



### **Year 9 boys celebrate Eastern and Western culture for a day**

“One of the most exciting things about being alive today is the convergence of east and west, of ancient and modern...” Buddhist David Michie in *Why Mindfulness is Better than Chocolate*.

Year 9 students were immersed in eastern and western cultures recently, as they participated in the annual East-West Day. East-West Day gave the boys a taste of long-standing historical traditions hailing from China, Japan, Germany and France.

Ms Nicola Griffin-Appadoo, Head of Languages, said the aim of East-West Day was to ignite the boys’ interest in the world around them.

“Whether they study a language or not, we want our boys to have an awareness and understanding of the many cultures around the world - we want them to have a global perspective.”

Teachers from Subiaco Petanque Club, including an international pétanque player, taught the boys this ancient French sport under sunny blue skies. One boy was impressed to learn that “pétanque is a sport that is played worldwide and has international championships”. There are six pétanque clubs in Perth where boys can further their skills.

Boys were interested to learn that Kung Fu means self-defence and appreciated learning practical skills in aikijitsu and aikido. The Chinese martial arts date back hundreds of years and movements are based on observing the ways that five main animals move. The boys discovered martial arts were developed to defend temples and anything can be used as a weapon. Whilst students were amazed to see fierce-looking weapons and were treated to weapon displays, they practised their moves using fans. The moves were similar to dance moves and required balance and skill.

Throughout the day there were opportunities to learn dance traditions. They learnt that the French country dances with sticks reflect the farming need to remove ‘muck from their clogs’, and German dance traditions included finding out about the complex patterns of May pole dancing and then practising the very energetic Bavarian-Austrian *Schuhplattler*, which historians believe to be of Neolithic origin from before 3000 BC. During the workshops and at lunchtime the boys were treated to exciting displays of Chinese lion dancing. This was performed before battles to bring good luck. A student commented that he had learnt that “Chinese lion dancing is difficult and requires a lot of skill and martial arts are about defence and not attacking.”

At lunchtime ‘Les Crepes de Paris’ demonstrated how to make authentic French crepes and the boys relished eating them with a variety of fillings. All students enjoyed watching lunchtime demonstrations of lion dancing, Chinese drumming, martial arts and weaponry.

Japanese calligraphy and origami was a more reflective workshop. Students learned the story of the one thousand cranes and got to create model planes. Using ancient Japanese techniques (but on modern specially treated drying paper) the boys used their brushes to create Japanese characters in time-honoured tradition. One boy said he was fascinated to learn that Japanese calligraphy can be worth a lot of money and it must be done with the right hand.

There was a model plane competition and the winners were Edward Grayling, Chirag Saxena and Angus Kitto. The winner of the paper crane competition was Thomas McQuillan. Congratulations boys

and thank you for the contagious enthusiasm you displayed.

The most popular workshop was the German fussball. As all workshops were varied and interesting the boys learnt a great deal from many different perspectives.

One mother provided the following reflection:

"I wanted to let you know how delighted we were to see the school organising the cultural East-West Day. Our son thoroughly enjoyed it and was very impressed with the way it was presented. While learning from books and the internet is fine, hands on workshops like these help to make education a far more enjoyable experience. Well done to Nicky Griffin-Appadoo and her team for the hours of work they will have spent on this. We do appreciate it."