



Beacon life

The Beacon Newsletter

Autumn term 2011



From the Headmaster...

This term has certainly been one to remember. We played host to the Independent Schools' Inspectorate who then produced a very encouraging report – with a great deal of excellence recorded within it.

The term started with new library facilities, an area dedicated to the boys in Lower School and two librarians to drive it all forward. The use of Old Barn has transformed smaller concerts, presentations and lunch times. It has

been wonderful to see what an impact our new Director of Music has had already, with some great occasions this term, not least the Beacon Voices singing evensong at St George's Chapel, Windsor.

The Beacon 5 Year Plan 2011 – 2016 was published in December mapping out our hopes for the coming years, and there is much there to excite. The school took ownership of White Cottage and created 30 new staff parking places. I am confident that in years to come this will prove to have been a shrewd move. Careful thought will be given to the long term use of this site.

We said farewell to Elizabeth Coupe, Head of Religious Studies and PSHE and Natalie Parker, who worked with us for just over a year as a Teaching Assistant and who plans to spend some time travelling. We wish them both well for the future. For the Spring term we welcome Kate McKenna, Teaching Assistant and Arabella Norton, Religious Studies teacher.

Debbie and I would like to take this opportunity to wish all Beacon families a very happy and successful 2012.

Paul Brewster

The Beacon links with Filadephia School in Kenya



When The Beacon agreed to host a group of 20 boys and four staff from Filadephia School in Nekuru, Kenya, we had no idea what an amazing nine days we would spend together. The Kenyan boys joined in lessons and

put on two fantastic assemblies – the first involved some amazing drumming and the second demonstrated their incredible acrobatic dexterity. They also took part in a rugby tournament at Saracens Training Ground, went to see The Lion King and had a teambuilding day at PricewaterhouseCoopers' Uxbridge offices. Parents from The Beacon donated over 150 bags of clothes, sports equipment, toys, shoes, games, books etc all which went back on the flight to Kenya with the boys at the end of their visit. The visit was arranged by TourAid, a charity set up five years ago to bring disadvantaged children into the UK on a trip of a lifetime, and sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers. We will be building links with Filadephia school and continuing the good work this visit has started.

International Studies

This term, International Studies has been focusing on Italy. The boys have learnt some Italian, and have also found out about Christmas in Italy, Leonardo da Vinci and Italian schools. At a special assembly, boys in Years 2 - 4 sang a well-known Italian song. Some boys made delicious focaccia with a chef. We were very grateful to a parent who brought his Ferrari to school – much to the delight of all of the boys.



The Great North Run – 31.31.31

'Team Jed' took part in the 31st Great North Run on 18 September to raise money for the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign. 31 runners - including parents, games staff and the headmaster – set out to raise £31,000. The campaign is close to the hearts of The Beacon community as Year 7 pupil Jed Thirkettle suffers from Ullrich Congenital Muscular Dystrophy (UCMD) - a degenerative muscle-wasting disease that causes progressive muscle weakness.

Opening of 'The Spinney'



In September, Michael Spinney, headmaster from 1999 - 2009, returned to The Beacon to open a new outdoor area named in his honour. The Parents' Society raised £20,000 to help provide this fantastic facility, which will be used

as an outdoor classroom – an extension of the Art and Design Technology department - and a quiet play area for boys who want to escape the hustle and bustle of the main playground.

The Beacon Maths Challenge



November saw our annual Maths Challenge, with teams of Year 6 pupils joining us from Chesham Prep, Elangeni, Great Missenden, Little Chalfont, Godstowe, Charlotte House and St Mary's School, Old Amersham. The children pitted their wits for four rounds of mathematical activities and enjoyed a challenging and fun afternoon which ended with tea and the presentation of prizes.



Year 7 French trip



The term for Year 7 started with the annual French trip to Normandy. It is a valuable trip, not only giving that all important boost to French but also providing the year group with a chance to gel after the changes that come at the end of Year 6. The boys enjoyed the trip – once we had arrived! It was the roughest crossing in all the six years I have been running the trip! As ever there was a good balance between having fun and learning the language. All activities are conducted in French and follow a short lesson on the vocabulary that will be used, covering any safety issues. These included canoeing, archery, bread making, aeroball, photography and the ever popular assault course.



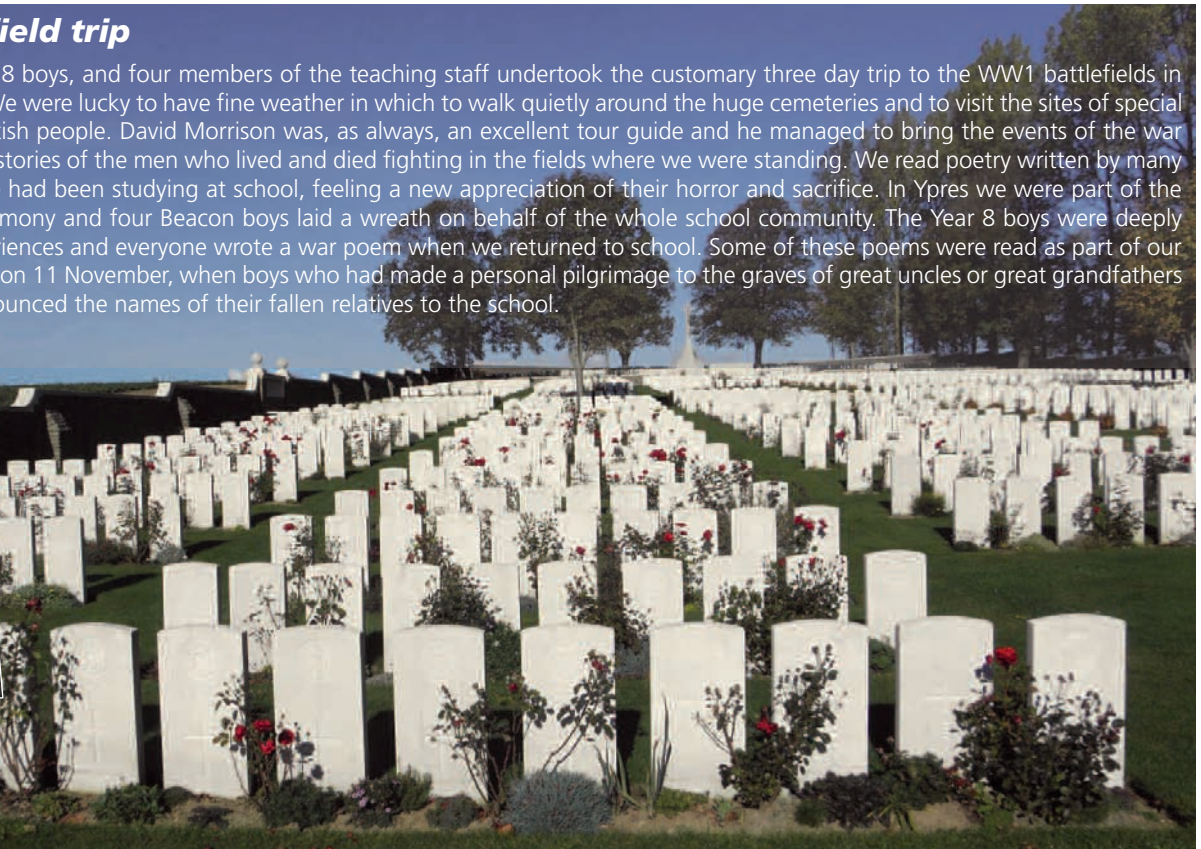
During the trip we visited a local market at St Hilaire – there was a worksheet to complete and many boys took the opportunity to ask the locals for help – and we also visited Mont St Michel – making our way up to the top and learning some of the history whilst taking in the great views. One of the highlights of the week was the French evening; fancy dress and snails!

Mrs Marshall

Year 8 Battlefield trip

This October the Year 8 boys, and four members of the teaching staff undertook the customary three day trip to the WW1 battlefields in France and Belgium. We were lucky to have fine weather in which to walk quietly around the huge cemeteries and to visit the sites of special significance to the British people. David Morrison was, as always, an excellent tour guide and he managed to bring the events of the war alive as he told us the stories of the men who lived and died fighting in the fields where we were standing. We read poetry written by many of the WW1 poets we had been studying at school, feeling a new appreciation of their horror and sacrifice. In Ypres we were part of the daily Menin Gate ceremony and four Beacon boys laid a wreath on behalf of the whole school community. The Year 8 boys were deeply affected by their experiences and everyone wrote a war poem when we returned to school. Some of these poems were read as part of our Remembrance Service on 11 November, when boys who had made a personal pilgrimage to the graves of great uncles or great grandfathers in the cemeteries announced the names of their fallen relatives to the school.

Mrs Jennings



Nursery & Reception Theatre Trip

On a chilly Monday morning in December Nursery and Reception ventured down to the Elgiva Theatre to watch Beauty and the Beast. We went on a double decker bus which added to the excitement. The show was an enchanting story that kept us enthralled from the beginning to the happy ending! We really loved cheering and shouting to help Silly Billy.

Miss Morgan

Year 1 History off the Page

Toys workshop

Year 1 had an excellent day with History off the Page. They spent the morning looking at and playing with old toys. During the afternoon session the boys had the opportunity to make some of the toys they had seen earlier in the day for themselves. The whole day was an enormous success and the boys thoroughly enjoyed it.



Lower School Harvest Festival



Lower School boys were joined by their parents for this year's Harvest Festival assemblies. The boys donated food for the Watford New Hope Trust and Mr Mike Smith came to explain where our food would be going and how it would help local people. The donations raised a

magnificent £379.12 for Oxfam's plant an allotment allowing several families in Africa to have a harvest themselves next year.



Year 3 visit to Natural History and Pitt Rivers museum, Oxford

At the beginning of October, Year 3 boys visited the Natural History and the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford for the first time...

- 'We had a talk about dinosaurs and got to feel coprylyte (dinosaur poo), crocodile skin, feathers, fossils, eggs and a fossilised T-Rex tooth.' Oliver Okhuijsen
- 'I learnt a fact that if a dinosaur had three clawed toes it was a meat eater.' Jack Shawyer
- 'The Pitt Rivers Museum looked very different. It was all about people and we learnt about masks.' Max Berry
- 'Also, there were shrunken heads that were in Harry Potter.' Charlie Hobley
- 'The trip was fantastic.' William Howells



Year 3 Greek Day

Quotes of the day...

- 'All of the Year 3s dressed up. It was fun.'
- 'The adventure was about a time traveller.'
- 'We had to do seven tasks and then we got a certificate.'
- 'After lunch we had a parade and the Olympics.'
- 'I liked the pitta bread and the hummus in the banquet.'
- 'We made a shield and I drew a trident, a lightning bolt and a blood-stained spear on mine.'
- 'The actors put on a show about life in Greece long ago. My favourite bit was when Tom Way dressed up as the Minotaur.'



Year 4 Roman Day

On 24 November the boys and staff of Year 4 came to school dressed as if it were 2000 years ago. They spent the morning trying their hands at Roman crafts, such as pottery or herbal medicine, and trading goods with a greedy merchant. In the afternoon they had a feast to celebrate the Roman victory over the rebellious Boudicca and her hordes. Some boys were taught to act like slaves, others performed plays, while still others showed us how the Roman soldiers marched and made their military formations. Hail Caesar!



Eastern Adventure Cruise

Half term loomed and it was an early start to Gatwick for 17 boys from Years 6 to 8.

Finally, we arrived in Turkey and the first highlight was a visit to Ephesus. The following day was spent at sea and an opportunity for the boys to attend lectures and lessons. On Wednesday we landed in Haifa, Israel and visited Galilee and other places of biblical and historical interest such as Capernaum and Nazareth. On Thursday, we explored Jerusalem, visiting the Wailing Wall, Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Garden Tomb and the narrow streets of East Jerusalem. Then, in contrast, we had a tour of the modern Jerusalem and the Kneset.

On Friday we landed in Port Said and journeyed down to Cairo and the magnificent Pyramids. A day at sea on Saturday was a welcome rest and another opportunity for the boys to attend a series of lectures and lessons.

Sunday brought us to Rhodes and the chance for some retail therapy, before sailing on overnight to Athens and exploring its ancient wonders. I hope the boys will treasure the memories of the places they visited and the friendships they made on this trip of a lifetime!

Mr Thomas





Music

The Music Department has been laying down solid foundations this term for exciting new developments in the future.



After an initial settling in period, a strong team of twenty-two dedicated music teachers has emerged. We have increased the number of weekly musical ensembles on offer, adding to existing groups the 'Young Voices' choir, three singing clubs, a Chamber Strings Ensemble for more advanced players and also the 'P Bone' Club for our Middle School boys (lightweight plastic trombones in all colours of the rainbow! - see photo right). More to come next term!



This term there have been several performances given by the boys both within school and at outside venues. The Beacon Voices sang at the Remembrance Service, Evening Prayers at St George's Chapel, Windsor (left), and went carol singing in Chalfont St Giles. The Young Voices were busy too and their performance alongside the Beacon Voices in the school Carol Service was a real highlight of the term for many of us. All our choirs and instrumental ensembles took part in the Autumn Term Concert at the beginning of December. Numerous soloists have also had the chance to perform in the opening round of the 'Beacon Young Musician Competition' and also at a 'New Parents Reception' hosted by the Headmaster.

Two Beacon boys, Henry Sheppard and Angus Neale, have recently been offered places in the National Children's Orchestra and Matthew Brearley has been offered a regional place (being first reserve for the main orchestra). This is an incredible achievement by all three boys and we are immensely proud of them.

Cap this all off with Year 3 and 4 rehearsals for Tinsel and Tea Towels, Year 5 and 6 rehearsals for Yanomamo and Year 6 and 7 auditions for Joseph and you can see that it has been a very busy term.

It has been great to see so many boys enjoying participating in the musical life of the school (and it is great to be back!).

Mrs Van Tromp

Drama



Christmas Plays

The Nursery and Reception boys put on a wonderful performance of Mary's Baby, a traditional Nativity. The boys had great fun and worked very hard to remember their lines and songs.

Years 1 and 2 performed a very modern version of the Christmas story in their own special way. Email: jesus@bethlehem.com was a humorous look at what would happen if Jesus had been born today and how everyone would receive the news. With angels on iPhones, kings flying in by private jet and poor Mary not making it past the BP petrol station, the story was delivered with humour and enthusiasm. A fabulous performance by all!

Tinsel and Tea Towels – Years 3 & 4

Tinsel and Tea Towels is the story of the run up to Christmas and what it is like in school. Unfortunately, the school inspectors arrive at the wrong time and witness all the chaos that ensues when classes are rehearsing for the nativity play. It is a light-hearted and sometimes funny play that rings true with what most teachers experience in school at this busy time of year! Year 4 boys took on the main roles, with Year 3 supporting as the choir.

Christmas Lunch...

... was enjoyed by us all!



Lower School



Middle School



Upper School





Sport

Rugby

1st XV Bucks Cup

The 1st XV enjoyed an excellent run in the inaugural Bucks Cup this season, reaching the final with a string of impressive performances.



Strengths within the squad dictated a specific game plan which proved to be very effective as the season progressed and more players improved their understanding, fitness and confidence in

themselves and each other. We were not blessed with exceptional pace anywhere on the pitch but the team developed a terrific team spirit which carried them to some memorable performances - notably a last minute win (24-19) against Great Marlow School in the 1st round of the Cup. William Borlase were our opposition in the quarter finals and a comprehensive display of controlled rugby saw us through with a 34-0 win. This victory put us into the semi-finals against RGS High Wycombe B team, in which a fantastic first half display put the game out of sight and we won 38-12 to set up an exciting final against The Royal Latin School.

We arrived at Bisham Abbey in good time and warmed up on the enormous pitch confident that we had the game to win. After scoring first by playing to our strengths we made some simple errors which handed a couple of scores to the opposition who had a significant pace advantage over us. Unfortunately we were unable to execute our game plan and the Royal Latin ran out worthy winners at 34-15. The squad did exceptionally well to win through to the final and they displayed plenty of courage, resilience, belief and no small amount of talent on the way. Without exception they should be proud of their efforts and deserve all the plaudits which come their way.

Mr Skea



The Danes Hill Tournament

The Colts A team won the Danes Hill tournament, beating St George's 21-7, Cranmore 14-0, Colet Court 40-0 and Cumnor House 21-

0. They beat Danes Hill with a golden try (first to score in extra time) 5-0 and then played Cranmore in the final, this time beating them 28-0. I have never coached a better group of boys and they have been the quality team on the South East circuit for the last three seasons. Normally a school team has some weaknesses, either weaker forwards or backs and you have a game plan to suit. However, this team can play tight in the forwards or go wide and score in the corners, such is their strength in depth. Well done to all the boys involved.

Mr Robinson

In other rugby highlights this term:

- 216 rugby matches were played across all age groups, of which we won 136, or 63%.
- The Beacon won the Plate Final at the 1st XV tournament at The Dragon in September.
- The Beacon A team were runners-up in our own U10 tournament in September, with the B team coming 6th.
- The U8 team reached the final of the tag tournament at Gayhurst in October, losing 25-30 to Davenies.
- At the Wellington College tournament in November, the U13s won the Bowl Final, beating Moultsford 15-10 with a golden try in the last play of extra time, whilst the U11s won the Plate Final, beating Dulwich College 21-7.
- The Colts A and C teams were unbeaten all season, with Colts A playing 11 and winning 11, whilst the Colts C team won all 10 of their matches.
- Rory Pond and Fitz Harding have been selected for the South East Prep School Barbarians U13 team, and Ross Hanekom and Daniel Harding for the U11 team.

Tennis

Last summer saw some fantastic performances on the tennis court from Beacon boys. Ben Smith won the IAPS National Championship at Queenswood beating two nationally ranked Year 6 boys. This is quite remarkable considering Ben was only in Year 4. Ben then followed up this victory by winning the U10 Bucks County Closed Tennis Championship held at Chesham Bois LTC. Jack Molloy, another outstanding junior player, won the U12 County Championships following on from his success at the IAPS last year. Extremely well done to both boys.

Squash

Congratulations to Ollie Moir and Hugo Eaton Hart who are in the Bucks squash team and competed in the Bucks County Closed at the end of September. Ollie finished third in the U13s. Hugo played in the U11s, and reached the final, winning 3-2, to take the title.

Golf

Congratulations to Louis Sanders, who is a member of the Herts U14 Golf team.

Parents' Society

Our first event of the school year was the ever popular Quiz Night. It was a closely fought contest to the final round, with the headmaster's team eventually crowned the winner! The following week, the Sports Hall became a disco venue and the Year 5 and 6 boys danced the night away with the girls from Pipers Corner and Heatherton House schools. With over 170 children in attendance, it proved a great success.



We have raised funds through orders placed for wrapping paper and ribbons and the boys had an opportunity to design their own Christmas cards, which all looked fantastic. The Bag2School scheme has been another successful initiative and proved a good opportunity to clear out cupboards whilst raising money for the school.

After an absence of five years, the Christmas Fair returned to The Beacon. We raised a staggering £7,000 at an event offering a shopping experience for the grown-ups and fun and games for the children. Thank you to all those who helped make the day such a success. So far with your help, we have raised £11,000, which is a tremendous amount – and all done whilst having fun!

Mrs Ensor and Mrs Peters – Joint Chairs





Old Beaconian life

Beacon Association Inaugural Golf Day

24 current parents, Old Beaconians and members of staff braved a chilly and windy day in October to play 18 holes of golf at The Oxfordshire Golf Club. Despite the weather everyone enjoyed the day which ended with a three course dinner at The Oxfordshire.

Prizes were awarded to:

- The winning team comprising of The Beacon staff members: David Robinson, James Skea, Steve Winter and Stephen Miles
- Longest Drive: David Robinson
- Closest to the pin: Charles Taylor

We are hoping to organise another golf day in the summer term so keep a look out for details.



Forthcoming Events

Other events to be organized for 2012 include a Year 9 reunion and for the first time a Year 11 reunion. Details will be published on The Beacon website and on our facebook group, The Old Beaconian Society, so look out for more details.