

19 MAY 2023

ST CATHERINE'S NEWSLETTER

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



Newsletter Highlights

INTERNATIONAL DEBATING: YEAR 11 IN LISBON

YEAR 7 HISTORY IN CHICHESTER

ISA SHAKESPEARE SUCCESS IN STRATFORD

CORONATION EXCITEMENT

PREP PERFORMANCE AND RESIDENTIALS

CELEBRATIONS AND LEAVERS: YEAR 11 & 13

International Debating Finals

Over four days in April, Muriel, Cara, Jo and Gabriela in Year 11 represented the UK at the European Council of National Associations of Independent Schools (ECNAIS) Debating Competition in Lisbon. This competition involved 12 teams from across Europe.

The girls participated in three heats of debating. Their topics were "We live in a post-truth world" for which they were the proposition; "European countries should establish quotas for young people in government"; and "It is possible for European countries to have a common immigration policy". For the latter two debates, the pupils stood for the opposition. In the final motion, our pupils scored highest out of all of the teams, achieving an impressive 37/40.

Whilst they didn't make it to the final round, our pupils made for tough competition. They placed fifth overall, and greatly enjoyed watching the final debate which saw Spain - as the proposition - take the lead over Bulgaria in the debate: "Parental school choice reduces inequalities".

Significantly, St Catherine's pupils were awarded the People's Choice award for their overall character, approachability, inclusivity, confidence and attitude. In a message from the CEO of ISA, "the girls are a credit to St Catherine's School", a message which we second.

In between the debates, the girls listened to informative talks with keynote speakers, including the Portuguese Secretary of State Education. They also went on a walking tour of Lisbon to take in some of the culture of the city. All in all it was a fantastic experience for the girls and we are incredibly proud of their achievements.



Thank you to Mr Novak for all his hard work in preparing the girls and getting them this far, and thank you to Miss Holgate-Smith for accompanying and supporting our girls on this wonderful experience.



Year 1 & 2 Tower of London Trip

In April, Year 1 and 2 went to the Tower of London. After an exciting journey on the train and the tube, the girls took part in a drama workshop where they retold the events of the Great Fire of London in 1666. Their dramatic re-telling really helped to bring the events of this time to life.

We learnt so much, had lots of fun and even got to see the crown jewels too!



Coronation Tea Party

Year 1 and 2 celebrated the King's coronation by having a tea party. We sang our national anthem God Save the King, decorated cupcakes, ate juicy strawberries from the local greengrocer and made our own cucumber sandwiches. We spoke about what a coronation is and why it happens.



Year 7 Weald & Downland Trip

Our trip to the Weald & Downland Living Museum has definitely helped me to understand the standards of living during the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods.

To start off our visit, we learnt about how bricks were made in the past - they would dig clay, leave it to break down, mix it, mold it and shape it a bit more - this was especially interesting because it helped me to understand how they used to build houses without modern technology. We then went to the Lurgashall Mill. This was one of my favourite parts of the trip as we got to see how flour was made and we even tried making some ourselves using a quern-stone. This really showed how hard it used to be to make food because turning the stone was such hard work; after only two rotations I was out of breath!

Next, we saw a 15th century common hall plan house. The peculiar thing about this house was that the external timbers were painted red - it is unusual for paint like that to survive so long, especially since most timbers are painted when or before the houses were constructed, and this house was built in the 15th century. We also saw a 15th century butchers shop, a water pump and an old school. The school building was quite small and cramped and it made us all feel grateful for the big classrooms we have now. We also saw a poorer medieval house and were told how, because people would grow their own food, in the summer everyone would eat happily, but during winter, a lot of people would go hungry.

After this, we visited an Anglo-Saxon house, which was quite small and didn't look like much, but which we learnt would have belonged to a fairly wealthy family. The walls were made of wattle and daub, and were painted white using a mixture of chalk and water. Another thing many of us found odd about the house was that there were tiny holes in the walls. Our guide explained to us that the Anglo-Saxons used to believe in fairies and they wanted to be welcoming to these little creatures who brought good luck. We also learnt that, as metal was expensive, Anglo-Saxons would use animal bones to make all sorts of things. For example, rabbit and bird bones were used to make sewing needles whereas a sheep's bone was typically used to form chisels. We also learned that women had no rights to buy a house in that time period.

Our last stop that morning was to a medieval peasant house, which taught us the differences between the lifestyles of the Medieval times and the Saxons.



For example, the first thing we noticed was that this house looked significantly larger and more impressive than the Saxon one despite the fact that the person who owned this house was not as wealthy. An interesting point to note was that Medieval villages or towns would have had trouble getting a fire started so they kept one running as a group.

We finished with a workshop about the plague, also known as the Black Death. Plague doctors looked quite peculiar as they wore a beak-like mask in order to protect the doctor from the plague by stuffing it with nice smelling herbs. The workshop participants discussed the children's nursery rhyme Ring-a-ring-a-rosies and how this suspiciously innocent children's rhyme is really referring to the Black Death!

All in all, I deeply enjoyed our class trip to the Weald and Downland Living Museum. I am very sure that everything I have learnt will help me in History in the coming year.

Ayesha, Year 7

ISA Shakespeare Competition

William Shakespeare was a very influential poet, playwright and actor back in the 16th Century. He is considered the greatest writer in the English language, hence people still celebrate his work all around the globe.

When I heard about the auditions for the ISA Shakespeare Monologue Competition in March, I was keen to take part: the writer's plays are filled with shiver-inducing scenes and powerful monologues, so this was an opportunity where my passion for Drama could shine through!

Choosing a Shakespeare monologue was difficult, but eventually Cleopatra's 'No More But E'en A Woman' monologue from the play Antony and Cleopatra stood out to me. I found the character so strong and awe-inspiring that I instantly wanted to try playing this beautiful and charismatic woman.

In April, at St Catherine's end-of-term assembly, I learnt that I had won second place in the competition for the Learnt Monologue Category in Key Stage 3! I was delighted to receive my award, and thrilled to have come second in this prestigious competition, which had more than 150 entries from independent schools all across the country.

On Monday 24 April, I travelled with my parents to Mary Arden's farm located in Stratford-upon-Avon, where a Drama workshop was to take place for the competition winners. Mary Arden's farm is the birthplace of Mary Arden, who was Shakespeare's mother. To this day, the farm is still a working farm as well as a museum. A woman dressed as Mary Arden in Tudor clothes introduced us to the Tudor farm before we were all taken on a tour. Discovering the childhood home of Shakespeare's mother; peeking inside the chimneys; learning about how the house was built, and imagining what life must have been like for Mary with her seven sisters, was a fascinating experience. It was fun to imagine young William visiting his grandparents' farm, discovering the wonderful grounds and perhaps creating plays and stories in his head! We also got the chance to see all the animals and livestock at the farm: pigs, donkeys, geese, turkeys, and more.

Then, we all reunited for a fun workshop based on a monologue from Macbeth. It was very creative and enjoyable. Afterwards, we were each allocated a different place in the farm where we performed our monologues. I performed mine in the barn, where there was a throne for my character, Queen Cleopatra! I had so much fun presenting my piece, and I felt proud to receive such positive feedback. I also enjoyed watching everyone else - they were so talented, and I am grateful I had the opportunity to perform among them. It was a unique experience.

Calista, Year 9



Year 3 & 4 Aesop's Fables

On Friday 28 April, Year 3 and 4 pupils delighted the audience with their phenomenal performance of Aesop's fables. Their stage presence and confidence helped to bring across the morals of some of his well-known tales as well as those less familiar. We are really proud of the hard work they put in throughout the Spring Term.



Food & Nutrition Exams

For their exam, 9S had to design and make a dish suitable to serve at a music festival. Here are their amazing results.



8S's task for their exam was to make a sweet dessert. They worked very hard and produced some very impressive results.



Year 4 Residential Trip to St Albans and Phasels Wood

It was lots of fun on our residential trip to St Albans and Phasels Wood. First, we went to St Albans Cathedral and learned all about St Alban, who saved a Christian priest in a Roman town by switching places with him. In the cathedral there was a gift shop where we could spend the money we took on the trip. Then we went to Phasels Wood, where we stayed for two nights in rooms of four people on bunkbeds.

I shared a room with Priya, Zoey and Aimee. In the daytime, we played lots of games and went climbing, which was great fun! My favourite activity was the low ropes course. In the evenings, we had a movie night in our pyjamas and sleeping bags. The food was delicious - we ate bolognese and curry for dinner, and we had sandwiches for lunch. I really enjoyed our three days together.

Lucy, Year 4



Protecting UK Wildlife

Year 4 has been learning about endangered species and the environment in science. We did our bit to protect UK wildlife by planting some seeds to attract butterflies and bees. We are looking forward to seeing them grow.



Year 5 PGL Trip

At the end of April, Year 5 went to PGL in Liddington for five days. We spent our days completing fun activities, including abseiling, zip lining, fencing and archery.

The tasks involved lots of teamwork and cheering each other on, and many of us had to push past our fears. We loved all the challenges, spending time with our friends, and the scrumptious meals! Overall, PGL was an amazing adventure.

"The best part in my opinion was the giant swing. I also enjoyed the campfire night with songs and yummy sweets."

Anaya, Year 5

"I loved the raft building! You had to use huge barrels, sticks and ropes with special knots. When we took them out on the water we hoped we wouldn't sink or fall off. It was great fun because we used them to go around the lake and play games."

Tess, Year 5



Silver Duke of Edinburgh

On 24 March, nineteen of us in Year 11 met at Brockenhurst station. This was the start of our three-day practice expedition for our Silver D of E award in the New Forest. We were all equipped with rucksacks, tents, snacks, plasters and warm clothing, ready for the long trek ahead of us. Once we had got to the camp, we pitched our tents and relaxed by playing card games, before cooking our first hot meal, this of course was pasta.

Day 2, we woke up 'bright and early', and with everything packed away, we set off into the forest. As the day progressed, we ticked off checkpoints and met the Activ instructors at key locations. We walked through the stunning woodland, ate our lunch in the sun and saw lots of beautiful New Forest ponies. Mr Cox also met us along the way, he cheered us on and kept our spirits up. He was a great help and even saved us all from accidentally walking into a stream and being knee-deep in water! Eight hours and at least twenty miles later, we collapsed in a heap and set our tents up, just before the heavens opened.

Day 3, we packed up for the last time and set off again into the forest. We walked for miles along the same, never-ending path, only to be confronted with a sea of mud from the rain overnight. Not to be deterred, we trekked through with our minds set on the finish. Finally we got back to the station, tired and hungry, but pleased to have achieved it. We are thoroughly looking forward to the real expedition (after our GCSEs) in the summer. Thank you to Mr Cox, Miss Toner, Ms Meydanci and all of the Activ team for their help and support.

Florence, Year 11



Bronze Duke of Edinburgh



On 22 and 23 April, Year 10 pupils completed their practice expedition for their Bronze Award. They were in great form and thoroughly enjoyed walking through and camping in the Surrey Hills. The instructors from Activ Adventures had lots of praise about the girls' hard work and positive attitude, despite the odd downpour along the way. They should be very proud of their achievements and we hope they're looking forward to their Qualifying Expedition at the beginning of June.



U11 Tag Rugby

Congratulations to our U11 team who won the Harlequins Tag Rugby Tournament!



Prep Swimming

Girls in Year 4 - 6 have been learning about water safety and personal survival in their swimming lessons. Here some of our Year 5 girls can be seen practising the huddle position!



St Catherine's Prep came 2nd out of four teams at the Mall school. All the other teams were boys. Our girls swam brilliantly and for some it was their first gala. Well done, girls!

Golf Club

Friday Golf Club for Years 7 - 9 at Strawberry Hill with a Pro golfer is proving extremely popular! Here are the girls practising their swings.



Athletics

The senior PE Department have begun the athletics season and are delighted with the progress the girls are making. Clubs for all events have been well attended and we look forward to supporting all the girls in their annual sports day in July. Many pupils have taken up the opportunity to train at St Mary's University's athletics track, which is an excellent venue to support their progress. In addition, trials for the ISA Athletics Championships, due to take place on Wednesday 7 June are under way. The talent pool is strong and our girls' enthusiasm enormous. All we need now is for the sunny weather to return.



Acrobatic Gymnastics Success

After becoming Scottish Champions and winning the London Regional Championships, Lea (Year 10) and her partner became English Champions in the Youth Women's Pair category in Acrobatic Gymnastics on 15 April, and then on 14 May they became British Champions. This is a tremendous achievement. Very well done to Lea and her partner!



British Champion!



At the end of March, Pippa in Year 9 and her women's group qualified at the Regional Acrobatic competition to represent London at Nationals in mid-May.

Talking Textiles

In Art this term, Year 5 are creating "talking textiles" - a piece of textile artwork that will tell a story.

To launch their learning and inspire them about the possibilities of sewing, local textile artist Ruth Blackford came into school to show the girls some of her work. The girls enjoyed touching and feeling the textile pieces and hearing about Ruth's different projects.



Modern-Day Mary Seacole

Freya, Georgia and Megan in Year 6 were shortlisted for the Young Seacole Ambassadors competition 2023.

Participants were invited to submit a piece of work describing who they regard as their modern day Mary Seacole, and why. The prize-giving ceremony was held at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, and we are delighted to say that Freya's entry came second.

We were doubly delighted as Freya nominated as her modern-day Mary Seacole our very own Mr Gerald, who works in the Prep department. Very well done to Freya, Megan and Georgia for doing so well in this inspiring competition.



National Numeracy Day



On 17 May the Prep department had a Maths-filled day when we took part in National Numeracy Day. We celebrated the day by wearing our own mathematically decorated t-shirts!

A representative from As Creatives joined us for a workshop, as we raced through space using our mathematical skills. We also took part in challenges and problem-solving to work out the best candidate to race to space.



Thank you to our Local Police

Year 1 and Year 2 visited the local police station to drop off a thank you letter that we had made them. We wanted to thank the police for their continued support protecting our community. They gave us stickers too!

Ignite Project

Years 7 and 8 have recently embarked on the Ignite Project, which promotes our School mission by encouraging pupils to engage in activities related to our five core values: Community Faith, Courage, Scholarship and Service.

Pupils have now received their Ignite Passport booklet, which allows them to record their contributions to our community.

Some of our girls' contributions have included Florence in Year 7 helping with a Year 1 and 2 swimming lesson during her lunch break; some more of our Year 7s painting backdrops for the Year 3 and 4 production; and the Year 8 girls working hard helping to coach Prep cricket club after school.



Year 11 Celebration Day 2023

To mark the final day of timetabled lessons before Exam Preparation Week and GCSEs, Year 11 celebrated Friday 6 May in style. The day included Form Time with tutors, a special lunch in the Drama Studio, a presentation with photographs of the pupils' best moments, a Liturgy, and it culminated in the cutting of a cake and a delicious spread of some 'afternoon tea' style treats.

The weather was touch and go for a while, but thankfully we were able to make our way outside for the traditional staff vs students rounders match, which seemed to include a lot of water pistols and a few soggy-looking teachers. The girls went home with smiles on their faces. There were also a few tears at the thought of it being the end of an era.



Exam Preparation Week

Year 11 and 13 were welcomed back on site for exam preparation week. As well as the opportunity to take practice exams, revise quietly and seek teachers' advice, girls were also able to take advantage of time with the Independent Listener, yoga sessions and sessions with Daffyd the therapy dog!

Bringing calm and comfort to the pupils of St Catherine's, Daffyd the Therapy Dog paid us a visit to help our girls clear their minds with the pressures of exams. Who wouldn't feel relaxed after a cuddle with Daffyd?



Year 13 Leavers' Formal



On Friday 5 May we bid farewell to Year 13 with their Leavers' Formal. During the celebratory mass, the roof of St James' Church echoed to an array of St Catherine's favourites including Here I am, Lord and Be Thou My Vision and the assembled girls, parents and staff reflected on the amazing journey these young women had been on together and prayed for their future successes. Once back at school, drinks and nibbles led into a delicious three course meal (the brownie seemed to win the popular dish award). The site team did a wonderful job at transforming our Dining Hall into a magical venue bedecked with lilies and fairy lights whilst Dean and his team served excellent food and the evening flew by.

Seeing Year 13 all dressed in their finery and laughing as memories (or occasionally photos!) of the last seven years were shared around was an apt reminder of just how much resilience and spirit they have. It has been a real joy to see them come through the Sixth Form and we are excited about what they will achieve in the future.



Year 13 Leavers' Formal



Housekeeping / Notices



We would be very grateful if parents could be mindful of parking in a way that does not cause any inconvenience to local residents or pose any dangers to other road users or pedestrians.

Parent engagement and word of mouth are strong marketing tools in the broader community. With that in mind, please remember to follow us on our various social media channels and to like and share our refreshed activity in these spaces.



Date to diarise:



ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL
— TWICKENHAM —

The Headmistress is pleased to invite you to

St Catherine's Day

Saturday 1 July 2023

Guest Speaker:

Alexander McLean, CEO of Justice Defenders

10.00am Mass
11.45am Speeches
1.00pm Drinks & Lunch
Followed by Summer Stalls

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



ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL
— TWICKENHAM —

We welcome you to attend our upcoming Open Events



Prep Welcome Morning
+ Join the class
Friday 9th June, 11.00am



Prep Scholarship
Activity Morning
Friday 9th June, 11.00am



Whole School
Open Evening
Thursday 15th June, 5.30pm

Book now at www.stcatherineschool.co.uk

St Catherine's School
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You are warmly invited to our Open Events