



In this issue... Moroccan trip, Jack the Ripper, Young Enterprise events and more ...

# contact

## Busy Year 7 Open Evening



*Mr Jennings introduces map reading to prospective students*

Our Principal, Mr Marcus Barker gave a visionary speech incorporating a photographic media presentation shown on the multi plasma screens around our newly refurbished hall.

We would like to thank all the students who volunteered their time to act as tour guides and help staff in all the subject areas – they are our greatest ambassadors – all of whom have been presented with a certificate of merit for their services. Visiting parents and their Year 6 children left with a positive vision of the academy and the excellent education available.

We welcomed many, many prospective Year 7 students and their parents at our two open evenings held in September. The visitors took the opportunity to look around the Academy to see for themselves the excellent facilities and learning environment we have to offer.

Our student tour guides were in constant demand, showing the visitors around and answering their questions. Students were also based in subject areas to demonstrate their skills from practical experiments in Science, using the machinery and technology available in Design & Technology to illustrating their drawing skills and sculpture techniques in Art and Design. The Food Technology room also welcomed parents and their children to taste the wonderful cakes and biscuits specially prepared for the evening by our students. Other subject areas displayed exemplar work by students and exhibited or presented visual overviews of their curriculum topics.



*Ms Steele helps two young visitors in a practical experiment*

## Grease is the word

It has been over six years since we staged a whole school production so we are really excited at the prospect of staging the musical 'Grease' over three nights in February next year. The Academy is very proud of the newly refurbished hall which will enable big productions to take place and showcase the dramatic and musical talents of our students. The hall is fully equipped with stage lighting and a sound control system as well as superb acoustics.

Auditions have now taken place for all the main characters in the storyline and our very own Sandy and Danny will be played by Georgia Sargeant and William Bray who really impressed the performing arts team with their singing and dancing.

Grease may be best known for the 1978 movie, but it was originally premiered in 1972 as a stage musical and has been seen in the West End in three productions since and is now coming to Ashcroft Academy for three nights only.

Revisiting Rydell High School and charting the on-off relationship of main characters Danny Zuko and Sandy Olsson, the show will ooze talent with tons of terrific tunes that we are all so familiar with.

Grease is the word and you are the ones that we want as our audience.

Watch this space for more 'Grease' news.

### Cast List

Danny	William Bray
Sandy	Georgia Sargeant
Kenickie	Sam Johnson
Rizzo	Silvana Figueira
Frenchy	Hawah Wurie
Marty	Chloe Gibson
Jan	Shanika Nickells
Doody	Sam Miller
Sonny	Franklin Baeza
Roger	Aaron Hobbs
Patty	Abby Oliver
Eugene 1	Nathan Bryon
Eugene 2	Damon O'Sullivan
Leo	Miguel Minoletti
Cha Cha	Emily Williams
Tom	Matthew Cahill
Vince Fontaine	Aaron Street
Johnny Casino	Simon Allinson
Teen Angel	Decontee Moore
Principle McGee	Stephanie Adu
Blanche	Patricia Tumba
Coach Calhoun	Louis Coward
Mr. Lynch	Oliver Woolcott
Mrs. Murdock	Maggie Blankson
Nurse Wilkins	Meg Shaw
Mr. Rudie	Keenan Scott
Basketball Player	To be cast
Arnold	Jonathan Bilson
Andy	Sam Wells
Pitcher	To be cast
Umpire	To be cast
Sports Coach	To be cast
Vi	Samara Zwain

## Term Dates Academic Year 2008/2009

SD Mon 1 Sep - Wed 3 Sep 2008  
**TERM 1** Thu 4 Sep - Fri 24 Oct 2008  
 (for new Year 7 and Year 12)  
 Mon 8 Sep - Fri 24 Oct 2008  
 (for all other years)  
 TB Mon 27 Oct - Fri 31 Oct 2008

**TERM 2** Mon 3 Nov - Fri 19 Dec 2008  
 TB Mon 22 Dec 2008 - Fri 2 Jan 2009  
  
**TERM 3** Mon 5 Jan - Fri 13 Feb 2009  
 TB Mon 16 Feb - Fri 20 Feb 2009

**TERM 4** Mon 23 Feb - Fri 22 May 2009  
 SD Fri 3 Apr 2009  
 EB Fri 3 Apr - Fri 17 Apr 2009  
 BH Mon 4 May 2009  
 TB Mon 25 May - Fri 29 May 2009

**TERM 5** Mon 1 Jun - Fri 17 Jul 2009  
 TB begins Mon 20 Jul

SD Staff development day  
 TB Term break  
 EB Easter break

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## Moroccan Atlas to Atlantic

A group of Year 11/Post 16 students headed off to Morocco during the summer break to tackle the Atlas mountains and take in the Moroccan atmosphere. Although just a short flight away, Morocco seems like a world apart from life in the UK. This expedition to North Africa offered a chance to explore the cultural and geographical diversity of Morocco from watching the snake charmers in the Medina square to exploring the stalls in the labyrinth of the market in Marrakech which really leaves up to its mystical reputation. Combined with a four day trek through the mountains to experience the Berber culture of the High Atlas mountains the trip was a once in a lifetime experience and one that the students would remember for a long time.

On arrival in Marrakech the group spent the morning exploring the hidden sides of the town, the beautiful gardens and the famous Djemaa El Fna square. Marrakech is so rich with heritage that students felt they had been transported to another era. The square is the stage for long-established rituals in which shifting circles of onlookers gather round groups of acrobats, drummers, pipe musicians, dancers, storytellers and comedians. Later that day the group met with their guide, mule-drivers and cook at Imllil to begin their trek heading towards Assagou, their camp site for the night.

The following day saw the group trek uphill through pines to Tamaterter Pass where they were met with fantastic panoramic views of the Atlas mountains. Their trek continued downhill to Imnane Valley for a typical Moroccan lunch before continuing along the river to their next camp at Imsker. A good night's rest was welcomed by the group as they thought about the next day's long journey. El Bour Pass beckoned the next morning with a trek downhill to Omi Oughlad climbing progressively through junipers and oaks to Techt. Finally the last lap for the day they continued to the Azadene valley finishing by the river at their camp for the night at Tizaine.



Students realised you needed a certain degree of fitness to withstand the rugged terrain and they had still yet to conquer the peak of Toubal, the highest peak in North Africa and their ultimate goal. The next two days the group continued through zigzag paths spotting the remote Berber villages in the distance and taking in the breathtaking views of the region.

Tired but exhilarated from their journey they looked forward to meeting the vehicles that would take them to their last port of call – Essaouira. This coastal town, a deep contrast to the mountain terrain, was a wonderful vibrant and colourful place and enormous fun to explore! The students explored the old ramparts, walked down the narrow streets to see whitewashed and blue-shuttered houses and of course visit the amazing souks where their bartering skills were put to the test. An overnight stay in a hotel seemed heavenly before they headed back on their return flight to London.

Overall, this trip has a great mixture of adventure and culture combined with the stunning scenery Morocco has to offer. A truly wonderful experience! Mr Sardar is already organising next year's trekking trip through Poland's Tatra Mountains.

*At the market making friends with some lizards!*



*Trekking through the junipers and oaks high in the mountains*

## Message from the Principal

It's certainly been a very busy term with a real 'buzz' in our Academy. Most exciting for students is the announcement that we shall be staging 'Grease' in February. This will show off the exceptional talent of our students in our superb refurbished hall. The Academy is beginning to feel 'complete' at last, as the building work moves towards conclusion.

At the start of October the gymnasiums were handed back to us; a great relief for PE Staff who have had to manage for over 12 months without good on-site facilities. By the time we finish next term we should take possession of our brand new Performing Arts and SEN block. At last this will mean that the transformation from CTC to Academy is accomplished.

Marcus C J Barker

## A Guide to Personal Economics

Another Young Enterprise programme focussing on Personal Economics delivered to Year 11 students also took place this term as part of the statutory Citizenship/Work-Related Learning curriculum. The programme aims to encourage students to appreciate their current and future role in society and the economy as consumers, employees, employers, tax payers, investors and borrowers – a very apt topic considering the present global financial crisis.

To begin their journey through the world of finance the students created their own 'Life Map' to consider their personal aspirations and goals for the future. They were introduced to the world of budgeting, banking, financial planning and employment enjoying a hands-on practical understanding of personal finance, credit and debt, savings and budgeting. They explored the recruitment and job interview process by completing a mock application form and, through role-play, how to conduct themselves at an interview. Other activities included 'Spending Dilemma', a game with the purpose of deciding if given characters could afford to purchase certain items. Working together in groups, the students considered if the item was a 'need' or a 'want' and looked at the character's bank statement and type of income to determine how it could be paid for.

This led to the students thinking about consumer rights, credit and debt and the national economy involving a number of games to enhance their economics' understanding. The students ended the session with the 'Lifemap Living' board game where they explored a wide range of employment opportunities through case study characters. Each player followed their character's life map path with the objective of being the first player to reach retirement having collected six ambition disks listed.

This was such a worthwhile event, the activities were fun and the numeracy contribution was exceptional with the students learning the real meaning of getting into debt through lending, budgeting, saving and investment. We had some excellent feedback from the business volunteers from Young Enterprise who said how impressed they were with the attitude of our students. They said they were both ambitious, yet realistic and had a clear direction and goal in mind. Without question the students rated getting good qualifications as their main focus at the moment.



*Students play the 'Lifemap Living' game*

## Thames Festival

Three of our Year 10 students were privileged to be a part of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Thames Festival which took place on the 13 and 14 September. Michael Prentice, Trim Sejdai and Jack Wykes-Anderson joined Mr Miller to play with the Paraiso School of Samba. There was plenty of feathers, glamour and even a few celebs! Well done to the boys, they played really well and earned the respect of Europe's best baterial!



Thames Festival is a two-day spectacular, free celebration of London and its river; an exciting mix of arts, spectacle and entertainment, all focused around the River Thames. The Festival takes place right in the heart of London, between Westminster Bridge and Tower Bridge, on the river banks and on the adjacent riverside walkways and public open spaces. The Festival commissions new work, and transforms unusual spaces on and around the River Thames with a mixture of street arts, carnival, pyrotechnics, illuminations, art installations, river events, massed choirs, circus and music.

The finale is a spectacular illuminated Night Carnival on the streets of the capital, started by London's Mayor, Boris Johnson. A vivid mix of masquerade, dance, music, illuminated sculptures and fantastic costumes, the Night Carnival winds along the north and south banks of the Thames. This is followed by a spectacular fireworks display fired from the centre of the river itself.

*Jack, Trim, Mr Miller and Michael at the Festival*

## Your School, Your Business

Our new Year 7 students recently enjoyed a 'Your School, Your Business' event run by volunteers from the Young Enterprise organisation. Through fun, network-generating exercises, our new young people were able to feel more at ease with the transition to life at a 'big school', gaining valuable social skills along the way. The aim of the 'Your School' programme is through hands-on, interactive games and creative problem-solving activities, students learn that their school is a business, helping them develop self-confidence, networking skills and enterprise capabilities.

The outlook of being the 'new kids', meeting lots of new people and understanding different expectations can leave students isolated and nervous at the prospect of starting secondary education. For the last six years they have felt comfortable in their smaller primary school, knowing their teachers and at ease in their surroundings. 'Your School' offers students the opportunity to overcome their fears, make new friends and understand more fully the importance of their continuing education. Central to the seminar are the skills that the students will need to be successful in their new school, such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving.

The Young Enterprise volunteers compared our school to a business, showing students that the work in the school contributes to its primary business objective: the delivery of quality education. Students interacted with academy staff in order to develop an appreciation of different roles within a business to develop a sense of their own belonging and responsibility and encouraging them to become good corporate citizens.

Following a personal development plan the students explored the business of learning through such activities as a human treasure hunt, creating their own school organisational chart and working as a team to produce a logo and a slogan for an imaginary project. The final activity allowed the students to evaluate the skills they had utilised during the activities as a comparison to the skills audit they had prepared about themselves at the beginning of the event.

All the activities were delivered by fully-trained business volunteers who were very impressed with their enthusiasm and were surprised by their general maturity. The students had an enjoyable day working with each other thus enabling them to build upon their confidence and self-esteem.



*Students take some tips from their SPM*

## Who was Jack The Ripper?

Year 11 GCSE History students were whisked back in time to the gloomy, depressing streets of late-Victorian London when they visited the East Docklands Museum to view the Jack the Ripper exhibition and find out about his crimes and the legacy of the East End for their coursework.

This is the first ever exhibition allowing the public to explore the Jack the Ripper murders by returning to the scenes of London's most infamous crimes and displaying the evidence gathered at that time. From police files and photographs to letters from the public and supposed Ripper himself, students could examine, for the first time, surviving documents and artefacts from the investigation and follow the crimes as they unfolded.

Stepping back in time to the labyrinth of replica late-Victorian Whitechapel, the students uncovered the human stories behind the sensational reports and explored the lives of the victims, witnesses, suspects and police, and the world they lived in. The replica roads and buildings helped to set the scene and atmosphere of this era.

Although no one knows who he was, Jack the Ripper is probably the capital's most infamous son, his story passing into legend, shaping the way London and the East End are imagined. Full of objects attesting to the never-ending public appetite for this story, the exhibition will ask why the tale of the Whitechapel murders continues to resonate 120 years on and why this one unknown figure has become so iconic, and so much a part of London.

The students gathered much information for their coursework and no doubt have their own ideas of who 'Jack' really was! An enjoyable and fascinating trip that really brought History alive.



*Students listen to the policeman as he relates his involvement in the Jack the Ripper case*