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# Beech Hall School

for pupils aged 6 months to 18 years

## The Griffin Extra

Issue 9/2 - December 2023





Official Beech Hall Christmas card designed by  
Joshua Goodhead (Lower I)

EducationToday  
School & Supplier  
AWARDS 2023

PROUD  
FINALIST

***"Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."*** [Albert Einstein]

I faced many challenges during my primary education. I watched every parent/teacher meeting end with my mother in tears and my father's face a picture of controlled rage. None was directed at me and I never felt unloved, but I felt their pain very deeply and like Einstein's fish, I felt stupid. To their credit, my parents never focused on what was wrong, but rather would let me know what I was doing right.

My teachers classed my ADHD neuro-divergence as autism with both learning and behavioural difficulties. With my school determined to push me into this identity, I was provided with a carefully diluted curriculum so as not to overwhelm me. This unintentionally left me as an easy target for bullies attracted to those treated as different. It all came to a head after a series of physical attacks on me, and my parents removed me from that school, having lost all faith in the state school system. My parents' support allowed me to enrol at the independent school Beech Hall in Macclesfield.

Paradoxically, I am truly thankful for this inauspicious start to my education. Within a very short period it was determined that far from having learning difficulties, I could thrive in advanced classes. At Beech Hall the needs of the individual were assessed and confidence was built with limitless encouragement to develop us academically and personally.

As a result of my early experiences and with additional assistance from amazing friends, physical activity, hypnotherapy, proper diagnosis, and medication, I have found "Me." I now see my neuro-divergence as my "superpower."

Extract from the University application of an Alumnus 2021



The second half of this Michaelmas term has been one of significant success and achievement, and so this Griffin Extra is published to recognise and to celebrate that success.

The front cover depicts Bentley Williams (Lower II) who performed solo as the Star in our Upper junior Nativity last week. Bentley has been working hard in his singing lessons, as well as learning the guitar, and that hard work paid off as he sang faultlessly in front of consecutive audiences. Both Nativities were a triumph of confidence, talent and pure joy.

Both Mr Walker and Miss da Cunha will be quick to remind us all that the focus of sport is not always on the winning, but on the manner in which we have played, both individually and as a team. Are we proud of the way we performed? Could we have demonstrated our skills better? And, of course, it's always nice to come away with a win, or a trophy or two as well!

Girls' sport at Beech Hall is thriving and it's been great to see hard work start to pay off in some of the girls' achievements this term. The girls travelled to Milton Keynes for the Chatsworth Schools Girls Football Festival, returning their well-deserved runners-up Plate from 2022. On their southbound train, little did any of them know that they would be returning with the winners' Cup, having scraped through a goalless match and goalless extra time. Down to penalties, it was a question of who was going to hold their nerve and whose would crack? Congratulations girls, an outstanding achievement! As if this weren't enough, our netballing girls then went and beat Stockport Grammar 7-4 at

home - just incredible!

Our 2023 Channel swimmers have taken "the treble" this year scooping gongs at the Cheshire-wide Everybody Leisure Awards, two at the international Channel Swimming Association annual dinner, and then finally in the magnificent Liverpool Cathedral as they collected the North-West's Educate Award in the final category of the evening, the WOW Recognition award. Aleks Rangayah was presented the Everybody Leisure award at the prestigious Crewe Hall by the paralympian and life peer Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson. Well-deserved indeed considering not only their achievements in the sea, but also now collectively raising £85,000 for Mencap over the last three years.

Not limited to sport, the first Musical Soirée of the academic year was just beautiful. In fact, to be more specific, the first half was utterly unique and bonkers packed with individual confidence and passion, building to the most sublime second half of performances of talent and high calibre indeed. You will have had another chance to enjoy some of these performances this afternoon in church and, for some of them, just one more opportunity at the spring term evening as their final Upper V performance. Whilst we didn't take any photos this year, I would like to commend Noah Richardson (Upper IV) on his performance of the Last Post at our short service of remembrance. I asked him with less than two weeks' notice and he picked it up and practised over the October half term to be ready for the first Friday back - fitting and moving, thank you Noah.

Thanks to Senior Head Girl Ruby Roberts and her mum for representing the school at last Friday's Education Today Awards at the Riverbank Park Plaza Hotel in London. Whilst we didn't win, we should be very proud indeed of having been one of eight shortlisted schools in the category of Independent School of the Year!



A few weeks ago, 32 of our GCSE English Literature and Drama pupils were fortunate enough to travel to London to see an outstanding performance of A Christmas Carol at The Old Vic at Waterloo. Such was the success of the trip and the prescience of a story so valid almost two hundred years later, we chose to use it as the backdrop for this year's Carols by Candlelight service. Senior and Junior Prefects shared the story of Scrooge and his elevation from a "grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner" to a man who "had never dreamed that any walk - that anything - could give him so much happiness". I am always immensely proud of our pupils' behaviour when we are off-site and no more so than on this occasion, so beautifully articulated by a member of the public.

Wishing all of our pupils, families, colleagues and friends a very restful, joyful and personally fulfilling Christmas, with every health, happiness and success for 2024.

**Mr James D Allen**  
**Headmaster**





**CHATSWORTH CHAMPIONS!**  
**GIRLS GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH**















# WALKING ON WATER

## CHANNEL SWIM SQUAD CLAIM TREBLE











# MUSICAL MAGIC

## MUSICIANS ROCK OUT WITH CONFIDENCE







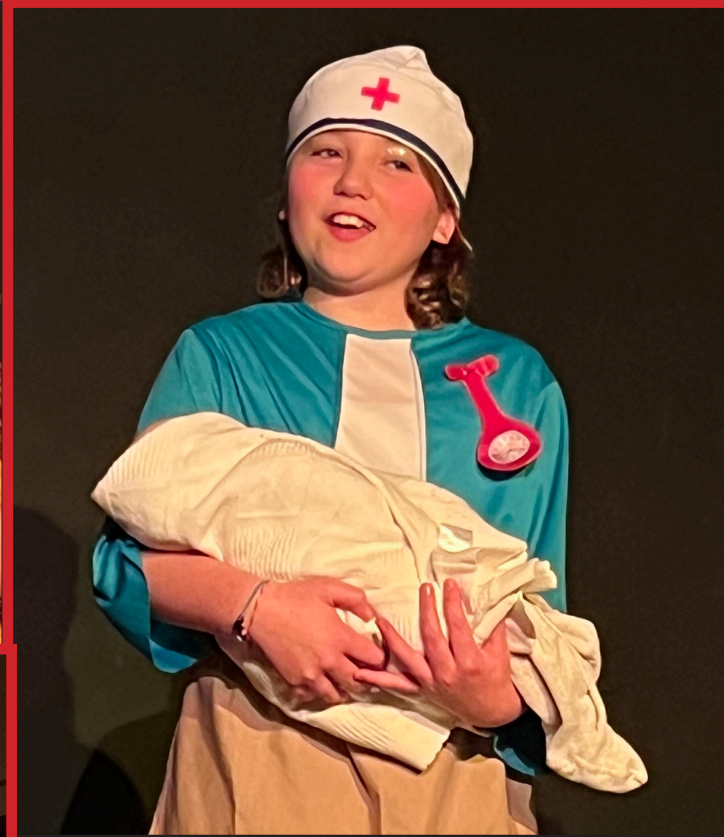




**THE SLEEPY SHEPHARD & A MIDWIFE CRISIS  
BUT NOBODY EVER LISTENS TO THE DONKEY!**













## A Christmas Carol Part I: An introduction

Ruby Roberts, Senior Head Girl

11.7 million people in the UK are living in poverty. That is 1 in 6. The US is the richest country in the world and has the highest rate of poverty of all developed nations. Between 2008 and 2021, the number of people using food banks increased from 26,000 to 2.5million. In the last year 3 million people have used a food bank in the UK.

Charles Dickens' most famous story, first published in 1843, nearly two hundred years ago, has frightening relevance still today.

It is a GCSE English Literature set text and some of us went to see Christopher Eccleston play Scrooge at The Old Vic in London a few weeks ago.

The story underpins the school's values of kindness, respect, integrity and ambition. It may be a story about inequality and greed, but it is also one of change and hope. We would like to tell the story of A Christmas Carol in excerpts throughout our service.


**THE  
OLD  
VIC**



*"There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humour."*







## **A Christmas Carol Part II: Bah! Humbug! I wish to be left alone**

**Blake Lyons, Senior Head Boy & James Barlow, Senior Prefect**

Humbug! If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding and buried with a stake of holly through his heart.

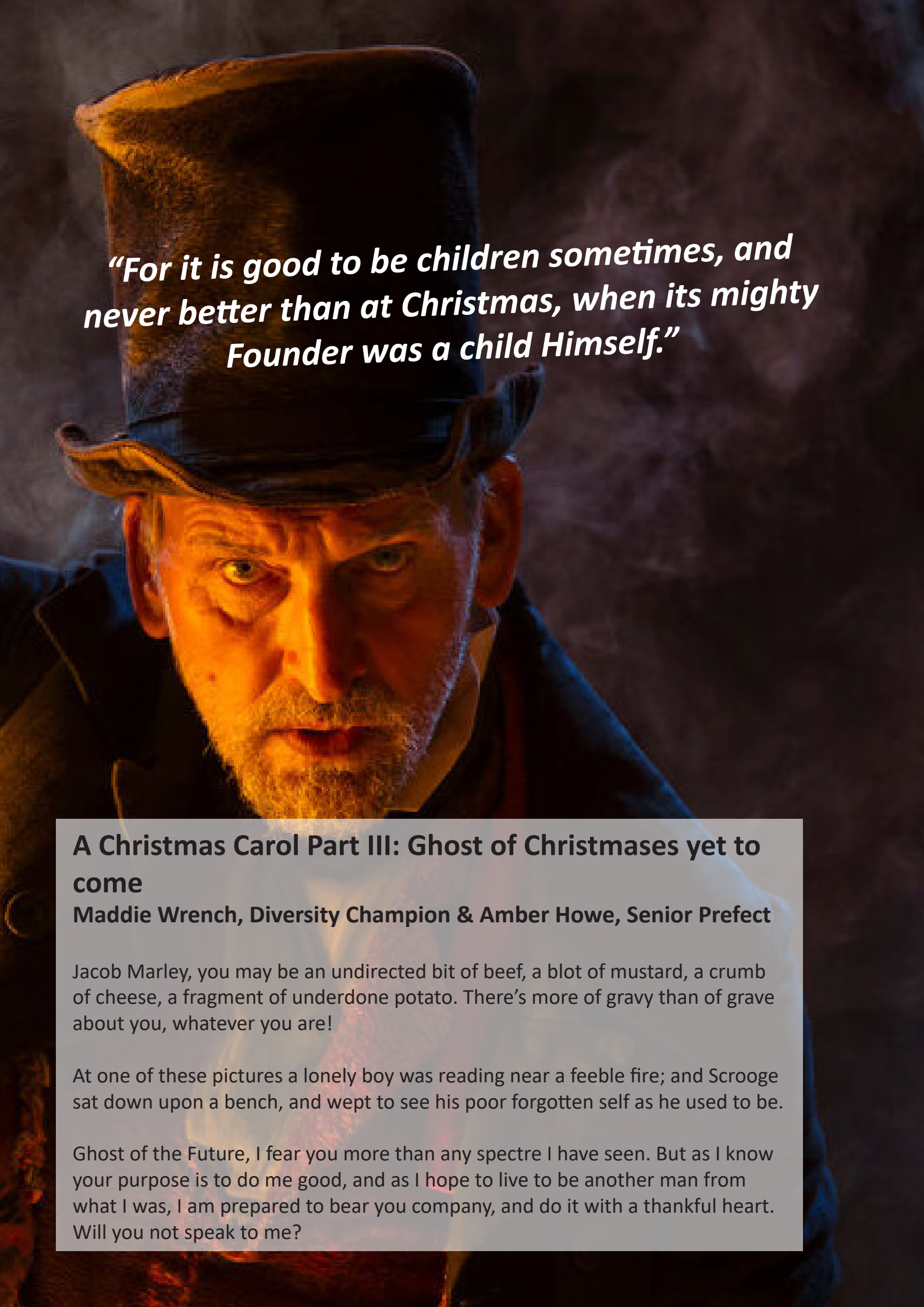
He was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge. A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner. Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shrivelled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice.

A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December Bob Cratchit! But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.

I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas and I can't afford to make idle people merry. If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population.

**THE  
OLD  
VIC**





***“For it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child Himself.”***

## **A Christmas Carol Part III: Ghost of Christmases yet to come**


**Maddie Wrench, Diversity Champion & Amber Howe, Senior Prefect**

Jacob Marley, you may be an undirected bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!

At one of these pictures a lonely boy was reading near a feeble fire; and Scrooge sat down upon a bench, and wept to see his poor forgotten self as he used to be.

Ghost of the Future, I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But as I know your purpose is to do me good, and as I hope to live to be another man from what I was, I am prepared to bear you company, and do it with a thankful heart. Will you not speak to me?



A man in a blue jacket and white trousers stands on a wooden structure, holding a small green and yellow bird in his right hand. He is looking upwards with a smile. The background is dark with numerous warm, glowing lanterns hanging from above. The scene is lit with a blueish light, creating a festive and nostalgic atmosphere.

## A Christmas Carol Part IV: I will honour Christmases in my heart

**Luke Edwards and Abigail Gibbons, Senior Prefects**

It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself.

I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time . . . as a good time . . . the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers

He went to church, and walked about the streets, and watched the people hurrying to and fro, and patted children on the head, and questioned beggars, and looked down into the kitchens of houses, and up to the windows, and found that everything could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk—that anything—could give him so much happiness.

I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach.

**THE  
OLD  
VIC**



## **A Christmas Carol Part V: God bless us, every one!**

**Edith Parkes, Junior Head Girl**

**Luke Edwards and Isaac Inwood, Senior Prefects**

**Leo McGuinness, Junior Head Boy**

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did not die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world.

I don't know what to do! I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a school-boy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to every-body! A happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!

A merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God bless us!

God bless Us, Every One!

***"A merry Christmas to us all, my dears. God  
bless us!  
God bless Us, Every One!"***





## Subject: Train from Manchester to London

*“Good afternoon,  
I had the pleasure of being on the above train when some students boarded at Macclesfield on 24.11.23.  
When they boarded I thought ‘oh no’, seeing how many of them there were and what noise I was going to be subjected to.  
How wrong I was ... what an exceptional group of young people they were. They were polite, respectful and so quiet for the whole journey. They were told to wait until all of the other passengers alighted and wait they did!  
I commented on their exceptional behaviour to one of the staff members but wanted to make the school aware so those students could be commended. They are a credit to themselves, the school and their communities. I hope they have the most fulfilling lives and achieve everything they set out to do.”*

*[A very appreciative member of the public]*

**THE  
OLD  
VIC**