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The Magazine of Comberton Village College
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ISSUE 66, SUMMER 2024



WHEELY NICE: *Comberton's first two new minibuses arrived at the start of this term.*

Charities add third bus

Earlier this term Comberton took delivery of two brand new minibuses as part of a new lease deal.

Now the school has a third thanks to a 'charity-sponsored' addition.

The first buses to arrive are leased from Riverdale and are decorated in the college livery, one sporting the logo of the main school and one for the sixth form.

These have already been well used to facilitate the large number of off-site sporting activities and educational visits that form our curriculum for Years 7-13.

Last month, Jane Hylton (Head of Cabin) and David

Clarke (Deputy Principal and Director of Sixth Form) travelled to Woburn Golf Club to be presented with our final new, accessible, vehicle.

We are hugely grateful for the financial support received from members of Variety Golf (varietygolf.com) and our main sponsor Joie (Joiebaby.com), who have significantly contributed towards the purchase of the vehicle and installation of the lift system.

Joie is a UK-based company who manufacture pushchairs, car seats and other items for families with young children.

Their core philosophy is to serve your family, our

community and our earth that we all enjoy. In recognition of their substantial donation, this vehicle comes with their logo and colours.

After a long application process, we felt we needed to say thank you personally to the members of Variety Golf and Joie by visiting them at one of their sponsorship events.

We explained how Comberton Village College is a mainstream school and sixth form, and within our setting, we support a large number of students who may also have additional needs.

Jane Hylton went on to explain that we have many students who have a variety of needs within our community, including those who may have a wide variety of different physical difficulties like cerebral palsy, hearing and visual impairments.

In addition, we have students with various learning and developmental needs as well as our neurodiverse students who have autism and/or ADHD — all of whom are part of our wider community.

This new minibus will help all our students across the school and sixth form feel included so that they are easily able to participate in a variety of off-site activities.

We were delighted that our newest vehicle was delivered in time for use during Activities Week. Comberton is also replacing the seven-seater Ford Galaxy MPV with a nine-seater Ford Torneo.

● In addition, and unexpectedly, Acorn Book Club (abcbookclub.co.uk) kindly donated two large crates of books to inspire reading for pleasure, something that is interwoven with our curriculum and literacy focus. These have been shared among the library, KS2 Support, the Cabin and the Centre.



CHARITY HELP: *The fully accessible third CVC bus is in the colours of the main sponsor, and (above) some of the bonus book donation.*



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Fond farewell to Year 11

On July 1st, the Class of 2024 came together for the Comberton Village College Year 11 prom at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford.

The year group really went all out with their outfits; they were dressed to the nines and looked absolutely amazing.

There were some pretty spectacular entrances; a vast array of limousines and impressive cars, one very large tractor, a wheelbarrow, a fleet of motorbikes, and for three of our students, a plane ride which touched down on the landing strip of Duxford airfield.

Upon arrival, pupils were greeted with a red carpet and a huge number of well-wishers cheering their entrances.

Among the crowds there were their teachers, teaching assistants, family members, friends and former Comberton students.

It was wonderful to see the community of support surrounding each and every pupil there.

IWM Duxford was a spectacular venue. Once inside, pupils were able to take photos and sip welcome drinks alongside various planes, sit down for a chat and some snacks and throw some shapes on the dance floor, which was packed for much of the evening.

There was a lot of dancing to some tried and tested tunes from the likes of ABBA, Queen and Beyoncé and a particular highlight was seeing basically the entirety of the year group jumping up and down to 'Sweet Caroline' as the last song of the night.

As the night came to a close and the pupils made their way home — or on to the various after-parties that the teachers had heard rumours of — it was apparent how much their time at CVC had impacted pupils and how much of an effect the year group had on the staff who turned up to support them.



DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY: Students enjoy the music at their Prom.

There were plenty of tears and talk of how much had changed since Year 7, from both pupils and staff!

It was a fantastic night and a fitting end to five years together for a wonderful group of young people.

We wish them all the best for the future — good luck CVC Class of 2024!



RED CARPET ARRIVALS: Students and staff were met by crowds of friends and families.

Celebrating the end of an era

On Friday 28th June, the rain stopped, the sun shone and we were ready to mark the end of KS4 with Year 11 on their Celebration Day.

The signing of T-shirts and yearbooks got under way in the morning before we all moved over to the back field to continue the celebrations.

There was music, inflatables, ice creams and pizzas, freshly made on the back field! Delicious!

During the afternoon, we had performances by Louis (11R) and Joseph (11O) and took a trip down memory lane.

It was a fabulous day to mark the end of our time as a year group at Comberton Village College.



LAST HURRAH: Year 11 gather at school for the last time as a year group to celebrate their five years together.

Full archive is now online

This is the 66th Edition of News@Com — Issue One was published in December 2001 and there has been a magazine published every term since then.

These publications represent a wonderful history of the evolution and development of Comberton Village College over more than two decades.

During this time the school has developed as a Sports College, Languages College and Training School. We have opened The Cabin and grown a new school, sixth form and Trust, to name but a few of the developments.

Many thousands of students and staff have had great opportunities and experiences over this time, all documented within these publications.

There have also been huge changes in the way the magazine itself has evolved. Originally produced and printed off-site, all stories and pictures were sent on floppy disks in the post to the publishers (who sold advertising to fund printing).

Later it was produced in-house with a copy printed — and enthusiastically read in form time — for each

student until the pandemic brought another change. Although we did not miss an issue, even with students learning from home, printing was no longer an option and News@Com became, and has remained, an online only magazine.

All 66 editions can be found here: <https://www.combertonvc.org/news-and-events/news-at-com>

Central to all of this is one person: Judy Czlyok (pictured), who has overseen each edition. Judy joined us in 2001, having previously been a journalist at the then Cambridge Evening News.

She has had a number of roles both for Comberton and, since 2013, the Trust.

Perhaps the most public of these is overseeing student transport across the Trust, as well as producing this publication, other schools' and Trust magazines and publicity material. Judy is leaving the Trust at the end of August and leaves a very big hole to fill.

We are deeply grateful for her excellent service over 23 years and wish her the very best for the future.

Peter Law, Principal



FIRST EDITION: December 2001.

Sun shines brightly on rearranged walk

Comberton's annual Walk for the World went from washout to heatwave this year! Originally cancelled on its traditional late September date due to wet conditions, which left the route across the fields between Toft church and Comberton church as a dangerous quagmire, it was re-arranged for June.

And that turned out to be the hottest day of the year so far!

With Year 11 and Year 13 departed after the end of exams, it was left to the rest of the students and staff to splash on the sunscreen, don their hats and water bottles and enjoy a leisurely stroll in the sunshine.

The more than £2100 collected in September ahead of the original walk will still go to support projects at Comberton's partner schools in South Africa and Peru, while the £1100-plus collected last month for the sports-themed non-uniform day, which co-incided with the walk, helps to fund transition for pupils joining CVC in



STEPPING OUT: Year 7 participated in their first Walk for the World at a new time of year.

Marching with Pride

Last month, students from Comberton's Equality and Diversity Group participated in the first annual Cambridge Pride Parade.

Although Cambridge Pride has run for a few years, this was the first year that they organised a parade.

In the past, we have travelled to the London Pride Parade, but this year we were really pleased to be able to celebrate closer to home. The parade began on Jesus Green before moving through the city centre — there were crowds lining the streets cheering the marchers on — and the amount of support was lovely to see. We hope to make this an annual trip to show our group's support for the LGBTQ+ community.



SUPPORTING PRIDE: Equality and Diversity Group students joined the parade.



SCENES FROM THE SHOW: *Treasure Island* showcased the talents of Comberton's KS3 actors.

Swashbuckling success!

Comberton's drama and music departments transported audiences to the high seas with their spirited rendition of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic, 'Treasure Island', adapted by Bryony Laverly.

The production showcased the talents of our young actors, whose performances were the heart and soul of this swashbuckling adventure.

The play opened with an evocative acapella song, setting up the audience for a night of atmospheric story-telling.

As the scenes shifted from the Admiral BenBow Inn to the deck of the Hispaniola and then to Treasure Island itself, the captivating performances by the students kept the audience engaged throughout.

Seren (9V), playing the young Jim Hawkins, delivered a standout performance. Her portrayal of the curious and brave protagonist was both heartfelt and convincing, capturing the audience's empathy and support.

She guided us through Jim's adventure with a maturity, and performance level, well beyond her years.

Opposite her, Noah's (8N) Long John Silver was a masterclass in complexity. He balanced the character's charm and menace with finesse, creating a memorable and multifaceted villain.

The supporting cast also shone brightly. Misty's (9E) Dr Livesey brought a touch of sophistication and wisdom, while Alice's (8T) portrayal of Captain Smollett was authoritative and commanding. The crew of the Hispaniola, played by a lively ensemble of students, provided both comic relief and dramatic tension, their camaraderie and conflicts adding depth to the narrative. Ben Gunn, played by Soren (9R), was a delight with his eccentric mannerisms and comedic timing, providing both levity and pathos.

A special mention must go to cast member Maya (9N), who captivated as Israel Hands and impressed us all by speaking her lines in Spanish with such fluency and ease.

The ensemble's energy and enthusiasm were infectious, especially within the scenes on board the Hispaniola, as well as during the sea shanties sung at set changes.

These musical interludes, featuring lively renditions of songs like 'Blood Red Roses' and 'Randy Dandy', kept the nautical atmosphere alive and had the audience tapping their feet and clapping along.

Special mention, too, must go to the choreography in the fight scenes, which were remarkably well-executed by the young actors.

The musical score, arranged by the music department's Mr Bloska, complemented the sea shanties and added undertones to dramatic scenes perfectly, heightening the tension and enhancing the atmosphere.

The use of props, creatively designed and made by Miss Miles and a team of student volunteers, helped transport the audience to the different locations with ease and were skillfully utilised by the actors on stage.

One of the most impressive set changes transported the audience on to the deck of the Hispaniola. As the curtains parted and magnificent 10-foot mast revealed itself behind the curtain, and an impressive ship's wheel, that looked as though it had been plucked straight from the deck of a real vessel, was placed on the platform staging.

The students manoeuvred the set pieces with skill and precision, transforming the stage into a believable seafaring ship. The

addition of the mast made the adventure feel as though we were right there with Jim and the crew, sailing towards the unknown.

The technical aspects of the production were equally impressive with Alfie (9M) helping with lighting, and Ash (11C) and James (12FF) ensuring the sound was spot-on.

The creative use of props and puppetry, including the lifelike parrot Captain Flint, brought additional charm and whimsy to the production. The puppeteers, Noemie (7B) and Alys (7T), managed to give the bird a personality of its own, demonstrating impressive skill and creativity.

Overall, the school's production of *Treasure Island* was a triumph. It was evident that a great deal of hard work and passion went into bringing this tale of adventure and treachery to life.

The students' dedication and talent were on full display and they should all be incredibly proud of their accomplishments. This was a night to remember, filled with adventure, excitement, and, most importantly, the joy of storytelling.



PLAYING THEIR PART: Students brought energy and enthusiasm to the production.

Spain trip is a big hit

Earlier this term, 51 Year 7s and six members of staff set off on their trip to the beautiful town of Comillas in Cantabria for five days of Spanish immersion activities.

We have known organiser Jose Herrera, from Links Into Spanish, for many years and it was a pleasure to work with him again.

Pupils participated in various activities as well as enjoying the 'churros con chocolate', the paella and the beach!

The students loved it:

"We went to the beach, the wildlife park, and to various school meetings.

These meetings were really fun as we were interacting with the Spanish children, who were around the same age as us. We were speaking in Spanish to them, and they were speaking in English to us.

"Comillas is a really nice town, with an amazing house designed by a famous Spanish architect, Gaudi. His house contained really clever ideas like windows that ring bells when opened and closed.

"Our hotel bedrooms were big and comfy. The hotel had a pool, a landing to socialise with people who were not in your room, and a dining hall, where we ate the excellent buffet that the cooks provided. The beach was not a long walk from the hotel, so we went there often and enjoyed that warm sand, ice cream and snack shop nearby." — James (7R).

"I enjoyed the wildlife park there; it was really nice to see the animals so free and happy in their large enclosures." — Ben (7V).

"We went to the beach every full day and we had a great time there, but we got very very sandy." — Iwan (7T).

"The doughnuts for breakfast were my favourite part!" — George (7N).

"My favourite was the beach; it was so pretty with a sea breeze. We spent hours playing football and chatting with our new Spanish friends we made at the school." — Emily (7R).

"My favourite part of Comillas was the beach, playing football and meeting all of the new Spanish people." — Beth (7R).



SPANISH DELIGHT: Comberton's Year 7 had a great time in Comillas and particularly loved time on the beach.

Students give it their best shot at finals

Year 8 students Aidan and Meenakshi took to the national stage last month after reaching the finals of the Routes into Languages Translation Bee finals.

Both just missed out on a podium finish, ending just one point behind the winners in the Spanish section.

However, throughout the competition both demonstrated remarkable linguistic abilities, navigating challenging translations with precision and creativity.

The level of competition was incredibly high this year, and our candidates faced some of the best young translators from across the country.

Both students worked tirelessly in the lead-up to the competition, dedicating countless hours to practice and preparation.

That followed their victories in the regional competition held in Peterborough in a competition that attracted more than 5000 students initially, with only 77 nationally reaching the regional stage.

Senora Hategan, who oversees the Translation Bee (and Spelling Bee for Year 7), said: "Their commitment and perseverance were evident in

their impressive performances, which made us all extremely proud.

"Aidan (8C) and Meenakshi (8I) not only showcased their language proficiency, but also represented our school with grace and determination.

"They have set a high standard for future participants and have shown that with hard work and passion, we can achieve great things.

"You have made us incredibly proud, and we look forward to seeing all the amazing things you will accomplish in the future."

Senora Hategan was also very proud of two of the five International Leaders — Ella (10E) and Anastasia (100) — who accompanied her and the finalists to the competition as their final act of a busy year. Not only did they help with registration, serve refreshments

and guide teachers, parents and students to their respective competition rooms (the Translation Bee is also for those studying French and German), they also spoke to an audience about what it's like to be a Language and International Leader at Comberton.



FINALISTS: Two Comberton students took to the national stage after winning the regional competition.

New video now live

Comberton staff feature in a new promotional video recently released by the British Council. It highlights the International School Award and includes Principal Peter Law and International School Coordinator Marielle Burgess, who were interviewed in the autumn term. Comberton was awarded the British Council's International School award for its international work for the sixth time in 2022.

The award is valid for three years so we will be looking for a further re-accreditation next year.

The award recognises the school's work to bring the world into the classroom. It is a badge of honour for schools that do outstanding work in international education, such as through links with partner schools overseas.

Fostering an international dimension in the curriculum is at the heart of the British Council's work with schools, so that young people gain the cultural understanding and skills they need to live and work as global citizens.

The video, entitled Your Partnership, Your Way is available here:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/partner/your-partnership>



LEADING: International Leaders helped at the Translation Bee finals.



CHINATOWN EXPERIENCE: Part of the Year 7 Mandarin Excellence Programme's immersive activities.



Introducing Mandarin

Comberton teamed up with Cam Academy Trust partners Melbourn Village College to offer Mandarin in the main school this year for the first time.

Previously Mandarin was only available as an A-Level option, but this term marks the end of the first year as part of the Mandarin Excellence Programme, a prestigious learning initiative spearheaded by University College London's IOE Confucius Institute for Schools.

Twenty-five Year 7 students signed up to learn the world's second most spoken language (after English) with four hours of after-school lessons each week — and an impressive 23 have completed the first year of the accelerated learning programme.

Celebrating the completion of each year traditionally sees students take part in immersive activities ranging from craft to a trip to China (Melbourn's Year 9 have just got back) and this year Comberton students also enjoyed time out of the classroom.

They had the chance to cook the popular chicken chow mein — and enjoyed the cooking almost as much as eating the delicious food.

Then, earlier this month, it was off to London with Mandarin teacher Jian Liu, who

works at Melbourn, for a full day of activities.

The group started at the British Museum, where they learned some Chinese history by taking part in a treasure hunt through the Chinese Gallery.

Students worked in pairs to find nine ancient Chinese displays, discovering the name of each and when and how the items were used in ancient China.

Then it was on to Chinatown, where they dined in an authentic restaurant with dishes such as Beijing roast duck, Shanghai spring rolls and sweet and sour and exotic Chinese vegetables.

Jian Liu said: "The Yr 7 MEP students are very passionate about learning Mandarin and Chinese culture. They are a very conscientious group and they worked from 3-5 pm every Monday and Tuesday this year. They were also super excited to be going on this trip to Chinatown and the British Museum to have more of a taste of Chinese culture.

"It has been very satisfying seeing young people being able to have this wonderful journey learning Mandarin and experiencing Chinese culture."

It is planned to offer the same Mandarin option to the new intake of Year 7 students in September.

Museum visit has a French twist!



FRENCH ONLY: Language learning is taken out of the classroom.

Last month Year 10 pupils went to the Fitzwilliam Museum to take part in workshops led by Cambridge University PGCE trainees.

They spent time in the portrait gallery, the armoury and the impressionist gallery, completing interactive and challenging activities — all in French! It was a helpful activity in preparation for their GCSE speaking exam and a good opportunity to use their French outside the classroom.

Pupils had a great morning, followed by a sunny lunch outside the Fitz.

CVC welcomes international guests

On 1st July we welcomed 16 pupils from Pui Kiu Middle School, in Hong Kong, to Comberton to practise their English and learn about school culture here.

After a welcome from International School Coordinator Marielle Burgess, they were hosted by some wonderful Year 9 tour leaders.

They took a keen interest in the canteen and English food, and rounded off their trip over cookies and juice, interviewing Comberton pupils for their school project.

They were very gracious guests and left us with Chinese snacks to enjoy, and a Pui Kiu Middle School teddy bear!



ON TOUR: Students from a Hong Kong school with their Comberton tour guides.

Key priorities are set out

Trust leaders and headteachers will be working on a long-term strategy and setting clear priorities for the future following the arrival of new CEO Claire Heald.

She has set out areas likely to be prioritised as the Trust continues to consider how best to serve our young people and their families.

Alongside the Trust's six core principles, which underpin the aims and values, Claire wants to focus on:

- Reading. This is probably the most important thing we teach our children.
- The potential for all-through education. With the number of children who progress from one school to another Trust school, this feels like an important opportunity for us — and one that we can really build on.
- Ensuring the best possible outcomes for our

most vulnerable students. It is our role to remove barriers and unlock potential whether they are pupils with special educational needs or disadvantaged pupils.

● The power of collaboration. There is collaboration already happening in and across our schools but we can do even more — to make this a truly great Trust to work in and support our young people to learn and develop even more effectively.

Claire, who took up the role at half-term, added: "Reading has always been a passion of mine, right from starting my teaching career as an English teacher. In many ways the most important thing we teach our children is how to read, as it is a critical enabling competence — opening up possibility and opportunity for our young people."



MEET AND GREET: Claire Heald chats with pupils at Jeavons Wood Primary School.

'There are exciting times ahead for Trust'

Claire Heald has been busy getting out and about across all the Trust schools since she joined as Chief Executive on June 1st.

She said: "I have spent time in all of our schools over the last few weeks and have very much enjoyed meeting headteachers and school staff. I have particularly enjoyed talking with our brilliant young people and hope to do more of

this in the new academic year.

"I also hope to be able to meet more of our parents and wider community stakeholders.

"Stephen Munday clearly leaves a strong legacy and I hope to do this justice by leading our family of schools forward successfully into the next stage of our journey.

"In my conversations with Trust staff, people

have openly talked to me about their hopes for the future.

"This is a Trust with extraordinary potential.

"There are exciting times ahead and I'd like to thank everyone for the warm welcome I've received so far."

CamVC original returns as director

Dr Richard Kueh, HMI, joins The Cam Academy Trust as Director of Strategy & Improvement at the end of July.

Richard currently serves as the Deputy Director for Schools and Early Education at Ofsted and is one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). He has been part of the senior civil service for the last two years. He brings his experience working across England's 24,000 state-



leading change. Before joining Ofsted, he worked as a director of a Department for Education (DfE)

regional school improvement partnership of 12 primary schools.

"Making meaningful connections is central to high-quality educational practice," he said. "Just as it's vital for leaders in schools to make connections between behaviour, attendance, outcomes, provision and

safeguarding information for pupils, so it's vital for trusts to 'connect the dots' between primary and secondary teaching, initial teacher training and on-going teacher education."

Richard is no stranger to the Trust — he was part of the founding team at Cambourne Village College.

His academic background is in philosophy and theology, and he finished his doctorate at Cambridge while teaching at Cambourne.

He led the subject nationally as lead HMI inspector for Religious Education (RE).



IMPRESSIVE: The team who won the Trust maths competition amassed a total of 51 points.

Maths is for girls too!

Groups of Year 9 girls from all four Trust secondary schools got together for a team maths competition at Melbourn Village College.

There were three rounds in the competition, which included estimation questions, a cross number, and building 3D models!

Students worked in groups, with one girl from each school in each team. They all worked incredibly well as a team and communicated effectively in tackling maths questions that were quite challenging.

The winning team scored an impressive 51, and six students were highlighted for displaying best teamwork.

The purpose of this competition was to encourage more girls to take up maths after GCSE, as all the sixth forms in the Trust offer A-Level Maths, A-Level Further Maths, and Core Maths.

One Melbourn student, Iris, said: "I found my team easy to work with. It confirmed that I wanted to study maths beyond GCSE."

Thank you to Melbourn for hosting a lovely afternoon!



PLATFORM: Students at the event to pitch their design to a panel of expert judges.



RECOGNITION: Students collect their award at the celebration event in London.
Picture: Richard Heald. Design Ventura

‘Outstanding’ designers

Congratulations to the Comberton team of Year 10 Design and Technology students, who were named as one of the ‘Outstanding Finalists’ at the Design Ventura competition.

Design Ventura is a national competition for secondary schools and ‘the programme is a Design Museum initiative, created in partnership with Deutsche Bank’s global youth engagement programme Born to Be, to encourage students aged 13 to 16 to create product ideas and learn about the design process.’

Although they didn’t win overall, the Comberton team of Natalie (10R), Georgia (10N), Poppy (10E), Ieva (10E), Jayden (10B) and Myles (10I) was one of only 10 shortlisted to the final from an original entry of 310, so it is an amazing achievement!

Design Ventura promotes design and enterprise skills. In the Autumn term, Year 10 Design and Technology students at Comberton work in teams on a live brief set by the Design Museum. They consider and work through the whole process of design, from initial ideas to a final concept.

They detail and specify materials, manufacturing, budgets, marketing and branding.

Students develop their designs and create a final prototype with packaging, plus a product presentation. Teams then compete in our own school competition, judged by staff and principal, Peter Law, who was previously a DT teacher.

This year, the standard of design and presentation was particularly high and teams were commended for their creativity.

The winning team’s design, put forward to the national competition, was a colourful and aesthetically pleasing product, responding to the theme of ‘colour and community’:

‘The Creative Colour Light-Box is a mindfulness product, designed for younger children:

‘A lightbox you can make your own, offering you prompts and colourful triangles, to create shapes and animals. Watch them light up!’

Once shortlisted, our team pitched their design in front of industry professionals at Deutsche Bank



Headquarters in the City of London.

Those they faced included Sebastian Conran and Kangan Arora — plus a live audience.

Then in April, our team attended a celebration event at the Design Museum, where the winners were announced and other awards handed out.

They attended design workshops, exhibitions, a networking event with industry professionals and were invited on to the stage to collect their award. Judges, industry professionals, teachers, parents and pupils joined together to celebrate their achievement.

The competition enabled pupils to gain an insight into the professional design world, to develop creativity, skills and teamwork and encouraged entrepreneurial skills.

Pupils gained a lot of self-confidence from presenting their work to a high-profile judging panel; it was a bit like presenting on Dragons’ Den (but to nicer judges).

A team from The Piggott School, in Berkshire, won for the second year running (with different pupils) for their ‘Colour Countdown’, which will now go into production and be sold at the Museum.

For more information visit:

<https://ventura.designmuseum.org/2024/05/06/design-ventura-2023-24-celebration-event/>

<https://ventura.designmuseum.org/2024/03/18/design-ventura-shortlist-2023-24/>

Follow on X at: <https://x.com/DesignVentura>

Design Ventura Pitching Day film:

Design Ventura Pitching Event 2023-24 on Vimeo

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www.catrust.co.uk/key-information/vacancies

CAM
ACADEMY TRUST

Event is real eye-opener

In April a group of 15 Year 10 students attended an event for KS4 from across the city, organised by the Cambridge Literary Festival in conjunction with the Litmus schools writing project.

It was an excellent opportunity to see the inside of the Cambridge Union, provoking discussion in our group about debating and politics, which set the tone perfectly for what was to come.

To introduce the topic of this year's Litmus project, novelist Ali Smith introduced the pupils to Amelia Gentleman, a Guardian Journalist and author of the book *'The Windrush Scandal: Exposing the Hostile Environment Policy'*.

For the next 40 minutes she explained how the immigration controls introduced in 2010 had impacted thousands of legitimate migrants from the Caribbean, whose parents had come to Britain to work in the 1940s and 50s.

She was assisted in this task by Michael, a quietly imposing Barbadian former teaching assistant. He told the story of growing up with his grandparents, who were the children of slaves, living on a farm where the stars were like a dream,

and the rustling of the sugar cane lulled him to sleep: of the culture shock of moving to Croydon aged nine when his parents were able to send for him to join them: finally of the shock of being told decades later that he couldn't continue to work at his school because he didn't have a British passport.

Although teaching *'Small Island'* by Andrea Levy to my A-level literature students had given me an awareness of some of the background to the scandal, centring as it does on the lives of two Jamaicans who arrive to build a new life in the 'Mother Country' in 1948, it hadn't come home to me before that this legislative approach was the reason why, coming back from maternity leave in 2010, I'd been asked to show my passport to our HR department.

For the students, this was an issue that defied belief. I was incredibly proud that one of our pupils, who ventured to ask a question along the lines of 'how can the Government apologise for the Windrush scandal and still be trying to send people to Rwanda?', got a spontaneous round of applause from the hundreds of students in the room.

After this, the participants were ready for a change of tone, and to be reminded that we were there to think about a story-telling project, and that is exactly what this well-conceived event gave them.

For the next hour they were entertained by graphic novelist Woodrow Phoenix, who improvised comic strip stories based on characters and scenarios that the students shouted out.

He had some time to answer students' questions, and offered the advice that it's always worth asking for opportunities, as the worst that can happen is that people will say no.

Very much in this spirit, the Comberton students had a very happy time after the event engaging with the speakers, who could not have been more generous; their free copies of Amelia's book were all signed, Ali Smith was full of warmth and encouragement for our aspiring writers, and Woodrow gave one of them his artwork.

Once I had finally dragged them away, the students had some time to eat lunch on the front lawn back at school, and reflect on a genuinely mind-expanding trip.

I look forward to taking a group of current Year 9 pupils to the Cambridge Literary Festival school's event next year — when you see it advertised, sign up!

Eleanor Norman, English Department



TELLING A STORY: Students listen to guest speakers at the Cambridge Literary Festival and Litmus schools writing project event.

Talk highlights curriculum links

Year 10 had an engaging talk from author Rob Eastaway entitled 'Much Ado About Numbers'.

Rob has written a variety of books, and won awards for his work to help popularise mathematics.

His new book and Year 10 talk linked all things maths, English, science, music, art, history and more to the works of Shakespeare. It was a great chance to see the links between different areas of the curriculum. Copies of his book are available in the school library if you would like to know more.



MAKING CONNECTIONS: Author Rob Eastaway's books popularise maths!



ART AT WORK: Students produced fantastic sketches from their trip to London.

Trip supplements coursework projects

Last month the Year 10 Art GCSE students had the opportunity to visit the National Portrait Gallery and the National Gallery.

They were able to see incredible art works and used the time to the fullest, producing fantastic sketches to supplement their coursework projects.

Of course, there was also time to relax and take in the sights and sounds of Leicester Square, and enjoy lunch in the purpose-built learning annexe of the newly refurbished Portrait Gallery.

Well done for a brilliant arty day out, Year 10!



BOOK THERAPY: Reading can help reduce stress and escape the worries of everyday life.

Reading is healthy!

Reading can be good for the mind, body and soul and can reduce stress.

A 2021 British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Public Perceptions Survey found that 43% of people in the UK found reading helped ease their stress levels during the third national Covid lockdown in 2020.

Building on work from last year, when the Library and Resource Centre introduced a micro-library in the staffroom, we are happy to have launched a new micro-library in Reception for visitors to Comberton Village College and Sixth Form.

We are encouraging all our visitors to pick up a book

while they are waiting, as reading a book can help you escape the worries and stresses of the everyday world.

The Library team are always looking for ways to support our students' mental health and wellbeing, so to coincide with Mental Health Awareness week (13-19 May) we had a special display of some of the books available in the Library that can help with this. Mental Health Awareness Week's focus this year was on movement, so we showcased books from our Health and Wellbeing section, as well as inspiring sports biographies and sport stories. We also signposted local parkruns and included a

helpful A-Z of activities list from Mind, the mental health charity.

Research from the Mental Health Foundation (MHF — MHAW Movement — Report 2024.pdf (mentalhealth.org.uk) shows moving more is great for our mental health and can increase our energy, reduce stress and anxiety, and boost our self-esteem.

The Library and Resources Centre helps students daily by offering a calm, friendly space where they can come to for help and support before and after school and during breaks and lunchtimes.



LOOKING FOR INSPIRATION: Students search for the books they want to read.

Book fans flock to pop-up shop

The school library hosted our second Scholastic Book Fair this term.

Once again we welcomed in a portable book shop, to great excitement!

Pupils were able to browse and buy from a whole host of titles, from recent bestsellers to favourite classics.

There was something for everyone, and plenty of excellent summer holiday reading was chosen!

Many thanks to all the families who were able to support this event.

We've now spent more than £160 worth of Scholastic Vouchers on new books for the library, raised by pupils buying books from these fairs!

Carnegie provokes talk

Students in Year 8 and above met weekly to discuss the books shortlisted for the Carnegie Award.

Alongside the spotlight on the books, we bonded over delicious treats baked by several members of the book club.

This just made the reading and discussing process of these books even sweeter! By the end of those few weeks, we had all formed opinions of the books which we felt deserved to win the prestigious award.

This was immensely beneficial for all of us as we discussed topics which we would not have thought about on a regular basis.

It was also very insightful as several opinions and voices helped us realise the diverse ways words can be interpreted.

On Carnegie Day, we assembled in the library, ready to learn even more about experiences as students from other schools were also present.

Within a few minutes, everyone bonded over their love and knowledge of books, which was

seen through the various activities we completed throughout the day, such as quizzes and competitions.

As usual, the entire day was made even more complete by the various treats and drinks, which were provided.

We were also incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to have Julian Sedgwick as our guest speaker. He is the author of 'Tsunami Girl' as well as his new book '100 Tales From Tokyo Ghost Café'.

The talk was extremely engaging and fun to listen to, capturing the hearts of all the potential authors present that day.

It was a wonderful conclusion to a wonderful day which saw current Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho take the Yoto Carnegie Medal for Writing for his novel in verse 'The Boy Lost in the Maze'.

The medal for Illustration went to Aaron Becker for 'The Tree and the River', a wordless picture book.

Ishaani (10T)



GUEST: Author Julian Sedgwick joined students on Carnegie Day.



HIVE OF ACTIVITY: Quizzes and competitions took place.

Different ways to learn

The need for speed was added to this year's amazing range of opportunities for Activities Week.

This is the penultimate week of the summer term each year when, while Year 7 are on their residential or 'staycation' and Year 10 are on work experience, Years 8 and 9 try new activities and experiences. The year groups selected from 20 different activities both on and off the school site. New this year was **Speed Week**, which started with a trip to the Letchworth Go Karting and Driving Simulator venue. Then it was on to Thorpe Park to test nerves with the heights and speeds of some of the best rollercoasters the UK has.

Wednesday was paintball and a trip to Thetford to test our combat skills against projectiles travelling at 180mph.

Thursday saw participants whizz past the sights of London on a highspeed jet boat on the River Thames, before taking a tube to St Paul's to try our new-found racing skills at the F1 arcade and some of the most realistic race simulators around.

Finally we headed back to Letchworth on Friday for an extended Karting and Simulator day, that saw most students racing at full power on the karts. Meanwhile, **STEM Week** aimed to foster creativity and innovation in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

A highlight was a trip to London's Centre of the Cell at Queen Mary University, where students engaged with interactive exhibits, deepening their understanding of cell biology.

Back at school, biology activities included dissecting owl pellets to explore predator-prey relationships and microscopy workshops that revealed the intricate structures of organisms like daphnia and plant cells. Chemistry experiments involved creating red cabbage indicators to test pH levels and conducting aspirin concentration tests using titration techniques. Engineering skills were honed through a challenge to build balloon-powered cars, encouraging students to apply physics and engineering principles in a practical context.

The week culminated in a STEM conference featuring professionals from biotechnology, engineering, environmental science and information technology, who shared career insights.

Students also enjoyed a visit to the Vertigo Virtual Reality Centre in Milton Keynes, where they experienced immersive VR simulations, blending education with entertainment and highlighting the potential of technology in diverse fields.

Thirty-four students, along with four Year 12 helpers, spent **Coding, Electronics and Robots Week** honing their coding skills in Minecraft's Python environment; building circuits and solving electronics-based problems and building and controlling robots using BBC Microbits.

On the Friday students visited the Centre of Computing History in Cambridge and had a great time learning about how computers work and exploring the biggest processor in the world! Over the course of the week the pupils developed a range of STEM skills that are important in today's job market.

Students who took the **Good Gig Guide** activity had a fantastic week learning about how to put on the Best Gig Ever!

They visited different venues and benefited from the generosity of production teams at the ADC Theatre,



SO MANY OPTIONS: During Activities Week.

Arts Theatre and Mumford Theatre, who shared their expertise and knowledge.

At CVC participants explored how to budget for the extensive costs of putting on events, from venue fees and providing toilets to booking multi-million pound acts.

They received training in setting up and troubleshooting sound systems and lighting and at the end of the week managed the sound and lighting for the music and drama departments.

This included the **Production in a Week** activity. A group of 15 students took on the challenge of creating a production in four days.

The stimulus was a number of Victorian cautionary tales, and the group took this starting point to devise a highly spooky and atmospheric performance set in a graveyard. As the piece unfolded, the souls of children, who had perished in variety of horrible ways as punishment for their bad behaviour, told their stories to the audience.

On Friday three performances were given to packed houses.

Across the school, suddenly, there were children screaming, heavy footsteps running in the corridors, and bodies found at the bottom of stairwells.

Comberton was transformed into the set of a horror film — as a result of the English department hosting **Film Week**, where 80 students were given the chance to experiment with editing software to create their own movie trailers and animation shorts.

The Offshoot Foundation helped direct pupils, which proved to be a big hit.

Other activities included some magic at the Harry Potter Studio Tour and a visit to the Light Cinema in Cambridge to see Inside Out 2. The week ended



with a celebration of their work, culminating in an 'Oscars' award ceremony.

Dungeons and Dragons Week also had, unsurprisingly, a horror theme! Students kicked things off with a bang, their newly-made characters entering a Haunted House, solving puzzles and fighting monsters made of all four elements. Throughout the week, students made their own dice and some even began to make their own games. Everyone got stuck in and involved, learning how to play DnD and working together to make the week brilliant for all.

Many of the activities had a sporting theme.

Cerys (9O) and Seyiye (9N) enjoyed **Dance Week** and reported: "We had an exciting week. Nikki, our dance teacher, taught us three dances. Each morning we started off with a 40-minute warm up and then got into learning dances. It was lots of fun and tiring. On Thursday we performed the three dances to other students at school and on Friday we did a range of workshops and ended the week watching a "This made us all bond together through dance and discover that 'you're not a dancer if you don't leave with a bruise'."

Another activity centred around **Horses** and Rosie (8R) said: "I was lucky enough to get Horse Ownership. During the week, we were paired with a pony, learnt the basics of grooming, tacking up, stable care and riding. We spent a fun and enjoyable week with friends, Comberton staff members and staff at Monach Farm in Hilton."

What better place to escape from the heat of the UK summer (if only) than to spend time learning to snowboard or ski?

Fourteen Year 8 pupils had the opportunity to learn **Snowboarding** from qualified instructors during at Snozone in Milton Keynes. Core muscles were certainly put to the test and a much-needed rest day spent shopping on Wednesday was very welcome. It was also a great week at The Snow Centre in Hemel Hempstead for **Ski Week**.

The group of 15 were very excited to learn a new skill, or a returning skill for some of them. Platon (8N) in particular stood out! On the whole, the group made brilliant progress. Well done everyone!



CLOSER TO HOME: In-school activities included film-making and STEM experiments.



ART IN ACTION: Year 9 studied Dali in Figueres.



TRADITIONAL FARE: Year 8 ate paella in Malaga.

Adventures in Spain

Groups of Year 8 and Year 9 students headed to different parts of Spain for Activities Week.

The Year 8 trip to Malaga was nothing short of spectacular! From the moment they set foot in the sunny Spanish city, excitement and anticipation filled the air. The trip was a perfect blend of culture, history, and fun, leaving everyone with unforgettable memories.

A 'rather brilliant group' of Year 9, meanwhile, travelled to Figueres to look in greater depth at the famous Spanish artist, Dali.

In the weeks leading up to the trip, pupils had participated in sessions run by Art teacher Jess Roffey to learn more about Dali.

Once in Spain, they visited Gala's castle; a particularly generous gift from Dalí, toured his house in the beautiful fishing village of Port Lligat and went

to his museum in Figueres.

They also made the most of the Spanish weather with trips to the beach and the waterpark.

The Malaga adventure began with a walk round the city and a tapas tour, sampling a variety of Spanish dishes, which the students really enjoyed.

The second day was a journey through time at the Gibralfaro Castle and the Alcazaba Fortress.

Students learned about the battles between Muslim soldiers and Christian forces, immersing themselves in the rich history of the ancient fortifications.

Then it was on to the beach to relax and cool off.

Day three was a dive into the world of art at the Picasso Museum, where students gained a deeper understanding of the man and his work, before having a delicious paella lunch at a typical Spanish restaurant and heading back to the beach.

The beautiful Botanical Garden was the destination for day four, the group enjoying the shade of the lush greenery. Then in the evening they saw a mesmerising Flamenco Show, highlighting Spanish traditions and culture.

The day finished with *churros con chocolate*, *bocadillos* and a thrilling football match on television. The final day was spent at the Imagination Museum. Students explored the interactive exhibits and had a great time despite the 40-degree Celsius heat.

Little did we know a four-hour delay awaited us at the airport. However, this unexpected twist didn't dampen our spirits. We waited patiently, making new friends and reminiscing about the fantastic trip we had just experienced.

¡Muchas gracias y buenas vacaciones a todos!

Immersed in the fields of warfare

For the Battlefields tour, we left school at 6:30am, having collected our tour guides, we then travelled to France via the Euro Tunnel and drove to our first location in Belgium.

Lijssenthoek CWGC Cemetery used to be a CCS (Casualty Clearing Station), where wounded soldiers were taken to be treated and evacuated to England or Calais. After learning this, we explored the roles of women in the war before driving to the Bayernwald trench system and walked in what used to be the German frontline trenches.

In the evening, we visited the city of Ypres and the Menin Gate. As an added bonus, we visited this small chocolate shop near the Cloth Hall. After dinner, we watched the daily Last Post Ceremony, which three of us participated in by laying a wreath. Finally, we drove to Albert, where the Poppies Hostel is located, and had a good night's sleep.

Tuesday was an eventful day because our coach broke down near Ulster Tower! As we waited for a replacement, our guides spoke to us about artillery and tactics used in the Battle of the Somme.

When the other coach came, we travelled to Auchonvillers, where we walked down the Sunken Lane and to the Hawthorn Crater.

For lunch, we were in a delightful tearoom with newborn chicks and chickens! Because of stormy weather, we spent most of the afternoon inside, exploring the weaponry and uniform used in WW1 trench warfare. One lucky member of our group was allowed to dress up as a soldier in historically accurate uniform.

Our favourite part of Tuesday was at Hawthorn Crater, where we learnt about how underground bombs were used.

On Wednesday, we drove to the nearby town of Arras, and visited The Boves, which are a series of underground tunnels used during WW1.

Next, we visited the Neuville St Vaast German Cemetery where we compared how different countries chose to pay respect to the fallen after the war. Did you know that there are around 45,000 soldiers buried there?

We went on to Vimy Ridge to learn more about trench warfare in the Battle of Arras. From there, we drove to Notre Dame de Lorette and the Ring of Remembrance. At the Ring, we had the opportunity to find our surnames on the panels around the circle.

Finally, we went to Thiepval Memorial to the Missing, where the guides showed us where the five Comberton boys' names were on the memorial.



WAR WEAR: Students model original uniforms.



A SOLDIER'S VIEW: In the trenches.

At the hostel, the teachers gave us the opportunity to watch the European Championships semi-final between England and The Netherlands. Our last day was Thursday and we only had two stops before heading home. The first stop was the John Monash Centre, where we had to use an app to interact with the exhibits. One of the features was an immersive short film depicting a few battles where Australia fought Germany during WW1. For our final destination, we had a short walk in the Étapes Military Cemetery. We are grateful to the teachers who volunteered to supervise us! One of our favourite parts of the trip was walking in the preserved trenches as it showed us what it was like to be a soldier firsthand.

Lily (9V) and Elsie (9I)

Memories to last forever

On Monday 8th July, almost 260 Year 7 pupils embarked on the eagerly-awaited Beaumanor Residential trip, departing at 10 am and arriving at the picturesque Leicestershire hall by noon.

This annual trip, a tradition for nearly 30 years, marks a significant milestone for our pupils.

Upon arrival, we set up camp under the sunny skies and wasted no time diving into a week packed with exciting activities.

Pupils faced their fears abseiling, traversed the thrilling high ropes course, paddled through canoeing adventures and even explored the mysterious Beaumanor Hall cellars. Each activity provided both challenges and unforgettable moments, fostering teamwork and resilience.

Wednesday night was particularly memorable. We set up two venues with projectors to watch England v The Netherlands, allowing everyone to see England score a dramatic last-minute winner in the semi-finals of the European Championships, sparking

scenes of excitement and celebration. The following night saw pupils showcase their skills in a lively talent show, culminating in a disco where 'Sweet Caroline' was the final song, met with enthusiastic cheers and dancing.

Matt Knight, Head of Year 7, commented on the trip's success. "The pupils have had an amazing time and truly embodied the school ethos: Caring, Confident, Capable," he said.. "The week wouldn't be possible without the hard work, commitment and dedication of many staff and volunteers, so I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to such a successful week that the pupils will remember for years to come!"

By Friday afternoon, we returned to Comberton, tired but brimming with memories of an extraordinary week. The Beaumanor residential trip continues to be a rite of passage, offering our pupils experiences and friendships that will last a lifetime.



ALL ACTION: Students tried everything from high ropes to archery to build teamwork, resilience and friendship.

'Staycation' was a week of fun too!

Not all students go to Beaumanor and for those who stay behind, there's still a special programme of activities as Flossie (7E) and Monica (7O) explain:

"During the 'Staycation' for one of our activities we made stop motion movies out of Lego and clay, it was fun for everyone to try.

"Then we did orienteering — and it was great to get fresh air and run

around. We met new people in the year group we had never met before. When we got back, we relaxed and played board games.

"The next day we did an A to Z treasure hunt on the backfield. We also came up with good ideas — for S we chose supply teacher (Mr Bacon). We then went back inside and had ice cream as a reward for our hard work.

"After break we had a lesson in sign language and Scratch, which we enjoyed.

"Next, we started to film our stop motion movies; it was a bit stressful because the Lego characters kept falling over.

"The next day we had a quiz about flags and were allowed to choose two flags to draw on cookies.

"We went swimming and after practising three different strokes, we had free time to play in the pool.

"After lunch we all watched each other's stop motion movies, which was entertaining because everyone had different ideas.

"On Thursday, we did badminton and basketball which was very exhausting. After break we decorated candles and made mosaics which was very fun.

"After lunch we watched the Dance Week students' performance and then watched a movie.

"On Friday we did some sports outside such as rounders, before decorating T-shirts with any design we wanted — some of us designed football shirts and others did nice patterns.

"In the afternoon we watched Music Week's amazing performances and tidied up after a great week. Thanks to Mrs White, Miss Cotton and Mrs Gillings for a fun week!"



SEEKING: Year 7 students who didn't go to Beaumanor, complete an A-Z treasure hunt on the back field.

Going 'batty' for the countryside!

What an adventure a group of work experience students recently had with the Countryside Regeneration Trust at Lark Rise Farm.

The charity promotes nature-friendly farming to help reverse the biodiversity decline and combat climate change.

Year 10 students Ashton (V), Morgan (O) and Ben (R) were looked after by Vince, the conservation officer at Lark Rise Farm. After a training session on day one, the students were able to help supervise a team of volunteers from Severn Trent Water, who were at Lark Rise for a Corporate Volunteering session as part of the campaign against Himalayan Balsam.

Days 3 and 4 were spent mainly helping with the wildlife monitoring work and learning how to identify, count and record various groups of species, with a session looking at the insect life in the Bourn Brook, a butterfly count and, the highlight for many, a bat survey.

From dusk till 11:30pm, they walked a 3km route and recorded 20 pipistrelle bats, using ultrasound bat detectors.

With rain forecast, the team spent the last day of the week on the all-important data handling part of a Conservationist's job, sending our bat data to the Bat Conservation Trust's survey. We worked out how many territories of birds were recorded on the farm, based on maps produced by our volunteers during the spring. We ended with a discussion on careers in conservation and it's my hope that the experience will inspire these young people to consider this as an option," said Vince. "As well as giving the students a fun-filled week, it was also a great benefit to the work of the CRT and gave me a real boost of energy to see these young people enjoying life in nature." For more information about the Countryside Regeneration Trust, please see <https://www.thecrt.co.uk/>



IMMERSED: In conservation work.



VARIETY OF PLACEMENTS: Students completed their work experience with a wide range of employers.

Into the world of work

Congratulations to our Year 10 students, who all completed work experience in July, with some travelling as far as the USA, France and Switzerland to complete placements!

They received fantastic feedback from their 'employers', including that the students were "great ambassadors for Comberton Village College and a credit to their families" and "an asset to our business — we will miss them". South Cambridgeshire District Council hosted students at their Cambourne HQ for the first time. There they learnt about the different departments in the council and conducted presentations at the end of the week.

One lucky student, Emma (10N) had one of her weeks with an MP and enjoyed visiting the House of Commons, helping to edit social media posts and watching MPs get sworn in.

We held a celebration of work experience assembly in the Performance Hall on Monday where Fay Lawson, Career Guidance & Development Lead, gave out

postcards for exceptional effort with work experience.

These were awarded to Ishaani, Gareth and Joanna (all 10T), Charlie and Benedict (both 10V), Rudy and Ben (both 10R), Jay and Josie (both 10I), Shreeya and Julie (both 10O) and Alli (10M).

Six vouchers were awarded to pupils who had made an outstanding effort — Ronia and Freya (both 10N), Oran, Aydin and Angus (all 10O), and Anna (10V). Ronia was at My Dentist in St Neots, where she enjoyed learning about the different dental equipment that is used in the practice and also enjoyed communicating with clients.

Freya's placement was at ADAS, where she gained practical scientific experience and an insight into the more practical element of what a scientific career can involve.

Oran worked at Renesas, where he learnt many useful things about the industry, including the amount of time, money and effort invested in computer chips.

Aydin spent his placement at the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences in Cambridge discovering different types of fossils, how to handle them and understanding their history. Aydin particularly enjoyed writing a social media post for the museum.

Angus went to C&D Motors, where he got hands-on experience of changing oil filters and tyres, installing a new car exhaust and learning how to balance wheels.

Anna completed her placement at Cambridge Stem Cell Institute, where she gained valuable insights into academic and industry research. Well done to all our Year 10 pupils; you have worked extremely hard at your work experience placements. Thank you also to their parents and carers for their support with this.

Insight into German careers

Late last month, a group of students in Years 9 and 10 took part in a German careers workshop at the University of Cambridge.

As part of the day, students attended a training course on intercultural awareness, and learned about a variety of opportunities available for exchanges, working, and living in the German-speaking world. Students enthusiastically completed linguistic challenges throughout the day, and all came home with well-earned prizes!



CAREERS WORKSHOP: With a German twist.



RIVERSIDE GATHERING: For the Year 13 Prom as students and staff enjoyed a dinner and disco at The Graduate Hotel.



Comings and goings . . .

No sooner had Comberton Sixth Form said goodbye to the latest cohort of Year 13 students with the Leavers Celebration Assembly and Prom than staff were welcoming a large group of Year 11s who have chosen to continue their studies here.

Around 300 turned up for a day of introductions — to each other and the courses they hope to study — as students from 34 different secondary schools started the process of getting to know each other and their way round the sixth form.

They had introductory lessons and then joined current staff and student ambassadors for a BBQ at lunchtime.

Before that, there were two wonderful opportunities to say goodbye to Year 13 students.

The first of these was at our Leavers Celebration Assembly, which was followed by a BBQ in the sunshine.

The assembly was a chance to reminisce over their time at school and college (we enjoyed starting with a montage of photos from their very first days of school

which parents had secretly sent in), hearing some words of wisdom from the sixth form tutors (including a fun game of who's who using the tutors' baby photos), hearing a fabulous story written by Mr Ryall which managed to incorporate every Year 13 student's surname, handing out awards and wishing the leavers all the very best luck with their exams and next steps.

For the first time this year we gave out Teagan's Award, set up in memory of Teagan Blake, a Comberton student who passed away in 2022.

It is given to someone who demonstrates the qualities that Teagan herself displayed and valued; academic progress, sporting achievement and community mindedness.

Both staff and Year 13 students were able to nominate anyone they felt embodied all of these qualities and it was wonderful to read all of the reasons why people nominated their peers.

Of the seven very deserving nominees, it was decided the inaugural award would go to Billy (13WD), for the incredible fundraising work he completed, raising £9500 for Magpas, for captaining the boys' Under-18 football team and for his focus and hard work in his academic studies.

Blaine (13JD) was awarded the Reading List Foundation Scholarship for his progress and expected achievement. He will be able to use the £275 scholarship towards his university studies.

Each subject awards a prize; it is very difficult to choose just one student for each subject, as so many students go above and beyond, but congratulations to those who won.

The second chance to say goodbye to our Year 13s was the Leavers' Prom, which took place at The Graduate Hotel in central Cambridge on Thursday 27th June.

Luckily, the sun was shining and it was a chance for students (and staff) to get dressed up and come together to celebrate the end of their time at Comberton Sixth Form.

Students enjoyed welcome drinks in the beautiful riverside garden and this was followed by a delicious dinner in the River Suite and a disco, with students filling the dance floor until the last song was played.

We wish all of the year 13 students the very best of luck with their next steps.



TUCKING IN: Offer holders enjoy a BBQ at the Welcome Day.

Already looking ahead to 2025

Comberton Sixth Form has been very busy looking to the future. As well as the Welcome Day, for offer holders who have taken their GCSE exams this summer, there have been two taster days for those currently in Year 10 as well as an Open Evening where prospective students and their parents had a chance to find out more about life at Comberton Sixth Form.

Around 550 teenagers from the local area participated in one of the taster days. Due to their popularity, there was one morning just for those already at CVC and a day for those at other schools, to enable all who wanted to attend to do so.

It was a fantastic opportunity for them to experience post-16 lessons and find out more about the content and opportunities gained by studying A-Levels and BTEC extended diplomas.

The Open Evening in late June again coincided with

the hottest day of the year so far.

It did not stop hundreds of those due to start sixth form in 2025 flocking to the site to tour the buildings, attend talks in the Performance Hall and most importantly, talk to staff and students to find out about our subject curriculum, enrichment and the multitude of opportunities at CSF.

It was lovely to see so many young people, parents and carers enjoying the social spaces and refreshments from the food vans.

For anyone who missed the event, more information on admissions, courses and opportunities can be found on our website: www.combertonsixthform.org or on Twitter — @combertonSF or Instagram — CombertonSixth.

We will also offer tours of our site in November and have staff attending the local Post-16 evenings hosted by CAP and local schools.



PLENTY OF INTEREST: At Open Evening.

Planning steps up a gear

Following our progression conference in February, in which Year 12 students were encouraged to start thinking about their plans for life after Sixth Form, preparations for the next steps really stepped up a gear this term.

Our traditional UCAS information evening at the beginning of June was extremely well attended and helped to outline the process, the timeline and the support on offer to CSF students who are considering a university pathway. Guest speaker Lucy Nottingham, Higher Education advisor at the University of East Anglia, presented the universities' perspective on the process and also offered insights into the often-perplexing world of student finance. In the days following, sixth form tutors held remote individual guidance meetings with students and many of their parents, with discussions taking place around plans, ranging from university to apprenticeships to gap years. These have been complemented by advisory meetings for those considering alternatives to university, and individual consultations and preparation sessions for

those making early applications to Oxbridge and other competitive courses. A busy period came to a close with two trips to support the decision-making process.

First was an outing to the UCAS Discovery Exhibition at the Norfolk Showground Arena, at which students were able to seek information about, and advice from, representatives from universities and apprenticeship providers all over the UK. This was followed by an opportunity to attend an open day, at the University of Birmingham, where students experienced a taste of campus life; from sample lectures to tours of student accommodation.

A guidance session on the planning and writing of personal statements was the focus for students' final PD slot of the year, following which our attention now switches to September and another busy period of post-18 activity.

Whatever their plans, students should now be feeling well placed to start looking ahead to life after sixth form.

Stephen Leggett, Deputy Head of Sixth Form



CAMPUS LIFE: Sixth formers gained an insight into what attending university might be like.



VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY: At the UCAS Discovery Exhibition in Norfolk.

New team hard at work making changes

The Sixth Form Team would like to thank the outgoing Sixth Form Council for everything they have done over the past year, with their most notable achievement being the introduction of our, now annual, Cultural Day.

This celebrated the diversity of our community in a highly impactful and purposeful way. The Council also welcomes the newly elected officers for 2024-2025.

This is a group of seven students who will work to develop the sixth form experience at Comberton and represent the student voice.

The new Council has already been meeting on a regular basis, has set the priorities for the year ahead and is making headway to see

changes in readiness for the arrival of our new Year 12 students in September.

The newly elected Council will be led by our two Presidents — Hanna (12JD) and Max (12WD).

Working alongside them will be our Vice Presidents, who each have a specific focus for the year; Jessie (12RJ) as VP Welfare, Equality and Diversity, Sarah (12RA) and Nick (12SC) as VPs Social and Extra-Curricular, Melina (12PG) as (VP Academic Leadership and Lily (12FF) as VP Community and Environment.

The Sixth Form Team looks forward to working closely with the Council over the next year to ensure the students have an active role with the continual developments of our Sixth Form.

NEW TEAM:
The Sixth Form Council.



GAME ON: Students ran a Carbon Footprint game at the Cambourne Eco Festival.

Festival inspires copycat plan

Two members of our Sixth Form Student Council, myself as the current Community and Environment Vice President, and Nick (12SC), attended the Cambourne Village College Eco Festival and ran a Carbon Footprint Game for those who attended.

The day involved various stalls, from a mobile, eco-friendly book bike to organisations and charities like Greenpeace.

Also in attendance was the fabulous organisation called The Repair Café, that runs community events matching people who need stuff fixed with people who like fixing things.

The day was incredibly successful overall and allowed us to make further connections with Cambourne Village College and their Eco Council, which we look forward to continuing in the future. The event has also inspired us to try and create an Eco Festival at Comberton with all our own stalls and events taking place throughout the day.

Lily (12FF)



BOAT ACCESS ONLY: The group heads into the Tortuguero National Park in the only way possible.



TREE-PLANTING: Students help plant wild almond trees in the National Park.

Into the rainforest . . .

A-level Biology and Geography students in Year 12 had an amazing time in Costa Rica, taking the opportunity to extend their understanding of biodiversity in the rainforest and explore the physical environment.

Our departure from Heathrow was eventful, with a terminal evacuation causing a little stress and delay on what was already expected to be a rather long journey to Central America.

Our students coped really well, eventually arriving to San Jose late in the evening. With an early start (5am!), we travelled four hours by bus to the Tortuguero National Park via Costa Rica's central mountains.

With no roads in the National Park, travelling to Tortuguero takes a further two hours by boat. The fast boat ride gave us the ability to escape the heat and humidity and our first opportunity to see amazing Toucan, Spider and Howler Monkeys, along with a glimpse of Caiman.

Overnight, we stayed up really late to see Green Turtles laying their eggs on the beach (sadly no photos could record this wonderful sight due to National Park restrictions and our agreement not to disturb the process).

For the remainder of our time in Tortuguero, we enjoyed further boat safaris, the resort's pool and rainforest walks. With our lodge in the rainforest,

sloths, iguanas and various monkeys were a regular sight.

Next we travelled to Fortuna to visit and swim in the volcanic hot springs. Fortuna is more commonly visited, so the water slides and pools were a welcome change from the National Park.

Leaving the following morning, we had time to trek and swim at the Fortuna Waterfall which at 75 metres in height, has eroded a spectacular gorge through the rainforest over time.

Spending time in the mountains of Monteverde gave us some respite from the heat and humidity. We enjoyed a brilliant night walk in the forest where we witnessed more toucan, an unusual tree porcupine, frogs, insects and a side striped palm pit viper along with an eyelash pit viper.

Travelling towards Costa Rica's Pacific Coast, we paused the journey for a final river safari in the hope of seeing American crocodiles - our tour didn't disappoint with 20+ seen (ranging from 1m to 5m in length).

Our Costa Rica experience ended with some time on the beach before making our journey home.

The students were fantastic and my thanks to Mrs James and Mr Roberts for agreeing to help me make this spectacular visit happen.

David Clarke

Deputy Principal and Director of Sixth Form



TOURIST PHOTO: At the Fortuna Waterfall.

Range of opportunities for students

While the biologists and geographers were delving into their subjects in Costa Rica, the rest of Year 12 were on work experience.

Students had a range of placements in different industries locally and further afield, with one student going to the USA!

A number attended programmes arranged by Anglia Ruskin University (ARU). They held a Business and Law work experience programme at their Cambridge and Chelmsford campuses and also a Character design programme at their Cambridge Campus.

Several year 12 students took part in the creative careers' week organised by the Social Mobility Business Partnership About - Social Mobility Business Partnership (smbp.org.uk) They went behind the scenes of the Cambridge Corn Exchange and learned about the variety of different creative careers available.

Other students helped with activities for younger pupils. One group went to Beaumanor, where Year 7 pupils were enjoying their residential week, and help them set up and take down the camp as well as with their activities.

Others stayed at school to assist Year 8 and 9 Activities Week options.

Other placements saw Oli (12SC) spend his week at Bosch Rexroth, a hydraulics company, learning about engineering and applying physics in a work environment.

Lexie (12JM) worked at Elite Conveyancing, a local law firm, seeing different aspects of the legal profession. During the week, she shadowed lawyers, sales associates and client managers and met the Head of Legal, who gave her advice surrounding the range of routes into law, such as legal apprenticeships and university.

She found this useful and said: "My work experience has definitely helped me consider my post-18 plans."

Joe (12CR) completed his placement at the Shuttleworth College Zoological Education Centre, where he helped feed the different animals and gained an understanding of the data that is recorded for each animal.

This was particularly useful as Joe is looking into studying data science at university. Well done to all Year 12 students and thanks to their parents and carers for their support.



BEAUMANOR CREW: A group of Year 12s helped with the Year 7 residential trip last week.

Food: a learning process

In May, two groups of sixth formers took part in a Cambridge University researcher study called: 'Exploring the knowledge, perceptions and driver of UPF engagement and consumption with UK adolescents: a qualitative study'.

We started the session with researcher Yanaina Chavez-Ugalde asking questions to learn about our previous understanding of ultra-processed food (UPFs), which made us really think about what it is we're actually eating and whether we're making a conscious decision about how we fuel our bodies. Later we moved into group discussion around three main talking points: benefits of UPF, negative things about UPF and alternatives to UPFs. This got us talking about why we are eating them and

what role different environments and factors had in making our food choices.

We looked at what we eat at school, home and out and what solutions there could be to UPF being a large amount of the food we eat and if there are better alternatives.

The session ended with some overall feedback which was a really helpful summary and allowed us to communicate and share similar and different values in an open and helpful way.

The session overall was a really great experience and furthers our knowledge on UPF and how we can encourage healthy eating at school.

Becca (12WG)



THINKING: About how students fuel their bodies.

EXPERT VIEW: Wildlife presenter Ajay Tegala talks to students about Wicken Fen.



TV presenter shares his Fen expertise

At the end of June Year 12 A level biology students went on the annual field trip to Wicken Fen to complete necessary practical skills. They enjoyed sampling the two ponds to compare the biodiversity of the invertebrate species present.

They also studied the plants growing in the peat ecosystem using a transect and quadrants.

A new highlight this year was a guided walk with the Wildlife TV presenter and author Ajay Tegala, who shared his extensive knowledge of the Fen.

STEM day out

In June, a group of 30 Year 12 biology students went on a STEM Day at Anglia Ruskin University.

We had a great day exploring different courses the university has to offer, such as forensics, biomedical science, sport science,

psychology and animal science.

We really enjoyed experiencing sessions in real university classrooms and labs and learning about STEM at ARU.

Overall it was a great day out for everyone.



INSIGHTS: Students experienced working in university labs and classrooms.

Young pharma master new skills

For three months earlier in the year, four Comberton Sixth Form students joined students from other colleges around Cambridgeshire to explore pharmacology and complete lab work at the University of Cambridge.

In this placement we — Katherine (12FF), Eleanor

(12CR), Claudia (12MR) and Owen (12MR) — participated in four key sessions. We learnt new techniques including how to use a Gilson pipette, which helped us gain skills on the importance of precision and accuracy.

As well as this, we heard all about the different aspects of pharmacology from various PhD students and professors.

We first investigated how many proteins there were in a single cell.

This involved using a haemocytometer, a technique called freeze-thaw lysis, and our new knowledge of Gilson pipettes. We developed our biological maths skills alongside real life lab techniques to come to a conclusion on an average number.

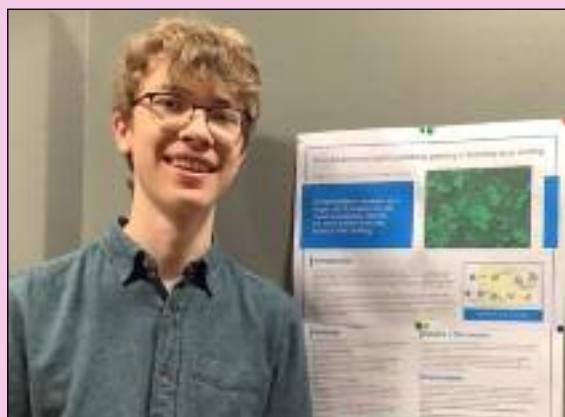
The next session was a full day 'The Pharmacology Masterclass' in which we completed two practical research experiments. In pairs, accompanied by a PhD student, we began with the 'virus attack'

experiment: how viruses bind to their target cells, specifically transferring receptors on human cells, enhancing our own Module 4 learning. We discovered which antibodies prevented the virus by looking at the fluorescence of the cells in a plate reader. In the afternoon we were taught about the Langendorff preparation, a set-up which involves drug administration to the heart and analysing its contractions. We completed this experiment online and tested drugs involved with calcium channels and other receptors.

The final part of the course was producing a scientific poster to explain an experiment of our choice from the previous sessions.

We presented them at Corpus Christi College and the winner was from Comberton Sixth Form — congratulations Owen!

Additionally, we listened to a lecture about aging which was great. Overall, it was an extremely valuable experience, not only for our own interest but also for aiding skills that will be important in university and helping with our UCAS applications. We really recommend this course to anyone who may have the opportunity.



BEST PRESENTATION: Was made by a Comberton Sixth Form student.

Eleanor and Katherine

Sport and study do mix!

When it comes to a sporting future, Comberton student Madeline is spoilt for choice.

Not only has she just cemented her place in Milton Keynes Ladies first team football squad for next season despite being only 17; she is also having an incredible summer playing cricket in the Sunrisers Emerging Players Programme (London & East Region).

Madeline's passion for both sports means that she is extremely busy all year round. The teenage striker, last year broke into MK Dons' first team while in their under-23 squad and, somehow, between the ever-extended football season — returning this month for pre-season training after finishing fixtures in May — she also finds time to hone her skills as a fast bowler and work part-time as a lifeguard.

This summer she has taken to having the ball in her hand rather than at her feet and is playing cricket at Mildenhall Cricket Club in the EAPL, as well as Cambridgeshire Under-18s, the women's county first XI and for the Sunrisers at regional level, where she has her sights on breaking into the Academy squad next year.

Madeline has always enjoyed sport. Not only does she excel at football and cricket, she also played county hockey, county netball, and competed in athletics and trampolining competitions in her early teens.

It has not always been plain sailing and at one point Madeline reported: "juggling two sports that I love and feel passionate about has been tricky over the years. Sometimes having to forfeit one for the other, especially when the seasons overlap, has not been easy".

Last summer Madeline was crowned the winner of 'The 1', a Nationwide competition to find cricket's next top junior female cricket all-rounder.

Undertaking various cricket drills including batting, bowling and fielding, the national competition was open to girls aged 12-18 and is run by former England Cricketer Lydia Greenway.

Madeline took home a host of prizes, including a pro-player contract from Kookaburra Sport, which included two custom fitted bats, batting pads and gloves, as well as becoming part of the junior ambassadors' programme with Payntr, who specialise in performance footwear.

Keeping up with schoolwork when you train multiple times a week in different sports in different locations around the country is always a big ask — especially when studying doesn't come naturally.

"I'm dyslexic and have struggled, my GCSE results were not the best," said Madeline. "But I'm determined and planning for my future, I believe you can follow your dreams even if schoolwork is a struggle."

Madeline spent five years at Comberton and never expected to be walking through the doors of the sixth form.

But a conversation with a sixth form tutor on the sidelines of a school football



FIRST-TEAM SQUAD: Breaking through at MK Dons, aged 17.

match brought her back to Comberton where, with the support of her tutors, she is gaining a newfound passion for studying.

"The move back to Comberton was the best decision I've made," she said. "I'm getting good support, and really enjoying the BTEC Sport course I am taking." On her return, Madeline helped Comberton Sixth Form under-18 team to the final of the English Schools FA Arnold Clark Cup, a year after helping the under-16s to national victory in their age group competition.

Madeline is still unsure what her future may hold but she is working with David, at Athleticadamix, an agency which specialises in placing outstanding young British sport players in American universities.

The process is still in the early stages but he is helping Madeline gain access to colleges offering scholarships to study and play football in the USA.

Madeline said: "I'm excited at the thought of going to America. I'm still toying with the idea of a two-year Junior College or doing a four-year course; at the moment I am keeping my options open."

She has come to realise that education and football can be a perfect combination! That marks a major turnaround in her thinking as she has gone from a reluctant student to one now considering undertaking the USA college SAT Test as she launches her bid for a scholarship to an American university.



'THE 1': After winning a national competition for 12-18-year-olds to find the next outstanding female cricketer.





KEY ELEMENTS: Camping and carrying everything with you are central to the Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions.

Intrepid award seekers!

Comberton has a long tradition of students completing the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Initially the focus was on the bronze and silver levels, but the advent of the sixth form means that students can now also reach the gold standard during their time at Comberton.

And this year has been no different, with hundreds of students taking time to work on the four different sections (five for gold) that the awards require. They involve helping the community/environment, becoming fitter, developing new skills, planning, training for and completing an expedition and, for gold only, working with a team on a residential activity.

The expeditions are usually the most highly anticipated and over two weekends in late May and early June nearly half of Year 9 pupils participated in their first bronze assessed expedition.

Pupils walked around Grafham Water, thriving on a

classic DofE diet of noodles and marshmallows, and walking around 20km a day. The overnight temperatures were chilly, but the skies remained (mostly) clear.

Pupils were carrying enormous rucksacks, which, in some cases, had other bags, crocs and saucepans hanging off, but they still succeeded!

We were very proud to see them arriving in the car park at the finish with smiles on their faces and very, very long lists of what they were looking forward to doing or eating when they got home.

Over the last few weeks, the gold practice as well as the silver assessed expeditions were completed.

For the gold, Year 12 students travelled to the Dark Peak in the Peak District, where there were more than a few hurdles to overcome.

These included arriving on the campsite late and the weather not always being on their side, but the students adapted to the everchanging conditions and

impressed with their resilience, skilled orienteering and overall positive attitude to the week.

The silver expedition took place near Matlock and Bakewell, also in the Peak District, where again the weather was prone to changing although the final day finished with clear skies and relieved students! For assessed expeditions students are tasked with completing an aim; which ranged from creating a horror movie to reviewing participants' kits.

To finish that trip, the minibus had a lively journey back ringing BBC Radio 2 for 'All Request Friday' and trying to get 'Unwritten' by Natasha Bedingfield played.

It was amazing to see so many students helping each other and throwing themselves into everything DofE has to offer.

All students who took part represented Comberton well and impressed campsite goers, so thank you all and we look forward to next year to do it all again.



REACHING THE PEAK: Both the silver and gold expeditions this summer took place in the Peak District.

New cohort experience two taster days

While Year 10 are on work experience and Year 11 have left, we welcome our new Year 7 cohort for the following academic year to visit a slightly less busy school for two days of transition.

On Thursday 4th July, nearly 300 Year 6 pupils arrived, many using the school buses for the first time, to experience being a member of Comberton Village College for the day.

This began with lots of excited youngsters entering our Pupil Entrance in anticipation of what the day ahead held for them. The first task was to discover which tutor group they have been placed in! They were keen and swift at finding their designated 'letter' for their tutor group to go to their first assembly.

As will be the normal routine in September, pupils lined up ahead of entering the Dining Hall, where Ms Phull, the Head of Year 7 next year, delivered an assembly to the new cohort.

She welcomed them to Comberton, setting expectations for the days ahead and for September when pupils formally become members of our school community.

Pupils then had some time with their new form tutor, to ask questions about their timetable for the day, what the school rules are, and meet Year 7 leaders (current pupils in Year 8) who are assigned to each tutor

group.

The following three periods were focused on English, Maths and Science, which allowed our visiting pupils to experience familiar primary subjects. These were introductory lessons to both reassure pupils and help ease them into subjects. It also gave pupils an opportunity to get to know some members of staff beyond Ms Phull, Ms Kirkby, Assistant Head of Year, and their form tutor.

During their social times, pupils were based in their new social area and enjoyed fruit for break and a free hot meal provided by our catering team.

They were able to mingle with their peers and gain a sense of our school community with the other three year groups on site.

The day ended back with their form tutor, when they received a free book from our school librarians and a T-shirt ready for the . In that they competed as teams in their new tutor groups across a range of activities. These are significant days on our calendar as we welcome new pupils, and our other year groups move 'up' a year. It is always a day of excitement and trepidation, but one which, we hope, helps our new Year 7 pupils to get prepared for September!

We are really looking forward to welcoming them again after the summer holiday.

Sarah Higgs, Assistant Principal



LEARNING THE ROPES: Year 6 find out about what life will be like when they start at CVC in September.

Chance to guide change

For the second year running, Comberton participated in the Cambridgeshire Students Forum, which is organised by Unloc.

Six students from Year 8 to Year 12 were involved in this amazing experience, which is all about promoting student voice.

Earlier this term, they attended a Student Voice Celebration Day at the end of the year-long programme and received certificates of participation as well as hearing reports from the various sub-groups' actions and experiences.

The work of Cambridgeshire Students Forum (CSF) links with the work that we continue to do at CVC to celebrate the Rights of the Child as listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We are very proud of all the things that are happening at CVC to promote the Rights of the Child and being part of the CSF is one example of the many activities we do.

"I loved my time at Unloc this year! As Co-Chairman, I was incredibly lucky to get multiple opportunities to speak in front of large numbers of people — which I found has done wonders for my public speaking skills and confidence," said Josh (12JD).

"In addition, having the time and space to share ideas with like-minded people, work together to figure

out a solution to shared problems, and then actually do something in real life to solve that problem, was amazing! "It showed me just how easy it is to speak up about your issues, and get your ideas listened to."

Abigail (12KS) said: "I have enjoyed my experience with Unloc this year.

"I feel that, from working with my Action Group, I have been able to have a real impact on my local community.

"Personally, I found it very rewarding as I not only learned a lot about Student Voice, but the Forum also helped me learn how to use it to make change.

"Through the programme, I was able to meet new people, talk to local councillors and feel that I was taken seriously.

"As well as this, I developed my confidence and teamwork skills, which I look forward to continuing in my future. Overall, my experience with Unloc has allowed me to understand Student Voice and the role it plays, and it has given me a renewed confidence in my abilities that have made me feel more prepared and excited for the future."

Clemence (8R) commented: "Unloc was an amazing experience that really helped my confidence and public-speaking skills.



UNLOC-ING CHANGE: Some of the Comberton students with their certificates of participation.

"In our final summit, we concluded our time by talking about what each group did and meeting different people from the Cambridgeshire County Council.

"Unloc was great at introducing me to students from other institutions, who I wouldn't have met if it wasn't for this. Thank you so much for the opportunity."

Twins Seren (9V) and Misty (9E) said: "Unloc was a really eye-opening experience for both of us, allowing us to step away from our comfort zones and into new environments.

"We were given the opportunity to work with new people and get involved in promoting changes for the community.

"It was a really refreshing experience and one we would definitely recommend to other students."

You can read more about the Celebration Day here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/16sWYdhuv170rj0RjwR08QeSt5SxZmu1B/view>



BRAINSTORMING: Considering flood issues at Churchill College.



PLANE BRILLIANT: The winning model plane.



INSPIRING: The next generation of young engineers at Meridian Primary.

STEM enthusiasts get out and about

Comberton's STEM club have been very busy since before the Easter holidays with a range of exciting activities.

Just last month, they joined the Eco Club to visit Dr Rachel Thorley at Churchill College, Cambridge, to learn about how engineering is helping us to design buildings which are better able to cope with flooding.

The students had the opportunity to meet engineers undertaking research at Cambridge University and to ask them about their work and how they got into engineering.

They also had a tour of the site and learned about some of the exciting research happening at the college.

It was a very enjoyable and enlightening day for all.

Two days later, STEM Club hosted a flying competition — though everyone kept their feet on the ground!

Competitors were challenged to build a machine which would fly under its own power.

The winner was the flying machine which could travel the greatest distance in the air before hitting the ground.

Harry (8V) took top spot as his machine managed 16m of unaided flight.

Harry was also one of the STEM leaders who visited Meridan Primary School just before Easter to deliver a tower-building challenge to Year 5.

They were challenged to build the tallest possible egg-holding tower and the winners managed 32cm.

Incredibly only one egg was broken and Harry, as well as Marrici (8N),

Thomas (8R) and Vaughan (10N) did an amazing job presenting the challenge to Meridian's young engineers.

30 years of commitment

Irayna Owen has been at Comberton for the last 30 years and this summer retires from teaching.

During her time at Comberton, Irayna has had a far-reaching impact, working across a number of different teams and in a range of roles, as well as supporting primary and secondary schools across the East of England as part of her Advanced Skills Teacher work. Irayna started in September 1994 as Head of Biology and a Year 11 Tutor and the one constant during her time at Comberton has been science, which she has taught every year since joining.

She has also been an Assistant Head of Year, Deputy SENCo, Acting Head of Year, SENCo, Advanced Skills Teacher in Science, Assistant Principal, Sixth Form Tutor and Deputy Head of Sixth Form.

In fact, Irayna has been absolutely central to the growth and development of the sixth form at Comberton, particularly in the areas of SEND



LONG-SERVING: Irayna Owen (inset) with her first tutor group.

support and the wider welfare and wellbeing of students.

We are incredibly grateful for the care, commitment and support Irayna has shown to the many, many staff and students she has worked with over the years, and she will be very sorely missed.



She said: "I am really proud of being in the team who worked to introduce the Cabin to the main school and appointed the staff to lead it, of being part of the team who set up Beaumanor and went on the first trip (and then went on nine more trips!), setting up the IT and OT courses with Matt Mannas and teaching on the science HLTA course for the county. "But I am most proud of working with individuals over the years, both pastorally and in science, and, hopefully, making a difference to their outcomes."

Also leaving this summer after many years of sterling service are administrator Eve Baxter, who has been at CVC for 22 years, exams officer Liz Hart, Head of Sixth Form Ellie Jenkins, who both joined in September 2010, and Assistant Principal Sean Pollock.

He started at Comberton as a PE teacher in 2000 and has also been a Head of Year, SENCo and Assistant Principal.

After a year on secondment to Trust partner school, Melbourn VC, he is making the move permanent.

Preloved uniform is the biggest earner!

The Friends of CVC Trust Fund Trustees, with the support of CVC staff members, parents, carers and student volunteers, have been successfully raising valuable funds for the benefit of the school community.

Fund-raising events, including raffles, a pop-up coffee shop, Bag2School and Easy Fundraising plus individual and corporate donations brought in an impressive £2,427. But by far the biggest haul has been through the sales of preloved uniform. This has raised £6245 — so if you have any outgrown or unwanted uniform, please donate it via the school reception!

This income means the committee were able to fulfil all the small grant requests made during this period. They were:

- £1,000 request from the Drama Department as seed funding to acquire new curtains, since the curtains were no longer fit for purpose.
- £1,000 to KS3 Support. This enabled them to buy a whole list of items which has helped towards creating essential areas of the provision to the next level.
- £200 for the Rugby Tour. This enabled the participants to buy socks!
- £100 to the Library to buy some sets of books to encourage reading. This was sourced by a direct donation of £50 from a past adult learner, Derek Skipper. The Trust Fund matched the donation.

We have received a few grant requests for the 2024-25 academic year and Trustees will consider the level of support we can afford.

Our sincere thanks to all our supporters — raffle prize donors, those who gave and purchased preloved uniforms, buying raffle tickets, as well as making donations, including your time.

Without you, none of this would be possible. We are a very small committee and we continue to ask for your support. We would love to hear from you.

Vijju Churchman, Chair
email: vchurchman@combertonvc.org



FUNDRAISERS: Preloved uniform sales (top) were the biggest earner, but collecting textiles also added to the Trust Fund income.

Socials take experiences out of classroom

100 Year 7s travelled to Xtreme360 trampoline park in St Neots for their summer term social. They had an inspiring amount of energy as they enjoyed the whole trampoline park to themselves, many of them showing off impressive tricks.

After 90 minutes of bouncing, they then enjoyed Dominos pizza as they sat and chatted to one another.

The year group socials were an excellent chance for the year 7s to meet up outside school and get to know others in the cohort. It was wonderful to see them all enjoying themselves and getting on with each other so well. They all behaved impeccably and were an excellent representatives of CVC.



LOVE TO JUMP: Year 7 at the trampoline park in St Neots.

Thorpe Park was such a fantastic Year 10 social, the rollercoasters were spectacularly thrilling, and the experience is one I'd recommend to anyone and everyone. It was such great fun to spend time with my friends — even if we did spend most of it upside down screaming at the top of our lungs.

Scarlet (10C)

The sounds of success

This summer the music department hosted a marvellous concert.

We experienced outstanding performances from 11 of our school bands, two student soloists and a duet.

There were many types of music played; from a sweet relaxing music from the string ensemble to a glow-in-the-dark neon rave from the brass ensemble.

Here are my personal highlights: In the first half, we listened to a thrilling performance from the Comberton Young Voices where they sang several songs from ABBA, with some excellent choreography that had the audience dancing.

Then Soul Band performed a piece arranged by student Ziggy (11N), which had us singing along.

They also performed a modern hit 'Crazy in Love' by Beyoncé, including a rap solo bravely done by saxophone player Will, with such style.

Afterwards, the Snare Drum Group opened with the theme song of the '20th Century Fox' and then a group composition which had us all laughing from the last-minute improvisation of Ms Bristow playing the triangle.

The lights then dimmed down to a spotlight on an excellent Year 10 pianist, Misha (10N), with an amazing performance of her own song 'Waterfall'.

After the interval, Head of Music Mr Parker opened with the orchestra playing 'Rhapsody in Blue' by Gershwin and an awesome violin solo from Catherine (9M), where she performed 'Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho'.

The choir, directed by Mr Bloska, then performed 'I'm Just Ken', the best song

from Barbie, the No 1 movie last year.

After that we had an outstanding piano and violin duet from Reagan (9O) and Jess (9B), where they played 'Chanson de Matin' by Elgar.

The atmosphere changed completely to the neon rave from the Brass Ensemble, who were wearing glow-in-the-dark glasses.

They performed the electronic song 'Sweet Dreams' from the Eurythmics.

Just as I thought this was the best, it got better when they played 'What is Love?' by Haddoway. I was having a blast!

Lastly, the Big Band played a fun and enjoyable song 'Hyperspace' which had the audience out of their seats, and a beautiful rendition of 'April in Paris', which had great dynamics. We closed the night with another exciting, head-bopping song 'Cactus Mambo'.

This year's summer concert was one of the best moments of this year because it was an evening where I could perform and show my skills as a guitarist and also have fun and enjoy the evening listening to outstanding performances from other groups and students.

As a member of Soul Band, Concert Band and Big Band, I would highly encourage joining a band at school because there's a great community of musicians and joining has really helped me improve my confidence in performing. It also means that you can look forward to these amazing events that happen three times a year!

Narin (10T)

CVC MUSIC DEPARTMENT PIANO APPEAL



The Music Department is raising funds to purchase a much-needed new piano to be used for lessons, recordings and performances. Donations are welcome by either of the methods below:



*You can raise funds for our piano appeal every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! These donations really add up, so please sign up to support us by pasting the link below:
<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/cvcmusic/>*



*To donate, please either scan the QR Code above or paste the link:
<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/23146>*



SPECIAL GUEST: Chef Jamie Oliver was filming at Comberton.

TV chef joins lesson!

One very lucky Year 7 class had an extra special Food and Nutrition lesson earlier this term.

Not only was their teacher, Miss Jones, showing them how to prepare and cook a dish, but the famous TV chef and author Jamie Oliver joined them! Comberton's Food and Nutrition Department have been working with Jamie's Ministry of Food this year to pilot their schools' programme. They have created a number of practical food lessons with resources and were looking for schools to trial the lessons, and to provide feedback so that the programme could be developed in readiness to be rolled out nationally. All Year 7 pupils this year have taken part in the programme, and some have kept food diaries and completed surveys to help with research.

They have made a fabulous range of recipes developed by Jamie and his team, including 'Wrap it Up' burritos, 'Catch of the Day' fish finger sandwiches, and 'Friday Night Fakeaway' chickpea and coconut curry.

Jamie Oliver spent quite some time with the class, talking to them about their lessons and their thoughts around cooking, and then took some time at the end for some photos and autographs.

Ministry of Food gave all of the pupils in the lesson a special apron to keep and Jamie's presence certainly caused a stir around the school, especially as he was accompanied by a film crew.

There is an embargo in place, so we can't tell you what they were filming for, but it is VERY exciting — watch this space!



TASTINGS: New foods were available to try.

Healthy lifestyles

Comberton took part in Healthy Eating Week again this year. This is an annual event created by the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF). It's all about celebrating healthy living and encouraging people to make positive changes to their lifestyles and promoting healthy eating, drinking and physical activity.

Comberton has taken part for several years, and it is an opportunity to remind the whole school community about the links between nutrition, wellbeing and the health of our planet.

It was a great week:

- Our catering team took on the challenge of our themes of the week. We were treated to additional wholegrain food items, new fruits and vegetables, an enhanced salad bar full of crunchy, fresh and delicious salads, with a particular focus on hydrating foods.
- Jugs of delicious flavoured water with fruits, cucumber and mint were available for all.
- We had food tastings out on the field throughout the week — with a focus on sustainability and reducing food waste, this included Jamie Oliver's chickpea curry, semifreddo, banana loaf and lots of refreshing homemade ice pops (fast becoming a CVC tradition).
- We ran Healthy Eating assemblies for Years 7-10.
- Year 7s kept a healthy habits tracker to log their food and drink for the week.
- We had a guest chef, Steve Walpole, to demonstrate cooking while minimising waste with our Year 10 Hospitality and Catering students, which was really informative, fun, interactive and tasty!
- Our Year 8 BiteBack team had a stall in the foyer on Tuesday lunchtime.

Champions look at different options

This year, we have been involved with BiteBack.

This is an exciting project that helps put healthy food in the spotlight at CVC. It aims to drive social action through pupil voice on issues that matter to young people, to make a tangible difference to our whole school community, and to join a movement of 200 schools sharing best practice on school food issues.

We kicked this off with an assembly run by one of BiteBack's young activists, followed by five sessions run through the first part of the year with all of our Year 8s.

Following these sessions, pupils registered their interest in becoming a School Food Champion.

They explained what they have been doing: "Year 8 BiteBack School Food Champions have been meeting since March this year to look at the food and drink provision at CVC.

"We needed to understand what the important issues are so we conducted surveys and spent time during Health Eating Week catching up with as many pupils as we could to talk about food and what we would like to see on the menu. When we looked at the responses from our surveys, it became clear that there are healthy options available in our food provision, but they are not always chosen.

"We also found out that people would like healthier food options in the buttery. "We are now discussing dishes that could be added to the school menu, and other changes that we could make to help people make healthy and tasty choices. We are always open to hear any tips on how we can encourage well-balanced break and lunch choices!"



RESEARCHING FOR CHANGE: Comberton's Biteback food champions.

New slopes go down well

The Easter Snowsports trip is always a highly-anticipated one with a good chance of blue skies and sunny days, this year was no exception.

And our new destination of La Thuile, in Italy, did not disappoint.

With 62 students and eight members of staff, we set off in gloomy, wet conditions.

Unfortunately, this continued for the majority of our journey, but by the time we arrived at our beautiful hotel at the foot of the mountains in a picturesque town, the weather was looking brighter. We had a great first evening, filled with games and activities, before getting sorted into rooms and settled for the night.

Many of our younger students who go on the Easter trips have never skied or snowboarded, and this year saw a record number of complete beginners.

This meant that many were all starting from the same point, and we would see a significant amount of progress from many, which is always great to watch.

Our first day on the slopes gave everyone a good opportunity to really feel what snowsport activities are like, with our beginners getting to grips with their skis and boards and our more experienced students taken off to explore the vast ski area.

By the end of our first day, there were lots of smiling faces and great stories of what had happened and how excited people were to get back out the next day.

We were fortunate to have a big dump of snow that night, so the conditions on day two were excellent. The progress made by the students was amazing, with some groups even being able to make the trip across the mountain and across the French border for more skiing.

Our second day finished with a trip into the town for a traditional pizza evening meal before heading back to the hotel to get some rest.

The next two days on the slopes were incredible; the skies were clear blue, the sun was shining and not enough sunscreen was worn, despite several reminders. Many students sported amazing goggle tans!

With bowling and a trip to the supermarket as



GLORIOUS CONDITIONS: At the new venue for Comberton's snowsports trip on the Italian side of the border with France.

evening activities and plenty of stories shared at our group meets, our evenings passed quickly. It was fantastic to hear all the great experiences and funny anecdotes of the day's events from the students. To see so many happy faces make these trips so worthwhile.

Our final day on the slopes was not one to disappoint.

All students progressed on to the harder blue and red runs of the main mountain while the higher groups took on the black slopes with ease. It was clear what a success the trip had been.

We finished with not only a great presentation led by the instructors, on the rooftop of our meeting point in

glorious sun, we also managed to squeeze in time for an ice cream at the bottom of the gondola, where it was 20°!

Overall, this is one of the best ski trips I have been lucky enough to go on.

The students were, as expected, on their best behaviour and fully engaged in the ethos that has been created from previous trips.

The staff team were amazing, again fully embracing what it means to be on these ski trips and helping boost the experience for students. A huge thank you to them.

We now can't wait for our next trip.

Jamie Magan, Trip Organiser



REAPING THE REWARDS: Students were presented with a range of awards and certificates at the end of a successful week.



SKI LESSONS: There was a record number of beginners on this year's trip.

Bourn snatch second

Bourn gave it their best shot but there was just no stopping Harston & Newton at the annual South Cambs School Sport Partnership's Quadkids competition.

They fought really hard to snatch runners-up spot, just 13 points clear of third-placed Gt Abington, but still finished a massive 222 points adrift of the runaway winners, who retained the 'small schools' trophy they have won for the past four years.

Haslingfield were a battling four, just two points off a medal and 15 ahead of fifth place in a tight battle for the minor placings. Barton and Dry Drayton were also among the 19 teams who took part.

Quadkids sees teams of five boys and five girls each compete in a 75m sprint, a 600m run, a long jump and vortex howler throw.

Individual performances are scored using a points table and the winners are the team with the highest cumulative points score so it is important that every athlete puts in their very best performance in each event.

Performer of the day for Bourn was Albert who was second individually among the boys behind Maxime from Harston & Newton.

In the 'big schools' event, Trumpington Meadows stepped up from third place last year to take the title, well clear of Milton and Bassingbourn.

The event was supported by members of the Partnership's successful Leadership Academy programme with a team of more than 40 sports leaders from Comberton Village College helping at both competitions.

They demonstrated enthusiasm and great professionalism in running all of the events and acting as group leaders and helped ensure the primary school pupils all left having had a memorable day.

Partnership Manager Claire McDonnell said: "It was a great day; it is always one of our favourite events of the year and this year certainly didn't disappoint.

"There were some incredible performances and, most importantly, a lovely atmosphere as the children supported their teammates and showed great respect to their fellow competitors.

"As always, we have to thank the sports leaders who organised and scored the events for us and encouraged every athlete to give their best effort. They did an outstanding job and we simply couldn't have run the event without them."



TEAM EFFORT: From Bourn's runners-up and from the Comberton Leadership Academy helpers.

Football is fun . . .

The South Cambs School Sports Partnership hosted a fun afternoon of football at Melbourn Village College for girls in Years 3 and 4.

Ten teams took part in the #LetGirlsPlay event, which was aimed at introducing new girls to the game of football and giving them the opportunity to represent their school in a fun and friendly environment.

Matches were seven-a-side with roll on, roll off subs with teams getting to play against lots of different schools in 10-minute matches.

Eight sports leaders from Melbourn Village College helped to referee all the games, whilst current MK Dons players Maddie, who is at Comberton Sixth Form, and her twin sister Olivia helped to inspire the girls, along with Astro the mascot.

The schools taking part included Dry Drayton, Trumpington Park, Barton, Coton, Girton Glebe, Melbourn, Meldreth and Thriplow.

With the focus of the event being fun, the results of the matches were not recorded; instead teams were asked to score their opposition



GIVING IT A GO: Girls are introduced to football at a fun tournament.

based on their teamwork, fair play and their team/individual skill. Nicky, from Melbourn Dynamos Wildcats Girls Football, also supported the event and chatted to the girls about the weekly Saturday morning sessions she runs for girls aged 3-11 at Melbourn Rec. Claire McDonnell, South Cambs SSP Partnership Manager said: "It was a lovely afternoon of football and great to be able to give so many girls their first opportunity to play competitive football. "They had a really fun time playing with their friends and representing their schools and they all left with massive smiles on their faces.

"We hope that some of them will continue to play back in school and some may even want to join their local girls club."



DYNAMOS: Bourn's winners and a pupil hits out.

Giving cricket a go

An introduction to competitive cricket was relished by primary school pupils this half term with events at Sawston & Babraham Cricket Club's Spicers sports ground and Cambridge St Giles ground in Caldecote. South Cambs School Sports Partnership hosted Dynamos cricket for Year 3 and 4 pupils with 30 teams representing 22 schools including Bourn, Barton, Coton, Meldreth, Thriplow and Harston & Newton.

Dynamos is for eight to 11-year-olds, with everyone on the team getting to bat and bowl, with a no ball or wide giving the batter a 'free hit' from a batting tee to give everyone the opportunity to score runs.

Claire McDonnell, the South Cambs SSP manager, said: "Both events went really well, with lots of competitive matches and some great fielding and batting. They loved playing at a proper cricket ground, they had lots of chances to hit the ball and loved being part of their school team."

With 15 teams taking part at each venue, the events were organised into three pools of five, with each team playing the other four teams in their pool in a round robin competition.

Bourn, Pendragon and Jeavons Wood collected the winners' medals from Caldecote with Thriplow, Petersfield and Willingham triumphing at Sawston.

Barton were among the schools winning Spirit of the Games awards for demonstrating excellent teamwork, determination and respect.

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CUP WINNERS: 9B were the top performers on their year group sports day.



EFFORTS RECOGNISED: For the best individual performances among Year 9 girls.

Good sports battle it out

The biggest week of the PE Department's sporting year was kicked off by Year 8 — and they did not disappoint!

They brought banners and flags aplenty as each tutor group competed as a pre-determined country for honours across a range of athletic disciplines like high jump, hurdles and 100m to see who would be crowned champions.

To finish the day — while the Year 9 maths leaders were busy inputting all the results — team relays took place and it was fantastic to see, and certainly hear, so much support. Special mention to Charlie in 8V, who cheered so much throughout the day that he lost his voice!

Well done to 8B, who won the performance trophy, 8V, who were the endeavour winners, and highest-scoring pair of Zac (9O) and Jocelyn (8B). Another early start for PE staff the following day as the wet weather that had threatened did materialise.

However, it didn't seem to dampen Year 9 spirits and they embraced the day, with a particular focus on working for the endeavour award.

It ended up being very close with 9N taking the honours, although 9M, led by Mr Knopf, deserve a special mention for the 'can do' attitude and positivity.

Thankfully, the weather brightened for the competitive relays and sprints at the end of a day which also saw 9B emerge as performance champions with Harry (9T) and Charlotte (9R) taking the individual honours.

The rain also fell for Year 7 but they showed great resilience and they tried

their best in difficult conditions.

7V came out as winners, with 7C taking the endeavour award. Zac (7O) and Thomas (7T) were inseparable as the best boys with Amelie (7M) top of the girls.



LEADING LIGHTS: The best individual performances by Year 9 boys (left) and Year 8 competitors (below).



Interform proves a real resilience test!

This year's interform has had some great team and individual performances in rugby, netball, football, hockey, flag football, rackets and of course, the cross-country run.

The weather made it difficult for the pupils, battling through wind and rain, but the resilience and determination shown by all years was great to see.

The quickest runners were Alys (T) and Patrick (B) in Year 7, Amelie (N) and Rocco (M) in Year 8 and Madeleine (N) and Atticus (M) in Year 9.

The overall results saw E win their first interform, taking the Year 7 title ahead of M, with B and T sharing third spot.

I were the winners in Year 8, ahead of R and N, with T taking the honours in Year 9, followed by B and V.



SOMETHING NEW: Cabin students tried different events at an athletics day

Fun to try new and different events

In June, a team of Year 9 pupils from The Cabin took part in an Outdoor Athletics Plus event at Cambridge University Athletics Track.

The aim of the day was to encourage participation in a variety of different sporting events and to strengthen team-building skills.

Activities included long jump, triple jump, target throws, discus, shot put, 100m and a team relay.

Each pupil attempted every event while being cheered on by other members of their team.

The atmosphere was full of energy and enjoyment, and afterwards the pupils all received certificates for their efforts and achievements.

'Best' leaders bow out

Writing this article is actually quite difficult, as it means the reality has hit that the Year 10 Leadership Academy pupils have ended their course.

This year in particular, the pupils have been outstanding. Dare I say the best year I have ever had...!

During this term, we have had pupils lead the CVC swimming gala, umpiring at the Dynamos Cricket competition, assisting with Barnabas Oley Primary School's sports day and helping to officiate the QuadKids Athletics event run by the South Cambs School Sport Partnership at Wilberforce Road.

Certainly a busy few months, which is even more impressive as the Year 10s combined these commitments with end-of-year assessments and work experience.

Five students — Anna (10N), Arabella (10R), Ava (10R), Brooke (10M) and Kim (10C) — recorded more than 100 hours of volunteering to receive gold awards with a further eight gaining silver for at least 50 hours and 17 achieved bronze with a minimum of 25 hours.

Huge congratulations to Anna (10N), who was awarded Sports Leader of The Year.

Rebecca Kingston, PE Department



TOP TEAM: The Year 10 sports leaders have been exceptional.



TREBLE COMPLETE: 9T have won for a third time.

Champions again!

The sun was shining for the annual KS3 swimming gala on Thursday 27th June. The morning started with our Year 9s competing in their last gala.

There were some stand out performances, however it was 9T who again were crowned the champions for an impressive third year running after winning in Year 7 and 8 as well.

Year 7s were next up and their enthusiasm was unmatched! A special mention must go to 7B, who competed as a team of girls, with Andi giving a masterclass in swimming technique. However, it was 7T who took the win.

We finished with Year 8s, who always bring an exceptional energy to sporting events. With Mr Magan on the mic and Year 8 bringing their personalities, it was always going to be a great afternoon. 8E were crowned champions.

Well done to everyone involved.

COMBERTON SPORTS & ARTS		FITNESS CLASS TIMETABLE				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
BODY BLAST 18:00 - 18:50 HANNAH	YOGALATES 17:40 - 18:40 SANDRA D	FITNESS PILATES 17:40 - 18:40 SANDRA D	STUDIO CYCLING 17:45 - 18:25 AYMEN	STUDIO CYCLING 17:30 - 18.15 JENNY BROWN	YOGA 10:00 - 11:00 JENNY BISHOP	STEP 09:00 - 10:00 AYMEN
STUDIO CYCLING 18:00 - 18:45 AYMEN	STUDIO CYCLING 17:45—18:30 JENNY BROWN	CIRCUITS 18:45 - 19:45 TARA	CORE 18:30 - 19:00 AYMEN			YOGALATES 10:10 -11:10 SANDRA D
DANCE AEROBICS 19:00 - 19:50 HANNAH	CARDIO TONE 18:45 - 19:35 SANDRA D		PUMP AND TONE 19:05 - 19:50 JO	FITNESS CLASSES FREE OF CHARGE FOR MEMBERS NON-MEMBERS WELCOME : £6 PER CLASS CONTACT CSA RECEPTION TO BOOK ON! TEL: 01223 264444 MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE FROM £32 A MONTH - WHICH INCLUDES: UNLIMITED USE OF FITNESS SUITE AND FREE WEIGHTS ROOM AND FREE BADMINTON COURT HIRE		
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County Cup qualifiers!

After rain cancelled our initial date last term, Year 8s finally had their chance at the District Netball tournament and both the A and B team had high hopes after winning this in Year 7.

The A team started very strongly, with a 21-2 win over Cottenham — a very impressive result for a 12-minute game!

They followed this up with a 18-0 win over Sawston as excellent accuracy from Matilda (V) and Rosie (R) helped the goals add up, while Lottie (E) and Evie (N) denied the opposition scoring chances.

They faced their toughest opponents, St Mary's, next, and narrowly lost 7-8.

The wins in the group stage meant Comberton still made it through to the semi-finals, where they continued to impress, winning 13-0 over Bassingbourn.

That put them into the final against St Bede's — a very strong team who beat Comberton in friendlies earlier in the year.

However, with some very smooth mid-court play from Grace (E), Ella (N), Tesni (E) and Alice (R), Comberton clinched the victory 12-7 for their second District title in a row!

Victory also means the Year 8s progress to the Cambridgeshire County Netball finals in November.

Meanwhile, the B team won two out of three of their games, only narrowly losing to St Bede's B team.

The hard work and commitment to training has paid off! Well done all.

Year 7 also took two teams to their District event and both finished third overall, with the A team narrowly losing to Impington in their semi-final.

Both our teams worked very hard in their respective competitions, facing schools such Swavesey, St Mary's, Bassingbourn, and Chesterton.

Sharp passing, fearless interceptions and shooting with ease put the teams in great positions.

Some highlights were confident and accurate shooting from Emma (T) and Molly (N), as well as excellent defending from Enoch (T) and Emily (R).

Our centres and wings worked hard throughout the tournament with Immy (N) and Maddy (E) constantly running up and down the court! With the potential for some stressful games, the calmness and composure of players like Katie (V) and Alice (R)



YEAR 8 DELIGHT: The players celebrate after the A squad qualified for the county finals in the Autumn.



YEAR 7 SMILES: After a creditable third place in their District tournament.

Students shine at Jubilee Cup event

Each year, Comberton participates in the Jubilee Cup, a prestigious schools' athletics event that brings together the county's top athletes.

This year, more than 70 Comberton students competed across various track and field events at the Cambridge University Athletics Ground, braving scorching temperatures that tested their endurance alongside their athletic skills.

The Comberton athletes displayed tremendous dedication and sportsmanship throughout the day.

Their hard work paid off, with several first-place finishes across multiple events.

Amelie (7M) won the Year 7 hurdles, securing a thrilling second-place finish overall for the team.

A nail-biting photo finish in the 100m saw Francisco (9T) clinch gold, helping the Year 9 boys to victory overall. Harry (9T) took top spot over 300m.

The Year 10 girls also dominated the field, taking first place in the 100m, through Lily (10R), the high jump, thanks to Fiona (10C), and discus, won by Brooke (10M).

The Year 10 boys continued the winning streak with top honours in both discus and shot, courtesy of Oran (10O) and Vedant (10N) respectively.

Overall, Comberton achieved an impressive fourth, solidifying their position as the second-best state school among the participating

institutions.

"We are incredibly proud of the hard work and determination our students demonstrated at the Jubilee Cup," said teacher Ms Kingston, who helped coach many of the girls across the year groups.

Fellow teacher Mr Magan echoed the sentiment, "The scorching sun presented a challenge, but the team spirit and unwavering focus on competing with excellence truly shone through," he said.

Congratulations to all the participants! This year's Jubilee Cup was a fantastic display of athleticism and school pride, and we look forward to even greater achievements next year!

STRENGTH IN DEPTH: Comberton's Jubilee Cup athletes head for the Cambridge University Sports Ground.



Jenna leads medal haul



TOP THREE: The winners of the sports person of the year awards.

Eighteen Comberton rising stars in 11 different sports were among hundreds from across the Cambridge area honoured for their achievements at the annual Roy Burrell Awards.

These awards recognise the high standards by Year 11 students from schools across the Cambridge District Secondary Sports Association at a special evening, this year held at Netherhall School.

They are held in memory of Roy Burrell, a teacher at Chesterton School, who died at the age of just 49 but was a keen advocate of sport and PE.

Students must have reached county standard or above in their chosen sport to gain the award and more than half of Comberton cohort can boast reaching national standard.

A sports person of the year is also named and this year, Comberton footballer Jenna (11C), who captained the girls' under-16 team to glory in the ESFA cup last year and the under-18s to runners-up spot earlier this summer, took third place. This year's guest speaker was Saffron Walden-born Paralympian all-rounder

Laura Sugar, herself a PE teacher, who talked about her sporting journey.

She started as a Welsh international hockey player and captained their under-20 team before the 2012 Paralympic Games in London inspired a switch to athletics, where she competed in sprint events.

She did not medal at the 2016 Paralympics but was a World Championships finalist in 2017 and won European Championships silver and bronze medals.

She switched to para canoeing and won European Bronze and World Championship silver in the KL3 class on her debut season in 2019 then won gold at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics (held in 2021). She now has her sights firmly set on glory in Paris this summer.

Comberton's winners — Athletics: Bryn (11I); Cricket: Rosie (11V); Dance: Ella (11E) Frankie (11T); Fencing: Monty (11O); Football: Luke (11M), Jack (11N), Jenna (11C); Hockey: Joss (11O); Judo: Carys (11M), James (11I); Powerlifting – gym: Sawyer (11B); Rowing: Maksymilian (11R); Squash: Connor (11T), Isaac (11M); Swimming: William (11C), Edward (11I), Sam (11I).

Awards celebrate talent and dedication

Earlier this term CVC proudly hosted its annual Sports Awards event, a celebration of athletic talent, dedication, and achievement within our school community.

The event featured guest speaker Steve Frew, a Commonwealth Games gold medal-winning gymnast, whose inspiring words resonated with everyone present.

With 35 categories and 67 nominated students, the evening was a testament to the hard work and passion for sports displayed by our young athletes.

Each nominated student was accompanied by their parents or carers, adding to the supportive and celebratory atmosphere of the night.

The evening was a wonderful opportunity to recognise and celebrate the remarkable contributions and efforts of our students. Congratulations to all the nominees and winners for their outstanding achievements and dedication to sports. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for these talented individuals.

Our dedicated PE staff took the stage to highlight the achievements of each nominee and announce the winners.

Our winners were....

Football: Boys — Barney (7N), Jaime (8E), Harry (9T), Charlie (10C), Jack (11N); Girls — Katie (7V), Amelie (8N), Ellen (9I), Anna (10N), Chloe (11N).

Netball: Emma (7T), Rosie (8R), Maysoon (9N), Brooke (10M for KS4).

Athletics: Boys KS3 — Liubomyr (8E), KS4 — Alex (10E); Girls KS3 — Grace (8E), KS4 — Fiona (10C).

Cross-country: Mixed — Alex (10E).

Basketball: Under-13 — Hudson (7N), Under-15 — Jenson (9N).

Rugby: Stanley (7V), Ethan (8R), Harry (9T), Charlie (10V).

Hockey: Boys KS3 — Sam (9O), Girls KS3 — Caitlin (8I).

Rackets: Mixed — Kris (9O).

Special Awards

Sports Personality of the Year: KS3 — Grace (8E), KS4 — Kim (10C).

Team of the Year: Year 10 Netball

Sports Leader of the Year (Year 10): Anna (N)

Sports Performer of the Year: Jenna (11C)

Curriculum Performer of the Year: KS3 — Stanley (7V), KS4 — Tommy (11E).



ACHIEVEMENTS RECOGNISED: Some of the award winners.



GUEST SPEAKER: Commonwealth Games gymnast Steve Frew.

Final is just a game too far

The Under-18 Girls Football team had an unexpected journey to the English Schools FA Arnold Clark Cup final in Stoke.

Having initially lost out in the semi-final of the national schools' competition, their opponents were disqualified and Comberton were put through. What followed was a show of impressive emotional maturity as the team switched their mindset back to their fight to be champions — several of the squad having played in last year's under-16 team who triumphed on the national stage.

They trained hard in the weeks leading to the final, with Mr Asensi regularly leading both lunchtime and after-school sessions to ensure the team were physically and tactically ready.

Simultaneously students were preparing for their GCSEs and A-Levels and their ability to balance their studies with training is testament to their determination to be part of a national cup final team. The team travelled to Stoke the night before, with a final evening debrief featuring videos from staff and supporters.

The next morning, the final kicked off at 9.30am with a crowd of friends and family cheering the team on. Led by captain Jenna (11C), the team worked hard to fulfil their individual roles on the pitch — a meticulously planned formation that put opponents Blenheim High School, from Kingston, through their paces.

An early opportunity for Comberton was almost taken with Maddie (12MR) exploding forward on a break

but the goalkeeper snatched the ball before she could get a touch. Within the first few minutes, Blenheim put Comberton under pressure but these attacks were shut down by defenders Sophie and Lola and some great saves from keeper Bry.

The score remained level at 0-0 for some time until a Blenheim winger scored a long range shot with incredible pace.

This knocked Comberton but they pushed on regardless, with Izzy (12RJ), Summer (11E) and Emmelia (12CR) working hard in the midfield to make chances happen.

Despite Aliyah (11O) continuing to close down frequent attacks from Blenheim, they were able to increase the score to 3-0 at half-time.

After a motivational talk in the changing room and agreement that Comberton were not going to go down without fight, the team came back out for the second half.

An early injury to keeper Bry meant some changes were required and Liv (12RA) was substituted on, making some great saves throughout the game. Although Blenheim continued to pile on the pressure and scored again, Comberton maintained their composure, helped by the calmness of players such as Rose (11V) and Imogen (12WD).



NATIONAL RUNNERS-UP: Comberton's girls reached the English Schools Football Association under-18 national cup final.

Martha (12FF) and Chloe (11N) worked hard to keep Blenheim's at bay, staying tight and fending off further attacks.

Maddie and Maddie (13RJ), our two attackers made excellent runs, nearly converting on several occasions.

The relentless efforts finally paid off with captain Jenna scoring a brilliant goal following a huge run. Unfortunately it wasn't quite enough and despite a back-heel to save a goal from Maddie, Blenheim went on to win 6-1.

As always, the resilience and determination of this team should be commended.

They demonstrated exceptional teamwork and tenacity throughout the competition. We are very proud of them all!

Abbey Cotton, PE Department

Last-gasp heartbreak for Year 10 boys

The Year 10 Football team capped a fantastic year with a thrilling run in the District Cup, narrowly missing out on the trophy in a dramatic final. Their journey to the final kicked off in January, and after a bye in the first round, the boys exploded in the second round with a dominant 14-0 victory. A sterner test awaited them in round three against Northstowe, but they emerged triumphant, 3-0.

The semi-final against St Bede's proved a nailbiter.

After building a commanding 3-0 lead early on, St Bede's staged a comeback, making the final score a narrow 3-2 victory.

The much-anticipated final at Bottisham VC was a spectacle. Walk-out music, official referees, and a large student body cheering them on provided a grand stage.



AGONISINGLY CLOSE: Comberton were narrowly beaten in the Year 10 District Cup final.

Comberton started strongly, taking a well-deserved 1-0 lead thanks to a Rory goal. The second half saw the heat and fatigue take their toll, with BVC equalising. As the final whistle loomed, a goalmouth scramble resulted in a winner for the hosts and heartbreak for Comberton.

While ultimately falling short, the Year 10 team deserves immense credit for their dedication and impressive run. It was a year filled with passion, teamwork, and some truly memorable moments on the pitch.

There were many stand out performances throughout the year, but I would like to give a special mention to Rory, a goal in a final will always be memorable, Charlie, our player of the season, and the captain Frank — a real leader. He has been fantastic in his management and organisation and a lot of the credit for a successful year must go to him. We now look forward to Year 11.

CVC: George (10E), Dylan (10R), Tommy (10C), Rory (10O), Lucas (10E), Zak (10C), Fraser (10C), Frank (10M), Charlie (10C), Finley (10O), Monty (10M), Sawyer (10C), Beau (10V), Sid (10N), Dillon (10R), Zak (10N)

Michael Wilce, Head of PE

Rising star is on the ball

Year 9 pupil Jenson is gearing up for the biggest competition of his life this summer.

He will play for England in the Rising Stars Tournament in London in August against top club and country teams from home and abroad. But Jenson (9N) is no stranger to international basketball, having played for the under-14 national team for three years.

However, it will be his first time at this competition, to be held at the Brunel University, London — not far from the home of the London Stars where he already trains and plays matches, journeying to the Capital at least three times a week.

He has already helped England to victory this season in the Copenhagen Invitational tournament against leading Danish and Swedish club sides earlier in the year then was part of the England A team that won the Tri-Nations tournament in Manchester against Wales and Scotland.

He has also played club basketball in the European under-14 league, competing across Europe against the top club teams in his age group and helping Stars finish fourth overall this season.

Jenson will move up to under-15 next year, but has his sights firmly set on remaining in the national set-up and attempting to become part of the GB under-



CHARGING THROUGH: For club and country!

dominant left hand.

"I'd love to play in a European League one day," he said. "Basketball is really big in Eastern Europe and it's a style I think will suit me. I know a few words of Lithuanian. . ."

16 set-up, with the first step being selection to a combined under-15 and under-16 training camp next summer.

Longer term he would like to finish his GCSEs at Comberton then join one of the basketball academies with the ultimate goal of playing professionally in Europe.

He believes his game is better suited to the European style of play — one of the key reasons he joined Stars — rather than the American game.

"I've always been on the small side," said the 5ft 3in playmaker, who plays point guard. "It means I can't really get away with playing the USA style.

"But I can go one-v-one and fast break. I've been working on my shooting too, improving my long shot, and was the fourth top scorer in Denmark."

Jenson has also been working hard — in training, at home with his dad and with a personal coach — to improve other aspects of his game, particularly dribbling with his non-

Cup delight for two boys' teams

The Year 7 football team capped a brilliant season by defeating a strong Swavesey side in the Cambridgeshire Schools Cup final.

Comberton had a dominant run to the final, comfortably beating most other schools. However, Swavesey, renowned for their footballing prowess, posed a significant challenge.

The final was a tense affair, with both teams creating multiple scoring opportunities. Swavesey struck first, but Comberton remained unfazed and continued to control possession.

Right before half-time, Thomas (nicknamed 'Haaland' for his goal-scoring prowess) equalised for Comberton, sending the teams into the break level. The second half mirrored the first, with both sides eager to find the winner. Fortunately for Comberton, Thomas added another goal.

Swavesey responded by applying intense pressure, but the resolute defensive pairing of Josh and Barney kept them at bay. Swavesey threatened with a late shot, but goalkeeper George produced a spectacular acrobatic save. Then, with seconds remaining, Elias displayed excellent game-reading and found himself unmarked in a one-on-one situation with the goalkeeper and calmly headed the ball into the net to seal victory.

This triumph is a testament to the exceptional performance of the entire squad, not just in the final but throughout the season.

Winning the Cambridgeshire Schools Cup in their first year of participation is a remarkable achievement. The future looks bright for this talented group, and we eagerly await their pursuit of further trophies in the years to come.

Comberton: George (N), Barney (N), Josh (N), Elias (I), Patrick (B), Matty (B), Logan (V), Oscar (O), Daniel (M), Gabriel (C), Zachary (C), Thomas (T). George Anderson, PE Dept



GRAND FINALE:
The Year 7 boys rounded off their season with cup success.



UP FOR THE CUP: The under-14 team added the County Cup to banish last year's District final defeat.

The Under-14 Boys football team had another successful season despite an early ESFA Cup third round defeat to St Ivo on penalties.

They then played Sawtry in their first County Cup game of the year, winning 8-1 at home, showing the team's potential. They followed up with a 5-0 win over Arthur Mellows Village College, Peterborough, and beat Longsands, St Neots, 5-1 to set up a semi-final against a strong St Bede's team.

The game was close but after two goals from Harry (9T) in Mr Magan's goal-scoring boots, the team came away as 2-0 winners.

The final was against Cottenham at Huntingdon Town Football club, which made for a great occasion. After losing in the District Cup final last year, the team were keen to ensure the result was different this time.

They started fast, playing on the front foot and winning the ball high to keep Cottenham in their own half. This led to several chances but unfortunately none was converted. After half-time Cottenham were hungry to change the flow of the game and our team had to work together to keep them out.

But, with 20 minutes to go, the ball fell to Harry, who had forced his way through two defenders to lift the ball past the on-rushing goalkeeper.

Pandemonium! For 20 seconds — almost straight from the kick off, Cottenham worked the ball wide before sliding in their forward to finish past our goalkeeper. This was a key moment in the game and Henry (9T), the captain, knew this and asked for calm from his team-mates.

That they were, and five minutes later Harry was played through again, slightly wider than last time, but somehow he found a way to finish under the Cottenham keeper, putting Comberton back in the lead.

Despite Cottenham's attempts to get back into the game, the team stood strong until the final whistle to finish as County Cup winners. A great year and we are looking forward to seeing what next year brings.

Joe Asensi, PE Dept