

# Mark College Newsletter

## April 2009



Mark College is a specialist secondary school for girls and boys aged 10 to 19 with specific learning difficulties associated with dyslexia.

Our aim is to give students the opportunity to achieve their full potential so that they can pursue their ambitions and achieve their personal goals.

### School ski trip

At time of writing, 37 members of staff and students will shortly be off to the wintry mountains of Austria for a weeks skiing holiday, organised by Mr and Mrs Scott.

This is the second ski trip organised at Mark College and we wish them well. Details of the trip will appear in the next issue of this newsletter.

### Principal's welcome

We have reached the end of a spring term full of successes. I know you will enjoy reading about them all. We are particularly proud of Matthew Kwan who won the ISA art competition; Burke Bouska competing in a National cross-country race; the students who did the school proud in the Mark Youth Theatre's production of Wind in the Willows and all the Year 11 students who received very positive feedback from the local employers when they took part in an interview evening.



We have had visits from several old boys this term including one of the first cohort who left Mark College some 23 years ago. Jan Green, a leaver in 2004 has learnt sign language and is helping to teach blind children. George Morgan, who left two years ago has been chosen as part of a select team travelling to Africa to do conservation work. It is always good to see old students and hear of the different ways their lives are progressing. I hope you all have a Happy Easter and I look forward to welcoming you to our Open Day on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June.



This picture of the whole school appeared in the local press in connection with the outstanding Ofsted Care Report received by Mark College this term.

*Julie Kay* School Principal

### South West art competition winner

Matthew Kwan, who won first prize in the Priory Art Competition last year, has won another prize. This time it was at the ISA Art Competition for the South West of England, which was held at Trinity School in Devon last month. Mrs Johnson took a selection of work from the whole school, and she reported that the standard was high in all age groups. Matthew won first prize in the over 16 category. His painting will now be entered for the national ISA competition in the summer to compete against other regional winners.



### English schools cross country championships



Burke Bouska has become the first pupil from Mark College to compete at the English Schools Cross Country Championships. Although a few runners have managed to reach the ISA finals in recent years, the English Schools is open to all schools and is therefore a much bigger event. Representing Somerset, Burke finished in 298<sup>th</sup> place in the Intermediate boys race, which is an excellent performance in a field of nearly 400 runners. He reported that it was unlike any race he had ever run, with a crowded start, tough hills and no chance to run away from the pack. An amazing experience.

## Mark House news

Easter is here and the lighter evenings and warmer weather is approaching and after a long winter we could all do with some of that. As usual though, the Mark House clan have kept us on our toes with bags of energy and enthusiasm to always be doing something. Sports hall sessions with games like Time Bomb, Submarines, (let them explain!) badminton, football, basketball, gymnastics; you name it, they've done it. Of course, no term is complete without the now it seems compulsory games of 40 40 in the dark, and the latest favourite, murder in the dark (Mark House style)! We have also managed to fit in several trips to the cinema, and have seen Bolt, Hotel for Dogs and most recently Mall Cops. Some also managed to get tickets for Mark youth theatre's production of The Wind in the Willows, showing their support for their friends in Blackford House. And if that wasn't enough... they have also squeezed in cake making, pancake day, swimming, story telling and the ever popular board games evenings. We hope you all have a wonderful Easter, and manage to resist the lure of the creme egg!

**Quentin and Phillipa Green**

## Geography news

**Year 13:** the A level group are currently studying a module on the geography of sport and leisure, which has given us the opportunity to visit the beautiful countryside of Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks.



The glorious weather added to the mood of the day allowing us to fully appreciate the beautiful surroundings. The day started in Dunster with a brief look at the conflicts the village encounters, then onto Tarr Steps to take full advantage of the local tea shop.

## Year 11 mock interview evening

The annual frenzy of letter-writing, CV-compiling and form-filling by Year 11 pupils has resulted in another immensely valuable and enjoyable evening of interviews, when local employers visit Mark College to grill them and grade them on such aspects as personal appearance, job knowledge and employability. Jobs ranged from motor mechanic to accountant (with a rich variety in between!) and feedback from the employers was unanimous in its praise for the attitude and personal skills of the pupils. Rounded-off with a 'meet and greet' session in the dining hall and an excellent buffet spread provided by Sue and the girls in the kitchens, the evening proved once again what splendid young people we have here and how highly we're regarded in the community – long may it be so!



## Blackford House news

Another busy term has flown by with the boys having more and more time to spend outdoors, playing football and getting to know the village a bit better. Alex, Tom, Ben, John and Mike recently appeared in the Mark Youth Theatre production of The Wind in the Willows, we were very proud of the boys achievements in this and they were all excellent in their roles. We were able to take a large group of students to see them perform, and I know the performers appreciated their support. The annual "Blackford's Got Talent" night is approaching and we are very much looking forward to seeing the variety of acts the boys have been working on and we will post the winners in the next newsletter. This term finished with an Easter egg hunt which was highly competitive as I'm sure you can imagine. We look forward to seeing the boys after the Easter holidays and hope some of them can bring some sunshine back with them. Happy holidays!

**Mr and Mrs Creaser**

## Mark youth theatre production

Mark College has had a link with Mark youth theatre for several years now, and on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March they brought to life Kenneth Grahame's much-loved story 'The Wind in the Willows' at The Princess Theatre in Burnham on Sea. All shows were nearly sold out, and the boys from Mark College were very well supported by their friends and staff from the school who turned out to watch. They had been practicing for weeks and all their hard work paid off as they performed brilliantly! Well done to John Mannu (Stoat Stuart), Tom Wilder (Mole), Alex Palmer (Weezle Wilfred), Mike Pestell (Stoat) and Ben Hiscox-Smith (The Train Driver). Also well done to Leo Willis for his supporting role behind the scenes.



## Quarter points

Quarter points have continued to be given by all staff, with the top ten each half term receiving awards (and £5). Three pupils got into the top ten for the first time and therefore receive a bronze award and £5. They are: Oscar Drysdale, Mitchell Davis and David Luffman. Four pupils have achieved a top ten place twice: Ashley Jeffries, James Leeming, Ben Hiscox-Smith and Abigail Hoad. There are two silver awards (plus £10): Jade Harris and Jack Macarthur. And congratulations go to George Hughes-Onslow, who is the only pupil to be in the top ten on all four occasions.

### Art

Pupils at Mark College continue to produce exceptional art work. Two pictures from Mitchell Davis (Year 8) and Panuve (Year 11) are shown below. Mrs Johnson has requested that if you have any old tiles or unwanted crockery, please send them in for our next art project.



## Wedmore House news

As winter releases her snowy grip, spring offers on the one hand sunshine to warm the hearts of the teenage boys in Wedmore House and on the other hand, the promise of exams! Yes, 'tis the season to get stressed'. Early in the term the nation listened intently to news and weather reports to find out if offices and schools would be open. For most, there were a few days off, unless, like our boys, you live at your school! So not really the holiday they wished for but as they say 'a bad day playing in the snow is better than a good day in lessons.'

This term the cycle of life once again turned from the oval ball to the round one and shouts of 'pop it', 'great tackle' and 'ruck him out' were replaced with 'square ball', 'down the line' and 'on me 'ed son'. Much fun was had by all, judging by the volume on their return from matches. Some took part in the dry slope skiing, all attended the job interview evening, several represented the school sports teams, and most played on their computers a lot. A special mention goes to Burke Bouska for representing Somerset at the English Schools Cross Country Championships. Well done all.

**Mr and Mrs Scott**

## Science department news

We took all the pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do additional science to the Colston Hall in Bristol to a series of presentations by leading scientists in their field. The talks ranged from nuclear fusion to genetics, with a fully illustrated and entertaining one on why people become obese. Hopefully it may inspire some of the pupils who would like to do A level science.

**Mrs Payton and Mr Storie**

## Sixth form matters

A succession of Parents' Evenings recently, have given me a good idea of how our A Level students are doing on their courses there. All students are (or should be!) now gearing up for the final few weeks of term, with AS and A2 exams beginning in mid-May – the Easter holiday invariably proving crucial in terms of preparation.

Meanwhile, good news for two of the Year 13s: Matthew Kwan has been accepted onto the Art Foundation at Central St Martins in London and Oscar Foster-Kane has a conditional offer of a place at the University of the Creative Arts in Rochester, to do a BA in Contemporary Photographic Practice.

Both of these students have worked very hard to gain these highly sought-after places and should be proud of their efforts. Decisions and destinations for their peers in that year group remain open as I write and much remains to be done before the end of the year, to finalise the next steps into the future – exciting times!

**Mr P Robinson**

## Red nose day 2009

The students were full of fun this year, and started the day either in mufti for which they had to pay a pound for the privilege, or in fancy dress.



At morning break Matron Bethell ran a tuck shop which was a great treat for the students and very well supported. At the same time, Mrs Burrows, Miss Thomas and Tom Wilder had a 'Bush Tucker Trial', with such foods as cockles, spoonfuls of marmite, cold sprouts, anchovies, raw onion, taramasalata and olives! At lunch time Mrs Winfield held a 'Grand Prix' for the boys who have remote control cars, which was watched excitedly by most of the school. She also held a raffle, the prize being an Easter egg. This was won by Mr Green.



**The grand total raised by students and staff was £207.**

## 1st XI football

With much more inclement weather since half term, fixtures have continued uninterrupted, with the usual mixed bag of results. High spots were undoubtedly the heroic 3-2 victory over local rivals Sidcot and the thrilling overturning of an early season defeat by Bristol Cathedral School, with an equally spirited 2-1 triumph. A predictable trouncing by a vastly superior Crispin side and a rather less one-sided loss at Haygrove were tests of character as much as skill and these fixtures against comprehensive schools continue to give our boys a valuable (if unpalatable) insight into the 'real world' of school football.

Paradoxically, our best performance of the season ended in a defeat: given the opportunity to play on a brand new, state-of-the-art G3 artificial pitch at Clifton College recently, the team produced football of outstanding quality and tenacity on a day of unseasonable warmth. Scoring first and striking the crossbar twice in the first half, still level at 2-2 with ten minutes to play, we were unfortunate to concede two late goals to go down 4-2, but the occasion was hugely enjoyed by all, including a very proud coach, watching admiringly from the sidelines. One win and one defeat in the final two games completed a successful and enjoyable season.

Team : Greg Matamala, Jack Hearne, Chesney Brown, Christian Gosling, Burke Bouska, Josh Dorrington, Gabi Underhill, Ezra Rice-Butler, Oli Lake, Dixon Lewis, Joe Runyard, Tom French, Genis Robert Tort, Dan Rule.

## Intermediate football

It was an enjoyable, if at times unpredictable season for the intermediate football team. The first game was an epic, a 6-6 thriller, the team showing good character to come from behind, with some superbly taken goals by Matthew Renshaw. A tough couple of weeks followed with games against Crispin and Sidcot (Year 9) both excellent football teams and it was in these games that we made the most progress. George Hughes Onslow showing great leadership and Chris Mansfield was bravery personified in goal, putting in man of the match performances.

Our best chance of a win came against Sidcot (Year 8) where we had lots of chances but couldn't quite hit the back of the net. The final game against Chilton Cantello was perhaps our best performance although we conceded two soft goals; we created an excellent chance with Matthew Renshaw hitting the back of net, via a defender. We continued to keep the ball, George Catlett and Ryan Maynard working hard to keep the pressure on, superbly supported by Lewis Vercoe in midfield, but alas, we didn't manage to score an equaliser. Nevertheless, it was a measure of the excellent progress the team has made.

Team: Chris Mansfield, George Hughes-Onslow (Capt) David Luffman, Josh Baldwin, Kyran Scott, Lewis Vercoe, Alex Palmer, John Mannu, Ryan Maynard, Matthew Renshaw, George Catlett, Milo McMahon, Jonathan Collett and Mitchell Davis.



Mark team 1st XI football team

## Mark School running club

The cold dark evenings, rain and snow added to the determination shown by members of the running club. Pupils competed in both the ISA and Somerset Schools championships and produced excellent results in both.

The season started with the local Sedgemoor Area Cross Country, kindly hosted by King Alfred's School. Both Oli Lake and Burke Bouska qualified for the team to run in the county trials but the heavy snow the day of the event lead to a cancellation and Burke's automatic selection for the SW area championships in Taunton. Bredon School hosted the area ISA race to select the team for the nationals.



Mark team before the race

Although we sent an unusually small group, results were excellent. In the intermediate race places were as follows: Nick Bridle (1<sup>st</sup>), Charlie Flood (10<sup>th</sup>) and Kyran Scott (11<sup>th</sup>) and in the Under 18's Burke Bouska (2<sup>nd</sup>) Oli Lake (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Josh Dorrington (18<sup>th</sup>). Four boys went on to the compete in the ISA Nationals – Nick did well to gain 19<sup>th</sup> place and although Oli felt that he had a bad run to finish



Charlie leads Kyran to the finish well clear of the rest of the field

30<sup>th</sup>, Burke produced a solid 14<sup>th</sup> place. Charlie Flood also ran well finishing 63<sup>rd</sup> in a large field. The following day Burke Bouska raced again in the SW counties, where his 11<sup>th</sup> place earned him selection for the English Schools Championships.

**For information on our specialist education and care services:**

**Please call us on: 01278 641 632**

Send an email to:  
[markcollege@priorygroup.com](mailto:markcollege@priorygroup.com)

Or visit our website:  
[www.priorygroup.com/markcollege](http://www.priorygroup.com/markcollege)