



Dear Parents,

I hope that you are all keeping safe and well.

It has been a challenging week with us having to close two close contact groups (one in Lower Fifth and one in Upper Fifth) due to an individual positive test in each year group. I am grateful to parents and pupils for their understanding and to those staff who managed this difficult process, notably Allison Hyde in the Medical Centre and Mrs Shearer the Deputy Head. Despite this, it has been a very productive week on all fronts. Most importantly, the academic momentum continues and I commend our teachers and pupils for the hard work going on in every department of the school. With mock examinations ahead for Upper Fifth and progress tests for Sixth Form (all of increased importance given the uncertainty over the nature of public examinations next summer) the pressure is pretty unrelenting at the moment. As always, I am deeply proud of the school community for the resilient and determined way it continues to tackle the challenges presented by the global pandemic.

A-Level Drama

Last week, we were treated to some extraordinary performances from our Upper Sixth Drama students in the A-Level practicals. As always, the standard was dizzyingly high and the productions packed an extraordinary emotional punch. Three pieces were performed in the style of French dramatist Antonin Artaud who is best known for his “Theatre of Cruelty” ideas that are designed to shock the audience and “to restore to the theatre a passionate and convulsive conception of life”. Mission definitely (and stunningly) accomplished there Mr Sell! The fourth adopted the style of Frantic Assembly; a theatre company which aims to create “culturally influenced collaborations between movement, design, music and text”. This piece about the Bronte sisters showcased that style perfectly. All the productions were brilliantly conceived and executed with breathtaking sets, beautifully made costumes and highly imaginative staging. The actors rose superbly to the challenge and delivered their performances with the total focus, commitment and selflessness that we have come to expect from Sell-Sykes ensembles. In addition to our two amazing directors, my congratulations and thanks go to the wonderful Miss Glinn, our choreographer Lisa-Jayne Gordon, stage manager Tam Walker-Reid, designer Cat Knowles-Lenoire, technician Jayden Lewis and drama assistant Rob Gain. It was a phenomenal team effort that once again raised the bar in terms of quality and ambition for St Edmund’s A-Level Drama.



ACTORS:

MATTHEW BAWTREE

ELIZABETH BOURNE

RUBY COUPE

NATANIAL FLORENCE-WRATTEN

LUCY HENDERSON

AMY LAWRIE

CARL LE HEGARAT

MADLINE MARSH

OLIVIA NESS

BEATRICE PAISLEY-DAY

JESSICA PHILLIPS

JAMES PRESS

CHLOE PROVERBS SPRY

Wagner Wheels

This session of car maintenance is part of our series of House events run by bubble this term. It is not restricted to Wagner pupils though. Ali SK, Max Lester, Carl le Hegerat, Jude Lanstone and Sean Bradley all now know how to change a tyre and can find their way around an engine. Thanks Mr Coupe!



Student Voice

The Student Voice group met this week to provide feedback to senior staff on life at St. Edmund's. They raised fifteen points for discussion and the meeting was extremely constructive with some new approaches identified, particularly related to water fountain provision, Christmas dinners and the management of the bubble arrangements.



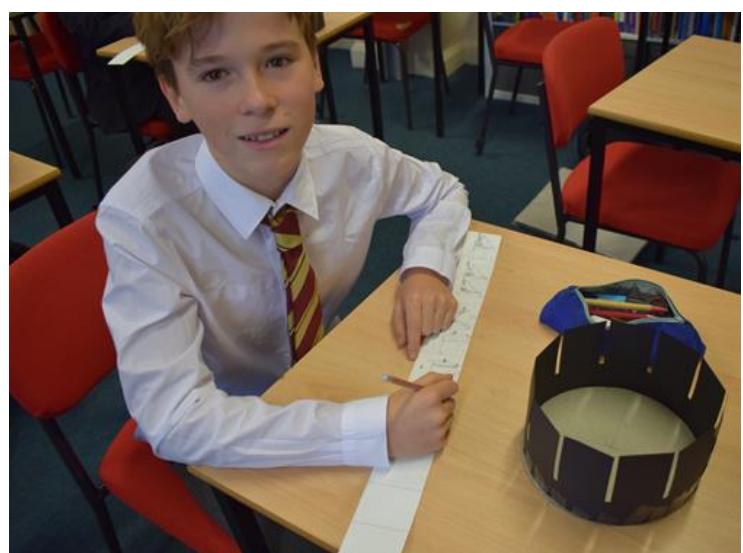
Geography Competition

Congratulations to Emily Jackson who won the Geography model making competition. Highly Commended prizes were awarded to Poppy Gower and Fabian Crooks. All three winners created 3D models of waterfalls complete with plunge pools and undercutting...



Zoetropes...

Lower Fifth pupils in Mr Filmer's Art class have been making zoetropes as part of their project about movement within art. Having been inspired by the pioneering photographer Eadward Muybridge, they drew their own sequences of jumping cats, running camels, and sinking ships and animated them by spinning their sequences within their own...



Sporting News

More exciting news this week in sport, with Sam Hodge (L6) being accepted onto the U18s Train Sharp road cycling race team, based in Lewes. Sam has been road cycling since just before the first lockdown and has clocked up over 3700 miles on both his indoor trainer and around South East Kent since April. He joined Thanet Road Cycling Club and took part in their weekly 10 mile time trials throughout the summer and also in regular Zwift races on-line. As a result of his rapid improvement in time trials, Sam was invited to trial for the Train Sharp race team, who have supported numerous current pro riders to reach their goals. Congratulations Sam on this fantastic achievement and the opportunity to race in Regional, National and International road races in the near future.



Sixth Form Inter-House Futsal (indoor football) is underway on Thursday lunchtimes with skillful action in this fast paced 4 aside indoor football session. There was a fantastic turn out and this will be available to other year groups over the coming weeks.



We are looking forward to the M5 Inter-House Cross Country on Tuesday afternoon. This year we have both individual races and a mixed team relay which should be great fun. Pupils will tackle the 1.3k course around the school site to score points for their houses. House T-shirts and hoodies at the ready please!



Poetry Competition

Finally, Mr Whitman has asked me to encourage pupils to consider writing an entry for the following poetry award...

Students aged 16-18 years are invited to enter The Christopher Tower Poetry Competition 2021. Entry, which is free, could not be simpler:

- write a poem of up to 48 lines on the theme of 'The Key';
- submit your poem before noon, 1st March, 2021;
- further details can be found at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/towerpoetry-enter.

First prize is £3000, second £1500 and third £500. Three runners-up will be awarded £250.

I started this newsletter with a sunset and will bring this newsletter to a close in the same way with this lovely shot kindly sent to me by Robyn Davies in Year 8. It reminded me of the opening verse of my favourite poem, written by Louis MacNeice...



The sunlight on the garden
Hardens and grows cold,
We cannot cage the minute
Within its nets of gold;
When all is told
We cannot beg for pardon.

I hope that gets some of our young poets thinking...!

Have a great weekend.

Edward O'Connor
Head