



## Spring Has Sprung!

Dear All,

With Spring most definitely in the air I would like to wish you all a Happy Easter and thank you for your continued support.

Once again the term has been busy and successful - there is ample evidence of both activity and achievement within this edition - and students continue to do the school and themselves proud. A particular highlight for me was the recent visit of students and staff from Perigueux,

who not only lent authenticity to the French Market day but, in all that they contributed, confirmed the worth of our French Exchange.

For the second year running our Spring Concert was held at Christchurch and if anything was even better than last year! It was a delight to see and hear so many of our talented students performing, with confidence and enthusiasm and great musicality.

## Big Hat Cabaret Friday 8th July 7.30pm



## The Arts Centre

Devizes Rd, Swindon, all tickets £5

Box Office Tel: 01793 614837



Music, dance, film, and comedy, by dynamic performers, some with disabilities

Front page picture: Yr 9 Dance Club performed at the French Market Cabaret.

Commonweal Matters is edited and compiled by Josie Williams, Community Arts Development Officer. If you have a story you would like considered for publication please email [josie@commonweal.co.uk](mailto:josie@commonweal.co.uk). This edition was proof read by Mr Defter.

Factor in team success (such as that earned by the Senior Maths Challenge team) and individual achievement (Swindon Young Cooks for example) and what we have are plenty of reasons to be positive about school life.

Given the huge amount of change taking place in the world of education at the moment it is more important than ever to concentrate on doing things we know are valuable and life enhancing. Whatever happens in the near future regarding academies, the role of the local authority, curriculum revision or funding changes, we are committed to preserving our philosophy and ethos.

As ever it is Commonweal staff who promote and embody our ethos and as we approach the Easter break there are a number of arrivals and departures you should be aware of.

We say good bye to James McKinley – an ex student who has served us well as an ICT Technician in the last 2 years.

Thanks are due to David Oliver who has done a great job since Christmas in providing continuity

and diversity in the Music Department; we welcome back Ali Sutcliffe full time in the Summer term.

After 20 years of glorious service we reluctantly say farewell to Mary Holder, who is retiring. Officially she has been our Behavioural Support Assistant; in reality she has been many things to many people – staff and students – and as such is literally irreplaceable. All those who have benefited from her humanity and warmth will want – as I do – to wish her well in the future. Mary's leaving led us to review her role and thus we have appointed Ruth Becket, whom many of you will know as a Drama teacher here as our Vulnerable Interventions Person (VIP), as of April 1st 2011.

There is clearly much to look forward to and anticipate in the Summer Term and we will post all major developments on our website, as well as utilising our Parentmail facility when appropriate.

#### **Keith Defter**

It is worth noting the following calendar dates around Easter, which for a number of reasons are exceptional this year:

Spring term ends for students at 3pm on Thursday April 7th  
Friday April 8th - Teacher Development Day for Commonweal staff.  
Tuesday April 26th - start of Summer term.  
Friday April 29th - Royal Wedding holiday.  
Monday May 2nd -Bank Holiday

NB. Friday May 13th Year 11 Study Leave begins after Leavers' Breakfast and Leavers' Assembly (approx. 12 noon)  
Summer Half term begins for students at 3pm on Thursday May 26th.

#### **Parent Mail**

Dear Parents / Carers,

If you are reading this copy of Commonweal Matters online then we would like to thank you for signing up for our new system! We hope that you are finding it useful so far, and that you see an improvement in the speed and quality of communications from the school as we start to use it more fully.

If you have not yet signed up and would like to do so then a registration form is available

either on the school website or from Reception; these should be completed and returned to Mrs Daryan, the Headteacher's PA.

So far we have had a very good take-up for ParentMail, but we would like to encourage any parents who have not yet signed up to do so since this will increase the benefits for both parents and the school. Even if you do not have an email address, registering a mobile phone number would allow us to contact you by text in urgent situations. Text messages are paid for by the school, so there should be no cost to parents for this service.

**Victoria Johnson**  
**Business Manager**

**Please help with the school allotment**  
We are hoping to complete the last of the major work over Easter. It is a large area to fill and we would welcome any garden tools, furniture, pots (any size), seeds, unwanted plants etc. Please bring any contributions to 130 or email Mrs Preston  
apreston@commonweal.co.uk  
Many thanks  
Climate Cops

## Make Your Mark With £10!



Models, make-up and rehearsals can only mean one thing- a fashion show! On 24th March 2011, after 3 weeks of preparation, I held a fashion show in the hall of Commonweal School- it started off with just £10, and took less than a month to organise!

Every year, students have the opportunity to enter a national competition 'Tenner 2011'; run by Enterprise UK. This event encourages students and young people across the UK to do what they can with £10 within the month of March. My idea was to hold a fashion show using models from within school, and to raise as much money as I could for Cancer Research and Oxfam.

I encountered a few problems along the way. I had wanted to borrow clothes from the High

Street store New Look, but the £900 deposit was just slightly out of my league! With a week and a half to go, I had no clothes so I had the idea of using clothes from charity shops. I paid a trip to Oxfam and managed to create a whole vintage wardrobe. On top of this, I would need all the professional expertise I could muster for hair and make-up artists and stylists. Luckily Jessica Bowles stepped in as head stylist and make up was done by Frankie Williams.

The night was a great success, with a cast of 14 models styled to perfection, followed by performances from Commonweal students, including The Stellars, Carrie Downes, and Chloe Hughes. There was also a raffle and prizes which included meals from Pizza Express, Toni&Guy, Lush and many more. The clothes that were modelled in the show were available to buy in the auction at the end of the night. With a turnover of nearly £500, I'm really pleased with the result; and I'd like to say a huge thank you to all students and staff who helped as I couldn't have done it with all the support I received.

**Tallulah Lyons, 10SA2**

## French Market Day



At 7am on the 16th March with the arrival of 20 market stalls, the main hall began its transformation into a bustling French Market. By 8.55 every stall was occupied – fruit and veg, pupils poised with their frying pans keen to make crêpes, a wide range of gifts donated by staff, Red Nose Day stalls selling, of course, red noses, runny noses, gigglers etc., in addition to home-made cakes, and several stalls manned with students all hoping to 'make their mark with a tenner' bearing a variety of drinks, sweets and cakes. There was also a chef in whites ready to make croque monsieur and croque madame, a bread and pastry stall courtesy of the Coop with croissants, pain au chocolat, pain aux raisins and baguettes, a Fairtrade stall organised by Ms Bint and two large stalls selling an interesting array of tinned, bottled and packaged foods actually purchased in France by our French Exchange Partners from Périgueux.

Minutes later the first two excited groups of Year 7 arrived in the hall – some to complete an activity sheet including an

## Le Marché Français

interview with one of our French visitors and others clutching euros eager to shop. The latter had just visited the bank run by Mr. Jellis and very ably assisted by Gilles Rebol, an English teacher accompanying the French students, and Rob Shimwell, one of our governors. In the run-up to the market, all tutors had been practising key market vocabulary eg. 'Je voudrais échanger 5 livres en euros s'il vous plaît' / 'Je voudrais une crêpe s'il vous plaît' so everyone was able to speak French. Many students used the opportunity to bring euros in from home which allowed them to make a quick start with the shopping.

While this was taking place in the hall a third group were sampling a drink of the brightly coloured 'syrops' and snacks in the French café run by Ms. Clements and Mrs Davis or trying their hand at French boules in the quad organised by Polly Long and her team of community sports students.

A fourth group was in the dance studio which had been turned into French Cabaret sitting around



tables covered by crisp table cloths, tea-lights and a back drop showing footage of the cancan as performed originally in Parisian nightclubs thanks to the technical expertise of Nick Weaver. Students enjoyed a rendition of Edith Piaf's 'Non, Rien de Rien' by Alice Baker in year 10, the antics of the comic trio Harry Salles, Carli Green and Joe Staddon in year 9 and the famous Cancan very ably performed again by students in year 9.

(Georgia Brown, Alice Lune, Elisha Kay-Dean, Elisha Matthews, Georgia Martin, Poppy Marshall, Louise Van Der Sanden, Hannah Wood, Tamara Caney, Megan Barron, Jordanne Clark, Emma Piatek).

During periods 3 and 5, it was the turn of students in Year 8 to visit the Market and take part in the activities described above. At breaktime and lunchtime, students from all year groups with euros to spend poured into the Market hall to embark on a shopping spree.

Jordan Chambers in Year 7 snapped up a number of bargains. In her feedback about the market, she wrote, 'I thought there were great deals because I brought in €10 from home but only spent about €6. I bought a red bag for

€1.20, a bag of 100 sweets for €1, a rice crispy cake, a chocolate bar and a drink of coke for 60 cents each, a cookie for 70 cents and a croque monsieur for 50 cents and a packet of cakes for €1.70. I would definitely go again!' Douglas Carmichael also in Year 7 summed up the feelings of many. 'The market was very well organised and great fun. The food was good especially the pancakes.'

At 3pm it was the adults turn to look for a bargain. Staff, parents and people from the local community were more than happy to buy all the remaining cheese, bread and pastries and to stock up with French specialities normally only available in France. The Market Traders' stall selling ice-cream proved popular and visitors took an interest in finding out more about the sterling work of the Old Town Branch of the Swindon Rotary Club.

All students in years 7, 8 and 9 will be encouraged to reflect on The French Market in lessons and assemblies to identify how the 6 skills which underpin all learning ( self management, team working, effective participation, independent enquiry, creative

thinking and reflective learning) were enhanced through preparing for, and attending the market.

Particular thanks for the success of the Market are due to the FMC, the French Market Committee (Sophie Illsley, Hannah Burkhardt, Ellie Trollope, Daniel Shurmer, James Turner, Jack Davis) all students from 8A1 Maths who helped to prepare year 8 for the Market Day by designing challenges for their peers – graphs to convert sterling to euros and vice versa , estimating the weight of various items, adding the weight or capacity of items together and French conversation practice. A huge thanks is also due to students who designed posters to advertise the market or provide information about famous French scientists, others who made the fantastic banner which was displayed on the school railings, or manned the many stalls, helped in the bank, took photos/film and conducted interviews, organised the French boules and took part in the cabaret.

The French Market Experience would not, of course, have been possible without the support of staff from all subject areas who

generously devoted their time and energy in so many different ways or the sponsorship we received from our own PTA, companies and organisations from the local community and the Grassroots Grant for community related projects from Swindon Borough Council. The Midcounties Co-operative in addition to a community grant allowed three members of their staff to attend the Market and made two deliveries of bread and pastries. Intel and the Old Town Branch of the Swindon Rotary Club made a donation towards our initial costs and Nationwide granted permission to two of their employees to spend the day helping at the Market in addition to promising to match our Red Nose Day ( La Journée du Nez Rouge) contribution up to a total of £100.

All proceeds from the Market are going towards the School's contribution to Red Nose Day and once all the outstanding bills have been settled should be well in excess of £500!

**Clothilde Cortez**  
**Genny Williams**



## French Exchange



### French Exchange 2011

On Sunday 13th March about 40 students welcomed their French Exchange partners who had arrived from Périgueux in the South of France, understandably very tired, nervous and also very excited! They stayed in the homes of their exchange partners and during the day were either involved in activities in school or out on visits to places in Swindon, the surrounding towns and countryside. It was a busy and eventful week! On the Wednesday the school hall became a French Market for the day, with our French guests helping us out manning the stalls. It was great to see the students communicating

and getting to know each other. We also welcomed Mr Dalmon, the headteacher of Clos-Chassaing school, on the Friday to celebrate the official recognition of the 'twinning' of our two schools by the French education authority. After spending the weekend hosting students and teachers in our families, we had to say goodbye to our guests on Tuesday morning. Overall, the week went extremely well and suffice it to say that our French guests were truly spoilt with a fantastic weather! Our students were excellent hosts and they are now looking forward to their return visit to Périgueux in June.

# Red Nose Day



On Red Nose Day the school raised in excess of £1,300 via a non-uniform day, a lunchtime concert and a stall at the French market.

## Peer Educator Casey Hindon 10R2 explains about the latter...

During the market, as Peer Educators, we held different stores selling either red noses or tasty cakes! These stalls were busy at break and lunchtimes and, at the end of the day (5pm) we had sold out of everything!!

The week was full of very tiring mornings for all the Peer Educators, often getting to school at about 8am, when some of us don't usually get up until then!!!

Despite our tiredness, we still showed each year group our assembly on Comic Relief. The assemblies went down well and were followed by performances by The Stellar's, singing 'Give a little Happiness' and 'Forever Gold' by The Wanted.

At the end of the week, our efforts did pay off, as, to some excitement; we got to dress up as pirates!!! It was humiliating, but very, very funny! Recently, we found out our fundraising total and just as Peer Educators, we raised a staggering £290!!!

Thank you to everyone who came to either stalls if you visited the French market, and we hope that you all wore your red noses or did something funny for money, we certainly did!!!!

# Song for Red Nose Day



The Stellar's, Commonweal School's new super group, have launched a fund raising song for Red Nose Day. The song was written by Nick Weaver, the schools performing arts technician and is available from the school for a minimum donation of just £1. Music teacher David Oliver has helped hone the girls skills to produce an upbeat and positive song which is called, 'Give A Little Happiness.'

"The song has a big band show sound to it as the girls voices suit this genre," said Nick who is a musician in his own right and is well known locally for his positive and uplifting songs. "They were a pleasure to work

with," he added.

The Stellar's, all aged 15, explained..

"The song is about thinking about other people and being nice to them when they are in need, it's all about karma," said Maddie Gill.

"Nick gave us the song to listen to and we went away and put our own twist on it and worked out the harmonies," said Becky Pour.

"We feel very privileged to be asked to become Commonweal's new super group. We are all very close and work well together and it is nice to be able to share the experience," said Alice Baker.

“We are all really excited and are looking forward to playing in the community. We would love to be famous in Swindon and play at places like 12 Bar and the Youth Festival. We have got a facebook page so people can keep in touch,” said Didem Gormus.



The idea for the super group came from Josie Williams, the school’s Community Arts Development Officer. “The Stellars follow in the footsteps of the Commonweal Fab Four who left last year. We have such a lot of talent in the school and I thought it would be a great opportunity for the girls to come together to perform in the wider community. I identified the girls following the school musical of Thoroughly Modern Millie, staged at the school in the autumn.”



During Red Nose Day the entire school also took part in a 100 metre dash in order to break the World Record for the number of people to complete a 100m run. This was organised by parent Gerry Hannon and teachers Kirsty Hunt and Jayne Cunliffe.



“We have had a great many lunch time performances of late and I am 100% behind students who want to perform and further develop their skills. It is a real buzz to see them up on stage singing their hearts out and the Red Nose lunchtime concert was no acception.” said Keith Defter, Headteacher.

### Climate Cops News

This term we have focused on recycling and have made some real improvements. Textile recycling is on-going so if you have any textiles (clothes, curtains, sheets pillow cases etc.) please bring them in and put them in one of the bins outside room 130. Every kilo is another 50 pence towards the school allotment.

We are now composting the food waste from the food rooms, into the compost bin on the allotment, several times a week. We have also donated an extra bin to every room and office for dry recyclables (plastic, card, cans and paper) and Tuesday is now bin day. This should see a big reduction in the amount of rubbish going to landfill for the school.

We are also hoping to send unused text books to Africa through a charitable recycling scheme too.

The allotment is making slow but steady progress thanks to the caretaking staff; we hope to start planting up over the next few weeks and more so after Easter. If you have any spare seedlings,

or plants, vegetables, fruit, flowers and herbs we will happily take them off your hands. We are also looking for pots, tools and garden furniture.

Please email Mrs Preston [apreston@commonweal.co.uk](mailto:apreston@commonweal.co.uk)

Watch out for some competitions and more news next term...

### Language Learning Fun

On completing the topic of clothes 9B3 French class have spent a couple of lessons preparing a class fashion show. In groups they had models and comperes and they wrote scripts to describe their models and their clothes. This included using a variety of adjectives in French to describe colour, fabric and style. Desks were used as a cat walk and there were some great poses and some random outfits.

Everyone took part and it was a thoroughly enjoyable lesson just proving that French is fun! Thank you to the class for working so hard on this I really enjoyed the lesson too. Miss Forrester

**To strive, to seek, to find,  
and not to yield.'**  
**Last line from Alfred, Lord  
Tennyson's poem Ulysses.**

## Europa Centre Yr 8 Visit



On 14th February we left school at seven in the morning for the trip to the Europa Centre in Essex. At the centre we learnt and practiced how to buy different things in French and we learnt by asking the staff (in French) about French life itself. After we had finished the shopping we sat down in a café and had a French snack.

I think that the trip was a complete success, we didn't just learn about French speakers in France; we also learnt about other countries that speak French, because the staff at the centre included natives of other French speaking countries like Chad.

After we had left the Europa centre we went to the Natural History Museum in London. We saw all the new exhibits and

found out lots of interesting things about the world we live in. I thought the most interesting parts were looking at the Darwin Centre and the large mammals which include a large whale.

By Harry Lewis

In the Europa Centre we had the best visit that our subject, French, has ever had! If you did not go you missed out on the best trip this year for two simple reasons: it was fun and challenging. Feel like testing yourself on your French? Need to learn about France? Well, this trip had it all, it was a small replica of a French town. It had markets and stores which you could buy stuff which was a nice way to add variety. It was like a game in which you had to balance your account in order to not go broke. It also had a surprising twist in the near end of the visit which only the people who paid attention will understand fully

By Max Goncalves

.....  
: "I studied the lives of great men :  
: and famous women, and I found :  
: that the men and women who got :  
: to the top were those who did :  
: the jobs they had in hand, with :  
: everything they had of energy :  
: and enthusiasm." :  
: said by Henry Truman :  
.....

## Gambian Assembly Week



During the last week in March every year group has seen a presentation put together by students who went on the Gambia Trip in October 2010. It started by them drumming as students arrived into the hall. The students talked about what the trip objectives were, how they got a place, how they prepared and described some of the experiences they had when they were there. The link with Gunjur has existed for a number of years now and grows stronger with each visit. The 23 students we took this year did a phenomenal amount of fundraising and collected between them approx. £17,000, a record for the school! This money is

used to fund workshops in the pre-schools and offer donations to schools and the medical centre. In addition because of the amount we raised we were able to donate an amount to the village as a whole, to help with the rebuild of their market following on from a very bad rainy season which had destroyed a lot of the village and left some families homeless.

Our visit was as amazing as ever with locals from Gunjur welcoming us into their homes, their schools and their medical centre. Commonwealth students saw firsthand the visible joy of receiving a pencil, a notepad, a football shirt or some sweets.

They enjoyed teaching some under 6s some songs and dances and prepared art and craft activities for them to enjoy. When reflecting at the end of the day a lot of them questioned their own lives and how materialistic our society is. Some even went on to suggest how they might change their own habits.

This trip requires a lot of preparation and work before (fund raising and workshop planning) and afterwards (diary writing and assembly planning) All of the students participated fully and it was an absolute pleasure to have shared in their experience and taken them on this trip.

Thanks also go to the staff (Miss Derrick, Mr Scandling and Mrs King) that came as they too have been involved in much of the pre and post trip work.

I look forward to opening the Gambia 2012 trip up next term for Year 8 and 9 and hope students watching the assemblies will want to apply for this amazing and life changing opportunity.

**Miss Forrester**

## **Paired Reading Happy Easter**

28th March was the last session before Easter, as Year 10s will be on work experience. Next term due to the Bank Holidays, there will be only 3 sessions on the 9th, 16th and 23rd of May.

Thank you to the dedicated Year 10s who have turned up regularly, to make these sessions possible. Well done to the Year 7s who have turned up on a regular basis and we hope you are becoming more confident with your reading. See you after the Easter break.

**Mrs Hall, Mrs Ogden and Mrs Wier.**

## **Happy To Help**

During the last half term the school came to the aid of ITV Fixers, a charity working with 16-25 year olds, letting them speak out about an issue, or 'fix' a problem.

A film was made in Swindon by folk who want to encourage families to foster children. The film crew came into school and filmed in our play ground.

## **March Celebrate RE Month**



March 2011 was Celebrate RE month. Schools all over the country have been doing various activities to celebrate RE. At Commonweal we had a Hope Tree available throughout the week. During the lunch times many students came along to put their own hopes, hopes for others or for the world. They also came along to read what others had put on the tree. The Hope Tree gave many students a chance to reflect on what was important to them. hopes included:  
"I hope for the people in Japan to be ok"  
"I hope that there will be no more war in the world"  
"I hope to become a boxer"  
"I hope I will pass all my GCSE's with an A\*"  
"I hope my friends think of me as a good person"

## **Swindon Young Cooks**



Our congratulations go to Guilherme Gutierrez and Joe Falzon who after getting through the semi-final at Swindon College on March 18th will compete at the college final on May 6th.

Our congratulations go to all who took part in the heats in school – all very fine cooks! Well done.

The Year 9/10 teams are now gearing up for their final in school.

Thanks also to the judges; it was not an easy task as the standard was so high!



**Miss Caudwell and Mr Soulsby**

## News From Maths



### UK Senior Maths Challenge

The Senior Maths Challenge is aimed at Sixth-Formers and bright Year 11 students. In our squad of twelve we had students in Years 8,9,10 and 11. All were prepared to attend three one-hour training sessions after school and do extra homework.

They did very well to gain five awards between them. Tom Penfold 10R1 achieved a gold certificate with an excellent score and went forward to the next round. Four others achieved bronze:

Patrick Foster 11R2, Louis Capitanchik 11SA1, Peter Sinclair

11ST1 and Ben Parsley 8SA2 (an excellent result!)

Other members of the squad were:

Vicky Jennings 10W2, Sarah Read 10SA1, Caleb Nankivell 9W1, Tamsyn Smith 9ST2, Adam Pearce 9ST 2, Tom Codling 8SA1 and Ben Legge 8SWt1. These came very close to getting a bronze.

They all deserve praise for their hard work, reliability and good humour. Thanks also to Mr Glennie for his help in training the squad.

**Mr Jellis**

## Commonweal Win Regional Maths Final!



For the past four years, Commonweal has entered a team in the regional final of the Maths Team Challenge. Students can be selected from Years 7,8 & 9. We have a squad of about ten volunteers who have been training weekly for over 2 months and twice a week in the fortnight before the final. The big day was Friday March 18 and the venue Wootton Bassett School. The team was: Tamsyn Smith 9ST2 (captain), Adam Pearce 9ST2, Ben Parsley 8SA2 and Will Penfold 7R2. We were up against 17 other schools from the West of England.

The team made an excellent start, scoring full marks in the first round. However, the competition was strong. At the end, we waited anxiously for the results. We were elated and relieved to hear the

name of Commonweal as winners. We now qualify automatically for the national finals in London on June 20th. A team needs competition and this was provided by the other reliable members of the squad. They were: Caleb Nankivell 9W1, Tom Codling 8SA1, Keava Morris 7W2, Lewis Akeroyd 7ST2, Tyler Gerring 7R1, Ben Tubb 7ST2.

Training sessions will resume at the start of next term. I am very grateful to our ex-student Ryan Sawyer (now at New College) who has faithfully turned up every Wednesday to help train the squad, often single-handed. It has been a pleasure to work with these youngsters. They are keen, hard-working and good company.

**Mr Jellis**

# News From The PTA

## Changes to Summer Event

The PTA has decided not to go ahead with the Summer Event this year, originally planned for Saturday 2nd July. Unfortunately the school band is not able to perform at the summer event, and as the parents of the students in the band usually also attend the event, the PTA came to the conclusion that the event was likely to have a low attendance and therefore wouldn't be a good fundraiser. We apologise to everyone who was looking forward to the event.

The good news is that we have decided instead to have a PTA presence at the Old Town Festival event on The Lawns on Saturday 25th June. The school will have the Commonweal School Performing Arts Marquee as usual, so the PTA are planning to provide the following activities alongside the Commonweal School marquee:

**Cafe** (serving cream teas, soft drinks, crisps, sweets etc.)

**Vintage/second hand clothes stall**

**Stall for face painting and tattoos**

**Tombola** (if we have enough manpower)

This will be the first time we have attempted this, which is very exciting, but we really need as many helpers as we can get, on the day (to help with the stalls and café), and beforehand (perhaps to make scones and cakes for the café), to make sure that the day is a success for the PTA. So please let me know on [manilb@virginmedia.com](mailto:manilb@virginmedia.com), or let the school know, if you're able to help in any way at all. All offers of help would be gratefully received!

## Diary Dates

Saturday 25th June – Old Town Festival event (more details to follow later)

Tuesday 27th September – PTA AGM and Wine Quiz (tbc)

Wednesday 12th October – Prom Fair (tbc)

Friday 11th November – Quiz Night (tbc)

Sunday 27th November – Craft Market

## PTA Meeting Dates

All meetings start at 7pm and are held in the Staff Room.

Monday 4th April

Monday 6th June

# News From Performing Arts with Josie Williams

One thing I love about Commonweal is the real buzz that exudes from the place and the people in it! This term we have had a plethora of opportunities for our young people. During the first week in March students on the Creative & Media Diploma ran a series of lunchtime concerts as part of their coursework. These were very well attended and gave the performers a platform to increase their performing skills and confidence. The C&M organisers did a very good job of coordinating these events to a high standard.

“This evening was a great success and well attended by parents and siblings. The quality of the dance was very good and the girls interpreted some very complex and emotional themes in a very mature manner. The evening was very important for performers in preparation for their GCSE moderation the following week. I would like to say thank you to the girls for all their hard work and also to Jayne Cunliffe, our maternity cover dance specialist for taking up the helm whilst Mrs Harman is on maternity leave.”  
**Sue Derrick,**  
**Head of Performing Arts**

Evening of GCSE Dance



Other events have included a French play delivered by a touring company. This was seen by all GCSE French students and was delivered purely in French.

The department fed into the French Market. Heather Birkbeck, Head of Drama coached students, Harry Salles, Carli Green and Joe Staddon in the art of Impromptu Cabaret techniques and Mr Oliver from the Music Department and Miss Coretz from the French department helped Yr 10 Alice Baker with her rendition of the

famous Edith Piaf song, Non Je Ne Regrette Rien. Whilst the Yr 9 dance club, coached by Jayne Cunliffe provided some excellent dance including the Can Can. Pictured below Joe Staddon and Harry Salles, the Yr 9 dance group and Alice Baker



## London Theatre Trips

There have been two theatre trips to the West End this term to see Grease and The Wizard of Oz, organised by Miss Browning. The newly opened Wizard of Oz was absolutely brilliant and the stage set at the London Palladium cost in excess of 1.5 million pounds! Andrew Lloyd Webber certainly puts on a show! Much to the sheer joy of staff and students alike, two of the stars of the show Michael Crawford and Sophie Evans came outside and signed programmes!



## The Big Hat Network

There are lots of workshop and performance opportunities on offer from this network of partners and further info can be found at [www.thebighat.org](http://www.thebighat.org)

Workshops for folk with any disabilities or those wishing to help build confidence and ability in this sector include dance, music, drama and animation.

This can, if participants want to, lead into a performance at The Big Hat Cabaret at The Arts Centre in July (see advert page two) For further info on either of the above please tel Josie Williams on 01793 612727/427860 or email [josie@commonweal.co.uk](mailto:josie@commonweal.co.uk)

## Move It Trip

This very exciting and interesting trip to the Olympia in London was one of the highlights of the year for our dance students. We started off with a 40 seater coach and had to increase to a larger vehicle as 59 students finally signed up.

This annual event is an opportunity to see a wide range of dance performances, dance related stands from clothing to higher education colleges and workshops two of which the girls took part in. Oh and a few stars of dance were spotted along the way!

“I thought it was amazing, because it was so energetic and

there was so much happening. The classes were fun, because we were learning new moves,” Emily Hollister 7SA2

“I had an absolutely amazing day, because we got to watch professional dancers and we even got our photos taken with some celebrities. The classes were fast moving and energetic and we got to dance just like Beyonce!” Abigail Cameron 11W1



## Sing Up



At the end of last term, we held a singing leaders workshop as part of the Sing Up initiative that we began last year. Funded by Swindon Music Service, 'Gathering Voices' came to Commonweal to teach a selected group of Key Stage 3 students how to become young singing leaders, as well as improving their own singing and confidence.

The students learnt a variety of songs from around the world and took turns to teach songs to each other, and lead the group in a performance of the songs. The aim of the project is to encourage the students to be more confident and they will then be taken out into the feeder primary schools later in the year to teach singing and host their own singing workshops.

Check out our dedicated  
arts web site  
[www.commonwealarts.co.uk](http://www.commonwealarts.co.uk)

## Cabaret Night

As part of Mrs Sutcliffe and Mr Stacey's marathon fundraising, they are organising a Staff Cabaret Night in aid of their 2 charities – CLIC Sargent (Cancer & Leukaemia in Children) and VICTA (Visually impaired Children Take Action). Tickets cost £5 (including first drink) and are limited so get one quickly! The night will include acts from various staff and Governors of the School, as well as a number of students and is set to be a very entertaining evening. There will also be a cocktail bar and a 'ready steady cook' challenge for our Senior Management Team during the interval!

### Marathon Update!

With only 2 weeks until Marathon day, Mrs Sutcliffe and Mr Stacey are limbering up for the challenge of running 26 miles on 17th April. Training has been going well and both teachers have managed to run up to 20 miles in preparation. As well as running, both Mr Stacey and Mrs Sutcliffe have to raise between £1000 and £2000 each for their respective charities. Student, parents and staff have been supporting them by buying cakes (£100 raised) donating at the Spring Concert (£95 raised),

and betting in the staffroom sweepstake! The final push is the Staff Cabaret evening on 7th April which is set to both raise money for a good cause, and be lots of fun. If you wish to donate any sponsor money to the teachers, then please contact Mr Stacey or Mrs Sutcliffe at school for further details.

## Spring Concert

This year's Spring Concert was once again held at Christ Church and was a resounding success. The concert was a prime example of teamwork between the Music Department – rehearsing and organising the programme, Josie Williams – publicising, organising refreshments and the venue, Nick Weaver – technical support, and the students. The Church was packed with family and friends of the performers and everything ran very smoothly. The programme included items from our music clubs: Concert Band, all three choirs and various soloists, as well as the Sing Up project choir and Lethbridge School choir and drumming group. Mrs Sutcliffe said "I was incredibly proud of the students at the Spring Concert and am excited about what the future

holds with this much talent in the school at the moment."





### **Junior Choir Singers Perform @ Princess Lodge**

On 7th April, singers from the Junior Choir will be visiting Princess Lodge Care Centre to perform a selection of songs, including 'Close Every Door To Me', 'Misty', and 'Steal Away', and to give them daffodils to wish them well for the Easter season.

### **World Music Workshops**

Two World Music workshops have been organised for the Year 9 and 10 music students, which we are very excited about! Our Year 10 GCSE students will be

treated to a World Music workshop here at school on Tuesday 26 April (the first day back after the Easter break), where they will gain a deeper insight into the World Music set works we study as part of the GCSE course, as well as enhance their performing skills and listening repertoire.

On 9th May, Miss Zylinski will be taking a group of G & T Year 9 students to visit the Pitt Rivers and Bate Collection of Musical Instruments at Oxford University to participate in a Gamelan workshop. Gamelan is a set of xylophone-type percussion instruments from Java and Bali, and we are very privileged to be able to have this opportunity. Again, this will give them an invaluable insight into World Music and prepare them for the wide range of set works we study at GCSE level.

### **Composition Competition**

At the beginning of the Spring Term, Miss Zylinski invited students to submit musical compositions in any style for the annual music Composition Competition. "The standard and

quality of composition seems to get better and better every year, and it was very difficult to decide the winner. However, Robert Sinclair 11ST1 narrowly pipped Patrick Foster 11R2 to the post of receiving first prize for his superb compositions, which display a very mature compositional style indeed, in particular his handling of harmony and structure. Patrick's piece was very promising too, demonstrating exciting cross-rhythms and syncopation in a modern minimalist context. Well done, boys! Both winners will receive a certificate and HMV gift vouchers," Miss Zylinski.

### **Swindon Music Service Open Days**

Swindon Music Service (SMS), which delivers first class peripatetic teachers to schools across Swindon, is running a number of workshops and Open Days in the next few weeks. Their Open Day is on Saturday 2 April at Drove People's Centre (12-3pm), and will be a fantastic opportunity for both adults and children to try out different instruments and sign up for tuition if they wish. Please contact Swindon Music Service 01793 530139 for further info.

### **News From Art by Mrs Parker Woolway**

Well done to all Yr 11 students who completed their GCSE exam on 15th and 24th March. All members of the Art Department are really impressed and proud of the way their students have worked for and during the exam. This year's group have really made an effort to get work done and we are hoping that in August they will see their hard work has paid off.

### **Easter 2011 Creative Project**

Earlier this Year the Art Department was asked if they would like to be involved in the Swindon Churches Together 'Easter 2011 Creative Project'. It was decided that my Tuesday and Thursday Key Stage 3 Art Clubs would work together to produce a piece of art work. We were asked to select what aspect of the Easter story we would like to base our work on and chose 'Jesus entering Jerusalem'. The art work was designed by the students, using a series of canvasses, that were then joined together. The work uses recycled materials, and has 3D elements created using papier mache and card construction. It will be displayed somewhere in

Swindon Town Centre from 16th - 24th April, as yet we are not sure of the location. Students at New College are also hoping to make short video clips showing the students working on their exhibits. Judith Hawkins who is organising this event came to look at our exhibit last week, and was very impressed with what has been created so far, so well done to all of you.

**Mrs S Lucey**

Thanks should be given to a large group of Year 8 students who gave up many lunchtimes to create an enormously long banner that advertised the French Market on 16th March. Students were given a 'French' brief by Mrs Williams and worked every subsequent lunchtime to finish the banner in time. I know that the girls involved were very proud of their efforts. Well done.

### **Call for materials**

The Art Department are shortly to start a project to create a series of mosaic mirrored trees (like the ones that can be seen at The Eden Project). We are making a plea for gardeners who have dead trees in their gardens (5 ft max!) to bring

them in to be used in the installation. In the first instance if you have anything you think that could be used, please contact Mrs Parker-Woolway. Any donations of broken mirror will be gratefully received too. Thank you

### **Yr 7 and Yr 8 Trips**

The Year 7 trip to Steam will shortly be happening - keep an eye out for the invitational letter. The Year 8 trip postponed from the beginning of the year will hopefully be organised to take place at the beginning of June.

### **Girls Football Team In The Finals**

Congratulations to the Year 7, 8 & 9 girl's football team who both progressed through to the finals of the Swindon Schools Football Competition. Both teams worked hard in the finals at the Swindon Arena, and came away in second place.

**Miss Scrivens**

**'First in the heart is the dream. Then the mind starts seeking a way.'**  
**Langston Hughes:**  
**Freedom's Plow**

## **Trip to Plas Pencelli**

Back in January 58 Year 9 students and 5 members of staff visited Plas Pencelli outdoor activities centre at Pencelli, near Brecon in South Wales. A packed week of activities produced a great deal of fun; many new experiences and some very tired, and at times cold, bodies.

Each day provided the students with an array of opportunities for experiencing new situations, learning new skills and enjoying themselves. Students also benefited from being able to take responsibility for their own organisation, their kit, their lunch and their peers, and learnt a good deal about themselves and their environment.

Days at the centre are based around two activities: a main daytime activity somewhere in the stunning locality and a smaller evening activity at the centre. The daytime activities were: canoeing, rock climbing and abseiling, caving and hill walking. Each activity presented different challenges to be overcome, different experiences to be had and an insight into a different way to enjoy the world around us. As

the photos show everyone got stuck in, pushed themselves to do the best they could and came away exhausted but very satisfied.

The evening activities may have been smaller, but were also a superb chance for enjoyment and an opportunity for students to learn about themselves, their environment and each other. Over the five nights we experienced a night walk, orienteering, the very wet and very dark 'dingle decent' and a selection of teamwork games. There was also a much-needed chance to unwind on Wednesday with a relaxing evening in Brecon, swimming and bowling.

The week as a whole went superbly. The students that visited Pencelli have cause to feel very proud of themselves. They showed enthusiasm, teamwork and a positive attitude throughout and everyone came away with stories to tell and lots of memories to savour.

**Mr Drew**



# Commonweal Piano Festival

Featuring young pianists from across Swindon

The Arts Centre, Devizes Rd, Old Town

Tuesday 17th May 2011 @ 7pm  
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Tickets now on sale from the Arts Centre Box Office  
Tel: 01793 614837

All performances will be played on Grand Piano  
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