

# St. Martin's School

## Newsletter



Issue No. 35

### A FOND FAREWELL TO MRS. GRIFFITHS

by Mrs. J. Underwood, Head of English



Where do I begin? Is the question I had to ask myself as I started writing this farewell. As many staff and pupils are aware Mrs. Debbie Griffiths will be leaving us at the end of this term to begin

a new and exciting stage in her life. Mrs. Griffiths started at the school on 1st September 1996, as a fresh faced head of RE and has since made it her mission to support and inspire both staff and pupils with her relentless work ethic and kindness.

Her endless dedication and commitment to our school has been invaluable and she will be sorely missed by all who have had the absolute pleasure and privilege of working alongside her over the years. Who else would send emails at 4am on a Saturday morning?! Her dedication is such that she insists on returning until the end of the year to teach her pupils and ensure that their educational experience under her watch is complete. As always, this is over and above any expectations (typical Deb)!

Her sector leading work throughout her career at the school has been recognised in so many capacities and must be highly commended. Mrs. Griffiths has not only been Senior Assistant Head teacher and Head of RE, but is also an excellent teacher and an even better colleague and friend. Her assemblies are legendary and whoever takes on her many roles will have big shoes to fill, (including those in the dap cupboard).

And so it is with mixed emotions, that we bid a fond farewell to a wonderful and inspirational person and wish her much love, luck and happiness in her new role. Goodbye Mrs. Griffiths – we are all so sad to see you go.

### MINISTER FOR EDUCATION VISITS ST. MARTIN'S

by Mr. M. Yeoman, Deputy Headteacher



Photograph courtesy of South Wales Argus

Staff, Students and Governors were delighted to receive a visit from the Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis AM, on Monday 19th October, which included officially opening the new school library.

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### NEW AIMS FOR OUR SCHOOL

by Mr. L. Jarvis, Headteacher



What a busy term this has been for all school staff, students and no doubt yourselves.

This will be our last paper-based newsletter

as we modernise and become more environmentally friendly. We aim to ensure that all our events are viewed online through our new website which will be launched in the new year.

During my first term as Headmaster there have been a number of structural changes designed to ensure that the school runs more effectively. Each of these changes has

been taken after careful consideration of the impact upon the standards that we expect of our students.

St Martin's School is a school on the up and is improving at a rapid pace. The staff see this, as do the students and during the first half term so did ESTYN when they visited the school to undertake a monitoring visit.

*I thank you for your support this term and wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*



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## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ANIMATE...

by Mr. D. Latham, Head of Art



Above: Year 6 have a go at stop motion animation using iPads.

This year the art department has been working with year 6 pupils from our feeder primary schools. We have teamed up with Jeremy Roberts a professional Bafta nominated animator in order to work with small groups of pupils at St. Martin's School. Their task is to write, and draw their own storyboards with the project developing into the production of their own animation using stop motion and green screens. So far it has been a great success. We have recently worked with pupils from the Twyn School who have just finished filming their work and are now ready to add sound effects back in their own school. We look forward to seeing them all again in year 7!

Below: The Twyn Pupils with Mr Latham (Left) and Jeremy Roberts (Right). Also a special thanks to Julie the cleaner who's always there to pick up after us!



## HUW LEWIS AM VISITS ST. MARTIN'S

Continued...

During his visit, Mr Lewis opened the new school library which was funded through the School Challenge Cymru programme to support the development of literacy. The Minister was entertained by our School Choir who showcased two songs from the National Eisteddfod this summer which were highly commended. This was followed by a selection of students from across all years sharing both staff and students' feedback to learners which has been shared as a strength of the School.

Mr Lewis and Sylvia Jones (School Challenge Advisor) concluded the visit by meeting with Mr Jarvis and Mr Yeoman to explore the current issues in education and the progress in making St Martin's an outstanding school.



Photograph courtesy of South Wales Argus

## DIGITAL LITERACY AND COMPETENCY FOR ALL

by Mr. M. Lewis, Head of ICT

You may be aware of the forthcoming changes to the Curriculum in Wales, which will bring many exciting opportunities to all learners. From September 2016 one key element that will be implemented is "Digital Literacy & Competency", an evolution that is already taking place here at St. Martin's!

For a while now, many departments have been using Twitter as an effective tool in and outside of the classroom. We also have 120 iPads on site to facilitate teaching and learning, and since May 2015 we have been working with Aspire2be, the UK's fastest growing Ed

Tech team, who have brought many tried and tested ideas to the table for us to consider as we prepare for these important times ahead. As well as this, we also launched ShowMyHomework this November and have a brand new website coming in the New Year!

Over the coming academic year we will continue to build and develop the effective use of iPads & ICT in lessons, introduce a digital leaders group consisting of staff & pupils and extend the use of online and collaborative learning. We will hit the ground running this January with the launch of our school's digital mission statement and training for our learners and digital leaders.

We are incredibly eager and passionate about bringing St. Martin's School fully up to speed with the digital world we live in and equip our students with lifelong capabilities!

## ST. MARTIN'S STUDENTS AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS NUFFIELD PLACEMENTS

by Mrs. A. Whitcombe, Teacher of Science



Nuffield Research Placements are offered annually to only 1000 students across the UK. The placements give Year 12 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) students the opportunity to work alongside professional scientists to complete research projects.

This year, we were thrilled when 3 of our students were offered places at Cardiff University during the summer. Over the 6 weeks Elizabeth Edwards completed a project with Dr Magdalena Rychlowska entitled 'The social powers of emotion and facial expression.' Elizabeth said "The project gave me invaluable experience and boosted my confidence in my abilities." Megan Barrell completed her research project; "Reducing noise in the brick cutting industry" with Dr Michael Packianather at the Physics and Engineering Department, and Emer Hammond's project 'The effectiveness of cochlear implants' was completed with Dr Jacque Grange. Congratulations to all of you and thank you for representing the school so well.

## A ROARING SUCCESS

by Mr. D. Latham, Head of Art



This year's school and local schools winner for the Lions Club Peace poster competition was awarded to Imogen Hynes of year 8. Her lovely design has now gone forward to the next round in the national stages of the competition. Good luck to her!

The Peace poster has been a long running competition to promote the notion of peace and has finally come to an end after many years of hard work and dedication by staff and pupils at St Martin's along with the local Lions Club representative Mr Alan Trevors. The art department is sad to see the end of the competition and would like to say a big thank you to all who have taken part over the many years it has run. A special feature will appear soon on the Art department website.

## LET'S DANCE

Nicole Warr-Townley 8RJ (pictured right with her dance partner) has become a UK Latin dance finalist in the age group 12-16. What a fantastic achievement!

## SIXTH FORM CHARITY FUNDRAISING

This academic year, Sixth Form have endeavoured to raise money for various charity organisations through a range of events within St. Martin's School. So far they have raised £131 for Children in Need and have collected £90 in cake sales for Macmillan Cancer Support.



## CUTTING EDGE GENETICS

On the 20th November, St Martin's hosted a genetics road show for all the A-Level biologists in the Caerphilly basin. The road show, organised by Wales Gene Park, gave pupils an insight into genetic related courses and careers. The pupils also had the opportunity to put their questions to the experts. Rhian Morgan, from Wales Gene Park said:

*"The roadshow is to engage students with genetics and show them the high level of research that's going on in Wales."*

They listened to talks from Dr Meera Raja from Cardiff University, Dr Noha Mohamed from the European Cancer Stem Cell Research Institute and Dr Frank Holier also from Cardiff University, who researches the genetic history of polar bears. Head boy Joshua Walton said:

*"It was brilliant and will be really beneficial for university interviews. I really enjoyed the lecture on cancer stem cells. It's amazing that cutting edge research is taking place so close to home."*



## IT'S BEEN AN EXPLOSIVE WEEK IN SCIENCE!

by Mrs. L. Davies, Teacher of Science



The Science department celebrated Chemistry Week with Chemistry workshops being run during breaktimes, lunch and after school. Pupils had an opportunity to try first hand, experiments that were beyond the curriculum. The day was a huge success with over 50 pupils attending the workshops to have a go at bangs, fizzes and explosions.

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## THE FAMILY PROJECT GO RESIDENTIAL!

*by Mrs. J. Underwood, Head of English*

Earlier this month, I had the absolute pleasure of accompanying the very talented Mrs. Owen and Miss Talbot on a residential course that they had arranged for our wonderful pupils. The pupils went to The Holiday Inn, Cardiff where they were looked after amazingly by all staff involved. The purpose of the visit was for the pupils to complete a key qualification. Their commendable work ethic ensured

that they were focused and determined and we were all impressed by what each pupil managed to achieve. It wasn't all work, however. The pupils also went to an all you can eat buffet and did us proud there too! Not a morsel of food was wasted, except for the odd snail. The chocolate fountain was drained dry! They were then taken to watch a movie at the cinema, as a treat for working so hard. Mr B and Miss C also joined us and we all thoroughly enjoyed it. The pupils were an absolute credit to their families and the school and we feel privileged as a staff to have taken them. Well done all!

## PUPILS TAKE THE LEAD IN CLUSTER CROSS COUNTRY

*by Mrs. B. Griffiths, Head of PE*



This month, Miss Conway organised the annual cluster cross country at St Martin's school, with Cwrt Rawlin being the clear winners of the day. The year 11 BTEC class helped run the event as part of their BTEC planning and leading assignment. This saw them organising the equipment, scoring systems, warm up and a small football match for the primary school pupils. This was supported by Mrs Griffiths' leadership

academy, where Sam Hughes stole the show, establishing himself as a strong, dynamic leader. There will be further cluster events over the year, so keep an eye out.

## SIXTH FORM DEVELOP BUTTERFLY MINDS

*by Mr. C. Husband, Teacher of Art*



This term, our art students in year 12 and 13 have undertaken a special mural project in collaboration with the Butterfly Dementia Scheme and Ty Pentwyn Nursing Home. This is a professional brief that aims to work with people in care homes who are

suffering from Dementia and Alzheimer's. The mural consists of a collection of images based on the residents memories. In a recent visit, sixth form interviewed many of the residents to gain an insight into their memories and expectations. Following their research, the students then designed a series of murals based on these collective memories in anticipation of a large scale painting which will adorn the walls of the care home in Treorchy. It is hoped that the first Mural (based on seaside visits during the residents' childhood years) will be finished next term and bring much pleasure to staff and residents alike. Keep an eye out for our latest posts on the department website.

**Visit us at: [www.stmartinsartdepartment.wordpress.com](http://www.stmartinsartdepartment.wordpress.com)**



## THE "LAST POST"

*by Eiry Allender, Year 11*



Remembrance Sunday is always a busy and important time of year for me. This year, I had the opportunity to play the last post at four locations around Caerphilly including the new memorial at Caerphilly Golf Club. To be asked to play the last post is always a privilege. I feel it is really important to remember all the soldiers that have died for our country, along with their families and friends. It was an unforgettable experience, made even better by the sight of so many local Primary Schools attending. For me, this only proved that WW1 and WW2 will be remembered for generations.

## CHRISTMAS DINNER, A TOTAL SUCCESS



Wednesday 9th December was Christmas dinner day at St. Martin's and with Mr. Jarvis and Mr. Yeoman serving the droves of customers, the festivities were complete. We were also very fortunate to be joined by some of our parents, who had been invited by Mrs. Owen and Miss Talbot, as part of The Family Project, to come and have dinner with us. It was a wonderful event and thoroughly enjoyed by all! Huge thanks have to be given to the catering staff who provided us with the fabulous meal. We were truly spoilt!