

# RUMBLE MUSEUM

Newsletter  
June 9th  
2022

## ABOUT US

The Rumble Museum at Cheney is run by educational charity The Iris Project and spread throughout corridors and rooms. We run regular projects, talks and events, and have two active student Museum Councils.

We have been awarded full Museum Accreditation by the Arts Council. Find out more at [www.rumblemuseum.org.uk](http://www.rumblemuseum.org.uk)

## REWILDING BREAKFAST TALKS

This term, our breakfast talks move on from the dystopian themes explored in May to more utopian ideas and themes, with a series of sessions exploring rewilding.

Year Sevens and Eights have been invited to sign up for four talks, either exploring a particular rewilding project, such as Pupak Haghghi on Rewilding the Fertile Crescent, looking at how rewilding is presented in the media with Dr Paul Jepson, or exploring how we can take action locally, with Dr Keith Kirby and Kate Sheard from BBOWT. Our first talk is with Pupak on 16th June!



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## THE RETURN OF THE RUMBLE DRAGONFLIES!

Lots of students will have noticed that, over the half term, a swarm of highly decorated dragonflies in bright, beautiful colours, have landed on the roof of Wainwright Building.

These dragonflies have been hibernating in a storage shed since they were replaced by our Rumble Robots on the plinths in 2020, and like the robots, were each designed by a different Cheney student - in this case, to represent different subject areas in the school. They were created and installed ready for our Natural History Festival which took place in 2019.

You can explore all the dragonfly designs in detail here:

<https://thecheneydragonflies.home.blog/>



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## DIONYSIA THE PARTYGATE EDITION!

Year Eight Latinists performed for our seventh annual Dionysia Festival! This year's festival took place on Friday 27th May at the auditorium at Corpus Christi College.

The Year Eight Latinists had been working very hard to adapt four well-known ancient Greek comedies to the modern day. Aristophanes was an ancient Athenian playwright, and he was renowned for lampooning the politicians, customs and context of his fifth century Athens in his plays. His plays were written during the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta, a time of great upheaval and uncertainty for the Athenian people. Many of the plays directly explore these themes.

The festival was opened by Dr Scott Scullion, who told the audience of students, parents, grandparents, and siblings a little about Aristophanes' comedy: how it was rude, highly political and unafraid to take on the politicians and topical events of the time.

The Year Eights chose "Partygate" as their overarching theme, and they incorporated this theme in a range of ways into the productions.

In Birds, the audience witnessed Boris, devastated at the loss of his beloved mate Dominic Cummings, who had just walked out on him, and plotting with Matt Hancock to create a brand new place called Etonia, where they could revel in privilege and parties. However, a UK citizen was not letting him away with it!



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In Apollo's Frogs, we saw a frustrated director attempt to get an unruly cast of actors to put on a production of the Frogs. With one actor refusing to wear green and be a frog because "green is so not my colour", another two constantly messing around and cracking jokes, and another trying to make her debut and to get into Oxford, the director has a lot on her hands!

In Clouds, a dim-witted MP attempts to get Socrates to let him into the Thinkery so he can learn how to argue Boris out of his latest partygate scandal. A chorus of Clouds and Socrates attempt to help him but realise it is going to take a lot of work...

In Artemis' Frogs, Euripides and Aeschylus argue it out in the Underworld, as Dionysus desperately tries to decide which of them is the best poet and deserves to return to Athens and save the city from despair. Audience participated in rap song but in the end scales were the only way to choose.

In Peace, a frustrated chief of police struggles to understand why Boris has not removed the Covid restrictions, until he discovers that it is to conceal the parties he has been taking part in. So he sets out to reveal the truth to the citizens of the UK.

The Year Eights also made posters and trailers for each play.



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There was a break for refreshments after their performances, followed by a stunning performance by Oxford University Drama Society, "Songs of the Silenced", a series of beautiful, witty songs based on the women of Greek mythology, introduced by a wry Circe.

Finally, our judges Dr Marchella Ward and Dr Scott Scullion announced their awards and feedback to the students, with thoughtful and supportive reflections on each of the performances, noting aspects of set, costume, trailers, posters, scripts and overall plays.

We are very grateful to our judges Dr Marchella Ward and Dr Scott Scullion for judging at the Dionysia, to Songs of the Silenced for their amazing performance, and to Corpus Christi College for letting us use their beautiful auditorium.

Thank you to all the families and friends who attended to support, and to our amazing Year Eights for their creativity, stamina and incredible performances!



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## EXPLORING THE INVISIBLE EAST

On Tuesday 17th May, we were delighted to welcome Zaiba Patel, Dr Arezou Azad, and Zhan Zhang to run a session on the Invisible East for our Year Nine Museum Studies students.

Zaiba kicked off the workshop by asking everyone to colour in on a map Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Southern Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Northern India and Western China, and to write down what they knew about the named countries. A few students commented that conflicts on the news were their main associations with some of the named countries. Others thought of particular religions and languages. So for example, most people associated Islam with Afghanistan.

Zaiba and Arezou both pointed out that in fact these areas were trade routes, with a rich mixing of ideas, religions and languages, alongside all the goods which were traded. It was explained that there is not much connected research in these areas, but literary manuscripts and fragments point to different religions and ideas and lifestyles co-existing in the region in Late Antiquity (400 CE to 800 CE) and the Middle Ages (800 CE to 1200 CE).

The group was then asked to imagine they were a world expert on ancient Persian, and some texts from Afghanistan had been discovered. What might they do? The group suggested they might try to contact Afghanistan to see if they were happy for them to work on the documents. It turned out this was precisely what Dr Azad had done when encountering this situation!



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Then in groups, students were asked to read a poem, written in Persian using Arabic script, which is the earliest Persian writing in the world. With the support of the workshop leaders, they were able to start to draw some conclusions about the contents of the poem. The poem was a “panegyric” poem, written in praise and honour of someone. In this case, the writer was lavishing praise on the recipient, who appeared to be Jewish, and was asking for more food and wine for his party, to which the recipient had not been invited!

There were lots of unexpected and interesting details about the context and lifestyle of the writer and the recipient that emerged from this poem.

After a short break, students were given another challenge. They were asked to imagine that it was the year 2072, when VR was a common aspect of museums. The task was to curate an exhibition on the Invisible East, choosing items from a catalogue which included both VR renting and objects.

Each group carefully chose a few items, and presented their choices to Zaiba, Arezou and Zhan. The items each demonstrated the complexity and cultural richness of the region, with mixing of religion, ways of life and ideas.

It was a fascinating session, which left everyone who attended with a deeper knowledge and understanding of the region, through the stimulating and engaging activities in the workshop. We are very grateful to Zaiba, Arezou and Zhan for taking the time to visit us and tell us about the Invisible East!



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## DYSTOPIA EVENTS!

On Tuesday 12th July we will be rounding off our Dystopia and Utopia Season with an all day event celebrating the utopian and dystopian stories that have inspired and fascinated through the ages.


Author Chris Beckett will be joining us for the day to deliver an assembly to the whole of Year Eight, followed by spending the day working on story ideas and cover art with Year Nines.

Mostly Books from Abingdon will be running an all day stall in the Library selling discounted novels and comics.

As well as this, a team of students will be running themed stalls and activities in the Library at break and lunch times, so do come along and find out what's going on!

Finally, from 3.30pm we will be opening up the stalls and activities to the wider community, and between 4 and 4.45pm Chirs Beckett will be giving a talk followed by a book signing.

The activities and talk will be suitable for all ages. To book, please email [lro@cheneyschool.org](mailto:lro@cheneyschool.org)



The Rumble Museum  
Presents

# DYSTOPIA DAY

12.07.2022

- Author talks
- Workshops
- Artefacts
- Stalls
- Activities
- Film viewings

[www.rumblemuseum.org.uk](http://www.rumblemuseum.org.uk)