

My day at the Luffield Science Festival

Wednesday 26th June 2019

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I was invited to attend the Luffield Science Festival and happily grasped at the offer. This is due to the fact that science is one of my many favourite subjects that just go above some of the others. I arrived at school and after registering myself in form, I left to go and find Miss Curness who was the person responsible for organising the event in collaboration with The Royal Latin School and Magdalen College School. When I arrived there were no other students there as the three Year Eight students that were to also attend were in assembly, so after a short wait reading my book, I finally met the three people I would be working with. My science teacher Ms Rodrigues was also present.

The six of us, including the two teachers, walked the short journey to the Royal Latin School which was to host the event in the Discovery Centre. It was weird as it was only a short walk to the school as we are so close there is very little space in between the two sets of grounds. We walked around trying to find reception and after a minute or so we found it and were led through the hallway to a nice room where we sat, talked and waited for all the schools to arrive. After a brief wait we were led through a maze of corridors and out towards the science block, the feeling reminded me of my first day, as the unfamiliarity of somewhere large and new dawned on me compared to what I now regard as familiar at the Buckingham School.

We arrived at the science block and were shown a presentation telling us about what we were going to be doing. I was so excited as it was revealed we were doing forensic evidence Cluedo! We were then put into groups and I was placed with a Royal Latin student called Ellen and a Magdalen student called Cameron. We were given a story "Miss Scarlett had been hosting a dinner party for her friends Colonel Mustard, Reverend Green, Mrs Peacock and Professor Plum and with Mrs White, of course, as the Chef. The gardener Mr Plant had been murdered and Mrs White had found the body in the hallway. We were given motives for each character that ranged from minor disputes to being his ex-wife in Mrs Peacock's case."

We were taken to another room and told that a threatening letter had been found in the grounds and a pen was collected from each suspect. We performed chromatography on each pen in turn and made a short list of suspects using the results when compared to a piece of chromatographed letter. After that we did a Bunsen burner experiment, burning powders that were on people's clothes at the time and matching them to the powder that was found on Mr Plant's clothes until we got a match - that was really fun! Finally we examined the powder under microscopes before a tour around at break time.

After break we examined people's clothes to get a match to the material that was found on Mr Plant's clothes, along with the powder. The material on Mr Plant was polyester which is manmade along with linen, which made it hard to tell the difference. The final experiment was soil testing which showed us the amounts of acids and alkali that were in the soil. We compared this information to the fact that different soils were used for different plants around the grounds. We established that each suspect had entered by a different door and we were therefore able to find out which suspect had left the muddy footprint found beside Mr Plant's body. After this we had lunch.

During the afternoon we did a fingerprint experiment to find the owner of the fingerprint found on the weapon beside Mr Plant. Finally, after compiling all the evidence, my team deduced that the murderer was Mrs White and that the murder took place in the library with the lead piping. This sadly was wrong! It was Mrs White in the kitchen with the lead piping! Two out of three was pretty good we thought! After this Miss Curness collected us and we walked back to school. It was a day I will never forget!