



St Thomas Learns

AUGUST TO DECEMBER 2021

NEWSLETTER

Self-discipline
Teamwork

Trust
High Expectations
Openness
Mutual Respect
Achieving excellence
Success

Welcome

Welcome to our first termly newsletter showcasing a sample of the fantastic learning and wider curricular opportunities our young people have been experiencing this term. Our young people are a credit to our St Thomas community and I hope that you enjoy looking through this snapshot of what they have been getting up to during this term.

It has been a busy, successful and enjoyable term full of engaging and stimulating learning opportunities both in and out of the classroom.

S Mariani

Depute Head Teacher

Physical Education

In PE this term, pupils have experienced a number of activities such as Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Swimming and Gymnastics. In National PE classes, pupils have focused on improving their Physical Fitness and the Emotional factor through Football and their Physical Skills and the Mental factor through Badminton. The Sports Leaders have gained valuable experience through delivering lessons to S1 and hope to continue this in Primary Schools next term as part of a new Primary School transition programme. The PE department have also launched their new BGE levels assessment model and this will be used in the following term.

Extra-Curricular clubs have started up again and have seen a large number of pupils involved across 12 different clubs including Basketball, Netball, Cheerleading and Volleyball. A big thank you to all who have volunteered to run the variety of clubs on offer at St Thomas'. The S3 Football Team have begun playing fixtures and have had 2 positive results coming from 0-3 twice to draw 3-3.

Pupils have also accomplished a variety of achievements outside of School:

Hugo Boyle, Daniel Burns and Preston Kennedy (S2) won the Edinburgh Cup for Spartans Football Club in August, beating County Down 5-4 on penalties in the Final.

Kianna Coertze (S2) has been selected for the Scottish Swimming National Junior Team.

Louise Joyce (S2) represented Scotland at the Gymnastics British Classic Challenge Finals from 5th to 7th November. She competed in Floor, Beam, Bars and Vault, helping the Silver Team to 3rd place and winning the Bill McLoughlin Cup for Overall Team performance.

Hannah Proudfoot (S2) has been selected for the Edinburgh District U15 Netball Team .

Martin Bienak (S4) competed at the Judo British Championships on 4th and 5th December.

Evie Phillips (S4) has been selected for the Scotland U16 Girl Basketball squad.

Caitlin Milne (S1) has achieved success with the U13 Spartans Girls football team, when they beat Hibs at Ainslie Park after extra time and penalties to win the league. Caitlin was the goalkeeper and was particularly pleased to make 3 saves during the penalty shootout to ensure success.

S1 BGE Working Levels

Your working level will be determined by your best four activities;

Description	Tracking Number	Rating	Curriculum Level	Progress
Exceeding expectations	1		4W	Consistently exceeds national benchmarks. Working very well independently and making very good progress overall.
Meeting expectations	2		3P	Consistently meeting national benchmarks and making good progress at this level
Needs improvement	3		3W	Meeting some benchmarks and requires support at times. Some gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills
Cause for concern	4		2P	Not yet meeting national working level benchmarks at this level



Social Subjects – History

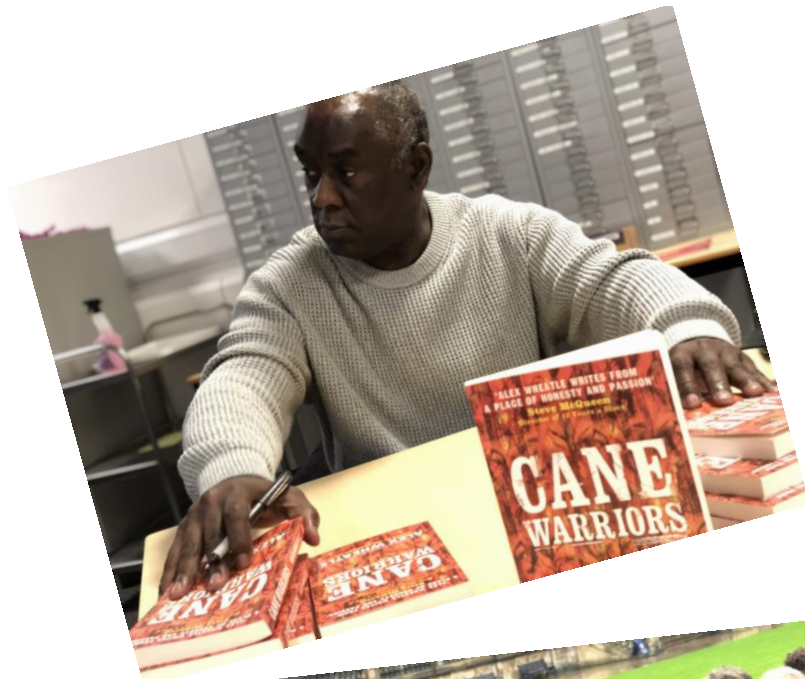
S4 joined History Tour expert Lisa Williams and Novelist Alex Wheatle (Cane Warriors) for an eye-opening tour around the streets of Edinburgh, exploring Scottish black history through Edinburgh landmarks. Lisa runs regular Black History Walking Tours around Edinburgh. She teamed up with Alex to create a special literary focused tour for young people about Edinburgh's role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the stories and histories of people from Africa, the Caribbean, and the ongoing influence and remarkable legacies they have left.

Who is author, Alex Wheatle?

This December Wheatle won the 2021 Young Quills Awards for Historical Fiction for his book: Cane Warriors

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/history-ks3-gcse-small-axe-alex-wheatle-and-the-brixton-uprising/ztrn6g8>

<https://uk.bookshop.org/books/cane-warriors/9781839131127>



History

4th year history went on an Edinburgh Book Trust trip around Edinburgh with Alex Wheatle, author of Cane Warriors.

Throughout this trip we learned about the importance of Black history within Edinburgh and learned about Alex Wheatle's life. Alex was sentenced to prison after the Brixton Riots in London. In prison he met a Rastafarian who taught him about the importance of reading books on Black History. On our trip, he read passages of his book, 'Cane Warriors', this was interesting to hear & as a group we are currently writing our book review on the book itself.

We heard stories about how the foundations of our city and how Edinburgh has been built up on enslaved people's money. This opened our eyes and we have had interesting discussions about how this history is important and should be included within schools today.

We learned about many Black people who lived within the city in Edinburgh who have been forgotten, including John Edmonstone. He taught Charles Darwin the art of taxidermy and in doing this contributed to science. However, his contribution is mostly overlooked.

It is important to continue having discussions about Black History and the importance of this in education.

Charlie, Mara, Katie & Niamh (S4)

History



S4 were nominated to receive a pack of Braw Talent's Suffragette Trumps game from *Women's History Scotland*.

<https://protestssuffragettes.company.site>

The Suffragette Trumps "give insight into the course and a personal approach to the women who were on the front line of this cause."—Niamh

"It feels less clinical and removed and more real and personal" when playing the game.

– Mara

"Interesting that it's Scottish – relevant because we usually hear about the UK in general so it's cool that it's specific to Scotland."

– Katie

"The cards are full of interesting women who previously we might not have known of."

– Charlie

Here are their favourite cards - **how many do you know?!**

Isabella Fyvie Mayo, Sophia Duleep Singh, 'Amaryllis' Edith Hacon, Dr Flora Murray CBE, Crystal Macmillan and Maud Arncliffe-Sennett

History



In November, the Senior History class made a trip to the National Museum. They spent a double period touring some of the exhibitions which link to their Scottish unit of study and completed a scavenger hunt. It was great to get back to the Museum – we are so lucky to have this resource on our doorstep! Well done to Bibi and Ross who won prizes for the most correct answers.

Modern Studies

S1 pupil Sophie Stewart (1A) wrote:

So far, in Modern Studies, we have learnt about prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes. First we learnt what they mean and then we looked at the effect they can have on society. We also learned about multiculturalism across the UK and in the city we live in. Over the past few weeks, we have been creating our own posters for Show Racism the Red Card to highlight the problem of racism.



Modern Studies

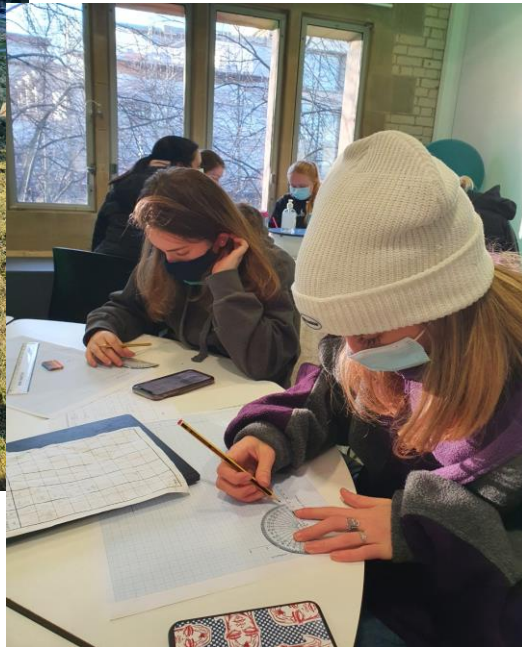


Higher Modern Studies trip to Holyrood

On the 18th November, our Higher class visited the Scottish Parliament to take part in a workshop and to get an idea of how democracy works in real life. The trip began with an insightful presentation on the inner working of the Scottish Parliament and government. This helped us get more detail into the material of the Democracy Unit that we have been learning in class. Following this, the Conservative MSP, Sue Webber, answered questions posed by the class and described her experiences as an MSP. Her answers helped us understand the challenges faced by an MSP in opposition. To end the trip, we watched First Ministers Question live to see the current issues being discussed. Overall, this trip was a great experience, and we learned a lot to help us achieve in Higher Modern Studies.

by Orlaith Joyce (S5) and Nasrin Shabestary (S5)

Geography



Our Advanced Higher Geography pupils enjoyed completing slope analysis field work at Holyrood park for their portfolios.

They also enjoyed participating in a workshop at Our Dynamic Earth.

St Thomas' Climate Action group

Design and create your very own climate crisis t-shirt to be entered into the school-wide t-shirt competition.

FORMAT:
either on
paper or
digital

PRIZE:
You will get
your t-shirt
printed

**SUBMIT your
design
to Dr B**

CLIMATE CHANGE T-SHIRT COMPETITION



DEADLINE:
14th of December
(Tuesday lunch time)



Organised
by school's
Climate
Action
Group

Luke Boardman (S1) won the Climate Action group competition which was to design a climate crisis T shirt. His winning entry is below-



Maths

S1 and S2 pupils represented our school in an Edinburgh wide *SumDog* competition. *SumDog* aims to develop key Numeracy skills through games and quizzes. Congratulations to all who took part and a special well done to Amelia Byrne, S1 who finished in the top 40 across the whole city!

"I can't believe how well I have done!" – Amelia Byrne S1.

Our top 4 winners!

Photo L-R: Amelia Byrne, Letizia Morana, Owen Conway, Tayyeb Shamsher.



Maths

After School Study

Our after school study classes resumed after the October break and it has been great to see pupils taking advantage of this opportunity. **Monday and Tuesday 3.30 – 4.30pm.**

Numeracy, Literacy and Health & Wellbeing in Maths

Our Numeracy class have been measuring their pulse and blood pressure providing an opportunity to discuss H&W and use their Numeracy and Literacy skills to interpret the graphs and charts.

Scottish Mathematical Challenge

BGE and Senior Phase pupils were offered the opportunity to take part in this challenge. Watch this space for results later in the session.

Numeracy

We have kick started our Numeracy Support Program for S1 pupils whereby seniors act as tutors to provide assistance in building required numeracy skills. The tutoring runs every Monday afternoon for 5 weeks. A huge thank you to our S5 and S6 tutors.

"I like peer tutoring because my tutor, Amelia takes her time to explain everything slowly. I have been learning about decimals, something that I used to get stuck with. I also really like the snacks and can't wait until next Monday to learn more!" – Emily Rockett S1.

"I really like peer tutoring because my tutor is very helpful and I am learning new skills. It is helping me a lot and I had fun." – Lola Somerville S1.



TU project



Some of our pupils from S1-S4 have been participating in a football programme delivered by Team United in partnership with our Active School's Coordinator, Alan Reid. Project Coordinator, Connor Brian has developed an exciting 6-week programme for the pupils to learn about a range of football related topics, including football journalism and sports nutrition. Each session has incorporated outdoor football activities, which the group have really enjoyed.



Support for Learning

In Support for Learning we have been doing lots of things in and out of the school building, including Music therapy, The Yard, the Life Skills Cafe at 6VT, the United Teams football, sessions at Gorgie Farm, supporting social and communication skills and emotional regulation.



Support for Learning

Therapet Thursdays:

St Thomas' SfL department are excited to be working in partnership with 'Canine Concern Scotland', a charity that visits schools with therapeutic dogs. Some of our pupils have been invited to spend some time engaging in reading sessions with our visiting dog, Maggie on Thursdays. More information about 'Canine Concern' and their supports within education can be found

here <https://www.canineconcernscotland.org.uk/schools-and-education>



Support for Learning

Music Therapy

Several of our pupils have been benefiting from weekly music sessions delivered by Jenny Linn who works with the UK wide music therapy charity, 'Nordoff Robbins'. Everyone has the ability to respond to music, regardless of age or ability and music therapy works with this capacity to encourage growth in communication and social skills, self-confidence, self-awareness and concentration. Music therapy offers individuals creative opportunities to express themselves, when words may be more challenging and this can in turn have a positive impact on their emotional well-being.

For more information, you can visit the 'Nordoff Robbins' website which includes a range of music therapy stories which may be of interest: <https://www.nordoff-robbins.org.uk/stories>

Love Gorgie Farm

Some of our pupils in SfL have been thoroughly enjoying their work experience sessions at Love Gorgie Farm! Pupils have benefited from the hands-on educational and learning opportunities offered by Love Gorgie Farm which is a secret countryside in the heart of Edinburgh!



Pupil Support



S6 MoneySense

The Stewart Ivory Financial Education Trust ('SIFET') is a charity that runs a programme of financial education sessions, principally aimed at senior school leavers in Scotland.

SIFET have delivered two workshops to our S6 pupil helping to raise awareness of how to manage their personal finances -
'Managing your money' and 'Managing your borrowing, Debt'

Pupil support

S2 & S4 SDS workshop

Claire Alexander our SDS school link met with all S2 & S4 pupils to conduct a workshop to support their future course choices. During this pupils had the opportunity to explore future pathways and destinations. They also took part in a fun 'Buzz' activity which allowed them to explore what skills and qualities they have by finding out what type of animal they are.

The logo for Skills Development Scotland, featuring the text "Skills Development Scotland" in white on a teal background with a scalloped edge.

Skills
Development
Scotland

S1 Police Workshops

All S1 pupils received a presentation from our school community Police Officer based on how to stay safe in the community. Pupils were also given the opportunity to discuss their journey to school and given tips on how to stay safe.

Equalities group

- ▶ Our Equality Group is pupil led and aims to celebrate the diverse community of St Thomas' whilst also raising awareness of local and global issues.
- ▶ In support of the charity, 'Show Racism the Red Card,' pupils organised a very successful Wear Red Day. As well as peer led House Assemblies, representatives from the Charity also visited our school to lead on workshops for S1-S3.



Show Racism the Red card - Equalities

Show Racism the Red Card

All pupils took part in 'Show Racism the Red Card' workshops delivered by the team at Show Racism the Red Card in the months of November and early December. This was an invaluable opportunity for pupils to discuss cultural and racial equality.

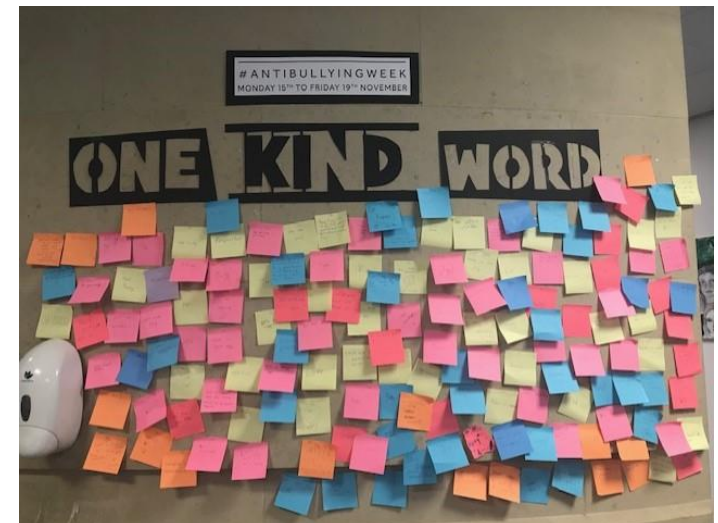


**SHOW
RACISM
THE
RED
CARD**

Anti Bullying week- Equalities



During Anti bullying week, pupils were delivered a presentation on bullying. They subsequently discussed ways to be kind and supportive to each other as well as where to access support.



Anti Bullying week- Equalities

- ▶ During Anti-bullying week, our school community signed up for the '5 days of kindness' challenge; taking a pledge to use kind words and actions. A rainbow of kind words was built in the foyer. Every pupil was issued with an Anti-bullying leaflet, encouraging kindness and giving practical advice of what to do if they witness or experience bullying behaviour.
- ▶ Both events were celebrated on Friday breaktimes with a Kahoot quiz. Congratulations to our winners, Olivier S2 and Juhi S1.

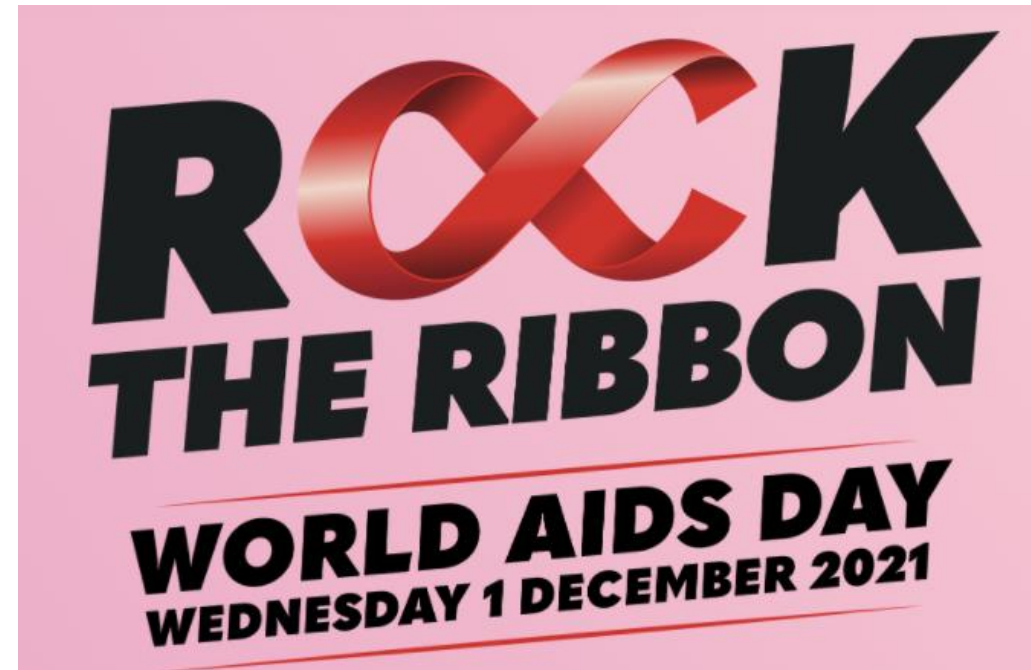


National Aids Day

We raised £140 raised for the National AIDS trust.

Fundraising was led by S6 Netsi Morant Valentin selling red ribbons at reception and a wear it red on world AIDS day Wednesday December 1st.

A fantastic achievement supporting a very worthy cause.



Science

- Science Club
- This term, our S1 Scientists have been attending Science Club on Thursday lunchtimes. They have carried out experiments to investigate the different flame colours created by metals, created their own lava lamps using common household items, investigated diffusion using skittles and even created their own Christmas decorations using invisible ink!



Science

Mutations workshop for senior Biologists

Senior Biology classes have attended a workshop at the Royal College of Surgeon's where they studied mutations as part of their course. They even got to try out robotic surgical instruments. The picture is of a senior pupil using a Da Vinci surgeon console machine to practice their surgical skills - this is the only machine in the world that people, other than surgeons, can access to get a feel for what it takes (and St Thomas Biologists are some of the first to use it!).

Emily Broadwood (S5) commented: "I really enjoyed the trip. Getting to see specimens of mutations in real life is fascinating. It's been the best school trip I've been on".

Royal Christmas Biology Lecture

Advanced Higher Biology were invited to attend the College of Surgeon's Christmas lecture on December 1st to hear speaker Prof. Alan McNeill who is a consultant urological surgeon at Edinburgh's Western General Hospital. He is an expert in the field of surgical robotics to achieve minimal invasive surgery. The S6 pupils loved the experience!

Biology Daffodil project - sequencing the genome

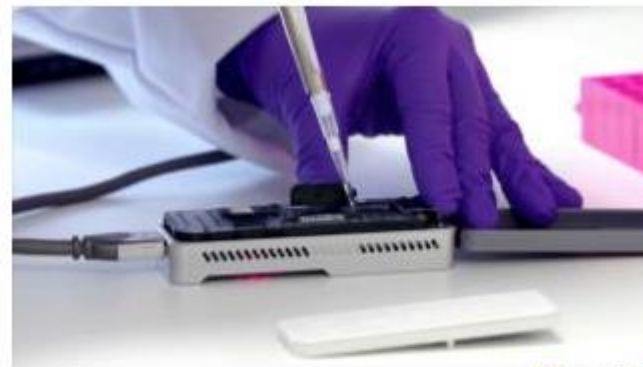
The school is very fortunate to have been chosen to receive funding from the Royal Society to participate in a very special gene sequencing program. With support from scientists at the James Hutton Institute in Dundee and Dundee University, pupils will be using the latest technology to extract chloroplast DNA from very rare cultivars of daffodils. The data our pupils collect will then be used to sequence the genome and will help researchers. The technology the pupils will be using is called a MinION which uses nanopore technology. NASA have used this in the International Space Station to sequence DNA in space so we're being given the opportunity to use some very special pieces of equipment!

Science

Photo of Dietah Connolly Sams (S5) using Da Vinci Surgeon machine and map of museum



Photo of minion for DNA sequencing and 2 different cultivars we are using (Empress and Ornatus)



Science



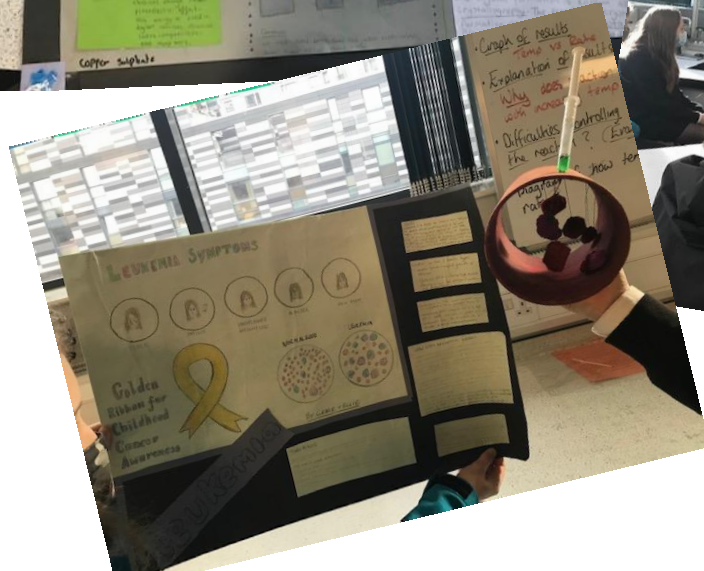
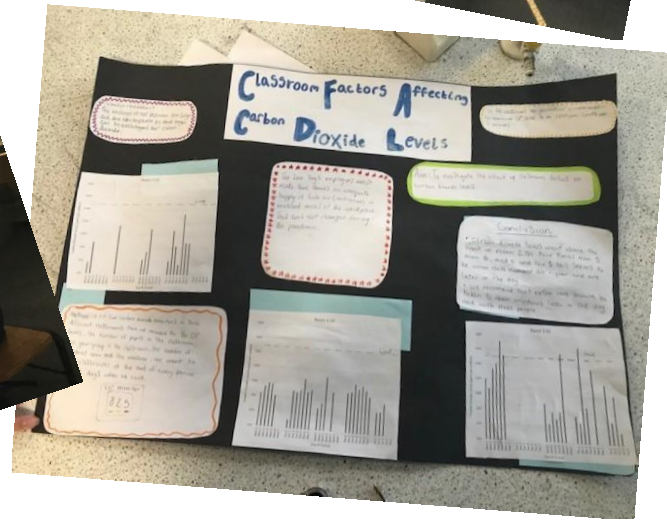
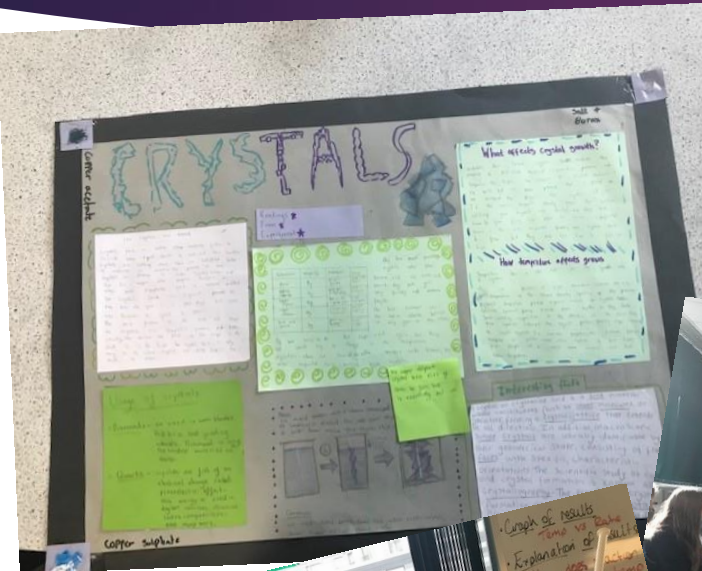
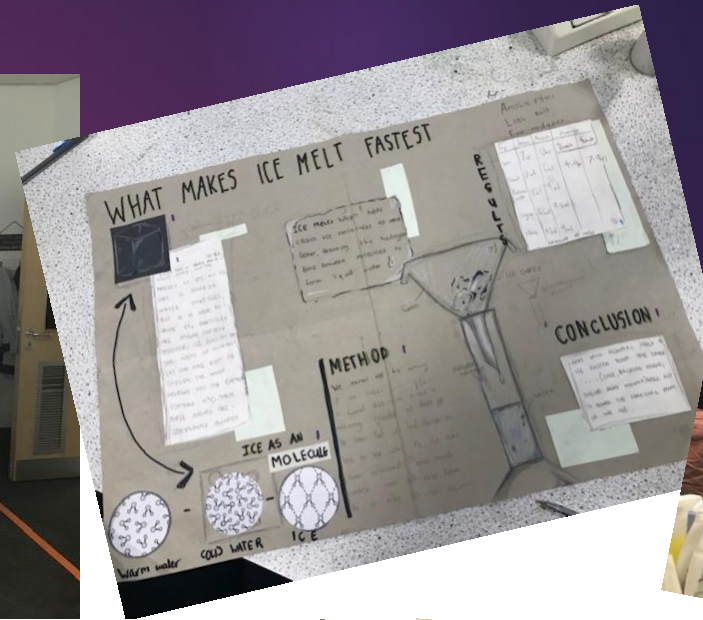
Senior pupils had the opportunity to attend Surgeon's hall as part of their Advanced Higher Biology course.

Science

It was back to business in science with lots of practical experiments in lessons and presentations to the class sharing what was discovered!



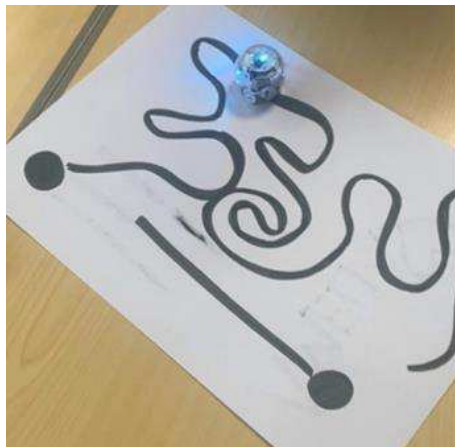
Science



Computing

S1 Computing

S1 Computing have been working with the Ozobots learning about sequencing and how robots minds work. Ozobot is a hands on way for pupils to work together as a team to understand how to program robots.



S2 Computing

All S2 students have signed up to get involved in the 'Duke of York Digital Award'. This award involves the students working through digital challenges and if they manage to get 50 points in each of the 4 main areas, they will gain the final award.



Computing – Digital Day

S3 Digital Day

On Wednesday the 10th of November S3 Computing students were involved in BIMA Digital Day.

They all got involved in a hands-on experience with digital professionals this year from Lloyds Banking group – who were absolutely amazing and helped all the students coming up with their own ideas as well as sharing their own journeys into Tech jobs. They are set a challenge of coming up with an innovative idea set by WWF to support climate change. On the 26th Nov Madame Jean Pierre, Mr Lodge, Mrs Hunter and Miss Stalker judged and the winning team was “EcoLocator” with team members Grace Beverage, Sadie Collier, Julia Broadwood and Erin McFeat. This teams idea was to create a website that suggests to users eco-friendly, cheaper and closer alternative locations to go on holiday too instead of more economically harmful, more expensive and further away places. The user would enter things they wanted on their holiday’s e.g. beach, hot weather and it would find the closest place that meets this description.

The idea will now be put forward into a national schools competition and the winning idea will be created in partnership with the WWF. Good luck to our amazing winning team and thank you to all students involved.

Below is a picture of Miss Stalker and all the digital professionals which helped our students on the day.



OUR WEBSITE

Our website helps people, young and old to find eco-friendly, cheaper and closer alternative locations to go instead of more economically harmful, more expensive and further away places through our website. It's simple to use, and gives you quick, nice destinations to go which are more eco friendly, instead of going on planes, which give off many co2 emissions into the environment. It provides information about climate change and what you can do to help stop this issue.



Computing

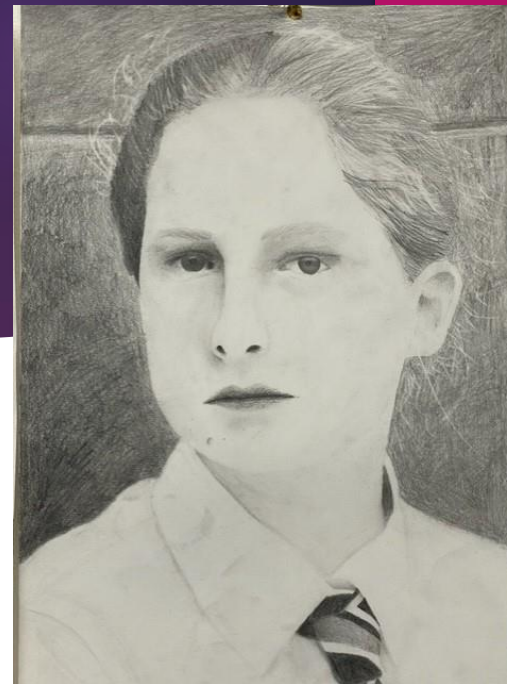
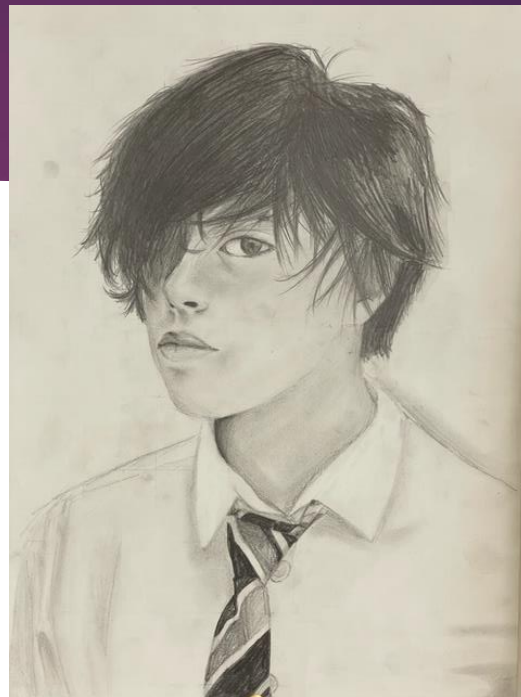
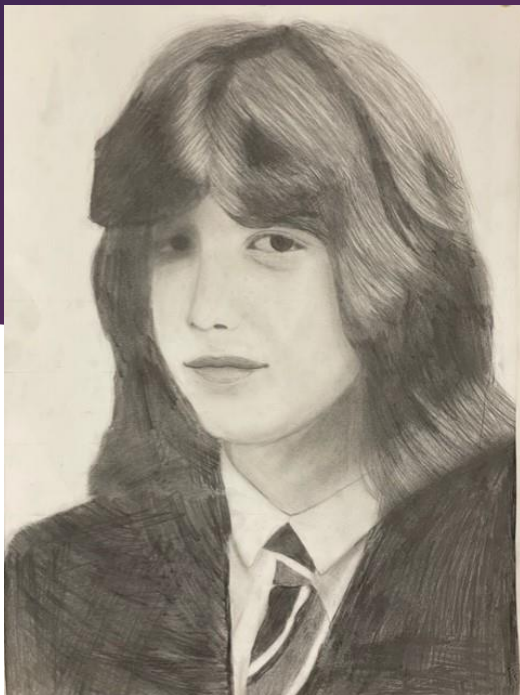
S4 Code Clan

On Friday the 3rd Dec, Code Clan visited all National Computing Science classes to discuss careers in technology and also discuss key skills with pupils which they would need to develop. Thank you to our Code Clan Specialists.

S6 Tech Team

Our S6 Tech team are working on learning lots of new skills and supporting Digital within the school. We have members of the team working with the janitors in setting up the projector / laptops for presentations in the main hall. This involved students working with hardware and having to problem solve to figure out how to set things up if all doesn't go to plan. Some of the other members of the team have been working on supporting editing the school website. This involves the team having official meetings with Mr Santini to discuss updates and changes for the website. They have worked really hard in order to add a student achievement area to the home page.

Art



S3 Self
portraits



Art

S3 SELF PORTRAITS

S3 Pupils comments

" I enjoyed seeing the difference from my self-portrait in S1, I can see how much I have progresses through the years."

" This portrait was a challenge because it was a big jump from the work I made in S2. I learned a lot in making my portrait, from tone to the details in the eyes, I think I can improve on those skills again."

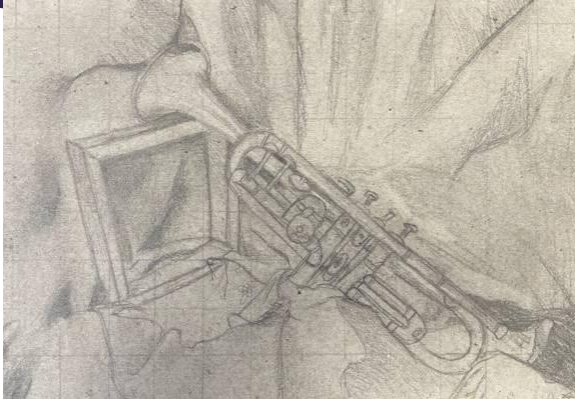
"I enjoyed working on my self-portrait, it felt like a great opportunity to improve from S2. It felt like last year's work was a practise and this was the real deal due to the extended time and scale of the project."

Art



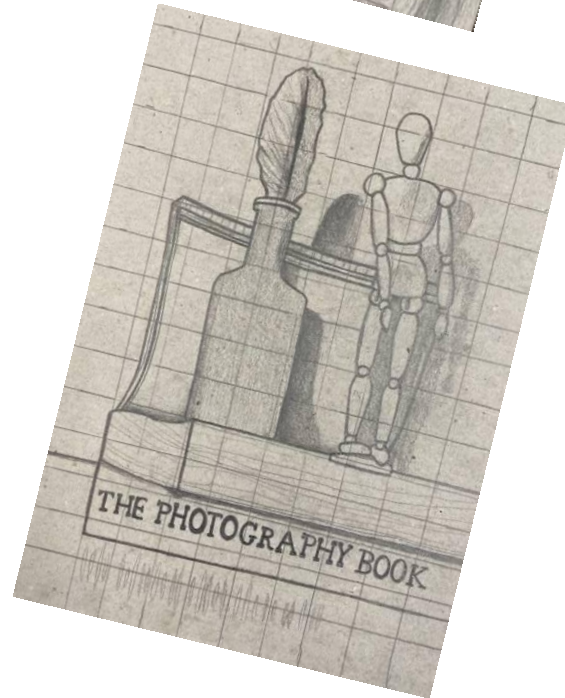
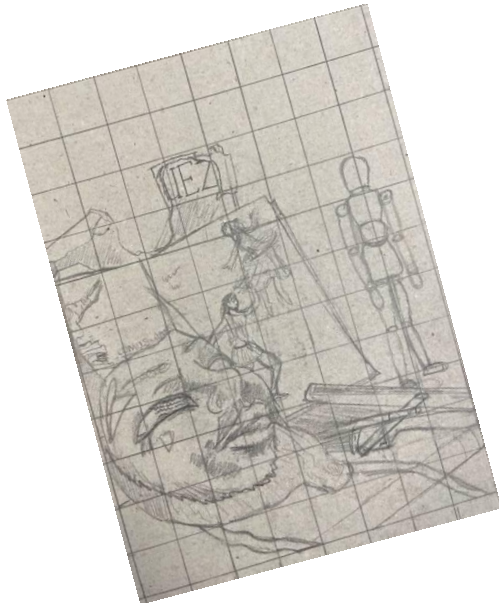
S5 Higher Art & Design
Exploration of compositions
for Expressive Folios.

Art

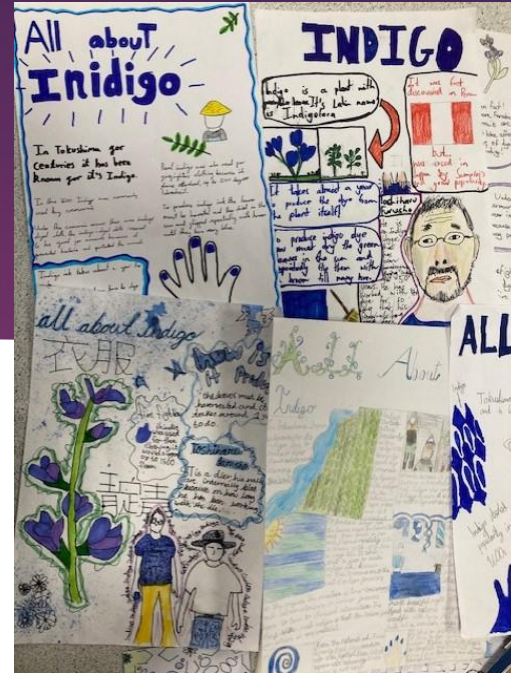


S2 ART & DESIGN

Pupils have been setting up their own still life arrangements and using photography to plan a composition for a painting. Here are examples of their drawings in preparation for Acrylic painting next term.



Textiles



S1: Have been learning about Japanese dyeing and textile techniques and are making small samples, Sashiko (stitching) and Shibori (dyeing) to make into a Boro bag.

S1: have been testing their running, back and decorative stitching techniques by creating these amazing felt Christmas Decorations.

S2: Little Textile group have been making a fabric organiser using the sewing machines. They have taken them home to give as presents.



Textiles



Next session the S2 pupils will have the option to return to study textiles in their S3 course personalisation choice sheet.

Practical Woodworking



Practical Woodworking have been making trivets, a set of coasters with plastic inlays and have just started a wood turning project, which will become hand-crafted fountain pens

English

- ▶ Since the October break, The English department have been fortunate enough to have a 'writer-in-residence'. Ryan Van Winkle, visiting every Monday. This was organised and funded through the Book Festival.
- ▶ Over the last few weeks, Ms Kavak's S2 class have been working with Ryan who has been teaching them creative writing techniques. They have been working together as a class to share their ideas on what makes the perfect creative story, working interactively to create different settings, characters and plots. The pupils have thoroughly enjoyed their time with Ryan. One pupil said, "His way of teaching is fun and creative". Another said, "I enjoyed his lessons and liked learning how to create different parts of stories and learn how to make each one interesting". Another said that "He is nice and he has a very good imagination; he created fun tasks and delivered great lessons."
- ▶ The Advanced Higher class have also worked with Ryan on a variety of writing projects. Here are some of the comments from the pupils. One pupil said, "It has motivated me to experiment with various writing styles and persevere even with a lack of creative ideas". Another adds "I enjoy reading my peers' writing and I feel like looking at other people's writing styles, giving me a different outlook as a writer." Another pupil commented "It has helped me explore different ways of writing and working within time limits to get pieces finished"



English

- ▶ Steampunk hat contest:
- ▶ 1st Jude Jackman
- ▶ 2nd Angelica Paterson
- ▶ 3rd Coral Cresswell



English

Citizen Project – 15th and 16th November

The English department were fortunate to participate in the Citizen Project which was organised through the Edinburgh Book festival. We had two days of busy, creative workshops with a variety of S1-3 classes. Writer Ryan Van Winkle and illustrator Hailey Beavis were enthusiastic leaders in the workshops which combined words and pictures.

Susan Burdzinska writes: "This activity was fantastic! When the lesson started, we were already provided with all the materials needed and let our imagination run wild. Many magazines were handed out which contained pretty much everything: animals, planets, plants and more. Thousands of possibilities and ideas could be placed on a badge or just plain paper. After everyone completed their marvellous pieces of art it could be compressed and secured so you could admire your work forever. I personally enjoyed this activity for many reasons; however, the art and creativity aspect were my two main reasons. It was a very friendly session and I hope at some point we could do it again."



Religious Education

Our beautiful oratory was refurbished before the summer holidays and has been in regular use since for Feast day masses, morning prayers, monthly masses and religious education lessons.

We are very lucky to have such a beautiful sacred space in our school.

Prayer and Sacramental Life of the School

The newly refurbished School Oratory has been put to extensive use this term. Morning prayers are offered daily from 8.25-8.35am, led by S6 Caritas pupils. We normally hear the daily Gospel and have a short period of reflection with some formal prayers such as the Morning Offering. A lovely way to start the day!

Father Samuel continues to offer Mass on the first Wednesday of each month, and is available to hear confessions beforehand.

Pupils have also been taken to the Oratory in their classroom RE lessons for prayer and reflection. House assemblies were held for all year groups on the feasts of Saint Margaret (16 November) and Saint Andrew (30 November).



S5 and S6 retreats

- This year we are complementing the Core RE Programme in S5 & 6 with a series of retreats, the first of which took place in November and December at St Catharine's Convent. St Thomas' has a long association with the Sisters of Mercy, dating back to 1886. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful location for our retreats right next door to our school. The theme of the first series of retreats was 'Basics of the Catholic Faith.' Pupils listened to three talks: Is it reasonable to believe in God? Who was Jesus Christ? The Sacraments and the Church: Do we need them? Afterwards there was opportunity for questions, as well as the celebration of Mass in the Chapel. The Sisters of Mercy also generously provided bacon rolls and tea and coffee to help the day along.



Caritas Award

Award participants this year: Chris Carty, Jakub Piotrowicz, Francesca Lee, Bella Stephenson, Patrick McEvoy, Oliver Magrath-Badrena, Keir Lynn, Ria Sherry, Alayna Rebello, Shona Riach, Maria Palica, Kalina Gancheva, Tia Jihan.

Our S6 Caritas Team have been outstanding in their 'faith witness' this year, which has included: mentoring younger pupils in their lessons, washing teachers' cars, a staff baby photo competition, bake sales; assisting at Mass and morning prayers, helping at St Catharine's Convent and the Shoebox Appeal.

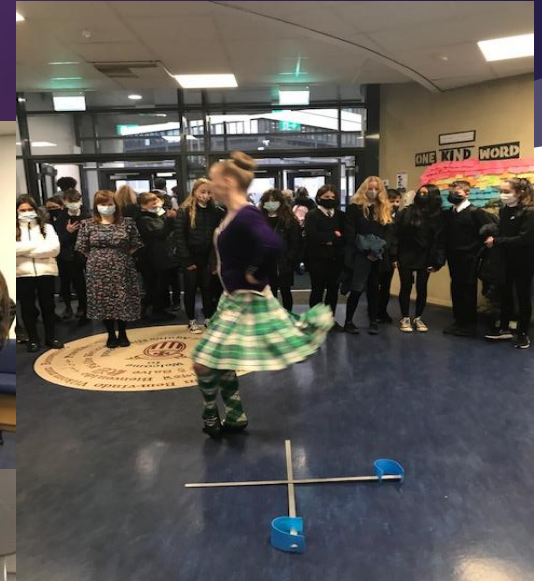
Love — Caritas — is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est



Saint Andrew's Feast day

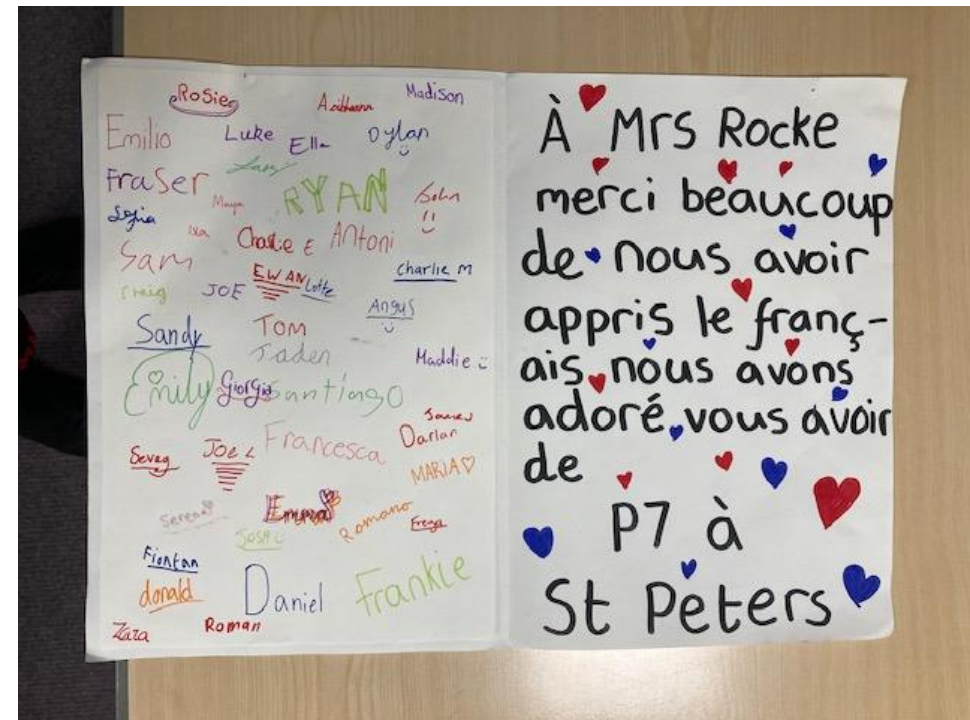
Mrs Stark, Pupil Support Leader for Saint Andrew's along with the house captains provided a fantastic day to celebrate the Feast day of Saint Andrew's. There was a whole school quiz, Scottish tuck shop and Scottish Highland dancing.

Mr Wotherspoon conducted house assemblies in the newly refurbished oratory for all Saint Andrew's pupils.



Modern Languages

- Primary 7 pupils in our associated primaries; St Mark's, St Mary's, St Peter's and Holy Cross Primary schools are benefitting from weekly French lessons with Ms Rocke of the languages faculty in St Thomas. Pupils are learning new skills in talking, listening, reading and writing in French and preparing for language learning once they join us in S1. Ms Rocke reports she is very impressed with the knowledge and enthusiasm of the pupils she is teaching and the pupils equally are benefitting from working with a modern languages specialist. The pupils said; "I like how we learn something new each week and the teacher makes it exciting to learn, I enjoy describing people in the class in French, 'I like how the teacher says the words, I am learning new things that I will use if I go to France.'" We look forward to welcoming the new languages experts in St Thomas next session. *Vive les langues étrangères!*



Modern Languages



**Modern Languages for
Life and Work Award**

- ▶ This year all S3 language learners are preparing for an award which develops learners' language and employability skills, through studying a language in practical and relevant contexts for life and work. This qualification covers areas such as communication, self-awareness, confidence, employability, leadership and independent learning. Among the various activities for the award, pupils take part in a job interview and write their CV in the language they are learning.

Modern Languages

- ▶ Students of Advanced Higher are celebrating the launch of a magazine written in the languages they study and published in collaboration with Edinburgh Napier University. Secondary school pupils across Scotland are also invited to contribute to the magazine's cultural and linguistic celebrations. St Thomas senior students wrote articles in French, German and Spanish on the theme of 'revolution'.
- ▶ The achievement is the result of a collaboration between our language learners and the Napier undergraduates, acting as mentors and role model for language learning in higher education. The project is aimed at creating a sense of community amongst languages students across the city, giving them a sense of pride and motivation by showcasing their work Edinburgh Napier's publication. Congratulations to the writers of the articles: Andrés Bancalari-Ruiz, Morgan Barley, Orla Boyle, Lucia Demetri von Pezold, Emma Guat, Enrique Kringe Carrio, Keir Lynn, Ben MacKay, Oliver Magrath-Badrena, Netsi Morant Valentin and Daniella Sasaki. The current issue will shortly be available here <http://worldwide.napier.ac.uk/> and print copies are distributed to the students and in selected venues around Edinburgh.



- ▶ Marcel Zuk and Oskar Kolodziej, in second year entered a national poetry competition 'MTOT' organised by SCILT, Scotland's national centre for language learning, based at the university of Strathclyde. Entrants submit an original composition as a poem or a piece of music in their mother tongue or in a language they are learning. Marcel and Oskar embraced the creative opportunity, supported by their teacher of Spanish, Ms Gil Rodriguez. The boys decided to compose a tune and write lyrics on the theme of the competition, 'choice'. They wrote a rap tune in their native language, Polish and composed an excellent piece of music, playing the guitar as they performed. The work addresses the multiple choices we all face in our daily lives. The result is a fantastic recording, now with the organisers of the competition. We must wait until February to find out the results. Until then, *¡powodzenia!*



Cheerleading

Cheerleading Team

This year St Thomas's has started its very own cheerleading / dance team run by Miss Stalker and Rebecca Thompson S6. We have been working really hard to learn new skills including jumps, dancing, tumbling and stunts. We are so impressed with how much the group have learnt already and can't wait to see what the new year will bring.



Running club

Gioia Macfie (S3):

"Do you enjoy running?"

If you do, then St Thomas running club is the place for you! Join us every Tuesday to run around the meadows and take part in some relay races. We hope to see you soon!"



The wider school community are welcome to join us virtually on **Strava** – just search for **ST Thomas of Aquin's Running Club**

Running Club

Running Club is open to all staff and S1-S6 pupils. It's a great opportunity to get some fresh air and a catch up with new friends! Many of our pupils have been using the Running Club as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Duke of Edinburgh

Bronze Duke of Edinburgh

The Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award is well underway at St Thomas's this year and it is so lovely to see so many keen S3 pupils taking part. This year we have over forty pupils signed up for the Bronze award which is a great number. The pupils have been working outside of school for an hour a week on their Skill, Service and Physical Activity and we have a huge range of activities that are taking place. We have pupils volunteering with sports clubs, Brownies, Guide Dogs, Cadets, charity shops and we also have many pupils doing litter picks in their local communities.

In school the pupils have been working on their navigation skills, first aid skills and they have been learning about how they can prepare for their expedition.

All being well the pupils will take part in an overnight camping expedition in the Pentlands in May. The pupils still have some preparation and work to go before then but are very much looking forward to the expedition experience!

Silver Duke of Edinburgh

Five of our S6 pupils completed a challenging Silver practice expedition near Loch Tay in the October break. One of the supervisors described them as 'A very good group, very fit and keen to hone their navigation skills'. Well done Nate, Tim, Adam, Jacob and Kyle.



We have another 17 S4/5 pupils who have signed up for the Silver DofE Award this session.

Duke of Edinburgh

What next after Duke of Edinburgh Silver/Gold?

We have great news about former pupils who took part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award at St Thomas's. Oonagh Thin has gone on to become President of the Edinburgh University Mountaineering Club. Two younger former pupils Sinead Thin and Jack Stephenson are the current President and Vice President of the Glasgow University Mountaineering Club. Huge congratulations to them all!

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is run by volunteers and we are always looking for new volunteers who are keen walkers and have their Mountain Leader award. If you think you could help please contact Mrs Rocke or Miss Reid.

Thank you.

Pupil Parliament – climate change

On Friday the 5th of November, Daniel Johnson, a constituency MSP for Edinburgh southern and Foysol Choudhury, a regional MSP for the Lothian region came into St Thomas of Aquin's for a climate surgery. We had organised this climate surgery by emailing MSPs who might be interested in being involved in our event. Daniel and Foysol had replied with keen interest and were excited to raise awareness about climate change whilst interacting with their constituents. It was an especially current time to have a climate surgery due to COP26 which is what gave us the idea to do it. The two MSPs arrived at around 10.40, the end of break. We took them to Mr Murray's S5 PSE and then Mr Rafferty's S5 PSE class spending 25 minutes in each. This was a stimulating opportunity for pupils to ask questions to their representatives. The MSPs answered the class's concerns with efficient and attentive responses and the pupils got to raise worries and ideas. After the surgery, we saw the MSPs out and thanked them for coming. This was a very inspiring occasion for the school to get involved in leading and raising awareness and acting on climate change, and we are excited to take it further!



MUSIC- The Edinburgh International Festival Opera Project.

We had a visit from The Edinburgh International Festival Opera Project. It was a specially created performance that explored the artform of opera. It was also lovely to see that one of the performers was an ex-pupil, Sean Webster! (18 years ago!!)

The performance was a fast-paced, fun, lo-fi, telling of a story not unlike the ones found in traditional opera but written to incorporate songs and music from across the ages of opera to demonstrate the breadth and power of the artform.

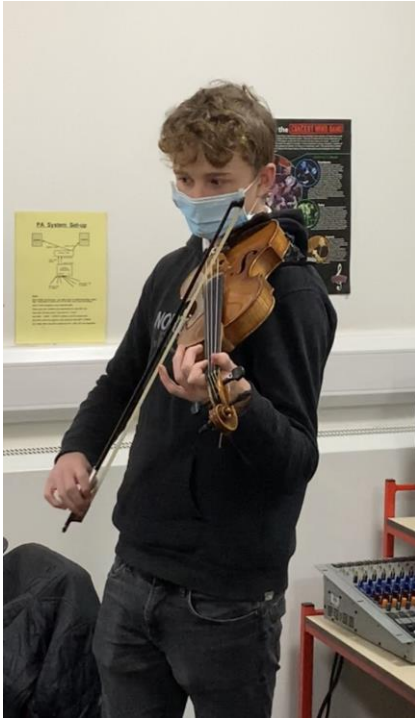
We were treated to a brilliant performance and pupils gave great feedback:

'it was a great opportunity to finally hear opera, very good singers, thank you!'

'it was a smart idea to have signs with what era the music was from and helpful as we happen to be studying those exact eras. The singing was amazing and I enjoyed it very much'



Music



Best of luck to S6 pupil Nate Beech Brandt in his upcoming ABRSM diploma exam, a great achievement by S6.

A big thanks to all instrumental pupils who are currently rehearsing very hard for our virtual Christmas recording event on Thursday December 16th. Videos will be posted on the schools private YouTube channel.

Library

Covid restrictions have meant that most Library activities have taken place in classrooms since August, but this has not prevented pupils celebrating events such as Roald Dahl Day and National Poetry Day. For the latter, they were asked to reflect on the theme of 'choice' and the small decisions they make each day. Some groups have also been shadowing the nominated books for the Royal Society's Young People's Book Prize. They have engaged with it brilliantly and learned lots along the way, including how old pairs of jeans can be used to insulate homes and what life is like on a space station! As ever, our pupils remain keen contributors to Teen Titles magazine, with their reviews included in the latest issue -details at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/learning-publications/teen-titles>



S6 Leadership team

The S6 leadership team have been busy this term organising different events.

For Halloween we organised a murder mystery which required pupils to go round the school finding clues to solve the unaliving of Mr Kennedy (physics). Congratulations to Coral's team (S1) for solving it! On the Friday before Halloween we had Halloween music in the hall, lighting done by the tech team and a bake sale organised by the Caritas group.

Along with St Andrews house captain, Fran, we have helped to organise St Andrews day events. There was highland dancing in reception at break, a Scottish tuck shop. and there was also a quiz about Scotland with pupils getting a question at the start of each period.

Throughout December we have been running a Candy Cane Drive where pupils have been able to buy candy canes to send to each one another. These will be delivered in PSE/RE classes the week before the Christmas holidays. All money raised from the candy canes will go to the charity Love Oliver. We have also supported Miss Whiffen in running a Christmas jumper swap and Christmas jumper day, with money raised going to Save The Children.

On Fridays in the hall we have played music requests for donations and Max, Christian and Oli have organised quizzes. Money raised from this will also go to Love Oliver.



Practical Cookery

The S4 practical cookery class were busy making Christmas cakes in December



Christmas door competition



Our S6 pupils have been busy putting together our annual Christmas door competition

Merry Christmas everyone



Wishing everyone in the St Thomas community a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We look forward to welcoming our lovely young people back to school on Thursday 6 January.