

PIN OAK



LITERACY
Communication

BIG ISSUE
Sexes VS Gender

ART
Librarian's Choice
Award

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LAST HSC EXAM!!!



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MOVEMBER

Yes, you know it: MOvember is almost here. That means it's time for those festidious facial fiascos to be struttin' their stuff over the next four weeks! Ooh yeah. Feel free to donate to our men's health fundraiser and pass to others: <https://mobro.co/oxleymobros118?mc=1>

Last year we raised around \$1,500. Thanks very much to everyone who contributed, and sorry to all those that have to suffer our mo's.

HEAD OF COLLEGE'S REPORT



Following the completion of the HSC Examinations on Wednesday, we were able to celebrate the graduation of our Year 12 students, with a new tradition that included a special Graduation Ceremony at school with parents, followed by a Graduation Dinner

at the Gibraltar Hotel.

It was wonderful to be able to welcome Year 12 parents on site for the Graduation Ceremony to the Elvo lawn and for them to share in this important rite of passage for each of our students, as they formally passed from 'Oxley Student' to 'Old Oxleyan'. In a new tradition, each graduating student received a specially crafted Oxley pin by jeweller Robin Wells, a Certificate of Graduation from the Federal member for Wollondilly, Mr Nathaniel Smith MP, and a copy of the book 'Phosphorescence', by author and journalist Julia Baird. The widely acclaimed book is described by Google Books as "[an] inspirational memoir... a deeply personal exploration of what can sustain us through our darkest moments- finding the light within". The book will have a special resonance for many of our Year 12 students, following the enormously challenging final year of school that they have just completed. We are incredibly proud of each and every one of our 65 Year 12 students from the class of 2020 and wish them all well for their futures.

Green time vs Screen time.

I am not sure whether you have heard the phrase Green time vs Screen time before? I was introduced to the idea from a parent in a new student interview last year. When describing how they managed the technology access for their children they said that the children had to earn their 'Screen time' minutes by having logged twice as much of active 'Green time'. So, for every hour actively engaged in sport or outside activities then the child could earn some Screen time. Screens of course included all screens from television to technology. I thought this was a positive way to negotiate the balance of technology use with children and have other benefits.

Last week I received an article from the Science Daily about new research from the University of British Columbia which found that teens, especially girls, have better mental health when they spend more time taking part in co-curricular activities like sport and the arts, and less time in front of screens. The study found that spending less than two hours per day of recreational time was associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and optimism, and lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, especially among girls. Similarly, co-curricular participation was associated with better mental health outcomes. I don't think this is surprising, but it is a timely reminder why the College focuses on the whole child and why I encourage our young people to play sport all year around not just the mandatory one season of ISA sport and to be engaged with other purposeful activities.

While these activities get students away from screens and being physical which is good for their overall health, they also build purpose, engagement and often give the student a sense of accomplishment. In a year where we have been more reliant on technology to remain connected and to use in our learning, it is important that we also make sure we are balanced and support our young people to balance their screen time. The full article can be found at: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/11/201102124849.htm>

Staff News

Last Pin Oak, I spoke of the new staff who would be joining the Oxley team in 2021 and as always at the end of the year we will say goodbye to some staff members who are leaving Oxley to take up new opportunities or begin a new stage of life's journey. Each person has made a special mark on the Oxley Community and I thank them all for their service to our students. Ms

Nikki Comboudas who finishes her contract at Oxley and will be taking up a new position at Gib Gate. As a young teacher Nikki has shone brightly learning her craft and giving her energy and passion generously to the Year 5 classroom. I am sure Nikki will continue to grow as an educator in the future and we wish her well with the new experiences she will gain in a different environment.

We say goodbye to Visual Arts teacher, Mark Hetherington who is moving closer to family in Adelaide and will join Seymour College next year. Mark has shared his passion,

professionalism and expertise with students and staff generously and we wish him well for the future.

Ms Bridgette Micklem is leaving after five years at Oxley as a French teacher. Bridgette has made the decision to leave teaching and is taking up a position to work in NDIS supporting people with special needs. We thank Bridgette for her commitment and wish her well for the next stage of her career.

Ms Olivia Cox has accepted an English teaching position at Ravenswood Girls School in Sydney. She will leave Oxley after five years of dedicated service. Olivia has been instrumental in developing the Film unit and Film Festival held in Year 10 each year. We thank Olivia and wish her well as she returns to her 'old school' next year.

Ms Vanessa Forbes will retire at the end of 2020 following an outstanding career in Visual Arts education. Vanessa will leave Oxley after 10 years of dedicated service and has made an enormous contribution to the creative life of the College. She is a devoted artist and I know she is looking forward to being able to spend more time nurturing her own talent. We are grateful for her generosity and commitment to many students over the years.

We are fortunate to have a strong team of staff at Oxley and while it is always sad to say goodbye when they decide to leave, we always wish our staff well as they develop their careers and take up new opportunities.

"We are incredibly proud of each and every one of our 65 Year 12 students from the class of 2020 and wish them all well for their futures."



DEPUTY HEAD LEARNING

Are you a tourist in other people's writing?

At Oxley, we are delighted to call ourselves a learning community, a place where students, teachers, parents and families continue to challenge themselves daily with new experiences, knowledge and understanding.

Last week, a number of K – 12 staff had the opportunity to attend the Primary English Teachers Conference (PETA), which, while online was a rich and engaging time of inspiration, provocation and reflection. I thank Kate Psarakis and Lara Sheils for their dedication and commitment over two days at this busy time of year.

A highlight for me was a Keynote Address by Dr Misty Adoniou. Misty is a Senior Lecturer in Language Literacy at the University of Canberra. She has presented nationally and internationally in the areas of spelling, literacy pedagogy, grammar and Teaching English as an Additional Language.

Misty's session was titled "The Power and the Passion" and took us on a journey through the relationship of language and literacy. Most importantly, Misty challenged educators to focus more on the "End Game" – what is the purpose of writing and how do we best instil a love of writing in our young people?

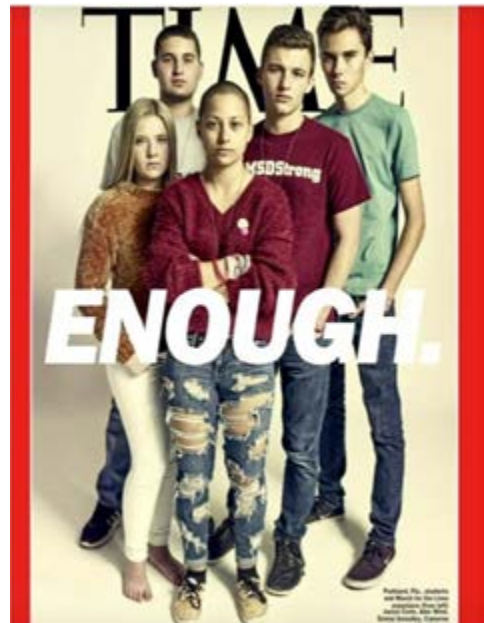
Misty used the lyrics of Bowie's 'Life on Mars' as to "hook" to make us think about how we communicate – through text, through visuals, through a combination of both. There is not enough room here to go into the detail, but I do challenge you to have a look at the interplay of lyric, music and structure and how reading a lyric as text relates to the melody behind.



Misty particularly urged us as humans to look at how we have communicated our messages to each other during the pandemic. When things got tough, we used our language (regardless of grammar and punctuation) to help us stay connected. She spoke of the place of the blog, the tweet, the chalk on the pavement, the words on a poster, the message on a cap.



Most all, the conference has really helped me return to the big question of purpose as we review and refine our K -12 language and literacy journey. What things are essential, what needs to be shaped to get the key components across in classrooms from



the youngest of learners.

We are also privileged to have a role here at Oxley that addresses Language and Literacy K – 12. I asked Mrs Kate Psarkis our K – 12 Language and Literacy specialist to summarise some of her notes into some key dot points to wet your appetite:

- When did someone else's writing come to visit you?
- Written language is crafted and becoming a reader/writer means thinking like a reader/writer
- Reading on its own is not enough preparation to become a proficient writer.
- Children need a deep reservoir of language to build knowledge and purposefully and intentionally meet their purpose. What is the difference between spoken and written grammar. Some children are trapped in spoken grammar but spoken grammar is different to written grammar. Consider what purpose is this for? What do I want the reader to think? To feel?
- How can we fill our student's language reservoirs? What will expand their language and improve their writing?
- Grow language from the quality books you read

We are excited to share this glimpse of our professional learning with you and look forward to continuing and planning as a result in our Junior and Senior school contexts in 2021.

By Kate Cunich, Deputy Head Learning





DEPUTY HEAD PASTORAL

NAIDOC 2020 – 'Always Was, Always Will Be'

In Senior School Assembly last week, we celebrated NAIDOC Week with a special Acknowledgement of Country and presentation by Melissa Wiya, the Aboriginal Community Development Officer at Wingecarribee Shire Council. As part of the presentation on this year's NAIDOC theme, students watched a beautifully produced short film of Aunty Sharyn Hall talking about the Guula Ngurra National Park, a place of cultural significance for the Gundungurra Aboriginal People which is located about 25km west of Bowral. It was formed in August this year and its name translates as 'Koala Country'. The park is home to many threatened species of animals and plants, as well as being a key habitat for the endangered glossy-black cockatoo.



Remembrance Day 2020

With fine weather on Wednesday 11 November, we were able to commemorate Remembrance Day as a College, with our annual outdoor service. The tranquillity and warmth of Elvo Lawn was as far removed as it could be from the First World War trenches of northern Europe and subsequent conflicts, in which so many gave their lives. Ava Lambie, Deputy Head Girl, spoke movingly on the subject 'What Remembrance Means to Me', sharing the story of her great-great-grandfather, Private Les Williams, who fought on the Western Front in the First World War. Ava spoke about the importance of Remembrance Day as "an opportunity to pause in our all-too-busy, noisy, crowded lives and thank our ANZACs for exercising true selflessness with a moment of all-to-uncommon silence".



Christmas Hampers – Donations Please!

The Salvation Army

Along with the Southern Highlands Christian School, we are collaborating with BDCU Alliance Bank to provide Christmas hampers for those in need. Specifically, we are collecting bon-bons and ginger bread houses. Students can deliver their donations to Senior School Student Services.

Wingecarribee Family Services

As in previous years, we are collecting both hamper items and children's toys. Due to health and safety regulations, only new, unused toys can be accepted. Please do not wrap any toy donations. Students should bring donations to their Head of House's office.

- Christmas Pudding
- Long Life Custard
- Tinned Fruit
- Bon Bons
- Milo
- Soft Drink
- Christmas Cake
- Cereal
- Chocolate
- Fruit Mince Pies
- Biscuits
- Candy Canes
- Jelly
- Jams
- Christmas Napkins
- Napkins

By Mark Case, Deputy Head Pastoral



Weekly Awards

Learning Journey

K: Lachlan Sutherland
Yr 1: Xander Fisher
Yr 2C: Harper Anstee
Yr 3B: Lexi Mendes Da Costa
Yr 3L: Jemima Anson
Yr 4: Henry Burton
Yr 5B: Oliver Henderson
Yr 5N: Molly Edwards
Yr 6A: Charlie Ryan
Yr 6W: Charlotte Strang Iori

Oxley Values

K: Beth Plain
Yr 1: Zoe Choo
Yr 2C: Oscar Jones
Yr 3B: Flor Pereira Merlini
Yr 3L: Will Carioti
Yr 4: Orson Francis
Yr 5B: Ginger Elias
Yr 5N: Claudia Carpenter
Yr 6A: Allegra Mineeff
Yr 6W: Georgie Marks



JUNIOR SCHOOL NEWS

A great start for new students at Oxley

I met with a wonderful new group of students who began at Oxley this term. We met for morning tea in my office. In speaking with our new students, I had a great sense of their enthusiasm about being with us. They are excited about the new opportunities, and they have told me what they are enjoying most so far.

Hayley in Year 4 said, "Everybody's been quite welcoming. Journal writing is my favourite thing in class."

Darcy Jones in Year 2, told me he was really glad that the other children don't ignore him. "The other kids actively play with me. The Library is my favourite place as I am a big Harry Potter fan." String Orchestra is also a favourite lesson for Darcy.

Polly Hopkinson in Year 5 told me that PE is her favourite subject. "I love my friends and the playground. The uniforms are nice and my favourite activity so far this term was the Minute-to-Win-It games in OLE Week".

Henry Burton, who started in Year 4 also thinks PE is his favourite subject because they are learning Dance. Henry's sister, Phoebe in Year 2 thought Strings Orchestra was the best, as well as playing with her new friends.

Felix in Year 1 noted that his favourite subject is Drama, and that they are making puppets. He also loves playing stuck in the mud in PE. Madison, his sister, in Year 3 agreed that Drama is her best subject because of the fun games and dances they perform. "I also really like Journal Writing and I love being able to write about whatever I like."

Levi in Year 3 finds that his favourite things at school so far are Creative Journal Writing and Sport.

Fairlie in Year 6 has enjoyed kayaking on the river during OLE Week, while Thomas in Kindergarten said he really liked OLE Week too, especially the Obstacool Course, and that he loves writing.

Thank you to all our new students for sharing morning tea and letting me know how they are getting along as they settle into Oxley. I also thank our teachers and student community for making our new students feel so welcome and at home.

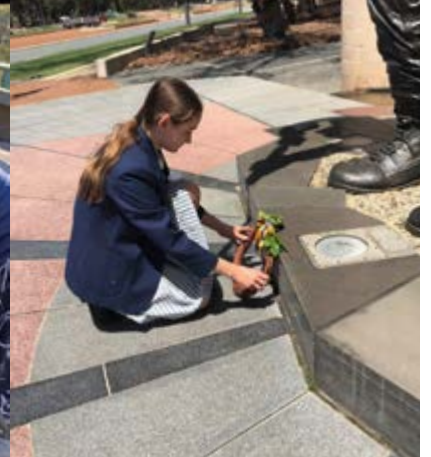
Year 6 Canberra Trip

This week, I was able to join our wonderful Year 6 cohort in Canberra. They are an impressive cohort and having been on many Year 6 camps and excursions in my time, I found our 2020 Year 6 group the most well-mannered, and kindest group of students I have ever taken away. It is a great credit to our Year 6 staff and to the families at this College that our students are genuinely caring of one another, interested in the world and that they asked meaningful questions and made sophisticated observations as we toured the national capital attractions. I am glad we have been able to provide an opportunity for our Year 6 students to make some extra special memories in their final weeks of Year 6, and to have been able to share some of it with them.

By Katherine Halcrow, Head of Junior School



JUNIOR GALLERY



INSPIRATION



FILM

A Life on Our Planet

This documentary, really gave me a different perspective of the world and what we are capable of for the better and the worse. It proves that with human intelligence creating such magnificent inventions and technology, we should use this knowledge to create and restore our planet's natural world. David Attenborough shows us what is happening with real statistics and footage. The audience is made to feel guilty and that they do need to take action. As we couldn't see the whole documentary in one regular class lesson, it made me reflect a lot until I could watch the remainder of the film.

His language and realistic facts for upcoming nations made me sad and scared. David Attenborough described nature as being beautiful and something which we can't let go of. Normally I would take advantage of the sights of trees, wildlife, floral and sunrises/sunsets. However, his words really moved me and made me understand it all at a much deeper level. Some footage in his documentary included images of beautiful wildlife and what we will miss out on if we continue to act as we are now. He also did comparison videos of animals forced to leave their environment because of our actions.

He suggested using less fossil fuels and greenhouse gases our environment can benefit naturally and overtime will return and regrow what we have taken away. He noted that this was for us and our future generations. That if we do what we can for the environment it will return, cleaner air, space and beautiful animals and scenery for ourselves and our scientists to learn about. Finally, he mentioned that everybody has to do their part to help the environment. Doing the little things such as mostly eating less meat and more plant based. Planting more trees, especially native wildlife. Making sure animal populations do not decline. Just the little things, slowly will help our planet.

In conclusion, our population needs to listen to what Attenborough is saying. We will be confronted with it in the coming decades, global crises that he, as a man, will not experience in his 90s. Yet he nevertheless finds hope by extrapolating small successes. Sustainable agriculture in the Netherlands has made the country one of the world's top food exporters. Fishing regulations around the Pacific island state of Palau have enabled marine wildlife to recover. The major achievement of the film is that it positions its subject as a mediator between man and nature. Life cycles go on, and if we make the right decisions, new growth can emerge from ruins.

By Charlotte Florida

In the David Attenborough: A Life on our Planet film, Attenborough uses his own life span to frame the ecological changes of the last century and expose the peril humans now collectively face. In the same hushed voice that once sparked such wonder and joy for anyone who grew up watching Attenborough's films, he delivers a bleak final warning of the senseless destruction of our mother Earth and the loss of its biodiversity. With its opening title subject standing amidst the Chernobyl nuclear plant, Attenborough maps out the wilderness degeneration and how human errors can render such civilisations uninhabitable. An array of ecosystems are displayed across the film to emphasise the stability and beauty of nature when untouched by humans; the grass plains are rich and productive, the rainforests provide the majority of oxygen, mangroves and corals nurse fish schools and other species; and all are exploiting seasons for food crops.

Through this effective approach to cinematography, such remarkable nature photography is coupled with Attenborough's retrospective; juxtaposing an ecosystem's lush potential to its stark counterpart. While the grim statistics that visualise the rapidly growing population, and the steady decline in the remaining wilderness concrete the demise of life on Earth; Attenborough finds hope by extrapolating small successes. Attenborough offers exciting and financially sound resolutions to the problems, from rewilding the planet, guiding population growth, increasing the use of renewables and regulating the fishing industries.

From someone who has cherished the Earth for almost 100 years, Attenborough urges the human race to prevent absolute failure by protecting our its ecosystems and being the ones to look after Earth when he is gone. For in the end, it is David Attenborough who says, "It's not really about saving the planet.

It's about saving ourselves."

By Breanna Billett



Sexes VS Gender?/ Societal Norms

What is the biological difference between sexes and gender? Basic scientific principles define an individual's sexual identification to be determined by the genetic composition of their chromosomes, anatomy and fundamental sex characteristics. However, within this rigidity of male and female categorisation there is a series of biological overlaps which discredit the typical classification of societal and gonadic features. Over the last decade, it has been proven that there is in fact a wide spectrum of different sexes accustomed to genetic deformities, chromosomal abnormalities and disordered sexual development (DSD). In fact, some researchers believe that as many as 1 person in 100 have some form of DSD. Now this physiological anomaly does not always present itself structurally, and can often manifest itself in hormonal and endocrine activity; resulting in a misdirection of reproductive signals and a sex drive incongruent with societal norms. These recent discoveries have been smeared by the scientific community and political realm as such ambiguous biological dichotomy does not adjoin with society's standards of stereotypical sexual behaviour and thus cannot be easily affixed within the political system, as in a world of binary definitions a person's legal rights and social status can be heavily influenced by whether their birth certificate says male or female. Therefore, the issue of sexual identification

is not in fact a dispute of 'scientific evidence' but rather a debate of challenging societal norms as the world fails to adjust to a new conception of gender fluidity.

This biological indifference of sexual categorisation, comes hand in hand with gender identity, as although a person may fit the typical scientific profile of the predominant female and male gonadic structure, they may choose to identify as a different pronoun/gender to their designated classification. There, are many different types of gender identities, including male, female, transgender, gender neutral, non-binary, agender, pangender, genderqueer, two-spirit, third gender, and all, none or a combination of these. However, someone does not need to have a label to have gender fluency, as the idea of gender is a socially constructed idea

used to 'box' and identify a person dependent upon the outbalance between masculinity and femininity.

Therefore, it in fact doesn't matter if someone has a different physiological structure, or sexual behaviour incongruent to their societal categorisation, as conclusively the notion of gender and sex is still evolving today and no one should feel forced to meet social criteria to feel accepted.

By Emilie-Rose Westlake-O'Dwyer (Year 10)

SENIOR GALLERY



VIRTUAL GALLERY



The Librarian's Choice- Joe Quilty & Lara Fischer Year 9

The Year 9 landscapes in our Library foyer remind us of the healing power of nature and its importance to our mental wellbeing. The positive impact of the natural world is more than just conjecture and is backed by scientific research; it even has a name, ecotherapy.

Two paintings have won the latest Librarian's Choice Award, one is of a peaceful dawn and reminds me of our recent Year 12 Mt Gibraltar dawn walk, by Joe Quilty, a wonderful community experience that began in the dark and finished at first light. The other landscape by Lara Fischer is enlivened by two dogs in the foreground, one of them staring directly out of the frame making a connection with the viewer and the other heading off, with head up, to explore. This painting is an invitation not to give up but to get up, get out and head off into the horizon with a friend. We are very grateful to have all the landscapes in the library to remind us of how lucky we are to live where we do.

By Mark Hetherington

DRONE TECHNOLOGY WITH FEILD WORK

When COVID-19 put a stop to excursions, we had to think creatively about how to help our Year 9 Geographers develop their understand of Environmental Change and Management. Yes, we could learn about natural and human induced changes happening on our coastline from the comfort of the classroom but it's quite the same as throwing oranges into the sea to learn about longshore drift, walking on a breakwater at the entrance to Lake Illawarra with the wind blowing through your hair or standing on a sea wall wondering why houses were built so close to the retreating coastline. In 2019 we took students to Warilla beach to investigate changes to the coastline and strategies being used to manage the changes. The feedback from students was very positive so we were keen to give our current Year 9s an insight into these issues too.

When we learned that Year 10 student, Nicholas Anderson was doing his Personal Interest Project (PIP) on landscape photography using drone technology we thought there was a great opportunity to make use of Nick's expertise and hence the idea of a virtual excursion was born. Nick spent a morning at Warilla beach flying the drone to capture images and video of the coastline and in the coming weeks our Year 9 students will make use of Nick's drone footage to evaluate the coastal management strategies that have been used by Wollongong and Shellharbour councils.

A virtual excursion – thanks to drone technology

Interview with Nick Anderson (Year 10)

What type of drone have you got?

I have a DJI Mavic 2 Pro

How long have you been flying drones?

Roughly a year now

Where did your interest/inspiration for your PIP come from?

Seeing the world from different perspectives has always been something I liked to do and a drone has helped me do just that. It's very interesting to see things you would not otherwise think about from 100m in the air. I chose my PIP project based on this idea and wanted to catch some of these different angles of everyday landscapes.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

As most people aware, over the last few months there has been an escalating social tension between political parties in the United States in the anticipation of the election results. However, after weeks of campaigning, debates, poll forecasting and media interviews, the election has birthed an evident winner; Joe Biden. As the presidential democrat representative, Biden received a staggering 76 994 475 million votes, thereby achieving the American public's popular vote at 50.8% and surpassing the electoral college prerequisite at 270. However, although this may seem a clear 'win' for the American people, it fails to recognise the political capabilities of current President Donald Trump as he threatens to challenge the results in the Supreme Court on grounds of 'fraudulency' and 'state illegitimacy'. This poses extreme danger to the enforceability of the results, because as of current the Republican party has swing of the Supreme court bench, as six out of nine justices have been appointed by Republican presidents. This alone is severely alarming, as if Trump is successful in his appeal to review the credibility of the

voting results, it could be months until Biden is conceded into the presidency resulting in an 'overdraft' of the Trump cabinet. This alone is frightening, as it means the Republican party would have successfully managed to defer Trumps' presidential concession, ultimately prolonging his term. This arbitrary intervention into the presidential transition is the beginnings of a dictator leadership, with 79 year old Stephen Jacobs (holocaust survivor) fearing the rise of the far right under Trump "feels like 1929 or 1930 in Berlin". This is fear is further consolidated by the greater public, as 20% of Americans still believe Donald Trump won the election despite the results. Trump supporters have gone as far to protest the electoral outcome in the streets of California, Chanting "This isn't over!" and "Stop the steal," and "Fake news" with American flags and Trump banners. This comes after avenues such as Rodeo Drive have been bolting shut their doors with wooden barriers as they prepare for civil unrest over the political conflict. The real question is now; "What will happen next?" By Emilie-Rose Westlake-O'Dwyer (Year 10)



HOW EARLY IS TOO EARLY TO PUT UP YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE?



By the time this article is published it'll be that time of year again- "Nearly December". And you know what "Nearly December" means; lots and lots of arduous conversations about "How early is too early to put up your Christmas tree". I as a diligent up and coming scientist and Christmas card maker extraordinaire decided to put the age old question to the test and conclusively decide; how early is too early to put up your Christmas tree?

In my preliminary investigation many agree that as long it is within the month of Christmas, putting up your Christmas tree is fine. However, this begs the additional research question; what constitutes as the month of Christmas? The month of December (Beginning on December 1st) or from the month elapsing from the 25th of November?

Throughout, the duration of the Victorian period, Christmas trees were traditionally put up much on the afternoon of the 24th of December... but that isn't very fun, and what do the Victorians know anyway? Others (Especially that one slightly too excited neighbour) look to decorate directly following Halloween on the first of November; in this scenario we encounter the opposite issue of the Pre-Christmas hype starting too early and dissipating closer to the big day. In addition to this then you would have your Christmas tree up for two out of twelve months or 16.67% of the year... and let's face it 2020 has been hard but not that hard.

So now you are wondering "World famous scientist Pearl with your great and almighty wisdom and knowledge, what is the ideal date to put up your Christmas tree?". Well, my dear reader; Religious tradition states that Christmas trees should be placed at the beginning of Advent, which begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas; this year on Sunday the 29 November 2020. This piece of data in conjunction with my afore mentioned preliminary research (The 1st of December of 25th of November debacle) has lead me to the believe that the earliest date to set up your Christmas tree is the 29th of November, with a window of opportunity spanning the 29th of November to the 13th of December... because 13 is a cool number and I said so. By Pearl Bendle, Year 12