



Season's Greetings



Headmaster's Message

I prefer summer to winter. So the winter solstice is a good marker for me. The sun will now stop its apparent southern journey and begin to march back northwards, meaning days will get longer from now on until the summer solstice. The word 'solstice' means 'stationary sun'; this year it's actually 3.27am

Friday 22nd. The ancient Romans celebrated this in the festival of Brumalia ('Bruma meaning 'shortest day'). By the 4th century the period merged with the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth. The exact date is obscure, but the symbolism is profound: the Roman celebrations were called *natalis solis invicti* – *birthday of the unconquered sun*. The link to the Christian story is clear. We are reminded that even when things seem at their darkest, hope will see the new dawn. As a teacher I believe in the transformational power of education. But I also know it's about changing hearts as well as minds. The Christmas message – to all faiths and those with none – is one that touches hearts because it is about love. And the world could do with a lot more of that right now.

Farewells

We say a sad goodbye to **Miss Scott**. Joanna joined North Cestrian in 2016 as part of the Science Faculty. Her Masters Degree in Marine Biology led to her focus on teaching biology, but her scientific skills and interests meant she could teach all three science disciplines with confidence and skill. Her love of travel saw her on the recent Costa Rica school trip where her knowledge of such environments plus her own experiences to places like the Galapagos Islands proved invaluable. We wish her well on her next ventures.

Mark Chadwick has been an integral part of the Science Faculty as its technician and is responsible for ensuring experiments are set up safely and with the right equipment, plus keeping abreast of the stock of chemicals and devices held in the faculty. He is retiring to spend more time with his family, but we will still benefit from his experience as he supports our new technician in their induction.

And finally...

The new academic year begins Monday, January 8th and this is a BLUE week. Please look out for email notices about uniform and calendar events.

I thank our wonderful staff for all they do for the school, its pupils and for each other. The Christmas break is thoroughly deserved and allows staff to be with their own family and friends and devote love and care to them. I wish you all a happy and peaceful time.





Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, from all the North Cestrian family.