



Dear Parents

It has been a wonderful week of festive events and activities to bring us to the end of term and the close of 2023 at Channing. It was lovely to see so many parents at the Carol Concert on Monday afternoon, which was a truly uplifting event on the theme of the healing power of nature. The thoughtful readings chosen by Ms Wilkinson, and read so well by our readers with the coaching of Mrs Kanmwaa, were complemented by the beautiful music performed by our various choirs under the direction of Mrs Bacon, Mr Boxall and Ms Zanardo. Rev Kate Dean of the Rosslyn Hill Chapel reflected in her opening on the fact that festivals in many traditions at this time of year - Diwali, Chanukah, Christmas, the Winter Solstice - focus on the coming of the light and the revolving of the seasons. I was particularly delighted by the communal singing - the assembled school certainly felt the sense of occasion and gave the carols some real welly!

This led me to reflect in assembly on Tuesday morning about the importance of the Carol Concert as one of the key traditions in our school calendar. If I'm honest it has always struck me as slightly odd how much emphasis is placed on Christmas celebrations in our Unitarian school, whose theology is rooted in the denial of the Trinity and which prides itself on being a school for people of all faiths and none. But nonetheless, celebrate we do - with serious style and some very quirky traditions that I've never seen in another school! And it matters immensely, because it is our traditions which bind us together: in our school, in our families and in our wider communities.

This also has personal resonance for me as this year I am hosting Christmas with my other half for the first time. As we have started to plan together it has become clear that my family has a lot of Christmas traditions, and his family has their own too: it's time for us to make some new ones together. Over lunch with colleagues and chatting to the girls, I've discovered that everyone has their own traditions that they are already enjoying or looking forward to again this year. Flora, one of our Head Girls, is Jewish but still has a Christmas tree (what one of my Jewish colleagues calls her 'Chanukah Bush') - but instead of an angel on top, they've got George Clooney. Several members of staff - Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and of no faith particularly - told me that they will all have full turkey Christmas dinners with their families on 25 December.

One member of staff told me that their parents have all the neighbours over to their house on Christmas Day - from 11am to 1pm, always at their house, always the same neighbours - a tradition which has been going on for more than 20 years. Imani, our other Head Girl, has family in Wales who start Christmas Day with a 7am run followed by a dip in the sea. Personally I start Christmas Day with the chocolates out of my stocking (another important tradition), but each to their own...

Many of these traditions will have been forged over years, and I am sure that there are some you can think of now that your family will enjoy this year, whether you are celebrating Christmas as a religious or cultural festival, or not marking it at all. However, mindful that I was talking to 650 teenagers, I said 'enjoy' but of course was well aware that many of them probably roll their eyes and exclaim how BORING it all is, to do the same old same old every year. I wondered whether this year, perhaps, they might revel in the familiarity and exult in their family traditions, just as they do here in school, and enjoy the experience, whatever and however you are celebrating.

My wish for them was to give thanks for the traditions which bind us as a community and make our school so special. I urged them to make the most of the festivities over the course of the week, supporting and encouraging one another to play their part well and enjoy being with one another. And my goodness they did! We had two exceptional Christmas dinners on Tuesday and Wednesday, thanks to Judith, our Catering Manager, Rao, our Executive Chef, and their fantastic team in the kitchen. Christmas Classroom yesterday afternoon bore testimony once more to the ingenuity and creativity of Channing's extraordinary pupils and Imani, Flora and I had a ball judging the different categories.

It all culminated this morning in a back-to-back series of festive activities, starting with a rousing Sixth Form Christmas debate on the motion 'This House believes that Scrooge is a better role model than Santa Claus'. It was won by the proposition and we enjoyed their character assassination of Santa and their excellent puns. It was followed by some toe-tapping Christmas Jazz - a most unusual and very wonderful tradition - and then Mr Gittins' much-anticipated staff pantomime, this year a reworking of *Beauty and the Beast* for a world of reality dating shows. It was enthusiastically received by the audience (oh no it wasn't, oh yes it was!).

There was just time for a quick change before Mark Reading, which features two more really important traditions, both musical ones. This year the Head Girls recruited the entire Officer Team to help with their rendition of Good King Wenceslas, which was acted out with real gusto (as well as fits of giggles!). However it was the singing of The Twelve Days of Christmas by the massed ranks of the entire school, from Reception to Year 13, which was a sight to behold. If not entirely tuneful, it is certainly energetic, and the passion put into it with props and actions and leaping up and down makes it a truly inclusive communal activity and one that we all love.

So these are the traditions that bind us. They make for a really special school and a special community. It is with enormous sadness, then, that today we have to say farewell to some members of staff who are heading off to pastures new. Our thanks to Miss Platt, who has been our Medical Applications Coordinator for one day a week for the last 18 months whilst completing her Masters in Education up in Norwich. It's an epic commute and no surprise that she has decided to start a new role as a full time Science teacher there in January. Her expertise and warm approach have been invaluable in this post.

Mr Matjilla, who has been our Head of Economics at Channing for just over a year, leaves us for some grand adventures in South America. He's off to travel for the next four months before starting a new role as a teacher in an international school in Peru in April. He has been a much-loved member of the school community who made a real impact in the short time he was

with us. We thank him for all his hard work with the department, as a form tutor and Head of House and wish him much happiness on his wanderings and in his new school.

Mrs Houston, PE teacher and Head of Year 9, is also on the move - to Manchester, where she and her husband will be closer to family. Mrs Houston's endless warmth and care has been so very much appreciated by thousands of Channing girls both in her teaching and in her pastoral roles over the last 10 years, and her smiling face is a firm fixture around the school. We wish her the very best for her relocation and a happy new life in Manchester.

Finally, we are very sad to bid farewell to Mrs Elliot, Head of Classics. She has devoted herself to the leadership of her thriving department, is a leading light in the development of teaching and learning in the school and will be much missed for her hours of thoughtful care and support for her colleagues, tutees and students alike. She has achieved a thoroughly well-deserved promotion to Assistant Head for Teaching & Learning at Streatham and Clapham High School and we wish her every success in her new role.

You also play an important role in our community, and I would like to express huge thanks for the huge amount of food, and the more than 100 winter coats, that were donated over the last few weeks. During all the Christmas festivities we must never forget that there are many just on our doorstep who struggle to heat their houses and feed their children, let alone buy presents and have turkey dinners. Your generosity will make a huge difference.

Thank you also to all the parents who have already volunteered to run our Sixth Form interview and assessment skills event on Tuesday 16 January. The event runs from 4.00 - 5.30pm with an expert talk to open, followed by a carousel of recruitment and assessment activities including psychometric testing, group exercises and a short face-to-face skills-based interview, with feedback. We need another 12 parent interviewers to help us with this important part of our support for life beyond school and university - rest assured you will be provided with example questions to use, although you'd be welcome to use your own. You will interview and give feedback to several students. You do not need to have any particular recruitment expertise - being an 'unknown adult' to the young person is the most important requirement! I hope you will be able to volunteer: please sign up [here](#). If you have any questions do get in touch with Ms Wilberforce, Head of Careers, and the team at careers@channing.co.uk.

I cannot end the term without an update on the investigation into the antisemitic graffiti found at Channing last month. Since 2 November we have spent countless hours reviewing CCTV footage, interviewing students, and providing significant pastoral support, as well as putting in place a comprehensive education programme designed to educate and inform students on the situation in the Middle East and the dangers of all forms of discrimination including antisemitism.

We updated the police and the CST on our progress this week. They told us that we have exhausted all reasonable lines of enquiry at present but added that if new information comes to light, they will help us follow up any new lines of enquiry immediately. They commended us for being proactive and engaged, actively looking for support and advice and following up every lead.

In their view the investigation is now a safeguarding issue and the focus should be on education. The police Safer Schools team will come into school next term to talk to students and highlight that this behaviour is completely unacceptable. They will also emphasise that bystanders and those who know the perpetrator have a responsibility to speak up. We will continue our efforts to educate the whole school community on the dangers of discrimination and the importance of our Unitarian values of kindness, respect and tolerance so that we can continue to be the warm, supportive community we strive to be.

Finally for this term, I wanted to share a thought for all of us as we embark on this holiday. The next three weeks will be filled with all sorts of activities, many of them with family and friends, some of which you may be anticipating with less than complete delight. When I asked one colleague what her family's traditions were, she had a one word answer: arguing. It was fortuitous, then, that my old friend serendipity kicked in with the arrival of Dr Kathy Weston's Wednesday Wisdom email this week. Entitled [Planning for Peace](#), it focuses specifically on how to preempt all the possible touch points which could cause stress levels to rise and tempers to flare as well as how to navigate some of the practicalities of these family get-togethers. It seems like really good sense to me and I'm already planning my 'pre-emptive strike' conversation with my son and other half: I hope that you might find it useful too.

With that let me send my warmest wishes to you all for the holidays, wherever you are going and whatever you are celebrating. Thank you for your continued support of your children and our wonderful school, and enjoy the break. I look forward to seeing Year 12 back in school on Tuesday 9 January for 11+ interview day, alongside Year 11 taking their mock GCSE Art exam, and everyone else on Wednesday 10 January for the first day of term!

With my very best wishes,

Mrs Lindsey Hughes
Headmistress

Notices

Parking

Please can I remind you of the need to park considerately around the school. In particular, we have had several complaints about parents parking at the junction of Bisham Gardens and Highgate Hill. This creates a real risk to all those parents and pupils as well as members of the general public who cross the road at this point. Please can I ask for your support in this matter

Photographs

Gillman & Soame took portrait photographs in September. If you haven't already, please order these photographs as soon as possible (especially if you would like them for Christmas). If details have been mislaid, please contact Gillman & Soame directly at action@gillmanandsoame.co.uk or on 01869 328200 with your child's name and quoting the security password **channing374rbd2023** and they can assist.

Upcoming TooledUp Events

Expert online conference: Reaching Girls Early: Proactive Approaches for Mental Health, Appearance Anxiety and Body Dissatisfaction: 26 April 2024, 9.30am

Guest speakers include Dr Sophie Nesbitt, Dr Lucia Giombini, Dr Amita Jassi, Dr Helen Ringrow and Dr Karri Gillespie-Smith.

Chatting with Channing – Alumna Amanda Davidson and the Transylvanian Scholars Program

Listen on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) or the [Channing Website](#)

In this episode, we have the pleasure of sitting down with Amanda Davidson, an alumna of Channing School. Our conversation delves into Amanda's academic pursuits post-Channing, her career, and the unique Transylvanian Scholars Program.



Amanda sheds light on the inception of the program, its connection to her family, and how it has evolved over the years. As the leading force behind the program, Amanda shares the challenges involved in its coordination and how the program fosters cultural exchange and understanding between students from Channing and János Zsigmond School.

We explore the invaluable skills and knowledge gained by students through their participation in the Transylvanian Scholars Program, examining its impact on both Channing and János Zsigmond students. Join us for a compelling conversation that unravels the rich tapestry of cultural exchange, and the profound impact of programs like the Transylvanian Scholars in shaping the lives of students.



CHANNING

Girls Enjoying Success

Music News

Music at Lunchtime - Christmas Edition

Last Friday's lunchtime concert brought Christmas cheer for all to hear! It was the last concert of 2023 and what a way to end the year! First off, Zoe Q in 12MY played Suite no.5 in C minor by Bach on the Viola. Her expressive and confident performance was very impressive. Next, Isabella S in 11SFr played Allegretto by Martinu on the Piano. Her skill was evident and she played very well, with convincing style. Lulu C then sang one of Mozart's very famous arias - 'Lho Perduta' capturing the style beautifully.

Then, Leah de T-L in 8LV brought Christmas spirit to the Founders' Hall with a performance of 'Underneath the tree' by Kelly Clarkson. Her voice was amazing and her joy was infectious! Next, a group of Year 9s took to the stage with a performance of Last Christmas by George Michael. Indy D, Issy P, Daisy L, Sophie M, Elena S were all amazing - the highlight of the performance was definitely the glockenspiel! Finally, Live Lounge stole the show with a rendition of 'All I want for Christmas is you' by Mariah Carey. The singers and instrumentalists got us clapping and singing along in the audience! You can listen to this Christmas music at lunchtime [HERE](#). Merry Christmas Channing!



Carol Concert

We are delighted to share with you a recording of this year's Carol Concert. Please click the link [here](#) to view.



English News

English Skills Club

Next term, English Skills Club will be focused solely on Year 11 and they will need to sign up for sessions in advance. [Here](#) is the programme of sessions. Please encourage your child to have a look and sign up for any that they think will help them. They can also join the Google Classroom to access the materials (code: **4kyt5e2**) or speak to Ms Wilkinson for further details.

Sports News

Under 12 Netball Haringey League v Woodside High School

On Tuesday 12 December 2023 the U12 Netball Team played in an exciting match against Woodside High School in the semi finals of the Haringey league. The team played with tenacity and displayed outstanding sportsmanship and gamesmanship. We are so proud of the team and how they represented Channing at this fixture. The team walked away with an impressive 29-2 win and will progress to the finals of the competition. A special mention to Thomasina R and Phoebe D for being voted players of the match by the opposition.



Congratulations to all students who played in the match and we wish them the very best of luck in the next round of the competition.

Cheerleading

Huge well done to the Channing cheerleaders who had their first competition of the season on Sunday 10 December. They came in a very close second place (literally 0.5 points behind 1st place). There were also two outstanding performance winners, Millie W and Sonia H, which added another 10 points to the league table. Channing are now in joint first place in the overall league table. Well done to all the girls who took part!



Fencing

A huge well done to Olivia W (Year 8) who has been selected to represent England at an international U14 Women's foil fencing competition in Paris in February. She also recently won a bronze medal at a national U14 competition in Cambridge - well done Olivia!



STEM News

Maths Snowflakes

Happy Christmas from the Maths Department. There have been lots of festive Maths activities in lessons. Mrs Wootton's Year 7s have been learning about symmetry patterns in class and after their Algebra test they made symmetry snowflakes and described the reflective symmetry and order of rotational symmetry in their beautiful patterns. Here they are on Christmas Jumper day, proudly showing their designs!



Glider Challenge

Year 7 and 8 students have been taking part in the termly STEM challenge. This term they were tasked with designing a glider to travel the furthest. They were able to use a variety of materials and even try out a stabilising propeller that can be controlled remotely with an app. Well done to Isabel in Year 7, who will get a prize and her name on the STEM trophy.



Cyber First Competition

Over 60 Year 8 students took part in the CyberFirst Competition which aims to inspire girls interested in technology to pursue a career in cyber security. The students worked in teams to tackle difficult challenges from cryptography and logic to artificial intelligence and networking. Our students were able to answer a number of the questions. Well done to Data Dynamo (Maya, Angie, Zara and Nancy) who came third with 1983 points. The Invincibles (Anais, Sofia, Mimi and Charlotte) came second with 2043 points and the winners with 2148 points were We Slay All Day (Elene, Yasmin, Edyln and Maria). We clearly have some cyber security experts in the making!

See if you can have a go at an example problem:

Anna has decided to take an analytical approach to the study of literature, and has run the following script against a favourite poem:

```
rule yara
{
  strings:
  $text_string1 = "Toasted-cheese"
  $text_string2 = "bathing-machines"
  $text_string3 = "railway-share"
  $text_string4 = "uffish"
```

```
condition: $text_string1 and $text_string2 and  
$text_string3 and $text_string4  
}
```

It returns the result: Input matches rule "yara" 9 times.
How many results will Anna get if she adds "Snark" into her rule?

Hints, flags and the solution can be found [here](#).

STEM workshops and talks with Professor Lewis Dartnell

On Thursday 7 December we had Channing's inaugural STEM Christmas lecture from Professor Lewis Dartnell. Professor Dartnell began his visit to Channing with a lecture to Year 11 and 6th Form STEM students. This first lecture, entitled "Astrobiology", had obvious links to Physics and Biology, but also touched on History and Geography.

Last week, Maddie and I were given the chance to interview Lewis Dartnell and ask him questions regarding his experiences as an astrobiologist. (Make sure to look out for our interview on the Channing Podcast in January) He gave us insight on his specific interests within the field and key moments that shaped his career, particularly sharing his views on the importance of the engagement and education of the public about science. As well as the interview, Lewis also presented the sixth form with a talk on astrobiology, what it is, and its growing importance in today's society especially.



After school, Professor Dartnell gave a captivating talk based on his book, The Knowledge, where he explored the type of skills and understanding a normal person would need in order to rebuild society in a post-apocalyptic world. From wood-fueled cars to homemade glass, we were taught not only how to survive, but how to shortcut our way back to the modern era. With mince pies and the chance to ask Professor Dartnell our most burning questions afterwards, it was definitely an evening to remember.

Chiara P, Year 12

In addition to delivering two lectures, Professor Dartnell led a 'problem based learning' workshop, encouraging Year 13 students to apply scientific knowledge in a creative way. They were asked to design an experiment to discover life on another planet, challenging the Year 13s to use simple concepts in biology and chemistry to first define life and then to determine how it can be found. This workshop helped some students to prepare for interviews, and helped all of them develop their problem-solving skills.

Rebecca B, Year 13



Year 13 Chemistry: Making Aspirin

What could be more festive than making aspirin? Well, that's what Dr Spinks and the Year 13 chemists thought anyway! Here are some of the fantastic aspirin samples that they made last week:

Science question of the week

This week's Science question of the week asked pupils to write their own fun Science themed Christmas carol. We had 4 fantastic carols which were all so well written that they all received a commendation for their brilliant work. The winners are Nancy S, Mariia S, and Ziyuan L, and Anoushka C - well done!

*Substance from the lab of science
Wing your dense over all the earth
Ye, who sang changes of the story
Now is the oxygen's birth
Come and react, come and react
React oxygen the newborn substance
Water in the fields evaporating
Acid with alkaline is now fizzing
Magnesium shines the fire
Come and react, come and react
Feel water the newborn substance
Seek the rarest substance
Ye have seen it burning light
Come and react, come and react
Feel heat the newborn thing*

In the bleak science classroom
Chemicals explode
Burned burners flaming
Helium spreads cold
Puff has tubes
Different acids flow
In the bleak science classroom
Just right now

Away in a lab
Away in a lab
All test tubes are here
Ready for experiments
As smooth as a sphere
The glasses of chemicals
As sugar had been laid
Stirred thoroughly with a rod
As much will mix best

The bubbles rise
The test tubes break
Planes are swept
Although the chemical, no trouble it makes
I love Thea, Chemistry and Science
Look down at the tubes in the racks
And always by my side
Till my work is done and down light cracks
Be around, the power of Science
I ask you to stay
Close by me forever in case I need you
And be used when I may
Bless all the Scientists
For working so good
Will be rewarded with heaven
Meeting the Lord, chances they could

Lab coat smells(jingle bells)

Lab coat smells, iodine fell,
It's all over shoe(hey)
Oh no, my shoes yellow,
Oh man, boo hoo,

Lab coat smells, mixing gels,
Oh damn, they went kaboom(oh)
Someone get a fire man, and put out all the fumes

Lab coat smells, can't find my cell,
Oh wait, there it is,
It's ribosome, like a little gnome,
Are scattered everywhere(oh)

Alumnae News

The Carol Concert, Christmas Classroom Decoration & Postbox Competition, unrivalled merriment, this can mean only one thing: Channing Christmas, of course! And to celebrate this we would like to share this beautiful wall hanging of embroidered robins made by students (circa 1960-70).



Merry Christmas and have a wonderful New Year! 🌟