

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

20 January 2017

One of the pleasures of working in a school is that we have two New Years, every year! There is, of course, the new academic year in September when everyone arrives back from their summer holidays, all bright-eyed and bushy tailed, ready for life in a different year group with different teachers. And there is January, the beginning of the calendar year when, although classes won't necessarily have changed, it still feels, for many, like a fresh start. This week, the school has fizzed with energy and there has been a notable spring in the step of the pupils as they have moved around the school. I know from my conversations with parents, staff and children this week, that for many, the holidays are enjoyable and relaxing, but it is also great to be back at school and back in our usual routines.

SFPA Committee

A new year brings fresh ideas and many of my meetings this week have focussed on planning exciting future events. On Monday evening I joined the St Faith's Parents' Association (SFPA) Committee to review last term's events (the Fireworks display and Christmas Fair) which I am sure you will agree were a fantastic success. We then spent time organising the next two SFPA events, on Friday 10th March (Quiz Evening) and Saturday 10th June (Summer party). Further details of both occasions will be sent to you in due course, but in the meantime, we ask you to note the dates.

Old Fidelian Committee

Tuesday evening saw the termly meeting of the Old Fidelian (OF) Committee, a group of old and not so old boys and girls who, in a most convivial atmosphere, plan the many OF social and sporting events throughout the year. At this week's meeting, we welcomed three new members to the Committee, all in their twenties. One is a concert pianist, another a manager at a large pharmaceutical company in the City and the third works in the Nuffield Hospital, with her office overlooking our classrooms! It is always a great pleasure to talk to former pupils about their time at St Faith's and their subsequent education and careers. As I said to the Committee on Tuesday, it is very unusual for a prep school to have such a thriving alumni network – this is usually the preserve of senior schools – and this speaks volumes for the fondness with which so many former pupils hold the school. Once a Fidelian, always a Fidelian as one member said to me at the meeting. I do hope that in years to come, our current pupils will want to stay in touch and remain part of the St Faith's community.

Dr Jane Wilson-Howarth Visit

One former pupil who has stayed in touch is Seb Howarth, a talented athlete who often runs for the OF relay team against the pupils and staff at our annual Sports Day. On Tuesday we welcomed back to St Faith's Seb's mother, [Dr Jane Wilson-Howarth](#), to talk to Year 6 about her family's experience of living and working in Nepal. She has even written a children's book based on their experiences in Nepal which our pupils found fascinating. After the talk, the pupils went in to their English and Humanities groups to produce their own accounts of the Nepal presentation, some of which you can read in the index of this newsletter.

Sculpture Trail

Closer to home, the Year 4s enjoyed a sculpture trail around Cambridge today. To complement their work in Art and Design, the children followed the Cambridge Sculpture Trail 1, taking in war memorials, abstract works and the glorious landmarks of the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Scott Polar Research Institute.

Drama Productions

Rehearsals are in full swing for the many forthcoming Drama productions: the Year 1 musical – Hansel and Gretel (1430-1500 on 8th March), the Year 4 Drama Showcase based on mini-pantomimes (1500-1540 on 1st March), the Year 6 production of 'Aladdin' (1900-2030 on 22nd and 23rd March) and the Year 8 production of 'We will rock you' (1900-2030 on 17th and 18th May). I do hope that you are able to join us for at least one of these events.

Foundation Concert

The musicians are also preparing for the Foundation Concert on Thursday 9th February (1900-2030), a biennial event which is designed to showcase the musical talent at both St Faith's and The Leys. On this occasion, the concert will be held in the Ashburton Hall, here at St Faith's; all families from St Faith's and The Leys are most welcome to attend.

Entrance Assessments at St Faith's

Tomorrow morning, I will be welcoming a large number of families to St Faith's for our annual entrance assessments for entry to Years 3-8. As usual I expect the parents will be more nervous than their children but we will be doing everything we can to calm any nerves and ensure everyone enjoys their visit to the School.

Four-Piece National Gymnastic Championships

On Sunday, we are hosting, for the first time, the finals of the four-piece National Gymnastics Championships. It is a privilege to be holding such a prestigious event and I am grateful to our large team of staff and parents who will be helping out on the day. A particularly big thank you to Miss McNally, Mr North and Miss Butler, three of our gym coaches, who are coordinating the whole event. With 40 teams from 23 schools, some as far away as Dorset, Shropshire, Wales and Belgium, it should be great day of gymnastics.

I don't know if you are a 'Sherlock' watcher but if you are, did you notice the fleeting appearance (pictured here) of a St Faith's blazer on a mannequin at 221B Baker street in last Sunday's episode! Curious don't you think?

Finally, Mrs Smith, our Head of Pre Prep, showed me this wonderful Christmas Challenge 'submission', one of many excellent entries from our Pre Prep families, all completed during the Christmas break. My favourite is the reindeer food in the top left corner.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell