



BELL BAXTER HIGH SCHOOL
Bell Baxter Diary
25th November, 2015



Remembrance Service

On Sunday 8th November, 2015 Mr. Black, along with our School Captains, attended the annual Service of Remembrance held at the war memorial in Cupar.

A group of musicians from school were also in attendance to play during the service. This year we helped in the organisation of the event by providing the order of service. Senior Prefects were also in attendance to distribute the sheets to members of the public. The service is always a real community event and in recent years has been exceptionally well attended. As a school it is very appropriate for us to play a full part in this very significant event to mark our war dead.

Lessons from Auschwitz Project

Two of our S6 pupils, Olivia Downes and Louise Carlton, have recently returned from Poland after visiting the Auschwitz concentration and death camp in their role as school ambassadors representing the Holocaust Education Trust - this is their report.

The group explores the lessons of the Holocaust and its relevance for today. The Holocaust Education Trust aims to increase knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust for young people and to clearly highlight what can happen if prejudice and racism become acceptable. The importance of identity in times of conflict and crises is being highlighted. We discuss the Holocaust by referring to its victims by the social groups the Nazis intended to destroy, as opposed to them being human beings. This brings to mind the international refugee crisis that is happening today.

The aim of our project is to encourage society to see these victims as being people, rather than refugees or immigrants. We want to make a symbol of the importance of acknowledging the individual, widespread disasters, and have chosen the boat, the means by which so many have escaped their own dangerous countries, to express support. Staff and pupils are being encouraged to write their name on this boat in order to highlight the fact that, regardless of race, class, gender or religion, we are all human beings, and it is this that defines us, and the victims of these human tragedies.

Our project is currently on display at the front of the school.

All Hail Macbeth!

Congratulations to cast and crew who performed their very successful version of the Scottish play, on Tues 17th November at the Lochgelly Centre as part of the Shakespeare Schools Festival. A cast of S3-6 pupils, directed by S6 pupil Vaila Anderson, were praised highly by the audience and professional actors, technical staff and director who were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the acting and directing and the performance as a whole. Vaila has summed up her reflections on the experience below:

"When I was first approached to take on the play it was incredibly daunting. However, I was so grateful that the teachers trusted me with such a big task considering that the plays they have put on at the Festival in the past have been such a great success. I absolutely loved that I was given full creative license and could take the play anywhere I wanted.

Although it was stressful at times, I couldn't have worked with a better cast. They were so patient and I was so grateful that they put their trust in me throughout the blocking process, no matter how crazy the ideas I put forward were. I really wanted to take the play beyond a literal interpretation and highlight the power and manipulation Lady Macbeth has over her husband. Therefore, I decided to set it in the 1950's (the time of the present Queen's Coronation) and have Lady Macbeth as a house wife of that time. Thus, the whole idea of her being a housewife was contradicted by the fact she was the more powerful of the two; she was more powerful as Queen than Macbeth was as King. We created a fifties atmosphere through Frank Sinatra songs, original music composed by an S2 pupil and strong red and black costumes. The technical effects, operated by Lewis Snowden, added immensely to the impact of the tragedy.

Parent Council News

Toy Drive

Bell Baxter Parent Council and the school are teaming up to support this year's Toy Drive, run by Fife Council's Children & Families Team to collect Christmas gifts for children and families in need and who might otherwise go without. We appeal for support from all parents and pupils to donate gifts, particularly for boys and/or girls of secondary school age. These can be handed in to the school's Main Office until the end of November, should be new and unwrapped, and can be of any value. Gift ideas include toys/games, toiletries and make-up, clothing, accessories and gift vouchers.

Christmas Hamper

The Parent Council is again running its Christmas Hamper raffle during this year's round of Parents' Evenings. Tickets can be purchased at the Parent Council table each night. Thanks to local businesses including Lidl, Co-op, Tesco, PepsiCo (Quaker Oats), Funky Rascal, Fisher & Donaldson, JT Roger, Luvians, Wee Kingdom, Little Venice and Minicks for their generous contributions so far.

500 Club Hamper Competition

A second Christmas hamper is also up for grabs in a special competition to attract more members to this in-school lottery.

Parents/carers will shortly receive an email encouraging them to sign up for the 500 Club (via mandate) - with a hamper full of festive goodies on offer to one lucky recipient. For only £12 per year, per member, this lottery raises almost £2,000 for the school each year - with half the money used as cash prizes, the other going to school funds.

The next meeting of the Parent Council takes place on Tuesday 1st December, starting at 7pm in the school's Conference Room. All Bell Baxter parents/carers welcome.

The India Experience 2015!

From 9th to 21st October this year 18 pupils and 4 staff from Bell Baxter High School visited Delhi, Bodhgaya, Varanasi, Agra and Jaipur. Our sixth trip proved to be as unique an experience as ever and one that continues to enthuse and inspire its participants. This group was no exception and was characterised by its cohesive and positive nature. The pupils' enthusiastic, receptive and mutually supportive attitude created an experience to remember with a broad smile.

Seema, our invaluable escort in India, and subject of countless stories and anecdotes, has always been a great favourite with our pupils and once again very quickly stole their hearts. Anyone who has enjoyed visiting this country will tell you that India is difficult to describe and really needs to be experienced to be understood. It is an assault on the senses in every way possible; full of amazing 'highs' alongside harrowing sights that have you digging deep into your resolve. Staff and pupils had to cope with a never-ending variety of unfamiliar experiences; ranging from thrilling to upsetting on a daily basis.

This unfamiliarity became apparent on our very first day! An hour into our tour and we found ourselves on rickshaws amidst a Delhi traffic jam. Oppressive heat coupled the sheer volume of noise and humanity associated with the narrow streets of Old Delhi was an instant introduction to India. The air thick with unfamiliar pungent smells, the overcrowded tiny streets crammed with vehicles of every kind, the free-roaming dogs, goats and cows can be quite scary for the initiated, yet all of the pupils fully embraced their experience and were ready for more!

However, what has remained with the staff, is the way all of the pupils embraced the spiritual atmospheres of both Bodhgaya and Varanasi and understood the significance of Hindu and Buddhist actions of reverence and reflection. They lit butter-lamps in memory of one of the founders of Samye Ling, they experimented with walking and seated meditation, listened to Buddha's teachings and paid respect to Buddha in the traditional manner. This enhanced both their own, and the 'group experience' in these very special places. It made us realise what a delightful group of people we had brought with us.

Staff and pupils will have a different perspective on life. You cannot help but reassess what is important in life when you are confronted with the absolute beauty of the Taj Mahal in Agra or the Amber Palace in Jaipur, having also viewed the piles of rubbish, the homeless, the disabled, the unwanted roaming dogs, the apparently abandoned children all vying for space in crowded Indian streets. It is difficult not to question life's values.

Diary dates

S1 Parents' Evenings – 2nd and 9th December.