



Head's Newsletter

Dear Parents,

Easter is upon us after a successful three week return to school. Pupils, parents and staff can look back on this term with a real sense of pride. In many ways, the lockdown of schools from January was much tougher on us all than its predecessor.

Despite the disruption, effective learning has taken place and our sense, reinforced by recent diagnostic assessments, is that pupils have made good progress academically across the curriculum. In cases where that has not been the case, we will put additional support in place during the summer term.

You will also see that there have been some tremendous achievements this week in public speaking and Drama – all the more remarkable given the short run-in since we returned to school.

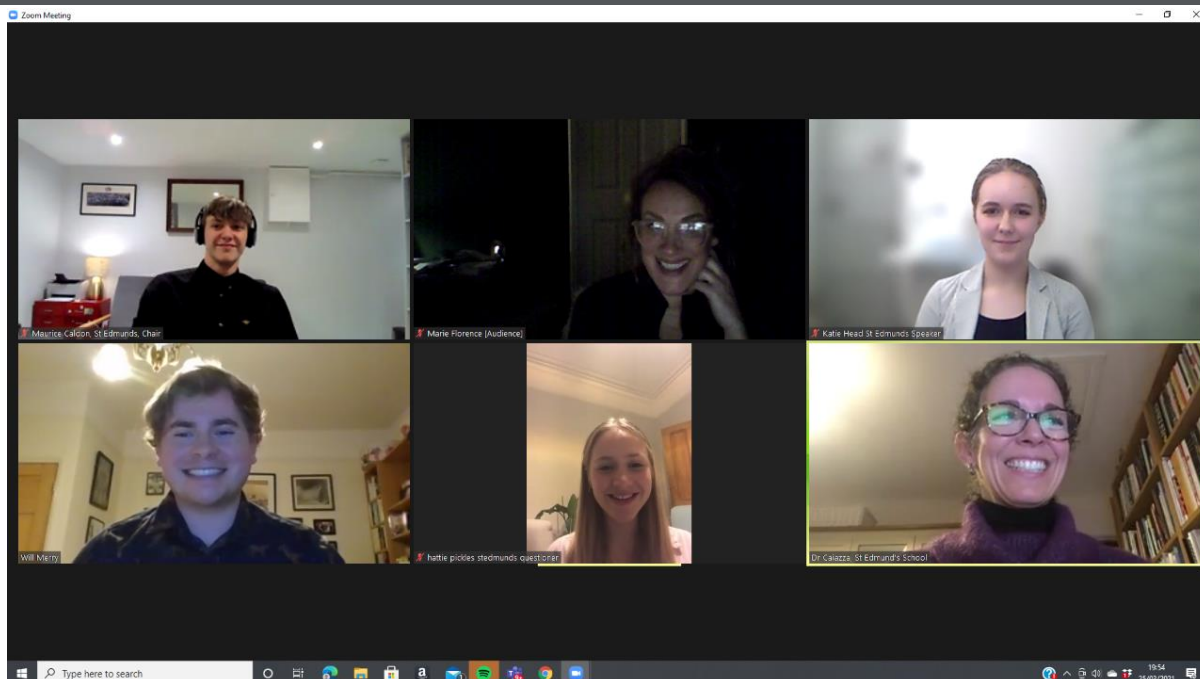
ESU Public Speaking



Congratulations to our Public Speaking Regional Champions!

Dr Caiazza reports on a fantastic team achievement...

"The English Speaking Union's Churchill Public Speaking Competition's Regional Finals took place via Zoom on Thursday, the 25th March, with four schools across Kent competing in five rounds of public speaking for the title of Regional Champions. I'm delighted to announce that Maurice Caldon (Chair), Katie Head (Speaker) and Hattie Pickles (Questioner) won the competition. The lead judge described the quality of public speaking throughout the competition as 'extremely high standard.' Our U5 Regional Champions will now go on to compete in the national semi-finals in April. In addition to the team's overall success, Maurice also received the honour of Best Chair with the lead judge commenting on the team's overall high score, and their impressive delivery and rhetorical mastery within each of their roles. We wish Maurice, Katie and Hattie the very best of luck as they prepare for the semi-finals."

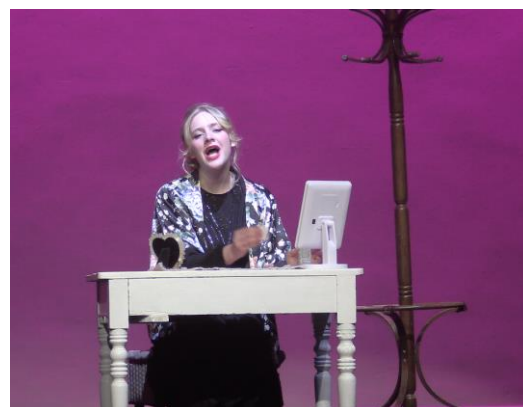


GCSE Drama Practicals

Mr Coupe reviews an excellent evening's entertainment...

"Upper Fifth drama students staged a rare evening of theatre on Wednesday, signalling a welcome return to the flair, passion and theatrical inventiveness for which the school is so well known.

A single piece of music in a minor key provided the stimulus for four mini-plays, presented as part of the group's final GCSE assessments. Each play took a daringly different look at themes of conflict and loss as well as the strange case of a latter-day Lucrezia Borgia, who had Victorian Brighton at her mercy.



Just Another War Story, written and performed by Jewels Hall, Henry Coupe, Daisy Marsh and Reuben Norton, explored the fate of two ordinary families from opposing sides in the Second World War. A compelling script and the subtle use of movement and mime created a tender portrait of those who pay the price when regimes go to war.

Four monologues based on verbatim testimony were combined by Aimee Qi, Joseph Henry, Maurice Caldon and Hattie Pickles to illustrate the aftermath of tragic events. But dark subjects are handled with a light touch; particularly the ensemble telling of the tale of a young man injured in a road accident; using their bodies to make the car, the crash and the hospital bed, the actors support each other literally and metaphorically.

Christiana Edmunds, by Brook Davis, Cyrus Cooper and Anna McCabe, was a moving as well as thoroughly entertaining gallop through the life of the thoroughly dangerous 'Chocolate Cream Poisoner'. Anna McCabe was superb as the haughty young Christiana, moved to poison the chocolates of a Brighton confectioner after her doctor refused to take her as a lover.



Light and dark were also in contention in *The Waiting Room*, by Lucy Walker-Reid, Edith Burton, Sienna Cowell, Frederic Golling, Kristina Somai and Lucy Carolan-Evans. Family divisions come roaring to the surface in a moment of crisis; again, stylised movement conveyed the subtlety and depth of the emotions at play.

Congratulations to all for the spotless and highly polished performances, which bore no marks of the covid-curtailed rehearsal schedule."



Year 11 and 13: GCSE and A-Level

Following our latest parent webinar, academic staff and our examinations team have been preparing our systems and data collection for the process of calculating Centre Assessed Grades. As you know, we will be running Final Assessments for pupils in May which will contribute to this. At the moment, we are still waiting for specific materials to be sent from the various examination boards (specimen questions, mark schemes etc) which will form the basis of these assessments. As soon as we have more information, we will be in contact with pupils and parents.

However, although it is natural for people to be anxious given the uncertainty, please be assured that we have an excellent team of staff working on this and have a robust and fair set of processes in place. Pupils should look on the Final Assessments as an opportunity to demonstrate how their knowledge and skills have developed in recent months: not as the final determinant of their grades. These will be calculated using a broad and fair set of data.

More to follow but if any of you are worried, I am happy to speak to you over the Easter break.

Lower Sixth Parents Evening

Thanks to everyone who participated in last night's virtual parents' evening for Lower Sixth. Hopefully, you found the new format (Schoolcloud) easy to use and conducive to a constructive and effective set of discussions. Lower Sixth will now be starting to think about university options and I know Mr Symaka (Head of Progression) has a programme ready for the summer term to support this process.

EKST Marble Run

The EKST Marble Run competition took place this week, with St Edmund's teams out in force. The pupils worked well together as a group scavenging items around the Senior School Site to use including, guttering and down pipe. The library shelves were being emptied of books, to act as supports and barriers.



Once completed, they worked hard to return said items, before maintenance became aware, and restore the library to ensure it was a working environment for the afternoon.

The judge was Najah Battikh, Engineering Academic at Canterbury Christ Church University. Their decisions were based on **creativity, quality of engineering** and the **length of the time** the marble is in motion.

I am happy to report St Edmund's came a highly creditable 2nd! Our pupils received their prizes from Christ Church University - a Tote bag, water bottle, notepad and pen.



Sport News

Mrs Millard brings us up to date!

"We've had a superb three weeks of sport, with inter house netball and hockey competitions taking place. The sixth form girls were quite fantastic, with excellent play from all. We were also delighted to see some willing volunteers coming out of retirement to rekindle their love of the game! Baker were worthy winners with Rebecca Reynolds (L6) leading the goal-scoring tally. Wagner were the L5 winners, with Baker and Wagner joint first in M5.



The L5 boys played their inter house tournament on Tuesday, with some exceptional skill on show. Wagner emerged victorious on this occasion.



Some of our pupils took the opportunity to run a cross country event for the English Schools Athletics Association, which in normal times is one of the largest cross country events in the world. Pupils ran either 2k or 5k depending on their age, with some very impressive times particularly from Adam Whitlock and Henry Goodwin (L5).

Those attending Strength and Conditioning sessions have been put through their paces by Luke, Poppy and Lewis from Unity Gyms. The sixth form group are now proud owners of MyZone belts which will track their training through an App and enable group challenges to be recorded."

Departing Staff

We say goodbye to three teachers this Easter who have all decided to pursue interests outside of education.

Dr Gemma Jones is leaving her roles as Head of Science and Biology. A highly valued and experienced academic leader with outstanding subject knowledge and organisational skills, Dr Jones has decided to spend more quality time with her young family.

Diccon Stubbings leaves the Sports Department after seven years at St Edmund's. Mr Stubbings is leaving to set up his own business.

Mindaugas Pakstas also leaves our Business and Economics Department to pursue a career in finance.

We wish our departing teachers every success and happiness. The respective Heads of Department will contact families affected by the changes to explain new teaching arrangements.

Have a wonderful Easter break.

Edward O'Connor
Head