

Classics



This year, the highlight for the Classics department was the joint trip with Warwick School to Italy at Easter. The aims of the department include developing students' knowledge of the lives of the ancient Romans so they can appreciate the vast cultural and archaeological legacy of the classical world, whilst encouraging them to compare and contrast with modern day society. This trip certainly gave students this opportunity and brought the classical world to life, inspiring them in their studies. We stayed in Rome for three days, viewing the iconic Colosseum - the site of many gladiator deaths, the Roman Forum, the majesty of the Pantheon temple, the arch of Constantine, Trajan's column and the Circus Maximus - the site of many dramatic chariot races. A cultural highlight was the visit to the Vatican, the smallest state in the world, and St. Peter's where we climbed the dome for a spectacular view of the city.

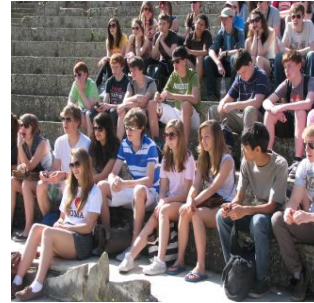


Then we travelled to the picturesque seaside town of Sorrento, via the well preserved remains of the Roman harbour town of Ostia. From Sorrento, we visited the ruins of the luxury villa at Oplontis (thought to be the home of the Emperor Nero's mistress, Poppaea) and the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum (destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79AD). The remains of their theatres, baths, villas and shops, preserved under the ash and mud, reveal so much about daily life in Italy at that time: a snapshot of the Pompeians' lives before that dreadful disaster overtook them.

Finally we explored the beautiful island of Capri, walking up to Emperor Tiberius's hilltop retreat and climbing Mount Vesuvius on the final morning



to peer down the volcanic crater which was, thankfully, peaceful!



In the summer of 2011, the A2 students, who were taught collaboratively with Warwick School, achieved a 100% pass rate and the AS results were superb with 4 of the 6 students gaining A grades at AS grades with 100% A-B grades. 4 of the AS students are continuing on to A2 level with 2 students hoping to study Latin at Oxbridge colleges. The first Year 11 students sat the new syllabus J281 with 12 achieving A* or A grades for GCSE and 6 of these students are continuing to A level. We have a large group of 24 students starting GCSE this year for examination in 2013 so it seems that Classics is very much alive and thriving at King's.

On the 21st June, Year 8 students from King's High together with Year 6 pupils from Warwick Prep were treated to a most enlivening experience with a thrilling display of Roman military procedures and a captivating insight into many aspects of Roman life.



A most convincing ancient Roman school teacher put the students through their paces and then brave volunteers were asked to participate in a mock Roman marriage ceremony.

The topic of slavery and hairdressing was covered next. The students soon became aware that life as a slave could even involve having your hair cut off so your owner could sell it to wig makers who provided rich ladies with an equivalent to modern day hair extensions.

The students learnt that being sold or born into slavery in Roman times would have been a most traumatic experience: not only would the loss of freedom be unbearable but the physical strain of the binding and chains that were sometimes used to restrain slaves would clearly have been uncomfortable and restrictive.





Next was the turn of the Celts to protect their country against the Roman Commander Julius Caesar in 55BC, and later the Emperor Claudius in AD43. As the Celts armoured themselves up they looked ferocious and menacing and the tribe listened carefully to strategic advice on how to beat the Romans in battle from their commander.



The afternoon session was equally as exciting and informative with a thrilling presentation on Roman weaponry ranging from threatening spears to menacing swords.

Furthermore students were put through their paces as they were drilled and had to respond to forceful commands. No mistake went unnoticed and soldiers were ejected from the army forthwith! Overall the event provided a most amazing insight into many aspects of ancient Roman life and certainly enhanced the Classical studies of all the students who thoroughly enjoyed such an interactive and entertaining day.

The department ran competitions from the fun Christmas quiz to the Year 8 theatre projects where the quality of entries (theatre cushions, masks, powerpoints, models and even cakes) exceeded last year's great success. Ms Peace judged the competition with the help of Dr Cheetham and we were very impressed at the dedication and thought that had gone into so many of the entries.

In March, Year 12 students attended a lecture day with their counterparts from Warwick School on their AS literature texts. The talks were most thought provoking and brought the texts to life.

A Classics club was offered at lunchtime to help any students with areas of difficulty: Year 11 made good use of these sessions in the run up to their GCSE examinations. We purchased the CD-ROMs to accompany the Year 8 and 9 textbooks. These have added an extra dimension to lessons and we will incorporate them further into the schemes of work for next year. We continue to look for ways to stretch gifted and talented students. Two Year 11 students have taken Greek lessons at Warwick School and we hope to start a Greek lunchtime club at King's next year.

On the 16th June, Miss Dormer attended a lecture delivered by Boris Johnson, the Mayor of London, on 'Teaching Classics in Schools'.

Mayor Boris Johnson praised the continuing success of the Iris Project for bringing Latin to schools but said that still more needs to be done to allow more students to enjoy the benefits of a Classical Education. We hope that is something from which students at King's can benefit. We aim to continue to raise the profile of the department in school, inspiring students to enjoy their Latin studies as well as achieving their potential.

Head of Department - Ms I Peace