



THE KING'S SCHOOL
CHESTER

HERALD

All the news from The King's School, Chester

Gold Star

Medal winner Tom James
returns to King's

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Medal winner Tom James visits King's, where he started rowing!

Beijing Olympics gold medallist Tom James re-visited The King's School in November.

After receiving a rapturous welcome at three assemblies, Tom spent the day meeting pupils and staff of the Junior School, Senior School and Sixth Form, allowing all the students to see and to hold his famous gold medal.



The staff and pupils were absolutely thrilled and proud to welcome Tom back to King's and asked lots of questions about Tom's rowing career and his experience of the Olympics.

Tom had lunch with coaching staff and the senior rowing squads, some of whom have ambitions to follow in Tom's footsteps to GB and Olympic success.

In the afternoon, Tom returned to the King's Rowing Club Boathouse on the River Dee with the U14 rowing students, which brought back memories for him, as this was the age he started to row at the school.



House of Lords visitor



Baroness Walmsley, member of the House of Lords was welcomed to The King's School in October.

Lady Walmsley gave an **enlightening talk** to the Sixth Form about the inner workings of the House of Lords, her personal role and why the House of Lords matters in terms of the structure of Parliament. **She welcomed questions, particularly from Government and Politics students.**

Baroness Walmsley joined some A level students and History and Politics teachers for lunch.

Olympian Olivia returns

Olivia Whitlam, Olympic rowing finalist also returned to King's in November to talk to current pupils about her experience.

Olivia started rowing during her Sixth Form years at King's – a mere six years ago and has never looked back.

At King's, Olivia went on to win four gold medals, with three more at university level. She was also in a winning crew at Henley Women's Regatta in 2005. She then became part of the GB team and went on to become the Under-23 World Champion, with partner Heather Stanning, in 2007. After more success in international Regattas, Olivia was selected for the British Olympic Team, this time rowing with Louisa Reeve.

Olivia enthralled the pupils with a "behind the scenes" view on the Olympics – from the dining facilities in the Olympic village to the training gym sessions alongside amazing world class athletes!



She even bumped into Princess Anne on a sightseeing tour of the Great Wall of China!

"Returning home on the Team GB flight made me realise how different the Olympics is to any other sporting event in our calendar.

To be sat with some top GB swimmers, cyclists etc. made the British Olympic Association's motto – One team. One goal really hit home"



A Level and GCSE success



The students receiving their A level and GCSE examinations this summer have achieved some fabulous results.

Almost a third of A level students gained A grades, nine students went on to study at Oxford or Cambridge Universities and almost 50% are going to "The Times Top 25" universities.

- Gordon Beck gained six A grades
- Adrian Tickridge, James Andrade, Leo Scott and Joe Lloyd gained five A grades.
- 15 students gained four A grades and a further 12 students gained three A grades
- David Graham gained a place at the prestigious St Martin's Central School of Art.

At GCSE level too, there were some fine achievements with a third of all students gaining at least nine straight A or A* grades.

- Oscar Hayward gained 10 A*
- Caitlin Deering, Jack Webb and James Carr gained 9A*.



43 students studied IGCSE Maths, regarded by some to be a more challenging course and achieved a stunning 98% A*/A pass rate. The Headmaster said, "It is a tremendous set of results and my congratulations go to all who have worked so hard during this year. I am very proud that all our students are going on to study at some of the finest universities in the country, which only goes to show what well-rounded and independent people they are"



In the footsteps of Darwin

Ecuador Biodiversity Expedition 2008

"...it appears to me that nothing can be more improving to a young naturalist, than a journey in distant countries. It both sharpens, and partly allays, that want and craving, which a ...man experiences, although every corporeal sense be fully satisfied".

Charles Darwin; The Voyage of the Beagle, 1840



On 12th July 2008, 25 Sixth Form students and four members of staff landed in the Ecuadorian capital, Quito to begin a fast-paced tour of one of the world's great biodiversity hotspots. The itinerary included golden churches, volcanoes, cloud forests, primary rainforest, Inca ruins, and of course, the unique Galapagos Islands.

The group hit the ground running in Quito hitting the city's cultural highlights, most memorably the spectacular **La Compinia Church** – allegedly decorated with seven tons of gold leaf. Soon followed a visit to the Equatorial line and the monument at La Mitad del Mundo, as well as the Inca ruins at Rumicucho before relocating to the Pululahua Crater – the caldera of an extinct volcano near Quito.

Trekking in the crater took them through the remnant cloud forests including a

mist-shrouded ascent of the small peak Chibo, covered in masses of Epidendrum Orchids, as well as a trip partway down the ancient Yumbu trail. The crater is rich in bird life such as the **Southern Yellow Grosbeak** and hummingbirds like the Black Tailed Trainbearer. Accommodation was under canvas but the heated Jacuzzi did add a touch of luxury.

On day five the trip to the Galapagos began. Charles Darwin visited the Galapagos in 1835, and, like the group, he landed first on the island of Chatham, now known as San Cristobal.

Darwin was unimpressed with his first contact with Galapagos wildlife, referring in the voyage of the Beagle in 1840 to the 'wretched-looking little weeds', 'dull-coloured birds', 'ugly yellow-brown' land iguanas, and 'hideous-looking creatures of a dirty black colour, stupid and sluggish', when describing the marine iguanas. The only good thing he had to say was that 'the young tortoises make excellent soup'!

The first contact with the wildlife of San Cristobal impressed the group much more. They ate their first meal at La Playa restaurant



(no soup), surrounded by spectacular and extremely approachable wildlife including Galapagos Sea Lions sleeping on the beach. Blue Footed Boobies and Magnificent Frigate Birds gave them an aerial display, whilst Brown Pelicans, and Sally Lightfoot Crabs ignored their presence. **As they left the restaurant, Medium Ground Finches – one of Darwin's finches – moved in to help clear up!** The afternoon was spent snorkelling with Galapagos Green Turtles and some amazing indigenous fish.

Next day they met their first Galapagos Tortoises and also viewed the rearing cages for the breeding and reintroduction of this species on San Cristobal. They now relocated by fast boat from San Cristobal to Santa Cruz. This trip turned out to be the highlight for many, including an astonishing hour of **swimming in crystal clear sunlit water with the local extremely inquisitive Galapagos Sea Lions** and snorkelling with Galapagos and White-Tipped Reef Sharks. On Santa Cruz they visited the Charles Darwin Research Station where Galapagos Mocking Birds were plentiful. The last surviving member of his species *G. abingdoni*, Lonesome George was asleep, but a visit



Galapagos Marine Iguanas.

from the group seemed to spur him into action. The closely related females he lives with have recently laid eggs which may be fertile. They were actually far more impressed with Diego, who in 1964 was the last fertile male of the species *G. hoodensis*. He was transferred from San Diego Zoo to the CDRS and has since then, with the twelve surviving females, produced over one thousand offspring for reintroduction. He was also asleep during their visit!

It was now time to relocate to the Amazon Basin with several flights, a three hour bus journey (only one flat tyre!), and a four hour motorised canoe trip to the Shiripuno Lodge on the Shiripuno River – part of the Amazon watershed.

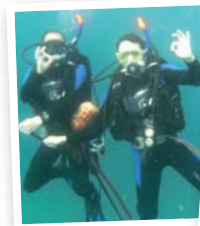
So began five days of astonishing biodiversity in one of the world's most diverse ecosystems. Trips along forest trails and canoe trips on the river by day and night allowed the group to glimpse some of the hundreds of species of birds and mammals and thousands of species of arthropod and plant.



Highlights on the river included watching Amazon Kingfishers hunt in the river and Amazonian Yellow Spotted Turtles bask in the sun. At night, the group will never forget seeing two Tapirs swimming alongside them, as well as picking out by torchlight the Spectacled

Caiman and fishing for piranha and catfish. On the forest trails they saw several species of monkey including the Monk Saki Monkey, Night Monkey, Red Howler Monkey, Squirrel Monkey and White fronted Capuchin Monkey. Jaguar (*Panthera Onca*), footprints were plentiful in the forest, but not surprisingly they saw no specimens in the flesh (the guide had seen two in twelve years)!

They saw and heard more birds than could possibly be listed here, but most memorable were the Blue and Yellow and Chestnut Fronted



Macaws. Other wildlife highlights were the tarantulas and wolf spiders in the accommodation block, Urania Moths and Morpho butterflies around the cabins and, on the trails, Leaf Cutter ants, Fer de Lance and False Coral Snakes.

On day thirteen, their heads bursting with more biodiversity than they knew how to handle, they set



off back down the River Shiripuno to Coca and eventually Quito. They stopped off to visit a Huaorani Community and see an impressive captive Harpy Eagle kept there. Back in Quito they prepared for the final day in Ecuador, and a visit to **Mount Cotopaxi, the second tallest but most famous volcano in Ecuador.** Cotopaxi was shrouded in mist as they approached it and an air of anticlimax descended upon them. But true to the luck that had followed them on this expedition, after lunch the clouds cleared allowing them fabulous views of the peak.

It now just remained for them to celebrate their final night in Ecuador. This took the form of an Ecuador V King's Chester Karaoke sing-off. There were memorable renditions of 'Hero', 'Barbie Doll', 'My Heart Will Go On', 'Nothing Else Matters' and 'Angels'. Ecuador came out on top when the Ecuadorian Frank Sinatra showed them how it should be done.

So ended the 2008 expedition, next stop Tanzania in 2009.



Iceland Expedition 2008

After more than twelve months of planning, fundraising and team building, twelve enthusiastic and determined pupils from years 8 and 9 set off in July 2008 for the experience of a lifetime.



The team flew to Reykjavik in Iceland to start a twelve day personal development expedition under the guidance of two members of staff and a leader from Wilderness Expertise, with the pupils taking turns each day to lead and organise the rest of the team.

After an exciting first day, the team found it difficult to settle down especially as it did not go dark all night! The next day the team organised food for the remaining ten days, arranged transport and re-familiarised themselves with the principles of cooking on Trangias.

Having had an early start on day three to travel to Landmannalaugar,

the team was able to take a short afternoon hike into the lava field and **experience first-hand the sulphurous mud pools, followed by a dip into a hot spring later that evening** – the last wash for many days!

The main trek started on day four, with a long day ahead of 26km. The trail took the team past small gorges, steaming vents, across snow bridges and past yellow mountain ridges. A tired group finally reached Alftavatn and set up camp for the night; after a superb sprint by one team member to catch his blown away tent (much to the amusement of other campers)! However as the wind increased and the rain became torrential an emergency plan was required to stop the tents being damaged and everything soaked. The team leader for the day managed to arrange with the hut ranger for the team to sleep in one of the huts for the night instead.

The sun was shining again the next morning and **the trek began at the foot of the green conic volcano of Storasula.**

After two freezing glacial-water river crossings the team entered the volcanic black desert of Maeliffellssandur and eventually reached the campsite at Botnar for the night.

The final day of trekking took the team through the **valley of Emstur in the shadow of the Myrdalsjokull glacier** and after another river crossing, down into the thick woodland of Þorsmork and the final trek campsite. It had been quite the most amazing trek.

After a long journey the next day, the team finally arrived at the Skaftafell National Park campsite ready to start their project work. They met up with the National Park rangers and other volunteers and agreed that their project for the next two days would be dam-building. The dams would help to stop the erosion in the old irrigation channels in the mountainside.

The following morning, once the dam-building procedure had been explained to the team, **they worked with incredible enthusiasm and completed three dams.** The day ended with a well deserved swim in a cold river pool; the chance to see the video footage of the 1996 volcanic eruption under the Park's glacier and resultant flood destruction in the area and a visit to the nature school in the Park. **The pupils were delighted to be able to give some of the funds they had raised to the local Icelandic teacher**



in order for her to buy equipment for the nature school.

On the second project day the team successfully completed three more dams and were rewarded with a BBQ and ice cream to finish the day.

After another early start on day 10, the team took a private bus to Gullfoss, Iceland's most famous waterfall and then on to Geysir to see the Stokkur hot water plume. A

final journey

back into Reykjavik at the end of the day saw the group back at the

campsite and an interesting meal of hot baked beans with tuna sandwiches. This was

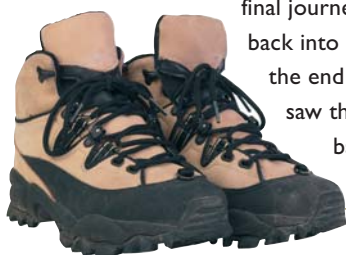
followed by a late night swim at the open air pool.

The team started day 11 with a morning at the Blue Lagoon where everyone enjoyed the steaming water and blue/white silica mud, followed by some shopping – the Viking hats seemed popular. The team then spent the next three hours on a fantastic whale-watching trip,

during which they were **fortunate enough to see Minke whales, a humpbacked whale and porpoises, as well as the obligatory puffins.** A final team meal at the

American Style restaurant filled everyone suitably with junk food and it was then back for the last night in tents before flying home to the UK.

It truly had been an adventure of a lifetime.



Children of Oedipus

The Greek legend of the children of the incestuous King Oedipus is full of excitement, dark tragedy and even violence: Jean Anouilh's version shows the daughter Antigone standing up to the rigid dictatorship of her uncle Creon in an atmosphere of military repression: not obviously easy material for a group of Shell actors.

But this talented group had some obvious things going for them. **Emma Lucia's imaginative and creative directing**, twinned with the fabulous venue of the Theatr Clywd studio, with its simple set and effective lighting, provided a great performance space. **The boys and girls responded wonderfully well, acting with discipline,**



style and poise, conveying not only the tension, but also the humanity of this great story.

Jessie Lee was particularly impressive as Antigone. Hannah Dent was both menacing and dutiful, as the reluctant dictator,

Creon. Matthew Williams and Harry Butt made a convincing and moving pair of brothers, and the whole team – or chorus, as they should be called – worked superbly well together. **Acting really is a team activity, and these young performers proved it.**

Cambridge soccer tour



J4 children went off to Cambridge in October, on the annual Cambridge tour, now in its 22nd Year.

The King's football team stay with host families of The Perse School in Cambridge and play matches against Kimbolton,

Bedford Modern and The Perse schools to compete for the **"Tour Trophy"**.

The team members were really excited about the tour which is valued greatly as both a team-building and character-building exercise. The team returned to Chester exhausted but triumphant, **having won the Tour Trophy!**

Cathedral trip



In September, J3 children visited the Cathedral as part of their "Pilgrims' Day project".

The children were involved in lots of activities from dressing as monks and eating in the Cathedral refectory to being part of a puppet story outlining part of the Cathedral's rich history.

The King's School, founded by King Henry VIII in 1541, originated in the Cathedral and it was a wonderful experience for the pupils to visit the spiritual home of The King's School. They all thoroughly enjoyed the activities.

Perfect Pirates



J2 performed "Perfect Pirates" earlier this year. Everybody in the year took part, at least saying one line each!

Each child had a unique costume which was relevant to their part.

The plot is set in 18th century when piracy was at its peak. It tells of the exploits of pirates Calico Jack and Captain Bluebeard and their bands attempt to find

hidden treasure. Unfortunately for them, Captain Barnet, the Governor's representative, is at the same time trying to capture them!

As in all good fairy tales, good triumphs over evil and in the final scene we witness Captain Barrett back in the UK and Calico Jack and his crew in prison, ready to face the hangman's noose.

The whole production, directed by Miss Anderson was a triumph and much enjoyed by children and parents.



The Tempest

At the end of June, J4 performed their annual drama production



Directed by Mrs Vanessa Gibson, "The Tempest" is a Shakespeare 4 Kidz production which makes Shakespeare's language accessible to Key Stage 2 children.

Starring all 72 J4 children and supported by 23 J3 musicians it was indeed spectacular!

Mrs Gibson said, "I believe that to give Junior School children a taste of Shakespeare in a fun, musical way at such a young age really sparks in them the initial interest, which then stays with them throughout their life."

The audience were seated on all four sides of the acting space and within seconds of the stage lights coming up, they were transported to a ship being tossed and blown in the waves. **The standard of performance was breathtaking**, and it was difficult to believe the children were only aged 10 and 11.

The spectacular direction, superb singing and music, wonderful costumes, effective lighting and impressive use of space, left the school hall feeling more like The Royal Exchange!

Drama is all about co-operation, trust, communication and self discipline and the J4's really gained from this experience.



Dream Librarians

As part of National Book Week, the Junior School ran a competition encouraging pupils to write about their "Dream Library", with prizes being awarded to the best entrant from each of the four year groups.

It was an extremely hard decision choosing the winners from the outstanding and imaginative contributions made by many pupils.

The winners were:

- J1: Luca Scott**
- J2: Robert Pownall**
- J3: Isobel Larken**
- J4: Sam Wild**



King's rowers win Gold in the Coupe de la Jeunesse

Four King's students competed for Great Britain rowing in the Coupe de la Jeunesse in Cork, Ireland, in July.

The four boys competed in gruelling rowing selection trials at the National Watersports Centre, Nottingham, to gain their places in the Great Britain squad and to row for GB at this prestigious European junior rowing event held at Inniscarra Lake in the County of Cork, Ireland.

The four Sixth Form students, Sam Arnot, Michael Thorp, Franz Imfeld and Stephen Jones, travelled to Ireland with a strong GB junior rowing squad selected from schools and clubs nationwide.

Sam Arnot competed in the GB Junior Men's coxed four boat and won **two gold medals** in two events with convincing wins against an Irish crew in silver medal position and an Italian crew in bronze position, in both races.

Michael Thorp rowed in the GB Junior Men's eight, which was coxed by his school and club mate **Franz Imfeld**. The crew won gold medals in their first event, after an incredibly close race against the top eight boats from France and Italy. France won gold in the second event with Italy in silver position beating the GB crew by a very small margin to the bronze medal position.

Stephen Jones rowed in the GB Junior Men's coxless four boat, which faced tough

opposition against top crews from across Europe and narrowly failed to win medal places.

After two full days of rowing the young rowers from **GB were the victors of the Coupe de la Jeunesse competition gaining 14 medals** in all and 223 points, driving the French crews into second place with 12 medals and 212 points.



Kings of the Kayak

Two Sixth Form students (Andrew Hales and David Wynne), led by Mr Parry, took on a very swollen Welsh River Dee over half term.

The river was so high and wild that no other kayakers were on the water. It was technical and powerful and involved precise and intense paddling to get through the wave trains and follow the line prescribed by their coach. The two students took on all bar one of the challenges thrown at them by Mr Parry with skill and determination. They finished the day with a run down the infamous Tombstones rapids.

The weather was variable but hot coffee and food at the cafe prepared them well. A short but vital paddle up the canal, to get to the put on point, provided some photogenic scenes before some jungle bashing was required to find a suitably calm entry to the river.



Double Champions of Chester!

The King's School U19 Netball AND Hockey teams have won the Chester and District U19 Netball tournament and the Chester and District Hockey tournament.

The Hockey girls' team have also won the Cheshire round of the National Schools' Hockey tournament, beating The King's School, Macclesfield, in the final. They went through to the North West semi-final, narrowly missing out in a tense match, which was decided on flicks.

Girls' hockey and netball have gone from strength to strength at The King's School and the teams are regularly winning both district and regional competitions.



The Forty Club winners

King's are this year's proud winners of the prestigious Forty Club Trophy, which is awarded to the school adjudged to have performed best against the Forty Club.

The Forty Club plays cricket with schools up and down the country.



The trophy is awarded for captaincy, batting, bowling, fielding, turnout, and behaviour on and off the field. This year's captain, Oliver Greening, received the trophy from former Kent and England spinner and new MCC President, Derek Underwood at the Forty Club's annual dinner in London in October.

King's girls have 2012 Olympic ambitions!

Lower Sixth student Alice Plews and Fifth Year student Kate Saunders, have both gained county and regional honours in Hockey.

Alice has been selected as a goalkeeper for the U18 North Squad, one of four regional squads in England. Alice trains every Sunday and is now one of the top eight hockey goalkeepers in England.

Kate Saunders has also had incredible success at the U16 level, playing as a forward/midfielder and making the first teams of both Deeside Ramblers and U16 North squad.

Alice and Kate have competed with the North squad in a regional competition called "The Futures Cup" against the other three regions,



where the teams were assessed by England selectors for the England training team.

Alice said, "I have my foot on the first rung of the ladder towards my ambition of getting into the national team and would love to be considered in due course for the Olympic team."

Hannah and Will gain national honours!



Image supplied by Chester Chronicle

Hannah Phillips, Lower Sixth, has gained a place on the Welsh U17 National netball squad.

Hannah travels to Cardiff for a squad weekend every month. In addition, she is also a member of Northern Thunder junior netball team who play in a netball Superleague consisting of nine

teams throughout the country. As a member of the junior, U19 team, Hannah travels to Manchester twice a week for training. She also plays for the Cheshire U19 squad and is hoping to go the European Championships next year.



Image supplied by Chester Chronicle

Will Slater, 3rd year, represented The King's School at the National Divisional Schools' Swimming Championship.

Will had a very successful day:

- Winning the 100m Backstroke in 1.05 minutes
- Finishing 2nd in 100m Freestyle
- Finishing 3rd in the 100m Breaststroke and 200m Individual Medley.

Will's success means he will now represent The King's School on the North West Schools' team in the National Championships.

Will trains three mornings a week and every day after school. On Sunday, he travels to Manchester to train with the Welsh regional squad – North Wales section.

He is the first King's School pupil ever to reach this level in the national finals.

These two students follow in a long tradition of King's School representation in national and Olympic teams.



Money-saving expert and ex-pupil – Martin Lewis



In November, the school welcomed back ex-pupil – money-saving expert and award-winning TV and radio presenter Martin Lewis, who was a student at King's from 1983-1989.

After leaving King's, Martin studied at the London School of Economics, where he was president of the Students' Union and went on to study a postgraduate degree in Broadcast Journalism at Cardiff University.

Martin is now famous as a money-saving expert, an award-winning TV and radio presenter, newspaper columnist and best-selling author.

Martin, who has been described as **"The Dumbledore of Debt"**, gave an amusing but important talk to the Sixth Form about managing student finances, including debt. He also met up with some of his former teachers and toured the school. He said, **"I really enjoyed re-visiting my old school and was impressed by the many new facilities, such as the Music School"**.

The students thoroughly enjoyed his presentation and hopefully will put into practice Martin's valuable tips!



Barcelona – Big Band & Gospel Choir

For those fortunate enough to be able to go, the highlight of the musical year was undoubtedly the Big Band and Gospel Choir concert tour to Barcelona in July.

These are two groups who just love to perform and they really excelled themselves in some beautiful venues in and around Barcelona, culminating in a memorable finale on the sea-front in the town of Roses, as part of the International Festival of Blues, Jazz and Gospel held there every summer. After the concert the band and choir were invited to hear an African Gospel Choir performing in the festival which was an amazing experience.



The Spanish audiences were delighted with the concerts, so much so that over 60 copies of the Big Band CD, 'Livin' the Mad Life' were sold. The fame of the King's School musicians is undoubtedly spreading! The excitement of performing the concerts in Barcelona was undoubtedly matched by the wider cultural experience on the tour and it was wonderful for the group to have the opportunity to

visit Gaudi's extraordinary cathedral, La Sagrada Familia, and the Salvador Dali museum in Figueres. These experiences, together with the excellent music and also the general sense of enjoyment felt by everyone on the trip will be fondly remembered for years to come.

