

The Holmleigh Edition

DECEMBER 2025

EDITION 2



In December's Edition:



Reflecting back on a very busy Term 2



Meet Deputy Headteacher Mr O'Gallagher



A Day in the Life of the ICT team!



Some RECOMMENDED FILMS from staff and students

The Holmleigh Edition

We are delighted to bring you the 2nd edition of our school newspaper!

After enjoying what they created last time, many chose to remain in their roles and that meant they were able to tackle this edition with more confidence and skill after learning so much in the process of the debut edition.

Others wanted to try something different and – once again – got out of their comfort zone, researched, planned, spoke to a wide range of staff and students, sent many many emails and worked hard to produce something engaging for you all!

Next term we will see a change in enrichment groups, so we will be bringing new reporters, interviewers and feature writers – hopefully some fresh creative ideas will emerge whilst keeping some of the classic features we have begun.

I just want to say a huge well done and thank you to the students, who have been so motivated and determined, for taking such pride in what they create.

Have a lovely Christmas and please do send photos if you end up baking the polar bear cupcakes!

Ms Furleger (*Teacher of English/Head of Year 11*)

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The Tales of Term 2

By Gracie Silvester



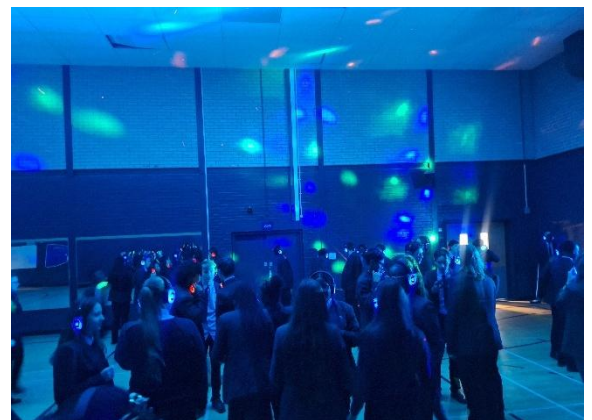
This term at Holmleigh Park has been the lead up to Christmas and the New Year, filled with many exciting opportunities for all students, and new experiences awaiting them in the last term of 2025. The beginning of November is a chance for remembrance of the valiant soldiers who fought in the war, while Christmas brings us precious time to spend with our families before a new year begins. How will you spend your mystical, magical Christmas this year? Students have continued to demonstrate the school values throughout this term and have maintained resilience as the year comes to its end.

Heart-warming House Charities:

At the end of last term, hundreds of students voted for their new house charities to be elected by attending a fantastic Fun Friday event during lunchtime where these amazing house charities were chosen as our fundraising recipients. Hurricane elected The Willow Trust, which provides therapeutic days out on the water for people suffering with disabilities. Javelin chose Gloucestershire Bundles who provide emergency sanitary kits for women and families whilst simultaneously supporting them through hard times. Meteor chose to support The Pied Piper Appeal who fund equipment for sick and disabled children that attend schools and are frequently at hospitals. Typhoon appointed Kingfisher Treasure Seekers who help vulnerable and disadvantaged people by supporting physical and mental health. We hope to be able support these charities to our full ability during this academic school year.

The Hardworking HP Heroes

The HP Heroes at our school must have 95% attendance across every term and the whole school year to be rewarded with special, exclusive activities for them to enjoy. For example, those students who earned the valuable HP hero badge, which highlighted their exceptional resilience, have previously been rewarded with prizes such as the end of year fun fair and silent discos being held in the final week of this term. This was given to them as a necessary breath of fresh air from the classroom for these exemplary students. The glistening badge that hangs on their blazers emphasises the students' sheer determination for positive outcomes with their high attendance, studies and academic success.



The Terrific Tree Planting

Our HP eco club planted trees on the field during the 26th of November's enrichment session where three groups blessed the Earth with precious saplings to reawaken the soil beneath. The teachers exhibited guidance when leading the green-handed students who were eager to cultivate the ground and promote the little trees to develop. The saplings can now be seen evolving steadily around the field's perimeter, contributing to the greenery and plant life at HP.



In conclusion, the second term at HP has been an overwhelming success throughout all years, allowing all teachers to express their delight at the achievements displayed by students. The new year of 2026 can commence with a positive perspective to continue the celebrations and successes of 2025.

Enticing Enrichment

By Danielle Clarke

Over the last Christmassy term, students have further indulged themselves into their Enrichment clubs going to deeper depths and higher heights than ever before. Not only has it been a pleasure, but it has been an honour to get to see so many students so intrigued by their clubs and so invested in their individual activities - whether they are discussing life experiences or cooking or playing an instrument, it has been fantastic to witness how much commitment they have to their Wednesday afternoons.

Stunning, skilled Synchronized swimming

First, I had the pleasure of taking a deep dive into a world of water-dancing; a very difficult sport requiring an astounding amount of body control, determination and gentleness - synchronised swimming. Our students have worked themselves up from basic moves to intricate, beautiful routines. It was astounding to see how they brought all of the moves, which previously had looked basic, and created them into a routine which they then performed together in a fantastic, fascinating arrangement of actions.

At the beginning of my visit, I got to see them warming up and reminding themselves of some motions they had learnt during the last term of their enrichment and practicing proper form. As the silent splashing of their limbs moving under the waves slowly spread the chlorinated aroma around the warm room, the students, who had begun sheepish, started to come out their shells and, where their movements had begun slightly uncoordinated and clumsy, they started to synchronise with each other appearing to facilitate the sport with every muscle that they moved. It was incredible to watch how a sport so underrated has captivated the determined students' hearts and they'll hopefully keep the memories of throughout their lives.

Mouth-watering festivities in the oven

As I walked into the cooking classrooms, I was immediately hit by the nostalgic redolence of all things Christmassy and festive; spices that only belong to the time of the year when the most beloved holiday of presents, family, the birth of Jesus Christ and food - obviously - comes around. It wasn't long before I managed to locate the delicious, aromatic smell to the rich golden brown biscuits the cooking students were making. Whilst some were

carefully creating detailed gingerbread men, others had rushed ahead by instead making round little crunchy cookies ready to eat straight from the oven.

It was wonderful to experience the beautiful atmosphere of students enjoying their own creations so much and being so dedicated to making scrumptious, delectable little sweet treats for consumption with their friends and families, and my mouth salivates at the thought of all the exquisite snacks the students had the opportunity to make whilst in their cooking enrichment.

Tantalising Talbot

Finally, I took a detour to D10 and was flabbergasted by the beautiful twists and turns of the whiteboard pens delicately derived into an intricate combination of letters mixed together to make satisfying signatures which the students had been working hard on perfecting for later use. I discovered that Mr Dewfall's number 1 top tip on being a good person is writing hand written notes. Due to this, he thought it an absolute necessity to teach his students the important life skill of having identifiable penmanship, which they seemed to enjoy and delight in to an immeasurable amount.

Another top tip I discovered was always follow through. Always. No matter how absolutely awful you feel, no matter how much you regret making plans, no matter if it's the worst day of your life - never cancel what you previously promised to do. The aim of all these amazing tips aligns perfectly with the aim of the club: to maximise personal achievement, develop your life skills and better yourself as a whole. The goal being to eventually achieve rugged individualism and build self-reliance, ultimately all leading to the construction of originality and independence of character.

Overall, I am eternally grateful to have had the amazing experience of being a part of the school newspaper and getting to see and write about the incredible variety of enrichment clubs that students get to participate in, and I hope, as the new year is here and we get to pick our new enrichment clubs, it will be as exciting as it has been this term to learn new skills and have new experiences.



A Day in the Life: The ICT Team

By Emmanuella Ogundiran

We normally arrive at a different time between 7am-8am so that any issue related to IT can be solved before the school day starts.

Our 'To Do' list varies every day because we get emails asking for our help – this could be anything from setting up the login details for new students to programming the smart board you see in your classrooms.

Some common jobs we do as a team would definitely be password resets, replacing broken or faulty items, supporting staff with any IT issues and setting up new starter students.



Some complex jobs we do would be setting up and programming the smart boards and - due to health and safety reasons - this has to be done during holidays or Inset days as it is very dangerous to have students roaming around the site or because we need the classrooms free.

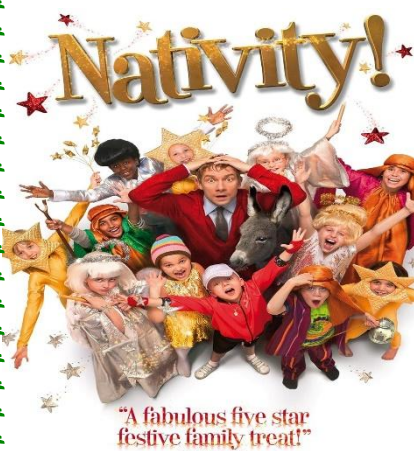
We would say that our day to day jobs are always different and very varied, but can involve similar things like classroom network issues and some software fixes. IT can be quite unpredictable and not always reliable, so we can sometimes run around fixing things that go wrong.



Our biggest project that would surprise people would most definitely be moving from Microsoft to Google a couple of years ago. To students and teachers, it was just a change of usage, but for us it was more than that and a huge job! It was a series of time spent moving teacher documents, student data and information, as well as making sure everything was transferred and still working

efficiently with the minimum impact on everyone.

Recommended Films by Staff and students



I absolutely love this film because it is so hilarious and I love the rivalry between the two schools. I also love Mr Poppy and think he is so funny. The best part is when they perform the actual play

By Lucy Stainton- streaming on NETFLIX



If you want a drama that will completely pull at your heart strings, the 2006 film In Pursuit of Happyness will do the job. Starring Will Smith - and his real life son Jaden Smith - as a single parent and salesman desperately trying to make ends meet while caring for his 5 year old son, this film will have you completely gripped as they suffer homelessness and other setbacks. Will Smith plays Chris Gardner - a man who shows determination and resilience to rise up and succeed when faced with difficulty. What is even more emotional is that the film is based on a real life story - proof that some films are timeless and have the power to tug at even the hardest of hearts!

By Ms Furliger

streaming on NETFLIX



My favourite film of all time is a musical called 'Singin' in the Rain'

It's nearly 75 years old now but still funny, and has a brilliant soundtrack and choreography. It's about a Hollywood film company trying to make a film with a really bad actor.

The main dance number was rehearsed so many times that the dancers' feet were bleeding by the time they filmed it.

Mr Conway

streaming on NOW



I ABSOLUTELY love this film because it is super funny; it is my favourite Christmas film. My favourite bit is when the people break into a lady's house to steal back a sparkle hoof unicorn princess (toy) for his daughter. This film is about when a man refuses to buy his daughter a toy as it costs too much.

By Lottie BEE

Watch on NETFLIX or Prime Video



The movie I am recommending is Harry Potter and the Goblet of fire. I chose this because I really like the books and the films. I feel like it explores more characters (like Ron ,Hermione ,Ginny, and Cedric) and I feel like you get a lot more development as it doesn't just focus on Harry, although he is the main character and plays a big role in the franchise. I rate this movie a five out of five!

Amirah Akanbi ITVX



OMG you guys, **The Princess Diaries** is this super cool movie about Mia, who's just a normal, kind of clumsy high school girl. Her life totally flips when her grandma drops a major bomb: Mia is a *literal* princess and the heir to a country called Genovia! She has to take these hilarious "princess lessons" and gets a total glow-up makeover, which causes a ton of drama at school. Mia struggles with being suddenly popular and deciding if she even *wants* the crown or just her normal life. It's a heart warming story about finding out who you really are and staying true to your besties!





The Lord of The Rings by John Ronald Reuel Tolkien

I thought these films were a brilliant tale of courage and showing that small acts of kindness can overcome the force of evil. The story follows a small group of heroes that seek to destroy the rings of power!

Recommended by Dr Brown

Stream on Now



Wicked: For Good directed by Jon M. Chu

I love the musical of Wicked so, when I heard they were making two films of the story, I couldn't wait to see it in the cinema. The first film was amazing and I had high hopes for the second one. Miss Martin and I went to see Wicked: For Good on its release date and it definitely didn't disappoint! The songs were a beautiful reflection of the original Broadway cast with a fresh twist and I haven't stopped listening to them since. The storyline progresses well through the film and the cinematography was outstanding the whole way through. Every detail is purposeful and thoughtful and they have managed to link cleverly to the Wizard of Oz's original storyline. I absolutely loved this film and would recommend it to any musical lover!

Recommended by Mrs Sharples

Only in cinemas



Zootopia by Disney

I love this film because it is about animals, which I love, but it's also because it shows us we cannot judge a book by its cover. It shows you should always get to know someone before you judge them. My favourite part is where they visit the DMV and it is run by sloths and they are all in slow motion. It is very funny!

Recommended by Miss Fahy

Stream on Disney+



The Super Mario Bros. Movie by Nintendo and Illuminations

I love this movie because I am a massive fan of the game, so I was ecstatic when they made a movie about it. This movie has a great story and references for people that look closely but a good watch for the general watcher. Also, the Peaches song is the best, I have listened to it so many times that it never leaves my head.

Recommended by Oliver Milligan

Stream on Netflix





Meet the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

An Interview with Mr O'Gallagher

By Martha Jewell

What's your favourite part of working at Holmleigh Park?

I came to Holmleigh Park when it was very chaotic and lots of hard work, but now that the school has improved and the students and staff understand the boundaries, I think that we can have a nice time in school, as well as work hard. It's nice how we are a community - we have evolved and come very far from what it was like at the start of my time here. I enjoy coming into school every day because the students have improved and every day is interesting.

Were your plans always to have a career in teaching?

No, I never wanted to be a teacher ever! I thought it would be awful and it scared me when I was at school thinking that some people choose to do teaching, but then I went to university and then had a job where I volunteered in schools and I loved that more than my job at the time, so I thought I would do it for a couple of years and I am still doing it 15 years later!

What was your journey towards teaching like?

I went to university and studied Environmental Economics and a Masters. People often go and work in the city for a bank – so I did some internships and ended up as a sale rep for a company, which was a bit horrible when you were sat in an office all day and no one wanted to buy what you were selling, but then I volunteered at a local school and one day I quit, did a career switch and signed up to a teaching programme and really loved it.

You have 3 young boys and have been part time for the past 2 years, how do you juggle senior leadership with family life?

Badly ha ha! No, my kids are all boys (7, 4 and 2) and, when I was working full time, lots of people didn't know who I was at the school gates as I could never pick them up due to the closing of the school times, which would make me really sad. However, HP is quite well run so I asked Mr Hudson and I got Thursdays off. In order to have the day off on Thursday, I arrive really early and leave 5ish on days that I'm working but don't take any work home. I work very hard on the 4 days I am here by having no breaks and not sitting down, and I switch off when at home to have a barrier between home and school life. This is a lot of work but it allows me to have a lovely day off on Thursday and do things like taking my kids to the park and spending time with them.

What's your goals for the future: do you aspire to be headteacher?

My HONEST view is that I always thought I wanted to be a headteacher as I like power and being in control and also there's a slightly aspirational thing where you instinctively want to make progress and

do better in your career, BUT – I have a family and wife now and I enjoy what I'm doing so not so much now.

What was school like for you when you were younger?

I LOVED school; I had a delightful time. I was very lucky that I had friends and the school did a lot of things for us and I played a huge amount of sport so I was doing something every day after school to keep me busy. Lessons were ok, I didn't always enjoy them but I did ok. I did all the extracurricular stuff and got decent grades at GCSE and A-Levels but, overall, I really loved school and had no problems.

What's your greatest achievements as a teacher?

There are probably two. On a small level, being a form tutor. I did it at this school and a previous school, and it is pretty beautiful as you can make really good relationships with students and families. Spending time and having a warm relationship with the students is really lovely and they tend to remember their teachers. On a different scale, making HP a calm and aspirational school has been a big achievement. There was a lot wrong 7 years ago for a lot of reasons, but now people are proud of coming here and we are completely full and oversubscribed. Not all students may be proud or happy here, but we try our best and generally we are respected in the community. We created a culture and worked hard as a team to be where we are today.

What's your favourite HP values and why?

I think the MOST important is being kind but WORKING HARD gets you further in life. It depends what you want in life. If I think about my kids, I want my kids to be kind, but you do have to work hard in life too. I actually really love our values – if we could make everyone do all 3 things then it would be amazing.

People often say the Greenshaw and Holmleigh Park policies are strict, what is your response to this?

Yes, they are and I love it. They are but boundaries set you free! I have seen it first hand in many schools when there are no consequences and students think that is freedom but that is not freedom. Freedom is about controlling yourself and being articulate. Young people are always going to make mistakes and often need a wise adult to tell them what's right or wrong. Of course the adult isn't always right, but they usually know what's best. I know that we are seen as too controlling here but it's for a good outcome and it's best for the student's future and development.

Why do think line up is such an important part of the school day?

It is really important to be part of a community and we have a lot of messages to give out, which is particularly important for the younger years. It's also really important to have consistency of expectations and routines. It has lots of benefits and more pros than cons to create an orderly and prepared start. So, with line up, we can see and control how each teacher does the check-ups and it also creates a calm start when we ensure people are standing still and focused. If you win the morning, you win the day!

HOUSE UPDATES

By *Theo Russell*

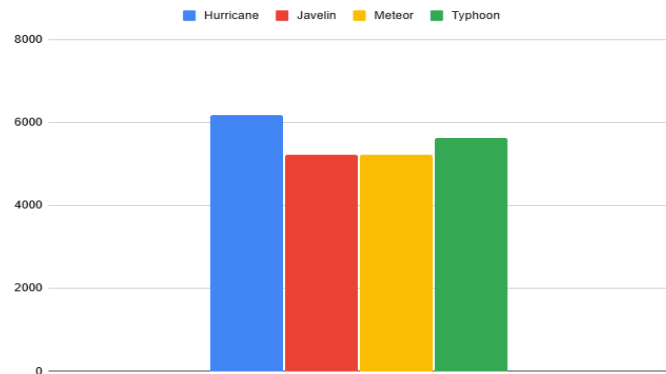
The House Standings

1st: Hurricane:8143

2nd: Typhoon:7563

3rd: Javelin:7080

4th: meteor:6804



Remember to keep working hard to earn even more house points.

The House Charities and charity week

The penultimate week of term wasn't just a competition on Friday - it was a whole week of exiting fundraising events all aimed to get hundreds of pounds for our fantastic charities.

Throughout the week there was a whole programme of charity events, like a sports games lunch on Thursday, a cake sale on Friday, a tombola on Wednesday, as well as an after school craft fun fair and a chance to write cards for local care home residents. Students have also been donating to Gloucester FoodBank, which is an essential cause throughout the year and at Christmas.

The final event to try raise money for charity is a Christmas jumper day on the final day of term that you have to pay a pound to donate to charity. The final total is incoming, but we expect to have raised over £500 by the end of term!

Overall, it has been a fabulous term of supporting much deserved charities, whilst also creating challenge, enjoyment and competition for the school community.





A spotlight on Sport - Molly Reeves

By Promise E. Odiase

When did you start playing football?

I started playing when I was around 11 years old (2020) because before that I played rugby (I played scrum half which suited me the most), but I then decided to change.

What is your position?

The first 3 seasons, I played midfield and then, when I moved up to U15s, played striker. I enjoy striker mostly for the fun of scoring goals – I got top goal-scorer that season ending with 48 goals. Now that I have moved up to the Women's team, I play midfield or striker depending.

Who is/was your favourite player growing up?

My favourite player is Ella Toone because she plays for Manchester United, which is the team I support and she also plays the same position as me. I like the style of her football, which I implement into my game play and her performance influences some of the skills that I use.

What has been your biggest achievement so far?

My biggest achievement so far is winning the league Cup with Gloucester City (GCAFC) last season and being able to play up for the Women's team.

What was the most difficult part of your football career at this point?

The most difficult part of my career was the pressure from the coaches and people around me, putting me off and making me lose the love of the game. It was very hard trying to find the confidence again to be able to play freely.

Do you ever feel nervous before a match?

From time to time I feel nervous, but I feel like it's a good thing as it shows how you care about how you perform in the game and want to do well.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time when you're not training or playing?

Art is my main thing to focus on if I'm not playing football and it takes my mind off things as I find it peaceful or an escape. Either Art or I watch different types of sports like rugby, American football and

football because - by watching these games - I can see different skills etc that I can put into my game and how I play.

Who were the toughest team you've played against?

Cheltenham town in the cup final was the toughest game I have played as they were already top of the league that season and going into that game we were seen as the underdogs. However, the pressure from that helped us to win 4-0, which was an enormous achievement.

What are your thoughts on the development of women's youth football?

I think the recent success of England winning the euros and the exposure now that young girls have with games being televised is inspiring young girls to take up football. After England won the 2020 euros, Lotte Wubben-Moy got the England team to sign a petition to take to the UK government to make physical education for 2 hours a week for all UK schools mandatory. By giving these young girls experiences in sport that they may never have had the opportunity to do before, this will hopefully make it the norm for them to be aspirational and realise their potential and skills.



CAREER CORNER - A spotlight on Mr Conway

By Amírah Akanbi



Deep dive into the career path of some of our teachers as I ask questions about how Mr Conway and Mr Ogden started teaching in the first place, what is it like being Head of Year and their favourite parts of the job...

What do you like about this school?

The main thing that I love about this school are the students. I really like how friendly everyone is and that in lessons, students will just 'have a go'. At some schools, students can be quite scared to take risks in Drama but I don't think that is the case at Holmleigh Park.

What do you like about theatre?

I have always liked theatre - I did my first school play at Primary School and have been performing on and off ever since. I was very lucky that I got into Drama school and spent 4 years learning all about how to perform. However, I also really like the technical side of theatre and, at this time of year, I'm quite busy designing the lighting for pantomimes.

What is your favourite year group to teach?

Each year group is different. In Year 7, I love that a lot of students haven't done Drama before, but I can see them starting to enjoy the subject. In Year 8 at HP, students really develop their performance skills. In Year 9, students are thinking about GCSE options so really push themselves in Drama. Then at GCSE and A level, students have the skills to take on a range of challenging roles and plays that we can't explore further down the school.

What was your previous job and has your career evolved in this time?

I have been a teacher for over 30 years and the best part of the job is that every day is different. Before coming to HP, I had been at my previous school for a long time and it was very different to here.

What do you like the most about drama?

The thing I most like about what Drama can do - is confidence and team work. If a group of people work together on something, the results can be stunning. Also, people might have thought 'I can't do that' but, quite often, if they trust themselves and work hard, they can do anything!

I used to live in Bristol and, at that time, the TV show Casualty was filmed there. So, I was a Dr on that show for about 5 years, which was really good fun. My favourite play is 'A Streetcar Named Desire' by an American playwright called Tennessee Williams. Performing the role of Stanley in that was great because I got to be really horrible! I also really love Shakespeare and my mission at HP is to put on a Shakespeare play before too long.



CAREER CORNER - A spotlight on Mr Ogden

By Amírah Akanbí

What led you to become a Geography teacher?

I decided to change my career about 12 years ago. I thought teaching would be a really interesting and rewarding job. I always had an interest in Geography as it teaches us a lot about the world we live in. I had studied it for GCSE, A levels and having a degree in it meant that I could go back to university and do teacher training relatively easily. Turns out we have lots of holidays too!

What's your favourite thing about being Head of Year?

Although it might appear that I am often telling people what to do or picking them up for poor uniform or behaviour etc, my favourite thing is that me doing those things means the year group runs more smoothly, which means that everyone has a much nicer and enjoyable experience while at school.

How long have you been a teacher and how has your career evolved?

12 years - I joined this school when it was called Beaufort and have seen how it has changed over the years to HP today. I have taught several subjects; Geography, History, Citizenship and Criminology. I applied to be a Head of Year a few years after starting here, so have seen several year groups through to year 11.

What is your favourite year to teach and why?

I don't really have a favourite year. In year 7, students are usually very enthusiastic and keen to learn but, as students progress through the years, their knowledge becomes deeper and therefore it is great to develop this further.

What previous jobs did you have before teaching and did you enjoy them?

After I left university, I applied to join the British Army. I went through training at a place called Sandhurst but unfortunately broke my leg and had to leave. I then went to join the Met police in London where I was a police officer for several years before deciding to retrain as a teacher! It was all tough but enjoyable.

How do you balance being Head of Year and a Geography teacher?

Luckily, I have always worked with fantastic people as part of my year group, which makes my job a lot easier. You need to be prepared to work hard but I find being organised is the key to balancing being a teacher and Head of Year.

Term 2: A round up of Fun Fridays

By Theo Russell

November 9th- Complex Countdown Conundrums

All the students vigilantly eyed-down the letters and desperately tried to rapidly write down the correct unjumbled word on their whiteboard to get the most wanted house points. Entry as usual was one house point and each correct answer was also worth one house point. That meant that the house points were flowing out of the teacher's pocket and into the four houses total. This factor made it even more competitive in the battle for the house points. The house that unscrambled their way to the win was Meteor.

November 14th- Thrilling Push the Button

One of the most exiting Fun Fridays of the year was a brilliant event. Children were chanting and cheering for their house members to score a high score. The team with the most points would end up victorious. Students leapt and scrambled across the board to score even more points. The scores racked up to an enormous tally of over four hundred for each house. However only one house could end up with the victory under the belt no matter how big the scores of the other team were. In the end it was Meteor again who took the crown of champions with a whopping score that reached well over five hundred.

November 21st- Adventurous Paper Aeroplanes

This Fun Friday was simple but extremely difficult. You had to fold a piece of paper into the most aerodynamic, strong and cool looking plane to soar across the sports hall. If you made it to the first set of cones, you would get one point, second set gave you two points and so forth. Typhoon came out of it with a whooping win thrashing all the other house with not just the longest throw but the second, third and fourth longest throws, taking them to a resounding win that finally destroyed Meteor's three Fun Fridays winning streak!

November 29th- Brain-testing Codebreakers

The second house competition of the year was a spectacle to behold. It was a nail-biting affair where the title of codebreaking champion was up for grabs. The semi-final was tense and two teams had to go out. Despite how hard they fought, the two teams who inevitably had to pack their bags and say goodbye to the chance to be champion were Javelin and - surprisingly - Meteor. This left two extremely clever teams. Hurricane and Typhoon fought valiantly but, even through Miss Ansell's and Miss Grinham's closed eyes, it was Typhoon who stormed to a witty win.



December 6th- Unbelievable one percent club

A brilliant event based off the very popular TV program was complicated, challenging and fun all at the same time. Many people attended wanting to be one of the few being able to make it to the one percent question and even dreaming to get it correct. All of the houses had many pupils turning up and making it impressively far in the competition. The crown of one of the hardest Fun Fridays went to Hurricane.

The chivalrous cadets

By Henry Dyde

Upon my visit to the Cadet enrichment, I was welcomed with a chance to question many people including people of the highest ranks. Firstly, I asked questions about what is incorporated within each session, in which I was told about the incredible opportunity to take part in field craft, fly planes and even shooting activities.



Not only are the cadets exposed to the amazing chances to do these activities, they are also directed to carry out many procedures with composure and courage. For example, at the start of each session, the Cadets are instructed to line up in order to be marked out of 10 on their uniform; cadets are marked on the crease in their trousers to the beret that each person wears on their head. In addition, the Cadets then participate in drill, which includes learning key skills of moving as a group in unison. The Cadets carry these drills out with confidence every session as a reminder of their competence in working as a team and following the correct orders efficiently and accurately. Furthermore, when the cadets have shown their commitment to the program, they are provided with 2 uniforms for completely free. Firstly, students are given a green uniform designed and worn for outdoor activities such as fieldcraft and navigation, and secondly, they are given a blue uniform designed and worn for indoor activities. This is what the cadets were wearing when I visited during one of their sessions. Upon my visit the cadets were instructed on the steps to take on an unresponsive person and practiced on fellow cadets and mannequins: a vital and valuable skill.



Character Programmes and House competitions

By Angel Seriki

These rewards and events are something our students and staff take a lot of pride in. It highlights the good work our students have done and it brings everyone together at the end of the school year to celebrate hard work and the demonstration of all the school values – working hard, being kind and taking responsibility.

School Colours

Students who make significant contributions to the school can be awarded with Junior, Half or Full Colours. Students must be nominated for their contribution to one of four areas:

Academic is exceptional achievement in lessons.

Culture is exceptional contributions to art, music, drama or other cultural areas.

Sport is for exceptional contributions to the school's sports teams.

Values is for being an exceptional role model and embodying the school's values.

House points

House points are reward coins. Students earn points for their house through a variety of activities. This includes participating in class and giving excellent answers, you can also earn house points by doing a kind gesture. Friday's tutor time is all about celebrating house points gained from individuals and tallying them up to then reward students with the most throughout the term.

Attendance rewards

Excellent attendance is recognized and rewarded through the HP Hero Club. Students with an attendance of 95% or higher are eligible. This is a big celebration for Holmleigh park and for all the students because it celebrates students' commitment to school through attendance.

Here are some quotes from our students about their favourite achievements and rewards:

"I got a sports badge for being the best kickboxer"

"I earned a certificate for player of the season in the girl's category for netball "

"I was in year 7 when I humbly won the best footballer in the year in the celebration assembly, because I was a supportive player, always wanting my team to do well in fixtures."

"My favourite achievement was earning 21 house points in one week and I was in the top house points earners in year 9"



Christmas fact file

By Melinda Bila and Isla Van Leer.



1. Nearly 60 million Christmas Trees are grown each year in Europe.
2. Santa Clause was first used by the company Coca Cola as a winter promotion.
3. 32.56 metres – The length of the longest ever Christmas Stocking. It was also 14.97 metres wide.
4. In 1999, residents of the state of Maine in America built the world's biggest ever snowman. It stood at 113ft tall.
5. 57 – The number of Olympic sized swimming pools that could be filled with the beer consumed in the UK over Christmas.
6. The total amount spent on Christmas puddings by the UK is £48,000,000.
7. Christmas trees were first decorated with fruits.
8. Japanese people spend their Christmas Eve eating in KFC. This is a popular tradition in Japan so much that customers have to book their seats 2 months in advance.
9. The most lights lit at the same time at Christmas was 194,672 in Belgium in 2010.
10. 'White Christmas' by Bing Crosby is the best selling Christmas song of all time.

Modern Christmas traditions in the UK

By Isla Van Leer and Melinda Bila.

1. Watching festive films such as ELF, Home Alone, Grinch, Nativity, Christmas chronicles, The Polar Express, Deck the halls, Jack Frost, The Snowman and much more with the most popular being Home Alone and Elf.
2. Christmas TV adverts have become more popular such as John Lewis and Coca-Cola leading the way.
3. Decorating your home with a tree and lights on the outside of houses has become very popular.
4. Wearing festive Christmas jumpers with designs like Christmas trees, reindeers, Santa Clause or snowmen.
5. Christmas crackers for added fun at the dinner table.
6. Hanging stockings for Father Christmas on Christmas Eve night with carrots for the reindeers and mince pies and milk (or alcohol!) for Santa.
7. Christmas Markets are springing up everywhere where they sell homemade crafts such as pottery, paintings and jewellery etc. They also sell food and drinks such as sweet treats or beverages like mulled wine or hot chocolate.
8. Secret Santa is normally a tradition with a group of friends or family where you anonymously pick someone out of a hat or basket from your group and you buy them a present without them knowing who it is from.
9. Outdoor ice skating, carol concerts and light displays are all favourite traditions in the build up to Christmas.
10. Pantomimes where you can watch things like Jack and the Bean Stalk, Cinderella, Aladdin, Peter Pan and Dick Whittington, although you usually need to book early for these!

Christmas recipes

Polar Bear cupcakes recipe



Ingredients

- 125g butter, softened
- 125g caster sugar
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 125g self-raising flour

For the topping

- 50g butter, softened
- 125g icing sugar
- 1 tbsp milk
- 500g white fondant icing
- 75g desiccated coconut
- 50g black fondant icing
- 1 x tube white writing icing

Method

1. Preheat the oven to gas 4, 180°C, fan 160°C. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with 12 muffin cases. Beat together the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs a little at a time, beating well between each addition.
2. Fold in the vanilla extract and the flour then divide the mixture between the muffin cases. Bake for 15-18 mins until well risen and golden. Take the cakes out of the tin and leave on a wire rack to cool completely before decorating.
3. To make the buttercream topping, whisk the butter with a hand-held mixer until pale. Add the icing sugar a spoonful at a time, whisking well between each addition. Add the milk and continue to whisk until the mixture is pale and creamy.
4. Roll out two thirds of the white fondant icing and cut out 12 circles using a 7cm (3in) plain pastry cutter – this will form the polar bears' face. Pinch the edge of the icing circles in two places to create the polar bears' ears. Spread a little of the buttercream on the top of each cupcake and then put a circle of fondant icing onto each one.
5. Divide the remaining fondant into 12 and roll each piece into a small ball. Stick the balls onto the cakes using a dab of water and then brush the whole of the fondant icing lightly with water and dip into the desiccated coconut to coat completely.
6. Take the black fondant icing and roll out 12 balls for the noses and 24 small balls for the eyes. Use a little of the writing icing to stick these onto the bears to create the faces.

A celebration of Art and Textiles from Term 2



Created by Evie Davis and
Angelika Kowalczyk



Daniel Crunkhurn



Molly Reeves



Scarlett Read-Jones



Bonnie Wilkins



Natalia Blake



Niamh Phelps



Daniel Woodcock



A collection of work from the 3D Sculpture enrichment club.



Emily McGarrick



Taylor Hopkins



Created by Ava Tatton

A celebration of English creative writing

A Poem about the Christmas Armistice 1914. Stanzas interchange from both the perspective of German and British soldiers. Completed as part of the Conflict in Drama unit in Year 9.

We are just men

By Ruby R

I miss my friends and family,
Especially since it's Christmas,
We all sing carols even the Germans.
I go over to the trench to declare a truce.
It's Christmas after all.

I miss my freunde und familie,
Especially since it's weihnachten.
I see a boy going over the trench,
I told everyone nein, it is weihnachten.

We both surrender
I felt a sense of friendship
the gunfire stops as I go under.
it was like at home, I felt peace.

We both aufgeben
We said let's play Fußball
I felt a sense of peace.
It was like I was with my freunde again.

The game is done, we go back.
Merry Christmas!
Frohe Weihnachten!
And now we go back, to the big attack.

A celebration of English creative writing

A winter gothic short story: as part of the Gothic Short Stories Unit in Year 8

By Grace Gurr

It was a cold, gloomy night, snow falling, as I was parking on the driveway. I turned my car off and stepped out as the cold breeze rushed over me. I didn't know anything about the house; I had just rented it for now. I slowly walked to the boot of my car, my keys dangling in my hands. I popped the boot open and picked up my huge suitcase. I slowly rolled it to the front lights near the door, taking a slow breath — it was really heavy. I fiddled with my keys, trying to find the right one for the house. A silver, rusted key was the one I needed. I dangled it along my hand and slowly opened the door, making a loud screeching sound as it moved ajar.

I walked in. It was a wooden-structured house with a cosy feeling shifting around. There was a small sofa with a TV opposite, a tiny kitchen with enough space to cook, and a single bed in the corner of the big room with a small nightstand.

I actually liked the house, but something was putting me off. A slow, faint knocking sound rang in my ears until it gave me a headache. I sat down on the sofa; I could feel the springs — it was so uncomfortable. I ignored it and started to unpack my suitcase. I got out my most important things first: my toothbrush, some pyjamas, and clothes for the next day. I thought everything was going well, but that irritating knocking sound kept distracting me. I brushed it off.

"It's probably just the pipes malfunctioning," I said to myself. But was it?

I changed into my pyjamas and slowly got into bed. As I lay there, staring up at the blank, cream-coloured ceiling, I slowly fell asleep.

2:52 a.m.

My eyes were stinging as I brought myself to sit up. Why did I wake up? I was probably dehydrated. I carefully got up and walked over to the kitchen, the floor making a loud squeak with every step. I opened the cupboard, got a glass, and poured myself a cup of water.

Suddenly, I heard it again — the knocking. This time it was louder and more fierce. I clenched my jaw; it was coming from above me. That's when I saw it: a ladder with a small square opening leading up to the attic.

"Was there meant to be an attic?" I whispered to myself.

I walked over, and the sound of the knocking increased. A heavy but slow knock was coming from the opening. I looked up; a wooden panel had shifted, exposing a dim light that shone down onto the floor. I held my breath and started climbing up the ladder. It felt unsteady and not capable of holding anyone. I felt I had approximately 10 seconds to get to the opening before the ladder collapsed. Although it didn't take long, it felt like hours. My knees felt weak, but I kept going.

I pushed my hand forward and the panel slid to the side, uncovering more light. The knocking stopped.

I peeked my head up and looked around. I couldn't see anything. I shifted my body and locked my eyes onto a candle. Not just any candle — it had engravings on it. I couldn't read them from where it was

positioned. I started to peer even deeper into the attic, but suddenly, a knock rang in my ears — slow but very steady. This time it was coming from the door.

I stepped down the ladder and rushed to the door. As I was about to turn the handle, I thought to myself, *'Who would be visiting at this time of night?'* I hesitated but opened the door. The freezing, blistering wind flung it open, but no one was there.

I was about to shut the door when, in the corner of my eye, I saw it — a shadowy figure. I couldn't tell what he was wearing, but it appeared to be a black suit. But wait... what was in his hand? It was hard to see, but it was a candle — the same candle I had seen in the attic.

I quickly slammed the door shut in terror and rushed back to the attic. I rapidly climbed up the ladder, no longer afraid of its fragility, but no light greeted me at the entrance. Everything felt different. I turned my body and couldn't see it. The candle was gone.

My body shut down. What was going on? How did that mysterious figure take the candle? I slowly and carefully walked back to the door, watching my step, and slowly opened it. But nothing was there. It was like time had frozen — everything was so quiet. I couldn't hear the loud wind anymore.

What was going on?

I walked over to my bed, confused and horrified at the same time. I felt so tired, but how could I go to sleep after all this? I should just pack my stuff up and leave. But what if that mysterious figure was standing outside or still lurking around? I couldn't take any chances.

I lay in bed, closed my eyes, and thought about what was going on. I will call the landlord in the morning, I told myself. I let my eyes shut and slowly drifted off to sleep.

I woke up, 10:33 a.m. I rushed out of bed and packed my stuff up, turned all the lights off, and walked out the door to my car. I put all my things in the boot and sat in the driver's seat.

Was this really happening, or was I going crazy? I still don't know what was going on to this day. Sometimes I wake up to faint knocking, and once I thought I saw a candle on my bedside table.

Maybe I wasn't imagining things...