



Dear Parents,

“Life is what happens while you’re making other plans”.

As an unashamed Beatlemaniac, I have always appreciated the essential truth of this John Lennon quote. It seems particularly apt this week. As a Leadership Team we have been looking forward: planning for Public Examinations and (hopefully) more normal Summer and Michaelmas Terms, starting to look at next year’s timetable and also addressing the prospect of a routine ISI inspection sometime after September 2021. But, of course, the busy daily life of St Edmund’s has continued and this week has been an especially rich and diverse one.

## University Update

Despite the lockdown, the 2021 UCAS round is fully underway.

Our UCAS advisory team, led by Charlie Mount (Head of Sixth Form) and Johnny Symaka (Head of Progression), continue to provide close support for our Upper Sixth applicants. Even though we are only in January, our pupils have achieved some great outcomes. This is excellent news at what is still an early stage in the application process.

Seven students have already received a “clean sweep” of offers to all five of their chosen universities.

We have also achieved some great successes at the elite Russell Group Universities (and the list of offers is growing daily):

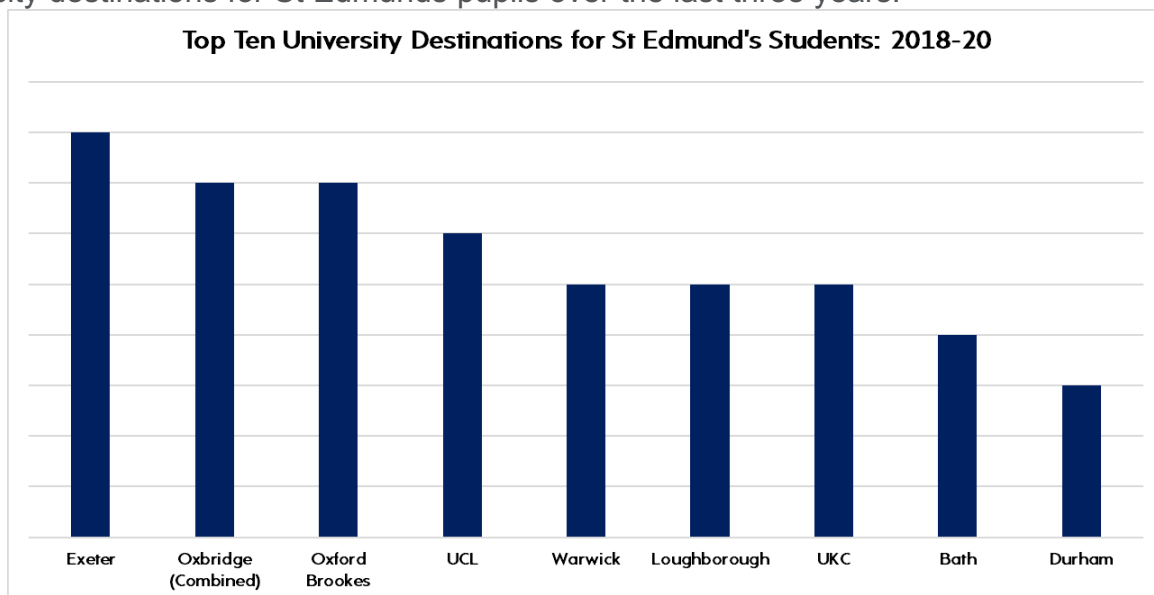
- University of Birmingham (International Relations with French)
- University of Bristol (Theatre and English)
- University of Cambridge (Law)
- Cardiff University (Media, Journalism and Culture)
- Durham University (Business & Management)
- University of Exeter (Business & Management, English & Drama, International Relations and Modern Languages, Law with Business, Natural Sciences, Psychology)
- University of Leeds (Modern Languages and Business)
- University of Liverpool (Accounting and Finance, Medicinal Chemistry)
- Newcastle University (Sociology)

- University of Nottingham (Law)
- University of Oxford (Italian and Linguistics)
- University of Sheffield (Law, Physics with Philosophy)
- University of Southampton (Biomedical Sciences, International Relations, Marine Biology, Modern History & Politics)
- University of Warwick (Mathematics)
- University of York (Molecular Cell Biology)

Two St Edmund's students have won places at Oxbridge this year. Congratulations to our Captain of School, Isobel Wanstall. Isobel has been offered a place to read Italian and Linguistics at Balliol College, Oxford University. This is a wonderful achievement and thoroughly deserved.

Our congratulations also go to Frankie Shepley. Frankie has been offered a place to read Law at St Catherine's College, Cambridge. This is a fiercely competitive course and winning a place is a truly noteworthy achievement.

I thought you might also be interested by this destinations graph which shows the most popular university destinations for St Edmunds pupils over the last three years:



## U6 Debating team advance to South East Regional Finals

Dr Caiazza reports on a highly successful evening...

“On Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January, the ESU Schools’ Mace debate took to Zoom for the competition this year with the first heat between Kent schools involving St. Edmund’s School, The King’s School, Maidstone Grammar School and Benenden School to debate in three rounds over the course of the evening. St. Edmund’s School, represented by Isobel Wanstall, Nathaniel Florence-Wratten and Samuel May debated as opposition on the motion ‘This House believes that government economic policy should prioritise the collective happiness and well-being of the population over economic growth.’ Nathaniel confidently opened the opposition position with Samuel May, as second speaker methodically extending his team’s points on how monetary stability is essential to well-being. Isobel concluded as summary speaker, answering questions from the Zoom floor, showing her adept listening skills with engaging and succinct precision. At the end of the evening, St. Edmund’s and Benenden were announced as the two schools moving up in the competition. We wish our team the very best of luck as they now prepare for the next round of this national competition.”



## Holocaust Memorial Day

As part of the History A level course the L6 have been studying the origins of the holocaust this week. This has coincided with Holocaust Memorial Day on Wednesday which further increased the students' awareness of the horrendous events in Europe during WWII. This is a challenging subject to teach effectively but it always brings about a strong response from the students who often go on to further investigate the genocide for their own coursework task. As a foundation for the study, we looked at the historical anti-Semitism in Europe during the medieval and early modern period and how this developed over time into the 20th century. The students also investigated Kristallnacht in November 1938 considered by many to be the first clearly discernible move towards genocide and we will continue to examine related events during the war.

## COVID 19 Update

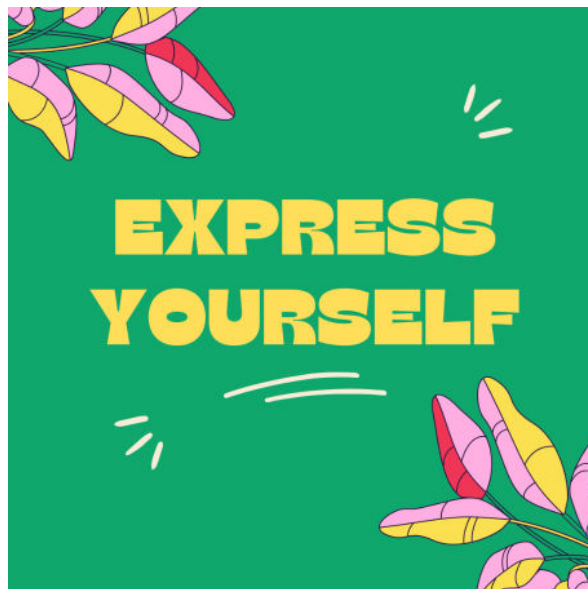
The Prime Minister announced this week that schools in England will definitely not reopen before 8<sup>th</sup> March, and then only if vaccination targets are being met for key vulnerable groups and hospital admissions are falling. It is disappointing news but our staff, pupils and parents continue to cope superbly with the challenge of remote learning. The school will do everything it can to support families during this period, ensure our pupils are not disadvantaged academically and continue to offer pastoral support.

The OFQUAL consultation on public examinations closed yesterday. The school has fed back our view on how to ensure fairness for students. We will keep you all informed as and when clarity about the arrangements eventually emerges.

## Pastoral News...

The peer listening team have been proactive during this lockdown, considering ways to support the school community and arranging individual Teams meetings with those who need a boost. Recruitment is underway for new peer listeners and anyone who is interested in joining should send an email to Mrs Shearer ([cjs@stedmunds.org.uk](mailto:cjs@stedmunds.org.uk)) on or before 12th February.

The theme for Children's Mental Health Week (1st-5th February) is 'Express Yourself' and Ms Florence has put together a short film to promote a series of activities designed to improve well-being and to encourage self-expression.



On 5th February, the L5 and M5 will have some time to consider their well-being with a screen-free Friday. They should use this as an opportunity to do something that enhances their well-being, whether it is creative, physical or simply catching up with work.



Videos about these events will be posted on the School's Social Media in the next couple of days.

## Academic Scholars: The History Medicine

Dr Gemma Jones (our Head of Science) delivered a fascinating presentation to L5 and M5 Scholars on Tuesday evening. It was an engaging and brilliantly researched session that prompted a lively question and answer session in the group chat. My thanks to Dr Jones for leading this seminar so expertly.



## Music Scholarship Process

Mr Payne and his team have been busy running assessments this week. He asked me to pass on the following message to those who have been involved:

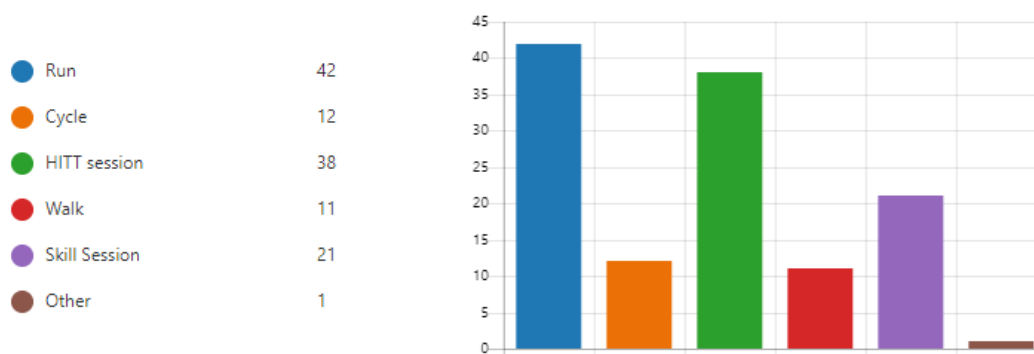
“It has been a real pleasure to hear some 'live' music making in the form of two days' worth of Music and Choral Award candidates this week. Performing together as a group is something we have very much missed during the lockdown. However, the music staff have been enjoying solo performances given by all the internal and external candidates in this current session. Apart from hearing a selection of pieces, sight-reading and aural tests, there is a chance for candidates and members of the panel to talk freely about music in general and one common thread that has come out of these conversations is how different the communication process is with live music-making compared to performing with pre-recorded backing tracks. The ability to be infinitely flexible when communicating in person to nuances that may change over time forms an essential part of keeping music fresh and alive, and we very much look forward to the time when we can all be together again performing face-to-face.”

## Sports

The Sixth Form Cambridge Technical groups are forging ahead with their coursework on Sports Injuries and Sports Psychology. This has prompted plenty of colourful discussions about gruesome injuries and what psychological effect this may have on sportsmen and women at any level. For those who are interested, Mrs Millard tells me that Andy Murray's 'Resurfacing' is a fascinating insight into his internal drive to overcome injury and a rather inspirational watch.

### 2. What type of exercise

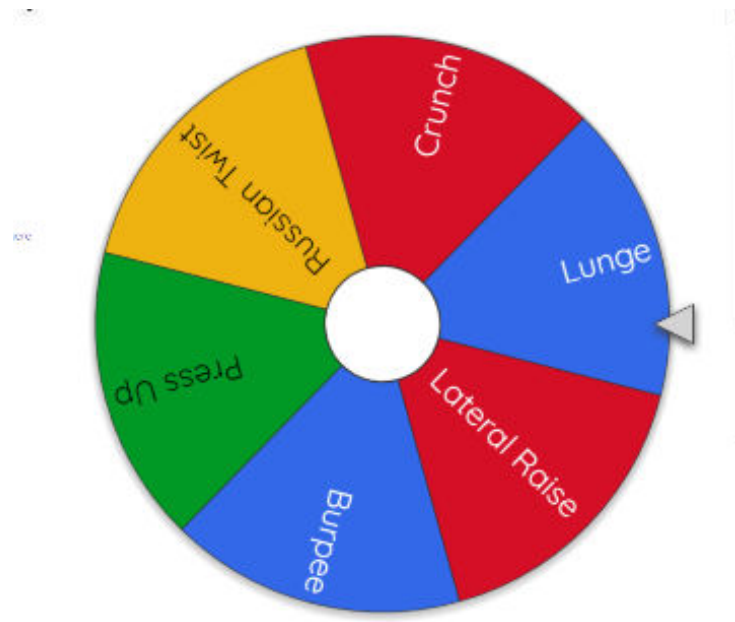
[More Details](#)



A good number of our sports scholars, boarders and day pupils are taking advantage of the Strength and Conditioning sessions after school on a Wednesday. This week's session was apparently particularly "brutal".

Sports scholars have been logging their activity details on an online form and it's great to see what some of you have been doing to keep fit:





To be honest, I prefer a gentle walk! On that note, the Sports Department received some fascinating 'What's in your surrounding area?' photos from L5 and M5 during Games this week too. Elephants in Kent, no less, amongst other wildlife! Well done to those pupils who responded to the challenge!





## “Baker” House

Mr Clapp and Ms Scally have been running a “Baker Brew Bake Off” every Monday. House members bake cakes solely for themselves apparently, which are judged on the basis of photographic evidence. The winners so far have been Dr Rowcroft and Mrs Lea (who had excellent help from her four-year-old daughter!). More pupil entries are encouraged! Next week, is “Brownie Week” and a rather smart apron in “Baker green” is the weekly prize.



Baker also run a weekly photography competition running for ‘unusual things spotted on our daily walks’. This week’s winner was U6 pupil Max Lester. He spotted a rather curious woodland creature in the undergrowth...







## And finally...Roman the Reindeer



And to finish on an outdoor theme, the Geography Department, always a good source of “weird news” (sometimes intentionally), have provided a Reindeer Update...

“This is Roman the Reindeer who St Ed’s have sponsored since February 2020. He is now 4 years old and looked magnificent this year with a very impressive set of antlers. This year was also the first year that Roman ran as breeding bull for the herd; they are the only breeding herd of reindeer in Britain! Apparently he is a friendly lad and very greedy so currently having a tough time with even more snow falling in Scotland, making finding food very difficult. Luckily, the Cairngorm reindeer herders are on hand with a bit of extra food. Check out the Cairngorm Reindeer Herd website here - <https://www.cairngormreindeer.co.uk/>”

Mr Kincaid & Mrs Burton

Have a great weekend and stay safe!

Edward O'Connor  
Head