



The Gosford Times

The Termly Newsletter of Gosford Hill School

Term 2 – December 2025

www.gosfordhillschool.org



*May your Christmas be
Merry and Bright!*



New Build Project Update: Demolition and Site Preparation Underway



It's been a busy and exciting term on site as our new build project gathers momentum. On Tuesday 2nd December, a large excavator arrived to begin the demolition of the redundant Maths terrapin on the former Maths playground. These temporary classrooms – originally installed c1998 and standing empty for several years – had long outlived their intended lifespan. Some of our alumni may remember them as M5 and M6, with colleagues such as Mrs Davys, Mr Slater and Mr Brand teaching in them over the years, to name just a few. By the morning of Friday 5th December, the structures were completely removed, with only the final debris left to clear.

On Monday 8th December, demolition began on the prefabricated concrete building that sat adjacent to the Maths terrapin. Just one day later, it had been completely removed. Originally constructed in 1950 as the school library, the building served many purposes over the years, including classrooms for Languages, tutor offices and reprographics. In more recent years it was used as a caretaker's store, before standing disused following Covid.

Elsewhere on site, a dedicated team has been carrying out asbestos removal works at the former caretaker's bungalow in preparation for its demolition. This area continues to be

cleared and levelled in preparation for the installation of temporary classrooms. Work is also progressing to level, widen and re-tarmac the former Bicester Road entrance. Once finished, this will initially provide construction access and upon completion of the new build project will reopen for site access to the school. Many former students will remember using this route to walk or cycle to school before its closure at the turn of the millennium. We'll keep you updated as work progresses!



All the Fun of the Christmas Fair!

The Hall was filled with festive cheer on the afternoon of Saturday 6th December as we hosted our annual Christmas Fair. There was music from the Gosford Hill Soul Band, plenty of refreshments, craft stalls and a variety of games for all to enjoy. We were even treated to a special visit from Father Christmas himself (Riley H, 7EMK)! It was lovely to see the Hall bustling with visitors from both our school community and the wider community, all joining together in the festivities. Thank you to our stall holders, to everyone who generously donated prizes for the tombola, and to the students and colleagues who gave their time to lead activities and support the event. Your contributions helped make the afternoon fun for everyone!



Johnathan Shines on the West End Stage



Congratulations to Johnathan, one of our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, who recently performed at His Majesty's Theatre, London, in a spectacular West End production of 'Across The Line' alongside his classmates from PQA Bicester.

On Sunday 9th November, Johnathan took to the famous stage – home of 'The Phantom of the Opera' – for an experience he'll never forget! In the first half of the show, Johnathan performed as part of the ensemble and in the second half, he stepped into a main role as Bailey – the fun and cheeky dog who guides the story's heroes, The Voyagers, on their adventure. This role even included operating a large puppet and delivering a solo monologue that opened the second act.



Johnathan described the experience as "incredible" and shared how special it felt to perform on the same stage as Phantom of the Opera, even getting ready in the production's dressing rooms! He expressed his thanks to the supportive theatre staff, his principal at the PQA in Bicester, LW Theatres, and especially Pauline Quirke MBE for providing performers like him with such a remarkable opportunity. Well done, Johnathan – your school community is very proud of you!

Celebrating Creativity and Kindness at Christmas

Congratulations to Florence, Simrit and Vasee in Year 7 for designing this year's official school Christmas cards. We were delighted by the number of entries received and would like to thank all students who took part for their creativity and effort. The cards were sent to our neighbours and to residents of nearby care homes, and we are grateful to the students who helped to write thoughtful messages inside them. We hope this small gesture helped to spread some festive cheer and reflect the kindness and community spirit of our school.



Year 9 Explore War and Medicine in London Museums

On Tuesday 4th November, our Year 9 students had the opportunity to visit the Imperial War Museum and The Old Operating Theatre Museum in London. The purpose of the trip was to deepen their understanding of the First World War, which they study in Year 9, and to give them an introduction to the GCSE History of Medicine topic. Below, Liliana and Sophie share their reflections on the visit.

"In the Old Operating Theatre, we learnt all about the way that people were operated on a long time ago. We learnt about the fact that they used to pin people down because they didn't have anaesthetic, so the patients could feel everything! There was supposedly "no such thing as germs" so they didn't know why people were dying so much and just called it "hospital fever". The hospitals were very dirty, so obviously bacteria spread a lot and was the main cause of hospital deaths. I (Liliana) got to lay down on the operating table, as they talked about what they would do."

Written by Liliana, 9LPY

"Gosford Hill School went on a history trip to the Imperial War Museum in London to learn more about World War I. It was a really interesting experience, and we got to see lots of real artefacts from the time, like uniforms, weapons and letters from soldiers. The Museum had powerful displays that showed what life was like in the trenches and how the war affected people both on the front lines and at home. Seeing the original objects and stories helped us understand what we've been learning in class much more deeply. Overall, it was an educational and memorable trip that brought the history of World War I to life."

Written by Sophie, 9LPY



Drama Department Trip – ‘The Nutcracker’ at Creation Theatre

“On December 3rd, me and other GCSE drama students had the opportunity to attend ‘The Nutcracker’, presented by Creation Theatre at the Northwall Theatre in Summertown. This vibrant adaptation of the cherished ballet takes an innovative approach, emphasising engaging storytelling and humour above the traditional ballet aesthetics, resulting in a captivating performance that we all found incredibly enjoyable.”

You can read Ella-Sky’s full review [here](#).

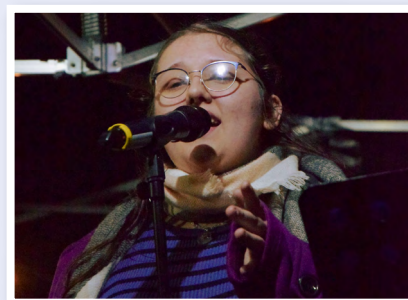
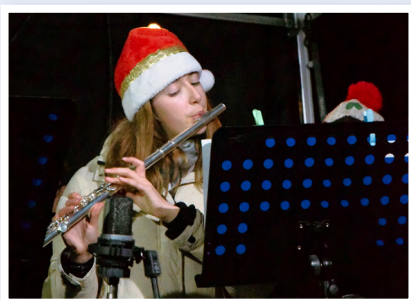
Written by Ella-Sky H, 11MWS



Soul Band at the Kidlington Christmas Lights Switch On

Thank you to Mr Purtell and our super Soul Band for delivering such a fantastic performance at the Kidlington Christmas Lights Switch-On on Thursday 27th November! It was wonderful to see so many of our students in the crowd, showing their support and singing along. The Gosford Hill School Soul Band has been very busy this term with all of the seasonal festivities going on inside and outside of school. They’ve also performed at our Christmas Fair, Carol Concert and Christmas lunch in the dining hall. Well done and thank you for your efforts, everyone!

📷 Photographs: Evie D, 11ADN



Sixth Form visit to the Bethlem Museum of the Mind

Year 12 and 13 Psychology, Sociology and Health & Social Care recently took part in an enriching visit to the Bethlem Museum of the Mind, located within one of the world’s oldest working psychiatric hospitals. The day began with an engaging talk exploring the history of the hospital and the changing approaches to mental health care through the ages. Students then explored the museum’s fascinating collection, which included Rorschach ink blots, original patient artwork, a reconstructed padded cell and examples of early restraints used in hospital settings.



The visit concluded with an interactive workshop in which students examined a case study, applying the Mental Health Act and developing therapeutic care plans. Many students valued the hands-on approach, with one commenting, “It was a blast! The interactive museum was fun and intriguing,” while another noted, “I enjoyed applying my knowledge to the case studies and developing an argument for and against the question.” Overall, the visit provided a powerful and thought-provoking learning experience that linked well with students’ studies.

Festive Afternoon Tea for Local Elderly Residents

We had such a lovely time hosting our Festive Afternoon Tea for elderly residents from the local community in December. This was the second year we have held this special event, which was planned entirely by two of our dedicated Senior Students, Nicole W and Daniel M. Our guests enjoyed tea and coffee accompanied by a selection of sandwiches and sweet treats, all served by students from across the year groups. Festive songs performed by our Sixth Form students added a warm seasonal atmosphere. We were really pleased to be joined by students from St Thomas More Primary School, who gave wonderful performances of Christmas songs and carols for everyone to enjoy.

Afterwards, our special guests joined in a fun quiz followed by an exciting round of bingo, teaming up with some of our students. A raffle rounded off the afternoon, offering a great selection of prizes, including a Christmas tree voucher generously donated by Bunkers Hill Plant Nursery. A big thank you to Nicole and Daniel for organising such a lovely occasion, to Dr Arnold for arranging the raffle, and to Mr Bateman for ensuring everything ran smoothly.



Crafting Canine Creations!



Year 9 students have been highly challenged during their six-week Textiles project, developing confidence and skill in machine stitching. The focus of the project was to design and produce a delightful dog doorstop, requiring students to use pattern cutting and work accurately with fabric using more challenging machine techniques. Throughout the process, students demonstrated excellent problem-solving skills to achieve a high-quality finished product, thoughtfully selecting from a range of colourful fabrics. The final outcomes reflect both creativity and growing technical expertise.

Mrs North, Teacher of Textiles

News from the Library

On Wednesday 12th November, five Year 10 students went to the annual Oxfordshire Book Awards held at Magdalen College School in Oxford. After a drawing workshop led by Korky Paul (who illustrated the famous Winnie the Witch series) and a quiz, the awards themselves took place with all the winning authors giving speeches about their background and how they came to write their books. Our students were reading books in the Best Secondary Novel category and the winning title was *Catch Your Death* by Ravena Guron.

The students enjoyed the occasion and agreed that it is a wonderful local event to be involved in. A list is now being drawn up for next year's group who will read the books that have been selected for the 2026 shortlist.

Mrs Hall, Librarian

Drama Department Trip – ‘The BFG’ at The Swan Theatre, Stratford-Upon-Avon

On Wednesday 3rd December, the Drama department arranged a theatre trip for Year 12 and 13 Drama students to see *The BFG* at The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon. This performance by the Royal Shakespeare Company, renowned for producing first-class theatre, provided an inspiring experience for students. Below is an extract from a superb review written by Scott N-C (Year 13). You can read his full review [here](#).

Miss Brimble, Subject Leader – Drama

"The third door on Miss Brimble's advent calendar saw a Sixth Form trip to the RSC to see a contemporary adaptation of Roald Dahl's beloved BFG. Bus driver Mr Smith skipped the performance to enjoy his long-awaited McDonald's, but what he ultimately missed out on was one of the most immersive, eye-catching and technologically advanced displays the drama department has ever seen. Not only did Tom Wells' adaptation of the childhood favourite appeal to eyes and ears, but was also carefully crafted to enhance the deeper meaning behind the piece, tackling concepts such as class, kindness, and of course, friendship in a lighthearted and easy to watch manner allowing us to laugh, gasp and grin all at the same time."



Careers News

Year 9 connects with Professionals at Speed Networking Event

On Thursday 4th December, our Year 9 students participated in a Speed Networking event designed to develop vital communication skills whilst giving them an insight into the world of work.

We welcomed representatives from eight different sectors, including Healthcare, Event Management, Technology, Communications, and HR. This provided students with a broad glimpse into the world of work, following on from their experience in Year 8 with different professions.



The speed networking format encouraged students to develop their confidence speaking to adults as they met professionals for short, focused discussions. The event's key goals were:

- **Practice Communication:** Students honed their skills in asking thoughtful questions and actively listening.
- **Identify In-Demand Skills:** Students learned directly from employers about the specific skills and attributes they look for in successful candidates.
- **Career Reflection:** The session helped students reflect on their own strengths and areas of work that might interest them for future careers.

The event provided students with another high-impact experience to bridge the gap between school and the professional world. A big thank you to all the professionals who volunteered their time!

Year 7 Students Excel at Oxford SMARTSTEM Day!

Eighteen of our Year 7 students visited the University of Oxford on Wednesday 10th December for a brilliant SMARTSTEM Day event, hosted at Trinity College and Jesus College, in partnership with SSEN.

This fantastic day was designed to ignite a passion for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) subjects, encouraging students to consider these fields as they approach subject choices.



The day was filled with engaging activities:

- **Ecological Engineers:** Students worked as teams, using LEGO to design and construct an innovative Ecopark, blending creativity with technical problem-solving.
- **Embracing Curiosity:** An inspiring session urged students to always be curious and keep asking the fundamental question of 'Why?'

Following a delicious lunch and tour of Trinity College, the day concluded with a lively careers fair. Students earned raffle tickets for asking questions to employers, giving them the chance to win prizes, including iPads!

Our Year 7 students were excellent ambassadors, showing great enthusiasm. Thank you to SMARTSTEMs, SSEN, and the University of Oxford for hosting such an enriching experience!

Mrs Zajac, Careers Lead

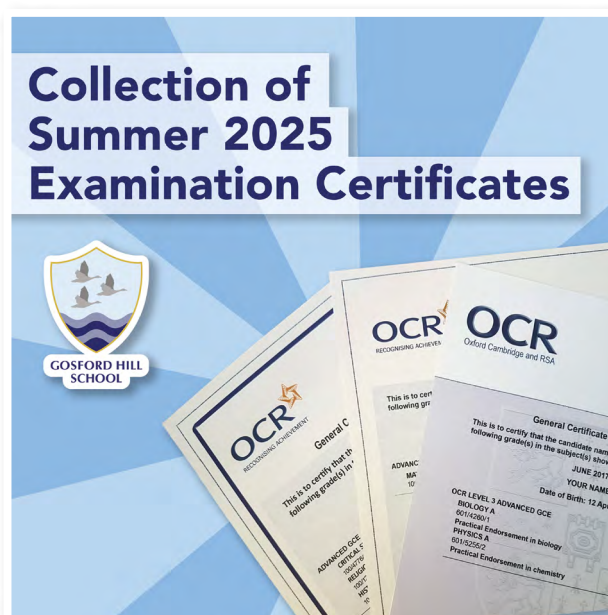
Collection of Summer 2025 Examination Certificates

Summer 2025 examination certificates will be available to collect from Reception between Monday 12th January and Friday 23rd January 2025 (between 9:30am and 4:00pm).

Candidates may arrange for certificates to be collected on their behalf, or posted via recorded delivery (at a cost) by completing the form at the bottom of the 'Exams Information' page of our school website: <https://gosford-hill.oxon.sch.uk/information-for-parents/exam-information/>

Authorised persons must provide photographic ID evidence on collection of certificates.

We recommend that you collect your certificates as soon as possible. Gosford Hill School will keep your certificates for a maximum of one year. After that, they will be destroyed. Please look after your certificates, as some awarding bodies do not offer a replacement certificate service.



Dates of Terms: 2025 - 2026

Autumn Term	Wednesday 3rd September 2025 – Friday 19th December 2025
Half Term	Monday 27th October 2025 – Friday 31st October 2025
Christmas Holiday	Saturday 20th December 2025 – Sunday 4th January 2026
Spring Term	Monday 5th January 2026 – Friday 27th March 2026
Half Term	Monday 16th February 2026 – Friday 20th February 2026
Easter Holiday	Saturday 28th March 2026 – Sunday 12th April 2026
Summer Term	Monday 13th April 2026 – Friday 17th July 2026
Half Term	Monday 25th May 2026 – Friday 29th May 2026

INSET Days

Monday 1st September 2025, Tuesday 2nd September 2025, Thursday 25th September 2025, Friday 1st May 2026, Monday 20th July 2026.

Contacting Your School

School Reception:

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School Email:

office@gosfordhillschool.org

School Website:

www.gosfordhillschool.org

Absence Line:

Telephone: **01865 855378** (Please use this number to report absences)

Email: **attendance@gosfordhillschool.org**