

Summer Term 2020

The Greyhound



SOLIHULL



Oscar Montgomery





Oscar Montgomery

Oscar was one of those pupils who come along from time to time and make an indelible and unforgettable impact on our community. He was one of life's good guys and he cared, he cared a lot, he cared a lot about everyone and everything he came into contact with. The school community is so much richer for the passion, commitment and friendship this incredible young man brought to it. We miss him a great deal.

Oscar was immensely talented. He had an incredibly strong work ethic, yet he always found time to help others, and he competed in a very diverse range of sports, several of them at county level. However, his sporting passion was rugby, and both Sils rugby and school rugby were hugely significant in his life. Watching Oscar in his bright red scrum cap giving his all for his teammates and coaches made us all very proud indeed.

Whilst on the topic of brightly coloured headgear, who can forget his charity inspired pink Mohican haircut in aid of Reynolds Cross School. The money raised paid for new signage at the school and the proceeds of the recent Big Old Sils Virtual Charity Quiz, in Oscar's name, also went to this excellent charity. The Head, Jane Davenport, said she will never forget Oscar, his spirit and his selflessness.

Oscar never let his passion get the better of him and he was renowned for his sense of fair play, on and off the field. He wasn't perfect and had a penchant for illicit ball games in the classroom, but he was always very honest, admitting his mistakes and accepting fault with little hesitation. To be fair, his 'innocent face' wasn't the best! There was a lovable rogue element to Oscar, but he was never anything other than very respectful towards staff and other adults, and he would always say hello and have a quick chat, even when surrounded by his pals or dashing off to his next commitment.

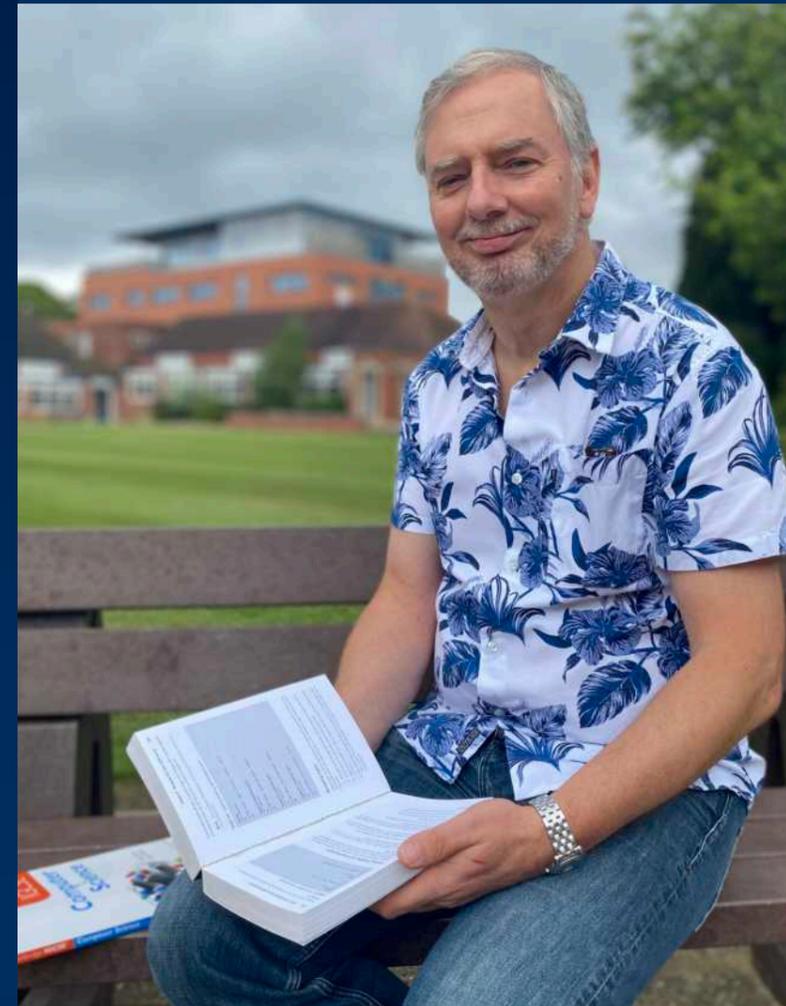
He had a real love of the outdoors and excelled in the water and on land. Oscar enjoyed much success with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, despite, I'm told, his friends putting rocks in the bottom of his expedition rucksack. In this and many other areas of school life, he was also a natural leader, serving on the Bench, and always very quick to put himself forward whenever help was needed.

Oscar would try anything and would always give his very best, whatever the subject or activity. He didn't believe in doing things in half measures and always pushed himself to new heights. 'In for a penny, in for a pound' was how Oscar lived his life. He was known for being spontaneous and 'in the moment', but never appeared flustered or disorganised. Oscar never held a grudge and on those rare occasions when he fell out with a friend, he would always appear without warning offering a big smile and a hug.

My sources tell me that Oscar was also fond of practical jokes and if science experiments involved syringes, someone usually got a soaking. Another thing to be wary of around Oscar was food. I have been reliably informed by those close to him that food and snacks were hoovered up by Oscar if left unattended for more than a moment.

Oscar was a wonderful human being. He was a great friend, a team player, brave and an inspiration to us all, young and old alike. We talk about resilience and growth mindsets a lot at school and Oscar embodied both. The same is true of our school aims and motto, and Oscar loved his community. He was an exemplary role model for all of us and not only leaves a big hole in our lives, but also many lessons for us to learn and follow.

David EJJ Lloyd



The Greyhound Interviews ... Mr Reardon, Assistant Headmaster (ICT)

How long have you worked in education?

Well, I started working at 16 in a University, so over forty years! (Don't want to give my age away!) I have been a teacher for the past 32 years, and at Solihull for almost 30 years now.

Have you always worked in ICT?

No, my degree is in applied biology, and when I began teaching it was as a Science teacher with specialism in Biology. I taught at the CTC in Kingshurst, which is what brought me to the Midlands. When I started at Solihull it was as a full time teacher of Biology.

If you didn't work in education, what career would you most want and why?

I have always had an interest in things technological, so I would probably have pursued a career in the creative arts, but on the technical side rather than the performance side. A lot of my working life has involved technical matters, from making

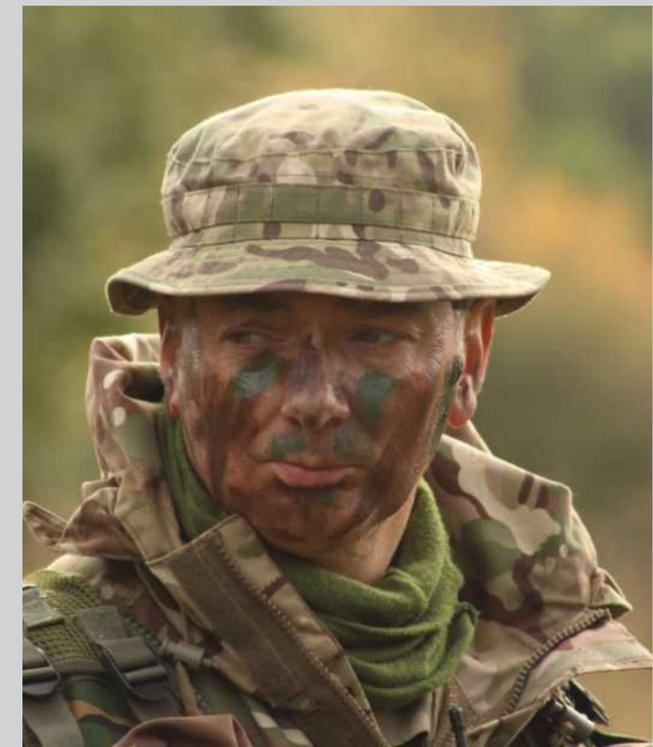
educational videos for undergraduates when I was in my late teens, through to filming and sound engineering when I came to Solihull, and ironically, the past few weeks I have been video editing a lot again, which gives me the chance to exercise my artistic/creative side as well as use my techie side.

What do you enjoy doing outside of school?

I am an active member of the School's Combined Cadet Force, which has given me the opportunity to try things I wouldn't have been able to otherwise, and taught me new skills. The social aspect is also great fun, as is helping out with D of E as an assessor. I enjoy travel and am looking forward to spending more time doing that when I retire. Family and friends are important to me, and I hope to see more of them once lockdown is fully lifted and we can have proper get togethers again. I enjoy cooking, gardening and photography too, so look forward to having more time to spend on those pastimes as well.

What's your favourite song of all time?

I have always been a fan of popular music, leaning a little on the rock/heavy metal side. With that in mind, I would probably go with 'Hotel California' by The Eagles. So many memorable lines there, one of which was thrown at me this week - 'you can check out any time you like, but you can never leave', referring to me leaving Solihull School at the end of the term. I normally think nothing compares with the original, and my daughters clubbed together to buy me tickets to see The Eagles live in London in August. Unfortunately, it has been postponed until 2021, but is something to look forward to, so delayed gratification. I also love the Gipsy King's version, which brings a guttural Spanish vibe that works beautifully with it.



Share Happy

At the start of lockdown we set up the Solihull Share Happy page to remember the good things that happen every day and to spread positivity. Our Solihull community embraced the opportunity to share moments of enjoyment – small and big; personal and important - from baking and gardening to sailing and swimming. Thanks for all the submissions, we hope this selection make you smile.



Community Relations

This term has yet again demonstrated the fantastic Solihull community spirit, despite the challenges of lockdown. The Solihull Preparatory School supported front line workers with the #NHSStaffRock campaign and the DT staff made great use of the laser printer to produce visors at a time of particular need. We also filled three minibuses of essential food, toiletries and baby items to be distributed by the local food bank throughout the borough. Pupils, parents and staff participated in the 'Big Brummie Camp Out' in support of SIFA Fireside and, in the last few weeks of term, Third Form students supported the Solihull Big Sponsored Read in aid of the Solihull Hospital Trust Children's Ward refurbishment. Thank you to the whole Solihull School community for your incredible enthusiasm and generosity.



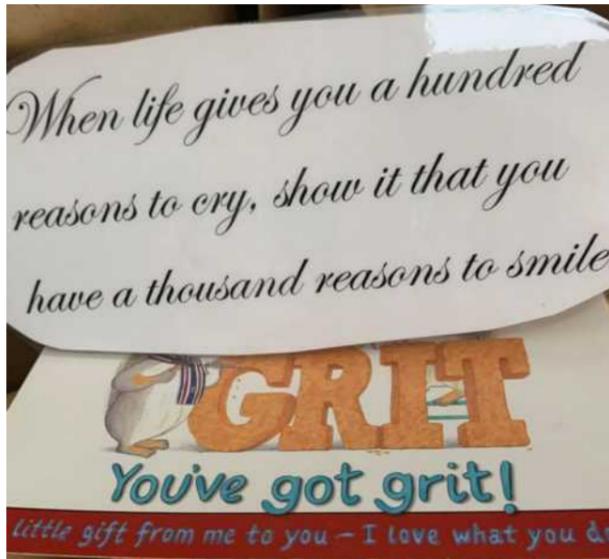
Bike Week

June saw the Solihull community celebrate 'Bike Week'. A fantastic effort from pupils, parents and teachers who collectively cycled nearly 4,000 miles over seven days. For some it was venturing out for the first time and learning basic road safety and bicycle maintenance and, for others, it was achieving personal bests and conquering hills. A highlight of Bike Week was the time spent in the great outdoors in the company of family. We look forward to supporting Cycling UK in Bike Week 2021!



#NHStaffRock

Pupils, parents and staff at our new Solihull Preparatory School (Solihull Junior School and Saint Martin's Alice House and Junior School) took part in an initiative to show their gratitude in support of the NHS workers. More than 450 families received #NHStaffRock kits to create goodie bags for NHS key workers battling the Coronavirus pandemic. Pupils were invited to personalise Scuffie and Twitch postcards to make NHS staff smile! The response was unbelievable with many families going that extra mile to support the campaign.



Staff in the Neonatal Unit at Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust were touched by our #NHStaffRock delivery. The team of key workers were so grateful for the treats and positive messages, now displayed on their colourful 'Rainbow of Hope' wall.



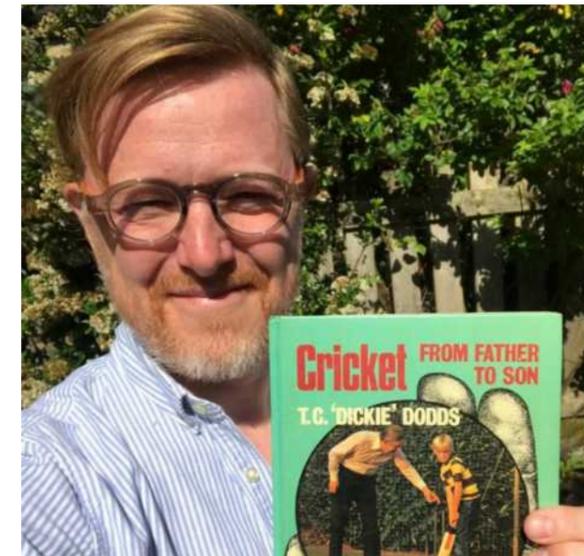
Sewing Sisters

Well done to Claudia in J3 and Thirds pupil Martina who, together with their sister Natalie, spent their free time during lockdown sewing bags and headbands for the NHS.



DT Donations

Our DT Department supported Nuffield Health Warwickshire Hospital, near Leamington Spa, with the donation of visors. In the true spirit of the school's motto "Perseverantia", Mr James, Teacher of Design and Technology, went into school with his wife and two children to make over 70 visors specifically for the hospital. The Solihull School community has also donated to other organisations.



Sponsored Read

Our annual Solihull Sponsored Read ran from 22 June to 5 July to encourage Third Form pupils to pick up a book and raise funds for Solihull Hospital Charity Children's Appeal.

To launch the initiative, we asked Solihull staff to share memories of their childhood books. From 'Carrie's War' to 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' to 'Cricket from Father to Son', there were titles to inspire all.

Charity Challenge

Charlotte in J3 and Oliver in Thirds have been taking part in a fantastic family charity challenge. The siblings and their parents set a task to 'keep active' and collectively covered 825km during May, raising more than £800 for Marie Curie. A great achievement.



Volunteering

Well done to Shells pupil Buster and his family who spent days volunteering at the Edgbaston Foundation food bank storage centre. Buster enjoyed the work and the great team spirit of those involved in supporting the charity.

NHS Thank You

The Grounds Team's new TinyLineMarker pitch robot, Xavier, arrived at the end of April and Mr Brotherhood put it straight to the test with a 'thank you' for the NHS. The message on our sports fields was visible to staff at Solihull Hospital.



Wellbeing & Personal Development

Lockdown didn't stop us recognising an important calendar event – Mental Health Awareness Week (18 – 24 May). This year's national theme was 'kindness' and Mrs Rooney, our Head of Wellbeing and Personal Development, set the whole school community the challenge completing 10,000 Acts of Kindness in a week, that didn't include money. The initiative was met with an enthusiastic response. From helping with the chores, to sending encouraging messages, letting arguments go, creating supportive study groups, saying thank you to a colleague – Solihull, we did it! 10,068 Acts of Kindness were recorded! They say kindness benefits the receiver AND the giver. This was certainly the experience at Solihull in May!




#BeKind

J3 pupil Charlotte and her brothers baked cupcakes for residents at the Royal Star & Garter Care Home in Solihull. Charlotte made the delivery to the elderly as part of our '10,000 acts of kindness' initiative. A lovely gesture.

75 VE Day

On Friday 8 May we marked the 75th anniversary of VE Day. The Solihull School community took part in a two minute silence and enjoyed celebrations to home. Mr Hammond recorded his version of Sir Winston Churchill's famous speech and Miss Bovill performed Dame Vera Lynn's 'We'll Meet Again'. Thanks to all who marked the occasion #wewillrememberthem



Lower School

Lower School Council

It has been truly wonderful to see the continuation of Lower School Council during the distance learning provision. Arguably, more important than ever, the collective pupil voice in Lower School has demonstrably helped shape further guidance to pupils on the time advised to spend per subject per week to help manage time. In addition, moving to cameras on for Lower School pupils for engagements across school life has been raised and actioned. A forum full of ideas, it has been fabulous to see their creativity and ingenuity come to the fore in novel circumstances.



Heads of Lower School – Lockdown Diaries

From the moment of school closure, Mr Gledhill was very grateful to the Heads and Deputies of Lower School (Noah, Flo, Robert and Hannah) for keeping lockdown diaries of what they thought and did over those initial weeks. We look forward to sharing those in due course and for future generations of Silhillians to experience what this period of history was like for Lower School pupils. We are sure a school archivist in 2120 will take a keen interest also!

Classics

The Classics Society has continued to meet throughout this term and has been on some very exciting, virtual visits. We started off with a bang, going to the J Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, to look at their collection of Greek and Roman sculpture. Then, we laced up our walking boots, and explored the Roman fort of Housesteads, on Hadrian's Wall. Our third trip was to Berlin and Turkey, to view the amazing monumental Pergamon Altar, and we finished our activities with a visit to Syria, to look at the site of Palmyra, that was blown up by ISIS, and to consider the importance of culture and archaeological sites, why terrorists see these as a target, and whether we should re-construct ancient sites. It has been an interesting and informative term, and we are all looking forward to being able to visit these places in person again soon!



Science and Engineering Club

The Science and Engineering Club has, once again, had a very successful term with students developing their scientific and engineering skills during our sessions on a Friday lunchtime. Many of our members have been completing the skills section for their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award, using equipment, which includes educational technical Lego kits, generously funded by the Solihull School Parents Association. During lockdown, a good number of pupils have completed their own engineering projects at home and finished off the skills section of the D of E Bronze Award. These projects have included a model train, a model engine, a working motor, a Scalextric track design and a model of a new Solihull School football stadium.



Engineering Education Scheme

The Engineering Education Scheme (EES), is part of the Aspire Enrichment Programme for Sixth Form students, has had a very successful year, and began with a launch event at Chetwynd Army Barracks in Nottingham. Here students completed a number of team building exercises as well as meeting their new mentors from Jaguar Land Rover (JLR). Over the following months the students completed projects looking at both vehicle customization options as well as a new wind tunnel design focused on improving the fuel efficiency of JLR vehicles. Earlier in the year students completed the realisation phase of their tasks. However, restrictions on social distancing and the school closure have meant that work isn't finalised and a small amount of fine tuning will be required in September.

Lockdown RAF

The RAF continued remotely throughout this term, led with great initiative by our Upper Sixth NCOs. Cpl Ben provided a live commentary over one of his recorded gliding flights, explaining the challenges of navigating thousands of feet above ground. Cpl Andrew gave a fascinating talk on the A10 Thunderbolt aircraft and Cpl George and Sgt Andrew prepared interesting presentations on the use of radio in the RAF. All four NCOs have enjoyed amazing service throughout the year, instructing the younger cadets. At the end of term, Laavunya, Frankie and Jane took their Part 1 RAF exam and achieved over 90%, earning themselves a distinction and promotion to Lance Corporal next year.



Warwick Group LVI Biology Essay Writing Competition

The Warwick Group Biology essay competition takes place annually with students from the eight Warwick Group Schools (Bablake, KES, King Henry VIII, Loughbrough Grammar, Nottingham High School, Solihull, Warwick & Wolverhampton Grammar) competing. The competition is designed to encourage students to research an area of Biology that is off the A level specification and promotes independent research as well as developing report writing skills such as citing references. All LVI students participate with the best two essays from each school being put forward to the final round. The winning essays are then judged by the Heads of Biology across all seven schools. This year our entrants were Bethan and Isaac. Bethan was overall winner with her essay entitled "How does formation and development of the gut microbiome as an infant combined with nutrition during pregnancy and early postnatal development impact on lifelong health?" An extract can be seen here and a full copy of Bethan's winning essay can be found on the Biology VLE



Intermediate Biology Olympiad

The International Biology Olympiad (IBO) is a competition for pre-university students which tests their practical and theoretical biology skills. The event brings together LVI students from all around the world and tries to both challenge and stimulate their curiosity in the biosciences. It is an opportunity for students to expand their talents. This year over 8,500 students took part and our Biologists were very successful. Freddie gained a gold medal. Thomas, Toby, Bethan and Isaac secured a silver medal. Isabel, Callum, Elisabeth and Khanh all won bronze. In addition, four students achieved highly commended and seven gained a commended certificate resulting in 87% of our entrants securing recognition. Well done, Team LVI Biologists!

How does the formation and development of the gut microbiome as an infant, combined with nutrition during pregnancy and early postnatal development, impact lifelong health?

Our birth and early postnatal environment are crucial stages in infant development which have domino effects on lifelong health. Beneficial nutrition and the composition of the gut microbiome and its development (which begins forming as a new-born is delivered) are beginning to be understood as vital factors for contributing to health in later life.

Formation and development of gut microbiome on lifelong health

The gut microbiome is composed of millions of different types of organisms and affects the health of our entire bodies. A diverse gut microbiome with the ideal combinations of good gut bacteria and organisms helps modulate immunity, reduce the effects of toxins, absorb nutrients from food more efficiently and fight disease. (1) Diverse microbiomes can also aid with brain and heart health, controlling blood sugar, and reducing diabetes. (2) In addition, the intestinal microbiome produces a number of hormones (90% of our serotonin) for use elsewhere around the body. (1) The gut microbiome can also have protective influences against conditions like childhood Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL). ALL is initiated by genetic mutations but microbial exposure which forms the gut microbiome acts as a protective entity against infections which trigger the secondary mutations in this process. This highlights the importance of microbial development in infants as a protective entity against conditions like ALL. (15)

The consequence of having a gut microbiome which doesn't contain this necessary diversity can have serious impacts on health. For example, in a study in 2016 by European scientists it was shown that just two nights of partial sleep deprivation led to a decrease in diversity and number of good gut flora, leaving a microbiome which has been shown to have links with diabetes and obesity later in life. (1) An experiment in mice demonstrated that those with deficient gut microbiomes had guts which failed to develop properly, weaker bones and less effective immune responses than normal microbial mice. Factors like stress, can reduce the integrity of the gut lining via the gut brain axis which leads to the types of inflammation which are associated with anxiety and depression and so this demonstrates the close link between gut health and overall health. (1)

Acquiring this gut microbiome begins at birth where the microbiome develops in a certain order with the earliest microbes providing building blocks for the growth of other microbes etc and this process has evolved to become as effective as possible. However, as modern-day humans, the latest research shows how we are sometimes disrupting this crucial evolutionary process. (2)

An extract from Bethan's winning essay

Oxbridge Programme

It has been an extremely busy term for our Oxbridge candidates. Highlights have included the visit of Professor Robert Vilain from Christ Church Oxford to discuss Personal Statements and all things admissions; a flexible thinking event on Covid-19 and its wider implications; a session conducted by recent alumni; the visit of Dr Shing Law from Oxford to discuss the Medicinal Interview and a Solihull Schools Network Oxbridge event run in liaison with Cambridge University. Now, Personal Statements beckon and a busy summer is anticipated for all candidates!



Medics and Veterinary Programme

Medics and Vets have been kept on their toes with a range of varied events from the visit of Dr Kate Brough, a local GP, to Dr Shing Law, a medical researcher in Arthritis and Olivia Eguiran-Wray who discussed the trials and tribulations of applications. A highlight was the excellent talks given by our Upper Sixth Form Medics on BMAT and UCAT testing. Good luck to all those who are volunteering or about to volunteer in a Medical or Veterinary setting over the summer. In addition, we also welcomed another member of the Upper Sixth to present his experiences and reflections on work at the Birmingham Children's hospital, which was both fascinating and very informative.



Off timetable Ancient Greek GCSE

'Perseverantia' is our motto and this team of Fourth and Lower Fifth Formers has demonstrated it in buckets! They have had fun ploughing through the Iliad and through Herodotus this year, meeting a Spartan king, Menelaus and Paris, the Trojan prince and Ethiopians and the arrogant King Cambyses of Persia. They have completed some fantastic work on assimilating and practising the grammar. We are looking forward to more fun with Greek in the autumn!



Lamda

The shift to online meetings did not put the Lamda public speakers off their stride for a second this term. Well-practised speeches on topics as diverse as the use of VAR in football, liberty, the environment and the death penalty have become increasingly well-honed from home, and we have had fun with speaking games and impromptu speeches on 'how to make a pizza' and 'how to convince a predator not to eat you'. It is the IV students responses to the more weighty questions of the day that have truly impressed Dr Hart and Mrs Francis, though; amongst the mature and articulate discourse we have seen on topics such as the government's response to Covid-19 and the place of religion in modern society, the passion and conviction with which Daleen approached the question of 'how we can create a more racially harmonious society free from the hatred of xenophobia and racism' stood out as particularly worthy of commendation. Good luck in the final exams next term!

Marginal Gains

The May issue of Marginal Gains was published this term. Understandably, the pupil's focus on the Coronavirus and life in lockdown. The full magazine is available to read in the publications section of the school website.



Modern Foreign Languages

As well as distance learning their various languages, many pupils have been enriching their subjects in some very creative ways. We have had Third Form pupils taking part in the 'This is Language Nutty Tilez' competition in Spanish, Shell Form French pupils completing a 'sandwich fou' challenge and many using a plethora of different platforms to maintain their level of language. A special mention goes to Zara in Thirds and her brother Rhys in J1 who rose to the challenge of a competition posted on the Languages Fun Team and created some Spanish - themed dishes. In addition, Jemimah in J4 is obviously a budding chef as she made some Spanish fruit salads and delicious magdalenas.

Food and Nutrition

International food was one of the themes for our Fourths practical work in Food and Nutrition. Pupils researched a cuisine of their choice and then made a selection of dishes. Special mention to Daniel who created some outstanding meals from around the world including Hawaii, Spain, Egypt and France - with music and decorations to match. Who needs to go abroad when you can eat like this at home!



RS

Thank you to Shell Form student Guneet for her lovely RS project. The department set humanism as a topic and reflected on what makes a happy human.





Distance Learning in Maths Pupil Comments (Week 1)

SOLIHULL

I feel that my learning progressed as it should have done if we were in school.

Overall, I feel quite confident as the lectures explained the things we had to learn very well.

I think it was the right amount of work to complete and I made corrections on my work after attending the clinics.

We could ask any question in the clinic which helped sort out any queries.

The pre-recorded lessons were informative and they told me all I needed to know for the assignments.

It was easy to access all the work.

I think I understood the questions well and attempted them well. Also I think I could improve by spending more time on the harder ones.

I feel that the experience was good and the lectures were well organised as you could pause them and always go back to help you if you didn't understand the 'test your understanding' part.

I feel that the whole learning experience went well and I was able to understand and complete the work.

I feel like it went very well. It wasn't too hard.

AMBITION - OPPORTUNITY - COMMUNITY

Maths

Our Maths Department received some marvellous feedback during the first week of the distance learning programme. Well done team, and thank you.

Pi Club

We have built a fantastic community of over 40 Lower School mathematicians in our virtual Pi Club. Mathematical puzzles have been posted each week via the Teams platform. Pupils have demonstrated some incredible mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills engaging with these puzzles.



English

Globe Theatre

As part of the Thirds' Shakespeare project, the pupils were required to research the Globe Theatre and make a model of it. Some pupils, such as Isaac, made a 3-D model, whilst others showed off their baking by creating an edible version of the Globe!



Art

Lockdown Painting

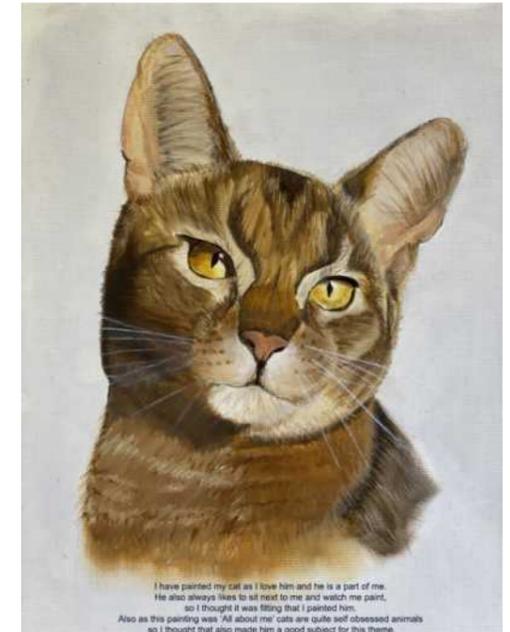
Upper Sixth student Aryan has painted this hyper-realistic acrylic artwork during lockdown. Over 100 hours of patience and skill to create every meticulous detail. Well done, Aryan, you have an incredible talent.

Art Scholar's Exhibition

Our Art Scholars were asked to create a new piece of work based on the theme 'All About Me' for an online exhibition. There were some really stunning pieces. You can view the full set of works in the 'Galleries' section of the school website.



I did the portrait of my Nan and I, with myself in focus as it was a self-portrait task. The reasoning behind this piece is to show how age is affecting my Nan's memory. So I did the painting in black and white to represent the faded memories in her life, and the only parts in colour are the flowers on my hat, as she loves her garden and all the flowers within. I then also did my eyes in colour as I feel as though that is the one thing she will never forget about me as she's always adored the colour of them.



I have painted my cat as I love him and he is a part of me. He also always likes to sit next to me and watch me paint, so I thought it was fitting that I painted him. Also as this painting was 'All about me' cats are quite self-obsessed animals so I thought that also made him a good subject for this theme.



The idea for this collaborative family painting stemmed from a discussion about what we could do to make the most of being at home and document this time visually. This painting is an attempt to spend more time on things that might not have been on the radar before lockdown – spending time with family, appreciating the garden and making time for art. Dimensions: 4 metres x 1.3 metres.



Half Term Sculpture Challenge

Over half term the Art Department set a challenge for pupils to make their own 'lockdown' sculptures from natural materials found in their gardens, inspired by the artist Andy Goldsworthy. The pieces were so creative and inventive.

Our Little Bird

There is a little bird,
Who flies to and fro,
Between our garden fences so.

He's a red-breasted fellow,
Who drops to the decking,
Picking and pecking at seed we leave out for his getting.

He carries a pink handbag,
Collecting squishy worms from the ground as tokens,
And returning them home to the trophy cabinet he opens.

Calling out to his friends,
Shouting out about treasure beneath,
Assembling a team to construct a wreath.

I wonder how far,
How far have his stick legs travelled?
We are baffled.

We are still as free as our little bird,
Who flies to and fro,
Teaching us to live our lives as we choose so.

We might be trapped in lockdown,
With boredom reaching its' peak,
But who's to say we can't speak?

Let us smile, laugh and cry,
In the company of our little bird,
Who taught us how to fly.

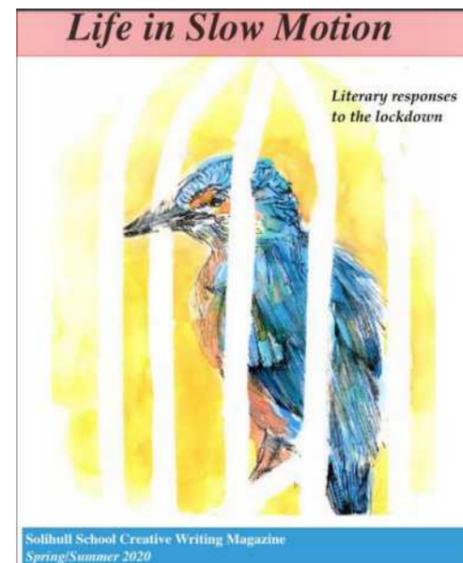
Lauren, LVI



Lockdown Creative Writing

A beautiful piece of 'lockdown' creative writing from Lower Sixth student Lauren. Thanks for sharing your poem, Lauren.

The latest issue of our Solihull Creative Writing Enrichment Group's e-magazine 'Life in Slow Motion', which has been produced during lockdown, is now available on our website. Enjoy!



House Events

House Run

At the end of April we launched our remote 5k House Run. Thanks to all students and staff who took part and entered their time on the Sport, Health & Fitness page including a great joint effort for Jago from Alistair in J2 and Isabella in Thirds.



House Bake Off

Lockdown baking has been big and Solihull pupils have enjoyed cooking at home. From spring themed cookies and cakes to creations with leftovers. We've loved seeing the varied selection of tasty treats! A special mention to Mari in Third Form who has created her own YouTube Channel, 'Time to Bake', documenting a range of delicious homemade cakes and biscuits.



Lockdown Business Initiative

Upper Sixth students Jack and Guy have spent their time during lockdown developing a positive initiative for pubs. The friends have set up a business to create extra seating for beer gardens – from excess kegs. They have already received many enquiries including an order from a venue in Yorkshire. Brilliant work.



House Music

Mid-June we launched the House Music Challenge for both Junior and Senior School pupils. Miss Rosina invited families to make some music, using household items only. The entries were varied and incredibly creative including versions of television theme tunes, 'We'll Meet Again' by the late Dame Vera Lynn and 'Dance Monkey' by Tones and I. A fun competition and all entries received points for their House.



Preparatory School Parents

In June we presented to our Solihull Preparatory School parents. We went online on 'Microsoft Teams' to talk uniform, wraparound care and more in preparation for welcoming pupils to the Saint Martin's campus in September.



Junior School Art Detectives

Art Detectives Club is a creative club for J1 and J2 pupils. Its aim? To investigate different ways of making art, looking at how inventive we can be and also, more importantly, to have some fun, whilst working from home. The pupils have really risen to the challenges set and have impressed Mrs Morgan with their ingenuity, resourcefulness and enthusiasm. From painting vibrant landscapes with household items, to making rainbow trees, creating bird's eye view images of animals in the garden, to mixing their own incredible paints from foodstuffs. The artwork produced has been amazing! Well done to everyone involved.



Junior School

Junior School Picnics

Our J1, J2 and J3 pupils were reunited for a morning, across three days, in June for socially distanced class picnics. The time flew by and two hours didn't seem long enough to catch up on all the news everyone had to share. J1 reminisced about classroom times, shared lockdown tales and enjoyed musical statues. J2 enjoyed a super-hot day chatting and playing circle games with much merriment. J3 picnicked in the shade and made a 'Teams' call to friends who could not attend so that they could be a part of the occasion too. It was wonderful to have all the children back together, seeing their huge smiles and all the teachers loved spending time with their classes.

Junior School Cookery Club

Throughout the school closure period, many people turned to baking, not least our Junior School! Each week a new recipe was posted in 'Teams', and pupils baked, sending in photographs of themselves and their creations. Shortbread, brownies, flapjacks, lemon drizzle, banana bread, Victoria sponge, tiffin, carrot cake, cookies and more were eagerly baked and consumed by pupils and their families. Many children took treats to their neighbours or grandparents and left them on their doorsteps. These were very much appreciated and also helped the pupils 'fill a bucket' with kindness. Cookery Club proved to be the most popular co-curricular activity during lockdown and Mrs Humphreys is already making plans to organise a Baking Club at Solihull Preparatory School.



Junior School Sign Language Club

Over the summer term, Sign Language Club have been learning how to sign the alphabet, numbers, colours and songs, including; 'I can sing a rainbow' and 'Million Dreams'. They have worked hard weekly to learn some new signs, whilst distance learning.

Junior School Eco Council

Our Eco Council have shared some ideas for Solihull Preparatory School and how we could include some 'green' initiatives on the Saint Martin's campus. They have also contributed to some challenge, including the 'Tree of Hope' competition set up by Love Solihull team, as well as creating bird feeders and recycled Spitfires for VE Day.



Junior School Young Ornithologists Club

Junior School children have enjoyed bird watching during distance learning. They have made bird feeders and been delighted to spot a variety of feathered friends in their gardens and on local walks. Some of these include: buzzards on bales of hay, robins, woodpeckers, swans and cygnets, blackbirds and even a sparrow hawk! It has been great to hear that grandparents have also become involved and therefore honorary members. We also enjoyed watching live footage from the nests from BBC Springwatch and intend to keep twitching in the summer holidays.

Junior School Head Boy and Head Girl

"We have loved returning to school after lockdown! Although it has been hard to socially distance from our friends, it has been great to see them after three months. Sport has been keeping us fit and healthy, with a range of activities every afternoon and it has felt different eating outside, as well as bringing in our own packed lunches! We have also been making the most of outdoor learning, including sketching, measurements and filming, in addition to working on our devices too. We really enjoyed the last week of term and spending it with our friends and teachers!"

A message from Cameron and Alice J4 Head Boy and Head Girl



Junior School STEM

Every Monday the children in J1 and J2 STEM Club are set a new challenge. Some of the tasks this term have included designing a boat out of recycling, creating an imaginative rainbow, or making a musical instrument. There were many entries each week and the winner received three merits.

Junior School Spanish

One of the tasks that Junior School pupils have enjoyed the most as part of the distance learning programme, has been cooking traditional Spanish dishes and making their very own fans! They prepared a typical Spanish dish called 'Pan con Tomate', a very simple, but tasty snack consisting of bread, garlic, extra virgin olive oil and tomatoes. Those with a sweet tooth made 'Arroz con Leche', a version of rice pudding which is served cold. Mrs Roman-Blythe has been very impressed with the culinary talents of the pupils, we may have some Michelin star chefs in our ranks!



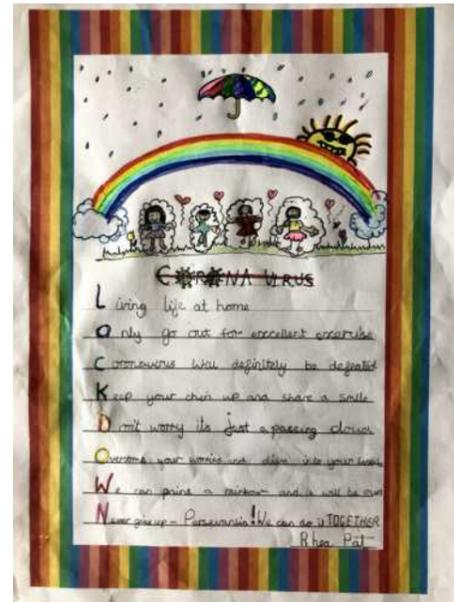
Junior School Drawing

Our J4 pupils enjoyed a relaxing afternoon sketching School House in the sunshine in June.



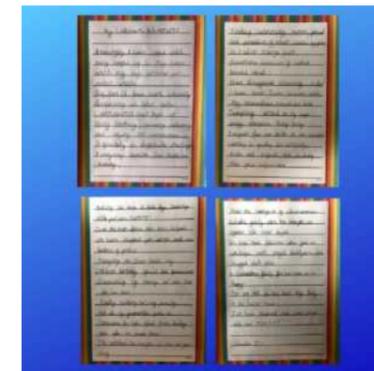
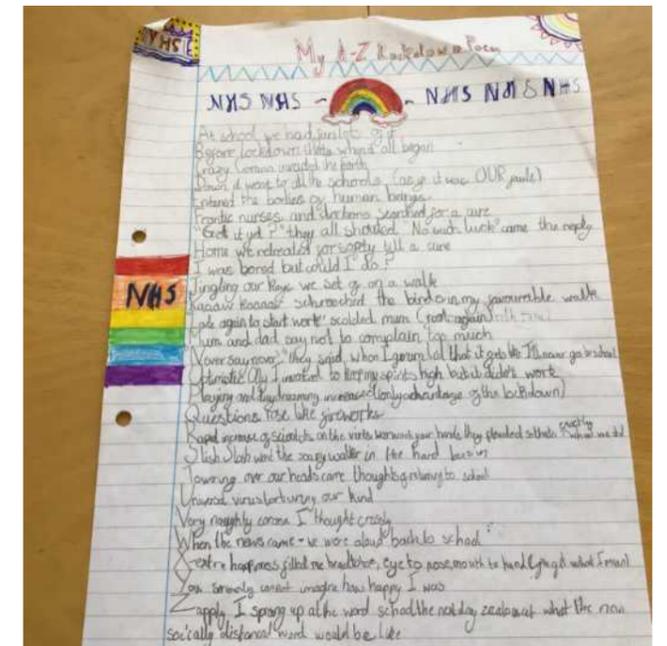
J3 & J4 Photography Club

Even though the children have been working from home, they have continued their passion for photography. Each week they were set a specific task, such as an image for VE Day or photographing something that began with the same letter as their surname. Pupils also took photos for fun and to demonstrate creativity. They have tried to improve angles and avoid distractions in the image and the results have been fantastic!



Junior School Lockdown Poetry

Mrs Lynch invited our J1 pupils to share their thoughts and emotions by writing alphabet themed lockdown poems. The pieces were colourful and creative. Thanks to all for taking part and well done to our winners Anmolika, Rhea and Claudie.



Spring Illness Campaign

In February, J3 and J4 were involved in The Spring Illness Campaign for The English Institute of Sport. The pupils designed and decorated small boxes which included messages of encouragement. These were then filled with hygiene products and distributed as care packages to the athletes in the run up to the Tokyo Olympics 2020. We are sure they have been well received and wish all participants the best of luck for Tokyo 2021. World Champion English artistic gymnast Joe Fraser sent this message on social media: "Want to say a massive thank you to Jess who designed a lovely box that got to me during lockdown and kept me happy and motivated! I really appreciated it so thank you and I wish everyone a huge success as we get through these difficult times."



Sport

Cross Country

Congratulations to Kate in Thirds and Jack in Fourths on their Cross Country success. Kate was joint first in the Year 7 Girls Category and Jack won the Year 8/9 Boys Group of the Solihull area School's Cross Country competition. Jack also receives the Bob Albutt Memorial Trophy for the highest counter for the West Midlands area at the English School's Cross Country Championships.



Solihull School Sailing Club

With this year's sailing season just about to get going as the Covid-19 news first broke, our fixtures against Warwick & Rugby and the NSSA 2-boat team racing championships were among the first to be cancelled... followed, of course, by the rest of the season. Not to be daunted, the Sailing Club has 'met' weekly this term, brushing up on our Team Racing theory, rules and tactics, and putting them into 'practice' using e-sailing. We have had some lively competitions, with expert coaching from club captain George and enthusiastic commentary from the 'Banana army'! Everyone is looking forward to getting back on the water 'for real' over the summer, and hope to return to fixtures and regattas in September.



Record Breakers

Congratulations to Miss Bovill and her son, Jonathan, who now hold the title of 'Fastest half marathon run by parent and child (mixed)' in the Guinness World Records. A fantastic achievement! If you'd like to attempt it, Solihull, 2hr 58min 35sec is the time to beat!

Rugby

Well done to Upper Sixth student Mitch who has joined the Worcester Warriors Three Pears Academy.



Music

Cancelled Events

Our musical summary of this term is, of course, dramatically different from that of summer terms in previous years. The result of school closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that many of the musical rehearsals and preparations of last term have not resulted in concert performances. Events we have missed have included: the Summer Concert (for large ensembles – when we also traditionally mark the contributions of all our Upper Sixth leavers by presenting them an individual rose); the Upper Sixth Pupils' Recital (a chance to hear our A-level musicians in solo performance, alongside other Upper Sixth musicians); the Junior School Concert (for the larger ensembles, for soloists and for year group curriculum-led performances – including hearing the results of the progress of all the J1 pupils through the class Instrumental Scheme); the summer term Solihull Sings! event – the choral outreach programme event which brings our J2s together with Year 4 children from two or three other local primary schools; a lunchtime concert at Solihull Methodist Church in which some of our music scholars would perform to the local community; all the weekly Sunday Chapel Services that our three Chapel Choirs would have prepared for; four Informal Concerts (for individual soloists to delight audiences and gain important experience of performing in front of others); as well as music for three prize giving events and two leavers' services (the Upper Sixth and J4). In addition, the usual cohort of pupils ready to take their instrumental exams (with the ABRSM or Trinity exam boards) have had either to put this on hold, or make the decision to miss that grade and move on to new repertoire and horizons.

Online instrumental lessons

However, with the unusual and unexpected comes resourcefulness. In addition to not being able to meet in school in person to make music together in ensembles the pupils have, of course, not been able to have their one-to-one individual instrumental and vocal lessons in the Music School. However, due to the determination and resilience of both teachers and pupils, alike, online lessons sprung into action, with all facing a rather steep learning curve. Not only did everyone have to work through the challenges of using technology in the most effective way, but also get used to the slight time delay that comes with this way of working – making live duet or ensemble performances nigh on impossible. We have also all realised how much nuanced communication happens when you are in the same room as someone else and how much we take for granted how quickly we can demonstrate something. However, having to re-think how we communicate has led to refreshing our approach and I am certain that some of the changes we have made to teaching will stay with us as and when we are back in the Music School, face-to-face.

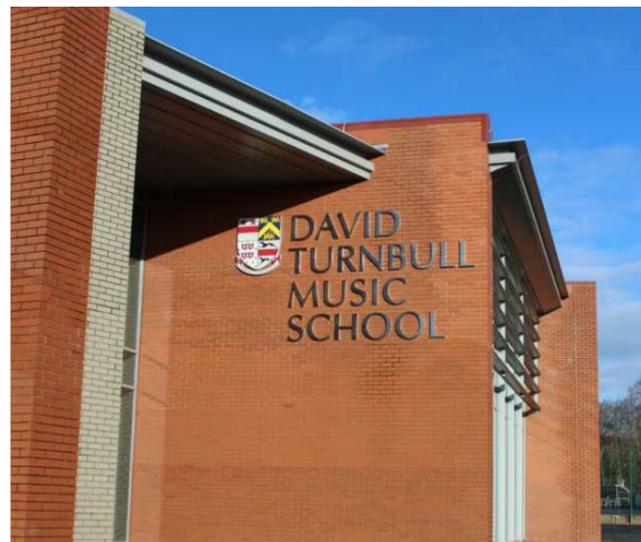


Weekly Virtual Informal Concerts

The lack of possible ensemble performances has been balanced by a weekly Virtual Informal Concert – ‘Friday at 4’. So many pupils – aided by their teachers – have recorded solo performances in the more intimate surroundings of their own homes allowing them a chance to perform and us, the audience, a weekly moment to stop and enjoy the wonderful power of music to bring us together – even in times like these when we are much more physically remote from each other. Thank you to all the performers for improving our wellbeing; I can only hope it has had the same benefit to you too. An additional thank you to various colleagues – especially Mrs Martens and Mr Rice – who have pre-recorded piano accompaniments in order to facilitate many of the performances, and to Mrs Baumber for bringing together all the technical aspects of the video recordings each week into the finished article. Further congratulations are due to those pupils who have been playing music outside their houses at 8.00pm on Thursday evenings for ten weeks when we all celebrated the work of the NHS and key worker staff.

‘Musical Mutterings’

One of the things many pupils, and staff, have missed about not being in school has been that sense of belonging, camaraderie and community that comes with being part of activities in the Music School. To help fill that void we set up an online weekly club – entitled ‘Musical Mutterings’ – as an informal moment in the week for anyone with an interest in music to come together for a virtual ‘tea and cake’ chat. We held a gentle home-grown musical Kahoot quiz each week (hosted by Mrs Baumber) and created a moment to chat about what we were each doing and what we were each missing whilst working from home. We also often introduced a piece of music and shared our thoughts about it. I do hope that all those who joined each week felt, like me, that little bit more re-connected with those whom we would normally be seeing regularly during the week, had we been in school.



Virtual ‘Learn to play Drums’ group

A big thank you to Mr Phillips for recording various instruction videos to guide pupils and staff to improve/begin their ability to control hands and feet to create an increasingly involved set of patterns a drummer would use on a kit. Sitting on the sofa layering up four different techniques certainly stretched the multi-tasking capacities of many! I do hope those who have been involved will continue to practise the skills learnt and developed this term – perhaps for a showcase when we are back in school?

Virtual Choir

The weekly singing of the Chapel Choirs has been greatly missed but Mr Rice has been leading a virtual choir session online each week. Singing together online (as with any ensemble music making) in real time is not possible due to the time delay. However, Mr Rice and singers have been exploring how to record parts separately at home and then combining them together. I know that, for those that have been able to be part of this, maintaining an interest in singing and in choral repertoire has been great fun. Thank you, Mr Rice.



Virtual Sports Day

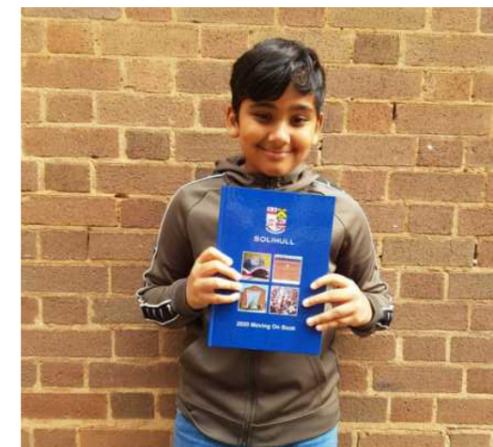
In the final full week of term we launched our Virtual Sports Day with pupils from across the Senior School submitting times and distances for a range of fun and competitive activities. Shenstone finished in first place followed by Windsor and Jago. There were some fantastic entries with numerous pupils completing 14 out of the 15 challenges! The sit up activity proved popular and there were some terrific individual and family efforts! Well done to all involved.



Virtual Open Morning

In June we held our first Virtual Open Morning on Microsoft Teams. The event included live presentations and Q&As as well as pre-recorded videos from our 'Big 6', Wellbeing & Personal Development and Novus Curriculum. Almost 200 joined the Saturday morning session and the feedback has been very positive.

Good luck to our Solihull leavers 2020.





Solihull Preparatory School

Exciting developments over at our Saint Martin's campus.
The first Solihull Preparatory School sign is in place!

Summer Term Teams of the Week

The Pupils

For their groundedness and giving, in serving the community, making music, volunteering and making the world a better place at a difficult time

Virtual Concert Team

A fabulous first ever virtual concert

Debating Team

An excellent first ever online Debate

Big Brummie Camp Out Team

An excellent camp out raising funds for the SIFA Fireside Homeless Charity

Editorial Team

A fabulous publication of Marginal Gains

Bike Week Participants

Fantastic contribution and team effort towards a successful Bike Week

GCSE Greek Team

Incredible team effort in persevering with Ancient Greek

Creative Writing

For producing some quite incredible material over the term, culminating in the fantastic publication 'Life in Slow Motion: literary responses to lockdown'.

The Cast of 'Goodnight Mr Tom'

For working on a 'lockdown' video project throughout the term.

Follow Solihull School on twitter: @solsch1560. facebook: www.facebook.com/SolihullSchool Instagram: @solsch1560

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