



# Christ Church Cathedral School

Friday 15th March 2024

Dear Parents,

Yesterday, I found myself in an Anglo Saxon crypt. To get there I had to switch on an old lightbulb which illuminated the uneven and narrow steps, worn down by the passage of time and feet. The crypt itself was small and simple, the crudely carved arches lending a sense of great antiquity to the place. The place in question is the Crypt of St Wystan's Church in Repton, Derbyshire. It is one of the oldest buildings in England, dating to the first half of the 8th Century - probably around 740 – 750. It's worth remembering that the oldest building in Oxford dates from about 1000. Repton was the capital of the ancient Kingdom of Mercia, which occupied the same sort of area as the present day Midlands. I felt, as I stood there, as if I was in the very heart of the Midlands, and indeed the red stone with which the arches had been built, so characteristic of the Midlands, reinforced this. The great 20th Century poet and writer about place, Sir John Betjeman, described the small chamber, measuring 16 foot by 10 foot, as "holy air encased in stone" a magical description.

Being there reminded me of the importance of particular places and the profound effect that they have upon people who spend time in them. It's terribly easy, particularly in an age when we can travel around so quickly by car, train or plane, to lose sight of the power of individual places. I spent Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of this week at an inspection in a school in the Midlands. It is set in a remarkable Georgian Manor House with hills sweeping down to the graciously landscaped grounds. It was a real pleasure to walk around this landscape, imbibing the surroundings, which set the atmosphere of the place. I enjoyed the visit very much. It was, as ever though, a great pleasure to return to Christ Church and to be reminded so powerfully of the extraordinary environment which we have here – the beauty of a very different coloured stone from that which I had seen in Derbyshire, our honey-coloured Cotswold stone, the "dreaming spires" of our unrivalled city, so majestic when seen from our playing fields. And of course, to be together as a school in the Cathedral this morning, in a building of exquisite glass and wood, was a profoundly moving experience. And what an apt environment to hear a Form 4 boy read the Parable of the Prodigal Son, in front of the whole school, with extraordinary fluency and to then hear a boy play Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata faultlessly, with hardly any warning because the previous plan had to be changed at the last minute. I feel so privileged to work in such a blessed environment where so much is achieved by our wonderful pupils.

And our boys achieved another thing today when Forms 5 and 6 went up to St Edward's to play Hockey against New College. We have only just begun playing hockey again, after a gap of a number of years, and it was so exciting that we were able to put out four teams from these two year groups. I am delighted to say that our A team triumphed over their rivals – a very splendid result. It is wonderful to be playing Hockey again – a game of great excitement and speed. We are fortunate in being able to use the Astroturf on Christ Church playing fields, and it is clear that our sessions there have been very effective.

Mr Richards is very busy at the moment. In any free moment he has, he can be found rehearsing for the School Play which is to be performed next weekend on Friday and Saturday evenings. Once again, Mr Richards himself has written the Play and accompanying music. This time the Play is set on a Scottish Island called Gallinsay, where I have no doubt, entertaining and colourful events will occur. I hope, very much, that as many of you as possible will be able to come and watch. I know that the actors would appreciate a good audience given how hard they have worked.

In the front hallway of the School is a list of the Headmasters since the foundation of the School in 1546. There are some gaps in the catalogue and hence at various time the phrase "No Record" appears. One boy asked me recently "Who was no record?" What an insightful question! One of the greatest pleasures I have found about my job is the number of questions one gets asked. More and more I think questions are the gateway to enlightenment. I'll be doing everything to encourage the pupils here to continue asking questions!

Mr Murray  
Headmaster

**Hilary 2024**  
**Monday 18th - Sunday 24th March**

MONDAY 18	
3.30 - 4.30	After School Chess Club (Form 2)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Football Skills Club (Forms 3 - 5)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Ancient Greek Club (Forms 7 & 8)
TUESDAY 19	
8.35	Form 3 Assembly
3.30 - 7.30	<b>Nursery and Pre-Prep Parents' Meeting (Online)</b>
3.30 - 7.30	Pembroke and Worcester Voice Trials (Prep Boys)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Touch Rugby Club (Forms 3 - 8)
WEDNESDAY 20	
	Forms 3 & 4 Swimming
2.30	U10 & U11 Football v Cokethorpe (Home)
3.55 - 4.45	After School Chess Club (Forms 3 & 4)
4.10 - 5.00	After School Mandarin Club (Forms 7 & 8)
4.30 - 7.30	<b>Forms 7 &amp; 8 Parents' Evening (SchoolCloud)</b>
THURSDAY 21	
9.05 - 10.25	Forms 3 & 4 Trip: La Fromagerie
1.35 - 4.10	Forms 5 - 8 School Play Dress Rehearsal
4.10 - 5.00	After School Football Club (Reception - Form 2)
FRIDAY 22	
8.30	Cathedral Assembly, speaker The Sub Dean
4.10 - 5.00	After School Multi Sports Club (Reception - Form 2)
6.30	Forms 5 - 8 Play Performance (WWH)
	CC: IN
SATURDAY 23	
	CC: Return to School in time for Rehearsal
3.30	CC: Boys Rehearsal
4.45 - 6.45	Full Choir Rehearsal
	CC: Not required for Evensong
6.30	Forms 5 - 8 Play Performance (WWH)
SUNDAY 24	<i>Palm Sunday - Holy Week Services Begin</i>

**Trinity Music Exams**

**This term's Trinity Music Exams will take place in school on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March. SB**

## CCCS School Play



Performances of the School Play, *Gallinsay*, will be on Friday 22nd and Saturday 23rd March at 6.30 pm in the Walton Hall.

Tickets will be available from the School Office next week. There is no charge.

## WORCESTER AND PEMBROKE CHORISTERS FORM 3 VOICE TRIALS 2024

We are very much looking forward to recruiting new choristers for our Worcester and Pembroke Chapel Choirs this term. Voice trials will take place at school during the morning of **Tuesday 19th March**, and I am delighted that we can offer this exciting opportunity to boys in Form 3. Being a chorister offers unrivalled musical training as well as the opportunity to develop team-work, make friends, grow in confidence, go on tour, make recordings, win music awards at Senior School and much more! Please do contact me at [biddell.s@cccs.org.uk](mailto:biddell.s@cccs.org.uk) if you have any questions, or if you have a son in another year-group who would be interested in auditioning for a place.

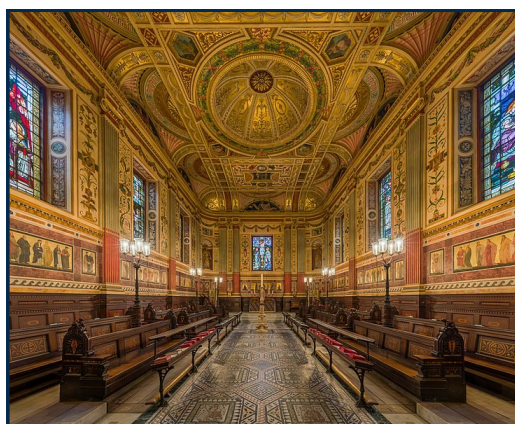
You can find out about our two choirs on the school website:

<https://www.cccs.org.uk/private-prep-school-oxford/worcester-college-chapel-choir>

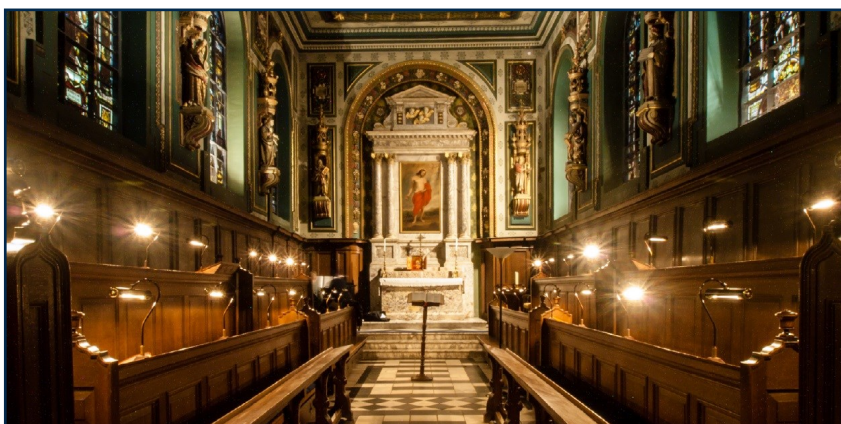
<https://www.cccs.org.uk/private-prep-school-oxford/pembroke-college-chapel-choir>

At voice trial, boys will be asked to sing a short, simple piece (something learnt in class, or a favourite hymn will do) and undertake aural tests. Everything will be done to ensure boys feel at ease... it really isn't scary at all. SB

Please do get in touch if you would like your son to have a voice trial this term. SB



Worcester Chapel



Pembroke Chapel





## Forms 1 & 2 News

To celebrate National Science Week this week, Forms 1 and 2 took a trip to the Oxford Science Centre. We began our day by entering a room filled with exciting and interesting activities. Some of these included programming BeeBots, examining materials under a microscope, a construction table, an animal sorting table and more! Each activity offered a chance for the children to explore and experiment. For example, there was one table where lots of different bottles had been set up, each with a different material inside. The children used magnets to see if the materials were magnetic, held them under light to see how this made them look different, and shook them or turned them upside down to see how the materials changed.

After the workshop, we had a delicious chocolate biscuit and a break before heading to the Exploration Zone. Here, we were able to create and make our own experiments and discoveries. For example, an 'Air Table' required the children to make their own parachutes to hover over the table. Another activity the children enjoyed experimenting with included balls and scarves, by making them fly through the giant tubes of the 'Scarf Shooter'. There was even a table where you could watch water freeze to ice before your eyes... Other stations were a thermal detective camera, a circuit workbench, Tower of Brahma and a game of 'Guess What', with a range of minerals and crystals. After another fun session, we had our lunch outside - luckily the weather stayed dry!

Afterwards, we went for a woodland session. We first looked at the different habitats in the woods, exploring who might live there and how we could tell. We then had a go at building our own 'Mouse Houses' in pairs, considering how we would make sure the mice were kept warm, dry and safe. As we walked to our next station, we kept our eyes peeled for animals and made note of all the wonderful colours of nature. Our final activity was a Minibeast Hunt. We found slugs, snails, centipedes, beetles and more. Mr Robards even managed to catch a centipede and a beetle who both started to have a battle in their container! Before we knew it, the day was over. My, how slime flies when you're hanging out with snails! MHW

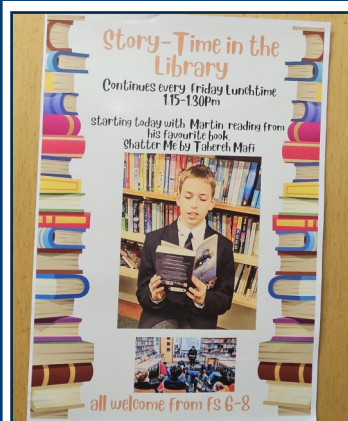


## Reading News

Following the success of lunchtime reading by our staff during CCCS Reading Festival last week, the boys asked if this could continue - with them doing the reading.

This lunchtime, Martin (Form 8) read the opening chapters of his favourite book, '*Shatter Me*', by Tahereh Mafi.

Reading sessions will continue every Friday lunchtime with the Library being available on Monday to Thursday lunchtimes for quiet reading, and for choosing new books. SS





## French News

This morning, Nursery, Reception and Form 1 lined up excitedly in the playground before trouping along St Aldates to the Story Museum for a morning of French story-telling.

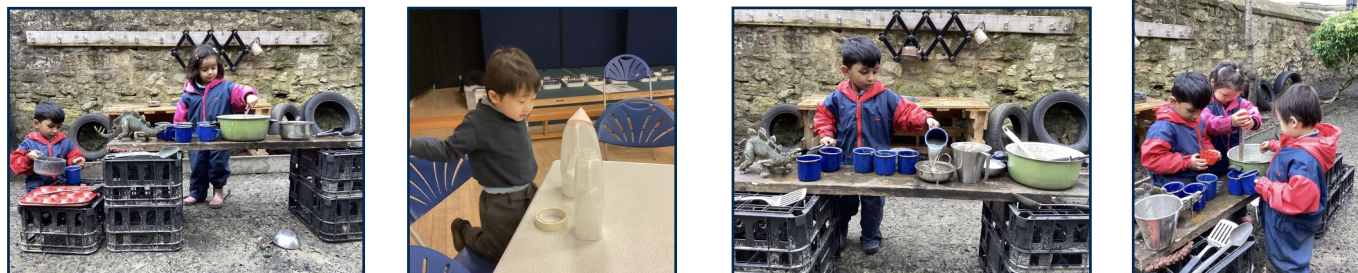
With plenty of audience participation, in French of course, the children listened to stories about Monsieur Panda delivering doughnuts, a bear who couldn't sleep because of his noisy house and a beautiful story about a little girl and boy who grew up in a silent world where you had to buy words to speak.

Apart from practising their French listening and speaking skills, the children were busy with a craft activity and had time to play, dress up and explore, until all too soon the time came around to step out of the magical world and walk back to school... AE-W



## Nursery News

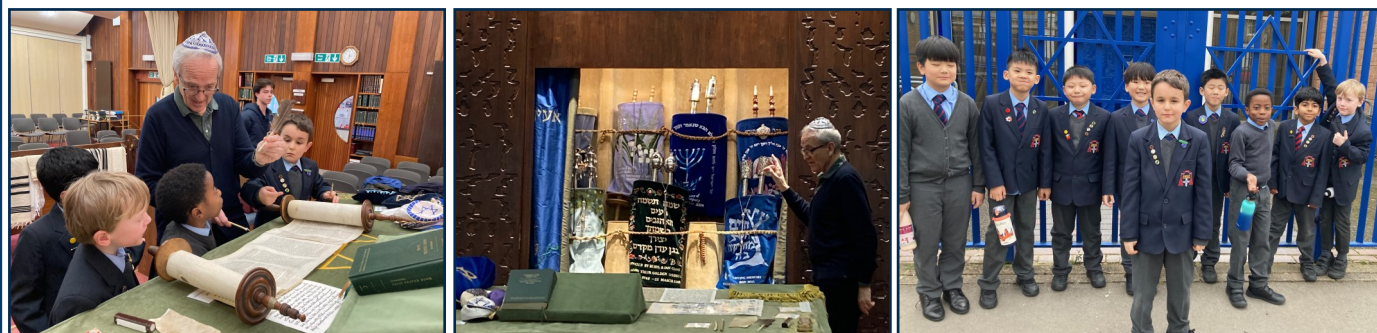
Nursery children have been experimenting with new tools in the mud kitchen this week, using huge pipettes and slotted spoons. We observed that pine cones float in water - even the huge ones, as do wood chips - but stones sink! Transferring water is much quicker with a pipette, but it takes time to learn how to use them. We were also very fortunate to attend a Science Workshop here at school, where we explored how air can propel vehicles and we made our own 'mouse rockets'! HB



## Form 3 News

Form 3 enjoyed a trip to the Oxford Jewish Centre on Monday, as part of their study of Judaism. We were shown round by a volunteer who was extremely impressed by how much the boys knew already.

Our guide explained how the synagogue is laid out and how it is used, as well as showing us the Ark containing the Torah scrolls. We were lucky enough to be able to touch an old retired Torah and to attempt to read the Hebrew letters holding a yad. The boys were particularly interested to see the mezuzahs on the doorframes, as we have put mezuzahs with our own rules for good behaviour on our classroom wall. Thank you very much, Michael Ward and the Oxford Jewish Centre: we have a lot to remember. AF





## Music News

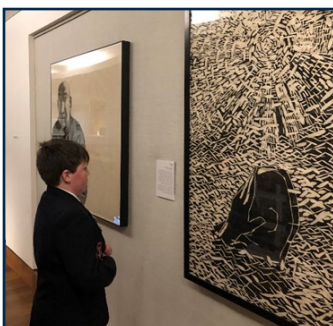
Parents will be familiar with the ABYSO, founded by the Kanneh-Mason family, after its memorable performance with our combined choristers in the Cathedral last October. I have just returned from Antigua where I worked on the ABYSO's Playing To Inspire festival, rehearsing the Inspire Choir and Junior Orchestra as well as coaching individual players and performing. Antigua's government is keen for the country to become a classical music hub for the Caribbean, and - in addition to numerous concerts, TV and radio events - the festival included a fascinating morning for schools hosted by Minister for Education Daryll Matthew. In his words, "The transformative power of music in schools... is a cornerstone of holistic learning", supercharging everything from academic achievement to behaviour to perseverance to a sense of self-worth. (These are things we definitely know at CCCS, so if anyone would like to read his superb speech please ask me for a copy!)

In addition to all seven Kanneh-Mason siblings, the ABYSO was joined this week by a delegation from the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra plus double Grammy-winning singer J'nai Bridges, and the repertoire included Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Clara Schumann and selections from Bizet's 'Carmen'. Anyone who saw the Kanneh-Masons performing in October knows how charismatic and virtuosic they are, so it was tremendous to be able to work (and learn) alongside such a fantastic team. I hope that supporting this wonderful organisation gives CCCS pupils a sense of connectedness, and a unique perspective on the value of music and its ability to reach across cultural barriers.

The Antiguan musicians were moved to know that our boys have been raising money to help buy instruments, so I would like to thank parents for their recent generosity. I am also grateful for the support of peris who have joined me in working with ABYSO musicians online, and to colleagues for their help over the past week. The orchestra faces considerable challenges and exists in a world where power, water and even roads cannot always be relied upon. There is immense ambition, however, so if you would like to make a donation - or have a spare instrument at home - please do contact the school office and I will pass these on. Hopefully we will be able to host musicians from ABYSO in Oxford again before too long! SB

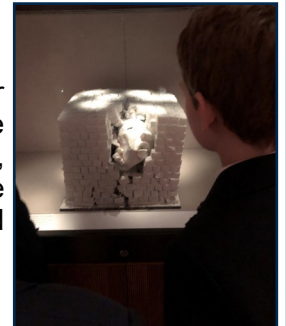


## Making the Most of Oxford Club



This week, Making the Most of Oxford Club paid another visit to the Ashmolean but this time to look at some modern Art. We saw an exhibition by the Chinese artist, Fang Lijun. We had read that his work captures the disillusionment of his generation in China and we could definitely see disillusionment in some of the works of Art.

We really enjoyed looking at the porcelain sculptures. KS

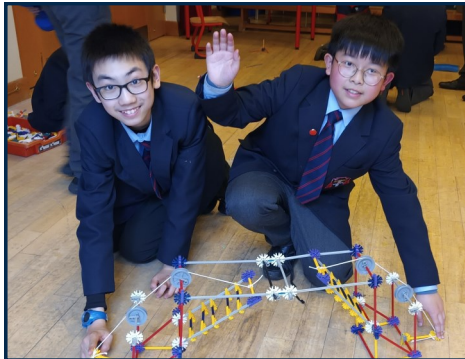
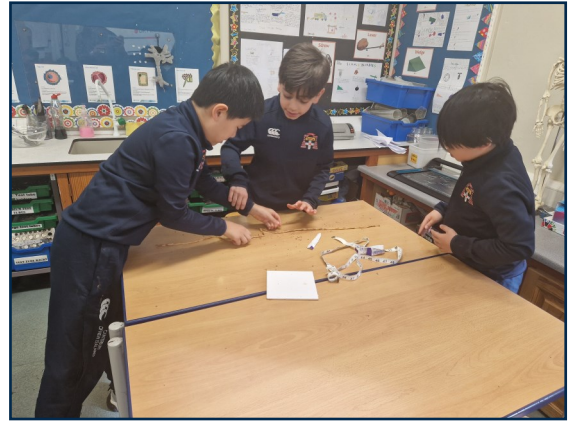
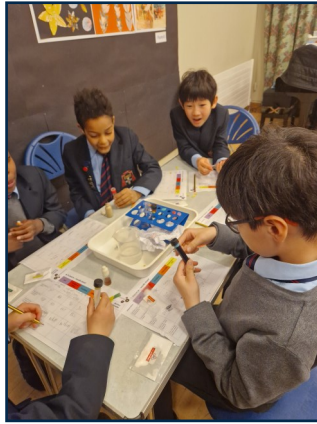




## Theme Day

On Thursday, to mark the end of British Science Week 2024, Prep boys took part in a STEM focused theme day. The boys enjoyed a day of exciting and creative activities, such as learning about the planets in French, making lava lamps, testing metal salts, and seeing how far they could stretch a Curly Wurly (the world record is apparently over 4 meters!)

We had a visit from Ian, from the Science Oxford Centre in Headington. The boys had the opportunity to take part in workshops throughout the day, using their knowledge of materials to learn how to solve crimes (Forms 3 to 6) and building bridges with K'nex (Forms 7 and 8). We ended the day with a Science Assembly to show off the work the boys had done for the annual Big Science Oxford Competition. It was such an enjoyable day, and I was so impressed with the boys' enthusiasm. CS



## RED NOSE DAY



£210.00!!



## RED NOSE DAY

