

# S Augustine's RC High School



DECEMBER 2016 - NEWSLETTER

## NEWS FROM THE HEAD TEACHER

Dear Parent/Guardian

As we draw towards the end of another term I would like, once again, to thank you all for your support in so many aspects of school life. Your support is, of course, critical in ensuring that we can deliver the best possible outcomes for our young people.

It has been another very busy term for St Augustine's, especially as we are now in the season of Advent. The tree is up and lit and the RE Department are busy preparing our young people for the arrival of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We had a very successful Christmas Fair organised by St Augustine's High School Parent Council. Thanks to them and to all who supported us on the day.

Many of our S6 and a small number of S5 are busy completing university and college applications—we wish them every success with their applications and their future careers.

Finally as the season of Advent draws to a close, it is timely to think about the message of Peace and Hope that Christmas brings. Pope Francis' teachings: "We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and practice peace."

I wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year.

M McGee

Head Teacher

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@stahsnews

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL HAS UP TO DATE ADDRESS, TELEPHONE, EMAIL AND EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS FOR YOUR CHILD.  
THANK YOU.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thurs 22 Dec  
End of term service  
Non-uniform day

Mon 9 Jan  
In-service—staff only

Tues 10 Jan  
Pupils resume

Thurs 12 Jan  
Parent Council Meeting

Mon 16 Jan  
Senior phase prelims begin

Fri 27 Jan  
Senior phase prelims end

Thurs 9 Feb  
S2 Parents' Consultation  
& Information Evening  
3.50—6.20pm

Fri 10 Feb  
Non-uniform day  
End of term

Mon 13—Fri 17 February  
HOLIDAY

Mon 20 Feb  
All resume

Thurs 23 Feb  
Careers Information Evening  
7.00pm

Thurs 2 Mar  
S4 Parents' Consultation  
& Information Evening  
3.50-6.20pm

Thurs 16 Mar  
Parent Council Meeting

Fri 31 March  
Non-uniform day  
End of Term Service

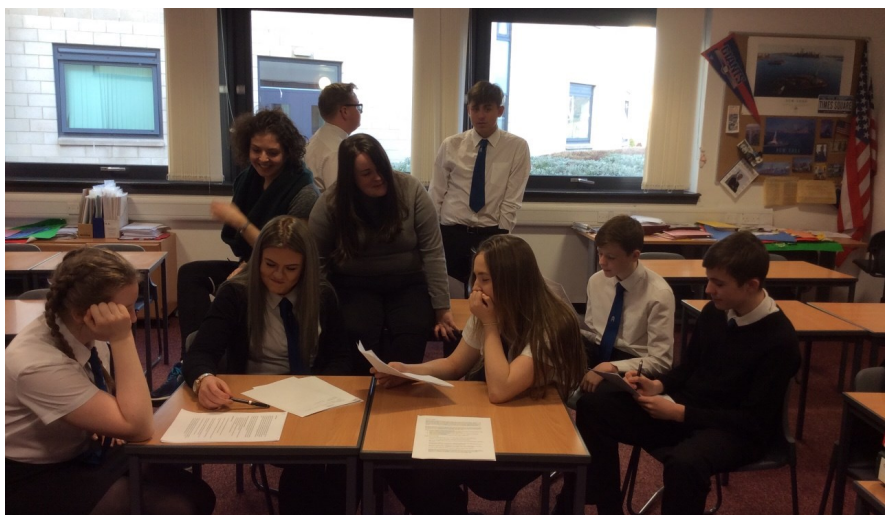
Easter Break  
Mon 3—Mon 17 April

Tues 18 April  
All resume



## Edinburgh MiniTrials

In October seven Modern Studies pupils took part in the Edinburgh MiniTrials event at Edinburgh Sheriff Court. The MiniTrials, held annually from 2003 and supported by the Faculty of Advocates, involves pupils from eight schools across Edinburgh and are an enjoyable way to learn about the Scottish legal system. Pupils took part in the reconstructions of two criminal jury trials, assuming the roles of the major participants – lawyers, court officials, witnesses and jurors. Pupils worked with a Procurator Fiscal and a Defence Solicitor prior to the trial to prepare their case. Bartek Bolesta, Ela Tomasz, Georgia McNally, Joyce Chakonda, Natalie White, Zara Mason and Miguel Chui all did an excellent job and managed to 'win' both of their cases."



Edinburgh University Law students working with S4 Modern Studies class on Streetlaw.

The class are currently preparing for a mock trial.



### St Augustine's "rocked" to the sound of *The Half Eight Rock Band* on Wed 23 November



The Half Eight, as well as getting pupils rocking and singing to popular songs, gave advice on how to stay safe online (never giving out personal information, never meeting strangers online, safety on social network sites, following rules of their parents on the internet etc) as well as discussing cyber bullying and where to go for help. They also discussed personal stories of young people who were so badly affected by bullying that they committed suicide. On top of this, they discussed the importance of treating each other fairly, why diversity should be celebrated, what to do if you're being discriminated against and why it is wrong to discriminate against other people. The talk is very interactive and the pupils engaged very well.

### Career Ready

As part of the Career Ready programme Miss Graham and Mrs Barry accompanied their year 1 and year 2 pupils to Standard Life as part of a workplace visit. The pupils were welcomed into the organisation where they were taken to the top floor of the building to enjoy not only a very inspiring and motivational talk from newly recruited school leavers but also the beautiful view of Edinburgh castle! A very successful afternoon! Well Done to all those involved.





### Wheely Windy Challenge

S1 pupils had a great time building and designing a wind powered vehicle to take on the Wheely Windy Challenge set by Heriot-Watt University. The Brightest Watts group from Heriot-Watt University were visiting the school to work with all of our S1 pupils on a series of workshops that included working on engineering and language skills. As well as these workshops they have also invited pupils to visit the University later in the year. More details and photos of these events will be posted on the school website and school twitter account in the coming year.



### Late Coming

It is important that pupils develop the good habit of being on time for classes. Regular late coming is unacceptable for a number of reasons:-

- It is unfair to pupils who have been on time as class lessons are seriously disrupted by constant late comers.
- All employer's references have a section for reporting on time keeping of pupils. This applies to all jobs, whether temporary, permanent or part time.
- It is a bad habit to develop and certainly does nothing to prepare our pupils for life after St Augustine's.



### School Uniform Policy



Parents are asked to co-operate with the school in encouraging the wearing of the school uniform. Wearing school uniform contributes to a positive school ethos and helps avoid discrimination and reduces peer pressure to wear expensive designer clothing.

- **Black tailored trousers or skirts of a suitable length**
- **White school shirt**
- **School Tie**
- **Sensible black school shoes**
- **Blue School Blazer with school badge (for years S5 & S6)**

A black v-neck cardigan or v-neck jumper will be acceptable over  
a white school shirt and school tie

Ties can be purchased from the School Office

**Jeans, joggers, leggings, jeggings, tracksuit bottoms, trainers and designer tops, caps and boots are not appropriate school wear (including ankle boots)**



## Commemoration and Remembrance at St Augustine's High School

Every year St Augustine's pupils participate in activities to support commemoration and remembrance. S5 and S6 pupils supported the Poppy Scotland Appeal by encouraging pupils to make a donation and wear a poppy. This was a great success and students from all year groups wore their poppies with respect. Emilia Fec, Sophia Paschall, Patrick Ferry and Blair Millward produced an informative power point presentation for Tutor Time classes. This included the importance of the poppy as our symbol of remembrance and information about William Duffy who died at the age of 19 in World War One and who is remembered on our school Roll of Honour. A poignant 2-minute silence was observed by the whole school community at 11am on 11<sup>th</sup> November. Furthermore, Sarah Coyne, Erin Sutherland and Sophia Paschall represented the school at the Corstorphine Service of Remembrance and Commemoration on 13/11/16. Sarah and Sophia laid a wreath on behalf of the school whilst Erin gave a speech to the audience focused on Scotland's contribution to WW2.



**From left to right:** Callum Murray 6D1, Ashley Hood 6A1, Kieran McNair 6M1, Sophia Paschall 5A1, Emilia Fec 5D1, Blair Millward 6A1, Sarah Coyne 5D1, Erin Sutherland 5D1, Murrion Wood 5D1, Holly Taylor 6D1, Alisha Chalmers 5M2.

## Free Schools Meal & Help with School Uniform

Some funding allocated to schools is based on pupils receiving Free School Meal entitlement. This allows us to provide extra support to our pupils. We do think a number of families who should be receiving this benefit are not currently claiming this support. This means they do not receive the help with meals but also means we do not receive all the additional funding we could.

**We would encourage you all to apply if you are entitled to do so (see below). Money for free meals is put automatically on to pupils Young Scot cards. The cards can be used to purchase food at lunchtime and a variety of hot and cold food is available. If your child does not have a Young Scot card, or has lost their card, the school office can issue a pin number and give details of how to get a new card. If you think you are entitled please do apply! Help with the form is available through your child's pupil support teacher.**

Assistance is also provided to children from low income families in the form of clothing vouchers which go towards buying school uniform. You can claim for free school meals and assistance with school wear for your children if you are receiving:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit, and your income is less than £16,105
- Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and your income is under £6,420
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit

If you are between 16 and 18 years old and receive any of these benefits in your own right, you can claim free school lunches for yourself. If you match these conditions and do not receive any element of Working Tax Credit you can also claim school wear vouchers. The form for applying can be collected from the school office and you can send the completed form and supporting evidence by post (address on the form) or by email to: [school.grants@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:school.grants@edinburgh.gov.uk)



## Battlefields Experience 2016

In June 2016, the St. Augustine's 9th Pals battalion set off on a school trip to the battlefields of World War 1. As we set off on a day's journey aboard a coach and over the English Channel to Belgium, it became evident that this would be a challenging and rewarding experience for everyone involved. What many students expected to be an average trip, turned into a hard-hitting and unforgettable insight into what life was like for those who fought 100 years ago.

After a long day's travel and a well-deserved rest, we visited our first stop on our battlefield's experience. At the aptly named Pool of Peace, we were told that the largest crater made from a 19 mine offensive by the British was in front of us, in the form of a large and peaceful pond. This was saddening and yet a sign of hope for many of us; what once was a war torn place where many men died, now stood a beautiful pond brimming with life. Another highlight of our first day was Sanctuary Wood, where we followed in the footsteps of soldiers and realised the horrific conditions and harsh reality of trench warfare. As a battalion we experienced the pungent smells and trudged through muddy puddles inside real trenches which gave us an immense sense of respect for the soldiers who dealt with this and much worse day in and day out.

On our second day we crossed the border into France and visited an array of war memorials, one of the stand out ones being the Canadian monument at Vimy Ridge. Many forget that not just British soldiers fought in the conflict, but also many countries from her Empire. This is where we learnt about the Canadian troops who worked alone for the very first time and captured important German territory. A striking white memorial was erected in its place to commemorate the important role that the Canadians had played.

On our final day we visited Essex Farm, where it is believed the poet John McCrae found his inspiration for the infamous poem "In Flanders Fields". Whilst at Essex Farm we also visited the grave of one of the youngest recorded soldier to die during WW1, at 15 years of age. Most of the students on the trip were 16 and older, which showed us the unforgiving nature of war, where boys who had barely lived had died. We visited many British cemeteries throughout the trip, each with uniform graves and beautifully kept grounds, however the most striking of them all was Tyne Cot Cemetery, where almost 12,000 men were laid to rest, with over 8,000 of them with unnamed graves. We concluded our final day at the Menin Gate Last Post Ceremony, where every night a ceremony takes place, honoring the missing whose names are inscribed onto the walls of the memorial. Many pipers, soldiers and ex-service men took part in the ceremony, whilst an audience of hundreds gathered to pay their respects. We then held a private ceremony with the 9th Pals Battalion, where we laid a wreath and heard a rendition of 'Amazing Grace' performed by some teachers and students alike. This was a great time for reflection of the entire trip and all that we had experienced in our short visit. Tears were definitely shed at this point as the reality of war hit us all.

Whilst on the trip, two of our students were able to visit their relatives' graves who had died in conflict. This proved to be very emotional for all of us involved as it put into perspective that all the grey headstones in each cemetery represented uncles, fathers and sons, who were just like us.

On the trip the students were encouraged to fill in a diary of what we experienced each day. Some of them summarised the trip as a whole:

"The trip was an emotional experience... I have now seen so many things that change the way I now look at the world"

"This trip has really brought to life the war and the lives of the soldiers. I have now a deeper understanding and I have had an amazing time"

"I thought I knew a lot about WW1 but now I know much much more... Hard hitting realisation going home when all these men never did."

It is important to thank Mercat Tours, in particularly Sandra our guide, who was a fountain of knowledge and really brought the trip to life for everyone involved. We would also like to thank Mrs Barry, Mrs Herbert, Mr Stobie, and last but not least Mrs Cochrane who was involved in every aspect of the trip from the planning stages to looking after us on the long journey home.

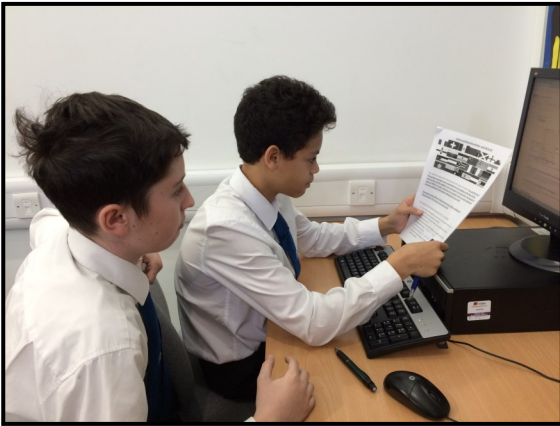
By Sarah Coyne & Erin Sutherland, 5D1





## Unity and Diversity at St Augustine's RC HS

The week beginning 28 November 2016, we celebrated the unity and diversity of St Augustine's RC HS. Staff across the curricular areas introduced a global theme to their lessons this week, including making Indian sweets and haggis pakora in Home Economics, researching different currencies in Maths and examining flags and identities in Support for Learning. Displays in the reception area and the theatre highlighted the diversity of the school, where more than 40 languages are spoken.



On Tuesday afternoon we held a marketplace event, where students were able to sample the cuisines of a range of countries, from Mexico to Greece to Poland, or try henna hand painting. Outside agencies such as Young Carers, Shakti, ELREC, SCORE Scotland and MCFB had information available at their stalls, while student groups Justice and Charity and TRUE Colours discussed world issues and how young people can make a difference.



### Unity and Diversity at St Augustine's RC HS

Wednesday's show 'Our Scotland', which was performed to the whole school, sent out a clear and positive message about the strength to be found in the diversity of our school and our country. Through a powerful narrative, delivered by S3 Drama students and others, the origins of the nation of Scotland were explored. The narrative was interspersed with music and dance from Gambia, China, Ireland and the Scottish Highlands, a poem from Poland, and of course, on St Andrew's Day, the audience arrived and left to the sound of the Scottish bagpipes.







Unity and Diversity at St Augustine's RC HS





### NEWS FROM THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Traditionally Christmas is the busiest season of the year in a Music Department and 2016 has been no different. The pupils have worked hard increasing numbers across the board in each of the groups.

- **The Windband** is growing in confidence
- **The Baroque Group** continues to attract good numbers and is a highly skilled group of performers who have recently performed at the prestigious Childline Concert in the Central Halls
- **The Choir** has grown to a very healthy number of singers from all years and some of the S3 students were singing in a newly formed Edinburgh Choir at the recent Fanfare Concert in Central Halls. Also in the Fanfare Concert, the school was represented by Gianni Pacitti our senior percussionist who played in the Edinburgh Schools Wind Ensemble.



Thank you to all our groups and many of our junior and senior musicians who performed very well in the recent Christmas Cabaret.

Our students regularly sit Associated Board Music exams and we have some 100% passes recently with merit. This is entirely due to the commitment of the Instrumental staff who are the backbone of this department.

### Auschwitz Visit

In November we began our project by attending an orientation seminar at which we were given information about what happened at many of the camps. Following this we were spoken to by a Holocaust survivor named Eva Clarke. Eva told us the incredible story of her family and how she was born in Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. Eva's mother had survived in numerous concentration camps, including Auschwitz while pregnant. Eva and her mother were the only surviving members of her family, 15 of whom were killed in Auschwitz Birkenau. Sometimes it is difficult for us to imagine the scale of the holocaust, but we both were able to relate to one person's personal story.

Around one week after the orientation seminar we visited Auschwitz. We began by visiting Auschwitz One, the work camp. The first part of the camp we saw was the gate with the words "Arbeit macht frei" which translates to "work sets you free". Unfortunately, this was not the case. We went into buildings in the camp which had been converted to show what the lives of the prisoners were like. We were then taken into a room, which on one side there was a huge pile of hair. This was one of the rooms which impacted us the most, seeing the huge pile of hair of innocent victims was extremely powerful. We were then taken into the possessions building. In this building we saw the shoes of many of the prisoners, including one shoe which stood out, the brightly coloured shoe of a young child. Following this we viewed items such as pots, pans and shoe polish, items people thought they would need in their new lives. People had no idea what was awaiting them in the camps.

After visiting Auschwitz One Concentration camp, we then visited the Birkenau concentration camp or also known as the 'Death camp'. When we first arrived at the camp, we recognised the long railway line heading up towards the entrance of the camp and the high arch watch towers. This was very symbolic as an estimated 1.2 million Jews, Gypsies, disabled people, Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexual men and women were taken along this railway, never to return. We were shown around massive wooden huts which were the prisoner's washrooms and toilets. These were simply holes in the ground and cold water taps where prisoners could visit twice a day with a maximum of 20 seconds to clean themselves. Those who were not thrown into gas chambers on arrival and chosen to work, were forced to work in tortuous conditions. As we experienced first hand, the weather in Poland is extremely cold and heading into minus degrees even in early November, this therefore made us think of those prisoners suffering in just a thin top and pair of trousers. Another thing which stuck out was the high barbed wire fences which surrounded the massive grounds of the camp showing it would be impossible to escape especially with watch towers spread across the camp in many directions. We finished our tour of the Birkenau Death camp with a service held by a Jewish Rabi where we lit candles and prayed for all those who perished there.

Our whole experience of the day had a massive impact on us, which we weren't expecting would hit us so greatly. For example it made us realise that we need to use the millions of deaths of innocent people as a lesson that nothing as devastating as this horrific mass murder can be repeated. We also agreed that the Rabi's speech during our service was very inspirational and taught us a lesson that stereotyping people and racism should never be condemned no matter how large a scale it is on. Overall, this experience was extremely hard hitting but an amazing opportunity which we are both grateful to have taken part in.

Zara Mason & Callum Murray



## Science at St Augustine's

On 24<sup>th</sup> November 20 students studying Higher Biology attended the National Museum of Scotland where they had part of their DNA profiled. The workshop was led by the University of Edinburgh and in the process students saw and used a variety of modern laboratory techniques such as DNA extraction, PCR, restriction enzyme digestion and gel electrophoresis. Students started by seeing if they could taste a bitter compound (phenotype) and noted how bitter it tasted to them. Then they started an investigation to see if their DNA (genotype) was related to how bitter they thought it was.



The students started by collecting samples of DNA from their cheek cells. The DNA was then extracted. They gained experience with apparatus such as micropipettes, PCR and gel electrophoresis allowing them to develop professional laboratory skills. Students compared their profiles to find out what gene they had and discovered whether there was a correlation between their genes and their taste receptors.

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December saw the final of the 4<sup>th</sup> annual "Today's Science; Tomorrow's Engineers" competition where S2 pupils showcased their solutions to engineering challenges regarding water. The winning group, consisting of Rachel Eadie, Sharon Solomon, Beulah Fofana and Holly Byrne, impressed the group of 13 judges of local Scientists and Engineers with their fog catching solution for increasing water supplies.



We were also joined by 40 teams of pupils from St Cuthbert's and St Joseph's Primary Schools. They were tasked with creating a concept that would improve the lives of people with disabilities. The winning group, consisting of Addison Reynolds, Anne Zheng and Erin Angod of St Cuthbert's Primary, designed a toy for children with Down's Syndrome to aid the development of feeling and understanding. The quality of many of the entries was excellent and the judges praised the ingenuity and communication skills of many of the pupils.

**Coming Soon-** On the evening of Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January we will host our first family STEM challenge. Look out for more information coming in the new year.



### Polish National Day

On Thursday, 10 November, St Augustine's held a Polish National Day of Independence event. This is the second consecutive year the school has held a commemoration. Through drama, music and words, the audience of more than 100 students and staff learned about Polish history and culture, and the origins of this special day.



### POLSKIE ŚWIĘTO NIEPODLEGŁOŚCI

W czwartek 10 listopada, szkoła św. Augustyna obchodziła Polski Dzień Niepodległości. To już drugi rok z rzędu obchodzimy ten dzień w naszej szkole. Poprzez muzykę, dramaturgię i słowa publiczność składająca się z ponad 100 uczniów i pracowników szkoły mogła dowiedzieć się wielu interesujących faktów na temat historii, kultury i pochodzenia tego szczególnego dla Polaków święta.

