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# Grey Coat

Number 154



THE PARENTS' NEWS LETTER OF THE GREY COAT HOSPITAL

JULY 2009

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*Dear Parents,*

*This is the last issue of the newsletter this year – and it is packed with articles celebrating the activities Grey Coat students have been working on – and in many cases winning. By the time you read this it will be very close to the end of term, and you will probably also be reading your daughter or son's final tracking report for the year. At the time of writing I am busy reading the reports of all the students, and I am delighted to see how positive the vast majority of them are. The students have all reflected on their progress during the academic year; they rejoice in their successes, and set themselves challenges for next year. I am sure parents will all read these reports with care, and will give their children warm encouragement for good effort and congratulations for positive achievements. Where progress or effort are not as good as they should be, please help your son or daughter to reflect on what is holding them back from wholehearted commitment to their studies, and help them work out how to do better next year.*

*I hope that all members of the school community will have a truly restorative break over the summer – a chance to unwind, to explore new places or new activities, perhaps, or to revisit old friends and favourite books. We all need this, so that the new start in September feels fresh and both staff and students come back full of energy and good resolutions for the best year ever. The new start will feel especially significant for students moving into Y10 at Upper School, and into the Sixth Form in Y12. These are major steps on the road from childhood to adulthood. We shall also be welcoming new students into Y7 and Y12, and we hope they will soon settle in and feel part of our hard-working and caring Christian community.*

*Some of our students will be moving on this summer – some from Year 11 going on to Sixth Form colleges or other schools, for a taste of new subjects or new experiences; others from Year 13, stepping out into adult life at university, in the world of work, or, in some cases, travel and volunteering on a gap year. A few, from other years are moving with their families to new places and new schools. We wish them all well, and hope that what they have learned at Grey Coat will stay with them, and stand them in good stead, wherever they move on to next.*

*After the holiday, enrolment for Y12 will be on Thursday 3rd September; Y13 on Friday 4th, and school starts again for Years 7-11 on Monday 7th September. The school will look rather different by then, as the work on the improvements under BSF will at last have started. At St Michael's there will not be much for students to see, as the work over the summer focuses on the office and the staff room areas. At St Andrew's, however, building work on the new Arts block will have begun, and this will make some obvious differences to school life. The most obvious, of course, will be the fact that the car park and playground area will largely be taken over by the building work and new temporary accommodation for the school. The kitchen and dining room will be on the ground floor of the temporary accommodation, and there will be art and music rooms above. (The site offices for the builders will be above that, with completely separate access arrangements, to maintain the separation of the building site and the school.) The existing music area will have been remodelled to provide two history classrooms and new toilets for students. All staff and students will enter and leave the school through the front entrance throughout the year during which the building work will be taking place.*

*I look forward to seeing you all, refreshed and full of good resolutions, when we reconvene.*

*Rachel Allard*

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# Attendance & Punctuality

If your child is absent for any reason, please remember to phone the school between 8 and 9am to let us know. The phone number for reporting absences is 0207 969 1998. For years 7-9, please press option 1 and for years 10-13 please press Option 2.

Please make sure we are notified in writing as far in advance as possible of any medical appointments. Please make sure the letter clearly states the time the students need to leave and the time and type of appointment. Your daughter's full name and Form should be on the note. Attendance and Punctuality is taken into account in all aspects of school life.



## Attendance & Punctuality Years 7, 8 & 9

May I say how pleased I am that nearly everyone got in on both the London Underground strike days. All those girls made a tremendous effort in the face of adversity and chaos. Well done to you all.

Angela Trainor  
Attendance and Punctuality Officer, St. Andrew's

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## Attendance & Punctuality Achievement



Photo: Kristie being presented with her certificates as part of this year's NRA Day celebrations

**Congratulations** to Kristie Brandon 11C she has managed to achieve:

100% Punctuality for the last FIVE years 2004 – 2009 AND 100% Attendance for the last THREE years from 2006 – 2009

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# AS & A2 Art Exhibition

On Thursday the 14th of May, 2009 the Art department took over the lower school café and Art room once more for a private view of AS and A2 work made during the year. The chairs and tables were cleared from the café to make the most of the magnificent space and light in the building. Our aim was to transform the space into a gallery-like setting in order to show off the work at its best.

Students, staff, parents, governors and friends were invited and we had a good turn out with everyone enjoying refreshments while looking at the work. Many people



One of the exhibits on display at the exhibition

commented on the quality and individuality of the students' Art, ranging from drawing and painting to video, textiles and photographic installations. It was great to see so many members of staff there. We were also pleased to welcome some of the outside agencies we have been working with in particular Ann Gilmore from the Royal Academy who works with our students on the RA's AttrAct Programme.

The Art department would like to thank the students for helping to clear the space and spruce up the Art room in preparation, the school caretakers and also Anne Marcher for helping to make the night a huge success. We were extremely pleased and proud of all our students. *Ms Lyons, Head of Art*



Left: another piece on display at the exhibition

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## Library Corner



The Winner of the 2009 Carnegie Award was S.Dowd's *Bog Child* which we all felt was a fair choice.

Over the summer break all staff will be reading a book on the theme of Freedom. Please encourage your daughter to do the same – the freedom booklist will be available on the Library area of the school website and all the books are available in the school Library – but to avoid the rush try your public library as well!

Stop Press: Westminster Libraries are running a summer Reading Challenge – Read It To Win It – see the School Library or any Westminster Library for details!

# Easter and New Year in Cambodia

**C**ambodian New Year falls in April, so while everyone back here in the UK was eating chocolate, Kate Figgess and I (LSAs here at Grey Coat) were celebrating the New Year in Cambodia!

Kate and I went to Cambodia to work with the local village children as part of a voluntary programme called Globalteer. We stayed in the city of Siem Reap, famous for its magnificent Angkor temples.

The organisation runs a variety of projects that include a free education programme for the children, homes for orphans and vulnerable children, vocational training, day centres for street kids, community support, sports and arts.

Kate and I were placed at the Globalteer Community Development Centre, one of the many schools that run the free education programme. It provides local children that are unable to afford the government school fees, the opportunity of a free education.

The school was based in a small village 10km from the city which we cycled to each day, this became a real challenge when the temperature reached 43 degrees! A far cry from my daily commute on the crowded tubes and buses during the rush hour!

We taught the children a range of subjects throughout our stay and they were very enthusiastic about learning, but were unfortunately equally enthusiastic about climbing trees to pick the coconuts and mangoes during the lessons!

The end of our trip was spent celebrating the Khmer New Year which lasted a whole week!



This was a real education for me as the children showed us how to make New Year decorations and taught us traditional dances and games. Most of the games involved hitting each other with toys and the most popular one involved hitting the teachers as hard as possible on the knee with a conker!

This trip to Cambodia gave me a real insight into another culture and whilst I felt like I was doing a little to help, it felt more like a privilege to spend those few weeks with such an inspiring and amazing community.

*Emily Sargent*

Photos: The children of the Globalteer Community

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# Celia Pym Interview

**A** Postgraduate student at the Royal College of Art on her last visit to GCH, Celia Pym is now a Textile Artist who also features in the RCA Outreach Programme

"Passionate about wool", Celia was impressed by the scarf knitted by GCH Staff on behalf of a Naval Veteran and admired the tapestry created by the Old Greys' Association to commemorate its Centenary in 1999.

After listening to the School Councillors' speeches, Celia spent some time talking about aspects of the debates and her own education. On the first motion, This House believes in single-sex education, Celia would have sided with the Opposition. Her early years at The King Alfred School, Barnet, and in the Sixth Form at Sevenoaks had been much more congenial than her experiences at the single-sex Walthamstow Hall. Art at Sevenoaks had been "fantastic" and Celia had enjoyed visiting art galleries and adding welding and weaving to her IB skills in maths and history.

The second motion, This House believes there should be more celebration of the successes of youth, occasioned some ambivalence. Whilst there are students who do not rely on praise to achieve, for others praise is important in generating motivation through a positive approach. Since students have to live in the real world where adverse comment may well be encountered, Celia felt that honesty was essential.

In relation to the third motion, This House would abolish Faith Schools, Celia would, given the opportunity, have "most likely voted with the Proposition" as she dislikes being told what to think. Her wish, for herself and for others, would be for students to determine beliefs for themselves and some faith schools appear to be propagandist. Nevertheless Celia thought it was important for students to learn about religious philosophies and about the significance of major occasions such as the Passover.

Whilst appreciating that schools provide structure and friendship, Celia felt that the key role of school was to enable students "to learn about things".

Asked whether she would prefer to visit the Tate to see the Van Dycks or go to the Royal Academy to view the Palladio exhibition, Celia declared that her real preference would be to look at the work of the American photographer, Walker Evans. Not really a fan of the European tradition, Celia would, if pushed, have headed into Tate Britain. Presented with the offer of live theatre tickets for Madame de Sade or Hairspray, Celia would "opt for a musical every time". New York however would be rejected in favour of Crete to which Celia would take her favourite novel, Tony Morrison's Beloved.

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## ¡Vamos a Valencia!

**A** group of sporty Year 9 Hispanists are honing their ICT skills in the hope of winning a week's football course in Spain, with Valencia F.C. The girls are creating Spanish PowerPoint presentations about tourism in Valencia to be used in advertising campaigns by the Valencia Tourist Board. We are convinced that Grey Coat girls will raise the bar on last year's winning entries and wish them muy buena suerte in the competition!

Thanks to Mr Coe and Miss Miller for sharing their wisdom with us and with the girls.

*Miss Stacey, Miss Pye & Miss Camp*



# All The Fun at the Guild's

The International Fair took place on Saturday 16th May this year and was a great success. Each form had worked very hard to portray their chosen country. The judges had a very difficult task to choose the winner but Year 8G won overall with their Egyptian stall. They can look forward to a day out to Euro Disney before the end of term! Well done to everyone for providing such a happy fun event, and raising over £2900 for the school. Thanks from the Guild go to the staff, the school keepers, the students and parents who helped make the day a success, and for all the contributions towards the Guild stalls for plants, jams, marmalade, chutney, cakes, bagels, jewellery, pancake making, hot dogs, and to Starbucks for lending us the coffee machine.



Students pictured with Ms Worsfold at the International May Fair



The plant stall



The pudding & jams stall



The Polish stall



The cake stall

# International May Fair 2009



The Moroccan stall



The German stall

The International May Fair 2009 was another success. In the morning everyone came to set up their stalls, including helpful parents and even teachers! Many people were wearing traditional costume including; Mummies from Egypt and Greeks in robes. Every form performed brilliant traditional dances and had busy stalls selling a wide variety of things from hot food to handmade crafts.

Lots of parents, friends and families came to look around the 18 international stalls. Arranged by continents people could see from Iceland to India, from Ireland to Italy. Many forms won prizes at the end of the day for Arts and Crafts, Food, Traditional costume, Language and Culture, Dance and The Green prize.

The overall winners were 8G and their fantastic stall on Egypt! Well done to everyone!

*Eleanor Armstrong 8G*



The audience watches the Spanish dancing

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# TimeBank UK

*TimeBank UK is a national charity providing volunteers with information on voluntary work and volunteering projects in the UK. Volunteers came into school to work alongside pupils on a campaign of their choice. Below students recount their experience of the project.*

**W**e have enjoyed our TimeBank experience where we made a campaign about trying to stop gun and knife crime and raised awareness of this particular issue. We advertised a T-shirt design competition in our year group and created a T-shirt with the winning design, which we then sold.



From left to right (Holly Tarry; Bethany Kilminster; Chidima Abiaka)

We went to the first ever Urban Fete which we all enjoyed including Miss Warren and all 3 girls Bethany Kilminster, Holly Tarry and Chidima Abiaka. At the fete we did activities such as a clothes swap shop, debates, and recycling. We got filmed and interviewed too. We were interviewed for invisible children another campaign and we were interviewed by the young timebank team themselves.

We think that this campaign was a big success and we are thinking about having our own swapshop at school to raise some more money for this campaign.

All of the children who were involved were really happy with the design of the T-shirt and we would recommend this citizenship group to all the new year sevens. We would love to take part in this activity again.

*Holly Tarry, Bethany Kilminster, Chidima Abiaka 7G  
Members of the Timebank team*

The Timebank team ran a competition to design a T shirt, then got it printed and sold it. This photo shows Bethany modelling the T shirt at the Timebank Urban Fete, in the Market Stables in Camden.

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## Jack Petchey Award News

**H**elen Chiu won the May Jack Petchey Award for her outstanding achievements and contribution to Graphics. Helen has demonstrated an outstanding level of graphic skill. She has recently completed her GCSE coursework making a pop-up book and design folio documenting the design process. The book is easily of university standard and Helen is producing work of this level while only in Yr 11. Helen's work is so impressive that the Design and Technology department have kept samples of her project work to inspire and challenge other students even at A level.

Helen also studies other GCSEs both academic and creative and manages to make sufficient time for all of them. In addition to all these skills it is not just that Helen is incredibly talented it is the way in which she achieves these high standards.

Besides the fact she possesses all of these incredible talents Helen herself displays so many personal qualities to be admired: she is modest, she never thinks she is better than anybody or blows her own trumpet. She is patient and politely mannered, honest, calm, kind and thoughtful, considering others before herself yet still ambitious and determined to succeed. *Ms Parish*



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# Father & Daughter Swop Books for English Project

As part of the drive to get Year 10 girls to move on to more challenging fiction, Amber Tallon in 10G and her father, John, swapped books. Amber read one of her father's recommended books, *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, Unbeliever: Lord Foul's Bane* by Stephen Donaldson and he read several of the books in the *Noughts and Crosses* series by Malorie Blackman.

Here's what Amber had to say about the experience and her dad's choice of book for her:

"I found that swapping books was very interesting and stimulating because the writing style of the book was different to what I was used to and that really pushed me. I thought that the book was very exciting although I felt that the story line dragged on a bit and I found the character of Thomas Covenant intriguing because he was an anti-hero and I had never really encountered a character like that in any other book. He was a leper who was pulled into a fantasy world which is disorientating enough but on top of that he was also believed to be a historic hero that was said to come back in the people's time of need. Covenant was thrown in at the deep end from the very beginning and he never wanted that; it was this defiance that made me interested in his character because he would always surprise me. I kept expecting him to step up to the challenge and save the world but that sort of thing wasn't in his nature of being 'outcast unclean' as he put it.

Overall, I really enjoyed the book and its unique storyline and characters made me eager to continue the series. Each one may be long and difficult to digest, but by the end it's definitely worth it."

Mr Tallon had this to say:

*"I thoroughly enjoyed the books and found that they were quite challenging in the sense that I quickly lost the idea of black and white. What I was latching onto was the feeling of injustice, and that it is always the attempts of the minority to be recognised for their own worth and to be accepted as 'human'. The theme of colour is really just a reference to put forward the point of inequality and discrimination minorities face. What was interesting was the relationship between the two main characters and also how others on the outside viewed the relationship. I think that while the books were interesting, the story began to fade in the third book and fourth books but overall they were very good and I would be happy to swap books with Amber again!"*

Swapping books with parents, Godparents, friends and EVEN teachers is a fantastic way of broadening your reading horizons without stepping into the complete unknown.

Discussing your reading material is an excellent way of analysing literature more deeply. Not only does it help with preparing for exams, but discussing books also helps everyone to become more aware of how the printed word continues to have the power to affect just us as deeply as other more visible media.



Amber Tallon and her dad John with their swapped books

Many thanks go to Amber for her wonderful idea to swap books with her dad and to John Tallon for participating!

Ms Bond, English Department

# Visiting Margo Selby

When Margo Selby was at GCH in the 1990s, her interests included art and drama. As well as performing in the school production of "Guys and Dolls", Margo featured on television as Julie in the long-running school soap, "Grange Hill".

From the Sixth Form, Margo pursued a Foundation Art course at Camberwell and then took her degree at Central St Martin's. After an MA at The Royal College of Art, Margo has developed her enthusiasm for design and textiles into a thriving business which allows wide scope for her creativity.

Her fabrics are made into scarves or bags and also range from covering a chair to bed linen at Habitat. No material is wasted so small pieces are made into lavender bags whilst scraps stitched together become pin cushions. Displayed in one window is a Design Award-winning rug woven from banana silk fibre (from the trunk).

Margo is an Old Grey who now runs a well-established textiles studio in central London. All the AS students were inspired by her arts and crafts collection which includes a wide range of interior design and other luxurious textile products which are on display and on sale in various well-known establishments.

Additionally, in her gallery Margo exhibits the work of other well-known textile and jewellery designers and on 16th June we saw a wide range of exceptional work as part of the London Jewellery Week. Especially we liked the way certain designers are using unusual yet interesting materials and techniques.



Having a go on the loom



Students listen to Margo Selby talk about her work

In the basement we were given a sneak preview of Margo's most recent designs which have been commissioned by the British Museum. These designs are very colourful and exciting. Her previous work for the BM was linked to Islamic mosques and the new springboard is South America.



Some of the Margo Selby fabrics

Margo uses many textile techniques such as weaving to produce her own designs. As we were shown around her studio we saw the looms which she uses to produce the fabrics. I was very lucky to have a go on this loom. At first I found the task quite tricky but gradually I started to get the hang of it.

Margo's talk to sixth formers at the gallery and subsequently to parents and students at the Design and Technology Exhibition at St Andrew's was really inspirational as she assured us that anyone can achieve anything in life. Through dedication and hard work anything can become possible. *Abigail Udoyen*

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# Student Voice

On returning from the Easter holiday the Upper School Council members had, in discussion with Ms Lecky, raised a number of issues which they felt were important to their contemporaries. Voting on these issues produced 3 topics which were to be debated during the Upper School assembly on 6th May when representatives of the Upper School Council were to undertake their first 'student voice' assembly.

Members of the Upper School Council were divided into 3 groups. Those working with Teni Tijani, Senior Prefect with responsibility for Year 11, compiled points on the subject of single-sex education whilst students under the aegis of Head Girl Camille St Omer tackled the topic of celebrating youthful success. With Caroline Mensah, the Upper School Council Prefect, the third group considered the role of Faith Schools. The meeting with Ms McMellan at 8am on Monday, 27th April, showed how seriously the Upper School Councillors were thinking about the 3 subject areas and how thoroughly the representatives were preparing for the Upper School presentation.



The student voice session in assembly

Whilst selected individuals were assembling speeches for delivery on 6th, Ms Lecky was organising her team of specialists to utilise the activote equipment.

Each form in Years 10 and 11 despatched 2 pupils to the Sports Hall where they were instructed in the technique of pressing the appropriate buttons to signify their support for or disagreement with the views expressed by the speakers.

With extreme rapidity on the 6th Ms Weithers was able to reveal the way each person had voted and to supply the percentage in favour of the proposition or siding with the opposition. For the first motion there was almost equal support for the confident speeches given by Georgia Bonsu and Georgina Corrie who had respectively presented the advantages and disadvantages of single-sex and co-educational schools. The second debate, delivered by Shannon Royce and Rachel Clarke revealed that a greater measure of praise for the successes of the young would most certainly be welcomed at GCH. In the third debate, Amy Pang's strongly argued rejection of Faith Schools was well counter-balanced by Naa Bannernan's experience of life in a secular secondary school. Whether proposing or opposing, all 6 speakers addressed the key points at issue in each debate and spoke clearly and succinctly. The event was an impressive and successful expression of the 'student voice'. *Ms McMellan*

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# Christian Youth Enterprise Weekend

On Friday 8th May 30 students in Year 7 and 8 departed for their weekend away at the Christian Youth Enterprise centre in Chichester.

When we arrived at the centre we met our leaders for the weekend – Hermione and Ben. After having a tour of the centre we then were shown where we would be sleeping for the weekend – an old minesweeper boat called The Gerald Daniel! We unpacked our belongings into our room and then went on a walk of the surrounding area.

The next day we woke up and had our breakfast. Everyone worked as a team to clean up after themselves. We then got into our activity groups for the weekend and were given our practical kit to wear. Our group's most challenging part of the weekend was the assault course, where we had to work together to go over the obstacles in the quickest time. It was difficult, but really enjoyable!

My favourite part of the weekend was when we did kayaking on the estuary. We had our own kayaks and we paddled up to various parts of the estuary. It was quite confusing at times if you paddled the wrong way, but really fun!

We also did other activities during the weekend, such as archery and sailing. These were really enjoyable and it was great to learn a new sport. One of the most memorable parts of the weekend however was when we had the bonfire and the mini talent show where everyone sang and danced. It was an excellent way to end our final night at CYE.

Thank you to all of the teachers and the staff at the CYE centre for an excellent weekend. *Jordan Campbell-Weedon 7G*

# Goodbye to Y13s

We said goodbye to Year 13 on Friday 22nd May with Strawberries and Cream in the garden at Lower School. It was great to see so many staff and parents join in our celebration of students' time here at Grey Coat. We were lucky to hear a final performance by the Gospel Choir, after which there was scarcely a dry eye in the place! It has been a great pleasure to work with Year 13 this year; they have contributed so much to the life of the school community, and we wish them every success and happiness in the future. *Ms Stevenson*



Former Head Girl Georgina Howitt speaks to students, teachers and guests



St Andrew's garden was transformed for the event



Some of the Y13 students who said goodbye to Grey Coat



The huge cake bought for the Y13 leaving party



The Senior Gospel Choir gave an emotional farewell performance

