

# SEVENOAKS TODAY



## Biodiversity

Travelling to Madagascar, a group of L6 Biology students arrived in the capital Antananarivo (Tanna) for a night, before heading down south to Fort Dauphin, a port town on the southern coast. After a seven-hour experience on a truck they finally arrived at Ifotaka and the camp where they would spend the next week.

The group worked with scientists and PhD students on five different sections of preservation of the Mandray Valley: birds, lemurs, amphibians, reptiles, vegetation and invasive plants. This data is going towards a report for UNESCO to make the Mandray Valley a protected biosphere.

The group visited the village of Ifotaka to see the new classroom built for the local school from the money raised in Sevenoaks at the quiz night and Lower School disco. The gratitude shown by the headmaster greatly touched everyone. After saying a sad goodbye to the camp and the Madagascan students, the group travelled to Nosy Be, an island off the north-east coast.

The final week comprised of snorkelling and completing the PADI dive course around Madagascar's astonishing variety of coral and fish. Lectures on reef ecology helped the group increase their knowledge exponentially. The sun and beach proved a completely different experience to the first week and both were equally unforgettable.



## Top of the class

The school is celebrating its excellent examination results.

In the **International Baccalaureate**, students achieved Sevenoaks' most successful results to date.

- 16 students gained the maximum 45 points for the IB Diploma
- 23 students gained 44 points
- 125 students gained diplomas with 40 or more points
- The average points score per student was 39.9, the school's best ever average

These results placed the school as the top full IB school in the UK.

At **GCSE** and **IGCSE**, the results were equally impressive. All students took three separate IGCSE sciences and Maths. IGCSE is widely seen as a more challenging qualification than traditional GCSEs.

- 53.6% of all examinations were graded A\*
- 84.8% of all examinations were graded A or A\*
- 19 students gained 10 or more A\* grades
- All but 31 results out of 1414 examinations were grade B or above.

## Study shows advantages of IB

Research published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in 2011 has extolled the advantages of taking the International Baccalaureate. Closer to home, Dr Gerda Frank-Gemmill has completed a study based on 823 IB students who left Sevenoaks School between 2000 and 2007 and graduated from a UK university. The study suggested that IB students were significantly more likely to obtain a 'good honours degree' (1st or 2.1) than their A-Level counterparts. The study showed that OS who attended Oxford and Cambridge obtained degree results that were markedly better when compared with those of the overall student population. Both studies firmly support the view that the IB is an excellent preparation for university.

**i** More information on these studies can be found at [www.sevenoaksschool.org/international-baccalaureate](http://www.sevenoaksschool.org/international-baccalaureate)



■ Congratulations to **Dr Rachel Yu** who received the 2011 Georg-Helm-Preis in Dresden. Her thesis was selected as the best in the Science Faculty in the Technical University of Dresden.

## Alan Gibbons visit

Award-winning children's author Alan Gibbons visited Sevenoaks to give a full day of workshops for the Lower School. He entertained the Lower School with witty jokes and humorous impressions and talked about his novel *An Act of Love*, a story about terrorism told from the point of view of a soldier.



■ In June, as part of Enrichment Week, pupils from Year 8 were challenged to combine music and art to explore an exam waiting room, creating an installation designed to transform the viewer's perception of The Space and reflect on their experience of waiting. The pupils created a powerful and darkly humorous installation that strongly reflected the pupils' view of exams.

The **Independent State Schools Partnership Project**, a three-year project funded by the DfE to support outreach work with local state schools (Knole Academy, Hextable School, Orchards Academy Swanley, Wilmington Grammar School for Boys and The Grammar School for Girls Wilmington), has just been concluded.

The partnership has organised 17 activities and involved nearly 600 pupils. It was set up to specifically raise student aspirations in Mathematics, Science and Languages. For its final activity in July, Year 9 students from four of the Partnership schools attended a session which introduced them to Russian and Mandarin (pictured). By the end of the day the students were familiar with the Cyrillic alphabet and had managed to write and speak in Mandarin.



## Off the beaten Plath

In May 2011 a number of L6 students and teachers made a tour of Stratford-upon-Avon and North Yorkshire to explore the physical, emotional and intellectual landscape of Shakespeare, Bronte, Plath and Hughes. After a student-led seminar in Stratford, the group visited Shakespeare's home and watched a mesmerising version of *Macbeth* in the new Theatre. The group went north to stay in Haworth where again students led seminars on *Wuthering Heights* and the poetry of Plath and Hughes.

## A cracking day out

The **Mathematics Society** had its inaugural trip in June, when a group of Lower Sixth students made the journey to Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire to visit the remains of Station X, the home of Britain's Second World War code-breakers.



## Hitting the high notes

A concert, pictured left, was held in September to showcase the school's talented singers. Highlights included a selection from *The Magic Flute* by Mozart. There was real contrast in the performances, from the extraordinary low range from **James White** (U6) to stratospheric top Fs from **Emily Lindsay** (U6). **Yimika Awolowo** (U6) performed the beautiful 'Ave Maria' by Caccini with amazing breath control. After a concert of superb solos, the evening ended with a sparkling Bach Aria by **Francesca Vernon** (Y11)

## The Elle factor

Congratulations to **Elle Watson** (Y10), who finished third in the Pizza Express Big Audition, a national music competition with over 7000 entrants. Elle took part in the national live final in late November before a panel of judges, including renowned jazz performer Jamie Cullum. Elle performed a fantastic set despite struggling with a sore throat and was the top solo performer, finishing behind two groups. Elle is a member of the Gospel Choir and Choral Society.

## Scholars' recital

On Wednesday 2 November, three music scholars performed a lunchtime recital to real acclaim at St Luke's. **Elsbeth Newey** (L6) impressed the audience with a mature and virtuosic violin performance of the first movement of Vivaldi's Winter Concerto from the *Four Seasons*. **Marcus Mok** (L6) then played a lyrical version of Rachmaninov's 'Vocalise'. **Samir Yep** (Y11) ended the recital with a passionate performance of Romance from Wieniawski's 2nd Concerto for violin.



## Brass concert

November saw the visit of the fabulous Fine Arts Brass Ensemble. This internationally acclaimed brass quintet worked with Sevenoaks brass players and choirs during an inspiring day of workshops and rehearsals, before wowing an appreciative Pamoja Hall audience with a spectacular evening concert. Highlights included Bach's 'Jauchzet, Frolocket' with the Choral Society and Parents' Choir, a wide range of jazz standards with terrific trumpet solos, and a multiphonic performance of 'Happy Birthday' on the tuba for a boy in Year 8!





## Sturm und Drang

The Sevenoaks School Theatre Company's interpretation of *Macbeth* incorporated dynamic physical aspects and made inventive use of a strong ensemble cast to create a visceral atmosphere and bring the play vividly to life.

The title role of Macbeth was played outstandingly by **Jake Spence** (L6), who sensitively showed the character's mental conflict and portrayed his developing greed brilliantly. **Kathy Stocker** (U6) played the calculating Lady Macbeth superbly, capturing the character's cool exterior, whilst showing her ambition and thirst to reach the top. The evening provided a compelling, refreshing and lucid view of *Macbeth*, and was performed by an obviously passionate and enthusiastic cast. Both actors are pictured left.

The company (pictured below) took the production on a successful tour to Ibbenbüren, Germany over October half term. There were performances in the breathtakingly beautiful village of Tecklenburg, in front of 650 people in Ibbenbüren itself, and at the Berlin British School.



## 2011 A Space Odyssey

Combining themes of immigration, persecution and imprisonment of refugees, *An Odyssey* was a truly unique production for the Drama department, and an exciting event for the school.

The audience were led inside the venue by actors playing cruel guards, and were assigned name badges with random identities. They were taken through a maze of white asylum-like walls, and screamed at by members of the cast portraying fellow prisoners.

As the audience voyaged through The Space, learning of Odysseus' travels, they not only witnessed a spectacle but become part of it too. The actors were hugely successful in incorporating the audience as an extra character. The show itself was spectacular, employing dance, music, puppetry, mime, lighting, singing and many occasions of audience interaction.

**Charly Solomou's** (U6) rich vocals were a highlight and **Alex Tocili** (U6) was in every scene and kept the audience captivated throughout.



# China in their hands

In July, a group of Sevenoaks students (pictured below at the Great Wall) joined the two-week 2011 Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) Summer Camp to China.

Joining another 400 students from 37 schools across England, the group landed in Beijing, spending a number of days visiting local places of interest including the Great Wall, Olympic Stadium and Forbidden City. The students flew to Shanghai, where they benefited from Mandarin lessons, cultural classes and exciting sights. Students also had an opportunity to build a strong bond with their fellow Chinese students and a rare chance to spend time with a local Chinese host family.



## Indian summer

On the annual PROMO Summer trip to Mumbai, a group of students visited several charities around the city including a school for the blind, a children's hospital and care homes for the old, infirm and abandoned children with HIV.

The students also taught children over four days at different schools, on the topic of countries that were involved in India's development. The students returned eager to do even more for those charities, and donated over £3500.

## Walking on ice

A large cohort of Year 10 IGCSE Geography students enjoyed a six-day expedition to Iceland in the first week of the summer holidays. Highlights of a truly memorable trip included an ice walking expedition on Sólheimajökull, a black glacier; a visit to Gullfoss, Iceland's magnificent and most famous waterfall; and a walk up the crater rim of Eldfell volcanic cone on the island of Heimaey.



## Sun, sea and Spanish

During October half term a group of Year 10 Spanish students enjoyed a week-long Study Trip to Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain. Alongside grammar and speaking exercises, the pupils also learned about Spanish culture, wrote recipes in Spanish and visited the market to practise their oral skills. As evidenced by the increased quality of the Spanish in the students' diary entries, it was both an enjoyable and productive trip.



## Sporting success

### ■ Athletics

**James Yun-Stevens** (Y8), pictured above, was placed 1st in the U13 javelin at the Kent Championships with a throw of 40.61m. Although not his best throw this season, he was well ahead of the rest of the field of competitors. James is currently No 1 in the country in his age group having thrown over 45m. He currently holds the pole position in the UK Athletics Power of 10 rankings.

### ■ Fencing

Congratulations to **Megan Beddoe** (L6) who won a bronze medal at the Junior National Fencing Championships. Megan won a bronze in the U20 tournament despite being still in the U17 category. Megan will be fencing for the South East U18 Sabre Team at the inter-regional championships in December and will also compete for the Great Britain U17 Sabre team at their first international competition in Meylan, France.

■ Congratulations to **Finn Lewthwaite, George McGirr, Guy Parfitt, Daniel Gribben, Oscar Frost and Oliver Pickering** (all Y10), who have been selected to represent the West Kent District Football team this season. The boys attended trials throughout the summer and were selected from a strong field.

### ■ Hockey

The **U13 Girls** were finalists at the County Tournament, and have progressed to the Regional Finals.

**Chris Norris** (Y10) has been selected to train with the U16 England Boys Hockey Team, following an excellent performance at the Futures Cup in which he scored three goals.

**Lily Elliott** (L6) was part of the gold medal-winning U18 England Schools Girls hockey team at the UK School Games in Sheffield (1-4 September), which is designed to give young stars an experience of playing in an Olympic/Commonwealth Games-style multisport event. They beat Scotland 3-1, drew against Ulster 2-2 and then beat Wales 2-1.

The **1st XI** (pictured below) celebrated becoming Kent U18



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County Hockey Champions for the first time, beating King's Canterbury on penalty strokes and qualifying for the Regional Finals.

*Squad: H Barker, C Bickley, M Bos, E Desmond, E Elliott, L Elliott (Captain), N Farrant, C Grossmann, P Lambert, L Lawson, O Rendall, L Roberts, L Seeley, C Somerset, N Wilkinson*

In mid-July, 30 senior girl hockey players travelled to Cape Town to take part in the prestigious **Brothers Sport International Hockey Festival**.

After a successful training camp in Stellenbosch, and two warm-up matches each, the group moved to Cape Town to play in the festival against teams from South Africa, Australia, Holland

### ■ Rugby

The U14 A rugby team have enjoyed a brilliant run in the Kent Cup recently, reaching the semi-finals and losing a hard-fought battle away at King's Canterbury 12-5.

### ■ Sailing

**Andy Cornah**, Sevenoaks School's Head of Sailing, was a member of the winning Great Britain team at the ISAF Team Racing World Championships in September.

It is the first British victory since 1995 and the team included two Old Sennockians, **Ben Field** (OS 2000) and **Dom Johnson** (OS 1997).

The Sevenoaks School team also did really well, coming 4th in the U19 competition.



Photo supplied by European Fine Wines

and England. Each team played a total of seven matches, with the A team finishing 8th out of 24, the highest placed English team ahead of Millfield, Uppingham and Dauntseys.

Represented by recent leavers Sevenoaks were represented by **Laurence Gibbons, Emily McEachern, Henry Forward, Victoria Moynes, Nick Ashton and Harrison Hodgkins** (pictured above), the team never finished outside the top four in all their events

### ■ Shooting

Congratulations to **Victoria Redman, Serena Yuen** (both U6) and **Sharon Chang** (L6) who have been selected to shoot for the Kent County Ladies Squad. A team of recent leavers, **Fran Danczak, Tabitha Grainger, Nick Robinson and Alastair Brenninkmeijer**, won the Ashburton Challenge Trophy at the Bisley Meet this summer.