



Dear Parents

It would be remiss of me to start this week anywhere other than in Chicago - or at least in Founders' Hall and the Arundel Centre, which played host to the phenomenal production this week. I am in awe of the vision Ms Hill, Ms Zanardo, Mr & Mrs Maliphant-Gray, Miss Vince and all of the team brought to the show, and perhaps even more in awe of the talents of our performers, musicians and crew who brought it all to life. It was an extraordinary team effort, one that rivalled the West End for quality and ambition, and I could not be more proud of everyone involved. My thanks indeed for your hard work, not just this week but in the months of rehearsals that have made it all possible. Thank you also to the audiences every night this week for your enthusiastic participation, dressing up in your 1920s outfits and cheering on the performances: it was very much appreciated! A full review and photos will follow next week.

As Miss Hill said in her programme notes, this production required her - and the cast and crew - to be 10% braver. Music to my ears, of course, but also entirely in keeping with my musings this week after attending the GSA Conference at the start of the week. Our President this year, Marina Gardiner-Legge, is Head of Oxford High and used her opening speech on Monday to praise the resilience, persistence and ability to adapt which the tailored education of a girls' school provides. I think that Chicago was a great example of this, and even though the students taking part may have thought they were just singing, dancing and putting on a show, in fact they were developing vital skills of communication, collaboration and adaptability for the modern world. They were also making memories that will last for years to come.

I often say in my talks to prospective families that one of the joys of a girls' school is that everything in it is designed just for them: the curriculum, the leadership opportunities, the very culture of the school is based on the empowerment of women. Over the course of the last few weeks I have interviewed the two dozen students who have applied to join the Channing Sixth Form next September. It's interesting to see how many of them are currently at co-ed schools and want to make the transition to an all-girls environment for their A levels. Even more interesting is their answer to my question about what role they think schools should play in preparing girls and young women for a world which is not equal. Every one of them said, in their own way, that it is vital for us to educate our students that the world is not yet fair, and help them develop the skills they will need to take on the evident bias and challenges which still remain in all aspects of society.

This was also Marina's theme, as she highlighted the ways in which women's standing globally is still unequal: the disproportionate impact of war on women in conflict zones, the growth of the global gender pay gap and attacks on women's rights such as the overturning of Roe v Wade in the USA. She referenced a recent report on the 'Motherhood Penalty', which accounts for 80% of the gender pay gap, and what sociologists have dubbed the 'second shift' of home duties for working women. For us in schools there is no doubt that the cost and availability of childcare is

having a massive impact on teacher recruitment and retention, and that's just one way in which becoming a mother can adversely affect a woman's working life.

As Marina pointed out, though, the world is not just unequal and underrepresentative of women, it can also be actively unpleasant for them. Sadly that is the sharp end of our girls' experience and, as a school as well as a sector as a whole, we encourage them to tell us, speak out and hold a mirror to the world about how half the population is treated. By coincidence this article in [The Times](#) on Tuesday quotes Professor Dame Jane Dacre, a former Channing parent and Governor and former President of the Royal College of Physicians, on sexism and sexual violence in the NHS. It's just one example of a sphere in which many young women want to make a career but which appears increasingly unattractive, let alone unsafe. Marina quoted the recent revelations from the Covid inquiry about the treatment of Helen MacNamara, former Deputy Cabinet Secretary, during the pandemic. Not only was the culture in Downing Street apparently endemically sexist, other witnesses have made clear that the lack of diverse decision-making through the exclusion of women from the centre of power directly affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the UK Government's response to the situation.

So it is incumbent on us to unleash the power of girls, giving them confidence for a future which must be designed for, by and with them. Marina described students in girls' schools as 'a catalyst for a more inclusive society', 'firebrands' and 'trailblazers'. There is no doubt that the unique collective understanding of a girls' school offers opportunities for female leadership and empowerment in an environment where every pupil can be a role model for each other. She urged us to remember that our schools are the solution in a world designed by men and where it is our responsibility to make women visible.

Her rallying cry was echoed by the next speaker, journalist and broadcaster Mary Ann Sieghart, who talked about her new book [The Authority Gap: Why women are still taken less seriously than men and what we can do about it](#). If you/the women in your life have already read [Invisible Women](#) by Carolina Criado Perez, then this should be next on the list. Sieghart spent a gripping 45 minutes demonstrating the inequalities of attitude faced by women, using some personal anecdotes (including being nicknamed Mary Ann Big Head by Private Eye at the peak of her career at The Times) but mostly citing study after study which demonstrated the myriad ways in which women are automatically underestimated, patronised, assumed to be more junior, talked over and interrupted. Women of colour are twice as likely to report this experience than white women.

Interruptions were an interesting example. As Sieghart put it, interrupting someone fundamentally tells them that you are more important than them. You are actively silencing them. She quoted a study of US Supreme Court hearings which showed that female Supreme Court Justices were interrupted three times more often than their male counterparts - and that 96% of the interruptions were by men. These women are some of the most powerful in the federal government and yet they remain subject to this basic inequality: an excellent demonstration of the authority gap.

Closer to home we have always known that boys in co-ed environments get more attention than girls. They shout out in lessons and are called on by teachers more often than girls, who are rewarded for being quiet and well behaved in class. This is a reflection of boys' social groups which reward boastful, competitive behaviour to establish a social hierarchy, as opposed

to girls' socialisation based on self deprecation ('I hate my hair', 'I'm useless at maths') where social groups are bonded by the admission of vulnerability. Girls are not routinely rewarded for confidence and self promotion - 10% braver, anyone?!

However, as Sieghart pointed out, the traditional solution, that women should take assertiveness training to solve this problem, doesn't actually work. After all, no one likes women who behave like men. They get called abrasive, aggressive, bossy, over assertive or even scary. Instead, we should encourage girls to speak up. Sieghart cited a study which suggested that in all settings, from schools to workplaces to parliaments, men speak more than women. However women were perceived to have dominated the conversation when they spoke as much as men. She suggested an alternative approach (with apologies for the language that follows): that rather than sending women on assertiveness training, men should be sent on bullshit-avoidance courses. She quoted a genuine study entitled (and I kid you not) [Bullshitters - who are they and what do we know about their lives?](#) which showed that teenage boys were more likely to completely make up their expertise about different topics.

I could go on - the talk was genuinely fascinating - but you get the idea. More important than the evidence she gave us (I'm sure we could each give half a dozen more examples immediately from our own experience) are the practical steps we can take to make a change. Some thoughts Sieghart suggested included:

- Developing cultures and systems which reward thoughtful consensus, building and humility, skills at which women can often excel
- Calling out the interruptors and idea-stealers with polite interjections: 'let me finish', 'I'm so glad you agree with what I said earlier'
- Offering as many different kinds of role models as possible (a fantastic study suggests that 63% of women of a certain age who watched The X Files as teenagers cited Dana Scully as their inspiration to pursue a career in science)
- Using language like 'brilliant', 'outstanding' and 'talented', which is generally reserved for boys, for our girls too. Boys are often praised for their natural ability while girls are rewarded for hard work, with adjectives such as 'conscientious' and 'diligent'.
- Encouraging girls to blag it sometimes: Sieghart referred to school as a competence factory for girls and a confidence factory for boys, a limitation for which girls' schools don't have to settle
- Actively teaching and promoting skills for coping in a sexist world; confidence with warmth, humour and emotional intelligence.

Together she and Marina offered a positive outlook for the future for our girls and young women. The world is starting to value listening and empathy more, transformational leadership is prized. As Marina put it, as school leaders our job is to ensure that our students feel equipped and ready to do what is right rather than what is easy, to be captain of their lives and make them fulfilling and meaningful. I know that we are educating them for life, not just for exams, university and work - and I take that responsibility very seriously.

Two final thoughts this week. As we are going into the Christmas period, we also think of those who are less fortunate than ourselves. As you are aware, many families are struggling financially, often unable to buy food or warm clothing for their children. Every year, we collect to support local charities in their endeavour to help those in need. This year, we are looking for non-perishable food

products and toiletries (both for children and adults, but please do not donate any sharp objects such as razor blades). We are also collecting winter coats. These could be children's coats or adult ones, both male and female. If you have items to spare, please ask your children to take them to school and drop them in the foyer of the AC. Last year, we made a substantial contribution to three different charities and made a huge difference to the life of our fellow Londoners. If you are able to, please donate generously.

Finally, Channing's second annual Sustainability Week runs next week from 27 November until 1 December. Here is how you can get ready for two of the special events that week:

- Clean Air Day is Monday 27 November. We request that all students and staff try not to travel by car on that day but use other modes of transport. Our Eco Reps will also be outside school collecting air pollution data.
- The Sustainability Fayre takes place on Friday 1 December. One of the star attractions is the second hand clothes stall. For this to work we are asking all students to have a pre-Christmas clear out of previously loved clothes, bags and accessories to donate. There will be pink bins in the Sixth Form Centre to collect the clothes. Our Sustainability Officers, Lola and Grace, will be handing out prizes to those who donate. All proceeds will go to the charity [Just One Tree](#).

As you will know from the letter you received from Mr Meier today, we are welcoming meedu, the Middle East Education Project, and Stand Up! Education into school on Monday. I'll also be joined by Rev Kate Dean of the Rosslyn Hill Chapel at assembly on Tuesday for an exploration of what the Unitarian ethos means in practice, and I have no doubt that I will be reflecting on that in next week's Word from the Head. That means I'll need to wait another week to share further insights on the political and economic headwinds facing the independent sector which I garnered both at the GSA Conference and at a strategy day hosted yesterday by HMC, our second representative association, along with ISBA and AGBIS who represent independent school Bursars and Governors. There is plenty to report: watch this space!

For now, my warmest wishes for what promises to be a chilly weekend. Congratulations once again to the cast, crew, musicians and everyone else involved in Chicago: I hope that a weekend of rest awaits you.

With best wishes,

Mrs Lindsey Hughes
Headmistress

Notices

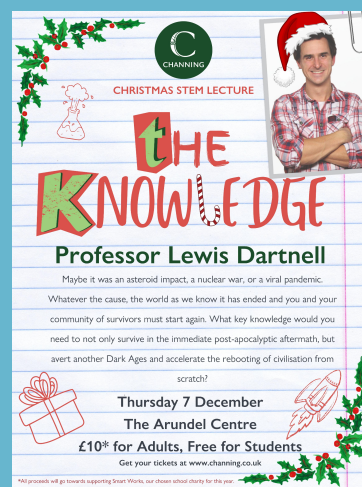
Unifrog Parent Accounts

Students in Years 11-13 are now using Unifrog, a destinations platform that helps young people navigate the wide range of possibilities open to them after school. Lower year groups will enrol in due course.

Parents of all pupils can create their own Unifrog accounts by going to the Unifrog sign in page and using the sign up code **CHNNParents**. The code is valid until 8 February 2024. Do sign up and explore what is on offer. A presentation outlining some of the main tools can be found here: [Unifrog parents' presentation](#). You may even decide on a career change yourself!

Christmas STEM Lecture

We are delighted to invite parents and students to the inaugural Channing Christmas STEM lecture on Thursday 7 December 2023. This year we will have the opportunity to hear from astrobiologist, research scientist, presenter and author Professor Lewis Dartnell who will discuss his Sunday Times 'New Thinking' Book of the Year and international bestseller, *The Knowledge: How to Rebuild our World from Scratch*. To book tickets, please visit <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/events/landing/49571>



Upcoming TooledUp Events

[Webinar on Self-Harm with Dr Dennis Ougrin: November 29, 17:30](#)

Following his successful and fascinating webinar on discussing real-world trauma with children, psychiatrist Dr Dennis Ougrin returns to help parents and educators with an equally sensitive topic: self-harm. Please note this is a live Q&A rather than a 'talk'.

[Expert online conference: Reaching Girls Early: Proactive Approaches for Mental Health, Appearance Anxiety and Body Dissatisfaction: 26 April 2024, 9.30am](#)

Guest speakers include Dr Sophie Nesbitt, Dr Lucia Giombini, Dr Amita Jassi, Dr Helen Ringrow, Dr Karri Gillespie-Smith,

Harington Christmas Fair

You are warmly invited to the Harington Christmas Fair and Open Day, which will take place on Saturday 9 December from 10.00am to 2.00pm and entry is free to Harington at 54 Cholmeley Park, Highgate, London N6 5AD.

The Harington Students and Staff have been busy planting a wonderful selection of seasonal bulbs and plants for sale at the Christmas Fair. Their Students will be looking forward to visitors coming along to the Christmas Fair and Open Day to view their work at the Harington Horticultural site.



You will also be able to enjoy:
Christmas decorations, art and crafts, gifts and cards.
Beautiful Christmas wreaths.
Seasonal bulbs and plants.
Live music and Christmas carols by our good friends the London Metropolitan Brass.
Delicious refreshments, cakes, chutneys and jams - Homemade by the Friends of Harington.
Fantastic Raffle Prizes organised by the Friends of Harington.

Junior School Winter Fair Raffle Tickets Now On Sale!

Come one, come all and allow yourself an opportunity to win one of our epic Winter Raffle prizes including dinner at Claridges, football and tennis coaching sessions, a hamper from Harvey Nichols, gym and personal training vouchers, a case of Neckstamper beer, vouchers to local pubs and many more!

All proceeds will be donated to the Gastroenterology Department at Great Ormond St Hospital. Raffle draw will be held on 1 December. Tickets available on Classlist under "Events & Parties" at: <https://app.classlist.com/parent/#/raffle/1069000682> .

Many thanks for your support, The CA.

Black Friday TODAY at Uniform4Kids

It's Black Friday at Uniform4Kids with 20% off all products including schoolwear, sportswear, footwear and accessories for one day only, online, exclusively **TODAY**, Friday 24 November 2023. This offer is available online only via www.uniform4kids.com. Discount code **BLACKFRIDAY20** must be entered at checkout. A discount cannot be added retrospectively to an order already placed. Please note we will not be offering Click & Collect or Delivery to School during this event. Orders will be dispatched via courier and may take up to one week to process.

Photographs

Gillman & Soame took portrait photographs in September. If you haven't already, please order these photographs as soon as possible (especially if you would like them for Christmas). If details have been mislaid, please contact Gillman & Soame directly at action@gillmanandsoame.co.uk or on 01869 328200 with your child's name and quoting the security password **channing374rbd2023** and they can assist.

Volunteer interviewers needed for careers event

On Tuesday 16 January 2024 from 4.00 - 5.30pm the Careers Department is seeking volunteers to help us run our Sixth Form interview and assessment skills event.

Sixth formers will hear from experts beforehand and then complete a carousel of recruitment and assessment activities including psychometric testing, group exercises and a short face-to-face skills-based interview, with feedback.

We need many parent volunteers from all year groups to act as interviewers. You will be provided with example questions to use - or can use your own - and will interview and give feedback to several students. You do not need to have any particular recruitment expertise - being an 'unknown adult' to the young person is the most important requirement!

If you can help on Tuesday 16 January 2024 at the school, between 4.00 and approximately 5.30pm (or 6.00pm if you would like to stay for a drink and nibbles) please respond here:

[Interview and Assessment Skills Event responses](#)

Thank you very much for your help. We will be in touch with volunteers before the end of term.



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Girls Enjoying Success

Music News

Autumn Concert - 16th November 2023

'Also sprach Zarathustra', that famous stirring fanfare by Strauss, opened our Autumn Concert and set the tone for an amazing evening of music from our large ensembles and choirs. Queen were on stage next (posing as the Concert Orchestra) in an exciting medley of songs from that inimitable group ably led as usual by Ms Leisha Zanardo. Conabor Choir revealed their Hallowe'en (ok, maybe a little late) suite in 'The Bat' and 'Someone came knocking', ably accompanied by our newest addition to the music staff, Mr Fearghus Fallon.

Another new member of the music team, Miss Emily Newman-Pond, led Cremona Strings in a rendition of a Vivaldi Concerto for Strings. Cantemus Chorus, gearing up for Chicago, gave us two little jazz standards of an astronomical nature with 'Fly me to the moon' and 'How high the moon', directed by our Head of Vocal Studies, Miss Jenny Bacon. Mr Patrick Dodds then led the Brass Ensemble back on the stage for 'In dreams' from the film 'The Lord of the Rings'.

'Mamma mia!' - and following the brass, what a performance of it from the Brunner Show Choir led from the piano by Miss Leisha Zanardo. Next the spotlight was on Year 10 student Anna R-B as she played the trumpet for Torelli's Trumpet Concerto, accompanied by the Senior Strings directed by our Head of Strings, Miss Laura Dodds. We then had a little Seville moment with some of the pieces we learned whilst away at half-term, firstly 'Flamenco' and 'Suave Respiro' played by the Seville Ensemble and written for the tour by Miss Leisha Zanardo. Then two a capella items directed by Miss Jenny Bacon, 'Simple gifts' and 'El Vito'. The Symphony Orchestra closed the evening with a movement from Rimsky - Korsakov's 'Scheherazade' and Verdi's Grand March from 'Aida'.

It was a delight to have a full house and an incredibly appreciative audience acknowledging the superb performances that our students had given. It was fully deserved! We were unable to video the evening, but you can listen to it [HERE](#)



English News

Year 8

Inspired by the masked ball in Shakespeare's comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*, 8MH created their own masks, which depicted the public and private personas of the main characters. Students created a range of illustrations to represent the key traits of their chosen character, including snakes, roses, and some impressive biceps!



Year 7

7JG made some fantastic collages based around Dickens' initial description of Scrooge as part of their study of 'A Christmas Carol'. We love how they have picked up on so much of Dickens' abstract imagery in their interpretation of the story.



Whole-school Reading



I2/I3EHa are making the most of Channing's whole-school reading sessions with Agatha Christie's classic detective novel *The Crooked House*. The form read together every Monday morning, taking it in turns to read aloud and participate in discussion. It's off to a promising start with a suspicious death and a long-distance romance. We're looking forward to finding out whodunnit!

Partnership News

Robotics and Coding club

Marina, Evie, Dahlia, Amandine, Anoushka, Sofia, Aayu and Brayden have all now built their robots. They have completed testing their robots using the remote controls. Now they have moved on to programming and downloading code to their robot brains to move around independently. The next step will be to create an obstacle course with a start and finish line. They will compete by programming their robotics to see which team completes the course in shortest time.



Science club

This week in Science club pupils were using the microscopes again, but this time to make their own slides of onion cells! Under the watchful eye of the sixth form helpers pupils obtained tissue, placed it on a slide with Iodine, and then viewed their slides under the microscopes. Due to the excitement over the woodlouse last week they were also able to look at these on the dissecting microscope again (in the picture below).



STEM News

CyberFirst Year 8 Competition

Here are some of the 60+ Year 8 students who are working hard on the CyberFirst challenges. We have 24 teams signed up in Year 8. We are looking forward to seeing how they do by the deadline on 29 November!



Bebras Competition

Pupils from Year 7, 8 and 9 took part in the Bebras Computing Challenge. The image shows Year 7 pupils attempting the challenges. We are looking forward to the official results next week.

Science Club

In this week's Science Club session we discussed the important role of reaction times in everyday situations. We investigated our reaction times through the ruler-drop test and introduced distractions, such as doing simple calculations, to understand how they impact our reaction time. Following that, we explored various online tests to measure our reaction times more accurately. Feel free to check out the link to test your reaction time: <https://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/chreflex.html>.



Next week we will be carrying out fun psychology experiments.

STEM Careers Club

This week students presented on an area of interest linked to their potential future career. It was impressive to hear the depth of understanding and confident presentation styles of the students as they discussed the bird 'flu outbreak, the use of artificial intelligence in developing medicines and the use of light therapy in treating Alzheimer's disease.



Marine Biology Club

This week at Marine Biology Club we witnessed....a miracle! Up until yesterday, Mr Grossman had led us to believe that we had 6 fish - 3 neon yellow guppies and 3 black and pink tuxedo guppies.



But when we arrived for our weekly meeting, Leila L was quick to point out that there were now 4 yellow guppies!!! Mr Grossman had to admit that he had indeed bought 4 yellow guppies (they were on special offer), and thought one of them had died overnight after their arrival. He didn't tell us to spare our feelings. But it turns out, it was just hiding! Theories were thrown out as to where and why it had chosen to hide - was it sick? Pregnant? Or does it just enjoy a good practical joke?

Our Year 9 and 10 Marine Biologists will no doubt find out the truth!

In the meantime, this week we were shown how to change some of the water, and how to feed the fish. We also created a daily rota for checking in on the fish and feeding them. Our next jobs include naming the fish, working out how much of our budget we have spent and how much remains, deciding which fish to buy next, and thinking about where else to take Marine Biology club after Christmas.

KS3 Science question of the week

This week in KS3 Science question of the week the pupils were asked to answer the question 'What is the oldest living thing on Earth?'. This led to several intriguing answers and ideas, the most common answer being the immortal jellyfish. The winner of the commendation this week who wrote many fascinating facts, and also a brilliant photo of the immortal jellyfish, was Anoushka C. The runners up, who all received a merit, were Ziyuan L with her research into the Greenland Shark, Mariia S with the Great Brisbane bristleback pine tree, and Scarlett C with the Bao Bao tree. Well done everybody!



When I did research, the number one thing I got was the immortal jellyfish. The immortal jellyfish is an interesting species. Whilst humanity are yet to discover immortality, this jellyfish is already experiencing it, but not how we think it is. When you think of immortality you think of living forever, ageing forever. The immortal jellyfish does this but in a different way. It ages but, every time it gets injured, it becomes younger (am I making sense?). Immortal jellyfish can die, but when that happens, the jellyfish's body decays and it is sort of reborn. It turns into something called a polyps, and from a polyps comes a jellyfish. The immortal jellyfish does not feel pain in the same way that humans do, they don't have a brain, heart and bones.



The Greenland shark

The longest living species is the Greenland shark who has the longest known lifespan of all vertebrate species (estimated to be between 250 and 500 years). This is because the Greenland shark has a very slow metabolism, an adaptation to the deep, cold waters it inhabits. Scientists discovered that they could determine the age of the sharks by carbon-dating these proteins.

Here are some pictures of the Greenland shark:



Science Journal Club

Catrin chose an article explaining that fusion reactors could be used to produce radioactive isotopes for hospitals way before they become useful power generators. This led us to investigate how radioactive isotopes are used to treat cancers and we discussed how they can also be used to track movement of molecules through the body or to study reaction mechanisms. We found out more about fusion and learnt a new word - "spallation" - and looked into how spallation differs from fission. That cancer treatment hadn't been the original goal of fusion reactors, but that it could be a very useful outcome seemed particularly interesting to us - how many other useful discoveries are made by accident, and isn't this an argument for the benefits of scientific research for its own sake?

Archive News

I don't know about you, but I fondly remember my Home Economics classes at school (cue thought: "I wonder if my mum still has that little sewing box I made in Y8...she must have kept it, right?"). With that in mind we would like to share some photos of the 1970 Founders' Day presentations from the Archive.



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