

HIGHNOTES

Highgate School newsletter

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World in their eyes

London to San Francisco: 8617 km; flight time: 11 hours. This was the first experience of many on the Geography trip to the Golden West of America, including the states of California, Nevada and Arizona. The flight was long, but what awaited us was one of the most famous cities in the States, which has sights such as Pier 39, Alcatraz Prison, the Golden Gate Bridge and the largest Chinatown outside of Asia. The second full day included a trip to Muir Woods, home to the sequoia (redwood trees), some of which are 3,500 years old! San Francisco to Fresno: 263km; driving time: four hours. After an overnight stop, there began a trip through Death Valley which was particularly stunning

due to its size. Fresno to Las Vegas: 416km; driving time: eight hours. Our hotel in Las Vegas was just off the Strip, so we took a tour of some of the hotels including the Venetian, which has a canal running through the shopping mall. The following day proved to be the most spectacular: a visit to the Grand Canyon. The path was merely metres from the edge of the Canyon, and there were breathtaking views everywhere. Las Vegas to the Grand Canyon and back: 1338km; driving time: 10 hours. On the last day, we went to the Hoover



Dam, before flying back from Las Vegas International Airport. The whole thing was an unbelievable experience!

James Sperling 12QG

Science Week Spectacular



competition, a debate and presentations by Y12 students and their French exchange partners on 'La Bioethique', as well as lessons on how to make sweet flavourings and extract DNA from strawberries and cheek cells. Visiting speakers included Dr Mike Grocott from UCL, an intrepid researcher and co-

The middle of March brought a phenomenal week of scientific activity and cross-curricular education to Highgate. To mark the beginning of Science Week's extensive programme of events, Year 11 pupils attended the 'GCSE Science Live!' conference at Westminster's Central Hall to hear five of Britain's top scientists talk about their area of specialism. The impressive line-up of scientists consisted of Prof Sir Alec Jeffreys, Prof Steve Jones, Dr Maggie Aderin, Dr Andrea Sella and Prof Brian Cox. Other highlights of the week included a science-fiction story

founder of CASE (Centre for Altitude, Space and Extreme environment medicine), who explained how he led an expedition to the summit of Everest to research hypoxia and human performance at extreme altitude. Meanwhile Gordon Catherwood considered poetry and the aesthetics of science, while our Oxbridge-bound young scientists, Max Jamilly, Hugh Lindsey and Douglas Perkins, delivered talks about fractals and their fractional dimensions, Brownian Motion and the use of MRI scanners to communicate with coma patients.

On the nose

Incroyable: the Pottier-Plaiستowe production of Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* pulled off the singular feat of making many of us non-linguists in the audience forget we were watching a play in French. So natural was the delivery by the actors, so deft the touches of humour, so poignant the final atmosphere – and so alarmingly realistic the sword-fighting – that we were in absolutely no doubt of the play's wit and tragic insights. The story of unrequited love and the importance of being articulate was told with sparkling humour throughout. Special hat-doffing must go to Omer Tiroche whose stage presence and linguistic panache might have been made for the role of Cyrano; while Jake Goodman, Sacha Hajinal-Corob and a dastardly Ben Joseph added great depth to the entertainment. Many congratulations to all involved.



Senior School Charity Week raises over £7000

The week before Half Term saw the Senior School in the throes of Charity Week, raising money for the three nominated charities: Kids Company, The Meningitis Trust and The International Medical Corps UK. The superb total of more than £7,000 was collected via a number of events organised by the Charity Committee, including staff vs pupils Masterchef (winners: the pupils); musical breakfasts, arm-wrestling, staff vs pupils netball (winners: the staff) and a chilli-cake-of-doom eating competition. Head Master Adam Pettitt, who took part in the arm-wrestling (winning one bout against Shevket Halil Shevket and then losing the next two) said of the week, 'The outcomes in terms of the money raised were fantastic; it was also particularly touching that the children took

the Meningitis Trust to their hearts, after the death of former pupil Antonia Bruch last October. They also appear to have learnt an enormous amount about the challenges of running this sort of event.' Meanwhile, the Junior School ran its own Charity Week, in which pupils from Years 3-6 succeeded in raising over £4,500 for Breast Cancer Campaign. The multitude of fundraising events included a treasure hunt, bake sale, staff photo quiz, penalty shoot-out, mass dance event, apple-bobbing, tug of war and bring-and-buy sale.



School trips survive ash cloud chaos

Organising school trips abroad is always a logistical headache, but few teachers, when filling in their Risk Assessments this year, could have predicted a volcanic ash cloud as a potential cause of disruption. At Highgate, two trips were affected: the German Exchange to Essen-Werden and the Classics trip to Athens. But it is a testament to the spirit of the teachers and pupils that the trips were still such a success, despite the delays. For the ten students from Y10 and Y12 who went on this year's German exchange, which takes place in partnership with Essen-Werden Gymnasium, the trip went on for four days longer than planned, with an arduous fifteen-hour return journey by bus. But thanks to the generosity of the host families, the students were able to take advantage of the hold-up to enjoy the benefits of a town which is currently enjoying a cultural boost, having been nominated the 'cultural capital city of Germany for 2010'. Meanwhile, further down the continent, in Greece, the Classics trip faced a delay of five days, which saw them moved to a new hotel in the rural village of Tolon, where learning continued uninterrupted with lessons around the hotel pool, before the party was finally able to take a flight back to the UK.



Under the Tuscan sun



During the Lent half term, 30 year 12 pupils jetted off to Florence, where we were immersed in a five-day cultural tour. Every day included visits to world-famous churches, palazzos and museums. The hotel could not have been situated in a more prime location, only streets away from the Duomo, Florence's dominating cathedral. Many of us climbed the winding staircases to the top of its

highlights, including Botticelli's Birth of Venus and the Primavera in the Uffizi gallery. After each intense day's touring, we were rewarded with a traditional, three-course dinner, often involving a detour to the ice-cream parlour on the way back. Despite the frequent rain (and a meagre breakfast of a hard bread roll and cold coffee) the trip was an extremely enjoyable experience. *Red Moat, 12QG*

Mathmoids

Congratulations to Sam Karlin 9EG, Lucas Raschke 9GH, Henry Davidson 8D and Joe Dharampal-Hornby 8K, who represented Highgate at the Junior Team Mathematics Challenge competition - and won the regional final. The boys will go on to represent the region in the national finals on the 21st June.



From class to Callas



A Year 7 pupil, Eleanor Burke, is making a name for herself on the operatic stage, with a series of increasingly high-profile roles. Eleanor started her operatic career, in 2008, in the children's chorus for the English National Opera's double bill of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci*. This was followed by a stint in Jonathan Miller's *La Boheme* for the ENO, in 2009. Since then, Eleanor has graduated to solo parts, and this March, performed the role of the Little Vixen in Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen* at the Royal Opera House, under the musical direction of conductor, Sir Charles

Mackerras. Eleanor says of the experience, 'The rehearsals were extremely hard work. I had to dance for nearly three hours a day perfecting my moves as the vixen. I was so battered and bruised that the costume department made me specially padded shorts so that I could carry on.' But, bruises aside, Eleanor admits that she relished the role and the production, defying her nerves because, as she puts it, 'being on stage, singing, is where I love to be'. And she will have plenty more opportunities to sing in the near future, because she has just been cast in the pivotal role of Flora, in a forthcoming production of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* for the European Opera Houses. Eleanor begins a three-week rehearsal period in Venice at the beginning of June, before opening in Teatro La Fenice in Venice, the very opera house where the opera premiered in 1954.

Maths for young minds

Any notions that Maths is a subject which intimidates young minds were dispelled during February, as Year 3 children enjoyed a Puzzle Challenge Day, designed to give them a hands-on experience of teamwork and problem-solving. During the three 90-minute sessions, led by the Happy Puzzle Company, the children encountered a variety of fun, but challenging, 3D puzzle scenarios, which they had to complete in teams. Most challenges lasted for no more than a few minutes, but required each team to work together and carefully develop strategies in order to find a solution. The day certainly got the thumbs-up from the children. Lucy Szemerényi, Junior School Maths Coordinator, said, 'An



interactive day like this really gets the pupils working together and combining their strategies to solve a range of problems. It was great to see them enjoy the opportunity so much and hear so many enthusiastic responses.'

Chess? It's child's play

Over the February half term, one Y7 boy proved his sporting credentials in a global field. Isaac Sanders, 11, competed in the Cappelle la Grande Open in France, an annual chess tournament considered one of the strongest opens in the world, where Grandmasters and International Masters mill amongst the 600 or so competitors. Isaac scored 4.5/9 and a Tournament Rating Performance of 2114, winning a prize cup for best Under 12, and earning himself an appraisal from the Daily Telegraph Chess correspondent, Malcolm Pein, as 'Isaac Sanders - a name to watch'. More recently, Isaac scored 5/9 in the Lucopen tournament in Lille, while, on 17th April, he entered and won the Open Section of the Golders Green monthly rapid-play, beating some of the best adult players in the area. The chess bug first bit Isaac when he was six, on holiday on the Isle of Skye one particularly rainy summer. In those days, he'd lose to his Dad by one move

each time - but he doesn't lose to his Dad any more. 'You need to be able to calculate long variations', explains Isaac, whose other skills include Maths and Latin. Isaac's sister is also one to watch, being one of a Junior School U11 team which broke school records at the Pontins Qualifying Tournament in February, scoring 24 wins and 1 draw out of 25 games. The summer will see Isaac representing England at the European Union Chess Tournament in Austria. Best of luck, Isaac!



But is it Artemis?

One raging sea-monster, several frenzied horses and two very manipulative goddesses featured in the brilliant three-night production of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, as directed by OC Guy Woolf (TL 2009) last term. The play provided a sumptuous culmination to a richly varied Classics Week - which also included a lecture from Dr Nick Lowe of Royal Holloway on Homer, a talk by Dr Laura Swift of Worcester College, Oxford on the role of women in Greek drama, a Roman banquet and screenings of '300'.



The play explores the monumental themes of love, freedom and forgiveness. Guy's enthusiasm for its haunting analysis of human life, played out beneath the critical and domineering gaze of the gods ensured that the audience were treated to an evening of intense and deeply moving drama.

Hippolytus is a young man (played with passion and nuanced understanding of the text by Arthur Graham-Dixon) obsessed with Artemis, the goddess of hunting and chastity - a terrifyingly imperious Kathryn Kramer. But on the other side of the stage looms Aphrodite, goddess of love who, feeling mistreated and vindictive, begins the play with a baleful exposition of how she intends to ruin Hippolytus - and his whole household in his wake. As the story unfolded, we were treated to standout performances from Tom Wright, playing Hippolytus' father Theseus, and Charlotte Holtum, as Phaedra, who is infected with love for her step-son Hippolytus; as well as superbly atmospheric sound and set design.

The best things come in fives

This has been a season of records for Highgate Fives. In winning the Under 19 Open in tremendous style at Highgate this March, Harry Hatchwell and Cameron Most ensured that we have now won this prestigious Cup three years in a row.

Eve Smith-Bingham and Amira Reimer (Y6) won both the Girls Under 15 and Ladies Under 19 Open Championship where Highgate had all four semi-finalists – Hannah Rapley and Francesca Howell (Y10), Eloise Most and Lara Foch (Y8) (finalists in both competitions), and Aimee Paul and Scarlet Katz-Roberts (Y6). This is a particularly talented group of girls and we

look forward to further success in the future.

Eve and her partner, Ingimar Tomasson (Y5) won the National Under 12 Championship beating James Bloomfield and Robert MacLennan (Y7) in the final. Eve is the first girl to win the Under 12s and Ingimar is the youngest. We entered 34 pairs in this competition – also a record.

Our Under 14s dominated the National Under 14 Championship playing with exceptional skill and determination. The reward? Seven pairs in the quarter finals – an astonishing achievement. Charlie Noble and Joe Berriman retained the cup they won last year beating Jamie Willett



and Joe Perl in the final.

There are now more than 40 girls playing the game seriously and reaching a very high standard and the number of boys playing at the lower age groups is higher than ever. Congratulations to all our 82 pairs who took part in the National Championships and who also played in school matches. AB

Runners make great strides

Highgate's cross country runners have enjoyed a highly successful season, with team victories for the U13 boys at the Pat Bagnall Memorial, the Belmont Relays and the Hereward House Cup. Their success was mirrored by the senior team, who finished in 9th place at the King Henry Relays in Coventry, as Michael Allan-Dan, Asher Brooks, Archie and Joe Patch and Luke and Josh Ames-Blackaby achieved Highgate's best ever finish at the competition in over twenty years of competing. The first Highgate girls' team to make the journey to the Midlands came away with a promising 5th place – all the more impressive given that two Y8 girls were

competing in an open age group for Highgate. But the laurels go to Michael Allan-Dan, who ran the 7th fastest time of the whole competition in Coventry – a remarkable achievement given that no fewer than 47 schools were present – before rounding off a record-breaking season by representing Middlesex at the English Schools Championships in Manchester, along with Molly Patch, Sophia Parvizi-Wayne and Luke Ames-Blackaby. There has been success too for Highgate's marathon runners. Asher Brooks and Hugh Lindsey, both in Y13, completed the gruelling 13.1 miles of the 'Runtothebeat' and Silverstone half-marathons, raising plenty of money for charity in the process, while several Highgate staff successfully completed the London Marathon on 25th April: Dan Brandt finishing in 3 hours 57 minutes, Paul Webb in 4 hours 15 minutes and Mark James in 3 hours 38 minutes.



On their toes



Dancers throughout the Foundation showed that they had all the right moves in March, at the annual cross-Foundation Gym and Dance Evening. 92 children, from Year 2 to Year 13, took part in the event, performing dance styles which ranged from Classical ballet to a Michael Jackson-inspired hip

hop and body-popping routine from a group of Year 6 boys. The event was organised and choreographed by Clare Rodgers, who this Autumn founded a youth dance company for dancers in Years 7, 8 and 9, who took to the stage with their own contemporary spin on 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Standout performances came from Rebecca James and Claudia Chmielowska, both in Year 7; but all participants and their coaches worked incredibly hard over the course of the Michaelmas and Lent terms to rehearse and fine-tune the routines to such impressive effect.

Pats on the back all round

After a series of trials Year 8 pupils Joe Light, Richard Footman and Aaron Nutman were recently selected to represent London Independent Schools Football Association at a national tournament hosted by Repton. After playing particularly well all three boys were selected to represent the South in the next stage of trials and matches; from these, Aaron was selected to represent the England ISFA team. This is a tremendous achievement for both him and the school, and comes immediately after the pleasing news that Max Woollard gained a third place in the national fencing



championships. Other notable representative honours were recently awarded to some of our talented cross-country group - Molly Patch, Michael Allan-Dan, Luke Ames Blackaby and Sophia Parvizi Wayne all ran for Middlesex in the English Schools Championships in Manchester.



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