



The Greyhound



SOLIHULL

Christmas Term





After more than 16 years of exemplary service to the Board of Governors, 11 of those years as Chairman, Mr Mark Hopton, stands down and leaves the Board.

Mark Hopton is altruistic, hugely generous with his time and resources, and also a modest and humble man.

He is passionate about education, and as an Old Silhillian, very dedicated to the future of our school. Mark possesses a very rare combination of being an outstanding strategist whilst also having a forensic eye for detail. He is visionary yet fully aware of the hard work required in turning ideas into reality.

Mark is ambitious for the school, but not just in terms of buildings, facilities, balance sheets and public examination results. He has been, and remains, committed to wellbeing and personal development, safeguarding, promoting mental health, and equality, diversity and inclusion. Furthermore, Mark is deeply concerned about the future of our sector, and the affordability of an independent school education is a perennial debate and remains at the top of his agenda. Mark cares about people, and further evidence of this is his commitment to our bursary provision.

Mark is a regular attendee at Big 6 events – the full curricular and co-curricular programme – and is ever present at Sunday Chapel services, often playing an active part in liturgical proceedings.

As Headmaster, I often talk to audiences about ambassadorial responsibilities, role modelling behaviour and being an upstander rather than a bystander. Well, Mark leads by example and is highly respected by young and old, Old Sils or not.

He has always made himself available for individual members of the School Leadership Team (SLT), and has become a de facto member of that team. We will all miss his wisdom, camaraderie and generosity. He is not a fair weather friend. His head is firmly above the parapet come rain or shine, and he can be a 'scrapper' when required to be so. His pivotal role in the merger of our two schools, against the backdrop of a global pandemic, is irrefutable testament to this.

On a personal level, Mark was an amazing mentor to me in the early years, the best I could ever have hoped for, and he remains an invaluable advisor and friend. I have been incredibly fortunate to have Mark alongside me for the last 11 years, and in recognition of what Mark has done for this community, we were delighted to name a building in his honour. When I put the suggestion to the SLT and Mr Damian Kelly, Chairman Elect, there was no hesitation at all – instantaneous agreement!

The Mark Hopton Building is a fitting tribute to a loyal and dedicated servant of the school, an exceptional chairman and a great friend to us all.

David EJJ Lloyd
Headmaster

December 2021



The Greyhound Interviews ...

Mr Jones

Preparatory School Senior Deputy Head

How long have you worked in education?

For 15 years since qualifying with a PGCE Primary with QTS and securing an NQT role at Dorridge Junior School. I then moved into various middle leadership roles before being seconded to the Infant School and being promoted to Deputy Head, focusing on transition between the Infant and Junior School as it became a merged Primary School. In 2013, I moved to Solihull School as Deputy Head of the Junior School, spending six years in that role before becoming Senior Deputy Head of the Preparatory School during the merger of Solihull and Saint Martin's schools.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Seeing the children flourish, particularly when I've been able to help make a strategic change that has a positive impact on their personal development. I also enjoy supporting colleagues, a variety of teaching and non-teaching staff, as part of my leadership role. No two days are the same working in a school and it's a genuine privilege to come to a workplace with so many talented pupils and staff.

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

I would love to have been a doctor, to help save lives! Though I've definitely been fascinated by epidemiology since the pandemic so that's a more unusual choice!

What do you like doing outside of school?

I'm an avid Liverpool fan so will rarely miss watching a game and occasionally make it to Anfield. I also enjoy playing football myself, but am sadly picking up more and more injuries these days! Also, I love to spend time with my two daughters and wife, as well as our friends and extended family.

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

Jules Verne's *'Around the World in Eighty Days'* was a childhood favourite and inspired my love of travel. I do feel that favourite books and songs evolve and change over time. Sorry, but for my song, it's another Liverpool linked answer! *'You'll Never Walk Alone'* is very special to me, not just because of the Liverpool connection, but it was also played at my Dad's funeral.

Who would be at your fantasy dinner party?

Jürgen Klopp (and perhaps Stevie G!) because not only do I admire what he's achieved as a football manager but I'm fascinated by his ability to motivate and get the best out of people. Matthew Syed because he's an interesting mix of journalist, public speaker, author and former British number one at table tennis - all his books have been inspiring and insightful. Greta Thunberg – perhaps an obvious one at the moment, but I imagine she'd get stuck into any debate and her passion and commitment to climate change is an inspiration to us all. Martin Lewis – I love his money saving mantra and his passion for teaching financial education in schools.

What would you take to a desert island?

Definitely my AirPods ... and a device preloaded with lots of audiobooks and podcasts that I never seem to find the time to listen to!





Sixth Form Community

Introducing some key members of our Sixth Form Community, our Heads of School, our Benchers and our House Captains.



Perseverance

On Wednesday 17 November 'perseverance' was announced as the Cambridge Dictionary word of the year 2021. The Latin interpretation, 'Perseverantia', is our school motto, so the Headmaster shared his thoughts on the perseverance shown by our whole school community throughout the last two years. Read the Headmaster's latest blog on our website.

Pole Breakfast

At the beginning of term, members of Pole visited the Refectory to meet the House Captains and collect a pastry to celebrate being the overall winning House for the 2020 - 2021 academic year! Senior School pupils and staff were invited to enjoy the breakfast treat served by Pole House Captains for this year, Kade and Tara.



Branded Headbands

Two Prep School pupils demonstrated proactivity in response to the refugee crisis borne of the humanitarian upheavals in Afghanistan. Sisters, Enaya in J4 and Arniya in I1, fashioned Solihull headbands from school skirts and invited orders in return for a minimum donation of £5 per item. All proceeds go towards a charity supporting the refugees across our region. 72 items were sold and made throughout the term, raising £495. With the collection, and working with Entraide Mutual Aid in Solihull, the girls chose to spread some Christmas joy and purchase gifts for refugee families in need. A huge thank you to the school community for supporting the campaign, and well done Enaya and Arniya on a great giving initiative.



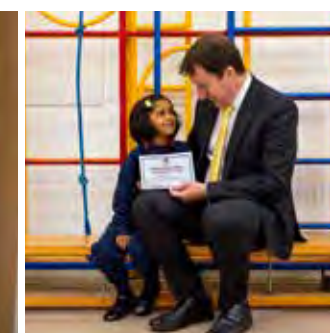
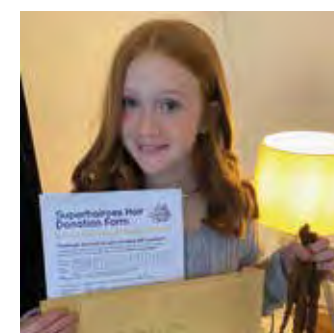
World's Biggest Coffee Morning

On Friday 26 September, staff on both campuses joined the World's Biggest Coffee Morning fundraising for Macmillan Cancer Support. Thanks to Miss Airdrie and Mrs Humphreys for co-ordinating the cakes and bakes and to all staff who created and donated.



Afghanistan Appeal

Before half term, J4 pupil Amelia began collecting children's clothes for the Afghanistan Appeal. In one assembly, Amelia reached out to her Prep School peers and the response was outstanding! The mountains of donations have now been delivered to Carriers of Hope, an organisation which has been supporting refugees since 2009.

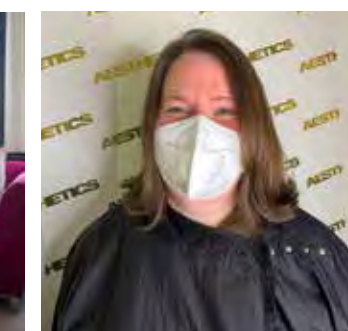


Charity Cuts!

Five Solihull pupils have been recognised for their charity initiatives for The Little Princess Trust this term. Shell Form girls Hayden and Carla and Prep School pupils Siya in Nursery, Roberta in J1 and Aana in J3, chose to fundraise and have their hair cut to donate to the organisation which makes wigs for children who are undergoing cancer treatment or have lost their hair through illness.

Great giving, girls – and super smart new styles!

Ms Harford-Fox joined the 'charity hair cut club' in December.





Girl Up

Solihull *Girl Up* Group asked pupils, parents and staff to support their period product drive by donating pads, liners and tampons to the Warwick Road campus collection points. In November, Alison from Children's Storehouse, Jubilee Church visited our Senior School to pick up the many items and meet with members of *Girl Up* who led this important initiative.



Collecting Crisp Packets!

We're delighted to have supported a new charity brought to our attention by J4 pupil Lauren. On both campuses, pupils and staff bought in empty crisp packets so they could be recycled to make blankets for the homeless.

Our collection was recently posted to the 'Iron Man' who irons the crisp packets together to create survival items; the 'Iron Man' was formerly homeless. Thank you to Lauren, sister Amelie in J1, and the whole family for this wonderful idea, and thank you to Belinda Griffiths and Elizabeth Sach for putting together our first blanket.



Reverse Advent Calendar

Pupils in Mrs Massarella's Third Form chose to participate in a reverse advent calendar this month. The children decided to donate an item of food to create a charity parcel rather than receive a chocolate treat from their Form Tutor each day.



Virtual Fitness Challenge

Congratulations to this team of Shell Form pupils who completed our Land's End to John O' Groats Virtual Fitness Challenge during the summer break. Before half term, Flynn, George, Oscar and Amy received their certificates and medals for successfully undertaking the 932 mile iconic 'end to end' in aid of Tommy Godwin Marie Curie Fund.

Harvest Festival

A message of thanks for your Harvest Festival donations ...

"A massive 'thank you' to all the pupils, parents and staff who donated a huge amount of food to the young homeless of Solihull. St Basils works with 16-24 year olds who find themselves homeless for many reasons in the borough of Solihull and the rest of the midlands. This food will be distributed between the Solihull services. One is for immediate access off the streets, two are for 'move on' from which they move to their own properties with the council, and the final one is a floating support service where we go into people's homes and help them to maintain their tenancies when they are struggling. Once again, well done everybody."

Phil Bradley, Progression Co-ordinator, St Basils



Supporting LAFF

Since December 2020, we have raised £2,614.71 for the Latin American Foundation for the Future (LAFF). Mrs Brown recently sent £2,500 to the charity which has been matched in the 'Big Give Campaign', so a massive £5,000 is making its way to Peru. All of the money raised is put towards educating children of the three 'casas' in Peru : Casa Mantay – a place helping abused teenage mothers, Azul Wasi – an orphanage for young homeless boys, and The Sacred Valley Project – a hostel for rural girls.

Thank you to all pupils and staff who purchased Krispy Kreme doughnuts, raising £400 over three break times. And an enormous 'thank you' to the LAFF Team who have been so supportive in organising and running events over the last three years.



Thank you to the SSPA for checking and displaying the Harvest items, and to Pat and her granddaughter Olivia for the flower arrangements. Fourth Form pupil, Olivia, assisted with the flowers as part of her Bronze DofE Award volunteer work.



Climate Change

Two Prep School pupils were inspired to take action against Climate Change and received Commendations from Mr Penney to recognise their initiatives. Anmolika in J3 attended the Climate Action Rally in Birmingham and was given the opportunity to lead the rally, raising awareness with chants and slogans. Amira in J2 wrote a speech about Climate Change and took her place in Solihull town centre. She repeated her thought-provoking piece at least 25 times and raised £117.22 for the International Tree Foundation. Wonderful work, Anmolika and Amira.





Charity Week

Our annual Prep School Charity Week raised more than £9,000 to support local, national and international organisations. The five-day event in October included fun activities from a pupil-led tuck shop and photo booth to a book sale, popcorn and film afternoon and whole school non-uniform day.

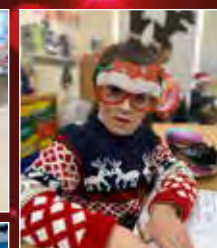
Highlights this year were the staff dodgeball match – held on a super sunny day! – well done to Mr Penney's team who took home the trophy; and the terrific talent shown in our Prep School Talent Contest. Moana, Irish dancing, singing, guitar, gymnastics, Sir Winston Churchill, Frozen, jokes, magic, ballet and tap the judges had a tough time picking the winners.

This year, the charities that will benefit from the kindness of the Solihull Community were chosen by Prep School pupils – local organisation Helen and Douglas House, which supports terminally ill children and their families; Winston's Wish, the UK's childhood bereavement charity; and international organisation, WaterAid.

All children had the opportunity to present their charity suggestions to their classmates and a series of democratic votes were then cast to pick which of the many very worthy causes put forward were selected.

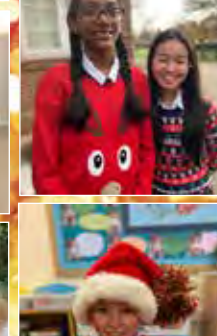
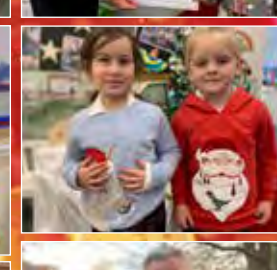
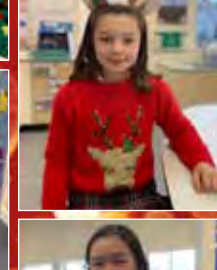
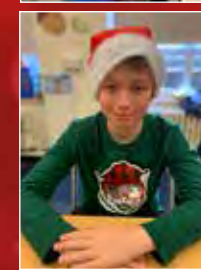
Well done to Gabriella in I2, Cameron in J2 and Erin in J4 – through a pupil vote and superb follow-up presentations, their chosen charities were supported this year.

In December, each organisation received a cheque for £3,026.41.



Charity at Christmas

December saw our whole school community take part in various charity activities including bringing a donation to support Christmas Jumper Day, collecting for the Crisis Appeal, dressing trees with baubles for St Basils and, on the last day of term, a non-uniform day to raise funds for Safeline. Thank you for your ongoing enthusiasm to our Community Relations.





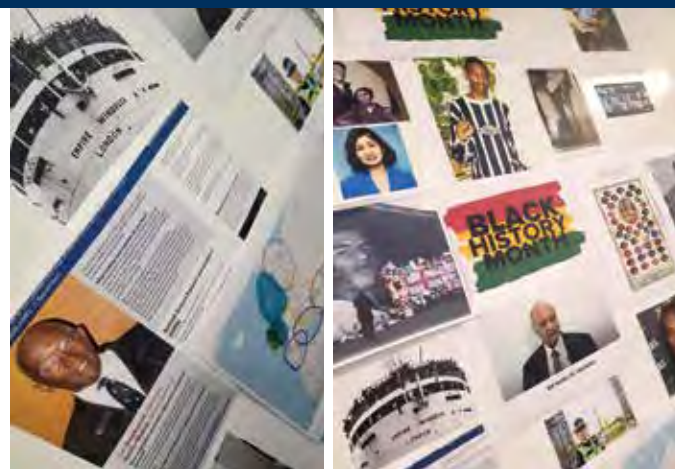
Hello Yellow

On Friday 8 October we supported Young Minds UK with the #HelloYellow campaign, wearing a little yellow to help spread a very important message!



Aids Awareness Day – Solihull Rocks the Ribbon!

In the week where a possible HIV vaccine enters the first phase of clinical trials, what better way to continue this important work than to raise some money for the National Aids Trust by selling their immediately recognisable red ribbon. Alongside learning about the history of the virus, from the first cases in the 1980s, through the stigma of an HIV + status, Princess Diana's HIV Ward opening and busting myths about transmission, it felt great to be doing something that again celebrates inclusion for all. With some appropriate musical flurries from events like the Freddie Mercury Aids Concert in 1985, we know at least that we are contributing to ongoing important work.



Black History Month

For Black History Month (October) this term, we looked at the word 'history' recognising the adage that we have more in common than that which separates us. After learning about the story of Stephen Lawrence and the background of his family, we were able to bring our own histories to life on our Black History Month Wall. Stephen was more than a victim of an horrific crime. He was an aspiring architect with a rich heritage that spanned many generations, cultures and countries. In honour of him and his family, we reached back to identify individuals from our own past and present history from underrepresented and diverse groups and/or ethical upstanders.

Thanks to Aurelia, Harshini and Delphine, three of our J4 Prep School Librarians, for this fantastic display created to celebrate Black History Month.



World Mental Health Day

On World Mental Health Day on Monday 10 October, we celebrated the support of our MH Wellbeing Buddies, Peer and Academic Mentors, MHFA UK staff and Sixth Form students who help keep our school community safe and well. Thanks to the Catering Team for the fabulous cupcakes.



Equity Flag Crossing Official Opening

This term saw a monumental moment in our school's history! After a successful pitch by members of the Equity Group to the Headmaster, the Equity Flag Crossing, inspired by the Progress Pride Flag, was installed over the summer and officially opened on Tuesday 21 September. Inaugurated by our Head of Art, Ms Trim, the aim is to have a lasting acknowledgement and celebration of diverse groups within our school community. In the realms of equality, diversity and inclusion, there will be lots more important representative initiatives and work to highlight how highly we esteem these important themes.

Ms Trim said: "I smile when I walk over the crossing because it sends such a positive message to every member of our school."

The Headmaster commented: "A testament to the hard work and vision of the school's Equity Group, and the Pride Group that preceded it, this is a permanent statement of our celebration of equity, diversity and inclusion. I feel incredibly proud to be part of such an institution."



Dr Funke Abimbola MBE

What a wonderful treat it has been for the whole school community to work with Dr Funke Abimbola MBE. When Dr Abimbola visited Solihull on Thursday 25 November, representatives of the Equity Group were delighted to be able to spend some time with her in an open discussion, securing good advice on where our focus and progression should be. There is a clear intersectionality with discrimination and wellbeing and much of what we learned will help us continue our ongoing commitment to equity for all. Dr Abimbola said she was thrilled to meet the pupils and reported that she had "never seen this level of commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in any other school where everyone in the community is on the same journey – gold standard stuff". Dr Abimbola spent time at the Prep School and Senior School speaking with pupils and staff, before taking part in an online seminar for parents and alumni on Wednesday 1 December.



On Tuesday 31 August, members of our Equity Group were invited to our Warwick Road campus to take the first steps on the Equity Flag Crossing.

RETRACE

This scheme is a non-punitive, collaborative, positive and supportive process for pupils who may have lost their way a little and found themselves in serious trouble. It is well-received by pupils and, as a result of Ms Harford-Fox's interview on BBC Radio 4, has recently started to gain interest from other schools across the UK. Our first educator's workshop, taught by Mrs Rooney, was a great opportunity to illustrate our encouraging and successful initiative to other educators, with more signed up for the next one!





Lower School Council

This term has, once again, seen a hive of activity of super pupil voice in action. Of particular note was the request from Lower School Council representatives to enjoy a meat free day as part of raising awareness around the carbon footprint relating to meat consumption. This day duly happened on Friday 12 November, the day that marked the end of the COP26 summit, with support from our superb school caterers, Thomas Franks. In addition, pupils have come up with fantastic ideas relating to all matters 'eco', where we can all help protect the planet.



Show Racism the Red Card School Competition

Congratulations to Fourth Form pupil Jessica who, at the start of term, collected her prizes for her success in the Show Racism the Red Card School Competition 2020. Jessica was awarded first place in the Creative Writing Category (Year 7 - 9) and received a bumper pack of football clothing, balls and other items.



Las Torrijas! – La Gastronomía Española

During the first half term, as part of their Spanish studies, Fourth Form pupils have been learning about Hispanic cuisine. To bring the experience to life, the children participated in the making of a Spanish classic dessert – las torrijas – a mixture between French toast and eggy bread!

The pupils made some fabulous creations which were judged by the Spanish department teachers, Head of Food Technology, Mrs Massarella, and a member of the catering staff who comes from the Canary Islands!



Science and Engineering Club

The Science and Engineering Club has enjoyed a very successful first term. Since September, Lower School pupils have made electric motors; investigated the energy stored in food; experimented with the energy capacity of different metals; considered how fireworks are made using metal salts; learned some basic electronics and, most recently, were taught how to calibrate a thermometer. All children have participated enthusiastically, with some Fourth Form pupils using the sessions to go towards the Skills section of their Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award.



Inclusivity Charter

Back in 2019 as part of Anti-Bullying Week, the Lower School Council voiced the need for an updated statement from the community in relation to promoting kindness and messaging regarding anti-bullying. Fast forward to September 2021, and that initial spark has transformed into the Senior School 'Inclusivity Charter' which incorporates feedback from the Equity Group and other sectional councils. Education around this formed part of the pastoral provision during Anti-Bullying Week 2021, with more to follow in 2022 including raising awareness as part of the school's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

To mark Anti-Bullying Week, we asked our pupils and staff to share their One Kind Word, and on Monday 15th November the whole school once again embraced Odd Socks Day.



Third Form Tutor Evening

As in previous years, Third Form parents were invited into school for a tutor-parent meet and greet to discuss transition into Senior School life. In addition, parents also enjoyed presentations from the Head of Senior School, Mr S Morgan and Head of Lower School, Mr Gledhill. The evening provided a chance for families to learn about wider Lower School life, and how the adolescent brain rapidly evolves during this 'second window of opportunity' of early adolescence, and how we can best support our pupils. Thank you to our parent community for their support.



Science Constructions

In Science, Third Form have been learning about cells and, over half term, the pupils were tasked with constructing models at home. These are just some of the super imaginative, clever creations.



Archive Room Visits

Having missed a year due to lockdown restrictions, I was pleased to once again welcome every Third Form class to the Archive Room this term. All pupils took a keen interest in the many fascinating exhibits we have which celebrate the rich history of our school. As always, one of the highlights was trying on the collection of caps and boaters. It is wonderful to see the children enjoying learning about our past and asking many questions, and it is an incredibly rewarding experience for me.

This year, as part of their Novus Curriculum, under the direction of Miss Francis, pupils are producing some project work on various historic Solihull objects that took their interest.
Mr J Loynton, School Archivist





Woodlands

In September, as part of their transition to Senior School, we were delighted to be able to run an outdoor education bonding day for all our Third Form pupils. It was super to see the children getting involved in all the activities – stretching themselves on the climbing walls, working as a team on assault courses, showing bravery on the high zip wire and navigating the different challenges in team canoes ... and getting very wet in the process! Well done on a wonderful week at Woodlands, Third Form!





Schools Challenge Competition

It was with great excitement that eight intrepid quizzers set out to KES on Wednesday 10 November, to take part in the annual Schools Challenge Competition, which unfortunately hadn't taken place last year. Intensive practice since September had polished up our rusty quizzing skills, and our two teams acquitted themselves really well, against some very strong competition, only being beaten by the narrowest of margins. A special mention for Huw, captain of the A Team, who has been a member since the Third Form!



Junior Physics Challenge

Last year, our current Upper Fifth pupils attempted the Junior Physics Challenge which quizzed them on their general physics knowledge and on topics they have covered in class, and some they had yet to learn about! The cohort were fantastic and gave up some of their lunches to go through subjects in more detail. As a result of their hard work, all pupils received either a bronze, silver or gold award. A phenomenal achievement!



Science Presentations

On Thursday 2 December, Lower Sixth students Paige and Anesu presented on Physics topics of 'What would happen if we fell into a black hole?' and 'Who should make ethical laws on gene altering, politicians or scientists?' The two 15 minute talks, followed by a Q&A session, were open to all Senior School pupils, with the gene-editing content and discussion of particular interest to Fifth and Sixth Form students. Well done to Paige and Anesu on their knowledgeable speeches.



Chemistry in Action

In November, Lower Sixth students had the opportunity to attend the 'Chemistry in Action' day at the University of Warwick. This involved a series of lectures, which included – Strange Ice, Nano-invasion, Lateral Flow Tests: Why Chemistry is More Than Just Chemicals, Vaccines Without Refrigeration and Don't You Just Love Things That Blow Up! There was also an exam success presentation given by an A Level examiner. Mrs Goodman reports, it was a very informative and enjoyable day!



CREST Award

During the 2020-2021 academic year, a number of Lower Sixth students started their CREST Award as part of their enrichment sessions. The first group recently completed their projects and have submitted to the British Science Association for approval. Good luck to all participants and well done to Alex and Ben who designed and created this longboard.



ITG Partnership

In September, we were delighted to announce our partnership with Birmingham-based marketing agency, Team ITG.

A leading name in their field, Team ITG are renowned for their innovative, technology-led approach to marketing and boast offices throughout Europe and the US, working with brands such as Costa, KFC and PUMA.

The partnership will further the development of students' skills and experience, delivering fantastic opportunities to be involved with live projects, working with global names and sampling a taste of the business world. In addition, Team ITG's own recruitment team will offer our students a wide range of support, from CV preparation to honing interview skills, all of which will be invaluable on the road to them securing future employment. Through these interactions, Team ITG are offering two guaranteed placements on either their one-year circuit, where they will experience a variety of roles within the business, or their recognised apprenticeship programme.

Thanks to Mrs Chillcott for driving the partnership.



Physics Talk

On Friday 15 October, Dr Arpan K Banerjee visited Solihull to deliver a talk on 'Physics, Röntgen and the History of Radiology (Medical Imaging)'.

A Level Scientists, particularly those interested in Medicine or Dentistry, and keen GCSE pupils were invited to attend the presentation by Dr Banerjee, an engaging speaker who is very eminent in his field, and was even in a World Service programme this year on the BBC.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct1r16>



LAMDA Public Speaking Award

Public Speaking Success! Congratulations to Upper Fifth Solihull Diploma students and Lower Fifth Public Speaking Society members who received their LAMDA Bronze medals in assembly in September. All passed with either Merit or Distinction.





National Poetry Day

Senior School pupils highlighted about their favourite poems on National Poetry Day, with some recording readings to share with our whole school community. In Miss Evans' Lower Fifth class, pupils came to the lesson with a piece that they like and then discussed the content with different partners.

Each child read at least eight poems and enjoyed debating the pieces with their peers. The pupils also listened to Spanish poetry and talked about what really makes a text a poem, as well as learning if they can still enjoy works when they don't fully understand the words. Miss Evans said ... "all the pupils were stars and we are leaving class a little richer with some poetry seeping into our souls!"



Art Exhibition

In September we hosted our annual Art and Photography Exhibition in the George Hill Building. A wonderful opportunity to view some impressive pieces.



Poet Laureates Appointed

Congratulations to Upper Fifth pupil Amber and Lower Sixth student Charlotte on their success in the school's poet laureate competition.

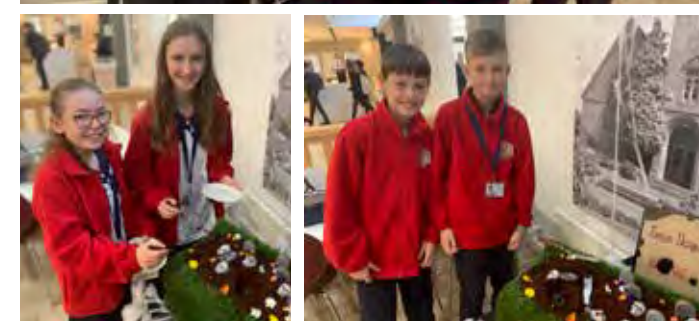
Amber and Charlotte will share the role of Poet Laureate for the next 12 months, having impressed the judges with their submissions. Dr Hart and Dr Eagleton made the joint appointment on the basis that the pupils will both bring something very different to the role. The girls will produce poetry for special commemorative occasions in the school's calendar as well as respond to urgent and pressing contemporary issues of the day. We look forward to hearing from them over the coming year.



Art Workshop and Visits

On Monday 8 November, Lower Sixth Photography students enjoyed a portrait and still life workshop with Lucy Williams. The sessions with the award-winning photographer concentrated on different lighting techniques and included tasks such as how to direct a model on location.

In December, Ms Trim and members of the Art Department took the Art Scholars and other selected students to see the Grinling Gibbons and John Nash exhibitions at Compton Verney. The stunning works included historic and contemporary wood carving, sculpture, painting and woodcut print-making. Fantastic!



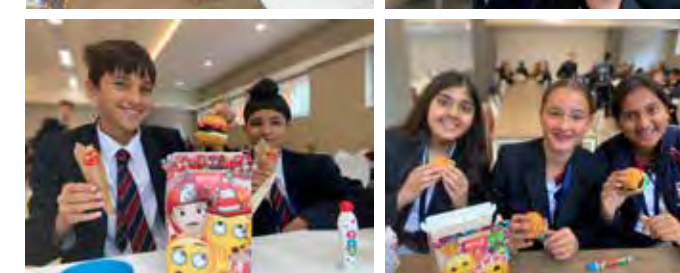
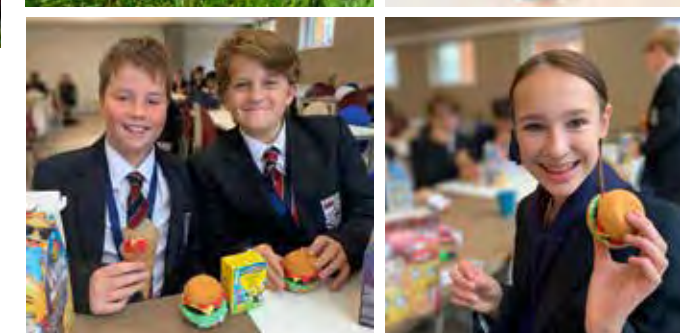
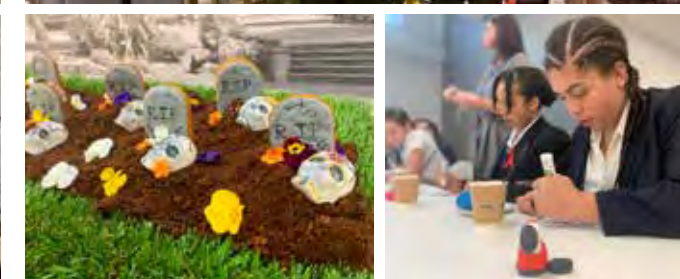
Headmaster's Birthday Parties

This term, the Headmaster has hosted four themed parties for Third Form pupils. Children with birthdays in September celebrated with takeaway cake creations; October's event saw spooky scenes in the refectory; frosty icing topped the treats for November's Winter Wonderland and, finally, a festive focus for our the December gathering. We look forward to more imaginative cakes and competitive bingo in the Easter term.



Dancing Dream

Congratulations to Third Form pupil William who received amazing results at the British National Championships in the Winter Gardens in Blackpool in November. William and his dance partner, Patricija, came second in Ballroom and second in Latin. When asked about his recent success, William said it is "an absolute dream come true".





Marginal Gains

This term we've seen two editions of Marginal Gains, the magazine written and edited by our Politics students, led by Mr Affleck.

The first covered topical issues including 'Should private schools be taxed?', 'Should the right to protest be limited?' and 'Patriarchy in Parliament'. The second, in late November, focussed on the outcome of COP26 and climate change more broadly, including a look at what we are doing to address the issue.

Marginal Gains can be found on our website.



Maths Cake Club

Delicious creations this term from Izzy, Dan, Ashish and Benny. They cakes look great and tasted even better!



Spelling Bee!

Well done to Third Form pupil Josh on achieving fourth place in the Routes into Languages Spanish Spelling Bee competition. Josh, who participated against 818 youngsters nationally, was congratulated by his peers and Ms Campbell, Head of Third Form, in Lower School Assembly.



COP26 Climate Conference

On 14 October we held a Mock COP26 Climate Conference in our Bushell Hall with Old Silhillian Rod Oram addressing our Sixth Form students from the Conference Chair. Negotiations, diplomacy and keynote speeches all took place during the interesting and informative afternoon of debate, with our youth delegates expressing their disappointment that world leaders failed to reach agreement on global climate action at Mock COP26.



Senior Maths Challenge

Amazing results in the UK Maths Trust Senior Maths Challenge which took place on Wednesday 10 November. More than 100 Solihull students achieved Gold, Silver or Bronze certificates.



Food & Nutrition

In Food & Nutrition this term, pupils have enjoyed practical lessons creating tasty dishes including pasta salads from our Third Form; healthy chicken or lentil curry and pizzas with homemade bases and a variety of toppings from Sixth Form pupils. Lower Fifth made tagliatelle and quiche, and spicy tomato soup and wedges were on the menu in one Sixth Form Enrichment session.

Our staff also donned their super smart new uniforms and asked the question Did you know we are less likely to know what to cook on Wednesdays?





Economics Essay Success

At the start of lockdown in January, five Lower Sixth students entered the Durham University Economics Society (DUES) Economics Essay Competition 2021. Each student conducted their own research and studied academic essay writing skills before submitting a 1,500-word piece. Asad, who is now in the Upper Sixth, wrote an essay entitled 'Evaluating the effectiveness of monetary policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic'. Out of 800 entries from 35 countries, Asad's essay received a 'Top 10% Award', with his work marked as 'highly commended'. Well done, Asad.



Connecting Classrooms

At the start of this academic year, we were delighted to be granted an International School Award by the British Council. This was in recognition of activities that took place across departments and campuses, including during lockdown in 2020-21.

We were doubly delighted that we were given a Connecting Classrooms grant to support shared projects with partners in Saint Mary's School, India and Annal Jyoti School, Nepal. We decided to focus on the topic of sustainable food choices, which was very much "of the moment" in the run-up to the COP26 summit.

After much collaborative planning between the schools, we put together a programme reflecting the aims of our application – to increase our shared understanding of global citizenship and evaluate what we can learn about sustainable living from each other.

Pupils in the Fourth Form made food diaries for a typical week. In Geography they then looked at the environmental impact of their choices based on food miles, packaging and waste, and presented their findings.

The Food Technology Department took up the gauntlet and designed a sustainable menu based on traditional British recipes. They shared them with the partner schools, who did the same, and there was even a live link up where we shared a cooking lesson.

In Science lessons, pupils undertook an analysis of the food that had been cooked and shared nutritional information with each other and our partner schools. We came to the conclusion that there is more that we can do to be sustainable, and by working together we can make a real difference.

We look forward to the next link-up where we celebrate what was achieved between the three schools in a shared sustainable breakfast, as well as taking the project into the Prep School for another live lesson with India and Nepal.

We are pleased to have been able to co-ordinate work not just across departments but also across continents. It gave us all a much broader perspective on how big our community really is and how we can all make a difference.

Mr P Delaney



Solihull Area (and environs) Oxbridge Network: Opening Doors?

The Oxbridge Network was set up five years ago by Dr Foster to provide an opportunity for students from both Solihull and other schools to share in the Oxbridge expertise and knowledge. The network, which has 11 member schools, works closely with Girton College, Cambridge University to allow students to participate in talks and events run by the network and led by Solihull Schools' Dr Foster. It is also a chance for students to gain valuable interview practice and guidance from teachers across the network and beyond. Over the past few years, the network has run numerous tutorial events which have enabled students to experience sessions which mirror Oxbridge supervisions or tutorials – the last two involved 180 students. The group has also run talks/webinars on admissions and interview experiences and on the Thursday 18 November, the first major face to face event post- Covid-19 restrictions took place. This involved 20 interviewers from across the 11 schools and 63 candidates. Each candidate was interviewed by individuals who were not known to them, which helped them overcome any nerves. The feedback from this event, without exception, was extremely positive.

Future plans for the network involve offering opportunities to those in more under privileged areas, and to harness further expertise through liaison with Oxford. The aim is to ensure that wider participation is achieved whilst also providing current members with a wealth of expertise and knowledge.

Middle School Council

Inspired by the COP26 summit, Middle School pupils spent time exploring how they could make a commitment to change. Lots of ideas have been fed back into Middle School Council, however Upper Fifth Ansell and Mrs Super developed a great initiative for an 'Environment Challenge'. Their simple bingo card design encouraged pupils to do their bit to help minimise our environmental impact. Pupils were challenged to get involved in a range of things: from walking to school, to 'upcycling' and making their own clothing. A huge congratulations goes to Lower Fifth Lee and Miss Noon for their superb work on the issue as a form group. Their individual endeavours and collective response has shown it is possible for us to enjoy our day to day lives, whilst considering our environmental impact.



Classical Greek goes from Strength to Strength

After five years of real success with off timetable Greek under Dr Foster's tutelage, we currently have eight candidates proposing to sit GCSE in the summer, and who are studying off timetable. A full Saturday of grammar was held during this term for all these candidates and they enjoyed learning in a relaxed environment. Two other Saturday sessions are scheduled before the examination.

A further 10 candidates started last summer term and these Shell Form pupils are now studying off timetable with Mrs Johnson. They will undertake the Greek GCSE in Lower Fifth in 2023.

We also have four candidates from the GCSE class of last year, currently pupils in the Upper Fifth, who are 'keeping their hand in' with A Level at lunchtimes with Dr Foster. It is hoped that they too will undertake A Level Classical Greek as students in the Lower Sixth next year, as did the three candidates in the Upper Sixth studying for A Level on timetable.

"I just love it – it is a challenge and some of the authors we read are fascinating – but it really helps with my other languages and with other subjects" – a quote from a current A Level student when asked about the 'keep your hand in' class.

A fun but challenging subject and something everyone enjoys! Notification of next year's off timetable Classical Greek class for Shell Form pupils will be issued at the beginning of the summer term.

Dr S Foster



Warhammer Club

Pupils enjoy this co-curricular lunchtime activity for the games, the competition and the intricate figure painting. Warhammer is a tabletop battle, and can be a hobby for life.

Mr May, who leads Warhammer Club, said: "This is a lifetime game and can be as in-depth as you fancy. You can either choose to play, or paint the figures yourself with as much detail as you like".





House Photographic Competition

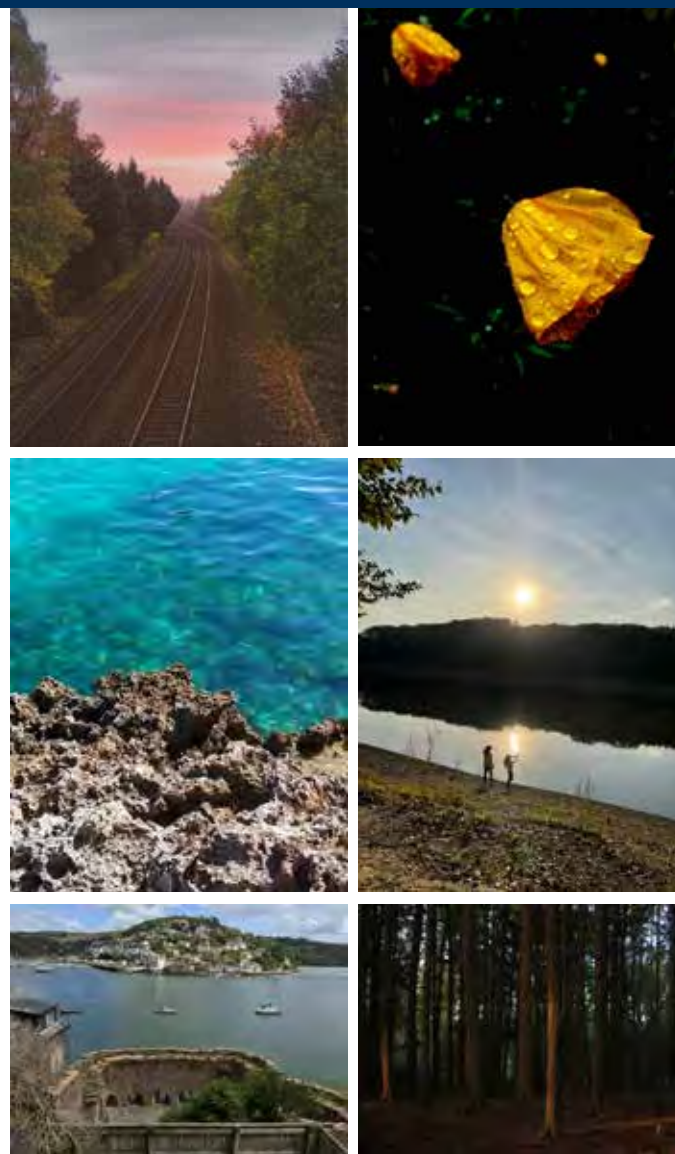
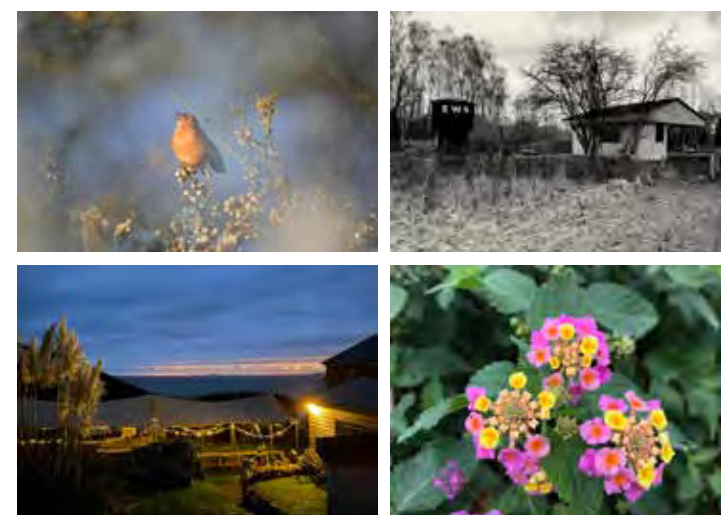
Well done to our House Photography Competition Winners:

- First place - Balaarka, Lower Sixth
- Second place - Harry, Upper Sixth
- Third place - Ria, Third Form

'Best in House' Awards went to:

- Fetherston - William, Third Form
- Jago - Niamh, Third Form
- Pole - Georgia, Upper Fifth
- Shenstone - James, Fourth Form
- Windsor - Jinzhu, Lower Fifth

And finally, congratulations to Jinzhi in Lower Fifth and Maryam in Third Form for their Highly Commended entries.



Hairspray

In October, we were delighted to welcome 'Hairspray' cast member Paul Hutton to the Bushell Hall. Paul, who has performed in numerous high profile theatre productions, joined pupils from Fourth Form to Upper Sixth on stage and shared his experiences in a Q&A discussion.

At the end of the session, Paul interviewed Gold Arts Award pupils as part of their qualification.



Medea

Early in December, pupils in our Lower Fifth and Lower Sixth performed our first production of the year. Medea, directed by Upper Sixth students Alex and Hiba, is a version of Euripides' Greek tragedy adapted by Ben Power. Well done to all, two wonderful evenings of performance in the SMArt Centre on our Saint Martin's campus.



St Cecilia Concert

This year's St Cecilia Concert, which provides a performance platform for our Senior School ensembles, was particularly significant as it was the first live school concert in the Bushell Hall for two years – yes, really! There was clearly an air of excitement and anticipation amongst the audience and performers alike.

The concert brought together over 100 pupils, playing and singing in seven different ensembles. The programme, as usual, featured a wonderful breadth of musical periods, styles and genres ranging from pieces by Rimsky-Korsakov, Offenbach and Shostakovich, to music from film, musical theatre and pop.

These were presented by the String Orchestra, the Lower School Orchestra, the Concert Band, the Big Band, the Flute Choir, L. S. C. (Love Singing Chorally) and 'The Twelve' (close harmony group). Throughout the concert not only were all the performers fabulously committed, effective and wonderfully musical on stage, they were all tremendous listeners – really supporting each other throughout. It is always a privilege to see such joy, especially this year; huge congratulations to all concerned – pupils and staff ensemble directors.



Recitals

In addition to the Informal Concerts, we had three recitals this term. The first was held at St Alphege Church as part of their Wednesday Lunchtime Recital series and the audience warmly received the chamber music presented. The second – the Music Scholars and Instrumental Award Holders Recital – was a real delight; all performances, whatever the repertoire or age of performer, displayed real musicianship, passion and sensitivity. The final recital was given by Upper Sixth pupil Vincent when he performed his entire 40-minute piano diploma recital programme. Not only was it mesmerising, but he played it all from memory! Good luck, Vincent, for your exam in the final week of term. We now look forward to Ziying's diploma recital next term, on 28 March.



Informal Concerts

As with the St Cecilia Concert, it has been such a thrill to be able to open our doors for parents and friends to come and hear live solo performances. The Informal Concerts provide a relaxed forum for pupils to gain individual performance experience, and it has been heart-warming that so many have taken up these opportunities. Over three concerts in the Prep School and a further three concerts in the Senior School, well over 150 pupils have performed and all played and sang with great aplomb and enjoyment. Bravo to all! Do remember that these concerts are open to all pupils, whether they have their instrumental lessons in or out of school.





Exam Successes

After many terms of recorded instrumental exams, it has been good to welcome back visiting examiners in the second half of this term. We are sure that all will have prepared well and we look forward to celebrating news of their successes next term. News we did get early in the term was of successes in diploma exams held at the very end of last term. Congratulations, then, to Lower Fifth pupil Yichen for being awarded her ATCL Diploma on the piano, and to Upper Fifth pupil Katy for gaining a distinction in her DipABRSM diploma on the cello.



National Children's Orchestra

Mrs Roberts, Head of Strings, is thrilled that all six string players who auditioned for one of the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain groups were successful – a rare feat to have so many for one school, and five of them are from the Prep School! Congratulations to J4 pupils Yoyo, Leon and Yiyang, J3 pupils Daisy and Bella and Ziqi who is in Shell Form in the Senior School.



CBSO Youth Orchestra & National Youth Orchestra

Congratulations to Katy and Gemma in Upper Fifth for having spent a week in half term rehearsing with the highly acclaimed CBSO Youth Orchestra and performing in the concert in Symphony Hall, Birmingham. They have more courses and concerts coming up over the year, and Gemma will also be involved in the National Youth Orchestra's rehearsals and concerts over Christmas.

GCSE Composition Concert

Towards the end of term, we held the annual GCSE Composition Concert. One composition from each pupil was presented using the technology of computer and music notation software. Mr Phillips guided us through each piece, highlighting the main features and strengths. We are used to hearing so many of our children perform music by other (often established) composers, but it was a special treat to see and hear the creative side of their musicianship. Those who were able to attend were not at all surprised to hear that a very impressive proportion of the pupils were awarded high marks.

Chapel Choirs

After a long break, it has been wonderful, this term, to have been able to be back having Sunday services in the Chapel. The Chapel Choirs have had a busy term with the Boys', Girls' and Chamber Choirs all involved. In addition to the usual weekly Sunday evening services, they sang magnificently at the Remembrance Requiem Mass and, towards the end of term, the Advent Carol service. Unfortunately, rising Covid numbers in the Solihull area in early December meant that our eagerly anticipated Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols could not be held with a congregation. Not to be outdone by the virus, the choirs, readers, and Father Andrew went ahead with the Sunday service which we recorded for the school community to watch. Well done to all our singers for their continued commitment.



Informal Concerts

About 80 pupils have taken up the opportunity to perform solo in one of the three Informal Concerts this term, and there will be further opportunities in the Easter term. We hope they enjoyed the experience of performing as much as the audiences have loved listening to them!



Harvest Festival Service

It was fabulous to see so many Prep School singers leading our worship in the Harvest Festival service in the Chapel on the Warwick Road campus. Next term they will lead the singing at our Christingle Service and, we hope, our Pets' Service – details to follow in due course.



Music Ensembles

Music continues to thrive in the Prep School and, as with so many Senior School events, it has been wonderful being back having ensembles working across year groups. Mrs Peat, Mr Rice and Miss Bovill have all enjoyed working with the four different choirs; Mrs Roberts has been delighted with the blossoming sound of String Orchestra, and Mr Slade has been impressed by the rhythmic energy of Wind Band. We are looking forward to hearing these groups in the Winter Concert on Wednesday 26 January – a date for your diaries.





Christmas Performances

The final three weeks of term were full of the thrills of Christmas singing. This began with 45 pupils in J1-J4 performing at the start of the SSPA Christmas Fair – all dressed in boots, hats and Christmas jumpers/tinsel on that snowy weekend at the end of November! Mrs Peat and form group teachers then had a joyous end of term preparing the children for three nativities (Nursery, Reception and Infants) and two carol services (J1/J2 & J3/J4). All the children pulled out the stops to create magical and memorable moments to help us celebrate the Christmas Story. It was a real shame that rising Covid cases in our area meant we had to decide not to allow parents to come and watch the Junior events live, but we recorded them and will pass on details of the link for families to watch – over and over again! – at home.

A Merry Christmas to all.



Christmas Performances





Remembrance Day

Pupils, staff, governors and specially invited guests gathered in the school's Great Quadrangle on Thursday 11 November to remember those who died in two World Wars and other conflicts, with pupils not attending in person accessing the poignant occasion via live stream.

This year's ceremony was particularly memorable as, prior to the annual Remembrance Service, Old Silhillian Roy Ward MBE and Acting Headmaster Sean Morgan unveiled the school's new War Memorial, which was commissioned to mark the centenary of The Old Silhillians' Association and to celebrate the bond that exists between Solihull School and former pupils.

In March 2021, our Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Ms Lucy Lunt, launched a campaign to replace the old war memorial, which was worn and weathered. Over six months, the ambitious target of £30,000 was achieved, with donations from 287 former pupils, parents and staff and, in September, Weldon Stone commenced work on the new piece accurately listing in full the names of Solihull School's fallen.

Former pupil Roy Ward MBE, who attended Solihull School and was present at the first war memorial unveiling in 1947, said: "74 years ago, I was in my first term at this great school and attended the unveiling of the old war memorial which is now being moved to another part of the campus. I can remember acknowledging at that time, just two years after the war, how important it was to remember and honour all those brave men and women who had made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our tomorrow. But, remembrance has more significance to me now than ever, which is why I have so enthusiastically supported this venture and am greatly honoured to be asked to unveil the new monument."

Following the unveiling, wreaths were laid at the new War Memorial by the Head of School, Amy, CCF Sergeant Major Benedict; Roy Ward MBE representing all past and current Old Silhillian serving officers; President of the Parents' Association; Simon Griffiths, President of Saint Martin's Old Girls Association; Louise Cox; President of the Old Silhillians' Association; Barry Allen; Chairman of the Governors, Mark Hopton, The Bursar Richard Bate and Acting Headmaster; Sean Morgan.

At the Senior School, Mr Mackenzie presented a personal and poignant Remembrance Day Assembly to our Sixth Form students. In the Prep School, Mr Grove spoke to Alice House children, sharing photographs of pupil and staff family members who fought in the war, before leading an assembly for Junior School pupils who learnt about different coloured poppies, including the purple poppy to remember animals we lost in war.





Sport Report

It has been a fantastic term for Sport, Health and Fitness. We are excited by Our Purpose to make our programme fun and enjoyable for every single one of our pupils. For some, that might be the joy of completing a forward roll or a badminton smash for the first time, for others it may be to master a drag flick or to be selected for the Loughborough Lightning Netball Academy. In Health and Fitness, we are implementing a new Functional Movement programme across both schools to help all our pupils develop their core skills, including hopping, skipping, jumping, running, throwing and catching. We have also had a focus on hydration with various posters around the school encouraging pupils to consider the benefits of drinking more water.



In our Prep School, every child in J1-J4 has represented the school this term. The buzz with the younger boys and girls is fabulous – they have so much energy and are always keen to improve. We have been focussing on Rugby for the boys and Hockey for the girls in our Games lessons, but the range of clubs on offer means that there is something for everyone.

It has been great being able to play fixtures again and to see parents packed on the touchline cheering enthusiastically; that was particularly the case at our two swimming galas.

In the Senior School, we have had some wonderful performances from our girls' hockey teams. We fielded an U14C team for the first time as well as an U15B team – participation has been high throughout the age groups.

I have been really impressed with the attitude of our Third Form and Shell Form pupils, they have played with great energy and skill – the future looks very bright! Our U14's won their county and zonal rounds to progress to the Midlands Finals at Rugby School. After topping their group, they won their semi-final with a tight 2-0 win over Loughborough High School to progress to the final against Repton. Having gone a goal up early in the first half our girls battled to keep Repton out whilst still looking dangerous on the counterattack. Repton equalised with just a few minutes to go to take the game to penalty strokes and squeezed through 4-3, I could not have been prouder of every one of our girls, they were magnificent! Our girls' 1st XI has also had a great season culminating in a nail biter in the England Hockey Tier Three National Cup quarter final against RGS Worcester. With a noisy crowd of staff, parents, pupils and governors cheering us on we fought back from 0-2 down to draw level at 2-2 before a clinical penalty corner routine saw the visitors move into the semi-finals; once again, the work rate, passion and energy was outstanding.



We have had various players playing in the National League: Upper Sixth student Harry (Harborne), George in Lower Sixth (Olton), Ellie in Lower Sixth and Florence in Upper Fifth (Sutton Coldfield), Upper Sixth student Izzy (Olton) with several others selected for Performance Centres, Caspar in Upper Fifth is in the England U16 training squad. Our boys' teams have also been regularly playing this term as they prepare for their main fixtures in the New Year. We have fielded three teams at U14 and U15 for the first time and our 1st XI is looking very strong.

Our Rugby teams have enjoyed playing again – Mr Covill informs me it was 579 days between fixtures due to Covid. Our senior boys have led the way with some excellent performances against some of the top schools in the Midlands, the highlight was playing at Coventry's stadium under lights against Bablake/King Henry's with a few hundred people roaring them on, including our U12s who had played earlier in the evening. Our U16 team has had lots of exciting competitive games with results often still in the balance with ten minutes to play. The U14's and U15's has also performed well moving the ball wide against bigger and more powerful teams. I have enjoyed refereeing our U12s and U13s this term; they are developing into very skilful, smart rugby teams with lots of potential.

Although not strictly the netball term, our girls have been training hard with Maria in Upper Sixth (Loughborough Lightning), Lower Sixth student Niamh (Wasps), Upper Sixth Aimee (Severn Stars) and Isabel (Severn Stars) all selected for Superleague franchise teams - Sarah in Lower Sixth has been selected for the USA national team. Our 1st Team and U14s have both progressed to the Regional Finals in Walsall next term after winning their county rounds and our U12's, U13's and U15's are all through to the next round of the National Sisters In Sport Tournament.

Our cricketers have also been training hard, with numbers at after school clubs at an all-time high. We have also enjoyed successes in Swimming, Sailing, Climbing, Squash and Skiing as we look to expand our programme and give more pupils the opportunity to find an activity they love with the aim of them still being physically active at 25, 45 or even 95!

Mr C Dossett



U14 Netball

The U14 girls competed in the County Round where they had some great games against some difficult opposition. They won every game to qualify as first place and go through to the Regional round taking place at the end of January.

A great achievement! We look forward to seeing how the girls get on.

Well done to Fourth Form pupils Millie, Maddy, Bea, Isabella, Maryam, Olivia, Phao, Scarlett, Jemima and Amber.



Senior Netball

Back in September, our Senior netball squad entered the Solihull Borough Netball Tournament. The girls came first in that tournament which meant they qualified to the next County round.

On a crisp, fresh evening in November they travelled to King's High Warwick where they played against the five strongest netball squads in the County. It took them the first half of each match to settle, however they managed to win all five games. The whole squad took to the court to make an impact on all five wins. Defensively the girls were amazing, turning ball over all the way down the court. Our oppositions challenged us mentally and physically, but our resilience, our dynamic attacking play ensured that students did not give up. The next stage towards Nationals is the Regional tournament in January.

Back row: Pippa, Freyj, Alex, Izzy, Maria, Hannah, Jenny, Aimee and Izzy.

Front row: Sarah, Niamh, Queta and Rachel.



Hockey

Well done to the U14 girls on winning the County Championships in October. Unbeaten on the day. Fantastic!



A superb term for our 1st XI boys' Hockey team - unbeaten all season.



Squash

Our girls Squash team made their debut on Thursday 9 December with matches against Cheltenham Ladies College, King Edward's School and Exeter School.





House One Mile Run

It was a Pole hat-trick in our One Mile House Run on Tuesday 5 October. Well done to our fastest member of staff, Mr Corbett; winning boy, Upper Sixth student, Alex and the first girl to cross the finish line, Fourth Form pupil, Bea.



J3 House Rugby

Well done to Pole, champions of the J3 House Rugby.



Swimming Championships

Upper Sixth student Josh competed in the National Winter Swimming Championships in Sheffield in November. In the 17-year-old age category, Josh came in 22nd in England in the 400m individual medley and 23rd in the 100m backstroke.



Cricket

Congratulations to Toby in J4 and Third Form pupil Jamie on their success in this season's Warwickshire Cricket Awards. Toby won the Warwickshire U10 Players Award and Jamie won the Warwickshire U11 Bear Award.



Swimming Galas

At the Prep School we were delighted to host Balsall Common Primary School for two swimming galas this term. Well done to our Junior School pupils who were involved in the events, and thanks to the home and away spectators for their amazing support.





Clay Pigeon Shooting

This term, 14 Upper Fifth and Upper Sixth students have undertaken weekly tuition in clay pigeon shooting with Mrs Parker. Most of those involved were complete novices at the start. On Wednesday 15 December, the group held their annual Christmas clay pigeon shoot with all students competing for the high gun. The winner in group one (and overall high gun) was James with a score of 22 out of 25 and the winner in group two was Ayden with a score of 21 out of 25. All have developed tremendously over the course of the term; in most students' cases being front-footed in stepping out of their comfort zone in trying a completely new sport. Well done, team CPS!



Skiing Success

It has been an incredibly busy few months for the Solihull Ski Team. The term started with a training event at Gloucester in which most participants tried ski racing for the first time. We were able to enter 28 pupils from J2 to Upper Sixth at the English Schools Ski Association (ESSKIA) Regional Qualifiers going on to win five of the six categories we entered. Special mentions must be given Upper Sixth student Ella, who was placed second overall, James in Upper Sixth, achieved third place and, a particularly amazing result for J4 pupil Josh who came in fourth overall.

The success in Gloucester meant that 24 pupils qualified to compete at the ESSKIA English Finals in Norwich on the weekend of 9 – 10 October.

Our U12 girls narrowly missed out on a podium finish, but our U12 boys team of Hugo, Veer, Tommy and Joshua finished third in their category. Upper Sixth student, Ella, was crowned the fastest overall girl for the third time. Ella's outstanding achievement means that she is the only girl who has equalled the ESSKIA success of British Winter Olympian, Chemmy Alcott.

The Senior School teams qualified to race at the British Schools Artificial Slope Championships which should have taken place in Llandudno on 27 and 28 November. Sadly, Storm Arwen forced the postponement of this event, which we now hope will take place early in 2022.

Many of our skiers can also be seen in action throughout the coming months as they join the Midland Ski Club Winter Race League, honing their skills in preparation for the Easter Schools' Races.



ISA Climbing Competition

On Friday 26 November, pupils from our Upper Fifth and Lower and Upper Sixth took part in the ISA Climbing Competition in Worcester. A fantastic team effort.



Geography Field Trip

The Upper Fifth Geography fieldtrip to Shrewsbury and the Carding Mill Valley took place in October. The pupils were involved in research and collation of data in the town centre before heading off to walk the beautiful Long Mynd for the second part of the trip. Pupils measured the velocity of the river and studied the geographical features of the valley, and the impact of humans on the area. During the evening, the hard work continued with learning activities led by the centre's instructors. A great trip for our Upper Fifth who enjoyed being back out completing fieldwork.





Biology Field Trip

On Friday 24 September, Upper Sixth biologists and Solihull staff went to North Wales with the aim of undertaking fieldwork and investigating the different ecosystems and their ecological processes. This trip not only gave us the opportunity to develop our data handling, analysis and presentation skills but also gave us the chance to enjoy and experience the varied landscapes of North Wales.

On Day one, we went to the banks of the River Conwy, where we had an introduction to freshwater sampling. We adopted the kick sampling method to examine the effect of abiotic factors on invertebrate distribution. This method was very hands-on and we enjoyed looking at all the little invertebrates that we caught – which included a few fish! In the evening we completed some maths work, analysing the data we had just collected a few hours before. Little did we know that this was just a taster to what was coming next ...

On Day two, we set off early to travel to the rocky shores of Penmon Point, which is on the North East coast of Anglesey. With the stunning view of the Penmon Lighthouse, we conducted fieldwork to study the zonation of algae and animals, by identifying and quantifying them using a belt transect; furthermore, we also looked at the how the height and width of limpets differ as you move along the intertidal coast. After a jam-packed morning, we moved on to Beaumaris for a well-deserved lunch of fish and chips in the sunshine. After a lovely break, we travelled to our next location within Beaumaris, where we conducted Grassland ID. This involved using quadrats and keys to identify the type and abundance of plant species present. All in all, it was an enjoyable day with, so far, really good weather.

On Day three, we were able to see, first-hand, the effects of succession and the impacts it can have on the landscape.

For me, it was amazing to find out that where we now see sand dunes, used to be the sea, lapping at the feet of Harlech castle. On the sand dunes, we used systematic sampling and point quadrats to observe the type and abundance of organisms living there, and how that differed as we moved across the sand dunes.

We also implemented a range of techniques to investigate how these plant communities change in relation to environmental factors such as wind speed, soil pH, soil moisture etc. This involved using lots of different devices and collecting values for data analysis. Our last job for the day was carrying out a short investigation, where we measured light intensity and collected leaves in preparation for Monday.

On day four, our last day in Wales, we paid a visit to an upland Nature Reserve to look at the impact of human activity on the landscape. The views were absolutely breath-taking, and we all thoroughly enjoyed the walk. We learnt about the land management practices that were used to maintain the magnificent landscape. To finish off the trip, we undertook conducted chromatography of leaves that we collected ourselves to identify the pigments that they contained.

Overall, the trip was a success and a really valuable experience. I don't think I could possibly have gained a better understanding of ecology, land management and analysis of data without this opportunity.

Shrujal, Upper Sixth

CCF Exercise - Finding Santa at Stanta

At 5pm on Friday 26 November, five minibuses, one trailer, two vans, 58 cadets, 12 members of staff (which included two former pupils, two former staff and staff from the IT, Maintenance, Sport, Health & Fitness and Science departments), Cpt (SSI) Dean MBE, Cpt Lord (rtd), C/sgt Swann and Cpt Sayell (SSI Portsmouth) headed off to Bodney Camp Stanta training area in Norfolk.

After a good night's sleep in basic dormitory accommodation, at 7am all cadets paraded up to the cook house under the leadership of the junior NCOs for a M.O.D breakfast, where it seemed difficult to tell the difference between the toast and the fried bread for some of the younger cadets, breakfast training needed!

Six sections of cadets lead by the NCOs set off on a round of activities including camouflage and concealment, bashers and cooking, observation, orienteering and CQB with paintball guns.

With Storm Arwen incoming, the cadets all kitted up with full waterproofs, hats and gloves and carried on with the day. With the increasing wind and rain, all showed high perseverance, performing well as a team.

At 6pm, with the driving rain and a container meal under torch light, we headed back into camp for a debrief and an early night before returning to school on Sunday morning.

Many thanks to the junior NCOs who all showed the values and standards of the Solihull School Combined Cadet Force.

Sgt Bate





Duke of Edinburgh's Award

It has been a busy term for our DoE pupils and staff! In September, enrolment on to the Award Scheme for pupils across the Senior School took place at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels with those signed up encouraged to commence their Skill, Physical and Volunteering elements straight away. Candidates must upload regular evidence of what they are doing on to their e-DoE account. The variety of activities is staggering!

Later that month saw the tail end of the big Covid expedition 'catch up' with four groups of mainly Upper Fifth pupils trekking across Shropshire for their Silver Assessment expedition. It was fabulous to get back out and doing a 'proper' expedition once more. There were some really tough climbs and very long days but all groups ended up completing.



The first Saturday of October half term saw a large expedition set off from the Field of Mars, heading North to the Lake District. This was for a Gold Assessment and involved the same pupils who partook the training week in the Rhinogs of Snowdonia during the first week of the school summer holiday. Six groups of Upper Sixth students plus 12 staff were to spend the next six days trekking and wild camping across the fells of Cumbria from the coast to near Penrith. The distance is a huge challenge in itself, but things got off to a pretty awful start on the first night when gales hit, and the campsite became flooded. The lane leading to the camp was blocked and many students woke up not just in a very wet field but in sodden sleeping bags. The rising water table had somehow managed to penetrate their tents. Minibuses became stranded on the field and needed towing off by tractor and all of this before we had even officially started!

The next four days were ones of real endurance. The weather was relentless and many students ended up soaked through, despite having good kit and their best efforts to keep dry. Some very unseasonal poor weather on their summer Snowdonia training all those months earlier inevitably helped prepare them for what was to come! The wild camps happened as planned but some route changing was still necessary in order to keep teams closer together for safety reasons.

This was one of the toughest Gold trips the school has ever completed and those students who took part can be immensely proud of what they achieved.



It really was a fantastic effort by all and something that they will never forget.

Maybe it was because of these hardships that many of the current Lower Sixth students have opted to choose a Gold canoeing venture this year with an external company! The group that has chosen to do a walking expedition were involved in a training day in the Malvern Hills in early December. This was to acclimatise those who had completed the Silver Award under Covid restrictions, an opportunity for the students to experience a few proper hills and a taster of what is to come when they embark on their practice next Easter 2022. All Gold candidates also complete a Residential section where they travel and participate with other young people who they do not know from across the UK. This is a challenge indeed, but fantastic for building resilience ahead of possibly leaving home to study the year after.

When we return in January, we will begin the Bronze expedition training for all 18 IV Form groups. As always, we are indebted to all of the staff members and volunteers who make such expeditions possible. It is a great effort and commitment.

Well done to all the young people involved once again who have achieved some remarkable feats across all areas of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Mr O Bate

SSPA

This year the SSPA was very excited to host the Christmas Fair at the Prep School for the first time. After a year's absence it was great to kick start the festive season with this firm favourite. As always, both the chocolate and jar tombola proved exceptionally popular, whilst a lot of fun was had at the human fruit machine. For a second year we welcomed back pupils from the Lower School who did a fabulous job hosting various games and competitions in the refectory. We are still finalising the figures; however this year is on track to have been the best for fundraising in a long time.

It has also been great to get other events back in the diary this term. Thank you to all who attended the Quiz Night in September and well done to all the pupils in the Prep School for their fabulous Christmas Card designs which, at the time of writing, are now hopefully spreading festive cheer to friends and relatives around the country. Our Prep School Christmas Shopping Event rounded off the fundraising this term, a day for pupils to purchase gifts and stocking fillers for all!

Thank you to everyone who has provided their time and support to the SSPA.

Mr S Griffiths, President SSPA





Head Boy and Head Girl

Our Christmas term Prep School Head Boy and Head Girl, Charlie and Megan, enjoyed their roles of responsibility - including some big decisions ahead of, and during, Charity Week.

Here the J4 pupils share a bit about what they love at Solihull: Charlie's favourite subject is Maths and he likes Hockey Club. He believes one of the best things about Solihull is all the academic and sport opportunities.

Megan joined Solihull in J1 and is a fan of Science, because she loves discovering new things. Her favourite school lunch is lasagne - especially the crispy cheese topping. Megan really likes all the Prep School staff as they are very kind, patient and sometimes quite funny!



Monitors

Our Prep School Monitors for the Christmas term 2021 were J4S and J4D. Thank you to Miss Smith's form and Mrs Dickerson's class for their duties and efforts.



Wow! Award Winners!

Well done to all of our Alice House pupils who received certificates to recognise their efforts and achievements. Here are just some of this term's Wow! Award winners.



Gold Star Winners

Congratulations to our Prep School Gold Star winners, the first group to receive the award this academic year. Mr Penney presented the successful Junior School pupils with their badges and certificates in assembly.



Prep School Council

This term, Junior School pupils were involved in elections for the position of Chair of the Prep School Council. Well done to our J4 candidates - James, Lucinda, Freya, Harshini and William - and congratulations to Lucinda who was voted this year's winner.



House Selection

Fun times during the House selection process for pupils in the Prep School.



Platinum Award Winners

Cute Mr Men themed celebration cakes at the Prep School for our Platinum Award winners.





Roald Dahl Day

On Monday 13 September we, once again, celebrated Roald Dahl Day at the Prep School. Pupils came to school wearing a something yellow or with an item of clothing on inside out! Mrs Pemberton organised a Roald Dahl Day Invention Competition and the winners were Nursery pupil, Annie, Bertie in I1, Yukun from J2 and Alistair in J4 with some super creative ideas.



EYFS Activities

Nursery and Reception started the year with the topic 'Home is where the heart is' and enjoyed finding out about different types of homes. A particular highlight was going for a walk around the local area, pointing out the various styles of houses and buildings, and looking at the shapes of the windows. The teachers also incorporated the traditional stories of 'The Three Little Pigs' and 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. The pupils enjoyed creating paintings inspired by 'Pigcasso', the painting pig! The boys and girls watched the farmyard animal at work and then had a go at copying the technique by holding the brushes in their mouths! Children always have fun with food and they loved making and tasting porridge and, at the end of the half term, they were treated to a wonderful 'Three Little Pigs' themed lunch and cake to celebrate engaged learning. 'Sparkle and Shine' was the topic for the second half of the term, and a children had the chance to bring their bike or scooter to school as part of our road safety week and to mark 'Beep Beep! Day' on 17 November. After an active session with Mrs Higginson, Nursery and Reception pupils were taken out onto the Saint Martin's campus zebra crossings to learn rules around traffic and the all-important 'stop, look and listen'.



Forest School

Forest School has welcomed lots of children this term. The EYFS pupils have been busy in the new digging area and had fun making wildlife feeders using Cheerios, these were quickly devoured by the birds and squirrels!

Pupils in I1 and I2 have been learning about fire and enjoying drinking hot chocolate and eating toasted marshmallows. They also conjured up a huge range of interesting culinary delights in the mud kitchen ... apple stew and scented gravy anyone?

Our Junior School children, who attend lunchtime and afterschool clubs, have been constructing some fantastic shelters, using both natural and man-made materials. They have also been active on the climbing tree – testing their balancing techniques!

A group of Nursery children made a lucky discovery in Forest School - a fantastic den made by older pupils, the perfect hiding place!





Junior School Eco Council

Junior School Eco Council have had a busy first term exploring ways to make our Prep School more eco-friendly.

They started the term designing mascots to support our eco agenda. J4's 'Eco Bear' was the winner, riding on his recycling truck. The Council then had the fabulous idea of buying litter pickers for the school to help remove unwanted waste from outside areas. Additionally, the children wrote letters to the Bursar asking for signs for the Prep School to encourage parents to turn engines off, rather than leaving them idling at pick up and drop off times.

We will be continuing to work on this message next term as well as exploring a new initiative of eco-friendly items to sell in our next SWITCH sale. Watch this space!

The November SWITCH sale was very popular – especially the new range of items.



I1 Co-curricular Clubs

Pupils in I1 have been embracing the many opportunities available in the lunchtime and after school co-curricular clubs. From Craft and Construction and Drawing to Fine Motor Skills, Book and Biscuit and Baking. There's been a lot of fun in Alice House.



J4 Insect Creations

Beetles and butterflies, ladybirds, ants, spiders and caterpillars. These brilliant, colourful paper mâché bugs have been made by our J4 pupils!



Virtual Author Visits

Every Prep School pupil from Reception to J4 enjoyed a virtual visit from a renowned children's authors this term. Dame Jacqueline Wilson MBE joined J3 and J4 on Friday 12 November; Maddie Moate zoomed in to J1 and J2 classrooms on Friday 26 November and Nick Sharratt appeared on the screens in Alice House on Friday 3 December.

Mrs Winn shared details of their meeting with Maddie, a well-known CBBC presenter, 'YouTuber' and writer who is inspired by Science and how things work. Maddie chatted to the children about her new, and first, book 'Stuff' a title full of wonderful facts and stories about resourceful and eco-friendly ways people have made things.

Her webinar was to a host of schools from around the UK and she began by answering a question from one of our pupils! Maddie introduced the children to her book, explaining that her stories were inspired by her visit to different places around the world, including Africa and Thailand. Her first piece was about how elephant poo had been used to make paper in Thailand. The children were rather shocked by this but were then keen to try it themselves, discovering that it is plant based with no odour!

Maddie's virtual visit proved to be an inspiration to all our budding eco-warriors, scientists and travellers. She talked about how the process of completing the book took a year, but that she was inspired to write again soon.

In the session with Jacqueline Wilson, our J3 and J4 pupils were also lucky enough to have one of the Solihull School questions answered. In response to "What is your favourite word in the English language?" Jacqueline answered ... "Rainbow, because it is a happy word and reminds me of the NHS efforts during the pandemic".

Our Alice House pupils received a virtual visit from award-winning author Nick Sharratt. The pupils enjoyed listening to some of his stories and poems, and he taught the children how to draw some of his familiar characters. A favourite activity was drawing a shark, from 'Shark in the Park', with a Christmas twist.



STEM Club

Pupils in J1 STEM Club were tasked with making waterproof boats, and the following week the children tested their constructions. Well done to Bobbie, Freddie, Eva and Inayah who created the winning boat which, not only floated, but also held 100 marbles! Other STEM sessions have included building spaghetti towers and creating Christmas tree decorations.



I2 Games Club

Learning through fun and play in I2 Games Club.



Reading Buddies

In November we launched our new lunchtime Reading Buddies programme in the Prep School library. Our enthusiastic J4 Reading Buddies enjoyed sharing books, reading and story discussion with our I2 pupils.



Computing Club

In Miss Lynch's J4 Computing Club, children made banana pianos using Makey Makey Inventor Kits and circuit boards. Such a fun session!





Gardening Club

Our J1 Gardening Club signed up to this year's Morrisons scheme, 'It's Good to Grow', which allowed schools to collect tokens and use them to purchase gardening equipment, seeds and more! Our green-fingered boys and girls set themselves an ambitious target of 6,000 tokens, which would then enable them to order items such as a water butt and a composter. The purchasing of seeds would also help progress an exciting 'plant to plate' initiative for 2022.

Thank you for your donations, we'll be exchanging them for suitable items for the school very soon.

This term, under the guidance of Mr Poole and Mrs Winn, the children have been involved in clearing the fenced area outside the Junior School, planting spring bulbs, and creating colourful signage.



J2 Lego and Coding Club

In this session of Lego and Coding Club pupils were making various constructions from ice lollies to rotating fans using code.



Kindness Pledges

In November, J1L delivered their class assembly on the theme of 'Choose Kindness'. As part of the Prep School Kindness Week, the pupils also shared their kindness promises with the rest of the year group and children in all forms wrote a #bekind pledge.



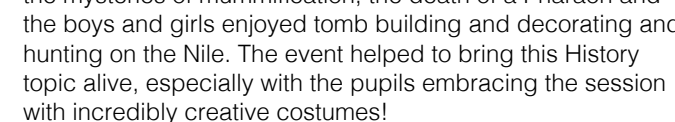
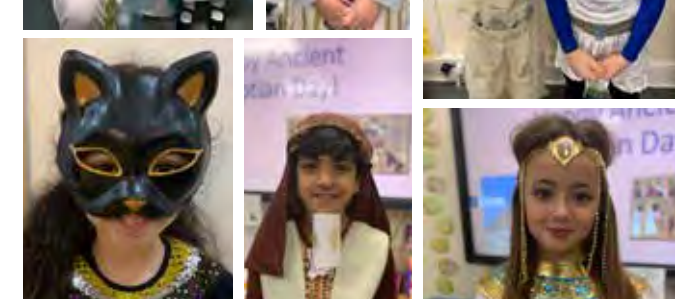
J2 Art and Craft Club

Pupils in Mrs Morgan's J2 Art and Craft Club have had great fun recently, designing and creating their own colourful Advent Calendars. The children painted their Christmas designs onto special bags and then attached numbered felt pockets. Then came the important part ... filling each day with 24 delicious chocolatey treats.



Journey to the Stable

On Wednesday 24 November, I2 and J1 visited St Alphege Church for the annual trip to support their learning on symbols and the Christmas story. The pupils took part in a craft activity to make a Christmas themed bookmark, which J1 enjoyed as they got to share their knowledge of symbols. After this session, the children listened and watched as the performers told the tale of Mary and Joseph's journey to the stable in Bethlehem through the perspectives of other important characters in the story. The pupils and teachers had a lovely time with some reporting it was 'relaxing', 'enthalling', 'exciting' and 'fun'.



Ancient Egyptians

On Tuesday 14 December, J2 pupils took part in an interactive workshop, introducing the children to the fascinating world of the Ancient Egyptians through the eyes of an Egyptologist. The full day of activities took the pupils on a journey through the mysteries of mummification, the death of a Pharaoh and the boys and girls enjoyed tomb building and decorating and hunting on the Nile. The event helped to bring this History topic alive, especially with the pupils embracing the session with incredibly creative costumes!



Great Fire of London Workshop

On Monday 6 December, I2 pupils took a trip down memory lane, or Pudding Lane we should say, in an interactive drama workshop all about the Great Fire of London. The children acted out the fire growing and spreading, learned about the famous diarist Samuel Pepys and debated the best way to rebuild the city. Hopefully they have been inspired to visit Pudding Lane when they are next in London.





A Christmas Message from Father Andrew

During the latest cold spell which brought some disruption to parts of the UK there was a funny side to it. Heard on a local radio was an announcement which said, "The Open Air Winter Wonderland Show in Cardiff, Wales, has been cancelled because of the snow." [You couldn't make it up!]

Sometimes the Christian Story appears to have become to many the beginning of a joke and sometimes people don't manage to hear the serious bits amidst all of the good words and ritual, the glamour of praise and thanksgiving.

A Virgin birth, Angels singing the heavenly chorus, Joseph, and of course the blessed donkey, nothing seems untouchable anymore; much seems to be consigned to romantic indulgent story-telling, rather than a radical new understanding of God.

It might be for many in society, that the celebration of a new birth is manageable, but the possibility of contemplating a new life coming out of something other than ourselves, quite different. Something which some would rather mock, than pursue, or have to face or work at.

In recalling the Christ Child, amidst the worrying things that we are all witnessing and experiencing over these past months in this nation and throughout much of the world, we must for this season of Christmas, at least try our best to put aside the anxieties of the moment, the doubts... and remember the central serious truth, that Christ was born to bring peace, tolerance, healing and order to a troubled world.

Christ is born to bring a new perspective for us and upon us; a new perspective of hope of which we are called to witness to the world.

Many of us are not the best examples of Christ in the world, but all of us are given new opportunities to be less scrooge-like and more Christ-like every day. In this most holy season, let's not worry too much about yesterday, but today. Proclaim the Christ Child and to take him to your heart, not only celebrating a new life, but contemplating a new life for ourselves in him.

So put away your sadness, be happy and joyous in his birth, and let the happiness of this time overwhelm us all, for a new hope of salvation has been realised by our world. Because of that infant child we are given a new hope; because of this child we can begin to be different; for God is with us and God is for us, no matter how painful things might become for us as individuals or as a society.

So, let's be thankful for our parents, grandparents, our schools, faith-leaders and fellow pilgrims. Hold nothing back, because God held nothing back. Welcome him, embrace him and enter the New Year with a spring in your step, embrace him as love itself and be thankful.

With my encouragement, prayers and blessing for you all.

Father Andrew Hutchinson



Development Project at the Prep School

On Monday 4 October, the Prep School opened its gates to O'Briens Contractors to commence the development work for the Saint Martin's campus car park expansion and new playing fields construction project.

It wasn't long before some major groundworks were underway, involving large digging equipment and related machinery, much to the excitement of the pupils, especially those in Alice House.

Though the recent stormy and wet weather hasn't been ideal, the project remains on track with the new parking facilities to be opened during the Easter term and, nature allowing, new playing fields to be usable for the start of the next academic year.

The Bursar



Christmas Term Teams of the Week

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. U13C Netball Team | Fantastic teamwork, positive attitude and community spirit in their first match of the Season |
| 2. U14A Boys' Rugby Team | Excellent teamwork and sportsmanship in their victory against Stamford School |
| 3. Girl Up Team | Brilliant pupil-led initiative to raise awareness of period poverty |
| 4. Climate Change Conference Team | Superb team performance demonstrating their debating and public speaking skills |
| 5. U16 Boys' Rugby Team | Fabulous team spirit, can do attitude and perseverance |
| 6. Challenge Team | Wonderful team effort and performance in a challenging competition |
| 7. Cast and Crew of Medea | Two outstanding nights of Drama |
| 8. U14 Girls' Hockey Team | Excellent performance and teamwork in reaching the Midlands Finals |
| 9. Running Club | Supporting each other to competing in their first Park Run with positivity |
| 10. Solihull Greyhounds | Fantastic performance in the Dubai 7s, December 2021 |
| 11. Musicians & Choristers | A remarkable performance of Nine Lessons & Carols and a great outdoor Carol Service |
| 12. Girls' Squash Team | Excellent teamwork, positive attitude and perseverance |
| 13. 1st XI Boys' Hockey Team | Super teamwork and performance throughout an unbeaten season |
| 14. Form IIIMn | Initiative and contribution towards community fundraising |

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