



The Hermitage Herald

November 2025

Hello!

Welcome to November's edition of Hermitage Herald – designed to keep you up to date with everything that's been happening in our school. Here are the highlights of such a busy month here at Hermitage Academy – enjoy!

We Remember....

Every November, Hermitage Academy comes together to honour those who served and sacrificed in times of conflict. This year, our Wellbeing Garden again provided a beautiful and reflective setting for the ceremony.

The service was led by students who are members of the uniformed services, and our Year 12 student Thomas performed the *Last Post* and *Reveille*, adding a poignant touch to the occasion. Dr Whillis, who serves with the Army Cadets, led our students in the parade and service, with Jasmine (Year 9) proudly carrying the standard.

Wreaths were laid by Jacob H (Year 10) alongside our Student Leaders, who read passages with great respect and composure. At 11am, the entire school community observed two minutes of silence to reflect and remember.

Dr Whillis said: "The students involved in the parade were fantastic as were the Year 7 spectators who were so respectful, especially considering being out in the cold and rain. It was both a pleasure and privilege. I'm so proud of how the school has made sure that the sacrifices of past and present service members (and their families) are recognised. Across school, students helped to decorate the space with colourful poppies, and related activities and discussions around Remembrance Day were held within our World Ready programme."



A crochet garland to remember

Students Lainey and Lucie, both in Year 9, worked tirelessly over the last term, creating a spectacular poppy garland in preparation for Remembrance Day. The garland contains over 200 poppies, hand-crocheted by the girls. They dedicated weeks of their time to the project, both in and outside of school, and even taught younger students how to

crochet, to get more people involved with the poppy project. Well done to Year 7 students Esme, Codi, Tilly, Ruth, Florence, Ella, Victoria, Alice and Leona-Grace, and Year 9 student Ethan, who all helped to get the garland finished!



Services Spotlight

As we pause to remember and those who served and sacrificed in times of conflict, we also take this opportunity to celebrate the strength and commitment of our own community—the next generation who will carry forward these values of service and dedication.

We are proud to highlight some of our students who volunteer within the uniformed services. Their contribution reflects the spirit of responsibility and leadership that we strive to nurture at Hermitage Academy.

There were many students involved in the ceremony. We invited all students who are part of the uniformed services to wear their uniforms on Remembrance Day, which included all cadet groups, Guides and Scouts.

Name: Adam F
Sea Cadet



A typical session includes:

It depends on the rank! We do seamanship, which is ropework, first aid, and when I become an able cadet, I get to train up the lower ranks – I'm shadowing classes at the minute.

How did you get into it?

I was bored one night and asked my Mam to find me something out of school to try. I have never looked back! My younger brother is also a Sea Cadet.

Any achievements?

- Awards for tidal rowing,
- My Drill team made it to the National championships
- Basic Marine Engineering

What's next? I'd like to join the Navy when I am older.

Name: Jacob H
Air Cadet



A typical session includes:

Working towards badges
Training in shooting – learning to use air rifles
Teamwork and Leadership are key areas .

How did you get into it?

I like planes and have done since I was young– it made sense to join a club that gets you close to the things you are interested in!

Any achievements?

- Training to use the air rifle
- Bronze Duke of Edinburgh
- Bronze leader and Bronze First Aid

What's next?

Not sure, but maybe I will go into the Air Force.

Name: Jasmine R (Flag Bearer)
Army Cadet



A typical session includes:

Drills – Marching
First Aid and Navigation and expedition skills
Working towards ranks and badges
I sometimes teach lessons to the 'basics' (the new recruits).

How did you get into it?

I have been going for about a year – I went along with my older brother.

Any achievements?

- Promotion to Lance Corporal
- 2 star First Aid

What's next?

I'd like to be a Veterinary officer in the Army.

Name: Thomas H
Senior Bugle Major Nationally - Army Cadets (Music)



A typical session includes:

Lots of music practice!
Repeating key pieces .Other routes in Army cadets would be learning to use guns etc. But I stick to Music.

How did you get into it?

I was shown an advert in school when I was in Year 7. I decided to give it a go!

Any achievements?

My position in the country for playing the bugle is a great achievement.

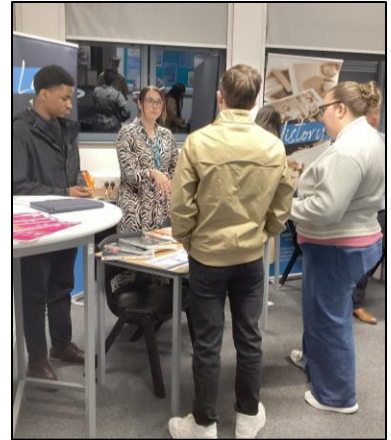
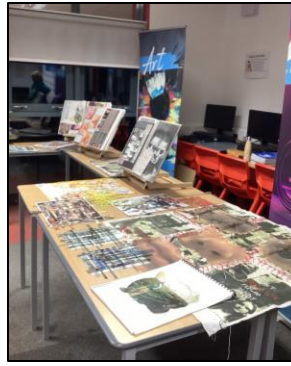
What's next?

I want to go to University to be a History Teacher, but I may also go into being an adult instructor in the Cadets.

Welcome to our Sixth Form!

We are incredibly proud of our Sixth Form and everything it offers. This month, we opened our doors to prospective students for our annual Sixth Form Open Evening—and what an event it was! Each year, this evening grows in size and excitement, and this time was no exception. With a wide range of new courses available, current Year 11 students from Hermitage Academy and further afield, had the chance to discover what makes our Sixth Form special: a close-knit learning community built on academic excellence and personal development.

Many of our students describe Sixth Form as an extended family—a place where hard work, fun, and lifelong friendships go hand in hand. There is a shared commitment to success, and our dedicated staff work tirelessly to support every student. Our goal is simple: to ensure that students leave us as confident, well-rounded individuals, ready to thrive at university, college, or in the world of work. The evening was packed with information about courses, engaging activities to spark curiosity, and plenty of opportunities to speak with our experienced staff. It was a fantastic showcase of what makes our Sixth Form such a vibrant and inspiring place to learn.



Meet Charlie – Fundraiser of the Year!

We often feature Year 9 Charlie in our newsletter, as he is always on-the-go, raising money for charity and helping others. We're bursting with pride this month to share that Charlie has been named 'Fundraiser of the Year' for the charity 'Changing Faces' at a special awards ceremony in London, last month.

After surviving a serious car accident at age 4 that left him with significant facial injuries, Charlie has turned his recovery into a mission to help others.

Supported by 'Changing Faces', Charlie began fundraising at just 8 years old and has since raised over £23,000 through a series of inspiring sporting challenges. And most recently, Charlie embarked on his '10 Miles for 10 Years' challenge, marking the anniversary of his accident.

Charlie's determination, resilience, and compassion has caught the attention of our local MP, Mr. Luke Akehurst, who took a break from Parliament this month to visit Charlie at school, after reading about his fundraising from our very own 'Hermitage Herald'!

Charlie and his parents shared their story with Mr Akehurst, and he offered to support Charlie's efforts by talking in Parliament about the Changing Faces charity and the work Charlie has been doing.



Future Business Magnates

Our Year 8 students attended the launch of the Future Business Magnates competition this month. The group took part in various team building activities and had to build their town out of Lego. They can't wait for the next challenge!



News from North East SCITT

Do you know someone who would make a great teacher? Let them know about our virtual Q&A session!

- **Thursday 11th December**
- **4-5pm**
- Discover our outstanding course
- Learn about tax-free funding of up to £31,000
- Ask any questions you may have about teacher training



Book your place now:
<https://www.northeastscitt.co.uk/teacher-training-taster>

Attendance Winning Treats!

The form with the best attendance across the first half term enjoyed a breakfast treat for their continued excellent attendance. Congratulations 8A1 with 99.4% attendance!

We are always striving to improve attendance as we really do see the importance of having your child in school, with us...we celebrate attendance through our weekly assemblies and through whole-school incentives – every day in school matters!



Forest School Update

As the holiday season approaches, our Forest School students are embracing the spirit of Christmas in the most creative and sustainable way possible—by using natural materials and traditional woodworking skills. From now until Christmas our Forest School will become a workshop buzzing with activity. Students will be gathering fallen branches and logs to craft beautiful decorations such as rustic wooden ornaments, every piece reflecting the resourcefulness and imagination that Forest School encourages. Working with tools, our students are learning practical skills while connecting with nature, with safety and teamwork are at the heart of these sessions. Forest School reminds us that Christmas isn't just about store-bought decorations—it's about creativity, community, and appreciating the beauty of the natural world.



Charity Corner

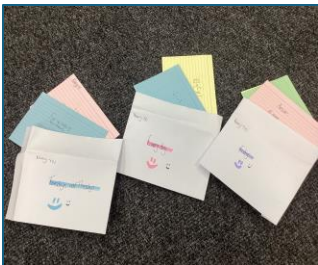
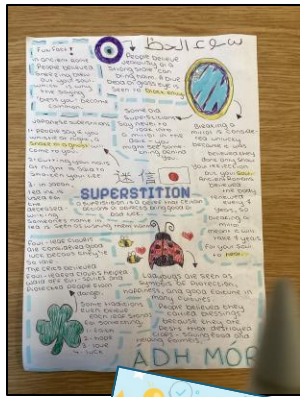
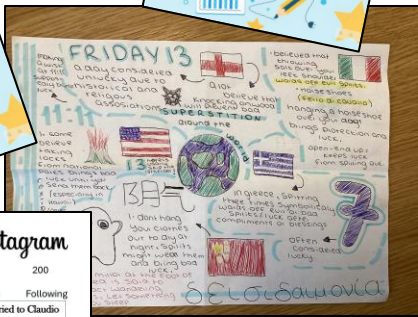
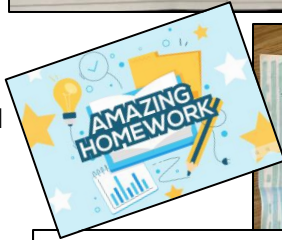
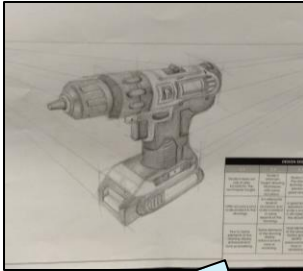
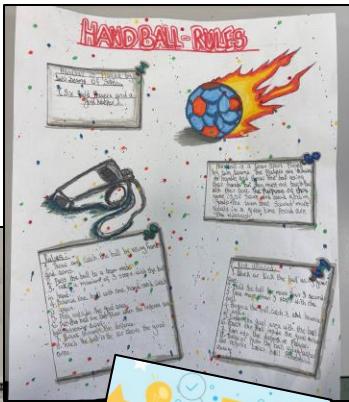
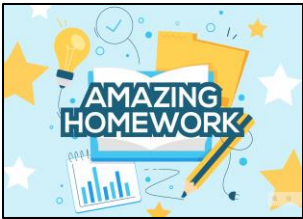
November is Children in Need month! As always, we put on a show at Hermitage Academy to raise money for this well-known and worthy cause. A whopping £472 raised! Well done to everyone involved!



Homework Heroes and ReviselWise

There's been so much going on in classrooms in November and our students have really stepped up when it comes to their homework. Here are a selection of amazing efforts from this month:

- Amazing Technical drawing homework from Harriet M! Miss Craggs has never given a student full marks before, but she could not find fault!
- Bella C In Year 7 has produced an exceptional poster for her PE homework
- Lexi W in Year 8 has created this masterpiece for her English homework. The task was to design a poster about superstitions to link with 'Blood Brothers' but she went above and beyond and looked at different cultures around the world.
- Members of 7X3 and 7Y3 were given the challenge of 'creative week' in English, where they were given a range of tasks ranging from creating visitor's guides to Shakespearean England to writing the script for a tour guide in the Globe Theatre. All the tasks were based around the Shakespeare text we are studying, 'Much Ado About Nothing'. Kasey-Brooke chose to create a fictional Instagram page for main character, Hero, showing her love for Claudio, and Rory M decided to recreate the Globe Theatre using Minecraft! There were some fantastic submissions, and Mrs. Howard congratulates everyone for their hard work and unwavering creativity!
- In addition, in class both classes have been showing off their knowledge of the play creating impressive revision mats. Well done all!
- As part of World Ready, Key Stage 3 students have been introduced to 5 key revision strategies, including flashcards, revision clocks, loci memory palace, foldables and mind-maps. The aim was ultimately to ensure our students have a range of revision strategies at their fingertips, helping them to build confidence around revision and to build resilience. Here are some beautiful examples from Mrs. Burn's Year 7 Maths class!



UK Parliament Week

UK Parliament Week is an annual event, spreading the word about what Parliament is, what it does and how you can get involved. It's a great way to find out new things about UK Parliament and was especially informative for those who are close to the voting age.

As part of our World Ready programme, we featured this as a week-long exploration of all aspects of Parliament and what it means to today's young people, informing our students about our UK Parliament, and how they can take action and make an impact on the issues they care about.

In school, we had a visitor from Parliament to talk to every year group in a rolling assembly. We also had fun activities throughout the week, as well as Parliament-themed activities and information during form time across the week, such as 'Parliament Job of the Week' and inspiring news from around the country of other young people who attend Youth Parliament.

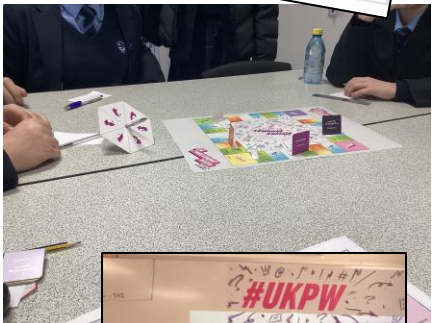
Mrs. Blair took on 'Petitions Pursuit' with a team of Year 7 students – a fun board game where players race around the UK gathering support for their petitions.

Careers Fair

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the companies that participated in the Careers Fair. The event was a great success, with

students actively engaging with exhibitors and gaining valuable insights into a wide range of career opportunities and pathways.

We also welcomed Durham Works to school this month, working with Years 11 and 12. The students enjoyed their workshops, solving problems and looking at different careers top support next steps. Of course, with any workshop, essential skills such as leadership and teamwork were important factors, and the students demonstrated these skills throughout their sessions.



Performing Arts news

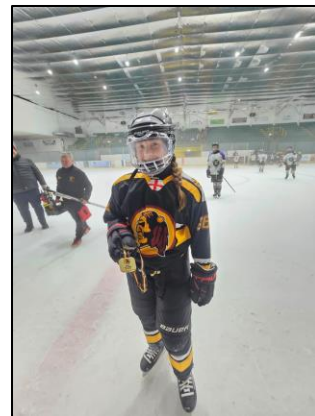
You'll remember our absolutely amazing school production Aladdin Jr, performed last summer? Well, our performing arts shows are coming home! We're upgrading our lighting and staging to make future productions even more spectacular. Keep an eye out for raffles, sponsorships, and fundraising opportunities—and stay tuned for the big reveal of our next show (it's going to be *practically perfect in every way!*). Thank you for your amazing support!



Sports Round-up - November

Every month we give you a round-up of what's been going on in and out of school on the sports scene. As always this month we are jam-packed with sporting news and success:

- A huge shout out to Lilia in Year 7, who plays ice hockey outside of school. At her most recent game against Manchester Storm Academy, Lilia was awarded 'Spirit of the Game/Most Valuable Player' (the person the coaches believe most embodied the team spirit). She plays for Whitley Bay Mohawks U14N1 and also their U16 girls' team in defence.
- Our inter-girls' team had a brilliant afternoon at the second round of the ESAA Cross Country Cup this week. The team represented the school amazingly, showing incredible determination and teamwork. Well done to everyone who competed, your effort was outstanding!
- The following girls have been selected to represent the U13 district football squad: Freya R, Victoria S, Olivia H and Mollie P - an amazing achievement – well done!
- Congratulations to our Under 16 girls' football team, who recently won a very competitive County Cup game. The team showed great resilience and sportsmanship.
- Congratulations to our Year 7 futsal team, who picked up two big wins in the district finals this week. These wins also progress the team through to the county competition. Well done everyone. It's great to see such teamwork and determination.



- It was amazing to see so many of our runners representing our school in the Area Cross Country event. Congratulations to Isla FH, Faye C, Tom SP, Faye E and Zack J, who all qualified for the next round. This is an impressive achievement, and they were up against some of the strongest competition in County Durham.
- Our Under 16 rugby team proudly represented Hermitage in the Durham County Cup this week. The squad showed incredible skill, determination and resilience throughout the match. Well done to Adam L and Will D, both for their outstanding performances, and leading the team by example on-and-off the pitch.
- Congratulations to our Year 10 futsal team who have won the district competition and progressed through to the county competition! The team showed superb determination, teamwork and sportsmanship throughout.

Coming up...

Assembly topics - December



We love keeping you updated on upcoming events and learning topics in school. This gives you the chance to chat with your child about what they’re exploring in class, helping to build strong connections between home and school. These conversations make learning more meaningful and reinforce knowledge. Please take a moment to ask your child about what they’ve been working on – it really makes a difference!

Week Beginning:	Assembly Topics - December
1 st	Gaming Safety and Sleep
8 th	Energy Drinks
15 th	Christmas Week/Celebration assemblies

The Twelve Days of Christmas...



We've got so much festive fun lined up for our students during December. Check out our 12 days of Christmas timetable below. Not long to go now!

Parent Information Evenings Continue...

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD WITH READING!

This session is open to all parents and aims to empower you at home to support your child's reading. There will be helpful hints and tips as well as an insight into how we support your child in the classroom and through our curriculum.

THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER
4:00-5:00PM

Sign up here: <https://forms.office.com/e/vHGbkuQ3or>

A reminder that our upcoming reading support session for parents will be taking place on Thursday 11th December, from 4:00-5:00pm. The session is open to all parents and aims to offer helpful hints, tips and insights into how we support your child's reading in the classroom, so that you are best equipped to continue supporting them at home. To sign up for the session, please visit: <https://loom.ly/jyTqkpY>

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

1 4 DECEMBER Christmas Card Design Competition House Bubble Camp Launch feedback donations under tree Hot chocolate at break time	2 5 DECEMBER The Christmas Read along	3 8 DECEMBER History with Ghost of Christmas Past Christmas in the Trenches Where's Santa camp Warm mince pies with apricot cream	4 9 DECEMBER Christmas around the World Ghost of Christmas Present
5 10 DECEMBER Ghost of Christmas Future Modernise Christmas Song Christmas ice creams	6 11 DECEMBER Christmas Original Christmas Pet Photo competition	7 12 DECEMBER Core home letter writing The Great Hermitage Christmas Bake Off Santa's Stock Swap Christmas Minicuts	8 15 DECEMBER Christmas Dear Day Planning Christmas Movie Night Hot chocolate at break
9 16 DECEMBER Christmas Movie Soundtrack quiz Festive Bake/Sweet sale Christmas concert at the church in the evening	10 17 DECEMBER Christmas Dinner Make a Reindeer Pet comp results Key Stage 3 Points 'Cinders'	11 18 DECEMBER Christmas cards from the clubs Voices: Care Home Visit Voices Pig in blanket bake at break	12 19 DECEMBER A Christmas Movie Quiz Christmas Jumper Day Student Karaoke Year 7 Church Visit

THROUGHOUT CHRISTMAS

Every day there is a Christmas hit/carol to be played for everyone to hear. Christmas Elves will also be delivery candy canes and Christmas cards.

Dates for the Diary - December

December	What's on?
1 st	Sixth Form trip – Life Centre
2 nd	School Athletics
3 rd	Year 8 Futsal after school
4 th	Futsal Tournament after school
5 th	Sixth Form Bake Sale – Cash for Kids
10 th	Christmas Lunch Ski Trip Parent Information Evening 5-6pm
11 th	Parent Support Session – Reading 4-5pm Barclays Bank Workshop (Y7 and 8)
12 th	Lunchtime Book Swap – English Dept
15 th	Christmas Movie night
16 th	Christmas Concert – see above for timings
17 th	Sixth Form trip – York
19 th	Year 7 Church visit/service

The Hermitage Christmas Concert

Join us at St Mary & St Cuthbert's Parish Church In Chester-le-Street, on Tuesday 16th December for our annual Christmas concert. The concert showcases the amazing talent of our incredible Music Department, and an array of festive songs, young soloists and our Voices group (along with just a few Santa hats) will fill the air between 7pm and 8:15pm. Grab your ticket for £2 from the Music Department before they sell out!





Hermitage Good news!

Welcome to our regular spot where we round-up the good news happening in and out of school. This feature relies on our parents and students getting in touch with all the wonderful things going on. Here's the lowdown on who's been in touch and what they want to share:

Year 7:

- Alice S wanted us to know that she sat her Grade 1 piano exam, passing with a Merit. An amazing achievement!
- Fynn wanted us to know that he has made the grade and is on the school football team! Brilliant news!
- Courtney R is super-proud of winning a Golden Ticket in school for her excellent reading!
- Georgia picked up Woman of the Match playing football. And well done to Amazon Jaguars for winning!
- Joel wanted to shout from the rooftops about his football team's recent 10-1 win! Wow!!

Year 8

- Grace T recently competed in a shooting competition with Scouts and came joint first place, scoring 98 out of 100 – that's phenomenal!
- Grace also took part in the Remembrance parade, alongside Willow S and Benjamin C.
- George B picked up Player of the Year and 'Best Catch' at his Cricket presentation.
- Mia, Emily, Erin, Mila and Alice competed in a rowing quad in Durham, and did amazingly well! They were the youngest J13 racers and came second out of 4 crews in the age group above!

Year 9:

- Tyler C wanted us to know that he applied for a BBC TV series casting. We have everything crossed that you get the part!
- Lydia just wanted us to know that she is so proud of herself as she has come out with great grades for her hard work in English!



House news

We really do encourage healthy competition here at Hermitage Academy; collecting positive house points across the school day contributes towards the house points totals.

November's winning house was Integrity, winning comfortably with over 500 points in the lead. As we move into December there is everything to play for...who will win the house prize at the end of term?

House Points		
Half-Term		
1.		8,111
2.		7,870
3.		7,819
4.		7,200

Positive Points

These students have collected the most positive points in November – Well done and keep up the great work!

7	Tilly S
8	Hayden K
9	Amy-Leigh D
10	Alyssa H
11	Ella H
12	Lauren M
13	Kelsie G

Keep in touch

If you have anything to share about your child, or anything that may be happening in the community that you think we would like to hear about and could feature in our newsletter, please do get in touch.

Also, please let us know what you think of our newsletter! We'd love to hear from you!



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