

“It has been a long and gruelling term, BUT IT IS REMARKABLE TO SEE WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED”



THEO: A CAPTAIN CAPPED



2 GRADE 8S WITH DISTINCTION FOR MAX



IT'S A KNOCKOUT FOR BEDE

PENNELL NEWS



Dear Pennell Parents and Guardians,

It seems like a very long time ago that I took this photo of the Year 11s the night of their dinner in January. It has been a long and gruelling term with the bulk of the emotional toll borne in the first six weeks what with the mock exams and the careful managing of the boys' response to the marks; the "Pennell Plague" in the absence of Dee; the demands of the House Concert; the myriad inter house competitions and national academic competitions that we enter; what seem like hundreds of trips and other enrichment opportunities that we try to cram in before the public exams begin. And then there is the gradual return of sunlight and the confusion and profusion of very early daffodils, snow drops and crocuses ("What? So soon?" we say every year, as if Mother nature herself has panicked and forgotten to change the clocks...). But looking back it is remarkable to see what has been achieved in what is actually quite a short few months.

Academic achievements

With two year groups thoroughly in the grip of public exam preparation, it is gratifying to see that other year groups are all represented high in the overall effort league. It is certainly easier for the Upper School to take the top spots given that they have, in some cases, only six teachers to impress. Ian Chee's 6.22 effort score takes pole position followed closely by Bill Cao's 6.13. Year 11 Benedikt Miller comes in third with Year 12's Isaac Chu and Alex Fan 4th and 5th respectively. Top Year 10 is Chorus Yuen with a solid score of 5.70 while the top Year 9s are Gabriel Barlow in at 13th in the house, closely followed by Freddie Ferro and Louis Bullen. Sung Tangwatanawongsa is to be congratulated for his work in the national Royal Society of Chemistry "Top of the Bench" competition. Tommy Lovas impressed sufficiently to make it through to the final Olympiad round of the National Maths Challenge.



Tommy receives his Maths Challenge certificate.

The following academic league tables also demonstrate excellence this term:

Lent term's show hsm league

Year	First	Second	Third
9	Bertie Brushfield	Gabriel Barlow (2nd=)	Victor Lam (2nd=)
10	Jamie Mercer	Chorus Yuen	James Kan
11	Alex Tse	Guillaume Najbor	Sung Tangwatanawongsa
12	Isaac Chu	Alex Fan	Ernest Ng
13	Aidon Chan	Ian Chee	Cole Warren

Most improved eRC effort score (across the two eRCs this term)

Place	Name	Improvement
1st	Adam St Paul (Y13)	1
2nd	Omar St Paul (Y11)	0.70
3rd	Guillaume Najbor (Y11)	0.52
4th=	Matthew Tsang (Y11)	0.45
4th=	Sea Tangwatanawongsa (Y11)	0.45
4th=	George Kendon (Y11)	0.45
4th=	Runo Okoloko (Y11)	0.45

Cultural

As ever, an enormous amount of energy and enthusiasm was invested in our house concert and I have to say this year was very much on a par with our usual standard. It is always such fun bringing the ideas together and as a longtime fan of Flight of the Conchords I was particularly pleased that Max and Henry performed *Jenny* so superbly. I can't print here what they initially proposed singing...! Of the concert, Tim writes, "I think my theme a few years ago was a reflection on the impact that organising a house concert had on the ratio of ginger to grey hairs adorning my head. The process of crafting a successful revue is never a bump- or stress-free affair. However I really must say that year-on-year my job is made all the easier by the astounding levels of talent, dedication and good humour that the boys display in the otherwise dark weeks of January/February, so much so that those evening rehearsals become an



TJS, courtesy of Petr Volkonskiy's grandfather

enjoyable rather than an arduous part of the house routine to kick off the Lent Term. We have been persistently blessed in Pennell House with an abundance of dramatic skill and musical prowess, and this year proved no exception. Whether our ears were being soothed by some piano from Victor Lam and the violin from Lucas Battel, or our eyes were being 'treated' to some questionable synchronised swimming dance moves from the Year 10s or the all too familiar experience of being in an airport departure lounge as dramatised by the Year 9s, the evening was certainly a bouncy and varied mixture of hilarity and class.



Lukas in action

My thanks as ever must go to all of the video editors and live performers who really brought it together on the night. Although I know that of course Mums and Dads are some of the kindest and forgiving audiences we will ever present to in our lives, it is always daunting treading the boards of Big School in front of one's peers, and the live sketches from the Year 9s, 10s and 12s, Henry and Theo's rendition of a *Guide to Acting*, and Max and Henry's hilarious performance of the Flight of the Conchords' *Jenny* were all executed excellently in my humble opinion. Special mention must go to Max Walker, who has been a linchpin of Pennell House Concerts (and thus an invaluable part of my tool cabinet) since he stepped onto the stage five years ago with his guitar as a fresh-faced Year 9. Henry and Theo must also be commended for commanding the theatre with such ease and anchoring the show as very charismatic compères. They did not show an ounce of distraction despite having to juggle this responsibility with their own notable stints on stage including the Year 12 sketch and (for Henry) a duet.



Year 12 English class sketch

Having crested a notable birthday this year (I leave you free to guess which), I'm hoping that I can attribute the inevitable increase of grey hairs in years to come to my age rather than the 'stresses' of crafting an annual hour-and-a-bit of entertainment. Honestly though, it is your sons who make it an increasingly easy and enjoyable part of the house's calendar. Here's to many more years of purple talent. Well done chaps!"

Having thought that we had completed the inter house singing competition for the year, we then had the a cappella to contend in, right on the night before the end of term. Corraling a troupe of hesitant non-singers to perform unaccompanied in front of their peers, under competitive conditions is not for the faint-hearted and I take my hat off to Max and the boys just for giving it a good go. We can currently count the number of music scholars in the house on one finger but what we lacked in musicality, we made up for in sheer gusto and charm and, as the judge commented, they certainly won the audience over.



Oom Pa Pa! from the a cappellas

Congratulations to Alex Fan (centre, front row above) for passing his Grade 6 singing exam, Bertie Brushfield, his Grade 3 drum exam and Isaac Chu for his distinction in Grade 8 piano. Max Walker's two Grade 8s at distinction in both piano and singing is a tremendous achievement.

Sporting

In addition to singing we also had inter-house chess, squash, swimming, football and hockey all in the last few weeks of term. At times it was logistically impossible to get to it all and some boys were pulled from one court and pushed onto another with moments to spare. We were even disqualified from our first chess match because we were five minutes late! Congratulations must go to our junior swimmers who came second in their tournament. Tommy Lovas in particular impressed in the pool with a first place in the Junior individual medley and a time of 1: 24.39.



Tommy's victory time

1st team players this term include George Kendon in football, Theo Bevacqua, Henry Turnbull and Max Faulkner-Bryant in rugby 7s. In badminton the U18As included Steven and Chorus Yuen, Sung Tangwatanawongsa, Matthew Tsang, Justin Chong, Alex Fan, Vikrant Gurung and Ian Chee. Our U18 Fencers include Bill Cao and Raul Sanchez Martin Ampudia while Ernest Ng represented the College in the U18Bs. A-team players this term include Adekola Aderogba and Jamie Pascall (U15As hockey, with Jamie also selected for the Sussex 7s). Gus Toomer and Freddie Ferro played hockey for the U14As - runners up in the Sussex Cup.

Congratulations go to Bede Rowlands for a second round boxing knockout in the Battle of Kent, while Henry Turnbull and George Pool enjoyed an unbeaten season in the 2nds hockey with nine straight victories in a row. Cole Warren's captaincy of the 5ths in football deserves special mention, not simply because he was captain but because his coach writes, "he has been their talisman for two years now and a selfless captain this year. He has been highly commended by every coach we have played against and deserves huge pat on the back".

Finally, of course, we should pay tribute to Theo Bevacqua's very hard won cap for Wales. It has been nail-biting watching him progress through the selection process and the Bevacquas have worn a groove in the M4 but it has paid off and we are extremely excited for him. To [ahem] cap it all, he was jointly awarded the Simon Green Award for endeavour at the end of term too.



Theo receives the Simon Green award



The mighty junior house hockey team



The equally mighty senior house football team and...erm... "coach" Petr



Some requests and reminders:

We hsm's thought it would be fun to start the summer term with a boarders' ball. This is precisely what the community weekends are all about and we do hope that you will support our first ever boarders' party. You will have been emailed about it but in a nutshell there will be a carvery and a big band to dance to and all boys should wear a black tie (or suit and bow tie).

Absence from College will always need parental confirmation please (mode of travel, departure and return timings etc.). This obviously includes such things as dental appointments and weekend leaves but also university interviews and open days, the travel to which you may or may not be involved in.

Flexi weekends - if you know that your sons will always take flexi weekends do let me know to save the to-and-fro of communication on Friday evening. Otherwise I will assume that it is to be decided each weekend. One or two have already notified me of a Monday 8.00 am return every flexi weekend.

Do please think carefully about how much pocket money you give your sons. In many cases it may not be appropriate for them to have a bank account (and card) until the Sixth Form. Another rather neat solution is the Go Henry card (www.gohenry.com/uk) which you can control, make easy transfers to, set budgets and basically gives you visibility of what is being spent and where. Unfettered dollops of cash are unhelpful and encourage binge spending, especially online.

Final thought for the term...

The chaplain at the end of term referred to the staggering coincidence that when Sir Christopher Wren was roughly marking out the shape of the proposed new St Paul's Cathedral on the ground, after the original had been burned down by the Great Fire of London, he asked a workman on site to hand him a piece of stone. On it by chance was written the word "resurgam" meaning either "may I rise again" or "I will rise again" (pedant's corner: depending on whether you take it to be a present exhortative subjunctive or a future indicative. Latin, eh?). The chaplain went on to make the connection between Easter and the idea of re-birth. And that got me thinking... As I mentioned it has been a long term, in some ways a difficult and testing term. I, for one, have felt purged and re-born after I succumbed to the plague (hope you're not eating...) but the weird thing is that I genuinely felt good for having been bed-ridden for 48 hrs. As I said to the boys after their mocks, in some cases they too need to rise from the ashes, as from these, as the old song goes, grow the roses of success (I didn't put it in quite those terms). The idea of embracing failure - though far from new - is becoming lucrative with books published every week on how and what to learn from mistakes. I am not sure a book is necessary but it does take thought and determination, and that I hope is what the Year 13s and 11s are demonstrating right now at home. They will have learned which revision strategies work best in which subject, they will have learned which time of day they work best and how long they can concentrate for and will hopefully be loading their day accordingly. One thing I realised in my resurgence midway through the term is that an evening on duty, wandering through the house with no agenda other than to chat with the boys about anything or nothing, can be such a huge tonic. I have laughed out loud for the first time in weeks whilst on duty and it just goes to show what terrific company your sons are. Huge thanks to you and them.

With very best wishes and have a lovely easter,



Ben



Dates for the diary

Start of Summer term - Tuesday 23 April, 18.00

Saturday 27 April Boarders' Ball, 19.00 (community weekend)

Saturday 4 May (after commitments) - Monday 6 May 18.00-21.00 exeat

Monday 13 May Y11 study leave commences

Friday 24 May (after commitments) Half Term; 17.00 Y9 GCSE options meeting for parents; Y13 study leave commences

Saturday 22 June community weekend

Friday 28 June College Sports Day (all study leave boarders back in)

Saturday 29 June Speech Day for all (bring a picnic and join us on College Field); pm Cornflower Ball