



Christ Church Cathedral School

Friday 6th December 2024

Dear Parents,

What a remarkable week it has been. I can hardly remember the School being busier, and yet everything has gone as well as could have been expected. On Sunday I attended the carol service at Pembroke College. The service began in darkness – literally – except for a single candle shining in the darkness, the shadows of the congregation flickering on the walls. From this single point of light, a wonderfully moving service emerged. There were well-loved and well-known hymns, there were new versions of old favourites, there were heart-stopping solos and above all else, the sound of the boys singing with such accomplishment; within a very short while, the choir has become a really serious musical outfit and it is heart-warming what Mr Wilson and the boys have managed to achieve.

And then on Tuesday I heard Worcester choir sing their carol service. Rarely have I heard a choir singing with such commitment and passion, and it was a privilege to be present in that peerless chapel listening to a well-drilled choir under the inspirational leadership of Mr Lee. Their spirited rendition of “Ding Dong Merrily on High” got me dancing all the way back to School afterwards!

Talking of Evensongs, a remarkable thing happened on Wednesday evening. In the boarding house a group of the Cathedral Choristers got together and organised their own Evensong. Music was chosen, choristers were assembled, a sub-organist was appointed, and the organist chosen. The Form 5 boy who had taken on the role of organist had even asked his mother to obtain a handkerchief to fold into his lapel pocket, a nod towards Mr Holder’s sartorial elegance. Pews were arranged and a congregation assembled. Then an entire Evensong was performed. All this without any adult input and during the boys’ free time. When our pupils opt to put on Evensong in their free time for pleasure, one knows that something special has been achieved. I hope that Mr Holder, at the end of his first term, realises the impact that he has had, and it helps remind one of the profound effect that being in a choir has upon its members.

The informal Christmas Concert was also a triumph. For the first time that I can remember, we had a group of pupils from Pre-Prep perform. They have been part of a recorder and percussion group and it was a real treat to see them play together with some of the senior boys. We had a large group of boys in the double-reeds ensemble, instruments which are extremely rare elsewhere – not here – and then we had the finale, a wonderfully colourful performance of Christmas music including the now traditional Jingle Bells with musicians playing from all parts of the room, including a troupe of players who marched jauntily into the hall playing with gusto as they moved. All in all it was a joyous occasion.

As I write, the School is being transformed into a Light Show venue. Around the small playground, displays illustrating the twelve days of Christmas have been set up, each charming in its inventiveness and colour. I very much hope that all of you will, by the time you read this, have seen the displays. The boys and their form teachers have worked hard to ensure that this most entertaining of Christmas carols is engagingly brought to life. May I thank Mr Harrison, Mr Crooks (head of the PA) and the many other people who have worked so hard to ensure the event's success.

Tomorrow many people will be watching the reopening of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris after the devastating fire. The interior, apparently, is immaculate – perhaps the only time when we will be able to see a mediaeval building look as it must have done when it was first seen all those centuries ago, cleansed of the patina and accretions of colour which time adds to such buildings. It will be, for France, a moment of celebration and justified pride at what has been achieved in so short a time. We paid our annual homage to France today when we enjoyed the French play – a drama performed by our Form 8s, this time based on the fairy tale Cinderella. There were some very animated and characterful performances, but what struck me most was the fluency of the French speaking achieved by the boys. For a moment I felt we were on the other side of the channel – quelle joie

Mr Murray
Headmaster

Michaelmas 2024
Monday 9th - Sunday 15th December

MONDAY 9	
TUESDAY 10 4.10 - 5.00 4.10 - 5.00	Rec - Form 4 Multi Skills Club Forms 5 - 8 Squash Club (Squash Court)
WEDNESDAY 11 2.00 - 4.30 3.30 - 4.15 4.10 - 5.00	Forms 3 & 4 Swimming Forms 3-5 Trip: Oxford Playhouse Pantomime Rec - Form 2 Mandarin Club (Form 1 Classroom) Forms 3 - 5 Mandarin Club (Form 4 Classroom)
THURSDAY 12 10.00 & 2.00 4.10 - 5.00	Pre-Prep Nativity Play Forms 6 - 8 Mandarin Club (Form 4 Classroom)
FRIDAY 13 8.30 12.00 4.10 - 5.00	Cathedral Assembly, speaker: The Sub-Dean Christmas Lunch Greek Club CC: OUT
SATURDAY 7 10.30 - 11.30	Carol Service, Cathedral (after which, term ends)
SUNDAY 8	<i>The Third Sunday of Advent</i> <i>University Tenth Week</i>

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](#)

Music News



We have arrived at the last week of term with lots of exciting musical news. We received impressive music exam results across the Prep school, with **12 Distinctions** and **6 Merits** among them, and heard that a record-breaking three boys have won places in the prestigious National Children's Orchestra. This is a wonderful accolade, as it recognises them as some of the very best players of their instruments in the UK. There will be concerts, rehearsals and residential courses for these boys in 2025, and I'm very much looking forward to seeing how this will develop their playing. Well done Ian, Patrick D-D and Terry!

I am also delighted to share news that Leo R was awarded his piano Diploma with Distinction this week. This is a simply extraordinary achievement for a boy of this age, and a testament to his immense musicality and diligent work. Leo is an unstintingly dedicated, heart-felt pianist and very much deserves this superb result.



We shared all of this excellent news with the Prep school in the Cathedral this morning, after which Alexander S performed a spectacular Schubert Impromptu at the end of assembly. Alexander won a place to study the piano on Saturdays at Junior Guildhall this September, and his playing is going from strength to strength. All three of our choirs have been sounding excellent at their advent services, but the instrumental standards at school have never been higher and I very much appreciate the hard work of boys and music staff. What a term! SB

Informal Christmas Concert

More than half the boys in the school were involved in our ever-popular Informal Christmas Concert, and a very appreciative audience of parents crammed into the Walton Hall on Wednesday night (with standing room only!). For many at CCCS the festive season only begins once Mr Wilson has been sighted in his Santa hat, and they were certainly not disappointed this year.

It was wonderful to see so many peri staff at the concert, and congratulations must go to the senior orchestra, double reeds ensemble, guitar group, pre-prep ensemble, Form 8 soloists and many chamber groups for performing so joyously and launching us into December.

Merry Christmas to everyone from the music department!
SB



Woodland School News

At Woodland School this week, our Pre-Prep children had enormous fun creating clay faces and mounting them on trees. The children 'went to town' with their own imaginative ideas, using twigs, leaves, and natural materials, to create their masterpieces. Soon we had our very own 'Woodland Art Gallery' with a portrait exhibition of magnificent woodland characters. Some were friendly, others were rather more scary!

We also had a thrilling visit from a resident Muntjac deer from Christ Church Meadow, as well as testing out our new rope swing for the first time. What lucky children we have in our Pre-Prep! TR



Form 3 News

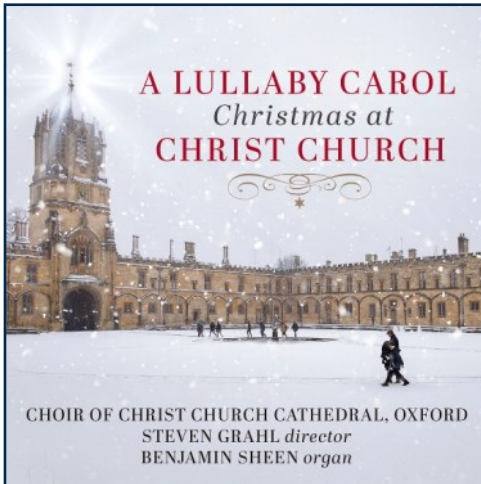


Form 3 had an exciting visit from the fossil expert Mr Scott this week! We carefully observed fossils from different geological ages including the Ammonites and Echinoids from the Jurassic Era (140 million years ago), plant fossils from the Carboniferous Era (350 million years ago) and the Trilobites from the Devonian Era (360 million years ago). Sadly, we did not have any dinosaur fossil remains. However, we did have dinosaur fossil poo (Coprolites)! SG



And here they are with the Gingerbread House they made later that day!

Christ Church News



We are delighted to announce the release of the Cathedral Choir's latest CD, 'A Lullaby Carol: Christmas at Christ Church'. It includes traditional and contemporary music for the festive season, and a number of works by composers associated with Christ Church. The CD is available in person from Christ Church Shop and online from AVIE:

www.avie-records.com/releases/a-lullaby-carol-christmas-at-christ-church/

Journey to Bethlehem: Children and Families' Service

Tuesday 24th December • 10.35 am

Come along with your children for this interactive service of music, play, and storytelling as we learn about the Christmas story and journey to the crib together

ANGUS IRVINE PLAYING FIELDS FUND

#Jointeamshotgangs

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

WITH THE CHORISTERS OF WORCESTER COLLEGE,
CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL SCHOOL, OXFORD

THURSDAY 12th DECEMBER 2024

7PM PROMPT START
ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
GREAT TEW, OX7 4AF

CAROLS FOLLOWED BY
COTSWOLDS WHISKY TODDY,
SAUSAGES & MINCE PIES



scan QR
code for
tickets

TICKETS £25 EACH
CLICK ON LINK IN DETAILS



CHRIST CHURCH
CATHEDRAL



Discovering Christian faith through story and song

Free weekly sessions with refreshments
for pre-school children (from birth) and their adults

Mondays in term-time from 15 January 10-12 noon in the Priory Rooms ➔

For more details contact wonderlings@chch.ox.ac.uk



You're never too young - or old - to wonder

At a Wonderlings session you will find friendly faces and warm hearts ready to greet, support and encourage you and your little ones through the joys and challenges of the pre-school years.

What to expect:



Gathering time with free play –
settle your feathers and make yourself at home.

Circle time with Bible-themed activities –
singing, dancing and playing instruments.



Story time with thought for the day –
board books and journaling

Refreshment time with a cuppa –
food for body, mind and soul to send you on your way.



Come to Christ Church through Meadow Gate
and follow the curved path.

The door into the Priory Rooms is first on the right
through the arch.

