

School Newsletter

April 2021



Dear Parents

It has been lovely welcoming everyone back to school after the Easter break. We hope over the coming weeks to have further lifting of restrictions and that in turn more normal ways of school life will return.

Head's Tea

I am delighted that we have been able to reintroduce Head's Tea. The format has had to change slightly, in order to be Covid friendly, so we currently have a weekly rota by year group. Five girls from the year group will be nominated for something exceptional they have either achieved or undertaken and, as a treat, will be invited to have Tea and Cake at break time on Friday with me. Last week was the first week and I had the most delightful conversation with Year 9 pupils who have not forgotten, despite the ups and downs of the past year, what it means to be an Upton girl.

Dining Room

The pupils have been delighted to find a welcome addition to the Dining Room menu with the introduction of ice cream. This is proving very popular in all kinds of weather, but as summer approaches we are sure that this will be a firm favourite for all our pupils (and other members of the School Community!). We have changed a number of elements of our catering arrangements this year and I hope that as we are allowed to welcome more pupils into the Dining Room, the menus will get better and better. We have changed the branding of the Dining Area and I hope that we can share more menus with you on the website over the coming term.

Uniform

The majority of girls have returned to school in their summer uniform and looking very smart. In terms of planning for the new academic year and uniform purchases, I should like to advise you to reserve your items well in advance to ensure that you are able to secure the garments you require for your daughter. We will, of course, do our utmost to ensure that all orders are fulfilled in a timely manner. You can order uniform at any time but we will be sending out

information in the coming weeks about when our 'uniform shop' will be open.

Mobile Phone Usage

Pupils should not be using mobile phones during school hours in line with our policy. Pupils breaching this policy will have their mobiles confiscated.

Should a parent/carer need to contact their child during the school day, they can do so through the main office. Please do not encourage your daughters to use their phones by accepting calls from them in the day and then calling into school yourselves as a result.

Plea for help - Careers Education Programme

In addition to the careers education programme delivered by staff, we run careers events throughout the academic year that involve representatives from business and organisations coming in to work with our pupils. Contact with employers and varied careers talks with industry experts is of huge benefit to our pupils as they prepare for their future. Due to COVID 19 we have had to suspend our work experience programme again this year. This along with having to cancel our biennial careers fair and the partial school closure, has limited employer interaction.

As the COVID rules are starting to relax and subject to all precautions going forward, if you would be willing to come into school (or virtually) to talk about your career, are able to offer interview advice in the form of a mock interview or work for an employer or organisation that would be willing to offer work experience placements, apprenticeship advice or other support, we would really love to hear from you.

Please email Mrs K Douglas, Careers Adviser and Work Experience Coordinator kdouglas@uptonhall.org

Pupil achievements



Congratulations to Lucy in Year 7 who has passed her Grade 4 Flute exam with Merit.

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Glue Club

Blog by Amelia K, Year 8, Poster by Sharon P

Glue is a philosophy and debate club that enhances your speaking, listening and analysis skills. It covers a broad range of topics and stands for God, Life, the universe and everything. It is very interactive, you get to learn new things, watch interesting documentaries and ask big questions. We also occasionally get guest speakers in to talk to us. One of my favourites was from Animal Aid, who spoke to us about the ethics of animal testing. We have also explored questions such as, "Is climate change a test from God?", "Is social media bad for us?", "How do each of us perceive colour?" and "Can science tell us how to be happy?"

Glue has really changed the way I look at things about the world and those around me. I have developed the skills of communication and empathy, which are important as I continue to grow through education in school. Glue has even taught me about myself. I have been able to notice where I may have prejudiced opinions, or where I thought I knew a lot about a topic, but I do not. It has also shown me how to collect information from trustworthy sources. I have made lots of new friends at Glue and found people who have the same interests or views as me.

As part of GLUE we also work on academic skills, such as critical thinking which will support me at GCSE, A-level and beyond. Furthermore, we have been preparing ourselves for education after Upton, as we explore what happens at University and the experiences we can make for ourselves in order to enhance our CV's and get there! We have spoken to Professors, students and post-graduates from all sorts of Universities. Glue provides us with amazing opportunities and we also have lots of fun whilst doing it.

Glue is run by Miss Harris who is dedicated to help us learn and develop these essential skills. She also supported us during lockdown, posting many articles and topics on our google classroom page to encourage us to read and continue our wider-learning beyond our everyday school subjects.

Overall, GLUE is a welcoming, fun and interesting extra-curricular club where you can meet new people,



develop key skills and learn about interesting topics on the world's biggest questions. Miss Harris and Mr Carter, our amazing teachers who run it, are brilliant and you can always talk to them about anything! We would love more people to join, so if you are interested then please see Miss Harris and she will happily welcome you to our weekly meetings. GLUE runs every Monday lunchtime for year 9 and every Wednesday for year 8, 1pm to 1.45pm. Looking forward to meeting you very soon!

Virtual Author Visit- Liz Kessler

Year 7 students attended a virtual author visit with author Liz Kessler on Tuesday 20 April. Liz Kessler joined us live from her home to talk about her latest novel *When the World Was Ours*. We heard an engaging talk about the author's career journey from teacher to journalist and now to an internationally bestselling author. Liz Kessler shared that the book was based on the author's own family who, as a Jewish family, lived under threat during Nazi rule. The



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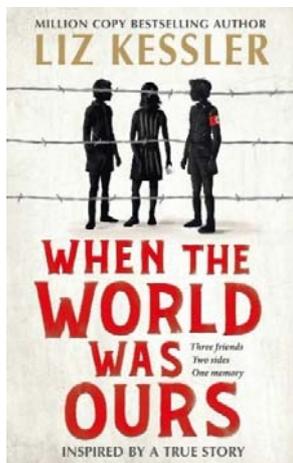
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author showed pictures and talked about her research trip taken with her wife to five countries past homes of relatives, to Auschwitz and even to the name of a relation written in The Book of Names.

The author read from her book and explained that the three protagonists were based on the experiences of her father. One child was based on his escape and the kindness of those who helped his family to flee. The second child was based on the 'what if' scenario if kindness and chance had not allowed the family passage to safety. The third child represented the possibility of a life without threat and instead a life of Hitler Youth groups.

Year 7 students all showed great respect for the grave and powerful topics discussed within the talk. Copies of *When the World Was Ours* are available for reservation in the school library. In our library lessons we will be reflecting further on the talk and ask students to share their experiences of reading the novel.



When the World Was Ours has been described as a powerful and heart-breaking novel about three childhood friends living during the Second World War whose fates are closely intertwined, even when their lives take very different courses. A *Sunday Times* Children's Book of the Week, this is the perfect

story for readers of *Private Peaceful*, *The Book Thief* and Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*.

Art Therapy

This term we have been lucky enough to welcome an Art Therapist into school. Jen Wise is in school 1 day each week to work with girls on a 1:1 basis who find it easier to explore their feelings through the medium of art. This work is part of our ongoing partnership with Mersey Counselling and Therapy Centre, who have kindly funded this provision.



During their sessions, the girls choose what they wish to work on. Their art work is constructed using a number of materials (sometimes it can get a bit messy!)

and is stored until the end of the course when the girls are able to keep their creations. Pupils can see Mrs Griffiths if they think that they would benefit from this form of therapy.

Caritas Fundraising thanks

We received a letter from Rachel Taylor of Caritas thanking our school community for their support of this year's St Joseph's Penny Appeal on behalf of Caritas Diocese of Salford. They had received the Just Giving transfer from our fundraising activities and donations made of £2,220.06, plus gift aid.' The generosity of the whole school family means that they can immediately meet the urgent practical needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, poverty, loneliness and marginalisation, as well as work 1:1 with those who need help to make transformative changes to their circumstances. They are extremely grateful and want us to pass on our thanks to everyone who contributed.

Chaplaincy News

The Year 12 Product Design class have made a beautiful resurrection scene which now serves as a



reminder in chapel that the Easter season lasts 50

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days in which we celebrate the joy of the resurrection.



Our Chapel in itself is a wonderful resource to have in school and we've recently made the most of this organising a Chapel lesson for Year 10 facilitating their learning about church architecture and features through a Chapel quiz, with Easter eggs for the winners.

Beautiful the Chapel may be, Year 7 and 8 c.r.e.a.t.e lunch club availed of another lovely and reflective space on our school grounds: The Mary Garden. Since the weather was nice girls were able to engage all their senses in an outdoors meditation to mark Earth Day. So often we take our earth and all it produces for granted. We pondered on the beauty of



nature, the energy from the sun and how the earth is our common home and sustains all of us. We left the Mary Garden filled with gratitude.

100 Miles in May for Mind

Mrs Griffiths is running 100 miles in May for Mind. As our safeguarding lead, Mrs Griffiths oversees the many initiatives that we organise that promote good mental health and support those dealing with mental health issues. The mental health of so many in our community has been affected over the past 12 months. This includes, staff, pupils and parents. If you have found things difficult or if you have been supporting a friend, family member or colleague then this is for you!

If you are able to spare a small donation, it would be very much appreciated. You can donate by visiting the following page....

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nicola-griffiths31>

School assessments

You will be aware on the green calendar that in the last week of this term, we usually have school exams for all year groups. These are not taking place this year owing to the volume of assessments we are doing for Year 11 and 13 students to ensure that they can be awarded GCSE and A level grades this summer. We will, however, be assessing Year 12 and 10 students in the summer term. Years 7 – 9 will be assessed in class through their classwork rather than in more formal testing. Details of all year groups progress will be sent to parents at the end of the year in their annual reports/tracking (for those who have already had a report).

Parents' Evenings

Owing to the pandemic, this year we had to move to an on line parents evening system. Earlier in the year, all of our curriculum evenings were also conducted virtually. I actually really enjoy seeing parents in person on parents' evenings, however, many of you have expressed a wish that moving forward, these virtual events become the norm. I understand this as it does not take as much time to come out to school and you do not have to spend as much time queuing. In order to accurately gauge parental opinion on this, please could you take a minute to fill in the questionnaire which will be sent to you shortly. We will then make a decision on it. If we do decide to go

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down this route, I will work some more informal parental drop ins into the calendar where you can still come and see us with any questions or concerns. Our relationship with you is very important and I would not want that to always be via a screen.

I should like to conclude by thanking you for your continued support as we aim to provide your daughters with the best possible education, in the most challenging of times. Upton has very strong relationships with home and we are grateful to all parents for your cooperation.

Please keep in your prayers all of our Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students who are working hard, alongside their teachers, to achieve their grades this summer.

Stay safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Gaunt'.

Mrs Andrea Gaunt
HEADMISTRESS