

Top Hat Chat

All the latest news and views from Top Hat Theatre School



Message from the Principle

"Show rehearsals are well under way.....my favourite time of year!!!

Show tickets go on sale on Saturday 17th May, at 10am at the church. Strictly first come first served. Sadly due to high demand we cannot reserve seats without payment.

Don't forget... all you budding parents we have a number for you in the show too... keep an eye out on your inbox for rehearsals!!! (You know you want to!) As always... any questions please call me."

Miss Julie xxx

"You must actively live your dream. Wishing and hoping for someday doesn't make it happen. Get out there and get involved."

— Mitchell Maxwell



What's Happening this term?

Term Starts:

Monday 28th April

Bingo Night:

Saturday 17th May

Term Ends:

Saturday 24th May

Competition Winner.

Thanks to everyone who put forward suggestions for naming the newsletter.

There were some fantastic entries. Those reaching the shortlist include:

- Don't Stop the Music
- All That Jazz
- Spotlight
- Be fabulous
- Keep on dancing

The Committee finally decided upon "**Top Hat Chat**" after much deliberation. Well done to **Melissa Eady**! A box of chocolates will soon be finding their way to you!

Contents

School Information:

Message from the Principle 1

What's happening this term 1

Competition winner 1

Fundraising News 2

Results and successes 2

Exams 3

Outing 3

Coming soon 4

Branching Out 5

Photo Gallery 6

Features

Star Pupil 7

Spotlight on..... 7

Features Article 8

Other Stuff

Fun Stuff 9

Stuff for sale 9

Your Views 9

Next Issue 9

Contact us 9

Fundraising News

Easter Party and Pamper Night... hot off the press!!

What a fantastic night! Thank you to all students, family and friends for coming along and supporting your school. An amazing £353 was raised for the costume fund, and feedback has been very positive!

All the girls, and some boys too, enjoyed being pampered, having nails, hair and make-up done, as well as enjoying a great selection of cakes and food.

The photo booth was extremely popular and we hope you have received and like your photo... a lovely keepsake from a great evening. Thanks to all the committee and helpers!



Shakey Shakey!

We are looking forward to a return of the popular Bingo Night on Saturday 17th May at St Albans Church Hall, doors open 6.15 eyes down 6.45. Lots of cash prizes to be won, plus refreshments and a raffle at half time. It's our last fundraiser and official social before the "End of Year Show", so let's make it a great one and welcome lots of new faces. We look forward to seeing you there! ☺

General Reminder

As a school we try to keep our expenses as low as possible. We do this by fundraising events throughout the year, but also we regularly collect bags of unwanted clothing, bags shoes etc., so if you are having a clear out, please bag it up and bring it in, Thanks!

Results and Successes

Bedford Drama Festival

Well done to **Isabelle Benstead** and **Monica Nuttal**; and also **Honey Evans** and **Evey Donnelly** for being placed 5th in their respective sections in their Duologues at Bedford, as well as **Joley Wright** who came 5th in her monologue.

Milton Keynes Festival

Top Hat students continued to perform well at the second part of the Milton Keynes festival with special mention to **Alice Lane** who came 2nd in her section for singing. It was her first festival and a huge section so very well done!



Congratulations also to the Senior group (From left) **Megan Rowles**, **Isabelle Benstead**, **Jessica Crouch**, **Honey Evans** and **Evey Donnelly**, who were placed 3rd ... the highest placing for a Northampton based group!



Northampton Drama Festival.

A number of our students took part in the Drama section of the Northampton festival. Well done to **Eadie-Rose Clarke** who won 1st place in her section which had over 30 participants! Also, well done to all the other participants, Joley Wright, Kayla Sibanda, Milly McNee, Ella Tweed, Alessia Maxted, Gabriella McMorrow, Emily Halton, Honey Evans, Monica Nuttall and Evey Donnelly.



Northampton Dance Festival

Some fantastic results from the festival with **Ella Tweed** gaining 2nd place for song and Dance and **Remaya Barnes** also placed 2nd in her section. Both Ella, Remaya and the Junior group qualified for All England which takes place in May 2015.

Baton Twirling National Championships, Crawley

This year, seven of our Top Hat Twirlers attended the three day National Championships over Easter Weekend. **Megan Rowles** achieved two podium places coming 3rd in Dance Twirl and 3rd in Fancy Strut. **Jessica Crouch** achieved 5th for her Dance Twirl, 6th in Fancy Strut and 6th in Poise and Personality. **Honey Evans** came 6th in Dance Twirl. **Neve Burton** and **Chloe Chandler** came 7th for their duo. Evey Donnelly and Caitlin Jilbert got through to the finals in their sections. Well done to all our Top Hat Twirlers, it was a tough competition against the best twirlers from all over the UK!



Results from exams

Well done to all the pupils who took their ballet, tap and modern exams, especially those for whom it was the first time taking an exam. The Grade 2 ballet exam took place on the 14th March and the following students all passed with merit. Well done girls! x

Alana Farmer
Milly McNee
Alessia Maxted
Georgie McFarlane
Julietta Sirmen

I look forward to reporting the results of the Tap and Modern exams in next terms newsletter!

Top Hat Outing



Easter Outing – “I Can’t Sing”

Some of our students went to see the musical “I Can’t Sing” in the West End over the Easter break. The show was brilliant and we all had a great day out visiting Hamley’s and lunching in the Big Smoke! Not only that, but we also got to meet three members of the cast after the show who came and spoke to us in the auditorium. They chatted about auditions, working in the theatre and how they got the job in the first place. Very exciting and very VIP!

We are all very surprised to hear it is closing on the 10th May as we all thought it was fantastic!

Coming Soon....

News Flash: Save the date! Top Hat Summer Fete

The biggest date on the Top Hat social calendar is fast approaching! Make sure the date is in your calendar!

This is the event that can't be missed and it's bigger and better than previous years! It not only marks the end of the Top Hat School year, it is also a chance to celebrate all that has been achieved over the year and gets the students and parents together before dispersing for the summer. This year we are also having a graduation and reports presentation, as well as some performances from the end of year show. It should be a fantastic day and a nice relaxed end to the term. More details to follow in next terms newsletter.

19th July 12-5pm at the Spinney Hill Pub

Advance Notice: End of Year Show Saturday 12th July

By now you should all have the dates of the show and rehearsals in your diary, but just a reminder of some of the key points!

Rehearsals: Sunday 22nd June and Sunday 29th June 12:00 to 4:00pm at St Alban Church Hall

Dress Rehearsals: Friday 4th July and Friday 11th July 5:00pm to 8:00pm at St Alban Church Hall

All students in the show MUST attend the rehearsals!

Performances: Two performances will take place on Saturday 12th July: Matinee 2pm and Evening performance 7pm. At Cripps Theatre Northampton.

Charity nominations: Top Hat donates a significant amount of proceeds (approximately 75%) from the End of Year Show to a local Children's charity. If you would like to nominate a charity for consideration, please contact Tracey Clarke either at the school, or via Facebook or email.

Volunteers: Obviously there is a lot of work that goes on backstage at the show and we need extra hands to be able to help out. Volunteers will be paired with experienced helpers and would be expected to come to the dress rehearsal and be able to help out at one of the Saturday performances. If you are interested, please contact Faye Burton via Facebook.

Costumes: These are not to be taken home at the end of the show. No eating in the costume, and please look after them with respect. Thanks.

Personal Stuff: Please ensure that all personal belongings are named! This includes shoes, clothing etc. Also we ask that the younger students do not bring technology backstage, there is too much risk of these costly items becoming lost or damaged. For the older students, we expect them to be used with discretion and care.

Raffle prizes: We have been very lucky in recent years to have some fabulous prizes donated for the end of year show. Obviously this generates a lot of proceeds which can benefit the chosen charity, so please if you are able to donate anything or approach any businesses for donations, they are gratefully received and make for a much more exciting raffle! Please see Tracy McMorrow, or contact her via Facebook.

Please note that there will be a professional DVD being filmed at the show for you to order.

Top Hat Summer School

Booking is now open for the ever popular Summer School which takes place from 28th July until 1st August at St Albans Church Hall from 10am until 3.30pm, cost £100 (i.e. £20 per day!). This year promises to be an action packed week where students will learn some amazing skills not normally found at Top Hat such as circus skills and roller skating. However places will be on a first come first served basis, so please get your names down as soon as possible if you want to be a part of this fun filled week!

Tune in to next terms newsletter for all the details



Branching Out

West End News



The prestigious Olivier Awards took place on the 13th April at the Royal Opera House. Our very own **Oliver Finnegan**, pictured above(far right) with his fellow "Charlies" and Willy Wonka. The musical had been nominated for seven awards and won two awards. Fantastic opportunity – well done Oliver!



Wizard of Oz

Congratulations to **Eadie-Rose Clarke** and **Georgie McFarlane** for their performances in the KOS Musical Theatre Company production of Wizard of Oz which took place at the Lighthouse Theatre, Kettering from 29th April until 3rd May. The show followed four months of rehearsals. Well done Eadie and Georgie, you have done Top Hat proud!



Broadway and Beyond

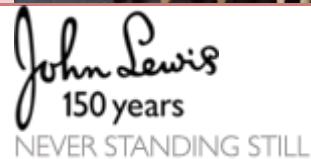
On the 12th April, Top Hat Theatre School joined the cast of Broadway and Beyond on stage at The Lighthouse Theatre, Kettering for an evening of entertainment with songs from the West End. Top Hat students performed three numbers, doing our school proud!



John Lewis Advert

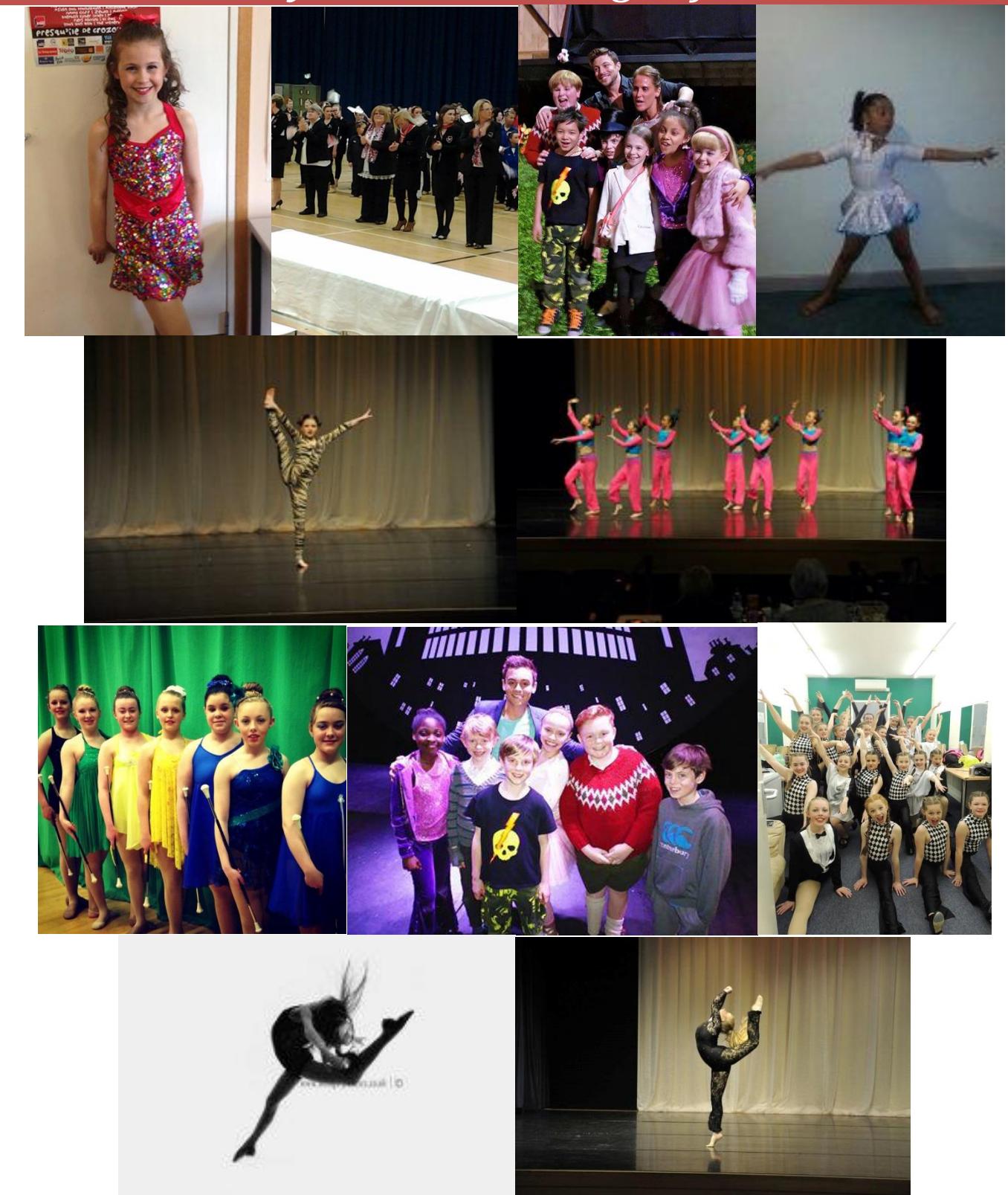
Currently airing on TV is the 150th anniversary advert for John Lewis – keep a look out for our very own rising star **Ella Tweed**!

"Never Standing Still" the advert looks at British life from past to present. If you cannot wait to see the advert on TV, you can view the advert on the John Lewis website and click on the 150 years.



"The advert is a joyous and celebratory look at British life from past to present. It shows that we've been ever-present, as your lives have continued to move forward at increasing speed."

Photo Gallery: The best images from this term



From top left: Ella Tweed at Northampton Dance Festival; Tracey Clarke with her fellow Judges at the BBTSA National Baton Twirling Championships, Oliver Finnegan with his fellow cast members from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Duncan from Blue; Remaya Barnes at MK Festival, Gabi McMorrow at the Northampton Dance Festival; Top Hat Junior Group at the Northampton Dance Festival; Top Hat Twirlers at the National Championships, Oliver Finnegan and his fellow cast from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory with Tom Daley; Top Hat dancers at Broadway and Beyond; Summer Harte-Felce photographed by Mango Photography; Honey Evans at the Northampton Dance Festival.

Features Section

Star Pupil



Rachel Johnson.

Rachel is a real trouper! I also dislike it tremendously as she towers above me now and she's only 12! She took two dance exams this session, tap and modern. All went well until almost at the very end she not only hurt her elbow, as it turns out... she has fractured it!

Not only did the examiner not notice..... Rachel carried on like a true professional, until the very end when she was carted off to hospital by mother! Get better soon Rachel! Xxx

Spotlight on.....



Musical Theatre

If you want to perform on stage, this is where you start!

Musical Theatre is a fun class which encompasses acting, singing, dancing, movement and voice. Students study a different musical each term and learn the choreography from the show. Some of the musicals covered include: Wicked, Les Miserables, Annie, Oliver, Footloose, Starlight Express, 13 and Legally Blond amongst others!

There is also work done towards auditions, and if you are thinking about a career in Theatre, the more credits to your name the better. It all helps in building up your Curriculum Vitae (CV). Even if this is not the direction you want to do professionally, it is a thoroughly fun class, with plenty variety.

Classes are held on:

| | | |
|------------|---|------------------------|
| Tuesdays - | Juniors (7-11 year olds) | from 4.15 until 5.15pm |
| | Senior (12 years +) | from 7.30 until 8.30pm |
| Thursday | "Broadway Babies" (3-6 year olds) from 5-6pm. | |



Classes will be split further in September due to the growing number of pupils in each class.... Woo hoo! x

Benefits from doing Musical Theatre include:

- Increasing confidence
- Helps broaden skills base as you cover all aspects of Musical Theatre
- Helps prepare you for future performances.
- Enhances your performance CV

Tips for Success in Musical Theatre

- Practice reading at home! It all helps with script reading
- Although you don't have to be a fantastic dancer to excel at Musical Theatre, any dance knowledge helps. In particular, Modern goes well with this class.



What our Students Say:

"I love Musical Theatre because it's lots of fun. It puts me in a really good mood as we sing and dance - it's a really happy class"

Joley

"I love doing it [Musical Theatre] as it is good, fun and enjoyable and I love to perform!"

Eadie-Rose

"I like Musical Theatre because it's a bit of everything. It's not like just singing and dancing and acting, it's bringing the three together which makes it complete. As I love theatre work, it makes it feel more real."

Gabi

"I love Musical Theatre because it's so much fun and you get to sing and dance!"

Lucy

Features article

Fundraising.

Top Hat Committee put a lot of heart into planning and organising a programme of social and fundraising events throughout the year, so what is it all about?



What sort of events do you hold?

We try to keep it varied throughout the year, but generally we have a big party at the end of each main term i.e. a Christmas party, Easter party and our main Summer fete. There are other things that happen in between such as our ever popular bingo nights and drama and talent nights. If there are any other ideas for social/fundraising events, please contact any of the committee members.

Ok, so what's it all about? We keep on getting emails and messages about parties, bingo nights and other fundraisers.

As a school, we do a lot of socials and fundraisers. The reason for these is twofold. Firstly, on the fundraising side of things, money raised goes towards the costumes for the end of year show. These can cost anywhere between £20-100 each, which as you can imagine with over 100 students, and most doing more than one class, soon amounts to quite a hefty bill!

The second reason is the social side, which can be far more important. You could drop your child off at class, pay your fees and pick them up at the end, and that could be the end of it. However, Top Hat can be like a second family. Friendships have been forged between both parents and students. Supporting the events gives everyone a chance to let their hair down and socialise.

I bring my child to class every week, buy uniform and contribute £20 to the costume fund each year. Is this not enough?

Most theatre schools send out an invoice for show costumes. Supporting the events is a way of keeping these costs down for everyone. Plus they're fun! It is so nice to see the kids socialising out of class time and it gives them a chance to get to know others who are not in the same classes as them, and promotes the sense of "family" that we have here at Top Hat.

So where does all the money go?

All the money raised goes towards purchasing the show costumes. The committee is made up of volunteers and we ask parents and supporters to help out with cakes, and raffle and tombola prizes. The only exception to this is at the end of year show, a large percentage of the raffle money is donated by the school to a very worthy and usually personal cause. Last year we donated over £400 towards the Jennifer Trust (www.jtsma.org.uk) charity which is very personal to Julie.



Where is the money being donated to this year?

This is where we are going to be asking for your input. We would like your nominations for a worthy children's charity, preferably personal and local and approximately 75% of proceeds from show night will be donated. Contact Tracey Clarke for further details, or to nominate your charity, stating briefly why your charity should be chosen. Closing date: 7th June 2014.



What else can I do to Help?

Of course we would like to see as much support at these events as possible! It is a lovely chance for both parents and children to socialise and bond. If you are willing to provide any home baking or even volunteer at any of the events, please contact any of the committee members. We are also always looking for donations for raffles and tombola's, so pass on any spare items or unwanted gifts. Also, if you have any ideas for fundraisers let us know!

Fun Stuff!!



Caption Competition: *Behind the scenes!*

Simply come up with a funny or clever caption to go with this photo which was taken behind the scenes at the Lighthouse Theatre on 12th April. Send your entries to Deb Jilbert (details below), by 2nd June 2014.

Your views: Motivation Quotes

What quotes inspire you? Email debborah.jilbert@hotmail.co.uk with your dance inspiring quotes to appear in next issue of the newsletter.

Stuff for Sale

This is the section where you can sell your old stuff, be it dance shoes that you have grown out of or costumes, in fact anything dance related that you no longer need and you think someone else in the club can benefit from. Again, put your adverts in the Newsletter Think Box or, email the editor Including a decent picture, details, condition, contact details, etc



Contact us

Top Hat Committee

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Principle: | Julie McKenna |
| Chairperson: | Tracey Clarke |
| Treasurer: | Lyn Firman |
| Secretary: | Faye Burton |
| Members: | Tracy McMorrow Leanne Naylor Kirsty McNee Hayley Rowles Caroline Karabin Katie Wright Deb Jilbert Lesley Crouch Emma Mumford |

For Sale: Top Hat T-shirt and Top Hat hoodie (New style) aged 9-11 worn twice. Very good condition £15.00 for the set.

Please email the editor Deborah.jilbert@hotmail.co.uk if you are interested and they can be collected from class.

Apologies to Alessia Maxted... last newsletter, your name was spelt three different ways in various editions of Issue 1! Hopefully I have got it right now!! ☺

Coming Next issue: Due out: 9th June 2014

Spotlight on: **Ballet**. Please see below if you would like your views included!

Feature Article: **Summer School**

Get involved with your Newsletter

For any inclusions into next term's newsletter, please contact Deb Jilbert on debborah.jilbert@hotmail.co.uk before 2nd June 2014.

Items especially needed:

- "All about me" articles : Please include your answers to the questions in this issues "All About Me" feature, two good photos, at least one should be of you performing, and get your parents signature approving your application.
- Items for sale: please include item description, photo, price and contact details.
- Your views: what are your favourite dance inspired quotes?
- Spotlight on Ballet: What is the best thing about this class? Include your name and age.

This is Your Newsletter! If you have any suggestions for features or other inclusions, please contact me on the above details. Many thanks. And hope you have an exciting term!