

JULY 2025

SOUND WAVE

*Securing the future of deaf
children and young people*

**"Pupils' lives are positively transformed
by attending Mary Hare."**

(Ofsted, May 2025)

Read more on page 3

**Congratulations to Braidwood,
winners of Sports Day.**

Read the full article on page 20

£150,000 raised to date for the MUGA.

Can you help us raise more?

Fundraising pages 22 -26

maryhare.org.uk

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WELCOME TO MARY HARE SCHOOL

Welcome to this year's edition of Soundwave.

With both our Ofsted Social Care and Ofsted Education inspections having occurred within this academic year I am spoilt for choice on quotes! The standout line for me has been:

"Pupils' lives are positively transformed by attending Mary Hare." (Ofsted, May 2025)

I am delighted that Ofsted inspectors and the many other visitors we host have independently identified this impact and recognise the ambition within the school to ensure deafness is not a barrier to success.

The judgement of Outstanding in all areas for are Social Care Inspection was fantastic endorsement for those leading and working within the Residential provision and the wider teams such as Medical and Wellbeing teams, Speech Therapy and Interventions, Safeguarding, Facilities and Health and Safety leads.

"Staff are attuned and responsive to children's presenting needs and provide additional support for children and their families outside of the school." (Ofsted, Oct 2024)

In writing to the pupils the Ofsted Lead Inspector wrote *"If you take every step with the thought that your only limitation is your own imagination, this will take you far."* This is very fitting with our continued ethos within the school of *Set Your Sights High* and is something that shines through within this edition of Soundwave.

The continued support of our PTA, Foundation Trustees and our affiliation with the Worshipful Company of Lighmongers continue to be highly valued. Multiple projects have been enabled through the support of these groups but of particular note has been the refurbishment of two of our science labs during the Easter break. Over recent years we have seen several students transition to prestigious science related degrees at university and I am pleased that our facilities now provide a more modern learning environment.

I hope you enjoy the insight that this edition of Soundwave gives into life at Mary Hare School. I also hope that it inspires even more people to get involved in everything that 2025-26 promises to deliver.

Robin Askew
Principal

MARY HARE PRIMARY SCHOOL

SO MANY ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES...



I seem to have blinked and another year has passed with so many more achievements and milestones passed.

Many more children have joined our school growing new friendships. Our youngest members of the school are growing in confidence day by day and it has been

a true pleasure to listen to their voices strengthen and their reading skills develop. Our oldest members have been given many opportunities to flourish this year and amazed us with their determination to take on new challenges.

This year, as a school, we have taken part in more activities with other local schools including: the Agricultural Challenge, Forest School, PE lessons with mainstream peers and our

residential to Mill on the Brue which have all supported the communication and language skills of all our children. We have also supported many causes and celebrated different subjects with our Macmillan Tea Party, NSPCC Number Day, Children in Need, Wear it Loud and British Science week to name but a few. At the children's request, we have also begun many clubs at lunchtime including cooking club, gardening club, computing club and arts and crafts club which support our children's holistic development.

This year our major highlight has been the Sensory Courtyard project which was supported by a grant from Learning through Landscapes. They have kindly donated money and training to support us in creating a calming and sensory haven within our school courtyard. The children have designed and created this space from the very start and are now reaping the rewards in the spring weather.

It has been a busy year once again but, as always, a fulfilling one to look back upon.

Rachel Sheen
Head of Primary



**MARY HARE
SCHOOL PANTO**



**MILL ON THE BRUE
RESIDENTIAL TRIP**



FUNNY FACES



GARDENING CLUB



SCIENCE WEEK



**NEWBURY SHOWGROUND
HARVEST DAY**





FOREST SCHOOL



NEW SENSORY GARDEN



MAKING FAIRY GARDENS



WORLD BOOK DAY



COOKING CLUB



NSPCC NUMBER DAY



**MAKING MOSAICS
FOR SENSORY
GARDEN**



WEAR IT LOUD



RSPB BIRDWATCH

MARY HARE SECONDARY & SIXTH FORM

REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST YEAR

As we quickly approach the end of this academic year, I have been given the opportunity to highlight just a few of the activities and areas of development across our secondary school.

In spring this year, our library space was transformed and opened up. It now includes new areas for students across the key stages to use for their reading groups and independent research and study. Our students love the little book nooks where they can curl up in and get lost in a good book.

Reading is a core skill and our English Department have been busy promoting the joy of reading. For World Book Day, they put on a book quote hunt challenge for the Year 10 students in the library. Adding to the vibrancy of the space, the Careers Department also have a new base within the library where Year 12 and 13 students can drop in during their study periods and explore all the options available to them post Mary Hare.

Beyond the library, our Sixth Form catering students have had another fantastic year, engaging with members of the public in the local area. Once a month they bake cakes for Educafe, a community initiative in Newbury. This year they were delighted

to cater for their birthday party, which was a public event for 200 people. At Christmas, our catering students, supported by their Sixth Form peers and form tutors, also prepared the hospitality for an afternoon cabaret event for fifty elderly people from the surrounding area. These opportunities give our students valuable real-world experience and help build strong community ties.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the age range, all our Year 8 students participated in Brilliant Club, an initiative run by the Scholars Programme. This is the third year that Mary Hare has engaged in this programme, which gives students the chance to work with a PhD tutor on an assignment, gain understanding of universities and visit some top educational institutions. They participated in eight tutorial-style sessions and then produced a final piece of work which was marked in a university style. This year, the topics were British Prime Ministers and democracy.

To round off the experience, all our students took part in a graduation event at Bath University. This is a really inspiring programme which encourages our pupils to aim high and sets a strong foundation for their academic aspirations.

Rachel Carr

Assistant Principal – Progress & Attainment



WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF PLUMBERS VISIT



SNOW



FOOD TECH



CHRISTMAS PARTY



FACEPAINT



FIRST FRAMED

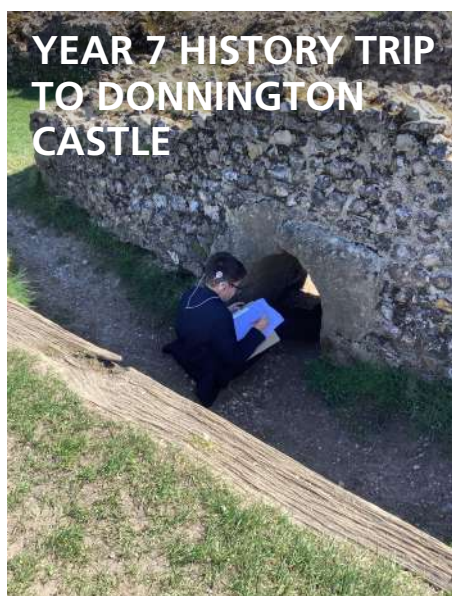


CHILDREN IN NEED



**BUILDING CRAFTS
COLLEGE VISIT**









LASER CLAYS



VE DAY



REMEMBRANCE DAY



BIRTHDAY



RED NOSE DAY



SCIENCE PROJECT



PLUMBING



HELLOYELLOW





NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM



GINGERBREAD



ELDERLY CHRISTMAS PARTY



PIZZA



MANSELL





LIFEGUARDS



HOSPITALITY

COLE'S DINER

It's been another successful and full year in Cole's Diner. It's not just a place where students can relax and enjoy each other's company but represents a hub of extra-curricular activities for all year groups: students practice their hospitality skills in the Youth Club; 6th formers train as lifeguards. The year is punctuated by a number of outings that help build confidence as well as offering a fun way to spend a weekend or day out.



BUILDING BLOCKS



POTTERY





CREATIVE ARTS NEWS



Photos: Simon Vail Photography

"Thank you to you and the team for supporting the children to create an amazing performance. We thoroughly enjoyed it."

Parent



JO WHITE AND THE SEVEN

On Friday 6th December, the students wowed families, friends and audience members with their annual winter production.

The 2024 Christmas production was *Jo White and the Seven*. A pantomime that was packed full of jokes, plenty of tree puns, lots of panto magic (Ohhh yes it did...!). A hilarious spin on the classic tale, *Snow White*.

Performed by students from across Mary Hare School, this modern pantomime showcased their substantial talents through comic performance, contemporary and street dance, popular and traditional music as well as technical backstage skills.

With over half the school involved and students from across all years at Mary Hare, this was a truly inclusive production. But, it was also collectively ambitious setting new heights for musical, dramatic and choreographic excellence.

Students and Parents were truly entertained by the different levels of humour in the script and staging, from visual comedy like the pantomime horse, through the comic timing in the acting and the wordplay in the script (you had better be-leaf that the trees were tree-mendous) to the traditions of Pantomime which drew the audience into the spirit of the show (oh, no it didn't).

Some words from our Head of Performing Arts, Neil Farrow, "Ambitious, truly inclusive, funny: smile and laugh a minute, with over half the school involved."

A couple of students also shared a few words:

"This production is a success."

"Thanks for making it so joyous!"

Parents also said how much they enjoyed it:

"I love to hear her sing and the band perform. Your team are such a good role model for her and the other young people at school. Thank you for all you do."

"Thank you to you and the team for supporting the children to create an amazing performance. We thoroughly enjoyed it."

(Jo White and the Seven by Anne Bourke)



DANCE

During the Spring Term, the dance department took part in three key events from our annual dance calendar.

The first was our annual participation in *Manmade*—a boys' dance project led by ZoieLogic Dance Company. The company worked with 22 of our Mary Hare boys to create an original piece of choreography, which they performed three times. Their first performance was as part of the *Manmade* dance platform. It was fantastic to see such a large group involved, proudly representing the school alongside other local participants.

Next, the boys took the stage at *Ignite the Stage* at Arlington Arts—a performing arts fundraiser in support of Mary Hare. They delivered a bold and energetic performance, doing the school proud. They were joined by our Year 12 dancers, who performed a jazz duet complete with top hats and tails—a real showstopper!

The final event of the term was *Spring Equinox*. The boys opened the evening with their *Manmade* piece, and the Year 12 duet showcased their latest work, inspired by renowned choreographer Akram Khan. Their performance was one of their strongest to date and clearly demonstrated the impressive progress they've made in their first year of BTEC Dance.

The dance department is excited to close the academic year with our summer production and looks ahead with anticipation to all that the coming year holds for our students across the school.



DEAF-INNATELY COOL!

The Mary Hare band "Deaf Innately" performed to great acclaim at the Corn Exchange Theatre as part of the International Music Event, the Newbury Spring Festival. In amongst two weeks of international musicians performing in town, our very own year ten students put on a set of four songs in a concert highlighting local talents. "They crushed it", "smashed it" all while they "looked very cool".

As well as amazing the packed auditorium, it gave them the opportunity to listen to bands from the local community and realise for themselves just how good they are.

ART & DESIGN

Year 9 working on their clay pots inspired by the work of artists John Maltby and Paul Klee.



A selection of the pupils' ceramic pots inspired by the work of artists John Maltby and Paul Klee.



The pupils created the clay pots using both the coil and slab techniques and decorated them with coloured slips before firing them in the kiln.



Year 8 pupils making their own clay plates using a hand mould and decorating them with underglazes. The pupils had been learning about Delft pottery.



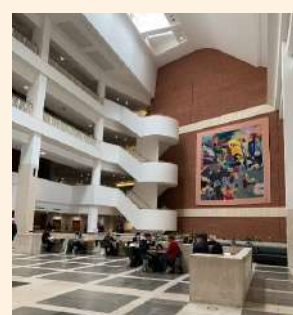
Examples of the Year 8 pupils' finished ceramic plates.



Some year 10, 11 and 12 students working with our visiting mural artist Layla Cope. Layla spent a day working in the art department to teach the specific skills of creating murals.



A group of our sixth form were invited to the Grand Final of the National Articulation Competition, which this year was held at The British Library. Before the competition we were taken on an amazing tour of the library and introduced to some of its vast collection.



The environment at the library is friendly and they are keen that everyone knows that once over the age of 18, we are all eligible to join The British Library.

Our students were involved in 3 group exhibitions this academic year. In October we organized the First Framed exhibition where we showed student artwork alongside the work from other schools. In January we joined the GENerate exhibition organized by The Base at New Greenham Arts and in May and June we contributed work to the exhibition Challenges at New Era as part of the West Berkshire Open Studios Scheme.

CAREERS AT MARY HARE

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



This academic year has been one of positive change for the careers team at Mary Hare School. I joined Mary Hare in September 2024 and am so proud of all that our amazing students have participated in this year and seeing how their confidence has grown.

One of our major changes was the introduction of the Unifrog system which both staff and students have embraced with much enthusiasm. Students have been completing in quizzes to find out what opportunities may suit them and searching on opportunities related to their interests. Parents play a hugely important role in students' careers journey and Anna and I look forward to working with you to support your students on their individual pathway.

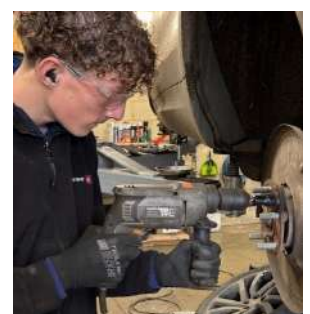
Across the year our students have done an amazing job at exploring the world of work and representing the school at work experience, events and trips. Year 11 really made the most of their work experience opportunities in October and we received positive feedback across the board from the employers that they joined. Across Sixth Form we have had students out on weekly work placements with Tigers day Nursery in Thatcham, Happy Kids, Pets at Home, Donnington Valley Hotel and Mary Hare Primary School.

National Apprenticeship week saw employer engagement from Xtrac who came in to run an engineering workshop as well as students participating in various in-school events during the week.

We have had trips to Hall Hunter Farm, University of Reading, AWE, Building Crafts College, Farnborough UCAS Fair and Newbury Careers Expo to name but a few. In addition we have had many visitors across the year and we thank them for their support: 3 Discovery ran a workshop on linked in for Year 13 students, The Worshipful Company of Plumbers came in and ran a pipe bending masterclass, Josh Wilkinson from Open Cosmos came in and talked about his career as a satellite systems engineer and The Worshipful Company of Carpenters came to visit and then hosted out students in return.

All in all, it's been a very busy and enjoyable year in careers and Anna and I look forward to continuing to work with you and our fantastic young people.

Claire Smith
Careers Lead and Industry Placement Officer



SPORTS NEWS



A DAY TO REMEMBER: SPORTS DAY 2025 SUCCESS!

Mary Hare Sports Day, held on Friday, May 23rd, was a resounding success—uniting students, staff, and families in a joyful celebration of athleticism and school spirit.

Although the skies remained overcast throughout the day, the weather was comfortably warm — ideal for outdoor activities without the glare of the sun. From sprints and relays to egg and spoon races, every event was met with enthusiastic participation and loud cheers from the sidelines. The sense of camaraderie and healthy competition was truly heartwarming.

Adding to the festive atmosphere, our incredible PTA went above and beyond by organising a school-wide barbeque. The delicious aroma of grilled food filled the air, drawing everyone together for a well-earned feast. It was a wonderful opportunity for families to mingle, students to relax, and everyone to enjoy the day beyond the track.

Sports Day 2025 not only showcased our pupils' talents and determination but also highlighted the strength of our school community. It was a day full of laughter, encouragement, and shared memories—one that will be fondly remembered by all who took part.

The day concluded with a spirited closing ceremony, where anticipation buzzed through the crowd as the final scores were announced. Cheers erupted as **Braidwood House Team** won Sports Day overall. **Arnold House Team** won the House Championship. Their hard work, teamwork, and sportsmanship throughout the day truly earned them the top spot—congratulations to Arnold House!



SOPHIE MERNAGH

Sophie has been selected for the 2025 Deaflympics in Tokyo to play for Great Britain Deaf Football. This is an amazing opportunity but Sophie needs to raise funds to support her trip and all the associated costs. You have until December 2025 to make a donation here: <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/fundraising/sophie-mernagh>

We are very proud of Sophie's achievements!



TAG RUGBY

In March pupils from the primary school competed in a Tag Rugby tournament at Newbury RFC against other mainstream schools. As Harrison said, 'there was great energy in every game!' Our superstars showed great determination, resilience, teamwork and positivity.



GETTING A TASTE FOR GOLF?

This year, the Sixth Form and Year 10/11 students have been lucky enough to have some Golf Taster sessions in their PE lessons. These have been run in partnership with Donnington Valley Golf and their Head Professional Dieter. The sessions started on the school field and then later on, students have been able to enjoy putting and a few holes at Donnington Valley on such a fabulous course. Hopefully, this will encourage our students to broaden their horizons as to what activities they can take part in outside of School and after they leave.



FUNDRAISING



MARY HARE FOUNDATION CHARITY GOLF DAY

On 23rd April, the Mary Hare Foundation held a very successful Golf Day at Donnington Valley Golf Club in Newbury.

Over 80 golfers took part in the day and enjoyed 18 holes followed by lunch and an auction of items with a sporting theme. The whole event raised £24,000.

This sporting event was to support Mary Hare School's Sports Appeal. During lunch pupil, Sophie, spoke about her hearing loss and the support she gets at Mary Hare and that she has been selected to play for GB at the Deaflympics in Tokyo in 2025.

The Mary Hare Foundation is very grateful for all the support for this event, including many local businesses: Donnington

Valley, Estate Agents: Roots & Carter Jonas, Newbury Audi, many local pubs & restaurants, Tom Ward Racing & Jamie Snowden, Yattendon Estates, Aardvark Safaris, Marsden confectionery, Honesty Group, Deanwood, Mary Hare Hearing Centre, Gecko Fitness and Bloxham Mill.

The overall sponsor was Cazenove Capital wealth management division of Schroders and the whole event was organised by a committee of volunteers.

Picture of The Organising Golf Committee. Mary Troughton, Janey Marsh, Julia Scott & Woody Hellyer.

SUPPORTERS ENJOY THE SCHOOL WINTER PRODUCTION

In December the fundraising team showcased the talented performances of students to friends of the foundation. Kirsten Lloyd, former chair of Trustees (who retired in December 2022) was gifted a tree by our current chair, Harriet McCalmont, to recognise her 15 years of service at the end of the production. Harriet congratulated the pupils on a phenomenal job well done and the staff for their dedicated work arranging the production. Our very own Mary Hare catering students made up goody bags to thank those who have helped raise significant funds for the Foundation, including gingerbread, Christmas cake, and Brownies.

WINTER JIGS AND REELS 2025

On Saturday 4th January, just under a 100 people braved the snowy weather to celebrate the new year at Hermitage Village Hall with our Family Reels Party. While the snow flurried outside Parents, grandparents and children, dressed up in party clothes with a splash of tartan, got into the swing of things. Very much in thanks to Alex Carver who kindly returned as the caller for the evening and made sure everyone had a roaring good time. We saw lots of experienced faces who got to dust off their reeling knowledge while sharing special memories with their children curiously learning an old tradition. The event raised a total of £1755 for the Ivan Tucker Bursary Scheme.



WEST BERKSHIRE SCHOOLS AND CLUBS PERFORMANCE SHOWCASE RAISES INCREDIBLE £5.5K FOR MARY HARE FOUNDATION

For the second year running, The Nicola Moran Academy of Drama presented 'Ignite The Stage', the performance showcase for West Berkshire schools and clubs, to a sold out audience at Arlington Arts, and raised close to £5,500 for the Mary Hare Foundation from ticket sales, programmes and raffle tickets.

An audience of more than two-hundred theatre-goers including the Mayor of Thatcham, Suzanne Adamantos, enjoyed 26 tantalising performances that spanned dance, contemporary and classical, drama, musical theatre and live band music.

A host of West Berkshire schools and performance clubs, that included St Finian's School 'Glee Club', The Nicola Moran Academy of Drama, Maia Hendrickx Vocal Studios, Allenova School of Dancing, The Elibah School of Dance, Kennet School's Encore Dance Company and Psycho Dance Company, St Gabriel's School, St Bartholomew's School, The 'Eggs Benedict' band from The Downs School, Trinity School and Mary Hare School all participated.

THANK YOU BAYER

We are hugely grateful to the volunteers from **Bayer** (a leading Pharmaceutical, Healthcare and Crop Science company based in Reading) who came to do some gardening and painting at Mary Hare. Approximately 28 people came to the School over 2 days in August last year, thanks to their organiser, Kayla Piper, (UK Customer Service Operations Manager).

The volunteers helped to spruce up some of our outside spaces around the residential accommodation, which was fantastic treat for the students to come back to in September. The whole group kept smiling - even though it was not the best weather!

During the October half term another group from Bayer came to dig the beds in the Pond Garden area - restoring it to how it used to be years ago.

We look forward to seeing them again in August 2025.





THE INFLATABLE 5K IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST AND BEST INFLATABLE 5K OBSTACLE RUN.

This unique inflatable obstacle course and run included 32 obstacles over the 5km run at Newbury racecourse on Saturday 28th September. Mary Hare had a great team of 18 people taking part and this including extended family & friends – It was a fun morning and they all did really well – some of the participants said

“It was hard climbing on some of the inflatables” – so not your average 5K but most absolutely loved it!

The morning was a bright sunny one and the added extra is that they raised £1,205.00.

“It was hard climbing on some of the inflatables” – so not your average 5K but most absolutely loved it!”

Audience feedback

A NEW MULTI-USE GAMES AREA (MUGA)



The first stage in our Sports Appeal is to raise £700,000 for the MUGA. Every time we raise another £10,000 we will gain another ‘square’ on the pitch. With your help we aim to cover the ground by the end of 2026.

If you want to donate to the MUGA/Sports Appeal you can do so on the website.

SPORTS APPEAL

At the time of writing this we have raised £150,000 towards our Sports Appeal. We have decided to make it a two-phase appeal – concentrating on raising the funds required for the 3G MUGA pitch first. So this is how much we have raised so far!

We are grateful to the following donors for their support:

- The Antony Hornby Charitable Trust
- Mr Robert Froy
- Newbury & Thatcham Hockey Club
- Nicholas Jones Charitable Trust
- The G J W Turner Trust
- E B M Charitable Trust
- The Mabs Mardulyn Charitable Foundation
- Cazenove Capital
- Tate Consultancy Ltd
- Mr David Low

There have already been far too many supporters to name them all here – but this is a big thank you to all of them for helping us to get the appeal off the ground.

The School is working with planning consultants to prepare for the submission for full planning consent. Once this has been granted, we will be able to forge ahead in earnest with the main appeal.



MARY HARE'S LONDON QUIZ NIGHT



Was held on 30th April held at St Colomba's Church Hall in Knightsbridge.

We have held this quiz in London for several years now. This year we welcomed over 100 people taking part with our expert Quiz Master and Trustee, Kit Loyd who was interacting with the participants. The Winning team was Agatha Quiztie headed up by Virginia Von Celsing.

Thank you to our sponsors of the evening JP Hambro and Kingsley Napley Legal Company.

The event raised a fantastic £7500 for the Bursary Fund.



HELP US TO COVER THE GROUND!



£640K	£650K	£660K	£670K	£680K	£690K	£700K
£570K	£580K	£590K	£600K	£610K	£620K	£630K
£500K	£510K	£520K	£530K	£540K	£550K	£560K
£430K	£440K	£450K	£460K	£470K	£480K	£490K
£360K	£370K	£380K	£390K	£400K	£410K	£420K
£290K	£300K	£310K	£320K	£330K	£340K	£350K
£220K	£230K	£240K	£250K	£260K	£270K	£280K
£150K	£160K	£170K	£180K	£190K	£200K	£210K
£80K	£90K	£100K	£110K	£120K	£130K	£140K
£10K	£20K	£30K	£40K	£50K	£60K	£70K



BEFORE



FOYLE FOUNDATION



AFTER



THANKS TO THE FOYLE FOUNDATION FOR OUR TOTALLY RENOVATED LIBRARY!

The Foundation was fortunate to secure one final grant of £32,000 from the Foyle Foundation to update the Secondary School library before the closure of the grant maker at the end of 2025. Mary Hare has been a beneficiary of the Foyle foundation on multiple occasions across the years having received a total of £107,000 in grants. The Foyle Foundation was founded by the relatives of the founders of the former family-owned bookshop Foyles in Charing Cross Road, London and will have distributed £180m in grants over its lifetime.

In preparation for the library renovation in the October half term, some members of staff, friends, and family, led by the Principal Robin Askew, volunteered during their break

to come and tidy the old library and paint the walls a bright white. An air source heat pump was installed to improve heating while reducing energy costs and the old furniture was moved around to imitate the proposed layout of the new furniture so pupils could see how it worked. Listening to feedback from pupils our staff suggested adding more seating and study tables for 6th form who liked the new layout and were using the library more. As well as requesting the addition of a quiet area for KS3 & 4 pupils for 1 to 1 learning and some additional storage. The new library includes all these things and more with new shelving, reading alcoves and study areas all in a light wood giving the library space an airy and modern feel.





LITTLE HARES

KIM GURNEY TELLS US WHY SHE LOVES COMING TO LITTLE HARES WITH HER SON JACK

I've been attending Little Hares at Mary Hare Primary School since May 2023 with my son Jack, and it has been a truly wonderful experience for our whole family. We attend once a month and always look forward to it.

The sessions are incredibly varied and engaging, from learning some British Sign Language, to stories, play, singing, music therapy, meeting older deaf students and speech and language activities. There are lots of professionals at each session and are often representatives from various support organisations such as the NDCS, which is so helpful. We have the opportunity to talk about EHCP's, nurseries, schooling, social needs, events, technology and all sorts. It's such a valuable chance to ask questions and get advice tailored to our circumstances.

One of the best aspects is being able to meet other families in similar situations. It's not often you find a space where everyone just gets it, and we've found real connection and support in that community.

The staff at Mary Hare are absolutely exceptional. So kind, knowledgeable, and genuinely welcoming. They create a warm, supportive atmosphere, and even something as simple as being offered a drink and snack makes you feel instantly at home.

The Primary School itself is incredible. It has clearly been designed with the specific needs of deaf children in mind. Every detail seems to have been thought through so carefully. It would be an absolute dream if my son could attend the school in the future.

One particularly memorable moment for me was when Rachel Solly was reading a book to my son, who is profoundly deaf and non-verbal. He was completely captivated by the communication and, to my amazement, began copying the speech sounds – it was the start of something truly beautiful, and I'll never forget it.

My son loves playing with his deaf friends at the group, and it's been lovely to see his hearing sister included in everything too – it's such an inclusive and family-friendly environment.



PEOPLE NEWS



On May 1st we welcomed back a group of former members of staff. They enjoyed hearing about new developments at the School and also taking the opportunity to catch up with former colleagues.



HELLO

We said hello to a number of new staff this year including:



Todd Andrews
(Marketing Assistant)

Todd has joined us to support marketing whilst Selina is on maternity leave. Todd has a degree in journalism and is familiar with the school, as his sister Cherry is Head of History.



Claire Smith
(Careers Lead & Industry Placement Officer)

Claire joined us in September 2024 - read about her first year on page 19.



Jesamine Oldman
(Drama Teacher)

Jesamine Oldman joined Mary Hare School

in August 2024 as the new drama teacher.

"It's been a real pleasure working at Mary Hare School this academic year. I've been made to feel incredibly welcome by both students and staff, whose warmth, talent, and enthusiasm have made this a truly memorable experience. The facilities in performing arts are fantastic and have really helped bring creativity and learning to life. I'm excited to see what the future holds here and feel proud to be part of such a vibrant community."

GOODBYE

We also said goodbye to some familiar faces:

WORDS FROM HUGO BOUGAEFF, OUR FRENCH ASSISTANT



I have been working at Mary Hare for eight months, and I can confidently say it has been a transformational experience for me. From the beginning, pupils and staff were very nice and welcoming, and my worries about being alone in a foreign country, speaking in a language I was not used to speaking daily, went away quite fast.

I was really impressed by the level of French of the pupils at Mary Hare. I worked a lot with Year 11, who all improved greatly through the year, and I am really proud of them and their progress. I also had a lot of sessions with Tilly, a Year 13 French A-level student, who impressed me with her skills and

learning capacity; I am sure she will speak French better than I can speak English in the near future.

I also ran a French club with French games and food tasting, and I want to thank all the pupils that participated in this activity for trying to discover a culture they are not familiar with. Like a lot of people, I thought at first that deafness was an obstacle to learning a foreign language, but the students showed me that they were perfectly able to achieve that, even surpassing my expectations and the standards I was used to.

Thank you to all pupils and staff, especially Sarah Owen and Rachel Carr, who supported and helped me in my role during the whole year. Thanks to all of them and this great experience at Mary Hare, I am now sure that I want to keep teaching in the future.

I will miss everyone here and this chapter in my life very much.



Anne Munby
(Fundraiser)

Anne sadly leaves us in August after working for the Mary Hare Foundation for the last 18 years. Anne has worked on many

different fundraising projects helping to raise £millions for the School. Highlights include Murray House boarding house, the refurbishment of the swimming pool and, of course, the New Primary School.

Anne said: "Being able to find the funds that ultimately give students the best opportunities in an environment they deserve has been very rewarding. I have enjoyed working alongside some fantastic people both in School and with volunteers, Trustees, the PTA and companies and I wish Mary Hare all the best for the future."

Cheryl Colby
(Head of PE)

Cheryl Colby joined Mary Hare in 2003. Cheryl has engaged students in a wide range of sporting activities and events and inspired many of them to go on and pursue their love of sport after leaving Mary Hare School. Cheryl said: "It's obviously been a pleasure to have that transformative influence in a lot of young people over the years. I'm sorry I won't see the new Sports Centre but I'm sure it will be much appreciated when it is built!"



Jane McMillan
(Development Director)

After more than 23 years Jane is retiring from her role as Development Director at the end of August. We asked her what changes she has seen in that time:

"When I joined Mary Hare my first job was to raise the funds required to build Arlington Arts Centre. It was a great fundraising appeal, as I had to point out to supporters that deaf young people have as much interest and talent in the performing arts as their hearing peers. Then came Murray House, the swimming pool, Howard House 2 and most recently the Primary School, science labs and library. I have enjoyed every minute of my time at Mary Hare – not least because I can see the tangible results of the work of the fundraising team. I have also enjoyed looking after marketing and admissions over the years.

I have seen lots of other changes (including working for 4 different Principals). The curriculum has broadened, the boarding facilities improved and, sadly, it seems to have become even tougher for families of deaf young people to secure a place for their child. But many things have remained consistent over the years: the unfailing support and expertise of the teaching staff and those in residential care; the dedication to the cause of improving the educational opportunities of deaf young people from every member of staff and not least the amazing drive, talent and personalities of the pupils.

I wish Mary Hare the very best for the future and look forward to coming to visit when the new sports centre is built!"

"I have enjoyed every minute of my time at Mary Hare – not least because I can see the tangible results of the work of the fundraising team."

MEET THE NEW PREFECT TEAM

Our new Head Prefects have been duly elected. They are:

JASPER: HEAD PREFECT

Why did you put yourself forward for the Prefect Team?

I put myself forward because I wanted to make a meaningful contribution to the school in my final year. After many years of being here at Mary Hare, I wanted to give something back by helping to suggest and implement changes to activities and facilities that would hopefully benefit all pupils. I am a hard-working individual with ambitions for my future. Being part of the Prefect Team will test me in ways that I may not have previously considered.

It is also a valuable opportunity to represent my school and do things that push me personally out of my comfort zone, and this was another key reason which motivated me to put myself forward for the role. I consider it a privilege to serve my school, whilst allowing me to develop new skills and capabilities, meet new people and practice being a collaborator.

What do you hope to achieve over the next academic year?

What I hope to achieve over the next academic year, are possible changes to the houses by installing new house emblems/logos for the four schoolhouses which are, (Arnold, Braidwood, Beverly, Mary Hare). In terms of deciding what the logos might be, we could hold a competition between the students in the school and the judge's being teachers, prefects or houses captains can decide on the best emblems/logos for the houses, I may also want to make a few changes to the house events by changing or adding other events.

How can you be a good role model to the younger students?

I hope I can be a good role model by demonstrating qualities such as determination, responsibility, and hard work. I would like to show that through determination, if I can stand-up and speak publicly to represent the school then so can other students; illustrate taking on a responsibility like being a lifeguard; and showing that being proactive and putting yourself forward for a role like Head Prefect is achievable with hard work. I also believe that upholding a high standard of dress code and good presentation helps to develop personal confidence.



Our Prefect Team

SIENNA: HEAD PREFECT

Why did you put yourself forward for the Prefect Team?

I put myself forward for the role of a Head Prefect because I wanted to show the rest of prefect team and the rest of the school the importance of collaborating as a team. As well as allowing everyone to voice their opinions, whether or not they are in the prefect team. And I believed that stepping up on a leadership role would also step up my confidence.

What do you hope to achieve over the next academic year?

I hope to achieve more engagement between different year groups across the school, create more inclusive house events or charity events and thoroughly encourage the students to make more friends by breaking their communication barriers, especially towards oral and BSL children.

How can you be a good role model to the younger students?

By creating an example of myself, being both a BSL and oral student, giving the students the confidence to be able to voice their opinions and allowing them to collaborate as well as balancing my socialising and studying time.



PTA ROUND UP



It's been another busy year and we have enjoyed putting our energy and resources towards supporting the School in any way we can.

In the autumn, we made a donation of £2500 on the Good Exchange, where the School had registered a fundraising project to refurbish the science labs. Our donation was match funded by the Greenham Trust making it worth £5000 towards the project! We are very pleased to see the science labs have now been completed.

Once again, our Christmas hamper-school house raffle was a great success, and we made in the region of £500.

Throughout February pupils were invited to pitch to the PTA in a Dragon's Den style initiative. They presented their ideas for a chance to get them funded up to the value of £300! The Dragons (AKA the PTA) met on Friday 21st March 2025 to hear and discuss the ideas.

First up... Alex, Roxanne, Louise and Sofia from Adelaide House requesting funding for new furnishings, so they can meet and dine together in a more comfort. We agreed to co-fund 2 new tables and chairs, blinds and curtains to spruce up the room.

Sophie, Head Prefect, presented her pitch to the PTA on behalf of the 6th form to request funding for new flooring in their common rooms. We were able to agree funding with the school for one of the rooms, so they were busy in the

Easter break getting rid of the old carpet and laying new tiles.

Year 11 requested funds to source a second-hand pool table – which we hope will give them hours of fun together and help reduce a little stress when taking a break from GCSE revision!

On behalf of Mansell House, Zach presented an energetic and fun pitch (shared by Nadine) for 2 telescopes and some outdoor games (tennis, cricket and swingball). The pitch was so good, of course we had to agree to funding the purchases.

The PTA held a BBQ on the School lawn during Sports Day this year which took place on Friday 23 May. This year we hosted a raffle and the opportunity to get involved with the re-launch of the 100 CLUB. For £2 per month (£24 for the year) your number will be entered into the lucky draw each month to win the top prize.

The PTA is run by a committee of elected parents and staff. You automatically become a member when your child joins the school. We are a friendly and supportive team and you are welcome to join in on events volunteering in what ever capacity you are able to. We Look forward to meeting you soon.



ALUMNI



On 1 March 2025 a group of alumni from 1994 – 2001 came to unveil a plaque in Arlington Arts Centre in the Music Department, in memory of Steven McMahon.

Former student Steven was a kind and gentle man who loved music and was an excellent drummer with a wonderful soul. The group were joined by Nasser Bouzida, Music Teacher, who enjoyed teaching Steven. Nasser said he was an enthusiastic player who practised prolifically, and he enjoyed teaching him.



OLIVER PRITCHARD IS AN IRONMAN!

Oliver left Mary Hare in 2015 and attended the Royal Agricultural University in Cirencester. He started entering triathlons whilst at University and is now currently one of GB's elite Triathletes. In May this year, Oliver came 2nd overall and 1st in his age group at the IRONMAN 70.3 in Mallorca. This huge physical challenge included a 1.2 mile sea swim and a 56 mile run. His overall time was 4 hours 9 minutes including his bike leg, cycling at an impressive 23.5mph and a half marathon completed in 1 hour 16 minutes. What an amazing achievement!



Oliver's next aim is to be involved with the Deaflympics in November 2025 but is still waiting to hear if he has been selected or not.

Oliver said, "I believe a new Sports Hall at Mary Hare will not just be a wonderful new building, but will boost the sporting dreams and aspirations of students at Mary Hare School. It has the power to shape their future. As I gear up for my next challenge I am reminded that every step and every race is a testament to the power of sport in shaping lives and creating opportunities".



MARY HARE OLD PUPILS ASSOCIATION

Barry Avison (entertainment co-ordinator), Peter Mugridge (host & administrator of the Mary Hare History Forum/website), Derek Grabham (Chair), Lesley Hunter (archivist), Melinda Napier (Chair of British Deaf History), Annabelle Bolingbroke-Crabb (archivist & former Chair of MHOPA).

The School is grateful to the MHOPA for putting funds towards the purchase of some new benches in the quiet garden near the manor. This area is for staff to use to sit quietly when they need time to reflect.

The MHOPA committee is organising a big celebration of Mary Hare's 80th Anniversary on 19/20th June 2026. If you are interested in purchasing tickets the MHOPA will post further information later this year.



LOUIS FRANCIS STONE DESIGN

Louis Francis left Mary Hare School in 2007 and went on to study at Central Saint Martins College of Art in London, followed by a three-year City & Guilds Diploma in Historic Architectural Stone Carving.

Louis was helped by The Shaw Trust, a charity in the UK, which helps disabled and disadvantaged people into employment. He asked for advice when he visited the Job Centre about setting up his own business. He had a one-on-one meeting with a business advisor and BSL interpreter and, with their guidance, he drew up a business and action plan and that was to be the inception of "Francis Stone Design".

He is now a highly skilled Stone Mason, offering a bespoke service and working closely with leading architects and designers. Each project is tailored to clients' needs, from concept to completion. You can see some of his wonderful work on his website, www.francisstonedesign.co.uk

Louis has also been featured on TV on *Make it at Market*, where he works with a team of craft experts to help people starting out on their journey to make a living from their hobby. Due to its popularity, *Make it at Market Series 3* was on BBC One.

Most recently he appeared in *George Clarke's Amazing Spaces* where Louis converted an American School Bus into a full-time living home.





Ellie Wheatley went to work for Newbury Weekly News for her work experience placement in June this year. As a result the paper published an article Ellie wrote and have kindly allowed us to reproduce it below.

SEWA DAY BOOST

FOR LOCAL NURSERY SCHOOL

Coffee morning organised by local Hindu group raises £2,000 for improvements.

Thousands of pounds have been raised for improvements at a nursery school, thanks to a Saturday coffee morning.

A total of £2,000 was raised by the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh UK (HSS) and Sewa Day-organised event, which was held at Newbury Town Hall and will now go towards improvements at Victoria Park Nursery School.

Now in its fifth year, the coffee morning welcomed members of the public, along with former MP Laura Farris, mayor of Newbury David Harman, deputy mayor Sarah Slack and Councillors Nigel Foot and Gary Norman, who all praised the organisers for their continued dedication to local causes.

Speaking at the event, a member of the organising team said: "We are humbled by the response from the community. Raising £2,000 in just two hours speaks volumes about the generosity and unity of Newbury. With steaming cups of coffee, home-baked cakes and a strong sense of purpose, the morning offered more than just fundraising – it fostered connection,

kindness and a shared commitment to making Newbury a better place for all."

In previous years, proceeds have been donated to local charities such as Loose Ends, the mayor's preferred charities and tree-planting initiatives across the town.

HSS UK, a registered charity established in 1966, works to promote community cohesion, cultural values and volunteerism.

Sewa Day, a national charity focussed on the principle of 'selfless service' plays a vital role in the community year-round – from organising weekly surplus food collections for local shelters to spearheading tree planting and litter-picking drives in partnership with Newbury Town Council.

By ELLIE WHEATLEY
newsdesk@newburynews.co.uk
[@newburytoday](https://www.newburytoday.co.uk)
Courtesy of Newbury News

WELLBEING REFLECTIONS

This year, the Wellbeing department has moved rooms, we now have a bigger office on the ground floor which is accessible to all our students. It is right next to the area where we run lunchtime clubs and has therapeutic spaces available to our students. After the PTA's donation towards the lunchtime clubs last year, we have been running Art Club, Games Club and Do Good, Feel Good Club. The Art Club has produced some beautiful work that has been displayed in different places around the school. We are currently working on a giant canvas for the Speech and Language Team around Deaf Identity which can be used at different events.

In October, we celebrated YoungMinds #HelloYellow campaign supporting World Mental Health Day, everyone got the opportunity to wear yellow and different 'yellow' activities during lunchtime to raise awareness.

The highlight of the year for us, was our Happiness Day where we had a climbing wall and laser clay pigeon shooting at school. All pupils (and some staff) got to have a go and had lots of fun- a great opportunity to try something new and smiles all round.

During our Mindfulness Day, students had to go into our beautiful grounds to collect natural objects, they then took it in turns to place the items to create a collage of leaves, twigs and flowers. We then stepped back to look at the picture to see what was created, the results included a bird and a forest. For World Mental Health Week we did activities linked to movement including skipping, hula hooping and bean bag throwing illustrating the connection between mental and physical health.





MARY HARE'S FIRST FAMILY FUN DAY

For families of deaf children

Sunday 6th July 2025 10am – 4pm


Climbing wall, laser clays, craft corner, refreshments,
information tent, games, pic-nic area.



**TICKETS £5
PER FAMILY**



Book here



Next year's
Family Fun Day will be
on Sunday 28th June 2026