

March 2012



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Our front page pictures



Book characters become large as life

Visitors to Portsmouth High Junior School, Hampshire, on World Book Day could have been forgiven for thinking they had stepped off the street and right into a fictional world of make believe.

A whole host of book characters emerged from every corner happy to be part of the celebrations for World Book Day. From Harry Potter to Long John Silver and from Wally to Dorothy, the colourful array of outfits brought back memories from many much-loved book favourites.

Year 5 girls rose to the challenge of an Alphabet Book Trail in the Portsmouth High Junior Library alongside their teacher Emma Dowthwaite. Portsmouth High Nursery also joined in with the fun. Nursery Leader Clare Mills led fun activities associated with their favourite story books. At the Senior School, each class was challenged at registration with a quiz "First Lines from Which Books?" set by the School Librarian, Mrs Middleton.

Pictured: Year 5 pupils step out of the classic swashbuckling tale 'Treasure Island'.

More about books – pages 34 - 35

Religion, ethics, philosophy.

Special feature pages 42 - 43

Cover background: The Chapel at Northamptonshire's Oundle School.

The Chapel of St Anthony, consecrated in 1923, was built as a memorial to the fallen of the First World War. It contains some of the most important and influential stained glass in the country.

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Foundation to increase Scholarships

Old Bancroftians, current and former members of staff, parents of current pupils and OBs and School Governors came together to celebrate the launch of the Bancroft's Foundation last month (February).

Bancroft's School, Essex, has a long tradition of giving talented children of all backgrounds the opportunity to experience a Bancroft's education and, to mark the School's 275th anniversary year, the Bancroft's Foundation has been established to provide means-tested scholarships which will enable bright pupils to study at Bancroft's regardless of their families' financial situations.

Guests heard from Old Bancroftian Dr Mike Lynch OBE, lead Patron of the Foundation and himself a Scholar, who spoke animatedly and humorously about his own experiences at Bancroft's. He also spoke of his own support for the Foundation and encouraged guests to join him in lending their support for the initiative.

Another Old Bancroftian, Julien Anani-Isaac, who is currently studying at Worcester College, Oxford and was a Francis Bancroft Scholar, spoke of the impact scholarship support had on his school career. He highlighted the breadth of activities offered by the School: "I will always be very grateful for the opportunities that I received during my time at Bancroft's... (I was) surrounded by teachers who really believed in my potential, and had the chance to get out of my comfort zone and explore and discover new things."

Thanks to generosity of Old Bancroftians and friends, the Foundation has already received over £1.2 million in gifts and commitments and has been able to welcome the first two Foundation Scholars to the School this academic year, and is delighted to announce that a further four Scholars will begin their studies at the School in September 2012.

To find out more about supporting the Bancroft's Foundation, please contact Gemma Wicks, Director of Development at gemma.wicks@bancrofts.org or on 0208 506 5711.

Pictured: Three Heads (past, present & past): Dr Peter Scott, Mrs Mary Ireland, Dr Peter Southern. Photo by Melissa Page

EXCLUSIVE

Public Benefit inspections

~ Charity Commission refutes press reports

The Charity Commission has clarified the latest position regarding public benefit and independent schools, following reports in the national press about 'a change of heart' over school inspections, reports which the Commission describe as inaccurate.

A Commission spokesperson told ISM: "The Commission did undertake a programme of assessments of a range of different types of charities to consider the extent to which they met the public benefit requirement. The programme of assessments started in July 2009 and was completed in February 2011.

"The assessments were carried out to provide practical examples of how the public benefit requirement works in practice for a range of different charities (e.g. care homes, charitable independent schools, religious, arts, recreation and leisure charities).

"In March 2011 we published a summary of the findings of our last round of assessments (which had ended in February 2011), which clearly stated that the formal programme of assessments had concluded.

"There has been no 'change of heart' in relation to the assessments programme following the Upper Tribunal judgement, which was handed down in October 2011, as the programme had already been concluded seven months previous. "We do not carry out routine assessments of any charities.

"It does remain the Charity Commission's overall responsibility to ensure fee-charging independent schools operate for the public benefit in accordance with the law, including the Upper Tribunal's judgement.

"If, hypothetically, a charitable fee-charging school was found not to be operating for the public benefit in accordance with the judgement we would generally expect to work with the trustees to agree a way forward. We would take reasonable account of how much time and resources might be needed by a charity in its particular circumstances to make any necessary changes in order to meet its obligation.

"We have already begun the process of revising our public benefit guidance as a whole, to reflect the Upper Tribunal's judgement."

The spokesperson said concerns about whether a charity was operating for the public benefit would be brought to their attention by complaints, media coverage/queries, whistleblowers or by the charities themselves – for example, a charity might report a serious incident to the Commission or contact them for advice on particular issues. "It may also be the case that whilst looking at particular concerns about a charity, we uncover other issues of concern. It has always been the case that we assess/look into/consider concerns about specific charities that are raised with us."

Clive to Shropshire

Packwood Haugh School, Shropshire, has announced the appointment of Clive Smith-Langridge as Headmaster from September after Nigel Westlake, the current Headmaster, moves to Brambletye School, West Sussex.

Clive moved into education in 2003 after 15 years in senior roles with major international companies, both at home and overseas.

He was Deputy Head Master at Hordle Walhampton School in Hampshire after experience as a teacher of Physical Education and Games, Head of ICT and Mathematics, a member of the Senior



Management Team and house parent, and running the boarding at Cumnor House School, Sussex.



Red roses raise funds

Pupils at Blundell's School, Devon, came up with an innovative way of celebrating Valentine's Day while raising funds for charity. Sixth form girls from North Close, one of Blundell's boarding houses, sold red roses to their fellow pupils to send to friends in the school. Messages to the chosen recipient were attached to the roses which were then delivered by the girls, guaranteeing the anonymity of the sender and in keeping with

Valentine's Day tradition. The initiative raised £320 for Special Olympics, which provides year-round sports training and competition programmes for children and adults with learning disabilities. The money will go to the South Devon club which specialises in training gymnasts. The sale of red roses is just one of the enterprising ways in which pupils at Blundell's, a boarding and day school for ages 11

– 18, fundraises for charity. In the last academic year, the school raised over £10,000 through collections and such events as Blundell's Got Talent, home clothes days, sponsored sports activities and socials. The events were organised by individuals, year groups, boarding houses and the whole school in aid of local and national charities such as Children's Hospice South West, Water Aid and Macmillan Cancer Support.

Royal visit

H.R.H. The Duke of Kent visited Caterham School, Surrey, last month (February) to unveil a plaque commemorating the opening of the refurbished cricket pavilion.

In addition to unveiling the plaque, H.R.H. The Duke of Kent saw the school orchestra and choir give a performance of the School's Bicentenary Anthem, which was composed by the Director of Music Stuart Thompson. The Circus Club gave a display of circus skills and the CCF put on a varied display of outdoor skills.

The refurbished pavilion will be known as the Leatham Pavilion

in memory of Mr Terry Leatham who was Headmaster from 1950 to 1973.

The pavilion has been refurbished by the School, assisted by donations from the Old Caterhamians' Association and the Parents Association. In addition to sports facilities, the pavilion includes state of the art workspaces for Art and Drama.

Headmaster Julian Thomas, pictured with the Duke, said: "I am delighted that we are able to celebrate the bicentenary year with a project that will support students in both sport and the creative arts."



Tackling cyber-bullies

The emotional trauma and stress caused by bullying cannot be understated and pupils at Workop College, Nottinghamshire, have been educated in recognising and preventing the effects of bullying and cyber-bullying in particular.

Cyber-bullying has been defined as "when the Internet, mobile phones or other devices are used to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person" and as it has become more common in society, particularly amongst young people, there is a very real need to deal with such an important issue.

At Workop College, the Sixth Form prefects took a Chapel Service, setting the tone of how menacing cyber-bullying is by dressing in faceless masks to imitate the anonymity of this behaviour. The impact was undoubtedly intimidating and was effective in setting the scene for the rest of the week's events.

A large anti cyber-bullying banner has been displayed in the Great Hall and each day thought-provoking posters have been put up around the school which are blunt and frank allowing the pupils to be fully aware of the consequences of cyber-bullying.

The Captains of School took the whole school assembly, with hard-hitting statistics and stories associated with cyber-bullying and throughout the week all PSHE classes have centred on this most important and topical subject.

National Cipher Challenge

A team of Year 13 pupils from King Edward's School, Bath has won the 10th National Cipher Challenge.

The National Cipher Challenge is a national code-breaking competition run by Southampton University with 1800 teams from across the country taking part. The challenge is sponsored by a number of companies including IBM, GCHQ and Netcraft.

Students were given a series of codes to decipher, with the complexity of the encryption increasing at each stage. The final code was a message

encrypted using music which the students managed to crack on the final afternoon of term.

The four Year 13 pupils have been invited to the prize-giving at Bletchley Park later this month (March). They will have lunch with the sponsors and enjoy an afternoon of lectures given by code-breaking luminaries and receive the first prize award of £1000.

David Middlebrough, Maths teacher, commented: "Congratulations to all the students, this is a wonderful

achievement. The teams enjoyed the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the great code-breakers at Bletchley Park and this success is a credit to the intelligence and determination of the students involved".

Tempest Fugit



Pictured left to right: Will Neaverson, George Timbrell, Nas Andriopoulos, plus a sample of the last code the team had to decipher

Nelson Run kickstarts Tercentenary

Pupils at the Royal Hospital School, Suffolk, commenced their celebration of 300 years of history with a tribute to one of its most famous Governors – Lord Nelson.

As well as being a school Governor, Nelson also sponsored pupils to attend the School and pupils were awarded medals bearing his image. Today the upper sixth boarding house is named after Nelson and the School celebrates Trafalgar Day each year with a ceremonial dinner.

20 pupils and 4 staff took part in the 'RHS 300 Nelson to Nelson Run' from the place of Nelson's birth near Burnham Thorpe, Norfolk, to Nelson House at the Royal Hospital

School. The first runners started at 7.00am and groups of two or three completed legs of 12-15km passing a 'Nelson' baton over 150km finishing at 6.00pm. They passed through places such as Great Bircham, Castle Acre, Swaffham, Merton, Bardwell, Elmswell, Stowmarket, Needham Market, Great Blakenham, Sproughton, Stoke Bridge in Ipswich, Wherstead and finished on time at Nelson House, the Royal Hospital School, Holbrook.

Event organiser and teacher at the School, Mr Martin Callow, said "I totally underestimated the depth of enthusiasm demonstrated by these

girls and boys. Most had already taken part in sporting activities that morning or over the weekend including the East Anglian Cross Country league, inter-school hockey and netball matches and kayaking on the River Stour in preparation for the Devizes to Westminster challenge at Easter. These are incredibly committed young men and women who are prepared to push themselves and enjoy the challenge – it seems to be an RHS trait!"

Hockey champs

The Loretto School Under 13 boys' hockey team has triumphed against some formidable opposition to become Scottish Preparatory Schools' Champions. The boys beat off opposition teams from Perth and Edinburgh.

The Loretto team got off to a flying start, beating Craigclowan School from Perth, 1-0. In the next game the Loretto team beat Ardvreck School in Crieff, 3-0. Loretto School saw off Fettes from Edinburgh, winning 2-0 and drew their final game 1-1 against Cargilfield School from Edinburgh.



Hampshire bound

Richard Jaine, currently Surmaster of St Paul's School, London, will become Head of Sherfield School, Hampshire, in September as well as having a senior role on owners' GEMS' UK Education Committee and in coordinating a working group to develop a strategy for boarding schools for GEMS.

Richard takes over as Head of Sherfield School from Professor Pat Preedy.

Professor Preedy will assume the role of Chief Education Officer of Little GEMS International (LGI) and an Adviser on GEMS' worldwide early years education. Pat is one of the world's leading specialists in early years education and has pioneered innovative pedagogical practice in this field; she will play a crucial role in developing LGI across the world.

Richard started his teaching career at Marlborough College and joined St. Paul's School in 1980.

Appointed Head



Mrs Joanna Rex has been appointed Head of Bedford Modern Junior School.

With a BA (Hons) from the University of Lancaster where she majored in Religious Studies, Mrs Rex also has a PGCE having trained for the Upper Primary age range. Mrs Rex joined Bedford Modern School in 1992 as a Year 5 class teacher before becoming Science Co-ordinator in 1998. In 2002, Mrs Rex was promoted to Deputy Head Pastoral, which then became Deputy Head in its own right in 2004.

Common Entrance ~ the way forward

The Inaugural Education Conference at Cheltenham College, Gloucestershire, provided an opportunity for a hundred or so leaders from the independent sector to get together and talk about what really matters; what children are actually learning in the classroom between the ages of 11 and 14.



Dr Alex Peterken

College headmaster Dr Alex Peterken reports...

The learning years between 11 and 14 are full of potential as they are the last in our school system that are free from the clutches of the public examination system, and all the politically-motivated interference that accompanies it. This age range is also the only area where the independent sector itself has total control of curriculum content and assessment methods and so, quite rightly, we wanted to kick off our annual education leaders' conference with this most promising of topics.

There is now a consensus for modernisation; how should Common Entrance (CE) develop over the next 10 years? Can we introduce more skills-based assessment, focusing less on regurgitation of factual knowledge and more on how pupils can adapt, analyse and utilise skills they have developed at Prep School? Can we take anything from some of the innovation already out there in the Prep School Baccalaureate and the Independent Curriculum?

The conference's short answer was yes. Granted, when you get 100 Heads in a room you'll hear 100 different views, but there were some interesting common strands that emerged. Firstly, there was a huge sense of appreciation that the South-West of England now has a chance on an annual basis to have its say on major issues affecting independent education in the UK today. No longer are such events restricted to the London/Home Counties sphere of influence. Secondly, there was a consensus that, while many teachers may decry the CE exam syllabi as being restrictive, this is, in fact, in the nature of any syllabus. The overriding feeling was that much of CE is still good, and there is plenty of teaching in Prep Schools which goes way beyond the test and is

genuinely inspiring to pupils. "Show me a teacher who is restricted by the exam syllabus and I'll show you a boring teacher" said one Head.

Julie Robinson, Education and Training Director of the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS) reassured delegates that, although it would take some time for CE to develop, it would do so, and that it is important for Prep and Senior Schools to play their full part in the consultation process. There was considerable interest in the joint Humanities paper being trialled by Cheltenham College this year instead of CE and further discussions are now taking place with the CE Humanities Group, chaired by Helen Davy, Headmistress of Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls.

Paul Brewster, Headmaster of the Beacon School, spoke powerfully about the Prep School Baccalaureate (PSB) and its all-encompassing curriculum, including sport, music and drama. Paul argued that 10-13 year olds need more freedom to develop a passion for learning rather simply acquiring facts to pass the test. There were some interesting aspects of his PSB programme but, as it is still at the pilot stage, the small scale of the PSB means that credibility with some Senior Schools (even though they might applaud the principle) was seen as a potential obstacle. Perhaps the Independent Schools Examination Board (ISEB) taking the PSB under its wing may be a fruitful way forward?

Andrew Hammond, Director of the Independent Curriculum and Headmaster-elect of Daneshill School, Hampshire spoke colourfully about what a good education should involve. The Independent Curriculum's resources are not an alternative to CE, but a scheme of study that attempts to get children

more involved in the wonder of learning, in active participation and in creative and independent work. Senior Schools were also reminded of the need to maintain momentum in Year 9 (the first year at senior school). Prep School Heads spoke of too often hearing from former pupils that the pace of progress had slowed in those first three terms in a new school. Introducing independent projects in the first year of Senior School can be very helpful in this regard; new Cheltonians this year have just completed such a project on 'The Elements' which has stretched and inspired their thinking.

Andrew Nott, Headmaster of St Hugh's Prep School, Oxfordshire closed the conference with an upbeat message about the importance of communication between Prep Schools and Senior Schools over the admissions and selection process. There was just time to take in the neo-gothic surroundings of Cheltenham College and buffet lunch in its newly-renovated library before Heads returned to their schools refreshed with ideas. This first Cheltenham conference was a resounding success, with no shortage of suggestions for next year's theme either!

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Fair Access to University ~

Professor Les Ebdon's appointment as Director of the Office for Fair Access – OFFA – has re-ignited the debate over whether it is appropriate for universities to tailor admissions policies to favour students from disadvantaged backgrounds rather than purely on academic potential.

Some commentators suggest this is like hoping a pedicure will mend a broken leg, i.e. misses the essential point entirely – which is how to make state-funded education more capable of helping the most able children reach their maximum potential. Grammar schools and direct-grant systems have been quoted as examples of how this can be done.

Others, including Baroness Deech, chairman of the Bar Standards Board, have said that showing preference towards particular groups of students was the “hallmark of totalitarian regimes” over the last 100 years. Lady Deech, the former principal of St Anne's College, Oxford, called for the abolition of the OFFA, which was set up by Labour to ensure poor students were not put off higher education. She also said universities should use the courts to protect their independence.

Opinions from three independent school heads....

Real solutions or cheap fixes?

Ed Elliott, Head of The Perse School, Cambridgeshire:

Some in the coalition express understandable regret that a student in an independent school is 55 times more likely to gain a place at Oxbridge than a student in receipt of free school meals. For such politicians this injustice needs instant rectification, and the fastest and cheapest means of achieving this is to skew university admissions to favour of those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Opposing politicians argue that such a solution replaces a socio-economic injustice with an academic one. Is it fair that students with poorer grades

should be awarded university places in preference to those with better academic profiles? Putting academic injustice to one side, is it in the nation's, students' or universities' interests for undergraduate courses to admit applicants who lack the skills and abilities needed to make a success of degree level of study?

Skill gaps can be filled, but educational deficiencies that have developed over 15 years of primary and secondary schooling are not easily rectified in three or four years at university, especially in institutions not resourced to provide the small group 'catch up' teaching required. In all the talk

of lowering university admissions standards for disadvantaged groups there is little recognition of the consequent need to increase university funding to provide additional teaching and support to help under qualified youngsters successfully adapt to the rigours of higher education. The only other option is to dumb down degrees, but reducing university standards is no way to educate a nation or remain competitive in the international knowledge economy.

The harsh reality is that lowering entry requirements is likely to cause more problems than it solves. Undergraduates may struggle on

courses they cannot cope with, drop-out rates could rise, students may acquire debts but no degree, and university staff could rebel against the heavy hand of central government interference.

Disadvantaged children deserve genuine educational solutions that work not sham quick fixes. This means a first class schooling from nursery onwards. It is expensive, it is time consuming, but it works. The Perse has nearly 400 years of such history, and through its means tested bursary programme, it gives disadvantaged children an outstanding education and a real leg up in life that will last.

Five suggestions to Professor Ebdon...

Extracts from an open letter to Professor Ebdon from Chris Ramsey, head, King's School, Cheshire, and Co-Chair, HMC/GSA Universities Committee:

I hope that in the spirit of openness and co-operation which the coalition Government is supposed to represent, you will not mind these words of advice. They come from a sector you have been painted as opposing. I trust that caricature is untrue, as most of the caricatures of the independent sector are too. We do not claim to speak for all sixth form students, or even all the best ones. But the independent sector does claim – justifiably – to represent some of the most important seed-corn for the country's intellectual future. For example, nearly a third of those studying medicine or dentistry at university in 2009 came from ISC schools; over a quarter of those studying languages did. Over 30% of the intake of your former university

– Imperial – was from ISC schools. You might lament this, but the universities themselves might respond that they need students who have been independently educated. You might argue that these strong students would have gained places wherever they were educated ... but would they? 23% of the Physics A level candidates nationally in 2009 were from ISC schools; many state schools do not even teach Physics.

So for what it is worth, here are five pieces of advice for you to take or leave – or rather, five pleas for you to listen to or not. First, I hope you will indeed listen – listen widely and respectfully – to all the various opinions surrounding Higher Education at the moment. Your colleague Professor Thomas, of Bristol wrote recently to the Times, for example, saying that 'UK universities have long been committed to both widening participation and fair access. The latter is not about dumbing

down; it is about identifying those students who have the ability and potential to succeed at university, regardless of their background. This has everything to do with excellence. A-level results are one of the best indicators of ability and potential, but they are also heavily influenced by a student's background and the school attended.' Professor Thomas described the Bristol admissions process, whereby A-level results are mechanically adjusted according to the type of school attended as 'nuanced': you should fear that Admissions Offices will try to second guess what supposed advantages or disadvantages a potential student might have had – in other words, to tamper with the empirical evidence offered by the one thing all students do have: exam grades. After all, grades at public exams (taken by virtually all potential students) are the only actual level playing field. Doubtless they are

'influenced by background'. But ability and motivation are the much more overwhelming factors. I hope you will be guided by this important principle.

Secondly, the office you run is rightly named the Office for Fair Access. Now, people get very worked up about fairness. The Schwartz report of a few years ago did a good job, though, of defining what fair access to university should look like: 'Fairness,' wrote Professor Schwartz, 'does not mean that the Government should choose students. The Steering Group wishes to affirm its belief in the autonomy of institutions over admissions policies and decisions. Moreover, it should be clearly recognised that it is perfectly legitimate for admissions staff to seek out the most academically excellent students'. These so-called Schwartz principles are like the Gettysburg address: Vice-Chancellors value them and they represent one of the few bits of Government policy they genuinely

top appointment prompts fresh debate

Dr Tim Hands, Master of Magdalen College School, Oxfordshire:

If parents are to believe the media, the university odds are stacked against their children if they choose to send them to an independent school. How do we persuade them of the enduring importance and value of tertiary education in the face of alleged discrimination, spiralling costs and graduate unemployment?

Over the past decade there have been numerous shifts in thinking about how best to approach university admissions. From the Schwartz report on university admissions in 2003 to the creation of the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and the introduction of increased tuition fees in 2006/07, successive governments have sought to increase applications to universities from particular sectors of society. Now we have the appointment of Professor Les Ebdon as Director of OFFA, and with it suggestions that OFFA will make moves towards social engineering and "dumbing down" at university level in order to compensate for problems which government incompetence over secondary education has created in the first place.

Universities, naturally, look to predict final degree outcomes in applicants – no mean feat when faced with wide differences in styles of education from

Independent Education – Help or Hindrance?

the ages of 4 to 18 in the UK. There are two lines of thought: the school attended prior to university affects the student's final degree result; the prior school type has no effect! Research can sustain both points of view – or can it?

In 2010, Dr Tony Hoare of the University of Bristol found that "students from lower-performing schools do better than those from high-performing ones in final-year results". Hoare argues that this is by a margin that would justify admitting them with between one and two grades lower (for typical AAA offers) and three grades lower (for ABB offers). By contrast, two years later Dr Richard Partington at Cambridge University looked at methods of predicting performance in the Cambridge Tripos and concluded that school background makes only a "marginal difference" and that the pattern is "inconsistent". Partington found that using school and college A Level performance data to "weight" exam results at point of application did little to improve correlations with Tripos performance. Clearly both models cannot be correct.

Some argue that universities should follow the approach advocated by Tony Hoare. Yet how can

disadvantage be fairly measured? One method is on school type and school performance – what is known as "contextual data". But contextual data is deeply flawed. It fails to take into account, for example, the numerous pupils at independent schools from families with modest means who are there thanks to scholarships and bursaries, or those whose parents have chosen to make significant sacrifices to secure an independent education for their children. Any university that values education can only respect parents who value education also.

Independent schools are more attentive this year to any discrimination against them which might be generic. Previously, admissions surveys have been conducted annually. This year we are having mid-year interim surveys, meaning that they are done in real time and not retrospectively. Previous years have not seen any significant concerns, and that remains the case this year. Our

experience at MCS this year has been overwhelmingly positive, with offers from a large number of Russell group universities, earlier and more generously than before.

Actually, universities and independent schools (both of them now fee paying) have much in common, not least curricular independence. Independent schools also share with universities a belief in education as a facilitator of social mobility – not the blunt tool of social engineering. That commitment to scholarship and the desire to attract the best people to schools and universities – based on achievement and potential – remains key to the future success of our pupils, and binds the two sectors together. So do not believe the myths you read in the newspaper. One myth is that universities discriminate against candidates from independent schools. The other is that they distinguish in favour of them. And both of these myths cannot be true.

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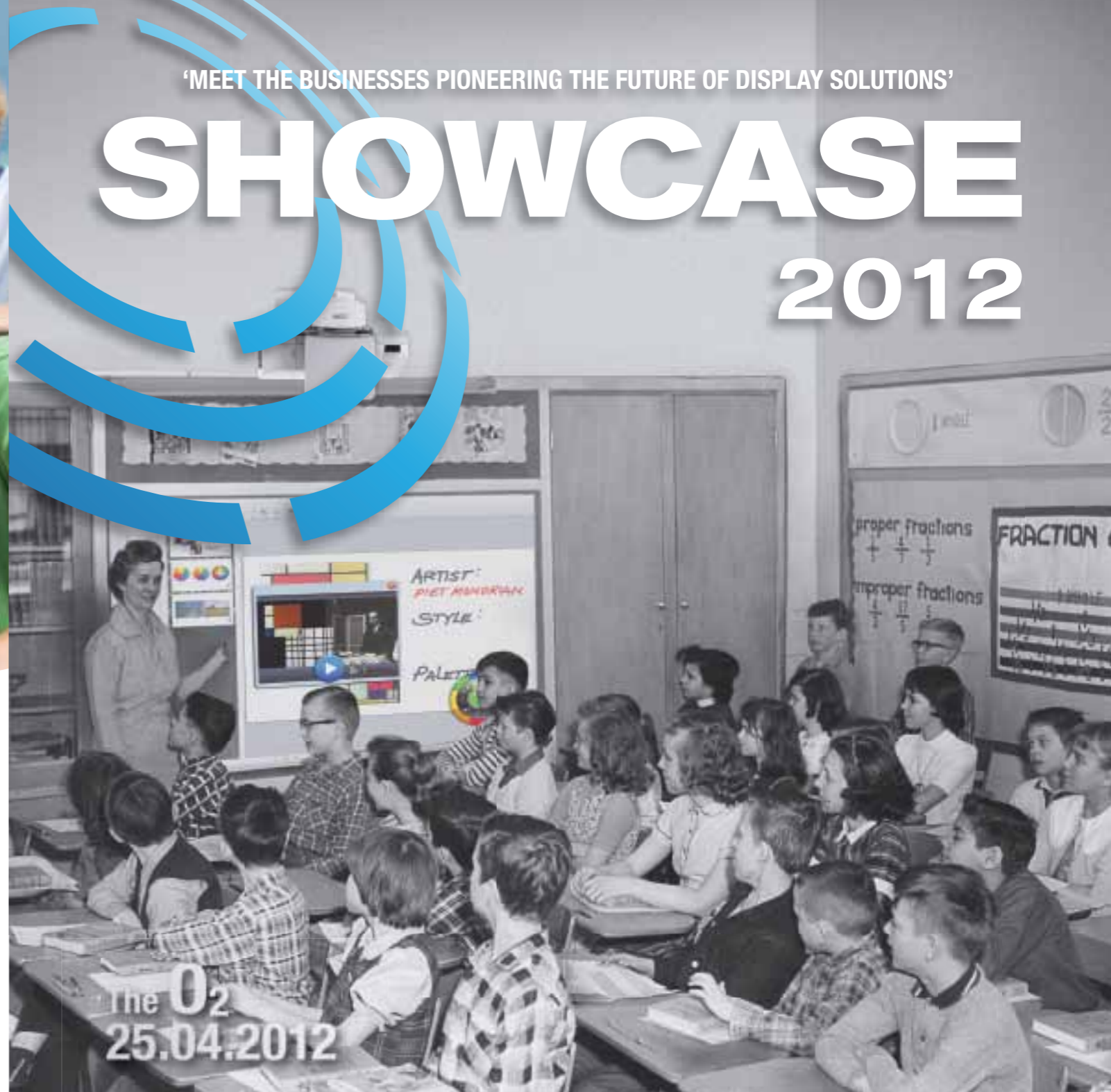
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An upward trend...

Last year's Independent Schools Council Census revealed a rise in boarding numbers - up by nearly 2% with international student numbers up by over 5%.

In recent weeks, four day schools have contacted the Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) for advice on how to start boarding from scratch. All four were envisaging a small boarding house - homely, friendly, not too large a scale - and expecting that the apparently burgeoning international market would enable them to fill it comfortably. Indeed, they reported receiving enquiries already, even in advance of having the accommodation.

There is talk of the considerable benefits to a community of having an international dimension, and providing the opportunity for British children, often in rural surroundings, to make friends from around the world.

National Director of the BSA Hilary Moriarty said: "It is heartening to see that a British education is still prized around the world. Whatever reservations British parents may have about their children becoming boarders - and flexi and weekly boarding increasingly accommodates students who, for whatever reason, do not wish to plunge into the full boarding experience - it is clear

that parents overseas, often half way round the world, have no such qualms. The highest numbers of international students continue to come from Hong Kong and China, often at a young age. We should be very proud of an education which is worth that trip for the child, as well as that expense for their parents."

The Boarding Schools' Association (BSA) represents member boarding schools in the UK, in both the state and independent sectors, including primary as well as secondary schools. There are 462 schools in BSA, educating and caring for approximately 73,000 boarders.

New diploma course

The Boarding Schools' Association's (BSA) new Diploma in Leadership in Boarding opened this month (March) to the first cohort of senior boarding staff at both state and independent schools who wish to further develop their professional understanding and knowledge of the strategic management of boarding schools. A similar course is planned for next year.

Building on the already extensive programme of training provided to boarding school staff by the BSA, the new Diploma, which is accredited by the University of Roehampton, involves a series of study days over eight months. Focussing on leadership and senior management challenges, it requires the students to carry out an audit of an aspect of boarding of their own choosing; make an oral presentation on the key findings; and produce a 6000-word report proposing the necessary actions for improvement.

27 students and 3 tutors are taking part in the inaugural £510 course, which hinges on reflective learning and action research i.e. the students are encouraged to look at their own practice and consider how to improve their management of boarding. Much of the benefit derives from an exchange of views and sharing of best practice. Richard Harman,

Chairman of the BSA and head of Uppingham School, said: "The continuing professional development of boarding staff is an important priority for the BSA and this Diploma will be of great value to individual members of staff, to schools, and ultimately to the children themselves who will benefit from the best possible care." Alex Thomson, BSA's Director of Training, said: "Boarding staff, at all levels, need specific skills such as an ability to listen and counsel as well as an understanding of mental and emotional health in children of all ages. Gone are the days of the well-meaning amateur who got a job in a school boarding house with no qualifications. Nowadays, boarding staff are expected to have completed a wide range of specific training."

The Boarding Schools Association runs a wide range of CPD opportunities every year for boarding

staff - pastoral care workshops, residential seminars and a professional development certificate course that has been successfully completed by more than 1000 staff since it started in 2000. Such professional development - which is a requirement of the National Minimum Standards - includes highly relevant topics such as supporting children with eating disorders; understanding parental responsibility and other family law issues; recognising signs of cyber bullying; meeting the needs of overseas boarders; dealing with the transition of boarders from prep to secondary schools; managing difficult behaviour; meeting boarders' emotional needs; advising on student-teacher boundaries; supporting boarders with special education needs; helping children who are coping with divorce or bereavement; and developing the boarding staff team approach to meeting boarders' needs.

Annual boarding heads' conference

The annual conference for boarding school heads will take place at the Bristol Marriott Royal hotel in Bristol, Tuesday 1 - Thursday 3 May 2012.

The conference will be chaired by Richard Harman, BSA chairman and head of Uppingham School. The theme will be Boarding: Belonging in the 21st century.

Speakers include broadcaster and columnist Libby Purves; John Timpson, chairman of Timpson Ltd; psychologist Dr Christopher Thurber; Charles Dunstone, co-founder and CEO of Carphone Warehouse and chairman of The Prince's Trust Enterprise Fellowship; Christine Ryan, Chief Inspector of the Independent Schools Inspectorate; and Barnaby Lenon, chairman of the Independent Schools Council.

The Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP will be the guest of honour.

Independent living...

One of the benefits of living and working at a Boarding School is that students develop a greater degree of independence than many other youngsters of the same age.

At Ratcliffe College, Leicestershire, this independence is further enhanced for boarders in Year 13, who have the chance to spend two weeks living in the Sixth Form Flat.

This self-contained, three bedroom apartment is situated close to the boarding accommodation in the main school building. There are shared bathroom facilities and a large lounge/ dining room, complete with kitchenette facilities. Students living in the flat - groups of three boys or three girls - attend the usual daytime classes and activities, including lunch. They prepare all other meals in the flat, having spent

Challenge unnecessary bureaucracy 'from a position of strength'

Despite the fact that the revenue generated through the recruitment of overseas students is often crucial to the financial well-being of independent schools, I am always surprised by the lack of understanding (and sometimes lack of interest) of the mechanics of the Tier 4 system - the pathway allowing such recruitment - by senior managers of independent schools, writes Mark Taylor.



All too often, the management of the issuance of Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) and proper data recording are given to junior administrative staff who are both lacking in training and under-resourced. Indeed, their role of compliance with UKBA regulations is just one small part of an already busy day.

By becoming a Tier 4 sponsor, school staff have become immigration officers and their competence will be assessed, not by the school's academic results or pastoral care, but by their ability to comply with the sponsor guidelines. Failure to do so can lead to the suspension - or even revocation - of a sponsor licence and the consequent haemorrhaging of

overseas student recruitment.

In 2011, the sponsor guidelines changed twice, a new Highly Trusted statistical assessment was introduced and the UKBA carried out a consultation in August when many school decision makers were away. The granting of HTS to all independent schools in April 2011 offered some protection to independent schools from the changes but, for many schools, it has generated a degree of complacency. With the question of the mechanics of compliance with the regulations not being seen as a priority by senior school managers, in some cases little attention has been paid to the new guidelines, struggling staff members have created their own (often defective) systems which, if put

to close scrutiny, would cause the UKBA concern.

Over the last 12 months the number of Tier 4 sponsors has reduced significantly and the UKBA has had some success in forcing the removal of inadequate educational institutions from the list of sponsors. At the same time, the reduced resources of the UKBA are being directed increasingly towards unannounced inspections of schools. Independent schools can expect a greater degree of scrutiny than at any time since the introduction of the Points Based System.

The Tier 4 system is over-regulated for the low risk independent school market. Without a doubt the overseas student market is

of significant benefit to the UK economy. However, if independent schools are found to be failing in their responsibilities as a sponsor, any attempt to challenge the UKBA will be flawed. The excesses of the Tier 4 system will only be successfully challenged from a position of strength.

The starting point for independent schools has to be an understanding of their own compliance regime. Given the importance of overseas recruitment to the financial position of the school, has the school dedicated sufficient resources and leadership to ensure long term compliance? If Head Teachers, Bursars and Senior Management Teams have not asked that question of their school, now is the time to do so.

Mark Taylor is the Executive Director of The Taylor Partnership (www.ttplaw.co.uk) which specialises in Tier 4 advice to schools. He delivers practical Tier 4 seminars to school staff and is a regular speaker at the British Boarding School Workshop.



their allotted budget at a local supermarket beforehand. The weekly shop provides students with a healthy dose of reality, as many have little idea of the cost of food! Members of staff check that the students are in the safely secure flat last thing at night; other than that, there are no morning wake-up calls and supervision is kept to a minimum.

Mr Graham Sharpe, Head of Boarding at Ratcliffe, recalls several amusing stories from the

three years that the flat has been open: "Two students admitted to spending the whole of a washing machine cycle staring intently at the machine - scarcely able to believe that they had programmed it correctly. Then there were the three young men who suddenly seemed unusually eager to help out at a number of evening events. It turned out that they were waiting around at the end, to see what refreshments they could collect and take back with them to the flat!"

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Diploma celebrates excellence

Sherborne Girls, Dorset, has introduced a Years 7 - 9 Diploma covering the four key areas of Knowledge, Learning Skills, Personal Attributes, and Community. Director of Studies Gill Oliver explains the thinking behind the initiative...

For an 11-18 girls' boarding school, the freedom to deliver a broad and challenging curriculum in years 7-9 is to be relished. Yet so many of the things which underpin academic success later on – personal development, extra-curricular endeavour, sound learning skills and a love of learning for its own sake – are seldom recognised by conventional assessment. At Sherborne Girls, we have wrapped all the things we value in our own assessment framework for these junior years: the Sherborne Girls Diploma. Each pupil in years 7-9 now compiles a colourful portfolio

to our regular tutorials. In this supportive environment girls can be encouraged to recover from a low mark or an unsuccessful event. The simple fact of discussing with the tutor which pieces of evidence should go in is a part of the process, training the pupil to evaluate her own performance and reflect on her experiences. Each term begins with self-evaluation, reflecting on the last school report and setting down ambitions for the term ahead. In the Knowledge section of her file, the pupil will put assessment grades and examples of the work of which she is most proud. The

Management, Resilience). Here the evidence may be drawn from the classroom or recorded via the school's merit system. There is also a particular impetus behind cross-curricular projects, which often involve more open-ended tasks, and typically work in teams. Throughout, the emphasis is not on box-ticking, but on evaluation and encouraging the girl to improve her skills. The IB Learner Profile – adopted when the school began to offer IB alongside A levels – provided us with an inspiring description of an effective learner. In engaging with Personal Attributes we are using the

The Community section provides a record of Volunteering, Clubs and Societies, initiatives such as the Learning to Lead programme, contributions in the boarding House, and any context in which a girl has gone the extra mile to help others. The Junior boarding House has its own award-within-an-award which asks the pupil to show she can deal with all manner of practical tasks for herself. It is true that we were in a good place to embark on this initiative. Personal tutoring was established in the school, and was particularly strong in our Junior house where a dedicated tutor team, working closely with the Housemistress, supported years 7 and 8. We were poised to develop outdoor education in this age group, which has contributed much. Shared values amongst colleagues have made the Diploma, easily, the work of many hands, something that is right for us. There was a common understanding of the problems of transition for the intake in year 9, and a realisation that we needed to articulate our aspirations for the girls to the girls. Once in Induction week was not enough! The Diploma framework has allowed our aims to become and to remain explicit to them and to their parents.

The girls enjoy the 'year book' aspect of the portfolio, adding photographs, illustrations and reflections as evidence of all they have done. Excellence can be celebrated here; creativity in presentation is encouraged, in true SG style. Towards the end of the summer term, each girl in years 7-9 will have a Diploma Interview with a senior member of staff, in which she will present her portfolio and this is the context in which her examination results will sit. The good habits and attitudes she has acquired will follow her through the school. And already we can see that this holistic approach to assessment is giving each pupil not only something to work for, but also something which has a personal meaning for her.

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to illustrate her personal and academic journey through the year, all to be submitted in a final assessed interview in June. The Diploma portfolio has four component sections: Knowledge, Learning Skills, Personal Attributes, and Community. Compiled alongside an adult, the portfolio lends a special sense of purpose

girls themselves are seeing the need to include the very things they may have struggled to master. Learning skills are broken down into specifics: Personal skills (Leadership, Teamwork, Communication, Emotional intelligence); Using Information (Research, Reflection, ICT, Presentation) and Approach (Risk Taking, Reliability, Time

IBLP framework to help the pupil become the person she wants to be; this section of the portfolio is a light-touch record of the shifting focus in tutorial, as well as giving an opportunity for self-expression. Top of the Learner Profile agenda for this year's new girls is Risk Taking – as one pupil put it, "I need to dare myself sometimes".

Pictured: Sherborne Girls, Director of Studies, Gill Oliver, with two students looking through their Diploma Folders of work that will contribute to their award.



Benefits of reality TV?

Debating in schools offers important argumentative and persuasion skills for children even as young as 8.

This was proved at St. Dominic's High School for Girls, Staffordshire, as pupils from years four and five from Vernon Lodge, Brewood Middle and St. Dominic's High School for Girls were put into two teams to debate 'is reality T.V good for children?'

Not only did the children have the benefit of receiving a master class in how to be an effective speaker, using language in a fluent and clear manner and critical thinking skills, but they also benefitted from socialising and team building skills as they were

divided into teams with a mix of pupils from all three schools.

The debate itself was hosted by Gavin Williamson MP with an experienced team of independent adjudicators from Brewood Rotary Club.

Mrs Mason-Cowley, Head of English at St. Dominic's High School for Girls said "the success of the evening was the evident development within the teams. They progressed from nervous, reluctant speakers into active participants and contributors. It was lovely to see the children mixing socially both within and across the teams".

Changes at Hornsby House

Hornsby House School, London, has a new headmaster from September – Edward Rees will join from Dulwich College Junior School, where he is deputy head, succeeding Jon Gray, who is leaving Hornsby House at the end of the summer term after eight years to be Headmaster of York House School, Hertfordshire.

Edward Rees was educated at Charterhouse and Hatfield College, Durham, where he graduated with a BA (Hons) in Education, specialising in Geography. Since 1996 he has fulfilled a wide range of roles at Dulwich College, including leading the Junior School as Acting Head during an ISI Inspection. He is

himself a qualified and experienced inspector of Independent Schools and a governor of a local co-educational preparatory school. He is married with two young children and he plays cricket for the MCC in his spare time.



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Making science a priority

Applications from people looking to become physics and chemistry teachers are at record numbers, with chemistry up 12 per cent and physics at the same level as last year's best-ever number. Science teaching is alive and innovative in independent schools.

Should there be 'an element of change?'

Dr Clare Catley has been Head of Chemistry at Bedford Modern School since September 2009. Clare has a degree in Biochemistry and Biological Chemistry from the University of Nottingham and completed her PhD in Biochemistry at UEA. Prior to her teaching career,



Dr Catley was a post-doctoral researcher at The Gray Cancer Institute, Mount Vernon Hospital, Middlesex, where she researched and published work on the role of free radicals in apoptosis and tumorigenesis.

"It should not be surprising to hear that I am passionate about

Chemistry and that, as a woman, promoting my subject to young women is something very close to my heart. So, it was with interest and optimism that I read the news that Selvarani Elahi has been appointed as the Deputy Government Chemist – the first woman to hold the title," said Clare.

"When I think back to my own education, Chemistry was in every way a male dominated subject. There were just two girls studying A Level and, as it turned out, we were the only female Chemists for a number of years. The two of us, encouraged by our parents and teachers, were determined to study Chemistry at degree level, which we duly did. Both of us discovered that we were not quite such a minority at degree level, but were still a minority nonetheless, a pattern which continued in our subsequent careers in research. We were not alone – in fact, studies show that the retention of female Chemistry graduates in long term scientific positions is poor.

"I have no reservations whatsoever about 'bucking the trend' and I am pleased to see that an ever increasing number of Bedford Modern School female students are also choosing to do so. Not only are these young women making the choice at A Level, they are opting to pursue degree courses with a significant Chemistry content. Undoubtedly, Bedford Modern School students are empowered to make well informed choices but it is my hope that they do take some inspiration from female role models within the Department; three out of six teachers and our technician are female.

"It is my view that there is now more opportunity than ever for women to address the imbalance in the scientific community; the world is truly their oyster in this respect. And with women such as Selvarani Elahi to inspire them, let's watch out for some of our talented Bedford Modern School young women leading the way in the future."



Newton Prep School London hosted its second annual Science Open House on 14th February, with a Valentine's Day theme. Parents and pupils had the chance to try their hands at heart and flower dissection, exciting chemical reactions, experiments with magnetic attraction and shocking static electricity, and much more.

The Elephant Toothpaste (potassium iodide, hydrogen peroxide and soap) and Red Slime (cornflour, water and red food colouring) were particularly popular stations. Newton Prep's three laboratories, divided into Physics, Biology, and Chemistry activities, were filled to bursting with more than 100 parents, pupils and friends who were keen to get a taste of Newton Prep's hands-on approach to science

Recruitment on the rise

With six months still to go in the recruitment cycle, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) is just over half way (53 per cent) to achieving its chemistry target of 1154 trainee teachers and nearly a third, 30 per cent, of the physics target (1326).

The TDA is attributing the increased interest in these subjects to the new tax-free bursaries of up to £20k which are available for high-flying physics and chemistry graduates entering teacher training and the special scholarships available for physics trainees from the Institute of Physics.

Last year's entrants were also the best ever, with the highest proportion of graduates who had 2:1 degree classifications and above, on record. 62 per cent of entrants to university-

based training had a 2:1 or better. The number of pupils taking single science GCSEs and A Levels is finally on the rise, which means there's increased demand for new talent for our classrooms. However, teacher training places are filling up more quickly than last year, with overall acceptances to courses up 11 per cent on last year.

Stephen Hillier, chief executive of the TDA said:

"Teaching is increasingly a career for the most able graduates. With new teachers rating their training as very good preparation for the classroom and big tax-free bursaries and scholarships available for top graduates wanting to teach priority subjects, like physics and chemistry, there has never been a better time to teach."



Space is not the final frontier for an Ashville College, Yorkshire, teacher, who has been called up to help front a national initiative to increase the size and quality of the UK's science and engineering skills pool.

Conor Davies is just one of 12 teachers nationally to join the National Space Academy, who will use the context of space to teach STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) and geography to both pupils and teachers around the country.

Over the next four years, and working with scientists from three universities, Mr Davies and his 11 colleagues will deliver student master classes, careers events and a bespoke space engineering course at Loughborough College.

New museum & refurbished library

One of the oldest schools in Wales, Howell's School, Cardiff, has been bringing its history to life with the opening of a museum in the room where its Governors have held their meetings since 1859.

About 250 visitors went to the school to celebrate its official opening as well as that of the completely refurbished library.

The school was opened for 30 orphan girls and 30 pay boarders in 1860, and on display in the new museum are items from the very earliest days, such as an original candle reading lamp, lock and keys, and even a soap-cutter and soap from the laundry. One of several mannequins shows the outer clothing worn by a boarder in the late 1870s, including a long cape, bonnet and socks, which were discovered in a locked cupboard in the 1990s. Information panels summarise the school's history above display cases containing documents and other artefacts from all periods of the school's history. The room in which the museum is located doubles as a meeting room and reception area, so visitors are able to view it.

Mrs Janet Sully, who is in charge of the school's archives, said: "We are very fortunate that so many items from the past have been preserved and it seemed a good idea to enable visitors to the school, as well as current and former pupils, to be able to see some of them. We have so much material that we are only able to show a selection of documents at any one time, so we plan to rotate them." At the opening ceremony, six of the current pupils donned uniforms from different periods in

the school's history and spoke about what life was like at those times. The original library, built in 1933 after a great fire destroyed a substantial part of the school, is used for silent study and research and has been named The Goarin Reading and Research Room in honour of the father of a former pupil, whose generosity has enabled the refurbishment. It was only after François Goarin's death that his daughter Elisabeth discovered that he was awarded the high military honour, the Croix de Guerre, for bravery during World War II and, as he loved studying, she wanted to honour him in a way connected to research.

The other main section of the library, which was originally created in 1982 as a memorial to a previous distinguished headmistress, Miss Margaret Lewis, has now been officially named after her. The adjoining Careers Centre has also been given a completely new look.

Mrs Jane Wilks, the Head of Library and College Careers Adviser, said: "The newly refurbished Library and Careers Centre have been a real hit with the students of Howell's who now have a beautifully designed space to read and relax in comfort, a more formal area to study in silence in preparation for exams as well as easy access, via the bespoke library shelving, to all the resources they need to succeed in their studies. It is through the generosity of those who donated to the Annual Fund and Mrs Elisabeth Bayliffe's contribution that we were able to finish this refurbishment to such a high standard and offer a wonderful environment for the students of Howell's today and for many years to come."

New head

Cundall Manor School, Yorkshire, has announced the appointment of a new headmaster. Richard Notman will start at the beginning of the new school year in September and joins



from Longridge Towers School in Northumberland where he is deputy head teacher and has been covering the role of acting head teacher.

Richard, 40, replaces Peter Phillips who will depart in July. He graduated with First Class Honours from Birmingham University where he won a scholarship and three major awards and has a post-graduate degree in Mathematics from the University of Manchester. Having originally trained in accountancy with global management consultancy KPMG he also brings financial expertise and commercial awareness to the role and his responsibility for the Enrichment Programme at his existing school was also a factor in his appointment.



Sampling life 'on board'

Over thirty Bruton School for Girls, Somerset, pupils spent the day aboard HMS Liverpool whilst the Royal Navy destroyer was alongside in London.

HMS Liverpool, a 30 year old destroyer, docked in London prior to being decommissioned later this year.

The girls were escorted around the ship by female members of the ship's company, viewing the cramped conditions in which the crew must operate when at sea. During the visit students learnt about the role the vessel played during 7 months on

deployment off the coast of Libya in 2011, becoming the first British ship to be fired on in 30 years.

Headmaster, John Burrough, said "The girls enjoyed the experience, which was truly educational and gave them a far better understanding of what it is to serve in the Royal Navy, to be at sea and to be involved on active service. We are most grateful to Commander Colin Williams and his colleagues and wish them well as they prepare to bid farewell to their ship."

Pictured: BSG Pupil, Ellie Ablett, in the Lynx helicopter aboard HMS Liverpool

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St Teresa's Senior School, Surrey, will have a new head from September.

Mr Michael Farmer is currently Principal of Kilgraston School in Perthshire, Scotland, the fastest-growing girls' boarding school in the UK with recent Scottish league topping academic results and record growth in pupil numbers.

Married with two grown-up children, Mr Farmer is Chair of the Scottish Girls' Schools, the Scottish representative on GSA council and a member of the GSA boarding committee.

New Principal



Stephen Oliver has been appointed Principal of Our Lady's Abingdon (OLA), Oxfordshire, from September.

Mr Oliver, who is currently Deputy Head of St Benedict's School, Middlesex, will succeed Mrs Lynne Renwick, who is returning to the North East at the end of the academic year in August to take up the role of Head at Durham High School.

Mr Oliver was educated at the Universities of Birmingham, Cambridge and St Andrews and has taught at Stonyhurst, The Royal Grammar School Guildford, Uppingham and Haberdashers' Aske's School. He is married to Caroline and they have three young children.

Independence *in* Leadership

Westminster School hosted the first Cross Association Leadership (CAL) Symposium to debate the issue of "Independence in Leadership, the future of Independent schools". Speakers (pictured) were the Schools' Commissioner, Doctor Elizabeth Sidwell; Headmaster of Eton, Tony Little; and founder of the Independent Thinking Company and author, Ian Gilbert. The event – which attracted heads, chairs, and aspiring leaders, was chaired by Deborah Leek Bailey, Headteacher of Babington House School, Kent, and Chair of the CAL group (pictured with speakers, second from right).

Liz Sidwell was the first to speak and many were undoubtedly expecting her to promote the value of sponsoring an academy. Whilst this was mentioned the majority of her presentation covered examples of successful collaboration between the sectors and the importance of government allowing autonomy within schools, so that such partnerships could flourish naturally, where need and inclination arise. The schools' commissioner was adamant that both sectors should work together for the good of all children. She also remarked that if the government expected outstanding schools, then it too, needed to be "Outstanding". She acknowledged that the department were now looking for help with the primary sector, so that the vision, ethos, focus on teaching and learning that is prevalent within Independent schools could be the focus of collaborative partnerships.

Anthony Little, the head of Eton College, Berkshire, then went on to outline his views of leadership, stating that there is no set template for leadership within Independent schools, but that outstanding leaders comprehend what is required for their context, knowing when to communicate their desired outcome and when to show restraint. Mr Little claimed that the notion of "Leadership" has been hijacked but that effective leaders should set the moral tone of what they know and do. His statement that he was "proving to be that model of hopelessness that will inspire", caused much mirth, but surely it is only a successful leader, who sees the interconnectedness of things, that can publicly offer such humility? A statement that met with much agreement was his view that the tyranny of exams is an unwelcome constraint and that schools are not able to prepare pupils for the world of work in a way that best suits the

pupils' needs. He also criticised the current University system, stating that it was a barrier to change because it uses the GCSEs as a means of entry.

Ian Gilbert asked his audience to reflect on whether they were serving the needs of future generations but raised the broader question of whether we even require schools in the 21st Century. Mr Gilbert quoted Piaget saying "Intelligence is what you use when you do not know what to do". He stated that schools had democratised the knowledge of learning and that teachers needed to look at the moral and ethical value of their roles, ensuring that pupils learn, as well as being leaders reflecting on what they are preparing pupils for. He used the example of the Khan Academy and made the audience contemplate the difference between fungible and anchored roles.

During question time, Paul Moss, of the St James schools group, asked whether more emphasis should be given to leadership in service and Tony Little agreed that pupils learn extensively outside school. David Boddy, Headmaster of St James Boys senior school and former advisor to Margaret Thatcher, raised the issue of the voucher scheme, stating that government needed to open access to the best schools to raise standards. The schools' commissioner was quick to remind him that every child wants and deserves the best education possible.

James Wilding, Proprietor of Claires Court School, Berkshire, said that his school offers numerous outreach programmes and wishes to do more but that often the local authority fails to capitalise on what is available within independent schools.

Deborah Leek-Bailey, chairing the meeting, enquired whether there were any middle leaders in the audience who had strong views on what they



had heard. Kirsty Sinclair, from St Peter and Paul's maintained primary school offered her thoughts on the government exam driven agenda, which does not acknowledge the outstanding things which do occur in schools graded as underperforming – a comment for which she received a round of applause. Miss Sinclair is currently working on a middle leadership cluster programme with Mrs McDonald Smith from Babington House and six other primary schools, providing evidence of partnership activity at its best.

Mrs Leek-Bailey said schools have a responsibility to help address social mobility and that no matter what is done currently, there are likely to be more, or different partnerships, that can be initiated.

In the written feedback for the event 100% of the attendees agreed that they would like a similar symposium in the future. Said Mrs Leek-Bailey: "Vision and determination is crucial to the survival of our schools. Whether we use our independence to work in partnership with other educational establishments, set alternative curricula, or redefine the nature of learning within Independent schools, the truth is that by identifying aspirant leaders, who are flexible, intelligent and innovative, we are in a position to ensure that Independent education will continue to flourish – meeting the varying needs of the younger generation."

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Standing up *for* all alumni

'You should avoid alienating your alumni – especially if you are hoping for some kind of payback from them.' So says Peter King, marketing director at Wisbech Grammar School, Cambridgeshire, as he argues the case for valuing all past pupils and not just the select few...

In publications distributed to past pupils, try to avoid giving the impression – as they do in some university and college magazines – that you are only interested in ex-students who have succeeded

in climbing some way up the establishment ladder. Pandering to admirals, police chiefs and minor ambassadors is not going to send former pupils, who relished the institution's reputation for

subversiveness and its identification with the hoi polloi, rushing to their piggy banks to cough up cash for bursaries.

If a section of the annual magazine containing news of old members is subtly changed into 'a selection of notable alumni', the people who get left out – the war heroes, the geniuses and the all-round good eggs – will find that their loyalties are being strained.

A school can be judged by its attitude to its old students. Every current pupil has an equal claim to a named space on the school register, the great leveller, and the leavers should continue to take their rightful, alphabetical place – no more and no less.

The last impression that you want to give is that past pupils have become the preserve of a dedicated development office, which is operating its own private ranking system, and that the people tasked with tracking down former students have no personal knowledge of them and have never been involved in the central task of teaching them.

Even the word 'alumnus' is off-putting. Old members are lumped under a conveniently obscure and mildly pretentious Latin tag – and when an elderly member of the institution is photographed looking at a current exhibition, it seems rather dismissive to describe him in the caption as an 'alumnus', rather than taking the trouble to give him a name.

A school, like a university, should show a genuine interest in what Louis de Bernieres would call the 'little people' and titbits of news about them are of at least as much interest to the whole body of leavers as the trumpeting of the titles of the people who like to be classed as the great and the good.

If someone has just started teaching in a local primary school and has offered to write something about it, you should be as open to that as the more famous ex-student who has just won record backing on 'Dragons' den'. And when an old boy dies on active service, his memorial plaque

should not be tucked away in an obscure part of the school because he did not hold a commission. Of course, it will help the institution if you focus in an imaginative way on some of the high flyers, but it is important to keep a balance.

And if an old girl steps across your threshold for the first time in more than sixty years, it is a big moment for her – and it makes her day if the head has time to enjoy a cup of tea with her and listen to her tales. The encounter may lead to the acquisition of lost copies of school magazines and other useful documents, and some past pupils may have skills – such as an expertise in ballroom dancing – which they are more than willing to share with cast members rehearsing for Terpsichorean scenes in the school play.

At reunions you should avoid sending out the signal that you have an A-list tucked up your sleeve and that senior figures in the establishment will converge on one or two big fish, while the B-list people can be left to sip their drinks and share their insignificant anecdotes with the small fry.

It is also unfortunate if it is transparent that special gatherings are stage-managed for publicity purposes, so that particular members of the audience are there by special invitation – like celebrities sitting in prominent positions in television shows – while the people who have paid to come out of genuine interest are forced to take a back seat.

And you should be appreciative of tip-offs from former members of the institution. If one of them lets you have a good-quality photograph of the unveiling of a blue plaque in memory of one of your most distinguished past students, you should make sure that you use it in one of your publications rather than professing an interest in the celebrity while demonstrating that you are not capable of joined up thinking.

Instead of reducing your past pupils to nameless fodder for fund-raising campaigns, you should focus on them primarily because they are members of your community.

Failure week a success

Such questions were at the centre of 'Failure Week', which ran last month (February) commencing 6th February at Wimbledon High School, London. Whilst the initiative may sound unusual for an independent school, the idea is to demystify the word and encourage the girls to put 'failure' into context and to face it head on and learn from it – hence calling it what it is and not dressing it up.

Spanning the Junior and Senior Schools, involving students from four to 18, Failure Week included:

- Assemblies focussing on the subject of failure, with examples of successful people, including famous names and teachers, who have 'failed' along the way
- Activities designed to assess how students feel about failure
- Tutors discussing the merits of failure, sharing a 'failure' they faced in their lives with their pupils and discussing how they came through it.
- Explorations of the negative side of 'not failing'; the importance of having a go and risking failure
- Emphasis on the pastoral network of support that underpins school life and can help when things go wrong
- Encouraging parents to discuss any 'failures' they have had with their daughters and what they learnt from them

The Headmistress of Wimbledon High, Heather Hanbury (pictured), came to teaching after a career in Management Consultancy and is adamant that success and satisfaction in life can come from 'daring to fail and daring to get it wrong':

"My message to girls is that it is better to lead a life replete with disappointment than one where you constantly wonder 'if only...'. The examples I use include: 'If only I'd tried out for the first team, I might have been selected' or 'If only I'd applied for that job, I might have been successful'. I want to suggest to girls that it is acceptable and completely normal not to succeed at times in life.

"Failure Week' complements what we do throughout the school, which is to encourage our girls to be courageous and to take calculated risks. We give our students plenty of support and opportunities to try new things in and outside the classroom. For high-achieving girls

especially, where the fear of failure can be crippling, this intellectual resilience and robustness is vitally important. Successful people learn from failure, pick themselves up and move on. Something going wrong may even have been the best thing that could have happened to them in the long run – in sparking creativity, for instance – even if it felt like a disaster at the time."

Wimbledon High is part of the GDST (Girls' Day School Trust) network of 24 schools and two academies across the UK. Chief Executive, Helen Fraser, is adamant that the initiative will be invaluable for the girls.

"Resilience is so important in working life nowadays" said Helen. "Things happen that are not 'fair' – companies merge, economies crash, strategies change – and a young employee can find his or her career hits the wall, through no fault of their own.

"Wimbledon High School are helping to build vital resilience in girls; by showing how making mistakes is not necessarily a bad thing, that it is fine to try and fail – and then pick yourself up and try again – or as Samuel Beckett said, 'fail better'.

"Any successful woman or man will be able to look back at bad times in their career and remember how they regrouped, and moved on to better things."

As well as a huge amount of media coverage it generated internationally – from India to Canada via being the second most shared story on the BBC website for a day and a great amount of tweeting - the response from parents, students and staff show that it has captured people's imaginations.

Head of Year 7 and co-instigator of 'failure week', Dr Elyse Waites, said: "Our students are high achievers who often reach the end of their school career having never 'failed' at anything. The longer you leave it to

'fail' the more crippling it is when it, inevitably, happens. The purpose of 'Failure Week' was therefore to encourage girls to take more risks in lessons and to try more things outside of their academic studies.' Workshops identified students' attitude to failure and encouraged them to think again, to view the positive lessons that can be learned from getting things wrong.

The initiative was very deliberately rolled out in the younger years too. The Junior School's Director of Studies Emma Bryant said: "We talked a lot about girls realising that when they persevere at things, it can make them feel courageous and proud. We wanted them to embrace this, and as a consequence, to build up their resilience in class and in life in general." The school



stressed that the week happened as a result of much preparation and an existing pastoral structure which is supportive of both staff and girls trying new initiatives. 'Resilience' was the focus of the first half term of 2012 and 'Perseverance and Tenacity' the previous half term, demonstrating the school's ethos.

Video clips such as Derek Redmond failing his Olympic dream (but having the courage to persevere round the track) were complemented by speakers such as Everest mountaineer Nick Carter, who chose to turn back (and saved his frostbitten toes) just 30 metres from the summit.

Not everything works out in life – but for Wimbledon High School GDST, 'failure week' turned out all right.

ISBA plans for conference

The 9th and 10th May 2012 will see the Independent Schools' Bursars Association's (ISBA) annual conference take place for the first time at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference



Centre (SECC) in Glasgow. Bringing together many of the independent education sector's leading experts, the conference will highlight a range of topical issues affecting schools, providing bursars and other senior management staff with the information and advice they need to be effective in their roles during these difficult economic times.

More than 400 bursars and senior management staff are expected at the conference to hear high profile speakers such as Lord Adonis debate the meaning of true independence for schools and Professor Joe Nellis from Cranfield University give his insight into the reality of economic recovery and its effects on the sector. Barnaby Lenon, the new chairman of the Independent Schools Council (ISC), will also offer his views on the future of his organisation – the umbrella body for all independent school associations including the ISBA.

Mike Lower, general secretary of the ISBA (pictured) said: "We are delighted to be bringing this year's ISBA conference to Glasgow and we look forward to welcoming representatives of almost half of our member schools to the event. With important updates for schools from expert speakers, plus networking opportunities and an exhibition of more than 100 professional advisers and companies dedicated to the sector, we know that bursars and other senior management staff

will gain valuable information and advice at the conference which they can take back to their schools and put to good use".

Paul Simpson, professional development director at the ISBA, added: "With break-out sessions at the conference this year including updates on employment law, public benefit, the new integrated inspection regime plus many more, this event is a key part of the professional development opportunities we offer to members. Careful consideration goes into choosing each session and speaker to ensure that the issues covered are as relevant and topical as possible which, in turn, enables delegates to learn as much as possible during the two days".

The ISBA conference concludes with its annual members' dinner. The Glenalmond College Pipe Band will welcome the guests at the start of the evening which will end with award-winning journalist and Strictly Come Dancing contestant John Sergeant as after-dinner speaker.

For more information on the ISBA conference please see <http://conference.theisba.org.uk/>

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Think like an Entrepreneur

The Girls' Schools Association has just launched a new competition to encourage schoolgirls across the UK to take more calculated risks and 'think like an entrepreneur'.

The competition, Ahead of the Game, is spearheaded by GSA president Louise Robinson and sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland, Research in Motion and Smart Study Ltd.

It will involve over 150 fourteen year old (Year 10) girls from girls' schools around the UK and comes fast on the heels of research published in the February edition of the Economic Journal which concludes that girls who experience a single-sex education are more inclined to take economic risks than girls from co-ed schools.

Mrs Robinson – who is head of Merchant Taylors' Girls' School, Merseyside, – believes that learning to think like an entrepreneur is about much more than becoming a successful businesswoman. She said: "Girls' schools excel in giving girls the confidence to take calculated risks and make difficult decisions which is why you find that so many female high flyers were educated in all-girls' schools.

When girls learn to do this, it becomes easier for them to aim high in other areas of their life and have the confidence to pursue possibilities they may otherwise have overlooked or thought beyond them. We hope this competition will galvanise a new wave of entrepreneurship throughout our schools and we're delighted to have both Claire Young and our sponsors on board to enthuse the girls and give them practical advice and ideas about how to develop their business ideas."

The Ahead of the Game competition will take place between now and the final in December, encouraging girls to work on building their businesses over a sustained period of time. At one of four initial enterprise days this month (March) entrants must pitch for funding and one of 10 places in the second round. Businesswoman and social enterprise champion Claire Young, a former finalist on the BBC's Apprentice show said:

"In an increasingly competitive job market it essential for students to gain much valued enterprise skills. The UK desperately needs to increase its percentage of women in business and initiatives like 'Ahead of the Game' will help to create the next generation of female entrepreneurs."

will help to create the next generation of female entrepreneurs."

Girls' schools are no stranger to encouraging calculated risk-taking and entrepreneurship. They have long advocated the freedom from stereotypes that a single sex environment can deliver, enabling girls to explore ideas, pursue interests and develop self-confidence without the pressure that the presence of boys can bring.

New research published in the February edition of the Economic Journal appears to back this, concluding that "girls are more likely to choose risky outcomes when assigned to all-girl groups."

At Wakefield Girls' High School, pupils are already reaping the benefits of enterprise competitions designed to encourage them to be more entrepreneurial and less averse to taking risks. The school has hosted the final of their WGHS Young Entrepreneur of the Year competition which they launched last autumn. In a full day of pitches and presentations, key stage 3 students from six Yorkshire schools competed for the title and a substantial business support package.

Girls' schools who are entering the Ahead of the Game competition include:

Burgess Hill School for Girls, Walthamstow Hall, BlackHeath High School, Prior's Field School (Godalming), St James Senior Girls' School (London), Bromley High School, Roedean School (Brighton), Sherborne Girls' School (Dorset), Heathfield School (Ascot), Queen's College London, St Teresa's School (Dorking), Royal Masonic School for Girls (Hertfordshire), Heathfield School (Ascot), Greenacre School for Girls (Surrey), St Swithun's School (Winchester), St Mary's Calne (Wiltshire), James Allen's Girls' School (London), Northwood College (Middlesex), Luckley-Oldfield School (Wokingham), City of London School for Girls, Channing School (London), St Catherine's Bramley (Guildford), Wimbledon High School, St Leonards-Mayfield School (East Sussex), St Margaret's School Hampstead, Bedford Girls' School, St Francis' College (Hertfordshire), Francis Holland School (London), Moira House Girls' School (Eastbourne), The Godolphin and Latymer School (London), Merchant Taylors' Girls' School, The Queen's School Chester, Manchester High School for Girls, Withington Girls' School, Bolton Girls' School, Westholme School (Lancashire), Edgbaston High School, King Edward VI High School for Girls (Birmingham), Loughborough High School, Ockbrook School (Derbyshire), The Raid Maids School (Bristol), King's High School (Warwick), Nottingham Girls' High School, Malvern St James (Worcestershire), St Helen's School (Northwood Middlesex), Sheffield High School, Northampton High School, Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls (Monmouth), Leicester High School, Headington School (Oxford), Tudor Hall School (Abingdon), St Helen and St Katharine (Abingdon), The Royal High School Bath, Central Newcastle

"16 years after leaving Moreton Enterprises I am now managing director and owner of a creative marketing agency and am often asked where my drive and confidence comes from. To which the response is always: Moreton Enterprises."

~ Suzie Branch, BranchMartinSpicer Ltd (Old Moretonian)

"Many schools get involved in Young Entrepreneur, but to actually have created a business like Moreton Enterprises, pretty much off their own bat, is unique."

~ Jonathan Forster, Principal of Moreton Hall

"Moreton Enterprises has completely opened my eyes to the trials and joys of being in business. The skills of delegating and of making final decisions can only really be learned properly in a real-life environment."

~ Charlotte Eyre, Director, 2010-2011



Moreton Hall leads the way...

Moreton Hall School, Shropshire, has a long history of inspiring young women to get hands-on business experience within the student-run Moreton Enterprises, writes the school's Catherine Ashworth, Head of Business Studies.

Moreton Enterprises has been running at the school for 25 years and started when girls decided to re-open the local British Rail train station and take on the running of the ticket office. Today

the business runs 7 retail outlets on-site at the school, including a Ryman's stationery store and a Barclay's Bank. All the businesses are run entirely by students, with the key appointments of Directors being passed annually from one Year 12 group to the next. The girls and the school encourage parents and friends of the school who have a business-bent to get involved as mentors. Last year the team generated a record turnover of £50,000.

Pictured: various Moreton Hall's entrepreneurial activities.

Moreton Enterprises has inspired many young women who graduate from the school at 18 to pursue successful careers in business. As well as the links with Ryman and Barclay's, this year's team is currently in discussion with a Peter Jones Academy Graduate – who also starred on the Young Apprentice – to appoint her as the school's (possibly the country's) first Entrepreneur in Residence and to pursue a business

idea with her, packaging up Moreton Enterprises for use in other schools.

The team is also working with successful local business people on a further concept, running a Dragons' Den style recruitment drive to identify 2 or 3 local entrepreneurs for the Moreton Enterprises team to support and work with.

Business is certainly booming for the young business women of Moreton Hall.

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Profile

In conversation with **Matthew Burgess**

Matthew Burgess is General Secretary of the Independent Schools Council, the umbrella body for the independent education sector in the UK. He is a lawyer.

Born: 1968

Married: To Penny, with 3 children: Benjamin, Isabel and Theo (all under 6)

Schools and University Attended: Brighton College, Queens' College Cambridge, Georgetown University Law School

First job: 1989 with the Law Commission

First management job: 2005 with Centrica plc

First job in education: 2008 with ISC

Appointed to current job: 2011

Favourite piece of music: Elgar's cello concerto

Favourite food: Black pepper crab with steamed buns (a Singaporean special)

Favourite drink: Cloudy Bay in summer, hot chocolate in winter

Favourite holiday destination: San Francisco

Favourite leisure pastime: Playing with my children

Favourite TV or radio programme/series: Anything by Andrew Graham-Dixon

Suggested epitaph: I rather like Spike Milligan's: "I told you I was ill"

Q You joined the ISC in 2008, and served as General Counsel under three chief executives before taking the senior full-time role last year when the ISC underwent re-organisation. The focus of your job now must be as much managerial as legal. How have you found the change on a personal level?

A *ISC is a small, focused organisation, with only six full time employees and the same number of part time/job share employees. Management is really not a major issue – I'm lucky to work with a small group of dedicated individuals and have the support of a dynamic and well-respected Chairman. And core aspects of my job have remained the same: together with my colleague Sarah McKimm, representing the interests of the sector to Government on issues where we can present a collective view, and being a leading source of guidance on legal and regulatory matters for schools. I'm fortunate that in the three key areas of ISC's work – research, legal, press – I have the support of such capable colleagues.*

Q Sticking on the topic of re-organisation at the ISC, what do you see as the benefits of the 'new-look'? Will the various constituent organisations of the ISC step up to the mark and speak with one voice, or is there a danger that the sector's message will become more diluted?

A *There is now complete unanimity on ISC's purposes: we exist to support the aims and objectives of our member associations; to protect and promote the sector through targeted, focused and effective campaigns with policy makers and opinion formers; to be a leading source of legal and regulatory guidance for the sector; to conduct and compile authoritative sector research and intelligence to underpin everything we do; and to provide online access to sector and school information to inform parental decisions. On some issues, such as the challenge to the Charity Commission or the inclusion of our teachers in TPS, the sector will wish to deliver a single message and we, working with our member associations, can facilitate that. But on other issues, there is no single sector message. That's not a weakness; it's simply a reflection of the diversity of the schools – and pupils – that make up the sector.*

Q One of your predecessors Jonathan Shepherd said: "Within a diverse sector composed of independent entities there is perpetual tension between the wish to cohere and the wish to fragment". Are you finding the same?

A *At a school level, clearly all schools are acutely aware of the need to continue to flourish as independent businesses. But it's pretty easy to find common ground on issues like the need to keep regulation in check, or the benefits of independent education. That's the essence of what we do: protecting and promoting the sector as a whole, with the intention that all schools feel the benefits. I have no wish to enforce uniformity on matters where there is a rich diversity of views, and it's not ISC's role. What we can do is work to magnify the impact of unanimity where it exists, drawing on the expert resources we have access to within the sector and creating opportunities and platforms for those individuals to get clear messages across to policy makers and opinion formers.*

Q You've got the top job at an interesting time. Academies and free schools like to describe themselves as independent, meaning they are outside local authority control whilst still funded by the state; rather a different definition from ISC schools which are independent in the sense of privately-run, mainly fee-paying. How can the real difference between these two concepts of independence be got across to parents and the media?

A *Interestingly, I sense that new academies and free schools are not gravitating towards the 'independent' label that they've been given. But you're right, there is a real potential for confusion here. The key point, of course, is that the choice that parents are exercising when they choose an independent school is qualitatively different to enrolling at – or in many cases being allocated to – a local state-funded school. For many, perhaps most, parents, choosing an independent school will be one of the most significant decisions they take. It's down to each individual school to market its own ethos and approach to education, but what sector associations can do is continue to highlight the many and varied benefits of independent schools in delivering the best possible start in life: the strength and depth of the curriculum and how it is taught; co-curricular opportunities; high standards of pastoral care; in*

sum, nurturing and developing the particular talents of each child. Freedom from state control has to play a part in that too.

Q On the subject of free schools, it seems odd to some commentators that independent schools are permitted to apply for conversion to free-school status, which will effectively transfer costs from parents to state at a time when Treasury coffers are under so much pressure. Would it not make more sense to grant parents some tax-relief on school fees, thereby encouraging more take-up of independent school places and reducing the state education budget, or to resurrect the widely-admired Direct Grant system?

A *It's certainly interesting that assisted places are back in the press again – the Fair Access to University Group suggesting, for example, a voluntary scheme for independent schools to commit a percentage of places for bright pupils from state schools who qualify for free school meals, with direct grant or passport funding. IAPS is a champion of the Educational Tax Allowance, the value of which would vary in inverse proportion to wealth, and which parents could use and top up to meet school fees. Our own research suggests that the idea of state support for places at independent schools is accepted as sensible by more and more people: more than half of adults now support use of government funds to enable children from lower income families to attend independent schools.*

Q A number of independent schools have closed at very short notice, leaving parents out of pocket, pupils' education in the lurch, and a nasty taste in everyone's mouth. Should the sector develop protection of some kind, meaning schools would not close at less than a term's notice? After all, schools generally expect parents to give a term's notice of their child's departure, and independent education cannot afford to be considered a risky investment.

A *I'm not sure how one could ever construct a system which would prevent businesses closing at short notice. And bail-outs don't have a particularly good name at the moment. The best defence is proper governance and oversight, which is why sector organisations like AGBIS are so important.*

Q The ISC has scrapped its annual conference, launched with such a fanfare in 2006. Why? Did they not serve any real purpose?

A *ISC won't administer any more conferences, although that's not to say that some of our most successful events won't continue in a different guise. Our SEN conferences, for example, which have been running very successfully for five years, will carry on under the aegis of our SEN Expert Group. Similarly, our sell-out ICT conferences will continue with the support of the ICT Expert Group. Annual conferences are a slightly different proposition, and all of our member associations hold their own annual conferences already of course. But we can look back with pride at our past conferences. I particularly recall the annual conference in March 2010, two months before the general election. We had all three contenders for the Schools' Minister portfolio address the conference, and by meeting each of them individually in advance we ensured that there was a remarkable degree of unanimity about the need to preserve the independence of our sector and lift the burden of regulation. Some months afterwards, with the new government in place, we saw ContactPoint scrapped, the Vetting and Barring Scheme halted and onerous changes to Independent School Standards and National Minimum Standards reversed.*

Q You spearheaded the opposition to the Charity Commission's now-discredited definitions of what constitutes charitable status of independent schools, steering the ISC to largely successful Judicial Review conclusions. You must have been pleased at the outcome – what do you think the future holds on the subject of 'proving' charitable status?

A *Yes, I am pleased at the outcome. Not only does it vindicate our original concern that the Commission's guidance was legally flawed; it results in a much more satisfactory position for schools. It lays to rest once and for all any notion that the charitable status of independent schools is under threat. Schools have charitable purposes for the public benefit and are therefore legally charities; nothing in the 2006 Act changed that. The focus then turns to how governors make decisions about the running of schools and, here, the ruling reasserts the authority of governors and emphasises the wide range of*

decisions they may properly make. There is of course a limit to that range: and governors which take this ruling as the green light to turn inwards, looking exclusively to the interests of full fee-paying parents/children to the exclusion of all else, would find themselves personally in some difficulty. But in my experience, that is not how governors approach their task.

Q Your background is in Corporate Law, handling major company transactions in London and Singapore. This is a rough-and-tumble world of City finance and deal-making. What did you most enjoy about it?

A *I spent 13 years in private practice in the UK and Asia, and then a further three years with Centrica working on strategic transactions. The most enjoyable time was probably my four years in Asia, working on a varied programme of mergers and acquisitions, partnerships and joint ventures, and even debt restructuring and bail-outs (Asia in the late 90s being a foretaste of Europe a decade later). I liked the buzz of the deals, the professionalism of my colleagues and the wonderful opportunities for travel.*

Q You were educated at Brighton College, the Sussex independent school where you are now a Governor, and your son attends an independent school near your Middlesex home. You got into Cambridge University to study Law - no mean achievement in itself - so what was it about your independent education which helped you towards academic success at the highest level, and what appeals to you about such education now as a father?

A *I am fortunate to have extremely supportive parents who were prepared to make sacrifices so that my brother and I could have the best possible education. My time at Brighton College was very happy, and I enjoyed not only the wide range of subjects on offer but also the musical opportunities – taking up the piano and violin and playing in chamber groups, orchestras, string quartets, even busking on the beach! The education I received continues to enrich my life today, and I hope that my children will be stimulated in the same way to engender a love of learning that will last them forever.*

"Dancing is affirmative, optimistic and democratic. It embodies the idea that the world can be a better and happier place."

~ The Guardian, 20 December 2008

Why Dance?

Natalie Gibbs, Head of Dance, Bromley High School, Kent, reflects...

The profile of dance in the media has grown and has exposed itself to new audiences young and old. We have seen 'Strictly Come Dancing', 'So You Think You Can Dance', 'Britain's Got Talent' and endless music videos on our screens that have encouraged people to find out more and for many try a new dance style. Dance enthusiasts will say how dancing not only is an enjoyable and highly skilled talent; it provides true escapism from the outside world, whatever ability one has. Dance is the most popular physical activity after football for young people.

Young people enjoy dance. They value dance as an expressive art form, as social recreation and for the instrumental benefits it brings. Dance is a creative activity that uses the kinaesthetic mode (bodily movement) with imagination in its creating, performing and watching. It complements other forms of intelligence and provides a vehicle for young people to physically express and communicate their ideas, identity and culture, their understanding about themselves, others and the society in which they live.

There are endless benefits that dance can bring to the lives of children and education. It has been proven that within schools dance can enhance the learning of pupils across academic subjects. Dance

can inspire and motivate, it helps improve concentration, focus, management skills and teamwork. Dancing intensifies the human experience as a form of education. It reinforces the formal learning related to other academic subjects, especially for children who may not respond to traditional modes of teaching. It can build confidence, help to overcome shyness, and enhance brain activity.

Although it is not traditionally an academic subject, Dance can be taken as an exam subject, for example, GCSE, AS/A Level and does test not just the physical skills of the performer but the analytical and appreciation skills too. Dance as a qualification can lay the foundations for a career in dance or be merely a subject that pupils enjoy and therefore the opportunity to achieve a high grade.

Pupils at Bromley High participate and are experienced in various different dance styles; these students have the opportunity to share their knowledge, expertise and talents with other pupils at the school. Our recent dance and drama performance, 'We Will Rock You' showcased these varying dance styles and introduced to pupils new styles that they may have previously never experienced.

"Dance is the hidden language of the soul" Martha Graham.

"Dance has always been an integral part of our Visual Arts provision at Bromley High School, but we are delighted that we now have an academic department and a dedicated dance teacher to develop the subject and move it forward at the school."

~ Louise Simpson, Head, Bromley High School

(Sources from *Dance In and Beyond School*, Youth Dance England)

Pictures by Paul Knivett



Natalie Gibbs



Advertorial Feature

The place to find the latest in theatre technology

With the increasing popularity of the performing arts, both on the curriculum and as an after school activity, there will be few schools without some form of performance space. Whether yours is a stage in the assembly hall, a drama studio, a dance studio or a dedicated performing arts facility, it will be well worth visiting the annual ABTT 2012 Theatre Show to catch up on what's new in theatre technology, and to find out about higher education courses for your students.

The ethos of the annual Theatre Show, organised by the Association of British Theatre Technicians and now in its 34th year, is firmly established as a focus for theatre technicians to experience the latest in theatre technology, talk with manufacturers, suppliers, educators, practitioners and industry associations, enjoy seminars and share experiences with colleagues and friends in a relaxed atmosphere. Whoever is involved with the school theatrical spaces will find plenty to see – lighting, sound, seating, stage engineering, drapes, effects, scenic paint, dance floors and much, much more. News of exhibitors and events is available on the show website and blog, as well as Facebook and Twitter.

The 'Old Truman Brewery' in East London where the ABTT 2012 Theatre Show will be staged on the 13th & 14th June, is an exciting new venue created from the regeneration of ten acres of once vacant and derelict buildings on the former brewery site and is also placed central to one of London's most exuberant and eclectic shopping and dining districts.

Show director Roger Fox explained, "Many colleges in the UK now offer some sort of vocational theatre technology courses, and some of these will have a stand at the show this year. Students on backstage courses often 'get the bug' from their school's drama productions, especially when the technical facilities are good, and the Theatre Show is the one place where all areas of equipment, installation, education and advice combine."

The Old Truman Brewery offers a perfect home for a show that continues to welcome new, creative and innovative ideas in a non-intimidating setting that is just a few steps on the London Underground from Central London and a short walking distance from both Underground and Overground rail stations, and conveniently placed for London City Airport.



Free entry can be obtained by registering online at www.abtttheatreshow.org.uk

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Young Supporters Concert

Mrs Olivia Sparkhall, Deputy Director of Music at Godolphin School, Wiltshire, led 400 young Wiltshire voices in song at the Barnardo's Young Supporters Concert held in Salisbury Cathedral last month (February).

The programme was opened by the award winning Godolphin Vocal Ensemble and included pieces from Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School, Broad Chalke CE VA Primary School, the Godolphin Choir, Alderbury & West Grimstead CE VA Primary School, Leaden Hall School, Downton Primary School, the Godolphin Voices and the Warminster Singers. The massed choir, made up of 400 young voices, concluded the programme and was



conducted by Mrs Sparkhall and accompanied by Mr Tom Young, also from Godolphin.

Mrs Samantha Price, Head of Godolphin, said "what a wonderful evening and how special to see children doing something for other, less privileged, children – I really hope we can do this again next year".

Advertorial Feature

Brentwood School

Brentwood School is a leading Independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 3 – 18 years. The school follows the 'Diamond Model' for academic teaching, which means that from 11+ boys and girls are taught separately until the Sixth Form, when classes are mixed to prepare young men and women for the world beyond school.

Brentwood pupils thrive on academic success, expert teaching staff, outstanding facilities and an ethos that encourages confidence, as well as a caring and unpretentious attitude.

The Sixth Form facilities were recently improved to provide university standard accommodation. Designed by award winning

architects Cottrell and Vermulen this new development features a brand new Sixth Form centre, state-of-the-art classrooms, fully equipped computer suite, common rooms and private study areas and a 400-seat 'Wessex Auditorium'.

The Wessex Auditorium was officially opened in November 2011 by His Royal Highness Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex. It offers a magnificent performance space, tiered seating for 400 and a large multi-deck stage with inset steps. At the opening ceremony Prince Edward dramatically unveiled the commemorative plaque and commented, "I hope that this new space will be used for all sorts of dramatic purposes and I'm going to try to be the first one!"



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Pupils sing at Windsor castle

Solihull School's choristers rose to the occasion when they were granted the rare privilege of singing at Windsor Castle.

The boys and men of the West Midlands school's Chapel Choir sang Choral Evensong in St George's Chapel, the burial place of ten monarchs and spiritual home of the Order of the Garter.

The event to celebrate the Conversion of St Paul was attended by a large congregation of parents, teachers, tourists and clergy including the Dean of Windsor The Right Reverend David Conner.

The 41 singers, aged from eight to 18 years, sang the anthem Blessed

Advertorial Feature

Tiered seating takes centre stage

When the third oldest school in the country needed a solution to a complex theatrical problem they called on experts Mainstage.

St Peter's School, York, a co-educational boarding school founded in 627AD, wanted to develop a former church hall in the school grounds – converted some years earlier for use as the school's drama studio – into a smart, new multi-functional theatre.

The Dame Judi Dench Drama Centre, complete with high ceilings and stained glass in abundance, lacked something of the flavour of a serious theatre space in its own right.

Innovative

Mainstage, one of the UK's top three providers of portable staging and tiered seating, rose to the challenge. They assessed the site, requirements and available space and designed an innovative seating arrangement.

Mainstage used aluminium



be the God and Father by Samuel Sebastian Wesley, with solos from Alexander Lavery and Mark Lawrence, and Charles Wood's Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (No.2) in E Flat.

The choristers, led by Solihull School Chapel Organist and Choirmaster Oliver Walker with his predecessor Peter Irving on the organ, rehearsed in nearby Eton College Chapel before taking their places in the choir stalls of the magnificent 15th Century chapel.

platforms from their Topdeck System range to provide safe, robust tiered seating, which ingeniously incorporated existing stage blocks, on three sides of the theatre.

Accommodating both children and adults, the modular units join together effortlessly to create tiered areas with flexible access points.

Benefits

"The new seating bank has given our old studio space a new lease of life and turned it into a proper theatre," explains Helen Coney, from the school's drama department. "Our old flat, grey chairs, which didn't allow us to get any height or depth, have been replaced and we now have adaptability and functionality."

Helen added that Mainstage had created an intimate, cosy theatre space which inspired confidence.

"The theatre is now used for a phenomenal amount of things - drama lessons through the week,

exam performances and the sixth form play to name but a few. "We can also use the seating elsewhere because it is so very adaptable and easy to move. "We are delighted with everything Mainstage have done."

For more information call 01524 844099 or email m.sweetland@mainstage.info

Young Musicians of the Year

Four students from Licensed Victuallers' School, Berkshire, are celebrating being selected as 'Young Musicians of the Year'. With over 70 students entering from the Junior and Senior Schools, 20 finalists played at the LVS Ascot Young Musician of the Year grand final last month (February). The event is one of the highlights of the school's musical calendar and with such a high calibre of entries it was a

difficult job for the Adjudicator, Mr Dylan Quinlivan-Brewer, Head of Brass at Wellington College, to select the winners.

Head of Music Performance at LVS Ascot, Miss Cecilia Smiga commented on the event: "The evening was an outstanding success. The students performed to a very high standard, and I am delighted by the progress that is being made in Music here at LVS."



Pictured: The winners with Dylan Quinlivan-Brewer



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Head girls in tune for charity

Two sixth form pupils from a Derbyshire school played to their strengths – organising a musical spectacular all in aid of a worthy cause.

Head girl, Caroline Oliver, and deputy head girl Laura Burkinshaw, both 18, of Mount St Mary's College were full of brass as they raised hundreds of pounds for "Help for Heroes" by hosting the tuneful event with a retro theme!

Headlining at the 'Northerners Night' was The Brass Players, who have performed for royalty, appeared on worldwide hit records and award winning feature films, toured all five

continents and starred on almost every popular UK television and radio station.

Supporting the musical celebrities was the talented school brass band, which performed for the audience of music lovers, parents and charity supporters who thoroughly enjoyed their rendition of "Jupiter" from Holst's Planets Suite.

The event, held in the school theatre, raised over £500 which was added to the £200 collected by past and present school musicians performing Christmas carols to nearby residents in December.

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Percussion Packs

Drums for Schools have launched four revolutionary Class Percussion Packs. The packs make it possible for every school to satisfy the key requirements of the National Music Plan as well as those of the National Curriculum – and all on a shoestring. The packs include carefully chosen, hand-made instruments, a practical Teacher's Guide and online video support and prices start at just £99. Crucially, the Teaching Guide that accompanies each pack is so practical and easy to follow that any enthusiastic teacher can apply the lesson plans – so no specialist expertise is needed and schools following this approach can quickly become self-sufficient in music teaching and have no need for extra budget for peripatetic staff. The packs are suitable for all age groups from KS1 to KS4.

The Class Percussion Book, written by educator and professional percussionist Andy Gleadhill, shows generalist teachers how to combine the basic classroom percussion instruments with authentic world rhythms and melodies, enabling them to teach their pupils all the

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elements of music and help them rapidly progress to the point that they can improvise and perform a range of pieces from around the world. There's also a selection of video clips available on line that further support teacher and pupils by giving practical demonstrations of the techniques and pieces covered in the Guide.

Schools and education providers can buy the Class Percussion Packs and any Drums for Schools product via the website, drumsforschools.co.uk, at a 30% discount, so the new packs cost just £99 for the 10 Player Starter Pack, £149 for the 30 Player Budget Pack and £239 for the full 30 Player Pack. Whole Class instrumental teaching has never been more affordable or more accessible.



School Shines in Drama Festival

Pupils from Bromsgrove School took home a wealth of awards at the BEAME awards ceremony in Birmingham following their participation in the festival.

The Senior School pupils took part in the Birmingham Festival of Acting & Musical Entertainment, performing their One-Act Youth Play, *Shockheaded Peter*, resulting in them winning four out of the five categories for the genre in the awards.

Pupils Nyree Williams (aged 13) and Taome Jennings (aged 14) were both nominated for The Edyth Jones Shield for Most Outstanding Female Performance, which Taome won for her consistently amazing

performance in the play every night. Niall Hegarty and Andrey Ogarev (both aged 15) were both up for The Leon Salberg Shield for Most Outstanding Male Performance. Andrey narrowly scraped the victory for his intensity and physical versatility with only a point between himself and Niall as runner up.

Teacher Mrs Lucinda McKee took home The Roy Pinsent Shield for Best Original Play or Script for her excellent adaptation of the play, and to round off the evening the group was awarded The Mabel Burrows Shield for Any Outstanding Achievement for their Ensemble work.

Photo: (L-R) Teacher Mrs McKee with pupils Nyree Williams, Taome Jennings, Andrey Ogarev and Niall Hegarty

All that jazz!

Royal Russell School, Surrey, Jazz Band performed at one of Shirley Methodist Church's well-attended monthly concerts.

The 150 strong audience enjoyed a real treat, when the six piece band entertained them with a large repertoire of swinging jazz. One of the pieces was composed by a member of the band, 16 year old Joshua Fernandes, who plays the clarinet. Joshua was only 15 when he composed the piece entitled *Tulipe*.



Great Choral Day

Staff and pupils from two local primary schools joined forces with Holmwood House School, Essex, to participate in their fourth annual Great Choral Day.

Each year, Director of Music at Holmwood House, Tom Cogan, invites different local primary schools to attend the event and this year, invited Year 4 pupils from Heathlands Primary School, West Bergholt and Dedham Primary School to join Holmwood House pupils in a fun day of singing.

Over 100 children enjoyed the workshops led by the Holmwood House music staff, with them learning 4 different

songs throughout the day and culminating in a performance for their parents and teachers at the end of the day.

The Great Choral Day was the last for Tom Cogan, Director of Music at Holmwood House, as he will be retiring at Easter after 25 years working at the school. Fellow colleague, Peter Snell, will take up the post upon his retirement, aided by Tom Stapleton as Assistant Director of Music & Drama.

Alexander Mitchell, Headmaster, said, "This is one of my favourite days of the year. It is always wonderful to see children from local schools join together in song."



150 pupils attend music day

More than 150 pupils from across the North of England have attended Ashville College to rehearse and perform a combined massed concert in one day.

The students, who represented ten independent junior schools, participated in the Headmasters Conference Music (HMC) Day, which is now an established annual event at the Yorkshire school.

The young musicians, aged between eight and 11, began the day by rehearsing in their various disciplines – choir, woodwind, strings, brass and percussion – before coming together for one, final rehearsal ahead of the all important performance.

In front of an audience of friends, family and teachers, the pupils

performed a selection of Disney classics and well-known children's favourites.

Jonathan Dolman, Ashville Junior School's Headteacher said: "This event has now become firmly established in our diary and is one that the pupils – and teachers from all the participating schools – thoroughly look forward to."

The schools that took part in the day were: Clock House at Bradford Grammar School; Coram House at Ackworth School, Pontefract; Hymers School, Hull; Lyndhurst School, Pocklington; Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield; The Grammar School at Leeds, The Royal Grammar School, Newcastle; Yarm School and Yarm at Ranthorpe, Darlington.

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Advertorial Feature

New instrument storage system has the edge

Instrument storage can be a problem. Instruments of every shape and size, some delicate, some cumbersome, all need a dedicated space where they can be stored neatly, safely and securely. Bulky theatre props, costumes and sheet music also take up a lot of storage space. Where do you put it all in a way that keeps it accessible, but also secure and well protected? How do you make sure storage doesn't impede movement and access? What kind of options do you have? And where in the world do you start?

A good starting point is talking to Black Cat Music, a company that has been providing instrument, costume and sheet music storage solutions for years - both custom-built, and from the well-respected and trusted Wenger range. Joining the comprehensive range of established instrument storage products is the new Edge™ Storage System. With budgets under pressure the Edge™ Storage System has been developed as an economical product, but without compromising quality or durability and is supported by Wenger's ten-year warranty. It is also eco-friendly being constructed from fewer

materials, and includes an FSC wood option amongst the choice of styles.

This flush-to-wall instrument storage system cuts down on the amount of material used, as does the open back concept between the unit and the wall behind it. These design elements help to make cost savings, while maintaining the long-lasting quality and elegance for which Wenger products are renowned (hence the ten-year warranty). The system can be custom-designed to accommodate the number and size of instruments required by the school; it can also be designed to store costumes, theatre props or sheet music.

Doors are available with the option of wood or grille fronts. Either way they are pretty tough. Experience has shown that students have a tendency to hang on locker doors, so doors are load-tested with more than 300 lb (136 kg) of pressure on the outer edge. It is also the case that easy theft is the most likely theft, and to prevent that the patented lock-bar is 12-gauge steel, the strike plate heavy-duty, and locks tamper-resistant.

Choristers on a National Stage

A Christ College, Powys, pupil has been accepted into one of the UK's most prestigious children's choirs – continuing a startling run of singing success for her school on the national stage. Issy Bridgeman, aged 14, has won a place in the National Youth Choir of Great Britain.

She is following the musical standard of excellence set by three of her fellow choristers in the school's Chapel Choir and Chamber Choir.

Megan Gee, aged 17, from Chippenham and Holly Taylor, aged 16, from Brecon, who have been singing with the school's junior choir for six years, have established themselves as two of just 35 senior members of The National Children's Choir of Great Britain.

And tenor Richard James, aged 18, from Aberystwyth, who recently won the Christ College Musician of the Year competition, has been offered a place at Birmingham Conservatoire for the next academic year.

Photo: (left to right): Issy Bridgeman, Megan Gee, Holly Taylor and Richard James

Director of Music Richard West said music had always been a strong feature of life at the school. "To have three singers performing in national choirs and another who has the opportunity to study for a singing performance degree at Birmingham Conservatoire is a testament to their hard work and dedication.

"Places in the National Choirs are by audition and the girls have done so well to gain their places. We are also very proud that all four singers make such a significant and positive contribution to the musical life of Christ College."

Issy, Megan and Holly will be performing with their respective choirs over the school holidays, and all four singers will be contributing to the Christ College Gala Concert in the Brangwyn Hall on 28th April, which will involve around 200 pupils performing from the school.

Junk music making

Noise was the order of the day at Hart House, the pre-prep section of Edge Grove Prep School, Hertfordshire, when the children were treated to a junk orchestra, exploring sound-scapes from the twilight zone to foot-stomping madness.

The show, Mr Brown and his Clang Bang House, was performed by professional musician Saul Eisenberg, whose Junk Orchestra brings together his passion for percussion, theatre, building, innovation, performance and working with young people.

Rachael Toolan, Head of Music, said: "It was fantastic to see the excitement on the children's faces as they created 'stormy music' from the junk. This was interactive learning at its best."



Pictured: Edge Grove pupil Benjamin Sunden (5) makes music on a piece of Saul Eisenberg's 'junk'.



www.blackcatmusic.co.uk



Lloyd Webber performs

The Felsted Olympiad welcomed Julian Lloyd Webber to Felsted School, Essex, to give a recital to a packed Grignon Hall, which included pupils, parents, staff and music lovers from all over Essex. Accompanied by Pam Chowen on the piano, Julian showed his brilliance on his Barjansky Stradivarius cello (dated c.1690), with pieces by Bach, Faure and Britten. The second half was particularly moving as the audience were treated to the beautiful piece 'In The Half Light', written by his father William. The finale was the epic Cello Sonata by Rachmaninov, which lasted a full 35 minutes!

Julian had arrived earlier in the afternoon to perform with Felsted pupils and members of the Norwich branch of the musical charity 'In Harmony', of which he is Chairman. Julian is also patron of Felsted's state-of-the-art new Music School, so it proved to be a unique occasion for him.

Director of Music, Mr James Lowry, commented; "We are extremely privileged to have Julian as our patron. We are currently raising funds through a Grade 1-a-thon project, where members of the Felsted community have been challenged to raise sponsorship by taking up an instrument and sitting a Grade 1 exam within two terms!"

Our Country's Good

The audiences of the Leighton Park Senior School, Berkshire, production of "Our Country's Good" felt they were transported back in time to the penal colony at New Sydney Cove, New South Wales in 1789.

The play by Timberlake Wertenbaker is a modern classic and tells the story of the first theatrical performance in Australia in 1788 by a convict cast. Even for an experienced cast this is a very challenging play, relying heavily

on the ability of the performers to portray the complex and multi-layered characters of jailers and convicts, set against the brutal and violent environment of the penal colonies.

Alex McGrath, Head congratulated the whole cast on delivering "such a memorable performance, with an understanding and skill far beyond their years. There is no doubt that Music and Drama are key strengths of the school".



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'Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body'

~ Sir Richard Steele (1672 – 1729)

World Book Day on March 1st coincided with the 200th anniversary year of Charles Dickens' birth. Despite the onward rush of technology, reading – and writing – books remain close the heart of many school activities...

McD gets OK for CD

Pupil's from Gad's Hill School, once the former home of world famous author Charles Dickens, celebrated Dickens 200th birthday at McDonalds!

As part of the Dickens bi-centenary celebrations the school put on several performances of the musical "Oliver" based on one of Dickens famous works "Oliver Twist". The children had just finished a matinee performance at the Woodville Halls Theatre in Gravesend, Kent to an audience of 500 local school children and community groups including Age UK, Salvation Army & The Royal Engineers Association.

That same evening they were due to perform at a gala anniversary show to a full house of 700 people

and VIP guests including the High Sheriff of Kent, Mayor & Mayoress of Gravesham and Mayor & Mayoress of Medway.

Between the shows, and with 150 children to feed, the nearby McDonalds got the children's vote and was where they celebrated Charles Dickens' Birthday in the way they know best.

Charles Dickens was born on 7th February 1812 and lived at Gad's Hill Place from 1856 until his death 14 years later in what is now the school dining room. At the time he was working on his final novel, The Mystery of Edwin Drood.

Gad's Hill School has occupied Gad's Hill Place, Higham, Kent since 1924.

Top Gear connection

Pupils and staff at Kingswood House School, Surrey, welcomed the author Andrew Hammond on World Book Day as the younger pupils came to school dressed as their favourite book characters.

Mr Hammond, who is the brother of Top Gear presenter Richard Hammond, visited the school to read to a number of year groups.

The author is an experienced teacher who has taught in prep schools for many years as a Deputy Head, Director of Studies, Housemaster and Head of English and Drama.

He has published over 40 educational titles and was commissioned to write a five-book horror fiction series for teenagers.



...Of unicorns and mermaids

Popular children's author Linda Chapman told stories of unicorns, mermaids and stardust spirits when she dropped into Belmont Grosvenor School, Yorkshire.

The writer of a range of well-known novels including My Secret Unicorn, Stardust and Not Quite a Mermaid, spent the morning inspiring the pupils not only to read – but write their own stories too. Linda told them how she became a writer, and read extracts from the first book she wrote when she was a schoolgirl.

Pupils from year 3 to year 6 were asked to come up with ideas for their own shadow creatures – drawing and creating the fictional character and talking about how it might

attack people, and how Sophie and Sam, the heroes of her book, could defeat it.

Sophie Johnston, Head of English, said Linda's visit had been an overwhelming success. "Linda Chapman inspired the children to read, to write and be creative with their ideas. She engaged with them and provided advice for their own writing. It was a wonderful sight, after her talk, seeing all the pupils sitting in the library, reading her books, and talking about them, and coming up with ideas for their own stories," she said.

Waterstones set up a pop-up shop in the school's library to enable pupils to buy Linda's books – and get her autograph.

Wacky idea

World Book Day at The Towers School, Sussex, saw lots of inventive costumes including the rather uncomfortable ones worn by 'Bill and Ben' and the very colourful Minnie Mouse and friends. The entire Senior School participated with competitions and activities held in the library at lunch-time. Even the staff were happy to dress-up.

Following on from this success Ms Jaynie Hansell, the Senior School English Co-ordinator launched a competition called 'Wacky Reading'. The idea is that each girl sends in a photograph of herself reading in the wackiest place she can find; even photographs with kindles will be accepted. The photographs will be judged after the Easter holiday.

Anniversary Style

Ardingly College Prep School, Sussex, joined in the nationwide celebrations of Charles Dickens' 200th birthday with a suitably joyful production of Dickens' Testament at the Capitol Theatre, Horsham.

This was the first performance of a new musical written by James Verner who was also the original Producer of the smash hit musicals Hair and The Black Mikado. James adapted his piece, in which Dickens relates Bible stories to his children, especially for the College and he described the performance as, "A truly wonderful evening for a writer's first time viewing of his work – so much talent there."

After the show James Verner commented: "What could anyone

say but the greatest of thanks to Ardingly College and its leaders for having the wit and understanding and, crucially, the support for their children, to encourage a production of this nature. A leap of faith indeed."

Building on Ardingly's success, there are now plans for a professional Christmas production of Dickens' Testament and a recording of the songs.



Bookathon assists local charity reading scheme

Bedford Modern School held its own special Bookathon to mark World Book Day.

Every member of the Bedford Modern School community – pupils, parents, staff, friends and family – invited to take part by donating books with the aim of collecting 2012 books in 2012 to be used for local charity reading schemes such as Fun4Young People, which works with deserving children in Kempston.

Almost four million children in Britain do not own a book and

donation boxes were placed at a number of points within the School with any books, fiction or non-fiction, suitable for children aged between 5 and 15 being welcomed.

The School's initial target was more than doubled and a total of 4740 books were handed over.

Elva Sheldon, English Teacher at Bedford Modern School whose initiative it was to launch the Bookathon said: "Both we and those at Fun4Young People are absolutely delighted with the generosity shown by so many, enabling us to reach such a magnificent total."

In tandem with the Bookathon, Bedford Modern School also held "The Big Library Picnic & Birthday Bash", to celebrate the fifth birthday of the School's Learning Resource Centre.

As part of the event, pupils were invited to come along to the Library during the lunchbreak and, for one day only, have lunch, squash and biscuits on picnic rugs in the Library whilst listening to staff read from their favourite books.



Inaugural Book Week

The Hawthorns School, Surrey, held its very first Book Week this year. Head of English, Alex Woodard: "The inaugural Hawthorns Prep School Book Week has flown by in a flurry of author visits, competitions and activities. Every day a 'Mystery Reader' has appeared in the School Library. Visiting authors and speakers included Stuart Chevalier who spoke about his passion for graphic novels; Mike Thexton, aspiring children's fantasy novelist, who gave writing workshops on plot and character; and Tom Palmer, a successful children's football and rugby author, whose interactive presentations culminated in a penalty shoot-out!



The week culminated with a Book Swap in the Front Hall, giving pupils the chance to donate a book in exchange for another. All in all, a busy and bookish time!"

Watching Prime Ministers

Crowning their celebrations of World Book Day, Warminster School, Wiltshire, welcomed the eminent historian and writer Lord Peter Hennessy to give a lecture entitled 'Watching Prime Ministers' – something he has done, in his own words, 'for most of his life'.

Using his functional analysis of the role of PM, Lord Hennessy created what was effectively a Prime Minister's 'Job Description' – one which has expanded greatly over the post-war period. Whilst this may sound a rather dry, analytical task, nothing could be further from the truth. Lord Hennessy thoroughly entertained throughout, treating the audience to some hilarious anecdotes and divulging information some of which had remained until recently buried in classified national archives in Kew.

Pupils Become Published Writers

Pupils from Bromsgrove School, Worcestershire, are due to become published writers in a national Young Writers anthology.

27 Pupils from Year 9 have had their work accepted for publication in the next edition of the anthology, entitled New Adventures. The entries were selected by the publishers of the anthology, which will be available at bookshops nationwide.

English teacher Daniel Williams said: "It would be difficult to single out individuals as all

the entries were excellent, but it is important to note that English is a second language for a number of the international pupils involved in the competition, which marks a huge achievement."





Finalists again

A place in the Independent Schools Football Association Cup Final awaits the Chilton Cantelo School, Somerset, 1st XI, who won through to their second national final in two seasons after coming through a semi final against Chigwell School, Essex.

The final will take place at Hinckley United's ground in Leicestershire on 26 April against last year's opponents Liverpool College, where Chilton will be looking to overturn a 2-0 defeat. Coach Kevin Wagland – pictured back row left with the squad – said: "To make it to two National finals in a row is a massive achievement for a school of our size and the culmination of five years hard work for this squad of players."

Selected by England

16 year old Charlie Beckett has been selected by the RFU for this year's England Under 16s squad. The 6ft 5in Year 11 pupil from Merchant Taylors' Boys' School, Liverpool, will join a 22-strong squad to prepare for the internationals against Italy Under 17s and Wales Under 16s in April.

Charlie, who has been playing the game since the age of 5, comes from a rugby family with his father and coach, Mark Beckett, having played for the North of England Seniors and his Uncle, Andrew Taylor, having played for England in the Under 18s team.



At the Maths Olympics!

Katya Richards, a pupil at St Helen and St Katharine, Oxfordshire, has been chosen to represent Great Britain in the European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad.

Just like any Olympic hopeful, Katya has completed a number of gruelling selection rounds; her performance in the British Mathematical Olympiad Round 1 as she pitted her mathematical brain against 1400 top mathematicians, from schools across the country, gained her a place in the joint British and Hungarian Mathematical Olympiad training event which took place in Hungary in January. Katya performed so well in the British Mathematical Olympiad Round 2 that she was chosen, along with 3 others, to represent Great Britain in the inaugural European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad taking place in Cambridge next month (April).

"Katya is the most insightful mathematician I have met in my

career and her problem solving skills are phenomenal, particularly for someone of her age" remarked Mr Morris, Head of Mathematics at St Helen and St Katharine.

Katya (15), says she loves solving complex mathematical problems and hopes to go on to study maths at university.



Photo by Marc West

It's a hat-trick for Brookwood!

The independent school catering company, The Brookwood Partnership have once again proved they are among the best companies to work for in the UK.

At an award ceremony last month February, it was announced that Brookwood were listed as 31st Best Company in The Sunday Times Top 100 Best Companies to Work For. This is the third time Brookwood have received this crown of honor, appearing in the 2008 (81st) and 2010 (54th) listing.

Sue Parfett, Managing Partner, said "With strong competition, it is no mean feat to secure a place in the Top 100 but we work tirelessly to ensure Brookwood is the best place to work. Our place as 31st Best Company is a fantastic recognition to what goes on behind the scenes of creating more than 40,000 fresh and healthy meals a day." Our founding philosophy is providing a food standard that can't be bettered which is only achieved by ensuring we recruit and train the best

employees in the sector. In the last year alone, some 16,000 hours were spent on training activities from NVQ's to on-job training courses and Brookwood's Management Development Programme.

More than 1000 companies entered the competition which is designed to measure employee engagement by analysing 54 questions across Leadership, Wellbeing, My Manager, My Team, My Company, Personal Growth, Giving Something Back and Fair Deal.

Pauline Vallance, Brookwood's HR Manager, was present at the award ceremony "I am very proud to say that I work for one of the best companies in the UK. The company is passionate about its staff and working here offers the opportunity to grow both professionally and personally."

The full list of The Sunday Times Top 100 Companies to Work For 2012 was published in the paper on Sunday 4th March.



www.brookwood-ptnrs.com

Head for new prep

Sussex's newest Prep School has appointed a headmaster.

Sebastian Rees (41) has been appointed by governors at Seaford College Prep School, near Petworth, with effect from September 2012. Mr Rees is currently Director of Studies of Junior Kings School, Canterbury, where he has taught for the past six years. Prior to that, he was acting head of Northbourne Primary School and a teacher at nearby Sandwich Junior School, Kent.



London-born Mr Rees was educated at Cumnor House Preparatory School in South London and Cranleigh, before reading French and Italian at University College, London.

Reviving tired turf



Advertorial Feature

Edinburgh Leisure, which manages and maintains all leisure facilities for Edinburgh City Council, has signed a five-year agreement with Replay Maintenance to undertake surface maintenance of its multiple synthetic sports pitches, spread across six sites.

Edinburgh Leisure's Shirley Bowman believes it's the best way of managing costs whilst keeping sports pitches at peak performance. "Replay Maintenance undertakes its Revive service on all the pitches an agreed number of times a year. I know they will do the work when they are scheduled to, in a safe and professional manner, and the quality is excellent so it's one less thing I and my groundsmen have to worry about."

The Revive process uses a specially developed, single operator machine to remove contaminants from in-filled and water-based synthetic turf carpet as well as polymeric surfaces. Rotary brushes penetrate deeper into the in-fill than static brushes, breaking up the contamination crust and removing it with a powerful vacuum filter system for disposal off site. The sand or rubber in-fill is then filtered, dropped back onto the surface and worked in using a static brush head in the first instance, followed by a drag mat. The process helps reduce

www.replaymaintenance.co.uk

compaction of the surface, enhances its porosity and helps maintain the playing characteristics.

Luke McGeechan at Replay Maintenance says it's an increasing trend: "We are seeing more and more customers who want regular maintenance to support what their groundsmen are doing. Service agreements are a great way of scheduling the specialist maintenance of synthetic sports surfaces but at a known cost over the short or long-term. State-of-the-art processes, such as Revive, keep sports pitches playing better for longer."

Shirley Bowman believes there is also an added advantage; "We can contact Replay at any time if we have any queries about any of the artificial sports surfaces we have. Their advice and guidance is always really useful and they respond quickly to requests for repairs, which are very reasonably priced."

All Replay service agreements, which can be set at intervals to suit the customer include, free of charge, pre and post-maintenance tests with the Fieldman testing device. This records the difference the maintenance is "making to the playing surface and enables the operator to plan future maintenance far more effectively.

Advertorial Feature

Understanding insurance needs

As a specialist education insurance broker our role involves identifying the school's risks, sourcing relevant products and advising and recommending to our existing as well as new clients on the most appropriate insurance cover for their needs. However, as the end decision will always ultimately lie with you the client it is vitally important to ensure you fully understand the risks and take all steps possible to ensure you have the right level of cover in place for your school. Ensuring you have adequate protection in the first place, can help prevent any catastrophic financial losses in the future.

If a school is proved to be negligent following injuries to students, visitors or other third parties, the results can be disastrous. In a recent bodily injury case involving a cyclist who sustained major head injuries he was awarded a sum in excess of £14,000,000, the bulk of which was for future medical costs and care for the rest of his life.

We strongly recommend a limit of indemnity of at least £10,000,000 to all our clients although this is obviously dependent on the size of the school and the risks involved. Many larger schools would need to consider much higher limits again.

When considering business interruption, statistics tell us that 77% of businesses never fully recover after a major fire and that over 40% of businesses fail following a major loss due to the indemnity period not being adequate. When assessing the school's indemnity period you would need to look at an absolute worst case scenario that most of your safe guards fail and you end up losing a major portion or maybe even all of the school building(s). The indemnity period should also take in to account the period of time it would take for the school to fully recover back to normal trading conditions and not just the period it would take to re-build. This assessment should be covered in the impact analysis of a Business Continuity Plan which we can assist with as part of our risk management support.

The above are just two areas which if not adequately protected could lead to a significant financial loss to the school which the school may never recover from! At EIS we can assist with this as well as advising on many other areas of risk management. For further advice or quotations please contact Guy Adams on 0117 929 9381 or info@eisinsurance.co.uk

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BIBA

School fee finance and the Consumer Credit Licence

~ Weighing up your options

In today's challenging economy, it makes good financial sense for schools to enable parents to spread the cost of fees by paying in more manageable instalments instead of having to make a significant lump sum payment. In fact, it may even make the difference between a parent deciding that an independent education remains an affordable option for their child or turning instead to the state system, writes Michael Swan.

Many schools have found that offering school fee finance through a specialist provider is an ideal way to offer flexible payment options to parents. It relieves them from some of the onerous compliance duties and responsibilities required by the Consumer Credit Act 1974 and the burden of time-consuming administration, both of which inevitably come as part and parcel of operating an in-house finance facility. So, using the services of a specialist provider – such as School Fee Plan – can remove some of the legislative hassle involved with offering credit to parents directly.

However, under the Consumer Credit Act 1974, unless a school is merely advertising the services of a third-party credit provider, a Consumer Credit Licence may be required. In other words, a licence might be applicable if a school discusses, recommends or actively promotes such services, all of

which in our view are integral to the effective communication of payment options to parents.

At first glance, this may appear to be something of an off-putting prospect, but the good news is that applying for a licence from The Office of Fair Trading is a relatively simple and straightforward process. And, once in place, it does offer some protection to parents and schools alike.

In addition, obtaining a licence is now a one-off process – licences issued since April 2008 run indefinitely. In terms of financial outlay, the total cost of applying for a Consumer Credit Licence is £1,225, of which £1,075 constitutes the licensing fee and £150 a Consumer Credit Jurisdiction levy. Whilst this is a one-off expense, any changes to a licence would incur a charge and a maintenance fee will be charged from 2013. For more information including obligations on credit licensees and how to apply, visit <http://www.offt.gov.uk/OFTwork/credit-licensing/>.

So, while schools may need to take account of the initial cost involved in obtaining an indefinite licence, our firm view is that the financial benefits that a specialist payment facility can bring in terms of parent retention, and even attraction, far outweigh this charge.



Working with you to make school fees affordable



School Fee Plan is committed to working with schools to offer parents a more affordable and convenient way to pay school fees.* You'll benefit from:

- ◆ Access to a dedicated Business Manager who will work with your school every step of the way
- ◆ Support and training to help you maximise the benefits of School Fee Plan
- ◆ Regular e-bulletins to keep you up to date with key news and developments
- ◆ User-friendly material that helps parents understand the benefits of School Fee Plan

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Call: 01372 746006 **Email:** sfp@pcl.co.uk
Website: www.sfpschoolfees.co.uk

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Michael Swan is Managing Director of School Fee Plan.

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School Fee Plan can be contacted on Tel: 01372 746 006 and Email: sfp@pcl.co.uk

Prevention is better *and* cheaper than cure

*“One hopes not to use it; one begrudges the cost of having it; but one hopes it would be unfailingly there when needed. When it is used it has to be faultless, but for the most part it remains largely invisible.”**



If you ask most people what they want from their insurance, they will usually say “low premiums and speedy claims payment,” writes Martin Linaker.

They are unaware of the role that insurance specialists can play in the provision of guidance which might prevent an incident occurring in the first place or minimise the impact of an incident, should one occur, and generally help them achieve their objective of proving a safe and secure learning environment. If this is the case, then it is our fault in the industry for being backward about coming forward, as we have much to offer schools. Insurance should be a partnership, not a battleground.

Mitigation against Fire

Fire is still the number one threat to school property with over a thousand arsonists a year following W.B. Yeats’ advice that “Education is not so much the filling of a pail but rather the lighting of a fire”. Although the vast majority of these fires are in the maintained sector, independent schools should not be complacent, particularly those in urban areas.

With the view that prevention is very much better than cure, here are some simple, low or no cost measures that a school can put in place in order to mitigate the risk or impact of a fire:

Rubbish Areas – Arsonists are opportunists and tend to make use of loose combustible material, if left lying around.

- ✓ Rubbish should be kept in locked industrial bins in a secured compound positioned at least 8 metres away from buildings. Investment in a compactor may well pay dividends.

- ✓ Wheelie bins that can not be secured should be chained, so that they can not be pushed up against buildings.

Fire Doors – Jamming a fire door open defeats its purpose to check the spread of flames, heat and smoke.

- ✓ Make sure that fire doors are closed and that everyone understands the importance of this action in preventing the spread of fire.

Control of Flammables – Most schools have good procedures for their own staff for the storage and handling of flammable materials, but what about contractors? The careless action of a contractor leaving paint pots around after work in a visible and accessible position led to a costly school fire.

- ✓ School staff should conduct routine checks of premises at the end of the working day, including where contractors have been working.

Corridor Displays – Many junior schools like to advertise their pupils’ art work on the walls. However, this can create a potential hazard, if the corridor is also an exit route.

- ✓ 3 metres of display board followed by a 1 metre gap provides the right level of separation.

Electricity – Most insurers insist that a school is wired to National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) standards and the wiring checked every five years. A freak accident at a school office recently could have resulted in a potential claim of £3M property damage and £300K business interruption. Simple measures to minimize risk include:

- ✓ if the use of adapters is unavoidable, do not overload the circuit;
- ✓ ensure equipment is unplugged, when not in use;
- ✓ take faulty equipment out of service immediately;
- ✓ never use equipment with a damaged flex.

Business Interruption and Disaster Planning

Some insurers offer a free business interruption survey as part of their service. These are useful for all stakeholders as it helps crystallize what the worst case scenario would

be and a plan to deal with it. The local temporary building supplier takes part in these surveys and can advise on the optimal location for temporary accommodation and the quantity required. In the event of an incident, this pre-planning reduces the lead time for facilities to be moved on site and helps work out the likely costs that can be compared for adequacy with the sum insured of the business interruption cover.

Should a major incident occur, this particular insurer also provides an “incident manager” who will liaise with the loss adjuster and the insurer’s “major loss team” to put in place whatever is needed to get the school up and running again in the shortest possible time.

Conclusion

When looking at your insurance, the bottom line should not be the only criteria upon which it is judged. The quality of advice and the value of any additional services offered before, during and after an incident are worth taking into consideration.

For all your insurance needs



Call 01306 746 300



Martin Linaker is the Managing Director of SFS Group Ltd, a specialist intermediary of risk management and insurance products and services for independent schools and their parents. Tel: 01306 746306. E-mail: martin.linaker@sfs-group.co.uk

**How Air Vice Marshal Paul Luker, Chief Executive of the Council of Reserve Forces & Cadets Association sums up the general attitude to insurance.*

Religion, ethics & philosophy

What does it mean to be human? If death is natural, why isn't it wrong to prevent someone from dying? Is embryonic selection morally right? Has religion any relevance in today's world? Two recent school conferences have helped pupils face up to some of these major issues; a number of schools have new staff on their pastoral teams; and others have organised visiting speakers...

Around 250 pupils from Cornwall and Plymouth held at Truro High School, Cornwall.

Leading British academic Dr Peter Vardy was the speaker, addressing a range of topics like ethics and assisted reproduction, Catholic natural law, utilitarianism and the problem of evil and suffering and concluding with a debate about whether a belief in God can be justified in the face of horrendous evil.

According to Dr Vardy, it has never been more important for young people to be aware of people's beliefs and the complex moral dilemmas they are increasingly likely to cause.

"Studying religious philosophy and ethics at GCSE and A level is about learning to understand deeply the arguments that underpin different positions on issues like genetics, war and IVF," he said. "It is a subject

that is academically rigorous and more and more useful for anyone considering careers in fields like medicine, law or finance."

Dr Vardy's powerful message certainly struck a chord with the young people present. Most of them took an active part in the debate and there were plenty of questions and discussion throughout the event.

The conference was organised by Truro High's Head of Religious Philosophy and Ethics Peter Mothersole.

"I've been trying to get Peter Vardy here for a long time because I've been to his conferences before and know how good he is," he said. "A lot of people think that RP is all about the bible but it isn't. Not only does it tackle timeless questions about the creation of the universe, the purpose of mankind and what

happens after death, but it also considers the many ethical problems that confront us today.

"Those problems aren't going to go away. In fact they are probably going to become much more

central to our lives. That's why young people need to be aware of them and why developing the ability to understand and evaluate different perspectives is increasingly crucial in our modern day lives."



The religious philosophy conference held at Truro High School – Peter Vardy in discussion with pupils.

8th Annual Religious Studies Conference

Over 400 students attended the 8th annual Religious Studies Conference hosted at The Cheltenham Ladies' College, Gloucestershire.

Pupils heard from two eminent speakers. Michael Wilcockson, author of several key Ethics books, Head of Divinity at Eton College and a Chief Examiner for OCR, led

a session entitled 'How far can you go? Sexual Ethics'.

During the second session, students heard from Baroness Warnock, a respected author and life peer who has chaired committees on Special education, human fertility treatment and animal experimentation. Baroness Warnock spoke passionately on the topic of

Euthanasia, of which she is a committed advocate, having previously written numerous articles on the topic.

Her talk prompted lively debate amongst the students during the afternoon session which took the form of a panel debate between the students and visiting speakers.

Dr Victoria Sherwood, Religious Studies teacher at Cheltenham Ladies' College and Conference Organiser said, "The Conference gave students from many different schools across Gloucestershire the fantastic opportunity to hear from two eminent speakers and to engage in discussion and debate with them. It was an extremely stimulating day and the combination of the thought-provoking speeches and the more practical examiners' sessions will be of great help to students in their forthcoming exams.

The Schools that attended the conference were:

Bournside School & Sixth Form Centre, Cheltenham; Cheltenham College; Cheltenham Ladies' College; Chosen Hill School, Cheltenham; Coulston's School, Bristol; Dean Close, Cheltenham; High School for Girls, Gloucester; King Edward High School for Girls, Birmingham; Kingham Hill School, Chipping Norton; Ribston Hall, Gloucester; Sir Thomas Rich's Grammar School, Gloucester; St Edward's School, Oxford; St Mary's, Worcester; St Peter's High School, Gloucester; Stroud High School; The King's School, Gloucester; Wycombe Abbey School, Buckinghamshire; and Wynstones School, Gloucester.

Strong message from popular boy band

It was certainly a different sort of lesson – and one which girls at Truro High School, Devon, are likely to remember. No books or whiteboard needed – just a really cool band performing live on stage.

Eli Prime launched on to the music scene in 2010 and have since played to 20,000 people at The Clothes Show Live, supported McFly and performed alongside Pixie Lott, The Saturdays and Alexandra Burke. Described as a band to watch in 2012, they are currently touring schools throughout the country as ambassadors of DARE – Drug Abuse Resistance Education.

After getting all the girls to their feet with a rousing set of songs that included their new track Groundhog Day, Karl, Luke and Chris took their microphones into the audience to talk about the damaging effects of drink, drugs and smoking – backing

up their powerful message with anecdotes and images of stars like Daniella Westbrook who lost part of her nose through cocaine addiction and tragic Amy Winehouse.

The event was organised by Truro High's Librarian and Head of PHSE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) Vicki Rendall.

"Getting Eli Prime here was a great opportunity to deliver a very powerful lesson in a fun, engaging way," she said. "All our Year 7 to Sixth Form pupils were able to attend and there was a lot of dancing and autograph signing. I think I can safely say the teachers enjoyed it too!"



Photo (by Bernie Pettersen): Eli Prime at Truro High School

Question Time for Bishop School

In an open Question Time the Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rt Rev. Stephen Cottrell, encouraged and inspired pupils at St Hilda's School, Essex, to consider the Church of England ministry as a career choice.



The Bishop told the young teenagers there was an optimistic future for women in church ministry.

Recently called to speak to a conference of 16 to 19-year-olds about becoming a priest, he said he was heartened by his experiences.

When pupil Scarlett White 13, asked if he supported women bishops he told the school he intends to vote in favour of women bishops at the General Synod in the summer.

Pupil Rachita Nalgirkar, 14, asked if the Bishop was concerned that young people have drifted away from religion. The father of three sons said: "I am heartened that so many young people

are interested in spirituality and how well they live their lives."

Bishop Stephen, who was brought up in Leigh and whose wife Rebecca was a former pupil at the Independent school, said he was impressed by the challenging questions posed by the senior pupils which ranged from sex outside marriage, consumer wealth and image, Lenten fasting and the future role of women in the church.

St Hilda's School Headmistress Susan O'Riordan said: "I was impressed at how deeply the pupils thought about the questions they asked the Bishop. His visit certainly helped them to explore their own spiritual journey."

Pictured: Bishop Rt Rev. Stephen Cottrell with senior girls and Headmistress Susan O'Riordan



New Director of Chaplaincy

Father Simon Ellis has taken on the new role of Director of Chaplaincy at the Jesuit Day and Boarding School in Derbyshire, Mount St Mary's College.

Fr Simon, originally from Cambridgeshire, has taken up residence and now lives on site in the grounds of Mount St Mary's, in Spinkhill. "As Director of Chaplaincy, my role is to support and offer advice on a range of matters to all involved with the two schools, overseeing worship and to have a significant involvement in pastoral care. It's important that every pupil who attends both schools know they have someone there for them, no matter what faith background they come from."

Fr Simon was formerly a Church of England Parish Priest in Long Eaton, near Nottingham, and previously ministered in Parish life in Bristol, before being received into the Catholic Church and ordained as a Catholic priest in the Summer of 2011.

As well as his school role, Father Simon also arranges pilgrimages and works with vulnerable people in the local communities.



In the Chapel at Oundle School, – a window by the celebrated John Piper (1903 – 1992) depicts The Way, The Truth, and The Life.



Michael Wilcockson and Baroness Warnock with students from the conference

Boots organised at last



www.alternature.biz

Fed up of tripping over piles of muddy welly boots? Alternature offer a range of Wellington racks for schools and nurseries to provide an easy way to keep those boots organised and out of harm's way.

We offer two types of rack:

Basic floor standing racks in pine for 10 pairs of boots upwards.

Three tier racks for 30prs of boots with castor wheels to make moving them easy.

Alternature specialise in boot stands and welly racks with everything designed and made in house using sustainably sourced, solid pine. All of our racks are treated with a hard wearing yacht varnish for use outside.

We tailor each job to your requirements with welly stands made to a size that suits you. We can provide boot stands for one class or whole schools. Prices start at £62 for a 10pr rack with discount available for large orders.

www.alternature.biz

Jubilee coins

INA (International Numismatic Agency), based in Cheshire, is a British company, established in 1998, which makes coins and medals to celebrate special occasions. For the historic event of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee they have produced a superb proof quality collectors coin, housed in a 4 page educational, deluxe folder, made by the same packaging company which supplies the British Royal Mint.

Their own superb portrait of HM the Queen, approved by Buckingham Palace, is featured on the obverse of the coin. A selection of reverse designs are on offer for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and some Commonwealth countries. INA also offers a bespoke design service, where a school could have its own crest, etc., on the reverse of the coin, or stickers can be placed on the packaging as a very economical way of personalising the product.



This product is proving extremely popular with schools as a lasting memento and historic keepsake for school children, families and friends alike. Selling the coins can also be a great way of raising funds for schools. The individual folders are currently retailing at approximately £5.00, but wholesale prices range between £1.10p and £1.95 (plus VAT) depending on quantity.

Tel: 01625 820444
www.queensjubileecoins.com

New website changes perceptions

Portakabin has launched a new website as part of its campaign to change the perception of modular building and to demonstrate just what is now possible with this highly innovative and flexible approach to accommodation for interim and permanent uses.

The new site, www.portakabin.co.uk, has a number of key features, including:

- More than 2,000 images across the site to illustrate the almost limitless design possibilities of this modular approach
- A 32-page photo gallery which showcases some of the most innovative applications of Portakabin buildings from across the UK and Europe for both interim and permanent use
- Clear and simple navigation to allow specifiers to access information more quickly
- More than 150 comments from users of Portakabin buildings, that are automatically refreshed, demonstrating the benefits of the



approach to organisations across a diverse range of sectors

- 100 layout drawings so potential users can visualise their own accommodation
- The locations for the 50 Portakabin Hire Centres are now linked to Google Maps, so visitors can obtain customised directions
- An easy-to-use contact form system so visitors to the site can download as many free industry reports or information requests as they require whilst only having to submit their contact details once
- A new section for the Portakabin Hire Emergency Response service, which can provide buildings in a matter of hours in the event of a crisis situation

Tel: 0845 401 0010
www.portanews.co.uk

Full Flavour Cake Mixes For Real Meal Appeal

Craigmillar Extra Moist Plain Cake Mix, from CSM United Kingdom, is now available in a handy sized 3.5kg bag. Requested by school caterers this easy to handle, easy to store pack can help you reduce wastage and aid stock management.

With one mix caterers can make a whole range of cakes including muffins, cupcakes, tray bakes and loaf cakes that meet the challenge of catering to children's tastes and staying within the government guidelines for school dining. Easy to prepare and cost efficient to use, simply add oil, egg and water to produce premium, indulgent eating quality sweet treats. The excellent shelf life of the cakes made using the mix means that there is no need to bake everyday, saving time and labour.

The mix makes a light batter that holds fruit and other inclusions well,

you can even add root vegetables as a source of additional fibre. Cakes can be filled and decorated to add even more variety and appeal.

Extra Moist Cake Mix is available in three flavours, Chocolate, Toffee and Plain. Already tested in schools where they are popular with pupils and catering staff, Craigmillar Extra Moist Cake Mixes use all natural flavours with no added colours or preservatives, no hydrogenated fats, meet current FSA sodium/salt guidelines and are low in saturated fat when made with vegetable oil.

The Plain Extra Moist Cake Mix is available in a handy 3.5kg size, that is easy to handle and to store. Other flavours of Extra Moist Cake Mixes are in 12.5kg boxes. There is also a 12.5kg Plain mix pack, too.

Recipe sheets are available at www.csmglobal.com/uk



www.csmglobal.com/uk

Pat Carter ~ A reflection on 25 years of change and challenge

This year marks two significant milestones for me personally and professionally – The first, my 65th birthday, a result only of the inevitable passage of time doesn't take any talent or ability. The second is the 25th anniversary of my company, isbi schools which I am a little more sanguine about!

Like the independent schools we serve, we have seen many changes over the past 25 years and it's hard to believe where isbi started, when as a young army officer with the remit of offering advice on boarding schools to service families and in awe of the 'magic' of the new microcomputers, I grabbed the opportunity to use that magic to translate the existing card index system into a database. Distributed to parents in the form of a floppy disc, this was how 'isbi schools' was born.

I know full well the confusion those of us at a certain age can feel when faced with the plethora of choices in social media and web based chat. Denial is however futile and

acceptance and the readiness to embrace these changes is the only way to succeed. As generation y (those born after the 1970's) move into the parenting 'market' we will be faced with a society where these methods of communication are as easy as breathing. I believe we at isbi have taken this onboard and are now looking forward to offering a website optimised for search engines with integrated social media. As the saying goes – 'If you think change is difficult try standing still!' Not something I would recommend!

The process of selecting a school has fundamentally not changed and relies on parents accessing comprehensive up to date information on schools, making a shortlist and then visiting those schools. isbi takes the hard work out of getting that initial shortlist. As far as schools are concerned their lifeblood is (and always has been) their pupils and it is isbi's raison d'être to help schools find pupils by helping parents to find schools. Here's to the next 25 years!

www.isbi.com

Bushboard are Top of the Class!

The Priory Community School – an Academy Trust (PCSA), a co-educational Technology College in Weston-Super-Mare, recently undertook a £6 million refurbishment scheme to bring their facilities into the 21st century.

The school's toilet block was redesigned to provide a safe, clean and contemporary environment which minimised opportunities for bullying and anti-social behaviour. The result was an open washroom

which could be easily supervised by school staff, furnished with Bushboard's HiZone cubicles to ensure students had the necessary privacy.

'Bushboard have always been attentive and efficient whilst offering a great quality product,' explained Mark Brothwell of the Building Consultancy. 'We know that HiZone cubicles offer complete privacy, which was exactly what we needed to complement

the unisex design of the main washroom area.'

'We always place students first and it was essential that the new washrooms were of the highest quality,' reported Principal, Neville Coles. 'And Bushboard provided exactly that!'



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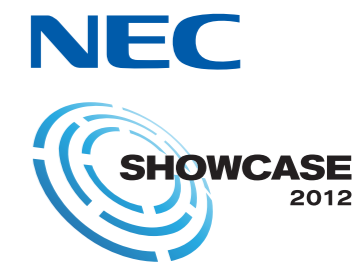
Meet the businesses pioneering tomorrow's display solutions

NEC Display Solutions announce the fourth annual Solutions Showcase to take place on Wednesday 25th April at The O2 in London. NEC Display Solutions, in collaboration with their Solutions Partners, will showcase the latest developments to impact on the displays industry at the most unique and compelling Display Solutions event of the year.

The NEC Solutions Showcase provides a unique platform focused upon solutions rather than technology to create a compelling medium for growth within the displays industry. An established annual event on the AV calendar, the 2012 Showcase is now in its fourth year after successive growth and increasing media attention. Dedicated to uphold application excellence, the NEC Solutions Showcase provides an exceptional opportunity to discover 'best in class' innovative technology solutions at the only event where Solutions

take precedence over technology to enable knowledge, understanding and business opportunity to flourish. Once again, the Showcase will be supplemented with a programme of seminars in association with The Screen Forum to include 'The O2 – A Digital Journey' and 'Augmented Reality – The World According to 3D and Mobile Interaction'. Visitors can also take advantage of bus tours to the Olympic Park and the British Music Experience.

The NEC Solutions Showcase will take place from 10am until 6pm on Wednesday 25th April 2012. For further information and to register, visit the website.



www.showcase-nec.com

Softball set covers all bases

Softball brand Wilks, which only arrived on the scene last year, returns for the new season with a formidable line-up of products which targets players of all abilities and ages with a selection of quality, yet affordable kit. Wilks offers some great softball sets for those looking to set up a team this summer. The Senior and Junior Teambuilder sets really stand out, with the former an ideal option for companies and businesses thinking about starting a team or for a bunch of mates who simply want to pitch up in the park at weekends for a game. The Junior set, meanwhile, ticks all

the boxes for schools or kids clubs looking to give the game a go. Both sets comprise two bats, four balls, catching gloves, base mat sets, as well as rulebooks and a kit bag to cart it all around in. In short, both sets are the ideal way of introducing new players to the game.

The complete Wilks softball collection for 2012 features bats, balls, gloves, individual packs, team-sets and accessories to suit all pockets, tastes and abilities. Whatever you choose, you can be pretty sure you'll get an affordable product that performs beyond your expectations.



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- St. Francis School Wiltshire

If you would like mention made of your upcoming head or principal appointment for which applications are sought please let us know – there is no charge for a listing.

News items, contributions, comments and suggestions are always welcomed by the editor.

Please email to mail@independentschoolsmagazine.co.uk

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- Ashtree College
- Babington House School
- Bancroft's School
- Beacon School
- Bedford Modern Junior School
- Bedford Modern School
- Belmont Grosvenor School
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- Brentwood School
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- Bruton School for Girls
- Caterham School
- Cheltenham College
- Cheltenham Ladies' College
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