

# INTOUCH

ST. AIDAN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

NO.23 - NOVEMBER 2022



As we approach the end of term, the pace of activity by staff and students does not reduce. The school is very busy as you can see from this edition of InTouch. There have been many memorable events this month but perhaps the stand out for me has been the school production, Legally Blonde. It was an amazing showcase for the talents of our students. The cast, the band, the technicians, the crew all shone in a dazzling show which brought the audience to its feet in rapturous applause. My family have a personal thank you to add for the amazing sum raised in support of the Teenage Cancer Trust, a charity very dear to our hearts. Charitable giving is well supported by friends and family and students here at St Aidan's and I am delighted to announce that we raised a huge amount for Children in Need and Wellspring this year. The Sixth Form students really made the day with their ingenious costumes and fancy dress – thank you! This month St Aidan's is preparing for Christmas, a very special time of worship and celebration for our school community. I am sure many of you will be joining us at our Carol Service and Christingle events, which are highlights in our calendar, and I look forward to seeing you there!

Mr Thornton

## Anti-Bullying week

This year's theme for Anti-Bullying Week (14th – 18th November) was to 'Reach Out'. The ILC's newest interactive display was all about how us as individuals can reach out to those around us who may need some extra support. The idea was that anyone can write down their own ideas of how to help a friend who is struggling, but also what they may need from other people if they are struggling themselves. It was really positive and encouraging to see so many students come forward to say what they would do to reach out to support a friend. Our favourites included "appreciate their boundaries", "check up on them", and "give small gestures, compliment them and make them feel good".



## Armistice Day

Each day in the week leading up to Armistice Day each year group was invited to morning assemblies held by Mr Thornton and Dr Murray explaining the importance of remembering those who gave their lives for our country. Mr Thornton gave moving personal accounts of his ancestor Albert who fought in the trenches of France and Belgium during World War 1. This included photos of a trip he took to visit these trenches and descriptions of how dangerous and difficult it would have been for Albert who was killed in the Great War by a German sniper. Dr Murray reflected upon the Heroes of war and how we as a nation commemorate those who have fallen internationally, nationally and locally.

On Friday 11 November, a poignant assembly for Year 7 was held in Constance Green Hall. Helping us mark the occasion was the Maths department's Mr Cottrill formerly a Platoon Commander in 4th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment before becoming a teacher.

Mr Cottrill now serves as a Lieutenant in the Army Reserve, working as a Troop Commander in 269 Battery, 101st Regiment, Royal Artillery and together with sixth form students Tobias Bennett who is an Air Cadet and Annapaola Proietti who is an Army Cadet, they slow marched the colours to the front of Constance Green Hall standing on ceremony for the duration of the assembly.

Mr Thornton and Dr Murray delivered the assembly with the help of Year 7 students Issaac Metcalfe and Isabelle Doran who read poems beautifully. A letter from a World War 1 soldier (an ancestor of Ms Strickland) was incredibly moving to hear when spoken by Year 13 student Dan Bryant. Thanks must also go to our guest speaker, retired Major Bruce Down. At the 11th hour, Year 13 student Euan O'Connell played the Last Post while the hall and school fell silent. Elsewhere, positioned around school, were our trumpeters and buglers also playing the Last Post so everyone in school could hear.

## Stamp Appeal



In the lead up to Christmas when we will receive cards, we are asking for used stamps to be brought into school and left in our collection point at reception. Please support this appeal by cutting out used stamps (leaving a 1cm border) and popping them in this box.

All money raised will go to the Bone Cancer Trust. This is a charity very close to our hearts, as we fondly remember St Aidan's pupil Frank Ashton who passed away from a rare form of Bone Cancer called Ewing Sarcoma at the age of 14 while in Year 9 here.



# GCSE Certificate Presentation Evening

On Wednesday 16 November, we gathered in Constance Green Hall with our former Year 11 students and their families for a very special evening of celebration as the students were given their GCSE certificates. Speeches were given by Interim Headteacher Mr Thornton and former Head of Year 11 Mr Alker.

Assistant Headteacher Mr Holdsworth who oversees Key Stage 4 Progress celebrated the year group and had a chat with our guest speaker Harrogate Town Captain, Josh Falkingham. Josh gave a brilliant insight about his journey towards becoming Harrogate Town Captain and how it involved ups and downs along the way. The key message to these students was that resilience is the most important thing in life, this is something they have displayed already during their GCSE years.

This year group were the first year group to sit their formal exams following years of disruption brought about by the pandemic. In Year 10, they coped with huge periods of home schooling, online learning not to mention the lack of normal trips and social activities that we encourage our students to take part in as relief from the pressures of GCSE work.

Despite all of this, the results they achieved as a year group were among the strongest GCSE results, we have ever achieved as a school and we believe they may even be the strongest results in the county (official figures are not released until January).

We are very grateful to our brilliant team of staff who supported this year group through this challenging couple of years while coping with the challenges of teaching online and we also extend our gratitude to the parents/carers/families who it was wonderful to celebrate with on Wednesday. Congratulations to each member of the year group and to those who received special prizes. We are very proud of you.



## Maths Olympiad for Girls

Huge congratulations to all the girls who volunteered to attempt the MOG which is no small undertaking! It consisted of a 2.5 hour paper with 5 challenging, advanced mathematical problems. Well done to each student – what an impressive achievement! The girls who took part in Year 12 were: Iris Asbury, Bethany Brook, Erin Bullen, Ava Cooper, Iona Davies, Matilda Griffin, Leah Helm, Dakota Hunter, Kezia Jackson, Kristine Joshey, Ella Lewis, Alice Parker, Olivia Parris, Amrita Rooney, Tiffany Rosley and Natalia Walker. In Year 13: Taia Port, Rupali Thiyagarajan and Jess Thompson.



## Sixth Form Debating Competition

In mid-November the first round of the ESU Mace competition was held online. The Sixth Form debating team consisting of Lizzie Gibbin, Huda Naser and Jamie Green proposed the motion: This House would ban the sale and consumption of meat. They faced skilful opposition from Malton School. Although this was our team's first inter-school debate, they did exceptionally well. The judge was impressed with the quality of their arguments and the style of their performance. They scored high marks in all areas. Many congratulations to the team and best of luck for the next round in January.



## Year 7 Public Speaking Competition



This term, the English Department have been teaching Year 7 about persuasive writing skills and the art of constructing a well researched argument. Pupils have learnt how to form a viewpoint from which to write, the use of rhetorical and persuasive techniques and the impact of their choice of language and style of delivery.

To mark the culmination of the project, Mrs Cartwright invited children to put their new found skills into practice and deliver a speech at a Public Speaking Competition in front of the rest of the Year Group, teachers and judges. With so many high standard auditions Mrs Cartwright and other Year 7 English teachers had a really hard task to pick the final 18 speakers. The competition was held in Constance Green Hall and produced a highly informative and entertaining afternoon. Speakers spoke passionately about topics ranging from 'The Inequality of Wages' to '3D Printing' and 'The Power of Music', to 'The Beano'.

Three external judges, all with extensive personal experience of Public Speaking, – Sally Bendtson, Limelight HR, Tony Kirkland, HG1 Productions and Rowena Lloyd, KSSD were extremely impressed with the high standard of delivery and the maturity of children who had only been at Secondary School for one term.

They had the unenviable task of choosing a winner and 5 runners up and after much deliberation, during which time the audience were entertained by the West African Drumming Ensemble led by Mrs Collett, the judges presented Certificates of Achievement to all speakers. They announced Evie Howard as the overall winner with her interactive and well researched speech 'Witch Trials' and runners up Harry Taylor, Jacob Hirst, Louis Moore, James Moulton and Charlotte Lachmann.

## Jessie performs in Shrek the Musical!

Congratulations to Jessie Thomas (7P) who was part of the cast of HSAP in Shrek the Musical at Harrogate Theatre over October half term.

She shared the roles of Young Fiona, Young Shrek and Baby Bear over the course of six shows.

As well as singing a solo, Jessie enjoyed dancing as part of the ensemble, learning so much from the talented cast and making wonderful life long memories.



## Medics and Vets interviews

Earlier this month, we were fortunate to welcome medical professionals from Harrogate District Hospital to put our Year 13 medical and veterinary applicants through their paces in a mini multiple mock interview event. The students found this incredibly helpful in preparation for their university interviews. We are very grateful to the staff from Harrogate Hospital for giving up their time to benefit our students.



## Zawadi Christmas Catalogue



Looking for Christmas gift ideas? Zawadi has the ideal solution! Take a look through our Virtual Christmas Gift Catalogue before you search elsewhere!

Zawadi is a student led team who raise money for Artizan International by organising many different fundraising activities each year. Artizan International is a Harrogate based charity which empowers people living with disability – you may have seen their colourful shop in the centre of town selling amazing textiles, jewellery and cards, all made at their training centres in Peru, Ecuador and the UK.

This Christmas, Zawadi would like to present to you their Virtual Christmas Gift Catalogue, which is full of the tools and equipment needed to train differently abled workers so that they have the skills to regain financial and social independence. Choose any of the items listed - from a Paper Making Mould or Jewellery Starter Kit to a Screen-Printing Table or a Sewing Machine – all are priced accordingly and can be itemised in a gift card for you to send on to a friend or family member this Christmas.

Buy online via the above link! Gift cards will be returned to you via pupil registers. Each one includes a personal story from one of the many people Artizan has trained. Zawadi members Luas and Amrita are heading up this festive team initiative and their message is; 'Please support us! In doing so, you can buy the 'chance of a lifetime' for someone in Peru or Ecuador. Every penny you spend will enable Artizan International to buy more tools to support their training & social enterprise centres and help transform lives.'

## Children in Need

Friday 18 November was the official Children in Need Day and to mark it, we had a non-uniform day for main school and the Sixth Form came in fancy dress and had a fun time during period 5 with Kahoots, board games or football on the 3G. Senate held a brilliant auction where prizes varied from a pass to get to the front of the lunch queue to a signed Leeds Utd shirt. The amount Sixth Form raised from the auction and donations totalled £1638.04 for Children in Need. Main school raised a grand total of £2578 which will be split equally between Children in Need and Wellspring.

In true St Aidan's style Sixth Form went to town with their costumes. Some of the sights around school were surreal at times including a game of football on the 3G where a team of Flamingoes battled it out against some Bananas! We are told that the Flamingoes won!



## Clarinetist

On 24 November we were delighted to welcome former St Aidan's pupil and professional clarinetist Andy Mellor who came and performed for Year 10 and 11 GCSE music students. He played the Mozart clarinet concerto which is a set work for GCSE music and was accompanied on piano by former Director of Music Mark Pallant. Following his impressive performance of the concerto which took around half an hour, Andy answered the students' questions.

He explained how after he left St Aidan's he went on to study as an undergraduate at the Royal College of Music in Manchester before completing a Masters at the Guildhall School of Music in London which involved playing with the London Symphony Orchestra. While here at St Aidan's Andy was a member of Chamber Choir, Swing Band (where he played Saxophone brilliantly according to Mrs Elliott), SAJE and Symphony Orchestra.



## Legally Blonde 22-26 November 2022

"Irresistible" is the word I would use to describe the St Aidan's production of Legally Blonde that brought the magic of the West End to Constance Green Hall at the end of November. This is a show with real heart, a powerful message about self-acceptance and some absolutely banging tunes!

Directed by Mr MacCallum with pace and wit, the plot races along as we follow the President of Delta Nu Sorority, Elle Woods (Blossom Sabel, exceptional in the lead role), on her journey to legal greatness. Accompanied by her "Greek chorus" of heavenly Delta Nu friends, Elle passes her exams and makes it into Harvard, hoping to win back her ambitious boyfriend Warner (Dan Bryant) who has unceremoniously dumped her for the more "serious" Vivienne (Sophie Gentle). After many setbacks, Elle eventually achieves a prestigious internship with the shark-like Professor Callahan (Sam Shores) but finds that her battle is far from over. With the help and friendship of salon-owner Paulette (Imogen Ostler) she eventually finds true love with the genuine and caring Emmett (Freddie Hagen) and earns respect for her legal skills, not her wardrobe!

It is perhaps unfair to single out members of this truly exceptional cast, who all gave 100% in every one of the five performances. I would love to have written about every one of them individually and I was absolutely blown away by the talent on display. However, there were notable moments that had the audience cheering and, in some cases, roaring with laughter: for me, Elle's very individual "personal essay" where Blossom belted out a huge song while high-kicking across the stage, Paulette's dreams of "Ireland" where Imogen's voice really shone and the courtroom scene where we wondered whether a witness was "Gay or European" were highlights in a production that set the bar extremely high throughout.

The dancing, beautifully choreographed and directed by Miss Miller, was energetic and spectacular and the band, under the skilful direction of Mrs Elliott, were simply exceptional; the challenging score sounded incredible and it was almost impossible to believe that every member of the ensemble was still at school. The singing, under the direction of Mrs Collett, was utterly breathtaking throughout – difficult harmonies and multiple key changes sounded effortless.

I am sure that every member of the audience would agree that "OMIGOD!" Legally Blonde was an enormous artistic success. The production was also honoured to support the Teenage Cancer Trust, nominated by our Head Teacher, Mr Thornton, in memory of his late son Richard who was supported by the charity before he passed away in 2018. Our collection raised £1000 so a huge "thank you" to all who contributed.

Mrs Parris



## Wins for the Year 10 Boys Football Team

Congratulations to the Year 10 boys Football Team who won the Harrogate and Craven 7-a-side tournament at Rossett High School this month. With great performances all round, they then went on to win 5-1 at the All Years boys football visit to Bolton School.



## Squash Success

Our Key Stage 5 Squash Team finished second in stage 1 of the National Schools Competition this month. This means that they progress to stage 2 of the championships. Despite losing to Lincoln Minster School, the team managed to beat St Peters, York. Well done to Zack, Stan, Holly, Pierce and Max.



## Swimming Superstars - 6th Fastest School in the Country!



On 19 November, we were delighted to hear the following results from the London Aquatics Centre where our newly formed Junior and Senior Girls Swim Teams competed against many schools that specialise in swimming in the ESSA Secondary School Championships.

A massive well done to our Senior girls who came 25th in both the Freestyle and Medley.

Our Junior girls qualified for both finals and came away 8th fastest school in the Country for Freestyle and 6th fastest for Medley.

## Under 13 girls are Area Champions

Congratulations to the Under 13s Girls Football Team who competed in the Harrogate Town area 7-a-side tournament and were crowned champions! They will go on to represent Harrogate Town in the next round in January.



## Sporty Superstars

Well done to Year 9 student Ollie Jones who took part in the Loule Cup in Portugal over half term. Competing in trampoline, tumbling and Double Mini Trampoline as part of the England squad. Out of 17 countries, they came third!



# District Cross Country Championships



This month, we had 5 teams competing in the North East Region round of the English Schools' cup. 4 teams won and 1 came 2nd, so all 5 qualified strongly for the National Cross Country Final in December. Niamh Robinson and Eve Whitaker were individual winners of their inter and senior girls' races and Ellie Simpson was second in the junior girls' race. Luke Shacklock and Arran Robson were both 4th in their inter and junior boys' races. This is the school's best ever showing from this round and we are looking forward to the national finals.

## Dates for your diary

3rd Dec	ESSA Cross Country Final	11th Dec:	Light up a Life Service	15th Dec:	Carol Service
5th Dec:	Year 8 Ullswater Trip	13th Dec:	Year 7 Panto Trip	16th Dec:	Year 7 Christingle
7th Dec:	FOSA meeting	14th Dec:	Year 12 Christmas Service	16th Dec:	Break up for Christmas



We hope you have enjoyed this 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](mailto:K.Caine@staidans.co.uk))