

The PE Department

We all have our own memories of PE and whether these are good or bad largely depends on whether you enjoyed sport. If you were one of those who deliberately gave in and was the first to be caught when playing Pirates in the gym, it could be tough.

In winter, if you didn't play rugby you were sent on a cross-country. In summer, if you didn't do athletics you were sent on a cross-country. For girls, there were a few more choices, lacrosse or netball in winter and athletics, rounders or tennis in summer. There was one teacher in charge of PE for boys and one for the girls but with some assistance from volunteer members of staff on match days. There was no academic study of PE at GCSE or A-level.

How it has changed! Now the Head of PE at Crossley Heath is Neil Hale and the Head is Beth Denton. They have a staff of six to teach and organise all the many and varied PE activities at the school. The school has a special arrangement with Leeds Beckett University (formerly known as Leeds Carnegie) to provide training for undergraduate PE students who come and teach under the tuition of the full time staff.

The boys' gym is now used as a sixth form recreation room. The girls' gym is still in use for gymnastics and dance but now there is a magnificent sports hall, which has a fitness suite as well as teaching and conference facilities. The swimming pool is still in use but the fives courts have gone; the lawn tennis court where Egg Bolton and Connie used to play has gone; the cricket nets have gone, soon to be occupied by temporary classrooms; the athletics arena is still in use but not for javelin and discus,

as I remember! There are still the hard tennis courts, netball courts and a new five-a-side pitch. Rugby is still played at Broomfield and Kensington. Cricket is played at Broomfield.

There are still house competitions for rugby, netball, swimming and athletics but the senior cross-country, which at one time went up to Norland, now only goes round the moor (probably owing to 'Health and Safety').

There is an amazing range of sporting activities now available for students. As well as the core sports of rugby, hockey, netball, athletics and rounders, there are tennis, golf, badminton, squash, horse riding, girls' rugby, girls' football, table tennis, mountain walking, climbing, yoga and Zumba! The PE department are even responsible for the tradition of ballroom dancing at Christmas, now called country dancing, but they still do the Gay Gordons and Valeta!

Probably the biggest change has been in the teaching of PE, in particular the theory. The only theory I can recall were the sports quizzes we had on the few occasions when the weather was so bad we couldn't go outside. Some time ago, when the school was led by John Bunch, some parents with children who wished to go on to study sport at university made the case for PE to be included in the GCSE options. It is now studied at both GCSE and A-level. Subject areas such as physiology and sports science are taken to very high levels comparable with any 'academic' science subject.

Those who are not interested in competitive sport are encouraged to undertake some

physical exercise and shown how important it is to keep fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet. Crossley Heath has Sports Leader courses at junior and senior levels. The students are taught how to teach young children in sport and exercise and they run sporting events at certain primary schools.

The school enjoys considerable sporting success at team and individual sports. Both boys and girls take part in tournaments throughout the UK and abroad. There are special rugby tours biannually to Canada and Australia for the senior team and an annual tour to Wales for the junior team. The girls have gone to Dubai for hockey and netball and to Paris and Gibraltar for netball.

Crossley Heathens have represented the school at county and national level in athletics, fell running, cross-country, tennis, judo and windsurfing and the current goalkeeper for the GB U17 water polo team is a Crossley Heath girl.

There was a time when PE and sport at school was regarded by some a welcome break from academic study; to others it was an activity to be tolerated. The Crossley Heath PE department now offer all students the opportunities to take part in sport, both competitive and challenging, to study it at serious academic levels and to appreciate the importance of exercise and diet in a healthy lifestyle.

MICHAEL DENTON



Sports Tour in Dubai

Over February half term a group of netballers and hockey players experienced the trip of a lifetime on an exciting sports tour to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. We set off early on the Friday morning and, after a short transfer, we boarded the eight-hour flight to Abu Dhabi. Landing at around 10pm their time, we were met by a tour rep and drove the two hours to our hotel in Dubai, passing the main strip of Dubai business district and getting a taste of the week ahead.



All the girls were active in the sweltering 35-degree heat, playing in two hockey matches, a netball match and an international netball tournament. This was a brilliant opportunity to play against international clubs and school teams, with matches against Dubai and Abu Dhabi colleges, and teams travelled in from neighbouring emirates. With mixed but respectable results, we came second in the plate netball competition and fourth overall, with a special commendation for Emma Bullough, who was named player of the tournament.

As well as sports, we experienced all the excursions the Middle East had to offer. We visited the wealthy business district, the Burj Khalifa and The Dubai Mall. In addition, trips to the traditional spice and gold souks of Dubai taught us about the brief, yet deep history of the 'rags to riches' story of the country. A highlight of the trip was the evening experience of sand dune driving and a traditional BBQ in the desert. The thrilling and scary journey over the dunes ended in the heart of the desert, where, under the beautiful sunset, we had the exciting opportunity to try sand surfing, camel riding and eating Arabic food, while watching talented belly dancers.

Overall, the trip was a great experience filled with thrilling activities and competitive sports matches, all in the 35-degree heat of the Dubai sun.



EMILY BRIGGS
(YEAR 11)



Year 9 Netball at Condover Hall

Sunny Shropshire – most of us were relieved to finally have reached our destination. Jade, our liaison, greeted us with smiles and laughs, which turned out to last our whole weekend. After dinner we went to do the evening activities – laser quest in an inflatable maze, tunnelling, dodging lasers and a challenging team memory game. Before going to our dorms, we explored the mansion a little more. Finally, we settled down to sleep, preparing for the day of netball ahead of us.

After breakfast, and with full stomachs, we took our time getting down to the netball courts ready for our first match. Cheering on the other teams and playing game after game, it was a whirlwind morning for us all. Our afternoon activities included abseiling, archery, body-zorbing, climbing, a Gladiator wall, trapeze and low ropes. We never ran out of things to do! After a hearty meal, we made our way back to the mansion, where music and flashing lights greeted us. Among the excitement and laughter, the netball rivalry between the teams was forgotten.

The next day brought more matches with the knockouts, semi-finals and final. We made our way through the ranks to the final, facing the unbeaten Woodhouse Grove. After an intense game, the yell of an umpire drowned all our worries. Crossley Heath had come out victorious.

SUNA ANANTHARAMAN
CHARLOTTE GREEN
(YEAR 9)

