

ISSUE 13
28th March 2024



MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our end of term edition of our fortnightly blog.

I do not know where the time goes! It seems only recently I was wishing you all a happy new year and now we find ourselves breaking up for Easter. I hope all of your families are well as British Summer Time is at last nearly upon us!

As I said in the last blog 2 weeks ago, we recently welcomed Ofsted in to the school. I have now received a draft report which I have sent back to Ofsted with some comments for their consideration. I am currently awaiting receipt of the final report. As soon as I receive it I will send on to all of you and a copy will be placed on our website. I am anticipating receiving this either over the Easter break or if not then hopefully very soon after we return. Once I share it I can of course say much more about it. I am sorry I can not do that yet but hope to be able to do so very soon after our return from Easter.

Thank you to all those parents and carers who attended the Year 9 Options Evening last week. We hope you all found the evening useful in helping you determine the subjects that your son will be studying in Year 10. When we return from Easter the hard work begins here to turn these options choices into classes and we will keep you updated with a view to confirming final options decisions in late May.

The blog is again full of updates which I hope you enjoy reading. A particular highlight for us this term was the visit to Ypres that we ran for 110 Year 8 students last week. I have spoken before about trips and how much we value them and how we are expanding the number of trips we offer as we know for many students some of the longest abiding memories are those from school trips. I am very grateful to the 10 staff who arrived at the car park at 4:30am last Friday and did not get home until 10:00pm but I know they ensured that the students had a great experience at the battlefields. Well done and thank you also to all the students who behaved so well on this trip and represented the school magnificently.

Another highlight was this weeks Year 10 play – ‘DNA’ – which we had the privilege of watching this Thursday evening. As I think you all know, we have worked really hard to bring Drama back into Holcombe and this is our first GCSE performance. The students did an absolutely amazing job, putting on a really impressive production under the guidance of Mrs Miles, and all are to be congratulated.

In addition to Ypres and the Year 10 play, a lot of other great things have been happening here and I will leave you to read about it in the following pages.

A gentle reminder that we will return from the Easter break on Monday 15th April – there are no staff training days at the start of next term so all students will return on that day. The most significant event happening in term 5 is that our Year 11s will be commencing their formal GCSE examinations and our Year 13s will be commencing their formal A Level examinations. All our students in year 11 and 13 have been working to prepare for these examinations for quite some time and wish them every success.

My very best wishes to you all for a very happy Easter.

Mr L Preston
Headteacher

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Our students have been involved in a number of brilliant activities over the couple of weeks. Please take a moment to read through these fantastic opportunities.

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KEY DATES

Term 5

- **Monday 15th April**
- First Day of Term 5
- **WC 22nd April**
- Year 11 and 13 MFL Exams
- **Thursday 25th April**
- Year 10 Parents Evening

STAY CONNECTED

Follow Us on Social Media

See all of the enjoyable and engaging activities we get involved in throughout the year.

Follow us on our social media channels.



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YEAR 8 TRIP TO YPRES

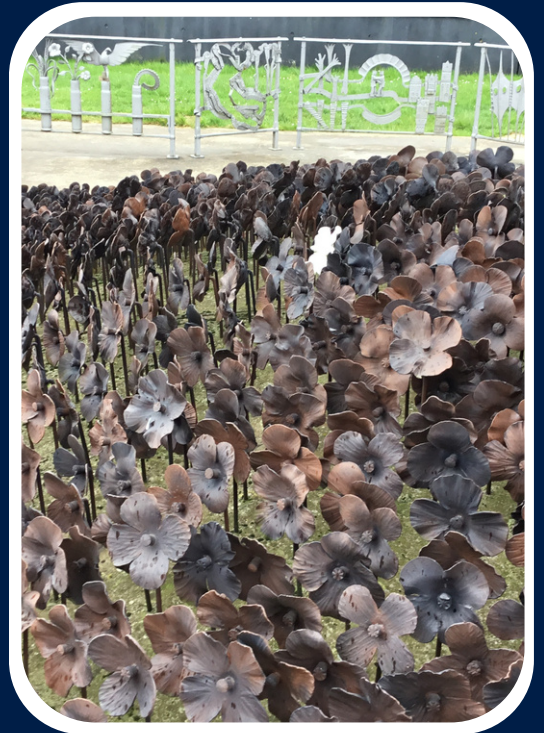


On Friday 22nd March, 110 Year 8 student's braved the early hours of the morning for a day long visit to the First World War battlefields in Ypres, Belgium. The day focused on preparing boys for their upcoming study of the First World War and involved visiting **Lijssenthoek CWGC Cemetery** (focusing on Causes of the Great War, 1914 battles, ethos of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission; Empire troops, the role of women in the Great War). **Bayenwald German trench system** (learning about the development of trench warfare; use of ground, trench construction, daily routine, technology, problems with trench fighting. **Tyne Cot** (the largest British & Commonwealth war cemetery in the world) where students laid a wreath and remembered fallen soldiers, **Langemarck** (The German war cemetery, where Hitler himself was wounded during the war and where he visited in 1940 after the German invasion of France) and finally the **Passchendaele Museum** where they entered a replica British trench system, got to look at weapons and uniforms from the war and took part in a show and tell run by our amazing historical guides, who dressed students in British army uniform and demonstrated how weapons worked included the Lee Enfield Rifle, bayonets and grenades as well as trench digging and the use of gas masks.

The day was capped off with a well earned visit to a Belgian chocolate shop in Ypres town and then the home journey. Overall Holcombe students, had an enjoyable and thoroughly rewarding day, with many of them asking a variety of excellent questions to the guides and engaging a range of amazing activities as well as the opportunity to socialise and learn a variety of new things.



YEAR 8 TRIP TO YPRES - PHOTOS



INDOOR ROWING COMPETITION



Congratulations to the Year 8 (Jude Simmons, Dylan Drabble, Jed Cunningham & Camron Harding), Year 9 (Noah Dodd, Stanley Raynor, Chris Bennett & Finn Novak), Year 11 (Riley Marshall, Alfred Savage-Mansarey, Joshua Oweikeyi-Oki & Noah Keeble) & Year 12 (Sam Hall & Ed Little) rowing teams who took part in this year's GSP & HSP Indoor Rowing competition. Holcombe, who were tasked to complete rowing heats covering distances between 1000m to 2500m and time-trial relay competitions, covered a combined distance of 17,626 metres on the day. After a gruelling morning of rowing there were gold medals for the year 9, year 11 & year 12 teams. These outstanding efforts contributed to an overall third place finish for the Holcombe team. Well done to all involved.



BIOLOGY TRIP TO WAKEHURST PLACE



On Wednesday 27th March 2024, 19 of the Year 13 Biologist went on a Biology Field Trip to Wakehurst Place, the Sussex annex of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and the home of the Millennium Seed Bank. The student spent the day completing two workshops on DNA profiling and Woodland Ecology. The students had to put their knowledge of DNA profiling into practise with a practical activity where they had to identify the DNA profile that they had generated of plant material impounded by HM Customs and Excise. Did it contravene the CITES rules?

After lunch the students completed the second of the workshops on woodland ecology by completing an ecology sampling activity to look at the conservation of coppiced woodland and how coppicing leads to increased biodiversity. The students also managed to squeeze in a talk and tour of the Millennium Seed Bank where Kew keeps an underground collection of over 2.4 billion seeds from around the world, banking them to conserve them for the future. The day at Wakehurst was a useful and enjoyable day for the students but was only made possible by the staff that attended the trip and made the day run so smoothly.



WORLD BOOK DAY COMPETITION WINNERS



Congratulations to the winners of our World Book Day Competition run by Chartwells, Emodiaga Adjekukor and Joseph Peachey. Both winning a copy of Marcus Wareing's recipe book.



RNKMD FESTIVAL - HOLCOMBE WINNER



On Saturday 23rd March, Ethan Morris 7Gu took part in the annual Rochester and North Kent Music and Drama Festival performing Waka Waka (This time for Africa) by Shakira on Steel pan a first for the festival and was triumphant coming first place in his competitive class. The music department wants to congratulate Ethan on winning and his effort and commitment to music.



THINKING AT HOLCOMBE - THE BIG QUIZ TRUST FINALISTS!



We are very proud to announce that our Key Stage 3 Big Quiz team have made it through to the whole trust final.

Huge congratulations to Zak Bennett (Year 9), Jacob Walters (Year 9) and Samiul Alam (Year 7) who will be taking part in the live final in term 5.

THE BIG QUIZ 2024

PRIMARY SCHOOL FINALISTS ARE
Furzeham Primary School and Penbridge Junior School

SECONDARY SCHOOL FINALISTS ARE
Holcombe Grammar School and Maritime Academy

CONGRATULATIONS

THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST
Transforming Life Chances



PI DAY COMPETITION - UPDATE!



You will recall that in our last newsletter we gave congratulations to Sam Hall who won our Pi Day competition, recalling pi to 69 decimal places!

There was outrage from year 8, who knew that someone in their community could complete the task to 100 decimal places - but was regrettably sick on the day of the challenge.

Therefore, we are delighted to confirm that today, Jason A-Derricks, of year 8, has confidently recited pi to 100 decimal places in the presence of Mrs Banks and Mrs Sommerville, and will also be winning an Amazon gift voucher!

Huge congratulations to Jason!



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, QUEEN'S COLLEGE PRESENTATION



On Friday 22nd March period 5, the school hosted a presentation from four current students at the University of Cambridge. Raina, Jorja, Paige and Nimrah (see below) spoke of their experiences of studying A levels, sitting exams, writing UCAS applications, choosing which course and universities to apply to, and of course, actually being an undergraduate at the University of Cambridge.

Ms Arnold hosted over 50 of our year 12s (see their feedback below). After the presentation, it must be shared that the undergraduates, who have been to a range of schools in the South East, commended Ms Arnold on the manners, conduct and level of interaction demonstrated by our Holcombe students.



Nimrah, third year student of History & Politics ‘Queen’s has provided me with some of the happiest moments of my life – I have made lifelong friends and been exposed to a vast range of opportunities I otherwise wouldn’t have had access to. The staff and support team have been more than incredible!’



Jorja, third year student of History “Coming from Havering, Queens' was a bit of change but I've really enjoyed my three years here and can graduate having learned lots about my degree and myself”



Paige, second year student of Psychological & Behavioural Sciences “Coming to Queens' felt like a big surprise, so I enjoy sharing some of the things I wish I knew during my experience here, Cambridge-specific but also just about university in general”



Raina, first year student of Medicine “Queens’ is a very friendly and welcoming environment where student welfare is highly valued”

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, QUEEN'S COLLEGE PRESENTATION - CONTINUED



Jessie, year 12 "What I found useful was the information on the different colleges, formal events, curriculums designed to challenge, elitist myths, entry requirements for courses, bursaries that are available, highly regarded STEM courses, societies and clubs and much more"

Ayo, year 12 "From the Cambridge talk I learnt about the different colleges, tutorials called supervisions which offer extra help after lectures, availability of travel grants, the different range of intakes of state school students, the importance of personal statements, that Cambridge has their own entrance test and so much more. Interestingly, the presenters told us that if you don't get in, it does not mean you are not good enough it is just luck"

Omar, year 12 "..the talk inspired me to apply to Cambridge, due to the insightful information about supervision.. the different colleges..student accommodation..."

Thank you to the undergraduates from Queen's College, University of Cambridge and Ms Arnold for hosting the event.



YOUNG REPORTERS



BBC

YOUNG REPORTER

BBC Young Reporter is the BBC's journalism and media project supporting young people to develop content creation skills, find out about careers in broadcasting and share their own stories.



Year 7 students Jake and Michael have made their entry to the BBC Young Reporters Competition. Students were asked to come up with a story within the category of 'Me and My World'. Jake and Michael have worked together to come up with a story surrounding how young people can use online media in a positive way when they feel that there is a lot of information about the negatives of online media and there isn't enough of a balance. The students have discussed why it is important for young people like themselves to become digital and media literate students in the digital world they are growing up in.

Entries will be shortlisted by a panel from the BBC working on the Young Reporter competition. We look forward to hearing whether their entry was successful so they can go on to complete the report in full with the support from a team from the BBC.

YEAR 7 FOOTBALL SUCCESS



Congratulations to Year 7 students Liam Tandy, El-Amin Aderibigbe, Freddie Delaney and Rudi Charles. Their football team, Rainham 84 Youth U12 Devils, won the Express Cabs Maidstone Youth Football League Division 3 on Sunday 24th March finishing champions with one game of the season remaining, a fantastic achievement.

Congratulations also to Hudson Maunder whose team, Rainham 84 Youth U12 Rangers, finished runners up in the same league.

The Devils are always looking for new players to strengthen their squad so if any year 7 students are interested please contact recruitment@rainham84fc.co.uk or ring Kate 07795242029.

DOFE UPDATE TERM 4



As we rush towards the end of March and the end of the Award accounting year, well done to the 63 students that have completed their DofE Award this year. This year the school has seen a 117% increase in the number of Awards achieved compared to last year. All of these students by now should have had their certificates Awarded to them in Year group Celebration assemblies. There are still more students that have completed the expedition element but have not submitted their evidence for the other sections yet. Let's use Easter break and the last terms of this year to get your evidence submitted and your awards finished and awarded.

Next term will see the current Year 9s begin their preparations for their expedition that will be taking place in September 2024. The students will be getting themselves into their expedition groups early next term in readiness for starting the afterschool expedition training sessions that will be running next term. These sessions will be taking place in B21 on either a Tuesday or Thursdays depending upon their group number from 1515 – 1600. The programme for the sessions is as below and are compulsory for all students who wish to attend the expedition. Further information will be emailed to the parents of the current Year 9 cohort involved with more information.

Date	Topic
Week 2	Introduction to DofE Expeditions (The 20 Conditions) and The Countryside Code
Week 3	Navigating using a Map and Route Planning
Week 4	Emergency Procedures and First Aid
Week 5	Menu Planning

DOFE UPDATE TERM 4 - CONTINUED



Over the Easter Break the 12 students that are involved in the Silver Award will be completing their Practice Expedition around Meopham. They have been spending the last week of term preparing their routes for this venture. Good luck to them and I hope the weather is kind for them.

The Gold Award group have also been busy competing their expedition training with MOAC, so now they are now all ready to go onto to their practice expedition in the summer in the Peak District.

eDofE Drop-in sessions continue to take place every Thursday lunchtime from 1325 – 1345 in B15 for any student engaged in the Award to come along to if they need any help with their eDofE online accounts and competing their Awards.

Mr Giles Phillips
DofE Awards Coordinator

TRIP TO OXFORD UNIVERSITY- HERTFORD COLLEGE



On Monday 4th of March, 25 year 9 students went to Hertford College in Oxford where they were able to experience life at university.

Students had a talk about careers and high aspirations and were able to take part in different activities such as a Master class on the importance of languages and they had a discussion about what university life and culture at Oxford looks like.

Furthermore, they had a tour of the Hertford and Queen's Colleges and were able to eat in the refectory of Hertford College sharing it with real college students.

They also had the opportunity to speak to college students who informed them about the variety of courses and asked them relevant questions about further education. The students' behaviour during the tour at the college was immaculate; they were a credit to the school and engaged very well with the day at Oxford.

Mrs Ortega



TERM 4 INTER-HOUSE RESULTS YEAR 7 & 9



Year 7

Activity	Basketball	Table Tennis	Kick Rounders	Total points	OVERALL POSITION
Ardent	5th	5th	4th	4	5th
Barfleur	4th	1st	1st	12	1st
Conquest	2nd	3rd	2nd	11	2nd
Guardian	3rd	2nd	3rd	10	3rd
Shannon	1st	3rd	5th	9	4th

Year 9

Activity	Basketball	Table Tennis	Hockey	Total points	OVERALL POSITION
Ardent	2nd	5th	3rd	8	4th
Barfleur	3rd	4th	5th	6	5th
Conquest	5th	2nd	2nd	9	3rd
Guardian	1st	3rd	4th	10	2nd
Shannon	4th	1st	1st	12	1st

TERM 4 INTER-HOUSE RESULTS YEAR 10



Year 10

Activity	Basketball	Hockey	Kick Rounders	Total points	OVERALL POSITION
Ardent	4th	2nd	5th	7	4th
Barfleur	5th	5th	2nd	6	5th
Conquest	2nd	4th	4th	8	3rd
Guardian	1st	3rd	1st	13	1st
Shannon	3rd	1st	3rd	11	2nd

MUSIC CORNER



Upcoming music events that might interest you:



The Oasthouse Theatre Rainham - The Acoustic Session Saturday 6th April 2024 evening all tickets £6 for more information visit <https://www.oasthousetheatre.co.uk/productions.php> or contact General Enquiries: info@oasthousetheatre.co.uk

Central Theatre Chatham Legend the music of Bob Marley Thursday 9th May 2024 7:30pm (the show can also be seen at The Woodville Theatre Gravesend in October). Ticket Band A £28.50 Band B £27.50. For more information contact phone: 01634 338 338, you can email: boxoffice@medway.gov.uk or visit <https://www.medwayticketslive.co.uk/whats-on>



The Orchard Theatre Dartford – Northern Soul Live The signature Thursday 30th May 7:30pm Tickets £31.50 For more information contact Box Office: 0343 310 0033 or visit <https://trafalgartickets.com/orchard-theatre-dartford/en-GB/whats-on>

Bromley Little Theatre Bromley – Big Wolf Band Sunday 14th April 2024 one night only Tickets £15 For more information visit <https://bromleylittletheatre.org/music-nights/>



Rochester Cathedral - Elvis by Candlelight Friday 24th May 2024 at 7:30pm Ticket prices vary between £15-£30 for more information visit <https://www.rochestercathedral.org/new-events/2024/elvisbycandlelight>



MedwayGo

Take the hassle out of the holidays with MedwayGo. Choose from hundreds of fun activities for children from Reception to Year 11, including sport, dance, art, drama, and lots more! Children will have a great time making friends, keeping active and learning new skills plus each child receives a free balanced meal as part of their session.

Any child who currently receives benefits-related free school meals can attend for free and we can offer support with travel for children with additional needs. Multi-sports full day sessions can also be booked for children not receiving free school meals for just £17.95 per child

All staff and volunteers are experienced, and DBS checked, providing peace of mind for you and lots of fun for your kids!

Find out more and book activities here: <https://go.medway.gov.uk/>

Happy Easter...summer term bookings
happening now!



The CPD Standards Office
CPD PROVIDER: 22648
2024-2025
www.cpdstandards.com

Approved CPD training for anyone who works with children or teenagers.

**National Standards CPD accredited
with certificate**

Monday
29 April

19:00 -21:00

FREE



Helping kids back into school

School refusal is a growing concern. This session looks at why it is occurring and offers supportive ideas to assist parents.

Tuesday
9 April

19:00 - 21:00

£24



Cannabis Awareness

Still on the increase, are you able to talk to young people about this drug? Get the facts and the confidence to be able to have the conversation.

Thursday
18 April

19:00 - 21:00

£24



Understanding Addictive Behaviour

Screens, gaming, social media. What is happening to the brain and body and how can we control it.