

**Our News**

**End of an era**



Although the leaver's celebration was the week before (see the report by Chris later in the newsletter) their final moments at Dame Catherine's were marked in style. In the tree, in the garden, on the piano, having groups hugs – and in the skip? (It had to be done!) We will miss your individuality and creativity!!!!!!

**What's been happening in school?**

**Melbourne Carnival (by Bria)**



As it was our first year taking part in the carnival, we didn't really know what to expect. The day was absolutely fantastic! We all had such good fun taking part, and although the prep work was tiring, it was well worth it as we won first prize!! It was really lovely to see our children (and some adults!) dressed up and waving out at the crowd, all enjoying the experience. We are already excited to take part next year.



Given the fact that Josh has done so much extra this year, we decided he deserved a well-earned break, and we let him have some time out so he could go with his family, who had booked an extended weekend break to Disney Paris. He was rather disappointed to miss joining us and winning the float. He did get to see Disney's version and sent us a photo (see below for a comparison.) Anyone up for a trip to Disneyland Paris to show them how it's done?



## Royal Ramble

Our Royal Ramble was a great success. The children had a great time taking part and all completed the challenge. It was then back to the garden for our end of year party, and although we had some technical problems with the bouncy castle, the children all enjoyed their picnics and playing with their friends.

We hit our target with the very generous and well appreciated donations and sponsorships. This will enable us to invest in our garden and early years areas with some new play and climbing equipment. Although this was directed at our younger children, this will benefit all children at the school.

If you haven't yet donated and would still like to, the JustGiving page will stay live until 1<sup>st</sup> August, donations can be made either to this page ([www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/theroyalramble](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/theroyalramble)) or by direct bank transfer to school, with the reference 'TheRoyalRamble'



## Leaver's Party (by Chris)

With just a week left of school for another year, it was time for the bittersweet arrival of the Leavers' Party, and a sad, but very fond bon voyage to some of our beloved year 6s. The Wildcats had been working hard, rehearsing songs and dances for a spectacular farewell. We put together pieces from the 1960s through to the 1980s, along with a self-penned DCHS spin on Those Were the Days, and ended it all with a 1980s school disco-themed danceathon.



When the day itself arrived, the school had prepared the treat of a bouncy castle, which the children were able to enjoy between performances. Parents joined us too, and to send the children off in style, we ended the evening with the traditional Dame Catherine's Leavers' Story, and Campfire. It was a lovely end to another busy year, and a fitting send off to all our children, who are leaving us, and yet will stay with us forever. Good luck to Sophia, Thor, Stella, Ava and Katy and Jess. We know that you will do brilliantly at whatever you set your mind to, and you should know that you are always welcome back here – even if you are going elsewhere, this is still, and will always be, your school.



## Hot days

Whilst children finished just in time to avoid the hottest days we've ever had on record, we did have a few in mid-June and we had a fantastic water play afternoon one Friday! (We still have a lovely pink towel left if someone owns it by the way!)



## Lots of ice cream

One of our other fun activities to do when it is hot is to eat ice lollies and ice cream! We are known for making the most of opportunities (often last minute) and finding some aspect of learning to go with our having fun! We call this OFF PISTE. This is exactly what we did when we had some work experience students in school earlier in July. We combined their art and language skills, looked at the weather, and they designed an ice cream role-play stall for all the children, and taught them to order the flavour they wanted in Chinese.



## String quartet National Forest project



In June and July, we had a unique opportunity to take part in a music project with 4 other primary schools. The project was aimed at 7-11 year olds and our Wildcats took part in the final performance, which was at the beginning of the Timberfest. The music had been especially written for the performance and the

children all had various roles, mimicking and amplifying the sounds of the forest as the quartet played their piece. Thank you to the families who joined us for the amazing experience.

It was fantastic that all aged children who were in school when the workshop took place in June could benefit from listening and learning about the instruments. Our younger children were entranced by the 4 professional musicians, and it was lovely to see how confident they were interacting with the musicians. Thank you to Graham Oppenheimer, who teaches at Chetham College and is one of the UKs foremost violists, for helping us to be part of the project.

## School visits



### Nottingham castle

Wildcats have certainly made the most of their term with several school visits. Nottingham Castle was the first of these, which linked into our learning about the Middle Ages. We used Chris' expertise as someone who comes from Nottingham, and learnt many stories ahead of our visit. Children learnt how to be an outlaw, explored the caves and loved the virtual archery and adventure playground.

## Monkey Forest



The Monkey Forest was a perfect choice of place for a whole school visit, not too far to walk, animals to watch and great play equipment to enjoy. It was good fun to learn how these animals communicate too. For example, when they want to warn or threaten others they raise their eyebrows, purse their lips into an O shape and push their chin forward or when they don't want to give in during a conflict, they open their mouths wide and show their teeth. Some of us enjoyed imitating these gestures!

## Our Big Sleep and activity Days for Wildcats



Many parents were keen for their children to have an opportunity to stay away from home. This had been especially hard due to the pandemic and we shared the view that it is an incredibly important for children to be able to do this with friends. We put together a unique opportunity, having considered all the different children's needs, and provided a 3 day experience, where children could feel at home with us (to reduce anxieties) but spend time away from home and enjoying lots of activities with friends. Chris has written a special report about the 'big sleepover and activity days for Wildcats.'

As the end of June approached, the teachers were wondering what they'd done by inviting the Wildcats to stay over at school for three whole days! The children descended with sleeping bags and provisions for our first ever in-house residential, with trips out each day, and fun and sleepovers each night to mark the start of our busy end of year schedule.

On the first day, the rest of the school joined us for a trip to see the monkeys. We were all delighted to watch the antics of the Barbary Macaques of the Trentham Monkey Forest, and the children had the chance to swing and jump themselves in their fabulous outdoor play area. There was slight confusion at the end of the trip, when the teachers had to determine which monkeys were ours to take back, and which we had to leave at the forest, but a great day was had by all.

After a bit of a barbecue, games at the school, and some late-night, sneaky awakedness, the bleary-eyed Wildcats embarked on their second trip – their next destination: Tamworth! After a jaunt to the castle, we bounced away our cares at the Jump Xtreme Trampoline Park (the teachers even let the children join in too!), with a buffet feast thereafter. The day wasn't done yet, though, as we then headed over for mini-golf and bowling, some for the very first time. Back at school at last, the children finished the day with a dip in the paddling pool, sushi (at the request of some children) and a movie night, before a much more reasonable bedtime.

As the third and final day dawned, we all left for our final adventure, this time to the exotic climes of Markeaton Park. After a splash to cool down and a play in the play area, we headed over for an ice cream treat at McDonalds before the last activity of the trip. The children (and Chris) strapped in for some rock climbing at Clip n Climb, and spent the last of their waning (though still enthusiastic) energies on surmounting different walls and climbs. After a full-on, but fantastic residential, the children departed, with happy memories of their adventures, leaving behind more than a few memorable quotes, some of which we have detailed below.

*"Ooh, is this cake bespoke?" (We just love the fact that children even know this word!)*

*"My magnet doesn't mag!" (definitely needs to be a verb as it works so well)*

*"Bria, I need your car keys. Thor's locked himself in your boot!" (do we really need to build how to escape such situations into our curriculum?!!!!!)*

*"Josh, do you just go around feeling everyone's sandwiches?"*

*"My neighbour's cat died last year. He's still dead."*

*"I'm not sure if I'm 18, but I've just bought an apple cider lolly."*

*Child 1 (who had bought a souvenir toy from Tamworth castle and was playing in the park): "There are so many people to test my new axe on – Chris, you're going to be the last." Child 2 (as Chris starts to run and is being chase by child 1): "Chris don't embarrass us please."*

Our staff think it important to laugh out ourselves (and each other) and the children join in well with our many jokes and comments. Enjoying listening to their comments provides lots of fun for us all. So, we



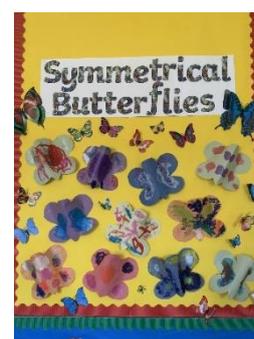
thought we would add the quotes into our newsletter to give our children in Wildcats a challenge – can they can remember or guess who might have said what during our 3 days?

Joking aside – the whole group were absolutely amazing and the staff really did enjoy it immensely! A lot of team building took place that week, and such a lot of firsts for the children, which they should be so proud of! Thank you to the parents for such support. A special mention to Danielle’s dad for the amazing cake and Czarek’s parents for the sushi and snacks.



## Squirrels and Rabbits

Squirrels have been extremely 'buuzzy' learning about bees and other Minibeasts. They have enjoyed hunting for bugs and using the science lab role play area to look closely and learn more about minibeasts and their habitats. This term has seen many new pets join the Squirrels room! There has been an Ant Farm, Wormery, Tadpoles and Caterpillars.



As a part of the Rabbit’s learning, we decided to set the children with the challenge of creating their own Dioramas based on a particular scenery and animals. It was thanks to all of the parents help that we were able to complete this with the boxes they had brought in for us. Rabbits started this off with jotting, down ideas and providing a final sketch of what they wanted

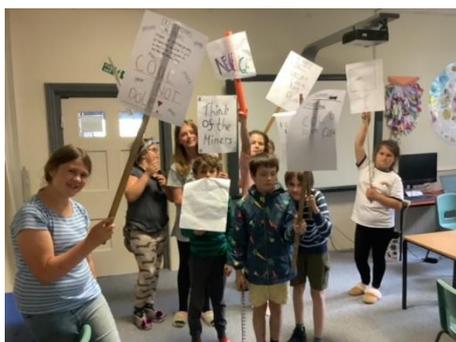
to create and achieve by the end of this topic. Once this was completed, their main focus was to replicate this design with the use of materials they had specified. These boxes were then converted into miniature models where the rabbits created a background and foreground scenery using different techniques to support this. This included painting with water colour, splash painting, junk modelling, creating shapes with pipe cleaners, paper cut outs of animals and modelling with clay to make their ideas come to life.

Here are some of the Diorama’s that the children have made, and we hope you can see their creative minds behind their scenes.



This term the whole school has been involved in improving the area at the top of the garden, with a view to making a sensory garden and edible garden, Ely has taken a lead in this with the rabbits.

## Witty Wildcats



Wildcats have spent June and July journeying through the decades of the Queen's reign. They learnt various moves, including the hand-jive and twist and explored technology such as walkmans and cassette players. They enjoyed learning about how computers and games consoles developed. We tried to explain to them that the 1980s wasn't ancient history, but we aren't sure we succeeded on that one! We were very proud of how much of our learning came from our questionnaire about growing up in specific decades, which around 40 people completed. (Thank you!!!!) The children created graphs, summarized information, and prepared and gave

presentations, which meant that everyone got a real sense of how it was to live in the different decades. A highlight was them compiling their own videos using WeVideo after interviewing all the staff and they chose Rick Astley's 'Never Gonna Give You Up' as the backing. Some of us used to like that song but maybe we need another few decades break after listening to it for several hours whilst the children were editing! Our question 'The 2<sup>nd</sup> Elizabethan Age: a good review?' had such a lot of potential. The children explored many key events such as the Great Smog of 1952, writing diaries about this. They made school puddings from the 1970s. Chris taught them about the miners strikes and they enjoyed recreating these. It was interesting to make some comparisons between the 1970s and today too.

## Reminders and requests

- Advance reminder about footwear for next term. Can all children please make sure that they have indoor shoes which fit in school. We ask children to come in their outdoor shoes and take them off before coming into our carpeted classrooms. As these need to be stored close by, outdoor shoes should not be wellies. (Wellies are kept in storage areas for outdoor learning. ) We would be grateful for special consideration on Wednesdays, those children who join us on that day. The footwear children come in should be suitable for PE, unless they bring additional footwear on this day. Coming in wellies and having indoor shoes as fluffy slippers poses somewhat of a challenge in how to do PE and even we aren't that creative, so considering the whole package of what children have on their feet is important. If indoor shoes are pumps, these are fine for PE. If the shoes children come in every day are trainers, these are also OK for PE. If they have neither, this poses a problem when it comes to PE. Thank you.

## Dame Catherine's Fundraising

**Art show summer 2022 Bank holiday weekend. Pre-view and reception Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> (evening) Show Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> and Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August.**

Thanks for those who are volunteering support with any element of the art show set up. We plan to do this from Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August pm to Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August pm. Bria will communicate regarding timings and jobs. It is a great way of getting to know other parents and staff and even if you can't give much time, there is always something to be done (painting boards, hanging paintings, sticking labels next to paintings, tidying up, even making cups of tea for people doing some of these jobs!) We also need adults to support the selling of paintings during the show itself. A couple of hours away from children hanging a few paintings might actually be a therapeutic and welcome treat for some parents by the end of August!!!

Any parent who wants to be added to the WhatsApp group so they know what is happening with this over the summer is asked to e-mail back the form to the office.

There will be some e-mail communication about the art show via flyers etc. nearer the time.

For those new to the school..... The Dame Catherine's Arts Show has been running for over 20 years and has been attended by artists and visitors across the country. We use the village hall and also a couple of rooms in school, which are transformed into art galleries. It has traditionally raised around £6,000- £8,000 for the school, which has supported the whole community by subsidising school fees.

Whilst times have been challenging over the past couple of years, we have been delighted to retain the art show and now have a virtual presence too. In an ever-changing world, generating new interest is important as is retaining artists who have submitted work over the years. Please get in touch with Bria or Lorna if you know of anyone who might be interested in submitting work, and we can pass on the information.

## Coming soon: dates for the summer and next term

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> August and Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August** : summer activity days **9.30am – 3.30pm**

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August – Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August**: art show set up.

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September**: school term starts for staff. NB staff have chosen to work this INSET day in advance of finishing for summer so the school office will be closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September**: **INSET DAY for all school staff**

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September**: **Autumn term starts for children.**

***We will be having a bear themed week the first week back as part of their transition work for children. Children are welcome to get their teddies ready for the new term!***

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Oct – Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October inclusive**: autumn half term holiday

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December**: children finish for Christmas

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2022 inclusive** : winter holiday