

BIRCHWOOD *News*

newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

Dear Parents / Carers,



It's great to get back to normal - even if this is a 'new normal' and not quite the same as it was pre-pandemic. Our 1450 students have returned with a steely determination to catch-up and make the most of being at school with friends. It is often the case that one only really appreciates something when it is taken away - I certainly think this is the case with school.

I just want to apologise again for the mass vaccination day and the slow speed at which students were 'jabbed.' Both myself and the Headteacher at Leventhorpe have complained and we are still waiting for the additional date to vaccinate Year 7 and 8 students. On a positive note, the vast majority of Sixth Form students have been vaccinated and this was the cohort in which Covid was spreading last term - so it is good to see that the case number for 16-18 year olds has dropped. We also managed to vaccinate over 401 Year 9-11 students but this remains a personal choice and will not affect any child's entitlement to a full education at Birchwood. We are not aware of who has and who has not been vaccinated other than a summary total. We are also maintaining our additional hygiene measures to help keep the risk of viral infection at school to a minimum.

Before we look forward, I also wanted to take a quick look back and say well done to our 2021 GCSE and A-Level students. Despite all the challenges and turbulence of their run in to receiving their exam certificates, they all did amazingly well and should feel very proud of their results. As a school, we worked hard to ensure every 16 year old and 18 year old went on to do what they wanted to do with no one left abandoned. The fact we saw record numbers go on to secure places at University (100 students) and large numbers join our growing Sixth Form is a success in itself.



Now that we have been informed by the DfE that GCSE and A Level / BTEC exams will be running in the summer, we are spending time in lessons and assemblies explaining this to students. We are in a good place to ensure students do as well as they can and we are also organising additional revision and catch-up lessons.

One key area all teachers are focussing on is analysing each student's work, in each subject, in order to provide diagnostic feedback to help improve progress. If a student, for example, is currently working at level 5 in GCSE Maths - doing well with algebra but struggling with fractions, then being forensic with the support and directing the student to additional help with numerators and denominators is far more instructional than simply working harder or revising more...

We are also focussing on giving parents more opportunities to come into school for workshops and additional information to help them support their child. We relied heavily on parental support during lock-down and it would seem a missed opportunity to not capitalise on this. For example, we have just held a successful Year 11 parent workshop looking at GCSEs, exams and Post-16 options.

I hope you enjoy reading the rest of this edition of Birchwood News which has a real cross-curricular feel with a return of clubs and events alongside students excelling at things they enjoy. We also want to hear from you - if your son or daughter is doing something amazing outside school, please let us know. We have some really talented and yet modest students who, sometimes, need that little bit of encouragement and recognition! Please email us at newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

Dr Ingate, Principal

Inside this month's edition:

Science in Actionpage 3, House information ...page 6, PSFA News ...pages 12 and 13

I am Mrs Young, the parental and student contact in relation to all income for 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 login details or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me via email: jyoung@birchwoodhigh.org.uk



News in Brief.....

A huge thank you to everyone who donated shoes for the Afghanistan Refugees via Rose Wormald at Care 4 Calais.

Black History

This October we have been celebrating Black History Month with a number of events including:

Tuesday 12 October - BLACK HISTORY MONTH SHOWCASE (panel discussion about diversity and inclusion with Ugo Monye, Nicola Adams, David Olusoga, and Naomi Sessay)

Friday 15 October - DR FUNKE ABIMBOLA (spoke about about her career and achievements and how we can ensure that we are engaging with Black History Month)

Thursday 21 October - HIDDEN FIGURES FILM EVENT



Congratulations to our Financial Studies students Logan Parker, Katie Belton and Dylan Ketteridge who have gained the opportunity for a scholarship at The London Institute of Banking and Finance. Mr Levey

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Term Dates 2021/22

Autumn 2021

1 September - 21 December 21
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 5 January

Thursday 21 July

Friday 22 July

Other information dates

Tuesday 23 November

Year 13 - Parents Evening

Wednesday 17 November

Sixth Form Open Evening

Monday 6 December to

Friday 10 December

Wizard of Oz musical tbc

Wednesday 15 December

Carols by Candlelight
at St Michael's Church

BioArtAttack Competition



Biology Week



From the very big to the very small. Your BioArtAttack could take inspiration from the smallest parts of the natural world that only a microscope can see, or vast environments or ecosystems.

Get creative and submit an entry for this years BioArtAttack competition!

Your entry can be anything from drawings and sculptures to models and collages of any scale. The piece of art created can be entered by an individual or as a group, including classes, or any group of biology enthusiasts.

Anything and everything creative is eligible for submission, just send me photos of your masterpieces.

The deadline for entries is Monday 1 November 2021

You also need to tell us in writing a bit about your piece, including:

- The title of your piece
- Equipment and material used
- What your piece depicts
- The science behind your piece



Entries will be judged on:

- the variety of materials used
- the variety of creative skills used
- the aesthetic quality of the piece
- the originality of the piece
- how well the piece captures the biological basis of the subject matter

For more information, ask your science teacher

Science in Action

Year 7's have been learning about the structure of the body and the winner of Mr Loveday's Pasta Skeleton was Josh Bateman.

Other Year 7's meanwhile have been learning about the relationship between forces and mass. In particular, they used model hinge joints, such as the elbow to lift an increasing mass with Newton meters to discover what happened!
Well done all.

Mr Loveday, Science



Pasta Skeleton by Josh Bateman.



Meanwhile in Year 11....

As part of their Inheritance and Reproduction module, students have dissected a flower to show all the different stages of sexual reproduction in plants.

Birchwood High School – Year 7 Summer School

This year Birchwood High held a summer school for the incoming Year 7 students during the week 23 – 27 August 2021. Around 200 students attended the sessions during the week which contained an enriched timetable of events. In English, students were gifted a copy of Percy Jackson to read over the summer, they then explored two extracts from the novel, and students also created a mask, based on how Medusa was portrayed in these extracts.

Whilst they were in Maths they studied a variety of topics including multiplying, factors and multiples.

Miss Waring in Religious Studies discussed what is meant by human rights and discussed a simplified version of the UN declaration of human rights. They then discussed which rights they thought were most important and why. In Geography, Mrs Franklin had the students using their map reading skills to familiarise themselves with the school site. The students enjoyed playing detectives in History Mystery and Science Suspects. During their Drama lesson students explored

“Getting to know you games” and

“icebreakers” by learning about facial expressions and body language. Using an incident occurring at a primary school as their start point, the students devised their own piece of drama. Each group was given a

location such as: Library,

Playground, Café, Classroom and the students gave themselves a variation of different characters such as: the bully, the teacher’s pet, the sporty one, the shy one, the loud one etc.

They all performed their pieces to the class at the end of the lesson. The VEX robots that were donated by the PSFA were used for the first time in Technology during the summer school. Mr Newman and Mr Creed had the students programme and build a robot during their lesson.

Fun and games were had by all students in PE and during the afternoons with Club Excel. Many thanks to the Café team who provided the students with Breakfast and Lunch.

On their final day the students went on a day trip to an outdoor activities centre at Danbury



Year 7 Summer School Visit to Danbury Outdoors Centre, Essex

Over the Summer holidays, as part of summer school, Year 7 went to Danbury Outdoors Centre which offered an amazing opportunity for our new Year 7 students to meet each other, team build, develop determination and resilience whilst having an enjoyable time with their peers in the countryside. Students were given opportunities to reach new heights, gain confidence and face challenges with extra vigour.

Students were able to enhance their social and group skills, which has been very beneficial since starting school full time in September.

Fun, smiles and laughter was the theme of the day!

Mrs Pressland



Forensic Science Investigation at Birchwood High School Summer School - 2021



During Summer School week, our new Year 7 students were invited to take part in an exciting 'who done it' forensic themed investigation. Using science experiments to analyse clues found at the scene, students were able to determine the identity of the perpetrator.

SUSPECTS

Tilly Lou
Height: 5'3"
Alias: Sweet Tooth

Dan the Man
Height : 5'8"
Alias: The General

Casey
Height: 5'
Alias: Lucky Lady

Jake
Height 6'6"
Alias: Armchair Quarterback

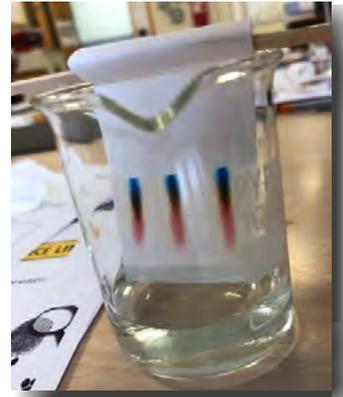
Activity 1

Chromatography – ink analysis

Students were able to analyse the ink left on a note at the crime scene.

Chromatography is a method of separating out materials from a mixture. Ink is a mixture of several dyes and therefore we can separate those colours from one another.

Different ink pens use different types of ink dye and will produce different chromatograms.

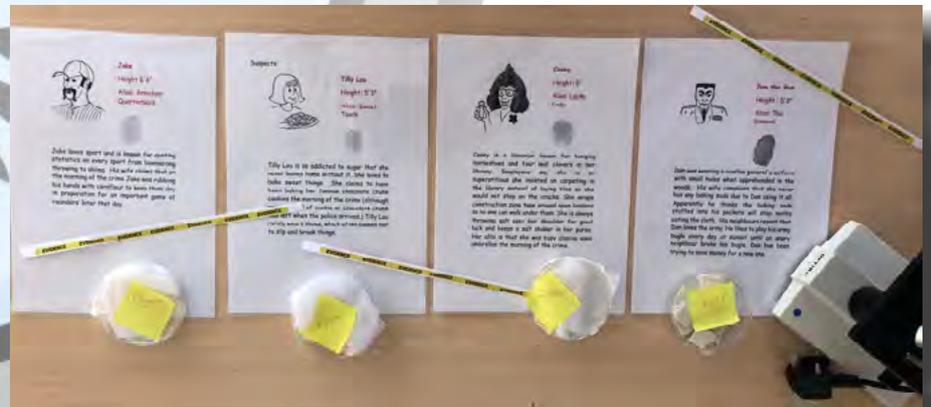


Activity 2

Microscopy – fibre match up

Several fibres from clothing were found near the door and were placed in a plastic bag and taken to the forensic chemist for identification.

Students looked at each fibre under the microscope to find a match.



Activity 3

Soil analysis

Students analysed the soil found in a foot print. Soil has unique properties that serve as identification markers. They can be traced and matched to each other. The pH level of a substance measures its acidity or alkalinity. Students determined the pH of the soil.



Activity 4

Bones to height

The bones of the feet can tell a lot about a person. Forensic anthropologists team up with the police to help solve crimes. The length of a person's foot is approximately 15 percent of his or her height.

House

This year's Charities are...



The Sparkle Foundation is a grassroots charity, working in rural Malawi to support vulnerable children, youths, adults and communities.

The charity was set up by CEO Sarah Brook in 2012, after a life-changing accident during her gap year in Malawi, ever since has vowed to help the people who saved her life. We aim to create a future in which every community has an equal opportunity to live a life of health and self-sufficiency in Malawi. They have spent years understanding the needs of the community and have developed an innovative approach to drive positive change within the charity sector through the delivery of a sustainable and replicable best practice

St Clare Hospice



St Clare Hospice is a local charity and each year they care for hundreds of people across West Essex and the East Hertfordshire border. They provide free, compassionate care and support to adults who are living with a life-limiting illness, facing the end of life or experiencing bereavement.

All the donations go to things such as paying their staff who provide specialist, compassionate care to those who need them; to buying medical supplies, equipment and running hospice facilities – hospice care may be free, but it is not cheap. With limited NHS funding, voluntary income plays a vital role in making our work possible.

Can you help us sponsor a child?



FOR JUST
£15 a month
YOU CAN GIVE A CHILD

- 2 MEALS A DAY
- FREE EDUCATION
- MEDICAL CARE
- CLEAN WATER

WHY NOT SPLIT THE COST OVER A CLASS AND HELP A CHILD TOGETHER?

that's just
50p FOR A CLASS OF 30



WE CAN SEND YOU:

- ★ UPDATES ON HOW OUR CHILDREN ARE PROGRESSING
- ★ ARTWORK FROM THE CHILDREN
- ★ VIDEOS FROM THE TEAM IN MALAWI



why not change a child's life today?

www.sparklemalawi.org
admin@sparklemalawi.org
Reg no. 1161708

Well done to 7CHT who have won the Year 7 Spelling Bee Competition Kahoot by getting 95% correct answers!

Upcoming events..

November

Monday 22 November - Staff Bake off
House Kahoot - Teacher Fun facts

December

Decorate a form room competition
Monday 13 December
Year 7 – 11 Rewards Afternoon , 1:30 - 3:00pm
Tuesday 14 December
Sixth Form Winter Wonderland Rewards trip
3:30 - 9:00pm
Friday 17 December
House Charity Day - Theme Christmas
These events may be subject to change.

PE news....



Teacher Tennis Ace

For many people, tennis is synonymous with Wimbledon or the US Open but for Birchwood teacher Mrs de Graaf it's an all year recreation event which is played at the Bishop's Stortford Lawn Tennis club, Cricketfield Lane. Mrs de Graaf has been a member at the club for many years and she plays for Bishop's Stortford Ladies 1st and 2nd team across Hertfordshire.

This summer, the club held its annual tournament for members which culminated in a finals event that was played in front of club supporters and friends. Mrs de Graaf was crowned champion in two events: Ladies Singles and Ladies' Doubles with partner Lynn Murphy. Mrs de Graaf is keen on fitness and she believes that exercise is vital for well-being and healthy mental wellness.



On Tuesday 21 September the Senior Birchwood hockey team participated in their first fixture of the season against Freeman Collage. The match began and in the first half Grace Limrick scored for Birchwood, taking them one nil up and no other goals were scored in the first half. After half time, Freeman scored from a short corner which took the score to one all. The game concluded at 1-1 with both teams playing a good fair game and a brilliant start to the season.

Well done to all the team.

Mrs Chapman, PE.



Congratulations to Theo Trigg who was runner up at The Grover's Day, 18 Hole Golf Competition at the Manor of Groves Hotel with 38 points.

Well Done Theo!



Congratulations to Charlie Allum from the Football Academy, who has recently played for Bishop's Stortford Blues main team for the first time against Bognor Regis Town. Fantastic for the club to see the pathway from Academy to first team in action! Well Done Charlie!



Coast-to-Coast challenge for kids in Kenya

Travelling abroad this summer was not an option, a beach holiday was a distant memory. So, with the summer holidays looming, and, as if the year wasn't challenging enough with three lock-downs, online teaching and learning I decided to take up the Coast-to-Coast Challenge. It is a 100 kilometre walk from Minehead to Dawlish in Devon over two days. As the days approached, I realised that this was no mean feat and I started questioning my foolish decision when I said 'Yes' to the challenge. I had signed up for it so there was no going back especially as I was walking to raise money to support a primary school in Kenya. The first day I walked 50 kilometres and stayed the night at Tiverton. When I say stayed the night, I mean four hours sleep before embarking on the next 50k the following day. There were some hardcore walkers who did the challenge overnight but that was not for me.

Mahinga primary school is in rural Kenya and I'm aware that there are children in the school that spend the whole day in school without food. In this part of Kenya, the average daily rate of pay for casual work is around 80 pence! Children must pay fees to attend school and in addition they must buy their own stationery and textbooks. I could not let them down. I raised £450 through sponsorship on crowd funding.

My vision is to raise enough money to build a small kitchen where they can cook simple meals for the students. If you would like to help me realise this dream, you can contact me via the school. It was worth it though...I don't know if I'm ready to do it again but those of you who know me are probably thinking...'yes you will'. All I can say is 'watch this space'. The picture above is of 12-year-old Ciku who I support by paying her fees so that she can attend school. Recently though, her mum informed me that the family had to rebuild their house in another part of the compound when the land was subdivided. Ciku and her family were left with no toilet [outside latrine] and they had to ask the neighbour to let them use a latrine whenever they need a wee! The money raised will also help this family to dig up and build a latrine of their own to avoid the embarrassment of asking their neighbour whenever they want to spend a penny!

Mrs de Graaf, English

Student Shines at School



William Gilbank, one of our Year 11 students, was delighted to be selected to represent the Eastern Region at the National School Games 2021, a three day multi-sport event at Loughborough University. The Games featured Cycling along with Netball, Cricket, ParaTriathlon, as well as many other sports.

William has spent the season earning his place on the team by becoming Eastern Region Circuit Race Champion and competing at various National Cycling events. The team, made up of four boys and four girls from across the East attended the three day event which included a Track Day at Manchester Velodrome, Street Sprints, and a Criterium Race at the University Campus and a 60 km Road Race at the village of Slawston on Sunday. William's long term goal is to ride for Team GB at the Olympics and the school games was a great springboard to show off his talent.

William, aged 15, said; "The School Games was an amazing experience, we had an opening ceremony, three days of hard competition and a chance to meet athlete mentors as well as having seminars on the life of a Professional Athlete, it certainly has increased my desire to make it to the top". William continues his season at Redbridge, before turning his attention to Cyclocross racing for the winter. William is kindly supported by Matts Auto Repair Services in Bishop's Stortford but if you are able to support William further in his push for the top please email: gilbankracing@gmail.com.



Wonderful Dance Trip

Performing Arts students went on their first Dance trip of the year to see 'Nobody' by the Dance company Motion House. The piece was a mixture of acrobatic and contemporary dance. Students were amazed by the high power energy, standing lifts and the stamina seen by just seven dancers. The trip was enjoyed by all and we are looking forward to the next one at Christmas!!!

Musical Theatre Workshop

Well done to all BTEC and Year 11 GCSE Dance students who took part in Hannah Ellaway's Musical Theatre workshop. Hannah is an ex Italia Conti student who is starting up her own franchise in Bishop's Stortford. What an amazing experience had by all, it is so nice to be dancing together again!

Miss Adams (Head of Dance)



Year 12 and 13 Drama students went back to the theatre!!!!!!

We saw 'The Normal Heart' at the National Theatre, a play which deals with the AIDS crisis in New York through the 80's. Students had mixed reactions to the intense, narrative style which was interesting... the A level course requires students to develop a knowledge of theatre in all shapes and forms and yet most student's exposure has been limited to West End musicals and some have not even seen those. Students were reflective and mature and some interesting post performance discussions were had. It felt so good to be back in the theatre and the sing along to 'Sweet Caroline' with a busker in the underground made the evening all the more memorable!

A massive thank you to Mr Morton for saving the day and accompanying us at the last minute.

Mrs Hassani, Head of Drama

The Wizard of Oz Rehearsals are well under way...

With a strong cast of 64, rehearsals are underway for this year's whole school production of The Wizard of Oz.

The show will run from Tuesday 7 - Friday 10 December.

Keep your ear to the ground for fund raising events that you can be involved in to support the show.

Tickets will be on sale from November. Don't miss out on this pre-Christmas display of the incredible performing talent our Birchwood students have.

Our Welsh Wonders completed their Duke of Edinburgh Gold over the Summer

In July a group of Year 13s, alongside Miss Lava and I, went to Wales. Whilst Miss Lava and I browsed the local second hand bookshops, our students braved the 30 degree heat and Covid complications in the Brecon Beacons in order to complete their Gold DofE Award Expedition Section!

After a journey on public transport which was an arduous challenge in itself (all trains from Stortford to London were cancelled) there were two days of quite intense training, re-learning skills such as map orientation and practicing first aid scenarios which would prove useful in the days ahead.

For their assessed expedition, they planned to walk from the centre of Hay on Wye to the outskirts of Abergavenny following trails (calling them footpaths would be inaccurate) surrounding Offa's Dyke.

Despite navigational setbacks and issues with heat exhaustion resulting in re-routing to safer lower lying and more sheltered routes, the group spent the final day with one foot in England and the other in Wales descending from the hills.

They spent nights at secluded farms or tucked under medieval ruins and learnt a huge amount about the area, themselves and each other. During the debrief one of the participants said "this is the happiest I've been in a long time. Just going out and doing something." And that's what DofE is about, working in teams, enjoying the outdoors, going out and doing something.

Following the expedition they gave a presentation to a small group of socially distanced family members and staff and the DofE Team are now prepping our next expedition, a record 70 students will hopefully have completed their Bronze Expedition by the time this issue of Birchwood News is published!

Mr W Morton, Head of DofE



Wonderful weather for Geographers!

In September the Geography department took a group of sixteen Year 13 students to Walton-on-the-Naze to complete fieldwork for their A Level coursework. This was the third time we had rescheduled the trip due to the pandemic so we were extremely grateful that we were finally able to get there! Students had a great couple of days and collected lots of data to compare the managed and non-managed ends of the Walton coastline so they can draw conclusions about how effective the coastal management is in the area. We were also extremely lucky with the September weather which made the data collection easier, although some students still managed to get wet by getting too close to the waves!



Miss Diver, Head of Geography





Why not follow us onFacebook

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 and search for Birchwood High School.

Changes

Jane has been Chair of the PSFA since it was launched but resigned over the summer holidays as her daughter has now completed her education at Birchwood. Joy resigned as Treasurer due to work commitments and is currently handing over the baton to Sarah Ficken. The PSFA would like to take this opportunity to thank both Jane and Joy for being part of the Team and to welcome Sarah onboard. We are looking for a new Chair, so if this is something you are interested in then please contact us via email birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com

'What Makes You Happy' Photo Competition

Congratulations to Isaac Horwood, 8CPD, for winning the Birchwood PSFA 2021 Photo competition. The competition was judged anonymously by Sophia Spurgin, an award winning photographer. Isaac won a £25 Amazon voucher! Eleven other entries were carefully selected and will be used for inclusion in a 2022 calendar to raise funds for the school. Look out for details of this coming soon!



Race Night

Thank you to everyone who supported our recent Race Night event. It proved to be a successful evening in raising funds for Birchwood's Resilience Week, promoting mental health and well-being. Well done to the owner of the horse 'Vision Express' who won the auction race (an even bigger thank you for donating your winnings back!). A special mention and thanks to Andrew Kadlec, the school's Catering Manager, who provided us with food on the evening. Also a big thank you to everyone who donated raffle prizes.

The Human League Raffle

Michelle Jones Boswell very kindly donated two tickets to see Human League at Wembley on 11 December 2021. Tickets were £1 each and we are pleased to announce that £116 was raised and this will be donated towards the Birchwood's Resilience Week. Congratulations to Vicki Sweeney who won the Raffle with ticket number 328! We hope you enjoy the concert.

PSFA Facebook Page

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

PSFA Preloved Uniform

If you are replacing items of school uniform and the old items are still in 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. Please note this email address will be checked on a Wednesday, and uniform requests available for collection from student reception on a Friday, upon receipt of payment.

Birchwood Bonus Ball

Congratulations to Louise Lloyd-Rossi who was the winner of the July draw. Ball 10 was drawn by Mr Bull, Finance Director. Congratulations to Yasmin Mehmet who was the winner of the August draw. Ball 61 was also drawn by Mr Bull.

Coming Soon

We are currently making some changes to the Birchwood Bonus Ball and details will be released shortly.

Birchwood Futures Foundation Fund

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. Every penny goes a long way to helping raise additional financial resources to enhance students' educational experience whilst at Birchwood High School. 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 to 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 donate. Donations of any value are voluntary and collectively they 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 and search for Birchwood High School.

Tesco Community Grant Scheme

We are delighted that our Resilience Project has been chosen to be part of the Tesco Community Grant Scheme from 1 October until 31 December 2021.

The project aims to foster a culture of resilience and promote positive mental wellbeing in young people both at Birchwood and in the wider community. We are looking to run workshops, host inspirational speaker events, as well as develop an educational programme that teaches young people the skills required to look after their mental health.

If you shop in Tesco's please look out for the token collection box at the checkout. We would be extremely grateful if you voted for us with your blue tokens and encourage your family and friends to do the same. For a full list of the stores taking part in the project, please see below. Thank you!

BISHOPS STORTFORD
SUPERSTORE, CM23 4DD
ELSENHAM, CM22 6EH
STANSTED EXPRESS, CM24 8DJ
SOUTH ST BISHOPS STORTFORD
EXPRESS, CM23 3AZ
BISHOPS STORTFORD EXPRESS,
CM23 3PD

Mr Harlow
School Counsellor

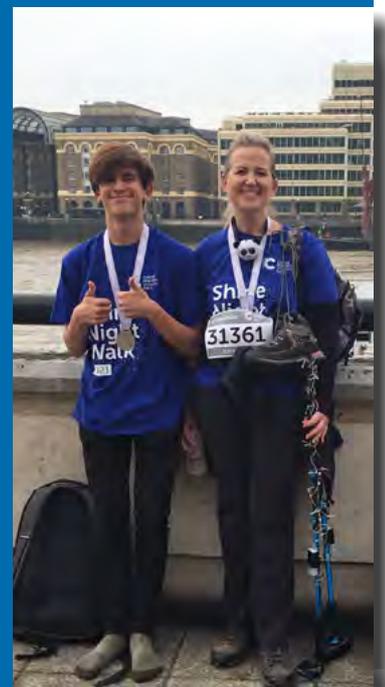
The SHINE Night Walk

On the 25 September my sister, my mum and I took part in The SHINE Night Walk, an overnight marathon (26+ miles) to raise money for Cancer Research. My mum had treatment for cancer 10 years ago so we wanted to do something special to say thank you for all the amazing help we had, and to remember those who were not so lucky.

We set off with thousands of other people from Southwark Park at 21:30, and the atmosphere was electric- literally- people were wearing fairy lights and glow sticks, and the trees in the park were all lit up. Our route took us in a big loop around Central London passing sights such as the Shard, the London Eye and Tower Bridge. The crowd thinned out as the night went on but there were always marshalls and passers-by to cheer us on and give us a boost. Eventually, after nine and a half hours of blisters and sleeplessness, we finally got to the end, where we collected our medals and collapsed in a small heap. It was the longest, most painful thing I have ever done, but it was worth every step and I'm so proud of what we achieved.

If anyone would like to donate to Cancer Research, here is the link to my Giving page:
<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/bens-giving-page-740>

Ben Hamilton, Year 12



Welcome to the Birchwood High School Library



Hello everyone,

My name is Mrs Gibson and I am the new Library Resource Manager. Having worked in education and school libraries for over 20 years I have a wealth of experience that I can't wait to share with the Birchwood Community.

My main focus this term is the implementation of 'The Reading Cloud' Library Management System. The cloud based software allows students, parents/carers and staff to access the library catalogue from home or school via the school website. Look out for more details in future editions of the newsletter.

Library Opening Times:

- Monday: 8:15-8:45am and 3:05-4:15pm
- Tuesday: 8:15-8:45am and 3:05-4:15pm
- Wednesday: 8:15-8:45am and 3:05-4:15pm
- Thursday: 8:15-8:45am and 3:05-4:15pm
- Friday: 8:15-8:45am and 3:05-3:45pm

The library is open to all students during the times above.

It is also open for reading or quiet study to all year groups during morning break (Monday-Friday) and during lunchtime (Monday-Thursday).

Sixth Form students can access the library at anytime for private study during the school day.

Book Amnesty:

If anyone has any outstanding or overdue school library books at home I would be grateful if they could be returned as soon as possible. There is a book return box in the Library.

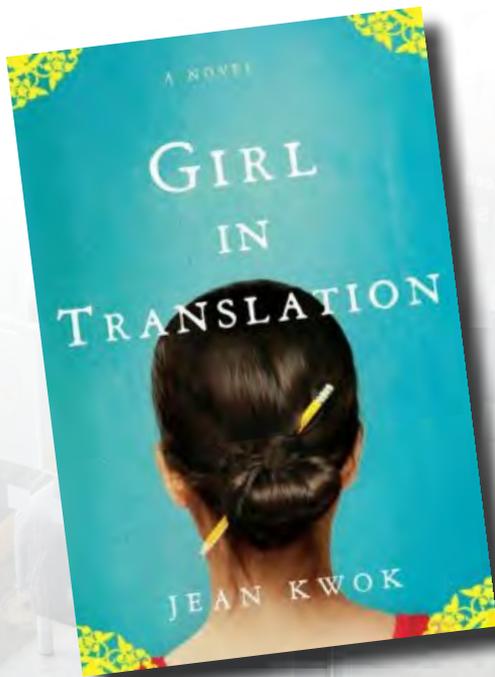
I look forward to meeting all students over the coming weeks and encourage them to take advantage of the resources on offer.

Mrs J Gibson – Library Resource Manager

“At the moment that we persuade a child, any child, to cross that threshold, that magic threshold into a library, we change their lives forever, for the better.”

Barack Obama

September Book Review by Chloe McCreary



Girl in Translation by Jean Kwok

Kimberly Chang. Straight 'A' Chinese student. Top of her class. Now... A simple Chinese girl living in New York City?

I've loved this book from prologue to epilogue, with every chapter reaching through Kimberly's teenage years. It speaks with depth about cultural divide and a loss of innocence. Kimberly is brought to America at 11 not speaking any English with her weak mother. They are met with misfortune and exploitation through her aunt, and have to live in a vermin infested apartment in Brooklyn.

Entangled in a new culture, she learns to fight her way through and become what she could not in Hong Kong. She is forced to translate who she is, and walk a fine line between two worlds. The ending is not something you would expect and this book slashes through Asian jibes and stereotypes.

Girl in Translation is a must read for anyone seeking a novel that is fun to read yet heart-breaking as it exposes the choices some are forced to make every day.

If you want to return any outstanding books they can be returned to the return box in the Library NO questions asked.

Birchwood Book Club

Friday lunchtimes
13:30 – 14:00
Run by Mrs Gibson and Miss Lava

Come to Birchwood Book Club and fill your minds with the wonder within books. Write reviews, enjoy the Carnegie shadowing and put your creativity towards book themed arts and crafts. We will be discussing your favourite books and you can enlighten everyone with your opinions. Run by Mrs Gibson and Miss Lava, this lunchtime club lets you delve deep into a vast array of wonderful books written by all your favourite authors.

ROALD DAHL CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY
HARRY POTTER
THE BOOK CLUB C.I. COOPER
THE FEET APART
SHADOW AND BONE
LIX AFTER



READ, REVIEW, REWARD!

Birchwood's Half-Termly Reading Competition!

Read as many books from the reading lists as you can.

Win 5 points for every book that you read & review!

To enter, submit your review to Miss Lava in D7
OR Mrs Gibson in the Library
OR
 email it to dmiguellava@birchwoodhigh.org.uk
jgibson@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

At the end of every half term the students who have completed the most reading will be entered into a prize draw for a **WATERSTONES VOUCHER!**



Birchwood celebrated National Poetry Day on Thursday 7 October 2021.

National Poetry Day is a UK wide celebration of poetry, and the theme this year was Choice.

To celebrate National Poetry Day form tutors read a poem to their tutees during form time. All staff were invited to choose their favourite poem and students were asked to guess which member of staff had submitted each verse.

Congratulations to 7CHT and 11MAS who both guessed correctly. Both forms have been awarded House points.

*Mrs Gibson,
Library Resource Manager*

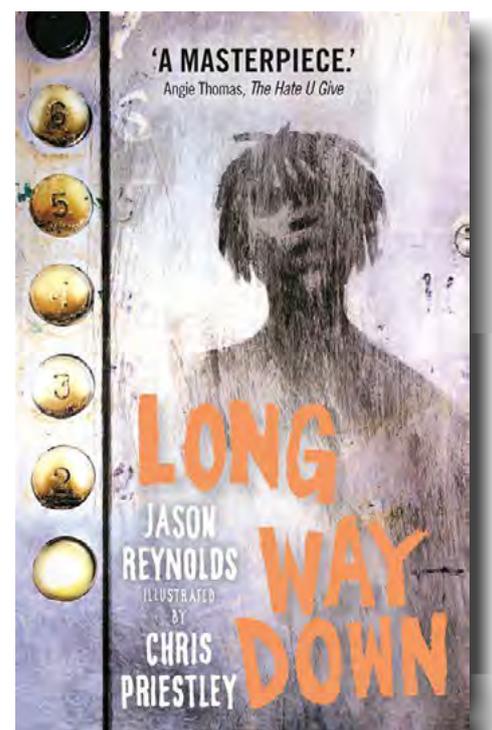


Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds, reviewed by Miss Lava

There are stories that need to be told and re-iterated over and over again, in order to break from the cycle of violence and this is one of them. Long Way Down follows Will's descent to the ground floor of his building, and of his mind, as he mourns and suffers over whether or not to avenge the death of his brother Shawn.

Jason Reynolds' poetry is genius, short, poignant with no wasted words, it really strums the strings of agony that Will is in. Mostly though, Reynolds' genius comes from the fact that he weaves together this complex plot that comments on violence breeding violence, in a setting full of depravity where violence feeds hungry mouths but also kills them and tears families apart. It is social commentary at its best, looking at young America and how it is still harbouring this vicious cycle that families in lower classes and mostly families from black African backgrounds, cannot escape.

The ending leaves the reader begging to know what Will's decision was, but the question itself is more of an exercise of self reflection where Reynolds invites his readers to ponder on the decision they will make next. Will they add to the cycle and become another cog in the machine that breeds and breathes the barbarity? Or will they step out of that world that will continue to try to consume them all until it spits out only remnants of their soul? A great read, with beautiful art by Danica Novgorodoff. Highly recommended.



Gardening Club

As it reaches the end of this year's very successful growing season the students entered some of their wonderful produce into the local Sawbridgeworth Garden and Allotment Show, which takes place every year (the first Saturday in September). They came third in their section for their Rainbow Chard.

We are currently looking for some new glass for our greenhouse so we can continue with projects over the winter months including making some bug and bird houses.

Mrs Homer



Design the Birchwood High School Christmas Card competition 2021

What to do now...

Produce a fantastic design! Check out the specifics.

Bring your card design to Miss Morrison in C23.

Submit by Friday 5 November at the latest.

Judging will take place during the following week with Dr Ingate making the final judging decisions. **Good luck and enjoy!**

Do

- Your card must be an original design.
- Your card can be of any festive scene.
- Your design **MUST** include the Birchwood logo.
- Your design can be made using any media (see the don't list) and any size or format as your card will be scanned and reproduced.

Don't

- Make your card **too light**
- **Include glitter**
- **3D elements**
- Include any writing or seasonal greeting as this will be added electronically.

Prizes:

1st prize £15 Amazon vouchers + 30 house points

2nd prize £10 Amazon vouchers + 20 house points

3rd prize £5 Amazon vouchers + 15 house points

All entries will be awarded an Achievement point.



YOGGA

CLASS FOR ADULTS

AT BIRCHWOOD SCHOOL
THURS 7.15-8.30PM
(SUITABLE FOR BEGINNERS
& INTERMEDIATES)

FREE TASTER SESSION

£10 PER CLASS (£9 PER CLASS IF
PAID MONTHLY IN ADVANCE)

CONTACT
GILLIAN REYNOLDS
FOR MORE INFO & BOOK A SPACE

TEL: 07748 934 609

EMAIL:
GSHAWREYNOLDS@GMAIL.COM

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