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# ECOTRAIL

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**MEET PAUL BULLEN-SMITH**  
HEAD OF CAMBRIDGE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES



## TRAILBLAZERS GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES CAMPS



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## Blowing in the Wind...

So many questions and we are looking all around..... the answer my friend.... is blowing in the wind. Last month the Nobel Committee on literature in Sweden awarded the Nobel prize for literature to the uncivil but iconic figure of the 21st century, Bob Dylan. A rebel with many causes.

Bob Dylan came by at a unique time where the world was undergoing changes. Industrial revolution was taking shape in Europe and America. The world was just about settling down after being battered by two world wars and the first use of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The world was broadly drawn apart by two primary political ideologies. The Communist thought, practiced and led by Russia and China, large parts of Eastern Europe, many Latin American countries besides many African and Asia countries and the other called themselves Free world democracies where the people decided who would lead them through elections like Western Europe, India, Japan, USA, Australia etc. The world was bipolar one led by Russia and the other by America.

Two bloody wars for world primacy was being fought in Vietnam & Cambodia and the other in Korea by USA and Soviet Union. The youth in Europe and America took up cudgels with the then government, against the war which was not connected to them- and the Rock & Roll culture was born. The youth world over did not want to fight battles. They wanted love and peace thereby the famous sign of Peace, love etc. Hippie culture was on the rise as a sign against any form of rules which were seen by the youth as unjust laws, be it in schools, university or work place. "Woodstock" a rock show over three days still remains a milestone in the growing liberal movement. Drugs, smoking, rock music, modern art, free love and political opposition was the norm.

Hijacks, Police brutality and army excess anywhere in the world was rebelled against. One such rebel was Bob Dylan.

There will be many a debate on nominating and awarding Bob Dylan the Nobel prize. Was it appropriate, mainly from Purists, who will readily acclaim García Márquez or Salman Rushdie or Rabindranath Tagore as worthy of such a prize. The truth is Bob Dylan is an amazing poet and musician who poignantly brought out the pain and suffering of the youth and the inequalities that existed then. He constantly was against the establishment forcing them to right their wrong. He spoke about the unjust wars, the mass destruction of forests, the exploitation of labour and pollution. He was intolerant to the world and the United Nations for being tolerant to apartheid in South Africa and the sins of politicians. He expressed love for all humanity in his writing and practiced in his life. His famous song and lilting lyrics of "Blowing in the wind", "Like a rolling stone", "Knocking on heavens door" are a landmark both in music and poetry that connected with the youth of the sixties to the eighties. But they apply to our lives today even more, since the inequalities still exist, planet earth is on self-destruction mode, gender bias, religion, caste and colour divide still exist.

Congratulations Bob Dylan on receiving the award and just like you, playing difficult to reach and a truant to the Nobel awards committee who just can't reach you ..... They should have known better. The answer my friend is Blowing in the wind, the answer is blowing in the wind...

**Ranjan Biswas**  
Editor

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## On the Brink...

The Indian Star Tortoise or *Geochelone elegans* is a land tortoise found across various corners of Indian Subcontinent mostly in Central & South India. It is known to inhabit in a variety of dry vegetation types, including scrublands, grasslands, desert edges, coastal grounds and agricultural landscapes of fields.

The species is listed as Schedule IV species of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972, the highest protection possible for a terrestrial species in India. This species has also been placed under CITES Appendix II and is also listed as Vulnerable in IUCN Red List.



Image courtesy: Jacob Jose

Adult males typically reach up to 26 cm and adult females typically up to 32 cm in carapace length. Females attain sexual maturity at around 6-7 years of age. Nesting seasons coincide with the monsoons that vary depending on the geographic location. Annually, females typically produce two clutches comprising 2-10 eggs.

Indian Star Tortoises have yellow to tan heads, limbs, and tails, though the skin may be marked with dark spots or blotches. The carapace is the most striking feature of this tortoise and can have smooth to almost pyramidal scutes. Each scute has a yellowish areola (center) with yellow or tan lines radiating from it, forming the star shape for which this species is named. The marginal scutes have incomplete "stars".

Major threat to this species is illegal wildlife trade and habitat loss. This species of tortoise are in high demand amongst pet lovers due to which they are illegally smuggled across India & abroad.



## Teen Years Need Sunlight

Teens and young adults who spend more time outdoors may be less likely to become nearsighted later in life than those who spend less time outdoors, a new study suggests.

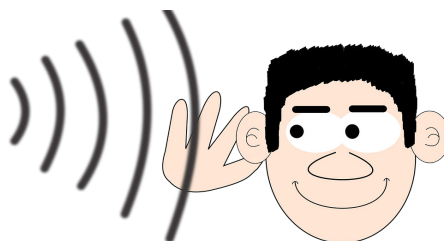
People in the study who spent more time exposed to ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation – which the researchers calculated based on the participants' exposure to sunlight – between ages 14 and 39 were less likely to be nearsighted at 65 than those who spent less time exposed to UVB radiation, the researchers found. "Increased UVB exposure was associated with reduced myopia, particularly in adolescence and young adulthood," the researchers wrote in the study, published

in the journal *JAMA Ophthalmology*. Trained researchers examined the participants' eyesight, and collected blood samples to examine the levels of vitamin D in their blood. They did that because previous research had linked higher vitamin D concentrations to a lower risk of nearsightedness. These researchers also interviewed the participants. They asked not only about their education levels, diets and medical histories, but also about how much time they had spent outdoors. It turned out that people who had been exposed to higher levels of UVB radiation as teens were less likely to be nearsighted.

## Stem Cell Cure

Scientists believe they are on the brink of a cure for congenital deafness. Researchers have produced stem cells to correct the hereditary defect. They have found a way of growing human cochlear cells which can be used to replace faulty ones in people deaf from birth due to a genetic error.

Professor Kazusaku Kamiya, a specialist in ear diseases who is leading the research...said: "I am very excited by what we have done...It is possible a therapy could be available within five to 10 years."



## Why Eat Plastic?



The fact that sea birds eat floating plastic has long puzzled biologists. New evidence suggests that for a lot of birds, plastic actually smells like food. It all comes down to a common kind of algae floating in the ocean. The algae is food for tiny animals such as krill. When the krill gobble up the algae, the algae emit a chemical called dimethyl sulfide. When seabirds smell that chemical, they know it means tasty krill are in the water. So when the algae cling to the plastic, and when the krill eat them, the birds smell it and that's their "foraging cue." They scoop up the krill and with it, plastic.



# An introduction to Cambridge Global Perspectives



“The breadth and variety of topics in Cambridge Global Perspectives means that learners can choose their topics and so gain some ownership and choice in the topics they study. It is the quality of learning, the process followed, rather than solely the outcome that is key.

**Paul Bullen-Smith**

Head of Cambridge Global Perspectives, Cambridge International Examinations

Cambridge Global Perspectives is a unique subject for classes 9-12 that offers an explicit skills focus approach. The subject is designed to develop a set of transferable skills that we at Cambridge feel are truly vital, both academically and for lifelong learning: research, analysis, evaluation, reflection, communication and collaboration. These skills are not the only relevant for the 21st century learner but they are the ones that we as an international board feel that we can assess reliably, validly and fairly.

This explicit focus on skills means that content is not the focus. The subject is taught through globally relevant topics through enquiry based learning, so the content is learned but the emphasis is on developing critical thinking and problem solving approaches to a wide range of topics. In IGCSE (classes 9-10) for example, the learning perspective is Personal, Local, and Global. At A Level (classes 11-12) the perspective is still local and global, but with a deeper analysis through varied themes or ‘lenses’ e.g studying a topic through an ethical, cultural, scientific or economic lens. The programmes take an iterative approach so the learner is given analytical and research techniques; communication and collaboration opportunities to look at a topic. They are then asked to reflect on what they have learnt, how effective their collaboration was, and then given the opportunity to practice and develop these skills on a new topic.

Pedagogically, this is an ‘active learning’ approach which encourages the learner to reflect on their past learning, and look to improve in the future. They will be progressing their skills through practice, reflection and so follow a ‘spiral’ of learning as their skills and understanding progress and deepen. Teachers become less didactic and ‘scaffold’ their lessons less and less as the learners’ use of skills improve. They increasingly can spend more time teaching and facilitating actively rather than going through

a content based textbook lesson after lesson. The breadth and variety of topics in Cambridge Global Perspectives means that learners can choose their topics and so gain some ownership and choice in the topics they study. It is the quality of learning, the process followed, rather than solely the outcome that is key.

The assessment approach is unique with around 60-70% of marks for research, analysis and evaluation, and the balance for reflection, and then communication and collaboration. The exam components range from a written exam to a student chosen essay to a team project. The skills approach in Cambridge Global Perspectives aligns well with the other Cambridge syllabuses that while explicitly focussing on content have to a greater or lesser extent the development of similar skills research in History and Physics, communication in French or Drama and so on. Together all the Cambridge syllabuses aim to deliver the Cambridge ‘learner attributes’.

The introduction of Global Perspectives is increasingly seen as a core part of a school’s balanced curriculum as it marries the solid academic content of the Cambridge syllabuses with the explicit transferable skills approach integrating them all. Looking ahead we are developing our understanding of these softer skills through research into the constructs of collaboration and reflection, using technology to develop valid assessment models of ePortfolio, and have initiated a pilot for Cambridge Global Perspectives for 5-14 (classes 1-8). When this launches in 2018 we will have a progressive, ‘spiral’, skills and global competencies programme for the whole school.

**Paul Bullen-Smith**  
 Head of Cambridge Global Perspectives  
 Cambridge International Examinations  
 Cambridge, United Kingdom



# Shivaliks Calling . . .





# Global Perspectives Camp

## Camp River Rocks

Two top international schools went for an enriching trip to the Shivaliks with Trailblazers. Their journey was filled with enchanting views, clear blue skies and lots of sunlight. The road journey to the campsite was almost parallel to the river Bhagirathi. Students were delighted to see the confluence of Bhagirathi and Alaknanda forming the mighty Ganges near Dev Prayag. The students reached the beautiful campsite situated on the banks of playful Alaknanda. Adding to the beauty and serenity were chirping of the birds, gurgling of Alaknanda through the mountain ranges, abundant vegetation of rhododendron, oak and pine forest and crisp cool air. Students enjoyed rafting on the challenging rapids with beach games on the way. They were enthralled to do rock climbing and jumaring in a nearby forest grove. Trailblazers experts shared information on flora and fauna. While on village trek, students were amazed to see the humility and simplicity of Garhwali people who greeted them by saying Namaste. Students and teachers had fun throughout the camp and bonded very well with each other during the visits and activities organized by Trailblazers.

[www.trailblazersindia.com](http://www.trailblazersindia.com)



While most of the people in the world were talking about the US elections, a group of energized kids from a Cambridge School in Hyderabad had set off for an exciting adventure. Keyed up from the get-go, the students thoroughly enjoyed the activities planned for the day. Lounging under a huge Neem tree, the students were facilitated by Trailblazers experts in understanding water cycle processes and the importance of water conservation by the way of simple experiments, nature games and activity sheets. Facilitated by this knowledge the children solved a worksheet on water and resolved not to waste any water. Trailblazers Science Educators engaged students in various activities and encouraged inquiry, critical thinking, research, collaboration and communication through pedagogies in line with Global Perspectives. Students reflected and reinforced the knowledge at the end of the day. The camp ended with beautiful nature collages that kids had made depicting various events during the camp. The kids made the most of the campfire nights and entertained everyone present with their dance choreography, their songs, jokes and spooky stories.

The real treat however, was the nature trail in the early morning. Surrounded by birds and dragonflies and greenery, the children couldn't wait to go into the forest and spot the real animals. In the cool morning just as the sun was



rising, the Trailblazer and forest experts led the children through a lovely trail grazing the outskirts of Vikarabad. The children spotted thrushes, wagtails, spiders, peafowls, egrets and a few were also lucky enough to spot a herd of deers walking through the bushes. Some even found peacock feathers and broken antlers during the trail. To keep them active adventure activities were also organized. All in all, it was an exciting and educational trip for the little third and fourth graders.



## Sahyadri Trail



Nestling in the Sahyadri ranges - Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani - are vast plateaus at approx 4500 feet above sea level. Trailblazers organized a camp with exciting activities and visits focussing on history, culture and wildlife for a group of students from an international school. They began their visit with Pratapgarh - the "Valour Fort" and trekked to the top of the fort. Its history and significance were shared with the students and reinforced with the help of Fort challenge during reflections. Visit to the honey center was informative and they learned how honey is collected by various collectors and deposited in a cooperative which after processing is stored in small containers for selling. Students purchased different kinds of honey (such as Jambul and Karvi) and fruit concentrates for their home. Trailblazers experts shared the importance of bees in our ecosystem and the famous quote of Albert Einstein which says mankind would be wiped off from the earth in just 4 years without them. Seeing sunrise from the top of Asia's second largest plateau was mesmerizing and refreshing. Information on Geography of the place and plateau

formation was shared by Trailblazers. Students were amazed to see the tiny Donald Duck flowers forming the patches of carpets on the plateau. After taking a few pictures with the rising sun, they returned to the hotel. With some rare animals and reptiles, the visit to a snake park was interesting. Trailblazers experts shared information



on flora and fauna of the park. It was time to showcase their talents and students participated wholeheartedly during the talent night. Next day they visited a palace closely linked to the Indian freedom movement. It served as a prison for Gandhiji, his wife Kasturba Gandhi, his secretary Mahadev Desai and Sarojini Naidu. Students returned enriched with sweet memories.

## Mughal Trail

Trailblazers explored the Mughal capitals of Delhi, Agra and Fatehpur Sikri with a group of students from a top school in Kolkata. Their journey commenced by visiting the Bahai temple - the symbol of peace and communal harmony. Students sat in the quiet and serene environs inside the temple and prayed for getting good marks in their exams! An evening visit to Qutub Minar was pleasing. It looked beautiful in the evening lights. Built in early 13th century, the fluted 72.5 feet red stone tower tapers from bottom to the top. Students learned that almost 4 dynasties of Delhi Sultanate had worked on it to make it the present structure it is today. After visiting Delhi, students set out to visit the other two capitals viz Agra and Fatehpur Sikri. And zip they went in the fastest train of India. The UNESCO world heritage sites of exquisite Agra Fort and marvel



of marble - Taj Mahal were explored in Agra. The Fatehpur Sikri visit made them realize the grandeur and tolerance of Akbar the Great. He was a tolerant king appreciating all religions and architecture styles viz. Hindu, Islamic, Persian and Roman. They also visited the magnificent Itmad-Ud-Daulah on their way back to Delhi. Students and teachers did not miss any opportunity to shop souvenirs for their friends and family. They enjoyed the team games, activities and visits during the camp making it a grand success.





# Tiger spotted!



## History & Wild Trail

It was beginning of the winter, the weather was just right and pleasant to discover northwestern part of India. Trailblazers, with a group of students explored Rajasthan's famous forts, monuments and forests. The journey started with a visit to the Pink city exploring the UNESCO world heritage sites of Jantar Mantar and Amer fort. Jantar Mantar is an open air astronomical observatory built by Maharaja Jai Singh II, the founder of Jaipur. Students learned how time was calculated in the early 18th century. After the observatory, they visited another UNESCO site - the Amer fort. Built by Raja Man Singh, it is situated in Amer - the erstwhile capital of the region. The fort is an excellent example of ecofriendly building and a site for water harvesting. It has a blend of Mughal and Rajput style of architecture. After exploring Jaipur, they explored the Dhok dominant deciduous forests of Ranthambore by jeep safaris. They were rewarded by sighting of the majestic tiger! It was a grand finale of the exciting trip.

## Mowgli Trail

Trailblazers organized a wild trail in the forest of Central India for students of a top school. The National Park located on the border of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh states is one among the remaining hotspots where one can still sight the majestic striped cats. It occupies an area of 300 sq km and is home to varied species of mammals, birds, reptiles and other lesser flora & fauna. The camp aimed at bringing out a better understanding of the rich biodiversity of Central India which included wildlife safaris, identification of

wildlife in the field and conservational efforts to protect and conserve. As a part of the trip, students enjoyed jungle safaris in the core area of the national park and sighted the Bengal Tiger, Asiatic Leopard, many species of deers, birds, Dhole, Golden Jackals, Indian Gaur and Wild Boars in their natural habitat. Students also enjoyed a visit to the pottery village and gained hands on experience. During their time in Orange City, the students visited the Narrow Gauge Rail Museum and enjoyed a toy train ride. The history of Indian Railways was shared with them. The camp ended with shopping for Orange Barfi. Trailblazers had a basketful of fun games and activities planned for the energetic students during their stay near the National Park. They had loads of fun and enjoyed every bit of the Trailblazers experiential learning programme..



# Village Health Literacy Programme



In continuation of the social development activities in a rural village of Maharashtra, Trailblazers Foundation conceived and launched the "Village Health Literacy Programme" in close association with Dr. Indira Shukla, Principal of Gokhale Education Society's College of Education and Research. Under the community service component of the two-year B.Ed. course, it was decided that the B.Ed. students shall conduct a door to door health literacy campaign in the village as well as the nearby padas (settlements).



Two weeks prior to the event the Trailblazers Foundation team met the students at their college to brief them on the project and prepare them for the campaign. They advised the students to focus on women and children, health as well as hygiene and also emphasized on the importance of modern agriculture and education for rural children. It was suggested that the B.Ed. students make posters on these themes and street plays which can be staged in front of the school children.

The village Sarpanch was informed about this event. He readily agreed to welcome these students and make arrangements for their campaign. On the day of event, students completed two hours train journey from their college in Parel to Asangaon. The Sarpanchji received everyone at Bhaktnivas, where tea and snacks were arranged.

After a welcome talk, students were given information on the village, its Sarpanch, and Trailblazers Foundation's work in the village.

Then the 48 students and four teachers were given their plan of action for the day, route details and emergency contact details. Students were divided into smaller groups of 12 each and escorted with their teachers - Prof. Sandeep Bodke, Prof. Vinod Gavit, Prof. Chetan Chavan and Prof. Sangeeta Patkar.

Students entered into conversations

which were guided by questionnaires given to them. Two street plays were staged with the message of "Role of education in development of the village" and "Women's empowerment." After the campaign concluded the students had a group reflection and feedback session. Each group presented their report to the entire team. There were four students who saw a village for the first time! Some students concluded that, there were women in these padas who were better aware of personal hygiene and health care, than the others. Regarding medical services, the villagers said they prefer private medical treatment from nearby town over government health care as it was faster and effective, though expensive. To have a balanced diet including fruits and vegetables majority of villagers were dependent on the nearby town, especially for leafy vegetables and fruits.

The campaign was a success and all the students went back with a feeling of accomplishment, excitement and enthusiasm. They all were happy and thanked their college Principal and Trailblazers Foundation for this wonderful opportunity. Trailblazers Foundation's dream to initiate this village as an ideal community which walks the path of India's smart and developed village was on its way to fulfilment.



# Science Exhibition at EuroSchool, Airoli

EuroSchool Airoli organized an interesting Science Exhibition - 'CESA C(euro)sity' on 25th Oct, 2016. Mr. Ranjan Biswas MD of Trailblazers and Editor of Ecotrail was invited as the Chief Guest during its inauguration.

In his keynote address to the students and parents of the Cambridge section, Mr. Biswas emphasized the importance of fundamental sciences and encouraged the students to pursue a career in this field. He also highlighted how a transformational change can be made with the study of fundamental sciences and touched upon the topic of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). He also added on his part to the existing STEM making it STEAMED, the A, E & D standing for Art, Environment and Design. Dr. A M Bhagwat, retired scientist from BARC was the guest for the day and Mr. Biswas explained to the students how fortunate they were to get a chance to interact with such dignitaries.



Ranjan Biswas giving keynote address and Dr. A M Bhagwat (extreme right)

Special thanks were given to the Principal, Ms. Sudheshna Chatterjee and her team for arranging such an engaging exhibition which gave a very qualitative exposure to the young minds. Post the speech Mr. Biswas visited the

projects made by the students. He interacted with them and was keen to understand the various science projects from the young scientists. Students were very happy and eager to explain

their respective projects to him. The Principal of EuroSchool Airoli, Ms. Sudeshna Chatterjee thanked Mr. Biswas and other guests for being a part of this school event.

## South City International School World Tourism Day

World Tourism Day was celebrated on 27th September by Mr. John Bagul, Principal, South City International School, Kolkata. Mr. Ranjan Biswas was invited as the chief guest. He spoke about the importance of ecotourism and protection of our environment which was greatly appreciated by the audience.



Ranjan Biswas (extreme left) in discussion with Mr. John Bagul, Principal South City International School, (extreme right)

## Smt. Sulochanadevi Singhania School Model United Nations

Director Education and Principal, Dr. Revathi Srinivasan of Sulochanadevi Singhania School hosted MUN 2015-16 where Mr. Ranjan Biswas was invited as one of the chief guests to deliver a talk on Catastrophic Climate Change and its Impact on Humans. His talk elicited huge applause from the delegates.





# Global Perspectives: Bird Migration

## Understanding Migration

The mystery of migration has always fascinated mankind. Join us for our exclusive birding expeditions as we explore the Wetlands in search of migrants. Mumbai's coastline attracts many migratory birds from Europe &

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+91 22 25891513 / 25891490 +91 9820603530  
Best time for the Project: January to March 2017



### Days to remember

- 14 November-Children's Day
- 19 November-World Toilet Day
- 20 November-Universal Children's Day
- 19 November to 19 December-National Environment Month
- 1 December-World AIDS Day
- 3 December-International Day of the Persons with Disabilities
- 10 December-Human Rights Day
- 11 December-International Mountain Day
- 18 December-International Migrants Day

### 5TH DECEMBER 2016



## World Soil Day

The International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), in 2002, made a resolution proposing the 5th of December as World Soil Day to celebrate the importance of soil as a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to human wellbeing.

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