



BUCKS UTC

December Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers.

AYLESBURY CHRISTMAS MARKET - SUNDAY 4TH DECEMBER

On Sunday 4th December in Aylesbury's Market Square a range of enterprise companies from local schools sought to sell their 'wares' - Bucks UTC has to take massive heart from the following:

- Some 30% of our students were in attendance, supporting each other in 'shifts' to entice customers to buy products produced in the College in the previous week.
- While companies from other schools were intent upon profit generation, in our case all profits were to support the learning resources of one of our own Year 11 students Charlie Spooner who has been very poorly recently – this in itself speaks volumes for all our students.
- A variety of students have spoken to Sarah Newell, Alan Bailey, Nick Han and Tom Byrnes of their sense of pride in 'delivering' their projects and ideas through to fruition – truly this says much for the College's evolution in 2016!
- Finally and not least of all, I was humbled by the array of staff supporting our students in the Market Square: no other 'provider' in the county could even begin to match the 85% of teaching staff who joined our sales teams for all or part of the day - the goodwill between staff and students within the UTC is something we must celebrate!
- Truly, I found the Christmas Market and the event itself illustrating amply what Bucks UTC stands for – staff and students working together on work-related projects, with learning spanning many domains.
- I thank every student and member of staff for their goodwill and work – together, we do make a difference!

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We were delighted by the level of goodwill shown between staff and students at the Christmas Market.

REMINDER OF KEY CHRISTMAS DATES

The longest term of the academic year is drawing to a close and I believe many students and parents (and even staff) will heave a sigh of relief at the prospect of the forthcoming Christmas season. That said, I know that 'preparing' for Christmas and all festivals is demanding and indeed the same is true of our students' work in the current term for everything I know, from my 25 years of 'leadership' is that the examination requirements upon all learners have increased and this is especially true for Key Stages 4 and 5, i.e. our 'bread and butter'!. So I truly hope that every student can reflect positively upon some successes and progress in the past term, look forward to the Christmas season and contribute to their own family's festivities and celebration, and within these key words are the qualities I feel we all as parents and carers wish to see our children utilise and value.

- **Monday 19th December** - End-of-Term Reports issued.
 - **Tuesday 20th December** - Term ends at 1pm.
 - **Wednesday 21st December–Tuesday 3rd January inclusive** - The college is closed to students.
 - **Wednesday 4th January** - Staff Training Day.
 - **Thursday 5th January** - Spring Term begins, students on site for 8.30am.
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THE FIRST TERM

What have our students been working on in the specialist areas and with employers?

Key Stage 4

- Working with [Graphite AM](#) to understand the processes involved in 3D prototyping
- Planning maintenance of buildings
- Technical Drawing
- Brick techniques and carpentry
- [Bletchley Park](#) Visit
- [Rackspace](#) Seminar
- Aylesbury Architecture Tour



BLETCHLEY PARK

Key Stage 5

- Website Design Project for Me, Myself, I - a Winslow-based charity.
- [J-motion](#) Project – camera techniques
- Community Project for [Buckingham Park School](#), making swords for their school production at the Waterside Theatre, Aylesbury
- Building Technology
- Graphical Detailing
- Project Management
- Intel work placements
- Cisco Work placements
- Cisco Video-Conferencing Project
- [Double Glazing Direct](#) work placements (website planning and design)
- [Bunce Plumbing](#) work placements
- Rackspace Seminar
- Student Finance Workshop with the Student Finance Tour/DFE



Whole UTC

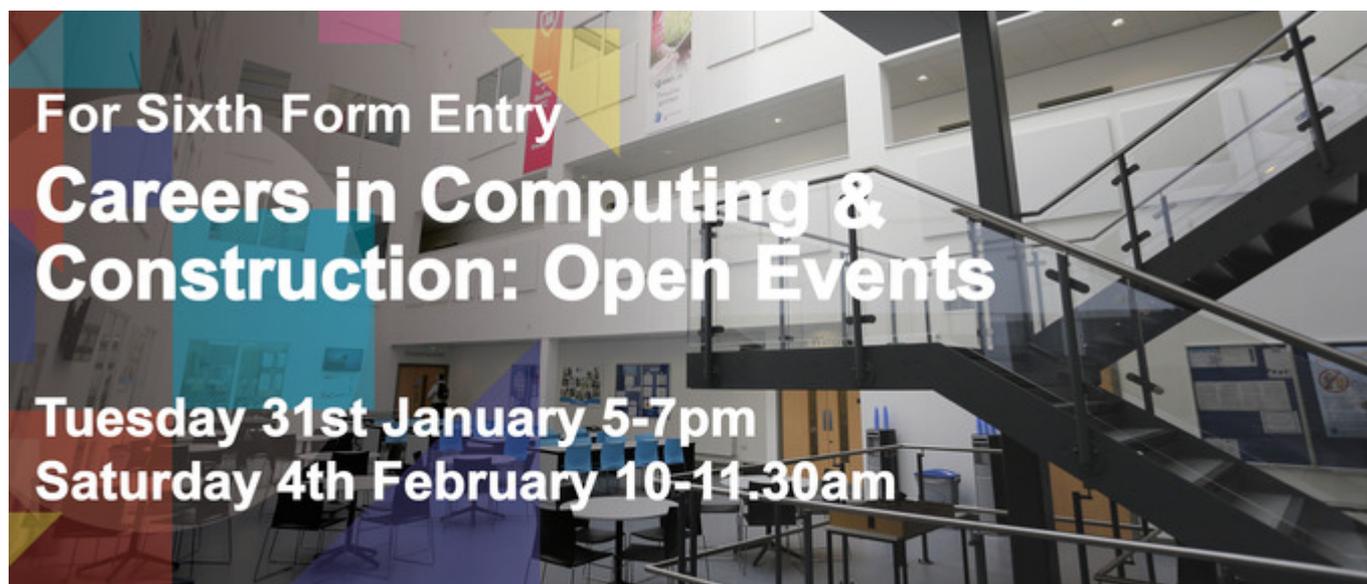
- [Elevate Education](#) - all students take part in 3 of the 4 externally delivered seminars during the year:
 1. **Student Elevation** - This examines the fundamental elements for success and introduces students to a range of skills that will allow them to motivate themselves throughout the year.
 2. **Study Sensei** - 'What is study?' This seminar breaks down the study techniques of the top students, providing students with a roadmap for the work they need to be doing across the year and how to do it.
 3. **Memory Mnemonics** - The only thing trickier than getting through all the work in the final years of school can be remembering it! This seminar covers the simple-to-use techniques and strategies that help students with their memorisation and recall of information.
 4. **Ace Your Exams** - With the arrival of exams knowing the materials is no longer enough - it now becomes the case of application. The question for many students is 'How do I take all the work I have done and turn it into the marks I deserve?' This seminar outlines the critical exam skills that will allow them to excel in the exam room, whilst also demonstrating that exams are not just about the exam room – the preparation is where the marks are.
- Christmas Fair Project with Aylesbury Town Centre Management Team
- Fundraising
- [Skills Show](#) visit at the NEC Birmingham
- Sales Workshop with Klaus Allion, Managing Director at [ANT Telecom](#)

Future

- Trip to [Waddesdon Manor Gardens](#) to support year 11 students to complete their 'Hostel Garden Project' for the Creative Studies qualification
- Intel Head Office Visits for all Computing students
- Taylor Wimpey Site Visits for all Construction students
- Taylor Wimpey guest lectures
- Berlin Trip, February 2017

FORTHCOMING DATES IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2017

- **Thursday 5th January** - Term Begins
- **Thursday 12th January** - Year 11 Parents' and Students' Consultation Evening
- **Thursday 12th January** - An update for parents of Years 10 + 11 - 'the Core Curriculum at KS4' in the Main Hall 7:00-8:15pm.
- **W/C Monday 16th January** - Assessment (of progress) Week, all students (Interim reports to parents W/C 30th January)
- **Thursday 19th January** - Years 12 and 13 Parents' and Students' Consultation Evening
- **Tuesday 31st January** - College day finishes at 3:10pm (to enable setting up for the careers event)
- **Tuesday 31st January** - 'Careers in Computing and Construction' Event , 5-7pm
- **Saturday 4th February** - 'Careers in Computing and Construction' Event, 10-11.30am
- **Friday 10th February** - College closes for Half Term, 3.10pm
- **W/C Monday 13th February** - Half Term
- **Monday 20th February** - Staff Training Day
- **Tuesday 21st February** - College reopens, students on site for 8.30am.



FORTHCOMING PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' CONSULTATION EVENINGS

- **Year 11 Parents' and Students' Consultation Evening: Thursday 12th January** - online information will be circulated from Wednesday 4th January re appointments.
- **Years 12 and 13 Parents' and Students' Consultation Evening, Thursday 19th January** - online information will be circulated from Monday 9th January re appointments.

FORTHCOMING PARENTS' INFORMATION EVENINGS

One of the important aspects we are seeking to develop this year is our shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our students. Subsequent to last term's evenings 'on how students learn' and our 'anti-bullying workshop', in the Spring Term we will be hosting two further evenings, namely:

An update on the KS4 Core Curriculum for all Year 10 and 11 Parents

On Thursday 12th January 7-8.15pm, there will be presentations from English, Mathematics and Science

and a review of how we are monitoring students' progress this year.

'Careers in Computing and Construction':

- Tuesday 31st January 5-7pm
- Saturday 4th February 10-11.30am

The careers events will showcase our 16+ curriculum to prospective (Year 12) students for September 2017, and I hope as many current parents and students as possible will also join us to meet both our sponsors and a range of local employees in our specialist areas, namely Computing and Construction.

More detailed letters of invitation to both the above information evenings will follow in January.

RECENT SUCCESSES AND DEVELOPMENTS

The College is indebted to our main sponsors for a range of successful events in recent weeks:

- The Anti-Bullying Workshop (in Anti-Bullying Week) was led by Graham Strachan, Director of Engineering at **Intel**; and the actual week also involved a number of related workshops for students.
- The **Elevate** Workshop for students in Years 10-12 was planned by Sarah Newell and many students have said how relevant and useful the presentations were.
- **Intel** and **Cisco** have enacted a range of work placements for our 16+ students, led by Alan Bailey and a full summary of our employer-based opportunities for our students is attached. We are indebted to Alan Bailey, Nick Han, Sarah Newell and Cheryl Saunders (our recently appointed work-related learning coordinator) for their collective work. It is an impressive range, illustrating that we are responding to the students' comments.
- Interim Reports and a parent's summary of the recent Cognitive Ability Tests have been distributed to all parents and carers: the work here of all staff, led by Tom Byrnes and Sarah Newell is impressive.

BERLIN - A FIRST (EUROPEAN TRIP)

Some 30 students and staff will be departing in February for a five-day visit to the City of Berlin. This is 'a first' for the College and we are collectively indebted to Tom Byrnes, Amie Hartwig and Nicholas Han for their preparedness both to plan and take responsibility for our students on this exciting opportunity.



END-OF-TERM REPORTS

An important milestone of our developing practice this year is our assessment of every student's (overall) progress every Half Term. I hope the information shared in early November was helpful and equally that the End-of-Term Summary which will be distributed on Monday 19th December will be informative and constructive for all parties.

The 'Mantra' of the Department for Education is assessing the 'progress' of every student from their Key Stage 2 data and, if there are issues within this for all UTCs, equally it is our responsibility to maintain the integrity of our core value - preparing students for their future careers, in our case in Computing and Construction. When Ofsted visits us in the coming term many, many of our developments in 2016 will be reviewed by the current regime - in the reality, we do have much to celebrate re the real progress the college has made!

STAFFING NEWS

We expect to be stable as we go into the Spring Term and I take heart from this situation, for I have great confidence in our developing practice(s). I am also indebted to the expanding range of colleagues who have taken on additional responsibilities, to enhance the opportunities available in the College, individually:

- **Mark Bilsby** – Role as **Transition Manager**, in effect Head of Years 10 and 11.
- **Tom Byrnes** – **Data Management**.
- **Cheryl Saunders** – **Work-Related Learning Co-ordinator**, liaising between specialist areas and both our sponsors and local employees.
- **Sonia Hothi and Vince Mealing**, who are working together as **Student Champions**, to enhance our College Council.

QUALITY ASSURANCE (Q.A)

One of the most important processes and developments of recent weeks was the introduction of a 'Quality Assurance' week in November. This self-review of our practice(s) is led by our Better Learning and Teaching Group which is chaired by Sarah Newell and its first report to the Governors' Teaching and Learning Group (which monitors our Post-Ofsted Action Plan) is both informative and inclusive – highlighting both current strengths and the need to continue to develop practice where necessary.

The Q.A week entails colleagues observing lessons and scrutinising students' work, with objective feedback to colleagues on strengths and weaknesses. Such 'weeks' are now a termly 'event' at the UTC - quite simply, 'it is how we do things'- this is a phrase you will hear me refer to again in the year ahead for our determination is to secure a 'UTC way' of nurturing all our students.

STAFF TRAINING DAY

I indicated earlier in the term that we would share information on the 'what and how' we assess on our training days. For the coming January day, staff will have two main focuses:

- ASD Learners and their preferred learning styles.
- Year 10, reviewing progress to date (to inform the development of support in the coming term).

News Across The College



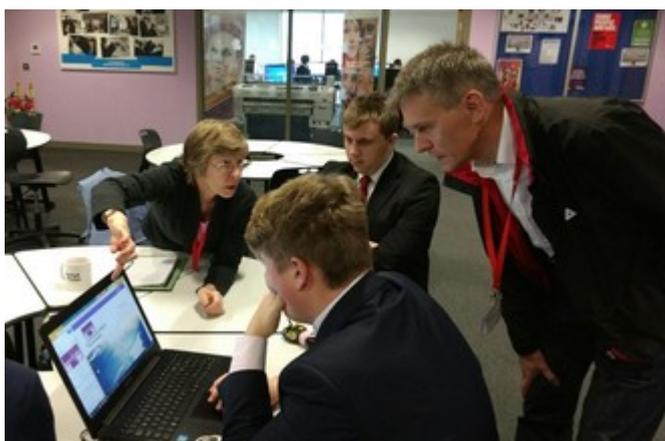
Bucks UTC Students take part in Aylesbury's Christmas Market

On Sunday 4th December, students of all year groups participated in Aylesbury's Christmas Craft & Gift Fair. We are delighted to announce that the event was a tremendous success, with students receiving a fantastic response from the public and having made a good profit which will benefit fellow student Charlie Spooner.

Students worked in House Groups to create a range of exciting, festive products in an all-school project that encouraged team work and the development of business skills. Designs highlighted skills of students from both Computing and Construction specialisms, with products including coat racks, vintage-look furniture pieces, 3D-printed decorations, candles, photo frames, homeware, a green-screen photography session and artwork.

Visitors were delighted with the range of items students had on sale and were also keen to learn how they were made. Children and adults were also engrossed with the interactive items on display, including a head-in-the-hole photoboard made by Level 2 Construction students featuring Mr and Mrs Claus, along with an elf - as demonstrated by staff members above!

To read the full story, [click here](#).



Year 12 Computing Students Design Free Website for Local Charity

Year 12 Computing students have given a local charity their first online presence, designing a new website as part of their 'live' project learning.

Guided by digital marketing experts, [Framework Digital](#), one of Bucks UTC's partners; the students undertook a design brief to create a fully-functioning website for charity Me, Myself, I (MMI). This included managing both the technical elements and visuals to maintain to the charity's branding. The new site is expected to go live before Christmas.

"The students have done remarkably well to understand the charity and its intentions. This is a marvellous opportunity to have a web presence that we otherwise couldn't afford..." – MMI Trustee, Fran West.

"...It's wonderful to know that our hard work is going to benefit a local charity that do such great work to help others, and that this new online presence will spread word of their fantastic services." – Methuna Kamalanathan, Year 12 Extended Diploma IT student and Project Manager of MMI's website design.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



Formula 1 3D-Printing Expert Prepares Students for the Future of Tech

Bucks UTC's Year 10 and 11 Computing students have received a series of 3D-printing workshops by industry expert Kevin Lambourne, MD of [Graphite AM](#) – a 3D-printing consultancy that specialises in building complex designs and high-performance components for Aerospace and Motorsport Industries, with clients such as Formula 1.

Students were taken through the process of building prototypes and learnt how Graphite AM uses 3D prints for a number of clients for testing and product refinement. Year 11s have also been set to present their own 3D prints in order to receive feedback, so they too can produce work that is of the highest quality and fit-for-purpose in the industry.

To read the full story, [click here](#).

Construction Students' 'Theatre Debut', Making Props for Local Musical

Bucks UTC Sixth Form Construction students recently made their 'theatre debut' with a community-based project which saw them design and construct 60 wooden sword props for [Buckingham Park Primary School](#) pupils to use in the musical piece, 'Play on Words', shown at Aylesbury's Waterside Theatre on November 1st 2016.

Over 90 Buckingham Park pupils in Years 4 and 5 participated in a collaborative arts festival for youngsters known as the 'Energy Festival' which has seen over 900 of Bucks' school pupils participating. 'Play on Words' was written by local music teacher Jane Smith, and tells the story of school children discovering the joy of poetry. The swords were used by Buckingham Park's Year 4 children who provided the dance for the song based on the poem, 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'.

"We're really grateful for the support of Bucks UTC in preparing 60 replica swords for our performance... We look forward to further collaborative projects in partnership." – Nick Waldron, Buckingham Park Primary School.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



Principal at the Palace!

Tony Withell, Principal of Bucks UTC, was invited by the Baker Dearing Trust to a reception at Buckingham Palace on 10th October 2016, hosted by HRH Prince Andrew KG, the Patron of the Trust.

The Principal had an opportunity to talk to Prince Andrew, who of course officially [opened the College](#) back in January 2014, and he also spoke with Lord Baker – both of which were interested to hear of our student numbers increasing and also of the improvements in our Key Stage 4 results last Summer.

"This was truly a marvellous evening and I take great heart for the progress we are collectively making in the College being recognised... I am so pleased for our students' progress, we are definitely heading in the right direction!" – Tony Withell.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



Learners get Inspired on a Visit to the UK's Largest Skills Show at The NEC

On Thursday 17th November 2016, Bucks UTC students were delighted to visit the NEC Birmingham to experience the UK's biggest skills show.

Described as a 'one-stop shop for careers information', The Skills Show allowed students to mix with a range of big-name employers in an environment where jobs and skills were brought to life in one of the most interactive and imaginative of settings – and one that also covered an exceptionally broad range of industries.

Students met various employers and spoke about future prospects, whilst gaining essential networking experience. In addition, we are happy to confirm staff were met with enthusiasm by a number of top companies and organisations who were eager to learn more about what we do.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



Staff & Students Talk Positive Behaviour for National Anti-Bullying Week

Bucks UTC is delighted to announce its participation in this year's anti-bullying week, with an all-school presentation and related workshops on the subject.

[Anti-Bullying Week](#) is coordinated by the Anti-Bullying Alliance and took place 14-18 November for 2016. The week shines a spotlight on bullying and is designed to encourage children, teachers



Computing Students Network with Elite Tech Companies at Digital Summit

Bucks UTC Computing students were fortunate enough to attend the Digital Summit, organised by Buckinghamshire Business First at the Waterside Theatre. The summit focused on the future of technology in a wide range of industries whilst highlighting emerging markets and innovative practices, with many local and nationwide businesses exhibiting in order to pitch their agendas and industry opportunities to visitors.

In addition to exhibitors, BBF's Digital Summit received the likes of Microsoft, Bosch and [Google's Digital Garage](#) talking at their annual conference.

"The Digital Summit was a wonderful opportunity for students to network with a wide range of industry professionals... plus a number of employers have expressed great interest in supporting the UTC..." – Alan Bailey, Head of Computing.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



Successful Workshop with Elevate Education - 'Enhancing Students' Performance'

On Thursday 24th November, Year 10-12 students received a workshop from learning educators [Elevate](#), who provided our learners with unique advice and techniques to improve their project management and overall education performance.

The workshop covered a broad range of issues.

and their parents to take action against bullying throughout the school year. The theme for 2016 was 'Power for Good' and it worked to highlight the three following matters:

- How young people can understand ways in which they can encourage individual and collective action against bullying.
- How to support others suffering from bullying.
- How to value others' differences.

To read the fully story, [click here](#).



Our Biggest Ever Open Event, With Over 200 Visitors!

On Saturday 15th October, we opened our doors to over 200 people in what has been the biggest Open Event we've ever held – a truly wonderful start to the First Term!

We were delighted to have so many people in to have a good look round our facilities and to hear from our staff and students. From our 200+ guests there were 88 prospective students, and we were amazed to see how engaged they were in the talks and activities we had running throughout the building.

A huge thank you must go out to our seven voluntary students for the way they conducted themselves when giving tours to our visitors. Every open event we hold, our students are more than happy to give up their personal time to help ensure the event is a success. They showed true initiative, and did an incredible job guiding such a large number of visitors.

To read the full story, [click here](#).

Study techniques were explained in great detail, along with demonstrations of memory techniques. Students were asked about their approach to projects and their thought process, be it setting goals, planning work or coping with anxiety or other negative feelings. In addition, many resources and higher-education/employer routes were discussed, with the intention to get learners thinking about their futures and the ways that they can go about achieving their aspirations.

To read the full story, [click here](#).



Teaching Staff Work to Empower Students' Communication Skills

We are committed in supporting the development of our pupils, for their confidence and preparing them to be the best professionals they can be.

In respect of this, we are pleased to announce that our teaching staff have been working with specialist training company [Elklan](#) – who are leaders in developing young people's communication skills.

The training programme is specifically tailored for further-education staff who work with students aged over 16, with the intention of empowering students to develop the communication skills that all young people need, especially for those who have speech, language and communication needs. The course runs over an eight-week period, and guides staff through the process and the challenges young people may face, and also informs of effective methods to support young adults to build confidence in these areas.

To read the full story, [click here](#).

To conclude, on behalf of the College can I wish every student and family a fulfilling and enjoyable festive season: I am conscious of the variety of faiths on our student body and I hope that my words apply retrospectively to every recent festival. Sometimes in our busy, ever demanding world we struggle to find time for the things that matter to ourself, our family and our community; in the coming weeks and in the words of a sadly-missed Irishman, 'may your God go with you'.

Truly, God bless.

Taylor Widdell

A reminder that Key Dates for 2016/17 are available on our [website](#).



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Bucks UTC offers specialist courses in Computing and Construction. It brings together Bucks New University, Aylesbury College and major local employers including Taylor Wimpey, Cisco and Intel in equal partnership, offering students the right skills and motivational, work-related learning experience to improve their employability within the Computing and Construction sectors.