

ST CATHERINE'S NEWSLETTER

"Be who God wants you to be, and you will set the world on fire." - St Catherine of Siena

NEWS & FEATURES

- Sixth Form News**
PAGE 2
- Year 9 & 10 Film Day**
PAGE 3
- Successful Futures**
PAGE 4
- Chaplaincy**
PAGE 5
- Year 8 Pastoral Day**
PAGE 6
- Food & Nutrition**
PAGE 7
- Duke of Edinburgh**
PAGES 8 - 9
- Library News**
PAGE 10
- ISA Dance**
PAGE 11
- Sports News**
PAGE 12
- Key Dates**
PAGE 13



From the Headmistress

I think that the very well timed Bank Holiday weekend has been evident in the more relaxed faces of the girls over this week, and I hope the little break was a happy one for you all.

Life in the Senior School is, at present, partly shaped around the series of assessments for Year 11 and Year 13 pupils, as they work toward their Teacher Assessed Grades; the girls are to be commended for their steady response to this challenging time, which will soon be complete, leaving them all with a wonderful summer ahead.

Other highlights include Year 8's turn for pastoral time this week; this included an excellent talk on managing friendships, and some zorb football on the field, which looked like a very good combination of care and fun for these pupils. Last week also included our remembrance of St Catherine of Siena, with prayers and the customary crunchie bars and I look forward to more celebration, of St Catherine and of our school community, at the end of term.

With kind regards
Mrs McPherson

SIXTH FORM NEWS

Ten Year Anniversary



To say that God is in his heaven, all's right with the world is, perhaps, putting it a little strongly. However, as I watched the Sixth Form and Year 11 tucking into the amazing spread laid on for the Sixth Form 10 Year Anniversary Party it really did feel like we might be taking tentative steps back to normality. There was cake, an array of buns and sandwiches, a DIY Tiara station, sparkling wine, massive helium balloons and an abundance of joy. From the moment the Prime Minister cancelled Christmas, Lockdown Three has threatened to nudge us into Cromwellian levels of government sponsored misery. So, to see the girls enjoying the closest thing to a party the current restrictions would allow, was brilliant.

We don't like to limit ourselves to one party in the Sixth Form and Year 13 are very busy planning their Leavers' Formal Dinner (and of course revising hard at the same time). I have just seen the menu that the girls have selected and I can confirm they have excellent taste. Now I just need to hit Richmond to acquire a new party frock for the occasion. My Times 2 fashion section tells me lilac is this season's colour.

Despite turning up to the start of term a fortnight late due to the birth of my third daughter, it already feels like I was never away. There is a calm, productive energy to the Sixth Form area at the moment as the girls in both year groups are working towards their assessments and I am grateful, as ever, for the excellent Sixth Form Tutor team for setting such a strong tone right from the outset.

Whilst I am aware that St Joseph of Cupertino is the patron saint of exam takers (by all accounts he was not at all good at exams himself) I have never found praying to him to be especially fulfilling. Before any exam (or job interview) I have always pinched Jacob Astley's refrain from the Battle of Edgehill: *O Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forget Thee, do not thou forget me.* Regardless of the detail, I am a firm believer that a proper exam routine is important. For me, this has involved charging ink cartridges, donning smart enough clothes that I feel in a work frame of mind, and some quiet prayer and reflection at the start. I would encourage the girls to take the time this term to ensure they are approaching their exams in a way that means they are calm, focused and ready for that intense burst of mental agility required to leap whatever academic fences the examiner may put in their way.

Mr Warner



YEAR 9 & 10 FILM DAY

On 25 March Year 9 and 10 enjoyed a day of film-making. They learnt about filming, editing and producing their own movies.

It was wonderful to see Bubble 4 really engage with the activity and the weather just about held it together to allow for filming outside. The films they have produced in their teams are superb. We are very much looking forward to our Oscars evening on 27 May when the films will be screened to the cohort and prizes will be awarded. Thank you to Mrs Gillies and Miss Collett for their help in judging the pieces. Mrs Eagers



On behalf of Year 10, I would like to say how much we all enjoyed Film Day. Firstly, I would like to thank all the members of staff that were involved in making this day possible. We learnt a lot of new things, including how to edit our videos and how to merge them to make them into a short movie. For example, we learnt how the angle of the camera makes a big difference to the mood of the movie. It was also a good chance to spend some time with our friends and have some fun. We are all really looking forward to our own Oscars evening on 27 May. Thank you to Mrs Eagers for helping to put this together along with Miss Collett and Mrs Gillies. Diya M 10C



On behalf of the whole of Year 10, I can say that everyone thoroughly enjoyed Film Day, which was generously organised by our teachers. We learnt how to film different types of shots used in movies and practised techniques to make our short films as effective as possible, for example, stage combat. We were instructed how to do this safely, while of course having great fun! Not only was the day educational, but it provided some much needed pastoral care in the form of an engaging activity. The day was filled with experimentation and lots of smiles and laughter. And we did this all Covid safely! Clem C 10C

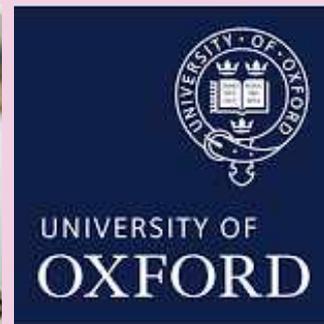


Lights... Camera... Action! Film Day was a fantastic way for us to take time out of our studies and work together as a team to make short films, as well as learning new techniques such as editing, film recording, and my personal favourite, how different angles can create impact and suspense in film. A huge thank you to everyone who made this day possible, it was thoroughly enjoyable! Sophie B 10C

SUCCESSFUL FUTURES

Ask a Chemist with Oxford University

In the session "Ask a Chemist", girls from Year 11 and the Sixth Form had the excellent opportunity to attend a webinar, where the guest speaker, Dr Marie Wong, talked all about her Chemistry degree and her PhD at Oxford University. She talked about her research project that she did for her PhD as well as her plans for the future. Dr Wong has just finished her DPhil (PhD) with a wealth of research on developing chemical methods for the synthesis of complex molecules. She was particularly interested in techniques to synthesise chiral molecules for applications in industries such as pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals and materials. We then had the opportunity to ask some questions that we had regarding Chemistry and her life as a Chemist. Overall the experience was really positive and inspirational.
Amulyaa L 11S



On 18 May we will be welcoming Yisum Heneghan to talk to the Senior girls about Greenpeace and careers in urban sustainability. The talk will be at 1600 and will be online. Bubble studios will be arranged in school.

Yisum serves as the Workshop Project Officer for C40's Climate Solutions and Networks team, looking at adaptation, waste & water, transportation, buildings & energy, urban planning & development. Yisum holds an MSc in Environmental Technology from Imperial College London and a BSc in International Relations and History from the London School of Economics.

We know that sustainability is of great interest to our pupils, and we think this will be an exceptional opportunity to learn more about careers in this sector.

Sixth Form Personal Safety talk

Our Police Liaison Officer, PC Simon, spoke to the Sixth Form about personal safety in the wake of the shocking and deeply tragic Sarah Everard case. Our girls were glad to have the opportunity to discuss practical ways of keeping themselves safe. PC Simon discussed how it is never the victim's fault, and that embracing sensible methods to boost personal safety is not victim-blaming. The Sixth Form were reassured that incidents like this are extremely rare. Many thanks to PC Simon for his sensitive and practical advice.



CHAPLAINCY

Year 8 & 9 Retreats

With restrictions on school day trips easing, we were delighted to be able to take Years 8 and 9 out on two separate retreat days. It was good to be able to go off site and enjoy the facilities of St Margaret's Church and Hall as well as having the chance to enjoy the sunshine in their garden.

Year 8's retreat focused on inspirational people, exploring the lives of some modern saints as well as reflecting on the gifts we also share with each other, remembering the words of Pope Benedict when he came to St Mary's ten years ago, that we are all called to be saints in our world.

Year 9 explored the theme of Justice and enjoyed working through an activity exploring some of the challenges and choices a refugee might have to face. While it was fun, it also gave pupils an insight into the experience of having to leave your home and make sometimes difficult choices about what to leave behind. Pupils took time to reflect on the issues presented and came up with some wonderful artwork and prayers as we brought the day to a close with some quiet prayer in the church. Thanks to the Parish of St Margaret's and Miss Berry as well as other staff who came to help: Mrs Neale, Mr Cox, Miss Graham and Miss Toner.

Miss Ryan
Chaplain



YEAR 8 PASTORAL DAY

Year 8 enjoyed a morning focused on developing positive friendship skills this week. They began with a fascinating online talk from Emma Gleadhill, which had pupils thinking about what it means to belong and why that is important. Her presentation moved on to recognise that while we can't change the behaviour of others, we are in control of our own actions, and how this can make a real difference in encouraging friendships with others. Year 8 pupils then had a chance to reflect on the talk in their Form Groups before joining in some fun and creative activities such as Bubble Football, where the girls could, quite literally, bounce off each other, and a quieter crafting session where pupils could talk quietly while creating friendship bracelets.

Miss Ryan

Pastoral Head of Lower School



FOOD & NUTRITION

Year 11 GCSE Exam

This term Year 9 have been doing a project on desserts and have made Swiss rolls, cheesecake and chocolate caramel shortbread.



*Well done, girls!
These look delicious.*

DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Training Expeditions

Bronze

The recent Year 9 Bronze Duke of Edinburgh training expedition with Activ Adventures was, despite the changes put in place due to Covid, a great success. The 43 girls who were out and about in Richmond Park on Saturday 17 April and Epsom/Ashted Common on Sunday 18 April did wonderfully well on their training expedition.

Saturday consisted of navigation practice with Activ instructors in a sunny Richmond Park, followed by a walk to school and cooking practice on Trangia stoves on the school playing fields. All of the Activ staff, Year 9 girls and Mr Cox also observed the one minute's silence for HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

Sunday meant putting the navigation training into practice in the Ashted Common area. Despite the very warm, summer-like conditions, all the girls managed to navigate successfully around the route set by Activ Adventures. There might have been a couple of off-map moments for a few girls intent on exploring the wilder areas of Tolworth to the North and some temporary moments of mislocation in the wild woods of Ashted but all came good in the end.

There were some blisters at the end of two very hot days and the girls definitely hit the 20,000 plus step count on the second day. Many thanks to those staff who came out and were on the ground over the two days. The girls appreciated the support, as did Mr Cox.

Year 9 came away tired, sore and with a few blisters here and there. But they did very well over the two days, and definitely lived up to our motto "*Not words, but deeds*".



DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Training Expeditions

Silver

Well done to the 35 Year 10 girls who undertook their Duke of Edinburgh Silver training in the Surrey Hills on Friday 23 to Sunday 25 April, with Activ Adventures and Mr Cox.

Day 1 and we were off to a flying start. The girls were at Box Hill station for 08:50 and then, after team briefings, we enjoyed a beautiful circular walk up to Ranmore Common and back, accompanied by stunning weather and views. Mrs Parfitt, who retired last year, also came out to see us, and the girls were very pleased to see her.

Day 2 was spent in the steep wooded valleys to the south of Haslemere. The teams encountered dusty trails, woody paths and bluebells everywhere. Did some teams temporarily lose their sense of direction? Oh yes, but lessons were learnt about the need to concentrate and also to get heads up and out of the maps. Loud singing from some participants was a bonus when it came to tracking some temporarily mislocated teams who had lost focus at Poison Copse. There was a little bit of cooking practice at the Scout Hut, route planning for Day 3, and finally home. Mr Cox falling over? Never happened!

Day 3 - north of Haslemere to Hindhead and then the Devil's Punchbowl. Again, we enjoyed spectacular views, but hot, dusty and dry were the words of the day. Our route featured steep climbs, rocky paths, hidden valleys, streams, ancient sunken tracks, rope swings, and yet more navigation practice. There were some particularly stellar and speedy performances from teams 6 and 7, blisters, lots of singing and excellent morale. Proud of the girls? Most definitely!

At least 30 miles and 70,000 steps were completed over the three days, and, as one of the girls said, memories were made. The girls will be moving on to the qualifying expedition in September when they will hopefully get the full camping experience and pass the expedition section of the Silver Award.



LIBRARY NEWS

Carnegie Award

The Year 7 and 8 Book Clubs are taking part in the CILIP Carnegie Award shadowing scheme. The Carnegie Award honours the best books written for children and young people each year. The girls are reading all eight books and will be writing reviews on them, and ultimately voting for their favourite. Here are the books on the shortlist, and all come highly recommended. The [Carnegie award website](#) includes further information on the books including age ratings.



Mini Reporter

Following the success of our Young Reporter scheme for Year 12, we have set up Mini Reporter for Years 7 & 8. Their first assignment will be to interview some of our alumnae about their Coronavirus experiences.



BIRTHDAY SURPRISE!

Fr Ulick's Birthday Surprise

Just before Easter, Miss Ryan found out that the Parishioners of St James' were planning a surprise for Fr Ulick as he was celebrating a very special birthday at the end of March. With all sworn to secrecy if they happened to meet Fr Ulick, pupils across the school prepared birthday cards and messages wishing him a very happy birthday and adding our hopes that we may soon be welcoming him back to say Mass in St Catherine's.

Miss Ryan joined other parishioners and pupils on the morning of his birthday to present the cards along with some small gifts. He was delighted by the surprise, and had had no inkling as to what had been planned. The school was just as pleased to have had the opportunity to participate and show our appreciation for all that Fr Ulick does for us.



ISA DANCE

On Friday 23 April, 14 very dedicated pupils performed three different dance routines for the ISA Dance Competitions. St Catherine's submitted video links of a self-choreographed Contemporary Solo by Rima A in Year 7, a K-Pop-Commercial routine self-choreographed by Izzy P and Silvana M in Year 12, and a Commercial-Street dance, put together by Miss Holgate-Smith and performed by a group of Year 9 girls.

In normal circumstances, this would have been an Autumn Term event attended in person. However, because of the pesky uncertainties of COVID-living, this was not an option. Yet, as they say in the Arts: "the show must go on!"

Hence, the decision was made in mid-March for this to be transferred to a remote event. Considering our holidays began on Friday 26 March, we had a lot to do and not a lot of time.

The girls worked tirelessly over the Easter break, watching and learning videos of choreography, or creating their own routines. This continued into the first two weeks of term, which saw the girls rehearsing and practising their numbers, as Miss Holgate-Smith made room bookings and searched the web furiously for costumes.

The girls' commitment was impressive: they were now ready to perform. After school, on one sunny Friday evening, the girls dressed up, warmed up, and danced their socks off, with Miss Collett wielding the camera. Their enthusiasm and hard work shone through and, after a few takes, the teachers and pupils were happy. The finished pieces were submitted to the ISA Dance Competition organisers, ahead of adjudication. At this point, no results have been released, but the girls were buzzing with their efforts and had a wonderful time being physical, theatrical and creative together, especially following the restrictions of the past year.



SPORTS NEWS



A great start to the Summer Term

The PE department have had a fantastic start to the Summer Term. Athletics and Rounders have returned and the girls have been attending clubs in large numbers to improve their skills and enjoy participating again. We have seen a brilliant number of girls attending all clubs and it has been especially nice to see a lot of Year 11 and Sixth Form pupils enjoying Rounders together after school. Morning swimming, football and netball clubs are still high in numbers as the girls continue training, ready for fixtures to start again in the Autumn. As we get closer to Sports Day we look forward to being able to show off the girls' hard work in both lessons and clubs.



KEY DATES

Monday 10 May - Assessment week 1 for Years 11 & 13
Tuesday 11 May - Year 12 Geography Field Trip to Camber Sands
Wednesday 12 May - Year 12 Geography Field Trip to Stratford
Monday 17 May - Internal exams Years 7-10 & 12
Monday 17 May - Assessment week 2 for Years 11 & 13
Tuesday 18 May - Siena Society with Yisum Heneghan
Friday 21 May - Year 11 Celebration Day
Friday 21 May - Year 13 Leavers' Formal Dinner
Monday 24 May - Internal exams Years 7-10 & 12
Thursday 27 May - Year 11 D of E
Thursday 27 May - Year 11 & 13 off site
Friday 28 May - Year 11 D of E
Friday 28 May - All Senior girls off site
Monday 31 May - Friday 4 June Half Term

You can keep up to date with all of our St Catherine's news on social media:



@stcatherinessch



Mrs Healey's Throwing Club looking forward to a great summer of sport.