

# International News



October 2011

Many Nations, One Community

## Presenting St Mary's International group!

*St Mary's takes pride in the many international events and activities that take place within the school throughout the year. This year, a new International group has been created within school, with the aim of developing the international ethos of the school, and promoting the global dimension to pupils, staff and the wider community.*

*Here is a look at some of the school's planned events in the coming months.*

### French Exchange



  **The French Exchange 2011/12 is no doubt going to be the best yet.** The match-making process is in full swing as the group of 43 Year 10 students (15 boys and 28 girls) are anxiously awaiting news of their partners to be.

The partner

school is in Issoire, near Clermont Ferrand in the Massif Central, a mountainous, volcanic region in the centre of France famous for Volvic water, Michelin tyres and Vichy mints as well as a range of gastronomic delights.

A veritable treat is awaiting the French when they arrive in December. Not only will they see Leeds at its festive best but they will be able to visit Saltaire, York and take in a trip to Annie, the musical, at the West Yorkshire Playhouse as well as joining their partners for the Christmas Carol concert at Leeds Trinity. Snow has been ordered in advance to complete the winter wonderland experience.

Our return visit will take place in April and if it's

anything like last year the students will need suntan lotion and dark glasses as we were blessed with almost unbroken sunshine from start to finish. As well as taking in the sights of the Auvergne region, the students will be able to experience a day in a French school and spend a night in Paris - ooh là là!

All students from last year had a wonderful time both improving their French and enjoying a culturally uplifting experience. I cannot highlight enough the importance of learning the 'real' language and gaining first-hand experience of communicating with native speakers. Life-long friendships can be made and memories will never be forgotten.

### Sicily Exchange



**The Sicily exchange is all set to depart again.**

Twelve students from years 11 and 13 will be going across to Sicily for a week on 19th October to experience the culture and language of the country. They will be staying with Sicilian partners, who are due to return to the UK in March.

The exchange takes place in the small town of Caltagirone which is famous

for its ceramics. During the trip pupils will get to visit various places of interest including the historic city of Syracuse, and Mt Etna, an active volcano that erupted as recently as September 2011! Pupils will be able to experience what school life is like in Sicily, and will no doubt sample the delights of Sicilian cuisine. The school that we visit ( Istituto Paritario "Maria Ausiliatrice") is one of our

Comenius partner schools and during the trip, pupils will get the chance to work on our current project entitled "Putting us on the Map." (For more information see our Comenius website:

[www.puttingusonthemap.eu/puttingusonthemap/](http://www.puttingusonthemap.eu/puttingusonthemap/)

### Parliamo italiano!



**Italian classes have begun**

**again this year.** Lessons take place between 3pm and 4pm on a Wednesday afternoon for pupils in key stages 4 and 5. Uptake has been good, and pupils who wish to can work towards a GCSE .



Chinese classes are also available on Thursday lunchtimes for KS5 in C8 with Mrs Beesting.

## German exchange



Last year our Germany exchange celebrated its

**25th anniversary.** Since its inauguration in 1987 well over a thousand pupils from St Mary's and from the Franziskus Gymnasium in Vossnack have visited each other's homes and schools, and experienced what life is like on the other side of the Channel. In March 2012 the latest group of St Mary's year 10 pupils will set off through the tunnel on Eurostar to experience a taste of life in Germany. They will visit the world renowned historical cities of Aachen and Cologne, and will have a chance to set foot in neighbouring Holland and Belgium in what is a truly international part of Europe. They will also have the opportunity to put into practice the German they have been learning for the last two years or so.

## Boots for Africa

St Mary's is taking part in a national campaign started by Sheffield football club. The aim of the charity is to collect used pairs of football boots that would usually be thrown out, and send them to Africa where there, the children and can play in real football boots like real footballers. St Mary's, in partnership with the Ilkley Rotary Club, started in May 2010 and in school have already collected 90 pairs of football boots. The aim is to have 100 by Christmas so if you have just purchased a new pair football boots, bring your old ones in clean and tied together, and you too could be fulfilling a young child's dream.

By Karl Verspyck and Katie McDonnell

## Bambisanani Partnership



This summer fourteen students and four members of staff visited

**Mnyakanya School in the Nkandla region of Kwa Zulu Natal to develop the collaborative work between the two schools and wider community, which is referred to as the Bambisanani Partnership.**

An important aspect of this year's visit was to develop a relationship with the well resourced and highly successful Eshowe High School situated approximately an hour away from Mnyakanya. To that end four students from Eshowe were invited to join the Bambisanani Leadership Programme for the week with St. Mary's and Mnyakanya students. During the visit the St. Mary's students, supported by the Eshowe students, mentored twenty Mnyakanya students on the Bambisanani Leadership Course. An aspect of the course was for students from all three schools to jointly organise and deliver a Multi-Skill Sports Festival and a Literacy Festival for four local Primary Schools. The mentoring programme was a tremendous success as were both festivals. Students from St. Mary's, Eshowe and Mnyakanya taught reading and sports skills to over sixty



children from Ntowane, Halambu, Khomo and Kwamanqondo Primary Schools at a festival on the final day of the visit.

The St. Mary's team brought with them much needed equipment for Mnyakanya School including books for the Bambisanani Library, opened a year ago, calculators, stationery and resources for art, science, sport and health education. St. Mary's supports forty individual orphans at Mnyakanya and these students were provided with the uniforms and equipment they need for the year ahead.

The visit to South Africa clearly had a tremendous impact on the St. Mary's students with one student commenting: *"This adventure has changed my aims and goals in life. It has made me realise the change one person can make in influencing someone's life. It has given me a totally different outlook on world issues."*



## Comenius



Our school, is involved in a Comenius project with eight other

**schools across Europe.** We have one school in Northern Ireland, two schools in Sicily, two schools in Belgium, a Spanish school, a Polish school and a German school. The aim of being part of Comenius is to enable our students to learn about other countries and cultures, and have direct contact with students in these countries.



Our current project, which is entitled "Putting us on the Map," began last October with the aim of focusing on the idea that a school is embedded in a local community. Work done over the course of the project will be put onto our own Comenius website which will enable pupil's to learn about communities in our partner schools.

[www.puttingusonthemapeu/puttingusonthemap/](http://www.puttingusonthemapeu/puttingusonthemap/)

## International week 2011.



**St. Mary's International week took place the week commencing the 11<sup>th</sup> July, with activities revolving around the theme of water.** Faculties built this theme into their lesson plans for the week with activities comprising of songs, poems, reflections on how we use water

and scientific experiments. The plight of people living in the Horn of Africa was also raised and a huge £843 was collected by students and staff to send to the appeal. The sixth form did a fantastic job in helping with this charity event and the school as a whole was made more aware of the importance of water and the consequences when it is lacking.