



# Highdown Link

Term 1 2014/2015  
Volume 14 Issue 1

Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre Newsletter – keeping parents and the community informed

## Sixth Formers to Oxford



This summer saw Highdown Sixth Form students gain some outstanding results in their A-Level examinations. Two of our students, Anna Livesey and Zara Markovic-Obiago, were awarded places to study, at the University of Oxford.

Before they set off for Freshers Week, we were able to ask them a few quick questions. **Why did you choose to apply for Oxford?** Zara - "I had the idea of Oxford in the back of my mind but when I went to their summer school (UNIQ) for a week after my AS exams I became set on it. I enjoyed my time there so much and became sold on the University".

Anna - "I wanted the challenge of applying to such a prestigious University, although I did not think I would get in, I wanted to give it a go and test myself academically".



**What advice or support did your teachers give you?** Zara – "The Sixth Form staff helped me to make sure I was applying to the right schools by showing me books, leaflets, websites or booking a workshop on interviews for people applying for medicine". Anna - "All staff were really positive and encouraging about my decision. My English teachers in particular were very helpful, through every stage of the process, reading the many drafts of my personal statement, advising me for the admissions test, running a mock interview and then ensuring I got the grade I needed". **What are you most looking forward to?** Zara - "Despite seeming intimidating right now, I am looking forward to tutorials. The interviews were a similar format and even though they were stressful I found them stimulating so I am sure they will be great with less pressure". Anna - "It will be great studying the subject that I love in more depth and in such an intense intellectual environment. Although it is daunting thinking of having one to one sessions with leading academics". **What advice would you give to any student who is thinking of applying to Oxford?** Zara - "I would say that you need to love your subject. The work load is high but the pay off from a University like Oxford is amazing if you are truly passionate. As Oxford is so unique, go to an open day there before you apply to check it is the right vibe for you!" Anna - "The best advice I could give would be to go for it. It is very easy to convince yourself that you will not get in, or that Oxford is just for private schools, but the University is trying to increase its intake of state school students so, the more of us they have to consider, the better!

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## Highdown Careers Fair

**A Date for Your Diary - Tuesday 11 November 2014, 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.**

After many requests from students and parents we are planning our first Careers Fair at Highdown. The event is aimed at all students from Year 9 to Year 13 with parents invited too. Apprenticeship providers as well as higher and further education establishments are attending to ensure students get to see the many pathways they can aspire to. There will also be representatives from a wide range of organisations, from the NHS to Peter Brett Associates, who will be informing and inspiring our young people to help them plan for a successful future.

Careers@ 

## Sports Results

Well done to the Girls U14 football team who came second in a rotational league of twelve teams and were unbeaten in their games. The results of the matches were:-

Highdown 2 - 2 Prospect

Highdown 4 - 0 Reading Girls

Highdown 3 - 1 The Abbey

Highdown 3 - 0 Oakbank

Highdown 3 - 1 Bulmershe

Highdown Vs JMA - Highdown awarded the win as JMA forfeited game.

Goal scorers included: Freya Jenkins (top goal scorer with 7 goals), Leila Aljabar, Kyra Hannibal, Hannah Butcher and Chante Bynoe-Gittens. The following girls also went for Berkshire U15 Development Team Trials and were selected to be in the squad: - Leila Aljabar (Year 9), Chante Bynoe-Gittens (Year 9) and Jodie Hayden (Year 10). Huge congratulations to these girls!

## Senior Production

**SENIOR PRODUCTION**

**'US AND THEM'**

**IN THE MAIN HALL**

**TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW**

**HIGHDOWN SCHOOL**

**DECEMBER 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Highdown's Sixth Form Drama students will be performing in the Senior Production 'US and Them' on Monday 1 December and Tuesday 2 December 2014. The production will take place in the school hall starting at 7.30 p.m. Tickets will be on sale after half term from the Finance Office. Students £3.00. Adults £5.00. The Production explores the relationship between Britain and the USA over the last two centuries, at times comic but also thought provoking, the show exploits dance, drama, frozen images, live and recorded music, physical theatre. We hope you will support their efforts.



## BBC Berkshire Trip



In July 2014, the members of the Highdown School Radio team visited the BBC Radio Berkshire studios in Emmer Green. They were able to go into a professional recording studio and see how all the components of a radio show are put together by the presenters and producers. They also got to pretend they were being filmed reading a news bulletin in the TV studio where some local reports are recorded. The students were highly commended on their behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. The number of questions they asked was impressive! This visit has inspired them for their

own radio podcasts which they record and play in The Gallery at lunchtimes. Anyone wishing to attend radio club this year can sign up in the hall foyer and check the recording rota in radio room window.

## Author Visits

Not one but two high profile authors have visited Highdown in the last few weeks. Michelle Paver the award winning writer of the "Gods and Warriors" series came to speak to a packed hall of visiting students from Emmer Green Primary and Queen Anne's School as well as Highdown's Year 7 students. She described the immersive way she does the research for her books by; swimming with dolphins, climbing erupting volcanoes and being charged by a lioness. The latter will be included in one of her next exciting adventures set in Bronze Age times. Students were also fascinated to hear about the bush craft skills she has learnt and were able to examine the string she made from nettle stems. All skills that her hero Hylas needed to survive. Year 8 students were made to think about what makes a person an adult by the author Stewart Ross. Stewart came to talk about his dystopic novel, the Soterion Mission, which is set in a future where no one lives beyond their nineteenth birthday. This fast paced story explores a world where knowledge and culture have disappeared so allowing a violent and ruthless band called Zeds to thrive and threaten the Constants who try to keep up the ways of the "long dead".



## Year 7 Trip to Ufton Court



On Tuesday 7 October 2014, Year 7 were amazingly lucky to have blue sky and bright sunshine for their team building day at Ufton Court. The wind was chilly but the team building games kept them active and warm. In the morning they were in small groups of seven students, learning to work together. They were led in their activities by the staff from Ufton Court, leaving their tutors free to get to know them

better. The activities all included various levels of challenge and many needed different leadership skills to be successfully completed. The afternoon involved two tutor groups working together in different activities. This time it was important to listen and follow instructions or the activity failed, especially with the parachute. The students had a great day and worked well in their various teams. The tutors were all really supportive and helped the day to be so successful.



## Carnegie Shadowing

A group of dedicated readers have read, discussed, reviewed and voted for their favourite title on the Carnegie shortlist. All of the eight titles have been enjoyed by at least one member of the group but "Rooftoppers" was their favourite. To see more about the Carnegie Award go to [www.ckg.org.uk](http://www.ckg.org.uk) and in the shadowing pages you can see reviews by Highdown students. This year's winner was Kevin Brooks for "The Bunker Diary". On Tuesday 17 June 2014, thirteen Year 7 and 8 students visited the author Katherine Rundell as part of their Carnegie Shadowing at Theale Green school. Topics discussed included:- the most vital parts of a good story, her inspirations and her book "Rooftoppers", which had been shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal. Also, she demonstrated an example of how to begin a story using ideas from the audience. The name of the story was "Buy One Get One Dead". A few of the writing tips she shared were:- "start as close to the end as possible" and "do not always go with your first thoughts". Katherine also told them about her own personal writing experiences and said that she sometimes has to force herself to write by tying herself to her chair to get her work done. The visit was a great success and everyone enjoyed it. They enjoyed interacting with her and got a chance to get a book signed by her (which is available in the library). Although Katherine did not win the Carnegie Medal, she did a brilliant job and her book deserves to be appreciated. The Bunker Diary – an overview and review by Nicki Ashworth. You can see more from Nicki on the library page of the Highdown Website. The Bunker Diary is about a boy living on the streets, by choice, because he has run away from his wealthy father. He tries to do a good deed, by helping a blind man; in return the 'not-so-blind' man kidnaps him. He, four adults and a nine year old girl end up locked in a bunker, with no way in or out except a lift. It soon becomes obvious that they are being monitored constantly, they cannot escape and they are being played with, by means of punishments and gifts. This is a brilliant book; it was absolutely gripping, all the way through. Katherine is glad this book won, although it is quite a dark, grim book and she does not know why she liked it so much. It contains a lot of swearing, although I do not think the swearing had any effect other than to emphasise personalities.



## Noticeboard

### MOBILE PHONE RULES FOR STUDENTS

Mobile 'phones can be used in class at the teacher's discretion for Teaching and Learning. If a student is found to be in breach of this rule, the 'phone will be confiscated and remain secure in the Headteacher's PA's office until the end of the school day, when it can then be collected. The sanction will be to serve an afterschool detention on the following Thursday. Parents will be notified.

### ABSENCE LINE

**If your child is ill please contact  
the School Office on 0118  
9015823 before 9.30 a.m.**

### TERM 2

**Starts: Monday 3 November 2014  
Ends: Friday 19 December 2014**

### DATA CHECK

**Do we hold the correct information on your student?  
Please complete a data form and return it to Highdown.**

### LOST PROPERTY

**Please ensure that your child's belongings are named. Lost  
property handed to the School Office, if named, can be  
returned to the student. Any unnamed items will be  
displayed for students at regular intervals.**

**School Reception 0118 9015800  
Email [office@highdown.reading.sch.uk](mailto:office@highdown.reading.sch.uk)**



HighdownSchool



[www.highdown.reading.sch.uk](http://www.highdown.reading.sch.uk)