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The Magazine of Comberton Village College
ISSUE 65, SPRING 2024
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Attendance matters . . .

We were delighted to be awarded an Attendance Award by the Fisher Family Trust.

This is awarded to schools with the lowest absence rate in England.

We are extremely grateful for the hard work of pupils, parents/carers and all staff in securing positive attendance at school.

The work of the Attendance Officer, Mrs Solanki, and the Attendance and Family Support Worker, Mrs Gardiner, has led to some great improvements in processes around attendance and support for pupils and their families.

The DfE has recently launched the campaign 'Moments matter, attendance counts' to support improvement in attendance across the country.

There have been national concerns about the decline in school attendance following the pandemic in 2020. According to the DfE the cumulative attendance of all secondary age pupils is currently 91.3%, whereas our school is currently at 93.2% for the same period.

If we write to you about your child's attendance, we are intending this to be seen as supportive and not

punitive — we are keen to help your child as much as we possibly can to fulfil their potential. Your child's pastoral team review attendance weekly and we have found that the supportive one-to-one conversations that form tutors have been having with pupils has really helped to identify if there are any barriers preventing good attendance at school. One of the pieces of information which parents and carers are finding really useful is the NHS guidance 'Is my child too ill for school?' which has clear guidance on when a child should not attend school due to illness.

We are also lucky to have Ms While-Paddon, a registered nurse working in school. She is able to assess pupils' health and will give guidance to parents and carers on what medical advice and support should be sought.

Please do remember that we are here to support you and your child to do their very best and we are also open to suggestions of ways to continue to improve our practice. **Zach Beamish, Assistant Principal**



Awards recognise progress and results



Comberton is delighted that their excellent outcomes have been recognised by SSAT (The Schools, Students and Teachers Network) in this year's Educational Outcomes Awards.

The awards recognise that CVC is among the highest performing secondary schools in the country, based on 2023 performance data and information from Ofsted.

The college was recognised in two categories, receiving awards for being in the top 20% of schools nationally for student progress, and in the top 10% of non-selective schools for student attainment in the 2023 end of KS4 exams.

The SSAT Educational Outcomes

database compares all state-funded schools in England.

To be recognised with an Educational Outcomes Award is a significant achievement and a testament to the work of the whole school community.

Principal Peter Law said: "It is very rewarding to yet again receive these awards.

"This is a clear indication of the hard work and dedication of pupils, staff and parents alike!"

Sue Williamson, Chief Executive of SSAT said: "Congratulations to Comberton Village College on winning two SSAT Educational Outcomes Awards.

"This success is down to the superb learning and teaching, outstanding support and



inspirational leadership of students, staff, parents and governors. You have made a huge difference to the lives of the young people in your school. Thank you."



Contents

- A Truly Nun-derful Show – 3
- So Much to see in Rome – 4
- Core RPE – 4
- New Team Make Plans – 5
- CVC Robot Returns – 5
- University Insights – 6
- Maths Excellence – 6
- Photo Inspiration – 7
- Trip helps with Fieldwork – 7
- Year Group have a Ball – 7
- Teams Impress in Quiz – 8
- Book Swap Success – 8
- Donations Allow Purchases – 8
- Reading Benefits – 8
- The Power of Reading – 9
- Tastebuds-Tingling Talent – 10
- D&T Trip – 10
- Good to Talk – 11
- Breakfast Delight – 11
- Apprenticeships Insight – 11
- Students go to Extreme – 11
- Sixth Form News – 12-17
- Show of Talent – 18
- A World of Partnerships – 19
- Student Poem in Print – 19
- German Exchange – 20
- Looking Deeper at AI – 20
- Bee Competitions – 20
- Exchange is a Highlight – 21
- Spanish Interaction Day – 21
- Sharing the Inspiration – 22
- DofE Latest – 22
- Trust News – 23
- SCSSP Update – 25
- Sport – 26-28

A truly nun-derful show!

When we started rehearsing *Sister Act* at the beginning of October, none of us realised quite how challenging this musical would be.

The score is full of uplifting gospel songs, all of which were unfamiliar to the cast, and many of which require the ability to sing some very tricky harmonies.

In addition, the majority of the musical numbers also cry out for some pretty complex choreography. Add to that the larger-than-life characters, the fast-paced dialogue and the need for spot-on comic timing, and it quickly becomes clear that

the show demands a company of actors who are skilful, responsive to direction and able to perform seamlessly together as an ensemble.

And of course, there is the sheer amount of music in this show — lots of underscore as well as the songs, which could only be played by a group of highly accomplished musicians.

Fortunately, we were lucky enough to have an absolutely wonderful cast and band, who rose to the challenge admirably. Throughout the rehearsal process, they all worked tirelessly, and their commitment, energy and enthusiasm really brought this 'feel-amazing musical comedy' to life!

Tierney (12SC) beautifully embodied the sass and naivety of disco diva, Deloris van Cartier, belting out every number with fantastic energy and demonstrating spot-on comic timing. A similarly high level of comedic flair was demonstrated by Isla (10M) as Mother Superior, her performance perfectly capturing the character's stern presence and dry wit through powerfully expressive vocals and nuanced acting.

Elin (10R) superbly portrayed the emotional journey of Sister Mary Robert from a shy, withheld postulant to a young woman radiating confidence and joy. Her emotionally-charged rendition of her solo numbers held the audience spellbound.

Scarlett (10C) gave a fabulous, charismatic performance as Sister Mary Patrick, bringing to the role an energy and comic verve which really lit up the stage. Annabel (13WG), as the wonderfully dour Sister Mary Lazarus, brought down the house every time with her astonishing rapping skills, while Fodhla's (12JD) marvellously idiosyncratic and comical performance as Monsignor O'Hara was delivered with a faultless Irish brogue.

Kiran (10V) gave a heart-warmingly comedic portrayal of Officer Eddie Souther and his impressively silky vocals really wowed the audience. Jude (10V) cleverly brought out the menace of Deloris's problematic love interest, Curtis Jackson; a strong performance that was only enhanced by his mellifluous singing.

Freddie (10B), Alessa (12SC) and George (10M) as Curtis' comically inept team of gangsters were hilarious, employing fantastic characterisation skills and a cartoonish flair in their highly engaging delivery of the song and dance numbers.

The production also featured a collective of talented nuns, who added brilliantly to the comedic mayhem onstage, raising their voices to truly magnificent effect. Notable among them were the comically otherworldly Sister Mary-Martin-of Tours, played by Madeleine (12JM), and the elderly yet feisty Sister Mary Theresa — the angelically-voiced Cecily (12JM). Alongside a small male ensemble, whose performances nevertheless packed a real punch, this versatile group spiritedly took on a variety of roles from policemen to bartenders, as well as those of Deloris' three vivacious backing dancers (Milena 10N, Josie 10I and Arabella 10R).

The 21-piece band spent many hours rehearsing in order to master some really difficult music, then learnt to co-ordinate it with the action — including a very tricky chase sequence — over the course of a couple of rehearsals.

They performed with great verve and musicality, seamlessly accompanying the action onstage and helping to lift this fabulous musical through the roof. All in all, this was an uplifting and heartwarming production, performed by a talented cast and band, who clearly relished every moment.

Congratulations to all the students involved — CVC's *Sister Act* was truly nun-tastic!

Jane Menczer, Director



FEEL-GOOD FUN: Scenes from the brilliant *Sister Act*.



MYTH-BUSTING: At the Colosseum where there is no evidence of Christians being martyred despite rumours.



TOURIST HOTSPOT: Students take in the enormity of the Trevi Fountain in the Piazza Navona.

So much to see in Rome

Rome is one of the most significant religious and cultural capitals in the world and in January, 34 Year 10 and 11 pupils, who are studying RPE for GCSE, had the opportunity to visit it.

The trip was a three-day visit, taking in the sights of Rome like the Trevi Fountain, Spanish steps, Pantheon and specific basilicas illustrating the Roman Catholic faith.

As we walked the streets, we spotted signs of the importance of the Catholic faith and role of the Pope among civilian life, such as the 'Keys of Heaven' symbolising the Pope's authority.

We also visited a beautiful basilica, with brightly coloured paintings across the walls and ceiling, and relics for people to pray to.

It was a lovely first day; the group walked more than 17 kilometres so we were grateful for the evening meal at a nearby restaurant and an early night at the hotel to rest tired feet!

Our second day consisted of a visit to the Vatican which, much to the surprise of our pupils, is a country in itself!

Having gone through security checks, we had a walking tour through the gardens and official palaces of the Pope and saw the famous 'Last Judgement' fresco by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel, which was breathtaking! We then had some time to enjoy Italian pizzas and buy some souvenirs.

Our final visit was to the Colosseum and the Roman Forum, where we admired a scene of Jerusalem painted as a fresco on to one of the archways to the Colosseum.

We learnt that there isn't any evidence of Christians being martyred at the Colosseum, but that this idea had become popular during the 17th Century. Our tour guide was full of detail and she was fascinating to listen to! Our walk through the forum ended at the modern entrance, surrounded by various layers of historical buildings including Roman temples of worship.

It was a full and busy trip, but one during which we experienced a taste of the religious history of Rome (and lots of delicious pizza!)

Sarah Higgs, Assistant Principal



BREATHTAKING: A beautifully painted basilica in one of Rome's many churches.

Core sessions look at key themes

Year 10 had an interesting Core RPE morning earlier this week, looking at different religious perspectives on the Environment and Climate Change.

We had a visiting speaker from the Faraday Institute, who discussed how science and faith interact.

WCCYM delivered an interactive session about Christian perspectives, and in two further lessons students investigated Buddhist and Islamic perspectives on the environment and looked at a number of environmental practices of how each of these religions care for nature. This followed the first Core RPE morning of the term on the theme of War and Peace, discussing Islamic and Christian perspectives, whether nuclear weapons can ever be justified and how organisations such as the CCND work for disarmament.

Interesting speakers and lots of discussions took place — well done Year 10 for your engagement!



ONE POINT OF VIEW: CCND argue against nuclear weapons.

New team make plans

We are the new Head Prefects and are very excited to help represent the school.

We are thrilled to have been selected after a thorough process and, as the new Head Prefects, we particularly aim to improve social areas, communication between teachers and pupils, and mental health.

During our time as Head Prefects, we really hope that we will be able to represent your views as a student body and will strive to make Comberton an enjoyable experience for all pupils.

To get this role, there was an application process, starting with completing a form. In this form, we detailed previous awards, qualifications and responsibilities, particularly positions showing evidence of leadership, and our Senior Prefect position of choice if we didn't get Head Prefect.

On this form we also needed nominations from teachers and fellow pupils, and wrote down the GCSE subjects we are taking.

Along with the form, we had to write a letter of application addressed to Mr Law, following prompts for each paragraph. For the first paragraph, we explained how and why we would be a good role model to other pupils. We then described a situation where we had worked in a team and explained what we had learned from the experience, and wrote about someone who we believed was a good leader and why, famous or otherwise.

Lastly, we explained why we thought it was important for the school to have Head Prefects. This letter was a great opportunity for us to show why we wanted the role of Head Prefect and prove we would be suitable.

Out of everyone who applied, it was narrowed down to 10 candidates, who then became the initial Senior Prefect team, four of whom would later become Head Prefects.

We were then all invited to have a professional interview. Our interview panel was made up of the following people: the Principal, Mr Law; Ms Burgess, who is our Head of Year; Miss Segal, the Head of Student Leadership; and one of the school's governors.

We had to answer unprepared questions in front of them. I think that everyone who took part in this part of the process was very nervous because it would be a test of our speaking and confidence.

However, we found it not to be as bad as we thought; all the panel members were very kind, and it gave us an understanding of what it would be like to be a Head Prefect. The questions asked were very well thought through and the majority



GOALS: The new head prefects have set out their plans for their term of office.

were about things we had stated on our forms and letters. Overall, the interview took roughly 10 minutes and happened during the school day.

The final stage in our Head Prefect applications were the presentations to a panel of mainly students. This consisted of the out-going Head Prefects, a couple of Year 7 School Council members, Mr Roberts, and Miss Segal.

Our presentations were on subjects we were interested in or know a lot about to show our public speaking skills, and to get to know us a bit more.

The topics that we chose were: The Relevance of Classical Literature, The Performing Arts, Leadership within the Army, and Art. We chose these since they were topics we could speak about passionately and would find it easy to talk to others about.

This was useful as speaking in front of others is something that the role involves a lot of, and this helped us gain understanding and practice of those skills. After our presentations we were asked a few questions — both about our PowerPoints and our application letter, and all together this part took around seven minutes.

Freya (10N), Elin (10R), Freddie (10B), and Vedant (10N)

CVC robot returns after five-year break



OUT AND ABOUT AGAIN: Comberton's robot took part in the First Tech Challenge after a five-year absence.

Welcome back to the CVC robot — last out in 2019 and now up and running again thanks to the hard work of Ash (11C), Douglas (11O), Tilly (10I), Rose-Marie (10T) and Amy (10V).

Attending the First Tech regional competition at RAF Alconbury on 12th March, the robot passed inspection with flying colours and went into its first alliance.

Students had enabled the robot to pick up pixels and build a tower and almost succeeded in getting it to do a pull up. Finishing the early rounds in seventh place, Comberton then proceeded to the semi-finals, forming an alliance with Ely College.

Working as a team, they won the first semi-final, but sadly lost the next two in the best-of-three competition and finished third overall.

Throughout the day the students were judged on teamwork, kindness and professionalism, starting with a formal interview by the judging panel.

The students were awarded the Judges Trophy at the end for their performance throughout the day. Well done to the CVC engineering team.

The team would also like to thank Lakenheath School for lending us a controller when ours stopped working. They are now fundraising for new motors and a controller so if anyone would like to sponsor us, please contact susmith@combertonvc.org.

If you would like to join this club, it is in Lab 2 on Mondays and Friday 3-4pm. All year groups welcome as there are different roles — it's not just coding.

University insights . . .

In March, we took a few Year 10 pupils to visit Peterhouse, our link Cambridge college.

This is trip that has been running annually for a number of years and was made extra special this year by the chance for students to meet Genny, a former Comberton and Comberton Sixth form student who is now studying Linguistics at Peterhouse, having first visited the college on this very trip. It was great to catch up with Genny, who is one of several former Comberton students in their first year at Cambridge.

Below Lyra (10E) gives a student perspective on the visit. **Eleanor Norman**

As we strolled through the charming gardens, we walked into a fancy room with refreshments on a side table. When we sat down for tea and biscuits (and orange juice), a woman walked in and announced



herself as the outreach officer. "We are so honoured to have you here today! Welcome to Peterhouse!". We stood up and thanked her as she beckoned us forwards into another room.

When we sat down she announced that we were doing a quiz. We all looked at each other in shock and nervousness. While it was hard, it actually was really fun, but we got a tad competitive.

It was about Cambridge and universities, and we learnt so much — like a typical course is three years, Cambridge University is 814 years old, Peterhouse is the oldest college, and there are more than eight million books in the University Library.

Receiving the first lecture in a beautiful lecture theatre was incredible. We talked about the experiences, the opportunities, and all the niche courses, such as Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, or Theology. It was so interesting and entertaining! We learned a lot, especially about opportunities, money and experiences — and that was only the first lecture.

We went to break. However, we'd drunk all the hot water when we had tea and eaten all the biscuits! When we got back we talked about student life and types of universities. They are campus, city, and collegiate. The colleges in a collegiate university provide accommodation, a dining hall, library, sports facilities, pastoral support, and clubs and societies. Peterhouse is one of the smallest colleges, with only 80 students per year. Students take a tuition fee loan from the government. However, you can also get a living cost loan that encompasses all of your costs, and you can also get a maintenance loan. Usually, though, after the first year you have to move out of student accommodation to other accommodation, which you would share with a friend or

roommate.

And a fun fact, people do climb the colleges! There are also clubs and societies such as the Assassins Guild, DJ Society, and Bubble Tea Society. There is also monetary help and physical help for people with disabilities or who are neurodivergent.

We then heard from some student ambassadors, who were all first years. They talked about the food in Peterhouse; most first years don't have very equipped kitchens, but there is catering on the grounds.

After a nice lunch we went on a tour, starting with the library. This one is only for Peterhouse students, and it used to be a museum of archaeology. It's open until midnight, and it has 60,000 books in it. It was very old-fashioned, very beautiful, and very elegant. It also has a computer room and a printer.

We then went to the common room, which is open 24/7 and has televisions, gaming consoles, and other appliances.

After that we went into the bar (I know we're too young to go to a bar but we did) that holds events throughout the year, and it was quite cool.

There was also a gym but we couldn't go in because you had to be trained. We then went to the Gibson Court, the newer of the two courts. There were lots of pretty flowers and blossoms around.

Afterwards we went to the chapel, built in the 1600s, which was very ornate and colourful, full of beautiful stained glass. A short walk later we went to the dining hall, the oldest secular building in Europe still used for its original purpose.

St Peter's Terrace was built in the 1700s, and it's the main building for first years, except for foreign students and disabled students, who stay in The William Stone building. Connecting the chapel and dining hall is the old courtyard, which has housing for supervisors.

After a quick break, we headed back into the lecture theatre and started to learn about A-levels. We learnt how to pick our A-levels, both good and bad methods, such as pick the ones you like, or not deciding because of your grades.

We played a game about who's applying for which courses using their A-levels. In general, science courses require science A-levels, arts courses are more relaxed, but some might need a specific subject.

However, sometimes if you apply for another college, you'll get pooled into another college. At the end of the last lecture, we were told to explore the subjects we want to take in sixth form, such as read books or listen to them.

Overall it was an amazing trip; thank you so much Peterhouse!

PETERHOUSE EXPERIENCE: A tour of the college and the chance to meet a current student, who attended Comberton.



Maths excellence!

Two teams of Year 10 mathematicians represented CVC at the local Year 10 'Maths Feast' at Linton Village College, competing against 16 other teams from a number of other schools in the area.

Both teams did incredibly well, achieving the highest score in three of the four rounds between them! A brilliant result of which they should be very proud.

The competition comprised team rounds on the topics of 'Maths in Quiz Shows', 'Crossnumber' (like a crossword), 'Logic Puzzles' and 'Building Origami Shapes'.

Both teams scored highly in all rounds with team one — Dora (O), James (C), Leann (C) and Norman (O) — collecting full marks in rounds two and three and team two — Christopher (N), Frederick (V), Nathan (N) and Yahel (B) — topping round one with 20/25 and also gaining 25/25 in round two.

The other teams included Cambourne, Linton, Coleridge, The Leys and Trumpington.



GREAT AT MATHS: The two CVC teams did well in a 'feast' at Linton.



PICTURES TELL A STORY: Students were in London gathering exam material in a gallery and on the streets. Pictures: Lola (11M)

Gaining photo inspiration

Year 11 Photography students went to London for the day to visit the Daido Moriyama exhibition at The Photographers' Gallery.

The show of street photography images was truly inspirational and showed a lifetime's work by the artist who had documented the streets of Japan and transformed the way we see photography by questioning its very nature. Students documented the local area and captured the hustle and bustle of the London streets with people shopping and interacting with one another. The final shoot location was the BBC studio building, where the large glass facade

provided the perfect architectural backdrop.

This research trip formed an important part of the GCSE exam unit in providing the students with valuable primary sources to edit once back at school. Meanwhile, Year 11 artists spent a day at the Tate Modern, taking in the sights and sounds of a bustling contemporary gallery and enjoying time to reflect and draw.

They gained valuable research material for their upcoming GCSE exam, and enjoyed a relaxing day of creativity.

Midlands trip helps with fieldwork

Year GCSE geography students spent two days in Birmingham in March for their fieldwork requirements.

We spent Day One in Birmingham city centre, collecting data and taking surveys of different areas to answer specific questions based around the regeneration of the city.

We then enjoyed the free time given to us after completing our survey results, particularly at the shops in the Bull Ring.

Afterwards we enjoyed downtime at the hostel playing pool and building towers.

The next day was at Ash Brook to answer the physical geography question. We travelled west to the river in the Carding Mill Valley to measure velocity and cross sections of the course from source to mouth.

Luckily, warm dry weather helped us to successfully collect our data samples. We found this particularly helpful to consolidate understanding of previously explained models and river features earlier on in the GCSE course.



IN THE BROOK: Students take various measurements at Ash Brook.

Molly (11N) and Claudia (11C)



PARTY-GOERS: Year 8 at their social.

Year group have a ball . . .

The Year 8 social this term was themed as a Masquerade Dinner & Dance, and the pupils fully embraced this with plenty of stunning masks on show!

The evening began with arrivals on the red carpet, and the pupils were seated to enjoy a wonderful three-course meal, prepared by our catering team. There's no doubt the chocolate fudge cake for dessert was a hit with many!

After the meal, all pupils moved into the foyer and had a go at some charity activities in aid of Cancer Research.

These included 'Guess How Many?', 'Pin the Mask on Mr Law' and 'Guess Who the Baby is', along with a fabulous photo booth run by two sixth

formers.

All these activities created great entertainment for the pupils, and we managed to raise £55 for towards Cancer Research.

The evening concluded with a fabulous disco and the announcement of the evening's awards.

Congratulations to Libby (8V) and Millie (8O), winners of the 'Best Masquerade Mask', and Phoenix (8I) and Thomas (8R), winners of 'Best Dressed'.

A huge thank you to the Year 11 Prefects, who came to support this event and were a massive help throughout the evening. It was a fantastic evening that was thoroughly enjoyed by all!

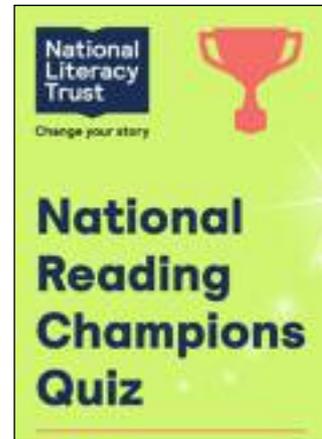
Teams impress in national quiz

Two teams of avid readers from Years 8 and 9 competed in a cross-regional heat for the National Reading Championships Quiz.

It was a very exciting and challenging event that enabled students to showcase their wide reading knowledge against other schools from across the country.

After six nail-biting rounds of intense and difficult questions, Team B placed ninth and Team A placed 13th.

Congratulations to Paula (8V), Elliott (8O), Emily (8R), Charlotte (9M), Sophie (9E), Gabriel (8O), Henry (8B), Alana (9M) and Soren (9R) on their wonderful efforts!



COMINGS AND GOINGS: The books donated to Comberton's German partner school (left) and the ones received in return.

German book swap is a real success

When a group of pupils went to Germany as part of an exchange during the winter, the librarians at CVC sent a small gift of some books to the library at Gesamtschule Obersberg, our partner school.

These were books that had been kindly donated to us, but that we already had enough copies of. (Thank you to Mr Waive and Ms Vázquez-Valero for taking the extra weight in their luggage!)

The books were a welcome surprise to our partner librarians, and they very generously sent a gift back for us with our returning staff and pupils — a beautiful set of fiction books in German for our shelves!

They are a lovely mix of books, classic and modern, covering a range of abilities

and interest levels, with even a couple for our A-Level students to enjoy.

The school library has been working hard to promote our small, but growing, collection of foreign language books.

It offers pupils and students a chance to stretch their skills in languages they are studying. We are also working to provide books in the first language of many of our EAL students, so that they can build and retain their skills from home.

Books in languages other than English are often hard to find in the UK, so we are very grateful to all those families who have kindly donated books to us over the past few years.

Donations allow purchases

Our group reading lessons have had a welcome boost thanks to a generous donation from an ex-student!

Nonagenarian Derek Skipper made the national news last year as the oldest person to pass a GCSE exam, having gained top marks in maths after taking a course through the Comberton Adult Education Department.

This year he has gifted some funds to our school as a thank you, and the Friends of CVC Trust Fund has very kindly matched his donation.

The school library has used the money to buy group sets of some popular books. All

English classes in Key Stage 3 have a fortnightly reading lesson in the library, and we are trying a new strategy to boost enjoyment of books and stories with a group reading format in some of these classes.

We hope that, with these lovely new books, even more students will be encouraged to read for pleasure. If it proves popular we hope to add more titles to our Group Reading collection.

Hilary Spargo, Librarian



GROUP READS: New sets of books for group reading have been purchased from donations.



Reading benefits

Well done to our Year 7 pupils who raised £250 in a Readathon sponsored read in March.

Thanks to them and their sponsors, children in hospital will be able to read the best new books and listen to amazing storytellers!

£200 of the money raised will be used to give new books to the children's wards in Addenbrooke's Hospital, and the Comberton Village School Library and Resource Centre will also get £50 worth of new books too.

Since their first Readathon in 2015, Comberton Village College pupils have raised a grand total of £2,468.00.

By reading, Year 7 have helped us get new books, as well as bringing the magic of books and stories to children in hospital — thank you to everyone who got involved!



CAKES GALORE: The World Book Day bake-off attracted plenty of entries.

The power of reading!

It was fantastic to see so many students engaging enthusiastically with all things literary in celebration of World Book Day on March 7th. With activities including a KS3 Treasure hunt across the school, a quiz, the English department dressed up as their favourite childhood characters and a book-themed bake-off, the power of reading was certainly obvious! The WBD Book Bake Off was held in the library and what a great competition it turned out to be! Students were invited to create a cake with a book theme.

With cakes depicting Mandrakes from Harry Potter, a bloody heart from Poe's Tell-Tale Heart, and even a proposal from Pride and Prejudice, all tastes were catered for, and the results were stunning. We want to say a BIG thank you to all the students who entered the competition. All the cakes were of a very high standard and the creativity was outstanding. With more than 20 cakes entered, the decision-making was very difficult... but we finally came up with winners – Maya (9N), Alex (8B) and Isla (8M) in KS3 and Luke from KS5.



WIDE RANGE: Themed cakes included everything from 'Harry and the Bucketful of Dinosaurs' to 'Pride and Prejudice'.



THROWBACK: The English Department dressed as their favourite childhood characters.

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ACADEMY TRUST

Tastebuds-tingling talent

We have had a very competitive term in the Food and Nutrition department. Jessica (8C) won our local heats of the Rotary Young Chef competition with a two-course meal of chicken ramen followed by lemon tarts with fresh raspberries, winning an Amazon voucher and the opportunity to go on to represent Cambridgeshire in the regional finals.

There she made a Thai pork and basil stir fry called Pad Kra Pao and a classic French pastry called Paris-Brest for dessert.

While she wasn't placed on the day, she had a lot of fun. She is definitely one to watch and should be incredibly proud of her achievements so far.

We have had another amazing year in Springboard's FutureChef competition. Two hospitality and catering students, Milo (10T) and Lola (11M), represented the school at the local finals at North Herts college in January.

They were well prepared and produced tasty, skilful dishes and for the first time in FutureChef's history, both our students won!

They were assigned chef mentors Thomas Leatherbarrow and Steven Walpole to support their culinary journey.

Both Lola and Milo worked hard with them to prepare for and compete in the regional finals at Cambridge Regional College in February.

They both produced amazing two-course meals and their dishes were fantastic — both were praised for their skilful advanced techniques, taste and beautiful presentation, but this time there could only be one winner, and Lola was crowned winner of the East of England!

For the national final, Lola was given a brief, to cut a chicken for sauté (very technical and precise butchery) and then use the chicken to create a dish using a limited larder of ingredients.

She also had to create a dessert based on the theme of 'tiramisu'.

As Lola and Milo had shared their mentor chefs, both chefs stayed on with Lola to help support and guide her and the development of her dishes, providing invaluable guidance, skills and support.

This year was the 25th anniversary of FutureChef. The day before the final, Lola travelled to London early in the morning, getting some last-minute practice at Thomas Leatherbarrow's professional kitchens in Wimbledon, before checking in at the Marriot hotel Marble Arch for a quick change before heading to the Mandarin Oriental hotel for a gala dinner alongside her mum and me.

It was a wonderful evening, and the 12 finalists from around the UK were celebrated for their amazing achievements — more than 13,000 students had participated this year, so to be in the final 12 was an outstanding achievement. The next morning all finalists arrived at Westminster Kingsway College, where the final was taking place.

Twelve judges also arrived, including Adam Handling, Chantelle Nicholson, Kerth Gumbs, Brian Turner CBE, Steve Munkley and David Mulcahy.

The judges all repeated advice from the gala dinner, which was to stick to your time plan, and try to enjoy yourself!

They kept a careful eye on proceedings, and all finalists worked really well under immense pressure. While Lola was not placed, her dishes looked fantastic and we are all incredibly proud of her. Afterwards, April Lily Partridge, sous chef at The Ledbury, recipient of the Roux Scholarship and the highest-ranking female chef in the Craft Guild of Chefs national Chef of the Year (and FutureChef alumna), spent some time with Lola, talking about her experiences, knockbacks, and how these really helped focus and shape her as a chef.

She gave Lola some advice for the future, and enjoyed looking at Lola's cakes and bakes that she is so passionate about.

Lola left with a stash of prizes including £100, chef's jackets, a knife set, a commemorative plate and medal, a signed copy of 'Why Waste? 2' by Adam



GALA DINNER: At the Marble Arch, London, Marriott Hotel, To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Futurechef.



DOUBLE GOLD: After the local round of Futurechef.



REGIONAL FINALIST: In the Rotary Young Chef competition.

Handling, and a copy of 'Vietnamese Made Easy' by Thuy Diem Pham. We'd like to say a big thank you to Springboard and the FutureChef team for a fantastic event, to our wonderful Chef Mentors Thomas and Steven, to our amazing technician Mrs Whiddett, and to all students and parents for all of your efforts and continued support.

Emily Goodson, Head of Food and Nutrition

Design team take product to national finals

On Tuesday 19th March a small group of Year 10 Design & Technology students were invited to

London as part of the Design Ventura Competition.



SHORTLISTED: Comberton's team reached the last 10 and are waiting for the final results.

Design Ventura is a design and enterprise challenge for students in Years 9, 10 & 11, and is run by the Design Museum and supported by industry professionals. The students — Poppy (10E), Natalie (10R), Georgia (10N), Ieva (10E), Myles (10I) and Jayden (10B) — had been shortlisted as one of the final 10 teams from 310 schools that had taken part in the competition, which is an amazing achievement!

They went to Deutsche Bank Headquarters in the City of London, to pitch their product, The Creative Colour Box, to a

panel of expert judges and a live audience. Their pitch said: "The Creative Colour Box is a mindfulness product, designed for younger children. They can make different shapes, or animals — the possibilities are endless. "Arrange the triangles in your chosen pattern then turn on the LEDs and watch as they glow and come to life! Children can come up with their own patterns but equally the box comes with a leaflet with challenges and shapes that children can try and recreate. This game is perfect for children who enjoy simple, creative challenges. Children can play by themselves, or they can play with friends too!"

We now wait until the final celebration event on Thursday 25th April to find out the results!



CAKE AND CONVERSATION: With Principal Peter Law.

Breakfast delight for organised form

Well done to our Year 10 pupils for working hard to organise work experience placements for July.

We are delighted that 273 have now organised their placements and completed their online forms.

This is a big achievement.

Thank you to our Year 10 parents and carers and our Year 10 team for their support.

The pupils of 10E had a celebratory breakfast on 6th March as reward for being the highest-achieving tutor group for organising work experience placements. Well done 10E!



GETTING AHEAD: 10E had breakfast together to celebrate organising their work experience placements.



SOMERSAULTS: A popular move on the trampolines.

Battles rage as students go to the Extreme!

Year 9 had an extremely good time at Extreme 360 Trampoline park this week. A hundred students travelled to the venue in St Neots and took it by storm! There were some fantastic skills on display with Ruby, Amber, Kitty, Molly and more showing some serious tumbling. Ms Burns got in on the action and showed us some skills of her own, including a back somersault!

There were some battles to be had in the foam pit, with Charlie taking on what seemed like the whole year group. Wielding the gladiator bags, students took to the

balance beam and fought it out to knock their opponent into the pit.

We also saw action on the dodgeball courts, with some huge dips, ducks and dives coming from the extra bounce, and some slam dunks on the basketball hoops. We finished the evening with margarita and pepperoni pizzas for all and headed home exhausted!

A great evening and a trip we are looking to run again with more of the year group in the summer term.

Abbey Cotton, Assistant Head of Year 9

Good to talk, and eat cake

Pupils who are working hard and getting things right now have the opportunity to meet the Principal for an informal chat about how school was going.

When the idea was mooted, I (as Principal!) was not convinced this would be something students would necessarily welcome — would they really want to miss a lesson to sit in my office and speak with me...?

Having done this several times now (and had feedback from the students), it appears the answer is 'Yes!'

Students who have been awarded a postcard for commendable conduct are entered into a draw, and two from each year group are selected for the 'Cake and Chat' session.

They are then sent an invite, and we spend around 45 minutes having cakes and talking about life at CVC.

I ask all pupils to answer two questions — what is going well for them at CVC and what would they most like to improve?

This has led to some fascinating conversations, with a number of common themes occurring. Students are very positive about a range of things, particularly the quality of teaching and support they get in school.

The most often mentioned areas for improvement are the lack of indoor social spaces and the pupil toilets, particularly the way some pupils misuse them.

Having these conversations has been illuminating for me, and we have taken a number of actions following the feedback.

I've also enjoyed some philosophical debates with pupils, including on the topic of detentions and how sanctions do (and don't) change behaviours.

I also see clearly that pupils like cakes (and I believe, the conversations).

Peter Law, Principal



LEARNING CURVE: Year 9 hear about different apprenticeship opportunities.

Apprenticeships insight

Comberton welcomed Charles River Laboratories, the NHS and Anglia Ruskin University to talk with Year 9 pupils about apprenticeships during National Apprenticeship week last month.

Pupils learnt about apprenticeship pathways, including degree apprenticeships. Thank you to the employers who attended to speak.



FIGHTING IT OUT: With gladiator bags on the beam.



INAUGURAL CULTURE DAY: The chance for staff and students to explore each other's heritage — and traditional food!

Heritage, colour and food

Comberton Sixth Form's first Culture Day took place in January.

The day was full of colour and excitement and it began with flags being hung and music from around the world being played in the Sixth Form to set the tone. Many students came into college in their cultural attire, or simply wearing colours that represent their heritage; this in itself opened up all sorts of conversations among staff and students.

Other aspects of the Culture Day that were available were Mehendi (henna) tattoos, delivered by some of the student volunteers, and placing a pin on a giant world map to show heritage.

One of the most exciting parts of the day was a Bollywood dance workshop, kindly conducted by Sujatha Chenilath, Artistic director of Nirtham Dance Academy, which consisted of a series of dance routines during lunch time and period 5 sessions.

Year 12 also had a guest speaker come in to further enhance the Culture Day experience.

The highlight of the day was, without doubt, the array of food that was on offer

from around the world.

This had been prepared by the parents and students and offered another layer of colour and flavour.

Delicacies from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean were available, as well as more local items from all over the United Kingdom.

This was not only an opportunity to experience and taste new flavours from around the world, but also to raise money and support the Council's charity of choice 'Love the One' — who support and stand alongside poor, abused, orphaned and exploited children in India — and we collected £200. Student Council President Shaarah said: "Culture Day highlights the value of cultural celebration, especially for students with heritages and roots from all around the world, as well raising a collective consciousness of a respectful culture in the college environment."

We would like to thank all of those who contributed in whatever way to the success of the day, and now look forward to our second Culture Day in 2025.

Sixth Form Student Council

Peeking into world of civil engineers

For the first time this year Comberton Sixth Form entered teams into the ICE CityZen competition, which is designed to inspire young people aged 16-18 to follow a career in civil engineering. The competition is made up of two parts — playing four rounds of the CityZen game, and creating a short video as a team project.

The game is played in teams over a period of four weeks, with each week presenting a different civil engineering challenge. Teams compete against each other for the highest score and learn more about what Civil Engineers do at the same time!

As teams discover more about the role of Civil Engineers in society, they have to apply their knowledge to their local area and suggest a project that would help improve people's lives in the same way that projects in the game do.

Teams present their project as a video of 2-4 minutes, which outlines a strong project proposal for the competition judges to consider.

Comberton was also assigned a mentor, Paul Remblance, a civil engineer, He was able to come into college to work with the students and offer them support for their video projects.

Comberton entered four teams into the competition and the students came up with projects to build a bridge over the River Great Ouse, improve cycling infrastructure in the local area, electrify the train line between Ely, Peterborough and Birmingham and build a new train line between Milton Keynes and Cambridge.

A total 367 teams entered the competition across the country and while Comberton students weren't awarded the top prize, the 'Butterville' team of Callum (12CR) and Andrew (12RJ), were shortlisted to the final 12, which is a fantastic achievement.



IMMERSION: Linguists in the Spanish city of Seville.

The gain in Spain!

A-level Spanish students recently took a trip to Seville, and we all agree that it was an amazing experience!

Not only did it include trips to many of the beautiful landmarks that we have studied, including 'la Mezquita de Córdoba', but we were also able to immerse ourselves in the culture of Andalusia and all its customs, including a flamenco show and ceramic workshop. It was a perfect opportunity, especially since the film we have studied focuses heavily on Andalusian culture! We all grew in confidence in speaking Spanish and used what we have learnt to talk to the locals.

The days were filled with exciting trips venturing all around Seville and Cordoba, and the nights were spent as a group enjoying as many tapas as we could eat!

It was so lovely to be able to experience Spanish culture and life in person and has really inspired us to continue with our Spanish studies in the future.

¡Muchas gracias a todos los que hicieron posible este viaje increíble! ¡Nunca lo olvidaremos!

Beth(13WG)



TAPAS TIME: All you can eat!

Sky's the limit for charity

Sixth Former Billy has raised more than £9,000 for the Magpas Air Ambulance after jumping out of a plane in honour of his late dad.

He pledged to do a sponsored skydive to raise funds for the medical charity, whose helicopters are dispatched directly by the East of England Ambulance Service, and played a key role when Billy's dad, Adrian, suffered a cardiac arrest last December.

Billy (13WD) said: "Magpas arrived shortly after my dad suffered a cardiac arrest and they acted quickly and calmly, whilst also comforting those present on the day. From the point of arrival, they then took charge and led the car and managed the process of extrication from the house.

"The organisation played a crucial role during some challenging times, giving myself, our family and friends the opportunity to say goodbye and I wanted to give back in their honour."

Billy chose what would have been his dad's birthday, March 17th, to do the jump and said it was a day full of mixed emotions.

"Although I felt fearful, it was the sort of fear that goes away knowing who and what you're doing it for, including those who have been so kind as to donate," he said. So far I have raised £9,020 and I'm keen to raise even more.

"The whole experience has been emotional, but truly unforgettable and for a cause that means so much to me and our family."

Head of Sixth Form Ellie Jenkins said: "We are really proud of what Billy has achieved.

"In what must be a difficult time, he has thrown himself into the challenge of completing a skydive and has raised an incredible amount for an important cause while continuing to work hard for his A levels."

Billy's JustGiving page is still accepting donations:

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/billywinterskydive?utm_source=copyLink&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=billywinterskydive&utm_campaign=pfp-share&utm_term=dadf126417c0417a9164161b7394bc1c



AIRBORNE:
An emotional skydive for the Magpas Air Ambulance charity.

The business of selling cakes

As part of the BTEC Extended Diploma in Business (equivalent to 3 A Levels), students are required to plan and run an event.

This involves not only conducting market research, planning the logistics and preparing financial forecasts, but also successfully running the event.

Three Year 13 students, Matt (CR), Matt (WD) and Daniel (RA) decided to run a cake sale in support of Alzheimer's Research UK. Having explored various options, they decided to support Alzheimer's Research because the disease has affected one of their grandparents, meaning they were all very passionate and eager to help people in similar positions in any way they could. One of the team had contacts who work for Alzheimer's Research, and had prior experience in running charity cake sales, and baking. His experience proved important to knowing what to sell and how to price the cakes.

The group selected Granta Business Park in Abington, because they had contacts there, and knew it was a location with enough footfall to attract customers to their stand.

The three spent the previous day together baking, and a few friends kindly baked and donated extra cakes. Sales on the day came to £362.70 which, less costs for ingredients etc, meant they were able to send £300 to Alzheimer's Research UK.

When asked to critique the whole experience, the group said they felt it helped them "understand the importance of excellent customer service, and how customers perceiving us positively can drastically increase our sales".

The Business Department are extremely proud of their efforts and dedication and that they contributed to such a worthy cause.

Paul Herbert, Head of Business Education



MAKING A PITCH: Students learned the importance of excellent customer service and positive perception in increasing sales.

Mind games . . .

On Wednesday 13th March I was lucky enough to take a group of Year 11 and Year 13 students to the University of Warwick for a 'Psychology in Action' conference. There were five guest speakers covering a range of topics including distortions in memory, body image, the work of a forensic psychologist, mesophonia and placebo effects and performance-enhancing drugs in sport.

The research showing how much of an impact people believing they were taking a performance-enhancing substance had on their performance (when in fact there was no active ingredient) was fascinating, and the students were all particularly interested in the role of a forensic psychologist and how you can become one.

Ellie Jenkins, Head of Sixth Form

The cutting edge of research

Five Year 12 A level Biology students had the opportunity to visit the Babraham Institute to participate in their Schools Day.

Students took part in a research project in one of the labs called: 'T Cells: The Cancer Slayers'.

This involved setting up assays to look at a specific type of immune cell called a Cytotoxic T Lymphocytes and their ability to kill tumour cells.

Students had the opportunity to use various lab techniques such as counting cells using a haemocytometer, setting up an assay to stain cells with fluorescently labelled antibodies, and then using flow cytometry to analyse the ability of the CTL cells to kill the target tumour cells when compared with non-target cells. The target cells were incubated for two hours in the presence of CTL cells before they were run through a flow cytometer to assess the killing ability of the CTL cells.

Flow cytometry is a technique not usually available to sixth form students. It is used to rapidly analyse cells (10,000 cells

per second) based on the expression of fluorescent markers on its cell surface. The cells are sorted by their fluorescence and displayed as a graph.

The Comberton group managed to determine that CTL cells had a killing success rate of 84% of the target cells in the time they had been incubating.

The students also had the chance to attend a lecture from one of the research scientists, who works for a company on the Babraham Site.

It gave students a valuable insight into the research and development involved in drug discovery.

The overall event was an exceptional opportunity for all who attended and provided an insight into the cutting-edge research occurring around the world.



IN THE LAB: Students at the Babraham Institute.

Csanad (12RJ)

Team claim top 50 spot in race

A team of four enthusiastic chemistry students attended the Cambridge branch of the Chemistry Race to take part in the competition.

The Chemistry Race is held in Cambridge, Oxford and in the Czech Republic and tests the ability of young chemists against their peers. Schools from around the UK, including from Glasgow and Belfast, attended the Cambridge section of the race.

The race was tense as more

private schools than usual decided to attend. However, we managed to

overcome the challenge with strong teamwork and willpower.

In the end, we achieved a top 50 placement, showing the strength and knowledge of Comberton's students on a national scale.

I'd like to thank my fellow members of the team — Abigail (12KS), Harry (13MR) and Sam (12KS) — for their hard work and attendance as well as the Chemistry department for their support.

It was a team effort, and it was an honour working with my peers.

Csanád (12RJ)



TEAMWORK: The Comberton quartet.

Facilities help give street a positive vibe

Earlier this term everyone studying Geography in Year 12 went on a field trip to Mill Road, Cambridge.

This was part of a practice NEA (non-exam coursework) for our course.

The real NEA will take place in Swanage in Year 13.

Our aims for the day included identifying whether people have a positive or negative perception of Mill Road and finding out reasons for this perception.

Before we left college, we had written a risk assessment, decided on what methods we were going to use and chose our sampling method. We chose to have a systematic sampling method because it was the simplest. Once we arrived at Mill Road, we split into groups and started our investigation.

This included interviewing passers-by and shopkeepers using pre-prepared surveys. These answers formed the base data for our aim of people's perception of Mill Road.

Other surveys undertaken included an Environmental Quality Survey, a Graffiti Analysis and a Soundscape.

We also took photographs to use as evidence for the later write up. The results found were that respondents had a generally positive view of Mill Road because of the facilities, despite the minimal landscaping.

A very interesting part of the day was when we were given a tour around

Cambridge Central Mosque, which is on Mill Rd. It was fascinating hearing about how they have tried to incorporate it into the local community by making it as unobtrusive as possible.

There is no minaret and no call to prayer. The building is also very sustainable — they have many double-glazed windows and thick walls to reduce their energy use.

Victoria (12FF)



COLOURFUL AND VIBRANT: The bridge on Mill Road, but what is the perception of the area?

London calling . . .

Collecting material for exam projects

I took part in both the art and photography trips to London on the 16th and 17th of February.

This was to gather sources, take photos and visit exhibitions, to further develop our final exam projects.

On the first day, we visited the Royal Academy, specifically the 'Impressionists on Paper' exhibition. Showcasing works by Degas, Morisot and Van Gogh, I was most inspired by Odilon Redon. I particularly liked his drawing of a stained-glass window in charcoal and pastel on card because of the bold use of colour and media.

We also visited The Courtauld, making many stops en route, to draw our surroundings. In The Courtauld we viewed the charcoal heads by Frank Auerbach. These massive charcoal and chalk portraits had a 3D geometric look and a soft fluidity, which made them rather calm and serene.

I enjoyed exploring the rest of The Courtauld, looking at the different eras of art. Our final stop was The National Gallery, where I loved viewing famous paintings such as Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' and works by Monet. The National Gallery also has a nice gift shop!

On the second day, the photography trip, I took my camera and caught as many shots as possible. Considering my topic – shadows and narrative photography — I took photos throughout of passers-by, buildings and railway stations. We visited an exhibition of the works of Edward Burtynsky in the Saatchi Gallery, which focused on the impact of human industry on the planet. I found his work inspiring and extremely impressive. Burtynsky's work shows the horrors of humanity in a beautiful, yet hard-hitting way. There was a visual experience in the exhibition, with three screens showing, interlinked with music and video. We continued our day and explored places like Brick Lane and Chinatown. The loud crowds gave us lots of opportunities to collect images.

Overall, the trip was great. I found it beneficial to my work. I was able to collect sources and loads of inspiration. This will help me as I create and develop my work in both art and photography A Levels.

Ani (13FF)



CAPITAL GAINS:
Photos and artwork from two days in London.



PLAY TIME:
Students at the Lyric Theatre to watch a production of 'Metamorphosis'.

Inventive adaptation allows for analysis

Sixth Form Drama and Theatre Studies students, along with the GCSE Drama students, visited the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith in January to watch the recent theatre adaptation of Kafka's novella 'Metamorphosis'. With the physicality of Frantic Assembly's style and the fluidity and lyricism of poet Lemn Sissay's adaptation, the production depicted on stage a powerful and poetic transformation of the struggles of people within a dysfunctional system.

The production fostered a potent sense of unease throughout, with the mood being relentless and unvarying from beginning to end.

The protagonist, Gregor, who faces the burden of providing for his family, wakes one morning to find himself inexplicably transformed into a huge insect and subsequently struggles to adjust to his new condition.

This was all presented through heightened physicality and exceptional athleticism by Felipe Pacheco, who portrayed a tortured, scrabbling physical language in the lead role of Gregor Samsa, at times even squatting upside down on the ceiling 12 foot in the air, like a fly caught in a web.

This was an astonishing and inventive play, complemented by an amazingly creative set which allowed all of the students to analyse and evaluate the diverse range of theatrical techniques and devices being used.



Considering the options

Year 12 students took the first steps towards planning for life after sixth form as they attended the college's annual Progression Conference Day just before the February half-term break.

Designed to offer an introduction to post-18 choices, it enabled students to take part in a number of activities across the day that highlighted the range of possible pathways and opportunities available to them, from university and apprenticeships to gap years and routes into employment.

Students had opportunities to begin or extend their research and planning into possible next steps during the day, supported by access to the universal destinations platform, Unifrog.

Alongside individual conversations with academic tutors, students also had the opportunity to attend live talks from guest speakers with expertise in specific post-18 fields.

Guidance on university applications came from Mike Nicholson, Director of Recruitment, Admissions and Participation at the University of Cambridge, who offered valuable insights into the application process based on his many years of experience in this role.

This was supplemented by a session delivered by our own Laura Peacey, who offered specific guidance to those considering applications to Oxbridge, or for competitive courses such as medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine.

Degree apprenticeships are an increasingly attractive option for many of our students and we were delighted to welcome Jade Matthews, Schools and Colleges Development Officer at Anglia Ruskin University, to discuss the specifics of this particular pathway during the afternoon session. The day was followed up



INSIGHT:
Mike Nicholson gave guidance on how best to apply for university.

a month later with a special careers event for which our Head of Careers, Fay Lawson, convened representatives from businesses and organisations across a range of sectors, allowing our students to explore routes into employment and pathways such as school leaver programmes and apprenticeships.

With the wheels in motion, CSF staff are now looking forward to working closely with Year 12 students in the coming months to build on their initial research and help them plan for the future with confidence.

Stephen Leggott, Deputy Head of Sixth Form

Employers give insight into opportunities



CAREER POSSIBILITIES: Students had the chance to talk to a range of employers about future choices.

At the Year 12 Careers Fair on Wednesday 13th March, we welcomed 37 employers to speak to our Year 12 students about opportunities post sixth form — careers, apprenticeship pathways and work experience.

In addition, Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) attended the careers fair to explain about the range of opportunities available at ARU and the work experience programmes they are organising in July for Year 12 students in Business and Law and Character Design. The Social Mobility Business Partnership (SMBP) shared the opportunities that are available to young people to support them.

They talked about the creative careers week that the SMBP are holding in Cambridge in July, which a variety of different organisations in creative industries will be attending. Thank you to our employers for supporting the careers fair. Thank you also to all of the parents and carers who attended the event to speak with our students.

Please get in contact if you would like to be involved in future careers events for our pupils and students by emailing Fay Lawson at flawson@combertonvc.org

Getting the feel of life at Oxbridge

CAMBRIDGE

Seven prospective Oxbridge applicants visited Peterhouse on a Year 12 Aspiration Day visit, attended by several other schools across the country, to give students an in-person experience of what it would be like to study at the University of Cambridge.

During the morning students attended a session in the lecture theatre which explained the collegiate system operated at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford and how the universities are made up

of faculties and departments in different academic subjects across 31 colleges.

Students then opted to attend a lecture in Engineering or English, which was delivered by professors who teach at the university. In the afternoon students had a tour of the college grounds and attended a Q&A session with current undergraduate and masters students. The day finished in the lecture theatre where students were given practical advice on how to write a personal statement for Oxbridge, and the importance of super curricular activities.

Laura Peacey, Deputy Head of Sixth Form

OXFORD



VISIT: To Wadham College, Oxford

Fourteen prospective Oxbridge applicants visited Wadham College in Oxford.

During the day visit students were invited to attend a taster session, led by a masters student in either humanities or science, attended a seminar which gave practical advice on how to write an Oxbridge application form and had a tour of the college grounds.

In the afternoon students took part in a research focus group regarding AI and the use of monitoring apps led by Professor Ekaterina Hertog, one Wadham's professors, which will be published as part of an academic paper.

Laura Peacey

VISIT: To Peterhouse, Cambridge, for an Aspiration Day.



ALL MAPPED OUT: With a plan that takes in studying in the USA on a golf scholarship.



Rising stars on course

Comberton Sixth Form is very proud to have two outstanding golfers studying at the college this year.

The two — Olly (12RA) and Olivia (12RJ) — have taken very different courses to reach their current status.

Olly has always wanted to be a professional golfer since the day his dad — currently the pro at St Neots golf club — took him along to the club aged six. And although Olivia was also six when she first swung a club, she was on a fun day trip to the local driving range with her dad.

Now Olly has his future mapped out with an all-expenses paid scholarship to Kansas State University secured for his post-18 progression before turning professional, while Olivia is still making up her mind on her future study plans — and whether she wants to try the professional route.

She has just signed up to the organisation that matches outstanding rising British sports stars to universities in the USA, but is also considering whether to study either psychology or for a sports science-related degree in the UK at one of the

establishments renowned for golf — Exeter, Stirling or St Andrew's.

Olly, 17, has an important season coming up, having just been selected for England under-18 boys for the first time.

Playing off +3, he will represent his country for the first time in France this month. Although players are competing as individuals, he will be one of England's six-strong squad at the event which starts with two rounds of strokeplay followed by two rounds of matchplay for those who make the cut.

"I was really happy to be selected," said Olly, who is still a member at the St Neots Club where he started. "I had a few good results last year, but it was still 50-50 whether I'd be selected."

His plans for the season also include playing in a number of under-18 national events including the English and British boys' events in Liverpool and Yorkshire respectively.

He already practises every day for a couple of hours as well as going to the gym three times a week and plays all day every weekend.

Somewhere in between he finds time to study for a BTEC in Business and will continue Business Studies around his golf when he goes to America in 18 months' time.

"I've already been for a visit," said Olly, who is sponsored by leading golf brands Footjoy and Titleist. "It's a different level and I can't wait."

Before he goes, however, he would dearly love to play at The Open as an amateur, having got close as a 15-year-old when he reached the final qualifying round. While Olly prioritises golf at every opportunity, Olivia is just getting back into the groove after taking a step back to focus more on her GCSE exams last summer. She is playing off 0.6 and is a member of the prestigious Gog Magog Club in Cambridge and is also the Junior Under-18 Girls County Captain this year.

Impressive results while in Year 10 were enough to get her into the Under-18 East regional squad and now she is looking to contest national under-18 and under-25 tournaments at Woburn this season as well as the R&A European Amateur Championships and the Scottish Girls Championships.

"I feel proud of my golfing journey and still really enjoy competing, but there is still a long way to go if I do decide I want to turn professional," said the 16-year-old. "At the moment I am just focused on completing my A Levels and golf tournaments this summer."

"I feel fortunate to have the option of a sports scholarship alongside my studies at university, but for now I'm keeping my options open for both the UK or USA."

She is juggling practising three or four times a week plus playing full rounds at the weekend with her academic commitments.

And, like Olly, she relies heavily on her parents to transport her and all her kit wherever she needs to go, whether it's 'up the road' to her club or to compete in Scotland and beyond.

There are definitely two sets of parents with more desire than most to see their children pass their driving tests!

UNDECIDED: Still considering university options although golf will be a key part of the selection process.



Show of real talent

The Music Department's Spring Concert showcased an impressive array of musical talent, demonstrating the depth and skill within the school.

The concert offered a diverse selection of performances ranging from classical pieces to contemporary hits, leaving the audience thoroughly entertained and impressed.

Performances by larger groups such as Comberton Young Voices, Soul Band, Concert Band and String Group were punctuated by solo or small group items. Sam's (8E) standout performance on the cello, of 'Julie-O' by Mark Summer, captivated the entire hall.

The concert also featured several items written or arranged by our own students, a sign of their growing confidence in music.

Comberton Big Band, under the direction of J Hatter, closed the concert on a high note with energetic performances of 'Moanin' and 'Spanish Flea,' leaving the audience tapping their feet and wanting more.



BRILLIANT BANDS: The Comberton Soul (top) and Big bands.

CVC MUSIC DEPARTMENT PIANO APPEAL



The Music Department is raising funds to purchase a much-needed new piano to be used for lessons, recordings and performances. Donations are welcome by either of the methods below:



*You can raise funds for our piano appeal every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! These donations really add up, so please sign up to support us by pasting the link below:
<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/cvcmusic/>*



*To donate, please either scan the QR Code above or paste the link:
<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/23146>*

A world of partnerships

Making friends for life

Fifteen Japanese students from Comberton's partner school spent three days at the college earlier this term.

The group, from Kobe University Secondary School, which has been linked to Comberton for five years, stayed with host families and joined their partners for lessons as part of a wider trip to England.

As well as spending two days in school, they also had a day in Cambridge as part of their UK visit, which also included spending time in London.

Although short, the visit made an impact on both visitors and hosts.

Andrew (13FF) said: "My experience was great overall, as I got to learn about a new culture by trying some of their food and traditions.

In the evenings we played some board games as well as watching some films. This allowed us to talk and discuss various things about both of our cultures which I found very interesting. "On one of the evenings my dad took

us into town and gave a tour as he is very knowledgeable about the history of Cambridgeshire.

"I thoroughly enjoyed showing them what Cambridgeshire has to offer as it made me appreciate the British culture more than I normally would have — and now I have a friend for life!"

Visitor Yuito Onuki said: "We are deeply grateful for the invitation to CVC, where we shared enriching experiences. The classes, particularly in English, were challenging but highlighted the inspiring attitude of CVC students towards learning.

"Our interactions, including surprising exchanges in Japanese with our hosts, emphasised the mutual curiosity and eagerness to learn that defined our visit.

"Our time at CVC has become a treasured experience, and we promise to share our learnings with peers at KUSS. We look forward to future exchanges between our schools, building on the friendship and understanding we've started."



JOINT PROJECTS: Comberton, Cambourne and Lord Byron students work together.

Hosting visiting pupil was 'really positive'

Students from Lord Byron School, in Arequipa, visited schools in The Cam Academy Trust earlier this term. Twelve students from the partner school in Peru stayed with Comberton pupils and three with students studying at Cambourne Village College. The visit was the final leg of their European trip, having visited Paris before arriving in the UK. During their time here, they had days out visiting London as well as punting and visiting museums and university colleges in Cambridge. The visitors delivered several assemblies at Comberton as well as at Trust primary schools and performed a fantastic traditional dance wearing Peruvian dress.

They also took part in project days organised by the MFL Department and a cooking session in which they learnt to make scones with their CVC

partner.

There was also a Peru evening, organised by the MFL Department, which gave the host families and all the students the opportunity to relax and enjoy a small Peruvian meal with Peruvian sweets treats brought along to enjoy.

Sabrina (9M) really enjoyed hosting and said: "My experience of hosting an exchange student was really positive! "It was exciting to test my own language skills, and try to work across the language barrier between us. I really enjoyed showing them around both my school and city, letting them see the different landmarks and historic places in Cambridge.

"I would 100% recommend hosting an exchange student; it's quite exciting and very good in boosting your language confidence!"



INTRODUCTIONS: To the visiting Japanese students.

Student poem goes into print!

In July 2023 all KS3 students at CVC had the opportunity to write a poem in the language that they are studying or in their native language. These poems are then judged within college and the best ones are sent to Routes into Languages to be rigorously judged by professional judges/poets as part of the Mother Tongue Other Tongue Poetry Competition.

Earlier this month a celebration event took place for students, their parents and guests at Buckingham House Conference Centre, Murray Edwards College, Cambridge.

This was a Routes into Languages East event celebrating languages and the wonderful multilingual poets from schools in the region on the 70th anniversary of Murray Edwards College.

Professor Wendy Ayres-Bennett, Emerita Professor of French Philology and Linguistics, University of Cambridge, and Emerita Fellow of Murray Edwards College launched the event with a presentation on the 'Menace of Monolingualism'.

The winners of the 2023 Routes into Languages East Mother Tongue Other Tongue competition were then announced with the opportunity for some of the stars to recite their poems to a wider audience as part of the Cambridge Festival.

A Year 8 student, Juliet (8I) was one of the winners!! Well done Juliet for your hard work and creativity! Juliet's poem, in Spanish, will be published and in the next couple of months she will receive a certificate, medal and the anthology with her published poem.



POEM CHOSEN: The Spanish verse will go into an anthology.

Broadening horizons

Comberton's German exchange, which runs in partnership with Gesamtschule Obersberg, in Hessen, enjoyed another successful iteration in December 2023 and March 2024.

The exchange is designed to allow students on both sides to not only use their German skills in a practical and real setting, but to forge friendships and partnerships with students from a different community.

In living with their exchange partners, students are able to immerse themselves in the experience, and widen their horizons. Students on both sides greatly enjoyed the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities, and to learn about school life in another country. The success of this exchange relied not only on the students' palpable enthusiasm, but on the kindness and generosity of the families who agreed to host a student as part of the exchange.

While in Germany, students got to know the local town, Bad Hersfeld, through a scavenger hunt expertly organised by our host school. They took part in cultural activities, including sport and baking German Christmas cookies (Plätzchen), and enjoyed the ever-popular trip to Merkers Salt Mine (expert translation provided by Herr Waive).

On the recent return leg, students again took part in baking and enjoyed lively discussion on the correct pronunciation of 'scone' (it's "scone" by the way!) They got to know Cambridge with a visit to King's College and took in the sights of London over two days.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the families who hosted a German student with such care, and we are so proud of all of our students who threw themselves



IMMERSIVE: Students experienced life in Germany then shared their homes with their partners on the return leg.



into this adventure with such enthusiasm.

We are already looking forward to taking the next cohort of students to Bad Hersfeld in early December...watch this space!

The German Exchange Team
(George Waive, Paula Vázquez-Valero, Alison Shorten, Birgit Federle)

Looking deeper into ever-growing world of AI



UNIVERSITY DAY: Students attended a German Conference at St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

A group of students in Years 10-12 took part in the annual German Undergraduate Conference at St Catharine's College, Cambridge, at the beginning of March.

Students took part in an interactive workshop led by Deutsche Welle, focusing on fact-checking digital media in the ever-growing world of AI.

They also had the opportunity to look at presentations on the research of German undergraduates studying at various universities in the UK.

The visit was rounded off the trip with a tour of Queens' College.

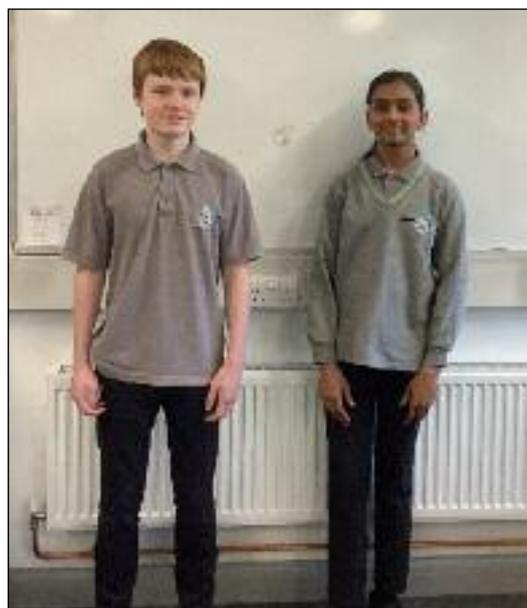
Three go forward

The first round of the annual Spelling Bee competition took place earlier this term for Year 7 Spanish students and more than 20 made it to the second stage of this competition.

The competition consists of translating into Spanish and spelling, in Spanish, of course, as many words as possible in one minute. At the first stage, students were given 50 words to learn, and at the second stage — where students compete to represent the school against others in the area — 100 more words were added to their lists.

Everyone did very well, and our three finalists are: Ursula (7I), Humza (7M) and Thomas (7T). They will represent Comberton at the Regional Competition, which is being held at Cambourne VC on May 9th.

We wish them all the best of luck!



HEADING FOR PETERBOROUGH: Comberton's Translation Bee qualifiers for Spanish.

Trio reach regionals

The school round of the Translation Bee took place on Monday and 13 students took part. They had been learning the second stage list of sentences in Spanish, French and German. Rather than the students receiving extra words to learn as in the Year 7 Spelling Bee, students were instead tested on an additional tense at each stage (stage 1 — present tense, stage 2 — present and future, stage 3 — present, future and past, stage 4 — present modal: I want to...)

Each student had one minute to correctly complete as many translation tasks (sentences from the toolkits) as possible from English to the target language chosen.

Aidan (8C) and Meenakshi (8I) now go to the Regional Competition in Spanish, with Tegan (9C) representing Comberton in German. The next round is on 5th June at Arthur Mellows Village College, Peterborough.



COOKING TOGETHER:
English and Spanish Students make 'the best scones in England'.

Exchange is a highlight

A group of 33 students and their four teachers from Colegio Maria Rosa Molas in Zaragoza, Spain, arrived in England at the end of February.

Eighteen students stayed with their CVC partners and 15 were hosted by Cambourne Village College students.

Everyone was excited to see their exchange partner as they had not seen each other since November.

They arrived at the end of the day with enough time to be welcomed by our Deputy Principal, Regina Lawrence. After the welcome everyone went to meet their new family!

The following day Spanish students started with a tour of the school, followed by two hours of activities organised by our Year 9 Language Leaders.

A special thank you to Ellen B (O), Amber (T) Alice (N), Miriam (T), Ellie (B), Elsie (I), Chloe J (E), Ellen J (I), Seniye (N), Chloe K (O), Maya (N), Catherine (M), Zoe (C), Eilidh (O), Lily (V), Freya (V), Bernard (O), Samaah (M), Charlotte (T), Katarina (N), Elodie (T) and Caitlin (T) for the English quiz, treasure hunt, bingo, and dance moves!

Throughout the rest of the day at CVC, Spanish students accompanied their English partners to lessons and made and, of course, ate scones!

A special thank you to Mrs Whiddett in the Food and Nutrition department for teaching everyone how to make the best scones in England!

On Friday, Spanish students went to London and they had a fabulous day. The weather behaved very well for them, and whilst they left CVC with rain, they came back with sun! In London they visited the main tourist attractions and went on a river cruise on the Thames.

The weekend proved to be packed with fun and activities. The host families organised every single minute, and everyone had a great time, fully immersed in the English culture. There was bowling, extra visits to London and Cambridge, and, of course, a roast dinner on Sunday!

On Monday, our CVC students and their Spanish partners attended a Drama workshop organised by Mr Frost.

He inspired everyone with his energy and enthusiasm, and Spanish students loved it.

At the end of the session, they begged their headteacher (who was one of the teachers in the exchange) to add drama to their curriculum. Thank you, Mr Frost!

The rest of the day was spent cooking or in lessons with their English partners.

On Tuesday everyone went to Cambridge for a guided tour of King's College, punting on the River Cam, and, of course, the annual visit to souvenir shops to buy the Cambridge hoodie. Very early on Wednesday morning (exactly at 3 o'clock!) the Spanish exchange students left CVC to return to their homes.

Everyone had a great time and made the most of this experience, both linguistically and culturally.

One of the parents, whose daughter was involved in this exchange, said: "Thank you so much for arranging such an excellent Spanish exchange. Alice and her partner had such a lovely time together on both arms of the exchange and it was a pleasure to have Carla come and live with us for the week.

"It was such a great experience for them both and Alice's Spanish has improved in leaps and bounds. I think the exchange really will be one of the highlights of Alice's time at Comberton."

Students team up for learning experience



LEARNING TOGETHER: English and Spanish Students took part in an interactive learning day at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford.

A group of Year 10 students spent an exciting day at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford with a visiting group from Spain. They teamed up with students from the Sagrada Familia School, in Cantabria, for an interactive day of languages and history. The day was led by José Herrera, from Links Into Spanish, and Comberton languages teachers, Mrs Barcz-Morgan and Mrs Burgess.

After an ice-breaker activity using Spanish and English, the students split into mixed teams to tour the Battle of Britain hangar and the American Air Museum.

Each team then delivered a presentation to the whole group in both languages with students acting as 'teachers' of their own language.

The groups also had lunch together and were able to talk in Spanish and English.

José was extremely impressed with students' engagement and, as always, he injected lots of energy into our language learning.

It was only one day, but it was very intense and rewarding!

We hope that we can recreate this next year.

Sharing the inspiration!

The Cam Academy Trust has been chosen as one of Oak National Academy's new partners to create new online resources for Teaching and Learning.

The Trust will work with Oak, created in 2020 to provide online educational resources in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, to create new, high-quality primary and secondary Modern Foreign Languages resources, including a full package of KS4 resources for the new GCSEs in French, German and Spanish. The Trust is one of 14 new partners announced this week in the second phase of Oak's new curriculum plans, with core subjects already under way.

Under the leadership of the Trust's Director of Languages and International Education, Rachel Hawkes, who was previously Head of Languages at Comberton, CAT will be responsible for developing Oak's new languages curricula and resources.

CAT has international education and languages at the heart of its ethos across its 11 schools, which teach pupils aged 3-18. One of the six principles that underpins the Trust's work is 'The International Principle' which states: All our schools should have a clear international emphasis in their educational provision both within and beyond the formal curriculum.

The new Oak curriculum will have as its foundation the LDP (language-driven pedagogy) curriculum followed at Comberton.

The four-year KS2 primary curriculum in French and Spanish will be based on the Trust curriculum already developed by Dr Hawkes and Comberton languages teacher Paula Vázquez-Valero, which is widely used in our CB23 partner primary schools. The new curriculum will be built following both the Oak guiding curriculum principles and the Oak subject guiding principles.

Dr Hawkes said: "Our languages curriculum is built on a firm foundation — it is research led, practice informed and content rich, and reflects our Trust commitment to make languages accessible, real and inspiring for all students.

We are delighted to be partnering with Oak on this new venture which builds on the ambition of a unique partnership between research and practice, and the tangible success and enthusiasm of our learners."

In this, The Cam Academy Trust is supported by Twyford Church of England



IN AT THE START: The new Oak secondary curriculum will have the Comberton curriculum at its foundation.

Academies Trust, Oak's curriculum partner for secondary English, the home of Teach West London teaching school hub, and NCLE Language Hub.

As well as MFL, the latest announcement sees Oak working to create thousands of curriculum and teaching resources in seven other subjects – art & design, citizenship, computing, D&T, RE, PE and RHSE.

Oak, an independent public body that works in partnership with educators, business, commercial publishers, school trusts and educational charities, is now a recognised national resource, supporting millions of teachers and pupils and The Cam Academy Trust is proud to have been chosen as one of its partners.

Matt Hood, Oak's Chief Executive, said: "I am delighted to announce a second group of curriculum partners to work with Oak to share and develop resources for the rest of the national curriculum. Once again every part of the education sector is part of this collaboration, meaning teachers will have access to some of the best curriculum thinking and resource design available.

"Resources in our first six subjects are being developed and rolled out each month and feedback from teachers suggests they are both respected and popular.

"Oak is, at its heart, a collaboration of teachers and experts sharing their knowledge to help their peers. This powerful partnership announced today ensures Oak will continue to provide schools and teachers with high-quality resources into the future."

Silver seekers grapple cold nights in tents

TIRED BUT HAPPY:
Comberton's Year 10 silver DofE participants on their practice expedition.



The first Duke of Edinburgh expedition of the season took place last weekend as 65 Year 10s completed a Silver practice in the Chilterns. This was the opportunity to fine-tune preparations in anticipation of their award expedition taking place in Activities Week.

Pupils walked an average of 20km a day in small groups on both Saturday and Sunday, responsible for navigating their own way through a list of checkpoints.

To make matters easier (!) they had to carry everything they needed for the weekend on their back. Frost on the Friday made for a chilly night under canvas, but a 'tropical' 5 degrees and a healthy dose of exhaustion meant sleep came easier on the Saturday.

Congratulations everybody on displaying great resilience, commitment and teamwork. You were a great group of pupils to take!

The DofE Team



New Chief Exec chosen

The Trust has appointed a new Chief Executive.

Claire Heald will take over from Stephen Munday, who has been Chief Executive since the Trust was formed in 2011 to oversee the conversion of Comberton Village College to an academy.

She takes up the post overseeing the four secondary schools, two sixth forms and seven primary phase schools in June.

Stephen retires from the post this week, having initially joined Comberton Village College as Principal in 2001 before moving on to lead the Trust which oversees it when it became an academy 10 years later.

Mark Norman, the Director of Finance and Operations, will be acting CEO for the interim period.

Claire's appointment, following a rigorous selection process, comes as CAT looks to the next stage of its development.

Alongside potential future growth — with Fowlmere Primary School set to join imminently and a number of other schools also interested — the sixth form at Cambourne is set to open in September 2024, with new, state-of-the-art facilities.

Claire joins from Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), a network of 57 schools nationwide, where she is currently National Director of Education.

Before joining AET in 2021, she was Deputy Chief Executive at Inspiration Trust, a Norfolk-based group of 16 schools. Claire founded and led a free school in Norwich, and before this had a number of senior leadership roles in Norfolk schools.

During her time at AET, the proportion of schools rated Good or Outstanding by



APPOINTED: Claire Heald will take over as Chief Executive in June.

Ofsted improved from 71% to 86%. Last year also saw AET's highest results on record.

Claire is also a trustee of The Difference, a charity whose focus is to improve the life outcomes of the most vulnerable children in society.

Sue Williamson, CAT's Chair of Trustees, said: "I am absolutely delighted that Claire Heald will be joining the Trust family later this school year.

"She has an impressive track record — both throughout her time at AET and prior to that at Inspiration Trust.

"She very much shares in our values at CAT, and I have every confidence that our trust will go from strength to strength under Claire's leadership as we move into this next phase of our development.

"Claire will be joining us at an exciting time for the trust — our new sixth form will be opening, and we have a healthy pipeline of schools expressing an interest in joining our family. This will be an important new chapter for us, and we are absolutely committed

to delivering the high-quality education that local families deserve."

Claire said: "I am thrilled to be taking on the post of Chief Executive at The Cam Academy Trust. The Trust has the potential to be an exceptional group of schools.

"As a values-driven leader, their six core principles resonate deeply with me, particularly around standards of excellence and inclusion. It's also very important to me that the Trust's schools continue to be at the heart of their communities.

"I'm very much looking forward to getting to know all of the schools and working with the staff to build on the successes to date."

First leader bows out

Stephen Munday, the first and only leader of The Cam Academy Trust since its inception — originally as The Comberton Academy Trust — retires from his role this week.

Before he helped set up the Trust in 2011, he was Principal of its founder member, Comberton Village College.

He said: "It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have served as the Chief Executive of our Trust since establishing it 13 years' ago.

"The world has moved on a lot in that time and the Trust has grown and developed both in its number of schools and also in terms of

the influence that it has exercised on the local education system and beyond.

"But what has not changed are the values and principles upon which we are based and that frame all that we do.

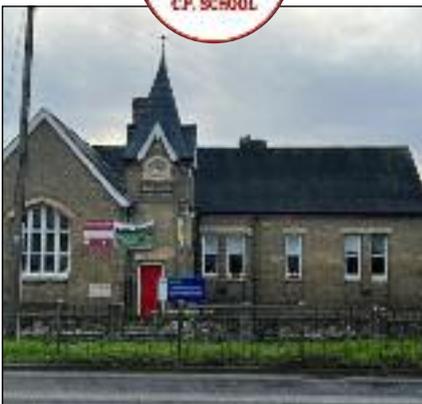
"This matters at all times, including when a new Chief Executive takes over from a previous Chief Executive. People may come and go, but the essence of what our educational organisation and community is stays the same.

"It is in safe hands, ultimately the hands of all staff who work in our Trust and group of schools."



CONFIDENT: Stephen Munday is certain the Trust is in good hands — of those who work in it and its schools.

Two more schools move closer to joining



After a long journey and a lot of hard work by all, Fowlmere Primary School is on the cusp of joining The Cam Academy Trust.

There is still some last-minute work to be done, but the sincere hope is that the school can become part of the Trust from April.

The school is local and feeds into Melbourn Village College. The move to join the Trust will strengthen further our aim to create strong local educational communities and work at the centre of our communities.

Harston and Newton Primary School is another that feeds into Melbourn Village College.

It is also seeking to join us. Following a pause in the process while a new Chief Executive was appointed, this process is now fully resuming.

It is hoped that formal approval can be granted soon after Easter and that the formalities enabling the school to become part of the Trust can be worked through.

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Challenge accepted!

Students from **Comberton** were joined by their peers from the other **Cam Academy Trust secondary schools**, plus **Gamlingay Village Primary**, for an **Action Sports Experience Day at the college**.

More than 50 Year 7 students from CVC, Cambourne, Melbourn and St Peter's and Gamlingay Year 6 pupils were pushed out of their comfort zones and challenged to master new skills with an 'I can' attitude at the BMX and scooter workshops.

The day was organised by the South Cambs School Sport Partnership and delivered by professional stunt scooter rider Terry Price and ex-BMX world champion Mike Mullen. Students first listened to an inspirational talk from Mike, where he spoke about how he got into BMXing and the challenges he faced and had to overcome as he learnt from his failures to master riding and reach the top of his sport.

Mike then impressed the students with a trick and stunt display before they were fitted with helmets and took part in separate BMX and scooter workshops. Despite many of them initially feeling nervous or scared, by the end of the sessions the students all had beaming smiles across their faces as they learnt how to handle their fears and gained a real sense of achievement from persevering and stretching themselves to learn something new.

Pupils took some really key messages from the day and commented the following when asked what made them feel good about themselves during the event or what they had learnt:

"I persevered and did most of the tricks", "I learnt I can do more than I think", "I can't do it 'yet' but I will if I keep

trying", "It's important to get back up again and go again", "Practice makes progress", "I can overcome my fears" and "It made me feel good when I achieved the tricks".

The day ended with a motivational story from Terry about how he began scooter riding, the challenges along the way and how they were overcome. He finished off with a huge backflip!



HAVING A GO: Pupils learn tricks on the BMX bikes and scooters.

Pictures: Bradley (11T), Zak (11E) and Vinnie (11M)

Leaders do an amazing job at tournament

Sixteen sports leaders from **Comberton** did an exceptional job as they helped run the annual **Quicksticks hockey tournament for primary pupils**. They umpired **140 games across eight pitches during a day-long competition**, which featured 'big schools' (according to pupil numbers) in the morning and 'small schools' in the afternoon.

And they earned high praise from South Cambs SSP Partnership Manager

Claire McDonnell, who organised the event.

"They all did an incredible job and showed excellent communication and decision-making skills as well as empathy towards the younger children," she said. "A big thank you to them."

Coton Primary School were the most successful of **Comberton's partner primaries at the competition for pupils in Years 5 and 6**.

They finished runners-up to defending champions **Harston & Newton**, who successfully retained their 'Small Schools' title in the event at the **University Athletics Ground in Cambridge**.

The Quicksticks format is played by four-a-side teams made up of two boys and two girls. There are no goalkeepers, and the game is played with bigger and lighter balls making it safe, fun and accessible to all.

Twelve teams contested the 'Small Schools' event, which comprised seven-minute matches, with Coton being one of those who won their initial pool games to go into Division One to contest the title alongside the eventual winners, **Barrington and Histon & Impington Park**. **Dry Drayton and Bourn** also took part.

The 'Big Schools' event attracted 20 teams from 11 schools and was won – on goal difference – by **Trumpington Park**.

HOCKEY HEROES: Sports leaders took charge of 140 quicksticks matches across eight pitches.



It all stacks up to a fun new sport

Pupils from **Barton**, one of **Comberton's partner primary schools**, had the chance to try something completely different when they travelled to **Melbourn Village College** earlier this month.

Up to a dozen children from each of 10 schools enjoyed a session of 'sports stacking' at a festival jointly hosted by the South Cambs Partnership and **Di Baker**, from **Speed Stacks UK**.

Cup stacking, an individual or team activity, in which children stack and unstack cups through a variety of fun relay races and challenges, made its mark on more than 130 Key Stage 2 pupils.

And the pupils from **Barton** were recognised for 'showing good communication across all the activities' as the **Melbourn sports leaders** nominated schools for their collective participation, as well as handing out stickers to individuals for demonstrating the **School Games values of teamwork, determination and self-belief**.

Barton joined pupils from **Foxton, Swavesey, The Meadow (Balsham), Trumpington Park and Fen Drayton** in the morning session as teams took to the sports hall to take part in seven different dynamic activities that served to promote both hand-eye coordination and motor skills while fostering teamwork and healthy competition.

While the 'Caterpillar Relay', the 'Pyramid to 6' and the 'Stack and Back Relay' all proved popular, the hands down

favourite was the '3-3' timed stack!

Despite initially feeling a little 'overwhelmed', 'nervous' and 'scared', by the end of both the morning and afternoon sessions, the children left with smiles on their faces having thoroughly enjoyed the different activities on offer.

One pupil left saying, 'this has been amazing!' another stated how they had 'loved all of the activities' and 'can we do it again?'



DIFFERENT TYPES OF STACK: Pupils competed in different events with a variety of cups.

Delight at return of 'Tour'

In February half term, the Year 8 and 10 rugby and netball teams had the exciting opportunity to head on the first Comberton sports tour in many years!

Manchester was our destination, and a jam-packed few days awaited.

The first day saw us travel north, stopping on the way at the National Football Museum. In the evening, we attend a Rugby League game, where St Helen's took on London Broncos.

What an atmosphere! It was the first home game of the season for St Helen's, and they did not disappoint, winning the game 40-4. After a long day, and an early wake-up call ahead, our beds were calling.

We woke on Day Two with spirits high, as all the pupils went to breakfast representing Comberton in their new Canterbury tour kit.

We fuelled up ready to attend our pro-coaching sessions. The rugby boys headed to Sale Sharks, a Premiership rugby club, where they toured the facilities, before having a coaching session from Sharks' coaches.

Meanwhile, the girls had their session from the Manchester Thunder franchise.

They took part in both attacking and defending drills, before applying this to game play.

Charvi (8O) was awarded a signed Manchester Thunder netball at the end of the session due to her work ethic! Despite being exhausted from the coaching sessions, we managed to find some energy later on in the day for a swimming session, followed by bowling in the evening!

Day Three started with some already tired pupils... so what better than to visit a trampoline park! We headed to KickAir in Manchester, which gave pupils the great opportunity to show they are multi-talented!

With handsprings and somersaults galore from the likes of Jessica (8N) and Kim (10C). After lunch, we headed to our next training session, led by our staff team.

Mr Berwick was brilliant at leading the rugby, giving them time to practice game tactics ahead of our fixtures the next day.

Mrs Girling and Miss Baker led the girls, letting them practice and perfect the drills they learnt the day before.

After training, we, of course, found more time for activities, heading to the Trafford Centre for the pupils to show off their mini-golf skills!

The day finished at an arcade/interactive darts centre, where Mr Magan truly showed he was the 'King of Skill', by being the best at Shuffleboard (his favourite game)!

Our final, but most important day, dawned... fixtures day.

We headed to Salford University, where we had a last-minute training session.

This was especially helpful to determine positions and teams for the four netball squads.

With lots of pupils injured, we had a big job of moving people around to make up numbers. The flexibility of pupils and willingness to join other teams or play out-of-position was commendable.

We then made the journey to opponents Wickersley School and Sports College.

Very close and highly-contested games all round for all the teams, finishing with wins for both Year 8 netball teams but defeat for the Year 10s. It was the same in the rugby where the younger boys won their match but the older ones lost against 'a team the size of adults'.

Special mentions to Lottie (8E), who stepped up to play GK for the Year 10 A team, and Anna (10N) for her umpiring and coaching support throughout the tour.

The final biggest mention of them all goes to the tour organiser, Mr Hyde. We all had a brilliant time. Thank you for all your time and effort.

Rebecca Kingston, PE Department



GOOD SPORTS: Comberton's Year 8 and 10 rugby players and netballers on tour in Manchester.

Tough time for girls

The Year 9 team played in the first of what will be many district netball tournaments this year.

They headed to St Mary's to play against their hosts, St Bede's, Swavesey, Chesterton and Bottisham.

They had a tough day, coming away with two draws and three defeats. However, their progress and team spirit was very commendable and this team have gone from strength to strength, with a fantastic results in their friendly fixtures this year, especially against Cambourne recently.



WINNING PITCH: Means Comberton will have an exciting new club launching next term.

New club set to launch

The Dragons' Den project is an initiative from Living Sport.

David Welch, project leader, came into Comberton to launch this in January to a select group of our sports leaders.

The task for our sports leaders was to design and pitch a new sports club to engage pupils in Year 7 and 8 who do not take part in physical activity. The leaders had time with David to discuss common barriers that young people might face within PE, and what alternative activities might engage this group. The sports leaders went away for a week to

prepare their pitch, which to be delivered by a panel of Dragons (David Welch, Miss Kingston, Mrs Clarke and Mr Sycamore).

The pitches were phenomenal and the pupils had really thought about the costs, planning and delivering of their new club. The winning group pitched their idea of a Glow in the Dark sports club and best of all they have been granted £1000 to purchase the equipment to launch it next term. Congratulations to the winners Ella (10E), Arabella (10R), Izzy (10N), Freya (10N) and Emily (10T).

STRENGTH TO STRENGTH: The Year 9 netball team have made good progress.





TROPHY HUNTERS: The Year 7 and Year 10 teams are both still on the trail of silverware.

Teams dream of cup glory

It has been a busy few months for school football, with all teams entered into the District Cup and the Cambs FA Cup/Plate competitions.

With many rounds and lots of fixtures taking place, we have had some teams who have done exceptionally well.

The Year 7 boys team have gone from strength-to-strength and are chasing a trophy double. They are currently in the semi-final of the District Cup, and have made it to the final in the Cambs FA Cup after a stunning 6-3 semi-final win against Northstowe.

The Year 10 boys team have also made it through to the semi-final of the District Cup. They are due to play either St Bede's or Impington Village College after the Easter break. Keep your eyes

peeled for results.

The Year 7 girls' team had a fantastic victory in the quarter-final of the Cambs FA Plate competition. With only seven players (for a 9 a-side game), they managed to

come away with a 12-2 win over Cottenham!

Alongside all the fixtures has been some exceptional refereeing and officiating from our pupils. Thank you to Anna (10N), Kim (10C), Josh (10E), Oscar (10I), Jack (11N) and Harry (9M), who have been regular assistants at our games.

There are still lots more fixture to come, especially for the under-14 and under-16 girls' teams. Watch this space for an update in the next edition!



REMARKABLE WIN: For seven Year 7 girls in a 9-a-side game.

COMBERTON SPORTS & ARTS		FITNESS CLASS TIMETABLE				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
BODY BLAST 18:00 - 18:50 HANNAH	YOGALATES 17:40 - 18:40 SANDRA D	FITNESS PILATES 17:40 - 18:40 SANDRA D	STUDIO CYCLING 17:45 - 18:25 AYMEN	STUDIO CYCLING 17:30 - 18.15 JENNY BROWN	YOGA 10:00 - 11:00 JENNY BISHOP	STEP 09:00 - 10:00 AYMEN
STUDIO CYCLING 18:00 - 18:45 AYMEN	LBT 18:45 - 19:35 SANDRA D	CIRCUITS 18:45 - 19:45 TARA	CORE 18:30 - 19:00 AYMEN			YOGALATES 10:10 - 11:10 SANDRA D
DANCE AEROBICS 19:00 - 19:50 HANNAH	STUDIO CYCLING 19:45 - 20:30 JENNY BROWN		PUMP AND TONE 19:05 - 19:50 JO	FITNESS CLASSES FREE OF CHARGE FOR MEMBERS NON-MEMBERS WELCOME : £6 PER CLASS CONTACT CSA RECEPTION TO BOOK ON! TEL: 01223 264444 MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE FROM £30 A MONTH - WHICH INCLUDES: UNLIMITED USE OF FITNESS SUITE AND FREE WEIGHTS ROOM AND FREE BADMINTON COURT HIRE		
CIRCUITS 19:55 - 20:40 HANNAH						

National medalist

Year 7 Daniel has won a medal after qualifying for the British Schools Judo Championships for the first time.

The 7E pupil took bronze in the under-55kg class for those in Years 6 and 7 at the national finals in Sheffield earlier this month.

After winning two of his three fights, he was the third best Judoka at this weight and age at the event.

Earlier this term, the Melbourn Judo Club Orange Belt (9th Mon) member won the Eastern Region qualifying competition to book his place at the finals.

Older brother Oliver (9V) also reached the national finals but narrowly lost to the Bronze medal winner in the repechage, bringing his tournament to an end.

He had also qualified by winning the East Regional title in the Year 8 and 9 category. But he did it the hard way. With nobody else in his over 66kg weight category, the Green Belt (12th Mon) had to fight in the Year 10 and 11 class at the regional competition — and won the silver against the older boys as well as being awarded gold in his own category.

Melbourn Judo Club head coach Iain Reid said: "This event is the pinnacle for school judo and the set-up is exactly like the international events hosted by the European Judo Union and International Judo Federation and can be intimidating for some players.



TAKING UP THE FIGHT: Brothers represented Comberton at the British Schools Judo finals.

"Both boys dealt with their nerves well and put in excellent performances. We had five players there; two in Years 12 and 13 who are experienced athletes.

"It was good to see Oliver and Daniel listen to them and follow their advice in the warm-up area before going on to the mats."

Both boys got involved in the sport almost by accident.

They were attending Melbourn Sports Centre for swimming lessons, found out about the judo club and thought the training, both mental and physical, involved in the martial art, would complement the rugby training they were already doing at the time.



TEAMWORK IS EVERYTHING: Comberton's girls are in the finals of the English Schools Football Association under-18 Cup.

Comberton are awarded cup final place

Comberton's girls are through to a second successive national cup final.

A year after winning the English Schools Football Association under-16 trophy, half the victorious squad have helped the college into the final ESFA under-18 Arnold Clark Cup.

In their first season entering this age group, Comberton will now face Blenheim School, Kingston, for the trophy in the final at Stoke City's ground next term.

They were awarded a final place after their semi-final conquerors, Trinity Catholic College, from Middlesbrough, were disqualified for fielding ineligible players – there are strict rules on how many students joining a school only for sixth form can be included.

It was an unexpected twist for the Comberton Village College and Sixth Form's team of students in Years 11-13, who had thought their chance of going for the double was over after the semi-final defeat.

Earlier, they had come through two penalty shoot-outs this term to progress as the competition went national, having beaten East Anglian opponents in rounds 1-3 before Christmas.

In round four, they ousted The West Bridgford School, from Nottinghamshire, 3-1 in the shoot-out, after the game finished 2-2 after extra-time. It was a similar story in the fifth round where they finished level at a goal apiece with The Piggott School, from Berkshire, and Comberton went on to win the spot kick competition 4-3. And that was despite missing regular goalkeeper Liv, who was injured in the previous round. Bryana stepped in and did a fantastic job, saving two penalties with the shoot-out poised at 3-3. Earlier she had also dealt brilliantly with long-range shots from the visitors as they made Comberton's defence and midfield work hard during early exchanges.

However, Izzy, Summer, Jenna and Lola kept

them at bay with some well-timed tackles while Rose, Chloe, Sophie and Imogen forced errors from their opponents.

Comberton's forwards, Madison and Madeline, used their speed to outpace The Piggott School defence and in the second half, finally broke through, after the former made a great run but had her shot saved. Madeline followed up to score.

An injury to the visiting keeper unsettled the game for a while but did not deter the search for an equaliser, which came with 10 minutes left. With the teams locked at 1-1, the match went straight to penalties.

Having won the under-16 cup on spot kicks, Comberton have practised these often and Izzy, Madison, Madeline and Jenna coolly put away their efforts to give the home side victory.

● Football round-up — Page 27