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Yesterday, the children enjoyed a delicious traditional Christmas lunch with all the trimmings, together with crackers, party hats and carols. This morning however, brought to a fitting end the Autumn Term. To loud cheering and much frivolity, the **House Challenge** was held as Pitt, Nelson, Drake and Scott competed for the title. There were scenes of children dressing up as a Christmas pudding, using dingbats to solve Olympic sports, rearranging letters to decipher Olympic cities, creating giant advent calendars and composing an Olympic song to the tune of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. The grand finale saw the children presenting their songs and Christmas puddings. Congratulations to **Mrs Rose** and **Mrs Hughes** for putting together an original and innovative programme, and to all the children and staff who competed with such energy and determination. Fun was indeed had by all.

As always, this term has been filled with a multitude of experiences that have engaged, stimulated and challenged children of all ages. Just by having a cursory glance over the calendar you will see that barely a week goes by without a visit, trip or adventurous learning opportunity for someone somewhere in the school.

The last time author **Felicity Cloake** was at Kingshott it was probably as a pupil. However, she returned last week to work with a variety of groups in the school to write different food reviews. As a combined festive Food Technology and Art activity, all Year 3 children made mince pies. Building on work from Art lessons, they were asked to create pastel drawings of mince pies, which they then ate (the pies, not the drawings) and wrote about them. They described their appearance and flavour and explained why they did or didn't like them. One Year 6 group reviewed a classic Victoria sponge, linking to their topic on flour. Felicity also answered a range of questions about how she got into writing and how she got her first book published. All the children enjoyed themselves and it was a great opportunity for them to see what a success an ex Kingshott pupil has made of her talents.

Last week **Years 7 and 8** children treated us to a marvellous evening of entertainment. They performed their rendition of '**Gel (Slicker than Grease!)**' by Malcolm Sircom. In stark contrast to last year's period show, this was an up tempo 21<sup>st</sup> century spectacle, with modern pop music and themes. The play is based on the conflict between a group of kids from a youth theatre and a local gang who do their best to wreck the youth group's latest show and the community centre where they perform. As with all the best shows, everything ends well when all parties find the 'Gel' that binds them all together!

As usual the main speaking parts were performed by Year 8, with Year 7 providing sterling support in chorus roles. There were some outstanding individual performances by doubtless future stars in the making, with some excellent character acting and inspired singing and dancing. The overall impression, however, was one of unity and group support, with every single cast member giving their all regardless of natural talent and, most importantly, in the knowledge that they had the support of their fellow cast. Above all, it was clear that everyone there had a fantastic time.

Huge thanks go to everyone involved: children, staff and parents without whom these wonderful events would not be possible. We now look forward to workshop plays next term from the Year 5 and 6 children and of course our next musical extravaganza in the Summer Term from Year 3 and 4.

Last Saturday three Year 5 boys, **Joseph Stringer**, **Barney Davis** and **Jude Schoeman** (and ex Kingshott child **Joshua Platt**) took part in a world record attempt to form the largest scrum ever. They were there as part of Hitchin Rugby Club's U10 side. At Wembley Stadium, in front of an enthusiastic crowd of 40,000 people, the record was achieved with 750 children from around the country joining in.

On Sunday night the **Kingshott Chamber Choir** again joined forces with the **Hitchin Orchestra** and produced a wonderfully entertaining performance at **Benslow Music School**. With the children joining in with their singing, along with solos and musical accompaniments, the audience was treated to a special night. Well done to **Miss Eales** and all the children for their participation.

On Tuesday, the Pre-Prep held their annual **Christingle Service** in front of admiring parents. As always, the service included children of all ages as Mary and Joseph, the angels, shepherds, wise men, and a donkey. There was musical accompaniment from recorder players and percussionists. Pre-Prep Prefects **Robert Stevens** and **Georgia Howell** played their part too. Congratulations to all involved, including the staff who put all the children through their paces to make sure that the donkey neighed at the right time and the angels didn't fall asleep. To put us in a festive mood, the Kingshott Association topped off the afternoon's proceedings with mulled wine and mince pies. Ho ho ho. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the £758.70 raised for **The Children's Society** through the Christingle Candles and donations after the service.

There are still some places available in **Activ4** next term. Should you be interested please contact Mrs Whittaker.

Apologies to **Annabel Rogers** whose name was omitted from the list of children who participated in the **Christmas Cracker** production at Plinston Hall last weekend.

**Simon Fox**, who lives in the school cottage and has been on the staff at Kingshott for over four years, leaves us at the end of this term. He will be returning to family in Sheffield and hopes to enrol on a teacher training programme in the not too distant future. Simon has been very involved in many ways at Kingshott, be it as a teacher of ICT, accompanying the USA ski trip, working at the Maths Mania holiday clubs or being the helpful gentleman who unlocks the school when a child has forgotten a musical instrument over the weekend. We will miss him, and we wish him every success in the next chapter of his life.

One of the many highlights of my job is receiving visits from children on a very regular basis. I've been lucky to continually savour the delicious delights created by children during their Food Technology lessons. I've appreciated beautiful drawings and paintings created during Art lessons, I've read about Sikhs, short stories about cats up a tree and longer diary entries by someone on the Titanic on that fateful night. Some Year 7 children repeated their persuasive arguments used in class to convince their friends about being a vegetarian, the dangers of mobile phones or the merits of school uniform. And finally, on Tuesday morning all the Pre-Prep children brought me their Santa letters which we burnt, along with magic powder that translated the smoke into words that Santa read as he flew over the school. Working with children is a real pleasure and a constant reminder of the faith we have in the next generation, the privileged role we play in guiding them in the right direction and that, above all else, life is there for the living.

Enjoy a relaxing holiday, appreciate spending time with friends and family and savour the very best that Christmas Day has to offer. See you in the New Year.

Iain Gilmour

## BIRTHDAYS

To the following who celebrate in the next four weeks, we wish you a very

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY:

Katherine Arnold, Harrison Beach, Arun Chohan, Samuel Cunningham, Kiana Dallas, Max Davies, Barney Davis, Nicholas Fisk, Heather Gore, Magnus Hartree, Nathan Hildebrand, George Hill, Malachai Kadiri, Alice Kelly, James McCammon, Henry Morris, Fife Ogunsakin, Toby Onojeghuo, George Payne, Sophie Pinnington, Louis Schofield, Edward Shaw, Joshua Sudweeks, Adam Tandy, Anna Timms.