



Bancroft's is a wonderful place for birdwatching and I say that as someone who's been lucky enough to go to some of the best places to see our feathered friends in this country and around the world. You might think a self-confessed 'twitcher' would find our school field and the forest around it all a bit humdrum but it really isn't! Last night, as I was leaving, a heron flew majestically over the roof of the Prep School. Often I see the bright green flashes and hear the screeching sounds of a flock of parakeets careering over the netball court. Early wintry mornings are wonderful for listening to robins, who though they sing sweetly are actually rather grumpy, aggressive birds who view their bit of Bancroft's as their territory not ours! Another striking sound is that of woodpeckers in the trees over the fence. My favourites though are a pair of pied wagtails who flit around together so joyfully from the roof tops of the senior school to the field and who love to eat the bugs on the cricket square. There have been pied wagtails at Bancroft's for as long as I remember and I associate them with this place every bit as much as the spotted lions on our school crest. Like the ravens at the Tower of London, I hope they never leave! Of course, if you want to see all this birdlife you have to look up. As I often tell the Prep children there are amazing things to see everywhere if you simply look.



Joe Layton

SCHOOL COUNCIL

The School Council had a very successful meeting with Marc Stephan our Catering Manager and his team on 6th February in the Warner Room. You spoke and they listened! The overall feeling was that lunches have really improved this year with lots of comments about the food being more child-friendly. The kitchen staff have started to accommodate the council's recommendations from last year with jelly, pizza and skinny fries now making an appearance. The council would like to see macaroni cheese more frequently and a better range of vegetarian options, not to mention some more basic soup options so watch this space. It is wonderful that the children have the opportunity to consult with their peers on a variety of issues that affect them on a day to day basis and then liaise with the school adult body to make a difference. We are proud to provide a platform for our pupils to voice their concerns and advocate for change to their school.

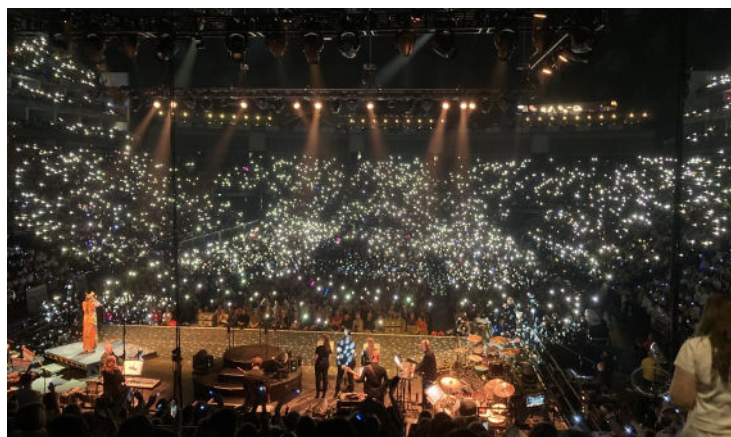
Sarah Strong

YOUNG VOICES



On Thursday 18th January we went to the O2 for the most epic day of our lives! We were going to sing in the largest children's' choir in the world: Young Voices. We had excellent seats next to the stage. It was really exciting when we saw the guest stars like MC Grammar (the famous rapper for children). It was really fun to see how the seats were filling up fast with family and friends. We were lucky to find our parents in the gigantic crowd. Our mood was rising as every seat was filled. It was so exciting when the lights were dimmed and the host came out in a colourful dress. After we sang our first song (*The Moment with BSL*) we were finally in the Young Voices spirit. Next, we sang a well-known song which was called *Get on Board* and then finally MC Grammar came out and we sang the chorus for one of his raps which was a big honour. After that we sang two more songs and then Urban Strides performed their dance number. Arirang was our next song which was in Korean. The jazz singer, Natalie Williams, came out and we sang with her. We watched 13 year-old drummer, Nandi Bushell, play an epic rock medley which we sang the lyrics to. Finally, we sang the finale *River Deep Mountain High* with all the guest artists. Wow, it was good! It was a night we will never forget!

Irina and Inaaya 1AK



CHARITY CHALLENGE

Last year, my family and I climbed Ben Nevis to raise money for families in Bangladesh who have a shortage of water. Our target was £1,000, but we raised over £2,000; enough to provide 2 tube wells! As we raised more than we thought, our dad paid some extra money so we could provide a third one! At the end of the long walk-up Ben Nevis, we were proud of ourselves, but now we are immensely proud. When we first set up our Just Giving page, we did not think it would turn out the way it has done. When we got to the top it was so cold, we could not wait to come down! But after my mum put a picture of us at the top of Ben Nevis on the Just Giving page, more money started pouring in because we had completed our mission. Before we had the tube wells put in, some of the families were drinking dirty river water and now we hope they can at least have some clean water to drink. In the winter holidays we visited family in Bangladesh and got to have a go at using the manual hole boring tool. The experience was great and afterwards we got free coconuts! We hope our challenge will inspire many others to do the same, so this world can become a safe and happy home for everyone.

Imani 2LW



LUNCHTIME CONCERT

Before the concert, we had our lunch early. When we got back down to the Prep School, there were already some eager parents! I went into the PAC, unpacked my clarinet, feeling quite nervous as usual, and headed back to the hall, where some people were already sitting on the benches. I listened to 12 very well-prepared pieces and then it was my turn to play a Harry Potter piece. I stepped up onto the stage and smiled at my mum who had already started filming me. Ms Tarrant played an introduction which sounded beautiful. When I started to play, I played my passage of music and I think it sounded good. Then there was the 8-bar rest during which Ms. Tarrant played the faster section and then I followed up

by playing similar music. When everybody had played, we had biscuits!

Harris 2LW

I went to the PAC, unpacked my guitar, and into the hall. I listened to the pieces before me, and they were all very good and I enjoyed them a lot, then it was my turn, playing *Danny Boy*, an Irish melody. I was nervous as always, but I did it and it was fine. I stumbled a little, but I don't think anyone noticed. All my friends said I did amazingly well and that felt really good. After all the performers had played the audience gave us all one last round of applause. On Friday in assembly, I performed again. It was a lot better and smoother than the piece I did in the concert, and I felt happy about that.

Siddharth 2LW

CHESS CHAMPS

On Sunday January 14th, 9 stoic girls, 2 tired teachers and 2 enthusiastic chess coaches met in the dark, by the Tower, for an early morning departure to Guildford and the semi-finals of the ECF's Girls' National Championships. The journey to St Katherine's School Bramley had a special sense of anticipation as it marked the start of the defence of our title. We fielded three exceptional teams and competition was fierce, with only the top six teams qualifying for the finals out of the fifty-five competing. All three teams performed brilliantly in what was a highly charged atmosphere against schools from all over London and the south of England. It was wonderful to see that every single one of our players won at least one match in this very competitive event. I am delighted to say that our A team, comprising of Olivia, Zoe, and Mary, emerged victorious, clinching first place with remarkable skill and poise. We are really excited about the finals, and the possibility of regaining our title, in April. Well done to everyone who played!

Lisa Life



BATTLE OF THE BRAINS

Three Bancroft's Prep teams entered the National Science Club Quiz, and one team has made it through to the final in June! The first round (quarter finals) was intense for all three teams because there was a lot of self-expectation and excitement. The quiz started. Examples of the questions included: 'What type of cloud is involved in thunderstorms and can be 10 or more miles in height?', 'Who invented the lightbulb?' and 'What is roughly the same length as an astronomical unit (AU)? Even if you knew you the answer your mind filled with worry. We could see our team's place going up and down the scoreboard. Our team would have a rough patch but then we'd get a few answers right and shoot up a few places on the scoreboard with an abundance of points. The Quarter Final end results came with a mixture of excitement, nervousness, hope and despair. Then the results appeared on the screen came and the quiz master explained that the top 22 teams would qualify for the semi-finals and that other teams would have to wait to find out whether they had made it through. There was joy and disappointment as results read: Bancroft's Prep Team 2: 18th place; Bancroft's Prep Team 1: 21st place; Bancroft's Prep Team 3: 28th. Bancroft's Prep Teams 1 and 2 had made it into the semi-finals! The semi-finals were everything the quarter finals were x 10! Everyone was nervous because they all wanted to qualify for the finals and they had been preparing, and they were all feeling confident. Both teams got the first question right and they were on track. Then, as the questions became more difficult, the teams had to think carefully about how to place their votes, whether all 4 team mates selected one answer, or the split their votes between the 4 possible answers. Things were looking tricky for the teams after the first two rounds, but then suddenly Team 1 was on a roll, getting a string of correct answers. This spurred on Team 2, who then got 5 correct answers in a row. By the end of round 5, Team 1 had fought their way up to second place. It was so tense; months of revising came down to this moment. Both teams performed superbly in the in the final round, gaining the full 500 points! When the final scores were shown, both teams began jumping up and down with excitement. Bancroft's Prep's performance was outstanding. Team 1 were thrilled because they qualified for the finals at Oxford University in first place. Bancroft's Prep Team 2 did very well, but unfortunately only the top 5 from this round qualify for the finals so they didn't make it through. Overall so far, the Science Quiz Club has been an intense scramble for success and glory. Bancroft's has done well and there is still a chance that we could finish in first place in the final. This has been an amazing experience so far and tension still lies in the air as we await the final on the 28th June.

Ethan and Dawud – 1BR

HENRY V

On 8th February we had the pleasure of a visit from the Young Shakespeare Company who performed 'Henry V' for the Betas. We had, '...a kingdom for a stage, princes to act, and monarchs to behold the swelling scene!' The play follows the young King Henry after he has just

inherited the crown. The play focuses on his early campaign in France and shows us the events around the battle of Agincourt. This play is a brilliant way to consider leadership and the qualities of a king as well as looking at a range of themes including power and responsibility, war, class and society. The Young Shakespeare Company made sure all the children played a part in the drama and it got the play off to a kick start. The Betas are very excited to explore the play in more detail after half-term and already know some of the key quotations and famous speeches!

Sarah Strong



HOUSE DRAMA

The Prep School were treated to 4 excellent performances from the Houses in the annual House Drama competition. To say that the House Captains did an amazing job is an understatement. This was a one hundred percent student-led production where scripts were written and edited; rehearsals and auditions were organised; props and costumes were located; stage directions were instructed and acting skills were honed. Rehearsals began before the Christmas holidays, but luckily everyone had remembered their lines. Everyone that took part showed great confidence and delivered their lines superbly in their performances of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Aladdin and The Grinch. The performances were expertly judged by a panel of Prep School staff: Mr Hall, Miss Bird, Miss Peckham and Miss Kelly. In the end, it was Monkhams who were the winners with their wonderful performance of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. I was a fantastic morning of drama - bravo!

David Archer



STORY COMPETITION

"As the whistle blew, the crowd waited to see if the girl would get up from the tackle..."

Celebrating the vibrant creativity of our pupils, the recent creative writing competition which centred around girls' football has been a tremendous success! A remarkable 65 pupils passionately crafted short stories, with one-third of entries contributed by boys, showcasing the inclusivity of our literary endeavours. It is heartening to see diverse perspectives, delving into the world of girls' football. Currently, 10 innovative and inspiring stories have been shortlisted and are proudly on display in the library for all pupils and teachers to read and cast a vote for their favourite. We are excited to announce that renowned author Lou Kuenzler, the inspiring force behind the book *'Our Beautiful Game'* that sparked this writing competition, will also be selecting her favourite among the shortlisted entries. Every story has also been collated into a folder and is on display in the library, for all to read.



The shortlisted stories were:

'A Good Girls' Guide to Changing the World' By Imani Abdul-Kahar 2LW
'The Goal!' By Krish Aggarwal ALD
'The Tricky Game' By Eden Kanolik ALD
'The Setback' By Savanna Lall 1TB
'Fiona's Surprise' By Zara Mann 1TB
'Never Give Up' By Anisa Mongelard 1AK
'Juliana's Football Adventure' By Annabelle Ojo ATC
'Emily's Shocking Win' By Tanvi Prabhakar 1AK
'The Golden Eagles' By Mia Singh 2LW
'The Inter-galactic Space and Time Football Competition Finals' By Theodore Willerton BNB

Having so many entries is a testament to the literary prowess and creativity flourishing within our Prep School. But of course, there could only be one winner and after a very close competition, we are delighted to announce that **Eden Kanolik** ALD was victorious! Read her winning story next.
Sasha Kelly

Short Story Competition – Eden Kanolik

As the whistle blew, the crowd waited to see if the girl would get up from the tackle. One of the people in the crowd shouted, "She will definitely not get up. Girls can't play football!" Sophie, the small girl on the pitch did not move a slight bit. She couldn't move. She was too badly hurt. She had dreamed of winning a football match, it was her chance but now it was over and she was out of the game.



That night, her parents tried to help but Sophie had lost all hope. The next day, Sophie was at her grandma's house and her grandma said, "time is a very precious thing. Your grandpa didn't become a great footballer in one night. It took time. If you learn and train to play football for a bit of time you could become a great footballer too. If you try hard!"

"But the boy-" Sophie started to say.

"The boy was wrong – girls are strong!" Grandma chanted.

"I'll try hard so I can make my dream come true," cried Sophie.

One year later, Sophie, now 11 years old, tried playing at the stadium again. She thought that it would be her big moment. Sophie looked around and suddenly she saw... THE BOY! He was in the front row but Sophie imagined he wasn't there. She said Grandma's words to herself, "the boy was wrong - girls are strong!" The game started. Sophie was about to score a goal when the goalie did a great save. The boy laughed and shouted, "Told ya! Girls can't play football." Sophie was furious, but she spotted her chance – the other team had the ball. Sophie whizzed across the pitch.



"It's 1-1 and the red team has the ball but, wait a minute – who's that racing towards the ball? It's Sophie! She makes the tackle and she's heading for the...GGOOAALL!!!!!! Sophie scores! The blue team wins the cup!"

At school, Sophie's goal was the only thing that people were talking about. Sophie and her friends were laughing and chatting when a boy asked if he could join them. She noticed him straight away. He was the boy from the stadium who said that girls can't play football. He said, "I'm sorry I was rude. You taught me a lesson. Girls can play football" Sophie forgave him and they became such good friends, she even taught him how to play football!

The end

SPORT UPDATE

The new year has kicked off with tremendous energy and enthusiasm in the realm of sports at the Prep School. Our girls have been putting in exceptional effort during their Games lessons, showcasing dedication and skill on the netball court. Simultaneously, the boys have been working diligently in their hockey Games lessons, demonstrating commendable teamwork whilst perfecting their stick skills. All Beta, Prep 1, and Prep 2 pupils have now successfully participated in their first competitive fixtures in these respective sports, and the level of commitment displayed by our young athletes is truly commendable. As we reflect on this positive start, we eagerly anticipate even more thrilling fixtures in the coming half-term. Thank you for your ongoing support in nurturing a culture of sportsmanship and excellence at our school.

Team PE

BANISH BOREDOM!

Any budding Prep School artists are encouraged to submit their works of art to The Young Artists' Summer Show. It is a free, open submission exhibition for young artists aged 4-19 in the UK. We have registered Bancroft's Prep School so parents are able to submit artwork. They are judged by a panel of artists with selected artworks displayed online and on-site at the Royal Academy of Arts. Please see the RA's website for more details of how to enter: <https://youngartists.royalacademy.org.uk/get-involved#howitworks>