



Spring Term 2020

This has been an exceptionally busy and really rather bizarre Spring Term. In fact, as I reflect on all that has happened since the Christmas newsletter, I am in awe at just how hard everyone has worked to enable so much to happen. Developing resilience is one of the key foci with all our students and this term has certainly presented us with many opportunities to rehearse and demonstrate this important attribute. In addition to the usual bespoke provision, we have included a full week of work experience for our Year 9, 10 and 11 students, several public examinations, annual reports to parents of secondary students, a very successful and well attended Parents' Evening in place of the Spring 2 Education Reviews and continuing cultural capital enrichment opportunities including a new and exciting partnership with Leighton Park School.

Things never stand still at Foundry, so let me update you on our student and staff changes this term. We have welcomed four new students into the primary classroom, seven more into our secondary provision and thirteen new students are receiving support from the Medical / Vulnerable programme. During the term, four secondary students have left us and we have said goodbye to one primary student who has moved out of area. The untimely arrival of Covid-19 has put three further 'forever school' placements on hold. We wish all these students the best for the future.

Our staffing position looks equally good with just one staff member, Jacquie Little, leaving us to join the Probation Service. I am delighted to report that we have successfully recruited two new Teaching and Learning Support Specialists, Stephen Hammerstone and Kirsty Howden, both of whom started in February. For now, we are fully staffed, however with the completion of the Brambles Development, we will be recruiting additional staffing to enable the delivery of our curriculum from September.

On the subject of the Brambles Development, Phase 1 was completed on schedule at half term and we have moved in, vacating our former corridor for refurbishment. Sadly Covid-19 has brought works to a halt, so for the foreseeable future there will be no further progress to report. Wanting to be optimistic, the scheduled completion date of the end of August is still possible given there was a planned 4 week suspension of all works for the duration of the Year 11 exams, which will no longer be necessary... but who knows how long the "stay at home" directive will last.

Finally, a word about the Year 11s and their exams. I have been very impressed by the determination shown by so many of our students to continue to engage in their education and to generate additional evidence of their current attainment, many through home schooling with resources provided by their teachers. These are unprecedented times and we will do all we can to support our students in being awarded the examination grades that they deserve.

The strangeness of these times continues when I remind you that the Summer Term actually begins on Monday 20th April and you should note that Foundry College will be closed to all on Friday 8th May for the Bank Holiday. In reality, in response to the Government's directive, Foundry will remain open over the Easter holiday period to a small group of students, looked after by a very much reduced staff team. We will endeavour to keep you updated with our plans going forward as the Covid-19 response continues to evolve.

All that remains is for me to pass on my best wishes for Easter and my hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well.

Jay



Foundry visits the Battlefields

On the weekend of 6-9th March 2020, 2 staff and 2 students from Foundry College headed off with the First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme to visit the Battlefields of Ypres in Belgium and The Somme in France to develop their historical knowledge and gain experiences to influence their creative writing and Expressive Art.

It was a first for the College, a trip abroad trip and taking place over three nights; so a huge adventure.

Many cemeteries and memorials were visited including Tyne Cot Memorial near Ypres, where it was decided the bodies and remains of the soldiers from across the Ypres Salient would be buried. The remains of over 11,956 soldiers are buried here with a further 34,927 recorded as missing on the memorial walls, creating an overwhelming display of headstones and architectural panels. You are actively encouraged to climb up the poignant central Cross of Sacrifice and take in the enormity of the site and the view across to the cathedral in Ypres 8km away.

We placed a wreath by the grave of Alfred Hurdwell, a local soldier originally from Honey Hill, Wokingham, whose name we had been given to research and then locate at Tyne Cot.

We also placed some Wokingham soil at the grave of a French soldier at the Notre-Dame-de-Lorette Memorial at Ablain-Saint-Nazaire, northern France, where over 42,000 French soldiers lie having given their lives in WW1. Along-side this is a modern elliptical war memorial designed by Phillipe Prost and engraved with the names of all 580,000 men who died during the war, whatever their rank and nationality, all etched alphabetically forever in copper.



At Thiepval, we saw the magnificent memorial built to honour 72,337 missing British and South African servicemen who died in the Battles of the Somme between 1915 and 1918 who gave their lives yet have no known grave. We paid our respects to another local Wokingham man, John George Thomas Merit, listed on column 11D.

Our visit to see The Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate was very moving, the firemen of Ypres playing their cornets perfectly. This has been done every night at 8pm since 1928.

It is an act they vowed to perform, in order to honour and remember those who died. They have only missed a period during WW2 when the ceremony was moved to Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey. The memorial bears the names of more than 54,000 soldiers who died in Belgium and have no known grave.

Our final day took us to see the amazing work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which continues to maintain the up-keep of physical graves and online records of the thousands of soldiers who have died since WW1 up to the present day. The initial decision to bury soldiers where they died in battle continues, resulting in 23,000 memorial sites spread around the world commemorating soldiers from more than 150 different countries, each with a personalised headstone, made and carved at Beaurains, France. Their core principles, articulated in the Royal Charter in 1917 remain relevant today stating that all the headstones should be uniform and permanent and that there should be equality of treatment for the war dead irrespective of rank or religion; that every one of the fallen should be commemorated by name on a headstone or memorial. It was a very moving experience to see headstones being actually carved on the day, ready to replace a weathered, unreadable old one or to mark the resting place of a newly fallen soldier.



As well as the obvious historical, literary and art knowledge our students gained, they built friendships with students from other visiting schools included in our party and coped with new routines, new experiences and maintained our high expectations impeccably. They were a credit to school and family and it was a real pleasure and privilege to enjoy their company. Lots of laughter, plenty of grit, even some tears, 'thanks girls' we would happily take you anywhere.

We would like to give our thanks to the FWWCBT programme for enabling this trip to take place and the CWGC for its unending dedication in continuing its traditions of honouring those soldiers who die on the frontline, named or unknown.

It was a real privilege to be part of what turned out to be the last centenary battlefields tour.

For further info, please contact:

www.cwgc.org

www.centenarybattlefieldtours.org





**It was the best of times, it
was the worst of times.**

Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens: A Tale of Two Cities

The English Department have had a very busy term as our students produced pieces of controlled assessment for their iGCSE exam as well as preparing for, and completing, their spoken language presentations. Additionally, where possible, all our Key Stage 4 students sat their Functional Skills Level 1 English Language. At the time of typing, the results for the writing paper have not been published. However, we can report that the number of passes in the reading paper saw an unprecedented percentage.

On the subject of 'unprecedented', we have to applaud our students for being so well prepared for their summer exams, which has made it all the more difficult when we heard that the exams would be cancelled this year. Rather than 'give up', students asked what they needed to do to secure a grade to which our response was; 'provide as much evidence as possible'. Despite this being unsettling for all, students have rolled their sleeves up, asked for appropriate support and are working extremely hard to produce as much evidence as possible in order to secure their predicted grade.



Our 'unprecedented' circumstances was the stimulus for a piece of prose, created by the very talented Cerys Crellin, whom you may remember from the Christmas newsletter, won a national poetry competition last year. We think Cerys has beautifully summarised these strange times and we hope you enjoy this piece as much as we did.

Break Time

For the 12th time today I light up another 'gret, my skin gently warms as the evening sun blazes down on me. The world is quiet. Barren, but at ease. It feels like time has stopped ticking and the world has been put on pause. I can see the heat evaporating off the pavement that was once smothered with crisp autumn leaves. I hear bird song that I have never encountered before because they have been overpowered by the erupting engines of cars. Before it was like a competition of who's the loudest, now the birds have won. I take another drag of my ciggie which I feel like I have been smoking for days. I am okay with that. The world has stopped spinning and the streets are bare. No movement. No voices, apart from the sounds of burning and the gentle exhale from my lungs. Nature is satisfied, and for once I am too. I breathe in and all I can smell is a mixture of fresh daffodils and the smell of spring bloom. The smell of tranquillity fills my nostrils. Sweet revenge from Mother Nature as she forces the whole world into hibernation in a matter of minutes. Now nature can come out from hiding. The birds can fly without breathing in toxic fumes, the bees have a million opportunities to pollinate, and the rabbits can run free without the fear of the farmer's gun. The lack of selfishness and hatred makes my heart finally be at peace with the world. Within 5 minutes nature has crept out of its cocoon and has already started celebrating. For the 12th time today I stub my cigarette out into the ashtray. I take once last glance at the potentials of nature which it has been modestly denying all this time. I am at peace with myself and I am appreciative of nature but I am still disheartened with humankind.

We liked it so much that we sent it to the Wokingham Paper who have agreed to publish it before Easter. We are all enormously proud of this achievement.

Occupational Studies

Until the recent school closure, almost all pupils studying the course were on track to achieve their Level 1 or Level 2 qualification. Those who have been with us for a while have almost all completed their Level 1 units and many are well into Level 2, where most are learning to carry out brickwork operations, are developing their cooking skills or have embarked on a fitness programme. A few pupils are working towards or have completed other units, more specific to their own interests. Completing 1, 2 or 3 of these units will give the pupils enough credits to gain a Level 2 award. The evidence we have for all the pupils is good, but with them all at different stages of completion it is difficult to know what impact the current situation will have on the final outcome of the qualification. The situation is still less clear than it is for the GCSE qualifications but we will keep you advised as we learn more. Work to support the course is being placed on Doodle and this will give pupils an opportunity to build on their evidence base whilst they are not in school. This extra evidence may be very important in determining the outcome of their studies.



The course continues to have a practical focus and we have been particularly busy with the bricklaying unit continuing throughout the winter months because of the fairly mild weather conditions. The quality of the work being produced by many of the pupils is very respectable and although the physical skills are quite difficult to master our pupils are showing resilience and a determination to get the work right, which is a delight to see. For some of the pupils who have managed to complete the unit we have managed to organise weekly trips to a local farm, where they have the opportunity to put these newfound skills into practice in a real environment. There are a wide range of construction and maintenance projects for the pupils to get their teeth into and it gives them a good introduction to the world of work. Although presently on hold, we hope to continue work at the farm when the government advise that it is safe to do so.



Little Drummer Boy

Primary have had the wonderful opportunity of visiting **Leighton Park School** in Reading for drumming sessions with a great team of teachers in their Musical Department.

Once a week, the boys have been attending one to one sessions that have allowed them to understand the various instruments that make up a drum kit. They have learnt the correct use of drumsticks, cymbals and all the accessory hardware such as pedals. The boys have shown great improvement over the weeks and on their last session of the term, they came together as a band to perform their favourite tunes, being 'We will rock you' by Queen and 'Shout out to my Ex' by Little Mix.

We are immensely proud of how our boys have embraced this musical opportunity. They have shown musical flare and the concentration levels have been incredible.



We look forward to continuing this partnership with Leighton Park very soon.

Well done boys!

Action at Leighton Park School.

In addition to drumming our partnership with Leighton Park School has provided primary pupils with the opportunity to experience a weekly morning of parkour training with Jed and Edo.

Parkour is a training discipline using movement that is developed from a military obstacle course. The aim is to get from one point to another the fastest and most efficient way possible.

The boys have thoroughly enjoyed their time jumping, balancing, rolling and crawling their way through the course.

Jed is very pleased with their commitment and looks forward to continuing training with the boys next term.

We look forward to developing our relationship with Leighton Park to include opportunities for secondary pupils such as sporting and work experience.





An Adventure 65 million years in the making...

On Wednesday March 4th, Foundry's Primary team went on a Jurassic adventure to Brickies Play Centre (Holme Grange Craft Village).

On arrival, the boys were directed to the mission control room where they were given their mission statement: Help save the park rangers, who were stuck on Dinosaur Island. Their mission comprised three objectives they had to achieve.

- Objective 1: Build a dinosaur robot that the rangers could use to infiltrate the dinosaur's enclosure.
- Objective 2: Build a vehicle that would be able to rescue the park rangers.
- Objective 3: Build a new enclosure that would keep the dinosaurs on the inside and keep the park rangers at a safe distance.

The boys (and adults) built several amazing models (see accompanying pictures) and they were able to fulfil all the mission objectives and save the Dinosaur Island Park Rangers. All members of the primary team had a fantastic experience and looking forward to heading back to Brickies for the next adventure.





Thames Valley Adventure Playground.

Primary class have once again been enjoying their weekly visits to TVAP this term. There has been fun a laughter for all our KS1 and KS2 children.

Logan kept a lookout for any lake monsters; whilst the primary crew visited the newly built train station. William was busy selling train tickets to Disneyland and Toys R Us, with a quick detour to the jungle for Brian.

We have also enjoyed being creative in the art area and 'hanging' in the soft play and of course a spot of dress up!





Foundry College certainly did **‘Step up’** to Sports Relief 2020.

The boys each managed their own stations around the primary garden and in the sports hall. Brian was in the primary classroom showing us all his latest moves on *Just Dance*, Nicholas set up the football goals with a super shoot-out challenge, and not forgetting William and Dylan who were on the dodgeball team.

The primary children raised a total of £36.95 for this wonderful charity.

A very special mention to William for helping us organise all the visitors! Well done primary – great team work!





A quick peek at some of the wonderful activities the Primary class have been up to this Spring term.





Adios Amiga!

Well we are having too much fun! Brian made a great cowboy on one of our trips to Thames Valley Adventure Playground. His partner is Maddy Fabre, our fantastic PGCE student who joined the classroom for three months during her training. We were so sad to say goodbye to her – she was a great addition to the team and will make a fabulous SEN teacher. We wish her all the best for the future and are so glad that she was able to make it back home to her family in Gibraltar. Come and visit us soon Maddy!





Science at Foundry College

The move to our new premises has provided us with an exciting opportunity for practical science in a purpose-built lab. Once fully equipped, all students studying science will be able to do practical work and GCSE students will be able to benefit from taking part in required practical investigations, which have so far been taught mainly using virtual learning resources.



Spring Term 2020
Tuesday 7 January 2020 - Friday 14 February 2020
Half Term
Monday 17 February 2020 - Friday 21 February 2020
Monday 24 February 2020 - Friday 3 April 2020*

Summer Term 2020
Monday 20 April 2020 - Friday 22 May 2020
*May Bank Holiday (to celebrate VE day) - Friday 8 May 2020 , College closed. *
Half Term
Monday 25 May 2020 - Friday 29 May 2020
Monday 1 June 2020 - Friday 17 July 2020 *

- College finishes at 12:30pm on the last day of term

Inset Days (College closed to pupils)

- Monday 20 July and Tuesday 21 July 2020

Please note the change to the Early May Bank Holiday to **Friday 8th May 2020**

