



St Hilda's School

HARPENDEN

Caring, Curious & Confident

NEWSLETTER

Friday 11th December 2020 No. 97

*'So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh, come one and all, to own Him.
The King of Kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone Him.'*
William Chatterton Dix, 1871



Dear Parents,

As we reach the end of the Christmas term, the sound of familiar seasonal music, the timeless message of the nativity story, the happy chatter of children's voices and much excitement has filled every moment of the final stages. Despite the gargantuan challenges faced in 2020, it has been heart-warming to experience the children's endless enthusiasm and adaptability, together with admiration and gratitude for the perpetual hard work of staff throughout the 9 months of lockdown, the return to school in June, and this term. Mercifully, despite some periods of inevitable self-isolation, we have been fortunate to have escaped much of the chaos that has been experienced in many schools with numerous bubbles isolating in the months since September. Although there have been considerable differences to 'normal' this year in how we have celebrated this season, it has still been possible to have concerts and services, Christmas lunch and a very special visitor on Wednesday – thank you for sparing the time!

It was lovely to have the Nativity Service in St Nicholas' Church this morning, where the standard of singing by Form V and Form VI was incredible, given the fact that we only obtained permission to hold the service there 10 days ago. The Form VI girls also read and led the service with confidence, helping us to reflect once again on the real significance of this Christian festival.

It has been a sad time as we have said goodbye to two highly regarded teachers, Mrs Rigby and Mrs Rushbrook today. Mrs Rigby is a professional artist and illustrator who has given the girls in her care so many inspirational moments. You only have to walk around the outside of the building, let alone the inside, to appreciate her ability to create wonderful things which the girls have been so absorbed in making. Her last piece, created with Form V, was the wellbeing mural which was to have been placed outside the Jarvis development on Salisbury Avenue. Mrs Rushbrook has helped generations of St Hilda's girls to achieve great things on the sports field. One sadness of the summer was that Sports Day was cancelled, including the guests of honour, which were to have been ex-pupils who have gone on to achieve national rankings and team places in the years since and who were inspired by Mrs Rushbrook's encouragement. We wish both of them every happiness for the future and thank them very much for all they have done for St Hilda's for so long.



Form II had a fabulous time on Wednesday, dressing up as Victorian nurses as part of their topic on Florence Nightingale. Learning Victorian manners and ladylike ways, coupled with experiencing dressing their classmates with bandages and nibbling cucumber sandwiches, proved to be a wonderful way to end the term.

Thank you so much to all the people who have helped FoSH make Christmas still be a special moment for the girls and the parents. The hampers have looked wonderful in my room – though sorely tempted I was very good and didn't eat or drink anything despite it feeling like Fortnum and Mason – and raised an incredible amount of money for the School. We are very grateful for the continued, practical support of our very special parents' association.

Our safety and ability to see our families is no doubt uppermost in our minds as we approach the Christmas holiday. We have been advised by Herts County Council to inform you that if a child became symptomatic less than 48 hours since they were last in the School, (or if they had no symptoms but had a positive test result less than 48 hours since last in the School), you will need to let us know so we can help to identify any close contacts that need to be informed and advised to self-isolate. Those attending the Holiday Club next week will need to keep us informed beyond next Friday. Should you have any issues, please email your child's form teacher, the School Office and myself. I hope that all in the St Hilda's Community will stay safe and well.

St Albans Abbey are putting on a large number of events over Christmas and I have been asked to share this link with you. <https://www.stalbanscathedral.org/whats-online-christmas>

A year ago, I wished everyone well for a new decade and a new year. None of us could have predicted what was ahead, for St Hilda's, the country and the world at large. I am so thankful that, despite everything, the spirit of community, the atmosphere of friendship, mutual support and nurture which we seek to promote, together burn brightly and fiercely as we end 2020. I am so grateful to all of you for your unstinting support shown to me and all the wonderful team of staff, who have worked so incredibly hard this year. I wish you all a blessed and Happy Christmas, and whatever 2021 may hold, a successful and prosperous New Year. Term starts on Tuesday, 5th January.

With my warm regards to you all,

Dan Sayers
Headmaster



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