

# Hillcrest Highlights

Issue 2: August 2015



## From the Past to the Future:

### Celebrating 100 Years of Faith in Hillcrest Road

The Summer Term 2015 was a term of hard work, achievements and celebrations. The visit of H.E. Cardinal Vincent Nichols on 30th June was a highlight, not only of the Summer Term, but also of St Augustine's Priory's One Hundred Years of Faith on Hillcrest Road.

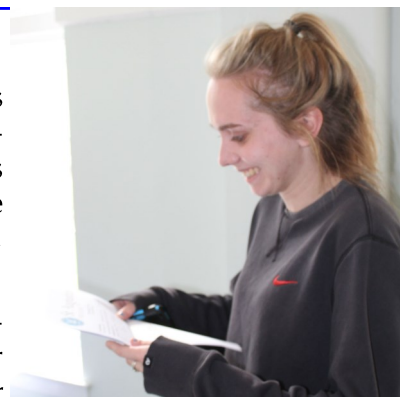
August brought great news from our A Level and GCSE students, congratulations to all those who are now going on to further education or A Level study.

We hope you enjoy reading about this and the events of the summer in Hillcrest Highlights. Read other Priory Posts either on the App or the website.

## A Level Results, 13th August 2015

With 100% pass rate at A Level, St Augustine's Priory celebrated the results of its A Level students. With a variety of university destinations including UCL and Warwick our students are heading off to study subjects such as Economics, Politics and History & Sociology.

In a climate where increased rigour has been introduced into the public examination system, our girls have done extremely well, thanks to their hard work and to the work of their teachers.



There have been individual successes at every level of the public examinations this year.

At AS Level there are outstanding results with a high number of A grades in subjects including Drama, Economics, History and Government & Politics. Several students have achieved 100% in their units in subjects such as

Mathematics, English Literature and Creative Writing.

In addition, in the Cambridge iGCSE results announced on 11th August our English Literature candidates achieved 89% grades A\* to B and for English Language achieved 100% grades A\* to C.

Congratulations to all our students, you deserve every success!



## GCSE Results, 20th August 2015

GCSE results day on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August proved that the girls of St Augustine's Priory consistently achieve phenomenal GCSE results. Last year, we were ranked the top performing school for GCSE results in Ealing (Source: DfE league tables, January 2015). This year, our results are the strongest since 2011. Nearly 30% of our GCSE grades are A\*s and As. A quarter of all grades are A\*s. The most commonly occurring grade in the cohort is A.



Our rising Sixth Form scholars, Aneae Rodriguez, Aliyah Ahmad and Simran Bal, excelled themselves, notching up 20 A\*s and 12 As between them. Equally impressive was Rebecca Ball with 9 A\*s and 3 As and Claudia Bergin with 6 A\*s and 3 As. We look forward to these talented and hardworking girls taking our Sixth Form from strength to strength in September.

Other achievements of note were Anna Szyszko who achieved a phenomenal 11 A\*s and 2 As, Emma Loffhagen who achieved an outstanding 11 A\*s, Marie Freely who achieved 8A\*s and 3As and Monica Hanna, who achieved 6 A\*s and 4 As.

Individual subjects had much to celebrate. Proving that single sex girls' schools deliver the top scientists, nearly three-quarters of our IGCSE triple scientists achieved A\* or A. 81% of triple science Biology entries were A\* or A and 77% of triple science Physics entries were A\* or A. 90% of Latin candidates achieved A\* or A and 100% of Music candidates achieved the same. Nearly 70% of French, History and Astronomy results were A\* or A. Over 60% of Triple Science Chemistry and Religious Studies entries scored A\* or A.



The Headteacher, Mrs Sarah Raffray commented:

"Last year our GCSE results were outstanding and ranked us best performing in Ealing; once again, our girls have attained record grades including in the more challenging IGCSE Science subjects as well as across the breadth of subjects, with the highest recurring mark across the entire cohort being A. As a small single sex girls' school we know we are uniquely able to give our pupils tailored academic support combined with the tools for building resilience to challenge, as these results suggest. As always, these excellent achievements reflect the hard work of staff and pupils. There have been many outstanding individual achievements but evidence of progress of each girl and that she has achieved her very best across a wide breadth of subjects remains the most rewarding aspect."

## First Holy Communion Celebration: Lower I's Joyous Mass

Our annual First Holy Communion celebration is always a lovely occasion. This year, Fr Fintan Crotty, SS.CC. from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Acton came to celebrate Mass for those who have recently received their First Holy Communion in an event that enables all the girls to rejoice together with their friends and families.



Lower I girls had prepared the Mass with the help of Mrs Round, Lower I Form Teacher, and the Junior School joined them in their commemoration. In addition, this

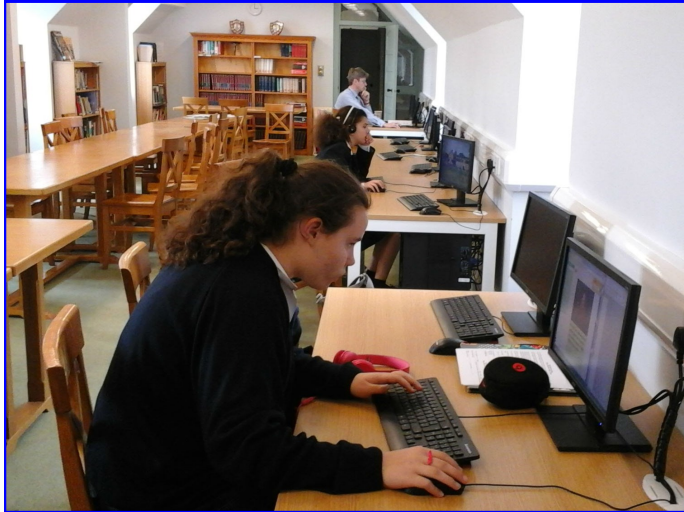
year the First Holy Communicants were joined at Mass by their Faith Friends, girls in the Senior school who had recently been Confirmed and who had invited the First Holy Communicants to their Confirmation Mass earlier in the term. They had travelled together in their journey of faith this year and it was fitting that the Faith Friends should be a part of this Mass. At the end of Mass all Lower I gathered in front of the altar to sing their anthem, Panis Angelicus, a moving end to a beautiful event. Parents and other family members also joined us in the Chapel and after Mass ended Lower I and their families and teachers gathered on the Chapel Terrace for refreshments and to enjoy the grounds before Lower I went back to lessons.



## New Study Spaces: Room for Research

St Augustine's Priory began the Summer Term with new study spaces created for our pupils. Over the Easter holidays a new designated Sixth Form study area was created which is situated next to the Scriptorium.

With new computers, a stimulating colour scheme and a glorious view southwards over the Thames valley, this provides an additional space in which our Sixth Form can work.



It is proving popular – members of the Sixth Form say that this is an ideal area for concentrating and focusing on their studies.

## A Stitch in Time:

### The tapestry continues

On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April our project to upholster the kneelers in the Chapel, 'A Stitch in Time', took another step forward. Pupils, parents and staff met in the Art Room under the watchful eye of Miss Eng to continue with our work designing the patterns to be embroidered and we were, as always, pleased to welcome new participants.



Wednesday evening saw tracing and drawing as our main activities, our inspiration being the designs and symbols distributed around the school in the plasterwork and stained glass.

On his visit on 30th June Cardinal Nichols saw the exhibition of 'A Stitch in Time' prepared for that evening's Summer Arts Evening.

*If you are interested in being a part of our 'A Stitch in Time' project, no skills are required as tuition and guidance will be given!*



## St George's Day: Prep I celebrates

On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April Prep I celebrated St George's Day in style. Not only is St George patron saint of one of our school houses and patron saint of England he is also, among other countries, patron saint of Georgia, Portugal and Serbia.

Prep I celebrated St George's Day by hearing his story and retelling it and Circle Time - talking about times when we have been brave like St George, eating strawberries and making St George's flags.



## Conservation in action: Upper VI visits the ZSL

On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March Upper VI Geography and Biology students visited London Zoo. Sruthi Pirabakaran, an Upper VI Biology student, reports on the visit:

'Just before the Easter holidays the Upper VI Biologists and Geographers had the opportunity to visit London Zoo with Miss Keep and Miss Pfannes-Varrow. We attended two educational talks; the first discussed the role that the Zoological Society of London plays in conservation, the second was about behaviour and intelligence among the animals in London Zoo.

We learnt about captive breeding programmes and explored the importance of ensuring animals are matched correctly, whilst maintaining animal welfare. We also learnt that the conservation that is carried out by ZSL is not only undertaken within zoos but in countries worldwide. As their website states, 'ZSL runs conservation programmes in Britain and over 50 countries worldwide; the conservation of wild animals and their natural habitats is fundamental to our mission. We work with local communities to conserve their environment and promote sustainability.'

One of our tasks was to arrange a list of animals in order of intelligence, this task proved to be harder than we thought and raised questions such as 'how do we measure intelligence?' and 'what is the definition of intelligence?' Animals at London Zoo are taught by associative learning which can be beneficial for vets who need to administer medicine to dangerous animals. It also has other benefits, for example, allowing birds to fly free from their enclosures to stretch their wings, as they have learnt to return to their enclosures when instructed. In between the talks we had the chance to observe animals that displayed various types of learning, innate and learned behaviour and observed how gorillas learn through socialising. Overall, it was an enjoyable and very instructive visit and has helped us to understand the importance of studying animal behaviour and also to appreciate the work that ZSL carries out to promote conservation.'



## Circus PaZaz comes to St Augustine's Priory

On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June the Junior school spent the morning at Circus PaZaz learning circus skills, among them plate spinning, juggling, stilt walking and the high wire – great for budding circus performers. On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June Circus PaZaz performed for pupils, parents, and members of the public. The circus was full of excitement, with Zaz the clown, Tillie Twist and her hula hoops, a strongman, and Aerial Anna who performed acrobatics in a large hoop high above our heads. In addition to the circus, the Parents' Committee also organised all the fun of the fair, including face-painting, bottle tombola, bouncy castle,



barbecue, music, balloons, an obstacle course and velcro golf. There was also a smoothie stall with crushed berry and oreo smoothies for sale, made by the girls. One audience member had this to say, 'What a fantastic summer afternoon. There was a great buzz throughout it all'. This was a wonderful family afternoon and our thanks go to all those who contributed to the success of the day, especially the St Augustine's Priory Parents' Committee who organised everything and worked so hard to bring it to fruition.



## Be Spirited Time: Nursery to Lower IV

On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April our Chapter Room and Chapel welcomed pupils from the Nursery to Lower IV and gave them the opportunity to 'Be Spirited'.

Prayer stations were laid out in both areas so that our pupils were able to savour different approaches to prayer and meditation.

For example, at one prayer station children were invited to try Bubble Prayers by thinking of anyone they knew who may be having a difficult time. They would then blow a bubble and say 'Jesus be with (and say the name of the person)'. They then watched silently as the bubble rose and vanished and were then still for a few moments.

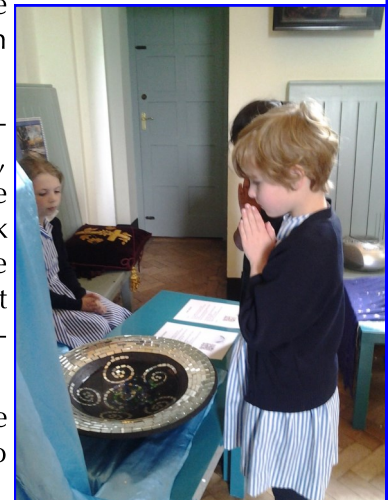


Praying with Creation was the focus of another station. Children were invited to be still and gaze at a flower, looking carefully at the colours, the shape, the stem and the petals. They then wrote a prayer or litany of praise for all that God has created. For example, praising God for the flowers and trees, for the rivers and streams or for the mountains and valleys. And then they were invited to be still.

A table with Scrabble tiles was provided for Words for God. Again, being still started and ended the prayer. Pupils were invited to think about what God is like for each one

of them and then they could make a word or words with the Scrabble tiles that described this. After that they looked at the words prayerfully for a few moments and prayed a short litany: God, you are..., God you are...

Using the methods illustrated at each station the children were able to explore and discover different aspects of faith and ways of approaching and listening to God.



Pebble prayers allowed the girls to hold a pebble and think about all those who bring warmth and love into their lives. As they dropped the pebble into the dish of water they could pray for all those people and as the ripples spread out, imagine God's love spreading out to everyone.



Holding a wooden cross and feeling the smoothness of the texture invited thank you prayers for all that Jesus has done for each one of us. Other stations invited praying with music, drawing hand prayers and praying for the world.

There was also God's Gift prayer station. There was a closed box at this station in which there was something very special and quite unique. The children spent time thinking about what could be inside this box, what could be that special?

On opening the box each child discovered a mirror.

How does each of us feel about being very special – about being God's gift?





## Exploring the River Chess: Upper II Geography Fieldtrip

On Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April Upper II went on a Geography fieldtrip to Amersham Field Centre. Here Mia Tobin, Upper IIA, reports on their visit.

'Last Friday Upper II travelled from school to the River Chess centre, where we met two FSC (Field Studies Council) teachers named Danni and Theresa. Danni and Theresa gave us a talk about the rules of the river plus what to expect on our tour. In the classroom we sang the 'water cycle song'.



Upper II then returned to the bus and travelled to Chesham Moor, where we sat on the river bank to draw a field sketch, measure the width and depth of the river and, finally, have fun with a cork by timing how quickly it travelled from one side of the bank to the other. All our results were recorded. We then left Chesham Moor and travelled to Scotsbridge Mill (which is further down the river than Chesham Moor which is close to the source of the River Chess). After lunch we repeated the same experiments we had completed earlier. So, we again drew a field sketch and measured the width and depth of the river. During class next week we will be reviewing all the results which will help to prepare us for our assessment!

The best part of the day was fishing in the River Chess. Many different species were found and placed in large trays for us to observe. We also rehearsed the songs from our forthcoming play "Honk" as we had earlier spotted two ducks and named them Ida and Drake. Upper II had a wonderful day; a huge thank you to Ms Keep, Mrs Tippen, Mrs Racadio and Mr Ferguson for organising the visit and accompanying us.'

## Duke of Edinburgh's Award: Sixth Form Expeditions

Billie Morrison, our Head Girl, writes about two recent Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award weekends.

'On the weekend of 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2015, five brave Augustinian girls and their incredible teachers went on an adventure and travelled into the vast unknown (aka Wales) on the journey of a lifetime (our training weekend)! After five and a half hours, and a lot of singing, we made it to the Gilwern Adventure Centre, Abergavenny. The following morning we were re-taught by our Assessor, Cath, how to read a map and take a bearing using a compass and other necessary skills for surviving in the wild, barren planes of southern Wales! We spent the first day readjusting to walking with our equipment and navigating a route and the second day followed a route planned out for us by Cath; cue much moaning and complaining as we walked the scenic valleys of Abergavenny and indulged in a few snowball fights! This practice weekend was a lot of fun and, although we were happy to return home to a shower and a hot meal not cooked in a pot, we waved goodbye to Wales with a sense of foreboding as we knew we were soon to return...



We returned to Gilwern on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March for our Practice Expedition— four days of hiking and three days of camping, including one night wild camp. We had planned our route beforehand and felt we were prepared for what lay ahead with enough food supplies that would definitely last us four months, let alone four days!! We set off on our walk as soon as we reached Wales and were delighted to find that Wales was welcoming us back with glorious, bright summer sunshine and... Oh wait, no – it was raining when we arrived and it started to hail two hours into our walk. It was good to be back!! We had four difficult days of walking and we expressed our discomfort with torrents of complaints whenever we met the teachers. We contended with sporadic hail storms, maps flying away, lakes going missing, sleeping bags getting wet, multiple breakdowns, tent pegs being forgotten at camp and getting lost! But I don't think we would change a thing! As Katarina Krneta said, "Despite being difficult, I am so glad I did it". Anna-Rose Poyntz said, "It brought our whole team closer together – we really looked after each other."



We would encourage anyone who wants an adventure to sign up for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. As Katarina put it "You don't know who you really are until you are soaked, hungry and crying but surrounded by friends who are holding a map above your head to keep you dry!"



## Poems from the Priory: Upper IV to Sixth Form Workshops

Our always successful Tom Warner poetry workshops are now in their third year. This year over twenty students from Upper IV to the Sixth Form have enjoyed and benefitted from these workshops run by the poet, Tom Warner. The students take part in blocks of five workshops and undertake a range of exercises designed to enable them to explore and develop as writers.



Tom Warner is one of Faber's New Poets and is widely published and highly regarded. His latest volume of poetry, *Yoga*, was shortlisted for the East Anglian Book Awards 2014.

As ever, our students have produced poetry of a very impressive standard and the final poems are now being put together for our third volume of 'Poems from the Priory' which, as with the previous two booklets, will be available to purchase – they are always much in demand, so make sure to buy a copy!

We are very grateful to Tom Warner and our English Department for yet again running these poetry workshops which are loved by the girls and enable them to mature as poets; and we look forward to enjoying yet another stimulating volume of poetry!

The 2015 volume of 'Poems from the Priory' is available now! Be sure to obtain your copy at a cost of £4.00 from the English Department.

## Religious Studies visit: Upper VI visit the Buddhist Vihara



Here is a report from the recent visit of Upper VI to the London Buddhist Vihara, a centre for Theravada Buddhism. Founded in 1926 by Anagarika Dharmapala, the Vihara was the first Buddhist monastery to be established outside the continent of Asia.

'On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April we visited the London Buddhist Vihara in Chiswick. This helped us in our preparation for our upcoming Religious Studies examinations. We were met by Venerable Ari, a Buddhist monk from the Vihara. He took us into the shrine room where he showed us the statues of the Buddha and the candles, flowers and incense which are used in daily prayers and worship.

Venerable Ari showed us the small cutting of the Bodhi tree that the Buddha sat under when he achieved Enlightenment. We learnt that the tree was a banyan tree and that any tree can become a Bo tree if someone sitting under it becomes Enlightened. We also learnt about Vesak Day and Dharma Day, the major festivals celebrated by Buddhists. They both show how the original religious experience of the Buddha informs religious practice and behaviour today, a great example for us to refer to in our synoptic paper!

Venerable Ari then explained to us the rituals surrounding death in Buddhism. He showed us the white cloth that the family give to the monks which symbolises the passing on of merits to the deceased, this ensures their happiness in the next life. He also explained that the family gathers together after three days and ninety days after the death of a family member to undertake charitable work, which again passes on good merits to the deceased. This helped us to understand the concept of karma and the cycle of birth, death and re-birth for our unit on Body, Soul & Personal Identity.

Our visit ended in the Vihara's kitchen, where we enjoyed tea, biscuits and swiss roll with Venerable Ari. We would like to thank the monks of the Vihara for their kindness, hospitality and generosity in welcoming us into their home and Mrs McDermott for organising the visit.

## Open Day: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2015: Memories of a superb day

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May saw our Open Day where, over two sessions, morning and afternoon, there was the opportunity for us to meet prospective parents and for our visitors to see around the school, enjoy refreshments in the café, meet pupils and teachers and discover all we have to offer. Many of our pupils were on hand to assist with the activities, including acting as tour guides, where they did a superb job welcoming parents and children and taking them on a voyage of discovery around the school and grounds. Staff and pupils had prepared subject areas for visitors to explore with exciting activities abounding! After touring the school our guests gathered in the Chapel to be welcomed by Mrs Raffray, the Headteacher, see a film about the school and hear some short talks by members of staff.



The highlight of this session was a speech from our new Head Girl, Billie Morrison, a summary of St Augustine's Priory and all that we are about:

'My name is Billie and I have recently been elected as Head Girl for my final year here at St Augustine's Priory. I hope you have enjoyed your tours and have enjoyed seeing the creative and unique learning environment and familial community that is our school. Parents, I could relay facts and statistics, quote the prospectus, try earnestly to persuade you that this is the place for your daughter to grow up in. However, from my own experience as a nervous 11 year old girl, I understand the vital importance of girls feeling comfortable and certain that this is the school they want to attend. Therefore, I hope you don't mind but I am going to address the girls here.

Hello all. It's really lovely to have so many of you here. Choosing a new school is scary. I'm sure you've all thought some of the following. What if everyone is smarter than me? What if the work is too hard? What if I don't get into the netball team or the orchestra? What if I don't make any friends? I remember feeling like that. It feels like the whole world is getting so big, so quickly and you don't know if you're ready for it yet. To be honest, on the brink of leaving for university, I still feel like that myself at times. But I am here to reassure you, you will make friends. The work will sometimes be hard but you can do it. You will get into the netball team.



No matter what school you go to, you will grow into beautiful, intelligent, strong women but at this school you will grow with a team of supportive, passionate teachers, a group of close friends, a support network amongst all year groups and, most importantly, you will have fun. That's what I think is most important anyway. That feeling of getting up in the morning and not thinking, "I have double Maths, French, History, Geography and Science. AAAAAH, it's so boring!! WHYYYY???" When I get up in the mornings I look forward to seeing my friends and my teachers and learning new things in an environment that I feel comfortable in.

When I was sitting where you are, I was really excited by this school. Excited by the prospect of "real science" with lab coats and test tubes and explosions! Excited by the beautiful grounds, the field, orchards and the meadow. Excited by the prospect of school trips around the world that you may have seen on your tours! I decided on that afternoon that this was the place for me. And six years later I have broken 14 test tubes, burnt the arm off a real lab coat, run around that field more times than I can count; I have seen the Northern Lights in Iceland, amphitheatres in Greece, performed in cathedrals in Malta and rolled down mountains in Wales. I love this school and, as I enter my last year, I am really very sad as I don't want my time here to end.

Recently, a Year 13 student asked me if I was the girl who used to sit alone on the bench under the Music Room window with my nose in a book. I was struck by how far I had come and how much I had grown over six years. The introverted girl who would spend most of her breaks in the library is a distant memory and I am certain the amazing care and familial community of St Augustine's has really helped in my emotional and personal development.'





Growing up, I was lucky enough to live close to the Science Museum and I will never tire of jumping the meridian line in Greenwich. There was clearly an interest in science before I had even acknowledged it. After unearthing a profound love of physics, I have enjoyed visiting the Royal Institute to attend lectures and am still hanging out (when I get the chance) at the Science Museum! This adoration of the subject was nurtured by the passionate teachers of St Augustine's and the fact that I am about to sit an extra Astronomy GCSE is down to their personal interests, passion and encouragement. When I was looking around schools my mum and I were often discouraged by the fact that the Food Tech departments were given pride of place above the science labs. St Augustine's was the only school that seemed genuinely excited about girls becoming scientists. I can, by

the way, make a mean carrot cake but I couldn't have learnt about Quantum Physics at home.

Hello again parents. I am really proud to be taking up the role of Head Girl in September. The competition for this role was fierce as so many of my peers feel passionately about this school and want to give back to the community that has supported and cared for us over the last six years and longer. In fact, one of my closest friends and now Deputy Head Girl said that she has "not blood, but St Augustine's tartan running through my veins".

I keep referencing the pastoral care at this school which, alongside the amazing teachers, is what I feel sets the school apart. As the sibling of a brother with a serious heart condition, this emotional support has really meant a lot to me, especially during Year 7 when my brother had a very serious operation. I recently discovered that my Form Mistress had consistently been in daily contact with my family and I realised that, although I was unaware at the time, I was in caring hands whilst at school during this difficult period.

Because of the closely knit nature of this school, the small class sizes and year groups with mentors and Form Tutors, all my teachers know me inside out. They know whether I am having a bad day just by the way I walk into the classroom. Staff here are always available with a listening ear, or maybe just taking five minutes out of their timetable to go through that piece of Maths or Russian homework you are struggling with. And every girl I've known at this school feels the same way.

The cohesion between year groups is most apparent when the whole school comes together for events such as Charities Week where the students try to raise as much money as possible for charity with various talent shows, cake sales and dressing up days. The bond between the Seniors, Juniors and Preps is a wonderful example of the school's ethos, "Freedom to Flourish". Free from the increasing demands of social media on young people, at St Augustine's we are given the opportunity to play, and my year group are often running around in the field with the younger years – most recently a massive game of bulldog with Year 6. We are given space to grow at our own pace. The older girls consciously look out for the younger ones, whether as class councillor, a Big Sister or whilst chatting with a lonely Year 7 (something I tend to do often as Year 7s frequently seem to wander around, looking a little bewildered for the first couple of months – well, I know I did!).

I studied 11 subjects at GCSE level, including a Music GCSE taught outside the timetable. We were allowed to choose four of our GCSEs alongside the compulsory core subjects and, as you probably have gathered, my bias was towards the sciences. However the choices were vast from Russian to Classical Studies to Astronomy. You will have seen for yourself the breadth of subjects available and many of my year group achieved above average results last year with most getting over 6 A or A\*s and two girls getting 10 A\*s each.

Now, I consider myself lucky to have had the privilege of growing up at St Augustine's Priory, in this academically stimulating and loving environment of which I can say I have loved every minute.'



## As You Like It: Form III Performs in the Open Air



In their English lessons Form IIIA and Form III Alpha have been studying Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' and on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May, under the direction of Mrs Raffray and Mrs Collins, they gave an open air performance of Acts III and IV on the Chapel Terrace. An outdoor setting for 'As You Like It' is ideal and, with the weather warm and sunny, our grounds were the perfect auditorium for the actors and audience.

In front of an audience of their peers and a panel of judges, Form IIIA performed

Act III while Form III Alpha presented Act IV. The roles were rotated among the girls who performed with panache, energy and enthusiasm.

After the performances both actors and audience retired for well-deserved cakes and ale (well, OK, juice and biscuits).

The judges withdrew to consider their verdicts which were as follows: congratulations to Form IIIA who won for their costumes, great memorisation and a wonderful sense of fun, and well done to Form III Alpha who won for their superb comic timing and their staging. So, move over the Minack Theatre and Regent's Park Open Air Theatre – St Augustine's Priory is the place to be for open air theatre!



## Collected Grimm Tales: Upper IV 's showpiece performance

Upper IV's production of 'Collected Grimm Tales' was a highlight of the Summer Term. Here, Heather Woodman, Upper IVA, reports on this unique production. 'On 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April Upper IVA and Alpha took it in turns to put on two amazing performances of Carol Ann Duffy's 'Collected Grimm Tales'. Everyone had great fun working together to put on the performances especially on the rehearsal weekend, where both classes came together as one for a whole weekend at school, supporting and giving each other help and advice.

Before we started rehearsals we were assigned our characters. As one of my characters was a duck, I began searching the internet for some fitting music to go with my dance. As I was searching I came across many different songs that I thought would fit the play perfectly. Two albums in particular caught my attention, 'Grimm Tales' by Nox Arcana and 'Magical Creatures' by Derek and Brandon Fiechter. That's when I began marking up my script, which soon became layered with an assortment of pencil markings and mismatched post-it notes. After discussing my ideas with Mrs Brown (who was in charge of the performances of both classes) and sending many an email to the composers of the music asking permission to use their works of art in our rather small scale, but extremely important production, I took it upon myself to find fitting music to enhance Upper IVA's performance.



Everything was coming together just as planned, the music fit perfectly just as Mrs Brown and myself had hoped, the acting was exquisite and the costumes... well the costumes just topped the whole thing off like the icing on a cake. During the rehearsal weekend everyone was really beginning to get a sense of what the night of the performance was going to be like. We all took ownership of our own lighting, staging and, of course, music. It was during this rehearsal weekend that Mrs Brown approached me and asked if I wouldn't mind doing the music for Upper IV Alpha as well, a task I gladly took on with open arms. Everyone put in as much effort as humanly possible to make the performances the best ones our year group would ever put on and by far the most memorable too. It was a thrilling experience and possibly our last taste of "true" freedom before we all get our heads down and stuck into our new GCSE timetable. The performances, determination of everyone involved and new memories will be something I'll never forget.'



## Our Summer of Fundraising

St Augustine's Priory featured prominently in the local and Catholic media recently with our outstanding fundraising achievements during the Summer Term 2015. In May, Lower IV held a bake sale for the Teenage Cancer Trust which culminated in a flash mob dance, raising £200 for this organisation which supports teenagers diagnosed with cancer. Then on 7th June, over 150 pupils, parents and staff took part in the 5k Cancer Research UK's Race for Life—a phenomenal community achievement which raised £5,471.37, well exceeding our target of £3,000. As Headteacher, Mrs



Raffray, commented, 'It is powerful that nearly a quarter of the school ran for such a great cause and the contribution of mothers, aunts and grandmothers sums up what a tremendous community we are'.

At 'The Color Run', also on 7th June, several Sixth Formers took part to raise funds for the NSPCC. This was also a 5k run and participants were covered in different colour paints at each kilometre, ending up rainbow coloured at the finish!



We also raised funds for Nepal, suffering from the terrible effects of a recent earthquake. These events commenced with a collection of clothes, organised by parents. Then, on 22nd May Lower V and staff climbed, ran up, ran down and ran around Horsenden Hill. The sum raised at this event was added to the amount raised

the week before with 'Building a Bridge to Nepal, an event which raised over £400 by girls and staff laying a line of £1.00 coins from one end of the cloisters to the other. This was also a Lower V initiative. As Aisha Toussaint said of the walk around Horsenden Hill, 'This may seem like something small, but just by doing small things we can all have an impact.'



## Sports Awards: An evening marking sporting prowess

On the evening of Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June the P.E. Department marked a year of sporting achievement. In front of an audience of parents, friends and staff our athletes and the sports they participate in at St Augustine's Priory were celebrated. Coming at the beginning of our Sports for All Week, a week filled to the brim with Senior, Junior and Nursery Sports Days we enjoyed an evening where not only achievements, but also the girls' contributions and progress throughout the year were applauded. Netball, hockey, swimming, cross-country running, tennis and athletics are some of the sports we enjoy at St Augustine's Priory and this was an evening to observe all we have achieved over the last academic year.

We were privileged to have as our guest speaker for the evening Hannah Mcleod, a member of the Team GB Bronze medal winning team at the London 2012 Olympic Games. She



spoke wittily and wisely about her life in hockey, emphasising to the girls that in the past, when she hasn't always been selected for teams, this has made her work even harder to be selected the next time! Following her speech she answered the many questions put to her by an eager audience.



We look forward to the next academic year when our ever-continuing sporting development will continue, led by our fantastic Sports Captains and the redoubtable PE team of Miss Lymburn, Miss Hales & Mrs Lindsay!



## One Hundred Years of Faith: H.E. Cardinal Vincent Nichols visits St Augustine's Priory

It was a glorious day. Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June saw St Augustine's Priory celebrate our One Hundred Years of Faith on our Hillcrest Road site with Mass celebrated by H.E. Cardinal Vincent Nichols with several priests from the nearby parishes concelebrating.



We were so pleased that His Eminence was able to join us on this happy occasion. On arrival he and his Private Secretary, Fr John O'Leary, were welcomed to St Augustine's Priory by Mrs Sarah Raffray, Headteacher, and Mrs Sue Kirby, Chair of Governors. After visiting our Chapel and the exhibit of our One Hundred Years of Faith project 'A Stitch in Time' to embroider kneelers for our Chapel, the Cardinal gathered with the concelebrating priests and deacon and processed into the grounds

where a marquee had been raised in which to celebrate Mass, our Chapel not being large enough to host such an assembly. The whole school was gathered in the marquee, with parents, staff, past pupils and staff, Governors and members of the local community ready to welcome the Cardinal, among them Mr Steve Pound MP.

After the entrance hymn four girls performed short monologues, snapshots from the past one hundred years; one girl represented 1915, the year the community of Canonesses Regular of the Lateran and their pupils moved into this newly-built convent and school, one represented 1945, one 1968 and one the present day. One Hundred Years of change, except for one thing, the Faith which has been at the heart of our community since its founding in 1634 and which brought the nuns to build their convent and school here.

The Cardinal celebrated Mass with great joy and warmth. He delivered a homily on the rock of faith and how we all should be clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness. He succeeded in personally addressing this to each individual present. All members of the St Augustine's Priory community who were present, from the youngest child in the Nursery to the oldest past pupil of 93, recognised the relevance of his words and knew that they were personally addressed to them.



The girls were present throughout the Mass, whether serving, reading, bringing up the Offertory gifts, playing music, singing or through their musical compositions. At the end of Mass girls performed a liturgical dance, a celebration of all they do at St Augustine's Priory, covering many of the subjects and activities here; but beginning with a genuflection, an offering of all that we do and are to God.

At the end of Mass Cardinal Nichols blessed the newly-renovated Prayer Garden, worked on by pupils of all ages and supported by our dedicated Parents' Committee and gardener, Mrs Molloy. We also have a beautiful mosaic marking our One Hundred Years of Faith, into which each pupil had laid a tile and was then completed by artist Mrs D'Sousa. This too was blessed, at which point a hundred blue and white balloons were released and flew high into the clear blue sky.

The events of Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June were a highlight of the life of St Augustine's Priory. A day to be remembered by all those who attended this beautiful Mass. We are all so glad that Cardinal Vincent Nichols was able to join us for this day, his presence was a great blessing for us and his warmth and generosity of spirit manifestly apparent.

