

ad altiora

The magazine for Arden's Students, Parents, Staff and the Local Community

Issue Two Summer 2012



ARDEN



IT SEEMS INCREDIBLE that I have been associated with Arden for more than a year now. What a year it has been! There have been many, many highlights but what stands out is an overwhelming sense of pride; pride in our students and their involvement with the school, the strength of relationships between students and staff and between Arden and its community. I have been delighted to see the many opportunities Arden students have to develop their leadership skills, steer school policy, develop exciting new initiatives and ultimately 'give something back' to the school and the wider community. Student bodies such as the Student Council, Leadership Team, Senior Pupils and Sixth Form Prefects exemplify all that is exciting and dynamic about our students.

Arden's academic success speaks for itself, but the achievements of our students in areas such as sport, music and drama are equally stunning. The performance of 'Oliver!' was amazing and thoroughly deserved all the plaudits it received. It's just one example of how Arden pupils, staff and parents work together as a team. The Upper School Concert at Bushell Hall showcased the depth and breadth of the school's musical talent, providing an evening that was both entertaining and enriching.

Arden's sporting ethos has always been strong – we pride ourselves on adhering to the Olympic values of 'friendship, respect, excellence, equality, courage, determination and inspiration'. Success has been achieved at all levels, in individual as well as team events. These achievements were celebrated in Arden's inaugural Sports Gala Dinner. The evening was made all the more special as we were honoured to welcome many distinguished guests; Mr Tommy Godwin (Medallist in the 1948 Olympic Games), Miss Kate Grey (Paralympian swimmer) and Mr Alan Bell (Official starter of the Men's 100m Final at the 2012 Olympic Games). Earlier in the day, Alan gave every student the chance to be under starter orders for a 60 metre sprint, firing the pistol he will use in the Olympic Stadium. Arden's Olympic values were further reinforced by being one of only a handful of schools selected to plant an official Coubertin Oak tree – in honour of Pierre de Coubertin who planted an oak tree in Much Wenlock one hundred and twenty two years ago. It was that visit to the Shropshire market town where he witnessed William Penny Brookes' 'Olympian Games', that he later credited as a major inspiration for establishing the modern Olympic Games.

Year 8's Rebecca Johnson recently won a competition for the children of Lloyds TSB employees to design a poster for the British Paralympic Team. We were delighted to discover that her prize included a visit to Arden by Paralympian athlete, Richard Whitehead. He proved a truly inspirational and motivational guest and kindly agreed to officially open Arden's recently constructed Multi-Use Games Area, or 'MUGA'. Arden students were also inspired and humbled by the new relationship we have developed with Sendafa School, Ethiopia. We believe this will be a rewarding and mutually enriching partnership and look forward to developing it further in future.

The summer term is a particularly busy one with several trips and events, however many older students will be focused on their exams. I am confident all our students have been prepared to achieve their personal best. I wish them all success and anticipate another strong set of results. September will bring a new year group and I am looking forward to welcoming them into the Arden family.

The newsletter strives to reflect the many amazing events that make up life at Arden and showcase the quite incredible talents of our students and the opportunities available to them. I am proud and privileged to be Principal of this school and look forward to working even more closely with students, staff, parents, Governors and members of the wider community over the coming months.

I hope you manage to have a restful and enjoyable summer and I look forward to meeting you at one of the many events in the Arden calendar.

Martin P. Murphy *Arden Principal*



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Cover Picture: Richard Whitehead with Head Boy, Alex Cardall and Head Girl, Hannah Colbert.

Opposite: The AS Level Biology Trip to Aberystwyth in March 2012.

Ad Altiora

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Legendary Paralympian visits Arden

Inspirational British paralympian athlete Mr Richard Whitehead who runs on prosthetic carbon fibre legs recently visited Arden. Richard, who is the current 200m AND Marathon World Record Holder, made a special guest appearance at our school on Friday 25 May. He presented Year 8 pupil Rebecca Johnson with a prize for winning the Lloyds TSB Children's Paralympic Design competition which was open to children of Lloyds TSB colleagues. Rebecca's mother is an employee and, happily for us, is also a key member of the Arden PTA.

Rebecca beat other entrants in her age group, with her winning design being used to form part of the Lloyds TSB Paralympic Message of Support Book. Richard commented that "the whole of ParalympicsGB will really appreciate the Message of Support Book and it will sit proudly in the Athlete's Village for us all to look at and be inspired in our pursuit of Gold".

In addition to the pupil presentation, double leg amputee Richard, who sports the tattoo 'Cometh the man' on his forearm, addressed

pupils in two assemblies. Years 9 and 10 students were first to hear his motivational story and were delighted when Richard gave them the chance to ask him questions. Students from Years 7 and 8 were even more eager to ask questions and listened to his inspiring story of overcoming challenges through hard work and dedication.

After the assemblies Richard took time to talk about his love of sports with the Sports Leadership Team. He asked each student about their sporting lives and listened intently to their answers – his understanding and knowledge of a wide range of sports was an inspiration to them all.

Richard was invited to open Arden's new Multi-Use Games Area, aka 'MUGA'. It seemed fitting that such a motivational athlete should open this fantastic sporting facility. Arden would like to thank Richard for the time and commitment he showed to its students – all of whom were inspired by his passion, courage and commitment.

Pictured, Richard Whitehead's visit to Arden:

Above: Alex Richard, James Gavigan, Katie Craddock, Dan Brookson, Hannah Colbert (Head Girl), Emma Kelly, Alex Cardall (Head Boy), Laura Wheatley.

Top right: Mrs Brown (Arden Governor), Martin Murphy, Richard, Mr Bohana (Arden Governor).

Middle right: Richard poses with Rebecca Johnson and her competition winning design.

Below: Richard cuts the ribbon at the official opening of Arden's new MUGA surface.



Olympics Trial for Arden Student

On 23rd June, Sixth Former Madelaine Smith (above) competed in the 2012 Olympic trials which were held at her home club, Birchfield Harriers at the Alexander Stadium in Birmingham.

As an up and coming athlete, she was invited to compete with world-class athletes like Jessica Ennis and Tiffany Porter. It was an absolutely fantastic experience from start to finish, as well as being hugely nerve wracking at the same time. However she steadied her nerves and ran an incredible race coming a very creditable sixth.

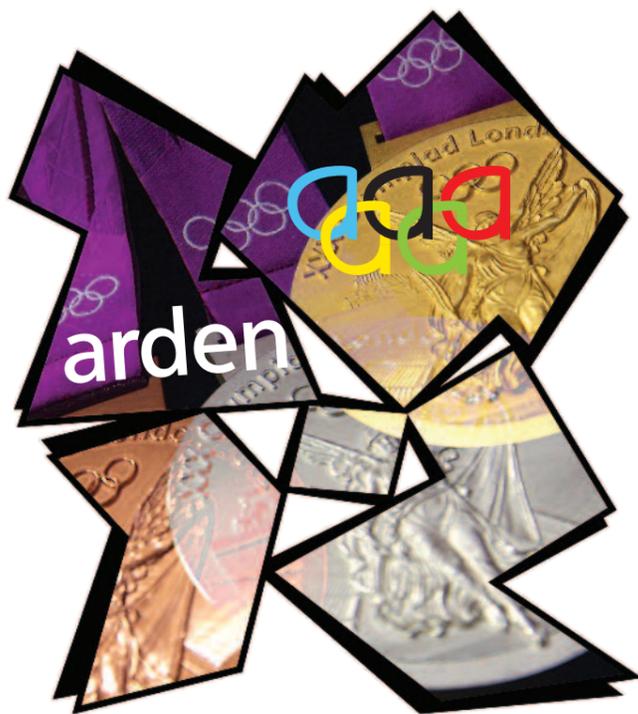
It was a wonderful achievement for Maddie and her coach to even be selected. The experience of racing at such a high level will stay with her forever. Hopefully it will not be the last such event for our young star. Bring on 2016!

The Coubertin Oak Tree

Among the many exciting events that took place on Friday 27 April, one of the most prestigious was Arden's involvement with the planting on a genuine Coubertin Oak tree in the school grounds. Back in 2004, as part of London's bid to host the 2012 Games, acorns were planted from the original Coubertin Oak tree in Much Wenlock, planted in honour of Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the Modern Olympic Movement. The saplings were then nurtured by Kew Gardens, becoming the healthy young trees they are today. Only a handful of schools have been selected for this incredible honour, the schools chosen form a ribbon of oaks from Much Wenlock to the Olympic Park. Arden was delighted that so many important guests were able to take part in the tree planting ceremony included Mr Alan Bell who will be Chief Starter of the 100m final at the 2012 London Olympics. Also in attendance were Mr Tommy Godwin, a Medallist at the 1948 London Olympics, Paralympian swimmer Miss Kate Grey, CEO of Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Mr Jeremy Blackett, and Councillors Mrs Sheila Courts and Mr Ian Courts who are the two Deputy Mayors of Solihull. Arden's association with the Coubertin Oak tree continued as Principal Mr Murphy accompanied the new Head Girl, Hannah Colbert and Head Boy, Alex Cardall, to the Olympic Park in London on Monday 28 May. There they witnessed the planting of the final Coubertin Tree by Chris Collins, who is the BBC's Blue Peter Gardener, along with Paralympic Swimmer, Chris Holmes. The ceremony was followed by an exclusive tour of the Olympic and Paralympic Village with other VIP guests. Mr Murphy commented "it is a huge honour for Arden to be associated with the Olympics in this way. The planting of the Coubertin Oak tree at Arden will live long in the memory of the community. Arden is proud of its involvement with the Olympic season and the values it represents."

Pictured: Tom Briggs (Head Boy 2011-2012), Kate Grey (Paralympian swimmer) and Mr Martin Murphy, in the foreground Mr Tommy Godwin (Medallist in 1948 London Olympics).





ARDEN OLYMPIC SEASON

THE ARDEN OLYMPIC SEASON BEGAN ON FRIDAY 27 APRIL WITH THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF OLYMPIC-INSPIRED EVENTS AT ARDEN. DESPITE THE WET AND WINDY WEATHER, ALL PUPILS WERE INVOLVED IN RACES STARTED MR ALAN BELL, CHIEF STARTER OF THE 100M FINAL AT LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES.

Not only did Mr Bell start the races with the official Olympic gun, he spoke passionately to the pupils beforehand about his life-long involvement with sport and the many opportunities it offers. It was an amazing day for all concerned - even staff took to their trainers to enjoy the experience, much to the amusement of the student spectators!

Mr Bell was invited to a very special lunch where he was accompanied by two further special 'Olympic' guests - local resident Mr Tommy Godwin an Olympic cyclist who won Bronze medals at the 1948 London Olympics and who is currently enjoying a role as an Ambassador for the London 2012 games. Arden was also honoured by the presence of Kate Grey a Paralympian swimmer who explained how sport had 'helped me to learn lifelong skills such as teamwork, leadership and communication'. This echoes Arden's ethos of upholding of the Olympic values of 'friendship, respect, excellence, equality, courage, determination and inspiration' - reinforced by a new banner in the school hall reminding pupils on a daily basis of these important values.

The guests were also joined at lunch by dignitaries that included Mr Jerry Blackett (CEO-Birmingham Chamber of Commerce) and Councillors Mrs Sheila Courts and Mr Ian Courts (Deputy Mayors of Solihull). All the guests were involved in planting a genuine Coubertin Oak tree in the school grounds.

The day culminated in Arden's inaugural 'Sports Gala Dinner' which was a fitting and exciting way to draw the Olympic themed day to a close. Students from Years 10-13 were honoured for their sporting achievements and having their awards presented by the Olympic guests made it a truly memorable evening for the students.

The evening was a huge success, enjoyed by students, staff and guests alike and was truly a celebration of values Arden holds dear - those of teamwork and commitment.

ARDEN SPORTING AWARDS

- Sports Leadership.
- Special Recognition in Sports.
- Achievement in Dance.
- **Player of the Year:** Comprising 23 different categories.
- **Sports Ties Presentations:** Sam Craven and Lizzie Stainton.
- **Team of the Year: Year 10 Basketball.**
- **Dance Ambassador:** Imogen Shepherd-Roberts.
- **Coach of the Year KS4:** Will Norris.
- **Coach of the Year KS5:** Calam Bruce.
- **Sports personality of the Year**

The climax of the Dinner was the 'Sports Personality of the Year' award. It was a huge honour to be nominated but there could only be one winner and that was... Nathalie James. As the deserving winner, Nathalie will also be in receipt of a tailor-made suit by Clement and Church.

Picture A: Miss Burkinshaw (Science Teacher), Mrs Roberts (Science Teacher), Alan Bell, Kate Grey, Miss Lamb (Science Teacher) and Mrs Hull (PE Teacher/Head of Year 10)

Picture B: Alan Bell and Kate Grey, in the foreground the Year 7 boys, left to right: Max Beesley, Harry Gibson, John Rich, Micah Lau-Mackaay, Stefan Mason, Sean Brocklebank, Jonathan Blackhurst

Picture C: Left to right, Tom Briggs, Mr Tommy Godwin, Alan Bell (holding the official gun), Kate Grey, Martin Murphy, Megan Davies.

Picture D: Nathalie James - winner of Sports Personality of the Year.





Diamond Jubilee

GARDEN PARTY SATURDAY 2ND JUNE

A celebration of the Queen's 60 year reign and her extensive world travels inspired the theme of international food, dance and music for Arden's first ever garden Party held in the front grounds of the school on Saturday 2nd June. The leafy setting proved a perfect backdrop for a host of novelty stalls including patriotic hair gelling, ice creams, face painting, cupcakes, candy floss and the chance to be photographed with Arden 'royalty' - our very own Pearly King and Queen! Former Head Boy and Head Girl, Tom Briggs and Megan Davies were resplendent in their suits, designed and produced by Miss Veal who combined traditional 'pearly' designs with the Arden logo to dramatic effect.

A mouth-watering selection of cuisine from across the continents, catered by Gourmet Foods of Knowle was enjoyed by all and a well-stocked real ale bar and Pimms tent was kept busy all night long! Talented pupil performers, professional dancers and musicians formed the fantastic stage line-up, opening and closing with an electrifying rendition of 'God Save the Queen' by local guitarist Mr David Marples, in a nod to Brian May's iconic Golden Jubilee solo back in 2002!

Several pupils from Arden, having taken up the challenge to learn how to play the cavernous Japanese Taiko drums, bravely took to the stage to demonstrate their newly acquired skills in front of the crowds. With disco interludes from the Power Leisure Team and compere Matt Bullock of Station Cafe Bar, the evening's programme encompassed a truly international flavour with Latin, Contemporary, Irish, Street and Classical Dance by the Arden Dance Team, the rhythms of the Caribbean Limbo ensemble 'Babetunde Live' and home grown talent 'The Ardenaires' and their Big Band Sound. Traditional Indian Bhangra dance troupe 'Gabhru' wowed the audience with their dazzling repertoire that preceded a stunning grand fireworks finale that brought the evening to a dramatic and memorable conclusion.

The idea to host a Garden Party was conceived over six months ago when Arden PTA decided they'd like to stage an event that would bring the local community together and run alongside the other activities and celebrations taking place in Knowle to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. With ticket sales that reached a sell-out figure of over 1,000, PTA Chairman Colin Winstone and Arden Principal Mr Martin Murphy would like to extend their sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who attended, performed and volunteered during the evening to make it such a resounding success.



Looking the Business

When it comes to dress sense, we all know the Sixth Form is the home of sartorial elegance. Now our senior pupils have a stylish new jacket worthy of their good looks and business-like approach! It had been noticed how smart everyone looked when students dressed up for the Prospectus photographs and the Prefects were soon on the case hammering out a plan to cement this level of style. It was at this stage that the Prefects' concept of a new Sixth Form jacket came about. After much debate it was decided the jacket should make our older students stand out in the school.

The specialist team from 'Perry Uniforms' came to discuss the jacket and Prefects' and Senior Pupils' ideas took shape in the form of a smart, tailored look that was ideal for many different situations both at school and in the professional world. The high quality bespoke English-made garment that has been developed now reflects the special status of our Arden's Sixth Form students within the community.

Despite its excellent quality and smart amber satin lining, the unique Arden jackets will be priced at just £7700, with payment options for paying outright or in easy installments. After discussing this figure with students, parents and governors we are confident this represents excellent value for money. Some of our students also had the chance to visit the Leeds factory to work with the design and production teams.

The new jacket will be compulsory for all Year 12 students in September 2012. Don't worry if you order a jacket, but are then unsuccessful in gaining a place, because a full refund will be provided. It's a good idea to order your jacket in plenty of time to ensure you are wearing the Arden jacket this autumn!





Arden Cross Country Success

We very are proud to announce that seven Arden pupils were selected to represent the West Midlands County Team at the prestigious Aviva English Schools' Cross Country Championships that took place on Saturday 17 March 2012. The pupils, who are all members of Solihull and Small Heath Athletics Club, include:

- **Junior Girls:** Year 8's Abigail Nolan, Elvie Cox, Caitlin McDonald and Katie Mladenovic
- **Junior Boys:** Henry Barton, Year 8
- **Intermediate Girls:** Meredith Cox, Year 10
- **Intermediate Boys:** Zac Nolan, Year 11.

With six races of varying distances covering three age groups, 45 County teams took part in this massive event bringing together over 2000 of England's best young athletes. The cross country course itself is located on an active MOD airfield (RNAS Merryfield) near Taunton in Somerset and lived up to its promise of being a challenging but interesting venue.

For some runners, this cross country event has proved to be a stepping stone to future glory, with such well known athletes as Mo Farah and Paula Radcliffe, to name two, making a mark at these championships early on in their athletics careers. We know all the pupils tried their very best and we really hope they enjoyed the whole experience of competing for their county.

Stunning Season Continues for Arden stars

Four Year 8 pupils at Arden school won't need any lessons in teamwork this term as they celebrate their latest success in a remarkable winter of road running and cross country racing. Officials have been sent scurrying for the record books as Abigail Nolan, Elvie Cox, Katie Mladenovic and Caitlin McDonald bagged four of the eight places up for grabs in the Warwickshire U13 team for the prestigious UK Inter Counties cross country championships. The four girls have also been selected in the West Midlands Schools squad for the English Schools

cross country championships in Taunton despite the squad being chosen from Year 9 as well as Year 8 pupils. The girls, competing for Solihull and Small Heath AC, have already won team gold medals in the Warwickshire cross country championship and the West Midlands Young Athletes cross country league, the latter against 18 other clubs as far afield as Cannock, Leicester and Northampton over a five race season. Top three finishes were secured in the Midlands road relays and the Midlands cross country championship and an excellent eleventh place in the National road relay championship.

A spokesman for Solihull and Small Heath AC said "The girls Under 13 team have had a great season. It's not often that four members from the same club are selected in one team for the Inter Counties. The fact that they are all at the same school is incredible" The girls' race in the Inter Counties championships was televised live on Sky Sports on Saturday March 10.

Individual awards have also been awarded to:

Jack Reidy	Year 7	Henry Barton	Year 8
Abbie Nolan	Year 8	Elvie Cox	Year 8
Nicole Beard	Year 8	Katie Mladenovic	Year 8
Andrew McDonald	Year 11	Dan Mladenovic	Year 11

Year 11's Zac Nolan also received an award for four years' attendance at league races. In the Albutt relays Year 7 boys finished second, Year 8/9 girls were winners, as were Year 10/11 boys. All of which was incredibly impressive - congratulations to all concerned.

League places secured were first place for the Year 10/11 boys. Year 8 girls had two successful teams; B team were third and Arden A were first! Year 8 boys finished a very credible second. It has been a year to be proud of and all members of the team should be congratulated on their commitment and performance.

Photograph: Back row, left to right: Emily Knowles, Dan Mladenovic, Zac Nolan, Andrew MacDonal, Nicole Beard, Abigail Nolan, Elvie Cox. Front row, left to right: Lydia Routledge, Meredith Cox, Lydia Sexton, Jack Reidy, Josh Mort, Henry Barton

SKI sestriere

80 pupils from Year 10 gathered on Friday 10 February all packed and ready for our ski trip, but nothing could have prepared us for the 24 hour coach trip that followed!



2012 Yr.10 Ski Trip

Caffeine frenzy

We made good progress down to Dover through the traffic, but missed our ferry and had to wait another hour and a half for the next one. For the teachers, it couldn't have been much worse until someone handily found a coffee machine. All that caffeine making 80 excited kids in a confined space even more agitated than before. Once across the channel, everyone got some sleep after Emma Catton and Millie Herbertson finally finished their Jedward impressions and yet another game of MarioKart had lost its appeal!

Sestriere

Located high in the Italian Alps, Sestriere is a beautiful resort, but the first thing we did was get our skis! Everything went according to plan, we were in and out quickly and efficiently, except that no one had thought to put the skis or boots in order! Sure enough, people were putting their boots on the wrong coach; picking up the wrong boots; and a certain Ben Davis was even able to do up his boots completely before realising that they were on the wrong feet!

After all the chaos, our first day of skiing began at about 10.30am. In Group 1 we got in four or five runs before going back for lunch. Pizza was on the menu, and once we finished eating, it was back on the slopes! Our instructor had changed and our new one seemed to have forgotten we were only school children. The first run he took us down was a black one that hadn't been pisted: about half the Group fell over, including Ms Cassidy and Ms Kavanagh. Everyone enjoyed the first day however there was lots of moaning about aches and pains back at the hotel.

A Perfect Week!

There were many highlights through the week; the weather was absolutely perfect, and along with the skiing we did some great evening activities. Ice skating in freezing temperatures was a funny experience. Phil Geobey and I had a snowball fight with Mr Singh.

There was the pizza night, but by the third of my eight pizzas I was completely stuffed! They were all were delicious, but the chocolate pizza desert was most people's favourite!

'L'Hunt sur la montagne'

I think the skiing award for best teacher has to go to Mr Hunt for trying two very difficult jumps one after the other in the snow park. Of course they both saw the same triumphant outcome as he fell flat on his face with his skis going in all directions!

On the last night, awards were given out for different achievements throughout the week. The best skier in each of the eight groups was recognised, and a few others awards were made for people who had been kind and helpful to others. Presented by our team of instructors, the best skier's award certificates were thoroughly deserved!

A last round on the piste!

On our last day at Sestriere we squeezed in four hours skiing, making sure we rounded off the trip in style. The journey back through Italy and France went very quickly, indeed SO quickly that we arrived in Calais more than seven hours early! We couldn't get an earlier ferry so we went to a shopping centre and all piled into McDonalds! We finally got back to home turf and Arden at eight o'clock. I was glad to be back in my own bed at last!

I know that everyone had a brilliant time, and I'd like to thank Mr. Warwood and Miss Bain for organising the trip, and thank the other teachers for putting up with us for a whole week! ■ Daniel Brookson



SKI USA



Great anticipation as forty extremely excited Arden students gathered for the trip of a lifetime this Easter. The destination was a surprisingly warm Sugar Loaf Mountain in Maine, USA. After the long flight we landed in the US to be confronted by countless neon signs promoting products with questionable health credentials and with a quick calorie top up (with said products), we continued our journey on a luxury coach which even had wi-fi! We finally arrived at Sugar Loaf to be somewhat taken aback by the lack of snow. There was no time to worry as our body clocks were saying it was 5.00am and screaming for sleep!

There were mixed feelings on our first day of skiing with trepidation for those who hadn't skied previously, the more experienced among us were eager to test their ability. Our first day saw some interesting techniques in response to the heavy ski drag from the lack of snow. This led to a some hilarious tumbles; most notably Evy, a very experienced skier, who fell on a 'blue' nursery slope run!

The lack of snow actually proved a positive thing benefit at times, meaning the resort was quiet; leaving the Arden crew to dominate the slopes. Each ski day brought more enjoyment as we all improved. The improvement was something of an essential because the icy conditions meant if we didn't ski well we spent our time sliding unceremoniously downhill, skis in the air, watched by our eager instructors who thought nothing of the adverse conditions.

One of the best experiences was slalom racing in pairs; giving us the chance to test our mettle against the competition. I'm pleased to say we gave our teachers an absolute thrashing!

Days spent skiing were followed by luxurious relaxation in our plush hotel; made all the easier by our Rep 'G' who organised what seemed like a 24 hour quiz and great entertainment facilities within the resort. Many of us opted to play pool in The Mountain Bar, located in a fabulous position... at the bottom of the mountain!

Fresh from five days of skiing, we left Sugarloaf Mountain with a sense of sadness and headed for the outlet village. We spent loads buying as much as we could possibly afford; there were some great bargains to be had in the Bose store!

Next came Boston, a city of great affluence and sophistication. A meal at The Hard Rock Café was a first for most of us and was very enjoyable. It was followed by a scouting trip, hunting out shops for the following day! Another highlight of the city was the 'Duck' tour, which enabled us to experience Boston's character from land and the Charles River, our strength maintained by loads of Dunkin's Donuts!

After yet more shopping, the reality that we were going home finally sank in. Our return flight gave us the chance to reflect on our amazing trip. We'd all like to thank the teachers for organising such a great experience, packed with humour and enjoyment throughout.

■ Ollie Grant, Year 12



GermanExchange

Sunday 11 March and Arden pupils were waiting at Birmingham airport for their German exchange partners from Frankfurt to return the visit. By noon, German partners had been reunited with the English pupils, and spent the remainder of their first day in England with their host families.

On Monday morning, 33 German students arrived at school, creating a lot of excitement amongst Arden pupils. After a kind welcome from Mr Murphy and other members of staff, they spent the first two hours in lessons with their partners, then went to get a train to Solihull to visit the Mayor and the Council house.

On Tuesday, the German students travelled to Stratford-Upon-Avon and spent the day visiting Shakespeare's Birth Place, The Boat Houses and had a guided tour around Shakespeare's Theatre. They then had a short time to look round and take in Stratford. Later that day, English students organised activities for a lot of their partners, including a large group going bowling together.

Wednesday saw both the German and English students getting a train into Birmingham, and visiting ThinkTank. They spent a couple of hours looking round the interactive museum; they then had lunch and headed towards the Bullring.

All the students enjoyed shopping in Birmingham and experiencing English shops and culture, many especially enjoyed visiting Selfridges and the Krispy

Kreme store! We headed back on the train, and German students spent the rest of the day enjoying the sunshine, and activities with their partners.

On Thursday, the German students spent the day at the school with their partners. However period one, two and three were occupied with a drugs awareness assembly, and then, drama and dance sessions from willing members of staff, which everyone enjoyed! Thursday was a 2:15 day, due to parents evening, so the German and English students left school at the earlier time and had more time to do activities after school.

Friday, the German students went on a trip to see Warwick castle and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They then returned home, just in time to get ready for a large party thrown by the school! Many of the English and German students attended, along with Mr. Murphy and his children. After the school party, many of the students went to another party at one of the host family's houses.

Saturday, was the last full day with the German partners. Most of the students went to London. The day went quickly and as they woke up the next morning it was a sad sight to see them pack their suitcases with souvenirs and reminders of England. All the exchanges and their partners met at the airport for a sad goodbye. It's amazing how much you connect with people in just two weeks and we would certainly recommend the exchange to future year groups!



SwedenVisit

Eighteen pupils from Years 8 and 9, along with Mrs Robinson and Mr Simpson, boarded a plane bound for Sweden. The trip was organised to conclude a research project with some students from a town called Vaxjö, pronounced 'Vecra'. We started early on the Tuesday morning, getting to Birmingham Airport for about 8:00am.

Though the Copenhagen plane was delayed we still managed to get a bite to eat before catching the Vaxjö train. We arrived early evening in time for a pizza before settling in for the night. Thankfully everyone in Sweden seems to speak very good English; Swedish just is impossible for us to understand!

We were up early next morning for a trip to a local primary school called Pilbäcksskolan. The Headteacher explained about education in Sweden which is very different to ours. While there, we visited one of the classes and discussed the differences between life in Sweden and England. It was interesting to find they share a lot of the same hobbies. We also took part in a PE lesson, before going on a tour of Vaxjö finishing up at Echo Tower; a curved water tower with an amazing echo! That evening we visited Norregård secondary school and our research partners who we already knew from our Skype sessions in the UK. We also cooked a traditional Swedish dinner, which if you've ever visited IKEA you'll be unsurprised included meatballs! We really enjoyed the evening.

The next morning, we were back at Norregård school to listen to a presentation on Vaxjö. This was very interesting and we learned a lot; did you know it is the greenest city in Europe? We spent the rest of the morning joining in their lessons; during this time we had a question and answer session talking about Arden and life in Solihull.

I think our Swedish friends enjoyed having a break from their work and learning about something different. After lunch we met up with our research partners to make some notes about the topic we had been assigned at the start of the project; these included hobbies, food, music, celebrations and the future. After lunch we went into town for shopping. Many Swedish stores also have branches in the UK, but some were different and we enjoyed looking around to see what we could buy.

In the evening, we had a Thai meal with the pupils from Pilbäcksskolan which was so hot it nearly killed us, but we really enjoyed it anyway. Later we met up with the older students again for bowling. That was great fun and we enjoyed spending the evening with them.

Unfortunately, Friday came round very quickly and we didn't want to leave. We went for a look around an amazing brick cathedral and did some last minute shopping before heading off to the station to start our journey home. It was a wonderful trip that everyone greatly enjoyed. We made lots of good friends that we have kept in touch with and we would love to do the trip again or invite the Swedish students here. ■ Will Davison 85.

languages

Konnichiwa! Privat!

The Languages Roadshow – Friday 23 March

■ **Diana Wheatley, Miranda Yates, Amy Swift and Callum Beddoes:** As you can see, we have been learning Japanese AND Russian! The Languages Roadshow was an enriching event that enabled us to develop our language skills further and get an insight into the cultures of other nations. We all thoroughly enjoyed this session and embraced it as a great opportunity to learn these interesting languages. The teachers were always ready to lend a hand, further adding to our enthusiasm. ■ We learnt how to say and spell our names in Russian and learnt the letters of the alphabet in Japanese, enabling us to better understand different cultures around the world, and how we should make an effort to appreciate their languages and develop our own communication and learning skills. We also found new ways in which to learn and enjoy a language. ■ We would definitely recommend the Languages Roadshow to other students who already have a passion for languages, and those who enjoy communicating in different ways. The experience was both educational and exciting, a perfect blend that ensured we benefitted fully from the experience and further fired our interests in the languages of other countries.

■ **Shirin Anari and Lauren Penny:** Like Diana, Miranda, Amy and Callum we were also involved in the brilliant Languages Roadshow. Organised by Miss Bhogal, it enabled us to learn basic Japanese and Russian. First we studied Japanese, learning the alphabet and even made our very own jumping origami frogs! The thing we enjoyed most was getting the chance to learn how to greet someone and also trying some Japanese chocolate. Overall it was fun, whilst also being educational, although having the opportunity to learn even more about Japanese culture would have been great. ■ After that, we learned some Russian. It was more challenging than Japanese but we enjoyed it just as much. We started off with a very difficult quiz. Our team did reasonably well but came last! ■ We experienced a lot of wonderful activities but would have liked some more interactive activities. However we DID really enjoy the experience and would love to do it again!



Languages in the adult world

■ **Natalya Constantinou 11C:** Believe it or not, languages do have a use outside of Arden school. German and French as well as other languages are useful skills in real life. This was something demonstrated and explained by Mr Rich as he told a selected group of Arden students (who study either French or German at GCSE) about his life and his own personal experiences with languages. ■ We found out that from an office job to a hiking trip with complete strangers to being a judge, languages can always be used. You can make new friends, live in another country, apply for jobs you never thought you'd get and use your language skills to make your life more exciting. ■ We learned that languages are especially useful in the business world as it is expanding rapidly. This means that we need people who can speak foreign languages to improve the relations between international clients and complete deals. To fully understand another language you need to learn about the country and culture too. Otherwise you may say something which sounds alright to you but could be offensive to the person you are speaking to. ■ You are more likely to be employed if you have a second language under your belt as this opens up more opportunities for work, especially overseas. ■ We also did an exercise to simulate what it would be like to try and make a deal between two countries with the same language and different cultures. It was really hard because we needed to get our point across whilst trying to get information, strike a deal and not offend the clients at the same time! It helped us all to realise how different things can be everywhere else and how learning another language can be really beneficial to you.

A fond farewell to Sue Hill



An amazing 28 years after joining the school as a part-time History Teacher; ten years before any current Arden pupil was even born; much-loved Assistant Vice Principal, Mrs. Sue Hill has retired. Years 10 and 11 came together to bid her a fond farewell in a special assembly. Later she attended a tree planting in her honour and a leaving party held by the staff.

In Sue's words

"I love Arden. In fact I am sure that if you broke me in half the word 'Arden' would run through me like a stick of rock! There is a sort of magical combination of things which fills the air and makes it such a special place". These heartfelt words came back to haunt Mrs Sue Hill who retired at Easter when Mr Murphy did indeed present her with a supply of 'Arden' rock! As befits a teacher who has been at Arden for twenty eight years, there were many events to celebrate her role at the very heart of our school. The highlight must have been the whole of Years 10 and 11 managing to keep a special tribute assembly a secret! This was an opportunity for pupils to say thank you to a teacher who has meant such a lot to SO many. Despite being almost speechless with emotion, her thank you was both eloquent and heartfelt.

28 years at Arden

Mrs Hill's life at Arden started as a part-time History teacher back in 1983, rising through the ranks to become Head of History in 1989. Her passion for History is immense and her enthusiasm contagious – inspiring many Arden students to go on to study History at university. A special memory of Sue for hundreds of her pupils, is her now famous rendition of 'Rule Britannia' delivered with passion and often while standing atop a desk!

Plaudits from students and colleagues alike

Sue was the first Head of Year to take a year group right through the school from Year 7 all the way up to Year 11. In 2001 she became Head of Key Stage 4. Many of the comments that have poured in from former pupils attest to her success in this role. A recent leaver said of her, "definitely one of my ULTIMATE favourite teachers! I'm glad we got to spend our five years with this special lady!

She kept us on the straight and narrow and, as for me and my sister, she looked after us in the KS4 office. I don't think we would be where we are now without her support."

In addition to her role as Head of Key Stage 4, Mrs Hill became Acting Assistant Head in 2009, rising to Assistant Vice Principal in 2011. Arden has been overwhelmed with tributes from students both past and present, but there have also been plaudits a-plenty from Sue's colleagues. It is a testimony to the very special place she has in the fabric of the school that so many ex-colleagues made a point of attending her leaving party.

Personal tributes

As befits her role as a retired English teacher, Mrs Dove managed to encapsulate many of Sue's special qualities.. "My memories of Sue? Apart from being an inspiring teacher and greatly respected colleague, she's someone who can dispense wisdom at just the right moment – usually through a chance meeting in Reprographics or the Library; someone who is energetic in the pursuit of everything – I never knew anyone who could move around school as fast; someone always welcoming to a visitor – no matter how many times I came seeking to borrow equipment or even her classroom; someone never short of a friendly quip and a super sense of humour!

The final word from Mr Murphy... "Sue has been an outstanding member of staff throughout her twenty eight years at Arden. We wish Sue and her family well for the future and I know she has some fabulous plans in place to enjoy a very well deserved retirement. Sue I know will miss Arden greatly, but I feel sure we shall see her again, she will always be a very welcome visitor in the future."



In Brief

Indoor Athletics

The indoor athletics teams trained every week up until our first competition for Solihull borough's schools.

The track events included an obstacle relay, two laps, four laps, six laps and paarlauf, whilst the field events included vertical jump, standing long jump, standing triple jump, speed bounce and shot. Overall we all did very well, the Year 7 girls came SECOND, Year 7 boys came FIRST, the Year 8 girls also came FIRST, whilst the Year 8 boys came SECOND. Sadly though this meant that only the winning Year 7 boys' and Year 8 girls' teams went through to the county-wide competition.

County Level Success

Next came a county competition. We had two teams travelling to Coventry to take part. I'm pleased to report we did very well again! The Year 7 boys came third, whilst our Year 8 girls came first! Unfortunately, our Year 7 boys didn't make it through to the next round, though our winning girls certainly did and will be going on to the regional competition.

The Teams

The third placed Year 7 boys comprised Jack Reidy, Stefan Mason, William Hitchcock, Oscar Hughes, Coel Taylor, James Price, Joe Blue Zimmerman and Captain, Morgan Scriven. Our reserves were Josh Rice and Josh Mortl

The Year 7 girls' team featured Charlotte Lack, Ella Gavigan, Fife Akinosi, Lauren Colwell, Lily Jenkins, Megan Burn and Rosie Stops. Roisin Monaghan was Captain. Tess McGoldrick and Megan Farragher acted as reserves.

The Year 8 boys' team was made up of Brian Crighton, Sam Bird, Ollie Russell, Ben Foulkes, Ali Blackburn, Tom Carter, Kristian Bennett and Captain, Henry Barton plus reserve James Gordon.

The winning Year 8 girls were Abbie Nolan, Elvie Cox, Caitlin McDonald, Raya Pascua, Nicole Beard, Sophie Lenoard, Virginia Kinahan, Olivia Beattie, headed up by Captain Fiona Foulkes, whilst Kiara Whitehouse was reserve.

Young Chef Competition

Every year Arden students enter two main cooking competitions that are run by outside organisations.

On Wednesday 22 February Alex Kirby and Laura Ventrella travelled to Stratford upon Avon College for the Rotary Club Young Chef competition. They had to prepare a two course meal for two people in just two hours and set a table ready for serving. Both students had practised in advance and were ready for a very busy and stressful evening!

Alex prepared a main course of rack of lamb with herb crust, glazed carrots, cauliflower and potato dauphinois. His dessert was a rhubarb and ginger soufflé. Meanwhile Laura made veal with a potato rosti, spinach and wild mushrooms and a red wine jus. Her dessert was chocolate tart with passion fruit sorbet in a tulle basket. All the dishes looked and tasted fantastic, well I did have to taste them; there are some perks to my job!

Although sadly Alex and Laura didn't get through to the next round this time both students did themselves and Arden proud. They found the experience challenging, but also rewarding. I'd like to thank Alex and Laura's parents for their encouragement and support, we're now looking forward to our next competition!



Arden's Artist in Residence

An interview with Frances Townley

We interviewed Frances Townley, who had been working in the Atrium for the past few weeks drawing and painting students this term. Frances told us that she has been interested in art ever since she was six, but now retired she has plenty of time for portraiture. We asked her what made her want to become an artist? "As I got older, my art improved and I started showing off what I'd done to others, as well as exhibiting." She has exhibited at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' exhibition, recently she also had an exhibition in Knowle and Dorridge Village Hall.

Frances explained she does all kinds of artwork, but specialises in oil paintings on canvas. Whilst here at Arden she has been concentrating on line drawings. We asked her who most inspired her, she likes many artists particularly the great masters like Leonardo Da Vinci and Vincent Van Gogh.

We asked about her visit to Arden and she told us she'd really enjoyed herself, joking that it's has been great to have so many models to help her with her work! She also liked meeting Arden's art teachers and drawing quickly because it was "good practice" for her. She advises everyone who enjoys art to keep practising because if you do, you will just keep getting better and better.

Finally we asked Frances what has been her best piece of artwork? She's very proud of the one on her business card because of the different materials, such as gold and leather strips, that were used to create it. ■ **Will Howell & Jesse Wood.**

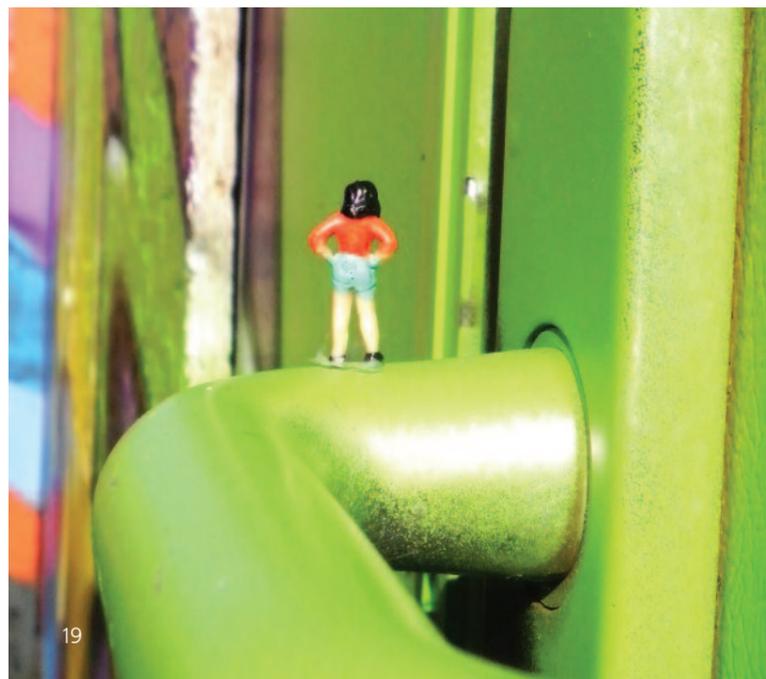


Year 8 Cookery Club: Pupils in Mrs Herbert's Year 8 Cookery Club have been busy making Easter products. They began with an easy chocolate nest, progressing to hot cross buns and an Easter cake.



Year 8 Photography Project

Our Year 8 photography students thoroughly enjoyed their latest project based on the art of a London street artist and photographer known as 'Slinkachu'. He uses small models to interact with the environment often making the figures appear lost and lonely. ■ Pupils were encouraged to think of a narrative between their tiny people and objects they found. ■ They were taught about composition, focus and light. We're sure you'll agree they were a very talented bunch, producing some very special photographs.





New Senior Team

Arden's new cohort of Senior Pupils have been selected and are now eager to take the reigns from their predecessors. They'll have a tough act to follow, but are determined to serve Arden well throughout the year. Their motto for the year is 'Determination + Enthusiasm = Success'

...They certainly seem to be bursting with determination and enthusiasm, and we wish them a successful and enjoyable year!

Laura Wheatley: *It is a pleasure to be chosen as a senior pupil as there was a lot of stiff competition for the roles and I hope that I can fill the role to the best of my ability. Most of all I am looking forward to representing my school and working as part of a team.*

Alex Richard: *I am thrilled to have been chosen as a Senior Pupil. I feel privileged to be given this role and I can't wait to make a difference in the school and put others' views across so that we can make positive changes. I am looking forward to all of the events. I hope I can put across everyone's ideas and be the role model that is expected.*

Emma Kelly: *Simply getting chosen as a candidate by my year and teachers was amazing, so getting onto the Senior Pupil team was just fantastic! Especially as everyone performed so well in the interviews. I'm looking forward to taking on the role in the year ahead.*

Dan Brookson: *I am very pleased about getting into this year's Senior Team, and I hope to make as great a contribution as possible. I am enthusiastic about the roles we can undertake as a team throughout the year. Any suggestions will be gratefully received by myself or other Senior Pupils and we will happily take them on board.*

Alex Cardall: *I was absolutely delighted when I was voted by my peers and teachers to become part of the Senior Pupil team... To then be chosen as Head Boy was a really great feeling! I am looking forward to pursuing the role and all of the exciting events that will take place throughout the year in my figurehead role as part of the team. I'm determined to continue the hard work and dedication of past Senior Pupils, bringing daily positivity to Arden. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and I am thrilled to have been given it.*

Katie Craddock: *I was extremely excited to find out I had been nominated by the teachers and my peers as a candidate to join the senior pupil team. In the interviews the competition was extremely fierce, and I was doubtful if I would make it, however when called into Mr Murphy's office, I was overjoyed to discover I had made it! It is a real honour to be able to represent the school, and I hope to do so to the best of my abilities. We have already had fun giving the year 11 leaving their hoodies and year books, and I am looking forward to the fashion show and other upcoming events which we have some great ideas for. Bring on the year ahead!*

Hannah Colbert: *I'm really happy to be chosen to be Head Girl, the interviews were challenging as there were many other strong candidates, so it is very rewarding to be given this opportunity, and I am looking forward to the rest of the year.*

James Gavigan: *I was very pleased to get chosen for the short list for senior pupil as it was my peers and teachers belief that I would be good for the role. I hope to prove them right and enjoy all the experiences I can over the next year.*

Pictured, left to right: Laura Wheatley, Alex Richard, Emma Kelly, Dan Brookson, Head Girl Hannah Colbert and Head Boy Alex Cardall, Katie Craddock and James Gavigan.

Gymnastics Success

Mrs Heard and Mrs Bennett, who coach the Arden teams, are extremely proud of their gymnastic stars. The students rounded off the year with a fantastic performance at Stoke on Trent in the British Schools National finals. This attendance was the culmination of a very successful season which saw three Arden teams representing the West Midlands.

■ The U13 mixed team won third place with superb performances on both the floor and vault. Understandably they are all excited and deservedly so! ■ The U13 boys team, all Year 7s, have improved significantly over the year and came seventh which is a fantastic performance for them. Many of them pulled off their best performance to date. ■ The U19 mixed team really missed Elinor Hathaway on the floor, unfortunately she is struggling with an injury to her shoulder. However the team performed well to achieve a creditable fifth place against incredibly strong opposition. ■ **The U13 mixed team are:** Hannah Northam, Lillie Jenkins, Megan Farragher, Raya Pascua, Callum Beddoes, Krislian Bennett ■ **U13 boys:** Ed Elvidge, Josh Rice, Will Hitchcock, Luke McWilliam, Nick Kudanowska, Coel Taylor. ■ **U19 mixed:** Emma Johnson, Elinor Hathaway, Alana Coley, George Spittle-McGuire, Harry Robinson, Bruno Roberts.

■ Pictured below: Top row, left to right: Nick Kudanowsk, George Spittle-MacGuire, Coel Taylor, Krislian Bennett, Callum Beddoes. Front row, left to right: Josh Rice, Raya Pascua, Hannah Northam, Arden Principal Mr Murphy, Ed Elvidge, Lillie Jenkins, Megan Farragher, Will Hitchcock.



Ski Race Success

Despite the early rain (the sun shone by the end of the day), the three teams that competed in the Midlands Ski Race held at Ackers in March did Arden proud. ■ The U14 team of Lydia Routledge, Ellen McKenning, Sophie Llewellyn and Lauren Handley were up against some really stiff competition with seven schools in their age group. The pupils from Princethorpe, Solihull School and Heart of England were all very experienced and although the girls didn't feature in the team results, Ellen McKenning was placed third overall. ■ Entrants were placed

in age groups according to the year of their birth and so despite only being in Year 9 our pupils were competing in the U16 race. The team, made up of Ella Hitchcock, Katie Saunders, Joe Foulkes and Faye McKenning, skied steadily to complete both runs without incident and earned themselves a second place overall to Solihull School. ■ The U12 team consisted of four Year 7 boys: Will Hitchcock, Jack Bailey, Josh Mort and George Burley who scored an impressive overall third place. George completed a fantastic run to finish overall second in the age group.



Welsh Cap

I officially received my first Welsh International U16 Football Cap at The Village Hotel in Cardiff on 19 May 2012. It was presented by current Wales National Football Manager, Chris Coleman, pictured left with Cian.

Like my parents, I personally felt extremely proud to have been able to represent Wales at international level - but also a little nervous, given there were more than 200 people attending the ceremony... and I was the youngest player there!

Before the presentation, my Wales Manager, Osian Roberts gave a speech about what the U16 players had achieved during the previous twelve months and showed a motivational video of the team's performance. The video featured highlights of myself and the team - it really made what I'd achieved sink in! Chris Coleman then gave a ten minute presentation covering the importance of professionalism; working hard, having a positive mental attitude, diet and how important it is to bounce back from setbacks - not only in football of course, but in life too.

Being part of the squad has given me the opportunity to make new friends and visit countries like France, Poland and Switzerland - as well as playing live on TV three times! I'm particularly proud of these achievements, because the whole time I've been playing in a squad that is a year ahead of my age, though I quickly adapted to the speed and strength of the game at this level. This year, I will be playing for my own age group, as well continuing with the older squad. Whilst I intend to work hard at my football, I also place great importance on my academic career and want to perform to the best of my abilities in both areas.

I would especially like to thank the school for allowing me time away to represent Wales and Mrs Hull and all the other teachers at Arden for the support they have given me ■ Cian Harris

A school at the 'Leading Edge'

Arden is proud to announce it is now a 'Leading Edge' school. The Leading Edge Partnership programme was established in 2003 and encourages Secondary schools in England to work in partnership to solve some of the most intractable problems in education. ■ The programme encourages schools to work locally, regionally and nationally to raise achievement through the sharing of proven ideas. There are currently over 300 Leading Edge schools within the programme who represent some of the most outstanding and innovative educational practice.



I recently took part in the Sky 1's 'Got to Dance'. The weekend of the live semi-final was really nerve-racking. Saturday was spent rehearsing on the stage, watching each performance back on video to get angles and positions just right for the camera men, costume fitting, meeting other acts and of course non-stop filming!

When we arrived at the famous Pinewood studios for the actual show, we were whisked to our dressing room which was full of good luck cards from the judges, masses of sweets and endless pop! But I was only there for moments before it was into hair where they put it all in rollers and stuck a net over the top! Lloyd and I were then taken off for stage rehearsals. We danced our routine and it was all-change again on the camera angles... It was now getting hard to remember which camera to face at each step. We then went to wardrobe, the show had provided us with costumes and shoes - and even my earrings! We were now ready for our dress rehearsal.

We met Davina on stage. She was such a lovely, bubbly person and quickly had us in hysterics. We rehearsed the results ceremony with the other acts before finding out we would be the fifth to dance. I was then taken to makeup where they even painted my toenails!

The audience were in their seats by 4.00pm - two hours before the actual show started! The warm up act even had Davina dancing to 'YMCA', meanwhile we were sat waiting backstage listening to the audience, I felt the most nervous I have ever been. I was shovelling down sweets whilst Lloyd gulped down three cans of Red Bull. The fact that it was a live show made it even worse; there would simply be NO second chances! When we finally got on stage the adrenalin took over and I gave it everything I had. We were most worried about negative comments and red stars from the judges. But our routine was the best it had ever been and we got some great comments and THREE GOLD STARS!

The after party was just as amazing. It was a night signing autographs, having pictures taken and taking part in Dance Central 2 on Xbox Kinect battles - which we won! What an awesome time! The most amazing experience I've ever had; I really want to compete at this level again. Lloyd and I really appreciated the overwhelming support from everyone at Arden and were touched by everyone's interest. Special thanks go to all those who voted on the night... Though it wasn't enough to take us through to the final, we still received a huge vote and our friends at school will have been a major part of that.

■ **Rebecca Scott**



Art Trip to London

Saturday 3 March six Sixth Form students along with Mrs Astle left at 7.45am, arriving at London Marylebone around 9.00am, taking the Tube to Piccadilly Circus. After numerous failed map reading attempts we were at the steps of The Royal Academy for the David Hockney exhibition. Despite the busy crowds we were able to really appreciate his spectacular art work in person - its sheer quality was astounding.

The show features vivid large-scale paintings inspired by East Yorkshire. It spans a 50 year period and demonstrates Hockney's long, if lesser known, exploration of, and fascination with the depiction of landscape. It includes a display of his iPad drawings and a series of new films produced using 18 cameras. These are shown on multiple screens, providing a bewitching visual journey through the eyes of one of our greatest modern artists.

We stopped for a spot of lunch at Trafalgar Square to regenerate our artists' eyes for the afternoon we had ahead of us. Then it was off to the National Portrait Gallery and the works of Lucien Freud exhibition. The exhibition features more than 100 life drawings and paintings from throughout his working life, including pictures of family members, friends and muses.

■ **Alice Collins, Emily Dann and Francesca O'Keeffe.**

Badminton

Arden's Badminton Club has been running all year and has been extremely popular with students. We've had terrific support from our young leaders who have helped with coaching, special thanks go to Maddie Gardner, Mike Breslin and Luke Perrins.

Our badminton teams enjoyed some success in the Centre Parcs competition. Our KS3 boys; Kevin Sudtagon, Sam Gilluley, Joe Lynoc and Sam Eyre; and KS4 boys; Micheal Breslin, Jung-Te Kim, Pyung-Te Kim and Harry Morgan; came up against stiff opposition from Langley and St Peters who won the Solihull KS4 and KS3 rounds.

Arden's KS3 girls; Ellie Tomkins, Bella Hunt, Becky Hicks, India Williams and Megan Pery; fared better with easy wins over the other Solihull schools, going on to represent the borough in the county round against the best Coventry and Warwickshire schools.

The Arden KS3 girls were unlucky to draw Higham Lane (the eventual winners) in the first round. They were the second best team in the competition but didn't make it to the final.

Our KS4 girls; Maddie Gardner, Rosie Marlow, Celina Smallwood, Lucy Tanner and Amy Stainton; performed superbly, winning many of their matches 5-0 on the way through to the county final where they beat Kenilworth School 3-2. They then went forward to the regional finals, playing top teams from across the Midlands. The team had another fantastic day at the regional round, making it through the first round to earn a place in the semi-finals.

Congratulations to all the pupils who represented Arden!

Sixth Form Prefects... the next generation

We assembled on a chilly Wednesday morning, split into groups of four, all eagerly assessing the competition for the pivotal roles of Sixth Form Prefect. A nervous waiting game ensued before we each got the call into Mr Murphy's office. Some enthused about past achievements, whilst others simply sat with a quiet confidence. When the call eventually came, we ventured into the unknown wondering if there were three fiery judges on the other side of the door about to give us a grilling. Thankfully it seems they had been tied up with their duties in the Spanish Inquisition and so instead we were greeted by the familiar smiles of Mr Murphy, Mr Parman and Mrs Shuff. They quizzed each of us about how we see ourselves developing the role of Prefect and asking about how we would change Arden.

Into the Dragon's Den

Many good ideas stemmed from this; building better links with the local community and closer ties with the rest of the school. After such a complete turnaround from what we expected we left our interviews feeling welcomed and at ease. The rumour mill was quickly rolling on who the favourites were and how many Prefects would actually be selected. We all had different strengths to bring to the role, making each one of us a good candidate.

February half term seemed to last a month, punctuated by a daily ambush of the postman to see if 'the letter' had arrived. When they finally did, it was with great surprise and pleasure that we found in fact EVERY interviewee had been appointed as a Prefect!

Plan of Attack

The Prefects meet up to discuss the week's order of business every Tuesday. The form and location of the meeting alternates; one week we will meet in a classroom for a quick check-up, and the next we be an hour-long meeting in the conference room. It is during the main meetings that the most of our planning is done; decisions are made, progress reports delivered and volunteering needs are divvied up. So-far, the meetings' agendas have been dominated by the proposal for the mandatory sixth-form blazer featured earlier in this magazine. The stylish new blazer is a popular idea that the Prefects have been heavily involved in developing. I'm pleased to say it has now been officially adopted for the start of the next school year.

The conference meetings see us seated around an enormous boardroom table, with Mr Murphy and Mrs Shuff sit at the head. The long discussions are punctuated by the arrival trays of sandwiches, sausage rolls, mini-quiches and flapjacks, helping keep us focused the agenda of the meeting rather than grumbling stomachs. It's only taken a month or two for these meetings to become really effective; the early shouting matches have quickly developed into coherent, positive discussions, though strong views are sometimes still passionately expressed!

Brainstorming

The numerous, wide-ranging ideas of the team are diverse and often have great potential. We have discussed a range of issues, each of which hinge on our primary aim as Prefects; to contribute positively to the excellence of Arden as an educational institution.

A key way to achieving this is by helping to promote school policy on core issues like littering. We have already organised a break-time rota that enables us to aid duty staff in ensuring that rubbish is dealt with correctly. It might seem a relatively mundane problem, but visible litter can have a profound impact on the school and its public image, as well as on the wider local community. As Prefects it is our responsibility to address such issues, ensuring Arden, and the Sixth Form especially, is viewed positively by the community.

Aiming High

We are also pursuing a range of other aims, notably the idea of greater involvement with lower school. Year 7, 8 and 9 students have often commented that the Prefects and their role in the school is something of a mystery to them. We hope to solve this by integrating more closely with lower school pupils by promoting events such as discos as well as through organising clubs and mentoring sessions.

These are initiatives that we can also extend to the wider community; residents of Knowle after all, may not be well versed in the inner workings of Arden, many may only have contact with the school through occasional letter. By working within our community, we hope to create a more personal and proactive medium through which Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath residents can engage; thereby highlighting the positive ethos of Arden as an institution, and the warmth that it instills in pupils and the school as a community.



Aberystwyth 2012 AS Level Biology Trip

In the last two weeks of March, fifty Year Twelve students went on a field course to Aberystwyth in Wales over two separate weekends. The trip was to support their current studies and was aimed at inspiring a sense of the importance of protecting our natural environment.

On arrival, students went on a visit to Aberystwyth University where they had a lecture on fungal diversity entitled 'The Wonderful Waxcaps of Wales', delivered by microbiologist Dr Gareth Griffiths. This was followed by a tour of the universities' stuffed animal and skeleton museum, research aquarium and scanning electron microscope room before they attended a talk on UCAS applications.

On the Saturday of each weekend students were given a guided tour around the RSPB reserve Ynys Hir and went to see the endangered red kites being fed. This was a great opportunity for students to develop an understanding of how complex conservation projects are and how much high level management they involve.

Sundays involved the students using biological keys to identify organisms found in a local fresh water stream using specific sampling techniques they need to understand for their A Level course. This understanding of how we research and conserve wildlife in its natural environment was then transferred to how we conserve animals in zoological gardens with a visit to Borth Animalarium.

Whilst the Animalarium is a small zoo it does boast a large collection of rare species which are mainly rescued exotic pets. Students were given the chance to hold snakes and other reptiles before getting to look around the zoo at animals ranging from crocodiles to meerkats. The final place visited on the trip was the Ynyslas Sand Dunes, which are a Site Of Special Scientific Interest and thus highly protected by the government. Here students carried out quadrat sampling to measure succession of organisms with increased distance from the sea.

The weather for both weeks was fantastic and students represented our school really positively. The RSPB wardens commented on just how knowledgeable and respectful the students were about conservation and biology in general. Whilst the trip was tiring for all involved, it was definitely worthwhile with students and staff gaining a lot from both weekends.

The students commented "We managed to learn a lot for the course whilst having fun in a relaxed environment", another said "We learnt about succession and biodiversity in the lessons and also saw them in practice at the sand dunes and the conservation areas. It was very informative and fun". A third added "I really enjoyed the zoo and the RSPB nature reserves - and winning the prize for finding the dragonfly larvae!"





Sport Relief

Sport Relief took over Arden on Friday 23 March, with staff and students spending the day dressed in a 'sporting superstars' theme. Tennis players, American footballers, rugby players and even a few Usain Bolts were present for the day that raised over £3000. The main event on the day was human table football which was set up in the sports hall. Our own Mr Eades made a Soccer AM-style hole of glory, providing lots of fun and competition whilst a Zumba class was put on in dance studio.

An all-school challenge was set; to collectively cycle the distance to Edinburgh. Five exercise bikes were set up and used throughout the day. Staff and students took turns cycling for three minutes, each distance was then added to the special score board. Whilst Arden didn't make it to Edinburgh, we did get to Gretna – just inside Scotland - a great achievement for all who participated!

Arden Sixth Form recently formed a partnership with Solihull Moors, our local semi-professional football team. Club representatives visited Arden and handed out free tickets for a home league game against Vauxhall Motors. The club members also talked to students about the club itself.

Arden's charity co-ordinator Adam Goodridge said, "Once again the charity day was a huge success. The human table football is probably the best event we've ever had on a charity day. It was just so much fun! The Staff versus the Year 7 and 8 girls' football team was a great way to end the day. It was fantastic to see so many people making the effort to get dressed up, especially for such a worthwhile cause".

In addition to the £3000 raised for Sport Relief, we're pleased to announce over £400 was also raised for Orchid, a charity focusing on male cancers.



GCSE Dance Day

On Tuesday 7 February, Year 10 & 11 GCSE Dance students were lucky enough to have a professional workshop lead by Kat Dale – an AQA GCSE Dance examiner.

The day started with a thorough warm-up which included some technique work and flexibility exercises. By breaktime the pupils were focused and ready to learn the Set Study dance piece – Find It! This is a very challenging dance piece encompassing a number of styles including contemporary and popular dance. The music and actions are fast and hard-hitting.

By lunchtime the first half of the dance had been covered and the pupils were ready to tackle the dreaded floor part which included slides and rolls – this is probably the most challenging part of the dance. After a quick break, enthusiasm and energy was restored!

To finish the day, Kat went through how to achieve the top grades for this module of the course, with pupils keenly taking notes and rehearsing. Despite being extremely tired and aching from the day of dance, the pupils took on board what Kat was saying and applied it to their own performance. Hopefully there will be some very good marks!

Flute Choir

On Wednesday 28 March the Arden Flute Choir performed in the Lower School concert alongside many other performances. We had been practising very hard throughout the previous term under the leadership of Sixth Former, Lauren Bull. We performed just one piece as it ran to four pages and was nearly four minutes long! The piece took quite a while to edit, but in the end, it was reworked into a suitable piece

Everyone practised very hard, right up until the last minute, coming in for a final rehearsal at 18:00 before the evening performance. As a result of all our hard work the night went very well! We would all like to especially thank Lauren as we couldn't have done it without her! ■ **Lucy Munden 7S.**

Arden Student Exhibits at London Gallery!

At the end of summer 2011 every Year 13 Art Student entered work into Arden Decorative and Fine Arts Society's competition. The winners went on to be entered into a further competition under the auspices of the prestigious Mall Galleries in London. We're very pleased to report that Kiran Kang's work was selected and was exhibited during the show in March.

Kiran's painting which is entitled 'Sophie' was completed as part of her final examination in A Level Fine Art. She is now studying for a Foundation Certificate at Bourville College of Art.



William Cutbill

Many students dream of one day achieving professional sporting success, especially as we approach the Olympics this summer. For one Arden pupil, Will Cutbill, this dream could soon be a reality! Will is a gentle giant in Year 9 who does not shout about his incredible achievements.

Will has always been a key player in the school rugby team and captains the Arden team as well as his local team the Silhillians; and at district and county level even captaining the Warwickshire team. When playing for Warwickshire in January, Will was spotted and invited to trial for the Worcester Warriors. Over thirty other young people from as far as Herefordshire and Shropshire were also at the trials which consisted of a one hour training session followed by three 20 minute games against the existing team. Only four players got through.

Will is thrilled to be part of the Worcester Warriors Development Team. His first game against Sale Sharks was on 4th April. He will be training once a month in the 'development squad' and travel all around the country to play. In Year 11 he will be able to trial for England. Of course, the England team is 'the dream'.

We couldn't be more proud of our sporting hero and are looking forward to the next stage in his rugby career.

Rugby Sevens Tournament

On 1 March, Arden played in a rugby sevens tournament at Solihull School. There were four pools and Arden was put in the pool with Bablake School, Old Swinford Hospital School, Nottingham High School and Bedford Modern School. We were all excited as none of us had ever played sevens before. We started against Bablake and started strongly through good tackling from Jacob Delaney and Joe Lynock but unfortunately Bablake managed to score a couple of tries thanks to their quick winger; we did however manage to get a consolation try when Harvey Grant picked the ball up from the back of a ruck and ran 30m to score underneath the posts.

The next game we played was against Old Swinford Hospital School. We gave a good fight in this game through strong tackling by Will Mather and Callum Davies but unfortunately they managed to score more than us.

The third game we played was against Nottingham and we wanted to win it. 60m runs from Callum Allaway, Jesse Wood and Will Cutbill together with some great drop kick conversions from Joe Foulkes allowed us to get a well-earned draw.

The final game we played was against Bedford. Good tackling from Dom Freeman forced a mistake and Harvey Grant capitalised, managing to score from it. However even with Harvey's try we couldn't win! Well played to everyone, we did very well considering that we hadn't had any sevens training and all of the teams we played were private schools with considerable sevens experience. ■ **Will Cutbill 9N.**



Maths Success!

On 8 February, seventeen Year 10 pupils attended a Further Mathematics Conference held at Solihull Sixth Form College. Organised by the Further Mathematics Support Programme, the event was attended by over 150 pupils from eleven local schools. The aim of the afternoon was to give pupils an insight into what studying A Level Mathematics and Further Mathematics involves. It also focused on some unusual applications of Mathematics which we might not immediately think of.

The pupils spent the first half of the conference in workshops that ranged from modelling Platonic Solids with balloons to using simultaneous and trigonometric equations to predict how far projectiles would fly.

Everyone agreed the highlight of the day was a keynote speech given by best selling author and Mathematician, Rob Eastaway. Pupils were captivated, discovering he made his name (and his living)

creating formulae which are today used to rank the best batsmen and bowlers in International Cricket. His talk entitled 'From Lampard to the Olympics' highlighted applications of Maths which are often taken for granted but are of vital importance in enabling many athletes and sportsmen to perform at the top of their game. The speech concluded by proving 'that' goal by Lampard was definitely over the line by using some basic concepts of Mathematics and Physics - without the need for goal line technology!

We were delighted to end the day on a high. Two of our pupils, Catriona Carswell and Rose Creeves, were awarded a signed copy of Rob's book, 'The Hidden Mathematics in Sport'. This award was for providing the best answers to a set of sporting questions which all 150 attendees were asked to attempt beforehand. Well done Catriona and Rose. They are also pictured with the other Arden delegates and Mr Kilbey (far left).



Year 10 Netball Season Report

This year has been reasonably successful for Year 10 netball. We won most of our matches and came third in the Solihull area schools tournament. Our team had Sophie Beale-Burchell (GS), Ophelia Neville (GA), Lucy Tinley/Anna Shute (WA), Holly Sandford (C), Meredith Cox/Amy Stainton/Laura Kelly (WD), Maria Thompson (GD) and Emma Kelly (GK). We worked well as a team and this showed when we played our matches.

Our first match of the year was against Lode Heath. They were a good team and it was a very close match, but, in the last few minutes Lode Heath scored twice and we couldn't get the goals back in time. Next up was St Martin's who are known for having very strong sports teams; but we didn't let this put us off and gave them a good game even though we lost in the end.

However we didn't let these early losses put us off and carried on training, getting better and more used to playing together as a team in a newly re-allocated set of positions. Our determination against Alderbrook paid off with a win. We now went from strength-to-strength, beating Tudor Grange. Unfortunately we lost against Solihull School's very strong team, but gave them a hard match resulting in a very close final score. Season end featured a netball tournament against most of the Solihull area schools. We played four matches in total, getting through to the semi final against Solihull School. We felt sure this time we'd get the upper hand. Into extra time with just one goal in it, Ophelia shot, but the goal fell just as the final bell rang and it was not counted, meaning Solihull won!

All in all we had a great season although the score line might not have shown this in places. We are looking forward to our next and last netball season as by then we shall be Year 11s. ■ **Anna Shute.**

Kayaking Success

Sunday 1 April saw Joe Pittaway of 10R representing Solihull in the first national Marathon Kayak race of the year, and came first in his Division 5 race. He completed the eight mile course in an amazing time of 1 hour 18 minutes. He has now been promoted to Division 4. The photograph shows Joe about to overtake two of his own coaches who, in a two-man boat, should have easily beaten him! Congratulations Joe and good luck for the rest of the season.



STEM Day

A group of Year 9 students recently visited Birmingham Metropolitan College's Sutton Coldfield campus for 'Big Bang in a Box'. This 'STEM' event had been organised to give students a greater understanding of the applications of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

There was a wide range of activities, starting off with Professor Rex Harris' talk on the Protium Project; new technologies, involving hydrogen and magnets. These are being used to power canal boats, and reduce atmospheric, water and noise pollution. Next up was a demonstration of how ice-cream can be made using cryogenics; tasty stuff indeed! Then it was onto making balloon kebabs, using long sharp wooden skewers. This activity didn't go by without causing a few big bangs of its own.

The highlight of the day was a crime scene investigation 'Who killed Suzy Bury'. Students had to solve the murder by looking at blood spatter patterns around the body and the age of maggots that were found in the wound, amongst many other tests; gruesome but fascinating! Our students managed to solve the murder and won a forensic suit! James Malloy enjoyed it so much he wants to set up CSI Arden! Emma Cooper said "The balloon skewers were really good", whilst Eleanor Wilkes enjoyed making ice-cream with liquid nitrogen. Plaudits go to young sleuth Matthew Brenton who was very pleased to win the forensic suit for solving the murder. Everyone agreed it was a great event.

Year 7 Imagineering Club

CATS technician, Mr Crawley has been busy with his Year 7 Imagineering Club. Students have been learning the basics of soldering by designing and making a USB-powered desk lamp. This then led on to a wireless 'steady hand' game where students had to design the shape of their game and then bend the wire to match their design, taking into consideration how difficult they wanted their game to be.

The group then had to develop their soldering skills so they could build the design which included a sound when the player touched the wire with the loop. Everybody thoroughly enjoyed these projects and are now raring to go on new challenges!

Arden and Sendafa School

During February 2012 Arden was offered the exciting opportunity to start a partnership with a school in Sendafa, Ethiopia.

Arden is one of just 15 schools across the UK to be given the opportunity to engage in this exciting project, the aim of which is to enrich the lives of young people through sport. The project called 'International Inspiration', started as part of the London 2012 bid where a pledge was made to reach young people all around the world through sport and connect them to the inspirational power of the Games.

Arden in Ethiopia

In March, Vice-Principal Mrs Robinson and Miss Bain, Head of PE, flew to Addis Ababa where they spent most of the next seven days learning about education in Ethiopia and engaging with the young people of Sendafa. Sendafa Secondary School provides an education for the local community. The school has 2500 students but a PE stock cupboard containing just four footballs and four volley balls. A humbling experience! Despite the school's limited resources the pupils were vibrant and inquisitive and were clear in their vision of wanting to make life better for the people of Ethiopia.

On March 25th Sendafa's Headteacher Mr. Amanuel Merdasa and his Head of PE Mr. Melesse Tafesse arrived in Knowle. They stayed at The Greswolde Arms Hotel and found the community a fantastic help in ensuring their stay was as memorable as possible and thoroughly enjoyed being in the area. Ethiopia is a mainly Christian country (it's actually the oldest Christian country in the world) and both teachers were keen to attend the services at Knowle Church.

The future together

Over the next two years, Arden is looking forward to working with the Ethiopian staff and students to develop leadership opportunities in both schools and increase participation in Physical Education in Sendafa. Arden's role will no doubt also involve some fund raising, though the core purpose of the association is all about working together and learning from each other.

Pictured top, left to right: Arden Governor Mr. Harley-Mason, Miss Bain Head of PE at Arden and Vice Principal Mrs Robinson with Mr. Melesse Tafesse Head of PE at Sendafa School and Sendafa's Headteacher Mr. Amanuel Merdasa, far right Mr. Murphy.

Centre: A PE lesson at Sendafa.

Bottom: The PE cupboard at Sendafa, it's amazing Ethiopia produces so many great sportsmen with such meagre facilities.



Year 7 Gifted & Talented Artist Trip

The Gifted and Talented Art trip was brilliant. The coach trip was short and calm. When we arrived we were chaperoned by a lovely woman who interacted with us and made sure we had a good time, but didn't disturb anything. The first room we were in had only portraits on the walls- mostly of prophets and the disciples as they were all painted in the Renaissance. She showed us what a difference the slightest change in position and attitude can make in expression. ■ We then went through two more rooms, all containing portraits of wealthy children, lords and ladies. We learnt about the different clothes and objects that depicted richer characters in art from the poorer. Children were a popular subject for paintings as rich parents loved to have a beautiful picture of their child in their grand houses to show off to others. ■ The final room was full of pictures of equestrian activities. In here, we learnt about an artist whose pictures were somewhat 'sloppy' as he used rough outlines and painted with vibrant colours and went over his lines. He could've kept it neat- but where's the fun in that! ■ We tried to use this method and sketch out a picture of our own like his, but it was very difficult. All in all, we had a brilliant time and none of us can wait for the next trip. ■ **Amy Kelly Walcott 7S.**

It's a Knockout!

The morning was a gloomy one to say the least! However with dark skies and imminent rainfall, spirits and expectations were not dampened. 'The A Team', kitted out in their personalised T-shirts, lined up in military single file, next to their opponents. The Arden PTA seemed to be a fit and strong outfit but 'The A Team' were confident of victory. To begin the day there was a mass warm-up and bonus points were already up for grabs.

A VALIANT effort by all the members of Arden staff who made up 'The A Team'. The first challenge for Group D was the Sack Races.

'The A Team' came second in this event to the Knowle Legion Heirs. The second challenge is where 'The A Team' picked up momentum! They won the Bash Course and Hoopla with ease (gaining 6 points as Mrs Butcher-Johns cleverly played the joker).

Mr Pillinger beat the selected member of the Arden PTA in a sudden death basketball shootout to win Challenge Three. The Fourth challenge was the tunnel and shot putt. Once again 'The A Team' were victorious and comfortably sitting in 1st place in group D. The Fifth Challenge is where it all began to go terribly wrong. Tandem Space Hoppers are one to forget! The Sixth Challenge was the Elephant trunk relay. Members of staff had to run up a slippy surface before emptying a leaking wellington in the elephant's trunk (another one to forget)! 'The A Team' were successful in the last challenge (human table football) however it wasn't enough to see off the fierce competition of Knowle Legion Heirs with just two points separating the teams.



Olivier!

First performed more than fifty years ago, Lionel Bart's much-loved musical reworking of Dickens' famous book hit the Arden stage this February.

The Backstage View

Months of preparation had been put in and now it was time... The fine-tuning and triple-checking was all complete, we were ready to go! All the actors were full of excitement as they waited backstage for their turn in the spotlight. Every scene change had been rehearsed in every detail, and it was now time to see the pay off.

Silence filled the auditorium as the audience awaited the opening scene in the workhouse. The actors entered and we were underway! Interval arrives, giving us a brief chance to make last minute checks before Act 2, all props in position, and all scene changes perfected...

Act 2 goes fine and the audience show clear appreciation of all the effort and hard work we've put into the production. Curtain call done, now to breathe a sigh of relief... Everything went perfectly. No accidental puffs of smoke, no forgotten cues and no misplaced stagehands. Success!

Just one thing left to do; that's to go home and sleep because we needed all our energy for the two performances tomorrow, let's just hope no wheels fall off! Jake Smithers, Stage Manager



'Oliver' Beddoes

Oliver!

The initial 'Oliver' had to quit, I was absolutely delighted and overwhelmed to be chosen in his place. Early rehearsals concentrated on characterisation of Oliver as a curious and innocent boy. This early work meant I was confident of how to play the character and knew my lines. Over the next weeks we honed the character, then it was show time!

First Performance! Our first performance was on Friday 24 February for an audience of local schools. The tension backstage was immense, everyone was nervous and excited at the same time - we hoped our hard work would pay off. The show began and the children seemed captivated. Both the cast and audience really enjoyed the show and the curtain fell to a huge round of applause. We were all pleased with how it had turned out, but we still worked hard to iron out a few tiny things for the evening performance.

Debut! Our first show for the paying public followed on the Friday night! This audience was mostly made up of friends and family making us more nervous than ever! Of course the audience was great and really supportive, and certainly seemed to be enjoying it and as much as we were we! As the show ended, we couldn't believe how successful it had been... Two more shows to go and we're determined to make them unforgettable.

Saturday Matinee! Saturday 25 February and the matinee was our second public performance but, like every professional, we were still nervous! Of course pre-show butterflies proved fondless as it went off faultlessly. It was interesting to see how differently the audience reacted from the night before. We were beginning to get sad about the run coming to an end, but were all excited about the last performance that night.

Can I Have Some More? The final performance came round so quickly! We were determined to make everyone proud so we really put our heart and soul into it. The audience was the best one yet - they were even cheering and clapping before we even went on! Everything was just perfect! As the show moved towards the end of the last Act everyone really went for it - it was amazing! When finally it was time for curtain call and bows - the audience went wild!... It was finally over, but what an unforgettable time!... ■ **Oliver 'Oliver' Beddoes.**

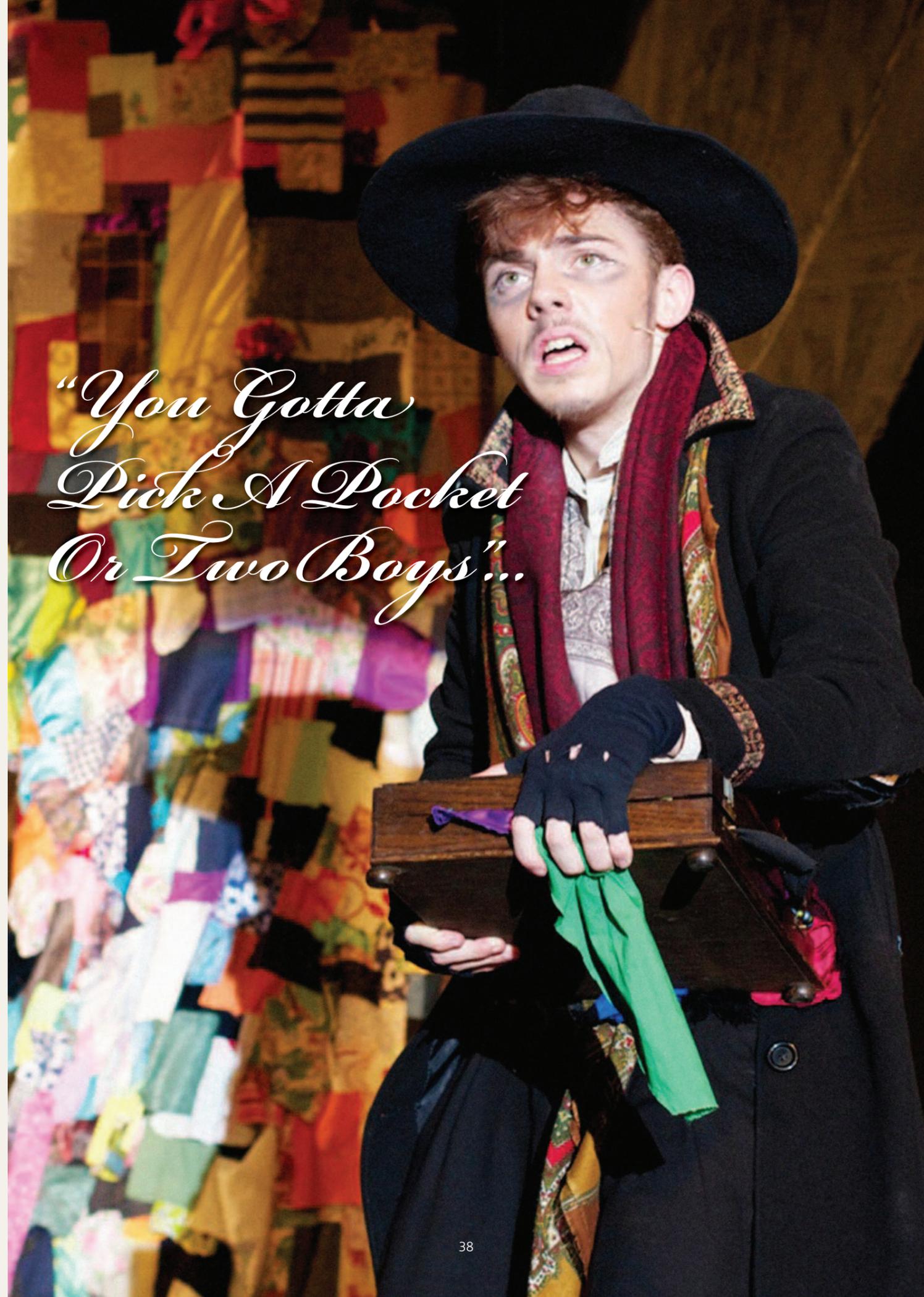
The Dancers

All the dancers rehearsed every Monday. Over a few months we really got it together. We then started rehearsals with the actors, began singing and really got into our facial expressions and big movements ■ The weekend before the play was costume fitting, and that's when everything really came together. There was an amazing friendship and respect that grew between the dancers in the hours of rehearsals we did and our acting improved massively ■ I helped the dancers to rehearse by being annoyingly bossy whilst leading rehearsals. It was important to me that everyone got it right, because I'd done three previous plays and felt really passionate about the dancers living up to the actors' high standards and maybe even bettering them!

■ **Becky Bugg.**

Fagin's Boys

We all jumped at the opportunity of participating in the school production of 'Oliver!' Being part of a famous musical like this is a great way to showcase the variety of talent throughout our school. Of course it isn't just an opportunity for people who love acting, singing or dancing, there are many, many opportunities for students interested in textiles, lighting, graphics, backstage, music, technology and prop building. It's these often forgotten skills that are so often the key elements of a brilliant production. The amount of all-round effort that goes into the show is just incredible, teachers and pupils alike ■ This was our first production and we were lucky enough to receive the roles of Fagin's boys. We had lots of fun exploring the characterisation of each boy and making the characters our own. In our enthusiasm to be great characters, we attended every rehearsal throughout the beginning of the year and the February half-term holiday. Each rehearsal enabled us to enhance our parts and to work with others in similar roles. 'Oliver!' is packed with a wide range of characters of different ages and personalities, meaning there's a role for everyone! The teachers and sixth formers were fantastic at choreographing our own Arden take on this wonderful musical. Their help allowed us to add depth and showcase our own twists and personalities to make the production unique ■ When it came to the first show, we were all nervous but worked hard to make sure it was a real showstopper! Each department within the production worked really hard to achieve great results ■ Each rehearsal day, the entire cast was given the opportunity to nominate for the 'Oliver! Awards' which highlighted the work of the pupils or leaders recognised by other players and people involved in the production for their extra hard work, with teachers deciding who won the overall award in each category ■ **Amy Swift, Diana Wheatley & Olivia Johansson - Fagin's Boys!**



"You Gotta Pick A Pocket Or Two Boys"...

Oliver!

Alex Cardall

Let's review the situation... from the auditions I instantly knew that 'Oliver!' was going to be spectacular. Everyone was clamouring for parts and driving to produce the best show possible. Weeks of rehearsal seemed to fly by and before I knew it, it was a month until the show. The unity of the cast grew through the weeks and my personal experience with Fagin's boys really developed, into an onstage relationship. My experience of Oliver will stay with me for the rest of my life, I didn't want it to end... like Oliver I want some more!... I'm sure he will be back soon ■ **Alex Cardall.**

Issy James

Oliver was a huge success and everyone was delighted by the audience's response, confirmed by the praise we received from numerous parents, teachers and members of the public. This was my first school production and I was really pleased to receive a leading role as Nancy. The show took weeks of hard work to put together and by the end of it we were all absolutely exhausted ■ As a result of constant rehearsal my voice degraded into a slimy, green, slug-like squeal like Roz from Monsters.Inc. Nothing for it, I had to pour gallons of boiling hot Ribena and honey down my throat every day for the final week - horrible! If that wasn't enough, I had to wrestle with my rather revealing costume which extended my waist by about 4 miles! The bustle gave me the back end of a very fat elephant. Looking back, I now understand why people kept making the noise of a truck reversing whenever I moved! That week was simply heaven ■ **Issy James.**

The Band Plays On

One down, two to go! That first performance went brilliantly. Despite all the nerves and worries, we began with a bang - we were all in tune! The audience response was much better than we could have hoped for, giving us a real boost. As we approached a number, Mr Seago would give us his hopeful smile, we'd cross our fingers hoping it'd be pitch perfect, and it was! ■ After we'd tackled one of our hardest numbers, 'London Bridge' and the musical was drawing to a close, everyone in the band breathed a sigh of relief - it had gone so well! During our curtain call, as the actors and dancers piled on the stage, we couldn't help but smile as the audience clapped along to their favourite reprises... as we stood up at the end, it felt like all our hard work had paid off, at last we could relax! ■ ...but oh no, we still had two more performances, and we were determined to make them even better than this one! We were excited, ready, and determined to play like we'd never played before! In less than 24 hours' time, we'd be back, and doing it all again, though it was saddening to think 'Oliver!' was already approaching its close, though we were sure our best performances were to come, proving this classic of the British stage is nothing without its music! ■ **Eve Rimington.**

GCSE Drama Showcase

An evening's entertainment at the Drama GCSE Showcase this year would have had you on a roller coaster ride of emotions. Imogen Shepherd-Roberts' touching and sensitive portrayal of a young girl suffering with anorexia was incredibly sad and moving.

Chris Cottell bravely created a role for No Man's Land based on a member of the EDL who then 'sang' his protest in a duet alongside rapping Harry Robinson who played a UK born Muslim. Dole Up may be the Midland's first play about last year's riots. The satire in the play was very clever and ending with the line 'It's not my fault' spoken by a Police Officer, a 'Rioter' and his Father. The cast of 'Arbeit Mach Frei' also handled a challenging subject with thought and courage; they juxtaposed satire and poignant monologues to educate the audience about the Holocaust.

Adam Bailey wrote an original script for much of his group's performance Forget Me Not. Set in a pub, the actors multi role played the bizarre and quirky punters who ranged from a wannabe Magician (Paul King), an incompetent Best Man (Joel Alcock) and a Stripper (Joe Batson) to a young woman searching for her birth parents (Eve Rimington). The students this year have particularly enjoyed interpreting comedic scripts and Bouncers and The Government Inspector couldn't fail to make you laugh, cringe and cry with laughter. Jess Wheelan performed with a frenzied energy and superb timing performing with her group in a tight ensemble. Zoe Gray was unforgettable in her role as a young lad 'out on the town' as she cruised around the stage and insightfully tapped into a guy's point of view of the clubbing scene. John Godber's play Shakers was interpreted by the cast as an insight into the secret sadness of three cocktail waitresses leaving the audience touched by their character's honest monologues.

Even with her knee injury and having to perform on crutches, Maddie Carr played 'David' in an exceptionally creative version of The Chrysalids. The cast used abstract physical theatre to capture the curious characters in a post-nuclear war society. The play was beautiful to watch despite revealing a parent's rejection of his own children. Stolen Secrets is a play that few schools would attempt because of its dark content and challenging written form. This was what excited its cast who succeeded in performing an enchanted world of horror for the audience. The ensemble performances were without fault but Tom Briggs was haunting in the 'scissor' scene.

All students worked exceptionally hard to create their performances and all felt the pressure in recent weeks. It was an added weight to have not only the Examiner, but the Team Lead Examiner and the Assistant Principal Examiner to perform to. I am sure that the students could not have done more and they deserve to do well. However, equally importantly, I hope the 2012 Drama GCSE students will look back at what they have achieved with pride. They demonstrated care and support for each other, incredible team work, commitment and determination and stunning courage; little of which will be 'awarded'. Mrs Warrender, Miss Pearson and I could not have asked for more from the groups; in our eyes they are all A Star.

■ **Ms Lewsey, Head of PEPA**

GCSE Drama

January when we selected our groups for our Drama GCSE performances still seems like last week! At the time exams seemed an age away, but in no time at all it was 29/30 March. I was in the 'Stolen Secrets' group and I think it's fair to say that tensions were pretty high. After six months of rehearsals, we were desperate to succeed. Following brilliant preceding performances, we were even more anxious to get it right.

Our group was in the unique position of having already performed publicly and being in separate classes. This meant that we had to make up for all the lost class time during rehearsals. From the very beginning, we were rehearsing twice a week until 5.00pm. We were also rehearsing every break, lunchtime AND after school during the two weeks prior to the exam. However, moments before the start of our performance, it still didn't feel like enough.

In the end though, we were very pleased with the way that it went. Our play was the shocking, and frankly depraved, 'Stolen Secrets'; a strange, unsettling exploration of different people's secrets and the things they'll do to keep them safe. After the performance, we were thoroughly relieved; six months of work had come to fruition and we'd completed our Drama GCSE. Overall, I think everyone doing Drama is extremely pleased, I think I speak for us all when I give special thanks to Ms Lewsey, Mrs Warrender and Ms Pearson for their help and support.

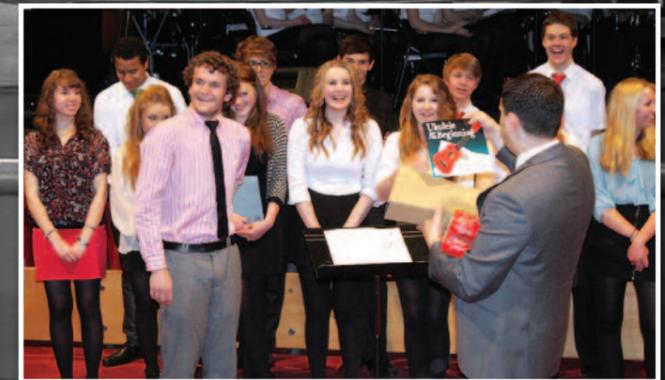
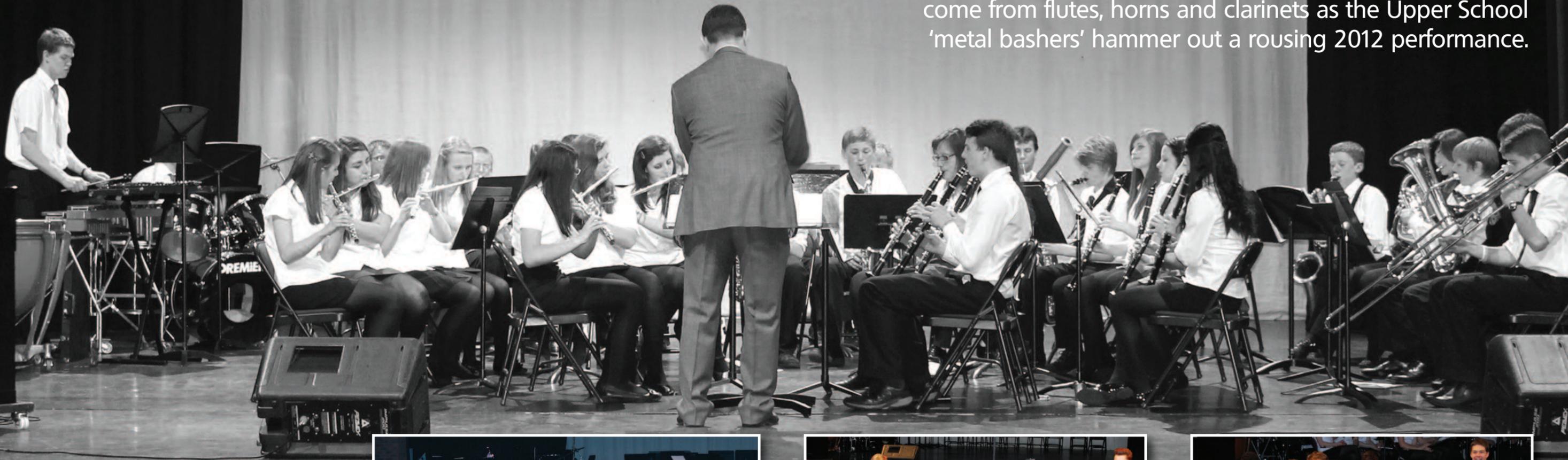
■ **Alex Gray.**



The Upper School Concert in April had a new venue, Bushell Hall and what an impressive backdrop it was for a remarkably entertaining evening. ■ The students excelled in their new environment and showcased a varied selection of music ranging from Oliver! and Vivaldi to Billy Joel and Beethoven. We were treated to the Mission Impossible soundtrack, a Queen medley, excerpts from West Side Story and the amazingly energetic Trash! Bang! Wallop! ■ This was the final concert for many Year 11 students and the very final one for Year 13s. All the students; concert debutantes to seasoned professionals, gave their all, making it a truly remarkable evening.

Trash! Bang! Wallop!

Arden musicians demonstrate great music doesn't just come from flutes, horns and clarinets as the Upper School 'metal bashers' hammer out a rousing 2012 performance.



Main Picture: The Senior Band.

Pictured Right: Right, Chamber Choir being conducted by Year 11 student Maddie Parkin. Middle Right, Trash! Bang! Wallop!. Far Right, Mr Seago (Head of Music) being given a present by Year 13 students.

World Water Day

Birmingham Metropolitan College organised a World Water Day for students in Year 9 at Sutton Park. Mrs Bennett took ten of our Creative Arts and Technology students and we had a fantastic day in beautiful sunshine learning about how precious a resource water is world wide and working as a team. Our team was brilliant and made the day especially worthwhile. On the trip were: George Kavanagh, Cameron Scriven, Lauren Ingram, Amy Allen, Esther Lau Mackay, Sam Bennett, Max Allen, Sophie Peasley, Amy Norman and Ben Northam.

On Thursday 22 November, ten lucky students, each of whom was especially gifted in a design subject, were fortunate enough to go to Sutton Park and take part in Birmingham Metropolitan College's 'World Water Day'. The day started off with an introductory rain dance, performed by specialist dancers, which not only got the crowd of schools in the mood, but raised a huge ovation. By this point, the schools were in their teams, each of which was named after water in a different language. The teams included 'eau', 'majji', 'agua' and Arden was 'wasser'. ■ Once at our team's base camp (which was essentially an empty bucket with a flag in it), the activity leaders told the teams that their first task would involve orienteering. Each team had to split in half, and each sub-team was given two locations in the woods. Once the team had navigated to the position, they would find a bottle of water with their team name on it. ■ Arden's Team 1 was the first team to return with both bottles, and were thus awarded an extra bottle. It was explained that the objective of the day would be to collect as much water as possible, and that each task a team took part in would potentially reward them with water. From that point on, Team Arden went around a circuit of stalls, and at each of them learned about all different aspects to water. The stalls included a team race with planks strapped to your feet, where each plank held an amount of water that you would be allowed to keep if you finished with it; a stall where we learnt about purifying water; a stall where the team had to pump water from one container to another with a self constructed pipe system (and again we got to keep the water we pumped); a stall where the team made soap; a stall where we tested how hard it is for a professional rower to row for longer than five minutes, a stall where we learnt how to make water in a desert; a stall that taught us about filtration and many more. ■ Unfortunately, we didn't win the Grand prize, but we did come third. The students all felt the experience greatly enriched their learning, not only about water, but about teamwork and co-operation. ■ *Article by Cameron Scriven.*



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