

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

11 October 2019

Do you remember a teacher at your school who had a profoundly positive effect on your future? Perhaps someone who inspired you to try something new, push yourself a little harder or think in a different way? In *The Times* last Friday, Old Fidelian, Saracens full back and 2019 European Rugby Player of the Year, Alex Goode, spoke candidly about those who have had the greatest influence on his career. One of those people is Richard Mitchell, his first rugby coach here at St Faith's who went on to become the Head of Wellingborough Prep School and is now on our Board of Governors. The article can be read [here](#). It always warms my heart to hear of how teachers have inspired children. I hope that our current generation of Fidelians will go on to remember their teachers at St Faith's with as much respect and gratitude as Alex has for Richard.

Full Steam Ahead!

Teaching and learning are in full swing at this point in the academic year. My travels around the school this week have highlighted the breadth and depth of learning occurring and the extent to which our staff go to make lessons fun and engaging.

Last Friday, over twenty brave Year 7 pupils entertained an audience of parents, staff and friends with a wide variety of poetry recitals, from the deeply thoughtful to the highly comical. Oscar's, Madeleine's, Sofi's and James' recitals can be viewed below; the remainder are accessible on the VLE. Very well done to all those who bravely stood up and delivered with such confidence.

[Watch all the recitals](#)

On Monday, pupils from Year 6 visited the Perne Library in Peterhouse College, to find out more about its incredible collection. Marie Turner, the Assistant Librarian, took the children through the Scholar's Garden, Deer Park and Old Court to reach the Perne Library where they were shown around by Scott Mandelbrote, the Perne Librarian. As an unexpected bonus, our pupils were fortunate enough to be there on Matriculation Day and so witnessed all the Freshers arriving in their gowns.

On Tuesday, Year 5 enriched their understanding of the Muslim faith, with a 'Hajj experience'. The children travelled to five stations around Ashburton Hall to discover the importance of this pilgrimage for the followers of Islam. At each station the children participated in a different activity such as dressing for Hajj and circling the Kabah.

Year 7 have been studying volcanoes, and in particular Mount Etna, in their Humanities lessons this term. On Thursday break-time, staff were treated to cake and informal discussions with the pupils about the models they have made which illustrate many of the geographical features of volcanoes. Some of them had in-built eruptions!

During several lunchtimes this term some of our Year 7 pupils have been reviewing a range of STEM books nominated for the Royal Society Young People's Book Prize. With guidance from Miss Gamble, pupils have had the chance to chair the meeting, discuss their books, give their individual view points and to ultimately vote on their chosen winning book. The results of the scrutiny and their chosen books can be found in the STEM library in The Hub. Their results will now be submitted to the Royal Society and added to feedback from other pupil panels across the country.

Meanwhile in Engineering, Year 3 have been learning about how the shape of a structure affects its strength and have constructed pyramids out of a variety of materials (linking cleverly to their Humanities topic on the Ancient Egypt). Pupils were also challenged to make the tallest possible structure out of marshmallows and dried spaghetti!

The breadth of learning was also apparent in the Pre Prep this week. On Wednesday morning Mrs Harmsworth's Year 1 class charmed their parents and fellow pupils with a re-telling of the classic Julia Donaldson tale, *The Troll*, which links to this term's topic of Pirates. Confident

delivery of lines, charming costumes and props, and a jolly pirate song topped off a wonderfully entertaining start to the day.

Year 2 had a roaring time on Thursday when Ashburton Hall was transformed into 1666 London, including of course, the staging of the Great Fire which started in a bakery in Pudding Lane. The children began the morning as apprentices on the streets of London, learning skills common to the era, such as leather and metal working, sewing, etc. As the children developed their trades the fire started to spread. In the afternoon the children experienced the devastating effects of the fire as they evacuated the burnt out streets, looked for personal belongings in the charred remains and considered the process of rebuilding the city. It was wonderful to see how much the children were enjoying learning about this historical event.

Independent School Caterer of the Year

If an army marches on its stomach then so too does a school, which is why we are so keen to provide high quality catering. We were thrilled to learn, therefore, that this week our Catering Manager, Peter Burt, was named Independent School Caterer of the Year at the annual EDUcatering awards in London. Under Peter's leadership, catering at St Faith's has improved significantly over the past five years. Indeed in the most recent Parent Survey the quality of food was ranked extremely high and far exceeded national benchmark data. This award is much-deserved recognition for Peter, Head Chef Kevin and all our excellent catering team. The School's catering company, Chartwells, also won the 'Contract Caterer of the Year' award.

School Council

On Tuesday I joined the School Council for their lunchtime meeting. I was very impressed by the Council's good ideas to improve the school, many of which I will be taking forward. Thank you to the members for such a mature and interesting discussion.

Latham House Sock-Swap

Socks of every colour and pattern imaginable were on display on Thursday as many children, and indeed staff, embraced the Latham House 'Multi-Coloured Sock Swap' fundraising day. This year Latham are raising funds for Blue Smile, a local children's charity which supports children with significant emotional difficulties. I am delighted to announce that we raised over £593.57 (£1 per sock swapped) for this most worthwhile cause.

Finally...

We have hosted several Old Fidelian (OF) visits this week. On Wednesday, Mark Begbie returned to the school for a tour. Mark left St Faith's in the late 1990s, moved on to The Leys, studied Theology at King's College, Cambridge and is now Director of Creative Arts and a Teacher of Theology at Charterhouse School.

On Thursday six Old Fidelitys, all at St Faith's in the 1950s, returned to the school for a tour and lunch, and a chance to reminisce on their time here as pupils. They were genuinely stunned by the developments that they saw and also commented on the pupils' happiness and engagement in lessons. We are grateful to the OFs for making donations to our Makukhanye fundraising. During the course of lunch there were plenty of references to St Faith's teachers who had inspired them. I was particularly struck by the comments from one of our guests who said his love of nature (he now runs two nature reserves) began here when one of the teachers encouraged him to explore the flora and fauna of the school site.

A reminder that the half-term break will begin on the evening of Thursday 17th October and term will resume on Tuesday 29th October. The next newsletter will therefore be on Friday 1st November - the day of the SFPA Fireworks Display!

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell