



Notting Hill's Got Talent

Christine Maynard

The theme for this year's NHEHS Careers Convention was *Notting Hill's Got Talent*.

The evening was a great success with more girls attending than ever before and more representatives, over 80, on hand to answer their questions. As ever the strength of the event lay in the sheer breadth of options and opportunities it was able to demonstrate: from advertising and archaeology via finance and forensic science, photography and physiotherapy all the way through to veterinary work and careers in the voluntary sector.

Some girls know exactly what they want to do and they headed straight for the representatives from their chosen field. For others, who are less sure, this was the opportunity to see where a degree in languages might lead or being good at maths might take them.

There were also two Audition Sessions made up of short

presentations, given against a strict time limit about seven very different careers. Cat Hadfield spoke about her work in marketing for L'Oreal and Tasha Price (a NHEHS Old Girl) described her career in medicine. Kate Wilmot covered her work as an architect and Rachel Tandy talked about her career as a barrister. The challenges and rewards of working as a musician and composer were covered by Eilla Jarman-Pinto, while Victoria Gosling dealt with life as a commissioned officer in the armed forces. Finally we heard from Psychologist Nicola Jacyna who works as a Psychologist for the NHS.

We are hugely fortunate to have been able to draw on the combined experience and insights of our speakers and on those provided by the parents and Old Girls who acted as advisors. Thank you to the Parents Guild Careers Committee and everyone involved for making this such a wonderful event.

Science Club

Andy Crame

Science Club has been offering another half term full of slightly off the wall experiments.

We started off with a perennial favourite; making a hovercraft from an old CD, a bottle top and a balloon. This produced some competitive desk top racing between rival hovercraft!

In the following weeks we looked at custard, first making bouncing custard balls (and you thought custard could only be lumpy), then investigating a custard suspension which could behave as both a liquid and a solid. Great fun was had when this was placed on a loudspeaker with



the bass turned up to produce custard that seemed to live and dance.

In the final meeting before half term girls extracted DNA from a Kiwi fruit, using a plastic bag and

a mixture of washing up liquid, salt and water prompting the remark, “DNA, that’s really cool”.

More ‘cool’ stuff after half term. If you are in Year 7 you are welcome to come along, Monday 1.45 in C2.

Who Killed Caravaggio?

Juliet Learmouth



On 30th January, Year 12 and 13 Art History students attended a lecture at Westminster School given by Andrew Graham Dixon,

one of the world’s leading art historians. We were treated to a highly engaging talk which gave us an insight into the perilous world of the great Baroque artist, Caravaggio. Through his insightful analysis of Caravaggio’s work, Andrew demonstrated how each painting revealed not only Caravaggio’s profound religious faith but also his experience of life in the back streets of seventeenth century Rome – a life characterised by crime, violence and debauchery.

Andrew argued that it was precisely this combination of “the sacred and the profane” which enabled the artist to create works of such emotive and spiritual power, miracles happening to real people.

We never did find out who killed Caravaggio as time ran short before we reached the final episode of Caravaggio’s life. However, many were inspired to read Andrew’s biography on Caravaggio in order to find out more.

Metamorphosis

Debbie Whitmarsh



GCSE and A Level Drama and Theatre Studies students went to the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith to see Metamorphosis in a co-production by the Icelandic company Vesturport and The Lyric.

The play is based on Franz Kafka's celebrated short story and sees the unremarkable life of the Samsa family turned upside down when their son, Gregor, emerges one morning inexplicably transformed into a monstrous insect. Girls from Year 10 had been exploring the

text in their lessons and were familiar with the themes of the play while many of our students had grappled with the challenge of creating the beetle and working within the Brechtian constraints of this text. So, expectations were high and everyone was clearly looking forward to seeing how this exciting company would realise this challenging play in performance

We were not disappointed. Gísli Örn Garðarsson's athleticism was stunning and his acrobatic physicality a marvel. The production was darkly comic and profoundly moving, combining a mind-bending, gravity-defying split level set and a mesmerising score by Nick Cave and Warren Ellis.

Model UN

Joes Pepper



Four talented debaters from Years 11 and 13, Sarah Brooks, Harshini Pattni, Antonia Mathias and Emelia Newton Jones, attended the weekend Model United Nations

Conference at Lady Eleanor Holles school where they joined 35 delegations from 14 schools around the UK.

They represented Egypt for the weekend following genuine UN procedures and protocols which include frameworks for constructing points of information and amendments to resolutions.



Activities to celebrate Chinese New Year have been taking place in Years 7,8,and 9 Mandarin classes. In Year 7 the girls tried their hand at brush painting ...



...made Chinese New Year posters and took part in a Lion Dance.



Year 8 and 9 have performed Chinese fan dances, traditional dances which usually tell a folk or classical story .



Bowling

At the end of January 74 girls from Year 10, along with their form tutors and Head of Year, spent an evening at *Tenpin Acton*. A combination of a late 'Christmas do' and the chance to relax with friends, the evening was a great success with huge amounts of nutritious (!) party food, and it seemed that a good time was had by all. The girls were competitive but not quite as competitive as the new star that emerged that evening — Mrs Peric-Matthews! Compete against her in the bowling alley at your peril!

Richard Petty



Courtauld Gallery

Year 12 art historians enjoyed a visit to the Courtauld Gallery in London to study the outstanding collection of paintings by Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, Fauvists and Expressionists. Highlights of the tour included Manet's "Girl at the Folies Bergeres", Gauguin's "Nevermore" and Van Gogh's "Self Portrait with a Bandaged Ear". The girls also enjoyed examining the gallery's collection of Fauvist paintings and gained an appreciation of the radical use of vibrant colour in the early 20th century works of Matisse and Derain.

Juliet Learmoth

Talking Nerds

Anna Duns and Philip Sheldon



A group of sixth formers really enjoyed an evening trip to see *The Festival of the Spoken Nerd* at the Bloomsbury Theatre. The evening's sell-out performance was broadly based around the title "Life, Oh Life!" and a group of very talented scientists and stand-up comedians showed the audience that science and humour can mix!

Their 'sketches' included the science behind colour vision and our perception of colours such as magenta, which lies outside the colour spectrum. This was explained by using optical illusions. Bees, having the ability to see in the ultraviolet, get a very different view of flowers

from ours. The audience responded to news of the latest advances in robotics and the pathology of bladder infections with a mixture of fascination, groans and nausea. We also heard about the mechanics of free running and stunt cycling with amazing demonstrations from two champions in these new sports.

This proved to be a very entertaining evening out for all of us. Serious science was successfully covered using stand-up comedy, appealing to a very wide ranging audience and provoking much thought and discussion.



Evening Primrose, Human View



Evening Primrose, Bees' View

Duke of Edinburgh Awards

Paul Quarmby



Some of the girls receiving their Bronze Awards can be seen in the picture at the top of the page with Julian Simmonds, Chair of Governors, Mrs Critcher and Mr Porter. Another group of Bronze Award winners pictured (above left) with Mr Simmonds and Ms Swift, Deputy Head, Pastoral. The group of girls (above right) are some of the Silver Awards winners pictured with Mrs Critcher and Mr Pepper.

Julian Simmonds, NHEHS Chair of Governors and Linda Brown, Duke of Edinburgh organiser for the Borough of Ealing, visited the school on Thursday, 13 February for a special ceremony to congratulate the Notting hill and Ealing Bronze and Silver award winners from last year and to present their awards.

More than 80 girls received Bronze awards with a further 40 receiving Silver. Many of the staff who assessed the girls last year helped to present the Awards and posed for photos with their respective groups.

The six girls who completed their Gold awards last year have been

to Buckingham Palace recently to receive them, some from The Duke of Edinburgh and others from Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex.

Mr Quarmby attended one of these ceremonies recently and had the pleasure of helping the Earl with the Awards.

Choral Evensong at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle

Paul Jeanes



On Wednesday 6th February, the Chamber Choir were pleased to be invited to sing Choral Evensong at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. The magnificent surroundings of the chapel provided a stunning setting in which to sing this beautiful service, with its superb acoustics allowing the girls voices to ring around the entirety of this 14th century building. As a 'royal peculiar', the chapel falls directly under the jurisdiction of the British Monarch, rather than a bishop. We were delighted to be singing on the 61st anniversary of the accession to the throne of Her Majesty The Queen, and several dignitaries were present including the High Commissioner of Canada and the Ambassadors

of Honduras and Cuba.

The service, which is offered daily in the chapel, is very traditional, and consists of prayers and readings interspersed with musical settings sung by the choir. The choir is responsible for singing the Preces and Responses, the Psalm, the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis and the Anthem. The style of the music is rooted in the Anglican Choral Tradition and some of the music, particularly the singing of the Psalm, can be very difficult to grasp.

The choir had spent several weeks learning the music for this service, and as was clear to all present at the service, the girls

rose to the occasion with their usual confidence and security. The quality of the singing was absolutely first rate, and this was coupled with a very professional approach, entirely in keeping with the formality of the service.

At the end of the service, the Dean of Windsor, The Right Reverend David Conner KVCO, offered some very favourable comments to the girls, particularly commenting on the quality of singing, their diction and their professionalism.

We are delighted to have already been invited back to Windsor and look forward to returning there later in the year.

Crowded Coasts

Lisa Richards



In February 17 Year 12 geography students met at Paddington station to set off to South Devon for a residential geography field trip to be conducted around the theme of Rebranding Places and Crowded Coasts.

Once at our destination we made ourselves comfortable in our modern accommodation (complete with geothermal heating) at the field centre. Our first stop was the windy coastline of Slapton Ley where we looked at coastal defences including the Scandinavian boulders cemented into the ground and the impressive sea walls.

The next day we visited the seaside town of Torbay and we were able to see the many attractions available for visitors along the 'English Riviera' and consider how this coastal region deals with the challenges of large visitor numbers and changing visitor

patterns and increasing competition from exotic locations.

On Sunday our studies took us to Plymouth, where we looked at how the city is handling redevelopment and admired the grandeur of Drake's Circus, a £200 million shopping centre, with modern glass architecture. iPads were used to capture the moment and take down data from local residents and visitors, rather than traditional pen and paper.

Gemma, our superb guide, provided us not only with waterproofs when needed, but lots of local information and knowledge about the area. Overall, a fantastic trip with lots of excellent data collected and plenty of opportunities to enjoy each other's company over meals and much needed cups of warming hot chocolate.



Explosive Geography

The Year 9 geography syllabus covers plate tectonics and volcanoes. Challenged to make a model of a volcano the girls rose to the challenge using a variety of materials from cardboard and modelling clay to cake and Lego!



With the help of some clever chemistry many of the volcanoes even exploded or expelled smoke.



Minimus Returns

After the success of last year and winning first place in the National Mythology Competition, our Minimus project is back and growing.

In the Junior School Year 4 girls are again enjoying getting involved in discovering Latin language, culture and some famous myths. (You can see the myth of Medusa being acted out in the picture.) This year we have a new group of teachers from Year 12: Mary Sheard, Sorrel Evans, Shyma Zitoun, Sara Malik and Emma Aldric. They have taken to the project well and their sessions are very much enjoyed as perhaps you can see.

It is fantastic that this year we have been able to expand the project to North Ealing Primary School where a group of committed and passionate pupils in Years 5 and 6 are enjoying racing through the Minimus course on a Thursday evening. They are being taught by our now experienced group of Year 13 students: Katie Byford, Eleanor Vale, Imogen Cosgrave, Abigail Thompson and Jessica Zhang.

The myth that the groups will perform this year is based on Pandora's Box so do watch this space for more details on how we get on.

Alex Smith

Creative Writing Finalists

Sarah Davies

Congratulations to Kate McGregor in Year 10 and Sara Malik in Year 12 for being the NHEHS winning entries in the Middle and Senior categories respectively of the GDST Creative Writing Competition one of the many events being held to celebrate the 140th birthday of the Trust. Their stories have gone on to represent NHEHS against the winning entries from other Trust schools. The competition is being judged by Helen Fraser, the GDST's Chief Executive .

GDST Spelling Bee

Tracy Cheng



24 girls from Years 8 and 9 headed to Heathfield School for Girls, hosts of the regional semi-final of the Girls' Day School Trust Foreign Language Spelling Bee., where they went head to head with pupils from eight other GDST schools.

The competition is part of the events being run to celebrate this year's 140th anniversary of the founding of the GDST and is designed to focus students' attention on the importance of learning foreign languages as well as being a fun way to encourage students in Years 8 and 9 to

actively improve their vocabulary, spelling and memory skills. The heat was one of four taking place across the country, involving 21 schools and over 370 pupils. The semi-finalists had already won a round in either French, German, Spanish, Latin or Mandarin in their own schools.

Both our Year 8 and Year 9 Mandarin teams have made it through to the final at Howell's School in Cardiff on 5 March, where they will be tested on 140 words. Good luck girls!

“Dying is an art” – a tribute to Sylvia Plath

Catherine Crothers



poets’ work drawing near, attention turned to discussing Hughes’ writing, but with Plath on the brain, the girls were dubious, to say the least, about how much credit to give the former Poet Laureate!

An hour or so and several heated debates and conflicting opinions later, the jury was in. Greatness attracts greatness, and despite their differences in life, Plath’s *Ariel* and Hughes’ *Birthday Letters* are still equally admired, read and discussed for reasons beyond their creators’ infamy – their poetry really is an art, and both, I think it was agreed, do it exceptionally well.

Many thanks to Miss Wheeler for her help in facilitating the event, to the Year 13 students for sharing their perpetual Plath passion, and the Year 12s for, as ever, such an enthusiastic and engagingly discursive afternoon.

There was something poetically perfect in the flurry of snow that threatened to engulf NHEHS on Monday, 11th February, or “Plath Day” as it became for the sixth form English students. This time fifty years ago, surrounded by snow, loneliness and the final drafts for her ultimate collection, *Ariel*, the poetess committed suicide. In tribute to her and her work, the sixth form gathered at lunchtime for a “Plath Picnic Party”, eating red-based goodies (after all, in the words of Ted Hughes, “red was [her] colour”)

and generally reminding ourselves of what a truly talented, if tragic, woman she was.

Alas, before the customary “Hughes-bashing” could commence, as is wont to happen when discussing Plath and her death in a pro-women environment, the Year 13 girls and English Language students had to leave our gathering for afternoon lessons. However, for the Year 12 Literature students at least, the discussion continued. With their comparative coursework on both

Oxford Union Debating Competition

Joe Pepper

NHEHS was represented by Sorrel Evans, Katrina Will, Antonia Mathias and Emelia Newton Jones at this year’s regional round of the Oxford Union Debating Competition held at Latymer Upper School.

They debated challenging motions, such as ‘This House believes that the police should be privatised’, against stiff opposition from other schools in the region. They all spoke eloquently and persuasively, and gained a great deal from the experience.

Drama Club

Debbie Whitmarsh



Year 7 and 8 Drama Club is off to a great start, meeting every Tuesday after school.

With anticipation growing as the completion of the Big Build and the unveiling of our new facilities gets nearer, members of the club are determined to be part of the exciting programme being planned for the end of the summer term. The club, keen to have a clear identity, have christened themselves *New Beginnings* and, as well as t-shirts and a specially designed logo, they have many plans.

They are entering the Schools Shakespeare Festival and are already rehearsing an edited version of *The Tempest*, which they will perform, along with other local schools, at a local professional theatre. They will

also have the opportunity to experience workshops with actors and directors.

Initial ideas for staging and developing a new and exciting concept for *The Tempest* are already underway and the group are beginning to think about costume, props and marketing, which are also integral to the project.



New Beginnings plan a number of open rehearsals to enable their peers to see what they are up to and they hope very much to be one of the first groups to perform in the new drama studio, so that parents can also see the high level of creativity we have here at NHEHS. So watch this space!



University Visits

Richard Petty



As part of the Year 10 Enrichment Programme, girls are enjoying the opportunity to visit a leading university on an accompanied trip. The aim is to raise horizons, look beyond GCSE work and to provide a glimpse of what they might expect in the world of Higher Education

50 girls have so far participated in trips. 30 girls have been to Cambridge (Downing and Jesus Colleges) and 20 to Oxford (Magdalen and St. Catherine's Colleges), with the rest of Year 10 set to visit UCL in March.

The Year 10 Enrichment Programme is run during the spring and summer terms. It is designed to help the girls look towards the future and the exciting opportunities which await them in school and beyond, as well as developing their skills and aptitudes in and outside the classroom. Activities include: sixth-form academic shadowing, developing discussion and speaking skills and an Enterprise Day which involves the girls in dynamic and stimulating activities promoting an awareness of the commercial world.

The girls have enjoyed the visits which provided some inspiring and eye-opening talks from university staff, beautiful settings, and character-building, biting cold weather!

Many thanks to Alex Smith for making the Cambridge visit a possibility and to 2011 leavers Miranda Bain, Maddy Ellis-Petersen, Hannah Greenstreet, and Hannah Williamson for taking time out of their busy Oxbridge schedules to spend time with us and talk to us about university life.



Old Times

In mid January, a group of English Literature enthusiasts, otherwise known as the sixth form students, travelled to the Harold Pinter Theatre to watch a play called *Old Times* written by Pinter himself. There was much anticipation, excitement and joy at the prospect of seeing Rufus Sewell play one of the three main characters, and indeed his remarkably sculpted face and heaven-sent voice may have been one of the things that made the play so amazing .

Just like many other of Pinter's absurdist plays, *Old Times* makes absolutely no sense, but it is this mystery and confusion that mesmerised us all (that and Rufus' beauty of course!) As soon as the play had finished, the theatre was filled with a buzz of people, who were just as enthralled as we were, discussing their interpretation of the play. Thanks to modern technology, we were all able to google possible meanings and various interpretations on our train journey home. This led to lively debate as many of us disagreed strongly with some of the suggested interpretations!

We'd like to say thank you to the English Department for organising the trip, Miss Marks and Miss Crothers for accompanying us and, last but not least, thank you to Rufus Sewell for a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Mahsa Chalabi



Anti-Bullying Blog

Yes, after the success of the Anti-Bullying Blog last year our Year 7 girls are blogging again. Focusing on the sensitive subject of Bullying, Year 7 have explored the impact of this insidious behaviour with huge maturity and intelligence.

In their drama classes they have used role-play, frozen image, thought tracking and many other explorative strategies and both Mrs Craggs and I have been impressed by the work that has been done by all three classes. The blog was set up to continue and widen the debate and keep the discussion alive. It has been a huge success. Many girls have recorded their thoughts about the lessons and some have posted poems, YouTube links and personal experience making the blog a really rich resource of information, ideas and useful discussion.

It is about to take a new turn as the Year 13 Theatre Studies students have been invited to comment. The Year 7 girls are very much looking forward to sharing their blog with the older girls and hearing their views.

Debbie Whitmarsh and Sandra Craggs

The Chrystall Prize Semi-Final

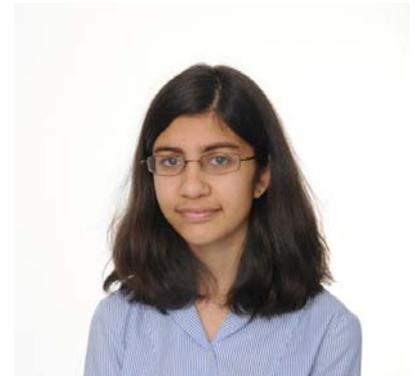
Leila Sharafi

At the end of January, I had the privilege of representing Notting Hill & Ealing in the semi-final of the GDST's Chrystall Prize Public Speaking competition. This stage of the competition, which included girls from 5 GDST schools, was hosted this year by Heathfield School.

I had to give a seven minute speech on the topic, "The right to offend and be offended is intrinsic to any healthy democracy," followed by three minutes of answering questions from the floor. I found the theme particularly interesting as I believe that we all try to avoid controversy at times, and are afraid of offending others. We actively self-censor and even restrain or inhibit what we think, say and do.

I really enjoyed the competition. It gave me a chance to overcome my fears and speak confidently in front of people who I had never met before.

I can truly say that all the speeches from all the competitors were thought-provoking and entertaining. The speech entitled, "A woman's place is where she chooses it to be" had a refreshingly rational and contemporary feminist viewpoint that acknowledged



the skills and expertise that come into play as a wife and a mother, while eventual winner "A touch too far?" looked at modern technology and how gadgets have replaced communication and friendship. In "Is poetry a defunct art form?" the speaker put it to the audience that poetry explored in schools perhaps doesn't give us an insight into the beauty of the art form. Finally we heard a speech about teenage celebrity worship.

Although I did not win through to the final round of the competition, I had a great day and it is an experience I will never forget.



The judges: Jeremy Garson, solicitor; Ritu Sethi, solicitor and senior partner at The Sethi Partnership and Jerry Lyons, award winning journalist.

Design Prize Success

Andrew Kerrison



For the first time NHEHS entered students in the Design Museum's Young Designer Awards which was held on Saturday 2nd of February at the Design Museum in central London. The students entered were Ellen Coleman, (Year 12) who entered the 3D Product / Furniture section and Lucy Ashmore and Alex Howes (both in Year 10) who both entered the Architecture / Built Environment section.

The Design Museum competition is open to all young people aged 14 – 19 years who are currently studying on a UK design course, or who take a keen interest in design. This includes both secondary schools and colleges. The competition itself is the largest and longest running design competition in the UK and this year received over 300 hundred entries from a range of UK schools.

The competition itself is broken into four different sections; Architecture/Built Environment, 3D Product/Furniture, Graphics/Interactive and Fashion/Textiles. All four design briefs had a theme of celebration and success based on London 2012 and the Queens Jubilee.

The judges, who were from various sectors of the design industry, all agreed that this year's entrants were a step up on

previous years with regards to design excellence. The student's design folios were judged on the overall innovation of the finished solution, their ability to meet the brief and the standard of presentation of their final solution.

All three NHEHS students are to be congratulated on the standard of the presentation of their folios and their design solutions. Particular congratulations go to Alex Howes who having made it through to the final 15 was awarded second place overall for her portable pavilion concept, a great outcome and one made all the more impressive when you look at the excellent standard of work from all entries.

Very well done, Alex.

You can see Alex's work along with work from other competitors at www.flickr.com/photos/designmuseum



Alex Howes won second place in this national competition with her design for a portable pavilion

The Moaning and Mourning of Trojan Women

Shyma Zitoun

On a frosty February evening, a group of GCSE and A level Latin lovers and Greek geeks caught the 7.30 showing of *Trojan Women* at the Bloomsbury Theatre. Following an admirably well-managed head count by Mr Smith, given the dispersive nature of teenage girls, we filed into the auditorium and took our seats.

The lights dimmed, chatter faded, and a tux-clad Poseidon took centre-stage. Soon joined by an equally elegantly dressed Athena, he provided brief contextual detail in the form of a long, angry rant against the Greeks and their attack of Troy. As we watched, Athena defected to the side of the Trojans and both gods cursed the Greeks and their violent, sacrilegious tendencies. They spent a moment pitying the Trojan women for their fate, and then left just as the destitute ex-queen Hecuba tripped across the stage.

The rest of the play consisted of mournful, verbose laments (delivered mainly by the obviously very upset Hecuba) interrupted only by the occasional arrival of a band of Greek soldiers to move the plot along or explain an event. We watched as the women bemoaned the death of the Trojan king Priam, their enslavement at the hands of the Greek men, and the thoughtless actions of flighty

Helen (of Troy, that is). We were aptly entertained by mad prophecies from the (slightly ADHD) Cassandra and wry remarks and dry wit from the widowed Andromache as well as the excessive manhandling, the soldiers' reaction of choice, whenever the women's complaints and wailing got out of hand.

A particularly sad scene in which Andromache's baby is cruelly (but surprisingly tenderly) taken away by the Greeks to be thrown off the walls of the city to his death left us all, if not teary-eyed, mildly shocked (and also confused when the corpse was returned seemingly intact, a few scenes later). When, after a quick interval and more moaning and mourning from Hecuba, the infamous Helen herself made an entrance, we were all ready to throw her off the battlements ourselves if that would put an end to the Trojan women's weeping and impromptu dance numbers that left the audience highly befuddled. However, we only found ourselves groaning in frustration when she managed to win back her unfortunate husband Menelaus (in a comparatively short 15 minutes of monologue) by merely batting her eyelashes and strutting around the stage to hisses and

glares from the other Trojan women.

Although the performance did turn out to be more amusing than perhaps intended for a play recounting the horrors faced by female captives after a long and bloody war, we found it a lively and enriching experience nevertheless. The unchanging set (a prison camp) was particularly effective. As the story unfolded we shared the characters' claustrophobia and frustration (which reached a peak at the end of the play, when Hecuba simply walked out of the gates of the prison where she'd spent the duration of the performance!). It was interesting to have the opportunity to see a different interpretation of the Fall of Troy and by the end of the play we felt that the individual fates faced by the women had been strung together and contextualised pretty well, while also providing entertainment.

As the lights began to dim again to a slightly creepy voiceover pondering human fortitude in the face of death and desolation, we were all left with a better understanding and higher appreciation for Greek tragedy and modern theatre, and a newfound enthusiasm for the two combined.

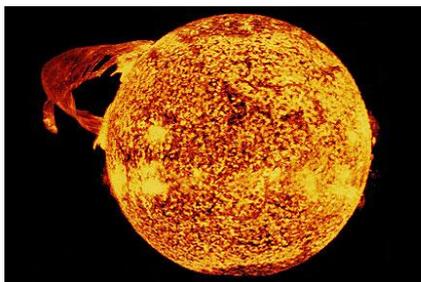


Making us Superhuman

Philip Sheldon

Year 11 were at the Dominion Theatre on 1st February for the GCSE Science Live Conference which offers the opportunity to hear a series of lectures from some of the best science communicators in the country

Lucie Green from UCL's Mallard Space Centre showed us images of sunspots and solar flares, huge eruptions of gas from the surface of the sun and gave us the current explanation of these phenomena.



Next, geneticist Steve Jones posed the question 'What are the genes that make humans fundamentally different from other animals'. His answer is to suggest that the genes that give rise to the part of the brain responsible for language are unique to humans. He also discussed the idea that modern languages have evolved and branched out from a single common ancestral language a theory that had been proposed long before Darwin appropriated and modified it to suggest

how living organisms have evolved. Andrea Sella, a Chemist from UCL bravely tackled chaos theory (the origination of order from a chaotic system), applying it to chemical systems. He proposed that the theory could be used to explain patterns in nature and how the zebra gets its stripes. Simon Singh gave us the Big Bang, the history of the theory and the evidence that supports it.



In between the main speakers were sessions on examination technique from Stewart Chenery, a Chief Examiner but for many of us, the highlight of the day was Lord Robert Winston talking about reproductive biology. He engaged with the audience, not only with the vital statistics of their gamete death rate (of the girls) and production rate (of the boys), but also posing the question of whether it could ever be right to improve the genotype of an in vitro fertilised human being.



Junior Science Fun

To celebrate the Junior School's Science Week, Year 4 visited the chemistry department for a series of demonstrations to learn how much fun chemistry can be and to see how senior pupils investigate rates of reaction.

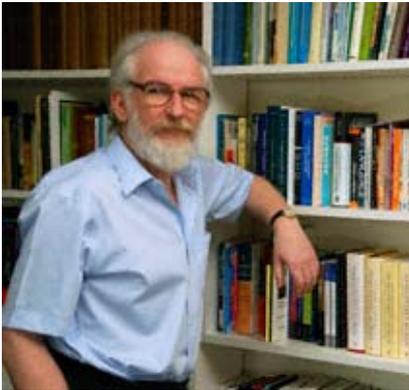
We started with a demonstrations that showed burning liquid alcohol followed by the 'Whoosh' bottle, where the alcohol vapour is burned. The girls were able to see that the change from a liquid to gas caused the substance to burn much more vigorously. Then everyone had a go at crushing a sugar cube and with much enthusiastic pounding were able to prove that a much larger volume and surface area is produced by reducing particle size.

On a large screen we showed the reaction between thiosulphate and hydrochloric acid and the Year 4 girls were able to time the reaction. The effect of a catalyst on a reaction was demonstrated using Rochelle's salt with hydrogen peroxide, catalysed with cobalt. This gave rise to a series of colour changes, provoking a chorus of ooh's and ahh's .

As a finale, the girls were shown the catalytic effect of Mentos on bubble production in a bottle of Diet Coke.

English Language Conference

Lucy Wheeler



AS Level English Language students went to the Institute of Education, Russell Square, to attend a series of lectures by four leading linguists. Our first speaker was Professor Ron Carter, Research Professor of Modern English Language at

the University of Nottingham, who lectured on the features of spoken language. Dr Marcello Giovanelli talked about patterns in text and language in general and Dr Sylvia Shaw spoke about language and gender in politics.

After lunch we listened to David Crystal, author of more than 100 books about the English language and famous for his research work in such fields as intonation and stylistics. However, he is perhaps best known to students for his two encyclopaedias for Cambridge

University Press, *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language* and *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language*. Crystal spoke engagingly and wittily about how language has changed over time and focused on the changing prescriptive and descriptive attitudes of the last 300 years.

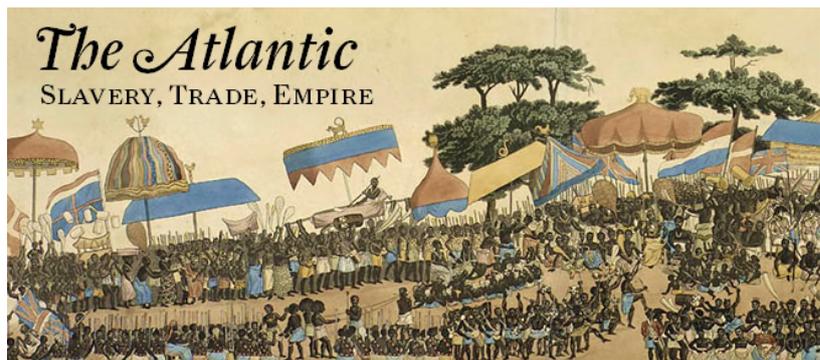
It was an excellent finish to the day and we all came out feeling inspired and having enjoyed listening to some of today's most acclaimed researchers on English language.

Year 8 Trip to National Maritime Museum

Joe Pepper

The whole of Year 8 travelled to Greenwich to visit the National Maritime Museum to take part in an 'Understanding Slavery Enquiry Day' attending a number of workshops relevant to their History course this year.

They were able to handle artefacts connected to African culture from the pre-slavery era before looking at items used in relation to enslaved Africans. There was also the opportunity to view original manuscripts, such as information on slave plantations, and log books from slave voyages.



We visited the Atlantic Worlds gallery which examines the motivations and ambitions of Europeans making the long, perilous Atlantic crossings to reach the New World. The gallery contains paintings, prints and drawings, decorative arts and ethnographic artefacts

which explore the encounters and exchanges made by travellers upon reaching North America and West Africa.

We all had a great day, and the girls impressed everybody with their intelligent questions and keen interest in the topic.

Sports Reports

Dianne Dunkley, Nicola Evans, Annette Greenslade and Jennie Scott

Bad weather has affected both training sessions and fixtures since January with many matches cancelled. Weather permitting our teams will be in action again after half term when highlights will be the GDST Rally on Tuesday 26th February at Hawks Hockey

Club, Oxford, the GDST Cross Country Rally on Wednesday 6th March hosted by Croydon High School and the U12 London Hockey Plate competition on Friday 1st March, which is being held at Streatham and Clapham High School.

Netball

Despite the bad weather the U16s Netball Squad (see photo) did manage a friendly competition with local schools, St Augustine's and St Benedict's.



The U16's are: Ella Wilson (Captain), Saphia Youssef, Sacha Parkinson, Lauren Oliver, Sophie Dolphin, Jess Brisley, Scarlett Regan, Anna Hubbert, Sophie Harber and Eliza Kondratiuk

International Netball

The PE Dept took 30 pupils to Wembley Arena to watch an international match between England and Australia.

A spectacular evening was had by all and the fact that England won made the trip even more

worthwhile! As well as the opportunity to see netball played at the highest level the girls also got the opportunity to meet many of the England Squad after the match and to collect some autographs.



England and Australia fans at Wembley



Pamela Cookey of England shoots



Serena Guthrie of England

Photos from:
<http://blog.joetothphotography.com/>