

CELEBRATE RE!

Throughout the month of March, schools nationwide have been celebrating Religious Education as a subject with academic rigour and the capacity to promote greater community cohesion.

The Religious Studies Department at KEHS does not need a campaign to celebrate the creativity, imagination and intellectual capacities of our students! However, this has been a great opportunity to build on our existing work. This month we have welcomed a number of special visitors to school including the Bishop of Birmingham the Right Reverend David Urquhart who led a whole school assembly and then a lesson with Lower Sixth A level students. Reverend Mark Earey from Queens Theological College explored 'Eschatology' with the Upper Sixth. The Reverend Susannah Rudge, who left KEHS to read a first degree in Theology at Oxford and then an M Phil. at Cambridge, talked to the Upper Fourth about the Eucharist and about vocation. These fortunate girls were also treated to insights into the life of Sajida, a Muslim woman. Dr. Brindha Mahon answered questions from Lower Fifth students on Sikhism.

In addition, we held a special 'CELEBRATE RE' event on Tuesday the 22nd March when girls, parents and a number of representatives from local faith communities gathered in the school hall to share something of their life stances. Members of the Bahai faith and local Humanist, Victoria Denning, joined representatives of the six major religions. Girls took the lead in explaining aspects of their faith and a number brought along celebratory foods to share. The colour, beauty and inspiration of traditional Indian dance from Samyukta Aryasomayajula, Shreeya Kotecha and Neelam Deshmukh helped to make the event a great success.

Sixth Form girls were also delighted to be invited to an academic conference at the University of Birmingham. Seminars on Sufism and the Philosophy of Religion generated great interest as did the address by Reverend Dr Toby Howarth, advisor to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Eliza Summerfield and Hannah Mabley were selected to take part in the 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme, attending seminars at the University of Aston and flying to Poland for the day in order to see the stark reality of Auschwitz Birkenau for themselves.

The Upper Fourth also captured this mood of contemplation and remembrance during their visit to Coventry Cathedral; an excellent catalyst to their work on 'Christian approaches to Peace and Reconciliation'.

If that wasn't sufficient, then consider the fact that a camera crew arrived in School to film a Religious Studies lesson and individual students talking about their beliefs - this will be accessed by teachers and so hopefully generate more interest in Religious Studies and so... the circle is complete!

We are so proud of our students and our subject and thank everyone for their excellent support to celebrate Religious Studies as it goes from strength to strength.



A TOUCH OF THE CLASSICS

On Monday 14th of March, you may have looked up from your work and seen fleeting figures donning togas and tainia processing the upstairs corridors.

Well actually they were peploi, not togas, but that is another matter. No, this was no regular Greek lesson. This was the Panathenaea!

The Panathenaea was a religious festival and games held in Athens to honour the birthday of the city's patron goddess, Athena, goddess of wisdom, crafts and war strategy. Athena was an interesting character, born from her father Zeus' head after he swallowed her mother. She came to the aid of many Greek heroes such as Perseus, Heracles and Odysseus, turned Arachne into a spider and, despite being a virgin, was one of Erichthonius's two mothers. However, she became patron of Athens after giving the olive tree to the people. Some believe her epithet, "grey eyed" stems from the grey underside of olive leaves. Understandably, we felt Athena was due some more honour. However, with no room in the PDM room for chariot racing and no inclination towards wrestling, we celebrated symposium (drinking party) style.

We dressed in our peploi, put on necklaces and made our own tainia (headbands worn to parties) and took our effigy of Athena (ahem, doll) to the PDM room, where we dressed her in "the sacred peplos". Courtesy of a genuine Greek in the group we learnt a Greek dance, and then we ate Greek food (and Athena's birthday cake) whilst Mrs Kavanagh read a moving extract from Homer's Iliad to us, which we will be reading in the original Greek as part of our GCSE course. We then just about had time for a game of kottabos, the ancient game of flicking the dregs of your wine (or in our case "wine") at a target, or into a friend's cup. Our symposium was obviously a great success as we had a genuine Greek-style gatecrasher in the form of Ms Pallister! A huge thank you to Mrs Kavanagh and Mr Scroi for organising our symposium, we couldn't have done it without you!

Isabella Kessedjian L5A

OLYMPIC MATHEMATICS CHALLENGE



Mr Kavanagh will be running a regular Maths Challenge. He launches the first of his puzzles in this edition of the school newsletter. Solutions on A4 to Mr Kavanagh by the 28th April.

There are 9 regions enclosed by the 5 Olympic rings. Put a different whole number from 1 to 9 in each region so that the sum of the numbers in each ring is the same.

What are the largest and smallest possible values of the common sum?



Democracy Week

Georgia Luscombe (U6E) tells us the reasons behind 'Democracy Week'



It is often said that young people have no interest in politics; that we will only care when we come to pay university fees or income tax, or that the ins and outs of Westminster really don't apply to us.

To some extent, this is true; why should we bother taking an interest if we can't vote and our parents mainly deal with financial issues? However, the reality is that we are the future electorate; the majority of our current Upper 4ths will be able to vote in the next General Election of 2015 and, as many of the Upper 6ths would agree, there is no magic moment as you reach eighteen when the workings of our political system become clear. It is up to the individual to begin thinking about their own views on current issues before they arrive at the ballot box.

That is why I decided to launch 'Democracy Week' in school, from Monday 28th March - Friday 1st April. Inspired by the recent struggles for democracy in the Middle East, I thought it was probably time we all started to appreciate our freedom of choice in the Western world a little more. Watching the news one evening, and seeing people die for the rights we so casually enjoy, made me think: to what extent do we still live in a democracy? In the 2010 General Election, 65.1% of people voted in the election. (House of Commons research). This was a slight improvement on the two elections before this, if only because people are more ready to exercise their democratic right during times of recession. Even so, considering the trouble our country has gone through over the past few years, what with a poor economy and soaring unemployment, why did 34.9% of the population feel that it was not worth bothering to vote?

"A democracy cannot thrive if its future generations do not debate amongst themselves or contribute new, fresh ideas to deal with the problems we face in an ever-changing world."

If the voter turnout continues to decrease as it has for the past sixty years (in 1950 it was at 83.9%), then will we not reach a point in the not-so-distant future where 50% of the population does not vote? And if this does become the case, the actual government (having received perhaps half of the total vote) will only represent a quarter of the population. Can we call this a democracy, if only 25% of people are responsible for making the laws for all of us? This represents a growing phenomenon in Britain - as a country, are simply less and less interested in democracy. In which case, it could become entirely obsolete in another fifty years because we will be governed once again by a minority. Is this really what we want for our political system, or is it time to change our attitude?

Our school educates some of the sharpest minds in the country; it is our responsibility to engage in political debate, to listen to other people's opinions and to exercise our own freedom of choice. That is why we are holding a whole school election on Friday 1st April, for which girls have created their own political parties. The manifestos put forward for this



election have been brilliantly thought out and show real originality and creativity; it is vital that these qualities are applied to the UK's political system in the future. All I wanted from this exercise was for people to talk about things which they are passionate about or even to develop a passion of their own. Something which is lost in the contemporary system of judging students by their exam grades is the ability to defend their own ideas, rather than to regurgitate other people's. A democracy cannot thrive if its future generations do not debate amongst themselves or contribute new, fresh ideas to deal with the problems we face in an ever-changing world.

On a more worldwide scale, we must also decide whether democracy actually is the best policy. I will be giving a talk on Tuesday 29th March about the merits and drawbacks of 'democracy' versus other ideologies such as Marxism and



Fascism. I will also address the issue of what 'democracy' really is and whether we do, in fact, have one in Britain. These things may seem abstract compared to more immediate concerns such as homework to complete and netball matches to play but

I hope that, for this one week at least, I communicate the importance of thinking about political issues; though 'Politics' isn't everybody's cup of tea, it is something which every individual should consider at some point in their life. If we don't, then are we not just mindless cogs in a machine?

If we want to boast of a 'fair system', if we complain about the NHS, if we think taxation is unbalanced, if we don't want increased university fees, if we want to eliminate the gender pay gap, or anything else which affects our everyday life, then we have to drop the all-too-common motto of "No, I don't care about politics". Almost every issue is political. We have the privilege in this country of being able to vote, to form our own parties, to protest... And yet we exercise it so sparingly. The uprisings in the Middle East should make us feel inherently privileged that, despite budget cuts and sometimes untrustworthy MPs, we at least have the ability to do something without being massacred by those in power.

Which leads me onto the last issue; do we have the right to intervene in struggles for democracy abroad? This will be formally debated by four members of the Lower 6th on Thursday 31st March and will be followed by a floor debate, to which I hope many people will contribute. It should prove to be a highly controversial topic! One of the most pressing concerns for the UK at the moment is the East-West divide; how do we deal with issues of terrorism whilst remaining sensitive to cultural differences and not imposing our political views upon foreign countries? I have no doubt that how we handle the current situation in the Middle East will shape the world for my generation. This is why it is so vitally important that we follow events closely and decide how we believe they should be handled.

'Democracy Week' should tell you everything you need to know before making these decisions and taking them out into the world. After all, who knows whose views will be put into action in the future?



Business Live! Conference, Disneyland Paris 2011

This February half term a group of twenty three girls, Mrs Sangha and Mrs Azmat climbed aboard a coach ready to journey an epic twelve hours to their destination: Disneyland Paris! The coach was shared with students from Carr Hill School, Kirkham who had already travelled for three hours before arriving to pick up the girls from KEHS.

The weekend itinerary included a two day stay at a Disneyland Resort hotel with access to all the theme park rides, a day conference with European Study Tours and a Wild West Buffalo Bill's evening meal and show.

The weekend was jam packed full of thrills and screams with highlights such as the 'Tower of Terror', 'Space Mountain' and 'Rock 'n' Rollercoaster' as well as the more subdued rides which our teachers took full advantage of, such as 'It's a Small World' and the 'Mad Hatter's Teacups'.

At the conference there were three speaker sessions which gave the girls a chance to meet and listen to industry experts on their experiences within the business world and learn about the different career routes available to them. Fraser Doherty, founder of Superjam and youngest ever supplier to a major supermarket chain, spoke of how he entered the highly competitive jam market with his unique product that contained many superfruits and did not have additives. Laetitia Beneteau of Eurostar spoke of the challenging conditions facing the business, in particular, new train companies operating on the same routes and increased competition from the budget airlines. Louis Barnett, Britain's youngest entrepreneur at the age of 12, spoke about his chocolate brand 'Chokolit' which is ethical in that it supports wildlife. He also spoke of his unique product designs and the niche market that he was targeting.

All in all the three speakers were fantastic and kept the audience stimulated and offered plenty of scope for discussion at the end.

Throughout the morning, the girls had to complete work books evaluating Disneyland as a business idea, with tasks including budgeting for a family of 4's trip to Disneyland, assessing the marketing strategies and determining some of the qualities necessary to work at Disneyland.

Mrs Sangha, feeling inspired after the conference, imparted some wisdom to the girls. Memorable quotes include: 'Fear is the disease, but hope is the recovery'.



Finally, the Buffalo Bill's evening created much excitement as the audience was required to participate for much of the show. However, we can safely say that no one enjoyed it as much as our teachers, who actively involved themselves in all of the activities!

A big thank you goes to Mrs Sangha and Mrs Azmat for organising such a fantastic weekend!

Quotes:

- 'Seeing the young entrepreneurs today has helped me realise that age is just a number in business' - Rhea Tewari
- 'This trip has helped me understand the variety of opportunities available to me in business' - Natalie Tran
- 'What a fun and fantastic way to learn - in Disneyland!' - Maheen Gill

By Sonia Razi And Rhea Tewari

KEHS Team win Inter-School Business Game

On 21st March 2011, Lower 6th Economics and Business students from KEHS went to the Great Hall at Birmingham University to participate in the challenging Inter-School Business Game organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

There were a total of 29 schools with many teams from around the Midlands present. Groups of 6 were given a case study where they had to act as accountants and come up with four solutions to problems. They then had to present their work and ideas to a panel of judges and the other contestants with only 3 minutes to present.

The competition was tough and culminated in one winner that has been chosen to go through to the finals in July. KEHS won top prize and will now attend the National Final held in June to represent the West Midlands.

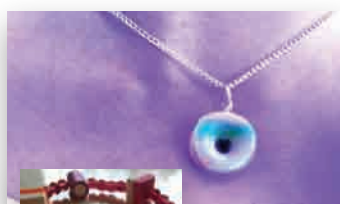
The winning team consisted of: Lauren Fahy, Emma Harrison, Naomi Harryman, Emma Stevens, Rosie Steward and Natalie Tran.

Congratulations girls!



Success for KEHS Young Enterprise Company

This year's Young Enterprise company, which is called YUM! has been selling hand made sweet themed jewellery as well as individually wrapped sweets.



It has had a busy few weeks, attending official

Young Enterprise trade fairs selling to members of the public. The company has been to both the Touchwood Shopping Centre in Solihull and the Sutton Coldfield Gracechurch Mall. At Touchwood, the team sold their products with considerable aplomb taking in the highest sum of money out of all of the stalls.

In Sutton, the girls went on to receive the prize for 'Overall Best Trade Stand'. The stand was well presented, highly informative and colourfully presented. The win was a real boost to the company's morale. Well done girls!

Clebury Mortimer – 4th-6th March 2011

On the afternoon of Friday 4th March, around 150 enthusiastic singers and instrumentalists piled into Clebury Mortimer Pioneer Centre, ready for the tiring but fulfilling weekend ahead.



Before we could even settle into our dormitories, rehearsals commenced on Mahler's extraordinary 4th Symphony, Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, played exquisitely by Kiyam Lin, and Mozart's 'Vesperae solennes de confessore' for

the Choral Society; three challenging works that required a huge amount of effort and perseverance from both the students and conductors, Dr Collisson and Mr Bridle.

After the first day of demanding but rewarding and inspiring music making, everyone was already complaining of exhaustion! Having been warned of the extremely sensitive fire alarms, pupils lay awake dreading a repeat of two years ago when three fire alarms rang at unspeakably early hours of the morning. No such terrible event occurred and all woke up refreshed for a full day of hard work.



As rehearsals passed by each pupil could feel the pieces coming together and, encouraged by the passion of our music teachers, started to feel confident that the concert on the 20th March was going to be mind-blowing! But the climax of the day came with the long anticipated annual barn dance and 'Big Bounce'. Dressed in typical barn dancing attire (or as a horse in the case of two sixth formers), everyone 'dosed' the night away! The next morning we were surprised to find the orchestra rehearsal room covered in aluminium foil, Mr Monks' room filled to the ceiling with balloons and Dr Collisson's room covered in post-it notes; all the hard work of the crafty Upper Sixth!

The Choral Society and Symphony Orchestra came together to show each other what they had achieved and, after final tweaks had been made, the final run through proved to us how much we had improved over the weekend. Everyone had a great weekend away and huge thanks must go to the combined KEHS and KES music departments for making it possible.

by Alice Halstead