



Parent Newsletter

Autumn 2023

Music Department

Christmas is always our favourite time of year in the Music Department, as hundreds of students rehearse festive music and prepare for their performance at Ely Cathedral.

Over-60s Performance

The Christmas festivities began for us on Friday 1 December when we were delighted to perform a selection of our Carol Concert pieces to the Soham Over-60s in the Performing Arts Centre. Our audience enjoyed a warm drink and a mince pie (served by our senior student team) and then watched as hundreds of students performed their Christmas piece in preparation for their big performance the following week. The entire Year 7 cohort performed songs they had been working on in music lessons and a range of choirs and soloists also performed. Members of the Over-60s commented on how fantastic the performances were and how polite and well-behaved the students were all afternoon.

King's College Choir

Music GCSE students were then lucky enough to visit King's College Chapel in Cambridge on Tuesday 5 December, to watch the world-famous Kings College Choir perform songs and readings from their Christmas Eve televised performance programme. This was, as always, exceptional and offered our students the chance to hear stunning choral arrangements before they performed their own in the next day's carol concert at Ely Cathedral.



Ely Cathedral Christmas Concert

On Wednesday 6 December we spent the day at Ely Cathedral with 180 students, rehearsing for the sell-out evening concert. Our students, as always, represented the school beautifully throughout the day, demonstrating outstanding behaviour, resilience, effort and musicianship. With lighting set, screens up, camera crew in place and the Christmas tree looking beautiful, we were ready for the big performance. A total of over 300 people performed in the concert that evening, including primary school students, members of community choir, parents, previous students, friends of the school and members of Wicken Coronation band. The evening began with a stunning selection of solos from our GCSE students, and then the audience enjoyed a range of choral and orchestral numbers, congregational carols and, of course, the rousing 'Soham Village College version' of Gaudete, which included two drummers and a brass ensemble plus 160 singers! It really was a wonderful evening and another example of just how talented and brilliant our students are.







Drama

This term saw the formation of a Youth Collective '@lantic Xplorers' in partnership with The Fitzwilliam Museum. Our brilliant students have taken part in a range of weekly workshops from artists, poets, performers, designers and even got to practise their DJ skills!

Students have become frequent visitors to the Fitzwilliam Museum this term, responding to exhibits at the Black Atlantic Museum exhibition and learning about the legacies of empire and enslavement in Cambridgeshire.

Last week they took part in an incredible drama workshop with Kenny Wing Tao Ho from the acclaimed Gecko Theatre (www.geckotheatre.com). He will be with us next term, helping to produce a live theatre performance created by the students and performed at the museum.



Maths - Bletchley Park Trip

Fourteen of our Year 8 students had the amazing opportunity to visit Bletchley Park on 4 December.

They left school along with Mrs Platt and Mrs Silk soon after registration and had a great day out. Nestled in history, this trip offered a first-hand glimpse into the captivating world of codebreaking and cryptography, enriching their understanding of WWII's pivotal role. Under the guidance of Bletchley staff, our students explored the very grounds where Alan Turing and his team made ground breaking contributions, decoding Enigma and shaping modern computing. Engaging exhibits and interactive displays transported them back in time, fostering a deeper appreciation for the importance of collaboration, ingenuity, and perseverance. During the workshop on "Interception to Intelligence: Battle of the Atlantic" our students could apply team working, problem-solving and strategic thinking skills to obtain and apply scenario-based intelligence. Students also had the opportunity to see an Enigma machine and have a go at Morse code.

This hands-on experience not only broadened their historical perspectives but also sparked curiosity and inspired them to explore the realms of technology and mathematics.





nationally, we are very proud of Soham's top team, the 'Famous Tough Herrings', who came in at 126.



Modern Foreign Languages

GCHQ

Students in Years 9 and 10 have participated in two events organised by GCHQ this term. On 11 October, thirty-two students took part in a talk regarding careers at GCHQ, followed by a problem-solving activity where they had to work together to crack codes in French to solve a simulated national security problem. All the students said that they would recommend the activity to others. They were hooked from the moment that the GCHQ analyst said he wouldn't be showing his face online to us due to protecting national security!

This was then followed by a national competition in which Year 9 and 10 students participated in teams of four to 'capture flags' and solve puzzles during a week-long challenge. Twelve teams took part from Soham Village College, and with over 500 schools and 3000 teams participating

MFL Languages Challenge

In MFL we started the year with a Languages Challenge:

Can you guess the teacher working undercover as a secret agent?

The students were then encouraged to become secret agents themselves through completing the '50 Challenges' on the European Day of Languages app.



(Secret agent: Mr K)



Year 11 Geography Fieldwork

In December, Year 11 students visited Cambridge to complete their GCSE geography fieldwork. Students were researching to see if the regeneration of CB1 had improved the environmental quality of the area. Students used a variety of geographical techniques learnt in the classroom prior to the trip to test this hypothesis. They have followed up their practical work by evaluating their methods and drawing conclusions from the data gathered.

Despite the cold conditions, it was great to have all our Year 11 students outside the classroom applying some of the theories they had been learning about. The students were a credit to the school for the duration of the trip and will make good use of the data collected in their summer exams.



Science Museum

In November, we took thirty Year 8 students to the Science Museum in London. We visited several of the galleries and then attended a STEM skills fair and a question and answer session with representatives from industry.

We visited the Technicians Gallery where students got to try out some of the interactive exhibits, such as making lifesaving medication as an NHS technician, and investigating renewable energy by having a go at fixing a wind turbine. They were also able to investigate the



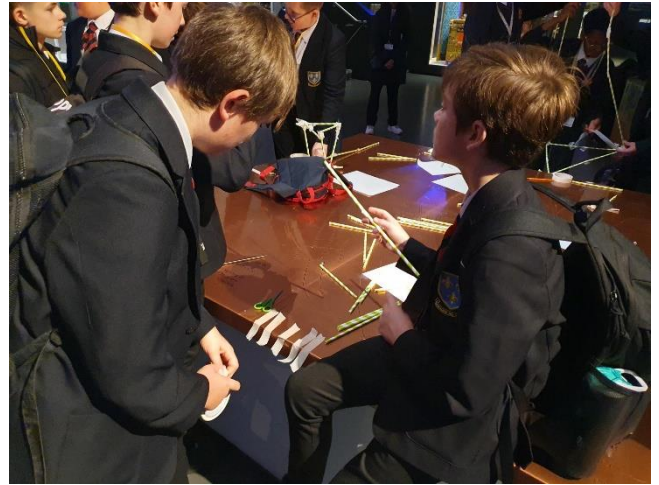
We have also welcomed our new British Council language assistant Léa, who has been helping GCSE students with their speaking skills and has also been hosting Year 7 and 8 French club where you can find crêpes, Eurovision, and even Cluedo in French.

range of careers that a science technician can take part in.

We also visited the Engineers Gallery, where the students were able to take a closer look at iconic objects such as the first digital camera, the cutting-edge CMR 'Versius' surgical robot arm and a miniature atomic clock that the entire GPS system depended upon, as well as learn more about the remarkable people who invented them.

We then took part in a STEM skills fair, where representatives of many different employers aimed to inspire the students and boost their STEM skills with hands on activities. They were able to compete to build the tallest tower, play games that simulated computers, and have a go at media production. They also met employers from the RAF, nuclear and renewable energy companies, English Heritage, and the conservation team at the Science Museum.

Following this, they took part in an engaging question and answer session with some of the employers at the fair. Here the students were able to ask questions such as, "What does a typical day look like?", "Do you have to wear a uniform?" and, "Is your job dangerous?"



Foundation Learning Tier Autumn Term 2023

It has been a very busy term for the Foundation Learning Tier students, especially Year 11.

Heritage Workshops

As a follow-up to the archaeological dig we took part in during the summer term, the Year 10 and Year 11 students were lucky enough to participate in the Heritage Skills Workshops at St Andrew's Church. The students tried a wide-variety of heritage skills including flint knapping and plastering. This has experience has led to a few students now thinking about a career in the heritage building industry. We are really looking forward to the next archaeological dig that will be happening in July 2024.



Royal British Legion Christmas Parcels

As part of the now annual presentation of forty Christmas parcels to the Soham Branch of the Royal British Legion, the Year 11 students have already cooked forty Christmas cakes and prepared the shortbread and gingerbread biscuits ahead of our big bake and Decoration Day. Once this is done, we'll be presenting the parcels to the Royal British Legion representatives on the last day of term.



Year 11 visit to Duxford

As part of the travel and tourism and history curriculums the Year 11 students went to Duxford on cold, but sunny day in November. The brief was to examine a local tourist attraction and to look at how it attracts visitors and where they make adaptations to support all. For history, the students were looking at the First and Second World Wars, as they study the rise of Nazi Germany. In addition, students will be studying the Cold War in the New Year, so being able to see elements of that in the museum was a very enriching experience.



Year 10 Shearline Engineering visit

Twenty-six design and technology students were invited to the premises of Shearline Engineering in Ely in September, to celebrate National Manufacturing Day. They were shown the various departments within their business, including their motorsports section where they manufacture key engine parts for Le Mans racing cars. Students also used a machine to inscribe their own name onto a pen, and heard from a current apprentice.

Careers Activity

Year 10 Ely Cathedral Careers Fair

The whole of Year 10 went to Ely Cathedral in November to take part in the East Cambridgeshire. Careers Fair. Around fifty local businesses, colleges and universities were present to talk to students about what they could offer in the future. The students used their time very constructively, asking lots of great questions and finding out what businesses did and what they looked for in potential employees. Feedback from students and exhibitors was very positive, showing the value and benefit of this event.



Year 9 Careers Support Workshops

Selected Year 9 students took part in a one-off careers workshop during this term, delivered by the Careers Team. This was an opportunity to understand a little more about the qualification options available after Year 11, and to talk through

what 'having a career' actually means. Students discussed what key skills businesses look for in employees, and they also talked about what jobs or careers they might be interested in in the future. The workshop is just one part of the extensive careers programme designed to help all students prepare themselves for their next steps after Soham Village College.

Year 8 Mushroom Farm visit

As part of our collaboration with local produce grower G's Fresh, two classes of Year 8 students visited their mushroom farm in Littleport. Students learnt how G's operate and run their businesses. They were then kitted out in hairnets and overalls, and had a tour of the factory. They were shown the various stages of the growth life of a mushroom, and even got to pick their own for tasting.



Library News

It has been a busy term in the Soham Village College library, with the new book awards being launched, quiz trips to London and a visit from the Scholastic Book Fair.

SVC Book Awards

Having previously shadowed the national children's book awards, Mrs Webb decided we could go one better here at Soham and create our very own Soham Village College Book Awards. Students have nominated their favourite recently published books and this has helped to form the shortlist. Year 7 students are having a fortnightly English lesson held in the library. Each lesson focuses on a different shortlisted book. Alongside this, there are whole school competitions for each book, and Mrs Webb has even managed to get some of the authors to record videos specially for the school. The winning book will be voted for as part of World Book Day celebrations in March, so

watch this space to see which will be crowned our favourite book.



'What on Earth' Magazine Quiz

In November, the school entered the 'What On Earth' Magazine quiz and beat nearly 100 other schools to make it through to the grand final in London. The team quizzed hard placing third in the secondary category, as well as getting to

experience the historic venue of Stationers' Hall near St. Paul's Cathedral. They even made it into the 'I' newspaper the next day. 'What on Earth' is a great magazine which we subscribe to here at the library, but they have also given us a great offer if you were looking for Christmas presents this year. If ten parents sign up for a subscription here then the library at Soham Village College will get £200 worth of books. Just use the code 'SOHAM' at checkout so we can claim the benefit.



back to spend on books for the library, which is amazing. Some students even got to choose books as prizes for being the first ever winners of the Soham Village College book award competitions.



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- 3** At the online checkout, remember to enter the discount code **SOHAM** so that we can credit your child's school with your new subscription.
- 4** Once 10 or more parents at your child's school have signed up, the school will automatically receive **£200 of fantastic non-fiction books – absolutely FREE!**

Contact: info@whatonearth.co.uk

Your child will receive:



Back to School Reminder

A reminder that the new term will commence on Wednesday 3 January 2024 at 8.30am. This will be Week A on the timetable.



Scholastic Book Fair

It has been a whirlwind week with the Scholastic Book Fair visiting the library. Students have flocked to the bookcases and bought over £600 worth of books. This has earned us over £240