

VOL 08.12.09

# minerva

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SHELLEY COLLEGE



H He Li Be B C N O F Ne Na Mg Al Si P S Cl Ar K Ca Sc Ti V Cr Mn Fe Co Ni Cu Zn Ga Ge As Se Br Kr Rb Sr Y Zr Nb Mo Te Ru Rh Pd

In this edition...

Parents' Gateway is launched

STEM and the 'Global Challenge'

Stepping back in time, to the days of Darwin

Saturday Morning Science

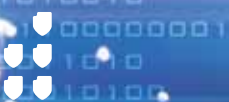
Latest trip to Martha's Vineyard

World-leading historian visits

... and lots more!



This is an example of parental engagement at Kitchen Sink Science.



**shelley college**

A SPECIALIST CENTRE FOR SCIENCE

"Excellence and Enjoyment"

## Message from John McNally



It is a real honour to become the Headteacher of Shelley College and I am really looking forward to starting in January. It is an impressive school, with highly talented students and very able staff. I also believe there is tremendous potential for the future and I very much hope this is the start of a long and happy working partnership for the college and me.

Shelley College will be fourth school I have worked at and my second headship. My current school, St. Wilfrid's in Pontefract has been recognised as a High Performing Specialist School and now boasts three specialisms of Languages, Applied Learning and Leadership Partner Status because of its outstanding results. I hope this will help me bring a few new ideas to Shelley, to complement its current high levels of performance.

Before working in education I had a previous life as a Project Manager and IT Consultant, working for a company that supported Police Command & Control Systems. Although I enjoyed the job, I have not regretted changing to teaching for a second. There may be many challenges in education but it is never dull and the rewards of helping young people achieve success are second to none.

My academic background is mathematics, particularly applied mathematics and I do have a great appreciation for the importance and relevance of science. It is important for all our futures we encourage young people to consider science, engineering and mathematics courses or careers and I will be reading future issues of Minerva with interest to see how this is working in action. I have seen how the Science specialism is leading many improvements at Shelley and I am sure this will continue well into the future.

Other subjects are just as important too though. I want to continue providing students with every opportunity to demonstrate and develop their talents in a wide range of areas. For example, I love sport and believe it is tremendously important, not just for improving health, but for learning lessons for future life about teamwork, achieving success and responding to failure. I am also in absolute admiration of people who can sing or dance, being tone deaf and in possession of two left feet myself. Whatever students strengths might be, I want to help them achieve success and enjoy their experience at Shelley to the full.

I look forward to meeting you all in January.

### Diary Dates:

Mon 4th Jan - 1st Day of Spring Term  
Thurs 14th Jan - INSET DAY & Sixth Form Open Evening  
Tue 12th Jan - Careers Convention

Wed 3rd Feb - Yr 11 Parents Evening  
Thurs 4th Feb - INSET DAY  
Tues 9th Feb - Yr 12 & 13 Parents Evening  
Mon 15th Feb - Fri 19th Feb Half Term

Tues 9th March - Yr 9 Options Evening  
Tues 23rd March - Yr 9 Parents Evening  
Wed 31st March - Yr10 Parents Evening  
Thurs 1st April - Last Day of Term

## Presentation Evening

Our annual presentation evening was held at the Galpharm Stadium on Wednesday 11th November. Last year's Year 11 students were invited to collect their GCSE certificates as well as specific students being recognised and rewarded for department and whole school awards. Year 10 and 11 students were rewarded for academic progress and excellence, improvement as well the Headteacher's and Governor's awards.

The evening was extremely well attended, with over 400 students, parents, staff, governors, sponsors and special guests present.

The guest speaker at the evening was Mr John McNally, our new Headteacher, who takes up his post in January.

The award winners in Year 10 were:

|                       |                                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Danny Roche 10JP      | Most Improved student          |
| Matthew Waterson 10JP | Academic Excellence            |
| Cameron Hughes 10PCR  | Highest Academic Achievement   |
| Alex Goodliffe 10YS   | Headteacher's Sunshine Award   |
| Lauren Powell 10DH    | Governor's Student of the Year |

The award winners in Year 11 were:

|                        |                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Adam Sykes 11MCo       | Most improved student          |
| Caitlin Pritchard 11HR | Academic excellence            |
| Joe Kelly 11KJA        | Highest Academic Achievement   |
| Courtney George 11PH   | Headteacher's Sunshine Award   |
| George Lane 11PH       | Governor's Student of the Year |

The main awards of the evening for the 2009 leavers went to:

|                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hayley Akroyd               | Paul Tobin Community Award     |
| Jodie Lancaster             | Most Improved Student          |
| Kathryn Hunt                | Academic Excellence            |
| Sarah Pugh                  | Academic Excellence            |
| Abigail Schofield           | Academic Excellence            |
| Sanjay Bahia                | Highest Academic Achievement   |
| Jordan Haigh                | Headteacher's Sunshine Award   |
| Richard Asensio-Barraclough | Governor's Student of the Year |



## Meet the **E TEAM** (That's E for 'Environmental'!)

Meet the E Team, a committed group of 20 individuals who get together every Tuesday after school to improve the College's environment by participating in a whole range of bio-diverse projects.

Over the last few years, the E Team has been keeping the College environmentally- friendly through regular improvements to habitats. The team was also instrumental in achieving the Bronze, Silver and Green Flag Status Awards.



If the aroma of Miss Ramsay's (and our other talented bakers) freshly baked cakes isn't enough to entice students to attend, the satisfaction of 'doing the right thing' never fails to draw in new members. As an added bonus, weekly E Team attendance could also help contribute to each student's college or university applications, and even contribute to part of the service aspect of The Duke of Edinburgh Award.

E Team co-ordinator and keen environmentalist, Heather Ramsay, comments: "E Team offers a wide range of ways to take positive action on local environmental issues like biodiversity and waste. Many of the projects we do come from the team's own ideas about what could change at Shelley, making those projects even more rewarding for the students."

Over the last year, many students have gained a lot of experience and knowledge of horticulture as E Team members. Some have even gone on to study at a further level at Askham Bryan College because they have enjoyed their time with E Team so much.

E Team, however, is not just about improving the College's grounds. The E Team has secured many changes in policy throughout the last few years. For example, look at most light switches and you will now see signs urging you to 'switch off'. E Team monitors the collection of Morrisons 'Let's Grow' vouchers and, every year, new equipment is bought to continue the fantastic work of the E Team.

Do you want to make a positive and visible improvement to your College? Then join the E Team every Tuesday from 3 – 4.30pm in E47. Email [ramsayh@shelleycollege.org](mailto:ramsayh@shelleycollege.org) to find out more.

## Thrills, spills... and a BTEC Diploma!



Back in October, the Shelley College Year 12 BTEC First Diploma Travel and Tourism students went on a day trip to Alton Towers. They weren't there, however, simply to enjoy the rides. Far from it! This was primarily an educational visit to enhance their understanding of how one of the biggest visitor attractions in the United Kingdom operates.

During the day, students attended two conferences. The first described how Alton Towers operates its customer service department – as gaining new customers and retaining old customers is extremely important in this very competitive industry. The second conference described the 'behind the scenes' business side of Alton Towers. For example, did you know that there is a mirror on every gate in the staff-only areas so they can constantly check that their appearance is correct and of the highest standards?!!

Both conferences were extremely informative and will provide excellent support throughout the Travel and Tourism course. And, yes, our students did get to enjoy a few of the rides. After all, they deserved it!

## WOOD MICE, BANK VOLE AND SHREW? It's all in the name of Science

As part of their Ecology, Conservation and Recycling portfolio, Shelley College's Year 13 Applied Scientists recently conducted a comprehensive survey of wildlife in deepest, darkest... Shepley.

During a residential visit to Cliffe House, students were able to investigate the relationships between organisms and their environment. Evidence was found of habitat preferences when a single pitfall trap attracted 12 ground beetles looking for shelter. Optimum wildlife corridors were discovered by placing live mammal traps near sources of food and cover. These brought in a catch of more than 10 different wood mice, plus bank vole and shrew.

Data was also collected on the vegetation, soils and weather, to help explain why these animals are able to survive here, often undetected and in surprising numbers. The group is now analysing the nature of this diverse habitat with a renewed appreciation of the biodiversity that exists quite literally on the doorstep.

## Media Studies IMOD trip

As part of their independent module of work (IMOD), in October our AS level Media Studies students went on a very successful trip to York along with Media studies teachers, Mr Briggs and Mr Weston.

The enthusiastic students had spent three weeks planning a piece of film in small groups or independently and put their individual skills to great use preparing for the day out and getting permission to film in and around York's biggest attractions, including York Minster, where some fantastic footage was taken.

The projects filmed included a horror trailer, a BBC-style documentary, a classic chick flick and a look into York's spooky past. On return to College, the footage taken in York was then edited in the Apple Mac suite to create highly professional pieces of work.

The trip showed how well the Year 12 students are adapting to the pace and style of work in Sixth Form. The day in York went smoothly thanks to all the preparations done by students beforehand, plus a little help from the Media Studies teachers. The students gained valuable experience in preparation for their coursework and examinations, as well as working independently in preparation for university or entering the workplace.

## STEM and the Global Challenge

As part of our STEM commitment (a two-year opportunity for students to reach their potential in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), we have launched a 'global dimension' project to establish sustainable aquaponics (a way of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions, without soil) for the benefit of third world countries.

Working with The ABLE Project in Wakefield, we have begun looking at the feasibility of large-scale aquaponics systems, where fish can be grown quickly for food (as they are a high source of protein) and a wide variety of crops can be grown using nutrient-rich water from fish waste.

### The Global Challenge

The ABLE Project would like to commission students at Shelley College to research the feasibility of introducing Aquaponics in Nepal. As the project is in its infancy, we have much to learn about the biochemistry involved but will endeavour to analyse a variety of essential nutrients and take precise measurements to ensure maximum growth rates.



John Beaumont, from The ABLE Project, and STEM students discuss how an Aquaponics system works.

## Parental Engagement

Wednesday 2nd December saw Shelley continue to build on its success at A Level with the launch of its first Parental Engagement Evening. The focus of the evening was a celebration of the work carried out by our AS students in their subject areas since September.



Following a brief introduction from Senior leaders and a demonstration of independent study by the Year 12 musicians, students were encouraged to meet and talk with parents about their AS studies. The evening had a very student centred approach with a view to engaging parents in the activities that our AS students are involved in on a

day to day basis. Students, staff and parents used the opportunity to discuss ways in which both study skills and independent learning could be used to aid exam success and performance in key assessments.

The evening had a very relaxed yet informative atmosphere with very positive comments from parents, staff and students alike as to the definite value of the event. The students involved 'engaged' parents with their enthusiasm and knowledge giving clarity through their explanations as to what their work at AS involves and where they need help and support to achieve success.

All students involved were excellent ambassadors for their subjects, the Sixth Form and Shelley College as a whole.

## Introducing the Shelley College Parents' Gateway

Shelley College website will feature much more of the information you, as parents, have asked for.

Through the website, you will be able to log into the new secure Shelley College Parents' Gateway and access a wider variety of information about the College, the activities within the College and information specific to your children. You will be able to monitor your son or daughter's attendance and attainment information as frequently as it is updated, without having to wait until review days to receive it. Best of all, the information will be available to you at the click of a mouse.

### Access to Online Course Materials

The Shelley College Parents' Gateway will also give you access to the same online course materials that the students access to support them in their learning. This will give you a deeper insight into the work students are involved with at the College and enable you to support your children's learning across the subject range.

As well as making improvements to our website, we are also looking at increasing the different ways in which we get information to you. Other examples of this will be the use of email and SMS text messaging to keep you informed.

### Parents' Gateway Key features:

- Safeguarding information and e safety
- Secure parental access to information about their child's attendance, attainment and behaviour
- Regular news updates
- A letter repository
- A calendar of events
- In-depth reports of events and activities at Shelley College
- Further information about courses and course content
- Links to useful resources and websites to help support your children's learning

For security purposes, you will shortly receive a user ID and Password to access the Parents' Gateway. The administration of these will be issued to parents and carers of Year 9 and Year 10 students on a rolling programme during the next term up to Easter.

If you have any questions about the Parents' Gateway, please contact Mr Emsley, ICT Strategic Leader at the College, or email [emsleyd@shelleycollege.org](mailto:emsleyd@shelleycollege.org)

## Saturday Morning Science

Students from across the pyramid and Kirklees recently joined our Year 9 Science Ambassadors for a Saturday morning of exciting experimentation. Seven laboratories were open for families to share in the learning experience. Experiments included making blow-up balloons, Alka-Seltzer rockets, creating lava lunacy, corn flour slime, a fizzing rainbow and the aptly named stupid egg trick.

The event helped promote our Specialist School Status in Science and demonstrates our commitment to providing family learning events for students and parents/guardians. Our next family learning event takes place during National Science and Engineering Week in March and is entitled 'Reach for the Stars'. Details of this event and other events will be advertised on the College website.

## SAM Learning – 10 Hours Challenge



SAM Learning has been available to Shelley College students for a number of years now. The service, which is accessible to all staff and students, covers a wide range of subjects across the curriculum and can be used both in school and at home.

Students can log in and complete interactive tests, exam practice questions and exam papers, while staff can assign homework and monitor students' progress. Where students have used this regularly and completed over 10 hours over a period of weeks leading up to examinations time then there is good evidence to show that it WILL improve their final grades, whether GCSE or Key Stage.

Independent educational charity Fischer Family Trust produced a fifth research report analysing the impact of e-Learning on the KS2 SAT (ages 7-11), KS3 SAT (ages 11-13) and GCSE (ages 14-16). The results of 396,812 pupils across England confirmed for the sixth consecutive year that doing as little as 10 task hours' on SAM Learning can start to improve attainment.

SAM Learning offers a wealth of content to help students improve their learning. Students can focus on specific learning objectives you can assign homework tasks that include revision exercises, exam questions practice and past papers. With a proven track record in improving exam results it is a good way for students to prepare for their examinations.

## What a Misery? What a result!

When invited to take part in a competition to design a poster for the Huddersfield Thespian Society, students on the Applied Art and Design A level course really showed their true colours!

The poster was to be for the staging of the play 'Misery', based on the book by Stephen King, and due to be shown at the Laurence Batley Theatre. For the competition, students were asked to keep their designs simple and not to copy images from the Internet. They also had to add in text as well as their own names in the form of a credit, just in case they won!

### Top prize winners

Once the nail-biting judging session was complete, Year 13 student, Lucy Nixey, was awarded the first and third prizes and Amber Holt, also in Year 13, came in second place.

You can see all the poster designs in the foyer of the Laurence Batley Theatre throughout the showing of the play. Special thanks go to Mrs Root, from the Drama Department, for enabling this project to take place.



## The relevance of Remembrance Day in 2009



During October and November, Shelley College History students were doing one of the few things that both students and adults find hardest: speaking in front of an audience!

Despite the nerve-wracking task of speaking in front of over 100 fellow students, our speakers felt it was important to raise awareness of Remembrance Day within the college community.

Mr Dempster's History Club, ably supported by Year 12 History students, spent a lot of time considering what type of presentation they would like to give to the Shelley students. They hit upon the theme of explaining why Remembrance Day is just as relevant to Britain today as it was 40, 50 or even 60 years ago.

In a very thought-provoking and, at times, emotional assembly, students covered the meaning of Remembrance, as well as looking at the effects of the more recent conflicts that British troops have been involved in regarding Iraq and Afghanistan.

Special thanks go to Mrs Almond who kindly played 'The Last Post' in a number of the assemblies for the students.



The Poppy Appeal raised £245.73

## The Great Debate: Arthur Scargill... a Local Hero?

"What better individual to form the subject of a powerful debate than Arthur Scargill, one of Yorkshire's most controversial figures?"

That was the question considered by three Year 13 History students, Beth Lockwood, Amy Green and Sam Burdett, when deciding on a topic to present at the Historical Association's annual 'Great Debate' competition at Birkdale School, Sheffield, on November 5th.



The focus of this year's debate was local history and, after serious consideration, Beth, Amy and Sam decided to centre their 5-minute presentation on Arthur Scargill.

After the students prepared their research and speech, Beth gave an excellent presentation in front of the Historical Association's exacting panel of judges. Despite not being selected to go through from the Sheffield heat to the national final at Clare College, Cambridge, the students found the competition to be a valuable experience involving research, team work and presentation skills. The History Department wishes to say a big thank you and well done to Beth, Amy and Sam for dedicating a lot of their own time and efforts to the project.

## Stepping back in time... to the days of Darwin

Just imagine for one moment that it is 1881 and the aged Charles Darwin has taken a nap after his customary thinking walk at Down House, in Kent. Now imagine his amazement at waking in the present day, with a modern £10 note in his pocket. Surely he must be dreaming?



On November 16th, Shelley students had the opportunity to share in Darwin's dream. They heard all about his life and achievements. Then Darwin heard from students about 21st Century technology and his position in the modern curriculum.

Darwin (well, a pretty close look-alike) toured the College Science Department throughout the day, dropping in on lessons. Over fifty students, staff and parents then joined a STEM evening workshop in the Altitude Building to hear a full account of Darwin's expedition to South America on HMS Beagle.

## World-Leading Historian on Nazi Germany speaks to Shelley Students



On November 12th, Year 13 History students got the opportunity to hear one of the world's top historians, Professor Sir Ian Kershaw, speak about his life's work on the study of Hitler and Nazi Germany.

The talk took place in Birkdale School, Sheffield, with Professor Kershaw delivering a lecture entitled: Why did Nazi Germany continue to fight to the bitter end? Shelley students enjoyed a very thought-provoking presentation, with Sir Ian putting forward a number of possible interpretations to explain the refusal of Nazi

Germany to surrender before May 1945. Professor Kershaw also answered questions from the audience regarding his work on Hitler's Germany.

For Year 13 students, the talk was not simply useful for their studies; it also provided a glimpse of the new style of learning they will be exposed to at university. The History Department would like to thank all of the students who attended.

## The Battle of Wakefield: the least-known turning point of the Medieval Period?

On September 26th, Mr Miller, Mr Dempster and Mr Briggs took the Year 12 'Societies in Change' group on a tour of Sandal Castle and the site of the Battle of Wakefield, an event which took place on December 30th, 1460.

Mr Briggs, who has extensive knowledge of the Sandal Castle site, provided a guided tour of the castle and the spot where the 'uncrowned' King of England, Richard, Duke of York, was killed by the Lancastrian forces of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou.

As a result of the day, the students got a sense of what a medieval battle would have been like, as well as being able to place key events of the Wars of the Roses into a local and national context.

The History Department would like to thank Mr Briggs for giving up his time to guide the Year 12 students around what, albeit a rather forgotten piece of local history, nevertheless changed the course of English history.

# Martha's Vineyard: another very happy return!

By Julie Hampson

The annual trip to Martha's Vineyard has long been a highlight on the Shelley College calendar... and this year's trip was no different! Beginning their journey at 3.45am on a cold Wednesday morning, this year's exchange students made their way to Manchester Airport tired but excited at the thought of the adventure that lay ahead. They arrived on the Vineyard at approximately 7.00pm local time and all went on to various hosts' homes.

During the 10-day stay, they enjoyed various excursions, including: a tour of the island and various historic sites, a trip to the Natural History Museum at Harvard University, and a tour of Rose Cliff Mansion, which has been used in films such as *The Great Gatsby*, *True Lies* and *27 Dresses*.

One of the highlights of the trip was watching three seals that kept popping their heads above the water to observe the group enjoying time on a beach on Chappaquiddick Island. Shelley students also had the opportunity to attend a couple of lessons with their hosts to see what school life is like on the island.

During the weekend the students had free time with their exchange partner where the families organised various activities for them. Some went to New York, others went to Boston and some were even lucky enough to stay over night there. There was also the chance to do some shopping and pick up souvenirs and presents for those back home.



The final day included a trip to Quincy Market in Boston, followed by a Duck Tour of the city, which was a wonderful way to end what had been a thoroughly enjoyable exchange.

I would just like to say a personal thank you from Mr Rayner, Mrs Hieatt and myself to the students who came with us. Their behaviour and conduct throughout the trip added to its success; they were a pleasure to be with. We now look forward to welcoming our American friends when they visit us in April. We shall aim to make them feel just as welcome as we were made to feel at Martha's Vineyard.

## cycling



**Year 9 student Leon Gledhill and Year 11 student Leon Taylor-Woodhouse spend much of their weekend training and racing for the Holme Valley Wheelers cycling club, situated in Holmfirth. They also train throughout the week at Manchester Velodrome, when the complex is available for use.**

Leon Gledhill who races with a bike made of carbon fibre, recently came first place in the under 14's British Schools championship. He was also first in the national hill climbs and off road cyclo-cross events. Leon owns four types of bike in which he uses each for different conditions and surfaces; a track, a time-trial, a winter and an old pro-bike, this was very popular in the 1980's.

Leon Taylor-Woodhouse has been cycling for nearly two years. He has a racing bike which is fully aluminium. In recent events he came first in the cyclo-cross race held at Newsome Sports College and was part of the winning team in the regional time trials. He is currently ranked 9th in the country for his age group. He came 5th in the regional British Schools cycling hill climb.

**On Thursday 22nd October Shelley College was host of the Shelley Schools Cyclo-Cross Country.**

Around 30 pupils from Schools across the area, turned up with their mountain bikes and took part in a one mile race around the fields of the College.

The event organised by Year 12 B-Tec National sports students with the assistance of teacher Mr. Morris raised £80 for the "Kirklees sporting legends fund" which supports talented junior athletes across Kirklees.

## Sports round-up

### Swimming success

Shelley swimmers once again had a very rewarding evening at the English Schools Relay Competition, entering three teams – intermediate girls, intermediate boys and senior girls – in this year's event. Competing against a large number of schools (from as far away as Scarborough and Harrogate), the intermediate boys improved upon last year's performance by winning Bronze in both the Medley and freestyle races. The senior girls lost their crown to Greenhead, but won Silver in a very impressive heat.



### Athletics

The summer seems some distance away now, however Shelley athletes enjoyed a successful season as teams and individuals. The girls' team reached the second round of The English Schools Competition and both our boys' and girls' teams were event leaders in the Kirklees Schools Championships. Marcus Nixey goes from strength to strength in senior athletics. Lauren Powell and Elliot Kilner travelled to Italy to represent Kirklees in their respective events. 2012 here they come!!



## Total Fitness, Soccer City... It's all change in Year 11 PE

This year has seen an exciting change in the programme of activities offered to all Year 11 students for their PE lessons. The PE Department has changed its approach to delivering the PE curriculum by offering students the opportunity to participate in activities outside of the school. As a result, students can now go to Total Fitness, Laserquest, Skelmanthorpe Squash Club and Soccer City, or decide to remain in school and participate in a school-based range of activities. The aim of this new approach is to develop a positive attitude towards lifelong participation in some form of physical activity.



### Under 15's cricket

Last academic year, the under 15's cricket team won the Huddersfield Schools league with a convincing playoff final victory against Holmfirth High School at Cumberworth Cricket Club. The team (pictured) were also runners-up in the Huddersfield Cup and reached the quarter finals of the Yorkshire Cup. As a result of their success in Year 9, they also represented Yorkshire in the North of England semi-finals in Nottingham.



## Year 9 inter-form challenge

Understandably, it was also a tense and close fought battle throughout the season. A programme of inter-form competitions, held over lunchtimes for Year 9 students during the first half of the autumn term, proved extremely popular. Five-a-side football (taking place on Mondays) involved 12 different tutor groups, with the eventual winners being Mr Tunnacliffe's tutor group. The netball competition (held on Tuesdays) involved 9 different forms and was eventually won by Mrs Clee's tutor group. Competitions for the current half-term are basketball and girl's football. So, if you're a Year 9, don't miss the chance to join in!