



Westminster Academy students meet and learn about WWII heroes



Neil Flanagan, MBE holds a photo of himself as a young RAF soldier

By Diellza Jashanica

Recently some guests came to our school to talk about WWII and their role in it. We learned about Ita Ekpenyon, from his daughter. He was an African who

volunteered as an Air Raid Warden in the Marylebone area. He had come to London from Nigeria to study law when WWII broke out, and he immediately signed up to help. Air Raid Wardens were important for maintaining safety, rescuing people and avoiding panic in each neighbourhood.

Ita Ekpenyon bravely stopped a riot in the Marylebone Air Raid Shelter when a group started shouting that all non-white people had to leave the shelter in the middle of a bombing raid. He addressed the crowd and reminded them that all members of the Empire were entitled to protection by The Crown and, for the safety of all, they had better settle down and look out for each other. He went on to

hold games and parties in the shelter to keep people occupied during the frightening raids when they had to wait in the shelters without any light. His became one of the most popular shelters in the area, and he was invited to make patriotic broadcasts back to Nigeria.

We also met Neil Flanagan, who came from Jamaica to serve in the RAF. He endured a perilous journey by boat to get here and stayed in basic bunkhouses while he trained to build and maintain the controls of fighter air craft. After the war, he dedicated himself to serving the community by volunteering at the Citizens Advice Bureau and local hospital, as well as lots of other places. He was awarded the MBE by the Queen in 2000.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Principal Smita Bora

We have had an incredibly successful first term at the Academy. In previous editions of our newsletter, I

have been proud to announce sets of improving examination results and a highly positive Ofsted report. In today's newsletter, students, staff, parents and the community will be delighted to hear that Westminster Academy is not only now one of the most improved schools in the country but it is also in the top 25% of all schools for the value it adds to students as they progress from Year 7 to 11.

Next term, students in Years 9, 10 and

11 will be sitting GCSE examinations. In addition to this, many students will be participating in extra lessons over the holiday to further enhance their learning.

All students return to the Academy on **Monday 1st November 2010**. It is important, as always, to ensure your child keeps up to date with reading and revision during the holiday. I look forward to seeing you all next term to continue our exciting journey of improvement!

Red House students monopolise literacy prizes

Year 8 Red House boys continue to lead in winning literacy prizes at Westminster Academy.

The latest two winners are **Aymen Hajila** and **Rewad Hamade**. They wrote poetry that impressed Ms Sara and were able to choose new books signed by famous authors as their prizes.

For the next competition:

Write about your favourite book; why you like it and why other WA students should read it.

Hand your entries in to the library by Fri. 5 Nov.

Come on girls, you can't let the boys win all the prizes!!!

Year 7 Parents' Evening is coming

Ms Anita Bjelica, Vice Principal

Year 7 Parents' evening is on **Wednesday, 3rd November** between **4 p.m. and 6 p.m.**

This will be another opportunity to discuss your child's progress with their tutor and all their teachers. We look forward to seeing you then.

Sixth Form student Motaz Mekki is praised for his contribution to the Westbourne Forum Board



Motaz Mekki

**By Allison Bennett,
Westbourne Forum Community
Development Officer**

Motaz joined the board of Westbourne Forum in December 2009. Since then he has attended board meetings and

contributed enthusiastically to discussions. He feels the weight of responsibility, as he says "I personally represent everyone aged between 13 - 21." He stresses the importance of "Getting the negativity away from the title 'youth' through opportunities presented to us by the Forum.

Motaz has made much of those opportunities through his involvement in Forum Events such as International Day, The Summer Festival and the Eid Party and never misses a chance to give a young person's perspective on all issues.

Motaz says, "I was reluctant to stand for the board of the Westbourne Forum initially, but once I was elected I saw how my in-

put could really make a difference to the face of Westbourne. So far, all the points that I have raised in Board meetings have been taken into account, but there is a lot more we have to achieve. I am particularly proud of the International Day as both myself and other WA 6th form students attended, met lots of local people and showed them a different side to 'the feared youth'"

Motaz is currently working on a presentation to the Paddington Rotary Club to bring to their attention the plight of the Forum which is facing severe funding cuts. Motaz has a widely-liked presence at Board meetings and he gives older members hope that the future is in safe hands.

Local film maker Louis Buckley comes to Westminster Academy

By Rochelle Williams, Leona Hoxha, Zainab Salaman, and Yousef Mir-Ali

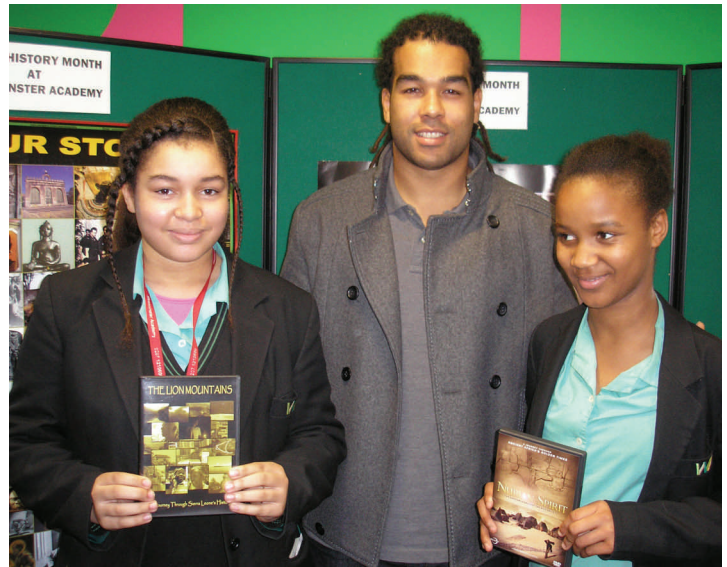
This week, professional film maker Louis Buckley came to our school to talk about why he became a film maker and to show us clips from his films. He wanted to find out more about his African heritage, so he went to Sierre Leone and visited the area where slaves were kept before they were put onto ships. I won a copy of *The Lion Mountain*, the film he made about his journey. **Rochelle Williams**

But he didn't just believe what he read in books, he went to the National Archives and looked up documents such as the receipts that the slave ships kept. Ms. Cunningham taught us facts about the slave trade, but he actually went and looked it up. I like the music and the songs in his film *The Lion Mountain*.

Yousef Mir-Ali

I found it interesting that when he was young, he never thought about being a film maker. It was only when he was older that he realised this was a possibility. He was the first person in his family to travel back to Africa. His film contained lots of interesting facts about the slave trade.

Zainab Salaman



Louis Buckley with Rochelle Williams and Maria Soares Da Silva who are holding the copies of his DVDs, which they won by answering questions about his films

He was really interesting. I learned a lot about slavery from watching his film. I also think it is a really fun way to learn; to watch a film and then to meet the person who made it and learn about why they wanted to make that film. He also showed us clips from his film *Nubian Spirit* which is about the pyramids in Sudan. I wasn't sure if the Sudanese pyramids came before the famous pyramids in Cairo, but he explained how many things originated in that area- the Nubian kingdom.

Leona Hoxha

I won a copy of his film *Nubian Spirit* because I knew three things developed in the ancient Nubian Kingdom- making paper, precision cutting of stone, and smelting iron ore.

Shamica Stanley-Olubodun

Louis Buckley in Sudan when he was making *Nubian Spirit*

Year 7 Trip to the London Film Festival



Still from the film *Lezare* (dir: Zelalem Woldemariam, Ethiopia, 2009)

On Thursday 14th October 2010 Ms Junker and Mr Pitcher's Y7 Topic classes went on a trip to the London Film Festival at the British Film Institute. We saw three different short films: *Lazare*, *Pumzi* and *St Louis Blues*. Not only did we watch these films but we also got to talk to the editors of the second film. We learnt lots of amazing facts after they described to us how they came up with the film and what happened during the process of making it. They told us that they wanted to make people aware of what we can do to the environment.

By Amina Lounes

We were on the Tube heading to Embankment. Everyone was making random guesses about what they thought the films were going to be about. To tell the truth, none of the guesses were as close or as entertaining as it really turned out to be. The film festival was located near the River Thames. The place looked quite dull but huge from the outside. As we entered, everyone was amazed by its beauty.

We went into the National Film Theatre 2. There was a large orange curtain protecting the screen behind it. After a couple of minutes a lady stood at the front of the hall. She gave us an overview of what we were going to watch. The lady moved out of the way and the large curtain opened, showing us the massive screen it hid.

By Alla Kalam

The film *Lezare*:

The little poor boy is in rags and has no family. Homeless, sleeping on the ground and searching for food, he begs for money but nobody gives him any. Everyone ignores him wherever he goes. He is desperate for bread or food. One man gives him a coin but in return the boy must help plant trees with all the villagers to prevent desertification. When he loses his money, he digs up all the plants just to find his coin and eat.

He is my favourite character of all three films because he is just like the little boys that I've seen in Bangladesh. They are poor but each month there is a festival where poor people gather and other people come and give them food.

By Ridwana Khanom

Parents' Surgery

There will be a surgery for parents every Monday between 4-6pm. This is an opportunity for parents to come in and see Mr Barnes, Senior Vice Principal, face-to-face about any matters of concern, or to pass on their compliments about an aspect of their child's education.

Parents can book an appointment by telephoning 020 7121 0636.

We look forward to seeing you !

Year 7 Trip to the London Film Festival



Pumzi (dir: Wanuri Kahiu, South Africa-Kenya, 2009)

The Film *Pumzi*:

The story's setting is Nairobi during World War Three. Everyone lives inside and even water has to be recycled. Outside there is a sea of sand that is never ending. Asha finds out that some soil that has been sent to her is alive, by planting a 'mother seed' which grows. This is a rare thing as there are no trees left in Nairobi. Asha contacts the person she thought sent her the soil, but the lady refuses to answer her questions. However, Asha believes there are still more trees in the world and she is willing to find out. I love the fact that she will never give up. The last part is very sad because she risks her own life travelling in the hot scorching sun. To her disappointment she doesn't find any trees but decides to plant the seed with half a litre of water she has worked hard for. I felt sorry for her and I couldn't help thinking what would happen to her and if she would survive.

Asha is my favourite character because I think she is a brave girl. She is also an adventurous girl who is willing to help the world and sacrifice her life for others.

By Gentiana Hashani

The Film *St Louis Blues* :

I think that *St Louis Blues* is a great film. As a musical it brings together a bit of everything. It has all the key elements of an entertaining film, comedy, drama and a small pinch of despair. The songs are also one of the key features that make *St Louis Blues* a joyous experience. The film may be in French but it is based in Senegal which was once part of the France-Africa colonies. Seven passengers would like to go from Dakar to St Louis in a shared taxi. The seventh passenger is late but eventually catches up with the car. At first they are stuck in traffic and the endless overcrowding of people but later they are in the countryside, riding away like mad. Overall *St Louis Blues* is a joyous treat of comedy, music and drama all at the same time.

By Tohin Munshi



Still from *St Louis Blues* (dir: Dyana Gaye, Senegal and France, 2009)

I think my trip to the BFI was very exciting and eye-catching. The reason for this is that we went through lots of famous places. In primary school we didn't use to go through busy places. The thing that made me most excited was when we were on the Embankment Bridge across the River Thames which I had never been on before. I would rate this trip as the BEST so far in my life.

By Naim Badi

Academy Attendance

Regular school attendance is an important part of giving your child the best possible start in life. Talking to your child and their tutor could help to solve any difficulties you have in getting your child to go to school - and there are other forms of support available if you still have problems.

Regular school attendance - why it's so important

- Going to school regularly is important to your child's future. For example, children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Children with the best GCSE results and the highest levels usually have attendance over 97%.
- Good attendance shows potential employers that your child is reliable.

Research suggests that children who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behavior or crime.

Preventing your child from missing school - what you can do

You can help prevent your child skipping school by:

- Making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Taking an interest in their education - ask about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities.
- Discussing any problems they may have at school - inform their Tutor, Head of House or the Principal about anything serious.
- Not letting them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work.

Arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays will help to prevent disruption to your child's education and to the school. Under normal circumstances, you should not expect the school to agree to your child going on holiday during term time.

In November we will be allowing 1 day off for the celebration of Eid, although the government still regards this as an absence. A non-uniform day will raise funds for a nominated charity.

This year we have been instructed by School Inspectors (Ofsted) to increase our attendance levels FROM 92% TO AT LEAST 97%.

Please help us to achieve this.

Next Year we finish school on the 22nd July 2011 for the Summer Holidays, and return on the 4th September 2011.

PLEASE DO NOT BOOK ANY FLIGHTS BEFORE THIS TIME, AS THEY WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED.

Activities for Children, Families and Young People in Westminster



Parents, children and young people can find out what's on in the half term holidays on our What's On Westminster 2010: Half Term Highlights . This online listing showcases a variety of free and low-cost activities for children and young people across a range of services including sport and leisure, arts and culture, libraries, parks and many more.

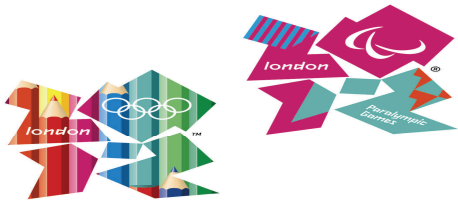
On-line listings:

Visit www.westminster.gov.uk/wow

Family Information Service

Information on What's On Westminster can also be obtained via phone from the Family Information Service on 020 7641 7929.

Westminster Academy is awarded 2012 Education Partner status



Living the Olympic and Paralympic Values

Westminster Academy has just been awarded 2012 Education Partner Status, which is the official London 2012 education programme for schools, college and local authority education providers across the UK.

The programme offers a huge range of opportunities and resources targeted at 3-19 year olds.

In response the Academy will receive a whole range of flexible, interactive learning resources de-

signed to get students thinking about the Olympic and Paralympic Values and the London 2012 Games including games, fact sheets, films, news articles and much more.

2012 Education Partner Status is only awarded to schools who are demonstrably living one or more of the Olympic and Paralympic Values and are committed to integrating these Values into their whole school development planning and ethos.

What Are the Olympic and Paralympic values

The Olympic Values:

- friendship
- excellence
- respect

The Paralympic Values:

- courage
- determination
- inspiration
- equality

Mr Gorton, Westminster Academy's Curriculum Co-ordinator for P.E says, "This is a truly amazing opportunity for students at the Academy, which will no doubt enhance the Olympic experience for all. In every curricular area there will be opportunities to enhance knowledge and understanding, proving that the 2012 Olympics will have a measurable impact upon teaching and learning in our school."

'Go-Ride' comes to Westminster Academy

By Mr Gorton

Go-Ride school clubs in association with Sustans, British Cycling and Sky are all about getting more young people into cycling. The club provides high-quality cycle coaching activities, delivered in a traffic-free environment. The Westminster Academy Club has a British Cycling qualified Coach running the coaching sessions - Rob Mortlock.

Currently up to 32 Year 8 students benefit from the programme during curriculum time, however, more students are invited to attend the after school session on Fridays from 1:35pm. If you are interested in attending the Go-Ride Club, ask your PE Teacher for details.

In addition, Westminster Academy also has an After School Bike Maintenance Club



Raman Jaff , Ariana Gashi, Isa Alsharifi, Suthiphath Chaiput-Chanchaoren and Asif Alam take part in a Go-Ride session at Westminster Academy

which meets on Thursdays. Students can learn how to repair bikes and can re-build a bike which they will then be allowed to keep. The Club can take eight students at a time—please see Ms Taylor if you are interested in joining.