

St. George's School Newsletter

Friday 9th May 2025



From the Head

Year 13 Leavers

Today we said farewell to our Year 13 students. All agree that they have been a wonderful, inclusive, and talented year group who have left a lasting impression on the whole school community.

Although they are not quite finished, with A-levels still to come, we took time today to mark this important milestone. The events of their leaving day brought laughter, celebration, and perhaps a few tears as staff and students alike looked back with gratitude on all that this year group has contributed to life at St George's. You can read more about what they got up to during the day below.

In my chapel address to the year group, I reflected on their time at the school — on their leadership, their creativity, their support of younger pupils, and, above all, their kindness to one another. They have excelled not just in what they have achieved, but in who they have been.

I spoke to them about the adventurer Felix Baumgartner, who in 2012 broke the world record for the highest skydive, using his extraordinary leap as a metaphor for what it means to stand “on the brink” — that threshold between what is known and what lies ahead. It is a moment often marked by uncertainty and anticipation. The path forward will require effort and resilience, and it may at times feel daunting. But we have every confidence in their strength, character, and capacity to rise to the challenge. They do not need to fall - they can fly.

We are deeply proud of each one of them, and we look forward to celebrating their success over the coming months — and to welcoming them back in the years ahead as Old Georgians.

Marking VE Day this week

This week, we have held a series of events to celebrate VE Day and to educate students on the importance of this day in history as well as its relevance today.

Mrs Chalkley, from the History Department, has worked extremely hard to coordinate materials for lessons across the curriculum. All History lessons for the day were focussed on teaching about the different experiences of groups across society on the 8th May 80 years ago - this included archived sources and information about St George's school, where students learnt how all rules were abandoned for 2 days - certainly gave us all something to think about!

The Faculty also held a 'Bake Off on rations' where students showcased their baking skills using ration-inspired recipes and made some VE inspired biscuits. The winner of the competition was Edward T in Year 7.

At lunchtime, students ran round the school doing a scavenger hunt finding clues about individuals who contributed to VE Day.

They also ran a challenging Escape Room that saw students having to complete 4 tasks about VE day to escape the room in time for period 5. A big thanks to all students who took part and to the staff who organised the day'

At 12.00 midday on Thursday, the whole school held a minute of silence to reflect on those who had lost their lives and at 3.00 p.m., all students heard Churchill's speech and watched the crowds celebrate.

The school has been decked out with Union Jacks and our school flag has been lowered to remember those who died. We hope that students have learnt a lot about VE Day and can tell you all about it.



From the Archives: VE Day at St George's on 8th May 1945

Mr Tucker, our archivist, has very kindly dug out this report from the school archives which is a wonderful insight into how school marked VE Day in 1945. This account titled 'VE DAY' is taken from the Georgian magazine, Vol XLIX, August 1945, No 2, pages 27-8:

'For some days before the beginning of the term it had been a matter of speculation, among both pupils and Staff, whether or not Germany's final surrender would anticipate, and so postpone, their return to school. It did not.



The summer term began on the day appointed. But to settle down to a normal routine with such an event impending was hardly possible; the school existed in a state of more or less suppressed excitement until at last the good news came through. That was Monday evening: at once prep ended. Horne Hall was cleared, dancing began. Boys and girls sang, romped, ran wildly over the school field, gave full vent to their feelings. The staff on the whole took the news more calmly.

About 10:30 p.m. that night three members of staff, ambling home from the cinema, met a stream of boys and girls rushing full tilt down Sun Lane. After a few moments of surprised incredulity, conviction dawned; yes, it was St George's! Something phenomenal must have occurred; why, of course it had! Victory in Europe! Whither the race went is still unknown to the writer; but the participants trickled back to bed in breathless twos and threes not long after.

Next day, those who could went home; those who could not remained. Which side had the better time is still in dispute! At school, a late breakfast was followed by prayers; then rules were abandoned; one did what one wished. At 3.00 p.m. we foregathered on the gravel to hear Mr Churchill announce the cessation of hostilities. Again we did what we liked. At 10:30 p.m. Mrs Watts applied a match to a huge bonfire erected in the middle of the Lower Rugger Field. Round this we danced, hand in hand in a huge, unwieldy circle, other bonfires about us; Verey lights from the camp at Batford starred the sky and showered down their cascades of light. We burst into song; the choir, led by Mr Dawn, gave shape and tune to our singing. Some enthusiasts from Remove broke into Greek, clashing discordantly with the English melodies coming from the other side of the fire. Meanwhile, the flames had blazed to their zenith; they dwindled and fell; then we leaped through them-at first in hesitant ones and twos, then, as the others grew in confidence, whole parties leaped in succession or hand in hand through the dying heat. Midnight! There was no official bedtime that night; we went away as we were summoned by fatigue.



Next day, too, there were no rules until after supper, then bedtimes came as usual. Fortunately, we were blest with fine weather: the open sky could be our roof.

What did it mean - all this merriment, wild effervescence of spirit, fun laughter? How many of us stopped to think? The youngest of us could scarcely remember a world at peace; the oldest looked back - with relief? Yes - for we trusted that out of the ashes of Europe new life would spring. Both young and old felt, surely, that the victory bonfire was a symbol; the world as we had known it, now cleansed and purged by the fires of suffering, had set foot on the road to a purer and more vital existence'

Notes:

- *Horne Hall is now the computer room at the top of the corridor by the dining room*
- *Verey lights - flares used for signalling and night lights*
- *Camp at Batford - a PoW camp initially containing Italians and later German PoWs - opened 1943.*

Goodbye to Year 13

Today was Year 13s Leaves Day and the decorum and spirit reflected this fantastic year group. There was time with their tutors; an awards ceremony, yearbook signing and a special Leavers' Chapel Service with the biggest turnout of parents and carers ever.

There are not many occasions when our students are allowed to use the back doors to the chapel (they really are stunning insta doors) but they enter in year seven through them and exit via them when they leave us in year 13. We wish them lots of good luck with their revision and exams and encourage them to stay in touch - our doors will always be open for them.



Celebrating OFSTED with the students with a drones and ice-creams

On Friday, we said a big thank you and well done to our fantastic students for their part in our OFSTED report. The whole school who were present on Friday, came out of period

5 to meet at 'Aim Higher' to experience a drone photograph and video of us all celebrating.

A very big thanks goes to the brilliant PSA for supplying the ice-creams and thanks to an old Georgian, Robert Siddle, for capturing our joy with his drone.

Staff V Students Debate

Two weeks ago, the fifth 'Teachers versus Students' debate took place in the Old Library: as Mr Ellis and Mr Reynolds went into battle against two of the school's best debaters (Cailin E & Emilie Z). It was a fiercely contested debate, with the students ending up as winners - after a wonderful performance. This puts the students 4-1 up in the series!

Although debate club does not run in the summer term, we have lots of exciting stuff going on this term: including Model United Nations on Thursday lunchtimes, inter debate school fixtures - and a visit to the Oxford Union next term.

Thanks to all who have supported St George's debating this year: our Year 11s have been at the forefront of the growth of St George's debating and we look forward to seeing them develop as senior debaters in sixth form.



Nature Club goes on a non-bat bat walk!

The group had a late night meet in the school grounds on Thursday, in search of all the dusk and night time non-humans of St George's. Whilst the bats did not grace us with their presence, we felt sure they came out for a party as soon as we left! And we were lucky enough to encounter blackbirds, robins and blue tits producing the wonderful sound of evening birdsong around the school. Some of our fine old oak trees are home to an amazing array of wildlife species, and we feel very proud to be part of a community that is such a haven for nature.

If your young person is interested in joining this fun group, please contact Mr Reddings for more information: breddings@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk



Music Department Summer Concert - 8th July

Rehearsals for the "Summer Send Off" begin next week, including the return of our student-led Thursday lunch-time Dance club.

If your young person ever wanted to learn and perform a dance from 'Wicked' - this is your moment. Encourage them to sign up in the Music Dept.

Show Choir is on Wednesday Lunch-time - no audition needed and it's pop and musical theatre repertoire. Concert Band replaces Senior Orchestra on Fridays - all ages and abilities welcome.

Get Ready for House Bake Off 2025!

House Bake Off 2025 is underway! This is a fantastic opportunity for students to demonstrate the skills they've learnt in Food and make something to share with others at home. It's open to year 7 - 10 and our theme is **Celebration**. Students have been asked to prepare, cook and present a dish made to eat at a celebration e.g. birthdays, anniversaries, cultural and religious festivities. The dish should be homemade and can be sweet or savoury. The focus is on the creativity and presentation of the dish. Photographs should be taken of the finished product and added to the application forms available from House Offices and on Google Classroom. The deadline for **Round One** is **Tuesday 3rd June**.



To get your youngsters thinking and salivating, please see some suggestions below.

Cakes: fairy cakes, muffins, sponge cakes, tea loaves, loaf cakes

Biscuit dough: Shortbread, gingerbread

Pastry:

- Shortcrust pastry - quiches, pies and tarts
- Pâte Sucrée (sweet shortcrust) - tarts
- Rough puff pastry - cheese straws, pies, pastries, rolls
- Choux - eclairs, profiteroles, buns

Pasta dough: Ravioli, lasagne sheets

Bread: Sweet (enriched) or savoury - bread rolls, focaccia, pizza, cinnamon rolls

Competition Day: Friday 27th June.

House Staff can't wait to see what creative, delicious dishes are made! Please encourage your children to get involved with this exciting House event, as vital House points are awarded from this competition.

Any questions, please contact Mrs L Bailey lbailey@stgeorges.herts.sch.uk

News from PE Department

Next week's athletics fixture: Thursday - year 8&10 and Friday - year 7&9

SUMMER MIX - Open to ALL parents!

Just over 1 week to go until our fabulous Summer Mix on Saturday 17th May, 7pm – late. Come and join us for an evening of dancing to a live band (Get Carter) and socialising with other St Georges parents and your friends. This is not a black tie event, more an informal summer evening to celebrate lighter evenings and summer on the way! Tickets are priced at £35 each to include a meal and a drink on arrival. There will be a bar selling a selection of drinks, fun games to play if you fancy a challenge and the dress code is casual. We look forward to you joining us for a fun night of entertainment! Tickets can be purchased on Parent Pay!

Auction

We are going to be holding an auction at the Summer Mix but we want to give people a chance to see what is on offer and a chance to send a silent bid in ahead of the evening. Please see poster here with links to auction items and how you can submit a silent bid! Please click this link to the PDF for more information:

file:///N:/Summer%20Mix%20Auction.pdf

Lacrosse and Rugby Coaching Clinics

After the success last summer, we are returning with our lacrosse and rugby coaching clinics! These will be open to all players in year 7, 8, 9 and they are a great chance to keep skills ticking over during the summer months ahead of returning in September. It will be £10 per session and they are running on the following dates:

- Saturday 7th June (9:30-11:00 a.m.)
- Saturday 14th June (9:30-11:00 a.m.)
- Saturday 21st June (9:30-11:00 a.m.)
- Saturday 28th June (9:30-11:00 a.m.)

All information will be available on parent pay in the coming weeks. Please save the dates for now!

Advanced warning: Walk to School Week’ is coming on the 19th May

We are hoping to get as many students and staff as possible to walk to school next week so if you usually drive your young person to school, what not start the conversation about either they have a go at walking or you drop them further away from the school. Walking has great benefits for both physical and mental health as well as being better for the environment.

For those students who have to get the bus or the train, perhaps there are other ways of promoting walking after school or on the weekends.

Year 8 Faraday Challenge Day

Last Thursday, Mrs Dodds ran our fourth Faraday Challenge Day. The IET Faraday® Challenge Days are an annual competition of one-day STEM activities. Students have the opportunity to research, design and make prototype solutions to real-life engineering problems. The challenge enables students to experience working as an engineer for a day. At each event, teams compete to win a place on the season’s league table.

This year we participated as a Host School and were pleased to have a team from Katherine Warrington School. It is always a fantastic event, run expertly by the Challenge Day Leaders and Stem ambassadors. It was also great to have 6th Formers volunteer to run the Challenge Day resource shop.

The teams had to race against the clock to come up with a solution to the design brief (which is only announced on the day of the event) putting their engineering and technology skills to the test. All the teams came up with some excellent ideas and displayed great teamwork. The Leaders had a very difficult task selecting the winner, which was our visitors from Katherine Warrington.

Well done to all the participants.

