

# THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

## 19th March 2021

I have always been more of a night owl than an early bird. This suited me well in my younger years at university when my social life began at the time I now go to bed. Nowadays, rising in the early hours for work, particularly on gloomy winter mornings, is not my favourite part of the day. By the time I have dressed, packed my briefcase, made the long commute to work (all of 100m) and enjoyed the first cup of strong coffee in my office, my body and brain are starting to connect and slowly but surely, I gear myself up for another busy and invigorating day at St Faith's.

There was no such gradual start on Monday morning. No sooner had the alarm clock sounded and I had emerged from the depths of the duvet, a large and extremely busy bee appeared from nowhere, buzzing around my head. My first sighting of a bee in 2021 and not the best timing, I thought to myself. Where had it come from? My first instinct was to swat it as fiercely as possible with my bathroom towel, but fortunately common sense prevailed and after several desperate attempts, I managed to trap the imposter in a glass jar and release it out of the window.

There, in the confines of my bathroom at 6am, St Faith's British Nature Day had started with a flourish! A whole-school enrichment day that was not just based on the natural world around

us, but had a specific focus on bumblebees. Some things are just meant to be!

### **British Nature Day**

This annual event at St Faith's sees pupils follow their normal timetable, with lessons adapted to celebrate the natural world around us. In Maths, for example, Year 5 made origami bees while Year 6 pupils enjoyed valuable practice using pairs of compasses to construct hexagons. Meanwhile, Year 8 pupils solved the Magic Hexagon problem, first published by Ernst von Haselberg in 1888; 'In the following hexagon, can we place the numbers 1 to 19, such that the sum of every straight line in any direction (with 3, 4 or 5 numbers) is always 38?'

Mrs Greaves challenged her Year 6 English pupils to write a poem about bumblebees, having taken inspiration from 'The Flight of the Honey Bee' by Raymond Huber. She was delighted with the quality of the poetry she received. Year 8 pupils used the image of a bee making its first flight of the Spring, through the grounds of St Faith's as inspiration for their poetry.

## Year 6 Work

## Year 8 Work

Pupils in Year 8 French made posters proclaiming, 'Sauvons les abeilles' or 'Save the bumblebees', which detailed the ways people can protect bees by planting flowers and not using pesticides.

In Humanities, Year 7 learnt about the history of bee keeping, from the times of the ancient Egyptians to the creation of the modern day beehive in the 1840s, which allows bees to remain in their hive even after honey was harvested.

Year 7 scientists researched the link between flowers and bees and discovered why they are a perfect partnership.



In Pre Prep, Foundation pupils made a beautiful display of Spring flowers in their classroom to celebrate the recent change in season. They also had a tour of the school grounds and using their iPads, took photos of the wildlife on site. In Year 1, pupils in 1JC learnt about British garden birds and developed their sketching skills, as you can see from these photos.

Gill Perkins, CEO of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, rounded off a wonderful day with a virtual assembly to the whole school, in which she explained how everyone can 'Bee the Change' and do their part to help sustain bumblebees in Britain. Her advice included gardening tips to make better feeding grounds for bumblebees, suggestions on how to record the numbers and varieties of bees seen between March and October, and details of how to build bumblebee nests so that they have safe homes to live through the winter months. She ended her assembly with the wise words of primatologist and anthropologist Jane Goodall, *'You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.'*

## **Back Together Again**

As I passed by our Year 4 classes this week, I was delighted to see that the rooms have been decorated with some delightful displays which celebrate the joy of being 'Back Together Again'

after the long spell of home learning. Each child has decorated their own piece of a jigsaw to reflect their individuality. As a symbol of the class reunion, the pieces were assembled into a colourful jigsaw. The children also drew self-portraits to produce a unique record of this memorable occasion.

## Year 6 General Knowledge

Yesterday our Year 6 General Knowledge team took part in this year's National Quiz Club Championships, held virtually of course. Pupils from 48 schools from around the UK were challenged with questions such as 'Where is the Headquarters of the Red Cross? (Switzerland)', 'Khartoum is the capital of which country? (Sudan)' and 'which US President declared war on Japan? (Franklin D. Roosevelt)'. Our team performed very well, finishing 4th overall and qualifying for the national finals next term. It was lovely to be there, with Miss Dow, to share in the sheer excitement and joy of this competition, and witness the impressive general knowledge of our pupils. Many congratulations to Navya, Oliver, Alice and Alexander.

<https://youtu.be/7AevRoEBd-4>

## Passover

Year 5 pupils are currently studying Judaism in Humanities and have been showing off their mini Torah scrolls which they made during home learning. This week they enjoyed making and tasting elements of the Seder Meal (celebrated as part of Passover each Spring to remember the exodus from slavery in Egypt). Each part of the meal symbolises a different section of the story, such as tasting parsley dipped in salt water to remember the tears of the slaves, or dropping 10 drops of wine onto a napkin to remember the 10 plagues.



## Dissections

Having missed out on heart dissections during last summer's lockdown, Year 8 finally had the chance to investigate the intricate structure of the heart during their Science lessons this week. Once the initial squeamish shocks had been overcome, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the challenge and Mrs Price, Head of Science, was most impressed with the dissection skills on display, commenting that she felt she had possibly seen the surgeons of the future!

## Finally...

After such an uplifting British Nature Day, led by our Eco Coordinator, Miss Gamble, let's finish with a section from the lovely prayer that was read so well by Year 6 pupils, Alex and Ellen, in the whole school assembly on Monday.

*All creeping things, all flying things,*

*All living things, all dying things,*

*The highest hills, the deepest seas,*

*The strongest gale, the slightest breeze,*

*The blossom on a cherry tree,*

*A spinning spider's artistry,*

*The smell of dry earth after rain,*

*Each cell within a human brain,*

*Each fallen leaf, each towering pine,*

*Reveals your intricate design.*

*Creator Lord, we stand amazed,*

*And for your earth, we give you praise:*

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell