



SCGSG

Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls
DECEMBER 2024

CHRISTMAS HAS ARRIVED!

The annual concert, PA Fayre,
Chamber Choir & more...

ALSO IN THIS EDITION:

Pegasus raise money for Children in Need
Creative Careers Week 2024
Year 7 "Turning Points in History"



A message from the

Headteacher

Dr. Barbara Minards

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2024! It has been a long autumn term packed with lots of seasonal events including the Parents' Association Christmas Fayre, annual Christmas Concert and Christmas assemblies.

We have a lot to celebrate; Year 7 have completed their first term at Sutton Girls, Year 12 have made a positive start to Sixth Form, Year 11 and 13 successfully sat their mock examinations. All students have shown their love of learning, positivity and resilience in the way they have engaged in their lessons, tutor times and a variety of extra-curricular activities. These include inter-house maths competitions, music and drama rehearsals, trips to the theatre and netball fixtures to name just a few.

The Sixth Form open evening on 21st November was very well attended by current Year 11 students and their families along with prospective students from a variety of other schools. It was great to see so many of our Year 12s and 13s helping in departments and sharing their experiences of the 20 different A-level subjects, our inspirational environment and our supportive, caring and thriving community. We also provided information about the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), super-curricular activities, careers guidance, application advice and leadership opportunities that are all part of the sixth form experience here at Sutton Girls.

Pegasus held their house charity day in aid of Children in Need on 15th November. The student-run stalls and games in the sports hall

at lunchtime were very popular as was the spelling bee competition with students in Years 7 to 12 and staff as participants. It is fantastic that our current students continue the School's long-standing tradition of fund-raising for a range of charitable causes and live up to our motto '*Not for our own advantage, but for the common good.*'

On 27th November we welcomed back last year's Year 11s for a presentation evening to celebrate their successes. Students and their families were invited to collect their GCSE certificates, enjoy some tasty refreshments and catch up with friends. Hearing students sharing their positive memories of Years 7 to 11 and discussing their start to the next stage of their educational journey was very rewarding.

Yesterday we hosted a celebration evening for the Year 13 class of 2024. It was great to welcome back our most recent alumni to recognise their many achievements. We were delighted to be joined by former student Masooma who presented the A-level certificates and subject awards and shared

her experiences of completing a degree in Medicine and becoming a doctor, currently working in a very busy E.R. Department. Her advice on overcoming challenges, seeing setbacks as 're-directions' and strategies for maintaining your wellbeing were inspiring. It was great to hear how much her time at Sutton Girls meant to her and that the friendships made during her school days are continuing.

We enjoy hearing from our Alumni in all years and invite you to share your stories and career journeys with our current students and staff. Please do get in touch with us via [Future First](#) and [LinkedIn](#), we look forward to finding out what you have been up to since leaving Sutton Girls.

Please enjoy reading this edition of our newsletter which is filled with some of the varied activities that have been happening at Sutton Girls this half term.

Have a lovely Christmas holiday and best wishes for a happy and healthy 2025!

Dr Minards





Annual Parents' Association Christmas Fayre spreads cheer!

by Mr S. Hall
Marketing Assistant

The festive season officially kicked off on Friday 6th December as our Parents' Association Christmas Fayre took place in the Hub!

This year's packed-out event was spread across the dining hall and hub spaces, featuring stalls by each of our Year 7 form groups, World Challenge students raising money for their expedition to Borneo in 2025, and small businesses from the local community.

Featuring a variety of games, handmade gifts and treats, our Year 7 students put on their entrepreneurial hats to create stalls as individual as they were! Some of our World Challenge students also got creative with their fundraising efforts, with Taylor Swift-inspired friendship bracelets, handmade cards, and a creative "Blind date with a book" which saw mystery titles wrapped up with only a small description of the genre on a gift tag!

Our Gospel Choir once again

featured prominently throughout the evening, performing classic Christmas carols and some unique pieces brought together by SFE Music Services specialist, JJ, and Mr Collet.

We would like to thank everyone who attended and donated so kindly during the course of the evening, you helped to make everything that little bit more festive!





Chamber Choir perform for the Christmas lights switch-on at Good Hope Hospital

by Orla in Year 8

The Christmas light switch-on at Good Hope Hospital on December 3rd was an exciting event for Sutton Girls' Chamber choir. It was filled with festive joy as we all counted down to watch the beautiful lights that decorated the tree. Whilst we

sang, nurses and doctors gathered round to witness the magic, they even joined in with some of the singing!

After an eventful arrival, we managed to get there in the nick of time and with seconds to spare, we began singing. The singing was broken into pieces by

heartwarming speeches all about the true meaning of Christmas.

Overall, it was an uplifting experience in which we all returned to school with broad smiles on our faces and a festive spirit, so thank you so much to Ms. Stamoulis for giving us this amazing opportunity!

CBSO Youth Chorus at Symphony Hall

by Emme in Year 10

I was fortunate enough to join CBSO Youth Chorus after another student (Aimee, Year 11) mentioned it to me. Aimee and I already participated in a taster concert in October, but the music makers' concert on November 20th was my first experience in Symphony Hall with CBSO (Aimee has been doing this for several years).

The preparation for the concert was very thorough. The choir leader (Julian Wilkins) is a truly special coach. He held us all to a high standard in a way that I felt very inspired by his expectations of us. Prior to the concert we also had the opportunity of rehearsing with our conductor, Sofi Jeannin so that we were ready for her conducting style. I was really excited ahead of the performance to be in such a prestigious place with such talented people. All

the pieces in the concert were music created for young people. Together with the children's chorus we performed eight pieces - The UK premiere of Nico Muhly's 'Friday Afternoons'. I particularly loved singing 'Warm Summer Sun' as the dissonant harmonies create such a beautiful, moving sound.

It was nice to read the lovely reviews we had as we did not have the opportunity to look

at the audience's response. We were focused on Sofi Jeannin's guidance, because it was imperative to watch her keeping time and giving us cues (we knew there would be a delay in sound due to the size of the stage).

When the choir's performance was over, I was elated because I felt it had gone so well, and I was so grateful to have such an unforgettable experience to look back on.



Commemorating Remembrance Day with the school Respect Leaders

by Anutofunmi in Year 8

Every year in November, we remember the special day that officially ended World War 1. On this day, we celebrate and commemorate the lives of soldiers and those who gave their lives in the war for our freedom. To remember this day, we wear a symbol - the poppy - which grew on the graves of soldiers. This day, on the 11th of November, we celebrate Remembrance Day.

In the school, during the preparation for Remembrance Day, the Respect Leaders of all year groups came together to create a Ceramic Poppy Wreath. Our inspiration for this was from



the planting of 888,246 ceramic poppies in the moat of the Tower of London in 2014, representing soldiers who fell in the war. In

the span of 3 weeks and with the help of Mrs Parkes and some Sixth Formers, we created our own version of this in the model of a wreath.

To make the wreath, we used air-dry clay and the slip and score method, shaping and forming the clay into the shape of a poppy. We then added details onto the poppies and let them dry. Finally, we painted and applied further decorations on the poppies.

This has been so far, a major highlight of our duties as Respect Leaders and we are very grateful for this fun and enjoyable experience that we have been given and share high pride in our work.





SCGSG Christmas Concert

Once again, our annual Christmas Concert was a wonderful showcase of our students' talents, sprinkled with festive cheer!





Thank you to our excellent Music teachers, Mr Collet and Ms Stamoulis, our peripatetic teachers from Services for Education, our students and their families. Merry Christmas!

A message from the SCGSG Charity



The remit of the SCGSG Charity is to advance the education of young people by providing benefits for students of the School. This term we have supported sporting fixtures by funding transport for the school cross-country team.



We have also made the decision to use £30,000 of your donations to enable the School to replace the hall floor which was in poor condition and further damaged during the recent heating repair work.

Supporting the School in this way is at the heart of our objective at the Charity. The school hall is central to Sutton Girls; it is used daily and is the home of countless assemblies, drama and PE lessons, charity events, achievement celebrations and numerous amazing musical performances.

It connects our current students with those who have gone before them with Headmistresses and Head Girls listed from 1929 to the Headteacher and Senior Student Ambassadors of the present day. Many generations of Sutton Girls hold fond memories of key events and celebrations held there.

The existing floor is over 40 years old and the School would like to replace the damaged 1980s tiles with a modern equivalent of the original parquet floor.

Your donations have made this possible.

To help mark this achievement we will be reaching out to Alumni to gather memories of the school hall ready for a special exhibition to mark the completion of the works.

Thank you do our donors, every penny received helps to make a big difference to life in the School.



If you would like to donate on a regular basis to the work of the School Charity, please [follow this link](#).

Thank you for your support. We would like to wish everyone in the Sutton Girls' community a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Jane Petit
Chair of the Charity

Old Girl - 1969 to 1976

Barbara Minards
Headteacher

Charity Trustee

Creative Careers Week

18th - 22nd November

by Mr S. Hall
Marketing Assistant

It has been a real privilege to have been joined by three fantastic individuals as part of our Creative Careers Week celebrations, who shared their career journeys with our students.

On Monday, our A-Level art students greeted Professor Jennifer Powell, for a chat about her career pathway. From History/History of Art student, through an array of curation roles at great organisations like Kettle's Yard in Cambridge, The Royal Academy and Tate Britain in London, to the full-circle moment of being

appointed Director of the Barber Institute, where she studied her BA.

Francis Faux, composer and freelance musician, was our second speaker. Francis spoke to some of our GCSE and A-Level music students about his upbringing, being surrounded by musicians in his family, the growth of his freelance career, and some key tips for their coursework.

Our final guest, quite literally, was Sutton Girls' alumna Lucy Guest, a social media and digital marketing

extraordinaire. Lucy's Tuesday afternoon session started with an introduction to the various roles under the social media umbrella, such as content creation, data analytics, and community management. Lucy then set our students the task of planning a campaign for the (fictional) Sutton Girls University using the ideas and examples of best practice they had discussed beforehand!

We are so grateful for Jennifer, Francis and Lucy's time this week. Their passion has really fired everyone up!



Student thoughts...

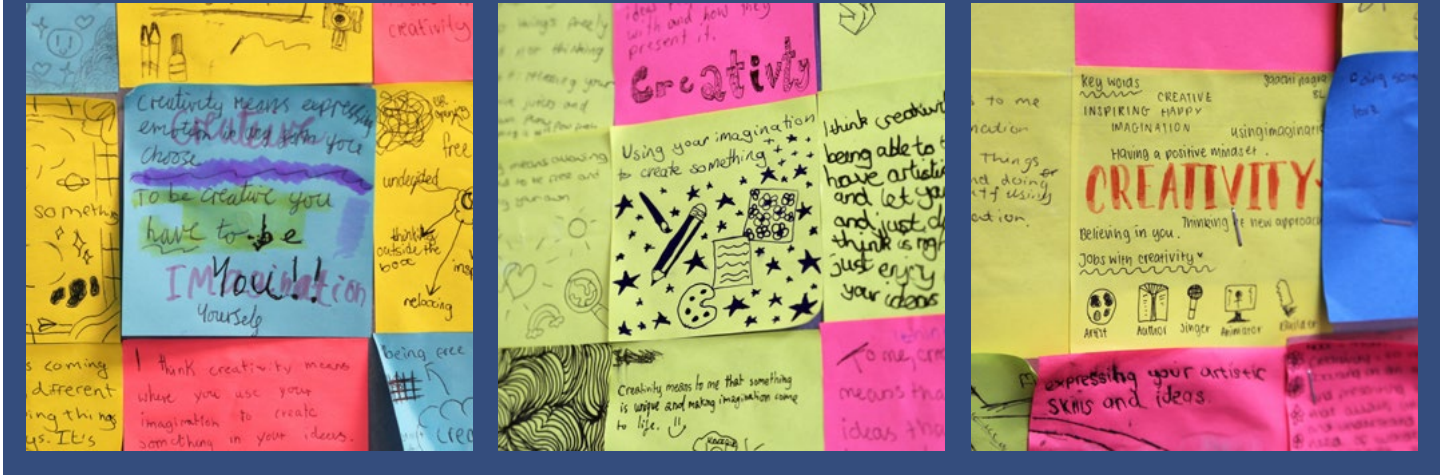
I really enjoyed listening to her career, especially because it's so different and yet so similar to how I imagined my own career being. I have always been more attracted to a science-based career, despite loving creative subjects, but I want to work in a group to expand on the knowledge of previous generations, like Dr Powell. It was wonderful to see this from the perspective of someone who does something so different from what I aim to do and yet relating deeply on our personal goals. I loved hearing about the journey of her career and all the different teams she has been a part of. I aspire to have as interesting of a career as she has!



It was an eye-opening experience which introduced me to ideas I'd not yet thought about. Lucy's commitment to educating us on her professional sector was really engaging. It was a lovely experience, and it was nice getting to know new people in my group.

What does “creativity” mean to you?

We began Creative Careers Week by asking our students what creativity means to them and writing/drawing/musing on a post-it note, which culminated in a huge mural of ideas and thoughts!



Maths Week Inter-house Challenge

by Zara in Year 7

Hello, my name is Zara and I, along with my classmates Vicky, Ava and Charlotte represented Year 7 Cygnus house in a the interhouse maths competition. This competition was part of Maths Week England 2024 and teams from all houses in each of Years 7 – 9 took part.

In this competition, four participants per house in each year group attended and were split into two pairs, pair A and pair B.

For the first round, the Shuttle round, pair A started with a question and tried their best to answer it (and it was important to do so as pair B needed this to be right to answer their problem!). Once pair A got an answer their allocated Sixth Former checked it (we did get two more chances to get it right, if wrong although scored fewer points). Once we then had this answer, we ran over and gave it to pair B and the system repeated. This competition was so fun and exciting!



Round two was similar but was a relay round in which we had to answer as many questions in our alternating pairs as we could ... but less pressure as we did not need to get our question correct to feed in to the next question.

The competition was so much fun and a great chance to represent my house. Thank you to Mrs Appleton for arranging it – we'd love to do it again soon!



A Day in the Life

For our Christmas edition, Year 10 student Holly shares with us a day in her school life, but with a festive twist...

I am now in my fourth year at Sutton Girls, gearing up for GCSEs, and can't believe how fast it's flown by. For the past 3 years I have taken part in the PA's Christmas Fayre and thought an insight into this busy day would be of interest!

I follow my normal morning routine; at first, getting up, dressed and ready for school. But today I also had to bring in all the crocheted toys I've been making over the last six months. This will be my third year of selling these toys to raise money on behalf of the Parents' Association to benefit the school.

First thing we have form time with Mrs Harradence, where we had Personal Development that day. After attending my first lessons, and break, it was lunchtime. On Fridays, I go to karaoke club with a friend, led by Mrs Toft. This week we were singing Christmas songs – and we sang Underneath the Tree by Kelly Clarkson which was great fun.



After the final two periods of Maths and English, I went into Sutton with two friends who were going to help me on the stall to get some food. Upon returning, we set up the stall's table whilst a large queue began to form – very exciting.

Once it reached 5pm, the fayre opened, and people could buy the toys. We did very brisk trade and sold out in under 10 minutes, raising about £270 for the school. I am very proud of myself for that.



We're always looking for students to share a day in their life. Are you interested in writing for the school newsletter? Email [Mr Hall](mailto:Mr_Hall) for more information.

Students share in Diwali celebrations

by Theiya in Year 7

This year Diwali happened on 31st/1st of November, depending on your culture, following a period of five days of multiple celebrations and prayers.

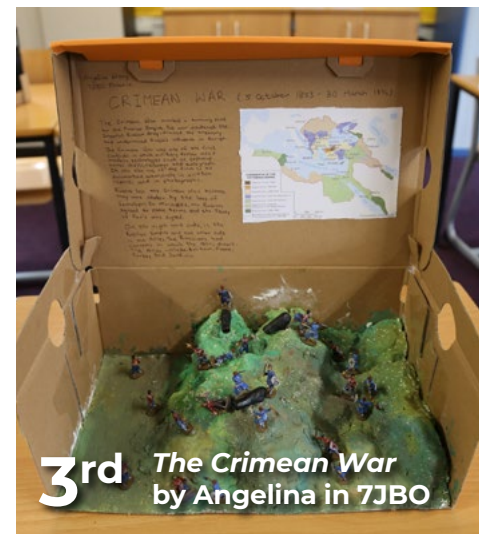
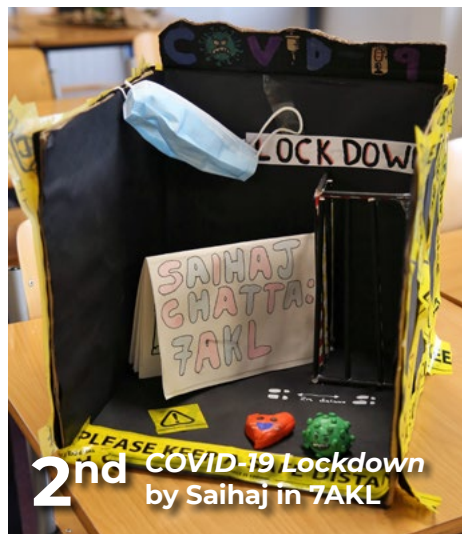
Our sixth form Respect Prefects decided to raise awareness of the celebration for the school community by putting on a special dance performance during lunchtime on Wednesday 6th November as well as crafting stations where students could



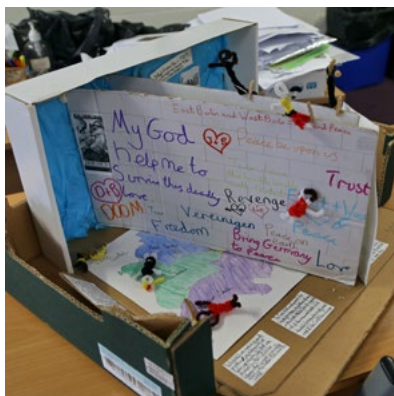
create their own colourful Rangoli, diya patterns and delicious snacks, plus some informative

displays on what Diwali means to Hindus, Sikhs and Jains!

Year 7 create amazing entries for “Turning Points in History” competition



Highly Commended entries:



Berlin Wall by Bella in 7AKL and Camille in 7MDC, **Elizabeth II** by Thejani in 7SBA, **Moon Landing** by Iyla in 7JBO, and **World War Two** by Ava in 7SBA.

Birmingham Schools Climate Conference



by Imme in Year 12

On the 21st November, me and a group made up of Year 9 - 12 had the amazing opportunity to go to the Birmingham Climate Conference in the Birmingham Council Chambers where we modelled the COP 26 talks running concurrently.

This year, COP 26 took place in Azerbaijan and focused on financing the green transition, particularly highlighting dividing wealth equally between the more and less developed nations, the latter being the group of countries who are suffering the brunt of the impacts.

After a multi-round selection process in which we responded to the prompt 'Are we doing enough to halt the climate crisis?' we were divided into two teams and were each assigned a country to represent. I was leading the delegation for Barbados and Georgina led the delegation for

Australia (two countries with wildly divergent climate policies!). Luckily, we were provided with lots of documentation from the organisers and set about preparing an opening statement to present ourselves to the other schools and gathering information for the debates.

Two intense research sessions later we were off! It was a bitterly cold day but thankfully the Council Chambers were warm and we were all taken aback by just how beautiful the interior was - it felt very formal to be sat in tiered seating with our own personal built in microphones! In the morning we debated with the other schools about the importance of climate financing and the potential sources for this money in the official format followed by real COP delegations. For me, this highlighted the setbacks of high-level climate diplomacy as well as being a fascinating experience in the

realities of geopolitical dialogue.

In the afternoon, we met with different local groups who work to reduce the carbon footprint of Birmingham schools and heard their perspectives on how we could work together to increase the sustainability of the education sector - this included ideas such as installing solar panels and increasing awareness of food waste. We were also incredibly lucky in that we had the chance to question a counsellor on BCC's climate policies which informed us on upcoming changes regarding waste bins and idling cars around schools.

Overall, it was an eye-opening experience which I would gladly repeat. It's an incredibly valuable experience to have this available to us, especially as we go to school in the city in the UK with the 2nd worst air pollution, a factor which contributes to global warming.

Pegasus raise over £1,800 for BBC Children in Need!

by Aditi in Year 7

Pegasus House's Children in Need Charity Day was a tremendous success. Students and teachers came together to support a wonderful cause, participating in a variety of fun and engaging activities. From exciting games to creative challenges, every moment was designed to bring our school community closer and make a positive impact on the lives of children in need.

One of the delightful highlights of the Pegasus Charity Day was the nearly sold-out Pick 'n' Mix stall, expertly run by a few enthusiastic Year 7 students. Their infectious energy (and amazing selection of sweets) made the stall a success, attracting many students. The sweet treats not only brought a smile to people, but also contributed to the charity funds, showcasing the impressive initiative of our youngest house members! Well done!

The homemade bracelet stall, lovingly crafted by the students, was a standout attraction at the Charity Day. These creative young



crafters put their heart and soul into designing a variety of unique and colourful bracelets. Each bracelet not only added a touch of charm to the event but also raised a lot of money.

The bake sale at the Charity Day was a delectable delight, featuring an array of mouth-watering treats baked by students, teachers and parents. The bake sale not only satisfied everyone's sweet tooth but also significantly contributed to the fundraising.

The Pegasus House Spelling



Bee was a fantastic event of the Children in Need Charity Day, where both teachers and students displayed impressive spelling skills. The House Captains organised the competition, which encouraged a spirit of friendly rivalry and collaboration. This light-hearted competition allowed everyone to see their teachers in a new light, as not only educators but also fierce competitors. All the years competed, from Year 7 to Year 12! The enthusiasm and laughter filled the room, creating a memorable and uplifting atmosphere. Participants, whether they triumphed or stumbled on tricky words, walked away with a sense of achievement!

There were much more activities, like cup pong and a drink stand to enjoy, so I hope you all enjoyed the event! As a proud member of Pegasus, I can tell you the hard work that had been put to make this day possible. Let's thank all the members of Pegasus that contributed. Most of all, let's thank the Head of House, Mrs Alderson, and our house captains.



Irish Open Diving Championships

by Sophie in Year 7

Over 3 days in November, I competed in the 2024 Irish Open Diving Championships in Dublin as part of Sandwell Diving Club. I placed 2nd on the 3-metre springboard and 4th on the 1-metre springboard, as well as placing 8th on the 5-metre platform (which was my first time ever competing at 5-metres!).

The challenge of competing is that the competitions can be a bit stressful, but you can always try and look on the bright side. If you're happy and having fun, that is all that matters!

I always try and do my best, but it is still important I enjoy what I do and I try not to stress or get anxious about my results.



Sutton Girls' U14s Netball team

by Miss E. Hewitt
PE Department

The U14's played phenomenally well in their tournament this half term, jointly winning the overall tournament. Against some tough competition, they fought hard in every match, seeing them lose only 1 game!



The camaraderie was fantastic, not only on display by the homemade team bows, worn proudly in their hair, but all-round sportsmanship. Their success sees them qualify for the regional schools' stage of the competition in January. Well done to Lauren, Serina, Hollie-Mai, Evaleen, Jess, Keirah, Martha, Esmie, Anna (Year 8) and Yvette!

You can look forward to our next newsletter at the end of the Spring 1 term in February. In the meantime, keep up to date by following us on:

[facebook.com/suttcold](https://www.facebook.com/suttcold) or twitter.com/suttcold



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