



Parent Newsletter

Summer 2023

Achievements in Music

Lily Turner (Year 10) - Grade 5 Musical Theatre Singing - Distinction

Sienna May-Knight (Year 10) - Grade 5 Musical Theatre Singing – Distinction

Alex Wallaart (Year 7) - Grade 4 Piano - Distinction

We would like to offer our huge congratulations to Luke Russell (Year 11), who has been successful in his audition with Aldeburgh Young Musicians, a progressive artist development programme based at Snape Maltings Concert Hall. He is the third student from Soham Village College to achieve this, following in the footsteps of Dominic Wills and Lauren Peck. He will now have the opportunity to work with professional musicians and experts during weekends and school holidays, participating in specialist masterclasses, competitions and composition workshops. We wish Luke every success in the future.

Music Department

The summer term has been another performance-filled time of year in the music department. Not only did we host the exciting and highly anticipated Young Musician of the Year final, but we also presented two evening music showcases with Year 11 and Year 10 music GCSE students. These evenings are informal concerts, designed to showcase the performances that our students have been working on throughout the year, as part of their course. They are always a wonderful celebration of the progress and achievements students have made in music, full of a wide range of instruments, musical styles and ensembles. Parents commented on the incredible standard of performances and on the impressive confidence the students showed when performing to an audience (many for the first time). Proceeds raised from both events will go towards new instruments and resources for our students to use in music lessons, so that we can offer the best

possible musical experiences for everyone in school. Thank you for your ongoing support of these events.





Young Musician of the Year 2023

We were delighted to present another exceptional evening of musical performances at our Young Musician of the Year Final. Students from Soham Village College and feeder primary schools performed to a sell-out audience of over 200, as they competed for the title of 'Young Musician of the Year 2023'. The adjudicator, Richard Latham, was incredibly impressed with the standard of the performances and commented that some of the performances were professional standard. The overall Young Musician of the Year winner was Bethany, with her beautiful and incredibly moving rendition of 'With You' from the musical 'Ghost'. Overall Primary Young Musician of the Year was Adriana who performed a wonderfully stylish piano piece called 'The Spanish Guitar'. The other award winners were:

Stephen Kenna Shield for Commitment and Dedication to Music - Grace

KS4 Singer of the Year - Bethany

KS4 Instrumentalist of the Year - Luke (piano)

Runner-up – Noah (piano)

KS3 Singer of the Year - Maia

KS3 Instrumentalist of the Year - Alexander (piano)

Runner-up - Jasmine (cello)

KS2 Musician of the Year - Adriana (piano)

2nd place - George (drum kit)

3rd place - Lizzie (violin)





Celebration Evening

A highlight of the calendar is our annual celebration evening where we have the opportunity to recognise students' achievement and progress across the curriculum. In addition, it gives us the chance to welcome back our Year 11 students who have been selected for subject prizes. This year we were joined by visiting speaker Rev Eleanor Whalley who presented the awards to the students.

The Gimbert Cup for encapsulating the ethos of the school was awarded to Kara.

The Hunt Hereward Trophy for courage and loyalty was awarded to Leo.

The Stubbs Cup for services to the school was awarded to Lucy.

The Muir Cup for commitment to school sport was awarded to Leah.



The House System

Thanks to all the students and staff who voted in the recent online survey to decide our new House names. More than 700 people took part in the vote.

Next year's Houses will be called...



Cambridge Literary Festival

A group of Year 9 and Year 10 students attended an event at the Cambridge Union, as part of this year's Cambridge Literary Festival. Students heard from world-renowned and award-winning authors Bernadine Evaristo and Ali Smith, who were joined by David Herd from *Refugee Tales*. Inspired by *The Litmus School Writing Project* (run by Trinity College) the theme of this event was 'Over the Border'. All students received a copy of 'Refugee Tales', which combines authors' retellings and first-hand accounts of those who have been detained all over the world.



Parliamentary Debating Trip to the Houses of Parliament

The school debating team meets fortnightly to learn how to passionately and respectfully debate important issues that impact on people's lives. In October, the team prepared and delivered an exciting debate for Lucy Frazer MP when she came to visit Soham Village College. She gave excellent individual feedback to all students involved and picked two finalists who were given the opportunity to debate in the Houses of Parliament. In May, the whole team relished in the opportunity to embark on a trip to London to see the sights of Parliament and have a tour of the House of Commons where Lucy Frazer talked about how parliament worked. The finalists (supported by the rest of the team) went on to debate with and against other local schools in an articulate and passionate style. They were a real credit to the school.

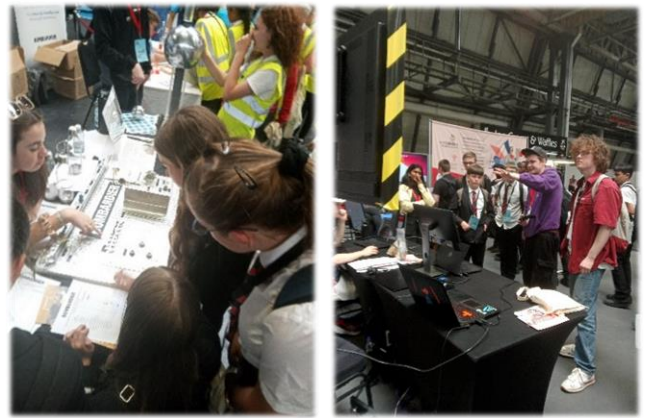
Year 10 Geography Fieldwork

In June, Year 10 students visited West Runton and Sheringham to complete their GCSE geography fieldwork. Students were researching the effectiveness of sea defences and using a variety of geographical techniques learnt in the classroom prior to the trip. They have followed up their practical work by evaluating their methods and drawing conclusions from the data gathered. It was fantastic to be learning out of the classroom, and the students were a credit to the school for the duration of the trip.



The Big Bang Fair

A group of Year 8 students had the exciting opportunity to visit the Big Bang Fair at the NEC in Birmingham this term. The students embraced the show with full enthusiasm, diving into the many exhibits on offer. There was a lot to keep them busy. They took part in activities such as: writing code to fly a drone; working with the BBC and their technology to report and present a headline news story; modelling radioactivity with nerf guns; helping live test video-games; examining eyes and ears as audiologists and optometrists; exploring the variety of STEM subjects offered by the University of Wolverhampton; using microscopes to reveal the insect world's most beautiful examples; working with Rolls Royce engineers to discover how they are working towards a cleaner future and experiencing some roles in the RAF using VR simulation. As we left, the students were buzzing about all the activities they had taken part in. They were all inspired by the STEM ambassadors they had spoken to throughout the day.



Year 7-day trip to Boulogne

Forty Year 7 students spent the day in Boulogne-sur-Mer on Friday 16 June. Travelling through the Channel Tunnel was a new experience for many of the group. It was a beautiful sunny day and after a picnic we visited a bakery, Boulogne old town and finally a hypermarket. Students had completed a research sheet before the trip and took part in a photo challenge in Boulogne with excellent results. The photos are now on display in the languages department. Everyone enjoyed the trip very much and many students said they would like to stay for a week.

Normandy Visit

In July, Year 8 students enjoyed a week immersed in history and French culture.

The week was packed full of experiences. We visited the 1000-year-old Bayeux Tapestry, D Day landing beaches, museums and war cemeteries. Students also baked their own organic baguettes at the Boulangerie Les Co-Pains and were immersed in the life of a goat farmer at the Les Saffries goat farm. Culinary experiences included tasting snails, frogs' legs, crêpes and goats cheese.

We so were so proud of the students who were a credit to Soham Village College throughout the visit. The teachers received praise and numerous compliments on the students' excellent behaviour, use of French and positive attitude.



Wicken Fen 125 Year Anniversary Workshop

Year 7 students recently enjoyed participating in a workshop with a local artist. The workshop was in collaboration with Wicken Fen, Babylon Arts and The National Trust to celebrate the 125-year anniversary of the Wicken Fen site.

The workshop saw students experimenting with clay to make self-portraits and artefacts of the future. Students learnt about artefacts that would have been used by the people that lived in Wicken Fen 125 years ago. Then students made their own artefacts inspired by objects from today, that people may be interested to see in 125 years' time.

The students produced beautiful work and were praised for their creativity and collaboration during the workshop.



Year 7 Bastille Day

On Friday 14th July Year 7 were off timetable for some extracurricular fun, learning about and celebrating the French Revolution. Everyone wore the colours of the French flag and participated in various activities including making brioche, learning about the history of the Revolution and using photoshop to design Eiffel Tower artwork.

The day finished with an assembly where an unlucky Mr Knight faced the chop in the guillotine and we sang the Marseillaise while waving our red, white and blue pompoms!



Ely Stained Glass Museum Trip

Year 7 students recently enjoyed a joint art and history trip to Ely Cathedral and its Stained Glass Museum.

The trip consisted of three activities: a 'discover stained glass' workshop where students learnt about the history of stained glass; a glass fusing workshop and a tour of the cathedral. This was an excellent opportunity for our students to develop their artistic skills in a new material and to increase their historical knowledge of stained glass and the medieval period.

The students had a fun day and were really enthusiastic about what they had learnt and experienced. Museum and cathedral staff praised our students for their attitudes throughout the day.



Key Stage 3 Art and Design Exhibition

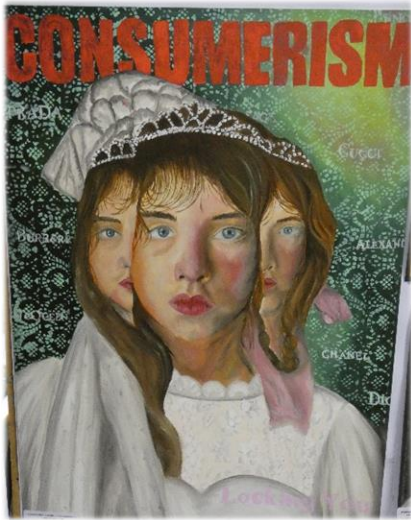
The Art Department celebrated the hard work and talent of our dedicated KS3 artists with students, parents, family and friends. The students have produced high quality and skilful work throughout the year, and it was lovely to celebrate their efforts. We look forward to seeing what they make next year.



Class of 2023 Key Stage 4 GCSE Art Exhibition







Drama Department

It has been an exciting year for Drama with Key Stage 3 showcases, theatre trips, student led clubs and some outstanding exam work.

Highlights of the year were the National Theatre Connections festival with "Circle Dreams" performed by students at Soham Village College

And at the Garage Theatre in Norwich. Students saw an exciting piece of Physical Theatre, "Kin" by Gecko Theatre.

We also took GCSE students to the Fitzwilliam to inspire their practical work which had a huge impact on the exam pieces.

Business Department

This year, our GCSE Business students have had the opportunity to work with three different businesses, each representing a different functional area from the curriculum. The students began looking at setting up a business in lessons and were lucky enough to have Roz Windsor (founder of The Big Jewellery Company) come to talk to the students about market research and her journey to being a small business owner. The students took part in a focus group about the jewellery and designed new product ideas fitting in with the brand.



Chief Financial Officer Francis Laud from G's brought some lettuces into class to discuss how profit is made from selling products to supermarkets. We looked at the production of vegetables from seed to shop and thought about the costs involved with growing one product. This really got the students thinking about the current economic climate and the impact on businesses such as supermarkets and the impact on customers. We had a great discussion about future career paths within large organisations and apprenticeship routes into different industries.



The Year 10 project this year was working with Turners on sustainable business models. We have worked closely with Stephen Blackmore throughout the summer term. He challenged the students to see whether changing to Battery Electric Vehicles would be a good idea for a transport company. The challenge mirrored a real scenario that lots of large companies are facing, trying to reduce emissions to be more environmentally friendly. The students created presentations, calculating the return on investment for Battery Electric Vehicles in comparison to Diesel engines. They also considered stakeholder views and marketing. Students then presented their findings and had the opportunity to apply to go to the University of Cambridge to see how research is carried out in a real-life project. David Cebon and his team hosted a group of students at the Dyson Centre for Engineering Design.

The students had a tour and a talk about sustainable energy linking closely to ethics, the environment and stakeholders which are significant elements of the GCSE course.



Soham Village College Diversity

As part of the school's effort to promote diversity and raise the aspirations of students from the black and ethnic minority communities, Soham Village College has embarked on a mission this year to enhance our provision around these

issues. This has included setting up a group for students to make suggestions, meet together and to talk about aspects affecting them. Several school policies have also been amended to bring us more in line with modern day society and we have recently invited a speaker in to talk to students about ambition and aspiration. We intend to continue this work into the next academic year with the possibility of some charity work and more events that will celebrate our diversity.



Careers Activity round up Summer 2023

Future Skills Questionnaire

Year 7 and Year 9 students all completed a Future Skills questionnaire which is used annually to assess the year group's level of understanding of all things Post 16 and careers related. They were asked to rate their skill levels (which employers now focus on), and also how positive they felt when asked to think about their own future from an education and work perspective. The responses help the Careers Team to adapt the careers programme going forward, so students are given the best support possible.

Year 9 Ely Courtroom Visit

Students with an interest in working in the legal sector were invited on a courtroom experience day at the old Ely Magistrates Court. After a presentation and group discussion with members of the local District Council, students took part in a mock court case, and they all played different roles. We were lucky enough to be joined by an actual sitting judge who oversaw the case and

provided a great insight into working in the legal sector.



Year 10 College Taster Days

Our Year 10 students were able to visit some of the Post 16 colleges during June and July for a taster day as they prepared themselves for their college applications in the autumn term. Many more took part in open evenings where parents and carers had the opportunity to visit the colleges and meet tutors and students. This activity will go a long way in helping students make well-judged informed decisions about their next steps on their educational journeys.

Year 11 St John's College Visit

A group of Year 11 students spent a wonderful day visiting St John's College in Cambridge as part of our continuing work with our link college. We were given a tour of the campus by some current students, and then took part in a skills-based workshop. Students also learnt about the Post 18 application process.

The Prom

Friday 30 June saw the much-anticipated return of the annual Year 11 prom. The glamorous students arrived in everything from supercars to tractors and were greeted by their peers, teachers and an enthusiastic local crowd. The red carpet saw students parade their outfits and pose for a professional photo. For one-night only, the Performing Arts Centre was transformed as students had the opportunity to create memories, take advantage of the photo booth and dance the night away. Despite the damp weather, there was a celebratory atmosphere with warmth and happiness all round. Students and staff thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The night culminated in the awarding of 'prom royalty' awards as voted for by attendees. The deserving winners this year were Scott and Fran, who were cheered loudly upon receiving their gold sashes.





Soham Village College Tree Planting

Students from Soham Village College, including our Future Group, took part in a fantastic and well-attended tree planting event in March. With the support and guidance of Nicola from Wild Burwell, we were able to plant some new young trees on the school site as part of our actions to support our local environment. The new trees have been planted near to the Beechurst building and are a combination of Bird Cherry, Downy Birch, Rowan and Blackthorn. Nicola from Wild Burwell said, "It was a great event! The students were very interested and enthusiastic."

The Future Group at Soham Village College have been keen to make an active change, and this is something they have planned and organised through their own hard work and communication with the local community. The trees will provide multiple purposes from an environmental point of view, including helping with the local carbon cycle and providing habitats for local wildlife. The students have provided a legacy that future students will have the opportunity to enjoy. Oscar said, "I feel passionate about being in this group and trying to encourage others within school to take care of the environment." The Future Group have continued to monitor the progress of the trees ensuring they are well watered, especially after some of the hot days we have had this term.

Mrs Wade said, "I am so proud of what the Future Group have achieved this year, they have worked tirelessly to make a difference and follow through on the ideas that they are passionate about to make our school site more sustainable for the future."





British Antarctic Survey

Some of our Year 7 students had a fantastic opportunity to work with the British Antarctic Survey in July. Students learnt about what it is like to live and work in Antarctica, saw and tried on the specialist clothing that is used, and learnt about all the amazing features we can now see from space using satellites. The session had a particular focus on the monitoring of wildlife from space. Students asked the experts some interesting questions about Antarctica and the wildlife they are monitoring. The students then had the opportunity to look for whales and penguins from space in a computer workshop led experts from the British Antarctic Survey.

Mrs Wade was impressed by how engaged and interested the students were in the sessions. They particularly enjoyed being able to explore evidence of penguins and whales from space.



Fitzwilliam Trip 2023

The whole of year 8 went on a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum, over 5 days, as part of the partnership Soham Village College has with the museum. Students spent time into the armoury, looking at how armour is constructed and why it was used. They spent time in the Monet exhibit, using colour and texture to respond to the artwork. They also got involved in a maths and problem solving activity, working out how the Egyptians would have transported a 20 tonne sarcophagus from the quarry, across the Nile and then down a shaft to the bottom chamber of a pyramid. Lastly, students looked at the modern ceramics and chose their favourite exhibits. All of this was followed up by work in Art, English, History and Drama lessons for all students. The Fitzwilliam have also run a competition with the school, for students to submit their creative response to their visit to the museum, with submissions as variable as creative writing and artwork. We look forward to the announcement of the winners in the near future and the continuation of our work with the Fitzwilliam Museum.

Archaeological Dig

In July, FLT students from Soham Village College took part in an archaeological dig in Soham. The school was invited to take part as part of St Andrew's Church's National Heritage Lottery Fund building project.

In preparation, Wessex Archaeology visited the school for a day of workshops that helped the students with the skills needed. The students were very much hands-on as they learnt to create a dig site, use sluicing to recover organic material, use a structured light scanner to build up a computer image of an artefact, complete an accurate drawing of a find and use videography to record the dig.

They then had the chance to try out their newly acquired skills out in the field for three days when they worked with experts to uncover the past in three different gardens in Soham. Students uncovered a number of different items, and these were scanned to create 3D images. The students' finds were then displayed at the St Felix Fair at St Andrew's Church for the whole community to see.



Maths Primary Transition

This half-term has been a busy one for maths Primary transition. I have had a fantastic time visiting over 280 students from our main feeder primary schools, taking the maths transition roadshow on tour for another year. Students in Year 6 have had the opportunity to problem solve and reason through exciting, hands-on maths activities as well as having an opportunity to ask questions about their move up to the college.

In June, we also had our annual Soham Village College Primary Maths Challenge event which saw 8 teams from 4 of our feeder primaries battling it out for the coveted 1st place. It was extremely close with Fordham Primary School winning overall and The Weatherall's teams coming a fantastic 2nd and 3rd place. This was a great experience for some of the cohort's brightest mathematicians, who we look forward to working with next year. The Year 6 students also got to hear from some of our Year 8s about further opportunities for maths enrichment at the college including UKMT maths challenges, trips and extra qualifications.

Library News

It has been a busy term in the library. Students from the school's reading club took part in the prestigious Carnegie Awards shadowing group. They enjoyed reading some of this year's shortlisted books and producing some work based on their favourite. The shadowing culminated with a party in the library to watch the winning book be announced.

Mrs Webb has been busy training Year 7 students who applied to be student librarians for next year. This is a great opportunity for students to demonstrate their responsibility and leadership and Mrs Webb is very pleased with the enthusiasm from all who have joined her team.

Finally, the library is getting a facelift and being redecorated over the summer holidays. The students have coped admirably with the disruption caused with the books being packed up and once the library reopens in September, the fresh new look will make the space even more inviting for our students.



Back to School Reminder

A reminder that the new term will commence for Year 7 on Monday 4 September at 8.30am and Years 8-11 on Tuesday 5 September, which will be week A.



CATS Community Group

Soham Village College have a new after school club called CATS, Community ambassadors' team of Soham and our aim is to make a difference in the community and be a positive presence in the local area. The student have put together a plan for the different activities they would like to carry out, and these range from rock painting, litter picking, visiting local care homes to carry out intergenerational projects, helping the local church and maintaining community flower beds.

We are all passionate about helping to build strong and positive relationships between Soham Village College students and the community.

