



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

SENIOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Friday 5th July 2024

Dear Barney Parents and Guardians,

If there is ever a better way to conclude an entire academic year with a whole School Sports Day, I have yet to find it, and it would have to be quite astounding if it were to rival what we have witnessed today.

Over 700 students, hundreds of parents, supporters and staff, all willing their children and respective Houses on, but within an overall spirit of camaraderie and community. It is a microcosm of all things Barney, with a wonderful combination of healthy competition mixed with grace in victory and magnanimity in defeat.

At the end of my journey, I repeat my thanks to you from my speech earlier today, for your unwavering support of me and our School throughout my time at Barney. I include a copy of my speech below for those who were unable to attend today, in which I express my gratitude and appreciation for you and your commitment to Barney. It helps make this place very special and unique and is another reason why I want so desperately for my children to remain as Barnardians.

Have a great summer, continue to embrace and support our magnificent School, and I look forward to seeing many of you on the other side when the time comes.

For now, as Old Barnardian Camilla Royle wrote at the end of her poem 'Barnardian' prior to her departure last year, and which has been read out in Year Group Assemblies this week, "it's been an absolute blast."

Yours,
Tony



“I’M GOING TO MISS THIS PLACE. THIS IS MY
DREAM JOB AT MY DREAM SCHOOL”
- Tony’s farewell speech

I’m going to miss this place. This is my dream job at my dream school. It’s because of my love of this place that I am stepping away as Head. I desperately want my children to be Barnardians and with Annabel joining Senior School in September, and with Georgina and William following shortly after, I want to be their Dad as opposed to their Headmaster. As I’ve also explained to many of you, I also don’t want to be expelling boyfriends, which I would absolutely do.

In my role, I have spoken to hundreds and hundreds of parents and have asked them what they want for their children. In almost every single response, one way or another, the same three things are stated. Firstly, they want their child to be happy, to have self-esteem, being who they are and who they want to be, comfortable in their own skin. Secondly, they want them to have confidence without arrogance. To be able to grasp opportunities, take risks, try new things without the fear of failing, and when they do fail, they have the confidence and resilience to get up and go again. Thirdly, they want them to be life ready, armed with the skills to not just survive in this rapidly changing world we live in, but to thrive in it.

Those are the three things I want for my children as a parent, and those are the reasons I want my children to remain as Barnardians, for this is the best place I know that combines those three things.

Barney possesses that magical combination of culture, ethos, character, kindness, togetherness and a total absence of pretension, although I recognise that final statement is slightly undermined as I stand here with my own oil painted portrait! But our USP is that intangible feel, the vibe, our sense of belonging, our community. In challenging times we want, even more than usual, to feel a sense of belonging, and to be part of something bigger than ourselves, and that is what this place is about.

What is also so unique and rarely matched is how closely aligned all those involved in the school are; the governors, the senior leadership team, the teachers, the ancillary staff and you the parents. You understand what we try and do and you fully support us.

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We are humbled and wholly aware of the investment, financial and emotional, that you make to send your children here, and I hope you don't think we ever take that for granted. As this investment potentially gets even more challenging in the coming years, it is possible that tensions may heighten further and this can lead to division. We must fight that urge. Instead, we must continue to collaborate and to communicate together, with transparency and trust at the core. The old adage of it 'takes a village... to raise a child' has never been truer and you do not know how disproportionate your support is of the School. It is not the pay packet or the long holidays that sustain teachers; it is the warmth and generosity of you, the pupils and the parents, and we, and I, have been exceptionally lucky to call upon this throughout my tenure and I thank you for this.

That support will be needed going forward, and I thank you in advance for getting behind my successor, David Cresswell. He is, first and foremost, and I say this as someone who has known him for 15 years, just a great guy. Having spent the last seven years with a range of Heads from up and down the country, of varying ability, I can assure you, he is also an immensely impressive man, and we are very lucky to have him. As a parent, I am hugely reassured that he is going to be the one leading us through the next few months and years, along with an outstanding governing body, senior team, and wider staff body.

I do not plan on being a total stranger, and, when the time is right, I will join you as a fellow parent cheering on from the sidelines and I will be this place's biggest supporter and advocate. I also hope to remain involved in the burgeoning Barnardian Society, looking to form even closer links, professionally and socially, between all constituent bodies of our community: alumni, former parents, former staff and current parents, and I hope to see many of you at future events.

So as I depart exit stage left, I hope you feel, most importantly, that I have cared. Cared about our School and our people. I may not have got every decision right, but I know I can put my head on the pillow knowing any decision I took was what I thought was in the best interests of our children and our School. It has been the greatest privilege of my life leading this School and looking after your children.
It's now time to look after mine.

Thank you.



CADETS TAKE TOP SPOT IN CAMP COMPETITION

Thirty Barney cadets had a fantastic week-long CCF camp based at Queen Elizabeth Barracks near York. They took part in command tasks, obstacle courses, adventure training and a range of other activities allowing the cadets to build upon their existing military skills and put into practice lessons from the APC syllabus they have learnt throughout the year.

After a number of competitions, the Barney CCF were awarded the prize of Best Cadet Force. Well done everyone involved!





GENERAL ELECTION 2024

What could be more fitting than using the final HeadSpace sessions of the year for a mock election, the day before the country goes to the polls?

Five brave Year 12 Politics students, Charlie, Harrison, Alexandru, Anna-Charlotte, and Archie combed election manifestos to prepare speeches and present the policies of the five main parties in England. This was especially impressive for two of that number, who were presenting in a second language.

Each year group listened to what the candidates had to say and were encouraged to think critically about each party's policies, and what vision for society each party offered.

Voting was done by secret ballot, using a ballot box that was made in 1928 - a significant year, as this was the year in which both men and women could first vote on equal terms.

Our mock election was won by the Conservative Party, the results are displayed in Central Hall. Though the results are of interest, it is the deepening of students' political understanding and knowledge that is the most important part of the process, and Mrs. Campbell has been delighted with the number of students who have since spoken to her or messaged her about all things political. Keep up that curiosity about the world around you.



Duke of Edinburgh - Silver & Gold Expeditions

It's been a very busy end to the term for those students in Years 11 and 12 who completed their Duke of Edinburgh's Award assessed expedition. Record numbers of participants saw a total 58 students complete an expedition at either Silver or Gold levels.

The Gold assessment had a 100% pass rate with 21 participants relishing the challenges that the weather and the terrain posed. It took place in the central and northeastern areas of the Yorkshire Dales, taking in the villages of Austwick, Malham, Horton and Kettlewell, finishing at the picturesque settlement of Thorralby. One group took in five summits over 2000ft: Ingleborough, Whernside, Plover Hill, Penyghent, and Buckden Pike.

The assessor's reports noted: "The route took in terrain of all the characteristics of the Dales, both limestone and gritstone, which was tackled in a most competent manner. Overall, groups covered significant distance with many high-level routes incorporating two wild camping experiences. The weather was hot and demanded constant attention to protection from the sun. Timing and navigation were excellent, ensuring the full eight hours were taken up each day. Camping standards and menus were excellent, and it was pleasing to see tents erected and food being cooked as soon as the team arrived on site." In their debrief, "The groups reflected enthusiastically about their venture, relating the events of the four days, and on how the team worked together and gelled as a cohesive unit."

The Silver expeditions were also through some challenging terrain in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale. A total of 37 Year 11 students completed the challenge in much cooler and more variable conditions than the Gold expedition, which threw up issues of its own for those involved. Groups walked from east to west, so rising steadily from the start to the north of Richmond, to the finish in either Keld or Raven's Seat. It was great to see how many of the participants rose to the challenge, digging in to ensure they achieved their goal.

It is difficult to pick out individuals, or teams, as each is different, but I am sure that every last participant has had an unforgettable experience (and hopefully in a good way!). Well done to each and every one.

DURHAM SCHOOLS' BIG BOOK BASH

A team of four (Jenson, Iso-bel, Evelyn and George) represented the School at the Durham Schools' Big Book Bash on Tuesday.

The event was opened by the Lisette Auton, author of one of the books they had read who also ran a writing workshop as part of the carousel of activities and awarded prizes.



HOWZAT!

On Thursday, we were proud to host the ECB level 1 Umpire Course that featured 23 of our girls from Barney. This achievement highlights their dedication in the game, as the game continues to grow for girls and women's cricket.

This marks a significant step in their cricket journey. Congratulations to our aspiring umpires!



PRIZE WINNING ESSAY

Isabel from Year 10 has won the Teesdale Rotary Essay prize.

Colin Dunningham (pictured) from the Teesdale Rotary Society visited School to present her prize.

Isabel's essay will be published in the Mercury and on the Durham Wildlife Trust website.



CHOIR IN HARMONY AT YORK MINSTER

The School's Chapel Choir travelled to York Minster to sing the service of Choral Evensong. The choir sang a diverse selection of music by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, Sarah MacDonald and Jacob Ewens, including the Chapel Choir favourite, 'O God what offering shall I give'. It was wonderful to welcome Archie, who starts in the Barney Sixth Form next year, to accompany the choir on the grand organ in the Minster.



2024-25 Term Dates

Michaelmas Term 2024

Wednesday 4th September
Senior School New Pupils' Induction Day

Thursday 5th September
Term begins
(Boarders return 4th September 16:00-20:00)

28th - 29th September
Exeat Weekend

Thursday 17th October
Half Term begins

Wednesday 30th October
Second Half begins
(Boarders return 29th October 16:00-20:00)

23rd - 24th November
Exeat Weekend

Friday 13th December
Term ends

Lent Term 2025

Wednesday 8th January
Term begins
(Boarders return 7th January 16:00-20:00)

25th - 26th January
Exeat Weekend

Friday 14th February
Half Term begins

Monday 24th February
Second Half begins
(Boarders return 23rd February 16:00-20:00)

Friday 28th March
Term ends

Trinity Term 2025

Wednesday 23rd April
Term begins
(Boarders return 22nd April 16:00-20:00)

3rd, 4th & 5th May
Exeat including May Day

Friday 23rd May
Half Term begins

Monday 2nd June
Second Half begins
(Boarders return 1st June 16:00-20:00)

Saturday 5th July
Term ends
(Prep School term ends 4th July 16:00)

