



THE BORLASE REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Christmas edition of The Borlase Review for as we close the door on 2023 and gird ourselves for next year’s celebration of the 400th year of the school’s founding.

As this term has progressed, so has my conviction that Borlase is a school in which the extraordinary is ordinary. The last weeks have provided a succession of Performing Arts events at which my already and increasingly high expectations have been blown away by the standards on display from our students. This started with the Autumn Concert which was followed by House Drama, Rocktober, the Advent Concert, Strictly Come Dancing and lastly the school’s Carol Services for which we are kindly hosted by Revd. Bull at All Saints Church, Marlow. One of the most striking things about these series of performances has been witnessing sometimes the same students, sometimes different, finding their voice and the arena in which to demonstrate their talents. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge here the work completed by Mrs Chislett and the Technical Crew, without whom these shows simply would not go on, confirming the importance of teamwork and collaboration.

Another particularly joyful occasion this half term was the celebration of Cultural Awareness in November with many students choosing to use the non-uniform day to celebrate their own heritage - a reminder that we are a proudly diverse community. You can read more about these different events later in the issue, alongside the various educational visits and sporting encounters that students have participated in.

Lastly, I want to draw attention finally to a board which has been mounted in Cloisters. Alongside decorated athletes, School Captains, and Presidents of The Old Borlasian Club,, we now recognise the members of staff who have served Borlase for 20 years (and there are a good number of our present teachers and support staff whose names are on it). At a time when people in the UK are reported to spend only around four years in any one job, this is a small token of appreciation for these people’s dedication to our school, and the part they will have played in the education of so many Borlasians.

I wish you all a peaceful and enjoyable festive break.

Ed Goodall
Headteacher





Borlase 400 Update

Thank you so much to everyone who has contributed to the Borlase 400 Campaign over the last four years and to the more recent Be Part of the Story appeal. We are delighted to see so much progress being made across the school buildings.

With your help and support from Old Borlasians, corporate sponsors, successful grants, trust applications and Friends of Borlase events we have seen the school's facilities transformed and the old buildings restored.

It was lovely to see everyone enjoying Christmas Dinner in the new Canteen.



It's not too late to be [part of the story](#). And have your child's name on a book in the Centenary Centre which opens in the new Year!

Do order your History of Borlase by visiting the [website](#) - the books can be posted out to you or collected on the last day of school.

Save the dates 2024 - A very special year

As well as celebrating with the current school community, there are opportunities and events that we have already planned to celebrate 400 years of Borlase together as a wider community. Our usual calendar of performance events continues with special contributions from our Borlase Alumni and we have some extra special "once in a century" events which we do hope you will join us for.

Save the dates 2024 - A very special year :

June 28th 2024 - Annual Old Borlasians v Current Students **Cricket Match**

June 29th 2024 - **Borlase 400 Open Day** at school and **Borlase 400 Celebration Dinner** in the evening

July 13th 2024 - **Borlase 400 Family Summer Music Festival**



"The First 400 Years History Book is now available to pre-order. Go to the Office on the Home page to place your order."



Psychology in Action, 23 November

On Thursday 28th November, a group of year 12 psychology students had the opportunity to attend the Psychology In Action conference, acquiring insight into psychology outside the classroom. The event was hosted by comedian Steve Cross which resulted in a highly entertaining day, full of science jokes, and extremely loud applause as the speakers took the stage.

The day commenced with a talk on how data is manipulated to form false perceptions and stereotypes. Then we explored psychology's applications to fields such as sports psychology and psychiatry, investigating the placebo effect, memory and hearing anecdotes from a practising psychiatrist giving us an understanding of working within the field. Then an engaging talk, full of giant dice and interactive questions, explained how brain shortcuts can lead to wrong decisions, delved into the science behind availability bias and pattern recognition and its application to marketing for example through coffee cup sizes. Following lunch we had a quick fire session on how best to prepare for exams. Here we were led on a journey through the 'memory palace' of South America, introducing us to revision techniques. Moving into a futuristic world we heard how reaction and decision psychology is essential for the development of the technology for driverless cars, and in this talk we got to see how VR headsets are being used in research studies to examine human behaviour when crossing the road.

Overall the day was an amazing experience allowing us to explore and discover new areas of the subject we hadn't considered before, from pre-historical psychological systems like memory and decisions, present day issues in the representation of studies in the media, to the future of driverless car technology through AI, all whilst having a great time.

Eva McKeivitt, Year 12

Physics in Action, 6 December

On the 6th of October, the physics department took a trip to the Emmanuel Centre in central London to go and see Physics in Action, a series of lectures by physicists in various fields that gave a brilliant insight into the wider world of physics. So we hopped on a train from Marlow station bright and early to arrive for the start of the presentations at 10:50 am.

There were six lectures in total, with ten minute breaks in between to stretch our legs, and a 40 minute lunch break halfway through. The topics ranged from a day in the life of the Curiosity rover on Mars and how it is piloted and directed, to a look at how AI is being used to detect and identify nuclear substances. I was particularly interested in the lecture on fluid dynamics, a student from the University of Bath, and how fluid dynamics related to our everyday roads and infrastructure. However, my personal favourite lecture was from Greg Foot, a science journalist for the BBC, who went on an underwater expedition into the sea off the coast of Bermuda, after physicists lowered the bathysphere (a small, non powered, submarine like orb) into the same depths 90 years prior. He also discussed another expedition in



STEM

Antarctica in 2005, in which scientists dove all the way down into the abyssal zone, to observe hydrothermal vents on the ocean floor, and the accidental discovery of the Hoff Crab (named after David Hasselhoff due to its hairy arms and legs).

After the presentations were over, we left the Emmanuel centre, and not a single person left without having learnt something new and intriguing. The trip provided such a broad range of topics that there was something that everyone enjoyed learning, and a good look at where physics can take us career wise for the future. Overall it was a great day out and an experience I won't forget.

Joe Cockroft, year 12

Tech Girl Competition

In early October, I entered a competition, completing a research project and presentation for HotTopics 2023 Tech Girl Award on the applications of Virtual Reality, augmented reality and other sensory friendly technologies on neurodiverse learners in STEM. Children who are neuro-diverse struggle to engage with STEM subjects at school unless they can access these really important subjects early and in a way that engages and works for them. Without special consideration and technologies to interest them, ultimately they will fall behind their peers and in later life be disadvantaged in their careers.

My video presentation addressed easy applications and their impacts, of technologies in classrooms across the UK, as well as highlighting the deep rooted issues within our special needs education system. As a result of this, I was invited to attend "HotTopics 2023 Technology event" at Abbey Road Studios, to receive my award as one of ten winners of the competition nationwide.

as well as present my ideas to a C-suite audience of technology and business leaders from around the world. Prior to my presentation, I was given a communication skills training session with Channel 4 news presenter Brigid Nzekwu, and allowed time to meet one of my mentors Charlotte Baldwin (CTO of Costa Coffee).

The Tech Girl event really developed my presentation and communication skills, as well as a fantastic chance to raise awareness of neurodiversity inclusion in STEM to influential figures in technology. I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity, and I would highly recommend for anyone to get involved with competitions and super curricular events to further their learning experience.

Georgina Lonergan, Year 12





Yr 13 Washington DC & New Orleans Trip, 18 October

During October Half Term, politics, English and history students were lucky enough to go on a 9-day trip to both Washington DC and New Orleans. We had an incredible time spending time with each other from the second we arrived at Springfield Lane, to the moment we came back.

During our time in Washington we got to visit the National Archives where we got to see the US constitution and the Bill of Rights - a key area of interest for the politics students. On the following days we did a walking tour of the National Mall, Library of Congress as well as the US capital. For all of the history and politics students it was an incredible insight into American history and how their constitution has developed and now functions. One visit which stood out to me was the Smithsonian Museum of African-American Historical Culture. This allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the civil rights movement and the impact it has had on society today as well as giving all of the history students a great opportunity to get sources for their NEA.

We then flew to New Orleans, where we were greeted with beautiful weather. We got to experience going on a streetcar for the first time as well as going on a sunset boat ride. A key moment from New Orleans was going to the Tate Etienne and Provost Museum, where we learnt about 3 girls who were the first children of colour to break segregation in schools in America. We had an interview with the girls who went to the schools and learned about the process; her experience which was eye opening to all of us. New Orleans is where one of the A level English literature books A Streetcar named Desire by Tennessee Williams was written. We sat through a lecture from one of the university professors of Tulane University where they gave an in-depth analysis of the author's life and the book itself. This was perceptive and helpful for the English students on the trip.

Not only was this trip incredibly useful for all of the students who went, it was also so much fun. Trying new restaurants each night and having time to go explore on our own with friends made this trip unforgettable. I can definitely say that they do bowling a lot better in America than they do here. I cannot thank all of the teachers and staff involved enough for giving us such an incredible opportunity.

By Ruby Peacey, Year 13



Year 12 Parliament, Whitehall and the Supreme Court trip, 13 November

Contextually, the trip's coincidental timing was impeccable and illustrated no abate to the dynamics of UK politics in recent times. As Mr Bodinetez and I waited on the platform for the train in Maidenhead, the then Home Secretary Suella Braverman was fired and by the time we arrived in London, former PM David Cameron was appointed as Foreign Secretary, replacing James Cleverly who had been reassigned to being in charge of the Home Office! Whitehall was absolutely buzzing with media keen to interpret events-as were we..!

Borlase's newest student cohort were great ambassadors, seizing the opportunity to comprehend and query.

Mrs Pryor, Head of Politics

On the 13th of November our year 12 politics class embarked on a fascinating school trip to Westminster. The day was nothing short of political immersion, beginning with a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament where we were exposed to the iconic building in much detail, and were given historical insight into the construction and hundreds of years of events taking place in parliament. Following the Parliament tour, we proceeded to the Supreme Court, where we deepened our understanding of the judicial branch's role in the democratic framework. Our journey through Whitehall included stops at the Ministry of Defence, the Treasury, and the serene Rose Garden—a symbol of enduring political power and decision-making throughout the years. Shortly after, we made our way back to the Houses of Parliament where we met with Lee Anderson, MP for Ashfield, who shared his experiences and perspectives on parliamentary life. The day concluded with a remarkable opportunity to observe a parliamentary session from the gallery, a particularly captivating experience given the concurrent cabinet reshuffle. Overall, the trip enriched our political understanding of the current government, and exemplified the intricacies of how such a change in the cabinet brings upheaval to the ordinary day-to-day workings of Parliament.

Katy Butler, Year 12



Jesus Christ Superstar, Wednesday 1 November

On 1st November 2023 the cast of Borlase's senior musical 'Jesus Christ Superstar' took to Milton Keynes to watch the UK tour of the show; a modern, revamped production directed by Timothy Sheader. The stage was set out like a rock concert, with a giant illuminated metal crucifix on the floor along with scaffolding as the set, providing some levels for the ensemble to use and a clever implementation of certain members of the band.

The impressive choreography performed by the ensemble was a notable highlight, as well as the creative use of mic stands by the priests. Come the interval the theatre was a buzz with numerous comparisons to our own version of the production (the main one being the UK tour taking a rock concert approach, whereas our production takes a more musical approach) which has been in progress since September.

Act 2 proved to be rather heavy, with a deeply emotional performance of Gethsemane from Ian McIntosh playing Jesus and the clever use of glitter representing the 39 lashings. However, we were offered some light comic relief from Timo Tatzber playing Herrod, adorned in a golden cape.

Overall, we were in collective agreement that the performance was an impressive and effective take on a difficult show and the enjoyment of the trip brought us closer together as a cast. Our director Miss Mountfield was keen to get us back in the theatre for rehearsals so we can implement some of their ideas! Thank you to the staff that took us and Mr Lofthouse who organised it!

Hattie Parkinson, Year 12

A View from the Bridge Theatre Trip, Wednesday 8 November

On Wednesday 8th November, Year 12 and 13 A-level Drama students went to see a production of Arthur Miller's 'A View from the Bridge' at the Rose Theatre. A much-anticipated trip, given our production of the play, performed in December 2022, in which most of the students were involved as ensemble members or as principal cast. A highlight of the production was the abstract set which was used. One feature that interested me was that every surface of the set was reflective, which created a sense of the character's actions constantly being observed, which was interesting considering the gritty, and (at times) unpalatable nature of the play. As a group, we were particularly impressed with the performance of Beatrice (Kirsty Bushell), and it was also fascinating to see how some of the direction this cast had been given mirrored some of the direction we ourselves had been given last year. Overall, it was a great production, and the period costume, hair and make-up really aided in creating the atmosphere of 1950s New York.

Ella Jenkins, Year 12



MFL Update

On Saturday 4 November we welcomed 25 students from our exchange partner school in Germany, Gymnasium Saarburg, to Marlow to stay with their partners in Year 9 and 10. It was a busy week, involving trips to Windsor, Kew Gardens, two trips to London to visit the Globe Theatre and a joint trip with Borlase students to visit the Tower of London and the London Eye, as well as a morning in school. Our Year 9 and 10 students will be going back out to visit the partners in Germany in late June 2024.

Miss O'Riordan's Year 9 German class have also been very busy making Christmas cards and sending them to our partner school in Germany - we are eagerly waiting for the Christmas cards from the German school to arrive in the post!

On 7 December there was a joint Drama/Spanish trip to see The House of Bernada Alba at the National Theatre, starring Harriet Walter as the matriarch of the family. This was a fantastic opportunity for our Spanish students to see one of their A Level set texts performed live and it was a very powerful performance. We are very grateful to Mr Lofthouse for organising the trip.

At the end of the term we are saying farewell to Mrs Barrett-Klikis, who is retiring. She has made a huge contribution to the department and the school as a whole during her years at Borlase. We will miss her very much and wish her all the best for her next adventure! We are also saying goodbye to our language Coordinator, Mrs Morton. We are certainly going to miss her phenomenal organisational skills, but we wish her the best for the future!

Mrs Colville, Head of MFL

Year 13 trip to Keats House, Thursday 2 November

On 2 November Year 13 English A Level students visited Keats House in Hampstead to learn about the Romantic poet and his life. Students were given a guided tour of the house, in which he lived from 1817-18 and where he wrote some of his best known poems including Eve of St Agnes and the great odes. Education officer, Linda Carey, then conducted a seminar on Keats' Ode to a Nightingale, written at the house.

Travelling into London to see Keats' house was so exciting. We learnt about early 19th century medicine which Keats studied, and the tragedy of his brief life. The tour of his house and seeing the reality of his life was moving, and it enabled me to comprehend Keats' poems better and his perspective. Going through Ode to a Nightingale with a Keats expert was deeply insightful and has assisted my studies greatly. From this trip I feel I have taken away a great understanding of Keats and the context behind his literature.

Darcey Seymour, Year 13



Autumn Concert, Thursday 16 November

On the 16th of November, the annual Autumn Concert took place in the theatre. This concert is always an excellent opportunity for students to showcase their talents in an array of musical ensembles. The concert always contains a wide variety of musical styles and this year was no exception with performances ranging from a Youth Voices 2000s Medley to a performance of St Paul's Suite from symphony orchestra.

Choral groups were also on full display, with a stunning performance of 'Refuge' from Chapel Choir, a mashup of classics from Cambiata, two gorgeous pieces from Forte e Fiero and performances of 'The Leaving of Liverpool' and 'The Longest Time' in true Madrigals style. There was also two Gospel classics from an electric Gospel Choir, and impressive performances of 'A Gaelic Blessing' and 'Daemon Irreptit Callidus' from Cantorum.

However, instrumental performances were just as excellent. Smaller ensembles such as Brass Ensemble, Flute Choir, Saxophone ensemble, and String quartet put on an excellent show, all bringing something original to the performance. And last but certainly not least, there were the larger ensembles; an exhilarating performance of 'Grand March from Aida' from Symphony Orchestra, A Mika Medley from Concert Band, and superlative entertainment from both Jazz Band and Jazz Orchestra.

Tom Hughes, Year 13

Rocktober, Thursday 30 November

Rocktober is always a night to remember and with the band scene at Borlase this year, that was certainly the case at Rocktober 2023. Bands of all ages took part throughout the evening with a total of 9 bands taking their turn in the spotlight. We saw a wide range of musical styles, from Fleetwood Mac to Green Day and Coldplay to Arctic Monkeys. Kicking off the evening in style was year 13 band 'Majesty' combining covers with some of their own original music and even being joined by special guests Ella Jenkins and Alex Hill for an excellent rendition of 'The Chain'. Next was year 10 band 'Knight' with classics from Radiohead and much more followed by Incognito from year 12 with Michael Jackson's 'Beat It'. The outstanding sibling duo 'Twilight Express' came next followed by Fourth Chord with 'Seven Nation Army' and 'Mr Brightside' to get everyone singing along. Next up was Year 10 band 'Division X' with a truly stellar performance including a metal cover of George Michael's 'Faith'. Year 9's Controversy came next with a memorable performance of the German metal song; 'Du Hast' followed by Thunderstruck with sing along classics for all to join in with. And finally, The Fundamentals came on with a mix of their own songs and covers to close the show!

Tom Hughes, Year 13



ARTS



Borlase Advent Concert, Wednesday 6 December

Mr Robson's Advent concert is one of the most festive items on the Borlase calendar. A combination of Instrumental and vocal performances with poetry and other literature of a festive nature make the evening a delightful start to the Christmas season. The audience were treated to music from Bach and Corelli as well as readings from Chatterton and Dickens, in addition to many other composers and writers whose works were showcased. The concert began with a stunning performance of 'Symphony in B flat major' from William Boyce played by Mr Robson and a small chamber orchestra made up of students, teachers and special guests. Additionally, a group of students performed a Bach chorale and one of Mr Robson's own compositions with style. Many soloists gave fine performances throughout the evening: Junwen Liew, Ruby Sharma, Dr Parsons, Eliska Hodkova and Lauren Bull all deserve a mention for their excellent solo performances. And finally, joining Mr Robson for a Bach Harpsichord concerto was Mr Alastair Ross, one of the world's most distinguished harpsichordists. Many thanks go to Mr Robson for such a wonderful evening!

Tom Hughes, Year 13

Strictly Come Dancing, Thursday 7 December

The Mountfield Theatre transformed into the Strictly Ballroom for a night full of Jives, Waltzes and Cha Chas on Thursday 7th December. The Year 8s put on a spectacular display and four performances stood out: Syd and Olivia for the Cha Cha Cha, Holly and Jacob for the Waltz and, with the judges unable to choose one finalist, both Oscar and Poppy, and Colin and Shreya for the Jive. These four couples took the tough task of performing again and left the judges with an incredibly difficult decision to make. To keep the audience entertained whilst Mr Miall, Miss Pi, Mrs Hindley and Mr Goodall discussed, the Y12 A-Level cohort performed the festive-filled jazz number: 'Frosty the Snowman'. The dancers leapt, kicked and pirouetted to finally set the Christmas spirit. Furthermore, earlier on in the show Ms Haldane, Mrs Lewington-Chislett and Mr Marchand delighted the audience with a ballroom-inspired piece, showing the Year 8s how it's done! After heavy deliberation Syd and Olivia took home the glitter ball with their snake hips and stunning acrobatics. Strictly is a key part of every Borlasians experience, another year completed and we can't wait to see what's in store for next year.

Alice Duncan and Max Bignall, Year 12



Carol Services, 13 & 14 December

Whilst the end of term can sometimes herald a slow down of activities, this is not the case in Borlase and certainly not in the Music Department! As ever, the Autumn Term at Borlase ended with the much-loved and much-anticipated traditional annual Carol Services. These include the Family and Alumni Carol Services and, as the student body has increased in size over the past few years, a further three school services on the final day of term. In total we now undertake five services (this year over just three days!) and my sincere thanks and congratulations to all the students and staff involved for their energy, enthusiasm and resilience in what has been a very busy and successful week!

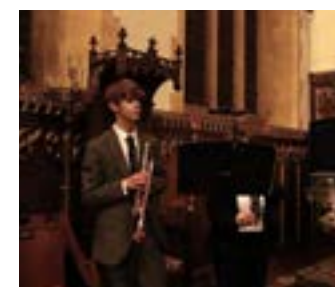
The services demonstrated the outstanding level of the students' musical abilities, with excellent performances from all groups, performing a wide range of Christmas repertoire. Traditional favourites included Chapel Choir's beautiful rendition of John Rutter's Christmas Lullaby and Cantorum's lyrical performance of Bob Chilcott's arrangement of Away in a Manger. The younger choirs contribution to the service was, as ever, much appreciated and very well received, with Forte e Fiero and Youth Voices giving performances of Spanish Carols (El Burrito Sabanero and Riu Riu Chiu respectively) and Cambiata brought smiles to the faces of the congregation with their energetic Deo Gracias.

The Carol Services provide a wonderful opportunity to introduce new carols to the students and congregation, and this year's services included performances of new works by two current female composers, In the Stillness by Sally Beamish and Now May We Sing by Cecilia McDowell. Both were performed with style and musicality by Cantorum. The services also show our student leaders at their very best, and I must congratulate Pia Andrew, leader of Chapel Choir, and Lauren Bull and Ruby Sharma, leaders of Gospel Choir, for the lovely performances from both groups - the latter providing the congregation with joyful and engaging performances of gospel classics, Ancient of Days and High and Lifted Up.

A Borlase Carol Service would not be what it is without a performance from the congregation-favourite, Madriguys, and their powerful rendition of Good News did not disappoint. Along with the congregational carols including Once in Royal David's City and Hark the Herald Angels Sing (expertly accompanied by Mr Robson on the organ and the student Brass Ensemble), the service ended with a slightly newer Borlase tradition - the massed choir item. This brought together all performers (almost 200 students as well as - on the final day - our staff choir!) in an entertaining and merry arrangement of The Holly and the Ivy by John Gardner, and sent the hundreds of congregation members off into the Christmas break with plenty of festive cheer!

Thank you and well done to all involved - and wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Mr Miall



Sports Update

*****SAVE THE DATE*****
Borlase Sports Awards Celebration Friday 26 April 2024
Information and Tickets Available in the New Year

Netball

All thirteen of Borlase's netball teams have been busy this half term, training and competing in matches. We have had friendly matches with local schools, as well as District league and National knock-out competitions.

The U12 teams have been committed to training and have made an excellent start in their netball careers for Borlase. The A, B and C teams are all currently unbeaten and have many more matches taking place between now and the end of the Spring term.

The U13 squads have also been working hard and have all made great starts in their league competitions. There are still many fixtures left to complete in the new year. A particular mention must go to the U13A squad who progressed to the second round of the national SNS Cup before coming up against an extremely strong Berkhamsted team. They really showed fantastic determination to make tactical and skill changes throughout the match to try and counter the cohesive and fast paced Berkhamsted team. We look forward to this group entering the National Schools competitions as U14s next season!

The U14 age group have had a challenging start to the season, with an incredible amount of potential within the squads there have been times where things have not fallen their way. They are working towards the end of season tournaments next term.

The U15 teams have been committed and shown great team spirit in their league and cup matches. They work really well together and have shown themselves to be adaptable and supportive of each other. The U15A squad, after their defeat in the first round of the National SNS Cup, had a convincing victory in the first round of the plate against Wycombe Abbey, followed by a close loss against a strong and confident Pipers Corner team.

The U16 squad have been busy, combining their netball with many other sport commitments and preparations for their mock exams this half term. Many students are using the sport as part of the GCSE PE assessments and have shown strong individual and team performances. We are looking forward to more matches and District tournament next term.

Senior netball has continued to flourish with both the A and B squad working well in training and putting out some fantastic performances on court. The B squad had a nail biting one goal victory against BCA in the league and have many more matches scheduled in the new year. The A team remain unbeaten in the District league. They had a fantastic cup run in the National SNS Cup, reaching the third round following a strong win against Headington School 21-15, before a narrow loss against Allyn's School 44-48. They should all be incredibly proud of the determination and skill level they have shown and we are all excited about testing ourselves at the Regional Finals of the National School competition in early February.



SPORTS

Cross Country

The season has continued with the school competing across all age groups in the ESAA Cross Country Cup. The Junior and Intermediate boys and girls teams travelled to Cottesloe to race against the other schools in Buckinghamshire. It is always a fantastic day, with many students having their first opportunity in a large-scale cross country event. The course itself involves a variety of terrain and one particularly big hill and is always a challenge even to experienced runners.

A few highlights from the county races were Colin Miles finishing in 6th place in the Junior Boys event and Emma Blake finishing in 8th place in the Junior Girls event. As a team event, it is a cumulative total of the top four finishers in a team, with the top three schools qualifying for the next round of the competition. We were incredibly proud that our Inter Boys finished 8th, Inter Girls finished 4th, Junior Girls finished 5th and the Junior Boys finished in 2nd place, earning them a place at the Regional Finals!

The Junior Boys, along with the two Senior teams then travelled to Stowe for the regional event. The Stowe course is very open and involves a few smaller hills before a long uphill stretch directly before the finish line. Again, the top three teams would progress through the competition to the Nationals Finals, which when racing against the top school in Central England is quite a challenge. On the day, we were impressed with the Junior Boys finishing in 9th place, followed later on by the Senior Girls finishing in 3rd place, earning them a place at the National Finals for the third consecutive year! A particular well done to Asmi Saha placing 6th in the Senior Girls event in her first year with us at Borlase!

On Saturday 2 December, the Senior Girls travelled to Suffolk for the National Finals being held at Woodbridge School. The temperatures were sub-zero for the whole day and the course included a variety of terrains with some steep down and uphills during the race. As expected, the field was incredibly strong with the top 26 schools in the country all racing. As always, the team were committed and gave everything to the race and we are incredibly proud of their 22nd place in this national event. A particular well done to Asmi finishing in 20th position and Alex Marden in 42nd place out of 140 runners. Thank you to Mr Lofthouse for joining us for the day to support the team.

We are already looking forward to the Cross Country Championships which will be open to all interested runners next half term and to the teams being back out together next season.



Rugby

Rugby at Borlase has gone from strength to strength this term with 130 boys getting the opportunity to represent the school. The 1XV have continued to grow in confidence stringing together a series of excellent performances throughout the season. The team had an entertaining cup run with victories against Rickmansworth School, Parmiter’s School and Chesham Grammar. This put Borlase in the semi final of the London and South East Bowl against the London Oratory. An extremely entertaining game with the lead changing multiple times saw the London Oratory winning in the final five minutes to take the win 28-22. The team have also had competitive fixtures against Great Marlow School and John Hampden Grammar School.

The Under 15 team have continued to go from strength to strength and have reached Round 4 of the National Bowl. Throughout the competition they have had noticeable victories against rivals Claires Court and John Hampden Grammar School. We wish them the best of luck against Richard Hale School hopefully progressing through to the fifth round! In the lower years the U14’s have continued to train with a strong attitude and are determined to keep on developing after tough defeats to Great Marlow School, Burnham Grammar School and John Hampden Grammar School.

The U13’s and U12’s have caught rugby fever with the school regularly putting out A and B teams for both age groups this season, something we have worked hard to ensure over the past couple of years. Like the other sides the U13A have continued to play their physical and attritional style of rugby with positive results against Great Marlow School, Lord Williams School as well as a last second draw against John Hampden Grammar School. Many thanks must also go to Mr Holloran and Mr Mead for all their hard work this term! We are looking forward to developing girls rugby next term.

Football
Senior XI Boys

The senior boys have continued in their fight for qualification to the County Cup quarter finals this half term. A 3-0 win over GMS was the highlight so far but there is work to be done in order to secure qualification with one game remaining and a win needed to guarantee a playoff spot. Alongside this the senior squad hosted Ryan Catholic College who were on tour from Australia. The game was played in great spirit by all and everyone involved enjoyed the experience.

U13 Girls

This half term has been one of huge success for the u13 girls squad in the County Cup. A winning run was kicked off with victory over Amersham, followed up by further wins against Burnham Grammar and Highcrest Academy. Next up is a quarter final game as the girls look to continue their great performances

U15 Girls

The u15 girls have had a strong run of games to secure qualification for the quarter finals of the County Cup. Wins over Wycombe High school and Highcrest Academy ensured the girls will continue onto the next stage of the competition. Great team performances have enabled the squad to achieve success and they will look to keep the momentum going when they find out their opponent in the coming weeks.



U16 Girls

The current County Cup champions have kicked off their campaign by picking up valuable points in tough games away to Wycombe High School and The Beaconsfield School. Next up is an away trip to Burnham Grammar School as the girls seek to progress through to the next round of the County Cup.

Senior XI Girls

The senior girls backed up their great start to the competition by going away and picking up a win at Chesham Grammar. A really strong team performance allowed the team to turn a losing position into a winning win with a 2-1 victory. One more win and the team will book a place in the semi finals of the County Cup

Rowing

This half term the river flow at our Longridge base has been too fast to safely get out on the water, with all squads really committing well to their land training. They have made some really good physical progress and their winter ego test scores reflect this. In an attempt to add a bit of variety into the programme all squads from Y9 upwards have spent time rowing at Dorney Lake, home of the 2012 Olympic Regatta. It is an enormous privilege to have such a world class facility on our doorstep and one that all of the groups embraced with great enthusiasm.

School Games

This half term Borlase hosted the year 3 & 4 Multiskills festival in the Sports hall, which was attended by over 60 local primary school children. The Borlase Sports leaders ran 3 stations as part of a rotation of fun games and skills that promote physical literacy and enjoyment, aiming to give primary pupils positive experiences of sport. The Sports leaders did a tremendous job of encouraging and coaching the year 3&4 pupils.

School Games hosted a number of squash festivals this half term, including year 7 & 8 Girls Squash festival and a 7&8 Boys Squash festival. The sports leaders once again were involved in leading the activities at the girls squash festival, for many of them this was their first involvement with squash. Despite this, they had half an hour with Heidi (squash coach) who took them through the activities they would be leading and introduced them to the sport. The Girls took to it like a duck to water and displayed great enthusiasm and leadership when on court with the girls from several schools. Both Boys and Girls squash festivals were attended by Borlase students too, giving students that had not played much squash before an opportunity to get used to the ball, playing against walls and using the racket before going into friendly game play.



Hockey

It's been a busy half-term for Borlase Hockey, with the students successfully juggling a number of indoor and outdoor commitments since the end of October. The excellent U16 & U18 indoor hockey seasons drew to a close at the end of November, but the U12s, U13s and U14s will all carry the baton in the spring term. The GU16s and GU18s are still competing in their respective England Hockey outdoor tournaments, and there has been plenty of competitive action for all of your Borlase Hockey members.

The highlights are as follows:

Indoor Hockey

All four U16 & U18 indoor teams successfully qualified for the South Central finals after finishing in the top two at the Buckinghamshire county tournaments. The BU16s, GU18s and BU18s were all crowned county indoor champions, whilst the GU18s narrowly missed out on goal difference to finish in second place.

GU16s: The GU16 indoor team reached the semi-finals of the South Central finals after wins against GMS and Oxford High. A second-place finish in the group meant the team faced a strong Wellington College side in the semi-final and, despite their best performance of the season, they couldn't overcome the team from Berkshire, eventually going down 3-1 in a tightly contested match. The future is certainly bright for this group, who will come together again in two years as the GU18 team.

BU16s: The BU16 indoor team won all three group matches to finish top of the group, before a 5-1 win against Stowe in the quarter-final set up a third indoor match of the week against Bradfield College. A 3-2 win secured a place in the final against KES, Southampton. An epic final went the distance - 2-2 in normal time meant the two teams would have to be separated by a shootout. Unfortunately, KES came out on top, winning the shootout 2-1. A second place finish was a fantastic achievement for this group, many of whom only started playing indoor hockey in September this year.

GU18s: The GU18 indoor team can be incredibly proud of their performances throughout the day, as they reached the semi-finals with two wins and a draw in the group stage. The pick of the matches was an entertaining 3-3 draw against the eventual winners, Wellington College. Wins against KES, Southampton, and Oxford High set up a semi-final against local rivals GMS, but despite taking 1-0 and 2-1 leads, GMS fought back in the second half to reach the final.



BU18s: The BU18 indoor team secured three wins from three in the group left the team top of the group, and a semi-final against GMS had been booked. Despite racing into a 4-0 lead, GMS fought back to 4-3 and nearly forced a shootout at the end. However, a place in the final was safely booked, but the team didn't quite have enough to topple last year's winners, Peter Symonds, going down 6-4. Having been level at half-time, Peter Symonds pulled away at the start of the second half and, despite a late comeback, the team couldn't turn it around.

All four senior indoor teams can be incredibly proud of their seasons. Attendance has been high at the early morning training sessions, and the teams all have great squad depth, which is testament to the commitment of the students this season, and bodes well for the future. Well done!

The BU13s and BU14s have also competed in indoor tournaments since October half-term.

The BU14s showed plenty of promise as they travelled to Whitgift School early November with a team made up of Y7, Y8 and Y9 students. A strong performance in the first match against The Perse, left the team feeling confident ahead of two matches against Whitgift. The pick of the performances was a narrow 1-0 defeat to Whitgift A team in a match that could have gone either way. Unfortunately, a 2-0 defeat to Whitgift B left the team in third place in the group, so they didn't qualify for the semi-finals.

The BU13s were also in action in November as they travelled to Charterhouse School for the first ever BU13 indoor tournament. The team improved throughout the day to finish on a high in their final match against Portsmouth Grammar School. One win, one draw and one defeat in the group set up a semi-final against Millfield, which ended in a narrow 1-0 defeat. The team saved the best performance until last though as they beat PGS 6-0, which provided plenty of motivation for early morning training sessions in the spring term!

National Cup

The GU14, GU16 and GU18 A teams have all been involved in competitive outdoor matches since October half-term. The GU14 and GU18 teams have played in England Hockey's Tier 2 competitions, and the GU16s are still involved in England Hockey's Tier 1 competition - the GU14 and GU18 format is a knockout cup and the GU16 format is a league, with the top two qualifying for the national quarter-finals.



Having narrowly lost to St. Edward's in R1 of the Tier 1 competition, the GU14s were drawn to play Wycombe High in R2 of the Tier 2 competition. A comprehensive victory as a result of some fantastic team hockey set up a R3 match against King's High, Warwick. Despite another improved performance, the team lost 2-0 to strong opposition, but we're looking forward to seeing the development this group will make between now and the end of the season. If the first term of 11-a-side hockey is anything to go by, the future is bright!

The GU16s finished the first six weeks of the season with an excellent 6-2 win against KES, Southampton, in October, which set up an entertaining tie against Prior's Field at Marlow Sports Club in November. Despite taking a 1-0 lead early in the match, the team didn't reach the heights of the previous match and lost 3-2. The final Tier 1 group match of the season will take place against St. George's College in the final week of the autumn term - good luck!

The GU18s have been busy indoors and outdoors! After the excellent performance in R2 of England Hockey's Tier 2 competition against Bishop Stortford, the team travelled to north London to face Mill Hill School in R3. A tight and cagey match was settled by two individual moments of brilliance as the SWBGS team won 2-0 to set up a R4 clash against regional rivals, The Perse. The team can be incredibly proud of reaching the semi-finals of the regional indoor tournament, as well as the last-16 of England Hockey's outdoor tournament in the same term.

All Borlase Hockey teams have been involved in fixtures since the start of the season in September, and the progress that everyone is making is impressive - keep working hard! Next term, the U12 & U13 teams will all play competitively for the first time this season, as well as the BU14, BU16 and BU18 teams, who are entering the following competitions:

BU14s - England Hockey Tier 1
BU16s - England Hockey Tier 1
BU18s - England Hockey Tier 2

Dates for Diaries

Jenna Woolven and Rebecca Ward will be joining us before Christmas to run sports psychology and nutrition introduction evenings. We're incredibly lucky to welcome them both to work with the students over the next couple of weeks, as well as in the spring term for follow-up workshops.

Sports Psychology Workshops 2024

Jenna is an Old Borlasian, represented England Hockey at U16, U18 and U21 level, has played in Europe for Surbiton HC, and has extensive experience in working with young people. To learn more about Jenna, please visit her website using the following [link](#)

Intro Evening - Friday 8th December, 5.30-6.30pm, Stuart Lever Room

Workshop 1 - Thursday 4th January, 4-5pm for U16s & U18s, and 5.30-6.30pm for U12s-U14s, Marlow Sports Club TBC

Workshop 2 - Wednesday 21st February, 4-5pm for U16s & U18s, and 5.30-6.30pm for U12s-U14s, Marlow Sports Club TBC

Nutrition Workshops 2024

Rebecca qualified as a sports nutritionist through Mac Nutrition University and has worked with Scotland Hockey and Macclesfield Rugby Club in recent years. Rebecca also plays hockey in her spare time and runs her own nutrition company called Balanced Nutrition - the website can be accessed using the following [link](#)

Intro Evening - Thursday 14th December, 6-7pm, Google Meet

Workshop 1 - Friday 5th January - 4.30-5.30pm for U16 & U18, and U12-U14 from 5.30-6.30pm, Google Meet

Workshop 2 - Friday 1st March - 4.30-5.30pm for U16 & U18, and U12-U14 from 5.30-6.30pm, Google Meet.

To sign up, please complete this [Google Form](#)

Finally, the Friends of Borlase Hockey group are looking for suggestions for their next event in February / March. The final details are still TBC, but they'll release further information in the New Year. Please help them by completing this [Google Form](#).



STAFF FEATURE

A Vision for the Future: In conversation with Gill Towell, Chair of Governors

By Helena Kennedy, Year 13

“What Borlase offers children is outstanding and I am very proud to be Chair of Governors” enthuses Gill Towell, our incoming Chair of Governors, as she greets me in one of the photograph-clad offices at the front of school on a crisp, autumnal morning. The passion and focus in her voice augments her impressive, commanding presence as I uncover her ambitions and expectations of our school, in what was a fascinating interview.

Born in Yorkshire to Scottish parents, Mrs Towell moved south at a young age to Buckinghamshire when her father took on the role of one of the Project Managers establishing the new city of Milton Keynes. Good at maths and interested in physics, she went on to study Engineering at the University of Strathclyde gaining a First (the only female to do so), before joining telecommunications company Cable and Wireless. Her career has taken her to Russia where she worked for five years, then on to roles as Operations Director across Europe, Middle East and Africa and now today where she runs her own sewing tutoring business both locally and now internationally. A lover of her school days, and now a committed mother of two girls, Mrs Towell is also a talented musician, playing the oboe semi-professionally to Grade 8 standard.

When asked what it was that drove her to put herself forward as Chair of Governors, a resounding enthusiasm for “working with incredibly professional teachers and support staff who always put pupils first” is her immediate response. “I value working with people who are so committed to supporting pupils”. A strong advocate of extra-curricular activities, Mrs Towell firmly believes that enrichment activities are critical alongside high performance in examinations, as pupils are prepared for the world of work. “I don’t think my daughter could have had a better education anywhere” Mrs Towell muses as she shares that her work in her first year as Chair is very much focused on building on the firm foundations of the Heads and Chairs of Governors before her, most recently and across 400 years of history.

“We must prepare our pupils for the rapidly changing face of employment over the forthcoming decades” she reflects as we discuss her vision and ambition for Borlase. “In its 400th year, I want Borlase not to think about the next 400, but to realise that the next group of Year 7s will be in employment in 10 years time and we need to prepare them for what that will look like”.

Asked if she had a wish for the school, a wry smile is followed by the instant response of “more parking and more time back for the staff” and for pupils that they “spend more time on enrichment activities alongside their academic studies to help prepare them for the world of work”.

As our interview draws to a close, I appreciate that a day in the life of our multi-talented Chair of Governors can be a busy one: supporting the senior leadership team with the strategic oversight of the school; supporting Mr Goodall with his orientation and new responsibilities; as well as having overall responsibility for wellbeing. “The best bit of what I do is interviewing pupils”. Reflecting on a recent visit to the student-led Equalities Group, she affirmed enthusiastically “if one of them is not running the country in a few years, I don’t know what is going on!”. We will have to wait and see.



ENRICHMENT

Careers Days - Dentistry, 7 & 9 November

On the 9th November, students from Year 12 had the opportunity to participate in a Careers Dentistry Day at Wexham Park Hospital. It was an amazing opportunity to work alongside and listen to the various experiences of trained professionals in the dentistry industry.

We met the regional dental advisor, Shakir Shivji, and his colleagues who work with him at Wexham Park. Each of them explained their own experiences within dentistry, and demonstrated how there are so many more opportunities and careers within this field that we had not previously known about. We were given a deep insight into the various roles of each person in a practice, and we learnt about the importance of teamwork and collaboration in this field. It was also helpful to see the process of applying for dentistry courses at university, and we were given advice on interviews and writing personal statements.

Throughout the session, we were given the opportunity to create composite fillings, with the equipment used in actual dental practice. They first demonstrated how to use the composite, and built up the filling bit-by-bit, to ensure that it had been set the whole way through. After applying each bit of composite, they used a curing light (UV light) in order to cure the composite. We were then sent off to work on our own fillings in partners (with one person acting as the dental nurse, and one as the dentist). This was an incredible insight into the actual hands-on job that a dentist would experience on a daily basis.

It was incredibly inspiring to see how passionate they are about their jobs, not only about the art of dentistry, but their drive to help others.

Students from Year 10 also had the same opportunity to participate in the Dentistry day on Tuesday 7 November where they listened to guest speaker, the Deputy Chief Dental Officer of England and also had the chance to have a go at doing a filling. Ellie Pash, Year 10, explained "Overall, I definitely feel like I have learnt a lot about Oral Health and I am very grateful I was able to get a chance to go on the Course and achieve doing a filling".

Francesca Wells, Year 12

Careers Day - Pinewood Studios, Friday 24 November

On Friday 24th November, we took a 45 minute coach ride to Pinewood Studios and on arrival, went straight to watch a video about the Creative Media Skills Institute (CMS). The organisation is run by Ailey Smith who is an Old Borlasian and it was so exciting to see her journey into film and the organisation she has made where experienced individuals actively working in the industry come and teach a class of 15 students twice a week. This opportunity is available for anyone who is looking to go into film and free for those under 18!

We got to meet multiple individuals who are working on movies and got told about the making of props as well as the classes they offer. There was also a chance to feel a cast of a nose made of silicon which was eerily similar to human skin.

After the video and introduction, we got taken around Pinewood into different buildings that specialised in a specific area of film. First, there were multiple stalls and lighting companies that we got to talk to- as well as Deadpool and a couple of stormtroopers. There were lots of opportunities, such as WFTV, a chance to be an extra in a film, BFI and multiple props organisations, even lightsabers, camera dollies and jibs. Afterwards, we went to another building which contained lots of cameras



and props. There we got to engage with individual's and ask about their career and their journey into film. There were so many stalls with different organisations and careers, such as colour grading, camera work, live streaming- which included a green screen where we could go stand in front of and look like we were in a spaceship.

Throughout this trip, everyone's passion for film was evident and we really enjoyed the tremendous level of experience and skill we got to meet and a huge thank you to Ms Chislett and Mrs Wingrove for organising this trip to Pinewood.

Niyati Aulakh, Year 12



Tabletop Games Club, 24 October

During the October half term, the members of the Tabletop Games club came into school for a full day of miniature battles and action! We had lots of games on offer for the students to play. The most popular were the Games Workshop games: Warhammer 40k, Warhammer Age of Sigmar and, my favourite, Blood Bowl!

We began in the morning with a miniature building and painting session. This was an excellent opportunity for students to share their skills, tips and techniques. The students learnt a lot of little gems that will make their armies or teams look even more impressive on the table. The atmosphere was really buzzing, as everyone was excited to have time to develop their hobby skills.

After that session, the students organised themselves into their games. We had some new players who buddied up with more experienced players to get the battles and matches going. It was wonderful to see the students operate so nicely in a spirit of competitiveness and good humour. We had enough time to be able to get a couple of games in, which was really wonderful. I am looking forward to the next time we get to put on an occasion like this. I anticipate that it will be during the February half term.

If you are interested to join the Tabletop Games Club, please see Mr Tekerian or Mr Marchand and join us in G7 on Fridays at lunchtime.

Global Cultural Day, Friday 1st December

We were pleased to celebrate Borlase's first Global Cultural Day on the 1st December. The Equalities Leaders worked hard to put together some activities to mark the occasion. I was very grateful that Mr Goodall allowed this to be a non-uniform day, as this made for whole school engagement and awareness of the day. We invited people to wear things that represented their cultural background so the school had a lovely atmosphere. Additionally, the canteen put on special dishes to celebrate different types of cuisine. They also decorated the canteen with lots of multi-national flags. At break time we had an international bake sale which, as one would expect, proved very popular and the last crumbs were sold 10 minutes into break!

At lunch Mr Marchand ran a Scottish Dancing session which was well-attended and enjoyed by all. We also had a language taster session in M8, where students presented key words and phrases from their culture to the audience. It was really brilliant to see our young people speak with such evident passion and knowledge about their countries and the beauty of their language.

Overall, it was a lovely day and a chance for people to talk and ask questions about each other's backgrounds. We were able to raise the awareness and generate the interest in different cultures. Thank you to everyone who helped to make it happen and who took part.

Mr Tekerian, Head of Drama



English School's Chess Championships Regional Qualifier, 23 November

On Thursday 23rd November SWBGS participated in a regional qualifier for the English School's Chess Championships. The event was held after school at Radley College in Oxfordshire with 8 teams participating. To qualify we would have to win 2 of our 3 matches during the evening. Our first match was against The Commonweal School from Swindon who were technically seeded above us, but we produced a very strong display, winning 5 of the 6 games to run out a convincing 5-1 winner. We then rotated the team slightly to allow the 3 players who had missed out in the first round to play the next match. We were paired against the hosts, Radley College, who had also won their first match by a score of 5-1. This match was to prove very close and pivotal to our chances of qualifying. We unfortunately suffered an early loss but wins for John and Charlie Palmer, followed by another loss, left the match delicately poised at 2-2 with 2 games still playing. Calvin Chris Biju's and Jack Barry's games looked very close with time on the clocks starting to run down. Calvin looked to have gained a slight advantage in the ending but Jack's position worsened and when his opponent queened a pawn it looked like he would succumb to a loss. His opponent however looked very nervous and after a long think, made a mistake allowing Jack to queen one of his pawns. The queens were quickly traded and Jack very soon realised that he had emerged into a winning position which he duly converted a few moves later. Calvin managed to convert his advantage into a win after the last pieces were traded off and one of his pawns was then able to queen. Both games finished within a minute of each other and this meant we had emerged 4-2 winners and therefore qualified for the regional stages next term with a match to spare! Our last match was against Abingdon, and I think subconsciously we relaxed and unfortunately, despite a few close games that didn't quite go our way, succumbed to a 5-1 defeat. The students were obviously proud of their achievements and we look forward to finding out which school we will be paired against in a one on one match in the next round in January. Well done to all those who played: Calvin, John, Charlie, Andrew, Lucas, Oli, Ben H and Ben N, and especially Jack B whose swindle ultimately lead to us qualifying!

Mr Campbell,
Teacher of Maths



The Friends of Borlase – Parents helping Students

Our enthusiastic parent association kicked off Friends activities for the year with a raucous **Comedy Night fundraiser** on 13 Oct! Mr. Goodall's assessment: "The acts were hilarious and I felt like I got through relatively unscathed!" What more can a Headteacher ask? (Look for another Comedy Night in the Spring term....)

Our terrific volunteers also staffed the Friends Bar at the **Autumn Concert, House Drama Finals, Rocktober**, and **Strictly Come Dancing Finals** at the Mountfield Theatre this term. AND: we switched into Festive Friends mode to serve mulled wine and mince pies at the ever-popular **Carol Services** at All Saints Church on 13 and 14 Dec. It's a delightful bonus of volunteering to enjoy the music and magic that our talented Borlase students and dedicated staff produce together!

Friends funds at work

At our **Annual General Meeting on 7 Nov**, attendees voted unanimously to fund the purchase of a NEW Bluetooth-enabled portable PA system for the school – it will be used for assemblies, sporting events, presentations, and yes: exams! A perfect example of how Friends of Borlase funds raised are used to enrich the lives and support the learning of all our Borlase students.

Lost Property: the eternal struggle

Our stalwart **Secondhand Uniform and Lost Property Team** has been hard at work sorting through the MOUNTAINS of mislaid jumpers, jackets, water bottles, and more rogue items of kit and clothing. Missing an item – or looking to buy something specific? Email lostproperty@swbgs.com with details!

Students can collect Lost Property every Wednesday from 1:40–2:30 p.m. upstairs of the old gym next to the music rooms. Pro tip: label ALL your child's items with their full name (rather than initials only) and we'll do our best to get wayward items returned.

Looking ahead

The Friends of Borlase will be helping with upcoming Borlase400 events: get some friends together or come along to meet some new people! Drop a line to friends@swbgs.com to volunteer and include your mobile number if you'd like to be added to our WhatsApp group.

Follow us on Instagram [@friends_of_borlase_](https://www.instagram.com/friends_of_borlase_) and Twitter/X [@FriendsSWBGS](https://twitter.com/FriendsSWBGS) and visit our website to learn more: sites.google.com/swbgs.com/friendsofborlases

Wishing you all a restful and happy holiday!

by Adrienne Blair
Secretary, Friends of Borlase



House Drama Review and Reflection, November 2023

In a period of many personal firsts for me at Borlase, House Drama has been a real highlight and a wonderful celebration of all that my subject can offer and all that our wonderful students can bring.

The theme of the competition was ‘Drama Through the Ages’, which allowed us to give students the opportunity to explore different parts of the theatrical world.

The Tutor Group Drama competition was presenting extracts from the Greek Tragedy ‘Antigone’. Each form selected a section from the story that they then cast and performed in their classrooms. It was really wonderful to see the full participation of each and every member of the forms across each year group. There was some lovely use of mime, characterisation and choral vocalisation. I watched each entry and assessed them on their quality and skill, before shortlisting the top few in each Key Stage. Mrs Walder and Mr Goodall then selected their winners and runners-up, which were as follows:

KS3 Winners: **Britons 1**
KS4 Winners: **Britons 4**
KS5 Winners: **Saxons 7**

KS3 Runners-up: **Normans 2**
KS4 Runners-up: **Vikings 3**
KS5 Runners-up: **Vikings 6**

A huge congratulations go to all entries, especially to the forms listed above. In all cases they went the extra mile to consider staging, characterisation and how the ensemble could use movement to enhance the main action of the story.

The second part of the celebration was The Whole-House Drama competition. Each House was randomly assigned a section of the excellent anti-war play ‘Oh What a Lovely War!’ based on the events, people and songs of the First World War. This involved a great deal of ensemble work with some lead performers. It also incorporated the terrific technical and singing abilities of members of each House.

The students performed these to Mr Goodall and Mrs Walder in registration time during the last full week of November. The performances had a live audience in attendance (the Year 7 and 8 students from the performing Houses). This really helped to generate a great atmosphere for the performers, and allowed them to give of their best. Additionally, the performances were live streamed, so that the rest of the school could watch along in their form rooms. I was really impressed with the quality and inventiveness of each of the entries. There were some excellent set design, costume design and staging ideas. The use of projections from the First World War made the pieces even more compelling and poignant. I was extremely proud of the work that the students created in their own time. Well done to everyone involved!

The winning House was Britons, who performed a great scene from the end of Act 1, just as the war enters its first winter. In this scene the German and British troops call across to each other, exchange gifts (amidst the explosions) and sing some traditional songs. In the case of the Germans, this is the moving ‘Stille Nacht’, for the Brits, it is the rather bawdier ‘Christmas Day in the Cookhouse’!

Britons performed this with a large cast made up of a whole range of year groups. They



HOUSE SYSTEM

came up into the audience to sing ‘Silent Night/Stille Nacht’ in German and English before entering the stage, which had been made up to resemble the trenches. The way they moved on and around their set was excellent, and the lighting and sound effects added to the sense of the imminent danger of No-man’s land.

A huge congratulations to Britons for a wonderful, artistic and moving piece of theatre.

The final category was the Individual and Paired Competition. For this, our students (and members of staff) presented modern monologues and duologues to me and Ms Chislett in the week before half term. This was a wonderful exhibition of the excellent talent we have here at Borlase. The variety of play scripts, film scripts and television scripts was absolutely wonderful to see! There was a great amount of comedy and also some powerful darker scenes as well. One notable frequent entry was the excellent ‘It’s literally Impossible To Be a Woman’ speech from ‘Barbie’. This is something that we saw performed quite a few times, as it has clearly struck a chord with our young people.

I must commend everyone who has committed to this competition over the last few months. The level of interest and the quality of work has been phenomenal. Throughout my time at Borlase, it has been a pleasure to teach our students and to get involved in some fantastic extracurricular work. The House Drama competition has been just as fun.

I am really proud of our finalists who showed their work on the Finalists’ Performance Evening on the 23rd November. The judges were two fantastic Drama specialists: the wonderful Miss Mountfield and Miss White. They were thoroughly impressed by the variety of work on show, and the breadth of talent we have at our school. Their final verdicts were full of praise for all of our performers. Ultimately, they awarded the winners and runners-up in each category and a full list can be [viewed here](#).

The leading position in the whole house competition changed hands at several turns. However, the final standings, with all of the results from the Finals evening calculated in, were as follows:

1st: Danes - 1335
2nd: Saxons - 1298
3rd: Britons - 1199

4th: Vikings - 756
5th: Romans - 709
6th: Normans - 448

A huge congratulations to Danes for their terrific participation and tremendous skill! All in all, I have really enjoyed running the House Drama Competition for our staff and students. It has been a real treat to see the skill, enjoyment and enthusiasm from all involved. I look forward to supporting the House Dance event that will be launched next September! Thank you to all involved for the wonderful support.

Berj Tekerian, Head of Drama

