



Christ Church Cathedral School News

—— 11th September 2026 ——



Dear Parents,

It is always a pleasure to welcome new pupils to the School and we have a large number joining us this term. I very much hope they will be happy here; certainly that's the impression they have given this week. And with their arrival come parents whom I would also like to welcome. Parents are central to our School. Meanwhile in terms of staff, we are joined by a new Bursar, Mrs North who comes to us from Godstowe School in Buckinghamshire. I asked the pupils what they thought a Bursar was and one helpful person answered that "They looked after the money!" I am certain that Mrs North will do just that most successfully. We are also joined by Mr Blake who has been working at King's College School in Cambridge and singing in the world-famous Chapel Choir there. He occupies the new position of Assistant Director of Music and will help support Miss Biddell in maintaining the extraordinary musical standards that we enjoy here. May I wish them all the best?

It was lovely to be in Cathedral Assembly again this morning. It's one of my favourite moments of the year when we come together again as a school after the summer. It was particularly lovely to see so many of the parents of new pupils joining us and almost all of them came to coffee afterwards. Please take the opportunity to come – so many people say it is a lovely end to the week and to spend time in our exquisite Cathedral, a real blessing. As ever we have some interesting external speakers coming to preach, for instance Alastair Chirnside, Warden of St Edward's and newly appointed Headmaster Designate of Eton, the newly appointed Headmaster of Cheltenham College, Chris Townsend and Professor Helen Moore, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, one of Oxford's smallest but most beautiful Colleges.

This coming weekend is Oxford Open Doors – a wonderful opportunity to get into parts of the city which are rarely open. Oxford, for its size, is almost certainly the most interesting City in England but so many of its joys and gems are hidden behind walls and through doors – indeed this is part of what makes Oxford such an exciting and intriguing place. This weekend is an opportunity to get behind some of those places normally hidden away. There is so much to see but one of my favourites is the painted room on Cornmarket, a room whose access is up a lino-covered staircase leading to something called Betfred, which seems to have some purpose associated with gambling. It is an entrance which could hardly be less auspicious. But get to the top of the staircase and one finds oneself in a glory of 16th Century domestic architecture, a room covered in a wall painting of exquisite quality and one which many believe was stayed in by Shakespeare himself on one of his many trips between London and Stratford – just one of the delights awaiting you over the weekend.

It's probably also worth saying that we too have our own private open doors opportunity when we invite parents to see one of the hidden treasures of Christ Church. This term we are in the process of organising a trip up Tom Tower – do please look out for that – it's a fascinating tour.

So many of our pupils are in College choirs, (Christ Church, Worcester and Pembroke); indeed CCCS is the only school in England which supplies boys to three institutional choirs. There are so many aspects of being in a choir which are valuable and life-enhancing, but going on tour is one of the most exciting! Both Pembroke and Worcester are planning foreign tours this year and I'm sure we'll have details of these soon, but we already know that the Cathedral Choir is going later this month to The USA where we will visit Minneapolis, sing in the National Cathedral at Washington DC, go to Boston, sing at Princeton University where Einstein went after he had lived briefly at Christ Church, and ending in New York where the choir will sing in the Carnegie Hall. It is a sensational itinerary and just one of the benefits of being a chorister.

I have a new tranche of Form 8 helpers on the gate with me in the morning given that it is the beginning of the year. They are still revelling in the novelty of the role and so are being extremely attentive to those parents and younger pupils who need help upon arrival. In an odd moment of inactivity this morning, a conversation emerged about one of their teachers. The teacher had shown a great deal of knowledge, apparently, about an element of current teenage culture. "Yes," said one of the boys, "Even teachers were young once!" How right they are and, indeed, I have always felt that one of the great advantages of the profession is that keeping the company of the young leads to a sense of youthful effervescence. But at some stage one has to admit that it is impossible to stop the passing of time, even if the ages of the pupils surround you stay the same, as they are constantly regenerating year after year. Shakespeare put it so well in his great Sonnet 65: "Or what strong hand can hold time's swift foot back?" and there does come a moment when even teachers have to admit that they are getting older and so, as you will have heard today, this will be my last term. But there is no doubt that the school has the most wonderful staff and governors who will ensure that its remarkable pupils will continue to be brilliantly looked after and that the school will continue to thrive and, therefore, as Julian of Norwich put it in one of her meditations written over 600 years ago. "All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well." In the meantime, I look forward hugely to seeing a great deal of you when I will be able to thank you for your support and kindness and to enjoying all the exciting events during the course of this term.

Richard Murray
Headmaster

School Calendar

Monday 14th - Sunday 20th September

MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER

9.05am - 12.45pm: Form 6 CAT 4 Tests

12.30 - 4.10pm: Form 7 Team Building Trip

TUESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

9.05am - 12.45pm: Form 5 CAT 4 Tests

9.05 - 9.45am: Forms 7 Writing Assessments

WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

9.05 - 10.25am: Forms 6 & (some) 7 Mock ISEB Pretests

THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

8.45 - 9.30am: Pre-Prep Parents' Coffee Morning

9.05 - 9.45am: Form 8 Writing Assessments

9.05 - 10.25am: Forms 6 & (some) 7 Mock ISEB Pretests

FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

8.45 - 9.15am : Cathedral Assembly, Speaker, The Chaplain

9.15 - 9.45: *Parents are welcome to join us for coffee and refreshments in the Priory Room following the assembly*

9.05am - 10.25pm: Forms 6 & (some) 7 Mock ISEB Pretests

4.30 - 6.00pm: Prep School Parents and Staff Drinks

SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

6.05pm: Evensong for Cathedral Choir Alumni - All Welcome

Upcoming Events



Whole School Open Morning

Saturday 10th October

9.30am - 12.00pm

CCCS

Come and discover the magic of Christ Church Cathedral School for yourself at our Open Morning on Saturday 10th October.

Prepare to be spellbound as you enjoy a tour of our grounds, meet our staff and chat with our pupils.

Register your place today:

<https://www.cccs.org.uk/private-prep-school-admissions-oxford/open-mornings>



Pre-Prep Parents Coffee Morning

Thursday 17th September

8.45 - 9.30am

Pre-Prep Playground (or Dining Hall)

Pre-Prep parents are warmly invited to come and explore the Pre-Prep School setting, meet the team and discover what the year has in store for their little one.



Prep Parents & Staff Drinks

Friday 18th September

4.30 - 6.00pm

Walton Hall

This is a wonderful opportunity for new and current parents to CCCS to meet the Prep Staff. This event is open to children too, so please feel free to bring them along.

If you would like to attend, kindly RSVP to Michelle Messenger at

messenger.m@cccs.org.uk



Future Schools Forum

Wednesday 23rd September

7.00 - 8.00pm

Walton Hall

Parents are invited to attend our Future Schools' Forum, hosted by the Headmaster and Deputy Head Academic, which will provide helpful advice about applying for Senior Schools.

All Prep School parents are welcome to attend, although it is primarily focussed on the parents of Form 5 pupils.

After School Clubs are back!

Starting Monday 14th September

Real Tennis Club



Real Tennis begins Monday 14 September and will be available to Form 5-8 pupils.

Please contact Mr Robson if you would like your son to attend.

Times:

16:20 Boys leave CCCS, walk to the court.

16:30-17:30 Court booking.

17:40 Boys return to CCCS.

Greek Club



Greek Club, open to Years 7 & 8, begins next Friday.

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School Clubs Timetable

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mandarin Rec - Form 2 3.30 - 4.15pm Form 1 Classroom	Multi Sports Rec - Form 4 4.15 - 5.00pm School Field	Chess Forms 1 & 2 3.30 - 4.30pm Form 1 Classroom	Rugby Forms 3 - 8 4.15 - 5.00pm School Field	Greek Club Forms 7 & 8 4.15 - 5.00pm
Football Forms 3 - 8 4.15 - 5.00pm School Field	Chess Forms 3 - 7 4.15 - 5.15pm Darwin		Mandarin Forms 3 - 8 4.15 - 5.00pm Form 4 Classroom	
Real Tennis Forms 5 - 8 4.15 - 5.45pm Real Tennis	Squash Forms 5 - 8 4.15 - 5.00pm Squash Court		Little Musketeers Rec - Form 2 Squash Court	
			Little Musketeers Forms 3 - 8 Squash Court	

If your child would like to join one of our after school clubs, please email the School Office at schoolsecretary@cccs.org.uk with the below information:

- Your child's name
- Your child's Form
- The name of the club
- Day of the club

A Swashbuckling Summer Adventure!



Too late for the final summer newsletter, it nevertheless feels wrong not to feature our summer play, Treasure Island, so here is a late write-up. Our actors had to work with particularly difficult conditions: the heatwave led, first, to a last-minute date and time change and, second, to many fewer rehearsals than we had originally planned.

Nevertheless, the boys did a marvellous job, and those who were able to attend were treated to a hilarious, confident and (of course, this being CCCS) high-quality musical performance of R L Stevenson's classic tale of piracy and treachery on the high seas.

There were sword fights, pistols (party streamers, what else?), 18th-century sea shanties, a chase with a skeleton, a character carried away by a shark, a talking parrot and audience participation in the final battle, before a final song on the ship back to Bristol.

Well done to all the actors, and a huge thank you to the parents and others who managed to come despite the date change.

AF



Don't forget to check your [SPLAAT](#) account where you will find more wonderful photos from our swashbuckling pirates! Arrr!

Building stories in the Nursery

This week we have welcomed back some familiar faces and new children to the Nursery, eager and ready to start the new school year.

It hasn't taken long before the children were happily building in the Nursery garden, experimenting with joining crates together and adding a story to their play. Here is a lovely snippet of one of their games.

'I've got a rocket.'

'So, he's the driver.'

'Yes, I am. I've got so many buttons here,' pressing pretend buttons on the crate.

'This is a camera.'

'Are you ready guys'

There is a chorus of 'yes, yes, yes.'

'It's starting to take off.'

'Ooh now it's starting to come back to the hard ground.'

'I'm looking through the camera.'

'We are going on holiday to the seaside,' and all the boys jumped out of their rocket and ran to play in the sandpit.

I think that we may have a lovely group of emergent story tellers this year. I am looking forward to hearing their stories this year and watching them perform them. I think we may all like to travel to the seaside in a rocket, especially in the British summer traffic. I wonder where their adventures will take them next week.

HB



First adventure at Woodland School

This week Pre-Prep ventured out to Merton Field for their first Woodland School session of this new academic year. The sun was shining over the parched playing fields which are slowly recovering after the fierce summer temperatures.

As many children were experiencing the woods for the first time, we introduced the children to our Woodland School rules. The children went around the environment looking for gold stars which highlighted various hazards which they needed to be aware of, enabling them to enjoy the environment safely.

Before heading back to School, we enjoyed a snack of delicious apricot flapjacks made by our fantastic chef, Peter Kilby. A splendid start to what undoubtedly will be a wonderful year of developing our amazing outdoor space and learning in the natural environment.
MB



From the Boarding House to the Haunted House

In anticipation of their upcoming tour to the USA, the Cathedral Choristers returned early to CCCS for rehearsals. Naturally, the boys worked extremely hard but we made plenty of time to let our hair down.



It may not have been immediately apparent to the boys that when Mr Murray takes them to Laser Combat, they are engaging with a foe of considerable skill and competitiveness. I think they smelled an easy kill but soon discovered that he has been playing laser combat longer than they have been alive and is a veritable terminator... albeit in tweed.

Crazy Golf followed (any kind of golf is rather crazy when the Choristers are involved!). George scored an impressive 71 on a single hole, suggesting that the concept of golf may have escaped him entirely. Jasper, however, emerged victorious with a sprightly 21 for nine holes. I was particularly pleased to be keeping the score rather than playing. Some sports are best enjoyed from a safe distance.

Just before the start of term, we took the boys to St Giles Fair. Among all the rides and attractions, the boys seemed to feel most at home in the haunted house, where they wandered through the darkness under the constant threat of suddenly encountering a ghoul, ghost or other such creature springing out at them. I have always felt that the familiar is a great comfort.

It has been a pleasure to welcome all the boys back to school and I commend their efforts which paid real dividends during the first service back in the Cathedral.

JR



Welcome to the Boarding House

We are delighted to welcome Gabriel and Reggie to the Cathedral Choir as Form 4 waiting probationers.

JR

A Magical Evening at The Parents' Ball



More than 70 people took part in the incredible experience of the Parents' Ball in the Great Hall of Christ Church. We started with drinks on the lawn accompanied by the wonderful Yuko (@yuko_violinist_oxford_), followed by a wonderful meal, drinks and dancing (some staff included!).

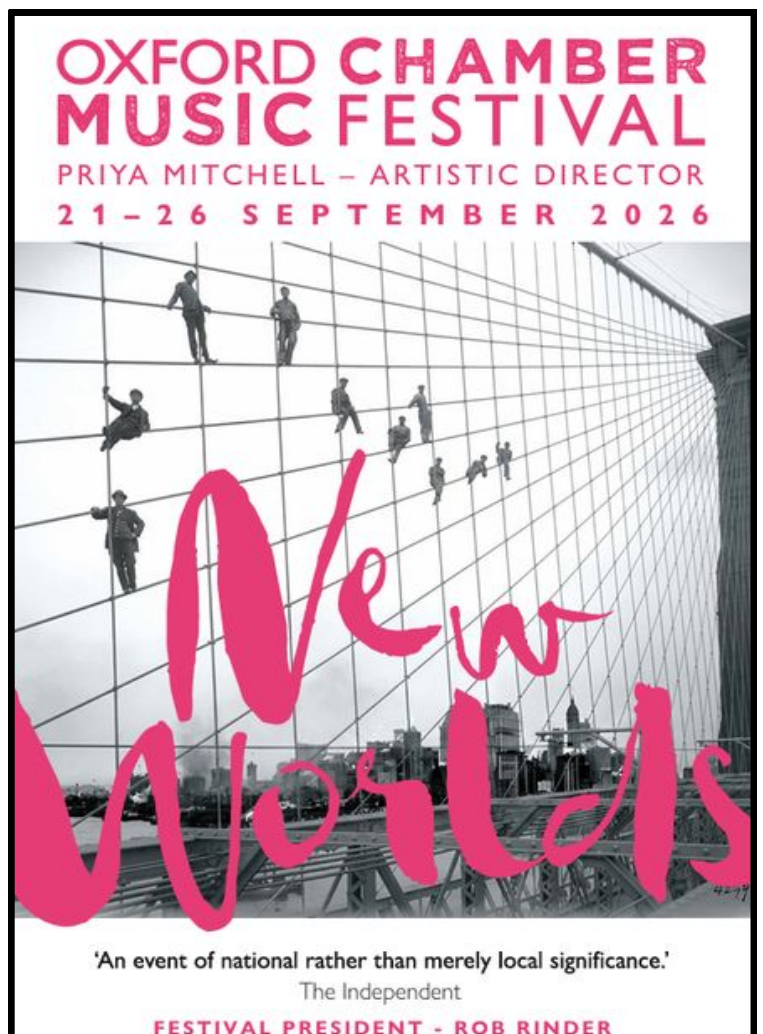
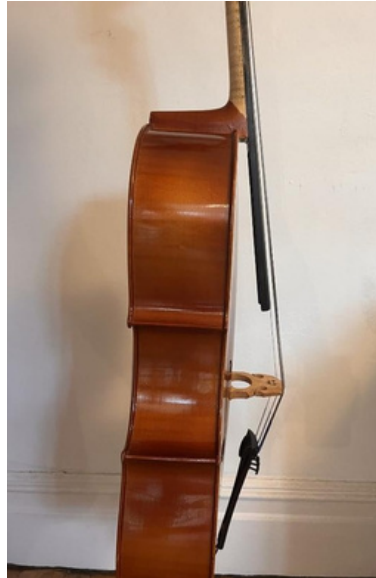
Many, many thanks to Mr Murray and Christ Church for all the support and assistance. Mr Crooks, Head of the Parents' Association



1/4 size cello for sale

Suitable for a child up to about 10 years old. Probably factory made, shows a Hungarian maker. Recently serviced with new strings and Wittner tailpiece, and comes with a case and new Hidersine bow. Spike extends to 36cm/14" and has a removable rubber stopper.

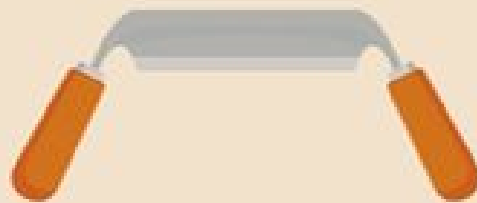
Looking for around £350 ono. Collection only from Oxford, UK.
Please contact biddell.s@cccs.org.uk



AN INTRODUCTION TO GREEN WOODWORKING

AT MAKESPACE OXFORD

**A day of hands-on traditional
craft by the canal.**



Sunday 04 October, 2026

09:30-17:00

Makespace Oxford (1 Aristotle Lane, OX2 6TP)

for all abilities

tools & materials provided

£120pp (book via QR code)

**With tutors Andrew Joye
& Ellis Stacey**



School Photobook



"Working at
the car
wash..."



Sorry boys, there's no pocket money this time!
Thank you Mr Robards and Mr Berry for
allowing the boys to practise their Life Skills!

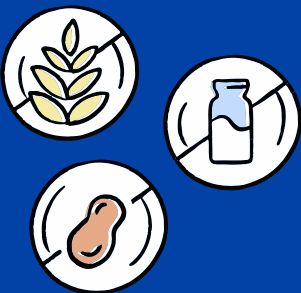


School Photobook

Choristers
know how to
have fun!



Help us keep the school community safe



If your child has an upcoming birthday and would like to celebrate with their CCCS friends, please place a cake order with our Chef, giving at least three days' notice. You can email Chef Peter directly at franks@cccs.org.uk
Please do not bring any outside food into the School.