

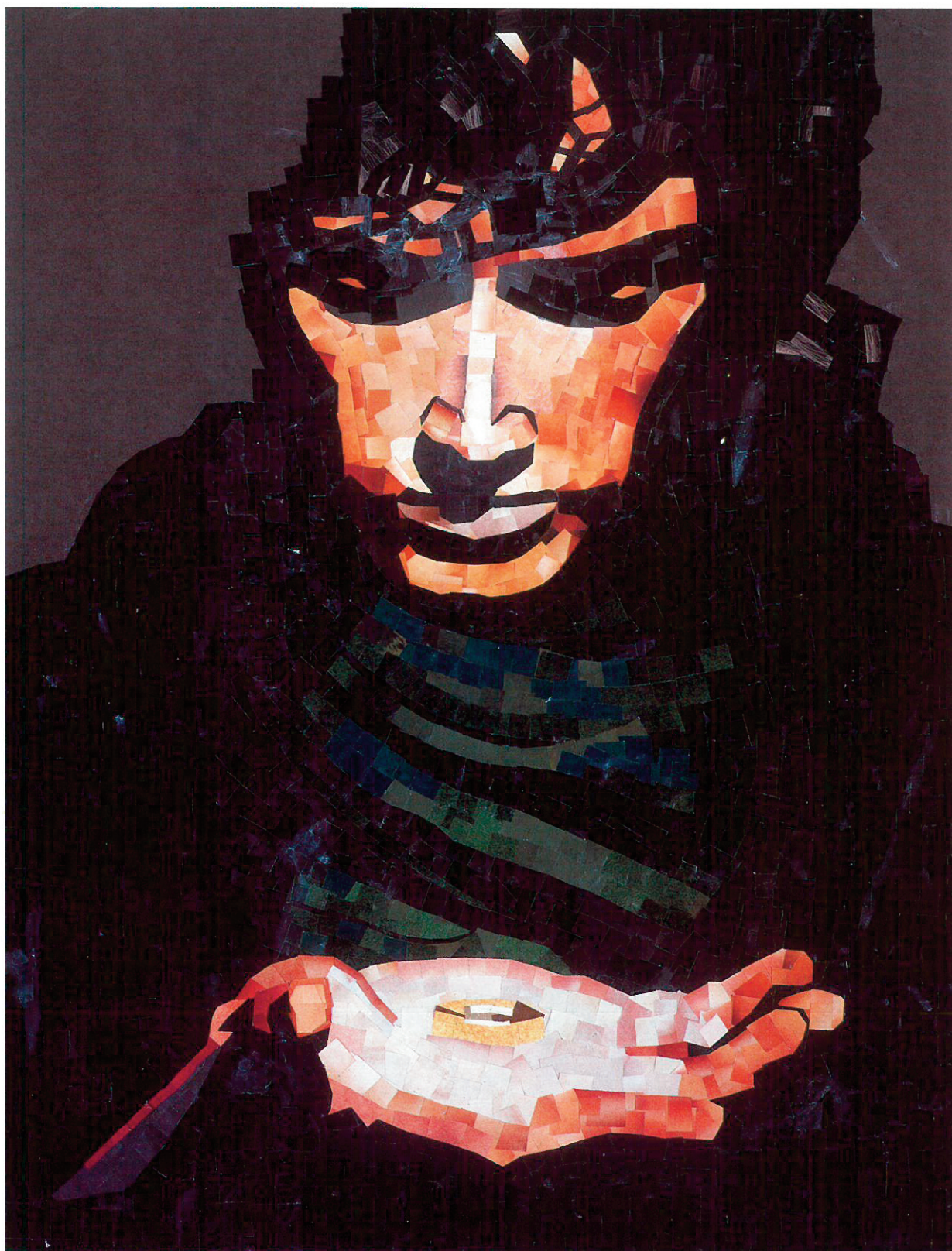
'Illumination': Faye Bennett, age 15





'Study for September 11th': Valerie Furnham, age 17





'Lord of the Rings': Joy Flatt, age 17





Zulekhka Waheed, age 17



# Creative Writing

## Year 11

### RADA Course

A couple of months ago I saw an advert in the *Stage* newspaper for a summer course at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA). They had recently created a new company with The Old Vic, and this year for the first time they were running courses at The Old Vic as a joint venture. The new company is called RADA at The Old Vic. It is run by a committee of directors from RADA and The Old Vic plus a number of actors. One of those actors closely involved is Kevin Spacey, who happens to be my favourite actor.

I applied for an intensive course designed for those who are seriously considering acting as a career. I had to complete an application form, that detailed my acting experiences so far, and my education. This was sent to RADA with my photograph. A few days later I was interviewed over the telephone and a week later I received a letter confirming my place on the Young Actors Intensive Course which takes place for two weeks in July.

During the two weeks, we study two plays with the directors of RADA and the directors of The Old Vic, as the instructors, then perform one of them to an invited audience of agents, casting directors and talent scouts. I have been told that there will be eight others on the course.

Naturally I was thrilled! I shall send you an update when I have completed the course! The only other piece of news is that I have now decided to use my mother's maiden name, so I am now Kate McGann . . . it will be my professional name! I will keep in touch.

Best wishes for the Summer.

Katie Salt . . . now Kate McGann

### Beijing

Beijing is the well developed capital of China. The busy roads and modernised underground are built around the famous ancient buildings. The Great Wall, separating China from enemies in the past, was built incredibly high and made of stone. I appreciate that the people work strikingly hard under the boiling hot weather, seeking their ambitious way of living. The street is full of food stores and the food is dirt cheap!

Joyce Lu, Year 11

### Brighton Beach

A funicular pebbled beach along the south-east coastline of England with a placid azure blue sea. Brighton has become one of the most attractive summer resorts. Three months a year, the peaceful town becomes hectic with thousands of tourists. The vacant beach is coloured by bikinis worn by people who are sunbathing. Most of them change to pink happily. Seagulls glide in the sky and cry intermittently. The sky is so clear that it mingles together with the end of the sea. Some sporty people come here and play water sports such as windsurfing and diving. Beach volleyball is very popular as well.

Along the beach, there are lots of indigenous shops which sell fish & chips and some traditional sweets and other products.

Joyce Lu

### Holidays

My last holiday was in Kachiano, a small archaic island in Korea. It is famous for its crystal clear harbour where masses of fish are caught for sashimi and sushi, the most popular and traditional foods there. Although there is no fragrance, the taste of sashimi and sushi are unbelievably delicious. Even my mum, who doesn't like to eat uncooked food, thought they were wonderful - freshly knifed pieces of fish which have just been taken down from fishermen's hooks soaked with the freshness of nature and a tasteful sauce.

Unlike the capital city Seoul, people in Kachiano are more concerned about their customs and traditions. They wear simple plain clothes with large aprons and waterproof boots which makes it easy for them to fish. Also, they are very hospitable and polite. They welcome tourists and treat them heartily like close friends.

I was soothed by this tranquil and peaceful environment. All the stress and unhappiness were removed from my mind when sitting on the rocky beach down in fishing village watching waves approach, from dawn to dusk. Although there were not many exciting things to do in Kachiano, I enjoyed the simple way of life and the awesome view of the sea there.

Queenie See, Year 11



## Creative Writing

### Year 12

#### Celebration of the Iranian New Year

The Iranian New Year is different from the normal New Year. We start our year on the first day of Spring, which is on the 21st March.

Usually, we set out seven things which start with S and sounds S in Farsi. They are usually seven things which were organic ones, such as wheat, apples and money in coins. We also put the Quran, a gold fish, some gold, money, a mirror, water with red apples floating on it, on a table for different cultural reasons.

We put the Quran because it is our Holy book, a gold fish because it brings life and beauty, gold and money because it is believed that it will bring more money in the coming years, a mirror and water because again it is believed that these things bring brightness to your life and safety.

The last Wednesday is usually celebrated by young people with fireworks and usually the family clears out all the rubbish that they have and all the old things that they want to throw away and they burn them. When the fire is a bit smaller then everybody jumps over it. This means the heat of the fire will burn all the evil inside you.

The New Year's season gets celebrated for thirteen days after the 21st March and during this time you go to visit people, usually the older people in your family, to show your respect for them, and you get visited by the other relatives. During this time all the work places are closed for five days and some people extend this holiday. Also at this time you have so many different dried nuts to put out for the guests and all kinds of sweets and cakes and biscuits. On the thirteenth of this month of the year, which is the last day of your New Year holiday, you have a picnic with your family and probably your close relatives. You take some wheat which you have grown for the New Year and you have to put it in flowing water, like a river, and let it go and you usually free your gold fish as well. Young, single people knot bunches of growing grass together and they wish they will be married by this time next year. The Iranian festival is really interesting if you understand what goes on, but as I haven't been to Iran for the New Year since I was thirteen, I had forgotten what everything symbolises until I asked my Iranian aunt.

Neda Baharan, Year 12

#### Jane Eyre – Book Review

This is a passionate love story, set in the 19th century in England.

It's about a little girl called Jane Eyre whose parents died. After that she lives with her aunt who is very unfair and wicked and sent her to boarding school for orphans. This boarding school is being run by Mr Brocklehurst who treats pupils very badly.

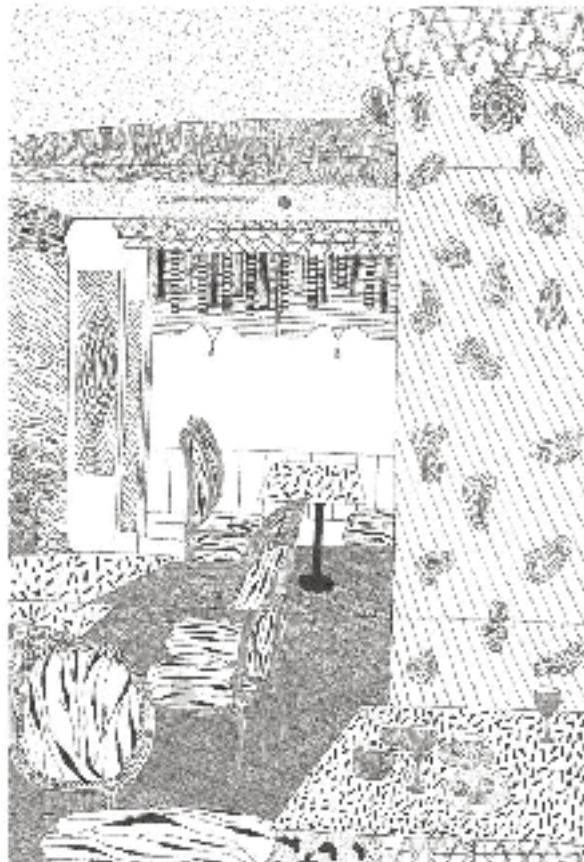
Jane makes some friends including a kind teacher who encourages her to learn. Jane was clever and wanted to be independent so she left school and became a governess for a young girl in Mr Rochester's house – Thornfield House, which is a rich estate.

Jane falls in love with Mr Rochester but there are serious barriers preventing their happiness. Eventually, Jane feels that she has to leave Thornfield House. Life is very hard for her after this and she has to overcome many problems. She receives some surprising information that turns her life upside down. At this point she has to make a lot of decisions which affect her future.

The story is told by Jane herself so we get to know how she feels more deeply. I got really involved in the story and wanted things to work out for her, it made me keep reading and I even cheated by reading the last page.

I would recommend this book to everyone who likes to read about a person's life. I found it easy to read and understand.

Neda Baharan, Year 12



Lindsay Cheng, age 14



## Miscellany

### Unhinged

My High School was a Sixties block  
In a Northern tower with a town hall  
clock.

My third year there, it was the case  
That the Music Room became our base  
As form rooms go, it was very cosy  
When we came in with cheeks all rosy.  
Wild from the playground, running about,  
We'd never talk but always shout!

One day a new game was invented,  
A fear of dying it presented ...  
We took it in turn to swing on the door!  
Holding both handles, feet off the floor!  
While one of us would play this beauty,  
Others watched for staff on duty!

We may have had some conscience  
twinges,  
But never dreamed it would SNAP AT  
THE THINGS,  
Splinters of wood falling everywhere,  
Just when I was swinging there!

The sickening crash brought the nearest  
teacher  
Who soon turned into a regular  
preacher  
On 'Guns' Behaviour' and 'Showing  
Respect'.  
We all surveyed our classroom wrecked.

So who is the teacher who years before  
Was the girl who fell off the Music Room  
door!

### Denise Lewis

Denise Lewis is also known as the 'British Athlete's Golden Girl'. Denise Lewis was the heptathlon champion at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. Before this, Denise had won several other medals. She won a bronze in Atlanta in 1996, a world championship silver in 1997 and European championship and Commonwealth golds in 1998. In Sydney she lived out her ultimate dream ...

Denise endured a painful heptathlon in Sydney but she overcame this and continued doing her very best. I think this was her ultimate dream because in 1991 she was a contender and narrowly lost to her compatriot Liz McColgan. If she had won this she would have been following in the footsteps of Mary Peters, who had won both Olympic gold and Sports Personality in 1972.

To tell you more about Denise, I'm going to tell you about the determination that she had to win in the 2000 Olympics. Denise knew that this time round it was going to be a painful experience. She suffered her painful foot injury to take the Gold Medal in the heptathlon after a brave 800m. Denise knew that if she was going to succeed anything she was going to have to finish 10 seconds behind Russia's Yelena Prokhorova. She became worried at one point as Yelena stormed ahead leaving Denise behind on the final straight. Despite her injury Denise was too determined now to just let everything slip, she kept the gap only six seconds between them so she could succeed in getting gold. Every event for her must have been like running an uphill struggle, she is a bright and pretty young lady so when she was honoured by becoming champion she was so thankful. In one event she saw the

Olympic champion for 1996 pulled out at the first hurdle, also Eunice Barber who was the favourite to win this, pulled out after five events. It was sheer determination which made Denise carry on and not pull out with the others. Denise said, "I said at the beginning it would be about who could survive, and that the fittest would survive, and I have to say I nearly didn't make it. But here I am."

Denise has clearly inspired many people and in some young eyes she is an idol. During the last round of the long jump she hurt her foot and wasn't sure whether or not it was going to be a passing thing. Towards the end it got worse and worse. She nearly didn't make it to the javelin.

Denise wouldn't be able to achieve all of this without the great team she has. The doctors and physios were always trying to come up with ways of coping for her foot. They even talked about giving her an injection at one point to lessen the pain she was suffering.

She says, "It must have been money on my side and the fantastic crowd support that spurred me on and I made it through those two laps of the 800m which wasn't easy, it was my worst 800m this year and I loved it."

Denise did this, not for herself, but for her country, which she loves and respects greatly. She loves the crowd and probably wouldn't have made it through the usual struggle of the 800m without them.

6584 was her total score. This went down as a personal best on her record.

In the first day of the Olympics she finished third. She jumped 6.48m to move up to second place and then took over the lead after throwing 50.19m with the final throw in javelin. The only other people that came close were Saarela with 43.92m and Prokhorova 45.00m. Denise got a boost when she found out France's Eunice Barber made her bid after making only one attempt in the long jump. Her biggest help was when France's heptathlon world champion was in trouble with injury throughout that season and took the decision to quit in Sydney after consultation with her team after her constant thigh problems.

I can honestly say that Denise Lewis is my idol, she is not this just because of sport, but her sheer determination to do it whatever happened to her and her appreciation for her country and her fans. She has enthusiasm for the things she does. She doesn't only do one sport, she does many. She finds time to do them all, and is always there for her family.

Enthusiasm, appreciation, determination, an idol, pretty, energetic, you could have just said Denise Lewis is the first place.

### Tennis Star Katie Russo's Newest Challenge

Katie was among 48 girls and 48 boys invited to play at Wimbledon this summer. Still only 13 years of age, Katie reached the quarter-final, yet her opponent, the number one seed, is already 14.

The next day she left the UK for a week's training in Barcelona at the Andres Gimeno Tennis Academy. She is now leaving St Mary's Hall as she has been offered a place at this prestigious academy, because the coaches were so impressed by both her achievements and potential.

Their gain will be our loss.

Katie has been a great pupil, she has many friends here who all wish her well. We'll all watch her progress with interest.

Buena Suerte!





## Creative Writing

### Year 13

#### An Evening with Andrew Motion

As we climbed into the taxi on a cold September evening, I had no idea what to expect. Earlier that day, Mrs Fincham had come into school brandishing leaflets about a poetry reading and said she had some free tickets. I decided to go because I like poetry and I wanted to see the magnificent St Bartholomew's Church which I had heard so much about.

When we arrived, I saw that I had made the right choice. As we entered the enormous building (said to be built to the same proportions as Noah's Ark), there was an expectant air. We made our way to seats near the front and I made myself comfortable, not knowing how long 'this guy' was going to speak for. As we waited, Mrs Fincham informed us that he was the Poet Laureate.

As he started to speak I lost all power of speech. His voice was wonderfully rich and warm and his style of speech was familiar, witty and enthralling. The first poem he read was called 'Serenade' and was about his mother and her horse. As I listened, my view of poetry was changed forever. I sat and let the words wash over me, listening with both heart and mind.

Suddenly it was all over. Two pupils from other schools read some poetry to launch the poetry reading competition, and it was finished. After a quick photo-call and a glass of orange juice, we got a taxi back to school. As I looked out of the window and saw Brighton at night for the first time, I realised that my view on poetry and also the world around us had changed.

I felt inspired, exhausted, enthused and happy.

Sarah Cockett, Year 13

#### Chinese New Year

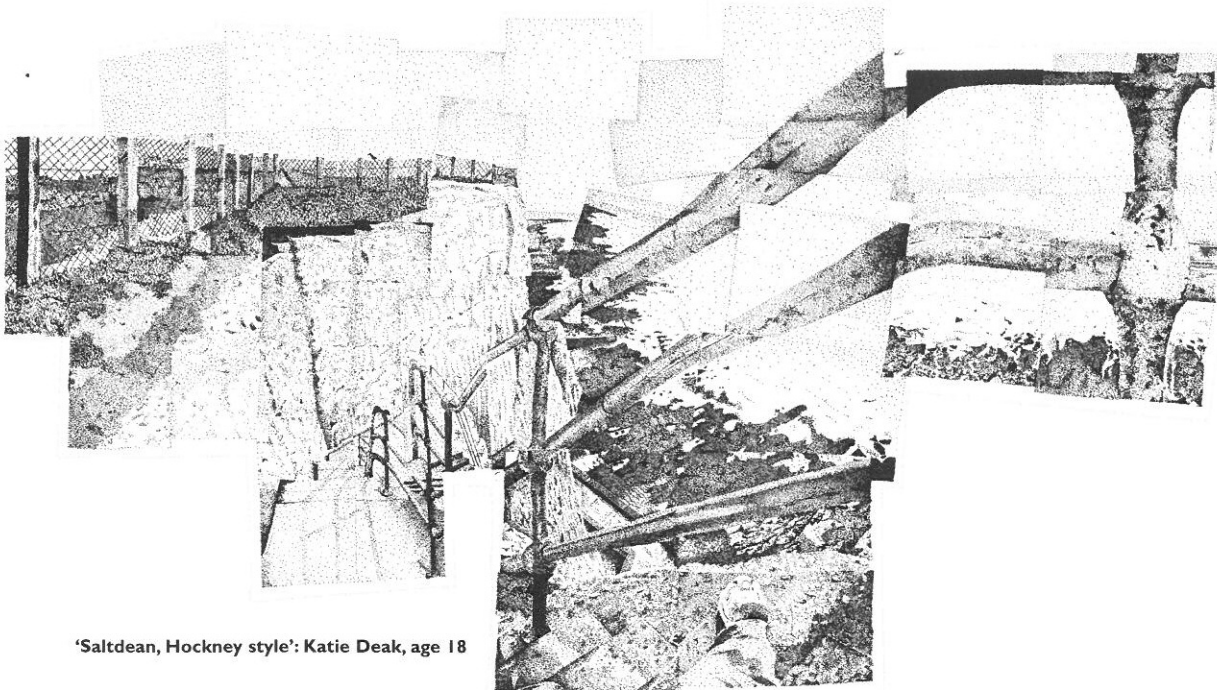
In China, we've got a special festival called New Year. It's somewhat like Christmas in Western countries. New Year is the only time when all families gather together and stores and businesses are closed for several days. The date of New Year is always between January and February.

Ten years ago, New Year was a very exciting festival for me, because we ate lots of delicious dishes, wore new clothes, visited relatives or friends, and even had fireworks. The government just allowed fireworks in the countryside, and I live near the countryside; consequently I have dazzling fireworks every year. The biggest present in the New Year is money gifts. Normally, people put money in a red packet, and this red colour means 'lucky'.

For parents, New Year is a busy time as they need to clean their house, cook lots of dishes, and prepare new clothes for their children.

At present, lots of people are on holiday in New Year, having a New Year's evening meal in the restaurant. This is modern life, but on the other hand, we are losing our cultural traditions. The atmosphere of New Year is becoming less special and exciting.

Hong Hong, Year 13



'Saltdean, Hockney style': Katie Deak, age 18