

Essay Competition Successes

Several Stoics across different Year Groups have recently been recognised in assembly for their success in external academic competitions.

Paul Ostroverhy (Upper Sixth, Chandos) has been given a commendation from St Hugh's College, Oxford, for his Julia Woods History Essay competition submission on the title, 'How did Tsarist Russia transform the Far East from imperial periphery to national territory in the years 1884-1914?' and has been invited to the college for Afternoon Tea to meet and talk to tutors, students and other competition entrants. This is a very prestigious and competitive competition which attracts entries from top students across the country, so this is a very impressive achievement indeed.

We also celebrated the achievement of Emily Bristow (Fourth Form, Cheshire) who placed Third in the Independent Schools Religious Studies Association essay competition, competing against a broad number of pupils from very competitive grammar and independent schools around the UK. Her essay was a tightly-argued response to the question, 'Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18) does not present God in a good light - do you agree?' We are awarding her a Bene for this achievement and also a Bene to Lewis Wilson (Fourth Form, Chandos), who also submitted an excellent entry on the title 'Humans are by nature religious beings - do you agree?'

Stephy Ho (Upper Sixth, West) was awarded a Bene by the Head for her extension essay completed over the Summer on the title, 'To what extent do Mythos and Logos play significant roles in Jez Butterworth's Jerusalem?' It was also announced that Kelly Hu (Upper Sixth, West) and Ozzie Visser (Fourth Form, Chatham) have also been short-listed for the John Locke Institute Essay Competition (Senior and Junior categories respectively).

Finally, last year as part of the Climate Change Challenge group run by Shelley Rowley, Alfie Corthine (Upper Sixth, Croft), Oliver Lamberton and Kaito Mbanefo (both Upper Sixth, Grenville) worked towards the Oxford Saïd Global Climate Change Challenge, an International competition looking at innovative ways to tackle climate change. As well as progressing in the main competition, their work has also been shortlisted for the Zayed Sustainability Prize. As a result of his online work, Alfie was awarded a £10,000 scholarship to a two-week residential Summer school at Oxford University in August. The school focused on the way in which AI and machine learning will impact the world in the near future. The two weeks were run by the University's Economics Department, with lectures, tutorials and team exercises, as well as a taster of life at Oxford with punting, evening debates and formal dining nights.

Congratulations to these pupils for both their endeavour and their success!

Dr Julie Potter, Deputy Head Academic



Kiaan's Outdoor Baptism

On Friday 5 September, the South Front became the setting for a memorable moment (perhaps a first?) in Stowe life - an outdoor Baptism service!

The original plan had been to hold the service at the serene Eleven Acre Lake, however, a recent bloom of blue-green algae meant a change of plan. In true Stowe spirit, a portable baptism pool was swiftly erected at the foot of the South Front steps, where Kiaan Fesharaki (Upper Sixth, Winton) was baptised in front of a supportive crowd of friends and family. The perfect weather only enhanced the magnificent vista and added to the sense of occasion.

The service began with a short reflection on the ancient Christian rite of Baptism. As Kiaan was gently lowered into the water, it marked a powerful symbol of turning away from an old way of life, and rising again to the new life found in Jesus.

During the service, Kiaan shared movingly about his journey to faith - a journey that has deepened his love for reading the Bible and shaped his outlook on life. His words were a quiet encouragement to all who listened.

This joyful occasion was made possible through the generous support of many Staff and pupils, particularly Steve Curley (Head of Grounds), James East (Estates), Rebecca Donaldson (Group Health, Safety & Compliance Manager), and James Peppiatt (Winton Houseparent) and Flora Peppiatt (Upper Sixth, Queen's) who led the music.

It was a moving reminder that faith is not only personal but also something we share as a community.

Rev James Righetti, Chaplain



Good afternoon,

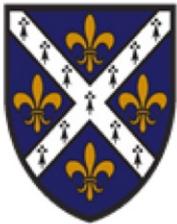
Thank you very much for your entry to the 2025 Julia Wood History Essay Competition run by St Hugh's College, Oxford.

We are pleased to let you know that the History Tutors at St Hugh's were impressed with your essay, and have **awarded you a commendation** – congratulations!

In recognition of your achievement, you are **invited to join us for afternoon tea at St Hugh's on Saturday 13th September, between 3pm and 5pm**. This is a chance to meet and talk to our Tutors and students, as well as other competition entrants. Please **confirm whether or not you would like to attend the tea by filling out this form by 5pm on Friday 5th September**.

We hope that you are able to join us for the tea, and look forward to welcoming you!

With best wishes,



St Hugh's Outreach Team

Elena Sorochina | Outreach and Partnerships Manager

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From: paul ostroverhy

Sent: 01 September 2025 16:16

To: St Hugh's Outreach <outreach@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk>

Subject: Updates regarding the results of Julia Wood?