

INTOUCH

ST. AIDAN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

NO.13 - DECEMBER 2021



At this time of Advent, a time of waiting and preparation for the coming Christmas season, St. Aidan's has been waiting very busily with all sorts of wonderful activities. Students and staff have, as always, generated many good news stories, many of which are included in this edition of InTouch, showing just how helpful, kind, determined and conscientious they are within our school community. Well done to all, and wishing everyone well at this special time of year in the School and Church calendar.

'That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 11 The Saviour—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!' Luke 2: 8-11.

Celebrating 30 Years of Chamber Choir



2022 will be a very special year for the iconic and celebrated St. Aidan's Chamber Choir! The choir was founded in 1992, and has continued in an unbroken tradition, even through the pandemic, of providing hundreds of young people with unforgettable and formative singing experiences, performing wonderful, inspiring music at the highest level in amazing locations, locally, nationally and internationally.

We are planning to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the choir with a Festival Concert at Ripon Cathedral on the evening of Saturday 2nd April 2022, featuring past and present members of the choir, as well as St. Aidan's Community Chorus and other young musicians from the school.

We would like to invite former members of the choir from any of its three decades to come along and form a spectacular 'Choir of Choirs' for the occasion.

To register interest please email music@staidans.co.uk with the subject 'CC30'. More information will become available in January.

Music and Drama

Staff from the Music department and our talented young musicians are in the words of our Director of Music, Mr Pallant "fantastically pleased and honoured" to be shortlisted for Outstanding Music Department in the 2022 Music and Drama Teacher Awards. The ceremony is in London in March and we are very much looking forward to it.

To see some of our musicians perform please visit the St. Aidan's YouTube channel to watch the recently added Senior Concert. The Symphonic Wind Band are also honoured to be performing at the Mayor of Harrogate's Carol Concert at the Royal Hall on December 23rd, which it has done for many years now. Always a fabulous occasion and for many in Harrogate the start of their Christmas festivities.

Year 7 Christingle

We are delighted to be able to host our Year 7 Christingle service which has always been such a special end to the Year 7's first full term at St. Aidan's. Staff and children have been preparing for the service for weeks and we hope those attending find it a fabulous way to start the Christmas holidays.



Year 7 Festive Treat

On Thursday 9th December period 5, the main school hall was a brilliant place to be as Year 7 and their teachers were treated to music and festive frolics.

The Symphonic Wind Band led by Mr Pallant performed a selection of Christmas favourites including Sleigh Ride, White Christmas and Feliz Navidad.

Mr Taylor entertained everyone with a hilarious poem entitled The Ballad of Twenty Pigs and there was a form Christmas Joke Competition! Each form had a representative to tell the joke and then teachers voted. The winning joke was performed by Harry Tanner of 7G to a rapturous applause and here it is;

Why does Santa have three gardens? Because he likes to Ho Ho Ho!



Year 8 Trips - The Lakes and Aberdovey

On Monday 6th December, we waved off Year 8 onto three coaches going to three different destinations; Ullswater, Howtown and Aberdovey in Wales. For most of the year group this will have been their first ever residential trip due to the restrictions caused by the Covid19 epidemic. The teachers have been thrilled with how the students have handled being away from home for four nights and the students have benefitted enormously from the experience. The weather has been challenging at times and as one instructor said on the Ullswater trip “sometimes we go looking for adventure, today adventure has come to look for us”. Staff always put the safety of the students first and adjusted plans when needed, staying at lower levels to avoid the worst of the weather. We would like to say a huge thank you to all the staff who organised these three fantastic trips and to those who accompanied Year 8 helping them create some brilliant memories. Activities have included; abseiling, gorgewalking, raft building, cooking their own dinner over camp fires and in the evenings there has been table soccer and pool accompanied with essential hot chocolate!

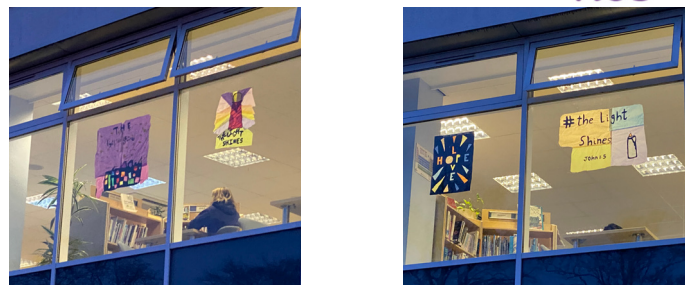


Reading Corner

The Library department has a list of recommended reading books to enjoy over the Christmas break. Click on the book covers to see the full list.



The Light Shines Window Trail



St Aidan's KS3 Art club has been contributing to a Harrogate-wide project, The Light Shines, for which homes and churches around the town are creating beautiful window displays on an Advent theme. We have been posting up some of our own displays in windows at the front of school to be lit up each evening during the last week of term. **Click here** to find out more about the project and access the trail which has been available from Sunday 12th December.

It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness



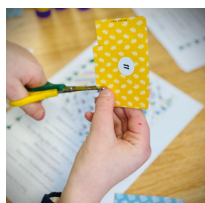
The Amnesty International group consists of students from the Associated Sixth Form, although we are hoping to open the group up to all years very soon. Amnesty only supports people who have peacefully expressed their point of view. In over half of the cases that Amnesty adopts, the prisoners experience an improvement in their conditions immediately.

Recently, we have been campaigning for Mohamed Baker, an Egyptian lawyer who has been imprisoned and tortured for representing people who have been speaking out about human rights abuses. We have written letters to the Egyptian Embassy in London and to the head of state. Additionally, we have had a type of demonstration in the Sixth Form café when a member of the group was bound, gagged, tied up with rope and stood in silence for all of those who suffer for peacefully expressing their views, people like Mohamed Baker. As well as this symbolic act, the group went around the café asking fellow students to join, giving out stickers and water-based tattoos. If you would like to find out more about Mohamed Baker [click here](#).

Please come and support the group in DL1, every Wednesday. As Amnesty likes to say: it is better to light a candle than curse the darkness.

Wellbeing Wednesday

The Independent Learning Centre (ILC) has been encouraging some of our Year 11 students to de-stress in the run up to Christmas by offering Wellbeing Wednesday. Studying for GCSEs can be a stressful time so ILC have offered an environment where students could take some time out to focus on positive ways to help their mental health. One week the students made Wellbeing Advents Calendars which were fun to make and looked fabulous!



Harrogate Foodbank

This month we started our Harrogate Foodbank collections and contributions have been pouring in - thank you! We have a donation basket in reception and are welcoming not just food but all household products! Every week, Harrogate Foodbank suggest a selection of items that would be useful and we will try to let you know this information on our social media channels. This month Year 8 have been asked to donate and in January it will be Year 9. However, all students and staff are very welcome to donate.



INFORMATION EVENING
THURSDAY 20 JANUARY

Maths Success

We have recently, in November, held the Senior UKMT Maths Challenge. 70 Further Maths, A-Level and AS Maths students, from Y12 and Y13 at St Aidan's, took part, and many (61%) were successful in gaining certificates (up from 48% last year).

Overall St Aidan's entries achieved 2 Golds, 14 Silver and 26 Bronze. A Gold puts a student in the top 7% of entries, Silver the top 14% and Bronze the top 22% so they have a lot to be proud of after such a difficult and disruptive couple of years.

Notable mentions are Alyssa Parris and Ben Chumas, both Year 13, who achieved Gold, with Alyssa achieving Best In School. Isabel Miles and Finlay Robinson, both Year 12, achieved Silver and joint Best In Year.



Science Olympiad



In late November, eleven Year 13 students sat the A2 Physics Challenge Paper, set by the BPhO in association with the University of Oxford. We're delighted and proud that all 11 achieved Merits (the highest category available). The paper is very demanding and requires a high degree of critical thinking together with sound Physics-based knowledge.

The students have been attending weekly lunchtime workshops where they discuss and work through challenging Physics questions with Mr Park and Mrs Watson.

Well done to: Ben Chumas, Jamie Bune, Lucca Amella, Jack Goodsall, Hugo Mellor, Thomas Jenner, Luke Fry, Ben Folkard, Jack Tinker and Kieran Ramdeehul. Particular congratulations go to Ben Handley who achieved the highest mark of any student sitting this paper at St. Aidan's in recent years.

Scholarship for Dan



We are thrilled for Year 11 student Dan Toulson who has got a 2 year scholarship at Leeds United. He starts on 1st July 2022. Dan has been in the Leeds United Academy since the age of 10 and plays as left sided defender. During the past 6 years he has been training 3-4 times each week plus games on the weekend and his scholarship reflects both talent and his commitment to hard work. His fixture list each year includes playing the best talent in the country at clubs including Arsenal, Manchester United, Liverpool, Manchester City etc. The scholarship includes further education as well as football training. Leeds United is a Premier League club with a reputation for developing talent. Congratulations Dan!

New Equestrian Club

The school now has an Equestrian Team. We have had teams in the past but not for a long time so this is a very exciting new sporting development at St Aidan's. The team is made up of 4 riders from Years 7 to 11 and we will be entering competitions run by the National Schools Equestrian League. This is a great opportunity for students who ride to represent St Aidan's and for us to compete against local schools in equestrian disciplines such as dressage, show jumping and eventing. Team riders will be busy over the Christmas holidays training for their first competition in January. Good luck to this new team!

Gingerbread House Competition

It was an amazing evening with eight Year 9 teams in attendance. All aspects of the houses had been made by the students and the most elaborate of decoration added. We even had LED lights and gingerbread people personalised into various staff members. The competition was judged by Mrs Douglas and our catering team's Helen King, who had previously presented a masterclass providing the students with all the gingerbread know how together with construction tips. The results were as follows:

1st prize went to 9D (b), 2nd to 9C joint 3rd to 9Y (a) and 9G.

The judging criteria was based on creativity, teamwork and organisation.

Well done all.



Christmas Card Competition

There were over 150 entries to Year 8's Christmas Card Competition and the judges, Mr Ives, Mrs Soper and the Art Department were very impressed with the quality of the work. Congratulations to the eight students who were judged as Highly Commended and to Mylo Drew who was the overall winner with his painting of a Robin sitting on a beautiful Celtic cross. The Highly Commended designs and the winning card are on display in school reception.



Top Tips for a Sustainable Christmas



St. Aidan's Eco Committee have been researching how to have an Eco-friendly Christmas.

Here are their top tips:

- 1) Avoid glitter on cards or wrapping paper.
- 2) Shop local.
- 3) Rent a tree in a pot (and then return it).
- 4) Buy your turkey from a sustainable and organic farm.
- 5) Upcycle last year's Christmas cards to make gift tags.
- 6) Use foliage out of the garden to make a wreath.
- 7) Don't buy plastic toys.
- 8) Make your own Christmas Crackers.
- 9) Buy reusable Advent Calendars.
- 10) Turn Christmas lights off at night or when you are out.



FLG Festive Creations

The Foundation Learning Group have been busy for the last few weeks making these miniature Christmas Cakes. The delightful aroma of home made mince pies was also wafting out of the windows of the bungalow this week!



National Cross Country Finals in Newquay



Very thankful for our luxury coach travel, our year 7/8 boys' team, year 9/10 girls' and boys' teams, and year 11/12 girls' teams travelled to the far South-West to compete in the English Schools' Cross Country Cup final. Having qualified strongly through the county round and the regional round all teams had high hopes of competing well against the best teams in the country.

Year 9 and 10 girls were the first to race, in windy conditions and a rare outbreak of sunshine. All of the team ran superbly well, taking places steadily as the race went on, to finish in 6th place – the highest team placing that any St Aidan's team has ever managed. The team were lead home by Seren Melling (23rd) and Elena Dickson (31st); and with most of the team in the same age group, will hope to go even better next year.

Daisy Abbs, Sophie Baker, Grace Brierley, Elena Dickson, Seren Melling, Niamh Robinson.

The year 7 and 8 boys team ran next, all of them new to this level of competition and the speed at the start of the race. Nonetheless, they coped well and finished as 11th team (of the 27 competing here) with Alfie Charlton finishing in 31st place, our first finisher. Again, with three year 7 runners in the team, the chances of qualifying again next year look good.

Charlie Baxter, Alfie Charlton, Ben Graham, Oliver Holt, Arran Robson, George Wastling.

The senior girls were next to race, with strength in depth meaning we'd had to leave good runners back at home, and led by one outstanding fell runner and one outstanding 800m runner in the team. Eve Whitaker finished in a fantastic 3rd place overall, Ella Colbourn 20th and the team were placed 9th overall – a superb performance. All of the runners will be eligible next year, with the team probably even stronger as runners move up from the younger age group.

Willow Baker, Ella Colbourn, Carys Dickson, Molly Hughes, Kaelin McCooke, Eve Whitaker.

Our intermediate boys' team, down to just the crucial 4 runners after a few withdrawals, had to battle through a serious lashing hail storm, running in just singlet and shorts! With most of the team still only in year 9, this proved a tough race indeed, however we were delighted by their determination and a team placing 20th bodes very well for next year with the boys a year stronger and faster in the same age group.

Otis Baker, Luke Brierley, Ollie Holdsworth, Sam Skaife-Clark.

Huge thanks to Ms Goacher and Mr Strover accompanying the teams, to Endless LLP for their sponsorship and to so many parents for their support. New runners are always welcome at lunchtime and after school running clubs.

Upcoming dates for your diary

4 Jan: Training Day

10 Jan: Year 11 Mocks begin

5 Jan: All students return to school

20 Jan: Sixth Form Information Evening



We hope you have enjoyed this Christmas edition of **INTOUCH**.

Thank you for your feedback so far; please do send any further comments or suggestions to Kate Caine (k.caine@staidans.co.uk)