Head of Sixth Form’s Welcome

This week we welcomed Dr Actar Sehra, CEO of Nivaura, as part of our Speakers’ Programme. A full write up is included and we thank him for his time.

As we draw to the close of term I want to highlight a few key dates.

On Tuesday 3rd July we will have our Sixth Form Transition Day. We have had over 200 students confirm their attendance and we are looking forward to meeting them! No Year 12 lessons will take place that day and we are asking all students, other than the Student Leadership Team, to use the day to:

• Visit universities or apprenticeship providers
• Research their next steps using unifrog
• Attend supercurricular activities
• Apply for work experience for the summer
• Prepare for any entrance examinations

Students will be expected to feedback to their tutors on how the day was utilised and we look forward to hearing about where the research undertaken on this day has led students.

On Tuesday 17th July from 3:00pm- 4.30pm we will host the Year 12 Results Afternoon. We will issue student results, including UCAS predictions. We will also give you a copy of the student and tutor reports which included a draft copy of their UCAS personal statement. We will go through all of this information with you. Parents and carers are expected to attend as this will be an opportunity to discuss results and predictions. Please put this date in your diaries.

Finally our Awards Evening will take place on Wednesday 18th July at 6pm (doors will be open from 5.30pm). This will be a lovely opportunity to celebrate the many achievements of this founding cohort and we look forward to seeing you then.

With best wishes,

Sugra Alibhai
Vice Principal and Head of Sixth Form

Key Dates

3rd July – Sixth Form Transition Day
6th July – INSET Day
(no school for students)
17th July - Year 12 Results Afternoon
18th July – Sixth Form Awards Evening
20th July - End of Term
6th September - Students Return
On June 19th our guest speaker, Dr Avtar Sehra, CEO of Nivaura, gave a presentation to INA sixth form about his life and the company he started three years ago.

Avtar explained that when he was young, being dyslexic meant that he struggled with literacy at school, but he learnt to compensate for his weakness in reading and writing by building on his strengths in art, maths and science.

He went on to study Physics at Imperial and Swansea. In Physics, he observed, you develop models to understand how things operate, and moving into quantitative analysis used similar skills to that used when developing models for Physics. (Quantitative analysis is analysis of a situation or event, especially a financial market, by means of complex mathematical and statistical modelling.)

He worked for a number of highly-prestigious banks, included Deutsche Bank, but then left and started his own company which is based in the UK and Italy. Avtar strongly believes that a company reflects its founders’ life and values and Nivaura’s name is taken from two words in Sanskrit and Greek which together mean ‘flow of energy’.

Avtar recommended three books that have influenced him greatly: The Innovator’s Dilemma, Sapiens: A brief History of Humankind and Richard P Feynman’s autobiography.

Also featured on his PowerPoint presentation were two Rubik’s cubes. Avtar explained that he enjoys solving these himself, but that his company also uses them as part of their interview process. The aim of this is, he told us, not to find out whether someone is able to solve the cube, but to observe the strategy used for trying to solve it. His company is looking for people who know how to solve problems, including using whatever means they have available to find out previous solutions. That is, they value less knowledge itself than the skills that someone has to acquire knowledge – which includes the ability to ask the right questions, along with the resilience and persistence to find a solution to a problem.

As to what Nivaura does, this was complicated and this write-up may well be a misrepresentation of what Avtar said. As far as I can understand it, Nivaura exists to provide a way to finance a venture, such as a new company, in an innovative, more direct and simple way that would otherwise require a great deal of complicated, lengthy and involved processes and would involve many more parties.
Avtar kindly left a lot of time to answer the wide-ranging and interesting questions that the students had already prepared.

Q: Do you do Bitcoin mining?
A: No, but the company is used by people who do.

Q: What are cryptocurrencies?
A: They are a means of synchronising a lot of financial transactions mathematically. (Again, this is not a very accurate representation of Avtar’s answer.)

Q: What is quantitative computational engineering?
A: Classical physics and maths can be used to model how things move and interact and you can use similar approaches to solve other problems.

Q: What made you choose theoretical physics over another field of physics?
A: I loved maths and problem-solving.

Q: Which A levels did you choose and why? Did you already have a career in mind when you chose them?
A: Maths, Physics and Computer Science. I nearly did Maths or Computer Science at university, but I was fascinated by ‘Star Trek’ and science fiction generally, which took me into Physics. But no, I didn’t have a career in mind when I chose these subjects.

Q: Did you prefer studying at Imperial College or Swansea University, and why?
A: I found Imperial quite hard, but by the time I was doing my PhD in Swansea I was more used to academia, so I enjoyed it more.

Q: What inspired you to complete a PhD?
A: Curiosity. I thought I’d like to see how far I could go with the subjects – in the end I did two theses because there were two areas I wanted to explore. I like to see things through to the end. Along with curiosity, it’s important to be resilient - not to give up when something gets hard. Also, be adaptable – because being adaptable means you’re unstoppable.

Q: What’s it like being a CEO of a company?
A: It’s exhausting. I used to work 15 hours a day in finance, but now I work 18 hours. If you’re passionate about something and you know what you are doing is making a difference, that sustains you. Also, you have to know the difference between management and leadership. As a CEO you have to have the respect of everyone in your company and that means you have to understand what everyone does. Often, with start-ups, you have done most of those jobs yourself.

Q: What’s it like being an Asian in a leadership role?
A: My parents have been in the UK since the ’60s and I was born here, but still when I was growing up, I often felt I didn’t belong. But when I went back to India, I felt I didn’t belong there either. Growing up like that leads to your feeling insecure. When you’re insecure you can let it overcome you and stop you from doing things, but I tried to understand my insecurity and not let it have a negative effect. With curiosity, passion and adaptability you can develop a set of skills which will help you overcome anything and people won’t see you as defined by your skin colour or your background, instead you will be defined by your strengths.

Avtar said “This is actually one of the first talks I have done in a school and it has been very interesting. I was very impressed with the students knowledge and level of insight and openness. I think one of the things that surprised me was the level of honesty in the questions that were asked. It is very refreshing because other talks I have done to corporate clients, they are much more reserved about the questions they ask and the more reserved questions are, the harder it is to get to the truth. With the questions asked today, the students probably got information from me than corporate clients would as they don’t necessarily ask the right questions. It is one of the things that is lost as people get older and move into the corporate world but it was great to see how honest and open the students were today.”

We would like to thank Dr Sehra for visiting us as part of the Speakers’ Programme and would love to welcome him back to INA soon.
Q: Where did you complete your Sixth Form, which A levels did you study, and why?
A: I attended Caterham Sixth Form and studied Art, Graphics, English and IT. I chose these subjects because they were of interest to me. I did not have a plan further than this, or how they may help my career in the future. I did not want to go to college and actually wanted to start working after leaving school or do an apprenticeship, but my mum made me do apply.

Q: Which HE institutions did you apply to, and why?
A: I applied to several art colleges including Chelsea, Ravensbourne, Central St Martins and The London College of Fashion. In honesty, I was poor academically and did not have the infrastructure or influence in my personal life to pursue academia. Saying this, I chose the creative route as this was more enjoyable to “study”. I use this term loosely as I actually enjoyed creativity, art, fashion, media, colours and spending time immersed in this appealed to me.

Q: Which college did you actually go to? Why?
A: I was accepted by Central St Martins College on an unconditional offer. At the time I did not know how prestigious it was, or how hard I needed to work when I got there. I thought I could rely on “talent” to pass and get accepted onto the degree course the following year. I was not accepted and had to go through clearing to eventually be accepted by the Kent Institute of Art and design to study a BA in Fashion Promotions. This was the proverbial “kick up the backside” I needed, meaning I aced my first year on the degree course, coming top of the class.
Q: Which course did you choose? Why?
A: I chose Fashion Promotions because it most closely matched what I was interested in and I believed it would help me build on my strengths.

Q: What was the best thing about doing that course at that university?
A: One of the best parts of my course was mixing with people of different ethnicities and cultures. I made friends from all over the world and it helped me expand my limited experiences of life in East London. The way people approached group projects, for example, was exciting to be around. I was a “straight A” student in my first year and then decided to drop out in my second year because it was too easy, plus I wanted to make money. Having financial challenges as a family shaped my choices for a long time as I wanted to free my family from debt and so I “blagged” a job at Burberry in London, before deciding to go back to University the following year to try finishing my course. Doing this re-affirmed my decision in the first year to drop out, and so I decided to apply for roles which interested me, and I got offered a job in marketing for a furniture start-up in Ireland.

Q: What was/were the best thing/s you did outside your studies while you were at college?
A: Outside of studying, I had a lot of fun! We partied a lot and I also spent a lot of time travelling from Kent to Uxbridge to visit my girlfriend (now wife). I visited so often, people thought I attended Brunel and in fact met my future business partner there, too.

Q: How did you get into your current line of work?
A: I got into my current line of work as follows: Uni > dropped out to work in a furniture startup > was made redundant after 8 months, during which time I bought my first flat at 22 and had a mortgage of £900 a month to pay > got an emergency job as an estate agent to pay my mortgage > my friend got me an interview at a stockbrokers firm > I got the job and started from the bottom and worked my way up for 1 year> moved to a corporate finance company and stayed for 2 years becoming the top performer > was head hunted to join an international property company > helped set up the investment division > saw an opportunity and co-founded a property development company in India, building 152 apartments > sold my stake in the business and founded my current business > started consulting and offering business advice 2018.

Q: Is there a decision you made that you are particularly happy about in retrospect?
A: A decision I am happy about in retrospect is making the choice to take full ownership of all decisions in my life, including the choices relating to feelings or my mental health. I cannot choose what happens in life, or what others will do, though I can choose how I respond (not react). This is an ongoing education.

Q: Is there a decision you made that you regret in retrospect?
A: I do not have regrets in life, though looking back, I made choices based on finances rather than on what was right for my life or what would make me happy. Though it is difficult at the time, choosing what is right for you is always the right choice.

Q: What message would you want the INA Sixth Form students to take away from your experience?
A: A message for INA students: When you have a decision to make, ask yourself, do you trust yourself? If no, then you have some work to do, if yes, then go for it. Trust yourself, back yourself and love yourself, because if you do this, you will become an unstoppable force. Do this daily and make it a habit.
Sixth Form Transition Day

Tuesday 3rd July

All Sixth Form applicants are expected to attend the INA Sixth Form Transition Day on Tuesday 3rd July.

We have organised a series of taster lessons, ice breakers and information sessions for students. We hope that the transition day will provide you with ample information and preparation for joining the INA Sixth Form.

Isaac Newton Academy, 1 Cricklefield Place, Ilford, IG1 1FY
Join us in celebrating our first

Sixth Form Awards Evening

18th July 2018

6pm - 7:15pm

Refreshments will be available from 5:30pm

Two tickets will be issued to each Year 12 student ahead of the event.

Dress code: Smart
The Year of Wonder Woman
26 June 2018
6pm - 8pm

Attend this screening of the 1975 pilot of the TV show Wonder Woman, which was released in the United Nations’ Year of the Woman and the year of the Sex Discrimination Act in the UK.

Placing the pilot in context of ‘second-wave’ feminism and discussion around the representation of women in media at the time, Dr Amanda Potter will introduce 70s Wonder Woman with a reflection on her more recent incarnation. The 2017 version travels back to World War One era London, when women did not have the vote and has been claimed, by some critics, as a post-feminist superhero and by others as embodying ‘third-wave’ feminism. How feminist is Wonder Woman, then and now? You decide.

Dr Amanda Potter is a Research Fellow at the Open University, where she completed her PhD in 2014 on viewer reception of classical myth on television. She has published on Xena: Warrior Princess, Charmed, Doctor Who, Torchwood, HBO Rome, Starz Spartacus and mythology based fanfiction.

Click here for more information.

Lauren Slater on ‘Lies and Lying’
26 June 2018
6pm - 8pm

Writer, Institute of Advanced Studies, A psychologist and writer, Lauren Slater is the author of several memoirs. The Institute of Advanced Studies is delighted to welcome Lauren Slater for this talk.

In Lying, first published in 2000, Lauren Slater forces readers to redraw the boundary between what we know as fact and what we believe through the creation of our own personal fictions. Mixing memoir with mendacity, Slater examines memories of her youth, when after being diagnosed with a strange illness she developed seizures and neurological disturbances – and the compulsion to lie.

Openly questioning the reliability of memoir itself, Slater presents the mesmerizing story of a young woman who discovers not only what plagues her but also what cures her – the birth of her sensuality, her creativity as an artist, and storytelling as an act of healing.

Click here for more information.
YAG Summer School

On the intensive week-long programme you will meet and learn from the best in both journalism and publishing. You will focus on honing your skills as a journalist and take a step into the world of publishing.

To give you a flavour of our summer school’s jam-packed week, you will:

- Learn the ABC of good journalism
- Meet and interview journalists and editors
- Learn how to produce and shoot videos
- Create your own news or literary podcast
- Be a data journalist by investigating facts and figures
- Review the latest books, films, TV and music

The summer school will take place from Sunday, 26th August to Friday, 31st August 2018. Please make sure you are available for the whole week before applying.

The closing date for applications is Sunday, 15th July 2018, 23.59pm.

We will be in touch on Tuesday, 17th July.

If you are successful you will need to attend group interviews on either Saturday, 21st July or Sunday, 22nd July, so please keep these dates free.

Good luck!

Click here for more information.

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UKMT Video Competition!

Teams of two to six students from Years 7 to 13 are invited to participate!

Produce a short film with your classmates describing...

Mathematics in the Natural World

I am looking for students with a flair for video production and editing who are willing to take on the challenge of exploring and explaining real-life mathematical concepts in a fun and entertaining “youtuber” style.

If you would like to take part and need help to get started please come and find Mr. Dewal or email me at: a.dewal@isaacnewtonacademy.org for further details.

Mr. Dewal
Mathematics Teacher/Ambassador for Higher Attainers
This free full-day event for Year 12 students (ages 16-17) studying A-level mathematics is designed to broaden mathematical horizons, give a stimulating introduction to advanced mathematical problem-solving, and encourage students to consider studying Mathematics at university.

The event will give an insight into some challenging, exciting and rewarding mathematics, and will support students to develop their mathematical thinking and confidence in tackling challenging problems. The day will be highly interactive: it includes a mix of talks and small-group workshops led by the NRICH team and staff from the University of Cambridge Mathematics Faculty.

Click here for more information.

Can Society Once Again Make Finance Servant, Not Master of the Economy?

6:30pm to 8:00pm
26 June 2018

In February 2018, Jeremy Corbyn accused bankers of taking the economy hostage, and said in a speech that Britain’s financial sector will be “the servant of industry not the masters of all” if the Labour Party wins the next election. How realistic is that promise? In this lecture Ann Pettifor will argue that given the dependency of the finance sector on the largesse of the state and its taxpayers, a Labour government could transform the relationship between finance and industry.

Click here for more information.

Free to think? Epistemic authority and thinking for oneself

18:30 - 19:45
26 June 2018

We depend on others for much of what we believe. Does this dependence undermine our ability to determine for ourselves what to think? I discuss two ancient responses to this question. For Cicero, our freedom to think depends upon our having no compelling argument for one view rather than another. By contrast, for Olympiodorus we are free (or ‘self-moved’) insofar as we form beliefs on the basis of a certain kind of compelling argument (a ‘demonstration’). Is freedom, understood in either of these ways, something valuable? Can demonstrative arguments either undermine or preserve our ability to think for ourselves? Click here for more information.
**Plan B:**
‘Note taking’ and ‘10 things you need to know about happiness’
03 July 2018
6pm-8pm

“If Plan A didn’t work the alphabet has 25 more letters!”

At Birkbeck, University of London we appreciate that education isn’t linear, and some of the biggest barriers to accessing university is confidence, especially around academic study skills. Things like note-taking, academic reading and critical analysis, to name a few.

**ENTER PLAN B!**

**WHAT IS PLAN B AND IS IT FOR ME?**

- Plan B is FREE programme for prospective students, designed to help boost confidence and develop transferable academic study skills. It consists of two parts, in one session:
  - Interactive academic study skills workshop
  - Taster lecture, to put into practice the academic skill just developed

[Click here](#) for more information.

**Festival of Stuff**

07 July 2018
1pm - 5pm

Join the Institute of Making to celebrate the sheer joy of stuff, as it hosts a one-day, large-scale, drop-in and totally free street festival with a wealth of curious things to get stuck into making and doing.

London’s most engaging lab will be bringing back it’s favourite activities from the past year as well as some new discoveries.

The event will take over Malet Place and fill it to the brim with delectable making madness, including mind-boggling demonstrations, exciting making stations, good music and improbable food stalls. As always, the Institute’s Makespace will also be open to the public, giving visitors the chance to have a glimpse of the magic goings-on inside and the opportunity to have a closer look at the Materials Library and it’s beautiful and wondrous collection of stuff.

**Open to:** Alumni | Public | Academic | Student

**Admission:** Free

**Ticketing:** Open

[Click here](#) for more information.
Rapid robot development
10.30am to 4.30pm, Thursday 26 July (£50)
You will design and build their own cardboard robot, based on an Arduino microcontroller.
Click here for details.

The enigma of cryptography
10.30am to 4.30pm, Monday 30 July (£50)
You will learn about historical codes and ciphers, making use of a working WWII Enigma machine.
Click here for details.

An introduction to rocket science
10.30am to 4.30pm, Friday 3 August (£50)
You will explore the theory of rockets and space travel, and design a mission to Mars.
Click here for details.

Adventures in topology
10.30am to 4.30pm, Tuesday 7 August (£50)
You will explore topology, the world of 3D shapes and the mysteries within.
Click here for details.

Spectacular colour chemistry
11.00am to 3.00pm, Thursday 9 August (£40)
You will discover what a colour actually is, understand how objects become coloured, and how chemists can manipulate these aspects to produce dyes and pigments.
Click here for details.

Adam Smith: what he thought, and why it matters
09 July 2018
6:30pm - 8pm

At a time when economics and politics are both increasingly polarized between left and right, this book, Adam Smith: What He Thought, and Why it Matters, which Jesse Norman will discuss at this event, returns to intellectual first principles to recreate the lost centre of public debate. It offers a Smithian analysis of contemporary markets, predatory capitalism and the 2008 financial crash; it addresses crucial issues of inequality, human dignity and exploitation; and it provides a compelling explanation of why Smith is central to any attempt to defend and renew the market system.

Click here for more information.