to be denied: Napoleon no less, insisted on his generals being lucky. Counting on generosity is just as uncertain. In 1963, St Michael's suffered a calamity with





The new Children's Laureate, Anthony Browne, spoke to pupils from across Sussex following a high-profile day at Windlesham House School, where he gave several talks, signed books and officially opened the school's new library. Mr Browne is one of the most outstanding children's book artists in the world with nearly 40 titles to his name. Gorillas feature in many of his books, which have received a host of distinctions.



By 'Owl Post' from Hogwarts, a very special delivery from Harry Potter author, J K Rowling, winged its way to a very lucky pupil of Seaton House School recently. Megan Bouttle, a pupil in Year 5, had, as part of an English assignment, written to her favourite author in praise of the Harry Potter series of stories she had so enjoyed. Megan was delighted, not only to receive a reply, but also to be the recipient of her very own Hedwig

## Handwriting contest

The National Schools' Handwriting Competition 2010 closes on 5th May 2010. There are three categories: Class A (7 years and under); Class B (8-11 years); Class C (12-14 years); Class D (Staff, open to all school staff).

A prize will be awarded to the overall winner in each category and individual prizes will also be awarded to the winner in each age group. In addition, the school submitting the best collection of entries will receive a cash prize, as will the runner-up school.

For full information, and to download an entry form, go to the official website, which is being run by John Catt Educational: [www.handwritingcompetition.co.uk](http://www.handwritingcompetition.co.uk)

the departure (under a cloud) of the founding proprietor. It could well have been the end of the school. But, luckily, a white knight rode into view; Donald Carnegie had the money to acquire the property and the vision and sense of dedication to see in it a truly worthwhile cause. Crucially, he had four sons, endowed with a variety of talents. Their combined input from 1964 ensured not just survival but growth, and with it, the inspiration that led to expansion. John Carnegie became Headmaster and was elected to IAPS. He remained at the helm for 25 years.

In 1974, the family established an educational trust to ensure the school's future. This was a visionary move by Donald Carnegie but the fact was that the whole business continued to be in

family hands. A last act of generosity remained, to release the school from all ties and financial burdens imposed by the family's understandable self-interest.

This is where I entered the scene, invited as a consultant to advise the family shareholders on the best way ahead, for themselves and the school they had done so much to create. I had to recommend a final act of generosity. Let them agree to permit the school to raise the money to buy its total independence, but at a price the school could afford.

The last and perhaps most crucial element in the survival of the fittest is the establishment of effective, prudent, enterprising and forward-looking management and governance.

Certain words have cropped up regularly in this story: location, vision, generosity, luck and autonomy. Here lies the clue to the survival of the fittest among our schools. Recognition of this, it seems to me, must be crucial in enabling a school to realise its prime purpose: the provision of exemplary education. St Michael's has been blessed by enjoying all of them.

As I bow out from this my last term of formal involvement with an IAPS school, I permit myself a valedictory observation. May those schools now reaching their diamond jubilee years, rejoice at their good fortune. Diamonds may or may not be forever; I would like to hope they are.

*The author is retiring as a governor of St Michael's, Jersey.*

# Not sure about boarding? J

**H**ow is the health of prep school boarding? In some quarters there may be surprise that such a concept as living at school from the age of eight persists at all in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Those of you reading this are, of course, among the well-informed and imaginative who clearly do appreciate that not only does it flourish but in today's boarding world things really have changed.

For those not yet in the know, the very word boarding can still have dire associations with banishment or punitive regimes. Many parents looking fondly at their sweet young offspring today could no more contemplate a boarding school for them than sending them on an SAS survival course.

That is, of course, until the children reach a certain age and their individual interests and needs, and the exciting experiences of their friends and peers, who have tried living at school, start presenting the very surprising notion that boarding is an active, modern choice, which a child might thoroughly enjoy and the whole family appreciate.

The best intentions of parents, our cultural concern with good parenting and a belief in quality time with children can all make boarding, as it has been understood in the past, a hard sell to even the busiest, multi-career families who may later find it the ideal answer to both their education and childcare dilemmas.

## John Baugh reports that prep school boarding is alive and kicking

When we, the schools offering boarding to boys and girls of preparatory age, present ourselves as successfully answering real family needs and providing outstanding educational experiences, we can become a very attractive and holistic schooling proposition. Give children the chance to try boarding for themselves and little more persuasion is needed.

Despite the addition of all sorts of impressive modern learning, arts and sports facilities, many boarding prep schools still have a reassuringly traditional air. Schools may indeed look similar to years gone by – but what happens in them has certainly changed beyond recognition and not just with nice new buildings. The life a boarding child leads today leaves the sad stereotyped and outmoded image of prep school boarding, with its hard beds, poor food and lonely weekends far, far behind.

While the dark arts and Quidditch are not on most school activities' programmes, Harry Potter has certainly had an influence with regard to the freedom and excitement that living away from home presents – and the

Potter series certainly did not stress modern, hotel-style facilities.

Boarding offers a breadth of things to do with friends under the supervision of friendly adults and, often, teenage gap-year helpers. This is what can so attract children who may these days lack siblings, or friends nearby, or safe places to play, or parents at home when they finish the day at school. Of course what a good prep school does – provide an excellent education and preparation for entry to and life in senior schools – remains its great appeal for parents. Adding boarding to this adds a special dimension to learning with any number of additional opportunities that create a demonstrably enriching experience of school.

As we have seen, it is often the children themselves who ask to board and who convince their own parents to let them try it. The parents then come to see the benefit of practical things like the supervision of prep, extra help from teachers and a safe place to be after 5.00pm in the afternoon. The philosophy of thriving and sought-after boarding prep schools, that boarding parenting is a productive partnership of home and school, underpins all this.

The teachers, houseparents and parents work together to create an educational and life experience that suits modern family life rather well. Busy careers, frequent travel, difficult school runs through heavy traffic and the demand for after-school activities can all make day school a logistical nightmare for some families. The family itself has changed and single parents, only children and those whose work takes them abroad also find much in boarding to improve their lives. School can provide stability, care, fun and lasting friendships when it is one of your homes.

Anecdotally, demand for preparatory boarding is strong. Overall figures for prep school boarding in general have been fluctuating in recent years with a tiny downward trend of 0.1% in 2009. As the Head of a long-established but very modern prep school, I see no sign that boarding is the dying art that some



# Just ask those that know...



interpreters of the statistics have suggested.

What I do see are characterful, highly individual, happy and enquiring pupils with strong relationships and a mature approach to life. They come from all kinds of families and all kinds of places: at half-terms and holidays some of them have a five-minute walk and some a day's plane journey ahead of them. It is all part of modern preparatory boarding which encompasses an extraordinary range of backgrounds, abilities and lifestyles – and which has an enduring appeal around the world.

Where demand is high, so of course are expectations – levels of care, contact and service must be high to exceed the needs and expectations of

those new to British boarding. The statistics show that more than half of all boarders are first-timers with no family experience or tradition of going to boarding school. The overseas market continues to grow significantly as new economies present new choices to their citizens. All of these customers are looking for a quality product and are prepared to pay if it is outstanding.

Boarding pupils are noticeably independent and responsible, say their teachers. Not in a preternaturally grown-up way because they have been sent away to school (a phrase to be avoided and rejected by any right-thinking boarding school that intends to attract a single pupil or pass an inspection) but because they naturally learn to manage themselves and get on with those

around them. Perhaps that was always the benefit of a boarding education, but in today's preparatory schools it is not the outcome of tough discipline and emphasis on self-reliance but the product of a warm community life.

A modern preparatory boarding school must of course offer an excellent education; all successful and healthy ones offer just that, but it must also provide genuine care, support and co-operation with and for pupils and parents. Given that my school and many others keen to attract young boarders endeavour to do just that, I would estimate the state of prep school boarding to be bouncing with health.

*The author is Head of the Dragon School, Oxford*



# Learning how to think

By Emma Worley

**S**ir Jim Rose's major review of the curriculum for England's primary schools made it clear that, over and above everything else, schools are about instilling a love and capacity for truly lifelong learning.

He argued that the key to this must be to teach children the skills they need to learn effectively so that they can 'plan, research and critically evaluate, using reasoned arguments to support conclusions' as well as 'think creatively, making original connections and generate ideas' and 'consider alternative solutions to problems'.

Innovative ways to challenge and inspire youngsters are, of course, every bit as relevant and of interest in the independent educational space as in the public. Some may argue even more so, as the former places a high emphasis on bringing out the very best in pupils. So it may not come as that much of a surprise that, as 'tough' an academic subject as philosophy is, it is increasingly being offered by some leading schools as a way to give children as young as seven some of the skills Rose says are now all too often lacking.

The aim is to teach the children how to philosophise, to do it for themselves – not bore them with the history of the subject – so that they learn how to approach problems more creatively. There is also mounting evidence that these children begin to think more deeply, develop complex trains of thought and appreciate another's differing or even conflicting point of view.

As a result, children become familiar with important moral themes well before adult life, which makes for more responsible and enquiring, socially-minded individuals in the long run.

There is also evidence that, while philosophy lessons at a young age stretch even the ablest pupils, they also seem to be a highly effective means of getting difficult, low-achieving pupils engaged once again and of spotting potential high-achievers not currently responding well to conventional metrics of progress (eg numeracy or literacy tests).



Are such claims too strong? The good news is that there are external and independent proof points around the value of philosophy in the classroom at even a young age. In 2007, UNESCO published a study looking at the benefits of teaching such approaches at pre-school and primary levels, concluding: 'We consider the teaching of philosophy to be both necessary and to be reckoned with.'

A study by Dundee University in the same year suggested that working on core philosophical debates as the nature of existence, ethics and knowledge can raise children's IQ by up to 6.5 points – even boost their emotional intelligence. The research also underlined findings in the field that philosophy promotes key speaking and listening skills, when engaged in at an appropriate early age.

Most of these sessions are being led by The Philosophy Shop, which has already brought regular weekly philosophy classes to more than 20 primary schools in London and now increasingly across the UK. The Philosophy Shop has now started offering the sessions to independent schools.

Eagle House School, in Berkshire, began philosophy classes for Years 3 to 8 last September. Andrew Barnard, the Head, believes that philosophy is giving his pupils an excellent chance to develop key life skills that will benefit

their engagement with all areas of the curriculum. He said: "Through various philosophy-based games and discussions the children develop their thinking and listening skills and learn to give clearer expression to their ideas. The children see philosophy as stimulating and rewarding and it is fantastic to see them growing in confidence."

One Eagle House Year 4 pupil wrote: 'We were asked, "What is thinking? Can you describe it without using the word?" That made me ask is the brain and the mind the same thing?' Another Year 4 pupil noted: 'Half of the class thought that your mind was different to your brain because your mind is what you think and your brain is what you know, but the other half thought that you could take out your brains but you couldn't take out your mind.'

Peter Worley, founder and director of The Philosophy Shop, has been teaching philosophy to school children for more than six years and is lead consultant for the special sessions at Eagle House. He said: "Good critical thinking and reasoning powers need to be developed over many years, so they become habitual, so it is important that philosophy is something that is encouraged from an early age."

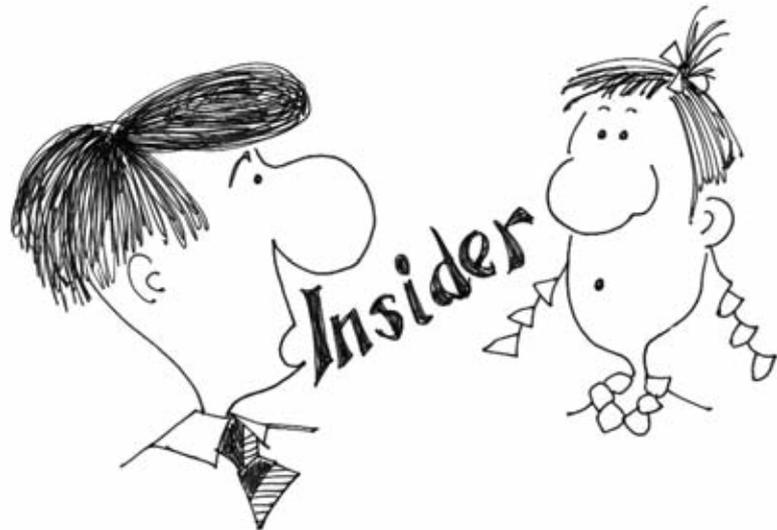
The author is a director of The Philosophy Shop [www.thephilosophyshop.co.uk](http://www.thephilosophyshop.co.uk)

It is rare for Insider to return from a conference having gleaned some useful knowledge. The session on boarding, led (dominated?) by Dragons (that's the school not a plethora of matrons) was a splendid example of what can be done by some willing amateurs, although Jumbo Womersley's tricky parent was far too much like the real thing. Entertaining yet thought-provoking, we were introduced to two interesting websites, those of the charity Red Balloon (good for talks on anti-bullying procedures) and Survey Monkey, useful for setting up your own on-line survey. Those clever people from Google will tell you exactly where to find them.

Well done to Alan Mould, author of *The English Chorister* (which Insider would love to review, but...) on having a short but pithy letter printed in the prestigious bottom right hand corner of *The Times*.

It is not often that one's Chairman of Governors begs to miss a scheduled board meeting, but Neil McGrigor did just that at Hordle Walhampton with a pretty good reason: to find the true source of the Nile. The group (two New Zealanders and Mr McGrigor) hit the headlines following an ambush and the death of a driver at the hands of rebels in Uganda and abandoning the expedition. Six months later they returned to complete it. *Ascend the Nile* (published by Random House in New Zealand) is the fascinating tale of the trip culled from the diaries kept by the men. Even knowing the outcome does not lessen the tension or spoil the enjoyment of a cracking read. If you find difficulty in tracking down a copy, try: [www.fishpond.co.nz](http://www.fishpond.co.nz).

In his years at Harrow, Insider's son had the great good fortune to be coached by Roger Uttley, he of the England and British Lions XV. RMU telephones to ask if prep schools are aware of an enterprise in which he is involved: Planet Sport? This estimable organisation has a proven track record of providing coaching cover for over ten years and as parents now demand expertise on the games field equal to, or



in some cases better than, that provided in the classroom it makes sense to employ the professionals. To chat things through call Ashley Wright on 0845 658 9800 or email him at: [ashley.wright@planetsport.co.uk](mailto:ashley.wright@planetsport.co.uk).

It was good to hear in our President's closing address that members of council cracked the Hotel de France mint box in no less than one and a half hours: Insider still has an unopened tin in his car.

In many respects *Prep School Children*, by Vyvyan Brendon, is a melancholy tome chronicling, as it does, the fast disappearing world of the full-time boarder. It conjures up memories for Insider; of being tearful and gloomy on Liverpool Street Station as he awaited the termly train back to school at Bury St Edmunds; of climbing trees, acting in plays and generally having a great time behind the back of some unfortunate schoolmaster that one wouldn't dare employ these days. It is a wonderful read with no holds barred ... which school is described as 'brutish and unpleasant' and at which school did the HM beat all 98 pupils (do you remember schools of this size?) for defying a prefect's ban on talking during elevenses? Great stuff. *Prep School Children* by Vyvyan Brendon is published by Continuum Books: [www.continuumbooks.com](http://www.continuumbooks.com).

The gaps in the seating for the early sessions in Jersey were not entirely due to the lure of the Zoo. Insider hears of

one group which turned up at Gatwick only to be turned off their flight. Spending the two hours waiting for the replacement was not much fun ... even less fun, for the few who found no room on the second plane.

Ann Scott and Patrick George have managed the tricky feat of combining a useful addition to the classroom with some sharp wit and excellent illustrations. *A Filth of Starlings* and *A Drove of Bullocks* are two visually arresting volumes compiling collective nouns for birds and fish and animals. A vast expanse of purple catches the eye as do two large fish listening to their MP3 players ... a pod of dolphins, of course. You can view these excellent books at: [www.patrickgeorge.biz](http://www.patrickgeorge.biz).

Following Harry Matthews' excellent Jersey sermon (in which he posed the intriguing question: What is worth swimming to at our schools?) it was gratifying to see a queue in Waterstone's of HMs buying the paperback edition of *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins. Commenting on this to the excellent Tim Sterry, Insider was presented with a copy of *The Dawkins Letters*, a fierce but engaging series of correspondence by David Robertson that counteracts the 'atheist myths'. There are points of agreement with Dawkins but the author sets out clearly where some of his thinking does not hold together. For a balanced view, read both books ... but the letters are published by Christian Focus: [www.christianfocus.com](http://www.christianfocus.com).

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# Improving life for children

As the school in Inungur grew in popularity it was necessary to relocate to a larger site on an adjacent piece of land, perfect for an entirely new building. The original building, a simple structure with a corrugated asbestos roof, was not a healthy home for the original 50 children. With the help of many, including Prince's Mead, the land was purchased and several new school buildings erected. Improved ventilation, additional facilities and much needed space now ensure the educational experience is more meaningful for the 200 children, aged three to nine, who now attend the school.

Great progress has been made in helping to provide the much-needed infrastructure to maintain its role within the community. The donations made by Prince's Mead alone have paid for the purchase of some of the land for the new school, built a toilet block for the staff and children, established water connections throughout the new building, paid for the installation of drinking water fountains, security fencing and, most recently, designed and installed two new playgrounds, one for the kindergarten children and another for the junior pupils.

Returning to India in August 2009, this time with Mrs Marion Forster, former chair of the Prince's Mead Association, brought many surprises and delights. The area where the school

*In July 2005, Penelope Kirk, the Head of Prince's Mead School, King's Worthy, Hampshire, established links with a small school in Inungur, Tamil Nadu, Southern India. She spent a month working with the teachers and pupils at the school and took resources and gifts from the pupils and parents of Prince's Mead. Since then many events have been held at Prince's Mead to raise nearly £8,000 for the project. Penelope Kirk picks up the story...*

is situated is very poor and the children all come from families of tenant farmers, earning between one and three dollars a day. One cannot come to India and cease to be amazed by this land of contrasts; it is a country where one experiences the very best and the very worst; profound highs and lows.

To be instrumental on behalf of Prince's Mead in improving the lives of poor rural children cannot be overestimated. These children, who have little in material terms, are blessed with supportive, loving, extended families and delight in simple things. Not for them the constant round of after-school activities, parties, iPods and mobile phones but playing in the street, improvising with anything they

can find to create toys, tending sheep and goats, carrying water from the river or well.

The school, which is also supported by the Christian Shantivanam Ashram, teaches spiritual harmony and the need to share with others and to delight in nature. The teachers do not expect anything other than to find fulfilment in their chosen careers, to care for their families and have no financial expectations of western visitors.

This time I took 60 watches, donated by a number of IAPS Heads from their unclaimed lost property. They were given to children in Year 5 (the top class in the school), all the teachers, admin staff and grounds staff at the school and a number of other people along the way.

The main reason for my second visit was to show the continued support given to this tiny rural school by Prince's Mead and to open officially the two new playgrounds installed and paid for by the Prince's Mead parents. It was a day to remember.

All the children and parents were shepherded into the main teaching area, the officials sitting formally at one end. The event combined with a Global Warming Awareness talk and included a formal tree planting ceremony. All the local people were given saplings, which they planted along the two-mile road from the village to the school to create a shady walkway for the children. The Earth Restoration Service, whose main trustee is Howard Colvin, one of the



# in a far-away Indian village



Prince's Mead parents, has already donated a large sum of money for trees to be planted in the new playgrounds.

The playgrounds themselves are amazing. Prince's Mead has installed roundabouts, swings, slides (which are so high, they would never pass our stringent Health and Safety regulations, but which are loved by the children!), rocking animals and a practical, simple building with open sides and a roof where children can sit quietly to listen to stories, participate in drama activities or simply read.

The value attached to education in India, cannot be overestimated. The curriculum is rigorous, with much of the teaching in English and delivered by rote. The thirst of the children to embrace their learning opportunities is tangible and much can be learnt from their desire to succeed. Education is a way out of poverty and this is recognised by all the families.

It is quite something, that a small prep school in Hampshire has had such a lasting and profound effect on a

small, rural community in a village thousands of miles away. The pupils at Prince's Mead recognise what has been achieved and I believe this link has been of benefit to all concerned, both in

England and India. The world is a vast place, but the school has certainly made a difference and will continue to support and nurture their friends on the other side of the world.



# Jeans for Genes

By Caroline Sharp

**D**ress-down days have become a popular event for charities wanting to raise money in schools. But Jeans for Genes Day is the original non-uniform day, which offers schools something in return for their fundraising.

The annual event, which takes place this year on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October, invites students and staff to wear their jeans in return for a small donation. More than £32million has been raised in the last 13 years by schools and organisations to help provide care for children and families affected by genetic disorders, together with crucial research to develop treatments and, eventually, cures.

Genetic disorders can affect a child's life in many ways including their movement, their learning and their lifespan. There are more than 4,000 recognised genetic conditions and although, individually, the conditions are rare, together they account for more than half of all childhood deaths in the UK. Schools' fundraising is crucial to Jeans for Genes being able to change these children's lives and in return for the efforts they make, schools have

access to free educational resources.

Teachers have been involved at every stage of the materials' development and a new microsite hosted on the charity's website brings all of the resources together. There are stimulating films featuring children's own stories of what it's like to live with their condition. Interactive whiteboard activities based on these films are tailored to Key Stages 1-4 and explore the subjects of genetics, difference and citizenship.

Children with genetic conditions can often find themselves isolated because of a lack of understanding. Jeans for Genes provides information that is really effective in bringing to life what having a genetic disorder means for a child. The charity wants to encourage children to understand and accept the differences that one small alteration in a child's genes can make.

St Teresa's Preparatory School, Effingham, Surrey, has been taking part in Jeans for Genes Day for the last ten years. Elaine Larque, the school's head of science who runs the day, says: "I

think it's very important that the girls have a responsible attitude to everyday life and they should put something back into the community. The educational materials are a fantastic resource, which we use every year both in the classroom and in assembly."

The girls decorate pairs of jeans with a new theme each year and hold a fashion show on the day to show off their creations. Elaine says: "Year 5 hold an assembly, which parents are invited to, so that mums and dads can see what their children have learned. Jeans for Genes Day is fun but it also brings the whole school together and it's an event that everybody looks forward to."

The money raised on Jeans for Genes Day is distributed to charities working in the genetic community. Grants of up to £25,000 help them provide children with the support and care they need now, such as family weekends, equipment and helplines, or research which could transform their lives in the future.

*The author is head of strategic communications for Jeans for Genes*

*Thomas is five, although he's no bigger than a one-year-old boy. He has a life-limiting condition called Cockayne syndrome, which affects his speech, hearing, eyesight and his mobility. Thomas attends a mainstream school and is happy and accepted by his friends, but his older sister, Ellie, is conscious of comments from older children about his appearance and his movement.*

*Jeans for Genes is funding a retreat weekend for the charity, Amy and Friends, which supports families with Cockayne syndrome. It's an extremely rare condition and the weekend gives children like Thomas and Ellie the chance to meet others like them. They can relax and have fun, and parents can share their experiences and draw support from each other. It's also an opportunity for health professionals and researchers to learn more about the condition.*

*Pupils can meet Ellie and Thomas in one of the educational films offered by Jeans for Genes at [www.genesareus.org](http://www.genesareus.org)*

*Jeans for Genes Day needs to raise at least £3million each year to continue its commitments to families, researchers and to its programme of education. Register for a free fundraising pack at [www.jeansforgenes.com](http://www.jeansforgenes.com) or call freephone 0800 980 4800.*



# Capturing a world of dreams

Kate Atkin, Admissions Registrar at Brambletye, explains how the school developed its website.

**B**rambletye is a coeducational prep school in West Sussex, for children aged from two and a half to 13. At a time when we are surrounded by talk of recession, it is essential that schools engage with as wide an audience as possible, appealing to prospective parents whilst also maintaining relationships with existing parents. With this in mind, we began to review the Brambletye website and concluded that it was in need of modernisation.

As Brambletye caters for day and boarding pupils, families may be local, based in London, further afield, or even overseas. The website, therefore, is often the first port of call for parents considering a school for their children. An increase in the number of school admission enquiries made online has certainly reflected this. It therefore needed to be a true and dynamic representation of Brambletye.

As Brambletye staff lacked the skills to develop a brand new website, the school needed to employ a website design company. Three companies were selected to make presentations to the bursar, head of ICT and a governor. Based on these presentations, third party testimonials and extensive research, we chose School Website.

A huge amount of thought and consideration went into the design and content of the new site. I undertook plenty of my own research by looking at other schools' websites, noting the features I liked. Looking at these, I soon realised the importance of easy navigation - nothing is more frustrating than not being able to find what you need quickly and easily. Good pictures and a colourful home page are also something to consider, as these entice the visitor to delve deeper. The resulting plan for our own website was to make it modern, fun, attractive and easy to use.

I regularly call upon teachers to write blogs about expeditions they have been



on with the pupils, or to talk about any events that have happened in or around school. Teachers also take photographs of these outings so the website is a great way for other pupils and teachers, as well as parents, to feel a part of the experience.

Brambletye believes it is important to keep the school website full with up-to-the-minute information - everything from fees to the breakdown of the school day is easily available. It is a window for parents, particularly for those whose children are boarding, to see what is going on at the school. There is also a section dedicated to parents called Parent Zone (only accessible with a parent login and

password) where we upload newsletters, invitations to concerts, notices about holiday courses, changes to fixtures, amongst other things.

The end result is that Brambletye now has a colourful, easy-to-use, informative and interesting website. [www.brambletye.co.uk](http://www.brambletye.co.uk)

*Brambletye worked in collaboration with School Website, the UK's leading provider of website design, prospectus design, marketing and branding for schools. For more information, visit [www.schoolwebsite.co.uk](http://www.schoolwebsite.co.uk) or meet the School Website team on stand D100 at BETT, the world's largest educational technology show on 13-16 January 2010.*

## Planning for the future?

Tell Prep School of your school's plans, send copy and pictures to the editor at Abbey Cottage, Blythburgh, Suffolk IP19 9LQ

# A very special remembrance in t

**Y**ear 8 pupils from Amesbury School, Hindhead, travelled to Ypres in November as an act of Remembrance. The four-day round trip is voluntary, yet every year, every pupil chooses to travel. Pupils spend two full days in Ypres, where they learn about the town's significance in the First World War. What makes the trip so powerful is that the pupils don't have to suffer a single PowerPoint presentation, nor are they required to write a diary or complete a project. We are there together without mobile phones or iPods.

For Amesburians, the Moore Prize is the most prestigious prize a pupil can be awarded. It is given to The Best Fellow in The School and the names of the previous winners are recorded in the dining hall. The first recipient was R H Lawson in 1906, followed by E W B Pim (1907), H M Henwood (1908) and G S Lewis (1909). On another wall, a memorial plaque records the names of Amesburians who gave their lives in the First World War; the names of Lawson, Pim and Lewis appear on that plaque.

The Ypres trip is broadly structured around visits to the graves of three other Amesburians whose names are recorded on the memorial plaque. Major C N North of The Royal Engineers (commemorated at the

## Nigel Taylor reports on a trip to war sites which bring back powerful memories

Menin Gate), Captain A T G Beckham of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Sikh Pioneers (buried at New Town Cemetery, Ypres), and Captain C S Jackson, of the Coldstream Guards (commemorated at Tyne Cot).

However, we visit various places and each pupil contributes by laying a wreath, reciting a piece of poetry, or playing a piece of music.

The first day starts at Flanders Field Museum. The museum occupies the second floor of the Cloth Hall, a magnificent building in the centre of Ypres. Without equal as a First World War museum, it gives the pupils the opportunity to gain a broad understanding of the war and the significance of Passendale (Passchendaele).

We leave for some hands-on education at Croonaert's Wood, Bayernwald, and Hill 60. The area of woodland known as Bayernwald was taken by German troops during the winter of 1914/15, when they constructed a system of trenches;

these have since been reconstructed. In the afternoon we deal with some big themes by reflecting on the meaning and relevance of the words 'courage' and 'cowardice'. In order to do so we visit the grave of Noel Chavasse VC and Bar. The son of The Bishop of Liverpool, Chavasse was educated at Magdalen College School, Liverpool College and Trinity College Oxford, a double blue and an Olympian. Chavasse, a medic, received the Victoria Cross on 26 October 1916 and the Bar, posthumously, aged 33, on 14 September 1917.

In stark contrast, we then visit the grave of Private Herbert Morris, just two miles away. A Jamaican, he enlisted aged 16 and travelled from the Caribbean as a member of the 6th Battalion British West Indies Regiment.

The afternoon draws to a close with a visit to the living museum known as Talbot House in Poperinge. An Army Chaplain, the Reverend Tubby Clayton, saw a use for the property as a soldiers' club; a place where soldiers would meet and relax, regardless of rank. A notice hung by the front door bearing the message: 'All rank abandon, ye who enter here.' One or two pupils play the piano and all of us drink tea, just as the soldiers did nearly a century ago.

The day ends with what is for many of the pupils the highlight of the trip, when two of them are chosen as official participants in the Last Post ceremony at The Menin Gate.

On the second day we leave Ypres as the soldiers would have done, through the Menin Gate and along the Menin Road. We walk through Polygon Wood and spend time at the stunning Australian War Memorial.

By lunch we are at Zonnebeke museum and in the afternoon the party walks to Tyne Cot, and on up to Passendale, before driving to the German Cemetery at Langemarck.

Sixty thousand German soldiers are buried at Langemarck. The cemetery always seems to be cold and it



# The battlefields of World War One



provides a powerful contrast to the orderly, manicured beauty of Tyne Cot and the other British and Commonwealth cemeteries. Our journey ends at Essex Farm.

Each trip has its own highlight. One year it was the singing of the pupils at Talbot House. A couple of years ago it

was the shared intimacy of the Australian Memorial at Polygon Wood at the start of our walk to Passendale.

This year, a detour from the normal itinerary took us to Hooze Cemetery, and we found the grave of the great grandfather of Freya Mileham, one of our party. He had been married for

only three weeks before being killed at the second battle of Passendale.

*The author is head of Amesbury School. For pictures of the trip go to [www.amesburyschool.co.uk](http://www.amesburyschool.co.uk) news and/or galleries. For advice on organising a similar trip email: [nigel.taylor@amesburyschool.co.uk](mailto:nigel.taylor@amesburyschool.co.uk)*



# The value of team building day

Seven years after it was first conceived at Dulwich College Junior School, the annual Team Building Day remains a well established and much anticipated date in the school calendar among boys and staff alike. Taking place at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term, the 100-acre grounds in South London witness 16 mixed-age teams of multi-clad boys racing around in an attempt to overcome a series of mental and physical challenges through group work and co-operation with their teammates.

The boys are used to competing for various events each year in their Day House groups – from Rugby and conkers in the autumn through to general knowledge in the winter and athletics in the summer. The difference here is that it's not a competition *per se*, more a team building experience with their housemates. The bonding element is enhanced by each boy being paired up with a 'buddy' from a different year group.

With each Day House group split up into two teams, a member of staff accompanies them as they attempt to complete eight tasks over the course of the day. The job of the teacher is to observe and intervene as little as possible, as they allow the group to organise themselves.

The interesting thing here is watching the natural leaders emerge. Initially the teams can be slow to get

**'The best groups have appointed leaders and begun to listen to all members of the group'**

organised and staff must bite their tongues (and sometimes block their ears to enthusiastic contributions) to allow the group to resolve issues amongst themselves and work out strategies for solving the tasks.

By Robert Boughton

After a couple of activities, however, the best groups have appointed leaders and begun to listen to all members of the group. It is not unusual for some of the youngest boys to have some of the best ideas, and the more perceptive leaders begin to listen and act on the opinions of the whole group.

The tasks themselves are devised in such a way that every member of the team has to take part for it to be completed successfully, so anyone who wants to opt out will encounter a substantial amount of peer pressure to take part.

The Post Walk, for instance, involves the group attaching themselves to a pair of wooden posts like a pair of communal skis and walking a distance of about 30 metres, while Spider Web demands that every boy pass through a different section of a specially made web, constructed from elastic attached to a wooden frame.

The smaller members of the group have to be physically lifted and passed through some of the smaller holes, which are cunningly placed at the top of the frame.

Some tasks demand more brainpower, such as Code Breaker, while Guess Who? encourages verbal skills and powers of deduction as they try to find out the name of the famous person stuck onto their forehead. Creativity is also encouraged - one activity involves inventing a team game, including a set of rules, from a bag of sports equipment.

General maths problem-solving skills are developed with age-old conundrums such as measuring two litres with one litre and three litre containers. Having to carry out the solution physically gives the problem an added dimension and makes problem-solving a concrete activity, rather than the usual classroom-bound conceptual leap.

Over the course of the year we see the clearest examples that the older boys can take on a meaningful role of responsibility, beyond the formal

structure of the school day. But it is also important for the Year 3 and 4 boys to see these role models in action.

There are also touching moments where bigger boys take care of the younger ones, setting up inter-year relationships and friendships. It is an excellent induction into the social networks of the school for the new intake of Year 3 boys.

We often talk about the importance of group work in the primary classroom and the boys really seem to take on some of the lessons of Team Building Day. It is something that they and staff alike can refer back to later in the year as clear examples of the benefits of cooperation, and what specific behaviour and actions are important

**'Apart from being an excellent lesson in teamwork, it is, quite simply, a great deal of fun'**

for a team to work effectively.

Interestingly, the boys themselves often cite the importance of listening to their peers as being the most important deciding factor for success or failure. It is also reassuring to see boys who may not be the most successful in other areas of school life taking on influential roles.

Apart from being an excellent lesson in teamwork, a development of physical and mental skills, an enhancement of peer relationships and ticking any number of other boxes of National Curriculum targets, it is, quite simply, a great deal of fun. While the boys may go home mentally and physically tired, and their throats a little hoarse, they have also experienced that other important element that should be a part of every school day: enjoyment.

The author is a Year 5 form tutor at Dulwich College Junior School



2009  
Winner  
Jaimee  
Harris

# Photographer of the Year 2010

**N**ow is your chance to prepare your entries for the 2010 competition. Entries must be received by May 31st, 2010 and the winning photographs will be published in September 2010.

Digital cameras will be presented to the first three prize-winners.

**The task:** Take a photograph in colour, or black and white, illustrating life in a prep school. It could be on the sports field, in the classroom, at societies or

clubs, showing pupils at work or play. It must be sharp, it must be well-composed and, above all, it must show the fun of life in a modern prep school.

**The rules:** Only pupils at prep schools may enter; no more than two photographs per entrant; files should be a minimum size of 15cms x 20cms and 300dpi/ppi. Photographs are only accepted in an electronic format either by posting a CDRom to John Catt Educational, 12 Deben Mill Business

Centre, Old Maltings Approach, Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1BL or by email to: [editor@johncatt.co.uk](mailto:editor@johncatt.co.uk)

Label the entries clearly with your name and school address. And please enclose an entry form from the magazine (printed below) to certify the work is yours. One entry form can cover all of a school's entries. If you would like your photographs to be returned, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope of a suitable size.

## ENTRY FORM

### Prep School Photographer of the Year Competition 2010

Name of Entrant(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Confirming Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

As far as I am aware this photograph is the sole work of the above pupil.

Please photocopy this form and attach it to the back of each entry.

Send entries to Prep School Photographer of the Year 2010, John Catt Educational Ltd, 12 Deben Mill Business Centre, Old Maltings Approach, Melton, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1BL.

It has been more than sixty years for some; others come to school every day to drop off or collect their grandchildren. All were instantly at home at Norman Court Prep School when more than 90 grandparents came from all over the country to go back to school for the day. After a hearty home-cooked lunch with the children, the grandparents were treated to a concert from the school's renowned musicians and several choirs. Then it was straight to work in the classrooms as part of a tour of the school by the senior pupils. Laughter and chat rang out over tea and Chef Mo's famous Monster Cake, before the grandparents reluctantly made their way home.



Bob Flowerdew, one of Britain's leading organic gardeners, opened the organic garden at Bilton Grange Preparatory School, Dunchurch. More than 200 people attended the opening of the garden, which has taken pupils, parents and staff at the school more than three years to develop. Visitors enjoyed locally produced organic cider and sampled this year's harvest of vegetables and fruit. The garden has proved a huge hit amongst even the youngest of Bilton Grange pupils, who help out with the gardening whilst learning about nature and the science and practical skills of organic gardening.



The girls from Westonbirt School's Year 7 were thrilled to have a close encounter recently with CBBC TV's Newsround presenter Ore Oduba. They met at the Save the Children Big Picnic Party, held to mark the charity's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at Westonbirt Arboretum, which is the school's nearest neighbour. Pictured here with Ore are Teddy Mardon (11) and Scarlett Jones (11).



In September 1939 – just as war was declared – nine-year-old Todd McMillan walked nervously down the drive at Rockport School, County Down. His school record, which still survives in a large green ledger, remarks that he had been subject to measles, chicken pox and whooping cough and was, 'inclined to be diffident'. Seventy years later, to the day, proudly wearing his old Rockportian tie, Todd walked down the school drive with his granddaughter, Georgia, who is following in her grandfather's footsteps and starting at the school. Todd remembers his own grandfather presenting a cheque for £25 for the school fees for the year. He would need to dig a little deeper at today's prices.

# Welcome to the head's study

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# How my world has opened up

**F**ive years ago I could barely read or write - in fact my literary skills were so bad that I couldn't even write a cheque or reply to an email. Reading a book would take months. I also had a very poor attention span and I struggled to concentrate on anything for more than a few minutes. This made life incredibly frustrating.

Today I am not only able to read and write but I am able to do things I never thought would be possible. It feels like my world has opened up and everything seems so much easier. There is no doubt in my mind that the routine I followed, the Dore Programme, has transformed my life and transformed the lives of my children.

I remember when I was captaining Wales against South Africa I was absolutely petrified before the match. My nerves had nothing to do with facing the Springboks in front of an audience of 72,000. I was worried because after the game I'd been asked to make a speech in front of players, their families and dignitaries.

One reason this was so nerve-wracking was that I had no confidence in my own abilities. Although I wasn't diagnosed with dyslexia until I was 21, learning difficulties had dominated my life. School was a nightmare and my poor concentration meant that it wasn't long before I began to fall behind. After school, my career focused on rugby.

Although I'm incredibly proud of what I achieved in my rugby career, the shadow of learning difficulties always hung over me. I remember once how a middle-aged woman threw a carefully signed autograph back in my face because I'd spelt her name wrong.

The moment that learning difficulties really came back to haunt me was the moment when my wife and I had to face the fact that both our children were showing signs of difficulties.

My son, Steele, had terrible problems with his co-ordination and struggled to ride a bike even though all of his friends could. We later found out he had dyspraxia. Meanwhile my daughter Lucy had huge difficulty with reading

By Scott Quinnell



Scott Quinnell, ex-Llanelli Scarlets number eight, has played rugby at the highest level representing both Wales and the Lions. The son of Derek Quinnell, one of the stars of rugby in the 1960s, Scott joined Llanelli RFC, aged 18, in 1990 and during the next four years he played for Llanelli 146 times, scoring 32 tries.

In 1994 he left rugby union and signed for Wigan rugby league club in a £400,000 transfer. He was capped for Wales at rugby league before returning to rugby union in 1997 with Richmond, though Quinnell was to return to Llanelli in 1998 when Richmond went out of business.

Quinnell played his first game for Wales, against Canada, in 1993: his last was in 2002, again against Canada. He won 52 caps, scored 11 tries and captained his country on seven occasions. He also toured twice with the Lions, to South Africa in 1997 and Australia in 2001, winning three caps and scoring one try. He retired from playing professional rugby in 2004, aged 32.

and found school very frustrating. It was ex-Scotland international Kenny Logan, who first introduced me to the

Dore Programme. I met him when we were working at Sky Sports and he told me about the problems he had in his own life with learning difficulties. As we chatted, I realised we had a lot in common. Kenny told me about a treatment he'd just gone through, which he said involved bean bags and wobble boards.

At the time I thought it was too late for me, but I was keen that my children should have the opportunities that I had never had. In the end, after talking to my wife, I decided to do the programme together with my children.

In January 2006 we all went to the Dore Centre in Cardiff. I was diagnosed as severely dyslexic. My problems were a lot worse than Lucy's and Steele's. We were all prescribed different exercises and when we got home we started straightaway. My wife, Nicola, was as sceptical as I had been, but we all felt it was worth a try.

It wasn't easy keeping up with the exercise regime. I was away with work a lot and had to be sure to take the equipment with me. You can also imagine the dramas we had getting two young children to settle into a routine - I had to be strict with them and strict with myself.

After about six weeks Steele was keen to try riding his bike again. After a few minutes he shouted: "Dad, let go!" What he didn't realise was I had let go a long way back and he had been riding all by himself.

I first started to notice a change in my own abilities when we went on a family holiday. At the airport I bought a couple of books to read on the plane. By the end of the week I'd read both books and I couldn't get enough of reading.

As I was noticing a difference in my own ability my kids were also flourishing.

Having suffered so much growing up with learning difficulties, it was an incredible feeling to realise I was finally winning the battle. More importantly, my kids were really coming out of themselves and starting to shine and grow in self-confidence.

# Scotland wins shooting match

Chris Laughton reports on how an English shooting team took on the mighty Ardvreck



If there is one name synonymous with success in prep school shooting over recent years it is that of Ardvreck, Crieff, Scotland. Although having just over 150 pupils it often has as many as seven teams representing the school in the termly PSRA postal competitions. The magnificent trophies of the four patron saints have been shot for each term since the association was formed back in 1906.

In recent years an annual tournament has also been introduced at Bisley, so that schools have been able to enjoy the excitement and challenge of a live shoulder-to-shoulder match as well. Understandably, it has been schools within the south of England that have made up the bulk of the entry list. Victory on the 50m Malcolm Cooper range, however well earned, would be undeniably even sweeter if all the shooting schools were able to attend and contest this event.

So as the saying goes: "If Mohammed won't come to the mountain, the mountain must come to Mohammed." With this in mind, the PSRA decided to raise an English team this year to take on the mighty Ardvreck. Schools were asked to nominate pupils who might be considered worthy of this challenge and their form was duly assessed at the Bisley Tournament in March. From these youngsters, a team of 11 from five English prep schools was mustered and plans for training were put into place.

It is one of the privileges and enduring appeals of teaching that one gets to see pupils rising to challenges across a broad spectrum of activities within their school life. The 11 pupils selected were no exception and their scores improved dramatically in the lead up to the tour. With five of the team scoring possibles on their last training weekend, it seemed possible that the team might just manage to pull off a famous victory on the day.

The mood was distinctly optimistic as the team checked in at Terminal 5, resplendent in red fleeces and white polo tops to provide that all-important corporate identity. Not that you could go unnoticed checking in a group of youngsters at Heathrow, with rifles too, even if it was just after 6.30am.

The mixed group of businessmen and weekend passengers on the 8.50am to Edinburgh were certainly intrigued and clearly surprised to see us on board. This mattered little to the youngsters who were by now eagerly tucking into a cooked breakfast. Refreshed and full of team spirit they were definitely 'up for it' and proud to be part of a unit that might just topple the mighty Scots, and in their own back yard too!

In the event, the team came close, but alas not close enough, to pulling it off. With no shortage of enthusiasm they were simply beaten by an Ardvreck team that was every bit as good as their formidable reputation. Two of the

English team, Jerry Stileman of Feltonfleet, and Sebastian Fomin of Aldro, reproduced their practice form by shooting possibles but Ardvreck quietly notched up a team average of 99, with six possibles, to ensure that victory went their way by a comfortable margin of 18 points. To see their youngsters calmly appear, one by one, and shoot as well as many an adult twice their age was indeed impressive. But Ardvreck has taken prep school shooting to new heights under their coach Tim Verlander. In his 21 years of shooting there, Tim has coached his pupils to no less than 60 out of a possible 63 victories in The St Patrick's Shield competition. Some of his charges, such as Jonathan Hammond, have gone on to international fame but all have been fortunate to have had an exceptional tutor to inspire and encourage them to aim for such superb standards of marksmanship.

As we tucked into lunch in the dining room before our flight home, above us, gleaming impressively on the wall, were both the St Patrick's and the St George's shields. These have spent most of the last two decades on Scottish soil and, for the time being at least, it looks as though they will be staying north of the border. Next year, however, it is hoped that Ardvreck will accept the invitation to a return match on English soil.

*The author is chairman of the PSRA.*





# Welcome, Trinidad and Tobago

**By Fiona Cumberland**

Ten girls from Tobago had a life-changing week when they visited England on a netball tour, arranged and hosted by Ripley Court School, Surrey. The girls were invited as part of Ripley Court's ongoing relationship with the islands of Trinidad and Tobago.

Last year, Ripley Court School hosted a boys' rugby team from one of the most deprived areas of Trinidad, as part of the *touraid* programme. The charity *touraid* uses sport to bring children from deprived areas of the world to England for a week's tour and cultural experience. This is the first time that a girls' team has been brought over.

Steve Brunning, head of sport at Ripley Court, said: "After hosting the boys last year, we wanted to offer a similar opportunity to girls from Trinidad and Tobago. We liaised with the Department of Education in Tobago through our contacts at the Trinidad and Tobago Development Company. We asked for girls aged ten to 11 so they could be hosted by our Year 5 and 6 girls.

The Tobago girls came from all over the island and represented most of the education districts. Before they came over, the girls had never played together as a team, which made their netball prowess even more extraordinary."

Prior to the arrival of the Tobagan team, the Ripley Court girls organised many fundraising events to ensure their visitors would have a truly memorable visit. These fundraising efforts included a cake bake, ice cream sale and a very successful dog show at the Ripley Farmers' Market.

The whole school became involved and began to understand the importance of the tour. Some of the money made from these events enabled the Tobago girls to see snow for the first time. The snow was at the new Hemel Hempstead Snow Dome but still very impressive and exciting nonetheless.

The morning the girls arrived was fuelled with excitement and anticipation on both sides and both teams quickly struck up conversations and friendships. After a busy first day of introductions, netball training and lessons at Ripley Court, the Tobagan visitors were collected by their host families.

Monday was one of the highlights for the girls. The day began with a trip on the London Eye, where all the major sights were seen and photos galore were taken. On the tour of the city, the Tobagan girls and staff were incredibly lucky to see the Changing of the Guard

at Buckingham Palace and it was lovely to see the girls' faces when the guards in their bearskins and red suits marched within a foot of them.

Next stop was the grand Trinidad and Tobago High Commission where they were very kindly invited to have a traditional Tobagan lunch. The girls felt very at home and it was a privilege to meet the High Commissioner. The girls performed some songs from their homeland before they had to head off to their next stop; Jamie Oliver's *Fifteen*.

Here the girls learnt that not everybody in Britain is privileged. *Fifteen* highlighted some of the social issues people may face and how enterprises like this can help people to find their feet.

The girls' visit to Ripley Court culminated in a netball tournament, involving five other schools. The Tobago and Ripley Court girls played in joint teams and were undefeated in the U11 tournament and won on goal difference in the U10 category.

Ripley Court School hopes to continue to build strong links with schools from Trinidad and Tobago and is looking forward to visiting the islands in the near future.

*The author is head of girls' games at Ripley Court*



## Former Ryder Cup player Paul Way salutes great golf at Stowe

Stowe welcomed more than 90 prep school golfers from more than 30 prep schools for the annual Stowe Putter and Junior Jigger competitions during August. Paul Way, former PGA and European Open Champion, was guest of honour for the day.

Following a rather gloomy and wet practice day, the golfing gods smiled on Stowe and the competition was played in beautiful sunshine – a rather uncharacteristic experience this summer. In his speech following the award of the prizes, Paul Way commented on the excellent quality of the course preparation as well as the good sportsmanship in evidence on the course. He also reflected on his own experience of playing the Stowe course some 25 years ago, when he was part of the Alex Hay young golfers' academy.



The 2010 Stowe Putter and Junior Jigger will take place on Thursday 26 August.

Winner of the Stowe Putter: Joshua Fletcher, Millfield, Winner of the Junior Jigger: Zac Jenkins, Hall Grove. Team Trophy: 1, Millfield, 2, Grosvenor, 3, Bedford. Over 13: 1 Tom Robinson, Bromsgrove, 2, Daniel Godin, Holmewood House, 3, Jacob Walker,

Grosvenor. Under 13: 1, Guy Johnson, Bedford, 2, Henry Hall, Millfield, 3, Daniel Escott, Millfield. Under 12, 1, Joshua Taylor, Bedford, 2, Oliver Baker, St John's, 3, Alexander Stocks, Castle Court.

The complete results are published on the Stowe website ([www.stowe.co.uk](http://www.stowe.co.uk)) together with pictures.



Pupils at Belmont Grosvenor School, on the outskirts of Harrogate, were treated to a masterclass in rugby ahead of the forthcoming season when England coach Jon Callard dropped by. Children were put through their paces by the former England rugby union fullback, who is now a coach at the Rugby Football Union's National Academy. The training session took place at the coeducational school's rugby pitches in the village of Birstwith. Year 5 and 6 boys spent the afternoon with Mr Callard, who taught them passing, tackling and kicking skills, and then played a game of tag rugby.

The rugby coaching session at Belmont Grosvenor School was an auction prize at the school's Magic Tree Ball, held in June. Dozens of items went under the hammer during the PTA-organised event, which raised £13,350 – with the money divided between the school and the Meningitis Research Foundation.



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Pictures, Phil Davies, www.ponytales.co.uk.

Riders enjoyed glorious sunshine for Windlesham House School's annual Inter-Schools Show Jumping. The winner of Class One, the 2'3 scurry, was Joe Saunders, from Oxted School, riding *Flyby Flea*. George Sturgis, from Windlesham House School, came second on *Havenhurst Minim* and third was Issy Salter, also from Windlesham House School, riding *Mariella*.

In Class Two, the team event, Windlesham House School fielded two teams – Windlesham Black (Emma Thormett, Issy Salter, George Sturgis and Holly Barsham) and Windlesham White (Hamish Heagerty, William Heagerty, Matilda Otway and Jemima Taylor).

The winners were Windlesham Black, second was Windlesham White and Oxted School were third. Windlesham's

success continued in Class Three, the 2'9 scurry, where Holly Barsham on *Gable's High Flying Filco* was victorious, second was Natasha Goldman from Hurstpierpoint College and third was Cameron Elliot from Sackville School. The final class, the 2'9 team event, was won convincingly by Hurstpierpoint College; Downlands School came second and Oxted School took third place.

## Tennis after the storms

The IAPS Tennis Tournament once again took place on the courts of Queenswood School, Brookmans Park, Cuffley and Potters Bar Tennis Clubs in Hertfordshire. There was a record turnout of over 300 boys and girls divided into two age groups: under 14 and under 12. Despite the large numbers and some inclement weather, the programme was completed on time thanks to some sterling work by

committee members organising the courts and the Queenswood ground staff who worked hard to make the clay courts playable after the storms.

The standard of play was, as always, very variable, but we like to be inclusive. On this point I would urge those schools who send players only when they have very strong ones, to come along in less golden years as everyone who takes part improves and

all the players enjoy the atmosphere of the tournament. My thanks go to all who contributed to the tournament: to the schools who supported us, to the staff and parents who organised the players and to the countless number who worked hard both on and off court to make our tournament once again a resounding success.

Mike Kelham, IAPS Tennis Committee

### Results

**Under 12 Girls' Plate Winners:** Victoria Mangan/Ellena Costa, Stormont. Runners-up: Kirsten Grant, Headington, /Emily Feisbusch, Edgeborough.

**Under 12 Boys' Plate Winners:** Charlie Russell-Vick/Oliver Santini, Marlborough House. Runners-up: Max Ringer/Joe Turner, Holmewood House.

**Under 14 Girls' Plate Winners:** Jenny Vincent/Iona Clive, Millfield Prep, Runners-up: Ellena Close/Maddie Barber, Hazlegrove.

**Under 14 Boys' Plate Winners:** Philip Kaczmarczyk/Zak Wakelin, Lyndhurst House. Runners-up: Charles Becker/Oliver Matisi, Belmont.

**Under 12 Girls' Doubles Winners:** Erica Cotton/Hettie Horler, All Hallows. Runners-up: Holly McCarthy/Naomi Jackson, St. Bede's.

**Under 12 Boys' Doubles *The Greenish Cups* Winners:** Edward and Thomas Pudney, Alleyn Court. Runners-up: Dominic Lea/Callum Bagley, St. Faith's.

**Under 12 Girls' Singles Winner:** Iona Clive, Millfield Prep. Runner-up: Naomi Jackson, St. Bede's.

**Under 12 Boys' Singles Winner:** Thomas Pudney, Alleyn Court. Runner-up: Lewis Symonds, Barrow Hills.

**Under 14 Girls' Doubles Winners:** Ella Monsey/Flora Hill, Culford. Runners-up: Lucy Hopkinson/Helena Bilney, Dulwich Prep.

**Under 14 Boys' Doubles: *The Hawkins Cup* Winners:** Rhodri Jones/Alex Fage, The Beacon. Runners-up: Max O'Brien/Sam Thomas, Edgeborough.

**Under 14 Girls' Singles: *The Vidal Cup* Winner:** Ella Monsey, Culford. Runner-up: Helena Bilney, Dulwich.

**Under 14 Boys' Singles: *The Cochrane Cup* Winner:** Alex Fage, The Beacon. Runner-up: James Wilkinson, Aldwickbury.



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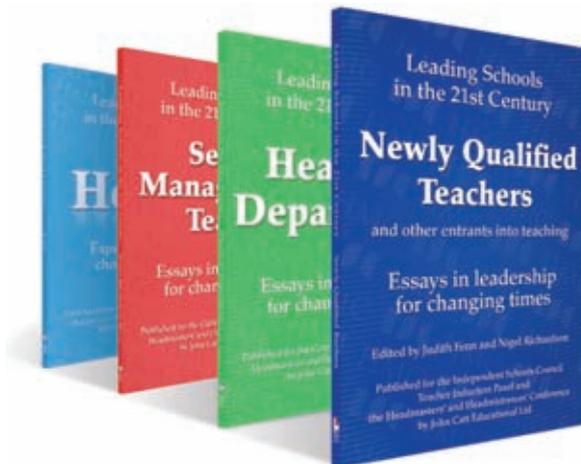
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Head of Schools' Services, Independent Schools Council

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# Home teams come racing home

On home turf, Derwent Lodge and Yardley Court from The Schools at Somerhill were delighted to come away with three of the six shields, which were keenly competed for at Somerhill in the IAPS District Cross-Country event.

Eighteen schools from Kent, Surrey and Sussex descended on the school to run on the hilly and challenging parkland in races between 1750m for the U9 Girls, to 3000m for the U13 Boys. Dulwich Prep, Cranbrook, took home the remaining three shields. This is the second year the event has been held; in total, 432 runners completed their races, and there were many impressive individual and team performances.

In the U9 Girls race, Kathleen Faes and Grace Annetts, both from Derwent Lodge, took gold and silver out of 77 runners. Isabelle Osmond from Kent College, Canterbury, also ran a good race to collect the individual bronze. Dulwich Prep took the U9 Girls team title with four of their runners placed in the top nine.

Miles Christian from Yardley Court took gold in the U9 Boys race where just six seconds separated the top four runners, out of the 77 who competed in this race. Henry Todd from Kent College and Rocco Zanelli from New Beacon collected silver and bronze respectively in a very exciting race. Dulwich Prep won the U9 Boys team shield and showed strength with their junior runners, three of whom came in close together in sixth, seventh and eighth places.

Charlotte Knudson from Rose Hill won gold in the U11 Girls race. In a large field of 104 young runners, Charlotte just pipped Holly Fielder from Spring Grove on the line to win by less than a second. Lizzy Neal from Kent College was third. Mhairi Fenton from Derwent Lodge came seventh, but the school showed depth in the team where the six scoring runners all finished in the top 16. This put Derwent Lodge 36 points clear of their rivals to take the U11 Girls team title.

Though Chris Stockton of Dulwich Prep won the U11 Boys event, he



couldn't prevent home team Yardley Court from having a convincing win at this level with a very strong overall performance; the Yardley team was led home by Freddy Brewer who came second out of the 81 participants. Matthew Barker from Rose Hill ran a fine race to finish third, just five seconds behind Freddy.

There were 36 entries in the U13 Girls race where Dulwich Prep excelled in both the individual and team titles, with Lucy Roud and Ella Stockton winning gold and silver medals. Rowena Maitland from Kent College, Pembury, took the bronze. Just ten seconds separated these three excellent runners.



The other Dulwich runners to score came in fourth, fifth, seventh and eighth giving them a massive lead of 82 points over Marlborough House in the team event. Yardley Court picked up their second shield of the day by winning the U13 Boys team event; runner Timothy Faes (National IAPS 1500m champion) won the gold medal, 21 seconds clear of Will Roud from Dulwich Prep. Archie Mackellar from Rose Hill achieved a bronze medal. All 57 boys in this race achieved respectable times.

## Results:

Team Events: U9 Girls 1750m, Dulwich Prep School; U9 Boys 2000m, Dulwich Prep School; U11 Girls 2000m, Derwent Lodge, Somerhill; U11 Boys 2500m, Yardley Court, Somerhill; U13 Girls 2500m, Dulwich Prep School; U13 Boys 3000m, Yardley Court, Somerhill.

Individual Winners: U9 Girls, Kathleen Faes, Derwent Lodge, Somerhill; U9 Boys, Miles Christian, Yardley Court, Somerhill; U11 Girls, Charlotte Knudson, Rose Hill; U11 Boys, Chris Stockton, Dulwich Prep School; U13 Girls, Lucy Roud, Dulwich Prep School; U13 Boys, Timothy Faes, Yardley Court, Somerhill.

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The pupils and staff of Town Close House Preparatory School were delighted to welcome England test cricketer and *Test Match Special* commentator Jonathan Agnew to Norwich to open the new sports hall. Aggers, as he is affectionately known to all BBC *Test Match Special* listeners, was clearly impressed by what he called this state-of-the-art facility. He said that the children were extremely fortunate to have such a building and expressed the hope that they would not take it for granted but would make the most of it. Before unveiling the plaque, Aggers spoke at length to pupils and answered a wide range of questions from the youngsters. He told them he remembered playing cricket at Town Close as an eight-year-old in shorts: "My abiding memory is that the ground was so small that you were not allowed to hit sixes, they only counted as fours." That pitch is only used for cricket nets nowadays and is alongside the new sports hall.

Fourteen teams took part in the Telford & Wrekin Schools' Under 9s Mixed Tag-Rugby competition, proving themselves to be tenacious runners and taggers. The Old Hall School emerged as worthy winners, having won all their pool games and narrowly beating a well organised Sturchley Primary School side in the final.

Eight-year-old Emilio Olson became U11 individual floor winner in the Trinity Gymnastics Competition, Wycombe

Abbey, with an almost equally peerless performance on the vault. Attracting teams from several counties – West Midlands, Shropshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and North Devon – the annual competition enables children to perform new routines, skills and vaults under the searching scrutiny of a judge.

A faultlessly executed floor performance propelled Emilio to first place, but his vaulting ambitions fell 0.1 of a mark short of gold. The winner? Elder brother Paolo, aged ten.

## Hit the sporting headlines

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DATE	EVENT	VENUE	CONTACT	TEL NO.
16 Jan	IAPS Badminton Tournament	St Paul's Colet Court	Dan Carroll	0208 748 3461
23 Jan	IAPS & Combined Independent Schools JudoCongress For Girls	High Wycombe Judo Centre	Dave Cooper	01494 461838
4 Mar	IAPS U11 Netball Regionals	Various	Philippa McCarthy	07977 253980
5 Mar	IAPS U12 & U13 Netball Regionals	Various	Philippa McCarthy	07977 253980
11 Mar	Eton Fives Championships	Harrow School	James Woodcock	07980 309793
13 Mar	IAPS Individual Judo Congress & Team Event	High Wycombe Judo Centre	Dave Cooper	01494 461838
13 Mar	IAPS U11, U12 & U13 Netball National Finals	Roedean School	Philippa McCarthy	07977 253980
21 Mar	IAPS Small School Sevens Tournament	Oundle School	James Ashcroft	01263 837324
27-29 Mar	District Football Festival	Repton School	Steve Bates	0118 971 0640
29 Mar-1 Apr	IAPS Squash Tournament	Martlesham Squash Club	Steven Hallam	01843 862991
7-9 Apr	IAPS National Chess Championships	Aldro School	David Archer	01483 409020
8 May	IAPS Individual Judo Congress & Team Event	High Wycombe Judo Centre	Dave Cooper	01494 461838
15 May	IAPS National Boys and Girls Swimming Championship	K2 Leisure Centre, Crawley	Dana Haugli	07785 790637
17 Jun	IAPS U11 Rounders Finals (Regional rounds at own venues)	Windlesham School	Gill King	01903 874721
5-6 Jun	IAPS Fencing Championships	Millfield Preparatory School	Sue Benney	01458 832446
14 Jun	IAPS Golf Championship	Royal Lytham St Annes	Stan Jenkinson	07760 178275

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### **Art and Design 2010**

**Wednesday 13 January, Co-ordinating art in the early years** - exploration of project ideas for the early years, plus inspiring schemes of work and leading your team. Abingdon Prep School, Oxon

**Saturday 23 January, Printmaking** - exploration of techniques without the need for a press - ideal for class teachers, early years and non-specialists, Headington School, Oxford

**Wednesday 10 February, Art History** - an art teachers guide to art history and how it can be incorporated into project work Bilton Grange School, Rugby

**Saturday 6 March, Further Printmaking** - adventures through mono, collograph, lino, drypoint and experimental work. Suitable for all age- groups including scholars. West Hill Park School, Hampshire

**Wednesday 17 March, Mixed Media Drawing** - exploration of a wide range of mixed media techniques to create large scale drawings, Dean Close, Cheltenham

**Wednesday 21 April, Using Museums** - in a museum, using the resources to build a scheme of work, History of Science Museum, Oxford

**Wednesday 28 April, Schemes of work and clay** - ideas for all year groups, Abingdon Prep School, Oxon

**Saturday 15 May, Textiles** - constructed textiles and mixed media work using silks, inks, paint, batik and felt, Cheam School, Newbury

**Wednesday 9 June, Painting outdoors** - landscapes and trees in acrylics, Bilton Grange School, Rugby

### **Design and Technology 2010**

**17 May, ELECTRONICS** - a beginner's guide to using electronics in DT, Summer Fields, Oxford

**26 May, WOOD** - hand techniques as well as machinery methods for woodwork in DT - lots of practical ideas for use in KS2/3, Abingdon Prep, Oxon

**9 June, PLASTICS** - using perspex and mouldable plastics in DT - lots of hands-on ideas for KS2/3, Abingdon Prep, Oxon

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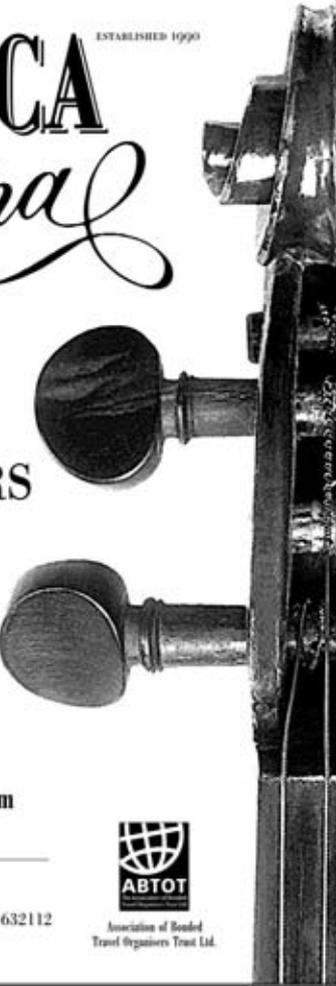
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