



IN FOCUS

BIRKENHEAD SCHOOL ANNUAL

2023 - 2024

HIGHLIGHTS

RECORD A LEVEL RESULTS

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DRAMA PRODUCTIONS

U12 NORTHERN SCHOOLS
LACROSSE CHAMPIONS

Welcome



It is a pleasure to welcome you, once again, to this year's InFocus magazine.

Every year, it takes considerable editorial discipline from our in-house team to keep the magazine to approx. 100 pages. The 2023-24 academic year has been no different, with the commitment and talent of the School's 190+ staff providing an outstanding breadth of academic and co-curricular offerings to our children and students from Nursery through to the Upper Sixth.

I hope what emerges from the articles you read, and the photographs you scan, is that Birkenhead School is a community with happy and busy children and students, one that thrives on strong core values, believing in providing opportunities that develop confidence, skills, and the resilience that lays great foundations for their future.

As a School, we will always continue to drive academic excellence for all, and this year's A Level results were once again the best on Wirral. Alongside these academic foundations, will also always sit the co-curricular opportunities that for so many students provide their grounding and the lifelong friendships and memories that they recall for decades to come.

I truly believe there is no greater investment that families can make than in their children's education. My thanks to all members of the School community for their many and varied contributions during the year. Without the commitment of staff, the selfless work of volunteers, alumni and the Old Birkonian Society, and the trust placed in the School by families, such achievements would not be possible.

Beati Mundo Corde.

Paul Vicars, Headmaster



I am sure you're going to love this edition of In Focus – it's absolutely jam-packed with wonderful examples of how children thrive at this school. Let's see if I can whet your appetite!

It never ceases to amaze me how Prep pupils keep their energy going long beyond the school day, and it's clear that they gain many skills and forge stronger friendships through the great variety of sports, clubs and trips we offer. I was delighted that our first ever Year 2 residential trip was such a success and this now means we have residential adventure trips for all pupils from Year 2 to 6. Our biennial Prep Ski Trip was another huge success and our group of 59 children from Years 5 and 6 were highly praised by the ski school, hotel staff and airline crew on their exemplary behaviour and manners.

It's been a year of significant development in outdoor learning with the introduction of our Nature Explorers programme from Reception to Year 4. This new area of the curriculum has enriched the children's learning in our amazing outdoor spaces, such as the forest school, sensory garden, outdoor classroom and allotment.

As you pore over the pages ahead, you'll have the opportunity see the many experiences our children gain on stage. Whether it's the Pre-Prep Nativity, Year 6 show or Seniors productions, whether an informal Music Serenade or a Whole School Concert in Bushell Hall, these magical moments on the children's educational journey build their confidence and self-belief and give them so many amazing memories of their school years.

Hearty congratulations to all the children and staff on their fantastic contributions to Birkenhead School life during the 2024-25 academic year and I wish everyone all the best for another fulfilling and inspiring year ahead.

Harry FitzHerbert, Head of Prep

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Our Values

 <h3>Respect</h3> <p>...we show due regard for the feelings, opinions and rights of others</p>	 <h3>Responsibility</h3> <p>...we are dependable, accountable for our actions and use good judgement in making decisions</p>	 <h3>Resilience</h3> <p>...we are adaptable, bounce back quickly from setbacks and try again</p>	 <h3>Inclusivity</h3> <p>...we interact with everyone and celebrate people's differences</p>
 <h3>Compassion</h3> <p>...we listen, empathise and show kindness to others</p>	 <h3>Courage</h3> <p>...we possess the mental and physical bravery to undertake activities that are challenging</p>	 <h3>Humility</h3> <p>...we avoid arrogance, recognise our strengths and weaknesses and celebrate the successes of others</p>	 <h3>Integrity</h3> <p>...we are honest and hold strong moral principles</p>

Early Years

Let's Grow Together

By Natasha Johns, Early Years SENDco & Third in Charge

The Baby Room has been a hive of activity this year with lots of days spent crafting, painting, singing and counting and taking in the sights and sounds of the wider school campus on our daily walks. The children love going on walks and exploring the school whilst holding the hoops to help with their independence – much to the delight of the older students in the School who love seeing our littlest learners and often send a friendly wave our way.

The Baby Room had a little visitor when Alfie the tortoise came in to Nursery! The children loved stroking his shell and discovering the different textures of his shell and skin. Another highlight of the year has been our time singing, dancing and learning the actions at story time to the Barefoot books. The children adore story time and parents often tell us the children will sing the songs at home too!

We've taken part in lots of crafts such as making playdough, exploring lots of different tuff trays and making art work with paintbrushes, pencils, hands and feet! The children also love to mimic daily activities they observe such as washing the baby dolls and "cooking dinner" – we always encourage parents to involve the children in appropriate daily tasks as they learn lots of skills through observation and subsequently mimic these tasks.

There have been lots of visits to the local art gallery, farm and park which the children have thoroughly enjoyed. We wish all the children who have left us to move over to the Toddler Room the very best of luck on your Birkenhead School journey. Although we'll miss you, we can't wait to see what the future holds!



Rising to the challenge in Rising 3s

By Jen Heaton, Rising 3s Supervisor

It's been a busy year in Rising 3s! From exploring the wider school grounds on our walks, visiting the pond to see the tadpoles in Seniors, and getting our hands dirty in Forest School!

The children have spent lots of time outside exploring Forest School, the garden and the wider school campus and haven't shied away from getting their hands (and clothes!) dirty getting stuck into all of the activities.

What we've been up to...

We visited the Prep gym where we joined in an obstacle course to explore different ways of moving our bodies to develop our gross motor movements. We practised balancing and moving in different ways and learned to take risks in a safe environment. We definitely have a few adventurers in our midst!

We have grown lots of different fruit and vegetables in our garden and the children love to help water them and discuss the things they notice about the environment and the way plants grow. We enjoy using our senses to explore the plants and get so excited to see the plants fully grown due to our efforts!

We have had great fun exploring numbers by counting and discussing shapes and colours through lots of activities and games. By exploring the puzzles and stackers, we're helping to develop our hand eye co-ordination.

One of our favourite things to do in Rising 3s is to get messy! We have enjoyed making pictures and focusing on our fine motor skills to create art work and manipulate one handed tools such as paint brushes, pens, pencils and glue sticks. We love to explore different forms of media and materials to discover textures and engage our imaginations.



Summer Fun!

By Mrs Ross, Deputy Nursery Manager

"Wow what a few great weeks the babies have had, we have had a mixture of rainy days and sunny days, but that has not stopped the babies in their steps, they have had fun playing and exploring around the campus and in the community, they have enjoyed visits to the sensory garden, the art gallery, forest school, the park, library, pond, pirate ship and had a special visit from Alfie the Tortoise, were the children got the opportunity to observe his eating habits."



Singing and Dancing with Jo Jingles

Our Nursery children in the Toddler room and Rising 3s welcomed a special guest last term when 'Jo' the cheery mascot doll came to visit. Jo Jingles offers fun, interactive music, singing and dancing sessions for Nursery to Pre-School children and offers a class children can actively participate in. The children loved singing and dancing along to all the songs, joining in the games and playing on different instruments. The sessions are always well-loved by the children.



It's fun to learn new things!

By Sammie Parkinson, Key Worker and Practitioner

The children in the Toddler Room have had a very busy year indeed!

We're very lucky to have access to the wider school and frequently go and explore the campus looking for new things for the children to discover. This year, we have been making the most of the refurbished pond in Senior school by visiting it to learn all about the lifecycle of frogs!

The children have enjoyed seeing the tiny eggs evolve into tadpoles and eventually frogs. It's been a highlight walking over to discover what awaits us in the pond. "Will they have legs today?" "Will they still have a tail?" "What do you think they eat?" are all questions we have discussed with the children.

In addition to this, we have been exploring lots of different activities in the tuff trays such as making bubbles in water and using different objects such as toy cars to make patterns. We try and make the tuff trays as fun and engaging as possible usually having themes such as Christmas, Easter and World Book Day which the children enjoy exploring. Back in May we made 'birthday cakes' using oats which were measured out and poured into baking trays then "baked".

We've also enjoyed visiting Forest School where we explored mark-making, and our visit to Prep gym had the children climbing, balancing and jumping around in joy.

We're so excited for another exciting year ahead!



Pre-Prep

By Mrs Tempest, Acting Pre-Prep Lead

Pre-Prep has been bustling with excitement and enthusiasm this academic year. The curriculum, consisting of adult led and child initiated learning provides endless opportunities to enhance and embed skills that promote independence, self-image, interpersonal skills and communication alongside academia such as literacy and maths.

There have been many popular topics however, the children fully immersed themselves in the 'People who help us' topic. They were able to re-enact first hand experiences through play, make use of resources and props to extend learning and meet a variety of professionals to support their knowledge and broaden their understanding of the topic. "We met a 'real-life' police man!" this was the highlight of the children's week when Special Sergeant Kausch from Merseyside Police visited.

Many thanks also to Shaun the Paramedic, Joan the Dentist and Jay the Refuse Collector.



It's a Mystery!

We like to promote a love of books in Pre-Prep and frequently accept requests for Mystery readers. Parents, carers, siblings and teaching staff, including Mr Vicars and Mr FitzHerbert, to name a few, like to surprise the children by sharing a story or two. We would like to extend our thanks to those who have embraced this opportunity!



It is well known that children learn best by doing- after some weeks of practice the children were geared up to demonstrate their skills on Sports Day, however the unpredictable British weather prevented this. Previously cancelled, second time lucky, the children and teachers were determined not to let a little drizzle dampen their spirits. In true Birkenhead School Style, the show went on and the children were able to showcase their throwing, jumping, balancing and co-ordination skills. What a brilliant job they all did! We were very proud of their efforts, resilience and sportsmanship.



The start of the Lent term bought two new dens to Pre-Prep. They are used as a quiet space for children, offering a calming environment for emotional regulation and rest. It is with great thanks to the Parents' Association who have enabled these valuable resources to be purchased.

The Sleepy Shepherd- a festive celebration for all the family.

Pre Prep put on quite the show when they performed 'The Sleepy Shepherd' to an audience of friends and family back in December.

They had clearly practised very hard learning all the cues, songs and actions – it was easy to forget we were watching 3 and 4 year olds!

The Sleepy Shepherd told the story of a lovable shepherd who just couldn't keep awake, as well as recounted the familiar Christmas story through a series of catchy songs.

The children thoroughly enjoyed their time in the spotlight and we'd like to thank all the Pre Prep teachers for all their hard work on the performance.



Once Upon A Time... in Pre Prep

Pre Prep had a magical time back in August when the setting was transformed into a castle fit for a Disney Prince and Princess.

There were Disney-themed tuff spots, pixie dust mark-making and lots of crafts and activities such as building Elsa's castle, making Monsters Inc characters with playdough and the children created their own wands and crowns. Tinkerbell even delivered a bag full of pixie dust and the children got to make a wish. The children enjoyed lots of magical moments with the week culminating in a performing arts workshop where they acted out the story of Cinderella.



Little School Highlights

Reception

By Mrs Bentley-Jones, Reception Teacher

Reception have had a very busy and active year, learning and playing together.

From visiting Mr Vicars in his office, exploring Forest School and sharing our first school Christmas Lunch, to making snow angels, listening to stories in the Willow Dome and visiting the World Museum, every week has brought new experiences. The time has gone so quickly and we are now looking forward to Year 1, but we have so many happy memories of our Reception days to look back on as we grow up.



Victorian Day

Year 2 took a step back in time when they came to School dressed in traditional Victorian clothing and were met by their Governesses Mrs Ford, Mrs Phythian and Mrs Pye back in January.

The day helped bring to life what they had been learning in the classroom about Victorian life. They got to write on slates, completed arithmetic and copied lines in full cursive style.



Blue Planet Aquarium for Year 1

By Mr Smith, Prep Teacher

Year 1 had a wonderful time visiting The Blue Planet Aquarium in March. The children loved seeing all the different sea life, watching a fabulous show where they got to see divers feeding the fish, including Big Betty, the aquarium's biggest shark!

Our favourite part was going through the tunnel, having sharks, rays and other sea life swimming just above our heads! We also enjoyed taking part in a workshop all about habitats, learning how different animals are adapted to life in different places.



Royal Horticultural Society Awards

Children in Little School were delighted to be awarded their RHS School Garden Level 3 Award in June.



Building on the success of their Level 2 award, this level recognises the pupils' abilities to grow and name a range of plants, keep the plants healthy and be planet-friendly gardeners. Their evidence to achieve Level 3 included all the work they had put into our School allotment, Sensory Garden and Bug Hotel.

The children were so proud to achieve this award for all their hard work and were delighted to receive their certificate and some goodies including a £50 gardening voucher and seeds to help them work towards Level 4! Well done to all involved, keep your hands in the dirt, heads in the sun and hearts with nature.



Frogs and Froglets for Year 1

By Mr Smith, Prep Teacher

Year 1 had a lovely afternoon Science lesson visiting the School pond in Seniors in June. We got to see lots of tadpoles and saw that some had turned into froglets and some even into little frogs!

We talked about why the pond is a good habitat for them and the whole lifecycle that frogs go through. We're so lucky to have access to the wider school facilities and these visits are always a highlight for the children.



Launch of Little School Houses

By Mrs Pythian, Year 2 Teacher

Back at the beginning of September 2023, in Years 1 and 2, our House system was well and truly underway.

We began by choosing suitable House Captains from Year 2 and all the children took part in a drawing competition to enable us to choose a House mascot. Several events have taken place throughout the year, including a football competition, a very successful 'Children in Need' bake sale and an Easter Egg colouring competition. The atmosphere and excitement at Little School Sports Day was incredible! The support for each house was very commendable during each race and the overall winners celebrated in style! We look forward to celebrating these and other events during the next academic year.



Little School Highlights continued

A wild time at Knowsley Safari Park

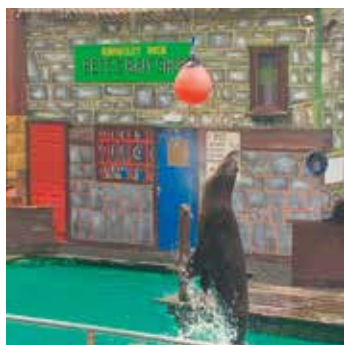
Year 2 had the best day at Knowsley Safari Park back in April.

They began their adventure in the coach with a safari tour from Ben who taught the children all about the animals they saw. Once the cheeky camels moved off the road, they visited the sealion show which was fantastic and taught the

children about looking after our ocean environment and the dangers of pollution to sealions.

The group managed to fit in the birds of prey display this year too which was incredible as the children got to meet a bald headed eagle, two types of vulture, a barn owl and two lovely European storks! The final adventure of the day saw the children do an African walking tour where they learnt all about meerkats, giraffes and red river hogs.

The pupils, and teachers, had a fantastic day exploring and learning all about different species and their habitats.



What an Adventure - Barnstondale

Year 2 ventured to Barnstondale just before the May half term break for an overnight stay packed full of fun and adventure.

It was the first time visiting Barnstondale for our Year

2 pupils who were full of excitement at the prospect of a night away with their friends. 32 Year 2 pupils were accompanied by Mr Smith, Mrs Phythian, Mrs Pye and Mrs Ford for an unforgettable few days. They took part in exciting activities such as den building, fire lighting, archery and a camp fire. They all had such an amazing time and their teachers couldn't believe how independent the pupils were — perfect ambassadors for Birkenhead School.



Year 2's Festive Adventure in Seniors

This year, Year 2 students had an exciting visit to the Design & Technology department in Seniors.

During their visit, they had the chance to create their very own personalised Christmas decorations, a memorable experience that combined creativity with technology.

Upon arrival, the two classes were warmly greeted by Mr. Parry, our teacher of Design & Technology. Mr Parry captivated the students with a fascinating explanation about light and lasers, making the visit both educational and fun. The highlight of the day was watching the laser

cutter in action. The children were thrilled to see their names engraved on acrylic decorations, each one a unique keepsake to take home.

The visit was also an excellent opportunity for the children to explore the DT lab. They were full of curiosity and questions about what they would get to create when they eventually join the Seniors. Mr Parry generously showcased some of the impressive work recently completed by Year 7 students, leaving the Year 2s excited and inspired for their future projects.

A big thank you to Mr Parry for providing such a wonderful opportunity. The experience not only allowed the children to get hands-on with technology but also sparked their imagination and enthusiasm for future learning in Design & Technology.



Play Leaders

By Mrs Ford, Head of Little School

Thank you and well done to our Little School Play Leaders who have done a phenomenal job this year leading by example and following our core Birkenian values in the Little School Playground. I couldn't be more proud of them. This initiative offers a wonderful opportunity for children to develop their leadership skills and promotes inclusivity during playtime. Children develop to become excellent role models who demonstrate exemplary behaviour and encourage new friendships to be formed through the art of play. The scheme is so popular that we have had to have two Play Leader teams this year, running for half a school year each. Thank you all for the fantastic contribution you have made.



Little School Sports Day

Children from Little School enjoyed their Sports Day in the summer term.



Enrich & Explore

By Mrs Pye, Year 2 teacher

Enrich and explore is a fun, innovative programme of activities that enhance the usual school curriculum. It allows us to explore topics such as helping our community, culture and diversity, mindfulness, STEM and much more. It helps us build teamwork, problem solving and many more skills.

In Infants this year, we have taken part in lots of different activities during our Enrich and Explore sessions. In Year 1, the children have explored art from other cultures and have experimented with Aboriginal techniques. Inspired by their Julia Donaldson topic, whilst visiting the Woodland Area for a Forest School lesson with Mr Davies, they made their very own 'Stickman' using the resources they found on the ground, as well as toasting marshmallows on the campfire. Considering their responsibilities to the community, they have been on litter picks around the school ensuring we have a pleasant environment to learn and have fun in. They have also been busy planting an array of fruit and vegetable plants in the school allotment area with Mr Smith.

The Year 2 children have also taken part in a variety of activities. With Mrs Pye, they took part in a Yoga session; they learnt some simple positions and then tried some breathing and meditation techniques to help them relax. With Mrs Ford, they have learnt some sign language and they have been busy in the allotment with Mrs Phythian this year too. On top of all of those exciting activities, we have also been considering our links with the community. The whole year group created Easter cards for two local residential homes. They have also been decorating cakes and learning about art from other cultures including Africa and Japan.

The children love our Enrich and Explore programme; they have learnt so many skills and developed their core values demonstrating what lovely, well-rounded individuals they all are.



NATURE EXPLORERS

By Mr Smith, Year 1 Teacher, Little School Curriculum & Assessment Coordinator

This year we were delighted to launch our very own, bespoke Outdoor Learning programme in Prep – ‘Nature Explorers at Birkenhead School.’

The programme is aimed at ensuring pupils recognise the importance of caring for and spending time in the great outdoors. Children in Reception all the way to Year 4 enjoyed taking part in a variety of outdoor activities, building up a range of skills and experiences to help them understand and appreciate the outdoors.

In Reception, the children worked on their Acorn Level award, completing four activities including visiting Forest School and learning how to tie some knots with Sammy the Snake.

Year 1 completed their Young Sapling Level, making their own Stick people in Forest School, using Julia Donaldson’s “The Stick Man” as inspiration, creating a minibeast hotel and toasting marshmallows around the campfire. Year 2 got stuck in at the allotment and undertook nature inspired art and den building to complete their Mighty Oak Level award.

Year 3 and Year 4 completed their Park Warden and Park Keeper levels respectively – visiting our allotment, carrying out experiments to see which conditions seeds grow best in, making bird feeders and much more. The children are all proud to have completed these first levels and we look forward to completing even more levels in the upcoming school year.



Hear from Sophie & Carrie, 4C

"At the end of term we were awarded our Park Keeper certificates for being Nature Explorers at Birkenhead School. Mr Smith from Little School came to Prep Hall to present the certificates.

To get our certificates we had to complete two different activities. The first one was at the Anderton Centre where we made dens for the ‘little people’ of the woods. We really enjoyed this activity, which was one of many great activities we did on our residential trip.

The second thing we did was make a bird feeder out of lard, birdseed, paper cups and string. When we had finished making our bird feeders, we were able to take them home and hang them in our gardens. We have had lots of fun watching the small birds enjoy feeding from them."



NATURE EXPLORERS

GROWING TOGETHER
at Birkenhead School





By Mrs Ford, Head of Little School

This year has been another great success for the Birkenhead School Civic Award, with a second level, the Eastham Award, being added to the introductory Mayer Award launched last year.

Children in Years 2 and 3 have been completing the Eastham Award, and we're delighted that every child who entered these two levels of the scheme was awarded the Mayer or Eastham Award in a ceremony with the Mayor of Wirral, Councillor Cherry Povall JP, on 21st May in Prep Hall.

The idea for creating the Birkenhead School Civic Award scheme came from the desire to continue the very successful scheme provided by Wirral Council, which was extremely popular with our children for many years. With the original scheme no longer running, Mrs. Ford wanted to do something to allow the children to explore and learn important fundamental skills to become good citizens.

The Birkenhead School Civic Award enables the School to celebrate the children's achievements both inside and outside of school, helping to shape them into well-rounded citizens who understand the importance of community, perseverance, self-reliance, and personal achievement.

The scheme is made up of five strands that the children have to complete, document, and have signed off by the appropriate bodies:

1. Local Awareness
2. Self-Reliance
3. Service to Others
4. Personal Achievement in Physical Activities
5. Wide Use of Leisure Time

The Award links with the School's Birkenian values of respect, responsibility, resilience, inclusivity, compassion, courage, humility, and integrity.

"Many of the areas overlap and are not exclusive to one particular element of both the Civic Award and our Birkenian values, but the fact that they intertwine so much helps to strengthen my belief that this scheme is an amazing initiative that matches the ethos of our school perfectly."

Mrs Ford, Head of Little School

The Birkenhead School Civic Award scheme has not only encouraged children to develop essential life skills but has also fostered a deep sense of community spirit and personal responsibility. The feedback from parents, teachers, and the children themselves has been overwhelmingly positive, with many highlighting the pride and confidence the children feel upon completing each level of the Award.

Mr. FitzHerbert, Head of Prep, added, *"The Civic Award scheme is a wonderful way for our students to engage with the broader community and develop a range of important skills. It is fantastic to see them take on challenges, support one another, and grow in confidence and capability. We're very grateful to the Mayor and all the local organisations that have supported this initiative."*

As the children progress through each level of the Civic Award, they build on the foundations laid in the earlier stages. The scheme not only aligns with the School's values but also enhances the overall educational experience, making learning more holistic and impactful.

The Birkenhead School Civic Award scheme is a testament to the School's commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals who are prepared to contribute positively to society. It celebrates the diverse talents and efforts of our students, encouraging them to strive for excellence in all areas of their lives.

We look forward to seeing the continued success of the Civic Award scheme and to celebrating the achievements of our students as they progress through each level. The future holds great promise for these young citizens, and we are excited to support them on their journey.

For more information about the Birkenhead School Civic Award scheme or to find out how you can get involved, please contact Mrs Ford or Mr FitzHerbert.





Children from Little School were awarded their certificates at a special ceremony with Wirral Mayor, Councillor Cherry Povall JP, on 21st May.



Prep Bournemouth Lecture Series

#inspiringtalksseries

See page 38



Prep Bournemouth Lecture with Sue Higginson, OBE DL

By Mr FitzHerbert, Head of Prep

School Governor and Deputy Lieutenant for Merseyside, Sue Higginson OBE, gave an excellent presentation to Years 5 and 6 as part of the Bournemouth Lecture Series back in June.

As a Deputy Lieutenant, Mrs Higginson supports HM Charles III and the Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside, Mark Blundell, in upholding the dignity of the crown. She explained how His Majesty likes to be kept up to date on the communities he serves all across his kingdom. The children were fascinated to see photos of the coronation, the Crown Jewels, the royal residences, the royal family and the Household Division, and also to be shown Mrs Higginson's OBE.

At the end of this highly informative and interactive session, Mrs Higginson expressed her delight at the knowledge and enthusiasm of the children, and she promised to return next term with the Lord-Lieutenant himself!



The Bombing of Birkenhead, 1940-41

By Mr FitzHerbert, Head of Prep

On 23rd April, Ian Bournemouth gave a special lecture to Years 5 and 6, entitled "The Bombing of Birkenhead, 1940-41".

The children were shown slides of all the bomb sites across the Wirral and were intrigued to learn about the places that were hit. The German bombers were of course targeting the docks and Cammell Laird Shipyard, but the bombs drifted off course. The bomb that landed nearest to the school was on the site of what is now the Caernarvon Castle Pub, on Bidston Road. Blast from this bomb took out the stone cross at the top of our School Chapel and four of its large stained glass windows too; miraculously, the School suffered no further damage.

Ian was most impressed with the children's interest and attention. Those that answered his challenging questions were generously rewarded with a copy of his book, Birkenhead at War, 1939-45. It is always wonderful to welcome Ian back to his old school and we are indebted to him for sharing his historical knowledge and his enthusiasm with our pupils.



We were delighted to welcome children's author Anna James to the school in September. Anna is the author of the children's book series 'Pages & Co', which follows the magical, book-wandering adventures of Tilly.

Anna delivered an exciting and engaging talk, during which children in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed a journey around the world and created their own stories, much to their amusement. Anna spoke to the children about how she draws inspiration for her stories from her travels around the globe, sharing photos and interesting facts:

- Did you know that the Tikkurila Library has a karaoke booth installed?
- The smallest book, 'Old King Cole', measures just 1/25"x1/25" and can be found in the Library of Congress in Washington, US.
- The Osmothèque in Versailles, France, is the world's largest scent archive.

She encouraged the children to be like magpies and always be on the lookout for 'hidden stories', as they may be found anywhere and everywhere. Anna finished her talk by telling the children that "Imagination is Magic."

It was a truly uplifting and inspiring talk filled with laughter, and we would like to extend our thanks to Lingham Booksellers in Heswall for inviting Anna to the school.



Anthony Walker Foundation Talk

Pupils across Junior Prep embraced an inspirational and thought-provoking session with the Anthony Walker Foundation in May.

An active and collective approach to tackling racism, discrimination and inequality, and the importance of developing a safe and inclusive community, with every child valued, were the core themes discussed.

We look forward to building on the key messages that were shared and supporting each pupil on their educational journey through Birkenhead School.



Bike Right's Bikeability

Some of our Year 5 pupils took part in Bike Right's Bikeability where they completed Level 1 and Level 2 in May.



They learnt how to do safety checks on their bikes and how to ride safely on roads. The children thoroughly enjoyed the sessions.

Developing wider life skills is an important part of a child's education at Birkenhead School and we nurture these skills through programmes such as 'Enrich and Explore' (Years 1 & 2), 'Future Skills' (Years 3 to 6), and 'Beyond Birkenhead' for our Sixth Form students.



Prep - Junior Highlights continued

TEACHREX[®] · NEW AGE EDUCATION ·

Year 5 got to 'hang out' with a very special visitor in January when Teach Rex visited the School and introduced Thomas the gorilla.

The Year 5 pupils were immersed into the story of Thomas's life and treated to a thought-provoking talk on deforestation and how many animal habitats are destroyed as a result. The children discussed the importance of sustainability and how to raise awareness of our human footprint on the world around us. The children worked in small groups to plan and then act out their own movies using iPads and green screen technology and, in the process, learnt how to edit their videos. In class, the pupils researched critically endangered animals and created excellent information posters in groups before learning how to sketch gorillas. We'd like to thank Teach Rex for coming in, Year 5 really appreciated your visit.



Rome in a Day for Year 3

By Mrs Washington, Head of Classics (Seniors)

Back in May, the children in Year 3 were studying the Romans in their History lessons.

To further their knowledge and to give them a practical flavour of what it might have been like to live in Roman times, Head of Classics in Seniors, Mrs Washington, came to visit their classes.

We discussed all we had learned about the Romans and how they lived their lives, including looking inside a Pompeian villa and talking about the Roman language of Latin, and how that has influenced modern vocabulary. The resources came from the Cambridge Latin Course which is used in Seniors from Year 7 onwards.

With the help of student volunteers, teachers then demonstrated how to put on a toga, which is what Roman people would have worn. Often in Roman times, wealthy people would have had servants to dress them, so then the children took turns in being the master and the servant and

dressed up in togas themselves. The session finished with a "surprise dish". The Romans valued a healthy, well balance diet. Nevertheless, their menu would include surprising foods!



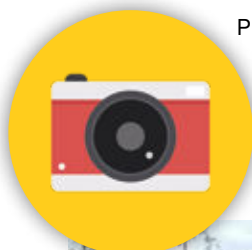
Co-Curricular Clubs

By Mr Corran, Assistant Head (Prep)

The extensive and varied provision of activities outside the normal day continues to flourish throughout The Prep.

From Yoga to Comic Book Making, Photography to Summer Games, an extensive range of clubs on offer ensuring there's sure to be something to engage and entertain all pupils.

Two of the new clubs introduced this year for Junior Prep were Portuguese and Photography Club.



Photography Club gave children the opportunity to learn new skills and find different and innovative ways of using different devices to capture different images. Some of the tasks involved exploring different focal points, colour,



reflection, green screen effects and moving pictures. Parents were also welcomed in for a Photography Club Exhibition where the children's work was displayed and a short video presented showing all of the children's hard work.

Portuguese Club was introduced by Miss Cope who is half Portuguese and has a BA Honours Degree in Hispanic Studies. This club was particularly special to Class 4SC as Lia Vianna, one of 4SC's pupils, is also Portuguese.



Together, Miss Cope and Lia ran the class each week and shared with the group lots of new vocabulary and stories of their own experiences in Portugal, learning all about the differences in culture. One of the class's favourite sessions was making 'Pasteis de Nata', a very traditional Portuguese dessert.

Chess Club

By Graham Carr, Chess Coach

This has been a very good year for the children at Birkenhead. They have enjoyed success individually and for the school and Wirral teams.

The Under 11s finished their Wirral Schools' Championship season strongly defeating the third placed school and narrowly missing out on overtaking them. The Under 9s are currently top of the Wirral Championship with one round left to play.

In April this year there was a chess congress at Merchant Taylors' School in Liverpool to find the best junior players in Merseyside. It was a very enjoyable day — especially so for Ralph and Artur who came home with trophies having finished runners up in the Under 11 and Under 9 sections respectively.

Four pupils have also starred playing for the Wirral County team against the best players in other counties across the country. Ralph represented the Under 11s and Artur, Archie and Toby the Under 9s.

Artur had the prestigious and tremendously difficult job of playing board one against the very top players of the other counties. I feel I should add that all children are welcome at chess club whether they aspire to be winning trophies or just enjoy playing a game socially with their friends after school.

My thanks to Mr Corran for helping start the after school clubs and for his support throughout the year and to the Parents' Association for their kind donation which helped us acquire the necessary equipment.



'Thank you to our Parents Association for their support'

Outdoor Adventures in Prep

Barnstondale

Year 3
Year 3 pupils ventured to Barnstondale just before the half term break for an overnight stay packed full of fun and adventure.

They had a wonderful trip participating in a range of thrilling activities including climbing, abseiling, making shelters and archery. They also learnt how to build shelters and to light fires. A highlight was when they gathered around the campfire to sing songs and toast marshmallows. A wonderful trip with core memories made.

Year 3



Chorley

Year 4

Our Year 4 pupils headed to pastures new in May, Birkenhead School's first residential to The Anderton Centre in Chorley.

Set in beautiful Lancashire countryside and directly adjacent to a working farm, it was the perfect setting for an action packed adventure.

Pupils participated in a range of exciting activities including tree climbing, a low ropes course and crate races (done in silence!). After a refreshing sleep, they were all ready for their rafted canoe activity on day 2. They were thrilled to discover that they had sole use of The Anderton Centre's huge lake, the setting was utterly picturesque.

Children and teachers alike thoroughly enjoyed the experience and once they had all paddled over to the far side of the lake, pupils participated in several games and activities — some brave pupils even chose to jump into the lake at the end!



Patterdale

The children in Year 5 had a wonderful time at Patterdale in the Lent term, showing great resilience against the elements!

They enjoyed walking, den building, fire making, canoeing, archery and low ropes.

It's a wonderful opportunity for the pupils to spend some quality time with their friends and make some core memories which will last a lifetime. We're sure everyone returned full of stories of their adventures!

Year 5



PGL Trip

By Jasmine L, Year 6 pupil

Year 6

On the 16th of April 2024, Year 6 got on a coach to PGL Boretton Park, to take part in a wide selection of activities, including: the terrifying high ropes course and the perilous raft building.

When we arrived, we were greeted by our two group leaders, Mon and Alice. Throughout the week, we took part in many challenges ranging from the giant swing to abseiling. Each day, we woke up at 7:15 and got dressed for an amazing breakfast and then morning activities. After our day's challenges were over, we had free time to go to the shops, explore the woods, hang out in our rooms or just play football. After our free time, there were evening activities, such as: campfire, passport to the world or games on the field. Year 6 greatly enjoyed their trip and are sure to never forget it. A huge thank you to all the teachers and staff who made this trip possible.



Prep Ski Trip

By Mrs Phythian, Year 2 teacher and Miss Rushton, Year 3 teacher

On 30th March 2024, 59 courageous members of Years 5 and 6 headed to the snowy village of Alpe d'Huez in France, accompanied by a team of Prep teachers. We arrived at the resort late afternoon, having wound our way higher and higher up the mountain. The excitement was building as we sorted our rooms, groups, skis and boots ready for action the following morning.

An early wakeup call and a delicious, hearty breakfast was consumed in preparation for our first day on the slopes. The Easter Bunny had even made an appearance, delivering chocolates to each room! En masse, we descended to the bucket lifts that took us up over the town to meet our ski instructors. Within a few minutes, each ski group was ready to start their adventure. Two hours of lessons in the morning led to hungry children, so we would head back to the hotel for lunch. Having refuelled, we would then go up the mountain for another two hours of ski instruction.

The children completed a week of intense ski lessons from beginners to advanced and all achieved their relevant awards. They progressed hugely, having faced individual challenges, from learning how to snow plough and getting on and off a chair lift to skiing down a rather precarious black run. We experienced a mixed bag of weather, from white outs and wind to the perfect bluebird ski day. During the evenings, we took part in exciting après ski activities such as the luge, karaoke, shopping and winter Olympics! The pool table became increasingly popular as the week went on, as well as card games with staff, which led to lots of laughter.

We returned to Prep the following Saturday, slightly tired and emotional but extremely proud and happy at our achievements. A great time was had by all, on and off the slopes, and we couldn't be prouder of how independent, sensible and what great company they were. A credit to school and perfect ambassadors of our Birkenian Values!





Year 6 Cultural Adventure to London

Some of our Year 6 pupils embarked on an exciting and culture-rich trip to London over half-term for an unforgettable adventure.

They kicked off the trip with a magical tour of Harry Potter World, followed by a fun-filled evening of bowling and arcade games before settling into their hotel for the night.

The adventure continued in central London on the Saturday where they enjoyed a scenic boat trip along the Thames to Greenwich to experience the mesmerising matinee performance of *The Lion King*.

On the final day, they set off for home but not before making a final stop for swimming complete with inflatables, slides and a wave pool!

The pupils (and teachers!) had a wonderful time making core memories and taking in all the sights and sounds that London has to offer.



Year 6 Visit to Imperial War Museum

Our Year 6 pupils have been learning about World War I this year so paid a visit to the Imperial War Museum in Manchester in January.



Prep - Junior Highlights continued

Deputy Head Awards

By Mr Halpin, Deputy Head (Prep)

Underpinning our approach to education within Prep lies the importance of academic rigour and challenge within the classroom.

As a selective school which boasts an extensive history of academic success, we must ensure all pupils within Birkenhead School receive the opportunity to extend themselves beyond the expected norms. Small class sizes, married to an engaging and inspiring curriculum, serve to enthuse, and wet the cerebral appetite amongst the Prep pupils.

The Eureka Extension programme, now firmly established within Prep, provides challenge for all pupils, both inside and outside the classroom. Indeed, our fleet of Eureka mentors, spanning the key stages, not only inspires to inspire our sharpest minds the opportunity to flex their scholarly muscles, but also inspires our younger pupils through weekly stretch and challenge sessions. These opportunities, coupled with the steady diet of stimulating lessons, allow our children to expand their knowledge and grasp of the world around them. This year, we have seen the transfer of this bear fruit with many children

making the trip to my office to share insight into the work they have completed and, in turn, receive the Deputy Head Stamp for outstanding work. A highlight of my week, and hopefully something similar for the children, the array of quality pieces has been a joy to see along with the enthusiasm and pride displayed by the pupils as they share their work. Worth noting, it also comes with a four House point bonus which never fails to please!

As we continue to evolve and weave new and engaging ways into our approach to educating the children, academic challenge will always remain a key ingredient as we look to serve our band of erudite thinkers with a curriculum they deserve.



House Championship

By Mr Corran, Assistant Head (Prep)

After its introduction last year, The Junior Prep House Championship has continued to gather momentum in its second year.

Points aplenty were eagerly competed for in a wide range of activities including Football, Cross Country, Rounders, Cricket, Boccia, Chess, Sports Day and many more as well as the culmination of individual house points gained throughout the year. After a closely fought competition, going down to the wire with the final event of the year, the House Quiz competition in the final week of term, the overall winners who enjoyed an afternoon of 'inflatable fun' together with some treats were Bidston.



Form Assemblies



Our Junior Prep pupils did a fantastic job delivering some excellent performances to audiences of friends and family for their annual Form Assemblies.

Each class focused on a topic such as the Olympics and the Tudors, and recited poems and performed songs as well as showcasing their acting abilities through short sketches which were both informative and entertaining.

Well done to all classes involved, you should be very proud of your efforts.

Values Champions

By Mr Halpin, Deputy Head (Prep)

As we navigate our way through an increasingly challenging world, the need for an anchor to hold us firm to a core set of beliefs has never been more felt.

Launched during the last academic year, the Birkonian values of Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Integrity, Humility, Inclusivity, Compassion and Courage have been much talked about. Whilst eight may appear greedy, the idea of releasing one or more back into the values pack seems unimaginable, such is the weight they carry across all areas of School life. Permeating their way through the School community, from Nursery through to our Sixth Form leavers, to teaching and support staff and parents and Old Birkonians, these values aim to shape, mould and guide us, providing not only stability, comfort and consistency but also arming us all with an equivocally clear blueprint of how to be.

Through themed assemblies, Chapel services and dedicated form time, values have been very much on our minds in Prep. Whilst some of the language and phrasing around values may have been beyond many of our younger pupils, the behaviours that match them have never been far away. For pupils in Junior Prep, their prominence has been very much enhanced this year with the introduction of Values Champions. Awarded in each of the three terms, one pupil in each class is selected as the form's Values Champion. Much coveted and eagerly anticipated, this award seeks to recognise the child who has epitomised all Birkonian values during that period. As you would hope, these decisions are agonised over by form teachers as is the abundance of choice on offer. The twelve successful pupils per term are dutifully rewarded with a special 'treat' lunch in the Headmaster's Dining Room at the end of term.

Whilst treats and awards motivate some, a Birkonian is content, without self-righteousness, and safe in the knowledge that they are heading in the right direction with a set of values and tools that will stand the test of time.



A Busy Year for Prep Science

By Mrs Clarke, Year 3 Teacher & Science Co-Ordinator

This has been a busy year for Prep Science. The children have been involved in a broad range of activities during the school day and at Science Clubs for both Infants and Juniors. The Science Clubs, run by Mrs Ford and Mrs Clarke, saw 20 children complete their Crest Awards at Star Level.

We believe that good-quality practical work can engage students, help them develop important skills, enhance their understanding of the process of scientific

investigation, and deepen their grasp of concepts. Each half-term topic is reinforced in a fun way through practical lessons.

We celebrated British Science Week with a variety of practical activities. Some of the favourite experiments included floating tea bags, making ice cream, and constructing spaghetti and marshmallow structures. We also marked World Oceans Day by reflecting on the importance of our oceans and considering ways to protect them. The Science room is always busy. On Open Day, it was packed with visitors eager to see the activities we offer. We are fortunate to have this dedicated space.



Prep Sports

By Mr Corran, Assistant Head (Prep)

Another action-packed year saw all pupils from Years 3 to 6 given opportunities to compete in a variety of sports throughout the year.

Participation, progression, and enjoyment were the key elements, but a strong competitive desire and will to win were always present.

The year could best be described as a 'so near yet so far' season as defeats were experienced in no fewer than four semi-finals. These included the Year 6 Houlihan Cup Football, the Year 3/4 Corgi Cup Football, the Year 6 Girls' AJIS Football, and the Year 6 AJIS Cricket. Nevertheless, successes and highlights were achieved and included the following:

At the AJIS Cross Country Championship at Rossall School, postponed from October to May, Birkenhead School had two outstanding performances. Gabi won the Year 5 Girls' race, and Ben won the Year 6 Boys' race, both races with over 100 of the best runners from North West Independent Schools.

Athletics has played a key role in Prep Sport this year, from indoor athletics in the winter to outdoor athletics and Sports Day in the summer. In turn, this has brought a good degree of success in the various meetings that Birkenhead School participated in.

At the AJIS Indoor Athletic Championships in late January, held at Robin Park, Wigan, the school returned home with three gold medals, a silver medal, and two bronze medals,

an excellent achievement considering the quality of the opposition. The highlight was probably gold for Oliver in the Year 6 One-Lap Sprint, although William first place in the Year 5 Chest Push and Lachlan first place in the Year 5 Javelin are worthy of mention. Following on from this event, Birkenhead took a team of Year 6 pupils to compete in the Wirral Schools Indoor Athletic meeting at Clare Mount Sports College.

After a successful evening, the school discovered that they had come first overall and were to represent the Wirral at the Merseyside Games at Greenbank Sports Academy in April. This was a far tougher event with 16 of the best schools from the area fiercely competing and, after an afternoon full of effort and application, Birkenhead came 5th overall.

In the final term of the year, attention turned to outdoor athletics and preparation for Sports Day. In addition, the school attended the AJIS Outdoor Athletics Championship at Victoria Park in Warrington. There was no overall team event, just individual events, and Birkenhead returned with five medals.

The Year 6 Boys 4 x 100m relay team won bronze, Mollie won bronze in the Year 5 Girls' Long Jump, Ben won silver in the Year 6 Boys 600m (lost out on gold by 0.2 seconds!), and two outstanding gold medals were won by Gabi in the Year 5 Girls Rounders Ball throw and by Barnaby in the 'blue riband' Year 6 Boys' 80m.



Y6 Rugby Winning Plate



Y5 & 6 AJIS Cross Country



Girls Football



Y5 & 6 AJIS Cross Country



Y5 & 6 AJIS Cross Country

Prep Sports Captains

Thank you to our 2023/24 Prep Sports Captains



LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS

Positions of
Responsibility
Pathway

Girls' Sport

By Mrs Sewell

Our Year 5 and Year 6 girls have been tearing up the courts and fields this season, showcasing fantastic teamwork and impressive skills!

The Year 5 girls have been a dominant force in both netball and rounders. They've enjoyed a strong run of home and away fixtures, consistently demonstrating exceptional talent and coordination. Their dedication to training and their positive team spirit have certainly paid off!

The Year 6 squad also deserves a huge round of applause! They recently competed in the prestigious AJIS Tournament, battling it out against tough competition. Their hard work and determination landed them a well-deserved 5th place finish – a fantastic achievement!

Most importantly, all girls in Prep have had the valuable opportunity to participate in competitive games, both at home and away, in a range of sports including lacrosse, netball, rounders, athletics, cross country, gymnastics, football, and cricket. This inclusive approach allows everyone to develop their skills, build confidence, and experience the thrill of team sports. We're incredibly proud of all the girls who've been involved this season. Keep up the excellent work, young athletes!



Prep Sports continued

It's not every day you get coaching from an England professional...

The Year 6 girls had a very special visitor in February when Manchester Thunders and England Netball player, Ella Bowen, visited the School to deliver a netball masterclass.

Ella put the girls through their paces teaching them skills to improve their techniques passing, receiving, dodging and shooting for their upcoming tournaments. What an opportunity for our girls!

We'd like to thank Ella for coming and delivering such a wonderful masterclass.



Prep Football Tour

The Year 6 Football squad enjoyed a successful trip to London back in February.

In addition to matches against Davennies School, Beaconsfield and Berkhamsted School, activities included a trip to Craven Cottage to watch Fulham against Brighton, and a stadium tour around Tottenham Hotspur.



FESTIVAL OF ARTS

MICHAELMAS TERM

Our Festival of Arts was a wonderful celebration of the Arts, running over several weeks in the Michaelmas Term.

Emelbi Art Workshop

Our Year 9 students enjoyed workshops with the talented artist, designer, and illustrator, Mike Barrett, also known as Emelbi. It was a day filled with creativity, where our students delved into the world of drawing and learned a range of techniques to craft unique character portraits. As part of our Festival of Arts, this experience was not only incredibly enjoyable but also highly productive. Thank you to Mike for generously sharing his skills and knowledge with our students and helping them on their artistic journey.



Lisa Milroy

Lisa Milroy from the Royal Academy of Arts led Year 11 & Upper Sixth students in an inspiring 'Everyday Objects' drawing workshop. Working with compressed charcoal, they produced masses of work based on personal objects. It was an honour and a privilege for students and staff alike to have Lisa visit and share her wisdom and experience as an art practitioner and educator.



'HEATHERS' THE MUSICAL

Heathers Musical Workshop

Students got to enjoy a workshop with West End Actress Teleri Hughes who was part of West End cast of Heathers playing the role of Heather McNamara.

The workshop consisted of learning two routines from the show and a Q&A. Students made an amazing effort to pick up both routines in such a short amount of time and were given a real insight to working in the industry.



Good Vs Evil Concert

The Festival of Arts saw a concert like no other with unforgettable performances from our students at our Good vs Evil concert as part of our Festival of Arts celebrations.

Audiences were taken on an unforgettable journey through captivating tales of good and evil told through music. In the concert of contrasts and connections, students sang their hearts out and performed all the musical favourites from the well-known heroes and villains of musical theatre.

Highlights included musical numbers from *Les Miserables*, *Sweeney Todd* and *West Side Story*, to name a few!



Celyn Jones Workshop

BAFTA award-winning actor and screenwriter, Celyn Jones visited the School to deliver a talk to our Sixth Form students as part of the weekly Sixth Form Nicholls Lecture Series.

Celyn was funny, engaging and gave a real insight into his career – students were even lucky enough to see an exclusive clip of his new film, *The Almond and the Seahorse*, which was not yet released in the UK.





Chamber Music Concert & Art Exhibition

We welcomed friends and family to Bushell Hall for an evening of creative flair which included music from some of our most talented musicians, and impressive artwork from last year's GCSE and A Level students.

Everyone was blown away by the talent showcased throughout the evening from the wonderful performances to the intriguing artwork on display. A highlight included a performance from Year 6 student, Ralph, on the School's new organ which, as Mr Robinson remarked, was wonderful to see such interest in an instrument not so commonly played by someone so young.

Jazz Night

Our finest student vocalists and instrumentalists jazzed up for a night of scintillating performances in the atmospheric setting of Bushell Hall for Jazz Night.

The talented students had audiences swooning over their performances of cool jazz classics with the amazing local band, Out of the Blue. We were also treated to a set from our very own Prep teacher, Mr Ryan. It was a fantastic event bursting with talent and flair and we hope all who attended enjoyed the evening.



The Jungle Book

By Mrs Delaney, Director

This year, Mrs Keating and I decided to 'get with the beat' and head to the jungle!

A firm favourite with many, the classic tale of Mowgli the Man Cub soon captured our hearts with its heart-warming story and catchy, toe-tapping songs. Mowgli's adventures begin as he grows up with the wolves, but he is always kept a close eye on by the firm but kind Bagheera. Wanting to know what else is out there, he meets his dear friend and fun-loving 'Jungle Bum' Baloo the bear. A lucky escape from King Louie, Prince Stuie, and his monkeys leads him to find some mischievous but friendly vultures. Danger is never far away with Kaa the snake (and her Koils!) and the terrifying Shere Khan, ready to capture Mowgli. However, in the end, Bagheera gets his wish and leads Mowgli back to the Man Village, much to Baloo's heartbreak and disappointment. There, Mowgli meets Shanti and decides that his place is with her.

As enthusiastic as ever, our Year 6 children gave their all in auditions, and once the show was cast, we hit the ground running. The pupils delighted us with their creativity and talent.

On the 26th and 27th of June, the Prep Hall stage was completely transformed. With Jake Gourley's awesome backdrop, the atmospheric sound and lighting effects, Mrs Lynch's stunning costumes, and Mrs Keating's incredible band, it truly felt like we were all in the jungle—particularly with the heat of opening night! The amazing scenery and props created by Mr Brand added an incredibly effective dimension to the show. A special mention must go to his transformation of the scaffolding tower into an amazing 'tree' from which many characters could hide, slide, and hang! The children did not let the temperature of the 'jungle' affect their performances in the least, and every single child raised their game with their acting, singing, and dancing. They all made Mrs Keating and I extremely proud.

Huge congratulations to the Year 6 cast of 2024. We wish you all the very best with the next chapter of your lives and ... never forget the importance of the 'Bare Necessities' of life, and ... when you're alone and feeling down, 'That's What Friends Are For'. May the memories of your time rehearsing for this show, your wonderful performances of 'The Jungle Book', and the friendships you have made in Prep live long in your hearts and your memories.





By Mrs Pankhurst, Director and Deputy Head
(Co-Curricular)

Never work with children and animals, the saying goes. We must have had a lapse in our judgment to opt to work with both this year on Lionel Bart's timeless classic, *Oliver*. And not just any children — those with the personality to be cheeky, loud, pick-pocketing urchins, requiring a certain degree of 'free-spiritedness' that made rehearsals an energetic (exhausting) experience on occasion.

Over seven months of rehearsals, including holidays and weekends, more than sixty students plied their trade to perfect their singing, acting, and dancing. This culminated in a two-week performance run over nine performances. Tickets for all shows were sold out, including a matinée performance for the younger audience members, a 'pub lunch' performance, and a Prep Performance where we entertained some local primary schools.

As has become tradition, the lead cast attended a West End *Oliver* Workshop, which cemented not only their skills but also their team spirit and reinforced the family feel of our productions, which grow into life-long friendships.

As always, the talent on stage was breathtaking: special mention to Charlie, as Fagin, who leaves us to attend The Hammond School to follow his dream of performing on the West End. Joining him on this journey are talented actors Thomas and Sadie, who have entertained audiences over the years, and we know they will find their success. Although we are sad to see them go, we are proud that the grounding our performers are given here at school can prepare them for the success of auditions and allow them to follow their dreams. It is also important to recognise our Sixth Form students, who are the spirit of the musical,



giving up their time to perform, but also mentoring the younger students. This year our Sixth Form cast consisted of: Ben, Sadie, Zoe, Gemma, Jack, Aly, Frankie, and Tilda. Amelia, Dan, and James worked as crew along with Sophia, Emily, Bonnie, and Tabitha in the orchestra.

It is clear that the future is certainly in very safe hands here; delighting the audiences with polished and professional performances from the younger age groups were Jemima as Nancy, Michael as Sikes, Harrison and Joshua playing Dodger, Lloyd and Tim playing Oliver, and Reece, Will, Helen, Greta, Harry, and James taking on the lead roles.

Special mention must be given to our drama captains, Sadie and Ben, who led the cast through lunch



rehearsals and gave outstanding performances as Mr. Bumble and Widow Corney. Sadie also took on the role of choreographer, and Ben is our supremo in the technical arena, ensuring that the sound and lighting were flawless.

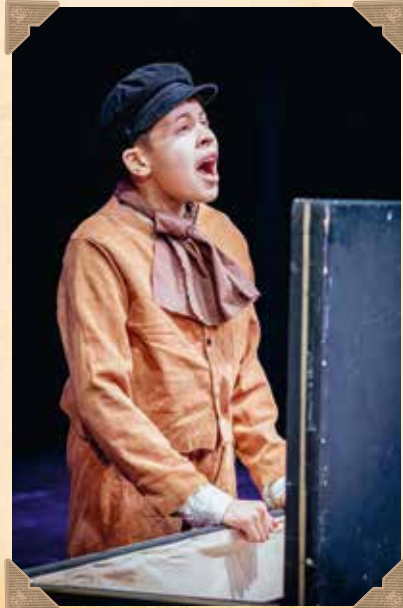
A full-scale production of this type is not possible without talented and committed colleagues. Working on our team were Mr Robinson as Director of Music and Mrs Groves on tech. Mrs Eassie made all the costumes, and Mrs Alcock managed marketing. Ms Keegan provided production support, and Mr S Robinson offered technical support. Also providing invaluable support were Ms Smeaton, Mr Stockdale, Mr Christos, and Mrs Margerison. Over the years, this wonderful group of people has spent many hours, always unpaid and usually unthanked, to provide

remarkable opportunities for hundreds of young people.

We would also like to thank our donors for their generous contributions to Oliver, without whom we would not be able to produce such a professional production. It is always a pleasure and a privilege supporting the students and colleagues in the Performing Arts, and I encourage everyone to get involved next year.

Grateful thanks to our donors:

Riverside Vets, Lion+Mason, The Content Co, Keeko, St James's Place, Forde Baker, Connective3, 7 Harrington Street Chambers, West House Orthodontics



SCUTTLEERS

By Mrs Groves, Teacher of Drama

It was so exciting to be able to provide an opportunity for the students at Birkenhead School to take part in a play this year. Although a number of our students had taken part in productions before, they soon learnt that doing a straight play comes with its challenges.

Scuttleers was a play that was unfamiliar to audiences and to our students, therefore they had nothing to base it on. Everything that the audiences saw within the performances was 100% original. Students developed as actors by creating their own characters, backstories, physical theatre and their own fight choreography. The

play was a huge success, with audiences commenting on the sheer skill that the students at Birkenhead School possess.

"A production with performances way beyond their years and experience. Astonishing."

"The students performed to the standard you would see at a London Drama School. Incredible!"

As always, the friendships that were made and the bonds that were created is something that the cast and crew will carry with them forever. I am so proud of the commitment and dedication that was given to this production, the students and I cannot wait to do it all again next year!





By James Huxley - 'Jimmy' and Lower Sixth student

'Scuttlers' was such an incredible experience that I was so lucky to be a part of.

From the first read-throughs to the final performance, it was non-stop fun. The gritty script and intense drama were so different from what I had done in the past and a great opportunity to improve as an actor.

The play was the first play the school has done in nearly 10 years so there was a lot of excitement and nerves going into the performances. However, with the talented cast and fabulous guidance of Mrs Groves, it was a huge success!

Some of my most memorable moments in the play were being able to bond with the cast and my close friends, which soon became family. From choreographing our own fight scenes to creating a 'Scuttlers 2' plot, I had countless laughs. I was fortunate enough to play Jimmy in the play, and it was an amazing moment for me to be able to play the bad guy (and also swing a hammer

around). As such an aggressive character, it is very hard to keep a straight face on stage, so I thank the cast and my friends greatly for helping me overcome this challenge. I literally couldn't do it without you.

It was so much fun and an absolute honour to act with the incredible cast we had, some of which had never performed before, and to be directed by such an amazing teacher. Everyone put so much into the play, from the impressive costumes to the stunning set, I can't thank you all enough!

I had so many laughs, smiles and joys that I will take away from this. 'Scuttlers' will be something I will hold onto for the rest of my life, I just wish I could do it all over again! It's such a great opportunity and I would definitely recommend getting involved with the play to anyone who wanted to get started in acting. You would be very welcome.

Thank you to everyone again and I can't wait for the next one!

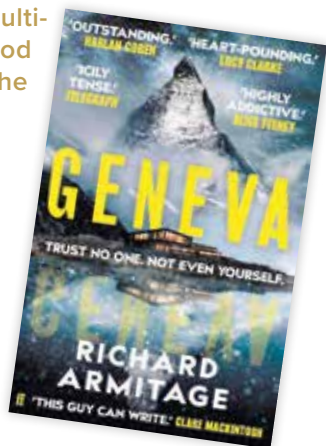
Inspiring Talks Series

Our Inspiring Talks Series sees leading professionals within their respective fields visit the School to talk to students and the wider community.



In October, we welcomed multi-award winning and Hollywood actor, Richard Armitage to the School to discuss his debut novel, *Geneva*, as part of our Inspiring Talks Series in association with Lingham's Booksellers in Heswall.

Richard spoke passionately about his career and the audience were thrilled when he read excerpts from his gripping new book.



We were delighted to welcome journalist, TV presenter, campaigner and author, Liz Earle, to Birkenhead School in May in conjunction with Lingham's Booksellers.

Liz was promoting her new book 'A Better Second Half' and engaged in a captivating interview conducted by Lisa Marrey from BBC Radio Merseyside. Speaking to an audience of 250 guests, Liz generously shared her wealth of experience and knowledge to give the audience tips and guidance on how to future-proof their health in midlife and beyond.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening, with the audience using the opportunity to ask for Liz's advice on a wide range of topics. The evening concluded with audience members having the opportunity to meet Liz personally and have their books signed and dedicated.

Audiences were treated to a night to remember when we welcomed BBC Presenter, Julia Bradbury, to the School to discuss her new book, *Walk Yourself Happy*, as part of our Inspiring Talks Series in association with Lingham's Booksellers.

Interviewed by her friend of 27 years and fellow BBC Presenter and Journalist, Louise Minchin, Julia spoke candidly about her passion for walking and the outdoors following her cancer diagnosis back in 2021.



NO LIMITS

We had the pleasure of welcoming Louise Minchin to Birkenhead School in June. Louise is not only a renowned broadcaster, journalist, and TV presenter but also an author and endurance athlete — a truly fearless woman!

Our girls in Years 7 to 9 were treated to an interactive and inspiring talk filled with empowering messages. Louise shared her journey in the world of journalism, detailing the wide range of roles available in the field. She emphasised the importance of following one's passion and provided valuable insights into pursuing a career in journalism.

A poignant moment of the talk was when Louise spoke about how she had given up swimming in her teenage years because of body image issues, a decision she now regrets.

She urged the students not to give up something they love, highlighting the importance of perseverance and dedication.

Louise also spoke about the fearless women she had met and the intrepid adventures she had undertaken with them. The experiences of these women inspired her to write her book "*Fearless*," as she felt that women were under represented in sports, both as authors and athletes. Her stories were not only inspiring but also a call to action for young girls to pursue their dreams fearlessly.

At the end of the talk, students had the opportunity to pose their questions to Louise and speak to her one-on-one while having their copies of '*Fearless*' signed. Louise generously gave out advice and shared hints and tips on how to take the next steps in their own '*Fearless*' journeys.

This talk forms part of our 'No Limits Series' for students in Seniors. Past guests have included yachtswoman Nikki Henderson and commonwealth boxer Stacey Copeland. Louise's visit continues this tradition of bringing remarkable and inspiring figures to share their experiences and wisdom with our students in the School's overall 'Inspiring Talks Series'.





Christmas Highlights

at Birkenhead School

Christmas Concert

Our Christmas Concert saw a celebration of music round off the Michaelmas term with performances from: Prep Orchestra; Senior Choir; Year 6 Choir; Clarinet Ensemble; Senior Orchestra; Saxophone Quartet; Chapel Choir; Brass Ensemble; Saxophone Ensemble; 'Bonnie & the Gentlemen'; and Big Band!

A joyous evening where pupils from Year 3 to Sixth Form, and staff, took to the stage in front of a full audience in Bushell Hall.



Chapel Services

Our younger Junior pupils held their Christmas Chapel Services for families and friends in Chapel.

They were joyous occasions where families heard traditional and contemporary carols in the beautiful setting and each class performed a poem.





Nine Lessons & Carols

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is one of several highlights in the School's calendar at Christmas.

On Sunday 10th December, the Chapel Choir sang two full services of Nine Lessons and Carols in the School Chapel. This was a wondrous occasion where we welcomed back

Old Birkonians, young and old, both to sing with the choir and be members of the congregation.

At 11pm on Christmas Eve, Chapel was once again full as we celebrated our Christmas Eucharist. Led by former School Chaplain, Revd Canon Ian Davenport, the numbers in the choir were swelled by a record fourteen Old Birkonians who came back to sing.



Little School Christmas

Children from Reception to Year 2 performed 'The Little Fir Tree'.



Christmas Jumper Day



PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

By Lynn Pownall, Chair

The Parents' Association would like to express their gratitude to all our parents, families, friends, staff and all who have supported our fundraising efforts this year. Clearly, we would not be able to provide our pupils with all the fun extras without this support, so thank you very much.

This year we have had quite a few 'wish list' items to consider and we are very pleased to have been able to provide the following:

- 15 Gambit Chess Sets and digital timers for Junior Prep Chess Club
- Sixth Form Ball Contribution
- Two Wooden Arches for Pre-Prep to create a calming safe space to help with emotional well being.
- Substantial support for Infants Playground Furniture to allow pupils to read, relax and feel calm/safe. Also, Playground Equipment for children who choose to play and develop their physical, social and emotional skills.
- Technical equipment (microphones etc) for use across the whole school site for various productions, concerts etc.
- Studio enclosure in the Chapel.
- 32 personalised hoodies for the Lacrosse teams representing School at the Lacrosse National in March 2024.
- A training programme for a group of students from Years 6 to 9 to form a KS3 Debating Team to compete at debating events.
- Sri Lanka Cricket Tour Support
- Funding for the Texas Science Trip participants to have extra time to talk to an Astronaut and purchase suitable glasses to view the solar eclipse.
- Funding for Year 4 Board Games and Construction Club to purchase new equipment for the club.
- Ice creams for every pupil taking part in all Sports Days
- Ice creams for Year 6, Post Production
- Fireworks Display
- Christmas Bazaar.

What a variety! We trust that all our pupils have been able to take advantage of at least one of the above. We can say that our pupils and school staff are always very grateful for any funding they receive. Again, it goes without saying, none of this would be possible without the support we receive with fundraising, thank you so much for that. The fundraising events we hold each year usually start with our 'pre loved' uniform sale, a number of these sales are held throughout the year to help with the cost of uniform and/or to supply spares in the (highly likely) event that a piece of uniform is lost! These are organised and run by Sabina and Cheryl whom I would like to thank very much for all the time and effort this entails.



We held our annual Firework Display at Mac Field, it was very well attended this year. I think everyone would agree that the display was fabulous, the display was fabulous, it was organised by School's grounds staff, who, I must say, are absolutely fantastic. We would not be able to host any of our events without their help and as such I would like to extend our very grateful thanks to Carl Williams and his amazing team.



We then moved on to our largest event of the year, our Christmas Bazaar, as usual this was a great source of fundraising for us, it was very well attended and all the children were clearly enjoying themselves, there was quite a queue to see Santa in his Grotto this year. Of course, we are very grateful to our parents who provided the very generous prizes for our Raffle which, again, was a great success. Thank you to everyone who took part in any way either by donating your time by helping on the many stalls, in Café Noël, with the Grotto and in the Sports Hall or by attending and supporting our efforts. In addition we need to extend a huge thank you to all members of school staff who are always very supportive of this event.

We organised for our Prep pupils to design a Christmas design which was then transferred into Christmas Cards, tea-towels and other types of Christmas gifts. We would like to thank our Prep parents in supporting us by purchasing some of these. This year it was made much easier as Class Fundraising changed to an online ordering option. Going forward, hopefully this will make it easier for both ourselves and parents alike.

Also in Prep, at the pupils' request, we held a few Bingo sessions, these are great fun for the children.



Something new this year is our 300 Club. This is our own mini lottery where you purchase a number for £2 per month (annually £24). We then hold a monthly draw where you can win prizes. 1st Prize £100, 2nd Prize £50 and 3rd Prize £25. Since we started we have had at least one winner every month. This has started off slowly but is growing. We still have plenty of numbers available, numbers can be purchased at anytime throughout the year, simply go to our web site <https://www.pta-events.co.uk/birkenhead>, it would be nice to have a draw with all 3 prizes being won. The 300 Club is run by Jayde Morley and I would like to thank her for all her hard work in setting it up and running it monthly.

I would personally like to thank all the members of staff who help out every year, quietly, behind the scenes where no one ever sees, all the staff members in Prep who make sure to make a slot for the pupils to complete the Christmas Design in time. The members of the Tech team who set up computers, TVs and sound equipment before the events begin, all the admin staff, including The Lodge and Prep Office who collect and store donations, communications staff who assist us throughout the whole year and both our headmasters who do their utmost to accommodate our requests, we could do none of this without you. It really is a whole school community. Thank you.

Last year we hinted at trying to organise some parent social events and we asked for any preferences. We organised a 'Fish, Fizz and Quiz' night where we planned to book Fitzy's Fish and Chip Van, have a glass of fizz and enjoy a professional quiz night. However, we had to stand down due to lack of ticket sales. We really would like to try to organise something in future, please come forward and let us know what you would prefer and we shall do our best to provide. A Summer Ball maybe? Please let us know.

As pupils leave or move on we inevitably lose members of the PA, this year Georgina Dewar will be moving on. You will have seen Georgie running Café Noël at the Bazaar, she had volunteered countless hours to the PA over the years and we will miss her very much. Thank you Georgie and best of luck going forward.

Finally, thank you so much to all the members of the committee who have worked so hard this year to put on these events to help our fundraising efforts, all we do as a team and I am very grateful for all your hard work and for the laughs!

We are always looking for new members for the committee, if you would like to join please come to the AGM in September, there is no obligation to take on any particular role, you could just come to find out what it's all about and what we do. Any offer of help is greatly appreciated, no matter how large or small, plus it's fun.

We wish you all a very happy summer break and look forward to a busy fundraising year when we get back.



Community & Charity

100 Years of Scouting in School

By Yvonne Hazlehurst (Deputy Lead Volunteer)

We made it! 20th Birkenhead (School) Scouts officially achieved our Centenary on 18th June 2024. After Baden-Powell launched Scouting at a meeting in the YMCA in January 1908, the Birkenhead pupils who attended came to the conclusion that it was a good idea, but it would not catch on.

We are happy to say that they were wrong. The Group was eventually formed, and went from strength to strength. Cub aged pupils in the Prep all followed a Cub programme every Wednesday afternoon whilst Mrs P Coggan was Head of Prep. Coming from a Girl Guiding background when I was interviewed by the then Group Scout Leader Freddie Wakelin to become a Cub Leader in 1988 I did not think I would still have the same enthusiasm for Scouting now, so many years later. Kelvin Britton our current Lead Volunteer (Group Scout Leader) arrived a couple of years earlier in 1986, already with Leader experience in Oxford, Bristol, Monmouth, Essex and his home City of Cardiff. Beavers joined our Group in 1990 and our latest addition has been Squirrels, for 4 to 6 year-olds, led by Mr J Davis and Miss S Lavelle. We are very pleased that we were the first Squirrel Drey in Birkenhead.

In a typical year our Scout Troop takes part in at least four competitions. The Beavan Challenge involves hiking an unfamiliar route, canoeing or kayaking, air-rifle shooting, archery and the Muddy Funster assault course. The Great Escape has 15 short bases involving problem solving and teamwork over a whole weekend. Challenge Camp is an opportunity to cook on an open fire, build a pioneering structure and hike the whole length of the Wirral Way. The Shelterbox Challenge which includes Cubs is a Treasure Hunt around the streets of Liverpool while supporting and promoting this charity.



Over the years we have enjoyed many other camps and adventures including District, County and National events. These have included trips to two Royal Tournaments in London, Wingding Camps for Cubs and Beavers, Welsh Jamborees and International camps in France and Poland. Many of our Scouts have represented Birkenhead at World Jamborees. We have been involved in Gang Shows locally, as well as performing in London and the Isle of Man. None of these things would be possible without the many Leaders and volunteer parents we have had help from over the years. We would like to thank everyone who has ever been involved. A big thank you must also go to all the parents who allowed us into their homes via Zoom during the Covid lockdowns. We sent the young people on treasure hunts around their homes and commandeered their kitchens in order to make microwaveable cakes in mugs.

So to the future; we need to secure more Leaders. If you have ever been or never been in Scouting or Guiding but would like to know more about what we do, email Kelvin on kelvin57britton@gmail.com. Our other major project is a new building. Our Scout Hut at McAllester Field has come to the end of its life. We have ambitious plans to build a new home for Scouting in School, and our plans are available for anyone to see. If anyone can offer any assistance with this project we would be delighted to have you on board. Here's to the next 100 years!



Science Nights went off with a BANG!

Back in November, we were delighted to welcome over 160 local Cubs and Brownies to take part in a range of experiments at our Big Bang Science Event from making universal indicator pictures to firing the pneumatic target and catching the nozzle at the other end of the room! Bushell Hall was filled with the sounds of amazed gasps and shrieks of delight as the children discovered how cool Science can be! The evening concluded with a 'Flash Bang lecture' with Mrs Tharme, Teacher of Chemistry, captivating the room with some incredible demonstrations. Thank you to The Royal Society of Chemistry for supporting the event and a huge thank you to our Science Leaders who made the

fabulous evening a success and ran the experiments for the groups - they truly were fantastic role models. We'd also like to thank our wonderful Lab Technicians whose work behind the scenes didn't go unnoticed. We hope all the budding young scientists had a brilliant time!



Change A Child's Life

By Mr FitzHerbert, Head of Prep

It has been an absolute privilege to note the support from the Prep community for our fundraising over the last year for Change a Child's Life.

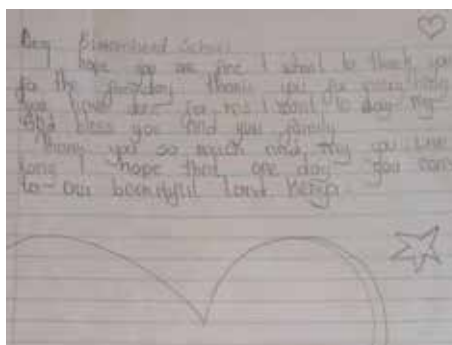
The generosity of parents and grandparents donating to retiring collections at concerts and carol services, and the children's enthusiasm for running bake sales, book sales and stationery sales have all combined to raise a total of £4,255. This fundraising makes a huge difference and means we can continue to fund Natalia Muthoni's education at Maria Immaculata School in Nairobi (where she boards during term time), whilst also providing funds to support her when she returns to her family in the school holidays.

Our funds also ensured that Natalia was able to participate in a wonderful school trip to Idyllis in Nairobi, a fun park with rides, a bouncy castle, a swimming pool and slides. Her animated face whilst on the mini-train ride shows just how much she enjoyed herself and it is heartening to know that something so simple as a day out can make such a difference. The funds raised also allow us to support key projects at Maria Immaculata School. The new Science Lab built at the school with previously raised funds, now needs

resources to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum, and we have agreed to provide the funding for these.

It has been a hugely challenging time in Nairobi this year and the torrential rains at Easter caused the worst flooding the region had seen in living memory. Natalia's home, a rooftop hut in the slums of North Nairobi, succumbed to the downpours and the family lost all their food and most of their possessions. Change a Child's Life stepped in to provide a new roof for their hut, new mattresses, food aid and medication for Natalia's mother who had contracted pneumonia. This aid was literally life-saving. The Kenyan Government had declared a national emergency and had taken the decision to close all schools, so pupils were not able to return to school after the Easter holidays for another two weeks. Many schools took far longer to re-open due to flood damage, but Maria Immaculata School re-opened as soon as the Government permitted and, thankfully, Natalia was able to return to school where she has continued to thrive in her education. It is Natalia's ambition to become a teacher when she grows up. Her work ethic and her enthusiasm for learning are clearly evident and I have no doubt that, with ongoing support from Change a Child's Life, she will get there.

A big thank you for everyone's support for this important cause and here's to another fun year of fundraising in Prep!



Community & Charity continued



CHESTER
CATHEDRAL

Chester Christmas Tree Festival

We were delighted to support the Chester Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival.

This year, our tree was creatively adorned with decorations that echo the theme of 'Sustainability.' A heartfelt thanks to Mrs FitzHerbert and the Year 4 pupils who poured their creativity into crafting ornaments that conveyed the important message of 'Renew / Recycle / Reuse.'



Children In Need

You may have SPOTTED a furry ear or two in our Pre-Prep and Prep in November as the children sported their spotty attire all in aid of Children in Need.

The children have had a wonderful time donning their spotty clothes and raising vital funds for such an important cause.



Charles Thompson's Mission

Thank you to everyone who made a donation to our annual Charles Thompson's Mission drive back in December.

The students from Reception to Year 6 generously donated Christmas gifts for adults and toys for children to enjoy over the festive period. The donations are always so gratefully received by Charles Thompson's Mission who are a Birkenhead based charity looking to help men, women and children who are homeless. Thank you to everyone who donated and coordinated the collection.



Children in Little School Spread Easter Joy

Residents at a local nursing home were delighted to receive hand-made Easter cards from Year 2 pupils just before the term ended.

The vibrant and thoughtfully crafted cards were used to decorate the home, bringing smiles to the residents' faces.

The children put in tremendous effort to make each card extra special. This heartwarming gesture not only brightened the nursing home but showed the young pupils the importance of community and compassion.



Community Club

By Miss Rerri-Bekibale

The academic year 2023 to 2024 has been a monumental success for the Community Club. Our achievements have not only brought the School community closer but have also positively impacted our local environment and supported charitable causes. Here's a recap of our accomplishments:

School Assembly Presentation: We presented our first whole School assembly, marking a significant milestone in our journey.

Biology Garden Improvement: We successfully revamped the Biology garden and are now proudly growing peas in the newly donated raised beds.

Fundraising for The HIVE:

- **Autumn Fundraiser Non-Uniform Day:** We raised an impressive £473.93.
- **Christmas Hampers:** We organised a competition to collect and deliver Christmas hampers in December, ensuring a joyful holiday for the recipients. Special thanks to Mr. Williams for driving the school minibus to deliver the donations.

Collaboration with Hubbub:

- **Christmas Jumper Swap:** We organised a swap week, donating numerous Christmas jumpers to children in the local community, thus reducing clothing waste.
- **Refill Stations:** We set up two refill stations during the Prep and Senior sports days, providing soaps, biodegradable poo bags, lotions, and hand wash. These initiatives raised awareness about climate change and zero plastic waste.

Future Plans:

- **Healthy Week Challenge:** As the academic year ends, we are excited to run a Healthy Week challenge.
- **Eco-School Application:** We are in the process of renewing our Eco-school status to maintain our commitment to environmental sustainability.
- **Funding for the School pond**

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the staff, students, and the site team for their unwavering support. Our special appreciation goes to Mr. Williams for his invaluable assistance with the HIVE donations. We look forward to continuing our work with the community and making a positive impact in the coming years.



Hive Easter Eggs

Well done to Year 5 who collected lots of chocolate Easter eggs to donate to The Hive, Wirral Youth Zone.

They were delivered to The Hive just before the Easter holidays.

Community & Charity continued

Remembrance Day 2023

Our School community gathered on the School in November for our annual Remembrance Service led by Mr Vicars and our Heads of School.

The service was both poignant and moving as the Exhortation was recited and The Last Post sounded.

We were also pleased to welcome some of our Old Birkenians who came to pay their respects.



Koala Appeal

Thank you to all of our Nursery and Pre Prep families who kindly donated to our annual collection for families supported by Koala North West.

Kody the Koala visited our Nursery in December where he met some of the children to thank them for their donations.

Our Early Years team have supported Koala North West for a number of years and are always so grateful for the donations received. Thank you to everyone involved in collecting and organising this wonderful initiative.



Chapel



Meet our School Chaplain, Bethany Hobbs

We are delighted to welcome our new Chaplain, Bethany Hobbs, to our School community.

Beth will oversee the spiritual provision for children and students throughout the School, irrespective of faith, as well as play a key role in School life such as lead our Chapel services throughout the week, provide a Christian presence within the School and lead and preach at our weekly Sunday Evensong Service.

Beth is very excited to start her new role at Birkenhead School and strongly believes in the significance of a faith-based education which she attributes to her own upbringing. Beth is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for everyone at Birkenhead School and wants the Chapel to be somewhere everyone comes together and feels welcome. She has a deep commitment to the spiritual and emotional well-being of our community.

Beth is passionate about creating a nurturing environment where every member of our School community can thrive. She believes in the importance of a holistic education, which encompasses not just academic excellence, but also spiritual growth and emotional well-being.

"I am honoured to be a part of the Birkenhead School family," says Beth. "I look forward to walking alongside our students, staff, and families, offering support and encouragement as we journey together in faith and learning."

Beth is available to meet with students, staff, and parents whether they need someone to talk to, spiritual guidance, or support Tuesday to Thursday, 8:30 AM – 2.30 PM

- Location: School Chapel
- Email: bah@birkenheadschool.co.uk
- Phone: 0151 652 4014

Be Inspired

An Exciting
Community
Course for
Year 5 Pupils

BE YOUR BEST SELF



By Mrs Hope, Course Leader

This was our fourth year of running this exciting community course. 'Be Inspired' gives Year 5 children from primary schools across the Wirral new experiences and is designed to build confidence and help pupils prepare for secondary school.

Teachers and parents were invited to nominate children who would be invited to attend all four weekly sessions, during which they would get to try new subjects and activities, as well as building on the national curriculum supplementing the work done in primary schools. The lessons were led by teachers and supported by Sixth Form pupils, who acted as mentors for the younger children offering advice, assisting with exercises and providing inspiration for the students on the programme.

Over the course of the programme, pupils undertook sessions on public speaking and learnt some tips on writing

and delivering speeches, which culminated in a prize giving ceremony where the speeches were given. Parents were invited to come and listen to their child's speech and see for themselves the confidence the programme had instilled into the Years 5 speakers.

The speeches were brilliant. Asiyah, a local Year 5 student who attended the course remarked that; "I've loved this programme, it has been so much fun and also my confidence has grown". Isabelle said that "Be Inspired has inspired me to try new things and to be more confident".

After the speeches, the students were awarded prizes for their commitment to the programme with special mentions for stand-out students who really relished the opportunity demonstrating enthusiasm and kindness along the way.

We were privileged to host this year's students. We hope the children enjoyed their time at Birkenhead School.



Birkonian Week 2024

Prep Prize-Giving

Families gathered in the marquee on Thursday 4th July to celebrate the achievements of the Prep pupils as part of our Birkonian Week celebrations. The award ceremony acknowledged pupils' contributions to areas across the School such as Sport, Academics, Music and Art.

It was wonderful to welcome our guest speaker, Guy Rands, former Head of The Grange Junior School, who delivered a thought-provoking and inspiring speech, which resonated with many of the audience – both children and adults alike. The evening finished with the children singing and a drinks reception in the Sixth Form centre.



Summer Concert

The annual Summer Concert in Bushell Hall proved to be a wonderful occasion to end the School year with students from across the School coming together to perform.

The evening was an opportunity to showcase the wonderful musical talents of our students and celebrate the School community's passion and commitment to music.

The programme included performances from:

- Orchestras: Prep Orchestra (Years 3 to 6), Senior Orchestra, Summer Band
- Choirs: Prep Choir, Chapel Choir, Senior Choir
- Organ Recitals from Prep and Senior students
- Saxophone Quartet, Clarinet Ensemble, String Ensemble
- 'Men in Sheds'



Seniors Prize-Giving 2024

Prize-Giving was held on the final day of the summer term and recognised and celebrated the achievements of all students. Andrew Cross, Chair of Governors, gave the Welcome address, followed by Mr Vicars, Headmaster, who gave the end of year address, and Ms Smeaton, Head of Sixth Form, who addressed the 2024 leavers.

Highlights included:

Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards (awarded to the student with the highest overall average in the year group):

James Kilty (Year 7), Amelia Budworth (Year 8), Chloe Meadows (Year 9), Prem Nagra (Year 10), Luca Noorpuri (Year 11), Sophia Campbell (Lower Sixth)

House Awards: Amelia Bantock (Kingsmead), Dillon Buckley (Shrewsbury), Sophia Campbell (Bidston), Jack Vicars (Beresford)

Old Birkonian Centenary House Cup for 2024 – Beresford

J.P. Hargreaves Award Presentations – Tabitha Rushton

Birkenhead School Honours Award Presentations – Ben Cuthbertson, James Huxley

Jack Hussey Cup for Cup for Charitable Contribution – Darcy Jenkins, Grace Clarke

Jackson Book Grant – Darcy Jenkins

The Howard Skempton Composition Prize – Nat Ford

Pyke Award for Service to the Community – Grace Clarke

Christopher Turner Memorial Award – Max Hendry

Graham Routledge Award for Eloquent Use of the English Language – Jack Vicars

The Rushworth Shield – Nat Ford

Jackson Award for All-Round Excellence and Commitment – Darcy Jenkins

The Franklin Willmer Trust for Academic Excellence – Max Hendry

Jon Vater Award for Resilience – Anna Leuf Nichols

Announcement of House Captains for 2024-25

Sadie Berry (Beresford), Gemma Clewes (Bidston), Zoe Janikiewicz (Kingsmead), Emme Ashfield (Shrewsbury)

Announcement of Prefects for 2024-25

Overdale

Martha Ballantyne, Jessica Collier, Bertie Golding, Lily Hardy, Hugo Jenner, Jessica Kelly, Tilly Phythian, Rosie Pugh

Head Boy of Overdale: Adam Hay

Head Girl of Overdale: Katie Banks

Deputy Head Boy of Overdale: Tim Chinnaraja

Deputy Head Girl of Overdale: Ellana Bennett

Senior Prefects:

Emme Ashfield, Ben Baker, Kate Ballantyne, Samson Bannon, Sadie Berry, Sophia Campbell, Gemma Clewes, Ben Cuthbertson, Emily Groves, Perna Gupta, Louis Hancock, Joseph Herbert, James Huxley, Zoe Janikiewicz, Aaron Mackie, Millie McTear-Smith, Scarlett Quinn, Sebastian Richmond, Tabitha Rushton, Harvin Sandhu, Emilia Sedgewick, Harry Tansey, Alexander Williams

Heads of School: Sophia Campbell and James Huxley

Deputy Head of School: Scarlett Quinn and Ben Cuthbertson



Birkonian Week 2024

Sports Awards Evening



The annual Sports Awards were held on Wednesday 5th July to recognise the sporting achievements of students in Seniors.

Special Awards

Junior Sportswoman of the Year
Junior Sportsman of the Year
Intermediate Sportswoman of the Year
Intermediate Sportsman of the Year
The Wild Family Senior Sportswoman of the Year
The Wild Family Senior Sportsman of the Year

Bella Hardy
Teddy Briggs
Isabelle Pickering
Daniel Stanton
Darcy Jenkins

Dylan Carroll

Netball

Junior Player of the Year Award
Senior Player of the Year Award

Isabelle Pickering
Eve Sewell

Lacrosse

Junior Player of the Year Award
Senior Player of the Year Award

Scarlet Grundy
Scarlett Quinn

Rugby

Junior Player of the Year Award
Senior Player of the Year Award
5 Point Award *

Thomas Huxley
Benjamin Baker
Dylan Carroll

Cricket

Junior Player of the Year Award
Senior Player of the Year Award

Teddy Groves
William Malpas

Hockey

Girls' Junior Player of the Year Award
Girls' Senior Player of the Year Award
5 Point Award *
Boys' Junior Player of the Year Award
Boys' Senior Player of the Year Award

Charlotte Jenner
Grace Clarke
Mim Sedgewick
Daniel Morton
Owen Price

Girls' Tennis

Player of the Year Award

Jemima Travers

Football

Player of the Year Award

Max O'Brien

Rounders

Player of the Year Award

Isabelle Pickering

Orienteering

Orienteerer of the Year Award

Conrad Baker

Golf

Golfer of the Year Award

Zach Webster

** 5 Points are awarded for International age-group selection.*





Performing and Creative Arts Awards

The Performing and Creative Arts Awards were held on Monday 1st July as part of Birkonian Week celebrations.

It was a wonderful opportunity to recognise and acknowledge students who have excelled in creative subjects with awards recognising achievements in English, Art, Music, Dance, Drama and Design.

Highlight Awards included:

Excellence in Public Speaking: Jack Vicars

Watson Prize for Creativity: Emily Pownall

Michael Scott Award for Inspirational Contribution to Music: Bonnie Lau

Best Newcomer to Drama: Amelia Bantock

Excellence in Stage Production & Design: Ben Cuthbertson

Prize for Drama Leadership & Inspiration: Thomas Whieldon

5 Point Award (Drama): Charlie Goodwin

5 Point Service Award: Ben Cuthbertson

Commitment and Persistence in The Arts: Zoe Janikiewicz

Excellence in Musical Theatre: Jemima Blair

Young Dramatist of the Year: Harrison Brown

Goodwin Award for Excellence in Theatre: Greta Jones

Val Levitt Cup for Drama: Charlie Goodwin

Thompson Cup for Outstanding Contribution to the Arts: Sadie Berry

Chapel Choir Prefect: Tabitha Rushton

Junior Designer: Scarlet Grundy

Senior Designer: Holly Cooper



MADRID

Spanish History and Culture

By Rudro G, Upper Sixth

In the February half term, a group of A-Level and GCSE students studying Spanish or Art went on a trip to Madrid. Although it was only a 3-day trip, it was very busy and provided us with a lot of opportunities to learn more about Spanish history and culture. After arriving in the Spanish capital, we immediately set out to explore the city.

The next day included a guided walking tour of Madrid, a tour of the Atlético Madrid football stadium, and a visit to the esteemed Reina Sofía art gallery. This was a highlight for many and seeing influential works like Picasso's 'Guernica' up close was an incredible experience. This feeling was matched, and perhaps exceeded, by our visit to the Prado the following day, where we saw famous collections like Goya's 'Black Paintings'. A personal favourite from this collection was 'Saturn devouring his son', a slightly disturbing yet insightful piece.

That day also featured a tour of 'Las Ventas' bullring, and a Spanish cookery class where we made popular dishes like Paella, Spanish Tortilla, and Tarta de Santiago. Overall, the trip was thoroughly enjoyed by those who attended and was a great chance to enrich our school studies.

En el receso de medio año de febrero, un grupo de estudiantes de A-Level y GCSE que estudian español o arte realizaron un viaje a Madrid. Aunque fue solo un viaje de 3 días, fue muy activo y nos brindó muchas oportunidades para aprender más sobre la historia y la cultura de España. Después de llegar a la capital española, salimos de inmediato a explorar la ciudad. El día siguiente incluyó un recorrido a pie por Madrid, una visita al estadio de fútbol del Atlético de Madrid y una visita a la prestigiosa galería de arte, La Reina Sofía. Esto fue lo más destacado para muchos, y ver obras influyentes como el 'Guernica' de Picasso de cerca fue una experiencia increíble. Este sentimiento fue igualado, y tal vez superado, por nuestra visita al Prado al día siguiente, donde vimos colecciones famosas como las 'Pinturas Negras' de Goya. Un favorito personal de esta colección fue 'Saturno devorando a su hijo', una pieza ligeramente perturbadora pero profunda. Ese día también incluyó un recorrido por la plaza de toros 'Las Ventas' y una clase de cocina española donde preparamos platos populares como paella, tortilla española y tarta de Santiago. En general, el viaje fue disfrutado plenamente por quienes asistieron y fue una oportunidad excelente para enriquecer nuestros estudios escolares.





London, October 2023

Trains, Tubes and Ships

By Mrs Curry, Teacher of English



On Monday 16th October Year 8 students set sail on a thrilling educational adventure to the heart of London, turning their trip into an unforgettable voyage of discovery. These young scholars navigated their way through the city, embracing the metaphorical role of sailors aboard a ship in search of knowledge.

Their maritime journey began with their arrival at HMS Belfast, the historic warship moored on the Thames. Following a brief stop to inspect their accommodation students meandered along the South Bank of the Thames and enjoyed a ride on the iconic London Eye, a colossal Ferris wheel that allows visitors to view the city in all its glory. As the students ascended, they marvelled at the sprawling metropolis, much like sailors climbing the crow's nest for a panoramic view of the open sea. Following the London Eye adventure, the students found themselves immersed into life on HMS Belfast as they undertook workshops in Morse Code and Signalling. In the world of a sailor, communication is key, and these workshops served as their compass to understanding the art of survival at sea.

Day 2 took the students to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, where a guided tour allowed them to set sail through the world of literature. A drama workshop followed, where they assumed the roles of actors, exploring Shakespeare's works. The young thespians learned how actors must navigate the seas of emotion to tell a compelling story. With hearts racing and curiosity ablaze, the young adventurers descended into the depths of the London Dungeons. An exploration of uncharted waters, where danger lurked around every corner, here, they faced the dark and gruesome aspects of London's history, bringing the past to life in a spine-tingling adventure.

The students then embarked on a voyage along the River Thames, passing their HMS Belfast accommodation en route. As the boat gently plied the waters, it was reminiscent of sailors navigating through a liquid highway, witnessing the city's landmarks from a unique vantage point.

As the sun set on London the students dropped anchor at Pizza Express, where they savoured a meal of delectable dough balls, delicious pizzas and to die for desserts. The odyssey reached its crescendo with a performance of the acclaimed musical, "Wicked." As students watched the magical tale unfold on stage, they experienced the enchantment of storytelling, learning that stories have the power to transport us to new worlds.

Day 3 began with an early rise and a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament, where the students witnessed the inner workings of the government. Students observed the heart of British governance, understanding the importance of navigating the country through turbulent times.

Their voyage of knowledge ended at the Tower of London, where they explored the historic fortress. Students marvelled at the Crown Jewels and the architecture, recognising the resilience and strength that has shaped the capital city over centuries.

As these Year 8 students returned to Liverpool Lime Street, they were no longer mere landlubbers. Their educational journey to London had transformed them into seasoned mariners of knowledge, ready to set sail on the seas of life with a newfound appreciation for culture, history, and travel.



Texas Trip

By Mr Mathew, Teacher of Physics

Over Easter break, our Senior students packed their bags and headed to the Houston Space Centre in Texas, USA for the trip of a lifetime starting with the eclipse.



Eclipse

Words cannot describe how magical the moment was, but I will certainly try my best! We had an early start due to the 3-hour coach journey required to get to the campus of Baylor University in Waco, Texas. The site was filled with people from all walks of life; small children curious about space to experienced academics that were giving talks on topics as diverse as Rayleigh scattering and the detection of exoplanets. Despite their differences, they had one thing in common - they wanted to see the eclipse in the company of family and friends and lock in those memories for a lifetime. There was a bit of excitement when the partial eclipse started, i.e. when the

moon first began to cover the sun. As it continued, there weren't any noticeable changes, and it was forgivable to think we would see more of the same. However, no one was prepared for what was coming next! As the final moment approached, the sky darkened, shadows became sharper, and birds were chirping away, diverted off their normal flight path.

And then it came. Totality! People were cheering, crying, and taking it all in. The sun's corona formed a beautiful outline around the moon, demonstrating the famous 'Diamond Ring' effect. It was truly a privilege to experience this moment with students and staff at Birkenhead School.



Experiences

The students had a great time with a variety of experiences during the rest of the trip. We had some wonderful meals in a range of restaurants including an All-American Diner, a Mexican restaurant and the famous Bubba Gumps Shrimp Company, a restaurant inspired by the movie Forrest Gump. At Bubba Gumps, our knowledge of the movie was tested, and some of the students did well at answering the questions. We also had a great time at the Kemah Boardwalk, a theme park with some amazing rides. Walmart was also a feature on our itinerary where the students got to buy some goodies to take back home.





Houston Space Centre

"Houston, we have a problem!" – These famous words were first echoed at the Houston Space Centre during the Apollo 13 NASA Mission. Our students got to spend a few days at the centre following the eclipse. Most of their time was spent on the Space Centre University Program, where they worked in small teams to complete projects related to the space program. One of the projects was to build their own rocket; teams used their knowledge of maths and physics to construct a prototype that had to launch high into the sky and then deploy a parachute so that it could land safely.

In addition to this, they also got to build a habitat for a team of astronauts on Mars and construct a model rover that could be used to complete tasks such as transporting small objects. If you ask me, the most exciting activity of all was the scuba diving! Astronauts need to be excellent divers, and we got a flavour of the underwater training they receive when we completed tasks such as building an airlock and identifying substances along a transect line with our scuba gear. The highlight of the week for many students was the graduation ceremony at the end, where Team Birkenhead took away a large number of medals and prizes, and where the students got to meet Hans Shlegel, a real-life astronaut!



History

First World War Battlefields Tour

By Harry Holden & Reuben Jones

In June, a group of Year 10 and Sixth Form students travelled to France and Belgium. We set off from school shortly after 6 am on Friday, 21 June, and made the long trip to Dover to catch the ferry to Calais. Upon arriving at the Holiday Inn near Lille, we knew we had two days of visits to look forward to: day one on the Somme and day two in and around Ypres in Belgium.

On Saturday morning, after leaving the hotel, one of our group had the opportunity to visit a relative's grave Cambrin Military Cemetery. We then went to the trenches and memorial centre at Vimy Ridge, where we walked around the site, experiencing how close the two trench lines were to each other. At the memorial located on Vimy Ridge, we learned about different soldiers and other people who helped in the war effort including Old Birkenian, Geoffrey Haddock.

On our way to the Somme, we visited Neuville-Saint-Vaast German Cemetery, where nearly 45,000 Germans are buried. We proceeded to Beaumont Hamel Memorial Park, where the Newfoundland troops famously attacked the German lines, and ultimately 86% of these troops died, some before even getting to the front line, as bodies clogged up the British trenches from the first wave of the attack on 1 July 1916.

We also visited the famous Danger Tree, where Newfoundlanders sought shelter during the battle. Whilst there, we paid our respects to another Old Birkenian, J. M. Sykes, who died at 19 and had the School motto, *Beati Mundo Corde*, as his epitaph. We then went to Thiepval and the Schwaben Redoubt and placed a wreath at the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme. Next, we stopped at the Lochnagar Crater, where British mines blew up German positions, and then visited the Devonshire

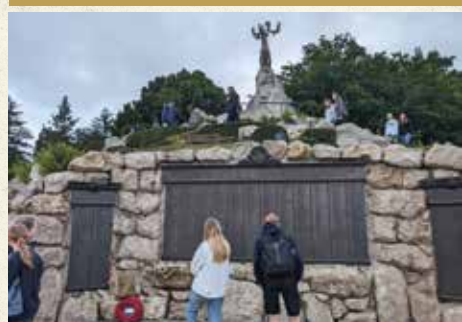
Cemetery, where we saw the grave of the poet William Noel Hodgson and listened to his poem "Before Action". We also heard the tragic story of Captain Duncan Martin, who foretold his own death and tried to warn his superiors, to no avail, before the fateful offensive was due to begin.

On Sunday morning, we travelled to Belgium and visited sites around the Ypres area, including Hill 60, Tyne Cot, and the Passchendaele Memorial Museum. The museum was remarkably interesting; it had many artefacts used on the battlefield, including guns and artillery, and remodelled, replica versions of First World War trenches and dugouts. At Tyne Cot, the largest British and Commonwealth war graves cemetery in the world, we saw approximately 12,000 graves. Such was the brutality of the fighting during the Third Battle of Ypres in 1917 that 75% of these graves are 'known unto God' (unidentified bodies). It was a sobering place to visit.

Later, we visited Langemark, one of the few First World War German cemeteries, containing the remains of approximately 44,000 soldiers, including many in mass pits. We passed by Vancouver Corner, the scene of the first gas attack in April 1915. Later that afternoon, we travelled to Essex Farm Cemetery and learnt about famous soldiers such as the Canadian, John McCrae, a poet who wrote "In Flanders Fields".

That evening, we enjoyed a pizza at a restaurant in Ypres town centre after enjoying some time to do some souvenir (chocolate!) shopping. As a group, we attended the Last Post at the Menin Gate, where two of our School party laid a wreath as a mark of respect for the fallen of the First World War.

When we set off on the final day, we reflected on what we had experienced, the heart-breaking stories we had heard and we were sure that we had gained so much from such an emotive and action-packed trip to France and Belgium.



La Plagne Seniors Ski Trip

By Miss Holland, Teacher of Physics

Bright and early in the Easter break, sixty snow-seeking students from Year 9 to Lower Sixth headed to Manchester Airport, accompanied by six members of staff. With their fingers crossed for bluebird powder days and no injuries, the sleepy-eyed group headed for Chambéry Airport.

Upon arrival in the village of Montalbert, nestled at the bottom of the La Plagne ski resort, students prepared for an action-packed week of skiing in one of the world's largest and best ski resorts. Paradiski has 425 km of runs, mostly over 2,000 metres elevation, promising some excellent conditions for the week ahead.

On the first morning, students and staff buzzed with anticipation. Due to Mr Taylor securing an excellent "ski-in-ski-out" location, students were able to dust off their salopettes, wrestle with their boots, and gracefully carry their skis all of 40 metres between the kit room door and the piste.

The students were assigned to one of six groups based on their prior skiing experience. Each was introduced to their ski instructor and tentatively set off down the mountain. Every morning ran like clockwork, with students working independently to get kitted up and on the slopes for their instructors' arrival at 9 a.m. Students were reunited at lunchtime, providing some much-needed respite for tired legs.

The remainder of the ski days ran to much the same tune, with students making the most of each and every day out on the slopes. Our wishes were answered with some big snow falls and bluebird mornings!

One-third of the students (and one brave member of staff) had little or no skiing experience prior to the trip, but under the expert guidance of their instructors, everyone had the chance to progress at their own pace. Their confidence grew exponentially, with some students rising across multiple groups within the space of a few days. Each student received a learning log at the end of the week detailing the skills they had learned, which will help inform their instructor the next time they take ski lessons.

Despite some minor bumps, bruises, and a few upset tummies from excess sugar consumption, everyone returned safely down the mountain each afternoon, all demonstrating excellent resilience and courage.

Evening activities for the students included the thrilling luge ride, with students chaotically snaking their way down the slope to the hotel. Students also participated in laser quest, swimming, Just Dance, karaoke and of course the main event: Mr Rule's summary of the days' best behaviour, best wipeouts and biggest wally awards.

The group returned to Birkenhead thoroughly exhausted after two travel days and six ski days, all with a new-found or rekindled adoration for being on the mountain. Equally exhausted, staff had been so impressed with the students' behaviour and enthusiasm that they were already discussing logistics for the next ski trip during the coach journey home!



Sri Lanka Cricket Tour

By Mr Jackson

Sunday 7th July, marked the beginning of our unforgettable cricket tour as we touched down in Colombo. We were greeted by our enthusiastic tour guides, some of the most welcoming people you could hope to meet. Immediately gifted with shell necklaces, we felt truly welcomed—a theme that would resonate throughout our entire tour.

We had heard numerous positive reviews about the hotels, and our first stop certainly lived up to the hype. Upon arrival, we were treated to a personalised Birkenhead School cake and participated in a traditional Sri Lankan candle-lighting ceremony. Fully expecting everyone to retreat to their rooms after a long night of travel, the boys had other plans. They dashed straight into the pool, quickly challenging an Australian touring team to an impromptu game of something that resembled water polo. Later that afternoon, we ventured out for a stroll around Colombo, where we stumbled upon a lively street cricket match. In a delightful twist, the cars yielded to the game, not the other way around.

Our first full day was dedicated to training, but the weather had other ideas. The cricket ground resembled a lake after a heavy storm, with a pack of stray dogs enjoying the water. Thankfully, an indoor venue nearby allowed the boys to train, with the fast bowlers charging in under the intense Sri Lankan heat. After training, we visited the Colombo Cricket Café, a quirky establishment run by an eccentric Australian woman, adorned with fascinating cricket memorabilia. We then explored Colombo city before returning to our luxury hotel, where an all-you-can-eat buffet awaited us.

Day two brought our first cricket matches. The strength of Sri Lankan cricket quickly became apparent, with one

coach informing us that cricket is played year-round here. Nevertheless, the 1st and 3rd teams achieved brilliant victories, with Jamie Price from the first team taking the tour's first and last five-wicket haul with his crafty off-spin bowling. We were incredibly fortunate to play at the prestigious SSC test match venue for two of our matches, a highlight for many.

After our time in Colombo, we checked out of the Cinnamon Lakeside and made our way north to Habarana, where we stayed at the stunning Cinnamon Lodge. The hotel was alive with playful monkeys swinging above our heads, and 'beware of snakes' signs kept us on our toes. Here, we embarked on a thrilling safari at Minneriya National Park, coming within feet of magnificent Asian elephants. Dr. Thorpe was in his element, armed with his birdwatching book and binoculars, eagerly spotting various species.

Returning to the hotel, we faced our first real dilemma of the tour: whether to stay up until 1:30am to watch England in the Euros semi-final. Half the group opted to stay awake, though some quickly lost interest — testament to Southgate's brand of football. An injury-time winner left the boys in high spirits as they headed to bed. This was short lived as they set their alarms for 5:30am ahead of our next adventure.

Early the next morning, we set off to climb the magnificent Sigiriya rock fortress. Our choice of bananas as snacks proved unwise, as monkeys descended upon us upon arrival! Credit to all the boys for their determination and positive attitudes as they conquered the rock at dawn. After a hearty breakfast and a refreshing swim at the hotel, we departed for our next destination, Amaya Hills in Kandy. Overlooking the lush rainforest, this hotel was nothing short of breathtaking, matching its beauty with exceptional hospitality and cuisine.



As we settled into Kandy, it was time to refocus on cricket. We faced formidable opponents in Trinity College (the former school of Kumar Sangakkara) and St. Anthony's College. Both matches were fiercely competitive, providing valuable lessons and experiences at impressive venues. Unfortunately, heavy rains interrupted our third matches, leading to an early return to the hotel. However, the boys didn't seem too disappointed, given snooker, swimming, spa, and squash facilities at the hotel.

Now on our eighth full day, we checked out of Amaya Hills and journeyed to our final hotel in Galle, stopping for an exhilarating white-water rafting experience along the way. This adventure was a hit with everyone, Mr. Walker being playfully hauled off his boat by ten of the boys being a particularly memorable moment.

An idyllic setting with the pool backing onto the beach, Heritance Ahungalla was another incredible experience. Treated like royalty on arrival again, we soon settled in, ready for back-to-back days of cricket. That was before a late and disappointing night to watch the three lions in the Euros final, of which we almost had a 100% turn out for.

The fourth round of matches brought joy as the second team achieved their first victory of the tour, showcasing their best performance yet. While the 1st and 3rd teams faced strong opposition and came up short. Not to be disheartened we moved onto our final games. The 1st team had the incredible

opportunity to play at the test match ground in Galle, with the Fort overlooking it. They truly relished it and put in a decent performance, albeit being defeated. All 36 boys had now played at an international ground on the tour, following in the footsteps of the greatest players of the game.

The tour concluded with an awards evening, reflecting on the incredible experiences we shared. Teddy Groves was named 1st Team Player of the Tour, Jake Smith earned the 2nd Team accolade, and Rishi Singh, who topped the charts for both runs and wickets, was recognised as the 3rd Team Player of the Tour. Harry Pickering was awarded the 'Tourist of the Tour' for his infectious enthusiasm and ability to connect with everyone, always sparking conversations or initiating games of football with the opposition.

On our final day, we visited the Foundation of Goodness, a charity for which we had raised funds. They were extremely grateful, and it was a lovely way for us to give back to a country that had given us so much over the past 12 days. The boys donated cricket equipment and clothing, adding a personal touch to our contribution. This was followed by a boat ride on the Madu River and a visit to a turtle hatchery, rounding off our journey with enriching experiences.

As we boarded our midnight flight back home via Doha, arriving in Manchester by midday on the 18th, we carried with us memories of camaraderie, adventure and cricket that would last a lifetime.



Sport News

Seniors Sports Captains

Thank you to our 2023/24 Senior Sports Captains



LEADERSHIP
PATHWAYS

Positions of
Responsibility
Pathway

BridgingFinance Solutions make it happen

By Mr Taylor, Director of Sport

Yet again, Bridging Finance have been fantastic supporters of Birkenhead School sport in 2023-24. The sponsorship offered by Bridging Finance allowed us to extend and enhance our excellent sporting provision by buying equipment and team wear to supplement our strong sporting tradition and being a leading educational sports provider. For instance, we have purchased items such as the cricket FrogBox, which means we will be able to screen live cricket games. In addition, the partnership with Gilbert/Gray-Nicolls means we can provide professional-style team wear for our pupils, ensuring they look their best when stepping onto the pitch against peer schools, such as with our new U15 and U16 rugby kits. We have invested in cricket this year with new match stumps (see below) and batting feeding machines to develop our batting in the lower school. This had a positive effect in the summer term, contributing to a successful cricket season. The netball teams also received new Gilbert match balls with the school and Bridging Finance logos for our competitive fixtures. Finally, thanks to Bridging Finance for sponsoring the Sports Prize Night awards and the new Sports Day House Trophy, which culminates the sporting year as we reward our pupils for their exploits and achievements throughout the year. Many thanks to Mr Steve Barber and the Bridging Finance team from all the sporting teams at Birkenhead School.

Items covered by Bridging Finance this year include:

- Purchase of a FrogBox video camera for screening live cricket matches at the school on our YouTube channel for the Sri Lanka cricket tour and beyond.
- Brand new match stumps from Gray-Nicolls for all three of the school's cricket ovals.
- Bola Bowling Machines stand.
- Softball cricket feeding machine.
- Paceman bowling machine.
- Subscriptions to the VEO cameras bought last year. VEO technology, the ultimate team sports camera, allows us to record and live stream our matches for post-game analysis.
- Netball match balls with the school logo for all netball teams.
- Two sets of rugby shirts for the U15 and U16 rugby teams for cup competitions.
- Sponsorship of an inter-house Sports Day Trophy.
- Sponsorship of the Sports Awards prize night.



Sports Personality Dinner 2024

- Graham Gooch OBE

We were delighted to welcome former England Cricketer, Graham Gooch OBE, to Birkenhead School for our annual Sports Personality Dinner.

Graham spoke to an audience of 190 guests at the black-tie dinner event, and was followed by entertainment from Britain's Got Talent finalist, Les Gibson.

The evening was a great success, raising funds for the upcoming Cricket Tour to Sri Lanka and a local Sri Lankan charity, 'The Foundation of Goodness'. The charity has been

instrumental in helping Sri Lankan communities rebuild after the 2004 tsunami. The School held a non-uniform day in April to raise funds for the charity.

Thank you once again to our sponsors for the evening: Bridging Finance Solutions Group; Quilter Cheviot; Rathbones; Evelyn Partners; SHG Engineering; Brabners; Kettle Design; Bermans; and ACS Solicitors.

Thank you as well to the parents and businesses who donated prizes - your kindness and generosity is very much appreciated: Mr Scrivener; Mr and Mrs Mellor; Mr and Mrs Malhotra; Mr Meisner; Mrs Stanton; Gaucho Restaurants; Purple Ski; and Grays International.



A Year of Sport

Rugby

By Mr Taylor, Director of Sport

The rugby season of 2023-24 was a highly successful one for the School as a whole. The 1st XV was very young, with only four Upper Sixth players, yet they punched above their weight and showed an appetite for improvement and training. Led ably by captain Dylan Carroll, who represented the North and Cheshire, they had another glorious night under the lights versus Stonyhurst, hosted by Caldy RUFC.

For the first time since the dreaded Covid, we were able to field two Senior XVs on several weekends. With more numbers and depth coming through, there should be the basis of a good 2nd XV next season. The U16s had a productive cup run, mirroring last season's U16, and beat Bishop Heber in the Cheshire plate final hosted by Chester RUFC. Many of these boys played 1st XV rugby during the season and matured into good senior players. To conclude the season, the boys headed to the RP7s and finished the season in fine style with a comeback win, a characteristic they have embodied during their school career. Congratulations to Dan Stanton, Louis Hayes Green, and Theo Hendry, who all played in the Sale U16 programme. As always, many thanks to Mr Pillow for his coaching of the U16s.

The U15s developed considerably through the season. After a positive start against Altrincham, injuries led to four defeats. However, the boys rebounded with four wins after half-term as players returned and confidence grew. The input of Mrs Jones and Mr Williams in their excellent coaching sessions and the boys' enthusiasm earned a good victory over King William's IOM in the U15 National Vase. The next cup game against Bolton, in what can only be described as horrendous biblical conditions of rain, hail, and snow, was an epic game. Unfortunately, it was decided by only two points, such were the margins, as two good teams went toe to toe in the mud. The 7s season that followed also showed further improvement in the squad as they finished in the top three in three events.

The U14s had a mixed season of highs, with fantastic wins away to Merchants and Altrincham, and some lows when things didn't quite gel. There was much improvement in the squad as new players were integrated and players moved positions. Captain Jasper O'Malley and Max Mira led from the front and scored the bulk of the tries,

but the U14s scored many points throughout the season. Work in defence and playing without the ball will be key in 2024-25. The boys finished the season by showing a huge improvement in 7s, taking the scalp of some top schools as they grasped the tactical awareness needed to play 7s. The boys have great team spirit and I wish them well next season.

The U13s continued their remarkable run from Year 7, being unbeaten in every game bar a half against WGS in a three-way game which also involved CGS. Aside from that, they swept all before them during the 15s season as all players contributed. Play the U13s and you know you have been in a game; they are as tenacious as they are cohesive! A special mention goes to Thomas Huxley, who scored 30-plus tries from outside centre. During the 7s season, the team won two tournaments, at AKS Lytham and the Cheshire 7s, as they continued their impressive record of playing four 7s tournaments and winning all four since Year 7. They headed to the RP7s full of confidence and finished their group with five wins to conclude a fantastic season. My thanks to Mr Lytollis for his expert coaching this season.

The U12s ran two sides this year, an A team and a development side. In total, 38 boys out of 54 in the year played for the rugby teams, which is the major positive of the season. With two sides, competition allowed players to switch between A and development sides. Towards the end of the season, we were able to give opportunities to development team players who had started with no rugby experience in the A team, such was their improvement. Captain Zach Birchwood deserves a mention for his leadership skills, and Evan Jones was a classy operator at fly-half. My thanks to Mr Harris, Mr Turner, and Mr Jackson for their efforts this season.

Representative Honours

North of England and Cheshire U18s - Dylan Carroll

Cheshire U17s - Ben Booth

Cheshire / Sale DPP U16 - Theo Hendry, Dan Stanton, Louis Hayes Green

Sale U15 DPP - Kai Jackson, Dan Garrett, Harry Ballantyne, Ben Morris, Riaz Penisini

North Wales U15 RGC, Josh Morris and Ben Morris

Sale DPP U14 Jasper O'Malley, Max Mira, Harry Garavello

Team Honours

U16 Cheshire Plate Winners

U13 AKS 7s winners, Cheshire U13 7s Winners



U12 Boys Rugby



U13 Rugby



U14 Rugby



U15 Rugby



U16 Rugby

1st XV Rugby

By Mr Rule

With the departing Upper Sixth making up most of the pack and our tactical advantage lying mainly in a young, but exciting, back line, a change in strategic focus was necessary for the 1st XV this season. Greater emphasis was placed on the importance of a strong kicking game and the need to move larger opposition around was hard to ignore. A mentality of taking greater risks and playing 'from anywhere' was instilled early on in training and our zero-blame culture meant players were free to express themselves. In a season where expectations started low, the 30-point average per game for Birkenhead is something we are incredibly proud of. Credit must go to Dylan Carroll and Ben Baker for leading on tries scored and instilling the belief that the team needed.

Remarkably, only five of the senior squad were Upper Sixth players this year, meaning that we were reliant on a young and inexperienced side throughout. It was great to see both the Phythian and Hendry brothers playing together for the first time at Under 18 level. A healthy competition for places developed, especially after the younger players proved they were more than capable of dominating older opposition. Special mention must go to Mr Pillow's Under 16s for their fantastic win over Bishop Heber in the Cheshire Plate Final. Congratulations to captain Henry White and his boys.

With a positive win ratio and most of our losses being only a one-score game, there was much to be pleased about this year. But, as has recently become tradition, a season is not complete

without the eagerly anticipated Friday Night Lights game against Stonyhurst College. Still smarting from an unexpected defeat last year, Stony arrived determined to set the record straight. Unfortunately for them, equally determined to put on the performance of the season were Dylan and the team. Early scores and a dogged defensive performance meant it always felt that Birkenhead had the upper hand. A successful forty metre penalty kick from the captain, with ten minutes to go, was ultimately the difference, and Birkenhead won again, 18-15. My thanks to all the players for their commitment this season and it falls on those younger players to deliver again next year, when expectations might just be on the rise.



1st XV Boys Rugby

Congratulations on Stonyhurst Win!

Congratulations to the 1st XV rugby team who won against Stonyhurst College under lights, in a thrilling encounter back in February. This is the second year running that the School's senior side achieved this feat and credit must be given to both sides for the spirit in which the match was played and the incredible skill and physicality on display. The final score was 18-15, with a penalty kick once again separating the two teams. Many thanks to the hundreds of supporters who turned up to cheer the boys on.



Netball

By Mrs Jones

What a Season!

Our U12 team adapted well to Senior Netball. With only one loss all season in the quarter-final stage to King's High School, Warwick in the Sisters in Sport Cup, they dominated netball locally and in Saturday block fixtures. Their success continued at the Wirral Schools' tournament, where they won all games convincingly, including the final against Wirral Grammar to be crowned District Champions. Unfortunately, weather was our downfall, and the Merseyside Championships did not take place, but nothing can detract from the superb season this talented group of girls had. The U12B and C teams had a number of fixtures, with many wins, including the B team finishing 4th in the Wirral Schools, competing against and beating many A teams from other schools. They also won the local Wirral Schools league, with girls from A, B, and C teams getting a chance to represent the School.

A successful cup run in the Sisters in Sport Plate competition was the highlight of the season for the U13 team, reaching the National Semi-finals where they lost against a strong Cheadle Hulme team. Wins throughout the season against BHSA, Abbeygate, Merchant Taylors', Kirkham, Alderley Edge, and St. Aidan's and a third place in the Wirral Schools' tournament have set the team up to continue their success next year.

It was a fantastic season for our older teams, with the U14, U16, and U18 teams all making Regional Netball Finals this year. The U14s started off the season at the Sisters in Sport Invitation at Oxford, then went unbeaten in the Merseyside round of the Nationals, had a cup run to the quarter-finals of the Sisters in Sport Plate, and achieved many convincing wins in Saturday block fixtures. They went on to become Wirral Schools Champions and 2nd in Merseyside. The U14s finished their season with the A & B teams going to Condover Hall in Shropshire for a weekend filled with netball and outdoor activities. The A team went on to win the Cup and the B team the Plate.

The U15s season was affected by injuries, but with many of the girls playing in the U16 and U19 teams for Nationals, they did fantastically well. They dominated local block fixtures and were crowned Wirral Schools Champions for the fourth year running. Despite key players missing for the Merseyside finals, the team stepped up and came 2nd. A narrow defeat (39-37) to Saddleworth ended their cup run in the 4th round.

The U16s once again showed their class, winning the Sisters in Sport Invitational in September and going on to become both Wirral Schools and Merseyside Champions. With many of this age group playing 1st and 2nd team netball as well this year, it was a busy season.

The 1st team, led by Netball Captain Darcy Jenkins, had their most successful season. Winning many Wednesday afternoon fixtures and coming 2nd in Wirral Schools, they were confident going into the Merseyside Finals, where they achieved a fantastic win against Wirral Grammar and came 2nd overall, only on goal difference.

Well done also to the many girls representing county and franchise clubs this year!

Netball Individual Achievements

U12 Merseyside – Izzy Halpin, Esme Bell, Libby Barton

U13 Merseyside – Arabella Jones, Chloe Cooper

U13 North East Wales – Maisie Hilton

U15 – Merseyside – Faith Johnson, Phoebe Rumsby, Reeve Pankhurst, Sophia Singer

U15 Wales National team – Nieve McCulloch

U15 Severn Stars – Jessica Talbot

U15 Leeds Rhinos – Isabelle Pickering

U16 Cheshire – Tabi Oakden, Georgie Southworth

U17 Loughborough Lightning – Eve Sewell



Wirral School Champions - U12s



U12 B & C Teams



U13 Team



U13 B Netball



U14 A and B Teams - Condover Hall Cup & Plate Winner 2



North West England Finals - U14s



Wirral School Champions - U15s



Merseyside Champions & Wirral School Champions - U16s



1st Team Netball

Boys' Hockey

Mr Taylor, Director of Sport

The boys' hockey season of 2023-24 was much improved from the previous year, with more fixtures, teams, and boys playing for the school.

The 1st XI won 8 games, which is by far the best record for a Birkenhead School 1st XI hockey team in many years. Much credit goes to Captain Ewan McPherson and Owen Price, who were outstanding all season and held the team together. A good core of West Cheshire players, including Tom Lindberg, Callum Wilson, and Dan Sweetman, added quality and experience to the team's spine. Clearly, the summer tour to South Africa benefited the lads, as they played with much more cohesion and confidence.

An overall record of 8 wins, 3 draws, and only 5 losses was very positive. With more composure in front of goal, this could have been even better. Included in this were victories over Wirral (three times), MTS, St. Anselm's, NULS, and a fine victory in the North West championship over Sedbergh. My thanks to Mr Roberts, the 1st XI coach, and Ewan McPherson, who captained the side for 2 years as 1st team Captain. With much of the side still at school next year, hopefully, this is something to build upon.

The 2nd XI, who again were mostly a Year 11 side with a couple of Lower Sixths, had a season of development as they learnt senior hockey is a step up. However, they epitomised a competitive spirit whenever they crossed the white line, with Murray Cowan and Oliver Coleman demonstrating this 100% attitude despite a tough season. This experience bodes well for next season.

The junior hockey sides built upon the increased playing experience and fixtures of the previous season. We fielded an U12 A and B team regularly for the first time this season as the fixture list expanded. The players also took the opportunity to train in good numbers during the season.

The U15s came out of the blocks fast with a 3-1 win over Bolton

and a couple of other strong performances before a mid-season dip in form. However, they finished the season strongly with wins over MTS, St. Bede's, and Rydal, ending with a record of 6 wins, 1 draw, and 6 losses, which signifies progression and development. Dan Moreton captained the side well, scoring some good goals. Other notable performances came from Harry Anderson, who played well in goal, Jacob Smith and Ting Ziohou in defence, and Rufus Marray in midfield. The majority of these players will be in the 2nd XI next season, with a few playing in the 1st XI.

The U14s committed to training and made huge strides in skill development and tactical awareness. A positive start, including a first win against Bolton, faded away as confidence dipped while playing some strong sides. The challenge is for them to be competitive next season from the outset.

The U13s played lots of fixtures with A and B teams, winning 10 games! I have a lot of optimism for the future with these lads. They demonstrated great spirit and a willingness to train and get better. They performed well at the Manchester Grammar U13 Powerball event and in the Northwest Tier 2 event. Toby Rashid showed what a fine player he is during the season, aided by James Walkett, Brae Williamson, and Nate Glascott-Tull.

The U12s had an excellent season with many club players. They won the majority of their games. At the North West U12 tournament Tier 1, they faced a 'group of death' in round one, with winners King's Chester and finalists King's Macclesfield in the same group. However, they finished the day positively with a win over Cheadle Hulme. With a strong core of club hockey players, the squad showed great tenacity and skill, and the future bodes well for them.

My thanks to Mr Oake, Mrs Armstrong and Mr Roberts for taking training for the U12s, U13s, and U14s.

Honours

West Cheshire Junior Academy Centre U18

Daniel Sweetman, Tim Lindberg, Callum Wilson

West Cheshire Junior Academy Centre U16 Daniel Moreton



U12 Boys' Hockey



U13 Boys' Hockey



U14 Boys' Hockey



U15 Boys' Hockey



1st XI Boys' Hockey



1st XI Hockey Team

Lacrosse

By Mrs Dunn

Lacrosse at Birkenhead has been successful for many. We started our year with a pre-season training day at Moreton Hall, playing against the touring squad from St Helen's and St Catherine's, Abingdon, and Moreton Hall.

In the North Schools' tournaments for our U18s, we travelled to York for an exciting day of lacrosse, finishing a credible fourth, with the trophy going to Moreton Hall. Our Seniors had mixed results throughout the season, with the highlight being the National Schools Tournament. Sunday proved tough for us, as we were knocked out in a tight game by St Paul's Girls' School, London. Nevertheless, it was a great weekend for all, and the girls once again cemented our place in Division 1, which is a great credit to them.

In March, the Seniors hosted St George's School, Edinburgh, who had travelled to the North West on a mini lax tour. A great relationship has been forged, and we have been invited back to Scotland next season.

Our U14s had a great season, both as a team and as individuals. Not being able to contest the North Schools Championship as a full squad due to a school fixture clash enabled the Under 13s to step up and fill the many gaps in the squad. We entered our team with a positive mindset and travelled to North Shropshire to play in the tournament. After a great day of lacrosse, this very young squad finished a very credible fourth.

After missing out on the North Schools' Tournament as a full squad, we entered the U14s to play up a year in the North Schools U15s Tournament. They were incredible, and after finishing second in the group stages, they won the quarter-final against Loretto, followed by a semi-final win over Bolton School. The team played Moreton Hall in a thrilling final and won the silver medal, with a tough 5-3 defeat. A brilliant performance from our young team.

Throughout the season, our U14s played some challenging fixtures, recording strong wins against Withington and Bolton, with a loss and a draw to Moreton—all proving to be a catalyst for a fabulous performance at National Schools. The girls travelled to Aldershot for an overnight stay and an early start, with an 11-0 win over Heathfield School. They went on to beat some big names in the school Lacrosse world, including Downe House School, Claremont Fan Court, and St Paul's Girls'. This meant they topped their group and qualified for the last 16 in the Top Championship Competition.

Next up was Wycombe Abbey, and Birkenhead won a tough match 3-2—a huge result, and Birkenhead were the talk of the tournament. In the quarter-final against another big name, Guildford High, nerves were running high, and the excitement was off the scale. Birkenhead knocked out favourites Guildford! The semi-final started well, with

us scoring first against a very strong St Catherine's School. The final was in touching distance, but it wasn't to be—our brave team ran out of goals and time. All were devastated until reminded that Birkenhead were one of the top four teams in the country!

Our U13s had a strong season, winning at Bolton, Moreton Hall, and Packwood, with many individual successes, including players gaining places in the England Lacrosse Regional Academy for the North of England.

Our Under 12s have been a revelation. What a talented bunch of athletes these girls are! They started their year off with a draw against Moreton Hall, but this was just a learning process for this team, and they quickly improved. A big win against Harrogate Ladies' College and another great win in a rematch with Moreton Hall followed. The Autumn Term proved tough, with weather causing havoc and fixtures being cancelled as a result. They had to wait until March for their big day, and it came as no surprise that they achieved mega success at the North Schools U12 Tournament. A rainy, cold day brought out the inner steel of this tough bunch, and without a single complaint about the conditions, this epic team recorded wins against Moreton Hall, Withington, Queen Margaret's, and Bolton, remaining unbeaten. They went straight to the Gold Medal match with a victory over Bolton School 7-2. What a victory. What a great performance. Trophy number one for this talented bunch—watch this space for next season.

Honours & Achievements

Many of our talented players have achieved Representative success throughout the school. Congratulations to all of the girls on their individual success:

U13 Cheshire County A: Margaret Jeffs, Arabella Jones, Polly Vicars. **B:** Hermione Adlard, Sophie Dougherty, Charlotte Fogg, Daisy Jones, Victoria Taylor **RESERVES:** Rosie Pugh, Beattie Woof

U15 Cheshire County A: Scarlet Grundy, Darcey Golborne, Layla Jones, Scarlett Lloyd, Olanna Quinn. **B:** Jemima Blair, Sophia Singer, Grace Reynolds

U18 Cheshire County: Kate Baker, Lexi Daulby, Sofia Grundy, Lucy Melling, Olivia Melling, Tabi Oakden, Scarlett Quinn, Eve Sewell

England Lacrosse Regional Academy North: U18: Jemima Blair, Kate Baker, Lexi Daulby, Sofia Grundy, Lucy Melling, Olivia Melling. **U15:** Scarlet Grundy, Darcey Golborne, Layla Jones, Olanna Quinn, Sophia Singer. **U13:** Ava Formela, Margaret Jeffs, Arabella Jones, Victoria Taylor, Polly Vicars

Super County North U15 A: Scarlet Grundy, Layla Jones, Olanna Quinn. **U19 B:** Sofia Grundy, Scarlett Quinn

National Academy Regional Tournament Players – North: U15 Jemima Blair, Scarlet Grundy, **U18:** Sofia Grundy

England National Academy: Alice Jones, Eve Sewell



U12 Girls Lacrosse



U13 Girls Lacrosse



U14 Girls Lacrosse



U15 Girls Lacrosse



1st XI Lacrosse



National Schools 2024 - First team U19

Girls' Hockey

By Mrs Alford-Swift

The girls' hockey season got underway shortly after returning in September, with the girls eager to enjoy a full programme of fixtures and tournaments. The 1st XI made a promising start against a very strong Newcastle-under-Lyme school, winning 2-0 on home turf. The next few games resulted in two very close losses and a 1-1 draw with Merchant Taylor's. This was followed by an excellent 3-1 win away from home in one of the standout matches of the season against one of our closest rivals, Kings, Chester. The girls clearly exacted their revenge after suffering a narrow 2-1 loss months earlier. Illness and injury saw us come up short against Rydal Penrhos, but after qualifying for the county championships once again in March, the girls regrouped and went out all guns blazing. A great display of unity and work rate was evident all afternoon, but we couldn't replicate our previous win against Kings, Chester. After losing to the eventual winners, Kings Macclesfield, we finished 3rd in Cheshire.

The 1st XI this year involved the largest number of Year 11 pupils we've ever had represent at this level, and they acquitted themselves admirably under the excellent stewardship of outgoing captain Rebecca Hennessey and incoming captain for next season Grace Clarke. With a good number of strong Year

10s coming into Year 11 alongside our current team, next season looks to be an exciting balance of development and perhaps going one better at counties!

In the Junior teams, there was notable success for the U14/15 team. With a number of girls playing club hockey in this age group, the improvements from last season were evident. This was coupled with superb commitment from the whole squad, resulting in four wins (three with clean sheets) out of the six games they played. Goals came from all over the pitch, demonstrating their excellent cohesion and variety.

The U13 team were some of the most committed and fun pupils to coach this year. They approached every game with a smile on their faces, even when things weren't going their way. They took turns being the goalkeeper, supported each other, and consistently remained positive. Three losses at the beginning of the season did not deflate them, and they eventually got their deserved 3-0 win over BSHA halfway through the season. They finished the season with a respectable 0-0 draw with West Kirby Grammar, whom they had lost to earlier in the season.

Finally, the U12s, as is usually the case, took some time to settle into what is a new sport for many. They kept plugging away, working hard on their basic skills, staying committed, and in the second half of the season, they really took off with a 6-0 win over BSHA and a 2-0 victory over Merchant Taylor's.



U12 Girls Hockey



U14 Girls Hockey



U15 Girls Hockey



U13 XI Girls Hockey

Cricket

By Mr Jackson

The 2024 cricket season has been a success on the whole. Whilst it has been a damp summer, we have been fortunate to not lose many fixtures to the weather, due in large to the fantastic efforts of our ground staff. With lots of enthusiastic students, we continue to 'bat above our average' and compete in a tough fixture list, often against schools with lots more students to choose from than ourselves.

Under 15s

The Under 15 team has another strong season, with the highest win percentage of any team at 78%. Year 10 student Teddy Groves captained the team admirably, and was well assisted by experienced players Jamie Young and Kai Jackson, who both had strong seasons themselves. Ben and Josh Morris showed great improvements this year. All five boys will be important players for the 1st XI in the upcoming years.

Under 14s and 13s

The real highlights of the season came from the Under 14s and Under 13s cup successes. Both were beaten in the final by strong Altrincham Grammar teams, though both put in pleasing performances throughout the Cheshire Cup. The Under 14s had a successful season, with big wins against Cheadle Hulme, Kings School Macclesfield and Lancaster Grammar in particular. The team was well marshalled by captain Amay Diwan, who also performed exceptionally well with the ball. Shiv Malhotra, Aaron Checkley and Rishi Singh also put in consistent performances throughout the season and were integral to the team's success. However, the team culture was crucial, with the same 13 committed boys playing week in, week out.

The Under 13s were brilliantly led by Teddy Briggs. His volume of runs at the top of the order, coupled with his many stumping's whilst keeping and his general competitiveness, made him a real asset to the team and a reason for many of their nine wins. The rest of the batting order must look to contribute more next season for the team to regularly score winning totals. James

Barlow took the new ball, racking up impressive figures, though Byron Jones' 7 for 16 in the cup semi-final was truly outstanding and very rare at any junior level. All in all a successful season for the team in a very busy fixture list.

Under 12s

Whilst it was a tough season for the Under 12s, they showed great appetite for the game and were a pleasure for coaches to work with. Performances improved considerably over the season, leading to a pleasing win against Merchant Taylors' School at the back end of the season. A superb spell of bowling by Sebastian Whalley, combined with an important unbeaten 23 seeing us over the winning line. Joshua Pugh has captained the team well throughout the season, and has been assisted by some strong Sebastian and Caiden Barker performances.

1st team cricket

As for the 1st XI, I have been incredibly pleased and proud with the effort and application this year. With the loss of some key players from last year, the team has rallied together, showing great togetherness and more fight than the previous year. Ben Baker has captained the side impressively and been integral to improving the team's culture. His gritty 32* off 80 balls against Bolton School to ensure we batted the full allocation of overs was evidence of him leading from the front.

We also had some early season successes, winning our group in the first round of the National Cup. Harry Pickering and William Malpas key performers in this, and both used their experience well throughout the season, picking up important wickets and scoring crucial runs. Alongside this, the boys should be proud of their efforts against school cricket powerhouse, Sedburgh. We also showed similar levels of grit in our tour to London. Although results didn't go in our favour, the standard of opposition was good and were very narrowly beaten in two games, massive improvements from last year. Perhaps the most pleasing aspect of the season is the contribution of some younger boys, particularly Teddy Groves (Year 10) and Krish Malhotra (Year 11); two all-rounders who have contributed consistently with bat and ball.



U12 Boy's Cricket



U13 Boy's Cricket



U14 Boys Cricket



U15 Boy's Cricket



1st XI Boy's Cricket

Annual MCC Cricket Match

It was a pleasure to welcome back some of our OBs, including Maddie A, who was the first girl to play for our 1st XI cricket team for Birkenhead School's annual cricket match against the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC). In a 40 over game, we battled and lost by 120 runs — a great effort for our team against a formidable adult team. Well done to all who represented the School, you demonstrated great technique and commitment to the game.



Girls' Cricket Festivals

By Mr Jackson, Cricket Coach

This summer has seen us successfully host three softball cricket tournaments, all at our McAllester playing fields.

At the first tournament, our Year 5 team played as well as local primary schools who also competed. This allowed over 60 boys and girls the chance to experience our brilliant facilities and the sport of cricket.

Following on from that, we hosted two girls' softball tournaments - one for the under 12s and one for the under 13s. This saw 9 schools in total come from far and wide to compete. A great two days was had by all, with some impressive skills on display from the young cricketers.

This has been the second year running such festivals, as interest amongst girls' cricket continues to grow at a rapid pace. There is a level of enthusiasm that simply cannot be ignored, as we continue to provide opportunities for girls to get involved in the sport.

On top of that, our Under 13 girls' team had a successful day out at Upton Cricket Club in the Cheshire Cricket Board softball festival, where they qualified for the finals day. This year has also seen record numbers of girls in Years 7 and 8 attend cricket training after school, with coaching provided by a full-time Cheshire cricket coach. The growing popularity of the game amongst girls is truly inspiring to see.



Athletics

By Mr Taylor, Director of Sport

The athletic season of 2024 comprised the English Schools Cup for U15 and U13 age groups over two rounds. There were also early season track and field events at the Oval Bebington, and the season concluded with the Wirral Schools Championships for Years 7 to 9.

The Schools Cup is a team competition in which 14 or 12 athletes make up a team and score points for times and distances rather than places. Therefore, it involved a large number of pupils, many of whom were new to athletics. After a day of hard competition at the Oval, many athletes produced fine performances in very windy conditions. This meant our teams' scores were lower than the other regional scores, which had enjoyed some rare sunny summer weather in the previous week.

However, we were proud of their efforts and awaited the news of regional qualification. It was credible that we got two teams through to the North West B final at Ellesmere Port. How the Junior Girls did not progress was beyond me, as they performed so well on the day!

It was great to see the Junior Boys (Years 7 and 8) produce an excellent performance to come 2nd in the B final. Especially considering the team had to change on the morning of the event due to students' absence. Despite this, there were great performances all around, particularly from Nate Glascott-Tull in the 1500m, Tom Huxley in the 100m, and Joe Kurton in the 300m. This, along with a good all-round team effort, which included some positive Year 7 performances, helped to beat some strong Independent and Grammar Schools.

The Inter Girls finished joint fourth with some credible performances from a largely Year 9 team. This bodes well for the future. These included Scarlett Grundy winning the 800m and high jump, and

placings for Olanna Quinn and Sophia Woof in the 300m and Maisie Darlington Bullock in the shot put.

Nathanial Glascott-Tull deserves a mention for his qualification for the European Biathlon Championships in Madeira and being selected for GB Pentathlon. He also did well during the fell running season as well as on the track in the summer. Meanwhile, Scarlett Grundy had a dream summer, qualifying for the English Schools Individual Championships in high jump and the pentathlon. She also won the Merseyside Schools Junior Girls high jump. Congratulations to both.

The season was capped for Scarlett Grundy winning the High Jump National U14 title at the English Schools in Birmingham in the summer holidays. The first ever national champion from Birkenhead School. An amazing achievement.

Overall, it was a good year with some positive team and individual performances as #TeamBirkenhead develops its athletics squads and training.

Individual Honours

Nathanial Glascott-Tull: GB Pentathlon, GB Biathlon – European Championships Madeira

Scarlett Grundy: English Schools' Individual high jump qualification, English Schools' Multi-events pentathlon qualification

Merseyside County Schools' Winners

Junior Girls High Jump: Scarlett Grundy

Team Honours

Junior Boys: 2nd NW B final English Schools' Cup

U12 Boys: Wirral Schools' Championships Winners

Intermediate Boys: 2nd Wirral Schools' Championships

Intermediate Girls: 2nd Wirral Schools' Championships

Senior Football Report

By Mr Lindberg

The Senior football squad completed eight fixtures this year, primarily against other schools' second teams. Sadly, we lost four fixtures in a month to waterlogged pitches; otherwise, we would have exceeded ten games in consecutive seasons. Although there are only a small number of regulars, other enthusiasts were 'borrowed' from the hockey and rugby squads, thanks to the flexibility of Mr Rule, Mr Pillow, and Mr Taylor.

Able led by captain Freddie Spooner, who provided strength and determination both at centre-back and in midfield, the team won six games, losing only one tight match to King's Chester (a result we managed to reverse later in the season); a first defeat since 2019. Of those who played the majority of the games, Max O'Brien ('Player of the Year') was our most skilful performer, often taking on several opponents at a time (with the cry of 'pass it' ringing in his ears). Alex Williams (Players' Player of the Year) was ultra-consistent, mixing controlled aggression with excellent reading of the game across the back line, whilst Tom Golding (Coaches' Award) was a tenacious, rapid full-back whose pace led to lung-busting runs up and down the touchline. Left wing-back and set-piece specialist Will Ward (golf competition clashes apart) has been a stalwart for three years and, as he likes to remind everyone, has remained unbeaten, as he missed our one reverse. Cameron Steel ended up joint scorer with Guy Arnott (eight goals each) and, whenever we could get Guy released from rugby, their link-up play and finishing proved too clinical for the opposition defences. Will Malpas and Fin Eymond were reliable performers in midfield, whilst Harvin Sandhu and Louis Hancock filled in where needed. When available, Sam Bannon's pace and versatility meant that he was effective in several different positions, giving the squad balance. Eoin Moore came in for

the last few games, providing aerial dominance and calm assurance at centre-half. Others who played in several of the fixtures were Dillon Buckley and Year 11 students Zach Webster, Harvey Hibbert, Gabriel Mangan, Jake Smith, Fin Lawrence, and Adham Sabry. With no permanent goalkeeper, we relied on players to fill in, with Sam Bannon, Aly Maklad, Zach Webster, and Harvey Hibbert all performing creditably at various times. Strike of the year, however, came in the end-of-term House competition (won by outsiders Shrewsbury), with Dylan Carroll thundering in a volley from outside the box as part of a planned corner routine.

Although there is invariably a 'make-shift' element to each squad selection, the students have relished the competitive fixtures and derived a lot of enjoyment from them. Let's hope we can achieve a similar level of success next year.



Young Golfers Shine in Development Season

By Mr Pillow

Despite losing key players last year, the young golf team rose to the challenge, competing in both the ISGA singles and the newly formatted Swift Foursomes league. This season provided a valuable opportunity for several new players to gain experience in competitive matches.

The team secured impressive wins against Ashville Harrogate, King's Macclesfield, and Bolton School. However, facing more seasoned teams from Rossall, Grammar School at Leeds, and Worksoop College presented tougher challenges. Despite the losses, the young golfers gained valuable experience from each encounter.

Will Ward deserves special recognition for his exemplary leadership as captain throughout the year. A mainstay since Year 7, Will's dedication and contributions will be greatly missed. Stepping up too was Vice-Captain, Zach Webster, who impressed with his consistent play and detailed scouting of the opposition!

Finally, a special mention goes to Alfie Ogden, who, at the young age of 12, has already established himself as a force to be reckoned

with, competing in every scratch match while maintaining a low handicap of 4.

With a strong foundation built through this season's experience, the future of the golf team is undeniably bright. Well done to Dan Stanton, Peter Morris, Mim Sedgwick, Henry Oakden, and Teddy Briggs for their contributions to the team's success this year.



Parent & Pupil Golf Day

The golf day at Prenton Golf Club in June was a great success, enjoyed by by Old Birkenians, staff, parents and pupils from Year 4 to Lower Sixth. There was some great golf on show but most importantly everyone had fun.



Girls' Summer Sports

By Mrs Alford-Swift

Girls' Tennis

The enthusiasm for tennis has soared this year, with weekly practice sessions consistently drawing between 40 and 50 girls. To further hone their skills, we introduced a second training session led by a high-level external coach. This additional training has provided the girls with advanced techniques and strategies, significantly improving their performance.

For the first time, our school entered the LTA Cup, facing off against Wirral Grammar, Queen's, and West Kirby Grammar. While we did not advance out of our group, the experience was invaluable. The girls enjoyed the opportunity to compete in singles matches alongside the traditional doubles format. There were several standout individual performances, and the overall journey was immensely rewarding. Encouraged by this year's success, we plan to extend participation in the LTA Cup to all year groups next year.

Our Saturday fixtures began on a high note with decisive victories against King's Chester at the U12 and U13 levels. The matches against Merchant Taylor's were mixed, with our Year 9 team securing a win while the Year 7 and 8 teams narrowly lost. The season concluded with our Year 9 and 10 teams competing against King's Chester. The Year 9 team earned a well-deserved draw, while the U15 team faced tough competition from strong county players and unfortunately lost.

Girls' Rounders

The rounders season has once again proven to be highly successful, characterised by robust participation, strong performances, and impressive results across all year groups.

This year saw exceptional turnout at training sessions, with large numbers of girls from all year groups participating. The enthusiasm and enjoyment derived from rounders were evident, as we consistently fielded A and B teams at the Year 7 and 8 levels. This inclusive approach allowed girls of all abilities to participate and enjoy the sport, fostering a strong sense of community and teamwork.

Our teams achieved an impressive 68% win ratio over the season. We kicked off with a clean sweep against King's School Chester, winning in all four age groups. This momentum carried into a block fixture against The Grange, where five out of our six teams emerged victorious. In midweek fixtures against local schools, our teams remained undefeated, showcasing their consistency and skill.

The season's highlight, as always, was the Wirral Schools' tournament. Unfortunately, the Year 9 and 10 tournament was cancelled due to bad weather, where we had been strong contenders for the championship. Despite this setback, we participated with high hopes in the Under 12 and 13 tournaments.

Both our A and B teams performed admirably, advancing out of the group stages. However, three of the four teams were narrowly defeated in the semi-finals. Our Under 12 A team reached the final against Wirral Grammar. In an intensely competitive match, they missed out on the trophy by just one rounder, demonstrating their resilience and skill.



Orienteering

By Mr Mathew

The orienteering team this year had some experience behind them and were all keen to take on other schools in the Merseyside Schools League. The fixtures, as always, were held in some beautiful locations such as Stadt Moers Country Park, Little Budworth Country Park, and Hightown Dunes. Our students produced some impressive performances, with many of them winning the league in their respective age categories.

Birkenhead School medallists:

Boys Year 8: Bronze Christian Light

Girls Year 10: Gold Esme Mercer

Boys Year 11: Bronze Conrad Baker

Girls Year 11: Gold Michelle Liang

Boys Lower Sixth: Gold Sebastian Richmond

Boys Upper Sixth: Silver Jacob Williams

The School also came third in the national competition at Temple Newsam in Leeds in November.

We also sadly wish goodbye to our captain, Jacob Williams, and Anna Leuf-Nichols. Jacob and Anna have been loyal members of the club during their time at the School, and both have been instrumental in guiding and supporting younger orienteers over the course of this year.



Music

By Mr Robinson, Director of Music

It has been another superb year of music making across the whole School and my heartfelt thanks go to all staff, students, and parents who have supported us.

I am very lucky to be assisted by a superb team of staff, without whom we simply could not provide the range of opportunities available to our young musicians and my thanks to Mrs Coleman, Mrs Keighren, Mrs Keating and Mrs Thomas for their inspiring leadership both inside and outside the classroom.

A first special mention this year must go to Mrs Thomas who, as reported in these pages a year ago, took over the teaching of music to the pupils in Little School in addition to her existing roles.

It is with sadness therefore that she has decided to relinquish the role of Music Administrator in order to concentrate on the many other parts of her job here, and I would like to thank Becky personally for her unwavering loyalty and commitment to the work of the Music Department and we look forward to welcoming Mrs Rebecca Nolan in September, who takes on that particular role.

We said goodbye at the beginning of the year to Miss Julie Baker, who had taught brass here for several decades, and welcomed not one, but two Mr McGregors! Mr Cameron McGregor took over first alongside his role as part of the RLPO team of librarians, but was a little too good at that job resulting in him being offered a full time position over the water. I was absolutely thrilled though that we were able to entice Mr Brian McGregor to take over from his son at Easter, and the team effort of both is already bearing fruit as we see a noticeable increase in the number of brass players, especially in Prep.

We also bid farewell to another part of the furniture, guitar teacher Mr Neil Gaskell. February 2024 marked thirty years since he joined the music team, and he decided to retire at Easter to spend more time with his family. Neil was an outstanding teacher, who will be fondly remembered by many who are reading this, and I would like to thank him for all that he has done for several generations of Birkenian guitarists. Replacing him as guitar tutor is Mr Andrew Millar, an experienced teacher and performer and we wish him well over the coming years.

After three and a half years of excellent singing tuition, Mr Jon Christos moves on to work with the National Schools' Singing Programme and we look forward to welcoming Mr Samuel Knock to Birkenhead School in September to work alongside Mrs Barbara Ruzsics in the vocal department.

Our final new member of the team this year was Mr Chris Callaway, who joined our piano tutors in the Summer term. Our final goodbye of the year was to Mrs Krista Robinson, who had been teaching piano in Little School and Prep for a number of years. All our departing colleagues leave with our grateful thanks and warmest wishes for the future.

As you will see elsewhere in these pages, alongside fabulous images – mostly taken by the immensely talented David Coleman – it has been another incredibly busy year, with the Festival of Arts once again bursting at the seams with an even broader range of artistic endeavour, and Christmas being the inspirational highlight of the programme with superb contributions from all ages, from Little School through to the Chapel Choir (plus OBs) who sang so magnificently in the services of Nine Lessons and Carols and Christmas Eucharist.

The Lent term was full of more solo performing opportunities in the Chamber Music Concert and Spring Serenade, Chapel Choir singing at Chester Cathedral, and then the arrival of *Oliver!* A real 'highlight' for me was the addition of a fabulous new event in the Summer term – our themed 80s Night – immense fun for all involved, with terrific music, costumes and hair! The year ended in the now traditional way with the non-stop entertainment of Birkenian Week(s), and again my thanks and congratulations to all who took part.

Student leadership is strongly encouraged throughout the School, and particular thanks this year must go to Darcy Jenkins for her superb organisation of Jazz Night, Ben Cuthbertson for both continuing to run the music Instagram account and also leading the Chapel livestreaming team. Bonnie Lau has been an outstanding Chapel Choir Prefect, and Nat Ford the most professional and high quality Cantor. A number of Senior School students have also continued to help with Prep Orchestra throughout the year, and Emily Pownall has been a terrific mentor to the younger clarinetists and saxophonists. Good luck to new appointees, Choir Prefect Tabi Rushton and Senior Musicians Sophia Campbell, Seb Richmond, Tabi Rushton and Jack Varis.

Outside School, our young musicians continue to perform with prestigious national and regional ensembles, including the National Youth Choir, Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Choirs and Ensembles, Wirral Youth Brass, Out of the Blue Big Band, Wirral Symphonic Wind Band, Wirral Symphony Orchestra, and the Early Music as Education (EMAE) ensembles. Several of our students also gain additional musical experience by attending the Junior department of the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.



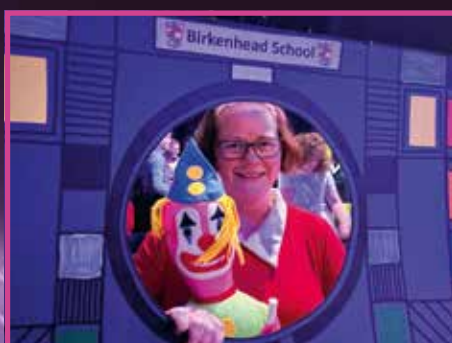
Music continued

80's NIGHT

What a night! We stepped back in time and rocked the night away in May! The hair was teased and the neon leg warmers donned and Bushell Hall was taken back to the electric energy of the 80s.

80s Night was a great success with the audience enjoying the infectious beats of the 80s. From iconic tracks by artists such as George Michael and Michael Jackson to the electrifying melodies of the Stone Roses, the audience was treated to a full spectrum of 80s classics! The stage showcased the talents of the Senior Choir, Senior Orchestra, Overdale Pop Choir, soloists, the String Ensemble, Clarinet Ensemble, Sax Ensemble, and Graham & The Hills, as they performed one hit after another whilst the audience sang (and in some cases danced!) along!

A fabulous event and thank you to everyone who came, to the Music department for organising and to all the students who performed.



Spotlight on Senior Clubs

MINECRAFT

- CLUB -

By Miss Purvis, Teacher of IT

Exciting news for all Minecraft enthusiasts!

This year, Birkenhead School has launched a brand-new Minecraft Club, offering a fantastic blend of creativity, teamwork, and fun. Students in Year 7, 8 and 9 immersed themselves in various activities, from building in survival mode, to participating in thrilling timed challenges like constructing spaceships or designing museums. One of the club's major highlights has been the group projects, where students collaborate to create our School. During the Open Day, the students displayed stunning recreations of the School Library and Overdale, showing a virtual tour for our visitors. In the Summer term, students have been working hard building the field and Sports Hall in anticipation of Sports Day.

Every student takes away something different from the club, with Ali Ishaq (Year 7) saying "I get to meet new people" and Georgia Alcock (Year 8) enjoying the "friendly competition and teamwork". The supportive and creative environment is open to all students, whether you're a beginner or a professional Redstone Engineer!



Philosophy Club

By Mr Bell, Teacher of English

Form-time philosophy has gone from strength to strength this year. Principally, a young thinker inspired by last year's programme researched and delivered his own philosophical topics including essentialism and existentialism, Hegel and Marx.

Adham Sabry has demonstrated astonishing academic drive and rigour in delivering inspiring seminars to a large group

of eager students from Year 10 to Upper Sixth. Mr Bell, coordinator of the project said, 'it is a pleasure to witness a gifted student deliver demanding ideas in a rigorous, succinct and approachable fashion. I hope that he inspires a new generation of thinkers in the school to follow in his week. Since he has taken over the sessions their popularity has soared. Mr Bell has continued to deliver philosophy seminars to a small but incredibly enthusiastic group of Year 9 students, 'next year, they will experience Adham's delivery which will engage them even more,' Mr Bell admitted adding, 'I am delighted that Mrs Dove has also brought her knowledge to bear into this project.'

Duke of Edinburgh Award

By Mr Hill, Duke of Edinburgh co-ordinator

In most respects, this has been a very straightforward year for Duke of Edinburgh activities, except that the weather has been mostly grim.

However, the students have shown remarkable resilience in the face of difficulties and, ironically, it is probably easier to carry a heavy rucksack for mile after mile across the hills in the rain, than it would be hot sunshine, though they have done that too in the past! North Wales has provided the setting for all our expeditions this year, whether in the Clwydian Hills, the Berwyns or in Snowdonia. We are fortunate to have such a wealth of exciting expedition country more or less on the doorstep. The walk is only part of an expedition, whether it is a two, three or four day excursion. Navigation, teamwork, personal administration, looking after each other, reacting to mis-haps, and project work are vital components as well. There is no doubt that our students learn important life skills on expedition and the concept of a whole school outing in Year 10 is, I am sure, an important

rite of passage for all young people, whether or not they actually complete their awards. My grateful thanks go to my colleagues, current and retired, who have supported Duke of Edinburgh this year. (Miss O'Connell, Mrs Fountain, Mr Carins, Mr Robinson, Mrs Dove, Miss Rere-Bekibale, Mr Roberts, Mr Oake, Mr Maher) Without their help, it would have been impossible to provide a substantial outdoor experience for more than 100 students. It has also been great to have parental participation in the form of Mrs Jenner, who has carved out her place as Base Camp Manager, to the benefit of us all. The fame of her cooking goes before her. Thanks also to our outside instructors, Nat Churchill, Tom Cart and Ross Worthington for your invaluable input.



Beyond the Curriculum in Seniors

Beyond the Curriculum is an exciting programme that incorporates a range of topics that extend learning beyond the national curriculum. The two-year programme runs across Years 7 and 8 in Seniors with students taking part in weekly sessions delivered by different staff and external visitors.

2023-24 Beyond the Curriculum programme

Year 7

Etiquette Training – Catering Team
 Leadership, Body Language & First Impressions – Mr Vicars, Headmaster
 Yoga – Mr Parry, Assistant Head / Head of Yoga
 Tenner Challenge & Study Skills – Mr Murdoch, Head of Overdale
 Poetry by Heart – Mrs Curry, English
 Drama – Mrs Groves, Drama
 Textiles – Mrs Cormack, Art

Year 8

Introduction to Politics – Mr McKie, Assistant Head
 Mental Health – Miss Cox, School Nurse
 Research and Presentation Skills – Mrs Reeve, School Librarian & Careers Adviser
 Product Design – Mr Evans, Design & Technology
 Critical Thinking – Mr Bell
 Creative Writing – Mr Blank
 Study Skills - Various



Beyond the Curriculum with Dr Keri Nixon

In June, our Year 7 students had an insightful session with Dr Keri Nixon about the dangers of social media. As part of our "Beyond the Curriculum" programme, these sessions help our students gain vital life skills beyond their academic studies.

Dr Nixon's talk focused on empowering students to stay safe online and emphasized the importance of peer support and collective responsibility, and building a strong community where everyone looks out for each other. Topics covered included the risks of depression, addiction, bullying and stalking from social media. This is the first of a number of talks that the students will receive from Dr Nixon throughout their time at the School on this topic.

Students Excel in Linguistic Olympiad

In the Lent term, a group of students participated in the Linguistic Olympiad and all earned Bronze awards:

Year 11 students: Amelia Bantock, Sadie Cardall, Michelle Liang, Storm Woodward

Sixth Form students: Rudro Guha, Scarlett Quinn

Special recognition goes to Amelia Bantock and Michelle Liang, who competed in the Advanced category. Their achievement is noteworthy given that Year 11 students usually enter at the Intermediate level.



Headmaster's Commendations

By Mr Vicars, Headmaster

A sign of a good teacher is one who inspires students to work beyond what is merely required and to produce work that highlights their further reading and passion for the subject.

It is one of the privileges of the role of Headmaster to sit down with students on a weekly basis to award Headmaster's Commendations for such work where they have shown independence of study, ambition, creativity and a desire to achieve their very best. Typically held on Thursday mornings, my Headmaster's Commendation discussions with students are genuinely one of the highlights of my week. This year, through such discussions with students from Year 7 through to Upper Sixth, I have learnt about UK female civil rights activists, about the differing presentation of masculinity across literature, recognised creative poetry, marvelled at lego sculptures, and embroidered quilts!

Inspiring teaching and academic drive and a thirst to know more is alive and well at Birkenhead School.



Value Added – A 10 Year Trend

Student outcomes at Birkenhead School are exceptionally strong. All schools calculate the value that is added to each individual student by comparing GCSE results with baseline testing in Years 7 and 9. In the State sector, it is known as the Progress 8 score. You will see from the graph below that our figure has been between 0.3-0.6 for each of the last 10 years.

This shows that each student, on average, achieves around half a grade higher in each subject than their ability profile would predict; a great testament to the learning environment in School and the collective efforts and commitment of students, teachers and families.

We are extremely proud of this sustained success and this summary provides real reason for celebration for the whole School community.

Figure 1 – GCSE Overall Performance





LEADERSHIP PATHWAYS at Birkenhead School

Positions of
Responsibility
Pathway

Mentorship &
Role Model
Pathway

Skills &
Knowledge
Pathway

At Birkenhead School we aim to provide opportunities for students to learn and practise key life skills both inside and outside the classroom.

One such skill is leadership, which for many will be essential as they progress on to further education and the wider world of work. Whether it's rising through the ranks of the military, managing a corporation, being a senior medic or running their

own business, Old Birkonians continue to attribute part of their success to the vast array of leadership roles that were on offer throughout their time at the school.

These opportunities were never more in abundance than they are today and year after year students leave our doors instilled with the values necessary to be successful in their chosen field and with the skills to lead those around them.

Positions of Responsibility

We would like to thank our Prefect and Head of School teams for their contributions during 2023/24. They are integral to the smooth running of day to day life at School.

They organise internal events and speak at a range of public events. It is an honour and privilege to be elected as a Prefect of Head of School and students who do so will have a record of service and commitment to the School.



Senior Heads of School



Senior Prefects



Overdale Head Student Team



Overdale Prefects



Prep Head Student Team



Prep Prefects

Prep Leadership Pathways



Little School Prep House Captains



Junior House Captains



Music Prefects



Little School Student Council

Digital Leaders

By Mr Pillow

This year, our amazing Digital Leaders from Years 5 and 6 have been busy sharing their passion for all things tech with the younger years. These students, chosen for their ICT and computer skills, have organised and run their own lunchtime clubs for Year 3, focusing on fun and educational activities like coding, digital art, and creating quizzes online.

They have also been lending a helping hand in the classroom, assisting the infants in logging in for their lessons and even getting involved in some cutting-edge projects. They were part of a special project trialling the new BBC Microbit technology, which we hope to roll out into the computing curriculum from September!

Our Digital Leaders can be very proud of all they've achieved this year. They've shown developing leadership skills and a real passion for technology, inspiring others to explore the exciting world of ICT!

Sienna (Year 6) said, *"I've really enjoyed teaching the younger children this year and exploring new technology. I've learnt a lot!"*

Ralph (Year 6) said, *"I've enjoyed the opportunities that it has given to try out new things so that the younger students can enjoy it next year. I like knowing that I was part of starting a new project!"*

This year's leaders were:

- Hattie, Lachlan, Anjali, Gabriel, and Seb (Year 5)
- Sienna, Zahra, Will, Ralph, and Isabella K (Year 6)



Mentorship & Role Model Pathway

Sixth Form coaching Reception children

Our Sixth Form students have been stepping up as coaches for our Reception children during their weekly Beyond the Curriculum sessions this year, focusing on 'Coaching & Leadership' with Mrs Jones. This has been an incredible opportunity for our younger children to learn from and enjoy time with their older peers while using the School's wider sports facilities.

Leadership is a cornerstone of a Birkenhead School education. We encourage all students to seize opportunities to lead and coach, building their confidence, skills, and knowledge along the way through different Leadership Pathways.

Our Reception students have thoroughly enjoyed spending time with their Sixth Form mentors. Such opportunities are truly special at our School. Other initiatives include Prep children reading with Reception and Pre-Prep students, assisting at clubs, and Sixth Form students mentoring their younger peers across the school.



Student Councils – Working Together

By Kate Ballantyne, Lower Sixth

This year, our School Council focused on fostering connections across all year groups, a goal we've pursued with enthusiasm and commitment. We as the Senior School Council members have regularly met with the Prep School Student Council, an initiative that has proven invaluable and reflects our school's core value of inclusivity.

Our collaborative efforts have provided a platform for discussing important issues and sharing ideas on improving our campus. The Prep Council were a voice for the rest of the younger student body. Suggestions from the Suggestion Box covered a range of ideas from a Prep Prom to altering the types of paninis available in the dining hall. But, the idea we all agreed to make our main focus of the academic year was campus cleanliness.

Recognising the challenges posed by persistent wet and windy weather, we have organised school litter-picking events. These initiatives have kept our campus clean and fostered a sense of responsibility and pride in our environment. Additionally, we've explored new bin designs to make waste disposal more efficient and encourage recycling.

Most importantly, our efforts have helped build strong relationships between Prep and Senior students. These connections provide a support system for prep students transitioning to the senior school in September. Senior council members now serve as familiar and friendly faces, ready to assist and guide their younger peers.

The collaboration between the Senior and Prep School Councils has been significant and rewarding. It has addressed practical issues and strengthened the sense of community within our school. As we conclude this school year, we celebrate our shared achievements and look forward to continuing this journey of inclusivity and connection.



Prep Student Council

Reflections From Our Heads of School

Darcy, Head of School (Joined Birkenhead School in Prep)

Having been at the school for 10 years, and with my time in the Sixth Form at an end, I am grateful for the opportunity to look back on my time at Birkenhead. Despite the long period of time I have spent at the school, ten years has felt like nothing at all, and as excited as I am to look to the future now I have finished my A Levels, I know I will miss the school community that has made me who I am.

A highlight of my School career has to be the wonderful friendship I formed with Grace Clarke when she joined the school in Lower Sixth. This bond has only grown stronger as we have served the School together as Heads of School – the first 'all-female' Heads in the School's history. The platform that this role provides to connect to all members of the school has been a real privilege. We have delivered Prep and Senior School assemblies, taken part in a range of charitable causes (most notably our 100k Steps in a Day Challenge in aid of the Door of Hope charity in Johannesburg), taken tours with parents and students, led the Senior Prefect Team and, at all times, attempted to be role models for the younger students. The opportunities this role has provided have developed my leadership and inter-personal skills and maybe, most importantly, enabled me to work with my friends as part of a team. Max, Grace and I have, quite simply, had the best time!

Another highlight for me has been the most amazing trips. I had a life-changing experience on the South Africa tour over the summer of 2023, playing netball against some of the most talented schools in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg, all whilst learning about the culture and seeing the amazing scenery that this beautiful country has to offer. The chance to spend time with friends whilst taking in the cultures of different countries is an opportunity for which I will be forever grateful, as, I am sure, will the students who took part in trips to Texas (NASA), Belgium, Iceland, and France and, more locally, on Duke of Edinburgh, as well as theatre tours to London and singing in cathedrals in our major cities.

Within the school, one of the key aspects that made my school career so enjoyable, was the wide array of sports and academic clubs available. Having not only had the opportunity to lead the 1st Team netball as Captain for two years, but also the chance to play all three focus sports at some point in my School career, developed in me a love of sport and fitness that has taken me into the world of competitive sports outside of School.

As I leave, I hope to pursue a career in the Army, alongside competing as a professional rugby player. The vast array of talent within the school in so many different sports never ceases to amaze me, with students having made it to county, regional, national and international standard. This talent also carries over to the arts, and the opportunities I have had to take part in many musicals. It has been a privilege to work beside so many talented actors, singers and dancers that this school develops, and which has led so many students, who found a love for the Arts, to follow a career in it.

As I look ahead to university, I know I will miss the community that has been my family for the last decade. I might be moving away for tertiary study and a career in the armed forces, but my heart will remain here as an Old Birkonian. I will definitely be a frequent visitor to the plays, events and the Sixth Form lectures but, most importantly, to see my sister take the baton from me and enjoy her time here, hopefully, just as much as I have done.

Grace, Head of School (Joined Birkenhead School in Lower Sixth)

Being appointed as Head of School this academic year has been an incredibly rewarding and transformative experience. Despite joining the School in Lower Sixth, I believe I have been able to take full advantage of the multitude of opportunities that, from first-hand experience, I know are simply not available at other schools. Having never picked up a Lacrosse stick before moving to Birkenhead School last September, I am grateful to have represented the school at two National School's competitions. However, arguably my fondest sporting memories are linked to captaining the 1st XI Hockey Team, including time spent playing alongside many of these talented players on the South African sports tour. Inspired through the aforementioned tour, I enjoyed undertaking the 100,000 steps in 24 hours challenge, to raise funds for the 'Door of Hope children's charity' in South Africa and the truly inspirational work they undertake. Achieving over double of the funding target, I thoroughly enjoyed completing the challenge alongside Darcy, with whom I have had the pleasure of working this year. Our efforts were further aided by accompanying students of all ages, as well as teachers. This is a demonstrative instance of the support network I have experienced over the past two years, both inside and out of the classroom, which has been second to none.

As a year group, our many and varied chosen career paths are testament to the School's individualised support, which encourages each student to find their niche. There are those who are planning to read Anthropology, pursue degrees in Chemical Engineering and Law, whilst others are opting for increasingly popular degree apprenticeships. The range of chosen career pathways displayed by the current Upper Sixth has been made entirely possible through both the Futures Team and the Nicholls Lecture Series, during which the latter has educated students on potential career paths including Genealogy, Biochemistry and, memorably, food product design, which ended with Ice Cream sampling for the entire Sixth Form.

The firm foundations of an education at Birkenhead School have not only given me the confidence to apply for my chosen career path of Dentistry; they have also given me the reassurance that, throughout my life, I will have the support of the Old Birkonian Society. An incredible opportunity to be a member of a network, which mirrors the tight knit community and values, reinforced to its future members from such a young age. I am incredibly grateful this year to have been able to reciprocate the support that the School had given to me and, despite being one of this year's leavers I am appreciative of the fact that my journey with Birkenhead School is nowhere near complete.



Art

By Mrs Margerison, Head of Art

This has been a wonderfully busy year for Art with many highlights.

In early October we took a large set of Sixth Formers to London on our annual trip. First, we visited Tate Modern to view their permanent collection then the 'Capturing the Moment' exhibition of contemporary painting and photography. A tube ride across London led us to the Victoria & Albert Museum to see the 'Chanel' exhibition; this much hyped show was a dream come true for the fashionistas in our group!

Two outstanding workshops contributed to this year's 'Arts Festival' with Music, Drama and English. The first focused on graphic style illustration with artist 'Emelbi', who impressed Year 9 students with his quirky graffiti portraits. Using pen, pencil and highlighter this productive day was hugely inspiring to all who attended.

Students from Year 11 and Upper Sixth were privileged to participate in an 'Everyday Objects Workshop' with internationally respected artist Lisa Milroy RA. It was fascinating to hear about her working practice and for the students to be led through a fast, creative hands-on experience. A busy Bushell Hall exhibition, celebrating GCSE & GCE students, combined with an Evening of Art and Music,

for a wonderful showcase of student talent. The three-week festival included numerous lunchtime events including a fun clay Pudsey Bear activity led by Lower Sixth students.

Over February half term, 44 students and staff travelled to Madrid for a Spanish and Art Cultural visit. The busy itinerary included a walking tour of historical sites and visits to the Atlético Madrid Football Stadium and Las Ventas Bullring. In the Reina Sofia Art Gallery, students saw 'Guernica', the iconic anti-war painting by Pablo Picasso, whereas in El Museo Nacional del Prado, they saw works by masters of European art including Goya and Velasque. On the last afternoon, students and staff attended a cookery course, taught in Spanish, where they prepared classic dishes including paella and tortilla.

An intense summer term of external exams led to impressive work; congratulations and very well done to all the students who completed their courses this year (those who think Art is an easy option have no idea!).

Finally, we were sad to say goodbye in April to our longstanding art technician, Jasmine, who was both a great colleague and crucial to the smooth running of the department.

As ever, a huge thank you to Mrs Cormack, Mr Ryan and Miss O'Connell for all their work and creative enthusiasm this year.

Amazing Artist Achievements 2024

In Birkonian Week, we celebrated talented art students in Years 7, 8 and 9 who have shown dedication both to Art and in meeting our departmental expectations. This includes demonstrating resilience when gaining new skills, independence, homework and in sharing good practice throughout the year. Each student received a certificate and one of our Amazing Artist Badges. We look forward to seeing them excel as they move up through the school.



GCSE & A Level Exhibition



Arts Awards Celebrations

On Monday 1 July, the Performing and Creative Arts Awards celebrated the achievements of students across the Senior School during the School's Birkenian Week celebrations. Artist of the Year 2024 was awarded to Anna Leuf Nichols, Upper Sixth, while the Watson Award for Creativity was given to Olivia Pownall, Upper Sixth.

This was the second year of the Art Department's Amazing Artist Award, which recognises achievements across different areas of Key Stage 3, including meeting department expectations and demonstrating skilful creativity. This year's recipients were Ellana Bennett (Year 7), Jennifer Venables (Year 8), and Layla Jones (Year 9).

To recognise students in Years 7 to 9 who have shown dedication to this subject, Art Badges were also awarded to Barney Pritchard, Ethan Poynton, Ivy Fowler, Jess Collier, Annabelle Snelson, Isobel Halpin, Lily Hardy, Jennifer Venables, Nicki Laing, Georgia Alcock, Hermione Adlard, Daisy Jones, Polly Vicars, Eleanor Wilby, Lydia Bates, Amelia Gouldson, Chloe Dixon, Pri Sharma, Olanna Quinn, Ollie Seed, and Finley Jones.





By Mr Jenkins, Head of DT, and Mr Parry, Assistant Head and Teacher of DT

As we reflect on the academic year, it's inspiring to see the growth and achievements of our students in the Design and Technology department. From Year 7 through to the Upper Sixth, our pupils have engaged in a variety of projects that not only enhanced their practical skills but also deepened their understanding of design principles, materials, and manufacturing processes. Here's a glimpse into the fantastic work accomplished across the year groups.

Year 7 students embarked on a journey of discovery and creativity, working on projects that introduced them to key concepts in design and manufacturing.



During the Michaelmas Term, they tackled the Chester Zoo project, where they designed and created puzzles for the zoo's gift shop. This project also highlighted important environmental issues such as deforestation and habitat depletion, teaching students how designers can minimise their environmental impact.

In the Lent Term, students ventured into the world of electronics with the 'Steady Hand' game project. They learned about electronic circuits and soldering components onto printed circuit boards, employing CAD/CAM technology to manufacture the game bases. The year concluded with a Textiles project in the Summer Term, where students designed and made zipped pouches, honing their skills in sewing and fabric manipulation.

Year 8 students built on their foundational knowledge with more complex projects.



They began with an electronic Night Light project, understanding light-sensitive circuits and their components. The Pewter Casting project introduced them to metals and alloys, where they designed moulds using CAD/CAM processes and cast pewter keyrings.

The Lent Term brought a Textiles project focused on creating 'bags for life' for chosen clients, emphasising sustainable design practices. In the Summer Term, students engaged in traditional workshop processes to manufacture scale models of Lego figures from pine, developing precision and craftsmanship.

Year 9 students faced more demanding projects that prepared them for GCSE-level work.



They began with a clock design project, refining their proposals through iterative design processes and employing resistant materials and CAD/CAM technology. The subsequent Textiles project involved

creating door stops from repurposed garments, integrating sustainability into their designs.

The year concluded with an Electronics project, where students designed and manufactured a stylophone, combining their knowledge of circuits with practical manufacturing skills.

In Year 10, students revisited and expanded their workshop skills through a mini-skills project.



They explored seating designs, conducting thorough research and analysis before producing prototype models. This iterative process encouraged creative and critical thinking.

The Summer Term introduced basic systems electronic circuits. Students used Yenka software to simulate circuits and then built functioning circuits, applying theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios.

Year 11 students focused on their NEA contextual challenge, exploring various aspects of design technology, from ethics to material costs.



They developed innovative design proposals and manufactured complex final products, preparing for their final summer examinations. This rigorous process nurtured critical thinking, creativity,

and practical skills, aligning with the high standards of the GCSE curriculum.

Lower Sixth students in Product Design covered a wide range of theory topics and engaged in practical projects like designing and manufacturing an occasional table.



This project utilised CAD/CAM processes and traditional cabinet-making skills, providing a solid foundation for their NEA projects in Upper Sixth.

In Electronics, Lower Sixth students delved into digital electronic theory, complex logic circuits, amplification, and programming. They created regulated power supplies and designed interface circuits using Assembler language.

Upper Sixth students built on this knowledge, covering advanced topics such as high-power switching systems and complex communications. Their major practical assessment involved designing intricate electronic systems, culminating in two comprehensive exams that tested their broad subject knowledge.

DT A Level Student Visit DMM factory

Our A Level Product Design students travelled to Llanberis to visit the DMM factory where climbing and arborial safety equipment is manufactured. The students undertook this visit to support their strong industrial foundation of learning and to witness, first hand, the many processes and testing strategies used in modern manufacturing.

Students were able to follow the process for manufacturing a carabiner from the raw stock form that enters the factory, all the way through the cutting, bending, forging, heat treatments, surface finishes and quality control and assurance best practice.



English

By the English Department

A Ghost Story at Christmas

We welcomed acclaimed author, Ramsey Campbell, for 'A Ghost Story at Christmas' as part of the School's Festival of Arts.

Ramsey and his wife, Jenny, listened to a range of superbly crafted stories. Ramsey has supported the School for a number of years, with the event being an annual fixture in the School's calendar. Students from Years 7 to Upper Sixth, along with guests from outside, shared the stories that they had written to the audience. At the end of the evening, Ramsey shared his insights into the writing process as well as his own role in the development of the literary horror genre before signing autographs and copies of his published work's.

There was also a selection of macabre art on display created by our Sixth Form art students. The artwork was inspired by fairy tales and was wonderfully surreal and dark which really set the mood.

Ramsey is an English horror fiction writer, editor and critic and since he first came to prominence in the mid-1960s, critics have cited Campbell as one of the leading writers in his field. He is an author of over 30 novels and numerous short stories, which have earned him critical acclaim and he is the winner of a number of literary awards. A collection of the students' work will be collated into an anthology and will be available for purchase in the Michaelmas term.

We would like to thank Ramsey for his continued support for the School.



National Poetry Day Competition

Congratulations to the winners and runners-up in our National Poetry Day writing competition, themed 'Refuge,' which took place in the Michaelmas term.

The standard was very high, and the English department was moved by the exceptionally poignant and thoughtful pieces selected.

- Joint Winners: Sophia and Amelia
- Runners-Up: Nathaniel, Adriana, and Annabel

Congratulations and well done to everyone involved!



Debating Team Success

Congratulations to our debating team who WON the district round of the Rotary Club 'Youth Speaks' competition back in February.

Their compelling argument on the motion, 'Why a cashless society is inevitable and beneficial for modern society' showcased a remarkable blend of thorough research and eloquent delivery. Their performance was not only well-structured but also engaging and entertaining, capturing the audience's attention from start to finish.

They attended the finals in April and despite not clinching the top spot, their performance was marked by compelling rhetoric and thorough analysis.

Jack, in particular, stood out as he was awarded the accolade for Best Opposition Speaker, with his lively, fluent and a engaging delivery. We are incredibly proud of Aaron, Jack, and Oliver for their outstanding performance at the UK final, their dedication and hard work have truly paid off, and Jack's individual achievement as the Best Opposition Speaker is a testament to his hard work and commitment.



National Reading Champions Quiz

On Monday 4th March, we were delighted to host the Merseyside and Greater Manchester heat of the National Reading Champions Quiz 2024.

This annual quiz is for students in Years 6–9, and a total of 92 students attended, forming 13 teams representing 12 different schools. Birkenhead School was represented by three teams: one team of four Year 6 students and two teams from Year 7. They were all very enthusiastic and should be proud of their efforts as some of the youngest participants. Well done to all!



English continued

POETRY BY HEART

The Poetry by Heart national competition has become a highlight for students nationwide, encouraging them to engage deeply with poetry through performance.

This year's event saw enthusiastic participation from the entire Year 7 cohort, with students supporting each other throughout the process.

Special commendations were awarded to Emilia Delaney, Ellis Wynne, Romain Trenor-Kempf, and Joshua Clark for their outstanding submissions. Emilia's heartfelt rendition, Ellis's powerful delivery, Romain's meticulous rhythm, and Joshua's expressive reading all left a lasting impression on the judges and their peers.

Poetry by Heart has encouraged a sense of community, a shared love for poetry and some healthy competition amongst our students. Encouraging them to discover the beauty of language and the power of spoken word, whilst demonstrating a personal engagement with literature from a wide variety of poets, places and periods.

In a tech-dominated age, Poetry by Heart highlights the enduring value of oral tradition and the unique connection forged through spoken words, celebrating both individual excellence and the collective spirit of the year group.



Taking Year 9 to 11 students to see *Life of Pi* at the Liverpool Empire in March was a mesmerising experience that left a lasting impression on everyone.

The incredible puppetry brought the animals, particularly the Bengal tiger Richard Parker, to life with astonishing realism and emotion.

Overall, the performance was a triumph, combining technical brilliance with a compelling and sad tale. The students left the theatre with a deeper appreciation for the art of puppetry and a profound connection to Pi's incredible story.



Year 9 to 11 students went to see the musical *Six* at the Storyhouse in Chester in September.

The Storyhouse's intimate setting allowed students to feel fully immersed in the performance, enhancing their connection to the characters and their stories. The bold costumes and dazzling staging added to the atmosphere, making the experience both entertaining and educational.



Year 11 students went to watch Ralph Fiennes' production of *Macbeth* in a warehouse in Liverpool at Christmas was an unforgettable experience.

The unconventional setting added a raw, immersive quality to the performance, making Shakespeare's dark tale even more gripping. Fiennes' portrayal of Macbeth was both intense and nuanced, capturing the character's descent into madness with chilling precision. The stark, industrial backdrop of the warehouse contrasted sharply with the rich, evocative language of the play, creating a unique and atmospheric staging. Students were captivated from start to finish, their understanding and appreciation of the text deepened by this powerful live performance.



In November students in both Year 8 and Year 9 went to see *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* at the Liverpool Empire.

Watching *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory* was not only entertaining but also offered valuable lessons about kindness, perseverance, and the consequences of greed. The students were engaged and excited throughout. The trip to the Liverpool Empire was a wonderful opportunity for Year 8 and Year 9 students to enjoy a timeless story brought to life on stage.

Maths

By Mr Hope, Head of Mathematics



Five of our Sixth Form girls took part in the Mathematics Olympiad for Girls, a

competition aimed at girls and young women across the UK, consisting of five challenging problems. Bonnie, Mim and Holly achieved Merits in the competition!



All of our Sixth Form mathematicians took part in the UKMT Senior Mathematical

Challenge. Many of them won silver or bronze certificates for their efforts and our gold certificate winners were Luca, Max, Dillon and Caiden.



Max qualified for the British Mathematical Olympiad in which he gained a Merit, Dillon and Luca won Merits in the Senior Kangaroo.



Now it was the turn of our Year 11 and Year 10 students to take part in the UKMT Intermediate Mathematical Challenge. Gold certificate winners were Prem, Michelle, John, Adam, Olivia and Luca plus Adham and Storm who were not available for the

photograph. Luca went on to win a Distinction and a bronze medal in the follow on round, the Maclaurin Olympiad.

Over the February half term break, all students in school were able to enter the Maths Education on Merseyside and Liverpool Maths Society Challenge competitions. There are three of these; one for Years 7 and 8, one for Years 9 and 10 and one for Years 11 and Sixth Form. Prize winners in these competitions were Ellana in Year 7 and Max in Upper Sixth.



A group of Year 11 and Lower Sixth mathematicians went to the Storyhouse Theatre in Chester for a morning of Maths Inspiration! This is a national programme of interactive maths lecture shows for teenagers. They want to show 14-17 year olds that there's far more to maths than taking exams. The four speakers were the host, Helen Pilcher, James Grime, who talked about Secrets of the Digital World, Katie Steckles on the Mathematics of Life and Colin Wright who entertained with Patterns, Predictions and Juggling! A very enjoyable morning and I am sure we will be attending future Maths Inspiration lectures.

Also in March, a team of four Sixth Form mathematicians went to Liverpool John Moores University to take part in the Liverpool Mathematical Society Maths Pop Quiz! They performed really well and came eighth out of 43 teams.

A team of four Year 10 students went to the Maths Feast competition at St Mary's Catholic College in Wallasey. They had an enjoyable time tackling a range of mathematical problems and won one of the rounds.



Now it was the chance for Year 8 and a few Year 7 students to shine. They took part in the UKMT Junior Mathematical Challenge. Again, many students won bronze and silver certificates and the gold certificate winners were Nathaniel and Felix who also qualified for the Junior Kangaroo and Gene whose score won him a place in the Junior Olympiad.

The UKMT Team Challenge and Senior Team Challenge both stopped during the pandemic and at last we have heard that the Team Challenge will start again next year so we look forward to entering a team early in 2025. Watch out for the return of the Senior Team Challenge too.



GEOGRAPHY

This year, the Geography Department organised two immersive field trips that offered students invaluable, hands-on learning experiences.

These trips not only brought classroom lessons to life but also allowed students to engage deeply with real-world geographical studies. Here's a look at the exciting journeys undertaken by our Year 10 and Lower Sixth students.

Year 10: A Spring Adventure in North Wales

Just before Easter, 50 eager Year 10 students set off for a three-day field trip to North Wales, a key component of their GCSE Geography course. Staying in the historic town of Conwy, the students explored various geographical topics through a series of focused studies. The first day saw students visiting the picturesque Aber Falls, where they conducted an in-depth river study. They measured aspects such as river velocity, discharge, and sediment size, gaining practical insights into fluvial processes and river dynamics. On the second day, the group travelled to Llanberis to conduct a regeneration study. This village, known for its scenic beauty and industrial heritage, provided a perfect case study. Students examined the impact of regeneration efforts on the local economy, environment and community, offering them a nuanced view of urban regeneration and sustainable development. The final day focused on a flooding survey in Llanrwst, a town that has faced significant flooding challenges. Students assessed the causes, effects, and management strategies related to flooding in the area.



Lower Sixth Winter Fieldwork in the Lake District

In February, our Lower Sixth A Level geography students braved the winter chill for a four-day residential trip to the Blencathra Field Studies Centre in the Lake District.

Despite the cold weather, the students engaged in various fieldwork activities, learning about data collection methods crucial for their Non-Examined Assessment (NEA). A significant focus of the trip was on teaching

students about various data collection methods. They learned how to gather and analyse data effectively, which will be essential for their NEA. This hands-on experience with data collection and analysis not only prepared them for their assessments but also equipped them with practical skills that will be valuable in their future studies and careers.

Despite the cold weather, the students demonstrated remarkable resilience and teamwork. The challenging conditions fostered a strong sense of camaraderie and perseverance amongst them. These qualities are not only vital for academic success but also for personal growth and development.



Introducing Mr Edwards

Due to the continued growth and expansion of the Geography Department we have recruited a new Geography teacher for September. Over 75% of current Year 9 students have opted to study GCSE Geography next year, we are increasing from one to two A Level groups and from September the Duke of Edinburgh Award will fall under the remit of the Department. We also have 4 residential trips going out next year to Iceland, Italy, Conwy and the Lake District! We are therefore delighted to welcome Mr Edwards to the team!

"Hi all! My name is Mr Edwards and I will be joining the Geography department in September. I studied Geography at the University of Liverpool. All aspects of Geography interest me but I am really fascinated by the environment and how we as humans can impact the world we live in. I love hiking, playing football and cricket and sport generally. I'm really looking forward to meeting you all in September and being part of Birkenhead School. "



Religious Education

By Ms Grey, Head of Religious Education

This year saw the successful introduction of two new courses in RE. In Year 9, we introduced a study of non-religious worldviews by looking at Humanism.

This encourages students to investigate, among other things, how non-religious people make ethical decisions and how and why they celebrate major life events.

We also introduced a new course at A Level with the start of Philosophy of Religion in Lower Sixth. This enables students to explore topics such as the different arguments attempting to prove the existence of God and the problem of evil and suffering for religious worldviews that believe in a good God.

We continue to examine the beliefs and practices of major worldviews such as Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, as well as ethical issues such as human rights and social justice, crime and punishment, and peace and conflict.

Earlier this year, the RE department took some Year 11 students to Liverpool for the European Youth Parliament Regional debating competition. They were a credit to the

School, worked incredibly hard as a team all day, and won both their debates on feminism and town planning, and poverty and crime.

A selection of Year 7 RE students also took part in a litter pick to enable them to put into practice their work on environmental issues and help a local community. We hope to roll this out further next year.



European Youth Parliament Regional competition

On the 28th February, six Year 11 students attended Liverpool John Moores University for the European Youth Parliament Regional competition.

In the world of EYP, Brexit never happened, and we are all united and tasked as committees to find solutions to contemporary issues facing Europe as a whole. The issues under debate this year included youth crime, marine biodiversity, AI and feminist town planning.

Our students were an absolute credit to the School and even teachers from other schools said so. They had clearly done all the research needed, had practised their speeches and were prepared to adapt them as necessary and they behaved politely and respectfully at all times, even when the competition got quite heated.

They each gained confidence as the day progressed, buoyed up by success after their initial debate, in which they won the public vote after being made to oppose a very attractive motion on increasing funding for youth services to cut youth crime. I have to say my heart sank when I saw we had been given that a few weeks ago! They very carefully opposed the motion on a number of technical issues, while agreeing with the substantive theme and successfully offered positive and constructive alternatives.

They worked so hard all day. It was nail-biting at times, but they won both their own debates and contributed thoughtfully in each of the others. I couldn't have been more proud of them. It's worth noting that most of the students had never been in a debating competition before and had limited experience of public speaking outside School. However, nobody would have guessed that. They each pushed themselves to do their very best and behaved exceptionally well throughout. The teamwork was evident and critical to their success.

Also worth noting that the Birkenhead School students were Year 11 and all the rest were Lower Sixth, which they clearly found intimidating when they first walked in...but not for long!



SCIENCE

By the Science Department

A level trip to Ainsdale

Despite the torrential rain the night before, the skies cleared over Ainsdale sand dunes to provide the best possible conditions for our A level students' fieldwork in June.

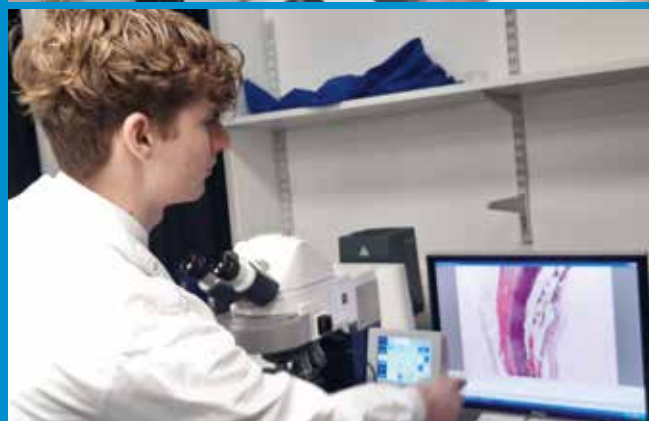
The trip was a wonderful opportunity for our Sixth Form students who were all keen to get stuck into analysing their data and writing up the investigation over their next few lessons!



Regenerative Medicine Visit

One of the Sixth Form Beyond the Curriculum courses this year was a Biology discussion group.

In addition to the several topical areas we researched, the world of Regenerative Medicine was explored in some detail, and culminated with a trip to the University of Liverpool's Regenerative Medicine facility. This multidisciplinary area of study covers stem cell biology, tissue engineering, bioengineering, biomaterials, chemical biology and gene therapy. Liverpool does some of the world-leading research in the field of eye disease, with the potential to advance the way patients are treated.





SCIENCE

continued



Royal Institution Youth Summit

By Luca Q, Lower Sixth student

In October, nine students from the Sixth Form attended the Royal Institution Youth Summit, held at the National STEM Learning Centre in York.

The event aimed to gather the opinions of young people to assist in the writing of the annual 'Christmas Lectures.' This year's topic is Artificial Intelligence.

In the morning, we heard from a variety of experts who gave talks on interesting topics about the applications of AI in fields such as scientific research and business. There were also talks focused on 'AI and Your Rights' and 'AI and Your Voice'. These greatly informed us about the role AI may play in society and some of the concerns related to it. We also had the chance to see a live demonstration of 'Miro,' an AI-powered experimental pet from the University of Sheffield.

In the afternoon, each student got to choose two discussion groups to attend, themed around the morning's talk topics. We had the opportunity to converse with other students from across the country, as well as with the experts giving the talks. At the end of the day, a feedback session was held, where we were able to share our thoughts with the team writing the Christmas Lectures.



Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine

The Lower Sixth Biologists had a fantastic time in March, accompanied by Mr Armstrong and Mrs Brooks, during their visit to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

They attended an engaging lecture on the biology of snake venom and its global impact due to snakebites. Following this, they toured the herpetarium, observing some of the featured reptiles safely behind glass. The visit concluded with thrilling venom extractions, where camera phones were ready to capture every moment!

We extend our thanks to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine for arranging this visit; the students thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



Royal Society of Chemistry- Top of the Bench Competition

By Mrs Moore, Chemistry Technician.

University of Liverpool, Central Teaching Laboratory.

Students were selected by each school to attend the regional heats of the competition in November. The aim is for them to experience a university laboratory and have some fun along the way. Each team is comprised of two students from Year 9 and one each from Years 10 and 11.

The students selected by Mr Lindberg, to represent Birkenhead School this year, were Amelia Bantock, Rhys Blackburn, Max Cross and Kylan Marley.

The day itself included three parts:

Poster presentation- this year's topic was Food Sustainability and the role that Chemistry can play. Our chosen topic was meat versus plant! The Judges commented that the poster was very informative and dealt with the ethics and science of alternatives.

The practical task included identification of some unknown solutions and included new techniques and ways of working. The team played to their strengths and did very well.

Each team member then sat a multiple-choice challenge. These are different for each year group and provided another opportunity to be tested.





Science Club Thrives

This year, Birkenhead School's Science Club, led by Miss Lightfoot and Dr Wilson, has seen an exciting journey filled with experiments, investigations, and a lot of hands-on learning for its enthusiastic Year 7, 8, and 9 students.

Led by Science Leaders Rebecca Wright, Erin McCausland, and Fareeda Nuru, the club took part in a national competition through All About STEM. Their final project focused on advances in food research, specifically avocado farming, with a submission poster showcasing their findings.

Closer to home, the students tackled a pressing issue: the failing privet plants outside the Science building. After conducting a thorough investigation, they determined the cause was poor drainage, leaving the plants waterlogged. Since their intervention, the plants have thrived, proving their hypothesis correct.

In addition to these larger projects, the club explored smaller-scale investigations, ranging from herb propagation and bubble snake surface tension experiments to engineering challenges like bridge-building. The students also got creative with slime, bath bombs, copper sulphate crystals, and even fireworks, delving into the chemistry behind their vibrant colours.

One of the year's highlights was the club's recreation of an A&E scenario, where students simulated an emergency abscess removal using surgical PPE. This followed last year's crowd-favourite "brain surgery" practical and was met with just as much excitement, sparking requests to share the experience on the school's Science Twitter page. Birkenhead School's Science Club continues to inspire curiosity and innovation among its students, proving once again that learning can be both fun and impactful.



Our Engineering Advanced Tutorial Group Students Get an Inside Look at Engineering and Nuclear Industries

Lower Sixth students enjoyed a unique opportunity to explore career paths in engineering and nuclear industries through several industry visits. The hands-on experiences provided valuable insights into potential future careers.

The students were first welcomed by NSG Environmental Ltd, a leading nuclear engineering consultancy based in Chorley. During their visit, they were given a guided tour of the site and had the chance to trial cutting-edge tools, including an advanced Geiger counter. The students also engaged in a discussion about the diverse career opportunities within the nuclear sector.

In another visit, the students had the privilege of touring the AMF Precision Engineering buildings. Former student, Zack Kirkman, who is now a part of the company, led the tour, giving them a comprehensive overview of the site and its operations.

A particular highlight for the group was towards the end of the summer term with a visit to Airbus. They were given an exclusive tour of Airbus's North factory, where the iconic wings for the Airbus A350 planes are manufactured. The students interacted with apprentices and graduates who offered valuable career advice, especially for those considering future roles in the aerospace sector.

These visits have provided the students with a practical understanding of the engineering world, offering an exciting glimpse into their potential future careers.



Biology Olympiad

The Lower Sixth Intermediate Biology Olympiad saw success, with Cameron Steel, Tabi Rushton and Joey Herbert achieving Silver Awards, and Callum Wilson, Evie Clewes and Scarlett Quinn achieving Bronze awards.

Some of the Upper Sixth students took the opportunity to complete the prestigious Biology Olympiad at the highest level, with Tom Ekins achieving a Gold award, and Anna Leuf-Nichols and Joel Radley achieving a Bronze award.

Brain Day

By Anna L-N, Upper Sixth Student

Before the Christmas break, we welcomed Dr Sutton back to the School to talk to our Sixth Form Biology and Psychology students for Brain Day.

The first part of the day was aimed at Upper Sixth Biology students. Dr Sutton began by enhancing our understanding of nerve cell communication with an in-depth look at synaptic transmission. We were introduced to certain disorders that can occur during brain development due to the absence of genes or the inability of the brain to fully separate into two hemispheres. Dr Sutton then explained what makes the human brain distinctive from other species. This was followed by a sheep brain dissection to examine key structures and compare its neuroanatomy.

Afterwards, Dr Sutton provided insight into recent developments in neuroscience, including the use of brain organoids to mimic neurological diseases for better understanding. Other future prospects were discussed, such as brain-computer interfacing, neural decoding, and neurobionics. Daunting but exciting possibilities were considered, including downloadable memories and thought-controlled computers. In the afternoon, Upper Sixth Psychology students reinforced their knowledge of schizophrenia and explored its link to crime. It was discussed whether having neurological disorders removes the ability to

control existing thoughts or causes a change in behaviour. As a result, questions were raised about the extent to which we have free will. Controversial law cases were examined, including the case of Paul Crossley, to consider whether criminals could be rightly blamed for their actions.

This complemented our classroom learning on forensic psychology and issues and debates around free will and determinism. The concept of neuroplasticity — where neural pathways in the brain change through growth and reorganisation — was also referenced in relation to gender, the brain's method of coping with trauma, and buffering the symptoms of neurodegenerative diseases like dementia.

Overall, it was a captivating day that offered great insight into the world of neuroscience and was a helpful contribution to our A Level studies.



Rocket Team Success at UKROC Regional Final

Our rocket team, comprising Year 11 and Lower Sixth students, recently travelled to York for the regional UKROC final.

With plenty of rocketeers and experienced teams from other organisations, they were fully immersed in the process.

It was a fantastic day, with both flights successfully launching and returning to school. They are now eager to enter again next year, possibly with two teams... watch this space!

ABOUT OUR ROCKET TEAM

Our rocket team, Luca and Ben (Lower Sixth), Michelle and John (Year 11), have been meeting weekly to design, build, static test fire, rebuild, retest, and rebuild again (you get the idea...) their rocket. Their team, 'Mission Ignition', unfortunately faced numerous ignition issues, with their biggest learning point being the change of motor used.

During one test launch, our Estates team nervously watched as they lost one rocket on the shot put circle! Thankfully, every stage was filmed, and data were collected from load cells and a range of camera angles. It has been an exhilarating experience, and plans are already underway for their entry next year.

This is the team's first year in the competition, and they have enjoyed a steep learning curve. Mrs Tharme and Mr Robinson are now certified to fly drones and oversee rocket launches at Mac Field!

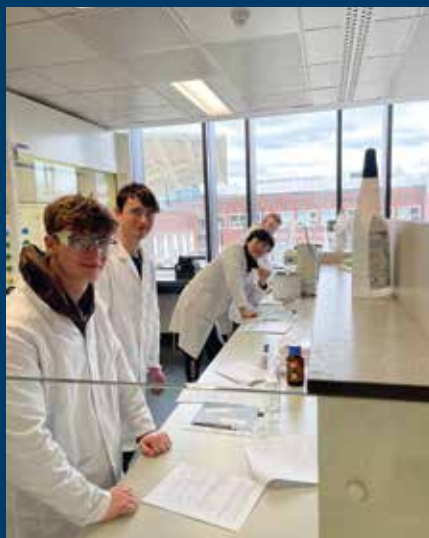




A level Chemistry visit to University of Liverpool

In March, our A level Chemistry students paid a visit to the University of Liverpool for a day of spectroscopy, spectrometry and organic synthesis.

The students used NMR, GC, and IR to confirm that they had synthesised benzocaine. A wonderfully insightful trip enjoyed by all.



Psychology

By Mrs O'Brien, Head of Psychology



In 2024, the decision was made to change the Psychology course specification from AQA to Eduqas to provide a broader and more rigorous academic study of the subject.

Leading universities highlight that the Eduqas examination board is the only one at A Level that fully prepares students for higher education by requiring them to carry out two personal investigations and answer questions on them in the examination. Students create hypotheses, gather participants using various sampling techniques, consider ethical implications, and conduct a full statistical analysis to check for significance.

For the first personal investigation, students hypothesised that sleeping patterns are affected by age. This research offers insights into strategies for managing and treating sleeping disorders. They created an online Google Forms questionnaire and distributed it to over 80 people using volunteer sampling. Learning how to create professional questionnaires and understanding the benefits of this method for reaching a diverse range of participants was invaluable for the students' research skills.

During the School Open Day in April, Lower Sixth students conducted their second personal investigation. They asked attendees aged 6 to 59 years old if they would be willing to participate in an investigation on age and reaction times. Students used the Stroop Test to test their hypothesis that 'As age increases, the time taken to complete the Stroop Test will also increase,' a prediction collectively made based on previous research. They used opportunity sampling to approach participants, set up their own equipment, recorded data, and analysed the results to confirm that statistically, they could accept their alternative hypothesis.

Engaging in such investigations was invaluable for students, providing them with insights into the research process used by psychologists they have studied and highlighting the time-consuming and complex nature of research.

This level of preparation and experience ensures that Psychology students excel at the start of a Psychology degree, where research is an essential part of the course.

Psychology students have many opportunities to explore the subject outside the classroom. During 'Brain Day,' Psychology and Biology students work together to learn about the inner workings of the brain. The Psychology side of the conference explores brain anatomy, methods of studying the brain, from open brain surgery to neuroimaging, and neuroplasticity: the effects of smartphones and vaping on the brain. Students also learn about the dissected brain, the effects of hemispherectomy, and have the opportunity to conduct a sheep brain dissection to experience first-hand what the brain looks like and how the theoretical functions they learn about in the classroom appear in real terms. Finally, students apply brain research to areas of the specification they are examined on, such as schizophrenia, drugs and the brain, and the challenges of mentally ill offenders and the law.

Students also visit Shrewsbury Prison to experience the history of crime and punishment, learn about the role of the media in sentencing, explore how a jury works, and consider the various roles within a prison, including guards, prisoners, and management, as well as how the prison fits into the UK judicial system as a whole.



By Ms Keegan, Head of Futures

Our Futures Team has been busy delivering a bespoke skills programme designed to prepare Sixth Form students for Higher Education and the world of work.

Through the programme, students participate in a range of engaging and interactive workshops and seminars offering valuable opportunities to develop their wider reading and research skills, as well as providing them with interview practice and tailored preparation for the various tests required for certain courses.

Sessions have included a carousel of skills courses, which is aimed specifically at developing interview, presentation, research and critical thinking skills. For those students that have needed interview practice in advance of university entry, they have been able to benefit from the School's extensive list of external contacts to be

able to put into practice and hone those skills developed in the Futures Programme in as realistic a context as possible.

The Advanced Tutorial groups have also been meeting regularly, and students have been encouraged to lead discussions on a range of current and thought-provoking topics. The groups consist of those applying to medical courses, including veterinary medicine and dentistry; those applying to study other courses at top-tier universities, including Oxbridge; and one for prospective Engineers. Sessions cover the intricacies of the application process, preparation for admissions tests and interviews, understanding the college system at Oxford and Cambridge and making effective use of open days. Students Those whose courses will contain a heavy mathematical component are given extra support to prepare them for interviews, assessments, and STEP examinations where required.

Futures Fair

On Monday 4th March our Futures Team held a 'Futures Fair' as part of National Careers Week, bringing together students and professionals from a wide range of fields.

Students were given the opportunity to meet employers and explore different career paths speaking to professionals in the fields of Gastroenterology, Forensic Psychology and Dentistry, to name a few. It was a fantastic opportunity for students to ask questions, network and browse the different stands to see if any matched their career aspirations. Our exhibitors commented on the confidence and genuine interest from our students and we are so glad many relished the opportunity – some as young as Year 7!

We were pleased to welcome some of our Old Birkonians as exhibitors for the event from companies including Rathbones, NSPCC, NHS, Progressive Energy and Lloyd's Register. We are also indebted to our parental and community support who represented DWF Law, Slater and Gordon, PFP Wealth, Legat Owen, plus many others.

As part of the fair there were also workshops on apprenticeships information, as well as demonstrations on our choices, careers and application support online programme, Unifrog. We would like to thank all the professionals who offered their time and advice, we are very grateful for their expertise and support of Birkenhead School students.



Sixth Form Taster Day

On Wednesday 12th June, Year 10 descended on the Sixth Form Centre to try out what was in store for them after GCSEs.

They had the opportunity to have a go at new subjects, such as Psychology, Further Maths, Business, Economics, Classical Civilisation and Theatre Studies, as well as learning about subjects they are currently studying at an advanced level. Lots of students chose to take the popular

Psychology and Business courses, with great reviews from the students about the fun and interesting aspects of the courses that they had learnt.

The day is to help students understand their choices for the future and potentially discover new routes, and subjects, that they may not have considered. Members of the Futures team were also on hand during the day in the Sixth Form centre to answer questions about future pathways and potential careers.

Apprenticeship Breakfast

Our annual Apprenticeship Breakfast event is growing in popularity amongst students at Birkenhead School, as many look to prepare for their futures.

The financial and work experience benefits that apprenticeships can offer as an alternative to other provisions are attracting much interest with savvy students and parents considering the competitive opportunities.

Mrs Fountain, our specialist apprenticeships advisor on the Futures Team, has supported many students to successfully apply for a range of apprenticeships over the years. As a result, her network of contacts of those studying apprenticeships and professional providers continues to grow. Many of these Old Birkonians are very happy to return to school and speak with current students about their experiences and the wide range of opportunities available. Austin and Max attended the breakfast, who are working in construction learning about

management and Quantity Surveying, and Zack Kirkman, who works for AMF Engineering in Bromborough, now recruits apprentices after undertaking an engineering apprenticeship himself. Molly, who left Birkenhead School in 2020, talked to students about her degree apprenticeship with Merseyside Police, and Tilly, who left in 2023, is currently studying for a Level 3 apprenticeship in Data Analysis at local company Auger Engineering.

Along with our Old Birkonians, we were very happy to welcome representatives from Unilever, whose apprenticeship programmes are growing every year. Ameer Husain is a fourth-year apprentice in Chemical Engineering at Unilever and explained to the students how he uses formulation engineering to look at toothpaste manufacture, along with process engineering to track manufacturing efficiency in products such as Persil and Dove. Rowan Meacher also attended from Unilever who is in her third year of a Laboratory Science degree apprenticeship, working on product development for brands such as Dove, Sure, Lynx and Comfort.



'Apprenticeship Breakfast' Students enjoyed a delicious breakfast while networking with apprenticeship providers



'Apprenticeship Breakfast Sam Jones' OB Samuel Jones talks to students about his experiences of apprenticeships at PWC

Where are they now

We are so proud of our students who have chosen apprenticeship routes:

Austin Dalby (2020 leaver) Redrow Homes Construction Management

Max Ingram (2021 leaver) OB Argyle Construction Quantity Surveying

Molly Rogerson-Bevan (2020 leaver) Merseyside Police

Jack Breheny (2020 leaver) Auger Engineering, Accountancy

Tilly McAlister (2023 leaver) L3 data Analysis Apprenticeship at Auger Engineering.

Mairead Anderson (2020 leaver) Digital Marketing Apprenticeship at the BBC

Louis Mason (2020 leaver) at Microsoft doing a BSc Professional Management

Natasha Keeling (2022 leaver) at Dyson is doing a BEng (Hons) and a Level 6 Product Design and Development Engineer apprenticeship.

Charlotte Dowell (2022 leaver) at Airbus is doing a BEng (Hons) in Aeronautical and Manufacturing Engineering.

Samuel Jones (2022 leaver) Computing at PWC



OB Molly Rogerson-Bevan talks to current students about apprenticeships in the police force

Nicholls Lecture Series

#inspiringtalksseries

See page 38



By Ms Smeaton, Head of Sixth Form

The Nicholls Lecture Series, named after eminent Old Birkonian, Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead, is a Sixth Form enrichment programme about which we feel justifiably proud.

Affording students an opportunity to listen to a variety of thought-provoking lectures on a range of topics, it provides them with valuable insights into the career paths of professionals from all walks of life. To give you a flavour of the sorts of subjects covered, this year we have delved into the worlds of food product design and civil engineering. Experts in the fields of medicine, finance and the Arts have inspired us. We have welcomed back Old Birkonians as well as new visitors to the School.

This year's speakers and topics have included:

Dr Paula Cowan - *From 1948–2023: The NHS at 75*

Mr Simon Venables - *Chester Zoo*

Mr Linton Stephens - BBC Radio 3 Presenter and Musician
The Perception of Success

Mr Mark Powell (Old Birkonian), Executive Director, Yes2Ventures
In Business for Good – or a White-knuckle Life in Social Enterprise

Ms Kirsten Stewart (Old Birkonian) - *Would you like Sprinkles with that?*
The World of Food Product Design

Mr Celyn Jones - BAFTA Award Winner, Actor and Director
Making it up and everything you need to do it

Ms Serena Wakerley - Participation & Engagement Youth Team
Leader *Your Voice*

Professor Stephen Smith (Old Birkonian) - *Is it Worth being a Doctor anymore?*

Mr Mike Barcroft - Innovation Strategist, Cream UK

Navigating the Changing World of Brands: An Introduction to Fashion & Advertising

Mr Dominic Richmond - *Financial Planning ... do we need it?*

Ms Hannah McLay - Senior Planner, BAM

Civil Engineering Projects & the People Who Help Deliver Them

James Maxwell (Old Birkonian) - *Introduction to Acquisitions & Mergers*

Rob Jones - *From Birkenhead to the Premier League*

Angelo Ghisletta - *Resilience Unveiled: The Intersection of Discipline & Mental Strength*

Josh Coyne (Old Birkonian) - *Living Life to the Full*

Paul Weedon (Old Birkonian) - *Mainstream Media Skills in the Modern Workplace*

Toby Vaughan (Old Birkonian) - *Building a Career, Demystifying the Finance Sector, and Fulfilling Potential*

Nicholls Lecture: Dr Paula Cowan

By Grace C, Upper Sixth Student, Head of School

At the start of term our Sixth Form welcomed Dr Paula Cowan MBChB, the Northwest Regional Medical Director of Primary Care. Throughout the lecture, Dr Cowan gave an insight into the 'Poor Law' and life before the NHS was founded in 1948 and even the first heart transplant on the NHS in 1968. The lecture then followed onto how Dr Cowan's career now mainly evolves around preventative care. Dr Cowan was inspirational in describing her somewhat lengthy journey to her current job, including qualifying from the Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin and practicing in Internal Medicine, Critical Care and Anaesthesia within Ireland.

Dr Cowan also spoke about a vital aspect of her career: listening to what patients aren't telling you and not what they are telling you, as well as some of the more challenging situations that are often presented in the healthcare profession. A diverse range of job roles in the NHS including Clinical lead for Urgent care at Wirral CCG although she mainly leads on women's health and respiratory medicine, Dr Cowan held the attention of the Sixth Form captive whilst she encouraged us to 'be chill like a duck' - to appear calm

on the surface whilst working hard or in this case, paddling hard, underneath.

We ended the lecture with questions from many intrigued Sixth Formers, including questions such as "How would you like to see the NHS in 25 year's time?" and "If you were to leave your current job role today, what lasting impact would you like to think you have had?", to which Dr Cowan answered with enthusiasm. The lecture followed with a lecture lunch, including aspirational medics and dentists having the opportunity to discuss diverse careers and opportunities in the medical field.



Sixth Form

International Women's Day

On Friday 8th March, a small group of Sixth Form students attended an Inspire Brunch for International Women's Day.

The event, hosted by Soroptimist International of Bebington, introduced students to the work of the Soroptimist Society, and gave them an insight into the charities the branch serves, both at local and international level. The students found the morning interesting, inspiring and thought-provoking.

Kate, Lower Sixth student, attended the day and wrote this piece for the Liverpool Echo which appeared online:

"As a 17-year-old girl, I am still in the process of figuring out what womanhood is. However, my journey so far has been incredibly enriching. I am honoured to represent my age group in discussing the challenges and opportunities that accompany being a young woman in today's society."

The newer generations have introduced fresh perspectives on womanhood, leading to ongoing debates about women's roles and the sensitivity surrounding the concept of feminism. Discussions that are vital as our world progresses.

I firmly believe in the boundless potential of women, and at 17, I've encountered no barriers to pursuing my aspirations.



I was lucky to grow up in a family that champions both strong women and men who support them. I've been brought up to believe in limitless possibilities for women from a young age. This upbringing has empowered me to voice my opinions without hesitation and to pursue any path I desire, whether in sports, academics, or social spheres.

The increasing presence of women in STEM fields has particularly intrigued me, fuelling my interest in pursuing a career in Physics and Chemistry. Despite these fields traditionally being male-dominated, I feel confident in my ability to pursue my passions.

Thanks to the nurturing environment provided by my family and school, I am confident that I can achieve anything I set my mind to."

Hear from Emme, a new Sixth Form Joiner

Lower Sixth student studying Maths, Biology and PE.

"My move here to to study my A Levels was undoubtedly one of the best decisions I have ever made. Transitioning into the school was an easy and enjoyable experience, as I was accepted by my teachers and peers who demonstrated the Birkenian value 'inclusivity', making the school feel such a welcoming environment."

Since joining, I have been spoilt by the sporting opportunities offered in contrast to my previous school. During my first academic year I have taken full advantage of all the sports available to me. I was warmly welcomed at the beginning of the year to extra-curricular lacrosse training despite not having played before and thoroughly enjoyed the experience and hope to continue next year. I have been fortunate to represent the school in various fixtures playing in the 1st XI girls' hockey team, 1st XI boys' hockey team, golf team and the 1st VII girls netball team. The high-quality facilities, together with regular training sessions and expert coaching, has undeniably been a contributing factor to my recent success of being selected for and representing the U18 Girls' Welsh Hockey Team.

This year I have thoroughly enjoyed my studies and I owe this to the inspiring and dedicated teachers who have been willing to go the extra mile, both inside the classroom, and by supporting me in all aspects of Sixth Form life. I've had the opportunity to participate in various

academic olympiads and organised trips to external lectures, field trips and universities have further enhanced my learning.

The breadth of opportunities which the school has afforded me in my short time here has been immensely motivating. I have experienced dedicated gym sessions led by friendly coaches from a respected local gym and in my weekly 'Beyond the Curriculum' sessions I have thoroughly enjoyed acquiring coaching and leadership skills by overseeing activities for Reception students. Additionally, the Nicholls Lecture Series have delivered thought-provoking lectures representing a diverse range of careers.

As my first year here at Birkenhead was coming to a close, I was humbled to have been chosen to be a Senior Prefect. I feel that this role will enable me to give something back to the school which has already given me so much in such a short period of time."



Sixth Form Leavers

- Class of 2024 -

Leavers 2024

George Ayre, Oliver Barton, Agatha Boardman, Dillon Buckley, Dylan Carroll, Grace Clarke, Luca Dawson, Bryce Edwards, Thomas Ekins, Nat Ford, Tom Gibson, Thomas Golding, Rudro Guha, Max Hendry, Darcy Jenkins, Bonnie Lau, Anna Leuf Nichols, Rithik Mahapatra, Serena Makki, Caiden Marley, Ewen McPherson, Natasha Misra, Eoin Moore, Daisy O'Halloran, Emily Pownall, Owen Price, Joel Radley, Freddie Southworth, Max Sowerby, Freddie Spooner, Emma Taylor, Nathan Walker, James Wallwork, William Ward, Jacob Williams, Jacob Wilson.



Staff Leavers



Jasmine O'Connell

By Mrs Margerison Head of Art

Jasmine joined the Art Department at Birkenhead School in November 2018.

She fitted into the department immediately and we were soon left wondering how we ever managed without her. The role covers a wide range of responsibilities including preparing materials, firing the kiln, rolling out clay, displaying work and washing up. Despite the tedium of the last task, Jasmine was always positive about the role and great company. Having a degree in Fine Art, meant that she could provide creative guidance and ideas, and was popular with all students. A qualified climber and lover of the outdoors, she assisted with Duke of Edinburgh and taught climbing in term time and over the summer for Star Activities. She also ran Star Activity Art Weeks. Mrs Cormack and I wish her all the very best for the future and want to thank her for her hugely appreciated contribution to Art at Birkenhead School.



Kate Musgrove

By Mr Hope Head of Mathematics

Kate has been an amazing teacher during her six years in the Mathematics department here at Birkenhead School.

She started here in September 2018 and made an immediate impact with her excellent teaching and no-nonsense approach to learning. You can guarantee that there is always an excellent learning atmosphere in her lessons and indeed in her form classes.

With the desire to enable every individual to reach their potential, she has helped hundreds of students achieve the best examination results possible whether that be in GCSE, A Level Maths or A Level Further Maths. She has contributed extensively to the successes of the department and I have always been able to rely on her to suggest, adopt and implement new initiatives effectively and efficiently.

Her work with her form classes has been equally wonderful. She has helped her tutees become better independent learners, public speakers and singers! Under her watch they have also become much better at taking responsibility to support one another.

Her involvement in school has extended beyond Mathematics into clubs to study, amongst other things, Asian culture and this year includes her popular weekly Lego Club.

She has been a wonderful colleague to us and it has been great fun working with her. Birkenhead School's loss will be a major gain for Kate's new school, Alsop High School in Liverpool, and we send her our very best wishes in her new role there.



Mark Turner

By Mr Vicars, Headmaster

Mark Turner, the School's Bursar and Clerk to the Governors, joined Birkenhead School in November 2012 after twenty years within the police force of West Mercia.

Over the last twelve years, the School has greatly benefitted from Mark's broad skill set as befits a Chief Superintendent, and he has matched this with his selfless capacity for hard work and a desire to always do right by the whole community.

As the School's business lead, in charge of the Support staff within the School who number over 100, Mark led the School through significant milestones in recent history, including the financial challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in preparations for VAT on fees and the removal of business rates relief. As Clerk to the Governors, his detailed strategy papers on these and on other matters, have been instrumental in supporting the Governors and the School's Leadership Team in making well-informed and timely decisions.

Yet the role of Bursar extends far beyond the routine, and there has been very little that Mark has either been unable, or unwilling to turn his hand to during his time here. Working backstage on productions, driving minibuses for the 'Be Inspired' programme, taking cricket teams – Lancashire Cricket Club being another passion – none of these on the Bursar's job description, but Mark has done these, because they simply needed to be done – and it was the right thing to do.

Mark leaves to take up a place to study Theology at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, a hugely exciting next phase in his and his family's life, and perhaps his calling; his contributions here have always been underpinned by his strong faith.

We thank Mark for his vast contributions to the School community over the last 12 years; his are significant shoes to fill, but I know that many colleagues and I will stay in contact, and we wish the Turner family well over the coming years.

Staff Leavers

We also said goodbye to the following staff during the year and wish them all the best.

Howard Doyle, Minibus Driver
 Peter Morgan, Minibus Driver
 Katrina Hughes, Early Years Practitioner
 Suzanne McIndoe, Finance Assistant
 Sarah Hadley, Head of Psychology
 Salmana Seayam, Teaching Assistant
 Kirsty Lunn, Early Years Practitioner and Fun Club Supervisor
 Kathy Jordan, Office Administrator
 Peter Leigh, Estates Worker
 Hayley Beaman, Early Years Room Supervisor
 Laura Wilson, Teacher of Chemistry
 Gareth Evans, Seniors Teacher (Temporary)

A Level Results 2024

This year, students celebrating record A Level results with a quarter of grades achieved were A* and 62% were awarded A*-A.

Mr Vicars comments: 'Birkenhead School is not a school driven by data, nor the hot-headed pursuit of grades at all costs; instead, we believe in students being inspired both in the classroom, and in their sporting, creative and wider co-curricular pursuits where so many life skills are learnt and friendships gained.'

'The results are testament to this philosophy, to the hard work of the students and to the professionalism and talents of all staff. I also wish to pay tribute to our families who trust in the School, and whose teamwork with us over so many years, often since Nursery, leads to deserved outcomes like today's. I truly believe that an investment in a child's education is the very best investment families can ever make, and a Birkenhead School education is one where we are committed to all-round excellence, and balance.'

A levels provide the gateway for students to progress onto the next stage of their educational journey. An exciting feature of the bespoke advice provided by the School's Futures Team is the diversity of routes that the students now take following today's results. From Computer Science to Chemical Engineering, Medicine to Mechatronics, Accountancy apprenticeships with PWC to Army Scholarships, Art Foundations and Artificial Intelligence, students will now take up some of the most competitive degree and apprenticeships places at institutions across the UK.

Mr Vicars continues 'While we rightly celebrate the pathways these students now take, perhaps the most important outcome from today's results is the self-belief, resilience and skills that these students will now take with them on their individual journeys. Many have overcome considerable adversity along the way and knowing that they can overcome challenges and still deliver at the highest level will stand them in great stead as they now join the extensive global network of Old Birkenians.'



GCSE Results 2024

August saw the publication of our GCSE results, with 21% of all grades awarded Grade 9 and our Added Value score showing that Birkenhead School adds, on average, over half a grade higher in every subject compared to their baseline expectations.

Headmaster, Paul Vicars, commented: 'We are exceptionally proud of all our students who collected their results, due reward for the dedicated efforts of staff, students and their families over the two-year GCSE course. The School's academic focus is aimed at delivering excellence for all, measured not only by many students achieving the very highest grades, but also strong Added Value scores, and we are delighted with both outcomes.'

21% of all grades were Grade 9, with 59% Grades 7-9. Over a fifth of students secured all their grades between Grades 7-9 while, quite remarkably, 5 students scored 10 or more Grade 9s – a very special achievement. This year's Added Value score, the closest equivalent to Progress 8, means the School continues the trend over the last decade of adding, on average, over half a grade higher in every subject for each student compared to their baseline expectations.

Mr Vicars continues: 'While very pleased with today's results, one of the great features of a Birkenhead School education is that academic study is just one part of our provision. Today's students have immersed themselves in the co-curricular activities offered by the School; participation in sport, music, drama, debating and a rich variety of other clubs and activities on offer are integral to the daily life of students, enhance their grade outcomes, and provide necessary balance and perspective. We celebrate today's cohort who have been great contributors to the School community over many years, many gaining regional and

national representative honours across many sporting and creative disciplines.

The majority of students receiving their GCSE grades now proceed into the School's Sixth Form. Reflecting the quality of GCSE results, and the School's outstanding A Level pedigree, September's Sixth Form will be the largest seen in the last decade. While approx. 140 students remains small by the standards of many local schools, the bespoke and focused support, both academic and pastoral, and the co-curricular and leadership opportunities that such a size enables, is a hallmark of a Birkenhead School education, and attractive to broad-minded and ambitious learners who join the School community from outside for their Sixth Form education.

In addition to the regular academic curriculum, these students will enjoy a range of further opportunities designed to provide the launchpad and mind-set for success after school. These include the Beyond the Curriculum programme (BTC) which provides students with core skills including critical thinking, presentation, research and interview skills, bespoke Oxbridge, medical and engineering pathway preparation and support from the dedicated Futures Team regarding UCAS and top degree apprenticeship opportunities.

As role models within a School that starts in the Nursery, Sixth Formers have opportunities to volunteer, mentor and lead their community. It is an exciting place to further their academic and wider passions, develop lifelong friendships, skills and independence of thought, and gain access to a global network of Old Birkonians who are keen to help recent leavers and university students at the start of their careers.







THE OLD BIRKONIAN SOCIETY

OLD BIRKONIAN SOCIETY BULLETIN



Chairman's Report 2023-2024

By Will Roberts

The AGM took place on 16th September 2023 with nothing controversial on the agenda. The President, Pippa McKeown, chaired the meeting while the

new Treasurer, Rob Young, organised the accounts for the first time. Around 25 OBs were in attendance.

Council meetings continue to be held on campus and, of course, the Society continued to support pupils at the School through Sixth Form scholarships which I know were appreciated.

The under-25s drinks were held again early in September and was well supported, while the annual golf day made a welcome return at the end of the month at Royal Liverpool Golf Club. As usual this was well supported with around 45 OBs competing.

November was a busy month again with the School hosting a number of OBs on the premises for the Remembrance Day service on 10th November. This was a very poignant affair with all pupils from Seniors "on parade" on the School field while the names of OBs lost in the Great War were read out by the Heads of School. All OBs are welcome to attend this year's service by registering through Birkonian Connect.

The London dinner took place the following Friday in the Houses of Parliament, which saw 150 OBs enjoy a fabulous dinner in a unique setting. Our thanks to Karl McCartney for arranging the venue. Details of this year's dinner can also be found on Birkonian Connect. Meanwhile, the Bazaar drew in the usual crowds at the end of the month.

Two more OB Liverpool Business Lunches took place over the course of the year, one in early December 2023 and the other in May 2024. The December lunch was held at the Restaurant Bar and Grill again and was the first lunch to have official sponsors, which was most welcome. I am pleased to say that these sponsors returned to help subsidise the May lunch as well at Hawksmoor. These sponsorship opportunities are available for any OB to arrange so if you would like to get involved you will not be turned away! This means the cost of places for these lunches is greatly reduced.

Both lunches were well attended, and the average age is noticeably coming down as recent leavers start to buy into the concept. Some very positive conversations took place at the last lunch between established professionals and recent school leavers who are heading off to University. There is a lot of value to be gained by attending these lunches at whichever stage OBs are in their career. There is a wealth of experience and expertise amongst our

membership which should be an invaluable resource for current pupils and recent leavers to access for their future benefit. These lunches also provide another forum to allow OBs to engage with one another in a relaxed setting.

The traditional rugby fixture against Birkenhead Park sadly fell victim to the weather for a second year running while another wine tasting event was due to take place in June 2024 but had to be postponed.

There continues to be a lot of hard work and investment going into the Society with Council members working alongside Carol Keegan and the Headmaster to continue to make progress. Birkonian Connect personifies these efforts and I would encourage all OBs to sign up and make use of this facility as it evolves. Registering and paying for events has now switched over to this platform to make the whole process more efficient while members can keep up to speed with news and events. It is another step forward towards modernising and providing a more useful tool for OBs.

We are also trying to make a more inclusive Society that appeals to all ages and genders. The Council members are all working very hard in voluntary roles to make something special for both existing and future generations of OBs. We are aiming to put in place firm foundations to allow the Alumni network to operate within a modern, efficient system. We want a Society that enhances the experiences of all its members by focusing on three pillars: Social, Careers and Networking, but this needs the input and engagement of the membership.

If any members would like to discuss setting up local branches of the OB Society or arrange any events, please do get in touch with Carol Keegan or me. It would be wonderful if we could have events spanning several countries and continents. The OBs are more than happy to help with any new ideas and initiatives from all demographics. Meanwhile, we continue to have better engagement with the School, involving staff and sixth formers to see what might work for the newest cohort of OBs when they leave school.

As ever, on behalf of the membership, I would like to thank my fellow Council members that work so hard on behalf of the Society as well as the Society's President, the Headmaster, the Archives department, and all the other voluntary leaders of our Group activities. Lastly, a special mention for Carol Keegan and Michelle Wardman without whom very little OB related business would get done.

The OB Society continues to evolve and so much progress has been made to make it useful to our membership, both old and new. Please continue to support all the events throughout the year by registering via Birkonian Connect.

I look forward to seeing a lot of fellow OBs in the coming year at the various OBS events that we are organising.

Beati Mundo Corde.

Will Roberts (1982-1996), Chairman of the Old Birkonian Society

News

OBs feature in MCC match

On Wednesday 19th June the School's annual cricket match against the MCC, took place on the main School cricket field.

The MCC are a team of adults, some of whom have played to a very high level and consist of some of our Old Birkonians, and against current pupils.

It was a good game and a good challenge for the School's current team on the day.

MCC won by 134 runs, MCC 216-3, Birkenhead 82 all out

Within the MCC team were OBs Ashley Davis, 2010 leaver, Dominic Smith, 2016 leaver, and Madeleine Arthur, 2020 leaver.

OB Madeleine Arthur was the first girl to play in the First Team for the School. She is currently studying for a Master's Degree at Loughborough University but manages still to find time to be chair of the University cricket club and captain of their First Team. She also broke a record at Bucks, which is a fantastic achievement within the sport.



Grafton Morrish golf tournament 2023

After successfully negotiating regional qualifying at Fixby in Yorkshire, our team of Kris Archer (capt), Carl Adams, Marcus Stam, John Hargreaves, Dominic Barnes and Josh Sims took part in the finals in early October. The venues are the magnificent links courses of Hunstanton and Brancaster in Norfolk and the format is scratch match play foursomes. Regional qualifying reduces the field from over 100 initial entrants down to the top 48 schools.

We had a tough draw and progressed past Mill Hill 3-0, St George's Weybridge 3-0, Charterhouse – 2-1, Epsom (alma mater of our Headmaster Paul Vicars – himself an accomplished golfer) – 2-1 and George Heriot's – 2-1. We then faced the formidable challenge of the famed sporting school, Millfield, in the finals. All of the team performed well and the result was 2.5 – 0.5 in our favour.

Throughout the event, there were some very close finishes with every team member having to make a significant contribution at critical moments.

This is the fourth Old Birkonian win since 2011 – a significant achievement against the resources of some very large schools – some of whom run golf scholarship programmes and even have their own on-site golf courses.



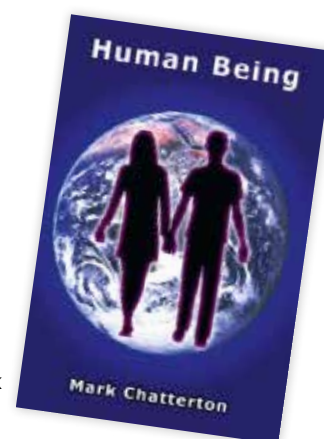
Human Being published work

OB Mark Chatterton proudly gives us details about his new book which has just been published; he writes: "My new book, 'Human Being' has just been published by Hadleigh Books.

It is a snapshot of life in the 21st century through the eyes of a visitor from another planet. The visitor travels around the world observing all the various actions which humans are doing to the planet and to each other. This includes such things as going to work, using money, waging war and

travelling around, as well as the different feelings humans have for each other and the animals they share the planet with. It is a mixture of fact and fiction and is at times both humorous and serious."

It is available as both a paperback and an e-book from Amazon or hadleighbooks.co.uk



OB Pilot's cyber-bridge practice for naming ceremony 'The Queen Anne'

River pilots are using a state-of-the-art computer simulator to rehearse the arrival in Liverpool of Cunard's new cruise ship, the Queen Anne. OB James Smart was fortunate to be part of this.

The Queen Anne is the second-largest ship to be built by Cunard, and this was named in a ceremony on the Mersey in Liverpool on Monday 3rd June.

James said, "It's a huge team effort bringing in a ship of this size into the Port of Liverpool.

"She's a huge ship, and there's a lot of ship out of the water as well. It's always the wind, really, that we have to be careful of. Although she's a very powerful ship you have to be careful. And of course the River Mersey has an extremely powerful tidal range."

James joined the Queen Anne and crew in Belfast on Sunday 2nd June, to help bring her into the Mersey at sunrise the following day.



Gifts for 2023 leavers

This year the OBS have again gifted the Upper Sixth leavers with an OB branded hoodie and water bottle, which we hope they enjoy!

The OBS are looking to reinvigorate its offering of branded items, so if you have any requests or ideas for particular items, please do let us know via miw@birkenheadschool.co.uk

The First Hundred Years of 20th Birkenhead Scouts

By Kelvin Britton – Lead Volunteer

Everyone who has ever given a public talk knows how things can conspire to ruin the best of preparation; late arrival and failure of audio-visual equipment can ruin everything. So it was in the old YMCA hall in Birkenhead on 24th January 1908. Nevertheless, Robert Baden-Powell persevered, and during his talk announced that he would be inaugurating an organised Boy Scout movement from that date.

It was taken up by two groups within the town, and although the 1st Birkenhead has long since folded, the 2nd has maintained its claim to be the oldest Scout Group in the entire world. There were boys from Birkenhead School in the audience, but they did not feel equally inspired to become involved.

Time passed; Scouting spread around the country, the Empire and indeed the wider world. Other schools similar to Birkenhead had embedded Scouting in the curriculum, and the then Headmaster, R Kennard Davis, had heard good things from other Headmasters. He approached a Master and Old Boy, W E Woodhouse, who had actually been present at the 1908 meeting to attend a Conference of Public Schoolmasters interested in Scouting at Easter 1924. Woodhouse was readily converted there and then, recruiting 13 boys to be the nucleus of the Troop, which was registered as 20th Birkenhead at Imperial Headquarters on 18th June 1924. Within a year, the Troop was established in Overdale, and assisted by pupils already active in other Troops within the town had grown to four Patrols, won a District Handicraft Competition and held its first Summer Camp near Holywell. The growth continued apace, with 81 in the Troop by Summer 1926! This led to a reorganisation into 3 Troops; the others were designated as 27th and 35th in 1928, renumbered as 37th and 38th in 1929, and then registered as part of 20th in 1935.

With the Third World Jamboree being held at Arrowe Park in 1929, it was natural that the School Troop was represented, with 14 members being part of either the West Cheshire or Public School Contingents. Many of the subsequent World Jamborees have been graced by Scouts from 20th, including in Hungary, Chile, Thailand and South Korea. Other International visits have included the biennial trips to Crouay in Freddie Wakelin's time, and more recent trips to Poland when Polish Partners helped to reintegrate the Polish ZHP into World Scouting following the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

In the early days, the School (and indeed the Scout Movement) concentrated on the Scout age group, but over time, opportunities for older pupils to take leadership responsibilities as Senior or Rover Scouts developed. Eventually, shortly before the outbreak of WWII, a Wolf Cub Pack was started in Prep, and Cubs have been an ever-popular activity from then on. Over time, the Association has changed in many ways, and we have adapted accordingly. A Squirrel Drey and a Beaver Colony have been founded and continue to flourish, Wolf Cubs became Cub Scouts, the age range for Scouts was modified, to be followed firstly by Venture Scouts as part of 20th, but now by Explorer Scouts run at District level. All sections can and do accept girls as well as boys, and the Scout Promise has various options to cater for those with no faith as well as those with commitment.

Being a School Group has unique opportunities and challenges; at various times, sections have had meeting slots within the school day, but there are obvious tensions when trying to balance that with the key principle that membership of Scouting is fully voluntary. Latterly, all section meetings have moved out of time-tabled time; our meetings directly after School work well for our Young People, but less well when it comes to recruiting adult help! Thanks so much to all our supporters over the past century who have helped the Group in whatever capacity; we could not do what we do without you all. Thanks particularly to those who preceded me; the last 38 years have been great fun and I intend to keep going as long as I have something to offer!



The Troop at Crouay 1968 - an exchange trip for over 20 years



Mayor presenting a flag to the Birkenhead Contingent to Hungary in 1933



Yvonne and Kevin - Leaders of 20th Birkenhead Scouts



Camp 1954 - Inspection



The Opening of the Scout Hut in 1964

Herr Walther Bensemann



The Archives Department received a query from Dr Gillmeister of Bonn University about Herr Walther Bensemann's time at BS where he was a language teacher from 1911 to 1914.

It transpired that Herr Bensemann is considered to be the pioneer of German

soccer, a sport he became passionately interested in during his time at a private school in Montreux, Switzerland. When he moved to Karlsruhe, to take his school leaver's examinations, he began to spread the game around Germany. In September 1889, he founded the International Football Club, the first football club in southern Germany, and two years later he was instrumental in the founding of Karlsruhe FV, one of the first champion clubs in Germany. He was also involved in the creation of Frankfurter Kickers, who would later become Eintracht Frankfurt. In 1900 he belonged to the founding-fathers of the German Football Association. Bensemann thought of football as a means of international understanding, so he started to organise international matches such as the ones between Lausanne and southern Germany in 1893. This led on to the five historical matches between Germany and England between 1899 and 1901.

Bensemann even put up the £200 required for the project (his father was a Jewish banker in Berlin). England won the first two games 13-2 and 10-2, which caused a Berlin newspaper to write: "After the first game the improved defeat in the second was because the Britons were most affected by the ceremonial drinking sessions and the spree following, which spoiled their fitness. The third game was won 8-0 and the fourth 7-0. England has since carried on this downward trend, with few exceptions." Although these matches had no official status, they are considered historically as the first international matches of any German side. While teaching at the School, Herr Bensemann was well known for his lavish dinner parties given for influential and prospective parents at the renowned French restaurant in the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. He went on holiday to Germany in August 1914 and did not return. Why, one wonders, did such a wealthy man teach in Birkenhead? Could it be its close proximity to the major port of Liverpool in which he spent some time – especially in its main hotel where secrets could be overheard? According to The Birkonian, after he left, some thought he had been a spy. In 1920, Bensemann founded Germany's Kicker-Sportmagazin, which soon evolved to be Germany's leading football magazine, a status which it retains until today. In January 1933, the Nazi Machtergreifung (meaning "seizure of power", it is specifically used to refer to the granting of governmental powers to the Nazi Party in Germany) compelled Bensemann to move back to Montreux where he died soon after, relatively unnoticed and without means.

Andrew Irvine OB 1910-16 died on Mount Everest 1924



Andrew (Sandy) Irvine was born in Birkenhead 1902. His father William Ferguson Irvine OB 1880-4, sent him to Birkenhead Prep in 1910 (between 1878 and 1926 there were 18 Irvine's from the same family at Birkenhead School).

In 1916 he left for his final two years at Shrewsbury School, entering Merton College Oxford in 1921. He attained a Double Rowing Blue and one for Squash. He went on the British Arctic Expedition in Spitsbergen in 1923 and in 1924 was a member of the third British Everest Expedition where on 8 June 1924 he and George Mallory died near the summit of Everest. George Mallory's body was discovered in 1999 but no camera was found to prove that the two men had conquered Everest. Sandy Irvine's body has never been recovered but if it is, the camera might also be found. Julie Summers, his great niece, unveiled his portrait in Bushell Hall in 2001, she also published his biography "Fearless on Everest – The Quest for Sandy Irvine". Julie recently unveiled a Blue Plaque outside his former home, 56, Park Road South Birkenhead, to commemorate the centenary.



Events

Old Birkonian Annual London Dinner

A night to remember!

An incredible night was had by all at the OBS Annual London Dinner, set in the grounds of the Houses of Parliament on Friday 17th November 2023. The venue was awe inspiring, and with an excellent attendance of over 130 OBs, this was an evening to remember. Our grateful thanks to OB MP Karl McCartney for the opportunity to host the dinner in such a prestigious venue, and also to Will Roberts (Chair of the OB Society), Headmaster Paul Vicars, OBS council members, Archives representatives and all who attended for helping to make the evening a huge success.



Under-25s OB Drinks

The focus was on the young alumni of Birkenhead School in September, as the Old Birkonian Society put on a drinks event for their under-25 cohort at the Library in Oxtun. Many of those who attended were fresh members of the Society,

having just finished their A Levels, so it was a perfect chance to let them know about the networking opportunities and events that they can look forward to in the years to come as they begin their professional journeys. Also in attendance were those who were soon due to be going back to university or undertaking apprenticeships, as well as staff from the School and representatives from the OBS Council.



OBS Business Lunch

It was pleasing to have another good turnout for the OBS Liverpool Business Lunch at Hawksmoor, Liverpool with a range of ages represented. Around a third of those who came were in the under 25s bracket which was fantastic to see and hopefully they enjoyed the networking benefits. We witnessed some positive career-related conversations so hopefully word will continue to spread about the advantages of coming along and mingling with OBs who are well established across a range of sectors and industries.

A number of stalwarts continue to support the lunches to catch up with established friends while also discovering if there are any potential business opportunities to harness within the Society.

The three pillars we are looking to build on as the foundations for the OBS are Social, Networking and Careers; the OBS Liverpool Business Lunch continues to tick the box for all three.

Will, Phil and Josh
The Old Birkonian Society Council



In Memoriam

We offer condolences to the families and friends of Old Birkenheadians of whose passing we have been informed during the past twelve months.

Name	Years at School	Died	Name	Years at School	Died
JK Aitken	1980-87	2023	DM Kaye	1948-61	2023
PJ Ascroft	1948-1956	2023	BAG King	1944-48	2023
C Bakalarski	1959-66	2023	LO Kirkham	1949-56	2023
R Birrell	Staff 1962-1998	2024	RJ Lee	1975-82	2022
DD Boyce	1956-63	2024	JE Maddocks	1942-48	2023
AK Bradley	1944-51	2024	JM Marsden	1949-52	2023
D J F Cameron	Staff 1982-2008		JE Moore	1948-56	2023
AJF Dackers	1951-57	2024	JS Newton	1957-64	2023
AR Dingwall	1943-50	2023	TS Roberts	1953-59	2023
G Edwards	1953-60	2023	AE Rowlands	1953-60	2023
NM England	1986-93	2023	AM Slater	1951-59	2024
MB Fisher	1951-58	2024	PS Swann	1958-65	2021
DL Fraser	1943-47	2022	G Thomson	1942-45	2024
GD Gill	1941-51	2023	RR Treasurer	1954-61	2024
GP Griffiths	1955-63	2024	P Venour	1941-47	2024
D Highcock	Staff 1997-2012	2024	PB Warr	1947-54	2024
GE Jones	1956-63	2024	DE Webb	1945-50	2024
BN Jones	1950-57	2024			

Obituary: Sheila Brew

We are sorry to record the death, last December, of Sheila Brew. Sheila was involved for many years in a variety of roles in School.

She was laboratory technician in the Physics and Biology Departments, assuming that role just before GCSE changed the way all subjects were taught. Over the years, she was involved in a variety of other roles: the provision of match teas, the work of the Ladies' Committee, uniform sales, the organisation of the November Bazaar and the robing of the choristers on Sundays in Chapel, of which she was a keen supporter. Her stall in the bazaar, over which she presided under its banner 'Mrs Brew – good as new' was a very popular feature of proceedings.

Her son, Iain, was a pupil at School from 1979 to 1986, after which he read Medicine at Sheffield University. Sheila was rightly proud of his achievements as a doctor over many years.

Obituary: Dennis Highcock

We are very sorry to record the death, in March, of former teacher Dennis Highcock, after a short illness. Dennis was appointed to the staff in 1997, joining the Physics Department. On the retirement, in 2000, of Alan Hanson, he was promoted to the post of Head of Department, which he held until he retired in 2012.

Dennis was educated at Cowley School, St Helens, and at the University of Bangor. He was in post when important changes were made to the examination system with the introduction of AS and A2.

Dennis was a popular figure among colleagues and students alike. Not least of his attributes was a very attractive sense of humour, which enabled him establish an atmosphere of harmony in the Physics Department. Former students will remember him with respect and affection.

Obituary: Bob Birrell

Members of Staff and Old Birkonians associated with School during the second half of the 20th Century were very sad to hear that Bob died just before Easter after being ill for some time. He taught hundreds of pupils over many years and will be remembered with great respect by all who knew him.

He was educated at Barrow Grammar School and the University of Manchester, where he was awarded First Class Honours in Chemistry. He was appointed to the Staff by Headmaster K D Robinson in 1962 and promoted to the post of Head of Department in 1969, which he held until he retired in 1998. He taught mainly what would now be Years 9 to Upper Sixth, which involved him in contact with many examination candidates over the years. He was a Housemaster and fully involved in the running of Public Examinations; he was a loyal supporter of Chapel and School Concerts as well as devoting much time to coaching rugby and athletics, for which latter role he was particularly suited, having represented his country as a younger man in both the Commonwealth and Olympic Games in 1958 and 1960.

Nobody had a bad word to say about Bob. His sharp sense of humour was appreciated by all his colleagues; he managed to amuse and delight without ever causing offence. After his funeral, a service of thanksgiving was held in School Chapel, attended by a large number of those whose lives he had touched during his own long life.

Obituary: David Boyce

David was born in Bebington, Wirral on February 19th, 1945. He attended Birkenhead School from 1956 to 1963 and while at School, became a founder member and drummer for The Roadrunners, a popular and influential R&B band, based on the Wirral.



Debuting at The Cavern Club in February 1963 on the same bill as The Beatles, the band went on to enjoy a further 70 plus appearances during the early sixties, by which time David had left School and turned professional.

After leaving the band in the late sixties, David turned to acting, and trained at the Rose Bruford College from '69 to '72.

Since then, he enjoyed a successful career as a journeyman character actor, and appeared in more than a hundred stage plays. He also worked on dozens of films, TV plays and series, as well as commercials in the UK, Europe, and the USA.

David sadly passed away on 1st May 2024 at the age of 79.



BIRKENHEAD TRANSFORMS



*Widening Access to a
Birkenhead School Education
birkonianconnect.co.uk/supportus*

BIRKENHEAD TRANSFORMS OUR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT TRANSFORMATIONAL BURSARIES



OUR SCHOOL

'Birkenhead Transforms' is our campaign to provide a further ten transformational fully funded bursary places in Seniors at Birkenhead School. The aim is to fundraise over the next decade to support these places in perpetuity.



OUR HISTORY

Our history and ethos has been moulded through the Direct Grant and Assisted Places eras, and these have brought a special diversity and inclusivity to the community, guiding the moral outlook of so many generations of Old Birkonians.



OUR FUTURE

We are proud of this initiative that will allow a greater number of students to access an exceptional education and learning environment. We hope that this campaign will encourage others to help local children fulfil their potential.

For more information please email carol.keegan@birkenheadschool.co.uk, phone 0151 651 3098, or visit birkonianconnect.co.uk/supportus

Years Past

2013-14

Jerry Grundy replaced Headmaster John Clark, who had been appointed Deputy Headmaster in 1996 then Headmaster in 2003. Harry FitzHerbert replaced Janet Skelly as Head of the Prep. She had been Head for 23 years. Alan Blain retired as Head of Art after 27 years' service. The Science Department was awarded a £5,000 for the quality of presentations and reports produced for the Comenius Project 2012-14, which involved 24 students from three countries. First XV Rugby won 10 matches and lost two. School Cricket team toured Antigua.



1983-84

School Boarding House closed, final Housemaster being Ray Liddell. Choral Society performed Purcell, King Arthur/Vivaldi, Gloria. Des Bower retired for the second time after 38 years' service to the Prep. New Computer Room opened in Science Block, with a donation from the OB Society Endowment Fund. School Rugby VII reached the Rosslyn Park School Sevens final. Numbers: 698 (195 Sixth Form) Prep 214



1973-74

19 pupils awarded places at Oxford and Cambridge. 'K' Block opened by Sir James Mountford. Jim McGrath OB awarded a second Cambridge football blue. Mike Croker OB represented Great Britain at handball. The following retired: Jock Austin OB after 28 years teaching Maths, History and Geography, also Cricket and Rugby; Ernest Camier after 28 years teaching Maths. Number 30 Picton Close was bought by the OB Society, as accommodation for the Head Groundsman and family. Numbers: 663 (195 Sixth Form) Prep 209

2003-04

John Clark appointed Headmaster having been appointed Deputy Headmaster in 1996. The 50th Anniversary of the Christmas Bazaar (see article). School Rugby 1st XV toured South Africa, they won 4 out of 5 matches. The following retired: Mary Williams after 24 years, the last eight as Headmaster's Secretary; Ian McKay after 24 years teaching Maths, also sailing and CCF-Royal Navy; Jane Laxton, 14 years as Librarian; Eric McKeivitt 15 years teaching Music and Nick Clark, 12 years PE, History and coaching Hockey. Numbers: Big School 483 (149 Sixth Form) Prep 266

1993-94

Stephen Smith appointed Deputy Headmaster. New School Hall named Bushell Hall, after previous Headmaster Mr WF Bushell 1930-46. Commander Hugh Daglish appointed Executive Officer of the Royal Yacht Britannia. Roger Ewing OB received English Badminton award for long-standing exceptional service. Jeremy Eyre retired after 13 years as Prep Deputy Head. Numbers: 681 (205 Sixth Form) Prep 381



1963-64

Mr JA Gwilliam, a former Welsh Rugby Captain, appointed Headmaster, replacing Mr KD Robinson. He was a disciplinarian Headmaster, who was to lead the School for 25 years. John Rogers and Alan Martin OBs were selected for England Rugby trials. CCF Army camp was held at Holcombe Moor in Lancashire. RAF Camp was held at RAF Cranwell, where Group Captain Aiken OB was Commanding Officer. The new Scout Hut was opened at McAllester Field. The School Philatelic Society was resurrected. Brothers JR and MF Crocker were selected as Captains of Cheshire Schools Senior and Junior Cricket Teams respectively. Mrs DB Hubbard retired after teaching 13 years at the Prep. Numbers: 639 (224 Sixth Form).



Years Past

1953-54

Rev RA Homan appointed School Chaplain, taking over from Rev 'Chuck' McVicar OB; following his death his house, 46 Bidston Road, was left to the School. Oak panelling was introduced in the Dining Hall, financed by Old Birkonians and Parents, with donors' names inscribed on the panels. The Big School stage was enlarged and improved, to allow more adventurous and dramatic productions.

1933-34

The first 'Old Boys' Day' was held at School, with 150 OBs present. Cricket matches and shooting competitions versus the School were held. Miss Cox died, having served 43 years as the first Prep Headmistress. Herr Bensemann died, a former language Master 1911-14 (see article). About 180 seats for Big School were engraved with donors' names. Hockey was re-introduced in the Lent Term. Numbers: 269 (42 Sixth Form) Prep 97

1913-14

The new Chapel west window was unveiled in memory of Rev JT Pearse, the School's first Headmaster. The School's Cadet Force was formed in October 1914, shortly after the outbreak of World War I with 120 boys aged 12 to 18. Herr Walther Bensemann, a language teacher from 1911, left August 1914 returning to his native Germany (see article). Numbers: Big School 210, Prep 73

1893-94

The School acquired the use of a large level playing field (before the School pitch was levelled in 1898) at the corner of Bidston and Howbeck Roads, which became part of Wirral Ladies' Golf Course. The name 'Birkonian' was coined in 1894. Previously the boys were known as 'Birkenheaders' or 'Birkenheadians'. The 1st Rugby XV were winners of the Liverpool Schools' Football (Rugby) Challenge Shield. School Sports Day was held in April at Birkenhead Park Rugby Club ground. The School Cricket XI were unbeaten with five teams being bowled out for less than 32 runs!

1873-74

The first School magazine was published with nine editions from March 1874 to June 1875 then restarted in 1883. Numbers: 120

1943-44

Following the 1944 Education Act, the School held its own entrance exam. The local authority also established its own selection exam, later known as the 'Eleven Plus'. Teachers and 30 boys again helped with the War effort in the summer holidays at Sudlow Farm Knutsford. The boys slept under canvas with the leaders sleeping in the 'Ritz' and the 'Rank Inn' - converted hen-houses. Numbers: 385 (59 Sixth Form) Numbers: 576 (149 Sixth Form) Prep 213

1923-24

Birkenhead Scout Troop was started with 13 boys using the basement of Overdale for their first two years. Andrew 'Sandy' Irvine OB 1910-16, was lost on Mount Everest, together with another local boy, George Mallory (see article). The School



Cadet Corps was officially recognised by the War Office as an Officer Training Corps (OTC). They received new rifles and bayonets. Their nine-day camp was held at Strensall in York. Harold M Locke OB played Rugby for England in its Centenary game. Numbers: 484 (Big School 334) Prep 150

1903-04

The Debating Society restarted after a five year's absence. One motion "Capital Punishment should be abolished" was defeated 12 to 16. Athletics Sports Day included: 120 yards; 220 yards had handicap; 150 yards and 300 yards sack race. The mile race only had three entries but the half mile had 68 entries! Numbers: Big School 165 Prep 58

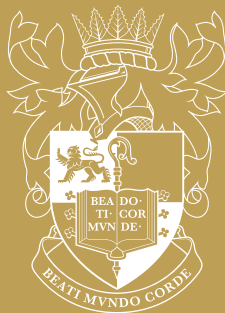
1883-84

Rev JT Pearse retired after 23 years as the first Headmaster. He chose the School motto Beati Mundo Corde (Blessed are the Pure in Heart), which was his best epitaph. The School magazine was revived and has been published every year since (School Archives have all copies of the publications). Numbers: Big School 104 (numbers declined in Rev Pearse's last five years but increased again with the new Headmasters)

1863-64

The earliest School printed list was in 1864 and shows the staff: Rev JT Pearse; Rev GH Hopkins; Rev GI Stephen; Monsieur Tueshi and RG Kelly.

I N D E P E N D E N C E T O I N S P I R E



BIRKENHEAD
— SCHOOL —

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