



Dear Parents,

It's not often that Channing finds itself at the cutting edge of current affairs and international relations. Yet that's exactly what happened on Wednesday afternoon, when Sir Keir Starmer was asked about the UK's negotiations regarding the return of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius at Prime Minister's Questions. While questions were being asked in Parliament and newspapers were publishing stories about the political complexities of the deal, our Year 11, 12 and 13 historians and nearly one hundred of their peers from local schools were sitting spellbound in the Arundel Centre listening to Professor Philippe Sands KC, who has been at the heart of the issue since 2010.

In conversation with Mr Raine, Professor Sands, author of *The Last Colony: A Tale of Exile, Justice and Britain's Colonial Legacy*, outlined both the history of decolonisation after World War Two and the specific story of the Chagos Islands. His gripping account of the international politics and legal issues involved brought the global significance of a little-known archipelago vividly to life. He also inspired future lawyers with a detailed explanation of what is required to bring a successful case at the International Court of Justice at The Hague, including the intensely personal stories of those affected by the UK's displacement of the native Chagossians in 1973. It's no surprise that this David and Goliath underdog story is being made into a film.

Historians are always interested in interpretation - the idea that one set of facts can be used to support two entirely different narratives - and Professor Sands' talk provided a fascinating example. He talked eloquently about his experience of working with successive Conservative governments since 2022, in ten rounds of negotiations, to try to reach a deal. They were close when the General Election was called last July and he explained that the three subsequent rounds of talks held with the new Labour government since then have just about brought it over the line. However he noted the irony that it is the Conservatives, who were leading the process until only a few months ago, whose voices are now loudest in opposition to the deal.

Professor Sands was the final speaker at the inaugural Channing History Conference, on the topic of Empire. During the afternoon GCSE and A level students from Channing, JFS, St Aloysius' College, William Ellis and Parliament Hill heard from leading historians in their fields in a series of lectures on topics as varied as the Roman Empire and the environmental impact of British colonisation in India. My enormous thanks to the Year 11 organisers, Cristina, Darcy and Winnie, and Ms Kung for her inspiration, encouragement and support. Every member of the History and Politics department was involved and I am grateful to them all for making such a remarkable event possible. You can read more from a student perspective in the section below.

This kind of intellectually exciting and challenging event exemplifies our aim to teach with ambition and inspiration. It was particularly satisfying that it took place just the day after I unveiled our new strategic objectives and vision for Channing 2035, to the Senior School students in assembly on Tuesday morning and to many of you in the Sports Hall that evening. Many thanks to those of you who were able to join me, our Governors and the Senior Leadership Team to hear about the process we have been through and our aims for the next ten years. For those of you who were

not able to attend, I offer this 15 minute film, [here](#), with thanks to Mr Subramaniam, our Marketing Manager, for his filming and editing skills. I am sorry to say that you don't get cake, though - it was delicious!



Invitations to join the parent discussion sessions will be sent out in the coming week and I am excited to see what you, your children and our staff have to say about what they would like to see in the Channing of 2035. There is certainly plenty more conversation to come.

With best wishes for the weekend,

Mrs Lindsey Hughes
Headmistress

Notices


Invitation - Join Channing Community Choir!

Parents are invited to join the Channing Community Choir and perform at the Spring Term Choral Concert at St Joseph's Church in March. Further information can be found on the invitation here:

 [Invitation - Channing Community Choir at St Joseph's.pdf](#).

Tooled Up Education

We are delighted to remind you that our school subscribes to Tooled Up Education. This gives you privileged access to an online platform packed full of resources, podcasts, webinars, activities and practical advice to help support you in all matters to do with parenting and family life. Here are two quick resources highlighting how you can make the most of your Tooled Up membership:

- 10 Things About Tooled Up  [10 things about TUE Parent Carers.pdf](#)
- [Tooled Up Tour Video Link](#) - this is a 5 minute video walk through of the platform, showing you how to navigate its features

If you have already signed up for an account simply click this [link](#) to access. To register for your free account now: click [Create my Tooled Up Account](#), enter your email address and our unique school PIN (available from the school office). To view the platform on your phone: click this [link](#) or scan the QR code with your phone camera.



Tooled Up Resources

These Tooled Up resources can help make 2025 a fruitful year:

The [2025 Goal Setting Planner](#) is a fun way to help children set achievable goals. These goals could be anything from new things they'd like to try, to saving pocket money for that special something.

For teens preparing for exams in the summer, it's never too early to get organised and the [2025 Exam Planner](#) can help.

Procrastination is something that can affect children and adults alike - we can often need to get lots done but somehow never quite do it! Find ideas to stay on-task and productive with these [Simple Strategies to Beat Procrastination](#).

Lots of us think about health and nutrition at the start of a new year. It's important for children to have a healthy attitude towards food and their bodies and we have several resources to support this. Dietitian Paola Falcoski's expert tips on [Helping Children Develop a Healthy Relationship with Food](#) will show you how to help children feel more involved in their own food choices.

For older children and teens [Dr Idz on Debunking Health and Fitness Myths](#) is great to share or watch together. We know that many young people's ideas about diet and their bodies come from social media, and this webinar explores the truth behind those narratives.

TikTok

You may be interested in this podcast by the National College, talking about TikTok, the potential dangers and how to safeguarding your children:

<https://nationalcollege.com/podcasts/what-parents-and-educators-need-to-know-about-tiktok>

The Channing Year 7 & 8 disco will take place on Saturday 1 March. We have also received an invitation for Channing Year 7 girls to attend the UCS Year 7 disco on 25 January. Please see the “What’s On” section on Classlist for further details.



Girls Enjoying Success

CHANNING

Just before summer, Cristina, Darcy and I began the planning of the inaugural Channing History Conference under the very broad theme of 'Empire'. It was to take place in what felt like the very distant future, yet these past few months have flown by. This Wednesday was the day we had all

been waiting for, and what a success it was. We invited local schools such as St Aloysius, William Ellis, JFS and Parliament Hill to join us in listening to a series of fascinating talks on the topic of 'Empire'. These included talks on the Roman Empire, the Dutch Empire, the economic effects of the British Empire on Africa and the economic and environmental effects of the British occupation of India.



We were lucky enough to be joined by Professor Bishnupriya Gupta (Warwick University), Dr Benet Salway (UCL), Professor Leigh Gardner (LSE), Professor Vinita Damodaran (University of Sussex) and Dr Lauren Lauret (Leiden University in the

Netherlands) who all offered us a new perspective and greater understanding of their respective empires through their fascinating and thought provoking presentations. We were also later joined on stage by all of the historians, where the audience had the opportunity to ask any questions they had regarding the presentations they had previously attended. The insightful and developed questions truly revealed the positive impact of the historians' presentations on both the Channing and visiting students.



We also had the privilege of hearing Mr Raine question lawyer and author Philippe Sands on the issue of British occupation of the Chagos Islands in Mauritius. This was such an eye opening experience, I amongst many others in the audience had previously not known about the issues surrounding the Chagos Archipelago so I found the talk both appalling and deeply compelling.

We would all like to thank the History department for helping to make our plan come to life, it has truly been an experience none of us are likely to forget.

Winnie D, Year 11

Drama News



On Tuesday 14 January GCSE and A Level Drama students attended a Backstage Tour at the National Theatre. We got to learn about the history of the building known as the 'The Home of British Theatre', peek behind the scenes to observe sets being built in workshops, painters in scenic art departments and even got to observe rehearsals for two productions, including Oscar Wilde's classic comedy of manners farce, 'The Importance of Being Earnest' which we saw in full later that evening. Ncuti Gatwa wowed us the audience with his flamboyant Algernon and we left thoroughly entertained. Perhaps equally



as exciting was the chance spotting of Timothée Chalamet arriving for his premiere at the BFI just next door!

English News

Years 7 and 8 have kicked off the term with an exciting independent reading project. Guided by their personal interests and favorite genres, pupils in each English class have been grouped into

reading teams. Over the course of the term, they'll dive into their chosen books, engage in lively discussions and work together to create an entertaining presentation or write a compelling book review.

Books range from classic science fiction horror, such as *The Day of the Triffids* by John Wyndham, to modern thrillers like Patrice Lawrence's teen drama *Needle*. If you would like a taste of the kind of books students are reading, listen to Dr Hayward read from [A Gathering Light by Jennifer Donnelly](#) - a captivating coming-of-age story set against the haunting backdrop of a true murder case.



Reading News

Delve into the darker side of fairytales with Frau Loosli who reads from [The Frog King by the Brothers Grimm](#) - a timeless tale of transformation and loyalty, where a simple promise leads to unexpected rewards. Its charm lies in its subtle moral lesson wrapped in magical simplicity. Yet, there is a violence to this story that reveals its darker, more unsettling layers.

Sustainability News

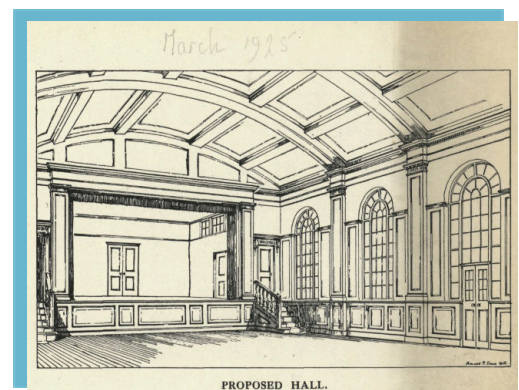


Some of our Eco Reps spent Thursday lunch time in the Junior School, bird spotting for the RSPB Big Schools Birdwatch. This was the most successful year for us so far, with 12 different bird species spotted including Blue Tit, Great Tit, Robin, Blackbird and Crow. The RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch (to do at home) is coming up from 24-26 January. If you would like to take part or find out more [click here](#).

Another group of eco reps collected litter in Waterlow Park. Everyone was shocked to see just how much litter there was and 4 full boxes were collected in 20 minutes. Well done to everyone who took part.

Channing Archive

As work continues on the Brunner House development we thought it would be interesting to think about the proposals put forward for the Old Hall in **1925**. I think it fair to say that the School's ambitions, very much like that of the girls, never stop pushing forward!



CHANNING



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