



Head's Newsletter

Dear Parents,

Another week flashes past.

Momentum is definitely building at school both academically and on the co-curricular front as things continue to normalise. As you will see from this newsletter, there is plenty to report on both inside and outside of the classroom!



GCSE and A Level Update

We continue to work closely with academic departments to prepare pupils effectively for final assessments and also to collate the appropriate supporting data and evidence for Teacher Assessed Grades (“TAGs”). There was one important development last week on this. Ofqual announced that they will be sampling the evidence schools have used to derive TAGs from all schools, starting the week commencing 21st June. This could include those previous essays, progress tests and assessment papers completed by pupils which contribute to the grade judgement submitted by the school. This is an attempt to prevent grade inflation and strengthen the validity of this year’s results. So do not be alarmed if teachers start requesting previous pieces of work back from pupils in the next few weeks. This is a process all schools are required to follow and we will need all the evidence in place well in advance of the sampling process. I have attached a link to the Ofqual guidance here for your information: [Ofqual Guidance](#)



Upper Sixth Study Leave and PSHEE Day

As the assessment period approaches, I wanted to make you aware of a couple of key pieces of information. Upper Sixth parents will by now have received an email from Mr Mount (Head of Sixth Form) regarding the possibility of study leave for the year group starting on 10th May. This is in response to a number of requests from students who have completed their syllabi and would prefer to revise for Final Assessments at home. We are happy to support this provided parents agree and that academic departments do not require the pupils in school for lessons or formal revision sessions during that week.

The U6 assessments themselves begin on 17th May and run until 27th May.

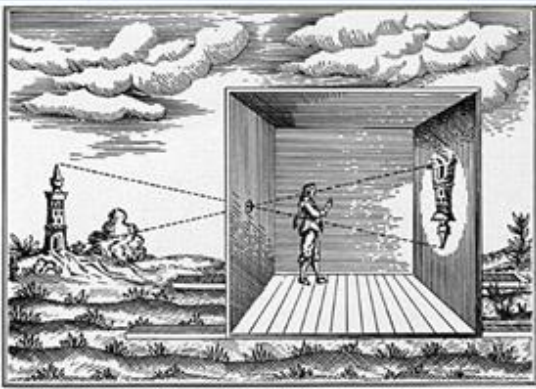
On Friday 28th May we will require all Upper Sixth students to attend school. This is because we are running an essential additional PSHEE session designed to support and inform them as they make the transition from school to Higher Education. There will be a particular focus on relationships and personal safety in the context of the ongoing Everyone's Invited campaign. This has highlighted the problem of sexual abuse in schools, universities and other institutions.

A separate letter will follow for Upper Sixth parents detailing the structure of this important day which will include a keynote address, breakout discussion groups and some excellent instructional video content. However, I am pleased to announce that we now have a confirmed guest speaker who has much expertise in issues relating to pastoral care at university: The Reverend David Stroud MA PGCE CTM who is the Chaplain at Canterbury Christ Church. As a qualified teacher David has been directly involved in education since the mid 1990's. He was ordained Priest in 2004 and after serving his curacy in Portsmouth diocese took up a post as Mission and Outreach chaplain at Canterbury Christ Church University. In 2014 David became Senior Chaplain at the same institution. As an academic, David lectures in Education and Practical and Pastoral Theology enabling him to fulfil both his calling to education and to ministry.



L6 Camera Obscura

The Lower Sixth Photography students got to experience being inside a camera this week after a room was set up as a “camera obscura”. The camera obscura (from Latin, meaning “darkened room”) is a device in a shape of a box or a room that lets the light through a small opening on one side and projects it on the other. This is the first form of photography that dates back to the 5th century. Scientists, Philosophers and Artists, including Aristotle and Leonardo De Vinci, have marvelled and used this technique in a way to project the outside world inside through a hole in a wall.

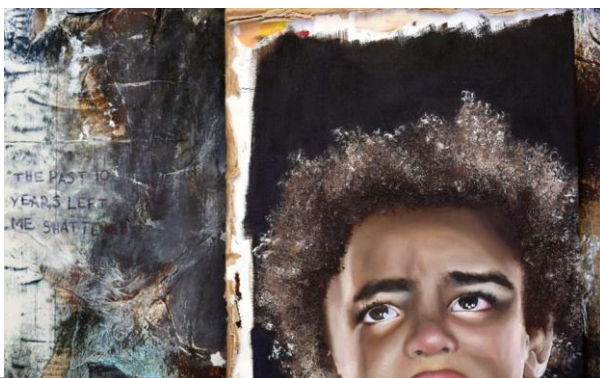


This image was taken of some of the pupils over a long exposure so they had to sit still for 30 seconds! You can see the cricket field projected on the wall behind them.

The Lower Sixth photographers will now go onto producing their own pinhole cameras using this principle on a smaller scale.

Royal Academy Young Artists' summer Show

The Art Department have been uploading entries for the Royal Academy Young Artist Summer Show this week. Artworks will be judged by artists and arts professionals with selected artworks displayed online and on-site at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. Here are a few examples of the wonderful work our pupils have created:





Geography

Mrs Burton tells me that Betsy Thorne did a fantastic job organising her classmates into a food web in Geography. Pupils were assigned a member of a woodland food web and the ribbons were used to identify who ate whom! The pupils learnt lots of new vocabulary and identified the impacts of short and long-term changes in the ecosystem.



Great preparation for our upcoming investigations in the woodland.

Sports News

Mrs Millard reports!

“It’s been a busy week with co-curricular clubs in full swing. Pupils are preparing for inter-school fixtures which start next week and there have been a number of keen athletes trying out some new events for track and field. Athletics is on Tuesday after school – it’s high jump week coming up!

The L5 celebrated the life of Sir Tom Moore in PE, taking part in the Captain Tom 100 Challenge. 10 reps of 10 synchronised exercises preceded the 100 metre challenge. Fast, furious and, we do hope, fun! If you would like to donate to the Sir Tom Moore Trust then please click [this link](#).





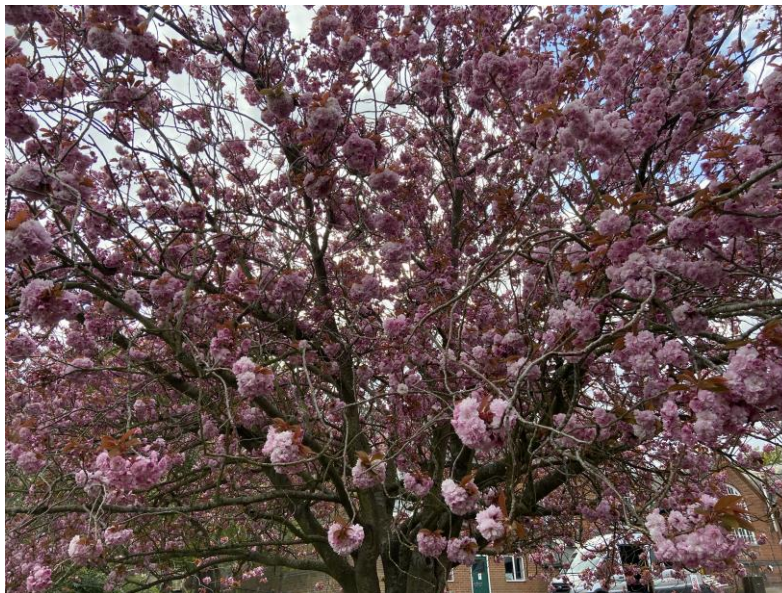
Our Sixth Form Cambridge Technical groups came together on Wednesday to recreate Max Ringlemann's experiment into individual effort within groups of differing sizes. A tug of war battle ensued with the U6 playing secret roles to either improve or negatively influence their team's cohesion and performance. It worked a treat, with a superb L6 discussion following the activity, highlighting many of the aspects that impact group dynamics.

Strength and Conditioning groups have been very well attended too. These sessions are open to all pupils and are a superb way to improve fitness. Do ask one of the PE staff if you would like to come along."

And finally...

At this time of year, the school site looks especially beautiful and I am very grateful to the Grounds and Estates team for their excellent work. Walking past the Classroom Block today on my way to the office I was reminded of AE Houseman:

"Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide."



Have a great weekend!

Edward O'Connor
Head