



# THE LINK

*A fortnightly Newsletter for the pupils, parents and staff of  
St Michael's Catholic College  
Issue 234 - December 2024*



## A Word from The Principal

Welcome to the final edition of The Link this term published in the 3rd week of advent where we are encouraged to find joy and hope in the coming of the Lord. At St Michael's there has been so much to celebrate this term, especially the way in which our students demonstrate such positive attitudes to learning and their determination to make the most of the many opportunities they are given at the school for both academic and spiritual fulfilment. The commitment and contributions from our staff and students bring such joy to our community and also give me hope that this generation of talented and caring young people are developing the skills and RUAH values to go out into the world to serve and be a light to others. There are so many high points from the term to be proud of but I would like to point out the success of the Year 7 and 8 Girls' football team, the inspiring creativity shown through the entries to our Black History Month competition and the central role that the Chaplaincy team plays in ensuring Salesian and Gospel values remain central to all that we do as examples of the joy and hope that we have both in the present and in what is to come.



Art work by Anuoluwa O Year 9

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all students, staff and Governors for their hard work and commitment this term and to also thank our parents and carers for working in partnership with us in support of their children.

May the peace and blessings of Christmas be yours and may the coming year be filled with peace, happiness and good health.

Ms F. Corcoran  
Principal



## St Michael's Student Wins BASET Pioneer Award

Congratulations to Julia S in Year 12 who has been selected from hundreds of applicants and after numerous interviews to receive The Britain-Australia Society Education Trust (BASET) 2025 Pioneer School Award. The Pioneer School Award fully funds an educational placement at Canberra



Grammar School in Australia, in summer 2025 which includes the airfare and living costs. We are delighted that Julia will have this once in a lifetime experience and know she will make the most of this brilliant opportunity. She is an outstanding ambassador for St. Michael's Catholic College.



## Borough Market Enterprise



After three weeks of intensive assembly line production, and quality control, Team Bosco took their product range to Borough Market. Their stall was in direct competition with teams from St. Thomas The Apostle, Charter North, and East, Dulwich.

Russell, Alexandra, Chiamaka, Nathaniel and Alaia sold direct to the public and turned over £150 on the day! Once costs are deducted, 50% of profit will go to CAFOD.

Congratulations to Team Bosco in successfully creating and executing their business plan, and navigating a competitive market environment.  
Mr P Viscovich



"Our experience at Borough Market was fun. We spread Christmas joy, whilst getting to know friendly customers, who purchased our products. Our products were very versatile, and other teams were very encouraging and helpful."

Alexandra 8BC

"At the start, I was nervous speaking publicly and carrying out negotiations. But then, I started or we started to get the hang of it. Overall, it was a pleasure to be there and it was a really fun experience. We didn't sell it all though, but visiting Borough Market was the most important thing about this day."

Russell 8BC

"Selling our products at Borough Market was an interesting experience. At first, it was nerve-wrecking speaking to the public but then I got into it because I was inspired by Alexandra and her public speaking skills. Overall, selling our Christmas Stockings was very fun. I would do it again."

Chiamaka 8BC

"As we got the opportunity to sell our stockings and ornaments making our money and meeting customers was really fun. I definitely think it was a positive experience from talking with competitors, dealing with transactions and change, observing other stalls to look at other products."

Alaia 8BC

## Aerospace Careers Event at Dulwich College

Students studying Physics in Year 12 were recently invited to an Aerospace Careers Event at Dulwich College. The day included robotics, virtual reality, 3D computing and quantum mechanics; and provided students with a great opportunity to explore how theory can be put into practice in the real world and in the future. Students particularly enjoyed meeting a robot dog and asking it questions. Libero A. said he "learned how VR is used to solve problems, how robots like the robot dog are designed to help with tasks, and how technology is used in areas like defence and maintenance".

Aron V (12RU) wrote:

"On Friday 29th November, we attended "Aerospace Day" at Dulwich College. I learnt about various topics surrounding aerospace and STEM such as the fourth industrial revolution, robotics and NASA's Artemis program. Furthermore, we were introduced to companies like Babcock and Boston Dynamics with interactive activities and presentations presented by well-experienced engineers around those industries. After the morning presentations and appetising lunch, we were moved around to four activity rooms where we used collaboration and problem-solving skills to complete tasks such as:



building the tallest tower with tape and paper, flying a drone in a simulation, and talking to a robot dog! Personally, what I enjoyed most was the amazing food and canteen... but if you want a serious answer, I would say using the virtual reality headsets to simulate a plane was very cool! An amazing experience and opportunity that I thank the school and the science department for making possible. 😊"



## Digging Into Creativity: Where Rocks and Brushes Collide!

On the 28th of November, 9B took part in an Art and Geology workshop with award winning artist Gail Dickerson. Within this workshop 9B was given the opportunity to learn about the layers of earth from the local area through a certain type of art that only used samples from the shaft site in Chambers wharf. Some of these materials were millions of years old and the chalk that we used was over 100 million years old. Gail Dickerson worked with 9B in the designing of a geology, archeology and history interpretation panel to be installed on the embankment near fountain stairs or by the river near the former Chambers Wharf Tideway shaft site. During this workshop 9B was able to make their own artwork out of colour pigments extracted from rocks and soil from the Chambers Wharf site that Gail Dickerson herself collected from construction staff on site. This also included using clay and paints made from samples. These were all extracted from the Chambers Wharf tideway shaft.

Anuluwa stated, "In the geology workshop I discovered that there are different approaches to creating art, and that it is not all about how beautiful or realistic the work is, but the meaning behind it is what makes it special and unique. Gail Dickenson was able to share her thoughtful pieces of work exploring the geology of London - it was an eye-opening experience, and I was able to see different meanings to art."

We look forward to seeing the final boards in situ.

Oliver R 9BC



## Astrophysicist and Ex-St. Michael's Student Explains "Dark Matter"

We were absolutely delighted to welcome back St Michael's alumnus (class of 2018), Jed Young, to share his research on Dark Matter. Please find the thoughts of Noah (11SA) below:

Jed Young was an excellent presenter. He was able to provide an impressive first impression, through his many successes throughout his career as an astrophysicist. Young had structured his presentation clearly and effectively. The first half would be all about what dark matter is, and the next half was based on advice on how to spend your time effectively as we move towards university, then into the real world, as well as transferable skills we should work on.



The topic of Dark Matter itself is something quite confusing to grasp our knowledge on, and it is a hard topic for scientists to dig deeper into, as dark matter does not interact with light at all, essentially meaning that it is invisible to the human eye. Additionally, we can't see dark matter through x-rays, radiation levels or any other instruments. This is different to something being very dark, like a black chair. The black chair absorbs a lot of the different colours on the spectrum, making it harder to see, unlike a bright red chair. However, dark matter does not absorb the light, nor does it reflect it. The only reason scientists believe dark matter exists is because of an unknown force that is allowing for the universe to expand, and for planets and galaxies to keep in place like a gravitational force. Jed Young had also shown us a table of all the energy in the universe and what percentage came from what. The table shows that 4.9% of mass-energy comes from ordinary matter such as protons and neutrons. 26.8% of mass-energy comes from dark matter and 68.3% comes from dark energy. Additionally, dark matter is expected to be making up 84.5% of the total matter in the universe. Just to summarise; scientists believe that dark matter makes up a large portion of the universe. We cannot see dark matter, and we do not have any tools to be able to see it. We only know of its existence through its effect on gravity.

Young had much enthusiasm for this topic and was open to as many questions as possible from us. He would make sure that we followed along with what he was talking about, as he attempted to make topics and ideas studied by top scientists into digestible, smaller pieces. Jed Young had also presented very useful tools and skills that we could use in these next few years. He had highly recommended EPQ's and



its importance, as it shows to employers that you were able to do your own research into topics that you are truly interested in.

Overall, Jed Young had presented a very interesting and meaningful presentation, that I would highly recommend for people to attend.

Noah 11SA

Please see the St Michael's Challenge and More Able webpages for further details:  
<https://sites.google.com/stmichaelscollege.org.uk/challengeandmoreable/lectures-and-research>

## Famous TV Professor Delivers Christmas Lecture - How to Find Aliens!

This December, we were lucky enough to be joined by Professor Chris Lintott from Oxford University and presenter of BBC's *The Sky at Night*. Professor Lintott's lecture was entitled *How to Find Aliens*. As the talk developed, he made it clear that finding aliens may not be the most accurate way to define it, and that we should think more broadly about different possible life 'forms' in our solar system! He shared fascinating details about the work that he and other astrophysicists across the world are researching, including sharing a new study about a potential planet discovered this week! We also learnt about some of the explorations taking place including data from Europa that is attempting to explore how far the ocean is



below the ice surface, and that a telescope has picked up sound signals from the star, Proxima Centauri (approximately 4.25 light years away).

There were some brilliant questions from the captivated audience of SSLP students. These included: What is the importance of magnetic fields? What would happen when – or if - we find aliens? Where do the funds come from for space exploration? Having heard all that Professor Lintott had shared, a student was also led to ask the question: what if there are no aliens? However, this was followed up by the final question of the event that asked Professor Lintott if he thought that life forms in space would be discovered in space in our lifetimes, to which he shared a more hopeful response!



Please find an article below by Franklin 12BC, inspired by this lecture:

### Are We Alone?

The question of whether or not extra-terrestrial life is active in our universe is an intriguing one at that, and a heavily debated topic. Whilst there's no definitive answer to this specific question, science has revealed a flurry of observations which suggests this possibility.

### THE OBSERVABLE UNIVERSE

The universe is home to approximately 200 billion-2 trillion galaxies which all contain their own atmospheres, planetary systems as well as different compositions of elements that construct the planets. So far, scientists and astronomers have discovered over 5000 exoplanets, which are in the habitable zones of their stars, which have the potential to support life by potentially having liquid water, or is that what they actually consume?

### THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

The theory proposed by Charles Darwin, was formulated in 1859, in the book "On the Origin of Species", primarily stating that organisms evolve over generations through the inheritance of physical and behavioural traits. As the fundamental theory as to how human life has evolved, this adaptation to the environment isn't only a niche for this planet, but can apply as we extrapolate principles from Earth's biology, allowing us to hypothesize their potential forms. As examples, planets with thicker atmospheres may stimulate the evolution of organisms that have the enzymes necessary to process these gases, or low-gravity environments leading to species having elongated bodies. On this planet, different species have evolved traits to solve issues lying in their habitats suggesting that alien evolution could potentially undergo the same thing. However, what if we narrow our senses and pay attention to the life that could be on this planet?

## Famous TV Professor Delivers Christmas Lecture - How to Find Aliens! (continued)



### EXTREMOPHILES AND OCTOPI

As life on this planet is quite varied in terms of genus and species, why can't we take into consideration "foreign" life here, as some species have evolved to thrive in harsh environments, allowing us to take into consideration other species that could evolve in those same harsh environments, but on different planets? As well as strange organisms to take into consideration, octopi? Octopi, compared to any earthly organism, are often described as "alien" due to their unique physiology, allowing them to function as a model for alien life.

### ARE THEY REAL? IF THEY ARE, IS THAT GOOD?

If extra-terrestrial life did exist, how do we know they'd want to cooperate with our policies, and what more, the state they could be in? What sort of technology could they possess? We don't know whether they may be violent or have very advanced technology.

"Aliens are alien. If they exist at all, we cannot assume they're like us." Stephen Hawking The assumption that they are even human-shaped is even potentially absurd. There are way too many different possibilities and hypotheses to properly formulate whether or not they are real, but as the universe is infinite, there's a high possibility that they do exist. However, there's too little evidence that they do, but more observations are being discovered at a frequent basis.



## St Michael's Staff Bake-Off

Congratulations to Mr Kelly winning first place in the staff bake-off challenge, with a close competition from Ms Weatherley in second place.

All the Christmas cup cakes were decorated artistically, thanks to the DT department for their support with this activity!



## Chaplaincy Corner

### What's been happening in the faith life of the school?

- Chaplaincy teams across the college have started their Advent Fundraising to provide hampers for local senior citizens.
- The college held a Memorial Mass for former member of staff, John Buckley who passed away over the summer holidays, he was a beloved and respected member of the college community
- Year 7 Young Salesian members attended the Sisters of Mercy Mass at Most Holy Trinity, Dockhead to celebrate 185 years of the sisters in Bermondsey and the reach and impact they've had in the local community and across the world.
- Advent liturgies have been planned for the last day of term at Most Holy Trinity Church with support from Canon Alan McClean.
- Year 7 DaCosta participated in the first Year 7 form Mass this year in the Chapel on Friday 29th November
- Mr Kelly led assemblies about the church's Jubilee Year and some of the upcoming plans in 2025 that the college hopes to fulfil in line with the 'pilgrims of hope' theme.
- Miss Casey shared this years digital advent calendar, focusing on the work of CAFOD, and rooted in scripture.

#### The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,  
may the faith you have given us  
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,  
and the flame of charity enkindled  
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,  
reawaken in us the blessed hope  
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us  
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of  
the Gospel.  
May those seeds transform from within  
both humanity and the whole cosmos  
in the sure expectation  
of a new heaven and a new earth,  
when, with the powers of Evil  
vanquished,  
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee  
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,  
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.  
May that same grace spread  
the joy and peace of our Redeemer  
throughout the earth.  
To you our God, eternally blessed,  
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

Miss Casey  
Chaplaincy Coordinator

#### The Word of the Lord



I will remember the  
works of the Lord;  
Surely I will remember  
Your wonders of old  
☞ Psalm 77:11



## Science Mock

And you're watching the clock,  
 Every tick,  
 Every tock,  
 It's not TikTok,  
 Not a limited posting,  
 Not social media showboating.  
 TikTok.  
 I want to watch too.  
 But instead I am watching you.



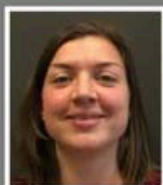
We've gone into extra time  
 Paper rustles  
 Fluid-filled cochlea vibrates  
 Pendulum pen  
 Between fulcrum fingers dangle  
 Frustration and knowledge bubble like an acidic solution.

You flip your paper again  
 Hoping to gain fresh insight.  
 Archimedes floats around periodically  
 But not one atom jumps out at you.  
 On the clock you gaze again.  
 You hear every tick,  
 I hear every tock.  
 You're sitting still,  
 I'm taking stock.  
 It's not an experiment.  
 No test tube in sight,  
 You take a gentle swill of St. Michael's learning skills  
 And out that level 9 spills.  
 Tick Tock!

Ms P Belvett

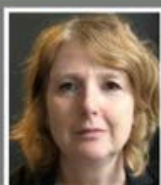


## Safeguarding Officers



**Designated  
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