



Christ Church Cathedral School News

— 25th April 2025 —



A message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents,

It's wonderful to be back. There is no better time in a school year than the beginning of the Summer term with so much to look forward to. Any of you who have visited the Meadow will have seen the Pavilion which is on the verge of being handed over to us. All our hopes that it would add to the exceptional environment of the Meadow have been realised and its winning combination of tradition and elegant modernity are apparent to even the most casual observer. I am thrilled. As soon as we have full access to the building, I will be in touch. Please ensure that Saturday 14th June is in your diary. In the morning we will be hosting our annual sports day; that will be followed, *deo volente*, by the formal opening of the building. I look forward to seeing all of you there.

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the foundation of Cardinal College by Thomas Wolsey. This was followed, one year later, by the foundation of the Cathedral Choir which is, in essence, the date from which the School can take its origin. Half a millennium is a fair amount of time for an institution to have existed – it certainly puts our lives into perspective. Tradition is, of course, an essential part of our school as, at heart, those things which are required for human flourishing, love, care, moral courage, fellowship, curiosity etc are the same as they always have been and it is always good to know that the problems which we have as human beings have, by and large, been experienced and overcome in the past. Rarely do we have to face these things alone, either individually or as a society. As the great Oxford writer, thinker and theologian, CS Lewis wrote “We read to know that we are not alone.” Nonetheless another thing we learn by looking back into history is that no era is ever quite the same as any other and there are examples of problems and conditions which we are facing for the first time. A school must recognise both these things.

We must be fully aware that we live in an exciting world full of opportunities which were not available to people in the past and we must ensure that our pupils make use of such opportunities and that they are ready for the world which awaits them. We have already introduced modules based upon AI in our ICT lessons and increasingly we are making use of the opportunities which such technologies provide. I was interested to see the notes of a recent meeting which had been written up using AI software – a most useful and extensive record of a fascinating discussion. It seems clear to me that the more understanding we have of AI, the more useful it will be to us.

I have always loved the fact that I teach in a school where discussion is central and much undertaken. For enrichment I am running a debating group and the enthusiasm with which people have signed up for it is touching – mastering the ability to debate is crucial to being able to influence others and to having an impact on the world. Equally one often finds oneself engaged in furious discussion about things which have less obvious significance. At lunch today there was a lengthy debate about whether one should spread the jam before the cream on a scone (as they do in Cornwall) or whether one should put cream on before jam (as they do in Devon.) One boy who was not from either Devon or Cornwall, nor indeed from anywhere in England, has solved the issue by cutting his scone in half, spreading one half with cream and one with jam and then sticking them together – a most elegant solution to the problem. Sometimes those with distance bring perspective to a seemingly intractable problem!

Mr Murray
Headmaster

School Calendar



School Diary: Monday 28th April - Sunday 4th May

MONDAY 28

9.15: F7 Residential Trip to Bath - Departing

TUESDAY 29

AM: Pembroke & Worcester Voice Trials (WWH)

1.30-4.00: F8 Mock Listening & Speaking Exams

4.00: F7 Residential Trip to Bath - Returning

WEDNESDAY 30

2.30: U10/11 Cricket v Oratory (Home)

FRIDAY 2

8.45: Cathedral Assembly - Speaker: The Chaplain

SATURDAY 3

2pm - 7pm: Be a Chorister for an Afternoon - Christ Church Cathedral

Dates for your Diary

Be a Chorister for An Afternoon

Saturday 3rd May

If your son is in Forms 2 to 4 and loves to sing, then please join us next Saturday for our 'Be a Chorister for an Afternoon' event. It's a great opportunity to have fun singing beautiful choral music and performing at Evensong with our current Choristers. If you're curious about Chorister life, simply click on the red button below to register.

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



Nursery Stay & Play

Wednesday 7th May

This is a great opportunity for pre-school children to come and see our lovely Nursery!

If you know a family looking to place their child in Nursery, please ask them to contact us to book a place at our Stay & Play - visit the school, meet new friends, and have fun!

[Stay & Play Registration](#)



Early Years News

Welcome to our newest little bloomers

We have had a lovely week in the Early Years, getting to know our new friends who have joined us this term. We are so lucky at Christ Church Cathedral School to have such a lovely hands-on Registrar who is recognised by all the children from their first day, and with whom they all want to share their stories.

It is lovely to see the children re-engage with familiar routines and activities in the classroom and to excitedly find what has changed on the shelves in the classrooms. It is so lovely to see the children helping each other and sharing familiar games and activities with the new children.

We have shared stories about St George this week and the children all wanted to draw dragons. We began with painting in red and adding details in black marker and crayon later.

It has been such a lovely start to the term.

HB





Thursday 22nd May



Nursery and Reception will be taking part in Pyjamarama to raise money for the [Book Trust](#) who campaign to get children reading. We will be reading our favourite stories and invite parents to come in and read their favourite story to our little ones.

If you would like to read a story, please email the school office - schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk

Pre-Prep Cathedral Assembly

Friday 9th May at 8.45am
Christ Church Cathedral



The Pre-Prep children will be joining the rest of the School for assembly at the Cathedral and we would love to welcome you all to join us.

Following the assembly, we would be delighted if parents would join us in the **The Priory Room at Christ Church** for coffee and refreshments. It's a lovely opportunity to connect with other parents and staff at the school.

We look forward to seeing you then!

Prep School Ski Trip



Snow much fun was had in Les Arcs!



What a week! For the very first time in more than 10 years, 18 boys from CCCS and 3 members of staff enjoyed skiing facing Mont Blanc for a week. It was so much fun!

Apart from putting on their ski shoes, the boys enjoyed every minute of the trip. They loved the skiing, the food, the après-ski activities, ordering a 'diabololo grenadine' at the bar of our hotel, playing cards, dancing, meeting French teenagers...the list is too long for this Newsletter.

Suffice to say that they came back buzzing and exhausted! When are we going back?

Mr Boarder, Mr Pear and Mme Loyer



Last chance to book your place in next year's ski trip!

We are keen to go to the French Alps again, during the first week of the Hilary Term 2026, Sunday 4th January to Friday 9th January 2026. The trip would happen over the last three days of the Christmas holiday and the first three days of the Hilary Term.

This trip to the resort of Flaine will be open to boys in next year's Forms 5 to 8, who are over the age of 10 at the time of the trip, fairly sporty and independent!

Chorister News

Holy Week at CCCS

Two weeks ago, the Cathedral Choristers returned to CCCS for Holy Week. The focus for the first part of the week was a performance of Buxtehude's Cantatas, a collection of which has not been included in the Cathedral Choir's repertoire since 2010. There has been increased interest in the musical output of Buxtehude since the 1970s, as studies and performances of early music became more fashionable. How lucky we are that the music of a man who so greatly inspired and influenced J.S. Bach is now seeing the light of day more regularly within the concert circuit (rather than simply through bland academic research or niche music groups).

Interestingly, when Buxtehude retired from his post as Organ Master at St. Mary's Church in Lübeck, there was a contractual requirement that his successor marry his daughter. Both Bach and Handel considered the role but turned it down due to this requirement. However strange this may seem to us today, it was not an uncommon practice, as it allowed the retiring musician to retain the position and their accommodation within the family. Ultimately, the role (and the hand of Fräulein Buxtehude) went to Johann Christian Schieferdecker.

Following a triumphant performance of the Cantatas, the boys had a little time to recuperate before the Easter weekend. There was a visit to Jump Inc. in Bicester, followed by bowling, and then it was on to the river for a spot of boating. Joining us for her first Holy Week was Matron Tina. Tina joined the Choristers as they took to the water in a small flotilla of chaos. Things went swimmingly for the most part, save for the untimely directional instructions of William L, who only informed Matron of a collision mere seconds before impact. Still, there was a certain majesty to her falling backwards into the rowing boat, which somehow gained the attention of the Dean and Chapter - I can only suspect there was a leak!

The boys were back in magnificent voice for Easter Sunday, delivering a splendid Mozart Mass at Eucharist and a rather festive Stanford in A at Evensong. The boys and all of us here in the boarding house wish to thank Mr. Holder and Mr. Moore for their very patient direction over the course of Holy Week and congratulate all involved in elevating the many services with such wonderful music. JR



In the Boarding House

Our Choristers taking some well-deserved time out during Holy Week



WORCESTER AND PEMBROKE CHORISTERS VOICE TRIALS 2025



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 28th April**, and I am delighted that we can offer this exciting opportunity to boys in Form 3 (but also higher years if places are available).

Being a chorister offers unrivalled musical training as well as the opportunity to develop team-work, make friends, grow in confidence, go on trips, make recordings, win music awards at senior school and much more!

Please do contact Ms Biddell on biddell.s@cccs.org.uk if you would like your son to audition for a place in one of the choirs.

You can find out more about our day-boy 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 their 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.

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

SB



Worcester Chapel



Pembroke Chapel

Enrichment

Baking



Life Skills

Mocktails and nibbles anyone...? Well it is Friday!



Architecture

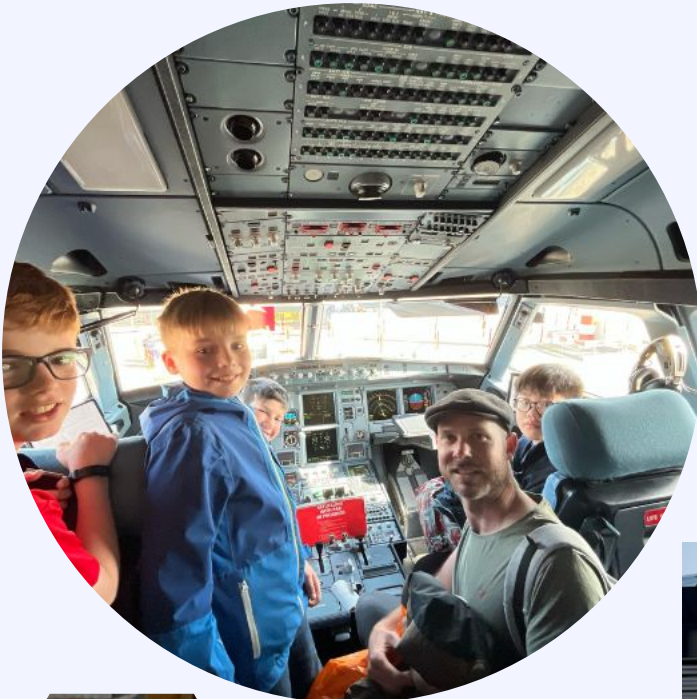
The Architecture Club views 16th Century wall paintings at the site of the mediaeval Golden Cross Inn on the Cornmarket.



School Photobook



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