



December 2021

BIRCHWOOD News

newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk



The Wizard of Oz 2021

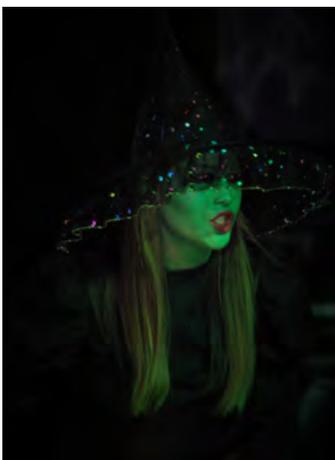
Someone once said ‘the show must go on...’ and believe me, at times we didn’t think it would. But after five long months of ifs and buts, LFT’s, isolations and rehearsals... we did it! Last week saw the biannual Birchwood High Musical production of The Wizard of Oz. We’d like to say a massive thank you to the staff who supported the show backstage and otherwise – we couldn’t do it without you!

With a cast of forty three students, including a team of dancers, accompanied by our amazing school band and supported by an all student backstage crew, the magical story that unfolded before a colourful backdrop was utterly superb. A celebration of the varied artistic talents that can be found amongst Birchwood students. Year 9 student Zoe Lloyd-Rossi made her Birchwood debut as the wonderful Dorothy. Zoe sang sweetly as she journeyed through the land of Oz, making friends with trusted cast member Year 11 Milla Sweett-Heals as the scarecrow, our wonderfully talented and delightful Tin Woodman Ethan Gillson-Hill in Year 10 and Sophie Springham who made the audience roar as she searched for the courage she always dreamed of.

A completely diverse cast varying from Year 8 to 13, who remained calm in the face of uncertainty and performed with so much energy and enthusiasm, that the audience left feeling uplifted and enriched by the experience. We are so proud of you all. Thank you for giving us all something positive to work towards as we glide into the Omicron era of this Covid crisis... as Dorothy and her companions proved – no road is worth travelling unless accompanied by those that share your goal.

DVD’s of the show will be available to buy in January, via ParentPay.

Mrs Hassani, Head of Drama



Inside this month’s edition: Headlines...page 6, House News... pages 7, PSFA ...page 8
Would you like to advertise in Birchwood News?

A one off advert (5cm x 5cm) £25.00, or to advertise for a whole year (8 editions) £100.00
please contact newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk for further information.





FINANCE

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.....



Students on the Life Skills Course have been working hard to support The Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice as part of their AQA Unit Award Scheme. They have worked together to decide the best way to raise funds for this deserving charity. The students spread the news throughout the school community promoting the "Great Popcorn Sale!" The end result being an amazing £108 raised to help Bluebell Wood continue their vital work with children who have life-limiting conditions and support their families.

Making Perfect Pasta!



The photos above show our Year 9 students making pasta for the first time. The end result was very impressive!

Mr Kadlec

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Term Dates 2021/22

Autumn 2021

1 September - 21 December 21

Finish at 1.30pm

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



My name is Lola and in my spare time I'm a show jumper. I compete at a senior level at around 1m. I am registered with British Showjumping which is a national organisation that covers a very high standard of competing.

I go to weekly competitions in which I am mostly successful. I am competing at a high level against seniors who are all adult. As I have been able to compete this year, I was entered into a league and became the 2021 Codham Park Showjumping Champion for December.

This league has been going on for the entire year and I have been at the top for the majority of the time. In this league you need to gain as many points as possible and the person with the most points is the winner. As I won I received £500 along with many more prizes from the sponsors.

When I recently found out that I had in fact won this league, I was over the moon.

I had achieved this with my once in a lifetime horse, Tasset Hill. She has brought me to the level that I am now.

Lola Dunn



Christmas Card Competition Winners
 Well done to the following students;
 First Prize, Oliver Klumpler, Year 7
 Second Prize, Katla Tomasdottir, Year 8.
 Each prize winner received an Amazon voucher and House points. Oliver also had his winning entry printed for the school Christmas card this year.
 Miss Morrison, Head of EPA



On the evening of Wednesday 24 November, we took advantage of the Catalan Programme (“Camara Catalonia”) at this year’s Cambridge Film Festival, taking place for its 40th year. Year 12 and 13 Spanish students chose a comedy drama called ‘Sis Dies Corrents’, interestingly retitled ‘The Odd-Job Men’ for the subtitled version. It was in Catalan, Castilian Spanish and Berber, with English subtitles, and was directed by Neus Ballús, who used deadpan and life-affirming humour to depict the three main characters navigating through the extraordinary that can be found in everyday life. Three very different characters, who only share their profession of handyman, and their relationship whilst at work, are the main elements that Ballús employed to analyse prejudices towards migration in Europe and the quiriness of human nature. It fits very well into the Theme 3 topics we study during the A level course, namely immigration, its challenges, positive impact and integration into Spanish society.



We all enjoyed being in a very Christmassy Cambridge, eating together beforehand and then settling down to watch the film at the Arts Picture-house. It was also fantastic to be there for the short introduction by the Catalan programmer, who introduced the film in person, and explained why this film had been chosen for this year’s festival.

A lovely film, which really did hit the right note!
 Miss Roderick, Head of MFL

THANK YOU!

The Art department are thrilled to announce that they have recently received a very generous donation. The family, who wish to remain anonymous, are supporters of the Arts and wished the money to be spent on equipment or experiences that will enrich the lives of the visual Art students at Birchwood High school. Diane Morrison, Head of Art said, ‘this was an exceptionally generous donation, and I am still overwhelmed and extremely grateful. The money will make a significant impact on our students, with a focus on GCSE and A level’.

Specific plans for the money are yet to be decided but it will be well spent, ideas so far include updated digital cameras, fine art printing equipment, or possibly life drawing classes for A level students. What is certain however is that part of the money will fund an annual photographic competition in memory of a member of the family who have made this exceptional donation.

Miss Morrison, Head of EPA

Birchwood's Environmental Group

**We need
 your clean
 Bottle Tops
 and
 Crisp Packets**

We are going to start trying to recycle these on the school site in tech, by making them into things like guitar picks, ice scrapers, coasters etc!

**Please bring them
 along to D3 or B9.**



'Headlines'



I hope you enjoy this upbeat and festive edition of Birchwood News, celebrating all the extra events and activities in the run-up to Christmas. I will also sum up where we are in terms of plans for January.



Despite the gloomy national news, we have kept an upbeat and 'business as normal' approach to December. From our Christmas card winner, Oliver Klumpler (Year 7) who made us smile with his comical penguins, to the traditional Carol Concert at St Michael's church and the amazing Wizard of Oz which I had to remind myself was a school production, it was that good, hat's off to everyone involved. Our hard-working catering team have put on Christmas lunches for all our students with clubs and after school revisions classes running as normal.



I would also like to pay testament to all our staff who have worked incredibly hard this term to keep focus on our three key main priorities – delivering high quality teaching, supporting and looking after student welfare and providing enrichment opportunities outside normal lessons. There is a real sense of 'team' at Birchwood with everyone contributing to help during this challenging time. We have also tried to look after our health with a variety of staff clubs including football, cycling, running and keep fit. This all helps maintain team spirit!



Covid update....

Despite the rising numbers of positive cases in East Herts, at Birchwood, we have seen numbers continue to be low, as we head towards the end of term - 23 student cases in total last week out of a school population of 1450 students. I hope the students concerned make a speedy recovery. Staff absence remains very low.

Looking ahead, our Plan A is to start the Spring Term on Wednesday 5 January with a staff training day – with students returning on Thursday 6 January. Your child will need to do a LFT on 5 January and provide photographic evidence of a negative result which are then submitted to the school – details were sent home in a separate letter on Thursday 16 December via schoolcomms. If your child unfortunately catches Covid over Christmas and this affects their return to school on 6 January, can you email DPO@birchwoodhigh.org.uk

We will continue with wearing face masks indoors and maintain additional hygiene measures and separate recreational areas for different year groups.

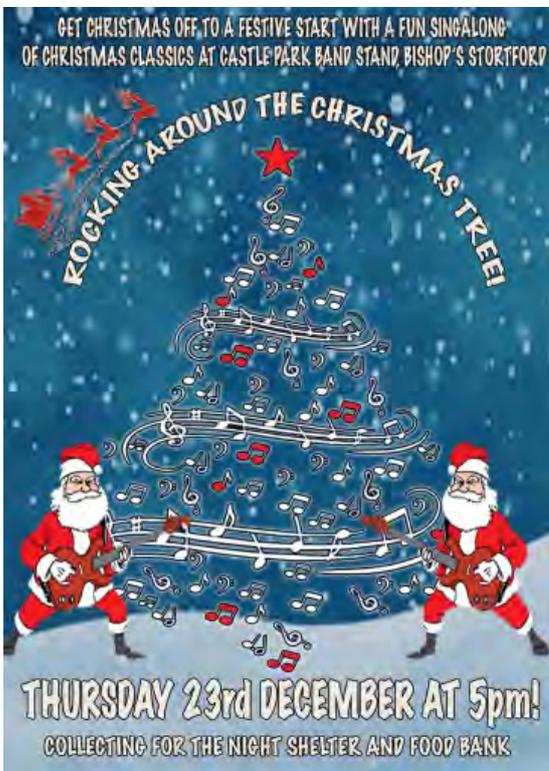
Plan B would be a response to any change in stance from the DfE. Any decision to close schools in January as a 'fire-break' maybe given at short-notice. In this instance, we will outline how we return to remote learning using Microsoft 'Teams' and Show My Homework. Personally, I hope we don't have to revert to Plan B – it is clear from the recent Survey Monkey data that students far prefer coming to school rather than sitting in front of a laptop. I think many of us feel the same way.

Have a safe and restful Christmas – students and staff have been amazing this term and my hope is that everyone returns in January to school ready to go.

Dr Ingate, Principal



Thank you so much to everyone who donated to Izzie's Breakfast Challenge. It was an idea Izzy had when she was seven, and it's a real privilege to still be helping the mission to collect donations. The White Chapel Mission was very pleased to receive all the items, this donation will make a huge difference to the people that need this service. Looking forward to the next one, and thanks again for supporting White Chapel Mission. Many thanks to the House Captains and Izzy for organising this event.



Congratulations to our BSP Sport Leaders for taking part in Year 3/4 Primary School Rapid Fire Cricket Event. Six Primary schools were able to attend the event, Windhill21 were the overall winners. Well done everyone.

Miss Peet, BSP Leader



Carols by Candlelight



Our annual Christmas Carols by Candlelight service took place at St Michael's Church on Wednesday 15 December.

Our school choirs filled the church with wonderful carols and songs.

Isabelle Ramsay started the service with a beautifully sung and unaccompanied "Once in Royal David's City".

Readings were given by Mr Gilbank, Miss Morrison and several students. It was a wonderful festive evening thank you to everyone who attended.

Mr Grogan, Head of Music

Congratulations to Alumni Gregg Varey who won Gold in the 66kg category at the British Judo Championships!



Christmas decoration

workshop

This year the Art department held their annual Christmas decoration workshop. There were two sessions, which took place on 10 November and the 9 December. The first session was making the decorations, by shaping the clay. The second session was decorating the fired clay. During the time in between the two sessions, the clay decorations were fired.

To decorate, there was paint (ready mixed and acrylic), glitter and decorations of the sort. Both sessions were fun and interesting, I recommend this for all students.

By Edward Wilcock



News from the Finance Department

In January 2022 the PS Financials systems are going to be upgraded to the latest version. We are making a significant upgrade from V2 to V7 and with this upgrade we anticipate some significant changes in the processes and procedures across the whole school.

Firstly we are moving to the ESFA Standard Chart of Accounts which enables us to automatically upload our accounts to the DoFE & ESFA without the need for any translation from our local chart of accounts.

More importantly we will be implementing electronic requisitioning, budget approval and workflow mapping to ensure that all appropriate "delegation of authority" sign offs are captured electronically.

As the system gets embedded we will implement the budget control module where individuals can only procure up to the level of budget set for the dept/cost centre. This will ensure that the "paperwork" trails of the yellow order forms will be a thing of the past and all users can track progress on their orders on the system.

More info to follow in due course.

Mr Bull, Financial Director

Birchwood High School is striving to become a cashless school

Since the onset of the Covid pandemic more and more of our activities have gone online.

This term we have added things like the school production of Wizard of Oz and the charities day events onto ParentPay and the uptake has been phenomenal.

We have removed the ability for children to bring cash to the Finance office and have removed the petty cash floats from a number of our faculties.

Next term we are looking to remove the cash machine in the Café which enables credits to be put into the cashless catering system. This system requires daily emptying, batching up of the cash and external collection of the money by an external third party company to bank these funds.

If there are any issues with this could you please contact the Finance dept via email; Financedept@birchwoodhigh.org.uk



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.

The PSFA would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Birchwood Bonus Ball

Congratulations once again to Lorna Cook who was the winner of the November draw and winning £139.50. Ball 89 was drawn by Mr Stopps. Lorna has 5 bonus balls and won the October draw and kindly donated the winnings back to the PSFA. Enjoy your winnings this month Lorna!

The Bonus Ball is a great way to support the school, and at the same time be in with a chance of winning some cash every month! It is £3 per month per ball, payable either in one lump sum (£30 for the remainder of the school year for one ball) or monthly as a standing order. A draw takes place at the end of each month and the winner receives half of the money collected, the other half going towards PSFA funds, for our children. Our bank details are:

Barclays Bank

Account Name: Birchwood PSFA

Account Number: 23298728

Sort Code: 20-25-19

Email treasurerbwpsfa@gmail.com to let us know you've paid and how many balls you would like.

The Big PTA Christmas Raffle

Thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets, a total of 277 tickets sold, raising a massive £415.50 for the PSFA. Good luck to everyone in the raffle draws.

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 once a week and uniform requests available for collection from student reception, upon receipt of payment.

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.



Science Club

Every Wednesday

3.05pm-4.05pm in C20

This term saw the beginning of a new and improved after-school science club. We have had a small number of regulars but are always looking for more to enjoy the fun science experiments that are done weekly. Starting the club off with squiggle bots. This entailed placing a motor on a small can with markers for legs, and with trial and error making them move and draw on paper. The next experiment was making film canister rockets. The students experimented with different reactants to see what combination would make the largest explosion and shoot the rocket the highest.

Reactants such as mentos and coke, vinegar and baking soda and effervescent tablets and water were used. They went so high the students had to go outside to get the full extent of the lift off.

The students did a two week project, they spent the first week researching and designing the best protector for their egg that would be dropped from a second floor staircase. The next week students built their containers out of recycled cardboard and straws. Students then dropped their egg in their case and out of seven designs only two survived. The designs by Genevieve Wilson and Hayden Turner, as pictured. Students then spent the next few weeks making crystals using different reactants to see which products made the largest crystals. We are looking forward to coming up with more awesome practicals and experiments to do. I am excited to get them thinking of making egg timers out of household objects and catapults using forces.

Miss LaLonge, Science





STORTFORD VIKINGS

BASKETBALL CLUB COACHING SESSIONS



Birchwood High Sports Hall
Thursdays

6pm-7pm: *9-11 year olds*

7pm-8pm: *12-14 year olds*

Start your kids young, sessions available for children aged 9-14. Have fun, make friends and get active! Whether you are experienced or never played at all, register your interest on our website and follow us on social media. Due to demand, new age groups opening soon.

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