

Dear Parents and Carers,

This term feels incredible long and so much has happened and changed over this time. Life at school does really feel as if we are heading back to 'normal' and we are starting to get up to a proper pace of life. I am so grateful to all of our team here at St Benedict's and the fantastic job that they do in making this school a wonderful place to be. Mission week was a tremendous success and it was brilliant to be able to do something together fully as a school community that put faith at the centre of our lives and to be able to do this during Lent was particularly special.

Our students continue to be extraordinary and their attitudes, enthusiasm and kindness shine through.

As you will know, we have finished this term with a visit from Ofsted. The report will be published in due course and until then the judgment shared must remain confidential; however, as ever of the two days of the inspection our school community showed what a unique and special place this school is to be. I am incredibly proud to be part of and to lead this community and I look forward to continuing our journey and building on our collective successes in the weeks, months and years ahead.

Have a blessed and peaceful Holy week and Easter,

Yours in Christ,
Imogen Senior

Uniform

If you have any old St Benedict's uniform at home that you would be willing to donate to the school we would be very grateful, we would like to set up a second hand uniform shop.

Thank you

The school office

Cycle Safety

We have been made aware that some of our students are not adhering to safe cycling practices outside of the school. Specifically we have reports that students are cycling or scooting against the flow of traffic outside Asda, West Suffolk College and the hill by the Council buildings. The students are also not wearing cycle helmets.

If your child does cycle or use a scooter for school, please could you reinforce the importance of road safety and ensure they are wearing their cycle helmets.

Mrs Cornforth

Interesting History

In Year 8 History this half term we have been studying witchcraft with a specific focus on the witch trials in Suffolk and Essex 1645-47. We have been analysing why the witch craze occurred and have discovered that the people who were accused of being witches were very often the most vulnerable members of society at the time, the elderly, the infirm and single women. Our study has culminated in a role play activity based on primary source case studies produced by The University of Essex. Pupils worked in groups to produce a news report on 5 different case studies, taking the roles of the witch, the accuser, a neighbour, the witch finder Matthew Hopkins and a reporter.

Pupils have been very engaged in this topic, particularly enjoying employing their acting skills this week. In addition to interest and enjoyment though, the study resonates well with the school theme of compassion for others as pupils have been reflecting on the importance of inclusivity and kindness to others and considering the implications of what happens in society when these qualities are missing from our lives. An excellent example of being able to reflect on our school values whilst learning and enjoying ourselves at the same time.

Mrs Titcombe

Congratulations

Many congratulations to one of our year 8 students Anya Barrett -Jeynes who took part in a Swimathon along with her Grannie. The team raised over £300 for the Arts Society Young Arts Programme who have very kindly made a donation to the school. She was presented with a medal and certificate by the Duchess of Grafton who is the president of the Arts Society in West Suffolk . After the presentation Anya was able to enjoy a fascinating lecture on Master Masons and how they built the great cathedrals of Europe.



Well done to them all.

Sporting Highlights



The under 15s girls rugby went to another tournament on the 29th March and showed their excellence again! They won four of five games with the loss being very close! The other coaches and refs all commented that they were the best skilled, most physical and showed the most team spirit, which was a real compliment. As ever, they represented the school fantastically well.

Mr Elmer

Year 11 sporting excellence

Northampton Saints U17's 'Hat-trick-Hero's' journey

One of our Yr11 students Billy Reid was scouted whilst for the Northampton Saints developing player programme (DPP), whilst at Bury Rugby Club in early 2021. After a few sessions he was asked to train with the player development group (PDG), a stage up from the DPP. Over the summer of 2021 he spent countless days at the Northampton Saints training ground in Bedford and at the Colchester outreach centre. Following on from the pre-season training and a game against London Irish, there was a round of cuts, selecting around 60 boys. Billy was asked to continue with the academy into the season training until December 2021. After this there was another round of cuts, this time down to around 40 boys. Billy progressed through and his training continued until late February 2022, when Billy went on a residential camp and had an internal game, both great opportunities to show off his skill. After these events, the final elite 25-30 lads were invited to join the u17 programme.



Billy was among this elite group. Billy has now had more consistent matches; recently, he played for Northampton Saints against London Irish, scoring on try and assisting in two. Then came a tournament at Warwick University where he played Bristol Bears and Newcastle Falcons. In the game against Bears, Northampton Saints were down 10-0 at half time, Billy came on and scored a hat-trick to win Northampton Saints the game and earning his new nickname the 'Hat-trick-Hero'.

Billy is one of only two boys in the PDG to come from a state school, he has had to spear-head his own training programme without the facilities offered to boys attending independent schools with their own rugby academies. Billy has maintained his schoolwork focus alongside his sporting one, he has consistently maintained an average attitude to learning score above 4. He has been school captain for his age group's sporting endeavours over his time at St Benedict's. As I am sure you do to; we wish him well on his continued rugby journey. He certainly makes us all proud.

Science News – Pasta Crop Failure Revealed As Aril Hoax!

OK, hands up anyone who fell for the "April Fool" last week. No one, I expect; although one or two might have thought twice about it. It was, in fact, based on arguably the most famous (and successful!) April hoax ever tried in Britain, back in 1957, which has gone down in history as the "Spaghetti-tree Hoax".

Back then the BBC was not much given to pranks and tomfoolery on television, especially when it involved the serious and hugely respected current affairs program, Panorama. What gave the story even more gravitas was that Panorama was presented by none other than Richard Dimbleby, who was a revered and trusted public figure on TV and radio. And so it came to be that on the evening of 1st April, 1957, the British public (at least those who owned a television!) sat down to watch that week's edition of Panorama.

When Dimbleby authoritatively informed viewers that spaghetti trees were experiencing a bumper crop that year because of an early spring and "the virtual disappearance of the spaghetti weevil," viewers were inclined to believe him, despite Dimbleby pointedly noting the date as he signed off! One possible reason why the hoax worked so well was that, back then, spaghetti was regarded as a rather exotic delicacy and was not widely known or available in the UK, unlike today.

The producer of the Panorama program had not told his superiors at the BBC in case they vetoed the idea, so the BBC was completely unprepared for the flood of telephone calls from viewers asking about the item of news. Many of the calls were asking the BBC to settle family arguments: where some believed the "spaghetti-tree" to be real, while others claimed to know that the pasta is actually made from flour and water! A few even wanted to know where they could get their own spaghetti tree. BBC operators were told to respond, "Place a sprig of spaghetti in a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best."

The origins of April Fools' Day are not clear but it is known that the tradition of practical joking and mischief-making dates back to Ancient Roman times. Ancient Romans and Celts celebrated a festival of practical joking at about the time of the Spring Equinox, as do millions of India's Hindus as well as others.

The French also mark April 1st but instead of April Fools they call it Poisson d'Avril (April Fish)!