

Ellesmere news



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Easter trip to Iceland

Over the Easter holidays an intrepid group of Sixth Form students set off to explore the stunning geological features of Iceland. Upper Sixth Former Emily Roberts describes the experience:

“The trip began with an extremely early Friday morning start, but, despite this, we were all excited for the days ahead. On arrival we launched into our tour with our experienced local guide, Betty. We enjoyed our visit to the hot sinter pools as well as walking in a fissure between the American and Eurasian plates. It was also our first experience of the changeable Icelandic weather as we were caught in a blizzard.

We were all fascinated by the panoramic views of the Golden Circle on the second day and the surreal experience of walking through the rift between the American and Eurasian plates. We also later relished the challenge of filming a geyser erupting. Due to the heavy snow that day, in the evening we were all able to take part in a massive snowball fight, followed by an awe-inspiring glimpse of the northern lights which entranced us all.



Exploring the spectacular landscape

In terms of getting up close and personal to the geographical features we studied in lessons, day three and five were certainly the most interactive. We were lucky enough to be able to walk behind the Seljandafoss waterfall after overcoming the treacherous path to reach it. On the final day we also enjoyed the chance to walk on the Solheimajokull glacier. At first, I must admit I approached the glacier with trepidation when I was handed an axe to help my walking, but it was incident free and the chance to crawl up a crevasse was an experience I will never forget. Day four was equally as interesting as we admired both icebergs and seals and on the final day a swim in the Blue Lagoon was the perfect end to the trip.

Despite some of the coldest showers of my life and an inability to pronounce any of the places we visited, I think we can all agree that this was an unforgettable experience, for which we are all really grateful. We owe a huge thank you to Mr and Mrs Waddams, Dr Gareth and tour guide Betty for organising this amazing trip for us."



American Drama Exchange

Easter also saw a group of students from Years 10 to 13 set off for Boston, Massachusetts, for the second half of our biennial drama exchange with our partner school Tabor Academy.

A group of students and teachers from Tabor had visited College with their own production of 'The Secret in the Wings' two weeks earlier and now it was Ellesmere's turn to tour our production of 'An Inspector Calls' to America.



A delicious gift from Tabor

Eleven performers and stage crew stayed at Tabor Academy for a week, sampling life at an American school, attending lessons and making new friends. Braving the cold spring winds and thawing snow, the group found it fascinating to see how education happens differently in another country and sampled such diverse lessons as marine biology and navigational skills at Tabor, which is known as 'the school by the sea'. Their performances were extremely well-received by keen audiences who, perhaps less familiar with Priestley's social drama, found it a thought-provoking piece which led to many lively discussions about the message of the play as well as the tantalising question, 'Who is the Inspector?'

The students enjoyed many cultural visits and learned a great deal about American history, visiting Plimoth Plantation Settlers Museum and Plimoth Rock, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Newport Mansions and, during a two night stay in the city of Boston, following the Freedom Trail to learn about the Boston Tea Party, and visiting the Museum of Science and Harvard University. Perhaps the highlight of the whole tour, however, was seeing a performance by the world famous Blue Man Group - an experience not to be missed. By the end of the show everyone wanted to enrol in the Blue Man Drama School!

The Ellesmere and Tabor Exchange has been going on for over twenty years now, and offers students a unique experience of touring a play, acting on the other side of the Atlantic and making new friends. Perhaps in two years' time it might be your turn to take part?



Will Ainge and Lisa Michel



The Inspector calls on the Birlings



The group at Cape Cod



Riding the Democratic Donkey, Boston



Plimoth Plantation



Boston Common

Bugsy Malone

This year's Lower School Play was the popular musical 'Bugsy Malone'. With a large and enthusiastic cast to work with, Director Mrs Rachel Schubert treated us to an entertaining spectacle in which all the children enjoyed finding their 'inner gangster', especially the henchmen who got to wipe out the opposition with their splurger guns.

The performance was accompanied by an excellent band of musicians led by Director of Music Mr Tony Coupe, and all elements of the theatre arts worked together to produce an impressive and entertaining performance: costumes, choreography, acting, singing, playing, lighting and sound as well as set design.

It was clear that the pupils' character development and performance were driven by their imagination and enthusiasm and the shows were a big hit with audiences on two evenings and at a special matinee for the pupils of our neighbouring school Ellesmere Primary.





Four Choirs Concert

The Four Choirs Concert took place on a bright summer's evening in Big School. Amongst the other ensembles, this year was the chance of our new Chamber Choir to join the concert for the first time.

Their performance of an 'a capella' version of 'The Longest Time' by Billy Joel, complete with finger clicks and 'sho-bops', was energetic and musical and they offered a beautiful rendition of 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' by Simon and Garfunkel.

Huw Lloyd gave his first solo performing 'Electricity' from the musical Billy Elliott with the Lower School Choir. The Senior Orchestra performed the technically demanding Overture from the 'Marriage of Figaro' by Mozart, producing a bright and convincing sound throughout. Billy McAllon assembled the Muddy Waters Quartet to perform an experiment in jazz with their interpretation of 'Blue Bossa' by Kenny Dorham. Other highlights included The Chapel Choir's performance of 'I Say a Little Prayer for You', made famous by Aretha Franklin, and the students and audience really got their toes tapping for the Choral Society's 'Mary Poppins Medley'.

This year's Four Choir Concert was entertaining, polished and full of uplifting music – in other words, a good night out for everyone who attended!



The splendid setting of Big School



Jakob and Harry Fradley



Choral Society

An Evening of 'Whine' and Song

Upper Sixth Student Hannah Miles reports on this student-led event:

"On Wednesday 3rd June a group of Sixth Form students organised a concert in aid of the charity Medical Detection Dogs. The charity was set up in 2008 by Dr Claire Guest, an animal psychologist. Her friend had previously been diagnosed with malignant melanoma after her dog had been persistently drawing her attention to a small blemish on her leg, and then she herself had a similar experience with her own dog, who alerted her to what proved to be cancer of the breast.

Today there are several cancer detection dogs working in the UK, who can recognize cancer in its earliest stages from breath or urine samples. A team of researchers at Bristol University are working in conjunction with the charity to try to identify the actual chemical that dogs are detecting.

Medical Detection Dogs, however, do far more than detecting cancer. They transform lives by assisting people who live with life threatening conditions such as Addison's disease, severe allergies, narcolepsy, and Type 1 Diabetes. My own dog, Hattie, has been a great help in the management of my Type 1 Diabetes – a condition I have had since the age of seven. My blood sugars can be erratic – either being too low, or too high, but Hattie will give me warning when my blood glucose goes out of range or drops suddenly. Her job is particularly important during the night when I am unaware of any symptoms. If she fails to wake me up she will run into my parent's room and let them know there is a problem.

Fundraising is so important, as training a dog can cost up to £11,000 and there is no government funding. There is currently a 3-year waiting list for a medical detection dog and 145 people waiting, so I know I am one of the lucky ones.

Our charity concert raised over £300 for the charity by the selling of wine, cakes raffle tickets and not to forget Mrs Wood's delicious marmalade. Many thanks to all the helpers and performers who made the evening such a success."



Hannah Miles

Physics Summer Barbecue

Year 13 physicists relaxed at the end of year barbecue after working hard all year.

Hosted by Mr and Mrs Joynson-Brooke at their home, the group enjoyed croquet, sausages and a chance to let their hair down at the end of a very busy year.

Miss Darrant and Illya Zalessky were crowned croquet champions after a hard fought contest, fending off a last minute surge from Billy McAllon and Sam Squires. Even Brewster, Mrs Joynson-Brooke's pet pig, was very impressed with their performance!



National Youth Theatre

Talented student Joseph Jameson has fought off strong competition to be accepted into the country's top youth theatre.

The 17 year old will join their three-week training course in London this summer, where students are taught a range of skills and acting techniques by professionals.

Jo, who is also a member of the Scottish Youth Theatre, will work on a number of projects which will culminate in a final performance. He was selected from 5,000 applicants from all over Great Britain and Northern Ireland who auditioned, and only 500 students were selected for their summer programme. He is now able to audition for any of their productions, which are staged in London's West End.

Ellesmere College Head of Drama Rachel Schubert said: "This is wonderful news. We encourage students to audition for the National Youth Theatre every year and it is fantastic to see Jo's hard work rewarded like this. Acting is a demanding and competitive industry, but this success will significantly aid Jo with his acting ambitions."



Jo Jameson Year 12

Model United Nations



Committee debates



The General Assembly

For their PSHE morning this term Year 9 participated in a simulation of the Model United Nations.

Ellesmere has a long tradition of participating in MUN conferences around the world as part of our commitment to raise the standard of public speaking amongst our students. Many of the students who took part in this 'in house' activity will go on to travel to cities such as Leiden or The Hague to take part in international MUN events in the future.

This time the problem of people smuggling was on the agenda and twenty countries battled it out in debates in four General Assembly Committee rooms. Every student was assigned to a team and a role, and part of the challenge of MUN is to research your allocated country's views on the topic and then learn to negotiate with others as well as present your arguments in public. There were many eloquent and well-researched speeches, and superb clauses submitted in every room, but every competition needs a winner, and in this case, it was Turkey, closely followed by joint runners-up Russia and Haiti.

Moduli Near and Far

Our ongoing conservation and development project in Tanzania received a real boost recently from two fantastic events.

First of all a group of our students visited St Martin's Academy Free School in Chester with Mrs Allen in order to tell them about their involvement in Africa.

There was great excitement amongst the younger pupils at St Martin's as they heard about the project as well as tried on Tanzanian clothes, planted sunflowers, learned some geography and discovered how precious rain water is now collected to water the reforested areas, thanks to Ellesmere's ongoing fundraising for 'Monduli Green'. Some of our students were able to share their own experiences of visiting Tanzania to work on the project over the last two summers.

Miss Smith, St Martin's Head Teacher said, "The children absolutely loved learning all about the Monduli Green project and the essential work it carries out. The students from Ellesmere were wonderful with the children and as a school we will be carrying out a number of fundraising activities to help support what they are trying to achieve in Tanzania."

Meanwhile, back at College, our Lower School pupils held a sponsored walk to raise further funds for the project as well as a One World Banner competition.



It's fun dressing up



"Where is Tanzania?"



Stepping out for Monduli

Wine Appreciation Classes

Wine Appreciation has become an annual addition to Sixth Form extracurricular life. The group meets to discuss the differences in grape varieties and to learn something about the complex processes involved in turning grapes into wine.

Discussion can become quite animated when comparing the nose and body of different vintages. An attempt is made to distinguish between New World and Old World varieties and to appreciate the differences caused by climate and terroir.

This term students have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to compare English sparkling wine with champagne and to understand why those wines would always cost more than prosecco or cava. To complement tastings it became something of a tradition this year for students to bring along their homemade cakes and biscuits. Perhaps surprisingly, there was general agreement on how well a shiraz went with chocolate cake.



The group with wine tutor Jonathon Hislop

Year 8 'Teen Tech'

Year 8 students recently enjoyed a day of engineering and science at the TeenTech event at Glydwr University in Wrexham. They designed apps, controlled robots, worked in a sound engineering studio and conducted numerous other engineering activities. They were given a real insight into the wide ranging careers that can result from studying sciences

Amy Darrant, Head of Physics, commented: 'We like our students to get involved in outside events like this because it encourages them to see how their science is actually used in real life. For some of them it provides inspiration to take these subjects at a higher level in the College and perhaps to go on to study them at University and beyond.'



Simulating the sympathetic relationship between lichen and fungi using cornflour, water and food colouring

Swimming Success

Ellesmere College Titans for the first time in the club's history have won the medal table at the Midland Championships against established swimming clubs including City of Birmingham, Nova Centurion (Home of Becky Adlington!), City of Leicester and Royal Wolverhampton School.

Phoebe Townsend, competing in her first ever District Championships, showed some real class coming away with 6 titles and in a host of National qualification events.

In addition to this success the Titans recently had two England international swimmers on duty in Majorca, training and racing at the world renowned BEST Centre. Harriet Rothwell and Olivia Gardner did the College and the Titans proud. Harriet won the junior 7km while Olivia finished 4th in the 5km.

Tazmin Pugh and Ellie Southwood have also just returned from Italy where they represented England in the Energy Standard International Cup against Russia (with Ukraine), Germany and Italy. It was a fantastic meet for both swimmers with England finishing second to Italy and Tazmin being awarded the 'Most Outstanding Swimmer' trophy.

The Titans now have a busy summer ahead with international and national competitions taking place well into August.

Ellesmere College Titans achievements in the 2014-2015 season

International Selection:

- Commonwealth Youth Games (Samoa)
- European Youth Olympics (Georgia)
- 2x Swimmers Four Nations England international (Italy)
- 2x Swimmers BestFest (Majorca)

Team Success:

- Great Britain Top Team Open Water
- 6th Place finish National Arena League
- Top Club Midland Championships, first time in the club's history



Phoebe Townsend



Harriet Rothwell and Olivia Gardner



Tazmin Pugh and Ellie Southwood



Under 15 Cricket Team Win Midlands Final

In June our Under 15 Cricket Team not only carried off the County title but also won the Midlands Final of the English Schools Cricket Association (ESCA) Cup in an exciting and closely fought match against Warwick School, where they won by three wickets.

Warwick won the toss and elected to bat first. It was a very entertaining game with Ellesmere completing the run chase with 22 balls to spare. Recovering from Warwick racing to 90-2 off 12 overs to dismiss them for 128 was an outstanding achievement. Sam Ellis took two wickets in his opening spell and then was supported well by Tom Furnival (2-17) and Connor Davies (1-36). Harry Newton was also outstanding, taking three wickets and conceding just six runs in his 5 overs.

Our batting got off to a solid start from Mathew Batkin (28) and Ben Beaver (23) before a consistent flow of wickets put pressure on Ellesmere with 26 runs needed to win. It was all down to Year 9s Connor Davies (18*) and Harry Newton (23*), who both held it together brilliantly to complete the victory. This then allowed the team to progress to the national semi finals against the winners of the north section, Manchester Grammar, where Ellesmere were narrowly defeated in a tightly-fought match.

Director of Cricket Gareth Owen said "Since becoming Under 14 County Champions last summer the boys have worked really hard throughout the winter in our Academy Programme. As a result they are now reaping the rewards for their efforts."

Captain Sam Ellis said, "We are enjoying the success at the moment. It's been good to carry on where we left off last year by now winning the County Title, and now the Midlands Final. Reaching the national semi-finals means we are one of the top four teams in the country, which feels amazing!"



College Shooters Prepare for Bisley

At the end of Term the College Shooting Team travels to Bisley to compete in the Premier Schools competition – The Ashburton Shield. First awarded in 1861, this is one of the oldest shooting competitions in the calendar: over 550 cadets from CCF and ACF contingents across the UK will converge for a week's competition culminating in the Team Match for the Ashburton Shield.

Members of the Academy, (pictured below left) have been training hard for this and other competitions. The College has had an extremely successful year with two teams winning their Schools leagues, nine shooters being selected to represent their country in the Schools International match, and five shooters selected to represent Great Britain Schools in Dortmund in their Opening International of the year.

Of particular note, Shannon Davies was top score in the Schools National and also top British Schools shooter in Dortmund, finishing in the top twenty in a very high quality field. Shannon has gone on to be selected for British Shooting's Olympic Pathway: Target Tokyo, one of only nine people who made it through three stages from a starting field of over 300. Richard Lay, Captain of School, also made it to Stage 2 - a tremendous accomplishment for the College. Earlier in the year Richard took a bronze medal in the British Air Championships – and all this while studying for his A levels and keeping the College in order!

Not to be outdone, Academy Coach Tom Rylands, who is still competing at International level, won the Scottish Championship in Blair Atholl recently. He also won the Grand Aggregate and was top score in the International match between England and Scotland. Tom travels to the USA in July as part of the Great Britain team competing in the World Championships at Camp Perry in Ohio.



Ellesmere Art 2015 Exhibition



The Ellesmere Art Exhibition took over Big School once again during half term and was a huge success with over 350 of pieces of art from over 90 artists across the UK.

The event also featured a preview evening hosted by its Patrons, Sir Algernon Heber-Percy, the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire and former High Sheriff of Shropshire, Mrs Diana Flint.

Portrait artist, painter and sculptor Maximillion Baccanello held a two-day public workshop which explored a variety of drawing techniques and tools. Max recently exhibited in London at the Society of Portrait Sculptors Exhibition at the Cork Street Gallery, where he was awarded the Tiranti Prize for Sculptor of the Year (Under 30s Section).

The aim of the Art Exhibition, which attracted over 1,000 visitors, is to raise the profile of the arts in the region as well as enhance our ethos as an Artsmark Gold School where the arts are celebrated. Nick Pettingale, Director of External Relations, said: "We have always been passionate about the arts at Ellesmere. This was our fourth annual exhibition with more artists, more exhibits and more visitors, and the event is really going from strength to strength."



Old Ellesmerian Battlefield Trip

On Wednesday 10th June, a group of Old Ellesmerians, the College Chaplain, the Reverend David Slim, the Custos and staff made their way by coach to France to pay their respects to the many Old Ellesmerians and staff who gave their lives in the First World War.

Basing themselves in Amiens for three nights, a Service of Remembrance was held 'in the field' at the Thiepval Monument on the Somme on Thursday morning, before visiting the last resting place of our fallen on the Somme Battlefield.

Friday saw the group visit Compiègne and the replica railway carriage in the wood where the Armistice was signed which ended the horror of WWI. The afternoon was spent with free time exploring the historic city of Amiens and its magnificent Cathedral.



Ellesmerian Club 125 Year Celebrations

Saturday 30th May saw one of the largest gatherings of Old Ellesmerians and guests, 331 in number, who returned to College to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the founding of the Ellesmerian Club.

Some OEs had crossed continents to be here, the furthest travelling from from Australia. Ranging in age from 18 to 85, some had not been back to College for forty years.

A Celebratory Chapel Eucharist with an OE choir, a drinks reception on the Terraces in glorious sunshine and a capacity crowd in Dining Hall for Luncheon was rounded off with visits to old haunts, the College's Art Exhibition and an OE ladies hockey match.

Photography by Weeson Oo (OE '73-'75)





Year 11 Prom 2015

