

The profile of the United Nations activities at the College is growing, with four trips now taking place every year. These give students an important opportunity to reflect in a practical way on issues which affect the world around them. It is only by coming into contact with other cultures and ideas that the students can develop empathy and understanding.

We were the first UK school to be invited to participate in the Model United Nations in The Hague in October 2006 and six students made the trip. Gabriella Sach, Adam Darroch-Thompson, Phil Donald, Rebecca Peck, Fiona Hamer-Philip and Christian Fischer-Zernin represented the interests of South Africa and the Vatican on the various committees. They very much enjoyed the cut and thrust of debate, as well of course as the many social events laid on by the hosting students.

In December 2006, I was invited, for the third time, to lead a team to possibly the most prestigious United Nations event, held in the UN building in Geneva. Jessica Summers and Laura Bridgstock pushed the profile of Lithuania onto the world stage with the quality of their speeches, whilst Matthew Tubbs and Alex Megone were so effective in representing Tuvalu (a small Pacific island) that the Secretary General complimented their efforts in his closing remarks.

In April we were asked to present all three of the resolutions at the Isle of Wight MUN, a rare honour and one which entailed a lot of extra work for the delegates. Jon Waghorne and Victoria Bagert (Japan), Jessica Summers and Georgie Rees (Argentina), and Fran Woolnough and Fiona Stacey (Croatia) all stunned the Assembly with the quality of their arguments and fluency of their speeches. All three resolutions were passed.

Bedford School hosted the inaugural Model Council of Europe in May and we were one of only six schools attending. Christian Fischer-Zernin, Henning Winterfeld, Clare Bush, Matthew Tubbs, Alex Megone and Gabriella Sach represented the interests of Poland and The Netherlands in a fulfilling day of debate and discussion (see photo below).

I would like to thank all participating students for their energy, enthusiasm and intellect at all of the events and I am very pleased to have awarded Alex Megone the public speaking prize for all of his efforts over the past two years.

*Mr Julian Holland*



It is strange how institutions evolve. The Pryor House Group has been through various phases and now in some ironic almost post-modernist way it seems to be calling itself 'Geek Club'. Not long ago, the word 'geek' was unknown to me except as a heterographical rendering of a chap who might have leapt from a Trojan horse on a bad spelling day, but the Age of Computers is come with its nerds and geeks to control its mice and machines. So it is that hebdomadal meetings of Geek Club take place, like Calvin's Consistory, on a Thursday, not bound though by any Ecclesiastical Ordinances or other Big Brother.

Freedom to think is perhaps the essence of what the group is about. If sometimes the class-room can be close to a treadmill turning inexorably towards the next exam, Pryor House Group is determinedly the opposite. If some members may be considering Oxbridge Entrance, they are also aware that those clever Oxbridge dons are doing everything they can to devise entrance procedures testing the ability to think and to express views of interest and breadth. Sometimes, like the Scholastics, we may pursue a trivial question ad absurdum

(a particular specialism of Mr Robinson's!), while on other occasions the breadth of the discussion may be the challenge. Works of art as different as Blake's 'The Ancient of Days' and Gainsborough's 'Mr and Mrs Andrews' have been used as starting points; extracts from films such as 'Intacto' have shaken us out of any Anglocentricity; individuals have expressed a passion for liberty, a penchant for the eighteenth-century navy, a fascination with Anglo-

Saxons and Vikings. The world is our oyster and, if the quality of the weekly pearls may vary, there is usually something to be prized from whichever shell is selected.

The term 'geek' also has a useful deflationary quality. If the metaphor moves from pearls to pebbles, it was Sir Isaac Newton who modestly declared that he had only found 'a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary', while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before him. He spent a little time at Cambridge (he was a professor at the age of 26!), and Geek Club members will be given a chance to visit the city where the spires don't just dream, to see if they aspire to it. One hopes that some of them will!

*Mr Michael Cooke*

