

Do we have news for you!



4TH.... IN THE WORLD!

Yes you read that right, as that is exactly what happened when the SHS Mock Trials team of 9 travelled to the USA before Christmas to take part in the world championships of the Mock trial competition.

Hayley Roberts, project coordinator said: "It has taken them 4 years to progress to this stage and no other UK school has ever come within the top ten".

The students began their journey 4 years ago by taking part in the Magistrates Mock trial for two years in a row. After such success, they progressed to the Bar Mock Trial competition and reached the national final at the Old Bailey.

After doing so well, they made a one-week trip to New York to experience the US judiciary system and to prosecute and defend a terrorism case.

They raised £20,000 in three months to cover the costs and have sponsors and supporters from all over the country:

What the students had to say:

Our Empire journey has finally come to an end, but we all agree that all the hours of hard work and stress, was completely worth it.

We arrived in NYC ecstatic, but exhausted. However, there wasn't much time for sleep, as it was election night. We went out into Times Square and could immediately tell that we were going to be witnessing an iconic moment in history; the atmosphere was simply unforgettable.

We felt so very lucky to be invited to the office of one of our sponsors; *Squire Patton Boggs*. To visit them in their incredible New York office at the top of Rockefeller Plaza was incredible (see photos below). This was such a valuable experience as it enabled us to speak face to face with real American criminal attorneys who gave us great advice, which we carried forward with us to the trials.



The Competition:

To say it was hard is an understatement, however our confidence grew after each round. As soon as the round was finished, Miss Roberts would rush down to the tab room to find out if we had won or lost our trial and to see our scores. Only teachers were allowed in the tab room and it was kept secure with competition judges and referee's monitoring it at all times. It was at this point that we realised just what we had achieved; we were in the WORLD championships and it was more hardcore than anything we had ever experienced in our local, regional and national heats!

We could not believe it when after each round, Miss Roberts kept coming back to us to say that we had won our trials! Consequently, after round 1 we were **10th** in our division (there were two divisions) After round two we were **8th**, after round three we were **4th** and after round four we were **3rd**!

After each round we really started to believe in ourselves and became more and more confident each time we got up there. We

were power-matched after the first round, so for the following rounds we were against schools of similar ability.



There were times when we doubted ourselves; for example all of the schools we were against had prepared physical demonstratives and were introducing many of the 90 exhibits. We had decided not to plan too much and do what felt right at the time. We realised that the key to success was listening to what the other side were saying all of the time, then making notes to bring up conflicting evidence when it was our turn. We even got so brave during a closing speech that we decided to borrow one of the other side's demonstratives! It was a balaclava, which we put on one of our own attorneys to prove that you can't identify someone when all you can see is their eyes! The judges loved this and so did we; we were thriving from our newly found confidence and enjoying every minute.

We knew we had come 3rd in our division, but had no idea how much gap there would be between our division and the other division. We knew that after the competition finished, we would have a two-hour wait until we would find out the results at the closing ceremony.

We genuinely expected an easy night; just sitting back and applauding the other teams. The first awards that were given out were for the most outstanding witnesses. We knew our witnesses had done extremely well, but one of our witnesses Samuel Mount came in the top 10 and was presented with an outstanding witness

award. We were all reeling with pride, and over the moon that Sam's hard work had paid off.

Finally came the placing of the teams. Out of 44 teams, only the top 15 were announced. We had no expectation at all to place in the top 15. When we got to the top 10, we all agreed that we hadn't placed, so we sat back and listened as the rest of the schools were announced. It had all been American schools, until we got to 5th place, which was won by the Australian team.

As they announced the next team all we heard were the words "**and all the way from Norfolk in the UK**", and we all looked at each other straight away! The feeling was really like no other. We were all overcome with emotion. There were tears, laughter; it was simply unbelievable. In that moment, we felt the real reward. Firstly, the pride to be representing our country at an international final, but



secondly the sense of achievement. **It was in this moment that all the hours, all the after schools, Sunday rehearsals, coming in all through the holidays; it was all worth it - every single second.**

As you can tell from the photo, emotions were still running high. It was midnight by the time the results we were called out and we were drained, but now ecstatic too!

For the next two days, we were just overcome with shock, and pride. We couldn't believe how well we'd done and I don't think any of us stopped smiling for the rest of the trip. On one of our last days, we went to central park. It was really magical to see all the autumnal colours that surrounded us as we made our way through probably the most iconic park in the world. As you can see, we didn't forget the important banner!

It's incredibly difficult to convey with words, how grateful we are for this experience that all of our sponsors and the school, have given us.

This trip was like no other. It has given every member of our team so much. We have come back almost different people; more mature, more confident, more determined - the list could go on.

This really has been the trip of a lifetime, and one that we will never ever forget

Springwood High School Mock Trials Team

