



WOODRIDGE PREPARATORY

MORE THAN A SCHOOL, AN EXPERIENCE



**HEAD'S EDITORIAL
ROUND SQUARE: INDIA
EQUESTRIAN ADVENTURE
SHAMWARI GAME RESERVE VISIT
ATHLETICS
IN THE NEWS**

September / issue # 12

www.woodridge.co.za

ROUND SQUARE 2025 CONFERENCE

Dear Families,

I am sharing some feedback from Garron Adlard, the Prep school Head of Round Square, following their recent attendance of a conference in India.

Travis

During the August holidays, five Woodridge pupils, namely Anina Krugel, Murray-John Boonzaier, Austin Botes, Gibran Hassim, and Jasper Poultney, represented the Prep at a Round Square Conference in India.

Accompanying these children were Mr Garron Adlard and Mrs Roslyn Pienaar.

The journey began with a five-day conference hosted by Sunbeam School Lahartara in Varanasi and was followed by a post-conference tour in which the delegates explored Delhi (both old and new) and Agra.

We departed South Africa on Sunday, 17 August, and, after four flights and nearly two days of travelling, arrived in Varanasi on the evening of the 18th. Before settling into our accommodation, we enjoyed an unforgettable experience attending the sunset Aarti ceremony at the Assi Ghat on the banks of the sacred Ganges River.

The conference itself brought together schools from across the Indian subcontinent, with Woodridge Preparatory School standing out as the only participating school from a different continent altogether. Centred on the topic of Leadership and guided by the theme "The Eyes Behind the I", the programme challenged delegates (all between the ages of 12 and 14) to look beyond themselves and to consider leadership as an act of service rather than recognition. Over five days, the children immersed themselves in traditional performances that showcased India's cultural heritage, dynamic workshops that encouraged collaboration and creativity, and Baraza discussions where they debated and shared perspectives with peers from across the region. The keynote speakers added further depth, addressing themes of resilience, innovation, empathy, and expression through storytelling, theatre, entrepreneurship, media, and the arts.

Varanasi: India

Our Woodridge delegates were asked to reflect not only on *how* they lead but on *why* they lead, learning that true leadership grows from listening, compassion, and courage. The conference gave them both the platform and the tools to test these ideas in real time as they voiced their thoughts in debates, asked questions of keynote speakers, and learnt to hold space for others' views.

A highlight of our Varanasi stay was a special invitation to learn from a silk-weaving family of artisans who have been weaving traditional Indian garments for over 400 years. The experience highlighted the resilience of tradition in an ever-modernising world.

Following the conference, the post-tour offered a visit to New Delhi, where we were privileged to enjoy a private tour of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the President's official residence and one of the largest palaces in the world. From there, the group delighted in the playful illusions and interactive exhibits at the Museum of Illusions. In Old Delhi, we were divided between three rickshaws, and our delegation navigated the bustling markets and colourful alleyways to reach a traditional Haveli (a historic Indian mansion). Here we were treated to a lavish high tea and had the chance to join local families in the timeless pastime of kite flying and kite fighting on the rooftops.

We then travelled into the countryside to spend a full day on an organic farm, where we learnt about ancient natural farming techniques and the restoration of harmony between animals and agriculture. Our meals were made entirely from food grown, harvested, and prepared on the farm itself. The visit also included a traditional pottery workshop, where the children worked clay sourced from neighbouring fields, and a ride on a bullock-cart pulled by an uncastrated bull, an experience that left a lasting impression.

From there, we boarded one of India's fastest trains and made our way to Agra.



Varanasi: India

Here we explored the Agra Fort, before standing in awe of the Taj Mahal, a timeless monument of love and devotion. The following morning, as the sun rose behind the Taj, we participated in a facilitated rooftop yoga session, a serene and reflective moment that captured the spirit of the entire journey.

Our final adventure took us to Keoladeo National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a birdwatcher's paradise.

Throughout the journey, our Woodridge delegates embodied the values of the Round Square Discoveries. They embraced every opportunity to learn, connect, and reflect, returning home not only with treasured memories but also with broadened perspectives and strengthened character.

This experience stands as a proud chapter in Woodridge's story, reminding us that education does not end at the classroom door. It takes shape in the relationships we build, the questions we are brave enough to ask, and the challenges we choose to embrace. It deepens when we step beyond our comfort zones, when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable, and when we find the courage to believe in ourselves, even in moments of uncertainty.

For our delegates, the conference was not simply a journey abroad, but a journey inward towards greater bravery, empathy, and understanding.

Delegates reflections:

"To be a leader you can't be quiet and not participate. You have to be vulnerable and put your thoughts out there to be an example to others, no matter how scary it may seem. I learnt that even a place that is so poor can be so honest and kind. I will always be true to myself and not take other people's assumptions upon myself but rather form my own opinion and try to be true to my own thoughts and views."

Delegates reflections continued:

"I learnt that my parents do more for me than I ever imagined."

"I learnt that leadership is better demonstrated by examples, and not just by shouting orders."

"I saw what servant leadership looks like, and how impactful it is."

"At the conference I learnt that no matter how different people are, we can all work together and that kindness and communication is key to being a successful leader."

"I learnt that wherever you go around the world there will always be plenty of people who want to be friends with you. I also learnt about the Indian culture and that every country has their own unique way of living."

Yours sincerely

Garron Adlard

Staff Reflections:

Click on the links below to view their India Adventure

[Garron Adlard](#)

[Roslyn Pienaar](#)

[Conference Video](#)

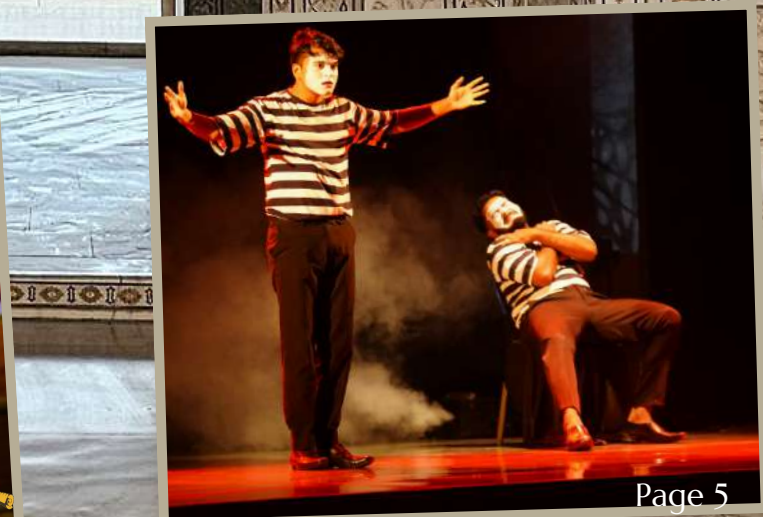


Some highlights of our visit to India

Varanasi



Some highlights of our visit to India



EQUESTRIAN ADVENTURE



Our Grade 1 girls enjoyed their sports lesson at the Equestrian Centre, where they learned all about horses. They were amazed by the beautiful animals and had a wonderful experience.



SHAMWARI GAME RESERVE VISIT



Our Grade 7 Eco-Committee spent two inspiring days at Shamwari, learning about conservation, tracking, snake safety, and the life of a game ranger. A highlight was seeing the critically endangered rhino in its natural habitat. The group also visited Shamwari's Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre to learn about vultures and their role in our ecosystems. Thanks to Shamwari, our guides Colleen and Devon, and Lisa Horn from VulPro for an unforgettable and educational experience.



ATHLETICS

Our pupils participated in the Independent Schools Athletics and Trail Run recently, hosted by DSG and St. Andrew's. They performed exceptionally well, placing in almost all the events on the day, including the trail run, which was held after the athletics.

Congratulations to all our pupils on their outstanding achievements!

The day was very successful, with Woodridge Preparatory winning the athletics meeting by having the most overall points. All the pupils can be proud of themselves and of their contribution towards the overall result. A special mention must be made to India Cockcroft for breaking two records and to our U12 Girls (4 x 100 relay) teams for breaking their respective record.



IN THE NEWS



We are proud to share that Quan-Carlo Stone has been selected for the Karate South Africa Development Team! He will represent South Africa in both Kumite and Kata at the GABS Open in Botswana from 10–12 October. We wish him all the best as he takes on this exciting opportunity.

Congratulations Quan-Carlo!

