

Your Child, Your School, Your Voice Heads Up!

'We will remember them.'

Dear Parents and Carers

At this time of year we remember the sacrifice and courage of our armed forces, who give so selflessly of themselves so that others might live their life free from cruelty and oppression. The image of the poppy, in itself a thing of beauty, is synonymous with loss and bloodshed; a crimson reminder of young men and women who will never grow old. For some families whose relatives are currently serving their country, the impact of conflict is not just on the soldier fighting, but his or her children, their mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. War seeps into the arteries of these families who keep positive when they are worried; stay strong when they feel weak and who all too often have to find a way of living in the face of death. This sacrifice made by so many seems difficult to comprehend for some people, who ask why we help other countries, risking our own men and women when the battle is abroad.

The fact of the matter is that some people need the help of others, a basic human characteristic. In countries where there is little democracy or order, where children cannot go to school and there is no freedom of speech, we have a responsibility to help. Not everybody has the strength, courage or selflessness to do so, and so for those that do, I wear my poppy. For those who train and serve with the dignity and humanity needed to help those in crisis, I stand in silence. For those who have already made the ultimate sacrifice so that we might live a life free from violence and fear, I weep.

On Friday our school community were invited to join me in the sports hall to observe two minutes' silence. We do this act of remembrance every year and it is voluntary, not everyone has to come, but those that do arrive in the sports hall, a bell sounds, we fall silent and then another bell marks the end. Today I was truly humbled by the respect shown by at least 700 students who chose to come along and stand with me. They show maturity beyond their years and an understanding that we are very lucky to be free and safe; inspiring.

This weekend I am honoured to be laying a wreath on behalf of our school at the Remembrance Sunday parade in town, and have invited two of our year 7 students to join me. They have been selected as they reflect our core values in their behaviour every day. Ethan Pledge and Amelia Davis will represent John Mason School and help pay our respects to our service men and women. As I told the students in assembly this week, my Grandfather was an RAF pilot who dropped spies over enemy lines for the French Resistance; he was a brave and intelligent engineer who told us nothing about his heroism or medals. For him there was no need to glorify what he had witnessed; friends lost, loved ones who didn't return. He felt lucky and guilty that he had survived what he had seen. To me he will always be Grandad Fred, teller of jokes, lover of the sea and staunch feminist. My poppy is for him. It doesn't matter who you remember, we all have our stories, but try and stop, find some stillness in your busy lives and be grateful.



That's all from me, have a great weekend

Sarah Brinkley

Follow me on Twitter: @HeadteacherJMS

Focus On Performing Arts

Dido and Aeneas

It's a few months ago now, but back in July, just near the end of term, the Performing Arts faculty put on a performance of Purcell's Baroque opera 'Dido and Aeneas' over two nights. We were lucky enough to be able to use the Amey Theatre at Abingdon School for this which allowed for an amazing theatrical experience. This is one of the earliest English operas written in the 1680s. A really new experience for all involved. The students involved did an amazing job, not only performing spectacularly but also discovering a love of a type of music they'd previously been unaware of!



Radley Close Harmony Singing day



The new school year kicked off early on with a chance for a group of our most talented singers to get together on a Sunday with students from a number of Oxfordshire schools at Radley College for a workshop day with the close harmony group Apollo5. They spent time doing vocal warm ups then worked with other students to put together an informal performance of some great well-known songs, such as Skyfall, Somewhere Beyond the Sea and Superstition.

Preparations for Beauty and the Beast

Auditions happened just after the start of term and we're now a couple of months into the preparations and rehearsals. We have a great main cast, with many who are already off-script for some sections. Our dedicated chorus members have learnt songs and some choreography already. It's going to be a great show. Put the performance dates in your diary – 7-10th March 2018

White Horse Ceilidh

Our school folk group 'What's Up Folk!' returned to Grove for the White Horse Ceilidh at the start of half term. Last year they just provided the mid-dance entertainment. This year they were the dance band. Playing tunes from 8 till 11.30pm was hard work, especially for the younger ones, but they kept going and really wowed the public with their playing ability and their understanding of playing for dance. They've already been invited back!



Music

KS3 Music

Our year 7 and 8 music groups have been working on performance skills so far this term. Year 7 building their skills on keyboard and ukulele, also learning some aspects of notation as they go and developing their ability to play with others. Year 8 have been learning about accompaniments and have studied music as diverse as Carmina Burana (possibly better known as the now rather dated Old Spice advert!), Michael Jackson's Bad and a Canadian Folk song.

KS4 Music

Our year 11s are working hard to produce coursework to really show off their skills to their examiner. Some good mock performances were done this week – with one nearly producing top marks! The hard graft of revision of all 8 of their set works starts now; their exam might not be until next May, but there is a lot of info and understanding that they need to have at hand for that time.

Year 10s have made a great start; really working on their musical literacy and now being able to apply that to the analysis of their first set work. Well done to all of you.

Drama

Year 11

Our Year 11 students have been preparing their own devised performance entitled 'Are you a friend?', an investigation into online behaviour and the impact it has on reality. This work is developed as a response to the unit 2 assignment brief which provides an opportunity to plan and prepare a performance from scratch. Working as performers and production support within their own theatre company, the students use research and devising skills to generate their own original material. The students will be performing their final shows to a live audience at the end of January and have been documenting their progress in their own production logbooks.

Year 10

Our new cohort of Year 10 students have been experiencing the new BTEC Tech Award qualification since the start of the year. The new course focuses much more on specific styles of performance and the practitioners within these areas, building up a broader awareness of theatrical knowledge that can be compared and contrasted later on in the course. They have spent time exploring techniques for classical and method acting, stage vs screen methods, as well as justifying different types of performance.

Year 9

Our Year 9 students have been building on their performance skills and writing their own material for monologues and duologues. Taking inspiration from the one-minute monologue competition in America they have been telling stories of their own, this is a tough start to their new BTEC course as it requires them to be on stage either alone or in a pair; requiring plenty of courage to deliver a confident performance.

Since then we have moved into our new project where students will be studying the script 'Oliver Twist' by Jeremy Brock, historical research and script scrutiny will be essential as they perform extracts from the play.

Accelerated Reader Competitions and Prizes

MAKE WORDS COUNT!

John Mason School uses the Accelerated Reader programme to help Years 7, 8 and 9 students with their reading progress. This year we are initiating a wide variety of prizes.



There will be a trophy, donated by the JMA, for the overall House winner. This is based on the number of words read by all the students in each House. So every single student's contribution counts towards the final total. There will be a state-of-the-art Totalizer board in the LRC, so everyone can keep track of how their House is doing.

In addition three times during the year, Xmas, Easter and Summer, there will be a prize for the best form in each Year. Again, this will be based on number of words read by each form.

There are also going to be individual prizes. Three times a year the three most improved students within their reading range from each year will have their choice of a brand new book, money for which has been

donated by the JMA.

At the end of the school year, the most improved student within their reading range from each year will receive a special prize, which this year is a Kindle.

So, who's going to be the most improved student? Who's going to be the best Tutor Group? Who's going to be the best House?

LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

Andrew Holme, LRC

Ada Lovelace Challenge Day



On Wednesday, our students took part in the 'Ada Lovelace Challenge Day' at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory.

Ada Lovelace Day is an international celebration of the achievements of women in science, technology, engineering and maths. To celebrate, RAL hosted a computing challenge day for teams of four students from Year 8 or 9.

Ada Lovelace is known for creating the first computer program – an algorithm intended to be carried out by a machine.

During the day, the students took on the role of being crew members on the 'Ada Lovelace', the first manned ship to Mars. Following a solar flare wiping out their computers, the students had to re-establish communications between mission control and Ada Lovelace; Create a temperature monitoring and reporting system; Use a motor and an LDR to re-orient a solar panel to receive the greatest possible amount of light and create a magnetic field detector to control airlock doors.



As well as the exciting challenges, the students were also given a tour of the Scientific Computing facility and were able to see how data, from various sources and countries, is stored and the importance of keeping the environment regulated.

The day was enjoyed by all and we look forward to our future visits to RAL.

Mr P Scutt
Lead Practitioner: STEM Ambassador

Community News:

JMA Lucky Numbers November Draw

1 st prize	£28.15	Rachael Roberts
2 nd prize	£18.77	Teresa Simms



Drawn by:
Ben Holt (Head Boy) and Olivia Hancock (Head Girl)

For the upcoming iDAY on 28th November, we require:

- 2 litre plastic **fizzy** drinks bottles.
- Old tennis balls
- Flattened cardboard boxes
- Sandpaper

Any donations would be gratefully received and should be brought the science prep rooms near S2.

Mr P Scutt

Lead Practitioner: STEM Ambassador

Dates for your Diary:

We make every effort to keep our calendar on our website up-to-date: click here to view: [JMS website](#).



John Mason School
Excellence Through Creativity

Parents' Forum

Your voice, Your school

Tuesday 14th November, 6.00pm in the LRC

This forum's key topic:

Keeping your child safe – Part 1

Ms Batchelor, Designated Safeguarding Lead will be giving a presentation on keeping your child safe. This will be a two part Parent Forum and the second part will take place in the Spring 2018.

Topics that will be discussed at the forum will include sexting, online security and health and wellbeing. There will be an opportunity for parents and carers to ask questions on any other issues they may be concerned about regarding the safety of their child.

At this forum, Ms Batchelor will be joined by the School Nurse, Mr Bate and Student Managers.

Please let us know you are coming: events@johnmason.oxon.sch.uk



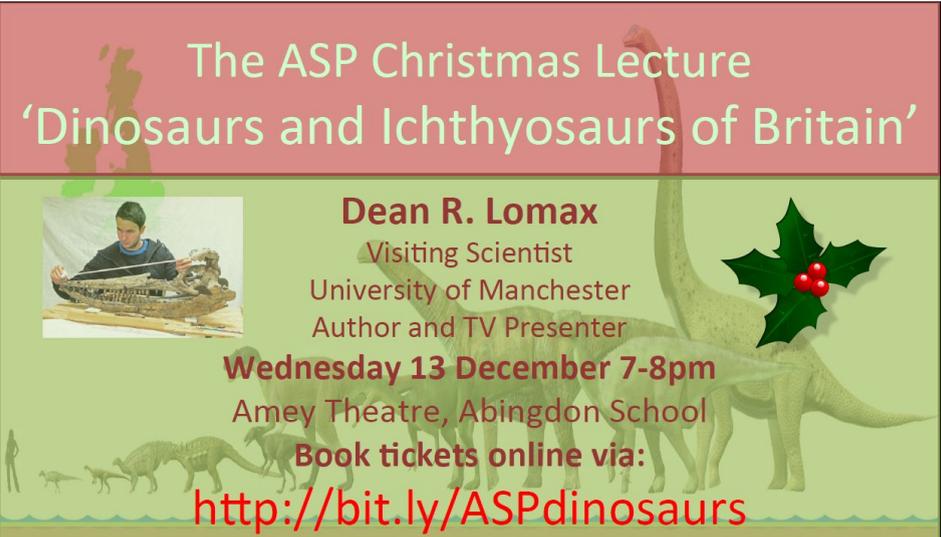
The ASP Christmas Lecture 'Dinosaurs and Ichthyosaurs of Britain'



Dean R. Lomax
Visiting Scientist
University of Manchester
Author and TV Presenter

Wednesday 13 December 7-8pm
Amey Theatre, Abingdon School

Book tickets online via:
<http://bit.ly/ASPdinosaurs>



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