

# The Berry Bugle



'The student voice of Mulberry School for Girls'

ISSUE 11, WINTER 2015

## CIVIL RIGHTS SOCIETY: THE LEGACY OF MICHELLE OBAMA'S VISIT

Partly as a result of our long-standing commitment to women's education and community empowerment, we were selected in June 2016 to host a visit from the First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama. Mrs Obama joined us at Mulberry to launch her Let Girls Learn campaign.

**Speaking to an audience of our students, staff, governors and partner schools, she stressed the global importance of guaranteeing full primary and secondary education for every single girl and young woman, emphasising that international governments need to make girls' education a top priority.** Mrs Obama's address perfectly encapsulated the core principles of Mulberry school. Listening to her speak, our girls recognised the ethos of the school community in which they live and learn, and sensed the global significance of that ethos, and its importance in establishing a world where every girl fulfils the potential with which she is born. Mrs Obama made it clear to Mulberry girls and their peers that they are a central part of the global conversation about girls' education, encouraging all of them to use the opportunities they have been given and the various platforms they are offered to speak out on behalf of disenfranchised girls around the world.

Shortly after the First Lady's visit, we were thrilled to receive an invitation from the White House to join Mrs Obama for a morning of discussion about how her Let Girls Learn campaign will be developed. We were invited to bring 20 girls and 5 members of staff to meet with the First Lady and her team.

Mulberry places great value on the importance of global education, and of an education which encompasses all aspects of social justice. We decided to make the most of this incredible opportunity and plan a week-long visit to some of the southern United States, during the course of which students

would learn about the history and development of the American Civil Rights movement, from the Civil War to the present day. A programme of travel was put together, including visits to Washington DC, Memphis, and Birmingham, Alabama. It was decided that students would visit landmarks in the history of Civil Rights, including the home of Frederick Douglass, the motel where Martin Luther King was assassinated, and the Civil Rights Museum.

We wanted the trip to provide students with the tools they need to become agents of positive social change on a global scale. They would learn about the rich and diverse history of Civil Rights; they would celebrate the progress that has been made, and explore the battles that are still being fought; they would connect their own identities, passions, principles and beliefs with the global struggle for justice and equal rights, finding their own places within a community of activists, thinkers, writers, teachers and students. Through education, experience, discussion and debate, our girls would gain a sense of how they might change their world for the better.



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At Mulberry, we have an established tradition of students acting as ambassadors to their peer group, and educating one another. We decided that the group of girls who attended this trip would use a variety of platforms to share the knowledge they gained with their peers and their local community - from the Berry Bugle, to our diversity education and discussion group 'United Cultures of Mulberry', to our feminist education group 'Feminist Fridays', our Girl Guides and our Human Rights Ambassadors network. In this way, Mulberry girls will work for positive change in their school community, their local community, and the global community of girls at school to which they are so proud to belong.

The trip was set to be an incredible opportunity, and we knew that most students in the school would be interested in taking part. In the interests of fairness, we decided to design a unique application process. Students who wished to apply for a place on the trip had to attend a series of education workshops on Civil Rights; complete a written application; give a speech to a panel of teachers; and have an interview with our Head Teacher and our Governors. The process was designed to give the students a thorough grounding in the history and development of the American Civil Rights movement, and to give them opportunities to think deeply about their own engagement with civil rights.

The application process was extremely challenging, but all student applicants rose to that challenge brilliantly. The quality of written and oral work produced was exceptional, and students showed real depth of thought. All those who took part should feel very proud of their achievements, and should recognise the value of what they learned during the application process.

After weeks of hard work, a final group of students was chosen: Jamila Ahmed 12JJ, Manaal Chaiwalla 12SS, Nowshin Hussain 12BW, Samirah Chowdhury 12SS, Tamanna Ali 12BW, Samilah Naira 12SS, Elizabeth Todd 12SH, Sumayya Bilqis 12JJ, Samihah Yasmin 12BW, Anisa Khaliq 12SS, Aklima Rahman 10L, Nadira Abdun 10B, Anika Chowdhury 10L, Sumaiyah Rahim 10Y, Mariya Chowdhury 10B, Fatimah Osman 10R, Maisha Zainab 10E, Jannath Rahman 10U, Saniat Zainab 10M, Tamanna Islam 10B.

The group departed for the US on Monday 16th November. Read on for the students' perspective on the trip; and some extracts from the girls' travel journals.

The headteacher, Dr Vanessa Ogden, would like to thank the governors who have raised all the money for this opportunity and our generous sponsors: **the Aldgate and All Hallows Foundation, Virgin Atlantic, the Pears Foundation, the Canary Wharf Group and Bank of America Merrill Lynch.** Dr Ogden states:

*"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Mulberry girls to develop their leadership and their understanding of the complexities of international politics and how to work peacefully to bring about justice and equality. A place on this visit brings with it the responsibility for girls to use what they have learned and "pay back" when they return to the school, our community and – over the course of their future lives – our nation. This is our commitment and I am deeply grateful to everyone who has made it possible."*

Dr Ogden would also like to thank Ambassador Barzun and the US Embassy in London for their support – their help has been fundamental to this opportunity.



Some of the group at the White House

## Making Memories in Memphis: Seven Days in the Life of a Mulberry Girl

Partway through the morning on Tuesday the 24th of November, anybody looking out of their classroom windows or making their way down to the main school reception would have been met with the presence of 20 of their fellow Mulberry students, 10 from year 10 and 10 from year 12, arriving at the school. Tired, grumpy, aching-at-the-bones, just where had these girls been? Listen up carefully because they've got quite the story to tell...

**L**ast year, when Michelle Obama visited our school, she extended an invitation for us to do the same: that is, to visit her at the White House. Naturally, this led to a very important question: who to take?

And thus was born The Civil Rights Club—a club which, as rightly suggested by its name, was an after school club for those keen to learn about the Civil Rights Movement 1955-1968 in America. Those who managed to stay at school until six o'clock for two weeks of workshops were gifted an Application Form, to be filled out if you wished to be considered for the White House trip. This consisted of four essay questions as well as some shorter questions to fill out. After this was a two-minute speech in front of a panel of five senior staff, and then a second interview with a panel of senior staff, including Doctor Ogden herself. After all these rounds, the final 20 were decided.

And so, we will fast-forward through all the preparation sessions: learning how to use a camera and film a documentary, about Abolition, girls education, #62million girls around the world denied an education, visiting the US Embassy and meeting

## Dear diary, today I met Michelle Obama (again)...

**D**ear Travel Journal;

Today was an average, totally normal day. We only visited the White House... and had a chat with the First Lady.

I met Michelle Obama! *Again!*

So, to begin with, we queued outside the White House for what felt like a long time. There was a fire drill, and we went through strict security – we had to show our passports twice. It was worth it for what happened next, though.

We listened to a panel of women and one man (yes, you did read that correctly) who all work for the White House. They work in different sectors, all of which interlink and overlap in some way. Participants included:

Ginnette Magana, Associate Director, OPE, Latino Outreach, Molly Dillon, Policy Assistant, DPC, Nirupama Rao, Economist, CEA, Danielle Carnival, Associate Director, OSTP, Taylor Lustig, Policy Assistant, DPC, Pany Faed, Social Office, Stephanie Young, Director of African American Outreach, OPE Roy Austin, Deputy Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, Justice and Opportunity Karen Evans, Assistant Director, Cabinet Affairs, My Brother's Keeper Initiative Jesse Moore, Associate Director, OPE Ashley Allison, Deputy Director, OPE Aditi Hardikar, LGBT Liaison, OPE

They were all really interesting, but my personal favourite was the man who worked for African-American Civil Rights. A lot of



ambassador Barzun... all the way up until Monday 16th of November, where 20 girls were making way too much racket for 6 in the morning. It was still dark, technically still Sunday.

Climbing into the coach, some were tearful, some were anxious; I was already going through my suitcase in my head, certain I'd left something behind... but one thing was constant: we were all so excited for the next day. To meet Michelle Obama. Again. And let's not forget having the chance to travel to three different states. Not to mention all the filming we'd be doing, for the documentary we wanted to make about our trip. And disappointed we were not—the Whitehouse was an absolutely unbelievable experience—and don't just take my word for it...

"When meeting Mrs Obama, it felt surreal as I simply couldn't imagine myself ever actually sitting with The First Lady and talking to her. It was an extremely pleasant experience to sit with her and to listen to her thoughts on certain topics, especially girls' education. The passion with which she spoke made it clear to me that she truly cared for girls' education and was determined to fix the problems that girls face, rendering them unable to fulfill their education. It has also helped me to realise that if we are not educating girls we, as Mrs Obama said, are not educating half of our population – which is shocking! Half the population uneducated means half the amount of innovative ideas and half the overall development as a community or

country. There needs to be something done about girls' education and Michelle Obama's 'Let Girls Learn' campaign gives us hope. Some one is trying to make a difference.

Michelle came across very down-to-earth as she was very much herself whilst she was speaking to us, which made me feel instantly comfortable with her. She is a very likeable person and definitely has a lot to say about many issues. She managed to inspire and motivate twenty young females into changing the world for the better." – *Anika Chowdhury*

In Washington we also visited a lot of other places other than the Whitehouse, such as Capitol Hill and the US State Department. We met some truly inspirational women, and men, who all gave us their view on freedom.

We then flew (again) to Memphis, Tennessee.

"I think that Memphis was actually the best state that we visited out of the three. We visited the Lorraine Motel, the hotel where Martin Luther King died. It has been converted into a museum now. It was incredibly surreal to be in the actual place he died in so soon after learning about his life, and the hardship he went through. It just made everything seem so real. In the evening we had dinner at the Rock 'N' Roll Café with an Elvis Presley impersonator singing, which was absolutely hilarious! I believe our experiences in Memphis made our whole trip more memorable and brought all of us together." – *Sumaiyah Rahim 10Y*

The next day we took a 4-hour coach

journey to Birmingham, Alabama. This was my favourite of the three states: we went to 16th Street Baptist Church, where three 14 year old girls and one 11 year old girl were killed by a bomb planted by the KKK on September 15th 1963. There was a memorial opposite the church, depicting four girls releasing six doves. The six doves portrayed the innocence of the six children who were killed, as two young boys were also killed that same day.

This site was the one I was most apprehensive about out of the entire itinerary, and yet it was my favourite part. I believe those girls and boys deserve to be remembered, brutally murdered for nothing other than the colour of their skin. The memorial is a reminder of the devastating consequences of racial hatred, but the determination of the city to remember those innocent children marks how far we have come globally: we are no longer prepared to accept a world in which people can be hurt, even killed, because of the colour of their skin. We want to build a better, safer, more accepting world.

Our visit to the United States showed us that there are people out there, like Michelle Obama, who are working to change and improve the world. It also showed us that we, too, are part of that effort. It is our work to change the world for the better. It is a team effort. We are all part of that team.

**Maisha Zainab 10E**

his work was focused on crime. He said:

'America holds 5% of the world's population, but 25% of the world's [prison] inmates.'

He said this is mostly due to the way American laws are written, as some of them are evidently too harsh in their wording.

We then met the First Lady herself, Michelle Obama. We had brought gifts for her. I gave her a blue scarf (sadar), and four poems that I wrote: 'Because', 'Headscarf', 'I wish I could be' and 'Reflection'. We gave her the famous Mulberry welcome, with smiles, cheering and applause. Then we sat down to ask her some questions. We asked her whether she believes learning about the Civil Rights movement is relevant. She responded that,

'A movement is flowing, ongoing. The Civil Rights movement is no exception. It is still flowing, ongoing, in the very day of today'.

Which is very true, in my opinion. The Civil Rights movement is about much more than the signing of bills and passing of laws, which many people mistake as the final sign of success. The movement is about achieving equality, acceptance, harmony and

peace. Have any of these things really been achieved yet? Michelle Obama asked us,

'Imagine if you were to take a plane anywhere. When you got off that plane, would you feel safe?'

Well: would you? Would you feel safe no matter where in the world you ended up? Honestly? I know I wouldn't. There are still some places where I would feel unsafe, for many reasons, including:

My headscarf

The colour of my skin

My accent

My gender

This is Michelle Obama's understanding of freedom: to be able to go anywhere in the world and feel safe. Welcomed. Free. If world events on the news are anything to go by, we have not achieved that yet, and the work of the Civil Rights movements and equality movements everywhere is far from done.

So how do we move forward? The answer seems simple: *education*.

'To educate is to teach. To be educated is to understand. To have education is to have a chance in life.'

Okay, I just made that up. But education is what the First Lady focuses on, as suggested by her Let Girls Learn campaign and her #62million girls movement. When we met women from Congress, their message was similar – that peace, equality and freedom will only be achieved when every girl everywhere has the right to an education.

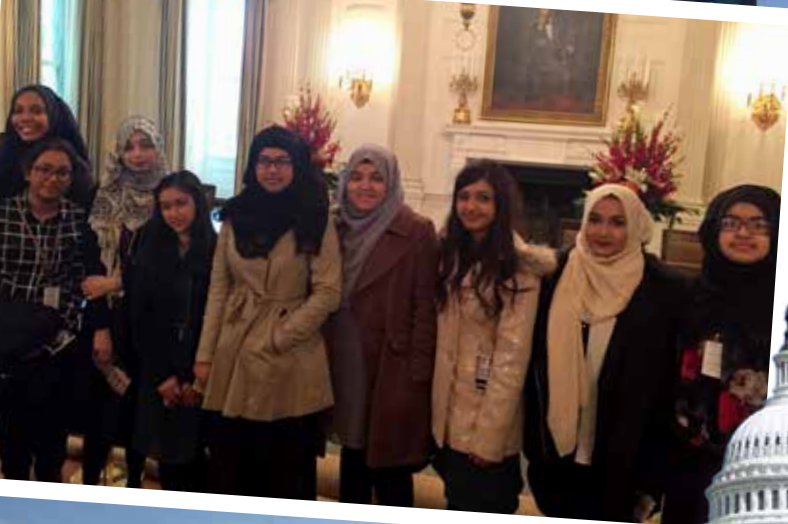
I suppose my responsibility, then, is this: to make the most of my education; and to help other girls everywhere to make the most of theirs.

**Maisha Zainab, 10E**

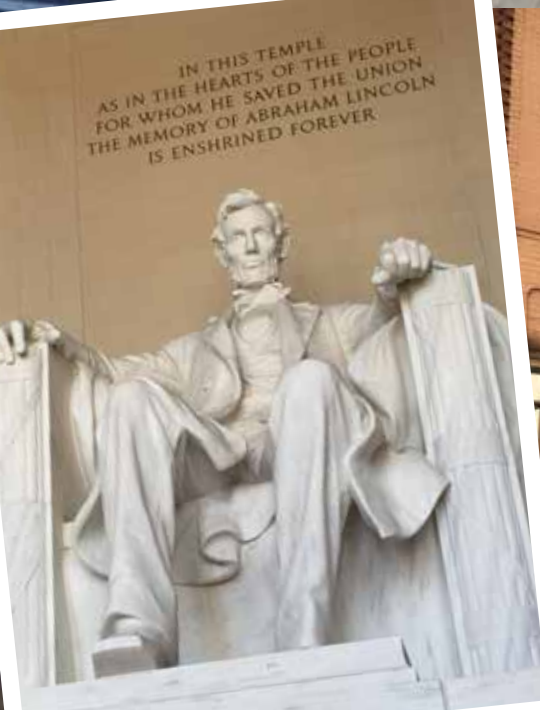
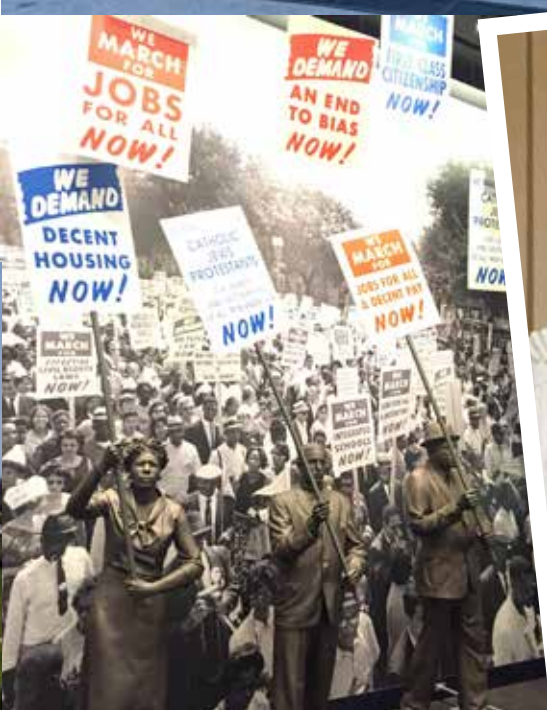


Our group posing for pictures with the First Dogs of the United States (Mr and Mrs Obama's pets, front centre)











**Shuhana Begum 10L**

# Wellies and Wristbands

Over the August Bank Holiday weekend, 1st Mulberry Guides and 1st Mulberry Senior Section went away on their first ever camp. The camp was a Girlguiding music festival called 'Wellies and Wristbands', taking place over three days at Foxlease campsite in Hampshire.

**The group dedicated an entire term to fundraising in order to cover the costs of tickets, after a unanimous Unit vote decided that this was the fairest way of ensuring everybody had the chance to take part.**

The Guides raised more than £1000, and 10 of them began to pack their bags for camp. The group left on Friday 28th August, catching a train all the way to the venue. After a brief stop to collect our orientation packs and find our campsite, we pitched our tents and set up camp for the weekend.

Over the course of the next three days, we tried every activity we could. We were able to take part in a range of adventurous activities, taught to us by qualified instructors. Guides and Seniors completed a low ropes obstacle course, and learned canoeing: initially hesitant on the water, the girls were soon performing daring challenges, standing up in their canoes and even, rumour has it, playing air guitar with their oars.

We learned survival skills, including how to chop wood and build a fire; we tried out bouncy castles, zorbing and inflatable slides; we made friendship bracelets and keyrings, had our hair braided, got temporary glitter tattoos, and spent an afternoon relaxing in a hot tub. We spent our evenings at concerts, dancing to live music. We got caught in the rain, got muddy, and our wellies filled with water – but we made lots of memories, learned lots of new skills, and came away feeling very lucky to be part of the Guiding family. Wellies and Wristbands was a perfect end to our first year in Guiding.

We'd like to say a massive thank you to everybody who helped us out by coming to our fundraisers. 1st Mulberry Guides and 1st Mulberry Seniors are now entering our second year. We're working on a project about body confidence, called

'Free Being Me', and we have welcomed some lovely new members to our Unit. Watch this space for more of our adventures in future.



Some of the Guides at Wellies and Wristbands

# A promising start...

The Berry Bugle sends warmest congratulations to Samia Chowdhury, 8M, and Nadira Abdun, 10B, both of whom were awarded Jack Petchey Achievement Awards in celebration of their work in Guiding.

**Samia won her Award for her fantastic efforts to fundraise for our first Unit Camp, despite the fact that she wasn't able to attend the camp herself.**

Her Award also recognises her work to welcome new Guides, and to be a loyal and caring friend to all in the Unit. Nadira's Award recognises her amazing work at Wellies and Wristbands, where she looked after younger Guides and helped everybody to feel confident trying new activities.

Some of our Guides and Seniors made their Promise this term. The Promise is a pledge to respect the rules of Guiding; being true to yourself, developing your beliefs and helping other people.

## Thank you, Ambassador!

Some of Mulberry's students and staff recently became members of Young Leaders UK.

**The group was established by the United States Ambassador to the UK, Matthew Barzun, to give UK young people under 35 the chance to make their voices heard on issues affecting the US, the UK, and the special relationship that has long existed between our two countries.**

As a result of our membership, we received an exclusive invitation to attend one of Ambassador Barzun's famous Eid parties at his residence in Regent's Park in July.

During the event, we networked with other members of YLUK, and met the Ambassador himself. Against the beautiful backdrop of the Ambassadorial residence, set within spacious grounds overlooking Regent's Park, we discussed the importance of young people's political engagement, and the insight and innovation Mulberry girls can bring to politics and diplomacy.

Ambassador Barzun was a fantastic host, even posing for a



Staff and students in the Ambassador's gardens

Snap Story with former Head Prefect Sujina Khatun. We'd like to thank the US Embassy for another fantastic opportunity for our students.



# Ground-breakers and Game-changers

On Friday 2nd October, Mulberry hosted our eleventh annual Women's Education Conference. Entitled 'Ground-breakers and Game-changers: Women in STEM, Finance and Scientific Innovation', the conference explored the lives and careers of women working in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, finance and medical research. The event was designed and run in partnership with Bank of America Merrill Lynch, who also sponsored us.

**T**he conference took place at King Edward Hall, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and was attended by over 150 girls from schools across London and the UK. A fantastic range of speakers representing a wide range of careers generously gave up their time to join us. The conference was opened by a welcome address from Andrea Sullivan, Corporate Social Responsibility Executive for Europe, the Middle East and Africa with Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

Our keynote speaker was Kate Russell, a journalist, author and reporter who regularly presents BBC technology programme 'Click'. Leading a talk called 'Girls Don't Game?', she addressed the invisibility of girls within the videogaming

industry and the technology industry more generally, pointing to the fact that women and girls are currently doing groundbreaking work in this very field and receiving far less recognition than their male counterparts. She invited us to explore some of the obstacles to success women in technology face, and what can be done to support young women as they explore, engage with and become empowered by technology.

Our first panel concentrated on women in STEM, with a particular focus on technology. Chaired by Kate Russell, this panel included Nishma Robb, Head of Commercial Marketing for Google and YouTube; Ruth Nicholls, Managing Director at Young Rewired State; Jo Cardwell, Head of International Wealth Management & Collateral Technology, Bank of



Panel One get the discussion started



America Merrill Lynch; Anne-Marie Imafidon, Founder and CEO of STEMettes; and Amanda Timberg, Head of Staffing Programmes for Europe, Africa and the Middle East with Google. This panel asked key questions, such as: what lies behind the gender gap in STEM careers? What are the benefits of more women in STEM? How can we make this happen? The panel focused in particular on the importance of role models, discussing their own journeys to success and giving practical advice on how girls can build careers in technology.

Our second panel explored women in Finance. Chaired by Dr Vanessa Ogden, whose background was in banking before she qualified as a teacher, speakers on this panel were Emma Howard-Boyd, Chair of ShareAction; Alice Crawley, Managing Director at Bank of America Merrill Lynch; Martina Slowey, Head of AMS Europe and International Prime Brokerage, Bank of America Merrill Lynch; and Diane Côté, Chief Risk Officer at the London Stock Exchange. The panel explored the lack of female representation in the world of banking and finance; and the effects of this lack of representation both on women hoping to build careers in finance, and on the financial industry itself.

Our final panel explored women in Scientific Innovation. Chaired by Kirsten Bodley, CEO of STEMNET UK, our speakers included Dr Karen Masters, Astronomer at the Institute of Cosmology and Gravitation, University of Portsmouth; Dr Dominique Allwood, Public Health Expert; and Miranda Lowe, Collections Manager of Invertebrate Zoology at the Natural History Museum. The panel explored recent controversies over sexist treatment of female scientists; how schools can encourage more girls to pursue science right to A Level and beyond; and how women are driving forward new frontiers in scientific research.

The conference included a wonderful spoken word performance from Vanessa Kisuule, a poet whose work deals frankly and powerfully with issues of negotiating ones identity as a young woman against the backdrop of an increasingly complex world.

The day was hosted by two year 12 students: Tanya Hossain, 12RA, and Nazifa Kamali, 12SS. Tanya and Nazifa were skilled comperes and wonderful ambassadors for Mulberry: Nazifa has since won a Jack Petchey Achievement Award for her hard work.

Three students selected from Mulberry and our partner schools gave speeches at the conference, focusing on some of the key themes the event explored. Anisa Khalique, 12SS, spoke about the female software engineers who are breaking new ground for women in technology through innovative video game design. A copy of her speech is printed in this edition.

The day was a great success, and delegates left feeling challenged but empowered, stretched but inspired. We are, as ever, extremely grateful to Bank of America Merrill Lynch for their ongoing support. In particular, we offer our thanks to Andrea Sullivan and her wonderful Corporate Social Responsibility Team, Anthony Harte and Russ Khroma, who worked tirelessly alongside us to make our vision of the conference a reality.



Tanya and Nazifa open the conference



Kate Russell delivering her keynote address

## Breaking News

Mulberry is in the top 3% of schools nationally

It late November we were notified by Raiseonline (the Department for Education's database of performance) that Mulberry is now in the top 3% of schools nationally for the best 8 GCSE results of all girls. Congratulations to students, staff and families for this fantastic achievement!



# Game-changers of the Future

Growing up in the age of cutting edge technological advancement has given me an insight into the vast and evolving world of video games. It is because of the new generation of gaming programmers and software engineers that digital natives such as myself are able to appreciate the more multi-faceted layers of the characters we find ourselves embodying when we play.

**The character of 'Lightning' in the Final Fantasy franchise, for example, is not only a resilient female protagonist who acts as a role model for the 52% of gamers who are female; she is also one of the first characters in a new era with more heroic women.** Up until the release of Final Fantasy 13 in 2009, there was yet to be a leading female character who did not play a love interest, or supporter, of the male victor. The change, however, proved to be greatly successful amongst players as Lightning returned again for two following games. Personally, I found myself able to connect with her much better than previous, male central characters who too frequently dominated the situations. Evidently, there was a potent sense of empowerment in being able to play as a protagonist more similar to me – a young woman.

Likewise, the redesign of 'Lara Croft' is yet another symbol of the step taken in the video game industry towards creating more inspiring women. Initially being a highly controversial lead with the unnecessarily provocative and over sexualised look given to the heroine in the 1996 and onwards game 'Tomb Raider', Croft now embodies authority in the more recent projects from 2013, portraying her in a different light. Her remodel into a character whose skillset in combat is the main focus, as opposed to only her aesthetics and physical attributes, reminds us that change is actually happening as we speak.

With more inspirational women on our screens, people are further encouraged to value the strength women can have, and support our fight for more representative media. Not too long ago, when my uncle would play with Chung Lee (a female character) in the popular game Street Fighter, he was insulted and made mockery of by others for choosing to play as a woman character when he had the choice of playing as a man. People would chortle; but only until they found their male characters beaten at the hands of Chung Lee. Nowadays, it is a lot more common for men to play as female characters. Part of this transformation is owed to the fact that women as leaders have slowly become more normal in video games.

It is no coincidence that these changes occur at the same time as a rise in the number of successful female software engineers in the industry. This correlation reiterates the necessity of having more women pursuing careers where they have the opportunity to make much-needed change. Statistics from 2009 show that 22% of game developers are women; however, though these numbers look to be increasing, 22% is not nearly enough if we want the voices of the more than half the gaming population who are women to be represented. Though there are many positive aspects to video games today, issues relating to stereotypes and body image still prevail.

Although modern games are giving a platform to more women as central players, there is unfortunately an issue where only a few body shapes are available to both male and female

characters. We are given the impression that the only way men can be perceived as strong is if they have protruding muscles, and the women we see in our games are either androgynous and large, or delicate and dainty. With games like Tekken, there is little to no room for players to be able to build their characters to a healthy body type where they feel powerful. Very rarely are there variations in body types to offer a more realistic and representative version of what is strong. As much as the people we see in television shows, magazines, films, and advertisements affect the way we perceive ourselves and our bodies, video games are another overlooked factor in increased feelings of insecurity. With an upsurge in exercise addictions and eating disorders amongst boys and girls today, the affects from yet another media outlet (video games) can be seen as making a harmful impression on people by creating an unattainable standard of a powerful body.

In addition to this problem, we still continue to face obstacles to long term change. Regrettably, the positive modifications being put in place today will fail to be sustained throughout future games unless they are being implemented with the correct intentions, wherein people understand and value the importance of the messages they are sending through their games. Although Final Fantasy has pioneered change in stigmas surrounding women as virtual leaders, I was saddened to find Lightning had only gained such status within the franchise because a key designer had modelled her on his 'dream woman': as a result, she had a larger chest by her third game. At that point, the respect I had for the company for introducing Lightning diminished, as their reasons for continuing to build on an empowering female protagonist were on par with the sexism in not giving women leading roles at all.

Overall, for viable transformations to be made in the video game industry, including working towards using it as a tool to promote equality as well as healthy lifestyles through more realistic looking players, a few steps are yet to be taken. To guarantee that the voices of more gamers are being considered when creating new games, the industry is in need of more women. To combat issues including inequality and body image insecurities, gaming developers should attempt to create characters more relatable to their target demographic rather than set unattainable standards of strength, beauty and roles. To keep these messages sustained, sincerity is vital – thus, changes should be made keeping in mind their absolute necessity and the impacts they will go on to have.

Video games are one of the largest multimedia platforms today with access to the youth. In that power lies a moral accountability to produce something not just gratifying, but also beneficial.

**Anisa Khalique, 12SS**



# Lights, Camera, Taking Action

In March 2015, Year 12 student Promee Reza spoke at the final event of the Women Of The World (WOW) Festival, 'Mirth Control'. Mirth Control is a two-hour extravaganza of music, theatre, poetry, comedy and political debate, curated and hosted by author and broadcaster Sandi Toksvig.

**M**irth Control has a different theme each year: this year, the theme was 'Stand Up and Be Counted', with Toksvig encouraging women to be politically active and to make their voices heard in the 2015 General Election by voting. As part of the show, Toksvig created a fictional political party called the 'Rescue Party': made up entirely of women, with our own Promee Reza as Minister For Youth, the Rescue Party sought to champion women's rights and gender equality, pushing for a society that is fairer for all.

In September, we received word that the fictional Rescue Party had sparked inspiration for real political change: Sandi Toksvig and Catherine Mayer, an author and journalist, had founded the Women's Equality Party, which sought to carry forwards the mission of the Rescue Party into the political sphere.

One of WE's inaugural events was a screening of the film Suffragette. Written by Abi Morgan and directed by Sarah Gavron, the film traces a particular group of working class East End Suffragettes as they struggle to win universal suffrage. A group of students from Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 watched an exclusive preview of the film at Soho's Ham Yard Hotel, followed by a challenging and inspiring Q&A with Abi Morgan, Sarah Gavron and producer Alison Owen.

The film was incredibly powerful, and comes as a timely and sobering reminder that the struggle for equal rights is not over.



Some of the group with Sarah Gavron at the Ham Yard Hotel's cinema

# International Day of the Girl

On Friday 9th November, 7 Year 9 students were given the opportunity to attend Southbank Centre's world-famous celebrations for International Day Of The Girl.



Speed mentoring underway on the London Eye

**M**otahara Zanath 9E, Mahreen Chaiwalla 9E, Lamyeh Ahmed 9L, Nazia Ahmed 9M, Nusrath Chowdhury 9RA, Emma Begum 9RA and Farzana Rob-Chowdhury 9RA were the winners of a Year 9 competition in which determined students went head-to-head for places on this exciting trip. Students had to submit a written application answering two questions: 'Why do you think it is important to have an International Day Of The Girl?' and 'Why would you be a good choice for this trip?' There were over 40 entries, all of excellent quality, but only seven winners could be chosen.

The group met early on Friday morning and made their way to Southbank Centre as the sun was rising. Once there, they met a group of mentors, inspiring women who worked in a range of fields – from politics to fashion, genetics to charity work. Together, mentors and students boarded a private capsule on the London Eye and were whisked up into the skies for the first of the day's activities: speed mentoring. During speed mentoring, each student spends five minutes talking to a mentor about her plans for the future; once the five minutes are up, she moves on to the next mentor. In this way, students are able to hear a huge amount of advice and support, from very different perspectives, in a short space of time.

After speed mentoring, the group attended a talk with BBC radio journalist Gemma Cairney, who showed her short film 'WOW Now'. Commissioned for the 2015 Women of the World Festival we attended in March, the film explores the issues and obstacles teenage girls face today. The talk was followed by interactive workshops on confidence building: students explored the idea of what 'power' means to women, thought about their own power to be a positive influence in the world, and used arts and crafts to make 'memory boxes' containing empowering messages.

Our students had a fantastic day at the Southbank Centre. They learned about the issues facing girls around the world, thought deeply about the issues that concern them, and learned new skills and ideas which empowered them to be ambitious and confident, to support each other and other girls, and to be a positive force for good in the world.



# Business Breakfast

Over the last year, Mulberry has established a partnership with the London Stock Exchange Group.

**W**omen are currently underrepresented in the financial industry, particularly at senior levels. LSEG recognise that when women are largely excluded from an industry, that industry misses out on a huge amount of talent, and women miss out on all the opportunities the industry could bring them. The group is therefore very passionate about encouraging more women to enter the financial industry, and making sure that women in the industry have lots of opportunities to progress to the top rung of the career ladder.

The LSEG-Mulberry partnership aims to encourage our students to consider a whole range of careers in finance, and support them as they begin to plan their lives beyond school. We have launched a number of initiatives this term, the first of which is our series of 'Business Breakfasts'.

Business Breakfasts are morning meetings at which women from within LSEG come to Mulberry to visit groups of students from years 10 – 13. Our visitors share their stories of success, then take questions from our students, followed by networking over breakfast. Each breakfast has a different theme, and our inaugural Mulberry-

LSEG Business Breakfast focused on 'Women in Law'.

We were joined by Lisa Condron, Group Company Secretary, and Catherine Johnson, Global General Counsel. Lisa and Catherine provided practical advice for students hoping to study law, and reflected on their own journeys – from attending comprehensive schools in small towns to working in some of the most senior legal positions in global finance. Both women reflected on the importance of good role models, supportive mentors, and being offered a wide range of opportunities at school. They encouraged our students to ask questions, reach out to successful women who would be more than happy to support them, and make the most of all that Mulberry and our partners can offer them. They also pointed out that students should not feel under pressure to choose one career path and stick to it rigidly, because they can have flexible careers that develop and change direction over time.

We would like to thank LSEG for offering our students their time and expertise so generously. Their support will make a real difference to our students as they strike out into their futures.

## How to change the world: Our Inaugural Annual Education Lecture

On Thursday 22nd October, Mulberry held our inaugural Annual Education Lecture at the Royal Society.

**T**he idea for the Annual Education Lecture came from one of Mulberry's core beliefs. We see a vital connection between education and industry. We believe that every sector of industry, from arts to engineering, science to finance, is closely connected to the work of schools. Industry has the power to affect education by mentoring students so that they can access, and thrive in, a wide range of careers; and schools have the power to affect industry, because it is in schools that tomorrow's industry leaders are currently being nurtured: a new generation of directors and CEOs whose education will inspire and empower them to bring fresh insight and innovative thinking to the table when they embark on their own careers.

For this reason, we wish to foreground and celebrate the role of industry in education, and of education in industry. We also believe passionately in a lifelong love of learning – this is one of the central principles of our school's ethos. We believe that education is a joy and a privilege in its own right, and we wanted to bring together representatives of our students, staff, governors and friends to celebrate all that education can do.

This is where the idea of the annual education lecture was born. We plan to hold an annual event for our valued friends and partners – an event to foreground education, to explore its relationship with the wider world and, above all, to celebrate the joy of learning.

Our first lecture was given by Jude Kelly CBE. Jude is the Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre, and founder of the Women of the World Festival, known as WOW, which began in 2010 and will soon enter its sixth year. She was introduced by Head Girl Muslima Sheikh, and Head Prefect Anika Chowdhury.

Speaking to an audience of over 200 students and friends of Mulberry, Jude spoke of the vital role that culture, creativity and the arts plays in education. She argued that the arts are essential to helping children build an 'inner world' where they can safely work

out their identities and passions. She talked about the immense value that the arts hold for individuals and communities, and talked frankly about sexism in the arts industry and in popular ideas about art: she pointed out that throughout history and in most parts of the world, traditionally women have been regarded as less creative than men, and art has been seen as something men have more right and more power to create and disseminate. She showed how this idea is a myth, and made an excellent case for the power of women in art, and the importance of supporting female artists.

The Inaugural Lecture was a wonderful start to what is sure to be a highlight of our yearly calendar. We would like to thank Jude Kelly and the Southbank Centre for their continued friendship and support. We are also grateful to the Royal Society for opening their doors to us, and encouraging us to make their beautiful venue home for the night.



Year 10 and 12 students presenting Jude Kelly with a gift – a piece of artwork by a former Mulberry student

# Spoken Word and Speaking Out at the Women of the Future Summit

On Tuesday 27th October, a group of Year 10 and Year 12 students was invited to attend the annual Women of the Future Summit. Jamila Ahmed, Anika Chowdhury, Samilah Naira, Tamanna Islam, Moriom Abdin and Inaya Absar were selected to attend the event, which took place in the prestigious London Hilton Hotel on Park Lane.

**W**omen of the Future are a fantastic organisation founded by Pinky Lilani OBE, the British-Asian Entrepreneur who founded the company **Spice Magic**. Pinky believes passionately in the importance of women celebrating and supporting other women, and in the transformative power of connections made through kindness and compassion. She founded Women of the Future as a network of women from many fields of industry, who provide support and mentorship not only for each other, but for girls at school standing on the brink of their own careers.

The Summit is an annual day-long conference which brings together the Women of the Future Network, and an array of inspiring speakers, to discuss



Shanaz Begum and Samilah Naira at Buckingham Palace

key issues of the moment. This year, the Summit explored ideas including leadership in a local, national and global context; and the power and consequences of the technology revolution and its particular relationship with women.

Samilah Naira 12SS, 2010 SLAMBassadors Champion, performed her celebrated spoken word poem 'Boomerang of Conversations'. Her performance was extremely well received, with many audience members approaching her afterwards to tell her how moved they had been by her

poem, which focuses on the importance of speaking your mind without fear, owning your words and using your voice for good. Samilah met with HRH the Countess of Wessex, who congratulated her on her fantastic contribution to the Summit.

All students had an enjoyable day of challenging debates, inspiring conversations and empowering connections. Networking through lunch, they exchanged business cards with diplomats and industry leaders, and forged new friendships for Mulberry.

In the wake of the conference, Mulberry was issued with a very exciting invitation: Samilah Naira, 12SS, and Shanaz Begum, Executive Assistant to the Head Teacher, were invited to attend an exclusive Women of the Future Reception at Buckingham Palace. Samilah and Shanaz spent an evening in the company of Women of the Future's wonderful network of inspiring and compassionate women, against the incredibly prestigious backdrop of the Royal Family's London seat. We are sincerely grateful to Pinky Lilani and her team for their support and generosity.



## Women of the Future

In October 2015, Women of the Future Awards celebrated their 10th anniversary. The awards, founded by Pinky Lilani, CBE DL provide an influential platform for successful young women in Britain.

**N**ow in its tenth year, the awards continue to unearth and recognise the inspirational stars of tomorrow across diverse sectors. Mulberry has been working with Women of the Future Awards for a number of years now and has grown three winners over the past 10 years. As part of their anniversary celebrations, the organisation hosted a series of events called a 'Week of Women' alongside the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and Wilton Park. These series of events brought together future women leaders from across the world. Women of the Future Awards showcased the achievements of 10 award winners in a book called '10 Years, 10 Stories' which identifies the ingredients of

their success. One of the stories is about Shanaz Begum, Executive Assistant to the Head Teacher who won the Public Service Award in 2012. The book launch took place at Buckingham Palace and Shanaz and Samilah Naira of Year 12 attended the tea party with the Master of the Household and the Private Secretary to the Queen. The Mulberry success did not stop there! In November 2015, Shanaz Begum took part in BBC's 100 Women season and was interviewed for a BBC World Service radio production called 'Home': a four-part series exploring the experiences of three generations of immigrant women, from Britain's Jamaican, Bangladeshi, Polish and Nigerian communities.



# Meet the STEMettes

On Saturday 7th November, a group of Year 10 and 11 students (Nadira Abdun, Radeya Maryum, Hanna Gadjakaeva, Rajmony Hasan, Tamanna Abul) attended an event at Bank of America Merrill Lynch run by the STEMettes.

**F**ounded by Anne-Marie Imafidon, STEMettes work to connect girls at school with successful women working in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) in order to provide mentorship and advice for girls hoping to build careers in these industries.

At the event in November, our students listened to a panel of experts talk about their experiences as women working in science, technology, engineering and maths. Using an app specially built for the event, they took part in interactive quizzes based on the panel discussion. They had the chance to network with the panellists and with the other students attending the event, and took home goody bags with STEMettes merchandise to remind them that they are now connected with a network of women who are willing to help and inspire them as they plan their own careers.



Anne-Marie Imafidon, founder and CEO of STEMettes, speaks at our Women's Conference earlier this year

## Solving the STEM Skills Gap Together

On Tuesday 17th November, our Year 12 STEM Scholars were invited to attend a conference at Deutsche Bank's UK headquarters, hosted in collaboration with BP.

**E**ntitled 'Finding the formula: Ending the STEM skills gap together', the conference looked at the fact that an overwhelming majority of people entering STEM degrees, and then STEM careers, are male. The conference asked what we can do – at industry level, in schools, and as individuals – to narrow this gender gap.

Mulberry students were invited to contribute their opinions as young women, and to advise industry leaders on what could be done to provide effective support for female students hoping to study STEM.

The conference was opened by Professor Louise Archer, a sociologist of education who spoke eloquently about the need for schools, governments and industry to invest time, care and money in ensuring that all school children have a strong basis of 'science capital'. She defined 'science capital' as knowing about science and scientists; having opportunities to explore science in your spare time and visit science-related cultural sites; and understanding the value

of science in everyday life.

Professor Archer then chaired a panel, with speakers including Miriam Franklin, Director of Personal Development at Mulberry; Kathryn Parsons, Founder and CEO of Decoded; Anne-Marie Imafidon, Founder and CEO of STEMettes; Alan Haywood, BP Plc Group Treasurer; and Eileen Taylor, CEO of DB UK Bank Limited.

After the panel discussion, Mulberry students hosted a stand where they advised BP employees about the value of providing mentorship for students at school, and helped recruit employees to the BP mentors' network.

Our students had a very enjoyable and informative evening. We'd like to thank BP and Deutsche Bank for offering us such an exciting opportunity.



Murshida, Kinza and Shamima (l-r) networking after the conference

## 'Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution'

On 20th October, 18 year 13s attended the London Premiere of a new documentary film called 'Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution'.

Students stayed afterwards for a question and answer session with the director Stanley Nelson as well as a former member of the Black Panthers, Mohammed Mubarak. Several students interviewed Mohammed, asking him questions about his experiences as part of the Black Panthers, a revolutionary group founded in the 1960s to encourage ethnic minority groups, particularly African Americans, to assert and protect their rights and freedoms. The trip was a really positive learning experience.



Students in conversation with Mohammed Mubarak

# The Global Water Crisis

In January 2015, the World Economic Forum announced that the water crisis is the number one global risk, based on impact to society. However, hot countries and poorer countries are particularly at risk. The top 5 countries worst affected by the water crisis are Libya, Western Sahahra, Yemen, Djibouti and Jordan.

**Over the years, the human population has steadily increased. The amount of fresh water available on earth has remained more or less consistent; but competition for this water has become more intense as populations have grown and demand for water to be used in cooking, bathing, gardening etc, has soared.**

People need water to survive: water is required for hydration, food production, growing crops for materials used to build homes and make clothes and many more essential parts of human life. Although 70% of the earth's surface is covered by water, only 2.5% of it is fresh water that can be used for human consumption. 663 million people in the world lack access to fresh water; 2.4 billion have no access to a flushing toilet. Globally, 1/3 of all schools lack access to clean water and sanitation.

Clean, safe drinking water is scarce. Today, nearly 1 billion people in the world lack access to safe drinking water – yet we continue to take it for granted, wasting water and spending money on bottled water, which encourages unethical companies to contribute to the global shortage by exploiting fresh water sources for commercial bottling.

In many African countries, access to safe drinking water is especially precarious.

People spend hours every day travelling to water sources, often placing themselves at risk of injury or attack on long journeys. Water-borne diseases are on the rise as people drink from contaminated sources: this has a knock-on effect on education and economic output, as illness and high child mortality rates affect children's ability to go to school and adults' ability to work.

The global nature of the crisis is underlined in similar reports from other regions. In South Asia, there have been massive losses of ground water which has been pumped up without proper control in the past decade. In hot countries such as Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, drought is common and crop failure is a constant risk. In Sao Paolo, Brazil, a drought became so severe that people began drilling through car parks and basements in search of ground water.

The global population continues to increase, but it is not met by an increase in clean water supplies. The crisis looks set to continue: our only hope is to find effective strategies for conserving freshwater supplies and improving access in the areas that need them most.

**Fariha Miah and Tasnima Islam 9RA**

# Model United Nations

The first of Mulberry's two yearly Model United Nations conferences took place on 27th November in the Mulberry and Bigland Green Centre. Over 150 delegates from schools across London joined us to represent the nations of the UN.

**This year's topic was climate change. Delegates discussed and debated the impact of global warming on all nations, touching on topics such as water and food security, economic development, migration and natural disasters.**

Two crisis committees dealt with the consequences of a tsunami in Japan, assessing the impacts of the disaster and planning short-term and long-term aid.

Within the MUN programme, students are able to learn about the structure

and functions of the United Nations through assuming the roles of UN council members. Students are allocated to countries in advance, and are expected to spend considerable time researching their country's stance on the conference topic. On the day of the conference, students are required to engage in fast-paced, often intense debates with council members representing other countries. They must represent the opinions of their allocated country, even if these opinions do not align with their personal

attitude towards the conference topic.

MUN provides a stimulating atmosphere in which students are challenged to hone their research, debate and presentation skills, and to thoroughly understand crucial aspects of international politics and diplomacy.

Printed above is an article on the global water crisis from some of the MUN Press Team, who write the conference newspaper, 'The Global Gazette'



# Anti-Bullying Week

On the 16th of November 2015, 5 year 9 Peer Mentors were selected to attend the Diana Award Anti-Bullying week 2015 London, sponsored by Facebook, at Alexandra Palace.

**M**any schools from all over the UK attended the event to take part in a series of workshops which help raise awareness of bullying and teach us different ways to take a stand against bullying.

There were workshops on art, dance, drama, creative writing, film-making and many more. Mulberry pupils attended My True Selfie led by Jodie Marsh, a body-builder, model and anti-bullying campaigner. We discussed what made us each special, and decorated t-shirts with these ideas. The workshop helped people be proud of themselves and be true to who they are. In the afternoon we took part in a dance workshop led by Twist and Pulse.

Conference attendees also took part in a Dragon's Den style competition to come up with the best idea to tackle bullying in schools. Our idea was to create a short film on bullying, showing how both a bully and a victim were feeling before and after an incident. We prepared our pitch in advance and delivered it to 300 people. We won 2nd place!

We also had the chance to meet many well known people such as Marcus Bulter (a You Tuber who experienced bullying and is very passionate about Anti-Bullying), Jodie Marsh, Caroline Millin (from Facebook), Twist and Pulse, and CBBC presenters Molly Rainford and Cel Spellman.

**Amina Rahman, 9M**

# Pre-entry level work experience week

The first half-term was a very busy one for our pre-entry year 11 students. Not only were they entering their last year of lower school but they were also preparing for their work experience - both coming of age events filled them with excitement and anticipation. The girls' work experience enabled them to develop their team working, communication skills and awareness of different jobs.

**T**he students met different professionals every day, asking them questions and exploring different aspects of the professionals' working day. Of course every day also included a variety of practical tasks, which the students embraced with their usual enthusiasm and vivacity.

On Monday the students settled into their new routine, enjoying wearing professional clothing, and spent some time discovering and appreciating the industrial scale of the school canteen. The students then helped tidy and clean the dining room, something they excelled in.

Tuesday was a busy day at Spitalfields City



Farm: the girls quickly overcame their initial reservations and settled into feeding the animals like absolute professionals. The chicken eggs had never been

collected so quickly...we were all very proud. Watson, the farm's Kunekune pig, particularly appreciated our visit as he was allowed to eat the left over banana skins.

On Wednesday we made our way to Ocean Design to practise working at the till,



packaging clothes for customers and tidying the shop floor. We also spent some time with our School Nurse to learn some basic first aid:



by the end of day, the teachers were covered in plasters and the girls were bandaged up!

The students spent Thursday morning reflecting on their work experience by completing their booklets and preparing for the next day. They then made their way to the library where they interviewed the librarians, helped tidy the library, stamped the books, and even had some time to enjoy some reading.

Friday was again an extremely busy day, with taxis booked for 9am in order to start the working day in North London's Action For Kids Offices at 10am. The charity had prepared a fantastic programme for the students, who learnt to make phone calls, photocopy paper work, shred confidential documents and laminate the cover pages they made.

All in all it was a great week: the girls were great ambassadors for Mulberry School and proved that team work makes the dream work.



## Morpeth and Mulberry FE Students speak at Interfaith Event

Four Tower Hamlets FE students, two from Morpeth School and two from Mulberry addressed an audience made up of representatives from many of the different religions and beliefs found in the borough.

Nusrath Hassan from year 13 and Naomi Warburton from year 12 spoke about their personal experiences of growing up in our multi-faith borough and were afterwards commended by the deputy mayors; Cllr Sirajul Islam and Cllr Shiria Khatun. After the speeches, everyone took part in an interfaith dialogue activity; each person sharing their answers to questions about religion and belief with ten other people. The event was part of the celebrations of Interfaith Week and was held at the AMANA Centre in Commercial Road on Thursday, 19th November.

## Charity Week

Charity Week is a project run by Islamic Relief. It's a project that occurs annually and tends to run for a week in many schools, colleges, sixth forms and universities.

These institutions compete to raise the most money for those in need around the rest of the world. This year Mulberry managed to raise a staggering £3,872.10. Mulberry raised the most out of all the schools and colleges that were involved. The Charity Week Team would like to thank all those who contributed to our fundraisers for their amazing generosity and support.

**Nadia Akthar, 12RA**



The Charity Week Team celebrating a successful week

## Banglahop!

On Friday 27th of November Banglahop Dance club performed at the Green Candle Christmas Gala at Oxford House in Bethnal Green.

**The 8 students from year 8 to year 10 performed a commercial Bollywood piece with an artistic ribbon fusion, highlighting the colourful essence of Bollywood Dance culture.**

The students were able to watch other groups from the borough who work with Green Candle including the senior dance group, Future Fusion, Counterpoint Dance Company and a collaborative piece by four Tower Hamlets Primary schools. The Banglahop students performed with dynamic energy and flare, and were a credit to the school.

The dancers involved were Sumaya Ahmed 8RA, Nadia Islam 8RA, Miftahul (Jannat) Prapte 8RA, Rita Begum 9U, Kazi Chowdhury 9U, Rafia Khanom 10B, Thamanna Begum 10Y and Saima Khatun 10Y.



Student performers in action

## Drama Trips

GCSE and A level Drama students in Yrs 10 – 13 have enjoyed many theatre trips this term.

**The A2 students have seen Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' twice; once at the Globe Theatre and once at the National Theatre, so they could compare and contrast an original performance setting to a modern day interpretation.**

They have also participated in a workshop and seen a performance of 'Splendour' at the Donmar Warehouse and went to a play reading of the Greek comedy 'Lysistrata' at the Almeida Theatre. The AS Drama students watched 'Our Country's Good' at the National Theatre and twelve lucky AS and A2 Drama students were able to watch the award winning Benedict Cumberbatch in 'Hamlet' at the Barbican Theatre, where

tickets to see this production had sold out within hours of going on sale! The Y11s watched 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time' at the Gielgud Theatre in the West End and were amazed by the production's use of technology and inventiveness. The Y10s watched a play at the Half Moon Theatre that touched on themes of identity and displacement.

The EPA Department took all of the Y9s to see 'The Lion King' in November and the students loved the spectacle of art, dance, drama and music and we look forward to taking the Y7s to the see 'Robin Hood' at the Theatre Royal Stratford East in January!



# International Drama Club

Mulberry has recently launched an International Drama Club: a group of Year 10 girls are currently exploring three plays written for young people by playwrights from France, Belgium and the UK.

As part of the club's ongoing work, the girls have worked with actors, writers, directors and translators from these countries, and will go on to share their own work with students in France and Belgium. The club look forward to a theatre trip in the New Year. Thus far, the club has provided excellent opportunities for Mulberry and other schools to come together as an international creative community, learning from and celebrating one another.



Students doing research as part of their work

## Musical Mulberry

On Wednesday 11th November several students from our school choir took part in the THAMES vocal day held at Bow School.




**T**he girls joined forces with other vocalists in Tower Hamlets for workshops led by world-renowned a cappella group VOCES8. The Mulberry girls (the most represented school in attendance) sang a traditional Australian song, Adele's 'Skyfall' and Bruno Mars' 'Uptown Funk' (complete with trumpet actions...). VOCES8 also performed several songs themselves – inspiring the pupils with their incredible vocal technique and ensemble skills.

If you are interested in joining choir (or any other music club), then come along one lunch time to try it out – the more the merrier!

Also, big congratulations to the many pupils who have performed music in assemblies so far this year. It's great to see so much musical talent here at Mulberry! A big highlight has to be the whole of year 9 singing 'Hold Back The River', as well as the year 9 band performing 'Stitches' with solos by Nisha (9Y) and Fahima (9B).

Elsewhere in the Music department, both KS3 and 4 have been on trips this term. GCSE students have been to see a live performance and an interactive discussion of the piece "Electric Counterpoint" by Steve Reich, which is a set piece.

### Extra-Curricular Music Clubs

Mondays	Wednesdays	Fridays
<b>Drumming Club</b> 1pm in MU07	<b>Ukulele Band</b> 1pm in MU07	<b>Mulberry Choir</b> 1pm in MU07
	 <b>WE HAVE UKULELES!</b>	

## GCSE Performance: Over 40% of students achieve at least 3 A\*-A grades

Students in Year 11 have performed well again this year in their GCSE examinations and are to be congratulated, along with their families and teachers, for their hard work and dedication.

**O**ver 40% of students were awarded at least 3 A\*-A grades, despite a non-selective, comprehensive intake and average KS2 starting points. Mulberry students continued to meet the challenges of the new KS4 curriculum with 54% of students achieving the Ebacc; the national figure for girls in 2014 was 28%. Students achieved over 80% A\*-C in the following GCSE subjects: Art, Bengali, Drama, English Language, English Literature, French, ICT, Media Studies, Religious Studies, Triple Science, Sociology and Spanish. The A\*-C performance of disadvantaged students closely matched, within 3pp, the A\*-C performance of other students in ICT, History, English Literature, Drama, Further Additional Science and Religious Studies.

The vast majority of Year 11 students have taken up places at Mulberry Sixth Form continuing their academic studies. We are optimistic that this cohort will follow previous trends and make outstanding progress in their Level 3 studies.

### Ms Higgs, Head of Year 11, said:

"I am extremely proud of my students. Their resilience and determination is a credit to them. In particular, they have supported each other to do well and this has been a big part of their joint success. We know that they are well-prepared to go out and make their mark on the world, achieving great things for British society, our local community and their families. I wish them every success."

Students in the sixth form have also excelled again this year at A Level. 1 in every 2 grades awarded to the 157 girls at Mulberry School who took their A levels this year were at the highest level, again despite a non-selective,

comprehensive intake. Mulberry School for Girls is proud of its inclusive approach to post-16 education, which allows all girls to excel academically. A significant proportion of girls attained A\* - B grades in Maths, Further Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Economics. Geography, History, Psychology, Religious Studies, Media and Sociology also did well with high numbers gaining A\* - B. Three quarters of all A level grades were awarded at A\* - C. Other students, who studied the vocational Health and Social Care CTech course worth 3 A levels performed well too. Students with severe and complex special needs made outstanding progress on vocational programmes.

Currently, 80 students hold offers for Oxbridge and Russell Group universities for subjects like Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacology, Maths, Biomedical Science, Economics, History, International Politics and Geography and we expect that many will be able to take up these places. Most of the remaining students hold university offers for other institutions in subjects such as nursing, teaching, Psychology, Sociology, the Arts and Media. We are optimistic that our students will follow previous trends with most commencing under-graduate degrees in September. The small number of other students have made a successful transition to apprenticeships and work-place training.

### **Dr Ogden, Head Teacher of Mulberry School for Girls, commented:**

**We are delighted that our girls have done so well. Many of the girls who have excelled are students who entered Mulberry in Year 7 with achievement profiles that would be described as 'average'. With outstanding teaching, excellent pastoral care in school and the creation of self-belief as well as an environment that promotes the success of women in particular, you can aim high and achieve those ambitions regardless of your starting point. Every girl who has done well has worked for her success and she thoroughly deserves her place at university.**



Year 13 celebrating fantastic achievements

# Mulberry Creates

## My life as a pen

Noise! It is the first thing I hear. Crying, shouting, screaming and chatter. Where I am or who I am I don't know. A sudden movement makes me shake. The next thing I see is light and lots of it. I also see a face of a woman. She looks at me and feels my smooth surface and a sound escapes her lips: "oh". Then she said, "You are the one". Snap! It is dark again and the next thing I know is that I'm moving. This was the beginning of a brand new life.

**S**ometime later, the shaking stops and the same Swoman picks me out and I am bemused. I am somewhere new. This place has light walls, a high table and velvet chairs, the rest I can't work out. She places me in a pot with lots of other sticks that look similar to me. One of them says "A new one already". What are they saying? Nothing makes sense. Until... She picks me up and starts writing with me. That's when I realise that I am a pen.

That was when my real adventure began. My owner was a middle aged women called 'Alice'. She picked me up and put me in the side pocket of her leather handbag. I was engulfed in rose perfume, tissues and coins. We were moving again, only this time it was a lot smoother, and it was only a short wait before I was pulled out. She started writing with me. Her hand moved quickly. She wrote "15-11-40. One German dead and two captured". The ride stopped. She held onto me and said "Our stop". I assume we were on a train; I never had the time to check as soon I was put in the bag.

Alice briskly walked for a good 5 minutes until we reached a place that smelt like smoke and burnt wood. She took me out of her bag, which I was now very comfortable in. She placed me on a small wooden desk next to a stack of cartridge paper and a radio with earphones. A tall man walked up to Alice and said in an unnatural deep voice "We all stay late today, they are planning something". Strange but not as strange as the last few hours have been for me. Alice put her earphones on, tuned the radio and started to write. "At 16 hours we shall launch 3 bombs into London and another 2 up North". Wow! Bombs. I was stunned—such a horrid thing would only happen if there was a war going on.

When we went home Alice picked up a pen from the pot and started to write, but the sound of a bomb frightened Alice making her pen break, then she picked up another one. The same happened again and again. These events made me worried about what would happen to me.

The next few days are the same: we come, she listens, she writes. The pieces of the puzzle are all fitting together. A war is going on between the Germans and the British.



Continued from previous page

Each day she writes about bombs, allies, prisoners and attacks. I don't know how long the war will last. In fact I don't even know when it started. Could it have been weeks, months - no, that is too short. Most likely years. The next day Alice and I are back. She sits down whilst sipping a cup of water. "It's going to be a long day today, huh". She puts on her earphones, but something is wrong, her face is confused. She is not writing with me...

BANG! The next thing I know we are on the ground and Alice is bleeding and our desk is only ash now. The whole building is in ruins. We stay there immobilised for hours. Alice unable to move. A bomb! That is just what happened. No one is nearby apart from a man, who comes up to help Alice up and as I am still in Alice's hand, he puts me in her pocket. He takes us to a hospital, where we stay for what seems to be forever, but eventually we are back in Alice's house and all the pens in the pot are gone, Alice broke every single pen... Meaning that I am the only pen that has lived.

All the way up until 2002 we survive to tell everyone our story....

Now I am kept at a museum for others to see. Once in a while I still feel as though the bombing was a nightmare which is going to come back and haunt me. This was my life as a pen who survived the world's worst war.

Samia Chowdhury, 8M

## Reflection

A 14 year old girl looks at me  
Nervous  
I smile at her in consolation  
She does too, kind of  
Her scarf is off-center  
Her hair showing, I  
Wonder if she knows but  
I don't tell her

*I do have manners*

Her eyes are cautious,  
darting  
About, extremely wary  
Her breaths hitched her  
Chest heaving  
As she looks for the  
Best escape route  
She should calm down, no-

One's gonna kill her

*Does she know that?*

Her teeth are clenched, her  
Hands tucked into tiny fists  
She can't seem to keep her-  
Self from tapping on  
something

Be it her foot on the floor  
Knuckles on the door  
Fingers on the flesh of her  
arm  
All obvious "tells"

*Obvious to me anyway*

I want to reassure her so I  
Place my palm against the  
glass

She does too, instantaneously

Placing hers over mine The  
glass is cool against my  
fingers

I tell her to move her palm  
She is stopping me from  
getting  
In but she does not listen

*She can't hear me*

What is obvious to me isn't  
Obvious to her, I realize  
I take back my hand and  
She does too  
A 14 year old girl looks at me  
Nervous

I smile at her in consolation  
She does too, kind of

**Maisha Zainab**

## Opinion

### Feminism Matters

Feminism. Contrary to some beliefs, that word is not synonymous with bullishness or assertiveness. Feminism is a movement that advocates for equal rights for all genders, regardless of their ethnic group, sexuality or religion.

**The struggle for equal rights for all is still very much real; this is evident in everyday phrases such as "You throw like a girl!" or in more extreme cases, frequent acid attacks on women in South Asia.** Girls face many gender disparities to this day, and so we should recognise their struggles, even if it doesn't directly affect us. At Mulberry, feminism plays a strong role and many students are active feminists. We frequently hold and attend events that empower women, for example our take on International Women's Day and our attendance at the Women of the World Festival. Another activity that focuses on feminism at Mulberry is Feminist Fridays. Feminist Fridays is a weekly club that happens in F01 where we discuss issues that affect us as women, or affect other minorities. In the past, Feminist Fridays have invited speakers, from various organisations, to guide us at our sessions. Most recently, the co-founder of UK Feminista gave a talk on how to run a successful campaign. Feminist Fridays is always open to suggestions about issues that we can talk about. If you are interested in attending, come along to F01 on Fridays at lunch.

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*The*  
**Berry Bugle**