



Baroness Young meets the students of Christ's College. Photo by Timothy Ng.

Politics students inspired by peer's visit

By Lucas Rudden

Christ's College Finchley hosted a talk in January by crossbench peer Baroness Young of Hornsey to encourage student engagement with the political and parliamentary process.

Baroness Young met with the government and politics sixth form students for an hour to talk about the work and role of the House of Lords. This was followed by a question and answer session on various aspects of the parliamentary process and life at Westminster generally. With the current unstable economic situation in Europe the occasion had particular significance for all who attended.

Andrew Bratt, teacher of government and politics, said: "This was a fantastic opportunity for our students to have direct interaction with someone who knows the parliamentary system inside out, as it can sometimes seem far removed from their daily lives."

The visit was arranged through the Lord Speaker's Peers in Schools programme, which has been running across the UK since 2007 and has so far involved around 30,000 young people. This continuing outreach programme sends members of the House of Lords into schools and colleges across the country to give talks in support of the citizenship curriculum.

KALASHNIKOV KULTUR

By Ricky Savage, the voice of social irresponsibility

That sinking feeling

Well, it's here. I'm talking about the centenary of the longest running saga in popular culture. It's produced 27 films, endless books and more Channel 5 documentaries than any other event this side of the War. Yes, we're talking Titanic. No matter if the facts have disappeared, the arrival of *Downton-at-Sea* proves that you can't keep a good ship down.

Let's get rid of the inconvenient facts first. The Titanic was one of three Olympic Class White Star liners. When it was launched in May 1911, it was the biggest ship afloat. It was completed on 2 April 1912, set sail on the 10th, hit an iceberg at 11.40pm on the 14th and sank three hours later. 2,224 people were aboard and 1,514 drowned. Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio were not among them. So now let's get on with the real business of lies, damn lies, myths and movie making.

No one ever said the Titanic was unsinkable; all the builders said was that it was virtually unsinkable and, like any virtual reality, they were wrong. And in the world of virtual reality, Kate and Leonardo could only have met in the movies as no third class passenger could have got anywhere near the first class decks. But never mind, the band played on until the last minute, and Captain Smith did what a bad captain should do when he's made a complete mess of things and went down with his ship.

Now, let's go to the cinema and indulge in the 27 odd movies that have been churned out from *Saved From the Titanic*, which hit the silver screen a month after the ship went down, to James Cameron's 3D version that dumps a 3D Kate Winslet in your lap. On the way there's been everything from Italian animation to *Doctor Who*. There was even one made by Nazi Germany in which the ship could have been saved if they'd only listened to the German officer rather than the dastardly Brits. Problem was that by the time it was finished the dastardly Brits were systematically reducing Germany to rubble so it got shelved. And then there's *Raise the Titanic*, the film that helped sink the British film industry...

But all is not lost. You can get your own Titanic experience in Highgate where the theatre Upstairs at the Gatehouse is showing *Iceberg Right Ahead* until 22 April. Why not go along and relive the complete icy experience?

Free school awaits government decision

By Cathy Halstead

The future of a free school for East Finchley is now in the hands of the Department for Education. The team behind the campaign to set up The Archer Academy breathed a sigh of relief last month as they submitted their 150-page application.

The government department will decide which applications will go through to the interview stage from mid-April to the end of June. If successful at both stages, The Archer Academy would be given both financial and practical support to locate suitable premises, recruit a headteacher and get ready to open in September 2013.

Campaign leader Avis Johns told *THE ARCHER*: "We've got a really strong team working with us to try and make the academy a reality, and we know the school that we've set out in our application could provide an amazing opportunity for local children. We just hope the DfE agrees."

However, the team behind

the application aren't just sitting back and waiting for the call. As well as continuing to drum up support for the school, they're researching potential premises, and following up the offers of help that they've received to date.

As Avis explained: "We're not being complacent, far from it, but we could be called for interview at very short notice, so we have to get our pitch ready. And as over 1,000 people have said they'd love to send their children there, we're determined not to let them down."

The campaign can be contacted at www.thearcheracademy.org.uk or by email at localschools@live.co.uk

Tennis club plan changes ends

By Betti Blatman

A second public exhibition on proposals to relocate Chandos Tennis Club to East End Road was held at Finchley Cricket Club in February, when members of the development team were available to respond to questions and hear views.

The scheme's layout has been amended by moving the four covered courts to the rear of the site and the clay courts to the front facing East End Road and there will now be 34 car parking spaces instead of 45. A planning application is due to be submitted to Barnet Council and construction may commence in early 2013 with projected completion by mid-2014.

Barratt Homes will register this site with the Considerate Constructors Scheme and as such will comply with strict regulations and supervision of their demolition and construction activity. They will also liaise with Barnet Council to agree working hours and give local residents direct contact numbers should any problems arise. Local residents will receive invitations to discuss the implications of construction work. For further information, visit www.chandosway.co.uk, telephone 0845 460 6011 or email info@chandostennisclubrelocation.co.uk

Get online at the Green Man

A project aiming to help local residents, especially those living on the Strawberry Vale estate, to get online so that they can reap the benefits of using the internet has been launched at the Green Man Community Centre.

The idea for the Net Worx project is simple. Local volunteers in the East Finchley area will train to help others who are taking their first steps getting online. Two volunteers have already stepped forward, Olajide Akinbote and Naphtal Motha, and others are expected to join the team over the next few months.

Centre manager Mark Healey said: "Net Worx is about helping local residents get online and feel comfortable using computers. I've seen how it's helped residents on other estates and I hope it has the same positive impact here. Maria Vitale and Jeanette Manu, who work for Peabody, are really friendly and approach-

able, and I am sure that they will make newcomers to the group feel really welcome."

Net Worx sessions will run every Tuesday 2pm to 4pm at the Green Man. For more information, contact Jeanette Manu on 020 7021 4659 or jeanette.manu@peabody.org.uk

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