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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Within a few days the trees have begun changing colour more noticeably although large swathes of the countryside are still green from a distance. Some roses still linger and show well by Old Chapel. But the lengthy drought ended on Saturday with a wet morning, followed by glorious sunshine for our sports fixtures. (When the School returned from Wales in 1943 a Master wrote 'A first sight of Bromsgrove, washed by the pale golden sun of autumn under a bright blue sky piled high with white cumulus, is unforgettable'). Yesterday morning was very chilly but with wet, windy westerlies now take hold of the weather. The L4ths walk the Malvern Hills on Wednesday in one of the great annual highlights of the year so we hope for better conditions than those forecast.

After their success at Rockingham in July, it is good again to record the exploits of our electric car and its young driving team. Last Wednesday they took the new look electric car to Aintree race circuit at Liverpool. We were confident that we had already qualified for the International finals at Goodwood based on previous results but wanted to make sure with our last qualifier of the season at the home of the Grand National. Mr Broadbent writes:

"When we arrived it was nice to hear other teams whispering about 'The Chicken' being the car to beat as it was theoretically the fastest Kitcar at the event. We unloaded the car, took it through scrutineering with no issues or problems to solve and could go straight out for the practice race immediately. During this time the new sprocket was tested, pit changes perfected and our new driver (Toby Lam) introduced to the racing experience. Race 1 was a disappointment but in Race 2 we moved into the lead, fell back a spot due to pit changes and then regained the lead again and this happened for most of the race up until the last 10 minutes when we lost most battery power allowing the others to overtake us. We finished the race in a respectable 14<sup>th</sup> place out of 40 and 4<sup>th</sup> in the Kitcar Category out of 20. The rough surface and wind really affected the car's final distance but we were pleased with the results which gave us some positive feedback about the added modifications. Although we did not win the Kitcar category we won a trophy for the 'Best Portfolio' submitted and we have indeed earned the right to race in the International Finals at Glorious Goodwood in Sussex at the start of October where we will be up against cars from America, Poland and Ireland to name but a few".

Again we are very proud of the team who comprised Ed Shinner, Brook Rotheroe, Alex Spurgeon, James Bromley, Aled Luckman and new comer Toby Lam. Many congratulations - we wish them every success.

The elements were very kind for Field Day weekend. It was good to visit the CCF at the Nesscliffe base in North Shropshire last Monday. Vast and numerous ammunition buildings remain from the First and Second World Wars now set in glorious countryside and woodland. Remarkably, over a third of the School were there accompanied by many staff and other military helpers for which we were most grateful. U4th Pupils enjoyed First Aid, the Assault Course, Leadership Exercises led by the RAF, firing on the range and camouflage skills. More experienced cadets fought a battle in open countryside. Our RAF Section learnt survival techniques - how to light a fire, making fresh bread with honey for breakfast over an open fire and sleeping under plastic sheets. Senior cadets led juniors by fine example. Well done to all involved

Meanwhile, Civilian D of E students enjoyed beautiful weather as they walked over the Stiperstones and Long Mynd in Shropshire. Most routes walked sections of either the Shropshire or Jack Mytton way, or both. Challenged to photograph and identify plants and birds on their first day, the winning group were able to find; three varieties of heather, gorse, rush, rowan and mountain pansy in addition to spotting a

Chairman of Governors: Mr S Towe CBE

buzzard. Their prize was a marshmallow, whipped cream and biscuit topped hot chocolate, complete with flake. The trip proved to be a valuable training exercise and the lessons learnt will be utilised when they travel to Exmoor for the qualifying expedition next year. Well done to all.

Last Tuesday 12 AS Politics students attended a Radio 5 Live event at the Alexandra Theatre Birmingham, linked with the Conservative Party Conference. Hosted by Stephen Nolan, and live on Radio 5, students were confronted with a panel of politicians, including Ministers for Health, Business, and Andrew Mitchell, ex-Chief Whip, most famous for the 'plebgate' scandal. The students were part of a handpicked audience and were able to observe Ministers deftly avoiding questions they did not want to respond to, as well as being subjected to fierce cross-questioning from the locals.

U4th artists visited Compton Verney House, an 18th-century country mansion in Warwickshire, which has been converted into an art gallery. Miss McWilliams writes:

"The late September weather was extremely kind to us on our trip. We were able to picnic on the beautiful lawn beside the lake after our guided tour of the Folk Art exhibition. We saw art from many areas of culture from all round the world, from elaborate shop signs, to shell casings which had been intricately sculpted into art pieces by men in the First World War trenches. Pupils were encouraged to engage in discussions such as 'What is Art?' and were taught the differences between what was considered 'High Art' and how Folk Art had come into being, as crafts and creations of the common man. Some moving pieces were the tapestries and quilts of sailors depicting their ships, recording the triumphs of battles and the names of the dead and captured. Most thought-provoking was the notion that many of the pieces created by soldiers and sailors could only be made with the limited materials they had available on their ships, submarines and in the trenches - making pupils consider how we might use our available materials more inventively and how fortunate we are to have the resources we have. After lunch pupils worked on creating their own sampler, using textiles and sewing, in response to what they had seen. All worked diligently in the short time we had there but will have the opportunity to complete their pieces in class. After this activity there was an opportunity before we left to appreciate the beautiful architecture of the stately home and some pupils produced sketches of the building.

All behaved immaculately and a member of the public even commented upon how well behaved our pupils were, which always makes us glow with pride and also count our lucky stars that we are fortunate enough to work with such pleasant children".

The Old Bromsgrovians v the School annual golf match at the delightful Blackwell Club was a highlight of last week. For the first time for 8 years the School won - Tommy Robinson and Patrick Dolan lost 2 and 1, Lawrence Hill and Chase Edwards won 5 and 4, Sam Bellamy and Harrison Hill won by 2 holes and L4ths Alfie Broadhurst and Richard Vaughan won 4 and 3 leaving the match result at 3-1. It remains a unique occasion - boys of all age ranges played OBs of various vintages. Anthony Webb made a gracious speech on behalf of the OB team, followed by a real Captain's speech from Harrison Hill (who had obviously picked up good tips on his flying visit to the Ryder Cup). It was good to again see each group play the 18<sup>th</sup> hole and then to join them at the 19<sup>th</sup> for dinner and to present the trophy which was re-awarded on Friday at Assembly. I was exceptionally proud - yet again - of the boys who were outstanding, dignified company at a formal dinner and occasion. OBs were very impressed with both their sportsmanship and general bearing, courtesy and friendliness. Golf is in great heart at School with a number of other talented young players waiting in the wings.

In the County Championships the U16 girls played well to defeat RGS Worcester and Malvern St James and drew against King's Worcester but a defeat against Malvern College meant that they did not qualify for the zonal round.

Squash continues to expand with over 30 players regularly playing in the internal school ladder and two senior teams representing the School for the first time in fixtures against St Edward's Oxford. Although both teams lost it was very pleasing to see the progress made by individual players.

The impressive run in the Aegon National Cup unfortunately came to an end for the U15 girls' tennis team who lost to Rugby School.

Our badminton teams continued their excellent start to the season against a challenging Cheltenham College side. 18 boys and girls (from L4th to U6th) represented the School in 3 teams; the girls' and

boys' second teams won and despite the boys' first team losing against stiff competition, we came away with an overall victory of 2 matches to 1.

The boys' rugby teams produced some excellent rugby winning all seven fixtures played against local rivals Solihull School. The 1st XV game was a rather scrappy affair but the School still managed to score 4 tries in a 27-0 victory. The U14Cs won and the U16Cs drew against King Edward's Birmingham.

In the 5 hockey matches played against Cheltenham Ladies' College there were wins for the 1st XI and U15A teams; the U14Bs drew 3-3. The 1st XI maintained their 100% record with an excellent victory. We attacked from the first minute to the last, scoring 6 great goals to win the match 6-1.

The senior girls' netball team progressed in the National Cup playing good netball to defeat a strong Stockport Grammar School team 33-23

Well done to Lois Brown and Ellen Wright who have been selected for the U19 West Midlands' Netball Regional Performance Academy and West Midlands' Warriors which is the team that competes in the National Performance League. Lois has also been given the honour of captaining the Warriors. She is also coaching the Worcestershire County U12 Netball Satellite Academy.

Congratulations to the debating pairings of Matthew Hegarty and Maddie Barber Fray, Eden Thomas and Lydia Wright, who won their first round of the Taylor Trophy debating competition. Matt and Maddie opposed the motion: 'This House Would Legalise the Sale of Human Organs', while Eden and Lydia proposed that 'All Farms Should Be Organic'. Both teams now go on to the semi-finals later this term.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visits to Lupton House and School House last week. Heads of Houses Harrison Frost and Killian Ormonde respectively were the perfect hosts.

Well done to the many parents and pupils who helped beautify the Memorial Chapel for our Harvest Festival Services last week. Produce was donated to local charities – New Starts and The Trussell Trust Food Bank – and £330 at the Harvest Service for 'Street Child Africa.'

The Chapel Choir – with record numbers – led our worship with great dignity and sang a beautiful anthem by Elgar '*Fear Not, O Land.*' The Brass Group played '*Jerusalem*' at the end.

Last Thursday our SSI Mr Farnes and Cadet CSM James Whitehead attended the Pre-Prep World War II Day. Mr Farnes wrote:

"We had been asked to attend and provide some drill, in the fashion of the Home Guard, so we put on our uniforms and off we went to teach some 6-7 years olds drill. We took half of the year group for 30 minutes each, and in that time, we had them mastering the basics of foot drill, and a small march. Also Armed with Rifles (Dowels), they mastered the art of shoulder and ground arms. The pre-prep pupils did extremely well, and we look forward to seeing them in the CCF. As members of the CCF we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves".

Musicians and readers also assisted in a CAS led 'A walk down memory lane' tea party for old folk from local residential homes. Well done to Teresa Gubern Gonzalez and Marie Kriegler (the main organisers), Florence Perramond, John Gunton, Ellie Saker, Eleanor Bingham, Nicola Morris and Cherry Chan. The readers were Olivia Bond and Ellie Birch, singers Kate Duffy, Lucy Kennett, Emma Reeves, Olivia Wormald and violinist Brittany Collie. The Brass Group also performed. Great service to our local community.

Matt Osborn (WS 2014) left to join the Lee Westwood Golf Academy in June and it was remarkable to hear his recent news. On Monday last week he met Lee Westwood who was presenting prizes at the finals of the Lee Westwood Junior Golf Series, and there is a great photo of them together. The students then all travelled up to St Andrew's and Carnoustie to assist with the Dunhill Links European Tour event as part of their work experience programme. On Tuesday Matt was assigned to walk the course as a course marshal with Rory McIlroy, the world number 1, who Matt said was so down to earth and pleasant. Then on Friday his task was to walk as marshal alongside Sir Nick Faldo... now that has probably made a few golfing parents envious.

We look forward to welcoming pupils from our German Exchange School in Potsdam at the end of this week.

We wish the Chapel Choir well for their CD recording at the end of the week.

## NOTICES

- 1. An Informal Concert takes place tomorrow in Old Chapel at 5.30 pm;** all are welcome. Refreshments will be available.
- 2. The U6th Parents' Evening** takes place on **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October**. Please see the attached letter from Mr Dowling. Please ask if unsure of any arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Bowen



**Deputy Headmaster**

## PS

In 1939 in Wales the Field Club 'enjoyed watching ravens, buzzards and peregrine falcons. In those days it was also easy to find snipe, plovers, curlews and redstarts'. The highlight was that 'we were exceptionally fortunate to observe a pair of kites through glasses for about a quarter of an hour.' There were just a handful of pairs then and they teetered on the edge of extinction, unlike today. Also topical today - 'Our third expedition was a badger dig, and we duly set off under the leadership of Mr. Williams, ex-huntsman, armed with spades and ready for a long afternoon's labour. We got the hard labour but not the badger'.

The '*Bromsgrovian*' included many items of interest from O.B.s serving the Empire.

Rhinos have vanished from much of Africa and in the wild a population of perhaps 400,000 a century ago is down to 5000. An OB in Kenya in 1934 wrote this passage which horrifies us today:

'I obtained a fortnight's leave and decided to try for rhino, never having seen or heard one as yet. After a day's train journey and three days march, I arrived at my hunting ground. We suddenly heard a snort from a ravine. My first sight of a rhino! On reaching the top a short stalk gave me a very easy shot. So far so good; first evening, first shot, first rhino. Next morning we literally bumped into two more at thirty yards. I chose the heaviest looking horns and let fly. It stumbled, whipped round and made off, but I was able to put another shot in it as it turned. But for the life of me we couldn't see it. The grey hide and grey thorn blended so marvellously. It was beyond hope so I put in another bullet to make sure. This is where the fun started. Out rushed Number Two looking most annoyed. A full licence only allows you to shoot two so I was completely flummoxed. I felt a fool and a very frightened one. It immediately rushed forward. Three times it came to within seven yards of me but each time returned to its dead companion. I had shot the female but why the male did not charge is more than I can say. A few months later it was the female who would not leave her mate and as I was pressed for time I had to shoot her too. Whether this behaviour is due to marital affection, pure stupidity or a complete ignorance of death is a question still to be solved'.