

Dear Parents

As the Spring Term draws to a close and we approach the Easter holidays, I wanted to write to keep you updated with key information, reminders of important dates and events and to celebrate the many and varied achievements of members of the Upton Hall School community.

Lenten Fundraising

During lent our school community took part in a rich array of activities linked to prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

The season of Lent started with Ash Wednesday on 5 March when all our students and staff received ashes. Lent is the six-week period of preparation for the great Christian Feast of Easter. During this time, Christians are asked to focus on three things that are of a spiritual and practical nature. They are prayer, fasting and charity. During the Jubilee Year 2025, our focus in prayer during Lent has been on the Jubilee theme and FCJ value of Hope. Many of our students have written prayers that have been included on the weekly prayers used in form time and lessons. Our staff have written some prayers too and these are displayed in our foyer. Year 8s took part in the Sacrament of Reconciliation on Friday 7 March and some of our sixth formers attended FLAME in Wembley arena on Saturday 15 March. On Wednesday 2 April, our ethos reps took part in the Stations of the Cross around our school grounds with our Chaplain (Mrs Hart).

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us to consider the more vulnerable in our society. The charities that we support every year during Lent are Cafod and Caritas through the Diocesan Good Shepherd appeal. To find out more about Caritas, please visit the following page for information and a good video too: <https://www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk/get-involved/good-shepherd-collection/> Each tutor group have been fundraising for these charities by leading a range of activities from dancing to singing to raffles. In addition, some staff took part in Cafod's Family Fast Day (Friday 14 March) and staff donated in return for some of Mr Jones's soup. We thank all our parents and carers for all their help and donations during Lent.

We will celebrate the end of term on Thursday 3 April with services focussing on the Stations of the Cross, Holy Week and Easter itself. We hope you all have a blessed and happy Easter.

News from RE

Students in Year 7 and 8 have learned about theology connected to Jesus's life and death this term, while students in KS4 and KS5 have prepared for summer exams. Around 30 students in Year 9 attended the Thriving Minds conference held at Liverpool College. This was organised by the Religious Education department to help students develop their critical thinking skills and gain insights from expert speakers. There were numerous focuses of the day including nanotechnology The life and work of Aristotle and a debate about to what extent animals should have rights. Students thoroughly enjoyed the day and felt it was both enjoyable and helped them to think about issues that they had not considered before. Mrs Hart and Dr Swai who accompanied the group were impressed by the students' mature thinking and willingness to participate in groups made up of both Upton girls and students from other schools.

Artists' Success



10 pupils from Years 11-13 have had their work displayed as part of the '[Fresh Perspectives](#)' exhibition at the Lady Lever.



It runs from 15th February- 27th April. It was fierce competition between the Wirral schools, but we were delighted to have had our bid accepted!

Athletics achievements



Caitlin H in Year 7 competed at the Northern Athletics Indoor Junior Championships in February in Sheffield.

She came home with a silver medal and PB of 4.48m in the long jump (placing her joint 3rd in the UK), and was the U13 Northern Champion for 60m, giving her

a gold medal and UK ranking of 11th, as well as a new PB of 8.53s.

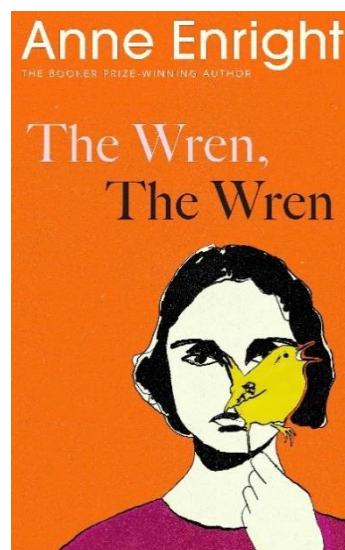
Hockey success



Sophia S and Liv Y in Year 7 won the Cheshire Hockey Final at Timperley on 15 March after a nail biting final which went to penalties. They will go onto the NW finals with their club Neston.

Women's Prize for Fiction Book Club

Book Review



The Wren, The Wren by Anne Enright

The first book we read in the Women's Prize for Fiction Sixth Form book club this year was *The Wren*,

The Wren by Anne Enright. Enright's novel was short-listed for the Women's Prize for Fiction 2024, but was beaten to the title by *Brotherless Night* by V. V. Ganeshanathan.

The Wren, The Wren is a two-perspective novel which explores the experiences of Nell—a woman in her twenties navigating the modern world of work, social media and dating—and her mother Carmel, who raised her as a single-parent and now laments her daughter's new freedom and her own empty nest. Enright cleverly guides the reader through their parallel experiences, while showing how each fails to understand the other, almost losing each other in their failure to translate each other's feelings. Poetry is also sprinkled throughout the novel, written by the fictional poet Phil McDaragh, Carmel's negligent father who became a national treasure, despite leaving his wife and family while his wife was terminally ill. The reader is invited to question the role our families have on shaping who we are and how they continue to haunt our lives, even affecting those who are several generations distant from them.

We had mixed opinions on this novel, with some students appreciating the clever employment of voices across genders, generations and opinions, while others were put off by Enright's modernist style and the use of streams of consciousness, particularly in Nell's section.

If you're interested in the themes of family, identity (especially female identity) and translation, this would be a really good read for you!

Chinese celebrations

Upton Hall School FCJ Celebrates Chinese Culture with Exciting Events, Performances, and Festive Dining

During the early part of the Spring Term, Upton Hall School was buzzing with enthusiasm as students from Year 7 to Year 13 took part in a series of vibrant activities dedicated to exploring Chinese culture. Organised with the aim of fostering cultural appreciation, both students learning Chinese and those new to the language were given the

opportunity to immerse themselves in traditional Chinese customs and art forms.

Chinese Culture Week (27th - 31st January)

A week-long Chinese Culture Week offered interactive workshops and fun, hands-on experiences, allowing students to connect with different aspects of Chinese tradition and creativity.



Blue-and-White Porcelain Painting: The students learned the history of the famous Chinese porcelain and designed their own patterns.



Paper Lantern Making: The creation of colourful lanterns added a festive and artistic touch, as students decorated them with Chinese characters and symbols.

Chopsticks Challenge: The students competed with their newly acquired skills and learned about the cultural significance of dining customs.

Chinese Film Screening: This gave students a glimpse into the traditions, values, and everyday life depicted in Chinese cinema.

Traditional Chinese Dance Class: The students learned graceful dance movements, adding rhythm and elegance to the week's celebrations.

A Festive Transformation in the Dining Hall (28 January)

To complement the cultural activities, the school's dining hall underwent a festive transformation. The red lanterns, colourful posters, Chinese flags, and decorative streamers created a vibrant atmosphere.



The school's catering team also kindly prepared special Chinese dishes for students to enjoy, including crispy spring rolls and roasted pork ribs.



Lion Dance Workshop (4th February)



As a grand finale, we welcomed a lion dance workshop led by professional martial artists. The lion dance, a symbol of luck and prosperity, captivated students with its energetic movements and vibrant costumes. We were introduced to the history and meaning behind the lion dance before trying out

movements themselves. Some chose to show off their skills on the stage and filled the assembly hall with laughter and excitement.

Cultural Engagement and Lasting Impact

The activities and festivities provided a platform for students to step outside their regular learning routines and engage in creative, meaningful experiences. For many, it was their first encounter with these aspects of Chinese culture, sparking curiosity and interest beyond the classroom. One Year 7 student commented, "I loved the porcelain painting. It was amazing to see how delicate and detailed the designs could be. It made me want to learn more about Chinese art!"

It is hoped that the students are feeling inspired and are willing to embrace and appreciate our diverse society.

French news



On the 6th of January, pupils studying French came back from the Christmas holidays celebrating the Epiphany by baking the traditional French cake "la galette des rois". C'était délicieux!



Science Update

Science Faculty News

There has been plenty to celebrate in the Science Faculty this term including British Science Week (7-12 March). With the theme of 'Change and Adapt' our Y12 STEM Leaders kicked off the week with an assembly outlining the importance of science in our everyday lives and inspiring the younger students within our school community.



During each lunchtime the Science Department ran a series of events and activities. Some of the students made footprint tunnels to monitor the activity of small mammals on our school site.



Science Department Uptonology Events



In the Science department, we continue to deliver our Uptonology series of talks. We invite leading, local scientists to come and speak about their work or research and about the personal journey they have undertaken to become a scientist in their specific field. We have heard from professionals from a number of careers and we hope that we can inspire our future scientists here at Upton Hall School and introduce them to the wide variety of scientific careers that exist within our workforce. Our recent visitors have included Kirsten Shoemith, a project engineer from Cammell Laird and Dr Kai Hoettges from the University of Liverpool.

Women in STEM Careers – Presented by Kirsten Shoemith a Project Engineer from Cammell Laird

In my opinion attending Upton's most recent Uptonology talk presented by a female project engineer from Cammell Laird was hugely beneficial for both physicists and other science orientated students alike. Cammell Laird is a local shipyard based in Birkenhead on the banks of the River Mersey. Providing us with opportunity to learn more about major industries in our local area not only allowed us to learn about the significance of naval industries to our community but also inspired us, as young women, to be unafraid to pursue careers in primarily male-dominated industries (such as naval architecture and other engineering-based careers). The project engineer explained to us clearly her route to her current career in naval architecture; providing us with a clear guide to both careers in the naval industry as well as to other roles based in Physics and engineering. As well as being both useful and interesting, the presentation was aptly timed as we celebrating International Women's Day on 8th March. This talk provided us with the confidence and inspiration to pursue careers previously occupied by men.

By Isabelle Y12

A picture of the RRS Sir David Attenborough at Cammell Laird Sept 2019



Micro-Age Project presented by Dr Kai Hoettges

Dr Kai Hoettges is an engineer and lecturer at the University of Liverpool, who works with the European Space Agency. The Micro-Age team is attempting to understand why the biochemistry of human muscle

tissue changes over time. Muscles deteriorate as we grow old but at such a slow rate that it makes it difficult to observe. However, in space, microgravity has a massive effect on muscle mass and function which makes it deteriorate at a much quicker rate. Therefore, tests that would take years and potentially decades on earth, can be carried out by astronauts in space in a matter of weeks.

The Micro-Age program uses tissue-engineered muscles and these are transported to the International Space Station where they are placed in a centrifuge and monitored so see:

- How they respond to stimuli (the electrical impulses used to 'exercise' the cells)
- Which proteins are made by the cells
- How well the muscles are exercising
- How inflamed the cells are

We also learnt about the challenges of transporting fragile objects into space. In order to keep the cells alive, they must be kept at a constant temperature of 27°C, supplied with enough oxygen and be in constructs that can withstand the forces of lift-off. These problems were resolved in a variety of different ways, using a variety of different science disciplines.

The latest study, Microage II, is due to be launched in 2025, and research will be conducted into how mitochondria regulate muscle mass. This is because in elderly people, networks of mitochondria in muscles break down. The project will be using a more complicated 'exercise regime' on the cells, and increasing the amount of tension felt on the muscles to see if this reduces muscle loss.

Overall, Dr Hoettges' talk showed to us how different parts of biology, chemistry and physics all come together to complete large collaborative projects.

By Bethany and Morwenna Y12



Would you like to help?

If you have a scientific career and would be interested in speaking to our students about your role, then please get in touch via email (for the attention of Emma Chadwick, Head of Science Faculty). We would love to hear from you!

UNILEVER Bright Futures Project

Since November last year, a team of five Year 9 students had been involved with the Unilever Bright Future competition. They attended a workshop that explored the five functions of Research & Development at Unilever Port Sunlight, and students were tasked to design their own product that met one of the business challenges set by Unilever staff. In March, they showcased their final product concepts, presenting to teams of expert judges on their formulation, packaging, sustainability and technical claims.

Our students designed a hair perfume in vanilla-rose scent that helps consumers' hair stay hydrated with a clean shine finish throughout the day. The packaging was made with recycled glass instead of plastic as their sustainability goal and a bamboo lid which has antibacterial properties, keeping their natural scents stay fresh for longer. The students presented their idea to groups of Unilever judges and answered questions about the health and safety of their product. They also discussed profits and scaling up if their business would potentially grow bigger. The judges gave positive feedback that will help the group turn their idea into reality and start taking their first steps as entrepreneurs of the future.



We are recruiting teams for next year's Unilever Bright Future competition from year 8 & 9 students.

School Newsletter

Easter 2025



We are looking for committed, innovative students with an eye for design so if you would like to be considered for this challenging yet fun and exciting project, please pass your name to Mrs Halpin. More details will be coming out October 2025.

History Update



Our History department led a group of forty year 10 students to Poland from 29-31 March 2025. After a rather 'challenging' start to our visit at Manchester airport, we embarked on a great experience for all involved where we toured Krakow, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Schindler's Museum and Wieliczka salt mine (UNESCO world heritage site). We also sampled the Polish culture, music, dance and cuisine which was interesting at times!



Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp



Our group in Wieliczka Salt Mine.



Wavel Castle

We were entertained with Polish folk music and dance on our last night. Some of our students and staff were even encouraged to join in!



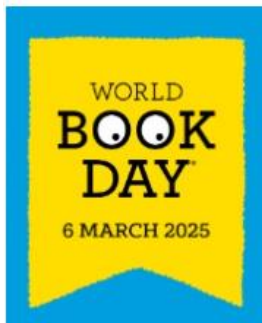


Homeward bound on the last day (Monday 31 March 2025)

Library News

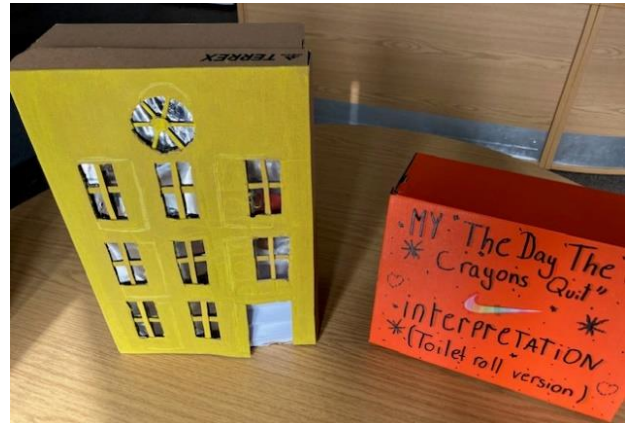
National Holocaust Memorial Day (27.01.25) marked the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the 30th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia. In collaboration with the History department, historical novels and biographies dealing with the Jewish experience under the Nazis in various countries were promoted in the library for a fortnight. During the day, lessons started with short extracts of Sabina Kadić-Mackenzie's life story. Sabina is a survivor of the Bosnian genocide, now living in Scotland. To support the day's theme, "For a Better Future," pupils were encouraged to start with kindness and to remember our FCJ values to guide us in acting against instances of 'othering', rather than standing by or joining in when witnessing instances of bullying.

World Book Day



For World Book Day 2025 we celebrated with several events around school. There is an on-going staff book

exchange and throughout the day lessons started with short extracts of Guy de Maupassant's "The Vendetta" as part of 'Story in a Day'. Key stage three students entered our two competitions: a photographic one, 'Guess the teacher reading this title' and modelling a toilet roll into a character from a favourite book for 'Crafty Characters'.



A sample of entries from our finalists and the overall winner, with an amazing scene of Paddington in a bathroom overflowing with bubbles by Kate S in 8C.

Entries were so good that it was truly hard for the two judges to narrow down the winners and so had to add several commendation awards. Thank you to all students who entered in celebration of world book day and congratulations to the winning students.

Poetry by Heart



This

competition began in October at class level and then at year group level with a school finals performance in the chapel where the judging panel of staff and English Literature A level students had to make that tough decision to put through Ava (8H), Lauren (8S) and Bethan (8J) to the national final. The pupils have worked hard this half term to learn new poems by heart and consider the best way to bring drama to their performances which have now been filmed and entered for the national finals in London. Thank you to our three finalists for their thoughtfulness in teasing out the meaning of their chosen poems, to Mrs James for expert advice and to Mr Murphy for invaluable technical assistance. Congratulations everyone for getting this far.

Reading Engagement

Year 7 - Earth House win the Reading Engagement House Cup. Congratulations to 7S students for their incredible efforts in reading for the second term running! They collected 593 reading engagement points. In 2nd place: Fire (7C) with 278 points, in joint 3rd place are: Air (7J) and Aether (7U) with 222 points and in 4th place: Water (7H) 121 points.
Year 8 – Air House win the Reading Engagement House Cup Congratulations to 8J students for their incredible efforts in reading again for the second term running. They collected 539 reading engagement points. In 2nd place: Fire (8C) with 460 points, in 3rd place: Water (8H) with 255 points, in 4th place Aether (8U) with 148 points and in 5th place: Water (8S) with 139 points.

Individual prizes were also awarded to students in each house who have gone above and beyond in their reading efforts this term. Congratulations to everyone. All reading engagement points have been reset and students can start to collect achievement points towards the trophy and individual prizes for the Summer term.

Carnegie Shortlist

2024 winner, Joseph Coelho with verse novel, 'The Boy Lost in a Maze'



The Yoto Carnegie Medal is one of the UK's longest running and best-loved children's book awards, recognising outstanding reading experiences created through writing in books for children and young people. The roll-call of past winners includes: Terry Pratchett, Philip Pullman, Ruta Sepetys, Elizabeth Acevedo along with local authors Shirley Hughes and Berlie Doherty who also gives her name to our library as an FCJ alumna. The Medals are awarded annually with longlists announced in February, shortlists in March and the winners announced at a ceremony in June. Books shortlisted for the Yoto Carnegie Medal are sure to offer great writing and a story unlike any other seen by the judges. All books from the shortlist are available in the library.



Promotions

Regular themed promotions bring books to the attention of our pupils and earn readers Achievement Points. Themes this term have included

School Newsletter

Easter 2025



anti-bullying, poetry, Irish authors, friendship, familial and romantic love, science fiction, women in science, comedy and empathy. Currently our theme is Muslim authors in honour of Eid Al-Fitr which some of our families celebrated at the weekend.



Donating books to our library

Thank you so much to pupils and families who have donated books to the library.



If you or someone else you know would like to help our school library, please consider looking at our wishlist with Lingham's Booksellers in Heswall. Books purchased here will go directly to our school library for students to enjoy.

Upton Hall wishlist at Lingham's

We also welcome any donations of books that have been published in the last 5 years.

Geography Department Adventures in the Spring Term

It has been a very busy but productive term and we are very pleased with the efforts and array of success our pupils have achieved across the year groups, here are some of the highlights.

Year 8



The winners of the Year 8 Antarctica competition received their photographs of their posters in Antarctica. Please see photos of the various scientists and expeditioners in Antarctica displaying the amazing posters created by our Year 8 Geographers. We are very proud of our winner's achievement in this unique opportunity.

Year 10



Our GCSE Geographers went on their second fieldtrip to Chester in February.



They were investigating sustainability in Chester and collected data including environmental surveys, mood maps, re photography, sketches and participant surveys. Here are some photographs of their day.



We were very impressed with their efforts, behaviour and participation on each trip, they were impeccably behaved and again received many positive comments from the public on how polite, respectful and enthusiastic they were.

Geography Ambassadors and Eco Club

We have a number of pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4 who have kindly volunteered to become Ambassadors of Geography. They are going to be introducing some events and competitions in the summer term so please look out for them. They have been assisting the Department with various tasks this term but the most significant is Eco Club and running the Geography Departments Instagram page.



Madelyn. Mc and Lucy P. members of the Senior Pupil Leadership Team, have been organising and running Eco club for the past year. They meet fortnightly with pupils from other year groups and have been educating and campaigning on a number of key environmental issues. Some of the many initiatives they have led on include:

1. Ocean's Project and the protection of coral reefs.
2. Created information and power points for the school on the importance of recycling, including the new food waste laws. They have begun the plastic recycling campaign with the boxes for collecting used bottle tops in each classroom.
3. The rearing and release of butterflies into the school orchard last Autumn. This is stewardship in action with increasing the biodiversity of the school grounds. They also prepared and delivered an assembly on the importance of this project to the whole school.

As Maddie and Isabel are now preparing for their A level examinations, they are now sadly saying goodbye to Eco Club and passing on a fantastic legacy to our new leaders. We wish them every success in their exams and future endeavours and also want to say a huge 'Thank you!' for all of their wonderful efforts, commitment and humanitarian and conservation impacts.

We would like to introduce our new Leaders of Eco Club Arianna, Morwenna, Sadie, Tara, Lexie, Niamh, Annabelle, Molly, Ava, Lizzie, Ella and Milly and wish them a successful year too.



They will announce the date and time for meetings in the summer term. If any pupil is interested in joining, please speak to Miss Clare.

Future Adventures

We have a number of exciting fieldtrips coming up in the summer term. You will be receiving a letter shortly after the easter holidays about the relevant trip for each year group, but please keep these dates in mind.

Year 7- Geography and Art fieldtrips to Liverpool- Tuesday 3rd June or Wednesday 4th June

Year 8- Geography fieldtrip to Bounce Below Monday 9th or Friday 13th June.

Opted GCSE and A 'level Geographers- Residential fieldtrip to Iceland - 11th-15th July

We would like to wish all of our geographers a very Happy Easter, especially those who are preparing for their external examinations. We want to wish our GCSE and A 'Level Geographers all the luck in the world in their revision and exams!

Pilot Visit

This week we were visited by Captain Emma Henderson MBE. Emma talked to multiple year groups as well as doing smaller sessions with pupils interested in becoming pilots. Emma is an inspirational speaker who featured in the documentary series Easyjet – Into the Cockpit. During the pandemic she founded a charity whereby cabin crew who were grounded offered their support to NHS staff. This mobilisation of 6300 staff gained Emma an MBE in 2023. Emma's message to pupils was to stay positive in the face of adversity, accept



there will be obstacles to navigate and do their best with courage and confidence. Anyone would have thought she had received an FCJ education herself.

New Food Waste Regulations – what this means for Upton

Under the Simpler Recycling Scheme, from 1 April 2025, businesses in England with 10 full time employees or more, schools, hospitals and other 'non-household municipal premises' must have separate collections for food waste and dry recyclable materials including paper, card, metals, plastics and glass.

This means that we have had to reconsider how our Dining Room operates and look at introducing 3 sittings at lunchtime to facilitate the smooth introduction of this regulation. Those pupils who bring packed lunches will also need to adhere to the allocated time for their year group. Pupils need to ensure that only food waste is placed in the food waste bins and all other non-edible products are placed in the recycling bins.

Pupils will not be allowed to eat anywhere other than in the Dining Room unless they bring in their own container and take it home each evening to be washed. Takeaway cups and boxes will no longer be available.

Given that the fines for failing to follow these regulations are significant, I am sure parents will support the school in the implementation of this new way of waste disposal.



Lockdown procedure

Earlier this term the whole school joined together for an assembly on Zoom to watch me give a presentation on how a lockdown would work in school. Although this topic can raise concern among pupils, it is really important they all know what procedure would be followed in the event of a lockdown. Lockdowns can be called for various reasons but the most obvious one and the one most publicised is in the event we had an intruder on site. As is always the case, Upton pupils listened calmly and sensibly and asked relevant questions. Last summer, as part of our ongoing plans to make the school as safe and secure as possible, a lot more CCTV was installed across the site. This is purely for the safety of pupils and staff and is only accessed to view if necessary. For more information about the lockdown procedure, please see the policy on the website.

Uniform

Summer Uniform - Year 7 and 8

From the start of the Summer term, the style of blouse worn as part of the school uniform for Year 7 and 8 pupils will change to a white short sleeved open necked blouse. This can be purchased from the online uniform shop.

Standards of uniform have been excellent at Upton this year and apart from the ongoing ageless battle of the rolling up of the skirt, Upton pupils always look *fabulous*. *Please can you remind your daughters that sports socks are not permitted as these have crept in recently.*

I should like to wish you and your families a very enjoyable holiday and an Easter filled with blessings.

Yours sincerely

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

Mrs Andrea Gaunt
HEADMISTRESS