



## THE BLUE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

**Mr S Jackson****Headteacher**

Many thanks to all students and parents for your support during the recent bad weather and masses of credit and appreciation to the staff whose efforts made it possible to keep the school open for all but one day.

Our best wishes to Lisa Snell of the English Department who starts her maternity leave this half-term.

**The Blue School****Roll of Honour**

Karen Nicodemi's son, Paulo, a former Blue School student, who also represented Somerset in Athletics, has reached the end of his apprenticeship. He is a Bespoke Taylor on Saville Row and has been nominated for the "Golden Shears Award". There will be a fashion show and ceremony in London on 16<sup>th</sup> March where the winner will be announced – good luck Paulo!

Congratulations to Blue School bands 'A Class Apart' and 'Satellites and I' for successfully competing in a Battle of the Bands at Glastonbury Town Hall in January. The musicians now have the chance to perform at this year's Glastonbury Festival if they win the final in Yeovil on March 21st. For details about tickets please see Miss Wilkins or any band member. We wish them the best of luck!

**FEAST****Mrs J Spencer**

The school was delighted to welcome world famous French chef, Raymond Blanc OBE, to the school on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January to open the new catering training facility. It was an amazing event enjoyed by all who attended.

The school received capital funding under the School Food Trust FEAST initiative to build the training kitchen. FEAST is an acronym for Food Excellence and Skills Training. The Blue School is the only school in England to lead a FEAST centre which will offer a range of NVQ qualifications in catering and hospitality, including apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes. The FEAST centre is available as a local training venue for both those who work inside and outside of the education sector. We are looking forward to working with local business and services to provide local training opportunities for anyone with an interest in catering and hospitality.

M. Blanc spent several hours chatting to pupils, staff and guests, tasting much of the food prepared and offering advice on a range of subjects and interests. There were a variety of activities at the opening event, from canapé and bread making to displays from local suppliers.

M. Blanc spent time talking with a group of sixth form students studying French at A level which they tape-recorded for their own learning purposes. He happily posed for photographs with students, staff and guests and was very relaxed and incredibly enthusiastic and interested in everything he saw and heard. He was very complimentary about the school's approach to healthy eating and the contribution that the School Council teams make to this initiative. In the end he had to be encouraged to leave in time to catch his train back to London but before he left he committed to a return visit and an invitation for staff and students to visit his own training venue based at his Michelin starred restaurant in Oxford.

Anyone interested in a career in catering, or who needs a certificate in Food Hygiene should get in touch with the Catering Manager, Lisa Western, on 01749 678799. The next round of

NVQ2 qualifications in Professional Cookery and Multi-skilled Hospitality Services commences in May.

**The Governing Body****Mrs J Stitch**

**Scheme of Foundation:** The Governors of the school are also Trustees of The Blue School Scheme of Foundation. They have asked us to make it known that they have at their disposal a limited amount of funds to disburse for scholarships, bursaries, maintenance allowances or grants to persons under the age of 25 years who are in need of financial assistance and who attend or have attended as a student at The Blue School. An information leaflet and application form can be obtained from the Clerk to the Governors at the school.

**World Challenge Expedition – India 2010****Mr Hotston, Mr Ward, Miss Woolcock**

Following the successful World Challenge expedition to Zambia and Botswana in 2008, we have now launched the next expedition for current Yr 10 and Yr 11 students. This will take place in summer 2010 and will take two teams of Blue School challengers to the Western Himalaya region of Northern India.

World Challenge expeditions offer education through experiential learning, including participation in physical challenges, eye-opening cultural exchanges, community project work, trekking and cultural adventure. They are journeys of personal self discovery and the challenge begins long before the journey starts, with a 15-20 month programme of training, fundraising and research that provides educational impact and teaches students a great deal about responsibility and planning.

The challengers are responsible for the running of the expedition, with participating staff assisting and advising where necessary. Each team member will take their turn as the Student Leader, taking responsibility for the day-to-day tasks and decisions and identifying ways to improve teamwork. Other team roles may include looking after the budget, booking transport or accommodation, purchasing food, litter control, updating the expedition journal and taking photographs.

The challengers have lots of wonderful fundraising ideas up their sleeves so please keep an eye out for them. All support from students, parents and staff of the Blue school is greatly appreciated by all of the challengers. Thank you!

**Music****Miss H Wilkins**

Congratulations and thanks to all the students who participated in the music events, concerts and trips last term. We really value your enthusiasm, time and commitment! With thanks from Miss Wilkins, Miss Cox and Mrs Rose. Here is a summary of all that happened last term .... *October 14<sup>th</sup>* – a group of Yrs 9-11 students attend the Young Persons' Concert at the Colston Hall in Bristol, *October 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>* - original and well known songs are performed at Pop Night, *November 12<sup>th</sup>* – Lower School Choir have their debut with Cohen's 'Halleluiah' at the Founders Day service, *November 26<sup>th</sup>* – a group of 30 Yrs 7-10 students attended a concert of Stravinsky, Brahms and Ravel at the Colston Hall in Bristol, *2<sup>nd</sup> December* – the Brighton Institute of Modern Music give a presentation and careers talk about the music industry to Yrs 9 and 11 students, *December 16<sup>th</sup>* – Carol Service at St Cuthbert's Church.

**Yr 7****Mr P Newbery**

Yr 7 students have continued their impressive start at The Blue School. They have now been taught in sets for English and Modern Foreign Languages for the past half term and the class work that the students have completed has been thoughtful and enthusiastic. The students remain taught in tutor groups for Humanities subjects, Science and Performing Arts. The tutor groups have now settled down and are working well together with just the right balance of competition and assistance between the classes. I accompanied 3 groups to Chepstow Castle during the half term and I was pleased to see that there are friendships developing both within and across the groups. Everybody who went that day seemed to enjoy themselves and learned a great deal from the visit.

The year group have become involved as individuals or as small groups in all aspects of life in the school. There are a very large number of Yr 7 students in the Blue School Council and the 2 year representatives told the rest of the year group about their activities during a recent assembly. The musical members have worked hard and the band continues to work well together. The sports practises for the Yr 7 teams have been well attended and the Football and Netball teams have played some really competitive matches. We have had some very strong participation in Cross Country and public speaking and the students representing the Blue School have been a credit to the year group and the School. All students need to make sure that they keep practising as we move towards the inter-tutor competitions just before the Easter Holiday.

**Yr 7 History Trip to Chepstow Castle****Mr R Wiltshire**

On Monday 26<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January the History department took the whole of Yr 7 on a trip to Chepstow Castle. Pupils have been learning about the changes to castles over the medieval period and Chepstow offers a number of excellent examples of these changes.

Each trip began with the coach setting out at 9.15 for the relatively long trip to Chepstow. Concerns were expressed by some pupils that they had not brought their passports, but these were allayed as the coach passed the sign for the 'Wales' border without any checks being made. More concerns were to follow as bemused pupils spotted the road signs written in Welsh, although fears that the locals would not be able to speak English proved unfounded!

As pupils were taken around the castle they were able to see some of the unique features of Chepstow, including the oldest twin-towered gatehouse in Britain and the earliest surviving example of secular decoration in the country. Pupils were also able to tour the recently refurbished 'Marten's Tower', so-called after the imprisonment there of Henry Marten, one of the men who signed the death warrant of Charles I. Despite his detention for such a serious crime, pupils were surprised to find out that he was entitled to keep a retinue of servants, entertain the local gentry and even live with his mistress!

The pupils were enthusiastic and well behaved throughout, despite it being exceptionally cold on the Thursday as the wind whistled around the medieval structure. On their return to school they will be considering the best ways of attacking and defending a castle like Chepstow, and the problems that would have been faced by the Normans who had built the castle to 'fight the bellicose Welsh'.

**London Trip Yr 9 Gifted and Talented****Miss R Harding**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of January we set off at 4pm from school. Arriving in London at around 9pm, we booked into the hostel and then went for a walk after parking the minibus. On Thursday morning after a quick breakfast we walked through Hyde Park to the Albert Memorial on the way to the Natural History Museum. Once at the

museum we were split into two groups: Darwinism v Creationism. We had two hours to research and then met up to argue our points. After we had a quick exploration of the Science Museum we had lunch and set off to the London Dungeons where Jack the Ripper gave us quite a fright. That night we ate in the second hostel before it was time for our flight on the London Eye at 8pm. It was fantastic in the dark, with Mr Newbery pointing out the landmarks. Friday morning we went to the Imperial War Museum and looked at the First World War exhibitions before setting off home going down Sloane Street on the way. Arriving in Wells around 4pm everyone had an excellent time and made new friends. Many thanks to Miss Harding and Mr Newbery from all the group.

**Rhiannon Kirton & Imogen White****Public Speaking****Gethin Hopkin**

On Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, three teams from the school participated in the Rotary Club Youth Speaks competition. The Year 9 team who competed in the intermediate competition spoke on whether it is right to keep animals in captivity. Two senior teams were entered, one consisting of Yr 10 girls who spoke on the death of the written word, and one consisting of two Yr 10 boys and a Yr 11 boy who spoke on the topic 'Monarchy or Republic'? The judges said that they were impressed with all of the teams who participated, and the boys' team made it through to the next round which is to be held on the 10<sup>th</sup> February in Churchill.

**Make a difference****Mrs J Hawes, Chaplain**

A number of students regularly attend 'Make a Difference' on Wednesday lunchtimes. We have a relaxed and enjoyable time, engaging in a variety of activities that focus on what makes a difference to our lives or how we can make a difference to others. Recently we supported the Amnesty International greetings cards campaign.



We designed and made a variety of cards to send to ten people who are being held in prison illegally or who are subject to some form of injustice. It is known that receiving messages of support from around the world is a great encouragement and comfort to these individuals and sometimes it causes the authorities to improve their situations.

**Young Stewards Scheme****Mrs S Barnes**

A small group of students from Yrs 9 - 12 (Richie Sutton, Miles Hutton, Robin Parker-Waters, Jack de Quidt, Alice de Quidt and Chad Moody) are learning how to be Wells Cathedral stewards as part of a joint initiative between the Cathedral, National Trust and the Blue School.

The students will be trained as tourist guides. They will learn about the history and archaeology of the cathedral as well as improving their communication and presentation skills. Once trained, the students will spend a day as guides and will be evaluated on their performance.

The group will also feature in a training DVD which the Somerset Youth Volunteering Network will use to promote similar schemes throughout the country.

### Impact on Learning - Yr 9 Options

The Impact on Learning Drama Group gave Yr 9 students a lively rendition of their Year 9 Option Choice Roadshow on 4th February.

The performance emphasised the school's advice to Yr 9 students - to choose GCSE options carefully, considering how they affect future decisions.

During various sketches, characters from TV programmes such as Casualty, Sunday Night Project and Doctor Who challenged Yr 9 to choose their options wisely, consider a wide range of subjects, to not be influenced by friends' choices and to realise the importance of good qualifications in later life.

### **The Blue School Council**      **Mr N Mantell & Ms S French**

Our innovative and wonderful Community Council goes from strength to strength with the majority of the 25 or so teams having completed their annual review and planning. The Blue School Council together with its partner Learning to Lead is hailed nationally as an example of best practice. As a result Sue Hackman, Chief Advisor on School Standards for the Department of Children Schools and Families is to attend the next Learning to Lead Insight Day in the Blue School on 5th March.

It cannot be overemphasised that, in addition to the other wonderful activities that take place in our school, the experiences, opportunities and learning afforded by students' work in the BSC: planning, negotiating, creating a vision, compromise and the rest are of immense value and important lessons for life. Feedback from employers and colleges and individuals confirms this and in a sometimes cynical age where young people are often unjustly criticised the contribution our students make is outstanding!

These are a few of this term's highlights:

The Badger and Spoon Team took delivery of their beautiful new hens. The Fairtrade Team are planning some exciting events to mark Fairtrade week. The Africa Link Team are working hard to plan a Trees for Africa mural. The Beautiful School Team are working in collaboration with the Art dept to extend the BSC mural in Kennion Corridor. Minibeasts & Reptiles are planning a fundraising walk to Glastonbury to raise cash for containers. The Garden Team are gearing up for new season after putting in a mammoth seed order. The Fitness Cuisine Team are planning Jamie Oliver style 'Pass it on' cookery sessions at lunchtimes soon. The Year Reps are gearing up for their new representatives to be voted in to the team. The Aquarium Team have installed a new fish tank (nearly) in the library. The Buddying Team are working hard to establish peer mentoring. The Dyslexia Support Team are busy designing a new display for the library. The Future Trees team have drawn up the plans for this year's orchard extension. And the Waste and Recycling Team have been invited to train as 'Junk Bandmen'!

We'd like to say a big, big thank you to all the staff and parents, especially Zoe our wonderful parent governor. The students might be doing all the hard work but without your support it would be an uphill struggle.

### **French Exchange**      **Mrs C Fitzsimmons**

We are pleased to be welcoming pupils again from the Collège René Cassin for the 2009 French Exchange. The 21 French pupils and their 2 teachers will be arriving on 23rd March and staying as usual with Blue School pupils in Yr 10 for one week.

We will be showing them the delights not only of Wells and Glastonbury, but also Bath and Bristol, and, of course, they will get to spend some time in lessons with their partners. We are going to France on 7th May and accompanying me this year will be Mr Ramsden, Head of IT. He has been working very hard at his French, I'm pleased to say, but has a hard act to follow after the excellent job done for the past 2 years by Mr Sweet. Merci,

M. Bonbon! I'm hoping you will be able to follow our exploits this year on Fronter.

### **Wells Blue Sports Centre Open Day**      **Matt Daffurn**

Scores of local residents descended on the Wells Blue Sports Centre on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January, as the doors were open to all to sample the activities and sports available at the Centre.

Fitness health checks, massage, pre school gymnastics and salsa dancing were just a few of the activities demonstrated from a vast selection that were available for everyone to try, free of charge. Local clubs were also on hand to demonstrate their activity which included: Acorns Hockey Club, Mendip Athletics Club, Rosemary Conley Fitness, Tae Kwon Do, Wells Karate Club and Wutan Kick Boxing Club.

The Sports Centre which is based on the Blue School campus has an STP, sports hall, fitness and weights room, dance studio and a range of outdoor pitches.

Centre Manager Matt Daffurn said:

'It was really encouraging to see the turn out and enthusiasm of everyone who attended our Open Day. We wanted to give local people the opportunity to sample what we offer and see for themselves what an excellent and friendly facility there is at The Blue.' For further details call: 01749 836222.

### **Performing Arts**      **Mr S Moody**

#### London Drama trip

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of January a group of GCSE drama students set off to London for an overnight stay to see two inspirational plays. Firstly though, we visited the Tate Modern and gazed at the wide selection of modern art. After a short stop in our rooms at the Baden-Powell House, we went to see *Les Misérables*, a West End musical, telling the story of an escaped convict trying to right his wrongs, pursued by police, and eventually ending up in the middle of the Paris uprising of 1832. All the actors and actresses did a stellar job, especially the boy who played Gavroche, a little urchin. He filled his character with life and humour, and one of the saddest moments was when he was shot by the French army.

The next day, we spent some free time in London, and enjoyed the many shops on offer. Afterwards, we went across the Thames to the National Theatre for a very informative backstage tour, where we saw all the stages, as well as scenery being manufactured, including a huge 3-storey set for the play *August: Osage county!* We then took our seats to watch the amazing *War Horse*. Set in World War 1, young Albert and his beloved horse, Joey, are separated when Joey is sold to serve in the war. Albert enlists to find him, but they soon come face to face with the nightmare of warfare. The most remarkable aspect of the play were the full sized puppets used to represent the horses. Amazingly lifelike, they brought an unforgettable sense of majesty to the play. Once the play had finished, it was time to embark on the journey home. Thank you to Mr Moody and his team for organising such a hugely enjoyable and enlightening trip.

By Miles Hutton 10HW

#### Silent movie Festival 2008

This year's silent comedy film festival in Bristol was hosted by the charismatic Paul Merton, whose passion for the silent era led him to commission a new score for Charlie Chaplin's: 'The Gold Rush'. The film was screened and its fifteen-piece score performed by the 'Emerald Ensemble'. This was probably the best silent movie ever; it had everything you look for in a film: fights, stupidity, a cruel joke that goes too far and a legend of comedy eating his boot. Other festival treats included: Chaplin's son Christopher discussing his father's work and Laurel and Hardy's 'Keep'em Laughing', where Laurel has a toothache and

goes to the dentist. Whilst in the dentists, a canister of laughing gas leaks and the duo can't stop laughing; they then crash into cars and humiliate a policeman. Judging by the laughs this was immensely popular with all ages. Actor Paul McGann ('Withnail & I') performed two Chaplin songs including the excellent 'Smile'. There was a screening of Buster Keaton's first short film: 'The High Sign', in which he plays a recently married man who builds a house incorrectly with hilarious consequences. The climax occurred when his house was on the train tracks and a train appeared to be heading towards it. The train missed the house and then ten seconds later a different train went straight through the same house. There were 35 students, and although we got back very late, it was only £10 and a fantastic Friday night out.

#### London Marathon

Mr A Shaw

Mr Shaw, science teacher, is training for the London Marathon on 26th April and any sized donations could be made at...

Dorothy House - <http://www.justgiving.com/AShawDorothyHouse>

Marie Curie - <http://www.justgiving.com/AShawMarieCurie>

Sense - <http://www.justgiving.com/AShawSense>

#### Examination Certificates 2008

Certificates for the 2008 examination season are ready for collection from the school reception. These certificates are important documents and may be required when applying for a job or for further/higher education. **Please note that the Examination Awarding Bodies have agreed a standard procedure for dealing with unclaimed certificates. Certificates will be kept by The Blue School for one year after issue i.e. until September 2009, after which time they will be destroyed by a secure method. Once destroyed it is the student's responsibility to request duplicates from the Awarding Body, for which there may be a charge.** If students are unable to collect certificates, they may authorise another person, in writing, to collect them on their behalf. Students may request certificates to be posted to them; however, the school cannot accept responsibility for any loss.

#### PTA Update

At the last PTA meeting in January, Sally Fraser donated a cheque for £3150 from her stewarding teams who helped at Glastonbury 2008. A huge thank you to her and all those involved for still supporting the Blue School. The money will go towards a new school minibus that we're saving for.

Robin Horton is continuing to organize our new team for Glastonbury – contact him via the Admin. Office if you're interested in finding out more.

A second Quiz Night will be held in October (Friday 16<sup>th</sup>), following the success of the last one. Do look out for details of this closer to the time.

As always, it's never too late to join the 100 Club if you've still not got around to it. It costs as little as £12 per year, with a draw held every quarter. This session's first prize winner received £153, so it's well worth joining. Contact Jacqui Summerhayes (PTA 100 Club) via the Admin. Office.

The winners for the October to December 2008 draw were:

1st prize: £153.00 – share no 64 – Mrs P O'Donnell of Wells

2nd prize: £45.90 – share no 17 – Miss Y Stockwell of Priddy

3rd prize: £30.60 – share no 110 – Dr W Muir of Glastonbury

The PTA meets once each term and any parents are welcome to come along. If you'd like to be involved but are unable to attend a meeting or would like any more information on the PTA activities, please contact Di Harris (01749 676947 or [DiHarris@talktalk.net](mailto:DiHarris@talktalk.net)).

Otherwise, do come along to the next committee meeting on Tuesday 3 March 2009, 6.30 pm in the Atom Café, Kennion Hall.

#### Dates for Your Diary

13 Feb	Half term begins
23 Feb	School resumes
13 March	Mufti Day – Comic Relief
19 March	Yr 11 Parents' Evening
26 March	Yr 13 Parents' Evening
02 April	Yr 12 Parents' Evening
03 April	End of term
20 April	School resumes
04 May	<b>Bank Holiday</b>
14 May	Yr8 Parents' Evening
22 May	Half term begins
01 June	School resumes
18 June	Yr 7 Parents' Evening
26 June	<b>Inset Day 5</b>
01 July	Yr 11 Prom
02 July	Yr10 Parents' Evening
08 July	Yr 6 Induction Day
09 July	Yr 6 Parents' Evening
13 July	Y10 Work Experience week
22 July	<b>End of term</b>

**ParentPay:** ParentPay allows parents to pay for trips and activities over the Internet using either a debit or credit card; the system is available 24/7. One of the advantages of using ParentPay is that parents do not need to return the Permission Slip attached to letters; permission is given electronically at the time of making your payment. Parents may top-up their child's Smartcard – any top-up made via ParentPay will be credited automatically to the Smartcard by the following morning. A large number of parents are taking advantage of ParentPay and find it easy to use. We would like to encourage others to try it to see how quick and convenient it is. If any parent has lost their instructions, or secure log-on user name and password, please contact the Finance Office Team on 01749 836262.

#### The Blue School – Uniform Service

Term-time opening hours are:

Wednesday 11.30am – 5.00pm

Thursday 11.30am – 6.00pm

Friday 11.30am – 5.00pm

Saturday 10.00am – 12.30pm

*Closed for lunch 2.00pm – 3.00pm*

The shop will be closed from Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February to Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February and **re-open on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February**

Telephone 01749 836236 for further information or 01749 836262 outside normal trading hours.

**Reporting Absence:** When your child is absent, please ring the school by 10 am on the first and subsequent days of absence. On returning to school, your child should bring a note to the tutor confirming the reasons for absence. Our Attendance Secretary has a direct telephone line with Voicemail – **01749 836210**. Please use this number when reporting your child's absence or, alternatively, you can e-mail us at [attendtheblue@educ.somerset.gov.uk](mailto:attendtheblue@educ.somerset.gov.uk).