

# newsletter

October 2010 | Issue 19

## Success once again!

The new school year got off to a flying start with all of us buoyed up by an excellent set of GCSE and A Level results.

I would like to start by congratulating the record number of girls who were awarded Sixth Form Scholarships, after performing particularly well in their GCSEs: well done to Shahad Atrah, Bhavna Bhalla, Ayman Dhanji, Tove Hubbard, Helena Lyn, Karishma Kanabar, Charlotte Pain, Karina Patel, Malika Patel, Shalinee Patel, Rajuel Sarna and Anika Shah.

The Sixth Form at Northwood College offers enormous scope for academic endeavour but it also offers the girls a myriad of opportunities for showing leadership, gaining life skills and taking on challenges that will help them grow as people. It is remarkable what our girls manage to achieve over the course of their last two years at Northwood College and I am always extremely proud of the confident, articulate and well-grounded young women we send off to university or to pursue a gap year.

Of last year's Year 13, I am delighted to report that the great majority are once again going on to their first choice university. We have 24 girls reading Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Biomedical Sciences, including three pupils

studying Physiotherapy, and a further three reading Biology, Biology with Psychology and Zoology and last year's Head Girl, Nicole Gillett, reading Astrophysics. Almost 90% of these girls will be attending Russell Group universities with one pupil studying in Japan. Of the others we have girls reading diverse subjects, such as English, Archaeology, Professional Music Performance, Computer Science, Law, Economics, Philosophy, Accounting & Finance, Civil Engineering & Management, History & Politics to name but a few. We wish them every success.

A handful will be back for retakes. In all cases they have already achieved creditable results – but in today's competitive environment, they have decided to try again for even better grades. They will need to demonstrate persistence and resilience – two dispositions that will be familiar to all our girls from their Thinking Skills work and that will help them achieve their final goals.

The wonderful thing about the Northwood College community is that it contains girls with such a great variety of skills and talents. Although I am thrilled when a girl gets all A\*s or As, I am proud of all our girls, whether their exam passes

are at A\* or C. We pride ourselves on not being a narrowly selective school, based only on academic ability. We value a host of skills, qualities and attributes and everyone's achievement is valued and appreciated. What matters is how hard a girl has tried. As long as she has truly done her best, she has done everything I could ever ask of her.

**Jacquelyn Pain**  
Head Mistress



## GCSE and A Level Highlights

44% of all A level passes were at either A\* or A and a spectacular 78% were A\* to B. Six girls achieved 4 A\* or A grades: Priya Abrol, Shreya Sheth (who both achieved 3 A\* grades), Sruti Dupaguntla, Tanya Patel, Shailee Sheth and Ravina Tanna. Eleven other girls achieved 3 A\* or A grades: Dipali Amin, Sara Asaria, Rakhee Budhdeo, Rulan Chatrath, Reshma Dhamecha, Alexa Fitzpatrick, Nicole Gillett, Helena Lewczynska, Sheenal Patel, Emily Rome and Nikita Samani. A further thirteen girls achieved 2 A\* or A grades.

GCSE results were extremely pleasing. 36% of all GCSEs were at A\* and 70% at A\* or A grade. 93% of all results were A\* to B. There were many outstanding individual performances. More than half of the girls achieved eight or more A\* or A grades. Six girls achieved 10 A\* grades and one girl managed an outstanding eleven A\* grades. Congratulations to all girls on their achievements – and keep up the good work; we expect great things from this year group in two years' time!

# Focus On - The Centenary Library

Housed in the school's original vaulted gymnasium, the Centenary Library at Northwood College aims to support all academic, recreational and pastoral aspects of school life and the end of the summer is a perfect time to look back over a typical year. Not that any year, or indeed any day, is ever 'typical' as one of the joys of working in a school library is that you never know what each day will bring.

Many days start around 8am as girls rush in to print their homework, scan the newspapers or borrow or return books before registration. The start of period one then brings girls in for study. The Library has a separate area set aside for Sixth Form girls, which is well used by girls wanting a quiet environment and wishing to utilise the extensive resources on offer. We also have groups of GCSE girls who are timetabled in the Library for study periods – a perfect place for them to concentrate on coursework and increase their independent learning skills. Teachers also bring classes over to search for resources, look at the school Archive materials held in the Library, or for quiet reading. As the school library is open all day, groups of girls can appear at any moment, needing help with research or suggestions for fiction books. Break and lunchtimes are very busy and we are helped out by a team of Sixth Form prefects who are trained in the use of the networked library system and are able to issue and return books, as well as cope with

the adoration of the younger girls who sometimes come over just to talk to them! They also help with the less exciting jobs, such as re-shelving the piles of books which are returned each day.

As well as the day to day work of the Library, the promotion of reading for pleasure is an essential part of the Library's role. The Library runs three vibrant book groups - a Lower School Book Club for girls in Years 7-9, an Upper School Book Club for girls in Years 10 and 11 and a Staff Book Group (for any age!). During the summer term the pupil groups shadow the Carnegie Award. We have our own Carnegie web page where the girls post their reviews of the shortlisted books and also host a discussion day where all the titles are discussed in detail. This year the reading groups from St Helen's, Ruislip High and The John Lyon School joined us for a very lively debate. The Lower School Book Club also chose their favourite book of the year to win our own internal Lucky Award.

As part of the enrichment programme run through the Library, we organise a series of author visits each year – these are a vital part of promoting reading and creative writing. This year we were visited by two extremely successful and engaging authors. In February, all the girls in Lower School saw Marcus Sedgwick, just before he was nominated for the Carnegie Award. Then in March, girls in Years 8 and 9 saw Anne Cassidy who spoke to them specifically about the craft of writing crime novels.

In addition to the very popular author visits, the Library celebrates various national initiatives throughout the year. Each September we take part in the Booked Up scheme, where each girl in Year 7 is able to choose a free fiction book. The Library Prefects help out with a special assembly to help the Year 7 girls make their choice of title. In October, we run the annual House Book Quiz to tie in with National Children's Book Week. This year the shield



Anne Cassidy



Marcus Sedgwick



The Lower School Book Club



The House Book Quiz

was won by Briary – meaning that Buchan is the only House never to have won this event. Being a proud Buchan member, this pains me more than words can say.

October also brings National Poetry Day, which is celebrated across the school with poetry springing up in unexpected places! Teachers start each lesson with a poem of their choice and visitors to the Library on that day are usually welcomed with a limerick or two.

World Book Day in March is a highlight in the library calendar. As well as the visit from Anne Cassidy this year, all girls in the school received a £1 book token and the Library gave away free chocolate to anyone who borrowed a book on that day. We also ran a World Book Day Quiz, which was open to individual girls rather than House teams. This year as always we had a lot of fun and the quiz was won by Jenny Spencer in 7G (now in 8G).

The majority of the Northwood College Archive is housed within the library and the materials give a fascinating insight into the history of our school. I am lucky to have the excuse to look through the collection in my role as school Archivist, both to compile the weekly 'On this day in history' column for the Bulletin, and also to be able to promote the wonderful heritage of the school to the girls. Each year on January 25th we enjoy cake and activities

to celebrate the school's birthday, this year producing a special assembly for the girls to learn about each of the 10 Head Mistresses of Northwood College. Through assisting the Year 13 girls in the production of their Leaver's Yearbook each summer, I am able to ensure that the details of our current girls will be a part of the Archive well into the future.

In addition to all the exciting events throughout the year and the day-to-day work assisting girls with book choices and research skills, obviously a lot goes on behind the scenes to ensure that the Library offers all the resources it should. New books are constantly purchased, then classified and catalogued on to the library system. Reading lists are checked and updated. Existing stock is constantly monitored to check that information is correct and up to date. Displays are continually changed to promote different areas of stock. Leaflets and bookmarks are produced to assist the girls with their research. Teaching plans are checked to ensure that books are available before work is given to the girls. The list is endless, but that is why being a librarian is never boring – there is always something to do!

From time to time I get asked: "do you need any qualifications to be a librarian?" Yes! Librarianship is a graduate profession. Many school librarians –

like myself – are also Chartered, which means that we have submitted evidence of ongoing professional development and proof that we are enhancing the role of the profession. Librarians have a terrible image problem, and are often seen as dusty, fusty custodians of rooms full of books. My role here engages me in all aspects of school life and the school library is simply too busy for any dust to settle! It is a strange situation in England that sees libraries as statutory in prisons, but not in schools. A good school library really is the beating heart of a school and pupils at schools without libraries are being deprived of a vital part of their education and growth. The Centenary Library at Northwood College provides a safe, welcoming environment for the girls, whether the reason for their visit is academic, recreational, or even social – it is a tragedy that not every school offers such a place. As to why libraries play such a vital role in supporting education, I will end with the words of Pat Gibson, the recently crowned Mastermind Champion of Champions. When asked how he had amassed such a vast array of knowledge, he replied simply "I read".

**Miss Min Edmonds**  
College Librarian & Archivist

## Meet the Registrar

I have been the Registrar at Northwood College for 10 years now and still enjoy it as much as I did when I first started. The role is a busy one and no term is the same, which helps keep my job interesting and stimulating.

As Registrar, I deal with all aspects of the admissions process, from the first call from prospective parents enquiring about the school, to the Welcome Events when the new girls come to Northwood College to meet their new classes. Together with the Leadership Group, I organise the entrance tests for each entry point to the school at

Nursery, Reception, Year 3, Year 7 and Year 12. As Northwood College is oversubscribed this is by no means an easy task! Every girl who applies is invited to an assessment and will take part in a group activity. This way every girl has a chance to shine! At Northwood College we are not only looking for girls who will be challenged by the academic, but will also enjoy the vast array of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities on offer. We want every girl to flourish.

As a mother I know only too well how stressful it is applying to schools and I use my experience to make it as painless as possible for the girls, as well as their parents. In this way my role is very satisfying and I love seeing the girls, who have perhaps been very nervous when they came for their assessments, beaming with happiness after meeting their new classmates and teachers at one of our Welcome Events. The Northwood College

environment and its ethos are something I'm proud to be part of and it helps to make my job all the more fulfilling. I work with a wonderful team and no day is ever the same.

After school my two daughters keep me very busy, but when I do have time to myself, I love to read, socialise with friends and go to the cinema.

**Mrs Jemma Davidson**



# Getting ready for the move to Year 7!

*I can't wait for Year 7. There are lots of trips and new subjects to get my teeth into.*  
Rebecca Hoare 6T (now 7CT)

Excited, nervous, happy and sad may be some of the emotions that are felt at the start of a new academic year, as expressed in this simple poem:

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Something has come to an end,  
Time is passing by,  
Another thing's just starting up  
We say 'Hello, Goodbye'

Feelings pulling every way,  
Saying 'Stay and Go',  
Some things change, some stay the same,  
We say 'Goodbye, Hello'.

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This is more the case for those girls who have completed their time in Junior School and are now moving to Senior School. Although we are one through school with girls aged from three to 18 we are aware that the move from Year 6 to Year 7 can be not only exciting but also a little daunting. Although much will remain the same, there are also many changes.

The College has in place a carefully structured and planned programme to facilitate a smooth transfer. Amongst other activities Year 6 pupils attend several assemblies with girls in Years 7, 8 and 9 and they also have their own assembly in the Senior Hall, led by the Head of Year 7. As well as opportunities to meet with and talk to older girls, they write a letter in the Summer term to me.

In this letter they describe all that they are looking forward to, as well as expressing any worries or concerns that they may have. These issues can then be addressed and resolved before the start of the academic year.

Girls will be excited and happy at the prospect of all that is on offer in Senior School, but may also be nervous and sad at leaving behind the familiarity of Junior School.

Two of our girls have written about their thoughts and feelings as they embark on the next stage of their educational journey.

**Mrs Janet Johnson**  
Head Mistress of the Junior School

*I know that in Senior School, I will become more independent and organised.*  
Zahra Tayeb 6T (now 7CT)

*It will be fun to wear the Senior School uniform.*  
Dayna Tohidi 6M (now 7Q)

Raft building at the Hillingdon Outdoor Activity Centre, part of the Year 7 Induction Programme.





There have been several events which have made me more confident about moving up to Year 7. Firstly, we had a tour of Senior School and went round the different classrooms that we would be using. This, in my opinion, was very useful.

Secondly, we had two assemblies which helped me get used to the assemblies in Year 7 and where we would have to sit. The Senior School assemblies are slightly different from ours.

Finally, we have had a Welcome Evening where, with our parents, we could meet our new Form Tutors. We also met the new pupils in our form and started to get to know them.

My main worries about Senior School were that I could have a strict Form Tutor and that I might not get to see my friends, but now we have had these events, I'm not worried any more. My new teacher is extremely friendly. As for breaking up with my friends, the Year 9s have told us about the Year 9 Buddy System: this is where the Year 9s help us with all our problems. After they told us about this, I felt better and more confident about moving up to Year 7. I am looking forward to moving into Senior School!

Sahar Saifuddin (7F)

*I am very excited about the trips in Year 7 especially the trips to H.O.A.C. and Dorset. I am looking forward to taking Food Technology and Textiles as separate subjects.*

Mala Pandit 6M (now 7CT)

*I'm looking forward to so many things in Year 7: meeting my new teachers; being allowed to eat sandwiches; being allowed to wear my hair loose; seeing all my Junior School friends, as well as making new friends.*

Missey Corrigan 6T (now 7Q)

*I can't wait for Senior School; I feel like I'm going to explode because I am so excited!*

Annabel Davey 6T (now 7F)

*I am excited about meeting new people in Senior School and it would be good to be given more responsibilities.*

Riya Bhundia 6M (now 7Q)

*I am looking forward to all the clubs I will be able to join.*

Shereen Chauhan 6M (now 7F)

*I am really looking forward to Senior School as I know all the teachers will be kind and understand us if we are worried.*

Avreen Chadra 6T (now 7Q)

*I feel like Year 6 has gone so quickly. Although I will miss Junior School, I am ready and prepared for the big jump to Senior School and the challenges it will bring.*

Shanayah Dadral 6T (now 7CT)



There have been many events to help us with the transition to Year 7. At the beginning of Year 6 we had a tour of Senior School with our parents to help us get to know all the different buildings we would use in Year 7. The Welcome Evening was an opportunity to meet our teachers and our new classmates. We were able to order our own personalised tracksuits and sweatshirts as well. We have attended two Senior School assemblies which were useful experiences as we will feel at home when we have assemblies in Year 7. We had our

Induction Day on 3rd September, when we spent the morning with our form teacher followed by a thinking activity with Mrs Simister in the afternoon. Then just before half term we will go on a residential trip to Osmington Bay which I am really excited about!

Mala Pandit (7CT)

*I can't wait to be able to use the tuck shop and also the new recipes we will learn in Food Technology.*

Parthivi Gambhir 6M (now 7Q)



# Have you got what it takes to learn?

One of the most important things we can teach young people is how to become truly independent learners. It sounds so obvious and so simple, but this commonly-used phrase represents a diverse and challenging set of skills and intellectual qualities.

For us, it means that we want our girls to leave Northwood College equipped with a range of practical strategies that they have discovered will help them personally when it comes to assessing sources, gathering information and making sense of their findings. Rote-learning may pass exams, but it is of very little help to anyone in the longer term. To thrive at university and in the adult world, it will be the ability and confidence of our girls to think deeply, to research effectively and to develop a rigorous understanding of whatever it is that they need to learn that will make them stand out from the crowd.

Underpinning this must be a genuine curiosity and thirst for discovery. Simply telling students what to learn and when to learn it is a trap into which schools easily fall. Instead, at Northwood College, we are seeking new ways of providing open-ended opportunities for our girls to develop tenacity in following up areas of interest and to communicate the results to others with passion and eloquence.

## T. E. D.

One particularly exciting new initiative that was launched last year was T.E.D. (Think - Explore - Discover). Throughout the Junior School, each class has been given special T.E.D. books and teachers have begun to set occasional homework activities that deliberately challenge the girls to:

- develop transferable skills (eg thinking skills such as questioning, creative thinking and making decisions; learning skills such as carrying out research, prioritising and summarising; communication skills in terms of presenting findings using a variety of formats);
- build habits such as initiative, independence and persistence;
- become immersed in something they find really interesting and which allows for an individual approach.

Though still in its infancy, the first phase of this initiative has been tremendously positive. What has struck us is the very evident progress that individual girls have made, their willingness to reflect and to learn from each other and their ingenuity in developing their own lines of thought. It has been lovely to see them learning to overcome their (entirely natural!) initial anxiety at being confronted with a task of this nature and to learn to enjoy thinking through a range of options before selecting a response of their own that they will find interesting to explore.

"I liked it because we got messy painting and sticking things in."  
Anu Olatidoye, Year 2

"I loved it because we got to do projects about it and became cleverer."  
Fatima Yaqoob, Year 2

## Looking ahead

T.E.D. has proved such a success that we are looking forward to extending our girls' skills still further with special Q.E.D. projects in Year 7. Several other fascinating options are being developed further up the school, including the Extended Project Qualification (described as "enormously valuable preparation for university" by Geoff Parks, Director of Admissions at Cambridge) and YASS (the Open University scheme to enable academically gifted Sixth Form students to study a wide range of undergraduate modules at first-year level alongside their AS and A Levels). Watch this space for more details!

C. J. Simister  
Director, Cognitive Development Programme

"I look forward to doing new things and finding out about them".  
Layla Meghjee, Year 2

"For T.E.D. we are given big topics, but good ones - like 'Icebergs' and 'Words' and my favourite was the 'Stars' one. I like this because with this sort of activity, you have more to write about and more opinions to say than if you were told exactly what to do."  
Priyanka Pandya, Year 6 (work from Year 5)



Saanya Verma (work from Year 1, now in Year 2)



"It lets your mind work as it wants to - normally the teacher tells you what to do, but with T.E.D. you can think freely."

Zahra Haq, Year 5 (work from Year 4)

"I liked it because we got messy painting and sticking things in."  
Anu Olatidoye, Year 2

### A Year 5 Example

For this Year 5 activity, the girls were given a picture, 'Dancing at the Moulin de la Galette' by Renoir, and were invited to respond to it in any way they wished. The results were fascinating – revealing increasingly confident creativity and independence of thought.

Sally West chose to select four of the people in the picture and delve into their characters, producing imaginary scripts for each one. She gave us an intriguing insight into what each person might have been thinking at the moment at which they were captured in paint forever.

**What made you think of this idea?**  
Because I'm not very arty, I thought I would turn art into my favourite subject which is English. First I thought I should do their personalities but then I was thinking, I wonder why they are doing what they're doing? That was how I got this idea.

**What's the significance of 24?**  
It's basically that I wanted a quick snappy headline. I thought of 24 because it's basically what's happening in the last 24 hours. It could have been anything – it could have been 13 but I thought 24 sounded a bit better.

**What do you think of T.E.D. homework?**  
It depends on the topic. I really enjoyed this one because you could think about what you were going to write at any time: in the queue at

breakfast club, for example, I was thinking about what to write in the speech bubbles. You didn't have to do it all in one block – you could take your time over it.

Here we were just given a picture. There was no guidance – you could think of whatever you wanted. When we looked at everyone else's books, there was such a variety of ideas and work and I found that really interesting. I'd never have thought of doing some of the things they did.

Sally West (work from Year 5, now in Year 6)



"Sometimes you're given just one or two words and you can be creative about how you think about what you're going to do, how you plan it and how you present it."  
Jemma Tait, Year 5

"There's no right and wrong in T.E.D. It's like you're escaping into this magical world where it's all your choice. You can have lots of ideas and use them in different ways."  
Rhia Versani, Year 5

# Drama at Northwood College

As is now well-established, the summer term saw not one, but two productions at Northwood College, the Junior School production of 'The Factory Children' and the Lower School production of 'The Willow Pattern.'

There are numerous opportunities for girls to take part in Drama at Northwood College and lessons from Year 3 upwards are taught as a discrete subject on the curriculum and by Drama specialists. In the Senior School it is taught throughout Year 7 - 9 and is a popular subject at GCSE, AS and A Level. From lunchtime Drama clubs to House Plays, the Lower School production and the Main School production, there is something for everyone. As well as performing, girls can learn about backstage

and design skills including Lighting, Stage Management, Costume, Make-Up and Sound to name but a few. Lessons for all girls from the Juniors upwards take place in our Performing Arts Centre, where we have a number of rehearsal spaces, and a large fully-equipped Drama Studio with sprung dance floor, full lighting rig and blackout facilities and mirrors along one wall. Drama is obviously wonderful for developing the girls' confidence, ability to work in a team and

communication skills, but we also have a number of past pupils who have gone on to become professional actresses. Whatever their long-term interests the benefits of being involved in full-scale productions like 'The Factory Children' and 'The Willow Pattern' are evident to all who saw them.

**Miss Celeste McCoy**  
Head of Drama

## The Year 6 Production: 'The Factory Children'

As the performance dates for 'The Factory Children', drew closer and closer, there was a mounting sense of excitement among the Year 6 girls. As they move up through the Junior School at Northwood College, all the girls look forward to their chance to shine in the production and every year, these shows are the long-awaited culmination of Drama and Music in the Junior School.

For months, every Tuesday after school, girls had been rehearsing enthusiastically. Miss Bennett-Goodman, the Musical Director, had been helping them perfect their songs, going so far as to hand out such unconventional percussion 'instruments' as hammers and metal bars, all in the pursuit of recreating realistic Victorian factory machinery sounds! Miss Silverstone, the Director, had been inspiring the girls to transform themselves into Victorian characters: while some girls gradually became oppressed children, slaving away in factories, others took on the roles of the supercilious children of wealthy factory owners. The serious, eloquent speeches of Social Reformers contrasted with the shenanigans of pick-pocketing street urchins and the humorous, often ironic, speeches of the 'Social Consciences'. Mrs Talbot and I, the girls' form teachers, also underwent a transformation, as we became the Stage

Managers, ushering girls on and off of the stage, prompting and handing out machine tabards, top hats, walking sticks and all manner of other props.

At the Dress Rehearsal, the transformations became complete, with the girls delighting in the array of costumes, and wigs of course! A team of Teaching Assistants had spared no effort in finding the perfect costumes. Teachers and parents with artistic flair had ensured that "The Make-up Room", otherwise known as the Junior Art Room, was an oasis of calm, despite having to apply make-up to 40 young girls in what must have seemed an all-too-short hour prior to the performances. That was no mean feat!

The evening of the first performance arrived. Mrs Johnson wished the girls good luck and the girls went to take their positions backstage. Staff and Senior School pupils prepared to operate the sound



Poor and Rich Children

equipment and lighting. Below the stage, in "The Green Room", staff were ready to help girls with their costume changes during the show. Finally, the girls (and staff!) found themselves backstage, awaiting the opening of the curtain with nervous anticipation. However, nerves quickly dissipated as the girls strode, sidled, swaggered, danced and skipped on to the stage to perform to an appreciative audience full of proud parents! The second, and final, performance came around all too soon and before long the girls found themselves singing a final encore. It had been a memorable experience for girls, parents and staff alike.

**Ms Julie Maloney**  
Deputy Head Mistress Junior School



Philanthropists and Overseers

Lucky's Gang

## The Willow Pattern – July 2010

Never one to forego a challenge, I was excited at the prospect of mounting a production of 'The Willow Pattern' by Judith Johnson. First performed at the National Theatre as part of their Connections Series of plays for young people, I knew the play was well written and provided a diverse range of opportunities for performance.

Early on in auditions, the majority of girls were all too keen to try out their Chinese accents. Whilst many were strong I began to get a little anxious as to how we were going to ensure consistency, projection, clarity and appropriate pace and intonation whilst maintaining the accents and ensuring they were not too high pitched! Were these accents going to be a step too far?!

I needn't have worried as all the cast more than rose to the challenge and furthermore, as they became more familiar with the play, began to inject the much needed comedy and humour that was also required.

There were, as always, many strong performances and it was lovely to see such a wealth of Year 7s and 8s taking on speaking roles which in many Lower School Productions would be more likely to have gone to the more experienced Year 9 girls.

Already stalwarts of many Northwood College productions despite only being in Year 8, Niamh O'Brien as the Mandarin, Emily Dawes as Chang, Anandi Shah as Ta-Jin's mother and Charlotte Perrotta as Ta-Jin were among the standout performances. Who could forget the scene where Ta-Jin is hilariously demonstrating his martial arts skills to the bemusement of the other characters and the obvious amusement of the audience?

Newer to the stage at Northwood College, Sophie Keliris-Thomas in Year 7 was excellent as Min and understood the importance of securing her lines early in the rehearsal process. Saheera Kohli was enchanting in her portrayal of Knoon She, and both girls made outstanding debut performances.

A multitude of narrators acquitted themselves well and worked incredibly effectively as part of the ensemble using a wealth of physical theatre to create everything from a bridge, through to a house, a river and a beautiful garden.

Two further girls who deserve a mention were my two doves, Riya Amin and Serina Mangabhai who were reliable and committed, as well as always being focused in rehearsals. They made the most of their roles throughout the performances showing that 'there are no small parts .....

With the cast wearing traditional Chinese dress, the costumes were as always stunning. Thanks to Mrs Onslow for sourcing them and for her tireless stage management of the production each night of the performance.

Backstage a special thanks should go to Katie Denman on lights, Preeti Swamy in Year 7 who took on the role of Assistant Stage Manager, learnt how to operate the lighting and sound and operated both on performance nights, Naima Fowlis for stepping in at the last minute and Alison Mace for her work on the stage make-up, alongside Lucinda Brooks-Hill and Bethany Woodcock.

All in all, the production was a great success. Audience members described it as 'exquisite' and 'enchanting', adjectives which make me believe we captured the essence of the play and, I'm sure all would agree, had great fun along the way.

Miss Celeste McCoy  
Head of Drama



# CREST

Northwood College has participated in the CREST (CREativity in Science and Technology) Awards for a number of years now. This award seeks to encourage young people's interest in Science, Mathematics and the many Technology subjects that schools offer.

We have traditionally run this Award through the medium of science, but are looking to expand it into other areas to offer the widest possible choice to our pupils. Recently, the Award went through some changes that have broadened its scope and added to the type of project that young people can do.

At Northwood College we offer girls the opportunity to participate at Bronze and Silver Level (roughly equivalent to doing a scientific topic to about GCSE and A Level respectively). The Gold level awards (roughly undergraduate degree level) have traditionally been competed for under the Nuffield Bursaries scheme. Some of our very best young scientists have been awarded these for the past five years.



## Gold Awards

These projects are proposed by the placement institution. Young people are matched to an area of interest. They meet with their project supervisor to discuss the project and they are shown how to undertake any new skills that may be needed to enable them to successfully carry out the project. They are also expected to be able to take the initiative and to spot areas where the supervisor may have overlooked something, to analyse trends and patterns and to draw conclusions from their research.

- 2007 Esha Abrol (Mount Vernon Hospital, Breast Cancer Research)  
Guari Vitlhani (Harefield Hospital/Imperial College, London, cell culture media). Gauri's work was presented at the BA Science Fair in 2008. This only happens to 200 or so projects (out of the 1000s done that year) that are deemed to be of a high enough standard.
- 2008 Puja Shah (University of Hertfordshire, mathematical modelling to find solutions to problems such as population dynamics or weather forecasting)
- 2009 Dipali Amin (University of Hertfordshire, devising a new flight simulator programme that allowed different parts of the plane to fail)
- 2010 Helena Wong (GlaxoSmithKline, the uptake of fats into cells)

## Silver Awards

Using their participation in the 'Save Our Seeds' project run by Kew Gardens, we have had a number of girls undertake some research into the factors that affect the germination of seeds. In 2008 Amisha Kota, Zainab Seedat, Aanika Shah, Fauzia Mumani, Sonali Karkhanis and Elizabeth Pearmain gained their combined Silver CREST award for their project on 'What seeds need to germinate'.

In 2010 Chloe Coop, Charlotte Brookes, Aimee Ross and Radika Kataria gained Silver Awards for their individual projects into the factors that affected seed germination. After performing an initial experiment, the girls looked at their results and picked out some interesting questions.

Chloe and Charlotte wondered if seeds from the same family germinated according to size. In addition, those seeds from the same species which came in a variety of sizes were investigated. Aimee wondered if 20°C really was the optimum temperature for seed germination, reasoning that the average spring day in this country does usually not reach much above 15°C and having some evidence to support this hypothesis. Radika knew that water was necessary for germination but she investigated whether the amount mattered.

All girls wrote a report on their findings and had to give a presentation to an audience of staff, fellow pupils and their Assessor before being awarded their certificates.

## Bronze Awards

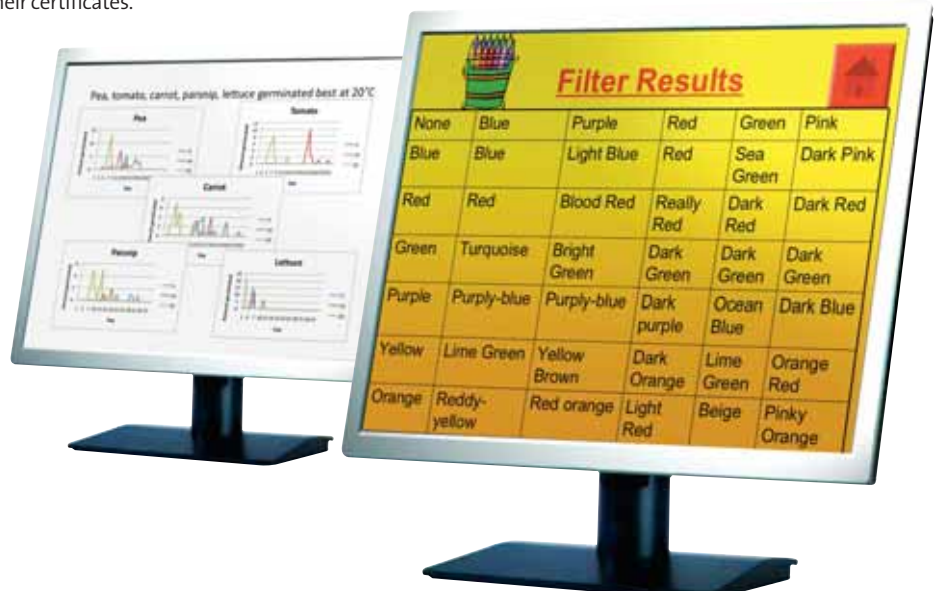
Bronze investigations have looked at (among other things)

- the amount of fizz in different fizzy drinks
- the effect the recipe for bath bombs has on its behaviour in a bath
- the effect of coloured filters on light and perceived colour
- the effect the type of flour has on the way a dough rises
- the effect the ingredients in toothpaste have on its cleaning ability

The girls have been ably assisted by the Science Prefects, who enjoy their role as Science Mentors to the groups and who often help the participants to come up with ideas and conclusions.

Again, all groups have to write up their findings and present it to an audience – although this time they may not have an external assessor but another member of staff from the Science Department. As is usual for the other levels, the girls have to be able to answer questions on their project and its outcomes.

Mrs Sharon Norris  
Science Department



# Talented Teachers

## Janaki Monk – Music Teacher and Soprano



From a very young age I have always wanted to be a singer. I was lucky enough to gain a place at Trinity College of Music Junior Department from the age of 8. I started studying under soprano Nikki Kennedy and with her support and encouragement I gained a Grade 8 in singing at the age of 13. At 18 I started a residency singing on board the Venice Simplon Orient Express, where I sing music from different genres, such as Opera and Jazz. I continued this while studying at Trinity for my Masters, where I trained under soprano Sophie Grimmer and opera singer Theresa Carhill.

I now sing on the Orient Express most weekends and Thursday evenings while teaching during the day at both Northwood College and John Betts, where I am the school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

Being a professional singer helps my teaching enormously, especially with the Harmonics, one of the main Northwood College choirs for girls in Senior School. I help them with their performance skills, such as developing a rapport with the audience, projecting their voices, the importance of warming up their voices before concerts, as well as relaxation techniques. Knowing the standard they need to attain is also very important, as is keeping them informed about trends in the music business and knowing what is fashionable at the moment, as far as artists and music are concerned.

I hope my experience really benefits the girls.

## Tracey Bush – Art Teacher and Paper and Book Artist

I have developed my current practice as a paper artist over a period of more than ten years. My work has been acquired by international collections such as the Yale Centre for British Art, USA, and the Tate Gallery Library and numerous private collections including the British Land Company.

During my work with GCSE Art and Design pupils at Northwood College I became curious about the influence that branding was having on young people. I read that it has been estimated that the average Western adult can recognise a thousand brand names and logos, but fewer than ten wild plants. I decided to create some wild plants in the colours and logos of branded products so that they could compete. My project, 'Nine Wild Plants', was initiated by this thought process.

As the culmination of the 'Nine Wild Plants' project I created a large replica of wild plants, made from paper and card packaging. Brands and logos are recognisable on the delicate stalks and leaves of the plants. This work was inspired by the 1503 drawing by Albrecht Dürer 'The Great Piece of Turf'. I called my work 'The little Piece of Turf'.

The artwork that I am known for is collections of paper butterflies and moths made from recycled paper ephemera. The material I use for the butterfly relates to its common name, so the moth 'Beloved Underwing' is made from vintage love song scores. I also make handmade books and many of the techniques and processes I have developed in my own work have found their way into my teaching. Year 7 girls at Northwood College have often made their own books for particular projects or last year presented a set of drawings.

I work with museums and galleries to develop education projects. In 2006 I was commissioned by The Barbican Centre to work with a primary school in Old Street to develop a Paper Theatre

installation to celebrate the Barbican's 25th birthday. Working collaboratively with a support artist, the class teacher, the children and I worked with huge sheets of paper in ways which were often new to them, such as cutting, tearing, punching and piercing. The design of the final installation was achieved by careful discussion in the group, building confidence in their visual thinking. I have developed this diorama technique on a smaller scale as part of my class teaching at Northwood College with Year 8 girls.

I have worked with Tate Britain to develop projects including 'River Voices' where I collaborated with a sound artist. The young people involved in the project collected river water which we used to create a water orchestra, and used a technique known as cyanotype to develop prints coloured blue. The final exhibit was favourably reviewed in The Times by Mark Irving. During the summer term at Northwood College, I make these prints with some of the girls. It is a versatile technique; some of the most successful have incorporated silhouette drawings and real leaves.

Each year I work with pupils from Northwood College Junior School during Book Making Day. Each time I devise a different set of projects for the girls to create. I am always amazed by the energy and enthusiasm of the girls during this day.

My work as a part-time teacher at Northwood College enables a longer dialogue with a group of pupils. I hope I bring the enthusiasm and expertise from my own practice into the classroom.

1. 'The Little Piece of Turf', 2006  
Photo: Neil Reddy
2. 'Beloved Underwing', 2009  
Photo: Tracey Bush
3. 'Paper Theatre', The Barbican Centre, 2007  
Photo: Neil Reddy
4. 'River Voices', Tate Britain, 2005  
Photo: Isa Suarez



# New Staff

## Jo Simpson



Sport has played such an important part throughout my life, enabling me to make lasting friendships and travel the world from playing hockey in Europe and Australia, climbing and mountaineering in the Alps and Pyrenees to sailing across the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

I see the role of the physical educator as providing the basis on which every pupil can build an active and healthy lifestyle through a broad and balanced

curriculum that is inclusive of all pupils, enabling each and every pupil to succeed to the best of their capabilities. It not only provides for the gifted and talented, but also allows every pupil to find success and enjoyment in physical activity. The skills that are learnt through sport are equally transferable to life in general, for example communication, co-operation and respect. I firmly believe that there is an activity for everyone,

that there is a role for everyone, whether that is as an outstanding performer, a young official or discerning observer.

I am really pleased to be at Northwood College, to shape the sports agenda to enable all students to fulfil their potential. My ambition is to enthuse a passion for lifelong participation in sport or any physical activity for every student!

**Miss Jo Simpson**  
Head of PE

## Kim Baskerville



I was born and grew up in Melbourne, Australia. After finishing my first degree (in Science) at the University of Melbourne, I came to England to pursue postgraduate studies. Coming to England was something of an accident: a friend of mine was applying to Cambridge and I photocopied the forms, never dreaming I had the slightest chance of getting in. I never intended to stay in this country permanently, either. Yet here I am, almost twenty years later, a naturalised British citizen, and happy to be here – despite the weather!

On completing my PhD, I spent a few years carrying out postdoctoral research,

before leaving academia to become a teacher. Another hasty decision, made when yet another unexpected opportunity arose – but another decision I've never regretted.

I began my teaching career as a Physics teacher at the London Oratory School, but soon decided that the rigours of experimentation were not for me. I also wanted to teach girls; having experienced the "glass ceiling" of higher education at first hand, I wanted to equip others with hard enough heads to break through it. I was attracted to Northwood College because of its Thinking Skills Programme and its

willingness to embrace change: two attributes I think are essential in the modern world. I hope to play my own small part in encouraging girls here to think for themselves and to find the courage to break through barriers and step into the unknown.

Away from school, I spend a lot of my time in the gym. I also enjoy hiking, skiing and lying on the beach reading a book. I travel frequently and have a particular enthusiasm for islands.

**Dr Kim Baskerville**  
Head of Mathematics

## Fiona McConnon



I am absolutely delighted to be joining the teaching staff at Northwood College as Head of the Modern Foreign Languages Department and look forward to being an Assistant Tutor for Year 9.

I am passionate about languages and international cultural exchanges. I travelled considerably as a child and have studied and worked overseas – in China and France – for over 15 years.

My knowledge of languages and intercultural understanding has opened the doors to many exciting career opportunities in the UK and overseas. These have ranged from being Head of the Foreign Language Department at the International School in Beijing to heading up a section in the British Embassy in China working with the Chinese government on poverty reduction and enabling my team to have a real impact on the lives of poor people in China.

I studied my first degree in French at University College London and then a PGCE at York University. Following this I then undertook studies in Mandarin culminating in a Masters in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. I also undertook a further Masters in Development Studies.

I believe that developing the ability to communicate in other languages and understanding other cultures is one of the most important skills that our pupils can learn. At a time when employers are lamenting the lack of language skills in our graduates and employing staff from overseas, this is an area where Northwood girls can excel and make themselves stand out in the employment market. With China becoming a world economic superpower, we are thinking about providing opportunities for pupils to study Mandarin, in addition to the languages we currently teach.

I believe that learning languages should be fun and that we should actively look for opportunities for cross-curricular working and to harness the opportunities that ICT provides in using language in meaningful contexts. I look forward to getting to know you all and to making a difference at Northwood College.

**Ms Fiona McConnon**  
Head of Modern Foreign Languages

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