

St Margaret's School Newsletter

Issue 57 11th February

Dear Parents,

'A Glimpse of Spring' - indeed it was. Last Friday's concert allowed us, the lucky audience, a glimpse of rising new talents, some accomplished ensembles, newly formed this year (two new quintets, two new duet partners), new instrumental solos (Tess Dibble on the piccolo). It was especially good to have so many girls in the audience supporting their friends' performances.

It was one of many highlights. Our Ten Tors' teams did another successful weekend's training last weekend. We are all very grateful to Mrs Harrison, Mr and Mrs Maxwell and the 'sweeps' for the support they give the girls.

Our CCF paraded for Woodard Schools' new Chief Executive, Major General Gordon. The General was in charge of the Gulf War and also served in the Balkans. Our relatively new cadets' drill, uniform and equipment had passed muster for this very distinguished visitor.

Major General Gordon was particularly impressed with the amount of development in the school within the last two years. At present, there is a smartening up of the Junior Play area; visitors to the PAC will also have noticed that (many thanks to the Uniform Shop's generosity last year) smart black backdrops have been made. These are particularly effective for tonight's A Level production, Brecht's xxxx. If you are interested in the German 'Theatre of the Absurd', you would be most welcome to watch this.

GCSE students will be rehearsing in school tomorrow for Blithe Spirit, for which tickets are on sale already. It is an extremely amusing play, and a total contrast to the Upper Sixth's choice!

The 'Bigger Splash' Art Day was almost twice as popular as last year and equally inspiring. My thanks, as ever, to Mr Scragg, Miss Shellard and Mrs McClune. Years 5 and 6 will be able to experience it on the afternoons of 26th February and 19th March. These will also be Open Afternoons, during which the families of both Prep and Pre-Prep pupils will be most welcome to visit. Full programmes will be sent to you soon. I am delighted to say that we have appointed our new Head of the Prep School. We will be doing a 'press release' soon. All I can say for now is that he is a very experienced head. All the candidates had to undergo a particularly rigorous selection procedure, including teaching a lesson: the pupils, incidentally, also voted his lesson the best of the five interviewed candidates' lessons.

We are hoping to do some additional fund-raising in the second half of term to continue the improvements in our Baring-to-Morford building. After the (substantial) structural strengthening of the far end (in July 2008), resulting in the vastly improved Sociology Room and the new, bright Room 37 (used mainly for English, at present), Modern Languages have been settling into the ground floor. We hope to link them more closely to the 'Chapel end' of the building by improving access into ICT (this will be the summer holiday's structural work). It will make the whole ground floor feel lighter and more spacious.

Various events are planned for the fund-raising: staff vs. girls' Netball has been mentioned . . . In particular, there will be the Auction of Promises on the night of Friday, 5th March. It is also rumoured that the term will end with a Talent Show. It is fitting that fund-raising should involve enormous fun!

Meanwhile, as the Pre-Prep celebrate Shrove Tuesday in advance with their Pancake Races, may I wish you, your children and all your families a very restful and refreshing half-term break.

Sheila Cooper
Headmistress



'enjoying excellence'



'A Glimpse of Spring' concert – February 5th 2010

What a wonderful way to herald the coming of Spring! This, the first concert of the new year, was a real triumph and the continually rising standard of performances, combined with the obvious pride and enjoyment girls have in contributing, continues to delight our full and appreciative audiences.

The concert opened with a dazzling performance of two very contrasting pieces sung by the Chamber Choir. The first, the anthem 'With a Voice of Singing' by Martin Shaw has become a firm favourite in the choir's repertoire and this was evident in the enthusiasm and energy with which they sang it. Their second piece, 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend' was their first attempt at the 'barbershop style' – the very difficult technique of unaccompanied close harmony, but their hard work in learning their parts paid off and it seemed to be a popular choice for the audience.

Louise Holton played a very delicate and reflective piano solo 'Octobre: Chant d'automne' by Tchaikovsky. Her sensitive touch and musical maturity were evident and the audience were spell-bound. Louise will perform this piece as part of her A level recital in March.

The other solo, 'Thoroughly Modern Millie' sung by Lucinda Howard, was a complete contrast. Lucinda conveyed her love of the Musical Theatre style with panache and flair. She should be congratulated on being invited for several auditions at Musical Theatre Schools for further study.

It was a real pleasure to hear some new instrumental combinations, such as Tessa Dibble (flute) and Lucy Norman-Walker (piano), and Charlotte Mackenzie and Lucy Norman-Walker (piano duet), playing two diverse and famous pieces. Both performances displayed impressive technical control and a high level of musicianship.

There was also an original piece, written for Flute Trio by Maya Connolly, as part of her GCSE Music coursework. An extended piece in rondo form, the piece employed a variety of compositional techniques and displayed attractive and effective flute writing.

Flute Cocktail undertook an ambitious piece called Espana Rhapsody, accompanied by Mr White on the bass clarinet. Directed energetically by Miss Highton, the difficulty and intricacies of the music was convincingly conveyed. Special congratulations to Tessa for keeping the piccolo in tune – an achievement indeed!

The Clarinet Quintet performed a tricky number, 'That's All' and it was a real pleasure to see and hear the group playing so sympathetically and delicately.

Another contrast was the Saxophone Quintet playing an arrangement of 'Our House' by Madness, which was spirited and persuasive.

Seraphim sang with their usual aplomb. First, they performed a beautiful arrangement of Mozart's sublime 'Ave Verum', followed by the popular 'Home' by Michael Buble. These are two songs which Seraphim will sing at a lunchtime concert in Glenorchy Church in Exmouth next week.

The other two choral items – 'Music of the Night' from Phantom of the Opera and two spirituals, 'Joshua' and 'O When the Saints', sung by the Senior and Middle School Choirs respectively, were lovely, compelling and familiar items, in the middle of and to finish the concert.

Again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my team of Visiting Music Teachers for their dedication and commitment to the girls and the Department, and all the staff at St Margaret's for their support and help in making events such as these such a success.

Mrs Mary Lowles

'A Glimpse of Spring'

This year's spring concert was brilliant and good fun to be a part of. Opening the show was the St Margaret's chamber choir with the powerful "With a voice of singing" followed by their first ever close harmony, barber shop number, the classic "Diamonds are a girl's best friend." The soloists of the concert were Louisa Holton on the piano playing "Chant d'automne," beautifully and Lucinda Howard, who sang the fabulous "Thoroughly Modern Millie," in preparation for her audition for drama school the very next day! Good luck Lucinda!

The ensemble groups all performed quite different genres of music, from the Saxophone Quintet's rendition of Madness' "Our House," to Flute Cocktail's complex Espana Rhapsody and the Clarinet's "That's all" arranged by Mr White. Lucy Norman-Walker played a famous Bach prelude as an accompaniment to the Gounod's lyrical Ave Maria played on the flute by Tessa Dibble.

Seraphim sang Mozart's Ave Verum followed by the more modern "Home" by Michael Bubl , both of which they will be singing at their coming up Exmouth lunchtime recital. Maya Connolly was St Margaret's very own composer on Friday night, and performed her GCSE composition with the help of Charlotte Smith and Julia Owen, a flute trio which she named, ".Summer Sailing"

Charlotte Mackenzie and Lucy Norman-Walker played the piano duet version of Greig's famous "Morning," from the Peer Gynt Suit, which was a brilliant opportunity to use the whole stretch of the keyboard of the grand piano! The second act started and finished with the senior choirs, starting with Senior who sang "Music of the Night," from The Phantom of the Opera. Closing the show was Middle School Choir, who finished with "Joshua" and "O when the saints." It was a fantastic musical evening, giving lots of the musical ensembles in the school a chance to shine with what they've been working on this term, with lots more to come in up and coming musical performances!

Lucy Norman-Walker



Mathletics

We have subscribed to the Mathletics' website now for just over a year and all of our students from Year one up to our sixth form mathematicians have access to the online games and exercises.

The Mathletics' live games provide mental maths practise and the exercises are perfect for consolidating each piece of work set in class.

Each student creates her own Mathlete and scores points for each correct answer. 1000 points in a week gains a Bronze certificate. Four Bronze certificates become a Silver Award. Five Silver certificates become a GOLD award. Girls who have already gained Gold Status are:

Molly Batchelor, Olivia Bletsoe, Christina Dunn, Phoebe Tremlett-Williams, Latifa Al-Lahow, Lucy Brice, Caitlin Rowcliffe, Melissa Carpenter, Charlotte Bolt, Rebecca Court, Shannon Darke, Bethan Davey, Charlotte Dinnis, Rachel Frost, Paige Gardner, Eleanor Geare, Stephanie Greed, Holly King, Flora Miller, Rachel Pooley, Emma Sinclair, Anna Whittingslow. Natasha Howes, Amy Prideaux, Charlotte Smith, Naomi Fuller.

There are five progressive levels in the 'Mathletics live' games that hone mental mathematics. The following results indicate the fastest in the school at each level

Questions per minute

Level 1 Alice Roberts 86, Charlotte Hocking 85, Charlotte Smith 82, Suzy Adams 82

Level 2 Alice Roberts 78, Charlotte Mackenzie 68, Phoebe Tremlett-Williams 67

Level 3 Flora Miller 68, Paige Gardner 67, Alice Roberts 67

Level 4 Flora Miller 45, Alice Roberts 42, Charlotte Mackenzie 38

Level 5 Alice Roberts 33, Charlotte Mackenzie 28, Flora Miller 27

Mathletics has a built-in parent centre - a free resource for parents that allows you to sign up to receive a free weekly email report on your child's progress.

Simply go to www.mathletics.co.uk/parent

Mr Farley, Mrs Searle and Mrs Tanner

Article about my environmental calculator presentation!

In ICT classes this term, we were asked to make up an environmental calculator. This included researching a LOOKUP function as we did not know anything about this. Once I had read about it, I wrote this explanation, although it is quite difficult to explain:

Your lookup function finds cells automatically in a spreadsheet and pulls out the information that you require. However, if you do not copy your lookup function correctly, it will not work so you have to be very careful! It is a really practical function and can save a lot of time. The LOOKUP function is one of the more powerful functions available in the Excel programme. Here is an example of a LOOKUP function:
= LOOKUP (G5,L5:L8,M5:M8)

Here is one of the questions that I included in my environmental calculator:

What temperature do you set your washing machine at?

40 or more – 10, 30 – 5, 20 – 2, 15 – 0

Altogether, I listed 12 questions and included lots of colour in my calculator. My presentation went well and I had my photo taken with it! I enjoyed this topic and I have learnt a lot from it. I have also learnt how to use Excel in a different way and now know what a lookup function is, does and also how helpful it is.

Victoria Boxall-Hunt

Young Writers 2009 Creative Writing Competition – Mini Sagas

Shortly before Christmas, the work of several St Margaret's pupils was entered for the Young Writers competition entitled Mini Sagas. The challenge was to create and complete a story in only fifty words. Recently we received the fantastic news that fifty of our girls' work "based on imagination, perception, expression and creative use of language." has been accepted for publication. Congratulations to everyone concerned! Below is a sample of some of the stories submitted by girls in Years 7, 8 and 9. We hope that you enjoy reading them as much as we enjoyed writing them.

Vivienne Kilbride Head of English

The Fishmonger by Charlotte Dixon, Year 7

Fishy breath wafts through the salty air. Millions of amber eyes stare at me like a haunting omen. A horrid man with splattered blood all over his hands, holding a shining, brutal blade boomed at me, "What do you want?" "Some salmon for my tea, please!" I screeched.

The Rollercoaster by Georgina Johns, Year 8

The white clouds were crowding in on her. She was paralysed with fear. Melissa couldn't move. As she swayed from side to side, the metal was crushing her ... Ahhhh! The colours were going round and round. She puffed and panted as the rollercoaster came to an end.

The Annual Run by Isobel Eggleton, Year 9

The man in red sat lazily on the beautiful golden sledge, his hands clasping the reins like pincers. He dropped a parcel down the long chimney and went on to the next house. Hot breath swirled around him and danced off into the night. "Go, Rudolph! Just 999 houses left."

No Way Out! by Amelia Newman, Year 7

I'm scared, horrified. I don't know where I am, it's dark. I ... I think I've fallen asleep, but definitely not here! Is it a dream or am I really alive? I try calling for help, but nobody answers. I try to wake myself up, but nothing happens. *Help, help me!*

The Dream by Amelia Knott, Year 8

Suddenly I was plunged into a dark blanket. I struggled to find a way out. I saw a bright light ahead of me, getting closer. I felt something rough on my cheek. Slowly, everything came back to me. My cat was licking my face. I was in my bedroom, sleeping.

Pursued by Rachel Pooley, Year 9

She risked looking over her shoulder, quickening as she saw her pursuer closing in. How could she have been so stupid? She had trusted him with her secrets, loved him when everyone had turned away. One secret too many was all it took. Now she was running for her life..

Junior Sports Report

On Monday, 1st February, the U11 A and B teams played Cathedral School. Although the A team made a promising start, they were up against a very well organised team who were fast around the court. The final score ended as a 12-5 win for Cathedral School. Henny Knott was Player of the Match.

The B team showed their prowess on the court with some very accurate passing and some good shooting, they won their match 5-1. Everyone played well but Izzy Knott received Player of the Match for her dominant play around the court. Well done to the B team!

On Thursday, 4th February, the U9 team visited Exeter School. The match was played in good spirits and everyone tried hard. Unfortunately, Exeter were too strong and won the match 11-2. Nina Savicevic was Player of the Match for her excellent marking.

Sports Report

6th Form Games: We try extremely hard in the PE department to cater for all the girls in the Sixth Form and offer a range of sports and activities in which every girl will find something of interest. By the Sixth Form the girls know whether they are a netballer or a hockey player – we want to make sure that every girl leaves St Margaret's having found a sport or activity that they enjoy and will take away with them and continue after school, be it Netball or Yoga. We try to offer sports that perhaps the girls have not yet experienced. We welcome suggestions and requests from the girls.

Rugby was one such sport that was requested by the girls. It continues to grow in the Sixth Form. The girls are starting to grasp the concepts behind the game and are starting to demonstrate some entertaining rugby. It is lovely to see some aggression and determination at St Margaret's – we still hear the odd scream and the odd complaint of a broken nail but I'd be concerned if we didn't!

Salsa has also been a hit with the Sixth Form. Mrs Hemming's lessons have been very popular and give the Sixth Form a taste of different activities that are out there to be experienced.

If you have a suggestion or can offer your expertise in a particular activity, we would be more than happy to hear from you.

Year 11s: Another suggestion from a pupil initiated the introduction of Self Defence in PE for Year 11s. The lessons have been very enjoyable but also extremely useful and thought provoking. I apologise to any Mums, Dads, Brothers who have had to be dummies as a result of these lessons. It is a fantastic addition to the Year 11 PE curriculum and one that I hope gives you more confidence in your daughter's ability to protect herself.

Year 10 and 11 are also doing trampolining currently which has been a huge success. The Year 10 GCSE set have done brilliantly well in such a short period of time.

Year 7 Netball: The Year 7 Netball teams played in a triangular tournament against Exeter School and St Peter's on Tuesday night. The A team had a good game against Exeter School ending in a 5-1 defeat. However this was a much better result than our previous game with Exeter. The same can be said for our game against St Peter's although we could not match them goal for goal, our performance and end result was better than our previous results against them. This is really encouraging.

The B team had a very close first game against St Peter's, we fought hard and managed to stay focused. Our recurring problem of rushing and panicking when we have the ball reared its ugly head again, and often lost us possession. The end score was 2-1 to St Peter's. All in all it was a very productive afternoon of Netball.



Biology Zoo Trip

Last Thursday Miss Collie's Lower Sixth Biology class went to Paignton Zoo to get information for our coursework visit reports. We left on the mini bus with Dr Marshall at 9.00am, and even though we were all dropping off on the way, we perked up when we saw the signs for the zoo. When we got there we went into the education centre where we had a talk from one of the zoo managers addressing each of our research topics. She gave us all information individually on the animals or topics we are studying (I'm doing the social groupings of meerkats), and we watched a powerpoint with video about the enrichments they give the animals to keep them from getting bored. Enrichments are things like food balls and piñatas which the animals have to work out before they can get the food, and it was surprising animals like porcupines liked to rip apart piñatas!



After that, we were allowed to wander round the zoo by ourselves, which was really fun as you can never get too old for looking at animals. The bush babies and the baby monkey were particularly cute, but my favourite area was the nocturnal animal area, as I love creepy animals. We met up again at 2.30pm and after a quick look round the shop left on the mini bus. It was a great day, and a nice change from normal lessons, and we all found out loads of useful information for our visit reports. Now we just have to write them up!

Laura King L6HE

E-safety and photo publicity

This week is INTERNET SAFETY WEEK. All children in the prep school from reception to year 6 have been learning how to be safe on the internet. The younger children were shown the film 'Lee and Kim's Magic Adventure' which you may have heard about this week from news items on the radio. We are creating an e-safety section on the website for you to browse and a sheet about e-safety for parents will be accompanying the newsletter.

This week we have been busy taking action in order to upgrade the security on our website. It has been brought to our notice that items from our newsletters and the Marguerite on our website are appearing under pupils' names when Googled. We have now put the 'noindex' meta tags on both the newsletter and Marguerite pages. This should stop the search engines listing contents of those pages although it may take a while to happen. All old newsletters have also been removed from the server. As a whole most of our website is quite generic with pictures of smiling girls and boys on our pages which are not linked to names.

As part of this upgrade of website security we have been checking on the responses that you have sent back about including your child in publicity photos. Some parents have asked to be notified first if a photo opportunity comes up for their child. I am afraid that there are occasions when this is just not possible so a notification response will be taken as a no publicity request. There are some of you who have not yet returned your permission slips regarding publicity photos. In these cases we will err on the cautious side and ensure that no photos are used of your named child in publicity documents

Dr Marshall

Lessons despite illness.

In true Dunkirk spirit, Sixth Form girls at St Margaret's were able to have their normal lessons this week even though their teacher could not make it into school due to a very painful shoulder. Video conferencing was set up so that U6 girls could have last minute revision for their Psychology module the next day. This worked so well that we tried it again the next day for the L6 Sociology class. Miss Rigby made a virtual appearance (courtesy of a webcam bought a few years ago with Tesco vouchers) and although she was in rather soft focus and an odd colour, the lesson went on as usual. Next week we will report back from the Prep School as they go international and make contact with one of the girls in Year 4 who has gone to live in Portugal and at the same time gather data for their Geography project on weather.

Dr Marshall

Prep, Pre-Prep and Nursery Open Afternoons

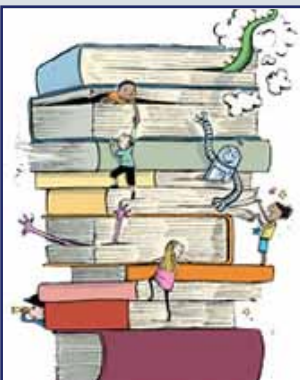
In your calendar you may have noticed that two Open Afternoons are to take place in the second half of term, one on Friday 26th February and another on Friday 19th March. On these occasions, we will be welcoming all parents, friends and relatives into the school, between 1.30 and 3.30pm, whilst lessons are taking place.

This is an opportunity to see our lively, stimulating environment at close hand.

WORLD MATHS DAY Wednesday 3 March ~ www.world-mathsday.com

The event runs for as long as it is Wednesday 3 March somewhere in the world – namely 48 hours. In the UK this means that the competition will run from Tuesday 2nd March at 11am until Thursday 4th March at 11am.

We intend that one Mathematics' lesson for each group will be spent in one of the school's ICT suites during this period of time. They will be accessing this website by answering questions correctly and trying to amass as many points as possible!



World Book Day – Thursday, 4th March

As part of our activities to celebrate World Book Day, the English Department will be holding a book exchange/swap. Girls are invited to bring in any books that they no longer want and, for 20p, they can swap their book for another of their choosing. If you have any books at home that you no longer want, please would you send them into school [they may be left in the Chapel] and help us to raise money for charity. Thank you.

Auction of Promises! Friday March 5th 7pm

Here are just a few of the 'promises' on offer in our auction but we need more!!

A Weekend at a holiday home in Porthowan, Cornwall for up to 8 people

Tea with the Lord Mayor with transport in the Mayoral Limousine

A day with an Express and Echo photographer

If there might be something that you feel you could offer or would be prepared to seek out from others as a 'promise' for the auction, please return the bottom section of the slip on your letter by **Monday 1st March**. Alternatively, you can simply attend the auction and join in the fun bidding for the promises on offer. Tickets will only be available until **Wednesday 3rd March**.

If you have lost your original letter please email: rtucker@stmargarets-school.co.uk.

James Davey Choral Masterclass 6th March

Participants will join James to work on some enjoyable repertoire in a range of styles and on aspects of vocal production and technique.

Years 3-6 10.15-11.15

Years 7-8 11.30 – 13.00

Years 9-13 14.00 - 16.00

All masterclasses will finish with a short performance to which parents are welcome. Further information from email: rtucker@stmargarets-school.co.uk.

