



I wonder if it's possible to write something about this first term back at school without mentioning Covid... ah, silly me, it appears it isn't! It's certainly true that the measures we've had to bring in to keep everyone safe are at the forefront of our minds. However, I told our new Alpha children and their parents that we did not want this year to be defined by the pandemic and I believe that our day to day life at the Prep School is pleasingly close to normal. The Alpha joiners are such a fillip for us and their excitement at being in their new school is really heart-warming. I asked one of them today what she liked about being here. She told me, "I like everything. I like where we can play, I like the school lunches and I like having you as my headmistress." I really appreciated her positivity though I confided that I prefer being called the 'head' of the Prep School and I conceded that not everybody is happy with lunch at the moment! It's proved a challenge to get everyone fed safely and efficiently, and with food they really like. I'm hopeful that after the half term break our catering team can make some further tweaks which will help ensure everyone is happy with this aspect of school life too. This week has seen our first virtual harvest festival. It's been different but, as is usual, the enthusiasm of the children and the generosity of our parents have shone through. In difficult times, it's wonderful to see how ready the Bancroft's community is to support others in our locality who are in need. The Redbridge food bank which is taking delivery of the produce and other supplies will ensure they go to those who will really benefit from them. Mrs Strong, our Head of Charities and Community Links, keeps telling me that 'kindness is the new cool', but it's true to say that, whatever is happening in the wider world, kindness is always in fashion at Bancroft's Prep

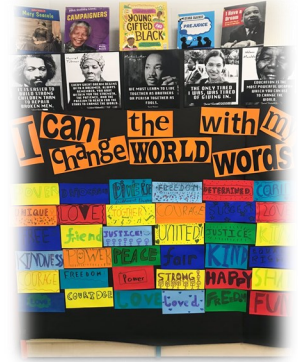
Joe Layton

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

October is Black History Month, where we celebrate the contribution Black people have made to the UK. Black people have lived in Britain for centuries; their history is part of our history. Yet many aspects of Black history, and many Black stories, are not as well-known as their White counterparts. This can be difficult for us to acknowledge, but at Bancroft's we want to deal with challenging issues as best as we can. As well as hearing about significant historical figures, every child in our school has started their term by reading a book that has either been written by a Black author or has Black central characters. We have explored themes of dreams, freedom, and racism and we have thought about how people's experiences and perspectives can differ as a result of their cultural

background. Having spoken to a number of children across the school, it is clear that they consider these discussions important, as indeed they should. Despite the discomfort that we might feel, we must listen to a wide range of stories from a wide range of people to work towards a fairer world.

Bino Rathod



HARVEST

For obvious reasons, this year's school events have not been the same at Bancroft's or anywhere else in the world, but because of the wonderful staff at our school, who have been working so hard to keep us safe, we have been able to have the experiences we are all accustomed to, including our traditional Harvest Festival. The Harvest Festival began in 1843, when the then Reverend Robert Hawker invited parishioners to a special thanksgiving service for the harvest at his church at Morwenstow in Cornwall. Since then Harvest Festival has become a celebrated tradition. ISS entertained us with a virtual play that told the moral message of how we should appreciate the food we are given. We heard from the Chapel Choir and enjoyed a jazz piece on the piano, by Jago. This year the Harvest Festival is especially important, more so than other years, because of Coronavirus, which has affected many in the UK and worldwide. Many of us would have seen scientists and politicians explain the hardships caused by the Coronavirus and how many more families are suffering from poverty and relying on foodbanks to help them feed their families. Therefore, we all contributed in helping the less fortunate during these times, by donating food and supplies to Redbridge Mutual Aid Foodbank. Your contributions were invaluable, and we thank you for your generosity.

Ella Bichou 1KY



CHARITY AMBASSADORS

Congratulations to the following pupils who have been appointed Charity and Community Ambassadors for the Prep School 2020-21:

Advait Devdutt 1HS
Ella Bichou 1KY
Anushka Jha 1HS
Alex Montgomery-Smith 1HS
Ellora Hand 2AA
William Hughes 2AA
Atronna Sebyala 2AA
Ian Subaskaran 2AA

I look forward to working with them on various projects in the coming year. They have excellent ideas, as demonstrated in their letters of application, and manifested our character values of kindness, collaboration and integrity. Do follow all our Prep children, and the wonderful community projects we do throughout the year, via Twitter and Instagram @prepcommunityandcharity

Sarah Strong

Head of Charities & Community Links



A SEA OF GREEN

Macmillan is one of the biggest charities in the UK, which helps people with cancer. They offer a variety of different treatments and services to people who are affected by cancer through Macmillan Specialist Care at Home programme. Sometimes, when cancer enters a house, family members have mixed feelings. Some of these include depression, guilt and anger. Therefore, we want to contribute to Macmillan to help them fight the battle. In previous years, we have held a bake sale at school and we all munched on scrumptious cakes. Sadly, this year, we have had to do things a bit differently due to Coronavirus but that didn't stop us from having fun. We all had a wonderful time dressing up in green. The money that we have raised will help Macmillan to support people who have been diagnosed with cancer. Thanks to Macmillan and thanks for your donations. We are proud to say we have raised £600.

Alex Montgomery-Smith

Prep 1 Charity & Community Ambassador



100 MILES IN AUGUST

2020 has been a very different year, one that will make its mark on history. My four year old sister, my mum and I participated in the '100 Miles in August Challenge'. We were motivated to do this as we wanted to build a balanced and a healthy lifestyle, as well as being much more active. We all learnt persistence and collaboration, two of our school's learning powers. Charities do a great deal in helping and supporting those who need them the most. Every day we walked miles between Buckhurst Hill and South Woodford through the parks, roads and woods. Many of our friends and relatives gave a kind donation to support us in raising £1,615 for the Teenage Cancer Trust. We found it a very interesting experience as we discovered new paths and places around Knighton Woods, which is close to our home.

Anushka Jha

Prep 1 Charity Ambassador



WALK OF KINDNESS



On Saturday 1st August my family walked 11k to Whipps Cross Hospital and back, to deliver gifts donated by our neighbours to the fantastic nurses who work there. We were sponsored by friends and family to do so and raised £1190. The idea was to do a long walk and en route, carry out a kind deed and bring a smile to someone's face! We delivered the gifts to Charmaine Yankey, the Coordinator for Improving Working Lives at the Tomswood Health and Wellbeing Centre at Whipps Cross Hospital.

I am Head of Charities and Community Links at the Prep School and wanted to support a charity this summer which would raise money for people who have been hit hardest by the coronavirus. These funds will help the British Red Cross to continue to deliver essential supplies to isolated people, and a national helpline for anyone struggling to get what they need, anyone who supports the NHS by getting patients home from hospital and work with food banks to distribute vital food parcels around the UK. Kindness is one of our school values, so 'The Wonderful Walk of Kindness' is an fitting charity to have supported this summer. If you raise money or awareness for charities outside school, do let us know; keep spreading kindness like confetti!

Sarah Strong

LAMDA EXAMS

Lockdown restrictions strongly impacted our LAMDA exams this year, but LAMDA found a clever solution: a virtual exam via Zoom. Everyone taking the exams worked hard revising their words in preparation. The day of the exam arrived and when I went onto Zoom, I was both excited and nervous since I had never done an online exam before! Once the exam started, everyone except me had to leave the room. Then a friendly LAMDA assistant appeared on the screen and asked me questions to check that everything was fine with the internet connection before leaving. Once the examiner arrived, I performed my piece of prose as well as the poem that I had prepared. I was sure I would get a good mark as the examiner gave me the warmest smile once I finished and I hope the same was the case for all other pupils. I found it unusual to see the examiner on the computer screen. From my experience, the best thing to do is to stay confident, be yourself and enjoy the process. I found the exam fun although I was relieved it was over!

Lily De Wever 2AA

MUSIC NEWS

Jenny Akroyd is our new Graduate Music Assistant, a role which involves helping in class, taking and supporting rehearsals, as well as general help in the Music Department of both schools. She has recently finished a Master's in Saxophone Performance at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, receiving a distinction. Pre-pandemic she regularly did lots of performing in and around London, however since lockdown performing has mainly been through digital formats, including a broadcast on BBC Radio Scotland over summer. Despite training as a saxophonist, Jenny also plays clarinet, flute and recorder. Aside from music, she spends a lot of her time baking and going on very long walks.



SCHOOL COUNCIL

Our School Council members have been selected by their classes and the new group met with Miss Adams and Mrs Dalton last week. Each representative is talking to their class about things they love about our school but also areas they feel could improve. We are meeting again before half term to discuss their findings. They are an enthusiastic bunch and we look forward to working with them this year!

ALD	Megan Amoasi	1SS	William Cohen
ASB	Soraya Tabrisi Rao	1KY	Arhan Jasani
AAK	Alice Horgan	1HS	Esa Sheikh
BBR	William Madden	2AA	Yousaf Khan
BCB	William Hicks	2TP	Alexia Mazumder
BLE	Liliana Rob	2CP	Beatrice Knuckey

LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS



Welcome, Walid Chokhman, our new French assistant. Walid was born in Meudon, France but grew up in Clamart. He attends the Sorbonne Nouvelle University and can speak French, Spanish, English and Arabic. He enjoys running and visiting museums and is a huge Harry Potter fan! He will be helping the Betas in their French lessons this year!

Welcome, also, to Robert Koch, our new German assistant. Robert really loves music and collects vinyl records from all kinds of genres. He is also a big sports fan and particularly likes handball and hiking. Robert is positive and friendly and describes himself as a 'glass-half-full' person. We look forward to working with him in German lessons in the Prep School.

Sarah Strong



'NEW' MUSIC

There was a time in the lead up to the start of term when I didn't envisage there would be any music lessons taking place in school and that the virtual lessons would have to continue at home. There were concerns about singing and wind instruments in particular with the distribution of droplets being something to consider. Government advice came slowly, but eventually a green light was given and ALL music lessons can now take place with certain restrictions. Music teachers themselves are able to wear either a mask, or indeed a shielding visor, and these have been provided by the school. Windows in all teaching rooms *must* be open, and most vitally every room has either one or two 8 foot high Perspex shielding screen. These are proving to be very successful. Pupil one side, teacher the other. There is no sharing of instruments, teachers won't handle a child's instrument, no instruments are loaned out and every pupil must have their own music. So far the system is working well, with very few teething problems, and for the next few months, it is the way to proceed. We will miss more direct contact between pupil and teacher, but this working alternative is surely better than the lockdown virtual lessons. These, of course can resume if the school has any partial lockdowns that deem face to face teaching impossible. Rehearsals in the meantime in school, continue in a more limited way, with our larger choirs not happening at the moment. They have over 100 children in them. The Chapel Choir of Prep 2 continues, as do the orchestra, recorders and wind band in year group bubbles. A co-curricular programme that we, along with the Senior School, are working hard to deliver, is bringing live music back to the pupils.

Adam Baum

CHANNEL SWIM

In May of this year I was asked to stand in to swim as part of an English Channel Relay team. The English Channel is known as the Mount Everest of swims and for the swim to be officially recognised it must be completed in a standard swimming costume, hat and goggles. We were due to make our attempt to swim to France on Wednesday 26th August, but Storm Francis had blown in and replaced the glorious weather and calm waters of the previous weeks, not what we were hoping for. We waited patiently at home and finally got the call to travel to Dover. Our swim was to start on Monday 31st at 11.00pm. As a team of six we knew it wouldn't be easy, we had talked openly about our worries and concerns, from swimming in the dark, jellyfish and the drop in overnight air temperature. Little did we know that seasickness would be our biggest problem! At 3.00am I jumped in. The boat lit up the water at the side and I swam close to the boat to protect me from the wind. I was hit by waves as I took my first few breaths and had to find the rhythm of the water and relax into my stroke and find my tracks to stay stable as the swell and waves moved me around. The hour passed so quickly and the seasickness completely subsided and I absolutely LOVED my swim. I was not at all scared of the dark and smiled when I saw the man in the moon looking down on me and my own reflection in the boat as I was swimming. These memories will remind me of the incredible resilience and determination we all have in us. We were all blighted by terrible sea sickness and after six hours we made the decision to head home for the safety of all on board. We all put in our best efforts and as a team we made it half way across the English Channel during my hour I was told I swam over 4000m. During my swim the pilot radioed the coastguard to ask for assistance for an unlit boat of refugees that needed help. The weather and water can be brutal and I will always remember the people in the water just ahead of me risking their lives in search of a better life. We did not make it to France. I'm not disappointed we had to turn back, our safety and wellbeing was far more important. I do though feel something incredible for having taken myself out of my comfort zone. There is an expression that **Life begins at the end of your Comfort Zone**, I have learnt a lot during the past few months, I am far braver, stronger and more resilient than I realised. Ask me if I will try again....oh yeah!

Susan Cheshire



TUG OF WAR

No matter the climate, the conditions or the fact that we are in the midst of a global pandemic, nothing stops our annual House Tug of War competition! The House teams valiantly battled it out during their Get Active sessions over the course of four mornings. The tuggers were unleashed and tugged until their hands were raw and their legs were burning in a show of great strength, resilience and determination. There was great sportsmanship showed throughout and a healthy sense of rivalry between the Houses. There can only be one winner though, and it was Manor 'The Mighty Green Machine' that were triumphant this time. The overall results for the House Tug of War were:

	ALPHA	BETA	PREP 1	PREP 2	TOTAL
HEREFORD	8	8	8	6	30
KNIGHTON	6	4	6	4	20
MANOR	10	10	10	8	38
MONKHAMS	4	6	4	10	24

Photographs of the event have been posted on the VLE <https://prep.bancrofts.org/houses/house-202021/tug-of-war>

David Archer

WELCOME

Welcome, Chloe Dack, our sports graduate student who helps the Games staff with PE lessons, Games sessions and extra-curricular sporting clubs. She has always enjoyed coaching sport and thinks Bancroft's Prep is the perfect place to develop her career further. Miss Dack has played cricket ever since she was 8 years old and it happens to be her favourite sport. In fact her role model is the bowler, Stuart Broad. He is inspiring in his bowling technique and has had many accolades. Miss Dack started coaching cricket to 5 year olds and realised that coaching and teaching is what she wanted to do long term. She would tell any pupil who is trying a sport for the first time not to be afraid but to have an attempt at everything – there is something for everyone. She believes that our school values of excellence and resilience can be achieved through playing sport. Apart from keeping fit, Miss Dack also advises our pupils to maintain a healthy diet full of fruit and vegetables. Miss Dack feels she has made the right decision coming to work at the Prep. 'Everyone is happy and friendly and will always help you out if you need them to.' It is a pleasure to have Miss Dack on board!

Sarah Strong

