




Durham
HIGHLIFE

March 2018 Issue No 68

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of Highlife. This year, Durham High School for Girls celebrates 50 years at Farewell Hall. The school was originally founded in 1884 and, following a compulsory purchase order, moved from Leazes House in Durham City to its current site in 1968 (you can read all about our history on the website). Since that time, the school has grown in pupil roll and in the number of buildings. Excitingly, plans are now afoot to overhaul the original 1960s building. The Governors and Senior Leadership Team, working with a firm of local architects, are currently exploring how to bring the current building up-to-date and future proof it for the next fifty years.

On a very chilly winter's day earlier this term, myself and a group of willing volunteers took a trip down memory lane by posing for a photograph at the top of the school steps to recreate a picture of headmistress, Miss Salter, and some of her charges in the 1960s. Alas, these days health and safety prevails and we no longer enjoy the company of a school dog on the premises. The uniform may have changed, but the girls still possess the same High School spirit.

On 26th April 2018, we look forward to welcoming the Bishop of Durham to the High School for a special service when we will give thanks for fifty years at Farewell Hall.

The Year 7 History Club is currently comparing school life now and then, after having delved into the School archive. In the next edition, we look forward to reading the girls' report about the changes that have taken place over the intervening period.

I hope you enjoy reading the wide ranging articles in this edition, covering many aspects of life at the High School, including STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths), Sport, Debating and the Arts - with World Book Day, the Gala production of 'Goodnight Mister Tom' and 'Little Lumiere' to name but a few.

After what has seemed a long and harsh winter, we look forward to the onset of Spring and to warmer days when we return to School after the holidays. I wish you all a very Happy Easter.

Mrs Lynne Renwick
Headmistress



50 Years at Farewell Hall

Oxbridge Success



We were all delighted when seven of our Sixth Formers earned interviews at Oxford and Cambridge this year – a huge achievement in itself, and enormous credit to the academic departments (Maths, Science Modern Languages, Music and English) who launched them to these heights.

Three girls subsequently received offers: Elinor Fowler to read Natural Sciences at Homerton, Cambridge; Lara Herriott to read Natural Sciences at Gonville and Caius, Cambridge and Jenny Tipple to read Music at Robinson College, Cambridge.

The students must have impressed their interviewers because the two scientists were snatched from their initial choice of college by the dons who spoke to them and the musician could just as easily have applied for Maths.

Symposium is perhaps a misnomer in a girls' school since it first described a male-only gathering in ancient Athens with intellectual chat, opportunities for Harvey Weinstein behaviour and heavy drinking! The DHS model is sober but lively and sometimes difficult to control – evoking passionate debate and shared humour. The downfall of Robert Mugabe gave opportunity for Zimbabwean emigres in school to give an authentic view on contemporary events. Catherine Deneuve's contention that "persistent or clumsy flirtation was not a crime" went right to the heart of the 'Me Too' debate, and the ultra-orthodox attempt to force the teaching of creationism alongside Big Bang and Evolution resurrected a debate which many thought had been resolved. The new leaders of Hungary and Austria raised the question of whether Brexit is wider than Britain. Symposium rides the currents of the modern world. Ancient Athens might have been proud.



Symposium

Champion School



Durham High School was awarded Champion School status by the National Citizen Service and this term representatives of NCS came to school to present our trophy. Champion School status is awarded to schools that have exceeded expectations in promoting the programme as well as recruiting students to take part. Open to all young people, NCS focuses on three core principles of social cohesion, social engagement and social mobility, all of which have benefits not just for the participants but for communities and society as a whole.

Debating Matters

As the Debating Club for Years 10 to 13 goes from strength to strength, we have had a number of new speakers this year, including 'maiden' speeches from Alyssa Teasdale, Claudia Chapman, Connie Stock, Katie Walton, Lucy Aitken, Ria Kejarwal, Sophia Emmerson, Sunanya Aggarwal, Tinaye Mupedziswa and Trisha Srinivasan. Topics have been diverse, including whether children should have restrictions on their use of technology, animal experimentation, introducing an e-Olympics and whether a hot dog is a sandwich or not.

Inspired by their in-house debating, several girls from Years 10 and 11 participated in this year's ESU Churchill Public Speaking competition in February. Gwen Baring was commended for her warm, welcoming style, Isabelle Dale for her charismatic questioning of the opposition and Sunanya Aggarwal received praise for her excellent speech about Dunkirk: 'Crushing Defeat or Military triumph?'. In our second team, chairperson Yasmine Zouari skilfully created a warm atmosphere, Thrisha Srinivasan was complimented on her questioning and Lucy Aitken's unexpected take on Paddington Bear, with its dry humour was highly praised. Both teams did extremely well in what was their first competition and Yasmine, Thrisha and Lucy went on to reach the final. Special congratulations are also due to Lucy, who won the Best Speaker award.



The Senior debating team, comprising of myself and Ellie Greenhow also enjoyed success. We were delighted to reach the third round of the ESU Schools Mace, the furthest Durham High has ever progressed in this particular competition. Unfortunately, we were unable to compete in Richmond due to the severe weather, but to be among the best schools in the North is an achievement in itself.

I was then fortunate enough to travel to the Houses of Parliament to speak in the national final of the Historical Association's Great Debate. This was a special competition this year, focusing on the impact of the 1918 Representation of the People Act as part of the celebration of 100 years of women's suffrage. It was certainly an amazing experience and a lovely way to complete my debating career at DHS. I could not be more grateful for the opportunities and support that the Debate Club has given me over the last 4 years, and I hope to continue my debating career at university. I would highly encourage anyone to take up debating; the world needs more women who aren't afraid to make their voices heard!

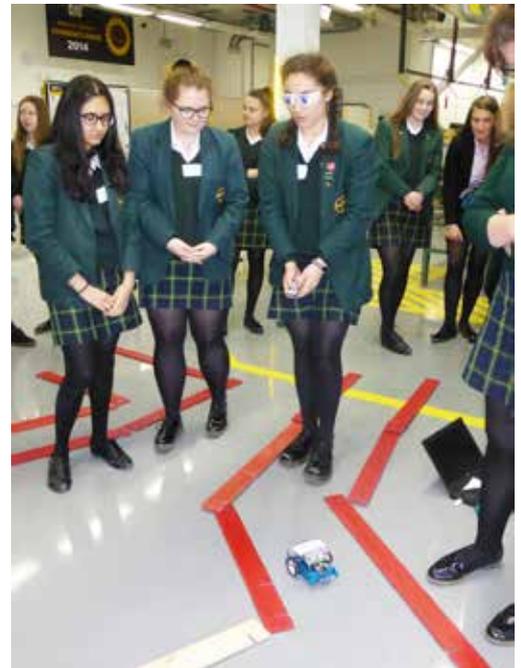
Elinor Fowler, Year 13





Caterpillar Tracks

A STEM event at Caterpillar, Peterlee, in March introduced a group of girls to engineering as a career, as well as showing them how Caterpillar is pushing the boundaries with technology to facilitate mining in remote areas. The girls then built mBOTS to drive around courses blindfolded, with team members providing directions. For the STEM challenge that followed, each group had to use Scratch to program their mBOTS to operate remotely and complete a route, without crossing any lines. 'The Trukinators' were the overall winners, and their prized CAT t-shirts were the envy of all.



The girls were fully engaged throughout and impressive in both the construction and the programming aspects of the STEM challenge. Communication and teamwork skills were apparent, as well as the potential to be highly effective leaders. It was a truly fabulous day, finishing with a discussion about apprenticeships and the opportunities available to women in engineering, as well as the promise from Caterpillar of follow-up careers support in school.

In November Laura Selvarajah and Vaniya Moradi travelled to Newcastle University for a MAD (Medicine and Dentistry) Day. Vaniya has always had an interest in Dentistry and attended to gain a greater understanding of the profession. She particularly enjoyed the practical sessions and would highly recommend the MAD Day to anyone considering Dentistry in the future – whether as yet undecided or as committed as Vaniya! Laura had a wonderful day too as she participated in medical practical sessions, including investigating the anatomy of organs, analysing x-rays, using a stethoscope and decision-making based on medical ethics. The application process and interview sessions proved extremely informative and Laura would advise all potential medics to attend future MAD Days as part of their preparation for university.



Seeing Stars



Star-gazing was on the curriculum for Years 7 and 8 when Dr Jennifer King of Durham University visited us with an indoor planetarium. The girls discovered how to use the stars to work out which way is north – always a useful skill!! They also learned why stars are different colours and the difference between stars and planets. The activity was highly entertaining, as well as supporting the girls' project on the solar system.



Junior Science Day had something for everyone this year. The highlight for Year 2 was a visit from Jay's Animal Encounters which included meeting a snake, a scorpion, a skunk, a skink and lots of other animals which don't begin with 'S'! The girls also learnt about healthy eating and different medicines from a pharmacist.

Girls in Year 3 learned about chemical reactions by making their own mini-volcanoes and sherbert. They also investigated friction and balance by making some moving spiders and balancing clowns.

Year 4 were shocked to discover a demand for money had been left in their classroom. Mrs Booth suspected some of the other teachers were behind it and, using chromatography, the girls managed to work out whose pens had been used to write the note. Year 4 also investigated the forces behind flight, experimenting with hovering ping pong balls, balloon powered rockets and paper planes.

Year 5 had 'Adventures with Air': balloons, pop-up bottle tops and old CDs were used to make hovercraft and they learned about the Bernoulli Effect with straws and table tennis balls. Using just a length of dowel, playing cards and sticky tape, they were challenged to make devices that used air resistance to arrest the descent of an egg.

Year 6 had great fun investigating eyes and how we see things, finding our 'blind spot' and exploring the persistence of vision. We wrote our names in Braille and made periscopes.





LIBRARY



On 26 March, the day before 'The Beast from the East' swept through Durham, 11 girls from Year 10 wrapped up warmly and caught the train to Newcastle to attend this year's North East Teenage Book Awards ceremony. Over the past few months, the girls have been reading the shortlist of 6 Young Adult novels and meeting at break-times to discuss them and to vote for their favourite. This year's selection divided opinion, with the heart-breaking 'Paper Butterflies' coming out on top – although everyone agreed that it should come with a box of tissues!

It was fascinating to meet a diverse range of authors who shared their experiences of writing, answered questions and signed books. From Clementine Beauvais, who talked about the tricky process of translating her novel, 'Piglettes', from French, to Lisa Heathfield who explained that her main character walked into her living room one day and refused to leave until her 'writing spirit' had written her story, there was something for everyone.

Gwen Baring and Sunanya Aggarwal had the honour of opening the proceedings by introducing the author of 'A Berlin Love Song': Sarah Matthias.

Hopefully, this has reminded our busy Year 10s that losing themselves in a good book is the perfect way to relax, unwind and dream!





World Book Day

World Book Day this year dawned white and brought an unexpected 'snow day'. Nothing daunted, both Junior and Senior Houses celebrated in the planned style one week later. Senior House girls decorated their Form room doors as book covers. A lot of fun, team-work and book related talk went on, with 7D's 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' being declared the overall winning entry. Junior House celebrated World Book Day with undiminished enthusiasm: younger girls arrived dressed as characters from traditional stories while the older girls' costumes were inspired by classic novels. In class, Year 1 looked at different versions of 'Little Red Riding Hood' then decorated a cake for grandmother. Year 2 visited the Senior Library where our Librarian, Ms Casey, read a story to them. They then wrote books of their own based on the story. Year 3 read stories to younger girls while Year 4 heard a retelling of Oscar Wilde's 'The Selfish Giant'. Year 5 had a frantic search for book titles and authors' names in a 'Blockbusters' style quiz. Meanwhile, Year 6 watched an excerpt from the classic film 'Gone with the Wind', prompted by the arrival of a Scarlett O'Hara (Keira Lewis).





Seven Stories

Year 2 thoroughly enjoyed their visit to Seven Stories in Newcastle where they had a fabulous time visiting the Bears exhibition and taking part in a drama workshop.

Dressing-up, listening to stories and making bear puppets were just some of the activities they took part in during the day.



In January, Year 4 went to the aptly named Wallsend to visit the remains of Hadrian's Wall and the Roman Fort at Segedunum. In a workshop we learned all about being a Roman soldier, helped by Mrs Booth being dressed up as a soldier - much to everyone's amusement - complete with 50,000 rings of mail armour. We held replica shields and spears and were trained to follow Latin commands. After lunch, we explored the fort, using evidence to work out what the different buildings had been used for, as well as locating where special Roman artefacts had been found. We then walked on some of the original Hadrian's Wall and climbed up to the top of the replica wall. Everyone agreed it had been a great trip and we learned a lot of fascinating information to help with our studies.



Kung Hei Fat Choy

Reception and Nursery had great fun celebrating Chinese New Year! We found out lots of interesting facts and had an amazing Chinese banquet. Trying different food, dragon dancing and even receiving lucky red envelopes made it a really special day.

We are very grateful to the Parents and Friends for their very kind donation to Junior House which has enabled us to improve our cookery facilities. We now have a Music/Cookery Room just along from Reception classroom and girls are enjoying using this area. Cookery is covered within the DT curriculum for all classes as well as being included in the extra-curricular programme.



On a snowy February day, Year 5 headed off to Beamish...

"I enjoyed exploring the town and finding out the history of the shops. I especially enjoyed visiting the sweet shop and finding out that some sweets used to contain pigs' blood! Some other boiled sweets were even made out of ear wax. Thank goodness they're not like that today".
India Arora

"My favourite part was when we went to the school, because the teacher was very strict. Our curriculum for the day was PE, Art, English and Maths. I loved Art because we got to draw a picture of Grace Darling while we listened to a story about her".
Poppy Moody

"I liked visiting the bank because it was interesting to learn about where they kept their valuables: in heavily locked rooms down in the bank's basement. These were called the vaults. It was pretty creepy down there!
Emma Beckmann

"The man in the dentist's was really interesting! He told us that when you were eighteen, your father would have all your teeth pulled out and buy you a set of false teeth as a present, so that you wouldn't have to pay to go to a dentist again. That would make you more attractive to a potential husband!"
Katharina Sheen



Brilliant Beamish

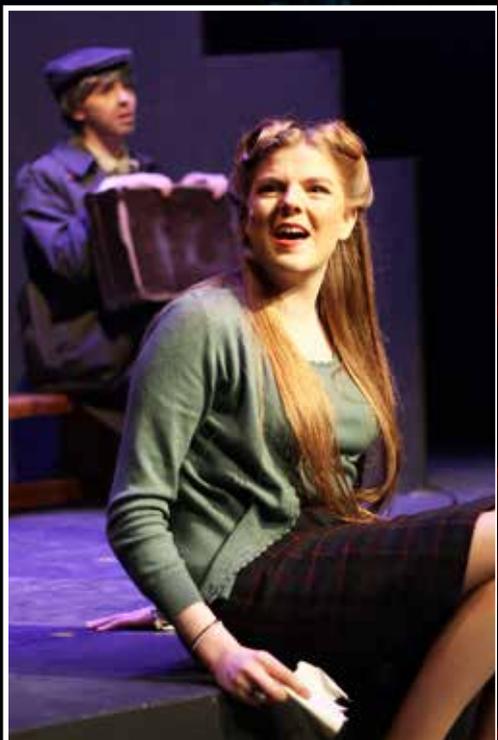
Year 1, right, also braved the snowy weather for a visit to Beamish Museum. The girls were able to step back in time and become servants for the master of Pockerley Manor. They were tasked with doing some polishing, baking biscuits and making lavender bags. The girls then travelled by bus to the town to explore the old fashioned shops and homes. The sweetie shop was by far the favourite where we got to see cinder toffee being made – and enjoyed some samples!



Our Leading Ladies

As part of marking 100 years since the first women got the vote in our country, our Junior Christian Union Suffragists created their own banners and had a noisy (but peaceful!) march through Junior and Senior Houses, including the dining room where they received a round of applause. Senior students joined in the chants for "Votes for Women" and "Equal Pay," when the girls visited Year 11. Banners also marked Jesus' teaching that we should treat each other in the way we would like to be treated and that we are all equal in God's view. Some of the issues the Junior pupils identified were that everyone should have equal access to food and water and that all men and women should have the right to vote and equal pay, irrespective of gender.





Goodnight Mister Tom

With amazing performances from the whole cast and an inventive set - complete with revolving stage - this year's production in Durham's Gala theatre of the musical version of 'Goodnight Mister Tom' delighted and impressed audiences, young and old alike.





Little Lumiere



Inspired by the recent Durham Lumiere, Junior and Senior Christian Unions created over a dozen installations of their own, mostly inspired by Bible Stories, which were brought together in a takeover of the Studio for our very own DHS 'Little Lumiere'.

The installations, involving light or fire, included floating angels representing Jacob's ladder and a work based on the Resurrection. In another installation crosses, stars and footprints were transformed when explored with ultra-violet light. A mini Durham Cathedral created by Junior House students and called "The Light of the World," had backing music from Tim Hughes and Stormzy. There were also angels, Christmas trees and even the Burning Bush, with students speaking God's words to Moses. Response to the day was super, with quite a few saying they enjoyed it more than the 'big' Lumiere. Watch out, Durham!



Dusseldorf delights

At the end of the winter term a group of Sixth Formers, accompanied by Mrs Wheeler and Mr Fox, embarked on a trip to Dusseldorf, Germany. On arrival we went for a chilly evening walk into the center of Dusseldorf and had our first glimpse of the Christmas markets, as well as enjoying fabulous views over the city on the Ferris wheel.

A guided tour of Düsseldorf the next day was followed by a visit to an Aqua-zoo then shopping on the Konigsallee, a designer area of Düsseldorf. On the Sunday we had a guided tour of Benrath chateau where, much to our amusement, we had to wear slippers over our shoes to protect the floors. The rest of the day involved shopping at Christmas markets and eating bratwurst and ended with a rather heated bowling competition, with Mr Fox revealing his competitive streak. On the Monday we spent the full day in Cologne and our last day was spent in Phantasialand where we rode on Europe's fastest multi-launch rollercoaster. We were all very sad to leave Germany after a truly amazing time.

Grace Cleasby, Year 12





Premiere League Netball

After 3 trials, I was delighted to be selected to move from the U17 to the U19 National Premiere League training squad, a huge achievement for any player, but particularly for someone of my age. Since then, I have been selected to play in the U19 match play squad which has helped develop my netball still further. Recently, I have been invited to train with the England Roses Academy at Loughborough in the Easter holiday, an experience I am really looking forward to!

Anna Jewitt, Year 11



County Cross Country Championships



Several of our students represented Durham at the County Cross Country Championships at Barnard Castle School in January. While all the girls were outstanding, running in the snow and freezing conditions, Bethany Fitzsimmons excelled and achieved the coveted Purple Durham Sweatshirt to represent County Durham in the next round!

After representing the North of England divisional rugby team for two seasons, I recently made a huge progression in my rugby career by trialling for the Tyrrell's Women's Premiership team: Darlington Mowden Park Sharks (pictured above with me in the front row, centre). I was successful in selection and am now playing and training with current and past England and Scotland international players. This is a fantastic opportunity and I already I feel my skillset is growing. So far, I have represented the development team in three league games and one cup game, and my coach has noticed my improvement between games, and believes that with strength and conditioning training through the summer I will be playing top-flight rugby at the beginning of next season. I am excited for what the future holds: my hope is to get scouted to trial for England Women.

Olivia Rowe, Year 13

Tyne and Wear Dance Festival

The Year 7 Dance Club performed at the Tyne and Wear Dance Festival at Biddick Academy. The girls performed beautifully, their dance choreographed by Sixth Former, Laura Selvarajah, and included a solo by Elise Blankley.



When Mia Liddell, Year 9, competed at the Northern Athletics Championships in February she ran the 60 metre Hurdles in an impressive 9.56 seconds to achieve a new personal best and a silver medal. Mia then competed in the Scottish Nationals Indoor Championships in the 300m sprint, coming 3rd in her semi-final. The final was a dramatic race for Mia; after being blocked in on the final bend, she managed to come from behind and on the final stretch, ran the finish of her life to come 3rd and take the Bronze medal. Mia is now ranked 24th in the UK for the 300m and 16th for the 60m Hurdles.

Our annual swimming gala at Freemans Quay in March was, as usual, an exciting, lively and very noisy event! Well done to all the Year 4, 5 and 6 competitors for swimming with great determination for their Houses. Particular congratulations go to Emily Hayes for setting a new school record in the Year 5 Butterfly, and to Jessica Wood for setting a new school record in the Year 5 Individual Medley. Booth set a new school record in the Year 4 Freestyle Relay and was also the overall winning House.

Record Breakers



Netball

Regional Successes

This term the U14, U16 and U19 netball teams competed at the Regional Netball Finals against the best teams in North Durham. The girls worked tirelessly in their games and played some excellent netball. The U14 girls finished in an excellent 3rd place and, as the majority of the team will be playing in the same tournament next year, they should be very excited at the prospect of reaching National Finals 2019. Meanwhile, the U16 team finished in 2nd place to qualify for the National Netball Finals - an excellent achievement! The U19 team worked hard against some extremely tough and well-established teams, never giving up - to their credit - and finished in 6th place.



Team Northumbria NSL

When Team Northumbria played against Benecos Mavericks in their super league match at Sports Central Newcastle, a group of our Year 6 girls was very excited to represent DHS as mascots, while some of our Year 8 were equally proud to be ball girls.



City Netball Tournament Success

Both the U14A and B teams brought home some silverware from the City Netball Tournament this term. The U14A team were undefeated throughout the tournament, taking back the trophy from Choristers and the U14B team were runners up in the Plate league. Well done to all who played in some bitterly cold and wet conditions.

Tennis



After attending Durham and Cleveland 18 and Under County trials, I was delighted (and surprised!) to hear that at only 11, I was the youngest girl ever to be selected for the team, with the other five members all 15 and over! In February we travelled to Grantham for the LTA County Cup Competition, a three day event competing against Devon, Lincolnshire and Oxfordshire. I beat players from Devon and Oxfordshire, helping us to team victories. On Day 3, I beat Lincolnshire's number 6, a tall, powerful 17 year old who was twice the size of me with a massive serve. The match lasted over 2 hours and I had the blisters to prove it, but I won, helping our team to overall victory. It was an amazing experience and the team spirit was excellent, making me proud to be part of Durham and Cleveland tennis.

Grace Hildreth, Year 7

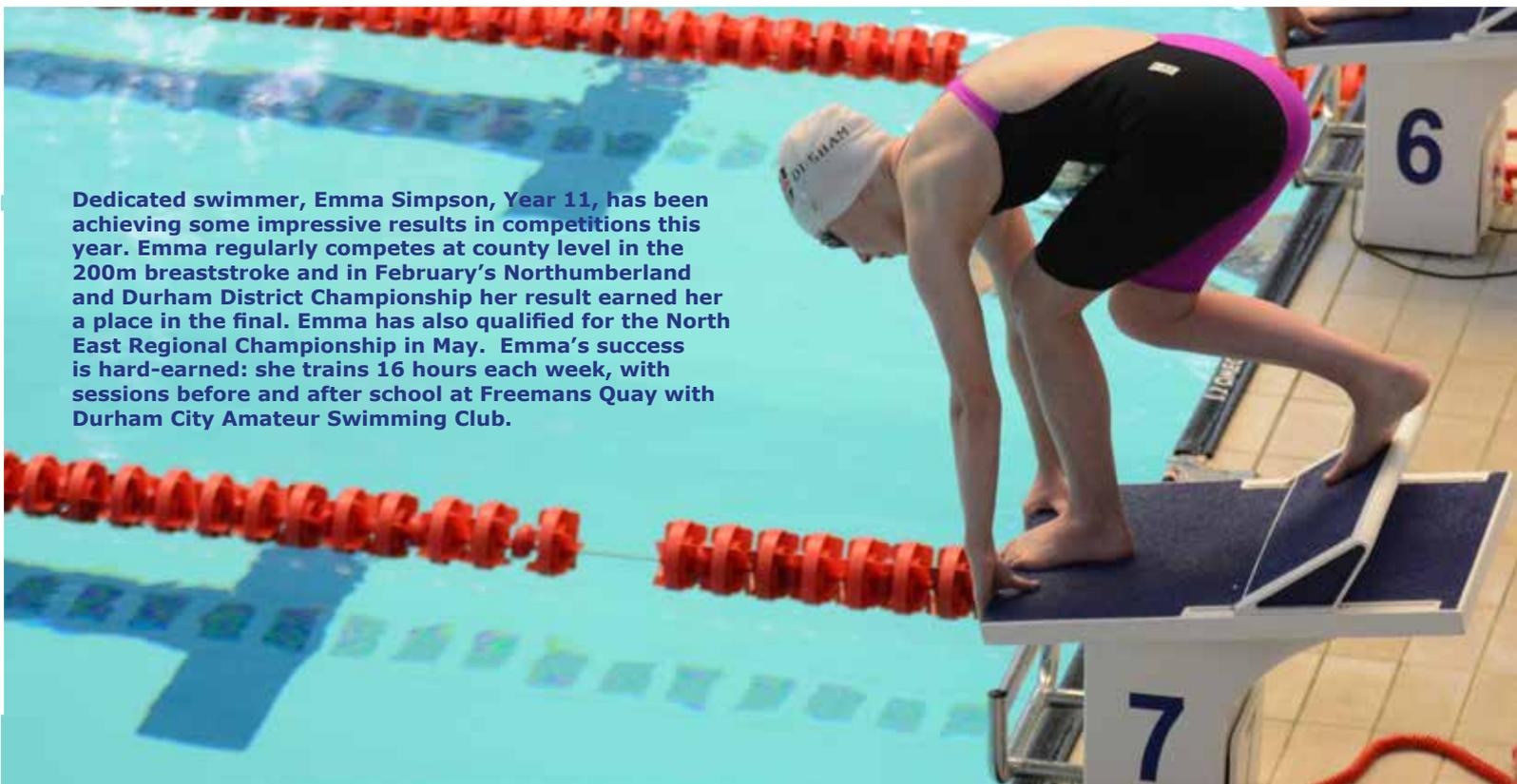
2017 was a highly successful year for Sixth Form athlete, Jazmine Moss, who ran personal bests in both the 100m and 200m while qualifying for the English Schools Championships where she won a Bronze medal in the Senior 200m. This achievement earned Jazmine an invitation to compete in Birmingham Indoor Arena at the British Athletics Indoor Championships. This was Jazmine's first time racing on the Senior stage, alongside Olympians and European champions and she ran the 200m with a personal best of 25.23s – a fantastic opening to her 2018 season!

Jazmine's success continued in March in the Scottish National Indoor Championships. She won her 200m heat and the semi-finals and then came second in the final with a new indoor personal best of 24.88 to be ranked 11th nationally.



Personal Best

Dedicated swimmer, Emma Simpson, Year 11, has been achieving some impressive results in competitions this year. Emma regularly competes at county level in the 200m breaststroke and in February's Northumberland and Durham District Championship her result earned her a place in the final. Emma has also qualified for the North East Regional Championship in May. Emma's success is hard-earned: she trains 16 hours each week, with sessions before and after school at Freemans Quay with Durham City Amateur Swimming Club.



The DHS Equestrian Team has been in fine form, starting the season with Olivia Davison coming 2nd in the NSEA plate competition in Selkirk in the 1m 10 class to qualify for the National Final.

The team came 4th in the 75cm Arena Eventing in September and in January won the NSEA county qualifiers for dressage, as well as having the top 3 individual placings (Jessica Walton 1st, myself in 2nd place and Olivia Davison 3rd). Jessica and I competed in the Novice 27 test, an individual competition, which I won with Jessica coming 2nd, and in February, Jessica and myself won the 90cm and 1m10 classes in the NSEA county show jumping qualifiers.

Outside of school competitions, the girls compete regularly: Sophie Evans qualified for the David Broome Show Jumping Championships; Sasha Cowie won at Seagold Centurion in the 80cm Show Jumping class and finished 2nd in the 80cm Show Jumping at Holmside. Hannah Dent has won many local show jumping and show cross events, and hunter trials. In the Braes of Derwent Pony Club team, her team qualified for the National Championships and she qualified for the Northern Show Cross finals. Hollie Dent finished 3rd in the Northern Show Cross final and has won many Show Jumping competitions, Hunter Trials, and Show Crosses.

I compete regularly in the British Eventing and at area level for South Durham Hunt Pony Club. The



Equestrian Team



highlight of my year was to win my regional arena to qualify for the National Pony Club Championships where I was delighted to achieve a double clear result to achieve 5th place in the novice section.

Olivia and I have had a number of successes across the Northern Region British Show Jumping National Framework and was invited to join the Northern British Show Jumping Junior Academy Team. At the British Show Jumping Championships she had clear rounds in both 80cm and 90cm classes, with no faults to finish 12th and 18th with over 100 riders in each class. At the Northern British Show Jumping Academy Olivia came 6th and 4th in individual classes.

Jessica Walton qualified for the National Pony Club Championships and won in the Dressage, taking her to a 'ride off' and she came home with a podium place of 3rd. Jessica was also selected for the Northern England National British Eventing team where she secured an individual win, to become the National British Eventing Champion of 2017 in the 100cm section.

The Equestrian Team is grateful to the Parents and Friends for funding our fabulous team kit, allowing us to proudly represent the school.

Katie Walton, Year 10

Cross Country

When the annual Junior House Cross Country Competition took place in February, we were once again very lucky to have perfect running conditions and lovely sunny weather.

In the Year 3 and 4 race Millie Slane came first, in second place was Harriett Lewis and Hannah O'Neil came third. Darcy Metcalf won the Year 5 and 6 race, with Jessica Wood coming second and Robyn Delaney in third place. A fantastic effort was displayed by each and every runner and the winning House was Booth.

