



'The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon. What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, watching God fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon.' Jan L Richardson

Dear Parents,

Christmas has come early to St Hilda's, with festive decorations and music in evidence throughout the School this week. The girls are all preparing for the exciting performances over the next fortnight. Whatever aspect of this season is memorable to you, I trust that the real meaning of Christmas will be the most important to everyone in the School community.

The FOSH Bazaar tomorrow promises to be another popular blend of festive fun and the opportunity to meet up with friends old and new. I am immensely grateful to those parents who have given generously of their time and donations towards hampers, tickets, decorations, stalls and refreshments. A massive thank you goes to the FOSH Officers and Committee members who have spent many, many hours behind the scenes organising this fabulous occasion which the girls love so much.



Forms I and II created these stunning winter landscapes at the recent Open Morning on 10th November, based on the work of Swedish artist James Aldridge

There have been so many events over the last two weeks. It was lovely to see so many parents and grandparents attend the Armistice event on 12th November, which made for a moving occasion. On Friday we celebrated St Hilda's Day with a super day of Maths puzzles and problem solving, which the girls thoroughly enjoyed. Despite the damp and cold, Form V had a really fun lesson on the field earlier in the week, lighting fires and cooking bread. We were pleased to welcome Andy from Dell Farm near Whipsnade, who taught the girls the uses of different woods and applying them to different whittling techniques.



Rotary Club

A massive thanks is conveyed to all who very kindly filled shoeboxes for the Rotary Club, which were collected last week. It was a record number with 129 boxes donated, which will make such a difference to the needy children they are destined for.

Contact Details

A reminder from the School Office to all parents to keep their contact details up to date, either via the Office or updating yourself on the Engage Portal.

Drop and Go

Now that pupils are arriving a little earlier, notice is given that **Drop and Go will finish each morning at 8.35am** from next term, rather than 8.40am as there are so few cars arriving after 8.30am. The pedestrian gates will still be accessible until 8.40am when registration closes.

Lend With Care

I am pleased to report that our latest feedback from Lend with Care has revealed that over £500 of our previous donations have now been paid back. Last week, the School Council assisted me in choosing five new entrepreneurs in third world countries, in making further donations of over £1500, which included the donation made by FOSH at the end of last term. Countries included this time are Pakistan, India, Ecuador, Bolivia and Bangladesh.

Dates for the remaining weeks of term

Senior Christmas Performances (Forms III to VI) –
Tuesday 27th November 2.15pm and 7.00pm, Wednesday 28th November 7.00pm
Form IV and V trip to Palace of Westminster – Friday 30th November
Junior Christmas Performances (Forms I and II) – Tuesday 4th and Wednesday 5th December at 9.30am.
Form IV Norman Workshop - Thursday 6th December
Junior Christmas Party and Christmas Lunch – Monday 10th December
FOSH Secret Gift Room – Tuesday 11th December am
Christmas Nativity Service, St Nicholas' Church – Thursday 13th December at 9.30am (details to follow)



The next newsletter will be published on Friday, 7th December. I look forward to meeting many of you at the Bazaar tomorrow (and our festive friend who is thankfully managing to fit us in during this busy season), and at the various performances in the coming two weeks.

With best wishes

Mr Sayers
Headmaster

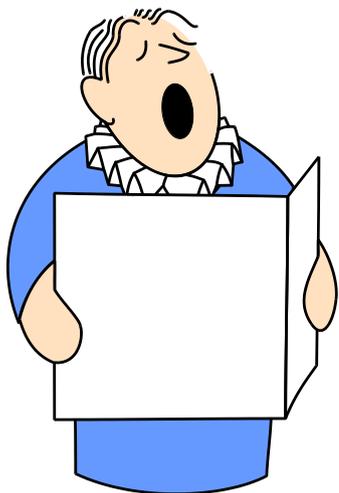
Music at St Nicholas Church

Would **YOU** or
YOUR CHILD like
to join us?



We are recruiting for children aged 7 to 14 for our
BOYS and GIRLS choirs –
no experience is needed and there are no auditions.

We are also recruiting for **EXPERIENCED**
SINGERS, who can read music, for
our Adult Choir from age 14 up.



JOIN THIS AUTUMN
and take part in
NINE LESSONS
and **CAROLS**
on Sunday 16th December!



Contact:

DirectorofMusic@StNicholas.ParishofHarpenden.org

Governor Day

We were pleased to receive this report by one of our Governors, Gillian Thornton on her recent visit to St Hilda's. Gillian was also a parent and a pupil at the School in former years. Gillian is a member of the British Guild of Travel Writers and Travelwriters UK.

'Now why do we have to be careful in the car park, girls and boys?' The Nursery children were getting dressed for their Friday morning Welly Walk. 'Because we might get squashed by a car!' piped up one 3-year-old quick as a flash, her classmates nodding sagely in agreement. Life skills are an import part of life at St Hilda's from the outset.

I was in school for a Governor's Day in October and first on my programme was an outdoor lesson in shapes. Finding rectangles on wooden fence slats, a circle in the nest box, and a rectangular window on a staff vehicle in the school car park – a stationary one, but we did look round carefully, just in case! The children sang shape songs, so enthusiastically that one teacher in a first-floor class room had to ask for some hush through the window. And as I left to move on to Reception, they were enthusiastically playing shape games round the field.

A regular day in school is an important – and hugely enjoyable – part of being a St Hilda's Governor. The chance to watch lessons in progress, meet new staff, and just absorb that very special atmosphere that is St Hilda's. We are not there to judge the teachers or pupils, just to observe so that we have a greater understanding of the school we represent and the climate of modern education. As a former pupil and parent, it's especially interesting for me to see the changes in education over the decades. How different today's interactive lessons are from the era when my classmates and I sat quietly behind our desks from one bell ringing to the next.

In Reception, the 4-year-olds were learning sounds and experimenting with 'u' as it sounds in 'umbrella'. After a wide range of related activities, they were all treated to a pink balloon and asked to write 'u' on it in marker pen. Then we all marched out to the tennis court to bat them in the air with a chant of 'up, up, up!' A lovely way to learn the alphabet.

Leaping up to the top of the school, I found traditional teaching methods alive and well with the weekly written tables test for Form VI. Many girls had proudly improved their results week on week, a couple even scoring the top mark of 121, yet every girl seemed happy with their progress. But here again, the lesson was warm and interactive. Test over, desks were hastily rearranged to facilitate group work.

Next stop, English classes, first with Form IV who were reading *The Butterfly Lion* by Michael Morpurgo. These 8- to 9-year-olds took turns in reading aloud, encouraged by their teacher to think about the meaning, add emphasis to their voices, and heed the punctuation. A Sixty Second Quiz also made them think about the events and emotions behind the narrative, as well as the vocabulary.

I made a mental note to pick up a copy of this lovely book, and also *The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes which was being studied by Form III. Here, every pupil had composed a mock entry in a diary written by the central human character and had been tasked with portraying emotion, as well as using similes and onomatopoeia. I loved the pots on the shelf labelled with 'boring words' such as Good, Bad, Pretty and Nice. Stuck for an alternative? Just pop up and pick out a strip of card with a suitable adjective on it.

Last stop of my morning was Form II Maths and a hands-on lesson in money. Initially, pupils had to work out change using real coins, then graduating to working the sum out in their heads. Throughout the morning, I'd noticed manners, respect, and willingness to help and this was evident again here as Form II tidied things away and got ready for lunch with a fun pre-lunch dance video that was clearly a test of this particular Governor's flexibility and rhythm!

As the girls lined up ready for the dining room, I watched out of the window as group of girls enjoyed a swimming lesson in the outdoor pool, a rare bonus in early October and a great asset to St Hilda's varied sports programme.

Arriving a minute or two early for Form I French after lunch, I was able to see the girls file in fresh from playtime and immediately respond to instructions from their teacher. In French. Very little English was spoken to these 5-6 year olds, who joined in enthusiastically with role play on how to greet someone and ask their name.

My final appointment was with Headmaster Dan Sayers for an informal discussion on my day, then it was time for the special assembly in honour of National Poetry Day. Two finalists had been chosen from Forms III, IV, V and VI to perform a short poem, but first, seven members of staff put on a unique performance of their own in costume, which involved witches, animals and a couple of scary monsters. Needless to say, it brought the house down, a lovely example of the connection between staff and girls.

Then it was on to the serious stuff, as I joined two members of staff to judge the poetry competition. We were treated to eight highly individual performances, all amusing and often involving multiple props. Feeling a bit like the panel on the X-Factor, we made individual notes before retiring to choose our worthy winners.

It was an upbeat end to a day back where I started my own formal education, and proof of how successfully St Hilda's has adapted to the needs of today's junior girls.