



# Balfour Newsletter July 2013

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## Introduction - The Head's Line

Dear Parents/Carers,

As is traditional at this time of year, we say goodbye to several members of staff who are moving on.

Four teachers are retiring. They are -

Mrs Atkins - Learning Support.  
Mrs Davidson - Head of Sandon House.  
Mrs Gray - Learning Support.  
Mrs Whincup - Head of English

Moving on to promoted posts elsewhere or to pastures new are -

Miss Barrett - English  
Miss Dixon - Maths  
Mrs Down - English  
Mr Kay - Maths

Two Teaching Assistants are also moving on. They are -

Miss Shelley  
Miss Wyatt

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the above for their commitment, dedication and continued hard work during their time at SGB. In particular, I would like to extend special thanks to both Mrs Davidson and Mrs Whincup, who have been on the staff of Sir Graham Balfour School for a considerable number of years and have contributed much to our ongoing development.

I'm sure you would wish to join me, in wishing them all, every success for the future.

So much seems to have happened this year, not only in the classroom but also in terms of enrichment. Some of the highlights have been -

- Three residential trips abroad to France, Germany and a ski trip to Andorra.
- Involvement in a host of charitable fund raising activities especially the 'Rowathon'.
- Visits from a number of inspirational speakers.
- Students winning regional and even national awards.
- and many, many other events and activities.

Whilst we are all looking forward to the summer break, we already have plans in place to enhance our provision even further and to make the next academic year even more memorable.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support and hope you have a restful and enjoyable summer.

Mr D G Wright  
Headteacher

# Afgan Dan

Afghan Dan, also known as Private Daniel Heath from the Queen's Royal Lancers regiment came to talk to our pupils following his return from Afghanistan after a 7 month tour of duty.

Several of our pupils wrote to Dan while he was serving overseas, and we sent him cards and presents at Christmas. Dan wanted to come and meet our wonderful young people and share his experiences with them, as

they made his days in Afghanistan a lot more cheerful with their letters and drawings. Dan worked with several groups of students, and even put our Year 9 Hidden Talent group through their paces in an army PT session in the pouring rain. As Dan said, 'if it's not raining, it's not really training!'.

We really enjoyed Dan's visit and learnt a lot from this inspirational soldier. We are looking forward to seeing him again soon to work with more of our young people.



# Parliament Visit

On May 7<sup>th</sup> Mr Lefroy joined Helene Ansell, an ATP committee member, Dorothy Coombs (Chair of the ATP) and 4 of her students, at the Department for Education for a meeting with Elizabeth Truss, Undersecretary of State for Education and Childcare. This meeting was a direct outcome of Helene inviting her local MP, Jeremy Lefroy, to watch a psychology lesson in Dec 2012 (see her article in ATP Today Feb 2013)

Helene's mission is threefold. Firstly to persuade the government to provide good quality Initial Teacher Training for psychology graduates (ideally with a bursary as for other sciences); secondly, to change the government's, and wider public's, perception of our subject as being less rigorous than other sciences (or just another "ology") and thirdly (perhaps most importantly) to insist that the D for E resolves the current situation in which psychology is a science at HE, a humanity at GCSE and a science at A level, but inspected by Ofsted within the social sciences, where it also sits where teacher training is concerned.

Helene's students did us proud, speaking confidently about the value of studying psychology, not only in terms of transferable academic skills but also wider life skills, and I am sure that, like me, the minister was very impressed.

We felt that the minister understood, and aims to investigate further, all the concerns being expressed, except the issue of bursaries for teacher training in psychology, where she argued that the other sciences are more 'economically productive', hence the bursary differential.



Back row left to right - Kate Appleford, Steve Owen, Mr Lefroy, Aneira Barnett.  
Front row left to right - Elizabeth Truss, Helene Ansell, Annabel Ryell and Dorothy Coombs (Chair The ATP)

# French Trip - Normandy 2013



## 1<sup>st</sup> day - Travelling

On Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July a very excited group of 40 year 8 French students and five staff packed their bags onto the coach, left Sir Graham Balfour and headed south to Normandy in France. As the journey passed, many sleepy faces began to appear as after a largely sleepless night we said farewell to England and a welcoming bonjour to France.

An early highlight of the trip was a stop at the pretty town of Honfleur en route to get straight into some French speaking at the numerous cafés and ice cream stalls, stretch our legs and enjoy the French sunshine! The last hour of the journey was the longest as we were all eager to reach the hotel and late afternoon, we finally arrived and unpacked ready for the week ahead.





## 2<sup>nd</sup> day - Visit to Arromanches and World War II sites

After students had wiped the sleep from their tired eyes and enjoyed a hearty breakfast, we headed for the seaside town of Arromanches sur mer. After an informative talk from Mr Taylor about the D-Day landings and the Mulberry harbours, we experienced a thought-provoking and graphic representation of the events of June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944 at the 360 degree cinema, before taking the walk down to Arromanches where the students enjoyed having some free time to practise some more French and sample more of the ice cream!

We then headed for Longues sur mer where students had the chance to explore a fully-preserved German gun battery before leaving for Pointe du Hoc, which was the target of heavy bombardment due to its threat to the Allied landings on two beaches, Omaha and Utah. The students thoroughly enjoyed an hour running up and down the huge bomb craters at this historic site, and got back on the coach ready for a power-nap en route to the next stop!



The next visit of the day was the American war cemetery which everyone found immensely thought-provoking. The students were extremely respectful while visiting the cemetery and got a realisation of the scale of the losses incurred during the war.

We then took the path down to Omaha beach, where 2,400 American soldiers



tragically perished on D-Day. The students enjoyed some free time at the beach, drawing in the sand and skimming stones, before making the long climb back up to the coach.

On returning to the hotel, the students were feeling the effects of an extremely busy day and enjoyed an evening relaxing and exploring the extensive grounds of the hotel.



### 3<sup>rd</sup> day - Visit to Biscuit factory and Cité de la Mer

Tuesday was our first full day in Normandy. After breakfast, we headed to the small village of Asnelles where we visited a family-run biscuit factory to get a demonstration on how to make traditional Normandy biscuits, all in French! While small groups visited the factory, the rest headed for Gold beach to see where British troops landed on D-Day, calling in en-route at a local bakery to again practise some French and sample the freshly baked pain au chocolat!



After leaving the biscuit factory, we headed for Cité de la Mer in Cherbourg which was another highlight of the trip. Firstly we navigated our way along the narrow corridors of an ex-naval submarine, followed by a visit to the aquarium where, amongst other things, the students had the chance to get close to sharks and sting rays in the touch-pool. Afterwards, the students enjoyed the highlight of the day which was the underwater experience and their chance to grab the headlines as explorers of the deep blue!



### 4<sup>th</sup> day - Visit to Merville Battery and Festyland!

It was already the last day and the week was flying by! After breakfast, we headed for Merville Battery, which the British 9<sup>th</sup> Parachute Battalion was given the objective of neutralising. The students had the opportunity to get on board a C-47 aircraft used during the assault and experienced a sound and light show, re-enacting the battle of Merville Battery.





We had saved the best trip till last as we headed for Festyland for an exhilarating afternoon on the rollercoasters! This is always a favourite with the students and this year was no exception! The day at Festyland was the highlight for most students and was a great way to spend our last afternoon in Normandy.



On the final evening of our trip the students enjoyed a disco, which was the scene of some interesting dancing and which was the perfect way to end what had been a very successful, educational and fun-packed trip.

### 5<sup>th</sup> day - The long journey home!

There were a lot of tired faces at breakfast on the final morning as the students loaded their suitcases onto the coach ready for the long journey back to Stafford. After a stop-off for some souvenirs at the hypermarket, we boarded the ferry in Calais and made the long journey back to school. Mixed emotions were felt on arriving back to school, as the trip had come to an end too soon; although all were glad to find their parents waiting and will keep fond souvenirs of the trip.



# Year 11 Prom

This years' Prom took place on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July at Sandon Hall. The weather was fantastic and the students looked stunning, it was a lovely night. I hope you have caught sight of the some of the photographs in the local press!



# MyKindaCrowd Visit to London



On Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June, 15 students went on a trip to London with MyKindaCrowd to visit some of the big businesses that are located in London. We saw a Law Firm called Slaughter and May, Channel 4 and the O<sub>2</sub> telephonic. Together, we all travelled around London seeing many sights and attractions with some guidance into what our future holds. When we met each group from the businesses, we found out what they were about, how they help out others around them and what you need to do to work there if you were interested. Each Company showed a strong pitch on what they did and it is definitely something I would suggest for someone else to do. It opened my eyes to the many possible routes I could take after School, College and University. Most of all, it was an opportunity that showed us exactly what we could be like if we worked hard and did what we loved. (Sara Butt - Year 9)

# Currys PC World Ambassadors

5 Sir Graham Balfour students did extremely well this week by being invited to the finals of the Currys PCWorld Tech Ambassador finals in Hemel Hempstead. Competing against 40 other children from other schools around the country 4 were chosen to be World Student Ambassadors.

All of the students were rewarded with a selection of electronic gadgetry and have been asked to review them for the company, the aim being to give PCWorld an insight in the way children think.

Speaking on behalf of the school, Mrs Sharon Metalfe Assistant Headteacher praised their achievement and said, it had been an fantastic result for both the students and the school. Out of the 9 students chosen, 4 of which were from Sir Graham Balfour School!



The ambassadors chosen were Niamh Callaghan, Ellen Butter, Fraiser Huckle and Cara Hawkins - Maisie Winfield was also selected for the finals.



Picture l.to.r Ellen Butter, Fraiser Huckle, Maisie Winfield, Niamh Callaghan and Cara Hawkins

# Chief Constable Visits SGB

On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June SGB welcomed the Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police, Mike Cunningham. His visit was in conjunction with a project involving the British Police Symphony Orchestra and the Gladstone Fired Up Project.

SGB was the first high school in Stafford to receive a visit and CC Cunningham, due to our close links with the orchestra who frequently rehearse here. He described the school as very welcoming and impressive.

During the tour, guided by two of Staffordshire's Police Cadets, he met with Richard Critchlow, Lead Teacher of Maths (First Violin within the BPSO) and Steph Owen (Head of Expressive Arts and a Cellist with the BPSO). Also in attendance were Detective Superintendent Steve Higgins (MET Police- Vice Chair of the BPSO and Principal Trombone), Tom Hammond (Musical Director of the BPSO and Workshop Leader for the Gladstone Fired Up project) and Ellie Davies (Project Manager for the Gladstone Fired Up project).





# News from PE

We have had a number of sporting successes this year, which include:

- The annual School Games Competition which will be held on the 28<sup>th</sup> June is a level 3 event and the County Championships. We have made excellent progress with our athletes. In order to qualify, you had to win the district Championships in that sport. We have 6 teams representing us, these are; Trampolining two teams, girls football, basketball, volleyball and dodgeball. This is a significant achievement as the other Stafford schools only have one or two teams, with some having none qualifying for the event.
- District Champs in Volleyball, Trampolining, Dodgeball, Girls Football.
- District athletics on the 20<sup>th</sup> May was also a huge success we had a number of athletes winning and as a result going through to the County Competition on the 8<sup>th</sup> June. These students are ; Natalie Muckerji, Issac Hanlon, Ryan Blagbrough, Chloe Preston, Josh Furze, Tom Kenny and Nathan Stevens.
- The success of the Tuesday night primary club and the fact our leaders have been outstanding has resulted in many parents commenting on how professional and mature they have been. The attitude and willingness of our students to give up their own time has been exceptional.
- We have an American School and their basketball coaches coming into school on the 14<sup>th</sup> June to work with some of our students.
- County Football Finalists Y7
- We have 10, Y7 /8 students representing the school in the County Athletics. Amy Pye, Iris Davis, Abbie Wrighton, Lucy Gilbert, Ben Brooks, Liam Green, Joe Littleddyke, Dom Key, Aby Anil, Dan Warton.
- Reached the County Final with the Y11 and Y10 basketball team. The year 10 Basketball team also won the district cup competition.
- Had a number of very successful B teams represent school in a number of friendly fixtures.





- Iris Davis won the Y7 Cross country event.
- Natalie Mukerji 100m County Champion and has qualified for the English Schools Athletics.
- Ran a very successful ski trip to Andorra.

# Big Walk for Cambodia

The annual Big Walk for Cambodia took place at 2.20pm on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July. Years 7,8 9 and staff participated by raising sponsorship and walking round the school field to raise the much needed funds to continue supporting our Partner School in Cambodia. The weather was beautiful and the some enthusiastic students even ran round.

This year Parkside Primary students, in Year 5 & 6, also participated with Balfour students. The rest of Parkside students walked round their own school field and, to date, have raised over £670. The money raised by our school is still in the process of being counted but hopefully will reach, or exceed, last year's total .

# Cambodia 2014 Trip

In addition to all the numerous fundraising events over the last term (washing teacher's cars, cake sale, teachers vs food, sports events, water balloon a teacher etc!) the Cambodia 2014 team also undertook a 20 mile sponsored walk during our July Activity Days:

## Walk with Wass

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 11 students and 5 teachers embarked on a gruelling 20-mile walk in the Peak District. The aim was to fundraise approximately £100 each, as the students who went on the walk were also going on the trip to Cambodia in February 2014.

Despite the sweltering heat, the walk was completed in an estimated 10 hours. The group began their journey at the top of Dovedale Valley, and followed the River Dove all the way to Ilam Park. They had to walk over many different terrains including roads, steep hills and bumpy farmland. After stopping for a half hour lunch break, they continued their journey down Manifold Valley for the remainder of the walk. As soon as the 20-mile walk was completed, the

group returned to the Scout Centre that they were staying in for the night and enjoyed a well-earned rest.

We are currently awaiting the total amount of money raised, but we would like to say well done to all of those who took part in the Big Walk for Cambodia 2014.

# On Line Payments Now Available at SGB



## Online Payments now available at this school

Register now to make payments online  
(e.g. Trips and Events)

To find out more, contact:

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

**ONLINE PAYMENTS COMING SOON  
IN SEPTEMBER 2013**



# Donna Louise Trust 5k Run

## **A First for Mathilde!**

Sir Graham Balfour student Mathilde Criq triumphed on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May when she took first place at the annual Donna Louise RunforIt! 5K Family Fun Run.

Held at the Trentham Estate, the event helps to raise valuable funds for The Donna Louise Children's Hospice. Overall 823 runners took part, 365 of these in the 5k Family Fun Run, and the remainder competing in the 10k course. As overall winner, the Year 8 student was presented with a commemorative plate, medal and t shirt to mark her achievement.

Based at Trentham, The Donna Louise Trust Children's Hospice Service provides respite and end of life care for children in Staffordshire and South Cheshire who, as a result of illness or accident, are not expected to live beyond their teenage years. Melanie Williams, Director of Fundraising and PR at The Donna Louise Children's Hospice, said: "This is a great achievement by Mathilde and all the other children and families who joined us at our annual family fun run. All the money raised will go to help fund our vital services, which help nearly 200 children across Staffordshire and South Cheshire. We look forward to seeing everyone back again at next year's event, where we are hoping to get 1,000 runners to celebrate the 10th year of the run."





# Duke of Edinburgh Award

Our Bronze Duke of Edinburgh group are progressing extremely well, with the majority already having completed some of their sections (Physical, Skills and Voluntary). The team spent last weekend in the Peak District undertaking their Practice Expedition and despite being some of the hottest days of the year they all were brilliant! Split into two teams, both of the groups completed their routes in very acceptable times and all returned to school in good spirits, with no blisters, sunburn or complaints at 7.00 pm on the Sunday evening.

A huge thank you to Mrs Hill for taking time out of her weekend to drive the school minibus, another huge thank you to Miss McConnachie who accompanied one of the groups on their hike and lastly thank you to Walton Open Award Centre for their support.

Well done to the SGB 2013 Bronze Group: Chloe Bishop, Sara Butt, Antoine Criq, Anya Elliman, Cara Hawkins, Stacey Paul, Matt Porter, Tom Samphier, Eve Smith, Pippa Spencer, Megan Taylor and Emillie Whitelock.



# SGB Eco News!

## Eco School Action Day at Wolsley Gardens Wildlife Centre, Near Rugeley

Some of our Eco Club members took part in the Stafford Borough Councils Eco-Schools Action Day. Students had lots of fun and learnt some new ideas for Sir Graham Balfour Eco Club. Eco Club runs every Tuesday 3.30-4.30pm. Come along and make a difference to school!



Searching for bugs and trying to identify them



Wildflower bombs

Cycling



Bug Hotels





# Parents Association

On behalf of the Parents Association we would like to thank you for supporting us throughout this academic year.

During this year we have had some exciting Bingo Nights with the attendance growing each time this event has been put on. Students, staff and parents have thoroughly enjoyed these evenings especially when the bingo was called on different occasions by Mr Wright (Headteacher) and Mr Chamberlain (Assistant Deputy Head) - thank you very much.

During this year the Parents Association committee members have also supported the Music Department with refreshments for both Christmas and Summer Leavers Concerts which prove to be very popular evening.

Each academic year the Parents Association request bids from all departments in school to enable additional resources/equipment to support students within their departments.

The money raised from our events and donations throughout the academic year is then allocated according to the bid requests which this year will be discussed on the 11th July 2013 at the next Parents Association meeting.

We will keep you posted for future events via the text messaging system, emails from the school direct to the parent/carers and students, school website and through our internal student bulletin.

The PA meets up in the DAC Centre at Sir Graham Balfour. The meetings are very informal, informative and a good way of keeping in touch with teachers, parents and what's going on in school because, as some of you are aware, you don't get to know everything!

The Parents Association would like to take this opportunity of thanking all members, parents and students and staff who have taken part in some way during this year and trust that the next year will even be better.

Come along and join us with the fun.



# AGM

The next Annual General Meeting will be held on

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Time: 7pm

Venue: DAC Centre, Sir Graham Balfour School, North Avenue,  
Stafford.

Refreshments will be provided.

Come along and meet new parents, have your say in what happens with  
the Parents Association events.

Bring along your ideas.



# Action Parkside

Unveiling of New Residents Noticeboard - Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Sir Graham Balfour was approached by Action Parkside, the Parkside residents committee, to provide a musical presence at the inauguration and unveiling of a new notice board which will provide community information for members of the estate. Four of our students kindly agreed to perform as a clarinet quartet and provided the welcome and closure music. Parkside Primary School Choir were also present for the event, which was officially attended by The Worshipful the Mayor and Mayoress of Stafford Borough Councillor Bryan Cross MBE and Mrs Cross.

The event was well attended and thankfully the weather was in our favour. Pictured below are SGB clarinet quartet: Beth Wheat Y13, Isobel Young Y11, Lucy Gilbert Y8 and Ria Williamson-Smith Y8 and a photograph showing the new noticeboard.





# Katharine House Hospice

On Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June, four of our students, accompanied by Mrs Gannon, went to Katharine House Hospice to present a cheque for £1670.00. This represented a part share in the money raised from our Rowathon held in February. The students were met by Mrs Amy Ratcliffe, Community Fundraiser and were given a tour of the hospice where they met some of the patients and staff. Pictured below, (left to right) Kristian Simpson-Davies, Charlotte Tatler, Mrs Amy Ratcliffe, Samantha Robson and Callum Challinor.





# Activity Days - SGB Experience



The Animal Experience - West Midlands Safari Park and Trentham Monkey Forest



## The Chocolate Experience - Cadburys World and Chocolate Making at SGB

On Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 51 students took part in the 'Chocolate Experience' in the D&T area. During the day



In the Graphics room students produced the packaging for their chocolates which involved using dies and die cutters on pre-prepared card covers. Some students took it further and produced their own covers. As an extension task students were allowed to make further more complex packages. Miss O'Dell could be found doing extension task at break time!

students learnt how to make a variety of chocolates, how to package and wrap them.

In the Food room students used a range of silicon moulds and chocolate to make rocky island, white chocolate, milk chocolate and peppermint creams.







In the Textiles room, students decorated an organza bag which would act as the wrapping for the packaging of the chocolates.





The Water and Ice Experience - Waterworld and Telford Ice Rink





## Your national new/used-uniform auction site

No need to bin or waste your child's hardly worn uniform anymore!!



### We at Uniformswap have the answer

Let's no longer waste our children's second hand uniform / out of school activity uniform as they cost such a lot. By selling or buying your unused items on our website [www.uniformswap.co.uk](http://www.uniformswap.co.uk) you are not only getting some money back for those items, but 10% of every commission fee goes directly to your school.

#### Very low commission rates

£1 commission fee for garments between £1-£10.  
10% commission fee for garments over £10.

#### Some items sold on the site

Logo Uniform / Non-Logo Uniform, Brownies Rainbows, Ballet, Tap, Dance, Scouts, Cubs Soccotots, Tumbletots, Football and much more.

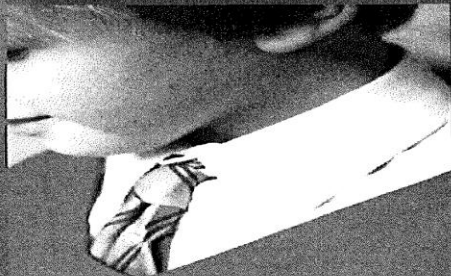
#### Check website for regular updates

If you need advice or further details or you would like to just donate your items please contact Sarah

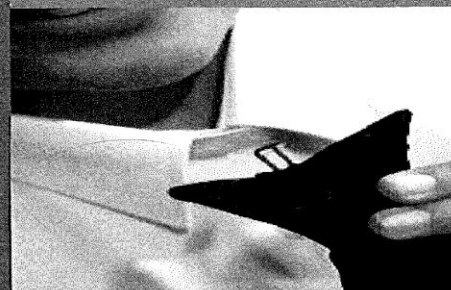
**Tel: 07817 398550**

**[www.uniformswap.co.uk](http://www.uniformswap.co.uk)**

**Email: [info@uniformswap.co.uk](mailto:info@uniformswap.co.uk)**



**REGISTER NOW and receive your 1st sale FREE**



**On behalf of Sir Graham Balfour School  
have a great summer holiday  
and  
we look forward  
to welcoming students back on  
Wednesday 4th September 2013.**