



SIR WILLIAM BORLASE'S
GRAMMAR SCHOOL



THE BORLASE REVIEW

Issue 15
Date 09/02/2024



*Inspire
Empower
Shape The Future*



Welcome

03 Mr Goodall's Introduction

Borlase 400

04 Borlase 400 Update

STEM

05 Space Agency Visit, Senior Physics Challenge, Physics Olympiad

HELM

06 Windsor Castle Trip, Geography Field Trip

07 MFL Update,

The Arts

08 Tech Theatre trip, Boys Logic Dance Workshop

09 Jesus Christ Superstar Senior Production

Sports

10 Sports Round up

Staff Feature

14 A Conversation with Danielle Harris, Head of English

Enrichment

15 Yr 7 First Aid course, Futures Evening, National Apprenticeship Week, Careers Champions

16 Chess Club, House Update, Spotlight on Mental Health

17 Friends of Borlase

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first edition of The Borlase Review of 2024.

I'm sure it will not surprise you to learn that we have and will continue to take time to look back at the last 400 years of our school's history this calendar year. The term started with extraordinary assemblies for each year group in which the story of the school's founding in 1624 was told but, attention was also drawn to the fact that this is the first term of the next 400 years and that, while we may spend time considering where we have come from, this year also presents us with an exciting opportunity not only to recognise where we are, but also where and what we want to go on to and to make a commitment to an inclusive and sustainable future.

It was perhaps fitting, therefore, that one of the first major events was to celebrate the opening of the Centenary Hall which is providing a wonderful, flexible working environment for Sixth Form students during the school day and also a great venue for external speakers such as those we welcomed for Futures Evening in January and National Apprenticeship Week in February, as well as hosting events such as the launch of the 2024 rowing season when rowers and their parents were invited into school. Our huge thanks (and the thanks of those who will benefit from this fantastic new facility for many, many years to come) go out to all those involved in the fastidious design work and construction of the building, and for the generosity of all the alumni and parents of current and former students which made this project possible, together with the Canteen refit and creation of the new Science laboratory.

You will read over the next pages about the visits, exchanges, fixtures, speakers, performances and events which have taken place already this year and I look forward to seeing many of you at further events to come including our Community Open Day on 29th June and the Summer Festival on 13th July.

Ed Goodall
Headteacher



Borlase 400 Update

On Monday, January 15th Mr Goodall was delighted to open the new Borlase 400 Centenary Hall to our Sixth Form Students and Staff. This is an exciting and much-awaited school improvement following a long period of fundraising and school development. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Borlase 400 Campaign giving us our Sports Hall and Campus, Science Lab, Computer Lab, new toilets, Maths Rooms, MFL rooms and so much more.

We were keen to give the students access to this facility as soon as we could as the completion was delayed; we will invite all of you who have contributed to the Be Part of the Story Campaign to come in and see the installation and there will be more information about the project as part of the Borlase 400 Exhibition in the summer. The later finishing date on the building means there is **still a chance** for you to have your or your child's name on a "book" in the impressive art installation if you click on this [link](#).

The Centenary Hall along with a newly expanded and upgraded Canteen and Kitchen means that students across the year groups have somewhere warm and smart to eat and have access to a wider range of healthy foods - this has always been a priority for the students, staff and parents.

The Centenary Hall is also a wonderful, permanent celebration of our 400th birthday! It provides an inspirational environment for our senior students and staff to have a coffee and work collaboratively or independently. The robust desks and coffee-shop style comfortable seating have built-in charging points for laptops and there is all day access to The Stage Cafe. It has a projector for presentations and assemblies and is a stylish, modern space fit for our students and staff. It is also a warm and welcoming venue for parents' evenings, larger meetings and presentations.

The old draughty windows in the 1960's building have been replaced as part of a change to the facade making the building more in keeping with the rest of the Chapel Cloister, and central to the design are two large stained glass windows designed by Petri Anderson who also designed the windows on the front of the Chapel. The pair of windows depict the historic school and celebrate the modern era of education at Borlase. They were donated by the family of Old Borlasian, the late Stuart Lever and by the Borlase Trustees, chaired by former chair of governor and Old Borlasian Mr Ted Brown.

Mr Goodall thanked Miss Mountfield (Former Headteacher) , Mrs Cains (Director of Development) and Old Borlasian, Harry Elliot for their work on developing the vision, design and raising funds to complete the project. Miss Mountfield loved having the opportunity to cut the ribbon and let the sixth form in at last!



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



Year 12 UK Space Agency Visit, 12 January

On Friday the 12th of January, Robin Mobbs from the National Space Academy came to Borlase to give a series of talks and activities about space, and how we explore, survive, and understand it. The day ranged from calculating the elliptical orbit of a planet, to trying on soviet cold war space suits, and provided a day of education and entertainment.

The first talk of the day revolved around the technology of space, and how it has adapted and evolved over the years. Robin Mobbs passed around a piece of a satellite that had come back from space to demonstrate how light the materials and parts that they send up have to be in order to keep the costs down, as sending one kilogram into space costs roughly £16,000. He also showed how spacecraft dissipate heat on reentry into the Earth's atmosphere, by heating one side of an insulation panel from the outside of a space shuttle, that had again been to space, and showing that the other side was still stone cold.

We transitioned to space exploration, not only how astronauts conduct research on the ISS, but how we are exploring deeper into space using robots and rovers. We started by analysing footage from the Perseverance rover on Mars, and how it shows that Mars, at least at some point, checked all of the boxes to accommodate life. We also learnt about the human aspect of space exploration and research, and what it would take to become an astronaut. Some of us got the opportunity to try on an old, Soviet era space suit, and we spent 15 minutes doing some basic astronaut aptitude tests. Turns out it's quite difficult to be an astronaut.

Finally, we ended the day by focusing on aerodynamics and engineering. We first drew up graphs and learnt about Space X's Falcon heavy rockets, and learnt more about the future of space travel, and its commercial uses. We then moved onto building and then firing our own rockets. We learnt about the aerodynamics of fin stabilisation on rockets, and how the placement of the fins on a rocket changes how it will fly. We were then put into groups to put this knowledge to the test, along with our own ingenuity, and built our own miniature rockets to be launched on the field.

Overall, the day gave everyone an excellent insight into all of the ins and outs of space, from the theoretical and mathematical, to the practical and adventurous side.

Joe Cockroft
Year 12



Senior Physics Challenge, 22 January

During the week beginning the 22nd January, all of our year 12 students and a few year 13 students took the UK Senior Physics Challenge. The questions were challenging and covered a wide array of physics content. Huge congratulations to the ten of our students who achieved the Gold award: Eddie Pratt, Freddy Smith, Ellie Spicer, Raf Conway, Toby Dickinson, Max Stokes, Callum Rayner, Will Tebbutt, Georgina Longeran, Tom Brandis, Izzy Gorf and Nathan Taylor.

Ms Pike
Head of Physics

British Physics Olympiad

On Friday the 10th of November, the school's top achieving physics students in year 13, completed round one of the British Physics Olympiad. It was a rigorous three hours of problem solving and calculations. The top achieving students will be selected to compete in round 2 in late february and thus the international Physics Olympiad and the European Physics Olympiad (EuPhO). However, even competing shows a profound depth of development, skill at the subject, and a determination to solve hard physics problems. As we eagerly await results, which are delayed due to unprecedented volume of entries, I want to award special commendation to:

Bertie Pain
Ben Proudfoot
Eddie Pratt
Olliver We

Miss Hall
STEM coordinator





Yr 7 Windsor Castle Trip, 5 January

On a cold but bright morning in January, 150 year seven students and staff embarked on our SWBGS inaugural trip to Windsor Castle. The visit was an opportunity to enrich the student's study of 'The development of Church, state and society in Medieval Britain 1066-1509' and, in particular, castles. Windsor Castle, an official residence of the monarch, is the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the world. Since the building of a wooden fortress at the time of William the Conqueror, the Castle has been transformed over the centuries into a splendid palace, while still retaining much evidence of its turbulent past.

The Borlase History Department has a unique connection with Windsor Castle. For the past five years, we have had the privilege of being able to display some of our best Year 7 castles from an annual competition at their new Education Centre. In this Education Centre the students were given a lesson on the history of the castle, the feudal system and how William took control of the country after 1066.

St Georges chapel gave the students an amazing understanding of the hundreds of years of monarchy, right up to the present day. This chapel was designed for the Most Noble Order of the Garter and was begun by Edward IV. It is now the final resting place of the late Queen Elizabeth II. Above the choir stalls hang the insignia of the Knights of the Garter, their swords, helmets, and banners; to the backs of the stalls are affixed their heraldic stall plates. We were fortunate to have a talk from Andrew Stafford, Old Borlasian Head of English (1981-2001) who now works in the Chapel.

The state rooms gave us the opportunity to understand how Windsor Castle was transformed "from a military fortification into a gothic palace," under King Edward III and subsequent Monarchs. The castle's staterooms are some of the most impressive and awe-inspiring rooms in the world, and they were definitely worth visiting.

The students were a credit to themselves and the school. Many visitors, from all around the world, kindly complemented the staff on their excellent standard of behaviour and respect. Well done year 7.

Ms K Hocking
Teacher of History

Yr 11 Geography Field trip to High Wycombe, 10-12 January

On a cold January day, the year 11 geographers visited High Wycombe town centre to carry out their human geography field work. The group initially went to the Field Studies Council centre in Amersham where their staff explained the principles of urban data collection. By mid-morning the students were working in small groups walking along transects across High Wycombe town centre doing an environmental quality survey and field sketching at predetermined locations.

After lunch the groups were allocated areas of the town centre to record urban land use. Questionnaires were used to determine shoppers' perceptions of High Wycombe and, while some groups had difficulty persuading any shoppers to stop and answer, one group had difficulty preventing a particularly garrulous respondent from taking up the entire half hour allocated to the task.

Although cold, the lack of rain and clear skies made for a pleasant day out of the classroom and enabled all the data to be collected effectively. Borlase students also took the opportunity to help the local economy during the lunch hour, sampling the offerings of fast food outlets or coffee shops!

Mr King
Head of Geography



MFL Update

It's been an exciting half-term in the MFL department!

Our Year 10 Spanish linguists have had an amazing time in Avila - they enjoyed their time with their exchange families and practised their Spanish speaking skills. Here is a summary from the students of what they have been up to!

We've all really enjoyed the Spanish exchange this year and we're very grateful to Señora Román and Mr Hazine for taking us on this trip! Our families have all been very accommodating and we have really enjoyed experiencing the Spanish culture. In Salamanca, Sir found the famous, lucky frog annoyingly quickly but eventually we all found it so have good luck for our exams. ¡Qué guay! We visited the university that Señora Román went to when she was younger and we saw the old and new cathedrals which were very beautiful. Also, we learnt about the story of the blind man, naive child, the bull, the bishop and acorn pigs which was very interesting. On Tuesday, we went on a tour bus and saw the modern architecture of Madrid's city centre. We also met Marshal from Paw Patrol and Chucky which was very cool, however, the coolest was by far was the gorilla. The monastery containing previous dead kings was also very impressive. On Wednesday, we saw how glass is made in Segovia and visited a palace where there were massive tapestries that we sadly weren't allowed to take photos of. We also went to ALE-HOP which is our new favourite shop and have so far visited three. At the end of the day we saw the aqueduct in Segovia and nearly gave Miss a heart attack by leaning over the edge (sorry Miss). We also went to Toledo, where we went on a touristic train tour! Lastly we spent the day at our exchange partner's school, it was fascinating to see the similarities and differences! We have loved this trip and will miss the lovely weather and views, and hope we can be on more trips with Señora Román and Mr Hazine!

On January 31st, our A level French students attended the British Film Institute French Study Day. This was an excellent opportunity for students to develop their analytical skills, build a deeper understanding of the themes of key set texts, and broaden their cultural awareness.

This Thursday, 30 of our KS4 and KS5 linguists took part in the UK Linguistics Olympiad. It was fantastic to see so many of our talented linguists rise to the challenge!

Finally, we are very happy to welcome Mrs Cranfield to the department, who will be taking over as Curriculum Support Assistant and supporting all the exciting activities in MFL!

Mrs Colville
Head of MFL



Year 12 & 13 Tech Theatre Backstage Tour & Show 18 January

On the 18th of January 2023, The Borlase Technical Theatre Department were lucky enough to go on an exclusive tour of the **Royal Opera House** in Covent Garden. We had the unique opportunity to delve into the inner workings of the Opera house, thanks to a private tour which gave us access to typically unseen areas. We even got to step under the stage next to the orchestra pit, up 6 stories into the fly and see their costume and lighting departments. Having spent time learning in class and in our very own theatre, it was eye-opening to see theatrical techniques come together on such a large and professional stage, translating to the real working world. To finish off the evening, we ventured off to the Adelphi Theatre to see a production of **'Back To The Future: The Musical'**. I was blown away by the music, the choreography and more importantly the tech!

Connor Botha
Year 13

Boys Dance Logic Workshop, 11 January

ZoieLogic Dance Company worked with 20 of our Boy's Dance Company on a two day workshop to create a performance piece for 'ManMade' which is an all male youth dance platform. ManMade brings together young people from a variety of secondary and primary schools across Newbury, to push the boundaries of male dance. This project first launched in 2010, and since then has brought together over 1,400 students and has helped develop physical skills, performance skills, creative expression and choreography. This year there will be seven schools performing at the Corn Exchange Newbury in March where students will represent themselves and their school with brand new performances.

Miss S Ramnarine
Head of Dance



ARTS



Senior Production, Jesus Christ Superstar, 5-8 February

Having witnessed the months of hard work and dedication that was put into countless after school and weekend rehearsals, it was amazing to finally be able to watch the finished product. The professionalism of the entire company was extremely impressive. From the quick costume changes to the intricate lighting designs, it no doubt further raised the already astonishingly high bar set by Borlase productions over the years.

Although an exceptionally talented cast stole our hearts through their captivating performances, a special mention has to go to everybody behind the scenes coordinating sound and lighting from the tech box, designing and applying the striking makeup and choreographing all the creative and contemporary dances.

We were shocked when only a handful of musicians emerged from under the staging to take their bow, as we had assumed that the music had been produced by a full orchestra. The cast members wonderfully portrayed the infamous and well-known story of the last week of Jesus' life, putting their very own Borlase spin on Sir Tim Rice's musical, which he himself confirmed was outstanding. It goes without saying that we thoroughly enjoyed watching our friends and classmates perform on stage.

It was clear how much they loved being a part of the show, which received a standing ovation every night of the week. We hope that Borlase continues its legacy of top class musical productions for many years to come, which we are excited to come back to see!

Ollie West and Kat Finney, Year 13

A performer's perspective

Back in September when auditions were announced for Jesus Christ Superstar, February seemed such a long time away; five months on and now we're here - show week!

A show is only successful when all those involved come together as one company - one team - and this has certainly been the case here. It has been the most amazing five months and the performers, musicians and technical crew have all come together, working to the best of our ability, to deliver the show we committed to as a team back in September.

At times it has been intense, exhausting and a little stressful: evenings, weekends and even school holidays have been spent together at school rehearsing - requiring us to manage our time and commitments.

This week, all of our hard work has been realised. Our preview night was amazing, especially as Sir Tim Rice, the show's lyricist, was in the audience. He was generous with his time, addressing the audience and taking time to chat to the cast after the show. The feedback we have had from him - and many other audience members (including standing ovations!) - has been so positive, it really makes all the hours of rehearsal worthwhile.

For many this will be our last show at Borlase and the memories of this week will stay with us forever: a true highlight of our time at Borlase.

Ruby Qureshi, Year 13



SPORTS

Sports Update

Visit to Loughborough University

We were thrilled that Loughborough University student recruitment team contacted the department to invite a group of high performing athletes from Borlase to an Aspiring Athlete Day. The group of Year 12s are all performing at exceptionally high levels in their sports and the world class facilities and structures at the University did plenty to inspire and motivate our group to strongly consider Loughborough as a possible destination for their higher education choices.

We were treated to a Q&A session with Scottish international and Women's first team hockey player Ellie, who shared her experiences of combining elite training and competition with her studies and explained the levels of support and opportunities available to student athletes across the different sports and varying levels of performance. We experienced a tour of the world class facilities with a particular highlight being the newly renovated fitness gyms 'Power' and 'Base.' The day ended with the opportunity to support the various Loughborough teams competing in BUCS fixtures. We were lucky to see the mens 3rd tennis, mens and womens 1st badminton, 3rd netball team and finally the mens and ladies 1st hockey teams including recent Old Borlasian Tilly Crampsie! I have no doubt that a number of this group will be heading back to Loughborough with family members on Open Days in the Summer and would encourage anyone else who is interested in finding out more to speak to any member of the group who will happily share their experiences

Hockey

It's the turn of the boys' to play in their respective cup competitions this term, with the BU14s, BU16s and BU18s all playing in the National Cup, and the BU12s and BU13s in county and district tournaments. The GU12s and GU13s will also be in action during the spring term. The U12s, U13s and U14s are also involved in indoor training this term, and the sports psychology and nutrition workshop will continue until the end of the academic year.

National Cup

The BU18s led by example in the first National Cup fixture of 2024 as they scraped through their Tier 2 National Cup first round match against Stowe in January. An excellent first 45 minutes left the team 4-0 up and qualification for the second round was looking like a strong possibility. Stowe mounted an excellent comeback though, and scored four goals in the final 25 minutes, including an overtime corner, to force a shootout. The teams still couldn't be separated after five shuffles each, but Borlase eventually prevailed 5-4 in the shootout to book a second round tie against St. Edward's School.



St. Edward's travelled to Marlow Sports Club later in the month in the second round of the Tier 2 National Cup. A solid display out of possession allowed the team to grow into the match, and they comfortably ran out as 2-1 winners to set-up a third run against last year's finalists, MCS, Oxford.

The BU16s have experienced mixed fortunes in England Hockey's Tier 1 league, but they can be pleased with the progress they are making. In January, the team faced Reed's School in their first Tier 1 league match of the season. A 2-2 draw is a positive result away against another strong hockey school, and to be disappointed to leave without the three points is testament to the progress they are making. The team took an early lead before they were pegged back just before half-time to finish the first half level at 1-1. A penalty corner goal early in the second half put SWBGS 2-1 up, but they conceded three minutes from time to end the game all square at 2-2.

St. George's were next up for the BU16s but they couldn't take inspiration from the BU18 result against St. Edward's in the match before them at Marlow Sports Club. The team can take heart from a spirited performance against strong opposition, and the lessons learned from the match will stand them in good stead moving forward. The final league match against Wellington College will take place at Marlow Sports Club just before half-term.

The BU14s began their Tier 1 knockout campaign at the beginning of February against Merchant Taylors' School. Despite dominating possession and territory, the team found themselves 1-0 down at half-time. A long aerial found space behind the Borlase defence, which allowed MTS to create an overload in the circle and the forwards put the opposition a goal ahead. Despite an excellent display of possession in the second half, the team couldn't find a way back into the match as it finished 2-0 to the home side.

RGS, High Wycombe, await in the second round of England Hockey's Tier 1 plate competition.

The GU16s also played their final competitive match of the season in January, as they made the long journey to Sutton Valence in Kent. Despite a strong second half performance in the Tier 1 plate, the team couldn't overturn the half-time deficit. The GU16s took a while to get started after the long journey, and found themselves 2-0 down at the break. A much improved performance in the second half saw Borlase fight back to get within a goal, but Sutton Valence scored a late third to leave the final score at 3-1.

Marlow HC Indoor Finals

Congratulations to the Marlow GU16 and GU18 indoor hockey teams who played in England Hockey's national indoor finals towards the end of January.

The GU16s finished as the seventh best indoor team in the country as they saved their best performance until last in the playoff. A great performance against Taunton Vale meant the team finished on a high. Always win your last match!



The GU18s can be extremely proud of their club indoor season as they finished as the third best indoor team in the country. A strong pool stage secured a semi final spot against Clifton Robinsons, but they couldn't hold onto the 1-0 half time lead to finish in third place.

Well done to Borlase students, Rosa Cook, Jasmine Elsdon and Eloise Hillebrand, who represented the GU16s, and Ruby Duncan, Martha Goodridge, Lauren Hilditch, Ellie Lane and Gracie Runcie, who represented the GU18s.

Sports Psychology and Nutrition Workshops

Jenna Woolven and Rebecca Ward have run four fantastic workshops since December 2023. Jenna has delivered two sports psychology intro sessions at SWBGS, and Rebecca has worked with our students to develop their knowledge of nutrition in sport on Google Meet.

The details of the remaining workshops are as follows:

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](#).

- **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](#).

- **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 for the sessions, please complete the Google Form [here](#).



Marlow Hockey Camps - February Half-Term

Super Sticks will run from 9.30am-12pm on Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th February. The camp is for all players in Years 1-6 and will take place at Marlow Sports Club. The second camp, the Marlow Masterclass, will run from 1-3.30pm on Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th February. The camp is for all players in Years 7-11 and will take place at Marlow Sports Club.

Super Sticks:

- Years 1-6
- Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th February 2024
- 9.30am-12pm
- £30 per day or £55 for both days

Marlow Masterclass:

- Years 7-11
- Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th February 2024
- 1-3.30pm
- £35 per day or £65 for both days

Please book using the following [link](#):

FoBH Music Bingo

The Friends of Borlase Hockey group runs events throughout the year and, after the success of the Quiz Night in the autumn term, we are pleased to announce that their next event will take place in February.

The Music Bingo and Quiz Night for parents, friends, family and staff.....

- Friday 23rd February in the Mountfield Theatre
- £20pp inc. pizza from Da Luca
- Bar with Rebellion Beer, wine, Prosecco, soft drinks
- 100 chart with a cash prize.

Tickets are now available [here](#) on TicketSource:

There are a limited number of tickets available, so don't miss out!!

**Netball**

After the cold weather of early January left us, we have had fixtures and training back underway in the second half of the season. A number of league matches have been played, particularly the U12 squads who have had both friendly matches at Wycombe Abbey and league matches against local Wycombe District schools.

On 3 February, the senior netballers travelled to Wavell School in Farnborough for the South Region finals of the national schools competition. This was following their victory at the county tournament in the Autumn. The squad worked well together to play against a number of top performing schools and finished the day in 5th position. The top two qualifiers from the tournament who are now heading to National Finals were both in the group with Borlase showing the exceptionally high standard needed from the first whistle of the day until the last. The group should be incredibly proud of themselves and as the squad is likely to be mostly unchanged next season, this day should prove a fantastic learning opportunity ahead of next year.

Over the next 6 weeks, all year groups and teams will be competing in their end of season District tournaments to allow them to celebrate the progress they have made during the season. We wish all the teams the best of luck at these tournaments.

Football**U13 Girls**

The youngest of the girls teams had their season come to an end with an exciting match away to DCHS in the quarter finals of the county cup. In a tightly fought match, the girls gave it all they had but after striking the crossbar twice and the opposing team keeper making some excellent saves, the girls came out on the wrong side of a 3-0 deficit. A great season from all involved and a brilliant foundation to build on for next season.

U15 Girls

In the Quarter finals of the county cup the girls had the task of taking on CGS in what is always a very close fixture. On this occasion CGS found themselves on the side of a 3-1 win as the girls fought hard to push for an equalising goal at the end of the game to take the game to extra time but it was ultimately unsuccessful. After topping the group stages of the competition the girls did themselves very proud and will look to take this year's good work forward into next season.



U16 Girls

The u16 girls have qualified for the finals of the County Cup that will be held in Slough Towns home stadium in March. Victories over DCHS (3-0) and Walton High School (8-4) secured the place in the final. The semi final was an excellent representation for football in what was a repeat of last years u15 final. 3-1 up at half time with goals from Ava P and Lizzie A x2, it looked like business as usual for this excellent group of players but WHS pushed hard and made the game a great tussle. Further goals from Hana Mc D x2, Nicole N, Alex M x2 secured the win.

Rugby

The Under 15's rugby team continued their excellent early season form with a fantastic 32-7 win against Richard Hale in the National Bowl 4th Round. Up next came Reading Blue Coat in Round 5. The boys played some brilliant running rugby but unfortunately could not stop a strong Blue Coat backline losing 35-5. Many thanks to Mr Mead for coaching the side this season and a well done to Gabriel Lorenzi, Ollie Drever, Finlay Clarke and Jake Scott for getting selected for the Midlands Central Development Player Pathway squad. We are looking forward to our U13 and U16 sides competing in some Rugby 7's after half term!

Rowing**Ergo Testing**

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. All of the Y10-13s undertook their half termly ergo tests with each squad coming together to support one another and give some much needed encouragement in the tougher moments!

The Jubilee Riverside Centre

The Y9s went in search of some rowable water at The Jubilee Riverside Centre in Slough during their games session having not been able to row in anger since before Christmas. It was fantastic to see them enjoying being back in the boat even in an unfamiliar environment. We are getting closer to a return to Longridge so the session should stand them in good stead as we move toward spring racing.

Molesey Boat Club Rowing Tank

Year 10, again in search of an alternative to indoor training, set off to use the purpose built rowing tank at Molesey Boat Club. The whole group got to work on building their technical skills in a really focused way and even got to try out a little bit of sweep oar rowing alongside their sculling.

**Student Games Organisation**

At the start of this half term, Borlase took part in two squash tournaments for those at the beginning of their squash careers. As a follow up to last half terms festivals (which introduced many students to the sport), the tournaments gave the students an opportunity to play competitive games with a friendly environment! Much of our squads consisted of converted racket sport players, those that attended the festivals and students that have had the occasional hit with friends and family.

The Girls competition came first, followed by the Boys competition the following week. This was a great opportunity which was enjoyed by all that attended and has hopefully opened the students eyes to a new sport that can be picked up both now and beyond school.



STAFF FEATURE

A conversation with Danielle Harris, Head of English

By Bobby Norris, Year 13

If someone told you that Ms Harris only joined Borlase in September last year, you probably wouldn't believe them. Our new Head of English has fitted perfectly into the framework of our school and it feels as if she has been here for years.

Speaking to Ms Harris about her transition from Reading Blue Coat to Borlase, she says that the school "is a warm and welcoming environment" and that the "friendly and funny" English Department have been fantastic in sharing her goal "to do the very best for the students" in their care.

This is Ms Harris' first time being Head of English at any school and she is certainly doing a fantastic job already. She has made changes to the curriculum for English and has chosen new, thought-provoking texts across the year groups that will be brought in next year "to keep things fresh and exciting and to showcase the best of Literature".

Ms Harris' passion for teaching literature has been exhibited in the ten years that she has dedicated to education. After achieving a degree in English Literature, and a PGCE in English, she trained in Cardiff before moving to London, where she taught for 7 years. After this, she moved to Reading.

Asking her why she wanted to teach English, she said, "I genuinely believe that books open up the world like nothing else. Books introduce us to different ideas, perspectives and voices and make us think entirely differently about something we thought we understood."

She continues, "Studying Literature is not just about literature: literature is a conduit for learning about history, politics, geography, economic theory and psychology. If you want to learn about the world and the human condition, Literature is the way to do it. The idea of filling my days with talking about Literature always seemed like a good idea to me."

When it comes to Ms Harris' preferred authors, her favourites are Hardy and Dickens, whom she regards as "geniuses" despite the "almost-unrelentingly bleak nature of their writing". Her favourite novel is Kazuo Ishiguro's "The Remains of the Day", which follows the story of Mr. Stevens, a butler in 1950s England who realises that his employer, Lord Darlington, is a Nazi sympathiser. Harris says that it is "a beautiful novel about the changing nature of England and a thoughtful human story about sacrificing personal fulfilment for duty".

It is no wonder that Ms Harris has fitted in so well at Borlase. With such passion for and dedication to her subject, she has become part of the number of teachers here who share the same passion for their own subjects.



ENRICHMENT

Year 7 Mini First Aid Course, 15 & 16 January

As part of their PSHE curriculum our year 7s completed their mini first aid workshop. In this workshop the students learnt to deal with bumps, burns, breaks and bleeding, carry out CPR and deal with choking. The class was practical, lots of fun and involved lots of activities for the students to enjoy. They all received a certificate and mini first aid booklet to take away with them. Thank you for the voluntary contributions which helped us to facilitate this course.

Futures Evening, 24 January

The Year 12 Futures evening took place on Wednesday 24 February and was designed to inform students and parents of the various pathways open to them post Borlase. The evening built on the informative weekly lectures that the students have been attending this half term. They were fortunate enough to have experienced specialist speakers leading each session advising how best to submit a competitive application in their field.

Futures Evening was an excellent opportunity for students to further develop their thinking and to help parents/carers understand the opportunities available and how to apply.

The evening covered university applications (UCAS), apprenticeships (including competitive degree apprenticeships), Oxbridge and the Creative Arts. The speakers for each session are listed below:

Katherine Pagett - Student Recruitment, University of Birmingham - UCAS

Tim Swithenbank - Careers Adviser

Katie Day - PwC and Birmingham University - Degree Apprentice and Borlase Alumna - Apprenticeships

Steve Raynor - Access and Outreach Officer, Somerville College, Oxford - Oxbridge

Mark Hartley - SWBGS Performing Arts, Freelance Production Manager and Technical Director for Theatre and Events, Lecturer for Guildhall School of Music and Drama - Creative and Performing Arts

It was an extremely professional event and we hope that it has encouraged students to do further research and to be inspired by the opportunities ahead.



National Apprenticeship Week, wk/c 5 February

Schools, employers, career advisers and thousands of students came together to celebrate apprenticeships in support of National Apprenticeship Week which took place 5-11 February. Throughout the week, top employers and organisations showcase their opportunities to those who are actively seeking an Apprenticeship with the theme this year being 'Skills for Life'.

We were delighted to welcome to the school two Alumni Apprentices, Myles Caddell and Alex Dust together with two Apprenticeship Providers, Zenopa and Buckinghamshire College Group, who all took part in drop-in sessions for those students who wished to ask their own specific questions and discuss next steps. Zenopa, who are based in Penn, currently have 5 Borlase Alumni working for them!

Myles completed his Degree Apprenticeship with the BBC and is now a Broadcast Operations Engineer. Alex is now an Industrial Designer having completed her Degree Apprenticeship with Dyson. Students had the opportunity to learn about their experiences and opportunities and ask any questions on how to apply for apprenticeship programmes.

Both the Alumni and Providers did presentations in classrooms throughout the day discussing careers in the curriculum, as well as an Assembly to the year 13s, the whole of Key Stage 4 and the year 12 lecture series.

We will also be welcoming Apprentice Alumni Harvey Green who is doing an Apprenticeship with Santander, along with K3 Capital to present to Key Stage 3 on a later date in February.

We are confident that our students are now more informed about the array of opportunities available with apprenticeship programmes.

Careers Champions

We are thrilled to welcome our new student Careers Champions. The students were selected across Years 9 to 12 to be a part of the Careers Team at Borlase. Their role will help us shape the careers provision in the school. The Careers Champions will be able to develop new skills by being a part of the team and helping to deliver careers events for Borlase. They will build careers awareness within their year groups and help us tailor our careers programme. It is a great opportunity for them to be a part of the wider Buckinghamshire schools network raising their profile within the region and within the school community. The Careers Champions and Careers Prefects did a fantastic job at welcoming and looking after our guests during National Apprenticeship week. Mr Goodall enjoyed giving most of our Careers Champions badges and congratulated them on their new role. We are looking forward to working with the whole team in the next few weeks and welcoming the remaining Careers Champions.

Mrs Wingrove
Careers Lead



ENRICHMENT

Chess Club

The chess club at school has been really busy this half term. The lunchtime sessions in H4U, which are open to everyone, are always very popular so if you haven't been, but want to have a go at chess then please come as there will always be someone to play with. Following on from last term's successful qualification for the National competition, we played the first knockout round against Papplewick school. We managed to win the match 7.5-4.5 thanks largely to 2 wins from John and Charlie Palmer. Our next match is just after half term, away against Eton which we are looking forward to. We have also participated in a 1 day blitz tournament at Harrow school, which consisted of 12 very short games of chess over the day. There were 13 teams of 8 players participating, some very strong, and we came a respectable 8th place, with all of our players achieving similar scores of about 50% of the maximum points available, top scorer here was Calvin Chris Biju (although only by 1/2 a point!). This was an enjoyable event which we hope to attend again next year.

The Sixth form had a match against our neighbours Great Marlow. There were some really competitive games here, and for most participants from both schools, this was their first over the board competitive match. We did run out 15-3 winners, but a lot of the games were closer than the scoreline suggests. We hope to have a return match in the near future, perhaps with some of the younger students involved. The most recent event was a team of year 7 students who took part in the National Junior competition (open to students up to year 8). We played in the qualifier at Greenford High school and although coming up against some strong opposition, we won 1 match of the 4 convincingly and all of the 5 individuals who played won at least one of their games. The students very much enjoyed it and well done in particular to our top scorer Ewan Brettenny. House chess will be coming up soon next half term, so if you want to get some practice in or participate in any future competitions please come along to chess club at lunchtimes.

There is a bi-weekly online chess competition for schools which we have been playing in for the last term. This is where we play for an hour after school on the lichess.org website and are matched against various opponents from other schools across the country. We had great success at the beginning of January where the team of Andrew Freedman, Lucas Wilson, Ben Hemmings and Jack Barry managed to earn promotion to division 1 (the top tier) of the competition. We managed to maintain our status in the following round and hope to continue this for future weeks. There are also online team battles on lichess, which are open to everyone to play in at home on certain Fridays after school. If you are interested then please come along to H4U at lunchtime and ask about how to sign up.

Mr Campbell , Maths Teacher



House Update

There continues to be a range of opportunities for students and staff to get involved in House competitions, to represent their house and to earn points for it. House competitions currently underway or to be launched this term include:

House Public Speaking and Debating
400 Photography Competition
Bard of Borlase
Inter-form House Competitions
House Chess
Inter-House Sports

Spotlight on Mental Health

We are delighted to join Great Marlow School in a community project focused on mental health. Ten of our Year 10 students have been chosen to be 'Young Mental Health Champions' working with Brighter Futures Together and the NHS. The programme is a peer education project empowering young people to have a positive influence on their own mental health and the mental health of those around them.

Young Mental Health Champions are teams of young people who work together to:

- **Learn** – each YMHC completes a Level 2 qualification accredited by the Royal Society of Public Health, empowering them to have a positive influence on their own health and the health of others
- **Have a voice** – YMHCs ensure that young people's voices are heard when local NHS mental health services are being designed, commissioned and communicated and will mystery shop local mental health services
- **Make a difference** – YHCs deliver positive messages to their peers on themes related to mental health and wellbeing, as well as educating them about the local services available





The Friends of Borlase – Parents helping Students

Enormous thanks to the kind volunteers who have helped out at the Friends Bar this half-term! We've enjoyed serving and meeting folks at the **Autumn Concert**, the **House Drama** and **Strictly Come Dancing Finals**. **Rock Show** was a particularly fun night – I'm constantly amazed by the talent of Borlase students and their bandmates.

Our team was especially impressed by the performances at the **Carol Concerts** at All Saints Church in the run-up to Christmas. After tidying away the mulled wine and mince pies and taking our seats, it was magical to be immersed in candlelit hymns and harmonies from Borlase's many choirs. Such a wonderful way to open the holiday season!

Speaking of Christmas, we want to thank the folks who bought their holiday birds from award-winning, local high welfare family farm **Copas Traditional Turkeys**. Based on those purchases, Borlase earned £35 via their PTA Cashback scheme – stay tuned to find out the winner of the £100 Copas voucher!

And finally, the Friends of Borlase were delighted to unanimously approve a request to fund the purchase of a **new portable PA system** for the school. This much-needed new mixing board and CD/USB player has already seen lots of use during mocks and will see lots more during upcoming Borlase400 events! (Look out for details and volunteer opportunities in the coming weeks....)

The proceeds from all FoB fundraising goes to enrich the lives and support the learning of all our Borlase students. Follow us on [Instagram @friends_of_borlase](#) and on [Twitter/X @FriendsSWBGS](#) or drop a line to friends@swbgs.com to volunteer or for any other reason!

Happy half-term!

By Adrienne Blair – Friends of Borlase Secretary

