

Commonwealth Day March 2005

Rosalie, Esther, Chloe and I were chosen to represent the School at the Commonwealth Ceremony at Westminster Abbey. The ceremony was also attended by the Queen, Prince Phillip, Tony Blair, Kelly Holmes and representatives from all the countries in the Commonwealth. During the ceremony there were processions of all the different flags in the Commonwealth, speakers and musical performances. These included African drumming, Gospel choirs and solo singers.



We all very much enjoyed our trip to London and were proud to be asked to represent the School at such an important occasion.

Emma Wilkins
Year 12

SMH Election Day 2005

On May 5th the General Election took place after a 30-day campaign which the average voter seemed to find dull, overlong and lacking any real passion or interest. Reactions to the SMH hustings at a crowded lunch-time meeting on election day could not have been more different. Organised ably and efficiently by Mr Wells, the three candidates and their teams were greeted by a lively, enthusiastic and inquisitive audience and an enlightening

and noisy meeting had to be extended into afternoon lesson time!

I was most impressed by the three speeches, all of which covered a range of issues and policy statements from the grand-scale and global (the Iraq war, global warming and immigration) to the more mundane, but important local concerns. The candidates spoke in party alphabetical order which meant Lily Vernon-Hunt, the Conservative Party candidate had the daunting task of speaking first. Her speech belied any nerves she may have had and she spoke clearly and with great conviction on a variety of issues including more police on the streets, attacking council tax rises and the need for controlled immigration. Her strong forceful style was reminiscent of Mrs Thatcher in her heyday! The Labour Party were represented by Pippa Scott, but sadly on the day she had a sore throat and was unable to speak - quite a handicap for an aspiring MP - and her speech was given by Claire MacNeill. It was a brave and courageous act at such short notice, but she made out the government's case with a mixture of telling statistics and a strong vindication of Labour's economic success.

Finally, for the Liberal Democrats, came Kiwi Lau. Despite operating in for her, a second language, she gave a punchy and effective speech in which she attacked the other parties for their support of the Iraq war, stressed the need for a new local income tax and proposed higher tax rates for the very rich to fund a range of socially useful programmes.

All three speakers were greeted with warmly deserved applause. The audience (all ages from 11 upwards) were clearly absorbed in the arguments and, at the end, many, including pleasingly several Year 7's, asked a series of searching questions to the candidates. It was a thoroughly worthwhile and encouraging session, and if our young electors are anything to go by, it leaves our democratic process in safe hands!

In the final outcome, perhaps, reflecting the youth and student vote nationally, the impressive Kiwi Lau won the

seat for the Liberal Democrats by a majority of 14 from the Conservatives but the biggest winner was politics itself and the exuberance and concern shown by so many for the issues of our times.

Result:

Kiwi Lau	84	Lily Vernon-Hunt	70
Pippa Scott	32	Liberal Democrat majority	14

Mr Hargreaves

Puzzle Day December 2004

This was a first for St Mary's Hall - a visit by the Happy Puzzle Company!

The day was divided into three sessions: Years 5 and 6, Years 7 and 8, Years 9 and 10. Up to 50 pupils attended each session and enjoyed the challenges they were given. Teamwork and problem-solving skills were important as each group strove to complete a wide variety of three dimensional puzzles and games. They marvelled at the spinner that produced a weird optical illusion, learnt to think more laterally and realised that early pleas for help were ignored - the satisfaction of solving a problem for themselves was obvious.

A sale of puzzles took place at lunchtime and most pupils in the Senior School have had the opportunity to fathom out the Happy Cubes (although some call them the Unhappy Cubes!)

Here are some quotes from some of the pupils:

"Really good"

"We liked competing with each other"

"It was fun to work in teams"

"Things that seemed impossible were possible if you worked at them"

"It was good for getting to know people you don't normally talk to"

"It got people involved - I was not really looking forward to it, but I really enjoyed it"

Mrs Dempster, Head of Mathematics

Berlin Trip St Mary's Hall and Roedean Sixth Form 14-16 February 2005

The snow and grey skies added to the atmosphere as we looked at *Checkpoint Charlie*. Even the tourists that surround it cannot rob this spot of its poignant reminder of a divided city. A few yards divided the old Russian sector from the former American sector. Hundreds died trying to cross and a moving whitewashed section of the famous wall together with crosses to represent the dead was a firm reminder of the very special past of this city.

Then through the snow to the historic centre - the Unter den Linden. This major route is lined with great buildings from the Prussian past - the Opera House, two cathedrals, the University, the great Museum Island with the national art gallery and the classical collections from ancient Greece and Troy.

Our brief exploration of the Nazi past in the city was focused on four remarkable visits on the second day. The first was to the Reichstag early in the day. The image of the building in flames in February 1933 is one of the most famous in German history. But that is matched by the picture of Russian troops hoisting the Hammer and Sickle flag on top of a ruined Reichstag in 1945. In Norman Foster's brilliant dome, we walked up above the level of the building to see its towers and to look over a snow covered city.



On the other side of the city there is the other side of Nazism. While innocent victims were being trampled to death or drowned in lavatories, masses of Berliners and foreign visitors were marvelling at the new Olympic stadium in 1936. As we were virtually the only visitors on a very cold snowy afternoon, this vast site had a special atmosphere.

In the evening, as we sat above the city in the revolving café of the giant TV tower, looking at the lights below, there was some welcome relaxation, but also a lot to think about.

The last day found us in the very room where Stalin, Attlee and Truman met at Potsdam to decide the fate of post war Europe. Here was Stalin's desk; here were the chairs in which the delegates sat. Only a few years before in another Berlin suburb millions of people had been consigned to death camps; now millions of Poles and Germans were moved from their homes; millions were placed under another dictatorship and Germany and its capital were divided for 40 years.

A visit to Berlin isn't instantly enjoyable; its shops, buildings, parks do not have the 'wow' factor; it has nothing like the night life of London's West End. But for the thoughtful visitor it yields a lot, and we hope that our students will go back and look again for themselves to explore the city more.

Mr Wells, Head of History

History Trip to Berlin 14th February

When girls are normally enjoying a romantic Valentine's Day, I, and three other History students were sitting in Stansted Airport at 6.00am awaiting our delayed flight to Berlin. As tedious as that sounds, the following days spent in Berlin were amazing. We boarded the plane and prepared for three days of historical, cold, tiring fun. As we landed, the thing that woke us up was the huge blanket of snow that covered Germany. Now completely awake at 10 o'clock local time, we headed for the youth hotel we were to stay at. Surprised at its sophistication, we were

welcomed by a woman who infuriatingly spoke little English. We stood in the lobby, Nicola, Helena, Fiona and I and about 20 Roedean girls, hoping to unpack and explore our rooms, and have a quiet nose around the hotel, but no. "10 minutes girls Meet back here in the lobby!" Mr Wells announced, eager to embark on the walking tour of Berlin. After a lot of fun with the card key, a change of socks and a quick rest on the beds, we made our way back downstairs, donned our woolly hats and gloves and faced the snow.

We were shown around Berlin by a lovely man called Peter, commonly known by Nicola and I as 'Tour Guide Pete'. He showed us preserved sections of the Berlin Wall, Checkpoint Charlie, and the Brandenburg Gate, as well as some beautiful pre-war buildings like the University and the Cathedral. After a few hours of walking (and frolicking in the snow) we stopped at the train station where we split up to get food. The first thing that crossed my mind was 'wurst' or to the average Englishman, sausage. After a taxing count of Dr Ashdown's group (he did a brilliant job of counting 4 students each time!) all five of us headed off on a wild sausage hunt.

The next day, thankfully on a coach tour, we saw the Reichstag building, and the impressive Olympic Stadium where Helena made her first snowman. We also visited Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp where we learnt, in a more personal way, about the prisoners and other interesting aspects like counterfeit money. That night, Nicola and I didn't visit the TV towers like many did, but we did have the pleasure of meeting new German friends. 'Fraternising' Dr Ashdown called it!

After sorrowfully checking out of the hotel the next day, we spent the day in Potsdam where we visited the Potsdam Conference Hall, the beautiful Sanssouci and some great German bakeries where we indulged in carrot cake, apple tart and hot chocolate. Although we wished to stay for longer, the three days we did spend in snowy Berlin were wonderful.

Charlotte North, Year 13

Ski Report December 2004

We arrived at school at 4.00am and said a final farewell to our mums and dads and got on the coach. We had a boring coach trip, where a few of us went hyper and a few just slept. At the airport, we had a super long queue at check-in, but we finally boarded an Easy-Jet plane, disappointed to see everything but everything was orange. Once in Geneva, we stopped halfway to have 'home-made sandwiches, causing Miss Whittaker to almost pull out her 'dentures'. Up the mountain we finally went, 29 hair-pin bends to be precise, and we reached the top. Alpe D'Huez, but, err, no snow, at the top of a mountain!! A real disappointment.

The hotel wasn't quite what we had expected but it was welcoming with all the freezing skiing that was to come. There was a five minute panic when Imogen lost her suitcase, but then we came to the conclusion that the people we were sharing the coach with must have taken it by accident and so the rep. went down to fetch it. After we had our boots fitted, we went off to explore the (unsnowy) village. Later, we had a typical French dinner of Fish and Chips and then we settled for an 'early night'.

The next day we were welcomed to the new routine we would have everyday, woken by one of the teachers, doing whatever they had to do to wake us up. Then we would hurry down to breakfast and go straight out to the slopes. The beginners spent their first day or two traipsing up those tiny slopes only to fall back down again, but we finally mastered the basics and moved on to a green slope. Over the week our group gradually moved up to harder slopes, but as there was a serious lack of snow, the slopes were icy and hard to ski down. It was made even harder when we saw the other group whiz past us, making us more determined to get down to the bottom. It took us quite a while to get to grips with the ski lifts, one person said she liked 'the vibrating bits' and there were many other nicknames such as 'Pinky' and 'Big Bag' and 'Snowball'. Katie Beves and Phoebe Hine were calling people 'Phat Spanners'.

In the evenings the hotel organised events for us to do, but on the one night when they didn't, Becky Broe and a few others did a makeover on Miss Whittaker and Miss Miles, which was great. However, Miss Whittaker couldn't get her eyeliner off. Another school was staying in the hotel with us, and the boys came along for their share in the makeovers. One person in particular took a liking to this.

Around the third day, it finally began to snow, but not lightly, really heavily and skiing down the mountains was bitterly cold. We even had a fire alarm at 12 at night, and we were all ushered out in our pyjamas, to be then told it was a false alarm. A few brave people dared to swim in an outdoor pool in the heavy snow. We ran and did snow angels in the snow then jumped into the water, which felt warm. On the way back up, our hair froze because it was still wet, and we were scared to touch it in case we snapped it! On Sunday we had a fancy dress ski down the slopes. Natalie Banfield won, and Sophie, Charlie and Lucy dressed as Miss Gale, Miss Whittaker and Miss Corris came 2nd. Ashleigh and Claire dressed as 'Bat Bunnies' but were mistaken by all male ski instructors as 'Playboy Bunnies'. On the way back from the chocolate fondue centre, which made us hyper, we had a great snowball fight (after a seriously heavy snow fall), and left our marks in the snow!

Claire Stokes and Laura Lansdale, Year 8

A Caterpillar!

*I look out my bedroom window,
Into the garden.*

*My eye is caught by a patch of grass
I look closer and see something moving,
What is it?*

*It's a long, green caterpillar!
I feel happy.*

Tallulah Frankland, Year 7



Sports Day

On Monday 5th July 2004 at St Mary's Hall, the Years 7, 8 and 9 took part in a sports day, the first time ever the Senior School had had one. It was a lovely hot summer's day and everyone was dreading it. We were split into our houses and then into year groups.

The first event was the discus. Nobody got past 'gold' but a few people got into the 'blue' area. Next were the hurdles. You had to get over as many hurdles as possible in 6 seconds. I got to the 'blue' again and nobody got to 'gold'. Then came the sprints. Only a few got to 'gold' in our group because it was really hard. The long jump was up next and straight away everyone jumped their way to 'gold'. Next came the hammer. Again everyone got 'gold'. Then the distance running. Hannah came first and I came second doing the maximum amount of 5 laps in 5 minutes. Then a race to the finish line between the four houses. Chichester just took it, with Babington 2nd and Adelaide 3rd, 4th was Bristol. In Year 7 Adelaide came 1st, in Year 8 Adelaide came 1st, but in Year 9 Adelaide came last. Overall Chichester and Bristol came joint 2nd and Babington and Adelaide joint 1st. It was a great day and I hope we do it again next year.

**Francesca Baxter
Year 8**

Army Challenge Day 8th July 2004

In the middle of June, a poster was put up in the school, offering volunteers from Years 9 and 10 the chance to take part in an Army Challenge Day, which is open to many schools from all over Sussex. This was to be held at the Army Training Camp in Crowborough on the 8th July. Despite there being only 15 places available, many girls from both years were interested in the trip. Gradually, the number of girls that were able to go became fewer and fewer. Firstly, you had to be over the age of 14. Secondly, if you were over that age and were still keen, you had to produce a piece of writing, explaining why you wanted to go on the trip, and how it would benefit you. From this, the 15 lucky girls were selected.

The Day Itself

We had to report to SMH for 7.15am, in order to catch the coach taking us to Crowborough. As we left, the clouds were threatening heavy rain. But the British Army doesn't stop for the weather! (Although it does march on its stomach!) We arrived at the Army Camp, and the SMH girls joined in with many other pupils from all sorts of different schools across Sussex.

The action started soon after we arrived. We were sorted out into our school teams, and were off to the first stand - FIRST AID. Many of us got bellowed at by a ferocious soldier who accused us of having granny meetings. He was covered in camouflage paint, just like us! After the warm up, we had to carry a stretcher (and heavy rucksacks) under and over obstacles. At that point I realised how exhausting this day was going to be.

Other exercises followed thick and fast, such as:

A talk on first aid parachuting: a strenuous job, and no good if you are scared of heights!

Land Rover camouflage techniques: this involves camouflaging a Land Rover with nets, all at the double.

Army Lunch (burger and chips): a hit with most of the girls, personally I wouldn't like to march too far on it.

Obstacle Course: unfortunately, heavy rain meant we had to retreat to the base tents.

Front Line Soldier: a short video, showing some of the soldiers in Iraq resulted in us asking many challenging questions to the infantry soldiers. We discovered that women can't be front line combat troops, but they can be, (and are) everything else. We had a go at a blow up obstacle course, which was great fun, followed by paintball shooting. Sadly, I and a few other SMH girls shot at, in the fog of war, the wrong targets. Friendly fire incident!

Royal Engineers: we came across a fast flowing river, teeming with Piranhas and Great White Sharks! Half the team was on one side of the river, the other half on the other side, and we had to set up ropes and send things across. We won! (Although the sharks did have a few tasty snacks!).

Radio Course: a few of us attempted the course, blindfolded, and we had radio handsets connecting us to everyone, including Rebecca, who was trying to tell us what to do, but it was very hard to hear when the opposition, plus the army were shouting in your ear trying to trick you into going the wrong way!

At the end of the day, there was an awards ceremony, where the top three schools in the competition won medals and t-shirts with the star prize being a mountain bike. Unfortunately, we didn't come in the top three. Strangely, however, Westergate School, the team that we were against during the day, lost to us more times than they won. Yet they came second overall. So we, the ST MARYS' HALL team, think that we came first overall, beating every team on the trip. Optimism wins many battles!

I think that we learnt a lot of things, such as working together as a team, putting up with challenging weather, and an insight into army life. We all had a great trip, and I can certainly recommend it for those who want to have a go next year.

Lily Vernon-Hunt, Year 10

Mill-on-the-Brue

Year 6 went to Mill-on-the-Brue during the half term holiday. It was the 4th June 2004. It's quite far away. It took 3 hours to get there. The teachers who took us to Mill-on-the-Brue were Miss Whittaker, Miss Gale, Miss Corris and Miss Thompson.

We arrived at Mill-on-the-Brue really early. The staff took us to see the rooms. I was sharing a room with Frederica, Jade, Yzzy, Stephanie and Holly. The room was not very big or very small. It was alright.

On the next day, we did lots of activities. It was very good but in all the scary activities I was shouting. Everyone thought I was mad. We had played waterslides, zuper zip, archery, grass toboggans, spider's web, slide and glide, colony game, challenge track and canoeing.

In the end I learned what team work is. I realised team work was better than doing it by yourself.

The activity I enjoyed the most was zuper zip, which was really good.

Yoyo Yik, Year 6

Sunset

*I can see a tiny sparkling raindrop upon a cloudy-
grey knitting needle,*

*The knitting needle is halfway through a grass-
green scarf*

*Being knitted by an old, wrinkled woman, rocking
in her rocking chair at a crossroads*

*While watching the sparkling show of jewelled
raindrops reflecting the sunlight*

*In an emerald-green meadow surrounded by
beautiful, glowing hills.*

At sunset.

Briony Keir, Year 7

Boarding Report 2004-2005

St Mary's Hall international boarding community has not only been busy with their school commitments but has enjoyed a varied programme of outings and events during the course of the year.

These have included visits to London to see 'Phantom of the Opera', the Tower of London, National History Museum, The Tate, V&A as well as more local attractions including Hever Castle, Ice Skating and events at the Brighton Festival.

Pupils in Venn House were given the opportunity to take a more active part in the Sunday Service at St George's Church, and Sophie Bowles is now a regular member of the Church Choir. We also had our first Sunday Service in our own Chapel - St Mark's. Nearly everyone contributed something to the theme of 'Self Image' - it was so good to see the varied art work on the theme and the musical participation was excellent. The format of the service was chosen by the students themselves with the guidance of Father Craig. Ami's poem, I think, sums it all up:

The world is beautiful

*Have you seen a garden full of different kinds of flowers?
Have you been to the aquarium full of different kinds of creatures?*

Have you seen the blue sky full of white clouds that have different shapes?

Now imagine;

Only a single kind of flower in a garden.

Imagine,

Only a single kind of creature swimming in the water tanks.

Imagine,

Identical clouds everywhere in the sky.

How odd, how boring, and how sad is that?

The world is beautiful, because we are all different.

The world is beautiful, because we respect each other's differences.

Ami Kondo, Year 13

The girls in Venn House had a great time at their Christmas Party whilst the evening at Donatello's was much enjoyed by all in St Hilary.

Year 12, together with the day girls, hosted a buffet supper for the staff during the Spring Term and, with the Year 13, have continued to experiment with their culinary skills at the weekends - the smell em.... from the kitchen is quite something!

Extra-curricular activities have kept many of the students busy. These include playing in the Brighton Youth

Orchestra, participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, the Young Enterprise Scheme and, of course, using the newly acquired internet in St Hilary.

It is sad to sell a building that has played such a focal part in the life of a boarding community, but we all realise that it is for everyone's benefit and we are looking forward to the new 'state of the art' conversion of Elliott House as the new Sixth Form Centre and boarding house next year.

Miss V Gravett, Head of Boarding

The Outcast

She inhabits an eerie place, where the air is stale and stinking. Skeletal trees cast outstretched shadows that claw the ground, like a man who scratches at the lid of his coffin. No farmer cultivates this land for it yields little that one could thrive on. In fact, so hostile is this place that fungi dare not grow upon the sour water, sunlight does not go forth to brighten the dingy depths, but approaches with caution. All life has fled from this waste land, whatever and whoever remains are kept like prisoners under her demoralized conduct.

Shrill caws of crows echo between lifeless corners, leaving deathly silence behind them that stirs up goose flesh upon even the warmest skin. Here, there is no sense of time, and the pathetic, grey wisps of clouds pass across the faded sky as if in a trance. No poet would find inspiration from the dull landscape, no lost and lonely soul would be comforted if he were to come across the place where she resides.

One might expect a rosy, brick cottage, a comfort from the harsh surroundings, where a log fire crackles and glows, and a cheerful chimney pipes out a thick, fluffy smoke. A lonely traveller might expect her to welcome him with a hearty smile and a round, flush face and say enthusiastically, 'Please, come in, have a hot drink, toast your frozen fingers on my fire and dry your dripping socks on my aga.'

One would be very wrong to assume such things, for in the centre of the ghostly woodland is her secluded slum. The flagging building consists of crumbling walls through which bitter winds whistle and flung across the tops of the walls is a corrugated iron roof, cold, and suffocated by thick, lifeless mosses. There is no chimney for she slumps on the chilling floorboards and her deadened skin refuses to feel the icy cold through her sodden rags.

Periodically, she'll hop amid the thicket like a vulture, with a hooked nose and wiry hair dangling about her hunched shoulders. The skin on her face is like crumpled paper and she has eyes as grey as elephant flesh. Her neck is scrawny like a chicken's, her cheekbones sharp and awkward like a horse's, and her twiggy fingers look as though they would snap. From every crevice in her body seeps a pungent and permeating odour. At the edges of her prune-like mouth a brown encrustation has formed. She is repulsive to encounter. No one knows how she came to be. Perhaps she emerged from the belly of a foul pond, or maybe she sprung from an accumulation of congealed mists and stench.

Rachel Strong, Year 11

Year 9 went to see 'Macbeth' at the Brighton Dome in February 2005:

Reviews of the play 'Macbeth'

I think that the play was very well acted, and some of the songs really helped to clarify the play. I was a little bit surprised that some of the more famous soliloquies, for instance 'is this a dagger I see before me?' were turned into songs (but not as surprised as Mrs H!) Some of the beautiful Shakespearian language was changed as well, for example 'thou shalt be king hereafter' was changed to 'you will soon be king', which I didn't like because it took away some of the 'old-fashioned' quality and didn't sound as good.

Something I did like, however, was the way that the 3 witches symbolised evil, which clarified the whole concept of evil.

I liked the way that the characters always wore the same clothes, as this made the play significantly easier to understand.

The actors were, in my opinion, extremely skilled and because of this the play was more enjoyable, but I was slightly annoyed that Hecate was male, and also was not acted particularly well. I did not get the impression that she was very evil.

The stage was interesting and it set the scene extremely well. I liked the screen at the top which displayed words saying where that particular scene was set. It was a clever arrangement, where little or no changing around was required between the scenes.

All in all, I enjoyed the play and look forward hopefully to seeing other Shakespeare plays in the future.

Anna Campbell, Year 9

On Friday 4th February, Year 9 went to the Brighton Dome to see a production of Macbeth by 'Shakespeare 4 Kidz' who describe themselves as 'experts in making the bard accessible to young people' and who said that their

performance was 'guaranteed to keep 'kidz' of all ages on the edge of their seats'.

Macbeth, together with his wife, murders his way to the throne, but, as paranoia sets in, Macbeth becomes more ruthless. Lady Macbeth, in her madness, commits suicide.

Normally, Shakespeare does not exactly 'enthrall' the average fourteen year old but this production, together with the 'lively' witches made the play at least entertaining. However, what should have been a funny performance from the Porter was well, frankly ruined by some of the worst 'knock knock' jokes ever written. The only thing entertaining about it was watching other people's faces as they inwardly cringed.

In most people's opinion, the witches were the best part, mixing dancing with excellent costume and overly-dramatic songs and speeches.

Overall, the music was good but the fact that they felt the urge to repeat the same tune made it less interesting. Plus, the company decided to give important soliloquys choruses and simplify the entire speech. Admittedly, it did make the speeches less complicated, though.

The stage and setting was effective as it had a screen set into the scenery, telling the audience where each scene was, which was quite useful.

The costumes were early 17th Century and Lady Macbeth had a beautiful green gown which made her look extremely aristocratic. However, the soldiers or guards could have been more original than just having some woolly grey cloth slung over them....

Overall, I enjoyed the production as it was quite entertaining and made certain scenes easier to learn or remember. Plus, it is much more interesting to see a live performance than simply studying the text.

Vivian Lord, Year 9

A wedding

At last it is the big day

All the bridesmaids want is to play

The bride's nerves are building

She's just about to knock down the ceiling!

The groom is taking it in his stride;

Not as worried as the bride!

Everyone making themselves beautiful

*All excited by their dresses they bought from
the shopping mall.*

Girls in the limo ready to go,

Everyone excited, the bride about to blow!

The men at the church ready to go,

*The women nearly there, nerves are
starting to show.*

Down the aisle, everyone in a trance

Waiting for the after party to have a dance

The vows are taken, the rings exchanged

*Man and wife, for them their world
has changed.*

Sophie Ballard

Year 7

Year 8's visit to the Merchant of Venice at the Marina Cinema:

Reviews of *'The Merchant of Venice'*

The Merchant of Venice was directed superbly by Michael Radford and Al Pacino leads an all-star cast, including Jeremy Irons, Lynn Collins, Joseph Fiennes and Anton Rogers. The film very much emphasises anti-semitism and racism in Christian society in Venice.

Al Pacino is a very convincing Shylock. He delivered his speeches with great power.

At the beginning of the film Shylock and a great number of other people stand on the Rialto bridge, watching a priest in a boat preaching against Jews. A Jew is thrown from the bridge to his death in the Grand Canal. This is also the first time you see Antonio, who comes up to Shylock and spits on him.

In the court scene Portia and Nerissa dress up as men and pretend to be a lawyer and a lawyer's clerk. When the Duke tells Shylock he must become a Christian, Shylock curls up on the floor and begins to cry. I felt moved by this. It is very shocking. For Shylock, the threat of death or having his fortune taken away is horrid, but being forced to give up his faith and take on the faith of the people who have been persecuting him is the worst punishment possible.

Jeremy Iron's portrayal of Antonio shows a strong element of cruelty. He is vicious and aggressive at times and frequently insulting and abusive towards Shylock. He kicks Shylock, calls him a dog and spits on him. When he asks to borrow money from Shylock he tells him he comes as an 'enemy' and says he will spit on him and call him a dog again.

In the film when Shylock's daughter Jessica leaves him, it is heart rending. Jessica elopes with a Christian. She goes off with someone who despises her father because her father is Jewish. She also takes her father's money. This distresses

Shylock terribly. He has lost his servant, his daughter and his money, which is his security in a dangerous Christian world. He is also told a cruel lie that the ring given to him by his wife before their marriage, and which he then gave to Jessica, was exchanged by Jessica for a monkey. It is not necessarily true but is said to cause him hurt.

Lynn Collin's portrayal of Portia is excellent. Throughout the film Portia is shown to be racist. She is racist towards the Prince of Monaco and Shylock. In the court scene she could just let Shylock go. First she suggests they should take away all his wealth before he can go. Then she suggest they could kill him. Finally, Antonio suggest Shylock becomes a Christian. Portia asks Shylock if he is content with this punishment.

If I had to give the film marks out of 10 I would give it 10/10. It was a superb film. All the actors gave wonderful performances. I recommend you to see it.

Clare Calder, Year 8

The Year 10 GCSE Drama Class have had two theatre visits this year. They have been to see Journey's End, a wonderful drama set in the trenches during World War One and Lord Arthur Saville's Crime, a comedy by Oscar Wilde.

As part of the GCSE course the students are required to write about productions seen.

'Lord Arthur Saville's Crime'

Russ Abbott played the part of Mr Septimus Podgers a man who, by examining hands, can tell a person facts about their past, and even foretell their future.

I have chosen to write about the scene in which Mr Podgers first meets Lord Arthur Saville. I chose this scene because it is the first time we see Russ Abbott's character. From his first line, Abbott makes it clear that he is a very important character, and his sudden appearance from

behind an aspidistra is ominous, despite being amusing, because the audience has no idea that he is there.

Whilst being a comic character, Abbott moves, talks and shows his character in a way that suggests there is more to him than appears. He does this by moving slightly, but surely, which gives the impression that he is a fraud. He talks as though everything he says is a statement and he could never be surprised. His tone of voice suggest that he is never confused. For example, when telling Lord Arthur Saville that he has seen something in his hands that Mr Podgers always feared he would see, his words tell that he is shaken, but his expression and tone of voice suggest that perhaps he is not surprised at all, which adds to his 'shifty' character.

Abbott makes sure his character talks about almost everything in the same way, for example, when talking to Lord Arthur Saville about how he wishes to kill his wife, and indeed is actually trying to do so, he speaks perfectly calmly - not even with hatred, anger, or fear in his voice.

Abbott also uses pauses to help him - when Lord Arthur Saville calls back Mr Podgers in the scene in which Abbott's character is killed, he pauses for a few seconds before turning around, adding tension and slowing down the fast pace of the scene. Abbott successfully played a comic part because he delivered the comic lines well. By allowing others to be ridiculous and hysterical, he became funnier in his calm state.

The funniest part of the scene in which Lord Arthur meets Mr Podgers is when Lord Arthur threatens to expose him as a fraud. Mr Podgers uses the musicians' sad music to help him convince Lord Arthur not to denounce him. This is funny because the characters do not otherwise acknowledge the musicians' presence, and he breaks this by encouraging them to play a sadder tune whilst he talks of his family, and attempts to gain enough sympathy from Lord Arthur for him to change his mind. Of course, it works.

Claire MacNeill, Year 10

Journey's End

I went to see *Journey's End*, a play by R C Sheriff, and produced by the Ambassador Theatre Group. My chosen character is Stanhope, who was played by Tom Wisdom. I will be discussing the reasons why I think he portrayed his character very effectively.

The storyline of *Journey's End* gives the audience an insight into how the men from the First World War trenches coped and survived, both physically, and mentally.

Tom Wisdom plays a serious, young Captain, who takes all the pressure and intensity of the trenches onto his shoulders. He expects everyone to 'buck up' and to 'go on together'. I think that Wisdom portrays this character well in the way that he uses a very authoritative and commanding voice when he talks to the other men in the trench. Without being told that Stanhope is in charge of the trench, I still knew almost as soon as he came on to the stage, due to his voice, his dominant movement, and his interaction with the other characters. His voice was always stern, it was clear and they all understood their place as subordinates.

But in spite of his being in charge of everyone else in the trench, Wisdom shows very effectively the idea of Stanhope's inexperience and youth. Stanhope has risen up through the ranks very rapidly, and it is clear from Wisdom's characterisation, that Stanhope is having difficulty in maintaining his composure. For example he drinks a lot, and his face portrays a constant inner conflict. His youthfulness shows through when another character, named Osbourne, who is a much older man and second in command, acts as a sort of father figure for Stanhope. Although Stanhope is (according to rank) of higher status, Wisdom shows effectively that he respects Osbourne, and listens to him.

The scene I have chosen to focus on is the scene where Hibbert, a nervous man under Stanhope's command, is asking Stanhope whether he can leave the trenches to go to the doctor. Of the two men, Stanhope is clearly of

higher status, Wisdom acts in a confident, calm and collected manner. The scene starts when Hibbert comes to Stanhope, complaining of neuralgia, and explains he must leave the trenches. However Stanhope is insistent, explaining that Hibbert must stay and remain in the trenches and continue to fight. Wisdom's portrayal makes it clear from the very beginning that Stanhope has no intention of letting Hibbert leave. Wisdom stands tall, and one can understand through his facial expressions that he is not going to give in to Hibbert.

Throughout the scene, Tom Wisdom delivers his lines in a variety of ways. For example, at the beginning, both men are quite distant and friendly with each other. Stanhope agrees with Hibbert that neuralgia is very painful, but after this, Stanhope explains more abruptly to Hibbert that he can't possibly go to the doctor, and that he has to go on and fight with the others. As the scene continues, Wisdom expresses his character's opinion in a stern and forceful manner.

The final part of the scene hits the climax as Stanhope gets his revolver out, and explains to Hibbert that unless he agrees to stay, there is going to be an accident, and he is going to get shot. Wisdom says these words in a very confident manner, showing Stanhope is of higher status than Hibbert. At this point, Stanhope is centre stage and Hibbert, stage left. At the end Hibbert sits on a chair, showing that Stanhope has won the dispute through status levels. This scene is full of conflict, there is a lot of interaction between the two actors, and this scene proves Stanhope's controlling and manipulative character. Wisdom's swift, dominant and strong movement on stage confirm to the audience Stanhope's character, and this quick understanding of Stanhope, reinforces Wisdom's skill of portraying a believable character, effectively.

Lily Vernon-Hunt, Year 10

House Drama Festival April 2004

Choosing plays, organising rehearsals, managing and motivating casts gives young directors wonderful training in management and an insight into theatre. This year we were fortunate as a school to have highly committed teams, eager to 'get things right', but willing to learn and take advice. We also had over fifty girls involved in the plays - a very large number which bodes well for the future of school drama. When those who have taken part go to the theatre they will have a heightened awareness of what goes into a production. They will also be aware of the importance of teamwork and mutual support and encouragement. So even if the plays had been poorly performed the process of putting them on would have been valuable. But because of the energy of performers and directors, these were far from poor. The adjudicator, Allan Cardew, in fact said that it had been a privilege to watch the work of these young performers.

Adelaide chose a difficult piece: the 'Farndale Avenue Amateur Dramatic' series of plays poke fun at inept amateurs who bring their backstage rivalries and vanities on stage with them. But to perform 'badly' on stage means that you have to first perform well, then deliberately act badly. Adelaide conveyed a good sense of fun and were commended for their energy and teamwork. Lucie Sherwood was a suitably daft yet commanding leading light of the amdram scene and her deliberately absurd portrayal of Tiny Tim in the groups supposed rendition of 'A Christmas Carol' was superbly comic. The whole cast contributed to the mayhem and the festival got off to a strong start.

Babington were even more daring in choosing a completely new play 'Operation Red Pepper' by Julia Bezanson. Julia is a former pupil who did great service to school drama in her time at St Mary's Hall. Her play is set in a country house where a group perform a sort of real-life Cluedo - acting, a play within a play. However, real life murders occur and the game spins out of control. The

challenge was to play two parts and to engage with a genre which is not very familiar to younger theatre goers - the comedy thriller. Settings were effective and again there was a lot of energy. Vusa Tebe as a peppery ancient army officer had good timing and the cast acted well as a team. After the break, Bristol presented 'Between Mouthfuls'. Alan Ayckbourn loves writing about meals. In this play two couples have a confrontation about infidelity entirely separately. Only when the waiter is with them do we hear them speaking. This requires very careful timing and direction. It is to Nicola Johnson and Charlotte Ridge's credit that they were brave enough to add another layer to this complexity by giving smaller roles to other customers - a group of 'hen night' girls, a badly behaved family and a rose seller.



Charlotte also played the waiter - splendid in blond wig, goatee beard and insolent manner. The two couples were well differentiated - grumpy older couple and shallow younger couple, and the waitress, Natalie Banfield, played her virtually wordless role with great realism and control. This was a quality production and earned a number of commendations for Natalie Paddenburg, Josie Latham, Rebecca Ridge, Holly McGill, Natalie Banfield and the directors.

Finally Chichester presented another Ayckbourn, the rather 'off the wall' 'Ernie's Incredible Illucinations'. Mr and Mrs Fraser have brought young Ernie to the doctor to tell him that Ernie seems to bring his fantasies to real life. Again, there is a play within a play as the various scenes are reconstructed in the surgery. The directors were clever enough to keep the doctor and his receptionist on stage all the time, to frame the action. The cast coped very well with a last minute change of cast, as 'Dad' was unfortunately indisposed and had to be played with the minimum of rehearsal by Katie Beves. This did not disrupt the team work, and there were some lovely cameos, as well as an energetic and well-focused portrayal of Ernie by Chloe Sachikonye, who was commended. Interestingly again the adjudicator also commended small roles as well as leading roles. This is confirmation that in theatre there are no small roles. Helena Yazdian-Tehrani walked across the stage as a 'serious person in the library' and instantly we were in that library - her costume, stance, expression conveyed 'library'. Similarly, Georgina Bennett acted completely in her role as the receptionist without saying more than a few words and made us feel that we were in



the surgery. No one needs to feel that making an impact on stage is dependent on having lots to say - seeking to establish a character truthfully is the essence of acting.

Mike Wells, Head of Extra-Curricular Drama
PS: Bristol won!

The Witches - November 2004



Roald Dahl's 'The Witches' has been not only a favourite children's book, but also a memorable film in which Angelica Houston was a terrifying Grand High Witch. It was brave of David Wood to attempt a stage adaptation, as much depends on dramatic transformations of children and witches into mice, and there are quite complicated changes of scene.

I was fortunate to be able to cast the play so strongly and to use pupils from Years 5 to 13. This is always rewarding. Our two 'boys' (Alice Kerrigan and Bethany Dubow) who were at the heart of the show proved to be unflappable and highly professional performers who rose to every challenge. The Senior School performers could give no less and offered whole-hearted support, relishing the grotesqueries of the witches. There were some very strongly characterized smaller roles and our two comic chefs (Georgia Rushton and Chloe Sachikonye) offered a routine, refined by careful rehearsal for which they took responsibility, that would not have disgraced a professional pantomime.

Mr Peebles and Mr Keeley re-thought the traditional realistic scenery and envisaged an imaginative setting in the semi-round. Really wonderful scenery 'modules' appeared and revealed their true potential when lit

effectively. Model mice moved freely over a dressing table and Grandmother (Keli Farkas) had such a realistic discussion with them that we really did feel that they were boys. A giant soup bowl was created to swallow up the Grand High Witch (Nicola Johnson) and a temperamental smoke machine hid some adept disappearing acts.

I was so impressed by the team effort of all concerned. It was unselfish of so many young actors to come along to rehearsals, not necessarily to play a long star role, but to work at very demanding special effects and to develop real group characterization. When the stage crew joined the cast, then there was real discipline and precision. It was moving to see how keen all concerned were to make this a success. In the end crew, musicians, cast and the ever-encouraging and supportive Miss Cooper worked with real love of the theatre to make 'The Witches' a memorable production. My thanks to all concerned for a production which I consider one of the high points of my directing career at St Mary's Hall.

Michael Wells, Head of Extra-Curricular Drama

'The Witches' has to be one of the greatest projects I've ever been in. When I first heard about the play I was very excited. I wanted to be in it. I'd seen the fabulous 'Hello Dolly' and the wonderful 'Annie' and now I wanted to be in 'The Witches'.

In the auditions I saw how many people wanted to be in the play and I knew that not everybody would get the part they wanted. I knew that there wasn't room for all of us. But, two days later my sister told me I had got a part. I was going to play 'Bruno'.

Rehearsals were long and often very tiring. However, for me they were the best part. I made new friends from the Senior School. When I started off I was very self-conscious. I didn't want to make a fool of myself in front of all these new faces. But I feel I grew up slightly. I overcame any embarrassment and learnt that acting wasn't about 'coolness' - it was about giving yourself into the character.

On the night of the performance anxiety was getting the better of me. I was in my costume and make-up but I was dead nervous. Backstage has to be the most hectic place I've ever been in - everybody rushing about, shouting, nerves, but most of all excitement. It's difficult to explain the atmosphere. I really can't put into words. Backstage is a show in itself.

The lights went off and I heard the opening music. Shouting turned to whispers and it was silent - at least just about. I stared through a tiny slit where the black paper covering the window in the door came short and watched the play. It was spectacular, with all the lights and music, to see it in all its splendour. But also to know that I saw this when it was just a small play with no props or settings, and that I had helped it grow to become as brilliant as it now was.

Time seemed to pass so quickly until I realised that it was my turn to perform. Heart in my mouth I opened the door and 'Bruno' ran out onto the other side. He leaped onto the stage and the play went on. It was thrilling to be on stage. I was transformed, now I was 'Bruno' and nothing else mattered any more.

Bethany Dubow, Year 6





'Annie' A Review

Last year, St Mary's Hall performed the musical Annie. To me, it was one of the best school productions we've had. Three months of solid rehearsal went into this production to produce a professional result that pleased the audience for 3 nights

in a row. Much credit belongs to Mr Wells who directed the play to its high standard and who, at the same time, performed the character Mr Warbucks.

The musical Annie is a story about a young girl who carries a smile despite her hard life in the orphanage. She always brings happiness to those around her and eventually finds her own happiness when she is adopted by a loving, wealthy family. Eloise Hordell-Welton brought the character, Annie, to life. Her strong singing voice and cute appearance won the hearts of the audience as she carried a warm smile through her appearance on stage. In total contrast, the mistress of the orphanage Miss Hannigan, played by Lucie Sherwood, instilled a sense of fear into all those around her. Her acting and vocal strength showed her lack of mercy to those poor orphans in her charge, all brilliantly played by the Year 6 +7's. Chloe Sachikonye's performance as the receptionist and Chloe Farkas' performance of Drake, the Butler, added extra dimension and humour to the production. I portrayed one of the cabinet members 'Perkins', along with 3 teachers, Mr Hargreaves, Dr Ashdown and Mr Keir, who dignified the role of President Roosevelt. I enjoyed the long rehearsals,



but dreaded having to sing a section of the song 'Tomorrow' along with the other cabinet members. It was definitely an experience to remember!

The fantastic performance of the musicians, so often overlooked, added atmosphere to the play. The brass section, with our 'in-house trumpeter', Mr Roser, performed particularly well in livening up the show.

We all enjoyed performing and rehearsing for Annie and believed it was received well. The audience responded with rapturous applause each night, reflecting the great hard work of each of the girls and staff members that was put into the performance.

Keli Farkas, Year 11



Maria Redman Concert

December 2004

There was a real sense of excitement in the Chapel as a full audience applauded Maria Redman onto the floor to perform Rachmaninov's 2nd Concerto with the Brighton Youth Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Sherwood. It was the first time I'd heard her play since she left SMH in Summer 2003 and I was intrigued to hear how she would handle this monumental piece after only 4 terms at Trinity College, London. Her performance was a triumph and she is to be congratulated for her excellent interpretation. The orchestra were also in fine form and made a fantastic sound in the Rachmaninov and in their ambitious reading of Vaughan Williams' 2nd Symphony. Real talent on show in abundance!

Mr Jay, Musical Director



Year 10 'Insight Into Industry'

This morning was not what I expected because I thought it would be really boring but it turned out to be good fun. It was hard thinking of what questions to ask the professionals but I managed to guess a few careers and so did Ashley. It was interesting not just to find out what job they did but what each incorporated and what qualifications you needed. All the people were really nice and I think they didn't mind skipping a few hours off work either! I really enjoyed making the t-shirt from paper and working in a team within our given groups. In the t-shirt project I was the design assistant, Ashley was the designer. When they told us last week that we would be designing a t-shirt, I thought we would have to make one out of material, not paper! So when I found this out, it was a shock and I wondered how on earth we would make it. Fortunately Ashley had plans already and it was quite easy. The main difficulty we had was making the off-shoulder part of our t-shirt. Apart from that it was really quite straightforward and we customised it in order to make it interesting, with different colours. Unfortunately our group didn't win any prizes but it's taking part that is the most important thing! We had a deadline to make our t-shirts and we had 1 hour exactly to do so. The reason for this was that in jobs you're given specific deadlines to be finished within and this was for us to see what it would be like. Everyone had to choose which role they wanted to fulfil and we were split into groups from the start because it allowed us to see what it's like to work with people you don't usually speak to, or necessarily get on with, as in jobs today. But generally I would say that I did enjoy myself and have learnt from the experience.

The jobs that I most liked the sound of were the Lush Manager and Personal Trainer. The reason I liked the Lush Management job is because you get to put your ideas into new products and ranges. Also you're working with cosmetics such as soaps, masks, tonics and all other bright and interesting products, plus they smell gorgeous! To me it just seemed like a job which would appeal. The personal

training job didn't appeal as much, but more than some others, for example a firewoman (Station Commander), a Hotel Manager, who has really long hours, or radiotherapist. Personal training would promote a healthy lifestyle and you would be doing different exercises as well - all very important things to sustain you in life. That's why those jobs appealed to me.

Olivia Antoniades, Year 10

Finding out about the world of work

Maggie Lok, from Year 11, asked to do her work experience at the Volks Railway. Stuart Strong, the manager, worked with Maggie to design a work programme to cover the areas she was interested in. This included working with the team to look at updating health and safety standards and creating a disabled access on a copy of the Winter Saloon train that Magnus Volks had running on the railway up to 1935.

In the workshop Maggie learnt how to use a lathe and milling machine, and tried drilling and metal cutting. She excelled at arc welding.

Stuart says: "She excelled straight away. In fact her welding was the best example that I have ever seen from a complete beginner!"



My UCAS Experience

Thanks to the wonderful help from the teachers and our careers guide, my UCAS experience overall has been a success. I did, however, come across some problems, for example writing my personal statement. This did take me time to do, and at times I felt that maybe I wouldn't get it finished, but thanks again to some sound advice and help, I managed and sent off my form to my six chosen universities.

A UCAS form consists of your personal statement - a short page about yourself, saying why you want to do the course you have chosen, what your hobbies and interests are, and what you have done in your school career; also any awards you have won or gained, like Duke of Edinburgh, speech and drama, and music grades; your predicted grades and a few sentences from your teachers, telling the universities how wonderful you are, at the end. Overall, it is a selling point to encourage universities to choose you for their course.

Once that is sent off, you must wait to hear from the universities. This may take some months of constantly checking the website for any updates. I couldn't wait to get on the computer and find out whether a 'uni' had given me an offer, but at the same time, I dreaded finding out whether I had been declined. Thankfully, I was accepted by all six universities. I now had the task of choosing one for my firm choice, and another for my insurance. This involved visiting Open Day after Open Day, to determine which university would be the one for me. I visited Swansea, Leeds, Cardiff, Kent, Bath and Winchester. At each Open Day I looked round the accommodation, had course talks from teachers and met other students. All were very enjoyable. I took notes at each one so I could compare them later, and seeing the cities they were situated in, or near to, was also a treat. It gave me a chance to visit places I had not been before, and start to get a taste for the places I might live in for the next

3 or 4 years. It also gave me chance to meet the people who would be teaching me, and see what the course was actually like.

Now that I have been to all the Open Days, I have chosen to go to Bath Spa, with Winchester as my insurance. I am very much looking forward to starting university in September, and wish all who are about to begin their UCAS forms the best of luck. If I was to give any advice, I would say ask if you have any questions. All the teachers and form staff were very helpful, and couldn't have done more to aid us in completing the form, but if they don't know your difficulties, they can't help. Choose your universities wisely. Go to Mrs Hollands and look at where the 'unis' are situated. If you don't want to be far from home, choose one nearby. Choose universities which offer grades that you can achieve. If you choose ones with very high grades, and you don't think you can achieve them, then you are putting yourself under unnecessary stress. And finally, go to the Open Days and enjoy them. If you see it as a chore it will be. Try and get a good feel for the place and look around not just the university, but the city too.

It can be a very daunting thing, choosing a university. I know I found it very difficult at first, but once you get into the swing of things, it can be very exciting and actually quite fun.

Nicola Johnson, Year 13

Laura spent two weeks in SMH in February 2005 as an exchange student.

Interview with a French Student - Laura Suissa by Stephanie Baxter

Stephanie: What is a typical day in a French school?

Laura: School normally starts at 8.00am and we have two hours of lessons until 10.00am when we have a 30 minute break. We then have more lessons until 12.30pm when we

have lunch. Lunchtime lasts for an hour and a half until 2.00pm when we either go to the library to do our homework or have further lessons. Then at 4.00pm we have one more lesson that lasts an hour.

Stephanie: So you have to go to school on Saturdays?

Laura: Yes - we have to be at school at 8.00am every Saturday for 3 hours of lessons until midday. I hate it because it means I don't get to have a lie-in at the weekends!

Stephanie: What are the teachers like in your school compared to teachers in England?

Laura: The teachers are quite strict in France and they get angry very easily if homework isn't handed in on time. The teachers here are also very strict but they're a lot friendlier towards the students. In my school we don't really get on that well with the teachers, whereas in England they seem to get on quite well.

Stephanie: What do you think is the main difference between both regimes?

Laura: I think that if you are an English student you have more free time than a French student and you get to go home earlier. Also in France up to the age of 19 you have to study all subjects such as Maths, French language, English, History, Philosophy, Spanish, Sciences etc. up until you leave school, whereas in England, you get to choose what you study when you're 16. I think it's better to choose them because you learn what you want to learn.

Stephanie: Which school system do you prefer?

Laura: I like the French system because it means you study all subjects and so get a wider education. However, I also like the English schools because there are so many activities you can do, such as sport teams and drama etc., whereas in France we don't have that many activities. I found SMH very different because it's quite small, whereas my school is very big and so there are lots of students. I really enjoyed my stay in England. I had a really good time!

Au revoir!

Esther Hu
AS, Charcoal, Pastel, Graphite

