

NEWSLETTER



Dear Parent and Carers,

I hope you all enjoyed the long weekend! Whilst the pupils were enjoying a short break of routine during another busy term, staff at HSL took part in the first Balcarras Trust INSET day, with colleagues from Winchcombe and Balcarras schools. Winchcombe school officially became part of the Balcarras Trust on 1st November 2023, although we have been working together since September having established subject networks across the 3 schools, where Curriculum Leads meet to discuss their curriculum, share ideas and resources and good practice. The focus of the INSET was well-being; staff participated in a variety of workshops and an inspiring keynote speech was delivered by Belinda Heaven. It was a very positive opportunity to consider how we can best support our fantastic staff at HSL, as well as a great opportunity to build relationships with colleagues from the Trust schools. We were reminded of the importance of looking after our own mental and physical wellbeing, as well as that of the pupils in our care, so we can sustain long and happy careers. I certainly came away, feeling very positive about the future!

In this newsletter, you will read about all the fantastic events that have taken place over the month of November. A particular highlight for me was our Remembrance assembly, where we gathered the whole school in the hall and reflected on the idea of service. As always on this occasion, the pupils showed such maturity and thoughtfulness. I was also lucky enough to accompany half of Year 8 on the History and Geography trip to Bristol recently, where they showed real sensitivity and curiosity to learn about the transatlantic slave trade and its links with Bristol, as well as speaking to the people of Bristol about urban regeneration. They were fantastic ambassadors for the school and I was very proud of them! A final small highlight for me, was the return of our litter picks in the local community. The recycling rockstars from Chelt, literally left no stone unturned as we searched for litter along Farm Lane. It was nice that several local neighbours stopped to thank them for their diligence. We hope to be coming to a street near you soon!

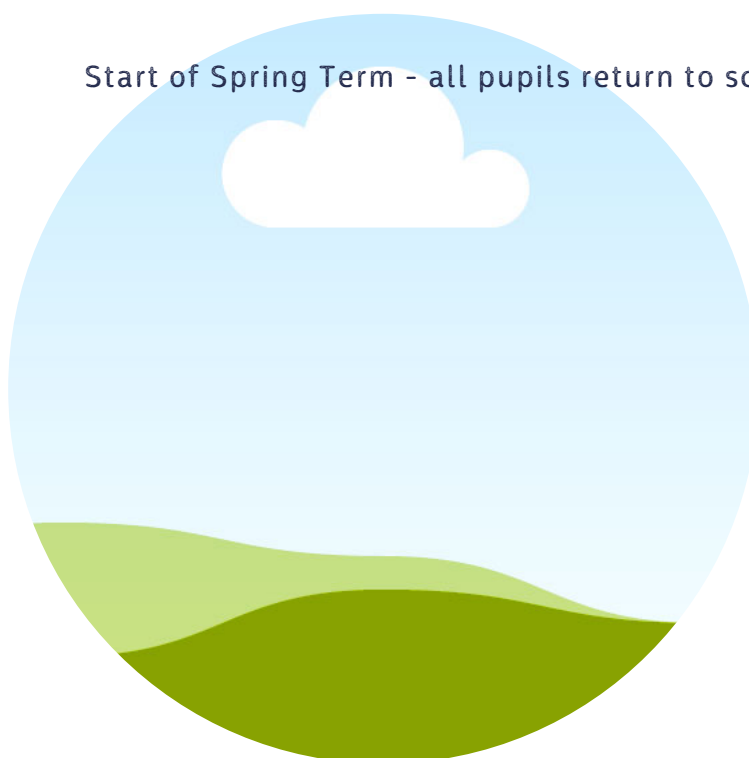
Finally, as we approach the final four weeks of term, I would like to thank you for the support you have shown the school this term. It was fantastic to see so many parents at our online safety talk with PC Simon Williams recently. We had such positive feedback we are looking of ways to bring him back to support you in the new year! Thank you to those who came to Parent Forum and our fantastic PTFA, who have really promoted the pre-loved uniform sales and recently donated a tremendous £3000 to the school from all their funding raising from last year. We are so delighted and will be using the money to purchase some fantastic netball, football and athletics team kit (chosen by the pupils of course!), as well as planters for our Eco-Committee. Thank you so much to everyone for supporting their work, it really does make a difference to the pupils at school!

With warm wishes,

Helen Wood
Headteacher

Key Dates - December

4th December	Christmas Foodbank collection begins
6th December	Year 9 French and History trip residential departs
7th December	Year 8 Headteacher's reward breakfast
8th December	Year 9 Headteacher's reward tea party
13th December	Christmas Celebration 7pm (mince pie and mulled wine provided by PTFA for a donation!)
14th December	Year 9 Headteacher's reward afternoon tea party
15th December	Sketch Book Circle deadline
20th December	House Gym and Dance competition (during school day)
22nd December	End of Term - pupils depart at 12:20 (optional Christmas jumper day)
8th January 2024	Start of Spring Term - all pupils return to school (week 2)



Remembrance Day Assembly

The whole school gathered for the annual Remembrance Assembly in November, with a focus on 'Service.' Mrs Wood encouraged the pupils to think about what the term 'service' means to them, using the 70th anniversary of the armistice of The Korean War to illustrate examples of how service can be easily forgotten. Mrs Wood linked the assembly to our right of the month - protection from war, which is article 38 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child. Finley South played the Last Post and reveille and Evie Crough read the Exhortation and the Kohima Epitaph.





HSL Book of the month - November



This month, we are recommending that our Year 9 pupils and parents of the HSL community read: *Cane Warriors* by Alex Wheatle.

Here is a brief synopsis:

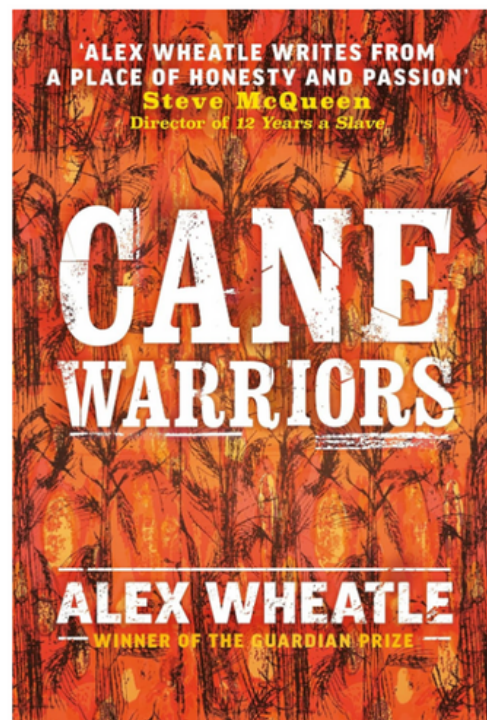
'Nobody free till everybody free. Moa is fourteen. The only life he has ever known is toiling on the Frontier sugar cane plantation for endless hot days, fearing the vicious whips of the overseers. Then one night he learns of an uprising, led by the charismatic Tacky. Moa is to be a cane warrior, and fight for the freedom of all the enslaved people in the nearby plantations. But before they can escape, Moa and his friend Keverton must face their first great task: to kill their overseer, Misser Donaldson. Time is ticking, and the day of the uprising approaches....'

Irresistible, gripping and unforgettable, *Cane Warriors* follows the true story of Tacky's War in Jamaica, 1760.

Please note: this is recommended for Year 9 pupils due to some graphic descriptions.

Do you want to write a book review of *Cane Warriors*? Please see Mrs Simms!

Do you want to find out more about the historical context of *Cane Warriors* and the slave trade in Jamaica in the 1700s? Read the afterword by Alex Wheatle.



Art and DT Department Spotlight

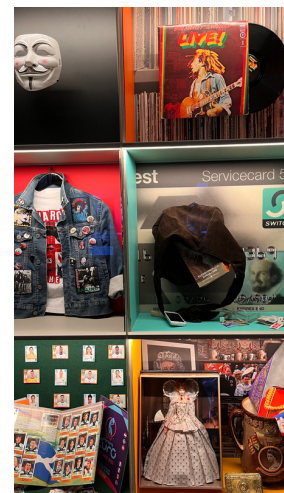
This month the spotlight shines brightly on Art & DT; two subjects, but one busy, vibrant and exciting department. Since September, the department has grown as we welcomed new students as well as teaching staff, marking the beginning of an exciting school year. The addition of Mrs. Joice and Mrs. Elliott-Squire to our small but mighty team has brought exciting new opportunities and even more enthusiasm for Art & DT. With 7 classrooms, 5 staff, 6 extra-curricular clubs and a grand total of 12 different projects currently being taught to Years 7-9 it's no surprise that the Art & DT department is an exciting place to be!

Art Lessons:

In Art, Year 7 are completing their initial projects and moving on to the topic of 'Musical Mark Making'. In this unit pupils explore abstract expressionism, and how to create visual narratives and compositions in response to sound, emotion and storytelling. Year 8 are beginning to explore pattern and will develop lino prints from their investigations of stylized natural form imagery.



Year 9 are embarking on projects in response to the topic of portraiture this term. Our recent trip to the National Portrait Gallery in London has given pupils lots of inspiration to be able to develop their ideas in a personal way and pursue their own areas of interest.



Art and DT Department Spotlight



DT Lessons:

In DT, pupils have already completed their first projects in different areas and are currently working in Ceramics, Product Design, Textiles and Food Preparation and Nutrition. In Ceramics Year 7 are learning about the artist and architect Friedrich Hundertwasser and are creating fantasy buildings using the slab building technique, whilst Year 8 are developing their hand building skills to create 3D vessels and containers based on the theme of 'Ugly Fruit'.

In Product Design Year 7 are getting started in the workshop and are designing a wooden Block Bots that will involve electronics and laser cut elements. Year 8 are becoming more familiar with the workshop machinery, such as the belt sanders and fret saw' in creating their pinball games and Year 9 are gaining confidence in creating different types of joints as they make their accessory holders.

Textiles has all students using sewing machines this term as well as a broad range of dying, hand embroidery and CAD/CAM techniques in the creation of their various products. Year 7 are creating a piece of bunting, with each pupil contributing to a larger garland. Year 8 are inspired by the installation artist Lucy Sparrow as they make 3D food and packaging out of felt and Year 9 are pushing themselves to create fabric story books aimed at children and toddlers.



Art and DT Department Spotlight

Finally, our Year 9 chefs have been working on a 'Bake Off' project which has had them designing signature dishes, completing technical challenges and producing a range of 'handshake worthy' showstoppers, some of which we hope, have made it home for others to enjoy. In addition to lessons, the range of extra-curricular clubs on offer have pupils sewing, making jewellery and Christmas ornaments, engaging in STEM, and creating dishes from around the world.

Other exciting things to happen this year in the Art & DT department have included our Year 9 trip to the Harry Potter Studios in September, the whole school Big Draw campaign in October, and the revealing of the house crests, designed by our talented pupils. So what, we hear you cry, is still to come this year?

Sketchbook Circle:

November saw the launch of the Sketchbook Circle project, where individual pupils and staff have been invited to produce a response to one of 50 different themes in a sketchbook, which they then hand in at the end of the term. Next term each member of the group will be given a new sketchbook with a different theme to respond to and have the benefit of seeing the response from its previous owner. We hope that the sharing of ideas, interpretations and skills will challenge pupils and create some exciting collaborative artwork. We hope to expand this group in the coming months, so those who are not currently taking part, will have the opportunity to get involved soon.

House Art Captains:

Our newly appointed Arts Captains have been getting involved in the Big Draw campaign, which had every pupil and teacher creating a mixed media bird. These will all be part of a whole school display. Arts Captains will very soon be taking the lead in coordinating the inter house art and house photography competitions due to take place in January and February next year.

Instagram and Abstract Advent:

And finally the department has set up an Instagram account where we will regularly be sharing the amazing work pupils produce everyday; we hope you'll follow us - @hsl.art.dt

Make sure you keep an eye on the feed on 1st December as we launch the Abstract Advent, in which we would love friends and family of the wider HSL community to get involved too. Use the hashtags #hslartdt and #abstractadvent to have your work featured.

Art and DT Department Spotlight

Year 9 Visit the National Portrait Gallery:

On November 14th Year 9 travelled to London and were exposed to a world of history and culture at the National Portrait Gallery. Arriving in the morning and in the pouring rain, students spent the day travelling across the world and into the past. The gallery whisked us into the hall of fame where the extraordinary portraits of celebrities and impressive historical figures invited us to discover a piece of their story. We met David Beckham, Beatrix Potter, Malala Yousafzai, Charles Darwin, Dame Darcey Bussell and several generations of the Royal Family, to name just a few. The collection included not only paintings but intricate drawings and photographs, giving each student something to catch their eye and their interest. We were all given the chance to put the artistic analysis skills we have gained from our lessons into practice in a different environment and used the booklets we were given to record these notes, which helped us to think about the diverse ways that art and portraiture can be interpreted. Due to the weather, we spent the afternoon getting to see more of the gallery. The portraits ranged from cartoons, abstract and seemingly simplistic faces, to glossy, formalised, realistic and imposing figures. Ned Mansell (9IS) and Talia Phelps-Garcia (9WI) described the trip in three words, "interesting, enlightening and inspiring." At the end of the trip, most of us managed to find our way to the gallery gift shop and treated ourselves to a postcard version of our favourite artwork on display, and even a mini realistic camera which were on sale too! We all felt that the trip was a wonderful experience to see and experience art outside of lessons and interact with others as we enjoyed ourselves and learnt about portraiture, ready for our upcoming art project back at school.

By Amelie Coates (9IS)



Parent Talk With PC Simon Williams - Online Safety

Keeping Children Safe When Using the Internet and Social Media

We were delighted to host PC Simon Williams at HSL on Thursday 16th November to support our parental community with helping to keep children safe using the internet when outside of school. Whether it be on social media platforms, gaming or simply browsing the internet, it is crucial that children are educated both at school and home regarding the risks that they are exposed to. PC Williams' talk was informative, eye-opening and offered sensible advice with regard to monitoring a child's use of the internet. The issues discussed included:

- Social Media Apps
- Grooming and Social Media Influencers
- Cyberbullying
- Location Services/Settings
- Parental Controls
- Passwords

Thank you to all parents who attended this talk. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we'd like to offer more support in the future for this important topic. For more information on how to support your child online, please look at the pastoral support pages on our website. We'd also like to thank PC Williams for his time.

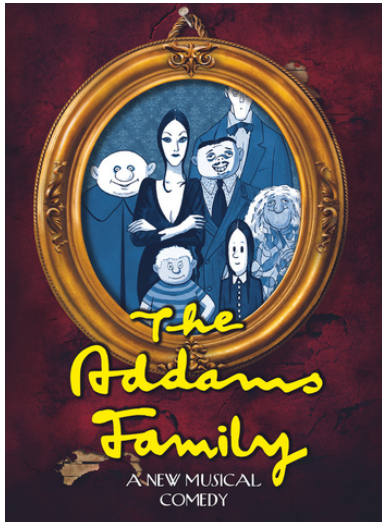


A parent, who attended the session, very kindly has sent HSL her top 'takeaways' from the evening which are as follows:

- Do not accept unsolicited friend requests and only game/message with school friends, family or family friends. If you don't know them in real life, you don't know them.
- A child is 68% more likely to be cyberbullied if they are using Tik Tok. The age rating for this platform is 13 but the police feel this should be 18.
- Snapchat - If a person knows your username, they can see where you are. Ghost mode on Snapchat doesn't actually work.
- Look at security settings on your child's phone and keep updates up to date.

Our next parent information evening will be based on 'Supporting Your Child's Mental Health' which will be hosted by Young Minds Matter on Thursday 18th January.

The School Production - The Addams Family



Rehearsals are in full swing for our annual production and students have been attending lots of sessions to practise their songs and start to choreograph for the big numbers! We are so impressed with the enthusiasm and passion we are seeing from the students and as you can see from the photos; they are having a wonderful time rehearsing! There have been lots of meetings happening with our backstage departments including costume, art and design and merchandise - yes, there is going to be a show hoody or t-shirt for the cast so watch this space for the design created by our team! These will be available to purchase and order in the new year.

We would like to remind all students involved that rehearsal communication is done through Teams and all students involved in the production have been added to the group to see the weekly schedules. The students have been brilliant at checking this and knowing where they need to be and when!



Peer Mentor Activity Day at Croft Farm

In early November we took 48 of our Year 9 Peer Mentors for a team building day at Croft Farm. The weather was not kind to us! With only periodic breaks of sunshine in the morning, the temperature was cold - nevertheless, our pupils got involved in some highly competitive raft building - with great success! By the afternoon the rain and strong winds started, but our intrepid pupils still managed to compete in paddle board races, kayak and participate in a variety of challenges. The hot showers at the end were worth the wait! When we returned to school, the pupils discussed how the skills they had developed during the activities (such as communication, empathy and resilience) could be used in their future role as Peer Mentors.





Litter Picking

This month, we have recommenced our litter picking in the local community. Each House has its own 'Recycling Rock stars' who are taking on the challenge with Mrs Wood every Monday lunchtime. If there is a litter problem in your area please let us know and we'll head to your street!



Odd Socks Day - Anti-Bullying week



All HSL students and staff were asked to wear odd socks, to celebrate difference, during anti-bullying week. There were some fantastically bright socks on display!



Green Space Development Team trip to Leckhampton Hill with the Community Wardens

On Friday 17th November, a group of HSL Eco-Committee members and other students walked up and joined Cheltenham Borough Council's Green Space Development Team and FOLK (Friends of Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common) volunteers on Leckhampton Hill to carry out essential conservation work.

The weather was glorious and the students had a fantastic time cutting back and burning gorse and tracking the cows roaming around the hill. Despite walking up the hill and back with no toilet access all day, following the cows down some very muddy paths, and having to cut through some very stubborn, thick gorse roots, there were no complaints and the volunteers were very impressed with how much our students achieved and enjoyed the experience.

Miss Kennedy



Green Space Development Team trip to Leckhampton Hill with the Community Wardens - Pupil Report

Starting the day we ascended Leckhampton Hill. Halfway up we met our guide called Wayne who is a Park Ranger for the Green Space Development Team. He told us all about the hill and the lime kilns. At the top of the hill we were split into two groups. One group went to try and find the cows using the cow tracker website on our phones. The cows were Belted Galloways and some of us were even lucky enough to feed them! Then after a much-needed lunch, the groups switched and we moved to the gorse. We began cutting down the gorse with our saws and loppers. The gorse bush was very spikey, fortunately we all had our arms and legs covered! This invasive plant has taken over the majority of free grassland where animals used to roam free. By cutting it down on this part of the hill we open up the landscape with more pathways and places for animals to burrow and shelter. After cutting down and burning the dreaded gorse we used an animal-safe herbicide to make sure the gorse doesn't grow back. After a long day of hard work we descended down Leckhampton Hill and back to school for a much-needed restful weekend.

In our opinion the trip was really fun because we discovered things we never knew before. Our favourite bit was when we cut down the gorse and looked afterwards at how much we had removed. We think that the hardest bit was finding the cows because they kept moooving! We learnt that hill was, and still is, a big part of Leckhampton because it used to produce limestone for the old Leckhampton and now it provides nice walks for anyone to do and also has no cars on it so it is very eco-friendly and it also has the nicest views.

We think the trip is beneficial to go on in the future because it's great to conserve our natural land around us as it has great relevance as it is important to protect the area we live in.

Written by Archie Allen 9WI and Ollie Freebury 9IS.





Eco-Committee Live Chat with Climate Scientists!

On Monday 13th November, The High School Leckhampton's Eco-Committee took part in a live chat which lasted for half an hour with five climate scientists from the website "I'm a Scientist...Get me out of here". We were able to ask them any questions that we had about what they (as individuals) were working on. They each told us something about their work and at the end of the chat, we each voted on which scientist we thought should receive money to fund their project. The scientist with the most votes receives £500 from the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Before the chat began, we had the chance to read some of their profiles and begin to think what questions we might like to ask them. Some of the questions we asked included:

"Do you think transport will be electric or hydrogen in the future?"

"Why is there so much radon in Cornwall?"

"What is Antarctic entomology?"

Having a live chat with climate scientists was not only interesting - but extremely important. One of the things we learned about were sustainable batteries. As well as being better for the planet, they are also priced more affordably. The intention is that the supermarkets will keep the prices low as more people shall wish to buy more durable and modest priced items.

We should always endeavour to reduce, reuse or recycle batteries.

REDUCE: It is always good to reduce the number of batteries we use to save money and unnecessary use of resources. We can also choose to use battery-free devices.

REUSE: If we must use batteries, we can buy rechargeable ones that can be reused multiple times.

RECYCLE: All batteries should be recycled at the end of their life. We throw away approximately 600 million batteries every year in the UK and we only recycle 45% of them. Recycling batteries will reduce harmful chemicals leaking into the ground at landfill. We actually recycle batteries here at HSL! Just bring them in and give them to Mr Champion, our Site Manager.

It was a great opportunity to hear about climate scientists' work and the Eco-Committee are very grateful for their time.

Written by Erin Hodgkinson and Sofia Jallow-Rossiter 7LB

Progress made in our aim to achieve better quality air!

Thanks to a generous loan from Cheltenham Borough Council, the Eco-Committee are going to be installing some air quality monitors to measure the air pollution in our car parks during December. We would like to see if we can reduce air pollution as soon as possible and we will be measuring again after the Christmas holidays. So, to help us in achieving this, please can you remember to turn your engines off when parked at the pick-up and drop-off areas. We have put up some signs to remind you. It is important that we do this to ensure we have a cleaner and safer environment for everyone in this community. Thank you.

Written by Michaelah Dixon in 8CH.



Our Parent, Teacher & Friends Association (PTFA) Key Updates



We are delighted to share that over the last year, with your help, the PTFA has raised over **£3,629**.

£3,000 has been donated to the school which will be put towards the purchase of planters for the garden and student designed football and netball kits.

We have also **pledged a further £100 per term** for HSL to purchase items required, as and when, to provide greater flexibility. A big thank you for all of your donations and continued support.

13th Dec Christmas Celebration : Christmas Jumper Sale & Mulled Wine

The PTFA will be serving mulled wine and yummy teacher made mince pies again this year at the Christmas Celebration.

We need your support to donate a bottle of mulled wine in advance of the event on the following dates between 3.15-4pm; 5th, 8th and 12th Dec.

Alcoholic and nonalcoholic both gratefully collected, but please ensure adults only drop off.



If you would like to volunteer for the night, please follow the QR code to the left.

Each year 1 in 4 Christmas jumpers end up **THROWN AWAY** or **NEVER WORN AGAIN**. WE CAN CHANGE THIS!

BIG CHRISTMAS JUMPER BRING & BUY SALE

Bring in your old Christmas Jumpers by:

Friday 8th December

Ready for a jumper sale on:

Wednesday 13th December
On the Evening of The Christmas Celebration
(All items £2)

All sizes accepted!
Anyone can buy!
Children, Parents, Teachers, Staff.
EVEN Mrs Wood!

HSL will take part in a Christmas jumper day on the last day of term:
Friday 22nd December

Free Donations for HSL While Christmas Shopping!!

You can raise **FREE** donations for The High School Leckhampton **EVERY** time you shop online this Christmas using **easyfundraising**!

You shop, brands donate to us. It won't cost you any extra!



easyfundraising

Help us make a difference when you shop. Visit <https://www.easyfundraising.com/easyschools/lechl-hsl>



Did you know... that you can make **FREE** donations for the school while shopping with over 7,500 brands!!

Shop with 7,500+ brands including:

Booking.com

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Viking

ASOS

BT

Liber Ecosta

Simply follow the instructions and donations will be automatically sent to the school.

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"The High School Leckhampton PTFA"

1 Visit <https://www.easyfundraising.com/easyschools/lechl-hsl>

2 Sign up

3 Your favourite brands donate to us wherever you shop with them