



There's a first time for everything and I must confess that I've never before been heckled by a camel. I'm still chuckling! It was during my thank-you speech after our wonderful Alpha Nativity performance and I was complimenting some of the fabulous costumes worn by various children. Quite understandably, one of them got the "hump" that I hadn't mentioned the three camels specifically - "What about the camels?" came the cry. It rightly drew a big laugh from our audience who had been fantastically supportive throughout. Someone asked me afterwards if I'd minded - my answer, "Absolutely not!" Bancroft's children can be spontaneous, witty, full of fun and just a little bit cheeky when the moment is right. We want them to be happy and at home in their school and we know that, if they are, good things will flow from that. Our Christmas concert was another joyous celebration which brought our whole school community together and, again, the atmosphere was magical. Our parents deserve huge credit for turning out in such numbers on a cold and frosty night, and the warmth they showed our performers really helped them to be at their best. It's not easy to stand up on the stage of the Great Hall in front of hundreds of people. But our wildly enthusiastic audience enabled all our young stars to shine! I thank you very much for that and I wish you all a peaceful holiday season and a happy new year.

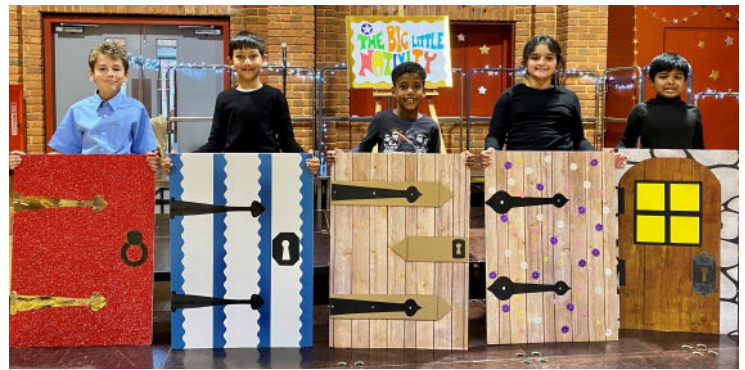
*Joe Layburn*

## THE BIG LITTLE NATIVITY

On Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December, the entire Alpha year group performed 'The Big Little Nativity' to a hall packed full of parents. With all 66 children taking part, the roles were numerous, from all the usual ones you would expect, to a tree, a list and even five inn doors! The script was divided up between the three classes, who learned their lines and stage movements during their Drama lessons with Ms Entwistle and all the accompanying songs in their music lessons with Mr Baum and Miss Harrison. Mrs Clark hunted down sheep, donkey and camel 'onesies', numerous shepherd costumes and a host of angel dresses, whilst Mrs Doctors created the most spectacular 'book' which illustrated the changing scenes. On Monday afternoon, the children put on their costumes for the first time and performed in front of their first real audience: the rest of the School. The 'book' was in the wrong order and then it toppled over! Lines were missed and the inn doors didn't quite get to the right place at the right time leaving Alpha teachers feeling a little frazzled, but, on the night, the children were nothing short of brilliant! Buoyed by the enthusiasm of the audience (and they really were very enthusiastic!) they sang and danced and delivered all their lines beautifully. So what if a shepherd lost his shoe and the sign heralding the empty stable was temporarily upside down - it all added to the magic! Mr Layburn congratulated the children on a wonderful

performance and thanked them all for their hard work and, as Mr Layburn has already mentioned, he did *not* forget the camels!

Laura Dalton



## DEBATING

Something that has become an ever-bigger part of life at Bancroft's Prep School in the last couple of years is debating. The ability to properly discuss and explore different questions, and to disagree respectfully with others, is an essential skill for children as they navigate the endless complexity of the modern world. On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November we hosted our first ever inter-school debating challenge, involving 48 children from seven local schools and including 12 of our own Prep 2 students. The event gave children the opportunity to participate in three competitive debates against children from other schools, discussing whether the world would be better without cars, whether the future is meat-free, and whether children should be allowed to vote. All the children performed very well, impressing the judges with their articulate arguments and confident delivery. Special thanks must also go to four Bancroft's sixth-formers (Samah, Sabina, Tara and Amina), all of whom did a fantastic job as judges. This event is just the beginning of our school's journey when it comes to competitive debating but it was great fun and an experience we definitely intend to repeat in the future.

Tim Paramour

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## AACHEN

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Legend has it that our regular Beta trip to the Christmas market of Aachen is not for the faint-hearted, but well worth the trek. This voluntary journey gives a very practical meaning to the German our pupils have studied in class. It's also a chance for parents to spend the weekend with their children in one of Germany's oldest and most compact cities, as well as to get to know each other in a totally new environment. It was superb to be able to rekindle the tradition this year with a visit involving almost 80 people or two coachloads.

"It was great to test my German skills," said Max, who joined us on the most recent adventure during the last weekend in November.

Alexander, who came with his dad, said, "There was so much to see and enjoy."

And Scarlett added, "It was such a fun and enjoyable weekend!"

Karen Yelverton



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## CHRISTMAS CARDS

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The custom of sending Christmas cards, as we know them today, was started in the UK in 1843 by Sir Henry Cole. Before this time, people used to send private notes wishing Merry Christmas, this was also done for births and to wish a Happy New Year. Sir Henry Cole was a busy man and did not have the time to write personal messages for Christmas in 1843, although he didn't want to just not send any. So, he hired an artist called John Calcott Horsley and got him to design a card which could be sent off straight away. In the modern age, the tradition of sending the Christmas card is becoming obsolete with text messages being the new way of communicating the Season's Greetings. Despite being a progressive school, we are also a traditional one and feel it is just to wish our neighbours a Merry Christmas. Our own Henry Cole is Head of Art, Naomi Doctors and she has designed a card that every child in the school has taken time and thought to make and we have hand delivered them to our local community this week. Time moves on but our values of kindness, collaboration and reflectiveness forever remain. Merry Christmas to you all! Sarah Strong

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## CAMBRIDGE TRIP

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The Alphas travelled to Cambridge on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December to visit two museums: The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Both are small museums run by the university and were the perfect place to consolidate our term's learning about the Romans and Celts, skeletons, rocks, and fossils. And, on a cold December day, we virtually had each museum to ourselves, which was a real privilege. We took part in workshops where we looked for clues about the past, examined objects and sorted different types of fossils. We also saw lots of unusual and interesting exhibits from Mary Anning's actual fossilised finds to a real skeleton of a hippopotamus found in Cambridge! Proof that our climate was once very different indeed. The Alphas were fascinated and we were very proud of how they presented themselves as bright, curious and articulate children. There are many small museums in Cambridge, which are all free to visit, so if you're looking for something to do over the holidays, go and check them out!

<https://www.museums.cam.ac.uk/>

Laura Dalton



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## REMEMBRANCE DAY

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We united across faiths, cultures and backgrounds at the Prep to remember the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces community from Britain and the Commonwealth on Remembrance Day in November. We paid tribute to the special contribution of families and of the emergency services. We acknowledged innocent civilians who have lost their lives in conflict. Wearing a poppy is never compulsory but is greatly appreciated by those who it is intended to support so our Charity Ambassadors sold poppies during the week leading up to Armistice Day to raise money for The British Legion and, on the day itself at 11.00am, we gathered as a school and took a moment to pause and reflect. Mr Paramour played 'The Last Post' to signal the start of the two minutes silence. We will remember them.

Sarah Strong



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## SCHOOL COUNCIL

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Meet the School Council Reps 2022/23; here to give the Bancroft's Prep pupils a voice. They were voted in by their fellow classmates, based on a speech they prepared, as to why they would be suited to this position of responsibility. Our School Council provides a meaningful way for pupils to have their views considered in decisions that impact upon them. It allows for critical thinking, problem solving and has a positive impact on our school community. Our School Council allows the pupils to take ownership and pride in our school. It is an excellent way to increase participation, teaching our Young Bancroftians about democracy, local citizenship and accountability. Topics of discussion in this term's meeting were new clubs that could be introduced, different options for our lunch menu and new ideas for break and lunchtime play equipment to name a few. Watch this space for further developments ... they have made a great start!

Sarah Strong



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## CHILDREN IN NEED

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On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November, we joined the nation in supporting Children In Need. Our pupils dressed in non-uniform with spotty accessories or Pudsey ears to mark the occasion. The charity has helped over 460,000 children and young people this year to overcome their challenges. This included supporting children and young people living in poverty, providing emergency support to families in crisis, providing comfort to children feeling sad, lost and alone, helping children overcome social injustice and supporting children to feel safe and secure again. We are proud that we raised £524.00 for them.

Sarah Strong



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## CHRISTMAS CRAFTS

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After the success of the Valentine's Craft Fair earlier this year, the Senior School came to sell their Christmas crafts in the Prep School. They made mini stockings, soaps, felt gingerbread men, keyrings and necklaces. They were raising money for ELHAP; a magical and unique charity providing adventure play opportunities to disabled and disadvantaged children, young people and adults. Since 1976, they have supported tens of thousands of disabled children. The Charity Committee offered a gift-wrapping service as an added extra; it was well supported by the Prep, raising over £190 and as ELHAP is part of the Big Give Christmas Challenge 2022 – the UK's largest match funding campaign, they will double our donations! It was so nice to see both schools collaborating together for such a good cause.

Sarah Strong

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## THE GREAT EXHIBITION

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The Prep 1s have been learning about The Industrial Revolution as part of their History curriculum on the Victorian era. They have spent a lot of time in class looking at evidence and discussing the changes that these technological leaps brought to Britain. We decided to hold our own Great Exhibition, following Prince Albert's idea in 1851, to show off their fantastic Victorian Invention projects. Everything under the sun seemed to be represented – from the camera to the x-ray, from molten steel to the railway, from the typewriter to the telephone. It was lovely to have the rest of the School and staff come to talk to the young 'inventors.' They really knew their stuff!

Bino Rathod



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## ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

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Organised by the Anti Bullying Alliance, November traditionally sees Anti Bullying Week events in many schools across the country. Their theme this year of 'Reach Out' came about following a consultation with teachers and pupils from throughout the UK. We were lucky enough to once again host the Openview Theatre Company who, through a series of workshops for the Prep 2s and a fabulously entertaining theatre show for the Alphas, Betas and Prep 1s, made this year's powerful message accessible and relevant to all the children here. With the help of puppets, Philip and Milly, the children were taught that whether it's in school, at home, or online, they should reach out and show each other the support we all need from time to time and most importantly to reach out to someone they trust if they need to talk.

Lisa Life

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## FOODBANK

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Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our collection for the Mutual Aid Foodbank in Redbridge this Christmas. We chose to create an advent calendar appeal, with a different item to be brought in each day so everyone could contribute as little or as often as they wished. Collaboration is a key value at the Prep and this shows how if everyone pulls together, the outcome can be huge! We had bags and bags of delicious produce to deliver to the foodbank and they were delighted. Kind and caring volunteers will now pack food parcels and deliver to homes in and around our local community. The aim of the food bank is to support the most vulnerable in our society with the growing numbers struggling through low income, loss of jobs, universal credit, homelessness and refugees. Thank you for being so kind – you are all wonderful!

Sarah Strong



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## GREEN TEAM

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Our children at Bancroft's Prep care deeply about environmental issues and have a strong desire to actively protect our planet. Environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity-loss or plastic pollution are huge global issues and the thought of tackling them can be intimidating, but we are committed to making positive changes and reducing our impact on the natural world. Helping the staff on this mission are a group of Prep 1 children who make up The Green Team. During the year, they will be discussing how we can bring environmental benefits to the local area through initiatives such as gardening activities or by reducing traffic pollution. With the clocks going back and the dark nights drawing in and as we appeal for more people to walk to school, we have been highlighting road safety this half term. The first job for the Green Team this term was assisting Mrs Life in her road safety campaign by selling Bancroft's hi-vis jackets. It was great to see so many children keen to wear these as they walk or cycle to school. Mr Layburn demonstrated the effectiveness of high vis jackets with a very powerful film in assembly. We shall be coming back to the theme of active travel throughout the year in a bid to promote the benefits of walking, cycling or scooting to school and to reduce the numbers of cars on site.

Bino Rathod

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## MFL LEADERS

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The artist and writer Edmund De Waal once said, 'With languages, you are at home anywhere' and he was right. It was wonderful hearing the Betas chatting colloquially around the market in Aachen, feeling confident in their own skin to the delights of the traders. We love celebrating languages at the Prep School and love giving our pupils a taste of something new. So, we were delighted to welcome the Modern Foreign Languages Leaders – linguists at our Sixth Form – to come to teach a taster lesson to each group. Some learnt Spanish, some German, French or Russian. They were taught through games and the children had great fun. So, thank you, gracias, danke, merci and благодарю вас to the students at the Senior School for being linguistic role models to our Prep pupils.

Sarah Strong

# MUSIC

It has been another very busy half term within the musical life of the School. Miss Harrison and I have been so impressed with the way the children have approached rehearsals and attendance has been good. There was a lovely lunchtime concert to start the half term. All roads always lead to Christmas and it started with our first ever Alpha Nativity, 'The Big Little Nativity'. All Alphas sang and the three classes split the parts imaginatively. The audience roared their approval and clapped along with the catchy tunes. This is sure to be an annual event, I hope. The Christmas Concert as ever was an epic event featuring every child in the school. What a fitting close to a Christmas Concert by all joining in with some uplifting carols. I hope that if either of these events have given you a warm glow, then I rest happy that our job is done. I must conclude by thanking Miss Harrison for the extraordinary job she has done in supporting the department this half term. She is quite a talent. Happy Christmas one and all.

Adam Baum

# HAVEN HOUSE

Haven House Children's Hospice provides specialist care to children who have life-limiting or life-threatening conditions. As our neighbours, we like to support them as much as we can through charitable events. Jenny, Reiko and Anastasia, who work in the Fundraising Office at Haven House came to talk to our pupils in Phase Assemblies about the wonderful work they do. They are arranging another 10k Sparkle Walk next spring – do try to support them if you can with family and friends.

Sarah Strong

# HOUSE UPDATE

The joy of hearing the email ping, followed by seeing a young Bancroftian sharing their joyous snowman that they created (in house colours) was enough to put a smile on anyone's face. Thank you to the Weather Gods for collaborating with the Bancroft Prep House Calendar and producing a lovely dusting of white powder on the exact date we had the 'Do you want to build a snowman?' activity in mind.



However, the highlight of the term has to be the House drama performances which demonstrated, not only the

acting talent of our pupils, but also the magnificent leadership of the House captains. The 'Green Manor Steam Train' is still a force to be reckoned with, however, a resurgence and steely determination exists amongst the other Houses. The title is up for grabs and there's plenty of time to go.

David Archer



These are just a selection of the huge number of snowman photographs sent in! The winning House was Monkams with 26 snowmen.

Monkams	26
Knighton	19
Manor	16
Hereford	16

The current overall scores are:

Manor	136
Monkams	120
Hereford	116
Knighton	114

# SPORTS UPDATE



It has been an extremely busy term for sports, one which has seen each and every single Beta, Prep 1 and Prep 2 pupil play in a competitive fixture and show off the skills that they have been learning in their games lessons! A particular well done to those boys who recently played up a year group in our rugby fixtures against Brentwood. They rose to the challenge, outperforming their opponents, proving that they were not out of their depth at all. We now look forward to the girls' netball season and the boys' hockey season next term.

As the world's best footballers currently battle it out for the coveted World Cup, our pupils have had the opportunity to play plenty of football this term. We finished the year with World Cup themed games lessons which the pupils really enjoyed. Additionally, our Prep 1 and Prep 2 footballers had the opportunity to play two competitive fixtures. We came up against some familiar faces when we played a friendly against the Thirds and our second fixture saw us take on Avon House. Our boys and girls had great fun under the floodlights and it was a very good experience for them all. We look forward to even more football next year.

At the end of last half-term, we travelled to Redbridge to play in an U11 Netball rally, which boasted 16 highly competitive teams. We welcomed two boys to the team (Idrees and Jun-Le) who settled in very quickly and looked as though they were regular members of the team. The team played some amazing netball on the day and narrowly missed out on winning the entire rally in the closing minutes of the final. The team should be exceptionally proud of their efforts and the silver medals that they came away with. We look forward to the netball season commencing in January.

## GIRLS FOOTBALL



In what was our first football tournament of the year, the girls had to battle the elements as well as their opponents (football in the rain is always great fun!). Our girls finished as runners up, earning themselves silver medals. It was such a great day where our girls learnt a lot about the game, and put in a performance that the Lionesses would be proud of - well done team!

## MIXED RUGBY

It was another first this term ... our recently formed girls' rugby team had their first competitive outing at a mixed rugby tournament at Wanstead RFC. Our additions to the squad - Sebastian, Eesa, William and Riyan - were fantastic on the day, using their experience to help support the girls and talk them through tactics and set plays. It was a very successful day and the team came away with silver medals, which was a fantastic achievement given that the majority of the team only started playing rugby seven weeks ago. We also had many positive comments from the coaches at Wanstead RFC who were impressed with our game play. Here's to more rugby next year ...



## INDOOR CRICKET

Congratulations to our U11 mixed cricket team who have qualified to represent Redbridge in the next round of the indoor cricket tournament. It was a phenomenal display of cricket by our pupils on the day, but they also came away having learnt a lot about sportsmanship and how to help their opponents also have fun in games. We look forward to the next round ...

