



SOLIHULL



MEDIA CUTTINGS
2013 - 2014



SOLIHULL

2013-2014



Daily Mail Online
August 14th 2014

Solihull Observer
August 21st 2014



Ten to go - all off to Oxbridge, from left, Alanna Wall, Jamie Turpin, Lucy Allen, Tom Griesbach, Nick Hooper, Maddie Lavery, Sam McCumskey, George Diwaker, Alex Browne, Ben Piggen, all 16.



Pupils celebrate another great year of A level results.

Ten for Oxbridge

SOLIHULL School's Oxbridge candidates have helped the school to achieve another excellent set of A-Level results.

All 10 boys and girls in receipt of offers from Oxford and Cambridge universities achieved their required grades to crown an outstanding year for the independent school, which recorded 100 per cent pass rate for the ninth year running.

Sucking the national trend and even beating last year's excellent results, 83 per cent of all grades were

Heads of School Lauren Buchanan and Thomas Griesbach (both 16) got seven A* A-Level grades between them. Lauren (three A* grades) will be heading to Exeter University to read English Literature and Thomas (four A* grades) to Cambridge University to study History.

between A* and B, and almost 55 per cent of the school's exam entries were awarded A* or A grades.

A total of 38 pupils among the 127 candidates achieved three or more A* or A grades, nine of whom gained straight A* grades. David E J J Lloyd,



Solihull School Headmaster, said: "I am delighted with yet another set of exceptional A-Level results."

"They are a fitting tribute to the hard work of our pupils and the expertise of our teaching staff."



Oxbridge here we come: pupils from Solihull School, a co-educational independent school in the West Midlands, celebrate their A-level success

The Times
August 15th 2014

No less than 91% of Sixth Form leavers won places at their university of choice at the end of an outstanding year in which 84% of all A-Level grades were between A* and B.



Solihull School's Izzie Fuller, Amy Lewis, Harriet Marshall, Becky Timperley, Annie Johnson, all 16, celebrate results

Daily Express
August 22nd 2014

Money still talking as private schools claim star results

EMMA MCKINNEY
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NEW figures have revealed just how much money talks when it comes to education.

Almost 33 per cent of private school pupils achieved the top A* GCSE grade this year - more than four times the rate seen in the comprehensive sector.

In the Midlands, King Edward's School in Edgbaston, flew the flag for independent schools.

More than 90 per cent of the 125 pupils who studied for GCSEs or the international equivalent achieved A star or A grades.

And 99.68 per cent of its pupils achieved a grade C or above - more than a third higher than the national average of 68.8 per cent.

The school stressed it was keen to educate all children and not just those from privileged backgrounds.

It already subsidises fees for 120 boys and earlier this year launched a £10

million drive to provide 100 free places for pupils from poorer backgrounds.

Chief Master John Cloughton said: "This increase in assisted places at King Edward's is making it the most socially and ethnically diverse independent school in this country."

"Such an education, made available without cost to the brightest, is bound to enrich the lives of individual boys and enhance the prosperity of Birmingham as a whole," he added.

Other success stories included Solihull School, which counts Top Gear presenter Richard Hammond as a former pupil.

More than 72 per cent of its 105 pupils GCSE students achieved A star or A grades and 97.95 per cent scored results of grade C or above.

The impressive figures were published by the Independent Schools Council.

Council chairman Barnaby Lenon said: "It is notable that independent school pupils achieved a high proportion of the top grades in hard subjects such as maths, separate sciences and languages."

"Many pupils will continue with these subjects at A-level and then university."

Top Gear presenter and former Solihull School pupil Richard Hammond



Solihull News
September 15th 2014



Oxbridge no measure of success, says top head

By Richard Garner
EDUCATION EDITOR

Schools should not be judged by the numbers they get into Oxford or Cambridge, according to the head teacher of one of the country's leading independent schools.

David Lloyd, headteacher of Solihull - a 1,000-strong selective fee-paying school for seven- to 11-year-olds - has told his parents in a blog: "This, in my strongly held opinion, is a fundamentally flawed yardstick."

In an interview with *The Independent on Sunday*, he said that many schools publicised the number of pupils they had got into Oxford or Cambridge in their promotional material, and that this was a question brought up by parents considering sending their children to the school.

"Some of our brightest students choose to go elsewhere," he added. "If you're an economist, it makes sense to study at the London School of Economics." A trainee vet might choose Edinburgh University, he suggested. "In my time at Solihull, some of our most able pupils have chosen to study medicine at Cardiff University when the likelihood was that ... they could have gone anywhere in the world," he said.

Schools can increase their Oxbridge admissions by encouraging pupils to opt for less popular courses at the universities - a practice which "feels totally immoral to me", he said. In some cases, the less popular course may be very similar to pupils' initial choice, but to suggest it for its lower grade requirement or fewer applicants was taking things too far, he thought.

"Most important is the best fit for the individual academically, socially, financially and geographically," he added. "There are lots of super universities out there, and globalisation means that the choice facing young people continues to grow."

Historic school to build new £4.5m sixth-form

BEN HURST

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SOLIHULL School is planning to transform education for its sixth form pupils after winning planning permission for a new £4.5 million facility.

The centre will be built at the heart of the School in Warwick Road.

Staff at the school said the centre would enable it to reinforce its standing as one of the Midlands' leading independent educators.

Construction work will begin in July next year at the 453-year-old school, which educates boys and girls aged between seven and 18 years.

The building will open in September 2015 and facilities will include teaching rooms and private study areas incorporating the latest multimedia technology.

The top floor will provide multi-purpose open-plan space for teaching, examinations and social events



“Our new sixth form centre will deliver a state-of-the-art teaching and learning environment”

HEAD TEACHER
DAVID LLOYD

The new £4.5 million sixth-form centre will be built at the heart of the school, in Solihull.

and an external terrace garden with panoramic views for the use of pupils and teachers alike.

Designed by Birmingham-based architects Malcolm Payne Group Ltd, the sustainable building will include high levels of natural light and ventilation, as



well as low-energy lighting and an energy efficient heating system to minimise its impact on the environment.

The new centre will be built on vacant land previously occupied by the old gymnasium and surrounded by the Bushell Hall, mathematics and science departments and the sports hall.

Head teacher David Lloyd said: "Our new sixth form centre will deliver a state-of-the-art teaching and learning environment that will enable our sixth form pupils to fulfil their academic potential and prepare for university and beyond."

Solihull School, which was founded in 1560 and has occupied its current site since 1882, has invested in a range of new facilities over the past ten years including the David Turnbull Music School, the George Hill Building containing new classrooms and the Alan Leo Pavilion.

This year the school achieved a 100 per cent A-level pass rate for the eighth year running with an impressive 84 per cent of passes graded at A* to B.

The school is staging a sixth form information evening on November 6 at 7pm and an 11-plus information evening on November 12 also at 7pm.

Birmingham Mail
October 25th 2013

The Independent on Sunday
February 2nd 2014

Birmingham Mail
December 19th 2013

School offers scholarship to grow creative art skills

BUDDING young artists from across the Midlands can apply for a scholarship to help fulfill their potential.

Boys or girls that show an aptitude for art could pay reduced fees, receive mentoring and specialist tuition from artists at Solihull School.

Scholarships for ages 11+, 13+ and 16+ will start from September 2014.

Head teacher

David Lloyd said: "Solihull School provides the best possible preparation for a career in the creative arts, which is why we welcome applications from parents from all backgrounds.

"Art Scholars are given every opportunity to exhibit, grow in confidence and develop their art in a variety of media in preparation for college or university."

New Heads of Departments were appointed to carry on the excellent work of their predecessors and there was a welcome too for the School's first Head of Marketing.

New senior team at Solihull School



New senior appointments at Solihull School (from left) Paul Morgan, Eleanor Hurst, Donna Trim, Tim Kermode and Rachel Hadley-Leonard

Solihull School has strengthened its senior team with the appointment of five new heads of departments who will join in September.

Tim Kermode is moving from Alleyn's School, in south London, to become the new director of music.

He is an accomplished choral singer and director and orchestral conductor and will succeed Stephen Perrins who has been made director of music emeritus.

Paul Morgan will lead the modern languages department and will succeed Marilyn Barrett who is retiring after 35 years of service at the school.

He joined the school as a teacher of modern foreign languages in 2006 and will oversee one of its largest departments.

Donna Trim will succeed John Nickson as head of art following his retirement after 33 years of service.

She joined independent Solihull School as a teacher of art and photography in 2007.

Eleanor Hurst, who joined Solihull School in 2002 to support individual pupils, is to be the new director of learning support and has previously worked as a curator at the British Museum in London before gaining a specialist dyslexia teaching qualification.

Making up the quintet of new appointments is Rachel Hadley-Leonard as marketing manager to focus on brand development, digital marketing and pupil recruitment.

Headmaster David Lloyd said: "I am delighted to have been able to make such high-calibre appointments as the school looks forward to an outstanding future with some of the finest staff and facilities in the Midlands, including a new state-of-the-art sixth form centre opening in September 2015."

Birmingham Post Online

June 26th 2014



Solihull businesswoman sails back to school to take up new roles

Birmingham Press | 27 hours ago

A Solihull businesswoman who sailed across the Atlantic Ocean in a 40ft yacht is steering a new course to serve current and former pupils from her old school.

Julia Skan is to become the first female President of the Old Solihullians' Association (OSA) – for former pupils of Solihull School – having also been appointed Careers Advisor to the School.

A sixth former at the independent school for boys and girls in Warwick Road from 1964 to 1986, she is helping to guide pupils towards fulfilling careers following the retirement of Dr Huai Cluley. Julia has more than 20 years' experience of working worldwide in industries ranging from publishing and healthcare to banking and recruitment.

A graduate in French and Italian, Julia worked as European Sales Manager at Reed Business Information, providing business information services for multinational chemical companies. Following a career break spent coaching fitness training and sailing across the Atlantic, she returned to the corporate world as PA to the Chief Executive of a Hedge Fund.

After moving back from London to Solihull three years ago, Julia worked for an executive search firm before establishing her own successful health and wellbeing business. She said: "I am looking forward to making use of my business background and extensive local, national and international contacts to give pupils, former pupils and parents the best possible careers-related help and advice."

She added: "I also want to encourage many more Old Girls to join the Old Solihullians' Association and to strengthen the OSA's links with the School as it embarks on an exciting modernisation programme including the refurbishment of the Capt Heath clubhouse and changing facilities to be completed in September 2014."

Julia is taking up the OSA Presidency later this month (December) after being President-Elect for the past three months. She organised a reunion of Former Old Girls from around the world at Solihull School this summer to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the arrival of girls.

The Old Solihullians' Association was founded in 1921 to preserve friendships between the 453-year-old independent school and its alumni.

Birmingham Press
December 4th 2013



Nigel Botterill, an award-winning entrepreneur and Solihull parent, presented the prizes at Speeches.

Top Midland businessman guest of honour at Solihull Speech Day

Posted on 14 October 2013.



Guest of Honour Nigel Botterill and Headmaster David E J J Lloyd celebrate with trophy winners (from left to right) George Gamlin, Olivia Harris, David Clarke, Julie Whiting, Amy Parry and Katie Hatter at Solihull School's Speech Day

Best-selling business author and award-winning Midland entrepreneur Nigel Botterill was Guest of Honour and presenter of the prizes at Solihull School's Speech Day.

The founder and chief executive of Solihull-based franchising, marketing and training company N5 Limited gave an inspirational speech encouraging boys and girls at the independent school for 7 to 18 year olds to follow their heart and intuition, become well-rounded and think big throughout their school life and beyond.

The Solihull School parent also told the packed audience in the school's Bushell Hall why building a business can be so fulfilling and worthwhile and how enthusiasm, a positive attitude and taking responsibility have contributed to his success.

The winner of the BT Essence of the Entrepreneur Award and the first ever non-American (and twice winner) to be named GKC Marketer of the Year published his first book on business 'The Botty Rules' in 2011. It reached number two in the Sunday Telegraph best sellers list with all the sales proceeds going to Teenage Cancer Trust.

Headmaster David E J J Lloyd welcomed Nigel as one of a number of principal guests including the Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Joe Tildesley and the Vice-Chairman of the Governors, Judge Michael C Morris. More than 150 pupils from the Sixth Form and Middle School stepped up to receive prizes.

* Solihull School is holding a Sixth Form Information Evening on Wednesday, November 6 at 7pm and an 11+ Information Evening on Tuesday, November 12 also at 7pm. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Admissions Secretary on 0121 705 4273 (email: enquiries@solsch.org.uk).

The School's 60-year-old war memorial was rededicated during the annual Remembrance Service.

Remembrance



Sophie Burtenshaw and Fergus Montgomery, both seven, pay their respects at Solihull School's rededicated War Memorial.



Warrant Officer Philip Dean MBE (with beret) joins Solihull School's Remembrance Day Parade before laying a wreath on behalf of former pupils serving in the Armed Forces.

War memorial is rededicated

by Chris Willmott
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SOLIHULL School chose Remembrance Day in the year before the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War to rededicate its 60-year-old War Memorial.

Consecrated and opened in 1953, the bronze monument now stands alone with great dignity in the School's Quadrangle following a major investment in new facilities.

The memorial bears the names of 120 former Solihull School pupils who were killed in the two world wars - 51 from the First World War and 69 from the Second World War.

Respects paid

All 1,000 boys and girls at the independent school in Warwick Road paid their respects in front of the memorial at the annual Remembrance Service in which Warrant Officer Philip Dean MBE,

Staff Instructor with the School's Combined Cadet Force, laid a wreath on behalf of former pupils currently serving in the Armed Forces.

Service

They were joined by Governors, Teachers and Members of the Old Solihullians' Association and Parents' Association. The service was led by the Chaplain Father Andrew Hutchinson.

David E J J Lloyd, Solihull School Headmaster, said: "As the centenary of the Great War approaches the rededication of our war memorial emphasises the ultimate sacrifices made by so many former Solihull School pupils to preserve our freedom."

Right - Solihull School's Deputy Head of School Charlotte Beesley with her father and former pupil Geof Beesley at the Remembrance Service in the School Chapel.



A party of civic leaders invited by the Mayor to tour the School praised the facilities and the pupils' community endeavours.

Civic leaders welcomed at Solihull School

Added on: 26th May, 2014 by [Simon_3496](#)



Warwickshire's civic leaders with their hosts on their visit to Solihull School: from left to right (back row) Harry Morgan, Deputy Head of School; Cllr Richard Davies, Chairman of Warwick District Council; Cllr Joe Tildesley, Mayor of Solihull; Keith Sac

Civic leaders from across the region were able to find out more about life and the modern facilities at one of the Midlands' leading independent schools on a visit to Solihull School.

[► School Fees](#) [► School Prep](#) [► School Hall](#) [► Spa School](#)

Warwickshire mayors and council chairmen were invited by the Mayor of Solihull Cllr Joe Tildesley to join him on a tour of the 454-year old co-educational school in Warwick Road.

The party, which was welcomed by the Headmaster David E J J Lloyd, Chairman of the Governors Mark Hopton, and Solihull's Senior Management Team, was told about the plans for a new £4.5m state-of-the-art Sixth Form Centre opening in September 2015.

Heads of School Lauren Buchan and Tom Griesbach and Deputy Heads Charlotte Beesley and Harry Morgan guided the visitors around the modern buildings including the David Turnbull Music School, George Hill Building with its new classrooms, and the Denis Tomlin Archive Room. The group enjoyed lunch in the Alan Lee Pavilion.

Cllr Tildesley said: "We had an enthralling time meeting Solihull's staff and pupils and viewing the superb facilities in what I hope will become an annual visit. The head boys and girls were fantastic guides and clearly very proud of their school."

Solihull is one of the Midlands' highest achieving schools, with its GCSE pupils achieving a record-breaking 77 per cent pass rate at A* and A grades last year and 88 per cent of its A-Level pupils winning places at the universities of their choice.

* Solihull School is hosting an Open Morning on Saturday, September 27 from 10am to noon. The Admissions Secretary can be contacted on 0121 705 4273 (email: enquiries@solisch.org.uk).

From Shakespeare to Monty Python, fine art to photography, and classical music to jazz, pupils excelled in thrilling public performances, exhibitions and compositions.



Solihull School stages Shakespeare using multimedia

Birmingham Press 123 hours ago

Innovative use of projection helps audiences explore traditional play.

Solihull School's drama lovers made use of multimedia technology to add an exciting new dimension to their production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

The independent school in Warwick Road used video and image projection equipment to explore the hallucinatory aspects of the play.

Lisa Fair, Senior Teacher, Pastoral and Production Director, said: "We asked the actors to interact with video images rather than themselves at key points in the play, which was quite a challenge."

"The experiment proved especially successful in enhancing the dramatic impact of the scenes where Macbeth stares at the 'dagger of the mind' and confronts the ghostly apparition of Banquo."

No less than 42 boys and girls took part in the annual Senior School Play, which was staged in the School's Bushell Hall in the run up to the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth.

The lead roles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth were performed by Calum Fisher and Charlotte Beesley in a show that was set against a backdrop of civil rioting and gang warfare.

The Witches appeared as underworld sirens, creating chaos through fantastical dance acts choreographed by the girls themselves.

Lisa Fair added: "The entire cast and crew were fantastic and special mention should go to Calum Fisher, who was outstanding in the title role, and to Charlotte Beesley who more than ably supported him."

Birmingham Press
January 19th 2014

Students are giving it the full Monty...

SOLIHULL School's drama lovers made their audiences 'laugh a lot' with their recent hilarious production of Monty Python's *Spamalot*.

A cast of 70 boys and girls sang and danced their way enthusiastically through the Tony award-winning musical based on Monty Python and the Holy Grail.

The independent school was one of the first in the UK to stage the classic slapstick comedy since the performance rights were granted last year.

It meant that without any equipment available to hire in, the School's Maintenance Department had to make the Las Vegas-like Camelot set and the equally whacky props, including a Trojan horse disguised as a giant rabbit.

The musical, performed in the school's Bushell Hall, followed the quest of King Arthur as he gathers prospective knights and sets off to search for the Holy Grail, meeting a series of crazy



The *Spamalot* cast, from left to right (back row) Tom Griesbach, Shashank Chaganty, Ben Newman, Chris Bevis; and (front row) Esther Downings, Calum Fisher and Oscar Haynes

characters and incidents on the way.

Theatre Studies students Calum Fisher and Esther Domingos played King Arthur and The Lake of the Lake,

while the four knights were played by Ben Newman (Sir Bedevere), Tom Griesbach (Sir Lancelot), Shashank Chaganty (Dennis Galahad) and Chris Bevis (Sir Robin).

Oscar Haynes was cast as Patsy. Live music was performed by the Solihull School Orchestra conducted by the School's Musical Director Stephen Petrus.

Solihull News
April 11th 2014





Solihull showcases...

We have an exclusive insight into Solihull's Summer Art Exhibition: Celebrated business woman and Solihull School parent Karren Brady was guest of honour at the independent school's summer art exhibition.

The Vice-Chairman of West Ham Utd FC and star of TV's *The Apprentice*, who was this year appointed a CBE for her services to women in business and entrepreneurship, joined other parents, pupils and friends at the event, held over three floors of Solihull's modern George Hill Building and adjoining School House.

Karren and her husband, former international footballer Paul Peschisolido, viewed more than 1,000 pieces of artwork created by pupils on A-Level Art & Design and Photography courses through to all years of Solihull Junior School. The exhibition included A-Level photography submitted by their daughter Sophia

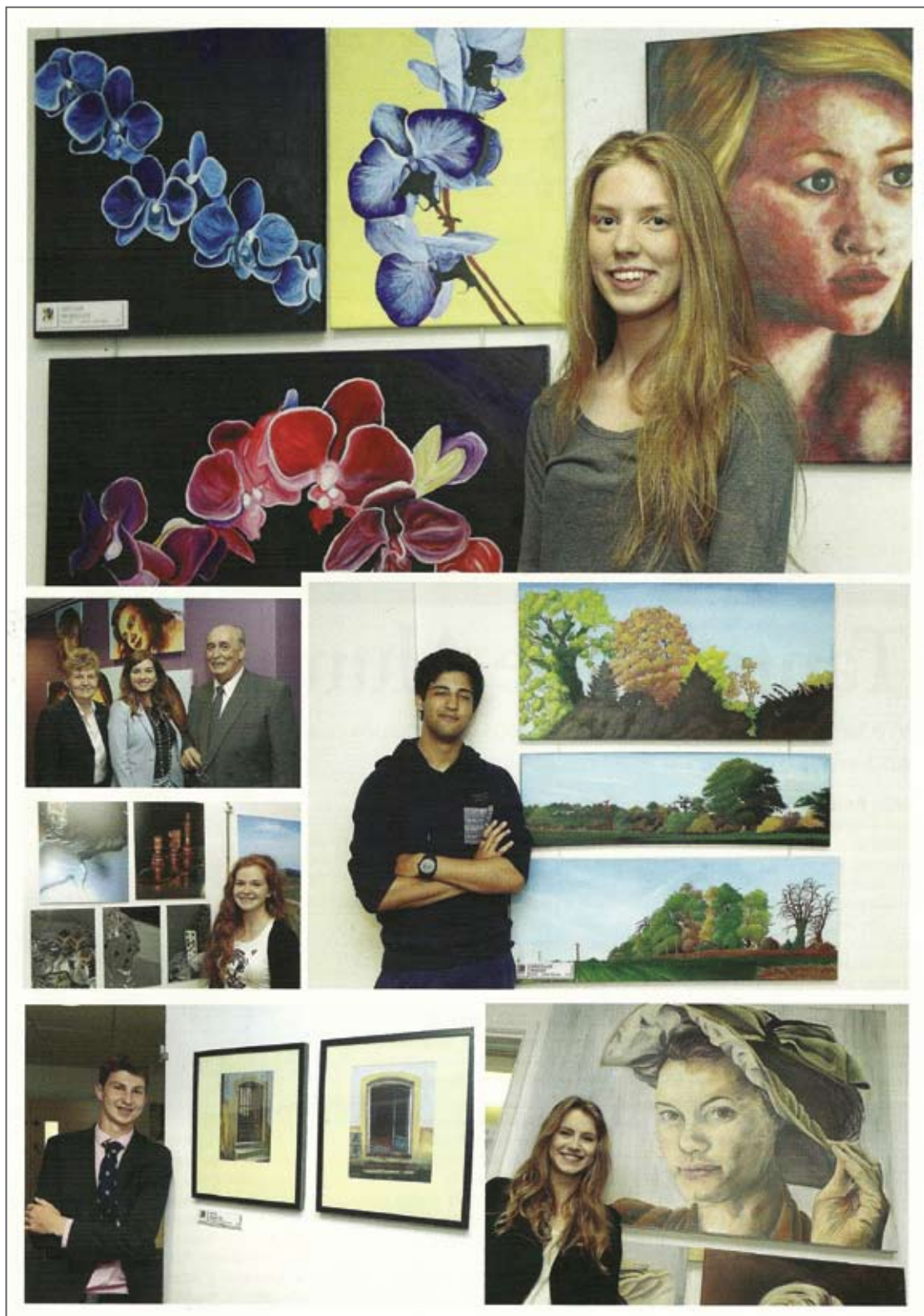
Peschisolido.

Solihull Junior School shared its section with entries from ten local schools: St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Balsall Common Primary School, The Blue Coat School, Eversfield Preparatory School, Kineton Green Primary School, Knowle Academy, Monkspath Primary School, Mapledene Primary School, Tudor Grange Primary Academy St James and West House School.

Karren, who presented certificates of thanks to the participating schools, said: "A collaboration such as this of local schools and local talent coming together in this school is remarkable and I congratulate everyone involved."

She added: "Learning the ability to express yourself, whether through communication or your work, is a vital preparation for life and I think the wonderful artwork we see here at this exhibition shows that these creative young people can approach whatever they want to do in the future with confidence."

The exhibition, which included live entertainment by a young violin duo from Solihull, also provided an occasion to pay tribute to John Nickson, who is retiring at the end of the summer term as Head of Art after 35 years' service to the School, and to congratulate Donna Trim on her promotion as John's successor.



STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION AT THE MAILBOX

JULY 10, 2014

FOCUS— YOUNG & TALENTED

We are delighted to welcome a series of striking photographs taken by A-Level art students at Solihull School who are now showcasing their innovative end of year work right here at The Mailbox throughout the summer.

The 29 unique photographs are being exhibited on The Mailbox's temporary hoardings on Level 2 outside the Toni & Guy Essentials salon and on Level 3 in front of the Nicky Clarke salon.



Whilst the extensive refurbishment takes place behind the scenes, we have taken the opportunity of having a unique blank canvas to surprise and entertain customers when they visit stores and restaurants at The Mailbox which are still open.



We were so impressed with the standard of students' work we decided to partner with Solihull School for this project – in fact we actually increased the size of the exhibition to accommodate a few additional images! This is a stunning display which we are sure you will enjoy over the summer as we continue working towards making The Mailbox even better.

Mailbox Online
July 10th 2014



Mathew makes it to ballet final

■ Mathew Prichard, who is representing England in a European ballet contest

A RUGBY-mad student from Solihull who gave up the pitch for poise has leapt his way to the final of one of Europe's biggest ballet competitions.

Mathew Prichard will be representing Britain in the final of the prestigious Genée Dance Challenge, in Belgium, where he will be judged by world-famous ballerina Darcey Russell.

The 16-year-old had to give up

playing rugby for Solihull School because of injury and to pursue his dancing ambitions.

The sixth former, who started attending ballet classes aged two to build his strength for gymnastics, beat off scores of top dancers to win the UK heat in Cardiff.

He will be up against the best Royal Academy of Dance-trained students from Belgium,

Luxembourg and the Netherlands in the under-19s category on September 14.

His mum Khian said: "We are thrilled with Mathew's success and can't wait until the Genée final which will provide a terrific showcase for his talents."

Mathew will go on to study dance at the Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance in Twickenham in September.

Birmingham Mail
June 19th 2014

Charlotte Beesley has been awarded an ATCL by Trinity College London.



Charlotte hits high notes

TALENTED Solihull schoolgirl Charlotte Beesley has hit all the right notes to gain a university level music qualification.

The 17-year-old was awarded an ATCL by Trinity College London, the equivalent to the first year of a degree, for her saxophone playing.

Charlotte, who plays in the school's senior saxophone group, saxophone quartet and senior wind band, passed her Grade 8 exam in alto saxophone when she was aged 15.

Christa Greswold, director

of the saxophone group and Charlotte's music teacher, said: "I am delighted for Charlotte as her standard of performance is equivalent to the performance component of the first year in a full-time undergraduate course at a conservatoire and she is the first girl in the school to achieve such an accolade."

Charlotte will be performing with the senior saxophone group at the John Lewis store in Solihull town centre on November 23 between 2pm and 3pm and at Solihull School's St Cecilia Concert on November 28 at 7pm.

Birmingham Mail
October 14th 2013

Olivia's quintet to be premiered

TALENTED musician Olivia Harris took her compositional skills into the concert hall with the world premiere of her quintet.

The 17-year-old's work for flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano was performed by her fellow pupils as part of Solihull School's St Cecilia Concert.

"Chant de la Rivière" (translated as "River Song"), which Olivia composed last year for her GCSE Music exam, was also recorded on its debut in Solihull School's Rushall Hall.

With a Grade 7 in singing and Grade 5 in piano, Olivia is a member of the National Chamber Choir of Great Britain. She also sings with Solihull School's Chamber Choir, Senior Choir and Jazz Singers.

Stephen Perrins, Director of Music, said: "Olivia is one of a number of extremely talented musicians at Solihull School and thoroughly deserves having her work premiered at our St Cecilia Concert."



Olivia Harris, whose work Chant de la Rivière will be premiered at Solihull School's St Cecilia Concert tonight (Thursday).

Solihull Observer
December 12th 2013



Sixth Form pupils encouraged younger pupils to study German by producing a magazine that was commended by the Goethe Institute.

Ole! Pupils brush up on their Spanish

SOLIHULL School pupils boosted their Spanish language skills after sharing lessons and leisure time with their exchange partners from Spain.

Seventeen pupils from Colegio Oleza, in Orihuela, near Alicante, were hosted by year nine Spanish pupils and their families on a week-long visit to the Warwick Road school.

Pupils on the GCSE course at Solihull took part in conversing in Spanish and playing sports with their guests.

The Spanish pupils visited Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick Castle, enjoying a traditional English afternoon tea in the refectory on their return.

At the senior school end-of-week assembly, Solihull's A-level Spanish pupils gave a presentation in Spanish in honour of their guests and presented them with t-shirts to commemorate their visit.

Paul Morgan, head of Spanish, praised the visit.

"The visit was a tremendous success in helping our younger pupils to improve their conversational skills," he said.



GAP YEAR STUDENTS BOOST LINKS WITH CHILE

by Anna Strach | on May 13th, 2014 |

NEWS

Solihull School has strengthened its links with a school in Chile after welcoming two new Gap Year students.

Andres Oelker and Paulina Rosales, who were classmates at The Wessex School in Concepcion, will be spending three months at the independent school for boys and girls in Warwick Road where they will be helping out in a number of ways.

The 18-year olds have already been helping Spanish language pupils to strengthen their conversational skills and even taken part in Solihull's production of 'Spamalot', with Paulina performing as a dancer and Andres one of the backstage crew.

Both staying with parents, Andres and Paulina are hoping the experience will improve the quality of their English before they return to Chile, where they aim to start university courses in engineering and geology respectively.

Deluxe

May 13th 2014

Students quiz author in German

STUDENTS strengthened their language skills thanks to a visit from a German author.

Sixth formers at Solihull School welcomed Dr Heinrich Detering, Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Goettingen and President of the German Academy for Language and Literature, and interviewed him in German about his career as a poet and essayist.

Recently writer in residence at Aston University, Dr Detering spent a morning with the A-level pupils, who discussed with him his views on German reunification as part of the school's university outreach programme.

The author was also presented with a copy of a magazine produced in German by pupils at the school. The publication has been com-

mended by the Goethe Institute as an example of Best Practice in inspiring younger people to study German.

Solihull's Year 8 pupils have also contributed articles to Birmingham University's Linguist magazine, while the lower sixth have won five free places on a European Film Workshop in a Birmingham University German joke competition.

Solihull News
May 9th 2014

Birmingham Mail
April 3rd 2014

Individuals excelled nationally in Mathematics and Design Technology while Sixth Form Science students kept up to date with the latest advances on their annual trip to America.

SOLIHULL BOY WINS NATIONAL MOTORSPORT CHALLENGE

Luke Bryant demonstrated how light affects a pit crew's reaction time



Luke Bryant with his trophy for winning the Pit Stop Challenge

A 14-year-old Solihull School pupil has won a competition for his idea for boosting the performance of Formula 1 pit stop crews.

Luke Bryant showed how light affects a pit crew's reaction time - and his solution was chosen from hundreds of entries to win the GSK-McLaren Pit Stop Challenge. The competition, part of global healthcare company GSK's programme for schools run in partnership with the McLaren Mercedes F1 team, challenged schools to use science to help their pit crew give their best performance at every race.

Luke used his knowledge, research and investigation to prove that by altering the brightness entering the eye to a pre-proven optimum level through active visors, crew reaction times would be improved in comparison with wearing standard visors.

In his presentation at the GSK Human Performance Lab, he was able to show the judges that the milliseconds of reaction time the visors would save could mean the difference between success and failure in a Formula 1 race.

The judges, which included double Olympic champion Kelly Holmes and McLaren chief mechanic Neil Trundle, were impressed by his "visionary thinking, unique insight and excellent presentation skills".

As part of his prize, the group was given a guided tour of the McLaren Technology Centre, where exciting design innovations for racing cars are developed, and Luke even had the chance to interview top McLaren driver Kevin Magnussen.

Luke said: "Winning this competition is the biggest thing that's ever happened to me and being able to visit the technology centre was simply amazing. I'd like to think that I could work for McLaren-Mercedes when I'm older."

Luke's teacher Betty Ford added: "Being able to relate what you learn at school to real careers in such an exciting technological environment was truly inspirational."



NUMBERS WHIZZKID JOINS MATHS ELITE

Solihull School boy Isaac Webber has been ranked among the top young mathematicians in the country after excelling in a national competition. The numbers genius made the top 50 in this year's British Mathematical Olympiad which had a total of 100,000 entrants. Maths teacher Mark Wensell said: "Isaac has achieved the highest marks in school in a number of mathematics competitions and thoroughly deserves his success."

SUM SUCCESS: Outstanding mathematician Isaac Webber

Birmingham Living
May 1st 2014

Science pupils join experts in Windy City trip

ANGIE HILLIER

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SIXTH FORM pupils from Solihull School had the opportunity to take to the windy streets of Chicago on a recent science trip.

The 17 A level students attended lectures and had their first-hand experience at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

More than 100 students were offered places on the "Leading Global Challenge: Discovery and Innovation" on subjects including energy challenges, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

The trip of speakers included a former US Secretary of State, two Nobel Prize winners and the actor and science advisor

Samuel L. Jackson, who spoke about science communication. The week-long meeting, led by head of science Andrew Jones and physics teacher Betty Ford, also included a tour of Chicago with numerous visits and night-time views of the city from the 300-storey Willis Tower.

The group also visited Argonne Lab, a national laboratory specialising in high-energy particle physics, where they were given a tour and took part in a question and answer session with a theoretical physicist.

Betty Ford said: "The conference provided a fantastic opportunity for our students to see the real-life contexts of what they have learned in lessons."

"It also gave them a valuable insight into what it is like to study science at a higher level or to pursue a career in science."



Solihull students enjoyed a trip to Chicago as part of their science studies

Solihull News
March 14th 2014

Boys and girls looked back to the future in discussing politics and careers in the company of past pupils and experts in their fields.



Celebrating the bimillennial anniversary of the death of Emperor Augustus with a statue design are, from left, Georgia Greenburgh, Gemma Kentish, Dr Penny Goodman, Joanna Johnson, Stephanie Roberts, William Jervis and Gabriel Lupoli. **a**

A guided trip back to Rome

LATIN and Classical Civilisation pupils at Solihull School called on the experts to help them commemorate the bimillennial anniversary of the death of the first Roman emperor.

The pupils from Years 10 and 12 discussed the life and legacy of the famous world leader Emperor Augustus with Dr Elena Theodorakopoulos of the University of Birmingham and Dr Penny Goodman of the University of Leeds on their Classics enrichment day.

The boys and girls at the independent school wrote obituaries of Augustus, examined the flowering of literature in his reign, and discussed the image he sought to project in the world-famous Prima Porta statue.

They even produced designs for a statue to show how they would project the image of Augustus, who reigned triumphantly from 27BC to 14AD and had the month of August named after him, to a modern audience.

Head of Classics Joanna Johnson said: "We had a fantastic day exploring the life of an architect of the modern world, who replaced civil war with stable and peaceful rule, consolidated the Roman Empire, and inspired a golden age in literature."

"We are delighted that our strong links with universities resulted in being able to welcome two of the UK's leading Augustan experts to our celebrations."



Women aiming to break job barriers

HOW to break the glass ceiling that is preventing women from reaching senior positions in business was the main focus of debate at a TV-style Question Time event at Solihull School.

Boys and girls quizzed female alumni and associates who have gone on to be leaders in their fields about their views and experiences at the lunchtime event, held to mark International Women's Day.

The panel of businesswomen was chaired by BBC TV presenter Joanne Malin, who pointed to the strides made by women in the workplace but also to the fact that women 'are still not paid equally to their counterparts and 'are not present in equal numbers in business or politics'.

She encouraged everyone to follow their passion and be prepared to be flexible in their career.



■ The panellists at Solihull School's Question Time event, from left to right (standing), Lucy Lunt, Harriet Evans, Manty Stanley, Lucy Jeaynes and (seated) Georgia Adderley and Joanne Malin

The distinguished speakers represented a wide range of industries from engineering and

manufacturing to facilities management and broadcasting. They comprised former pupil

Harriet Evans, Corporate Solutions Director for Mitsubishi Electric; Lucy Jeaynes, Managing Director of Larch Consulting; Lucy Lunt, a BBC Radio producer and Solihull governor; and another former pupil Manty Stanley, Managing Director of Teal Patents Ltd.

The panel line-up was completed by Georgia Adderley, who left Solihull School in 2011 and is now studying broadcast journalism at Nottingham Trent University.

Julia Skan, Head of Careers, who organised the event, said: "The event was a tremendous success in inspiring both boys and girls with new ideas and opportunities for careers.

"All the speakers answered the many incisive questions put to them by the packed audience supremely well and our thanks go to the panel for their magnificent support."

Supporting a rock star at the LG Arena, premiering a work by a world-renowned composer, and singing live on BBC Radio 4, all helped to develop the Chapel Choir's outstanding reputation.

Choir's chance to shine with Take That star

YOUNGSTERS from Solihull shone on stage with Take That star Gary Barlow.

More than 50 members



of Solihull School's Chapel Choir are helping the singer belt out the number one single, Sing, as he brings his solo tour to Birmingham. The pupils performed with the former X Factor judge at the LG Arena on Tuesday night and will do so again on Saturday, April 19.

Oliver Walker, head of the choir, said: "Our choristers are thrilled to have been given the opportunity to accompany one of the world's greatest singer-songwriters."

"These are terrifically exciting times for Solihull Chapel Choir as it continues to build an outstand-

ing national and international reputation."

Sing, the official Diamond Jubilee song, was co-written by Gary and musical theatre composer Andrew Lloyd Webber.

It is one of 13 number one singles and 23 top 10 hits written by the singer.

The Boys' and Girls' choirs were approached to take the starring role after they appeared in BBC Radio 4's Daily Service.

And they are also favoured by royalty. Last year the Boys' Choir was invited by the King of Norway to sing in Britten's War Requiem at the Bergen International Festival.



Solihull School's Chapel Choir, who sang with Gary Barlow (pictured left, at the NEC)

Solihull News
April 11th 2014

School choir prepares to sing to the world



Solihull School's Chamber Choir at St Paul's Cathedral last year.

SOLIHULL School's choristers are starting the year on a high note by broadcasting live on the world's longest-running radio programme.

The independent school's Chamber Choir – 50 boys and girls aged 14 upwards – will be singing in the Daily Service on BBC Radio 4 on Tuesday, January 21.

They will be performing the anthem 'I Give to You a New Commandment' by Peter Nardone, Director of Music at Worcester Cathedral, along with two hymns, direct from Emmanuel Church at Didsbury in Manchester.

A worldwide congregation

will be able to tune in to the service on Radio 4 Longwave at 9.45 am or listen to it online at whatever time they wish.

The music was chosen by Solihull School Organist and Choirmaster Oliver Walker to suit the theme of the day: the Christian's role in society. Oliver often plays the organ for services on BBC radio.

The service provides a prelude to a bumper year for the Chamber Choir, which has also been invited back to St Paul's Cathedral to sing Choral Evensong on Monday March 10 after making an outstanding debut last year.

The programme will include

the performance of a new Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, 'The Solihull Service', by Ben Parry, a world-renowned composer and Director of the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. Ben has written music for the Harry Potter films and the BBC Proms Series.

The Chamber Choir, part of Solihull School's Chapel Choir, will be giving the work its world premiere the previous day during Evensong in the School Chapel.

Oliver Walker said: "This is a thrilling time for Solihull School's Chapel Choir and a fitting reward for the dedication and talent shown by choristers at all levels."

Radio 4 Solihull Observer
January 23rd 2014

The Debating Society welcomed a top BBC presenter and former pupil as their new Patron in another outstanding year that produced England finalists and a national top-ten team ranking.

Pupils talk their way to top national final



From left, Jessica Browne, Megan Lloyd and Lydia Stephens with Randolph Churchill and the Rt Hon Lord Paul Boateng at the final of the English Speaking Union Schools' Public Speaking Competition at Churchill College, Cambridge.

ANNETTE BELCHER
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A GROUP of well-spoken Solihull pupils reached the finals of one of the world's most prestigious public speaking contests.

The team from Solihull

School was one of only eight from England and Wales to win their way through to the finishing line of the English Speaking Union Schools' Public Speaking Competition, held at Churchill College in Cambridge.

Jessica Browne, aged 15 and 16-year-olds Megan Lloyd and Lydia Stephens, won the Midlands round, with Jessica being awarded the prize for Speaker with Most Potential, and Megan - Solihull's Poet Laureate - scooping the award for

Best Questioner. The team was judged in the final by a panel chaired by the Rt Hon Lord Paul Boateng in the presence of Randolph Churchill, great grandson of the renowned orator Sir Winston Churchill after whom Churchill College is named.

The Warwick Road school was among more than 350 schools to enter the public speaking competition and its success follows that of sixth formers Madeleine Lavery and George Diwaker who were ranked as one of the top ten teams in the UK at the Durham University Schools Competition, Europe's biggest debating contest.

Solihull has also excelled at the Nottingham Open Debating Competition, where Oliver Rooney and Tom Williams, both aged 12, were ranked Best Novice Pair and outshone all the schools' sixth form teams by finishing seventh overall. Oliver and Tom were also part of an under 16 team, alongside Alex Lavery and Zershannah Qureshi, which reached the finals of the Oxford International Competition for Young Debaters at the prestigious Oxford Union.

Solihull News
May 16th 2014





Caroline Spelman MP, George Diwaker, Michael Buerk, Adam Hawksbee and Aine Maher.

Back in school to join debate

BBC PRESENTER Michael Buerk was back to his roots for Solihull School's first Big Debate.

The former Nine O'Clock News presenter and chairman of BBC Radio 4's The Moral Maze, who was a pupil at the school from 1955 to 1965, chaired the event in front of a large audience of pupils, parents, friends and dignitaries, including the new Mayor of Solihull Kate Wild, in the School's Bushell Hall.

Meriden MP and former Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman proposed the motion 'This house believes that rich nations (G20) should strive to meet the UN guideline of giving 0.7% of their GDP to the poorest'.

The opposition was led by Adam Hawksbee, a recent graduate and former President of Sheffield University Debating Society.

Mr Buerk, who has also become the new patron of Solihull Debating Society, said: 'The debate was terrific and showed why Solihull has one of the finest reputations for debating for any school in the country.'

Solihull was ranked among the UK's top ten teams at this year's Durham University Schools Competition, Europe's biggest debating contest. The School has one of the largest school debating societies in the country with more than 250 members.

Solihull Observer
July 18th 2014



BBC's Buerk chairs Solihull debate

Top BBC presenter Michael Buerk took his presentation skills back to his roots for Solihull School's first Big Debate

Added 24 July 2014 | Michael Buerk, Solihull School, debate, BBC

Posted by Dave Higgit

Save for later | Like | Tweet

The former Nine O'Clock News presenter and chairman of BBC Radio 4's 'The Moral Maze', who was a pupil at the independent school in Warwick Road from 1955 to 1965, chaired the event in front of a large audience of pupils, parents, friends and dignitaries, including the new Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Kate Wild, in the School's Bushell Hall.

Meriden MP and former Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman proposed the motion 'This house believes that rich nations (G20) should strive to meet the UN guideline of giving 0.7% of their GDP to the poorest'. The opposition was led by Adam Hawksbee, a recent graduate and former President of Sheffield University Debating Society.

Solihull pupil George Diwaker, who has won a place at Oxford University to read Theology, seconded the motion. Aine Maher, a Lower Sixth Former who will be next year's Debating Society President, was the seconder for the opposition. The Chairman was assisted by other leading Society members Madeleine Lavery and Ben Piggott.

Independent Education Today
July 24th 2014

Pupils and teachers collected a record-breaking £46,500 for local, national and international causes from their fund-raising activities throughout the year.

Leticia's in peak condition for trip to Africa

ANNETTE BELCHER
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SOLIHULL School Army cadet Leticia Salmon is off to Africa - after planning her mountaineering and charity challenge with military precision.

The 16-year-old corporal in the school's Combined Cadet Corps raised £1,300 to take part in Exercise Kenya Venture after turning her home into a tea shop.

More than 70 supporters, including the mayor of Solihull Coun Joe Tidesley and wife Joan, tucked into the full afternoon teas, served up by Leticia.

She made more than 100 pots of tea and served over 1,000 homemade cakes and sandwiches over six hours, and ran a raffle for a dozen donated prizes.

The proceeds from the event, added to those from other fundraising, were also enough to net £900 towards the funding of much-needed new buildings for Thangathi Primary School, which Leticia will be helping to build with other cadets during the expedition.

The teenager is among 42 cadets selected from 800 nationwide applicants to join the British Army-led initiative.

The expedition this summer will include a six-day climb of Mount Kenya and white water rafting, as well as assisting with the Thangathi school building project.

Leticia said: "The whole day was a great success."

"All the running around serving, cleaning tables and making endless pots of tea was worth the effort."

"And a huge thank you must go to all those who supported the event."

Leticia is one of 25 girls in Solihull School's Corps - 18 in the Army section and seven in the RAF section - out of a total of 105 cadets.



Leticia Salmon with Solihull Mayor Joe Tidesley and wife Joan at the fundraising tea party.

Solihull News

March 7th 2014

Shining example of fine parenting

WHAT a gorgeous girl greeted us in this paper at New Year.

Sixteen-year-old Leticia Salmon, from Solihull School, beamed from under her cadet beret, unbleached hair ruffled, not a trace of clown make-up on that pearly skin.

She heartened me. Here was a lovely girl I knew who'd never fall paralytically drunk, from a nightclub.

She's clearly blessed with parents who've raised a lady. The Middletons did the same!



Birmingham Mail

March 4th 2014



Kayakers Isobel Cawley and Isaac Webber finish opposite the Houses of Parliament

Pupils paddle to an amazing feat

A PAIR of Solihull School pupils have kayaked an incredible 125 miles in just over 23 hours in aid of Marie Curie.

Despite bad weather, aching muscles and even a broken rudder, Isobel Cawley, aged 16, and Isaac Webber, aged 17, managed to paddle from Devizes in Wiltshire, through 77 portages, to arrive at the finish line opposite the Houses of Parliament on Easter Monday.

The gruelling challenge, which they completed in 23h 19m 47s, was part of the Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race, Junior Division, which has been held over the Easter

Weekend since 1948. Solihull School provided the boat for Isobel and Isaac, who are also both members of Solihull Canoe Club.

Proud families of the pair joined them as the support team, to open locks and providing food and camping equipment as well as emotional support. Isobel's Mum Liz said: "This is very dear to Isobel's heart as both her grandma and granddad spent their last precious weeks in a hospice."

Together they have raised over £1,000 for the local Marie Curie Hospice. To make a donation visit www.justgiving.com/DWRACESOLIHULL.

Solihull News

May 2nd 2014





Staff from Solihull School have raised over £4,000 for the Marie Curie Hospice in a Coast to Coast cycling challenge.

Coast-to-coast riders raise £4k for appeal

ANNETTE BELCHER
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TORRENTIAL rain failed to dampen the spirits of 15 staff members from Solihull School as they pedalled from coast to coast to raise over £4,000 for a local charity.

The cyclists - beginners and experienced - completed the 141-mile route from Whitehaven on the west coast to Tynemouth on the east in four days.

"Our thanks go to all those who supported the team and our efforts."

The Warwick Road school has "proud links" with the hospice, with pupils having previously raised more than £5,000 for the Marie Curie Big Build Appeal.

Solihull School also supported the building programme by spon-

soring local community fund-raising with free use of its Bushell Hall for a series of comedy and drama nights.

Earlier this year, pupils and teachers from the school were invited to the official opening of the hospice by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as patron of Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Jazz artist visits Solihull School to play charity gig



ONE of Britain's most exciting jazz artists hosted a charity concert at Solihull School earlier this week.

Jeremy Sassoon made his Midland debut with his 11-piece band performing the music of Ray Charles in the Bushell Hall.

The former psychiatric doctor turned jazz singer and pianist has performed the Ray Charles Project with his band at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club in London and at major festivals, and been a featured artist on Jazz FM's Discovery Show.

Members of Solihull School's Saxophony, Saxophone Group and Saxbeats jazz ensembles were treated to a master class by the star.

Sassoon appeared at the school on the recommendation of Hugh Montgomery, a professor of intensive care medicine and parent, who has been a friend since they first met at medical school.

All the profits from the evening went to Birmingham Children's Hospital and Jeans for Genes Day.

December 20th 2014

Eight pupils played for their country in six different sports to mark another outstanding sporting year that began with the appointment of a former England Test player as Master in charge of Cricket.

Students to represent country



Solihull School's sporting successes: from left to right (standing) Abigail Humphreys, Charlie Hadley, Ben Priestley, Aoife Mannion and Charley Gregory; and (kneeling) Charlie Morgan, Jonny Allen and Ben Fowles

SOLIHULL School pupils are to represent their country on the pitch and in the pool this month to crown a triumphant season in no less than six different sports.

Fifteen-year-old Abigail Humphreys has been selected to swim for Great Britain in the Junior 400m Individual Medley in

Portugal after setting a new West Midlands record time at the British Gas Swimming Championships in Glasgow.

While in football, Aoife Mannion is in the Under 19 England squad for the European Championship Finals in Norway after playing in all three qualifying matches against Finland,

Serbia and Denmark. The 18-year-old defender also reached the semi-finals of the UEFA Women's Champions League with Birmingham City Ladies.

Their success follows that of four fellow pupils at the independent coeducational school in Warwick Road who have all played international rugby this year. Jonny Allen played for the Under 18 English Lions - also known as the Independent Schools Barbarians - against Zimbabwe, while Kieran Joyce was a member of the Ireland Under 18 Club side against France and Italy.

At Under 16 level, Ben Fowles captained the England Saxons to victory against Italy and won the Man of the Match award at the Bilton Watlington Festival, and Charlie Morgan played for England Lions against England Roses in the festival.

In athletics 15-year-old Charlie Hadley came third in the Under 15 Long Jump at the Sportshall UK Finals in Manchester, where he represented the West Midlands.

Meanwhile 12-year-old Charley Gregory earned notice of his Wimbledon instructors after winning this year's Nike National Clay Court Under-12 singles title.

Elsewhere fencer Ben Priestley was a member of the Great Britain Cadet (Under 17) Foil Team that competed at Cadres in France and in Brussels.

Steve Thompson, Director of Sport, said: "This has been an outstanding year for individual sporting success and a tribute to the huge training commitment put in by our boys and girls with the support of our first-class staff and facilities."



Charley Gregory with Tim Henman during the HSBC Road to Wimbledon. Photograph by Scott Heavey/Getty Images for HSBC. (s)

Gregory plays at Wimbledon

SOLIHULL'S Charley Gregory insists he will never forget his outing at the All England Club after starring in front of former British No.1 Tim Henman as part of the HSBC Road to Wimbledon National 14 and Under Challenge Finals.

The 12-year-old Solihull School pupil booked himself a spot at SW19 after competing in his Regional Finals and won one group match before being knocked out in the first round of the Boys Regional Consolation Draw.

Some 20,000 promising young tennis players from all over Britain competed in pursuit of a prestigious place at Wimbledon with Gregory among the top 144 boys and girls to have earned the right to play at the National Finals.

And, despite failing to follow in 2013 Wimbledon Champion Andy Murray's footsteps by lifting silverware at SW19, Gregory admitted his outing at the All England Lawn Tennis Club was certainly the highlight of his summer.

"It's a great experience for me. I've never done this tournament before so it's even more special and it's my junior dream come true," Gregory said.

"It's great to have an opportunity like this at such a young stage in my career. I've been to Wimbledon many times to watch games and visit the museum but to actually play a match on the courts is something I will never forget."

"It is my dream to turn professional and win a Grand Slam, preferably at Wimbledon, and this experience will hopefully help me push on. I'm just tried to take everything in but it was quite mind blowing."

Gregory, who attends Edgbaston Priory Club, even got the chance to meet former British No.1 and HSBC Tournament Ambassador Henman during his time at Wimbledon.

Henman spent time with the players, signed autographs, and posed for photos with the finalists and insisted he was impressed with the standard on show this year at SW19.



Ben Priestley training with his coach Sam Stockley.

Ben just perfect for GB squad

FENCING: After a gruelling series of UK-wide competitions, Solihull's second-year Ben Priestley has fought off his opponents to be selected to represent Great Britain as part of the U17 cadet team.

Ben, a sixth form pupil at Solihull School and the current West Midlands U16 champion, has made rapid progress in the five years he has been fencing and is relishing the chance to compete for his country in Calais, France, in December and Bratislava, Slovakia, in January.

His coach Sam Stockley is very pleased with his results and said: "Ben's hard work and effort are paying off."

Ben, who trains at Team Mella in Longbridge, Birmingham, is now aiming to beat the Europeans and be selected for the World Championships in 2014.

Solihull Observer
July 10th 2014

Solihull News
November 29th 2013

Solihull Observer
August 21st 2014



SOLIHULL School has capped an outstanding county championship-winning cricket season by introducing new state-of-the-art training facilities.

The independent school is one of the first in the country to have its own spin bowling machine along with all-weather nets to help develop the stars of the future.

Their arrival has coincided with the school's First XI, Under 15 and Under 13 teams' all celebrating success as Warwickshire Cup winners, and the Under 12s reaching the county cup

final, in a season in which seven players represented their county or region.

They included First XI captain Oliver Haley, who scored a century against Warwickshire Imps, took five wickets in an innings in a two-day match against Monmouth School, and was selected for the senior Warwickshire 2nd XI - and Fahd Janjua, who took five wickets against Bromsgrove at Under 15 level and also played for the First XI.

The new 'Merlyn' spin bowling machine, used by professional clubs, will enable pupils of all ages to test their technique consistently

against Test match quality spin bowling.

The easy to operate machine, designed and built by Bola to give England cricketers greater experience of spin bowling, can deliver spinning balls of every imaginable variety with the coach having complete control over line, speed and flight.

Darren Maddy, the former Warwickshire and England Test all-rounder who is now Master in charge of Cricket at Solihull, said: "The machine has opened the eyes of our cricketers to the thrill of what it is really like to face a top quality spinner. It will come into its own midway through the winter term when we

start training sessions for next summer."

Darren has also been instrumental in designing a new six-lane artificial net system to replace three grass- and three artificial nets: "These will complement our indoor nets in enabling pupils to develop their skills outdoors all year round."

He added: "I am delighted by our success, with a first team that was among the best in the country with eight successive wins and strong age groups coming up below them."

"The enthusiasm for cricket was such that we fielded three teams at Under 12 level."



Darren Maddy prepares to feed Solihull's new bowling machine for cricketer Fahd Janjua.

Solihull Observer
August 7th 2014

Solihull School enjoy cup success

RUGBY UNION: SOLIHULL School's rugby players have proved they are among the best in the Midlands after lifting the prestigious Solihull Cup.

The Under 18 Sevens Team from the independent school for boys and girls in Warwick Road beat Adams' Grammar School from Shropshire 24-19 in the final of the seven a side competition, which attracted 24 schools from ten counties.

The team won all five of their group matches, notching up 129 points and conceding only 14 points, in the invitation event held at Solihull School.

Cup winning success crowned an outstanding season for Solihull School's Sevens team, which also reached the semi-finals of the Fyde Cup and the quarter finals of the Kings School Worcester Cup.

Solihull's Under 15s also excelled in the Solihull tournament, reaching the final for their age group with victories in all their group matches.

The Under 15s rounded off their superb season by winning the Kings Schools Worcester Cup, beating Royal Grammar School, Worcester 31-12 in the Final.

Solihull's U12s also tasted cup winning glory at the Nottingham Sevens Tournament and reached the final of the Bishop Vesey Sevens competition.

*Solihull School's Ben Fowles achieved international distinction at the BMW Wellington Festival over the Easter holidays when he captained the England Saxons Under 16s Fifteen to a 10-8 victory against Italy and won the Man of the Match award. Solihull's Charlie Morgan played for England Lions against England Roses at the same Festival in a hard-fought match which the Lions lost 19-14.

Solihull School's Under 18 Sevens squad: Rob Gnyla, Ben Fowles, Liam McStay, Louis Roach and Charlie Badham; (middle row) Elliott Botterill, George Gamlin, Jonny Allen, Kieran Joyce and Toby Wassell; and (front row) TJ Regan and Sam Montieri.



MARTIN JOHNSON VISITS SOLIHULL SCHOOL

England's legendary World Cup-winning rugby captain Martin Johnson received a hero's welcome when he called into Solihull School to help with coaching duties.

Senior squad players at the independent school for boys and girls enjoyed a masterclass with the captain, who lifted the World Cup in 2003 and then became team manager until he retired in 2011.

The Solihull-born, 84 capped

England player, who also toured three times with the British and Irish Lions, passed on plenty of rugby advice and tips during the hour and a half training session.

Martin, who led his club Leicester Tigers to back-to-back Heineken Cup victories and won the league six times, also found time to answer questions from the youngsters.

He visited the school after being 'bid for' in a charity auction by a Solihull School parent.

Private Schools
Spring 2014

Solihull Observer
May 22nd May 2014

Maddy still learning as he goes back to school

Brian Halford

@brainhalford

IT is the leap which, sooner or later, every cricketer must make.

The day which comes to all and of which all, if not exactly dreading, become ever more acutely aware the closer it looms.

Retirement. The transition from player to ex-player. From an industry you have long-known and grown comfortable with to a different world. One day a veteran, the next a rookie.

Darren Maddy has just made that leap. The former Warwickshire and England all-rounder was recently unveiled as new master in charge of cricket at Solihull School.

He succeeds fellow former Bear David Hemp at a school with a rich cricketing history and enviable resources and facilities.

The 39-year-old, a highly popular player during a 22-year professional career which began at Leicestershire, is excited by the challenge.

But the fact remains that, never mind having played three Tests and 12 limited-over games for England and 761 matches (scoring 25,693 runs and taking 531 wickets) in senior cricket, he is now starting afresh.

As a 17-year-old, Maddy went straight from school into professional cricket. Now he's back to school. It's a big step for a man who has always valued stability in his working life.

"It is an exciting time," Maddy said. "I suppose mentally I have been preparing for this for some years, distancing myself from team-mates and friendships because I knew I would be leaving."

"I never knew which direction my life would take. Would it still be in the professional game or at an independent school?"

"When I announced in the summer that I would retire at the end of the season I expected offers to flood in but it took a while and there was a little bit of apprehension and insecurity. But then some opportunities presented themselves and Solihull School was definite-



■ Darren Maddy with Solihull School pupils, from left to right, Oliver Haley (aged 17), Will Rigg (13) and Matthew Smith (12).

25 years. I have never been one to chop and change. That showed in my spells as a player at Leicestershire and Warwickshire. I liked to be settled.

"In the professional game you never quite know where you are from one contract to the next and after 23 years on the road, often away from my family, I owed it to them to settle down where we feel comfortable and happy."

The historic environs of Solihull School is where Maddy is settling now and there were a few early nerves. Back in school, he knows he is starting again.

"I am under no illusions that I have loads to learn," he said. "My first day out of school as a teenager was as a professional cricketer and I don't know anything different so it will be strange when next season comes round and the games start at Edgbaston and I am not

maybe hockey. But cricket is my main role and I am really excited about it. My philosophy in cricket has always been based on enjoyment. If the lads enjoy what they are doing they will develop faster in terms of skill-levels."

Maddy's own boots have not quite been hung up yet. He will play for Berkswell in the Birmingham League next summer when school commitments allow but his first objective is the nurturing of young talent at Solihull.

And he will draw heavily on the expertise of the many coaches under whom he played. Most of all, the vastly respected Neal Abberley.

"In my first coaching sessions a lot has been based around the things Neal used to tell me," said Maddy. "He is a man I respected and admired a lot."

"It will be very satisfying to take a

Perhaps Maddy's input to the Bears is not quite over yet then. He was a popular and effective cricketer there, although his contributions in recent years were heavily affected by injuries, most of all a horrific blow to the face in March 2010. In a pre-season warm-up match in Bloemfontein, a Neil Carter bouncer got under the grille of Maddy's helmet and left him with multiple facial fractures.

"The injuries, and getting hit in the face in particular, led to some time out of form and some difficult times," he said. "But it taught me a lot about myself and how to deal with adversity."

"That's one thing I will pass on in my coaching - we all have highs but it's how we get through the lows that really matters. As a player, I think I could have dealt with them better at times."

Past pupils who were at Solihull as long ago as the 1930s ensured that more than 500 attendees at one of the School's biggest reunions had a day to remember.

Reunion day draws 500

MORE than 500 former classmates, teachers and parents rolled back the years at one of the biggest reunion days in modern times at Solihull School.

Past pupils who started as long ago as the 1930s enjoyed a variety of tours, workshops and sports matches - along with lunch and afternoon tea - at the Warwick Road campus of the independent school, founded in 1560.

Some guests attended lessons in figure drawing, language learning and jewellery making. Other subject options included exploring the nature of memory and happiness in a psychology class and testing common sense in a physics roadshow.

The outdoor activities included rugby, netball and hockey matches between past and current pupils, with presentations made to the winning teams by former England rugby coach and past pupil Martin Green.

Former England cricketer Darren Maddy, now master in charge of cricket, also gave a batting master class.

Elsewhere, visitors could view final rehearsals for the school's production of *Spamalot* in the Bushell Hall, and listen to the memories of Denis Tomlin, a former teacher who became second master, headmaster and governor in an association of more than 50 years with Solihull School, in the new Archive Room named after him.



■ Solihull School's recent reunion day attendees included Janet Leek, Ronald Leek (1947-1952), Freddie Collins, Roger Langstone (1942-1951) and Derek V Williams (1943-1948).

Picture: Dave Warren

The school's senior management team, Old Silhillians' Association committee and current teachers and sixth formers, were on hand to guide guests around other modern facilities including the David Turnbull Music School, George Hill Building with its new classrooms, and the Alan Lee Pavilion.

Former pupils and teachers continued to enjoy each other's company into the

evening, with a buffet dinner, drinks and dancing at the Old Silhillians' clubhouse.

Alison Bond, director of development and alumni relations, who organised the event, said: "We were delighted that so many former pupils accepted our invitation to meet up with their old school friends and teachers, and re-establish and strengthen their links with the

School. Guests went away saying that they had a wonderful time, and I hope we will see many again at future events."

Peter Turner, a former pupil who left in 1960, commented: "It was a great day and one that a lot of people will remember for a long time."

"It was marvellous to meet up with so many old chums and former teachers."

Birmingham Mail
April 16th 2014

Chance to sing in Fauré's Requiem

SOLIHULL School's Former Choristers' Association is inviting local residents as well as past pupils to 'come and sing Fauré's Requiem' in the company of Solihull School's Chapel Choir.

The Chapel Choir, comprising more than 90 boys and girls aged seven to 18, will be joining over 70 parents, past pupils and friends who have so far signed up for the event on Sunday, November 24 that will climax in a concert in the School Chapel on the Warwick Road campus at 5.30pm.

The event is the second to be staged by the Former Choristers' Association after an inaugural evening song last year that was rehearsed and conducted by CBSO Chorus Master Simon Halsey.

Choirmaster Oliver Walker said: "Gabriel Fauré's Requiem is a sublimely beautiful piece with memorable tunes and diverse moods making

it the obvious choice for a 'come and sing' event."

"The event is open not only to parents and past pupils but the entire local community and there are opportunities for all voice parts. Even those with minimal singing experience are welcome to join in."

Those interested in taking part in the event should register their interest by emailing the Former Choristers' Association at choristers@silhillians.net.

Meanwhile, Rita Schindler will be returning to Solihull School Chapel for a performance of Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols with the School's Chamber Choir on Sunday, December 1 at 6.30pm and Choirmaster Oliver Walker will also be conducting a Solihull Sings! concert with pupils from St Alphege, Chapel Fields and Solihull Junior schools on December 6 from 9am to 12.50pm.



Members of Solihull School's Former Choristers' Association join Solihull School's Chapel Choir at the inaugural concert conducted by the CBSO's Simon Halsey in the School Chapel last year.

Solihull Observer
November 21st 2013

Hey good cookin'!

'MasterChef Fittie'
Jack, 22, bids for
place in the final

Jane Tyler
Staff Reporter
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HE'S the spiky-haired heart-throb who has shattered the stereotype that students live on kebabs and beans on toast.

Because Jack Lucas, from Solihull, is in the semi-finals of this year's MasterChef aged just 22.

And it is not only his culinary skills which have impressed viewers - his good looks have earned him the nickname of "MasterChef Fittie".

Viewers will find out tonight whether Jack makes it into the final of the smash-hit BBC show.

He beat dozens of other amateur cooks to win a place in the programme's final six after he was encouraged to apply by his girlfriend Abi Morcott.

Speaking from Australia, where he is spending his gap year, Jack said: "She is pretty persuasive and encouraged me to apply."

"I didn't think I'd be good enough but thought it could be a good experience, especially as I had time on my year off."

Former Solihull School pupil Jack said his proud parents Linda and Tony, from Durrigton, were his biggest fans.

"My mum sends me emails nearly every day saying how she's spoken to so many people about me and my progress," he said.

"I think she gets even more excited than I do about it all!"

"Every night MasterChef is on, my parents invite people round to watch it. Mum is apparently being introduced as 'Jack's Mum' instead of Linda, which she finds very funny."



Jack on MasterChef and, top, with fellow contestants Wan Ping, Robert, Luke, Angela and Michael

Jack, who graduated from Exeter University with a First Class degree in geography last year, said all young men should learn to cook - to help pull girls.

"My girlfriend will vouch for the fact that being able to cook is definitely a hit with the ladies," he said.

"If you can rustle up a good meal on a date, it will surely impress." Jack said he taught himself to cook by watching culinary clips on YouTube.

"Abi and I would head to the supermarket late in the evening to bag a good bargain," he said.

"We would sometimes come

away with venison, fish and steaks that were 80 per cent off.

"But when I didn't have much time, I stuck to student classics like spaghetti bolognese and risotto."

"You can't go too far wrong with them."

Jack has a job lined up in Sainsbury's buying and marketing division but he said MasterChef had boosted his dream of owning his own restaurant and following in the footsteps of his cooking idol Gordon Ramsay.



Birmingham Mail
May 7th 2014

Pupils immersed themselves in a wide range of enriching activities and showed their caring side by raising a spectacular sum to pay for the rebuilding of a school in war-torn Sri Lanka.

NEW HEADS FOR SOLIHULL JUNIOR

SOLIHULL Junior School has boosted its leadership with a number of new appointments. Mark Penney and Michael Jones have been appointed as the new head and deputy head respectively, joining the school's director of studies, Janet Humphreys, in the new team. The appointments take effect from September this year following the retirement of headteacher Lindsay Brough. New head Mark Penney said: "Solihull Junior School is a special place where great things happen. To be given the opportunity to lead its consummately talented and hard-working team of professionals and over two hundred bright, inquisitive children is a great privilege."

Picture: Solihull Junior School's new Leadership Team from left to right, Michael Jones, Mark Penney and Janet Humphreys



Birmingham Living
October 2013

Students wowed by Range Rovers built in 90 seconds



Year 4 students from Solihull Junior School experience Range Rover engineering close up at the Lode Lane site.

SOLIHULL Junior School pupils came face-to-face with other bright sparks as they watched robots build bespoke Range Rover vehicles at the Jaguar Land Rover factory in Lode Lane, Solihull.

The boys and girls from Year 4 were 'amazed' at the sophisticated process that results in an entire car being rolled off the assembly line every 90 seconds.

They were also given a 'hands-on' opportunity to appreciate car manufacturing by using Lego kits to build their own model cars.

The educational visit supported the pupils' Geography topic on 'Settlements and Land Use'.

Mark Penney, Head of the Junior School said: "The pupils were fascinated to watch the robots play such a huge part in creating a car and the sparks they produced were a source of great excitement."

Solihull Junior School pupils all kitted up outside the Land Rover Experience at Jaguar Land Rover.

Birmingham Observer
January 2nd 2014

Bard work pays off

A NEW Shakespeare Club is performing a starring role in introducing boys and girls at Solihull Junior School to the world's greatest playwright.

Eight to ten year olds at the independent school are exploring the works of Shakespeare on their feet as if they were professional actors during the club's weekly after-school meetings.

The new performance-led introduction to Shakespeare's text and world has been proving so popular that number of members has doubled to 22 since the start of the year.

The club has been launched in the 450th anniversary year of the Bard's birth by Natasha Evans, an English teacher and former pupil at the school in Warwick Road.

Natasha is one of the first teachers from across the world



Natasha Evans with members of Solihull Junior School's Shakespeare Club.

on a new Master's course in the Advanced Teaching of Shakespeare, which is being run by the University of Warwick.

Her experience of working with specialist academics and directors has already enabled pupils to gain introductions to

the popular plays 'Hamlet' and 'Romeo & Juliet'.

Natasha said: "The new club is helping our pupils to develop their interest and confidence in Shakespeare in an innovative and exciting way. I hope it will instil a love of his plays all their lives."

Birmingham Observer
March 20th 2014

Artist Ian puts local pupils in the picture

A WORLD-RENOWNED artist from Olton has put on a show for pupils at Solihull Junior School.

Ian Cook thrilled boys and girls in assembly by recreating the Solihull School crest in a friendly explosion of colours on canvas with his unique 'PopbangColour' style using remote-controlled cars as paint brushes.

The school's ten to 11-year-olds also enjoyed a craft workshop with the trained fine artist and car enthusiast who helped them produce colour wheels, portraits, landscapes and car graffiti of their own using toy cars and car parts.

Ian, who is artist-in-residence at the Heritage Motor Centre in Gaydon, has gained an international reputation for his paintings, ranging from Jaguar and Land Rover vehicles in action to giant portraits of racing driver Lewis Hamilton and the Arsenal football team.

He developed his painting style by accident when he was given a radio-controlled car as a present and told not to get paint on it. It gave Ian, working as an art lecturer at Sutton Coldfield College at the time, the idea of taking the car into his art studio, splattering paint on the wheels and driving it

over canvas to make pictures.

After creating at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, Ian was asked by Reebok to create a giant portrait of Lewis Hamilton for its advertising campaign – and other commissions quickly followed.

Ian said: "My workshop with Solihull Juniors was awesome – one of the best I've ever done. The pupils were tremendously enthusiastic and showed terrific creative ability."

Mark Penney, Head of the Solihull Junior School, added: "Our thanks go to Ian for inspiring our pupils and providing them with an unforgettable experience."



Ian Cook demonstrates his painting techniques to, from left, Oliver Baker, Hannah Greenwood, Rhea Singhota and Dhillon Virdee-Oakley during a workshop at Solihull Junior School.

Birmingham Mail
October 12th 2013



■ Jack Rookin-Gray, Courtney Holland, Patrick Gramsbury, Hannah Welch and Ella Furber

Porridge's just right for pupils

BOYS and girls at Solihull Junior School served up a bumper helping of musical comedy to packed audiences in their annual theatre production.

All 56 pupils in Year 6 at the independent school in Warwick Road brought a tale of fairytale folk vividly to life in 'Porridge' by Craig Hawes.

The 10 and 11 year olds had

rehearsed their singing, along with the twists, turns and appearances that ensue when a crime wave hits Happy Valley, since September. Jack Rookin-Gray played Jack Spratt, the private detective called in to solve the caseload of mysteries in the musical, which played for two nights to pupils, parents, teachers and friends in Solihull

School's Bushell Hall. He was joined by Papa Bear (Patrick Gramsbury), Chief Inspector Drain (Hanaan Welch), Junior Bear (Ella Furber), Goldie Lox (Courtney Holland) and other fun characters including barmy billy goats, loopy lumberjacks, and a runaway cow. Lydia Lynch, who co-directed the production with

fellow teacher Suzannah Compton, said: "The children excelled themselves with wonderful individual and collective performances, and we are so proud of them."

"The show had something for everyone: non-stop humour and drama, with superb acting and singing, which will be remembered for a long time to come."

February 17th 2014



Pupils raise £6,400 for war-hit kids in Sri Lanka

SOLIHULL Junior School pupils are set to transform the lives of children blighted by the recent civil war in Sri Lanka after raising a record-breaking £6,400 in their Charity Week.

All 200 boys and girls at the independent school, in Warwick Road, took part in raising funds to help rebuild a primary school attended by 200 needy children in the war-torn north of the country.

They chose Solihull-based Assist Resettlement & Renaissance (Assist RR) as their adopted charity after being moved by a presentation from Dr Velautham Sarveswaren, a trustee and parent.

Since its launch last year, Assist RR has rebuilt or renovated five schools in northern Sri Lanka where families are being resettled after the destruction wrought by the 26-year war that ended in 2009.

Solihull Junior School pupils have contributed the lion's share of the £9,000 required to rebuild Veenavil Primary School, at Puthukudiyiruppu, in the Vanni region.

Pupils at the school are being taught under trees or tarpaulin because its war-scarred buildings have had their roofs destroyed.

Dr Sarveswaren, a civil engineer who was born in Sri Lanka and now lives in Dorridge, said: "We are indebted to Solihull Junior School for their wonderful efforts to help people in my home country who have been displaced and are in desperate need of support."

"We have identified Veenavil School as a priority case for action because pupils there are learning in very unhealthy conditions with water leaking into buildings and poor sanitation. Our aim is to re-roof the school and provide toilets for the pupils and the local community."

He added: "We are also helping disadvantaged children to compete successfully with others for coveted university places by paying for extra tuition, helping their families to earn a living by



■ Mark Penney, head of Solihull Junior School, helps pupils Daniel Yousef and Isabelle Burns, seven, sell goodies in a giant tuck shop

providing material support, and treating eye conditions at free cataract surgery camps."

Solihull Junior School, which raised £2,400 for Save the Children to help orphaned children in Sri Lanka in 2009 and has previously supported a Sri Lankan orphanage, organised a wealth of fund-raising events in Charity Week that culminated in a talent show.

The events included a giant tuck shop set up in the school refectory in which junior boys and girls sold fast-food

items such as toasties, pizza slices and popcorn to pupils in the senior school.

Money was also raised from a sponsored football match between monitors and staff, a Copper Chaos competition in which pupils brought in spare coppers, and challenges run by pupils on their own initiative such as guessing the number of sweets in a jar and finding the treasure.

Junior boys and girls also had the chance to watch a film for £1 and even invited boys and girls in the senior

school to join them in a non-uniform day by paying two pounds a head.

Mark Penney, head of the Junior School, said: "Being able to help transform the lives of needy children of their own age in Sri Lanka struck a chord with our caring boys and girls who put in a tremendous effort in what proved to be our record-breaking Charity Week."

"We are very grateful for the extraordinary generosity and support of our pupils and parents."



■ Children being taught in temporary accommodation at Veenavil Primary School in Puthukudiyiruppu

Sports day leads to fundraiser

Birmingham Press 7 2 days ago

Solihull Juniors raise over £6,500 for local special school.



Solihull Junior School pupils raised more than £6,500 for the local Reynolds Cross School after going the extra mile on their charity decathlon day.

All Junior School years at the independent coeducational school for 7 to 18-year olds in Warwick Road put in an Olympic effort for the community special school in Otton, which teaches children with learning difficulties. The 7 to 11 year old boys and girls took part in ten sponsored track and field events, ranging from welly wanging and netball throwing to space hopping and football dribbling, which netted £5,200.

Some pupils also took a step further by adding another £200 baking cakes and making cards to sell - and Oscar Montgomery raised over £1,250 by having his head shaved to a pink Mohican on the last day of term. The proceeds have crowned a sensational fund raising campaign by Solihull's Senior and Junior Schools, which have together yielded £66,500 for local, national and international causes this year.

Solihull Junior School pupils were moved to support Reynolds Cross after members of their School Council visited the school and reported back on its outstanding work. Michael Jones, Deputy Head of the Junior School, said: "Our boys and girls were sparked into action as soon as they learned of the opportunity to help other children of their age at such a remarkable local school. I am proud of their wonderful efforts."

Solihull Junior School's decathlon day followed a successful charity week last October when pupils raised £5,400 for the Solihull charity Assist Resettlement and Renaissance to enable a primary school to be rebuilt in the war-ravaged north of Sri Lanka.

Birmingham Press
November 8th 2013



TROPHY WIN: Tegan and Fintan Bristow from Solihull School with their coach Luke von Lossberg.

Success is a family affair

TWO young siblings from Solihull have been tipped as future internationals after scooping up top awards at this year's British Polocrosse Championships.

Nine-year-old Tegan Bristow, a pupil at Solihull Junior School,

and her brother Fintan, 11, who goes to the Senior School in Warwick Road, took their club to the final of the Primary Juniors (Under 14s) event at the championships, held at the Onley Equestrian Centre near Rugby.

The brother and sister

first took up polocrosse - a cross between polo and lacrosse - at the age of four. Originally members of the Arden Club in Henley-in-Arden, they moved last year to Rugby Club, which hosted the World Cup when it came to the UK for the first time in 2011.

Solihull News
November 8th 2013

Border line genius!

Henry, 7, can name EVERY capital city on planet and also draw outline of most countries from MEMORY!

Annette Belcher
Staff Reporter
annette.belcher@trinitymirror.com

HENRY Close's unique talent has really put the Solihull seven-year-old on the map.

Because the schoolboy can name every single one of the 220 capital cities on the planet.

What's more the geography whizzard also knows the population of every European country and can draw the border outline of most nations from memory.

As if that wasn't enough talented Henry, a first year pupil at Solihull Junior School, can count to 100 in Spanish and Japanese.

"I love learning about other countries. Geography is one of my favourite subjects," he said.

From Bujumbra in Burundi to Niamey in Niger, not even the obscurest of places have caught out the remarkable lad. To make the feat even more remarkable, some of the 196 countries have multiple capitals - South Africa, for example, has three.

Now the whizzkid wants to take on all-comers to test his amazing geography prowess.

Henry latched onto his unique hobby after being asked to name ten capitals and their countries as part of his homework.

Mum Tonia said: "The exercise stirred Henry's interest in geography and when he was off school sick one day he decided to learn the world's capitals."

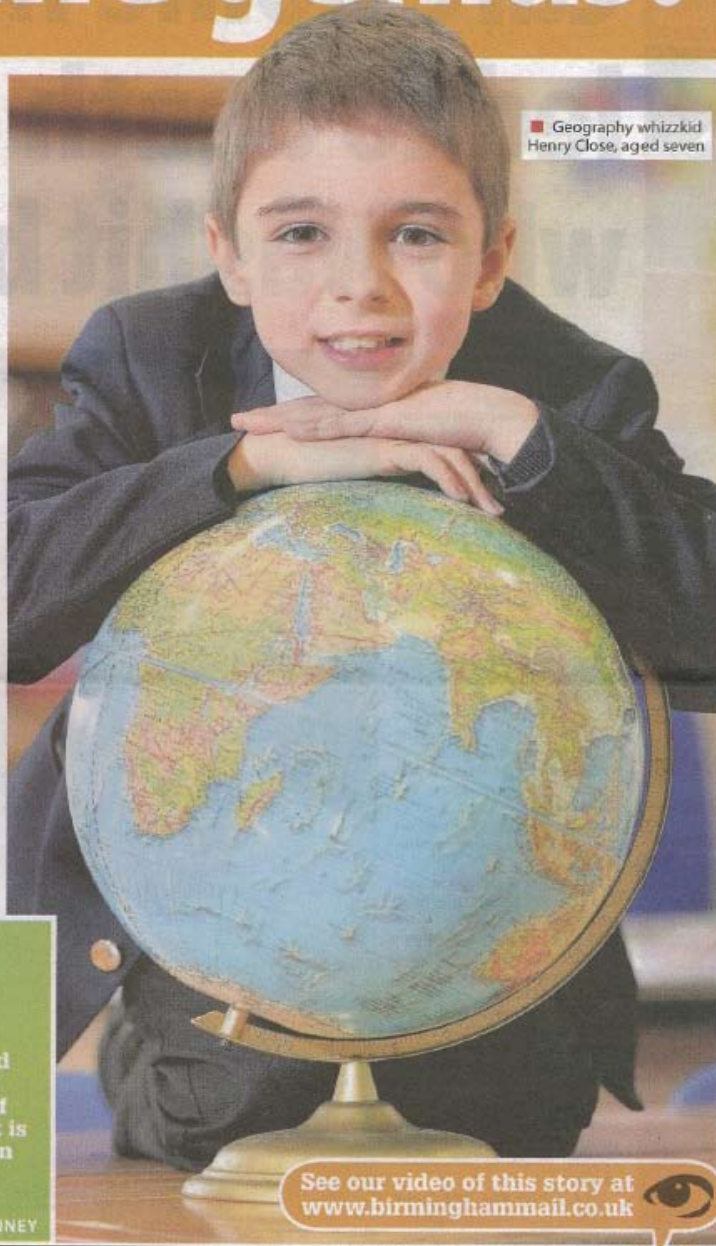
Henry also claims to know the population of every state in Europe and is now learning the figures for every country globally. He can also draw the outline of most nations from memory.

The schoolboy can't wait to visit some of the far-flung capitals that he has learnt off-by-heart.

Mark Penney, head of Solihull Junior School, said: "Henry has a wonderful capacity to remember facts and is stimulated by the challenge of learning new and exciting things."

"He is a delightfully engaging and friendly boy, with a love of learning that is an inspiration to us all."

■ Geography whizzkid
Henry Close, aged seven



“

He is a delightfully engaging and friendly boy, with a love of learning that is an inspiration to us all

MARK PENNEY

See our video of this story at
www.birminghammail.co.uk





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