

Birds of Prey

In celebration of science week, a man from Eagle Heights, a bird farm in Kent, visited year 10 and gave us a demonstration of various birds of prey. He showed us a hawk, a falcon, an owl and a bald-headed eagle. The part of the demonstration which had the greatest impact was when he let the birds fly around. This was not a joyous experience for all of us, but most of us were captivated! Fortunately they were all well trained, but this meant that he was able to fly them very low over our heads, which was rather thrilling. He shared his knowledge of birds with us, and it was interesting to learn about how they can keep their heads so still while flying, and how their wing span affects their flight movement. He explained how different birds are adapted for catching their prey, the barn owl for example, has very soft feathers so that it is as quiet as a mouse when it swoops on its prey (another mouse). Alan explained how these incredible adaptations were the result of a great deal of research and development - over sixty million years of evolution in fact!

At the end of the demonstration we were allowed to hold the owl, which was very soft and incredibly light, and then we had an unexpected opportunity to hold the bald headed eagle, which was quite daunting as it had a sharp beak and weighed four and a half kilograms. It was surprisingly calm, and a more pleasant experience than we had imagined it might be. We found this demonstration fascinating - and a very interesting way to spend a Wednesday morning.

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