

“Many great things happened this term which it would be myopic to overlook”



**THEO: ON SCREEN, BEATING ENGLAND**



**VICTOR: A MAN OF DISTINCTION**



**INTER HOUSE SQUASH CHAMPIONS**

# PENNELL NEWS



The house in full and hearty song in the house concert

Dear Pennell Parents and Guardians,

What on earth just happened? There we were, grinding on through the last couple of weeks of the term and before we really knew what was happening the house was empty, public exams cancelled, and the term had dissolved like a slice of cake dunked into a cup of tea. Teachers are creatures of habit and, forever, the cycle of three carefully orchestrated terms punctuated by assessments has been the landscape that we inhabit as comfortably as a hobbit hole. We're all still rather reeling from the speed and consequences of the shut down and by the uncertainty to follow. Lydia and I find ourselves home-schooling the girls (I'm certain someone has invented "new maths") and here I am trying to write a newsletter in spite of the fact that several house competitions have been cancelled including, I'm secretly rather relieved to say, the inter house a capella competition, as well as all school trips, one of which I was due to be helping on. And yet, many great things happened this term which it would be myopic to overlook. The house concert went without a hitch, the mock exams were attacked ferociously, several inter house competitions actually did take place in which we either prevailed or gave a very good account of ourselves.

The boys have volunteered, led, excelled, participated with inspiring enthusiasm - even at a lowly level - and have been superb company at several tutor meals. In amongst such upheaval, one thing has remained reassuringly unchanged: the boys have been a total credit to their house.

## Academic and service

Inevitably the focus this term has been on GCSE and A level mock exams. In the latter, Seb Marsh has been singled out for commendation by the Philosophy and Theology department for working so hard and "illustrating what can be done by working with the help of teachers and displaying grit and determination". Bassel Abdul-Azeez is also to be congratulated for his Departmental Commendation from the Physics department. His independent research on quantum mechanics earned him high praise; an impressive achievement for a Y9.

The following academic league tables also demonstrate excellence this term:

Lent term's show hsm league

| Year | First                 | Second           | Third                         |
|------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 9    | Zain Radwan           | Sam Sanders      | Bassel Abdul-Azeez            |
| 10   | Rolland Lau           | Gabriel Barlow   | Freddie Ferro/ Louis Bullen = |
| 11   | James Kan             | Victor Advincula | Jake Lawson Johnston          |
| 12   | Sung Tangwatanawongsa | Leo Fu           | Zack Radwan                   |
| 13   | Henry Turnbull        | George Pool      |                               |

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

| Place | Name                    | Improvement |
|-------|-------------------------|-------------|
| 1st   | Sam Tsang (Y11)         | 0.47        |
| 2nd=  | Louis Bullen (Y10)      | 0.28        |
| 2nd=  | Theo Marsh (Y10)        | 0.28        |
| 4th   | Bassel Abdul-Azeez (Y9) | 0.27        |
| 5th   | Gustav Stahlbage (Y9)   | 0.24        |
| 6th = | Lukas Battel (Y13)      | 0.19        |
| 6th = | Stan Hughes (Y12)       | 0.19        |

# Cultural and Social

The Y11s getting into character before their dinner



The Year 11 dinner this year had the theme of 007 and this was fitting reward for all their hard work over the holidays. In addition to this, many year groups went on tutor dinners towards the end of term. I am very grateful to the tutor team for giving up their evenings to organise and attend these events and I am delighted that they are clearly so mutually enjoyable.

Year 13 tutor dinner with RKH and LJJ



The bulk of the house's cultural efforts this term were directed towards the house concert, as ever expertly masterminded by TJS. This year we had the added frisson of stress from the fact that the Drama department had booked their Lower Sixth drama practical for performance the following week and had built an enormous set - complete with Airstream caravan - in the performance space. They tried to suggest that the JWA might be a better option but we held firm; the house concert *must* be performed in the school theatre. The JWA is just too polished, too technical, ill-befitting the "Ain't half hot, Mum" quality of the offering! The next hurdle was finding two - or more - willing compères and this proved more challenging than ever. We are very grateful that Zack and Jacob finally stepped up and presented the show. Next came the opening ripples of the problem that we are currently all belaboured by and we regrettably had to ask some families to keep away due to contact with the (then) infection zone. This concert had a painful labour. A strong opening from the Year 10s, however, calmed the nerves and set us up for a cracking evening. Sam Sanders (Y9) then upped the ante with a superb rendition of *Half the World Away*. It takes enormous guts to perform on stage, even more to do it solo and in your second term at school. The slightly surreal Y11 video and the Y12s dance had moments of great humour while the Y9s pushed themselves on from a strong Y9 drama performance last term to give us an excellent couple of interlaced sketches. The concert finished very strongly with Justin Chong, Isaac Chu and Alex Fan giving us a beautiful version of Maroon 5's *Memories*. Lukas Battel then did a stunning job of Küchler's op.15 in D major on his violin. The Year 13 video was one of the most moving I have ever seen at the PHC, documenting the steady build of personalities in their year group over time. The Toy Story soundtrack didn't help but I'll admit to being a bit teary by the end; what a fine body of men we lose from the top of the house this year.



Lukas and Alex in action

Congratulations to Alex Fan for passing his Grade 8 singing and to Victor Lam for his Grade 6 distinction on the piano.

## Sporting and service



Theo forces a game-changing penalty at the 51st minute

One of the sporting highlights this term has to be seeing the Head of House on television every Friday and getting so much time on the pitch. The Wales England game was Wales' finest of the U20 season and it was fitting that several of the U6th were there in person to watch (see right) and the Games Room full with Pennellians. It was quite something hearing the commentator's approval of Theo's performance with his Welsh lilt splitting Bevac.....qua so satisfyingly!



George, also on the big screen

Another highlight was winning the inter house squash competition. Captained by George Pool, the Y10s put in a particularly fierce fight in the Junior competition with Freddie Ferro unbeaten and Gus Toomer winning one game 11-0. Well done chaps!

We have had a number of boys playing first team sport this term. Zain Radwan played hockey for the U14As while Sam Sanders was called up to swim for the school at the Bath Cup held at the London Aquatics centre, recording a PB. Gus Toomer and Freddie Ferro played for the 15As hockey team while the senior basketball team benefitted from the selection of Chorus Yuen, Sam Tsang (both Y11) and Sea Tangwatanawongsa. Sam receives his half colours and the team should be congratulated on their five consecutive wins. Our school fives players included Jake Lawson Johnston (16A), Vikrant Gurung and Ernest Ng (18A) with the badminton 1sts represented by Matthew Tsang, Justin Chong, Isaac Chu, Alex Fan and Ernest Ng. Justin and Alex have been awarded their half colours. Reading this, it is baffling that there is no inter house competition for basketball and badminton and given that most of our senior pupils in the house participate in mostly those sports it does rather instantly reduce our seeding in the overall inter house sport competition. We were unable, for instance, to field a senior inter house hockey team which denied us precious points. To have come 3rd overall this term therefore is quite an achievement. Henry Turnbull and George Pool have both played hockey for the Seconds while Stan Hughes' amazing goalkeeping for the Firsts has drawn much praise. He finishes the term with his half colours also.



Jamie on the range

Jake Lawson Johnston and Jamie Mercer should be congratulated for passing their cadre course and their promotions in CCF.



The Junior house hockey team in action. Photos courtesy of B. Brushfield 'cause his dozy housemaster forgot to put the battery in his camera...

# Final thought for the term...

As you know, I usually do a box with "dates for the diary" in the house newsletter but I think it would be premature to predict anything at this stage. Mr Thornley, who manages the whitebook (school diary), and I had a funny realisation last week that he had, for the first time, printed a diary that was instantly completely inaccurate, the "lost whitebook" as it were. In these times we all look for reassurance that everything will be OK. I have to say that the number of messages/ photos/ videos I have had over the last few days from pupils, colleagues, friends and family tells me that the British sense of humour is fully in tact! I feel keenly for the leavers this year but am determined once the dust (sandstorm) has settled to get as many of them together as possible to enact our "last night" together. The thought of ending the school year without saying a proper goodbye is unthinkable.

It is not certain when we shall all reconvene under the same, steady roof that Pennell House has provided since 1986 but we shall and in the meantime I am sharpening my IT skills, more deeply learning how to use Microsoft Teams, and if we cannot open the doors again immediately on 14 April we shall be holding tutorials and lessons across the ethersphere. How very modern. I may even finally get round to reading Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*.

With very best wishes, as ever. Stay safe and healthy,

**YOUR HOROSCOPE THIS WEEK**

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  <b>ARIES</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home  |  <b>LIBRA</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home       |
|  <b>TAURUS</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home |  <b>SCORPIO</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home     |
|  <b>GEMINI</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home |  <b>SAGITTARIUS</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home |
|  <b>CANCER</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home |  <b>CAPRICORN</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home   |
|  <b>LEO</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home    |  <b>AQUARIUS</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home    |
|  <b>VIRGO</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home  |  <b>PISCES</b><br>You'll be spending time in your home      |