



The Theatre of Dreams

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On February 25th a handful of hardworking Year 8 students found themselves walking down Sir Matt Busby Way to the magnificent Old Trafford Football Ground in Manchester to see the famous Manchester United take on FC Midtjylland in the Europa League. They had earned their tickets due to their excellent behaviour and efforts in the Academy.

After taking up their prime seats in the East Stand the pupils and accompanying staff saw United start poorly, conceding a goal and missing a penalty, but then go on to mesmerise supporters with their best football of the season so far. They finally won 5-1 with Memphis Depay being their star player and 18 year old Marcus Rashford becoming an overnight local hero after scoring two goals on his first team debut.

With the St. Alban's team (and especially Bashar Ali and Mr. Malkin) well satisfied with the result there was time for sightseeing and photographs around the ground before catching the tram back to the mini bus.

Although the traffic home on the M6 was terrible all the pupils and staff enjoyed the event immensely - night time football at the Theatre of Dreams is a special experience!



Principal's message

For Christians, Easter is a festival of hope in the future, of new life and rebirth. It's no surprise that it takes place as Spring begins and the weather finally begins to get warmer! Coming just after halfway through the school year, the holiday also gives us the opportunity to gather our strength as we prepare for examinations and assessments that will have a very real impact on the futures of our students, especially those in years eleven, twelve and thirteen. They will be revising hard over the holiday, and we wish them the very best in all their efforts. Finally, it remains for me to thank you all for your support over the last term and to wish you a happy and restful holiday.



Students keep freedom fighter sane until release



St Alban's Academy students have been supporting a US prisoner who was wrongly convicted for 43 years. Students joined the Amnesty International campaign after hearing about the case from their History teachers. Amnesty International is an organisation that helps campaign on behalf of people who have been wrongly imprisoned, just like the Angola 3. The Amnesty campaign centered on writing letters to Albert Woodfox, so before Christmas, Year 7 wrote postcards to him to make him feel less confined and destitute.

Woodfox endured 43 years of solitary confinement due to an old conviction, which had been overturned three times. He was accused of the murder of a prison guard along with two others. Solitary confinement means that he has had to remain in his cell for 23 hours a day, with one hour of sunlight. Woodfox was a former member of the Black Panthers, which was group involved in the civil rights movements, they were fighting against racism in the 1950s in America where racism was an everyday experience for black Americans. Our efforts helped support a man who fought against this. Woodfox said "But to receive letters or hear that people have gathered to demand freedom is what keeps me sane."

How about the law?

Jasmin Zarin is weighing up her options about what, where and how to study. In her first year in sixth form Jasmin has a mentor from the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) and has visited their offices at The Cube. Jasmin's interest in a legal career was sparked after winning a mini pupillage at a local barristers' chambers. She says: 'I am fascinated by the idea of justice, especially social justice for vulnerable people. Everyone deserves access to the law and to its protection, regardless of who they are and from a professional point of view I think everyone wants to make a difference in the work they carry out.'



'I am really excited about completing my pupillage and exploring further the career options connected with studying law, either as a barrister or a solicitor. To win the pupillage place I had to ask a question of the head of the chambers during a student visit, and my question was: 'Is it ethical to discredit a truthful witness in order to save a probably guilty client?' This caused a lively discussion amongst both the students and lawyers present.' Jasmin is studying English Literature, History, RE and Sociology. She adds: 'I am hoping to go on to university next year although I don't think I will necessarily study law itself, I will probably convert my degree at a later date.'

Forced Marriage Conference



Ark St Alban's Academy in partnership with the West Midlands police and many other partners hosted a conference against Forced Marriage on Saturday 19th March 2016. Government guideline state 'A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it... In the cases of some vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced.' The conference brought together young people, community members, activists and faith leaders committed to the rights and empowerment of people to make their own choices. The conference provoked discussion, debate and most important galvanised support in furthering local and national efforts to end the practice of forced marriage. Our sixth formers had a leading role to present, perform and promote key messages against Forced Marriage.

BMW - The Dragon's Den

Sixth formers who have been working with BMW apprentices on the 'Business in the Classroom' project gave their final presentations to staff at Hams Hall in December, after weeks of research, supported by apprentices from the company.

Students were given a project brief to design an iGarage to accommodate two cars in the BMW range. The garage also had to have the capacity to charge the vehicles.

BMW staff were impressed by the amount of research undertaken and the quality of presentations.

Students have learned a lot about the dynamics of working in teams, communicating with professionals and presentation skills, which we are sure they will develop further on their journey up the mountain to university.



Planning for graduate careers



Year 13 students worked with Rikem Training Consultancy recently to prepare them for the rigours of a graduate assessment centre.

Academic excellence, whilst important, is not the only thing graduate employers are looking for. Students need to be armed with employability skills such as the ability to make presentations with confidence and work well in teams.

Rikem put Year 13 students through their paces with a competency based assessment. In addition to group activities students were interviewed and presented their ideas for a specific job.

All students received written feedback after the event to help them analyse and improve their performance ready for those real opportunities, not so very far away.



Working with Shakespeare

After a rigorous application process ten Year 10 students were selected to take part in a work experience pilot scheme in October.

Our lucky students spent 3 days with the Royal Shakespeare Company and students from Hull and Warwickshire, finding out just how much goes into producing plays and the enormous amount of back stage work necessary to support productions.

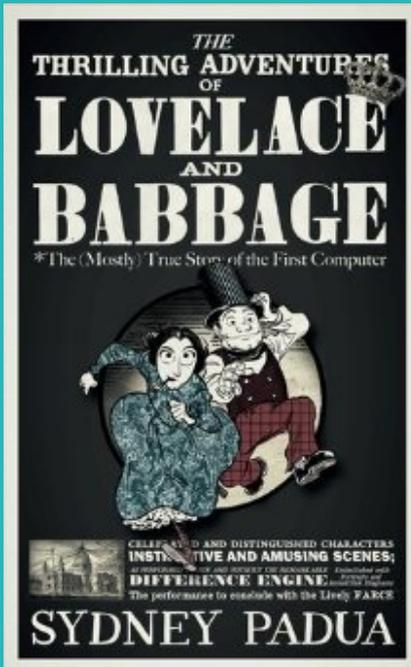
Students spent time in the lighting department, front of house, marketing, costume design and more, finishing up with a performance of Henry V.

They worked hard but thoroughly enjoyed their time in Stratford.



Recommended read

The Thrilling Adventures of Lovelace and Babbage: The (Mostly) True Story of the First Computer - by Sydney Padua.



This is a gargantuan and ground breaking graphic book about the pioneers of computing Charles Babbage and Ada Lovelace. Or should that be Ada Lovelace and Charles Babbage, because whilst the latter is well known as the father of computing science, history has somewhat neglected her role; hard to sum up, but in essence she explained how computers worked. Be warned though; it might be a graphic book but it doesn't take the easy route of simplifying things; there are footnotes and asides aplenty about Victorian society. Definitely educational, mostly entertaining and occasionally a little bit infuriating.

Dates for your diary

25/03/2016 - 08/04/2016 - Easter Holidays

11/04/2016 - Inset Day

21/04/2016 - Progress Day

Applications for Sixth Form places are now being accepted for 2016/2017, see website for application forms.

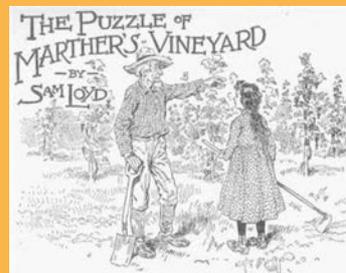
Message to Parents

We are trying to make sure that all our medical records are up to date. If your child has a medical condition such as diabetes, asthma or an allergy could you please get a letter from your doctor, or get the doctor to email the school, telling us what is wrong with your child and what treatment or medication they need. Please make sure that the letter is addressed to Mrs M.M. Bonham. (Thank you to parents who have already done this.)

Maths puzzle

What are the maximum number of grape vines that can be planted, not closer than nine feet apart, in a square plot containing one-sixteenth of an acre?

(Note: each side of this square plot would be 52 feet 2 inches)



Chaplain's message

I believe that prayer is the very soul and essence of religion and, therefore, prayer is the very core of the life of a person, for no one can live without prayer.

Mahatma Gandhi

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