





New Beginnings



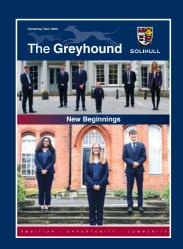
Christmas Term 2020



The Greyhound

New Beginnings at Solihull

On Tuesday 1 September 2020 Solihull merged with Saint Martin's to form one school across two campuses; Solihull Preparatory School on the Saint Martin's campus and Solihull Senior School on the Warwick Road campus. The date marks an important moment in our history. Thank you to all our pupils, parents and staff for their support and loyalty. We are so very proud of our new Solihull school which opened to boys and girls aged 3 - 18 on Tuesday 8 September 2020.



Tuesday 8 September 2020, Solihull's first day as a 3 – 18 school.

Head of School

Congratulations to our new Head of School, Bethan, and her deputies Hanaan and William.



The Greyhound Interviews ... Mrs Rooney, Head of Wellbeing and Personal Development

How long have you worked in education?

I haven't always worked in education - before becoming a therapist and a teacher, I worked in business as a Projects and Quality Manager in settings such as the construction industry, commodities and IT. I then trained to be a CBT and Integrative Counsellor, adding my teaching qualification as an extra string to my bow! I have been a teacher and trainer for 20 years, starting out in adult teaching. I have had the privilege of training professionals in diverse settings such as HMPS, College of Policing, legal services, social services, drug and alcohol services and in the charitable sector, but have turned my focus now to teaching our younger population - and I love it! I thought that becoming a therapist was my only vocation in life, but then I discovered teaching, so feel very lucky to have a second element of my career that I adore!

Have you always worked in Wellbeing and Personal Development?

Yes, most of my working life has been associated with these themes. As a therapist I have worked with and trained others on topics ranging from trauma and abuse, all elements of mental health, such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, through relationships, life changes, bereavement, and helping people to find strategies to combat some of the unhelpful ways that we find to cope. My focus in my teaching is to have conversations about our wellbeing, raise awareness and provide early intervention understanding about these important issues in the hope that with better knowledge, people can not only recognise when they need help, but also build skills for themselves to flourish and thrive.

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

When I was growing up, it was always law that interested me. I used to lurk around the Public Gallery at Warwick Crown Court and watch trials from about aged 15! So, I think it would either to be a barrister or, putting my therapist head on, to be a Forensic Psychologist. I was always drawn to issues around unfairness and justice, and understanding what people do and why. That said, I would also like to be an author! If the adage is true that everyone has a book in them, then I am hoping to achieve that as well.

What do you enjoy doing outside of school?

Life can be so busy so I do enjoy lots of mindful and quiet activities. As a Mindfulness teacher, I work on my practice lots! I am a massive reader, love my music, enjoy walking and am a fair-weather swimmer - not a fan of the cold! Although not so much this year, whenever we can my husband and I go to Wales exploring and coastal walking. It's our dream to retire there one day, but not for a while though! I am a huge movie buff and I love a quiz. And again, not that it has been possible in 2020, I love to entertain family and friends - I do like a games evening! Being with my family is my favourite thing of all. I'm a fan of being a late-bloomer and I am looking forward to fulfilling another dream which is to play the piano - lessons hopefully starting January under the guidance of one of our fabulous music colleagues!

What's your favourite song or book of all time?

That's so hard! It changes all the time but there are some stalwarts that are always top of my list. If pushed and imagining that it is the only song I would ever hear again, it would have to be 'Some Fantastic Place' by Squeeze. Even saying that though is frustrating because a thousand other songs pop up in my head! In terms of books, again so hard but if it was the only book that I could ever read again, it would have to be 'Captain Corelli's Mandolin' by Louis de Bernieres. But ask me again in a year, and I am sure that my choices will have changed! I'm a proud member of the Staff Book Club and some of the reads we have had recently have been stellar!

Back to School



This year's back to school photographs were extra special and we enjoyed seeing many proud parents share pictures of their sons and daughters. Smart siblings posed in front of Solihull homes and Mr Grove posted a hazy 'throwback' to his first day at Solihull aged 7, this September he joined us as a Junior School teacher at our Saint Martin's campus.

First Week Complete!



We shared our appreciation as we completed our first week as a 3-18 school. Our pupils, parents and staff were all so incredibly supportive, understanding, patient and kind. Thank you.

Poppy Pride

At home, I1 pupil Jeevan researched how Armistice Day is remembered by Sikhs and what part they played during the war. Wearing his Khanda Poppy with pride, he then presented his findings to his class. The Khanda Poppy shows a double sided sword and was designed to create awareness and help educate people about the sacrifices and contribution made by all Sikhs who fought in World War One and World War Two. Well done, Jeevan.



Solihull Speaks - Filling the Void

On Tuesday 29 September we hosted our first virtual Solihull Speaks webinar. The symposium for educators entitled 'Filling



the Void: Mental Health and Wellbeing in Education' covered wellbeing on the curriculum, ways for teachers to help pupils face up to social media, advice on trauma centred teaching as well as training on increasing resilience and improving male mental health. The full day event also included Shell Form pupils demonstrating their mindfulness techniques, interviews with our student

Peer Mentors and a Q&A with Head of Wellbeing and Personal Development, Mrs Rooney. Holding the event online allowed teachers from all around the world to attend, enabling best-practice from Solihull to be shared globally for the first time.

Remembrance

To ensure pupils remained safe within their bubbles, this year's poignant Remembrance service took a rather different form, with pupils and staff across the whole school community watching a live stream of the wreath laying ceremony at the school War Memorial.

As Upper Sixth students gathered in the school's Great Quadrangle at 11am on Wednesday 11 November to remember those who died in two World Wars and other conflicts, pupils at both the Prep School and the Senior School viewed the service in real time from their respective classrooms. Wreaths were laid at the school's War Memorial by the Headmaster; Chairman of the Governors, Mark Hopton; CCF Manager, Phil Dean MBE; Bursar, Richard Bate; President of the Parents' Association, Archana Somaiya; President of Saint Martin's Old Girls Association, Louise Cox; President of the Old Silhillians' Association, Peter Earl and Solihull Deputy Head of School, Hanaan. A rendition of the Last Post was played by Head of School, Bethan Bown, followed by a two minute silence, the Reveille, and a Roll of Honour, before the Headmaster recited the traditional tribute to The Fallen.

Solihull Poet Laureate, Lola-Blue, composed a poignant poem which she read during assembly (available in full on page 14) and trumpeters Bethan and Kieran recorded The Last Post and Reveille for Solihull Council's Act of Remembrance service.







Introducing our Senior School Bench and House Captains

At the final meeting before the festive break all Benchers received a token of thanks in recognition of their commitment and support this term.





House Captains

Woody, Simon, Evy, Dylan, Ella, Olivia, Toby, Lucymay, Yann and Freya (not pictured).



COVID-19 Pandemic

Christmas term at Solihull during the COVID-19 Pandemic.



Anti-Bullying Week -'United Against Bullying'

The theme of this year's national campaign on this important topic was 'United Against Bullying' with the central idea that more outsiders or bystanders can become upstanders in positive and productive ways. It was wonderful to see the development of some key initiatives by Lower School Council to contribute towards an Anti-Bullying Charter and other ideas which are actively being pursued such as accredited antibullying ambassadors. Watch this space!

The Kent Library highlighted titles for #AntiBullyingWeek with two brilliant book displays.

Odd Socks Day

On Monday 16 November, for the start of Anti-Bullying Week and Odd Socks Day, pupils and staff across the whole school community embraced the opportunity to express themselves. We wore a colourful collection of different socks to celebrate what makes us all unique!













Community Relations



Poppy Appeal

Solihull supported The Poppy Appeal with the sale of poppies, pins and other merchandise. In December we received a letter of thanks from The Royal British Legion for the £1,818.44 we contributed this year. A terrific amount, thank you.

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Harvest Collection

We received a huge number of donations for our Harvest collections in support of two local homeless charities, SIFA Fireside at the Senior School and St Basils at the Prep School.

Senior School were asked to bring in recipe ingredients for simple but nutritious meals, originally created by the Chef Director of Birmingham's fine dining Opus restaurant for the revamped menu at the SIFA Fireside Drop-In Centre.

As part of the Harvest activities on our Warwick Road campus pupils and staff enjoyed a hot school lunch of Comforting Cottage Pie and Tomato and Chickpea Curry, two of the delicious dishes being served to the homeless and vulnerable users of the centre in October.

At the Prep School children from Nursery to J4 were invited to bring in non-perishable foods for St Basils to support the charity in their work with young people.

Thank you to pupils and parents on both campuses for their generous donations.

Children in Need

On Friday 13 November, we hosted a Non-Uniform Day across the whole school community in aid of Children in Need, and started a week of Megathlon activities at the Prep School. *More on the Megathlon on page 25...*







Charity at Christmas

In the final weeks of the Christmas term, our Head of Community Relations, Ms Dignon, launched Senior School initiatives for Solihull Moors Community Foundation and The Solihull Village charity, collecting for the Hygiene Bank and Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness working in collaboration with groups throughout the Solihull borough to provide home starter kits. Third Form pupils brought in a bauble to dress the Bushell Hall Christmas tree which was then given to St Basils, and Fourth Form helped Age UK Solihull to prepare gift tags and cards for their clients and volunteers, using Ms Perrins' design for the cards we produced on behalf of the charity.

On Friday 11 December, Sixth Form students and Prep School pupils took part in Christmas Jumper Day and on Thursday 17 December we held a Non-Uniform Day. Both activities raised monies for The Children's Society.

Latin American Foundation for the Future

In November and early December, pupils had the opportunity to buy doughnuts at break to support Latin American Foundation for the Future (LAFF), a charity we have been working with for over 14 years. Shell Form, Third Form, Fourth Form and Lower Fifth boys and girls visited the Refectory across four separate days to enjoy a tasty treat in exchange for a £1 donation.

Many thanks to all who made a purchase and to the Charity Ambassadors who helped make the doughnut distribution such a success. So far this academic year we have raised over £350 for LAFF, which is a fantastic start. The initiative with Krispy Kreme Fundraising was organised by Mrs Brown.

Black History Month

- Know the past, shape the future.

Whilst learning about discrimination and prejudice figure in our academic provision throughout the year, not least via our Wellbeing and Personal Development Department, there are certain important national awareness days that we particularly acknowledge. Black History Month in October saw the whole school community provide learning and content on the concept of black history.

Some examples include Shell Form and Fourth Form pupils enjoying Hairspray! in Film Club – a story about segregation in 50s/60s Baltimore and other forms of discrimination such as class, shape and gender. The Equity Group were videoed in conversation about issues relating to Black History Month and they commenced a school-wide campaign to sign up as being Anti-Racist.

Other Black History Month initiatives ranged from Maths pupils researching the incredible work undertaken by 'Hidden Figures' mathematicians Katherine Johnson, Mary Jackson and Dorothy Vaughan; Shell Form Dance performances from Hamilton and members of Fourth Form 'Wade in the Water' from Alvin Ailey's Revelations; a BHM focus within the October issue of Marginal Gains magazine and a J1 assembly on the book 'Young, Gifted and Black'.



Wellbeing and Personal Development

#HelloYellow

On Friday 9 October, we took part in #HelloYellow for World Mental Health Day. Staff were invited to wear an item of yellow clothing to school to support the Young Minds campaign. Shoes, socks, ties, jumpers, t-shirts and tops all featured in the colourful event to show young people they're not alone with their mental health and to say 'it's OK not to be OK'.





These thoughts were shared on the Wellbeing and Personal Development Twitter account ... 2020 may not have panned out to be the year where we get everything we ever wanted, but maybe it's the year when we learn to appreciate everything we have. Mrs Rooney has also shared a motivational message on the social media platform each day throughout Advent. Follow on Twitter @wpd_solihull



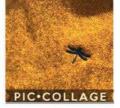






























The theme for International Men's Day on Thursday 19 November was 'Better Health for Men and Boys', with the aim to make practical improvements to the health and wellbeing of the male population. The day is also an opportunity to celebrate the positive values males bring to the world, their families and communities. On our social media platforms we chose to share this empowering quote from Barack Obama's Rally Against Toxic Masculinity ... "Being a man is first and foremost being a good human."

Be Kind

Friday 13 November marked World Kindness Day. Pupils in Shell Form have been learning about the science of compliments and the boost to happy brain chemicals for both the giver and receiver. This month they have been giving out kind messages as a 'thank you' to staff at the Prep School and Senior School. Well done, Mrs Rooney and Shells, a wonderful initiative for a feel-good start to the festive season.



Birthday Celebrations

During the Christmas term the Headmaster has welcomed Third Form pupils to the Refectory for birthday celebrations. Boys and girls who were born in September, October, November and December joined four separate themed gatherings with refreshments and incredible cupcakes. Pupils enjoyed Harry Potter, Halloween, sport and winter wonderland treats and the opportunity to win a prize in a fun game of bingo.





Our Refectory is One!

Of course, we couldn't let an opportunity for more cake pass us by! On Wednesday 25 November, the Headmaster and Assistant Bursar, Ms Henrick, stopped by our Refectory to mark the anniversary of the opening of our fantastic refurbished dining hall. You're only one once!

Debating

The Debating Society has had a successful first term, gaining places in multiple national finals as well as managing to continue running debates within school. Congratulations to Upper Sixth students Freddie and Lauren for reaching both the Birmingham University Schools Grand Final and the Warwick University Schools Silver Final in the same week, particularly given the difficulty of debating via a webcam! The society now looks forward to further competitions next term.

Third Form Debating Club have enjoyed lively meetings in the Kent Library with Mr Anderton each Tuesday lunchtime and Mr Grove's J4 Debating Club began at the Prep School this term. In J4, the pupils are currently showing their passion in preparing for a debate on the motion 'computers are better than books', to be held in January. Each proposition and opposition team is being mentored by a Sixth Form student with debating experience, using iPads and Microsoft Teams. The Sixth Form mentors, Rachel and Jenny, visited our Saint Martin's campus for a socially distanced photograph.







Lower School Council

Pupil voice has been at the heart of Lower School life, especially with the many necessitated revisions to the normal routine. The peer election of Form Captains and their subsequent contributions to remote Lower School Council meetings via their bubble has been a credit to all. Productive ideas around outdoor play space and use of facilities has led to tangible change and a Team of the Week award. Further peer election by Form Captains of a representative per year group for Whole School Council has led to wider discussion on school community matters with super contributions coming from Lower School.

Remote Reading Together

In November we launched a Prep and Senior School reading initiative, through the medium of technology. This incredibly inventive scheme really helps to bridge the physical gap between our two campuses, especially during this time when different age groups cannot mix. Both the younger and older pupils enjoyed the opportunity to listen and learn from each other.







Inter Faith Week

Pupils embraced Inter Faith Week, 8 – 15 November, by getting involved in a range of activities. There were some wonderful pieces of art, cooking creations, models made and celebrities profiled. House points were awarded for every entry and the judges' favourites belonged to Olivia, Maysa and Fatima. Quiz winners Mohamed, Dillon, Mack and Jayvyn also gained extra points for their Houses. Well done to all who took part, Miss Rutherford was really impressed.

House Events

House Sport

House Hockey has been active across Games afternoons and Third Form pupils have completed their House Rugby tournament, so there have been many opportunities for pupils to earn points for their House through Sport.

The Senior School girls participated in the House One Mile Run with Mollie, Third Form, achieving the fastest time for all of the girls (Third Form to Lower Fifth) - an impressive 6 min 15 secs! Congratulations, Mollie. A special mention also for Kate, Shell Form; Freya, Fourth Form and Florence, Lower Fifth, as first girls in their respective year groups.

Fourth Form pupil Sam was first home for the boys in his year group whilst Jack led an impressive performance by the Lower Fifth cohort, which saw six boys finish in under 6 minutes. After all that exercise and activity, we're certainly ready for the House Bake Off!



House Photographic Competition

Staff and pupils in the Senior School submitted some outstanding images for our autumn themed House Photographic Competition.

From colourful trees and cosy days to haunting Halloween and perfect pumpkins, choosing a winner was a tricky task! The first place photograph was taken by Lucas, Third Form (right); second place Lily, Shell Form and third place Jessica, Shell Form. All entries received points for their House and the winning images are displayed around our Warwick Road campus.









Eco Club

Pupils in our Third Form Eco Club have been busy clearing vegetable patches, filling bird feeders and planting bulbs. It's been fantastic to see the group enjoying the outdoor space and exploring nature and wildlife.







Food and Nutrition

It's been a busy term in Food and Nutrition with pupils working with new visualiser technology and many delightful meals being created in our Senior School classroom kitchen. We've seen fabulous organisation and focus and a real development in skill. The end results have been outstanding with some super savoury dishes including homemade pasta, fougasse bread, bolognese, stuffed peppers, chicken and bean enchiladas and a full English breakfast! On the sweet side, we've worked on festive baking with Fourth Form pupils and Christmas chocolate logs, with melting icing, which caused a little bit of chaos!

Creative Writing

Lower Fifth pupil Amber won Gold in the Anne Frank Trust Creative Writing Awards. Amber entered the Poetry (aged 13 - 15) category of the competition, which invited young people across the country to take Anne Frank as their inspiration and create a piece of writing that called for a world free from prejudice. Out of 937 entrants from across the UK, Amber was selected as a Gold Award winner for her emotive and original poem - 'Just One Voice'. Tim Robertson, CEO of The Anne Frank Trust said: "The Anne Frank Creative Writing Awards took place during an especially turbulent period in our society and I congratulate all who rose to the challenge and submitted an entry. We were overwhelmed by both the quality of writing displayed by young people and by their obvious commitment to challenging prejudice. We and the judges really had our work cut out in shortlisting and then selecting winners from the hundreds of entries. Congratulations to Amber from Solihull School for being among them. Her Gold Award for her work 'Just One Voice' is very well deserved. Amber won two books including 'The Promise' signed by Holocaust Survivor Eva Schloss, as well as a £20 book voucher.



Remembrance Poems

Four of our creative writers from Middle School and Sixth Form wrote Remembrance poems, shared here, and Upper Sixth student, Zarine, produced a painting to accompany the written work.

Fall is over now. Tear stained faces Stumble through the station Home

They're coming home.
A mother stands in the kitchen
Arranging the chrysanthemums
In her best frock
"They come home today!"

Three wide-eyed waddlers
Sit, fidgeting
As she bustles around them
Adjusting the glass over the mantle and
The chrysanthemums
She arranges the chrysanthemums
In their ceramic vase

Fall is over And they're coming home.

They're coming home!
"Simon tuck in your shirt."
I tuck in my shirt.
It's itchy and
I don't quite like it
But mother says we have to look our best.
She can be rather bossy sometimes you know.

Ever since Father and Thomas left
She's been acting strange.
She probably misses them
Like I do.
It feels like they've been gone for an
awfully long while now
But today's the day they return and I can
barely wait!
They're coming home.

They're coming home.
Outside;
The weak sun is high in the sky as
The streets flood
With grinning children
Dancing
And singing
At the arrival of those who have been
so greatly missed.

We Will Remember Them

They embrace

And breathe in the cool air.

They're coming home.
They're coming home.
I catch a glimpse of myself in the glass over the mantle
I look a state so
I attempt to flatten my hair.
Mother rushed my braids this morning,
Her mind seemed to be elsewhere.

I don't blame her It's been a long while since we've seen them and
She wants it all to be perfect.

I've often found myself thinking about Thomas and father;

Wondering and worrying.

I used to try to speak to mother about it but she would just stroke my hair and Tell me not to worry.

She's been odd ever since they left, Different.

I think she just misses them,
We all do
I can hardly wait to see them today.
They're coming home.

They're coming home.
The fallen.
Thousands of men
Face down in the mud
Travelling home
As the sun begins to set.
They're coming home.

They're coming home.
It's getting dark
And my legs are tired.
Two candles are burning on the mantle
And I've been told not to go near them.
Mother seems sad
I think I upset her when I spilt jam down

my best frock
She made me change
And now I have to sit very still so as not to make a mess of myself.

I've been told that my brother and father are to return tonight
But I don't think that they will.
When I said this to mother she gasped and scolded me.
I didn't mean to make her angry.

I miss them sometimes
I wish they were here
And I do hope that they'll be back
But it's almost bedtime
And I'm not sure if
They're coming home.

They're coming home.
Outside;
The sun is saying its farewells
Unlike the children
Who now flood the streets

With their plump tears.
Shrieks and wails can be heard all around.

The news that would never come Has come.

They're coming home.

They're coming home
And the chrysanthemums won't arrange
themselves!

I fear I've spent too long looking at them I fear I shan't see their beauty as I once did...

He gave a me a chrysanthemum
When we first met.
I remember the look in his eyes
When he handed it to me.
He told me
Fall is over
But our story is not.
Devoted love
Till death do us part.

The sun is almost gone.
There's a knock at the door.
The children spring up,
Pure elation on their tiny faces.

It's still.
They won't be coming home.

Fall is over
But their memory is not.
At the going down of the sun
We will, and do, remember them.

Lola-Blue, Upper Fifth

Remembrance Poems

Poppies Pinned to our Chest

They march until they see fields covered in grass instead of another man's blood,
Until they hear the sound of the raindrops
Instead of the ricochet of bullets from the enemies' guns.

They march until they can sit in their homes,
Listening to the screams of other lives lost in horrific,
piercing tones,

Till the ink of the letters are no longer just words on paper.

They march until their body is found on foreign ground,

Possibly in the waters of Dunkirk or in the hell of

No man's Land.

They marched until they would breathe and live no more.

The sun would no longer meet their faces again,

Their family lost in their mind's recollection,

Of the love that they had for them.

They marched so that we can stand here,
Poppies pinned to our chest.
So that we can wake up peacefully,
And know that they did their best.

Charlotte, Upper Fifth

When the Air Stands Still

In measureless fields of poppies painted red, Into an orange and yellow sunset overhead, Soldiers too young, too innocent, now lie, Amid the distant resounding of painful cries.

A snapshot in time, slowing, still, Silently staring at the brow of the hill, Tending the garden with a fine tooth comb, Holding and hoping that he'll return Home.

Superhuman soldiers who stood strong, Protecting future generations for so long, Building bridges across treacherous land, Marching together hand in hand.

Look up, every day the sun will rise, Paint their individual faces in the skies, And when the air stands still, We will remember their almighty will.

Lauren, Upper Sixth

One Thousand Years

A boy stands before me
He couldn't be any older than thirteen.
While we are locked
Like rocks at the bottom of the stream,
Life continues to flow around us, unimpeded.
The sound of chatter, of footsteps,
Of whizzing automobiles, of blowing wind;
Muted.

Blur incapacitates my sense of sight
And engulfs the backdrop to this boy.
I thought I was looking into his eyes,
But his eyes are nowhere to be seen.
They must be somewhere in a pit,
A thousand yards deep.
He gives me a look I know too well —
Feelings of heartbreak and despair and nostalgia
Rush into my brain,
As they return to me —
My father, my love, my son

My father, my love, my son,
Disappeared
Almost traceless.
One thousand years pass,

It's November;
They haven't returned.

I was mistaken;
They have returned,

The shells of my father, my love, my son.

Jean received a letter

That spoke of her husband That was "no longer with us". In retrospect, I find it odd

That I did not receive such a letter.

Where was my husband? My father, my son?

When I look into their eyes,
I struggle to perceive anything

In the void of one thousand yards.
When I look into this boy's eyes,

I struggle to perceive anything In the void of one thousand yards.

In this fruitless shell of a human boy; A thousand years of war—

Battle of Hastings, Siege of Orléans, Spanish Armada,
Battle of Blenheim, Battle of Saratoga, Battle of Waterloo —
Fought in this Great War.

Kade, Lower Sixth

Politics - Marginal Gains

During the Christmas term our Politics students have produced two issues of Marginal Gains. The first, in October focussed on Black History Month and the second, in November, was themed around the US election. Both editions are now available on our Solihull website.



Marginal Gains Protest policies Proprieses value to gain BLACK HISTORY WONTH

LVI Introduction to Law – external speakers takes on new meaning!

One of the many challenges of restrictions this term has been the lack of speakers on campus. However, with great challenge comes great opportunity. The Lower Sixth Law Group have fielded some excellent, incisive questions via Teams meetings to guests who may not ordinarily be able to visit due to distance. They have included: Old Silhillian Alex Henderson (General Counsel – Brighton & Hove Albion FC), Blondel Thompson (Barrister at St. Philips & Arbitrator for Court of Arbitration for Sport (Lausanne, Switzerland)) and Frankie Rhodes (Solicitor specialising in clinical negligence). We have more speakers scheduled for Easter term, plus the much anticipated Bar Mock Trial, which will take place remotely.

Maths

It's been an award-winning term in our Maths Department! Over 100 Solihull students achieved Gold, Silver or Bronze certificates in the UK Maths Trust Challenge competition on Monday 2 November; Shell Form pupil Chen received a prize for his outstanding engagement with Pi Club over the last year and two amazing results from Solihull pupils in the University of Southampton Maths Challenge - Zara scooped first prize and Amber a Certificate of Distinction ... plus, lots of fantastic creations in Maths Cake Club.







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Drama

Our Upper Fifth GCSE Drama pupils enjoyed their first production of the year in the Bushell Hall. Frantic Assembly's, 'Things I Know to be True' was our debut digital socially distanced Theatre Night. A fab experience - almost as good as a live performance.

At the start of term, pupils auditioned for this year's Musical and with roles now selected, rehearsals are regularly taking place. Theatre Design is proving very popular with many attending the various year group sessions with Mr Hunton. Creations have included a Bushell Hall 3D poster and amazingly realistic body part character props! Excitement is growing and we can't wait to see the performance in the Easter term.

Lower Fifth have also been working on a production which they hope to stage in the Easter term.











Art

To start their A Level course, our Lower Sixth Art students enjoyed a full day of portrait drawing with local artist Nick Logan and our Lower Sixth Photographers joined a portrait and studio lighting workshop with Lucy Williams.

Congratulations to Upper Sixth student Anna who received her Solihull Young Photographer 2019 - 2020 award in November. The competition, between students of schools and colleges in Solihull, is organised by the Rotary Club of St Alphege, to highlight photography skills and imagination. Robert Blyth, Rotary President 2019 - 2020 presented Anna with her certificate. The annual event is sponsored by Touchwood and Anna's award-winning images are currently on display in the shopping centre.









Smile with your Eyes

Our Art Department arranged a 'Smile with your Eyes' photographic competition for the whole school community inviting pupils and staff to wear a bright, colourful, fun mask and the submit a selfie. We received many fantastic entries, which made the final selection process really tricky for the Headmaster. Winners were first place Jessica, Third Form; second place, Charlie, I1 and third place Eva, Nursery Keep smiling, Solihull.

Outdoor Education

#DofEwithadifference

In October, 65 Upper Fifth pupils headed out on their Silver Practice expedition, based around Hatton, Warwickshire, This was completed under #DofEwithadifference regulations and it was fantastic to see so many enjoying the great outdoors and fresh air! The Silver Assessment took place in November. Congratulations to some of our Gold Award pupils who completed their expeditions this term with an external provider in Wales. Three groups went up and over Moel Siabod on day one and wild camped. They then headed across the Moelwyns on different routes before dropping down and continuing up the Watkin path to wild camp at Cwn Llan. On the final day, in strong winds, the groups went up and over to Rhyd Ddu. The pupils showed great independence and front footedness in completing this - they should be very proud of their achievements! Further Gold Practice expeditions took place with an external provider, which began in Princetown, Yelverton and finished in Ivybridge, Devon. Pupils have already successfully completed online training sessions, using Microsoft Teams, covering Campcraft (including 'wild camping'); Emergency Procedures (and COVID-19 precautionary measures); Equipment and Rucksack Packing; Food and Cooking. Their time in Devon covered a practical navigation training day and a three day expedition. The camps are 'wild' and so the pupils got a 'real' Gold DofE experience. Huge well done to all.



In November, all Solihull staff received a token of appreciation from the Headmaster. A thank you for their hard work, dedication, loyalty, support and commitment during a difficult term. #itsnicetobenice #bekind #thankyou #showappreciation



Terriers and CCF

Our Terriers have been practising safe cycling, knot tying, map reading and more in Outdoor Education and we've been delighted to see the return of our CCF sessions running on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, after school, in year group bubbles



Engineering Club

Our Lower Fifth Engineering Club restarted this term with pupils getting together in their bubble to celebrate past projects and discuss exciting new tasks for the year.

Library

On both campuses, pupils have access to an absolutely incredible selection of books including many fantastic new titles. Boys and girls in the Prep School enjoy a visit to the library to select something different to read each week and, in the Senior School's Kent Library, pupils can take home one of the latest bestsellers. There is also the opportunity to download a book from our Solihull ePlatform virtual library - over 1,250 unique ebook titles and more than 500 audio books. Happy reading - or listening!

Colourful Campuses

We are so very lucky to have such wonderful school grounds. Each season brings beautiful changes. Here we share some of the gorgeous colours around both our Saint Martin's and Warwick Road campuses.



Prep School

Classroom with a View

A moment of early morning calm for Prep School Head of Year, Miss Lynch. The Junior School teachers are loving the view from their classrooms.



Head Girl and Head Boy

Introducing our first Preparatory School Head Girl and Head Boy. Well done, Cara and William. The J4 pupils have embraced the role undertaking tasks including leading an assembly on 'The importance of being honest and bouncing back', based on Mr Penney's happy acorns; assisted with selecting the winners of the 'Spot Scuffle' photography competition and took prospective parents on a recorded virtual tour of the Saint Martin's campus for the online Prep School Information Event.

Assemblies

Each J1 class has enjoyed delivering a themed assembly to the rest of their year group in the SMArt Performing Arts Centre this term. J1P explained the history and significance of Remembrance, whilst J1W performed a wonderful play all about kindness. J1L marked Black History Month by sharing stories about inspiring black people throughout history right up until the present day. Here we share a poem created by J1W.

Kindness

Know that you should be kind to others.

I'll always treat others the way that I would wishto be treated.

Never choose to be hurtful, as you will upset someone.

Do not give up, you are unique.

N is for never be a bystander to bad behaviour,

Everyone should work together

Say generous things to one another.

See the beauty of being a bucket filler.







To mark World Kindness Day on Friday 13 November, Mrs Morgan's J4RM pupils presented a kindness themed assembly and celebrated being kind in their class. J4D staged a Thanksgiving celebration where Mrs Dickerson's boys and girls researched the history of the occasion as well as finding out about modern traditions. J4G provided an interesting morning session on Save the Animals, J4SM presented on Rebels throughout History and the whole of the J4 year group joined an assembly on poetry.



Prep Monitors

J4SM were appointed Prep School Monitors for this half term, giving Miss Moule's class the chance shine!

Spring Illness Campaign

In January, our Junior School pupils were involved with English Institute of Sport's Spring Illness Campaign, an initiative where our boys and girls decorated and sent care packages to Olympic and Paralympic athletes ahead of Tokyo 2020 (now Tokyo 2021). On receipt of the items in September, the Team GB sporting stars began to show their appreciation by sending messages and tagging our Solihull social media. Here are just some of the brilliant responses.











Cookery Club

In Cookery Club pupils have created healthy pizzas and, in Mrs Annandale's and Mrs Humphreys' Bake Off Technical Challenge, chocolate krispie cakes. Yum!









Roald Dahl Day

On Monday 21 September we celebrated Roald Dahl Day at the Prep School, inviting pupils to wear something yellow or inside out for a day of fictional fun! Boys and girls from Nursery to J4 embraced the event and took part in many exciting activities.

Co-curricular Activities at the Prep School

From cereal bird feeders in Reception Craft Club and learning and labelling body parts in I2 Spanish Club to Scuffle and Twitch creations from our J4 Eco Council and marshmallow and spaghetti towers in Mrs Middleton's STEM Club, the Prep School pupils have enjoyed a wide variety of co-curricular sessions this Christmas term. Here are just a small selection of photographs of the fun, learning activities boys and girls take part in outside of their day to day classroom lessons:











Nursery Fun!

Children in our Alice House Nursery have enjoyed dressing up, role play, dancing, painting, creating, colouring, stickers, puzzles, reading, games, Forest School, swimming and more! Learning and bonding through fun!















Recycled Creations!

Thank you to Reception Teaching Assistant Mrs Lee who, during half term, recycled old reels to create table top roads, car garages and play areas for our children in Alice House. The boys and girls love taking turns to race and park their vehicles! What a talent, and a very kind gesture.









Beep Beep! Day

EYFS pupils took part in Beep Beep! Day for Road Safety Week. Our Nursery and Reception boys and girls demonstrated fantastic focus for learning these important skills as they cycled and scooted around the Alice House playground and stopped, looked and listened before crossing the Saint Martin's campus road.







Art and Craft Clubs

I2 have been pebble painting - some scary, some silly, some super cute – to create a fun group of monster friends, and in Mrs Morgan's J2 Art and Craft Club, children have produced colourful dream catchers and wonderful sweet filled Advent calendars this term.



Forest School

Pupils are thoroughly enjoying learning in our Outdoor Education area on the Saint Martin's campus and it's been a real joy to see them exploring the space. Boys and girls have heard all about fire safety, experienced their first fire and used Mrs Crowton's fire steel to make sparks; the children have made natural art with soil, sticks, acorns, pinecones and leaves ... and assisted in a Forest School clean up! We look forward to seeing the area change throughout the seasons ahead.











Scuffic Goes to School SOLIHULL



Scuffle goes to School

Mr Penney invited J1 pupils to Malvern Hall hall for a 'Scuffle goes to School' assembly. Boys and girls sat quietly and listened intently as the Head of the Prep School explained the changes to the third edition of the book, including editorial updates, the addition of Malvern Hall and the Saint Martin's campus, fresh illustrations and new photographs. Each Prep School pupil received a hard copy of the publication in the first week of term.

To launch the latest edition, we also asked children from Alice House through to J4 to take a snap of a squirrel during half term! We suggested they seek out Scuffle scurrying around Solihull or find Twitch triumphant on a garden bird feeder and then take a photograph of these playful cute characters to win points for their House, and a special prize.

Winners of the autumn House photographic competition were selected with the help of our Prep School Head Boy and Head Girl and announced in assembly. Well done to all who entered and congratulations to our successful pupils Diya, I2 and Gurleen, J2 ... the girls received Scuffle and Twitch merchandise and will be undertaking a special job as part of their prize in the New Year.

Megathlon

It was Pudsey-tastic at the Prep School for Children in Need on Friday 13 November with a Non-Uniform Day to kick start the annual Megathlon.

In this year's charity event, children enjoyed a fun week participating in a carousel of activities in PE and Games lessons. It was a pleasure to see boys and girls from Alice House and the Junior School throwing themselves into everything from netball and climbing, to long jump and welly wanging! Well done to all pupils, and thank you for your support through the sponsorship of these activities. We look forward to sharing details of our total raised in the Easter term.





































New Playground for Alice House

The new playground for Alice House pupils opened on our Saint Martin's campus in November, and the children are absolutely loving the superb outdoor space which includes a bug hotel, wooden cabins, a fun 'road' and musical instruments.

Charity Chop!

J2 pupil Isla visited the hairdressers for a special short cut for the Little Princess Trust. In addition to donating her hair, Isla raised over £750 for the charity which provides real hair wigs for children who have lost their hair through cancer treatment and other conditions. Well done, Isla, a really kind and thoughtful gesture. Your new style really suits you.











Love and Marriage

Our Reception pupils have been busy learning about marriage and babies. The boys and girls created wonderful wedding dress and cake designs, and discussed photographs they'd brought in from home, then the following week the Alice House baby clinic opened for a fun time caring, feeding and looking after little ones.

National Poetry Day

Pupils at the Prep School celebrated #NationalPoetryDay by sharing some of their favourite poems and taking part in a creative writing session and the whole of J4 took part in a Poetry themed assembly.



Dentist Visit

J2 enjoyed a virtual assembly from Orthodontic Excellence where they learnt lots of valuable information to complement their Science curriculum and topic 'teeth and eating'. The children enjoyed listening to facts and were amazed to see the differences that braces can make to a person's appearance. Each boy and girl received a 'goodie bag' which included; toothbrush, toothpaste and some disclosing tablets. They have now started tracking their daily tooth hygiene on a chart, so hopefully J2 will all have gleaming smiles next term!



Science

Boys and girls in J1 planted cress to investigate what is needed for seeds to grow. The pupils loved the fun experiment and enjoyed a taste of their "yummy cress!" and in J2 the children have been learning about moving and growing.

J4 pupils went on an invertebrate hunt, exploring our Saint Martin's campus as part of their Science topic – Living things and their habitats. Digging in the dirt and searching high and low, our nature lovers found insects, snails and worms ... and even a frog!







Geography

In Miss Hicks' Geography lesson, I2 pupils had fun making balloon globes whilst learning about oceans and continents.

Well done to Bella in J3 who created this rainforest scene inspired by the year group's recent Geography topic.



In History, I2 pupils have been learning about The Great Fire of London. The year group crafted fantastic artwork for a colourful display in Mrs Higley's classroom.









Diwali

To mark Diwali brings pupils in I2 created beautiful rangoli designs with rice and coloured patterned sheets. In Forest School and Outdoor Education boys and girls made rangoli art from natural materials.

Solihull Cap Rings a Bell!

Joseph, J1 and Jessie, I1, have reunited an Old Silhillian with his school cap – almost 45 years after he last wore it! The children were given the item of uniform, which had the name Alun Rees inside, by their Grandmother who received it in a box of curios at her antique shop in Shipston on Stour.

The siblings took the cap to Mr Penney who was keen to return it to its rightful owner, and set the school Archivist off on a history hunt. Our Development and Alumni Relations Office undertook some additional research, discovered more about Mr Rees and tracked him down to Aberdeen.

A telephone conversation later ... and the Jago cap was packaged, posted and on its way to Scotland! It is now safely back in Mr Rees' possession and he has sent a letter of thanks to Joseph and Jessie.



Sport

Football, hockey, netball, swimming, rugby and dodge ball ... it's been an active term at our Saint Martin's campus. I2 come to school ready for action each Friday for #TracksuitFriday, J1 have enjoyed football in the sun and our J3 boys headed over to the Warwick Road campus for rugby in Games.

And to start the festive season, Mrs Higginson created magical doors in the PE Department!



















Swimming Skills

Former pupil Charlotte Rigg has been in our Prep School pool demonstrating her skills to our J3 and J4 Swimming Squads, and, in the last week of term, to our Nursery children. Charlotte, who was a Great Britain Junior Squad Swimmer, is currently the 8th fastest Senior in the country and is training for Olympic Trials next April. Good luck, Charlotte!

Some super results from our J3 and J4 pupils in their recent Virtual Swimming Gala J3 boys came first in the 25m Freestyle, 25m Backstroke, 100m Individual Medley and Freestyle and Medley Relays, they also achieved two second places in the 25m Breaststroke and Butterfly. J4 girls won the 100m Individual Medley and Freestyle and Medley Relays and came second in the 50m Freestyle and Backstroke. J4 boys finished second in the 50m Breaststroke and Freestyle Relay. Well done all!

Feeling Festive!

There was wonderful collection of colourful festive outfits, headwear and jumpers from our pupils and staff for Christmas Jumper Day on Friday 11 December – the day we also enjoyed a fabulous Christmas dinner. Prep pupils also practised for nativities and concerts and had the opportunity to buy presents and order specially designed self-portrait tea towels as part of our SSPA fundraising activities.





Wraparound Care

Wraparound Care is a new provision at the Prep School offering care both before and after school. Pupils take part in various activities such as weekly themed crafts, IT sessions, outdoor play and board games. They also have an opportunity to complete their Prep. Boys are girls in Alice House are very keen on construction so often make models with Lego, Kid K'Nex and moon sand. A recent craft theme was Harry Potter and the children in the Refectory loved recreating Hogwarts. When asked to describe Wraparound Care, some J3 children said, "awesome", "really fun", "the food is great".

Music

Our Music Department staff have been developing creative ideas and initiatives to provide pupils with musical opportunities this term. Within some quite restrictive measures around performances, musicians have still been busy with year group choir rehearsals, ensembles and more and enjoyed Informal Concerts, one year group at a time. These are recorded during lunchtime and the first session featured pieces from three of our talented Lower Fifth pupils - Gemma, Hannah and Katy. Our Chamber Orchestra, which includes some of our most advanced string players, has been exploring ways for music ensembles to work safely within the current climate and we are delighted that this group has now started rehearsals, with social distancing in place.

Numerous music activities have also been taking place at the Prep School from wind bands to choirs and Scuffle Singers. Mrs Peat and Mr Slade have been very busy! We also live streamed performances from our J1, J2 and J3 choirs - a fun, virtual way for parents to listen to our singers, we hope you enjoyed the experience.



St Cecilia Concert

Our St Cecilia Concert is one of the highlights of the year. An opportunity for the Senior School's larger music ensembles to perform an exciting array of music. Normally the Bushell Hall would be packed with a large audience and over 150 pupils taking to the stage. Whilst this was not possible in 2020, children still loved making music and we heard from string groups to saxophonists and the Fourths Trumpet Quartet, amongst many other wonderful sounds.



Prep School Performances



For the festive season at the Prep School, Alice House, Reception, I1 and I2 have been learning the songs for their Nativity plays: Whoops a daisy Angel, Born in a Barn and Hey Ewe! Nursery have been practising the first verse of Away in a Manger. Scuffle Singers have also been busy learning their song, Sparkle and Shine from the musical Nativity! In the Junior School each class has been working, with tireless enthusiasm on a chosen Christmas song as well as learning a verse from O Little Town of Bethlehem and O Come All Ye Faithful. These were 'pieced together' in a final pre-recorded performance with J3 and J4 Wind Bands, J3 String Group, our Piano Trio and a Christmas piece for six hands! Many of our Junior School children have also played their instruments as soloists in our weekly pre-recorded lunchtime concerts. Well done to everyone involved!

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

As we were unable to host our traditional Christmas get together in Chapel, we invited pupils, parents, staff and governors to a streamed service of our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols available via link at 6.30pm on Monday 14th December. We pre-recorded all the different elements, including socially distanced singing in year group bubbles. The outcome ... a meaningful service with contributions from boys and girls from J4 to the Sixth Form, and a beautiful Christmas celebration.

The Music Department also created an order of service, available to download from the school website, so attendees were able to join in with the carols.

In normal times we hold retiring collections at our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, to support The Children's Society. As this wasn't possible this year, we encouraged donations at https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/solihull-school



Sport, Health and Fitness

When restrictions allowed, we were delighted to welcome pupils back to our Warwick Road campus for weekend activities. On some days over 250 pupils have attended school on a Saturday morning to train in rugby, hockey and netball - and it has been fabulous to see so many happy, enthusiastic boys and girls enjoying their sport and exercise!

Swimming has also returned this half term, with Third Form Swimming Squad starting the day with the early session.







During half term some pupils attended England hockey assessments which took place over three days at Lilleshall. Girls - Annabel, Upper Sixth, U18 Trial; Maria, Lower Sixth, U18 Trial; Ellie-Mae, Upper Fifth, U18 Trial and Florence, Lower Fifth, U16 Trial. Boys - Thomas, Upper Sixth, U18 Trial; Charles, Lower Sixth, U18 Trial and George, Upper Fifth, U16 Trial. Charles has gone on to receive an invitation to attend stage two of the England U18 Trials. An excellent achievement as Charles is a year young in the age group.

Congratulations to Upper Sixth student Thomas who made his England Hockey League debut for Lichfield Hockey Club in November. The Mens' Conference North Division match against Doncaster was played at home and won by Lichfield, 6 - 1.



Netball

We have seen much Netball success with seven pupils selected for Warwickshire U13 County squad and five for the U15 squad. Three U19 players reached the second round of Wasps Trials and Niamh, Upper Fifth, gained selection. Milly, Shell Form, has been chosen for the Wasps U15 training programme and long squad. And finally, Queta, Lower Fifth, has been picked for the Loughborough Lightning elite squad after being awarded best newcomer/most improved player last season.







Dance

The Dance Department has been extra busy in the lead up to Christmas preparing festive performances during their co-curricular clubs. Mrs Hart said the pupils have shown enthusiasm and great resilience during this challenging time, as activities have been postponed and parts learnt remotely. It's been wonderful to see bright costumes and hear Christmas music in the Mark Hopton Hall and the SMArt Performing Arts Centre – a really cheering scene for us all. Our pupils have been working proactively and respectfully under some pressing circumstances, their hard work is pleasing and rewarding. We are very proud, Perserverantia.

Festive pieces included:

Third Form: Rockin' around the Christmas tree

Fourth Form: All I want for Christmas is you

Shell Form and Upper Fifth (two-part performance): Do they know it's Christmas?

Upper Fifth Dance pupils have also been practising their GCSE set phrases in our SMArt Performing Arts Centre on the Saint Martin's campus.

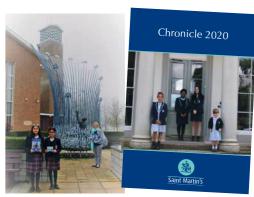
Saint Martin's

The Commemorative Chronicle 2020

A special edition of the Chronicle, Saint Martin's annual magazine, was published at the end of November. The final issue was distributed to governors, former staff and pupils, girls also received a commemorative coin.



On Thursday 27 November, in keeping with the tradition of Saint Martin's Commemoration Day, the Headmaster and the President of the Saint Martin's Old Girls, Louise Cox, laid wreaths on the graves of Miss Bull and Miss Tucker and Miss Bacon. The ceremony at St Alphege Church was conducted by the school chaplain, Revd Canon Father Andrew, who read the school prayer and Louise recited the words to 'God Make Me Kind'. Next year, it is our hope to turn this service into an Alumni event with a celebration lunch afterwards at the Saint Martin's campus.



































The company that could manufacture 'joy' and market it in packages would be very successful. Many have tried; all have failed.

Over the past few weeks many have been searching for the magical ingredient to make Christmas and a New Year joyful. Indeed, it's very hard to escape the conclusion that if we spend enough money, consume enough food and drink (from the right shops) and arrange for the right combination of people with whom to share it within distancing regulations then all will be well.

Yet we know it isn't always so. Many people simply dread the approach of Christmas and the New Year and are relieved when "it's all over for another year". Yet this is the time, above all, when God gives joy to the world!

What was it that the shepherds understood – but that eludes us today? Perhaps it's down to the simple fact that the shepherds weren't trying to achieve anything. For them it was just another night out on the hillside getting on with their routine work. The whole thing took them completely by surprise.

It begins with a surprise visit. The last thing the shepherds were expecting on a cold night out on the hillside was a visit from the heavenly hosts. The angels didn't wait to be invited and their news called forth a deep response from the shepherds.

Perhaps because they were themselves at the bottom of the social heap, with no image to defend, that they seem to have been amazingly open to the angel's message, once they had overcome their initial shock – so open that they set off to make a surprise visit to the family in Bethlehem.

We can only imagine the reaction of Mary and Joseph to the sudden arrival of unexpected guests. No chance to clean up the stable or bake a cake. "You'll have to take us as you find us" we sometimes warn our would-be guests.

God says the same, but from a higher motive. "Come and look for me where you least expect me and then be prepared to take me as you find me".

So where will we find God this Christmas and New Year? Perhaps in simple hospitality. But maybe more visibly and powerfully in the faces of those who have no home, no friends, no resources behind which to hide their extreme vulnerability. A surprise card, gift, message or phone call extending our generosity would perhaps surprise us with the warmth it would generate.

Surprises are the essence of Christmas gifts. But all our unwrapping and our sharing is just a faint reflection of God's own great act of unwrapping himself to reveal a helpless baby in the arms of two inexperienced parents.

It was the mother and father of all surprises. No wonder the shepherds ran off to tell everyone they met about the amazing events of an ordinary night.

The vulnerable baby who is God's own self has countless siblings. Some of them live in our neighbourhood. We will recognise them because they are a gift that comes unwrapped with the eyes of need looking straight into our own: a bewildered immigrant, a lonely pensioner, an unemployed parent, a homeless family......

Why not plan to surprise one of them with a touch of God's love this Christmas and New Year.

We may be surprised at the result.

Wishing you and yours a very safe and joyful Christmas. May God grant his gift of hope and healing for the New Year.

With my prayers and blessing

Fr Andrew Hutchinson



Solihull School Team of the Week 2020-2021

Christmas Term

and Carols Team

1.	Staff Mountain Leaders	Completing their Mountain Leader training
2.	School Nursing Team	For all their hard work and efforts so far this term
3.	Thirds Eco Club	Showing great interest and teamwork in looking after our Eco Garden
4.	LAMDA Pupils	For being front-footed, engaged and proactive throughout the summer term
5.	Equity Group	For their commitment to Black History Month and tackling all forms of discrimination
6.	Lower School Council	Excellent team effort working together to represent the Lower School Student Voice
7.	Duke of Edinburgh Expedition Team	For their front-footedness and flexibility in overcoming some challenging conditions on the Gold Award expedition to Wales
8.	The Debating Team	Fantastic team effort competing online against schools across the country
9.	Upper Sixth Drama Group	Successfully completing & performing their Component 1 Practical Exam
10.	St Cecilia Concert Team	Brilliant and passionate virtual concert performance
11.	Lower Fifth Ansell	Wonderful team effort collecting for the Hygiene Bank Initiative
12.	Festival of Nine Lessons	A fabulous streamed service of Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

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