

The Sheiling Ringwood

Newsletter

December 2023



Creative Christmas

Our students love being creative and hands-on throughout the year, but Christmas is a particularly special time where it becomes even more magical to share in festive crafts and cheer. This year, our Christmas activities once more brought us all together as a community through shared experience. Wonderful craft activities designed by staff and a range of festive and natural materials, coupled with love, care and attention from students, staff and their families made for some magical moments at our Christmas craft afternoon.

We were delighted to share in some lovely moments with families working on their activities and joyful faces throughout the event, especially during a visit from the comical Grinch! Seeing so many fantastic Christmas jumpers and outfits made for a truly special afternoon to launch the festive period at The Sheiling Ringwood.



Laughter in the leaves

At The Sheiling Ringwood, we treasure both smiling faces and helpful hands! Our younger school students recently shone in demonstrating these with infectious spirit. They wrapped up and energetically explored the colours and textures of Autumn across our beautiful site for all seasons. They also helped with clearing leaves to keep pathways safe and they did a fantastic job.



Titanic trip

Earlier in the term, Yellow Group in college took learning beyond the classroom and into the Sea City Titanic Museum in Southampton.

They discovered more about the story of RMS Titanic and how the tragedy affected the city and people of Southampton.

Students explored an interactive model of the Titanic, were able to listen to recorded messages of its passengers of the fateful night and see original objects from on board the world-famous ship.

Learning about the history of Southampton, settlers, docks and WWII connections were all part of the day. Students particularly enjoyed the many costumes, artworks and photographs.



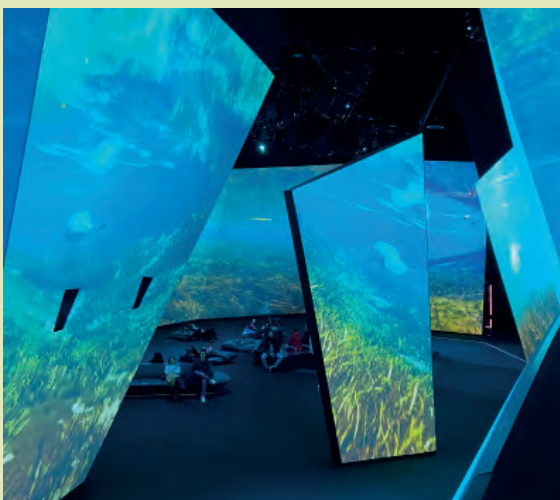
Wonders of the world

To support classroom learning, Kessi's class enjoyed a wondrous day trip with a special visit to The Daikin Centre at London's Earl's Court. Students were visiting the BBC Earth Experience which showcases breathtaking footage and music from the BBC Studios' Natural History Unit television series Seven Worlds, One Planet, projected on multiple multi-angle screens using the very latest digital screen technology.

All of the school students found this transformative audio-visual experience enchanting and the immersive nature of it very special. Students and staff described the day as unforgettable and a journey through the natural world and its 'awesome' diversity is one they feel lucky to have been part of.

The class were able to choose their own route through the experience in order to absorb the beauty of the 7 continents. Amongst the highlights were a forest full of fireflies, a colourful carpet of starfish and four-tonne elephant seals. They really did get to experience the beauty of life on each of the seven continents and, importantly, students were also able to learn a little more about the challenges faced by nature in a modern world.

The students were impeccably behaved throughout the day and represented themselves and school brilliantly.



Chair of Trustees

Hello. My name is Jon Freeman and I am very pleased to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the newly appointed Chair of the Sheiling's Board of Trustees and talk about why I am involved.

I have been associated with the Sheiling and its earlier incarnation for 18 years. Unlike my predecessors, I have not experienced being a parent of a young person receiving Special Education. I don't know what it is like to be in your shoes and have arrived here by a different route. My youngest son (in modern parlance "neuro-diverse") attended the Steiner-Waldorf School just nearby. I was a Council member there and first learned a little about Steiner anthroposophy, and more about governance in a Steiner-oriented organisation. When his time there was over, I was invited "up the hill" to join the Council of a rather different Sheiling School than you see today. At that time, there was no college, and the school was struggling to evolve as conditions and expectations changed. Those were challenging times.

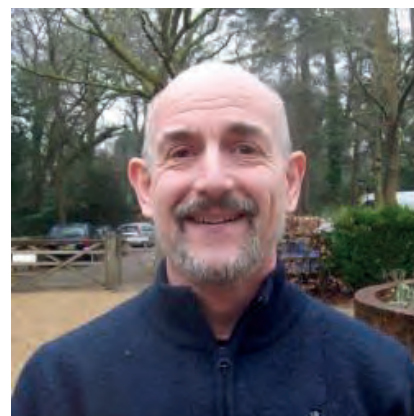
Unlike many of my fellow Board members, I don't even have professional experience in care or education or school management. In taking on the role of Chair, I am very grateful for their considerable expertise and their close engagement supporting various aspects of the work. It is a strong team. I believe we work closely and supportively alongside an exceptional leadership team with an extraordinary leader. The challenges are now very different, more positive, with a strong intention to sustain what has been developed and to improve further.

What I bring to this mix comes in two main ways. I had a significant career in the corporate world, working for several major organisations. I learned a lot about how complex systems work and even though the Sheiling is at a much smaller scale, it is among the most complex organisations I know. It is also directly responsible for the life of individuals to a far higher degree, and much more closely scrutinised. Over the years, I like to think I have developed some feeling for what this involves.

Alongside my corporate career, I was very engaged in understanding myself and other people. Learning a little about Rudolf Steiner and Camphill fitted alongside a long-time interest in psychology

(originally a part of my degree) and in the nature of organisational culture and ethos. In recent decades, I have been operating as a consultant in organisational development, a leadership

trainer and coach, and also as an author on science and spirituality and on the ethics of economic behaviour and systems. I was previously a founder director of the Conscious Capitalism UK chapter and am now a director of a small but leading-edge consultancy, Future Considerations, as well as crafting my own developmental materials on how we adapt our mindsets to meet the challenges that current life conditions are bringing to the world and to all of us as individuals.



Over the years, I have come to feel very close to the Sheiling. The relevance of the background I have described is that while the Sheiling's roots are in Steiner's theories of education, well-being and the human spirit, those theories can seem obscure and hard to understand. Yet beneath all the issues of what the Sheiling does, sit some deeper impulses of why we do what we do, and of the quality that we bring, the way that staff relate to your child and to you.

Today's expression of such theories and principles must show up in a daily reality in the modern world and I think that they do. Those aspects are hard to describe but I believe that they are what you feel beneath the surface, something that is almost in the air that we breathe when we come onto the Sheiling's grounds. They are what the Ofsted inspectors felt and recognised in their recent report.

My own part in all this is small, but it is important to me, and is what motivates me to remain involved. The chaos and complexity scientist Ilya Prigogine wrote "When a system is far from equilibrium, small islands of coherence have the capacity to shift the entire system." The way I see it, your young people are "far from equilibrium systems" in whom

the Sheiling approach fosters personal islands of coherence. In the midst of the chaos that affects our society and our care systems, we are subject to many stresses and the Sheiling also strives for sustainable coherence. I hope that is what you and your children will continue to feel. It may be

too much to expect for that to ripple out into the wider system, even though the Ofsted inspectors encouraged us to share the recipe. I hope that we can. If that affects anything wider, that will be a bonus.

Jon

Seasonal festivals

The vibrant festival calendar we all look forward to has continued with huge amounts of enthusiasm once again this year.

Students decorated jars for a magical lantern walk - which was truly impressive for 2023 - with lantern-lit canopied walkways and splendid songs from students and staff in full voice.

Students also learned more about poetry and art for Remembrance Day and felt the enchantment of walking the Advent spiral, which is always one of our most memorable occasions.

Students are now eagerly anticipating Christmas which shows in all of their class work but also in the spirited carol singing that we have had the pleasure of hearing. We have also seen some wonderful Christmas jumpers and decorative hats as students make their way around the site.



Contribute and connect with the Parent Forum & Discord

During the Autumn term, the Parent Forum's October meeting focussed on The Sheiling Ringwood approach to Positive Behaviour Support (PBS). This was a subject area of interest suggested by parents in the previous meeting and we were able to share our approach to PBS, how we record and how we develop our PBS/Joint Therapy Plans.

At the next Parent Forum, we welcome one of our wonderful Sheiling Trustees, Janet. Janet will share how support from outside of the Sheiling can be explored to benefit students and their families.

Following the successful MCA workshop and transitions event for parents and carers held in October, feedback suggested that our parents would value time allocated to meet one another informally, to network and connect. In response

to this, we have scheduled 2:00pm – 3.30pm on February 9th 2024, just before student collection at the end of the day (reminder leaflet attached).

This session will also provide the opportunity to meet informally with our visiting Nutritionist, PBS team and Kirsty, our Transitions Lead. We would love to see as many parents, carers and family members as possible.

We continue to welcome all families to the Parent Forum. There is also the opportunity to connect outside of these termly meetings by joining other parents on the private chat platform, Discord.

<https://discord.com/invite/2G7trfWhuq>

There is no pressure to join and if you feel another platform could be more suitable, we always welcome suggestions from families.

Fundraising update

A massive thank you to the team at The Fish Inn, Ringwood who have held their fantastic quiz nights in support of The Sheiling Ringwood throughout this year. Their final event is a very special Christmas Quiz Night on Tuesday 19th December. There are a few spaces still available – please call The Fish Inn 01425 473185.

Thank you to Somerley Park Golf Club for choosing to support us as their charity of the year. They donated a wonderful £800 which will go towards supporting our fundraising projects to build a new purpose-designed playground and outdoor exercise trail.

Thank you to the 'Sounds Like Fun Fordingbridge Choir' for choosing to support us through their recent performance, donating a lovely £436.87.

A recent message accompanying a donation we received summed up how The Sheiling Ringwood is such a special place, and how long it has been supporting young people and their families;

'My youngest brother Barry was at The Sheiling for ten years, to our recollection 1961-1971. He died in July this year just after his seventieth birthday. We are minded to make a donation to the Sheiling in gratitude for the excellent support he had in his adolescent years. The Rudolf Steiner approach to children with severe mental and behavioural disabilities was a blessing to Barry and his family.'

David Swain



If you're interested in supporting for us, either by holding your own fundraising activities or volunteering for us, please contact **Rachel** via fundraising@thesheilingringwood.co.uk or call **01425 477488**.

Supporting others

The festival of St. Martin encourages us to share warmth and light with others.

This festival celebrates hope and kindness to help others and be the good in the world.

As a community, we collected generous contributions of warm clothing suitable for men, women and children. Several sacks of warm clothes, scarves, hats, socks and winter coats have now been delivered to St Mungo's charity for distribution to those who need additional support.



The best for our students

This term, Jenny our Positive Behaviour Support Lead, was awarded a well-deserved PROACT SCIPr-UK Instructor of the Year 2023 Award.

Jenny commented, 'Winning the award for PROACT SCIPr-UK Instructor of the Year 2023 really means a lot to me. This year is my 20th year supporting people with additional needs and this award feels like a celebration of the career I have chosen and love so much. I have admiration for everyone working within care and hope they too can receive the recognition they deserve for the job that they do.'

With several successes that have brought high accolades this year, we hope we continue into 2024 continuing to be the best for our students.



Tasty Treats

Our college entrepreneurs have been busy again with their fabulous flavours of relish from 'Relish the Moment'.

Students confidently visited different office buildings and classrooms offering tasting samples and recording feedback. Just a week or two later, they had been busy chopping, cooking, decanting and labelling ready to deliver.

We were spoilt for choice but most impressive was the range of student skills on show from communication, cooking and design skills through to calculations for pricing. Excellent entrepreneurs.



Superstar students

We have very engaged students and families who support and fundraise for us at The Sheiling Ringwood but also generously for other good causes that are important to them. We love hearing about all the worthy efforts and adventures. Recently, a college student with a keen interest in the RNLI, and whose family are long-time supporters of the charity, took part in the RNLI Reindeer Run at Moors Valley Country Park.

Staff in Westmount house helped to create a poster which was sent to his family and friends at home who, in turn shared it onwards to raise money for the RNLI. For his superstar effort, an impressive £865 was raised for the RNLI.

The RNLI 1km Reindeer Saunter was enjoyed by our fantastic fundraising student, his family, a supportive friend from college and our energetic house staff!



University life

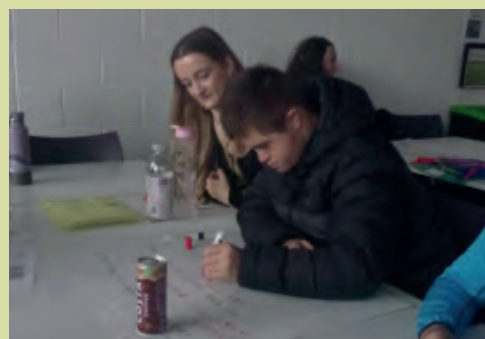
As a result of a growing professional network and peer working by college teachers and Winchester University staff, Silver and Yellow Groups from college were invited to Winchester University.

Sheiling students took part in a shared lesson with first year university Health and Social Care undergraduates, followed by lunch together in the campus cafeteria.

Sheiling students were incredible, making the staff involved in the visit feel very proud. Teacher Ceri commented, 'the group took to university life like ducks to water.'

College would like to extend thanks to all involved in ensuring we can continue to push the boundaries of opportunity for our students and enabling early starts and different adventures!

Reinforcing our commitment to SEND opportunities and development of university pathways, the college is also a member of the Inclusion in Higher Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities UK advocacy group (IHE UK) founded by Sue Carpenter 3 years ago. Participants of the group alongside Sheiling College now include colleagues from the Center for Studies in Inclusion, Winchester University, the Tizard Centre at the University of Kent, the Minstead Trust, Diversity and Ability together with supportive advocates from the USA and members of the Centre for Research in Inclusion.



Policy reminder

A reminder that our regulatory policies and our Statement of Purpose are reviewed regularly and are uploaded to our website for easy access. To view, please visit our website, www.thesheilingringwood.co.uk.

However, if you would like a hard copy, this can be accommodated, please just get in touch.

Dates for your Diary



Christmas Break

16th December - 1st January 2024

(inclusive)

Half Term

10th February - 18th February 2024

(inclusive)

Easter Break

27th March - 14th April 2024

(inclusive)

Our environment

We are all very appreciative of the rich, inspiring and therapeutic woodland site that we are nestled in. We are also thankful to our Facilities Team and their fantastic work in maintaining and developing our grounds and facilities.

This term has seen the finalising and next steps of varied projects coupled with the exciting development of new ideas for future improvements.

Watchmoor House kitchen upgrade was completed along with Hawthorn college offices refurbishment. Outdoor areas also received upgrades and refurbishment.

New plans are currently in the development stage for a purpose-built double classroom with teachers space and outdoor learning area. We are hopeful for the building to be as close to carbon neutral as possible and will endeavour that build and design features reflect this.

Our Sheiling Bees finished the year in fine form producing 105 jars of honey which were distributed during festivals for staff and students to enjoy and sold in Reception with only a handful of jars remaining!

Not be left out of the Christmas theme, the team has been able to distribute our reusable potted Christmas trees to classrooms and houses. It is so lovely to know we get joy from them each year as they grow!



Social media

We are keeping our X (@sheilingringwd), Facebook (@sheilingringwood), Instagram (thesheilingringwood) and LinkedIn (The Sheiling Ringwood) pages up-to-date. So check them out to see what is happening across the campus, events, see great new pictures and even keep in touch. Our YouTube channel (The Sheiling Ringwood) is another fantastic source of information and activities or you could link with us on our new addition of Instagram (thesheilingringwood).



Enjoy the Festive Break

The Sheiling Ringwood

Parent Forum

Forum

- Key departmental information
- Spotlight on 'accessing support' (from outside of The Sheiling Ringwood)
- Ideas/topics for the next Parent Forum meeting to be shared before the next meeting, please.

Save the date:

Friday 9th February 2024

2:00pm - 3:30pm An in-person network event for parents with an opportunity to speak with our Nutritionist, PBS Team and Transitions Lead.

Join us on Teams
7:00pm - 8:00pm

Wednesday
7th February 2024

For new attendees, call 01425 482451

or email health@thesheilingringwood.co.uk

thesheilingringwood.co.uk

