On 12th February, Tessa Munt, the Liberal Democrat MP for the constituency of Wells (which includes Street), visited Millfield House to talk to politics students and other interested pupils and teachers about her role as a representative of the people and her role in Parliament. Munt was previously Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) to Vince Cable, and therefore has close ties with powerful Ministers in Westminster, thus her knowledge of the operation of Parliament and how she is regarded as a female MP was insightful.

Munt's work in Wells must be commended; over the last five years, she has met and had detailed conversations with almost 50,000 of her constituents, including hearing some strange requests (most notably the task of modifying EU jam regulation, using the slogan ‘the end of the great British breakfast’ - coined by Munt in an interview for Sky News).

Munt admitted she will have difficulty defending her seat come May, as she has been the first Liberal Democrat in 83 consecutive years of Conservative MPs, defeating her predecessor in 2010 by a margin of only 800 votes after his 26 year reign. The talk was highly stimulating and we thank Ms Munt for her time and wish her the best of luck in the forthcoming election on 7th May.

On Monday 9th March a group of seven year 11s and six year 9s attended the Science Live day in Birmingham at the Alexandra Theatre, aimed specifically at GCSE students, as evidenced by the presence of whole year groups of different schools. Many prestigious scientists spoke on a variety of GCSE topics in a captivating manner through their passion for the topic or sheer showmanship. Such scientists included: Dr Simon Singh, whose degree was in particle physics and who spoke on the origin of the universe and the Big Bang theory; Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, who studies physics and received her PhD in Mechanical Engineering, who spoke on the planets in the solar system and the possibilities they may hold; Professor Jim Al-Khalili, Vice President of the British Science Association, who spoke on black holes, wormholes and time travel; Lord Robert Winston, a pioneer of IVF treatment, who spoke about ovulation and fertility; and Professor Andrea Sella, an inorganic chemist who was by far the best speaker, showing his experience in giving lectures to non-specialists, who talked about the rate of chemical reactions. All the subjects were extremely interesting and gave a greater insight to the topics that seem only to be touched upon in the GCSE work, but there were also a couple of specifically designed talks, given by a chief examiner, about exam technique and what the examiner actually looks for.

The distinguished scientists all spoke about intriguing topics and their own interest in them was clear. They used specific references that were able to hold the information more firmly in our everyday life while combining it with the topic; for example, Big Brother on the way to Mars and the issues they’d face; or Dr Who with time travelling. As I said previously, the most entertaining and well received speaker was Professor Andrea Sella, since he used humour to the best of its extent and spoke fully to the audience. The talk on fertility contained an amazing video on ovulation. But the talk I found most interesting was the one on the planets in the solar system, as it contained a lot of information. The speaker was very animated and obviously passionate about the topic so that we listeners were more receptive and the speaker was able to convey the information through imaginative ways.

Tessa Munt visits Millfield
By Hamish Heilbron and Morgan Carter

GCSE Science Live!
By Eleanor Abercromby
Wednesday 18th March saw Millfield School host a Wells constituency hustings. Those in attendance at the ‘Question Time’ style debate - with official hashtags and all - were Tessa Munt MP (Liberal Democrats), Jon Cousins (Green Party), James Heappey (Conservatives), Chris Inchley (Labour) and Helen Hims (UKIP).

Chaired by Jack Dickens (the OM and Trinity College, Cambridge history undergraduate-in-waiting), the evening’s agenda spanned a wide range of pertinent contemporary issues: the EU, immigration, tax, the NHS, social security, devolution, local issues, education and the economy, to name but all of them.

Proceedings got underway with an arid evaluation of the current economic climate. At one point in this debate, the Conservative candidate, James Heappey, somewhat bizarrely extolled the values of obsoletism, stating that the policy of ‘reduce, reuse, recycle’ was in diametric opposition to the values of capitalism. This earned him the rather curt rebuke of “reprehensible” from incumbent MP Tessa Munt.

Although generally liked by the audience, Heappey made a few statements which, if one were so inclined, could be labelled demagogic. This was most apparent during the climax of proceedings, which saw Heappey once again pitted against Munt in a fray over British defence spending and, more specifically, nuclear deterrent ‘Trident’. Heappey made a number of ‘what if?’ statements, seemingly appealing to humanity’s deep-rooted fear of mortality for support rather than any factual analysis of current global security threats. Munt disagreed, stating that she could not envisage any person on earth inflicting ‘Mutually Assured Destruction’ upon the world.

A more calming line was offered by the Green Party. We were treated throughout by the mellifluous tones of Jon Cousins, whose spiritually enlightened reveries resonated throughout the Johnson Hall. Although at times vague and uninformed (on, for example, the topic of independent schools’ charitable status), his concluding advice to voters to “vote with your heads and with your hearts” was a refreshingly unpartisan addition to an otherwise confrontational hustings.

On the topic of confrontation, the debate concerning climate change was (fossil) fuelled by a schism of belief that opened up between the candidates. More accurately, it was a division that left almost all members of the panel and audience united in the belief that man-made climate change was an issue, and visiting UKIP candidate Helen Hims claiming that although it may exist, any attempt to curb the spread of CO2 emissions would prove to be unnecessarily expensive.

When quizzed on the ‘reactionary’ climate change views of UKIP’s lead ‘spokesman on Energy and Industry’, Roger Helmer, labelled a “repugnant homophobe” by an audience member, she chose to remain quiet.

The general belief following ‘#MillfieldQT’ was that it had been a closely fought battle between two major candidates: Tessa Munt MP and James Heappey. Munt put in a resolute performance, defending not only her policies but also appealing to her positive work as MP over the last five years. Heappey held the cards when it came to speaking of his ‘potential’, but whether this will be enough to guarantee a swing back to the Conservatives remains to be seen.

Ultimately, the event saw pupils and staff engage with local political life, and one resounding sentiment that can be taken from the debate was the universal belief in the school’s positive influence on the local community. All candidates were keen to share stories of how Millfield has been a positive force within the constituency, and so too were audience members. In addition, it is hoped that this event will act as a succulent appetiser for the school general election on the 7th May.
Millfield Book of the Year

By Mr Trevis

Each year the library selects a shortlist of four books written approximately in the past 12 months to go head-to-head in a contest to see which will be chosen as “Millfield’s Book of the Year.”

Three students - Meredith Thorpe, Libby Letchford and Eleanor Abercromby - ensconced themselves in the library classroom to pick a winner, fuelled by Mrs Upton’s beautiful cake and the traditional order of Domino’s pizza.

Typically, Mr Trevis’ choice, I am Malala, was eliminated in round one – too political (nonsense – djt). Next to bite the dust was Counting by Sevens, an enjoyable read but too tidy, too The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time, too cheesy American.

This left two books, The Ocean at the End of the Lane and Dead Ends. Both had their advocates but the decision revolved around which of these books would appeal most to Millfield readers. Neil Gaiman’s fantasies always start from the everyday, real world before taking off into a world of their own, but eventually it was agreed that Erin Lange’s “buddy novel” Dead Ends would appeal across the spectrum. Below are the judges’ comments on their favourite books from the shortlist.

Dead Ends by Erin Lange

Review by Meredith Thorpe

To be honest, when I found out I had to read this book, I wasn’t too excited. While the storyline sounded interesting (a teen boy with anger issues meets an autistic teenage boy; they bond over their missing dads), it just wasn’t the type of book I normally read. Proving the age-old adage that you shouldn’t judge a book by its cover, or in this case, its blurb, I loved this book, written with the help of Times journalist, Christina Lamb, fills in the detail of Malala’s story. It is these details which help the reader to see the young girl behind the newspaper headlines. There is a danger that readers might avoid the book because they expect it to be about the political struggles affecting Pakistan. Of course the Taliban remain a threatening presence throughout Malala’s childhood, but much of the story is devoted to painting a vivid picture of Malala’s home life: her ambitious and driven father who has to fight so hard to establish a school in their village; the pious and humble mother who provides the background to the family; and Malala’s two younger brothers, with whom she is constantly at loggerheads. These domestic details set the scene for the drama which later unfolds when a young assassin leaps on Malala’s school bus and shoots her in the head at point blank range. From this point on her story suddenly becomes World News. After emergency surgery in Pakistan she is flown by private jet to the UK, where her terrible injuries are treated at a specialist Birmingham hospital. The doctors and nurses who save her life are the heroes who come to her aid, and as her story is spread across the world Malala remains in a coma, unaware that she has even left her own country. The final chapters are in many ways the most poignant, as Malala’s family are flown out of Pakistan to join her. The campaign for educating girls in Pakistan continues, spearheaded by Malala and her father. Meanwhile her mother, unable to speak English, has to re-build her life in a detached property in Birmingham thousands of miles away from the world she knows. For readers who want to be inspired, but also who want to know the human cost of standing up for your beliefs, this is a powerful and memorable story.

I am Malala

by Malala Yousafzai

Review by Mr Trevis

Most of us are aware of Malala’s story – the Pakistani schoolgirl shot by the Taliban for daring to stand up for girls’ education in her rural village in Pakistan. This book, written with the help of Times journalist,

The Ocean at the End of the Lane

by Neil Gaiman

Review by Eleanor Abercromby

The overall feeling from the book is one of nostalgia and severe unrest as the topic becomes more and more disturbing and sinister towards the end. The novel is about a middle-aged man who returns to his childhood area in the countryside where he grew up to find some solace while a funeral is going on; it is never made clear whose funeral, though. He eventually finds himself driving to the old Hemstock farm at the bottom of the lane, which he vaguely remembers. But once there, by the pond in the garden, which is actually an ocean, a whole portion of his childhood memories is unlocked. Neil Gaiman then goes on to explore the protagonist’s memories of when he was seven, starting fairly normally with family life but progressing to suicide, danger and his whole life being shattered and altered by creatures. By starting normally and progressing to an experience of something akin to the supernatural, but evidently more mysterious and dangerous, he manages to create feelings of unease, which only increase as the novel progresses, as well as horror at a family shattered and grief-stricken. The boy is accompanied by eleven year-old Lettie Hemstock, who always seems to know everything. The two quickly develop a strong and trusting relationship as Lettie attempts to show him a different side of the world, but it all goes horribly wrong as creatures like Ursula Monkton and big shadow-like birds that eat reality aim to take over and corrupt the protagonist’s life or just kill him. By the end of the book, when he remembers everything, it is revealed that, when he is unsure or confused in life, he goes often to the Hemstock and remembers everything, but that he forgets every time he leaves. This is the final point of the uneasiness and nostalgia, as he seems to be caught in a never-ending loop as the indirect result of letting Lettie Hemstock down. The novel is superbly written, with vivid description, while still showing the thoughts and feelings of a seven year-old boy at that age. The way it ends is not the way that the reader comes to want it to end, as a happy end, but instead sets it up so that it will never truly come to an end; not in the mind of the reader anyway. This book was thoroughly enjoyable and a good choice for anyone who does not want to get bogged down in anything too serious or political.

Counting by Sevens

by Holly Goldberg Sloan

Review by Libby Letchford

This book follows the tragic story of a genius little girl called Willow whose parents suffer from family life but progressing to suicide, danger and his whole life being shattered and altered by creatures. By starting normally and progressing to an experience of something akin to the supernatural, but evidently more mysterious and dangerous, he manages to create feelings of unease, which only increase as the novel progresses, as well as horror at a family shattered and grief-stricken. The boy is accompanied by eleven year-old Lettie Hemstock, who always seems to know everything. The two quickly develop a strong and trusting relationship as Lettie attempts to show him a different side of the world, but it all goes horribly wrong as creatures like Ursula Monkton and big shadow-like birds that eat reality aim to take over and corrupt the protagonist’s life or just kill him. By the end of the book, when he remembers everything, it is revealed that, when he is unsure or confused in life, he goes often to the Hemstock and remembers everything, but that he forgets every time he leaves. This is the final point of the uneasiness and nostalgia, as he seems to be caught in a never-ending loop as the indirect result of letting Lettie Hemstock down. The novel is superbly written, with vivid description, while still showing the thoughts and feelings of a seven year-old boy at that age. The way it ends is not the way that the reader comes to want it to end, as a happy end, but instead sets it up so that it will never truly come to an end; not in the mind of the reader anyway. This book was thoroughly enjoyable and a good choice for anyone who does not want to get bogged down in anything too serious or political.
In March 2015 I was lucky enough to be invited to the MA show, in the Atkinson Gallery at Millfield. A wide variety of really interesting and modern works that were being shown, from universities all over the United Kingdom.

The artist that I particularly liked was Tim Simmons; he studied at the Norwich University of Arts. In his pieces he uses both photography and film to create otherworldly landscapes. He focuses particularly on the appreciation of nature and the connection between man and his environment. As well as this he presents the more personal perspective for the viewer with the question of who we are in the present and who we were previously. I love the way that his large scale artworks manage to capture the feelings of the place that he presents, whether it is urban or natural. In particular I love how this feeling of calmness is presented in his piece “Burr Trail #5,” (below right) in contrast with the sense of tension in his work “Boulder Mountain #1” (above right) that is shown through the harmonious and dark colour scheme. I like also the way he lights the photographs to give an elemental effect to the piece.

The second artist who I noticed and whose work I really like was Louise Bliss, who studied at the University of Portsmouth. She uses an array of media, including etched acrylic and ink, combining these with digital prints. Her piece was called “Maggie (inside and out),” (see left). It depicts two digital prints of Margaret Thatcher; together they have complementary colour schemes creating contrast, adding to the overall theme and possible message of the work, yet individually they have harmonious colour schemes. Imprinted over the top on a glass screen is an acrylic etching of a skull and on the other an etching of the brain. I love how the blacks contrast with the bright colours that make up Margaret Thatcher’s face, creating a really strong and effective image, possibly reflecting the subject. Also I love the way the artist is conveying a clear message to the viewer through the way she has created this piece and the subject she has chosen.
The BTEC pupils designed and made the clothes for the Fashion Show over a period of six months, but the actual fashion show comes together in only five days. Miss Beare plans much of the logistics - for instance, the stage, lighting, posters and tickets - well in advance and everything starts to get installed on the Wednesday before. Our first rehearsal was that night, allowing our models to have a walk through, and then on the Thursday night we had a dress rehearsal. Things started to become real at this point, making quite a few of the models very nervous.

The designers had created a varying number of garments around the theme of 'The Future' and therefore had a different number of models to organise. The ones with more of a collection had more freedom over how they showed off their pieces.

On Sunday morning, the day of the two shows, we had a full dress rehearsal, with hair and make-up, and the music playing very loudly. This is the point when the designers became nervous as there was so much that had to be perfect. The rehearsal went very well and finished in time to allow the audience in for the 2pm performance. This first show was for the pupils. We always feel like this is one final run through before the bigger show at 7pm. Whilst it is taken just as seriously, the overall effect of the earlier show is not as strong because the evening show is much darker; and with the specialist lighting in the Atkinson gallery this becomes much more glamorous and atmospheric.

The show began with the elite dancers, which was a memorable start as it set the scene for what was to follow. Each designer had a slide showing on the screen at the back of the stage, as their collection walked down. Some designers chose to use their fashion photography images, while others created futuristic inspired wallpapers. This gave a professional feel to the show, and allowed the designers to show what their collection was inspired by. Most of the backgrounds reflected the genre of music we chose. We all felt this show went smoothly and the models were feeling more confident and ready for the 7pm performance.

This later show was for parents and staff. The atmosphere was amazing as the gallery was very dark and only the catwalk was lit up, creating a professional feel to the show. Again, the dancers went on first, followed by the Lower Sixth designers’ pieces; then it was Upper Sixth collections. At the end of the show the SCAD designs went down and this allowed the audience to see some MA work from fashion design students from the USA. Whilst at Millfield the SCAD students created their garments in only three days, yet they were still able to create four different ‘looks’. This ended the fashion show beautifully.

Personally my favourite part of the show was when all the designers and their collections walk on together and fill the runway, allowing the audience to see everything together and to appreciate how much the different pieces vary, even though they were all inspired by the ‘Future’ theme.

At the very end, when the show was complete, Miss Beare gave out flowers and gifts to all the staff and pupils who had played a role in the organisation and running of the event, enabling the designer, models and audience to applaud the people working behind the scenes.

I believe that this year’s Fashion Show was the best yet and Miss Beare outdid herself, as did all the designers and models. It was particularly effective as there was such a range of outfits and materials used. The leaving collection raised £140 for the Children’s Hospice South West.
SCAD visit: US degree students support the Millfield Fashion Show

By Mr Clements

Millfield School Art and Design department were delighted to host four degree students and their professor as they came all the way over from the U.S. to support the Millfield Fashion Show.

The group were made up of Alexandra Mesterton-Gibbons, Blythe McCormick, Andre Jackson and Krystal Solokis. All of them currently attend the Savannah College of Art and Design, where they are fashion students and post-graduates. They were ably supported by Professor Pappas.

They arrived on Tuesday 27th January and were shown around the Art department in the evening before returning to a local hotel where they created some designs - that evening! The next day Alex, Blythe and Andre, working together, began to cut the fabric for three different ‘looks’, each made up of a variety of different garments: silver leggings, an incredible hooded cape, a dress, skirt and tops.

Krystal gave a workshop to our pupils based on leather making techniques as she specialises in fashion accessories and had even made her own shoes and boots that she wore on the trip. Professor Pappas supported our BTEC pupils with their own designs and garments; she is an immensely experienced designer and lecturer but it was her charming character and New York accent that make her such a star.

The students also encouraged our pupils to create a fourth ‘look’ for the Fashion Show. The students and Professor Pappas worked tirelessly and the results were clear for all to see in the Fashion Show. In just three days, the garments that they created looked absolutely spectacular. These garments are currently in the Fine Arts Centre.

However, the legacy that they created in their short visit is not just fantastic garments but also a huge amount of inspiration, friendships and great memories. Furthermore, some of our pupils have been encouraged by their example and two of our pupils have been offered places next year at SCAD, whilst a group of 14 of our current Lower Sixth will be visiting SCAD in Georgia, USA, in August of this year.

If you’d like to join them please email ESD or CBX for a chance to see some of the incredible educational opportunities available to you after Millfield.

Some of the Lower Sixth BTEC pupils offer their own insight into the visit:

Agnes Farthing:
The SCAD students really helped me, especially Professor Pappas, particularly in advising me which materials were best to use and the art of sewing the material on the machine. They were all so helpful and encouraging with our work and really inspired me by their creative ideas and designs.

Magdalene Leung:
The fashion workshop was a spur of the moment thing which we weren’t expecting, but it was amazing! The SCAD visitors Alex, Blythe, Andre, Krystal and Professor Pappas are extremely talented and were so helpful. Their knowledge of textiles is fabulous. I got a chance to learn some designing and sewing skills from them while they were producing their own costumes designs. All of them were so sweet and nice and it was an unforgettable experience!

George Stevens:
The students helped me to understand how the fashion industry works, plus how they work; they also help me by showing me how to complete certain complex tasks to do with making, designing and working. I really liked all of the SCAD students and the professor. They were very nice and positive and it was a very enjoyable week. They inspired me to push myself and to continue doing fashion.

Georgia Sheehan:
Professor Pappas and the SCAD students were amazing and so kind to me. I learnt so much from their short stay: Blythe taught me how to use patterns and Krystal showed me how to work with leather. Overall they inspired me so much that I am attending the SCAD summer trip and I am considering taking fashion in the future!
DANCE 2015

By Carey Andrews

The Dance Show had a fantastic theme this year, one which made the entire performance all the more enthralling and very captivating, namely ‘dance through the years’. Starting off with the foundation of Millfield School and the introduction of the Indian princes, Bazique (the elite dance group of the sixth form) performed an Indian-style dance, adding a little culture to the show and setting the standard very high for the rest of the acts to follow - which indeed they did! Following this, and apparently in keeping with a bit of a theme at Millfield itself, was a 1920s/30s Charleston performed by Open Jazz, which was rather reminiscent of last year’s Upper Sixth winter ball, themed with Great Gatsby in mind; the music used was particularly upbeat and, coupled with the striking lighting, this made the energetic number very exciting to watch. After this dance there was more of a sombre mood and we moved into the world wars; there was a passionate and moving piece performed by the Vocational Modern class and next we ‘Brought the Boys Home’ with Bazique and ‘the Boys’ (the first rugby team). Then after these dances was a sorrowful and reflective ballet solo which captured the spirit of Anne Frank and then the graded ballet classes performed a graceful dance called ‘Royal Charter’. The show then took a move towards the upbeat, with the Choreography class performing an abstract dance based on Retro Futurism and then moving on to one of the two duets in the show ‘Hot Shoe Shuffle’, which was a lively tap dance with some very sparkly jackets. Following this dance was ‘500 miles’ by Junior Dance featuring Wally from ‘Where’s Wally!’ Trooping on with rucksacks and maps, the junior dance class found their way on stage to give us a very enthusiastic performance. After junior dance wandered back off stage we were transported to 1950s South Africa where the Contemporary class communicated a pleading and bittersweet dance, begging for freedom. Following this emotional dance, the Senior Dance class performed a Motown dance to ‘Memphis Train’, which moved us on from the struggle against apartheid to a livelier and more energetic mood. After this we discovered DNA with the ballet grades and then went on to experience the ‘Rhythm of Life’ performed by Junior Dance.

This led to the Swinging Sixties and ‘Nutbush’ with Bazique, followed by a very colourful performance of ‘Austin Powers’, featuring the devil himself, to round off the first half. The Ballet show class started off the second half with a reflective portrayal of the first manned flight into space and then shortly after this was our second commanding ballet solo of the night, ‘Tango’. Having been tangoed, the audience were then taken on a tour of the flashing, bleeping ‘World of Computers’ courtesy of Year 9 dance. Hip-Hop was our next destination and Bazique did a fantastic job with a tricky medley of very challenging ‘sick beats’. This was then followed by ‘Global Warming’ hitting the news, a passionate and alternative solo that made use of incredible gymnastics and a small black ball. Then we had the second duet of the show, the ‘Storm’, representing the devastation caused by El Niño of 1982, and in response this dance was chaotic and showed intense inner tumult. After this was the ‘Cold War’ and ‘The Bosnian War’ by Development and Vocational Modern, followed by a very lively performance under the influence of Michael Jackson by the Advanced Modern class. The final solo of the night followed this, another Michael Jackson themed dance to ‘Billie-Jean’;

Lucy Matthews
throughout these dances all the girls really entered into the spirit and character of Michael and seemed to enjoy it too! Before this solo was an instructive performance by year 9 dance of ‘Take Off’, which was based on the foundation of EasyJet.

To finish off the show Lavolta performed a thrilling and fast paced dance based on the London Olympics, with the dancers running around all over the stage, coming in from one side and going off in the other direction, only to reappear on the other side a few seconds later! This was a very impressive dance that was then closely followed by the final dance of the night, where both the dancers and audience celebrated having had such a good time. All in all this was a very slick and well put together show and was a fantastic achievement, both for dancers and for the teachers: Mrs Boyd, Miss Peach and Miss Okorafor. It was an utter triumph of organisational skills and choreography skills as well. Bravo.
On Friday 13th March, academics from various companies and universities visited Millfield to talk to all the A level Biology and Psychology students. Despite the ominous date, everything went completely to plan and was thoroughly enjoyed by all the students who attended.

The first psychology lecture, by Professor Mark Levine from Exeter University, covered social identity in pro-social and anti-social behaviour. This tied in nicely with the AS Psychology course, both interlinking with attitudes & prejudices and providing practical insight into what a qualification in this topic could amount to in terms of a career. As with all the lectures, this allowed for a broader understanding of the subject that would not have necessarily been possible during timetabled lessons (because they are largely course-specific). Professor Levine questioned the traditional interpretation of anti-social behaviour being due to an inherent drive towards animosity and “peer pressure”. Instead he argued that groups can police their own anti-social behaviour and thus encourage pro-social behaviour. He exemplified this point using one of his previous experiments involving football fans and further emphasised it with striking observations of inner city night-life using CCTV cameras.

The biology lecture was by Dr Nick Kent, from Cardiff University, on ‘sequencing spaghetti’. This talk was about analysing the structure of a DNA molecule and how it affects the sequence of genes. For our AS course we have already studied DNA and its structure, but Nick dug deeper into the subject to explain why the structure is as it is. We learnt that the DNA molecules are wrapped around many proteins in their structure, which have more of a purpose than to make it organised and compact. To demonstrate this he used spaghetti and meatballs to represent the DNA molecules being wrapped around the proteins. He told us that there are small and large proteins in the structure that determine which genes are ‘turned on’. In his work, he is able to find the order of the proteins and find which genes are turned on. This research and analysis has enabled scientists to understand certain DNA disorders such as Down’s Syndrome. The causes of these disorders are down to the arrangement of the small and large proteins which can change the genes that are turned on or off if they are in the wrong order. This talk was fascinating for all those interested in the structure of DNA and greatly increased our understanding of the topic.

Over lunch, attendants had the opportunity to meet the speakers in smaller groups or talk to undergraduates and postgraduates about their experiences studying biology and psychology. Simultaneous workshops on exam skills gave pupils insight into tips and tricks for improving their grades.

After lunch, the second psychology lecturer, Florence, an Oxford graduate in neuropsychology, took time out from her...
work with the charity Kids Company to stress the impact that neglect and abuse has on the brain, particularly when this trauma is inflicted during crucial formative years. It not only impairs the function of the brain but leaves it physically deformed. This concept was presented with the aid of numerous case studies, some well reported and others supported by Florence in her work with the charity. Kids Company works to try to reverse these detrimental impacts on children and young people by providing a vital support network, a concept alien to many of the children when they are first contacted. Although at this moment in time the work of Kids Company is indispensable, the ultimate goal is to amend the current social service system to extinguish the need for its work: "prevention rather than cure". Florence’s lecture was both emotionally and intellectually engaging due to its immensely moving content.

Dan Buckell the Executive Director of Tusk talked about the work of the charity. Tusk is a conservation charity working in 18 countries in Africa. Dan explained the problems associated with rapid expansion of the human population and the effects it has on the wildlife. Evidence shows that the demand for ivory has reduced the elephant and rhino populations by significantly more than half in just 50 years, leaving a frighteningly low population in the wild today. Tusk have been trying to ensure the growth of population of these endangered species by educating the local communities about how important these species are to their area, and just how few are left. They have taught the local communities who live alongside the wildlife the risk of endangerment due to hunting for these animal’s ivory. Dan inspired those of us who are interested in the conservation of people and wildlife to look further into the subject. Tusk’s philosophy of educating the communities to create a more sustainable land management strategy for these animals to be able to have a chance of increasing their population is inspirational and a may provide a credible, sustainable way forward. The final lecture of the day, by Professor Bruce Hood, tackled developmental psychology, specifically the impact of domestication on the human brain. Starting with the observation that the human brain has shrunk by approximately 20% — the size of a tennis ball — over the last 20,000 years, Professor Hood explained how animals can become domesticated in relatively few generations, using the example of the wild Siberian foxes which were tamed by the Soviet scientist Dmitri Belyaev. Hood then went on to describe the different stages involved in the cognitive development of a child, whilst relating the content back to show how this demonstrates that our species has evolved into domesticated animals. He tackled diverse areas such as gender identity and the ability to question the nature of truth and to interpret theories of mind. This lecture in particular perfectly illustrated how intertwined psychology and biology are.

Bruce Hood
by Amy Cooper

Professor Bruce Hood, the final speaker at this year’s Biology & Psychology symposium, gave a fascinating lecture on the ‘domesticated brain’. In his book of the same title, he outlines what he believes ‘makes us human’. His ideas are based around the knowledge that 20,000 years ago, after the end of the Ice Age, the average size of the human brain shrunk by around 20%, and his belief that this was due to our ‘domestication’. It is true that at that time there was massive population increase and people began increasingly to settle into larger communities, becoming more able to ‘collaborate’ and ‘socialise’. There was no longer such a huge element of ‘fight or flight’ taking place in the brain. Studies were done on this, such as an investigation of the Siberian silver fox. It took only twelve generations of these animals for a researcher to produce a domesticated fox, completely different to its wild cousins. Further investigation showed that their ‘fight or flight’ responses were reduced and that the brain had shrunk due to a decrease in testosterone, providing strong evidence for this theory of domestication. Professor Hood also talked about the differences between the concepts of ‘me’ (our sense of identity about who we are) and ‘I’ (phenomenological experience of consciousness), which is a debate relevant to those studying A2 Psychology. An example would be if I were to ask you the question ‘what is your favourite chocolate?’, your process of hearing and answering me would be the experience of the situation (your ‘I’), but you would be pulling your answer from previous experience (your ‘me’).

Also, as a childhood development psychologist, he went on to talk about the role of upbringing in how you develop as an adult. Since children have as many, if not more, neurons than adults, the differences come from young children’s lack of connections between them. When a child is raised in an environment without sufficient experience, the connections do not develop and can be lost forever. For example, children raised in an environment where they are not exposed to the same visual experience as is normal will be visually impaired for their entire lives.

Using an entertaining video of two 10-month-olds imitating their father sneezing, he demonstrated ‘babies’ selfishness’. According to him, babies imitate deliberately to see who finds them entertaining and therefore ascertain who is invested in them. Gender, an important topic for AS Psychology students, was also raised. We heard about children becoming ‘gender police’: once they discover their own gender, they become set on reinforcing their ideas in everyone around them, for example telling a boy wearing a skirt that it was not appropriate for his gender. Using an analogy involving Smarties confectionary, he demonstrated that while as adults we value our own opinion more, children have a tendency to just value what they think others value. Children cannot ‘self-regulate’ like adults, and how well they can control their impulsivity is generally seen as a measure of how they will turn out in life. This was all demonstrated by a very funny video of young children trying to resist eating a marshmallow.

Finally, we heard about ‘the future of the domesticated brain’. Professor Hood believes that, due to the digital revolution, we as a society are undergoing the next big change. He pointed out that today’s obsession with selfies and social networking is an interesting phenomenon. We all want to be ‘recognised and valued’ and post with a positive bias that distorts reality. As a frequent user of social media, I am not always receptive to the criticisms of the older generation, but I found his points to be very thought-provoking. Apparently, we seek these outlets to avoid loneliness, which has been shown to be more health-endangering than smoking or obesity. ‘When in isolation, I found myself on the verge of conversation with a cockroach’ – Nelson Mandela.

In conclusion, it was extremely generous of Professor Hood, who is an award-winning psychologist and experienced public speaker, to take the time to come and share his ideas with us. There was definitely a lot to be learned.
“Making a difference through integration of conservation, education and community”
is a righteous blurb of what the Nakavango Conservation programme
is all about. Based near the town of Victoria Falls, in Zimbabwe, lies
the Stanley and Livingstone Private Game reserve, where Nakavango
and its counterpart can boast a 2500 hectare piece of privately
managed pristine land, which you, as a volunteer, can channel your
time and effort into. Volunteers from around the globe are provided
with the unparalleled opportunity to gain a hands-on experience in
conservation management, sustainability strategies and community
development projects. Trust me when I say that this is not your typical,
quintessential volunteering experience. With Stanley and Livingstone
being in one of the most sought-after destinations in the world,
with the awe of Victoria Falls, the programme is amazing even on its
location alone. The game reserve that you protect and look after is the
only game reserve in the surrounding area that has the ‘Big Five’ game
in it. That in itself is pretty impressive and that certainly contributed to
my decision in going there.

I was apprehensive at first, as I did not really know what to expect.
I knew that I was pushing myself out of my comfort zone, which
primarily stemmed from the notion of this unfathomed path that
lay ahead of me, and it was rather daunting. I had done my research,
and everything looked amazing, but there was still that initial lining of
uncertainty. I eventually landed at Victoria Falls airport, where they
were exhibiting the symptoms of Ebola on television screens, which
exacerbated this feeling of apprehension. I met the man who was
to drive me to the Stanley and Livingstone Game Reserve and from
there on in, everything was honestly amazing. Not only was the driver
a Gooner, but he was also genuinely so merry and welcoming. From
this driver and the kitchen staff to the other volunteers and the head
guides, I cannot stress enough how welcoming and friendly everyone
was. What wasn’t so friendly, on the other hand, was the ongoing battle
that I had to endure for four weeks with the insects. For all of you
that know me, you’ll know that I cower even at an impersonation of a
spider, and this irrational fear was indeed a small predicament. My first
challenge came within an hour of arriving. This weary traveller simply
wanted a nice refreshing shower, not a wave of fist sized moths. I
entered my bathroom and I honestly would rather have had Mike
Tyson’s fist waiting for me than the attempted mugging by this
gang of moths; I ignorantly strolled up to my shower and turned
it on in an uninformed manner - uninformed in that you should
always check you shower in Africa - and the moths attacked. I
killed one with my face wash and scampered without returning
said bathroom for a few hours, in case matey’s mob wanted
vengeance. I learned from there on in to close your bathroom
window, so as to prevent any similar moth vs man royal bumbles.
Whilst on the topic of the inhabitants of Zimbabwe, the camping
under the stars brought many breathtaking moments, so much
so that I forgot about all the prospect of these insects and
Solifuges (look them up; they’re a nightmare). Imagine sitting
round a camp fire with an ice-cool beer in hand when suddenly a
loud crunching of trees abruptly ceases your conversation. You all
turn around, shine your torches and there, 15 metres away from
you, is a herd a bachelor elephants. It was simply stunning and
it definitely beat my years in St. Anne’s of facing off against the
neighbouring cows every time I kicked the ball over the fence. I
have to admit that I was not always so calm in the face of wildlife.
I certainly did wish I was back in the fields of Baltonsborough
when I was pranked by my fellow volunteers on my last night
of camping. Strategically placed speakers and an app that played
lion, hyena and leopard noises didn’t bode too well with me as I
was laying my head down to sleep. The authentic feel to this prank was
uncanny and I honestly thought a pride of lions was about to ambush
me in my sleeping bag. I rented a stick from our fire wood pile and had
that at the ready for the blood-thirsty, although fictitious, beasts.

The weekly trip to the local school was the most grounding part
of my trip. Never have I seen such genuine eagerness and happiness
be to taught and to learn, even from the grade 0s. We would go and
teach these kids the alphabet, as the four year olds were yet to learn
English, and then play with them during their breaks. The school was
very basic: the area that I taught in was simply a side of shade beneath
a tree, and the kitchen for all 300 pupils was one pot in a roofless hut.
The thing that I found most astounding was the fact that these kids’
parents paid for their education. Even when living in mud hut villages,
they could still set aside money for their children’s education, which
shows how much they valued it. It made me realise how lucky I was.
This dedication from the parents was mirrored by their children’s
excitement and passion for their studies. I couldn’t, however, go easy on them when we played football. Being from England, everyone had high expectations of me (I have no idea why; we’re dire) and nearly all of the kids were Manchester United fans. Sickening. Splitting the teams into the clubs supported, it was conclusively Arsenal vs Man United. The opposing team of course tried to cheat their way to victory with every bit of foul play in the book - typical United - but Arsenal held their own.

As a volunteer, you work from Monday to Friday. This entails a large range of activities, from finding and demolishing poacher traps to cutting a new road through the bush. This ‘work’, although hard work, was always great fun and educational. I, incidentally, learnt how to track animals, and you leave the programme with a whole new world of knowledge bequeathed by the expert local workers and guides. Weekends, on the other hand, are reserved for your free time, and there’s a huge lists of activities to choose from. Every Saturday I was out in Zimbabwe, my friends and I went on a “Sunset Booze Cruise” along the Zambezi river. My name is now up in lights on the top of the leader board for “Number of Pints” consumed within the two hour frame. I am forever spreading the renowned name of Millfield in good and exemplary fashion. White water rafting, I have to admit, was my favourite activity, but other excursions, such as the “Devil’s Pool” were also superb. The “Devil’s Pool” is a little gully on the cusp of Victoria Falls. The current of the Zambezi had carved this pool and we were literally swimming and sitting two metres from the 108-metre waterfall. It was simply spectacular. The white water rafting was a great fix of adrenaline. The six hours of rafting along the gorge of Victoria Falls was amazing. There were some “Level 5” rapids that our guide said are 99.9% likely to make us capsize. With sheer elation and a bit of trepidation we attempted to tackle these rapids and be that 0.01%, the un-capsizeable elite. We weren’t, and I lost both of my shoes. We did at least attempt these rapids (unlike the German group that bottled it) and it was pure, unadulterated fun.

Without sounding too much like a clichéd “Gap Yah” muppet, I cannot stress to you enough, not only on how exceptionally fun this programme is, but also how your hard work ultimately contributes to a great cause. I was pushed to my limits but I would not have had it another way. You meet some amazing people and my only regret, apart from getting urinated on by a poisonous beetle, accidentally picking up a snapping turtle and my foolish backings of Arsenal in bets at the backpackers’ bar, is that I couldn’t stay for longer. I do want to point out, though, that our guide said are 99.9% likely to make us capsize. With sheer elation and a bit of trepidation we attempted to tackle these rapids and be that 0.01%, the un-capsizeable elite. We weren’t, and I lost both of my shoes. We did at least attempt these rapids (unlike the German group that bottled it) and it was pure, unadulterated fun.

We learned how Plan International is trying to educate local Liberians about how to minimise the spread of Ebola. For example, Plan International has worked with African musicians to record music with lyrics to educate people, especially those who are unable to read or write (40% of Liberians are illiterate), of the dangers of Ebola and how to limit its spread. We learnt how the spread of Ebola was increased by the poor sanitation and housing conditions in the affected regions, and also by cultural practices, including traditional burial rituals, which are carried out on the dead, e.g. pouring water over the body of a dead person, which is then collected and poured over family members in order to ‘pass on the dead person’s wisdom’. This is just the type of action that unfortunately can aid the spread Ebola quickly from an infected person to a healthy person.

It was very interesting to hear about Mr Wright’s experiences and to appreciate the impact of traditions and lack of education on the spread of this terrible disease. The real tragedy seems to be that Ebola is a disease that can be contained quickly and relatively easily if it is treated with the isolation that is needed. We all hope that the message of the song writer’s gatherings pace and the legacy of this outbreak will be knowledge and awareness, which can then be passed to generations to come, thereby limiting the impact of any future outbreaks.
What it takes to be boxing world champion: a talk by Glenn Catley

Report by Ollie Stanford

I knew the human mind was powerful but since hearing Glenn Catley’s story, I will never underestimate the potential power the mind can bring.

On a cold March day in the Meyer Theatre, as part of the sixth form lecture programme, the journey of a boxing world champion was revealed. Catley’s story demonstrated resilient perseverance, the working towards goals and (something that might surprise you) hypnotherapy.

In the mid-nineties Glenn Catley was offered the job of chief sparring partner with WBO super-middleweight champion Steve Collins. This was an opportunity at which, as you can imagine, Catley jumped. This would prove the best decision he made in his career as a professional boxer. On many occasions Collins would “walk through the gym door and not say a word... that was when I knew I had to earn my money”. Catley noticed the difference when Collins used hypnotherapy as an aid to his training, an approach that fine tunes your sub-conscience brain. Through working with Collins, Catley formed his first dream to hold the British middleweight title.

Later in Catley’s career, in a preparation fight (WBC international) towards his dream, he lost to Hungarian Andras Galfi, having experimented with creatine. A small change to Catley’s diet had catastrophic affects; days before the ‘weigh in’ a substantial amount of weight was needed to be cut otherwise all dreams would be dashed completely. This mis-preparation almost cost Catley his career, finding himself in a state of clinical depression and “not getting out of bed for days”.

His dream was to go on but Neville Brown was between Catley and this desire. Brown was technically better, more experienced and the favourite. He was renowned for his venomous left jab, which had carried him to six British titles. Catley turned to one formidable tool he had once been at the receiving end of: hypnotherapy, trance sessions, visualisation - whatever you want to call it. Catley became mentally stronger than his opponent. He pictured, time and time again, countering Brown’s most devastating punch to reply with an upper cut, forming the basis of the story ‘The Cobra and the Mongoose’. After eight completed rounds Glenn was pronounced British champion.

Catley then set his sights on becoming the WBC super-middleweight world champion. After a rollercoaster journey to the title bout, being “robbed” on the judge’s cards and winning in the final round against a strong French Canadian in Quebec, it all came down to the biggest challenge Catley was yet to face: Marcus Beyer, in Germany. The thrilling fight went to the last round. A change of tack was needed. Catley’s coach advised risking everything, putting all technique to one side to “fight in the street”. Within 15 seconds Catley was super-middleweight champion of the world, proving the critics wrong once more. Achieving your dream isn’t easy but if you’re willing to put in the effort and truly believe that you can be the best, there are no limits as to how far you can go. Interestingly, Catley’s use of trance state visualisation has not stopped; he is now a qualified clinical hypnotherapist and psychotherapist, preaching his almost religious belief in its effects.
Sport

The Physical Education department launched de Coubertin Society with a fascinating talk from multi-award winning sports photographer Mark Pain.

On Monday 23 February Millfield's Physical Education department welcomed world class sports photographer Mark Pain to talk at the inaugural de Coubertin Society lecture, the department's newly-formed academic society. After an introduction from Head of Department, Stuart Maddock, in which he linked the life and work of Baron Pierre de Coubertin to the modern Olympic Games and Millfield School, Mr Pain captivated his audience of PE, media studies and photography students in a talk which ventured behind the lens of one of the best sports photographers in the business.

Mr Pain started by showing some amazing images he had taken from previous Olympic and Paralympic Games and went on to explain his background and the lengths to which professional photographers need to go in terms of planning and concentration in order to obtain the best possible images. The audience of over 350 pupils and staff were treated to more incredible images, including a famous picture of Tiger Woods driving a golf ball straight into Mr Pain’s camera; fortunately, he captured the moment before the ball broke his lens.

Mr Pain touched on recent developments in digital photography and the commercial aspects of sports photography before exposing the audience to 360 degree photographs of Wimbledon, Twickenham and the last year’s football World Cup. It was fascinating insight into sports photography.

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**CROSSWORD**

By Mr Maddock

The crossword compiled by Max Dunn

Across

1. The Minister of Silly Walks? (4,6)  
2. Away (3,2,4)  
3. Member of a British working-class movement between 1838 and 1858 (8)  
4. Become apparent (6)  
5. ____ Roth, co-director of, and actor in, ‘Inglorious Basterds’ (3)  
6. Common characteristic of Afghanistan, Switzerland, Rwanda etcetera (10)  
7. Shocked into silence (10)  
8. Edible seed related to the cashew, originating from Central Asia and the Middle East (9)  
10. No (slang) (3)  
11. Imagined reality as seen in Huxley’s ‘A Brave New World’ (8)  
12. Tree or shrub which produces clusters of yellow flowers (6)  
13. Ways for horses pulling barges (8)  
14. Utter (3)  
15. State of unacceptance (2,6)  
16. Uterus (3)  
17. State of unacceptance (2,6)  
18. Light, graceful, female dancer (9)  
19. Zero (3)  
20. Concealed (3)  
21. Dogs bred for guarding Tibetan Buddhist monasteries (5,5)

Down

1. Speck (3)  
2. Eau de Cologne (8)  
3. Light, graceful, female dancer (9)  
5. ____ Roth, co-director of, and actor in, ‘Inglorious Basterds’ (3)  
6. Common characteristic of Afghanistan, Switzerland, Rwanda etcetera (10)  
7. Shocked into silence (10)  
8. Edible seed related to the cashew, originating from Central Asia and the Middle East (9)  
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15. State of unacceptance (2,6)  
16. Uterus (3)  
17. State of unacceptance (2,6)  
18. Light, graceful, female dancer (9)  
19. Zero (3)
Mr Robertson

How long have you been at Millfield and in which capacities have you served?
I have been at Millfield for nearly seven months now as a Geography Teacher and Houseparent in the Year Nine day house, Ivythorn.

What were you doing before you came to Millfield?
Before I came to Millfield I had been working at Kingston Grammar School.

How does this school compare with the one you attended as a student?
I was at Bradfield College as a boy and there are many similarities between it and Millfield as it is also a boarding and day school, although it was predominantly boarding when I was there. Bradfield is a relatively successful school on the sports field, as is Millfield, but there was nothing like the breadth of sports and subjects on offer as there are here. The size of Millfield is quite a difference and then having small class sizes makes it quite unique amongst all schools, I would have thought.

When you were fifteen, what job did you most want to have when you became an adult?
Definitely not teaching. At fifteen I quite fancied the life of a professional cricket player, preferably in the international game and with some tours to hot countries.

If you have your time again at school, what would you do differently?
Music and drama. I dipped out of these at quite an early stage at school as I felt they were taking away time when I could be out playing football or cricket with friends. Once you have finished school, it is more difficult to find the time, and inclination, to learn to play a musical instrument, but this is something I wish I could do. Drama teaches you so many important skills for life beyond education and if I could have my time again at school I would certainly make more of the opportunities.

Is the ‘final version’ of ‘Nine@Millfield’ already in place, or do you feel that there are still tweaks to be made?
I think the programme of activities is excellent and has been a great success this year. However, there are always changes and improvements that can be made and it is important that Nine@Millfield develops as the school does.

Does it ever keep you awake at night?
No, but if you have noticed large bags under my eyes it is probably that my six-month old daughter has been keeping me up.

How do you like to relax on a Saturday night in term time?
Catching up on some of the Sky+ TV with a takeaway.

What’s the best film you’ve ever taken out from our school library?
My concentration span is usually too short for films; perhaps I will try this one for the holidays.

Could you please tell us about one of your favourite books?
Last summer I enjoyed Born to Run by Christopher McDougall who sets off to a very hostile part of Mexico in search of the rumoured greatest ultra-marathon runners on earth, a tribe called the Tarahumara. It combines a number of hobbies/interests: running, travel and Latin America.

If you could host a dinner party for any major historical figures, who would be there, what would you eat and what would you drink?
Che Guevara, David Livingstone and Captain Scott. As not much of a cook myself, I would ask them all to bring a course but make sure Scott was bringing the dessert as I am not sure his exploration of Antarctica will have helped to hone his cooking skills.

What’s the best piece of advice you’ve ever heard?
Take criticism constructively, not personally, and see it as an opportunity to improve.