

ncw news

Summer 2023



Royal International Air Tattoo

In July, students and staff set off for an adventure and visited the Royal International Air Tattoo. The weather was not on our side but a great day was had by all and memories made!

The RAF Team greeting guests on arrival was fantastic. They opened up a bag check area just for NCW and talked students through the safety checks. Once inside the show, students were free to explore the areas they wanted to with their guides. The noise from the planes flying was incredible and there was a definite excitement in the air!

The group were really lucky to be able to tour the Hercules that carried the Queen's coffin from Scotland back to England - the rain was pouring and the group took shelter under the wing of the plane. There were lots of photographers waiting for a VIP guest and students started guessing who the VIP might be... the King? Tom Cruise?

Or maybe a famous footballer? They all guessed incorrectly and the Prince and Princess of Wales and their children hopped out of a car and were greeted by RAF staff. Having waited their turn, students and staff explored the Hercules and enjoyed a private tour. Students sat in the front cockpit and imagined flying such an enormous machine!

It's no secret that NCW Student Len LOVES planes and has a huge knowledge of all things aviation. Despite the rain, Len said he had 'the best day ever' and was really happy to have experienced it all. He came away with some model planes that he had bought and showed them to his friends on the coach home. You can check out Len's recording of a Fighting Falcon on the NCW website.



A week of **Turntablism**

We feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity for Bradley Smith to spend a week here at NCW delivering turntablism and scratch DJ workshops. It was a truly refreshing week – inspiring and exciting.

Every single key stage 3 student had an hour-long workshop, along with our year 6 transition students who were coming to NCW for the first time. All of our music GCSE, A-level, BTEC level 3 Performing and BTEC level 3 Music Technology students also had at least one workshop with Bradley. It felt very special that this series of workshops has been specifically developed for blind and VI students.

Two Zoom calls with Nev (a VI musician living in the States) added something particularly unique to the week. Both lower and upper school students had the opportunity to ask questions after hearing a little about Nev along with a fabulous demo of his work. This was an opportunity for our students to engage in reflection on what it means to be a VI musician, as well as to ask questions about practicalities and accessibility.

Bradley was wonderful to have in school and leaves us with a legacy of expertise, resources,

equipment and excitement so that this project will continue within the key stage 3 music curriculum next year.

“I really liked the zoom call and to meet a musician with visual impairment and find out how they overcame all the barriers they met. I found it really inspirational and helpful” – Natalie

“I thought the session with Bradley Smith was particularly useful and interesting because of the niche aspect of this – it is awesome we have this equipment in school now” – Dan

“I’m delighted to have met so many glowing personalities who have all not only engaged in the sessions excellently but who have also demonstrated genuine care, support and encouragement of their peers. Regarding your music students, they’ve inspired me with their levels of musicality, love for the subject and especially the expert manner in which they are able to navigate their music production software in the production studio. I’ve been utterly blown away by the talent they possess.”

Bradley Smith



2022 Head Students pass the ‘baton’ on to the next Head Students for 2023

New Head Students for 2023 have been elected by students and staff. After a week of marvellous manifestos and many discussions, Amy and Lydia were successful and announced as 2023 Head Students.

The 2022 Head Students Luke and Ilya, have worked very hard this year. They have been to numerous events representing the college (including the May Court Dinner in London with the Worshipful Company of Lightmongers), delivered countless speeches and been fantastic role models for their peers and the younger students.

Luke is going on to university to study Sports Therapy and Ilya is also off to university to study Politics and International Relations. We wish them all the success in their life beyond NCW and look forward to hearing all the amazing things they get up to.

Amy and Lydia are eager to get started in their new roles.

Lydia said, “I am so excited to be given this position within NCW! I feel that I have grown so much as a person since starting here, and am looking forward to building and improving, even if in only small ways, a place that has taught me

a lot. During my time as head student, I would, most of all, love to begin connections with other mainstream establishments, in the hope that we can gain information and experience from them, as we give them the same in return. I am so grateful to the students and staff of NCW for giving me this opportunity; I do not plan to let it go to waste!”

Amy said, “I am really excited to be Head Student next year. I am passionate about NCW because there are many positives of this college. There are also many things I would like to improve as stated in my action campaign strategy. I am really looking forward to working with the staff and students and for them to contribute their ideas.”



Welcome **Steve Farr**



Principal of NCW. The appointment is to strengthen the Leadership Team and to oversee the operational running of the College.

For the last nine years Steve has been an Assistant Head at a mainstream school in South Gloucestershire and has over 20 years of teaching experience.

Steve will start at NCW in September and will bring an enthusiasm and eagerness to deliver the highest standard of education.

A keen and passionate historian he will also be teaching History and hopes to pass on his love

of history to the students. He is also an avid cricket player and is already looking forward to next year's staff vs students cricket match and our yearly visit from Marylebone Cricket Club!

“I am very honoured to be appointed as the Vice Principal for NCW. I am looking forward to working with staff and students and to continue the amazing standards that NCW achieves. I was kindly invited to Celebration Day and was blown away by the talent and positivity within the NCW community. NCW is special and I can't wait to be part it.”

Steve Farr

We are delighted to announce that we have appointed Steve Farr as the new Vice

Summer Camps and Residential

Years 7 and 8 had an action packed week filled with exciting activities and adventures! From paddle boarding, bushcraft skills to bowling – they did it all!

The week started with problem-solving activities at Lakeside Top Barn where they had to work as a team and using only ropes, safely rescue a ‘bomb.’ The next problem-solving activity required good communication skills and teamwork where students had to roll up a ground sheet, whilst standing on it and not stepping off! Sounds simple but it was very hard! Next, they put on wetsuits and took to the water and enjoyed paddle boarding in the sun. A quick picnic was followed by indoor climbing at a local climbing centre and after dinner a walk across the Malvern Hills.

On Tuesday the group canoed five miles downriver from Fladbury to Pershore. Everyone

loved being on the river, most kept dry and the weather was kind. In the evening everyone made the famous NCW pizzas and then went off bowling.

On Wednesday everyone climbed in the minibus and set off to the Forest of Dean to explore the Sculpture Walk, and the Amazing Maze with the evening finishing off with a traditional bonfire and BBQ and sausages, burgers and s’mores. Roasting marshmallows was a particular favourite! On the final day, Students learned bushcraft skills, making their own shelters and enjoying a day in the wild!





For Year 9s, speedboats, jetty jumping, rock climbing, waterfalls and canoeing were just a few of the activities conquered on their 4-day residential trip to The Outward-Bound Trust Centre in Aberdovey.

It was a trip they will never forget. The four days were packed full of exciting activities that the students embraced and thoroughly enjoyed.

Roman most liked exploring the local forest with rivers and waterfalls. His favourite part was building a camp fire and making delicious hot

chocolate from river water! He also loved the cooked breakfasts in the morning. George loved driving the speedboat very fast! All students had a go at driving and George especially loved jumping off the speed boat and swimming to shore.

Zander loved 'EVERYTHING about the camp' and was thrilled that he got to jump off the jetty!

Thank you to everyone at The Outward Bound Trust we look forward to returning soon!

NCW welcomes **Marylebone Cricket Club**

We were delighted to once again host the world-famous Marylebone Cricket Club at NCW. Students and players enjoyed a friendly match and students were given the opportunity to promote and raise awareness of VI cricket.

This yearly event is always greatly anticipated and one that students and staff look forward to. The sun was shining, the temperature perfect and only a few clouds in the sky. MCC donned a variety of Sim Specs and the long awaited match started. At the end of a great morning, MCC won the match and kept their winning title from last year!

Players and students then enjoyed some high tea and talk about their experience of VI sport and cricket. For some

players, this was their 3rd or 4th time visiting NCW and a date in their diary that they always look forward to. For others, this was their first introduction to VI cricket and they were amazed at the level of skill our students demonstrated.

The MCC then travelled to the Worcestershire Elizabethans VI Cricket Club for a further match in the afternoon. NCW students Louisa, Stan, Luke and Thomas all played for the Elizabethans and we were delighted to find out they won!

For Year 11 student Louisa, this was her first year taking part in the event. It is no secret that Louisa LOVES cricket and Louisa was super excited to be part of the day.

"Cricket is one of my favourite sports. It's great fun and I really

enjoy the social element as well as the opportunity to meet new people.

Meeting the players was amazing and it was fascinating to hear about their sporting career and how they became MCC players. I like promoting VI cricket and I am passionate about getting more people involved. It's such a fun sport!"

Louisa impressed the players so much, she was presented with the 'Chance to Shine' cap! Well done Louisa!



The Yoto Carnegies literary awards 2023



Earlier in the term, NCW students attended the prestigious Carnegie Awards Ceremony at the Barbican Centre in London. Mrs Holmes, our NCW Librarian, wrote all about it.

The Carnegie Medal is awarded every year for the best book written for children and young people. It's really prestigious and one which every author for young people wants to win!

There were awards for both illustration and writing, one each from 'pupil shadowers' and librarian judges. Travelling by train was a great opportunity to practise mobility skills, utilise the Rail Assist service and travel on the new Elizabeth line.

The guest speaker was former winner and author of the Charlie and Lola series of books, Lauren Child. Time to find out the winners! The 2023 Yoto Carnegie Medal for Illustration was awarded to Saving Sorya: 'Chang and the Sun Bear' illustrated by Jeet Zdung! This illustrator had recorded his acceptance speech from his home in Vietnam. He talked about his childhood love of cartoons and nature. The shadowers' award went to 'The Comet' by Joe Todd-Stanton who seemed genuinely overwhelmed that he had the approval of the children who read his book. The 2023 Yoto Carnegie Shadowers' Choice Medal for Writing went to 'I Must Betray You' by Ruta Sepetys, a book about Cristian who struggles under the surveillance and oppression of Ceausescu's Romania. The 2023 Yoto Carnegie Medal for Writing was won by 'The Blue Book of Nebo' by Manon Steffan Ros, a translation from the original Welsh. Manon Steffan Ros peppered her acceptance speech with Welsh words, mostly diolch meaning thank you!

After the ceremony the organisers had arranged for our group to have a photo with the two writing medal winners. What great day we had and what a marvellous opportunity for our students.

Digging with Dove!

Green-fingered NCW student Lawson, has not only created the most marvellous allotment within the grounds of the college, but has also launched a weekly gardening podcast!

From top tips for how to deal with pests, to when the best time to water your vegetables is... you can listen to all episodes on via the NCW website.



Trip to Avoncroft Museum



Recently the English department took a group of students to visit the Avoncroft Museum of Historical Buildings. The group had a great day soaking up the history of the site and appreciating the different buildings. Head of English, Mr Hinds, wrote the following:

"After surveying the ground, Snowball declared that this was just the place for a windmill, which could be made to operate a dynamo and supply the farm with electrical power [to] light the stalls and warm them in winter . . . [The animals] listened in astonishment while Snowball conjured up pictures of fantastic machines which would do their work for them while they grazed at their ease in the fields or improved their minds with reading and conversation."

This is a quote from the novel 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell. In it the windmill is a symbol of all things good that will come to

the animals when their revolution is complete. And it was with the windmill in mind that the English department took year 11 to the Avoncroft Museum of Historical Buildings to experience a real windmill.

Our guide, Pete, took us on a tour of the site. First up we visited the 'mail-order' chapel which originally stood in a place called Brinksty. This was basically a construction kit made of wood and corrugated iron. Next up was the threshing barn and grain storage – key processes on our journey to the windmill.

In the barn we learnt about why the doors were of different sizes, how the wattles (walls) were made, and the process of threshing. In the grain storage we saw how the pillars had been designed to stop the rats and to stop the animals hurting themselves by being made of special round bricks. We were then off to the windmill. We were able to examine the mechanisms,

see the grinding stones, have a go at pulling a grain sack up and see how the coarseness of the flour was regulated. The windmill is almost totally made of wood with different woods being used for different purposes according to their properties.

Finally, we went to the brick sheds where we had a go at making our own wattle and daub walls using clay (the original ingredients of daub included horse manure!) and we made our very own bricks and left them to dry out in the sun.

The students got a real insight into the farming methods explored in the novel and also had a great day out. An added bonus was that a year 11 class preparing for their Functional Skills exam helped organise the entire trip. They wrote emails, rang the museum, organised the packed lunches, ensured we had a driver... they were magnificent. A big thank to the staff at the museum for making us so welcome.

'Booming Voices'

Poetry Slam success

This term Year 8 have enjoyed putting their creative skills to the test and have delved into the amazing world of poetry. Each week they have been lucky enough to have a visit from Aaron – a slam poetry champion from Worcester Theatres. Aaron has helped the group get their creative juices flowing and create amazing poetry and spoken word.

In June, Year 8 took part in 'Booming Voices' at The Swan Theatre Worcester. There was a mix of primary and secondary schools. The morning consisted of workshops followed by a

'Poetry Slam' in the afternoon. All students took to the stage and performed poems written by themselves with the theme of 'being in an unfamiliar place.' Julie Fisher (NCW English teacher) was extremely proud and over the moon with how confident our students performed.

The highlight of the day was the reveal of the winner of the poetry slam...NCW student Natalie!

Natalie says, 'When I found out the theme was about being in an unfamiliar place, I wanted to write a poem about a pet that was sent to a shelter. I chose the idea of a



pet because it was a little bit different but also still relatable'

Well done to everyone that took part and special thanks to Mrs Fisher and Aaron for inspiring students to embrace the spoken word. You can listen to Natalie performing her poem on the NCW website.

Refurbished classrooms



We are thrilled that thanks to the Vinchel Foundation, two classrooms have been refurbished this term. The RE room and one of the English rooms have had a fabulous transformation.

Students and staff are enjoying learning and teaching in spaces that have been designed around accessibility and vision impairment needs.

The Vinchel Foundation supports people who are blind or vision impaired in the UK and internationally, along with their families and carers. The Foundation has a focus on education of blind and vision impaired young people and on the advancement of scientific knowledge of causes and treatments for vision impairment.

The classrooms now have features such as controlled lighting, interactive TV screens, new desks with power points and blackout blinds to name a few. The rooms feel fresh, modern and

an accessible space where great learning can happen.

We asked Year 9 what they thought of the rooms and it was a resounding "amazing, brilliant and much improved." Year 9 also liked the horse shoe layout of the room and enjoyed making use of the centre area as a stage to re-enact scenes from their favourite books!

Special thanks once again to the Vinchel Foundation for supporting NCW and making it the refurbishment possible. The rooms will now be known as 'The Vinchel Suite' to mark their kind generosity.





Transition Talk

Recently, NCW students visited University of Worcester to talk about the transition into higher education.

The day, organised by the University's Disability and Dyslexia Service included a mini lecture about the Disabled Students Allowance grant and the process of applying

for it. There was also a talk from the University's Library Services about the support it can offer and how students can get access to resources, books or journals in a way that suits their learning. There were also talks on the benefits of going to university, how to go about choosing a university and on some of the questions to consider before going. The

students also had a tour around some of the accommodation on campus.

Mentors from Look UK, a charity that supports visually impaired young people, also attended and gave a talk about their experiences of going to university.

Catherine Williams, Disability Adviser at the University of Worcester, said: "Visually impaired students have so many extra considerations when going off to university, so it is really important they do all the right planning and that they understand how to arrange support in good time."

Rachael McGirr, Psychology and Health & Social Care teacher, said: "It was an amazing opportunity for students to gain information on the transition to university as VI young people. Students found the day informative and engaging, allowing them to feel more at ease about accessing the available support to them if they progress to higher education."

Super Cars from 'Fast X' movie!



Recently Sixth Form student Thomas took a trip to Birmingham New Street with his NCW Mobility Officer to do some orientation around the station and to meet with Rail Assistance. Whilst there Thomas was lucky enough to experience some cars on display that were being featured in the new 'Fast X' movie!

As a huge fan of supercars, Thomas thoroughly enjoyed

being able to sit in the cars and have his photo taken!

Thomas also took part in a game where he was given a board with sentences from the film. He had to memorise them, the board was taken away and Thomas had to say the sentences out loud. He did really well and was given branded hand towel as a prize.

Well done Thomas! We hope you get to see the movie too!



Leavers' Prom

What a night! Students and staff gathered for a wonderful evening at this years' Leavers' Prom. In an exciting new venue and with a festival vibe, students arrived looking fabulous to enjoy a sumptuous sit-down meal, the legendary NCW LAFTA Awards and music and dancing into the night. Stevie and Louise were crowned as the Prom King and Queen and photos were taken against the sparkly backdrop, around that dancefloor or outside in the courtyard where folk gathered to get some fresh air around the fire pit.

It was a wonderful evening, enjoyed by all – thank you to Churchfields Farm for hosting us!



Celebration Day

Students and staff were joined by families and special guests in July as our whole community gathered for Celebration Day. A full day of music and prize-giving, the event is a chance to say goodbye to our

leavers, appreciate the musical talents of students and to congratulate those who have won awards for their effort and achievement over the previous 12 months.



NCW parents and carers.



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Good Luck Leavers!

Everyone gave a sigh of relief when exams were finally over!

A huge well done to all our students that have worked

so hard for their exams and taken it all in their stride.

Special thanks to the teachers, families, friends and residential staff who have

supported students during the exam season. It's now time to enjoy the summer and we wish you all the best of luck for results days in August!

News from the Houses!



Diglis Trip

On the last weekend of term the residential houses organised a trip to the Diglis miniature railway open day. The students enjoyed riding the miniature train and an ice cream was the perfect accompaniment!

Crafternoons

Students Amy and Carys have been enjoying 'crafternoons' in Fletcher House this half term and have made the most incredible decorated bottles with lights!

Supported by Staff member Sonja, they painted the bottles and then used napkins, glue and cork bottle lights. The finished products are beautiful.

Imagination Street

A fun time was had by all on an end of year evening trip to local play centre Imagination Street.

A chance to burn off some energy and also hand out the house certificates of appreciation. Here's a photo of the Dot's House residents on the night showing off their certificates!



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