



VIEWPOINT

A REVIEW OF RECENT EVENTS AT COBHAM HALL SCHOOL

from Mr Mitchell, Headmaster ...

In the last edition of Viewpoint I quoted a fellow Headmaster who, after visiting Cobham Hall, said it is “a school that is really going places”. In this edition you will read about some of the places we have been and the adventures and successes we enjoyed along the way.

As a school proud of its global nature, it should be no surprise that our experiences are in every field; academic, cultural, creative, social and sporting. As Headmaster of Cobham Hall it is also no surprise, but a regular source of great pride, that those outside our community whom we encounter during our activities regularly comment on the excellent manner in which our girls conduct themselves.

Much of the world’s attention is already beginning to focus on the global festival of the Olympic Games, just a few miles away from us at Cobham. Many facets of our Round Square ethos have much in common with those of the Olympic movement, and Cobham Hall pupils are being prepared for their own global adventures. Enjoy reading about our girls taking part and succeeding in an increasing variety of challenges.

S. Mitchell





pushing the limit ...

2011 ROUND SQUARE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Held at Wellington College in Berkshire, UK, this year's Round Square International Conference was an unforgettable experience for Cobham Hall's lucky five chosen student delegates. "I left wishing that I could pack some of the spirit to share with everyone," reported Joanna who attended the conference with Deshani, Lauren, Luise, Inez and Round Square Representative Miss Caro.

The theme of the conference was 'Reaching Beyond Our Limits' and each one of the Cobham Hall girls who took part came away with their own unique take on how the conference benefited them or challenged their ideas of their own limitations. "The Round Square Conference was a great opportunity to get out of my comfort zone and make new friends from all over the world. I had a great time and left the conference wanting to do more for others and myself and go beyond my limits," reflected Joanna.



Maidstone Music Festival

... GIRLS VICTORIOUS

Cobham Hall had great success at the Maidstone Music Festival in November, with two girls winning in solo categories and the school choir gaining a merit in their choral category.

Year 9 singer Olivia won her vocal class, while Year 12 violinist Rebecca also won her class with a distinction and was invited to play at the Winners Concert. "They both managed their nerves and performed brilliantly," said Head of Music Ms Clements. The choir came second in their class, to a specialist performing arts school. Given the contemporary nature of other choirs' song choices, Ms Clements said "it was refreshing to hear a group of young performers singing in the classical music tradition showing genuine connection and passion for the music." She said the girls won praise from the judges for their effort as a team and she was pleased with the attitude of the girls towards other performers. "They supported all the other schools with good grace and enthusiasm," she said.

Ms Clements originally entered the girls into the competition to give them a wider range of performance experience rather than as a purely competitive endeavour. "It was a vital performing experience," she said.

The conference's keynote speakers, ranging from a former charity CEO to world record hurdler Colin Jackson and Para-triathlete Karen Darke also gave the girls food for thought. Deshani wrote afterwards of Jackson's speech, "One message he gave us that I have brought with me - and typed, printed out and pinned on my door - is the message 'never be too self-confident' because in his life, this was one of the greatest mistakes he made."



As the school's Round Square Guardian, Deshani was also fortunate enough to meet Her Majesty the Queen who opened the conference. "It was one of the most memorable moments of my life, when the Queen asked me which school I was from and I replied 'Cobham Hall School, UK'. It was absolutely nerve-wracking to remember to curtsy and say "Your Majesty" when the Queen was standing in front of me, but it was definitely an experience that I will remember for life."

Friendships were made that span the globe - Lauren is already planning a trip to Australia to visit friends she made during the conference - and challenges were overcome. One particularly memorable challenge was the Wellington Race, involving a long distance run concluding with a trek/swim/paddle through an icy lake. "Although it was very exhausting I really enjoyed the experience because I had never done anything like it before," Luise wrote.



Lower and Middle School get a serious case of

DISCO fever

Students from a local grammar school as well as another Round Square school were invited to join the party and Cobham girls relished the opportunity to make new friends. The Lower School Disco had its own committee and themed the event 'Winter Wonderland', while Mr Allen proved he could learn something from his students, after he said Middle School disco-goers spent most of their time dancing and telling him about "some group called One Direction, whoever they may be". The discos raised more than £200 for charity and the girls are looking forward to the next one!



models of FASHION

In November, Cobham Hall Year 11s and Sixth Formers were lucky enough to be treated to a fashion show of clothing from Hobbs Autumn/Winter suit collection. Our girls made the event their own by offering themselves as models for the collection (and they did look oh-so-fashionable and smart!). Representatives of Hobbs also gave girls some tips on 'dressing the part'. "I learned how important it is to look smart," said Pre-IB student (and one of the models) Hannah.

Christmas at Cobham Hall

A TIME FOR GIVING

Mulled wine, mince pies, cupcakes, face painting and guessing what your Spanish teacher looked like as a baby all helped to raise more than £1,300 for Round Square charities at Cobham's Christmas Fair. The annual fair combines stalls run by independent businesses with those run by students. This year student-run stalls ranged from pinning the ear on the elf to a fair trade sweet shop and make-your-own Christmas decorations. There was also face painting, a lucky dip and a tombola. "Some of them were great fun," said Spanish teacher and Fair organiser Miss Caro. "The chocolate fountain always goes down well. Face painting was unbelievably busy and they made so much money. Everybody had something painted on their face."

This year's Round Square charities are UNICEF, Heroes, Multiple Sclerosis Research and Cancer Research. The girls choose these charities democratically each September.



TERM ALL WRAPPED UP

The school's Christmas Carol Service was the last in the line of Christmas events at Cobham Hall. After the Round Square Christmas Fair and boarding Christmas parties, girls enjoyed a traditional Christmas Dinner which took place on the last night before the end of term.

The Christmas Dinner was followed by Cobham's traditional 'Staff Entertainment' show where teachers and other members of the school's staff display their various performance skills to the immense enjoyment (and hilarity) of the girls.

Highlights included Head of Music Ms Clements giving girls some catchy musical advice on being naughty - she was getting nothing for Christmas apparently - which girls could be heard singing in the school hallways the next day, a troop of dancing teachers and others who turned themselves into a slightly less heart-throbbing version of the teen sensations One Direction.



encore!

Talking centipedes, great glass elevators, a journey to the centre of the Earth and a Big Friendly Giant are all in a day's work at Cobham Hall ...

The biennial Drama Festival capped off a gruelling five weeks of rehearsals as students learnt first-hand what it takes to put on a play. Girls put four plays together, in their school houses - Clifton, Darnley, Lenox and Richmond - doing everything from acting and direction to make-up, sets, costumes and lighting.

Students spent the final week performing their dress rehearsals in front of parents - "I think they got a real buzz out of it," said Drama teacher Ms Martin. On competition day they faced an external judge to determine who would win the coveted prize for Best Overall Production, along with a spate of other awards, including Best Actress, Best Director and Best Ensemble Cast.

Richmond House won the award for the Best Overall Production for 'The School Journey to Centre of the Earth' with Upper Sixth Former Lauren also taking home the award for Best Actress for her portrayal of the inscrutable Tricia. Best Ensemble Cast was won jointly by Richmond and Darnley's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

Highlights of the four performances included the cynical Earthworm in 'James and the Giant Peach' getting its groove on trying to save the day by acting as bait for seagulls and the very German Mrs Gloop from 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' who stayed hilariously in character even when in hysterics over the prospect of her son being turned into a marshmallow.

For the adjudicator Christine Livingstone, a seasoned television and radio professional, picking the winners was no easy decision. "That's why it got split between two on some of them because it was just so hard. It was so difficult to choose - the standard was so good."

LANGUAGE comes to life IN PARIS

Year 13 girls taking French for their International Baccalaureate Diploma put their language skills to the test on a three day trip to Paris to sample the culture and language of one of the world's most famous cities.

"There was too much to see in just three days but we made the most of our time in this beautiful city combining culture with putting language skills to good use," said French teacher Mrs Barry. "A Parisian friend organised a 'rendez-vous social' for our girls and students Benedetta and Georgina, who live in Paris, were able to support Maxi and Anna in their efforts to communicate in French. It is true to say that the girls now have a taste for Paris and will definitely return there in the future."

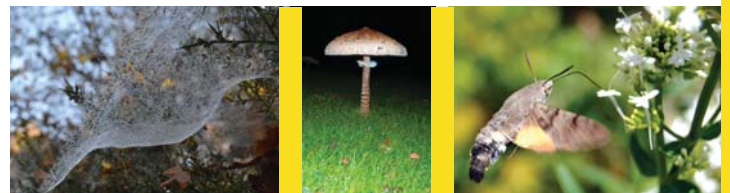


PHOTO EXPERIMENT

The Science Department conducted an experiment to see what happens when science and photography are mixed. Head of Science, Mr Fryer, reports on the results:

Students were invited to enter a Science Photography Competition, with 'science' being their only inspiration. We should all look at things a little closer and the aim of the competition was to encourage students to look afresh at what is around them while thinking creatively. There were prizes for three age groups - Lower School, Middle School and Sixth Form. The Lower School prize was awarded to Evie. Her photograph of a spider's web highlights the beauty of such a wonderful, natural construction, while Sina's (Year 10) toadstool shows effective use of flash photography. Sixth Former Poppy received a prize for her winning picture of a moth, hovering in front of a flower. It must have taken great patience to capture this image.

SIXTH FORM wireless

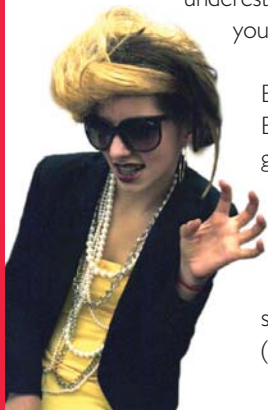
The school's wireless network has been extended so that all Sixth Formers can now have wireless internet access in their study bedrooms.



busy BOARDERS

Girls in Boarding had a jam-packed Autumn Term ...

There were plenty of weekend trips to entertain them including trips to Hyde Park, High Tea in London, a trip to see the musical 'We Will Rock You', and of course, never underestimate teenage girls' ability to shop (especially when you have a pack of them!).



Bligh House took it upon themselves to host a House Brunch one Sunday and Brooke House had an on-going game of Manitto where girls went around doing special things for one another in secret.

Christmas time also brought on its own range of traditional pass times including decorating a two storey high Christmas tree, Christmas parties (complete with a Christmas themed performance

from the Young Drama group), Secret Santa and even a personal visit from St Nick for younger boarders!

Another highlight of the term was the Hallowe'en Party. The costume competition was particularly hard to judge with a plethora of scary get-ups including grim reapers, zombies as well as a rather accurate impersonation of a certain highly distinctive (and decidedly whacky) pop star. "The Lady Gaga was very realistic. I loved the hair. It was Lady Gaga all over," said Housemistress Miss Lambert.

The Spring Term is already off to a good start - Brooke House has been to see 'Phantom of the Opera' in London, Year 9 boarders have had a delicious outing to Simply Italian ... and there's much more in store!



Cobham Hall girls through to biathlon semi finals

Four girls from Cobham Hall have made it through to the semi finals of the Schools' Biathlon Competition, after performing well in the regional heats held in Gillingham.

At the regional event in November, the Year 12 and 13 team took first place, with three of our competitors, Justina, Teresa and Chloe taking home second, third and fourth places respectively. These girls have all advanced to the next round. Our Year 9 team (some of whom are pictured below) came second, with Emma placed fifth overall in the age group. She will also take part in the semi final. Sports teacher Mrs Carney praised the girls' efforts in completing the multi-discipline event. "All of our girls have such grit and determination to succeed not only in the pool but also on the running track," she said. "They are competing in a very strong field with schools that have a large number of pupils."



ELDERS' NEWS

■ Sky journalist **Alex Crawford** [1976-1980] was awarded an OBE in the 2012 New Year's Honours List. She was also selected as one of the top ten 'Britons of the Year' by the writers and editors of The Telegraph for 2011.

■ **Sarah McRitchie** (née Cunningham) [1977-1982] has been invited to join the School's Board of Governors.

■ The school was happy to receive news that former student **Candy Zhu** married accountant Isaac Kewei in London on 5 November 2011. After leaving Cobham Hall in 2003, Candy studied Jewellery at St Martin's Art School and went on to obtain her Masters at John Cass College.



OPEN MORNING DATES

Sat 17 March 2012
9.30am-12.30pm

Sat 29 September 2012
9.30am-12.30pm

The September Open Morning will be combined with a Lower School Taster and Sleepover on Friday 28 September and will conclude on Open Morning the following day.

photographic success



FOR IB STUDENT

Sixth Former Emma Rose has come third in a nationwide photography competition.

Emma entered the Alexandra Rose Charities Rose Photographic Competition after encouragement from her photography teacher, Ms Lockheart, and was selected as one of four finalists. Emma submitted a photograph of a flower in her grandfather's garden because "it reminds me how beautiful nature is. Also how our selfish ways are destroying the planet, and one day these flowers may not exist."

Emma attended the recent awards ceremony in London where she met actress Joan Collins and had her photo taken for Ok! Magazine, one of the competition's sponsors. She is taking photography as one of her subjects as an International Baccalaureate certificates student and hopes to study photography in New York when she finishes school.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Cobham's Round Square staff Representative, Miss Caro has been busy this year. Apart from attending the International Round Square Conference at Wellington College, organising a post conference tour at Cobham Hall, the Christmas Fair and various other fundraising events, Miss Caro spent time in her Christmas holidays learning how to lead Round Square Service Projects in Cambodia!



Miss Caro attended the Leader Training Project with staff from other Round Square schools from all over the world. She learnt the theory of how to lead a project, then gained practical experience working on a project building a school as well as visiting a student project nearby. Her favourite memory of her trip is the Cambodian children and "how happy they were that we were building the school".

mathematical challenges

Two Sixth Formers recently competed in advanced mathematical competitions after being selected from thousands of students based on their mathematical abilities. It began when a group of Cobham Hall Sixth Formers undertook the Senior Maths Challenge when Cobham Hall hosted the event in November. Hong Dou, Year 12 and Trang, Year 13 performed particularly well and were invited to participate in further competitions. Trang took part in the Senior Kangaroo Challenge while Hong Dou was invited to participate in the British Mathematics Olympiad. Participants in this competition are given three and a half hours to attempt just six questions. According to Cobham Hall's Head of Mathematics, Mr Gilchrist, "The questions are very demanding: they require logic, proof and rigorous testing in a way that is far beyond A level and Higher level IB."

