

It feels like a long time since I wrote properly to parents and carers and I thought that I should take the time to do so. January seems to have more days in it than any other month and whilst it feels like the weeks are already flying, there seems to be a huge difference between those first few days before Epiphany and the cold, grey later days of January when it all feels a very distant memory. I am very proud of the school and community. Year 11 Parents' Evening this week had a real buzz of excitement and it is a reminder that our young people are always planning ahead and preparing for their next steps. In the coming weeks I look forward to meeting many of them (along with Messrs Richmond and Tatum) to discuss their Sixth Form applications. Rehearsals for High School Musical are heading into the home straight with the performances scheduled for the end of February and beginning of March. We are delighted to welcome new staff, including our new site manager Geoff Formby. With huge sadness however I would like to remember Mrs Petts, our previous DT Food technician (from 2018-2021) who sadly passed away at the end of the year. We remember her with fondness and pray for her and her family at this sad time. Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen

Yours in Christ
Imogen Senior

Ukrainian Christmas Celebrations

We have a number of students in school that wanted to share with us their Ukrainian Christmas. Festivities begin on Christmas Eve (6 January) and end on the Feast of the Epiphany. The Christmas Eve Supper or Sviata Vecheria (Holy Supper) brings the family together to partake in special foods and begin the holiday with many customs and traditions, which reach back to antiquity. The rituals of Christmas Eve are dedicated to God, to the welfare of the family, and to the remembrance of ancestors.

A special service was held at St Edmundsbury Cathedral where members of the local community came together with the Ukraine community to celebrate.



Following the service the families then sit down to the holy supper which is prepared by the whole family, it consists of 12 courses, each course is dedicated to one of Christ's Apostles, there is no meat, a Kolach or Christmas bread is placed in the centre of the table.

A *didukh* (meaning grandfather) is a sheaf of wheat stalks or made of mixed grain stalks. It is placed under the icons in the house. In Ukraine, this is a very important Christmas tradition, because the stalks of grain symbolize all the ancestors of the family, and it is believed that their spirits reside in it during the holidays.



After the *didukh* is positioned in the place of honour, the father or head of the household places a bowl of *kutia* (boiled wheat mixed with poppy seeds and honey) next to it. *Kutia* is the most important food of the entire Christmas Eve Supper, and is also called God's Food.

A jug of *uzvar* (stewed fruits, which should contain twelve different fruits) and is called God's Drink, is also served.

The first course is always *kutia*. It is the main dish of the whole supper. Then comes *borshch* (beet soup) with *vushka* (boiled dumplings filled with chopped mushrooms and onions). This is followed by a variety of fish – baked, broiled, fried, cold in aspic, fish balls, marinated herring and so on. Then come *varenyky* (boiled dumplings filled with cabbage, potatoes, buckwheat grains, or prunes. There are also *holubtsi* (stuffed cabbage), and the supper ends with *uzvar*.



It must have been an extremely moving experience for them, as we know that not all families were able to be together this year, we continue to pray for them during these troubled times.

Suffolk Schools Cross Country Final Race



The 'Final Race' of the Suffolk Schools Cross Country Championships took place on Thursday 12th July. We had a bumper crop of athletes qualify from the previous two rounds this year and, on the day, thirteen St Benedict's students competed against the cream of the cross-country runners in the county.

As we didn't have entrants in the Senior Girls event, the first to toe the starting line were Lucy Murphy (7P) and Imogen Grove (7L) in the Minor Girls race which comprised of one big lap (2400m) of the beautiful, albeit undulating, grounds of Woodbridge School. Many of the girls in the race set off at an incredibly fast pace, but Lucy and Imogen wisely chose to start more conservatively and work their way through the field, with Lucy finishing in 22nd position and Imogen in 49th.

Next up were the Minor Boys, who had to complete two slightly shorter laps (3200m). Once again Noah Wilkinson (7L) showed his class by finishing in a fantastic 12th position, ably supported by Oliver Lamas Nakagawa (7X), who also ran extremely well.

The Junior Girls ran exactly the same course as the Minor Boys, and despite having to run two laps both the boys and girls were pleased that they didn't have to run up the long hill to the Boarding House. All three of our students who ran were happy with their races. Molly Murphy (8L) was first home in 16th position, followed by Eleanor Slater (8L) in 34th and Emma Payne (9A) in 40th.

We fielded our largest squad in the Junior Boys race, which comprised of two laps including Boarding House Hill. Charlie Oxborrow (9C) ran strongly from gun to tape and was delighted to finish in 3rd place and receive a bronze medal. Paddy Matthews (9P) ran competitively to hang on to the leading pack to finish in 25th place. Both George Wightman (8A) and Archie Coogan (8S), who have another year in this age group, ran well and gained valuable experience to finish in 51st and 60th positions respectively.

Kuba Kluczynski (10C) and Taylor Valach (11C) ran in the three lap Inter Boys race (5700m). Kuba, who has competed in this race ever since he started at St Benedict's, ran brilliantly to finish in a fine 25th position. Taylor also ran strongly and should be very pleased with his 41st position, especially as he is currently managing an injury.

Charlie, Noah, Molly and Lucy all received letters to compete for Suffolk in the Anglian Cross Country Championships in Northampton in February, which is the selection race for The Suffolk Schools teams for the English Schools Cross Country Championships in Nottingham. Although the team selection for the Anglian Schools is yet to be confirmed, Charlie and Noah will almost certainly be chosen as a result of their high positions in all three Suffolk races.

We are exceptionally proud of the achievement of all the students who have run for the school this year as they have shown wisdom in choosing an active lifestyle, resilience in trying their hardest and compassion by cheering each other on.

Mr Murphy

Extra GCSE Language exam Summer 2023

If you are in year 10 or 11 and a native speaker of another language (Polish, Portuguese, Italian, German, Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian, Arabic etc.) please don't forget to take on this opportunity.

The school will pay for your exam, however there is an entry deadline (end of January).

Do the following to enrol:

Ask your parents to send the email to adrabik@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk with a short message that my son/daughter would like to sit the Language exam (specify the language) this current academic year.

Then it's your turn to get ready for the exam – any questions see Ms Drabik in E3.

Extra GCSE language is highly recommended to do in year 10, therefore you gain some experience a year ahead. But remember it's never too late to earn extra points. You are all welcome.

Mrs Drabik

Are you an aspiring novelist or creative writer? Check out

What's on at the Theatre Royal in Bury St. Edmunds