



THE EAGLE

Message from the Headteacher

December has been a very busy month, particularly for Year 11 who have sat their GCSE mock examinations. We are delighted with their mature manner and excellent behaviour which bodes well for the final examination series in the summer of 2026.

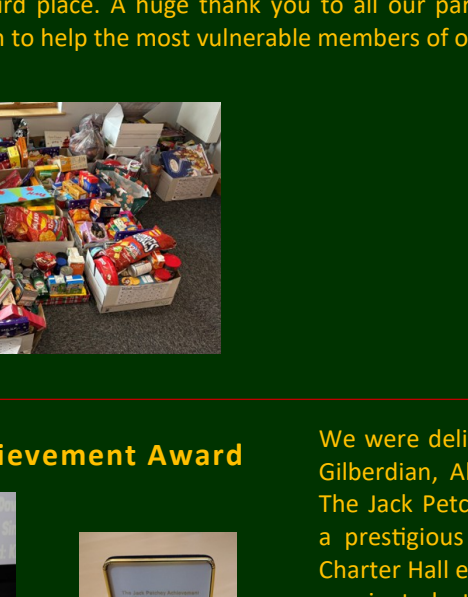
Year 10 students have been taking part in interviews for the next round of senior student leadership roles. As always, the quality of students' written applications has been impressive, as are the oracy skills that they have demonstrated in their interviews with staff. Throughout this term, all Year 7 Gilberdians have taken part in speaking workshops to build their confidence and skills in the art of public speaking. The important life skill of oracy threads through students' time at The Gilberd; in January every Year 10 student will have a mock interview with a member of our CEIAG community to practise their interview skills.

There have also been many co-curricular events and trips, culminating in our spectacular Winter Concert, which you can read about below.

Please visit the Gilberd Facebook page to read more about the positive achievements of our students, including the many sporting fixtures that take place.

Finally, I'd like to wish all members of The Gilberd School community a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Mr J Mitchell
Headteacher



Reverse Advent Calendar 2025

Year 7 and Year 8 Gilberdians were tasked with the challenge of donating items to provide much needed supplies for Colchester Foodbank this half term and they certainly rose to the challenge. The students excelled themselves, filling boxes with soup, tinned fish, biscuits, cereal, shower gel, shampoo and many other essentials.

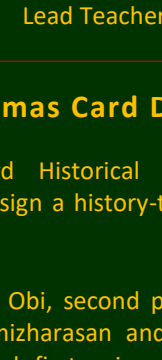
The House Captains proudly delivered their boxes and were delighted to discover that the grand total of donations weighed an incredible 327 kgs!

Penney were the house winners, with Shackleton close behind in second place and Franklin securing third place. A huge thank you to all our parents and carers for supporting your children to help the most vulnerable members of our community.

Mrs A Phillips
Assistant Head of Year 7



Jack Petchey Achievement Award



We were delighted to learn that Year 11 Gilberdian, Abigail Sayers, was awarded The Jack Petchey Achievement Award at a prestigious awards ceremony held at Charter Hall earlier this term. Abigail was nominated through the Girl Guides Association. Abigail attends the Braiswick Girl Guides Unit as a Ranger. Her award is in recognition of the hard work, kindness and support that she exhibits as a Ranger. Very well done Abigail!

Miss A Bird
Deputy Headteacher

Gilberd Bake Off 2025

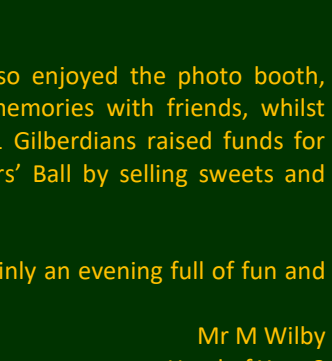
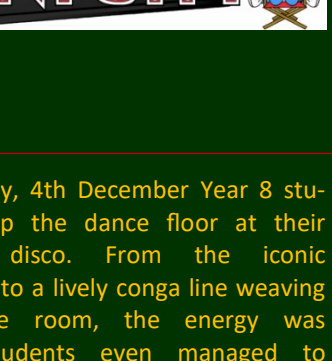


Congratulations to all those students who took part in this academic year's Gilberd Bake Off. The cakes made to represent the six Houses of The Gilberd were very impressive.

One cake was chosen by each of the House Captains to go through to the final round which was judged by Mr Mitchell and Miss Bird.

The overall positions were:
1st place – Shackleton
Maya Pawlowski 7yDSN
2nd place – Holmes
Ivy Karantzis 8yKHU
3rd place – Franklin
Amber O'Donoghue 7yKQU
4th place – Austen
Charlotte Pang 8yTWH
5th place – Wren
Lily Hart, Shelby Chiwora
and Ruby Newton 10yLBE
6th place – Penney
Aylin Bulbul 7yLYA

Mrs J Clark
Lead Teacher of Humanities



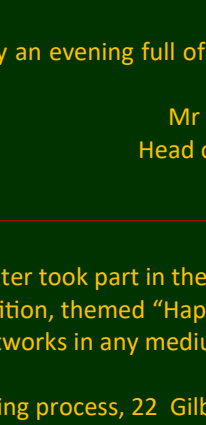
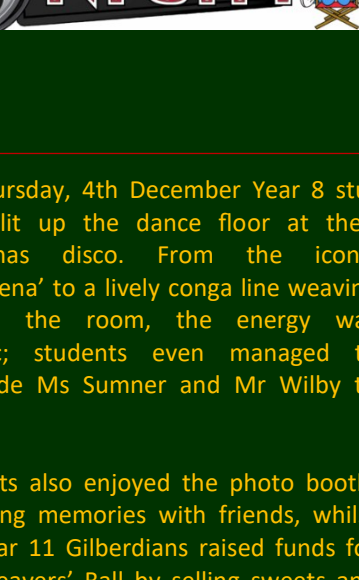
History Society Christmas Card Design

This month, The Gilberd Historical Society challenged members to design a history-themed Christmas card.

Third place went to Felicia Obi, second place to Rico Cox, and Riya Thamizharasan and Chloe O'Donoghue jointly claimed first prize, with a brilliantly imaginative design featuring Queen Victoria, Shakespeare and a plague doctor, wishing everyone "A Christmas as dazzling as the Field of the Cloth of Gold."

We look forward to further meetings in 2026.

Miss J Lambert
Subject Leader of History



Year 7 Christmas Film Night

On Wednesday, 3rd December, 230 Year 7 students, dressed in an array of Christmas hats and jumpers, spent a festive evening in our PA Block.

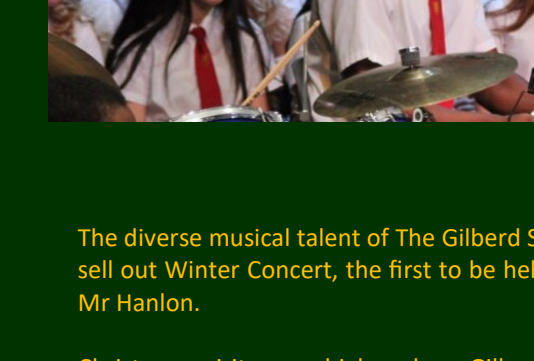
Students drank hot chocolate with marshmallows and cream and ate popcorn and sweets as they watched the Christmas movie "Elf."

The evening's finale was a wonderful chorus of 'Santa Claus is coming to Town'.

Mrs A Phillips
Assistant Head of Year 7



Year 8 Christmas Disco



On Thursday, 4th December Year 8 students lit up the dance floor at their Christmas disco. From the iconic 'Macarena' to a lively conga line weaving around the room, the energy was electric; students even managed to persuade Ms Sumner and Mr Wilby to dance!

Students also enjoyed the photo booth, capturing memories with friends, whilst our Year 11 Gilberdians raised funds for their Leavers' Ball by selling sweets and drinks.

It was certainly an evening full of fun and laughter.

Mr M Wilby
Head of Year 8

Rotary Club Art Competition



Students across Colchester took part in the annual Rotary Club Art Competition, themed "Happiness in Nature", creating 2D artworks in any medium.

After a challenging judging process, 22 Gilberdians were named finalists and attended an awards evening on 28 November.

Fleur Gregory was Senior Runner-Up, while Charlotte Pang won the Intermediate section. Charlotte's artwork now advances to the Rotary District level, with the chance to compete nationally.

Congratulations to all participants and especially our finalists for their amazing achievements!

Ms N Sayer-Schofield
Curriculum Leader of Art, Technology & Computing

Gilberd Students Shine at Christmas Bash VEX IQ Competition

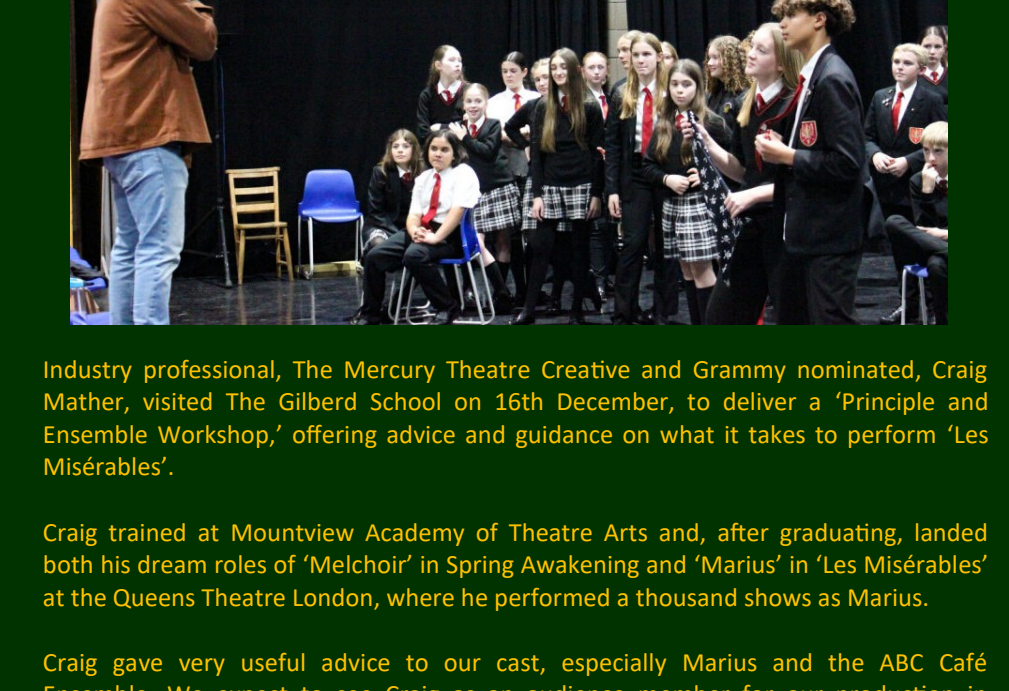
On 17th December, a group of highly talented Gilberd School students competed in the Christmas Bash VEX IQ Robotics Competition at St Helena School. Facing strong competition from across the region, every student showed exceptional teamwork, resilience, and problem-solving skills.

While we did not qualify for the national finals on this occasion, we are proud of our Gilberdians' efforts and are hopeful for a strong performance in January where we could progress to the next stage. Our students represented the school brilliantly, with exemplary behaviour and values. Well done to all!

Mr K Karantzis
Lead Teacher of Science



The Winter Concert



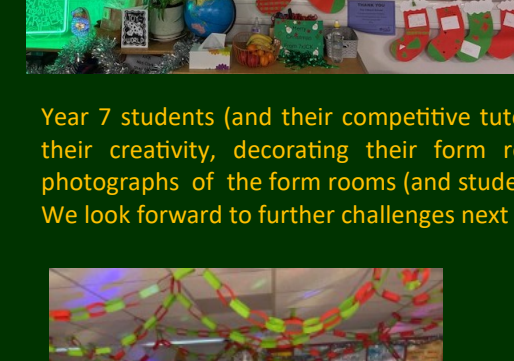
The diverse musical talent of The Gilberd School was celebrated this week with another sell out Winter Concert, the first to be held under the wing of our new Subject Leader, Mr Hanlon.

Christmas spirits were high and our Gilberdian musicians shone bright with high quality performances, ranging from Advanced Vocals to Wind Ensemble.

This year's concert also saw the reintroduction of the Staff Choir who sang the penultimate act 'If I Can't Have You', by The Bee Gees, with Pop Choir.

The final act of 'All I Want For Christmas Is You', by Mariah Carey, was a definite favourite, with the audience on their feet dancing, and requesting an encore.

A huge thank you to our Music, Drama and Dance staff, as well as our peripatetic tutors, for making the evening such a success. A special thank you also to Crosslight for supplying us with sound for the evening.



Visit to the Colonia Care Home



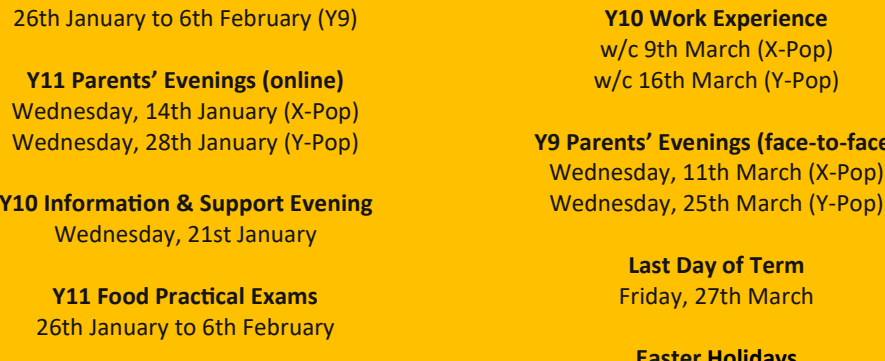
Our Gilberd Flute Ensemble, led by Janet Brook - one of our woodwind peripatetic tutors - visited Colonia Care Home on 16th December, to perform a variety of festive tunes to the residents.

We were warmly greeted by staff and the residents who were waiting in anticipation, with Christmas hats and Christmas cheer. Many residents sang along to the familiar tunes.

The Flute Ensemble and the residents had a spectacular time and we hope to make this an annual visit!

Mr R Hanlon
Subject Leader of Music

Les Misérables Workshop with Craig Mather



Industry professional, The Mercury Theatre Creative and Grammy nominated, Craig Mather, visited The Gilberd School on 16th December, to deliver a 'Principle and Ensemble Workshop,' offering advice and guidance on what it takes to perform 'Les Misérables'.

Craig trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and, after graduating, landed both his dream roles of 'Melchior' in Spring Awakening and 'Marius' in 'Les Misérables' at the Queens Theatre London, where he performed a thousand shows as Marius.

Craig gave very useful advice to our cast, especially Marius and the ABC Café Ensemble. We expect to see Craig as an audience member for our production in February.

Mr R Hanlon
Subject Leader of Music

Y7 Challenge Cup: "Deck the (form) halls with bells & holly..."

Year 7 students (and their competitive tutors) have risen to the challenge this week with their creativity, decorating their form rooms in style to celebrate Christmas. The photographs of the form rooms (and students) of 7JCK and 7KQU provide a flavour of this. We look forward to further challenges next term.



Mr S Banham
Head of Year 7

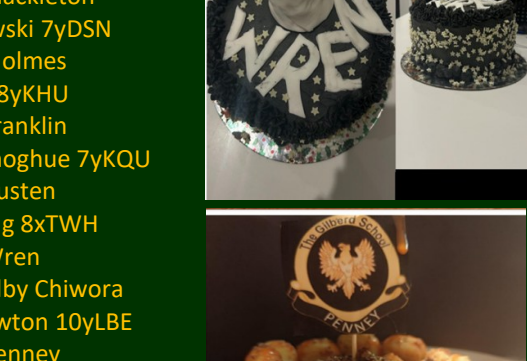
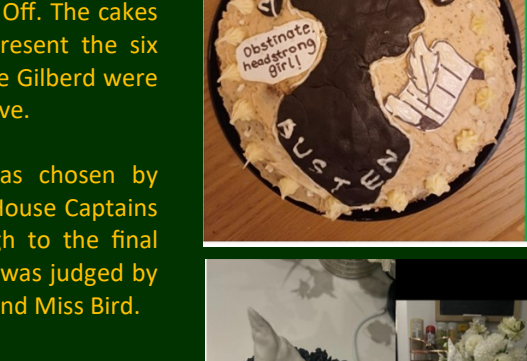
Visit from London School of Economics

Earlier this month we were delighted to welcome researchers from The London School of Economics who met with groups of our Year 9 students to find out about their experiences of technology within education.

The discussions were lively and heartfelt, impressing the visitors.

The researchers will report their findings from their visit to the Department of Education.

Mrs V Percival
Deputy Headteacher



Dates for your diary

Last Day of Term (Non Uniform Day)
Friday, 19th December at 12:10

Start of Spring Term
Monday, 5th January

Student Vaccinations
Wednesday, 7th January (Y8 HPV)
Thursday, 12th February (Y8 HPV 2nd round)

Y11 PE Practical Exams
5th to 9th January

Y10 Mock Interviews
Wednesday, 14th January

Assessment Weeks
12th to 23rd January (Y8)
26th January to 6th February (Y9)

Y11 Parents' Evenings (online)
Wednesday, 14th January (X-Pop)
Wednesday, 28th January (Y-Pop)

Y10 Information & Support Evening
Wednesday, 21st January

Y11 Food Practical Exams
26th January to 6th February

School Production (whole school)
9th February (dress rehearsal)
10th to 13th February

Non Pupil Day
Friday, 13th February

Half Term
w/c 16th February

First Day of Term
Monday, 23rd February

Y11 MFL Mock Oral Exams
23rd to 27th February

Y11 Core Mock Exams
w/c 9th March

Assessment Weeks
23rd February to 6th March (Y10)
w/c 16th March (Y11)

Y9 Options Event
Wednesday, 25th February
3.20-4.20pm (students)
6.30-8.00pm (Parents/Carers)

Y10 Work Experience
w/c 9th March (X-Pop)
w/c 16th March (Y-Pop)

Y9 Parents' Evenings (face-to-face)
Wednesday, 11th March (X-Pop)
Wednesday, 25th March (Y-Pop)

Last Day of Term
Friday, 27th March

Easter Holidays
30th March to 10th April

First Day of Summer Term
Monday, 13th April