

Commonweal Matters

Ability Follows Enthusiasm - A Centre of Excellence - May/June 2011



Reap What You Sow!

As I write we are saying farewell to our current Year 11 students as they commence study leave and begin the final phase of their KS4 external exams. I would like personally and publically to thank them for the superb way they have conducted themselves this year and throughout their Commonweal careers – they have been a credit to the school and themselves.

I will not however be wishing them luck in their exams since I firmly believe the outcomes of the

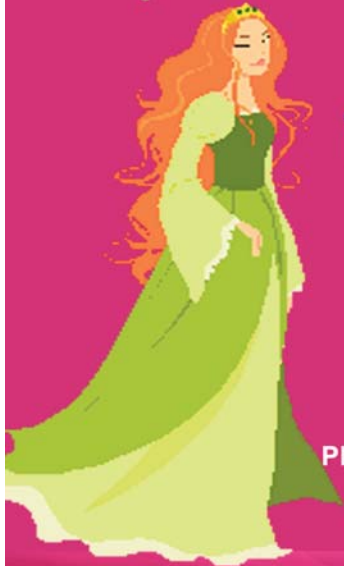
challenges they will face in the next few weeks should and will not be down to chance. Instead I will be encouraging them to continue to apply their undoubted ability, work hard and maintain a longer term view about what they hope to and can achieve.

Not surprisingly this approach applies equally to students in all years. Whilst the educational landscape is changing relentlessly it remains a given in my view that with parental support, high quality learning and an environment

Old Town Festival

18th - 26th June 2011

Miss Carnival Queen age 13 - 16 yrs
Miss Carnival Princess age 11 - 12 yrs
Competition



Final Selection
@
The Commonweal School
June 15th, 7pm

Tickets £3.50
available from school or
the Festival booking line
tel: 0790 3246955

For any entry form
Please tel: Josie on 01793 612727
or email
josie@commonweal.co.uk



Front page picture: L-R Megan Davies 8SA2, April Psarras 8W2
Harley Bunce 8W2, winners of this year's SFL Youth Slam

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.

which encourages individuals to flourish, success is so much more likely when harnessed to honest endeavour.

Yet again there is plenty within this issue to demonstrate how vibrant the Commonwealth community is and I thank all those who make it thus. If we needed a glorious example of this we need look no further than the cabaret evening just before Easter, which featured students, staff and parents, performing to raise funds for Ali Sutcliffe and Liam Stacey's London Marathon charities.

There is plenty more to look forward to as we move into Summer and as always I would encourage you to visit our website regularly. With Parentmail up and running now we will of course utilise this facility when appropriate.

Having submitted our application to become an Academy we still await a response from the DfE but as soon as we get it we will update you on developments. In the meantime, thank you for your continued support.

Keith Defter May 2011

Uniform

A reminder that we have now moved to our 'summer uniform.' with polo shirts acceptable. It would be much appreciated if parents/carers would lend their support to ensuring that proper and appropriate uniform is worn, particularly regarding shoes and coats.

News from the Governing Body

Currently the Governing Body is focusing primarily on the work required to lead the school through the process of becoming an academy. As many people will know the option for schools to become academies was introduced last summer by the new government. Commonwealth's response to this initiative was discussed during the autumn and winter within the Governing Body and with a number of key groups, including staff, parents, the local authority and interested primary schools.

On balance, we concluded that academy status would open up important opportunities for the school, for example:

- increasing our autonomy to decide how we spend our funding in relation to the services the

school needs, thereby generating savings

- enabling the school to invest those savings in the projects most valuable to the students and staff of the school
- increasing flexibility in how our curriculum is developed
- strengthening community cohesion through more explicit links with our partner school, Lethbridge,

In April the Governing Body therefore voted to make a formal application to become an academy to the Department for Education. The application has been acknowledged, marking the beginning of a process of responding to questions from the Department and, if successful, implementing the change. Over the summer term we will continue to work with the Department and the Local Authority to make the case. Progress will be reported on the school website and in correspondence through Parent Mail.

As well as this major project of work, the governors are continuing with “business as usual.” The three sub-committees met recently to discuss current developments in relation to the

curriculum, finance and planning and personnel, and these will be drawn together at the next meeting of the full governing body on 23 May. Governors are also continuing to attend school events whenever possible. This week we formally say farewell to another Year 11 group: as ever we wish them every success in the future choices and thanks them for their contributions to the life of the school over the last five years.

Mari Williams
Chair of Governors

**Donations Wanted for
PTA Mini Fete
at Old Town Festival**

**Can you help with any of
the following?**

Cakes
Items for Tombola
Vintage Clothes
(other items needed, see
article on next page)

If so please contact Manil
email
manilb@virginmedia.com
or tel
Manil 01793 432373

News From The PTA with Manil Brough

As we mentioned in the last Commonweal Matters the PTA will be at the Old Town Festival event on The Lawns on Saturday 25th June. We will be holding a mini-fete type event next to the Commonweal School Community Performing Arts Marquee, and we are hoping to hold the following activities:

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

Vintage/second hand clothes boutique.

Face painting and tattoos.

Tombola.

Hook-a-duck game.

Guess the weight of the cake competition.

We really need as many helpers as we can get to make the event a success, so if you can help with any of the following, we would be really grateful:

Help set up the stalls

(between 9 – 11 am).

Help run the cafe and stalls

(between 11 am and 4 pm).

Help clear up

(3 – 4 pm onwards).

Bake cakes and scones.

Donate items for the tombola.

Donate good quality vintage or nearly-new adult and teenage clothes.

Donate any pieces of wood, plywood, hardboard etc. suitable for making signs.

Lend large water containers preferably the kind that you can roll along.

Lend a gazebo

(especially if it has roll up sides).

Lend or donate any of the following items to help create a 'boutique' atmosphere for the clothes stall:

clothes rails, clothes hangers, free standing full length mirror, coat/hat stand, dressmaker's dummy or vintage wire type mannequin.

So if you're able to help out or lend or donate any of the items above, please let me know on manilb@virginmedia.com or **432373, or let the school know.** **Many thanks in advance!**

Diary Dates

Saturday 25th June –

Old Town Festival event

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 6th June
Monday 4th July (the last one for this academic year, and will be in The Wheatsheaf pub in Old Town at 7:30 pm)

Manil Brough
PTA Chair

Green Gear Non-Uniform Day For NSPCC

On Thursday May 26th the school is holding a non-uniform day in order to raise funds for this very worthy charity. Students have been asked to dress in green and donate £1.00.

“Green Gear is such a great way of fund raising and awareness raising and it targets the people that need it most - the kids themselves. Childline continues to support children 24/7. In Swindon we run great services helping kids in very difficult circumstances - this could not be done without initiatives such as this and the

support of Commonweal is so very gratefully received,”
Caroline Morgan
Swindon NSPCC Volunteer

Little Rays of Sunshine!



With a spring in their step members of Commonweal School junior choir entertained residents at Princess Lodge Care Centre in Currie Avenue. The choir presented the residents with a daffodil each and an Easter poster card which they made for them during their lunch breaks.

We sang for the centre before Christmas and were asked to return, so arranged the concert for spring. The students really enjoyed themselves and were happy to entertain the old folk. At Commonweal we are committed to our local community and are often asked for performances. The residents also enjoyed joining in with some of the songs, it was really nice to see both generations enjoying themselves. I would like

to say thank you to their music teacher Miss Zylinski for giving up her lunchtimes to coach the choir and thank the choir for also giving up their lunch breaks.

The girls are pictured with resident Mary Brooks age 87, "It was lovely to hear them singing it cheered me up for the day," she said.

"Princess Lodge residents were given the opportunity to connect with young people in our local community which helps them to lead happy and fulfilled lives. One of our residents Jim shouted out, 'first class!' Anne Martin, Care Manager.

Student Tara Bermingham who organised the poster said, "We made the poster in our lunch breaks. It was fun singing to the old people, because it was so nice to see them happy."

Josie Williams, Community Arts Development Officer

Realise you are responsible for your life. The decisions, the choices you make are yours. Don't blame others for things not working out, take responsibility, change the things that need changing.

Year 10 College Taster Days are in the Summer Term:

Cirencester College - Tuesday 5th July 2011

Swindon College - Wednesday 6th July 2011

New College - Thursday 7th July 2011

RLK Children's Centre

The summer RLK Children's Centre programme of events running from May-July 2011 is now available. Check it out www.barnardos.org.uk/rlkchildrenscentre

BIG TODDLE coming soon...

Wednesday 29th June 2011!

Come along 10am - 12pm with your under 5's to RLK Children's Centre. Let's raise some funds for Barnardo's! To collect your sponsorship form and for more information, please pop in or contact us on Tel: 525830. www.bigtoddle.co.uk

RLK Barnardo's Children's Centre is situated in Westcott Street, Swindon, SN1 5HS. For further info tel: 01793 525830 or mob: 07767425661

The Commonweal School are pleased to offer you through their Extended Services budget and partnership working



Ever thought about learning another language?
Would you like to learn Spanish in a fun and friendly environment?
..... Book a space now on our



Learn Spanish Course

This course is for adults only

At The Commonweal School, The Mall, Old Town, SN1 4JE
Every Monday for 5 weeks
6.30pm-8.30pm

Commencing Monday 13th June to 11th July 2011

This course will be offered for the fabulous price of £25.00 per person and is non-refundable. Hurry places are on a first come first served basis!

At The Commonweal School, in addition to the 'Learn Spanish', we are keen to offer our parents/carers and the wider community access to a range of exciting and interesting courses, at affordable prices, such as Garden Design, DIY, Computing and Cookery. If you have any other ideas for future courses that you may like to attend please email us at the addresses below or you can use the 'feedback and comments' facility on our website.

Email: lisa@evolve2.org.uk, sandra@evolve2.org.uk. Website: www.evolve2.org.uk

Please take a few minutes, to fill out the information below, even if you are not interested in attending this course, to let us know what you would like to do!

I would like/am unable (*please delete as appropriate*) to participate in the '5 week Learn Spanish' course starting Monday 13th June 2011. Please complete the following information, then detach this section and either post to Evolve2 Consultants Ltd, 35 Cornflower Road, Haydon Wick, Swindon, SN25 1SA or drop in the box provided outside the Headteacher's PA's office (or outside Safety Net) by no later than Monday, 6th June 2011, to secure your place. Please make cheques payable to 'The Commonweal School'. PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE POST. Please bring along a form of ID with your name on such as a credit/debit card or driving licence to the first session.

Name:

Address:

..... Email address:

Telephone: Home Mobile:

I would be interested in attending further activities, please tick all that apply:

- Art Recycled Art (*combination course to include garden decorations, mosaics and wood sculpture pictures*)
 Floristry Languages Literacy/Numeracy Computing Food safety in catering Fitness
 Complementary Therapy DIY Garden Design Cookery

I would prefer to attend, please tick all that apply:

- Mornings Afternoons Evenings



What can we bring to you and your community?



Evolve2 Consultants have over three year's experience as Extended Services Coordinators working with schools across Swindon and are pleased to announce that we are now working with 'The Commonweal School' to bring a wide range of opportunities and services to its pupils, families and wider community. Initially we will be setting up a 'Spanish for Beginners' evening course for adults — details to follow on our website (see below) and the school's site. We can also offer opportunities for adults such as Garden Design, DIY, Art, ICT, Floristry, Fitness, Complementary Therapy plus many more. If you have any other ideas for future courses that you may like to attend please email us at the addresses below or you can use the 'feedback and comments' facility on our website. We look forward to setting up many exciting and new opportunities for you all. Please visit our website for details on other courses that we are involved with and also links to many useful websites. See you soon. Lisa & Sandra.



For further information, please contact:

Sandra Collis and Lisa Parkinson

Email: sandra@evolve2.org.uk

Email: lisa@evolve2.org.uk

www.evolve2.org.uk

evolve *Consultants Ltd*

London Marathon 2011 with Mrs Sutcliffe



On the 17th April 2011, Mr Stacey and I took to the streets of London to complete the London Marathon. Having gained a place to run in the 2010 race, I was able to defer my place to the following year due to being heavily pregnant and so began her training in September, 3 months after the birth of my son. Mr Stacey combined his training with his wrestling and stepped things up a notch after competing in the Swindon half marathon in October.

TRAINING

Training became much harder during the winter months when snow and dark evenings meant it was much harder to get out and hit the pavements. I was running 3 times a week with my running buddy – Mrs Whittington. The two of us could regularly be seen running though Old Town at

6.30am on Tuesday mornings as well as running through the Cotswolds at the weekends. Mr Stacey became known for doing his ‘random runs’ with his brother – this entailed them setting out with no map and making decisions on whether to go left or right at every junction on the spur of the moment! By March, we had both managed to reach the 18 mile target and then 2 weeks before the big day, did a 20 mile run before taking it easy for the last 2 weeks.

The week before the marathon was school holidays and so both of us were able to take it relatively easy and plan for race day. We travelled up to London on the Saturday and went to the Excel Centre to collect our running numbers, supporter goodies and paperwork. They we relaxed, had a big dinner of pasta and got an early night.

THE RACE:

On the morning of the race, we headed off to Greenwich with our kit bags and got ready for the off! We both started at ‘Red’ start, but never actually saw each other as were in different sub-sections. I

passed the start line after 15mins and never looked back! I managed to stay level with the 10 minute mile marker runner for the first 10 miles before I dropped back to 11 minute miles. The run was amazing and having family every few miles really helped us to keep running with high spirits. The final few miles seemed to last for ages but the last 200 yards were brilliant and I even managed to get on the TV for the last 100 metres!



Once we crossed the finish line, we had the chip taken off our trainers, given a medal and a goodie bag and then an official marathon photo. We were then able to get our bags and meet our families.

When I had made it across London and had some food and a shower I was able to look up our finish times online. I was really chuffed to have completed the race within my target time and

managed it in 4 hours and 42 minutes. Mr Stacey ran the majority of the race with his brother and completed it in a very respectable 4 hours 44 minutes. The whole experience was amazing and I would definitely like to run it again in the future. I would recommend running as a form of exercise to everyone – it is free, you can do it anytime and works pretty much every muscle in your body at once!

FUND RAISING:

Both Mr Stacey and I had to raise over £1000 each for our charities in order to have a place in the marathon. Mr Stacey was running for VICTA (Visually Impaired Children Taking Action) and I ran for CLIC Sargent (Cancer and Leukaemia in Children).

Commonweal students, staff and parents were very generous with donations and we both managed to raise well over our targets. We ran cake sales at school and had help from various students, including Alice Lune, whose father works for CLIC and gave us lots of CLIC goodies to sell as well. We also did a sweepstake on our finishing times – the winner of my competition was Sheila Cooper. If she could kindly contact me on

asutcliffe@commonweal.co.uk
then I can arrange for her to
collect her prize.

The main fundraising event was
the staff cabaret night that took
place just before the Easter
holidays. The event showcased
the talents of the staffroom here at
Commonweal, with over 20 acts
ranging from singing and dancing,
to cooking and poetry. The
evening was a sell out and raised
over £850 for the charities.



The event was opened by Rob
Shimwell – a Governor, who did
his own rendition of ‘Come to
The Cabaret’ from the Show
‘Cabaret’. The first half then
featured Josie Williams singing,
Mr Soulsby playing the violin and
finally the staff choir singing
Summer Nights from ‘Grease’
with Mrs Sutcliffe and Mr Stacey
as Sandy & Danny! During the
interval, members of the senior
management team and Mrs
Lambdon did a ‘ready steady



cook’ in the canteen with help
from Joe Falzon and GG, the
results of which were eaten
during the second half whilst the
audience watched Mr Oliver, Mrs
Whittington, Mr Scandling and
Mr Chivers singing their items.

The evening was brought to a
close by the ‘Thriller’ dance
featuring some students and Mr
Stacey, Miss Cunliffe and Miss
Hunt. They emerged from the
audience with fantastic make up
on and really brought the house
down. Thanks to all those who
either came along on the night to
support the event, or actually
performed.... Watch this
space..... we may do another
one next year!



Rob Shimwell, School Governor Gives The Low Down



Wow, I'm impressed with Commonweal! First of all, I went to the Spring Concert at Christchurch and thought it was super. Now as a Performing Arts School, you'd expect there to be some talent from the students, but what particularly came through to me was the support that the children receive from the gang. By 'gang' I don't mean just teachers: everyone connected - whether in terms of organisation or performance. It was lovely to see teachers, some not so experienced, some substantially more-so, performing in the same acts as the students.

Then the Cabaret. The children were once again super, but it was here where it really struck home. Commonweal people, whether working in the Performing Arts

Departments of the school, in the sciences or humanities were fabulous! The teachers' choir, the bands, the duets and the solos: each one great. All too often these kinds of school 'dos' can seem a bit school-centric - but I brought a couple of non Commonweal friends to the evening, and they also had a ball, mostly because of the talent on offer.

It's not often I get a big lump in the throat, but I really sensed the feeling of community after that evening. Well done to Mrs Sutcliffe and Mr Stacey for running both the marathon and the evening, to all the staff for their (pleasantly surprisingly) talented input and of course a wider all-embracing one to the school as a whole. Love it!

n.b Fair play to Rob who was highly entertaining (see picture above) and really embraced the essence of the evening, I laughed so much my sides ached!

The Editor

**More photos on our arts
web site**

www.commonwealarts.co.uk

Poetic Justice is done: Commonweal wins the Poetry Slam Again



Well it was that time of year again when the Poetry Slam competition came to town! The Poetry Slam is part of the Swindon Festival of Literature and is a poetry competition run for students in Year 8 across all of the schools in the Borough. It has become a bit of a Commonweal tradition to steal the show; we have won six out of the seven years it has been running for. Yet again this year saw some outstanding dedication, enthusiasm and creativity from our wonderful students.

The two teams that were put forward from the initial workshop were: PWA (Poets Wiv Attitood)

consisting of April Psarras , Megan Davies, and Harley Bunce. The team called Ohh was made up of Chloe Hughes, Nina Hamley and Ellie O'Neill.

As a result of both teams' excellent writing and performance skills we managed to sweep the board with PWA coming first and Ohh was hot on their heels in joint second place.

Congratulations all round from a very proud English Department.

PWA Tell it Like It Is!

On the day of the show we all felt nervous. Instead of butterflies it was like crocodiles in our stomach. We were quite worried yet anxious about the other groups because they looked really confident and strong whilst we were there shaking like timid, little mice. When Sarah-Jane, who was hosting the competition, read out our team name, 'PWA' we thought the stage fright was going to get the better of us, but surprisingly when we were on the stage it felt overwhelming and exciting, we all loved it and got right into the performances. The laughter and the cheering

Wham Bam Thank you Mam!

from the audience gave us that boost we needed to keep calm and carry on.

After a nail-biting wait the winners were finally announced. We all felt really shocked when our group's name was read out as being the winner, but we were happy and very proud of ourselves that we had won the competition; especially as all of the other groups' poems were really strong. We were all glad we had won the trophy for the school.

We won... Again!

On the 27th April, about 60 students from schools around Swindon came to Commonweal for the poetry slam workshop with Marcus Moore and Sara-Jane Arbury. We started off by getting to know each other and doing confidence building activities. In groups, we then wrote a poem we would perform to the rest of the students and we were marked on various things, such as: Content of the poem, performance and warmth of the audience response. Two groups from each school were chosen to go through to the slam. Luckily, we got through

with our... interesting poem on toilet doors.

The next week was full of frantic planning and rushed rehearsals so we would be ready for the event. The Poetry slam took place at the Arts Centre on the 7th of May at 11:00 am. In the first round, there were seven heats where the groups competed for a place in the second round. Seven groups made it through, including both teams from Commonweal. Then we had to perform our final piece.

The SFL Youth Poetry Slam is project managed by Josie Williams, Community Arts Development Officer.

The audience were in fits of laughter at many of the poems. The competition was tough, so tough that three groups took second place, including the group from Commonweal; O.H.H. Commonweal's team P.W.A (poets with attitude) came first and bagged us the trophy for another year.

The experience was amazing and we learnt a lot of performance skills. Next year's year 8s have a lot to live up to!

Chloe Hughes & Nina Hamley Yr 8

News From Performing Arts
with Josie Williams, Community Arts Development Officer

Full on, fun and action packed is a good way to describe this term!

The Salsa dance in April was very well attended and saw the community dancing to the sounds of Latin Fiesta, a five piece South American band based in London. Our community dance partner Claudia Stroud led the dancing despite being nearly full term pregnant with her first child. Claudia gave birth on Saturday 30th April in the early hours, to a little girl named Luciana who weighed in at 2.7kg. Congratulations to Claudia and her husband. Jax Hamill continues with the delivery of Salsa Fit until Claudia's return. The classes are in the school's dance studio every Tuesday and Thursday night 6.30-7.30pm. No need to book simply turn up on the night.

The tailored work experience project with Big State Theatre and the Wyvern Theatre was another success. Twelve students spent the week at the theatre to learn about all aspects of theatre. They formed their own company, delegated tasks such as director, publicity officer and in a week created a piece of impro theatre

which they performed to an invited audience on the Friday night.

We have invested in a large marquee, well in fact two marquees which can be used independently or can be joined together to form one large marquee. This will keep our costs down, and enable us to continue with our summer work in the community; namely the Old Town Festival and Swindon Big Arts Day. I put out a call via the grapevine for some lights for the marquee and Graham Oxley, father of Yr 6 student Asha from Lethbridge School has come up trumps and has donated two chandeliers. Thank you for this very kind gesture which is very much appreciated.

I have been very active on the Old Town Festival committee and our community tent once again has a full line up of talent. I have also given my services creating promotional material to advertise the various event. Tickets for events opposite can be purchased **by CALLING THE FESTIVAL BOOKINGS LINE ON 0790 3246955**



Old Town Festival

18th - 26th June 2011

Theme 1960s

Diary of Events

15th June, 7pm at Commonweal School. Festival Queen and Princess. 11-16 year-old girls who live or go to school in Old Town. Winners to head parade on 25th June and be guests of honour at the festival. Tickets £3.50.

18th June, 11am onwards. Official Festival Opening Ceremony 12.30pm in Wood Street. Free event with Jazz Bands, U3A, Kentwood Choir, Street theatre from Commonweal School, stalls, children's entertainment.

18th June, 4 -7.30pm Pop concert in The Bowl in the Town Gardens. 'Graham Mack Rock Band', Little Miss D and the Rockets, Koribantez Latin Jazz, Ladybirds, Dead by Friday, Celebration. Licensed bar, food outlets. Free entry

22nd June 6.30 and 7pm 'Secrets of Old Town' Guided Walks
£2.50, including refreshments.

23rd June 7.30pm Jazz Concert in Christ Church, with Zena James Quintet. Tickets £10.00. Interval refreshments.

24th June 7pm 1960s dinner and cabaret in The Marquee on The Lawns, sponsored by Tesco. 3 course meal, with 'Elvis', 'Brenda Lee', and 'Lulu' in cabaret; fun 1960s competitions and disco. Tickets £12.00.

25th June- Street Parade 11.30am and fun on the Lawns from 10am. Family day on The Lawns, and Street Parade. Free event. Re-enactment groups, Art and music events, Licensed bar and food outlets. Fun and agility Dog show for family pets! Entries on the day, cost £1.00. Live local bands, then jazz evening in the Marquee; free entry .

26th June 10.00 onwards Family fun day in The Town Gardens. Free event. Heat of 'Swindon Talent'. Chalice, Erin Bardwell Jazz, Same Old Faces, Wildwood and WMD. Music in The Bandstand, stalls, funfair, licensed bar and food outlets.

News from Music

Now that I am back in school full time, we said a fond farewell to Mr David Oliver at the end of last term. He did a great job between Christmas and Easter supporting the GCSE students with coursework and really helped swell the numbers in senior choir with his choice of songs for them in the Spring Concert. We hope he enjoyed his time with us here at Commonweal and wish him every success with his future in teaching. I am now firmly back in the driving seat and excited about the upcoming events happening over the next few months!

Last term was a quiet one in the music department, with most of our efforts being directed towards GCSE coursework and revision. We did however contribute towards the Staff Charity Cabaret Night for the Marathon charities that was a huge success.

This term is all about preparing for the Old Town Festival on Saturday 25th June. Commonweal have invested in a fantastic marquee that will be used to showcase musical talent from all over Swindon. The School will be selecting items from Junior choir,

senior choir and the chamber choir as well as small group items and solo vocalists. The event is sure to be a huge success as always.

Unfortunately, the band practice rooms had to be closed last term due to repeated damage and disrespect of the equipment. Members of the bands need to ensure that they attend a session with Nick Weaver or myself to learn how to use the equipment properly and safely before they can use the rooms again. It is such a shame that this had to happen but the students need to understand that equipment doesn't grow on trees and that electricity costs the school money and damages the environment if not turned off at the end of a session.

On Monday 16th May, Ex-Commonwealian Shani Caulder came to school to deliver a vocal workshop to 20 of our Key Stage 3 students. Her aim was to develop confidence and stage presence in young singers and performers and it took place after school in the hall. The afternoon began with an ice-breaker activity that had the students singing their own name with some sort of body/hand gesture to go with it.

The students were very shy at this point and most of them simply said their name and accompanied this with some simple 'jazz hands'. Shani soon got the students to gain some confidence by splitting them into groups of 4 and giving each group a section of a pop song to sing. The students soon warmed up and became more comfortable as they got going singing in their groups. The groups were then invited onto the stage to perform their songs and Shani gave them advice as to how to use the stage and really perform their song.

The students really seemed to enjoy the afternoon.

"It was very good, fun and exciting," said Sophie Carter.

We are hopeful that Shani will return to Commonweal again later in the term to do a follow up workshop to develop our young performers even more.

Mrs Sutcliffe, Head of Music

Year 9 Javanese Gamelan Workshop - Oxford University

On Monday 9 May, Josie Williams and I plus fifteen Year 9 students (who have chosen to take GCSE Music next year) travelled to the Department of Music at Oxford University to participate

in a Javanese Gamelan workshop, to give them an insight into an area of World Music they may not have experienced before.



The Javanese Gamelan is an Indonesian orchestra of bronze gongs and metallophones (similar to xylophones and marimba). As a group, students learnt to play a traditional Javanese piece in different parts purely by ear, which explored cyclic patterns and pentatonic scales. Carli Green, 9R1, said, "It was a good demonstration, and will definitely help me during the GCSE Music course", whilst Maddie Lee 9R1 said, "I really enjoyed the workshop, especially learning about a different culture and new instruments."

Miss Zylinski, Music Teacher

World Music Workshop



Year 10 GCSE music students learnt about instruments played around the world when Chris Parks came into school to deliver a workshop on the subject. “I really enjoyed this project! It was great to see instruments and hear songs from other cultures that we wouldn’t normally experience,” Sian Francis-Cox 10ST2.

Piano Festival

The very first Youth Piano Festival was staged at the Arts Centre on 17th May. It was organised by Miss Zylinski and Josie Williams and was a celebration of the talents of young people from the borough. “It was lovely to see and hear such talent from across Swindon. The range of repertoire performed made for a thoroughly enjoyable evening and the students were exceptionally professional in their

stage presence. The concert was an excellent way of sharing talent across the town as so many pianists only perform in competitions and exams where there is added pressure. I am sure the young people have felt the benefit of performing at the Arts Centre on such a magnificent piano and I felt very proud of the students from Commonweal, and other schools, who took part. I am already looking forward to how we can make next year’s festival even bigger and better,” Ali Sutcliffe, Head of Music.

Julie Johnson-Little, a private piano teacher from Priory Vale said, “The evening was absolutely wonderful showcase of talented pianists, I will definitely nominate students next year.”

News From Drama

The Year 11 Drama students have been working very hard for their final performance pieces. They performed on the 10th and 11th of May to an outside examiner, who was delighted with the wide range of scripted work on offer.

The work ranged from John Godbers ‘Bouncers,’ a lively , humorous piece where four actors multi role play to intense and

serious scripts like, 'Street Car Named Desire,' and new work such as, 'Five Kinds of Silence.'

Fifty eight students were involved and the standard of work was high. One of our ex students, Alex Herrington, came back to help Nick Weaver with the lighting and sound and was a massive help.

Year Nine students got involved in filming the work and one student, Carli Green, performed in, 'To Kill A Mocking Bird.' Didem Gormus in Year 10 also gave a great deal of her time and talent to help out Year 11. The Year 11 also got staff involved recording the voices of Mrs Lucey and Mrs Smith to add extra depth to their work.

Miss Birkbeck, Head of Drama

Anti Smoking Film Wins Another Award



Students who created the anti-smoking film, 'Stamp It Out,' have won another award! The Deborah Hutton Campaign announced this year's winners of its annual film-making competition Cut Films. Out of 78 online entries from across the UK we came second in the category, 'Judges Choice.'

Young Cooks Competition



This competition is an annual event aimed at all secondary schools in Swindon.

Guilherme Gutierrez and Joe Falzon got through to the final for Yrs 7,8's on May 6th. Their food was much praised by the judges who commented that they had "raised their game" since the semi final. After adding up the scores they were runners up. Well done Jo and GG

Mr Soslby and Miss Caudwell

News From Polly Long - Sports Co-ordinator

Last week Commonweal hosted the Cluster primary athletics festival. King William Street and Robert Le Kyng attended with Yr 3 & 4. The students completed a tennis ball throw, standing long jump, relay race, 60 metre sprint and also the 400m. Certificates were awarded for the top scorers in each group.

The events all ran smoothly and they were organised and manned by the Sports leaders and young ambassadors at Commonweal school these were:

Megan Cleeves, Maisy Wichall, Charlie Barrett, Aiden Patterson, Evan Costello, Lillie Bellamy, Charlie Gardo and Issac Carter.

Next week the Commonweal Leadership Academy, Sports Leaders and Young Ambassadors will be running the Wiltshire county tri-golf event at Next Generation.

The event will consist of teams from all over Swindon and Wiltshire completing a round of tri – golf in which they will be scored. This is a team event. The students involved from the Commonweal School are:

Georgia Martin, James Warren, Josh Watkins, Jack Kilby, Lillie Bellamy, Charlie Gardo and Issac Carter.

Before Easter The Commonweal Sports Leaders went to Even Swindon school to deliver a morning of Multi skills with two classes of Year 5 students. The activities looked at agility, balance and coordination. They finished the afternoon off with games of bench ball.

Then the Leadership Academy and Young Ambassadors organised and ran an Olympic style event for 250 primary students at Next Generation working alongside other leaders from the other secondary schools.

At this event the leaders had to come up with an activity which used a multi skill - agility, balance or coordination as its main focus and then also had to incorporate one of the 7 Olympic values.

The day ran and the leaders really showed their potential in the way they organised, communicated and motivated the students to get involved and have fun.

Photos from the Piano Festival Held at The Arts Centre





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