

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

FROM THE HEADMISTRESS

Volume 13 Issue 2



December 2011

Dear Parents,

Following a very busy term, the Christmas holidays are now in sight and I hope they give you and your family an opportunity to celebrate the Feast amid the usual clamour of Christmas activities.

Before I give you news of the girls' achievements this term, I want to draw your attention to some important information.

Upton is giving very careful consideration to the invitation that we received from the Secretary of State for Education to convert to academy status. We have consulted widely on this matter, including with you as parents: an e-mail was sent to all parents on Friday 25 November, a letter sent home with pupils on Monday 28 November and the information has been on our website since Monday 28 November. A meeting for parents was held on Monday 5 December. In spite of our best efforts, it would seem that some parents have not seen this information. If you have missed the information please use this direct link www.uptonhallschool.co.uk to our website to see the consultation information, including details of a second meeting organised for those parents who missed the details of the first. This will take place on **Wednesday 4 January at 6pm** when Governors will be available to provide information and answer questions.

Feast Day Celebrations

On Thursday 8 December at Upton Hall we celebrated our school Feast Day. We joined with the Church around the world to celebrate the great feast of the Immaculate Conception when we honour Mary, the Mother of God. This date has a further resonance here at Upton as it was on that day in 1862 that the FCJ sisters completed the purchase of this site in Upton.

Girls took part in a variety of activities including a special Assembly, a session exploring the ethos of the school and what it means to be an Uptonian. Christmas lunch was served and pupils had the time to send an Amnesty Christmas Card and visit the Advent Prayer Labyrinth in Chapel. In the course of the day, girls enjoyed performances of 'Aladdin' the School Pantomime and a Feast Day Showcase of Talent in the Sports Hall. An international dimension was added to the day with Feast Day messages of goodwill being sent to other FCJ schools around the world, spoken in French, German, Spanish and Mandarin thanks to the efforts of our very talented MFL colleagues.

Senior Citizens' Christmas Party - Friday 9 December.

From 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm we welcomed just over 40 visitors from our local Nursing Homes for a special Christmas Celebration in the School Hall. Festive refreshments were served thanks to our Dining Room staff with the assistance of members of the Sixth Form. The

entertainment was provided by our very enthusiastic Year 7 and 8 singers who performed a variety of Christmas songs and members of the GCSE Music group performed solos and duets. This community event was very much enjoyed by all involved and we hope it will become an annual fixture in our calendar.

Christmas Carols – Wednesday 14 and Thursday 15

December. Congratulations to Mrs Hulme, members of our Music Department and the very talented young musicians and singers who provided a beautiful programme of music at our Christmas Carol Concerts held this week at Sacred Heart Church, Moreton. Our thanks to the Parish Priest, Father John Feeney, for his kind support and hospitality.

Pupil Achievements

- ❖ A talented dancer from our new Year 7 cohort, Ava McEvoy, was selected to perform in The Nutcracker Ballet at the Manchester Opera House in November. She trains each week with the Northern Ballet in Leeds.
- ❖ A number of our girls in Years 8 and 9 performed an Irish Dance routine entitled "Siamsa" in the Dance Proms at the Royal Albert Hall in London following the success of their Dance School (Hoylake School of Dance) in winning a place in this event. They were shortlisted out of 1000 entries so this was a huge achievement.
- ❖ Katie Everson in Year 11 has made a huge contribution to the Wirral Youth Parliament participating in the Youth Voice Conference along with a number of other Upton pupils. She was also invited to attend and participate in a debate at the House of Commons in early November. We have received praise and positive comments from the organisers of the Youth Parliament at Wirral Local Authority with regard to Katie's continued participation and involvement.
- ❖ A number of girls in Year 9 assisted during half term in fundraising efforts for "Save our Sue", a local lady whose friends are trying to raise £45,000 for treatment to prolong her life. The six members of Year 9 volunteered to give up a day of their holiday and pack bags in Sainsbury's Neston, raising £342 for the cause. Several members of the public and staff commented on their appearance, knowledge of the charity, confidence and politeness and that they were a credit to parents and the school.
- ❖ 11 Upton pupils are going to London on 5 January 2012 to the National Theatre to take part in The New Views Young Playwrights project which culminates in Westminster Hall in July 2012
- ❖ Upton Debaters are through to the second round of the Observer Mace Debating Competition thanks to the support and guidance of Mr Jackson.
- ❖ Stephanie Addenbrooke and Kaya Purchase in Year 12 went through to the finals of the Young Writers'

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competition held at the Athenaeum.

❖ 4 girls from Year 10: Rachel Kelly 10U, Kayleigh Nugent 10J, Ellie Oakley 10J and Molly Walsh 10J won the 'Best Use of Language Award' at the recent Wirral Languages and ICT Day hosted by Calday Grange Grammar School. They were set the task of promoting an imaginary X Factor Concert in Liverpool and had to interview a German Celebrity by telephone, produce a radio advertisement and brochure to promote the event, and finally to design and produce a pitch in the style of 'The Dragons' Den' and answer the Dragons' questions.

Sporting Achievements

❖ Six of our Sixth Form achieved their Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award and at the beginning of October they visited St James' Palace in London to receive the award. This is an outstanding achievement. We currently have a large number of girls from Year 9 upwards who are working to achieve various levels in this awards programme.

❖ Frances McNab, 9S won the National Schools Windsurfing championships at a recent competition held at Northampton Sailing Club on Pitsford Reservoir. Her sister Katharine McNab, L6ESE helps coach the squad.

❖ Cadets took part in a CCF Orienteering Competition in Warcop, Yorkshire. Rachel Fitchett, came second in the team competition, when she joined up with the Kings School Chester CCF/Birkenhead combined team.

❖ Aira Temporal in Year 10 has been selected for the U16 Merseyside Football team.

We offer congratulations to all our pupils for these excellent achievements.

Reports

Girls in Years 11-13 have each received a detailed report which can be accessed by parents on-line. There is an opportunity for both girls and parents to make a response to each report. Staff have invested a huge amount of time and effort in preparing these and if used sensibly these reports could be amongst the best Christmas presents you receive, bringing long-term success. Progress Information sheets have also been issued for pupils in Years 7 to 10. If you experience any difficulties accessing any of these reports please contact Miss Taylor at School.

January Modules

For girls in Years 10-13 January will bring modular examinations. It is very easy to let two weeks of the Christmas holiday slip away without making sufficient time to do the necessary preparation. Please ensure that your daughter does not return in a panic as a consequence of inadequate revision.

Dates for your diary - SPRING TERM 2012**January****Tuesday 3****Pupils return****Friday 6**

Year 11 Provisional Option Form submission

Monday 9

AS/A2 Modules begin

Tuesday 10

Year 7 Parent Teacher Meeting-5.30pm

Sat 21 – Sun 22

DoE Year 10 Bronze Expedition Training

Wednesday 25

Year 9 Parent Teacher Meeting-5.30pm

Sunday 29

DoE Gold Training Day

February**Thursday 2**

Year 11 Parent Teacher Meeting- 5.30pm

Saturday 4

DoE Silver Training Day

Monday 6DoE Gold Route Check
Year 11 Final Options Form submission deadline**Thursday 9**GCSE Certificate Presentation Evening
7.00pmAS Mountain Walking Assessment,
Snowdonia**Friday 10**A2 Mountain Walking Assessment,
Snowdonia

Progress Information to Parents

Mon.13 – Fri.17 Half-Term

For further dates please consult the school website.

BBC Radio Four's Any Questions is coming to Upton on Friday 3 February 2012 at 7.00 pm in the School Hall. **300 free tickets are available.** Please contact Mrs Spears at School for further details.

Uniform

The best advertisement for Upton Hall School is an Upton girl. With this in mind we expect our pupils to be smart in their appearance and wear their uniform with pride whilst adhering to the regulations. It is simply not acceptable for girls to attend school wearing make up, with dyed hair or fancy hair accessories. The temptation to follow fashion with the latest coat, footwear or bag should be reserved for outside school. Please ensure that your daughter returns to school in the New Year dressed appropriately according to the uniform lists for her particular year group. The cold weather calls for a warm black outdoor coat, plain black scarf and strong shoes.

Sixth Form students should honour the dress code which requires business dress. ***Jeans jeggings or leisure wear are not acceptable.***

Upton Community

This Christmas will be difficult for many families associated with the school because they are coping with the illness of a family member or a recent bereavement. We have had a number of pupils and staff who have lost a close family member or friend this term. I would ask you to remember these families in your prayers.



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Website

Our website is constantly being updated, please keep yourselves informed of School achievements at www.uptonhallschool.co.uk. We have recently launched the new Alumnae section which is well worth visiting.

Finally, to add a festive feel to the School Newsletter, Ms Skyner has been encouraging members of the Writers' Club to compile Christmas poems. Below are poems produced by our Year 8 pupils.



Christmas is Finally Here...by Katie Westby, 8J.

*Christmas Crackers,
Christmas cheer,
The anticipation of Christmas grows near.*

*There in the Stable,
Mary lies:
The chosen one
Scared of the unknown.*

*Angels rejoice in Celebratory voice
Shooting Stars dance.
Shepherds appear
Wise men arrive,
Presents are given
to the Christ Child.*

*Now this is the time to praise God,
To shout to the heaven,
and sing his praise,
as the joy of Christmas is Finally here.*

The one true meaning of Christmas by Alice Williams-McIver, 8J

*I am the Christmas angel
perched upon the tree
I look down on you
opening your presents
so happily.*

*But have you indeed
forgotten the true
meaning of this day?
Is it all about
santa, and the
presents in his sleigh?*

*What about Jesus
and Mary his mother?
All you really care
about is one present
after the other...*

*What about the gifts
he gave you?...
Love, friendship, hope
and happiness too.*

*Do you love him
like he loves you?
If you did, you would
make his wishes come
true...*

*So, make sure you
remember the meaning
of today, when Jesus
was born so lowly
and gently wrapped in hay.*

The true meaning of Christmas by Leah Simpkin, 8J

*Christmas, what would we do
without it?
Presents, joy and family cheer
happen every year.
So many things to do,
such as wrapping presents and
setting up the tree.
We may forget that Christmas has a deeper meaning too,
much more than the eye can see.
Remember what happened on Christmas,
when in a manger,
Mother Mary's son was born.
Jesus was brought into the world,
To share peace and bring happiness
to us all.
So although you may be busy this Christmas,
Let's not forget
the true meaning.*

May I wish you a very happy Christmas full of blessings for you and your family and a peaceful and successful New Year.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Young.