BEXLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL WINTER MAGAZINE

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WIZARD OF OZ

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

HOUSE REPORT

NEW LIBRARY

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CHRISTMAS @ BGS 2016

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year From the Editors!

We hope you enjoy this 2016 edition of the BGS School Magazine and we would love to give a big thank you to Mrs Johnson and the rest of the magazine team!

Mr Elphickôs Christmas Message

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the BGS magazine!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Johnson and her team of creative students who work so hard to produce this publication. I hope you enjoy it.

As the autumn term draws to a close we look back over these vital first weeks and months of the academic year. Our new Year 7 students are now settled into the life of the school and by just after half term their parents had met form tutors, attended a Music Concert involving every Year 7 student and enjoyed a BBQ here in school. Similarly, in the Sixth Form, over one hundred students from many local schools joined our own students and together, quickly established themselves as a strong Year 12 group with exciting potential.

This is also the term where the whole recruitment process begins again; we held inspiring, vibrant and successful open events for prospective Year 7 students and a few weeks later, three similarly successful evenings for prospective Year 12 students, one for our own and two for those from other schools. The Sixth Form open events were particularly important and informative events because they mark our first fully-IB cohort, the culmination of over a decade of commitment to this world-class diploma programme. As always, the overwhelmingly positive feedback is about how approachable and friendly our students and staff are – complete strangers to the school report that those they talk to on these evenings genuinely care.

At the time of writing, we have just heard news which means that a BGS record of 20 students have been offered interviews for Oxbridge! To get such numbers says a great deal about the quality of our students, the expertise of their subject teachers, and the sheer hard work that Mrs Stoddard and the Sixth Form Team put in. By the time you read this, students will have been interviewed in a range of subjects including English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Economics, Classics, Medicine, Chemistry, History, Psychology and Law.

You may have heard how successful our entirely refurbished Library is proving. Relocated over the summer, it is now central in the school and is a haven for readers and those researching or catching up on homework.

Although there is not much to show of it yet, the foundations of the new Performing Arts Auditorium have been laid. The Auditorium will have retractable seating for 200 people and underneath will be a new Sixth Form study area. I hope the Spring Edition of this magazine will have a photo of more than some concrete foundations!

Meanwhile, the rest of the school engaged in the plethora of activities typical of what we manage to cram into a term: visits, residential trips, conferences, two ECM days, International Week and of course, a range of House events. We have held Parents' Evenings for Year 13 and Year 11. Our annual 'No Pens Wednesday' supported our drive in Literacy, focusing on speaking and listening skills for a day, rather than writing. As this magazine goes to virtual press, our Year 11 and Year 13 IB students are taking their mock examinations before a well-deserved break.

The Drama production of 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz', as promised, was a celebration of talent across all the year groups! Mr Otley, supported by Ms Gabriel and Ms Brazier and some now very experienced upper school students, directed a team of students to produce a creative and witty celebration of the classic story combined with a strong message about self-esteem. It was wonderful to see our older students working alongside the next generation of thespians to produce such a memorable evening. Thank you and congratulations to all on a stunning production.

The Christmas Concert ushered in the festive season in style. Thirteen ensembles entertained a packed hall with mulled wine and mince pies at the interval. Congratulations to Miss Swadkin, the music department, peripatetic teachers and our music prefects on a polished and inspiring evening.

Have a restful Christmas break with family and friends and may I wish you every blessing in 2017.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz!

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz was set to be performed on the Bexley Grammar School stage as the school Christmas production. This was my first year at BGS as an external sixth form student and I have to say being in the play has been a fabulous experience. I met so many students who I may never have met before if I hadn't auditioned. There are so many elements to focus on when it comes to putting on a play but everyone was committed and enthusiastic coming to

rehearsals (even on Sundays) and it was all worth it in the end. I am so happy I got involved, as the feedback from the performances was extremely positive and everyone did a brilliant job onstage, backstage, technicians, directors, makeup and the band. Also, a huge thank you to Mr

Otley, Ms Brazier and Ms Gabriel (Toto) for their support and hard work. A MASSIVE THANK YOU!

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz was originally the first of 14 novels written by L Frank Baum as a contemporary 'American fairy tale' with Scarecrows, Woodsmen and Witches. The students of Bexley Grammar performed Carol Bird's 2014 adaptation of Baum's novel. The play begins with introducing Dorothy and her home Greysby, an aged and grey town full of boring residents who despise her. Also, she has her companion Toto, who is a sock puppet and barks rudely and randomly. After hearing a resident tell her Aunt Em to send her to a boarding school or orphanage, she is suddenly transported to the Land of Oz as she is taken away by the storm. In Oz, she meets her new friends; Scarecrow, Nick Chopper (otherwise known as the Tin Man) and the Lion. With the help of the Field Mouse Army and the servants of the Witch she ultimately defeats the infamous Wicked Witch of the West and returns home with teleporting shoes so that she can always come back to visit. Glinda, rather different from the film, is not much help with her ginger tea, kumquats and yoga! The play gives a modern and fresh twist to the otherwise much loved classic.

In an earlier interview with Mr Otley:

Why did you choose the play?

I try to pick a play that is an adaptation of a story people know and love - we have done Narnia, Alice in Wonderland and Peter Pan recently. I think it excites the actors and audiences more if they have some prior knowledge. I had a few ideas for plays this year, but once I read 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' I knew this was the right one - I found it really funny and there were moments where some actors would be stretched in acting really emotional scenes. It was also good to have a female lead the year after having a male lead.

I just want to find the play that can best showcase how amazing the pupils that do drama are - I want them to feel proud of what they have achieved and I want the audience to see their brilliance, like I do every day - I think this is a play with the scope to achieve this.

How do you think the play is going?

How is it going? Never ask a director that right before a show- because there are suddenly a million things that need doing and they constantly play on your mind. I think the lead actors in the show have been great, so hard-working and reliable. It is great that so many external Year 12 students have joined us and immediately wanted to be in a school show. The younger pupils are great too, it's hard with diplomas and house events to have time to do a show, so it's amazing that so many of them can be there. I think people will really enjoy the play, laugh and hopefully go home having learnt something.

We hope everyone who came to watch the play thoroughly enjoyed it and that you all have a Wonderfully Wizardly Merry Christmas!

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(Queen of the Field Mouses...not mice!)

House Report November 2016

Including report on the Jack Petchey Award Scheme

This term we have had several House sports competitions: Junior, Intermediate and Senior Boys' Football and Girls' Basketball alongside the Junior and Intermediate Table Tennis; Junior, Intermediate and Senior Girls' Netball and boys' Rugby running alongside the Junior and Intermediate Badminton. Both occasions went smoothly and a huge 'Thank You' to the PE department for organising these competitions. The Boys Senior Basketball has been moved to January 2017 to avoid a clash with ECM day at the end of November.

House Drama was on 12th October and again all Houses produced some excellent performances. It was good to see several Year 7 pupils taking quite major parts in these performances, despite having only been at school for a matter of weeks; Prothero gained first place. There will be an opportunity to see one or two of these performances at the Annual House Showcase next March.

The Harvest Box Challenge for Years 7 – 9 was held after school on 5th October with the results being announced in the Year7 Harvest Assembly the following day. Intermediate Cookery was held in November with Mrs Sawyer, a former member of staff, coming into school to help judge the process, presentation and taste of the Bakewell Tarts that were made by all the teams; Johnson were victorious. Senior Cookery was on 2nd December, the older students following the brief of 'Christmas dessert or cake', always an enjoyable competition, again Mrs Sawyer came in to judge alongside Miss Francis and Mr Elphick. Each House was able to choose what to make and apparently all judges had differing ideas on which entry tasted the best. Collins were victorious with a rather splendid Chocolate Yule Log, which went down a treat!

The Key stage 3 House Swimming Gala is due to take place on 19th December but, at present, this is how the results leaderboard stands:

251	276	229	211	208	218
Collins Second	Johnson First	Kirkman Third	Mabbs Fifth	Prothero Sixth	Wellman Fourth

This term Johnson House have been at the top of the leader board unchallenged for quite a while.

With many more competitions next term there's still time for it all to change.

Jack Petchey Awards

The first three winners for this academic year's Jack Petchey awards have now been chosen. The September Award winner was chosen by Mabbs House. Saki Okada was the winner and she was chosen for the work she does volunteering at her local library, particularly working with disabled children. Saki is always smiling, polite and helpful to everyone; she is a model student. Saki has put her money towards buying new

equipment for the Science Department and resources for the Art Department.

The October Award winner was chosen by Prothero House; Amed Yones was the winner and she was chosen for the following reasons: “She's worked with charity organisations which provide help for disadvantaged people suffering in the Middle East. She has protested the plight of the Kurdish people and wrote an open letter to David Cameron, to which she got a response. She is a caring, brilliant person all round, praised by her form, and is heading to university to study Politics and International Relations.” Amed has given her money to the Library, part of the winnings will pay for entry to a literary competition and the rest towards some new books.

The November Award winner was chosen by Wellman House. Joy Hui was the winner and she was chosen for the following reasons: “Joy is known by all her teachers and peers to be hardworking, pleasant and a pleasure to have in lessons. These traits continue outside of lessons; Joy spent her summer break in Romania, volunteering at a youth camp for underprivileged children with her church group. Since returning to school, she has continued to volunteer at the new School Library every week and was instrumental in getting it set up after it was relocated to a more central location.” Joy has chosen to spend her prize money between the PE Department, who are going to purchase some basketball training equipment and the Art Department, who are going to buy some more new resources.

Mrs J Snelling

JP Coordinator/House Leader

Bar Mock Trial Competition 2016

On 26th October 2016, a group of 14 sixth formers travelled to the Inner London Crown Court, to be pitted against other London schools in two law trials - one of witness intimidation and the other, an assault. For the second time, Bexley Grammar School participated in the Citizenship Foundation’s Bar Mock Trial. Jack Dalton, Sam Sherr, Cathryn Harding, Alex Sutcliffe, Noah Robinson and I all acted as prosecution and defence barristers, which was a great learning experience for us. Sam Co, Swechha Kansakar, Laura Castel-Hallier, Georgina Lesson, Suzanne Nasery and Tianne Odogwu remained calm under the pressure of their role as witnesses. Finally, Kristine Tran and Jess Kelleher worked diligently as the court officials.

We would also like to thank John Robb, a practising barrister, for taking the time to help us on 3 occasions with preparation for the trials and also lending us his personal wig and gown! He was on hand to provide support and was definitely a big help on the day.

Even though we didn’t get to the final of the competition and technically only won one case, it was said that “unofficially” we managed to win all three, thanks to the different judges ruling in our favour! If any aspiring lawyers still wants to join Law Society, please contact Ms Stoddard.

Abisola Bishi 12JJ

The Jack Petchey Speak out Challenge

For most Bexley Grammar School students, Friday 2nd December was just another regular school day, rewarded by a large portion of chicken and chips in the canteen. However, for myself and around thirty other year 10 students, we had a different timetable for the day. Initially, the premise of spending an entire day in one room with a different class focusing on 'speaking out' sounded more

nauseating than the usual Friday PE session.

Despite my first impression, the day quickly had a positive turnout for us all as we learnt from each other our likes and ambitions and how we could use these to talk and inspire those listening. We spent most of the day listening and then speaking to a man called Chris, who was very open to our questions and was funny and honest throughout. We prepared speeches during each period and then presented them for a chance to be in the Jack Petchey Speak out competition which promised a £2,000 cash prize if won and not in the sense of book vouchers!

Overall, I may not have been in the top three but I still felt like a winner in this experience because, regardless of the competition and the money, I'd managed to develop a life skill, whilst getting to know people I wouldn't normally associate with. We sat in an open circle which couldn't have been more fitting as the day had an unwavering welcome that outshone the rest of my week personally by a mile; last week I learnt a life lesson and you can't put a price on that.

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Charity News

The School Council elected Demelza Children's Hospice to be the charity BGS supported this term. They are a lovely charity who care for and support children and parents in the South East. We have been holding several different fundraising events, including a non uniform day and cake sales, plus a Christmas fayre, raffles and postal service are all happening in the next few

weeks.
The BGS School Council have also supported both Macmillan, by holding its annual coffee morning, and the Royal British Legion's annual Poppy Appeal, by selling poppies. Well done to staff and students for all contributions of both time and money.

Ms
Gradley
School
Charities