

Cross-curricular Pollination via the Fibonacci Series

Upper College Society on Thursday 3rd December witnessed a fascinating series of cross-curricular talks, themed The Fibonacci Series. Upper College speakers academically windsurfed seamlessly between Mathematics, Art History, Architecture, Science and Music, in exploring this fascinating mathematical theorem, in how it relates to aspects of nature, beauty and aesthetics. Staff and pupils were most impressed by the calibre of the talks, which did not necessarily bamboozle the listener bombastically, but explained how the Fibonacci Series and the Golden Ratio simply related to their chosen fields of enquiry. Within a matter of minutes, we went from musical excerpts of Bartok's music to the formation of sunflower seeds, and on to measuring Patch Payne's bodily proportions! It was a veritable feast of intellectual stimulus, which fuelled the gathered throng's thirst for intellectual rigour, in marrying up a mathematical formula of a simple beauty. I am a real advocate of the polymath principal, which proliferated during ancient Greece and was revived during the cultural dawn of the Renaissance in the 15th century. For our sixth form students to be able to forge links between 'like' subjects at A Level is truly enlightening, and instrumental in fostering growing independence of learning.

As a judge of the presentations appointed by Dr Samuel, I felt that Chuen Leik Low's Mathematical presentation deserved a prize, in that it was fully audible, easy to follow, and fascinating to boot! He didn't waver under the spotlight when grilled mathematically by his peers, and in general, he spoke with confidence and authority. Similarly Taya Sellers spoke with clarity and passion about the musical parallels, and this warranted a prize from myself also. Finally, Jacqueline Nussbaum-Lapping won a prize for the best question from the floor, related to the possibility of DNA patterns and genetic configuration in animals, plants and humans in relation to the 1:1.618 ratio.

It proved to be a hugely interesting and enlightening evening of intellectual entertainment. Thank you to Harry Ferris and Antonia Stuckey for hosting, and to Dr Samuel for chairing and collaborating with Mr Nelson on the evening as a whole.

Mr N. Nelson

Director of Culture at Cheltenham College