Ackworth Today

March 2017 Volume 21 Issue 5

NON SIBI SED OMNIBUS
FOUNDED 1779

Not for oneself but for everyone

Head's Message

Ackworth is an excellent school. To be an excellent school today means to do more than preparing children for examinations and academic performance. It requires excellence across the board: helping students to make a transition towards self sufficiency, providing opportunities to engage with fellow students and outstanding teachers, offering access to informed visitors and expert advice on careers as well as providing visits to tertiary institutions, developing critical thinking skills and fostering leadership and independence. Frankly, some schools are better at doing this than others and I think that Ackworth School is excellent.

It is admirable to pursue academic excellence, but not at the cost of mental health. Several academic schools I know of would perform poorly on the mental health tables, if there were such a thing, and there should be! I am convinced that good mental health is critical; poor mental health affects learning, influences relationships, impacts upon diet, destroys confidence and removes opportunities. Children perform better when they are happy; constant pressure and criticism are not conducive.

I am often asked what Ackworth School is good at, and also what we provide that differentiates us. Actually this school is one of the happiest schools you could imagine. I have met children who have been crushed by their experience at other schools who smile within days of joining this school and can learn again with ambition. We are good at making children happy - that is worth raising the roof about! I am surrounded by infectiously happy children who are infused with a desire to learn and not afraid to ask questions or to find their voice. Children who would fail elsewhere do well here. We can do things that affect children positively that other schools can't do. There is much value in that, and many go on to do very well indeed at university and at life!

We offer choices that many schools can't, because they may not attract teachers that offer the same breadth of experience or that have the same degree of consideration.

Indeed, Ackworth is a boarding school - we don't lock the buildings at 4 pm. Our school day doesn't end until 11 pm; many children stay for tea (some have breakfast too) and do their prep at school in the evenings. This comes without additional cost and is a terrific asset to our hard-working parents. (I suspect that you would pay handsomely for this anywhere else.)

At a time when the maintained sector is reeling from further funding cuts and increased class sizes, reducing both academic and co-curricular options and closing schools earlier to save money, Ackworth School is keeping class sizes small, retaining the breadth of our curriculum, increasing the range of activities on offer and retaining the length of the school day.

5th Form students receive Bronze Duke of Edinburgh awards

We are constantly striving to improve upon the educational experience for our students, be it the quality of teaching or the use of technology to enhance learning, our catering provision or the speed at which we can access the internet. After two years at Ackworth, I can state unequivocally that we produce young adults imbued with self-confidence and independence, who are able to move to university without faltering. There are many at Ackworth who find their way quickly, which is in itself a wonderful gift. It is why you invest in your child's future; the most important investment you can make!

Anton Maree

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York University Chemistry Competition

Deep in the suburbs of York, stomachs ablaze with a mixture of nervous excitement and travel sickness from the bumpy coach journey, we set out to compete in a chemistry competition at the local University.

Despite struggling with some aspects of the competition including the 300 second time limit for each question, we ventured on and came away with a full box of chocolates, its colour the crimson of victory and the experience of competing under the cracking pressure.

Callula Tobin, Benjamin Cawood, Rachel Swales, Madison Cusworth

Cross Country

During the Autumn term I took part in four District Cross-Country races that were held at Pontefract, Ackworth, QEGS and Silcoates. By finishing 2nd, 3rd and 3rd in the last three races I was selected to run for Wakefield Schools in the West Yorkshire Championships.

These were held at Leeds Grammar School on February 4th. It was a dry and sunny day – unusual for Cross-Country running. Out of around 60 students on a fast but fairly hilly course, I finished 15th and was the third Wakefield runner home.

Two weeks later I went down to Nottingham to run for Wakefield Harriers in the National Cross Country Championships. It was an amazing day with 600 entered for the race and 8,000 runners there in total! I am now training hard for the track season where I hope to beat my personal best in the 800 and 1500m.

Josh Dawson, 3P

This Cross-Country season I have taken part in many races through School and with Wakefield Harriers; these include racing at various Wakefield District Schools, Yorkshire Road Relays, Northern Road Relays, Northern Cross-Country Championships, West Yorkshire Schools and English National

The Hessle & Badsworth Inter-House Cross Country Winners: Hannah Newnham, Josh Dawson, Jakob Pfiz, Katie Assassa, Lucy Kitching, James Bourke

Championships. Each course has been challenging; some have been muddy, some hilly, (or both!), but all have been a fun day out! I am proud to have represented Wakefield Harriers and Ackworth School so many times and am glad I have had the opportunity to go from place to place doing something I love, as well as making new friends along the way. [I have also recently been inspired by an Olympic runner Laura Weightman who spoke to us at school. She talked about her highs and lows as an athlete and gave many of us determination to keep training hard.] I can't wait for my next races season!

Harriet Metcalfe, 2W

Children's French Books

Just in time for world book day we received a very exciting package from the French Embassy full of beautiful books for our pupils to enjoy. The children's French books will be in the senior school library for a few weeks so that everyone can enjoy them before moving to Coram House. Eventually we will have to send the books back but we hope that our pupils will have plenty of time to enjoy them. Here are some pictures of 1C enjoying unpacking the books in their French lesson.

Elizabeth Rayner, Head of French

Ruby Palmer

Ruby had an amazing weekend at the ASA Yorkshire Championship:

UK Maths Challenge

Well done to Kathy Su, Jamie Dobbie, Josh Dawson and Eleanor Morris who all received a Gold Award in the Maths Challenge. Kathy also achieved the 'best in school' score and has been asked to attend the UK Maths summer school.

"I enjoyed taking part in the maths challenge and look forward to the next round."

Jamie Dobbie

Inter-House Great Ackworth Bake Off

It was a great experience taking part in the Great Ackworth Bake Off. It was a very hectic but fun day.

The icing on the cake was being the winning team, and leading Woolman to victory! We were thrilled that the judges enjoyed our Valentine's tea – we certainly ate the whole lot afterwards.

Ben Cawood, 3J; Thea White, 6H; Molly Mackenzie, 1W

Nicholas Playforth receives his Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award

Well done to Old Scholar Nicholas Playforth who received his Duke of Edinburgh Award at St James' Palace. He was delighted to meet Prince Philip, who talked to him for a while about his learning to play the guitar.

His award was presented by Nina Wadia, who encouraged individual parents to clap their children despite the organisers asking the audience to wait until the end of the group to applaud. This lightened the whole atmosphere.

Trip To Munich – December 2016

Eight pupils and two members of staff spent a busy four days in Munich at the beginning of the Christmas holidays. Activities ranged from visiting sites of historical significance such as Dachau, the memorial to Sophie Scholl and Odeonsplatz, as well as seeing the famous Christmas markets, ascending the Olympic tower and visiting BMW World and the Allianz Arena, home of Bayern Munich. We also practised German when buying food at the Viktualienmarkt and watching a film at the cinema. Another highlight was a day-trip by train to Salzburg in Austria, which included shopping on the famous Getreidegasse and taking the funicular railway up to the Hohensalzburg Castle to enjoy views over the beautiful city.

Andrew Hilton, Head of German

What it means to be British, by Year 6

This last week we were learning about British values: Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance for all. Personally I enjoyed learning about democracy because we got to do a poster all about the different aspects of democracy, such as the different parties like UKIP, SNP etc.
Luke Peaker, Year 6

I enjoyed learning about the Rule of Law because we learned about the Magistrates and the Crown Court. The Crown Court is the really serious crime court and the Magistrates court is where the less serious crimes are heard. My favourite activity was Individual Liberty because a girl my age called Malala Yousafzai (who wanted individual liberty) was shot, but managed to survive. She travelled to hospital from Pakistan to Birmingham. When she recovered she decided to live in Birmingham. A few years later she received a Nobel Peace Prize. Theo Culff, Year 6

Last week was a focus week for Coram House all about British values. First we learnt about democracy, the voting system and the pros and cons of being in the democracy...I am glad we don't judge others in the school community and the rest of Britain. I am a quarter Italian and am proud to be British and Italian.

Eloise Celino, Year 6

We live in a democracy; a democracy is where you have human rights and can go to school and choose your own religion. You can vote, protest and get your voice heard. We have a rule of law which is a list of things you can or can't do. As an English person you will have individual liberty but people like Malala Yousafzai don't have individual liberty.

Dan Bourke, Year 6

Squash Success – National Champions!

The National Squash Finals were hosted at the National Squash Centre in Manchester this year. At the beginning of the year, we entered a boys and girls team at both U15s and U19s age groups.

The U15s girls were drawn in a very tough group, however did manage to progress to the Trophy Tournament. The other 3 teams dominated their group stages and comfortably sailed through to the main Finals. The U15 Girls, led by Amber Copley, included Asia Harris, Layla Johnson, Mollie Patterson and Jaspreet Nahal.

We all know about the prowess of the first three girls, however I would like to give Mollie and Jaspreet a special mention. There is no doubt that Mollie's table tennis background gave her a nice jump start in squash, however prior to this year Mollie had never played squash, let alone competitive matches. Mollie's hard work with late training sessions and commitment to squash was invaluable and her squash improved in leaps and bounds. Jaspreet also joined the U15 team this year at the age of 9 – still only in Coram House!

The Girls travelled to Manchester for the trophy Finals on Monday 20th March. They played their Semi Final against Millfield and won 5-0 – talk about hitting the ground running!! We then progressed through to the Finals and played Dame Allans School. This was a very exciting Final and some thrilling squash was played. Amber, Asia and Layla had 3 impeccable performances and secured a 3-2 win in the Final.

On the Tuesday morning, it was the Boys U15s turn – led by Sam Todd who was joined by the well-known Ben Sockett, Jordan Stewart and Ben Beachill from the previous year. However, due to this team losing Harry Anderson from the previous year, we needed to find a new player. We found Jaspreet's brother Akash, who is a mini gem and I am sure will have many years of success ahead of him. Again only 11 years old and with much growing still to do, this is no mean feat playing 5 years above yourself!

The boys played Langley Park School for Boys in the Quarter Finals and won 5-0 with convincing performances all round! We then drew Gosforth Academy in the Semi Finals who threw everything they could at our boys, however this wasn't enough and the boys secured their place in the Final with a 3-2 victory.

This meant, the same Final as the previous year – Wycliffe vs Ackworth. Akash started the Final with quite frankly an outstanding and exceptional performances. He lost his first game and went 1-0 down, he then pulled back to 1-1 before losing the 3rd game – 2-1 down.

In a game where Akash had no right to win, he displayed great determination and fight and composed performance enabled him to finish the match a 3-2 winner. Jordan unfortunately lost his Final, leaving the score 1-1. Sam, Ben and Ben all went on to win with controlled execution and regained the National Title, 2 years running. Wednesday 22nd March – the Boys and Girls U19s.

Fencing

I started fencing in first year but only moved onto the sword I currently use, which is Epee, in the middle of second year. I go to Fencing Club on a Wednesday night which is run by Mrs Jackson and coached by Mr Law. I took part in a Yorkshire Youth League fencing competition at Cullingworth in Bradford on 26th Feb'. There were two preliminary rounds followed by an elimination round and I competed in 12 matches against both boys and girls from Hymers and Doncaster Fencing Club. I was really pleased to have won a bronze medal and I am looking forward to the next competition.
Annie Bamford

Design Technology Reception Project

3rd Year DT pupils have been working on a project to refurbish Reception's outdoor area in Coram House. They have been tasked with making products that challenge the seven Areas of Learning (Maths, Literacy, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts & Design, Physical, Communication & Language and Personal, Social & Emotional development).

The two year groups have been working collaboratively to ensure the equipment meets the needs of the little clients! All students have thoroughly enjoyed participating in the project. Reception look forward to expanding their outdoor area and we hope that the project will be fully finished by the Summer! *Fiona McCormack and Emma Speake*

BBC 500 Words competition

Spring is my favourite time of year. I love the flowers, the lengthening days and the bundle of stories I receive from the BBC 500 Words competition! For the past 3 years I have been lucky enough to be one of the many judges of this fantastic event. I receive a selection of stories (usually around 40 in number) written by 10 to 13 year olds of varying ability. I have to read each one and score out of 10 in 5 different categories: Originality, Plot, Characterisation, Language and Enjoyment. For many people 500 words may not seem like enough to be able to write a detailed story. In my experience, with a little time and consideration you can create a whole world of possibility and excitement in this small amount of words.

The competition takes place between January and February each year with the final being held in June. There are 2 age ranges, 5-9 and 10-13. The prizes for this year's winners are the height of Chris Evans (6'2") in books and 500 books for their school, the prize for 2nd place is the height of Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall (5'6") in books and the prize for 3rd place will be their own height in books.

As you can see, this is a wonderful prize for anyone interested in writing and books and the fact that the final is taking place at

the Tower of London is a huge bonus. The competition has closed for this year but if you have any great ideas for a story, start writing now. You'll be ready to send off your story as soon as the posters are put up around school for next year's competition and then sit back, put your feet up and relax.

Erica Dean, Librarian

Our Business & Education Fair

Ackworth School held its inaugural Business and Education Fair on Friday, January 20th. The fair featured over 50 exhibitors, including local and national companies, occupational groups and universities.

The aim of the fair was to expose students to the wide variety of post-school options and encourage them to explore the various pathways to their global and social mobility.

"Ackworth School encourages an entrepreneurial spirit in our students and the Business & Education Fair gives them an opportunity to be pro-active by approaching exhibitors and discussing option", said Head, Anton Maree.

"In addition the fair also provides an opportunity for businesses to network with each other and realise mutual benefits.

We will be following up the fair with another new initiative, our Business@Breakfast series. As the largest employer in the Ackworth area we feel we have a responsibility to facilitate the social and economic growth which will provide employment opportunities not only for our own students, but those in surrounding schools.

Having been recently confirmed as the third BECSLink Community in the UK, it is incumbent upon Ackworth School to undertake projects which will enhance the global and social mobility of all students in the area. For example, prior to the Business & Education Fair we hosted, in conjunction with Barclay's Bank, two 'Money Matters' sessions for local Primary and Secondary students. We are now actively seeking further corporate partnerships which will enable us to expand such programmes." added Anton Maree.

Pictured (L-R) one section of the Business & Education Fair; Handelsbanken stall; Practise your Open Heart Surgery!; TopicUK stall; University of Sheffield; West Yorkshire Police.

For further information on Ackworth School's Business@Breakfast sessions or how to become involved in their BECSLink programme, (www.becslink.co.uk) please contact Michael Atkins at Michael.atkins@ackworthschool.com

Design an App

On Friday 2nd December twelve other language students and I, together with Mrs Rayner and Mrs Tod embarked on a journey to Leeds University for a language and business day.

In the morning we listened to talks given on the importance of language in global business with an emphasis on marketing and then attended language sessions in French and Spanish.

After a tasty complimentary lunch we were set a challenge: to design an app and give a presentation on the idea entirely in French or Spanish!

After a lot of debate, the judges finally came to their decision and two groups from Ackworth came home with the momentous prize of a 100g milk chocolate bar.

Chess

On Sunday 20th March Ackworth hosted an event for Yorkshire's finest Junior Chess players. The White Rose Academy led a day of competition and coaching.

England International Master, and England Chess Teacher Lateefah Messam-Sparks provided great tutoring. We look forward to more Chess events taking place at our School.

World Book Day

World Book Day was greatly celebrated by our pupils in Coram House, from book related fancy dress to a busy book sale – it was a truly enjoyable day. We were lucky enough to have local author Linda Jones, who has written 'A Fistful of Feathers' running writing workshops for our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. Year 6 pupils from Fitzwilliam School also joined us for the fun-filled sessions. The pupils taking part listened to some of Linda's wonderful poems and worked in teams to write some unique and entertaining stories.

BBQ at Mr Maree's house

This is an unforgettable time in my life. I think the BBQ was the best! The roast beef and chicken were very good. The Head told us about South African Food.

Vicky Chan from Hong Kong

Lunchtime Concert at Wakefield Cathedral

We were thrilled to take over 90 pupils to perform in various vocal and instrumental groups at Wakefield cathedral. The cathedral was filled to bursting point with a very appreciative audience and everyone involved had a great time.

Ian Lenihan, Head of Music

The Great War Debate

Keen historians took the opportunity to take part The Great War Debate hosted by Leeds City Academy.

After taking part in a hands on display of military uniform and weapons, pupils listened and questioned a panel of professionals, discussing the importance of naval over trench warfare in affecting the outcome of the First World War.

Ackworth pupils held their own, with Rhys Wickham, Amelie Harper and Bohdan Vynohradov questioning the panel. Thomas Wilson was praised for his confidence considering he was the youngest member of the audience.

All students took the opportunity after the debate to talk to BBC presenter Fiona Armstrong and historians Dan Hill and professor Holger Afflerbach and museum curator Mark Vesey.

Miss Elizabeth Roden is extremely proud of their mature and enthusiastic way they conducted themselves throughout the day. #thegreatwardebate

Where are they now? Highest Scholar 1975, Fiona Wood

Whilst at Ackworth School Fiona was athletic and dreamed of being an Olympic sprinter, but had more success in the academic arena. In 1975 she commenced medical school at St Thomas' Hospital as part of London University, graduating from there in 1981. Fiona worked at many hospitals as a junior doctor including, St Thomas, Great Ormond Street, University College, Derby, the Royal Hallamshire Sheffield, and Queen Victoria hospital.

Marrying Western Australian born surgeon Tony Keirath led to migrating to Perth with their first two children in 1987. She completed her training in plastic surgery in 1991 between having four more children.

In October 2002, Fiona was propelled into the media spotlight when the largest proportion of survivors from the 2002 Bali bombings arrived at Royal Perth Hospital

She was named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2003 and named Australian of the Year for 2005 by Australian Prime Minister John Howard at a ceremony in Canberra to mark Australia Day.

She was voted the most-trusted Australian in a Reader's Digest poll for six successive years from 2005 to 2010.

She is also an Australian Living Treasure.

In 2005, Fiona won the Western Australia Citizen of the Year award for her contribution to Medicine in the field of burns research, and the Clunies Ross award with co worker Marie Stoner for innovation in medicine.

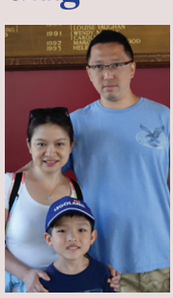
Fiona remains the director of the Burns Service of Western Australia focusing on translation innovation into clinical practice in the field of burn injury and scarring.

Professor Fiona Wood,
Director of Royal Perth Hospital Burns Unit

Where are they now? Highest Scholar 1990, Benjamin Cheung

When I visited Ackworth School last summer, the first time since I graduated, it did not feel like 26 years have passed. It felt like I was just coming back from a long break. Surely there has been updates and improvements, but the school buildings looked largely unchanged and was as beautiful as I remembered them. And the staff were as friendly as the teachers from my days there.

After Ackworth School I went on to study in the US before going back to Hong Kong, where I live today. I work for an electronics firm as a product manager, a position that involves working with colleagues and customers from around the globe. It's a challenging job, but it is also rewarding in many ways. Looking back I think it was at Ackworth School where I built my foundation in language and people skills, skills that helped me tremendously in my higher education and continue to help me in everything I do today.



When I was a student at Ackworth, every time I returned after breaks I would bring a suitcase full of goodies from home. When I returned last summer I brought along my wife Crystal and our son, Charles.

After walking on the school grounds and meeting some of the wonderful staff, Charles has decided to go to Ackworth School when he is old enough. Of course eight year olds are quick in making decisions and quicker in changing their minds, and they tend to forget they need to make the grades to get accepted, but this is one decision I would certainly approve and a goal certainly worth working for!

Haig on trial

The Fourth Form carried out a trial in history today. They placed General Haig on trial to see if the jury would charge him with the responsibility for the deaths and injuries suffered by the soldiers during the Battle of the Somme. The verdict was that Haig was innocent of crimes against humanity during World War 1.

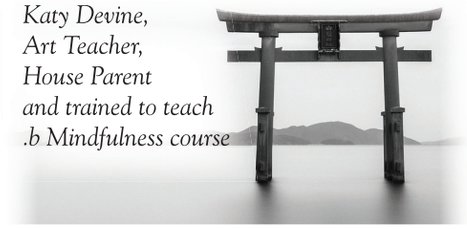
Mindfulness

Over the half term holiday I was lucky enough to attend a fantastic course which has trained me to teach Mindfulness to 11-18 year olds. The aim of MiSP (Mindfulness in Schools Project) is to 'improve the resilience and wellbeing of all young people to enhance their school career and to support them throughout life'.

The .b course [pronounced dot-be] is entirely secular and teaches students different skills for life. When full focus on a task is essential, be it in an exam or for an extra-curricular performance, Mindfulness techniques can be employed to help place the attention where it needs to be.

Students also learn about the behaviour of thoughts in the mind and how, by coming to recognise emotional feelings, they can pause for a moment to consider how they will respond to a situation, rather than simply react to it. Scientific research shows that people who practise Mindfulness can become happier and healthier individuals. I am looking forward to developing Mindfulness at Ackworth School.

Katy Devine,
Art Teacher,
House Parent
and trained to teach
.b Mindfulness course



Park Run

I've been going to the Park Run since the very first day that Miss Sochacka had the brilliant idea of taking us there. At the beginning it was hard to rise early on a Saturday to go running, but in time it was fine because I really enjoyed it. Running is the perfect way to start a new day.

Nostell Priory is a beautiful place and the people there are very nice. The only bad thing about it is that sometimes the weather is bad, but that's England for you. The last time I went I hurt my foot and Miss Sochacka carried me up the hill!! I could not believe it. My friends also helped me and every person who saw me asked me if I was alright and if I needed help. They were all so nice.

It's a wonderful place to run and it's ideal for beginners. All the people who organise it give up their free time to volunteer. Everybody is supportive and people motivate each other along the way. I hugely recommend everybody to come with us to run because you will enjoy it!

Marta Iglesias, Upper 6th

Renewal Fund

We must continue to invest in the infrastructure of the school. We need to exploit all of the opportunities that might add to the educational experience for our students. There are buildings, unused at present, that can be revitalised to provide exciting spaces for learning.

A Renewal Fund will enhance our facilities.

Old Scholars, former and current parents and other stakeholders are invited to be part of this process.

The fund aims to ensure that the cost of renewal and development is kept separate from any fee income.

Projects which could benefit from a Renewal Fund might include the upgrading of the swimming pool and adjacent buildings including modern changing rooms, a café, a fitness suite and multi-purpose rooms which could lend themselves to a dance studio, martial arts etc.

Opportunity Fund

Our relationship with our community is an important one. In the West Yorkshire region are disadvantaged but deserving and talented children for whom we must offer opportunities for social mobility. Such opportunities might be a half or whole-day experience, but could offer a life-changing moment.

The Opportunity Fund, like the Renewal Fund, serves to ensure that the cost of such aspirational activities are kept separate from any fee income.

We have received some seed funding for this fund and will approach businesses and other stakeholders to support it. Old Scholars, former and present parents are welcome to participate in this exciting and innovative venture.

I thank those parents who have taken out a listing in our inaugural Business Directory in this edition of Ackworth Today; the income from these listings has been directed to either the Opportunity Fund or Renewal Fund.

If you would like to advertise, please contact:
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Business Directory

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