



Sixth Form Newsletter - April 2023

From the Director of Sixth Form



Spring has sprung at SWCHS and not just because of the beautiful lambs and kids that have been born at school!

March always brings about a shift in momentum in the Sixth Form – Year 13s are feeling that the end is in sight and Year 12s are seeing the fruits of their hard work in Progress Check data and external examination results for BTEC and CTEC courses.

There have been some incredible successes this month – please take a moment to read about them in this newsletter. Like me, I am sure you will be inspired by the display of brilliance many students bring to our Sixth Form.

As ever, there are important dates coming up, so please put them in your diary for next term. In the meantime, I would like to wish you all a very happy Easter break.

Amy Kennedy



Key dates

Year 13:

- W/C 3rd April: Easter holidays for two weeks
- W/C 17th April: Mock exams series 2
- 1st and 8th May: National Bank Holiday s
- Friday 12th May: Last day celebrations
- Saturday 1st July: Year 13 Summer Gala

Year 12:

- 30th March: Parents' evening
- W/C 3rd April: Easter holidays for two weeks
- Monday 17th April: Return to school
- W/C 17th April: Mock exams for some CTEC students in year 12
- Tuesday 25th April: Future Planning parents' evening
- 1st and 8th May: National Bank Holidays
- W/C May 29th May: Half-term
- Tuesday 6th June: Return to school
- W/C 6th June: In class revision

- W/C 12th June: End of Year 12 exams
- W/C 3rd July: Work experience week
- Monday 10th July: Year 13 lessons start
- Monday 17th July: Progression Week
- Friday 21st July: Last day of school year

Celebrating our Students

This week in assembly, we were really pleased to deliver our first New Year's Honours treats to worthy students who make a positive difference to our school. Nominations were collected by students and staff and winners each received a letter, certificate and celebratory personalised chocolate bar. Students were recognised for all sorts of different accolades, from running lower school clubs and work from within the local community to helping others and showing real determination in their learning. These students will now feature on our notice board to inspire others.

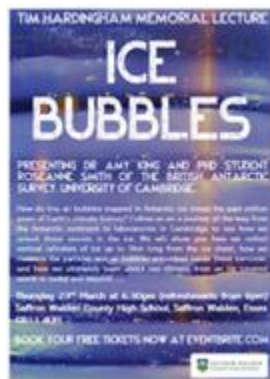


World Book Day

SWCHS Sixth Form celebrated World Book Day by showcasing reading opportunities within each subject area. Students and staff were encouraged to share their favourite books to inspire others. We are lucky to have extensive reading resources available to all students, either in the Library, Study Centre or Book Nook.



Tim Hardingham Memorial Lecture: Ice Bubbles



It was great to see so many students attend the Tim Hardingham Memorial Lecture, a topic we know Tim would have loved! Thanks to all who supported this event.

National Careers Week



This week created a spotlight on future careers, providing information and access to great insights into a range of sectors and roles – from engineering and science to music and the creative arts to law, finance and medicine. These were focused on life after studying, including after university, to give students a better understanding of possible future careers. In addition, there were open days at local colleges specialising in vocational courses and apprenticeships. Much of the information and insight is still available on-demand via teams and also available through Unifrog, as always. There will be more information about career related resources and opportunities in the monthly parent mail home.

Year 12

*“SWCHS Scholarship Programme – *Aspiration Without Restraint*”*

We are very fortunate to have members of the SWCHS community keen to help the next generation on their journey to success.

To this end, we are introducing a new initiative: The SWCHS Scholarship Programme, which will allow students to engage in both academic and employability experiences, regardless of background or financial standing.

Successful students will receive a guidance discussion in the first instance, then most appropriate opportunities will be sourced or funded by SWCHS Sixth Form.

We would like to offer scholarships to students who would benefit most from this type of intervention.

To be eligible, the student must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be on a bursary, or eligible for a bursary at school (see <https://www.swchs.net/page/?title=Bursary&pid=199> for more details).
- Be the first generation of their family to apply for University/Higher Education

OR

Low income family – in receipt of one of the below:

- Household in receipt of Child Tax Credit/Working Tax Credit with annual income of less than £20,817
- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance (Income-based)
- Pension Guarantee Credit equivalent to/less than Jobseekers Allowance (Income-based).
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit with annual income of less than £7400

AND

Meeting **all parts of our Sixth Form behaviour policy**

Please complete the attached **form**

<https://www.swchs.net/attachments/download.asp?file=591&type=pdf>

Rotary Interviews Feedback

Over 300 students attended the Rotary Club career based mock interviews that took place at the beginning of the month. It was a pleasure to see so many students involved in rich and deep conversations with their interviewers and the experience appeared to be mutually beneficial. A survey of the students gave the following feedback – over 95% said that they had found it helpful and that they feel more confident about future applications – more than 90% of them said they enjoyed it! Equally important, over 75% have updated and enhanced their CV as a result. Here are just a few of the feedback comments we received from the students and interviewers.

From students:

" Getting over nerves and actually speaking to another person. I received really helpful advice"

"I got really positive and helpful feedback on my CV and interview"

"I didn't think it would be so good and easy to talk"

"I got lots of good pointers"

"Gain in confidence"

From interviewers:

"I am so impressed with the enthusiasm and confidence for their studies and interests."

"I continue to be amazed with the quality of students at County High."

"I feel reassured about the future by the youth of today."

"I always feel very upbeat after I have finished the interviews "

"The students were so articulate and confident. I'd offer all those I've seen jobs!"

Congratulations to all the students involved and many thanks to parents for helping with the important preparation and of course, a huge thanks to the Rotary Club of Saffron Walden and all those who very kindly interviewed the students.



Life Lessons and PSHE

This month, Year 12 students had lessons on the role of social media and how it can influence self-esteem. Life Lessons also provided a great opportunity to prepare for the Rotary interviews and reflect on feedback. Year 12's final Life Lesson this month focused on opportunities abroad and making the most of gap year experiences. We look forward to welcoming Emma Cole from Positive Voice in a Life Lecture on raising awareness of HIV/AIDS.

Future Planning Event: Tuesday 25th April

We hope you can attend this event to learn more about how SWCHS can support students in making their next steps after Sixth Form. A full information letter will be sent out after Easter.

Year 13

EPQ Presentations

Congratulations to all students who gave EPQ presentations this month. Over thirty Year 13 students showcased their impressive project outcomes in these presentations and Q&A sessions. They were enjoyed by many staff and gave Year 12 students a useful insight into the EPQ process. The subjects explored this year were highly imaginative and fascinating. An eclectic mix of topic titles included threats to Elizabeth I's reign, the failure of Esperanto, Coco Chanel's influence on fashion, the impact on society if the internet ceased to exist, and the possibilities of extra galactic travel.

Revision over Easter and beyond

All students have received guidance on time management and revision. We recommend that students spend at least 50% of the holiday revising. Students also need to rest, so should not be doing too much paid work at this critical time. There will be plenty of time when exams are over for paid work!

To help structure revision, departments have created a guide to help students get started. If your son/daughter is feeling overwhelmed or unsure, please direct them towards these documents, which have been posted on Teams.

The Study Centre will be open between 10am-3pm from Mon 3rd April –Thursday 6th April. Students should sign in upon arrival and work in silence.

UCAS, Clearing and Finance

Students have received guidance on how to accept offers and will be advised on how Clearing works after half term, should they need to know on Results Day. Whilst we hope this day is a cause for celebration, it is important for students to understand the Clearing process. Staff will also be available on the day for additional support.

We strongly recommend that parents learn more about Clearing via the UCAS website. We will also send out additional information next term. <https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/what-clearing>

In assembly, students were reminded of the Finance process. It is important that students complete this process with you, as they will need personal details.



Leavers' Day and Summer Gala: Deadline to sign up: Monday 17th April

Please check the recent letter with details of the Leavers' Day and Summer Gala. The deadline for students to sign up is Monday 17th April.

Careers: Apprenticeships and Employment

Year 13 students have already secured more apprenticeships and direct employment than last year, with excellent roles in a wide range of sectors and organisations – from the armed forces to landscape gardening and from panel beating to finance. In addition, there is a larger group of students still working through the steps to finalise such positions, many of which will give them dual applications and hence the choice of university or apprenticeship. We are approaching the end of the period where many of the apprenticeship applications have been open and to support all these students, there is an additional CV and interview preparation and practice session on Wednesday 29th March during P5 – this is on top of the regular weekly drop-in support available and the individual support provided by tutors and career leads.

Life Lessons and PSHE

Year 13 students received two lectures this month: 'TikTok and Mental Health' by Mrs Kennedy, and 'Safe Travelling Abroad' by Mr Brown. Feedback on these sessions was very positive. Year 13 also had lessons on stress management and getting a good work/life balance, particularly in preparation for exams. The final Life Lessons focused on support with money, budgeting and finance, in preparation for life beyond Sixth Form.

Trips



Geology students enjoyed completing their field work in Dorset this month. They were a credit to the school.

Three lucky students were selected to share pizza and ideas at an exclusive talk with Ken Loach, hosted by Cambridge University. Here is Lewis Phipps' account of the evening:

My experience at the Precarious Lives: CRASSH talk was everything and more of what I expected. I had learnt a great deal about social realism within film but also the experiences of lived-experience talkers and charity workers who had also attended the event like: Red Hen Project Charity who aim to help parents/ guardians and families and support them through difficulties such as financial and emotional issues. With great thanks to Academic coordinator Helen Watts who had given us run downs of the day as well as allowing us to meet Ken Loach himself who had directed, written and produced the film which was screened at the event 'Sorry we missed you', which all in itself was an incredible movie. It was a pleasure to meet Ken Loach and get an insight into his creative mind and some more information about the production context of the Movie. Another group of people I should be thanking are the volunteers from the University of St. Johns for their warm welcoming and having an extremely helpful talk about life after University while being provided with delicious Pizza. And a final thanks to the panelists and the producers of this event for the incredible hospitality and information provided. It was an event that I will look back on as meaningful for my own knowledge for film but for people who are not as fortunate as myself or others.



The Senior girls Hockey team enjoyed a long weekend in Holland this weekend. Alongside playing local hockey fixtures, they also found time for tobogganing, trampolining in caves and laser quest! It looks like a brilliant time was had by all!



Variety Show 2023



Following the success of Charities Week in December, the Sixth Form Student Committee worked hard to arrange the annual Variety Show, which took place at Saffron Hall on Tuesday 28th March. The show featured a range of fabulous musical, dance and cabaret talents across all year groups, including highlights from recent student Dance and Musical Theatre showcases. All ticket and raffle proceeds went to the seven charities supported in December, increasing our running total of £10,400. We are so proud of the work our students put in, both on stage and behind the scenes, to make events like this happen. A special thank you to Saskia Warren, Emily Woodcock and Shelley McNulty, who have expertly led the Committee. We look forward to seeing Year 12 stepping up into these leadership roles later in the year.

Oddballs 'Splash of Colour' Event – Sixth Form Colour Tunnel



On Wednesday 26th April, Sixth Form students are invited to take part in the 'Splash of Colour' Fundraising Event, in support of the Oddballs Foundation. The event will feature a colour tunnel (run) and a cake sale to raise money for this fantastic charity. To improve awareness of testicular cancer, Year 12 and 13 benefitted from a guest speaker session from an Oddballs Foundation ambassador last month. We hope that the April event will help raise money and awareness for this important cause. Tickets will be available to buy on Wisepay. Further information is to follow.

Our lucky Music Academy students have participated in numerous professional concerts this month, including Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Dunedin Consort.



Congratulations



Congratulations to the Senior boys' hockey team for reaching the National Hockey Finals, finishing 5th overall. A tremendous achievement - we are very proud of you!



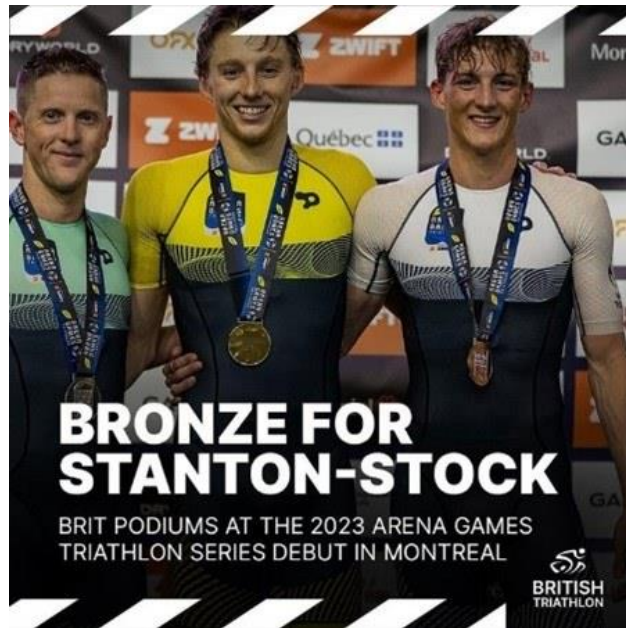
Congratulations to nine Year 12 students who took part in the national Biology Olympiad. Sarah Meanwell achieved Gold, Dan Legg achieved Silver and Georgia Arnell achieved Bronze.. Two further students were highly commended, three students were commended and one student received a participation award. These students should feel incredibly proud of their achievements, especially considering they were competing nationally against other Year 12 and Year 13 students. A fantastic achievement!



A Musical Mythology Showcase was a wonderful evening! Congratulations to everyone involved.



Well done to Adam, Jean, Finn and Euan, for winning the UN Strachan Trophy against HRS. The quiz was an annual tradition before Covid, so it is lovely to see this great community event back. A fun time was had by all!



Alumni student, Jack Stanton-Stock won a bronze medal in the recent Arena Games triathlon series. Congratulations!



Gap year student Niamh Davies has been accepted into the National Youth Music Theatre as an Assistant Stage Manager. Niamh first became interested in stage management when she led Charities

Week as Head of the Student Committee. Now, she is living her dream, working alongside professional stage managers who are leaders of their field. Congratulations, Niamh!