

The
Thomas Hardy
School

Newsletter



Summer #1
2026



Welcome

I am writing this on the afternoon of Friday 22nd May, having just returned from the school field where our outgoing Year 11 have covered themselves with ink and glory. We always seem to be lucky with the weather on 'shirt-signing day', and the laughter and affection between the students, their tutors and teachers is joyful. If a week is a long time in politics, three years is a lifetime in education, and the difference between the 13 year olds who arrived in 2023 and the 16 year olds who leave us today is profound. They are taller, cleverer, more confident and understanding of themselves and others, and we are very proud of all of them. Having bid farewell to our Year 13s earlier this week (a slightly more restrained cream-tea in the sixth form centre), we wish every success and happiness to all our departing

students and look forward to hearing how they all get on in their next adventures.

For our Year 9 and 10 students, next term the school goes Smartphone free, and staff have been preparing for this all term. It goes without saying that we are making this change because we are confident it is in the best interests of your children, and we rely on your support in making sure students understand and are on board with the new expectations.

The commodities of concentration, attention and social interaction are key for success in school, and we know that going Smartphone free will support our students in developing these key attributes.

There is so much to look forward to in our final half-term, from trips and visits to plays and

concerts, prize-giving evening and the transition events for our new cohort of Year 9s who will be joining us in September. Until then, please enjoy our newsletter, with all the usual updates on what our students have been up to, and their many incredible achievements.

The weather is set fair all week and I wish all students and their families a happy break in the sunshine.

With all best wishes
Nick Rutherford
HEADTEACHER

Newsletter design,
editing & layout:
Caroline Lester

COVER IMAGE: CCF AT RNAS YEOVILTON FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, more on page 1.
Image courtesy of Mrs Williams

Thanks to all contributors for their help with this issue





INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

A group of girls recently attended the

Royal Navy's International Women's Day at Yeovilton, where they learnt about STEM careers in the Navy and other opportunities available to women. The students were especially excited to hear from the women pilots who fly Wildcat and Merlin helicopters, and to try on the uniform the pilots use in their day-to-day role. There was also a Q&A session so they could hear what life is like in the Navy and the training opportunities available. They enjoyed a short weather forecasting lesson, which showed the vital role weather forecasts play in the Navy. A special thank you to Mrs Jones in THS Careers for helping the CCF organise and run this trip.

Mrs Williams



LORD-LIEUTENANT'S CADET

Staff Sergeant Finn Hadgett (Y12) has been

selected to be the Combined Cadet Force Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet for Dorset for 2026 - 2027. SSgt Hadgett will be invested into the role in a ceremony at the Corn Exchange in October. His role will be aide-de-camp to His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset, Mr Michael Dooley, at civil engagements, royal visits and other high-profile events. It is one of the top honours that a cadet can receive during their cadet force career. Army Section Commander Capt. Chris Copson said, "Staff Hadgett is, quite simply, an exemplary cadet who embodies the values of courage, respect, discipline, integrity, loyalty and selfless commitment. Keen, intelligent, well organised and resourceful, he is an outstanding role model to younger Cadets, bringing energy and enthusiasm to everything he undertakes." CCF Contingent Commander Maj Kevin Matthews said, "I'm delighted that THS has another Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet. Staff Hadgett will do the school, the CCF and himself very proud, I can think of very few as worthy of this honour."

Maj Matthews

Diversity Group



LOGO COMPETITION SUCCESS FOR ELLIE

The Thomas Hardye School Diversity Group held a design competition recently for a new logo. The competition was won by **Ellie Coulson** of IONW, her winning entry is below. This new logo is fully reflective of the protected characteristics seen within the school.

Mr Matthews

Dance



THS ALUMNI FLYING HIGH!

This year I have had the pleasure of seeing two of our past Performing Arts A-Level students performing professionally in prestigious roles. Both performances blew me away.

Some staff will remember the beautiful voice of **Bronte Shande (Kirkby)** who is currently touring internationally, fronting the original Amy Winehouse Band, see *image above*. After leaving us, Bronte furthered her vocal training at BIM before launching her career as a musician/vocalist.

Charlotte Anne Steen, see *image left*, who has performed in many professional musicals, is currently appearing in *Wicked* in the West End as part of the ensemble and also as understudy for Elphaba. I had the privilege of seeing her in this leading role last month, WOW!

As rehearsals for our school musical gain momentum, it struck me that both students were heavily involved in Performing Arts extra-curricular provision, and both had leading roles in our school musicals. How fantastic that the school had a role to play in the successful careers of these young people.

Mrs Ncube

Music



MUSICIAMS PERFORM UNDER HELIOS

On 28th March, our students performed as part of the launch event for Luke Jerram's Helios at Dorchester Arts. There were performances by the cello quintet playing Also Sprach Zarathustra and Grieg's Morning and Thomas Hardy Singers singing Esensvald's Stars. We also had a world premier **Freya Murray's** (Yr13), composition called 'Incandescence', which was written especially for the event. It was a magical evening!

For more news and information on the music department, visit: <https://music.wessex.ac/thomas-hardye-school-music-department.html> **or follow us on Facebook and Instagram @ths_music_dept**



INTO THE WOODS

Tickets for this year's musical 'Into the Woods' by Stephen Sondheim are now on sale and can be bought online here: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/events/landing/112047>

The musical will feature a cast of around 80 on stage, plus an orchestra of 20 and a stage crew of around 30. Please do come and support the hard work that everyone has put into bringing this production to life!

Music



ARTS FEST 2026

On Saturday 9th May, we held our annual Arts Fest. As in previous years, we held a comprehensive programme of performances for people to drop into in the theatre, the outside band area, and the performing arts block, featuring ensembles, soloists, musical theatre and drama groups. We also had a range of workshops for all ages to participate in throughout the day. In addition, we created a scratch orchestra (with around 80 people playing Copland's Rodeo-Hoedown, a streetband where people performed Uptown Funk (with dancers!), and a ceilidh. Around 900 people attended throughout the day. We were grateful to have support from Dorset Music Service and our team of Visiting Music Teachers to make it happen. Here's our film about the day:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KHgHKg8X_g

PE



GOLF

Well done to those who competed in the County Schools Golf Championship, with a special mention to **B. Sugg**, see *image top left*, who placed 3rd.

Alongside this, congratulations to **J. Emerton**, see *image centre*, who is now the Came Down Junior Champion.



ROUNDERS

Rounders' Club, see image top right, has had a fantastic start, with over 40 girls attending each week. The Year 10 team has already taken part in two fixtures against Colfox.

The Year 10s won both fixtures and the year 9 won one fixture and lost one fixture. The girls are building towards achieving success at the Thomas Hardye School Rounders Tournament after half term.

PE

TENNIS

The girls' team has made an exciting start to the LTA Youth Schools Competition, with their opening match against Sherborne Girls' School featuring some intense and highly competitive games. The boys' team is also entered into the competition and will begin their matches after half term.

SPORTS TIES PRESENTATIONS

Congratulations to all students who have been presented their Sports Ties, presented to those students in year 9 & 10 who have represented the school for two years.

Well done to: **U15 Girls' Netball**, see *image centre right*, who were presented their sports ties after a great County Netball Tournament; **U16 Boys' Football**, who were presented their sports ties after winning the Area Tournament for the second time with THS; **U15 Golf Team**, see *image centre left*, who were presented their sports ties after their involvement in the School's County Golf Championship.

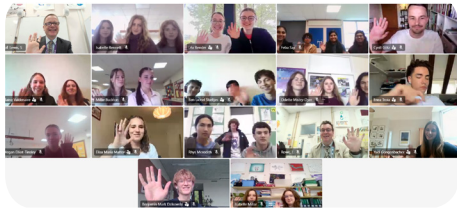


Day	Lunchtime	Afterschool
Monday	Bottom Sports Hall Only Basketball ALL Years Gym ALL Years	Year 9 and 10 Cricket Year 9 and 10 Rounders Year 9 and 10 Tennis
Tuesday	Bottom Sports Hall Only Badminton Sixth Form Only No Gym	
Wednesday	Bottom Sports Hall Only Badminton Lower School Only Gym ALL Years	Year 9 and 10 Athletics Year 9 and 10 Volleyball All Years Climbing Club Week 2 Wednesday
Thursday	Bottom Sports Hall Only Badminton ALL Years	

SUMMER CLUBS

Our Summer Term Sports Clubs are in full swing – with great numbers as we look forward to several big tournaments after half-term. No need to sign up, just turn up!

Science & STEM



GENETICS CLUB

Thirty Students from the Thomas

Hardye School Genetics club have been working with sixteen students from the Gymnasium Bäumlhof in Switzerland.

Students research the presence of a parasite called Wolbachia in UK and Swiss insects. Over two months, small groups of Swiss/UK students extracted DNA and visualised the presence or

absence of the parasite DNA.

The collaboration was managed virtually using MS Teams before being presenting in an online symposium. Feedback from the students suggested they found the project, “interesting”, “fun” and “informative”, which is always good to hear!



Mr Lewis & Dr Rowe

FLYING START CHALLENGE

Building on their huge successes at the regional

final, all 4 of our Flying Start Challenge teams attended the Grand Final held at Bristol Aerospace museum, joining over a hundred other students from other schools and regional finals. The day consisted of two STEM activities, a poster presentation and the glider fly-offs. Students also got the opportunity to explore the Bristol Aerospace Museum and go inside the Concorde on site. All teams competed really well across all the activities. Particular success to “Super Flies” who came first in the “Egg Car” STEM activity. Although no placings for the glider fly-offs, “High Fliers” did achieve something unique by landing their glider on top of Concorde! Congratulations to all students for their successes across both the regional



and grand finals and a huge well done for the hard work and commitment during the whole Flying Start STEM Challenge!

Mrs Dunford

Science & STEM



BIG BANG COMPETITION

Six Thomas Haryde teams entered the Big Bang Competition, the UK's largest science and engineering contest. Three teams received Participation Awards in recognition of their hard work and determination in STEM. These included: Algal AI Alert, Plantify, Heavy Metal Vaping.

Two teams have advanced to the finals at the NEC in Birmingham for the Big Bang Festival. Both Poseidon's Power and PropaGro have been nominated for the Energy Institute Sustainability Award 2026, while PropaGro is also in the running for The Big Bang UK Young Engineer of the Year, supported by Thales.

Each team presented their work to a panel of expert judges in renewable energy and conservation, impressing the judges with their innovation and dedication. Following this, both teams have been invited to showcase their projects at the UK's largest celebration of STEM for young people, one of the biggest youth events in the country.

Best of luck to both teams!

Mr Davis & Mr Price



Science & STEM



GREEN THUMBS ON THE GROW

Students at Thomas Hardy have been gaining *hands* on experience in the school's new kitchen gardens, planting a variety of vegetables and learning firsthand where our food comes from. The project gives students the opportunity to explore sustainable gardening and develop practical skills, while contributing to the school's fresh produce supply.

The school is seeking support from the local community. You can help by placing your blue tokens in Tesco's Stronger Start Scheme at Tesco Dorchester or by donating fruit and vegetable plants, seeds, or produce to help the garden continue to grow.

Mr Davis & Chef Ganaway

SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Three teams from Thomas Hardy – PropaGro, Algae AI, and PAI – have been awarded Honorable Mentions in the Trust for Sustainable Living Global Challenge!

The competition challenges young people worldwide to tackle real environmental and social sustainability issues in their communities, presenting creative solutions through short videos and innovative projects. With over 3,000 schools from around

the world taking part, only a select few received Honorable Mentions – making this recognition a remarkable achievement for our students.

Congratulations to our teams for their creativity, dedication and commitment to making a positive impact on the planet!

Mr Davis

Science & STEM



SAMSUNG FINAL

Sophie Cradock was invited to the finals of the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow competition after being selected from more than 2,000 teams nationwide.

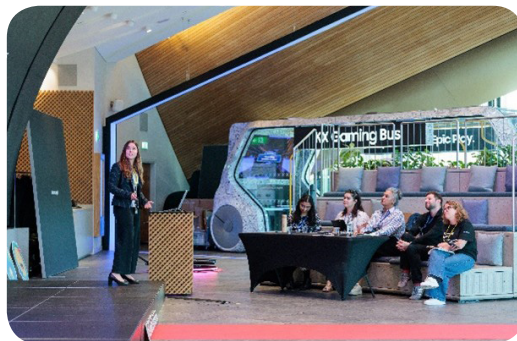
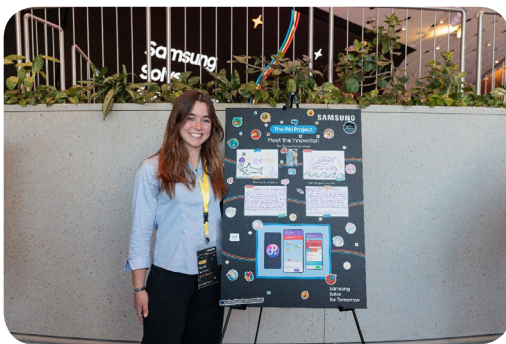
Her project used satellite data to track illegal fishing activities, showcasing an innovative approach to tackling environmental and sustainability challenges through technology.

She was required to present her project to a judging panel that included the CEO of Samsung UK and the UK Minister for Energy, making the event an exceptional opportunity to present her work to leaders in industry and government.

Sophie was also awarded the People's Choice Award in recognition of the outstanding public support for her project. The experience provided a fantastic opportunity to network and build valuable contacts within the technology sector.

Thank you to everyone who voted for and supported Sophie throughout the competition.

Mr Davis



Communication & Support

Tips for effective communication

Contact the tutor first.

For most academic and general/social concerns, the child's tutor should be your first point of contact. Email addresses follow the format of last name and then initial, no space, e.g.

jbloggs@ths.wessex.ac

Please be clear, concise and respectful.

Respect staff's working hours:

Parents should be mindful of teachers' workload and should not expect a response to emails immediately. Many staff are part-time, and teachers are not expected to respond to emails outside of the usual working day.

- **Family support and advice line** - 01305 228558
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/family-help-in-dorset>
- **Samaritans** (116 123) -
Free, 24/7 support line for anyone struggling
- **Shout Crisis Text Line** - Text "SHOUT" to 85258 (24/7)
- **YoungMinds Parents Helpline** (0808 802 5544) -
For advice on supporting your child
- **Connection** - Dorset's 24/7 Mental Health Helpline
- **Call 0800 652 0190** (free, open to all ages) -
This NHS service offers round-the-clock support for anyone in Dorset experiencing a mental health crisis, including parents concerned about their children

Safeguarding & Guidance Leaders

Year 9 Mrs Kelly
ckelly@ths.wessex.ac

Year 10 Miss Gosling
jgosling@ths.wessex.ac

Year 11 Mrs Morgan
cmorgan@ths.wessex.ac

Year 12 & 13 Miss Tinsley
atinsley@ths.wessex.ac

***If your concern is urgent,
please contact the school office:***

**Monday - Friday
8:30am - 4:30pm**

admin@ths.wessex.ac
01305 266064

Report an absence from 8.40am:

<https://www.ths.wessex.ac/for-parents/report-an-absence>

Mrs Noble

FOOTBALL CHALLENGE ON FILM - CAN YOU HELP?

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup approaching, The Prince of Wales School is launching an exclusive community project to unite Dorchester in support of the Three Lions.

We have recorded a local anthem, "Bring It Home Boys" and we want the people of Dorchester (adults and children) to be the stars of the official music video. We are inviting everyone to take part in this "Community Challenge" over the upcoming half-term.

The Plan: We would be incredibly grateful if you could share the attached communication with your families. We are looking for short clips of Dorchester residents singing, cheering and waving flags to be edited into a final "Dorchester Mega-Cut" music video.

DEADLINE: Clips must be sent by **6pm** on **Thursday 28th May** to:

headteacher@princeofwales.dorset.sch.uk

**Miss Bright
on behalf of Mr Spracklen**

JOHN MUIR AWARD

Thomas Hardy School is now a certified 'provider' of the international John Muir Award for nature conservation for 2026-2027.

Forty SEND students have received their Wild Places Guardian Award certificates from the John Muir Trust for contributing to the conservation, protection and restoration of wild places.

They undertook a variety of conservation work with members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) at Arne nature reserve near Wareham over a number of weeks.

Mr Oliphant

Dates

SUMMER TERM

half-term:

all students return:

last day of term:

Monday 25th May - Friday 29th May

Monday 1st June

Friday 17th July