

# HEAD-ITORIAL

## Snow decisions and communication

We have had a very interesting few weeks since the Christmas break. Three days of snow closures over two weeks is unprecedented for Sheldon. I want to take this opportunity to explain my decision-making so far, but also to thank all our parents for their flexibility and support. We are very aware that for many families late notice of snow closure is very difficult to manage.

On Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January, we had flash weather warnings for heavy snow that afternoon, evening and Wednesday morning. So we were on alert. As it happened the snow came very late, but when I made my phone calls early on Wednesday it was clear that the site was inaccessible, the roads were very dangerous and buses weren't running. So I took the decision to close. The site team did an incredible job that day clearing the paths around school and we might have been able to open on the Thursday but for the volume of snow in the car parks and the extreme forecast. We knew on Wednesday afternoon that it would be -6 degrees overnight and freezing through Thursday. So I took an early decision to close again and we used Thursday to hire a snow plough to clear the car parks. This allowed us to open fully on the Friday for all years (unlike the vast majority of Wiltshire secondary schools). On Friday we had a staff turnout exceeding 95% and a pupil turnout of about 70%.

Last week we had a better forecast on the Tuesday night, but the overnight snow was much worse. Although most pupils and staff would not have been able to get in, we had already committed to opening for the A level exams. More than enough staff made it in to allow the exams to go on and all but two students were able to complete their modules. Again the site team spent the day clearing paths and we got Mr Plough back in to clear the parking and bus areas. So we were able to open fully on Thursday and have the sixth form open evening.

In making decisions to open or close we consider: the risk of travelling in snow, the safety of the school site, the dangers when children are unsupervised at home, the disruption to families if children have to be supervised at home and the impact on learning from missed school days. Our aim is to stay open if we can. I hope that so far we have got the balance right.

It seems that many parents and pupils have welcomed the way in which we have used Twitter to give information. Although I only have 232 "followers" there have been thousands of hits on the site.

Gerard MacMahon, Headteacher

## PENCELLI 2010

Last week a group of 43 Year 10 pupils completed a residential outdoor education trip to the Brecon Beacons. The adverse weather conditions did not stop the students enjoying an action-packed week of activities. The heavy snowfall did prevent the instructors running some activities, but the students still managed to do caving, climbing and canoeing. The one alteration was a very exciting day of sledging and snowball fights! The pupils conducted themselves extremely well, and the instructors were impressed by their "go-for-it" attitude.

At Pencelli Not only do the students learn outdoor skills, they are put in an environment that test their ability to work with others, and they learn to be more independent. It was good to see so many students bond with peers they normally would not socialise within school. The level of teamwork was excellent and, hopefully, a lot of individuals discovered some hidden qualities that will benefit them now and later on in life.

Rob Humphreys

Congratulations to Mary Barnes, 11 BAC, who has in the last 6 months, achieved fantastic results in her music studies:  
Grade 5 Music Theory, Grade 4 Piano with Merit, Grade 6 Singing with Distinction

CONGRATULATIONS!

**ALSO** - Abi Love, Saxophone Grade 5 with Merit  
Jess Griffin, Flute Grade 5  
Marcus Frost, Saxophone Saxophone Grade 2 with Merit  
David Knight, Theory Grade 5 with Merit  
Tom Williams, Saxophone Grade 5

WELL DONE TO YOU ALL!

## Help Sheldon contribute to a Sea of CDs!

A local artist, Bruce Munro, is planning on creating a "CD Sea" in a 10 acre field in Kilmington. His plan is to use a million discarded CDs and a team of 200 volunteers to carpet the field, through which a public footpath will meander.

At the end of the project all the CDs will be recycled.

If you have any unwanted CDs (without cases), please bring them into school and leave them in the collection box in Reception. It would be great if Sheldon could be a part of such a creative undertaking! **Jane Dobson, Head of Music**

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Nick Kidd, 11 AEH, applied for the Tall Talent Campaign for the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil a few months ago. He has now heard from the UK Institute of Sport that he has been selected for the next stage where he will undergo vigorous testing for Rowing and Basketball.

Nick took part in the next stage of selections on Sunday 10 January at the Sports Training Village, Bath University - we'll keep you updated on his progress!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Get your Standard by e mail. Contact Carolyn Wakefield at sheldonstandard@gmail.com and a copy will be sent to you each time the Standard is issued. Items for possible inclusion should be sent to cwakefield@sheldonschool.co.uk

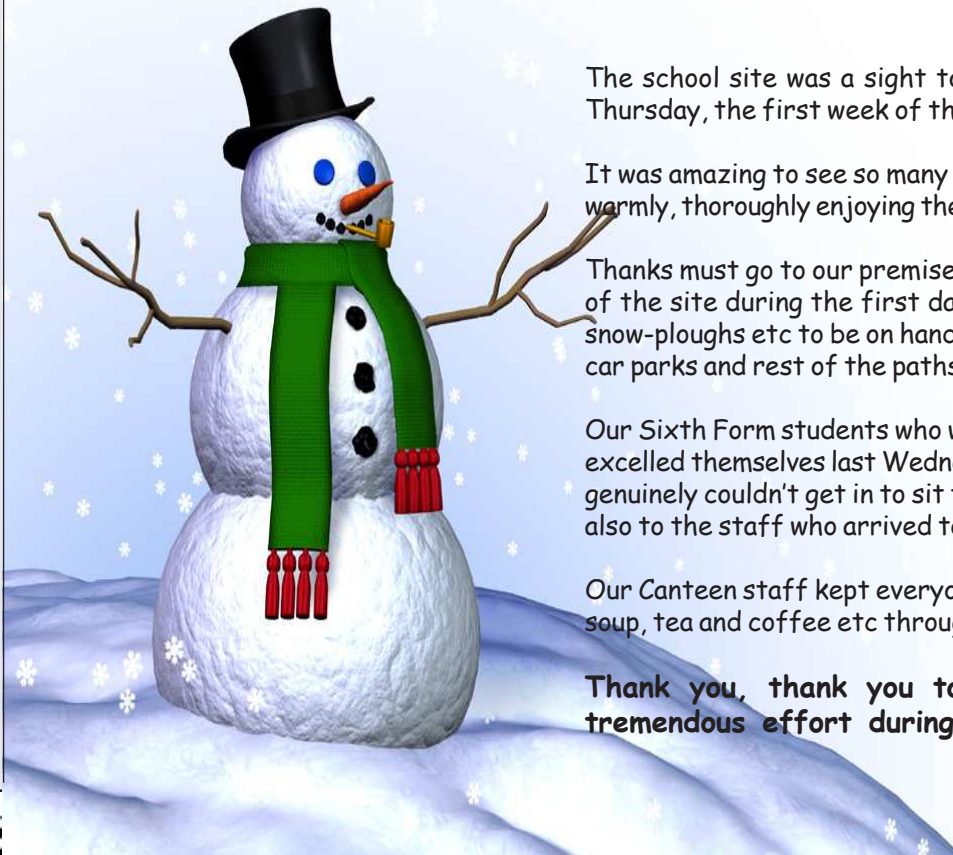
# Sheldon Standard

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Snow, snow and yet more snow!!



Giant snowballs, snowmen, sledges, skis, trays, snow sculptures and even a huge igloo!



The school site was a sight to behold Wednesday and Thursday, the first week of the school closure.

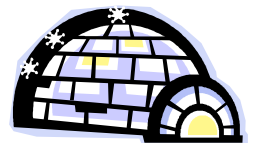
It was amazing to see so many people about, wrapped up warmly, thoroughly enjoying themselves in the deep snow.

Thanks must go to our premises staff who cleared most of the site during the first day, and then arranged for snow-ploughs etc to be on hand on Thursday to clear the car parks and rest of the paths.

Our Sixth Form students who were taking examinations, excelled themselves last Wednesday - only one candidate genuinely couldn't get in to sit the examination. Thanks, also to the staff who arrived to assist.

Our Canteen staff kept everyone warm with bacon rolls, soup, tea and coffee etc throughout the long morning.

Thank you, thank you to everyone for their tremendous effort during our "snow days".



## National Schools Equestrian Association Championships Qualifier Show Jumping Competition at Millfield School Sunday 7 February

If you and your horse/pony would like to represent the school please see Mrs Minors for information by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January - Entries close on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Open to all Sheldon pupils including 6<sup>th</sup> Form - Individuals and Teams - 3 Classes - 80cm, 90cm, 1m (first round)



## Thinking About Winning?

Congratulations to all mathematicians who have been entering the Puzzle Of The Week competition in the Maths Department. The good news now is that the merits we have been handing out have been augmented, courtesy of the Enrichment Fund. We are now offering six prizes a year to students who enter regularly!

The latest puzzle is on the noticeboard in the maths department: entries go in the box in M2.

Good Luck!

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