

# Newsletter



July 2025  
Edition



## AWARDS EVENING 2025

Solihull Sixth Form College celebrated student success in June at their annual Awards Evening, which took place at Renewal Solihull.

The College was honoured to host Deputy Lieutenant of the West Midlands Lieutenancy Carmen Watson at the event, as well as the Mayor of Solihull Councillor Annette Mackenzie. They were present to offer their support to sixth formers, who were being recognised for their efforts and achievements in both academic and extra-curricular settings. Jose Lopes, Chair of Governors for the College, handed out the prizes to learners.

Awards were given for each of the

A level, BTEC or T level courses that the College offers. Teachers faced difficult choices, as they were asked to select just two young people for recognition per subject. A range of young people were also honoured for extra-curricular achievements, including sporting success, exceptional progress and representation of Student Council. Shirley Lions were also in attendance at the event and handed out prizes for volunteering.

Interspersed between the awards, there were examples of learners' work for guests to enjoy, including two music performances, a journalism recital and a music video created by a Media Studies student and a video of the College's Team

Gambia volunteer project.

Three Outstanding Service awards were also handed out to staff who are retiring this year. Between them, these staff members have accrued 65 years of service to the College.

Principal Martin Sullivan commented, "The annual Awards Evening is a highlight in the College calendar and provides an opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved during the academic year. I'm very proud of all our young people and those rewarded at this event were just the tip of a very large iceberg. I'm confident that their success will be reflected in the publication of exam results this summer."



# CAREERS & HIGHER EDUCATION FAIR

The 2025 Careers & Higher Education Fair took place in June, offering Year 12 learners the opportunity to talk to a host of universities, training providers and employers all under one roof.

In what is one of the biggest careers fairs in the region, exhibitors took over the Sports Hall and Studio, with more than 80 stands for learners to visit, including universities such as Aston, Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Warwick. They were joined by employers such as BNP Paribas, Howden Insurance, Jaguar Land Rover, KPMG, the RAF, Solihull Council and many more.

A programme of talks saw visiting speakers come in to talk on a range of topics from Architecture and Pharmacy to Law and Artificial Intelligence. More than 1,200 bookings were made to attend careers talks, as Year 12 learners made the most of the opportunity to explore their post-College options.

Many of these young people will be applying to university and they will be making their UCAS applications in the Autumn. Academic Coaching

and Careers staff members will be supporting those learners to make the best applications they can.

Also this term, the College is celebrating accreditation with the Career Mark Platinum Award, following a successful recent assessment.

The College first achieved the Career Mark Bronze Award in 2015 and has had five re-evaluations since then, moving up the ranks to the Silver and Gold awards, before achieving the top Platinum award this year. The award is a national Quality in Careers standard using the Career Mark approach provided by Complete Careers and demonstrates adherence to the Gatsby Benchmarks.

This award looks at the whole student careers experience including through academic coaching and personal development, individual advice and guidance, the curriculum and the wider enrichment options available. The latter includes student societies, the Stretch and Challenge programme for students aiming for the most competitive courses and university destinations, and the Road

Map to Employment programme for students seeking apprenticeship options, which recently saw learners attend an Employability Fair on campus. Our programme of specialist enrichments, which support students into particular careers such as the Pre-Medical School, were also looked at as part of this accreditation, as was the quality of provision provided directly by the Careers team.

As part of the assessment day, the assessor Ron James spoke with Year 12 and Year 13 students to learn first-hand of the support that they receive. In particular, the students were able to provide examples of the individual support and the initiatives in place to provide relevant careers opportunities to support their next steps.

The report concluded: "It is clear that CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance) is continuing to play an important role at Solihull Sixth Form College and that this is making a positive impact on learners. The College has held the award for some time and is continuing to develop and further improve its provision."



# STRETCH & CHALLENGE

Aspiring learners have been getting a head start on their post-college plans by attending the Stretch & Challenge Summer School, which aims to extending students' learning and prepare them for the challenge of Higher Education applications.

The highest achieving students in Year 12 at the College signed up to additional subject sessions and guest lectures to stretch their learning beyond the A level curriculum. With many of these learners aspiring to apply to prestigious Russell Group universities, requiring early applications, interviews and admissions tests, these sessions challenged them to think critically and explore topics outside their current areas of study.

The two-day Summer School began with a visiting speaker from a Russell Group university. Dr Marta Guerriero, Associate Professor in Global Sustainable Development at the University of Warwick, delivered a lecture on Global Sustainable Development, which challenged students to consider the three pillars of sustainable development - society, environment and economy. Sarah Large from Mansfield College at the University of Oxford was also present to talk to students about making applications to Oxbridge and other highly competitive universities.

Other visiting speakers at the Summer School included David Metcalfe from the Faculty of

Medical Sciences at Newcastle University, who came in to talk to students who are looking to apply to study Medicine, and Anton Popov from Aston University, who talked to learners about decolonisation. Anne Drakeford from Clifford Chance international law firm was also part of the Summer School programme to offer advice on pursuing a legal career.

College teachers were also part of the Summer School and delivered workshops on Accounting, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Computer Science, Drama, English, Humanities, Mathematics, Media, Modern Languages, Music, Physics, Psychology, Social Sciences, Sport & Health and Visual Arts.



# END OF YEAR CELEBRATION

The End of Year Celebration took place on campus at the end of June.

There were lots of activities and food trucks on campus, as well as staff getting involved on the Soak a Teacher stand, which proved very popular.

The event also raised £652.71 for Kids Village.



# PHYSICAL THEATRE SHOWCASE

Drama students have been showcasing their assessed practical performances in front of an audience of friends and family.

Year 13 students on the A level Drama & Theatre course earn 30% of their grade from their 'Making Theatre' practical coursework. In this component, learners must undertake a practical exploration of three extracts, each taken from a different play, with the third extract to be performed in the style of a prescribed practitioner.

The practitioners that students chose to perform extracts in the style of were Berkoff and Stanislavski, while the extracts that they chose to perform included plays by Fin Kennedy, Dennis Kelly, Polly Stenham, Laura Wade, Duncan Macmillan, Phillip Ridley and Frances Poet.

Drama teacher Nadia Kouhi commented: "So much hard work went into these performances. There were eight different extracts in total, each covering very different and challenging themes. The students had to not only interpret the plays, but also showcase their acting skills in the style of Berkoff or Stanislavski. I'm proud of their achievements."



## EX-STUDENTS VISIT HISTORY

History students received the benefit of the advice and experience of former students in June thanks to two visiting speakers.

Dan and Mitch Barrett returned to the College to speak with Year 12 History learners about how to manage their time in Year 13, transferable skills for university and techniques for effective revision. The twins studied A level History when they attended the College (2020-2022) and are just graduating from Birmingham City University this summer after studying degrees in Criminology and Security Studies and Sports Business Management.

The talk included useful advice specific to the study of A level History, as well as guidance on revision dos and don'ts. With many of the current Year 12 students

aiming to follow the Barrett twins onto Higher Education, their advice on choosing a suitable degree and university were also highly relevant.



# VISUAL ARTS EXHIBITION

Talented artists and designers were celebrated for their achievements at the Visual Arts Exhibition in June.

Every student on the BTEC Extended Diploma in Art & Design Practice and A level Art & Design courses exhibited a selection of work. The pieces on show covered a huge range of disciplines and specialisms from Fine Art painting to Textile Design, from Photography to Architecture and from Graphic Design to Installation. The work also explored a wide variety of subject matter and themes. Staff members, learners, parents and carers attended the Private View on the evening of Tuesday 10 June, with learners from our Music enrichment

performing to entertain guests.

The Visual Arts department handed out awards to learners at the Private View, with prizes given for all four Visual Arts courses (BTEC Art & Design practice, A level Art & Design – Fine Art, Graphics and Photography pathways). A level Graphics & 3D Design students were recognised for being selected for the Sixth Form College Association Graphics Exhibition this year, learners on the A level Fine Art course were rewarded because they had been selected to feature in the Royal Academy Youth Summer Show. The Year 12 Photography Live Brief prize winners were recognised as their work was selected for the Sixth Form College

Association Photography Exhibition. Meanwhile, one of the Visual Arts Academy enrichment students was also recognised for their hard work, engagement and dedication to their Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Year 13 students were also rewarded for their independent learning and a Star of the Department was named to reward the learner who has stood out most this year for their hard work and commitment. Alice won the award for her work helping at open events, attending trips, visits and talks and helping her peers. Students were rewarded with vouchers which were donated by Photo Zone.



# GEOLOGY FIELDWORK

Year 12 Geologist visited Ercall Quarry near Telford, in July to undertake rock specimen identification, measurements of dip and strike and the location of a unique geological unconformity.

Rock formations at this site date back to 500 million years ago. Students have been inspecting samples of banded rhyolite, which indicates Pre-Cambrian volcanic rocks, some of the oldest rock deposits in England



# METFILM SCHOOL VISIT

Media and Film learners visited Digbeth's MetFilm School in Birmingham this term to get an insight into the city's thriving film and television industry.

Young people on the A level Film Studies, A level Media Studies and BTEC Creative Digital Media Production courses spent the day at MetFilm School to inspire our next generation of creatives by offering insight into the range of opportunities available in the film and television sectors. Students took part in a hands-on, industry-led agenda that included a working set workshop, a tour of the professional facilities and a unique 10-shot music video challenge, which was screened at the end of the day.

As part of the experience, learners had the chance to meet MetFilm School lecturers, who are active professionals in the TV and Film industry. The event provided a realistic glimpse into how the Film and TV world operates, and what pathways are available for those looking to enter it.

BTEC Creative Media student Alesha, reflected on the experience: "This was an enjoyable day, where I got to work with high-quality equipment and learn from people within the industry. This was really helpful and helped build my knowledge

and understanding."

This inspiring and immersive experience showcased the creative potential of Birmingham's young talent and highlighted the city's role as a key player in the UK's screen industries.



# PRE-MEDICAL VISIT TO KEELE

Students on the Pre-Medical School enrichment visited Keele University Medical School recently to make use of their labs and get an idea of what undergraduate study is like.

Learners completely practical work in the laboratories, where they successfully diagnosed and prescribed treatment of a Urinary Tract Infection, as well as exploring in depth the renal system with help from lecturers at Keele Medical School.

The fieldtrip followed hot on the heels of lecturers coming into

College to complete problem-based learning activities with the students.



# TURING TRIPS TO POLAND & MALTA

A group of BTEC students from have just returned from three weeks overseas undertaking work experience, thanks to a government scheme.

One group of students visited Poland and another went to Malta as part of the Turing Scheme, which is the UK government's programme to provide funding for international opportunities in education and training across the world. The BTEC Level 3 courses that the College offers require learners to undertake work placements in both the first and second year of study. By taking advantage of the Turing Scheme, funding was awarded to enable learners to do one of these

placements overseas.

Young people from across our BTEC provision went on the trip, including those studying Applied Science, Sport and Health & Social Care, who went to Poland, while those on the Business and IT courses went to Malta. Each student had a different work placement, with the businesses they were working for including water sports, school camps, farms, IT services, science labs, nurseries, care homes, restaurants and retail.

Vice Principal at the College Janice Hamilton commented: "The Turing Scheme is a fantastic opportunity for our young people, because it

offers not only valuable experience in the workplace, but also the chance to travel abroad and experience a different culture. It is fully funded and offered 37 students from our College the chance to take part. All the learners who travelled have learned a lot from their three weeks away and have developed both their confidence and their employability skills."

As well as working up to 40 hours per week, learners also had some free time to explore the countries they were in, taking in sights in Wroclaw in Poland and in Valletta in Malta.



# BTEC BUSINESS CHARITY EVENTS

Aspiring entrepreneurs organised events as part of their BTEC Business course and raised more than £1,000 for charity in the process.

Learners have been responsible for planning and delivering charity events at the end of the Spring term and have been encouraged to get creative as they raise money for Kids' Village, a charity which provides critically ill children and their families with the opportunity to experience free, magical breaks away from the stresses of hospital life. Kids' Village is the chosen charity of the Summit Learning Trust for 2025 and this £1,061.33 will help swell the coffers this year.

More than 20 events have taken place across campus, including bake sales, sweet stalls, sporting challenges and gaming tournaments. Learners got involved in the activities across break and lunchtimes to support their peers and help a good cause.

As well as considering the financial aspect of running an event, students have also been tasked with promoting it and completing risk assessments to ensure they have considered health and safety implications.



## EX-STUDENTS TALK UP APPRENTICESHIPS

IT students benefitted from the opportunity to connect with industry professionals this term, when two College Alumni visited to offer their career insights.

Former students Jamil Rahman from Process Management International and Zohirul Islam from Corpay visited the campus to speak with Year 12 students on the BTEC IT course. The session provided an exciting opportunity for current students to learn from those who have successfully transitioned from college into the professional world.

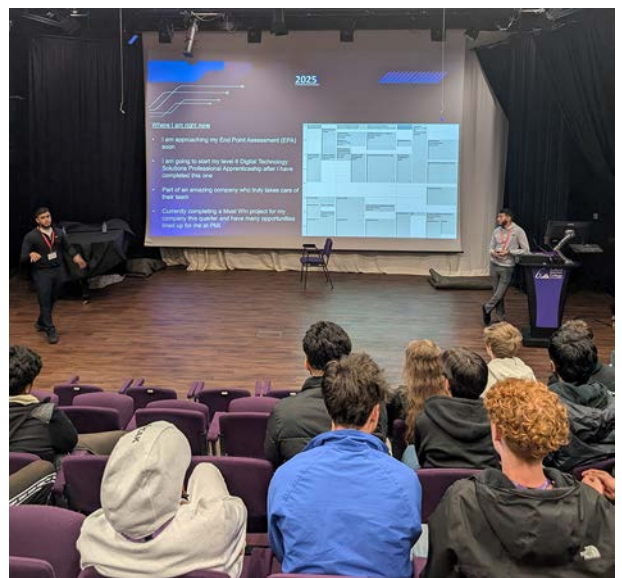
Jamil is now a Data and ICT Apprentice at Process Management International and he shared his experiences and discussed his role within the company. Zohirul is a Software Developer Apprentice at Corpay and he offered insights into his career path and the day-to-day

realities of his position. Both alumni provided first-hand accounts of their journeys, detailing the application process, what it is like to be an apprentice and the challenges and successes they have encountered so far.

This direct engagement with former students in their respective industry roles offered BTEC IT learners a practical and relatable perspective on potential career paths and the skills needed to succeed in the rapidly evolving IT sector.

Zohirul Islam reflected on the visit, saying: "It was a great opportunity to come back to College and share my journey. I know how overwhelming it can

feel deciding what to do after sixth form, so I hope hearing about my experience helped show that there are real alternatives to university. Apprenticeships have opened up so many doors for me, and I wanted the students to see what's possible when you take a chance on something different."



# YEAR 13 FIELDTRIPS

Year 13s brought their time at College to a close with some exciting fieldtrips in July. Some went to Alton Towers, while others travelled to London to visit the Moco Museum and see the Lion King musical.

The group that visited London ran into musician Lewis Capaldi in Covent Garden. He was good enough to post for photos with Kiana and Esha.



## MEDIA & IT WELCOME EX-STUDENTS

Media and IT students were given an exciting opportunity to connect with industry professionals, as BNP Paribas Personal Finance UK visited the campus to share valuable insights into careers and apprenticeships within the company.

The session featured former student Emily, who completed her BTEC Creative Digital Media Production course at the College in July 2024 and has since secured a competitive apprenticeship with BNP Paribas Personal Finance UK. Emily returned to speak with current students about her journey from the College to employment, offering a first-hand account of the application process, what it is like to be an apprentice and the real-world challenges and successes she has encountered so far.

Students also heard from Tanya Gamble, Operations, Training and Academy Manager at BNP Paribas Personal Finance UK. Tanya gave an engaging presentation about the company's mission, values and the wide range of roles available. She also focused on the importance of employability skills, offering practical advice on how learners can stand out in a competitive job market and successfully transition from education into the workplace.

Emily commented: "It was an amazing opportunity to return to the College and tell the students about my career path. It's important for all students to be aware about all the different possibilities after leaving college and hopefully my story inspired the Year 12s into looking at future opportunities in degree apprenticeships."

In addition, Media and Film students were inspired by the success of a former student Edward Halstead, who came back into College to talk about his success in the world of film.

After leaving Solihull, he studied at the University of Salford, where he graduated with a First-Class Honours degree. He then progressed to the New York Film Academy in Los Angeles, completing a Master of Fine Arts in Filmmaking. His final project, a short film titled 1UP, marked the culmination of his time there and has since received praise for its creativity and ambition.

In his Question-and-Answer session, Edward spoke about the advantages of attending university, as well as the importance of the foundational skills developed during college that continue to support his professional journey. He shared personal experiences and insights into the filmmaking industry, providing valuable advice for students considering creative careers.

Alex Marcu a Creative Media student commented: "Having the opportunity to personally speak to Edward was really inspirational and insightful and it gave me the chance to learn how I can progress in the film industry through networking."



# TRANSLATION COMMENDATION

A Modern Languages student has been commended the Midlands Regional Prize in the Anthea Bell Translation Competition this year.

Year 12 student Violet Brocklehurst has received a commendation in the prestigious translation competition. There were over 22,000 entries from over 300 schools in the competition, which is run by Queen's College, University of Oxford. The competition presents learners with the opportunity to translate texts at four different age levels from French, Welsh, German, Spanish and Mandarin into English.

Violet is currently in his first year of studying A level German, English Literature and Fine Art and worked in the German category of the competition. She translated a passage from 'Kurz vor dem Rand' by Eva Rottman. This text was written in a diary form and described Ari meeting up with her friends at a skate park, when a new boy, Tom, shows up.

Violet commented: "I decided to take part in this competition, because I

wanted to challenge and to prove to myself that I have the ability to do well if I really push myself. Although I am hoping to pursue a degree in English, I do not want to completely discontinue my German, as I strongly believe that learning a second language is very important. Not only do languages remove the language barrier, but they also allow you to fully immerse yourself in and truly appreciate other people's cultures, and shows a willingness to learn. Whilst being fluent in a second language is highly impressive, even learning basic phrases can go a long

way."

German Teacher, Jane Weatherup, added: "We are delighted for Violet and congratulate her on her success. It was great to see her pushing herself with this challenge and it will stand Violet in good stead when it comes to making higher education applications."

Violet hopes to work in publishing in the future, after studying English at university.



# TEAM GAMBIA FUNDRAISING

Students on the Team Gambia Volunteering project have been raising money at the end of term.

They held cake sales at the Welcome to College Day event for new students, as well as at the Summit Learning Trust Conference. The annual Gambia Quiz Night also took place with teams of staff, students and parents, as well as some ex-staff playing along.

Summit Deputy CEO Kully Uppal drew the winning ticket for the chocolate raffle at the Trust Conference.



# TRUST AWARDS FOR YEAR 12

Nearly 400 learners and staff members were honoured at the Summit Learning Trust Awards Ceremony, held at The Great Hall at the University of Birmingham in June.

Among those students were Year 12 learners, who won awards for progress and achievement in front of an audience of other learners, families, staff members and guests.

From academic progress to creative talent, personal resilience to community leadership, awards were given to learners who truly represent Summit's values of excellence, effort and ambition.

The Trust was proud to welcome Colonel Dr. Heidi Doughty OBE OSTJ TD DL, who represented the Lord-

Lieutenant of the West Midlands, and Abigail Vlahakis MBA DL. The awards were presented by Colonel Dr. Heidi Doughty OBE OSTJ TD DL during the evening. Their presence added special significance to the event and demonstrated strong civic support for the work taking place across the trust.

The event featured individual awards from all Summit schools and guests were also treated to a beautiful musical performance from Solihull Sixth Form student Sophie Brown, singing What Baking Can Do. The evening embodied Summit's



mission to deliver exceptional education, care and opportunity, not only preparing learners for exams, but for life.

## Y10 & Y11 TASTER DAYS

The 2024/25 academic year has concluded with tasters for Year 10 and Year 11.

Welcome to College Day took place on 3 July, with all those students who have offers for September invited in to try out their courses ahead of joining next term. Learners were invited to try a fourth subject too, in case any were thinking of changing their subjects. They also got a taste of extra-curricular activities with an Enrichment Fair in the Sports Hall.

For Year 10s, it was learners from Cockshut Hill, Lyndon, Ninestiles, Hall Green and Yardleys who came in to get a head start on their post-16 options. They will be making their college applications from October onwards, but the event on 7 July was the chance to start thinking about college life and the options open to them.



# DUKE OF EDINBURGH EXPEDITIONS



Students who chose Duke of Edinburgh for their enrichment have been taking part in expeditions this term.

The College offers both Bronze and Silver Awards and both involve expeditions in the local area. By participating, these students have developed key skills of goal setting, problem solving, self-discipline, independence and teamwork while building confidence and meeting new people, some of whom may become lifelong friends.

As part of the scheme, students are also required to complete voluntary work and learners have done this in a variety of different ways.

## HAMPTON IN GOAL FOR LIONESSES

An ex-student turned successful female professional footballer is currently representing England in the Women's European Champions.

Hannah Hampton is the No. 1 choice goalkeeper for the England Lionesses and is out in Switzerland for the 2025 Women's euros, following the retirement of Mary Earps. Hannah studied at the College from 2016-2018 and during her studies began her playing career at Birmingham City. She moved onto Aston Villa in 2021, before signing for Chelsea in 2023.

She was part of the England Lionesses squad that won the Women's European Championships in 2022, but has only recently stepped up to be first choice goalkeeper.

The matches played so far in the Euros have seen the Lionesses lose their opening group match against France 2-1, followed by a 4-0 win against the Netherlands.

The final group game will be against Wales, with the Lionesses hoping to progress beyond the group stage and defend their 2022 crown.



# GIRLS FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

The Girls Football Team won the league title this season, making them the third sports team from the College this year to claim silverware.

Playing in the ECFA West Midlands Women's Regional League, the girls won seven of their matches this season, including an impressive 16-0 over South and City College in March.

Their closest rivals for the title were Hereford Sixth Form College, who the girls defeated 5-4 just before Easter. They followed that up with a 4-4 away to King Edward VI College Nuneaton last week to bring a highly successful and enjoyable season to a close.

Sport and Health Curriculum Leader Lee Jones commented: "Congratulations to the Girls Football Team on a well-deserved success. They become the third sports team from the College this year to win their league, following success for in Men's Football and Netball. I'm proud of the determination and teamwork all our teams have demonstrated this season and delighted that it has been rewarded."

Also in Sport this term, learners participated in the annual Sports Day. The event was open to all learners who wished to participate. There were 100m and 400m races, throwing competitions and of course egg and spoon races, with both male and female competitions. Medals were awarded for those that came



first and second, with the winners being Dan Hankinson and Lauren Ashley. Also placed were Isaac Fee and Aaron Johnson for the Boys and Lola Struthers and Sophie Kimber (joint second) and Kiyanna-Grace Davis in the Girls competition.

Sports Activities Co-ordinator Michael Westmacott organised the event and commented: "It was hot out on the playing fields and competitors needed to keep themselves hydrated to participate. It was great to see learners getting involved in Sports Day and participate with such enthusiasm. I'm also grateful to the staff and students who volunteered to help run the events."

The Sports Day and the regular recreational sporting activities that take place are not only an opportunity for learners to get

involved in the wider College community, but also a chance to get away from studying and concentrate on their physical and mental wellbeing.



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