

Press Release

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For immediate use

Eminent Historian Visits Museum Curated by Trinity Pupils



Prof. Sir Richard Evans, Regius Professor of Modern History, University of Cambridge, addresses Trinity pupils before visiting the museum they curated.

Pupils at Trinity School handling Roman objects dating back 1800 years as part of their Museum project.

On Wednesday 4th July, Trinity School was honoured to host **Professor Sir Richard Evans**, Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge. Professor Evans gave a key-note speech to students and staff to celebrate the newly-opened school museum, curated by the pupils. The museum contains over 200 items loaned by the school community until the end of term. Highlights include Roman objects dating back to AD 200, letters from the trenches of World War One, banknotes from Germany during the hyperinflation of the 1920s, a signed second edition of Einstein's Theory of Relativity, and commemorative plates from the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

One of Britain's foremost historical scholars, Professor Evans heaped praise on the museum project, commenting on the wide range of artefacts on display: "Pupils have done a marvellous job in collecting such diverse and evocative objects. They show what an exciting subject History is and how we can all learn from what the past has left behind." His view that "museums are a starting point which allows critical reflection of the past" reinforced the aim of the project and the thinking skills that have been developed by Trinity students. The process of using objects to spark pertinent questions was one that Professor Evans found to be fundamental in the study of History. "A museum is not the resting place for a collection of dusty objects; it is a starting point for further enquiry."

He spoke on the nature of History as a discipline, reflecting that the subject is about critical enquiry, asking difficult questions and instilling the belief in students that we should refuse to accept what we are told. He also advocated combining knowledge and historical concepts in teaching, something which the History Department at Trinity was glad to hear from such an eminent scholar.

Trinity's Museum project has received prestigious backing with funding from the Historical Association, training for the students in partnership with the Horniman Museum, and a visit by Dr Xerxes Mazda of the British Museum who delivered the opening speech. **Nick Gibb MP**, Minister for Schools, describes the project as "an innovative and engaging way to increase an understanding of history for pupils and the wider community". It takes history out of the classroom and away from textbooks. Pupils are doing real historical research with a meaningful output. Students are developing core transferable skills in areas such as research, team work, communication and ICT. Several hundred children from local primary schools will be visiting the museum while it is open, doing workshops that will develop their understanding of how historians use evidence.

"Projects like this are exactly what our education system needs to ensure that the next generation continues to engage with the past," comments **Tristram Hunt MP**, History Lecturer and Television Presenter. Students are best able to enjoy and connect with history when you fire their imagination. "I have been simply enthralled by every one of the two hundred or so items that have been loaned to us. More rewarding than anything else has been the number of pupils who have told me the project has led them to find out about their family history for the first time, and what they have discovered has amazed and inspired them," explains **Siobhan Dickens**, History Teacher, leading the project.

Many pupils see museums as dry and static, filled with artefacts that have little connection to their lives; this venture challenges that assumption by making the museum fresh, personal, relevant and dynamic. "I really enjoyed this project. I'm much more likely to notice the historical objects around me now, and much more interested in visiting museums," says Archie, Year Nine. This innovative project not only increases pupils' connections with their own past, but is inspiring them to connect with our country's rich history in a new way.

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Further information

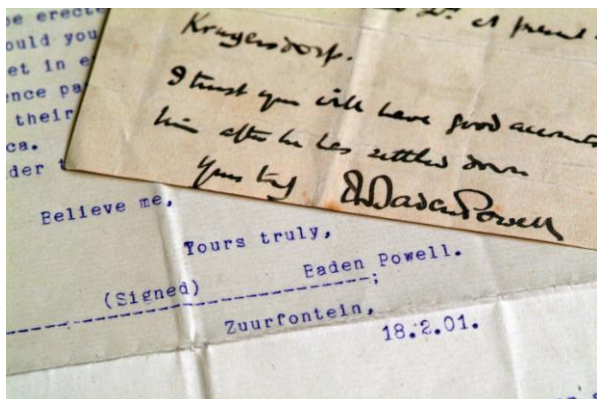
For additional information or to arrange an interview with Siobhan Dickens, please phone Elizabeth Beroud or Diana Jonesco (Marketing) on 020 8656 9541. Email: eab@trinity.croydon.sch.uk or dxj@trinity.croydon.sch.uk



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Further photos



Letters from Lord Baden-Powell (later founder of the Scouts movement) offering his condolences to a mother on the loss of her son during the Boer War

German banknotes from the Weimar Republic during the hyperinflation of the 1920s. The 2000 Mark note has been hurriedly over-stamped as 1,000,000 Marks

Further quotes by Siobhan Dickens, History Teacher and Project Leader

- “To hold in your hands a rolling pin used to make Winston Churchill’s dinner, or a letter written home from the trenches of Ypres, is a very special experience. I expected we would mostly see modern history items loaned, but we have some incredible objects dating back to Tudor England and even the Roman Empire”.

Further quotes by pupils

- “After doing the project I have realised that anything can be researched and found out about, if we ask the right questions. Whereas before I believed that some things just couldn’t. My researching skills have really improved.” – Anthony, Year Nine
- “I realise now that the objects people have in their homes can be just as historically valuable as the ones in museums, but they are just not aware of it” - Jacob, Year Nine

Further quotes by Dr. Xerxes Mazda

- On Thursday 28th June 2012 Trinity School, Dr Xerxes Mazda, Head of Learning, Volunteers and Audiences at the British Museum, delivered an inspiring speech. He described the project as “a remarkable achievement”, adding “putting together a museum is a powerful thing to do. It creates a tear in time, making a hole to connect with people from the past present and future. Collections help redefine History”.

About Trinity School <http://www.trinity-school.org>

Trinity School in Shirley Park, Croydon (South London), is a dynamic, forward-looking day school at the forefront of independent schooling. It offers an outstanding education to boys age 10-18 and has now opened its doors to girls in the Sixth Form. It is part of the Whitgift Foundation, founded in 1596 by John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury. His legacy provides the School with excellent facilities and an exceptionally extensive range of bursaries and scholarships, allowing pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds to benefit from an education at Trinity.

About The Historical Association <http://www.history.org.uk/resources/about.html>

The Historical Association is an independent charity incorporated by Royal Charter. They have been supporting the study and enjoyment of history since 1906. With over 6000 members the HA is the major national organisation representing the case for an historical education to policy makers and ministers. They advise on curriculum issues at all levels and campaign for access to specialist historical knowledge and collections. The Joan Lewin Bursary scheme aims to provide bursaries of up to £1000 for projects that will add value in terms of research or teaching and learning in history.

About The Horniman Museum <http://www.horniman.ac.uk>

The Horniman Museum opened in 1901 and holds some 350,000 objects. The Horniman has three main collections: Natural History with 250,000 specimens; World Cultures (Anthropology) comprising 80,000 objects and Musical Instruments with over 8,500 instruments. In recognition of their national importance, the Anthropology and Musical Instrument collections have been awarded Designated status. The Museum also has 4000 handling objects reflecting its main collecting areas which it uses with its visitors to further enhance the museum's mission to understand more about the world, its cultures, its peoples and its environments. This collection, housed in the Hands On Base gallery contains little written text and allows visitors to make connections between objects and ideas in a discussion-based way with facilitation staff.

About Professor Sir Richard Evans <http://www.richardjeans.com/>

Professor Sir Richard Evans is one of the foremost historical scholars working in England today. As well as holding the Regius Chair in Modern History at Cambridge University he is President of Wolfson College. He is a renowned expert on modern German history, and has published a seminal series on the history of the Third Reich as well as books on aspects of German social and cultural history. He has also written major works on the discipline of History itself, as well as serving as expert witness in the trial of David Irving for the crime of Holocaust Denial. He was awarded a Knighthood in the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours list.

About Dr Xerxes Mazda, Head of Learning, Volunteers and Audiences at the British Museum
<http://www.britishmuseum.org/>

Dr Xerxes Mazda joined the British Museum in 2005. He heads up the Department for Learning, Volunteers and Audiences which incorporates many different aspects of the British Museum all working towards furthering visitor engagement and knowledge. This involves the Schools and



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Families programme, Films, lectures and gallery talks, event programmes, and a web and interpretation team, as well as working with a vast group of dedicated volunteers.