

Welcome everyone to the Christmas edition of our Newsletter, which is filled with a selection of the enriching experiences and wonderful achievements that our students and staff have been a part of over these past seven weeks. It is truly a pleasure to reflect on the wide range of activities that our pupils are able to be a part of, as well as to read some of the literary contributions from the students; a huge congratulations if your work made it into this publication.

I'm pleased to say that the school continues to go from strength to strength, with the recently announced 1<sup>st</sup> choice Year 7 applications to St John's for September 2018 highlighting that we are now more over-subscribed than we have ever been before; a fantastic vote of confidence from the local community in the school.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support of St John's and to wish you all the very best for the holidays. I sincerely hope that you and your family have a very Happy and Holy Christmas as well as a prosperous New Year.

Mr Barron *Head Teacher*



Our Carol Service this year was a beautiful celebration and given the wholesale commercialisation of Christmas, was a real opportunity to bring some spiritual focus and meaning back to the season.

Many of our students, together with families and friends of all faiths and none, as well as parishioners and friends of St John's Catholic School came to sing and make a little space in all their busy preparations to support us in bringing light and love into Christmas.

Many thanks to all those who led the music and singing, those that undertook the readings, or helped with set-up and mince pies afterwards, to Fr Innocent and all those that came to join us.

Stay blessed

Deacon Michael *Chaplain*

## UCL collaborate with St. John's

We were very lucky this term to have Dr Hilton visit us from the University College London (UCL). The Year 7s took part in a session whereby Dr Hilton introduced the school and students to the possible uses of 3D printers in our curriculum. The Year 7s appreciated this greatly and were very enthusiastic about the concept of this; they were particularly impressed by Dr Hilton's actual 3D brain! The school are now collaborating with the university and have three 3D printers on loan which will be utilised in various departments across the school throughout the next few terms.

The Year 7s will eventually have an exciting opportunity to work with a team of scientists from UCL in an extra-curricular club afterschool. During these sessions they will combine their creative and practical skills to create their unique ideas. The school expresses its sincerest thanks to Dr Hilton and UCL for this excellent opportunity.

Mr J Steadman *Head of Year 7*



### **Congratulations** to the Boys Table Tennis

Under 16 silver medallist team:

Jacob Goodchild, Viltenis Stasiukaitis, Emmanuel Daramola, Kacper Medlewski

## Year 7 hit gold!

What a fantastic Term 2 Year 7 students are having. The Year 7s are really thriving especially when it comes to their good comments. With totals now reaching over the 8000 mark I am very proud of this cohort's achievements. With this admirable effort obviously comes rewards and I would like to share with you some special announcements.

As you all know students work towards good comment certificates across the year and it gives me great pleasure to congratulate Owen Biggs (7ASP) in reaching the first **Gold Certificate** in the whole of the school. This was presented by the Deputy Head, Mr O'Shea, in our Year 7 assembly. Owen has some very close competition with several students being only a few good comments away from the top position; all is to play for. As well as individual successes I am pleased to say that 7KBP achieved the most good comments, as a form, in the whole of KS3.

There have been some other very notable performances this term. Tegan Osei-Yaw achieved **12 Outstanding Attitude to Learning** grades in her recent report and is a shining example to the rest of the Year group. Many students have achieved 100% attendance to date and two forms are currently above 98% attendance, this is a truly outstanding effort. I look forward to this continuing success in the future, and as I frequently say to the Year 7s 'the bar should only be, raised not lowered!'

Mr J Steadman *Head of Year 7*



**Congratulations**  
Patrick Barron  
Year 7 – Runner  
up in Kent  
Cooks Final

## Inter- Faith Week

During Inter-faith week, a group of Year 10 students and Miss Hodgins attended an inter-faith dialogue at The Grand to listen to a debate between five different religions about Peace and War.

After hearing about the five religions we joined together to ask questions and to discuss what we had learned, the group came up with questions to pose to the representatives. For example, we asked the Hindu representative 'what is classed as evil?' and she responded by saying evil is the wrong things people choose to do such as murder and theft. My classmates and I really enjoyed this event it was really interesting to hear the different perspectives from different faiths.

Maria Rodrigues *Year 10*



I would like to thank all pupils for their engagement in 'Anti-bullying' week this year. The theme of the week was 'all different, all equal' and to symbolise this, all staff and students wore odd socks. The pupils were amazing and went along with this notion - donating £1 each in the process.

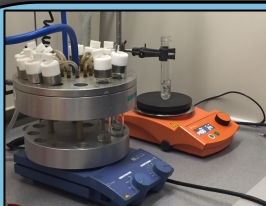
We raised £1,060, which we have donated to the anti-bullying alliance so they can keep up their good work in supporting young people who have been bullied.

Here is link that gives advice if you are worried about your child being bullied.

[file:///stj-fp01/staffdata\\$/OKelham514/Documents/SAFEGUARDING/20172018/Antibullying/Top-tips-for-parents-and-carers\(1\).pdf](file:///stj-fp01/staffdata$/OKelham514/Documents/SAFEGUARDING/20172018/Antibullying/Top-tips-for-parents-and-carers(1).pdf)

Alternatively please feel free to contact your child's pastoral manager and they will help to support you.

Mrs Kelham *Senior Assistant*



## London School of Pharmacy

On the November 20<sup>th</sup>, Year 12 and 13 A Level Biology and Chemistry students travelled to London to the School of Pharmacy, University College London.

When we arrived at UCL we were greeted by a group of PhD students who looked after us for the remainder of the day.

During the visit our students were given a careers presentation, were shown cutting edge technology involving 3D printing, given a presentation on the uses of 3D printing in the medical field as well as a tour of the Pharmacy faculty. We would sincerely like to thank the Senior Chemistry Lecturer Dr Stephen Hilton who made this visit possible as well as his enthusiastic PhD students who took time out of their extremely busy schedule to make us feel so welcome. Our students particularly enjoyed taking their blood pressure over lunch. A few students were even brave enough to have an electrocardiogram (ECG) taken. The students were blown away with the new labs, equipment, facilities, career possibilities and opportunities for research that UCL offered, and it gave them a great insight into the world of University.

Finally we would like to thank the Royal Society of Chemistry for securing us with a bursary, which enabled us to take our students to this event free of charge.

Mrs N Ball *Science Teacher*



## Literary Legends

### **Sinead Cox Year 10**

The darkness descends, and she rises above all. She radiates a light so bright that it is dark. Around her, the dark blanket is glittered with voluminous white dots. For hours, she ponders, and her love keeps her beautiful, solar aura emanating. She thinks of her love often, her light growing brighter as her beau enters her mind, as though she were her whole heart. And when the time comes, she will descend, to allow her love to live and breathe dazzling warmth. She admires her from below, whispering her infatuation for her. She falls everyday so that she can live.

### **Ethan Wise Year 10**

Your eyes twitch fervently as you wake up in the middle of the night in a place you've never seen before. Leaves crepitate beneath you as you stand and frigid air rushes your body. Instinct is to find familiarity with each mile between then topiary déjà vu is there greeting you. Eventually, you discover a path and follow. Further, in the distance you can barely make out through the black of the night a lithe figure. You call for help. It turns, but that spells mistake. It hurtles at you. Everything goes black. Rustling. A scream. Silence settles; death in accompaniment.

### **Rajan Sathie Year 10**

I woke up, I actually woke up.

By this time, I should have been gone. I look back at the tattoo; 29th of February 2020 and I check my calendar. "Today is the 1st of March."

My head is filled with confusion, swirling thoughts, all I think to myself is that I should be gone. I've waited for this day since I've been born; now it amounts to nothing. I search for clues; every person I know has died on their tattooed date. Then I realise it's a leap year, my life here is now an uncertainty.

### **Lewis Webb Year 10**

The last thing I remember is the day descending into an oily darkness. I was surrounded by leafy skyscrapers. I felt my hardened feet pound over the shrivelled foliage; the beacon of hope in the sky kept me moving.

I halted, turned around; I felt a freakish shadow shimmer over me. It was then that I knew the culmination of my hard work had paid off, or so I thought...

### **Raphael Mouradian Year 7**

Nothing but silence filled the air as the rotation of the world was slowing to a stop. The world was ending. Suddenly... a colossal boom! An explosion swarmed the globe, depleting the silence. They were notorious, they were deadly, they were shadows... Darkem, a feared combat leopard, carries a dark gloomy weapon that emits demonic energy from the face of the blade. Possessor, a fearless, ferocious fighter who can force your actions and thoughts. A deadly ghoul with fangs like daggers and claws like steel. Yet, they're surrounding you... You're seeing shadows.

### **Khadija Boutildja Year 7**

I got off the plane, the terminal was empty... I headed out of the airport, dizzy from the unusual spin of the plane ride. I went in search for a nearby hotel to stay in for a few months - instead, there was no signal, no anything. A newspaper fell at my feet, great, at least something about the news. However, when I took a glance at it, I dropped it, and stared out into the streets, knowing that I would never get back.

The date was 1954.

### **Jenty Powell Year 7**

At birth everyone is tattooed with their date of death, hers was yesterday... she had auburn red hair and deep black eyes, with rags for clothes. These are the dark days; the King rules this Kingdom, in grief and sadness from losing his wife. He tries to hide it but it isn't that easy. At birth the King's men come round and check your mark, once you're 'dead' they return. The prophecy states whoever survives their date will overthrow the King. She starts to shake uncontrollably,



**Badminton District Pairs Winners  
and Team Runners up!**

### Othello Lectures

“Listening to such fascinating lectures has really helped my knowledge of the play.” Ellie Thomas

“An incredibly useful experience.” Quinn Smith

“We gained a great understanding of the context of Shakespeare’s play which we can use in the exam” Eden Jackson-Knowles



Mrs Khan’s A-level English Literature class recently enjoyed a day at London’s Shaftesbury Avenue to attend a day of lectures on the play, Othello.

The day began at 11.00 am and the last lecture finished at 3.30 pm. From then onwards, we made the most of our trip and visited the famous Covent Garden for some Christmas present purchases.

The students found the lectures enlightening and an invaluable aid to support them in their upcoming examinations. The opportunity of listening to three University lecturers, plus a chief examiner, enabled the students to gain several interpretations of the play, as well as picking up some very useful examination techniques.

Mrs J Khan *English Teacher*



As part of the BTEC Level 2 Media Course, students attended the Harry Potter Experience at Warner Bros Studios. Students enjoyed the tour where they saw the original sets used in the Harry Potter films and were able to interact with staff and displays and complete a visual worksheet for their coursework. The trip is an integral part of their Media Course and enhances their understanding of film production.

Mr S Warwick *Media Teacher*

### Remembrance 2017

We would like to extend a huge thank you to all who contributed to the hugely successful Poppy Appeal.

We were honoured to organize and take part in the Denton Parish Memorial service, which was attended by a great many local dignitaries. We also played a very active role in the Borough Remembrance ceremony at Windmill Hill on Remembrance Sunday. Poppies created by our KS3 students were ‘planted’ in front of the Memorial at this service. Year 12 student Joel Williams-Modeste read a very moving poem at the end of the Ceremony.



On Thursday 15th November, the Duke of Cambridge launched a national, youth-led, code of conduct for the internet. The code called '[Stop, Speak, Support](#)' aims to reach every 11-16 year old in Britain, to empower them to stop cyberbullying, by speaking out and seeking support.

Stop, Speak, Support aims to help young people spot cyberbullying and know what steps they can take to stop it happening and provide support to the person being bullied. The code encourages young people to:

### STOP

- **Action 1:** Take time out before getting involved, and don't share or like negative comments.
- **Action 2:** Try and get an overview of what's really going on.
- **Action 3:** Check the community guidelines for the site you're on.

### SPEAK

- **Action 1:** Ask an adult or friend that you can trust for advice.
- **Action 2:** Use the report button for the social media it's happening on.
- **Action 3:** Speak to one of the charities set up to help with situations like this, such as Childline.

### SUPPORT

- **Action 1:** Give the person being bullied a supportive message to let them know they're not alone.
- **Action 2:** Encourage the person being bullied to talk to someone they can trust.
- **Action 3:** Give the person being bullied a positive distraction from the situation.



On the November 14<sup>th</sup>, Mrs Ball and Mr Sutton took the Year 12 Chemistry students to London to see a series of presentations run by The Training Partnership.

Chemistry in Action was a fantastic opportunity for our students to see the different careers they could have in Chemistry and what degree they would need in order to achieve that future, dream job.

Our students attended the following sessions: The periodic table of the oceans, Dying to be beautiful, Brain-inspired electronics with metal-oxide chemistries (Nanotechnology), Indestructible energy and the Chemistry of chocolate. During all these sessions the scientists that presented shared the story of how they got into Science and what was needed to achieve their goals. The Scientists shared stories about their jobs, in particular the oceanographer who spoke about how her research has taken her to the Antarctic and Arctic on several occasions. She spoke to us about her findings and how they showed a correlation to Global warming.

*Mrs N Ball Science Teacher*

### "The Play that goes Wrong"

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, our GCSE and BTEC students went up to London with the drama department to see 'The play that goes wrong'. It was simply amazing. There was not a single person who did not find it hilarious, and who did not have a smile on their face. I know I'm not only speaking for myself when I say that we all walked out of the Duchess Theatre wanting to tackle a piece of comedy.

*Jessica Austin Year 12*





Students from the BTEC Home Cooking Skills classes hosted the annual Community Afternoon Tea on the 7<sup>th</sup> December. Pupils prepared a selection of festive sandwiches and sweet treats, which were then served to local dignitaries, St. John's parishioners and the pupils' family members. Entertainment was provided by a number of Dance students in the form of a Lindy Hop and Contemporary dance duet, both of which wouldn't have looked out of place on Strictly Come Dancing! The choir also joined in with the festivities by singing a range of traditional carols. The event was a huge success with students, staff and guests all enjoying the afternoon.

Miss S Gosling *Food and Nutrition Teacher*

## Congratulations Mr Murphy!



Legacy 110 is a nationwide initiative supported by the Institute of Education to promote studies of World War 1 in schools nationwide. The Legacy 110 award was made to five schools at the River Room, Houses of Parliament. The awards ceremony included six teachers from schools all over the country were awarded the status of Senior Leader in Education. Among those given the award was our very own Mr Murphy, Head of History having completed a two year course.

The awards were presented by Neil Carmichael, MP for Stroud, Gloucestershire and a noted Historian.

## Year 8 Success!

Year 8 have had another superb term leading up to the Christmas break. It is pleasing to share with you the number of students who have been rewarded for their outstanding efforts across a variety of subjects. To date, 93 students have received a positive phone call home; 168 students have received a postcard home for reaching the 20 good comment milestone; 110 students have received a **Bronze Certificate** for reaching the 30 good comment milestone and 11 students have received a **Silver Certificate** for reaching the 50 good comment milestone. The students below deserve special recognition for achieving the highest good comment totals in Year 8:

- Abigail Boyle (8CHP) = 66 good comments
- Jacqueline Carl (8CCA) = 57 good comments
- Mark Jones (8CCA) = 57 good comments
- John Kefford (8GOC) = 54 good comments
- Holly Wells (8CHP) = 51 good comments
- Ryan Smith (8RSC) = 50 good comments
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I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support at Year 8 Parents' Evening on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November. The attendance figure from the night was 89%, which is a school record!

## 2017 Christmas Bazaar

The school was a plain canvas. It was mundane and ordinary; no colour and light embellished it, no emotions were displayed on it. And then an artist in the form of our parish began to paint the canvas. And it was like watching a flower bloom. The day was painted with serenity, tranquillity and was centred on community. We came together as a parish and used our talents to make the day a success. And it was! There were many different stalls to discover and purchase from. To begin with, there was the bookstall; an organised collection of books awaited their new owners. People were enticed and soon bought the compelling reads. Furthermore, the rich mix of cultures embedded themselves into the event; exotic tastes of an African cuisine and the appetising spices of India were incorporated into the dishes served. Moreover, elegantly decorated cakes were baked and arranged in colour, shape and taste. Iced Christmas reindeers grinned at you from the tables and gingerbread men smiled shyly at passers-by.

In addition to this, a nail bar was set up. Splashes of bright colours soon adorned people's nails and were an extension of the artist's imagination. From bright red nails with silver enhancements to simple, classic manicures. The enthusiasm for beauty didn't stop there. Generous donors bequeathed heaps of skincare. Sweet-smelling body lotions and cordial body wash sets quickly sold. The skincare was abundant and varied based on skin requirement. Likewise, the jewellery was copious. An entire stall and a half dedicated to it. Bright jewels sparkled and glistened in the afternoon sun and beamed as they were admired and eventually bought. In conjunction with this, glittery handbags and backpacks were traded.

Children were ecstatic over how many toys were at the stalls. Barbie dolls, cars, trains and everything under the sun being sold to the youngsters. Dolls with voluminous hair and pretty dresses rapidly caught the eye of buyers, as did the speedy cars and aeroplanes. A penguin stall was set up and many prizes were won. To expand on this, a big raffle was drawn and many prizes were received: champagne bottles, big Christmas sets etc.

Despite all this it wasn't the things sold that were the best part, it was seeing our community come together and celebrate who we are. Everyone was seated in the heart of the school and it truly did beat with comfort and joy. And so it was like a painting; the colours of contentment and happiness were illustrated perfectly. It was a painting frozen in time, to be relived by looking at it but never to be changed. People were laughing and cheering for the day that they had created. For it was a day of prosperity and success. All of us came together because of that willingness to help and support our parish and to highlight the good of the Christian faith that made the day such an extraordinary success.



### InterHouse Super 6 WarHorse event

The WarHorse figures, the latest in the InterHouse Super 6 events, were unveiled on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Year 8 and several distinguished guests were the audience for a talk by the Historian and Author Mr Andrew Robertshaw. Mr Robertshaw both acted and was consultant to the film Warhorse and recounted the many interesting aspects of being involved in the making of the film. The talk was highly interesting and entertaining and the audience

was hugely amused and intrigued. After the talk, the guests which included Councillors Greta Goatley and David Hurley, Deputy Mayor, judged the event but came to the conclusion that it was a three-way tie! The War Horses are on display at the school at the moment and truly reflect the brilliance of the staff of the Art Department working with 6<sup>th</sup> Form Students. Truly outstanding. The War Horses will eventually be on display at the Woodville Halls, Gravesend and County Hall, Maidstone.



## Chaplain's Corner

As Christmas is almost upon us how ready do we feel? Are we ready for Jesus to be born in our hearts? Among all the frenzy of activity, the presents, the food and celebrations, or perhaps the struggles to afford and meet the children's expectations, do we expect to be renewed spiritually or express our love and appreciation for what God has done for us? Will we accept his invitation to a real and personal relationship?

Jesus famously said 'man does not live on bread alone'; at this time of year we might adapt that to say 'man does not live on Turkey alone!' God is the very source of life to whom we owe our very ability to love. Christmas reminds us that our ability to love is perfected by the grace of God that we receive by opening our hearts to experience his love for us.

Imagine a shepherd who despite the angel's invitation decides not to go and visit the child Jesus with the others. The others return clearly moved; somehow changed, somehow lifted and more fully alive, and she regrets her decision not to go. Then she asks herself is it too late? She remembers the words of the angel that a saviour has been born to us; if he is our saviour, then surely he will stay with us, so it's not too late is it?



Stay blessed

Deacon Michael *Chaplain*

