



# Christ Church Cathedral School

Friday 29th November 2024

Dear Parents,

I mentioned to all those who were in the Cathedral this morning for the Christingle Service that I had wished some Americans a happy Thanksgiving yesterday and mentioned to them that it was a tradition which we had not adopted here and that it was therefore sometimes difficult to be an American abroad on Thanksgiving. He thanked me for my concern but remarked that an American tradition which we had adopted was that of Black Friday! Black Friday - that day of mayhem and madness which descends upon the shop-going and internet-surfing populace. We in the Cathedral, I went on to say, were here celebrating not a day of Blackness but a day of light, the beginning of Advent, the season when Christians look towards the coming of the light in the form of Christ at Christmas. A Christingle, which all the pupils in Pre-Prep and Nursery had made, is constructed from an orange which represents the world, four sticks of dried fruit or marshmallows representing the four principal directions and the candle in the middle representing the light that Christ will bring to the world. Forms 3 and 4 explained to us the tradition of the Christingle, and Pre-Prep and Nursery lit their candles and sang a song about the coming of Christ. As the candles were lit, the pupils' faces became suffused with the warm light of the candles, flickering in the darkness of the Cathedral. One parent was slightly sceptical about giving a group of very young children a set of flaming candles, but all passed without a hitch! The service was followed by two exquisite pieces of music performed by Andrew and Splendour, the first a jaunty and energy-filled piece on the Cello and the latter a lyrical singing of a solo from the Messiah by Handel. It was all a very fitting start to the Christmas season. As ever all our college choirs will be singing carol services, Pembroke on Sunday at 5.30, Worcester on Tuesday at 6.00 and the Cathedral Choir on Saturday at 6.00. They will all be memorable occasions. I am thrilled that so many of our boys have taken on the transformative role of Chorister.

I have just enjoyed a session in the Kitchen with one of the enrichment groups. The task was two-fold, to make Rocky Road, that most indulgent and sugar-filled of confections, and to prepare some bread for the boarders. The creation of the Rocky Road was a young boy's delight; smashed up biscuit, marshmallows, raisins and then a sauce of chocolate and treacle. Once all these elements had been added together, the stirring began. Peter, our Head Chef, had given us a huge bowl into which all these delicious ingredients had been poured. Together four boys took a large spoon and started to mix, just as if they were the witches from Macbeth. I started to intone the words from the play: Double, Double, Toil and Trouble, Fire Burn and Cauldron Bubble!" as the boys stirred the gloopy mixture in time to the insistent rhythm of the words. Given that it was not a concoction of snake filets and newts' eyes but instead a combination of delicious ingredients, and given that the stirrers were charming CCCS pupils rather than supernatural hags, there was not much in common, but the determination to create a product which would have a dramatic effect was the same! The bread was kneaded with great enthusiasm and then rolled flat using almost gymnastic power. I predict that the boarders will be feasting tonight. We know where to look if we need catering staff!

We have been reminded this week that Oxford is in a floodplain as the waters have risen on an almost biblical scale. Roads have been flooded and Christ Church Meadow has been transformed into a lake, though we were still able to host matches on our playing fields, unlike New College whose grounds were underwater. Then followed the cold. As I stood shivering on Brewer Street on one of those mornings in my thick coat and fur-filled gloves, a boy came running up the road, his breath puffing out around him like a steam engine. As he arrived in front of me I realised he was wearing shorts – even on one of the coldest days of the year. "Gosh," I said, "Do you always wear shorts?" "Yes sir, every day. I like shorts but sometimes I regret it!" Oddly his positive smile suggested that today was not one of those days!

Mr Murray  
Headmaster

**Michaelmas 2024**  
**Monday 2nd - Sunday 8th December**

<p>MONDAY 2</p> <p>2.30 2.15 - 4.10 5.15 - 6.15</p>	<p>U12 &amp; U13 Football v MCS (Home)</p> <p>LAMDA Rehearsals (WWH)</p> <p>CC rehearsal with Frideswide Voices</p>
<p>TUESDAY 3</p> <p>9.30 - 12.30 4.10 - 5.00 4.10 - 5.00</p>	<p>Forms 3-5 Trip: Oxford Playhouse Pantomime</p> <p>Rec - Form 4 Multi Skills Club</p> <p>Forms 5 - 8 Squash Club (Squash Court)</p>
<p>WEDNESDAY 4</p> <p>8.30 3.30 - 4.15 4.10 - 5.00 4.30 - 6.00</p>	<p>Forms 3 &amp; 4 Swimming</p> <p>Nursery Christmas Celebration</p> <p>Rec - Form 2 Mandarin Club (Form 1 Classroom)</p> <p>Forms 3 - 5 Mandarin Club (Form 4 Classroom)</p> <p>Informal Christmas Concert</p>
<p>THURSDAY 5</p> <p>4.10 - 5.00</p>	<p>Trinity Music Exams</p> <p>Forms 6 - 8 Mandarin Club (Form 4 Classroom)</p>
<p>FRIDAY 6</p> <p>8.30 10.45 - 11.30 2.55 - 4.10 4.10 - 5.00 4.30 - 6.00</p>	<p>Cathedral Assembly, speaker: Dr Cosima Gilhammer, Fellow Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford</p> <p>Form 8 French Play Performance</p> <p>LAMDA Rehearsals</p> <p>Greek Club</p> <p>Christmas Light Show</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CC: IN</p>
<p>SATURDAY 7</p>	
<p>SUNDAY 8</p>	<p><i>The Second Sunday of Advent</i></p> <p><i>University Ninth Week</i></p>

**Dates for the Diary**



For any boys in Forms 2 or 3, interested in joining the 'Chorister for a Day' event on Saturday 11th January, please contact Mrs Johnson, the Registrar.

Find out more on our website:

[Open Mornings and Visits- Christ Church Cathedral School](https://www.christchurchcathedral.org.uk/visits)

## Early Years News

We began the week by harvesting the pods from our bean plants. The children were amazed at the purple seeds, "like jewels", they found inside each papery pod. The oldest children, who planted the seeds at the beginning of the summer, were amazed at how many seeds we got from just three plants. I like the fact that they immediately needed to find 10 frames to see how many full frames and part frames they had.

We have seen a lot of progress with our children with their sound recognition this week and great excitement at being able to use the moveable alphabet.

We are immensely proud of the youngest children in the Cathedral this morning. Didn't they do well? What a great impact the experience has had this week, as the beautiful drawing by one of the four year olds demonstrates. HB



## THE OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE SINGING SCHOOL

*The Oxford and Cambridge Singing School* is for boys and girls aged 7-13 who love to sing.

The Singing School was established to give children the opportunity to experience great classical music with world class coaches in a relaxed and fun environment and to develop their confidence and ability in singing and performing.

This Christmas we will be singing:

*I wonder as I wander, O Holy Night* (Adolphe Adam) *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree* (Elizabeth Poston) and *Gaudete* (16th century, trad.)

At the same time, children will learn about vocal technique, music theory and history. Families are most welcome to come and listen to an informal concert at the end of each day.

For more information and to book, please see [www.oxbridgesingschool.com](http://www.oxbridgesingschool.com)

**Sat 21 & Mon 23 December 2024**

Churches of St Mary Magdalen & St Barnabas (Jericho), Oxford

## Form 2 News



This week, Form 2 visited the Oxfordshire Museum for a Victorian experience day. We started the day by being told that Victorian children were expected to sit up straight, with their hands in their laps and to be “seen and not heard”; a little different from now! We were given charcoal, slates and a rag and started an ‘Arithmetic lesson’. We learnt that if a Victorian child had a question, they had to put up their hand and then stand up to ask the question. We used the slates to write down answers to various Maths problems.



Next we were given an ink pot and dip pen to have a try at Victorian cursive handwriting. The children thought that this new style of writing was quite ‘arty’ and enjoyed writing their name in swirls and twirls. However, when we learnt about Victorian forms of punishment, such as the cane, they were less keen on the idea of a Victorian education!

Afterwards, we got the chance to look at the Victorians exhibitions. We saw a true ‘Penny Farthing’ bicycle, a Victorian Dolls’ house, a Victorian style bathroom and other artifacts from the time.

Our last session was exploring and comparing Victorian toys to the toys we play with today. The children's favourite activity was making their own peg dolls. They also played with yo-yos, a stick and hoop, a zoetrope, spinning tops and more. MH-W



## Woodland School News

One of the most rewarding things about being part of our wonderful Christ Church Cathedral School community, is the ability to engage with the natural world, right on our doorstep. Taking the children over to Christ Church Meadow, and beyond to our Woodland School at the corner of Merton Field, is an absolute delight for teachers and children alike, no matter how many times we visit.

During our Pre-Prep visits to Woodland School this term, we have been incredibly busy with all manner of activities, and the wood has been positively buzzing with our enthusiastic and inquisitive children, throwing off the shackles of the classroom and expressing themselves in nature.

I have recently undertaken a Forest School qualification at Hill End Outdoor Education Centre, and it has been highly rewarding to have been able to pass on valuable woodland skills to the children and to our support team. One activity that the children have been fascinated by is learning how to tie a range of useful knots, using lengths of rope. We have taught the children a variety of knots, including a 'Figure-of-Eight Knot' (AKA 'making a scarf for Granny') and 'Clove Hitch Knots' which are great for making dens and tying sticks together to make a plethora of woodland structures.



We have also been learning how to tell our own 'Woodland Stories' using natural materials, and a host of characters dreamt up from the children's rich imaginations. One such character is our squirrel puppet, 'Mr Nutty', who introduced the idea of the children creating a 'Museum of Magnificence' in the woods, to showcase all of the wonderful finds that they have made. The children gleefully took to this task, with imaginations running wild. Soon we had natural items proudly displayed on a wooden plinth for all to see, with the children employing poetic license to say what their artefacts were.

'This is not just a snail shell. It is a diamond earring from the princess of the forest!' 'This is not just a leaf. It is a magical golden carpet on which the Ruby Red Forest Folk fly across the meadow!' 'This is not just a rock. It is the sacred pyramid of the great knights who fought battles to win the woods over centuries!'

(cont. on the next page)



## Woodland School News (cont.)



We know, as teachers, that we are doing something right when children's imaginations are set free in this way, and the woodland environment encourages creative and imaginative play in abundance. Having modelled team games such as '1,2,3, Where Are You?', 'Sardines', and 'Hunters and Survivors' with the children, the most rewarding part is always when the children take over and adapt the games, or indeed make up their own rules, playing entirely independently of the adults. Through playing team games, the children's leadership and social skills develop at a considerable pace, and it is fascinating to watch as they interact and change roles dynamically.

In the upcoming Woodland School sessions, before and after the festive break, the children will have the opportunity to have fun with den building, clay modelling, bug hunting, and learning how to use woodland tools. With the new Pavilion nearing completion, Pre-Prep are extremely excited to be able to use the space as an 'Outdoor Classroom', from which we will be able to launch even more exciting learning adventures in the coming months.

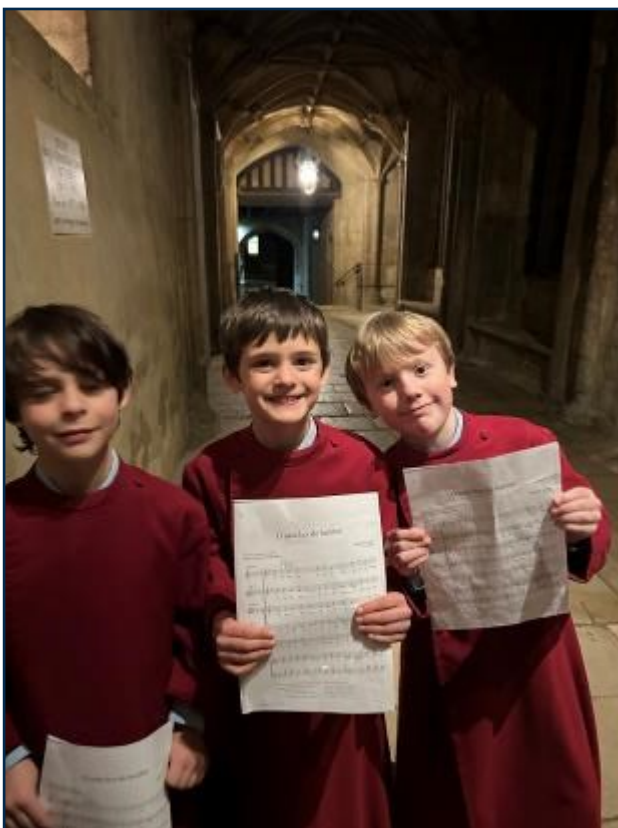
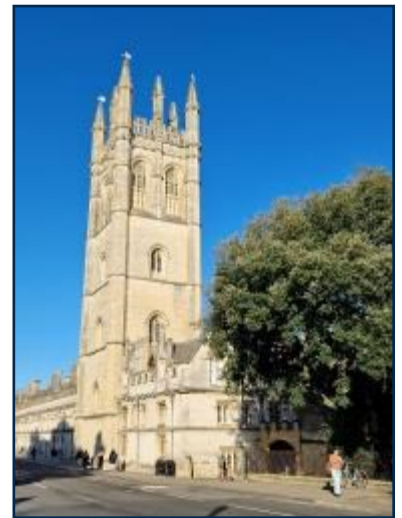


Lastly, I wanted to express our huge gratitude to our fabulous Parents' Association, who raised funds for our Pre-Prep at our Harvest Festival Bake Sale. I am delighted to say that these funds have been put to very good use, and we have been able to buy rope swings and ladders for the Woodland School. The children will absolutely love playing with these. Watch this space for future photos of them enjoying the swings! TR

## Music News

### Bassoonists visit Magdalen

An intrepid band of bassoonists adventured across the Meadow to Magdalen College School for music exams this week, at a session specially organised by Mrs Watson (who also teaches at Radley and MCS). All three boys are playing very impressively and we are lucky to have three really promising players at CCCS at the same time. Although a challenging instrument to play in the earliest stages, the bassoon is a rewarding option and is invariably in high demand for scholarships at senior schools and in orchestras beyond. George (Form 6) recently brought his bassoon to some of Pre-Prep Music lessons, where the Form 2 boys discovered that it is taller than them! There are lots of inventive options for younger players, however - including mini-bassoons and tenoroons - so if you think your son might like to try this versatile instrument, please let me know. SB



### Cathedral Choristers

Our probationer choristers sang in their first Evensong and did themselves and everyone proud.

We're looking forward to welcome many more potential choristers to our '*Chorister for a Day*' event in January. Boys from around the country, in Years 2, 3 and 4 (as well as some of our own pupils) will have the opportunity to rehearse with the Cathedral Choir, perform at Evensong, and experience the life of a Cathedral Chorister.

If you know anyone who would like to sign up for the day, please encourage them to get in touch with the Registrar, Mrs Johnson, in the School Office or on [registrar@cccs.org.uk](mailto:registrar@cccs.org.uk)

## Form 8 News

Last week, Form 8 travelled to Wendover woods to take part in activities run by Go Ape. Initially, the boys were split into teams and pitted against each other in a series of team building games. Both brains and brawn were tested during these games, and the boys truly rose to the occasion and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

After lunch, the boys were strapped into their harnesses and sent up 30ft above the ground. The high ropes course at Wendover is brand new and it certainly proved to be a challenge for our boys. Special mention goes to Ivan, who managed seven loops of the course, a record for Wendover! NH



Christ Church Cathedral School

# Christmas Light Show

Please Join Us For On

**FRIDAY**  
**6th December**

**4:30 - 6 pm**

**Place: School playground**

£10 entry per adult (children free):

this includes a food item and a drink

(tickets available in advance from the School office)

Please bring cash but you will also be

able to add things to your termly bill.

*Mulled wine*   *Hot dogs*   *Christmas lights*

*Sweet stall*   *Fun games*   *Bottle tombola*

*Hot chocolate*   *And lots of fun!!!*

**We are looking forward to seeing you there!**





*Please join us for the...*

## **INFORMAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT 2024**

William Walton Hall, 4.30pm Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December



Featuring solos by senior boys, and festive performances by:

Guitar Group • Lower Strings Ensemble • String Orchestra  
String Trio • Double Reeds Ensemble  
Senior Orchestra • Pre Prep Instrumental Groups







# Share your views

east west  
RAIL

**East West Rail is a new railway which would connect communities between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge, making it easier to reach the things that matter most.**

You're invited to take part in our consultation and share your feedback on proposals for the new railway. The consultation will run from **14 November 2024 to 24 January 2025.**

**There are several ways you can get involved:**

-  Attend our in-person or online events
-  Visit our virtual consultation room
-  View our proposals online and at information points
-  Fill in our feedback form



To find out more about our proposals and to share your feedback, scan the QR code or visit: [eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024](https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024)

It's important everyone can take part in this consultation. If you have any queries or additional requirements, please get in touch at:

 [contact@eastwestrail.co.uk](mailto:contact@eastwestrail.co.uk)  [eastwestrail.co.uk](https://eastwestrail.co.uk)  
 **Freepost EAST WEST RAIL**  **0330 134 0067**

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In-person events will take place from 2-7pm on weekdays and 12-5pm on weekends at the locations below:

-  **Oxford: 19 Nov 2024**  
Oxford Town Hall
-  **Bicester: 21 Nov 2024**  
John Paul II Centre
-  **Great Shelford: 22 Nov 2024**  
Shelford Rugby Club
-  **Steeple Claydon: 26 Nov 2024**  
Village Hall
-  **Bedford: 30 Nov 2024**  
The Grand Hall, Bedford Sixth Form
-  **Cambourne: 03 Dec 2024**  
Cambridge Belfry
-  **Lidlington: 06 Dec 2024**  
Lidlington Village Hall
-  **Bedford: 09 Dec 2024**  
Bedford Swan Hotel
-  **Wilden: 11 Dec 2024**  
Wilden Village Hall
-  **Tempsford: 13 Dec 2024**  
Stuart Memorial Hall
-  **St Neots: 07 Jan 2025**  
St Neots Town Football Club
-  **Comberton: 10 Jan 2025**  
Comberton Village Hall
-  **Bletchley: 15 Jan 2025**  
Bletchley Masonic Centre
-  **Woburn Sands: 17 Jan 2025**  
The Summerlin Centre
-  **Cambridge: 18 Jan 2025**  
The Clayton Hotel
-  **Cherry Hinton: 21 Jan 2025**  
St Andrews Church