

BERKHAMPSSTEAD
SCHOOL
MAGAZINE

AUTUMN TERM
2021

BLAZER

Christmas

IT'S THE MOST
WONDERFUL TIME
OF THE YEAR

See long, Mrs Agg!

MRS AGG RETIRES
AFTER 26 YEARS

*Join
the club*

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

INSIDE: SPOTLIGHT ON GAYNOR SMITH | DAY NURSERY NEWS | SPORTS REPORTS



Thoughts FROM THE HEAD

We cannot take for granted the joy of being in school, to see engaging and stimulating lessons, to enjoy all the extra-curricular activities and to spend time in the company of wonderful staff and children. It has been a wonderfully busy term filled with fun, activity and hard work. The children have risen to all the challenges set and over recent weeks it has been a thrill to see them in nativity plays, carol services and meeting Father Christmas!

If you were to ask the children what the school motto is, I am certain that they would be able to tell you. They would also be able to explain what it means and, most importantly, what they do to make sure that it is more than just words. 'Perserverantia Vincit' or 'Perseverance brings success' is an important part of what Berky is about and Mrs Andrews, the School's Founder, was very astute in choosing this as the motto... it is as relevant now as it was in 1945. This starts in Early Years where the 'Values Tree' celebrates those children who persevere, who are kind, honest, polite and can be trusted. The highlight of the term is always the awarding of the Sally Lee Kindness Cup for Pre-Prep and the Gill Agg Kindness Cup for Prep - see Page 4 to find out who the recipients were!

This term we have seen kindness and perseverance in abundance. The children and staff have worked hard to learn more about environment and there are now many pupil initiatives to make us more eco-friendly. They have been on numerous trips and visits to learn about how what we learn in school applies to the real world. They have developed their mathematical skills and their language skills which includes developing a love of a Foreign language through the specialist French teaching. At the youngest ages they start to learn about themselves and to develop a curiosity - in the Day Nursery, using aspects of the 'Curiosity Approach' has had a very positive impact. Year 6 pupils achieved fabulous results in the Grammar School entrance tests and in Scholarships and Entrance exams for the Independent Schools. In the Prep, they have played over 80 fixtures just this term!

As the pages that follow in this edition of the Blazer demonstrate, our children are always keen to do all that they can to persevere, be kind and thoughtful and to learn so much about themselves and the world they live in. I hope that you will enjoy reading of their many exploits during the Autumn Term.

Richard Cross

Richard Cross
Headmaster



Spotlight ON GAYNOR SMITH

Gaynor Smith is one of our brilliant Year 2 teachers, and is covering Mrs Toma's maternity leave. Originally from Birmingham, she moved to Cheltenham in 1987 to study History and Religious Studies at the University of Gloucestershire. She is married to Simon and has one daughter, Cassie, who is 24 years old.

What were your first jobs?

My first job was as a Saturday girl in WHSmith in Sutton Coldfield. I sat at the till by the door all day! My next job was working on the record counter in Boots, and then as a student, I was a Saturday girl in Wallis in the Regent Arcade.

What do you love most about being a teacher?

I love working with children, they make me smile and I enjoy their constant enthusiasm and zest for life.

You have been running the Pre-Prep after-school Crafts Club this term. Are you a keen crafter?

I enjoy scrap booking. I'm not a great artist, but I love cutting and sticking, especially with plenty of sequins and glitter!

If you hadn't become a teacher, what would you have liked to have been?

I really enjoy detective dramas and would love to have been a detective - although I would probably only have liked to have been a detective in a drama! As a teenager, I was a big fan of the show 'Moonlighting'!

What were your favourite childhood books?

My favourite books as a child were by Enid Blyton, particularly the 'Famous Five' and 'Malory Towers'. I was in a Famous Five club as a child, and we used to imagine solving crimes!

What do you love about Berky, and Year 2 in particular?

I love the family feel of Berky. Year 2 is a lovely year group as the children become increasingly independent and begin to extend their capacity for discovering and learning new things. New ideas and interests start to emerge and you start to see an increasing awareness of others. Their willingness to share, include others and be kind to each other increases and it's a joy to watch.

You have many skills. Is there anything else you would like to master?

I would love to learn to play the drums. When I was a child, I was in the Girls' Brigade. I always wanted to play the drums, but they made me play the bugle - I think my desire to play the drums stems from this childhood memory!

What else should we know about you?

I'm a big fan of Disney. I love Winnie the Pooh and practically rugby tackled Winnie the Pooh to the ground at the Disneyland 'meet and greet' in Florida! I also love musicals, disco dancing and meeting friends for afternoon tea!



CHRISTMAS HISTORY MYSTERY

Traditionally, Year 2 enjoy an annual History Mystery but, with many of the usual Christmas activities cancelled thanks to Covid, the Prep staff decided to hold a Christmas History Mystery for the first time. On two afternoons, the festively dressed children worked in form teams to complete a variety of puzzles and tasks to reveal the true meaning of Christmas and thereby help Mr Scrooge to become more generous-hearted. Points were also gained for effective teamwork and working independently; the winning forms were 4E and 6H.

A great time was had by all and Mr Scrooge's golden sovereigns were much appreciated; it was also a fitting finale for Mrs Agg who first created the History Mystery twelve years ago. GA

News

FROM AROUND THE SCHOOL

CHARITY NEWS

After some deliberation, the School Council voted to support Maggie's Cheltenham for our local charity, and the World Wide Fund for Nature for this year's global charity. We have also been collecting writing paraphernalia for Pens for Kids UK who send pens and pencils to developing countries across the world. Fundraising activities so far have included carol singing at Waitrose, the Christmas Jumper Day and the Christmas Stamp Competition. Thank you to everyone for contributing so generously.



BEST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

Highly Commended

After a lengthy campaign to encourage our community to vote for us, we were delighted to scoop the runner-up spot in the 'Independent School of the Year' category of the prestigious annual SoGlos Gloucestershire Lifestyle Awards. Although we were pipped to the post by King's, Gloucester, the outcome for us was particularly noteworthy as we were the smallest school by far to reach the finals, and the only one that was solely a Prep School: the other finalists (Dean Close, Cheltenham College, Malvern St James and Rendcomb College) are all combined Prep and Senior Schools. Mr Cross was thrilled and commented, 'I am delighted that the school progressed so far in these prestigious awards. This success is a reflection of the brilliant community of pupils, parents and staff and the exciting Berkhamstead adventure. This is a terrific achievement and we are very proud.'



ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

The highlight of Anti-bullying Week was Odd Socks Day, when everyone - including the Head and the teachers - wore odd socks or jazzy tights! Odd Socks Day was all about encouraging the children to celebrate their individuality, and was a really fun way to raise awareness of the important message. The children have benefitted this term from 'The Big Anti-Bullying Assembly' organised by the Diana Memorial Trust, and others delivered by Mr Cross, Mrs Bareham and Mrs Roddy-Watts. Meanwhile, Mrs Main organised a 'friendship web' for our smallest pupils in Kindergarten whereby each child was asked to say something kind about one of their friends - needless to say the children's comments about one another were delightful! This all-important anti-bullying message is fundamental to everyday life at Berkhamstead, but was highlighted in particular all this week.



KINDNESS CUP

One of our most special and coveted prizes, the Sally Lee Kindness Cup is awarded every half term to a Pre-Prep pupil who has consistently shown care and consideration for others. The Prep School equivalent is named in honour of Deputy Head, Mrs Agg, who cares deeply about our pupils' emotional wellbeing, and is a firm believer in encouraging good citizenship. Since the last issue of the Blazer, the Prep Kindness Cup has been awarded to Eva H and Maisie G, and the Pre-Prep Kindness Cup has been awarded to Edward H and Iris M. Well done to all these exemplary children!

PTA News

It's been lovely to have PTA meetings back again, albeit one virtually, and to meet lots of new parents. Thank you to everyone who has attended and supported the PTA.

Although Covid has sadly stopped our usual events again this term, we have had some great discussions at the meetings on how we can support the school, and this year, our fundraising efforts will go towards the new Prep Garden. The children originally entered a competition to design the garden and a brilliant Year 4 design won. Quotes are being obtained and it is hoped work will start in the New Year ready for the children to start enjoying the garden in the Spring. We are looking forward to the children continuing to be involved in the creation of the garden and, as well as designing it, growing plants and vegetables.

The long-awaited Cycle Scheme will take place in March and all the children in the school will be offered one course, funded by the PTA, on cycling proficiency. This is a great initiative, pitched and pulled together so brilliantly by Mrs Carder-Geddes, and we hope the children will enjoy it!

The Summer Ball will be back in June and it promises to be a fabulous event! Tickets

are selling quickly and we are really excited to be able to celebrate another fab year of Berky altogether.

Sadly at Christmas, we said goodbye to the fabulous Mrs Agg, and I want to take this opportunity to thank her - not only for what she has done for the school - but also the PTA. Mrs Agg has been a superb supporter of the PTA, always giving her time willingly, and memorably, sporting her fabulous elf outfit at each Christmas Fayre! The PTA wouldn't be what it is without her support over the years - Mrs Agg, we thank you for all your support and hard work; you will be sorely missed.

With best wishes,
Joey, PTA Chair



BERKY GETS GREENER

Three Year 6 children applied for the job of Eco Leader and, as they were all hugely involved in promoting eco matters last year, it was with great pleasure that we appointed all three - Hannah, Jacob and Sam - to this most important role. There has been a steady trickle of completed Eco Pledges which demonstrate various families' commitment to the Eco cause in pictures and writing, PowerPoint and video. The children who have received their Eco Warrior badge so far are Sam B, Jacob F, Hannah D and Zoe B (Y6), Chloe H (Y5), Mollie R, Isaac R and Freddie L (Y4), Polly B and Allegra S (Y3). We are hoping that more children will put in the effort to earn their badge in the New Year.

We postponed our big Green Day fundraiser until next term when hopefully we will be in a better, less Covid-ridden position to carry out our plans. We did, however, run an Eco Christmas Acrostic Poem Competition in the Prep Department, for which there were many very inventive entries. Although it was hard to choose the winners out of so many brilliant poems, the following were selected: Atlas M (Y3), Tom R (Y4), Sophia B (Y5) and Isla R (Y6).

Meanwhile, the Pre-Prep Eco Committee - led by Miss Martinez - organised an Eco-Friendly Arts and Crafts Day for Years 1

and 2 at the end of term. This was great fun, as were the resultant creations!

We are very grateful that the Friends of Berkhamstead (our PTA) have granted us a substantial sum of money for creating and equipping the Prep wildlife/wellbeing garden: a heartfelt thank you from us all. The layout of the garden will be based on Nancy B's winning design - created by her in Y4 - and will include whole class seating, a water feature and many other eco-friendly elements; we look forward to seeing this grow and develop in 2022 and to witnessing the local wildlife enjoying their new habitat. GA and LVW



HARVEST FESTIVAL

Harvest Festival, at the beautiful All Saints' Church, was a very special occasion as it marked the first time the whole school community had gathered together since the beginning of the pandemic, and the church was packed! The order of service included the story of 'The Little Black Cloud' expressively delivered - with the help of songs, actions and instruments - by Early Years and Pre-Prep, beautifully read poems from Years 3 and 4, some pupils from Year 5 explaining why we chose the Afghanistan Appeal for our collection, and enchanting singing from our senior Voxbox choir. It was thrilling to hear all the children sing together! Thank you for all your generous donations - we raised an impressive total of £750 for the Afghanistan Appeal!

LEST WE FORGET

Children and staff in the School came together on 11th November to pay tribute to all those who fell in the First World War, and in other conflicts since. Everyone took part in one or two minutes of silence (depending on their age) to reflect and pay their respects to the fallen. Meanwhile, Kindergarten and Year 2 children showed their own respects by painting beautiful poppy pictures.



Did you know that children develop more rapidly during the first five years of their lives than at any other time?

That's why this crucial period of a child's life is known as the 'foundation years'. If you nurture certain skills during these first five years, you create a solid foundation on which your child can build for the rest of their life. Needless to say, an understanding of this is crucial to our plans and developments at Berkhamstead Day Nursery and the School's Early Years department.

Communication and language are skills that certainly can be nurtured in the early years,

and books, stories and rhymes are fundamental to a child's development of these! Sharing books also helps to promote strong, loving relationships as well as developing skills to support the transition to school. The Day Nursery - with this in mind and determined to encourage a life-long love of books - have improved their in-house library with a lovely new seating area, attractive shelving and the addition of 'Story Sacks'. Story sacks are brilliant for encouraging a love of stories - they contain a book and props to accompany the story, and help bring the story to life!

Shown here is Isabel reading 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' to some of our Wise Bears, with the help of some fun props!

Another popular addition to the Day Nursery has been the introduction of a borrowing library which is located in the foyer of the Nursery. Our small library-goers have been delighted to take books home to share with their families. Thank you to everyone who has donated books!

For the love of Reading



Bears and Superheroes

We have welcomed old and new friends back to Kindergarten this term and feel so blessed to have such an amazing group of children; they have loved our topics of 'Bears' and 'Superheroes', coming up with lots of their own inspirational ideas to add to our plans.

One highlight for the children was our Teddy Bears' picnic; we read Winnie the Pooh stories, the children made honey sandwiches, cutting cut them into a variety of 2D shapes and eating them afterwards...yummy! Everyone created their own bear for our display, each grizzly showed so much character and personality.

During our topic of Superheroes, the children have been telling us who is their Superhero. To name a few, there are some amazing Grandpas, brothers and cousins in our children's lives who are great at tickling, playing games, making Lego creations and giving cuddles. It has given us so much pleasure to hear the children's stories about these special people.

Andrew Bear has been on his adventures again and the activities proved to be a great success with the children. We went on a hunt around the school following a series of picture clues left by Andrew Bear; we eventually found him guarding some hot chocolate and our delicious snack.

During the same week the children listened to winter stories and made winter crafts to include bird feeders and salt dough tree decorations. MM





Owl poo investigation!



Library time



Using positional language to tell the story 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'



Playdough disco



Sorting in maths



The beginning of the Autumn term is always an exciting time as it is a chance to get to know all our new children and parents, and our first topic 'Families' was a great way to achieve this. The children loved painting their portraits, and 'The Class of 2021' was a popular display. We went on to find out all about Picasso and his portraits, and the children used iPads to take selfies and photographs of each other. They printed them, cut out their features, and created their own Picasso-inspired portraits. Picasso would have been proud!

The second part of the term is always very busy leading up to Christmas, and our topic was 'Magic and Sparkle.' We found out about Guy Fawkes and his devious plan to blow up the Houses of Parliament. We also celebrated Diwali, looking at how another faith celebrates a significant celebration. The children watched a powerpoint which showed how Hindus and Sikhs celebrate Diwali, about the special clothes they wear, and the food they eat. They learnt about Mehndi patterns on hands and the children created some fantastic diva pots and lanterns. The children learnt about Advent and what it means to be Christians; they particularly liked the tradition in Germany when St Nicholas visits and leaves sweets in the children's shoes!

The end of term was celebrated with the annual Early Years Christmas Party. The morning was filled with games and dancing, followed by a party lunch. During the afternoon, the children heard a jingle of bells coming from the corridor - a very special visitor had arrived... Father Christmas! The children took turns to tell him what they would like for Christmas - what a fantastic end to a very busy and successful term! HR-VV



Okk we go...

LEARNING BROUGHT TO LIFE FOR
OUR INQUISITIVE PUPILS



VINEY HILL

At the start of this term, Year 5 went on their first trip of the year to Viney Hill. This trip is all about teamwork and taking part in activities with children within the year group that they might not know well. Activities included tunnelling, climbing, crate stack, orienteering, bush craft, low ropes, archery and a night walk. There was also a campfire on the last evening with toasted marshmallows. The weather was superb and the children had a great time. I was impressed with how well the children within each group were working together by the end of the trip. Well done Year 5, it was a fantastic trip! DB



ICT & RIVERS TRIP

The weather was fine and clear and off we went on our tour around the Gloucestershire and Welsh countryside. Our first stop at Broadoak saw the River Severn during a 1* Bore. The river was flowing fast and furious the wrong way with lots of debris being carried upstream. Our paddling in Cannop Brook was curtailed by a notice to look after our native crayfish but Symonds Yat was as spectacular as ever with the fantastic Autumn shades, meanders, the flood plain and river cliffs. We then twisted our way following the River Wye, passing Tintern Abbey and finally crossed the Severn Estuary. Our final stop was the viewpoint overlooking the estuary. I hope Year 6 enjoyed the trip; they were certainly knowledgeable about the river features we had done in class. Well done! LV

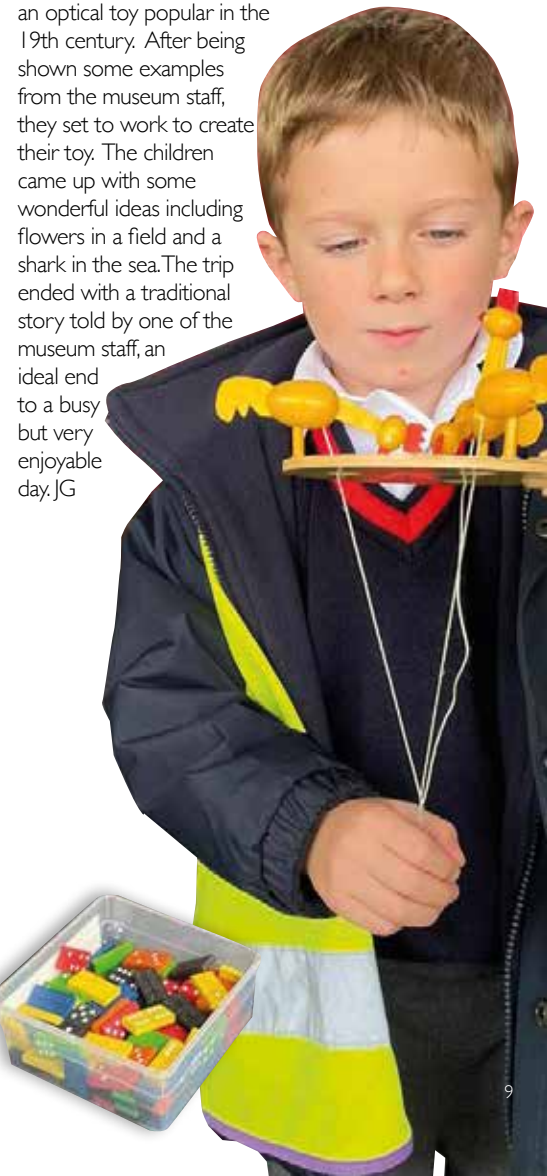


MUSEUM IN THE PARK

Everyone was very excited to learn more about the toys and games of the past during Year 1's visit to Museum in the Park, and the day out did not disappoint!

During the morning, the children engaged in a carousel of activities; they explored the museum, learnt traditional playground games and found out about different toys from the past. The children were amazed to find out that, in the past, girls' toys prepared them for running a home whereas boys' toys included soldiers, forts and toy guns. They also found out how to create games by simply using sticks and stones.

After lunch, the children were able to play with traditional toys including a china tea set, wooden blocks and acrobat toys. After this, the children were tasked with making a 'thaumatrope', an optical toy popular in the 19th century. After being shown some examples from the museum staff, they set to work to create their toy. The children came up with some wonderful ideas including flowers in a field and a shark in the sea. The trip ended with a traditional story told by one of the museum staff, an ideal end to a busy but very enjoyable day. JG



A close-up photograph of a child's hand reaching towards a red and black striped toy on a blue carpet. The text 'Toy story' is overlaid in a white, cursive font.

Toy story

t has been an incredibly exciting autumn term in Year 1 as our topic has been 'Toys'! We have had so much fun exploring the history of toys, as well as what toys children play with around the world.

In our first half of term we explored the history of toys. We looked at toys from the 1600s and each week covered a different century. We borrowed a box full of old toys from the Wilson Museum that the children played with, and went to the Museum in the

Park where the children made their own Victorian toy called a thaumatrope. We had incredible talks by Mrs Agg, Mr Cross and even Mrs Gargan's grandad on the toys they grew up playing with. The children really enjoyed being able to compare the toys from these talks to the ones they play with nowadays.

During the second half of term, we started to compare toys from England to toys around the world. We explored toys from America, Asia and Europe. Mrs Nair came in to talk

to the children all about the toys she grew up with in India. After learning about the toys children play with in the Philippines, the children then played a Filipino game called 'Jolen' where the aim of the game is to end up with as many marbles as possible!

Year 1 have really enjoyed learning and exploring toys from various centuries and countries. The children have made some fantastic observations and comparisons of the toys making this topic an absolute success! JM



SO LONG, MRS AGG

A RETROSPECTIVE

Left to right: Year 3 performing 'Rats!' (words and music by Gill Agg)
Mrs Agg
Mrs Agg with Mrs Lee and Mrs Owen, during Pre-Prep's Native American Indian Week.



THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT BERKY IS A VERY SPECIAL PLACE AND, HAVING WORKED HERE FOR 26 YEARS - AS WELL AS FOR A TERM IN 1972 WHEN MR SPARKS WAS HEADMASTER - I FEEL I AM WELL-QUALIFIED TO JUDGE

When I joined the school as a Year 1 teacher in 1995, Mr Marsh was in his final year as Headmaster; the only member of staff still at Berky from that time is the ever patient, kindly Miss Latham who was a member of the Kindergarten (then called the Nursery) team. The two front doors of Pre-Prep were still labelled 'Beechmount' and 'Fernbank' (the names of the original houses) and hints of the past when Berky also catered for older children still lingered – for example, the Prep Department was called the 'Middle School'. There was much to be done on the cosmetic and facilities fronts: the old Pre-Prep gym had plants growing on the inside and if you were foolish enough to leave your black daps (remember them?) in there, they would quickly

develop a magnificent growth of mould; that gym would be condemned as a health hazard nowadays! Equally mouldy was the second-hand uniform shed which sat wonkily in the space now occupied by the Pre-Prep wildlife garden. A motley collection of primitive computers lurked in the Pre-Prep basement and computing sessions consisted of playing computer games on them, largely unsupervised! There were no policy documents or planning requirements. Despite this, the education received by the children was excellent due to the quality of the staff and Berkhamstead was a happy and successful school. As a rather elderly NQT (aged 39), I just went into my classroom (now The Den) and did my own thing. So many people look back with fondness and nostalgia on their golden years at

Berkhamstead; it makes me very happy that two of my pupils from those early times chose to send their children to us!

There have certainly been some ups and downs during my time at Berky and much has changed for the better; happily, though, the essence of the school remains the same and Mrs Andrews would recognise and be proud of the current school. Mr Marsh was replaced by Mr Owen, who dragged us into more modern times with documents to satisfy any Inspectors and class names that equated to those in other schools; this meant that one year, the children appeared to spend two years in the same class - Form 1 was renamed Reception and the Form 1 children progressed with some puzzlement to Year 1. The uniform, too, was given a comprehensive makeover.

Clockwise: Berky staff 1995, Mrs Agg's first term at Berky. Spring Concert 'A Medley of Saints' (words and music by Mrs Agg to celebrate Berky's 70th birthday) Year 2 performing 'Millions' (words and music by Gill Agg) The old Pre-Prep gym (before the Andrews Centre was built) Year 2 trip to Crickley Hill Alien-themed History Mystery Mrs Agg and Mrs Owen played Zig and Zag! Sherlock Holmes History Mystery (Mrs Agg is Sherlock and Mrs Owen is Dr Watson)



I am sure that some of the lunchtime serving tins we use today were the original ones, dating from 1945 or thereabouts; however, our lunches are far more adventurous now. Back in 1995, we survived on a diet of rather greasy toad-in-the-hole, rubbery cheese flan, spotted dick and prunes. Just as it is today, chocolate sponge and chocolate sauce were firm favourites and I am delighted that good old rice pudding still features regularly on the menu.

Over the years, staff members have come and gone but the majority stay put; why move on if you find a school that you love, a school that you feel has the right ethos? Here, we have the freedom to influence what happens, to innovate and make changes, to be creative and broad in scope; there is a strong growth mindset - we know that there are always improvements to be

made and we never rest on our laurels.

My philosophy of education has always been to give children the power to think for themselves, the ability to work together cooperatively and respectfully and the confidence to make mistakes and learn from them. A teacher is so much more than an academic facilitator; only top-quality staff and a holistic approach to school life can bring about a truly effective all-round education. I also firmly believe that every child has something to offer, which is why a broad curriculum is so important; we value each child for their strengths while supporting them with the things they find difficult. I have especially loved the opportunity to organise special learning opportunities for the children - creative events such as the History Mystery, the music/drama productions and Poetry Week

- and particularly love it when the children challenge me or come up with thoughts and ideas of their own. What I will miss the most, though, is my relationships with the other staff and the children; we make a great team!

I was so touched the other day when one child said to me, "We're your shining stars - you can't leave us... will you still be able to teach us after you have retired?" Never fear - I couldn't just sever all ties with a place which has been my life for such a long time; I will be continuing my 'stargazing' as a very hands-on School Governor.

SO... SEE YOU ALL NEXT TERM!



Music
to our
ears

WE'RE PROUD OF OUR
MUSIC AT BERKY AND HERE
YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT THE MANY GROUPS
WE OFFER OUR PREP
SCHOOL CHILDREN

Every week dozens of our talented young musicians and singers receive specialist tuition in everything from keyboard and drums to flute, cello and guitar.

Our team of experienced teachers direct groups of players with the emphasis on having fun and developing their ensemble skills.

All groups rehearse from September to March and some continue through the Summer term in readiness for the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts and for our Year 6 Leavers' Recital.

We currently have ten Prep music groups - in addition to the Pre-Prep clubs - and every year we stage performances to showcase their high standard.

Many Berky pupils have gained music awards to senior schools and some have achieved places in the National Children's Orchestra and National Children's Choir thanks, in part, to the skills and experience they've developed through playing and singing in ensembles at Berky.

ALL THAT JAZZ!

We have two bands - our Big Band 'Razzamajazz' of 18 musicians and our smaller Jazz Combo. Razzamajazz is for wind and brass players with one year's experience who play alongside more experienced pupils in the rhythm section on keyboard, bass, percussion and drums. Jazz Combo is a small group of higher level players who perform both alone and with our Big Band.

Our bands are directed by experienced, professional musicians Miss Becca Holman, who plays brass, and Mr Henry Mills on keyboard. We are delighted that Mr Mills has joined the department since he began his exciting musical career with piano and euphonium lessons at Berky!

JIGSAW

This is our group for string players who are absolute beginners. Jigsaw has nine pupils playing violin, viola, cello and bass, and is directed by Mrs Judith Weeks. Mrs Weeks teaches and plays violin, viola and piano and performs with Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra.

BERKY BOWS

For string players with a minimum of one year's experience, Grade 1-2 level, Berky Bows boasts nine players and they are directed by Miss Pippa Ginns, (violin and viola) and Mr Mike Bacon (cello and bass). Miss Ginns is Head of Strings at Cheltenham College and performs in the Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra. Mr Bacon is a professional cellist performing with the Quartet at the Edinburgh Festival and others. He also teaches at Cheltenham Ladies' College.

CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

This ensemble is a small Chamber group of our top players. We have seven players in this group who rehearse pieces composed and arranged especially for them by their director Mr Jon Trim, who has had many pieces for orchestras and ensembles published. Mr Trim also teaches and conducts several local adult and student orchestras and is a tutor for the National Children's Orchestra.

SAMBA & AFRICAN DRUMMERS

All our pupils in Years 3 and 4 have sessions with percussion specialist, Mrs Debbie Sallis.

Her lessons encompass Latin-American Samba and African-style drumming and improvisation - which lead to thrilling performances in the Spring Concerts. Mrs Sallis is a member of The Music Junction, a community-based music school, and she leads percussion workshops locally for adults and schools.

BERKY BEATS

Our nine, energetic kit drummers and and percussion players from Years 4-6 join forces in this ensemble to play arrangements of lively, exciting music. Their performances are always creatively developed by the pupils themselves with percussion specialist Mr Tom Peverelle directing.

GUITAR CLUB

Any of our pupils from Years 3-6 who wish to learn guitar chords and accompany songs are able to join Guitar Club. Led by Mr Marc Titley and Mrs Debbie Sallis, they are taught to play recent - and not so recent - pop songs in a fun learning environment.

BerKeys

We have keyboard players in this orchestra who have reached a minimum of Grade 1 level. The group provides the unusual opportunity for pianists to play together in an ensemble. They learn to play in parts, creating an exciting, multi-layered texture. Each musician's part is specially written and adapted to suit their skill level. The pupils learn to use the keyboard's full range of exciting features and sounds. It is directed by Mr Matthew Sharp.

JUNIOR CHOIR

All our Year 3 and 4 pupils take part in the Junior Choir where they learn many useful and fun warm-up routines for developing good techniques of posture, breathing, articulation and pitching. They sing rounds and simple part songs which develop listening and ensemble skills. The Junior Choir always perform at the Carol Service and Spring Concerts. The group is directed by Mrs Mitchell who sings with Gloucester Choral Society, the Three Choirs Festival Chorus and Ex Collegio. She also plays clarinet in the Capriol Orchestra, conducted by Mr Trim!

VoxBox

Our popular VoxBox choir is for Year 5 and 6 pupils who are keen to develop their vocal skills further. Directed by Mrs Penny Mitchell, the singers enjoy lively warm-ups, scales and arpeggios, part songs and descants. The singers learn to sight-sing and take independent harmony parts. VoxBox singers have been invited to perform in public many times including for our annual Carol Singing charity event.

CLUB TOGETHER

Music clubs are just some of the extra-curricular clubs we offer the Prep children. Other clubs in the autumn term include Hockey and Rugby (during the first half of the term), Girls' Football (Years 5 & 6), Year 3 Chess and Senior Chess (Years 4-6), STEM (Years 5 & 6), and the Year 6 Fencing Club. Anyone in the Prep is welcome to join the Yoga, Running and Mandarin Clubs which take place before or after school.



>>>Supastrikers

A football club for Kindergarten and Reception, which takes place within the school day, and includes fun games and basic football skills. Each session starts with the 'Big Ball' and then a warm up, followed by structured games. The sessions always finish with 'Foam Ball Time' which teaches the children good hand-eye coordination.



>>>Craft Club

An after-school club for Years 1 & 2, run by Mrs Smith and Mrs Gargan. The children have taken part in a fantastic array of craft activities, including collage, decoupage, autumn and Christmas craft.

News

FROM PREP



CHESS MOVES

A lot of chess has been played since we returned to school in September. The Y3 Club has proved busy with its traditional melting pot of beginners, novices and the relative expert developing their chess skills weekly. Hats off and many thanks to the team of older pupils who volunteered to help teach, guide and encourage their young charges with patience and understanding. The older children have been doing battle in the Y456 Club and as ever the younger players in this tournament have caused numerous upsets against more experienced opponents. Regrettably, we are still to play a chess match against another school since Covid arrived on the scene; hopefully 2022 will see inter-school matches return. MC

>>>Gardening Club

A lunchtime club for Year 2, run by Mr and Mrs Taylor. The children are taught how to keep the garden tidy and weed-free, and depending on the time of year, they plant wildflowers, fruit, herbs and vegetables. They are also educated about pondlife, birds and mini beasts.



JOIN THE Club

There has been a wide range of extracurricular clubs for the Pre-Prep children during the Autumn term, with plenty of the pupils from Kindergarten to Year 2 taking part. The timetable will change in the Spring term with an exciting programme of activities including Board Games, Violin, and Crash! Bang! Wallop! (a Samba group) replacing some of the existing clubs for the older children. Some of the other clubs will continue. Here is a taste of what happened during the autumn term.



>>>Hockey

An after-school club for Year 2, which takes place throughout the year, and is run by Richie from RO Coaching. The children learn basic skills such as dribbling, how to receive the ball and 'team vision,' (teaching the children to be aware of their teammates' positions.)



>>>Drama Club

An after-school club for Years 1 and 2, run by Mrs Langley and Mrs Main, which provides a fun opportunity for the children to be creative and work collaboratively with their peers. The children are encouraged to stretch their imaginations and to experiment with expression.

MUSIC NOTES

In November we enjoyed the first Recital of the school year, and the first since March 2020! A wide range of pieces in different styles was performed beautifully by pupils from Years 3-6. We heard music played on the piano, violin, double bass, clarinet, recorder, cornet, trombone and saxophone with some having only started their instruments this term, and others who were far more experienced. The audience was very appreciative and extremely well-behaved and we hope that the recording of the event was available to parents soon after.

After school on Tuesday, VoxBox singers from Y5 found yet more energy to sing carols for the residents of Bay Tree Court in Prestbury. We have been entertaining there at Christmas for many years, since Berk's founder, Mrs Andrews, was a resident. She was a music teacher and the connection with Berk is still strong. We stood outside with the large windows ajar for the elderly people, wrapped in blankets, to listen, tap and sing



along. It was a festive and magical event and the children sang all the carols they knew with tuneful, confident voices. They were warmly appreciated and we departed with much waving and a final rendition of 'We wish you a Merry Christmas'.



MUSIC EXAM RESULTS
Grade 5: Ted L (Recorder - Distinction)

YEAR 6 MOVERS & SHAKERS!

Our Prep House Captains are chosen because we deem them to be excellent role models, who will do a superb job of leading and motivating their house mates.

House Captains are elected at the start of the school year and second House Captains are voted in at the beginning of the Spring term. Congratulations to Katy P (St Andrew's), Zoe B (St David's), Primmy P (St George's) and Sophia E (St Patrick's). House Captain duties include leading inter-school competitions such as the 'House Shout', and handing out commendations in assembly. The House system

is at the heart of the Prep School. When a child starts Prep in Year 3, they are allocated a House and receive a smart badge to wear on their blazers. They sit in their houses for lunch, to encourage pupils of different ages to mix. House contests take place regularly throughout the year. It is a House Captain honour to receive winning cups at these events.

Congratulations, too, to this year's Year 6 Eco Warrior leaders: Jacob F, Sam B and Hannah D and our School Council leaders Georgia A and Chloe E - we are equally sure you will make great leaders!



CROSS COUNTRY

We have had a successful term of Cross Country events. The first race at Newlands was flat and dry and Max and Otto both managed to finish in the top 10 for their event which was a great start. The other highlight of this race was that Lydia, who is only in Year 4, ran in the Year 5 and under race and finished in the top 30 - a big well done to her. The next event was at St Edward's, which included part of the big hill. Again, Max and Otto finished in the top 10 with Max finishing in 2nd place and Otto finishing in 5th. Lydia ran in the Year 5 and under race and finished in 15th which is a fantastic achievement. Well done to all those that took part; every runner worked hard and persevered to finish the race. We have some promising running talent coming through and I look forward to the final two events after Christmas. DB



>>>AT SoccerCamps

An after-school for Years 1 and 2. The sessions are based around fun games and exercises with different football topics each week. Throughout the term there are several competitions such as a dribbling competition, shooting competition and best attitude award. There is also a World Cup tournament at the end of every term!



>>>Ukulele Club

An after-school club for Year 2. Head of Pre-Prep Music, Mrs Sallis teaches the children simple melodies and how to strum! They borrow ukuleles from school and are encouraged to practise at home before the next lesson!



>>>Helen Gill Ballet

Ballet for Early Years children (during school hours for Kindergarten and after school for Reception). The classes - which have an emphasis on fun - focus on expression, performance, elevation, dynamics, musicality, rhythms, formations, space awareness and basic ballet technique suitable and safe for these age groups. A recent introduction has been tap dancing for Reception!





KINDERGARTEN PRESENTS FATHER CHRISTMAS DELIVERS

Our Christmas Concert 'Father Christmas Delivers' was a huge success due to the children performing so wonderfully with their enthusiastic

singing. The lovely songs told a story of Father Christmas needing help to mend his sleigh and with delivering presents to all the children all over the world. Mrs Sallis provided the fantastic musical accompaniment to the concert along with the children playing percussion. MM



RECEPTION PRESENTS FOLLOW THE STAR

The children performed their Christmas Nativity, 'Follow The Star' really beautifully! They were fantastic narrators, and all spoke clearly and confidently as they told the story of the very first Christmas. The children also sang traditional carols and accompanied the vocals

with percussion instruments. It was a fantastic show and we are very proud of all the children for their achievements. H R-W



PRE-PREP PRESENTS JESUS' CHRISTMAS PARTY

Lights! Camera! Action, and the Pre-Prep Nativity began! A fantastic fanfare of singing, acting and dancing saw the celebration of Jesus' Christmas Party. The children relayed the story of the Nativity through the eyes of the innkeeper and his wife, and it was such a

pleasure to perform in front of a live audience who rocked along merrily to the words and actions of 'We're having a party, isn't it great!' Well done, Pre-Prep, it truly was a great party! GS





PREP PRESENTS A CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Prep children worked hard during November and December to prepare a beautiful Carol Service. With Year 6 leading a stunning candlelit procession and the readings, they proved a remarkable group of singers and musicians. Our Carol Service was filmed in All Saints' Church with the children enjoying their first experience of singing together in the generous space with a lovely acoustic. Year 3 and Year 4 sang a beautiful new song 'The Refugee Carol' which reflected the experience of displaced people and chimed with our support for the Afghanistan Appeal. Alongside other more recent carols, we also sang traditional favourites 'Gaudete', 'Angels from the realms of glory' and 'O Come, all ye faithful'. PM



STEAM MUSEUM

As part of our Year 6 topic on World War II, we embarked on our annual trip to Swindon's Steam Museum. The children looked superb dressed as evacuees, and their costume helped give a sense of what it would have been like for children at the start of the War.

We took part in two fantastic workshops, one about the role of women in World War II and one about the use of the railways during wartime. The children got involved in role play exercises, dressing up and handling a variety of artefacts. It was an excellent hands-on learning experience.

During the afternoon, we explored the museum and recreated what would have happened when the children were evacuated to a new town or village. They got a real sense of the range of emotions that would have been experienced by children of their own age. With a couple of renditions of popular wartime songs to cheer the spirits, we ended our day.

The Year 6s embraced every opportunity, took part with gusto and got the maximum from the day. They were an absolute credit to Berk. P McC



WE THE CURIOUS

Year 5 visited We The Curious and had a really good time. Science should be about finding out things for yourself, doing hands-on investigations and having fun; We The Curious supports each of these.

There are two floors full of hands-on activities that encourage the children to investigate a whole range of different topics. 'The 3D show was brilliant,' commented Tom C-G, 'It really felt like you could touch the planets!' Alina G and Evie L agreed. 'I also loved running on the hamster wheel to pump the water' added Evie. Other favourites included listening through your teeth and looking at optical illusions. The children answered all the questions asked during the 3D show, and were well behaved throughout the trip. A lovely day was had by all. TM

ORGELKIDS

Year 5 spent a most instructive and interesting afternoon at All Saints' Church learning about the Organ. Did you know that the earliest fragments of wind instruments have been found from 30,000 years ago and that the Greeks and Romans played the organ as a recognisable instrument? It is also one of the most sustainable of instruments, being built of wood and we heard the sound of a 300-year-old pipe being blown. The workshop included the building of a small organ complete with frame, keys, pipes and bellows and Year 5 worked in teams to construct the instrument. Afterwards, we gathered around the church organ for a demonstration by John McElroy (a former Berk parent) and then some pianists were allowed to play on the keyboards with their hands and feet! We were very pleased with the interest and understanding shown by Year 5 through thoughtful questions and answers and they were a credit to the school. PM





U8 | RUGBY

Our Year 3 boys had a very pleasing first term of competitive Rugby. They developed their skills throughout the term. In every match all of the boys played their best, endeavouring to get the win for their team and school. All of our matches were high-scoring and very exciting to watch. Tag rugby is the kind of game that is fast and furious, full of end-to-end action.

The boys played in their two classes and were named the Bisons and the Buffaloes. Both teams did exceptionally well and only lost one game between them in the matches that we had this term. A very good term, well done! TM

U8 Bisons: Oliver B, Leo C, Lucas DCV, Jack F, Miles H, Atlas M, Rishik R, Charlie W
U8 Buffaloes: Hughie B, Jacob D, Charlie F, Fergus G, Jack H, Toby R, Isaac SR, Jasper W



U9A&B | RUGBY

Both sides have worked hard all season in training and showed in the matches played a steady improvement in both their skills and confidence. Captaincy was shared weekly with all boys working together as a unit and always supporting each other. Despite the obvious disappointment at having to play tag rugby this term we did have several contact training sessions to give the boys just a taster in this tricky area of the game. Passing and handling out of contact was an area of strength for us and was evident in our best game of the season against King's, Gloucester where we mixed both the As and Bs together to form four playing sides. The result of this showed a strong squad of 18 boys who were able to combine seamlessly to produce some excellent rugby. The boys always played with an enormous amount of fun and enthusiasm and both sides have been a pleasure to take on fixtures this term; they should be extremely proud of their achievements. Well done, boys. SM

U9A Team: George E, George J, Edward L, Alastair M, Wilfred M, Zack P, Thomas R, Ben R, Sidney R, Ben W
U9B Team: Dylan B, Jack F, Hugo H, Freddie L, Luis M-R, Owen P, Isaac R & Ben S



U10 | RUGBY

It was great to have rugby fixtures this term after no fixtures last year. It has been a challenging term for them as they have been introduced to contact and they have had to learn how to tackle correctly. They started with a match against Hatherop on very wide pitches which made it hard to contain the opposition. Both teams lost this fixture unfortunately, but they came away with an idea of what to expect this season. The match against Rendcomb was close with lots of tries scored by both teams, but Rendcomb had the upper hand and took the win. After half term the boys went to a triangular fixture at Cricklade Manor. They came up against Rendcomb again and managed to beat them this time in a very competitive match. The match against Beaudesert was also a win, and this was the best match I saw the boys play; they played cohesively and tackled well. The U10s have found the step up to contact rugby a challenge this year but I am hoping that after a term of playing contact, they will build on their experiences and come back next year ready to play again. DB

U10 Team: Ben A, Freddy B, Victor B, Seb C, Tom C-G, Will H, Harry H, Cameron J, Bertie L, Floyd R, Ben S, Gideon T, Joseph W



U11 | RUGBY

The U11 team have enjoyed a tremendously successful 2021 season. Having been unable to play contact rugby since they were in Year 4 and with only 11 boys in the year, there were going to be challenges. However this group of boys were exceptional. They worked as team, they encouraged each other and celebrated each other's successes.

We had many fine victories, with perhaps the match against The Richard Pate School and Cricklade, seeing us play our most expansive rugby. This, coupled with an aggressive and committed defence, made us a tough team to play against. An amazing fact is that every one of the boys scored a try during the season. Inevitably some players stood out. Otto was outstanding in every game and seeing Max, Felix, Reuben and Ben develop into very fine players during the course of the season was wonderful.

Jacob D-T, Sam and Barnaby really hit their straps this season and all made some excellent contributions in matches. As pleasing as anything was the development of Oscar, Jacob F and Manas who by the second half of the season had increased their skillset and were important players in the team. I was very proud of all of these boys. Their attitude was one of determination and a willingness to learn. Well done to all of the team. PMcC

U11 teams and colours: Reuben A, Manas A, Sam B, Oscar C-S, Jacob D-T, Jacob F, Max H, Ben J, Felix S, Otto S, Barnaby W

Outstanding player awards: Reuben A, Max H, Ben J, Felix S, Otto S



U8 | HOCKEY

This has been a wonderful season. The girls have really improved their skills. At the beginning of term some of the girls were even unsure of how to hold their stick. Now we are seeing Indian dribbles and backwards hits. Their understanding of the game has increased too, showing great positional play. I have been impressed with all their effort and enthusiasm. This has meant that they have enjoyed a very successful season. MT

U8 Team: Annabelle A, Rose B, Polly B, Isabella B, Lara C, Rosie E, Amelia E, Melba F, Charlotte H, Olivia M, Matilda M, Flo P-T, Hannah P, Allegra S, Diana S, Evie W, Yaz Y



U9 | HOCKEY

I have been thoroughly impressed by the attitude and the sporting behaviour of the Under 9s at hockey this term. They have played outstandingly well as a team with all the girls happy to rotate and play with skill wherever they were needed. Their goal scoring was phenomenal but their defence was equally outstanding. This is something which the won-lost statistics accurately back up! The U9s won 7 of their 8 matches, and the number of goals scored by the Berky girls was 37, compared to 3 by the combined opposition teams. What a season! Well done girls! CMcC

U9 Team: Claudia C, Harriet E, Ella H, Eva H, Kitty H, Charlotte J, Ara K, Estella L, Lydia M, Millie R, Coco P, Ellie P, Mollie R, Georgiana S, Olivia W



U10 | HOCKEY

It has certainly been a mixed season for the girls with some super wins and some frustrating draws and losses. All the girls have improved upon their positional play and have begun to use the space effectively when driving the ball forward. I have been really pleased to see a number of girls volunteering for a stint in goal, and even enjoying it! There have been a few memorable matches - the one that really stands out for me was the King's match, where every girl played to the best of her ability to produce a stunning display of skills and team effort. Well done, ladies, you have all improved your skills and shown some resilience and determination.

U10 Team: Emily B, Sophia B, Emma C, Nina C, Esi D, Esha D, Georgia E, Emilia F, Alina G, Francesca H, Carly H, Arwen H, Tatiana H, Chloe H, Amelia J, Evelyn L, Chloe M, Alba N, Erin P, Erin R, Alexa S, Violet W



U11 | HOCKEY

What a year! It has been a pleasure to experience some good hockey this year and even better teamwork in some matches. All girls have worked well on their progression this year. The Under 11 teams played with huge energy and endeavour and deserved better results at times. Berky were often the better team with both the attack and defence working brilliantly but despite having most of the play, the ball just would not go in the back of the net! The games that stood out the most this year were the Wycliffe matches; these were fast and forceful matches, and the girls never gave up and held their own against a really strong team. Having not used goal keepers for a few seasons it was lovely to see so many girls volunteering to play in goal throughout the season, with many great saves. They all played extremely well having not played that position for some time and some never! All girls should be proud of what they have achieved this term regardless of the final results. Well done to all! CK

U11 Team: Georgia A, Ellie B, Ellie B, Zoe B, Nancy B, Isabel C, Katy C, Thea C, Sophia E, Chloe E, Lucinda F, Maisie G, Isabel G, Vivienne H, Isla J, Ena M-L, Edith M, Primmy P, Katy P, Isla R, Zoe S, Alice S, Hetty W, Sydney W

Colours: Primmy P, Isla R, Ellie B, Nancy B, Thea C, Zoe S, Alice S, Vivienne H

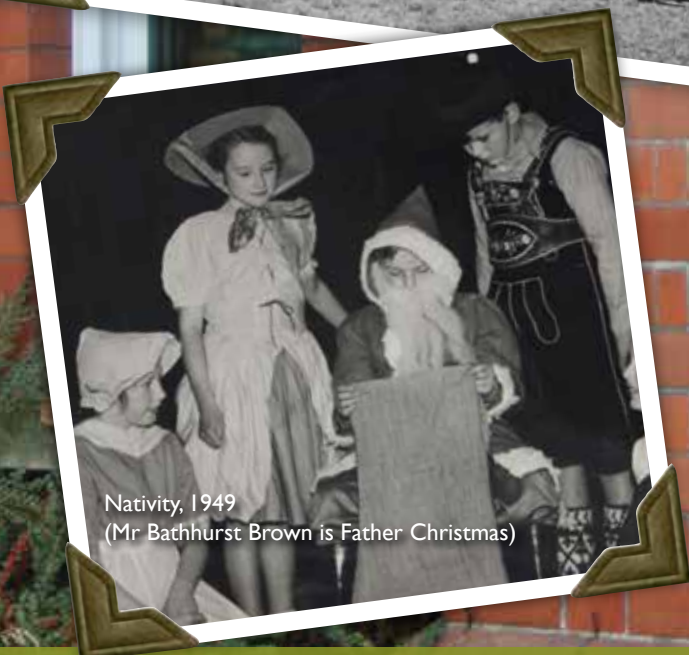
Outstanding player awards: Primmy P, Isla R, Ellie B, Nancy B



Whole School photograph, 1946
(current Prep playground, behind is Hewlett Road)



Nativity, 1949
(Mr Bathurst Brown is Father Christmas)



A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

We regularly welcome back former pupils, but Mr Simon Bathurst Brown's in late September was extra special - he was one of our very first pupils, and started here in our founding year, 1945! He and his wife Margaret toured the school with Mr Cross and Mrs Agg and recounted many happy and amusing memories of his Berky school days. It was fascinating to hear about Berky's first few years, the changes, improvements and developments since, but also the values that have remained the same. According to Simon, Berky was a happy school and he was grateful that it provided him with such a solid grounding. And his anecdotes were brilliant! He remembered, for instance, escaping the stinging blows of Austrian teacher Mr Konstandt's caning by stuffing an exercise book down his shorts! He also recalled secretly threading cotton around books on a mantelpiece, and pulling on the thread mid-lesson to cause all manner of chaos!

He agreed to a Zoom interview by Mrs Agg and Mr Banks to be transmitted for a morning assembly in the Prep School, and needless to say, the children were as delighted with the memories as the staff!



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