

# THOMAS DEACON ACADEMY STUDENTS DEBATE WITH CAMBRIDGE ACADEMICS TO BOOST WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Students from Thomas Deacon Academy took centre stage at an event to encourage young women to consider careers in science, technology, engineering and maths, organized by Murray Edwards College, part of the University of Cambridge.

Amy Danks, Aisha Sayeed, Zainab Amir and Sian Erskine attended the Murray Edwards Women in Science Symposium.

Held as part of the College's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, the conference celebrated the contribution of women to science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects and professions, and debated the barriers which can deter young women from choosing these subjects at university.

The Thomas Deacon girls met leading female scientists, including Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, space scientist and presenter of BBC The Sky at Night, Professor Dame Athene Donald, and Professor Denise Morrey, Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Oxford Brookes University, and shared their thoughts on how young female scientists should be supported and inspired.

They also heard from recent Murray Edwards graduate Olivia Walker, who spoke about how she discovered her own passion for science, which she is currently exploring as a PhD student.



"I would have loved to come to this before I chose my GCSE options," Sian commented, highlighting the importance of good advice at an early stage.

"The best bit has been meeting other girls who are into science, and meeting one-to-one with female scientists," said Aisha. "There is a real range of jobs available that we're not aware of at school."

Keynote speaker Professor Dame Athene Donald commented, "Despite an increasing awareness of the issues surrounding women in the scientific workforce, including encouraging them to enter STEM careers in the first place, there is still much to be done. It is disappointing to see how slowly progress is being made, but discussing and disseminating best practice, as well as identifying what goes wrong, are crucial for future generations." Dame Barbara Stocking DBE, President of Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge, said, "As a college for women, Murray Edwards strives to engage with this debate and to understand the issues facing women in science. We were delighted by the inspiring participation of everyone who attended the Symposium from our key-note speakers to the enthusiastic students from local schools."

