

## **Public Speaking Competition: March 11<sup>th</sup> 2010**

We were delighted that the Annual Public Speaking Competition for 14-16 year-olds from London schools was again able to be held in the superb venue of Eversheds in the City, thanks to the generosity of Freeman Glynne Stanfield. This has become our regular home now, and we are always extremely well looked after: the young people, their staff and the audience greatly appreciate the elegant surroundings and certainly enjoy the excellent refreshments.

This year, five schools, of very different characters, were able to participate, and we were expecting our record number of entrants, 14: however, various forms of ailment kept three away, so we had 11 speakers in all. We were very sorry that Freeman Lyn Williams was unable to impart her usual words of wisdom this year, but were extremely fortunate to secure the judging services of Court Assistant Davina Lloyd and Honorary Freeman (and Past Master Baker) Francis Bergin, both of whom brought great experience and imparted shrewd advice from which the speakers learnt much. The Immediate Past Master was privileged to chair so distinguished a panel. We were thrilled that the current Master hot-footed it from an event with Princess Anne at the Guildhall to be able to present the prizes, thus combining royalty and loyalty in one evening. The list of speakers and topics is given below, together with the names of the winners and runners-up.

1.	<b>Patrick Benjamin</b>	<b>CLS</b>	<b>'CCTV: necessity or intrusion?'</b>
2.	<b>Leo Sands</b>	<b>UCS</b>	<b>'Our attitude to the war on terror'</b>
3.	<b>Muhammad Patel</b>	<b>Little Ilford</b>	<b>'Mobile Phone Addiction'</b>
4.	<b>Joel Nelson</b>	<b>UCS</b>	<b>'The monarchy should be scrapped'</b>
5.	<b>Agonita Qerimi</b>	<b>Westminster Academy</b>	<b>'Fit for the future: why a healthy lifestyle matters'</b>
6.	<b>Ethan Ezra</b>	<b>CLS</b>	<b>'Celebrity culture has gone too far'</b>
7.	<b>Imran Hussain</b>	<b>Little Ilford</b>	<b>'The multi-cultural city: can it work?'</b>
8.	<b>Sarah O'Keeffe</b>	<b>CLS (Girls)</b>	<b>'Respect: do we all deserve it?'</b>
9.	<b>Joey Badawi Crook</b>	<b>UCS</b>	<b>'Democracy'</b>
10.	<b>Ubah Dahir Academy</b>	<b>Westminster Academy</b>	<b>'Are we all slaves to the latest trends?'</b>
11.	<b>Jamie Loyn</b>	<b>CLS</b>	<b>'I'd like to teach the world to sing'</b>



*The Master with the Winner and Runners-up*

<b>Winner</b>	<b>Imran Hussain</b>	<b>Little Ilford School</b>
<b>Runners-up</b>	<b>Sarah O’Keeffe</b>	<b>City of London School for Girls</b>
	<b>Leo Sands</b>	<b>University College School</b>

It has become a cliché to say that the standard of entries was particularly high this year, but this was confirmed by the comments of regular attenders, and the judges felt that all speeches had real merits: they agreed that all who spoke were indeed highly commendable, and they nominated no fewer than eight as potential winners, so that the fact that the judges had a ‘really difficult decision’ was truer than ever. In the end, they opted for the sensitivity and keen intelligence of Imran’s approach to the challenges of a multi-cultural society: he also impressed by delivering much of his speech without notes and by handling difficult questions by thinking quickly on his feet, and with great assurance.

In their remarks, the judges commented on the clarity of the vocal projection, on the arresting beginnings and use of humour, and on the conviction with which challenging and controversial topics were tackled. There was much excellent eye-contact, with the speakers engaging directly and effectively with their attentive audience, who responded with some testing questions that failed to throw the resourceful young speakers.

Freeman Pamela Taylor was thanked warmly for her hard work and organisation. She was grateful to the Company for its financial backing and to those Educators who supported, showing warm appreciation and a sense that the competition makes a real contribution to our annual programme. One wrote:

**“I had a wonderful evening and think that the event is one of the best things that the Educators put on... a cracking evening's entertainment - what more could anyone want?”**

Thanks are due to the judges, to the staff of the schools who had prepared their students so well, to Eversheds and Glynne Stanfield, and above all the students themselves, who continue to give us faith in the capacity of our education system to turn out articulate, thoughtful and charming young people.

DWT