

Keynotes

April to May 2023



Dear Parents and Carers

As you read this edition of the newsletter, we will be coming to the end of the first two weeks of the public exam season. Our Year 11 and Year 13 students have been working hard to prepare for the exams



that will take them on the next stage of their journey and their teachers have offered incredible support. I think it is worth acknowledging that our current Year 13 students have never sat formal public exams, so it is not surprising that there is more than a little anxiety about their experience. Last Friday, our Year 13s celebrated their 'Leavers Day' with a farewell Mass, speeches and BBQ and our Year 11s will do this same this week. We wish them all the very best for their exams and I am sure they will achieve everything they wish for when the results are opened in the summer.

You will see photographs of our 75th Anniversary celebration in this newsletter and I would like to thank all our staff, PTA and army of volunteers who helped make the day such a success. There were numerous inflatable activities such as Bubble Football which was a huge hit, traditional summer fayre stalls such as 'Splat the Rat' and a Coconut Shy and more modern additions such as a Photo Booth. Some of our Year 10 and Year 12 talented students provided the musical accompaniment and entertained our visitors with pieces from across the decades. If you joined us, I hope you had fun, took the opportunity to tour the school and learned something

about the history of St Peter's. I had the pleasure of meeting several Old Petrovians who attended the school in the fifties and had many stories to tell. They were overwhelmed at how the school had changed and developed and were delighted to see a thriving Catholic community still in place.



Finally, I would like to acknowledge the achievement of 126 of our Year 10 students who completed the first stage of their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award expedition last Friday and Saturday. We have a thriving DofE unit here at St Peter's and this is a record breaking year for Bronze participants. In a lovely quirk of timing on the same day that our Bronze participants were starting their expedition, several of our successful Gold awardees were at Buckingham Palace to celebrate their success and meeting the Duke of Edinburgh.

Enjoy your half term break and we look forward to an exciting final few weeks of the year.

God bless.

Mr T Miller, Headteacher

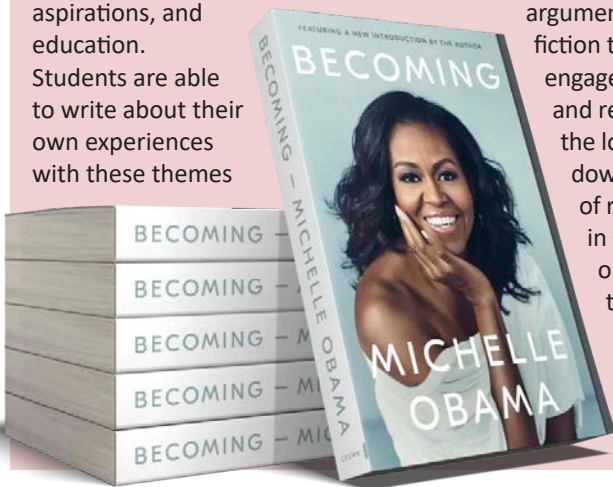


Curriculum Focus

New for Year 7 this year is an English Language unit centred around Michelle Obama's book, 'Becoming'. The unit is designed to develop and nurture creative writing skills in students by encouraging them to read and reflect on pivotal moments in Michelle Obama's life.

Throughout the unit, we focus on key themes such as: adversity, hope, aspirations, and education.

Students are able to write about their own experiences with these themes



and learn to explore the different ways they can present their emotions.

One of their favourite activities so far is where they imagine they are the Prime Minister and present a speech that focuses on what they want for the UK. This provides students with the platform to advocate for what is important to them, while also giving them experience in public speaking and developing an argument. By focussing on a non-fiction text, students are able to engage with the reality of success and read about the highs and the lows that come with chasing down aspirations. The examples of resilience and determination in the extracts gives them the opportunity to reflect on their own setbacks and how they can turn these into moments of growth on their own paths to success.

St Peter's Keys

I am delighted to confirm that the St Peter's keys have been awarded to Martha in Year 9 who has shown dedication to her sport and reached international level through years of dedication training and hard work.

Martha is an outstanding hockey player and has been selected for the UK Lions which is a national squad and is a pathway to adult international hockey. She played in a tournament in Holland over the Easter weekend and amazingly the UK Lions won in a dramatic penalty shoot-out final. Martha was brilliant and remained cool, calm and collected throughout!



McLaren Visit

We were treated to a fantastic visit by engineers from McLaren this month, who spent the day running workshops for students. Over 600 students in Years 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 attended and learned about the different STEAM careers (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) at the McLaren site in Woking. The icing on the cake were the two supercars that were brought along, including the brand new Artura hybrid super car. It was a fantastic day for both students and staff!



Year 12 RSE Day: A talk by Drugsline Education

On Friday 28th April, as part of Year 12 RSE Day, the Director of Drugsline, Steven Mervish, visited St Peter's to talk about the effects of drugs and the horrors he has witnessed through his time helping addicts and their families. Steven himself knows first-hand the destruction addiction causes as he graciously shared with us his experience as an addict living on the streets of London. His story was inspiring and focused on how important family is in dealing with these troubles, we learnt that his own son was what motivated him to get clean and revolutionised his life by creating Drugsline and revolutionising many others.

Steven then introduced James, who he has been working with and is impressively 11 months clean. James opened our eyes to how important self-esteem and encouragement is at a young age. He started using drugs

to increase his confidence around his friends at the age of 13, this eventually leading to him being in full blown addiction, destroying relationships and his opportunities at the time. However, he is now doing very well in his sobriety, and I felt proud of him even though I did not know him. Steven was incredibly memorable for everyone at St Peter's and really hit home for a lot of people listening. He was extremely down to earth and funny which lessened the load of the heavy topic of addiction and really communicated with us. He has faced so much adversity but still manages to be a genuinely good person and uses his experiences to help others rather than dwell on them which is very admirable.

Steven and James were massively influential and I think really educated a lot of us on the effects of drugs and alcohol which we did not think about

previously. It really made its mark on Year 12 and I want to thank them both very much and I wish James the best of luck in his sobriety. We're all rooting for you. **Written by Amber**

Feedback from Steven Mervish from Drugsline about our students:

I felt I could not let coming in to your school pass without writing to you, telling what a wonderfully inspirational group of young people you are. You made James and me feel so welcome. Right from the beginning of the day, James and I found you all to be so respectful towards each other and that says so much to me about all of you as individuals. There are some parts of the workshops where I am aware of the sensitivity of the subject, and other parts where we can have some fun. You ALL responded in such a positive way, that made the workshops even more enjoyable for me.

Art Update

It has been a busy time in the Art Department, 10 hours of GCSE and 15 hours of A Level Art and Photography exams. The students involved worked so hard and prepared thoroughly for these long periods of concentrated time.

In January, the students received a question paper from the exam board and have approximately 12 weeks to collect



and research their chosen theme. During the exam period, they bring together the successful elements of research to create an outcome. We are incredibly proud of their achievements. The sheer scale and ambition has been phenomenal.

Please put a note in your diary to attend the annual art exhibition on Wednesday 19th July from 5pm to 8pm in the Exam Hall and see for yourself some of this year's incredible work.

75th Anniversary Celebrations



Thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate the school's 75th anniversary on Saturday 13th May. It was a wonderful event with lots of fun activities for all ages to enjoy including a very popular memorabilia tent! It was also a great occasion for



some of our alumni to reminisce about their time at St Peter's. We were delighted to meet Mr Durkin who started at St Peter's in 1948 and Mr Wheeler who joined in 1950. If you are aware of any former students who missed this event and would like to be added to our alumni mailing list, please ask them to email Mrs Calvert. scalvert@st-peters.surrey.sch.uk

Student Success

This half term, we shine the spotlight on football and rowing success!

On Saturday, Josh in Year 9 represented Surrey Schools FA in a cup final at Plough Lane (Wimbledon FC) and they beat Sussex 6-1. The weekend before, they narrowly lost to another county 1-0 at Stoke City's ground and Josh was identified as one of the 'Players of the Match.' He attends these games in school uniform and represents St Peter's – congratulations Josh, keep up the good work!

At the weekend, Annie in Year 12 and Quinn in Year 8 represented Guildford Rowing Club in the Walton and Weybridge Regatta. This event was Annie's first race at senior level and she was fantastic. Quinn, who has only been rowing for one year, led his boat (first in the pairs and then in the fours), won at least one trophy and made it to another final! Well done to both of you.



Peace Garden Donations

Thanks to your generous donations we have made substantial progress with the redevelopment of the Peace Garden.

So far we have:

- Created new wheelchair and environmentally friendly hard surfaces
- Re-turfed the lawn
- Improved the soil in the flower beds
- Planted over 1500 bulbs and over 150 shrubs and perennials (these are named where possible)
- Taken softwood cuttings of the corn used to propagate these plants instead of buying new, transplanted ornamental grasses from elsewhere on the school site



Finally, we would like to:

- Upgrade the seating
- Purchase a water feature memorial
- Plant more spring and summer bulbs in the newest flower beds

If you would like to donate to help

us continue the work on the Peace Garden, we would be very grateful. You can donate via our GoFundMe page using the QR code here:



PE News...

Year 10 County Netball Finals 2023

After winning their Guildford tournament with a 100% win record earlier in the year, the 10A netball team participated in the County Netball Finals at Surrey Sports Park.

Although they were the first St Peter's team to reach these finals in the past five years, their nerves quickly passed once the girls started their games. With five games to play against the very best netball teams in the county, the day required motivation, determination and a lot of teamwork. Unfortunately, the team did not win but Miss Palmer said "I am so proud of this team and how far they have come. Their commitment to training, matches and each other is admirable and shines through in their gameplay. Every player shows determination to the end, no matter the result. I feel privileged to have watched them grow as people and as a team through the last four years."



Cricket Tournament

A combined Year 7/8 cricket team played in a tournament at Woolmer Hill earlier this week and secured a very respectable second place. The teamwork and support for one another was exceptional. Well done girls!

Volleyball Tournament

Some of our Year 9/10 volleyballers went to their first tournament in April at the Howard of Effingham School. We took two teams who ended up in the final against one another! The orange team won by one point and some exceptional skills were exhibited. A huge well done to all involved!



Rounders

Year 9 girls came 4th in their district rounders tournament last night in the sunshine at George Abbot! They narrowly missed out on 3rd place by half a rounder. The girls demonstrated great sportsmanship, team work and determination throughout and did St Peter's proud.

Match of the Day

Year 9 After reaching the District semi-finals last time, the boys had a solid start to this season starting off with back-to-back draws against Guildford County and George Abbot. This left us with a head-to-head showdown against Howard of Effingham at the turn of the year to try and get out of a very competitive group. A calm and composed performance brought about a 1-0 win to get to the semi-final stage again. The new year started with a B team tournament which St Peter's came away victorious in, showing the strength in depth that this year group has as a whole with loads of lads knocking on the door to earn a first team call up. A tricky away draw for the semi-final, but the boys stepped it up a gear and beat Woolmer Hill 9-0(!) with what was their best performance as a team to date.

This took us into the final with two minibuses full of supporters showing the community spirit in the year group, where we would yet again meet George Abbot (GA) after a tightly contested 3-3 earlier on in the season. St Peter's started and remained the best team throughout the first half, but were unable to capitalise on their domination, going into the break at 1-1. After staying in the game first half, GA were clinical in attack in the second half and took a 3-1 lead. St Peter's did not give up and managed to get a goal back taking it to a tense finale at 3-2. After throwing the bodies forward in desperate search



for an equaliser, GA got another on the counter to seal the game 4-2, a score line which looked harsh on the balance of play.

Well done for a fantastic season, going one step further yet again. Hopefully the same trend will continue next year ending with the trophy coming home!

Year 11 This was my first year with the boys as a team, inheriting them from Mr Price who did a stellar job last year of building a team full of hard-working lads who loved representing the school and each other. We started with the toughest of games against last year's winners Howard of Effingham and pulled off a brilliant 2-2 draw after a battling defensive display with moments

of attacking brilliance, just conceding at the end. This was enough to really build some confidence and what was already looking like a pivotal game to get us out the group, the boys went away to George Abbot knowing the winner was likely to take the second qualifying spot. If the first game was a hard-working gutsy defensive performance, this was that and more with some free-flowing attacking football when in possession bringing about a 3-0 win. A bye against County took us to the semi-finals where we would have an away game against top of the partner district, Rodborough. After the busyness of exam season, this was the boys first game in quite a few months, but they did not let that show, playing some brilliant football to take a commanding 6-2 win.

The season finished how it started, with a game against Howard of Effingham again, this time in the final. A great achievement to get this far and the boys were again supported by friends and teachers at Horsely FC. It was not to be on the pitch, despite another good and honest performance where they ran from first whistle to last, Howard showed why they were reigning champions taking the few chances when they came to win 3-0.

It has been a pleasure to coach you boys this year, but hopefully you enjoyed the many good experiences on the way.



Mental Health Awareness Week 2023

On Thursday 18th May, several staff wore an item of green clothing to show their support of Mental Health Awareness Week 2023. A staff member said, "Wearing green was a great conversation starter with students which led to a discussion on this year's theme about anxiety." As you are already aware, St Peter's is a big supporter of raising the awareness of mental health. Please click on the link for more information <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

School Trips...



Student Report: Geography Field Trip to Iceland

Over the Easter holidays, we went to Iceland and headed straight from Keflavik Airport to the lava tunnels. Upon arrival, we wore helmets and crampons and began the descent into the underground tunnel formed from volcanic activity. At the end of the tunnel, our guide turned the lights off. The tunnels can be considered as one of the darkest places on earth, where your eyes are unable to adjust to the low level of light and so this was a surreal experience for all! After the lava tunnels, we drove to the capital city of Reykjavík, where we swiftly dumped our bags at the hotel and went to the Hard Rock Café for dinner. We walked back to the hotel and went straight to bed following a very long day!

Day two was an early start and we drove to a glacier called Sólheimajökull and walked all the way to the top! There was a glacial stream which we drank straight from and washed our faces in, then after a group photo and further exploring, we drove onwards to have a quick lunch stop in the town of Vík.

After lunch, we carried on to the very popular black sand beach! The water along this coastline is so dangerous due to the rip tides that we were instructed by our tour guide to remain a minimum of 20m away from the water's edge! After that, we went to the first of two waterfalls. The first was called Skógafoss and is 60m tall! The waterfall marks where the former coastline was, and due to the amount of spray the waterfall consistently produces, there is a single or double rainbow on sunny days.

Overall, we were very lucky with the

weather and saw two 'glory' rainbows! The second waterfall was Seljalandsfoss, which is one of the only waterfalls in Iceland you can walk behind. Unfortunately, there was still a lot of ice from the winter along the path, resulting in us not being able to do that, but it was still amazing being able to admire it from the front! After a day full of activities, we drove to a remote hotel, with our fingers crossed to see the Northern Lights! In the evening, we all participated in the entertaining quiz prepared by Mr Dodsworth and then it was off to bed! Sadly, the Northern Lights did not make an appearance, but the adventures of the previous days made up for it!

The third day was Good Friday, so we started with a short liturgy followed by a waffle breakfast! After packing up, we drove to the Secret Lagoon, which is a geothermal-heated pool, and is the oldest in Iceland. We went in the pool



and enjoyed the natural warm water. After that, we went on to visit the three stops along the 'Golden Circle', which is a route showing Iceland's most popular natural attractions. The first stop was Gullfoss, which translates to 'Golden Falls', and is one of the most powerful waterfalls in Iceland, plummeting 105 feet (32 meters). There were lots of photo opportunities at all the stops, but one of the most memorable was our third stop of the day at Haukadalur Geothermal Field, where there are geysers that erupt every 5-10 minutes, which are some of the most frequent in the world! Many of us were walking round pinching our noses as it smelt like rotten eggs due to the sulphur! Luckily, we had time to stop off at an ice cream factory and then drove to the final stop along the Golden Circle, Thingvellir National Park. We returned to the original hotel, enjoyed dinner at the Burger Factory restaurant, where they ring a bell every time a baby is born and then went straight to bed after another long day.

On the final day, we hopped back onto the coach for a driving tour of Reykjavík and learnt a lot about the history and culture of the city. We were able to squeeze in a small amount of shopping, and then visit Hallgrímskirkja, which is a famous church in Iceland, followed by a trip to the Reykjanes Ridge, which is where we all stood in 'no man's land' in-between the Eurasian and North American plate. After the quick stop there, we made our way to the airport and after a slight delay, made our way home! It was an amazing trip of a lifetime! **Written by Meg**

UCAS Applications

On 18th May, UK universities finalised their decisions about which candidates to make offers to for September 2023. Many of our Year 13 students are currently holding offers for degree and apprenticeship courses across the country, with dozens of outstanding opportunities awaiting them. Some students are going to become subject experts in their disciplines; some will go on to be the doctors and emergency workers of the future; others still will enter into the business world with professional placements.

This year has been particularly successful for St Peter's, with five students gaining offers from Cambridge and three more being accepted onto Medicine degrees. Beyond that, more than eighty applicants have gained an offer from a Russell Group university, demonstrating not only the ambition of the cohort but the possibilities open to applicants in 2023. I wish each student the best, and I look forward to celebrating their achievements with them on A Level Results Day.

After half term, the Year 12s will begin their own application cycle, starting their personal statements for degree and apprenticeship courses beginning in 2024. I am greatly excited to be working with them in the final phase of their St Peter's careers.



Student Trip Report

DofE is a unique experience combining teamwork, leadership, stamina and navigating skills, mixed with exercise and lots of fun! Even though you will be feeling the burn while walking (particularly on the second day), I promise you, crossing the finishing line makes it all worthwhile and it feels like a genuine achievement.

The beauty of DofE is that you get the best of both worlds. Firstly, there is the educational side where you learn orienteering with a compass instead of Google maps, the pre-volunteering and camping skills such as putting up the tents and, of course, cooking outdoors. The roasted marshmallows were very popular in our big group! But secondly, it is a wild adventure with your friends; discovering new places, taking in the beauty of the countryside and exploring nature. Without a phone to look at, the great outdoors replaces Tik Tok and Insta!

The routes that we walked allowed us to take in the scenery and encounter

places we didn't realise were on our doorstep. I had a wonderful time with my friends, and we learnt so much, even when we were comparing blisters!

I have to admit we were relieved when we got to the end, particularly as we earlier thought we'd finished and then realised there were still three miles to go. You feel like you are on top of the world when you complete the course. It built up so much of my strength and it is something I will never forget.

DofE is something I heartily recommend. Just make sure you keep Sunday free for rest and recovery!

Written by Matylda



Year 7 Election

And the winner of the 2023 By-Election for St Peter's Catholic School is... **Finn and the Green Party (7KO)** after a fab campaign based on the Lorax.

The students had a great day and hopefully learnt a lot about politics and developing skills of working together, time management, organisation etc. They should all be very proud of themselves!



Prom Outfit Donations

Thank you for all the wonderful Pre-Loved Prom donations. If anyone is still in need of an outfit, please contact Mrs Mastromarco to arrange an appointment. **Email: smastromarco@st-peters.surrey.sch.uk**

