

# Grey Coat



THE PARENTS' NEWS LETTER OF THE GREY COAT HOSPITAL

SEPTEMBER 2007

Dear parents,

Here we are at the start of another school year, after an extraordinary summer. The outstanding event of the summer was the production of *Flesh at the Edinburgh Fringe*. After the success of the performances in Westminster Abbey in March, during the celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, Ms Duck took the company of young players to Edinburgh for the first week of the festival. I was able to go up there for the last performance on 11<sup>th</sup> August, to see the play, which attracted full audiences and excellent reviews, and to hear what a wonderful time the students had had. Both students and teachers worked tremendously hard to bring this success about. As soon as public exams were over in June, they had started rehearsing again, and put on four performances in London in July. They then all took a week's holiday, before returning to more rehearsals and the journey up to Edinburgh on 3<sup>rd</sup> August. There the pace of work stepped up even further. The company took part in the opening parade, did four street performances and six evening performances in St John's church on Prince's Street. The students also had the opportunity to go to ten other performances of interesting work including the Soweto Gospel choir, *Shakespeare for breakfast*, *Fuerzabruta* (an Argentinian theatrical extravaganza) and *Truth in Translation* (an award winning South African play). The whole experience was extraordinarily valuable, and I am most grateful to the staff who were prepared to give up their holiday to make it happen, and to the Grey Coat Foundation, and a number of very generous parents, who made the trip possible from a financial point of view. Although the performances were for paying audiences, half the box office receipts went to the church and the festival organisers, so the takings did not go anywhere near covering the cost to the school.

On my return from Edinburgh, it was time for the exam results, which I am delighted to say were outstanding this year. A level results are particularly pleasing, with the average UCAS point score per student at 320, well above anything we have achieved in the past. This is equivalent to one A and two B grades per student. The percentage of A grades was exceptionally high, at 39.6%, compared to the national average of 25.3%. This year's exceptional year group included a record number of students who received provisional offers from Oxbridge. It was very good to see them all achieve the necessary grades, and together with one late entrant from last year, we now have ten students whose places have been confirmed.

GCSE results were also very good indeed, with 91% of candidates achieving 5 or more grades A\*-C. The most notable achievement at GCSE was the improvement in the percentage of students who achieved 5+A\*-C grades including English and Maths. This rose from 63.6% last year to 87% this year. Value added, by comparison with Yellis predicted grades was very good, with many students making well above average progress in relation to their baseline data. Y9 achieved the best value added in Westminster for KS3. Both staff and students worked extremely hard to achieve these results and deserve to be congratulated.

Last year's exam classes set a remarkable example of hard work and commitment. The challenge is now on for all our students to do equally well, and to fulfil their potential. Success at GCSE and A level depends on hard work from Y7 up, so we expect every student to focus on school work throughout the year. By the time this Newsletter goes out, parents should have received copies of their daughters' homework timetables, and I would ask you to ensure that your daughter is taking homework seriously and doing it to the best of her ability. If you find there are problems with the quantity of work set, either too much or too little, please let the teachers in the relevant subjects know, so that they can make the necessary adjustments.

I would also ask you to encourage your daughter to get involved in at least one of the many extra-curricular activities available at the school. We find that these activities contribute to the wider education of students, and those who take part with enthusiasm also work better in their academic studies. The timetable of clubs and activities is published in this Newsletter – I am sure there will be something there to suit your daughter.

Our theme this year is *Wisdom* – let us all work together this year to help our students grow in wisdom, both at home and at school.

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.



*Angela Trainor & Vivien Moore  
Attendance and Punctuality Officers*

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## Attendance & Punctuality Years 7, 8 and 9

### Year 7

Welcome to The Grey Coat Hospital! I hope the girls will be very happy here and strive to do their very best in all aspects of school life.

#### Attendance

Our Attendance levels at Grey Coat are the best in Westminster and we would like to keep it that way. We ask you where possible to try and make medical appointments outside of school hours so that any disruption to your daughter's learning is kept to a minimum. Please remember to give your daughter a letter as far in advance as possible for any appointments she may have. For health and safety reasons any student who has to leave the premises during school time must collect an exit slip from the main office on the ground floor. Should your daughter need to be absent for a reason other than medical, please note permission must be obtained by applying in writing to the Headteacher Mrs Allard and will only be granted in exceptional cases.

#### Punctuality

Punctuality is considered of the utmost importance at Grey Coat and we take lateness very seriously. Those of you who don't live locally must make allowances for our transport system which can often be very unreliable. If your daughter comes into Victoria in the morning, I would recommend she walks the 8 minute walk rather than takes a bus or tube such a short distance. It is usually quicker!

Please try to plan the journey in advance and make sure you leave in plenty of time to use an alternative route should transport be delayed. Any student who is late twice in any 5 day period will be given a 30 minute detention which then increases by 30 minutes for any subsequent late in the same period.

If any students are still unsure about routes to school, I will be very happy to help them if they come to see me about it. Here at Grey Coat, we have trips where students get to visit the most wonderful places and these are very popular and very oversubscribed. On many of the trips therefore, gaining a place often comes down to attendance and punctuality, so it is in your daughter's interest to get here on time.

### Years 8 and 9

It is good to welcome Y8 & 9 back to school. I hope the girls all had a lovely summer and have come back refreshed and ready for this academic year. I am relying on them to set a good example to the new intake by attending every day on time.

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

# Attendance & Punctuality Years 10 & 11

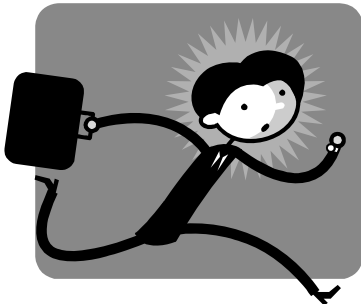
**W**elcome to St. Michaels "New Year 10's" and welcome back our new year 11s.

## Attendance

Attendance overall this year has been good. Please be aware that the days will get colder and darker so please make sure your daughter eats healthily and wraps up warmly. If your daughter does feel under par but is well enough to come into school, please be aware that students are allowed with their parents' permission to bring medicines into school which we will store in the main office for them to self administer.

## Punctuality

After a slightly disappointing start by a few girls this term students are making an excellent effort to arrive on time. Transport at times will always be a problem but if enough time is given allowing for **any** delays students should not be late to school.



Punctuality also applies to classes. Walking into a class late is very disrespectful to the teacher and also to the rest of the class who have made the effort to arrive on time. There is also a bigger picture to consider, attendance and punctuality is taken into account in all aspects of school life.

Vivien Moore  
Attendance & Punctuality Officer,  
St. Michael's

# The Sound of Music

**A** group of students from Years seven to eleven, including myself, had been given the opportunity to go to the London Palladium, to watch "The Sound of Music", on Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> of July 2007. It was not only the first time I watched the musical, but it was also my first visit to a theatre, I was unsure of what to expect.

With seats in the upper circle, we had a brilliant view of the stage. The story was of a nun, Maria who becomes a governess to the seven motherless children of the Von Trapp family, whose father remains occupied with business and has lost touch with his children. Despite the backdrop of war, the musical was kept light hearted by Maria and the children. The classic songs were instantly recognisable and made the whole experience very up lifting.

The "Sound of Music" was the perfect way to relax after the pressure of exams, a great end to the school year and a fantastic reward for the girls who achieved 100% Attendance and Punctuality.

Zahra Jaffry 11R

**O**n Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July, students from Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 who had achieved 100% Attendance and Punctuality throughout the year, were rewarded with a trip to the London Palladium to see The Sound of Music.

We travelled there by tube which wasn't the most pleasant of experiences but it was well worth it. Unfortunately, Connie Fisher (the star of the TV show "How do you solve a problem like Maria") wasn't performing that day but the Maria who did perform that day was fantastic.

The Sound of Music has become a very famous and popular musical to go and see, so naturally the theatre was packed which only helped the performance seem more real.

Near the end of the musical when the Von-Trapp family are performing in front of lots of judges, in a theatre where they are strictly on the same side of Hitler, huge banners displaying the famous German swastika came rippling down the sides of the Palladium in bright red, which definitely came as a shock but was amazing.

Overall, the trip was a huge success and all those long, hard school days were definitely worth it! "Thank You" very much Mrs Pickard, Mrs Moore Mrs Trainor.

Ann Mary Goodall 8Y

## Pizza Express Lunch

When it was announced that 8G was going to Pizza Express, everyone went crazy.

We all knew that the Pizzas would be mouth-wateringly delicious. Miss Bryant said that some lucky students would get to sit next to her and everyone started laughing.

The walk to Pizza Express made everyone really hungry and when the first people got their pizzas, they were devastated that they had to wait for everyone else to get theirs before they could start.

When we got back to school we all remembered to thank Miss Bryant, Miss Field and Mrs Trainor and asked them to start ordering next year's pizzas.

The thought of those amazingly tasty pizzas will encourage us to come in every day and on time next year. *Phoebe Ogunwobi and Amber Tallon 8G*

On Tuesday 10th July 7C went to Pizza Express as a reward for winning the year 7 attendance and punctuality league.

We had already ordered our pizzas we would like during the previous days and having arrived at school we had normal lessons from period 1-3. In period 4 we all lined up and walked to Pizza Express by the river. We went inside and we were greeted and then showed to our table, everyone was excited and happy that we had won and we couldn't wait to try our pizzas.



After waiting about 5 minutes we were given our food and we all began to eat, everyone was enjoying themselves and loving their food, it was delicious! As time went on we spoke about how the year had passed so quickly since we were 'new Greys' and all that we have achieved so far. We concluded that our time spent in 7C has been great and that Miss Morrish has been a wonderful tutor-we will all be very sad to see her leave us and take up her new role, but we are sure that she will have a wonderful impact on the new Year sevens.

Gradually time flew by and it was time to leave. We all walked back to school and by then it was time to go and sit our mental maths test. Overall I think that Pizza Express was a fun and enjoyable experience. As a form, hopefully we can go again next year as 8C. Fingers Crossed!

*Stephanie Black 7C*

## RE Conference

On the July 5th, Year 12 students from Westminster City School joined the students from Grey Coat for our Third Annual RE Sixth Form Conference. This year our theme was 'Is inclusion an illusion?', and with the guidance of our three guest speakers we sought to explore the issue of the extent to which the Church can be a place of inclusion for all peoples regardless of their gender, race and sexuality.

The day began with our Key Note Speaker, Dr Andrew Wright, of King's College London who set the theme in it's wider context and challenged us to consider the view that Liberalism, must by definition, have boundaries beyond which certain positions of belief and dogma are excluded. The second session consisted of a dialogue between Dr Robert Beckford, formerly of Birmingham University and now at Oxford Brookes University, and the radio broadcaster and writer Ann Atkins. Dr Beckford is a leading thinker in the area of Contextual Theology and he challenged us to consider that biblical teaching in the areas of gender, race and sexuality is intrinsically linked to the political and social 'context' of biblical writers. This particular session provoked extensive questioning and discussion from the student, and all of us, without exception were challenged to consider our views and faith positions.

In the afternoon, the Conference continued with workshops led by our Year 12 RE students, who facilitated activities in groups for rest of their year group. In this session, enthusiastic discussion of the issues continued.

The day was a tremendous success both in terms of the quality of our speakers and the contributions made by the students themselves. We were as a school community really 'doing Theology' on this occasion, and this reflects the quality of the work and insight held by our students. *Rev G Swinton*

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# Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award

Once again, students and staff set off for the wilderness of Dartmoor. Every year, we run two expeditions – one in mid-July and one in early August. The Year 12 students undertake a “practice” expedition and the Year 13s are assessed by an external assessor appointed by “The Dartmoor Duke of Edinburgh Expedition Panel”.

This year, I am very pleased to report that 42 students successfully completed an expedition of which 17 were assessed. **They have achieved the most demanding and prestigious outdoor achievement qualification in the world!!!**

There are four other sections to the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award. Students have to commit themselves to;

- 12 months Community Service – helping an organisation or individual once a week.
- 12 months Sport – individual or team sport.
- Follow any hobby and show significant progress/achievement over 18 months.
- Residential project – join a group of other young people and complete a residential project over a period of four days e.g. conservation.

In order to complete the expedition section, the students have to;

- Plan an 80km route over four days, in detail.
- Have this route “passed” by the Dartmoor Authorities two months before we go.
- Plan all equipment and food.
- Carry all equipment and food over 80km – camping wild - with no access to camp sites, showers or usual toilet facilities.
- Complete the 80 km safely (knowledge of navigation, emergency procedures, first-aid skills etc).

This year it rained for most of the time (3 out of 4 days on each expedition) as well as being foggy and very windy. The optimism and determination of all of the students, whilst being wet and maybe suffering from blisters, never ceases to impress me.

**Many thanks to all the staff who willingly give up their time and expertise for the students.**

All of the students who were assessed are now in a position to go to Buckingham Palace and receive their Gold Award from The Duke of Edinburgh himself. *Mr Higginson*



Photo:  
Year 13 assessed group  
after completing their final  
leg of the 80km route  
From left to right:  
Katherine Davis, Baby  
Ewnetw, Kirsty Kerr,  
Mustafa Safi, Rosie  
Musgrave, Matthew  
Taylor, Rebecca Winter,  
Derrick Gachiri, Jawad  
Juwad and Laura Mattis

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# Eton Summer School: Gifted and talented Program

Two Pupils, Bethany Hawke and Nancy Dai, currently in Year 9, were selected by Miss Solani to take part in a summer school programme for a week, held at Eton College. This was following success in the UK Maths Challenge run by the University of Leeds and the annual progress of both students. They joined thirty-eight other students selected from schools in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea.

## My Trip To Eton:

We were told that we were going to do our own version of the Shakespearean tale of Romeo & Juliet, but we had no idea what they had had in store for us.

Once we arrived, we were given a tour around Eton College. We were all very surprised at how large the place was. It was like a very big village that all belonged to Eton. They had their own playing fields which were many acres, their own market place where they sell sweets and food, a post office, a gift shop, lots of houses that were either occupied with the Eton Boys or the teachers - yes, if you teach at Eton then they supply you with your own house. We were told that there are about 400 teachers at Eton, a main theatre called the Farrer Theatre, a gym, an indoor swimming pool, an outdoor swimming pool (which is one of the largest in Europe), a Chapel and a dining building which they call 'Bekyton'.

Each day, we worked from 9.00am until 10.00pm with breaks between for lunch and supper. One of the hardest things to forget upon our return to London was the really nice food that they had! It was self-service and you could take as much as you like, (providing you can finish them!). The food was very healthy and there was always a starter dish, a main course, dessert and a salad bar!! There was also unlimited drinks machines offering tea, coffee, Cappuccino and hot chocolate! They also had fruit juices.

I really like the technology that Eton has for their facilities, as they are all very high-tech. During my trip at Eton, I learnt many things such as the importance of co-operation and teamwork, being patient with others and understanding what you are doing.

The accommodation was great and the girls lived in the Timbralls House. I really liked our house as it had a games room, a water machine and the main living room where we registered called the Fleming Room. We found out it was called the Fleming Room as the author of the James Bond series, Ian Fleming, had been to school at Eton and lived in the same house as we were living in!

The part I liked most was when we could spend time with our own tutors. Each tutor was assigned to a group of five or six pupils for half an hour each day to do whatever they wanted to. Our tutor group had the best tutor - instead of sitting down talking about how the day went, Charlotte Matthews, took us to her house to have the traditional English tea and scones, took us to the playing fields for a picnic, gave us a tour around the 'NO VISITORS' area, (e.g. Headmaster's office, inside the gates of the chapel where we saw the skeleton of the very first boss of the Headmaster) and took us in her car outside of Eton, into Windsor where we ate doughnuts, fed swans, played a game with the tourists and went outside Windsor Castle.

A typical day consisted of stage fighting, dance rehearsals and acting rehearsals. At the end of the week, we had to perform our own version of Romeo & Juliet, which ended up as a Modern version of it to our parents and members of the Eton community. I finally realised how hard it must be for the people working in the West End as it took us five days to do a 1/2 hour performance!

During the week, I made lots of friends from different schools and had learnt lots of lessons... It was all very emotional at the end as we didn't want to come home, but as a going away gift, we were allowed to do the Macarena dance, our favourite warm up games before we rehearsed which includes singing a song and doing a dance called the 'Funky Chicken' on stage. That week at Eton has been the best days of my life and I would never hesitate going again, even if it includes dancing! (which is not really my favourite hobby) Thank you very much for organising this excellent opportunity for Bethany and I!

Nancy Dai 9T

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## Maths News

We say good bye to Mrs Sarah Bucknill and Mr Ryan Store who have gone on to pastures new. Mr Store has returned to Canada to continue his teaching over there. We wish him the very best and thank him for his services within the department and at this school. Mrs Bucknill is now the Head of Mathematics at Richmond upon Thames College and on behalf of all the Year 11 students and the department, we would like to say a big thank you for all her hard work and efforts in supporting the department attainment their GCSE results this year. We also welcome a new member to the Mathematics Department Mrs. I. Ramage who has joined us this year and comes in as an exceptional Mathematics teacher for us (being able to teach both Mechanics and Statistics at A Level).

### Summer Schools - Gifted and Talented

We had a significant number of pupils attend a variety of Summer Schools this year ranging from Fashion and Media, Speech and Drama and to Science. There were pupils from Years 7, 8, 11 and 12 who attended with dedication, appreciation and a positive attitude. We would like to say congratulations to all of the following for being invited and completing the various courses.

### Year 9

The current Year 9s had a good year last year but have some work to do in order to match last summer's End of Key Stage 9 (SATs) Examination Results. We maintained 96% Level 5 and above with an overwhelming 49% students attaining Level 7 and above. (The national average was approximately 74% for Level 5 and above in Mathematics). The two top sets obtained 29 Level 8s between them and we hope that the current Year 9s are set for the challenge of doing better. The exam will be in the first week of May 2008 (and girls please note that Miss

Bryant has accepted the challenge). Well done to all the current Year 10 students for their achievements. We hope that they can turn these successes into exciting results in Year 11!

### Support for pupils

Pupils who would like extra help in Mathematics with homework, exam technique and/or certain topics should continue to ask their teachers for more help outside of class time. In addition to this, there is specific Mathematics Homework Club that runs on Mondays from 3.30 - 5.30pm. There will be a number of extra revision and booster classes for Years 9, 11, 12 and 13 that will run after school and during the first week of Easter Holidays. We shall also be starting a Year 7 Homework Club in January 2008. Please look out for forthcoming dates in the next Newsletter.

### Examination and Coursework

#### Dates:

For parents wishing to organise and pester their loved ones, we have a few important dates for you below:

- Year 11 GCSE MODULAR EXAM M5/M6/M7
- Year 12 AS and A2 Further Mathematics: CORE C  
1 9<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2008
- Year 13 A2 Mathematics: CORE C3  
17<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2008
- Year 10 GCSE MODULAR EXAM M5/M6/M7  
21<sup>st</sup> JANUARY 2008

I would also like to thank all staff in the Mathematics Department for preparing all of our students for their Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 Examinations last year. The results reflect both their and pupils' continuous hard work. Well done.

*Miss S. Solani,  
Head of Mathematics*

## Drama Club

KS3 Drama club will start on Tuesday 25th September at Lunch times. It will start at 1.10pm and finish at 1.40pm in time for afternoon registration at 1.45pm. Key Stage Three Drama Club will give girls the opportunity to work with girls in other years and devise pieces of Drama for short presentations at the end of each term.

Numbers will be limited to 25 girls. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. This group will be rotated every term to provide more girls with further opportunities. *Ms Foley*

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## Charity Week Dates

- Y7 - Week beginning  
14th January 2008
- Y8 - Week beginning  
1st October 2007
- Y9 - Week beginning  
3rd December 2007
- Y10 - Week beginning  
19th November 2007
- Y11 - Week beginning  
15th October 2007
- 6th Form  
Week beginning  
10th March 2008

# 'Flesh' Wows the Critics

This year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival was one of the most successful in its history. Once again it brought together a multitude of diverse, high quality productions, which resulted in a 10% increase in ticket sales. The Grey Coat Hospital is a modest institution and naturally does not lay claim to the entire ticket increase, however, some members of the Grey Coat Hospital cannot help but feel at least marginally responsible.



Last Easter, Westminster Abbey celebrated the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade with three exclusive performances of 'Flesh', a 60 minute play written by Ambrose Hogan and directed by Caroline Duck. Four months later, the company, Urban



Exchange Productions, made up of students from The Grey Coat Hospital, Westminster City and Westminster school, returned with a new and improved version; ready to fight the professionals for 6 successive evenings

as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The non-stop theatrical expedition of gospel singing and leafleting changed the act of walking down the street into an advertising extravaganza. We, inner-city students, acted our way in the pouring rain through parks and boulevards in

18<sup>th</sup> century costume occasionally launching into random 'Flesh' extracts and bursting into an African melody. Meanwhile, behind the public pretence, an unofficial

performing community of actors and actresses from around the globe backhanded flyers and made rapid exchanges of 'I'll see yours if you see mine' before preying on yet another member of the paying public. The competition for an audience was tough, but we didn't half meet the challenge. With audiences never dropping below 70 people, a complete sell-out on our opening and final night and 2 standing ovations, it rang true when we were honoured with badges reading the statement 'we survived the fringe 2007'.

However, it was not all work and no play; seeing other performances was unavoidable with theatrical temptations on every street corner. We experienced the full range of theatre genres from an intellectually stimulating adaptation of Chekhov's



*The Seagull* to the surreal club-like Argentinian production, *Fuerzabruta*. *Shakespeare for Breakfast* brought some of the most famous characters in British fiction together to a desert island,

*'The young actors throw themselves into their roles with tremendous energy. As Kwame declares himself a free man, there is hardly a dry eye in the house.'*

for a comedy eagerly watched by an audience munching on provided croissants and *Not for Sale* educated us



# at Edinburgh Fringe Festival

all on the sensitive issue of sex trafficking through metaphorical movement. Suiting the atmosphere of our own production the entire cast with the musicians saw the *Soweto gospel choir* who graced us with their presence for one of our own performances and gave great praise to the multi-tasking music team. We also saw one of the award-winning shows, *Truth in Translation*, an amazing South African Production.



The reception we received, the plays we went to see and most importantly the play we performed made sure that our expedition, our journey was not only a success but also a turning point. Lucky for Edinburgh Festival ticket offices, Urban Exchange has more to come.

We'd like to thank the teachers who came on the trip to support us and make it happen, Elisabeth Stevenson, Ann

McMellan and Sarah Galal (our hard working technician) as well as the creative team of Caroline Duck and Ambrose

Hogan and stage manager Sarah Wynne. We must also

acknowledge and thank The United Westminster Schools Grey Coat Hospital Foundation for their generous financial support and of course our favourite Canon,

## What the press had to say:

The young ensemble cast all demonstrate commitment and potential, but it is Umaru Saidu (Kwame) who stands out for his quiet intensity and emphatic resonance, with a voice which makes poetry from the script's melancholy storytelling. Both South African director Caroline Duck and writer Hogan, (who served in Iraq), never flinch from acknowledging the horrors humans are capable of inflicting upon one another. This heart-breaking piece of extraordinary theatre touches on every level from the soulful mingling of baroque and gospel music to the issues at its core, and is exemplary of the



One of the cast said the other day 'it was the best thing I've ever done' and it's no surprise she said it. Through the experience we were able to



power young people and theatre possess to engage with facts both past and present which need to be acknowledged.

**The British Theatre Guide\*\*\*\***

The young actors throw themselves into

*'This heart-breaking piece of extraordinary theatre touches on every level from the soulful mingling of baroque and gospel music to the issues at its core, and is exemplary of the power young people and theatre possess to engage with facts both past and present which need to be acknowledged.'*

communicate an important message about all of our histories; we were able to create friendships with people we may not normally have even spoken to.

Nick Sagovsky of Westminster Abbey. Also thanks to Rachel Allard and Jo Grainger who came all the way to Edinburgh to watch our show.

their roles with tremendous energy. As Kwame declares himself a free man, there is hardly a dry eye in the house.

**The Scotsman\*\*\***

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# Five Months in Yunguilla . . . . .

*“Azim Ajufo recently undertook a gap year placement in February 2007. After applying to The Grey Coat Hospital Adventure Trust she was awarded some funding towards her trip. If you are also in the Sixth Form and are planning a gap year placement or some sort of adventure you may also be eligible to receive some funding. Ask the Sixth Form office for further details and an application form.*

“Hello”  
“Hello”  
“How can I help you?”  
“Can I have a skirt, please?”  
“Alright, what colour would you like?”  
“Do you have pink?”  
“Yes”  
“Can I have a pink skirt please?”  
“Yes, sure, what size would you like?”  
“Can I have medium please?”  
“Yes”  
“How many would you like?”  
“Can I have one?”  
“Yes, of course”  
“Anything else?”  
“No, thank you”  
“Bye”

For us, the conversation above is nothing short of basic; the sort a five-year-old could knock out without giving much thought to it. In fact, this is a conversation I had with nine-year-old Karla in one of our classes, after two months as her English teacher. Two months back, she barely understood when asked her name in English.

For five months of my gap year, I chose to volunteer as an English teacher in the Ecuadorian village of Yunguilla. Yunguilla is a small community of three hundred inhabitants based in the Ecuadorian cloud forest; it is about a thirty minutes drive from the capital, Quito and is accessible only by dirt

road. Most Yunguillans earn a subsistence living, however, within the community there is a business partnership amongst about a sixth of the

which dinner is eaten in a local home.

The Yunguillan lifestyle is a very laid back one. This came across in



population that is currently working on developing the fledgling Eco-tourism industry in Yunguilla. At current, the majority of tourists to Yunguilla are volunteers.

For the past four years, the Gap Year organisation Gap Activities Projects (GAP) has sent two teachers to Yunguilla bi-annually; through GAP, I was able to go to Yunguilla as one of the two volunteer teachers. The English teachers undertake the responsibility of teaching English in the village primary school (current size: 28 pupils) in the morning and teach also in the afternoon in classes attended by people of all ages from the community. The village has one small primary school and no secondary school. Working hours are usually from 8:00 am till 12:30pm in the school, with a breakfast with the children from 8 till 8:30 and a lunch from 11 till 11:30. Classes resume at three in the afternoon, with students from the community, and last till six pm, after

everything from village meetings to our meals with the local families. Our first meeting in Yunguilla was on our first day there. It was with the youth and was supposed to allow us draw up a timetable for the afternoon classes. In this meeting, one of the young boys rode the length of the room back and forth on his bike *throughout* the meeting. Most of the attendees remained standing and those that were seated were mostly engaged in some kind of conversation. At the time, I was certain that this meant they just didn't care about what we had come to do. The dedication and respect they showed in their classes over the next five months, however, made me see that this wasn't true.

Things weren't so noisy in the adult Yunguillan meetings. Instead, what struck me about them was firstly, that we were even invited to be part of meetings about intimate issues within the community and secondly, that right from

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# Part of a Gap Year to be Remembered

the first meeting, when I could hardly string two words of Spanish together, I was asked to contribute an opinion. In most of the meetings we attended, the

mine. For a start, this meant making lesson plans and coming to classes on time and prepared. Most importantly, it also meant taking myself seriously.



Photos: Yunguillan children living in their Ecuadorian cloud forest community

chairman always seemed to save five minutes for us to contribute our opinions on the issue being discussed. When we spoke, though amongst the youngest in the room, everyone quietened to listen. This was an aspect of Yunguilla I never stopped being amazed at.

Until I came to Yunguilla, I had never truly imagined what teaching would be like. Having to explain things that I understood almost on a subconscious level was one of the hardest things I had to do as teacher. The hardest was discipline. I started teaching with the mindset of an 18 year old on a gap year. The kids, more than the older members of the community, could see that and, as kids do, took advantage. At the beginning, I had innumerable requests to go to the toilet, to sharpen pencils, to borrow equipment. Thankfully, not too long into my placement, I realised that to change their attitudes I had to change

When this was sorted, I found myself really wanting to make the kids understand as much as I possibly could. I planned lessons and did photocopies in the weekends to bring to class. I think my students could somehow see how much I cared for them and that made them respect me. I ended my placement like this -with the mindset of a teacher and the respect of most of my students.

I believe I came away from Yunguilla a Yunguillan- at least in part-. One thing the Yunguillans tried to do throughout our time with them was make us feel at home. Between being allowed to take part in their meetings and being invited to milk cows or make jam, I cannot remember ever feeling unwelcome in Yunguilla. I felt so involved in community life that, at times, I couldn't remember what it was like to live anywhere else. I learnt a tremendous amount in those five months. As I

packed my things, sad at having to leave what had become my home, I was surprised to find myself smiling. In fact, I had wandered off to my first few days in Yunguilla. I saw the awkward 18 year old I arrived as, wondering how I was going to survive without TV, internet, a washing machine and my phone; expecting very little to be expected of me as an 18 year old teacher. I remember being really scared that I wouldn't be given the opportunity to practice my Spanish because no-one would want to speak to someone who could only manage to speak very little. I went to Yunguilla barely able to differentiate 'hola' from 'gracias'. Now, though I can't speak Spanish perfectly fluently, I'd like to think I'm not too far off doing so. As I packed, I truly felt like I was leaving home. I didn't feel like I had been on a gap year project.

I would like to thank the Adventure Trust and GAP for the invaluable support they gave that allowed me to go to Yunguilla. For the Yunguillans, this support allows people like me to be a part of their community. Being able to learn English raises grades amongst the college kids and trains Yunguilla's tourism personnel in English, enabling them to provide a better service for the large number of English speaking tourists that come to Yunguilla. For me, your support allowed me to experience Yunguilla. Finding my feet in Yunguilla and the other places I went to in my six months away has given me a new self-confidence and a passion for travelling and languages.

The GCH motto speaks of educating girls to help them become independent women of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Trust's support is, for me, one of the greatest demonstrations of this school's ongoing interest, in helping both current and old Greys achieve this independence. The community of Yunguilla and I thank you very much. Muchas gracias.

*Azim Ajufa*



Learning the ropes aboard the Picos

## HSBC Sailing Academy Weekend

**W**illow Mercer (Year 10) and I were lucky enough to be selected for the HSBC sailing academy down in Poole harbour at the end of June 2007. This involved a four-day weekend of sailing and other fun activities, but mainly sailing. I had never been sailing before this, so didn't know exactly what to expect. The weather was not too good for the weekend, it rained most of the time, but we managed to fit in two long sailing sessions a day with a lunch break between. There were around 20 other people there from other schools also learning to sail. The weekend was a brilliant experience, which opened our eyes to the fun of sailing and introduced us to what it is like to sail and fall in! We were sailing Picos, which are wind-powered boats, and quite hard to capsize, however we managed to do this on more than one occasion! At the end of the weekend I gained my RYA level two sailing award and Willow got her level one. I'm looking forward to doing more sailing in the near future and was extremely thankful to Miss Heiskanen for organising this opportunity for Willow and me.

*Rachel Swann, Year 11*

## Booktrust Teenage Prize 2007

**W**hat better way to start the new school year than to read the books short-listed for this year's Booktrust Teenage Book Prize. The following books have made it as far as the short list

The Medici Seal	T.Breslin
My Swordhand is singing	M.Sedgewick
Just in Case	M.Rosoff
Leaving Poppy	K.Cann
Here lies Arthur	P.Reeve
The Penalty	M.Peet

All these authors have written other books as well so when you've finished these there are plenty of other books to go on to. Pop into the School Library to see for yourself!

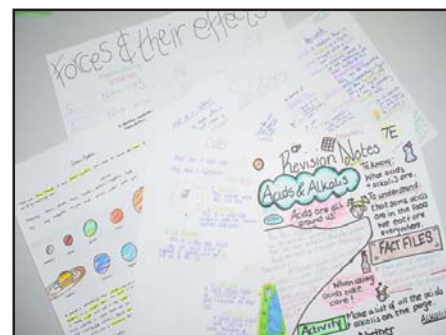


## Science News

**T**he summer's over and we are straight into the new year with a few new staff (Ms Flint and Mr Tickner), lots of new activities to try out, and a new club being run by Mr Hart and Mr Stephenson which will involve projects such as Forensic Science and Communications.

This will of course be a very important year for the Year 9,10 and 11's with their KS3 SATS and GCSE public examinations. There are more details about the department and what each year will be doing this year (including homework timetables) on the school website.

Should you need to contact the school regarding a science enquiry then please contact Mr Xavier for KS3 or Mr Higginson for KS4/5 in the first instance.



Revision Cards

The following Year 9 students have made an excellent start to the year with some colourful and informative revision cards: Nwazi Sibanda, Katie Byaruhanga, Milette Audain, Georgina Corrie.

**Lastly...**perhaps Winnie the Pooh knows something we don't. Honey could soon be marketed as a way to combat the effects of ageing. The research showed that diets sweetened with honey may be beneficial in decreasing anxiety and improving memory during ageing. It has been suggested that the findings may be due to the antioxidant properties of honey, which have previously been demonstrated in humans. (based on an article from issue 2621 of New Scientist magazine, 14 September 2007).

*Mr Xavier (2<sup>nd</sup> i/c Science)*

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# The Grey Coat Hospital Guild

an association for Parents and Staff



Dear Parents & Carers,

Welcome back to the established parents and a big 'hello' to all the new Year seven parents and carers. We hope you and your daughters are able to contribute towards the fundraising work of the guild over the next academic year.

All the new parents and warmly welcome to attend guild meetings which will be held on: 7<sup>th</sup> November (Annual General Meeting); 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008; 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008; 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and a final meeting in June. Meetings start at 6.30 pm and are held in the chapel in the St Andrew's building. Everyone is very welcome.

## **Barn Dance**

The Barn Dance will be the first of our exiting events to be held this year. It will take in the St Andrew's Building on 12<sup>th</sup> October and will start at 7pm.

There will be a band and plenty of wholesome good food and drink including bangers and mash and a vegetarian option. We expect lots of lively interaction and an opportunity for all the new year seven parents and children to meet and mingle with parents and children from other years.

There will be also be a raffle held on the night, with a chance for people to win three prizes and cash prizes too.

## **Other Important Dates for Events in the Next Academic Year:**

**Guild Carol Service** – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2007, 6.00pm at St Stephen's Rochester Row

**Guild Christmas Fair** – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2007, after the Carol Service – St Andrew's

**Quiz Night** – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008, 6.30pm at St Andrew's

**International Fair** – 17<sup>th</sup> May 2008 – 11-2pm St Michael's

**New Grey's BBQ** – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008, 4pm at St Andrew's.

*The next guild meeting will be held on 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 2007 and will start at 6:30pm. This will be the annual general meeting, where nominations for committee members will take place. If you are keen to help support the good work of the guild, we would welcome you to become a part of our committee. However, it is not necessary to be a committee member to help out, all you need to do is volunteer some of your free time and attend some of the meetings.*

If you are interested in knowing more about the guild please contact Sam Fores via [info@gch.org.uk](mailto:info@gch.org.uk), or send a letter to the free post address, which is: "Freepost RRAK-AGBC-CGYZ, The Guild, The Grey Coat Hospital, Greycoat Place, LONDON SW1P 2DY.



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# Work Experience News

Last July the current Year 11 had 9 days work experience in a variety of placements. The feedback from the employers and staff visits has been very positive and the students were able to share their experiences in the world of work on de-brief day.

On looking through the diaries from the student's placements I was delighted to see they had completed them well and reflected and evaluated their experience to a high standard. These are just a few of the comments taken from the employers report forms and review forms in their diaries.

**Caroline demonstrated a good work ethic with the finance team - loads of enthusiasm.**  
(National Portrait Gallery)

**Hollie has been a real asset to us - It has been a pleasure to have her here.**  
(Westminster Primary Care)

*Isabelle was committed to her learning and was fully involved in the practice from day 1- Her project impressed everyone - she's welcome back.* (Marks Barfield Architects)

Gemma was interested to know what goes on behind the scenes. She was an asset to us for the duration of work experience - if she ever wants to pursue a career in this industry - give me a call. (Vale Farm Sports Centre)

Jasmine has been a great role model for the children in my class, well mannered and willing to take on any task - establishing good relationships with many of the children in the class. (Herbert Morrison Primary School)

**Emelia has been a 'Rock' to our organisation; willing, dependable and hard working - loads of common sense and lovely manners, I have nothing but praise for her.** (Manpower Recruitment)

*Charlotte has carried out all the tasks we have set her with a smile and has been very thorough - thank you for the effort you have put into your work experience.* (Lloyds TSB)

Emily is a joy and it has been a very good experience for us. She has been happy trying new things and all jobs have been completed willingly, she also enjoys showing us things we may not understand with regard to the P.C. (National Trust Shop)

*Amy was willing to undertake any task asked of her, a natural love of animals shines through and she gained the trust of even our nervous dogs.* (Whittingham Kennels)

Harriet has applied herself wholeheartedly to given tasks, we welcome her back here anytime as both a visitor, potential employee and possibly exhibiting artist. (The Photographers' Gallery)

*Aisha has shown a lot of enthusiasm with helping the children with the learning resources - she has enjoyed learning new skills/activities that she can do with the children and specific learning the children are gaining from these.* (Bright Horizons Nursery)

Sacha fitted in well in the working environment, her interpersonal skills were utilised well when asked to work in a team with other work experience students. (Argo Holidays)

**Habiba was the best work experience student that I have worked with. She was very helpful in all areas.**  
(Parkway Recruitment)

Ebi has represented her school well, she has demonstrated a good enthusiastic attitude and approach to work and built good rapport with staff, and through Ebi's representation we would consider taking on another student from Grey Coat. (Central London Civil Justice Centre)