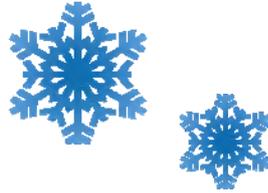


# St. Alban's RC High School



## Newsletter

December 2017 Issue 1



### A Message from Mr Lord, Headteacher

#### SCHOOL COMMS

Please could you download this new app to your phone, if you haven't done so already. It will help us improve communication with parents – and save the school money. The set-up process is simple and will take no more than a couple of minutes. (It's also free)

1. Search for "School Gateway" in the Apple App Store/Google Play or on your phone go to [www.schoolgateway.com/apple](http://www.schoolgateway.com/apple) (Apple) or [www.schoolgateway.com/android](http://www.schoolgateway.com/android) (Android)

2. Install the app and if you are asked then say yes to "Allow Push Notifications"

3. When you launch School Gateway for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with the school

4. The system will send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and the app will be activated for you. As soon as you've got the system set-up, all of the text messages we send you will appear in the app; you'll receive notifications/alerts as normal.

As another term draws to a close we have so much to celebrate and of which to be proud.

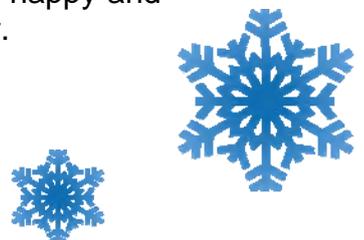
This new school newsletter, reflects just a small proportion of the ways in which our community lives our motto of 'Be the best you can be'. This term has been particularly busy with many events and activities taking place. These included the very successful Year 7 Retreats to Llantarnam Abbey which have given our Year 7 students the opportunity to get to know each other, to form new friendships which will last long into the future and to have an opportunity to reflect upon the movement of God in their lives. The Christian spirit of the students at our school has been prevalent at this time of year as we build community through our personal action. Our charitable fundraising activities this term have been aimed at supporting a range of charities including Cafod, Teenage Cancer Trust, Christmas hamper collection, Macmillan and raising money to build a borehole to provide access to clean water for a village of 6500 people in Rahama Rawun, Kano State, Nigeria. I would like to express my thanks to the staff whose hard work and dedication make these and other events throughout the year possible.

I hope you enjoy reading about it and all the events and activities that have taken place this term. Advent is a wonderful time of holy and expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. The weekly themes of peace, love and joy now provide the basis for form reflection and assemblies to help prepare our young learners for the feast of Christmas.

As I reflect on my first term as Headteacher at St Albans, I am extremely proud, as I am sure all parents and carers are, of all the achievements and successes of all our amazing students.

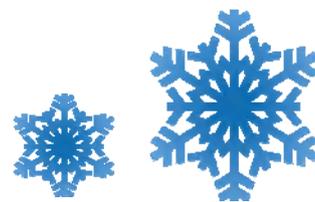
Finally on behalf of the students, staff and governors, I thank you for your continued support of the school and we offer our very best wishes for you and your families for a happy and holy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

*Stephen Lord*





# Focus on Faith

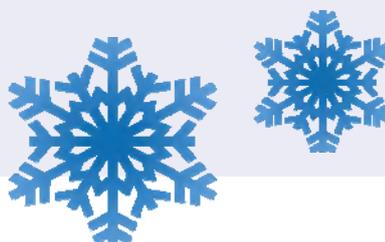


## A Message from Mr Timothy

The beginning of our **Autumn** term was started with our traditional welcome for our students. Our new Head teacher Mr Lord welcomed back all our students through prayerful reflection and reminded them that at St Alban's we strive to create and build a community where all members centre their lives upon the person and message of Jesus Christ. During September our Year 7 pupils had the opportunity to spend the day reflecting on this on their retreat at Llantarnam Abbey with the Head of Year Seven Mrs Blakey and her year Seven Form Tutors. Focusing on St Paul's letter to the Corinthians, the Year Sevens discussed how their many gifts and talents might be unique but should combine to build a community based on the values of Christ. During the month, we also began to offer our students the chance to celebrate Mass every two weeks during Rolling Tutorial.

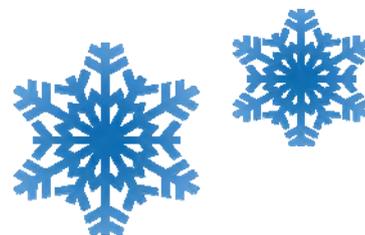
At the start of **October** the Religious Education Department organised their Liturgies to reflect on CAFODS Harvest Fast Day. We asked our students to 'Brighten Up' the Harvest by wearing some bright item of clothes. Our students generous fundraising meant that CAFOD's partners around the world will continue to help young people to live without fear, by creating safe spaces where they are free to be with their friends, learn new skills and make their own contribution towards building a more peaceful world. Our Year Seven's celebrated their 'Welcome Mass' with Staff and parents in the Hall. In his homily Fr Hayman asked the Year Sevens to always live the Gospel in our community and encouraged the group to use their unique gifts and talents to strive to be the best they can be and continue to build our tradition as a caring Christian community.

**November** began with a focus on the Month of Holy Souls. Mr Timothy reflected on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and encouraged every student to use the Beatitudes as their guide for the month of November. Each Form Class remembered the departed in their prayers and the names of all those loved ones that we have lost were placed before the Altar to be remembered at each Rolling Tutorial Mass. During our Anti Bullying week called 'Love thy Neighbour' week our students focused on the parable of the Good Samaritan. Our students were told that choosing kindness doesn't cost anything but can help someone enormously. Mr Timothy, Mrs Harris and Mr Jones encouraged students to follow the Samaritan's example in their conduct with each other and to show compassion and love to those they encounter in their everyday activities. They were told that through their choices and simple acts of kindness like the Samaritan we can help a person feel empowered to stand up to bullying. At the end of the month we celebrated the Feast of Christ the King. Students were asked to reach out in love especially to those in need in our communities by organising their Christmas Hampers –as this is the way God wants us to serve by being filled with care and compassion for our communities.





# Focus on Faith



## A message from Mr Timothy continued.....

**December** began with our Advent liturgies. Students were encouraged to find a minute or two to soak in the powerful Scriptures of Advent and to slow down. Mr. Timothy reflected on The Pope's message of where we are journeying to and are we truly showing the best person we can be. Pope Francis advises us that "the journey is never finished", so over the period of Advent our students were encouraged to renew the type of person they want to be in preparation for Christmas. Advent is always the perfect setting to prepare our Year Nines for the next stage of their journey with us. As they begin to slowly move from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 and think about their choices they had retreat days in Llantarnam to reflect on the true meaning of Advent. Through reflection and prayer, by reading the Sunday Gospel and meditation, they were encouraged to prepare their hearts for the journey ahead and as a place to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord Jesus and return to the true spirit and joy of this blessed season.

In the final week of Term another highpoint was the Carol Service. This year's service was celebrated with his Grace, The Most Reverend George Stack. The School Choir sang wonderfully, led by Mr Paul Cook as members of our community gathered for a wonderful hour of prayers, carols and readings.

*May the Infant Child Jesus and his most Blessed Mother grant you the joy and peace of this holy season and keep you and your loved ones safe.*

### Mr K. Timothy



**Left:** His Grace, The Most Reverend George Stack speaking at the Carol Service on the 19th December

**Top right:** Father David Hayman celebrating Advent Mass to students in the school chapel

**Bottom right:** Students singing on stage at the Carol Service





## Key Dates For Spring Term 2018:

Start of term 8th Jan

Ski Trip 6th 13th Jan

Yr 6 Transition Day 15th Jan

Yr 5 Transition Day 16th – 17th Jan

Llangrannog Yr 7 15th –17th Jan

Yr 10 Work Experience Yr 10 15th—19th Jan

Yr 12/13 Exams 15th—19th Jan

Yr 10 Consultation Evening 30th Jan

Yr 8 Consultation Evening 8th Feb

We Will Rock You 13th—15th Feb

Half Term 19th—23rd Feb

Yr 8 & 9 HPV Vaccines -22nd March

Yr 9 Consultation Evening—27th March

Easter Holidays 2nd April – 13th April



# Guild of St Stephen



The Guild of St Stephen was founded in 1904 by Father Hamilton MacDonald and it helps parishes recognise each of their Altar Servers that provide high standards of serving within the church. The Guild provides Altar Servers with a deeper understanding about what they are doing and how they are helping to strengthen not only their own relationship with God but also that of other members of the congregation.

I recently received the bronze medal of the Guild of St Stephen in St Albans Church in Pontypool from Father David Hayman on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017, the feast day of Christ the King, along with four others. This date was also the day that our church celebrated a Family Mass, which allowed the younger children of our community to be able to watch and learn from the experience and hopefully one day to be in the same position as my fellow Altar Servers and myself. I have been able to expand my knowledge within the Catholic faith and have felt closer to God knowing that I am fulfilling one of my vocations from him.

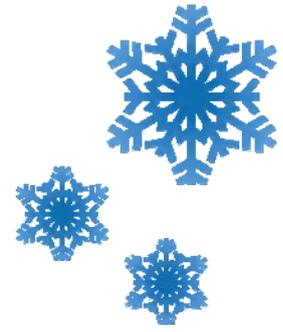
Being an Altar Server is important to me because it allows me to feel like I am helping others to strengthen their bonds with God, and it also allows me to feel like I am helping the church celebrate our chosen faith as one community instead of individually. Being an Altar Server I turn up to every Mass that I am able to attend early to help set everything up, I serve through the Mass, stay behind after Mass to help to clear away and tidy the Altar and Sacristy and then I offer help to anyone who needs it. By receiving the bronze medal of the Guild of St Stephen it has helped to strengthen my bond with God and has made me want to offer even more help.

**Catrina Higgins, Year 11**





# Charity



## HCPT

Is an organisation giving life changing pilgrimage holidays to Lourdes, France, for disabled and disadvantaged children supported by volunteer helpers. During Easter 2018, some of our pupils will be travelling to Lourdes with HCPT as pilgrims. They will be accompanied by a number of volunteer helpers from Years 12 and 13.

HCPT have one very special aim, to give children the most fantastic week on a pilgrimage holiday. Each child has at least one helper to give them the individual care they need. They share amazing experiences and become a very close knit family that goes far beyond their week away. We raise money tirelessly throughout the year to ensure that this amazing week happens for the children. It costs £600 per person to travel. If you can help in anyway, please get in touch.

## St. Alban's Christmas Hamper Appeal

Students and staff have been busy collecting luxury food items to create some beautiful hampers to deliver to families in the local community. Mr James

who led the appeal said 'This year, with the help of students and teachers alike, we managed to create fifty Christmas

hampers. These hampers will hopefully spread some cheer to the people of our

communities who would very much appreciate them. We have managed to meet the same target as last year which is amazing. Here's to next year's hampers and a big thank you to everyone who supported!'



## Staff Charity—Santa Appeal 2017

A BIG THANK YOU to the teachers and support staff who supported this year's appeal by either donating money or buying a present.

We have provided 34 presents for children who will be under the care of Torfaen Social Services this Christmas. Here they are all ready to be delivered!

**Members of 6<sup>th</sup> form council held a Coffee morning fund raiser on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Support and raised £112 September 2017. Another event was organised in December as a fundraiser for CAFOD which raised £58! Great work!**



# Christmas Extravaganza

## Partnerships

St Alban's RC High is proud to be a Learn Partnership School with the Royal Society of Chemistry. Pupils will have access to state of the art University equipment and the RSC provide workshops on KS5 curriculum topics.



On Thursday 7th December, St Alban's held it's first Christmas Extravaganza in the school hall. We are delighted to announce that the evening raised a massive £949.05 for the PTA. The PTA would like to thank Mr Cook and the pupils for putting on a great evening which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. We hope to make this an annual event and look forward to welcoming you all next year!



## Year 10 Christmas

All year 10 pupils have been working since September on the Enterprise and Employability Challenge as part of their Welsh Baccalaureate. They successfully designed and created products that were sold at a Christmas Fayre. A huge £973.36 was raised on the evening will be donated to Teenage Cancer Trust. Well done to all involved, a fantastic achievement!



# SUPPORT OUR PTA



**GREAT SCHOOLS NEED GREAT PARENTS**

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR PTA

CONTACT 01495 765800

FOR FURTHER DETAILS





# Visits



**USA**—The History department took pupils from Yr. 10, Yr. 11, Yr. 12 and Yr. 13 on a fantastic opportunity to visit Washington and New York. Highlights

of the visit included the Arlington Cemetery, Rockefeller Centre and Central Park. Students also



visited the beautiful St Patrick's Cathedral in New York.

**Mr McFadden** would like to thank **Orangebox** and **Linear Plastics** for hosting a visit from our year 12 Product Design students in November. The students were given guided tours of both factories, Linear Plastics are a large scale manufacturing plant who make parts for Orangebox. Orangebox are a multi-national furniture design company and they organised the day and gave the students a guided tour of their manufacturing and assembly plants. They also gave lectures specific to design. Both companies are situated in Treforest

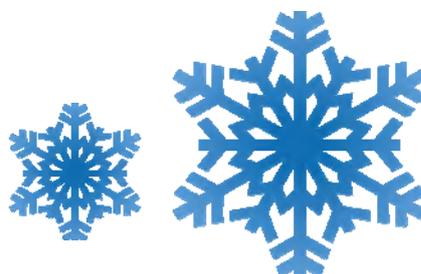


industrial estate and are excellent examples of industrious design within Wales.

**Rebecca Davies** in Year 13 took part in a Nuffield Health Project over the Summer. Here is what Rebecca had to say 'Over the summer holidays I spent a month carrying out my own research in the National Museum of Wales through the Nuffield Foundation - a scheme designed to encourage more young people to pursue a career in science. I was investigating how effective restoration of primary industrial sites are ecologically. It was really interesting to experience the protocol of research and to talk to academics in the University of Bristol as well as my own coordinator. After writing my report and finishing my poster for the presentation, I was lucky that I was given my certificate by Sir Martin Evans at the presentation evening - even the academics call him a legend! I really enjoyed my time at the museum and would recommend the Nuffield research placement scheme to anyone who wants some experience in science!' Well done Rebecca!



**Mrs Davies and Mr Lord attended the Presentation evening at Techniquest in October, with Rebecca.**





# In the Spotlight...

## Duke of Edinburgh Programme

St Alban's are pleased to congratulate the following year 10 pupils on successfully completing their Bronze D of E Award. They took part in a 2 day practice and qualifying expedition in the Wye Valley and completed between 3-6 months of learning new skills, volunteering and undertaking a physical activity.

**Bronze Award 2017-18** Charlotte Chipper, Anna Davey, Susannah Lewis, Charles Osorio, Peter Perez, Jessica Praitto, Ethan Preece, Tara Pritchard, Evan Skuse, Calon Stevens, Prince Becasen (Yr 13), Jonathan Morgan (Yr 13), Bethan White (Yr12)

**Silver Award 2017-18** We will be offering the Silver Award in 2018. Year 11 pupils can complete this as either a direct entrant or 7.6 expedition will be run with the Torfaen Youth Service .

**Gold Award 2017-18** St Alban's are currently running a pilot D of E Gold Programme 2017-18. There are currently 7 pupils completing the award and are currently completing their extended skills, physical and volunteering sections. They will be undertaking their expedition in the Summer term 2018 in North Wales (Snowdonia) with the Urdd.



Students all ready to go on a Duke of Edinburgh expedition in the Wye Valley.



## Tim Penn Visit to Year 9 MFL Students

On Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November, Tim Penn from Signature Leather paid a visit to some Year 9 students and gave us a good insight into the importance of being able to speak multiple languages in today's world. His presentation was very interesting, as he described to us the many different jobs and career opportunities that are available if we can speak other languages. This made many of us consider continuing with either French or Spanish as a GCSE option.

The information Mr Penn provided was extremely informative and many of us were shocked by some of the facts he gave us, for example if you were to study Archaeology in university, then a second language would give you the opportunity to spend a year abroad, all expenses paid, through the ERASMUS programme. It certainly opened our eyes to the benefits of being bi-lingual and meeting Tim has given us lots to think about in a positive way'.



**Poppy Jones Year 9**



# In the Spotlight...



## English Department News

We have had a busy start to the year, welcoming a new colleague from London, Mrs Al-Wahid. All our students are responding really well to their teachers and to learning. Outlined below are some notable features of the Department which might be of interest to you.

### Sound Training:

For the second year running, the school has invested significantly in a programme called Lexonik. This is an intervention programme that is, quite frankly, revolutionary. We are over the moon to be able to offer this to certain groups of students, in the first instance. We also believe that it will affect the ways in which we all teach spelling, vocabulary and verbal reasoning. The method of teaching is very fast-paced and based on groups of 4. We now have almost all colleagues trained up and three currently delivering. If you would like to find out more, click on the link below.

<https://www.lexonik.co.uk/about/what-is-lexonik/>

### Library Lessons:

We have decided, this year, to re-launch the Library, in the hope of bringing Reading back to life! KS3 English classes in Y7 and 8 now have a fortnightly Library Lesson with their English teacher, where they read quietly and extensively or carry out activities to engage them in their reading. This is led by our Literacy Co-ordinator Miss Owens (famous for Kung-Fu punctuation and Word of the Week).

<https://www.lexonik.co.uk/library/word-of-the-week/>

### KS5 Theatre Trip:

Sixth formers travelled to London in October, to visit The Globe Theatre and watch their set text, King Lear. Although it was quite a trek and they experienced being 'Groundlings', they loved the production. Hopefully the experience helped to bring the text to life so that they can engage with it more for their exams. Thanks to Mr Davies and Mr Lambert for this. We have record numbers of students studying to A Level with us this year!

### KS3:

Ms Rees continues to re-evaluate and re-vamp our methods of Assessment for Learning, with Mr Lambert and other colleagues writing lively Schemes of Work to engage our students with topics like Spies, Dystopian Worlds and Murder Mysteries. We are proud of the fact that we never rest on our laurels at St Alban's.

### KS4:

We have been particularly motivated, this year, by the fantastic results our young people achieved in August. They positioned us as one of the highest achieving schools in Wales for English and second highest in 5 counties locally. Partly as a result of this, we are proud to be supporting and working with 12 other English teams in this area. This is extremely beneficial for us as we get to see what works well in other schools and collaborate more effectively.

***Mrs E. Read***



# Achievements



- ◆ **Alex Elliott and Callum Hill** have been shortlisted at British Education Awards 2018 (National award ceremony for the students) for their brilliant academic results.. The British Education Awards ceremony is on Wednesday 31st January, 2018 at 6pm. The ceremony will be held at Hilton Manchester. Good luck to both Alex and Callum!
- ◆ **Owen Ashford and Katie Davies** both received the Diana Award at a ceremony in Cardiff for their volunteering efforts. Excellent work both!
- ◆ On Wednesday the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, five lucky St Alban's pupils took part in a Modern Foreign Languages training event at Cwm Rhymni School in Caerphilly to become Language Ambassadors. Amelia Johnson, Lucy Stokes, Keir Almano, Theo Collins and Beau Moss attended the course along with students from 16 other schools. They all had an unforgettable day working with other schools and taking part in workshops in French, German and Spanish. After a short introduction about the importance of languages, pupils learned about Spanish culture, regions and dancing. In the second workshop, Alex Pickerman, of the Goethe Institute, led a short quiz about Germany and told students much more about the importance of being a Pupil Language Ambassador. During the last workshop, pupils made origami fortune cookies in French. After lunch, pupils were split into mixed school groups and had an opportunity to discuss the importance of Language Ambassadors. The St Alban's team planned many upcoming events and got to know each other better. "The trip was a fantastic educational experience", says Lucy. "I would like to bring what I have learned straight into St Alban's". The five Language Ambassadors wish to attend another course next year and hopefully win the Pupil Language Ambassador award!





# Sporting Achievements



## Football –

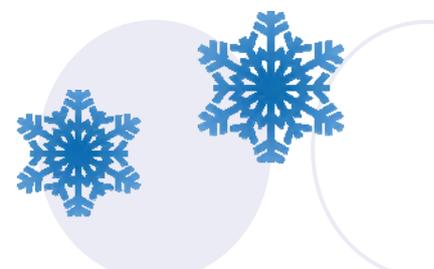
Ellie Sanford Year 11 (Photo on right) – Wales u15 v Northern Ireland, Scotland, England & ROI

Wales u17 v Bosnia, Denmark, Norway, France, Kazakhstan.



Year 9 competed in the Cardiff City Foundation Football tournament at the House of Sport in Cardiff. Competing against 20 other schools from across South Wales. The boys won their group winning two matches and drawing 2 matches. This progressed them to the semi finals where they beat Ysgol Derewyn 3-1 to progress to the final. The final was played against Richard Gwyn Barry and was a close game but unfortunately the boys were edged out losing 3-1. The boys involved were: Tyler Westcott, Owen Skyrme, Rhys Stevens. Josh Rippon, Luca Natale, Matt Coward, George Walsh, Jack Peake and Olly Mayo.

**Netball –** Catrin Minto and Katie Dawkins selected for SE Wales team (right). Below are our Year 7, 8 and 9 Teams. Bottom right is our Under 16 Team who finished third in SE Wales in the Anne Smart Trophy.





# Sporting Achievements

## Rugby –

Pontypool Schools District Team – The following pupils have gained a place in the Dewar Shield Squad

Ben Hitchings—Moa (Photo on right), Jack Legge, Evan Perry  
Luke Saunders, James Coleman and Will Gregory



**Gwent Dragons u16 Academy** - The following pupils have gained a place in the Squad

Josef Cowell, Mason Sullivan, Harri Bendon, Ethan Preece,  
Cian Smith and Lewis Stansfield

Wales Crawshays u18 – Callum Oliver and Josef Cowell were selected to represent Crawshays in recent matches v Monmouth and Christ College Brecon. Callum captained the team against Monmouth.

**Swimming** – Congratulations to Evan Sellick, CARYS Clayton and Emma Porter (below right) who have competed in several galas this term setting PB's. We wish them good luck in the upcoming Nationals.



## Prize Evening—

St. Alban's would like to say a big thank you to Mike Flynn, Newport County FC's Manager for being our guest speaker at our 2017 Prize Evening. This is a special event in our calendar where we celebrate the successes of our pupils in all subjects, not just sports! It was wonderful to have Mike join us, here he is pictured with one of our many rising stars (left) Thea Rogers Year 11.



## Christmas Mass Times

### **We Will Rock You!**

Rehearsals are underway for the 2018 St Alban's RC High School production of We Will Rock You!

Tickets go on sale first week back to school in January. Show dates are 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> February 2018, tickets are £5.

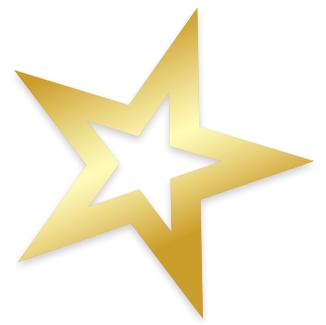
	Reconciliation	Christmas Mass
Our Lady of the Angels	23rd December 10.30am	24th December 9pm
St David's	23rd December 4.15pm	25th December 9am 24th December 6pm
St Alban's	23rd December 5.15pm	25th December 10.30am 24th December 7pm & 12 Midnight 25th December 11am
St Felix	23rd December following 10am Mass	25th December 9am

**May your Christmas be more about presence than presents.**

**May our faith, our family, our lives, centre on the Christmas Child now and always.**

**Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas break and look forward to seeing you all in 2018.**





would like to say a big  
**thank you**

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<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stalbansrchspontypool/>



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