

Trebles perform for Sir Simon Rattle



Eltham College was invited to provide the boys' choir for the Berlin Philharmonic's performance of Mahler's *Third Symphony* on Wednesday 23 February at the Royal Festival Hall. Given the hype and the expectations, this was a huge privilege but also a daunting prospect. Many regard Sir Simon Rattle as the world's best living conductor of the world's greatest orchestra. The packed venue had been sold out for eighteen months. The College Trebles were therefore hugely excited by the chance to perform in such elevated company and rose to the challenge magnificently.

The Eltham College boys took their place alongside the ladies of the London Symphony Chorus and BBC Singers in the 5th movement, which expresses an outpouring of heavenly joy, with the boys imitating the sound of heavenly bells ("Bim! Bam!") and ecstatic angels. The concert received extensive critical acclaim, and in all cases the singing of the Eltham College trebles was commented on most favourably; "incisive and bang in tune" (*Daily Telegraph*); "glorious contribution" (*Observer*); "peerless" (*TheArtsDesk.com*); "fervent richness of tone" (*Guardian*).

The Eltham Trebles will be performing the work again in Paris in March, this time with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Valery Gergiev.

Chris Harden sets goalscoring record

Records are there to be broken, but it is unlikely that anyone will ever again score so many goals for the Eltham College 1st Hockey XI as Chris Harden. He is phenomenal. Chris reached his century with five (!) goals against Bancroft's in early February. He then scored two more against Borden, five more against Reigate, three against Cranbrook, four against King's Canterbury and two against Caterham. His final total, whatever it is, will be the school record.

The school 1st XI have had another excellent

season, winning more than 25 games. Two rare defeats were against Kent College, including a very unlucky last-minute exit in the Kent Cup semi-final. The U16s went one better, defeating Tonbridge in the Kent semi-final but losing to Langley Park in the final. Nevertheless this qualifies the U16s for the Regional Championships, for the second time in 3 years. With the junior teams also performing very well, the future of hockey at Eltham College is bright. But we will miss Chris when he goes!





During the February half term 31 junior and 46 senior boys took part in school ski trips to Alpe D'Huez and Tignes respectively. The pistes in the French Alps were in very good condition and the boys made good use of their skiing lessons, the junior boys especially making excellent progress during the week.

Both groups enjoyed a busy après ski programme including bum-boarding, ice-skating and quiz evenings. The younger ones also tried their hand at a high ropes course while the older ones took the opportunity to socialise at the hotel disco.



Cultural trip to Cuba

Cuba is a very interesting and diverse island, as the Eltham College pupils on a cultural trip there in February discovered. We started with a grand Havana city coach tour, taking in the Partagas Cigar factory and the impressive Revolution Square, where Fidel Castro often gave speeches of up to six hours. Then we had a walking tour of the old squares and visited the Havana Club rum factory. Later we stopped to visit the Miramar Theatre - currently being restored and which will be a recipient of money raised from our own EC Factor show.

We spent the next day at Las Terrazas tourist complex to enjoy the diversity of ecosystems and to witness a co-operative way of living. On other days we went to Santa Clara, to see the museum and mausoleum of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, the city of Trinidad and the beautifully restored city of Cienfuegos. A novelty was a visit to a crocodile farm, with the chance to try crocodile meat for lunch!

At the end of the week we moved to a second hotel in Varadero, where we were able to bathe in the Atlantic Ocean and participate in a formal Cuban dance lesson as well as playing volleyball in the hotel pool. It was an amazing trip, from which we were able to build many friendships and cherish good memories.



Pupils in front of Camilo Cienfuegos, compatriot of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara

Welcome to French, German and Chinese visitors



We've had four groups of foreign visitors this term. In January a group from YuXin school in China (pictured) came as part of a tour of the English education system. They were pleased to be welcomed in Mandarin at the Junior School, where the language has been taught for five years now.

Then in February two groups were here at the same time, from our partner schools in Nuremberg and Laval. Finally in March

a group of Sixth form pupils from Monaco spent a week here. All three groups had a busy programme of excursions to London as well as spending time in school with their exchange partners. Extra lessons are arranged for them and Modern Languages Department staff conduct bilingual sessions with guests and hosts. The pattern of these exchanges is now well established and always successful; the return visits are in April.

A Choral Treat from King's



We were privileged and delighted to be able to welcome Collegium Regale, the Choral Scholars of King's College, Cambridge in February. Singers from the world-renowned choir performed

a highly entertaining and inspiring programme of sacred and secular music from the 16th century to the present day in King George's Hall. One of the current members of Collegium Regale is

Robbie Jacobs OE (on right in picture). He is this year's Musical Director of the *a cappella* group, who are famed for the quality of their sound and the expertise of their performance. Before the concert, the Collegium Regale singers and some of our own singers prepared two joint performances. Our pupils benefited enormously from the opportunity to sing with some of these accomplished young singers, and everyone was inspired by their skill and the advice they had to offer. Eltham College's Chamber Choir performed William Byrd's *Civitas Sancti Tui* with the visiting singers in the first half of the evening concert, with the Consort Choir concluding the programme with a joint performance of the Beach Boys' classic *I Get Around*.

The Eltham College Factor



This year's production of The EC Factor was staged over two nights in March in the Antony Barnard Hall. The staff judges provided their usual good-humoured criticism and putdowns; the eleven competing acts ensured that the entertainment value was high. The Wednesday show was won by Balance (above centre), who performed *Teenage Dirtbag*, which obviously struck a chord with the many Sixth Formers in the audience. It was a well-deserved victory for Head Prefect and Lead Vocalist Jacob Laing, who had also masterminded and directed the whole show. The Thursday winner was Eddy Forshaw (above, right) singing *Lost*. Thanks to the generous support of the Eltham College Community, EC Factor raised over £4,000 for local charities (Demelza House, the Marjorie McClure Specialist School, the New Lodge Riding School for the Disabled) and for the Music Fund for Cuba and their renovation of the Miramar Theatre in Havana (see Cuba report).

Young Voices concert at the O2 Arena

In January the Years 5 and 6 Choir performed to a sell-out audience of 20,000 at the O2 Arena, joining 8,000 children as part of the biggest schools choir in the world. The choir performed with professional artists, some of whom will surely go on to be the stars of the future. The boys had been learning their parts for the songs since the beginning of the school year. After an intensive afternoon of rehearsals with Principal Conductor David Lawrence and Music Director Craig McLeish, the audience arrived and the excitement built up.



Finally, the lights went down, the band started up and the concert began with an 8,000-strong Mexican wave. The children's choir sang choruses with the stars and also sang numbers on their own. The boys particularly enjoyed the Pop Medley and Golden Musical Memories, as well as the last item - a spectacular Michael Jackson Tribute. Everyone looks forward to taking part again in the future.

U11s soccer on a high



The Under 11 Soccer team have had an excellent season. Their results include an 8-1 win against Blackheath Prep and a 7-2 victory over DCPS. Perhaps the highlight was winning the Alleyn's School Tournament in February. Brendon Paulsen in Year 6, who scored two hat-tricks in the tournament, describes the final against the hosts:

"Our last match meant everything. It was against Alleyn's who over the past years have had superior luck over us so we were determined not to lose. If we won we would win

the tournament and if we drew or lost we had to hope for the best. In the end it was 0-0 after a very exciting game where everything happened, we hit the post several times, had about ten corners and a few keeper saves. In the end we won the tournament by two points! We were over the moon and it was a great way to end half-term. My "man of the tournament" was Harry Donovan as he provided crosses like a professional and never gave up in attack and defence. The entire team performed well and played excellently. I certainly think that we can keep the success going for the rest of the season."

Touché, Boys!!

Eltham College fencers have competed in four county and regional competitions during the first half of the Spring Term and from these, nine fencers have won a total of sixteen medals. This level of success is common for our team but even more satisfying is that some fencers have moved up an age group and are competing against fencers two years their senior. For example, Elliott Grover (16) competes in U18 events and is placed second in Kent and third in Surrey & South East England. Furthermore, two of our fencers have switched weapons to studying Sabre and have won medals on all three attempts. The fencing team also have a very talented U10 squad who have yet to be beaten by other clubs and schools.



Tom Hood left and Ben Hines

As a team we are committed to long-term athlete development, ensuring the longevity of our fencers' careers. Success at competitions at this early stage is testimony to the fencers' commitment to the sport along with the coaching expertise available at Eltham College.

The challenges ahead include the Public Schools Championships and the England Championships. Also next month we have four fencers, Elliott Grover, Andrew Hughes, Ben Dines and Tom Hood, all selected by their SE England results, representing their region at the British Championships in Sheffield.

Chess team reaches national final



Alexei Davis and Conor Murphy

The Eltham College Chess team, consisting of **Conor Murphy, Alexei Davis, Alexander Selway, Arul Gupta, Thomas Morton and Sachin Balaji**, defeated a strong Trinity School Croydon team in January, and then in February defeated St Olave's, thereby winning the regional final of the Yatley Manor national chess tournament. This is a "handicap" event with results adjusted for age.

This was an excellent result against a strong St Olave's team - all but one of the Eltham College players were playing opponents who outranked them in points. Alex Selway managed a draw on board 3 with a player who had a ranking 35 points higher than him. Young Arul Gupta on board 4 also managed a draw with a player ranked 29 points higher than him, and showed great composure despite time pressure near the end of the game.

Since then the team has won again, against Wilson's Grammar school, the Surrey winners. Sachin Balaji and Alexei Davis were our winners against much higher ranked opponents. So we are now in the last eight in the country.