

THIS WEEK AT ST FAITH'S

14th May 2021

One of the pleasures of my job is receiving letters of thanks from former pupils. They often reflect on their happy and positive start in life at St Faith's, frequently mentioning specific teachers who made an impression, sometimes recounting an amusing incident or a classroom misdemeanour and in a significant number of cases, referencing their joy of rowing. One of the things I have discovered during my ten years at St Faith's is that, for many former pupils, rowing was the one sport with which they felt a true connection. Old Fidelians tell me that rowing lessons provided an opportunity to develop a passion for a sport that they could go on to pursue for the rest of their lives, particularly for pupils who weren't so attracted to the traditional team games. When I joined a rowing session with our pupils a few years ago, I was struck by the rigour and teamwork required and the speed with which these super light boats glide through the water when everyone is working together in a coordinated fashion.

So it delights me to see our current Fidelians making the most of their opportunities in the beautiful surroundings of the River Cam each week. On Wednesday, our rowing coaches, Miss Kennerley and Mr Hames, were putting Year 8 pupils through their paces, or should I say strokes, in the single sculls. With the exception of the occasional encounter with a riverbank bush, our young rowers appeared to be getting the hang of it rather well, as we can see from these photos and video. I hope that many of them will go on to enjoy the sport long after they have left the school.

<https://youtu.be/CTxdPx5ljLY>

OF Golf

Speaking of sports for life, golf is part of our sports curriculum for the older pupils and it is great to see so many enjoying lessons in school and joining local clubs. On Monday, 14 members of our Old Fidelian community were reunited for the first time in nearly two years, at the annual OF Golf Day, held at the Royal Worlington Golf Club. This year, the event included a round of 18 holes and a sandwich lunch and drinks outside the clubhouse. Congratulations to the winner, David Sabberton, and thank you to Richard Devoy, the OF Golf Chairman. For details of further OF events please click here <https://www.stfaiths.co.uk/old-fidelians/news-events/>

Eco Racing – The Bentley Balloon Race

Competitive sport is always a great unifier and this week, Bentley House launched its unique charity event to raise money for Cambridge Aid, a local organisation offering financial help to individuals and families in need. The Coronation Race is a virtual balloon contest, environmentally friendly and with no risk to wildlife, but with all the thrills and spills of a real balloon event. Bentley House is encouraging anyone who wishes to participate to purchase a 'balloon' for £3, design it, decide how much virtual helium to fill it with, even customise its shape and the thickness of its foil. All participating balloons, including those from St Faith's entries, will be virtually launched from Westminster Abbey on Wednesday 2nd June. Computer simulations will then assess weather conditions, combined with the specifics of each balloon, to determine how far each one travels over seven days. The progress of each balloon can be tracked after it is launched.

As well as the national competition which has a cash first prize of £500, Bentley House has arranged for the top 20 St Faith's balloons (based on distance travelled) to receive a Hamper from our Chartwells catering team. For more information on how to take part in this innovative event and to raise money for Cambridge Aid please click [here](#).

[Buy a balloon for charity](#)

Year 8 Language Carousel

This term, our Year 8 pupils are enjoying the experience of learning new languages, as well as studying the different cultures of countries, as they take part in the annual Languages Carousel. Over the course of eight weeks, their language lessons have been tailored to develop and extend their existing knowledge and linguistic skills. Pupils will have the opportunity to take a brief but detailed dive into several languages, practising the decoding skills they have learned over the years, and investigating which languages interest them the most.

<https://youtu.be/OswvgP7bMgg>

This year, Mr Day, who grew up in a number of Arabic countries, is sharing his personal knowledge of the Arabic language and culture. He discussed with his class the 5 Pillars of Islam and the links between religion and language. For homework, pupils were set the challenge of teaching their parents a few key Arabic phrases, and having heard some of the lesson myself, I suspect that this was a highly entertaining homework for many families.

Miss Starling has been introducing pupils to Ancient Greek. On Wednesday, pupils learnt how to introduce themselves using this unfamiliar language, before practising the sounds and letters of

the alphabet - a word which originates from the first two letters of the Ancient Greek alphabet, alpha (?) and beta (?).

Meanwhile Mrs Deudney introduced pupils to the technicalities of the German language. They timed themselves on how quickly they could count to 20, then learnt the German words for various animals by playing a version of charades.

On a cultural theme, Spanish born Miss Marti-Palet is expanding Year 8s understanding of the unique traits of the Spanish culture across the world, this week with a focus on working and farming. In addition, Mrs O'Reilly has been sharing details of the French culture, having grown up in the Loire Valley.

Year 2 Bug Hotels

This week, Year 2 have been literally 'sawing' through their design and technology curriculum, 'nailing' all their objectives by designing and assembling their own bug hotels. The children learnt about safety when working with different tools and challenged themselves to control a hand saw and hammer to assemble their own wooden structures. They are looking forward to filling the hotel with bug friendly spaces and seeing what they attract when placed in gardens at home.

<https://youtu.be/seozOiTA8DE>

Buddy Sessions

On Monday, pupils in 8N carried out their first face to face 'Buddy Session' of the year, having had previous attempts thwarted by the restrictions of Covid-19. Year 3 to 6 pupils in Newton House connected with small groups of Year 8 Newton Prefects in outdoor spaces around the school, to explore the story of 'Scaredy Squirrel' and how he overcame challenges using his own skills and resourcefulness, and by seeking help from others. The clear message from Year 8 to their younger counterparts was to reach out when you need help.

National Schools Symphony Orchestra

We were delighted to hear this week that Juliette in Year 7 has gained a place in the National Schools Symphony Orchestra. The NSSO provides an intensive, high quality orchestral experience for young musicians. We wish Juliette lots of enjoyment and success as she performs with the NSSO this summer.

Finally...

Members of the School Council have been meeting to finalise plans for the survey they will be conducting at the school gates next week. Armed with clipboards, School Council members will be 'listening to the pupil voice', to get a stronger sense of the main issues they would like to be addressed in the coming months. I eagerly await the feedback from the Council on their findings.

In the meantime, I wish you and your family a happy and restful weekend.

With all good wishes,

Nigel Helliwell