



**FARINGDON**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# EDUCATIONAL VISITS

## 2024/2025

2,068 student places · 60 day visits · 44 nights away · 9 residential visits

### Battlefields, Belgium

30 September — 4 October 2024

On 30th September 2024, 56 year 11 students and 6 staff set out to visit the Western Front Battlefields of World War One. This site visit aims to give students an understanding of the key battles around Ypres and on the Somme to support their GCSE Studies. Students studying Warfare through Time look at the Battle of the Somme as a case study in developments in warfare, while those students studying Medicine through Time look at the impact of the trench environment and weapons on health.



Over the duration of the 5 day visit, students visited the Commonwealth Cemeteries at Essex Farm, Tyne Cot, Lijssenthoek hospital, as well as the Thiepval Memorial to those who died on the Somme, but who have no grave. Students also visited a number of trench sites, including the fully preserved trench system at Sanctuary Wood and no-mans land at Messines Ridge. We also paid a visit to Vimy Ridge and visited the preserved Canadian trench system, memorial and tunnels under the Canadian Front Line. Students also visited a number of Memorials to key moments in World War One, including visiting the Brooding Soldier at St Julien. This is a memorial to those soldiers who were injured and killed as a result of the first use of poison gas in April 1915.

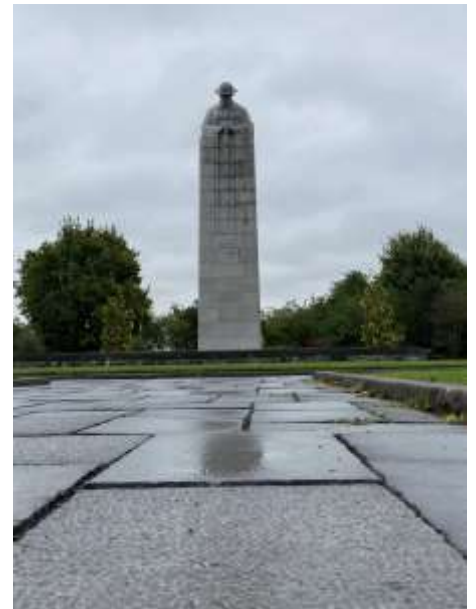
Students were also lucky to visit the Wellington Quarry at Arras. It is an underground museum which has been carefully and sensitively created in a section of the many kilometres of tunnels dug by the British Army in the First World War. The First World War tunnels connect with original tunnels and quarries dating back to the Middle Ages and Roman times underneath the city of Arras. Soldiers from New Zealand dug new tunnels and rooms and joined them up with the existing ancient tunnels and quarries or pits already under the city, quarried out hundreds of years before. The tunnels were fitted with running water and electricity supplies. Accommodation in

the underground city was available for the soldiers to live and sleep in, and there was a large hospital for treating the wounded in a labyrinth of rooms with enough space to fit 700 beds and operating theatres.

One of the many highlights was a visit to Talbot House in Poperinge. Talbot House was known as the 'Everyman's Club' – being a place where soldiers, not matter what their rank, could come for rest and relaxation away from the trenches. Built over a number of floors, it is a working guest house and charity. Students were able to roam through the house and get a sense of what Talbot House provided for the soldiers of World War One, be it spiritual relief in the chapel in the eves of the house, relaxation with a game of chess in the lounge or coffee and music in the Kitchen.

As with all visits to the battlefields of the Western Front, remembrance played a large part in the visit. Students were fortunate to attend the daily remembrance ceremony at the Menin Gate, and hear the last post sounded as part of daily ceremony that has taken place here every day (with a small break during World War Two) since 1928. We also we lucky to see students from New Zealand perform a Haka at the Menin Gate. Students laid wreaths on behalf of the school at Thiepval Memorial on the Somme, remembering those who gave their lives but have no grave, and Tyne Cot, the largest of the Commonwealth Cemeteries on the Western Front. Students also paused for remembrance and reflection at the 'Shot at dawn' memorial in Poperinge, where we remembered those executed by their own forces for what was then seen as cowardice.

Richard Hill, Subject Leader— History



## Kampala, Uganda

16 - 29 October 2024

Twenty years ago in 2004 the first trip to Uganda by Faringdon Community College students took place. That year there was three students and one member of staff, this year to mark twenty years since that first trip thirteen students and two members of staff made the same journey. First impressions of Uganda can always be mixed, it is a vibrant, magical and beautiful country but so different from rural Faringdon that it can be a little overwhelming at first for our students. This years intrepid bunch of students quickly experienced the vagaries of Kampala traffic as it took us four hours to get to our accommodation instead of the usual two!

Once settled in they quickly adapted to the Ugandan way of life and so far have enjoyed themselves. The first day is always a relaxed day with a trip to the money exchange and craft market where initial purchases of souvenirs are made. This year we followed this up with a trip to the equator on the Saturday. Kazo Hill school, our partners for the last twenty years had laid on a special event on the Sunday to celebrate the two decades old link. This consisted of various musical, and drama performances as well as speeches from the head teacher and director of Kazo Hill. We were very lucky to have been joined in Uganda by David Wilson a former head of FCC who set up the initial link and ran the trip for the first thirteen years. Mr Wilson gave a very well received speech outlining the history of the link between Faringdon and Kazo Hill and then the students of FCC performed for the audience. The next two days were spent in Kazo interacting with the students through a series of quizzes, speeches and debates as well as sporting competitions.

The last few days will keep us busy with a day of activities at a primary school and then it's off on safari before returning g home after another successful trip!



## Gloucester University, Gloucester

12 November 2024

We attended the University of Gloucester for our most recent Personal Development Day. Throughout the day we were given a tour around the campus and had talks relating to UCAS applications and writing personal statements. During our tour we got shown around different sections of the campus, ranging from study rooms and lecture theatres to the cafe and student accommodation on site. The campus we were visiting for the day was associated with creative media and music etc, so we were able to see the specialist equipment used and given brief explanations as to how everything works. This gave a really helpful insight into what life was like at the University and how the campus differs from a secondary school/sixth form setting. The talks given to us on UCAS applications and personal statements were really insightful into the whole application process and provided good tips for when we have to begin this. Overall, the day spent at Gloucester University was very educational and gave us a look into what some of us may be experiencing post A-Levels.



## Future Makers, London

6 November 2024



A new music trip in the calendar took place on Wednesday 6th November. Thirty students from Years 8 and 9 visited the Royal Albert Hall to attend the final of the 'Future Makers' music competition for young musicians. Before the performance began, we had a behind-the-scenes tour of the venue which included viewing the royal box and waiting room!

The final of 'Future Makers' was hosted by Jess Gillam MBE and songwriter and poet LionHeart. It was really inspiring to see performances of such high quality being given by school-aged people. We even got to meet one of the acts afterwards outside the venue!



## Bright Sparks, London

20 November 2024

Wednesday 20th November saw Year 9 and 10 students off to London to the 'Bright Sparks' concert hosted by the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The 'Bright Sparks' concert is an educational performance during which the LPO plays the set works and topics of GCSE Music courses. Whilst the orchestra is playing, students have short quizzes to complete and an analysis of the piece to follow. It was great during the concert to have so many students scoring so highly in the quizzes!

## NSPCC Concert, Faringdon

2 December 2024

FCC Voices performed again in the NSPCC annual concert and gave an enchanting rendition of "Somewhere in my memory" from Home Alone.

The concert is held at All Saints Church Faringdon and other Faringdon primary schools and local youth groups also perform. It is very well supported by both performers and audience and FCC Music is looking forward to performing there again next year.



## Concert Band, Faringdon

12 December 2024

During the morning of Thursday 12th December FCC Concert Band will, for the first time, be playing Christmas music at Faringdon Tesco.

We hope this will be the start of a lovely Christmas tradition where we can showcase FCC musicians and add to the festive cheer as people shop.



## Coxwell Hall, Faringdon

12 December 2024

FCC Music regularly take musicians and vocalists to perform for residents at Coxwell Hall nursing home. We always really enjoy our visits.

On Thursday 12th December FCC Vocalists are giving a morning performance there of Christmas songs.

## CBSO Concert, Birmingham

11 February 2025

Our annual trip to Symphony Hall in Birmingham took place on Tuesday 11th February. Year 7 enjoyed a selection of pieces including 'Hedwigs Theme', 'Imperial March' and 'Pirates of The Caribbean'.

It was a hugely interactive concert with lots of opportunities to participate and engage with the orchestra.

## John Blandy School, Southmoor

17 December 2024

FCC Music is very enthusiastic about encouraging music in Primary Schools (we are always looking for future recruits to FCC Music!) and we love going to primary schools and playing there and talking about music whenever they invite us.

On Tuesday 17th December FCC Concert Band performed Christmas songs in Assembly at John Blandy Primary School.



## Tower of London

9 December 2024

Early on the morning of 9th December, 15 students and two staff set off to visit the Tower of London - a visit supporting the students A Level History study of the Wars of Roses. The Tower played a varied role throughout the conflict being a palace, prison, mint, armoury and symbol of royal power.

Students investigated how the tower can be used as source of historical evidence to find out about the Wars of the Roses, as well as questioning the site and how it is presented today. Students took part in source work that questioned the fate of the Princes in the Tower using the site of the Bloody Tower and sources linked to the events that are supposed to have happened there. They investigated the death of Henry VI in the Wakefield Tower. Did he die of melancholy after the death of his son at the Battle of Tewkesbury? Or was he murdered on the orders of Edward IV? Finally, students investigated the execution of George, Duke of Clarence, who according to historical tradition was executed by drowning in a barrel of Malmsey wine in the Bowyer Tower.

The group were able to explore the tower, visiting the Crown Jewels, famous White Tower and Traitors Gate - made famous for its use during the Tudor period. We also managed to get up close with the ravens of the Tower – who legend has it, hold the key to the Kingdom's security. It was an interesting visit and students excelled in their investigations and performance of key sources linked to the stories from the Tower.



## War Horse, Oxford

9 December 2024



Our GCSE and A-Level Drama students recently attended a stunning performance of War Horse at The New Theatre in Oxford, an unforgettable experience that combined storytelling, puppetry, and innovative design.

Adapted from Michael Morpurgo's novel, War Horse follows Joey, a horse sold to the cavalry during World War I, and Albert, his young owner, on a journey of loyalty and courage. The lifelike puppets, created by the Handspring Puppet Company, amazed our students, offering invaluable lessons in teamwork, physical theatre, and non-verbal storytelling.

Directed by Marianne Elliott, this award-winning piece of theatre directly links to the A Level course as this is one of our chosen practitioners. The production's use of lighting, projections, and music left students inspired, sparking ideas for their own performances and coursework. One GCSE student shared, "The puppetry and design were incredible—it's given me so many ideas for our projects!"

Trips like this enrich our Drama curriculum, showing students the transformative power of theatre. We're excited to see how this inspiration shapes their future work!



## Oxfordshire Book Awards, Oxford

7 November 2024

On the 7th November, Mrs Brame and Mrs Tsolakoglou took 7 students from our book group to attend the OBA ceremony at Magdalen College School, Oxford. It was a very exciting day because we met several of the awards winning and highly commended authors there, including OBA patron, Jo Cotterell; Junior Novel award winner, Jess Butterworth; Secondary Novel award winner, Jan Dunning; Secondary Highly Commended A. Connors; guest authors, Kathryn Foxfield and John Dougherty! There were lots of Oxfordshire primary and secondary schools in attendance and we were all involved in an audience quiz to win some fantastic books during the afternoon too.

*We had an unforgettable experience at the OBA ceremony in Oxford. It was an incredible honour to meet the authors behind the books we loved. I thoroughly enjoyed speaking with the authors about their inspirations for their books and buying some for myself. It was truly amazing, and I cannot wait to begin reading the next set of books up for the award.*

*Ella 10DT*

It was quite a long day because we travelled by public bus, but it was worth it to meet these amazing authors (and enjoy a yummy cake afterwards). The students were an absolute delight to take with us and I'm very proud of them. We are all extremely excited about reading the next OBA shortlist and returning to book group in January!

*I really enjoyed the trip and thought it was a great experience to see the authors talk about their books and found it very interesting. I also really liked seeing the authors after the presentation and the presentation itself was very engaging and interactive. Overall, I had a great day and found it lots of fun.*

*Harry 9JAB*

If there are any other students who enjoy reading and are interested in finding out more about our after-school book group, please speak to Mrs Brame in the library.



## Sixth Form Ski Trip, Austria

3-10 January 2025

At the beginning of the term, the FCC sixth form set off on their bi-annual ski trip, 43 students and 5 staff members set off on a 22 hour bus journey to Salzburg, Austria. Upon arrival at the hotel, students were greeted by ski resort staff for an equipment fitting session, followed by some time to relax and prepare for the busy week ahead.

On our first day of skiing, the students were separated into groups where they then met their instructors for the week. The day was filled with hundreds of side-steps and many falls, as students slowly began to grasp the art of skiing. By day 2, despite the group being majority beginner level, students were comfortably using the button lift and skiing down the nursery slope with skill and ease. Such quick progression meant that on our 3rd day of skiing, the groups were able to branch out onto the blue and red slopes, even though visibility on this day was limited due to heavy snow. Throughout the rest of the week students progressed immensely, taking on some very difficult runs.

Year 12 student Lyra T says "I had the best time and made some amazing memories," she went on to say "I can't wait to go skiing again."

Students enjoyed a range of apres-ski activities across the week, which included, a pizza night at the local pizzeria, a night at the bowling alley, which was much enjoyed by both students and staff, and an evening in Salzburg, where students were able to explore the historic city and shop for souvenirs, and then on the Thursday afternoon there was a celebration presentation where students were issued with certificates, some winning medals for their speed in the slalom race. Such range of activities meant that students experienced a fast-paced week, packed with things to do.

- Keira K

*I would like to thank the 6th formers for being such fantastic company and for the many memorable experiences. You were excellent ambassadors for the school and I received many compliments about you from the coach drivers, hotel proprietor and the ski instructors. Also, a big thank you to Ms Timpson, Mr Rodgers, Mrs Heath and Mrs West who gave up part of their Christmas break to join us.*

- Mrs Button



## Year 9 Ski Trip, Austria

11-18 January 2025

On Saturday 11th January 2025, 79 students and 10 staff departed for Austria for the year 9 ski trip. We left FCC in the afternoon and caught the evening ferry from Dover to Calais. We had a good journey through the night, which saw us travel through France, Belgium and Germany, before arriving in Austria at the hotel Schuetzen-Hof on Sunday afternoon. Students had some time to unpack and relax in the hotel, preparing for a full-on week of skiing and après ski activities.

On the first day of skiing, we were greeted with blue sky, sunshine and cold temperatures. As the week progressed the temperatures became milder and on Wednesday it snowed lightly all day. Due to the snow in the middle of the week and cold temperatures for most of the week, we enjoyed excellent snow cover throughout the resort. The group were extremely fortunate to experience such good weather as it meant excellent ski conditions throughout the week.

The students made a superb amount of progress in their skiing ability. We had many beginners taking part this year and it was encouraging to see most of these students completing some challenging runs by the end of the week. Those with a higher level of proficiency to begin with, improved in both competence and technique, making great progress in their own right.

Throughout the week we got to enjoy a range of après ski activities. On Monday evening we went to a local Pizzeria, this was a particular favourite of students and staff alike. On Tuesday and Wednesday evening the après ski was mini golf and bowling. Due to the size of the group this was split, with half of the group doing one activity one day and then switching the following evening. After skiing on Thursday there were presentations by the ski instructors to each student, issuing them with a certificate. This was then followed by some time in the local town of St Johann. This allowed students the opportunity to buy gifts and essentials for the journey home. These après ski activities along with the ski lessons, meant an action packed and enjoyable week for all.

Friday was the final day of skiing, and we ended the week with more blue sky and sunshine. Although skiing is very tiring, it was great to see the enjoyment on the students faces and the eagerness to make the most of the final day. Upon returning to the hotel, we had a little time to shower change and have an evening meal, before starting our return journey. We had a quiet and sleepy journey back to FCC before arriving back on Saturday afternoon. As well as the progress made on the slopes, I was delighted with the overall conduct and attitude shown by the students. IBT staff, coach drivers and ski instructors all commented on the behaviour shown by the group. This was extremely pleasing and made the college staff in attendance extremely proud.



## Astronomy Residential, Northumberland

23-26 January 2025

The current cohort of GCSE Astronomers braved storm Éowyn to visit the Noth Pennies Observatory at the Academy of Contemporary Arts in Allenheads and image the start of 'parade of the planets' on. Saturn, Mercury, Neptune, Venus, Uranus, Jupiter, and Mars will all be aligned on Feb 28. Our students were able view Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Saturn in the night's sky at the Observatory which is situated just beneath the Keilder Forest National Dark Sky Site. Student's practiced using big telescopes to view targets, and were visited by professional Astronomer Roy Alexander at Astroventures CIC at have a talk on space rocks and space weather. Students also walked along Hadrien's will to the site known as Sycamore Gap and visited the Lead Mine at Nenthead.

Photo information: Jupiter and it's moons – imaged by Will Peal and processed by Jamie Park – both Y10 Astronomy Students.



## Swan Lake, Bristol

15 January 2025

Dance students from Years 10 to 13 had the incredible opportunity to watch Matthew Bourne's 'Swan Lake' at the Bristol Hippodrome. This iconic production, renowned for its all-male swan cast and powerful reimagining of Tchaikovsky's classic ballet, left a lasting impression on our students.

For many, this was their first time experiencing Bourne's unique storytelling and contemporary ballet style live. The production's blend of expressive movement, theatricality, and emotional depth provided an excellent example of how dance can challenge traditional narratives and captivate an audience. Students were particularly inspired by the strength and fluidity of the swans, as well as the dramatic use of lighting, set design, and costume to enhance the mood and themes of the piece.

Following the performance, students reflected on how the choreography and characterisation could influence their own practical work. Discussions focused on the ways in which movement can communicate emotion and how dance can be used to tell powerful stories beyond traditional classical ballet.

The students were wonderful company for Miss Whenray and Miss Kenyon and represented our school excellently. Experiences like these not only enrich our appreciation for dance but also provide inspiration for future creative work.

## Top of The Bench Competition, Oxford

15 January 2025

FCC was represented by four outstanding students at the annual Royal Society of Chemistry competition which took place at Oxford University Chemistry Teaching Laboratories on 15th January.



Caitlin, Euan, Aarish and Sophie were chosen to take part in the competition because of their achievements in science. On the day they had to complete a series of tasks using equipment, instruments and methods that they had never seen before. They had to identify medicines and substances in samples and diagnose the patient's conditions. It was very challenging, but they worked together brilliantly as a team and had a fantastic experience.

## UCAS Convention, Birmingham

24 June 2025

On Tuesday 24th June our Year 12 students attended the UCAS Convention at the NEC in Birmingham. This event is valuable and designed to support students in planning their next steps after Sixth Form.

The convention brings together universities, colleges, and apprenticeship providers from across the UK where students had the opportunity to explore a wide range of courses being offered and to be able to ask questions directly and collect prospectuses.

## Cello Concert, Birmingham

19 June 2025

On Thursday 19th June, 35 FCC music students travelled to Birmingham to watch the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra perform at Symphony Hall. We had been looking forward to this trip all year and there was much excitement about seeing cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason perform Elgar's Cello Concerto. For many of our students, this was the first time they had listened to a live performance of a full-length symphony. We thoroughly enjoyed Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, especially the brass-heavy final movement.



## Folly Fest, Faringdon

11 July 2025

Our 4th performance at Folly Fest took place on Friday 11th July. We look forward to this event every year and it is always brilliant to have so many students volunteering to perform. We also enjoyed a guest performance from Folly View Primary School. Thank you to everyone who came to watch and support our main performance of the year! We are already looking forward to Folly Fest 2026!



## Duke of Edinburgh Award

2024 - 2025

It's been a busy and rewarding term for the Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award participants at FCC, with both Bronze and Silver expeditions marking significant milestones. Here's a rundown of what's been happening:

### Bronze Award Expeditions (Year 9)

We wrapped up Term 5 with the Year 9 Bronze participants embarking on their practice expedition. Starting at FCC, the students set off on their journey to the campsite at Brampton. After pitching tents and enjoying a well-earned rest, they cooked their meals and settled in for the night.

On Day 2, they trekked from the campsite to the endpoint at Badbury Clump, completing the training for their upcoming assessed expedition. This gave them valuable experience with managing distance, weight, and the reality of life on the trail. Some found their rucksacks were not quite right, others brought more food than needed, and some just had to get used to walking with the weight of their bags over the distance.

The real triumph came with the assessed expedition. Starting at the Kilkenny Viewpoint in Gloucestershire, the students camped at Far Peak Campsite before reaching the scenic village of Bibury on Day 2. Along the way, they took in the Chedworth Roman Villa. I hope they enjoyed the varied landscapes and beautiful views.

I'm thrilled to announce that every student passed their expedition section with flying colours! In fact, the lead instructor sent me this message, which I'd like to share with you all:

*"Dear FCC, I just wanted to send you a quick email after last weeks Bronze D of E Expedition to let you know how impressed I was with your students. As you know I ran both the practice and the qualifying expeditions and the behaviour of the students, the commitment they had to the award and the effort they put in was exemplary. I run twenty to thirty expeditions a year and your students were the best I have worked with for a long time. They were a credit to you, the school and their parents and I'm sure you are all, rightly, very proud of them. I look forward to working with your school again in the future."*

Rob, Senior Instructor, BXM Outdoors.

A huge congratulations to our Year 9 students! Please make sure to upload assessor reports or ask assessors to submit them online here: [DofE Assessor Reports](#).

There will be an awards evening in January where participants who have completed all four sections of the award will be invited to **receive their certificate and badge**.

### Silver Award Expedition (Year 10)

Having completed their training expedition back in April, our Year 10 Silver participants are gearing up for their assessed expedition in Wiltshire, taking place on the weekend of July 19th. I have every confidence that they will rise to the challenge, and the staff team are excited to support them on this next step of their DofE journey.

As with the Bronze, please ensure that assessor reports are uploaded to eDofE accounts online. Assessors can write the report directly into the participants eDofE account here: [DofE Assessor Reports](#).

There will be an awards evening in January where participants who have completed all four sections of the award will be invited to receive their certificate and badge.



## Gliding experience, Gloucestershire

3 July 2025

Twelve students from Year 10 and Year 12, who had shown an interest in aviation or engineering, were invited to attend a special gliding day at Aston Down Airfield on Thursday 3rd July.

Gliding involves flying an unpowered aircraft and is a popular recreational activity as well as a competitive sport. Gliders are launched either by winch or via an aero-tow behind a powered aircraft. Using naturally occurring currents of rising air, gliders can remain airborne for hours and travel hundreds of kilometres.

The opportunity, generously provided by the Guild of Air Pilots, meant our FCC students had a chance to ride in a glider above the Cotswold Hills with an experienced pilot for at least 30 minutes. Some even took the controls under the supervision of the instructor. Willingly climbing on board an aircraft due to fly at 4000 feet without an engine (but wearing a parachute!) took considerable bravery. However, everyone was determined to enjoy and make the most of the experience!

The students were also fully involved with manoeuvring the gliders into position, attaching the tow ropes from the tug aeroplane, and even ensuring the balance of the wings in the early stages of take off! However, perhaps the most popular 'on-the-ground' activity was free (responsible!) use of two golf buggies used to cover the large distances of the runway and airfield. The students' excellent behaviour, willingness to help and politeness were noticed and praised by all those at the airfield, including the airfield manager, the lead gliding instructor and the Guild representative. The word of the day was, "outstanding".

The intention behind the day is to primarily enjoy the incredible experience of riding in a glider. However, the Guild is also looking for potential pilots with a clear aptitude who might progress towards a flying scholarship funded by the Guild. We are proud to say that several of our students showed that aptitude and have been encouraged to keep in touch with the Guild going forward.

Thank you to the Guild of Air Pilots for organising an unforgettable day for our students and we look forward to repeating the opportunity with a new set of students next academic year.

