



Christ Church Cathedral School

Friday 27th September 2024

Dear Parents,

On Wednesday, I found myself sitting in the upper gallery of one of my favourite theatres, The Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon. The theatre owes much to the Globe Theatre on London's South Bank, where many of Shakespeare's plays were first performed and where Shakespeare himself acted. It has galleries all around the stage which juts out into the audience with only the back sections of the stage being beyond the seats. This arrangement means that, despite its considerable size, it has an intimate atmosphere. I was there with a group of boys from Forms 7 and 8 to see Prokofiev's wonderful ballet Romeo and Juliet, based, of course, on the play by Shakespeare. The performance by Northern Ballet was electric. It starred Mr Robson's husband Harry Skoupas, playing Lord Capulet, who lent the ballet real humanity through his poignant portrayal of the father who loses his daughter through his manipulation of her. Prokofiev's score, so poignant in places and yet so violent, provided the perfect atmosphere for the dancers to act out the terrible tragedy which overtakes the young lovers. I was so impressed with the boys who found themselves engrossed by the spectacular drama. They all followed the story despite the fact that, this being a ballet, not a single word was spoken. Music and dance convey so much.

On Thursday morning, I asked one of the pupils who was arriving at school how they were feeling - "Exuberant!" they responded. "Why?" I asked, though this was a perfectly ordinary thing for this particular boy to say given how upbeat he is about almost everything. "We are going to the Formula 1 factory today!" Now that really is a reason to be exuberant. Form 5 visited the Alpine factory at Enstone, a vast building in the fields of North Oxfordshire, where some of the fastest cars in the world are made by hand. The boys were able to see the extraordinary care with which these exquisite machines are created - no mass production here! At one point they were allowed to go into the wind tunnel where racing conditions are simulated and at the end of the fascinating tour they were given elegant blue baseball caps which they all wore into lunch upon their return! Our trip to Stratford involved the husband of one of our staff; the second was organised by a former parent who works there. We are so fortunate in the contacts we have and the opportunities which we can provide for our pupils. If any of you work somewhere which might interest our pupils, or to which they could visit, do please let us know.

It was Languages Day yesterday. We had a colourful assembly at which a Form 8 boy talked to the School about why he considered learning languages to be such a powerful thing. Along with so many of our pupils, he speaks two languages fluently and is learning several others. Towards the end of the assembly all the boys were given a pencil. They were then shown a film which included a series of masked members of staff speaking various languages. There were some members of staff for whom no mask would have been a disguise, whereas others were less easily identifiable. There were languages which pupils did not find hard to guess, such as French, German and Italian, but few if anyone was able to identify Cornish, or indeed Scots. I was very surprised at the variety of different tongues on display.

In Cathedral Assembly this morning I happened to mention the terrifying nature of serpents. I discussed my son's pet milk snake which he handles with great care but which gulps down mice at a faster rate than a hungry ten year old. I also talked about the vast bulk of the green anaconda and its powers to constrict and then consume a human. I talked of the deadly venom of the inland Taipan capable of killing 250,000 mice with the venom of one bite. At lunchtime I paid for my serpent scepticism when a great snake enthusiast countered all my claims one by one. Snakes were far less dangerous than deer statistically. Snakes very rarely consumed humans, finding their shoulders difficult to pass through their mouths, and the number of human fatalities of the inland Taipan is miniscule. Indeed, it was easy to save oneself if attacked by a constrictor. Apparently, a number of approaches can be taken. If water is available, the head should be submerged until the snake drowns. A blow to the nose and eyes renders most snakes immobile temporarily and the snake's tail is comparatively weak and, if attacked, can cause the rest of the snake's body to weaken. Personally, I am not going to put myself in a position where I need to test these procedures - but at least I now know what to do if I become embroiled in the coils of a vast constrictor and I will never again paint such a negative picture of this beautiful species. One never stops learning, particularly at CCCS!

Mr Murray
Headmaster

Michaelmas 2024

Monday 30th September - Sunday 6th October

MONDAY 30	
4.10 - 5.00	Forms 3 - 8 After School Football Club (Merton Field)
TUESDAY 1	
2.30	U9 Rugby v Dragon (Home)
4.10 - 5.00	Forms 5 - 8 After School Squash Club (Squash Court)
WEDNESDAY 2	
	Forms 3 & 4 Swimming Bikeability Level 1
11.15 - 12.15	CC: Divine Office Festival Concert
2.30	U12 & U13 Rugby v Bruern Abbey (As Home / Bs Away)
3.30 - 4.15	Rec - Form 2 After School Mandarin Club (Form 1 Classroom)
4.10 - 5.00	Forms 3 - 5 Mandarin Club (Form 4 Classroom)
4.00 - 5.00	CC: Divine Office Festival Concert
THURSDAY 3	
	Bikeability Level 2 National Poetry Day Celebrations
4.10 - 5.00	Pre-Prep After School Rugby/Multi Skills Club (Merton Field/WWH)
4.10 - 5.00	Forms 6 - 8 After School Mandarin Club (Form 4 Classroom)
4.15 - 6.15	Forms 3 - 8 Online Tutor Meetings
FRIDAY 4	
8.30	Cathedral Assembly, speaker: The Chaplain
4.10 - 5.00	Forms 3 - 8 After School Rugby Club (Merton Field)
6.00	CC: Founder's Prayers and Autumn Gaudy CC: OUT
SATURDAY 5	
4.45 - 5.30	CC: Full Choir Rehearsal (Cathedral)
5.30 - 5.45	Boys' Rehearsal (Chapter Parlour)
6.00	Installation of Regius Professor of Divinity
SUNDAY 6	<i>The Nineteenth Sunday After Trinity</i>

Future Schools Event

Please save the date of Tuesday 12th November, when we will be hosting a Future Schools Event at the end of the School day. Several local senior and secondary schools have been invited, as well as some from further afield to whom we frequently send pupils. This will be a great opportunity for parents and pupils to meet Heads and Admissions staff from schools they might be considering for next steps. We will share more details closer to the time.

Languages Day

The Day started with an Assembly reflecting on the importance of learning languages. Trust, one of our Language Ambassadors in Form 8, started sharing his experience of language learning at CCCS and the impact languages have on his life.

We reflected on the fact that, this year, the theme for the European Day of Languages is 'Language for Peace'. Indeed, learning languages is about more than translating words. It's learning about a different culture and a different way of thinking. It's about building bridges between people, enabling them to understand each other better, developing empathy.

We strongly believe that giving the boys the opportunity to learn languages from a young age, is giving them the ability to see the world through someone else's eyes, thus creating the best foundation for Peace.

We continued our assembly by sharing delicious-looking photos. The CCCS Bake Off was a success... do judge for yourself!



Monuments- La Tour Eiffel (Sebastian, F4) & L'Arc de Triomphe (Hugo F7)



Paris, Randolph F5

The Isle of Man, Adam F6

Randolf, F5



Sarawak (Malaysian Borneo) with a proboscis monkey and an orangutan Sebastian (F4)



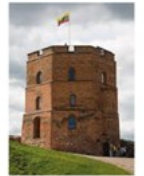
Flags – Greece (John F6)



Flags – Lebanon (Alex F5) and Norway (Armaan F5)



The Gediminas Tower, Lithuania



Gintas, F7



Apple strudels

- With the German flag made of sweets (Hugo F5)
- Made following an Austrian recipe (Matthew F7)



French symbols, Milan (F7) and Sergey (F5)

We then faced a challenge: discover the identity of masked linguists who were speaking a foreign language. The boys had a blast working out which member of staff could speak

other languages. A huge MERCI to all the members of staff who helped.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your support with our Duolingo Challenge, ending at 8pm this Sunday. It's been a fierce competition enabling many boys to talk about languages. Please don't stop learning after Sunday.

Pre-Prep also enjoyed an Assembly where they displayed beautiful traditional costumes from other countries. Our Language Ambassadors came to help them dance and sing in French, before helping them create our own poster promoting Peace. Bravo!

The whole day wouldn't have been complete without the help of the kitchen staff, who made pains au chocolat for snacks and a couscous, alongside Croation stews, for lunch. One of the simplest treasures when discovering new cultures, must involved delicious food. SL



Formula 1 Trip

As part of their Geography study of manufacturing in Oxfordshire, Form 5 were delighted to be invited to a private tour of the Alpine Formula 1 team factory and headquarters. We were shown how the cars are designed, made and refined, and astonished by the attention to detail.

The cars are constructed in tiny parts, out of the lightest materials... we saw a large room full of 3D printers producing some parts, and others being moulded by hand (like a kind of high-tech Play-Dough) and baked in the oven. We saw the largest room of computers any of us have seen, each one devoted to designing some small aspect of a car, to make it more aerodynamic, lighter or safer. Some of us were even lucky enough to visit the wind tunnel, where prototype cars are tested for wind resistance. We all agreed that this would be a great place to work, and discussed that this is the perfect explanation for why it is good to work hard at Maths, Science and Computing.



We are very grateful to Solmaz Jabari (a former CCCS parent) and everybody we met at Alpine for being so welcoming.

The trip has made me wonder whether there are other parents who work in interesting places, or have interesting jobs, and might be willing to talk to our pupils about it. If you do, could you please let me or the school office know. AF



Rugby Reports and Results

Following a few smaller fixtures last week, this week saw boys compete against Cokethorpe in both home and away rugby matches. With many still largely new to the sport - and a little tired from numerous excursions throughout the week - the boys fought valiantly through all iterations of the game (including touch rugby, and quasi-rugby league). Although there were a few precarious warning signs right before my game ("Sir, can we pass it forward?" or "Can we kick the ball?") the boys regathered nerves of steel as they ran valiantly towards contact games of rugby.

In the 11A game, George G of Form 6 was no apparent stranger to the out-the-back crash ball, scoring six of the seven CCCS tries. Further, Theo H, also Form 6, playing one of his first ever games of rugby, managed to muster late-era Johnny Wilkinson style defence, halting multiple advances from Cokethorpe.

Reports from the other teams' coaches were full of the boys' positive attitude towards the game.

U13 As lost 6-3

U13 Bs drew 0-0

U11 As lost 7-6

U8s & U9s - all played two games and each of the three teams won at least one of their games.

JD

Pre-Prep News

Not to be put off by the decidedly wet weather this week, our resilient Pre-Prep children eagerly donned waterproofs and set off for Woodland School. Following an 'epic' conker hunt for the greatest collection of conkers in all of Oxfordshire, the children set about making 'conker snakes' by drilling holes through the middle and threading the conkers independently to create slinky serpentine bodies. Others chose to craft beautiful necklaces and bracelets from hollowed elder wood.



It was lovely to observe the children using their own creations in imaginative ways in the woodland space, with lots of role-play and group games involving kings and queens being chased by snakes! We are so lucky at CCCS to have such an incredible natural space for the children to spread their wings and let their imaginations run wild. TR



Ballet trip

On Wednesday, 23 boys from Forms 7 and 8 saw the Northern Ballet's performance of Romeo and Juliet. Everyone agreed that it was an incredible experience: such strong, physical and emotional theatre, all portrayed without words but with powerful dancing. The sword fights, and the moment after the battle when a torrent of rice fell from the ceiling, were the favourites. Of course it was particularly exciting that the dancer playing Lord Capulet was Mr Robson's husband Harry, who has visited the school and will do so again to talk about his unique profession. AF



Year 7 Trip to Reading Museum and Silchester



Last Friday Year 7, accompanied by Mr Farmer and Mr Richards, and ably driven by Mirko and Mr Harrison, visited Reading Museum, in particular the Silchester Gallery. Here are displayed many artefacts found in the Roman town of Silchester - Calleva Atrebatum as it was known to Roman Britons - a once flourishing town that, after the end of Roman rule, was never built over and now sits in happy obscurity in wooded Hampshire countryside.

This was the second time the school has visited the gallery, and we were fortunate to have the same member of the museum staff, Guja Bandini, who energetically explained the museum's wonderful model of the town and allowed us to handle artefacts, including smart and imitation Samian Ware, a mortar, a strigil, and one of the million oyster shells found in the town. We also had time to see the famous Silchester eagle, play Roman draughts, and dress up in toga and tunic.



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Then to Silchester through the wrath of Jove, videlicet a spectacularly energetic and sustained electric storm. Happily the skies cleared shortly after arrival; and we walked the northern half of the one-and-a-half-mile circuit of walls. The walls were built in the late 3rd century, and are the most substantial surviving Roman walls in Britain – which makes all the more striking the hundred-acre emptiness of the interior, once abustle with commerce and life. Outside the walls is the elliptical amphitheatre, where some 7000-odd watched... well, who knows? Read chapter five of *The Eagle of the Ninth* for the sort of thing they may have seen. For our part we mimed some sundry combats whose outcome was all too readily decided with the turned thumb. NR

Lines inspired by Silchester:

Calleva Atrebatum commands the moor:
Home of Roman dust and bones;
Never built on, for ancient law
Decreed that none disturb these stones.

Some brave souls ventured there
Estranged by Caesar, born to rule.
Troops declare Claudius emperor...
Calleva's stones are chiselled and hewed.

Lo! Behold the burial of kings,
Heathen majesty wreathed in gold.
Once great palaces, jewels and rings,
Now left to rot and mould.

On the desolate moor it stands,
Bereft of life, incomplete of sound;
A once great city in Commius' lands
Now a ruin under pastoral mounds.

Matthew (Form 7)

Manning the North Gate

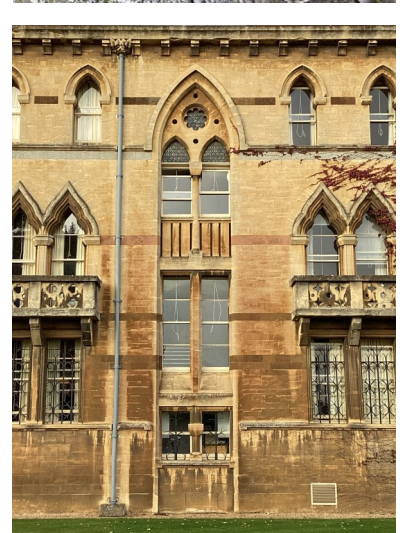


Photography Enrichment

This term in photography enrichment we will be learning some of the basics of what makes a good photograph. We will focus on composition and different techniques that people use to create incredible and interesting images.

A number of the sessions will be spent out and about taking photos and sharing what we have done. We will also look at various examples of eye-catching photography from around the world.

Here are some pictures from the first two weeks that the boys have taken. DP



Music News



I am delighted to share the news that Alexander S (Form 5) has been awarded a place at a prestigious Saturday school run for young musicians by the Guildhall School of Music. He had his first session at the weekend, and will now be following a very demanding musical curriculum in addition to his commitments in school as a Worcester chorister. I am very proud of Alexander, and wish him a wonderful musical journey at the Guildhall! SB



Nursery News

The Nursery children went on their first mini adventure of the year, spending Thursday morning on Christ Church Meadow, revelling in the autumn sunshine. The children were fascinated by the longhorn cattle, the digger working outside the visitors' centre and the puddles. The important lesson we learnt was not to jump in puddles that go over the tops of our wellies!

Back in the Nursery garden the children often develop their maths language through their games, describing the quantities of water, sand or mud they have collected, building through play and experimentation. When the children were asked what they had collected, one of the children told me that they had 'an ocean of water in their pan.' With the amount of rain we have had this week, I am sure we can all relate to this sentiment. HB

