



## Head's Lines

Dear Readers

**"A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special."** Nelson Mandela

As I write these words, South Africa is mourning the loss, and celebrating the life, of its inspirational leader Nelson Mandela. His 27 years of imprisonment, whilst undoubtedly physically and mentally gruelling, gave him plenty of time and space to reflect on the meaning of life, and to develop the values and ideals which became the cornerstone of his remarkable and transformative Presidency of the "Rainbow Nation" in the 1990s.

Personally, I have always been most affected by the power of Madiba's words about education, of which the quotation above is an excellent example. The activities and achievements described in this latest edition of The Bulletin illustrate how we at Withington also value the potent combination of ability, integrity and articulacy. Our girls develop a strong understanding that the privilege of a Withington education carries with it responsibilities – to make full use of their exceptional talents, to be excellent ambassadors for the School and,

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# Christmas Stars!

Withington's Christmas Concert and Tea Party for Senior Citizens heralded the start of this year's busy in-school festive musical programme.

Around 200 local pensioners were invited to the Concert and treated to a seasonal selection of old time Christmas favourites, traditional carols and instrumental pieces performed by Senior School choristers and musicians.

During the concert – which took place in the Arts Centre on 4th December – Mrs Marks and Mr McKenna led guests in singing renditions of nostalgic classics *Que Sera Sera*, *Moon River*, *Well, Did You Ever* and Vera Lynn's *We'll Meet Again*.

After a rousing finale of *Merry Christmas Everyone* performed by the Senior Choir and Senior Orchestra, the pensioners enjoyed party teas and each received a gift kindly donated by Withington pupils and parents.

The Senior Citizens' concert was previously organised annually by the Didsbury Rotarians but the School took over sole responsibility for the event last year after the club sadly announced its closure.

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...particularly, to help willingly those who are less fortunate than themselves. You will find numerous examples of all of these attributes in the pages that follow.

I hope you thoroughly enjoy reading about what the girls have been doing this term, and I should like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very restful holiday and a happy and healthy New Year.



Kind regards

**Mrs Sue Marks**  
Headmistress

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The Junior School and Senior Christmas Concerts are also part of the Music Department's Christmas calendar. The Juniors' concert was held on 12th December (reported in the Junior pages) and the Senior Concert was due to go ahead on 16th December - just as the Bulletin was going to press. It promises to be seasonably fun-filled - and following the success of the annual appearance of the dancing Christmas trees and Christmas puddings - the girls were all looking forward to the appearance of new dancing Christmas silver stars which made their debut at the Senior Citizens' Concert.

Out of school, WGS musicians have also been in great demand. On 1st December Withington joined St Ann's Hospice's Tree of Lights service in Manchester Cathedral. During the moving service, in which relatives light candles in memory of their loved ones, the Senior Choir performed Enya's *May It Be* from the *Lord of The Rings*.

And on 9th December the Senior Choir enjoyed Withington's long-standing tradition of participating in the St Ann's Church Festival of Lessons and Carols, with donations, as ever, going to the homeless charity, the Wood Street Mission.

The 80-strong Senior Choir started their day out with a browse around the Christmas Markets and rehearsal in the church followed by dinner at Café Rouge.

Said Director of Music, Mrs Sargent:

**“There is always something very special about Christmas at Withington. We are able to mix the old with the new and tradition with fun. With our choirs singing at religious services at Manchester Cathedral and St Ann's in aid of the homeless and St Ann's Hospice; the old-time Music Hall and Christmas music at the Senior Citizens' party; our own Junior and Senior Concerts that combine music and laughter - not to mention the House Carol competition on the last day of term!”**



# Independent Schools Inspectorate judge Withington to be Excellent...

Our most recent inspection took place from 24th to 27th September 2013.

The Inspection Team used evidence from the parents' and pupils' questionnaires, as well as lesson and activity observations, pupils' work scrutiny, analysis of public examination results, inspection of accommodation, and interviews with staff, students and Governors to reach their conclusions.

Independent Schools Inspectorate ('ISI') reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the School but must instead give clear qualitative judgements on eight specific aspects: pupils' achievements, the curriculum, teaching, pupils' personal development, pastoral care, welfare, health and safety, governance, and leadership and management. These judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors ('Excellent', 'Good', 'Sound' or 'Unsatisfactory'), representing the four grades for inspection.

Withington Girls' School has been judged as 'Excellent' - the highest possible rating - in every single category.

For schools where pupils' achievement is far above that usually found, the descriptor 'exceptional' may be used in place of that of 'excellent' as the top grade and it is a source of great pride that the quality of our girls' achievements and learning was judged to be 'Exceptional', a category which has been awarded to very few schools in the whole country.

The School was found to be fully compliant with all the regulatory requirements.

Headmistress Mrs Sue Marks said:

**“I am extremely proud of all our staff and girls whose talent, dedication and enthusiasm has been recognised in this report. It is very affirming that the inspectors noted that our girls are ‘receptive, alert, articulate and highly motivated’, as well as being ‘confident, happy and self-reflective, with genuine concern and respect for both their peers and staff.”**

The inspectors were particularly impressed with the quality of the girls' personal development, which they described as 'a distinctive feature throughout both Junior and Senior Schools'. Inspectors stated that 'the quality of care provided by the school is excellent and the standard of pupils' behaviour is exemplary'.

The ISI report also noted areas in which there has been improvement since our last inspection in 2007, including the quality of assessment, the provision of Careers Education and Guidance, the provision of Information and Communication Technology, the quality of Governance, and the quality of Leadership and Management.



## Young Enterprise

At the time of going to press, Withington's two 2013-14 Young Enterprise teams were preparing for the competition's first key event of the new 'season' - a Christmas Trade Fair at the Manchester Market stalls in Manchester's Piccadilly Gardens.

The two companies this year are: *Educake*, who are in the process of designing a cook book and *UnderCover* who are due to launch their own line of underwear. Both companies have been looking forward to their first trading experience along with 40 other YE companies from the Greater Manchester area. They will have the opportunity to sell to the public, practise sales skills and market themselves and their products in a location that will be packed with Christmas shoppers. *Educake* will be selling nail varnish, manicure sets, laminate bookmarks and other accessories and *UnderCover* will be selling socks.

The main competitive stages of the Young Enterprise Competition will take place later in the academic year.



## Withington shortlisted for a leading education award

Withington was recently one of five schools shortlisted for an Education Business Award, a prestigious national accolade that recognises a school's commitment to delivering a quality education.

Mrs Marks and Mrs Haslam were very proud to represent the School at the ceremony at the Emirates Stadium in London on 5th December, though Withington was just 'pipped' to the title by Guildford High School. They are delighted to have brought back a Certificate of Commendation for the School – further national recognition of the excellence of the education offered here.

Sponsored by Rathbones, Withington was the only school outside the South East to be shortlisted in the Independent School Outstanding Progress category, alongside other finalists Westminster School, Brighton College, Epsom College and Guildford High School.

The award was presented by Olympic medalist Roger Black to the UK independent school which, in the judges' opinion, "has made outstanding progress in the management of its facilities, finances and human resources and can demonstrate an increase in the educational performance of the school."

Mrs Marks commented:

"We were absolutely delighted to have been shortlisted for this prestigious national award so soon after receiving our outstanding report from the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which also recognised the excellent progress the School has made in recent years. We at Withington are not inclined to rest on our laurels, but are constantly striving for incremental excellence in every aspect of our girls' education".

# Ghyll Head 2013

Both of this year's Ghyll Head weekends for new Third Form girls were enjoyed under blue skies and glorious autumn sunshine.

On each of the two weekends (27-29 September and 4-6 October) the Third Formers, accompanied by their intrepid Form Tutors, Shadow Form Tutors, Head of Year and Upper Sixth Peer Supporters enjoyed an adventure-packed time in the Lake District. All girls participated enthusiastically in the activities and some made the most of every opportunity to get wet!

Head of Third Form, Mrs Yorke Menzies said:

"The girls worked so well in the all team activities – it was heartening to see them supporting and encouraging one another."

"The beautiful Lake District provided an ideal backdrop for getting to know each other better and making new friends."

All the girls wrote poems about their experiences – here is a sample:

*Whooshing down a zip wire,  
Scrambling up a ghyll,  
Jumping into a freezing lake,  
Rowing until our arms ache.  
Trying to find the number four,  
Lying in the sunshine, that we all adore.  
Gazing at the stars with awe  
All wanting to stay a few days more!*

**By Phoebe Houghton  
and Diya Salahudin**



# A2 Philosophy Students take part in the 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme

On Thursday 17th October, Orlagh Fallon and I left for Poland in the early hours of the morning. The trip was organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust. Over one hundred schools from the North West took part in the Lessons from Auschwitz programme, each one being allowed to send two pupils, meaning our group in its entirety had over 230 members. We were split into tutor groups, with the pairs from each school staying together. Each group had a Holocaust Educator to guide us through the visit and teach us some aspects of European history in the 1930s and 40s.

To prepare us for the trip, a seminar had been organised where we heard a survivor's testimony of the Holocaust, met our tutor group, and laid out our expectations for the trip. Most of us expected to be met with bleak, industrial, cold and eerie buildings upon arrival at the camps, but since none of us had visited previously we were a little unsure.

The trip was just for one day, in which we visited a Jewish Cemetery in the town of Auschwitz, the first Auschwitz camp, and Auschwitz-Birkenau itself. As the evening drew in, and the group had finished its tour of Auschwitz-Birkenau, a ceremony was held in which passages were read by members of our group, and the Chief Rabbi, Barrie Markus, spoke of the events of the Holocaust, its implications, and effects on the future.

I think what Orlagh and I found most shocking was the sheer size of the sites. Auschwitz-Birkenau is almost incomprehensible in its size, stretching across acres of land and surrounded by huge barbed wire fences.

The ceremony at the end of our trip was very moving and really allowed the group time to reflect on what we had seen that day, and time for us to comprehend the statistics of the Holocaust.

I know the trip had an impact on both of us and when our friends asked if we enjoyed the trip, it seemed strange to reply yes, because the places we went to were places of deep sadness and loss and to say it was a "good trip" seemed insensitive to those who had lost their lives. Instead the term "worthwhile" seemed to best describe the trip and our experience of it. Hearing stories of the resilience of the survivors of the Holocaust, and how they kept going even though they had very little light in their lives at that time, was truly inspirational.

Although not the usual experience of a school trip, the Lessons from the Auschwitz trip is one I would recommend to anyone who has the opportunity, and I know the memories of our time in Poland that day in October will stay with both of us for a long time.

Sophie Armstrong UVI M

## Economics

In November, 21 Lower Sixth Economics students went on the annual visit to the London Metal Exchange and Bank of England.

The LME is a fascinating trading ring in which metals are traded by the open outcry system. This involves traders making deals by hand signals to indicate raising or lowering a bid, and to indicate offers. For the students this was the highlight of the visit - it is an exciting, dynamic environment in which to see trading. The LME is an international market, with companies across the world trading commodities such as copper, zinc and nickel.

Students then visited the Bank of England. The museum has some excellent exhibits including the chance to run a model of the economy and to simulate share trading. Particularly popular was the chance to lift a solid gold bar worth over £100,000. Exhibitions include a detailed look at the history of forgery, including forgers' implements and their success in producing forged notes.

The group then had a talk and film show in the Bank's cinema. This was an incisive look at monetary policy and outlined the Bank's current actions in setting the interest rate and their policy of Quantitative Easing [QE]. We also had a discussion about the proposed change to polymer banknotes rather than using cotton paper as at present.

The visit finished with a flight on the London Eye and a look at the changing economic and industrial landscape of London.



## Physics Café

In a series of lunchtime Physics Cafés, this term we welcomed Sarah Skeoch a specialist in Arthritis who is working both as a doctor and carrying out further research into this condition.

For an hour she was bombarded with questions which even touched on the ethical issues of her job and we were left in no doubt what a rewarding and enjoyable career path she had chosen. Café Sci is a great opportunity to meet a real life scientist and ask all those questions you really wanted to know. There will be another session next term and all girls are encouraged to come whether they have attended already or not!



## Defibrillator

Mr and Mrs Derek Godsell generously donated a defibrillator to the School in 2010, in memory of their daughter, Amanda.

Former WGS pupil, Amanda, died of an undiagnosed heart condition, aged 31. Had a defibrillator been on hand, Amanda might have been saved. Mr and Mrs Godsell visited Withington in November and are pictured here with the defibrillator.



## Sixth Form Seminars

A programme of weekly seminars aimed at helping to foster intellectual curiosity and independent thinking amongst Withington's students has been rolled out this term for Sixth Formers.

Organised by the School's Oxbridge Coordinator Dr Cristina Vilela, the newly introduced Sixth Form Seminars take place every Wednesday with interactive sessions covering a broad range of subjects designed to encourage girls to acquire skills, confidence, knowledge and experience in topics that extend beyond A Level specifications.

Academics from Manchester University and Warwick University have visited the School to share their specialist expertise and Withington teachers have also contributed to the seminar schedule. Sessions offered so far have included, amongst others, an introduction to the ground-breaking material Graphene; Moral Dilemmas; Skin Cancer; Game Theory and Problem Solving and Biological Clocks in Ageing and Disease.

Commented Dr Vilela:

"These are not lectures but are very much hands-on experiences allowing students to formulate ideas, build arguments and to encourage independent thinking outside the classroom. Our girls respond really well and ask fantastic questions. The sessions are designed also to help support the university applications process and these are not just aimed at Oxbridge but at all universities. We want to make all of our Sixth Formers aware of the wealth of opportunities out there beyond School and everyone is welcome."

"We are continuing to build on our programme and have an exciting schedule planned for the future spanning a wide range of subjects, which will include a variety of themes across the Sciences and Humanities as well as more general topics," added Dr Vilela.

The seminars are available to all Sixth Formers and are publicised in advance via the Friday Activities and Events email that goes out to parents.

## The Wonders of Graphene

The final Sixth Form Seminar for the term was a presentation by Dr Irina Grigorieva from the School of Physics and Astronomy at Manchester University. Entitled *Graphene – a wonder material*, pupils learned all about this exciting new material first isolated by Manchester University-based Physics Nobel Peace Prize winners Professor Sir Andre Geim and Professor Sir Konstantin Sergeevich. In this session, girls were given the chance to make their own Graphene, a two-dimensional material consisting of a single layer of carbon atoms, a million times thinner than a human hair and stronger than diamond. They were able to examine it under the microscope, discuss what makes it so strong and why it can be seen with the naked eye, and ask a myriad of other questions.



## Manchester to Land's End in One Lunchtime

During the lunch hour on Friday, 11th October, Withington pupils celebrated the International Day of The Girl along with 10,000 other GSA pupils nationwide with a fundraising lunchtime walk to show support for extending girls' education in some of the world's poorest countries.

Almost all pupils, from Transition to Upper Sixth, walked three times around the Astro making 1km each – the combined group equivalent of walking from Manchester to Land's End.

The girls' efforts raised more than £2,200 as part of a worldwide fundraising project, Because I'm a Girl, organised by the charity Plan UK, which is aiming to raise a total of £250,000 to help up to four million girls globally complete their education and to get the support they need to help move them from a life of poverty to a future with opportunity.

Mrs Marks, who joined the girls in making the 1km walk, welcomed the lead being taken by Plan UK in raising funds to help the plight of girls living in developing countries saying:

"Regardless of where girls are in the world, education is of vital importance in opening the door to opportunity, helping them to move away from poverty and ultimately towards a better life."

"At Withington our girls are lucky enough to enjoy a rich array of opportunities and experiences. The lunchtime walk today will have not only helped with fundraising, but will also have assisted in reminding our pupils about the plight of less fortunate girls who, because of geography and circumstances, are unable to enjoy the benefits of a full and good education. Our girls were delighted to take part in this initiative with many deciding to run rather than walk!"

At least one-in-five girls worldwide are denied the chance to go to secondary school, says Plan UK. Studies have found that in developing countries an extra year at school can increase a woman's income by up to 20%; they are less likely to marry young and have children early and they are more likely to understand and realise their rights. Every £50 raised would allow a girl in Uganda, for example, to have a further year's education.

**It is still possible to donate via our Just Giving page: [www.justgiving.com/Withington-Girls-School](http://www.justgiving.com/Withington-Girls-School), or by sending donations into School.**



# Art Attack!

## Drawing on Life

On the dark and cold Monday evenings in November and December the Art Studio has been beautifully enlightened by the Sixth Form artists as they have been wonderfully capturing the female form in their Life Drawing classes. The studio has been filled with the sound of charcoal splintering and the resulting dust has billowed into the air as the girls have worked confidently and creatively on their studies. The array of techniques that they have learnt from their art tutors have ranged from very precise measured drawings to extremely spontaneous timed responses. The work will form an important and exciting part of their portfolios.

Mrs Ruth Fildes Head of Art



## Art Artefacts

On 16th October, artists from Lower Fifth made the short trip to the Manchester Museum. Luckily it was a dry morning as the girls' first challenge was to draw the exterior of the magnificent building and the contents of the museum allotment.

Once inside the museum the sketchbooks were brought out and the girls were ready to start drawing from the wonderful displays of insects, natural form, fossils, minerals and other specimens.

The pupils were incredibly mature and focused for the whole morning and soon became accustomed to other visitors looking at their sketches and praising their efforts. One of the museum workers even took pictures of the girls' work to add to the museum's Twitter feed. Soon it was time to hop back on the coach to school after a very worthwhile morning.

Mrs Zoe Taylor Teacher of Art



## Junior Art Clubs

Two groups of creative girls from the Junior School have participated in the annual Lantern Making Club and the popular Seasonal Decorations Club.

This year, instead of making large single lanterns, the girls have been making individual paper angels to adorn a string of fairy lights. The whole process began with a colourful design sheet, moving on to a simple wax resist technique to create the bright papers. The pupils have experimented by adding extra details to their work, using paper punchers, drawing motifs and attaching glitter and sequins.

The seasonal decorations club also began with a design sheet and the girls decided on their favourite colours and patterns. They then used metallic paints to cover the base of their Christmas wreath and added their own designs to the hanging seasonal shapes. To complete the decoration, the pupils selected lots of different threads and pretty ribbons to wrap around the wreath.

Both Art Clubs have been very enjoyable and the girls, as ever, have produced some wonderful crafty art works to take home.

Miss Hannah Brown Art Technician



## Anti-Bullying Week

With the theme "The future is ours: safe, fun and connected", anti-bullying week 2013 took place this year from the 18th to the 22nd of November. Girls sold wristbands, painted nails blue and wrote messages of support and hope on special blue notes to post onto our anti-bullying noticeboards.

Girls also wore their own clothes and raised over £500 for the anti-bullying charity, Kidscape. Let's keep on remembering to use technology positively!

Mrs Clara Edge Head of PSHCE



## Hannah Brown, MA

Congratulations to Hannah Brown, Art and DT Technician, on recently attaining her MA in Fine Art from Manchester Metropolitan University.



## Flash, bang, wallop, what a picture!

This term, girls attended a taster course for an after-school Photography Club. They found new influences by studying images, photographers and artists. The group tried new-found skills and got creative with their photography, including a light-painting session. The Club is suitable for all levels of budding photographer.

The Club will return in January and is run by professional photographer, Sandra Dalton.



## Girls Go Green

7th - 11th October

The Eco Warriors marked the GSA's *Girls Go Green Week* this year with two events, the first of which was a cake sale. Girls brought in homemade and shop-bought cakes with a Fair Trade theme and these were then sold to raise money to support Plan UK's *Because I'm a Girl* campaign. Eco Warriors raised over £40 to add to the impressive total raised by the Worldwide Walk. We also launched *Science into Schools*, which is run by Wastebusters. *Science into Schools* enables schools to exchange unwanted textiles for new science equipment and is designed to help teachers educate young people about waste and also to inspire them to get interested in science and engineering. Many girls and parents brought in bags of textiles, for which we are very grateful. We are still waiting for Wastebusters to weigh these and are then looking forward to getting points which can be converted into exciting science equipment. We hope to run an additional collection during national Waste Week in March, so don't worry if you forgot to bring in any textiles this time!

## Expedition Fundraising

At a time when many most of us are wrapped up in the purchase of that 'perfect' Christmas present, twelve Upper Sixth girls are exchanging traditional holiday preparations for an opportunity to work with young children in The Gambia.

They will spend the week of the 14th to the 21st December in a rural Gambian village where they will lead arts and crafts lessons for pre-school children and help renovate the local primary school which previous Withington students helped build. During the trip, the girls also will focus on Gambian chickens, rather than their own holiday roast turkeys, when they spend time at a newly developed chicken farm, one of several projects helping to ensure a sustainable food source for Gambian villagers.

Girls have spent months raising money for both The Gambia and Uganda expeditions. Activities have included a sponsored climb, bag packs in Sainsbury's, a Zumbathon, themed meal, cake sales and, most recently, four banqueting evenings provided by the Khandoker restaurants.

Mr Khandoker's contribution amounted to £1400. He and his staff raised this amount by hosting four charity evenings at his restaurants in Didsbury and Bramhall. Sincere thanks to Mr Khandoker who provided many Withington parents, staff and pupils with a delicious Indian banquet and contributed £10 to the fund for each meal sold.

Over the years Withington has been involved in many aspects of school and village life in The Gambia including the financing of a Nursery School, two Adult Literacy Centres, a Poultry Farm, a Well, fencing and Farming projects as well as a new Computer Centre, and equipment for a Medical Centre. We continue to sponsor teachers and students at Mama Tamba nursery school.

Please help us add to our Gambia and Uganda appeal using this Just Giving page: [www.justgiving.com/Withington-Girls-School1](http://www.justgiving.com/Withington-Girls-School1)



# Geographical

## Cranedale 2013

Twenty four Lower Sixth Geographers spent a long weekend on the East Yorkshire coast over Half Term. The first day Mrs Buckley and Miss Browning led an investigation into the crumbling cliffs of Holderness and the inspiring management schemes which were assessed at various locations. It was with huge sympathy that everyone viewed the precarious caravan sites so close to the edge of the cliffs and the collapsed roads all at the mercy of the crashing waves of the North Sea.

Once at the Field Study Centre, Physical Geography was the focus. The dramatic chalk cliffs of Flamborough Head with their caves and arches were the site for understanding geomorphological controls on these stunning chalk features and a chance to practise impressive field-sketching skills.

The sand dune study at Bridlington had all girls measuring rigorously and collecting their own data. The sun came out at the close of the day and although exposed to all the onshore winds the girls were positive and collected effective results for their AS Papers.

Evenings were spent working until 9:00 pm in the classrooms with much camaraderie but with all exercises completed with expertise.





# Goings On..

## Ogden Geography Prize

Yet again Withington has been awarded the prestigious Ogden Prize by the Local Geographical Association for the top performance in last Summer's Geography A-level papers. This year it goes to Harriet Macleod who secured full UMS marks on all her papers so achieving 400 out of 400 UMS marks. This was a remarkable achievement and Harriet sustained an incredible interest and knowledge for the subject always engaging in debate and crafting well-researched and structured essays.

Mrs Buckley said:

"It was a privilege to teach such an inspiring Geographer who has now gone onto Cambridge to study a Combined Social Science degree where her Geography provides an important foundation.

"I am thrilled that the quality of her exceptional Geography has been recognised and the award achieved by such a deserving candidate."

"A Withington pupil has gained this award five times over the last seven years. It is wonderful to know the School is producing such excellent Geographers in this subject that combines strands from the Sciences and Arts, helping girls to make sense of our world today and providing them with essential skills to forge exciting future careers."



## Debate Success

On 4th December, Upper Sixth Geographers took part in the inter-school Geography Association Debate on Sustainable Energy for All. It was hosted by Abbey College in the heart of the city centre. It took the format of a model General Assembly of the United Nations with countries represented by participating schools. For A-level Geographers it is a contemporary issue that cuts across many topics and is vital for the achievement of the Millennium Development goals. It was held in the prestigious setting of the Unitarian Chapel on Cross Street with twelve 'countries' participating.

We were allocated Nigeria and Namibia and the weeks prior to the debate had the teams researching energy issues in these two interesting African countries so they could build up a picture of their country's national interests rather than their own personal opinions. Namibia, a poor country with nuclear ambitions, had Freya Sykes as the leading delegate supported by Hattie Dufton and Lucinda Chamberlain whilst Nigeria, the largest oil producer in Africa but with the majority of its population also still depending on fuel wood, had Isabel O'Brien as its lead delegate supported by Hannah Loftus and Emma New who stepped in at the last minute for Natasha Senior who had been involved in the preparation. It was an exciting debate with many schools delivering excellent presentations and defending themselves superbly. We were against stiff competition especially from Bolton School, Girls' Division, Xavarian Sixth Form College and Bury Grammar School Boys, but the girls had researched well. The judges were very impressed with both teams as they were marked on the realism of their role play, the strength of their argument, quality of research, teamwork and public speaking ability.

Withington's teams excelled in all areas putting them in contention for the top place but it was Nigeria who narrowly secured the final top prize of the night.

Both teams were a credit to the School, with Freya and Isabel delivering their key speech with confidence and professionalism. As all these girls are going on to study Geography or a related Geography degree at University it was a wonderful opportunity to practise their academic passion in this exciting arena. They were supported by all their Geography teachers and the rest of their Upper Sixth groups so we were able to round the evening off with an Italian meal in the heart of festive Manchester!

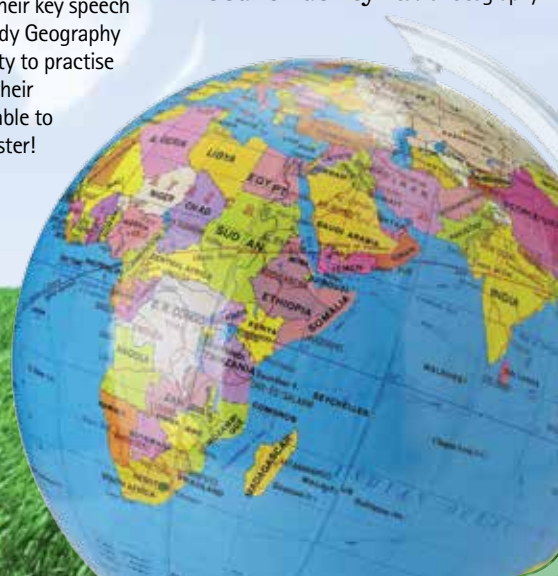


## WorldWide Quiz

We had the most exciting set of rounds for our Upper Fifth Worldwide quiz with over thirty girls involved in the first round. There was wonderful competitive rivalry and some excellent Geographical knowledge displayed with grapes and minstrels for sustenance. Sixth Form Geographers managed the tricky scoring and photographic knowledge of mountains was the most impressive of all rounds. Unfortunately our winning teams could not attend the local inter-school quiz night because it coincided with Open Evening!

To keep up our competitive spirit we are, however, inviting a team of Manchester Grammar boys to a final round to be hosted by Withington and featuring our winning teams in what we hope will be an exciting contest... watch this space. A date is to be fixed for after Mock examinations!

Mrs Julie Buckley Head of Geography



## Modelling a World Map

The Open Day in November saw the Geography Room converted into an exciting Arts and Crafts centre with two huge world map outlines spread over nearly all the desks. Lots of enthusiastic Geographers from Year 7 up to our supportive Sixth Form worked on building up a 3D model of our world's physical and economic features. They also invited our visitors to locate and place a feature of their own. Plasticine, play-dough, card, chalk and even cocktail sticks were just some of the raw materials available and each feature was given a label so everyone left their individual mark. It was incredible to see this artistic creative model of the world evolve and special thanks must go to Pearl Palfreyman from the Lower Sixth who painstakingly coloured all the ocean areas for the three hours of the Thursday evening closely watched by our young visitors. Thanks also to Lucinda Chamberlain and Hattie Dufton who enthusiastically encouraged the imagination of all children to get involved. As dolphins, elephants, volcanoes, rivers and ranges of majestic mountains began to bring the map to life everyone agreed it was a communal work of art. We want to thank everyone who contributed but especially our own girls for working so hard. As the maps due to their sheer size had to be unfortunately destroyed after the Saturday morning we felt it fitting to celebrate their creation with a mention and a photograph in the Bulletin as a lasting reminder of this unsustainable but quite incredible model of the world!



## Choirs for Cancer

An afternoon of choral and orchestral music featuring performers from across the country – including Withington's own Lower School Choir – raised more than £2,000 for The Christie Hospital and Renal Cancer Research.

The Choirs for Cancer event – held in the Arts Centre on 1st December – was organised by Withington's Vocal Studies Tutor Mrs Fiona Clucas whose husband Jeffrey Wynn Davies, a successful choral conductor, has himself recovered from renal cancer. The concert was compered by TV presenter and journalist Nicholas Owen who has also suffered from kidney cancer.

With a seasonal flavour to the performances, the programme featured the WGS Lower School Choir along with three award-winning music groups originally founded by Mr Wynn Davies – The Manchester Chorale, vocal group and chamber choir Canzonetta and Bury Youth Orchestra.

Mrs Clucas said afterwards that she was delighted with the response.

"The concert attracted 150 singers from as far afield as Scotland and Southampton and I was very proud of our own Lower School Choir. The girls are aged between 11 and 14 and they performed beautifully. Proceeds from the afternoon are likely to be around £2,000 through ticket sales, private donations and a raffle which offered some fantastic prizes. Amongst the prizes on the day we had tickets to Man Utd, Michael Bubl , Ant and Dec and The Manic Street Preachers. The concert was a great success."



## Terrific Transport!

### City Centre Shuttle Bus

We continue to receive positive feedback from parents and pupils about our City Centre Shuttle Bus which has operated since September. This shared service, with Manchester High School for Girls, connects with the mainline stations in Manchester.

The bus runs from Monday to Friday and there are two departure times in the afternoon. The 5.15 pm run has been scheduled to accommodate girls participating in after-school activities and picks them up right outside Reception.

The fare is just £1 per journey or, for more regular travellers, a termly or half-termly pass is available. A termly pass is £100 and half-termly is simply £50. Please collect a form from Reception or download from our website.

### Other Late Services

**Late 158/141** – this late service runs from Mondays to Thursdays and departs from outside Reception at 5.15 pm. The bus travels through Didsbury to John Lewis before going on to Hale & Bowdon. The fare is the same as the 158/141 and a return ticket may be used. This service has been well received by girls participating in after-school activities.

**McCarthy's Bus** (Macclesfield, Prestbury, Wilmslow etc) – this company offers a late service from Monday to Friday (at 5.15 pm) for a small additional charge if you are already a regular McCarthy's passenger. Girls may choose either to take the coach at the end of the school day or use the late service. Once again, girls have commented on how the late service has enabled greater participating in after-school activities. Please call McCarthy's directly for costs.



**"I am so pleased that Withington has introduced a shuttle bus to Piccadilly Station. The bus parks right outside school, it leaves on time and my daughter can keep contact with her friends at Manchester High. The best bit is that she can now catch the train home. It's quicker and cheaper than driving and she even manages to do a bit of homework on the way!"**

Mother of Alice, Year 10, from Glossop

## GCSE Science Live!

On Monday 25th November, a group of 40 Upper Fifth scientists went to the Bridgewater Hall to attend this year's GCSE Science Live!

The first speaker was Professor Lord Robert Winston of Fertility Studies at Imperial College London, a key pioneer of IVF treatment and renowned communicator of Science. On the day he spoke to us about his ground breaking research in IVF and shared with us his knowledge on whether it would be possible for women to extend their fertility life.

We were then fortunate to have the AQA Chief Examiner talk to us about how to improve our examination and revision skills, as well as how to approach different styles of questions.

Our next speaker was Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, who obtained both her degree in Physics and her PhD in Mechanical Engineering from Imperial College London. Dr Aderin-Pocock debated passionately her plan of emigrating to Mars for her retirement.

The first lecture after our lunch break was delivered by Professor Andrea Sellor, who is an organic chemist at UCL. He spoke about 'How the zebra got its stripes' and explained this by demonstrating a series of experiments of oscillating reactions. This was then followed by a talk from Professor Bruce Hood, a Professor of Development Psychology in Society in the School of Experimental Psychology at the University of Bristol, who gave a lecture on the 3lb lump of tissue in our heads that is more sophisticated than any machine that can be built today: the human brain.

Our final speaker was Professor Jim Al-Khalili, a well-recognised Physicist from the University of Surrey. The Professor delivered a speech entitled *Time travel: fact or fiction?* He explained that amazingly there is no need to rule out the idea of time travel as it is theoretically possible.

All the talks were extremely interesting and showed examples of the numerous opportunities and careers available in Science. We were given the opportunity to raise issues with Britain's top scientists all working at the cutting edge of their specialisms, and discover why they are all so passionate about their work. We were shown how Science does not have to be set apart from culture, but how it is an essential component of it. With the motto of 2013 being 'inspire a generation', we feel that Science Live really did achieve this as we all walked away truly inspired, awe-struck and eager to learn more!

**Julia McCarthy and Rishem Khattar** Upper Fifth



# Fond Farewells...

## Dr Claire Spinks



Teacher of Chemistry Dr Claire Spinks leaves Withington at the end of this term with our thanks and best wishes for the future.

Dr Spinks is relocating to her home city of London with husband Ben and two children Maia, 3, and Oscar, aged 18 months.

She joined Withington five years ago as Head of Chemistry but following her maternity leaves returned as a Teacher of Chemistry. A graduate of Edinburgh University, Dr Spinks moved to Manchester in 2000 to study for her PhD in Biochemistry and the Cell Biology of Alzheimer's before deciding on a career in teaching rather than research.

Whilst at Withington she ran the school's Sign Language Club, enjoyed joining in the Bridge Club and this year has been responsible for the Sixth Form Science Extension Club.

She said:

"Both my husband and I are originally from London and always thought we may return there one day. With the children being the ages they are this seemed the right time for us to go. As it turns out, the house we are looking to buy is equidistant between where Ben is from and where I am from. I will miss Withington though."

Dr Spinks hopes to take up a teaching post in London.

## Ms Clare Flynn



Development Director Ms Clare Flynn has left Withington for the second time. A former pupil, Clare returned to WGS five years ago as the school's Development Director, having departed from the Upper Sixth in July 2000, when she headed off to Durham University to study Modern Languages and Literature. Eight years later, having graduated and worked in fund raising roles for a number of charities, she returned as a member of staff with responsibility for attracting charitable donations for the School's Bursary Fund and other priority projects.

This time, Clare is leaving to join a leading international firm of consultants to non-profit institutions and organisations that counts amongst its clients Cambridge and Durham Universities.

When she joined the school in 2008 the 100 Plus Bursary Appeal had reached £1.4m on its way to reaching its target of £2m. The fund has now reached £2.4m to support means tested bursaries for girls who would otherwise not be able to attend Withington.

In her role of Development Director Ms Flynn has been responsible for a new school initiative, Enhancing Opportunities, launched in 2012, which aims to raise funds for projects identified by staff as having the potential to stretch pupils' abilities and interests beyond the core curriculum. With an initial aim of raising £50,000 in 2012, the Enhancing Opportunities fund raised £130,000 for projects which include providing an opportunity to 16 girls to attend a residential creative writing course next year run by The Arvon Foundation.

Ms Flynn has also established the Emily Simon Legacy society which recognises the generosity of former pupils, parents and staff who have chosen to support School through a legacy gift.

Mrs Marks commented:

"Clare has been Development Director at Withington for five years, and during this time there has been enormous growth in the work of the Development Office and in alumnae relations. Clare departed on 6th December to plan her move to London – and her wedding!"

Ms Flynn said:

"As a former pupil, it is a genuine privilege to have been able to shape and serve the institution which gave me such a good start in life. The Bursary Fund nurtures the potential of bright young women who would not ordinarily be able to come to Withington and the Enhancing Opportunities giving programme allows my fellow alumnae, parents and supporters to support our pupils' own outstanding ability, providing valuable educational opportunities. It has been a pleasure to work with the Headmistress, Governors, Trustees, staff, parents and girls."

"Withington Girls' School is a values-driven and warm place which equips young women with the skills they will need in the world beyond its gates, while our alumnae are remarkable women in their own right. I look forward to hearing about Withington's continuing success as a member of the Alumnae Association!" she added.

The process of finding a new Development Director is currently underway and in the meantime donations to the Bursary Appeal are still very much appreciated.

## Powering the Future



Upper Fourth pupil Sasha Geim recently enjoyed a unique opportunity to gain an insight into the field of Physics in Engineering during a four-day residential schools'

course. The course, run by the educational charity The Smallpeice Trust, is aimed at providing budding young engineers with the opportunity to learn about nuclear engineering and space science as well as providing information about possible career paths.

Sasha writes about her experience:

In the October half term, I went on a four-day residential Smallpeice course, 'Physics in Engineering' at Reeds School, Surrey. The course involved designing and building a model car which had to pass a series of tests, doing a design-and-make project run by the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL), attending various lectures, evening activities, such as the rocket challenge, and a formal dinner with disco. The course taught us essential skills, such as time-management, finance, teamwork and presentation and we also gained an insight into the different careers in engineering. As well as learning these, we also learnt about nuclear fuel waste and its transportation, how to power a train and what is found inside a nuclear fuel reactor. I especially liked our design-and-make project which was to create a model of a spent nuclear fuel flask, in which my group received the first prize. This course was organised and run by the educational group 'Smallpeice' with the help of Jaguar-Land Rover, Bloodhound SSC, NNL, FirstGroup and Surrey Satellites. Participants came from all over the UK and even from British schools in the Netherlands and Greece.

## London Alumnae Career Networking Event

It was a real pleasure for the Development Office team to welcome two alumnae speakers Emma Slater, Investigative Journalist (Class of 2004) and Katy Lindemann, Freelance Media Strategist (Class of 1999), to the New Cavendish Club in London on Thursday 17th October. Both gave up their time freely to deliver two extensive presentations to both WGS alumnae in attendance and to WGS Sixth Form pupils, via a live webinar link. It was the first attempt by the Development Office at using webinar technology; our aim was to open up and share best practice with a virtual audience.

Orlagh Fallon, Upper Sixth pupil said:

"I found this evening's event extremely interesting and informative. I was intrigued and enlightened about what the ladies had to say about their professions and I felt it was a really worthwhile event."

In real-life attendance our guests included working professionals from the media, marketing and PR industries and university students considering their career options.

The presentations were in-depth and thoughtful and the content provided much discussion and debate afterwards. Emma Slater studied Law at Bristol University, followed by Investigative Journalism at City University, London. In December 2012, Emma was awarded the prestigious New Journalist of the Year at the Press Gazette Awards. She has worked for BBC *Panorama*, where she turned her Masters dissertation into a TV documentary on criminal informants before going on to make two programmes for Channel 4's *Despatches*, including one highlighting the illegal designer dog trade. Emma is now working for the ITV's new investigative unit and her first programme aired in November.

Katy spent her gap year working at The Guardian newspaper before studying History at Oxford University. She moved on to developing highly creative and innovative media strategies for Sainsbury's, Harrods, Simple, BMQ and Warner Music, before moving to Naked Communications agency as a senior Strategist. In 2010 she took the brave step to go freelance setting up her own agency Seemingly Unconnected, a move she admits was challenging, but the right decision, providing her with the opportunity to work on varied projects with a mix of consulting clients and freelancers for a range of agencies.

Thank you to both our speakers, for giving their time to share experience and advice with our Alumnae and current pupils.

## Spotlight On Alumna Rachel Heydecker [2006 leaver]



**University of Leeds, BA (Hons) Politics and Parliamentary Studies, First Class**

**University of Edinburgh, MSc in Multi-Level and Regional Politics**

Without Withington I definitely wouldn't be where I am today. I studied Politics in the Sixth Form with Mrs Wallis, and as a Leeds alumnus herself she recommended the course that I ended up studying at University of Leeds. I will always be grateful for her highlighting the course to me! I have many fond memories of our small Politics class arguing over American politics and the weekly news quizzes we got to put together to test our classmates.

I am very grateful to Withington for instilling the attitude in me and my peers that we could do anything we wanted as long as we worked hard. Finishing university at a time when it was a lot harder for graduates to get jobs, I often reminded myself of this.

After I left Withington, I went to Leeds University to study Politics and Parliamentary Studies. This course allowed me to spend a year undertaking internships in legislatures of home and foreign countries, and I was lucky enough to spend four months in Washington DC in 2008 which coincided with Barack Obama's historic election. Interning in the office of a senior Democrat gave me an invaluable experience of life on the Hill and allowed me to hear the views of constituents on the controversial Bailout Bill which was going through Congress at the time.

After the formality of an American office, I found myself much more at home in the UK Parliament, in the office of the SNP [Scottish National Party] Westminster Group. I had expressed an interest in Scottish politics to my personal

tutor, and I found myself spending nine months in a small but extremely busy office providing research and press assistance to seven SNP MPs. What started as an interest became a passion and I was determined to continue to be involved after my graduation.

Unfortunately I could not secure full-time employment at Westminster after graduation, but I worked for the SNP part time and complemented this with three internships at various Thinktanks in central London. These internships allowed me to attend interesting events, be involved in various publications and meet senior political figures, but sadly it did not pay the bills.

After a year I decided that a further degree would help my employment prospects, and I moved up to Scotland to study for an MSc in Multi-Level and Regional Politics at the University of Edinburgh. As well as a degree from one of the top 20 universities in the world, I also secured a job as a Parliamentary Assistant in the Scottish Parliament.

I currently work for an SNP MSP for Glasgow, who is also Minister for External Affairs and International Development in the Scottish Government. During this momentous time in Scottish politics, I couldn't have hoped for a more exciting job. On a daily basis I provide research on constituency issues and engage with the press, but the job can also include visiting schools, food banks or housing associations in tough areas of Glasgow. Of course there's also plenty of leafleting and door knocking too!

The strong work ethic that Withington gave me definitely helped during my Masters year, where study is a lot more independent and relies on self-motivation. Withington has also encouraged me to offer any support or guidance I can to others, and I've been in touch with many Withington Alumnae who have gone on to study Politics at Leeds. Even up in Scotland I've stumbled over a few former WGS girls who are also in Politics!

My words of advice for current pupils would be to never give up on what you want. If you're knocked back for a job, ask for feedback and act on it, and also look out for those elusive paid internships! I also believe that no one can take an educational achievement away from you – so spending an extra year in education to study for a Masters will always be beneficial. Finally, I'd recommend Scotland as a place to live – it's beautiful if a bit chilly!

## Cambridge After Hours Alumnae Reunion

Leavers from the 1940s through to the 2010s joined together to make Withington Girls' School Cambridge After Hours event at Doubletree by Hilton, Cambridge, held on Thursday 14th October, a great success.

The event offered former pupils the opportunity to chat with old friends [and to make new ones!] over drinks and nibbles. During the course of the evening, twenty Alumnae gathered together to share their news and to laugh over memories of their time at Withington. Corrin Scott (nee Hogg) Class of 1979 said "It was very interesting to hear from the 'young ones' about aspects of School as it is now and compared with our day. It was also very pleasant to talk to a few older alumnae too, and to discover similar coincidences in life and to share those memories."

Many commented that the informal format, in comfortable bar settings was very enjoyable. Many alumnae are now keen for Withington to make a speedy return to Cambridge in the near future.

If you would like to help plan this or any other future Alumnae events – perhaps you know of an interesting venue or have a group of friends who would like to meet up – then please do contact the Development Office.



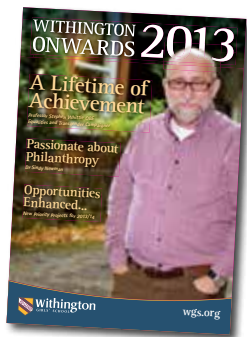
## Withington Onwards Newsletter

The Development Office produces a complimentary annual newsletter for Withington Girls' School Alumnae which is posted early December in a time honoured tradition. This year's edition features up-close interviews with former pupil, Professor Stephen Whittle OBE [1973], a successful equalities and transgender campaigner, who was recently awarded the Stonewall Award 2014 by the American Bar Association SOGI Commission, and Dr Sindy Newman [1977] President of Red Cross, Lancashire and Chairwoman of Tiffany Circle UK.

The newsletter's 'Looking Back' section was submitted by former teachers, Monica Hastings and Valerie Hempstock who share archive material and their own memories of the 1990 'Northern Lights,' production.

This year we have introduced a new column, 'Pupils' Report...' written by our Upper Sixth Formers and Student Ambassadors; Joanna Lees with 'Our Sporting Lives'; Sheanna Patelmater with 'On a Creative High' and Orlagh Fallon writing on 'Educational Change'.

We are really pleased with the Withington Onwards newsletter and we would like to thank all our contributors who have volunteered their time to write columns and edit our newsletter. If you would like to receive this edition then please email your full contact details to [Development@wgs.org](mailto:Development@wgs.org).



## THE Emily Simon SOCIETY

The Emily Simon Society has been established in recognition of the generosity of Founder, Emily Simon, who bequeathed the Playing Fields to School upon her death in 1920. The Emily Simon Society allows School to recognise those who would like to support the School's future through a Legacy gift, enabling projects such as the Bursary Fund to grow and enhance the opportunities for all current pupils. School is now inviting membership to become a Founding Member of the Emily Simon Society where you will be invited to join the Headmistress and Patrons at the inaugural Emily Simon Society reception.

**Please telephone the Development Office, on 0161 249 3494 or email [development@wgs.org](mailto:development@wgs.org) for further information or for a confidential discussion.**



## Alumnae Dates for your Diary

**5th March 2014**

**Withington London Universities Reunion**  
Venue to be confirmed.  
Please see Alumnae website.

**April 2014 (date to be confirmed)**

**Alumnae Annual Dinner**  
TBC, please see Alumnae website  
London, Venue TBC  
Partners and guests are welcome

**10th May 2014**

**1990s Decade Reunion**  
10.30am – 3.30pm, Withington Girls' School.  
For all Alumnae who left during the 1990s

More details of all our events can be found on the Alumnae webpages. Please contact the Development Office on 0161 249 3494 or at [development@wgs.org](mailto:development@wgs.org) to reserve your tickets.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

## WGS Online

Our Alumnae Association Withington Onwards stays in touch with hundreds of Alumnae through Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter!



Add: WGSAlum

Join: Withington Girls' School Alumni - group



Add: Development Office - Withington Girls' School

Join: Withington Girls' School Alumnae - group



Follow: [@WGSAlumnae](https://twitter.com/WGSAlumnae) for daily School and Alumnae updates

# SPECTACULAR

## Withington's 2013 Fashion Show

The Arts Centre became a spectacular blaze of colour as this year's fashion show, *Spectrum*, took to the catwalk, showcasing an array of rainbow inspired designs and raising more than £5,000 for children's charity Barnardo's and Task Brasil, a charity that aims to help improve the quality of life of Brazil's abandoned street children.

Billed as a fusion of fashion, fun and colour, *Spectrum's* 450-strong audience saw the catwalk explode in a riot of bright shades with a selection of beautiful outfits from local retailers and a kaleidoscope of lighting provided by the School's Tech Club. With 15 separate choreographed cameos, the show - which took place on 19th November - featured girls from Lower Fourth to Upper Sixth, boys from Manchester Grammar School as well as a group of Withington teachers who bravely took to the floor with an energetic dance routine.

Around 100 volunteers in all pitched in to help make the annual event a huge success. Alongside the models, the *Spectrum* team also included an Upper Sixth Fashion Show Committee, choreographers, presenters, the DT department and Tech club, specialist hair and makeup artists and members of staff.

Support for the show came from sponsors Beaverbrooks, fashion retailers who kindly loaned the models' clothes, make-up artists from Trafford College and hairstylists from Red Angel Hair.

*Spectrum's* organisers said:

"We hope that the proceeds raised will be able to bring brightness and colour into the lives of disadvantaged children across the UK and Brazil. Here at Withington, we have been fortunate to receive a wonderful education which is why we want to give those less fortunate a better start on life."

Head of DT, Mrs Cotton, who along with Head of Sixth Form, Mrs Robinson, oversaw the organisation of the Fashion Show paid tribute to the girls for their hard work and hailed the show as a great success saying:

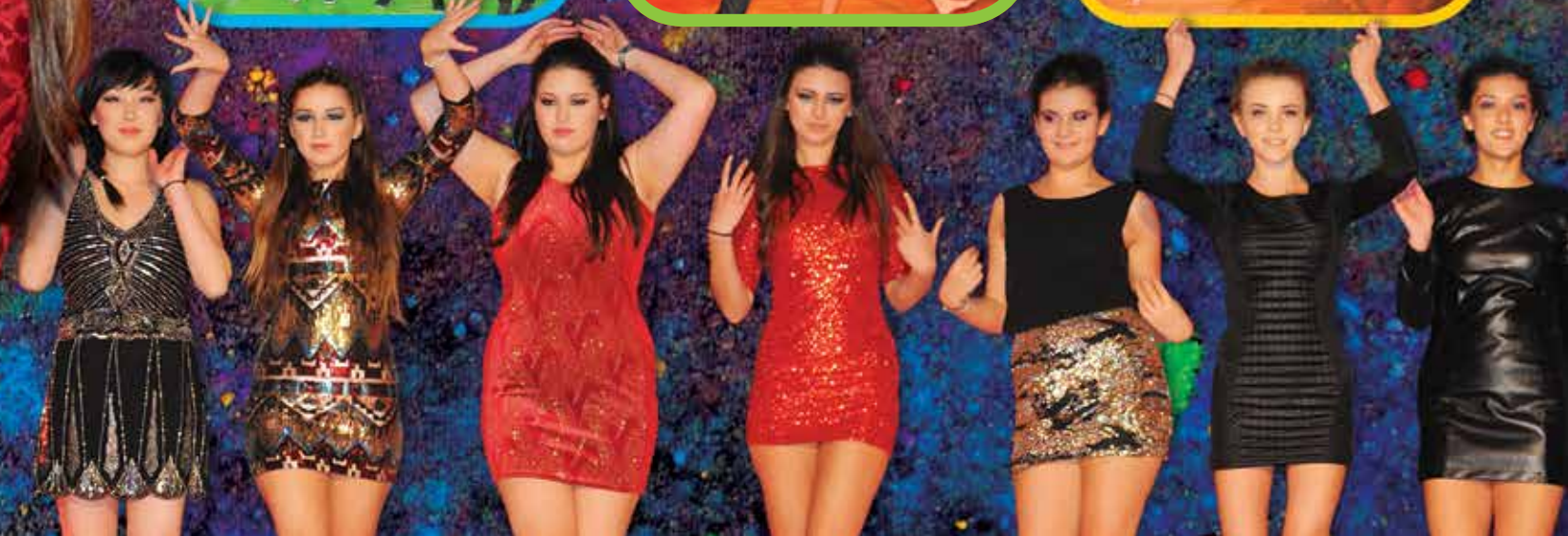
"It never ceases to amaze me that an event that has been held over a number of consecutive years can still be totally original with new concepts and new ideas. Year on year our girls are never daunted, they are always so enthusiastic and always exceed expectations."

The Autumn fashion show is one of Withington's largest single fundraising events and, says Mrs Cotton, underpins the School's ethos of community outreach and charitable giving.

Clothes were kindly loaned by Lucy's With Love, AX Paris, Barnardo's, Internacionale, Boohoo.com, Fashion Union, Norton Barrie, Vanilla, Forever Unique, Heavenly Way to Dye, SOS, Pink, and Vicky Martin.



# SPECTRUM



# Junior



## Junior Fun Night

On Saturday 5th October Withington Girls' Junior School had their unforgettable Family Fun Night, organised by the PTA. It was an action-packed evening with excitement for the whole family.

The mums and dads chatted away locked in their own world while their children were entertained by the flamboyant Louby Lou. There were lots of great prizes on offer and a stunning raffle with a giant cuddly teddy bear up for grabs. The Juniors would like to thank everyone who played a part in making the night such a success.

*By Lucy and Zara, UII*

## Juniors' Shakespeare Day

On the 11th October the Arts Centre became Macbeth's banquetting hall during the Junior School's visit from the Young Shakespeare Company.

The interactive play saw the girls adopting many and varied roles in the play including cooks and ladies during the banquet. It was a truly international affair with royal representation from France, Spain and Japan as the queens from these countries attended Macbeth's Royal Banquet. 'All hail King Duncan' resounded throughout the court from the enthusiastic royal attendants.

On a deeper level, the girls began to understand some of the significance of how a character can change and the influence of others. A truly fantastic day was had by all!

## Harvest Festival

Our Harvest Assembly this year centred on the antics of two church mice who lived in the church and very much looked forward to Harvest every year, particularly because of the food on offer. We considered each letter of the Harvest and most especially the need to S (share) with A (all). We were delighted to be able to present the Salvation Army with a food donation towards their work with homeless people in Manchester and our thanks go to all of the children and parents who contributed towards this.

## Bearly Loved

'Bearly Loved' is a charity set up to give all lonely children around the world a chance to feel special and loved, aiming to give every one of those children a teddy bear/soft toy of their own. All the Juniors and their teachers searched through their homes and brought bears/soft toys into school, filling in a passport for each one, ready for them to be sent to children in Angola. They had a special Assembly to say good-bye to all the soft toys and gave them an extra cuddle to take with them.

## Festive Coffee Morning

Many family and friends gathered together on 4th December for our annual festive coffee morning. As always, there was a great atmosphere, delicious cake and excellent company.

## Junior Philsoc

Thank-you to The Manchester Grammar Junior School for hosting our joint Junior Philsoc lecture on December 2nd. This session was led by the cartoonist Tony Husband, and Upper II girls heard how he started in his career and how he and other cartoonists produced a comic called *Oink*. He drew cartoons on request; even one of Mrs Burrows which was the source of much amusement. Everyone had a chance to pen their own cartoon festive card. There was lots of laughter and it was a very enjoyable lecture.



## Book Fair

We had a visit from Julia Hodgkinson on Thursday, 14th November in the run-up to the Scholastic Book Fair. The Juniors were enthralled by many of the new titles that were on offer and Julia told us enough about the books to make sure that we were 'hooked' without telling us the ending! This meant that the girls knew exactly which books they wanted to buy during the book fair and some titles were so popular that we had to put them on order. Particular favourites included *Russian Roulette* by Antony Horowitz, *A Home for Teasel* by Margi McAllister and the *My Story* historical biography series. Aply assisted by Junior Librarians, the Junior Resource Room was duly transformed into a market place for the week beginning the 18th November as the book stands were wheeled out and opened. We had a very successful week and many of the girls were also able to learn about the financial aspects of managing a float and daily takings. We now hope to be able to significantly replenish the Junior Library and ensure that our very talented readers always have new and exciting books to read.

## Rhythmic Gymnastics

Since September some of the girls in Lower II and Upper II have been participating in a weekly rhythmic gymnastics club with Miss Gardner. Each week, the girls work on their flexibility, try out leaps and jumps and have a go with different apparatus. So far they have tried the ball, the hoop, the rope and even the ribbon!

## Design a Sail

In their Design Technology lessons every Junior girl has produced a design for a sail for a 10-metre high sailing mast and the best two have been entered into a Sail Art Competition with the prize being the honour of having their designs enlarged and painted onto actual sails, to be raced by Olympic sailors at the Royal Victoria Dock, London in January 2014.

The theme they had to design for was 'Legends of the Sea', the 'Wind' and the 'Oceans'. Head of DT, Mrs Fabiola Cotton, said:

"The designs were all fantastic - so fantastic that we had to call in an unbiased panel of judges to make the final decisions." The two overall winners were Zahra Shah (LII) and Catalina Alvaro (UII). Well done!



## Reception Art Competition

Withington Receptionists, Ms Diane Halfhide and Mrs Sandra Sadler, have run a Christmas Art Competition for Juniors this year. It was unsurprising that the Juniors responded with some jolly good designs. The winning entries are displayed in the outer foyer with many more making the Reception area a very festive and Christmassy place!



# Juniors

# Junior Journal ▶▶▶

## Christmas Concert and Party Day

The Junior School Christmas Concert took place on Thursday, 12th December. The first half of the concert displayed the musical talents of the girls with the Junior Orchestra, String Group, Percussion and the Choir each putting on superb performances. In addition, the colourful Ukulele Orchestra, featuring every Junior girl, delighted the audience.

After the interval the girls enacted a musical play entitled *Silent Night*. Set in Austria, it told the story of how a poem written by a parish priest resulted in the well-loved carol. This Christmas musical cleverly combined humour, drama and Christmas traditions with excellent performances put in by the girls.



Just too late for the Bulletin press: On the day following the Concert, the whole Junior School will be going to the Lowry Theatre to watch the pantomime *Wanted! Robin Hood*. As always, the girls are eagerly anticipating our morning out, followed by the Junior School Christmas Party in the afternoon!



## Oxford's Wainwright Essay Prize 2013

Lower Sixth student Vidya Ramesh has been awarded the University of Oxford's prestigious Wainwright Essay Prize 2013.

The Wainwright Essay prize, established more than sixty years ago, aims to encourage the study of non-classical archaeology of Ancient Near Eastern countries. Designed for students attending British schools, the competition sets out to reward 'best scholarly practice'.

Vidya - who is studying History, Ancient Greek, French, Mathematics and Further Mathematics at A Level decided to enter the competition after a trip to the British Museum.

Vidya comments:

"After reading 'A History of the World in 100 Objects' by Neil MacGregor this year, I visited the British Museum for the first time. Each object on display, even a small Indus Valley seal seemed to have its own story to tell. The sheer breadth of what I could write about - 'any aspect of history, archaeology, society, art of the Ancient Near East' really appealed to me."

Vidya says the work involved in writing her essay has broadened her appreciation of history:

"It's easy to forget that it's based not only on textual sources, but on artefacts too," she says.

In her prize-winning 5000-word essay, Vidya considered the significance of archaeological remains around the kingdom of Elam - now part of south-western Iran - and examined the role of women in the three major spheres of Elamite society; the temple, the palace and the home.

Vidya says she chose Elam as her chosen subject because it is a relatively unknown area:

"I was intrigued by several historians' claims that it was a matriarchal society through and through. I had some knowledge of the power structures in the Ancient Near East, as well as the importance of women in religion. Yet I had never really seen the two connected, so I thought that would be something interesting to explore in my essay," she explains.

Vidya has won £250 to spend on books of her choice. She said:

"I was surprised, but delighted to hear that I had won the prize, particularly as it has been running for such a long time. I really enjoyed reading around the subject of my essay as well as examining the historical documents and artefacts prior to writing it."

Said Head of Sixth Form, Mrs Elizabeth Robinson, who is also Vidya's Classical Greek teacher:

"Vidya took on this complex challenge entirely of her own volition. I am so pleased and proud - but not surprised - that her entry was judged to be the best."

# Sporting Successes...

## Netball

### Condover Hall



The U14 (Upper Fourth) team has had an excellent season so far beginning with winning their age group in the GSA Masterclass tournament at Condover Hall in September, which involved more than 20 teams from girls' schools across the country. Ex-England Netball player Amanda Newton praised the consistency and skill level of the Withington team and named Grace Bodha player of the tournament.

The U13 team played seven matches on the Saturday, ending up 2nd in their group, taking them through to the play-offs for the trophy in the top group on the Sunday. They finished a very commendable 4th overall in their group.

### National Schools

In November the U16s finished a very creditable 4th in the National Schools' County tournament. The U14s were runners-up winning through to represent Greater Manchester in the Regional finals in January.

### Manchester and District Tournament

On Saturday 3rd December, five Year groups competed in the Manchester and District tournament and following some impressive netball, all teams were placed; the Upper Fifths put in a particularly good performance to finish runners-up and the unbeaten Upper Fourth were winners of their age group.

An impressive number of girls are playing at County level, they are:

Izzy Whittick, Kate Sinclair, Katie Bodha, Chloe Vell, Aneesa Adlington, Imogen McLean, Sophie Bashich, Leia Griffin, Grace Bodha, Sejal Karmarkar, Ellie Hayton, Lorna Mayo, Claudia Chavasse, Lexi Archer, Niamh Senior, Eryn Burch and Charlotte Westbrook.

## Lacrosse

A number of girls have won places in County and National squads.

England U19s:

Jo Lees

Scotland U19:

Francesca Gray

England U19 Development Squad:

Antara Bate, Flora Whyte,  
Iona Whyte and Lauren Cheyne

Cheshire U15s:

Miranda Bate, Helen Swarbrick  
and Maisey Deykin

Cheshire U18s:

Antara Bate

Lancashire U15s:

Lauren Cheyne

Lancashire U18s:

Flora Whyte, Iona Whyte,  
Annie Dean and Jo Lees

## Equestrian

Withington's first-ever riding team competed in the North West qualifier at the South View Riding Centre in September. Lillian Sears, Natasha Anson, Gabby Horan and Francesca Lugo came 9th out of 20 teams – a very good first effort! Special thanks go to Mrs Lugo who supervised the team at the event.



Congratulations go to the following girls who are reaching excellent levels of achievement in their chosen sports outside School.

## Tae Kwon Do

Alvira Kumar has won a gold medal at the Scottish Open International Championship held in Glasgow in November.

## Water Polo

Anna Ticehurst plays for Manchester 99s U15 team who won the National Championships at Manchester Aquatic Centre. She attends regional training and is hoping to be a North West trialist.

## Squash

Marielena Iacovides participated in the British Junior Championships in Manchester in November bringing her ranking to 34th in England for U13 girls.



## Mitzvah Day Fundraising

From 13th-15th November, Withington girls across all age groups and backgrounds showed their fantastic support for yet another annual Mitzvah Day. Mitzvah Day UK is a day of giving time and good deeds, not money, to charity in order to make a meaningful difference to someone who needs it. The Jewish Society decided that this year we would support the charity Age Concern UK. This was very exciting because Accessory World in Prestwich kindly let us borrow a full-sized mannequin, which we placed in the foyer. Girls were asked to sort through their wardrobe and bring in any clothes that they wished to donate, which were deposited in a box next to the mannequin. Each day, the mannequin modelled a different outfit. Age Concern UK has passed on their gratitude for the volume of clothes donated. Mitzvah Day proved to be a huge success and on behalf of the Jewish Society, I'd like to say a big thank you to all girls who got involved.

**Jessica Stolberg** Head of Jewish Society

## Tasty Treats!

Assistant Pastry Chef, Mrs Julie Callendar, has been getting creative producing Christmas-themed chocolate-covered apples and lollipops for breketime snacks.



## Pretium Triplex Verbi!

This term's Latin Scrabble event took place at Stockport Grammar School. Eight Upper Fifth girls competed in three teams against Stockport Grammar and MGS. One team from each school won each of the three matches and the scores were evenly balanced. It was, as ever, a competitive but friendly atmosphere.

**Mrs J Howling** Head of Classics



## Poetic Translation

Sitara Bartle of LVX and Lily Rouhi-Parkouhi of UIVX entered this year's Stephen Spender Prize for poetry in translation and although they were not among the winners in this national competition were pleased that they had made an effort and found out much more than they had expected from their respective poets. Lily tried to get into the mind of the Persian poet Ahmad Shamlou by translating *A Bright Horizon*, about love and hopes for the future of our world. Sitara interpreted from Sanskrit part of the *Bhagavad Gita* on the theme of devotion and the qualities of the best human being.



# NURTURING POTENTIAL

## Supporting Bursaries at Withington

### Diana's story

Diana says of her time at Withington:



"I am extremely grateful for my time at Withington and for the opportunities it gave me. I feel very fortunate that I was awarded a bursary and able to attend a school that encouraged me not only academically, but also personally. I have no doubt that if I had not have attended Withington I would not be the confident young woman that I am today, and so I owe a lot to the Bursary Programme.

"After leaving Withington I went to the University of Birmingham to study Theology and Philosophy, due to loving RS at school. The course was brilliant – a great mixture of old and new, ranging from Biblical Hebrew to New and Alternative Spiritualities in Theology. For my Philosophy dissertation I used Derren Brown's popular TV programmes (such as *The Heist*) to argue that we do have moral responsibility. I was sad to say goodbye to Birmingham when I graduated in 2012 with First Class Honours.

"In July this year I graduated from Manchester Metropolitan University having completed my PGCE in Religious Education. Since September I have been teaching Ethics, Philosophy and Religion at Westholme Senior School in Blackburn. I am glad that I was inspired by my teachers at Withington to enter this profession, as I can not imagine a job that is more rewarding. Now more than ever it is evident to me how important an all-round education is in preparing students for the next stage in life and I am so grateful that I was able to attend Withington as this gave me the best education I could hope for to prepare me for my further education and career. All this I would not have been able to achieve without the support of the Bursary programme – Thank you!"

Continuing her link with Withington girls, Diana volunteered to be a mentor in the University Buddies Scheme in 2011, which puts a new leaver in touch with an older alumna at the same university or college during their first year.



## Economics Team on Target in Bank Competition

Upper Sixth Economics students are on track for the next round of a national Bank of England Interest Rate Challenge after clinching top place in a regional knockout heat.

The four girls – Sonia Patel, Bethany Jack-Williamson, Rebecca Zafar and Amani Khan – competed against teams from other local schools, pitching their ideas on monetary policy, inflation and interest rates to earn themselves a spot in the area final in February.

Withington is one of 302 schools across the country competing for a £10,000 prize in the Bank of England and The Times Target Two Point Zero Interest Rate Challenge analysing UK and global economic data, the possible impact on inflation and the economic outlook for the UK – just as the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee does each month. The team must then decide if current monetary policy is appropriate or needs to be adjusted, to meet the 2.0 per cent inflation target set by the Government.

Head of Economics Mr Boddy commented:

"The team put a great deal of work researching their presentation, discussing their findings and building a clear outline of the current state of the UK economy. Their presentation was effective and covered a full range of issues that affect the Bank's monetary policy. After the presentation teams face 15 minutes of detailed questioning from the Bank's economists which is a great challenge. The team handled this very well, developing convincing explanations using their knowledge of economic theory and the UK and international economy."

The chair of the judging panel, John Young, said,

"We were impressed not just with what the Withington pupils knew about economic theory, but how well informed they were about what was happening in the economy".

The final will be held in March at the Bank of England, London.



## Politics Trip

On the 10th October, 10 Lower Sixth Politics students, accompanied by Mrs Wallis and Mrs Hamilton, visited London for the day. First, they stopped off at The House of Lords where they had the opportunity to watch a debate on mental health issues in the UK. They then went on to The House of Commons where they were lucky enough to watch a debate between some extremely excitable MPs, from both the leading party and the shadow party, who proved most entertaining to watch.

The girls then took part in a workshop where their knowledge was further broadened about the different electoral systems which is a vital part of the AS level course. They were also greeted by a familiar northern face, Withington's local MP, John Leech, and were able to ask general questions about his day-to-day work. They finally visited The Supreme Court where they were given a tour of the various court rooms and told about the procedure when a case is held. After a busy day they finally visited both 10 Downing Street and Buckingham Palace, which was taken as a major photo opportunity. All-in-all the trip was a resounding success for all the girls who came back with only positive memories and a fuller knowledge of various aspects of the Politics AS course.



## Multilingual Debating

On Thursday 14th November, six members of the Upper Sixth took part in the Modern Languages' Debate at Cheadle Hulme School. The girls had to debate the following motions:

1. We don't need paper anymore.
2. Environmental protests are a waste of time.
3. Prisons are of no use.
4. Dogs are better than cats.

They had to debate in their chosen language. Well done to Rachel Brunner and Leila Parsa who debated in French, Emma Ratcliffe and Georgina Harris who debated in Spanish and Antonia Halliwell and Isabella Barber who debated in German.

All candidates are to be commended on the tremendous amount of advance preparation they did ahead of the debate and they all acquitted themselves very well on the night. They defended their viewpoints and challenged their opponents admirably. They were all excellent ambassadors for the School.

Mrs Morton, Mrs López,  
Mrs Menzies and Miss Ellis



## Chester Zoo

Upper Sixth Biologists visited Chester Zoo in October, the last day before half term. Their brief was to study the role of zoos in the conservation of rare and endangered species. This forms a section on the A2 specification and it is fascinating to hear how much work the zoos do which is not immediately obvious to the daily visitor. The girls were surprised to learn where a large proportion of the entrance fee actually gets used, and how much impact the zoo has with projects abroad. This ranges from educating locals to setting up local wardens and gamekeepers and protecting the habitats of endangered animals so that they can be preserved in situ. Only if the animal is threatened with extinction are they removed from their natural habitats and put into a captive breeding programme. We also learned how palm oil plantations are destroying vast areas of natural habitats with the consequential loss of animal and plant native species, and how palm oil is used in such a wide range of products that the demand for its production grows daily.

The girls listened carefully to the lectures and asked thoughtful and interesting questions.

**Dr Sue Madden** Head of Biology



## Career Horizons

Girls and their parents turned out in force for Withington's Careers Convention on the evening of Thursday, 26th September.

More than 20 delegates representing a wide range of sectors visited the School to share their expertise with students from Lower Fifth through to Upper Sixth.

Guest speakers provided a valuable insight into a variety of careers - Architecture, Medicine, Politics, Dentistry, Experimental Physics, Television, and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). There was also a Gap Year talk by a representative of The Project Trust.

Delegates from a variety of other careers set up informational areas, enthusing attendees and sharing their in-depth knowledge and personal experiences. There was a diverse selection for girls to choose from - art, design and photography; investment banking; veterinary science; media; politics; engineering; physiotherapy and sports medicine; writing; psychology; research science; journalism; accountancy; law (barristers' chambers) and primary education.

The event, held biennially, was organised by Mrs Nicki Cottam, Head of Careers, and Mrs Louise Jefferies, Careers Assistant.

Mrs Cottam said:

"While it would be impossible to represent all of the career aspirations of every one of our students, many of the people in attendance have experienced a number of different careers, and have extremely broad and interesting progressions in their current roles."

"We were extremely fortunate to have many experts and outstanding practitioners with us for what was an extremely informative and enjoyable evening. It was clear that many were inspired by the words of our delegates and I am sure that it has been invaluable for our girls in helping them reach decisions about their future career choices," she added.



## International Debating Champions

At an exciting weekend at the Battle of Ideas Festival at the Barbican in London, Withington's Senior debating duo, Samantha Cooke and Sheanna Patelmaster, have won the Debating Matters International Debating crown.

In June, Withington's Debating Team became the UK National Champions which won them the privilege of representing the UK in an International Final vs the India National Champions. Their prize also included an all-expenses-paid weekend in London attending the Battle of Ideas Festival at the Barbican - two days of high-level, thought-provoking, public debate organised by the Institute of Ideas.

Three out of the four original team have now gone on to University so Sheanna and Samantha took up the torch for Withington and the UK.

At 5.30 pm on Saturday 19th October it was showtime and they began their battle debating in favour of the motion "Megacities are bad for the developing world" with Indian champions NPS Koramangala, from Bangalore, arguing against the motion.

After strong arguments from both sides followed by a challenging interrogation from the floor and an extremely incisive panel of judges, Withington / UK were judged to be the Champions!

Debating Matters judge, Austin Williams, associate professor of architecture at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, Suzhou in China said:

"...a close run thing between two high calibre teams; demonstrating genuine research interests, significant understanding of key issues, and intellectual bravery on a commendable level..."

Joel Cohen from the Institute of Ideas Debating Matters added:

"Not only did Samantha and Sheanna give a good fight in the International Final it was great to see them on the Sunday contributing to every discussion they sat in."

Since then, on Saturday 7th December, the team enjoyed the last element of their prize package - a fully-catered day in a private box at the Statoil Masters Tennis Tournament at the Albert Hall in London!



# ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES

## Supporting Annual Projects at Withington

The Enhancing Opportunities giving programme was established in 2012 to identify short-term funding priorities and provide stretch learning opportunities for all girls who will take their experiences and skills into their futures beyond Withington.

In September 2012, 13 former pupils from Withington helped raise £130,000 towards the Nurturing Potential Bursary Fund and Enhancing Opportunities Annual Fund in Withington's first telephone campaign. In addition to raising much-needed funds for the Bursary Appeal, this support has enabled the School to purchase all three identified Annual Fund projects in 2012 – a concert pedal harp, a state-of-the-art laser cutter and 16 prestigious residential placements on the Arvon Foundation creative writing course. This was only possible due to the kind and generous support of our former pupils, parents, friends and staff.



### Withington External Speaker Programme:

Understanding that Extends Beyond the Curriculum

£15,000

In order to succeed in an increasingly competitive higher education and work environment our girls need to demonstrate their knowledge and commitment to a relevant subject.

Dr Cristina Vilela says:

"Our aim is to help extend the girls' subject-related knowledge through an intensive weekly programme of interactive seminars, giving the girls an opportunity to formulate new ideas and informative discussions." The speaker programme will be led by leading external academics and professionals in their field, from science, humanities and the arts, and there will also be a focus on professional skill sets. The audience will be primarily be Withington Sixth Formers, but we would like to open up the sessions to pupils from other schools in the Manchester area who will not have access to this resource."

### Nexus Tablets:

21st Century Technology for Enhancing Geographical Fieldwork

£4000

The tablets will be combined with the most powerful GIS (Geographical Informational System) software and will provide an all-in-one data collecting and recording tool for use out in the field, whilst at the same time allowing instant web access to knowledge about the places being studied. Pupils will gain the advanced technological skills and knowledge needed at A-level, but it will be programmed to run simpler programmes for younger pupils at Key Stage 3 [Year 7, 8 and 9]. Sixth Formers will produce complex cartographic representations of their findings that will enhance analysis and understanding. It can be applied to complex environmental decision-making processes, for example the possible location of a Wind Farm site.

Says Mrs Julie Buckley, Head of Geography:

"As a learning tool, it will help students become independent and enthusiastic leaders of their own learning. This will certainly be bringing Geographical study into the 21st Century."

### How to Support Enhancing Opportunities

Regular gifts can be made monthly, quarterly, or annually for a number of years by Direct Debit or standing order. By making a long-term donation we can ensure regular income to support the enhancing opportunities programme, and use your donation most effectively. If 100 supporters gave £25 a month for two years, we would raise £60,000. If your donations are eligible for Gift Aid, at the 20% basic tax rate, a £25 monthly donation will be worth £31.25 to Withington.

We could not hope to offer these key projects supported by the Annual Fund without your help.

We would be delighted if you would consider making a donation, please contact the Development Office on

0161 249 3494 or email [Development@wgs.org](mailto:Development@wgs.org)

[www.withington.manchester.sch.uk/development/page/how-help](http://www.withington.manchester.sch.uk/development/page/how-help)

### Digital Spectrometer:

Clear views of Electrons in Atoms

£2000

The purchase of a digital spectrometer will allow Physics and Chemistry students to interact with a piece of equipment which will appear in their further studies and for many, their future careers. The spectrometer will significantly enhance the girls' learning at the highest level whilst at School.

Dr Dave Verity, Physics Teacher says:

"On the AS Physics course we look at the electrons in atoms existing in discrete energy levels. Electrons can make transitions between these levels by either absorbing or emitting electromagnetic radiation. A digital spectrometer would enhance the girls' learning of this topic as we could interface the spectrometer with a computer to display the spectra on a screen to enable clear viewing by the whole class simultaneously. We could also take direct and precise frequency measurements from this which we could then use in calculations where we could then determine the value of the energy levels."

# Bronze DofE

The 2013 Lower Fifth Bronze groups completed their first practice walk in and around Lyme Park on Sunday 13th October. We had 10 groups and some very enthusiastic participants, keen to practise teamwork and learn to navigate in the countryside.

The weather was quite wet with poor visibility but everyone had a good time. Each group had a different route and start time so although *Six Chicks with Hiking Sticks*, *The Five Amigos* and *Cool Compass Crew* were the first teams back, everyone was a winner and all have stories to tell. Many thanks to Mr Snowden (and family), Miss Akhtar, Mr Lindsay-Dunn and all the parents who walked with the groups.

**Mrs R Lindsay-Dunn** DofE Coordinator



# Lunch with the Queen

On Thursday 14th November, I was given the amazing opportunity of lunch at Gorton Monastery as a guest of the Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester. The principle guests were Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh.

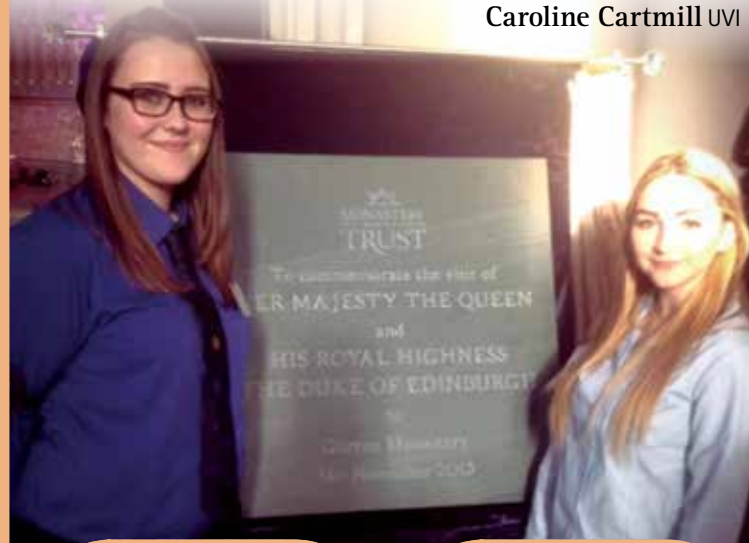
I was invited as a representative of Girl Guiding Manchester, as I am a young leader for the Rainbows at a local unit in Didsbury. I was delighted to have been chosen for this event, alongside other young people representing uniformed organisations.

Described as a "private function" with 100 guests, the atmosphere was warm and friendly and I met many interesting people, including Headmasters, Army officers, and charity representatives. I was able to get in a photo with the BBC North West Tonight presenters.

Gorton Monastery is a beautiful location. To mark the 60th anniversary of The Queen's Coronation, 740 candles were lit, including 61 pillar candles (one for every year of The Queens reign).

Her Majesty unveiled a plaque made by Shaun Williamson, one of the sculptors who restored the twelve 8ft high statues of the saints that were reinstated on their plinths in the Great Nave last year. The Queen and Duke also signed the Monastery guest book.

**Caroline Cartmill** UVI



# Kids' Lit Quiz

Congratulations to the two Withington teams who represented the School at the North West regional heats of the Kids' Literature Quiz 2013. Both did very well, winning individual rounds (and books!). Team B won a tiebreaker answering "how many players are there in a Quidditch team?" (answer: 7!).

Overall the B team came third out of 16 teams, with 67.5 points, with the winning team, King's Macclesfield taking the prize with 71 points – a very close margin.



# Cookery Club

This term, Lower Fourth girls have had the chance to attend after-school classes learning the art of baking and decorating. Run by the School's Pastry Chef, Mr Dominique Schickele, the girls have learnt to make roses and figures from icing, cinnamon biscuits, triple-ginger biscuits, honey chocolates and snowman cupcakes.





## It's All Adding Up!

This term has focused on UKMT Challenges for girls in Y12 and Y13.

### Senior Maths Challenge

7 Golds, 24 Silver and 29 Bronze

Penny Jones, Midi Wang and Heather Lewis – invited to sit the next run – Kangaroo challenge

### Maths Olympiad for Girls

This is a new challenge to try to increase the performance/participation of girls in the main Olympiad.

Penny Jones, Heather Lewis and Midi Wang all achieved distinctions.

### Senior Team Challenge

This involved Izabella Edmonds, Midi Wang, Penny Jones and Siyang Wei, competing against 30 other schools in the regional heats. The girls finally finished in 6th place out of 30.



## Young Critics Book Award

Congratulations to Ella Slater in the Upper Fourth who has won the Guardian Young Critics competition 2013. She won this on the basis of a book review which she wrote about one of the books which had been long-listed for the Guardian children's fiction prize. She and her parents were invited to a ceremony at the Guardian's offices in London on Wednesday 23rd October where the winner of the Guardian children's fiction prize was also announced. Ella got to meet and chat to quite a few of the long-listed authors who were there (including Emma Stead, the winner, and Lydia Syson whose book *A World Between Us* Ella had reviewed).



Ella writes:

It was a surprise that I was one of the winners of The Guardian Young Critics Award 2013. I had not expected to win at all and I felt very honoured.

On the day of the ceremony, in the October half term, we travelled down to London and spent a nice day walking around art galleries and getting sore feet because of the long distances that we walked in thin-bottomed shoes.



When the time came, we arrived at the Guardian where we were directed into a little reception room full of authors, publishers, other winners and their families. Amazingly, there were way too many sweets in there. Everywhere: jars of pick and mix, rainbow iced doughnuts, giant marshmallows on sticks wrapped up perfectly and tied with neon pink ribbons. There was even a giant table with a pink spotty table cloth. I didn't wait for anything, or anyone. I dived right in!

Throughout the evening, I met and saw various authors, including Patrick Ness, who liked my notepad, and John Green, whom I did not, at first, recognise. By the end of the night, I was exhausted but happy. It had been such fun and I had even acquired an invitation to spend a kind of work-experience day at the Guardian office. I departed with a few heavy bags full of prizes and souvenirs, and we ran back to the station so that we didn't miss our train. We managed to rush onto it at the second before it left Euston, in the end.



## Model United Nations

Withington girls represented Qatar, South Sudan, Rwanda & Central African Republic at the Model United Nations Conference – dubbed MUNCH – held at Cheadle Hulme School on the weekend of 12th – 13th October. In addition, several of the more experienced MUN-ers – Orlagh Fallon, Jess Stolberg, Sheanna Patelmaster and Giulia Baggaley Simpson – chaired in the Committees.

The Qatar delegation were awarded Highly Commended in the Crisis Debate then followed up with a Highly Commended Delegation Award for the whole conference. One of their debating scenarios was: 'Qatar has suffered a major earthquake' which formed the basis of the emergency debate... but the WGS Qatari representative reassured the floor, "It's OK – the World Cup WILL go ahead!"

There were many individual delegate awards too including Outstanding Delegate Awards in the Committees for two Lower Sixth Formers, Penny Jones and Sam Cooke. Mimi Johnson in the Upper Fourth earned a Highly Commended Delegate in her Committee, a tremendous achievement at her age.

Congratulations to all girls for all their enthusiasm and commitment and for everything they achieved during this weekend.



## Mock Trial Competition

On Saturday, 30th November, twelve Lower Sixth girls took part in a Mock Trial Competition at Minshull St Crown Court. The twelve participating schools were divided into three leagues, each conducting three 'trials' in a real courtroom in front of a real judge, who scored each team on their preparation, presentation and attention to court procedure. The girls had prepared for weeks in advance, kindly assisted by two barristers who volunteered their time to come into School for a couple of hours each week to familiarise the girls with the fictional cases and how to play their parts. Girls played the roles of barristers (in wigs and gowns), court clerks, witnesses and defendants, alternating, for each 'trial' between prosecution and defence.

The Withington girls – Siyang Wei, Vidya Ramesh, Jemima Eyre, Esther Webber, Ellie Hindley-Skelt, Melissa Hale, Marigold Melton, Sarah Loftus, Natalie Robinson and Gabby Horan – were scored winners in all three of their trials, coming top of their league. However, on points, they just narrowly missed going through to the final, but came a very creditable third in the competition. In a separate challenge, Anuradha Ponnappali and Sasha Gill took part in the MEN law reporter competition and won.

The girls all learnt a great deal about the UK system of law in the process and were a credit to the School. They should be very proud of their achievements. Congratulations to all.

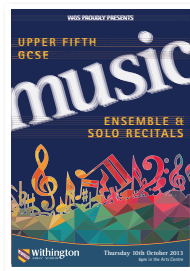
**Miss Amanda Phillips** Mock Trial Coordinator



## Musical Notes

Withington's Music Department has enjoyed another busy term of impressive performances, with a rich and varied programme of musical events.

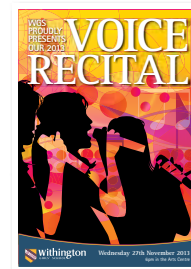
Founders' Day on 8th October marked the start of the musical year with the Senior Choir and Senior Orchestra performing in front of a packed auditorium of 2,000 parents, pupils, staff and invited guests at the Bridgewater Hall.



Ten Upper Fifth girls staged an evening of solo and ensemble recitals on 10th October to showcase a selection of their GCSE Music pieces. Mrs Sargent commented on the high standard across the wide variety of performances and added:

"It was lovely that the girls were able to perform part of their GCSE syllabuses with parental support during such an intimate concert."

On the 27th November the Voice Recital was an opportunity for vocalists throughout the school to sing to an appreciative audience in the Arts Centre. Girls from the Junior School through to Sixth Form performed 24 solos and two duets between them in a concert organised by Vocal Studies Tutor Fiona Clucas and Withington's new voice coach Laurie Ashworth.



Mrs Clucas was also responsible for organising the highly successful Choirs for Cancer concert held at Withington on 1st December, an event which included the Senior Choir and which raised more than £2,000 for cancer charities.

Although the run-up to Christmas is always the busiest month of the year for the Music Department, Withington's musicians took time out from their festive performances to sit their Associated Board exams. On 10th and 11th December 49 girls took exams ranging in level from the Prep Test through to Grade 8 in singing and a variety of instruments. The 11th December also saw GCSE controlled assessments on the theme of Music of Classical Western Tradition.

## Physics Olympics

On Saturday 19th October, eight girls from the Lower Sixth travelled to the Physics Olympics in Liverpool accompanied by Mrs Bradshaw. The activities ranged from catapults to dragons and bridges to gamma radiation. To their surprise, team *Icarus* (Eugenie Yen, Ellie Stonehouse, Olivia Ngan and Amy Brown of Lower Sixth) won the overall competition and beating 34 teams from other local schools in the North West and Wales which consisted of mostly Upper Sixth boys. Team *Alpha* (Haleh Taghinejadi, Siyang Wei, Sarah Alvi and Teneeka Mai) also deserve a special mention as they did very well in the Catapult Challenge. We had a great day and winning at our first attempt made it even better!



Join the 300 Club and help put

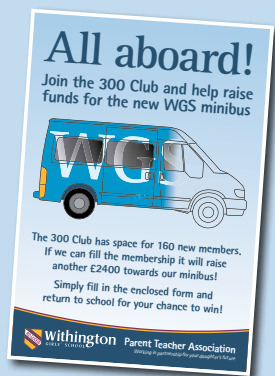
## “The Wheels on the Bus”

The PTA is hoping to be in a position to purchase a much-needed new minibus for the school in the near future which will be for the benefit of all the girls.

One of our initiatives - the 300 club - has space for 160 new members. If the membership were to be fully subscribed, it would raise a further £2400 towards the minibus.

The cost of membership is just £15 per annum and this entitles you to be entered into the termly draw where there are four cash prizes to be won. Joining is easy: visit the PTA page on the WGS website and click '300 Club' or email the treasurer - [Helen@coombescf.co.uk](mailto:Helen@coombescf.co.uk)

Please join today and help put the wheels on the Withington bus!



# Hollywood Glamour Came To WITHINGTON

The 'Hollywood Glamour Comes to Withington' Ball was held on 28th September at the Hallmark Hotel in Handforth, where 240 parents, teachers and governors enjoyed a delightful dinner, excellent entertainment and a wonderful atmosphere.

This is the main fundraising event for the PTA and, this year, we raised in excess of £5000 towards the purchase of a new minibus for the school in the near future.

Thank you to all for supporting the Annual Ball and for your contribution in making the evening such a success!

Yvonne Dodd, Chair



## Do call us (Before we call you!)

Pupil absence: Please would all parents use **0161 249 3476** to inform the School of pupil absence before 8.30am on each day of absence.

For contact after school please use these numbers:  
Senior Late Room: **0161 249 3492**  
Junior Late Room: **0161 224 1077**



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