

Inspired!



The Richard Challoner Gifted and Talented Newsletter ~ Summer 2010 ~



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Challoner Challenge

This year's Challoner Challenge competition had as its theme 'Conflict and Peace' and this was interpreted in a range of interesting ways – in poetry, music, sculpture, painting, computer game and moving image. The judges had a difficult, but enjoyable, time evaluating the entries for their originality and execution (the two judging criteria for the competition), and concluded by awarding prizes as follows. In Year 12, Robert White won his £50 Amazon voucher for an ambitious musical score for two contrasting pieces; in Year 10, Giacomo Carmello impressed the judges with his innovative 'breeze block' sculpture (above); in Year 9, a decision could not be made between Sam Baxter's highly thoughtful and creative musical composition and commentary, and Edward Randall's arresting and personal evocation of the reminders of war in art (no doubt inspired by the battlefields trip earlier in the year - picture above), and so both students won themselves a prize; in Year 8, Callum Cleary engaged the judges with his interactive exploration of war through a game medium. However, the judges were unanimous in their decision to award the main prize of a state-of-the-art, portable, touch-screen computer to Santiago Vidal in Year 7, for his thoughtful response to this year's theme by means of a painstakingly crafted Lego animation. Congratulations to everyone!

Curiouser and Curiouser

Every Wednesday, gifted and talented students (mostly from Year 10) get together in Mrs Verdin's classroom (EN3) for an after school club we call 'Curiouser and Curiouser'. The purpose of 'Curiouser and Curiouser' is to provide some extra insight into topics that are outside of the curriculum, but we are interested in learning about. An example of this was when we discussed the theories of 'Fixed and Malleable intelligence', determining which of these we think would help us to become 'better learners'. Ultimately, Mrs Verdin's goal in these sessions was to help guide us to reaching the top universities in England. She would prepare various topics of discussion (sometimes accompanied with PowerPoint presentations) which would help give us skills and knowledge which will help us on our journey to higher education. Some of the weeks, instead of Mrs Verdin, students would prepare power points, speeches or presentations, sharing our own knowledge in fun and interesting topics such as 'Pyrotechnics' and 'Conspiracy Theories'. I am sure that everyone that attended these meetings would agree that they are highly enjoyable and beneficial to our learning. Come and join us!

(Zander Williams)

G+T across the subjects...

This section provides a taster of what the departments at Richard Challoner have been doing to stimulate and nurture Gifted and Talented students, including extra curricular activities and school trips.

Art:

As always, the Art department have been exceptionally busy this year – organising large scale events such as the Big Draw, and the combined Art-Spanish trip to Barcelona, as well as a range of trips and workshops: a Royal Academy Life Drawing workshop for selected Year 11 and sixth form students; a sixth form art conference to hear artists, including Quentin Blake, speak about their work; a Year 10 visit to the Saatchi gallery and one day sculpture workshop; and a Year 11 trip to Tate Modern. In order to support gifted artists who are considering pursuing art in the longer term, careers presentations were also arranged from four young visiting artists.

Science:

Science Club has, as ever, been used as a forum to challenge the G&T boys from the lower school who come along to it; these same boys were also utilised as explainers during Science Fair - expected to find out the science behind the demonstrations they were coordinating, then explain it to others. Outside school, a team of boys represented the school in a Salters Chemistry competition, where they did very well, and we also sent a team of sixth formers to a University of Surrey chemistry competition this year.

A trip to the Biological Sciences labs at Cambridge University for the higher achievers in our AS Biology class has also been arranged, and there will be a similar visit to the Molecular Biology/Genetics, and possibly Marine, labs at Portsmouth University. Next year too, Mr Cheung will be coordinating a specialised club for our G&T boys, where they will be working towards the CREST Awards - a national award scheme for project work in the STEM subjects.

R.E

RE retreats have been run this year for students throughout the school. This year the year 7s went to St Josephs, the year 10 retreat took place at Whitstable and the year 12s on retreat at Sacred Heart in Wimbledon engaged in some interesting debates. The year 9s also visited the synagogue in Kingston for Holocaust Memorial Day.

Mission week this year also provided a number of G&T students with the opportunity to challenge themselves by leading some of the sessions.

P.E:

The annual Kingston borough sports event took place at Kingsmeadow stadium. In total, 8 schools took part in the competition, with students from our school participating in both Junior and Senior boys events. Richard Challoner were placed second overall in the competition, which is another excellent achievement for the school. On top of this success, some Challoner boys were selected to represent Surrey in further competitions. These boys were Luke Pearce, Robin Landi, Giovanni Menks, Asher Nelson, David Fitzpatrick and Carlo Gagliani.

(James Norton)

English:

This year was the first year in which a trip was taken to the Wallace Collection in central London in order to provide gifted students with stimulating access to a museum, inspiring them for the Original Writing element for GCSE. Run by experts from the museum and in creative writing, the day was fascinating and inspirational for all those who participated.

Geography:

In year 7 this year, pupils were encouraged to participate in the Mapskills Quiz where they had to use OS maps of the local area to find certain places based upon cryptic clues, for which photos were required as evidence. All pupils in year 7 were also offered the opportunity to orienteer around school and find different checkpoints, an activity based around a competition of fastest time wins – therefore stretching the G&T students, even though being undertaken in lesson time. In year 8, pupils' second levelled piece of work involved them designing and annotating a sustainable school for the future. This encouraged creative thought and the application of Geographical ideas into a practical scenario.

Music:

Sixth form Music Technology students were extremely lucky this year to engage in a day-long workshop run by composer Nick Kenworthy-Browne. Nick shared with them some of the 'tricks of the trade' facilitating their own compositions for a short animation.

G&T outside school

Medlink

On the 26th of June, Kieran Flynn, Matthew Ryan and I went to the annual 'Medlink X' conference held in Euston. The day consisted of four main lectures and one practical session. The first lecture was about what GCSEs and A' levels we needed to become a doctor or a vet. We then split into two groups: people interested in becoming a doctor and those interested in being a vet, to engage in some interesting and thought-provoking activities.

(Connor Cotton)



Richard Huish College:

Back in January, a small number of Gifted and Talented students, accompanied by Mrs Verdin, made the trip to an event in London held by the Richard Huish College, to attend a number of lectures on various topics. Each lecture took a seemingly uninteresting topic and approached it from a different angle, such as an intriguing lecture about the 'Proof of Mathematics', which involved ideas such as the 'Golden Ratio' and 'Mathematics in Nature'. Perhaps the most enjoyable of the five lectures, however, was about Nanotechnology and some recent scientific advances which could make the world of the future a very different place. From the possibility of 0% fat MacDonald's meals, to clothing which never gets dirty and tiny life-saving robot surgeons, this lecture really opened our eyes to what the future might hold, now that scientists can alter molecules on such a tiny scale. We were certainly inspired; I wonder how many young people that joined us that day, listening to that very lecture, will grow up to be Nanotechnologists when they are older?

(Richard Vaughan & Kieran Flynn)

G&T outside school

Jack Petchey Speak Out *(by Owen Cain)*

Three students from our school, Giacomo Carmello, Sean McAlinden-Barber and Owen Cain, were fortunate enough to represent the school in the annual Jack Petchey Speakout Challenge in May. The three of us were selected after a day of public speaking training aimed at high ability students from year 10, run by a Jack Petchey Speakout Representative. This training improved both our speaking and speech-writing skills. Taking three completely different styles of speech into the final competition, we performed well against students from every school in Kingston borough. The competition was a very enjoyable experience, with all three of the Challoner speakers finishing inside the Top 10! This was after speaking to an audience of over 100 people, which included our Head of Year, Mr Pritchard, in the unfamiliar setting of Chessington Community College. Our thanks go to Mrs Cheema for organising the training and support throughout. Since this event is run annually, students in the lower school will have an opportunity to participate in the future. We wish them the best of luck!

The Stock Market Challenge *(by William Rainbow)*

The stock market challenge tests student's maths skills, teamwork, analytical and arithmetic skills. Staff chose 5 students to be involved in the challenge: Richard Vaughan, William Rainbow, Stefan Clarke, Connor Cotton and Edward Long. The challenge was to buy and sell shares in a number of fictional companies and attempt to make money from rises in these shares' prices. We were given newspapers and news bulletins to look at, to help us try and predict the changes in the stock market. We did extremely well, coming 1st place in our borough and 2nd in the final - which included schools from across five boroughs. For our efforts in both rounds of the competition, we were each rewarded with a 4th generation iPod Nano and a £20 HMV voucher.

Imperial College Maths Master Classes *(by Richard Byszewski)*

I jumped at the opportunity to attend Maths master-classes for gifted mathematical pupils as, one day, I hope to become an actuary. We met the last Saturday of each month at Imperial College - the university where I would most like to study maths or actuarial science. My new friends and I collaborated in small teams to solve mathematical problems devised by the university lecturers. These were on subjects such as life expectancy, algebra, circle theorems and probability and sometimes required us to use lateral thinking.

Useful G+T Web Sites:

The GIFT website www.giftltd.co.uk is a great place to enrol on fantastic courses. There are two Summer Schools in August coming up, for example, including opportunities to investigate aerodynamics in a practical way, to participate in drama, to make a solar compass, or engage in some philosophical enquiries. Sponsorship is available from GIFT for those who feel they might not otherwise be able to afford it. The website <http://www.giftedchildcommunity.com/learningplatform/> is also worth investigating: it is a network - designed for 7-13 year olds - aiming to bring together the 'brightest and most creative people from all around the world'. For all ages of secondary school students, the Debate Chamber (<http://www.debatechamber.com/>) runs some fascinating workshops in a range of different subject areas, from Maths and English Literature to Law.