

Christmas Term 2018

The Greyhound



SOLIHULL



This term, we commemorated the centenary of the Armistice and welcomed our new Head of School Phoebe Harland, along with her deputies Katie Phillips, Oliver Rooney and Marisa Veloso.



A M B I T I O N - O P P O R T U N I T Y - C O M M U N I T Y



Lord Lieutenant's Cadet Olivia Tennant had the honour of attending a memorial service to recognise Victory in Japan Day, supporting Major Sylvia Parkin for the day. (7 September)



The Greyhound Interviews... Mr Hammond, Drama

How long have you been teaching?
Seven years.

What do you enjoy most about your job?
Sharing my passion about theatre!

What do you like most about teaching Drama?
Watching pupils fall in love with the subject, grow in confidence as performers or designers, experience new kinds of theatre on trips, and seeing their adrenaline at the end of a performance.

What has been your most enjoyable experience of directing a play?
Working on a production is always exhausting, but also enormously rewarding. Every production is different and I try to vary them as much as possible. The Edinburgh trips are always very special, as are the intense small cast productions like *Jane Eyre*, but there is also nothing like working on a huge musical or whole school play.

What's the best play you've ever seen?
That's an almost impossible question to answer! Possibly *Mnemonic* by Complicite, or Fiona Shaw as *Mother Courage* at the National Theatre, or Ivo Van Hove's production of *A View From the Bridge*, or...

What would you do if you weren't a teacher?

Well, early on in my career I tried to be a professional theatre director, but now I think that I would work in the education department of a theatre and try and write plays in my spare time.

What hobbies or interests do you have?

I love going to arts events, concerts, live comedy, movies, galleries, reading books and, of course, theatre. I'm also partial to a bit of Xbox when I have time.

Sara Crowther

Sara joined Solihull School in September 2004 after working for twenty-five years at Light Hall School. She quickly proved to be one of the most dedicated and experienced members of the Mathematics Department and she earned the utmost respect from the Common Room and pupils alike. She retired in August 2016 at the height of her game and many pupils still at the school today will remember her with great fondness and respect.

Sara was an extremely popular and well-respected member of the Common Room and when she spoke, people listened. She was always willing to give advice and guidance to new colleagues and was a calm, thoughtful and caring person to be around. Sara's commitment to pupils' progress and welfare was often reflected in feedback from parents and the response at school and on social media to Sara's passing has been moving. Sara had a tremendous impact on the lives of so many pupils and colleagues and she will be enormously missed.



This week, our Shell Form pupils got to grips with higher levels of the French language in their first few Senior School French lessons. (11 September)



Martyn Garner Memorials

To honour Mr Martyn Garner who died earlier this year, we have erected a slate monolith at the David Fricke Mountain Cottage in Snowdonia and have renamed the Outdoor Pursuits Centre the Martyn Garner Building for Outdoor Education.

These two tributes recognise both how loved and admired Martyn was by the Solihull community, and how much he valued and promoted outdoor education at the school.



2018-19 Bench

Say hello to this year's Lower School, Middle School and Senior Bench!



Well done to Lower Sixth student Charlotte Rigg who represented Great Britain at the European Junior Swimming Championships in Helsinki in July, making it to the semi-finals. (9 September)

We are delighted to announce 15 of our pupils entered Grade 6 of the LAMDA Speaking examination over the summer, with 7 achieving a distinction and 8 obtaining a merit. (12 September)





Today the Junior School celebrated Roald Dahl Day 2018 in style! Our pupils wore something yellow or wore a piece of clothing inside out and enjoyed a Roald Dahl quiz in assembly. (13 September)

Junior School STEM club had a fantastic time yesterday building towers to withstand natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes. (18 September)



Speeches Evening

This term we were delighted to welcome Dr Eugenia Cheng to Solihull to present the prizes to our students. Dr Cheng is an eminent mathematician, musician, baker and writer, and she delivered a fascinating and thought-provoking speech.



Girls in STEM Day at Birmingham University

On 12 September, a group of 12 Fourth Form pupils visited The University of Birmingham for a Girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) event, which was intended to encourage more girls into STEM-related subjects. During the day, the pupils completed a series of workshops to give them an insight into what might be involved in a degree or career in a STEM-related subject. They completed workshops which included looking at the Chemical Engineering behind the design of modern paints and an amazing talk about the evolution of species, and had a tour of the University campus.

Solihull Oxbridge network events

Dr Foster, the Oxbridge Co-ordinator at Solihull, has been the leading force in setting up an Oxbridge network for schools in and around Solihull, so students can benefit from a wide range of experiences and styles of events. Two events took place in September and October, the first with the Cambridge University admissions team and the second incorporating expertise from all the member schools. Both events were a roaring success with over 150 candidates at the first event and over 180 at the second. Further events are planned for the spring and summer.



Debating

This has been another great term for Debating at Solihull. We have had thirteen different teams competing in a variety of competitions including Birmingham Schools, Warwick Schools, the English Speaking Union Mace Debate and the inaugural Solihull Council Sixth Form Debating Competition (which was won by Georgina Hart, Oliver Rooney and Tom Williams). Our teams ranged from first timers to old hands, Fourth Formers to Upper Sixth, and showed all the characteristics we would want of our pupils – supporting each other, jumping into challenging discussions, taking risks and learning. A great first term.



Classics Society

We have had a very enjoyable term. In October, we went to the University of Birmingham to hear Dr Amy Russell (Durham) speak on the Ara Pacis – the Altar for Peace set up by the Emperor Augustus. This was a very lively and interesting talk, especially for those studying GCSE and A-Level Classical Civilisation, and those studying A-Level Latin. In November, the Classics Society travelled to London to visit the British Museum, where we saw Mrs Johnson's Top Ten Things, including the Theseus kylix, which was very exciting for those studying GCSE Classical Civilisation. After a good explore of the Museum, we then went to the London Mithraeum, a Roman temple dedicated to the god Mithras, where we experienced what it would have been like to take part in the Mithraic rites.



English Society

This term the English Society welcomed back Dr John Fagg from the University of Birmingham to speak to our Lower Sixth students about 'Surface and Depth in The Great Gatsby'. The following week, the Upper Fifth enjoyed a festive outing to the RSC in Stratford to see a performance of Dickens's classic *A Christmas Carol*.

Congratulations also go to Sarah Spence in the Lower Sixth, whose fantastic poems won her the prestigious title of Solihull School Poet Laureate. Sarah faced stiff competition from other poets across the school, but her excellent poem commemorating the centenary of the Armistice was judged to be the best and she gave a beautiful reading of it in whole school assembly.



Our Third Formers had a fantastic time at Woodlands today. What an adventure! (13 September)

Our new Third Form pupils spent their first week of Spanish studies sharing their research on the Spanish-speaking world. (18 September)





Well done to Lower Sixth student Matthew Vaughan who has been selected for the GB Archery National Age Group Academy. Keep up the sharp shooting! (18 September)

Our J2s are taking part in the Shakespeare School over the coming weeks. The sessions are developing their theatrical skills while learning about Shakespeare. (21 September)



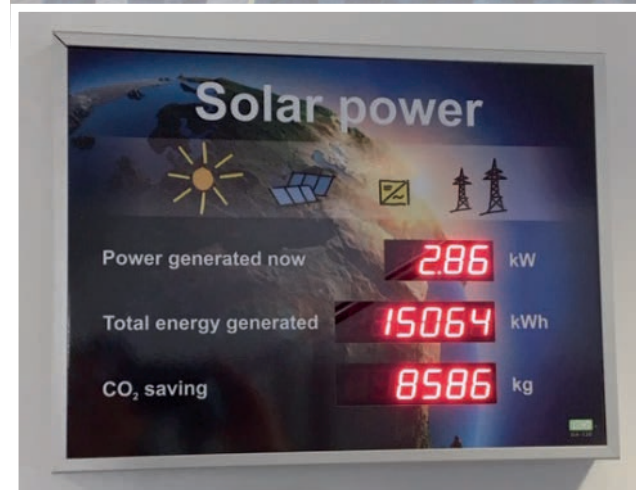
Lord Lieutenant Cadet

Well done to our Upper Sixth student and Lord Lieutenant Cadet Olivia Tennant, who participated in the British Empire Medal Investiture in September, as well as a whole host of formal events.



SSPA Christmas Fair

Hundreds kicked off the holiday season at the Parents' Association's Christmas Fair on 24 November. The event started with carols from our Junior School singers and was officially opened by Deputy Mayor, Stuart Davis. Fairgoers had their pick of festive fun in the Refectory, including a cake and filled jar stall, craft making, Switch stationery, human fruit machine, tin can alley and chocolate tombola. In the George Hill, guests were treated to a stellar selection of seasonal gift stalls - from handmade wreaths to handcrafted gin. At last count, the fair had raised more than £2,500. Thanks to everyone who visited.



New Solar Panels

With the help of external advisors, we have been investigating ways to reduce the environmental impact of the school site. One of our first major actions was to install 174 solar panels to the roof of The George Hill Building during the summer 2018 break. The installation of this first phase of solar panels, combined with other energy saving measures to be rolled out, will contribute to a reduction of our energy consumption and costs. As you can see, in the first half of term, the solar panels have already generated 15000 kilowatt hours of electricity.



Warwick Group Heads of School

In October, we hosted our annual Warwick Group Heads of School day. The new Heads and Deputies from Bablake, King Henry VIII School, Loughborough Grammar School, Nottingham High School, Warwick School, and Wolverhampton Grammar School worked on their communication and leadership skills ahead of what will be a busy academic year for them all. We wish them all the best.

Schools Challenge

We went to King Edward's School, Birmingham to take part in the regional rounds of this year's Schools Challenge. Unfortunately we were knocked out, but our A-team came within three questions of beating KES! This is one of our best results and we are looking forward to improving on this next year.



World Skills Careers Event

A highlight of a busy term in the Careers Department was the trip to World Skills Live in November. To get us thinking about our futures and the sorts of careers we would like to aim for, Mrs Chillcott arranged for us to attend the UK's largest skills, apprenticeships and careers event, which took place over three days in the NEC.

World Skills Live featured exhibitions and demonstrations from a wide variety of employers. The event was divided into different areas, each focusing on particular industry sectors. Some of us made a beeline for the Engineering and Technology area, while others were happy to wander around the exhibition space, soaking up the delights, in turn, of Construction and Infrastructure, Health, Hospitality and Lifestyle, and Digital, Business and Creative.

We came away armed with goodie bags and plenty of ideas to discuss with Mrs Chillcott in our upcoming Careers interviews.

Charity

Our charitable endeavours have got off to a very positive start this academic year. Pupils, staff and parents have worked together to raise money for a variety of good causes. Two particular highlights were the Junior School Charity Week, and Smarties September, which saw our Shell Formers eating Smarties and filling the empty tubes with coins before sending them to Solihull Hospital to fund a Christmas hamper for one of the wards. Many thanks as ever for your continued support.



This morning the Junior School hosted its House Sorting Ceremony complete with sorting hat! (19 September)

This week, we welcomed students from the Elizabethen Schule in Hofheim on the annual German Exchange. (21 September)





Huge thanks to @HearingDogs for speaking to some of our Lower Sixth who are learning sign language this year. (1 October)

Congratulations to the U14 netball squad winning the Solihull Borough Tournament tonight. The whole squad played some amazing netball, winning every match. (3 October)



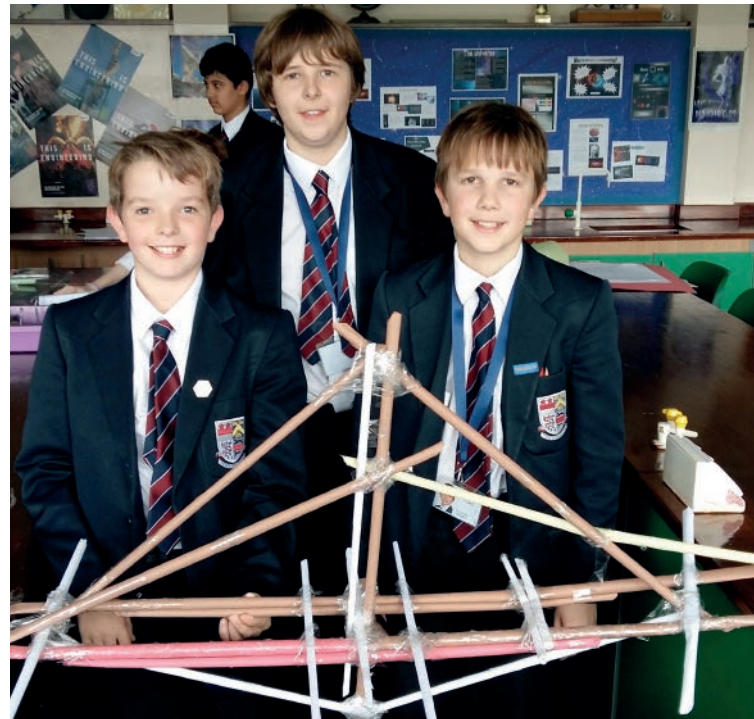
The Engineering Education Scheme - Launch Event

As part of their Engineering Education Scheme Enrichment programme, a group of 12 Lower Sixth students participated in a launch event at Chetwynd Barracks in Nottinghamshire. This saw the students completing a series of problem-solving activities during the day as well as learning about project management. They also met their mentors from Jaguar Land Rover with whom they will be working over the coming months on a project that will lead to the Industrial Cadets qualification.



Visits to Bentley and Jaguar Land Rover

Sixth Form Design & Technology and Green Power Racing students were invited to Bentley's Motorsport headquarters in Crewe earlier this term. The students had the opportunity to sit in some very luxurious cars, learn how vehicle design has changed since the early days of motoring and to see the Bentley Le Mans Prototype race car up close. A visit to the production line also proved very interesting, as was the opportunity to speak to their engineers for advice on developing our own electric go-kart. A more recent trip to Jaguar Land Rover involved seeing how vehicles are tested and developed to cope with different climates and terrain conditions at their Gaydon engineering facilities.



Solihull Engineering Club

The Engineering Club is up and running again this year with more members than ever signed up including many of our new Third Formers. We have started the year with our usual bridge building competition and will be moving on to our more long-term projects soon.

Digital Day

The Lower Fifth ICT and Computer Science pupils were involved in Digital Day on 13 November, a nationwide event organised by BIMA (British Interactive Media Association). Solihull School were partnered with an exciting local digital company called Freestyle. Pupils got themselves into small groups and were asked to pick one of three challenges. Virtual reality and augmented reality featured heavily in group discussions; there was even a talk on a robodog! The groups presented their pitches to the Freestyle staff, Mr Reardon and Mrs Patel with the idea that one group was to be selected to enter the national finals. Although it was tricky to pick just one group, we all agreed that the chosen group's idea and pitch was well-executed, met the brief and was innovative yet realistic in its use of technology. Now we shall wait to see if we are selected to present in the national finals!



Brain Day

In November, we hosted the first Warwick Group Brain Day. Psychology A-Level students from Solihull, Nottingham High School, Warwick and Wolverhampton Grammar School were all introduced to the latest research in neuroscience by the inspirational Dr Guy Sutton. After fascinating presentations on functional neuroanatomy, neurocriminology, drugs and schizophrenia, students were directed through brain anatomy during a live sheep brain dissection.



Textiles Club

Since September, Lower School pupils have been attending Textiles Club at lunchtimes on Mondays. Pupils have been given the opportunity to work with a range of fabrics to make their own cushions. They have been selecting and using a range of decorative techniques such as appliqué, hand embroidery and application of sequins and buttons. They have also been using machine-stitching techniques for both appliqué and the construction of their products. The pupils have made some beautiful products, and we will be moving onto some smaller projects in the New Year.

Science Club

Budding scientists in the Third Form have been getting some hands-on experience at Science Club. Each week they have undertaken a practical session examining a different science topic. These have ranged from investigating how fireworks work and colour chemistry to exploring the tiny world of microscopic organisms and cells and to blowing fuse wires and exploring electrical safety.



Well done to our Tuckshop Takeover team who raised over £350 last week for Birmingham Children's Hospital. (2 October)

Thank you so much to Annie Hoyle & Dr Stuart Davis from Cambridge University who joined us last week to speak to our pupils and those from local schools and colleges about how to prepare for Oxbridge interviews. (5 October)





Remembrance 2018 – Centenary Commemorations

A series of events to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War began before half-term, when every member of the school community printed a poppy on a white silk flag and assembled on the fields for an aerial photograph of a human montage to honour the Silhillians who fought in the war. 'Solihull Remembers', a gala evening of music, drama, history, original poetry, CCF drill and historical artefacts from the era was followed on Friday by the traditional wreath-laying ceremony in the Quad, at which crosses were planted bearing the names of every Silhillian who sacrificed their life in the conflict. The Chapel was decorated for the Remembrance Service and requiem mass with two stunning silk hangings produced by Karen Perrins in the Art Department.



Bosnia House

On Sunday 25 November, we were invited to the official opening of Bosnia House in Birmingham to receive a Community Impact Award to mark the work that we have done over the last year at school to commemorate and raise awareness of the Srebrenica genocide in 1995. Since visiting Bosnia in February this year, our three Future Leaders Chrissie, Oli and Tom have fundraised, led assemblies and contributed to a permanent display about Srebrenica that is now on view in School House. At the event, Chrissie received our award from the Minister for Faith Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth and we were treated to a delicious Bosnian lunch, traditional dancing and reflections on the genocide and the experiences of Bosnian refugees. We are delighted to receive the award and we pledge to continue teaching and learning about Srebrenica.

Lower School Diploma

On Tuesday 13 November, 34 Fourth Form pupils participated in the Lower School Diploma Evening in the George Hill Building, where they presented the portfolios and exhibitions that documented their work over the previous nine months, since enrolling in the Diploma programme during the Shell Form. The Lower School Diploma showcases Academic and Co-curricular endeavours, Charity and/or Community work, Leadership skills and an Extended Project piece, all underpinned by the Core Values of Humility, Compassion, Individuality, Integrity and Inclusivity.

Between them, the 34 pupils raised money and volunteered for 29 charities, including LAFF, The Cure Parkinson's Trust, Birmingham Children's Hospital, Teenage Cancer Trust, Mind, Molly Olly's Wishes, Northleigh House Special School, Women's Aid and Lumos, whilst the breadth and quality of the extended projects was extremely impressive and included such diverse topics as photography, filmmaking, composing music, creating artwork, traveloguing, poetry, creative writing, research projects, genealogy and environmental surveying. Congratulations to the 34 pupils whose hard work and achievements earned them the Lower School Diploma award.



Greek GCSE

This year and last year, 8 students from the Lower Fifth and one from the Lower Sixth are undertaking Greek GCSE classes off timetable after school and at lunchtimes to sit the examination in June 2019. Last year's students did exceptionally well at GCSE and so the current 8 are determined to rise to the challenge. A Saturday Greek Grammar Day on 1 December was very well attended. Two further Saturdays are planned for literature discussions. The students are enjoying the complexity of the Greek language and the parallels that they can draw with other Classical languages.





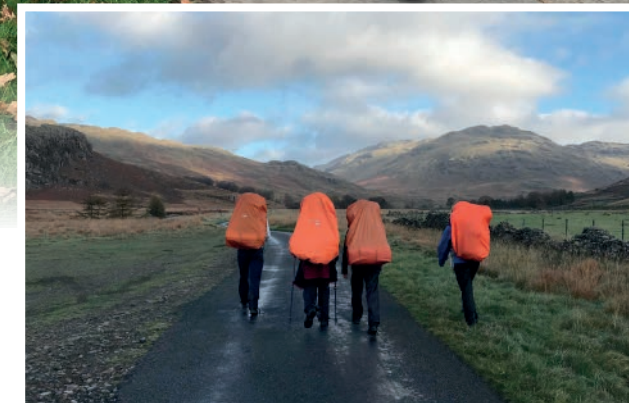
Parliament Trip

In September, the Lower Sixth Politics students went to London and we began with a visit to Parliament Square. Then we had a tour of Parliament, with an excellent exhibition about women's suffrage, followed by a workshop on voting systems. The highlight of the trip was a visit to Downing Street where by remarkable coincidence we bumped into Ed de Minckwitz, an Old Boy of the School, who works as a special advisor to Theresa May! He will be visiting Solihull in December to give our students an insight into life at Number 10.



Upper Sixth Spanish Study Day in London

The Upper Sixth Spanish students enjoyed a fantastic day of lectures delivered at the British Film Institute at Southbank, London. Over 300 pupils from schools and colleges across the UK came together for university-style lectures on a film, *Volver*, studied at A-Level. There was also a full screening in a cinema of this classic Almodóvar film to reinforce prior learning. A great independent study day for all and excellent preparation for university life.



Geography Field Trip to Devon

The Upper Fifth began term with a two-day residential field course to Slapton Ley in Devon. With the bonus of excellent weather, pupils worked hard to collect data investigating coastal processes and management techniques from Start Point to Slapton Sands, and the comparative successes of regeneration projects in Plymouth. This was an excellent way to focus the mind on work covered last year and apply this understanding to real examples, and to make a really positive start to the year ahead in a practical and fun way.



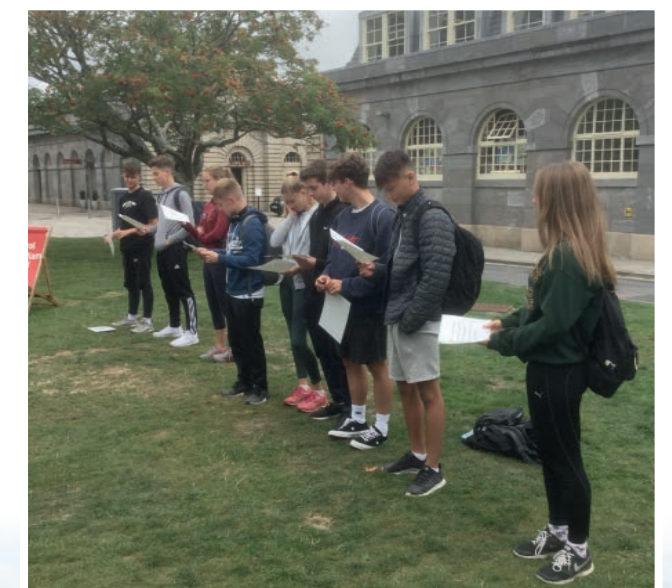
Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Three teams of Upper Sixth students did extremely well to complete a gruelling four-day trek across the Lake District National Park at the start of the October half term holiday. All students showed tremendous resilience and despite some terribly sore feet, some very long days and having to 'break camp' (and also on one occasion pitch camp in the dark) all pupils were successful.

Sasha Hofton wrote the following as the conclusion to her expedition report:

Gold DofE will be a memory that will stay with me forever. Not only has DofE made me a better person, improving my teamwork, leadership and communication skills, but it has boosted my passion for the outdoors. The expedition this October was so much fun, despite it being physically and mentally challenging. It was one of the best experiences I have ever had and the biggest challenge that I have ever had to conquer.

Well done to all students concerned and many thanks to all the staff and volunteers who make running such demanding expeditions possible.





Journey to the Stable

On 27 November, J1 visited St Alphege Church in Solihull to take part in a 'Journey to the Stable' as an RS curriculum link. All pupils were involved in four activities that focused on different parts of Christmas story, including the birth of Jesus, the Innkeeper, the Shepherds and the Wise Men. All pupils listened carefully, asked lots of intriguing questions and thought carefully about the real meaning of Christmas.

Learning about teeth!

As part of the J2 curriculum the pupils have been learning about teeth. The pupils enjoyed a visit from Orthodontic Excellence where they were fascinated to learn about the structure of the tooth and how to keep their teeth in good health. Their favourite part was when two brave pupils used a disclosing tablet to show the areas their teeth were most dirty. It was amazing to see how much plaque was on their teeth even after brushing. Hopefully, fewer sugary foods and drinks will be consumed by all of J2. A captivating morning where pupils were delighted to take home a special 'goodie bag' to help them keep their teeth clean!



Gold Star Winners

Congratulations to the Junior School's first set of Gold Star winners, who were chosen by their form tutors for their efforts during the first half term.



Zoolab

The J2 pupils had first-hand encounters with a corn snake, giant snail, cockroach, tarantula and an iguana when Zoolab visited and taught them about the different habitats as part of their Science topic 'Living Things'. The children were fascinated to observe and hold these creatures and the corn snake was definitely a firm favourite amongst the children!

J3 Rainforest Morning

The J3s participated in a Rainforest Morning where they learnt about the effects of deforestation through a traditional story. The pupils had to learn some dance moves and chants, and they put them together to the story to make a performance. They then looked at different rainforest artefacts and discussed what they thought they might be and how useful they would be to use in the rainforest.

Junior School Sport

The positive, enthusiastic and competitive culture of sport in the Junior School is growing day by day. It's great to see so many children not only wanting to be involved, but also wanting to develop their skills, get better and represent the School in competitive fixtures. Keep it up, everyone!

Boys' Sport

An excellent term of sport for the Junior School Boys. Again, we can proudly say that every boy in the Junior School has already represented the School in a competitive fixture in either Rugby, Hockey or Football. We have had a great mix of results so far this season, with hard-earned muddy wins over Warwick in rugby, fast and fierce clashes with The Crescent in hockey and close encounters with Balsall Common in football. Most importantly, all our boys are coming away from their matches with smiles on their faces and a determination to improve as a team.



Girls' Sport

S - Superb start for J1's sporting careers here at Solihull School with girls working hard in Games to get to grips with both hockey and netball skills, rules and tactics - two new sports to many of the girls. A big sporting festival is in the calendar for next term at which all girls will have the opportunity to represent the School in competitive and fun fixtures.

P - Participation in both netball and hockey fixtures for ALL J2 girls this term. High energy, enthusiasm and keenness to learn would sum up the J2 girls and their approach to their sporting endeavours with huge improvement shown on the court and pitch this year.

O - Oh wow... so many goals scored in J3 A B and C hockey fixtures against Blue Coat School. Girls have shown composure, determination and grit on the pitch and have taken the transition into full 7-a-side matches in their stride.

R - Resilience shown by J4 girls when facing tough opposition such as Bablake on the netball court, and humility in defeat. With record numbers attending co-curricular clubs in this age group, girls are developing in leaps and bounds (quite literally!)

T - Time on the sports field will always result in improvement of one kind or another. Keep having fun in your sport girls, and maintain that boundless energy - it really is fantastic.





Over the weekend, we took 4 competitive debating teams to Birmingham Schools Debating Competition 2018. (14 November)



Junior School Charity Week

West Bromwich Albion manager Darren Moore teamed up with the Junior School this year to help raise more than £8,000 for charity. Our football-mad pupils donated money to take part in an exclusive coaching session with the Baggies boss, who also donated a football signed by the West Brom squad to the raffle. Other fundraising activities included a new photo booth, as well as the usual favourites including a book sale, a giant tuck shop, a talent show and a 'Monitors versus Staff' football match.

The money raised will be shared between Heronfield Rescue Centre – a popular, small animal shelter in Knowle – and Kids Out, Giving Tree Appeal by providing over 500 presents for children who will spend Christmas this year in a Women's Aid refuge.

Appeals to donate second hand trainers and spectacles were also made on behalf of Assist RR, a charity we have worked with regularly in recent years and continues to focus on assisting innocent victims of war in Sri Lanka. This was supported by children in the Lower School and was a huge success as we collected 1135 pairs of glasses and 255 pairs of trainers, which will now be sent to an eye clinic and schools in Vanna and Kilinochchi respectively.



Well done to the U9 football teams who played the Crescent School last week. Every boy in J2 represented and played, and we won all three matches. (17 November)



Art Department

This term has been a busy one for the Art Department. The Lower Sixth artists have had two workshops with local artists. They spent the day drawing Mr Worrall's portrait with Nick Logan and produced some accomplished speed painting studies with Tom Shepherd.

In November, the Lower Sixth photographers had the opportunity to work with London-based photographer Lucy Williams and produced some striking portrait shots.

There have been lots of projects based on the important theme of remembrance and the pupils from Reynalds Cross School created some lovely poppy silk paintings to take back to their school with the help of the Lower Sixth photographers.



In September, every Senior School pupil came up to the department to print their poppy flags for the whole school aerial photograph and Karen Perrins (art technician and illustrator) created two five-metre silk paintings to hang in the Chapel. Karen also made commemorative crosses for each member of the school that lost their lives in the Great War and these were displayed with some of the poppy flags in the Quad during the Remembrance Service. You can see some of the work, along with photographs from the school archive in a display on the first floor of the George Hill Building.



St Cecilia Concert

On 22 November, musicians celebrate the life of St Cecilia – the patron saint of musicians. It was apt, therefore, that our St Cecilia Concert this year fell on the day before her name day. The concert brought together nearly 125 pupils playing and singing in ten different ensembles. The programme, as usual, featured a wonderful breadth of musical periods, styles and genres.

The music was presented by Chamber Orchestra, String Ensemble, Concert Band, Big Band, Saxophony, Combined Brass Ensemble, Flute Choir, Clarinet Choir, 'Jazz 793' and 'The Twelve' (Sixth Form close harmony group). In addition, two pupils had significant solos: Aviva Sandler played the viola with Chamber Orchestra in Telemann's *Viola Concerto* and Oliver Rooney played saxophone in transcribed versions of *Gabriel's Oboe* (the main theme from the film score for *The Mission*) along with Concert Band. Both of them played with great skill and musicianship, as did the two groups accompanying them.

Music Festival and National Youth Orchestra Successes

As ever, our musicians have been out and about performing in various local music festivals. Singers have been particularly busy at the Lichfield Festival. The number of our pupils gaining 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes awarded has been particularly impressive this year, so huge congratulations to them all, both for their successes and for their courage in performing in an event where their performances will be critiqued by an adjudicator. Special mention goes to Hannah Greenwood, Ella Furber, Eleanor Gooderidge and Shriya Sharma for gaining at least one 1st or 2nd prize each. Congratulations also go to Hannah Smith for having won 1st prize in the Grade 6-7 Piano class and 2nd prize in the 11-13 year class at the Birmingham Music Festival.

We were thrilled to hear, earlier in the term, that new Lower Sixth Music Scholar Maisie Stewart has successfully gained a place in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain for the second year in a row. This year she has moved up from the 2nd violins to the 1st violins. Do go and watch/hear her in action at Warwick Arts Centre on Friday 4 January as the orchestra gives its first concert of their new season.



Following a talk from the Anthony Nolan Trust about the importance of STEM cell research, 85 of our Sixth Formers pupils took time to provide a mouth swab for the Trust. (15 November)

On Friday, some of our Fourth Form pupils held a charity bake sale for LAFF Charity. (19 November)





Recitals

Once again, many pupils have taken up the opportunity and challenge of performing solo pieces in our six Informal Concerts this term – all with great aplomb and enjoyment. These concerts are open to all pupils, whether they have their instrumental lessons in or out of school.

In addition, our termly Recital given by Music Scholars and Instrumental Award Holders was a real delight; all performances, whatever the repertoire or age of performer, displayed real musicianship, passion and sensitivity. The next Recital (in April) is the domain of just the Upper Sixth and will be well worth a visit.

On Sunday 9 December, some of our music staff and friends presented a fabulous 40-minute recital of three magnificent pieces of chamber music for clarinet and strings. Mrs Martens (piano), Miss Rosina (clarinet), Mrs Roberts (violin) and Mr Phillips (percussion) were joined by two pupils (Maisie Stewart and Aviva Sandler) and two external professionals in performing music by Mozart and Prokofiev and a piece of Jewish Klezmer music. All in attendance then went to the Chapel to hear the service of Compline sung by the Chamber Choir. We are blessed with such strong performing musicians amongst our staff, so do look out for other recitals later in the year.



Strings Masterclasses

Opportunities for pupils to perform under the scrutiny of professional musicians have become a regular feature of the work of the Music Department. This term we had the privilege of welcoming Jacqui Martens, a young professional violinist. She worked with two groups of string players – one of Junior School pupils and then one of Senior pupils. Jacqui skilfully guided, encouraged and challenged all the players in aspects of technique, interpretation and performance skills. It is always great to see how all our pupils respond and interact; they all took away some great advice and realised that learning and performing need not be daunting. Next term we have already lined up similar opportunities for our pianists, and there may be more for other instrumentalists and singers.

Chapel Choirs

The Chapel Choirs have had a busy term, as usual, with the Boys', Girls' and Chamber Choirs all involved. Mr David Rice has taken up the reins from Mr Woodrow as Head of Choral Music and, in addition to the usual weekly Sunday evening services, he has prepared them magnificently for the Remembrance events (Boys' & Girls' Choirs at 'Solihull Remembers' in the Bushell Hall, and Chamber Choir for the Remembrance Requiem in the Chapel) and, towards the end of term, the usual Advent Procession and Nine Lessons and Carols services. Well done to all our singers for their continued commitment both to their singing and to the life of the Chapel.

Drama

GCSE and A-Level Drama students have enjoyed a very busy schedule of theatre trips and workshops this term. They were profoundly moved by VAMOS Theatre's touching portrayal of living with dementia in *Finding Joy*, experienced a bilingual English/Korean production in *Orange Polar Bear*, were spellbound by the theatrical adaptation of *The Lovely Bones* and were filled with joy after experiencing a musical version of *Twelfth Night* in London. They have taken part in a variety of workshops run by solo actors, the Birmingham Rep and students on the applied theatre course at the Birmingham Conservatoire.

After a year away, this September saw the return of the RADA Shakespeare Awards to Solihull School. Pupils have begun their one-on-one lessons in preparation for their Messenger and Bronze Awards, as presented by the most famous acting school in the world.



The Glove Thief

The first production of the new academic year proved to be another enormous success in the growing trend of student directed productions. The Glove Thief by Beth Flintoff, performed by the Shell and Fourth Forms, was the first production in Solihull history to be entirely directed by a Sixth Former, Alexandra Hogg. The play, which dealt with the tumultuous relationship between Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots, was ably performed by a passionate cast, which included an excellent Lola Blue Sattar O'Dwyer as Rose and an imperious Alex Townsend as Mary. The play, which was also designed and lit by Sixth Form practitioners, was enjoyed and appreciated thoroughly by audiences.



The Royal Hunt of the Sun

In early December, Bushell Hall audiences were treated to an ambitious staging of Peter Shaffer's 1964 epic concerning the Spanish invasion of the Inca empire in 1533, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*. A cast of forty brought this sweeping tale to life using physical theatre, masks and an especially striking set, designed by Mr Hunton. Joshua Newby was fantastic as Pizarro, charting the course of an extraordinary journey from cynicism to hope and from hope to despair. Atahualpa was brought to life by Aoife Mackew with majesty, authority and an ethereal physical presence which dominated the stage. The stirring and otherworldly live music, directed by Mr Phillips, was vital in lifting the action from the historical to the truly epic. Beth Miles's honourable De Soto and Ewan Waddell's gnarled narrator, Old Martin were other standout performances. Drama is a truly collaborative endeavour and this was certainly seen in the importance of the Inca masks, designed and created by Hiba Sandhu. *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* was a truly visual spectacle and a real achievement.





Very well done to J1 pupil Tommy Jones who competed at the annual Midlands Ski Club Championships a few weeks ago and won the U10 category. (21 November)

J4 pupils have been practising data handling and market research to help them create their own chocolate bar. (26 November)



Solihull Girls' Hockey Cup Competitions

This year for the first time Solihull School entered the Independent Schools Cup for Girls' at U13 and U15 level and the England Hockey Championship Tier 1 Level for U16s and U18s.



Girls' Holland Hockey Tour

27 girls and 4 members of staff flew out to Holland to experience hockey at its best and learn from the best. We certainly weren't disappointed. We travelled to Amsterdam, Venlo, Eindhoven and Harlem, played 4 matches and had 2 masterclass training sessions. We watched a Premier Men's Hockey Match, experienced a Dutch school, spent 2 nights with Dutch families, and took in some culture visiting the Van Gogh Museum, Anne Frank's House and the home of Ajax FC. A great experience was had by all!



Senior Boys' Holland Hockey Tour

During the first week of October half term, a party of 35 boys and four members of staff flew to Holland for the 2018 Senior Boys Hockey Tour. Highlights of the tour included some great cultural visits to Den Haag, Rotterdam, Amersfoort, Utrecht and Amsterdam; watching a Hoofdklasse (Dutch Premier League) hockey match; a visit to the Van Gogh Museum; a tour of the Ajax Johan Cruyff Arena and, of course, playing hockey against some good quality Dutch sides.

In total, the two squads played eight matches - with a tour record of 2 wins, 3 draws and 3 losses. All matches were keenly contested and the boys displayed tremendous progress throughout the week. Well done to all the boys, who conducted themselves admirably throughout the week.



U14 Warwickshire County Champions

Congratulations to the U14 Girls' Hockey team who were unbeaten throughout the tournament to be crowned Warwickshire County Champions – they were victorious against King Henry's and King's High Warwick, and beat Rugby both in the pool section and then in the final itself. This victory enabled them to progress through to the Midlands Regional round where they faced Bromsgrove and Oakham. Unfortunately, both teams were stronger and we lost 3-0 and 2-0. Congratulations must go to the squad on the progress they have made in the last 12 months.

The U13s were our most successful side and progressed through to the 3rd round, beating King's Worcester 2-1 and Bromsgrove 3-2 before losing 3-0 to a very strong Redmaids team from Bristol. This was an excellent achievement and the girls played some very mature and exciting hockey along the way. The U15s got to round 2, beating King's Worcester 3-2 before losing 2-0 to Repton. The U16s had a bye in the first round and then lost 6-0 to Redmaids, Bristol. The U18s beat King Henry's 2-1 and then lost 3-0 to Dean Close in the 2nd Round.



Well done to the winners of the Solihull School Parents' Association Christmas Fair cover design competition. (23 November)

Well done to all the J3 & J4 athletes attending Cross Country Club on Thursdays. (26 November)





Some of our Third and Shell Form pupils enjoyed an afternoon behind the scenes at Birmingham Airport, listening to experts speak about how the airport runs day to day. (27 November)

Well done to our fantastic Junior School swimmers who competed at the King Henry VIII Swimming Gala last week. Our J3 and J4 girls came 2nd and 1st respectively, and our boys came 3rd and 4th! (3 December)



Netball

This term, all age groups have entered a new National Cup Competition. The competition is played on a knockout basis with all matches to be decided on the day, with no replays.

The U12 team played RGS in the third round and beat them convincingly with a 19-3 win. Some great team play and determination ensured this win. The U13s played Queen Ashbourne in Derbyshire and won their third round match easily. They meet Edgbaston High School before the Christmas break.



The U14s came up against a very good Royal Grammar School and worked tirelessly but were unfortunately defeated. The U15s played their third round against Bromsgrove and won convincingly, some great defence ensuring some vital turnovers. The Senior Team meet Bramcote College from Nottingham in the next round.

Our U14s have qualified for the regional round of the national finals after an outstanding performance in the county round. It was a highly contested affair and we performed brilliantly to make it through. The team worked so hard, and demonstrated their determination and desire to 'rise to the challenge.' We look forward to the regional finals that will be held at the end of January. The team consisted of Ellie-Mae Beeton, Zara Johal, Niamh Trainer, Pippa Meigh, Amelia Penney, Sarah Gahan, Lara Fletcher, Lauren Mitchell and Jane Woodley.

Netball season begins in full flow after Christmas, and we are looking forward to some hard work and great results.

Netball Scholars

Congratulations to our fantastic netball scholars who have been selected to represent regional teams this year. Izzy and Lily have been selected for the U19 Wasps Netball Academy, Aimee and Isabel have been selected for the Loughborough Lightning Netball Superleague Academy and Rachel has been selected for the Severn Stars Academy!



Sailing Club

The 'old hands' in the experienced race fleet were joined by a host of new sailors keen to make the most of the last of the fine weather before half term, with Saturday morning sailing club at Olton Mere proving more popular than ever. Plenty of new skills were learned and existing ones refined, and things look good for upcoming fixtures against Rugby and Oundle next term.

Rugby Report

This term has been the strongest start to a season at Solihull across all of the age groups. Currently, we have the U16 XV sitting 12th nationally in the Performance League, 5th in the All Comers League and through to the final of the Midlands Cup. In a similar vein, the U14 XV are currently undefeated and sit 3rd nationally in the Performance League and 6th in the All Comers League.

Notable block victories, of which there have been many this term, were recorded against RGS High Wycombe and Oakham. We were also delighted that our Old Boys 7s squad attended the Dubai 7s Tournament for the first time and made it to the semi-final of the Plate. Well done gents!

Thank you for all of the commitment from staff; your support is always much appreciated.



Shell Form Rugby Tour to South Wales

On a wet Friday in November, 31 Shell Form pupils and 3 staff set off for a weekend of rugby in the rugby heartland of South Wales. Following torrential rain overnight in Merthyr Tydfil, Solihull played Risca RFC U13 team on the Saturday morning in somewhat wet and muddy conditions with players adapting to line-outs and 15-a-side very well. Bowling, laser quest and a meal out ensued on Saturday afternoon and night. The Sunday game succumbed to the weather but the pupils still enjoyed an impromptu beach 7s tournament!



Well done to George and Freddie Sunderland who competed in the RS Feva Sailing Winter Championships last weekend, recording a number of top 20 finishes in difficult conditions. (2 December)

Thank you so much to Old Sil and Special Advisor to Theresa May, Ed de Minckwitz, who spoke to our Politics & Economics students yesterday about Brexit and other political processes within the Government. (4 December)





Ski Team

This term, the Ski Team competed in the ESSKIA Championships. Both the boys' and girls' teams successfully qualified in the regional competition in Gloucester, to the English Finals in Norwich. In the English Finals, approximately 20 schools from all over the country competed; our girls came 8th overall, and the boys came 7th. Ella Giles was the fastest girl overall, for the second year in a row!



Both teams automatically qualified for the British Finals in Edinburgh, where they competed against the best Welsh and Scottish Schools at Hill End, a notoriously difficult slope. Despite some spectacular falls, both teams persevered. Ella was on the podium again as the second fastest school girl in Britain, an amazing achievement!

Christmas Term Teams of the Week

U16 Rugby Team

Outstanding team performance against King's School, Worcester

Senior 1st Netball Squad

Winners of the Sisters in Sport Knockout Competition

U13 Girls' Hockey Team

Excellent victory against Bablake School, showing great determination and team spirit

U14 Girls' Hockey Team

Warwickshire County Champions & unbeaten throughout the tournament

Ski Team

Outstanding performance at the English Schools' Finals

School Council

Insight, resilience and compassion shown at the Mental Health Conference Representatives

CCF Guard of Honour

Commitment and excellent conduct during the Remembrance events

U13A Rugby Team

Excellent performance v Warwick and RGS High Wycombe Schools

Cast & Crew of The Glove Thief

Three fantastic nights of Historical Drama

U12 Girls Hockey Squad

A strong team performance against King Edward VI High School for Girls

1st XI Boys' Hockey Team

Excellent victories against Repton and Bromsgrove

Cast & Crew of The Royal Hunt of the Sun

Three nights of spectacular Drama

Chapel Choir

Two wonderful services of Nine Lessons and Carols

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