



# Christ Church Cathedral School News

— 28th March 2025 —



## A message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

The last few days have been a kaleidoscope of vibrantly coloured activities. I sit here writing, feeling almost dizzy with the experience of it all.

We were all treated to a wonderful performance of Mr Richard's play Wilton Hall, a witty and colourful drama set in an 18th Century manor house. As ever every line was worth listening to. There were wonderful cultural allusions, brilliantly clever jokes – all delivered with character and verve by the brilliant actors. We are all so blessed to have Mr Richards in our midst and he ensured that all his actors put together a performance to remember. Well done to all those who were involved in such a stunning evening of entertainment.

On Tuesday, we had a remarkable concert in the Cathedral. The elite string players of Winchester College visited us. They played a remarkable Shostakovich piece which shimmered with brilliance. Following this extraordinary display, some of our string players joined them to play a charming arrangement of a Faroese folk tune. For our boys it was an unforgettable experience playing alongside such talented young men. It was particularly touching that one of the Winchester players was a former pupil Orlando who had been a chorister. Music does not stop beyond CCCS.

Yesterday, Prep-Prep and Nursery assembled in the Cathedral Garden for an Easter Egg hunt and Easter bonnet parade. In front of the ancient stones of the Cathedral, the boys and girls paraded round in front of their parents, showing off their beautiful creations. I was struck both by the ingenuity of some of the design and by the natural poise of the wearers. A cat walk would not have been out of place!

This morning we had a packed Cathedral to witness a double bill – a Mothering Sunday service during which the boys and girls of Pre-Prep explained why they loved their mothers and those close to them followed by four pieces played by our excellent string orchestras. There was one particularly striking piece focussing on birdsong, composed by our strings teacher, Mr Wilson himself, where four players were able to summon up the sounds of birdsong in spring. It was lovely to see so many parents at coffee afterwards.

Last night a large number of parents and some pupils attended a fascinating event in the Upper Library, one of the most beautiful rooms in Oxford. We had a most enlightening talk from the Keeper of Rare collections about the Library. He had put out for us some fascinating books which are rarely seen. There were two first editions of the Birds of America by James Audubon, a vast nineteenth century book whose pages measure almost a metre square. A similar pair sold in 2010 at auction at Sotheby's for £7,321,250 – no wonder we were asked to leave our drinks on a table before approaching the books. There was also a copy of Robert Hooke's Micrographia, the first British book showing drawings of creatures seen under a microscope. The page on view was a beautifully detailed image of a flea. And then there was my favourite, a very early manuscript of the Canterbury Tales by Chaucer, hand written in 1400. Despite having read many of the tales (and indeed having taught them) I had never seen an early manuscript. I was very surprised by how difficult it was to read the writing. At the other end of the Library was a display of the newly acquired collection of Lewis Carroll papers which have been left to the College making Christ Church the holder of the largest collection of Carroll archives in Britain. Part of the collection were translations into different languages of the Alice works. It was good to be reminded of how popular this work, based on Christ church, is.

And today we also had the Poetry competition during which a large number of our boys recited a whole selection of poetry from heart. It was hugely inspiring to see how talented our boys are and how much energy and commitment they put into learning the works. Committing literature to memory is one of the most rewarding things to do – not only do these works change the person learning them but each person gives new life to the work in question through their unique interpretation of it.

This morning, one boy heaved his bag off the School Bus. “ Huh!” he said, “My bag's just so full of nothing!” I always think that it's good to make the most of a situation! I hope that everyone makes the most of the Easter Holiday, that you have a great deal of rest and relaxation and a wonderful time together.

**Mr Murray**  
**Headmaster**

# School Calendar



School Diary: Monday 21st April - Sunday 27th April

MONDAY 21

EASTER MONDAY

TUESDAY 22

INSET DAY

WEDNESDAY 23

Term begins for whole school  
CC rehearsals Resume

THURSDAY 24

FRIDAY 25

8.45: Cathedral Assembly

## Dates for your Diary

### Be a Chorister for An Afternoon

Saturday 3rd May

After Easter, we will be hosting our successful 'Be a Chorister for an Afternoon' event. If your son, or someone you know loves to sing and is in Year 2-4 then why not find out if Chorister life is for them? To sign up, simply click the red button below.

[I want to be a chorister for an afternoon!](#)



# After-School Care and Clubs

## School Clubs

School clubs for next term will be announced in due course. They will commence in Week two of the new term.

## After-School Care - Trinity Term

Should you need to book your child into After-School Care or Prep, please let the school office know. It is important to book in advance to ensure sufficient staffing and that we cater for the correct number of pupils.

Please email [schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk](mailto:schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk) to book your child in.

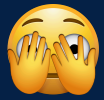
### Collecting your child after Prep

As there is very limited parking on Brewer Street, we kindly ask that if you are collecting your child by car, and there is no parking available, that you call us on **07719 109 433** and we will arrange for your child to meet you outside the school gate.

This will help us to ensure that there is always a steady flow of traffic down the one-way street. Thank you so much for your co-operation.



# Early Years News



Spoiler alert: Mums, look away now...!

The Early Years children have been very busy creating beautiful cards and gifts for Mothering Sunday. We talked about the word 'mothering' with our youngest members of school, and helped the children to understand that an important person who helps to mother you comes in all different forms; from an aunt, a big sister, step-mum, or Granny, who has helped you to learn, taught you to look after yourself and watched you grow. We discussed that this may also be a special teacher at school that really cared, or a kindly neighbour.

To all those wonderful mothering influences on our children's lives, the Early Years children wish you a very happy Mothering Sunday.



# Pre-Prep Celebrations

Pre-Prep School celebrated the end of term with two dazzling events. On Thursday we visited the Christ Church Cathedral Garden for our very own Easter Bonnet Parade and Easter Egg Hunt. Today, we enjoyed a lovely Mothering Sunday Service in the Cathedral.



# Form 1 News

Form 8 working with Form 1 in Art on felt Easter decorations! They made some great pieces. EE



# Form 5 News

## Form 5 Compositions



On Wednesday afternoon, Form 5 gave an entertaining performance for the children in Form 1 of their own compositions. After studying 'Carnival of the Animals', the class had split into groups to write music about their own choice of animal (with the extra challenge to hide well-known tunes in their pieces in the same way that Saint-Saëns often does).

Our 'Jaguar' group explained that they had chosen to use scary dynamics to represent their animal prowling through the forest, whilst the 'Hummingbird' group portrayed a fluttering bird that sang songs as it flew. We heard team 'Eagle' use inventive percussion techniques to depict swooping, whilst the 'Chameleon' piece deployed two totally contrasting sections to create the effect of changing colour!

Form 5 have worked really well on this project, so it has been excellent to see the boys working in teams and thinking so carefully about the right choices of rhythm, structure and keys for their music. Well done. SB



# Music News

## Winchester College musicians visit CCCS



It was tremendously exciting to host a visit from Winchester College's chamber orchestra on Tuesday. They visited CCCS to perform Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich to our Form 5, 6, 7 and 8 boys, as well as joining with our senior string players in a lively piece of Faroese folk music at the end of the concert. It was especially lovely to see ex-CCCS pupil Orlando performing as a cellist, as we so rarely get the chance to hear our departing music scholars play again once they move to their senior schools.

The Shostakovich piece (an arrangement of his eighth String Quartet, dedicated to 'the victims of fascism') is unforgettably dark and stormy, and gave our pupils a dramatic window into the kind of advanced string-playing that isn't often heard at Prep School level.

I am delighted that we are able to collaborate with the music departments of leading senior schools in this way, and am so grateful to Winchester's head of strings, violinist Rafael Bolivar, for bringing his pupils to inspire our musicians.

You can hear the Faroese folk piece performed by the combined Winchester and CCCS musicians on our YouTube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Rkf7XFX3K4>  
SB

# Music Competition

## House Music Competition, Trinity 2025



I am very excited that we will be starting work on the Prep department's House Music Competition after Easter.

Please remind your sons that they should prepare something to perform in class Music lessons on our return to school. There will be several weeks of preparations before our finals on Friday 16th May at 1.30pm, to be judged by the Director of Music at Rugby School, Richard Tanner.

Wishing everyone lots of fruitful instrument practice over the break! SB

# School Play

## William Wilton



This year's play was one of the best to have graced our stage, most people who have seen it will tell you. But for those who were deprived of the enlightening spectacle, I will tell you the rough plot of the story.

The show starts in the Wilton Room, Radcliffe (Radlings) Hall, its name coming from 18th century painter William Wilton, as the film company Poignant Pictures come to make a film on the life of the painter, entitled Wilton's Gift. Meanwhile Godfrey Radcliffe, 19th Lord Elmet and owner of Radcliffe Hall, frets over his finance and how he can staunch the leaking roof. As the actors rehearse and Major Gale, responsible for the running of Radlings, grumbles and snorts, Lord Elmet's grand-nephew, Gideon Grenville (Dongie, as he henceforth would be known by his friends), oversees this new enterprise with unquenchable vivacity.

As we enter the second act, we find that Boy with Candle, a famous painting by William Wilton and the jewel in Radling's crown, has been stolen! While the actors polish off the end of the film they are working on, (still with an unfinished ending, much to most of the crew's disappointment)

The third act I will not spoil. But I am sure, somehow, that the playscript will end up in your hands, and the twist explained.

★ Matthew Newman, alias Kieran Midgley (Screenwriter)

★ Hugo Abecassis-Loyer, alias Aaron Sable (Director and Co-founder of Poignant Pictures)

NR

# Poetry Corner

## And the Winners are...

We have enjoyed a splendid afternoon with Maya Little and Anna Nickerson of Tower Poetry, Christ Church who joined us for our Poetry Recital Competition. Well done to all of the boys who took part, you all put in a tremendous effort.

We are delighted to share that the winners of the 2025 Poetry Recitation Competition are...

### Poetry Recital Winners:

Forms 7 and 8 (Senior Section): Splendour for Ode, O'Shaughnessy

Forms 5 and 6 (Intermediate Section): George for Dog Days, Elaine Harris

Forms 4 and 5 (Junior Section): Harry for The ABC, Spike Milligan

### Poetry Writers Winners:

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Matthew (F7) for Roots

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Ben B-E (F8) for The roots I could have had

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Splendour (F8) for My Journey

### Commendations were received by:

- Henry P for Roots of Stone and Brick
- Navraj for Three Hundred Thousand Years
- Trust for The Elephant in the Room

Huge congratulations to all of the winners, and very well done to all of the boys who took part in the recital and those who shared their literary creations with us today.

Here is Matthew's winning poem  
Roots. Enjoy!

#### Roots

I have a pair of ancient boots,  
Resting in my attic,  
Cracked and lined, creased and holed.  
Ancestral boots, handed down,  
Striding through my genealogy.

Once they tasted  
English soil, English reeds, and English mud.  
Wetland waters were their home, walking by the River Yare.  
Tramping through the village of Surlingham,  
To Norwich and beyond.

Neeman, Numan, Neumann, Newman,  
All these names felt this leather,  
But halt! Stand and deliver! In 1851  
Convict, Benjamin Newman, transported to southern seas.  
Aground in Australia.

A decade later, ascending from the pit,  
Strode a Cornish miner, John Oxnam by name.  
Hungry, hungry for gold, hungry for adventure.  
Sifting and shifting, panning through Ballarat and Bendigo  
Striding south, to stop in Murchison, New Zealand, 1863

Bruised and battered, they march on  
Worn by weary soldiers,  
Grim and tired, trekking through trench and jungle in two World Wars.  
Patches over cracks, on the move, migrating like gulls to  
Repair and rebuild, in Australian soil.

I have a pair of ancient boots,  
Resting in my attic,  
Cracked and folded, the bloodlines of my ancestry,  
My roots, caked in many soils, intertwine, to forge  
Me.

# Mythology Competition

A project for the Easter Holidays

**In recent years we have held an in-house classical myth competition, but this year the national competition is returned; and boys are strongly encouraged to enter.**

We had such creative and arresting entries for the school competition that we should do well in the national arena.

For Years 5 & 6 the topic is The Wooden Horse; for Years 7 & 8 Romulus & Remus. We may send in 10 entries from each group.



The categories are:



**Creative Writing:** short story, play, retelling, poem or any other creative written response (500 words maximum, submitted as Word document (not a scan)).



**Art:** a painting, a sculpture in any material, a collage or any other artistic endeavour. Submit as a .jpeg, with views of all angles if necessary.



**Animation:** silent, spoken or sung; animated; or use, for example, PlayMobil figures or home-made puppets – but not real persons. Submit as a YouTube link to an unlisted video.

# School Photobook



We are super impressed with Raphael and Richard's efforts in DT this week - they made their own table tennis bat!



More wonderful compositions from Form 5



More arts and crafts from Nursery for Mothering Sunday!

# School Photobook



Winchester String Concert



Sergey is ready to fly into the Easter break with this handmade broom...



Well done Sergey, it looks great!



Some of the stars of 'William Wilton'



Well done to the cast and crew on a great performance!

# Celebrations in Pre-Prep School



Easter Bonnet Parade

