



THE ISLE OF SHEPPEY  
ACADEMY

# ASPIRE

Term 3 Newsletter 2011



(Left to right) – Anthony Halsall, Lucy Boyle, Baroness Benjamin, Louis Russon, Miles Brown

## BACK TO SCHOOL FOR BARONESS

She was a hit in TV's *Playschool* in the '70s, but today Floella Benjamin performs on a very different set in the House of Lords as Baroness Benjamin of Beckenham.

The Lib Dem peer visited the Academy recently to provide a valuable insider's view into the work of the House. Law, Sociology and Citizenship students found it an 'eye-opening' experience according to Year 12's Shannon Eastoe.

Baroness Benjamin spoke of her experiences in Lords debates and discussed the controversies of possible reform of the Upper House. This excited so much interest that the Baroness asked students to write to her with their own suggestions for reform. Many have already taken up the challenge.

Next stop is Westminster. The Baroness invited students to return the visit by meeting her at the Lords, and the trip should take place in the Summer Term.

## RAISE YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE...

Raise their chances!

A student with 90% attendance - is that good?

- 90% attendance = ½ day missed per week
- In one school year 90% attendance = 4 weeks of missed lessons!

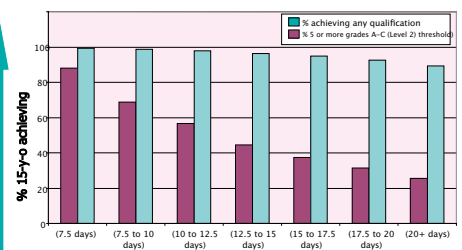
90% attendance over 5 years of secondary school

- = ½ a school year missed!

What impact might this have on your child's life...?

- Research suggests that 17 missed school days a year = GCSE grade drop in achievement. (DfES)
- The greater the attendance the greater the achievement!

### Secondary School Key Stage 4 Performance



So 90% is not as good as it first seemed!



## “IT’S AN HONOUR,” SAYS ACADEMY TEACHER

The achievements of an Academy teacher have won him an MBE in the New Year Honours list.

Head of Community Cohesion Paul Murray received his honour for services to education throughout a career spanning over thirty years. The award recognises his outstanding contribution to Danley Middle, Cheyne Middle and Sir Thomas Cheyne schools as well as the Academy.

Said Mr Murray: *“The kids are the best thing about the job. They’re just brilliant - and so are the parents, who have been so supportive over the years. There are lots of people I work with who are better teachers than I am. I just happen to have been mentioned.”*

Despite his modesty, colleagues and pupils at the Academy say the award was thoroughly well deserved. Generations of children in Sheppey would agree.



## ACADEMY ARTISTS’ AUDIO-VISUAL CREATION

Picasso was the inspiration for a stunning new art installation created by Year 10 students. The Academy’s young visionaries worked with visiting artists Peter Cooke, Wendy Dawes, Liz Foreman and Rick West to devise a striking sound-and-imagery piece. The work is a reflection on ‘Guernica’, Picasso’s dramatic Spanish Civil War painting. Community arts organisation Future Creative helped make it all happen, and you can see a film of the fascinating project on the Academy website.

# STACEY IS STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Amnesty International and exam board AQA have named a former Academy member ‘Student of the Year’.

Stacey Baxter, of Sheerness, produced an outstanding answer on Amnesty in last year’s A Level Citizenship exam. She beat around 400 students nationwide in this category, and picked up her prize at a ceremony in Westminster in December.

Said Stacey, now studying Sociology at the London School of Economics: *“The work of Amnesty touches my heart and I’ve always felt passionate about human rights, so to receive this award is an honour that means the world to me.”*

Dan Jones, one of the judges, said: *“We chose Stacey because she combined a great deal of understanding and empathy with a lot of carefully presented and accurate evidence and information. She’s a worthy winner.”*

Academy Citizenship teacher Victoria Standing added: *“We’re incredibly proud of Stacey and all she’s achieved. What makes her remarkable is her determination to use her talent not simply for personal gain, but for the benefit of others.”*



## WONDERLAND WOW THE ASSEMBLY

It really was an extra-special Special Assembly. Girlband Wonderland recently took time out before setting off on tour with Westlife and Boyzone to treat the Academy to a performance of their debut single ‘Not a Love Song’

Managed by Louis Walsh and Kian Egan, the girls are also ambassadors for PC game The Sims 3, so students got an extra treat in the form of Sims goody bags.

Head of music Helen Amos said: *“Students were on their feet dancing and the girls invited the most enthusiastic to join them on the stage. They held a meet-and-greet at the end and it was fascinating to hear how they got into the music business.”*



## TAKING THE NEXT STEP

Academy dance prodigy Joe Ingleton is set to take a place at the Millennium Performing Arts School in the autumn.

Joe spent months auditioning alongside thousands of hopefuls at London's top dance institutions, and eventually received offers from the Italia Conti and Birds Dance schools as well as Millennium. He is on the short list for a Millennium dance and drama award which would pay his tuition fees.

Many graduates of the Millennium have become professionals on TV, in West End musicals and on cruise ships. Joe's 3-year course, leading to a diploma in professional dance, is his next step on that route.

Joe, who is working towards a predicted 'A' grade for GCSE dance, has made outstanding contributions to the cultural life of the school. His fellow students and staff members will be watching his career with interest and delight.

## ADAM RETURNS TO THE ISLE

Brabazon's new Head of School brings valuable management and organising skills as well as teaching ability to the Academy.

Adam Reed takes up his position at Brabazon later this year, when he moves from his current role as the 14-19 Co-ordinator for East Kent.

Mr Reed lived on Sheppey as a child and attended Cheyne Middle School.

In later years he graduated with a Management Degree from the University of Hull, and he has since taught at Homewood School in Tenterden, St Anselms in Canterbury and St Edmunds in Dover. The Academy was particularly impressed by his knowledge and experience of school improvement issues, and looks forward to welcoming a great new asset.

## SO CLOSE TO TOP SPOT IN ENTERPRISE CHALLENGE



A team of Year 7 students put their creative and presentation flair to the test in a challenging 'Enabling Enterprise' event - and earned a very creditable second place.

Enabling Enterprise is an organisation dedicated to helping young people develop the skills, aspirations and experience to succeed in life. This introductory programme, 'Trash to Treasure', pitted five schools against each other to design a toy made from recycled materials.

On February 4th the contestants met head-to-head at the Fleet street offices of leading law firm Freshfields, a sponsor of Enabling Enterprise. Their task: to present their creations to a daunting audience of fifty people, including a panel of judges.

After team-building exercises and warm up-games to hone their presentation techniques, each team gave a five-minute pitch to promote their idea. The talented toymakers showed true panache, with ideas ranging from a football game complete with changeable scoreboard to a mobile toy box.

The Academy team came through the test with great success. Their designs were exciting and imaginative and only just missed first place. As a lasting benefit they gained experience of teamwork and running their own meetings, while learning more about environmental issues. A surprise visit by Olympic mascots Wenlock and Mandeville rounded things off in Gold Medal style - and maybe inspired the talented Academy students to go one better next time.



## A SERVICE WITH A TINGLE

Take an orange, wrap a red ribbon around it, push in some Dolly Mixtures on cocktail sticks, top it all with a lighted candle and there you have it - a Christingle.

Abbey School students made their own Christingles to be lit at the carol service at Minster Abbey just before Christmas. The Reverend Arthur Houston led the moving service and explained just what those Christingles mean: the orange is the world, the ribbon is the blood of the saviour, the dolly mixtures are the fruits of the earth and the candle is Christ, the light of the world.

Senior prefects Jack McCourt, Gemani Potton, Sasha Graham and Keiran Edwards gave readings exploring the theme of light, and celebrated the end of term by looking forward to the New Year.



## REMINDERS OF THE HOLOCAUST

The harrowing story of the Holocaust cast a sobering shadow over the 16+ Foyer on January 27th.

Students from the History and RE departments created the Holocaust Memorial Day Exhibition. Disturbing displays focused on the death camps, labour camps and ghettos, while stories of hope occasionally burst through to suggest that human values will always survive. Participating students gave out copies of one such tale, Irena's Story, which tells of the German woman who saved 2,500 lives by smuggling children out of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Mrs. Gayle and 16+ student Charlotte Farrant introduced a personal note, and helped bring home the reality of the exhibition, by speaking of their own visits to Auschwitz.

The Academy is considering making this poignant reminder an annual event, to commemorate those who suffered and died and to point to a better future pledged to avoid such inhumanity occurring again.

## IN COMPETITION INDOORS

### RUNNING AND JUMPING TO SUCCESS

Athletics can be fun, even in winter - and Academy competitors are up with the leaders.

Sportshall Athletics is a national sports competition designed to be 'fun, bright and colourful'. It mixes both team and individual performances in a range of track and field events specially adapted for indoors. This year the Academy is contending with all Sittingbourne schools to win a place in the regional Sportshall finals.

Teams meet on three separate competition days. After stage one the Academy's Year 7 and 8 boys team is right up there in 2nd place, while the girls are handily positioned at 4th in their table. It's an impressive performance so far, as many team members are tackling these indoor events for the first time. Watch this space for further progress ...

### PULLING AHEAD

Still safely cocooned from the elements, the Academy's rowers are surging forward too.

Three students qualified for Kent County Indoor Rowing finals after powerful performances in the January time trials.

Over a 5-minute period Mollie Button of Year 10 hit 2nd place by covering 1177 metres, while Nicole Sims came 5th with 1173 metres. In the Year 11 group Georgina Brown achieved 3rd place with 1424 metres.

## FUTURE EVENTS

### Term 4

28 Feb - 8 Apr 2011

### Year 8 Options Information Evenings

8 Mar 2011 (East)

9 Mar 2011 (West)

### Year 10 Parental Consultations

29 Mar 2011 (West)

30 Mar 2011 (East)

### Year 12 and 13 Performing Arts show

'An evening with Centrestage' a mixture of variety acts, scripted work, stand up comedy and song on Wed 13th April, Brabazon Hall at 7.30 - 9 (free admission to students from Year 9 or above)

## NEAR MISSES FOR FOOTBALLERS

So near yet so far: that was the fate of the Academy teams this season.

The Under 19s boasted the division's best defence and just one defeat. But too many draws meant Maidstone Grammar pipped them for the Kent Premier championship - despite the Academy beating them 4-1. Player of the season accolade goes to top scorer Daniel Pullen, who also hit the winner for Kent against Essex.

The Under 17s reached the semis of the first-ever Kent Cup tournament but went down to favourites Kennal Technology College. The whole Kennal side plays in the same Kent League team so class and teamwork showed - although it was a close game, finishing 2-0.

The Under 15s fell in the Kent Cup quarter finals. They beat holders Rainham Mark Grammar 4-2 - man of the match Harry Skinner - before meeting Hayes away. At 2-2, after extra time, it was penalties then sudden-death. The tall Hayes keeper stretched to deny the Academy's first effort. The Hayes man slotted his and that was it. Cruel result, great effort and huge promise for next season.

## EARLY ENTRIES OFF TO A FLYER

Year 11 students have made a flying start in the exam stakes. In this year's GCSE Early Entries at least a quarter of candidates have already scored A\*-C grades in English or Maths or both. Last year was a record-breaker for exam results at the Academy. Staff and students are out to do even better this time around.

