



## Conservation work in Honduras

*The Biology department led a trip to Honduras to observe and learn about conservation of the reef and mangrove ecosystems. Here is an excerpt from a pupil's description of the trip:*

The camp at Cantiles consisted of lots of hammocks dotted about a steep hillside which eventually led down a winding path to some tarpaulins covering a fire and some tables made of bamboo. Our time there was spent carrying out Habitat surveys, which involved measuring canopy cover, heights and diameters of trees and the presence of bromeliads. In time we became well practised at these, allowing time for Tarzan-style vine swinging, climbing trees for panoramic views and bathing in local streams.

Daily lectures were given on the research being carried out in the park. We learnt about snakes and fungi and had a chance to do experiments involving replicating DNA using a technique called PCR. Then we embarked on our reef ecology course consisting of seven interesting lectures, ranging from mangrove ecosystems to fish, coral and marine invertebrate



identification, and eight dives on the beautiful reef fronting Utila. Those not diving explored the mangroves by kayak, having the chance to spot the endemic Utilian iguanas.

This week was a real eye-opener. It taught us the importance of conservation and the need to maintain coral reef and mangrove ecosystems, not only to preserve biodiversity but also the huge social and economic importance they hold for us. These are fragile ecosystems and awareness as well as funding is vital for their survival, so our time in Utila made a difference, however small, in helping to preserve these beautiful and important ecosystems.

## Active Support for Habitat for Humanity

Eltham College has been working with Habitat for Humanity (HFH) in Kenya this summer. HFH was founded more than thirty years ago with the sole aim of tackling poverty housing on a global scale. Poverty housing affects people's health and well-being; their children's education; their employment prospects. Most of all, poverty housing traps people in poverty and robs them of hope and opportunity. HFH has built 300,000 homes in 90 countries around the world in partnership with people in need of safe, decent housing.

Nine students and Mr and Mrs Head-Rapson headed off to Nairobi on Saturday 19th July, and from there they drove 250km north to Runyenjes. The following day they started work on one of five house sites. Over the next ten days they dug foundations, laid concrete slabs, crushed rocks and built both brick and wooden walls. The students worked enthusiastically and with good humour.

On the last day they attended a Dedication Service at one of the houses in progress. The trip was completed with a couple of days in Shaba Game Reserve.



# Asking for more at the Edinburgh Fringe

After the major BBC television series *I'd do Anything* and the show's triumphant return to the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, *Oliver!* is enchanting a whole new generation of fans. Eltham College was thrilled to have secured the rights to such a classic, joyous show and took the production to C Venues, a stone's throw from the Royal Mile at the very heart of the Edinburgh Festival.

The production features a motley collection of villains, thieves and petty criminals. Nathan Smoker from Eltham College Junior School steps directly from the West End production to the Eltham College version. The role of Oliver is played by 11-year-old Joseph Beesley, who has now entered the Eltham College Senior School. The show is directed by Ben Pollard, with musical direction of its ten-piece band by Robbie Jacobs and choreography by Shermaine Slocombe. In mid-September the show also played to full houses at Eltham College.



## Morris Minors in Minden



Following their successful debut at the Mottingham Festival in June, the Eltham College Morris Dancers - the *Morris Minors* - visited our partner school in Minden in August. They danced at a festival to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Minden.

The trip to Minden, accompanied by experienced Morris dancer Mr Cheshire and Deputy Head Mr Cavendish, whose wife made the magnificent costumes, was an opportunity to strengthen still further our links with the partner school (the *Besselgymnasium*) with which we run the Year Ten German exchange. The boys stayed in families with children of the same age and the German pupils became part of the show, joining in with the music and dressing up as a horse in the traditional Mummings play which was also part of our performance. At the end of the trip the German families were genuinely sorry to see them go.

At the festival the Eltham Morris dancers shared the stage with such items as a cockney sing-song led by a pearly king and queen. On the following day they performed to a somewhat more genteel audience at Minden's water mill. The boys returned full of enthusiasm for all things German and the unusual, even eccentric nature of this trip will keep it in their memory for years to come. What's more, the Morris 'side' is now established as a permanent club at Eltham College.

## Pomp, Circumstance and a Picnic

After ECCO's successful outdoor celebrations in 2007, the annual Classical "Pops" concert returned to a giant stage on the Junior School playing fields on July 4th 2009. Under the baton of Adrian Roberts, the orchestra and choirs, made up of current and past pupils, parents and staff, as well as musicians from the local community, performed favourites such as the *Carmen Suite* by Bizet, the Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from Verdi's *Nabucco* and Strauss' *Feuerfeste Polka*, featuring the Headmaster on the anvil!

The second half included a James Bond Medley and the Theme from *Mission Impossible* before concluding with the traditional Last Night of the Proms finale accompanied by a feast of fireworks. The audience of over 1000 enjoyed the atmosphere of the summer's evening which rounded off dramatically with more fireworks as a backdrop to the main theme from *Star Wars*.



# Record A level results

Eltham College's pupils have again broken records with the best ever A level results in the school's history. 93.7% of all grades achieved were at A or B - 70% were A grades! This year's two Head Prefects, Peter Evans and Lewis Owen, stand out for their achievements - 4 A grades each, gaining them places at Cambridge University to read Natural Sciences.

In a year when it is going to be even more competitive securing places at universities, these outstanding results will be really important. "We are confident that the vast majority of our pupils, over 90%, will have secured places on university courses of their choice. When pupils have achieved good grades in subjects like Chemistry, Latin and Further Mathematics, universities know they are ideal candidates for their degree courses" said Paul Henderson, Headmaster.



## Aim Higher



Eltham College recently organised a conference for local schools, aimed at encouraging Gifted and Talented pupils to 'aim' for 'higher' education. The course, held on 2nd and 3rd July, was attended by 35 pupils from Darrick Wood, Eltham Green, Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy, St Colomba's and Woodcote High School; six of Eltham's Year 10s were also involved in the course.

Over the two days, the pupils were involved in a wide range of activities and heard a range of engaging presentations on Sixth Form and University life from Eltham College staff and speakers from Queen

Mary's University. A team of successful local businessmen led activities such as creating CVs, team-building, mock interviews and recording news reports.

Head of English, Matthew Pollard, who organised Day One, said: "The Aim Higher course is an opportunity for Eltham College to share its significant experience and expertise in providing pupils with essential skills for Sixth Form and University. Recent research suggests that some of the nation's brightest youngsters never get to university - this is a worrying trend. We hope the course allowed the students to realise that university entrance is worth pursuing as well as providing them with much practical advice about what to do in Years 11, 12 and 13 to get there."

## New faces

The school welcomes a number of new staff this term. Mr Alastair Tighe (*right*) takes over as Director of Music, Mr James Chesterton takes on the role of Head of Geography which allows Mr David Cotterill to concentrate more on



Mr Tighe

his role as Registrar, and Ms Lucia Scarantino is looking after the French Department during Mrs Horton's maternity leave. Dr Fiona Morris joins the Science Faculty teaching Biology and Chemistry, while Mr Sean Thomson adds to our strength in the PE and Games Department. Mr James Willatt proved so popular last term in Geography that he has been asked to stay on for another year.

A further exciting initiative is to extend the number of artists-in-residence we have at Eltham. Ms Martine Borge will be our new Artist-in-Residence, while Mr Kenny Emson (Writer) and Mr Steve Grihault (Actor) have both joined us this term for residencies to add an extra dimension to our pupils' studies. There have been two other changes in the internal management of the school: Mr Andrew Hillary becomes Deputy Head of Middle School, and Mr Jonathan Munn has succeeded Mrs Head-Rapson as Assistant Examinations Officer. Finally, we welcome Mr Paul McIntyre as Deputy Master in the Junior School. We hope that all new staff will enjoy their time with us and are sure that we will benefit from their contributions.

# Outward Bound and Chocolat

The Year 6 French Trip to the Château du Broutel was punctuated by spontaneous outbreaks of the Macarena (with dancing!) and various Michael Jackson hits. In between providing the musical entertainment, the boys managed to disturb the resident mythical crocodile in the lake while kayaking and raft-building, worry a number of woodland creatures while flinging themselves around the assault course and brave the dizzying heights of the climbing wall. Copious amounts of unusual, but tasty food gave them the energy to zip across the lake dangling from a rope and the necessary focus for shooting bullseyes in archery.

The luxurious double-decker coach (previously inhabited by the Harlequins Rugby Team!) transported the group on a variety of off-site activities including the chilly, but fascinating, underground city at Naours, and an evening excursion to the beach at Fort Mahon where yummy ice creams were enjoyed! Our trip home included a welcome pit stop (for everyone except Mr. Schaper Jnr) at the Beussent chocolate factory... without a hint of Willy Wonka!

Once again it was a great trip and a fitting way to say goodbye to the Year 6 boys, as well as to Mr Schaper Senior, for whom this marked his final 'residential' before retiring.



# D of E Trip to Arran



In July some sixty Silver and Gold participants set off from Eltham to the Isle of Arran for the qualifying expedition. The groups were based in Brodick, Arran's principal town, and from there they tackled the rugged landscape of the northern half of the island. Silver groups walked 45km over three days, Gold groups more than 60km over four days. All were entirely self-sufficient, carrying their food, clothing and accommodation with them.

After low cloud and persistent rain at the start, weather conditions improved and groups were able to return to their planned fair weather routes for the remainder of the expedition. Clouds of a very different kind now hounded the groups, as midges and clegs descended and gorged themselves on the pupils. The terrain too provided a tough test for participants, as the rain had left the ground very boggy in places.

Each group carried with them the SPOT device. This has been used on a number of expeditions now and allows leaders to monitor groups more frequently without it giving away positional information to the groups themselves. It also allows groups to summon assistance in case of emergency. Overall, the participants coped well with the conditions and showed excellent fitness, motivation, navigational and camp-craft skills. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the experience and, although it was tough, found it most rewarding.

# Hands-on Geography

At the start of the summer holidays fifty-six Year 10 pupils, accompanied by Mr Beattie, Miss Lewis, Mr Willatt, Mr Weatherly, Mr Hillary (and Jack the dog) and Mr Barron, participated in a residential Geography field course to the north of England. Based in Haworth, a small market town near Bradford famous for its connections with the Brontë sisters, the group conducted urban fieldwork in Skipton, looked around the urban regeneration zone centred on the canals in inner-city Manchester, and saw the fabulous limestone scenery around Malham in the Yorkshire Dales. A morning at Blackpool Pleasure Beach, which features one of the world's longest and highest roller-coasters, provided a break from the intensive Geography being studied. All pupils came back with tired feet (from their long walks around Manchester and along part of the Pennine Way) but much better informed about topics in their GCSE Geography course, particularly those relating to tourism, limestone scenery and urban regeneration.

