



## IMPORTANT Term Dates

### October 31

Back to school!

### November 5

Bonfire Night

### November 7

Functional Skills English exams

### November 11

Remembrance Day

### November 12

Diwali

### November 17

Children in Need

### December 7

Christmas Jumper Day

### December 20

Last day of term

### Support for mental health.

Mental health has never been so important.

[Children's mental health support.](#)

[Parent's mental health support.](#)

## Message from Jacquie



After some lovely September and October sunshine, autumn seems to have crept up on us and we are once again at half term.

There are lots of things to celebrate, have fun with, and enjoy in the coming few weeks: the clocks are 'falling back' by one hour at 2am on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October, so we get an extra hour in bed, Halloween is Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October, Bonfire Night is on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November and Diwali, the festival of lights starts on Sunday November 12<sup>th</sup>.

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> and Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October are inset days for staff, so the school term starts again on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October for learners.

I hope you all have a lovely half term break.

## Official Opening of Badgers Hill @ Integration.

The brand new unit in Calcot opened officially on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October. The old, single-storey prefab building has completely gone, and in its place stands a modern two-storey building with 4 classrooms, a lovely kitchen, and an open social area. As with all openings that are done right, a ribbon was cut, biscuits were eaten and everyone had a tour of the facility.

*"I'd like to thank everyone involved in bringing this project to fruition. It's thrilling to be in this building." Jacquie*

*"The key thing...is actually seeing the difference that being in this building over the last 5 weeks has made to our learners. I'm seeing great improvement already." Fram*



## Learn to Live....Live to Learn!

### Pod Plus

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Since the last newsletter, a lot has changed at Pod+. Firstly, we have moved and are now at the old Integration site in Thatcham. This is so much better, with the learners really enjoying the outdoor space and larger classrooms. Also, we have some new staff and learners, and the mix is working well.

In English, we have been learning about detective characters such as Hercule Poirot and Sherlock Holmes, and understanding the characteristics they have. We have also been watching mysteries and putting our detective caps on to solve these.

We have produced some fantastic work in art using techniques to create some amazing landscape pictures of the solar system.



Cooking is a big thing here, and we have tasted some delicious creations including coffee cake and savory snacks.



We have bought into a new, online learning platform called, Bedrock, to help improve vocabulary and grammar. So far, learners at Independence, Intervention and Pod+ have been introduced to it. We are running a half-termly challenge to see which group of learners can, collectively, gain the most points. This half term, the prize goes to.....Pod + for their amazing focus and determination. They enjoyed a lunch of pizza this week to celebrate!



Who will gain the most points next half term?



### Pod

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At the Pod, we have been learning about the Stone Age. Last week, we made a biscuit Stonehenge which proved more challenging than we had thought, teaching us some patience, resilience and team-work!



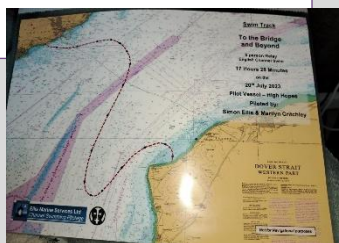
We also visited My Apple Juice near Hungerford to learn how the apples from our trees could be turned into apple juice. We learned about the whole process from apple selection all the way to bottling and labelling. We even had a go at various stages.



## Siobhan's incredible journey

On 19<sup>th</sup> July, I swam a relay with 4 friends from Samphire Hoe in Dover, England, to South West Wissant, France. It took 17 hours and 28 minutes. It was a day I will never forget.

We set off around midnight and I was the first to swim. The journey to the starting point was rough, rainy and very, very dark. When I got into the water, a reasonable 16 degrees, I was shocked by how much swell there was and hoped I was up to the challenge.



I had a spotlight on the water to guide me. This was tricky as it kept bobbing around. I imagined I was an escaped convict, swimming from Alcatraz!

When it came to swapping over, we had to be careful not to leave any water un-swum. Soon, we were making progress, though we were almost all sea-sick! Suddenly, there was daylight and an amazing sunrise.

My next swim was accompanied by a smack of jellyfish. I felt a sting on my arm which went right up to my armpit. Despite this, we had to carry on. Swimming for an hour in the sea at a fast pace is tough, especially as you get closer to France. It looked so close, but it was still really a long way off. We had to dig deep, and after a while, the blurry coast began to become clearer and we could see houses and people. It was so exciting! The water was as flat as a pancake as the final swimmer, Annie finished and we were allowed to swim to the beach. We were dancing, shouting and splashing with joy on a beautiful, deserted beach: we were actual Channel Swimmers!



Thank you to everyone who supported us and helped us to raise £2550 for Sarcoma UK and the Donaldson Trust charities.

## Intervention

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Break times at Intervention have been active, as we have been making good use of our table football, table tennis and pool table. There is some dispute over who is the best, but this reporter has heard that Jay is the one to beat!



## Inspiration

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This half term, learners at Inspiration have been learning about the Stone Age.



Elm class has made up their own song as well as a fabulous cave, whilst Oak class has been focusing on making predictions about our Stone Age Boy story, and using it to compare life then and now.

We have been learning about the different jobs they had to do in the Stone Age and considering whether we would prefer to have lived then!



## Building confidence at Forest School

Look at me setting up the slackline!



Look how high I am on the slackline!





Lacey (Y11) visits RAW mentoring as part of her timetable and now has an additional work experience session which is dedicated to her shadowing staff and supporting younger visitors.

When I visited Raw I was impressed with their new facility which offers mentoring through every type of sporting activity. The staff are incredibly welcoming and friendly with an impressive range of coaching and mentoring qualifications. I didn't have to request work experience for Lacey so much as finalise it! She had set the placement up herself whilst attending RAW and being a positive role model, encouraging younger learners to make good decisions and generally supporting the staff team. They are delighted to have her on board. Both Lacey and RAW have plans for this to be a long-term placement.

Lacey would like to join the RAW Team as a sports mentor when she is 18. She recognises that this time with RAW is an important step in the right direction. She is also exploring options in sports coaching courses after Year 11 to ensure she is correctly qualified.

*Ali, Careers Leader*

## Upcoming Open Days...

St Bart's Sixth Form: 2/11/23 5.30 - 8pm

Kennet Sixth Form: 9/11/23: 7pm

Theale Green Sixth Form: 9/11/23

New College, Swindon: 16/11/23

Willink Sixth Form: 17/11/23

Please look on the relevant websites for further information, or email Ali: [careers@icollge.org.uk](mailto:careers@icollge.org.uk)

## Destination Expo at Newbury College

Y11s at iCollege attended the Destination Expo, organised by Education Business Partnership, on 12<sup>th</sup> October. There were over 100 stands which our young people explored, being sociable and engaging with stall holders whilst collecting some of the freebies that were on offer!



In this picture, Cordie is trying out some virtual reality equipment being demonstrated by AWE.

## Independence

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Young people at Independence started the term with a workshop from the Watermill Theatre on developing life skills including making a first impression at an interview.

## Integration

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We have settled into our new building and have managed to set up our boxing bag for learners to use at break times.

In Practical Skills lessons, learners have been making wooden frames to use in their Art lessons later in the term.

And we have been making use of our lovely, new kitchen creating meals to take home.



Later in September, we held our 'Welcome BBQ' for new parents, carers and learners. Staff, governors and EHA were on hand to provide information and chat about this last, very important year at school. Everyone was treated to



hot dogs and burgers as well as a presentation.

## Our iCollege Community

Reports regularly cited in the media remind us that strong religious beliefs are generally associated with lower levels of anxiety and distress. The socially-sanctioned stories of organised religions that frighten away reality are clearly useful. How do we square this with our largely post-religious age in which we as humans retain appetites for illusion coupled with evasion of the objective reality that we are mortal?

In the words of the existential theologian Paul Tillich, 'Something is holy to everyone'; we all have an 'ultimate concern', that is, one of any forms of devotion, transcendental or otherwise. Now, of course, *what* you worship may trip you up: money, fame, beauty... So, if this impulse is inherent to humans, the key question is how helpful, adaptive, and meaningful one's choice of worship might be in the face of the challenges life throws at us. Young people can become preoccupied with this impulse to worship, and if, as is their prerogative, they're likely to reject the divine insulation provided by orthodox cultural belief systems, they might then adopt private religions that constrict reality down to manageable size. Preoccupations with one's developing sexual body that might be 'controlled' and altered through drugs and surgery, compulsive behaviours of various guises, disordered eating, and paranoia are all attempts at shrinking reality and finding psychological sanctuary in a narrow perceptual set.

By using symbolic thinking in our work with young people, we can appreciate that these maladaptive ways of engaging with the world demonstrate the *wrong* ritual but the *right* impulse, and thus use this understanding as a springboard for collaborative exploration.

*iCollege counsellor*

### A Note from Governors

Another new academic year is now well underway. Public exam results have been released and there is so much to celebrate in the achievements of iCollege learners. Many congratulations from all governors to all learners and staff for this last year's many successes. All the energy and hard work that goes into these is huge and wide ranging. Governors much appreciate all the energy and resourcefulness from staff that contribute so significantly to these successes.

Governors are delighted to see the new Integration unit in Calcot, now up and running. An official opening ceremony is taking place shortly and governors will be attending, along with others who have helped to make this new building become a reality.

Governors are again happy to welcome a new member, Teresa King, who was able to join our Management Committee meeting earlier this term. Teresa has written the following pen portrait by way of introduction:

Throughout my adult life, I have been involved in many volunteer positions, such as Parentline as a Counsellor/Advisor, Restorative Justice as a Volunteer Facilitator both for 4 years. A local Parish Counsellor for 20 Years, a Governor for 11 years mainly as Vice Chair and various other areas such as Finance, Curriculum and Staffing. I was also for 2 years a Governor at another school - both of which were in the local area - covering Finance, Behaviour and Staffing.



I was also involved in many other Community areas, involving both children and adults, and was involved in the setting up of Newbury Amateur Astronomical Society.

We look forward to working with Teresa; hopefully learners and iCollege staff will be able to meet her when she has the opportunity to visit the different units.

Governors wish all iCollege learners and staff a happy and relaxing break before returning to school later in October, ready for the build up to Christmas activities and festivities, already evident in many local stores!

## Art-Tastic!

The art department is having a wonderful start to the year! We have already displayed learners' work in the education tent at the Newbury Show and will later feature in an exhibition at Arlington Arts.

If you would like to visit the exhibition, "First Framed", featuring last year's year 11 learners, it opens on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November and runs until Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December at Arlington Arts Centre.



iCollege has been chosen to take part of an RHS research project on the question: 'Can gardening in schools have an impact on the well-being of the learners?'

We have learners from Independence, Intervention, Pod and Pod+ involved in this exciting project where they will get some funding to create and run their own mini-project in the garden.

It is brilliant for iCollege to be involved in such a project, and it is also exciting to think that our work in the garden will have an impact on the future of gardening in schools across the country.

## Getting into....Fishing!

### At iCollege, there are many young people who have hobbies outside of school...

I'd like to introduce you to Dylan (Y11), Declan (Y9) and Liam (Y10) who love to go fishing.

My name is Dylan and I've been fishing for over 3 years. I got into the sport by catching small roach and rudd on the float for the first few months.

As I began to understand fishing more, I started lure fishing for perch, pike, chub and trout. Then, 2 years ago I got into carp fishing down at my local club lake and now I target species such as perch, pike, trout, chub, carp and bream all on different methods like float feeder ledger and lure fishing.

I love fishing so much because it gets you away from phones and teaches you important life skills such as patience and resilience.

Some days I go down to the lakes for a few hours, but every weekend I go for 24-48 hours. I take my tent and camp.

One of the best lakes to go to in this area is a lake called 'Collins'. It's a club lake so everybody is friendly which makes for a relaxing time fishing.



Dylan

Being out in the open is very calming and relaxing. Most fishing lakes are in scenic places and provide on-site facilities like toilets and food vans.

When the weather is cold you are more likely to catch Pike because they struggle to breathe in hot weather due to the low oxygen levels. Carp tend to follow the weather patterns and you will find them biting more in the warmer months.

You can sometimes go weeks without catching a fish but this just makes you more determined to catch something.

Fishing is a great hobby because it teaches you patience and perseverance.

**Declan and Liam**



According to Dylan, Declan and Liam...

If I were to get someone into fishing, I'd recommend getting

- a 42 inch landing net for carp and a 36 inch net for others,
- 4 stainless steel bank sticks,
- a pair of cheap bite alarms such as the 'korum kbi bite alarms' for £40
- either 10ft or 12 ft advanta cxs rod in either 3lb or 3.5lb with a minimum spool size of 7000 on your reels
- a thick padded landing mat.

I'd suggest you start at a day ticket for a lake such as Frobury Farm which is £5 a day for one rod.

The club lakes in the Berkshire area are owned by Newbury and Thatcham Angling. For a night permit in Thatcham, it is £70 and for Newbury it's £25. With 8 lakes in Newbury there is a lake for everyone!

For a basic set up that's cheap but reliable you're looking at around £368.97

If you would like to contribute to the next iTimes, please email:

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Thank you to everyone who sent items for this edition.

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