



Kirkby Stephen Grammar School

A co-operative Academy

NEWSLETTER

www.ksgs.cumbria.sch.uk

Issue 127 Dec 22



Eden Valley
Sports Partnership

Shakespeare, his wife and the dog

Mrs Newstead arranged a free performance of the show 'Shakespeare, his Wife and the Dog' by Bated Breath Theatre Company for our A-Level Drama, English and Media students. The Drama studio was magically transformed into Shakespeare's office through use of simple but effective lighting and set. We were treated to a very intimate performance about a Wife and Husband's relationship with plenty of Shakespeare reference's thrown in for good measure. The performance was funny yet at times emotional and students were lucky enough to have a Q+A session at the end with the two performers Sally Edwards and Phillip Whitchurch. Phillip was also the playwright of the play. He explained to us that just before Shakespeare died, he had lost favour with the world and he wanted to explore this idea along with the relationship he may have had with his Wife. Both performers were mesmerising and we felt very lucky indeed to be treated to a private viewing. Thankyou to Bated Breath Theatre Company, Mrs Newstead and Conrad Lynch for making it possible.

Mrs Whitehead Head of Drama

Blood Brothers Theatre Trip

Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 Drama students went to see Blood Brothers at the Sands Centre in Carlisle and wow, what a show it was! The students were amazed by the incredibly high standard of the show and many of the audience were moved to tears by the emotional performance of Niki Evans, former X Factor finalist, who was the perfect Mrs Johnstone. Not only were the performances of the whole cast phenomenal but also the set, lighting, costumes and sound were all outstanding. Blood Brothers is our GCSE set text so not only is a trip to the theatre an entertaining, inspiring and cultural experience, in this instance it will support our GCSE students in their written exam. Blood Brothers is a long running show and I have seen it several times but this performance was by far my favourite. Our students are always brilliantly behaved on trips but it was still a lovely surprise when several members of the public came to me after the show to comment on how lovely and well behaved the students were. I believe that going to the Theatre is an important, enriching experience that all students should get the chance to do. Our next planned Theatre trip will be for Year 7 who I am taking to Theatre by the Lake in January to see the borrowers.

Mrs Whitehead Head of Drama



Dear Parents, carers and students,

A lot has happened since the last edition of our newsletter in the summer, only some of which is reflected in the articles you will read in the pages ahead. The staff have offered and run a bewildering array of trips, activities and visiting speakers/performers over the last few months. I hope you enjoy reading about some of them in this newsletter.

We have welcomed two new members of staff, Mrs Birtles and Mr Wiseman. Although, as you will read, Mr Wiseman is a former member of staff returning to help out as a volunteer and Mrs Birtles is a former student returning to work here. Perhaps this says something about the appeal of KSGS.

Last summer, we said goodbye to some treasured members of staff. Mrs Bennett finally retired, having retired before but come out of retirement to help us with Year 11 and Year 13 Business Studies. Confused? You should be. Mrs Knowles also retired after many years of excellent support for our SEND students. Mrs Butterworth our much respected and valued sociology and history teacher decided that it was time to retire also. And finally, and most sadly, our much loved caretaker, Marwood Dent, passed away at the end of the summer term. We have consulted with the students, who loved Marwood as much as we did, about what would be a fitting memorial for him. We will soon be putting their suggestions into action.

This term has been a long and challenging one, although at least we are beginning to see a return to normality after the restrictions imposed upon us by the Covid pandemic. We had Ofsted in school to conduct an inspection in early October and, as I write, we still have not received the final report. You will all, no doubt, have a sense that it did not go as we hoped and expected and the delay is likely to be because of the challenges we made to the initial draft report. I can assure you that when the final report is published, you will receive a copy of it along with an explanation from me as to what it means and also you will have an opportunity to ask and have answered any questions you have about it.

However, I would like to end by focusing on the many wonderful experiences that our students have had over the last term so that the tone of this letter is celebratory as we approach Christmas. As ever, our wonderful staff go the extra 10 miles for our students, who are more than worth it.

Oh, and come on England!

Gary Hartley
Headteacher



The 'Lessons from Auschwitz' project takes students on a 'journey of learning and exploration – about the history of the Holocaust and its relevance to today's world.' After an [introduction](#) seminar, the trip started by seeing the town of Oswiecim, which is more commonly known by the Germanised name Auschwitz, to experience the pre-war lives of the people who lived here. We then walked to the Great Synagogue Memorial Park, one of 20 Jewish sites of prayer in the town prior to WW2. Following the occupation of Oswiecim, the synagogue was set ablaze and destroyed by the Germans on the night of November 29th, 1939.

We then visited Auschwitz One where we observed shocking artefacts, including suitcases and shoes taken from people imprisoned in the camp. We were able to enter the first gas chamber, crematorium and see the execution wall; flowers, wreaths and other tributes had been laid in memorial.

After visiting the first camp we then proceeded to Auschwitz Birkenau. Barracks were reconstructed, with bunk beds and toilets, demonstrating the dire conditions of the camp. We then walked up the trainline to a memorial. Here, we listened to Rabbi Hackenbroch read out a prayer in Hebrew, listened to poetry about the Holocaust and all sang a hymn. To then commemorate the 6 million Jews that lost their lives due to Hitler and his collaborators, we lit candles and placed them across the memorial.

In order to reflect on our experience, we took part in a seminar. This was the most impactful part of the project as we were able to hear testimony from Holocaust survivor, Steven Frank BEM, who told us the story of his traumatic times in three camps from age seven. Steven's story was powerful, particularly as he himself [did not](#) identify as Jewish, but was recognised as a Jew due to his grandparent's religious expression.

As part of the project, we must complete the 'Next Steps' project. The purpose of this is to share our learning with others; to support this project, I have arranged for Holocaust survivor Janine Webber BEM to give her testimony to historians from Years 11, 12 and 13 on the 14th of December. A display will be developed with information about the visit and the contemporary relevance of the Holocaust and modern -day antisemitism. Sofia Monteverde. Year 12

FIRST DAY OF SPRING TERM TUESDAY 3RD JANUARY 2023

Mock Interviews In The summer term our current Year 11s took part in their annual Mock Interviews whilst they were in Year 10.

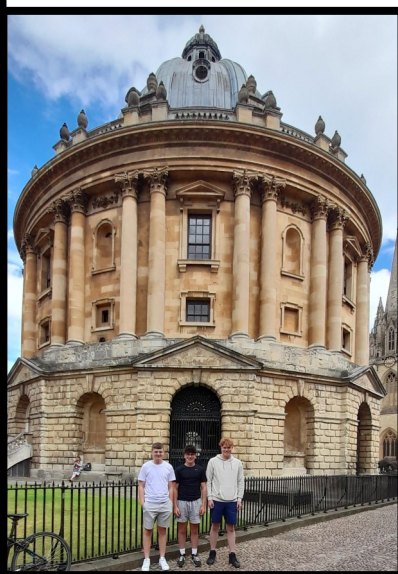
To prepare for the interviews they compiled application letters and CV's. These were then sent on to the interviewers. Each letter and CV was reviewed and scrutinised as it would be if applying for a job.

All interviewers were volunteers from local businesses and colleges. We can not thank them enough for their continued support of the day it is an invaluable experience for the students.

Students are asked to come to school in formal interview wear and then take part in the first round of interviews. They are asked a set of questions and are marked on appearance, communication and their paperwork. After the first round all interviewers select their top performing student and they are asked back for a second round where they are interviewed by a panel.

The feedback we had from the interviewers was excellent, they all commented on the professional paperwork and the mature approach the students had taken to their interviews.

On the day the overall winner was Sumer Pike followed closely by Tilly Rose and Neve Ivison. Mrs K Modlin



Oxford University Residential We set off on Monday morning from school for our long journey down to Oxford. The trip had been in the planning for a few months and it was exciting to finally be underway. Lee, Alistair and Dom all now Year 13 students had been selected to attend the residential as they were all considering applying through the Oxbridge application process.

Arriving in Oxford we were greeted with some amazing architecture. We made our way to Queens College and were shown our accommodation. The bedrooms were up 85 stone stairs and the toilets/showers were 85 steps below. On the first evening we were taken punting this was a great experience and chance to meet the student ambassadors and ask them all about life at Oxford.

We were treated really well whilst on our residential, provided with delicious food and shown the sights of Oxford. Queens College tours and insights in to their history and famous alumni with its special links to Cumbria. Student ambassadors were keen to share their experiences of the application and interview process which was all really useful information. We were lucky enough to have tours of the Bodleian Library and take advantage of meetings with course lecturers as well as tutorials in how to write personal statements for Oxbridge.

The weather was beautiful for our stay and the scenery was amazing. On our final day we were lucky enough to have access to the rest of the colleges in the University open day. A tour around Christchurch and its famous architecture combined with a walk past Maudlin colleges deer park were all eye openers.

The experience was invaluable to all involved, the boys have taken away vital information and advice which has been influential in their future University application choices. Mrs K Modlin

KSGS Table Tennis After an excellent return to table tennis last year, the school Friday lunch time – 10 tables set up in the sports – for recreational play, Friday after school club and juniors joining the Club night, Table Tennis was back on the sporting agenda.

Tournaments against Appleby Grammar School and Windermere were arranged and we had a strong and talented team in the Cumbria Schools competitions.

This year we have continued to develop opportunities for the students on Fridays and we have had a half-days coaching and a tournament in the half term, joined by junior players from Whitehaven, Kendal, Appleby and Burton.

We are entering a KSGS team into the Cumbria Schools Team Tournament in December and hope for a positive result in the County Schools – runners up last year. Plus plans to join Appleby Grammar School in some friendly tournaments.

We have recruited some new Yr7 players, who play after school on a Friday evening. Some of who have come to the Thursday club night with their families.

Friday lunch time is still as busy, however we are still recruiting for the after school club, as a number of older players have moved on.

Working with the Eden Valley Sports Partnership we have organised two TT Festivals for the Junior schools (90 and 60 students) and the KSGS TT playing students have joined the young leaders programme and help run these busy events, for which we are very grateful.

If parents are interested for their son's/daughter's to develop their sports skills and join the school TT group, or the Kirkby Stephen TT Club, please get in touch with Mike Sunderland, KSGS & Kirkby Stephen TT Club coach on 07975 946 312



STEM DAY

Late in the summer term the Science, IT and DT departments joined forces and arranged a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Day for the whole of Year 8. The day was hosted by STEM DESIGN who delivered a series of 5 workshops for our students.

Molecules into Medicine

In this workshop students covered an introduction into atoms, molecules and compounds, understanding what different medicines are used for, building a series of molecules for different medical drugs, building a large molecule drug, and were all involved in a discussion around careers linked to biochemistry.

Practical Physics

This proved to be the most popular workshop of the day (for both staff and students). With students certainly warming to the tasks set, which included: reaction times using the batak board, forces in football, creating power through the rowing machine, and physics in sport.

Robotics

Our students programmed Lego robots around a maze, realising why accuracy was so important. They then joined in a conversation about how robotics are used in manufacturing, medicines and scientific research

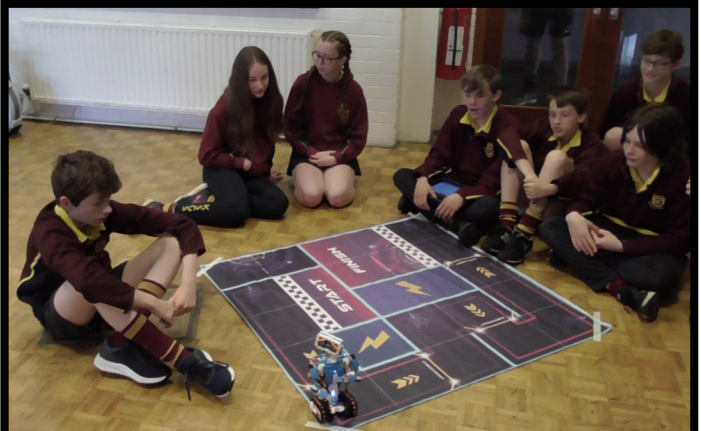
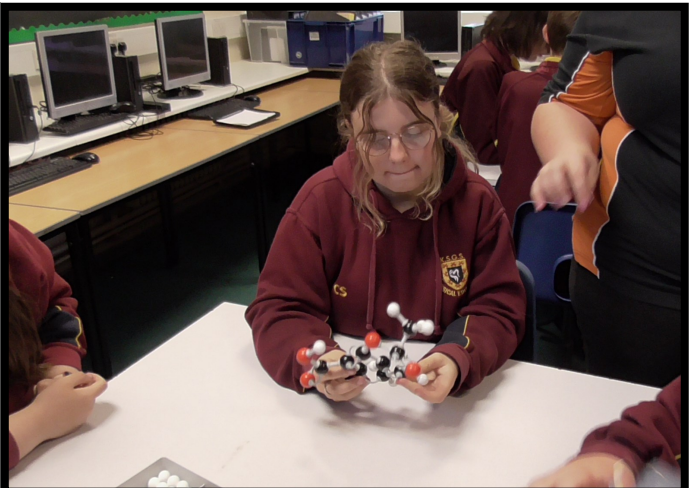
Code Breaking

The students cracked a number of different codes to solve different clues to help them solve the puzzle. Students enjoyed using morse code, cyphers, pixel coding, and tangrams before hearing about careers and opportunities linked to coding.

Engineering – Tower Building

In the Tower Tournament we were all challenged to look at the work of structural engineers when building our own towers to take in the challenges of hurricane winds. We bought our resources, we built our towers against the clock, then tested our tours against our own hurricane winds (a fan). We concluded the session by looking at careers in engineering.

A fabulous day was had by all the students and staff involved, a day which would not have been possible without the support of other staff, The Foundation Governors and The Westmorland Foundation, and not forgetting of course Learn by Design who made it all such fun.



LEARN
bydesign 



Year 8 NHS Careers Performance

On Friday 11th November, 'Performance In Education' visited KSGS to deliver an interactive drama based presentation about NHS careers to Year 8. Did you know there are over 350 different careers within the NHS? Students were also told about the different courses and pathways they could choose after their GCSE's including A-Levels, Apprenticeships, BTEC and T Levels.

Here are some comments from Year 8L students;

"It was quite funny, but informative too."

"It showed me just how many jobs are in the NHS- which is a lot more than I thought"

"The mix of careers and drama, where the actors were taking the role of students in detention who had been told find out about NHS jobs, worked really well."

National Anti-Bullying Week 14th – 18th November 2022

KSGS raised awareness about Anti-Bullying week through Assemblies, displays and learning activities in Personal Development lessons. Year 7 have been working hard to design some new anti-bullying posters. The winning designs will go on display in school and on the school website.

Students - if you have any concerns about bullying, then it is important to talk to someone you trust. You can talk to ANY member of KSGS staff, tell a friend or even report something anonymously via the student post box in reception.

Some useful websites for students include:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_18/

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/>

For Parents include:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>



D&T Winner

We have a star amongst us! Benji Atkinson won two, not one, prizes at the Dufton Show in August. He came first in 2 categories with his D&T year 7 project. His Acrylic Pencil Stand and Copper Jewellery piece, which were all made here in the KSGS workshop. Year 7 will complete these projects too during this academic year. Who will win the much coveted Dufton Show Prize next August? Mean while we salute you Benji. K Gough DT Subject Lead



Investigation Glacial Landforms and Processes in Easedale

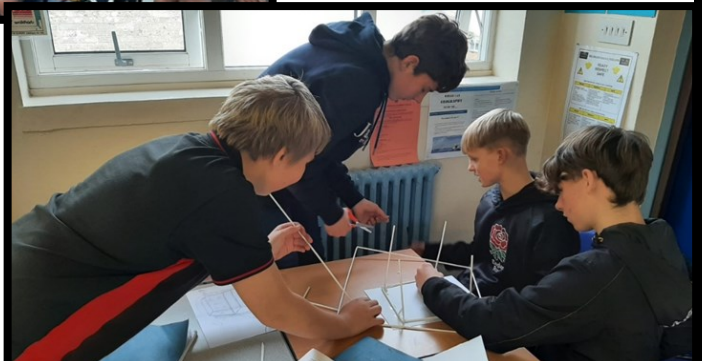
On Thursday 3rd Nov Year 12 Geographers, accompanied by Mr Luke and myself, had a successful day exploring and investigating the glacial landforms of the Easedale Valley and applying their knowledge of the processes responsible for their development. Students walked to Easedale Tarn, sketching and explaining the glacial features and noting their spatial distribution. There's no substitute for getting outside into the landscapes as this really enables students to visualise these unfamiliar systems at work! A till fabric analysis of moraines at the fore of the corrie enabled students to hypothesise past glacier flow directions. Unfortunately, the rain didn't hold off, but this didn't dampen their spirits! Well done Year 12!

BRING IT ON In October Years 10 and 11 went to the Bring It On event held at the Beacon of Light in Sunderland. This was a fantastic event showcasing different STEM careers. There was a lot of information available about the different pathways into the careers, from apprenticeships at 16 to university degrees with a year in industry. It was a great opportunity for the students to meet people working for companies in the Industry, including Glaxo Smith Kline, Fujifilm and Atkins. It was a busy day with lots to see and do. Some of our students made it onto the tv channel live streaming the event! We all came away with lots of information, freebies and sweets. We were very fortunate to be able to attend the event as it is really only for schools in the North East. However, as there are so few events like this run in Cumbria Mrs Slack was able to convince the organisers to give us some tickets. Thank you Mrs Slack! We're hoping we will be able to go back next year.



VOLCANOES As part of their Hazards topic, Year 9 got creative and produced some outstanding 3D and 2D representations of real volcanoes. Having studied the structure of the earth and the different physical processes responsible for the origin of shield and strato volcanoes, they applied this understanding to these projects. To access the highest grades, they were expected to demonstrate independent research into a volcano of their choice and reflect this in their models. A fantastic effort all round! Mrs Thompson.

EARTHQUAKES Having investigated the devastating impacts of earthquake events 9Z established that it's not earthquakes that kill people, its the buildings that do! They studied examples of 'earthquake proof buildings' in richer nations such as Japan and the USA. In response to this they set to applying the variety of building strategies to their own earthquake proof building designs in groups of four. This not only involved design ideas, but clear communication skill, collaboration and practical skills! Well Done Year 9 Mrs Thompson.



2022 KSGS Duke of Edinburgh Award Expedition Presentations

Well where do I start – it will have to be way back six years ago (2014) when we had a 6th Form Gold group, spearheaded by Aidan Wiseman and some very dynamic ladies – Amy Davis, Hannah Andrew, Martha Warren and Tessa Higgs and a young man called Thomas Metcalfe.

Below, at the ripe old age of 23 Thomas has completed his GOLD award and is preparing to go to London with a family member, meet royalty (Prince Edward) and claim his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, at Buckingham Palace, after starting it at KSGS. Congratulations Thomas.



Moving closer to 2022, I was approached by a very young James White – Yr10 - enquiring if you could move from a Bronze award, directly to a Gold award. The answer was YES, but only after your 16th Birthday, so another dynamic KSGS group was formed.

They started off, pre Covid, in July 2021 we eventually got on our bikes for Expedition training, (without the element of camping), so we designed some challenging single days – 2 days skills and safety riding drills, a day in Eden and back to KSGS, a day in the Pennines and back to KSGS and a day in the Dales and home again. All did not start off right, as one of the 5 students tore his ligaments in his foot and had to drop out and on the second day of riding out in the Pennines, one of the students tested positive for Covid19 and the final day in the Dales had to be cancelled for everyone.

Most groups would have given up, however not James White, Jonathan Keetley, Molly Woodmass, and Matthew Dixon. They all completed their Gold Residential – a week away working as a volunteer for a charitable organisation, Volunteering, Skills and Physical – leaving their final Cycle expedition to the Hebrides, for a period after their final A Level exams in July 2022.

In brief they accomplished their GOLD expedition:

Cycled over 300 miles

Caught 10 ferries and one train

Camped from their bikes for 8 nights

Journeyed round 4 islands and one peninsula – Arran, Kintyre Peninsula, Gigha, Islay and Jura

Interviewed and engaged with about 30 local residents with a survey – “Life in the Hebrides”

Endured some interesting weather

Visited only one distillery – the coffee shop!

Worked as a slick GOLD team

Finishing their time at KSGS with a memorable experience, that will sit with them for life. I am so proud of their accomplishments and they impressed the volunteer supervisors and assessors with their approach, achievements and sheer determination to succeed.

Grateful thanks to the Parish Council – Brittleton Award, KSGS Foundation Governors, Volunteer Supervisors/Assessors Andy Gillham and Martin Sansby and Bryan White for transporting the bikes. Finally a word about the outstanding parents who trusted the KSGS DofE programme and believed in their children, supporting them fully.

Moving onto the Bronze Expedition group – as usual there was a strong contingent who were trained, supervised, and assessed by volunteers from the Kirkby Stephen Mountain Team and support group.

Three groups were formed. Training took place at the Mountain Rescue Base and on the fells around Kirkby Stephen over several weeks in the Spring, with the assessed expedition in the Lake District in June.

The groups all planned and followed separate walking routes of around 25kms, starting at Coniston and meeting up again to camp in the beautiful Langdale Valley. They then continued their second day to finish at Langdale Ambleside Mountain Rescue base for a well-earned rest. Mike Sunderland



Gold and Bronze students pictured at the Presentation Evening in September



Hello! I am Mrs Birtles, and I have recently had the pleasure of returning to KSGS as a Teaching Assistant, having left here as a student in 2005. I thoroughly enjoy supporting children and young people, and this is something I have been fortunate to do for a number of years. It is incredibly rewarding to see them reaching their full potential. Helping students to enjoy their day is very important to me, and I genuinely believe that I have the best job in school!



Hi everyone - many of you parents out there will remember that I worked here at KSGS for nine years back in the nineties as head of MFL and then left for Teesdale School. I am now retired and have decided to spend some of my time volunteering in classrooms at Kirkby Stephen. The school is a unique one and when my son Duncan had lymphoma they did everything humanly possible to help him get through his A-Levels, which he did, successfully. It seems like a no-brainer to me to come and lend a hand, not least because I have been a Special Needs Coordinator and I know what a difficult job it is to balance the needs of pupils with the ever-decreasing resources available to schools. I am getting something back too as I am studying History A-level here - a long-held ambition and absolutely fascinating. There are plenty of familiar faces and it's a pleasure to meet and work with the next generation of pupils - it might feel a bit strange hearing people say "You taught my Mum, Sir" but the students here are just as friendly as they were then. **Andy Wiseman**



YEAR 11 PROM AT ROUNDTORN HOTEL

On Thursday 7th July 2022 Year 11 leavers celebrated the end of their examinations and their five years at KSGS with the traditional Leavers Prom. The event was held at the Roundthorn Hotel in Penrith. Students arrived in their finery to be greeted with a mocktail on entry as they enjoyed the summer sunshine in the hotel grounds and mingled with family and friends whilst having photographs taken as individuals and in groups of friends. During the evening students and staff who attended enjoyed a 3-course meal followed by coffee and a speech from the Head of Year 11, Mrs Wealleans. The evening was completed with dancing and socialising in the hotel grounds. A good time was had by all and everyone looked amazing in their Prom attire. Well done Year 11!



The Year 13's Prom was held at the North Lakes Hotel in Penrith. It was an absolutely fantastic evening with everyone having a really wonderful time. It was lovely to have the opportunity to celebrate the real achievements of this group who all did incredibly well to keep going despite the challenges of Covid. Rachel Steels Head of Sixth Form