

# SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE HEADMISTRESS

Volume 17 Issue 2



December 2015

Dear Parents,

As another very long and busy term draws to an end, I would like to thank all the girls, who with parental support, have made such a huge contribution to many activities.

### Feast Day Celebrations

On Friday 11 December at Upton Hall we celebrated our school Feast Day. The Feast is actually 8 December, when the Church celebrates the great feast of the Immaculate Conception and is a day when the goodness of Mary is honoured. At Upton this date has a particular significance as it was on that day in 1862 that the FCJ sisters completed the purchase of this site.

To celebrate the girls took part in a variety of activities including a special Mass in Chapel, a number of workshops including a Marie Madeleine presentation and an activity relating to the six key FCJ values. Pupils also had the time to send an Amnesty Christmas Card. Sixth Formers ran a Christmas Market to raise money for Cafod World Gifts with a particular focus on Nepal and raised £2,290.92 for their efforts! This was up on last year's amount of £2138.87.

### Christmas Evening – Parents & Friends of Upton

This festive event organised by the Parents and Friends of Upton took place on Tuesday 1 December and proved an excellent opportunity for many families together with members of the local community to do some Christmas shopping. The Junior Choir entertained the crowds with a medley of Christmas carols and songs. It was a wonderful evening which raised £2625. Our thanks and congratulations go to the committee for their outstanding efforts which will benefit all pupils in the school by improving the school environment.

### Senior Citizens' Christmas Party – Monday 14

**December.** From 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm, we welcomed over 100 guests to this annual event. 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 Junior Choir along with Senior and Chamber Choir and the School Orchestra who performed a variety of Christmas Carols and seasonal songs.

### Christmas Carols – Tuesday 15 December 2015.

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 Concert held this week at Sacred Heart Church, Moreton. Our thanks to the Parish Priest, Father John Feeney, for his kind support and hospitality.

### Upton Hall Apple Juice – For Sale!

The Eco Club and Mrs Julie McGettrick, Teacher of Food and Textiles who has spearheaded this group, have once again produced and bottled Upton's own apple juice from the apples in the School Orchard. This delicious juice is on sale at a cost of £3.50 per bottle, 2 for £6. Staff have been working with pupils on a cross curricular project relating to this product. They wish to capitalise on the huge potential regarding educational opportunities it might offer to our pupils. It can be purchased at Reception.

### Pupil Achievements

- ❖ Excellence Scholarships – I received notification from Edge Hill University that two of our former students, Bethan Shields and Darby Henderson have been awarded scholarships. Bethan was awarded an Outstanding Applicant Scholarship in Performing Arts and Darby received an Outstanding Applicant Scholarship in Creative Arts
- ❖ Beth Burgomeister-Westbrook has been in performances of 'Volpone' at the Arts Club Liverpool in December.
- ❖ On Saturday 21 November a group of Sixth Form students, accompanied by Mrs Pennington and Mrs Whitehurst, competed in the regional heats of the Bar Mock Trial today in Chester. Although they did not qualify for the National Finals they performed remarkably well. During their last round the judge was particularly full of praise for both sides saying that if he closed his eyes and just listened he would have thought that he was in an actual court case and that the standard in the last round was worthy of a national final. Assistance had been given to the team by a local barrister who thoroughly enjoyed participating and helping out and has offered his services in the future. Some of the girls are going to contact him with a view to securing work experience. The girls who took part are as follows: *Barristers:* Leah Simpkin, Jess Kelly, Katy Westby and Hannah Davies, *Witnesses:* Victoria Vicary, Ailish Molloy, Niamh Murphy and Katy Byrne Bibby, *Usher:* Olivia Benbow, *Court Clerk:* Jess Benjelloun, *Jury Members:* Phoebe Williams, Ellie Mitchell, Alice Harrison, Natassia Cox, Siobhan McGovern and Alice Macdonald.
- ❖ On Monday 23 November, a group of Sixth Form participated in the ESU National Debating Competition and were successful in reaching the second round. Of particular note were the performances by Charlotte Mallon, Elizabeth Nance and Heather Hughes.
- ❖ A large number of pupils will be participating in the Pantomime 'Jack and the Beanstalk' at the Floral Pavilion in New Brighton in January.



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- ❖ A group of Year 8 pupils won a Geography quiz hosted at Chester University. Not only did they perform well against teams of older pupils but they spotted an error in the marks which had led to them being awarded second place in error! The matter was raised, the correction made and the girls were very tactful and did not celebrate until on the coach. The staff were hugely proud.

### School Achievements

- ❖ The Fundraising Dinner in aid of Upton Hall School FCJ and Wirral Hospice St John's spearheaded by Jim Keaton, was held on Monday 19 October in the School Hall. Fergal Keane was an outstanding speaker. Feedback from guests has been very positive with some saying they would support another such event. The evening donations and payments raised £16,500 of which we received £9,800. This money is to be put towards match funding for our bid to the EFA to refurbish the School Hall.
- ❖ The British Council has recently confirmed the reaccreditation of the International School Award to Upton for 2015-2018 following the successful submission of our impact evaluation of international learning activities. The assessor was very impressed and commented on the exemplary and comprehensive nature of the evaluation which was a credit to school. Further comment included that it demonstrated clearly our continued commitment to understanding and applying the principles of international education in a creative and imaginary way. Mrs Natalie Hall, Director of Sixth Form was responsible for this submission and our thanks and congratulations have been offered to her.
- ❖ School Production of The Wiz took place from Tuesday 13 October to Thursday 15 October and was a huge success with some outstanding performances from our budding actors. Miss Davenport, Mrs James and Mrs Hulme were congratulated for the hard work they invested in ensuring its success.
- ❖ On Friday 23 October, Year 7 Welcome Ceremony took place when pupils were formally welcomed to the Upton Hall community in front of members of their family.
- ❖ On Saturday 7 November 2015 the Annual School Mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool was celebrated. The high quality of the music and the dignified conduct of the pupils have received many positive comments. The Deputy Lieutenant of Merseyside, Mr Peter Woods, represented the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside Dame Lorna Muirhead.
- ❖ Sixth Form Presentation Evening took place on Thursday 12 November when members of Year 12 were given the opportunity to perform and

showcase their talents to their friends and family.

They were then awarded with a scroll to represent their achievements at GCSE and collected their certificates at the end of the evening. It was a very enjoyable event.

- ❖ Year 11 Sixth Form Open Evening was held on Wednesday 4 November 2015. Once again this year, in a bid to attract more external applicants, a short radio advertising campaign was run on Capital Radio specifically targeted at this event with a number of our girls providing sound bites about their experience of life at Upton. Around 30 outside candidates attended the evening. The success of our efforts will be seen in the number of applications we receive.
- ❖ Curious Gallery – An Exhibition Designed by Children. From 11th to 13th of December, Open Eye Gallery, Mann Island in Liverpool became a space for experiments and discovery – for the gallery as much as for our visitors and collaborators. For one weekend in December, the general public were invited to visit this pop-up exhibition created by secondary school students of all ages with the assistance of the gallery staff. Working with four secondary schools from the Wirral and Liverpool, Open Eye Gallery worked to re-imagine a gallery – creating a space and exhibition designed by children. The artworks were produced by the students in response to a previous show at Open Eye Gallery, Metamorphosis of Japan After the War. Developed through a series of workshops on writing and local post-war history, the final works were on show to the public over the weekend. Upton was the lead institution, with input from Clarendon Specialist Sports College, Woodchurch High and Bellerive. This exhibition was supported by the **Curious Minds** organisation, who find ways to engage children & young people with possibilities in the arts. Its **Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education (SLiCE)** program helped to allow for a teacher to find imaginative approaches to learning through, and with, creativity.

### School Trips and Visits

- ❖ From 4 to 6 November we welcomed a delegation of staff and pupils from our link school in Taicang No 1 Middle School in Suzhou, China. They participated in a very full programme which was both educational and enjoyable which included time spent with Year 9 and 10 pupils in various classes including Science, Music, Art and Sports as well as a visit to Liverpool and its tourist attractions.

### Sporting Achievements

Tamsyn Brace in Year 10 has recently qualified for the World Championships in Irish dancing which will be held during Easter week 2016.

- ❖ The U13 and U16 Badminton Teams reached the North



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- ❖ West finals for the fourth year running and these will take place in January 2016.
- ❖ Helayna Birkett and Ellie Porter both outstanding players now play and represent Cheshire Badminton.
- ❖ In the Wirral Schools Athletic Club, Cross Country competition the girls finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> place and in the Merseyside County Athletic Trials, 20 pupils were selected and represented Wirral in a number of events. In the English School Cross Country Cup, the Year 9 and 10 team qualified for the North Schools Finals in Bolton where they finished 6<sup>th</sup>. They are also currently competing in the Saturday League races.
- ❖ Netball – Many interschool matches against Wirral, West Kirby, St Marys and other schools have taken place during the term with 18 matches played, 12 won, 6 lost. We have played teams from Year 7 to Year 10.
- ❖ Football is a growing sport on the Wirral following on from the success of the Women's World Cup earlier in the year and we now have a good squad of players, many playing for clubs outside of school. Niamh Charles in Year 12 will travel to Germany, later this month, to play for England U18, an outstanding achievement as the competition is extremely tough. Niamh has also been made Captain of Liverpool Ladies. Our U13 and U16 Football Teams won the semi finals of the Wirral School Football Tournament sponsored by Tranmere, but both teams lost to Weatherhead in the final.

**Reports**

Girls in Years 11 and 13 have each received a detailed report on their progress. 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 the girls receive, bringing long-term success. Progress Information sheets have also been issued for pupils in Years 7 to 10 and 12.

**Study Sessions**

Last year we used a company to work with each year group to promote study skills and the feedback was very positive. So a week of study based activities tailored for each year group has once again been organised. Letters with arrangements will be issued to the girls but for your information:

**Monday 18 January**      **Years 7 and 8**  
**Tuesday 19 January**    **Years 9 and 10**  
**Wednesday 20 January**   **Year 11**  
**Thursday 21 January**    **Years 12 and 13**

(The girls will attend these sessions during the school day and the cost will be covered from the Year Group

Activities contribution by parents, which was requested in September. School has also accessed funding to heavily subsidise this activity.) Sessions will run for parents called '**Parent Power**'. These are to help you help your daughter. They will take place in the School Hall at **3 pm to 4 pm and again at 5 pm to 6 pm on Monday 18 January for parents of girls in Years 7 and 8 and Wednesday 20 January for parents of girls in Years 9 to 11.**

**Stay Safe**

Over the Christmas period many young people will compromise their safety by drinking alcohol. I appeal to the girls, and ask for the support of parents, to ensure that all our students stay safe by being confident enough to say no to alcohol. Long term consumption of alcohol will paint your nose red and do even worse to your liver!

**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 who have lost a close family member this term or indeed have suffered through illness themselves. I would ask you to remember these families in your prayers. In particular, I would ask you to remember the family of Mr Jack Heery, former Chair of Governors during the 1990s who helped to lead the school from being an Independent School to becoming a Grant Maintained state school. Jack's wisdom and expertise was a great asset to the school at that time of change. We send our condolences to Margaret, his wife, and to his family. His funeral is on Monday, 21 December at 10am at *Holy Family*, Pensby.

**Parking**

Please ensure that when you park to drop off your daughter in the morning or collect her in the afternoon that you respect other road users. Swinging around in the driveway is potentially hazardous and should be avoided.

**Website**

Our website is constantly being updated, so please use it to keep up to date with current activities. [www.uptonhallschool.co.uk](http://www.uptonhallschool.co.uk). Significant dates for next term are shown in the website calendar.

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*