

## Third Years Trip to the Synagogue

On the 22nd of March the Third Years went to London for the day. After we'd been to the Mosque at Regent's Park, we went to my place of worship the Synagogue, well we thought we were, until we got involved with the lorry drivers demonstrating but finally we arrived.

When we got there, we met up with the Youth Leader who was going to give us a tour. The synagogue was Orthodox, so was very strict on all their rules and completely different from mine, as I'm Reform. After he'd given us a quick speech, he asked us if we had any questions but suddenly the whole of the year was quiet. So he moved on swiftly to showing us the Ark; by this time nearly half the people were in fits of laughter, as they had noticed the man's shoe as one of them had a massive hole cut into the front so you could see his sock. The ark was very interesting and he put it across very well. Next he took one of the torahs out (which are the holy scrolls) and brought it to the bimah where you read from This is like a raised platform. In groups we went up and he showed us the inside, and how the parchment was made of animal skins. Once he'd done this, he chanted us a line from the Torah and then asked me, but I couldn't, as the vowels of the letters had been taken out. When he was reading the Torah, he couldn't touch it with his hands or fingers so he had to use a special pointer tool, called a Yad.

While he was talking to the other groups, I looked at all the stained glass windows and tried to pick out what story

or festival it was trying to explain. Once all the groups had finished, we said goodbye and thank you, and made our way back to the coach for a long journey back to school. It took nearly two hours to get back and by then everyone was shattered, ready to go home and collapse in front of the TV.

*Natasha Conn, 3M2*

## Arriving in England

On 19th of April I flew from Madrid to London. I flew to Gatwick Airport. I went from London to St Hilary House by private car. I came with Monica, but she had to go back to Spain.

When I came to St Hilary a person took our cases and took us to our room. The first days were very difficult because I couldn't speak English very properly and I didn't know where to go, but now it's easier than the first days. In my room are: Clemence, Bethany and me. There was an other girl, but she only stayed for two days.

In the first days Lotte and Lauren looked after me, but the second week Lauren didn't come with us. I think that the school is very old, but I like it. It's very different from my school in Spain, because my school at home is very modern. The girls of my class are very friendly. I'm in IH and Mr Scandian is my teacher. In School House, Mrs Lynton and Miss Martin teach me English.

*Marta Soriano-Gomez, IH*

Alice Rawdon-Mogg on a sponsored bicycle ride in aid of Leuka 2000.



## Living History Museum

28th April 1999

This is an open-air museum in Gosport which aims to recreate a seventeenth century village, Little Woodham. Volunteers dress in costume and visitors interact with them.

The 2nd Year went to the Living History Museum at Gosport. When we arrived we were given an introduction talk. Then the village scribe took us to the village. On the way down, we passed the toilet. The walls were made from woven sticks, so if the wind was blowing or it was raining you wouldn't want to stay out there for long. They didn't have any toilet paper, so they just used leaves. We then saw a cob house. This is where the washer woman would work. Her house was again made of woven sticks. She would wash the clothes in a pot, and then scrub them against a board. The soap she used, she made herself and it was made from ash and fat.

The Scribe then left us and we spoke to the shoe maker. He uses leather to make shoes, boots, pockets and cups. The cups were called Tankards. Before they can be drunk from they are coated in nonpoisonous tar, to make them waterproof. The shoe maker didn't live in the village, he moved from place to place making and selling his goods. He didn't own any particular shop or land. The shoe maker supported the king in the civil war.

Next, we went to speak to a woman who made butter. The butter is made of cows' milk and cream. Once it has been made, the water is drained out. The butter milk will also be drunk. The butter will then be salted which makes it last longer. She would give the butter to someone to sell at the market. The butter woman had two twin boys who were apprentices. Her husband had died, so now she has to work rather than being a housewife. All the goods she had were kept in the bedroom. The house had no glass in the windows, as there is a tax on glass and so it is too expensive. The butter woman didn't support parliament or the king.

We then went to speak to the Master Gunner. He told us about the different bullets called pellets. If these hit you in the stomach your guts would come out. If they hit you in the arm or leg both would be blown off. The young men that train to be in battles start at the age of nine. They would be given a gallon of ale a day and as much bread and cheese as they could eat. The ale would be made weak. If the boys were caught drunk they would be given fifteen lashings on their

naked backside. The horses they used were shire horses. When they go to battle women and children would be on the battle field picking up the bullets.

We then went inside a tiny little cottage that just had room for one bed, one table and a tiny bench. This was where the lady who makes teas and remedies lives. On the table was coffee, chocolate, garlic, spices and herbs. She would also make cordials. We were able to get to taste a lemon and a black currant flavour. There were herbs hanging up from the ceiling.

Next we went to talk to the carpenter. He would take on apprentices. At the beginning they would cook for him, clear up after him and collect the shavings and put them on the fire. Once the carpenter saw that you were keen and trying hard, he would give you more important things to do, such as sharpening the chisel, making pegs and drilling holes in the timber. When the carpenter is constructing a house the wooden frame would be put up. The timbers were interlocking and had pegs going through to secure them. The thatched roof is then put on by a thatcher. Then wattle and daub would be put between the beams. The wattle is the sticks that are woven together. The sticks have to be fresh and green otherwise they won't bend. The daub would be made of straw, leaves and manure. Once this is put on, the house is painted in lime and sand; this stops the daub drying out and crumbling. The people wanting the house built could usually do the wattle and daub themselves, but if you don't have many people to help you, you might get the carpenter to do it.

Hastily we spoke to the dressmakers or weavers. The lady in charge had an apprentice who was fourteen and was her niece. They get the cotton and wool from the pedlar. The apprentice was wearing cotton to tie her bodice. If the person who wanted the clothes was richer and wanted a better fabric they would have to get it themselves. The dressmaker would also make dolls, as well as other items of clothing.

We then had lunch and went to Portsmouth Harbour for a boat tour of the harbour. Just some of the ships we saw were HMS *Victory*, HMS *Warrior*, HMS *Birmingham* and HMS *Edinburgh*. After this we took the coach back to school and I think we had all had a great day.

*Allana Austin, IJ*



Rebecca Rowland and Katayoune Mokhtar analyse pebble size

## Pembrokeshire Geography Field Trip

February 1999

We arrived at school, ready for the off, armed with our waterproofs. We all piled into the minibus and waved our parents goodbye. We faced a 6 hour drive to Pembrokeshire in Wales.

Finally we arrived at the Orielson Field Centre, our home for the next few days. Everyone was feeling a bit tired and 'minibus sick' but we were relieved that we had 'made it' and excitement filled the air. However, when we all glanced up to see a 3 storey Georgian staircase our hearts sank.

We were greeted by Anne, the warden's wife, who explained where the rooms were and the few rules we had to abide to. Then we were left to battle with the staircase while dragging our bags and suitcases behind us! We were then given the choice of staying in our rooms or roaming around the massive grounds. I chose to roam around and Becky and I managed to get a bit lost. All we could hear were sheep baa-ing at us and to top it all off we were covered in mud. Finally we heard Dulcie calling and we followed the voice until we had reached the Centre.

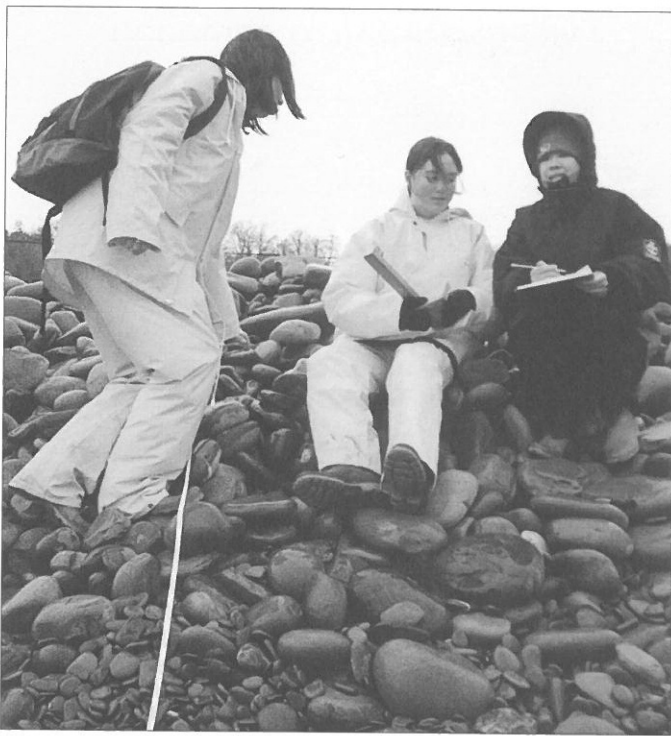
After dinner we had a meeting with Faye, our tutor, at the Centre. She told us what we would be doing and what we should wear etc. The classrooms were down in the old stable yard so we had to walk back up the road to the Centre (This will be important later!)

The Centre itself was a large Georgian building and it had a TV room, a games room and a table-tennis table. Most of our free time was spent having table tennis tournaments and we usually managed to make Miss Whittaker and Mrs Ridge play too.

Our first exercise was to study coastal management. This involved us travelling to Amroth village in South Pembrokeshire measuring the size of pebbles all day! However, boring it may sound it was quite interesting, we were trying to see if longshore drift was operating along the beach and in case you are wondering it was! We arrived back at the Centre wet from the drizzle and tired. We had half an hour to get ourselves together until we were back in the classroom to look at the data. The evening went as usual; dinner, classroom, table-tennis, bed.

The next morning we were greeted by the fact that today was 'climate day'; not that that's a bad thing. We learnt all about weather systems and which factors influence the weather. To collect the data we all had to get in the minibus and drive to various spots where we measured air temperature, relative humidity and wind speed. One stop included the top of a massive hill (Mrs Ridge insisted it wasn't!). It was so windy we couldn't keep our results sheets still! When we got back to the Centre we





**Pebble Size Analysis:**  
Dulcie Bailey, Donna Lui and Mary Patmore

analyzed the data and were free to relax. We played games and talked and played table-tennis! We were all having a great time but the most fun was just around the corner! We went to bed to get ready for our last working day in Wales.

We all woke up ready for a day in Haverfordwest the county town in Pembrokeshire. It was an urban study to Faye our tutor but to us it was 'shopping day'! We tried to discover the current land use patterns in Haverfordwest and the sphere of influence. It wasn't just shopping though. We had to interview people about where they had come from and describe what we had thought about the town. We were left to walk around the streets in specified areas for our groups. My group involved Becky, the mapreader, continually reassuring Clare and I she "knew where she was going". We weren't so sure! Luckily we didn't get lost and had a good amount of data.

When we got back to

the Centre we had a look at the data and thanked Faye for teaching us so well and got back to our rooms to pack. However, while Mrs Ridge and Miss Whittaker were commenting on how good we were and how they knew we were packing our suitcases, we were planning! We had all packed that morning and were now loading our suitcases into a spare room. We tidied the rooms and beds and then acted 'normally'. We had dinner and played table-tennis and enjoyed our last few goes on the arcade machines. Then when it was time for room inspection – we panicked. We had to move all the suitcases back and smile like little angels! Luckily it went smoothly and we started to make our way down to the stable yard where we hid in the minibus and waited to be found. Miss Whittaker and Mrs Ridge found the suitcases first but not us. We had left a clever note giving them clues of our whereabouts. They took the 'horses' clue as that we were hiding in the grounds not the stable yard. After a while we realised we should come out and go back. So we did, to find Mrs Ridge and Miss Whittaker laughing! We had arrived back at 10.59pm and lights out was at 11:00pm therefore we weren't in trouble! It was the best way to end the best trip. We all went to sleep with smiles on our faces.

Another long drive back to Brighton the next morning and we were back in school, meeting our parents and telling them how we had had the best time ever, which we did.

*Katie Mokhtar, IVO*

**Year 10 Geographers at the end of a long day in the field**





## Newcomers to St Mary's Hall

### My time in Brighton

With great expectations I arrived at St Mary's Hall in Brighton in September 1998.

Many students from my class also went abroad for one year at the same time. Popular destinations were the USA, Canada and New Zealand. I chose to come to England, because I was particularly interested in, what the people are like in a different European country, the English culture and most importantly to improve my English.

I was a bit nervous when I arrived, but everyone was very friendly, so soon I felt relaxed and well integrated. At the beginning the lessons were quite hard, because in terms of English, I hardly understood anything. But as time went by, listening to English became the most natural thing in the world.

In particular, I enjoyed having the possibility to meet girls from lots of different countries, which was very interesting. I made new friends and we often went to the cinema, shopping or other outings, for which Brighton is an ideal place.

Less nice was to read the British press which often writes in an insulting and one-sided view about things that have happened in the past, more than 50 years back.

In conclusion I would like to say that I enjoyed the time and gained many new experiences.

*Franziska Schatchler*

### Boarding at SMH

I'm a boarder at St Mary's Hall. The boarders live in a house in Sussex Square, St Hilary House. It's a small and nice building. There are many rooms in it. TV room, Blue Room, basement, washing room and about twenty bedrooms. In my room there are five beds, but we are only four pupils in the room. Kitty, Tinker and Debbie share with me. Kitty and Tinker are from Hong Kong and Debbie comes from Nigeria. They are all very nice.

Every morning we get up at 7 o'clock and go to the TV Room for registration. The person on duty then helps us with the post. In the evening at about 7.30pm the Tuck Shop is opening; it sells drinks, sweets and stamps. It's very funny. We must go to bed before half past nine. Between 7 o'clock and 9 o'clock you can do everything in St Hilary House, playing the piano, watching TV, talking with friends in English. It's very happy.

When I first came to St Mary's Hall, I saw some old buildings in the school. The school is so large. There's an office building, some tennis courts and some subject rooms. My classroom is in a small building, it's not too big but there are sixteen pupils in it. The classroom is very nice, a lot of postcards and many pictures on the walls and the windows are big. The students are very friendly. I think they come from many countries. I'm taught in the School House. It's a building for some pupils to learn English. This is a small building. Every morning, we go to church. There is a nice and cool church in this school which is very nice and large. I think it is big enough to sit 300 people. This is a nice school. When I first came here, I felt very happy.

*Lu Ping Li*

### My study in England

My name is Tinker – Tinker Ho. I'm 14 years and I come from Hong Kong. I've been at St Mary's Hall for just three terms, so my English isn't very good. I remember that when I first came to this school, I cried every day because I was homesick, but I'm fine now.

I've met a lot of friends here, some of them are my best friends. So I don't cry any more (because I've got my own friends to pour out my heart to). Although I can't really habit living in England because everything is different eg. languages, weather, people etc. But I'm very fortunate that all of my teachers and friends are always assisting me, so I can join in here happy and easily.

I thank them very much.

*Tinker Ho*

## Marie Cure Cancer Care Concert

Saturday 7 November 1998

In response to a request made by Penny Barnes, an Old Girl of the school, who is the local organiser of fund-raising events for the Marie Curie Cancer Care Fund, the school devised a tribute to Marie Curie which was performed at St Peter's Church on Saturday 7th November 1998.

Mrs Meek's narration led the audience through the main events of Marie Curie's life, from her origins in Russian occupied Poland, through the immensely dedicated and concentrated scientific work which led to the discovery of radium, to the honours she received later in her life. Interspersed were poems and musical items performed by the Chamber Choir and by soloists from the school.

Three members of staff performed extracts from 'Active Elements', a play by local author John Fisher about Marie and Pierre Curie.

Pupils from Transition to the Upper Sixth took part, and it was rewarding not only to be able to help a very worthwhile charity, but also to commemorate the work of an extraordinary and dedicated woman who was ahead of her time and intensely devoted to scientific discovery.

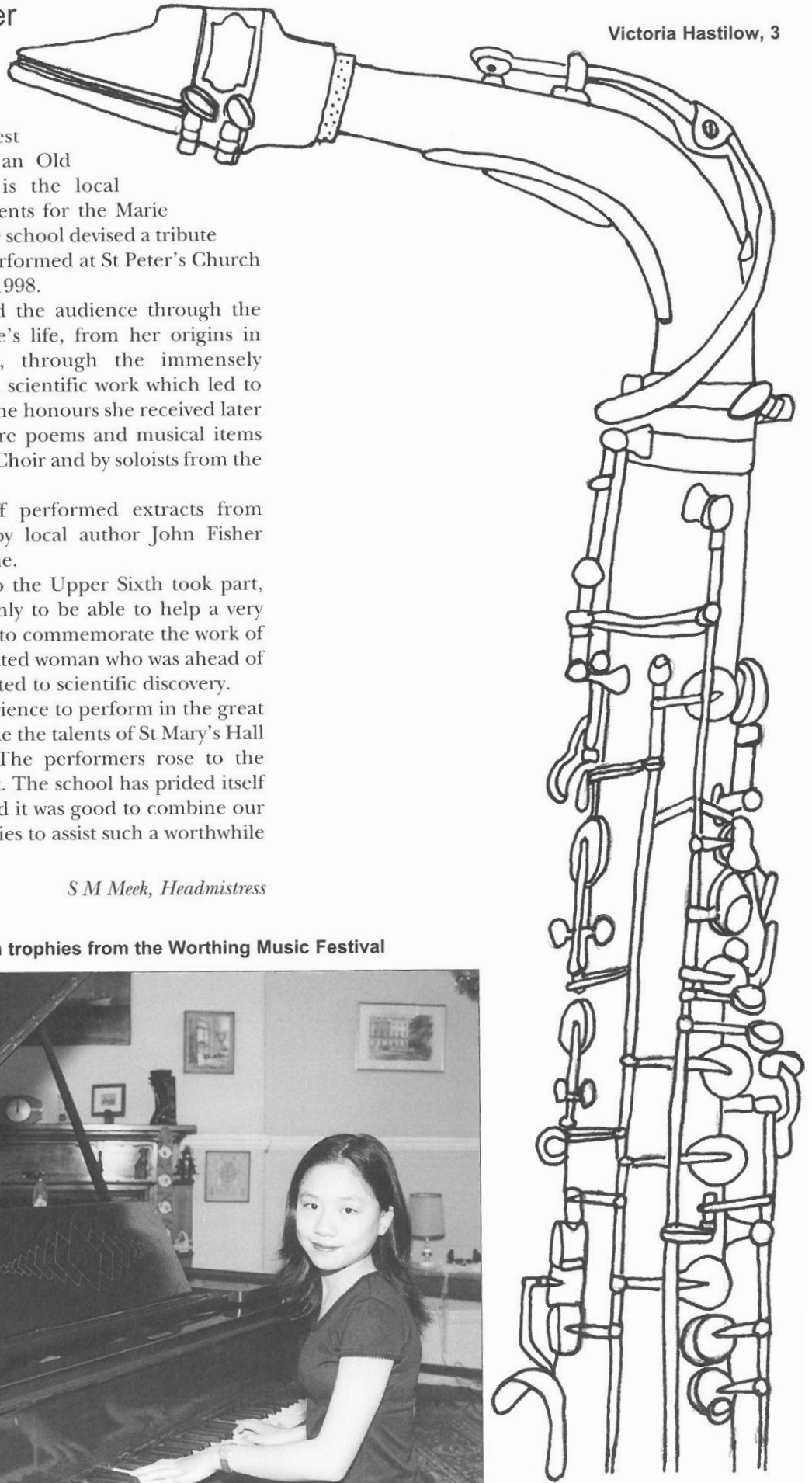
It was a memorable experience to perform in the great space of St Peter's and to take the talents of St Mary's Hall into the Centre of town. The performers rose to the occasion and gave their best. The school has prided itself in its fund-raising efforts and it was good to combine our musical and dramatic activities to assist such a worthwhile cause.

*S M Meek, Headmistress*

**Sharon Wong with trophies from the Worthing Music Festival**



Victoria Hastilow, 3



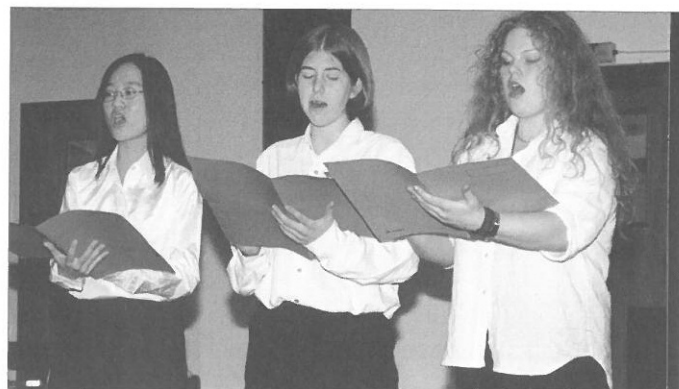
# THE SPRING CONCERT



Training Orchestra: Sarah Cockett, 4; Sharon Wong, 3.



Jazz Group: Kerry Moss, 2; Elizabeth Johns, 1; Maria Redman, 3; Amy Drinkwater, 4; Jenifer Comin, 3; Tamara McGraw, 5.



Chamber Choir: Amanda Tsui, 4; Alice Rawdon-Mogg, L6; Daisy Edwards-Bayne, L6.



Training Orchestra: Maria Redman.



Training Orchestra: Sarah Johnson, 3.



Piano Duet: Hannah Redman.



Harp Solo: Katherine Mathews, 5.



Chamber Orchestra: S. Wilkins, L6; H. Redman, 5; F. Woodbridge, 4; M. Redman, 3.



## Our Country's Good

December 1997

As director, I felt privileged to be able to stage one of modern theatre's most challenging plays with a cast and crew who gave such a high level of emotional commitment.

The play concerns the experience of the early convict settlers who were sent to Australia in 1787 and the officers who guarded them. Its twenty-two scenes begin with the barbarities of the voyage out with its sickness, squalor and harsh punishments. The language mirrors the violence of the life in the convict colony. However, set against the remorseless beating and degradation there is the desire of the educated officers to take something of the enlightenment of the eighteenth century to their new world. Against the odds, Lieutenant Ralph Clark stages a play – Farquhar's 'The Recruiting Officer' with the convicts.

The way that play is prepared and the enormous significance it acquires is the theme of the drama. It is by no means an easy nor comfortable play to watch, to act in nor to direct. However, its rewards for performers are enormous. The fascinating aspect of this production was the way that life mirrored art. Just as the convict actors are sceptical about the play, so were many of my cast. Just as Clark, the director encountered problems, so did I. However, just as the people in the play gained in enthusiasm and confidence, so did we all.

In the end, played with simple props in the round and with Mrs Lock's very effective use of material to transform the Hall, the play proved to have considerable power. Our crew worked with great speed and dexterity to ensure that the scenes flowed smoothly and a large cast showed great discipline and commitment.



This sombre, gritty play will never be to everyone's taste, but it captures something of the importance of drama and creativity. I can well understand why it has made such an impact when played in all sorts of venues – even in prisons. Thank you again, all who took part or helped.

*Mike Wells, Deputy Head*



# House Drama Festival

March 1999

The Spring Term seems a long way off now, but I should like to congratulate all Houses on their achievements in the House Drama Festival on the final day of term. This year's adjudicator was Mrs Sue Sheen, Theatre Manager and Drama teacher at Roedean. She commended all the Houses on their performances, but awarded first prize to Adelaide House for its performance of 'Ask a Silly Question' by Richard Tydeman, directed by Edwina Woolgar. The award for Best Actress was presented to Daisy Edwards-Bayne, who was equally effective in all her roles in Bristol's performance of 'Ghostwriter' by N J Warburton.

SMM

## ADELAIDE HOUSE PLAY

'Ask a Silly Question' by Richard Tydeman

Director: Edwina Woolgar

### Cast

Mrs Ambidex	Charlotte Bishop
Mrs Block	Katie Salt
Lady Faux-Parr	Edwina Woolgar
Miss Trigg	Sharon Wong
The Hon.	
Mrs Landskip	Alaina Belameh
Mme Plume-Tante	Alexandra Stuart-Hutcheson
Mrs Proliff	Valerie Furnham
Miss Hurdlefast	Samantha Compton
Mrs Ogily	Abosede Ososanya
Mrs Quaule	Saphy Ali
Mrs Ramsholt	Sarah Gartside
Mrs Shoolbred	Philippa Southwell
Cameraman	Katie Beves
Man	Charlotte
Overton-Hart	

Head of Backstage	Alexandria Conn
Backstage Help	Amy Drinkwater
Lights	Sarah Sage

## BABINGTON HOUSE PLAY

'Costa del Packet'

Director : Meera Majevalia

### Cast

Hump	Julia Bezanson
Vera	Jessica Warner
Lesley	Nicola Edwards
Sally	Rebecca Labertouche
Alice	Alexia Fleming
Back Stage	Athena Georgiou Georgina Tunbridge Selina Austin Atousa Saddighzadeh
Lighting	Vanessa Paidano
Sound	Kate Fleming

## CHICHESTER HOUSE PLAY

'Shakers Re-stirred'

by John Godber and Jane Thornton

Director: Louise Paddenburg

### Cast

Adele	Katie Mokhtar
Carol	Alexandra Mitchell
Mel	Faye Bennett
Nicky	Christelle
McCracken	
Person with sign	Sarah Hatherly
Backstage	Fiona Hunt
Lighting	Sarah Sage

## BRISTOL HOUSE PLAY

'Ghostwriter' by N J Warburton

Director : Daisy Edwards-Bayne

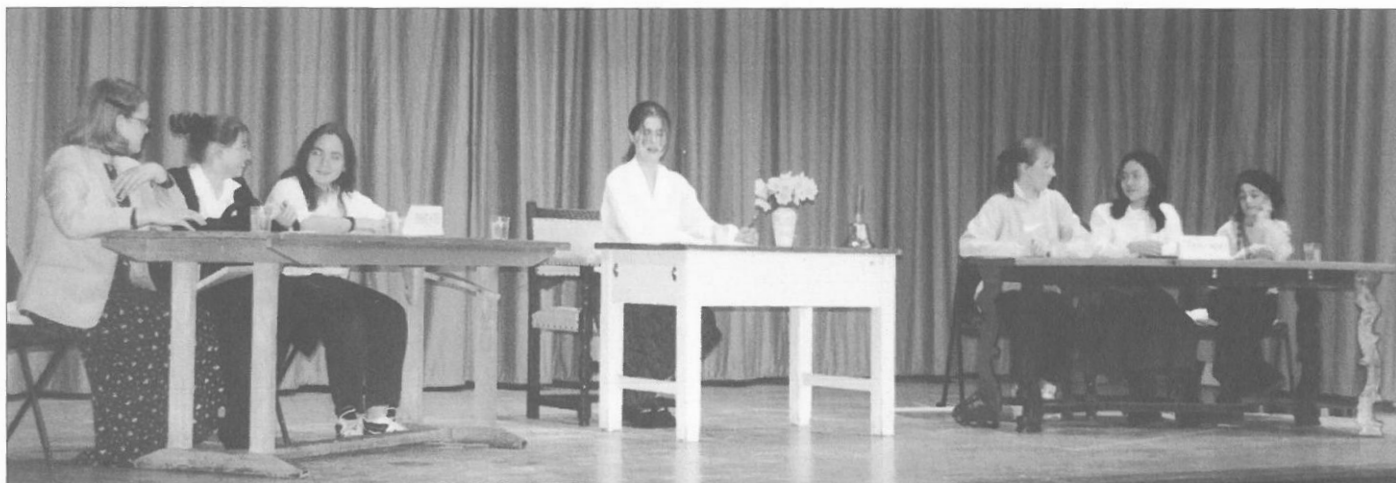
Co-Director: Alice Rawdon-Mogg

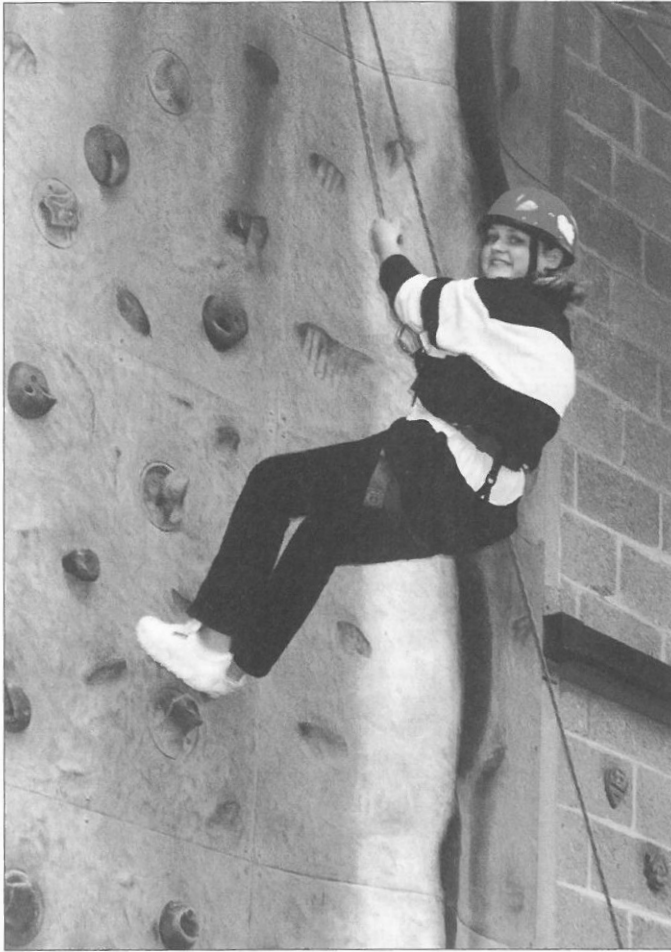
### Cast

Joan	Siobhan O'Hara
Belinda	Rebecca Rowland
Mrs Spruce	Amy Blackburn
Ghost	Amy Blackburn
Colonel	Sarah Johnson
King	Alice Rawdon-Mogg
Vicar	Alice Rawdon-Mogg
Butler	Mellisa Lim
Maid	Nicola Johnson
Mavis	Nicola Johnson
Arnold	Natalie Warren
Clarissa	Daisy Edwards-Bayne
Director	Daisy Edwards-Bayne
Queen	Daisy Edwards-Bayne
Mrs Cashflow	Gabrielle Ryan
Policeman	Gabrielle Ryan
Messenger	Gabrielle Ryan
Ron	Zulehkha Waheed
Vera	Sanchia Parker
Edwin	Alexandra Parr

Extras: convicts, one-legged pirates etc  
Zulehkha Waheed, Alice Rawdon-Mogg,  
Sanchia Parker, Alexandra Parr,  
Charlotte Ridge, Cassandra Kamtarin,  
Mellisa Lim

Adelaide: The winning House





## Our Trip to Blacklands Farm 1999

The journey was great! The moment we got there it was confusing whether we were sleeping in somebody's garden, on concrete, or actually in a field. However, we discovered that we were sleeping in a field. Everyone was eager to get out and start putting the tents up.

We arrived. There was a keen feeling of happiness with everybody.

We began putting our tents up; after about three quarters of an hour we had finished. Then we arranged the inside of our tents. We were ready to do the next activity – abseiling! We were told what to do with the harness, figure of eight, carabeena, helmet and we got into line. Everyone was really eager to have a go and got that nervous feeling out from the bottom of their stomachs. I think most people's hearts were pounding as they climbed the steep steps to the top. When we reached the top of the enormous tower we clipped ourselves to the rope. Any how after I got my feet over the edge I felt secure! In fact, I found it so enjoyable I took another two turns! I think everyone had the same feelings as I did about the whole thing.

Once we returned to the campsite we ate dinner, and that night we played hide and seek in the dark woods. When we returned (as we hadn't actually been found) we got ready to go to sleep.

One long day had gone by already and we still had a lot more to do. The next day I woke up shivering and I pulled a blanket around me and kept warm under my sleeping bag. Unfortunately, most people were up already so the comfort of my warm bed didn't last for long. I ate my breakfast with everyone else and collected fire wood as it was my duty whilst everyone else was busy washing up the dishes. We got ready for our next activity which was rock climbing, I was slightly worried but my friends Rishma, Agatha and Verity cheered me up and encouraged me. It was really good once I had got into the whole thing and everybody kept going back for more. Once we had returned to the campsite we ate lunch, and had a brief rest before going on to yet another activity, which was a trip to the lake to go canoeing. Once we had arrived we got into our canoes and were shown how to use our paddles amongst other things, we then had a little go on the water and played a ball game. After we'd arranged the canoes in a line on the bank some girls volunteered to swap canoes walking over the ones between!

It was once we were back at the camp that we played rounders while the others made dinner. After dinner we played a team game in the dark, it was where you had to catch other people. The next morning I think everybody was feeling a little sad because we were going home! We all got dressed and ready and then we ate breakfast. We all packed away our things and we could leave our tents up because some other people wanted them afterwards. We then played games until our parents came and gradually each girl was picked up, I think I speak for everyone when I say we'll never forget our trip to Blacklands Farm and all its experiences.

*Faye Bennet & Lucy Latham, IIE*

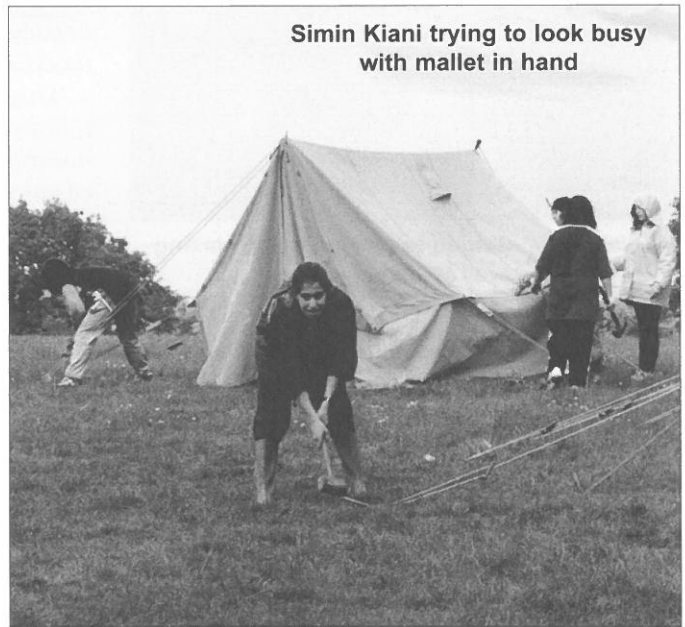




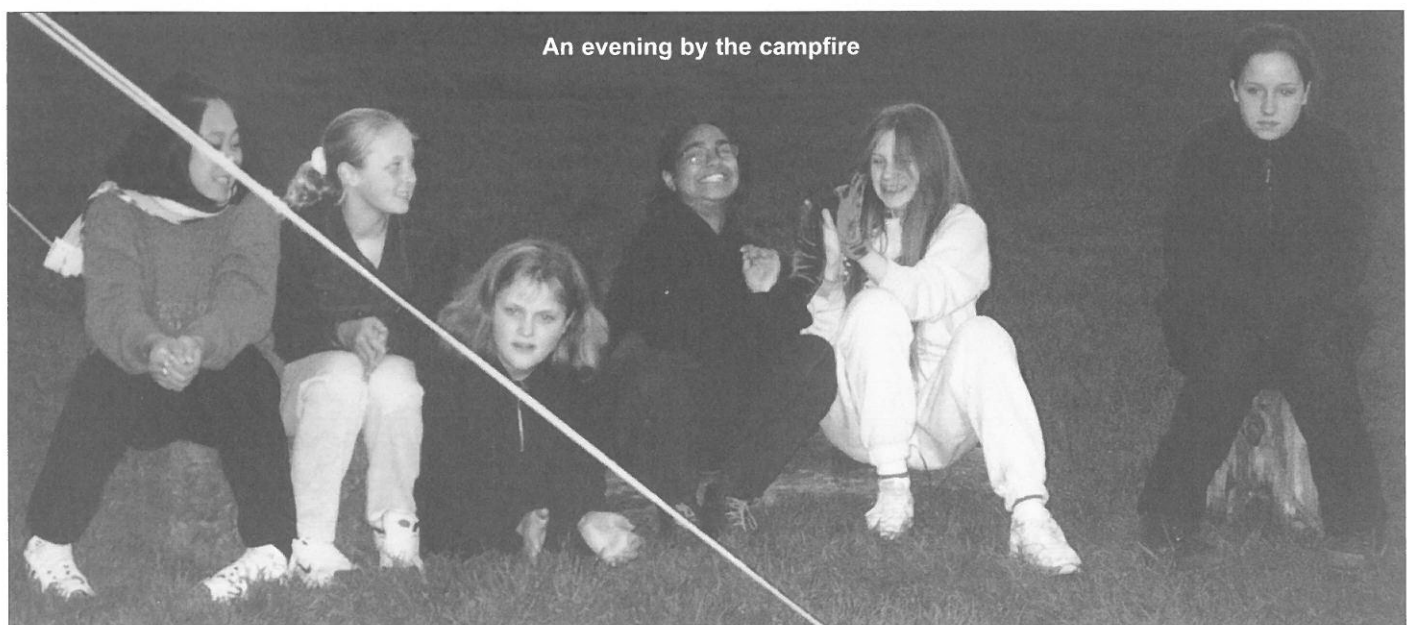
Canoeists ready to brave the cold waters



A happy bunch of campers



Simin Kiani trying to look busy with mallet in hand



An evening by the campfire



Zulekhka waiting in the wings before taking part in the dance display

## Cultural Evening

**O**n 16th October we held a Cultural Evening which involved girls from all over the world. It took place in the main hall and guests were invited to sample the delights of international cuisine made by the students at home or in School. The tables were beautifilly decorated and the food was delicious.

This was followed by an international costume and dance



A very composed Rio who spoke in both Japanese and English about being at SMH

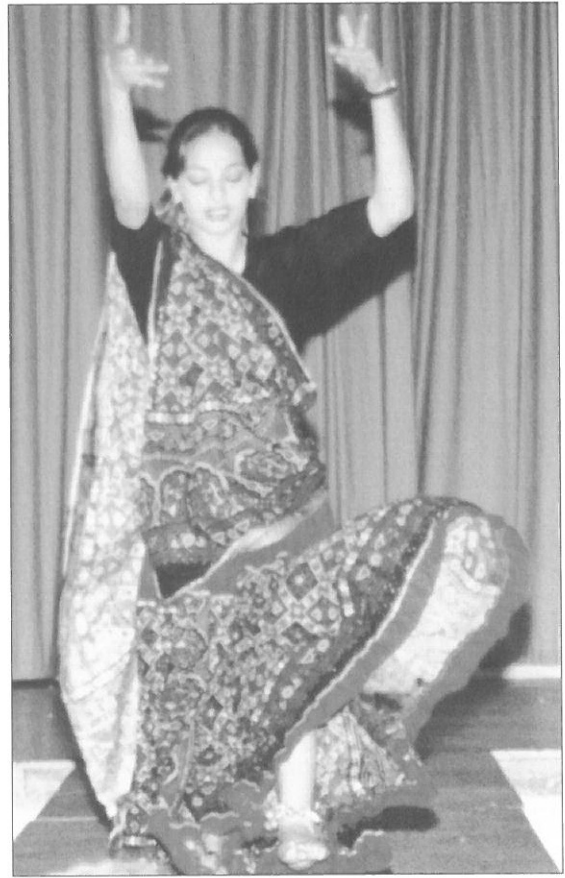
Zulekhka Waheed, Charlene Evans and Ellie Low just before the dance





**Tomoko making final adjustments to Rio's kimono**

display which started in the UK and encompassed the world. We watched girls from some fifteen different countries perform to music, in glorious costume, and we were enthralled by their gracefulness and talent. It was a lovely evening expertly organised by a dedicated Sixth Form committee, Rose Abdullah, Florence Chan and Deborah Lim, and was truly international. We raised £500 which has been sent to UNICEF's Hurricane Mitch Appeal.



**Meera performing a traditional dance from India**

**Tomoko and Carol show their origami talents**







Left to right: Mrs Teresa Broadbent (Headmistress 1988-92), Mrs Olive Leslie (Headmistress 1973-81), Mrs Susan Meek (Headmistress from 1997), Mrs Pamela James (Headmistress 1992-97). Front: Mrs Ivy Catt, 'special cleaning lady', who looked after all four headmistresses during her time at SMH, 1977-97.

#### At the Garden Party

The Bursar; Head Girl, Alice Rawdon-Mogg; The Headmistress; The Mayor of Brighton; Deputy Head; 2nd Deputy Head.



## Ski Report 1999

Towards the end of the Christmas holiday when most of the school was dreading the start of a new term, there were a few advantaged young people ready for the skiing experience.

We all met up at the airport in the late afternoon. We were pleasantly greeted by Mrs Moss, who had already started praying that no one would break a leg.

The short flight to Lyon was full of Christmas gossip (the nerves didn't come until the next morning). After collecting the luggage we boarded the coach for the 4 hour journey which seemed longer going than coming back. It was dark and the only visible object was the full moon. We had to use our wild imaginations to picture the mountains.

We soon arrived at our hotel which was conveniently situated and only a short brisk walk to the slopes. The hotel was called Des Alpinistes and had all the basic essentials to make our stay comfortable. It was an English hotel which was to our advantage when the lift broke down with myself and a few friends in it. We were then taken to the ski-tech where our first impression of Matt was that he was as enthusiastic as the teachers on a Monday morning! This opinion gradually changed through the week as we learned that he could speak as well as grunt, he could smile and he had a sense of humour.

As they say, pleasure is always followed by pain. It was the wake up call, not much appreciated, as on average we only had five hours sleep. Once all kitted up we started our first of many walks to the slopes. Once there, there were the gasps of the beginners and few who had already skied and the eagerness of the so called 'pro' Miss Whittaker. Next we met our instructors who took us on a warm-up on the nursery slopes before we were put into groups. I wondered if the other skiers could hear the loud pounding of the heart on that first run. We went into three groups. The first few days we stayed down on the nursery slopes and then worked our way up the mountains exploring and gazing at the breath taking scenery. The higher up the mountains we went, the harder the ski lifts became. We attempted the usual lifts occasionally, not to great success. Poor Mrs Moss was subjected to a T-Bar lift (or should it be poor Miss Whittaker).

Our skiing in general was improving with every lesson, although there was the very rare outburst of frustration which echoed repeatedly around the ricocheting walls of the surrounding mountains.

Our daily routine consisted of breakfast at 8.00, boot room at 9.00, a warm up ski session with the teachers and our first lesson at 11.15. Lunch was welcomed at 1.15. We ate our lunch back at the hotel which gave us the opportunity to strip off our sweaty clothes and relax on the balcony under the sun for 15 mins before we ate. The afternoon lesson began at 2.15. We would all meet

at the bottom of the slopes and head back to the hotel to get ready for dinner.

The best part of the day was first thing in the morning when we had our free ski with Miss Whittaker. We would head up the mountain and be the first ones on the slopes. There would be no-one around and the sun would barely have risen. It would be a dusty, misty colour which would make the snow sparkle like glitter.

We were lucky enough to have evening entertainment arranged for us which consisted of shopping, bowling, swimming, skating and bumboarding (which came naturally to most of us as we spent some of the day sliding down the slopes on our bottoms). On the Friday night, all the school groups plus the teachers went to a night-club with a pretty predictable name of Avalanche. It had decor from the 50s, a feel from the 70s, music from the 80s and we can't forget the pictures from the 1920s.

Mrs Moss must be grateful as we dressed appropriately at the club but unfortunately not always on the slopes! We had the wild jacket of Neallie which could be seen from the top of Mt. Blanc and the mad hatters of Kerrie, Michelle and Carol. Sheep-girl Sarah honoured us with the presence of Shaun nearly every day. When the snow came all we could see of our faces were our noses. We also had the pleasure of Cassie's mountains of make up, Michelle's elegant dress sense but the teachers always let us down.

The end of the week drew near and the rumours began of a minitest, so that we could be given a certificate. On one evening we had an award ceremony (a low budget one at that). We were also given the opportunity to say goodbye to our instructors.

On our last day we had time to pack and for Michelle to do some more shopping. Once the Mafia had checked our rooms it was time to start our return journey. I don't think there was one honest person who would have preferred coming home to the rain and dull weather of Brighton to leaving the adventurous snow and the warm welcomed sun. Our coach wheels rolled and it was time to hit the roads, but this time we got to see the beautiful mountains turn to bustling motorways.

Whilst on the flight home we were able to remember some of the memories we had just gained. No one will forget the day Carol forgot her ski pass, or the much awaited fall of Miss Whittaker, or the people we met, or the day Cassie decided her skis were broken at the top of the mountain.

Then the time came for us to see our relieved parents and head for home and our much loved beds.

We would like to thank Mrs Moss and Miss Whittaker for keeping their cool and their sense of humour during our ski trip.

*Amy Drinkwater, IVY*