



Ramsey Voice

Updates Newsletter

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Notes From the Head

Spring has arrived and summer is fast approaching which means the public examinations have started. Year 11 students are completing final preparations for their GCSE subjects and we wish them good luck. No doubt many of them will reflect on how quickly their time at The Ramsey Academy has passed and will soon be focused on the new challenges of post-16 study, apprenticeship or employment. At the moment however, their minds are focused on revision, exam technique and probably the 'Leavers' Prom'. Photographs and a report on this highly anticipated event will appear in the final edition of this year's Ramsey Voice.

We are delighted to announce that funding has finally been secured to complete the remaining work on three sides of the Tower Block. Following a successful bid to the Education Funding Agency the Academy has been awarded £475,000 and we will contribute the remaining money to complete the re-cladding and replacement of windows and doors. Work is scheduled to start towards the end of the Summer Term and will take up to six months to complete. Whilst this will cause some minor disruption to lessons the improvement in the

learning conditions will be worth it, as will the view of the Tower to all our local neighbours.

This edition contains yet again a wide variety of reports highlighting the opportunities on offer at the Academy and our commitment to working with the local community. Students have demonstrated initiative by contributing ideas to ensure their participation in a number of events in the town are successful, including raising over £1,700 for a local charity and supporting the annual Halstead Marathon.

Students have travelled to historical sites in London and Duxford and participated in experiments linked to astronaut, Tim Peak, on the international Space Station. Whilst many students contribute to this newsletter they have shown initiative and launched their own version, 'The Ramsey Ram', written by students for students. With the support of Miss Siseman of the English Faculty, the first edition of this spin-off publication was well received and it is planned to produce one edition each term. The Ramsey Ram will in future be sent electronically to all parents and published on the website.

We encourage students to show initiative, take risks and learn from the experience. When considering these aims this quote from the artist, Banksy, is quite thought provoking; "A lot of people never use their initiative because no-one told them to." - Mr R James

Happy Retirement to Mrs Payne

On Wednesday 4 May we said goodbye to Mrs Payne who retired after 15 years at the school. She was a familiar and friendly face for students and their parents and a very highly valued member of the office team. On her last day she was surrounded by gifts and flowers, many from parents who wished to show her their gratitude. To express their thanks the Pastoral Team gave Mrs Payne an 'Honorary Guest' ticket to the Prom, an event we know she is very much looking forward to.

Mrs Payne may have left the school but she will not be forgotten as we have named an award after her. The Margaret Payne Award.

We all send Mrs Payne our very best wishes for a very happy retirement. - Mrs C Downes



May Day Music

The Ramsey Academy Band and soloists once again performed at the May Day Celebrations in Halstead Public Gardens.

The crowd were enthralled with their renditions of Jurassic Park, Star Wars, Dr Who and the theme tune to Friends.

Well done to our soloists Imogen Dockrell, Rosie Shackell, Lily McKean and Bridget Clegg. The band's next performance will be at the St Francis of Assisi Summer Fayre on Sunday 26 June 2016. - Mr G Lewis-James

"It's not Rocket Science" YES IT IS!

After months of anticipation, which included an exploding space shuttle, the time is now here! A courier has delivered our pack of Rocket seeds which has spent time on the International Space Station with British astronaut Tim Peake. Our mission is to germinate 100 of these intrepid little travellers and compare them to 100 of their earth-bound relatives. We do not know which is which until after the close of the experiment.

Hundreds of UK schools are taking part in this RHS led experiment. Our recordings and observations will be pooled with these other groups. It is all part of research into growing food for humans travelling in space.

The experiment does not come without its risks. The seed packets are labelled "not suitable for human consumption". We have therefore placed hazard tape around the growing area.

Gardening Club members will be tending the seeds and seedlings with daily watering. Records will be kept of the first seeds to germinate, the numbers of seedlings with two proper leaves, and towards the end the size of the fully formed Rocket leaves.

The club are proud to have provided the Ramsey Academy with their first Rocket Scientists. The project will run till half-term, at which point the results will be uploaded to the RHS for analysis. Watch this SPACE! - Mr S Pittuck



Gardening Club - May Day in the Park 2016

For the second year Halstead has held Mayday celebrations in the town park. Ramsey Academy students were very visible and made quite an impact. The Design Faculty manned a craft stall, decorating pallet-wood crowns with shiny bling. The young children taking part really enjoyed the activity.

Six of our Gardening Club members manned our stall. We had pictures of our activities from the last two years on display. Students spoke to dozens of members of the public, keen to promote our club. We also sold planters and geraniums to boost our funds.

We have now received the RHS Schools Gardening Award Level 4, as well as Level 3. We are talking to Halstead In Bloom about a joint community project to help us achieve the Level 5 award.

The rain held off. The sun shone, a bit! We made £52 between ourselves and the Design stall. We are looking forward to next year's event. - Mr S Pittuck





Duxford Trip

On 22 April 60 Year 9 students joined the History Department for a trip to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford. Students had the opportunity to learn about many different types of aircraft from right across the 20th century. Students examined engines and cockpits as well as climbing on board various different planes which included the now retired Concorde.

The main focus of the day was a talk about Duxford's role in the Battle of Britain 1940. Small groups were given various artefacts from WW2 and then led to the site where the artefact was used. The tour covered the parachute packing shed, the Spitfire loading and testing shed, the command room and a hangar housing Spitfires, Hurricanes and a German Messerschmitt which had crash landed during 1940. Students then had time to explore various other exhibitions including one about land warfare that housed an impressive collection of tanks and one of

the amphibious landing craft used in the D-Day landings of 1944.

Despite the cold weather Year 9 were a credit to the school and thoroughly enjoyed their experience with many of them commenting on how interesting the trip was. - Mrs A Perrins

Tower of London Trip

On Thursday 5 May, 98 Year 7 pupils joined the History department for a trip to the Tower of London. Pupils had 4 hours to explore the Tower and the various exhibitions. There was also plenty of time to acquaint ourselves with the ravens who live at the Tower, one of which did manage to steal a cheese string from a pupil and then proceed to show her intelligence by opening the wrapper and eating it!

Pupils saw how the Tower has changed throughout History, from being a medieval palace to a Tudor prison and a Victorian garrison under the Duke of Wellington. Pupils even discovered how the Tower was used to imprison Nazis during WW2.

Some highlights of the day were the visit to the Crown Jewels where pupils saw a vast collection of crowns and regalia, a large collection of diamonds and the exhibition dedicated to the animals who were kept in the Tower Zoo. Pupils were particularly interested to read about the Polar Bear belonging to Henry II who was tied to a rope and allowed to fish in the Thames!

We were also lucky to be at the Tower when the Fusiliers were parading with their band so pupils got a real insight into the role of the Tower today. Year 7 were impeccably well behaved and showed a real interest in all of the information they were given. - Mrs A Perrins

Students' comments - What have you enjoyed about the trip?

"everything" Max Felton ; "Looking at weapons" Toby Edney ; "I have enjoyed being out with most of Year 7, probably a once in a lifetime trip!" Melissa Moon



Aspiration Charity Week

Aspiration House Captains, Sports Captains and the House Council launched Aspiration Charity Week to all students in a series of assemblies to all Houses. Once again Aspiration had chosen unanimously to support The Smile of Arran Trust in memory of Arran Tosh who sadly died as a result of a brain tumour. Arran was known to many of the students at Ramsey as a friend, fellow football player and musician. Mrs Alison Tosh, Arran's mother, spoke eloquently about her son to Aspiration students in an assembly and was truly inspirational in her courage and about the work of the Smile of Arran Trust. More details about the charity can be found at <http://www.smileofarran.com>

Charity week ran from Monday 25 April to Friday 29 April and proved to be a busy week, packed with a range of activities to suit all interests. As popular as ever, the cake sale offered delicious cakes baked by staff and students to start the fundraising on Monday and Tuesday breaks. Lunch time on Tuesday saw the new phenomenon of Y-Ball at Ramsey! An action-packed game with music and a Nerf ball! The Sports Captains organised some very competitive girls' and boys' teams to take part in some very hard-fought matches in the Sports Hall - supposedly a non-contact sport, but students literally threw themselves into the game! The players were urged on by M.C 'T-Dog Taylor Nicholson' and his music. Students from all Houses took part or lined the walls to watch the action and donate, of course.





Lip Sync Battle!

Wednesday lunch time resounded to the beat of the LipSync Battle. There were brave entries from students in all year groups, who were prepared to strut their stuff and make us roar with laughter in aid of The Smile of Arran, especially Terry Shortt and Taylor Nicholson- again! Maisie Smith and Elizabeth Curnock sang delightful solos and were very impressive too. Floor space was at a premium as the hall was packed for the event with generous students and staff, who donated their cash to watch the stars. Thank you to Mr Lewis-James for organising the Battle and to Max Felton and Amelia Bell who organised the contestants. As a finale, the staff raffle was drawn for the giant Smile of Arran cake, which had been kindly donated and raised over £90; the lucky winner was Ms Linsdell!

The Smile of Arran Trust logo is a beautiful tree, which Ms Gerrard re-created skilfully on canvas for staff and students to add their fingerprint 'leaf' in their House colour. This will be displayed in school. Thank you to the Year 10 students who worked tirelessly every day on this activity and provided plenty of wipes to clean up fingers!

Aspiring Year 10 Prefect candidates for Aspiration provided non-stop refreshments for staff and parents at the Year 7 Parents' Evening, all in aid of the Smile of Arran.

Friday offered a non-uniform day, which is always popular and provided a welcome relief from the constant refrain of 'Tuck your shirt in!', but this time the theme was green or sportswear. No-one disappointed! The (S)Miles for Smile of Arran sponsored walk took place in Arctic conditions at lunchtime on Friday as well. Thank you to Mr Child for organising the athletes and to the many students from all Houses, who battled the wind and hail to complete the laps of the field, running, walking or three-legged! They raised magnificent sums, especially Lauren-Mae Cooke and Sarah Taylor who raked in £86 and £83 respectively! Despite the chilly conditions, the Aspiration Prefects managed a roaring trade of ice creams with sticky sauce! Ms Barnard kindly braved the cold as well and donated proceeds from her jewellery stall.

Many students added their support by purchasing the brand new Smile of Arran caps, key rings, wrist bands and pens, which are still available from the House Office and the charity's website. One aim is to photograph the wearers of wrist bands in as many different locations in this country and across the world, so Ramsey students will be taking their bands to Strasbourg and Stuttgart in July!

Thank you to the office and Finance staff who sold raffle tickets and had the job of counting the amazing amount of money raised during the week. Ramsey students and their families, and staff raised the staggering total of £ 1646.63 and this is a credit to the supportive, caring and generous nature of all at Ramsey. The Smile of Arran Trust can continue their mission to provide the help and support for families and research. - Mrs R Sims

Duke of Edinburgh

With the sun shining and fantastic weather, The Ramsey Academy kicked off this year's Duke of Edinburgh with its practice expeditions over the weekends of 6 May to 7 May and 13 May to 14 May. The buses were loaded, kit bags packed and stretching at the seams, students set off from a small farm just south of Colchester and from here they walked, talked and ate for a collective time of 6 hours each day.

Students all had a great time learning to read maps and find hidden footpaths in the overgrown countryside and hidden along the sides of farmers' fields. They took well to the challenge of putting up tents and helping others do the same, before settling down to a well cooked dinner, comprising of mainly defrosted burgers on a portable cooker. Some even remembered the tomato ketchup!

Both groups showed great teamwork and were a fantastic reflection of the school, who received praise from some very tired Cub Scout Leaders on how well they settled down for the night, whilst their 7 and 8 year old children were wreaking havoc on the other half of the site.

We thoroughly enjoyed the two weekends away with this year's campers, and look forward to the assessment weekends in July being just as much fun.

PS we will try not to melt the marshmallows next time. - Mr A Lugton, Miss H Ralph and Mr N Murray



Why did I become a governor? Helen Ralph

I attended Ramsey as a student and both of my children have attended (with my son due to finish in July this year). I am also a member of staff at the Academy and have been for the past 10 years in various supporting roles.

I have a genuine interest in our Academy and our local community as a whole. I value the education my children have received and, as a governor, I am able to monitor the effectiveness of the school close up. I can challenge and question ongoing decisions to ensure they are being made to benefit our students in the best possible way.

I have a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the Headteacher and teaching staff and have a clear perspective of how our Academy operates.

I understand the importance and value of accurate record keeping and can see first-hand how the Academy safeguards all students effectively.

The position is voluntary and has provided me with a much wider perspective of how the Academy operates and why particular strategies are put in place. Like other governors, I act as a critical friend and, if I feel something needs to be improved or developed, I am encouraged to voice my opinion.

I am able to question why things are done a certain way and my ideas and opinions are always listened to. The role of governor has afforded me a valuable opportunity to give something back to the Academy - to help The Ramsey Academy continue to be the best it can be. - Miss H Ralph

The Sex Factor

On 4 May, Year 9, and the Health and Social Care Students of Year 10, embarked on a one day project entitled "The Sex Factor". The aim of this project was to examine safe and unsafe behaviour and to explore how their personal experiences can influence their choices. It also left the students feeling empowered to make informed decisions about their lives. Students were more aware of teenage pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Also, students were able to place sex in the context of relationships relevant to them, and also to explore the divide between what we know and what we do.

Students were impeccably behaved throughout the session. The play followed the lives of three friends in their final GCSE year at school. Students enjoyed watching the characters embark on their first relationships, and struggle with their identities. As the play progressed the friends fell in and out of love, in and out of friendships, and as the relationships became more complicated, communication broke down. After this, there was an interactive workshop, exploring how we can take responsibility for our choices and actions. The second play examined two alternative futures for the characters based on the different choices they made. Students enjoyed the session and found it informative. Here are comments made from students when asked to assess the project:

"The play was really interesting and very amusing. I understand a lot more how our actions can affect others."

"This play helps me to do what is right for my decision and life."

"This made me understand about the consequences of being irresponsible towards sexual relationships." - Mrs H Price



Jack Petchey Speakout Challenge

The training for Jack Petchey Speakout was very enlightening because we were taught techniques to control breathing and not to get nervous on stage. We were told how to make our speeches more effective and played games to improve and hone our vocal expression and speaking skills.

The Jack Petchey Speakout Challenge itself was exciting because it gave me a chance to speak in front of an audience I didn't know for an extended period for the first time. The microphone and the staging made it very cool and I felt like a professional speaker.

I got to meet lots of interesting and diverse characters whom I will never forget. Even though I wasn't in the top three regional finalists I still had a lot of fun and it was an experience I'm glad I got to be a part of. - Caleb Hood (Year 10)

Ramsey Ram Debut

Friday 6 May 2016 saw the official launch of the Ramsey Academy's first student magazine. The efforts of a number of students from all year groups resulted in the first edition of the 'Ramsey Ram' being published. Students who were interested in writing, publishing, editing, photography or who were simply creative and wanted to try something different were invited to an initial club launch meeting in February. The turnout was astonishing, with students filling up the seats and the floor of the classroom. The name of the magazine was chosen and the work began to produce news reports, reviews, stories and agony aunt entries.

After weeks of preparing and writing, the editing team (Amelia Dean, Hannah Martin-Pocock, Ryan Staples, Jasmin Selby and William Farrelly) got to work selecting and organising the material for the first edition. It was then up to the talents of Miss G Giorgio to design and put the finishing touches to the magazine. The pupils are extremely delighted with the outcome and are already hard at work on the second edition which we hope will be even bigger and better. - Miss H Siseman



Ceramics Studio

The Design Faculty has been making good use of the newly set up Ceramics Studio. Dozens of students have experimented with different clay projects.

The recently formed Thursday Lunchtime Pottery Club has been working on sculptural pieces. Shapes are formed using our wall mounted clay extruder. The end results have been fired and mounted on wood. They look excellent.

Larger installation pieces are fast coming off the production line. Many students have been making small parts which will be put together to create stunning ensemble exhibits. Watch out for our version of Anthony Gormley's Field of Dreams, Ceramic Totem Poles, and in a joint exercise with Gardening Club (they processed the pallet wood!) Georgia O'Keefe's ceramic flowers in wooden planters. - Mr S Pittuck

Ben Morris England Call!

Ben Morris left The Ramsey Academy last year. He was always a very keen footballer, involved in the Ipswich Academy, and everyone here had high aspirations for him. Since leaving Ramsey, Ben's football has gone from strength to strength, and even more recently Ben got a late call up to represent England under 17s at the European Championships in Azerbaijan. This is a fantastic achievement, with his hard work at Ipswich being recognised on a national level.

Ben went on to start games for England in Azerbaijan, scoring his first goal in an excellent 2-0 win against France. Unfortunately England were later knocked out at the quarter-final stage by Spain. However, having watched most of the games myself, Ben did himself very proud, putting in some top performances. From everyone at The Ramsey Academy, we would like to wish Ben all the very best in the future. - Mr G Charlton



Halstead and Essex Marathon

On Saturday 8 May, sunny conditions greeted runners and supporters of the Halstead and Essex Marathon. Volunteers from The Ramsey Academy cheered on the runners and provided invaluable support in the form of security, handing out medals and removing the timing microchips when competitors had completed the course. Students also handed out well earned refreshments to keep the runners' energy up.

Well done and thank you to all those who went along to support this fantastic local event. - Mr P Taylor

Ski Trip 2016!

At February half term, students from The Ramsey Academy joined their Notley counterparts for a week's skiing in Austria. After a 22 hour coach journey, everyone was pleased to arrive and pick up their ski equipment. Good weather prevailed apart from some thick fog and icy slopes on some days. Snow conditions were excellent and all skiers improved their skills while enjoying this fantastic experience. Après ski opportunities included swimming, quiz night and Lucky Flitzer. One unforgettable day involved skiing in fancy dress! - Mr M Child



Year 8 Football in the Finals

After doing an excellent job to get into the final, the Year 8 boys went to Coggeshall Town FC today to play against the group champions, Notley.

Notley had previously beaten us in the group stages so we were expecting a tough day at the office.

Unfortunately, although all the boys put in an amazing effort in the boiling hot sun, we were beaten by a very impressive Notley team who had most of the district team playing for them.

Final score was 7-2 but that was a flattering score for them as our boys played hard the whole game and at times looked evenly matched.

It's one step further than they achieved last year so maybe Year 9 will be the year for them to go all the way.

Please congratulate the Year 8 boys when you next see them for being the 2nd best team in the district. - Mr M Child

Dates For your Diary...

13 June - 17 June - Year 10 Exams
24 June - Sports Day
11 July - Art Trip
14 July - Year 11 Prom
18 July - 22 July - Strasbourg Trip
25 July - Summer Holidays

