



Building links with Tanzania



During the October half-term, a party from Eltham College went to central Tanzania with a mission to help a Community School there. Mr and Mrs Henderson, ten Upper Sixth pupils, Mr and Mrs Head-Rapson and three charity workers from South-East London went to the Kisasa Secondary School in Dodoma. As well as taking the first steps towards building a link between Eltham College and Kisasa, the party visited the Kisasa Primary School, built five years ago with help from a group of volunteers,

including Mr and Mrs Head-Rapson, under the banner of the Charity AZAR. Equally moving was a visit to the Village of Hope – a residential home for orphans with HIV.

At Kisasa Secondary School plans were laid for future cooperation. Meanwhile Eltham College pupils worked with local students, practising their spoken English, playing sport, singing, dancing, debating and painting some classrooms. **The full story is on the centre pages.**

Stephen Smith (1934-2010)



With the passing away of Stephen Smith in the summer, Eltham College has lost its last surviving full Rugby International, a Governor, a former OE Chairman and above all a wonderful man. Born in 1934 the son of missionary parents in India, Stephen attended Taunton School for two terms at the end of the Second World War while the Eltham College boarders were still evacuated there, and then Eltham College from 1945-53, when he was quite clearly the outstanding sportsman in the school. After national service in the Army, Stephen read Geography at Cambridge, earning a Rugby Blue there, as well as an England cap as scrum-half in 1959 and again in 1964. He taught at Harrow for 5

years and then went back to India as a missionary. Returning to England, he was appointed Headmaster of Caterham School, where he remained for 21 years. In retirement he was a very active supporter of Eltham College as an OE and Governor. OEs have described him as one of the truly outstanding Elthamians. No-one who knew him could fail to like, admire and respect him. The loss of Stephen Smith is felt by an enormous number of people, as the many tributes to him have shown. A celebration of his life was held on 12th December in the School Chapel as part of the OE Winter Reunion.

Singing all over Europe

Bravissimi!

Fifty-eight pupils and staff set off from Gatwick on Tuesday 13 July to spend a week enjoying the sights, tastes and sounds of Northern Italy, and to sing in numerous spectacular and inspiring venues.

The Choir gave four performances during their week-long stay in some beautifully impressive churches, receiving a warm and appreciative welcome from the home audiences. The opening concert was given in the reconstructed Baroque cathedral of the Alpine town of Asiago where an audience of over 300 gathered under the dome to hear the Choir perform music by Purcell, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Britten, among others. The Choir gave a second concert to another large audience in the resonant Cathedral in Asola, south of Verona, receiving a standing ovation for their performance of an eclectic programme of music which included works by numerous English composers. Having performed motets by Bruckner and Franck during the Saturday



evening Mass in the modern church of Our Lady of Lourdes with spectacular views over Verona, the choir gave a short recital for the congregation. The final performance was given amidst the gold mosaics and splendour of St

Mark's Basilica in Venice. In what was an undoubted highlight of the tour, the Choir sang motets at the midday Sunday Mass underneath the soaring domes and balconies of one of Christendom's most important churches.

Trebles and Gergiev in Switzerland and France

In September the Eltham College Trebles took part in a professional concert tour with the Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre from St Petersburg. The boys had been invited by the orchestra's Chief Conductor and Artistic Director, Valery Gergiev, to take the Boys' Choir part in two performances of Gustav Mahler's Eighth Symphony, in Basel and Paris. The Eltham Trebles joined the 100-strong Chorus of the Mariinsky Theatre to perform to packed houses in two of Europe's leading concert venues. In Basel's Musiksaal



and in the Salle Pleyel in Paris the performances were very well received and Gergiev commented on the "wonderful" singing of the boys.

The Trebles will be returning to Paris in March 2011 to perform Mahler's Third Symphony with the London Symphony Orchestra, again under the direction of Gergiev. They will also be performing the Third Symphony in February at London's Royal Festival Hall with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Sir Simon Rattle.

Chamber Choir in Windsor

The Eltham College Chamber Choir travelled to Windsor on Tuesday 12 October to lead the evening service of Choral Evensong in the Royal Chapel of St George, the Castle's and monarch's private Chapel. The Chamber Choir led the service from the choir stalls which are on either side of the tomb of Henry VIII and beneath the colourful banners of the members of the Order of the Garter.

The Choir sang the canticles to a setting in F major by George Dyson. The anthem was Grayston Ives' Listen sweet dove, the text of which is by George Herbert. The responses were sung to William Smith's setting.

It was good to welcome a large number of parents, family and



friends to the Chapel for the service, in addition to the members of the College of St George who live and work in Windsor Castle, and tourists. The Evensong took place on the eve of the Feast of King Edward the Confessor, one of the Chapel's patrons, adding an extra sense of occasion to a most memorable experience for all those involved.

Artificial Intelligence...?

On Thursday 14 October the annual Sixth Form Independent Research Project Presentation Evening was held, hosted by College Society. The 'competition' encourages Lower Sixth pupils to spend part of the summer holiday doing research in an area of interest. This year over 70 pupils took up the challenge, covering every topic imaginable. These were presented during tutor periods and the best were put through to the final evening in the ABH.

The evening attracted a good crowd of peers, parents and staff. The judges were Mr Henderson, Mr Cavendish and Mr McCartney who, along with other audience members, asked probing questions to the finalists.

The standard was incredibly high, and the finalists gave fascinating presentations. Matthew Auger talked about research he had done on Formula One aerodynamics; Peter Hopkin spoke on Chaucer's Canterbury Tales; Jimi Cullen



covered Artificial Intelligence; Jacob Laing informed us about the placebo effect; Patrick McCourt, using examples from television, covered the interesting topic of music in advertising; finally, Ruby Stevenson spoke passionately about Keats' Odes.

After much deliberation, the judges chose Jimi Cullen as the 'winner' with Jacob Laing 2nd and Ruby Stevenson 3rd. However, to use a well-worn cliché, they and the other 70 pupils who voluntarily undertook the research, are all winners. The skills of research, presentation, coping with questions will be useful for university interviews, university itself and the world beyond. Well done to all involved.



A boys' Night at the Opera

Three of Eltham College's trebles were selected to perform in English National Opera's production of Puccini's well-loved opera, La Bohème. The boys were given their parts after successfully passing a competitive audition earlier this term.

The pupils are members of the boys' street gang; one third of the selected boys come from Eltham College. Guy Clayson, Ruari Paterson-Achenbach and Joseph Beesley (left to right in picture, all from Year 8) rehearsed with the opera's Musical Director and Chorus Master, as well as later with the production's Director Jonathan Miller, and the production's opening night was on October 18th. They will perform in all thirteen performances in the run at the London Coliseum which continues until the end of January 2011.



Nine plays to packed houses

Three performances of the Edinburgh Festival production of the musical Nine were staged in September in the Antony Barnard Hall. This is the third musical the school has sent to the festival, and follows last year's epic production of Oliver! The London run played to packed houses and provided an opportunity for the Eltham College audience to see a rarely staged musical.

Nine featured current pupils, Old Elthamians and a number of talented students from the South East. The show was rehearsed over three weeks in the theatre and then the thirty-strong cast, band and crew travelled to Scotland for an extremely popular eight-show run in C venues. Starring as troubled film director Guido Contini was David Burnett (OE), with rising talent Joseph Beesley (Year Eight) appearing as the young Contini and also playing oboe in the twelve piece band, which was conducted by Gregory Liddington from last year's Upper Sixth.

KISASA SCHOOL, DODOMA

‘A class of 90 with only a few text books between them’



Cat Dow working with Kisasa pupils

The learning curve was steep as pupils from Eltham College worked at Kisasa Secondary School in Tanzania for the two-week half-term break, taking with them their skills in English and bringing away a new understanding of Africa, and of themselves.

Ten Upper Sixth pupils accompanied Maths teacher Mrs Christine Head-Rapson and her husband Bill, an engineer, to the school in a suburb of Dodoma, the new capital of Tanzania, to assist in teaching English. Later they swapped chalk for paint brushes and created a cheerful, optimistic environment by decorating classrooms.

Some of the Eltham pupils surprised themselves, and delighted the Tanzanian children, with their skills. In Tanzania, a Swahili-speaking country, most lessons are taught in English but not all teachers are proficient in the language. With 90 pupils in a class and almost no text books, it is a challenge for even the best teachers.

The term “distance learning” took on a new meaning as Mrs Head-Rapson taught Maths to a class of 90. The pupils at the front were absorbed in the lessons but many of those at the back, while respectful and subdued, seemed less engaged. With such large numbers, and with so many desks crowding the classroom, it is difficult



Mrs Head-Rapson’s “distance learning”

to maintain contact at an individual level and to gauge the measure of understanding.

Headmaster Paul Henderson taught English lessons based on the parable of the Good Samaritan and using a sketch mimed by members of AZAR (the charity which provided the initial link with Kisasa). Mr Henderson was able to split the classes into smaller groups, using the Eltham pupils to take English conversation sessions in a different room. Having smaller groups enabled him to encourage the Tanzanian pupils to speak out in class, come to the blackboard and receive the appropriate encouragement for efforts made. The Eltham Sixth Formers discovered how energy-sapping teaching can be, and through the efforts at conversational English, found out more about the families and lifestyles of the Kisasa kids, whose ages can range from 14-24.

Later the Eltham pupils helped organise and run two rousing debates whose

topics were tobacco-growing in Tanzania and the education of girls. The interaction continued with an amusing play from the Kisasa pupils about a witch doctor’s efforts to help a young man win the heart of a girl, and the Eltham pupils’ drama stressing the importance of a firm foundation in education. There was another opportunity for mixing as the Eltham Sixth Formers took an active part in a sports day which included netball, football... and a sack race!

During the second week efforts focused on helping to improve the appearance of some of the classrooms. This included repainting the inside and outside of a classroom block, including the blackboard. With some of the Kisasa pupils also joining in, it proved to be a very different but satisfying type of work. Over 300 text books bought with money raised by Mrs Head-Rapson arrived at the school while we were there, and each is stamped as the gift of Eltham College, London. We also discussed the possibility of other physical improvements

we might support, and it is clear that a relatively small amount of money from us can make a big impact there. However, experience shows us that it is not buildings and facilities which make a school, it is the people. Kisasa Secondary School is a group of classroom blocks with crumbling cement floors and tin roofs. The science lab is “equipped” with bottles of chemicals, and a tortoise in a box, presumably for Biology. ⇨

The Headmaster, Paul Henderson, writes:

“A class of 90 with only a few text books between them would be challenging enough for most teachers - and these teachers have to communicate in a foreign language, English. This is where I feel we could help. If we were able to provide a regular supply of good English speakers who had the confidence to go in and take lessons, work with the teachers to help them discover a freshness of approach to what happens in the classroom, then I am confident that something amazing could really happen. The school's motto is “Aim Higher” and I would like to see if Eltham College could help them achieve that goal. Mrs Elaine Galloway has indicated her wish to go to spend some time in Kisasa teaching Science and helping the other teachers with their English - she will be supported by Eltham College from September 2011. Mrs Head-Rapson is already planning to organise another trip for Eltham Sixth Formers in October 2011.

I hope that some of our wider community will also decide to give up some of their time - before going to university or after university before starting their careers - as another layer to help us change more young people's lives at Kisasa. I intend to establish a gap-year project when two or four students will go out to Tanzania for periods of about 4-5 months to live and work there. The OEA committee are keen to support this project and with the support of the Dodoma Education authorities and the British Council this should be a really worthwhile project. I hope that we can set this up in time for the beginning of the Tanzanian academic year in January 2012.”



Phelan on the drums

⇒ The school has no electricity, gas, telephone lines or running water - buckets are used to fetch water from the outdoor cistern. The dining hall is a small shack where local people sell chapattis and ice-pops at mid-morning break. Most windows lack glass so when the wind sends the orange dust swirling into the air, they use cardboard to try to stop it getting into the classrooms. It must be more difficult in the rainy season. There are long hours of daylight and there is some competition during break times to find a spot of shade under the three small trees in the school “quad”.



Kisasa kids perform their local dances

There was, however, much which impressed. Morning assembly is held outside and individual pupils give mini-lectures, in English, on all kinds of topics to the whole school who stand in rows, patiently listening, and supportive of the speaker. We all enjoyed the performance of local tribal dances, and the singing during religious lessons was quite haunting (listen on the school website). More classrooms were being built when we visited but without more teachers, they will be of little use. The education authorities told us they would give priority to providing teachers of Science and English - there is only one of each at the school at the moment. And perhaps this is where we can help most.



Eltham pupils decorating the classrooms



What do you think vampires are?

Marcus Sedgwick, inspired by Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast novels to write Gothic horror novels for teenagers, has researched this subject in depth, travelling to distant lands and searching out strange, almost defunct local traditions.

His exposition of the subject was not for the faint-hearted: indeed those who were feeling that way inclined were advised to think of fluffy bunnies if the going became too hard. Even so, as he showed us the film images which he encountered during the research process, we followed him into some truly frightening and strange interpretations. Then he gradually separated the myths about vampires: teeth, running water... from the actual ancient folk-lore use of garlic and he looked at the long slow process by which he found the ideas for "My Swordhand is Singing", which is a most unusual vampire story. We were privileged to see the actual notebook and slides from his journey to Romania. The slides demonstrated the slow and sometimes fruitless search for ideas: he needed to return during the winter before he could decide exactly where to place his novel. Finally the publishing process was discussed, in particular the difficulties of creating an appropriate front cover – right down to the bloody footprint, which clearly indicates that this writer does not specialise in fluffy bunnies.



England coach passes on advice

Ex-England Coach Brian Ashton came to Eltham College on 8 September to work with our senior Rugby players. Brian was England's Head Coach from 2006-2008 and took England to the 2007 World Cup Final.

The day gave the players a chance to learn some valuable attacking methods as well as how to approach the game with a more attacking mind-set. Brian was able to show the boys how, simply by being more positive in their play, they can attack from even the toughest of situations. The afternoon included a classroom session in which Brian emphasised just how important quick ball can be, and then the players were given the chance to go outside and put this into practice under the guidance of one of the world's finest coaches.

The day was a huge success and the boys all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. This season's results have shown just how valuable a day like this can be in building an attacking team

College Society inspired to read *Mr Rosenblum's List*

On Thursday 11th November the College Society welcomed Old Elthamian and novelist Natasha Solomons with her husband, the screenplay writer David Solomons. Natasha spoke about the process of writing her bestselling novel, *Mr Rosenblum's List* and the long road to publication. David told us about adapting the novel into a screenplay for Film4. Members of the audience asked several questions about the novel and where Natasha had got the ideas from. The 'List' of the title is from a pamphlet given to her grandparents when they arrived in Dorset from Berlin before World War II. It was a fascinating evening and an inspiration to all budding writers. It was great news indeed to hear that Natasha is working on her second novel. We look forward to seeing the filmed adaptation of *Mr Rosenblum's List* and reading her next novel.





Year 11 Leadership course

The October half-term saw fifty Year 11 pupils drowning in mud, falling off cliffs and hurling themselves into flooded quarries all in the name of 'character-building' and the development of their leadership potential. The weather was both cruel and kind in equal measure and the pupils carried out the tasks set (physical and psychological) with gusto and enthusiasm, ensuring that

success was most definitely the watchword for the week. Many of the activities, most notably the 'Bogrun' – as messy and smelly as it sounds – and the Coasteering (orienteering by traversing sea cliffs) were new to the course and were seen by all (participants and spectators) as the highlights of an exhausting but thoroughly worthy and enjoyable week.

Fitting Finale for Adrian Thomas

The tour started in Seattle against Liberty RFC and after four competitive quarters Eltham emerged victorious by 25–21. Next the tour party headed for Victoria on Vancouver Island and were well rested for the challenge of Crimson Tide, representing a number of districts from the south of the island. After another highly competitive game, Eltham held on to win by 27–26. Then, following a visit to an Aerial Adventure Course – a fabulous challenge for many but a nightmare for a few – the match at Nanaimo in the afternoon was less demanding and the whole squad had a good run-out while winning 42–5 in pleasingly disciplined fashion.

From there they headed to Vancouver and the Meralomas XV: big, athletic, well drilled, and highly self-motivated – was this to be a game too far? Meralomas dominated the game both in terms of territory and possession, but



Eltham refused to yield, inspired by another strong performance by the forwards. 13-7 down at the interval Eltham, conscious of the big provincial game to come, took off many of the senior players. Nevertheless the second half players scored two fine tries to win 19–13, a truly outstanding performance.

The toughest game was always going to be against Canada's top rugby province British

Columbia U18. Although Eltham College lost 40-22 the team stood toe-to-toe to a squad 25 of BC's finest, in touch at four tries each until fifteen minutes to go. This was a remarkably impressive performance and the Eltham College XV went down fighting with pride very much intact. Thus ended a very fine tour, enjoyed by all, not least Mr Thomas who stands down from running the 1st XV after twelve excellent seasons.

Art Treasures of Russia

On 18 October twenty-seven Eltham College pupils began a seven-day trip to St Petersburg and Moscow which will not quickly be forgotten. In St Petersburg we were lucky enough to stay on Nevsky Prospekt, which is in the centre of the city and that made it easy to explore. We spent most of the first day in the Winter Palace and admiring the collection of the State Hermitage, the foundations of which were laid down by Catherine the Great. There is a wealth of famous work on show from Rembrandt and Titian to Matisse and Picasso. While in St Petersburg we also visited the Russian Museum, the Peter and Paul Fortress, St Isaac's Cathedral and the Catherine Palace. These visits gave us a real sense of the city, but there was also plenty of time given to the Art pupils to take photos and to make drawings of the place and of the works of art.

We took the night train to Moscow, which was an experience in itself. Arriving early the next day we were hit by the dramatic contrast between the two cities and some bitterly cold weather. Our hotel was a huge imposing building on the outskirts of Moscow with some amazing views of the city. We were lucky enough to see the amazing collection at the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum, to visit Novodevichy Convent and cemetery, Red Square and St Basil's, the Kremlin and Armoury and to see the Bolshoi Ballet performing Sleeping Beauty. There was also time for more photography and drawing as well as a spot of shopping in the famous GUM department store and in the Arbat district of the city.



JUNIOR SCHOOL CHAMPIONS!



On the snow...

On Saturday 9th October the Junior School Ski team made the long journey to Rossendale in Lancashire to compete in the English Schools' Ski Championship (ESSKIA). Competing in the Under 12 boys category, the team of Diaco Abrishami, Harry Donovan, Sam Gaskin and Richard Trew were competing against boys who were in some cases three years older. Each boy had to complete a tricky slalom course twice and the scores were totalled and averaged out to decide the winners of the team competition.

All our boys skied brilliantly and we are delighted to announce that Eltham College Junior School are the Under 12 English Schools' Champions for 2010. In addition, Sam Gaskin recorded the fastest time for an Under 12 skier.

After their success at the National Championships, Sam Gaskin, Harry Donovan and Richard Trew have been selected for the English Schools Junior Ski Squad. They will travel to Austria in March 2011 for a week's training and will also have training sessions at the Snow Centre in Hemel Hempstead.

On the Chess board...

The Eltham College Under 11 Chess Players are the best in the country, and that's official. At the EPSCA National U11 tournament on 6th-7th July they won convincingly and are worthy national champions.

Five of the squad had played last year and we had come second, so the feeling was that the team had a good chance of lifting the National trophy. The team breezed through their zonal some months ago and at the strong semi-final at Camber Sands last week scored an incredible 28/30 to qualify for the finals. The final was held over two days, with 4 rounds being played on day 1 and three rounds on day 2. The team got off to a great start on day 1 with 4 wins. Particularly important was the



emphatic 4-1 demolition of "second favourites" Nottingham. We scored 16,5/20 on day 1, a very good start.

Day 2 started with a small "stumble" (only 3.5 pts!) followed by another emphatic 4-1 win against a near rival. Going into the last round the team had a 4-point lead and cruised through 3-2 to finish with 27 points. The team: Conor Murphy, Owen Messere, Alexander Selway, Arul Gupta, Thomas Morton and Rohan Rao played superbly throughout the tournament and won with a staggeringly high percentage. Particular mention must be made of Conor Murphy (on Board 1) and Arul Gupta (only 8, on Board 4) who won special board prizes for scoring 7/7. Fantastic. This team did their school proud. Many thanks to the parents for their support and assistance throughout the competition and of course to Coach Laurence Ball.

...and with the rugby ball



Our first game of the season was a tournament, with four teams. We (the A team) won all our matches, 25-0 v Merton Court, 10-5 against St. Christopher's and 20-0 against our 'B' team.

As we were practising kicking during training sessions, it was included in the next match, against Colfes, our main rivals. We played really well in this match, drawing 14-14 at the final whistle. Our next match was probably the hardest one that we had this season, which was against DCPS (Dulwich College Prep School). We dominated this game and ran out winners 28-7. This was the first time Eltham College had beaten them at U11 level.

Then we had the St. Christopher's 9-a-side tournament. Our first game was our hardest against Bickley Park, as we did not have the

ball all the time, but we drew 5-5. We won the next match against Merton Court easily with 15-5. Our next match was the 3rd and 4th place off against St. Christopher's and we won that again 15-5, so we came 3rd. The next week we played Whitgift. This was a very physical game but we thrashed them 28-0.

We could not have played so well without the expert coaching of Mr O'Dwyer, Mr Thomas and Mr Thomson. Also many thanks to the 'A' team for their hard work, perseverance and determination: Gabriel Downer, Joseph Allen, Harry Donovan, Arran Khanna, John Phillips, Jack French, James Tate, Nico Murlowski, Elliot Lilley, Oliver Colegate, Owen Davies and Alex Selway.

Brendon Paulsen 6MO