

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

14 February 2020

Book Week

Heinrich Mann remarked, 'A house without books is like a room without windows'. The same could, of course, apply to schools. Reading is central to a St Faith's education and as such the arrival of Book Week is a key event in our annual calendar. Our passionate and popular librarians, Miss Johnson and Mrs Warren, put together a wonderful range of special literary activities including author visits, book quizzes, a book swap and a much-anticipated Pre Prep book character costume day. Andy Shepherd came to talk about her book series, *The Boy Who Grew Dragons*, Ross Welford spoke about *The 1000 Year Old Boy* and *The Dog Who Saved the World*, and Tracey Corderoy entertained us with *Shifty McGifty and Slippery Sam*. The interest and enthusiasm these visits sparked were tangible and the joy of books resonating around the school this week was heart-warming to experience.

[Current Parents can view all the Pre Prep photos](#)

Liverpool Music Tour

This week Jane and I joined over 50 of our senior musicians on the school's biennial Music Tour to Liverpool. On Wednesday evening we had the pleasure of hearing our Senior Singers lead Evensong in Liverpool Cathedral. The beautiful sound of our choir reverberating around the UK's largest Cathedral was magical and a memory we will treasure. In the photo gallery below, you may wonder why the children are standing next to a red telephone box inside the Cathedral. Well, Giles Gilbert Scott was responsible for designing both the traditional red telephone box and Liverpool Cathedral, so one of his smallest designs is housed in his largest!

The next day saw an exhilarating trip around the British Music Experience, an interactive celebration of the history of pop music which got many of the tourists dancing, as you can see from the photos! This was followed by concerts at Birkenhead High School and St Peter's Church, Heswall at which our singers, ensembles, soloists and Concert Band performed several pieces, including a Beatles melody final , which was particularly well received by the Liverpool audiences. Not surprisingly, all our hosts were extremely welcoming and the stunning setting of St Peter's Church, overlooking the River Dee and the Welsh mountains, was a fitting climax to a memorable day. Jane and I had to return to Cambridge today so we missed

the visits to the Beatles Museum and Museum of Liverpool, and the performances in the Metropolitan Cathedral. What a feast of music and a wonderful experience for our pupils! My sincere thanks to Mr Gorick and Miss Kennerley who ran the trip and to Mr Sedgwick, Ms Allen and Miss Butler for accompanying our musicians.

Buddhism Exhibition at the British Library

On Monday a group of Year 8 pupils, accompanied by Head of Humanities, Miss Dow, visited the Buddhism Exhibition, the largest of its kind, currently being held at the British Library in London. Our pupils immersed themselves in the artwork and sacred texts, many written on tree bark, palm leaves and silks, which make up this impressive exhibition.

Somebody Swallowed Stanley!

2JJ charmed and educated pupils, staff and parents on Wednesday morning with a rhyming couplet story about Stanley, who had a most eventful day. Stanley was swallowed by a whale, who choked and spat him out, then he was picked up by a seagull and dropped. Finally Stanley was swallowed by a turtle and became caught in the turtles throat so the poor creature was unable to breathe and had to lay quietly on the beach. Thankfully a boy with a kite came along, found the poor turtle and pulled Stanley out of his throat, saving the turtle. Stanley, it turned out, was a plastic bag, abandoned and left to wreak destruction in the oceans. This was a powerful message, delivered in a delightful way by 2JJ, including an excellent four-part song they had written themselves. The environment and sustainability are key aspects of life at St Faith's and I was delighted to see the pupils engage so passionately with the subject. Well done 2JJ and thank you to Mrs James and Mrs Whelan for helping to produce such a clear and confident assembly.

Outreach

This week we provided transport to and from St Faith's to bring Year 3 and 4 pupils from Park Street and Babraham Primary Schools so that they could enjoy, along-side our own pupils, a talk from author Andy Shepherd. We also provided a coach service to bring Year 5 pupils from Harston and Newton Primary School to St Faith's for a STEM day. Our visiting pupils enjoyed Engineering, Computing, Maths and Science lessons led by Heads of Department in our

specialist facilities. Clearly everyone gained much from their experiences and we very much look forward to welcoming more local pupils to St Faith's in the future.

Arm Visit

The Eco committee welcomed current parent and Head of Sustainability at Arm, Dominic Vergine, for lunch on Monday. Mr Vergine spent an hour discussing a number of Arm's projects. The pupils were fascinated by a prototype tablet which is intended for use by healthcare workers in remote and disadvantaged parts of the world where the population is frequently unable to read or write but who would be able to use a finger print scanner. The news that Arm are developing a drone to monitor the health of whales by collecting samples of 'whale snot' did little to dampen the enthusiasm of our pupils, who then had a chance to grill Mr Vergine with questions including, 'How do you prioritise sustainability projects?' and 'How do you deal with conflicts if people are not happy with sustainability changes?' Our sincere thanks to Mr Vergine for taking time out of his very busy work life to explain to our pupils the impact technology can have on improving sustainability globally.

National Handwriting Award

Those with a good memory will recall that back in June I reported St Faith's had won the 2019 SATIPS National Handwriting competition. On Monday, Amanda McLeod, one of the judges, and Kevin Sadler from Nexus, the sponsors, visited the school and met with Ryan and Pippa, both place winners in their respective age categories, to deliver the Nexus shield for the top scoring school and to congratulate them personally.

Makukhanye Donation

On Monday morning OF and current parent, Chris Bullen, dropped in to my office to make a generous donation from St James's Place Wealth Management. The gift of £2,500 has been earmarked specifically for our partner school, Makukhanye, in Jeffrey's Bay, South Africa, for the building of new classrooms, to meet the needs of the expanding pupil roll. Mr Bullen and his family accompanied the St Faith's tour to South Africa last summer, and like many parents and children, were deeply affected by the visit to the township school. He then approached the charitable foundation at his place of work and inspired them to make this significant financial donation. A huge thank you to Mr Bullen and St James's Place Wealth Management for their generosity.

SFPA Summer Party

We are delighted to announce that this year's SFPA Summer Party will be held at Anstey Hall, Trumpington, on Friday 19th June 2020. This 17th Century Country House will be the perfect back drop for an evening of dinner and drinks, live music and entertainment. We hope that many of you can join us; tickets are now on sale [here](#).

And finally...

Tonight I will be joining my colleagues to play in the OF v Staff v Parents 5-a-side football matches. As our captain, Mr Clayton-Smith commented to the players this week, there can be no more romantic way of spending Valentine's Day evening. I am not sure my wife agrees!

I wish you an enjoyable half-term break and look forward to seeing the school community reconvene on Monday 24th February.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell

