

History



History has always played a vibrant part in the lives of Vinehall children since 1938 when the school opened with six boarders. The building itself became a 'living' primary source having been occupied by the Canadians during the Second World War. The current locker area used to be called 'Sergeants Only' and the children used to come across unsuitable graffiti scrawled by the soldiers in various unlikely places. Playtime might involve playing in the real trenches which had been dug in the Junior Woods area where the current Pre-Prep building is. Since many of the first teachers had been servicemen, the war was a very recent and real event and the children would enjoy drawing pictures of dog fights and making model aeroplanes. After John Jacoby, 'Taylor's potted history', as it became known, ensured that all the children had a good understanding of the past and the battle of Hastings was a core piece of the curriculum, just as it is now. History outings consisted of a picnic to Bodiam Castle in a charabanc. So what of history now?

History remains a core subject at Vinehall. At a time of global unrest it is vital that children have an understanding of the past and how it has helped to shape the present and future. Trips and visits remain an integral part of the syllabus and this year has seen outings to Mountfield Church, Battle, Batemans, Pevensey, Canterbury Cathedral, Churchill's War Rooms, Imperial War Museum, National Portrait Gallery and Bayeux with the Year 7s, as part of their French trip. This trip also included a visit to Arramanches to see 'Gold' Beach, one of the beaches used in the Normandy Landings of 1944.

In the classroom, the children learn the techniques through which history can be studied: an examination of evidence, the asking of questions, and the consideration of historical problems and their relevance to the world of today. The common entrance and scholarship exams require the pupils to examine, critically, a number of sources and to write an essay. The ability to write a coherent and structured essay combining factual knowledge with a detailed analysis of the events being described is a fundamental skill to be learnt and one which will carry the children in good stead for the rest of their academic careers.

To finish by quoting one of History's greatest orators, Cicero: 'History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity.'
EYB



2007/8



TOWNSEND WARNER HISTORY COMPETITION

As usual, Vinehall entered a team for this highly competitive annual inter-prep school history competition. There were some 800 candidates from all the leading prep schools. Vinehall was, once again, listed as one of the best schools entering the competition. Thirteen candidates did well enough in the tricky general knowledge paper to go through to the second round of the top 200 entries. Here, a difficult but entertaining two hour essay paper was undertaken. Congratulations go to all the team who did so well in displaying and communicating their historical knowledge!

The following pupils won through to Round 2:

Angus Begg 140th, Joshua Huntington-Rainey 112th, William Orr 140th, James Wardle 140th, Alexander Todd 131st, Roo Whittaker 178th and Freddie Williams 119th.

The following received Certificates of Commendation for coming in the top 100: William Barrington 81st, Andrew Everall 98th, Oliver Giles 92nd and Sam Piper 51st.

Special congratulations go to our top two entries this year who came in the top 50 and received certificates and book tokens: Alexander Pugh 25th and Claire Macfadyen 24th.