



Parents' Newsletter

Dear parents

Approaching Christmas again is really bringing home to me how long we have been living with the pandemic. We are now almost 21 months in. However since September has definitely been a new phase, with school looking and feeling much more like 'normal'. At the start of term, it was such a pleasure to see students from all different year groups mixing in the quad and canteen, and once again having multiple games of football on the field at lunchtime. Even more importantly, our curriculum has returned to normal with teachers back in their specialist rooms, which is of course of crucial importance for the practical subjects such as Art, DT, Food and Music who had to completely redesign their schemes of work last year. It's also been good to see the extra-curricular offer expand again, with mixed aged activities such as choir and orchestra running, and sports fixtures once more being played. You can read more in this newsletter of the many opportunities and successes of this term.



As ever, we have been incredibly impressed by the resilience of our students. Admittedly, Year 8 did look a bit shocked at the start of the year to realise just how many rooms there were in the school, having been restricted largely to the Science block last year! Year 7 however seemed more than ready for the step up to secondary, which deserves huge credit to their primary schools given both Year 5 and Year 6 were significantly disrupted for them. At the other end of the school, we recognise the incredible pressure that Year 11 are under, not just due to disrupted learning but also to uncertainty about what is to come. The government remains committed to GCSE exams taking place as normal so this is our prime focus. At the same time, we have a strong 'Plan B' in place just in case we have to devise teacher assessed grades again.

There is no doubt however that the pandemic continues to bring its challenges. Cases of COVID are continuous, with peaks and troughs, leading to students and staff being absent for 10 day periods. This is disruptive to all. Various COVID activities, such as distribution of home test kits and periodic mass testing in school, have now almost become part of 'just what we do'. I would like to express my gratitude to all of the staff at Gillotts who continue, even 21 months in, to step up, and go above and beyond to tackle whatever the next challenge is. We have also had tremendous support from you as parents and from our governors. It is at times like these that the school as community feels most important.

I do hope that the holidays will allow for some precious time with family and friends and some much needed rest and relaxation. See you all again in 2022!

Catharine Darnton
Headteacher, Gillotts

News of a former student – India Mawbey

We were wowed to hear a few weeks ago that India is the designer of the cover art for ABBA's Christmas single "Little Things". India has also designed all of the Christmas merchandise for ABBA and also the majority of the Voyage Tour merchandise for ABBA's comeback next year.



India was spurred on in her passion for Art by Miss Lucy Harris, an Art teacher at Gillotts at the time. India studied Art at The Henley College passing with the highest grades and then graduated in 2016 from Arts University Bournemouth with a BA Honours in illustration. She then landed her dream job after a year travelling around the world with her brother. She began working for Sandbag Ltd in 2017 as a designer and is a senior designer for them now, designing for music artists globally. She designs merchandise for artists such as Blink-182, Ru Paul, RadioHead, Incubus, Bastille, Stereophonics and CharliX. India actually did her GCSE at Gillotts on the band Blink-182 and so it was a highlight 18 months ago when the band requested her designs for several of their tours and gigs!

India has worked for the last six months on the ABBA merchandise and only after designing the Voyage poster, did they request that she design their single's cover. India had her cover art hand stitched to give the Swedish embroidery look. It has been a whirlwind few months!

Not By Ourselves Alone update

It has been a very busy two terms since September in which the school community has demonstrated the values of Kindness, Respect and Not Doing Harm to Others, across many parts of school life. Furthermore, we have been delighted that we have been able to get back to some sense of normality and offer students a range of opportunities to enrich their school experience.



Over the last two terms:

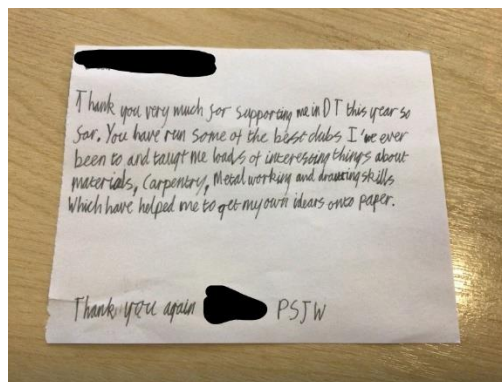
- Students have taken part in the Y7 Virtual Games, with Darwin house running out overall winners
- We have re-established the Terracycle Crisp Packet Recycling scheme as an ongoing house competition, helping us on our drive to do more for our environment
- Students have taken part in the 'Cup26 Challenge' as a House competition, with students undertaking environmentally friendly challenges at home and then submitting their efforts
- We collected donations for the local charity, Nomad, and their yearly Xmas Food Bank. Thank you so much to all parents for their donations
- DHK tutor group made a care package for the residents of the Chilterns Court Care Centre in Henley as part of their 'kindness at Christmas' plans
- We have engaged with Anti Bullying Week, with a plan to train up to 20 Anti Bullying Ambassadors in the new year

Lots more is planned for the new year, so we will be delighted to update you further in our next Newsletter.

As ever, if you want to keep up to date with all that is going on at school, and to see further examples of our students' successes both in and out of school, make sure you follow our social media pages on Instagram and Twitter, under the account names [@gillottshenley](https://www.instagram.com/gillottshenley)

www.instagram.com/gillottshenley

www.twitter.com/gillottshenley



Woodland Trust

Our application to the Woodland Trust has been approved and we are set up to receive 420 small trees to create a hedgerow between the school and farmer's field; this will link two woodland areas creating a wildlife corridor.

Darwin News

Tutee of the Term

DCAJ: Madeline Chaplin

DFD/HK: Dom Betteridge

DPJY: Jessica Clark

DFMW: Roxanna Schoenmakers

DJLG: Will Sadler

DADT: Jess Robinson

DDI: Stefan Vuckovic Kihlstrom

DRD/NFD: Kimberly Ellery

DCHA/CJW: Molly Lovelock

DGS: Leo Schlaefli

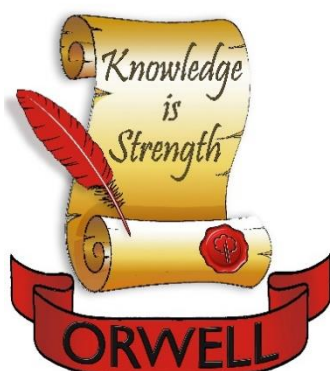
DJAS/CEC: Nina Atree

DROM: Stan Mitan



Orwell News

Tutee of the Term



OHRW: Ellie Pitt

OJKL: Izabela Gwiazda

OTWN: Olivia Wolska

OACM: Lou Thimonier-Bayet

OGDL: Poppy Cooper

OAD/AB: Charlotte Tong

OBLF: Felix Richardson

OCG: Alexandre Khoury

OHJS/SEL: Shannon Pitt

OPCM/TL: Lucy Mearns

OJSK: Tegan Morgan

OGMO: Pati Gwiazda

Pankhurst News

Tutee of the Term

PBJB/ELD: Evie Riska

PNGK: Flo Hughes

PSJW: Isaac Urch

PKLO/CLF: Millie Williams

PWJH: Stanley Lawrence

PGDM: Rowan Richens

PCLM/JTP: Adam Herbert

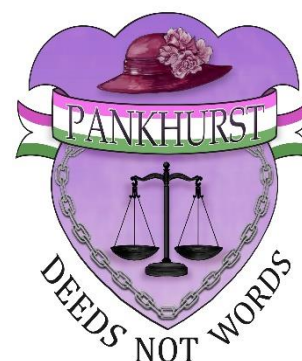
PSMS/HLM: Eddie Bristow

PHMJ/JJB: Sophie Chapman

PTAG: Lucy Herbert

PLS/LJA: Poppy Lunnon

PFLP: Corey Walton



Year 10 Woodlands Trip – December 2021

Following a break of over two and a half years owing to the global pandemic, Gillotts students have returned to Woodlands during the last week before the Christmas Break. This involves a five night outdoor activity trip to Glasbury-on-Wye on the edge of the Brecon Beacons. In normal times this trip takes place in the summer of Year 9 but we have been unable to run it over the past two years.



We have taken 45 Year 10 students along with four staff (- a huge thank you to Mrs Michael, Mr Snell and Mr West). Students have participated in a range of activities including caving, canoeing, high ropes & climbing, mountain walking and a waterfall walk. These have left the students very tired but exhilarated. They have also been presented with lots of opportunities to develop their leadership, problem solving and team work skills. This is in addition to trying out lots of new activities and developing new skills.

We are hopeful that we will be able to return with a Year 9 group in July 2022 and that we will be able to go back to running this trip on an annual basis in future years. The school has been going to Woodlands for around 50 years and it is a real 'rite of passage' for many of our students.

Dr Newbold



Sports Update

It has been fantastic to be able to compete in sports fixtures with other schools this year - both the staff and students have really enjoyed it. In both Rugby and Hockey we have been part of a South Oxfordshire league which has overall been really good to be part of.

Hockey and Rugby

We saw amazing successes in the girls' area hockey tournaments and fixtures including Year 8 and Year 11 winning their area tournaments which puts them both through to the county tournament. Unfortunately Year 7 and Year 10 had their area tournaments cancelled but still achieved fantastic success in their fixtures with Year 7 winning 8 matches between the A and B team and Year 10 winning 4 matches. We were delighted that Year 9 came third in their area tournament. The Under 16s squad were also fortunate to play against Shiplake College 6th Form on the water based astro turf at Reading where they won 3-0!



We are very proud that Years 7, 8, 9 and 11 all went undefeated in their rugby fixtures against local schools since September.

Duathlon

We also saw fantastic results in the Duathlon (consisting of a 2k ergo row and a 2k run) held at Chiltern Edge School at the beginning of November.

U14 Girls - 1st

U14 Boys - 4th

U16 Girls - 1st

U16 Boys - 2nd

We were delighted that we also took 3 out of the 4 individual golds too – Jemima B (Y9), Flo L (Y11) and David S (Y8). This was an excellent result overall for Gillotts.



Cross Country

In the South Oxfordshire Cross Country, which was held at Gillotts in November, we had a mixed set of results:

Year 7 Girls - 3rd

Year 7 Boys - 4th

Year 8/9 Girls - 2nd

Year 8/9 Boys - 4th

Year 10/11 Girls - 2nd (by 1 point)

Year 10/11 Boys - 1st

We had some exceptional individual performances - Hayley P (Y11) was 1st, Monty G (Y11) 2nd, Josh H (Y8) 2nd.



Everyone that participated all did incredibly well - as always behaviour and attitude was excellent - always so proud of our Gillotts students in that way.

Indoor Rowing

Following on from the duathlon we went to the area indoor rowing competition where again we did really well - the results were as follows:

U13 Girls - 1st

U13 Boys - 1st

U13 Overall - 1st

U15 Girls - 1st

U15 Boys - 2nd

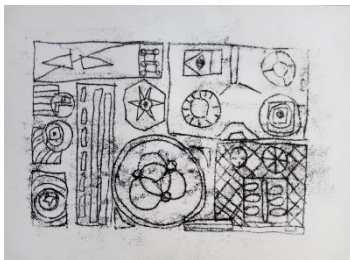
U15 Overall - 2nd

So overall a successful season so far and we are looking forward to Netball and Football starting in January

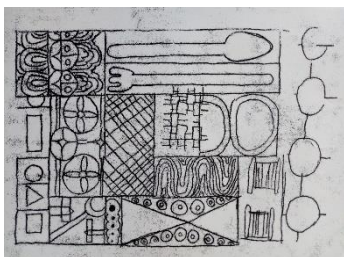
Hayley Rogers, Head of PE

News from the Art department - focus on Key Stage Three

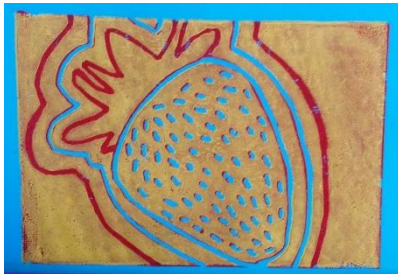
Year 7 have been learning about lots of different tonal media and produced these amazing mixed media compositions of shells. We are very proud of them.



Year 8 have been looking at man-made objects and studying the work of sculptor Louise Nevelson, who used reclaimed and recycled materials in her work. Then they made some monoprints inspired by their sculptures. They will be adding watercolour to these prints in the next few lessons.



Year 9 have been looking at how Pop Artists were influenced by food. Claus Oldenberg created giant sculptures of cakes and burgers. Andy Warhol made his infamous screen print of Campbell's soup tins. The students have made incredible clay cakes and fabulous three coloured prints. Here is some of the work from our talented students.



Year 7 House Art Christmas Card Competition

Year 7 were asked to design a Christmas card inspired by the cut paper collage work of Henri Matisse. Well done to Emily whose design was chosen by our Art Captains as the winning entry.

Henri Matisse



Emily



Congratulations to Olivia, Bella, Darcy, Jessie, Jamie, Lily, Poppy, Alice, Bisan, Penny, Adella, Paco and Mima who were runners up.

Religious Studies Art Competition

The Religious Studies department held an interfaith art competition to celebrate the many different religious festivals at this time of year. We had a great number of excellent entries, with the winning entry designed by Jessie Duncan in Year 7, who made a Christmas decoration entirely out of chocolate. Well done to everyone who took part and all who supported them!



Year 8 Christmas Food Club

Year 8 have been cooking some festive themed baked goods this term including:

- Chocolate puff pastry Christmas tree
- Sausage rolls
- Profiteroles
- Mini Christmas cakes
- Baked apple mince pies



Bronze and Silver DofE 2021-22

Year 9 students have made a great start on their activities for their Bronze Certificate of achievement and many have signed up for the expedition in the summer. The launch of Silver has been delayed but details will follow shortly.

The new [Gillotts DofE website](#) has links to advice, ideas and guides on updating eDofE accounts. It also has details how assessors can complete assessor reports once the 3 or 6 months of activity have been completed. Parents and participants are encouraged to take a look.

Drama Club

We are so pleased that Drama clubs have been able to restart in the Performing Arts.

Year 7 and 8 Drama Club has been really busy and we have enjoyed working towards pieces for the virtual concert.

The Year 9 Performers Group are producing amazing work and we are hopeful that circumstances will allow a performance in 2022.

Miss King and Mrs Alder are really excited to announce the launch of a new Musical Theatre Club in January. Join us in the Drama Room at lunch time on Fridays.

Music Department

Due to Government restrictions, we regrettably had to cancel all extra - curricular activities last year so have been really pleased to reinstate them this year.

Students have enjoyed their return to choir, orchestra, clarinet choir and ukulele club as well as having the opportunity to use the practice rooms during lunchtimes. We will be showcasing some of the musical talent at Gillotts in our first ever Virtual Concert which we hope you will enjoy.

Felix and Didi represented Gillotts School in the Battle of the Bands at the Henley Glow Festival on 12/12/21. We are very proud that they won - huge congratulations from all of us.



Message from the Head Students

Our time since September

Since we started in Year 11, Gillotts has achieved so much, and it has been good to get school back to some sense of normality; raising money for our chosen charity - Cancer Research UK; donations to Nomad Xmas food bank; the CUP26 Eco challenge; reintroducing the Terracycle Crisp Packet Recycling scheme; and setting up the wall of achievement. Hopefully many more things will come next term, including working towards becoming an Eco School. We love being your Head Students and being the link between fellow students and teachers - If you have any other ideas to improve the school, please let one of us know.

What we have done

So far as our time as Head Students we have discussed new ideas and things to improve our school - a wall of achievement; helped raise money for charity; helped out with virtual games; represented the school at the Henley Poppy Appeal; prepared and delivered quite a few assemblies; spoken at the Open Evening, and had an eye opening and informative experience at Nomad when we delivered donations for their annual Xmas Food Bank.



Charity

Thank you very much for your generous donations to the food bank, taking part in non school uniform day, and for DCHA organising a bake sale. So far we have raised over £1000 for Cancer Research UK. This will help the battle against Cancer greatly and we will continue to raise even more money in the new term.

Last of all we want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Abi, Roman and Ben

Library News

Accelerated Reader

This term Year 7 have been enrolled in the Accelerated Reader programme run by Renaissance Learning. At the start of the term all students took a Star test to assess their reading level. This gives teachers and students clear information on the types of books that students need to read in order to develop and progress. It also ensures that students will not be over-whelmed by books and helps them to pick reading material which is challenging but not completely daunting. After reading a book, a student takes a reading practice quiz, which simply checks that the student has read the story and can remember the plot. There are also vocabulary and literacy skills quizzes available, which relate to specific books.

All students have engaged really well with the programme, but this term we say congratulations to the following students and houses:

Danny Massey PNGK - 304pts

Isla Tate PSJW - 201pts

Siyona Mohapatra PNGK - 143pts

Tutor Groups with best % pass rate:

PNGK - 75%

OTWN - 74.5%

PJBJ/ELD - 73.8%

Congratulations to Pankhurst, who have done really well this term!

Next term students will take another Star test, so we expect to see progress and development' and even more successful quizzing.

Book Club

This term it has been a real pleasure to welcome mixed year groups to Book Club. We have students attending from Years 7-9. Our aim is to enjoy reading and writing and be creative. We don't all read the same book. Activities this term have included:

Some members have read some of the books from the Book Trust collection, providing multiple copies of brilliant books to schools free of charge – 'Wink' by Rob Harrell is about a boy called Ross who has a rare eye cancer; he deals with this with humour and positivity. 'Skywake Invasion' by Jamie Russell is the perfect book for those who love computer games.

We also read aloud a ghost story from a collection by Chris Priestley called Freeze, getting inspiration for writing 6 word scary stories at the same time!



Reuben in Year 7 has shared with us extracts from a book that he is writing.

We have made a variety of items from old books including book-marks, Christmas trees and hedgehogs. Recycling and upcycling are very much on our minds.

We have played word games and quizzes, including Christmas Family Feud.



Eco Club

This club was created in the summer term, inspired by the enthusiasm of Year 7 students. Now of course these students are in Year 8. On occasions we have members from other year groups too. We have been continuing the work in the Gateway Garden and have plans to develop the Lodge Garden too. We are also supported by two volunteers, Cathy Notaras and Julia Samyui-Adams, who come in to give practical support and advice.

We are also working closely with <https://www.youngclimatewarriors.org/> and talk about and attempt to carry out some of the weekly challenges that they set.



Before half-term we picked the green tomatoes (plants kindly donated by Mr Deloronzi!) as they were clearly not going to ripen. I made green tomato chutney and many club members tried this with their packed lunch at a communal lunch at our picnic table in the garden.



We have tried sowing some squash seeds in the greenhouse. They have been growing well, but time will tell whether or not they will bear any fruit.



Students are very aware of respecting the environment, leaving much of the garden to be wild and natural, so not weeding all areas. We are only weeding the raised beds and reserving them for planting bulbs and hopefully vegetables. It is always a joy to find worms and other bugs and not to be squeamish about them!



We always welcome donations of plants to the garden and there are always willing students to get them planted out.



Students are very pleased to be involved in the school's application to officially become an Eco School. We are very much guided by Mrs Michael; next term students and parents will get the opportunity to find out what Eco Club members would like to do to contribute to the application process and their views on climate change and preserving our precious environment. We are also indebted to Mr Bland for making our Eco Tree for the library. Students are invited to make environmental pledges and attach them to the tree.

Mrs Seddon

School Librarian



Term dates for 2021 - 2022

The dates set out below are the confirmed school term and holiday dates from September 2021.

Term	Dates	Number of days
Autumn Term	02 September - 22 October	37
October half term	25 October - 29 October	
Autumn Term	01 November - 17 December	35
Christmas holiday	20 December - 03 January	
Spring Term	05 January - 18 February	33
Spring half term	21 February - 25 February	
Spring Term	28 February - 08 April	30
Easter Holiday	11 April - 22 April	
Summer Term	25 April - 27 May	24
Late Spring half term	30 May - 03 June	
Summer Term	06 June - 22 July	35
Total		194

INSET days

The school will be closed to students on:

Thursday 2 September 2021

Friday 3 September 2021

Monday 6 September 2021 – to allow staggered start for COVID testing

Friday 24 September 2021

Tuesday 4 January 2022 – in lieu of Platinum Jubilee bank holiday

Wednesday 5 January 2022 – to allow staggered start for COVID testing

Thursday 21 July 2022

Friday 22 July 2022

Note that due to COVID testing, the first days in school for students in September are as follows:

Year 7: Tuesday 7 September

Year 10, Year 11: Wednesday 8 September

Year 8, Year 9: Thursday 9 September

Please see information emailed to all parents for further details.

Note that due to COVID testing, the first days in school for students in January are as follows:

Year 11: Thursday 6 January

Year 7, Year 10: Friday 7 January

Year 8, Year 9: Monday 10 January

Monday 2 May 2022 is the May Day bank holiday.

Note that the date of the spring bank holiday has been changed to Thursday 2 June;

Friday 3 June is the Platinum Jubilee bank holiday.

Early closures (12.30pm)

Thursday 23 September 2021

Friday 17 December 2021

Wednesday 20 July 2022

Staff and students preparation for Open Evening

Term dates for 2022 - 2023

The dates set out below are the confirmed school term and holiday dates from September 2022.

Term	Dates	Number of days
Autumn Term	02 September - 21 October	36
October half term	24 October - 28 October	
Autumn Term	31 October - 20 December	37
Christmas holiday	21 December - 03 January	
Spring Term	04 January - 10 February	28
Spring half term	13 February - 17 February	
Spring Term	20 February - 31 March	30
Easter Holiday	3 April - 14 April	
Summer Term	17 April - 26 May	29
Late Spring half term	29 May - 02 June	
Summer Term	05 June - 21 July	35
Total		195

INSET days

The school will be closed to students on:

Friday 2 September 2022

Monday 5 September 2022

Friday 30 September 2022

Monday 19 December 2022

Tuesday 20 December 2022

Note that only Year 7 and Year 10 (and Year 11 Leaders) are required to attend on Tuesday 6 September 2022.

The remainder of the school returns on Wednesday 7 September 2022.

Monday 1 May 2023 is the May Day bank holiday.

Early closures (12.30pm)

Thursday 29 September 2022

Friday 16 December 2022

Friday 21 July 2023

Staff and students preparation for Open Evening