

## ***REPORT ON THE HELLENIC SOCIETY SCHOOLS' ARTWORK COMPETITION 2006***

### **Number of entries:**

There were 139 entries in 2006, the second year of this Competition. (As part of the SPHS 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Competition in 2005, there were 149 artwork entries.) The judges were pleased to see a good expression of interest in the Competition at all levels, and although the total number of artwork entries was just slightly down on 2005, last year's figure had been mainly through a very large number of entries in the Primary (KS2) Section from a much smaller number of schools. In 2006, there was double the number of schools participating and much greater depth and individuality to the Competition. 5 of the 14 schools which had entered art for 2005 entered again, with 23 new schools competing. We look forward to the Competition going from strength to strength as it develops.

In the Primary (KS2) Section on Jason and the Argonauts there were 30 entries (97 on artwork of Heracles and the monster in 2005). In the Junior (KS3) Section on Hermes there were 71 entries (51 on artwork of the Warrior of Troy in 2005). In the Intermediate Section (KS4) on Perseus and the Gorgon there were 33 entries (there had been no entries at this level in 2005). In the Senior/Sixth Form (KS5) Section on the Greek Theatre there were 5 entries (1 on artwork of the Acropolis Monuments in 2005).

### **List of 28 Schools Competing:**

Old Palace School, Croydon; Portsmouth Grammar School; Haberdasher's Monmouth School for Girls; Colet Court School, London (St Paul's Preparatory School); Parkside Preparatory School, Stoke D'Abernon; Merchant Taylors' School for Girls, Crosby; Benenden School, Cranbrook; Bury Grammar School; Westwood High School, Leek; St Peter's School, York; Highfield Preparatory School, Harrogate; Henrietta Barnet School, London; Loreto College, St Albans; Maynard School, Exeter; Perse School for Girls, Cambridge; Putney High School; Emanuel School, London; Northampton High School; Alton Convent School; School of St Helen & St Katharine, Abingdon; Greek Primary School of London; Greek High School of London; Alcester High School & Technology College; Queen Anne's School, Caversham; Queen's College, London; George Abbot School, Guildford; Culford School, Bury St Edmunds; Howell's School, Llandaff, Cardiff.

### **General Comments:**

It was a delight to receive so many high quality entries this year, from students ranging from 6 to 18 years old. It was also a pleasure to read the correspondence with a number of teachers who illustrated the many innovative ways in which the Competition is being used in their schools, especially as cross-curricular work. The Executive Secretary would particularly like to thank those teachers who have corresponded with him about the Competition and given such rewarding feedback and comment on how their schools have been working.

In particular, we were amazed by the imaginative range of artistic media which was submitted for all sections in 2006: drawings in coloured pencil, pen, and ink; paintings in watercolour and oil, sometimes on canvas; black and white

sketchings and etchings; chalk sketches; collages and montages and 3D artwork using every imaginable texture; card mosaics; papier-mache pots; a painted emblem of Dionysus created in salt-dough; mobiles; models of shoes with feathers, winged boots, and sandal sculptures; helmets for Perseus; an immense decorated tapestry telling the story of the Argonauts; a montage of artefacts connected with the ancient theatre; a clay sculpture of Hermes; a life-size Medusa head; a photograph of a pupil dressed in a costume of Hermes; a painted silk with designs for Hermes; a tissue stuffed dolly of Hermes; a theatrical bill-board; a decorated shield showing the Gorgon. The judges felt they had seen every possible permutation until they set eyes on the photograph montage of a gingerbread Hermes, leading gingerbread souls down a liquorice allsorts descent to Hades and past Charon's boat made of jellybeans (!)

We do encourage schools to send a portfolio or a range of images of artefacts that are impractical to send or could be damaged in transit.

### **KS2 (Primary Section) "Jason & The Argonauts": Winning Entries and Report**

<b>Winner</b>	<b>£25</b>		
James Cameron	Colet Court School		age 10
<b>First Runner-Up</b>	<b>£20</b>		
Aurelien Gueroult	Colet Court School		age 10
<b>Second Runner-Up</b>	<b>£20</b>		
Year 3 Art Class	Haberdasher's Monmouth School for Girls		ages 9/10
<b>Highly Commended</b>	<b>£15 each</b>		
George Arghyrou	Colet Court School		age 9
Year 6 Textile Class	Alcester High School & Technology College		ages 8/9

(As well as the prize money - books, videos and other materials on ancient Greece worth approximately £120 were awarded to these prize-winners and their schools.)

The four girls from Alcester High School had prepared a large and impressive textile piece which told key episodes (in Bayeaux Tapestry fashion) of the story of Jason and the Argonauts. An accompanying project book illustrated how they had researched the topic by watching a cinema version of the myth, and then showed how they had used various fabric decoration skills in their illustrations (natural dying, silk screen painting, block printed border sections with Greek border designs, appliqué samples, etc). The result was colourful and highly visual and showed a good understanding of the myth.

George Arghyrou presented a carefully drawn piece of art in coloured pencil where Jason battled a fearsome dark-green dragon poised to strike. We were impressed by the technique of this 9 year old.

The Year 3 Class at HMSG presented a wonderfully effective mobile with a handsome Greek trireme fully equipped with oars and sail, and then a series of hanging pot and plate shapes which depicted the monsters and adventures of the myth: the harpies, the clashing rocks, the skeleton men from the dragon's teeth, etc. The plates and pots, all carefully represented with authentic Greek key borders and other patterns, were particularly successful.



the decapitated many-eyed head triumphantly (and a wonderful Fresian cow representing the herds which Argos had been guarding!)

Flavia Robinson contributed a most innovative and striking 3-D montage of Hermes in the underworld. Enclosed in a box, a wire figure of Hermes was working amidst the fiery souls of the dead.

Emil Pevtsov sent in a beautifully drawn and unusual piece of art on black paper, where the flying Hermes greeted a dolphin in the silvery-blue ocean and silver constellation patterns twinkled in the night sky.

Ashley Pike had created a quirky clay figurine of Hermes with his boots and cap clearly shown, and we felt this was the best of the several figurines we received for the competition.

Megan Shipton also worked in modelling clay, but had used the sandal theme and had created a slender pair of sandals with effective feather decorations and sealed with a shiny firing.

Stephanie Hyman had taken a pair of boots and worked these into a highly colourful and dapper pair of red and yellow and black boots for Hermes, complete with flapping yellow wings. We felt these were the best of the several boot or winged foot entries we received.

Elizabeth McIver presented a very different textile piece, with delicate painting on to silk. Emblems to represent the god had been chosen (winged boot, caduceus, lyre) and these and a highly ornate border had been beautifully painted on to the fabric.

Nicholas Girolami had updated the concept of Hermes the messenger and produced a colourful and highly expressive sketch of great character, where his modern spiv of Hermes (complete with shades and designer trainers) stood on an Olympian cloud and prepared to zoom his letter delivery to the mortals on the earth below

One of the most unusual entries was a DVD from Howell's School, Cardiff, with a 6 minute compilation of dramatic presentations on the myths of Hermes, as well as submission of the script, and designs for the costumes used. There were light-hearted scenes describing the story of Apollo's lost cattle with sketches of the Baby Hermes and Battus, Apollo searching on the hillside, Apollo questioning Maia, and Battus sealed into stone. Then there was a sketch of Hermes and Khelone, and as a consequence of her arrogance, she is turned into a furry toy tortoise! Karissa Singh (who directed, devised the script, and played Apollo and Hera) and her company (Emma Hunt, Fabienne Gress, Daniel Griffin, Darius Singh, with Jasmin Khan-Singh as camera operator) showed great creativity and good humour in this epic little production, notably augmented by the inclusion of an Out-Takes section (as all good DVDs now claim and featuring a lovely moment when Baby Hermes is flung too hard on to set...)

This section of the Competition received the most entries and the widest range of creative ideas, and the judges found it very hard to adjudicate between such very different artistic media with entries of models, painting, collages, boots, a DVD, etc. In the end, they chose the DVD from Karissa Singh and company as the KS3 Section-Winner for the lively and enjoyable way the team had approached their handling of the subject, and the time and efforts they had put into researching the myths and then producing and editing the DVD.

#### **KS4 (Intermediate Section) "Perseus & the Gorgon": Winning Entries and Report**

<b>Winner</b>	<b>£35</b>		
Sarah Tresidder	Maynard School	age 15	
<b>First Runner-Up</b>	<b>£25</b>		
Rachel Hutchinson	Merchant Taylor's School for Girls, Crosby	age 15	
<b>Second Runner-Up</b>	<b>£25</b>		
Catherine Gonzalez	Loreto College	age 15	
<b>Highly Commended</b>	<b>£20 each</b>		
Clara Low	Culford School	age 15	
Sofia Welch	George Abbot School	age 15	
Lily Unwin	Queen Anne's School, Caversham	age 13	
<b>Commended</b>	<b>£15 each</b>		
Sam Mardon	Emanuel School	age 15	
Chloë Monteiro	Merchant Taylor's School for Girls, Crosby	age 15	
Tasmin Patel	Old Palace School	age 14	

(As well as the prize money - books, videos and other materials on ancient Greece worth approximately £140 were awarded to these prize-winners.)

Sam Mardon had drawn an exciting image of Perseus battling an alien Gorgon monster with a very Sci-Fi feel. Then Sam had taken his designs for Perseus' magical helmet and created his own version of this unusual angular green device. We received several helmet variations in this Section and this was our favourite

Chloë Monteiro had been inspired by some famous ancient iconography and sent two canvasses with chalk sketches, representing Perseus walking (or rather prancing!) away from the decapitated and winged Gorgon. His bag is bulging with the head of the monster. One of the canvasses showed the full scene, whilst the other focussed on the body of the Gorgon as Perseus swaggers out of shot.

Tasmin Patel entered a carefully drawn and clever piece where Medusa is represented as a reflection in a giant eye: one half of her face is that of a beautiful golden maiden, and the other has been transformed into the snake-headed malignancy.

Clara Low had sketched the moment where Perseus's sword starts to sever the head of the shrieking Gorgon in a fine pencil drawing. The judges were particularly impressed by the detailed snake-locked head of Medusa in this depiction.

Sofia Welch presented a colourful frieze on the Perseus myth with Athene his patroness, the witch-like Graiai on a craggy mountainside, and the final battle where Perseus flies in to tackle a ghastly pig-snouted Gorgon monstrosity. This was visually very effective and attractively decorated.

Lily Unwin had also sought inspiration from Classical iconography and had used one of the reliefs where Medusa is almost a bug-eyed monster with wings and serpents spiralling off her head, and a great lolling tongue; and Perseus is holding up his knife whilst looking rather ostentatiously the other way. Lily's version updated this classic scene in a variety of colours on an effective terracotta-wash background.

Catherine Gonzalez presented us with a very effective sketch of portentous images swirling in the darkness. Under the huge pillars of some underground lair, we found a flash of light as Pegasus appears, the figure of a helmeted Perseus with his

shield, and a very awe-inspiring mask-like Gordon head with fantastic asps and cobras swirling around her.

Rachel Hutchinson remembered Perseus's ancestry as the golden son of Zeus and had made a standing model of the hero with sword and shield brandished. The strange elongated statue form was almost Cycladic in its type; and the colouration of bronzey gold on black gave an antique patina to the texture and was highly effective.

Sarah Tressider had composed a very unusual piece: a beautifully shaped shield of silver with studs embossed, and the painted reflection of a leering green Medusa stalking Perseus with her hands reaching out to him...! Both the technique of the artwork and the visual composition here were very impressive.

This was another section where judging was tough because of the wide range of different skills and creative ideas at work. In the end, the judges chose Sarah Tressider for having the most innovative concept which she had realised in a highly mature and sophisticated manner.

### **KS5 (Senior/Sixth Form Section) "The Greek Theatre": Winning Entries and Report**

#### **Winner**

**£35**

Charlotte Barry Merchant Taylor's School for Girls, Crosby age 16

#### **Runner-Up**

**£25**

Annabelle Machin Westwood High School, Leek age 18

(As well as the prize money – books and other materials on ancient Greece worth approximately £65 were awarded to these prize-winners.)

The two leading entries of the Senior Section could not have been more different, and yet both were highly effective in their own way.

Annabelle Machin presented an exquisitely drawn pencil etching of a frieze from the Temple of Dionysus dated to the 4thC. The still-life quality of the relief, and the careful details of the stonework and the architectural features gave the piece an archaising feel, and the depiction would not have been out of place in a plate from the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* a hundred years ago.

In complete contrast, Charlotte Barry had entered a very modernised piece with very pop-art feel. She had used a terracotta New Comedy mask of a slave with his mouth gurning into a wide rictus as her template image, and she had then shown this mask four times, each in a different psychedelic whirl of colours. The whole effect was highly Andy Warhol-esque and very striking indeed.

It was extremely difficult to choose between an archaising piece where the quality of the technique was paramount, and a modernising piece where the concept and visual effect was paramount; and the judges debated longest in this Section. In the end, we chose Charlotte Barry as Section Winner for the lively way in which she had updated a classical image.

#### **Overall Competition Winner:**

With four such striking and original Section Winners, choosing the overall Competition Winner was always going to be a hard task, and all four were very

worthy. However the judges were swift and unanimous in awarding the title of the 2006 Hellenic Society Schools Artwork Competition Winner to James Cameron for his superb KS2 efforts. Many congratulations to him!

Russell Shone

*Executive Secretary, SPHS (on behalf of the 2006 judges)*