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GYM & DANCE

This year our Gym and Dance display had the theme of 'A Night at the Movies'. There was a range of acts which included tap, ballet, contemporary, trampetting and gymnastics to name just a few! The evening provided the 150 performers with an opportunity to showcase their talents to an audience of 300. The night ran smoothly and all performers did themselves and the school proud. All year groups were represented from Year 7 right through to 6th Form. We had invaluable help from 6th Formers; they hosted the evening and also led the technical lighting and sound aspects.



GYM & DANCE

Three students, Gemma Everson, Lauren Jennings and Emily Mills were presented with the Gym and Dance Award for 2015 in recognition of their contributions to Gym and Dance at the Ashcombe. All three girls excel in their chosen areas and have performed at the Gym and Dance evening for the past five years. Each year the girls have participated in a number of pieces involving both disciplines. They have also coached younger pupils at extra-curricular clubs and set a fantastic example for all students. They are also completing their GCSE Dance course with great enthusiasm and are talented all round performers. Congratulations Gemma, Lauren and Emily!

All the performers were absolutely fantastic! Pupils had been working incredibly hard on their pieces and were rehearsing non-stop to ensure the display was a success. Generous donations were received with much gratitude and this will allow us to invest in new gymnastic and dance equipment. The performers' hard work and dedication ensured the performance was a resounding success and this was reflected in the audiences' reception and feedback! Well done to each and every one of them!



INDIVIDUAL SUCCESSES

HEIDI HARRISON



Last Autumn, Heidi Harrison was short-listed for Young Sports Star of the Year in the 2014 East Surrey and Sussex News and Media Sports Awards. Heidi, who is in 7XS, broke her elbow in the summer of 2013 during training but was determined to come back stronger than ever. Five months later and with intensive physio,

Heidi was crowned Surrey Champion which is a fantastic achievement.

On Thursday 12th February 2015, Heidi was invited to the East Surrey and Sussex News and Media Sports Awards Ceremony at the Harlequin Theatre in Redhill where she was announced as runner-up in the category of Young Sports Star of the Year. Very well done Heidi.

ETHAN COLLUMBELL



After being runner-up in the 2013 Loseley Park Photography Competition, Ethan Collumbell in Year 9 has been named as Junior Winner this year for his photo called 'Quack Quack'. Ethan was also shortlisted for 'Hitching a ride' in the Wildlife category. Ethan's expanding portfolio led to him being commissioned by the Advertiser series of newspapers to take photographs of the Remembrance Day event in Ashted. His photos were printed in the Dorking and Leatherhead editions, plus he also made the front cover of the Leatherhead issue with his photo of the crosses at the war memorial.

OLIVIA BAILLIE-YOUNG



Olivia Baillie-Young in 7XS has joined other elite dancers of her age group by accepting a place with the English Youth Ballet. She fought off competition from 200 other hopefuls to secure a role in the ballet's new adaptation of Coppelias. Olivia performed as a villager in three recitals of the production during October 2014 at The Hawth Theatre, in Crawley.

LILY MORAM



Lily in 8XS entered a competition (Open Mic UK) and was lucky enough to be spotted by a talent scout. Open Mic UK is billed as the biggest search for unsigned talent in the country, with judges travelling the UK hunting for the best singers, rappers and vocalists in all genres. She has now been selected to work as a development artist at Rivers Studios (Southampton). Some people

who have worked in their studios are Birdie and Luke Friend. She will be releasing a music video and an album of her own songs this year on iTunes! She also won Mole Valley's Got Talent and will be performing three songs at the Showcase Awards in March.

BELLA WOODWARD & RICCELLE NAVALTA



Bella and Riccelle, both Year 9 students, recently entered a regional cheerleading competition with their squad, Unity Allstars Pearl. The competition was held in Guildford and the girls' squad won their Division and as they had the highest score out of all Divisional winners they were crowned Grand Champions. Well done to them and

the rest of their squad - it's a great achievement. The next step is the National competition to be held in Nottingham which is coming up soon.

MUNROE RITCHIE



Munroe Ritchie has been selected by British Athletics to be part of the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) Programme in 2015. He is also going to receive an award from Surrey County Athletics

Association as top U17 athlete in 2014 for his overall achievements and breaking a 30 year old County championship 5kg record (65.70m), a 30 year old County School Championship 5kg record (65.89m) and setting a new County record for the U20 6kg hammer (57.60m). He has been invited to attend the Team GB U18 trials for World Youth Games 2015 with the 5kg hammer. What an amazing list of achievements, well done Munroe!

ELLYSIA MANUEL



Huge congratulations to Ellysia Manuel in Y11 who won the Surrey Indoor Bowls under 18's singles title 2014. Ellysia has been playing bowls since she was 9 years old. She plays outdoors at Dorking Bowling Club and indoors at Donyngs Bowls Club. She also plays for Surrey U25's and was the County Under 31 finalist in 2013. Very well done!

REUBEN COLLINS



Reuben is currently in Year 9 and when he was 13 he was signed on a scholarship to AFC Wimbledon. He is part of the Youth Academy and plays centre-back for the U16 team training with them regularly at their training ground near Wimbledon. The aim of the scholarship is to bring him nearer to his dream of playing professional football. The next step will be the U18 team. Well done Reuben – a fantastic achievement.

THOMAS PINCHIN



During February half term Thomas, from 7XS, landed a monster 35lb pike at a coarse fishing lake in Norfolk. Just to put its size into perspective 35lb is 2.5 stone or the equivalent to 18 bags of sugar or an average 3 year old...!

Thomas has been fishing for 2 years and really enjoys the sport - he could find himself in the record books for the season with a catch this size. This enormous fish took about 15 or 20 minutes to reel in and after he had posed with it on the banks of the lake he threw it back in. So this fierce looking fish lives to fight another day!

GEMMA EVERSON



Gemma stopped Gymnastics training in March 2013 and in September started to learn Pole Vault with Ellie Spain at Brunel University. A commentator, during the London Olympic Games, said that to do well at Pole Vault you needed to be quick, gymnastic and crazy – a criteria that fits Gemma quite well! On Saturday 24th January, Gemma competed in the U17 London Games at Lee Valley Athletics Centre. Previously she had vaulted 2m 85cm, but she has recently moved up a few poles (length and weight) and she did extremely well to increase her Personal Best by 41cm to 3m 26cm. Her next competition is Vault London then the Nationals in Sheffield at the end of February. We wish her lots of luck!

ASHCOMBE VOLLEYBALL

Several Ashcombe students including Edie Adams, Ailsa & Freya McDonald, Lydia Goodwin and Rachel Higgins made their National Volleyball League debuts in a squad including nine players under the age of 17. They beat the Cardiff Celts 5-0 but lost against hosts Team Solent 3-1.





SIXTH FORM DINNER DANCE

On 4th December the 6th Form celebrated the festive season at the recently renovated Burford Bridge Hotel. This year the theme was a Masquerade Ball and the evening comprised of a dinner and dancing late into the evening. The student union organised their own awards for students, the winners receiving a special gold mask. Some of the awards were 'Cutest Couple', 'Murder on the Dancefloor' (best dancing!) and 'Best Dressed'.

Many thanks to Catherine Gryffenberg and Lucas Fidgett for the hard work they put into organising this event and the staff who stayed right until the end...



'CRACIUN FERICIT' - THE ROMANIAN SHOEBOX APPEAL

Once more, Ashcombe pupils said 'Craciun Fericit' (Merry Christmas) to Romania through the annual Shoebox Appeal. This year over 120 shoeboxes were filled with goodies and over £250 was raised for their transportation to Romania. The boxes are collected by the charity 'Link to Hope' and are distributed to Eastern Europe's poorest children and families for them to enjoy opening on Christmas Day. Ashcombe students have supported this charity and other projects in Romania for decades. For more information about the shoebox appeal go to <http://linktohope.co.uk/shoebox-appeal>



SENIOR CITIZENS PARTY



Ashcombe's annual Senior Citizens Party was once again a great success and was enjoyed by all those who attended. Funds for the party were raised through Christmas Bazaars held by pupils in the lead up to the event. On the day itself, 6th Formers and teachers collected some of the elderly members of the community and brought them to the Main Hall so that the festivities could begin. Our guests were able to feast on a variety of sweet and savoury nibbles, prepared by Year 10 pupils,

whilst enjoying Christmas-themed entertainment. The day involved an angelic performance from our school choir, plus rousing singing of Christmas hymns by all present. Thanks to the hard work of Mr Woollett and the staff and pupils that gave their time, the Christmas Senior Citizens Party was a truly pleasant day for everyone involved. Mr Woollett received many letters and emails from the guests after the event thanking the Year 8's in particular for their very kind and thoughtful hosting of each table. One of these reads:-

*Dear Mr Woollett and Senior Citizens Team,
Thank you so very much for a most enjoyable afternoon tea, with entertainment from the band and choir included. The two young men assigned to our table were most conversational and looked after us brilliantly, so a special thank you to them also.*

We enjoyed our handmade Christmas Cards, sandwiches and cakes. We won a cookery book in the raffle so will enjoy using this in 2015 whilst remembering The Ashcombe School.

SCHOOL CHRISTMAS DINNER

On 12th December, the Canteen staff donned their festive attire and served up a Christmas feast for pupils and staff. There were luxury crackers, a fabulous turkey dinner with all the trimmings, Christmas pudding galore and delicious pavlova - Santa even made an appearance. Thanks to Mrs Whitehead and her team for all their hard work in making this such a special event for everyone.



CAROL SERVICE

At the beginning of December, students, their families, staff and Governors congregated at St Paul's Church for the Annual Christmas Carol Service. They enjoyed singing well-known carols and listening to performances from the Jazz Band, Junior and Senior Orchestras, the School Choir, and singing groups - "Glee" and "Harmonise". Representatives from each year group and the Head Boy and Head Girl delivered a range of readings. The evening was a great demonstration of the wealth of talent and broad interest in making music at The Ashcombe School.

ANNUAL AWARDS EVENING

On the last Wednesday of term, Ashcombe's Annual Awards Ceremony took place, with over 200 pupils receiving awards for academic, entrepreneurial and sporting achievements as well as for contributions to the school community and international dimensions.

Luke Caldwell was to be our Guest of Honour as a former student who had represented Scotland at the Commonwealth Games in the summer at 5,000m and 10,000m, but unfortunately he had contracted food poisoning whilst competing at the European Championships and was unable to attend.

Janet Housden, who retired as Chair of Governors in August after many years of dedicated service, kindly stepped in at the last moment to present the awards. This also gave the school a chance to thank Janet publicly for her great contribution to the school over the years.

The Award Ceremony was interspersed with some beautiful musical performances by the school orchestra and choir, a speech by the Chair of Governors and an address by the Headteacher, Mr Blow, thanking staff, pupils and Governors for their continued hard work, as well as the parents and local business who kindly sponsor many of the awards. Visitors can admire photographs of the prize-winners taken by Atlanta Yeatman, displayed in the school's foyer.



VIEWPOINT

Our recent Ofsted Inspection Report praised the wider curriculum at the school: "The school makes an impressive contribution to students' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It provides many opportunities for students to take part in sporting, musical, artistic, charitable and voluntary activities" "Students develop good cultural understanding through the wide variety of language courses. This is further enhanced by a range of extra-curricular activities such as language exchanges, trips to the theatre and concerts."

"[6th Form] Students are also given the opportunity to undertake leadership roles across the school and to access extra-curricular activities. They participate in a good range of local community initiatives; they lead charities week and run an old folks party successfully."

The inspectors told us how keen the pupils they spoke to were to tell the team of these activities and how much they were valued and appreciated. But these activities are totally dependent on the goodwill and enthusiasm of staff, and I continue to be deeply grateful for giving unstintingly and freely of their time. When we interview staff for posts at the school, I describe the ethos saying that our approach (for both pupils and staff) is one of "the more you put in, the more you get out", and the Governor on the interview panel always asks the candidates about what they would be able to contribute to the school outside the classroom. Just as the Ofsted Report commented "They [parents] feel fortunate to have such a school locally", so I feel fortunate that there is such a committed and dedicated team of staff to run all these activities.

DJ Blow

D.J. Blow
Headteacher

PIRATES OF PENZANCE



A plethora of hopeless pirates, gaggles of gorgeous girls dressed in fantastic finery, and perfectly presented policeman took to the stage, in this year's production of Pirates of Penzance! The cast were led by Jonathan Taylor as the love sick 'Frederic' and Delphine Boagey, who played 'Mabel', the object of his affections. The lead pair, along with the Pirate King, Samuel, Police Sergeant and Major General proved that their talents stretched much further than dramatic skills alone, with each showcasing their excellent vocal skills. Major General's daughters were also a demonstration of the talent present within the school, as they led their choruses in fantastic song and dance! The Police officers brought comedy and entertainment to the show, which was enjoyed by all! It really was a whole school production - the chorus, dancers and Show Band came from a variety of age groups, while the sound and lighting team was led by Sixth Formers, and supported by many students from younger years. The Food department chipped in, providing a range of tasty refreshments for the audience to enjoy during the interval, and Mrs Hook did a sterling job organising the costumes. We are already looking forward to next year's production which will be revealed soon!

EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES

On Thursday 25th September in preparation for the big day, the 'Say Hello to the World' checklist was distributed to all form groups, flags were flying in the canteen, the European Day of Languages quiz was ready to be tackled by students and the special international menu was planned and ready to go. The Council of Europe declared 26th September as THE day in Europe when we all celebrate the diversity of languages spoken worldwide. We have a chance to recognise the rich diversity of words and culture and to have some fun with trying to communicate - however simply - in as many different languages as possible.

Students were asked to 'Say Hello to the World' though the day using as many different 'hellos' as possible from countries around the world. The registers were answered with great variety of ways on that day! Students then ticked off what they had tried on their checklist. In form time all students were encouraged to enter the European Day of Languages quiz and the canteen entered fully into the spirit by offering a special menu for the day of Greek moussaka, Italian vegetarian Lasagne with Belgian waffles for dessert.



FOOTLIGHTS



The Ashcombe School were visited by the current Cambridge University Footlights Group on Wednesday 1st October. Footlights has provided the launchpad for numerous renowned actors and comedians including Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, Emma Thompson and David Mitchell. This year's group came to the school following their performances at the Edinburgh Fringe festival and then touring USA. The group are currently managed by Helen Charman, a former Ashcombe student who wanted to bring the performance to the school to demonstrate the possibilities available to state school students at Cambridge. This school has a long tradition of supporting students in their applications for both Oxbridge and competitive courses more widely. Helen, who has just graduated with a Double First in English, kindly offered advice to a group of U6th students currently completing their "competitive course" applications.

Footlights performed to a group of 70 students from the 6th Form and GCSE Drama groups. The show was very well received by all who watched. Matthew Mahoney, an Upper 6th Drama student said " It was an amazing standard of comedy and a lovely event."

VISIT FROM OWEN JONES



Students from the Ashcombe Sixth Form recently welcomed Guardian journalist and political commentator Owen Jones to come and talk to them about the state of British Politics. Students studying A Level Politics listened to an engaging and enlightening talk for half an hour before a 1 hour long Q+A, answering any questions from the audience. He gave some really thought provoking and eloquent answers whilst being polite and funny; as well as allowing students to get books signed, photos or just stay and chat to him afterwards. The session was energising and hearing Owen Jones speak, along with the message he gave, was "inspirational". Owen Jones tweeted his appreciation to many of the students saying that the students were 'challenging and thoughtful' and 'inspiringly engaged'.

WINTER GAMES DAY

On Friday 3rd October pupils from Year 7 to Year 10 enjoyed their Winter Games Day, with activities including Basketball, Hockey, Badminton, Football, Rugby and Netball. The number of participants for each of the activities was particularly impressive, with the vast majority of each year group participating. Students rose to the challenge with great enthusiasm, competing against their opposition houses. House captains provided great support, dressed in their house colours, photographing the day and supporting their teams. The day involved students from beginners to school team and county players; it was great to see students combining their efforts to create a brilliant atmosphere. Year 11 GCSE PE students, A level students and CSLA students made a fantastic contribution to organising and officiating all of the activities. Their assistance was invaluable for the PE department, ensuring its smooth running and a very enjoyable and successful day for all!

	Stuart	Tudor	Windsor	York
Y7	57	57	51	51
Y8	44	57	56	58
Y9	61	48	59	32
Y10	38	55	45	51
Overall	200	217	211	192
Place	3rd	1st	2nd	4th



NETBALL

The Year 7 girls have played 5 matches, winning 3, losing 1 and drawing 1

The Year 8 girls have played 5 matches, winning 4 and losing 1

The Year 9 girls have played 4 matches, winning 3 and drawing 1

The Year 10/11 girls have played 5 matches and won all 5

FOOTBALL

Year 8 girls football team have played two games so far beating St Andrews 1-0 and Priory 1-0

Year 7 girls football team beat Priory 3-0



Y7 MONSTERS BALL



The Ashcombe was visited by some unlikely, and normally unwelcome, creatures on a dark and stormy evening in October. Many small and rather excited Year 7 shaped monsters appeared for the Monsters Ball and what a time was had. A giant, evil minion DJ'ed the event, whilst several witches and a dragon surveyed the snacks and revelry. The Year 7's put in lots of effort for their costumes and make-up and prizes were awarded after half term. It was a great end to a very busy and successful first half-term at The Ashcombe School.



Y8 ROLLER DISCO

Last November, Year 8 pupils were treated to their first Social of the year – a Rock-n-Rollin' Roller Disco! Students turned up in a huge assortment of neon goodies from tutus to legwarmers, and spent the evening skating to their favourite music in the main hall. There were games like stuck-in-the-mud and even a boys vs girls dance-off which the boys were proud to win, probably largely thanks to Mr. Scrivener's cool moves! Everyone had an amazing time, and we can't wait for our next Social later in the year!



POETRY COMPETITION

This term students took part in 'Poetopia', a poetry competition for 11-18 year olds. It is set up by Young Writers and the idea is to get students to discover poetry in a fun and exciting way and then to go on write their own original poem, with the opportunity to become published poets! Young Writers used the popular utopian/ dystopian novels, such as 'The Hunger Games' and 'Divergent' for inspiration and ideas on what sort of poems to write for the competition. Students have the opportunity to win £40 worth of book tokens or the box set of the 'Divergent' series, as well as being published in the next Young Writers Poetry Book.

'THE LOST POEM' by Catherine Sandle (8YT)

Oh Poem, where do I start?
Must you come from the brain or must you come from
the heart?
Oh Poem, will you be about war or romance?
Will you see tangling trees or sparkling stars?
Oh Poem, will you reflect on stories told?
Will you show us the way for our futures to unfold?
Oh Poem, will you sing festive cheers?
Will you be joyful or sad throughout the years?
Oh Poem, will you tell me your thoughts?
Will you gracefully welcome us with your flaws?
Oh Poem. Look, I am done!

'BANE' by Nathan Hunter (7YT)

Sitting there with something in my brain,
Feeling nothing, but feeling pain.
Seeing it creates a stain,
In my mind I meet my bane.
My mind is cursed by disease,
The whole world gradually starts to cease.
I'm overwhelmed by grief, anger and despair.
I shall die inside my lair.

‘ONE HUNDRED PRETTY PICTURES’

by Anastasia Elrick (8YY)

Her body is the canvas,
The pen the blade,
She paints a pretty picture,
To reflect her feelings then.

Her crying is high pitched,
Her tears fall like rain,
She slashes to and fro,
She can't bear the pain.

She cries because of something
Too sad to even tell.
Her father is abusive
Her life: a living hell.

The bruises on her eyelids,
Black like fatal death.
Her mother is an addict
Who made her such a mess.

She sports one more blank space,
Right across her wrist,
She paints a hangman's noose,
One hundredth on her list.

She paints a pretty picture,
Her picture is complete.
Her eyes now glaze over,
Her pen drops to her feet.

THE SCHOOL COUNCIL



The school council provides a vital link between pupils and senior management. They meet once every half term to discuss important issues about the day to day workings of the school and debate potential solutions and suggestions. Recent successes have included the new door to the upper school canteen, easing the break time congestion and the full re-decoration of pupil toilets. We continue to work on important aspects of school life like the rewards system and teaching and learning standards across all subjects. The council is split into different committees, so smaller groups can work with the relevant member of SMT to ensure the school becomes a better place for all.

The Council has been busy so far this year assigning mem-

bers to specific committees that will look at improving particular areas of the school throughout the year. With the executive committee

also growing to include more Sixth Formers (including the Head Boy and Head Girl) we are hoping to make the council a more visible force around the school, finding new ways to increase the communication between the council and pupils. We have a great group of pupils this year who rep-

resent their peers with gusto and who are keen to make changes that will improve everyone's experience of school life. We also want to build on the success of last year to make the school a place where everyone feels safe and secure.

The pupils involved are:

Victor Basso; Hannah Newman; Jacob Byrne; Paolo Elias; Evie King; Sadie Parkinson; Chloe Cox; Bailey Osborne; Ollie Goldsmith; Georgia Wyatt; Ella White; Devante Brown; Jake Hourihane; Kayleigh Fincham; Sam Mangan; Nicole Carter; Robyn Bvuma; Robert Saxby.

YOUNG ENTERPRISE 2014-15: THE BEER MAT THAT SAVES YOUR LIFE!

This year Young Enterprise was made a compulsory part of the Cambridge Technicals course in the 6th Form so that students are able to apply their understanding to their own real-life business example rather than using case studies. This means we have a mix of students who have chosen to run their own company and those who haven't which has slowed things down at times as we are running one company with a bigger staff rather than two companies.

Nevertheless, with the support of two Business Advisers from Mole Valley, our company "Blink" won the blue

ribbon award of Best Presentation at the inaugural Dragon's Den event for this season against 12 other companies from Epsom College, St Theresa's, CLFS, Blenheim and others.

They took home £100 start-up capital to help them get going with their beer mat idea (drink drive limits on one side, taxi driver telephone numbers on the other – the beer mat that saves your life!). They were fundraising for extra capital on Dorking Gala Night in order to finance production.

CITIZENSHIP

This term we have arranged to continue the Lawyers in School programme, which was so well received by Year 9 last year. A group of lawyers from Surrey County Council come to the school to discuss the differences between civil and criminal law, and to inform students about the laws that affect them. Our thanks go to Allan Wells and his team for continuing his commitment to this program. These will provide a good foundation to those students who are involved in the Mock Trial Competition later this year which is being organised by Mr Tunmore. We also continue our sponsorship of 12 children around the world as part of the Action Aid Sponsor-a-Child scheme. Updates have been received from many of the children and are being distributed to the Lower School tutor groups.

DEBATING SOCIETY

The Ashcombe Debating Society runs every Friday lunchtime and students from every year group attend. Esme Bathe and Holly Pearce are this year's U6th organisers and they are responsible for deciding the debates and advertising around the school. This term's debates have ranged from Abortion to Scottish Independence and US Air Strikes in Syria to paying to see your GP. The Society has grown in popularity and is a wonderful opportunity for students from all key stages to share their ideas and opinions – we recently had seventy students attending one debate!

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD SCHEME

Returning to school in September meant a return to the various trials and tribulations that face both staff and students. There was, however, an aspect of school life that was eagerly anticipated: the start of a fresh year of Duke of Edinburgh. DofE calls to mind numerous images: of mud deeper than your knees; of sunshine dipping below the horizon as you approach your final destination or simply of quality time spent in the countryside alongside your closest friends.

DofE has once again attracted an excellent number of students; 160 Year 10 students to its Bronze programme, over two thirds of the year group. These students have already been put through their paces by Ashcombe's DofE team; attending evening sessions that have equipped them with the basics of camp craft, navigation, first aid and of course the ever important online system 'E-DofE'. They now eagerly await the Leith Hill training days that will allow them the chance to consolidate their new skills and familiarise themselves with the stunning Surrey countryside.

The Silver award, a more challenging and invigorating step up for those who found the rapture that followed Bronze all too enticing, has also proved popular; 49 students started the year with a three day expedition to Exmoor. The students experienced an unusual mixture of glorious sunshine and sensuously disarming fog; which resulted in students having to use all their navigation skills to negotiate the open terrain that Exmoor offers. The students' enthusiasm for the countryside around them prevailed over the blisters and lack of sleep (rumoured to be caused by some over-eager snoring, no names mentioned). True to Ashcombe style they tackled it all with vigour, emerging both victorious and utterly exhausted!

The Gold programme, the final and most challenging award, will be tackled later on in the year by a number of adventurous sixth form students. Known for its spectacular



terrain and both physical and mental challenges, the Gold programme offers students the chance to push themselves further than ever before, and for those who are successful the sense of triumph remains long after the mud has washed away.

Finally, DofE was celebrated in style at a recent award evening held at the Priory School. The fabulous event saw the presentation of over a hundred certificates to young members of the community who have, over the past year, completed a DofE award. Six local schools and community projects gathered at an event that was well attended by both students and parents. Richard Hamlin, Mole Valley Neighbourhood Commander, gave a rousing speech which praised the participation of the students; he commented on the benefits of having a DofE qualification and how the skills which it confirms, teamwork, dedication, and perseverance, are highly appealing to future employers. Audiences were entertained by music and dance performances by Priory students, and speeches from key members of the DofE community. DofE is an important opportunity for Surrey young people and it was wonderful to see the event so well attended.

GCSE ART TRIP TO BRIGHTON

In October GCSE Art students from Year 11 were taken on a trip to Brighton to produce observation drawings of the Pavilion for their 'Sense of Place' course work project. Students also photographed the Pavilion and Pier and used these photographs to develop their ideas for a painting for their mock exams in December.



6TH FORM TRIP TO THE MARSHALL SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

It's not every day that the 6th Form Economists get to listen to the Vice President of the European Central Bank, Vito Constancio explaining his thinking behind finally allowing quantitative easing or Ha-Joon Chang pull apart the general acceptance that free trade always helps developing economies. So it was a great privilege to be in the Cambridge Union building at the heart of the Cambridge University as guests of the Marshall Society back in January. Linda Yueh from the BBC gave an excellent synopsis of the state of play in China whilst one of the highlights was the debate between Madsen Pirie of the Adam Smith institute and Lord Robert Skidelsky, biographer of Keynes, on "This house believes in Keynesian economics". Despite the clearly labelled 'Ayes' and 'Noes' exits from the chamber,

we were allowed to voice our final decision without leaving our seats. Our thanks go to the Marshall Society at Cambridge for making us feel extremely welcome.



SURREY OPPORTUNITIES FAIR

Fourteen Year 10 and Year 11 students attended the Surrey Opportunities Fair at Epsom Racecourse on Tuesday 14th October. The fair brings together a range of over 100 potential employers and colleges (such as NESCOL, Guildford, Allianz and Surrey County Council) and allows students to question them about opportunities they may have for post-16 studies. Students also had the chance to

speak to college students and find out about the practical elements of the courses. They also had the chance to make chocolate truffles, build a shelf, change a car tyre and take part in welding! In addition a competition to win an iPad was run for all visitors and a Year 11 student at The Ashcombe, Emma Metcalfe, was the lucky winner!

TRIP TO CERN

In February 15 of the Upper Sixth Physics students went on a short but intense tour of the CERN Physics research facility near Geneva in Switzerland. Although we were only there for a few days, we all had the opportunity to have tours of the magnet test facility, the CERN site itself and even had the experience of going down to the CMS detector, one of the four principal detectors on the LHC ring (27km in circumference). This involved descending around 100m (33 storeys) to reach the level of the accelerator and see the detector, itself some 6 storeys high and with a mass of 14,000 tonnes. It was a truly awe inspiring experience. We were particularly fortunate in seeing CMS open for maintenance, giving them a glimpse into its inner, intricate workings. CERN is one of the most important scientific institutions in the world, a major centre of international co-operation (hosting staff and fellows of 113 different nationalities) and at the forefront in probing the deepest and most fundamental questions regarding the structure of our universe. They also are very proficient in building snowmen.

In addition to being highly interesting and exciting for everyone who went, the trip tied in very well with the students' current topics of study, which includes the Standard Model. It was great success and hopefully a trip which the school will be able to undertake in future years.



BATTLEFIELDS TRIP

Year 10 History students recently went on a 3 day visit to the First World War battlefields of Belgium and Northern France. They visited a number of significant sites, providing an insight into the realities of trench warfare and the human cost of the conflict. Based in the town of Ypres, students retraced the footsteps that many soldiers would have taken after arriving in France and headed for the trenches. They then visited Tyne Cot cemetery (the largest Commonwealth war grave cemetery in the world) and the Somme battlefield. At the Thiepval monument the students reflected on the enormous human cost of the battle then found the names of former Dorking High School (later Ashcombe School) students who are remembered at the monument. An evening visit to the Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres further emphasised the importance of remembering those who have fallen in battle. The final day considered the 'other' side to the conflict with visits to the 'Shot at Dawn Museum', as well as the German trenches at Bayernwald. The trip concluded with a sobering reflection at Langemark German cemetery.



UGANDA



During the summer of 2014 I had the wonderful opportunity of taking 8 Ashcombe students on a visit to Uganda. The first such trip in 2011 had been very successful, and had been intended to be the first step in an ongoing link, so we were delighted to be continuing the link with one school and expanding to another.

After a long flight, including an interesting stop in Dubai airport, we arrived in Entebbe. Located on the shores of Lake Victoria, it is a bustling African city which straight away immersed us in the local culture. We were taken to our hotel, Soser View, and greeted warmly by Paul, the manager who made us feel right at home. Our first afternoon was spent visiting Entebbe Botanical Gardens which allowed us to glimpse some of the local wildlife, including a huge mass of Golden Orb Spiders and some very noisy monkeys.

The following today we travelled to Kumi, a remote rural town where we would spend the next few days. The primary objective of the trip was to experience the local education system and to build on the work done by the

charity Build Africa. As we pulled up to our first school, Apama Primary School, we were greeted by the sound of ululations and hundreds of school children rushing out of classrooms to greet us: a memorable sight. The school made us feel so welcome and the students were given the full tour plus a chance to teach a lesson and run some game sessions. Mr Coughlin and I worked closely alongside the teachers there; looking at the difference in education systems and building links for the future.

The second school we visited was Katchumbala, which had been visited by the last set of Ashcombe students to venture to Uganda and it was great to see the impact our work had had upon the school. As well as spending time in schools students got the chance to see the prehistoric Nyero rock paintings, visit the source of the river Nile and spend the day in the Ugandan Wildlife Conservation Centre. Overall it was a brilliant trip; the students found it eye opening and enriching and it was so great to see them grow and develop as young adults over the course of the week.

Miss S E Davies

TUDOR CONFERENCE

The A-level History Tudor Conference in London helped Sixth Form historians to gain valuable insights into the changing fortunes of Henry VIII and his children. Students were enriched by their experience of hearing leading academics, including John Guy and David Starkey, discuss several key issues of the Tudor dynasty, including the personality of Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII's religious changes. Students also visited the 'Real Tudors' exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, which gave them a further opportunity to appreciate the style and presentation of the different monarchs.