

NEWSLETTER – 30TH JUNE

MESSAGE FROM MR PHILLIPS, DEPUTY HEAD (PASTORAL)

Last Monday, I delivered my last assembly at Mount House School. I chose as my theme the importance of British values.

Every school in Britain has a duty to promote the core British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. Our British values are the absolute rejection of the misconception that in Britain, “anything goes”, the belief that there aren’t really any fundamental rules or expectations.



These values – such as regard for the rule of law, the acceptance of democracy, equality, free speech and respect for minorities – are supported by the overwhelming majority of the British people. They are the means by which we have made our multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious society a successful reality.

They are the values that unite us. Our values allow us all to enjoy our individual freedoms, to lead varied lives, to live in diverse communities and to do all of these things while still living peacefully, respectfully and happily among one another.

At the heart of our values is a simple concept. Everybody living in this country is equal and everybody is free to lead their lives as they see fit. We are free to practise any faith, follow any religious denomination, or ignore religion altogether. We are free to wear whatever clothes we choose. We are free to give our sons and daughters the best education possible. We are free to build our own churches, synagogues and mosques and worship freely. But in our society, there are responsibilities as well as rights. We have a responsibility to respect the rights of other people. And we have to respect not just this fundamental principle but the institutions and laws that make our freedom possible.

Most people in Britain accept and positively cherish this proposition. We choose to live here. Immigrants come to live here. Many millions of people around the world dream of building a life here precisely because we have a free society, diverse communities and pluralistic values. But unfortunately, there are those political and religious extremists who would seek to undermine or even destroy those values.

But the reality of our British values is far superior to anything those with extremist views have to offer. Where they seek to divide us, our values unite us. Where they seek to dictate,

lecture and limit opportunity, our values offer young people hope and the chance to succeed. The extremists have no vision for Britain that can sustain the dreams and ambitions of its people. Theirs is a negative, depressing and, in fact, absurd view of the world - and it is one we know that, in the end, we can expose and defeat.

Extremism is not something that can just be ignored. It cannot be wished away. It must be tackled head on. Because where extremism takes root the consequences are clear. Women's rights are eroded. There is discrimination on the basis of race and sexuality. There is no longer equal access to the labour market, to the law, or to wider society. Intolerance, hatred and bigotry become normalised. Trust is replaced by fear, fraternity by envy, and solidarity by division.

Some believe that promoting British values is somehow narrow-minded or nationalistic. But British values are open, inclusive and pluralistic. And we must promote them not just because we are proud of them, and because they form an important part of our identity. Our values haven't just sprung out of nowhere. They have evolved over centuries in response to our political, cultural, religious and intellectual history.

Those same values democracy, liberty and tolerance were defended with courage and determination in the Battle of Britain in 1940. RAF pilots were not only from Britain, but from around the world. Our ancient values were to be defended by Christians, atheists, Jews, Muslims and Hindus.

We believe in religious freedom because the alternative is conflict and bloodshed. We believe in democracy because the alternative leads to the arbitrary abuse of power. We believe in equality because the alternative is discrimination and suffering. We believe in our values because they make a for a fairer society.

In these days of change and trial, British values are the rock on which we stand. May we rise above divisions and embrace and defend our British values to create, literally, a more United Kingdom.



SCHOOL CONCERT

This year's concert was a smorgasbord of musical talent and celebration. All classes from years 7-9 demonstrated musical skills developed over the year, each class performing at least one song.

These were interspersed with a number of heartfelt solos, duets and virtuosic piano performances. Additionally, the legendary Phantoms opened and closed the show.

I am proud of all the performers and grateful for the support of parents and colleagues for helping to make this special event.

Mr Whitehouse



ST MARTHA’S REUNION: TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE

On Saturday 24th June, St Martha’s alumnae gathered in the Cedar Garden for a reunion tea party. Sister Cecile spoke about spreading happiness, smiling and doing good, adding her Thought for the Day: “be yourself.”



Maireed Campbell and Layla Bradbeer

“My friends and I really enjoyed our trip down memory lane and I feel privileged that the school still plays a big part in our lives today.”

Natalie Baynes





The school received a lovely letter and parcel from Sally Butler in Ellalong, New South Wales, Australia, with some St Martha's School magazines and other artefacts from the 1930s, when her mother Vera Williams was at the school.

The artefacts include programmes for a 'Tea Dance Display' in which Vera and 27 girls from the 'Convent of St Marthe, High Barnet' performed a Gypsy Dance, a walking competition (to be judged by popular vote) and a keep fit routine. The date of the display was 18th June 1938.

There was a certificate of merit for Miss Vera Williams for arithmetic, reading, composition, history, geography, drawing and needlework. This was awarded to Vera by the Rev. Mother Superior, Sister Genevieve Marie.

The school newsletters, which were from 1933 – 1939, are full of details about the activities of the school. These include plays, sports days, concerts and examinations, which traditions are still continued to this day. The St Martha's girls took trips to the Houses of Parliament and Vera herself wrote an article about the Debating Society.

But in the 1930s, the arrival of a new wireless set was mentioned, and there were adverts for 'Miss Mildred Ransom's Secretarial College' as well as a long article about nursing as a career. As St Martha's was a convent school, there were plenty of religious retreats, processions and services detailed in the newsletters.

In every newsletter there were many students' essays, stories and poems. One of our favourite poems was this one, which we can all relate to even (especially!) in 2023.

More photos from various newsletters are overleaf.

Thank you so much to Sally and her family for sending us these fascinating glimpses into the history of our school.

LINES TO A SCHOOLGIRL'S GUARDIAN ANGEL

O Guardian Angel, hear my plea,
 And grant the things I ask of thee,
 Thorough let my homework be,
 Let all my marks be over three.

Help me, please, to do my best,
 When we have a frequent test,
 From Art and Latin let me rest,
 For they are subjects I detest.

Instead of lessons we don't need,
 Let more gymnastics be decreed,
 O Angel, unto thee I plead,
 From all defaults let me be freed.

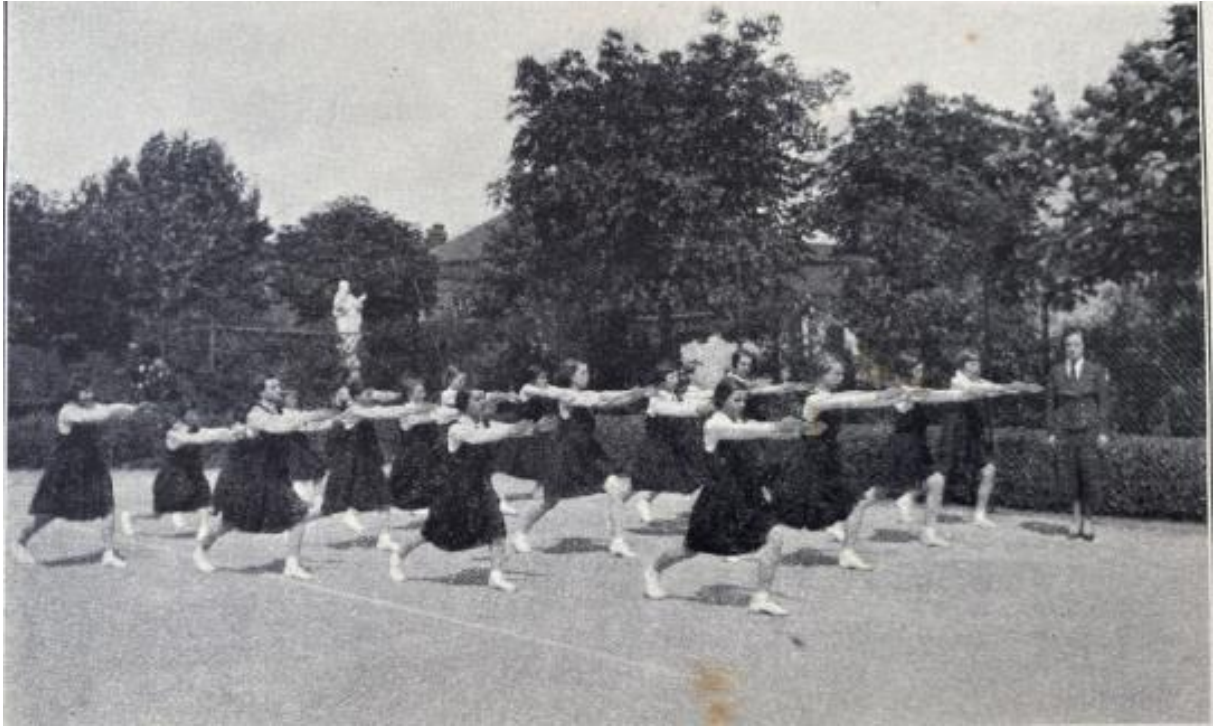
When wrestling with all my might,
 With sums when I do prep at night,
 Help me to get the figures right,
 My pages minus blotches quite.

Or, better still, please make a law
 Be passed, that we do prep, no more,
 Guide thou my pencil when I draw,
 Keep my belongings off the floor.

Exams. are not so far away,
 Be very near me then, I pray,
 And if the prospect's very grey,
 Of comfort send a tiny ray.

Norah Brogan (12 years).





In 1939, the newsletter reports that a new House System was inaugurated, and that, in the Inter-House netball competition, St Anthony's beat St George's and St Michael's so comprehensively that the two beaten Houses joined up to take on the victor – but they still didn't win.

Hockey was neglected that term due to the fierce rivalry on the netball court, but a heatwave in March meant that the school's students had a longer tennis season than usual.



ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE END OF TERM

Next week (Monday – Thursday) is Activities Week and the buses will leave at 16.15.

On Friday 7th July, students should arrive as normal at 8.20 and in full school uniform. From 10.30 – 12.00, Speech Day and prizegiving will be taking place in the hall.

Term ends at 12.00 and buses leave at 12.45.

