

THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

11 October 2019

School was awash yesterday with so many of the staff and students wearing yellow accessories to mark World Mental Health Day and I must admit I was incredibly proud of the comprehensive show of support for this initiative. As the recent brochure that we sent home only a couple of weeks ago shows, we take wellbeing incredibly seriously here at school and we are driven to maintain a happy and supportive environment in which each and every student feels she can find a listening ear. It just so happens that some of those ears nowadays are longer and hairier than those belonging to the rest of the team (and I am not referring to any particular staff here)!

Scientific studies have proven that dogs can reduce stress, anxiety and depression and we are thrilled to have a good core of canines who bring so much joy and happiness to our entire school community. Parents of girls in the Pre-Prep and Junior School will be familiar with the lovely Nula, a former guide dog who now acts as a Pets as Therapy Dog (PAT) for our younger students who all adore her and take it in turns to walk, cuddle and care for her in their groups. Many of you will also know of Ty, my border collie, who is a firm favourite across the school and who now also can proudly say she is a recognised PAT dog having passed her assessments just a couple of weeks ago. More recently, we have welcomed other canine companions to our fold who are bringing untold joy to the girls during their lunch and break times: Smartie (floppy Shih Tzu) keeps visitors to the lunchtime club in The Hub entertained, Mouse (Dachshund puppy) has rapidly established herself as the Sixth Form's unofficial therapy dog and little Frankie (Pug puppy) when not play fighting with Mouse in the Rose Garden or Common Room, has quickly become a firm Thursday favourite from Junior School through to the Sixth Form.





Without doubt, our somewhat unique canine companions across the school have the capability to provide such comfort and happiness in addition to all the many other initiatives that we have in place to support the community's welfare and I am only too grateful to have them in our midst!



The therapeutic powers of music are also widely recognised and we have a huge number of girls who join our many choirs and ensembles or partake in the many music lessons on offer. Following last week's super successful showcase from Years 5 and 6, it was the turn of the Upper 3 through to Upper 4s to make their first public performance of the academic year on Wednesday and it really was a brilliant afternoon of music-making. To have so much talent coming up through the ranks is very exciting and a continuation of our well-established and excellent Performing Arts reputation has certainly been set in stone by our younger musicians. A huge 'bravo' to all those that took to the stage and entertained us with such a variety of instruments and music!



Today I have had the very great pleasure of meeting many of the Class of '99 who were returning for their reunion to celebrate 20 years since leaving. It never ceases to amaze me just what varied and successful career paths our alumnae take and this particular cohort included doctors, a surgeon, an analyst of the US stock market, a professional photographer, a policewoman and plenty who are juggling work and young families (one who, having had triplets a couple of years after her daughter was born, was at a stage in her life where she had four children under the age of two!). Impressive!



And finally, good luck to the Upper Five GCSE Drama students who will be performing their absolutely outstanding devised pieces tonight for their final exams. The theme is 'Dreams and Nightmares' and, having watched them in rehearsal, the performances are both very clever and excellently executed. You all deserve excellent marks in my view!

On to the week's news!

Biz Whizz Careers speakers for next week

Biz Whizz returns next Friday 18 October with another all-star cast of speakers. These careers talks are compulsory for all girls in Years 10 and 11 to attend and we ask that they sign up to one of the talks on the careers board outside the School Office. Equally, Sixth Formers are very welcome but, again, advance notice of which particular talk they would like to come to is required in order for us to keep an eye on numbers.

Talk #1

We welcome back Old Maynardian, Liberty Dixon, who is the Head of Foresight, Science and Technology at the Department of Trade as well as Senior Private Secretary to the Chief Scientific Advisor. “This involves influencing science policy and understanding how exciting new developments in science and technology may impact trade, from artificial intelligence and outer space through to your wearable Fitbits.

I am also responsible for making sure that the Department is thinking about the future - we often tend to look at very short timeframes but actually we need to be preparing for the big things further down the line: such as climate change, an ageing population, global health and changing overseas markets. Just to note - working on trade basically means working on everything, as it is affected by many different things!”



Talk #2



As the Director for Crisis Response and Independent Living at the British Red Cross, Deborah Fisher OBE was previously a British Diplomat at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for 23 years where she undertook a variety of roles and overseas postings including Tanzania, Paris and Ethiopia. In her final posting she was Deputy Head of Mission to the British Embassy in Ethiopia and Deputy Permanent Representative to the African Union. “My talk will focus primarily on the diplomatic service and the opportunities afforded by the voluntary sector, as well as how the development of transferable skills is key to a flexible and interesting career.”

Talk #3

We are also delighted to welcome Lee Ferris, founder of his own design practice Studio Agora Architects. Lee has been instrumental in a huge variety of projects from the retractable roof at Wimbledon through to designs in Iran, Jeddah, Kuwait and many, many more on both a commercial and domestic level here in the UK.

His will be a talk about keeping up with an ever-evolving world of materials and construction methods and the joys of working in such a fast-paced world where sustainability and the environment is the primary focus.





Pre-Prep mindfulness for World Mental Health Day

Pre-Prep marked World Mental Health Day with a group mindfulness session in the morning with soft toys from home, using the mindfulness programme Headspace which we use in the Pre-Prep and Junior School.

Year 3 enjoy Kent's Cavern trip



Year 3 had a fantastic educational visit to Kents Cavern in Torquay on Wednesday. They learned so much about the Stone Age from their extremely knowledgeable guide, Elliot. For example, down in the Rocky Chamber you see Nature's artistry, with stalagmites and stalactites. Returning through Clinkicks Gallery into the Cave of Inscriptions and the Labyrinth to see examples of the earliest tools ever found in Britain, and the bones and teeth from extinct beasts like cave bears, woolly rhinos and mammoths. Along with cave art and excavating gems, this was an incredibly amazing day for all of us, topped by a beautiful rainbow which appeared just as we hopped on the bus to head home.

More hockey successes

Congratulations to our various hockey teams who have posted yet further fantastic results this week. The Under 18s took a convincing 2-0 victory against the Blundell's 2nd XI on Tuesday and the Under 11 A&B teams also both won their matches against St Peter's Lympstone on Wednesday.



First 'word millionaires' of the academic year

Many congratulations to our first Accelerated Reader word millionaires for this school year! Ita is the first word millionaire in the Senior School, and Sasha is the first in the Junior School. To become a word millionaire, girls need to pass Accelerated Reader quizzes on books which contain a total of over one million words. To reward them for the fantastic achievement of being first in the school, each girl was presented with a book, and there will be further opportunities for them to win prizes during the year. Our new literacy coordinator, Mrs Bean, was immensely impressed with the girls' achievements and looks forward to congratulating more word millionaires over the course of this year.



The Accelerated Reader reading scheme is used by all girls in Year 6, Upper 3 and Lower 4. Information about the scheme will be sent to parents soon so that they can support their daughter's reading at home.

STEMM Clubbers make greenhouse from recycled plastic



This week at STEMM club we have been developing our exterior structure for our eco-friendly greenhouse to grow produce for our kitchen at school and reduce plastic waste. We have been developing the structure of the greenhouse by cutting off the bottoms of plastic bottles we collected and connecting them together with thick rope passing through the center and then melting the cut out edges together. We hope this will help reduce the plastic waste we produce at our school.



Great variety at the Music Showcase

Following the success of the House Song and Junior School Showcase it was the turn of musicians from Upper 3 - Upper 4 to showcase their talent on Wednesday evening. There was a wonderful selection of soloists with vocal performances from different genres and a chance to hear a harp, trumpet and the violin. Well done to all the girls who took part - Claudia, Cathryn, Millie, Evie, Cia, Dora, Liberty, Kristina & Maddy - who are clearly great talents and ones to watch and listen out for.

Accompanying 'The Kaizens' at Plymouth Pavillions

Last Friday, fresh from the House Music competition, Alyssa (Upper 6), Thalia and Emily (both Lower 6) raced down to Plymouth Pavillions to perform alongside the rock group 'The Kaizens' as members of the Devon Youth Symphony Orchestra. They performed ten pieces with the band; a truly amazing experience. With a mosh pit, lighting effects and sound mixing to contend with it was certainly a challenge and an event to remember.



Head of Junior Music conducts three day tour of Normandy



Mrs Smith, our Head of Junior Music spent three days in Normandy last week conducting the Chivenor Military Ladies Choir. The choir sang at the American Cemetery above Omaha Beach at Colleville-sur-Mer, gave a concert at Ste Mere Eglise and also performed at Pegasus Bridge. The ladies also visited Arramanches and laid wreaths at Bayeux Cemetery. It was a great honour for the choir to be invited to perform at these enormously historical places and an experience which Mrs Smith and the ladies in her choir will never forget.

Having a pre-Christmas clear-out? Old candles required by Young Enterprise team

If you have any half used or unwanted candles the girls in the Young Enterprise team would be pleased to relieve you of them for their latest environmentally friendly products to sell.

“Our plan this year is to recycle paper from all around school to make our own paper that will eventually be cards with seeds embedded in so that the cards can be planted and produce flowers. This is in the aim to help bees pollinate as well as grow plants and flowers which is proven to increase people’s mental health and wellness.



However we are requiring old candles as part of our design. If you are able to donate, please can you hand the candles to your daughter and ask her to pop them in the box which will be in Reception. And thank you in advance!”

Have a great weekend!

Sarah Dunn
Headmistress