



# BIRCHWOOD NEWS

[newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk)

## HEADLINES

What a bumper edition – it is really uplifting to see the many aspects of life and education at Birchwood High School. There is a mixture of stories – some uplifting & celebratory and some reflecting personal hardship through what has been a very difficult last 18 months. Overall, I am amazed by the talent of our students past and present. One reads a lot in the media about how the pandemic has affected the education of young people but I think that their energy and resilience will prevail. I am also indebted to the many members of staff who have jumped at the chance of rekindling after school clubs and enrichment activities such as the DofE and Art Workshops illustrated in this edition.

In particular, on Page 10 there is information regarding our planning proposal to develop a new Multi-Sport Centre on our detached playing field. This is an exciting project – we have resisted a number of property developers advances to sell the land for housing in order to give something back to the community and help everyone keep fit and healthy – as well as support their local football team!

**Covid-19 update:** It is unfortunate that Covid-19 seems to have a resurgence in our area. In comparison to other local secondary schools, we seem to have been relatively unaffected – although I would stress that I work closely with the Headteachers from the other schools and their approaches and measures are very similar to ours - so the spread of Covid is rather erratic with no obvious causal link. I am extremely grateful to our parents for persisting with the twice weekly Lateral Flow Tests. With the small number of positive cases we have had, this has been picked up at home and reported to the school. This has drastically reduced the risk of infection to others in the school. As a reminder, please can you carry on with the Monday and Thursday test. If you do have a positive result, please let the school know and keep your child at home, inform NHS 119 and book a PCR test. If this comes back positive, you will need to follow the advice for your family in terms of self-isolation.

As a school, we are following the DfE Covid regulations to the letter. There is some ministerial talk about changing the approach to students being sent home because they were in close proximity to someone who was positive. One positive case leads to around 20-25 other children having to isolate at home for 10 days when they continue to be negative using the lateral flow tests. This is incredibly frustrating and disrupting. If there are changes, I will keep you informed. A few parents have asked whether their child can wear a face mask at school. Whilst the current DfE rules say that students do not have to, anyone who is anxious or who wants to wear a mask can do so. Our students want to be at school – current attendance is 94% (slightly lower than our normal 96%) compared to the national figure at the moment which is 86%. A recent meeting with the School Council (see photo) supported this assertion – in their view, learning in a classroom environment, seeing their friends and enjoying the wider aspects of school life is far better than remote learning at home. They are also keen to keep the recreational areas, one-way systems and extra hygiene for next year which we will do regardless of viral infection rates.

**Parent Survey** - Thank you to the 210 parents who completed our recent Survey Monkey questionnaire. A summary table can be seen below.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My child is happy at this school	38%	58%	4%	0%
My child feels safe at this school	39%	58%	3%	0%
The school makes sure students are well behaved	29%	64%	5%	2%
I am aware of what my child will learn	15%	55%	25%	5%
The school has high expectations	34%	59%	7%	0%
My child does well at this school	30%	62%	8%	0%
There is a good range of subjects	30%	65%	5%	0%
I would recommend Birchwood to another parent	94%	6%	0%	0%

The overall picture was positive, bearing in mind the impact of lockdown and how this affected our ability to teach in a classroom setting. There were also some very nice individual comments from parents along with some comments indicating areas we need to improve which we are very 'on-board with.' One of our key priorities over the next few years is to look to ways to improve parental engagement so this type of feedback is very helpful. Reviews from students and staff were equally positive – again with some good suggestions and ideas moving forwards. I am currently working with staff and students to agree our key priorities for 2021/22 and I will share these with you in due course. *Continued ...Page 2*

Inside this month's edition:

Headlines... page 2, Birchwood's Got Talent... page 8 and PSFA page 14.



Looking ahead to September:

It is difficult to predict where we will all be in terms of potential disruption but I very much hope that the on-going vaccination programme will ensure that we can return as much as normal. There is talk about rolling out a vaccination programme for secondary children in the Autumn but we will have to wait for clarification on this from the DfE and PHE. So we are gearing up for 'the new normal' keeping to many of our Covid adjustments but assuming that school will be fully open for business. Start of term for Year 7 and 12 will be Friday 3 September with Monday 6 September being start of term for all year groups. We are fully staffed and well-resourced for September.

There are some changes to Heads of Year for your information:

- Year 7 Miss Munro, Mr Phillips is leaving to become Assistant Headteacher at another Hertfordshire School.
- Year 8 Miss Payne, Mr. Herbert is taking over as Assistant Principal at Birchwood.
- Year 9 Mr Ruggins
- Year 10 Mr Stock
- Year 11 Mr Noblett, Mr Heydinger is relocating to work abroad
- Year 12 Mrs Hassani
- Year 13 Mr Clift
- Sixth Form Mr Torrance, overseeing our growing Sixth Form supporting Mrs Hassani and Mr Clift

We wish Mr Heydinger and Mr Phillips our very best after many years of loyal service to the school. The newly appointed Heads of Year are all known to the students and I am sure will build on our successful pastoral system already established at Birchwood. Once again, thank you for everything you do at home to support your child in these trying times!

Dr Chris Ingate, Principal

## FINANCE

I am Mrs Young, the parental and student contact in relation to all income to the school.

We use an online payment system, ParentPay, for administration of the school income, especially in these times. We would like to keep the students and ourselves as safe as possible so encourage everyone to use this payment method.

If you require ParentPay log in details or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me via email: [jyoung@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:jyoung@birchwoodhigh.org.uk)



## NEWS in Brief.....

**If you are struggling in these uncertain times HertsHelp can support you...**

This is a challenging time for everyone, and we want you to know that help and support is available for anyone who needs it in Hertfordshire.

HertsHelp can provide free, confidential advice and practical help for things like food, essential bills and emotional support.

Call 0300 123 4044, email [info@hertshelp.net](mailto:info@hertshelp.net) or visit [www.hertshelp.net](http://www.hertshelp.net)



### FRIDAY FAVOURITES AT THE CAFE

Mr Kadlec and the Café team have introduced "Friday Favourites"; so far they have offered a BBQ, Fish and Chips Friday and Street Food. During the hot weather they have also been offering a fine selection of ice lollies and ice cream tubs.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

#### Summer Term 2021

School finishes

for students at 12.30pm on

Tuesday 20 July

Staff will finish Thursday 22 July

#### 2021/2022

#### Term Dates 2021/22

#### Autumn 2021

1 September - 21 December 21

Friday 3 September –

Years 7/12 only

Monday 6 September

– whole school starts

Half term

Monday 25 October -

Friday 29 October

#### Spring 2022

Wednesday 5 January -

Friday 1 April

Half term

Monday 14 February -

Friday 18 February

#### Summer 2022

Tuesday 19 April -

Friday 22 July

Half term

Monday 30 May -

Friday 3 June

#### CPD Days

Wednesday 21 July 2021

Thursday 22 July 2021

Wednesday 1 September 2021–

CPD (staff training)

Thursday 2 September 2021–

CPD (staff training)

Friday 1 October 2021

Wednesday 5 January 2022

Thursday 21 July 2022

Friday 22 July 2022

Please note that the school is closed to students on all CPD days, unless a member of staff has asked students to attend.

We said goodbye to our Year 11 students with our annual celebration breakfast. They started off the celebrations by collecting their Hoodies and Leavers Books which they were then able to get signed. Mr Phillips, Head of Year 11 had laid on drinks and bacon baps for everyone to enjoy. Form tutors and Dr Ingate joined in the fun by signing shirts and taking part in the photo booth. Luckily the weather stayed dry for the students. We would like to wish them all good luck with their future plans.

Mr Phillips, Head of Year 11.



## Birchwood Sixth Form Vs. Football Academy Football Match

Wednesday 7th July – 2pm on the astro!

Tickets will be sold on parent pay until the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July and will be £1.50

Attendance is subject to good behaviour as you will be allowed to miss period 5!



June is Pride month in the UK - a month long celebration of LGBT+ communities all around the world. Pride month always takes place in June due to the Stonewall riots in 1969 – a landmark event which helped raise the profile of LGBT+ rights and equality across the globe.

On 28 June 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn - a gay bar in New York. They threw 200 people out onto the streets and seriously injured many. The event triggered protests and rioting by people in the LGBT+ community. News of the riots spread around the world and inspired others to join the cause for changes to laws and the treatment of the LGBT+ community. A month after the riots, the first openly gay Pride march took place in New York. The first Pride festival officially took place in the UK in 1972 where around 2,000 people turned out for the event. Now, more than 1 million celebrate the Pride march every year in London. The charity Stonewall was founded in 1989 to promote equality and fight against discrimination experienced by LGBT+ people. Stonewall were instrumental in overturning Section 28 - Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government law that made it illegal for schools to "promote" LGBT+ rights.

As part of Pride month celebrations at Birchwood, we were delighted and very lucky to be able to receive a talk from Team GB Olympic Gold medallist, Kate Richardson Walsh. Kate is the most capped female hockey player in her country's history and was captain of GB women's hockey teams for 13 years. An inspirational and charismatic leader, Kate was one of the many key builders and drivers of the incredible team ethos and commitment that drove the GB team to a nail biting victory at the Rio Olympic Games. In winning Gold, Kate also made history in other ways, becoming one half of the first same-sex married couple to win an Olympic medal playing in the same team. In her talk, Kate spoke of her experience of being a shy teenager and how being a quieter person did not always fit with the traditional idea of what made a good leader. However, she stressed how this typical view of a leader was often short sighted and discounted the strengths and qualities different personalities can bring to a leadership role. She highlighted to students the importance of focussing on their strengths and values, to really put time and effort into finding out what those strengths were and developing them. She said how easy it was in our culture to get caught up in what we are not so good at, and subsequently forget about the strengths we already possess. In the Q&A which followed the talk, Kate answered questions from students about how it had felt to be on the Olympic podium, how she had managed disappointment, and what was needed when times were tough. She also shared her experience of coming out to her friends and family as a lesbian, emphasising how important it was to have a good support network around you and, no matter what the response, to stay true to who you are. I was so impressed by the quality of questions from the students in attendance, their focus and engagement throughout the talk. Pride month is about raising awareness of LGBT+ experiences and history, but also about valuing and respecting each other. This is something Kate emphasised was not just relevant for those in the LGBT+ community or just during Pride month, but something to be considered always by everyone whatever their sexuality or gender identity.

*Mr Harlow, LGBT+ group*

# House



Next non uniform day is Wednesday 7 July. Students need to pay a pound via ParentPay as Finance are unable to take cash payments.



Non uniform day on the Wednesday 26 May raised £917.00 for Sparkle Malawi, The Firefighters Charity and Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.



# INTERHOUSE TOURNAMENTS

Birchwood's annual Interhouse Netball/Football tournaments were able to take place this year. The tournaments were spread over a couple of days (one of which was a House non uniform day on Wednesday 26 May).

Congratulations to everyone who took part, the winners received 250 House points and the runners up received 100 House points.

Winners:

## Netball

Year 7, 7KPE beat 7SAS 8-1  
Year 8, 8KMS beat 8DLA 14-4  
Year 9, 9DSS beat 9MCN 16-13

## Football

Year 7, 8SAS beat 7KPE 4-1  
Year 8, 8CCO beat GLG 4-0  
Year 9, 9MCN won 5-1  
Year 10, 10AFN won on sudden death penalties after a 1-1 draw took it straight to a penalties.

Miss Peet, PE



8KMS



7KPE



9DSS



7SAS



8CCO



9MCN



10AFN

# ALUMNI News....

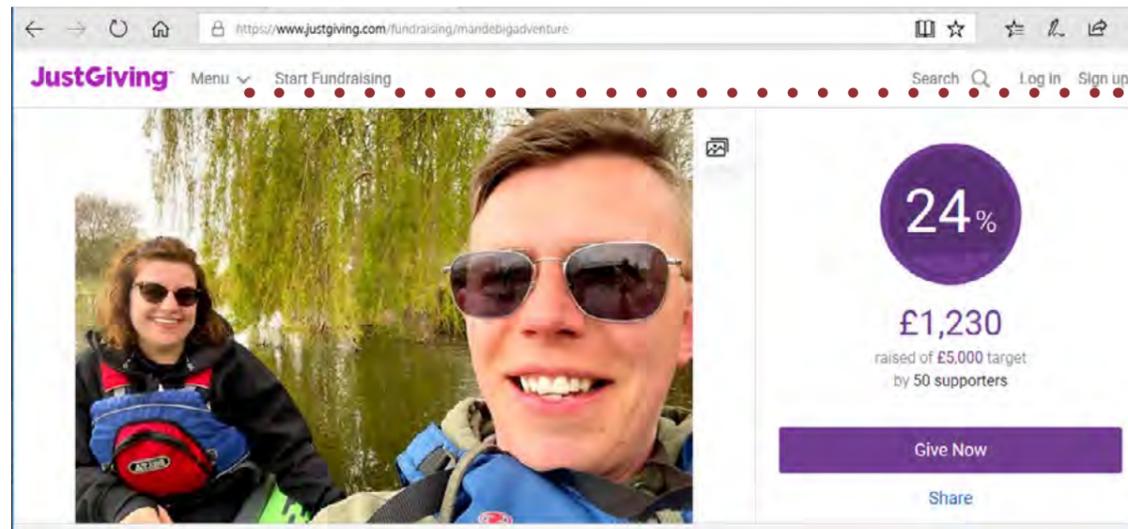
Birchwood would like to send their congratulations to the following Alumni students...

Ashley Sutton who claimed first and second place finishes at Snetterton to move to the top of the Kwik Fit British Touring Car Championship standings.

Layla Williams, 17, has won the Apprentice Award category of the Eastern Counties division of the Federation of Master Builders 2021 Awards.

Karl Swanepoel has secured a £13,000 investment in his latest business idea after winning a TV Dragons' Den-style competition. Karl, who is in his final year of a computer science degree at Aberystwyth University, has developed a website and app called Topwork which matches talented freelancers with start-ups seeking digital services.

Tally Miles, 17, who has been selected for the England Colleges Women's National Football team.



## Remembering Alumni Student Alex Jackson

Emma Jackson, one of our Alumni students, is raising funds and awareness for Papyrus UK which is a charity setup to help prevent young suicide. Emma is sister to Alex Jackson, also a former Birchwood student. Alex took his own life last June, at the age of 22. This was completely unexpected and the biggest tragedy for all that knew and loved him. From Saturday 29 May, Emma will be kayaking 286 miles in a single person kayak, completing the journey on the 15 August, which would be Alex's 24th birthday. If you would like to support Emma in her challenge please go to <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/mandebigadventure>



## Environmental Club - let's improve Birchwood for all creatures great and small!

Miss Crossley and Miss Long have set up an Environmental club, along with William Gilbank in year 10. The group met earlier this year but have met again before the end of the term to discuss how they would like to continue this into September. If you would like to be involved in September, you can email Miss Long or Miss Crossley.

The Environmental Group look to discuss their thoughts on the environmental issues at Birchwood and how they plan to tackle this. One thing the group have done, is create a 'wild flower' garden by the main café, which helps to provide the much needed nutrients, nectar and pollen for insects and wildlife. It also generates shelter for smaller animals and helps stabilise the soil.

Thank you, Miss Long ([glong@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:glong@birchwoodhigh.org.uk)) & Miss Crossley ([lcrossley@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:lcrossley@birchwoodhigh.org.uk))

## LIBRARY CORNER

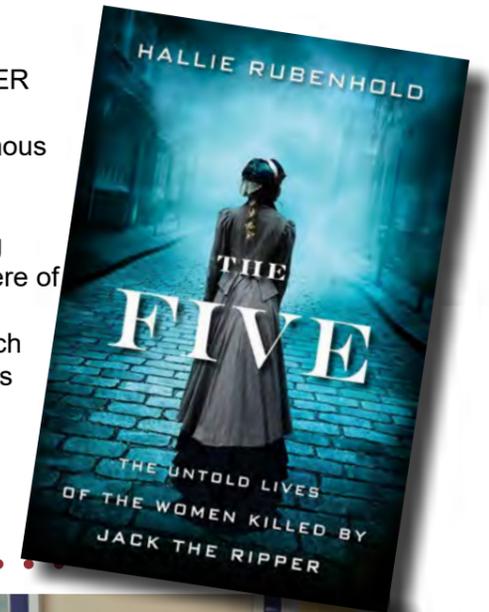
June Book review – Isabelle Ramsay

THE FIVE

THE UNTOLD LIVES OF THE WOMEN KILLED BY JACK THE RIPPER BY HALLIE RUBENHOLD

An educational and passionate book on the stories of five woman, famous for the same thing though they had never met: Polly Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes and Mary Jane Kelly. I found it an amazing read especially for anyone interested in or taking History as it takes the reader right back to the dark and dirty atmosphere of London that Victorians grew up in, proving it can be useful as secondary source for 1800's Whitechapel. Not only does Hallie tell each of those women's stories but she also evokes our sympathy and shows the tough conditions these strong women endured, discrediting all prejudices about their lives.

Overall it was a passionate and intriguing read that I would suggest to any fans of History, especially fans of History that has long been glossed over.



## Junior Maths Challenge!

Many of our students volunteered to take part in the annual Junior Maths Challenge. This was an online, timed challenge with some very difficult problems. Our students performed extremely well, and I would like to give a special mention to the students pictured as they achieved certificates for their particularly high scores.

Thank you and well done to all that took part.

Miss Bull, Maths

# Birchwood's Got Talent

On Tuesday 18 May, ten students from Years 7-10 competed in a very different type of Birchwood's Got Talent. Instead of performing in front of a live audience and judges, the contestants performed in front of members of the House Team for a virtual competition. The acts were recorded and contestants were able to request the use of coloured lighting and musical accompaniment.

Congratulations to all that took part:

- Heidi Cooper
- Evagelene Doyle
- Isabelle Hyams
- Emily Edwards
- Ethan Gillson-Hill
- Chloe McCreary
- Isabelle Ramsay
- Willow Robson
- Lucy Robinson
- Milla Sweett-Heals

Thank you to everybody who voted. The students all did such a fantastic job, and should be very proud of themselves.

The winners are as follows:

- 1st Place – Isabelle Hyams  
£75.00 Amazon voucher
- 2nd Place – Milla Sweett-Heals  
£50.00 Amazon voucher
- 3rd Place – Emily Edwards  
£25.00 Amazon voucher



## Virtual Young Musician Competition 2021.

Mr Grogan and Mr Stock would like to congratulate the following students for taking part in our Virtual Young Musician Competition 2021. The overall winners were Emily Robson (Classical - Harp) (top photo) and Jorja O'Grady (Pop - Voice) (bottom photo), with runners up Isabelle Ramsay (Voice) and Jessica Newton (Piano). The standard of musicianship was outstanding, and they had a really difficult time deciding on winners. The winners and runners up will be performing in our Summer Prom Concert on Friday 9 July on the Piazza.



Birchwood High School presents

# Summer Prom Music Concert

Friday 9 July 2021

at 7:00pm

Outside on Birchwood's Piazza

Refreshments will be available to purchase

**Purchase your tickets via Parent Pay £3.00 each**

Ticket sales are to raise funds for Birchwood High School and all proceeds raised will be used for the benefit of our students.



Year 12 Drama students hit the ground running on the first day back to school by completing their Component 1 practical Drama exam. Students have been working tirelessly to make up for lost practical time through the lockdown and managed to create some utterly inspiring pieces of work tackling issues about mental health in men and the projected image of women in fairy-tale stories - all light and breezy stuff! Students performed with absolute commitment and integrity in the sweltering heat with no audience due to Covid restrictions in place. I can't tell you what an achievement this was. Well done Year 12 - you smashed it!

*Mrs Hassani, Head of Drama*



# NEW MULTI-SPORT CENTRE FACILITY PLANNED AT BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

**Local school resists local developers in a bid to establish community sports facility  
An ambitious vision – including cycle track, multi-gym, football pitch and pavilion.**

Birchwood High School is excited to announce plans for a multi-sport community facility on the Dunmow Road playing field. Having stood empty for more than two decades, the Dunmow Road site is currently used intermittently for school PE and sport – as well as by local community football clubs.

Having resisted numerous opportunities to sell the land for housing, Birchwood High School has chosen to prioritise its educational and charitable goals – aiming now to develop a fully managed, multi-sports facility including mountain bike/cyclo-cross track, multi-purpose gym, artificial football pitch with stand surrounds and pavilion space designed for social and arts pursuits alongside fitness classes such as pilates, yoga and spin sessions. The pavilion will also house changing facilities and a multi-purpose gym. All facilities will be available for both school and local community use.

This state-of-the-art sports and leisure facility has been backed by British Cycling, bringing a cycling hub to East Hertfordshire, building on Birchwood's already burgeoning mountain biking club. British Triathlon have also shown an interest in this project, while Bishop's Stortford FC and Bishop's Stortford Community FC, which already has its academy based at the school, are also in advanced talks regarding use of the new facilities. Birchwood has also consulted with local groups who are keen to secure a safe off-road running surface, which architects are now looking to incorporate into the plans.

"Birchwood High School is committed to the health and well-being of our young people – particularly post-Covid, when such concerns are more important than ever," said Charles Gilbank, Deputy Principal of Birchwood High School, who is leading the project. "The physical, social and mental benefits of this new facility would be enormous and as we open up from lockdown, one of our key educational aims is to encourage fitness and enable re-socialising – both are which are done so well through sport. We simply cannot over-estimate the power of sport to increase the holistic wellbeing of our young people, as well as the broader local community."

"Birchwood, and Bishop's Stortford more generally, are lucky to have some good existing sports infrastructure," continued Mr Gilbank. "But with growing local population, and increasing demand for fitness, we believe that our school, with its long tradition of local outreach, is well-placed to build on our already successful community facilities to offer the very best in sport and leisure to Bishop's Stortford and the surrounding area".

Birchwood High has begun consultation with local residents, councillors and the local MP to understand both community needs and also issues which must be overcome to make these ambitious plans for the Dunmow Road site a reality.

"It is vital that we learn from the past developments to ensure a sensitive and sustainable plan for the future, which appeals to Birchwood High and local residents alike" said Mr Gilbank. While the school acknowledges there may be some concerns, the school firmly believes that the health, fitness and wellbeing of its 1,400 students, and the scope for broader community and regional participation in sport and exercise means that the realisation of these plans would make for a stronger, fitter and more prosperous Bishop's Stortford.

For more information, please contact:  
Charles Gilbank  
Telephone 01279 655936  
Email:  
cgilbank@birchwoodhigh.org.uk



## Can you support 8JGS?

Some of Year 8 are trying to increase their fitness levels. They are walking or cycling to and from school or logging their fitness on various apps. They are raising funds for Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.

If you would like to sponsor them please go to their JustGiving page <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jonathon-gilkes>



### Teachers ride 200 miles in one day for Mental Health Charity

Two members of, 'Birchwood TLC-Live Cycling', took up the challenge of riding school-to-school. Setting off from Mr Gilbank's old school in Pickering, North Yorkshire to Mr William-Powlett's old school in Newport, Essex. A total distance of 200 miles. In one day!

In the past the team has completed challenges such as; Birchwood to Paris and Mont Ventoux 3 times in 1 day. But the 200 miles was by far the longest ride so far. It took a total of 15 hours 30 minutes with a ride time of 13 hours 30 minutes, the pair averaging 15mph.

The cycling team was initially set up to improve the physical and mental fitness of the staff and a way to act as positive role models for the 1400 students at the school, as well as raising money for charitable causes. Charles Gilbank (Deputy Principal) said; "As teachers and educators we know the pressures that schools are under and Lockdown highlighted the need to stay fit and healthy. Cycling is a great relief from the pressures of the job".

With this drive the team chose, "Education Support", as the charity and have raised £1500 so far for the cause that is dedicated to the mental health and wellbeing of education staff in schools, colleges and universities. Offering a free 24/7 helpline and financial grants.

Mr Gilbank added; "We would like to thank all those who have donated and also the local companies that have offered us kit and vehicle support. TLC-Live, Palmer and Martin Vehicle Hire, Fosters Schoolwear and The Belgian Brewer". If you would like to donate please visit <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/charles-gilbank>  
Contact: Charles Gilbank



### Apprenticeship Talk:

On Thursday 17 June, myself, and other business students in Year 12 listened to Katie Adeniji who works in digital marketing; talking about her experience with apprenticeships and why she would recommend them as a way of getting into the role of marketing. Katie went on to talk about why she was intrigued by the idea of digital marketing and that she knew that from taking an apprenticeship that it would enable her to be exposed to lots of different areas of marketing, finding out which one best suited her.

She also spoke about beneficial ways in which we can gain knowledge and an understanding in the areas we wish to pursue in the future. These options included online courses such as Future Learn, Google Digital Garage and through utilising sites such as LinkedIn. Some of the key things Katie said that would enable us to stand out amongst others would be being creative with our CV's, by producing a cover letter as it shows the employer that you are interested in the position and when looking at a creative position, creating a portfolio of work to demonstrate your capability to the employer.



Laura Jones, Head Prefect

## A fantastic weekend for Duke of Edinburgh Bronze students...

On the hottest weekend of the year so far, despite temperatures in the high 20's, 40 Year 10 students, in groups with nicknames, braved the heat to trek from Takeley to Rickling Green, camping in the highly exotic grounds of Birchwood's playing field, yes, in spite of Covid, our Year 10 students completed their Bronze DofE Award Expedition.

It was an expedition like no other:

- Keeping in their school Covid bubble
- Camping on the school site to ensure we had exclusive use of a campsite
- Having a maximum of two per tent to allow for social distancing
- Ensuring regular hand sanitisation
- Imposed route plans written by Sixth Form helpers.
- Limited and reduced training time caused by the pandemic.
- Oh and because of Covid, most students had not been away from their families overnight for over a year.

As a result of this, our risk assessments were longer than ever before, and that was before we began to contend with the heat...

After turning off their phones and leaving their parents to finish their breakfasts at the lovely Thremhall Park Coffee Shop, the groups walked through Hatfield Forest, supported by members of staff and met with a range of strange animals and livestock, from horses who disliked the Red Devils, to a deer which was surprised by the Blue Bells. As they crossed the M11 and approached their campsites the Pink Panthers took a stroll along the Stort whilst others dodged low flying golf balls before, after around 6-7 hours of journeying, they arrived at their campsite. The students set up tents across what is normally the 1st XV Rugby Pitch and then cooked their supper on their stoves before either chilling and chatting or playing football behind the tents. On reflection many commented how nice it was to be without the distractions of mobile phones and how this really helped their mental health.

On the second day the groups roamed to Rickling. Pink Panthers and the Green Party both following the Stort for a bit, whilst Purple Dynamic meandered via Manuden; the Yellow Submarines, amongst others were on the more direct route, straight through Birchanger and Stansted towards Rickling Green. The heat was extreme on this, their second day, this time without staff support, but instead being remotely supervised by road mobile teams of enthusiastic staff. Independently, our students pushed on, working really well as teams, relying on each other and building on both their map skills and knowledge of the local area as they sped from shady break to shady break; being topped up with water at regular intervals. Finally, six hours after their walks had begun the groups arrived at their destination, suddenly a cavalcade descended on the previously sleepy village of Rickling Green as parents arrived to collect their travellers and cheer in the participants as they finished.

Every individual who started the expedition succeeded, all had pushed themselves, some well beyond their comfort zones, and all have done really well and should be hugely proud of their efforts. I certainly am. I am also profoundly grateful to all 14 of the staff who accompanied the trip and enabled it to happen!

*Will Morton*  
DofE Coordinator

Some quotes from the students who took part...

"I definitely enjoyed it and I surprisingly enjoyed the lack of technology and not feeling the need to go on my phone!"

I enjoyed the time with my friends."

Team work is essential and so communication is vital so that everyone is on the same page!"

"DofE is lots of fun!"

Patience and resilience is key. I am stronger than I thought I was!"





**Why not follow us on .....Facebook**

We have a Facebook page where you can keep up to date with events and meetings. Please follow us at Birchwood Parents Staff and Friends Association (PSFA)

**DON'T FORGET you can help us raise funds via TheGivingMachine**

If you are a regular online shopper you can generate free donations to our school at no extra cost to you every time you shop via TheGivingMachine.

Please have a look online [www.thegivingmachine.co.uk](http://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk) and search for Birchwood High School.

Please follow us on our Facebook Page 'Birchwood Parents Staff and Friends Association (PSFA)' and stay up to date with upcoming events and meetings.

**Upcoming Events**

Monday 8 July to Friday 16 September – 'What Makes You Happy' Photo Competition  
 We will be launching our first PSFA photo competition next month which will run throughout the Summer break. This is open to everyone, including students, staff, family and friends. The winning photo will receive a prize and the best twelve photos will be used in our 2022 PSFA Calendar. Entries are £2 per photo, payable via PayPal and should be emailed to [ticketpsfa@gmail.com](mailto:ticketpsfa@gmail.com) together with a completed entry form. This can be downloaded from our PSFA page on the School website.

**SAVE THE DATES**

Friday 24 September 2021 – Race Night  
 Following our success in March 2020, we are hosting another Race Night in association with East Anglia Race Nights. Tickets will be priced at £10 per person. More details to follow.  
 Saturday 27 November 2021 – Christmas Fayre  
 More details to follow but we are looking for Stallholders.  
 We are hoping to host Gin Tasting and Beer Tasting Events in the Autumn term too!

**PSFA Preloved Uniform**

If you are replacing items of school uniform and the old items are still in fairly good condition, please consider donating good condition items of preloved uniform to the PSFA. Please drop off clean items of uniform to our reception. If you would like to make a purchase of preloved uniform, please email [psfapreloved@gmail.com](mailto:psfapreloved@gmail.com). Please note this email address will be checked on a Wednesday, and uniform requests available for collection from Reception on a Friday, upon receipt of payment.

**Birchwood Bonus Ball**

Congratulations to Kerry Gaulton who was the winner of the May draw. Ball 52 was drawn by Dr Ingate, the monthly prize is £102. The Birchwood Bonus Ball is a raffle style club, with up to five numbers available to purchase per person, per subscription period. If you would like to take part by purchasing one or more numbers, please email [treasurerbwpsfa@gmail.com](mailto:treasurerbwpsfa@gmail.com) confirming your name and contact telephone details. Full terms and conditions of the Birchwood Bonus Ball Club can be found on the PSFA page of the school's website.

**Birchwood Futures Foundation Fund**

A big thank you to everyone who has donated to the Fund so far. The purpose of the Birchwood Futures Foundation Fund is to help raise additional financial resources to enhance students' educational experience whilst at Birchwood High School. With your support the PSFA is hoping to play a significant role in helping to keep Birchwood a well-resourced school with opportunities for all students. With your support the PSFA is hoping to play a significant role in helping to keep Birchwood a well-resourced school with opportunities for all students. There are two ways to make a donation to the Birchwood Futures Foundation. Either by ParentPay or via Virgin Money Giving, details of which can be found on the Birchwood PSFA Page of the School website. As a registered charity, Virgin Money Giving is the easiest way for us claim Gift Aid, which means that if you are a UK tax payer you are able to boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you to donate. Donations of any value are voluntary and collectively will make a huge difference for the School.

**Other ways to support the PSFA**

You can support the PSFA when shopping online with Amazon Smile. Find us on there under Birchwood Parents Staff & Friends Association or by searching our registered charity number 1184425. Alternatively, you can generate free donations to our school at no extra cost to you every time you online shop via TheGivingMachine. Please have a look online [www.thegivingmachine.co.uk](http://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk) and search for Birchwood High School.



**Preloved Uniform**

The PSFA has a wide range of good quality preloved uniform in various sizes, for prices please see the table below:

Item of Uniform	Price
Blazer	£10
Skirt	£8
Jumper	£3
Tie	£1
Non Branded Trousers	£2
Non Branded Shirt/Blouse bundle	Individually priced
Polo T Shirt	£4
PE Shorts	£2
Rugby Shirt	£6
Rugby Shorts	£3
¼ Zip Sweatshirt	£5
Pair of PE Socks	£1
Skort	£4
Tracksuit Top	£4
Tracksuit Trousers	£4



Email: [psfapreloved@gmail.com](mailto:psfapreloved@gmail.com) to request your items.

**AMAZON SMILE**

Birchwood PSFA is registered with AmazonSmile, please help us to spread the word.  
 AmazonSmile is a way for customers to support their favourite charitable organization every time they shop with Amazon. Shoppers who start at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) will find the same Amazon they know and love, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the price of eligible purchases to the charity of your choice.  
 Signing up is easy!  
 Here's how to sign up for AmazonSmile:

1. Visit [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)
2. Sign in with your Amazon.com credentials
3. Choose a charitable organisation to receive donations, or search for the charity of your choice. You can find us under Birchwood Parents Staff & Friends Association or by searching our registered charity no: 1184425
4. Start shopping!

- Turn on AmazonSmile in the Amazon Shopping app
1. Make sure you're signed up for AmazonSmile (use your web browser to visit [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com))
  2. Download or update to the latest version of the Amazon Shopping app for iOS or Android
  3. Open the app and find "Settings" in the main menu
  4. Tap on "AmazonSmile" and follow the on-screen instructions to turn on AmazonSmile in the app.



**A BIRCHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL FUNDRAISING EVENT ORGANISED BY THE PSFA**

**WIN!** Email your photos of what makes you happy to [ticketpsfa@gmail.com](mailto:ticketpsfa@gmail.com) by 16 September 2021  
 Payment by PayPal: Birchwood PSFA

**£25 Amazon voucher** **£2 per photo**

The 12 best photos will be used in our 2022 calendar  
 Award winning judge: Sophia Spurgin, ARPS



**Please Note:** Any images you submit could appear digitally in the Birchwood High School Newsletter and also as a printed image in the 2022 Birchwood PSFA calendar. Any other usage is beyond the control of the PSFA, and you accept that as a condition of entry into this competition. You retain copyright of any images you submit and will be credited as the copyright holder.



## Thanks to the PSFA and Highway Cycles...

This month the PSFA were thrilled to support the School's Cycling Club with a donation of £500 towards the purchase of a new dirt jump bicycle to add to their fleet. The School has a great relationship with Highway Cycles in Hertford who were successfully able to source the bike for us and generously offered a 10% discount in addition to ongoing maintenance support. Mr Barratt originally approached the PSFA before Christmas but the plans were put on hold because of government restrictions and then again because of difficulty in sourcing an affordable bike. Mr Barratt said "I am delighted to have the support of a local business for continuing our growth and development of our school cycling club. Sourcing bikes during this current time in the industry has been very difficult (with some brands even quoting 2023 for delivery!). Highway cycles have been able to access a steady stream of stock bikes and quickly secured our new special order dirt jump bike, for which we are extremely grateful to our PSFA for raising the funds to enable us to add to our fleet bikes. The bike will enable us to look at different aspects of technical skills and riding techniques. The specialist staff at Highway Cycles have also offered maintenance support which is vital with the bikes being used twice weekly."



Staff from the shop put the bicycle together and delivered it to school on Monday 7 June. Katie Horwood our PSFA Secretary was there to officially hand the bike over to the Cycling Club in time for their after school session that afternoon.



## What is BLISS and what does it stand for?

BLISS stands for Better Learning In School Society and it is a group of students who try to change and improve different areas of Learning within the school.

## Why is BLISS an important organisation to have in the school?

BLISS allows the students at Birchwood to have a say in how they like to learn, how homelearning is set and how they like to be rewarded for their achievements.

## What does a member of BLISS do?

The BLISS group meets a couple of times a month and decides on a project, something they feel needs improving in the school. Then they may design a survey to send out to the school, once the results have come in they would decide on next steps that they feel should be made to improve the chosen area. Finally, they present their results and improvements to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

## What has BLISS already done within the school?

Two years ago the members of BLISS changed the rewards system from credits to achievement points. BLISS is currently in the process of changing the way home learning is set and what types of home learning are set.

*Maddy Gilbank, BBC Reporter, BLISS Member*



# Parentkind



That summer feeling is on its way

# WIN UP TO £5,000



£3 ticket enters you in all 12 draws

- Help boost PTA fundraising
- Tickets cost just £3
- 12 chances to win up to £5,000
- Tickets are limited so once they're gone... they're gone!



## BUY TICKETS

It is illegal for anyone under 16 years of age to purchase or sell raffle tickets. Anyone under 16 years of age who buys a ticket for The Big PTA Raffle 2021 will immediately forfeit the right to any prize. Closing date 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021. A raffle is a form of gambling. If you, or someone you know, needs information and/or help with a problem gambling, please call GamCare on 0845 6000 133 or visit [www.gamcare.org.uk](http://www.gamcare.org.uk)

# Year 12 Biology

As a part of their practical work, Year 12 biology students were investigating the effectiveness of different antibiotics on bacterial culture *Micrococcus Luteum*. This is a common bacterium that can be found on or hands and surfaces. The students mastered common aseptic techniques that are widely used in a microbiology lab.



## Cloning Cauliflower

### Sensational Science by Year 9!

Last term Year 9 students managed to clone a cauliflower as a part of their work on stem cells. They took a small fragment from the stem of a cauliflower plant and transferred it into a container with a growing medium under sterile conditions. Three weeks later they observed the formation of green tissue and increase in size that indicated the cauliflower plants were growing and photosynthesising.



# Artist Darcy Turner runs a workshop for Year 10 art students.

On Wednesday 23 June, Year 10 art students enjoyed an amazing new sculpture experience. The artist and inventor Darcy Turner delivered a whole day workshop exploring his Stixx machine sculpture techniques. The students had to respond to their current coursework theme of Layers and produce a 3D sculpture. The Stixx technique uses a hand cranked machine invented by Darcy Turner to roll recycled newspaper into rods. Depending on the number of sheets of paper used the rods can be incredibly strong to support a huge sculpture, or even a person on a Stixx chair, or less layers will provide a flexible form. These are then joined together using cable ties. A very simple but effective technique.

The students were amazing in their engagement, enthusiasm and creativity! We had everything designed from tree trunks, to onions, rib cages to brains, hand bags to corsets.

Miss Morrison Head of Art and the Expressive and Performing Arts faculty said 'I am so proud of our Year 10 Art students! The day went by in a flash, with the students working so hard up to the last minute to get their amazing creations completed. The students have had so much to deal with this last two years, it was fabulous to be able to provide them with an exciting and creative opportunity. A huge well done to them all!'

Darcy Turner was equally impressed with the work the students completed, commenting 'the range of objects created with a challenging brief such as layers is outstanding!'

One student was heard to comment that it had been 'the best day ever!'

*Miss Morrison, Head of EPA*



# PE NEWS... 300 miles for Moses



Congratulations to Tain Richards-Farr and Harry Ford who recently played for Bishop's Stortford U16's in the Saracens Rugby Tri County Festival at Dartford Valley RFC.



I wanted to do something meaningful/tangible to help with a family member's hospital bill in Kenya following almost seven weeks in HDU on a ventilator with Covid. In Kenya, there's no NHS equivalent and some hospitals will not even admit a patient unless they have evidence that they can afford treatment. There have been cases of hospitals withholding the body of a family member when they die until the bill is paid! We are very lucky in this country to have our NHS and free education for all.

So....I set out to walk 300 miles during the month of May to raise £500. The main challenge about this was fitting in the time during the working week. But with longer mornings and evenings, I could average 10 miles a day Monday to Friday and more on weekends. I discovered some beautiful walks around this area. My favourite one become 'The Flitch Way' that goes from Stortford to Braintree as well as the tow path along the River Stort. I walked 308 miles, but I did cheat a little bit because I went over a couple of days into June. In total, I raised £509 which is great.

My next challenge is two day walking 100 km from Minehead in Somerset to Dawlish in Devon. I will be raising money for the school's charities as well as money to help a 12 year old girl in Kenya to pay for her school fees. Look out for sponsorship details in July's Edition of Birchwood News.

*Mrs de Graaf*



Do you wish to be a writer/reporter?

Do you enjoy English? If so...

**WE NEED YOU!**

Why not come along to Reporters Club which will take place with Mrs de Graaf in

C16

Week 1, 1.40-2.00pm

You can also submit your articles to [newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk)