



## Boris Johnson visits BGS

You'd be forgiven for thinking that Bexley Grammar's G5 on a Wednesday afternoon wouldn't be particularly high up on the Mayor of London's 'places to be' list; but no job appeared too small last week as Boris Johnson, arguably the nation's most loved politician, came here to talk to a group of Year 12 and 13 Government & Politics students.

News that even the man who runs the city can be late sometimes will be reassuring for those of you who are often found hurrying through the doors after the registration bell. Boris had missed his train down to Bexley, although it was "no fault of London transport!" he later confirmed. James Cleverly AM, Boris Johnson's right-hand man at the London Assembly, was able to answer a few questions about his work before eventually Boris jumped into the room with trademark enthusiasm; not to mention the entourage of councillors, advisors, assistants, journalists and photographers which followed.

After being introduced to the group, the Mayor began by mentioning some of the things which he and his team had actively been involved in since he was elected in 2008. Most notably the phrase 'Bringing the village to the city', was a befitting way to sum up his ethos of trying to bring the communal, green and safe aspects of a typical village to the bustling, productive city of London. A chance was then given to a number of people in the audience to ask a question; topics included how he was aiming to make his work more accountable, how he felt the Coalition would fare after the AV result, job opportunities for university leavers and a question on the issue of grammar schools, to which he replied that he was fully supportive of them to provide an aspirational route for young people to succeed. You could say that he may have been playing to the partisan crowd with this answer; though you get the feeling that with Boris he meant it.

*Robert Smith: Year 13 Government and Politics*

## Forthcoming Events

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May ~ Year 9 & Year 10 Reports issued

**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> May – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June ~ Half Term**

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June ~ UCAS information evening for Year 12

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June ~ Sports Day and Summer Fayre

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June ~ Day off in lieu of Sports Day

## BGS House competition 2010-2011 is over!

The House competition is a fiercely fought over competition lasting an entire year (June-June). It includes eleven sporting events, three large performing arts competitions (Dance, Drama, Music), and numerous other contests, including public speaking, bridge, Christmas card design, to name but a few! This year was a particularly close competition, with the six Houses led by strong teams of House Captains. The Heads of House and I have commented continually throughout the year about the quality of entries for competitions, and it is to the credit of the Heads of House and the House Captains that this is the case.

The year started with Wellman taking the lead at Sports Day last June, but the big competitions were won by Kirkman (House Drama and House Dance), and Prothero (House Music). Prothero quickly took the lead in the House competition, and for several months had a lead of approximately 100 points. However, Kirkman provided some very high quality entries for House Drama and House Dance and started to catch up. For a while it wasn't very clear who was going to win and in the end there were only seven points between the two Houses in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place! The final results table was as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> place Prothero	321 points
2 <sup>nd</sup> place Kirkman	314 points
3 <sup>rd</sup> place Wellman	281 points
4 <sup>th</sup> place Johnson	250 points
5 <sup>th</sup> place Mabbs	234 points
6 <sup>th</sup> place Collins	205 points



I would like to extend thanks and congratulations to the House Captains for their energy and enthusiasm for the House system this year and as always huge thanks to the Heads of House for their support and commitment. Well done to Prothero for achieving first place, but congratulations to ALL the Houses for working so hard and with such good humour and sportsmanship this year.

Next year's House Competition (2011 – 2012) will have a special **Olympic** theme, and starts on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June with Sports Day! See you there!

*Miss Swadkin (Head of House Leader)*

## Peer Mentors

For the first time Year 13 Bexley Grammar Peer Mentors were invited to the Barclays Headquarters in Canary Wharf, London to receive our Diana Awards. Ben Abbott and I were lucky enough to be picked from the Year 13 Peer Mentor cohort to attend the National Award Ceremony. When we first walked into the grand building we were greeted by past award holders and there were refreshments before the event started. Before the awards were handed out we were welcomed by various guests such as some Diana Award ambassadors who included Sinitta! Ben and I went up to collect the Peer Mentor's Certificate of Excellence, along with 70 other amazing young people. It was a privilege to receive the award for the achievements that Peer Mentors have made in our school.

*Priya Bhogal 13JKH*

It was a lovely occasion with various award holders providing entertainment throughout the programme. I was particularly impressed by how the Diana Award charity encourages its award holders to continue to take an active part in the charity and all that it entails. Award holders are invited to join an alumni programme which offers many opportunities for young people to continue to make a difference to the wider community. Several testimonies were shared by them as well as those of the young people receiving their awards.

More delicious refreshments were provided after the award ceremony providing an opportunity for people to socialise.

*Mrs Prescott*

## School Council

The School Council will be running a 'White Elephant' stall at this year's Summer Fayre and would appreciate any donations of unwanted items to sell: china, glass, bric a brac, records, CDs, DVDs, costume jewellery, toys etc.

Please leave any items for collection at reception in bags marked 'White Elephant'.

We thank you in advance.

*School Council*

## Year 9 Cricket

The Year 9 boys' cricket team had their first fixture of the season away to Hurstmere on Friday of last week. The boys batted particularly well with Joe Kelly scoring 32 not out. We saw out all 20 overs but due to some accurate bowling we only posted a total of 96.

Despite the best efforts of our bowlers (Chiraag Kerai took 2 wickets in the same over!) some sloppy fielding mistakes allowed Hurstmere to reach the target set in just over 13 overs. It was an inauspicious start to the season but we have plenty more games to go.

*Mr Skinner*

## Sixth Form information

### *Year 13s - time is running out to apply for student finance*

If any full-time students haven't applied for their student finance yet, they need to make sure they apply online at: [www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance](http://www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance) before the 31st May deadline.

They should apply now to ensure everything is in place in time for starting their course. Mrs Leffen has a small number of finance guides for anyone requiring help.

### *Year 12 ~ UCAS Information Evening*

Students and parents/guardians are invited to an UCAS information evening being held in the School Hall on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June at 7pm, with guest speaker Ms B Burrows, from Queen Mary's University, London.

*Mrs Leffen*

## Year 8 Merits and thanks

Congratulations go to Marcus Davenport, Nathan Burchell, Bethany Webster, Tony Chambers, Peter Smith, Ileri Akinlode, Helia Canaj (8KAS), Jemima Itang, Emily Wang, Emma Deadman, Daniel Hale and Ponni Srisabesan (8MGL) for successfully reaching 50 merits this term. Well done and keep up the good work!

*Mrs Kemp*

I would like to wish the Year 8s the best of luck in their studies whilst I am on maternity leave. Miss Lynch will be an excellent Director of Studies along with Miss Brand who is taking over the position of Senior Academic Mentor. Good luck for the remainder of Year 8 and your next step into Year 9!

May I also take this opportunity to thank you for all the lovely baby gifts you presented me with during our last assembly.

*Mrs Kemp*

## Morocco 2011

On the 6<sup>th</sup> April, 21 students set off from Bexley Grammar for 9 fun-filled days in the sweltering heat of Morocco. We arrived later that afternoon after the short flight and ride to our hotel right in the centre of Marrakech. That afternoon, we had a short while to relax in our rooms before we headed out onto the streets of Marrakech where we had a walk past the Koutoubia Mosque (visible from our Hotel's balcony); we then passed through the interesting Cyber Park, which is a public park with various internet and computer points where locals can access the internet, as most do not have internet access in their homes. We then walked back to our hotel for a buffet dinner before heading out to the main square in Marrakech: Jemaa el-Fna.



This was an amazing experience at night as the place was crowded with stalls, restaurants, musicians, storytellers and even people with monkeys. We then headed back to our hotel for a good night's sleep.

The next day we were up bright and early for a quick breakfast before we had a horse-and-carriage ride around the city; this



was a great way to see the amazing organised chaos of Marrakech's streets. We got off our carriages in the manufacturing district, just outside the souks and the main market areas, where we walked through local tanners and we were given sprigs of mint to help with the smell of the tanning process. We



then worked our way through the souks and other manufacturing works in the area, including shoe makers, people dyeing clothes, metal workers and potters. After that, we went to a local chemist where they sold herbal remedies, traditional cures, creams, oils, teas, herbs and spices; we were shown everything they had on offer, given mint tea and allowed to sample and buy what was on offer. We even got student price - ginseng was a popular choice. We then continued through the souks, heading to a local bakery where we could buy bread (which had just come out of the oven) before we headed back to the hotel for lunch. The heat of the afternoon was spent relaxing in the hotel and experiencing the markets and cafes of the main square. People took this opportunity to buy all manner of things, from jewellery, pottery, metalwork, souvenirs, headscarves, clothes, ornaments to instruments, all bought by bartering of course. Some people even took the opportunity to fully embrace the culture and

purchase a traditional Moroccan robe. We then headed back to the hotel to relax and have dinner before the long day that awaited us.

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April was spent travelling to Zagora, a massive 10 hour drive ('ooh no!' – Wassie's catchphrase); on the way we experienced stunning scenery and even stopped off at a local community which was focused around a palmery where they grew most of their produce, a real oasis in the desert. They grew date palms for dates which they sold and consumed, but they also grew wheat and other produce, as the whole area was fed with irrigation channels. We then headed to our hotel in Zagora with only time left to eat, relax and sleep.

The following day we drove out into the desert to see desertification first hand. We visited a village which is being encroached on by sand, which is very visible as it piles up against the buildings. We saw how they grew their food and lived in such an environment with their main water source being a river just outside the village. We also discovered that due to a rising water table their crops are being gradually destroyed by the salinity of the soil which is increasing as salt is brought to the surface. We then went to a local pottery, where we saw how they transformed the clay into intricately worked pots; Mr Shaw had a go as did another student. After that we went to a local silver-smelting workshop where we watched someone pour the molten silver into moulds and saw first-hand how the process is done. Then it was time for our intrepid camel trek out to



our camp in the middle of the desert. We each picked our own camel and many automatically found a bond, with each camel quickly acquiring a name. We then trekked through the desert on our camels as the sun was going down at the end of the afternoon, which was an incredible albeit uncomfortable experience. After the 2-hour trek, which regrettably Mr Miles failed to complete on his camel, we arrived at our campsite in the desert. Several of us then scaled the nearby sand dunes and got an incredible view of the sunset over the desert before we had dinner. This was followed by a group campfire where we were entertained with local music and songs and baked bread on the fire and then several of the students showed off their cultural heritages with various songs and dance. We then slept under the stars and had the best view of the night sky I have ever experienced.

We got up bright and early on Sunday and trekked back on our camels to Zagora where some of us then went to a hamam which is similar to a Turkish baths and where you receive a 'massage' and I use this term loosely, a scrub and then you have a general wash in 3 different rooms. After that we had lunch and spent the afternoon relaxing and recovering back at the hotel.

The following day we awoke very early at 5am to depart for the Kasbah-du-Toubkal, a massive 12-hour drive ('ooh no!' – Wassie's catchphrase); the drive was long but was full of beautiful scenery, especially on the approach to Imlil – the town near our hotel. We drove up through the majestic Atlas Mountains rising gradually higher along what appeared to be windier and windier roads. We eventually arrived in Imlil; however, the hotel was only accessible by foot and donkey, so we had a short trek up the hill to cope with before we relaxed around the hotel that evening enjoying the surroundings and the dinner we received.



On Tuesday we spent the day surveying the nearby river and so we were up early and trekking up the mountain closer to the source for our first site. In total we went to 5 sites and at each site we recorded data on physical, biological and chemical tests, checking everything including the species there, wetted perimeter, depth, velocity, pH etc. We split up into several teams and were each allocated a certain task to try and get every test done as quickly as possible. The sites ranged from higher up the mountain than our hotel to down in the town of Imlil, by a bridge in the town. When we reached the town of Imlil after having our lunch and completing the sites further up the mountain we visited a women's cooperative shop, which is owned and run entirely by women, something quite rare in Morocco. We then walked back to our hotel where some of us used the hotel's own hamam which consisted of a steam room and a cold plunge pool. After this, we had our last dinner at the Kasbah and spent the evening relaxing on the hotel balcony.



Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April was our last full day in Morocco and consisted of our departure from the Kasbah-du-Toubkal for Marrakech where we spent the rest of our day. We arrived back at our original hotel after visiting the palmery area of Marrakech – a touristy area with lots of expensive hotels and expensive things for tourists, such as golf courses and camel rides. When we reached the hotel we had lunch before spending the afternoon going around the markets and souks once again, many people taking this last-minute shopping opportunity as a chance to buy souvenirs or gifts for their families or just as a great last experience in Morocco. After shopping we returned to the hotel for dinner and our last night in Morocco, which we spent on our hotel balcony, chatting, listening to music and, as we had the whole trip, having a lot of fun. The next morning we woke early and flew home, bringing to an end a fantastic trip.

This was an amazing trip full of so many wonderful memories and experiences and one that I'm sure none of us will ever forget. On behalf of everyone who went on the trip, I would like to take this opportunity to give our thanks to all the teachers who went with us on the trip: Mr North, Ms Rock, Mr Miles and especially our group leader Mr Shaw. It was a very fun and enjoyable week in every aspect.

Alexander Catterall I2WRD