

WESTONBIRT *Life*



Termly News from Westonbirt School - Boarding & Day School for Girls Aged 11-18

AUTUMN 2010



100% pass rate for A Levels

Westonbirt girls have been celebrating their results, both at A Level and GCSE.



Main Picture: **All smiles from 6th Formers** (from left to right): **Emily Chambers**, **Rosie Bathurst** and former **Deputy Head Girl**, **Charlotte Hunt**.

Right: **Laura Moreland** is thrilled with her place at **Cardiff University**.

Pictured above: (left to right) **GCSE students: Harriet Smith, Laura Green, Daisy Newman, Olivia Birkin-Hewitt, Megan Mardon** and **Francesca Schiller** celebrate their results.

With 2010 being the first year for A* awards at A Level, Westonbirt School saw 8 of its girls achieving this prestigious grade in subjects ranging from Chemistry, Mathematics and Economics, to Art and English Literature.

Among the top achievers were **Emily Chambers**, who gained 3 A's in Biology, Geography and History and goes on to read Geography at Exeter University, Former Deputy Head Girl, **Charlotte Hunt** who, with 2 A's and a B, goes on to read Medicine at Peninsula (Universities of Exeter and Plymouth) and **Laura Moreland**, also awarded 2 A's and a B, going on to read Business Management and Marketing at Cardiff University.

Outstanding results were also achieved by **Vera Chen**, who was awarded 3 A grades and an A* and goes on to read Electrical Engineering at Imperial College, London. **Kya Lee** also achieved an impressive 4 A grades and will be reading Mathematics.

Of the many other success stories, girls are going on to read a range of different subjects, including English, History of Art, Psychology and Biomedical Sciences at their chosen universities, including Liverpool, Loughborough, Warwick and the University of Bath.

GCSE examinations were also the cause of great celebrations with **Olivia Birkin-Hewitt** achieving 7 A*s and 5 A's. Other high achievers were **Yasamin Soltani** (4 A*s, 3 A's and 1 B) **Ellen Cen** (9 A*s, 1 B and 1 C) **Christine Sun** (4 A*s, 4 A's, 1 B and 1 C) and **Laura Green** (4 A*s, 3 A's, 2 B's and 1 C.) The year group as a whole did extremely well with 97% of girls gaining 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* - C.

A parent's comment following GCSE results 2010:
"The academic staff here are simply inspirational"

in this issue

P2
Award-winning author visits Westonbirt



P3
Daisy definitely pulls it off



P4
Association celebrations





From the Headmistress

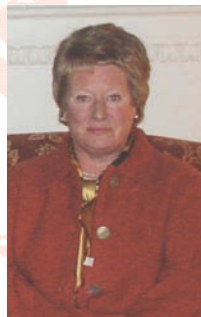
Photo above: Speech Day with Rebekah Heaney (Deputy Head Girl) Mrs. Mary Henderson (Headmistress) Mr. Dermot McMeekin (Chairman of Governors) Professor Patricia Broadfoot (guest speaker) and Ashley White (Head Girl)

The academic year has started smoothly with new girls and staff settling in well. The majority of girls in Year 11 have remained at Westonbirt for the 6th Form and they have been joined in Year 12 by 24 new girls. As always, the Westonbirt girls find that being in the Sixth Form is like going to a new school because every aspect of their lives is different.

In a new initiative this year, **Mrs Hudson** launched a buddy system to pair up new girls with "old" and organised a day of bonding events which included a samba band session and an evening of bowling. The girls have all embarked on their AS Level subjects with enthusiasm and are also enjoying a variety of Sixth Form options with Young Enterprise and the Leith's course in Food and Wine being as popular as ever. AS Level results were very impressive and the girls in Year 13 are now in the throes of writing their personal statements and planning their future courses and careers with both care and maturity.

At Westonbirt we continue to celebrate the whole person and I was delighted with news over the summer that **Georgina Cowan** and **Charlotte Hunt** had passed their *Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award*. This is a great achievement, particularly as the girls were able to complete all four sections of the Award (service, skill, physical and expedition) alongside their A Level preparation.

Highlights this term so far have included two beautifully sunny local walks for the whole school, a trip to the proms for our musicians and Year 8's visit to the "*Crucible*" sculpture exhibition at Gloucester Cathedral. Following much speculation and secrecy **Mrs Crosbee** and **Dr Exon** have recently launched this year's musical "*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*". It will be performed jointly with Rose Hill Westonbirt in March and rehearsals are already underway. There was fierce competition for the solo parts and I was amused to hear that a Year 11 potential soloist had "never been so excited about anything at Westonbirt!"



I would like to pay tribute in this column to our school receptionist, **Miss Eileen Galbraith**, (pictured left) who died of cancer in June aged 56. She was our first ever full time Westonbirt receptionist and she made the job her own, welcoming our visitors and solving a multitude of problems, both trivial and significant. She was a vital cog in our marketing wheel and an excellent Front of House and Box Office Manager for all our events, internal and external. She was the consummate professional who loved Westonbirt as much as we all loved her and she is greatly missed.

I am enjoying getting to know our new parents and look forward to welcoming you and all parents and friends to our many events, cultural, sporting and social, during this long autumn Term.

Mary Henderson



Author visit: Meg Rosoff signs books for Georgie Mobbs (left) Luana Tanir (centre) and Fiona Vincent (right)

Award-Winning Author Inspires...

Years 9 and 10 were treated to an afternoon of literature and laughter as Carnegie Medal winning author **Meg Rosoff** entertained them with highly amusing tales about the trials and tribulations of being an author (which her parents did not consider a "proper job"!)

Many girls had read several of Meg's books and were able to ask questions about their particular favourites. Book sales, organised by Tetbury's *Yellow-Lighted Bookshop*, rounded off the afternoon, with Meg personally signing copies for around 70 girls.

Science with a Bang!

Regency Cheltenham was brought bang up to date, when it hosted the **Science Festival** in June this year. **Westonbirt's Year 7** students experienced the power of **Dr. Hal's Giant Chemistry Set**, with hot ice, exploding ostrich eggs, and plenty of audience participation. In addition there was an *Endangered Species* trail set out in the *Imperial Gardens*, a *Discovery Zone* with a wealth of activities on offer, and last but not least, the **National Physical Laboratory's Water Rocket Challenge**. The *National Physical Laboratory* is one of the UK's leading science and research facilities, and has been involved in educational activities since 1993.



Key Skills: Lucinda Dalton (left) seen here with Alice Wordsworth (centre) and Molly Turner (right)

Entrepreneurs of the Future

A very successful Key Skills Day was once again a highlight of the summer term as Year 9 students discovered what it takes to set up and run a business. Helping them to do this was former Westonbirt student **Lucinda Dalton**, whose catering company '*Pots and Pans*' is going from strength to strength. During the day students learned more about key skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving and the numerical skills involved in costing, estimating and measuring. Lucinda was impressed with the quality of questions asked, which demonstrated a high level of perception and understanding on the part of the students.



Science Festival
Dr. Hal's Giant Chemistry Set



The Water Rocket Challenge
From left to right, Hannah Reichwald, Trudi Seager, Emily Brooks and Teddie Mardon

SUMMER TERM HIGHLIGHTS



Exciting times ahead for 6th Form leavers

Westonbirt's Summer Selection...

Speech Day was a true celebration of success, with glorious sunshine adding the finishing touch. **Chairman of Governors, Mr. Dermot McMeekin**, emphasised how impressively Westonbirt adds value to the educational experience of its students. The guest speaker this year was **Professor Patricia Broadfoot**, retiring **Vice Chancellor of the University of Gloucestershire**, who was clearly impressed by the opportunities open to Westonbirt's students and by their amazing achievements during the last academic year.

The professor made it clear that young people need 'Vision, Values and Valour' in order to succeed in the 21st century; there cannot be a more fitting summary of the ethos of Westonbirt School, where every girl is encouraged to aim high and achieve more than she ever thought possible.

There was a new departure this year, with the choir giving two outstanding performances. Nobody, having heard these exquisitely delivered pieces, could be in any doubt that the music results this year would be the best ever, with 100% of examinations being awarded A* and A grades.



Director of Music, Dr. Charlotte Exon (centre) pictured with high scoring examination candidates Harriet Smith (left) & Megan Mardon (right)

The nurturing of talent was also reflected in the standard of artwork displayed at this year's **6th Form Art exhibition**. The variety of styles and presentations clearly reflect the sharing of culture which enriches the lives of everyone at Westonbirt.



Prowess on the Field

Sporting activity was, as usual, a major feature throughout the summer. One of the highlights was the organisation and hosting of the **Prep Schools' Rounders Tournament**. 15 prep schools were able to take part competitively at all levels of play, and 5 pitches were in action all day. Every girl taking part received a certificate and there were prizes for the winning teams.



Director of Studies, Mr. Gluning, presents prizes at the Prep Schools' Rounders Tournament)

Daisy definitely pulls it off!



Does Mr. Scobloski (Alice Dymova) know that Daisy and Trixi (Amelia Schuler, left & Georgie Fenn, right) are concealed under his desk?

The end of the summer term saw the Drama Department put on their annual junior production, which this year was 'Daisy Pulls it Off' by Denise Deegan, in conjunction with Samuel French Ltd. Under excellent guidance and direction from **Mrs. Shirley English** (former Head of Drama) the show was put together during the 3 days of enrichment in the last week of term. There was a true creative buzz, with students involved in all aspects of production, including set building (by **Jenny Edwards**, Year 11) technical support (by Year 8) and props management (from **Ellie Menezes**, Year 7). Our talented juniors presented with ease the unfolding events at Grangewood School for Girls (similar to Westonbirt in many ways!) and grateful thanks go to Shirley English for producing the play in Mrs. Toghill's absence.

Voyage en Normandie

Trips abroad often bring out the best in students, and this year's visit to Normandy was no exception. Beautiful weather and exemplary behaviour, along with hard work and a healthy curiosity, made this trip a resounding success. Students made a great effort to make purchases using correct French vocabulary, and enjoyed seeing French culture at first hand. The visit to **Bayeux** (cathedral and museum, to see the tapestry) was particularly enjoyed, whilst the study of World War II was made movingly real by the visit to **Arromanches** harbour.



Holford Triumphs at Sports Day

The success of Holford House was especially poignant for **Miss Urquhart** (pictured right), who retired this summer after 21 years as Senior and Holford Housemistress. She received the warm send-off she so richly deserved, and is now thoroughly enjoying her new life at home in the north west of Scotland.



MOVING ON!

The highlight of the Association's year was the **80th Anniversary** celebrations held on 20th June. The largest number of Old Girls ever seen at Westonbirt began to arrive from midday onwards, enjoying the sunshine of a perfect summer's day. Old Girls, husbands and extended families picnicked throughout the grounds, creating a wonderfully lively atmosphere.

After lunch there were guided historical tours of the house plus 'scratch choir' rehearsals in the Great Hall, organised by **Ali Warrington Smyth (Hocking)** and directed by **Petronella Burnett-Brown (Dittmer)**.



Old Girls Veronica Parsons, Anne Rabagliati and Madge Smith, cut the cake made and iced by Angela Potter (nee Tracy) pictured to the right

At 4 pm **Mary Henderson** formally welcomed everyone and the 50 cm celebration cake was cut, by three of the oldest 'Old Girls,' **Veronica Parsons (Glover), Anne Rabagliati (Marshall)** and **Madge Smith**.

The day drew to a close with an amazing concert, including many favourites from the School Choir repertoire with organ accompaniment by **Louise Matley** and solos by **Helen Owens (Kucharek)** and her cousin **Mari-Ann Kucharek**. There were two virtuoso violin performances by Petronella, accompanied on the piano by Ali Warrington Smyth, and the finale was a rousing rendering of 'Jerusalem.'

The wonderful grounds, the warm welcome from the school, the musical highlights and the summer sunshine all ensured a very successful, enjoyable and memorable day.



Something new for the Old Girls: herbaceous borders, set out in the original Holford plans, have been added to the Italian Gardens

Thank you to Mrs. Mary Phillips for the information in this report.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

WINTER 2010 - 2011

Thursday 21 - Sunday 31 October
School Gardens Open Daily (11am - 4pm)
Gardens

Wednesday 3 November (7pm)
Kenton Cool Lecture (See left)
Orangery

Sunday 7 November
House Music Competition (2pm)
Orangery
RHW & FOW Bonfire Night Party (6pm)
School Grounds

Friday 12 November (4-8pm)
FOW Festive Fayre and Wine Tasting
Orangery

Saturday 13 November (7.30pm)
Music at Westonbirt - Oriol Singers
Great Hall

Friday 26 November (6pm)
Enchanted Christmas Event
(Choirs & Samba Band)
Arboretum

Saturday 27 November (7pm)
6th Form Charity Ball
Ground Floor Main Building

Sunday 28 November (5pm)
Advent Service
St. Catherine's Church
Followed by St. Andrew's Night Reels
(6.30pm)

Friday 3 December (5.30pm)
FOW Christmas Drinks Party
(including Choir & Jazz Band)
Library

Thursday 9 December (8 pm)
Community Carols with Nailsworth
Silver Band
Great Hall

Saturday 11 December (11am)
Celebration of Carols & Readings
Orangery

Friday 21 January (7.30pm)
Lecture 'The Ministry of Food'
Jane Fearnley-Whittingstall
Orangery

Saturday 29 January (7.30pm)
FOW Burns Night
Great Hall

Friday 4 February (7.30 - 10pm)
Music at Westonbirt - 4-MALITY
(Percussion quartet)
Orangery

Westonbirt School, Tetbury, Gloucestershire GL8 8QG
T 01666 880333
E office@westonbirt.gloucs.sch.uk
www.westonbirt.gloucs.sch.uk

News from the Friends

(From Sally Moreland, Chairman)



On Friday 15th October the *Friends of Westonbirt School Committee* organised a post-lecture supper following the fascinating Westonbirt Lecture given by **Jamie Murray Wells** (pictured left). On Saturday 16th October guests were, once again, well entertained

by the Murder by Candlelight Theatre Company at our *Murder Mystery Evening*.

This year's **Bonfire Party** is being held on **Sunday 7th November** and is an evening organised with Rose Hill Westonbirt Parents Association (RWPA). **The Festive Fayre and Wine Tasting Evening** with Thomas Panton Wine Merchants will take place on **Friday 12th November** - admission is free and the chosen charity is Jamie's Farm.

St Andrew's Night will be celebrated on Sunday 28th November. This is an informal evening with dancing to George Buchanan and his excellent band and a good opportunity to practice reeling for Burns Night.

Our last event of the term is the **Christmas Drinks Party on Friday 3rd December**.

Details are emailed on a regular basis and event flyers are on display in reception but if you would like to join us and have not received details then please contact:

reception@westonbirt.gloucs.sch.uk

We do hope that we may look forward to welcoming you, your family and friends to our evenings.

World Challenge Expedition to Southern Peru Summer 2011

A team of 12 girls: **Ellen Cen, Sophie Falkenburg, Zoe Garling, Laura Green, Annabel Jardine-Blake, Hannah Lawrence, Alice Marsh, Georgina McCulloch, Lexi Noon, Christine Sun, Fiona Vincent** and **Natasha Williams** will embark on an amazing journey of self-discovery to southern Peru with World Challenge in the summer of 2011. As well as experiencing the culture of southern Peru, the team will be trekking at altitude and, during the Project Phase of the expedition, they plan to help the local community at an orphanage.

Westonbirt School World Challenge Team are hosting:

Kenton Cool, the only European to summit Everest 8 times and to summit twice in a season

Wednesday 3rd November

Drinks: 7pm | Lecture 7:30pm

Tickets: £8

Please call: 0844 557 7755

(GOSWOLD OUTDOOR 10% DISCOUNT VOUCHERS AVAILABLE AT THE EVENT)



Westonbirt Christmas Cards for Sale



£5 per pack of 10 cards, available from the school office