

# Top Hat Chat

*All the latest news and views from Top Hat Theatre School*



## Message from the Principle

*"Dare I say it... the countdown to Christmas has begun!!! And of course for some students their dance exams! All the hard work will have paid off, and will be worth it in the end.... I promise!*

*I'm so very excited to be bringing the opportunity for our students to enter their LAMDA exams. LAMDA's performance examinations use drama to develop self-confidence, physical presence and a strong speaking voice. The kids are already making wonderful progress, and they seem to be enjoying themselves. Hopefully they will be ready to perform at the end of term in their class so that you may see their progress in such a short space of time. Encourage them to learn their lines... before you know it, your home will be filled with Drama Kings and Queens, although I'm sure that's already the case!!!! I'm so inspired and excited with this new venture, and having Miss Yates (my old drama teacher) on board to help out in class is just fantastic. Many hands make light work!*

*Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Bingo night (such fun) and the Christmas Party (a hit with the kids every year...and the parents!!!) and of course the most depressing party of the year... my erm.... 21<sup>st</sup>!!! Which is on the 21st December at The Picturedrome. I'd love to invite you all... the more the merrier!!! Hope you can come and join me for some Christmas Spirit and sadly my graduation into adulthood... apparently!*

*As always, please email or call me with any questions you may have... I'm off to the gym to be back to my usual size 6 for the party of the year!!"*

*Miss Julie xxx*



## Contents

### School Information:

Message from the Principle	1
What's happening this term	1
Fundraising News	2
Festivals and Competitions:	
- Results	3
- Advance Notice	4
Grading and Exams	5
Branching Out	5

### Features

Star Pupil	6
Spotlight on: Drama	6
Top Hat People: Emma	7

### Other Stuff

Competition Results	8
Next Issue	9
Get Involved	9

## What's Happening this term?

<b>Term Starts:</b>	<b>Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November</b>
<b>Leicester festival of Music:</b>	<b>9 &amp; 16 November</b>
<b>Bingo Night</b>	<b>Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November</b>
<b>Christmas Party:</b>	<b>Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December</b>
<b>Baton Team Training</b>	<b>Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December</b>
<b>Term Ends:</b>	<b>Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December</b>

## Uniform Reminder!

Please can all students wear correct uniform and have their hair tidy at every lesson! Uniform is a very important part in training, and all students should come to class looking presentable and in the correct uniform. 😊



# Fundraising News



## Bingo Night!

Sadly our Bingo Night was cancelled earlier last term due to unforeseen circumstances, but will now be held on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> November at St Albans Church Hall. It is always such a fun night so please do come along and support the fundraising for our show next year. We always do such a great job in raising funds, and that is all thanks to you the parents, so hope to see as many new faces as possible on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Doors open 6:45, eyes down at 7pm

**Hooray! It's Christmas Party Time!  
And you're invited!**



**Where:** Student Union Bar (Park Campus), Boughton Green Road, NN2 7AL

**When:** Saturday 13th December

**Time:** 6:30pm - 9:30pm



## Tickets on Sale Now!!

Adults/Concession: £3.50

Children (2 – 17): £5.00

Family: £13.50 (for 2 adults and 2 children)

***This is an event not to be missed, with lots of fun and games plus a visit from a very special guest!!***



### Donations Needed:

Children's Tombola: Sweets and Christmassy gifts.

Adult's tombola: Bottles of alcohol.

***Please hand these to Lyn Firman by the 6<sup>th</sup> December.***

Raffle: Please hand any suitable donations for the Christmas raffle to ***Tracy McMorrow by 6<sup>th</sup> December.***

Food table: Please collect your food slip when you purchase your tickets. This will let you know what contribution you can bring to the feast on the night!



## Pre-Christmas clear out?

Before Christmas is always a good time to have a good old clear out of your wardrobe! If you have any unwanted items, please bag them up and bring to St Albans. These will then be weighed and turned into cash for the costume fund.



## Milk Bottle Tops!

We are also collecting milk bottle tops again. Please bring them in to St Albans!  
Thanks!

# Festivals and Competitions

## Results and Successes

### Further news from the Rugby Dance Festival

Congratulations to everyone who took part in the Rugby Festival which took place over three consecutive weekends over September!

Special mention to **Hannah-Mai McMahon** (pictured), who performed in the tap solo section in her first ever festival! Well done! And a big congratulations to all the other students representing Top Hat!



### Area 5 Regional Team and Troupe Baton Twirling Competition –Lowestoft

Top Hat Twirlers had another successful competition on the 27<sup>th</sup> September in Norfolk bringing home another large stash of trophies and medals:



**Twirl Challenge:** First place went to both our **Junior** and **Senior** teams.

#### **Freestyle Pairs:**

First places were awarded to both our pairs in their relevant age sections: **Milly McNee** and **Ella Tweed** (Juvenile Level 3;) and **Megan Rowles** and **Jessica Crouch** (Junior Level 2)

#### **Freestyle Solo:**

**Tiny Tots:** Libby Burton (4); **Juvenile Level 3:** Ruby Tweed (2), Eadie-Rose Clarke (7); **Pre-Junior Level 3:** Megan Rowles (2), Ella Tweed (3), Neve Burton (8); **Junior Level 3:** Jessica Crouch (2), Honey Evans (3), Evey Donnelly (4), Caitlin Jilbert (5), Rheanne Firman (8).

#### **Fancy Pom Strut:**

**Jessica Crouch, Evey Donnelly, Megan Rowles** and **Ella Tweed** all won their sections! Also placed were:- in **Junior 2:** Honey Evans (2), Caitlin Jilbert (3), Chloe Chandler (4), Rheanne Firman (5); in **Juvenile 2:** Alessia Maxted (3), Milly McNee (5) and Eadie Rose Clarke (8); in **Juvenile 1:** Ruby Tweed (2) and in **Tiny Tots,** Libby Burton (3)

#### **Fancy Dress P&P:**

**Ella Tweed** won the **Juvenile** section, with Alessia Maxted (2) and Milly McNee (4) also placed. **Libby Burton** won the **Tiny Tots** Section. Megan Rowles came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the **Junior 1** section and Ruby Tweed came 3<sup>rd</sup> in **Juvenile 1.**

To top a very successful day – our dancing nuns, shook their pom poms into first place in the pom pom team section. A huge well done to all Top Hat Twirlers!



*Special Mention to Alessia Maxted for her first twirling competition in which she came home with two trophies and a medal! Well done Alessia.*



*Also a huge thank you to **Ant Maxted** who took some amazing photos on the day: Check out the rest of the days shots on the Top Hat Theatre School Facebook Page.*

## Baton Camp Competition

Well done to everyone who performed at the two day competition which was held at Skipsea Sands, North Yorkshire and concluded the week of intense training.



### **Day 1: 29<sup>th</sup> October**

**Basic Strut:** Places were awarded to Libby Burton (4); Honey Evans(5) and Milly McNee(5) in their age sections.

**Pom Pom Fancy Strut:**

**Jessica Crouch, Honey Evans and Ella Tweed** all won their sections. Other places went to Milly McNee (2), Caitlin Jilbert (3), Remaya Barnes (3), Rheanne Firman (4), Megan Rowles (4), Alessia Maxted (5), Libby Burton (5) and Ruby Tweed (6).

**Solo Twirl:**

Honey Evans (2), Jessica Crouch (3), Caitlin Jilbert (3), Megan Rowles (3), Milly McNee (4), Ella Tweed (5), Eadie-Rose Clark (6) and Rheanne Firman (7)

**Duo:**

All three Duo's won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in their sections – well done to Jessica Crouch and Megan Rowles (Senior), Neve Burton and Rheanne Firman (junior), Milly McNee and Ella Tweed (Juvenile)

**Fancy Dress P&P:**

Congratulations to **Ella Tweed** and **Libby Burton** who won their age sections! Also placed were Milly McNee (2), Megan Rowles (3) Alessia Maxted (3) and Remaya Barnes (7)

***Our Dancing Nuns also came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Pom Pom Group section!***

### **Day 2: 30 October**

**Freestyle Solo:**

Those awarded places were Megan Rowles (3), Jessica Crouch (4), Libby Burton (4), Caitlin Jilbert (5), Ella Tweed (6) and Ruby Tweed (8).

Special Mention to Remaya Barnes – not only was it her first time at Baton Camp – it was also her first competition and she won 2 medals – well done Remaya!

## *Advance Notice: Events in February/March 2015*

### **Baton Twirling Area Individual Competition**

Preparation is now underway for the Region 15 Baton Twirling individual competition in Lowestoft on February 21<sup>st</sup>. This is a qualifying competition for the National Championships which will be held over the Easter weekend in Crawley. Entries to be in before the end of this term – please see Tracey Clarke.

### **Milton Keynes Festival**

Drama section 21-22 February; Music Section 28 Feb – 1 March; Dance Sections 14-21 February and 8 March. All entries to be received by 6<sup>th</sup> December – please see Caroline Karabin

### **Northampton Music Festival**

Music section takes place 28<sup>th</sup> Feb – 5 March. Entries close 15<sup>th</sup> November.

### **Bristol Festival of Music, Speech and Drama**

Dance: 28<sup>th</sup> Feb to 3<sup>rd</sup> March Entries to be in 10<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Bedford Festival of Music, Speech and Drama**

Music Speech and drama 7-14 March. Entries close 15<sup>th</sup> November.

### **Kettering Eisteddfod**

Music Speech and Drama – 11-14 March. Entries to be in by 29<sup>th</sup> November.



# Exams and Grades



## Baton Grades

Congratulations to all the girls who did their grades at camp – lots of high merits and distinctions!

**Intermediate Gold:** Jessica Crouch, Honey Evans, Caitlin Jilbert and Megan Rowles.

**Novice Bronze, Silver and Gold:** Neve Burton and Rheanne Firman

**Novice Bronze and Silver:** Milly McNee and Ella Tweed

**Beginner Silver and Gold:** Ruby Tweed

**Beginner Silver:** Libby Burton

**Beginner Bronze, Silver and Gold:** Alessia Maxted

## Baton Twirling Grades



All beginner twirlers (Saturday 12-1 class) will be offered the opportunity to take their Grades during Term 3, expected to be in January. These will be taught in lesson as you require all three Beginner Grades (Bronze, Silver and Gold) to compete in the February competition, (tiny tots – Beginner Bronze only).

## Ballet, Tap and Modern Exams

The main exam session is expected to take place during term 4. Extra sessions will be arranged in the weeks prior to the exam to ensure you are fully prepared.

# Branching Out



## Calor Gas “One Day”

Congratulations to Jay-Jay Prince Lothian who has successfully landed a booking with Calor Gas for their new campaign “One Day”. The advert is now live and on your televisions in the South West and Anglia, however, you can get a sneak preview by searching Calor Gas One Day on YouTube or by the following link: <http://we.tl/sfLLyZshYD>. Well done Jay-Jay!



Jay-Jay in the studio.

## Good Night Charlie Bucket!



Time has come for Oliver Finnegan to put his character of “Charlie” from “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” to bed for now, after a successful two contracts spanning one year. Fantastic Work



Oliver, and we look forward to seeing you on stage again soon!



# Top Hat People:

## Emma Banham



*This issue sees our newest dance teacher getting a thorough grilling THC style, and some rather jealous glances from fellow Dirty Dancing fans!*



*35 year old Emma joined the Top Hat team at the beginning of the year and is already proving herself to be an inspiration to the students. Her energy is infectious and her honesty refreshing.*

**THC: did you always want to be a dancer?**

**Emma:** Yes. Dancing is what I always wanted to do. I never thought of any other career path. From the age of 6 ½ I lived and breathed dancing – it was and still is my passion.

**THC: Did you have any major setbacks? If so, how did you overcome them?**

**Emma:** I had many major setbacks along the way. Firstly not being able to afford the fees for Dance College! I thought that was it and I would never make it as a professional dancer. Also, auditions were horrible and very heart-breaking. Many times I wondered if it was all worth it and I just wanted to give up. I overcame these setbacks by working extra hard at my dance school. I did extra lessons when I could and practiced all the time. With the auditions I just kept on trying! I told myself get over it! I can do it!

**THC: Were your family supportive of your chosen career?**

**Emma:** My family were so supportive! They knew how much I wanted to do it and how hard I worked. My mum did everything for me to get there, from missing mortgage payments and cleaning the dance studios to pay for my extra lessons. I can't thank her enough!

**THC: Is there anything you would have done differently?**

**Emma:** The only thing I would have done differently is to try and stick it out in London for the West End. I just didn't like living in London. It was so expensive and I found it hard finding a job to fit in with auditions and dance classes.

**THC: What was your first performance?**

**Emma:** My first performance was at Hastings Music Festival when I was 7 years old. I did 3 solos: Ballet, Greek dance and National dance. My mum and I didn't have a clue about it all and when my teacher asked "have you got your make up?" my mum replied "what make-up?"

**THC: How long were you a professional dancer?**

**Emma:** I have worked in a lot of shows during my 14 years as a professional dancer. I actually signed 24 contracts and worked all over the world. My claim to fame was meeting Patrick Swayze on board Regent Seven Seas Cruises.



**THC: What classes are you involved in?**

**Emma:** I teach the Pre-Primary Broadway Babies and Primary West-End Wendy's which include Ballet, Tap and Modern. I also teach the Primary Tap Exam class and Grade 1 Modern as well as all the other Ballet classes up to Grade 6 and Pointe.

**THC: What do you look for in a perfect student?**

**Emma:** The most important thing is to listen and pay attention in class and do the corrections I have told them to do. I can tell if they are really interested in dancing and hard working in class. Perform and smile!



**THC: What do you do when you are not Top Hatting?**

**Emma:** When I'm not Top Hatting, I am a busy full time mummy and housekeeper I love spending time with my Partner Nigel and Olivia. I am also learning to drive. I am currently studying my first part of my teachers' diploma DDI and other dance exams. I also teach for another school on a Saturday which uses a different syllabus so I have training for that too. Every spare bit of time I have I am going over the grades for my classes at Top Hat. I am a bit of a perfectionist!

**THC: What is your ultimate indulgence?**

**Emma:** Shoes! I love shoes and if I get the chance, I spoil myself with a new pair. We women are all allowed a treat now and then as we work so hard!

**THC: What advice do you live your life by?**

**Emma:** I try to make positives out of negatives and never dwell on things.

*"My time is limited and I will not allow the noise of others' opinions drown out my inner voice. I will have the courage to follow my heart and intuition!"*

Life isn't a dress rehearsal. Grab it while you can!



### Emma's Tips for success

---

- Listen to your teachers! They do know what's best as they've been there and know what you need to do!
- Stretch and get really supple.
- Try to do all styles of dance and singing
- Enjoy every moment you're there
- NEVER EVER give up!

## *Other Stuff!!*

### **"Dear Top Hat Chat"**

Don't forget to use the Top Hat Chat Diary and let us know your thoughts. Especially what you would like to see in upcoming issues of Top Hat Chat.

#### **Halloween competition.**

Congratulations to our very own Creepy Clown Jester aka Gabi McMorrow who has won a private lesson in the Halloween fancy dress competition. As you know, students were invited to come to class in their Halloween outfits in the week before half term. These have been collecting 'likes' on the club facebook page and the one with the most votes wins. There were some absolutely fabulous entries, which must have made teaching these classes quite an interesting experience! £63 was raised for the costume fund. Well done to everyone who joined in the *spirit* and took part.

*[Pardon the pun – Ed!]*



## Special thanks for this issue:

- Caroline Karabin for keeping me organised and correct when it comes to all things dance festival related!
- Ant Maxted for letting me use his fantastic photos of the Area Baton Twirling competition in Lowestoft – check out his pictures on the Top Hat Theatre Facebook page.
- Leanne Naylor for reporting the news from the West End and Beyond.
- Emma Banham for responding to my gruelling questioning for the Top Hat People feature
- All members of the committee for answering my queries at all hours of the day!
- And of course everyone else who has contributed photos and information to this issue.



## Coming Next issue:

News from: **Christmas party**

Spotlight on: **Singing**

Feature Article: **Top Hat People: Tracey Clarke**

Due out: **January 2015**



## Contact us

### Top Hat Committee

<b>Principle:</b>	Julie McKenna
<b>Secretary:</b>	Faye Burton
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Tracey Clarke
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Lyn Firman

### Members

Kirsty McNee	Tracy McMorrow
Caroline Karabin	Hayley Rowles
Emma Mumford	Leanne Naylor
Katie Wright	Hayley Hendrickson
Lesley Crouch	Deb Jilbert



## Get involved with your Newsletter

For any inclusions into next term's newsletter, please contact Deb Jilbert via facebook or on [deborah.jilbert@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:deborah.jilbert@hotmail.co.uk) before 4<sup>th</sup> January 2015, or use the Dear Top Hat Journal.

*This newsletter is only possible with your input...  
if there is anything you want included, please let me know. Thanks! ☺*

**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!