



TAUNTON
SCHOOL

Prep & Pre-Prep COURIER

11th December 2020

#TAUNTONSCHOOL

A ROYAL CHRISTMAS SURPRISE



Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne, visited our school this week to officially open our new dining room and kitchens. The new facility is at the very heart of our whole school community and it is fitting that such an important part of Taunton School should receive royal recognition!

As well as the official ceremony, Her Royal Highness took time to meet with a number of our students, paid a visit to our design technology department, and had the opportunity to hear our musical talent on display in the school chapel.

It was an uplifting event for staff and students alike and well timed at the end of a very busy term, and a year like no other! Thank you to everyone who made this Covid safe visit possible.

More Inside

[HRH Princess Royal visit pictures](#)

[Meet The Director of Rugby](#)

[Sports News](#)

[Christmas Extravaganza](#)

[Xmas Fun in Thone](#)

[And plenty more....](#)



Have a very Merry Christmas!





The Head has his say...

Thank you to all those who have contributed such generous gifts for the Christmas Sparkle Appeal, which will all end up in the hands of children who would not otherwise have had much of a Christmas. I would like to mention specifically Cooper Associates who have very generously donated £1,000

worth of presents, each of which has been specifically chosen for a particular age group. Thank you!

Last week saw the publication of the Cricketer Magazine's Good Schools Guide for 2020 and we are delighted that we have retained our position in their lists of top cricketing schools at both Senior and Prep level.

On Wednesday of this week, it was an honour to receive a visit from HRH The Princess Royal, who came to officially open our new Dining Hall. Pupils from all sections of the school had the opportunity to meet with her, and the Princess said to all of them what a privilege it was to have this wonderful dining environment which would be the envy of many schools.

This final week has been packed with festive fun and wonderful events such as the Christmas Lunch on Monday, the Christmas Extravaganza yesterday, and today's Carol Services. I am not sure what the pupils enjoyed most yesterday. Was it the hot chocolate and cookies (thank you to the PTA!), the Fun Run, 12 days of Christmas, or the Form Parties. We are delighted to be able to live stream the Carol Services this morning – if you are unsure as to how to access these, please do contact the School Office.

It was terrific in yesterday's final assembly to see how proud and happy pupils were to be recognised for their special achievements. Some of the awards were given to pupils who have demonstrated outstanding levels of attainment such as the Year 8 colours for sport and the performing arts. In order to win those elite colours, pupils need to perform to a very high level, and demonstrate outstanding attitudes in all practices and matches. However, many of our awards are truly achievable by all, such as our 'Learner of the Term' certificates for outstanding grades in Attitude to Learning grades, and for a high number of 'Rolls of Honour'. Our TPS Way challenges our pupils to be ambitious, to try their best and to be kind and respectful, and these are all things which are achievable

every day by every one of our pupils. When they do these three things, they will be given the recognition which they deserve and we shall all be smiling!

There is insufficient space on this page to mention all of the many successes enjoyed by our pupils this term, but if you were to flick through this term's editions of the courier, you would, I believe, be amazed at what has been achieved. In what has been an extraordinary year, the parents, pupils and staff of our great school have pulled together and shown phenomenal levels of teamwork and mutual support. By doing this, I have no doubt whatsoever that we have all helped to provide something truly special for our children. None of this would be possible without the fantastic support given by parents to our children and to the school. Thank you, and I wish you all a very enjoyable festive holiday.

Andrew Edwards
TPS Headmaster



*Merry Christmas
to you all!*



News from Pre-Prep

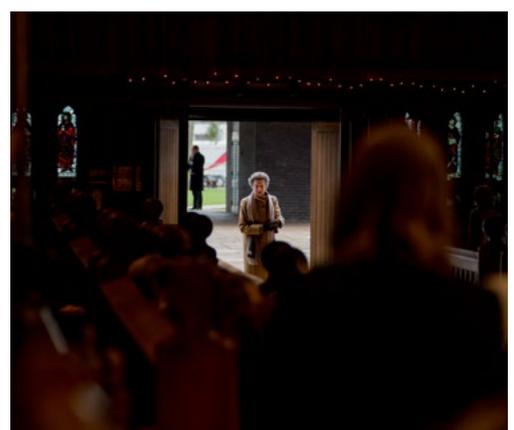
Today is the day..... the link to the long awaited Nativity Production is available. I hope you all agree that the children are fabulous in it – absolute superstars! I do hope that they enjoy seeing themselves and their friends on the screen. I also hope that you laugh and cry, as much as we all did here.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Cooper and Mrs Launchbury for all that they have done - above and beyond -- over the last term. Their support is greatly appreciated by me and I am sure that there are a great many of you who will also be echoing my thanks to the two of them.

Finally, this is my last courier piece of 2020. Thank you on behalf of all the Pre-Prep staff for all your support this term – it really has been appreciated more than ever. Enjoy a Christmas to remember with your family. Wishing you all a much brighter 2021, when it arrives.

Mrs Louise Leah, Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery

HRH Princess Royal visit



HRH Princess Royal visit



Did you know? The Princess Royal has visited Taunton School previously. She was last here some 50 years ago on the 12th May 1970 when she opened our Clarke Centre building. She is accompanied in this image by the then Head, John Rae.



Walking Home for Christmas



TPPS and TPS pupils Alex and Nicholas Coombes, and Evie and Jack Ledger participated in a 10 mile walk on Saturday. They have raised over £350 so far - a wonderful achievement for these young philanthropists.

Every year the four children select a charity for fundraising and this year they chose the Walking with the Wounded charity, participating in the Walking Home for Christmas event. It is a remarkable charity raising vital funds for supporting ex-military personnel adjust to civilian life.

Congratulations, to them all on a wonderful achievement for a very worthy cause.



Rachel Lawson, Pre-Prep Teacher

TPS Enrichment Extravaganza

Our TPS Enrichment group had a wonderful Christmas Extravaganza during our final session with our talented group on Saturday 5th December. Over the last few weeks, our separate socially distanced performance bubbles have been devising and rehearsing their own Christmas plays, featuring dialogue and stories created by them (with only some guidance from staff), as well as choreography, singing, and action led by a team of Performing Arts instructors. We also welcomed several new faces to our activities who were on a short open morning and we hope to be able to welcome them again in the New Year.

Sam Baker, Jayne Hornsby, Lucy Hartland-Mann



A fabulous family feel in Thone

What a cracking end to a very different Autumn Term in Thone and I couldn't be more proud of how the children have coped.

The boarders have embraced the limitations of on-site entertainment and have done a very good job of amusing themselves, each other and us in the process!

Lots of sports hall activities, dance routines choreographed, fun swims, crafting and laughter. Our older children have scooped up the younger ones brilliantly. There has been the most fabulous family feel to the end of this (sometimes trying) term.

Our newest members of the family have slotted in seamlessly and joined in with gusto. We look forward to welcoming and getting to know more newcomers next term,

Secret Santa gifts have been exchanged. Pressies have been purchased and wrapped in readiness for gifting at home. Once the packing has been achieved and the decorations are dismantled, all it leaves us to do is thank everyone who has contributed to the success and fun of this term. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and all best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

**Pippa Whitehouse,
Thone Matron**



Tales of the Iron Age



Year 3 were treated to a wonderful morning of story telling as a 'Fabulous Finish' to their 'I Am Warrior' topic when Bran, a Celt, visited us for the morning. Bran, played by Clive Pig, is a wonderfully engaging story teller, who taught us all about life in Celtic times. Pupils were thoroughly gripped as Bran's life unfolded before us. Mr Pig was really impressed by how much the pupils already knew as they confidently put their hands up to offer answers. After break, pupils participated in a series of story telling and drama workshops, acting out Celtic. The story ended with Bran explaining how Celtic Britain was invaded by the Romans, setting us up nicely for our 'Swords and Sandals' topic next term. It was lovely to see the pupils' enthusiasm for their learning and discussing what they might learn about next term.

The Year 3 Team



TPS Newspaper Club

TPS Newspaper Club have been working on a very special edition of their TPS Termly newspaper this term. They have covered stories about the changes in school, the Saturday Morning Enrichment programme, interviewed many teachers and included much more. Thank you to all the children for writing their articles and to Tom and Daisy for the amazing task of editing the newspaper!

We would love for you to take a look and have a read - [click here](#)

Amanda Hendy, Year 5 Teacher



Mums on the Run update



Taunton School 'Mums on the Run' undertook their personal charity run challenges for St. Margaret's Hospice at the weekend and have raised over £2000 so far! They pass on their thanks to everyone who sponsored and supported them.

If you'd like to make a donation visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/team/TauntonSchoolmumsontherun>

New members are welcomed - email carriechilds81@gmail.com to find out more.



Joyeux Noël from Reception Class

This week, our Reception children have been learning a little rhyme in French about two reindeer (deux rennes) – one called Donner and one called Blitzen. They also made a lovely reindeer puppet and used it to perform the rhyme in French. Well done everyone and Joyeux Noël – Merry Christmas!

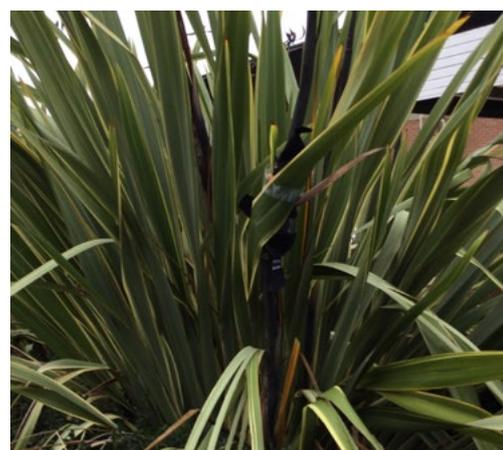
Louise Ashmore, MFL Teacher



Watch out, there's an elf about!

Over the weekend, when Mr Edwards popped into work, he was shocked to find he had a visitor in his office. This naughty little elf was found to be up to no good! On Saturday morning, the cheeky little thing had swiped Mr Edwards' favourite biscuits and coffee. On Sunday, he was found to be climbing out of the lampshade (where he had probably spent the night!). However, determined to catch the biscuit stealing thief, Mr Edwards returned with a net on Monday morning but the elf had vanished! Pupils across the Prep School have had great fun searching high and low for the mischievous creature this week and he has been found up to all sorts. Thankfully, he has now been captured and returned to the North Pole where we hope Father Christmas can control him!

Katie Hill, Pastoral Head of Year 3 and 4



The Show Must Go On! ★ Christmas Nativity Stars ★

Nothing was going to stop the Pre-Prep and Nursery children presenting their annual Christmas Nativity Play, not even a global pandemic! The children were filmed in their Year Group bubbles by professional cameraman, Dan Coomber (at a safe distance) and directed by our wonderful head of music, Mrs Hornsby. The completed scenes were edited together for the children's families and friends to watch at home. Thank you to the parents for the gorgeous costumes they provided.

The children were outstanding film stars! We hope you enjoy the première of their Christmas film - all parents will be notified when this is available to watch.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas from the staff and children of the Nursery and Pre-Prep.



★ Christmas Nativity Stars ★



★ Christmas Nativity Stars ★



A message to all festive shoppers from TPS Eco club

Somerset Waste Partnership and Taunton School are encouraging residents to buy Christmas presents in an eco-friendly way. We are asking people to consider buying presents from shops, buying coupons or purchasing online subscriptions and memberships will minimize the amount of excessive packaging.



We are aiming to reduce the number of gifts that are delivered in cardboard boxes. Cardboard can be recycled however the production of this material has a financial and carbon cost and additionally puts a strain on collection crews. Last year kerbside collection picked up 12,223 tonnes of cardboard. In April May and June this year there was a 24 per cent jump in cardboard collection.

This isn't about telling people what they should buy and shouldn't buy, it is to encourage people to try different options for Christmas presents.

We are also encouraging people who have a lot of wrapping paper waste from Christmas to go to recycling sites and put your waste there so it can properly get recycled.

As a part of our school effort to help this initiative we have a recycle bin outside of Mr Raven's room (S.A.T. 3) for plastic waste which would otherwise be difficult to recycle. Any profits from this scheme will go towards the charities highlighted in the photos.



Gracie Howells and Namu Gurushankar, TPS Eco Club

Year 5 learn about Victorians

This term, the children in Year 5 have enjoyed learning about The Victorians for their creative curriculum topic. They have explored the life and reign of Queen Victoria; explored how people were treated in the Workhouse; written letters explaining their disgust at the conditions and decided that they would not want to be Victorian school children! They also enjoyed reading 'Street Child' by Berlie Doherty and were able to follow the character of Jim Jarvis in all of his adventures around the streets of Victorian London. They

finished off the term by making Victorian Pomander decorations and bags. What a great term of learning for all in Year 5!



The Year 5 Team



Christmas comes early for our Prep Boarders

It looks as though Thone are on the good list this year! All our Prep boarders received a special Christmas stocking.



House Points

BRONZE

Josie Hanson – 6C
 Xavier Flay – 7V
 Daisy Greenhalgh – 7V
 Isabella Saunders – 7B
 Erin Whitelam – 7B
 Lola Tarr – 7B
 Jacob Linden – 4F
 Amelia Smith – 6C
 Harrison Adams – 6C
 Imogen Darvall – 6C

SILVER

Rosey Cobbett – 7B
 Thomas Dutton – 7B
 Robbie Eckley – 7B

Lockdown Swimming

Since lockdown started swimming has delivered 60 swim sessions, about 20 hours a week with Head of Swimming Development Graham Davidson across the whole school. With sessions starting at 6am there has been something for everyone across each week. Sessions have been challenging, long, short, fast and slow!

We have worked on improving starts, turns, four stroke skills, underwater work, pacing skills, as well as various aspects of fitness.

The underwater cameras have been busy with swimmers able to see what they are doing on the large poolside screen and make visible progress on all techniques in real time.

The progress that has been made is significant across the school with all leaving this period much better technically than at the start of lockdown 2.0.

There have been some fantastic demonstrations given by Senior School and Prep School swimmers alike. It's been great to see the TPS swimmers look up to the Senior School swimmers for inspiration and bring the Taunton School Swimming family together for a focused period, with everyone really focused and engaged and a joy to work with each day.

Well done everyone who turned up, new faces and old to the pool!

Hayley Mortimer
 TS Assistant Head Co-Curricular and Outreach

Christmas Craft Day in Year 2



All we want for Christmas is Airfix

Members of the Airfix and Warhammer club show their models made throughout the Autumn term. Guess what will be high on the list for Santa this year...!



Philanthropy at Taunton School, then and now

An update from the TS Foundation

The Taunton School Foundation was founded nearly 20 years ago with a mission to engage a global community of Old Tauntonians, parents and friends to support children at Taunton School. However, our culture of philanthropy is rooted in a history that long predates the establishment of the Foundation. Almost every building and facility was built with the benevolence of others.

The Science building for example, was created thanks to a sizeable contribution from the Headmaster at the time- Dr Whittaker- who donated his entire annual salary to help build a centre of scientific learning and hope for the future in an era after the First World War when so much had been lost. During the Second World War, Major Ronald Gerrard, one of the most talented sportsmen the school had ever known, was killed in action aged 31. His son, Duncan Gerrard- who never came to Taunton School or knew his father, left over £750,000 in his will to celebrate his fathers' legacy and to support children through sports scholarships.

Taunton School was once a grant aided school where ordinary local children who worked hard, were able to gain a place. We

were once dependent on the generosity of our alumni to develop our facilities and to support bright and able children through scholarships. We have a reputation as a one of the best schools in the South West thanks not only to generations of talented teachers and staff, but also because we have maintained a strong partnership with our community for over 130 years.

We continue to engage Old Tauntonians and to seek financial support for children at Taunton School. Over £4million has been raised as an endowment, with a legacy portfolio of pledges amounting to over £5million. Since 2015, we have been fundraising to support means-tested bursaries, augmenting the school's own provision through Assisted Places, and £1.7million has been raised, helping hundreds of families, including 70 sixth form students, many benefitting from 100% philanthropic support.

In this fragile time of hope during arguably one of the most devastating global events in recent history, it is clear that we need to look to our school community. More than helping parents who may be going through financial difficulties, bursaries are a driver for societal change.

An education at Taunton School is out of reach for most ordinary working families and without support for our bursary programme, we are at risk of losing our socio-economic diversity which benefits the whole school. We are therefore unapologetic in our commitment to strengthen our culture of giving.

The 100 Campaign- to raise over £5million to support over 100 children with bursaries throughout the school- will be launched in 2021. We are looking to our alumni and friends to support children now as they have always done.

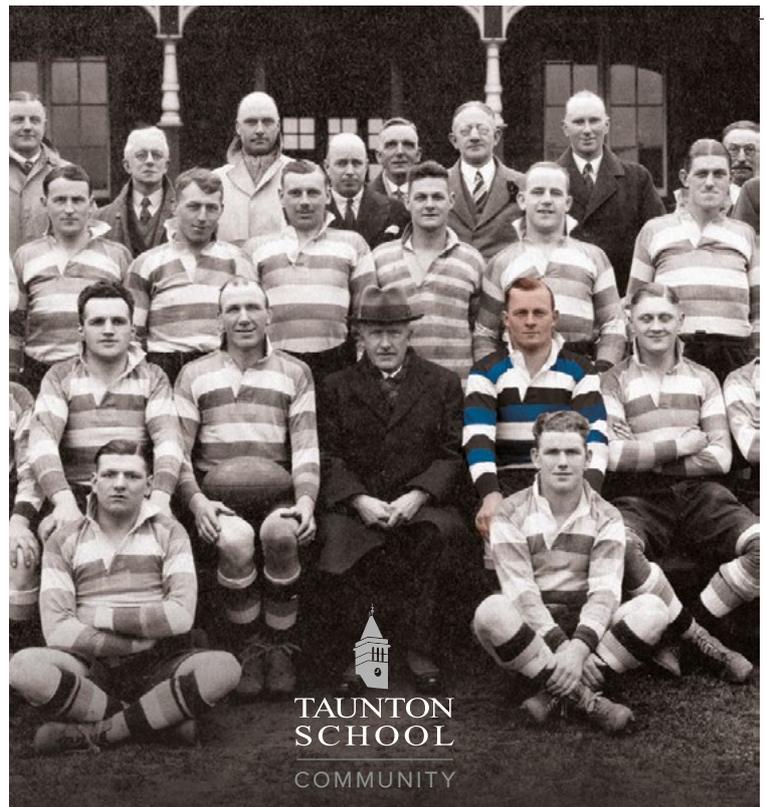
Nadine Latte
Foundation and Alumni Director

Here is our latest report from the school and OTs [The Review](#) [click here](#)

To find out more about the work of the Foundation, [click here](#)

Image: Major Ronald Gerrard

THE **100**
CAMPAIGN



Meet the Director of Rugby - Nic Sestaret

What is your job role and which age groups do you work with?

I am Director of Rugby and I work with students from Year 3 to Year 13.

When did you start at Taunton School and what did you do before?

I started in September 2014. I was a professional rugby player for Exeter Chiefs.

Who inspires you?

Mike Horn (nothing is impossible for this man).

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Being able to achieve great things with a group of people.

What do you find most challenging?

Having a rugby season without contact.

How do you 'switch off' from your job at the end of the day?

I don't! Hahaha... my wife and kids are the best remedy.

How will you be spending the festive season?

With my family in Exeter, eating, watching Christmas movies and playing games (we have a small prize for each winner).

What's on your Christmas wish list?

Covid free and happiness.

Is there anything else that you'd like to tell us about yourself?

I am married to a wonderful woman named Debbie, I have four children (India, Fraser, Darcie and Harper). I am French and I have lived in England for 15 years. My favourite actor is Denzel Washington. I can surf, ski, ride a horse and I am bilingual. My favourite season is autumn (rugby season!). I started playing rugby at five years old. Over my 13 year professional rugby career, I played in France and England.



Quick Fire Questions now...

Favourite Christmas Song

"It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas" by Michael Bublé.

Favourite Christmas Film

The Christmas Chronicles

Favourite Christmas Food

Pigs in blanket

Hobbies

Jigsaw and cooking

Any Pets

Eddie my dog (Spaniel)

Any Claims to fame?

I won a University 7's World Cup with France

Thank you so much for telling us about yourself Nic. We hope you have a wonderful Christmas with your family and you get a generous helping of pigs in blankets!

The Inaugural TPS Christmas Extravaganza!

We began with our traditional End of Term Assembly where we were able to look back and be amazed at what we have all achieved under very challenging circumstances, this included a celebration of our many successes on the academic, sporting and performing fronts.

Then, each year group had to come to the rescue of Santa Claus, whose sleigh had tipped over, scattering presents everywhere along the front of school! Luckily for Santa; who was present and looking suitably rotund (!), form bubbles of pupils were able to run around picking them up, in our first ever fancy dress "Santa Dash"!! Staff and pupils alike, raced around attempting to ensure that Santa's pressies were all returned to his sleigh. Year 7/8 pupils had to push his sleigh and load presents on at the same time... all very tiring stuff (well the Staff running with them looked tired anyway!!)

Tired out, we were then all treated to hot chocolate with whipped cream and marshmallows and cookies, courtesy of the PTA!

Next on the agenda was an opportunity to relax in forms with

a Christmas film, to further add to the festive good cheer. Then, following lunch, Miss Hartland Mann, coached (some of the Staff quite literally!!) all of us through a version of the Twelve Days of Christmas which included hilarious actions; it was lovely to see the whole school - and staff - all taking part. Pupils in Year 3-7 then went off to their forms for parties which involved all kinds of fabulous and fun activities; they also enjoyed the festive packed teas which they had brought in, whilst our boarders had lovely festive boxes containing a delicious selection of food, provided by the Kitchen staff and Mrs Wells. Year 8 were treated to a year group party, together with pizzas.

All in all, the whole day was filled with a lot of fun and laughter and was a fitting way to round off a term in which pupils, staff and parents have all risen to the challenges we have faced and achieved something quite unique.

My Thanks to all the Staff and the PTA who worked tirelessly to make sure our pupils had an amazing day.

Joanna Hall-Tomkin, Assistant Head Pastoral



The Inaugural TPS Christmas Extravaganza!



Christmas Hockey Coaching with Will Abell





WA Christmas Hockey

Dates: 14th-16th Dec
 Location: Taunton School
 Times: 10-3pm
 £90pp (3days)



!!!Prizes!!!
 3 hours of hockey
 Fun Swim
 Games, Quizzes & More



For bookings/enquiries please contact: will@wacoaching.co.uk
 QR code to the Facebook page where the booking link can be accessed.



Wishing you
 all a very Merry
 Christmas and a
 happy and healthy
 New Year!

TWEET OF THE WEEK

For up-to-date news, stories and announcements



TWITTER

@TauntonPrep

@TauntonSchool



INSTAGRAM

@TauntonPrep

@TauntonSchool

