HAVE WE LOST THE TRUE **MEANING OF CHRISTMAS?**

By Ethan Gray

The shops are filled with freshly plucked turkeys. The aisles are packed with wintery slogans. The blaring music attracts vulnerable shoppers. It can only be Overall, I strongly believe that we should stay Christmas... oh, wait it's only September.

Don't get me wrong, I love Christmas, but what really gets me going is the commercial aspects – shops raise So, instead of barging past other Christmas shoppers the prices of gifts and everything to do with Christmas. for those dubious bargains, why not spend time with I'd prefer Christmas a lot more if businesses didn't take family and friends and rediscover the true meaning of advantage of gullible shoppers.

Just think about Black Friday this year. One person broke their arm, rushing to get the best deals. Elsewhere, the police were called in to stop things getting out of hand. How can we live in a world where this sort of frantic behaviour (all in the name of getting the best deals) is acceptable?

Shouldn't Christmas be more about family greetings and talking about funny moments from the past eventful year?

As well as the commercial value, have we forgotten the real reason why we celebrate Christmas? I'm talking, of course, about the birth of Jesus. In the rush to buy presents, we often forget to spend time in church and never listen to the we stop to

Christmas carollers. This would provide a constant feeling of happiness and joy... if we would just slow down and pay attention.

traditional as it is so much nicer than rushing around doing last minute shopping.

Christmas? Image removed due to licensing restrictions



Snowflake Challenge

THE TORCH has been through a blizzard this month!

The word 'snowflake' has appeared in three different places within this issue (excluding this page!). Can you help us to locate them all?

Have a good look through the issue and tell your tutor where you can see them. Any tutor group to find all three snowflakes with receive house points.

Message from the Headteacher

Dear Parent/Carer,

As the end of term approaches, students and staff are very much looking forward to a well-deserved Christmas holiday.

Y11 preliminary GCSE examinations have recently ended and the results will be given to students after the Christmas holidays. These examinations have added significance this year, as the structures and protocols for examination entries are significantly different from previous years, following the announcement of Mr Gove (former Education Secretary) last year. The preliminary examination results will therefore be the basis for many examination entry decisions for our students. We have similar challenges with the post-16 AS and A level courses as there are now no January examination opportunities. Instead preliminary examinations will be held in most subjects and the outcome of these will inform decisions about the Summer entries.

Upcoming

Wimbledon Trip June 2015

By Aaron Duce

In June 2015, Mr Oldfield is hosting a trip to Wimbledon, London, as part of PE. This trip is from Monday the 29th of June till the next day, Tuesday the 30th. The trip requires a £40 deposit and an additional £100 to be paid by mid-March.

This trip will start with a journey on an executive coach down to London, where you will arrive to spend a day at Wimbledon Tennis Courts, with Court B tickets to see a tennis match. You will lavish in an overnight stay at a 3 star hotel, and wake up to a continental breakfast. On the Tuesday, there is also a shopping trip to Covent Garden planned, with even more yet to be decided!

Poetry Competition: Cells

The Christopher Tower Poetry Competition is the premier competition for aspiring young poets in the UK, with Tower prizes being the most prestigious prize for people of our age. As well as the literary prestige than comes with the prize, there's also numerous different monetary prizes to be won – the top prize wins £3,000, with £1,000 and £500 going to second and third and honourable mentions win £150 pounds! The theme this year is "cells", and the winners will be announced on Monday the 20th of April 2015.

At the end of November, we held our Presentation Evening for the Year 11 students who took their GCSE examination results last Summer and, as reported in an earlier edition of 'In Touch', achieved some record results. Many of these students have progressed to our Sixth Form. It was lovely to welcome them and also those students who left to pursue courses, training or employment elsewhere.

The last two weeks have been exceptionally busy. Last week, we enjoyed three performances of our pantomime "Aladdin", offering a slight variation to the more traditional story! The show played to full and very appreciative audiences and was very entertaining. Congratulations to all students involved in any way (on stage and behind the scenes), to the staff who undertook cameo roles and special thanks to Miss Anyon for her choreography and Mr McHale and Mrs Hardwick in the drama department who wrote, directed and produced the show.

On Thursday, we look forward to our annual Christmas Concert where many of our gifted musicians and singers will have an opportunity to showcase their talents in a programme of traditional and contemporary music. This is always a very popular and enjoyable evening which for many of us marks the beginning of Christmas.

All tutor groups are currently busy putting the finishing touches to their hampers for our annual Christmas Hamper competition. Once the judging has taken place, the hampers will be distributed to senior citizens living in the areas which the school serves and to a couple of nominated residential centres. With the incentive of a prize for the best hamper in each year group and a trophy for the 'best in school', staff and students have once again risen to the challenge and the results are amazing. The results of the judging will be announced in the next edition of the newly renamed 'The Torch'.

Please note, school reopens for staff and students on Monday 5 January.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and wish you a very Happy Christmas and a healthy, prosperous New Year.

Mrs P Ward Headteacher



News in Brief

Readathon

Many students in Year 7 are currently taking part in Readathon, a UK-wide sponsored reading event. Their aim is to gather sponsors and then read as many books as they possibly can before the closing date: Friday 30th January. All the money raised goes to charities, such as ReadWell, which provides books and storytellers for children in hospitals. It's great fun for all students who take part, and is also a great way to help a good cause!

Meeting an MP

By James Higginbottom

Wath Sixth Form History and Politics students were treated to a meeting with Wentworth and Dearne MP John Healey, the veteran minister of the Blair/Brown years. Mr Healey was forthright and candid in his opinions and answers to the questions asked, of which he had no prior knowledge. We found Mr Healey to be charming and illuminating and consider the afternoon to be a suitable bookend to our visit to parliament. The said visit, encapsulated in a wider trip to the capital, saw students take in a tour of the House; attend a debate in the Chamber; and take part in a workshop on the contrasting electoral systems. The trip was a great success, building on similar trips from previous years, and we hope to enjoy such visits again in the future.

Music Exam Successes

Congratulations to the following on their recent Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music Exams:

Hannah Robertson Grade 2 Piano with Merit
Hannah White Grade 2 Piano with Distinction
Olivia Bell Grade 1 Piano with Merit
Isobel Buttigieg-Cook Grade 1 Piano with Merit
Emma Birch Grade 6 Tenor Saxophone
Amy Smallman Grade 6 Violin with Distinction
Katie Malson Grade 2 Piano with Merit

Christmas Lunch

Organising a Christmas lunch is never an easy task in a school as large as Wath! However, things went smoothly on 9th December, and everyone who had pre-booked their lunch was treated to a delicious meal. A big thanks should be given to all of the catering staff, and also to Ms Owen who did all the behind-the-scenes organisation to make sure it was a real success.

Science Club News

A group of Y7 pupils have been attending science club on Monday nights after school. Here, they have had the opportunity to take part in lots of exciting experiments including flame testing, pH rainbow and the squeaky pop test!

One regular, Jake Robbins, said, "This club is so much fun!"

Here we are looking at optical illusions:



Y7 Science Club is open to all Year 7s. Get your parents to write a note in your planner to allow you to stay and then come along afterschool each Monday.

We also have a STEM club for Y8 and Y9. Here, the members of the club do lots of projects where they build things and investigate how they work.

Here they are making red cabbage indicators:



The STEM Club is open to all Y8s and Y9s. If you are interested in attending, just remember to bring a note of permission in your planner.

From Beyond the School Gates:

Stoney Middleton

By Patrick Binns

On Monday 24th October, Patrick Binns and Robert Jonson went to Stoney Middleton in the Peak District with the Y5s from West Melton Primary School. We went on the heritage walk and saw the different sights around the village: we had a look at the well dressings, Overall, I thought that the mine was interesting as it the boundary stone and the Roman baths.



Working with West Melton Primary at Sheffield Hallam.

A week later, on Monday 1st, we went to Sheffield Hallam University, where we took part in an enterprise competition, which was to make an idea that could be used in the heritage centre. We worked in teams named after the buildings on the campus and my team's idea was a bungee jump. We made a presentation which, at the end of the day, we had to present to the dragons and they decided which team won. Our team's bungee idea came in first place and will be modified to be safe inside the heritage centre and will be in the new heritage centre for 2017.

Y8 National Coal Mining Trip

By Ethan Gray

These days, local kids don't even know that Yorkshire was ever famous for its coal mining: they're always in the cinemas, on their phones or with their girlfriends/ boyfriends. So because of this, the history department decided to take a handful of children to South Yorkshire's own Coal Mining Museum.

The first time I heard of this trip, it sounded fantastic – this proved itself when I got there. My first opinion on the place was, 'wow'. It still has the original water

wheels and rope used to take us down the mine. Also, they had three pit ponies. Standing next to them were guides telling us facts, which made the trip very educational. Interestingly, they explained that the horses could get similar illnesses to us. One of them was the respiratory problem - this came from the muck and dust down the mine.

provided a fun way to explain about the facts.

KS5 Physics Trip

By Steven Sworowski

A Level Physics students went on a trip to Warwick University in October. We listened to several lectures including: a lecture on how you would survive the Apocalypse with everyday objects; a lecture on Bubble Engineering and how it is used to transport drugs and substances to specific parts of the body by using electromagnets; and a lecture on how flocks of birds fly together and how to analyse this using formulas. The trip was really interesting; it was good to see a Physics department in a university and will help us all in our A Level exams.

Y13 Biology Field Trip To Malham

By Sam Johnson

In October, Y13 Biology A Level students went on a field trip to Malham for three days. It was excellent; we were given the opportunity to use scientific equipment that was completely new to us to investigate lots of different exciting organisms. I particularly liked investigating the succession of plants all the way down a steep hill which was quite challenging in the freezing cold!

The evenings were lots of fun when the whole group gathered round for the evening meal, which was lovely, especially after hours of hard work in the field, before we finished the evening in the classroom. Hayleigh, our teacher and expert ecologist, was extremely helpful with all the challenging work on statistical tests and class work and I found her ways of teaching very clear and easy to understand. The wide range of investigative methods, from kick sampling in a fast flowing stream to observing how organisms were distributed on the banking, were all very interesting and will definitely help us with our revision and for the Biology exam in the summer of next year.

Reviews of Trips Out and About

Alton Towers Wheelchair Hell

By Lucy Nadin

Have you ever felt cheated? Well, I have. I went to Alton Towers on a school trip with fellow Year 12 students from my BTEC Travel and Tourism group and don't get me wrong, we had a wonderful time but there were parts of the day I remembered for all the wrong reasons.

I am disabled and chose to use my wheelchair for the day, which brought some bumps in the road (literally!). As soon as we got in the park, we had to go to the tourist information centre to get a wristband and immediately, we crashed. That was nothing to do with my driver, it was to do with the giant bump to get in. After we finally got out, we hit a second bump which was on the path and nearly made me tip out of my chair. You would think the owners of Alton Towers would think about making the paths smoother, wouldn't you? The path was my road and I expected it to be a smooth journey.

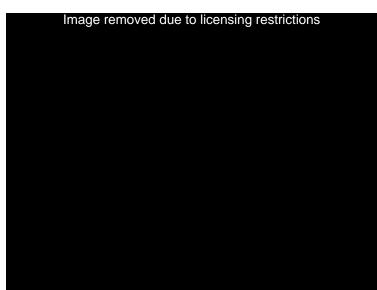


Keeping a tight grip over the perilous path.

The first ride we were heading towards was the river rapids, which were fun when we got there but not fun along the way. The hill was so steep that I had to walk down it when we left because my key worker was scared of tipping me out.

The staff were thankfully friendly and considerate on most of the rides, except for one member of staff that shouted at us through a microphone because we were going the wrong way to get on the ride.

But it all went wrong as soon as we got to Hex. If you haven't been on Hex before, it is all about the story of a tree and you have to walk through the beginning, so we followed advice from a steward to stick to the left-



Hex: Not much fun when the curtain closes.

hand side because there were steps and we had to go down and up ramps.

It was all going well until we got to the middle. We had to go up a ramp in order to get to the actual ride but as soon as we got to the top, the curtain decided to close. Just our luck. We were shouting for ages but nobody came. When we eventually got through, my key worker had to hold the extremely heavy curtain while I wheeled myself through.

We went down the corridor and found the ride had already started. At least it was a bit lighter because Miss Bradder turned on the torch on her phone so we could see where we were going. It was quite spooky waiting but eventually the ride finished and we managed to get on with the next group. When we filled in one of the members of staff, all they could do was apologise. Unbelievable.

We did enjoy ourselves and I will love to go back again but when wheelchair access is available, you would expect it to be fit for purpose.

THE TORCH Journalists

This edition was produced by Mya Taylor, Charles Lord, Luke Stanley, Aaron Duce, Hannah Steele, Ethan Gray and Miss Taylor. Thanks also to Lucy Nadin, Steven Sworowski, Sam Johnson, Jessica Thomas, Isabelle Parkin, Ellie Wimot, Grace Brammah, Abigail Savage, Melissa Donaghy-Roering, Kye Andre, Patrick Binns, James Higginbottom, Zoe Woods, Jack Cotton, Joe Waller, Snowflake, Mr Bishop and Miss Perry.

If you are interested in helping to produce THE TORCH, come along to F24 on Thursday afternoons, 3-4 pm, or see Miss Taylor for more information.

Creative Zone: Seasonal Sagas

This month, students were asked to get into the festive spirit by writing a Seasonal Saga. A minisaga is a short story with exactly 50 words. Here are the winning entries.

Just For Me

By Abigail Savage

One Christmas morning, a little boy woke up. "It's Christmas!" he shouted. Running downstairs, he opened the living room door and gasped. He couldn't believe it!

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6... 91, 92, 93... 98, 99, 100!

"100 presents just for me!"
Then he woke up. He'd dreamt it.

Santa's Missing Suit

By Isabelle Parkin

On Christmas Eve, everything was going to plan in the workshop, until he couldn't find his Christmas suit. He checked in his room and he asked his wife, but nothing. Until he went into the reindeer pen and found Rudolph in the suit; a nearby elf just stood there, laughing.

A Gift from Santa?

By Jessica Thomas

"Come on, come on, he's here. Look!"
A small boy, only six or seven, wearing his hat, mittens, wellington boots and a coat, led the way into the stable.

His parents gasped astonished as a new born reindeer looked up at them and spoke.

Was he a gift from Santa?

Next month's theme will be: Valentine Verses.

Express your feelings for someone in a poem type of your choice!

Winners will be published and receive e-Praise Points!

Deadline: Thursday 5th February

Christmas Eve Disaster

By Kye Andre

It was a cold, blistery Christmas eve. Santa took his last sip of milk. He stood up and grabbed his silk red coat.

"Better get a move on, you don't want to be late," yelled Santa's wife.

Nothing could go wrong. Could it? He set off. "I've forgot the presents!"

The Devil's Doll

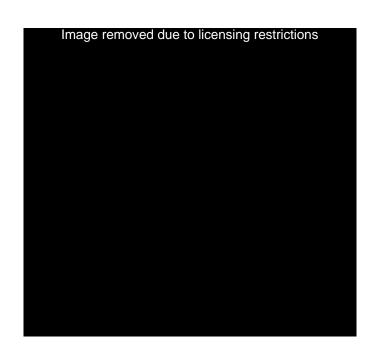
By Joe Waller

'Twas a cold night on Christmas Eve. The wind was whistling, the trees were rustling and the snow was falling. All I could think was what was in those presents? I woke up Christmas day and ripped open the box... There lay a little doll staring at me devilishly!

The Boy on the Street

By Jack Cotton

It was a dark Christmas night and the whole street was silent. A boy on the street, called Alex, was wide awake with Christmas spirit. At 11PM Alex started hearing quiet cheers and quieter boos, so he peered out of his window to see the sight of snowmen playing hockey.



Unexpected Guest

By Melissa Donaghy-Roering

Once Santa came to stay at my house. He left the reindeer in my garden! He cooked us a brilliant turkey and a Christmas Pudding. Santa said that I was very kind and he said that one day I could come to the North Pole by First Class Reindeer!

Presents Galore!

By Aaron Duce

One day at Santa's workshop, the elves were making iPad Minis for the children. All of a sudden, a loud bang echoed through the rooms. What had gone wrong? The Grinch had put a spanner in one of the clogs. One of the elves found it and saved the day.



Book of the Month

By Hannah Steele

The Fault In Our Stars, written by John Green, has won many awards. The story is about two teenagers who meet at a support group for the terminally ill. The group is a chance for them to talk about their illness and share how they actually feel about it. After the support group, the two main characters, Hazel Grace Lancaster and Augustus Waters, form an unlikely friendship. The two become closer and closer over time...but unfortunately time is running out for both of them.

The story contains some elements of humour and romance and is suitable for any age. It has been rated five stars by many individuals because of the way it portrays real life events. Many people believe this book to be useful. Be prepared, however; it has a twist at the end that will bring tears to your eyes.

Film VS Book!

Part 1: Roald Dahl

By Shanelle Elliott

This issue is all about Roald Dahl and his outstanding books and his famous films, which have gained the top places in must watch family films.

I am sure you all have heard of Roald Dahl! And if you haven't, get your head out of the TV and get to a library ASAP (as soon as possible). Because this particular author has won me over. As far as I'm concerned, he is a classic children's book writer, who sold his books to millions of people. They have now mutated into films, as well, so if you're not one for reading, then watch the films. THEY ARE A MUST!

Some of the most famous and popular books and films are *Matilda*, *BFG*, *James and the Giant Peach* and *The Witches*. They are the best bone ticklers ever. However, the films practically rewrite the whole books and take out scenes and replace them with what they thought at the time would satisfy the public... so you should always read the book first!

So, what are you waiting for? Read the book or watch the film — the choice is yours!

Remembrance Day

the first of the centenary years' Remembrance days - service at Barnsley town hall. the centenary marking 100 years since the beginning of the First World War. Remembrance Day is on the 11th of November every year, to mark the armistice agreement which signalled the end of hostilities in WW1, on the same date in 1918. Many memorial services were held in nations around the world,

As I'm sure most of you all know, it was very recently including an emotionally resonant and truly fitting

The school itself participated in the selling of poppies, and was markedly respectful in the observing of a two minute silence on Remembrance Day. Some of our year 7 classes have also written some interesting war poetry, all in respect of Remembrance Day:

R unning around to fight for their country.

E veryday it's making them hungry.

M any people died at war.

E very time loads of people die more and mor

M ain events matter.

B ecause people have a heart to support.

E ach time we remember them.

R espect the soldiers and raise some money.

A lways remembered.

N ever forgotten.

C omitted their lives.

E veryone remembered.

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

W eapons destroyed homes

O verseas planes flew

R etreat! Yells the captain

L ots of luck was needed

D ads and brothers who died

W hy did this war break out?

A rmies fought for freedom

R un for your lives

1914-1918

By Ellie Wimot

R ememberance Sunday is a day to remember all the soldiers who died in the war.

E ven the tiny injuries can hurt.

M ore and more people are getting killed because of the war.

E veryone needs to remember this special day for the soldiers.

M any of us take things for granted but they don't realise that people die in the war for us.

B uy a poppy to remember the soldiers.

E ven the smallest contribution to a poppy can make a big difference.

R emember, remember Remembrance Sunday 11/11.

By Grace Brammah

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Film Review: Ocho Apellidos Vascos

By Zoë Woods



Be prepared to experience not only laughter and joy, but also sadness and maybe a few tears as Spanish Director Emilio Martínez-Lázaro yet again wows nations with his new romantic comedy *Ocho Apellidos Vascos*. The film explores not only themes of romance and love, but it highlights the difference in the two Spanish cultures, creating a timelessly funny and humorous plot for all.

The film follows the journey of Rafa, a young, handsome man who has never left his home region of Seville, Andalucía. However, his life soon takes a dramatic turn and change of course when he meets Amaia, a girl from the Basque Country of Spain who is immune to his seduction techniques. Following their encounter, Rafa decides to pursue her and travels to the infamous Basque region on his quest to find love and happiness; ignoring the wise advice of his 'amigos'. Unfortunately for Rafa, things take a turn for the worst and after an unsuccessful reunion with Amaia, he finds himself spending time behind bars. After a series of events and complications, Rafa finds himself forced to impersonate a full-blooded Basque gentleman, in the hope he will receive Amaia's love eventually. In the process, Rafa must undergo a complete transformation of his appearance, create and forge a completely made up family and background, as well as learn to speak a whole new type of Spanish. With all these problems, can this union between North and South ever work?

Following the release of the film, box offices have seen an total audience of over two million people in the space of a fortnight, branding the film as an instant domestic hit. Although the film offers subtle jokes and humour with regards to the stereotypical view of a Sevillan citizen or a Basque citizen, all of it is in good humour, allowing the film to capture the essence of both important Spanish cultures. For any film lover, this movie is a definite must see and you will finish the film

in not only a bundle of laughter and tears, but also with a beaming grin on your face. There is only one way to describe Emilio Martínez-Lázaro's most recent masterpiece – 'A Spanish treasure'.

KS5 Spanish Film Club is every Monday 3 – 4 p.m. in G3. See Miss Bradshaw for more details.

Update from the Student Council

School Action

School Action group are focusing on litter at the moment. We need to reduce the amount of litter that both inside and outside the school environment. We are planning a promotion campaign to get the word spread around school that the current amount of litter is not acceptable, especially when we have so many bins around school. We also have a recycle team within the group who will be focusing on the promotion of recycling empty cans around school. We will also be working on tutor challenges that will be based around the litter theme and when the weather gets a bit warmer we will be developing a school gardening scheme — watch this space.

Students

This action group is primarily concerned with the students' experiences in school, their well-being and safety. Wath Comprehensive School prides itself on promoting an inclusive environment and therefore Action Group Students provides peer-to-peer support when things don't go to plan. Safe Havens is currently run in the Youth Centre during lunchtimes, offering a place for students to access if they need extra support or just to hang out with friends. A team of dedicated students deliver training to new recruits, who volunteer during their lunchtimes, ensure vulnerable students have a place to go.

In addition, Resolve uses restorative practice to help students deal with issues such as friendship problems. The Resolve Team undergo specialist training to offer a helping hand to other students during times when they want some extra support. The student initially fills in a form, requesting help, which is given to the Resolve team. The team meet and discuss a way forward and the student is given a choice about whether they take part or whether the Resolve team speaks on their behalf. This approach utilises the team's skills and experience, allowing all participants to have a voice and to contribute towards an agreed outcome.













The state of the s



Transformation into a genie!

Jafar looks very menacing.



Costumes ranged from traditionally Chinese (above) to very British (below). Much of the work goes on behind the scenes to make the show flawless (below left).



Behind the Scenes

By Charles Lord

The school pantomime was recently performed from the 9th to the 12th of December. In total there were four performances; one to local primary schools and three in the evening — for the general public.

We caught up with the cast and asked them why they love pantomime and what keeps them coming back year after year. Ebony Ormonroyd (who played Princess Jasmine) said: "The pantomime is always a great atmosphere to be a part of. It might be difficult in the middle but then worth it at the end when you're on stage with your friends."

Abigail Woods (Aladdin) added: "I have loads of weird and cringe worthy lines but it's pantomime so that's inevitable! You do have to be committed, especially when learning your lines. I really like working with new people on stage and just having a great laugh!" Jayme Cresswell (Shamu) said: "Watching everyone on stage is really great, it gives you a chance to see other people act."

With rehearsals taking place every Monday and Thursday between 3 and 4:30 and some finishing as late as 5, it takes a certain type of person to maintain such a high level of commit for over two months. Caelan Taylor -Mackenzie, playing the role of Dame, told us: "Learning lines requires total dedication; however, being on stage gives you such a buzz and being involved in a group is always a good thing, especially with regards to socialising as you really get to mix with people you ordinarily wouldn't."

With several nights selling out and amazing feedback from the primary school audience the annual school pantomime is something you can be involved in next time it comes back round! Watch student notices at the beginning of September... You could be the next star!



Aladdin 2014 🛨 🌣 🛨 🔯 🥇















Where would a Panto be without a Dame (above)? Nobility strut their stuff (below left). There's no missing those eyebrows (below right)!





Views from the Audience

Aladdin was an outstanding, professional performance, which easily rivals any pantomime at the Lyceum! Hilarious jokes throughout, brilliant costumes, lighting, sound and acting. All the students involved put in a tremendous effort and particular praise should go to the actors who played Widow Twanky (Charles Lord, Caelan Taylor-Mackenzie), Wishee (Mia Hollingsworth Smith), Washee (Lauren Hollingsworth Smith), and Abanazer (Jonah Thompson).

If you missed this fabulous theatrical treat, you should definitely make sure you secure yourself a ticket for next year's performance!



Not a snowflake in sight in Agrabah!

Sport and Music



Cross Country Success



battled their way to victory in a series of gruelling 16th October. They came first, bringing home the races, one each week for five weeks in a row. The team shield and a certificate each. team ultimately won the Rotherham Schools League, Particular mention should be given to Kristie Archer, which was a massive achievement.

They also took part in the Rotherham Schools Well done, girls!

Last half term, the Year 7 girls' cross country team Championship, a huge competition that took place on

who came first in every race in which she took part!

