eNewsletter: Friday 1st May 2020

Welcome to the latest eNewsletter

An Introduction from Headmaster, Leo Winkley

As May Day arrives, and we come towards the end of the second week of this summer term, the academic programme in remote has found a reassuring yet bouncy rhythm. The Commendations and Floreat nominations have been rolling in and teachers have been commenting very positively on the enthusiasm and productivity of the pupils. The virtual co-curriculum has landed, with its diverting range of activities across the four quarters of Salopian life: the intellectual, active, expressive and reflective. Housemasters and housemistresses, ably supported by tutors, have been keeping in touch with your children. It's been terrific to see how creatively colleagues are using this contact time – both for serious enquiry about your children's wellbeing and for light-hearted happenings and competitions or the simple fun of being together and sharing experiences of life in lockdown.

Wherever you are in the UK or across the globe, I do hope that your children have found both challenge and enjoyment in the week's learning. Spending time with their fellow pupils and teachers, albeit via screen and satellite, should have given them plenty of reassurance, encouragement - and fun. Looking ahead to the coming week, we will be sending out a survey to a large sample of pupils to give us feedback on their experience of the remote learning programme. Comments from parents and pupils so far have been very positive, which is excellent. However, we know there will be ways for us to improve the experience for the pupils. We will use pupil responses to reinforce what is working well and identify any improvements to make. You'll notice that each week will see the introduction of new elements: for example, the Upper Sixth received information yesterday on the fantastic programme devised by Head of Futures, Chris Wain and Head of Higher Education, Toby Percival. We aim to keep the curriculum - and our teaching - fresh and stimulating.

Speculation continues over when and how schools might re-open in the UK. We have good access to those conversations. Schools have been promised that any announcements – some of which seem likely to be made next week – will give us adequate planning time. It is likely that if schools are allowed to re-open to pupils, it will be for a limited number, across specified year groups and with a range of control measures in place. I shall speculate no further, but are working carefully to plan and be in a position to respond to any forthcoming announcements. Meanwhile, we continue to invest our time and energy in making the virtual Shrewsbury as good as it can possibly be.

Poetry connoisseurs amongst you will know TS Eliot's masterwork 'The Wasteland' in which he describes April as "the cruellest month". Certainly, the world has seen exceptional restrictions, hardship and worse over the past 30 days. However, alongside some truly beautiful weather in April, the month also brought remarkable acts of kindness and social responsibility. In the UK, the exploits of an elderly war veteran have captured the imagination of nation: his efforts have now raised over £32 million for the NHS. Even in straitened times, basic human goodness seems to inspire and motivate. Social media channels have resounded with inventive communal and individual challenges. In our corner of the world, we have seen much of the same indefatigable and good-hearted spirit in the initiatives and acts of pupils and staff. ⚫ Please follow this link to read more about an UVI pupil raising essential money for her community in Kenya.

Today, I was delighted to host a Virtual Floreat with 7 Salopians in the UK, France, Russia and China – ⚫ listed here.

The unfolding of an English summer is a thing of great joy. In a quiet moment walking around Top Common, I found myself lamenting the absence of ⚫ cricket. In truth, though, it is the absence of pupils that we really feel. An empty school campus (however beautiful) is a hollow place and those of us here may feel like one of Eliot's 'hollow men'. However, it is a new month and there are countless ways in which this wonderful school is thriving even in remote. Read on for abundant evidence of the vibrancy of Salopian life...

Do keep in touch. Please, don't hesitate to raise concerns if you have them, or indeed to let us know when things are going well.

As ever, I wish you and your families well. Happy May Day.

Leo Winkley

An update from Maurice Walters, Deputy Head Academic

One of the things that has been slightly surprising about this lockdown period has been the speed with which things we once considered strange and unusual have settled down into something approaching a rhythm of normality. My increasingly lengthy and unruly hair aside, order has been brought routinely out of chaos through a remarkable spirit of determination. This has been especially true on both sides of the remote learning programme – teachers have been grappling with new technologies and platforms to ensure that lessons can be delivered in as dynamic and interactively as possible and the pupil response has been quite remarkable. Interactions over Zoom with all year groups have demonstrated Salopians to be engaged and thoroughly committed to real and impressive progress regardless of the obstacles and their tenacity, continued resilience and intellectual enthusiasm has brought real pleasure and pride to our community.

⚫ Please follow this link to read the full update from Maurice Walters

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An update from Peter Middleton, Deputy Head Co-Curricular

Salopian Inspiration: Creativity

Who or what inspires you?

A couple of months ago I was asked who or what inspires me. The answer I alighted on for that particular presentation was to talk about Ethiopian running coach Sentayehu Eshetu. What makes him such an inspirational figure is perhaps for another time and another article, but I have been reminded of him in recent weeks and have seen so much of what I admire about his approach being replicated right here at Shrewsbury, whether it's the positivity and boundless enthusiasm of our staff or, indeed, in the resourcefulness they've shown in developing the programme for the summer term.

⚫ Please follow this link to read the full update from Peter Middleton

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An update from Anna Peak, Deputy Head Pastoral

As the remote schooling routine settles it is worth pausing to acknowledge that it is common to have good and bad days. 'All over the place' feeling or concerns is not personal failings; they are a normal reaction to the unfamiliar. Trying easily? It's because your brain is working hard and juggling complex tasks whilst dealing with the different routines you are establishing. Perhaps future based goals, projects and dreams have disappeared. Do not worry, it's your brain knowing that working in the short term right now is a safer way for you to cope.

⚫ Please follow this link to read the full update from Anna Peak

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Notices to Parents and Guardians

Stay Active Shrewsbury - Sports Roundup

⚫ Please follow this link to view our weekly Sports Roundup

Launching our First Virtual Friday Concert

⚫ Please follow this link to view our amazing Virtual Friday Concert

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Latest News

Careers Insight Talks
Friday 1 May 2020

This week saw the launch of daily careers insight talks, delivered by former pupils of the School.

[Read More]

Letters from Shrewsbury No. 8: Dear Cricket
Friday 1 May 2020

The latest in the Headmaster's series of 'Letters from Shrewsbury'. A letter to 'Dear Cricket' - a love letter...

[Read More]

Pupil Mairi Raises Essential Money for Kenyan Community
Friday 1 May 2020

The effects of COVID-19 aren't always the illness itself, and Mairi (UVI, MSH) has been raising essential money to help others.

[Read More]

Sir Eric Anderson
Friday 1 May 2020

In memoriam of Sir Eric Anderson, Shrewsbury School Headmaster 1975-1980, by Dr David Gee.

[Read More]

Futures & Higher Education Bulletin
Friday 1 May 2020

A Summer Term week 2 Bulletin from the Futures Department, full of useful information, reminders, resources and weblinks for Fifth and Sixth Formers and their parents.

[Read More]

My Journey Home
Thursday 30 April 2020

A first-hand account from a Third Form pupil traveling home to China in March.

[Read More]

Forthcoming Events

All these events, and many others, are listed in detail in our website Calendar

No Events added to the Newsletter.