

Julian



Grant

A HEAD OF THE TIMES

Why it will be a winter of content at Sackville

THE autumn term is always lengthy, beginning with welcoming our new students and then throwing our doors open to the community for open evening and open mornings.

In October, we were delighted to see confirmed the outstanding examination results of our students last year, placing our progress as very high in local and, indeed, national comparisons — top 15 per cent in the country.

We have also been so pleased to see our Year 7 students blossom over their first term here. They are full of enthusiasm and have been well supported by their tutors and, initially, by their Year 9 buddies.

Our biggest event of the term was our open evening which, together with the open mornings every day the following week, helped to give the community a real flavour of what Sackville has to offer. We were pretty

overwhelmed by the marvellous number of people that came along! Visitors seemed genuinely struck by the warmth and enthusiasm of our staff and students and, on the open mornings, by the calm and purposeful nature of the school.

This term we have also begun to focus on preparations for our 2019 school show, which will be 'Back to the 80s'. Our shows are well known in the community for their excellent standard and Mrs Beasley was delighted to have so many eager students along to auditions, which have resulted in a great cast. The excitement is building, so please keep the dates in your diary: Tuesday, February 12, to Friday, February 15, 2019.

Our annual 2018 Gym and Dance Evening was its usual excellent standard with many participants and parental supporters. It was tremendous to see so many of our younger students taking part and particularly our Year 7 students who

were only a few weeks into their Sackville lives. This reflects confidence and also the supportiveness of our community in helping new entrants settle in quickly.

We have been busy raising funds this term. Friday, September 28, saw an event that showed the Sackville community at its best. A mega-cake sale, organised by Jane Thomson, was held in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support, a charity close to staff and students' hearts.

By the end of lunch there was nothing left to sell, and an amazing £450 had been raised. In addition, we have now held our annual Children in Need quiz and the charity day itself included a staff

versus students basketball match.

As the centenary of Armistice Day approached, our librarian Mrs Rose looked at the topic of Remembrance and the First World War with all of our Year 7 classes. Poppies were also signed and displayed in the entrance to the school.

The climax to all of this was the creation of a giant human poppy on the playground. This was a remarkable achievement, with 1,700 people involved. On the following day, two minutes' silence was observed by all as the poppy image was revealed on classroom screens. It was incredibly moving.

Toby Castle, Year 10, participated in the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert

Hall on Saturday, November 10. He commented, "Doing this as a school, it makes everyone part of one thing, one big thing, and it should unite the school in respect for those who died for our country".

Steve Bush, senior science teacher and our Leader of Professional Learning, has been appointed a founding fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching. During October half term, he was invited by Baroness Onora O'Neill to represent Sackville at the House of Lords. This, together with our redesignation as a 'Leading Edge' school by the SSAT, is keeping Sackville at the forefront of national educational thinking.

There is much to look forward to as Christmas approaches, not least the winter concert, the Year 7 celebration assemblies with parents, the sixth-form Christmas dinner and, of course, our traditional service of nine lessons and carols at St Swithun's church.

Doing this as a school makes everyone united in respect for those who died for our country

Toby Castle, Year 10 pupil