

# Sheldon Standard

Just before half term, a group of Year 11 students went on a trip to **GCSE Poetry Live** at the Bath Assembly Rooms.

Intiaz Dharker was first up; she read a few poems from a variety of her collections, including 'The Right Word' which looks at the theme of mislabelling within the media surrounding terrorism. As well as this she performed a poem from our GCSE poetry anthology named 'Tissue'. Dharker gave us a backstory for the poem, which no doubt will be useful context for our upcoming exam.

Among other renowned poets who performed throughout the day, such as Owen Sheers and Daljit Nagra, was the highly anticipated John Agard! A common favourite across our year group, his performance was one of the most eagerly



English Literature *John Agard*

anticipated of the day, and we were all incredibly excited to hear him read. Just before his scheduled reading, Agard walked into the room without realising another poet was still performing. When he realised, he walked up to one of our pupils and sat next to him. For a lot of us, and our teachers, this was a huge moment! Agard performed poems from his collections including 'Checking Out Me History', and all of the schools even had a sing along with him for his last reading.

In the afternoon we had two talks from Head Examiner Peter Buckroyd who gave us plenty of examination tips and tricks for the unseen poem. We also had an incredible dual performance from the brilliant Carol Ann Duffy and Gillian Clarke. To finish the day before we headed home, we had a reading from Simon Armitage who read an amazing poem called 'Remains' from our anthology, focusing on a true story about a modern

day soldier, as well as others from his older collections. Overall the day was a huge success and really helped to bring the poems alive.

*Bryony Hayward, Year 11*

At the Intermediate semi-final of **Youth Speaks** held at Frome Market just before half-term, the team won 'runners up' against some tough competition. This was also the largest semi-final that the Rotary Club has seen for many years, so they did very well indeed.

Bea Baddeley-Chappell won 'Best Speaker' too. As you can see in the picture, she was delighted.



*Mrs Gale*

## Chippenham Library's Children's Bookfest

This week, Year 7 students were lucky enough to meet local authors, Fleur Hitchcock and Catherine Bruton. Chippenham Library celebrated reading and writing at their Children's Bookfest all week in the run up to World Book Day. Sheldon students had the opportunity to converse with successful authors and have their books signed.

It was a fantastic event that encouraged our talented young people to be brave and bold writers!

*Miss Jones*

Last term we entered two Photography competitions: The Young Photographer 2018, organised by Chippenham Rotary Club; and The Bigger Picture, organised by the Economic and Social Research Council.

We were recently given the fantastic news that our Year 13 Photographer student Che Deedigan came **first** in the Chippenham Rotary Club competition. His work has now been entered for the Young Photographer district competition. We wish him all the best!

At the same competition, our photography students: Eve Hawkins, Sean Wason and Cameron Hendry came second with some fantastic entries on the theme of Perspective.

The Bigger Picture competition was aimed at 14-18 year olds. For the 2017-18 academic year the challenge was to take a photograph showing the 'bigger picture' of how the world is changing and how it affects the students, their family, their friends, community and the nation as a whole. The competition had five diverse categories: New world order, Age of innovation, Fragile earth, Being me, and Society in chaos.

The Bigger Picture competition was open to all young people resident in the UK.

There were 550 entries, but one of our Year 12 Photography students Sean Wason has been selected as one of the category winners. His work will be exhibited at Espacio Gallery in London. Two more entries from Sheldon have been commended, our students Eve Hawkins and Josh Weston, who will also be exhibited at the Espacio gallery. All three

students have been invited to a private viewing and an award ceremony on the 20th March.



*Chee Deedigan's winning entry*



*One of Sean Wason's photographs which will appear in ESRC's Society now magazine*

The exhibition will run from 20th to 25th of March. All winning photographs will appear in the summer 2018 issue of ESRC's Society Now magazine. We are extremely proud of their achievements and we believe that their work will inspire and motivate their peers.

*Miss Paroussi*

# HEAD-ITORIAL

For the first time that I can remember I'm writing this for a Monday distribution, brought about by the unexpected events at the end of last week. You'll be aware of the saying "You're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't" and every time that snow is in the air and there's a chance of school closing, this phrase very much springs to mind. Thankfully, it had been over five years since we were last forced to close and it's never a decision we take lightly. But given what happened, I thought it would be useful to outline some of the more underlying issues that have to be factored in. Some schools and colleges had decided not to open on Thursday morning and had good reason for doing so; for us, I was very clear that we should come in and have business as usual – and in fact we had a productive morning's work, including for Year 10 who were involved in trial examinations. By 9:30, however, I had already had several staff tell me that their children's school had shut or was shutting and they would need to go and collect younger children – and snow by then had started to fall at Sheldon. Whilst not particularly heavy, it was in line with the forecast which also showed areas to the west due to receive significant precipitation in the early afternoon. Added to that, the red weather warning for parts of the south west, including areas in which some of our staff have to commute, and the picture became more complicated and critical. Bus companies needed to be contacted in good time and a decision made – and with the specific geographical situation of the proximity of Sheldon and Hardenhuish, the decision of the two schools also needed to be consistent, as the buses would not have come out twice. Met office and BBC weather websites were pored over, other headteachers in the county consulted and the longer term safety of students and staff had to be weighed up – and it was this last element that prompted the decision for an early finish to the day. Although everyone departed in good time and in generally reasonable conditions, by the time I was at home writing my Year 8 reports and listening to the weather reports on the radio, news of blizzard conditions between Bath and Bristol causing issues on the M4 (where large numbers of our staff had travelled an hour earlier) confirmed that the decision we had taken was the right one. Of course, the snow forecast might have arrived an hour or so later and many might then have questioned whether we should have been so premature in making the decision; hindsight is a wonderful thing, but in this case were we to have continued until the end of the afternoon session, many of our staff would have had risky and unnecessarily long journeys home – which we just could not have exposed them to. My own daughter took six hours to get home from Bristol later that day, a journey that would normally have taken 45 minutes; others of you may have had similar experiences. So, hindsight shows in this case, I believe, that we acted appropriately and I hope that we communicated our intentions clearly and in good time. I rather hope it's at least another five years before anything like this happens again, but trust that this gives a flavour of some of what had to be considered before we finally confirmed our decision.

*Neil Spurdell, Headteacher*

## Parent Governor Vacancy

There are two vacancies for Parent Governors on Sheldon's Governing Body, and we would like to invite parents, foster parents and guardians to put their names forward.

We would particularly welcome nominations from candidates with financial expertise and/or project management experience. If you would like to find out more the Chair of Governors, Megan Jones, would be happy to discuss this with you (contact [chairofgovernors@sheldonschool.co.uk](mailto:chairofgovernors@sheldonschool.co.uk)).

If you wish to stand for election you will need to complete a nomination form. The form and information on becoming a School Governor is on the Sheldon website under Information - Governors. <http://www.sheldonschool.co.uk/page/?title=Governors&pid=13>

Completed forms should be returned to school reception addressed to the Clerk to the Governors, or emailed to [jhawtin@sheldonschool.co.uk](mailto:jhawtin@sheldonschool.co.uk), by midday on Friday 16th March. If there is more than one nomination there will be an election by secret ballot.

Governors serve for a four-year term, and elected Parent Governors may continue to serve out their term of office after their child leaves the school.

If you would like any further information please contact me.

*Julie Hawtin*

## Too much time on social media? Too much 'screen time' in general?

A hot topic at home, at the moment.

A 'discussion' about how much time my children were spending on screens, despite a time limit being agreed upon had boiled over into a 'full shouty row', including door slamming and stomping about. I had to concede some ground however, as my daughter correctly pointed out that "you are always on your phone too..". Not fully accurate but largely so.

Two recently read quotes from 'internetmatters.org' sprang to mind, and formed the basis of some post-row reconciliation:

- "1. It's a good idea to give your eyes half an hour's rest from the screen before bed.
2. If it helps, tell your child that you're putting your mobile or tablet away too - younger children are more likely to mirror your actions."

We haven't gone as far as downloading and signing childnet.com's 'family agreement' but we have decided to re-assess our rules, and model some good behaviour at the same time.

*Mr Shaw*

**Sheldon Gymnastics Team win Gold**  
Congratulations to Kelsey Stokes (Year 9), Tegan Seed (Year 9) and Ellie Treacy (Year 7), who competed in the KS3 advanced gymnastics competition in the Wiltshire School Games and came first! Well done!!

Please note that the next Parents Enrichment meeting is on Tuesday 6 March at 7.00 p.m. in the refectory. All welcome.

## Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award

103 year 9 students attended a training day at school on a cold Sunday in preparation for their expeditions in the Summer. H5 Adventure ran the day where the students completed route plans, pitched tents, learnt how to use the stoves, developed their first aid knowledge and planned their meals.

Their next stage will be to complete their training weekend in May. In the mean time students are completing their other three sections of volunteering; skill; physical.

*Miss Langdon*

