



# The Bexley Bazaar



Bexley Grammar

Christmas Magazine 2018

# Christmas message from Mr Elphick

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the BGS magazine!

As the Autumn Term draws to a close, we look back over these vital first weeks and months of the academic year. Our new Year 7 students were happily settled into the life of the school by half term; their parents had met form tutors, attended a Music Concert involving every Year 7 student and enjoyed a BBQ here in school. Similarly, in the Sixth Form, students from many local schools joined our own students and this year made BGS history: They completed our now fully IB Sixth Form of 400 students. Staff and students are now benefiting from the focus that the single shared outcome of the IB Diploma brings. We are confident that Year 13 and Year 12 have the potential to be the highest performing BGS cohorts ever. At the time of writing, 18 students had gained interviews at Cambridge or Oxford and the majority of Y13 students had at least one offer and in many cases several offers at the prestigious universities they have selected.

This is also the term where the whole recruitment process begins again; we held inspiring, vibrant and successful open events for prospective Year 7 students and a few weeks later, two similarly successful evenings for prospective Year 12 students, one for our own and one for those from other schools. As always, the overwhelmingly positive feedback is about how approachable and friendly our students and staff are - complete strangers to the school report that those they talk to on these evenings genuinely care. We were also struck by the increasing number of external students who were better informed about the IB than in previous years.

Perhaps our new website is more effective at getting our messages out. There is a lovely promotional video, (created in-house with excellent support from a student at Ravensbourne) on our homepage, aimed at prospective Year 7 students. Our IB story was published in the 2018 edition of the Parliamentary Review, marked by a reception at the House of Commons. We also gained our annual curriculum award from the Prince's Teaching Institute (PTI) - this year for the English, History, Latin and MFL departments.

Meanwhile, the school has continued with the multitude of activities typical of what we manage to cram into a term: visits, residential trips (the Sports Tour to Barcelona and the Japanese Exchange at half term), conferences, International Week, No Pens Day and of course, a range of House events. We held two Power Days, new incarnations of our former ECM days, which have been reorganised and refocused to fulfil the growing demands of the PSHCE curriculum. Our Remembrance Assemblies, complete with 3 trumpeters playing the Last Post at three locations across the school, two minutes after 11 o'clock, held a special resonance in this centenary year. We have held Parents' Evenings for Year 13 and

Year 11. And as this magazine goes to virtual press, our Year 11 and Year 13 students are taking their mock examinations before a well-deserved Christmas break.

The Christmas Concert ushered in the festive season in style. Fourteen ensembles (if you count the two Rock Groups separately - a BGS record, I believe) in which nearly 10% of the student body participated, entertained a packed hall with everything from Mozart to Deep Purple! Congratulations to Mrs Goddard, Mr Laing and Mrs Eacott, our technician, Mr Ross, several peripatetic teachers (Mr Cooper, Mrs Goddard, Ms Wyllie and Mr Crocker) our Music Prefects and, of course, our performers, on an impressive and inspiring evening.

Finally, a huge thank you to Mrs Johnson and her committed team of students who work so hard to produce this stimulating publication. I hope you enjoy it.

Have a restful Christmas break with family and friends and may I wish you every blessing in 2019.

## Editors' Christmas Message

Merry Christmas, Bexley Grammar!

This is the first issue of our *Bexley Bazaar*, and what a busy first term it's been, now you can sit back and read what's been going on.....

Good luck to all Y11 and Y13 students in your Mock results, enjoy the break, everyone, and we wish you all a Happy New Year!

The Editors



# Collins House Report

Hi everyone,

The House competition started with the Sports Day events in the summer. Collins House has been at the top and doing well so far, 2nd at the moment, let's see where we go from now.

The House Captains have been excellent at getting pupils to take part in events - as well, the pupils have been so good. Thank you all.

Finally, it is that time of the year

where we are all looking forward to the goodies. Yes, Collins members you all deserve it. At this time, however, I would like to wish Collins House Captains, the Year 13s & 11s, all the best in their upcoming Mock exams. I wish you all the best now and in the future. I would also like to thank the Year 12s in Collins House in advance for their help and support.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to you all.



Mrs Lasoye, Head of Collins

# Johnson House Report

This term we welcomed our new Y7 and Y12 students. It's easier to spot the new younger students, and 7JR have certainly entered the school with a bang! I've been delighted to see the enthusiasm with which they approach everything and, with some of that energy being apparent in other year groups within the House, I have a lot of hope for our future.

The present, however, is a picture of limited success for Johnson. Our Junior and Intermediate netball teams did us proud, securing two first places in their competitions. The Intermediate footballers, the Harvest Box and the 'bowling robots' (STEM competition) saw us achieve third places, and after that things looked a little less positive. We're holding our own in fourth place overall, but the gap behind us is shrinking and the gap ahead getting bigger. Here's to a great Junior Swimming Gala where I look forward to seeing Johnson students ruling the waves!

I would like to end this account with a picture of our entry in the Harvest Box competition. What you can't see in this photo is the fact that there were several more boxes of food hiding behind our eagle's nest. Johnson students generously donated so much food that I genuinely believe we might have contributed as much as the other Houses combined. What a wonderful demonstration of the spirit of Johnson House, and a heart-warming way to end this report as we prepare to enjoy the Christmas season of giving.



**Mr Asker, Head of Johnson**

## Kirkman House Report

We have had so far a very successful year in Kirkman, and I believe we end the calendar year at or close to the top of the table. For this, thanks must go to the



Captains, who have worked really hard, but also of course to every participant!

We have had notable successes in the House Drama '*Girls Like That*', which we won, and also plenty of other first or second placings in, for example, Senior Cookery, Harvest Box decorating, Stem club and a variety of sports events, showing what a wide range of talents we have.

We look forward to next term which not only holds the handover to new Captains (already!) but itself has a lot of events within it; hopefully we can continue to hold our own and bring the trophy home at Easter.



**Mrs Fisher, Head of Kirkman**

Photos: winning Drama cast, above, and Captains, left.

## Mabbs House Report

We had a reasonable start to the year in fourth position. All Mabbs participants have tried their hardest in all the events which has made me proud. There were some wins with Year 7 winning the MFL song competition, both Junior (first place) and Intermediate (third place); Tennis did extremely well and last Friday we won House Senior Cookery with chocolate fondants. The change in the House Drama competition allowed the House Captains to choose a challenging choice of play- The Greek play "*Heracles*". Although the students did place in the final three, the use of of chorus and costume really helped to produce a creative re-telling of this dark play. As the next competitions arise, we hope to keep rising through the ranks to the top!

**Ms Gabriel, Head of Mabbs**

## Prothero House Report

Prothero have had a difficult year this year. Sports Day was a complete fail which set us back so far, meaning our team could have potentially given up. However, I am so proud of all members of Prothero as they have motored on and still kept the (friendly) fighting spirit. As a result we are slowly closing the gap. So, stay positive guys and keep on going. Stick together as a team and enjoy the experience.



**Mrs Mitten, Head of Prothero**

## Wellman House Report

I am exceptionally proud of the hard work and enthusiasm for house activities from Wellman this year. From the range of events such as House Cookery, Harvest Box, House Drama, Girls' Netball and Boy's Football, Wellman House has shown their dedication by creating teams and participants for every single event. I would like to especially congratulate the Wellman Year 8 and Year 9 students for coming first place in the STEM club challenge hosted by Ms Lusted. I have high hopes that with this momentum, that this may be the winning year for Wellman!

**Mr Ward, Head of Wellman**

# House Drama

This October, all the houses came together for House Drama. For a month, each house worked on a five to ten minute long performance of a script of their choosing. There were a variety of choices, ranging from Wellman's striking piece about 9/11 to Kirkman's rendition of "*Girls Like That*", a play about secondary school girls and how they treat each other. The range of subjects made for a thoroughly interesting afternoon.

With a limited cast of twenty five per house, we all definitely worried about how this was going to work out. Naturally, it took some thinking, planning and hard work from the brilliant House Captains, but in the end every house came into the hall ready to perform, with a vast array of props, costumes and makeup - we all had no idea what was in store.

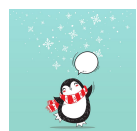
One by one, each house went on stage and performed their mini plays, and we were all amazed at the level of effort and teamwork put into the performances. It was obvious we had all worked really hard and then it was up to the judges to make the final decision. We all waited eagerly for them to reveal the results of the deliberations.

Mr Otley got on stage to announce where each house came. The well deserving winner was Kirkman, who did an outstanding performance that could barely be faulted by both the audience and the judges. Even though my house didn't win, I'm really proud of all the rehearsal time we put in, and it was reward enough to get to watch all the other houses perform.



Kirkman House

Kate Leadbetter, Year 12



# Report on Jack Petchey Award

## September - November 2018



The first Jack Petchey Award for the New School Year was awarded by Mabbs House in September to Nicole Tapponnier. Nicole was nominated for the following reasons: Nicole regularly helps with House activities throughout the at Bexley Grammar School, she always has a smile on her face and encourages others to take part in competitions. She is an excellent House Captain and is truly inspirational to students of all ages, warm, generous, a kind-hearted character, a very funny and uplifting person. Nicole has chosen to give her £250 winnings to the Art Department for a new portable projector and some more canvasses.



The second was awarded by Prothero House in October to Oliver Gray for the following reasons: Oliver is an active member of the form who takes part in house events and has donated money to charity through events. He is a charitable and caring person and is always there for people when they are feeling down, always friendly and breaks up arguments and gets people to calm down when they are angry or sad and is a good friend to many people. Oliver has chosen to purchase some sports equipment for student use during break and lunch times.



The last award of 2018 was nominated by Wellman House; in November they nominated Max Hickman who is in Prothero House for the following reasons: Max has given up his time to go with the Cadets to Malawi in the holidays to volunteer and help build a playground for less fortunate children. He also does other activities with the cadets as well as taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme. Max has chosen to spend his £250 winnings on some new camping equipment for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme which runs in school.

**Mrs Snelling, House of Leader**



# BEXLEY PEER MENTORS

*I interviewed Alexander Von Doetinchem, a Peer Mentor who is currently in Year 13, about how the Peer Mentor system works. If you're interested in taking the role of a Peer Mentor or need someone to turn to for advice, this is the article for you!*

## **What is your role as a Peer Mentor?**

As well as helping my Year 7 form through the transition from primary school, I have also assisted in focus work ranging from bullying to identity issues.

## **How does the peer mentoring process begin?**

In regards to being referred to a Peer Mentor, there are a variety of ways in which it can happen. The most common is that the student expresses a want to work with us, but they can be brought to our attention from teachers, other Peer Mentors or even fellow students.

## **How are Peer Mentors assigned?**

At this point Mrs Jones, the School Counsellor, and Mrs Johnson work to assign a Peer Mentor best suited to deal with the student's needs.

## **How long does this process last for?**

Okay, so it can last for as long as the student feels it's necessary, but it has to be reviewed every four weeks to ensure that progress is being made and that the student feels supported.

## **Why is this Peer Mentor system an essential part of the school?**

It provides a support network and lets people know that they're being cared for. It's also nice to speak to a fellow student as opposed to a teacher as that can be intimidating.

As well as that, we can also ease the transition between primary and secondary school.

### **How does the privacy policy work?**

Okay, so obviously the school knows a little about why a student is being referred, but not too deeply. Confidentiality is taken incredibly seriously by Peer Mentors and details about you will not be shared outside of sessions. There is one exception, however, if a Peer Mentor feels that a student is at risk of harming themselves or others, we have to disclose the details to the counsellor.

### **Do you stay in contact with the people you mentor afterwards?**

Well I am not in regular contact with people I have peer mentored in the past, they know that they are able to contact me if necessary and I'm still in contact with my form, but I feel it's important that students form connections in their own age range.

### **What have you learnt from this experience?**

Well it's made me more empathetic and confident, as well as allowed me to relate to younger people more.

### **What are your overall thoughts?**

I think it's a worthwhile and fun experience that has taught me new skills, improved my confidence and organisation, and overall allowed me to help others.

#### ***Need help?***

*You can contact either Mrs Johnson or Mrs Jones by email or speak to the Peer Mentors in the corridor (look for the smiley badges!)*

#### ***Want to apply?***

*We're taking in applications for Year 12s at the beginning of 2019!*

**Michelle Su, Y12**



# BGS IB student accepted at Jacksonville University USA



One of the great benefits of the IB Diploma Programme is that it provides a world-class, truly global qualification. Katie McKenna, in Year 13, wanted to study in the USA, and went about applying with real energy and drive: the result is an amazing success, as you can see from the letter of acceptance from Jacksonville University at the link below. All of our Year 13 students have received offers from very prestigious universities, or from gold-chip companies, for two main reasons: firstly, they are impressive students who should get excellent results next June; secondly, the range of subjects and other super-curricular activities in the IB gives them a real edge over their peers for the most competitive degrees and apprenticeships.

Well done to Katie, and to the rest of our most senior students!

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13IWG3giMLSiPUvNIPgWENKclDzj2WCGB/view?usp=sharing>

**Mr Morris, Head of Sixth Form**

# STEM news

SCIENCE \* TECHNOLOGY \* ENGINEERING \* MATH



It has been a busy term for STEM events! It all kicked off on Thursday September 20th, when Miss Francis organised for BGS to take part in a live web discussion with a real **NASA astronaut**. Sunita Williams is an engineer who has been commander of the International Space Station and holds the world record for the longest space flight for a female astronaut (195 days). With almost 50 schools participating in this live event, it was exciting to have one of our Year 11 Physics classes involved and they really took the opportunity to ask this prestigious and experienced astronaut some challenging questions that really got to the nitty gritty of life in space! Since there was a stream of questions coming in

from students around the country, we were thrilled for Sunita to choose to answer 'Does the ISS get smelly?' which was posed by our BGS students. Well, it turns out that cleaning is an activity that astronauts spend a lot of their time on!

The **Inter-House STEM Competition** also took place this term over four weeks. Teams of Year 8 and 9 students from the six different houses adapted robots to knock down skittles in a timed trial. The students rose to the challenge, as always, and the final event was full of drama; from batteries running out, to last minute tearing off and sticking on of appendages. However, there was a clear winner, which was never in doubt. Wellman's robot ploughed across the area, sweeping away all the skittles in just 13 seconds!



This academic year has seen the introduction of the new **Power Days** (taking the place of the previous ECM days), filled with opportunities for students to engage in a range of extra-curricular activities to



enrich and empower them in a variety of ways. Power Day 2 on Monday 26th November had the theme 'Industry and Enterprise'. There was a huge range of activities throughout the school from a Dragon's Den project for Year 7s right through to IB Chemistry and Physics practical assessments for Year 13 students. As the main building corridor filled with the smell of burning, we knew that the Chemistry Internal Assessments were well underway; a chance for students to complete an experiment of their own design and gain essential practical skills which will prove invaluable for those going on to university to study a Science degree.

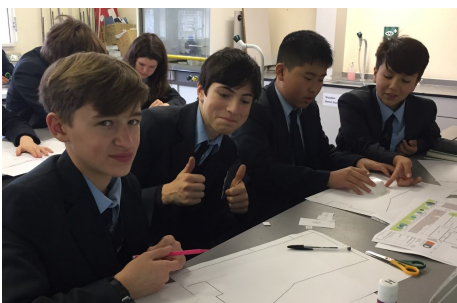


On Power Day 2 both Year 9 and Year 10 students were treated to a number of different workshops delivered by industry professionals. Having signed up to their choice of workshops, Year 9 students spent the day completing tasks that would give them a taste of what it would be like to work in their chosen field. The choices were to work with a chef and learn how to cook a three course Spanish inspired meal, veterinary science, computer science, product design, architecture, engineering and textiles. The hands on activities combined with the insights provided by our expert visitors provided an incredibly inspiring, as well as enjoyable, day.



Additionally, Year 10 were involved in a number of different activities designed to promote careers in town planning, architecture and engineering, all delivered by industry experts.

*"I thoroughly enjoyed participating in the Architectural Design Workshop. I loved that the architects from the Architect Company explained what they do and how step by step they design a structure. We then got briefed on the building we were designing (a poppy centre) and drew some concept designs. From there, we began to locate the building on the site area and develop the design of the building. Eventually we built a prototype model of part of or all of our building. Finally, we presented our ideas to the group! I liked how the architects were coming round and talking to us about our designs, suggesting ideas and answering questions. This helped me to in the end produce a better design and I overall, really enjoyed it. It was a great experience and it inspired me- as I am looking to go into this industry."*



**Anya Scothern, Year 9**



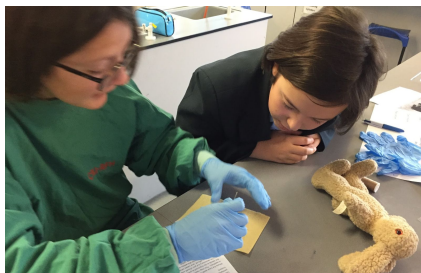
*“During Power Day I was in the engineering group. The task given was to build a roller-coaster track that a marble would roll down, using only various types of cardboard and tape, and to include: A 30cm drop, 20cm without using tape and a 360\* turn. We were then put into groups of five people and began work. I enjoyed Power Day; the day in general taught me a lot about aspects of the engineering process, for example the design cycle. The assistants from the university were lovely to work with and were a great source of information about going into engineering for GCSEs and later a career. All in all it was a wonderful experience that I would love to do again.”*

**Hannah-Louise Donovan, Year 9**



*“For Industry Day, some of the year 9s did Computer Science. First, we listened to a short lecture by someone called Chris Mannix who works for a coding company. He told us about qualifications, values to have as a coder and much more. After that, we were set a task similar to one his company faced not too long ago to do with stock trading and time zones. After that we made our own safari parks with different outcomes based on probability. Overall, I felt as though we all learnt a lot and it was extremely beneficial to those of us aspiring to follow a career path in coding.”*

**Max Dawkins, Year 9**



Through the planning of this day BGS is very excited to have secured a permanent partnership with the architectural firm IID Architects and we look forward to drawing on their expertise and enthusiasm in future projects.

**Ms Lusted, Science Dept.**

# FBCS News - Social and Cultural Anthropology trip to East London

On Wednesday 26th September, a group of Year 12 and Year 13 students studying Anthropology went on a trip to London. With Miss Contini and Mr Joe, we started at London Bridge, walked through The City, through Whitechapel, ending up at an art gallery in Shoreditch.

Having researched the area beforehand, the Year 12s gave talks on the different areas we visited - so that we could learn the history of these places and therefore



understand how and why the areas are so different. For the Year 12s, this was a chance to carry out an observation as part of our IB coursework at either Whitechapel Market or Brick Lane; Brick Lane was particularly interesting as it changed so much from one end to the other.

As shown in the pictures we took on the day, Brick Lane is fast becoming a trendy spot for hipsters and this is shown in the vast array of shops such as Cereal Killer Cafe, Dark Sugars Chocolate Shop, and Ragyard, as well as lots of street art created by artists such as “Dreph”. However, at the other end, Brick Lane is much more of a poorer area with a large Bangladeshi population (hence many street signs being in both English and Bangladeshi). In addition to this, there is a large group of Muslims who immigrated from Asia, and this is shown in the Mosque at one end of Brick Lane which was once a church. This was very interesting in allowing us to explore key anthropological ideas, such as how wealth leads to power. This was emphasised even more as we had just walked through The City - London’s key financial borough. The wealth here was clear to see and, as we walked through Lombard Street and past the Bank





of England, we noticed how vastly different these two areas are, despite being in walking distance of each other. The extent to which London is changing was shown clearly as we walked into Whitechapel and saw the appearance of lots and lots of cranes - the new buildings were advertised as luxury apartments and offices.

It was a good day out and we finished at a gallery in Shoreditch before taking the bus back to London Bridge and getting the train home.

Alice Brayford, Y12

## **Economics and Business Studies News- Commerzbank Insight day**

Commerzbank is a German investment bank, and - on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November - we were invited to attend an Insight Day at their London office. The day was based around the diverse opportunities the bank has to offer; they also offered us support on how we can best market ourselves to be considered by employers for job opportunities.

The bank was in the heart of London's financial district, all the buildings towered above us. To be honest, when we were walking into the reception, it was pretty tense. The reception was a tall room with big, white, marble walls; we walked through the glass doors into the foyer where everyone was trying to act accordingly: it felt like everything we did was being watched.

We were then led into the main hall where we were split up into groups, with the two other schools that were there. The day started off at 9:45 am with a meet and greet. This gave us the chance to get to know each other and introduce ourselves to the people on our table. We were all from similar backgrounds and got talking about our plans for the future.

A short while after, we were greeted by the head of the Vocational Trainee Scheme, Julia Hassheider, who gave us an itinerary of the day, and introduced us to the Head of HR, Anna Lowe, who briefed us with an introduction to the company. The speech covered some background information of the company and a short overview of each department, detailing their role within the bank, explaining the different objectives of the bank and how closely each department works together to realise these goals.

After the introduction, we were put into different groups and given more in depth presentations on the individual roles we could apply for as part of the Vocational Trainee scheme. The Vocational Trainee scheme is the school leavers programme offered by Commerzbank. It is a three year programme, where you can obtain

qualifications such as a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Business (Accounting & Finance) as well as a BA (Hons) degree in Business Studies, whilst working for Commerzbank, allowing you to gain practical experience. This would help you to apply the things you learn, expanding and solidifying your knowledge. There are four different areas you can specialise in as part of the VT scheme: Trade Finance & Cash Management Division (TF & CM), Corporates International / Relationship Management, Finance, and Information Technology (IT).

The current trainees led presentations on each of these roles, detailing their responsibilities and the work they do each day. Each trainee originally attended one of the three schools that were invited to the Insight Day and explained to us their motivations for applying for the VT scheme. They also told us about their experiences working for Commerzbank and how they adjusted from school to work life. The trainees specified how the company takes an active role in providing help and support to their trainees, listing the unique benefits they have gained being a part of the Vocational Trainee scheme. This helped us to make an educated decision on our plans for the future. When we heard about the amount of work you get as a trainee, some people were put off and it pushed them towards a more traditional route, but it allowed the rest of us to understand the commitment we were making if we became a trainee.

Then came lunch, which was probably the most stressful part of the day! Lunch gave us the opportunity to interact with the trainees, asking any questions we had, and to get more familiar with the managers of the different departments, but this wasn't an opportunity we took straight away. It took a while for us to get comfortable enough to start talking to the different heads of department; I remember my palms were sweaty, my knees weak, arms were heavy, but we had to make the most of the time we had, we only get one shot, this opportunity comes once in a lifetime, we had to seize it. So we stomached the strength to start talking to the people that were there and got to know them quite well.

The afternoon was focussed around our personal branding and marketing ourselves to recruiters. The first session covered how we should manage our online presence and how it can be used to shape an employers view of you as a person. In the modern era, social media is almost unavoidable, everyone has some sort of online presence and we underestimate the impact this has on how an employer sees you, as they often see your social media before they see you as a person. It also covered how we can market ourselves to employers and recruiters focussing on our key traits and building on them.

Next, we were given sessions on interview techniques, where we carried out separate mock interviews and were told how to structure our answers using the STAR technique. The STAR technique is an effective way to structure responses in an interview. First, you describe a Situation which applies to the question. Then you outline the Tasks and objectives you had to cover and the problems you faced in this situation. Next, what was your Approach to resolve the issue and finally you



summarise the Result of your actions. The final session was based on how to structure our CVs, where their recruiters gave us personalised feedback on what to include in our CVs and to break up each section, as well as any other improvements that could be made. I remember thinking my interview went quite well, I was nervous, but on the surface I looked calm and ready: my nerves made it hard to maintain eye contact; on the first question, I opened my mouth, but the words wouldn't come out, but I took a moment to think about what I was going to say and then the words came naturally. Overall, this day was definitely a beneficial experience for everyone who attended and we walked away from it with valuable knowledge on how to improve our personal branding and marketing for employers and recruiters and can now make an educated decision on our future plans.

Imaad Ahmed, Year 13

## Young Enterprise

Having been a part of the Young Enterprise company programme for two months now, my teammates and I have already gained valuable experience of dealing with real business issues. What has been a more intricate and challenging process than expected has also been a fantastic way of learning how real companies work and how solutions are found in the real working world.

So far we have started our fundraising process in order to kickstart our business aspirations and meanwhile we have been planning and suggesting ideas for our product and how we would like our company to work.

In order to replicate a real working environment as closely as possible we have each taken on roles to make this process more efficient. For example, while my initial role was as a member

of the sales team, I have now become Company Secretary. While these different roles give each of us the specialised skills associated with them, we work together on large decisions to ensure that every team member has the chance to be a part of every step in the process. Furthermore, should our needs, skills or capability change, we will always have the opportunity to either ask for help or to change roles completely - this way we will be able to see the business from an entirely different perspective.

Also, throughout the programme, we have had the opportunity to meet with business advisors at CitiBank in order to help us through this process. These meetings have not only allowed us to consult with professionals but have also given us an insight into the financial working environment. We

are so fortunate as to have this rare opportunity to work with such a large and well known company since we can all evaluate whether this is a career that we, as business and economics students, would like to pursue in the future. After all, this entire experience is the ideal chance to develop skills and prepare ourselves for future careers.

One of the greatest challenges in the competition so far has been coming up with a product. With so many criteria to consider in order to find a successful idea, each of us has had to apply what we have learnt through our studies at school in order to determine how to create a strong business, founded on great ideas. Many of these decisions have shaped how we work together as a team.

Over the next few months we will be producing our decided products and

finding ways to promote and sell them at various events in the new year. During that time, each department (Sales, Finance, Marketing and Operations) will be working together to contribute to the selling portion of the competition- in this time, learning key skills of communication and cooperation will be essential, and the hope is that all of these experiences will prepare us for the real working world, no matter what path we decide on, as all of these transferable skills will be invaluable for jobs in the future.

Hopefully, after a successful selling period we will have the opportunity to present our business in front of a board of professionals. It would be great to have the chance to progress in the competition and to do BGS proud!

**Erin McDermott, Y12**



# Computer Science Department News



## THE UK BEBRAS COMPUTATIONAL THINKING CHALLENGE

Bebras is a national challenge run by Oxford University that tests computational thinking and logical processing. It is a challenge that consists of mostly multiple choice questions where there are three types of questions, A,B and C, which vary in difficulty. Type A questions give you marks for correct answers and incorrect answers will not change your score. However, types B and C will give you more marks if you are correct and will deduct marks if you are wrong, thus meaning if you do not know the answer then it is better to leave it unanswered.

Taking part in the challenge is very simple; once the students taking part have been registered, they have a 40 minute time slot to complete a set of challenges. In Year 12, the Computer Science IB class were able to take part; however you do not need to study Computer Science to be able to enter the competition. There are various age groups that can be entered, ranging from Year 2 to Year 13. If you manage to score in the top 60 students in the country, you will be invited to Oxford to carry on with the challenge. Students who scored in the top 10% of the UK will also be invited to the TCS Oxford challenge in March.

I thought that Bebras was a fun way to test my own logical thinking and I could trust my judgment, even on some questions on which I was unsure.

**James Zhang-Ly, 12CED**

### THE RESULTS!!

At the beginning of November, 462 Bexley Grammar School students, across Y7-12, took part in the UK Bebras Challenge. Over 125,000 students took part in this challenge nationally, and our students were brilliant and have some fantastic results to show for their efforts.

### **Year 8 and Year 9**

Students entered at BGS: 373

Students entered nationally: 101,342

Students in Top 10% in UK: 110

Students with Distinction (Top 25% in UK): 95

Best in School: Isabelle Leung 9NET

### **Year 10 and Year 11**

Students entered at BGS: 60

Students entered nationally: 19,542

Students in Top 10% in UK: 16

Students with Distinction (Top 25% in UK): 16

Best in School: Mariusz Tang 10FF

### **Year 12**

Students entered at BGS: 27

Students entered nationally: 6,415

Students in Top 10% in UK: 3

Students with Distinction (Top 25% in UK): 8

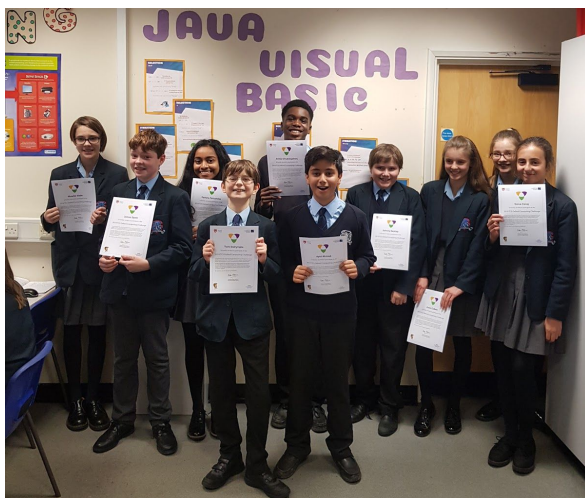
Best in School: James Zhang-Ly 12CED

### **So what happens next...?**

We have 129 students that have been invited to compete in the TCS Oxford Computing Challenge in March, these are the students that scored in the Top 10% nationally, obviously they will smash it!

Well done to all students that participated, you've definitely made us proud.

**Miss Muirhead,  
Head of Computer Science**



### **8PLR with their invitations to TCS!**

Students in photo: Phoebe Slade, James Spatz, Pamela Fernandes, Tom Dalrymple, Arinze Chukwujekwu, Ayid Ahmad, Johnny Beckley, Josie Collett, Maddy Hosier, Siona Canaj

# Drama Department News

## National Poetry Day

Thursday 4th October was National Poetry Day and, to celebrate, Miss Gabriel ran a poetry competition for the entire school. The theme this year was “Change”, and the various entries were displayed anonymously all over the school, the winner being **Niamh O’Toole-MacKridge** in Year 11 with her poem

“Pandora’s Box 2.0”



### **Pandora's Box 2.0**

*If Pandora's box were never  
opened,  
I wonder what would  
change;  
perhaps avarice would subside  
or childhood would reign*

*but if Pandora's box were never opened,  
I fear curiosity would still overtake  
perhaps it's set in stone that anguish  
is humanity's undeniable fate*

*if Pandora's box were never opened,  
I suspect most would stay the same  
perhaps it's in our nature to put a  
woman's curiosity to shame*

*if Epimetheus listened to his brothers  
warning (instead of putting his own  
pleasure first),  
would humanity find itself in a different  
position:  
in harmony, tranquil, uncursed.*

*but Pandora's box was opened,  
and the blame was laid on her,  
like how Adam let Eve eat the apple;  
her overlooked saboteur.*

*So let me try again:*

*if Pandora's box were never opened,  
I wonder what would change;  
perhaps misogyny would subside,  
or childhood would reign  
To be, or not to be.*

*To see, or not to see.*

*What you perceive, is what you believe,  
And what you believe, is who you will be*

*Time is your friend, most of the time  
But it goes so fast that you don't realize  
What you're doing for the rest of your  
time*

*And then comes the surprise!*

*The world stops rotating,  
Look in the mirror!  
Only then you'll be able to see  
Yourself a little bit clearer...*

*New opportunities and new friends,  
All these things never seem to end  
As the world carries on, and you're just  
having fun.  
Little do you know, the journey's just  
begun!*

*Change is constant,  
Learn from the past  
If you don't do this,  
Then you won't last.*

*You've got to be ready  
School starts in September  
Make this year, your year  
A year to remember!*

**Niamh O’Toole-MacKridge, Y11**

**Alice Brayford, Y12**

# Have you heard the exciting news along the Geography corridors?

Yes you are correct! A brand new international Geography trip has been launched and filled by a select group of 34 BGS Geography students.



These  
lucky



students will be travelling to the Azores in the Atlantic during October half term 2019. The Geography Department look forward to this trip where students and staff will be whale watching, visiting Europe's only tea plantation, traversing the lush volcanic landscape and much more! Not only will this allow students to experience geographical concepts in real life but it will also impress on them the magnificent awe and wonder such places hold.

Congratulations to these students and let the countdown begin!



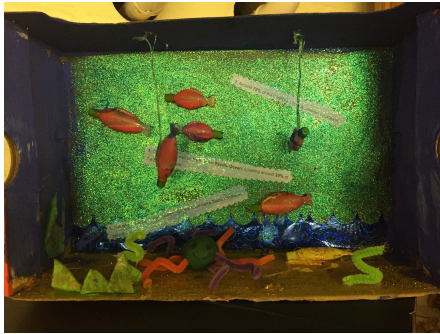
## What have the KS3 Geography Club been up to this term?

There has been tremendous interest from keen geographers from Y7, 8 and 9 in the geography



projects this term. All pupils are welcome to join Monday after school from 3:05-4:00 in M19. Here, students are let loose with their geographical creativity to explore exciting projects relating to the world around them!

At the end of last year we finished off an exciting year with our exploding volcanoes. And this year has got off to a fine start with biomes in boxes, autumn art, monitoring air quality at BGS and Christmas decorations!



Students enjoy expressing their creativity, chatting to like minded students and munching away on biscuits! Come and find out what we will be working on next!



**Ms Ashman, Geography Dept.**

## What's coming up in Geography over the next couple of months?



The Geography Department are privileged to announce that we have some ambassadors from the Royal Geographical Society visiting the department to speak to specially selected classes about the role of geography in our lives and futures! Will your son or daughter be lucky enough to get this unique experience in their lessons? Watch this space...



Its nearly Oscar season I hear you cry! That means only one thing...it's time again for the Geography Goscar season. Make sure you are wow-ing your Geography teacher with impressive homeworks, amazing commitment and focus in class or just general juicy Geography work! Who will be the winners?

**Ms Ashman, Geography Dept.**

# Y9 Geography Visit to the Natural History Museum

The Year 9 visited the Natural History Museum to explore the wonders of the Natural World. This took place over 4 days and saw the whole year group gain deeper understanding about natural hazards. We entered the red zone via an escalator that rose up through the centre of the earth. The exhibition gave Year 9 the opportunity to experience an earthquake in the “shake room”, this is based on the Kobe earthquake of 1995. Students were wobbled around whilst hearing the noise that an



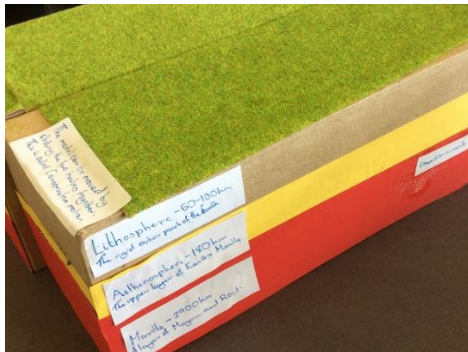
earthquake can make. It caused quite a stir! Students also saw a heat suit that volcanologists wear to carry out research, which looks more like tin foil but in actual fact can withstand extremely high temperatures. Year 9 were able to see bodies from the Pompeii eruption of 79 AD which are mummified. Students also enjoyed time exploring the other exhibitions that included the world famous dinosaurs, and the newly installed “dippy”. Overall, Year 9 had a fantastic day and were **juicy fact hunters**.

Year 12 have “slipped”, “tripped” and got “stuck” in the River Darent as a part of their

Geography IA. We managed to only lose one wellington boot but all students were wet and muddy after a day collecting primary data. We managed to

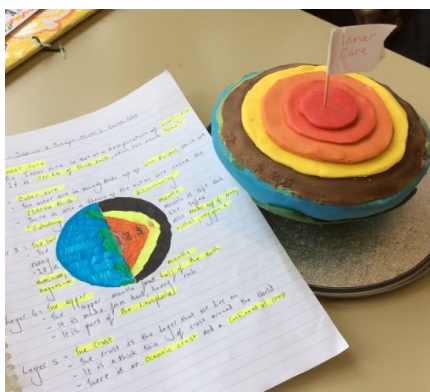


escape the rain on what was a rather damp day. Students worked in groups and took it in turns to collect primary data to investigate whether the River Darent conforms to the Bradshaw Model, this included the width, depth and velocity. Hopefully all students will produce some top grade coursework as a result of the day. Well done Year 12.




Year 9 students have been studying tectonic hazards in the unit “Dangerous places” and have got creative with their homework. Here is just a small selection of the outstanding work that has been completed this term, including models of plate boundaries, cakes that show plate boundaries, the structure of the earth and volcanoes and posters too. We loved them all

and enjoyed tasting a fair few too!

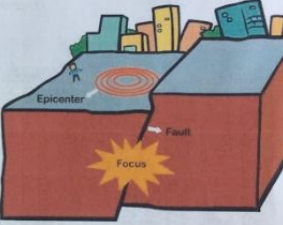


*National History Museum*


**Plate tectonics**  
 There are 7 major tectonic plates that cover 94% of the surface area for Earth. All of the tectonic plates together create the giant jigsaw which is the lithosphere.



**Earthquakes**  
 Earthquakes are natural events which can cause disasters. These happen when two tectonic plates press against each other and pressure is built up in the focus. Eventually this becomes too much and then the energy from the pressure is released in waves which causes the earthquakes.



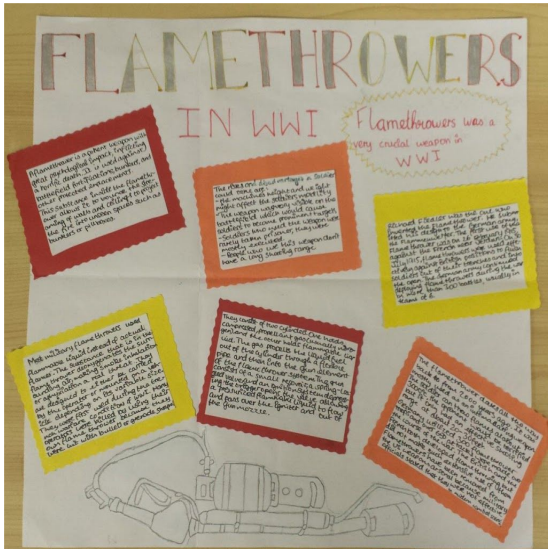
**Volcanoes**  
 Volcanoes are also events which are caused by plate tectonics. There are instances where the plates pull apart, which causes magma to flow upwards. Layers cool and as more lava piles on top, this forms a mountain shape (the volcano).



Ms J. Belton-Owen, Geography Dept.

# History Department News

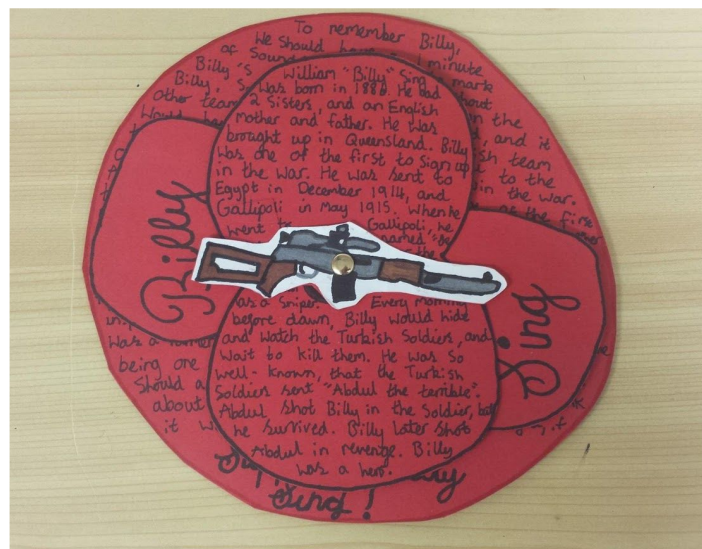
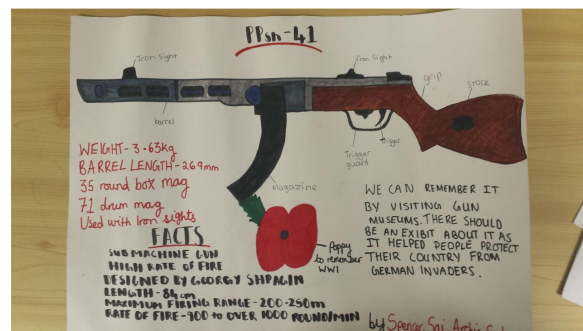
## WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING TO REMEMBER WW1 ?

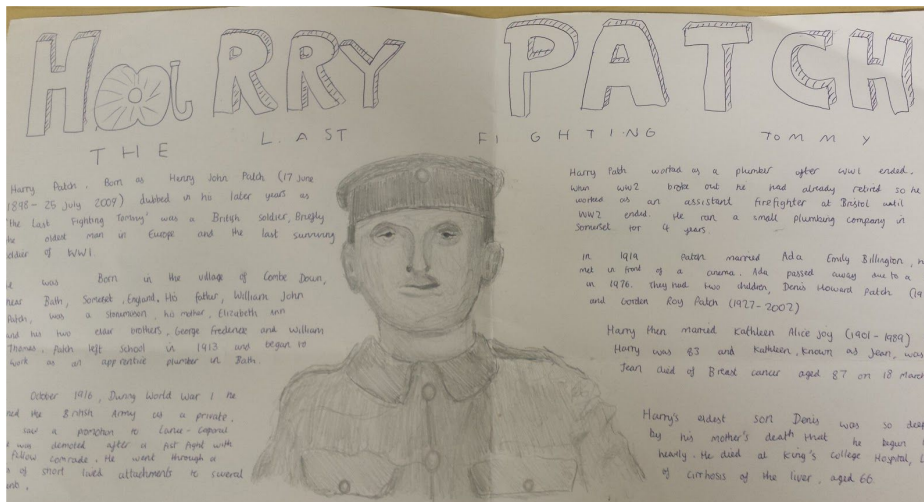


Over the period of remembrance, Years 7,8 and 9 have been doing many things to remember the people that lost their lives in the Great War. We have learnt about the impacts of WW1 and the devastational effects that it had on the lives of the soldiers.

To commemorate this huge event, we made presentations on different subjects to do with the war, in these presentations we had to include things such as; who / what we had chosen, what we can tell us about them, how we would choose to remember them / the event and why we would remember them like this.

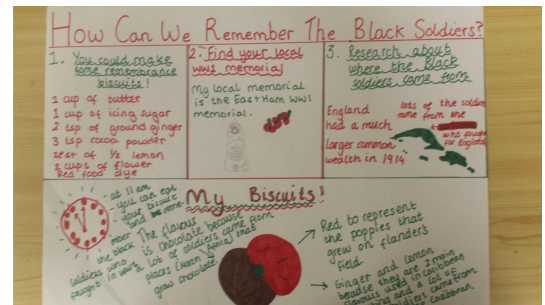
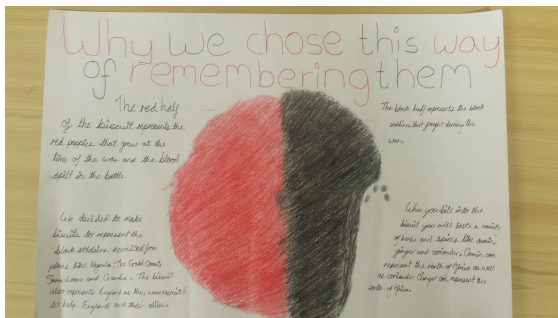
The subjects included; black soldiers in WW1; Russia in WW1; WW1 at sea and in the air and people such as; Harry Patch (a man who never spoke about his war experiences until he was 100), William Coltman (a soldier in the war who never fired a shot) and Walter Tull (a famous footballer at the time who also was a soldier in the war).





Our group decided to do our presentation on a lady called Nellie Spindler, she was the only female casualty of the war to be buried in Belgium. To remember her, we made a large gravestone with her story on it and underneath it had grass with many poppies on it as they are a symbol of WW1. Others also had creative presentations, such as campaigns. We think all of Year 9 (and the whole school) enjoyed learning about WW1 as it was something new that we had never done before.

By Zara Karim and Lydia Forsdyke, 9JMP



Images of work by: Jay Chin, Spencer Cox, Archie Brown, Sai Vajparu, Sneha Paul, Grace Taylor, Joseph Bakundikize, Vanessa Mitkova, Tyrese Olushola Rosie Barnwell, Dez Doherty, Alex Guest and Sanjana Pradeep, Y8; Zara Kadim and Lydia Forsdyke, Y9.

# Law Society News: Woolwich Crown Court - Mock Trial Competition



From the left: Connie Butler, Stacy Kindred, Koner Kalkanel, Mia Damiral, Isabel Hosier, Ms Stoddard, Diorel Zaimaj, Simran Ghag, Katy Jebson and Remea Maton

Over the last month the Year 12 Law Society and other volunteers have been involved in a Mock Trial Competition against Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School. We were presented with a fictional court case where photographer Hardeep Braza had been accused on charges of theft and obtaining services dishonestly. Each side had to prepare a defence and prosecution argument, as well as sourcing their own witnesses, members of the jury, clerk and usher to complete the rest of the court. We then had the opportunity to visit Woolwich Crown Court where judge HHJ Philip Shorrock tried the case (twice) and determined the winner of the two schools. Prior to this competition, I personally had very little knowledge of Law and I was initially rather apprehensive about visiting a real court - particularly one next to Belmarsh Prison!

Before the trial, barrister John Robb kindly agreed to give a talk on questioning witnesses. We focused on examination-in-chief and cross-examination. I hadn't previously considered the importance of the ways in which a barrister words their questions; however, I now see how calculated this process must be. When questioning their own witness, a barrister must avoid asking leading questions in order to allow the witness to logically tell their side of the story. 'Who', 'what', 'when' and 'where' questions are useful in setting the scene. For

cross-examination, when the witness on the other side is interrogated, the barrister wants to manipulate their questions to make their evidence seem less reliable. Through closely examining and comparing the witnesses' written statements with their spoken evidence, it's possible for the barrister to find gaps that may weaken the opposing argument.

When we arrived at Woolwich Crown Court we were required to go through airport-style security, something that was initially quite daunting. We were fortunate enough to secure the largest courtroom which, again, was rather intimidating. We ran the case twice with BGS as prosecution the first time, Chis and Sid the second, and each time the students playing barristers had the opportunity to question their witnesses in front of the judge. I was a member of the jury and at the end of each case we retired to the judge's office where we debated our final conclusion. We found it surprisingly challenging to make a unanimous and completely unbiased decision; however, in the end we managed to reach a conclusion: Hardeep Braza was guilty on account of obtaining services dishonestly but not on account of theft. As the jury foreperson, I had to announce this verdict to the rest of the court and justify our decision to the judge who then sentenced Braza accordingly. Overall, Chis and Sid won the first round and BGS won the second.

After both trials we received feedback from the judge, HHJ Philip Shorrocks. In particular he picked up on an over-reliance on notes and highlighted the importance of barristers speaking directly to the jury. As a newcomer to Law, one thing that has particularly stood out to me is how strategic every move is in court. The barristers have to be completely switched-on at all times and ready to respond to whatever a witness may say. They have to manipulate their questions and statements in a way that undermines the opposing argument without directly accusing them of being liars - something we learnt the hard way... Overall, I found this project extremely eye-opening and it allowed me to try something completely new. I found the trial fascinating and the unpredictability of the witnesses made for a compelling case. In fact, I had such an enjoyable evening that I was late leaving the site and had to be escorted off the premises by security...

I would like to say a big thank you, on behalf of every student involved, to all of the staff at Woolwich Crown Court for staying late to set up this experience. Thanks are also due to Ms Stoddard, without whom this wouldn't have come about: thank you for arranging such an enjoyable project - and for lugging a box of wigs and gowns along the way!



Isabel Hosier, Y12

# MFL News - International Day

On 25th September, Years 7-10 spent the day off timetable, celebrating different cultures from all around the world. The activities ranged greatly from Year 7s making Mexican masks to Year 9s baking Moroccan biscuits and having a taster in Salsa Dancing. The Year 8s took part in a Ti-Rakau session in which they learnt about the origin of the New Zealand dance, the Haka, which one student said was *“very interesting and not something he would ever have learnt or known about otherwise.”*



It was a very eventful day and was made all the more exciting by the various costumes which students, and some teachers, wore - some choosing to dress in clothes that reflected their family’s culture. This showcased a wide range countries and it was great to see the various different clothes.

Another way in which the day allowed us to celebrate different cultures around the world was the food available all week, which changed each day.

It was fun to see everyone dressed up and enjoying the day, whilst learning about other cultures. And of course, it was all down to the Language Department for organising such a great day.



**By Alice Brayford**

# Japan Trip 2018

## Tokyo: 18th -21st October

After a gruelling flight we landed in Japan and for the first time for many, we had a first glimpse of the stunning city of Tokyo. Just standing in the city was incredible as you are instantly overwhelmed with the atmosphere within Tokyo. We went through the first day with highlights such as going to Harajuku, which is one of the world's biggest fashion districts, as well as going to Akihabara which is an electric town filled with lights and technology.

Following day we went to Tokyo Disneyland and immersed ourselves in the magic of Disney. My personal highlight was the electric parade, which featured over one million lights.

The third day in Tokyo featured a Soroban workshop which is a Japanese abacus and is incredibly useful in arithmetic. As well as that, we went to the Miraikan Science Museum which featured the famous robot, Asimo; we also went to the team Lab exhibition which was a digital art gallery and a truly mind-blowing experience. Also I have to say that the convenience store was a massive hit, as I'm pretty sure most of our money went into food.

Our final day in Tokyo was a trip to the Tokyo Sky Tree which allowed us to go 1,480 ft into the sky. The view from the top was remarkable, as you could see the whole of Tokyo laid out in front of you, with the main star of the show being Mt Fuji peeking in the landscape. The accommodation in Tokyo was great. It allowed an insight into the culture of Japan and it also allowed students within our group to bond with each other and make new friendships. This led to a truly incredible experience for us all and we are grateful for Mrs Everett planning this trip.

**Joshua Ly Year 11**

## Hiroshima: 21st - 23rd

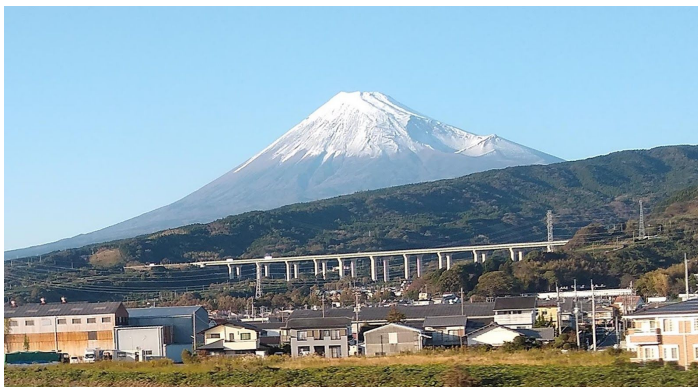
On the morning of the 22nd October, 16 jet-lagged students left for Hiroshima Peace Park, unsure of what exactly to expect and uncertain of how we would cope with the undoubted intensity and rawness of such a historically important and moving place. After the most overwhelming museum experience of my life, we were honoured to receive a lecture from a survivor of the 1945 Hiroshima bomb. She was kind enough to share her personal traumatic story of the bombing. I'm sure I speak for all students who attended that lecture when I say that we left with a newly found respect for those who so devotedly strive and fight for peace in such a violent world, and we left feeling motivated to make a change. On leaving the museum, our consciences were put to rest a little when we got the chance to donate one thousand origami cranes (made completely by Bexley Grammar Students) to the children's peace memorial, which honours and remembers children who died after the bombing due to radiation complications. In Japanese culture, if you make one thousand origami cranes, it is said that a wish will be granted. The beautiful incentive behind this memorial is to keep that wish going; and to support such a worthy cause in an authentic and beautiful way. The memorial receives thousands of donations a month, and we were incredibly proud to be a part of it.

Our stay at Hiroshima took a particularly nice turn, when we went to the ethereal island of Miyajima for an afternoon. And, if the clear skies, the golden sunset, the deer roaming around the already magical island, and the magnificent, notorious shrine wasn't enough, I was lucky enough to finally meet my aunt, uncle and baby cousin who live in Japan. Spending time with such lovely people in such an astonishingly beautiful place after a sombre morning really put everything in perspective for me, and I couldn't be more grateful to Mrs Everett for planning this unforgettable trip, and for continuing to share her passions with us in such a vital way, to help us grow and learn as people, not just students.  
**Niamh O'tool-Mackridge Year 11**



### Kyoto:23th - 24th

On October 23rd (Tuesday) our group arrived in Kyoto by Shinkansen (Bullet



Train) at around 11am. Promptly from the station, we took some local transport (bus) for 15 minutes to our first destination - Nijo Castle. This historical castle is a tourist attraction and is visited all the time. Our group entered the castle (barefoot/with socks) and had a fun time walking around inside and learning about the rulers who never lived there and only visited a couple of times

during 260 years of their reign. Outside, we were amazed to see the beautiful gardens were carefully looked after and the ponds bursting with koi carps. After that we visited Nishijin Textiles Museum and watched a Kimono fashion show on a stage and also learned to use a traditional wooden weaving machine to create samples out of different coloured wool. In the end they turned out to look like small scarves! As it was Mrs Everett's birthday, we went to a sushi restaurant that evening where we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Our accommodation for that night was the Kyoto Utano Youth Hostel which accommodated us nicely. The next day (24th October), we went to a Golden Temple. The temple itself was really pretty and as we wandered round we saw how much more beautiful it was. Unfortunately though, we couldn't go inside. The same day, our group went to the Pokemon Centre in Kyoto as well as a traditional area to find lunch. Very shortly after, we sped off to a building where we tried our luck at Karaoke! For some of us it sounded a bit dodgy.... After some fun though, we headed up a hill lined with shops and vending machines to the top where a temple resides. With an exquisite view and beautiful architecture, many of us had a great time here - an attractive feature was a waterfall divided into 3 jets of water. Supposedly, they represented health, wisdom and beauty and you were allowed to drink from two

and 'gain' some 'benefit'. I'm not sure how accurate it was but we had some fun trying our luck as our journey in Kyoto was coming to an end. With some nice souvenirs and some strange buys from vending machines, we got onto Shinkansen and left for our partner school, Keio SFC in a suburb of Tokyo....

**George Cook Year 11**

Keio Shonan Fujisawa High School visit: 24th - 28th October



During the last few days of the Japan trip, we experienced life at Keio Shonan Fujisawa High School. For the first night we stayed at the new Keio dormitory (before we met up with our exchange students). The next morning we travelled to Keio SFC, and took a tour around. It was amazing how large and different it was to BGS. After our tour we presented slides with information about English school and culture to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders. Then we met up with our exchange students. My exchange student, Nao, like many of the Japanese students, lived a long way from the school. That night I also met two of Nao's friends, Rina and Yui. Thankfully, they were all quite fluent in English and we had fun playing Mario Kart. The next morning I attended Nao's lessons at Keio, alongside Niamh and her exchange partner, Sakurako. We had fun playing "Fruit Basket" in Social Studies. In Mathematics I was thoroughly confused, not only due to language barriers but the fact that I was with a class of 17 Year olds. Next I attended their Home Economics lesson, which was slightly different to BGS' Food Technology lessons. In groups, students had to make and prepare baby milk, whilst one student would practice doing activities in a pregnancy belt. Overall an interesting concept, and entertaining too. Other lessons included a Japanese English lesson, and PE, tennis in large outdoor courts. After school we split into groups to participate in both a Japanese tea ceremony and Karuta club. During the tea ceremony we received a sweet piece of candy and a small serving of the traditional green tea. The ceremony was calm and another unique experience unlike anything in England. We then watched a short match of Karuta, a card game in which lines of poetry are written. A person says the first few lines of the poem, and the two opposing competitors must select the correct card with the finishing lines of the poem before their opponent. Despite being a card game, it was a rather aggressive and intense game. Once these activities were over, many of us met at an Italian restaurant to eat. Everyone was talking and messing around, and it was nice to meet up with the others and enjoy more familiar foods in contrast to many of the foreign Japanese dishes.

For our last day we attended the Keio vs Waseda baseball match. Waseda and Keio are both large private schools, with a rivalry similar to that of Oxford and Cambridge. It was amazing to see the amount of effort and school spirit involved, with teams of cheerleaders and orchestras on both sides of the stadium. Keio ended up winning 3:1, much to the joy of our exchange partners.

With the next morning came our departure. We are truly grateful for the hospitality that both Keio and its students have shown us.



**Devon Fell-Smith Year 10**

# Portuguese Lecture



On 12<sup>th</sup> November, a range of students from Years 10-13 attended a Portuguese lecture after school given by Dr Toby Green of King's College London. We quickly learned about some simple words and phrases, and how they correlated to English and how some of the words were simple English but slightly modified, which was interesting to look at from a linguistic point of view. One example of a phrase we learnt was: 'eu quero comer un sanduiche' - an essential for all hungry teenagers in a foreign country! Overall, it was a great thing to do and it opened up our horizons to a new language and a new culture. This lecture also gave us a chance to look at what it would be like to study a language, and in particular a new language, at university level. It was certainly an amazing experience and we all enjoyed it.

Ethan Pereira, Year 10

## Music Department - Christmas Concert

I caught up with Mrs Goddard, Head of Music here at BGS, to ask her about the Christmas Concert held on Tuesday the 4th December. Mrs Goddard explained the wide variety of

ensembles that took part, saying *"we had a rock band, jazz band, clarinet choir and a brass group"*. There was *"strong representation"* at the concert - which was played in front of Bexley Grammar's



headmaster of 40 years ago, Mr Jones. *"We've been working on it since September... It's not that long.. But they're pros, our kids."* On the Junior Orchestra (Years 7-9), she stated *"they really held their own, they were really good, ....and we were really pleased to see the participation of Year 7's in String Orchestra."*

*"We put some Christmas bits and pieces in, but otherwise it's a summary of everything we've worked on in the Music Department. We had "That's Christmas To Me" by Pentatonix, which was the penultimate performance... For audience participation, we asked the audience to hold their phones up with the*

*flashlight on, and to wave them... It was a lovely moment. And Emma Damiral-Wood (Year 13) recommended 'That's Christmas To Me' as a song for Junior Choir to sing, so that was a student choice which meant that the concert was really being designed by the students too."*

*"We had a big finale: everybody sang 'Happy Xmas (War Is Over)' by John Lennon...It was a fantastic summary of everything that we have achieved in the past 4 months alone."*

The Music Department, with Mr Elphick, also announced that the money raised from last year's practice pod campaign was going to be put towards converting MU3 into a new practice room suite, space that is sorely needed by the Music Department in order to support further the music-making going on in the department.

*"We're really grateful for the fundraising efforts of students, parents and staff towards the practice pod initiative, and we cannot wait to use and move into this new space, bring ever more students into all of our ensembles and the Music Department."*



Thanks to everyone who took part, and to those who didn't, don't be afraid to show off your talents in future concerts, they are always fun to get involved in and wonderful to attend.

By Elijah Reynolds, Y12

## Autumn Term News in PE

### Cross Country Championships

A rainy afternoon - proper cross country weather - saw six of our nine strong team be selected to represent Bexley Borough in the next round of the competition. Our runners did Bexley Grammar proud, racing hard against a tough field. The event was held locally



at Beths Grammar School. Well done!

## Girls Sport: Netball

### Year 7

The Year 7 girls have made an excellent start to Netball. They have shown real commitment on a weekly basis to training and made huge progress in their skill and understanding. I am very excited about the fixtures we have planned for the spring term and I am confident they will be a very successful team. Well done all!

### Year 8

We have seen a huge increase in the participation numbers for Year 8 Netball with over 25 girls coming along to training on a Monday night. Students have been working hard on developing their own individual skills, as well as those within their teams. The Year 8 Tournament is later in February so watch this space.

In October half term, ten players from the Year 8 squad embarked on a sports tour to sunny Barcelona. They spent two



days training with three England Netball coaches and developed a range of defensive and attacking skills in their sessions. On the last day of the tour the students played a tournament against rival schools (many of which were older). The year 8s worked hard to secure 2 wins out of their 4 games. Gracie Speak was also named as the most determined student on the tour due to her courageous performances in the hard-fought games. The squad were a fantastic addition the tour and worked incredibly hard to learn new skills and put them into competitive situations. Well done all!

**Ms Leffen**

### Year 9

The girls are progressing well with consistent training, matches and participation in the recent borough tournament where we convincingly beat the hosts, Chislehurst

and Sidcup Grammar. With over 20 girls attending training there is plenty of opportunity to develop our game play and skills. Well done girls!

### Year 10

Year 10s have been committed and dedicated to their training this year. Great participation from all the players with 13 players competing at the recent U15 tournament. Well done ladies on what was a tough competition! Double training every week.... we've really impressed! Keep it up!

Mrs Kemp



### Year 11 Netball

Year 11 team have continued to show great dedication to training and fixtures and managed to achieve second in the Bexley Schools Netball Tournament in October. The squad, many of which are GCSE students, work fantastically well as a team. Well done ladies- keep up the good work.

### Girls Football



Both Under 13s and Under 14 girls teams have so far had a great start in the Kent Cup competitions; the Under 13s getting into the 3rd round with 3 amazing wins against some strong sides and the Under 14s getting through to the Quarter Finals. Obviously, the further they get in these cup competitions the more difficult each match becomes going up against stronger opposition. Their efforts have been amazing. Most of the girls came on the Barcelona trip where

they definitely sharpened up their football skills.

**Mrs Haslam**

### Dance Club

We are hoping to offer GCSE Dance as an option in September 2019 and this is the first step to promoting Dance in the school. It has already taken off this term through the extra-curricular club; so many tasters in a variety of dance styles delivered by the wonderful Year 13s, Evie and Morgan. Their passion and enthusiasm is evident through their teaching. Thankyou girls! All the dancers are building towards the Bexley Borough competition in January. We can't wait for the



final performance. Best of luck to our boys and girls! The more the merrier..... Keep dancing!

**Mrs Kemp**

## Girls Basketball

A huge thank you to Mattie (Year 13) and Miss Rendle for their dedication to Girls Basketball on a Tuesday evening & Wednesday morning. The club continues to grow and skills continue to develop. Well done to all the girls who have managed to roll out of bed early to make the sessions. We have games coming up so keep up the hard work!

**Ms Leffen**

## Boys Sport:

### Football

Sixth Form Football this year has seen a vast number of players participating at different times as the squad is continuously rotated to ensure everybody is getting a game who is interested in playing. The games have been coming thick and fast with fixtures most weeks. The 1st XI are currently playing in the North Kent Premier League and opposition is mainly made up of Football Academies or schools that have close links to professional clubs in the area. Despite that the squad have shown great character and determination to compete at such a high standard. A recent result which sticks in the memory was a victory over our closest rivals Beths where we won 3-2 after falling behind early on in the match. BGS were 1-0 down at half time and eventually came out as winners after a superbly worked goal in the last 5 minutes of the match meant that it led to a nail-biting finish. All players who have represented the school team should be proud of their conduct as well as their performances. There is a really strong team spirit within the Sixth Form side that has carried over from the victory in the 2nd XI Kent Cup last year. I hope that there will be more silverware in the cabinet at the end of this season!

**Mr Mackle**



## Basketball

Congratulations to the Year 8 basketball squads. They took part in a small tournament against 2 Trinity sides on Thursday 15th November after school and

played some excellent quality basketball. The A squad won both of their games and the B squad won one and lost one. This was a superb effort and the matches were played with a huge amount of enthusiasm and commitment. All 4 teams remained friends at the end were exhausted and ready to go home and put their feet up! Well played to all involved and I look forward to the next tournament!

**Mr Mackle**

## **Staff News**

### **Mrs Howard's Success**

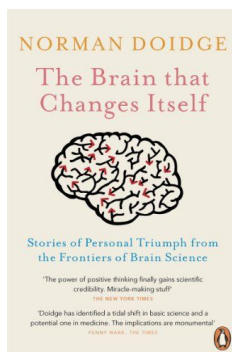
Mrs Howard represented Team GB at the European Aquabike Championships in Ibiza in October and managed to achieve an incredible 8th place in her category.

We are hugely proud of Mrs Howard and her hardwork and determination for this amazing event! Well done!



# Have yourself a psychological Christmas

When students and their parents come round on open evenings, one of the big draws to our 'stall' is the collection of books that we have out on display. Every time several parents tell me that they would have loved to study psychology, and they look with great interest at the reading material. This Christmas I thought I'd share a few recommendations with you, in case you find yourself with some time to get those little grey cells working over the festive period.



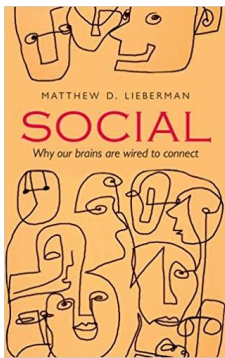
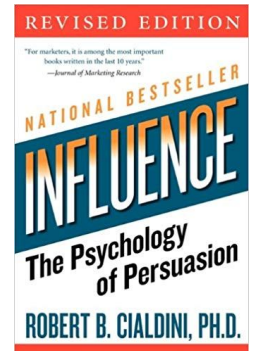
### ***The Brain that Changes Itself - Norman Doidge***

There aren't many books that I read that have a true impact on my life. This is one that did. Through all sorts of amazing examples, Doidge describes the ability our brains have to rewire themselves in response to experience. We can direct some of this change, and through reading this you can come to an understanding of how to change your habits (New Year's

resolution, anyone?) and an appreciation as to why it's so difficult to do so. This book challenged and inspired me in equal measure. What might it do for you?

### ***Influence: the Psychology of Persuasion - Robert Cialdini***

I first encountered this several years ago when I started teaching about compliance - how to manipulate others to do something they wouldn't otherwise do. That sounds potentially very bad, and it could be, but what Cialdini does is unpack the ways that such manipulation occurs, helping us to resist the many ways by which our behaviours might be subtly controlled. What brought me back to this book was our Speech Night guest last year - Duncan Jarrett, OBE, a former Commander in the Metropolitan Police and experienced hostage negotiator - who spoke about how the principles in this book shaped his approach to resolving crises safely. Whether you're negotiating with terrorists, salespeople or your children/parents, there's something in here that might help.



### ***Social: why our brains are wired to connect - Matthew Lieberman***

Although it might not be expected, this book in some ways helps to understand some of what is included in both of my other suggestions. Accessibly written, this book considers evolutionary theory and neuroscience as it discusses issues of socialising and why it is that, when connecting with others or experiencing social isolation, we feel the same sort of pleasure and pain that chocolate and injury (respectively!) give us. We cannot escape our evolutionary heritage - we have been 'designed' to be social, and if we don't recognise that then we're going to struggle to be fully human. Why do we want to be with others at Christmas? Because we're *Social*...

***Mr Asker, Head of Psychology***



# Power Day - Science Museum Trip

On 26<sup>th</sup> November, 10 students in years 7-9 went on a trip to the Science Museum in Kensington. When we arrived our teacher asked a member of staff directions to our first exhibition, and while we walked there, he gave us a running commentary



on all the more interesting exhibits we were walking past. As he was leaving us after this interesting introductory tour, he revealed that he was in fact the Director of the Museum!

Our first exhibition was about future engineering challenges. We spent an

hour there and for most of it, we were playing a game set up where you had to design a rover and see how far it could go, whilst overcoming several tricky obstacles.

Afterwards, we went to the aircraft exhibition. It had several historic planes, including a Spitfire and the first plane to fly non-stop across the Atlantic. It was this second plane that had caught my attention. This plane had made an amazing journey, and it has quite a funny story. There were two pilots on board, and they had to carry eight full fuel tanks to complete the sixteen hour long journey. With the weight of the critical amount of fuel they couldn't take much else with them, only a thermos of coffee, a bottle of whisky, a few sandwiches, a teddy-bear and a stuffed toy cat called Twinkletoes. They crash-landed in what looked like a smooth field in Ireland, having made this epic journey from Newfoundland, mistaking the people waving at them from below for giving them an excited welcome rather than warning them they were about to land in a bog. They survived and the two aviators were the first ever people to describe the feeling of jet-lag.

Next, we spent about five minutes before lunch looking at an exhibition about the Internet. We had lunch, before swiftly moving on to a 3D IMAX film about space. We saw views from the International Space Station, and heard several astronauts' accounts of their time there; from everyday life to going on spacewalks.

Unfortunately, it was then time to leave. We took the coach back and arrived at around 3:45 pm. Overall, everybody enjoyed it, despite the late finish.

Thank you very much to my form tutors for organising this brilliant trip!

**Sam Bowring, 7MPL**

# Guvna B Visits BGS:

## Q&A



On Monday, 3rd December, Christian gospel rapper Guvna B paid a visit to BGS, delivering some of his songs, a snippet of acapella and an underlying message of hope to Years 7, 8, 9 and 12. I caught up with him after his Year 12 assembly, in which he promoted his upcoming concert at the O2 with EDM band LZ7. Guvna B was born and raised in Canning Town, East London, with Ghanaian parents. His career successes include winning two MOBO awards and writing a book, entitled “Unpopular Culture”. I asked him a few questions about his schools tour and upcoming music, and - having seen him perform live before - what it’s like to be a gospel rapper:

What’s the “Illuminate Schools Tour” all about?

*So basically, loads of people in school struggle to find their purpose or apply themselves and stay focused. So it’s getting everyone together and saying “We need better communities, so let’s work together to reach our full potential and inspire people.”*

Yeah, that’s good. What’s it like working with LZ7?

*Yeah, they’re cool people, man. “Illuminate” is their organisation, so it’s good to be able to do stuff with other people - strength in numbers.*

Yeah, cool, I’ve seen them live as well. I saw you live at Creationfest, I missed about half of the performance..

*Come next year, innit, I’m there again.*

You’ve got a concert coming up, in the Indigo at the O2. Are you looking forward to it?

*Yeah, bro. Can’t wait! Obviously, South-East London - it’s good to be performing in London. I perform all over, so it’s good to do the hometown.*

What’s it like to perform live in front of loads of people? Do you ever get stage fright?

**Best feeling, man. I do get stage fright; the less people, the more stage fright I get.**

I heard, at Creationfest, you sang “Cast Your Cares”, I really like that song.

**Yeah, we’ve got a new single of that as well.. With Kingdom Choir. {Available on Soundcloud: Cast Your Cares (Radio Edit) [feat. The Kingdom Choir] - Guvna B}**

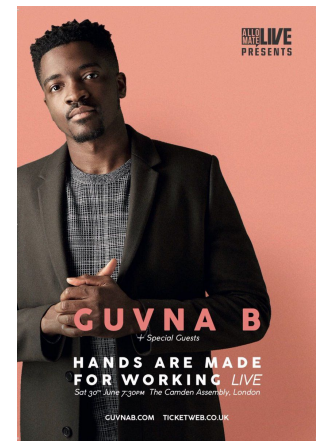
Yeah, I also really like “Nothing But The Blood” {Available on Youtube, iTunes and streaming services: Nothing But The Blood [feat. Deitrick Haddon] - Guvna B} - those are probably my two favourites of yours. But, when you performed “Cast Your Cares”, you said “I don’t know if I want to perform this, because it’s singing.”

**Yeah, but it was lovely in the end.**

So, you’ve got two MOBOs and you’ve even released a book! What do you use your music for?

**Therapy. I want people to listen to my music and think “I can get through this situation, keep my head up and stay positive.”**

You released “Hands Are Made For Working” in May of this year, and your previous release was “Secret World” back in 2015. Why the big wait?



**It takes a while to be inspired, you know? I could have put something out but it wouldn’t be as good as when I’m inspired. “Hands Are Made For Working” is something that involved deep inspiration.**

What was it like to work on that album?

**Special. Because it was for my dad. So it was good memories.**

Have you got any new music in the works? Can you give us an exclusive?

**Next year, I’ve got a track coming with a rapper called Andy Mineo, he’s sick.**

Alright, sounds good, thanks for talking to me.

**Elijah Reynolds, Y12**



# Crickets!

On 30th November, Bexley Grammar School witnessed a free food stand at break, including energy bars and high protein snacks. The catch? They were made from crickets! A highly motivated Year 9 student, Max Dawkins, was inspired to run this stall at breaktime.

These were his words:

*“It all started when I watched a video on how the sustainability of mainstream meat sources was devastating. I wanted to do something but felt it would make a very small difference too, for instance, to become vegetarian. The percentage of vegetarians around the world is mainly 4% (ranging to 30% in India down to religion). So my big plan was to encourage the whole school to reduce its carbon footprint, air miles etc. I felt it unrealistic to say that over any length of time I could get the whole school to stop eating all biotic protein sources. My compromise was to advertise one of the most efficient meat sources in the form of insects!”*

An innovative way to improve the environment is simply to reduce the carbon footprint of the food we purchase and consume, something that Max has caught onto astutely. After contacting a local organisation and obtaining some produce from them, he and a team of Year 10s handed out tasters of energy bars and dried crickets at break time, which were a huge success. Though people may have been reluctant to try them, over the course of his taster morning, it was found that about 70% of people enjoyed the cricket protein bars!

This bodes well for the future of Max’s project. He now aims to involve the local press, and to be a catalyst for change, potentially making Bexley Grammar “*the first school to introduce insects as a sustainable biotic protein source*”. We hope to report back on this project later on in the year with further updates!

**Brandon Lynn, Y12**

# “Why would you order over four hundred trees for the school?”



This question has been so endlessly repeated to me over the last month because, while most trees this time of year like to shed their leaves in preparation for the Winter months, exactly four hundred and twenty tree saplings found their way to Bexley Grammar School.

Although the thought of a school forest may seem like the start of a bad joke, when I first applied to the Woodland Trust, a company who delivers free saplings to schools and communities, I had a vision - to improve the environmental standards of the school and spread awareness on the importance of trees. Over the first two weeks of November, the school received fourteen different varieties of tree ranging from popular species like the silver birch, crab apple and wild cherry to more obscure species like the blackthorn, elder and dog rose; every tree sapling came with its own bamboo stick for support and its own tube for protection from pests. Eventually, all of the trees were given away to various teachers and students in the hope that they would all be planted and prove invaluable to the local environment with any donations received going to the school's Horticultural Society.

Despite ordering the trees myself, this event would never have been a success without the support I received from various students and teachers, who I will now credit accordingly. First of all, I must thank my friend Isabel Hosier, for being the first person that I confided to about the trees and she has given me wise counsel ever since. Then I must thank Mrs Stoddard, Mrs Gradley and Ms Muirhead; I told each of these teachers in sequence about the trees because I knew that I would need their advice on what to do before the trees actually arrived. I must also thank the Year 13 Prefect Team; we may have butted heads occasionally, however, I appreciated their involvement in the tree giveaway nonetheless. Most importantly, I want to thank the Woodland Trust because if they hadn't offered me this golden opportunity, then the school would never have got to appreciate the joy of planting a sapling and knowing that you've made a difference. It's crazy to think that the sapling, effectively a stick, comes from such a humble beginning and yet is able to grow and prosper into something which we owe our very existence to; in many ways, trees show what can be achieved through hard work and commitment.

It's been an eventful November, but I wouldn't have it any other way. Through the widespread distribution of tree saplings, I have managed to instil in the school the valuable message of environmental awareness. In an age where deforestation is at an all time high and there are some people who are more interested in profit and personal gain, it's reassuring to see society come together and plant the future. It's clear from the foundation of the school's Horticultural Society, run by Ms Muirhead and Ms Contini, that these trees have really 'taken root' in the heart of the school and will continue to flourish in the years to come.

"The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now." - Chinese proverb

Alfie Tindall, Y12



## **Our plan to boost student wellbeing by creating a food forest!**

Our original plan was to turn a plot of land at the front of the school into a garden, to grow only fruit, vegetables, herbs and edible flowers. Our idea was to have 3

raised beds with students planning, planting, growing and eating the produce. This small idea has spring-boarded us into creating a 'Food Forest'!!

We now plan to use the plot of land at the side of our school beside Danson Park, that used to be a nature area, but is now disused and overgrown. Our students have created a design for this area to grow all the things we wanted to originally and many more, complete with hedgehog hotels, wild flowers, bird and bat boxes. They want to have a polytunnel, shed and compost heap in this area too. Students have planned to have a huge area to grow pumpkins, so that we can have a school pumpkin carving competition. They also want a berry corner to grow blackberries, raspberries, sloes and a few others. They have planned to border the path with herbs and lavender so that when you walk in, not only can you smell the trees but you have a mixture of vibrant natural scents. The students that we have coming to the club so far are really excited about this project and we want students to be able to get the most out of this area; we want them to USE IT, for a hobby, or ecology, or just when they need a bit of time outdoors.

At the minute the area is really overgrown, and a bit of a safety hazard so we have A LOT of work to do to get this area ready to use, from clearing brambles and overgrown bushes, to building raised beds and homes for animals/insects.

In the New Year we plan to host a day of 'building the Food Forest' on a Saturday in the New Year. All students and parents will be invited to help us weed, clear the rest of the area, build compost bins and raised beds from pallets, make bug hotels and more. We are hoping that there will be a group of parents and students willing to give up an hour or two to help us - even though it will be cold outside!

We have an **Instagram** account for you to follow our plans, efforts and progress for this project, you can find us here: **@BGSHorticulturalSociety**

**Miss Muirhead and Miss Contini**



Our plan is to turn this ↑

into this ↓



# “The Christmas House”

Location? The entrance to Danson Park not a two-minute walk from the gates of BGS. Famously, just a few doors down Danson Crescent is a house that sticks out like a sore thumb, and the owner was the man I came to meet today. Its bright lights and decorations light up the street in the winter evenings, providing a local tourist attraction to the people of Welling - and across London. Jonathan Blake's life experiences range from the likes of being gassed in Tehran and seized in Kabul to helping Mother Teresa and taking a wedding underwater. In comparison, Christmas lights sounds like a tame topic to talk about, but here it is:

So, I'm here to talk to you about your Christmas lights; when did you start this tradition?

I think it was about 15 years ago. We started small, just the nativity scene in the front garden. And then people stopped to look at it, and were obviously interested by it, so it grew a bit bigger the following year, and then it snowballed.

That's a topical analogy! So, it's for charity.. Who in particular is it for?

Up to now, we've done it for Save The Children. But, this last year, there have been a lot of scandals in the charity sector. The difficulty is that big charities have become almost commercialised, like industries, and they have Chief Executives that take



massive salaries, and there's not a close enough monitoring of what actually happens on the ground. So we were quite disillusioned with that. Also, the scandal that was going to be reported in the papers about Save the Children - newspapers reported that they paid solicitors over £100,000 to try to protect their reputation, and it was published anyway. In my opinion they wasted all of that money, so this was heartbreaking to us

because we've raised money over the years [for them]. So we wanted to try something different this year. So I went to Gambia with my two elder sons three weeks ago with Water For Africa.

I know a couple that went to Gambia not too long ago, just as tourists.

They're trying to encourage tourism because it hasn't got a natural export.. Except peanuts! So they're trying to build up the tourist industry now they've got some political stability there. But I researched the different water charities. Again, the big water charities had Chief Executives and they roll out very big water aid projects - but we wanted something quite small that we would be personally linked to. We found Water For Africa; there aren't any offices, there are no paid salaries in the UK at all,

so this was like music to my ears. And I said, “Could we take on an individual project?” and they said, “Yeah, wonderful!” So we located a village right in the middle of nowhere, with no electricity, no proper water facilities... and the plan is to put in this water facility, a deep-bore hole, solar panels... to revolutionise both the provision of clean water, and then the health benefits and agricultural benefits that will come from that. So it will all happen from the Christmas lights. The wonderful thing is the Water For Africa Gambian staff are people who live in the villages, and originally Water For Africa helped their village, and they were so moved by how it can transform a village, they wanted to get involved. So it’s so personally involved, we wanted to support it.

How much does it cost you to run this lights show?

The building up of the lights over the years, obviously, has cost a lot. And when they break down, they need to be replaced. It’s sort of a running thing now, but we’ll probably spend about £200-300 buying new equipment every year. And then the electricity is about £200-300, so it’s about £500-600 commitment to put it on, but we pay that. Anything that people give through the door or through JustGiving, that’s all going to Gambia. It’s so wonderful when someone puts in £1 or they put in 20p, and they know that’s going to that village.



How much do you raise?

Well, over the years, it’s sort of increased, because obviously it started small. I think the biggest amount we’ve raised in a year is about £4000. But this is getting ridiculous because we’re, this year, trying to get £12000 so it’s maximising it three-fold. People say “You’re crazy Jonathan!” but, unless you’re crazy, and unless you set high targets, then you don’t achieve those things. But we’re hoping, fingers crossed. We’ve done well so far.



Does it bother your neighbours at all?

We’ve tried to be respectful, because if you leave the lights on all through the night, then people come back from parties, pubs and clubs, and they turn up outside with their cars and they make lots of noise.

Like moths, attracted to the light.

Yeah, so we turn them off at about 22:30, over the Christmas period probably about 23:30. But early enough so that the neighbours aren’t disturbed. And because of that, the neighbours are really supportive.

How many comments do you get then, are you the talk of the town?

Well the really moving thing is that, because we've done it for 15 years, for a lot of children locally, they have grown up with it their whole lives. This is the Christmas House to them. So part of their Christmas observance is to come to the Christmas House. That's really wonderful. In fact, there was a mum out there the other night - this was very moving - she had got her little boy in his pyjamas and dressing gown and she said, "Well I came as a child to see the lights, and now I'm bringing my children," so that was really special.

How do you maintain a standard every year?

I look at it and I try and think, "What's missing? What could we add on?" And each year, putting it out, I try and redesign it, re-present it, so it looks very different this year than it did in previous years. It's trying to get that wow-factor when people come to see it. And the children who are routine visitors, they always look and say, "Oh yes, that's different this year," so they spot what's changed.



How long does it take you to put them up?

It's a big haul; this year it was over a three-week period, which is a lot. You've got to get the equipment from all their various storage spaces, and then there's maintenance to do, and checking of the wires and everything, and then the designing of it. Then it takes about two weeks to put away. The difficulty is, it's probably about a two-month commitment of our lives to do the Christmas lights. And my wife says, "Jonathan, you're getting old! You're not going to be able to do this forever!" So how long I'll be able to keep going with it, I don't know, but everybody expects it - thousands of people! They come from right down at the Medway, across the Thames; in different boroughs of London they know about it.

How long do you plan to keep going with it?

Honestly, I don't know. Part of it is the physicality; it's absolutely physically shattering! So if my knees give out or my back gives out or something - and going up onto the roof is scary. The thing is, more and more people know about it because Channel 4 put it out on Christmas Eve a couple of years ago; they came and did a feature about it: "My Crazy Christmas Lights", so again lots more people found out about it and that generates more visits. It's very difficult because there's this massive expectation, and then there's just an ageing man. I don't know how long we're going to do it for; we'll take every year as it comes. There might be a revolution if we stop though, they might be down the streets protesting.

Maybe someone else will have to take the reins from you...

It could be written into the deeds of the house: "If you buy this house, you've got all these decorations to add!"

So why Christmas in particular, do you do any other holidays?

When we started, we just had the nativity scene. Obviously, Christmas is a big, national event, but then we also wanted it to be inclusive. We didn't want it to be, in a sense, specifically Christian or specifically exclusive. So, on that rolling message that goes around, just above the garage door, we've changed that to say we are celebrating birth. Because birth is common to everybody - everyone's born - so just the miracle of a child coming to a family is what we wanted to put at the centre of it. It's for everybody to come and celebrate with light and joy and giving and generosity and happiness.

Are you religious?

I'm actually a Christian Archbishop. But the way I'm religious is that I'm religious in a very interfaith, pluralistic manner so I work with anybody; I work with people who've got no faith or Christian faith or any faith. I take services for anybody. I work with anybody because I think that's what the ethos of love is: you are just there for anybody, because we've all got human hearts that beat in the same way. That's why we wanted the house not to be exclusive, it's there for everybody.



Are you going to do anything different next year then?

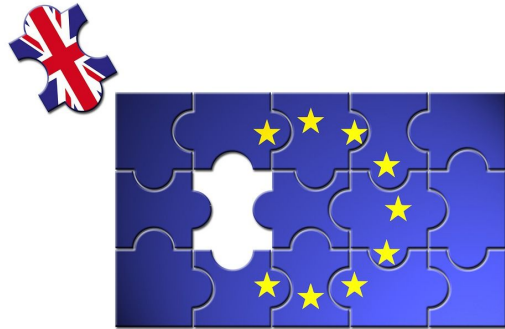
You're challenging me! And you're assuming I'm doing it next year! You might have to speak to us next year, if you come up with some good ideas. I put Father Christmas right on the chimney this year because somebody gave me that Father Christmas; that's the other thing I didn't mention - people sometimes come and give us their decorations. That's wonderful because it will replenish what we've lost. So somebody gave us that Father Christmas last year so I've put it right up on the chimney. I was quite pleased with that... As long as the wind doesn't blow it down!

Elijah Reynolds, Y12

# Brexit explained

## *Brexit.*

A word that, since early 2016, has been referred to countless times. In London, a predominantly Remain area, we hear people blaming all kinds of things on Brexit, from the weather to the price of a Freddo. But the stark reality indicates a national divide on the topic, and a deeper issue altogether.



So, what even is Brexit? From the referendum, it was apparent that people didn't quite grasp the true meaning of what Brexit may actually entail. The mismatch of information from the campaigners and the media to the general public was vast, and wildly exaggerated figures crying out that the NHS is proving to be too costly without much backing further fueled the widespread discontent which was soon to emerge within the country.

The true question is whether it is happening or not. The invocation of Article 50 means it should theoretically happen on 29th March 2019, unless the EU member states agree to prolong the leaving of the EU for a few more months. This would happen if there was any doubt that Britain would leave, which would happen in the case of a second referendum, if successfully organised by the Labour party. At present, a 585 page Withdrawal Agreement and a 26 Page Declaration on future relations have been formed. MPs were due to vote on these on 11th December, to allow the European Parliament to get involved in negotiations before the initial date of March 29th, if it were passed. If this deal is rejected, Britain may leave the EU with no deal, which is envisaged to be the worst possible outcome by politicians. Another possibility is a second referendum, or a General Election, stemming from a no-confidence vote in Theresa May\*. This complicates matters, especially as Jeremy Corbyn might aim to have a second referendum.

After Brexit happens, if it happens, Britain will undergo a transition period until 2020, to allow time to prepare for the post-Brexit laws to be enforced and set in stone. However, this has the possibility of being extended, though Theresa May is adamant that this will not happen. This conflicts with Nicola Sturgeon's goals to extend the transition period, deeming it undemocratic for Scotland to leave the EU when the Scottish electorate favoured Remain. Furthermore, the Irish border remains an issue, but both sides have agreed that there will not be a hard border, allowing for easier access and trading of resources.

Overall, the Brexit deal is extremely complicated. It may happen on 29th March, or it may not. A second referendum or a General Election may well take place after the outcomes of the vote on Mrs May's deal. If this happens, the next stages will remain even more unclear. If the Withdrawal Agreement is approved by MPs, then we will have to wait until 29th March for the official leaving of the EU, when Britain will undergo the transition stage and its future shall surely be clearer.

Brandon Lynn, Year 12

## Book recommendations

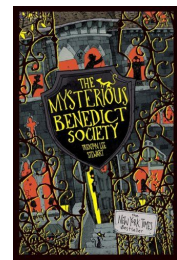
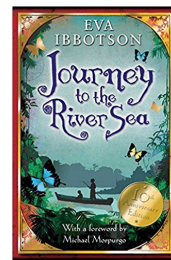
### for Christmas!



#### Year 7

**Journey to the River Sea** - Eva Ibbotson

*In 1910, an orphaned girl from England is sent to live with her distant family in Brazil and falls in love with a mysterious boy.*



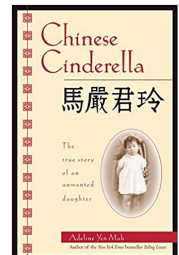
**The Mysterious Benedict Society** - Trenton Lee Stewart

*A group of very talented, but odd, children are recruited by a secret society and find themselves embroiled in a dangerous conspiracy*

#### Year 8

**Animal Farm** - George Orwell,

*An allegory on how power can corrupt told through the perspective of fan animals.*



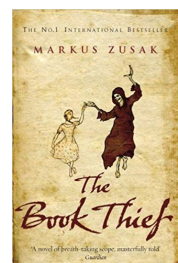
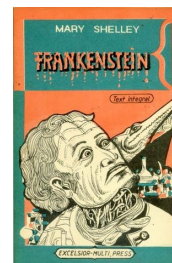
**Chinese Cinderella** - Adeline Yen Mah

*An autobiographical story about a girl raised with her father and cruel step mother.*

#### Year 9

**Frankenstein** - Mary Shelley

*The world's first modern horror novel.*



**The Book Thief** - Markus Zusak

*Set in the Second World War, narrated by death, Liesel, a book lover, helps her foster family shelter a Jew from the Nazis.*

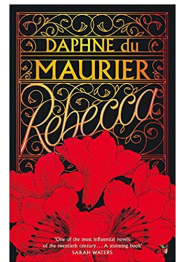
## Year 10

**Fahrenheit 451** - Ray Bradbury

*A story about the destruction of knowledge and the power that books hold*

**Rebecca** - Daphne du Maurier

*A mystery featuring love, paranoia and obsession*



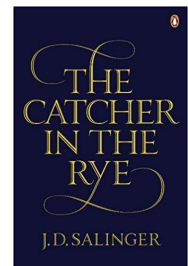
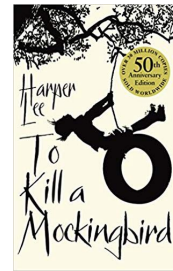
## Year 11

**To Kill A Mockingbird** - Harper Lee

*Racism in the Deep South of America, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, exploring human morality from the perspective of a young girl.*

**The Catcher In The Rye** - J. D. Salinger

*A lonely Holden Caulfield, expelled from school, spends three days in New York resenting how life changes as you grow up*



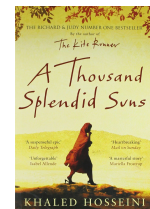
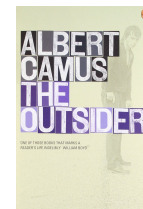
## Sixth Form

**The Outsider** - Albert Camus

*A story about grief, and how those who do not show their grief are alienated by society*

**A Thousand Splendid Suns** - Khaled Hosseini

*A truly heartbreaking novel about women suffering during the Taliban's control of Afghanistan*

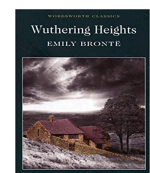
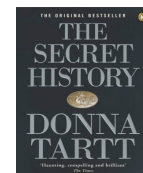


**The Secret History** - Donna Tartt

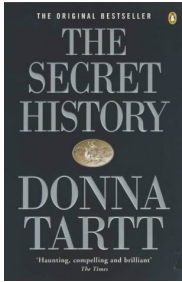
*(see full review in this Magazine)*

**Wuthering Heights** - Emily Brontë

*A turbulent, passionate romance between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff*



# Book review: “The Secret History” by Donna Tartt



“The Secret History” is set at seemingly idyllic Hampden College in Vermont and holds all the charms of any classic. The reader is instantly hooked in with

the prologue in which narrator, Richard Papen, admits to the murder of a fellow student and the novel becomes a memoir of sorts.

The novel starts with Richard signing up to Hampden College to study Greek and the Classics purely to escape from his boring life in Plano, California and it is in that one moment that his life is set on an entirely different course. At Hampden he meets Julian Morrow, the Classics teacher, who soon becomes the father he never felt he had, and the five other Greek students, who isolate themselves from the rest of the college.

Richard’s fellow students are my favourite element of the novel and at first appear flawless and unattainable. They are incredibly intelligent, seemingly perfect and so obsessed with the Greeks that the story itself contains all the elements of a tragic Greek myth as they all collapse under the burden of what they’ve done.

Watching the students slowly fall apart as the novel progresses is made all the more interesting as we learn about underlying tensions between them and, as Richard struggles with the morals of what they have done, constant dangers are presented to them.

Unusually, the novel begins with the murder and therefore becomes less of a whodunit and more of a why. This is an interesting choice to make as the reader immediately knows that Richard has got away with it and much of the novel is inside his mind. Richard is a traditionally lonely narrator who creates perfect versions of the other Greek students to make up for his, thus far, boring and uneventful life and is obsessed with the idea of beauty. He talks about sex very often throughout the novel but is also in love with the beauty of poetry, Greek in particular.

Richard says that the first sentence he learnt in Greek is “beauty is harsh”, which - for me - sums up the book completely, although beauty is rarely mentioned by any of the characters at all.

The last few pages of the book lead up to a dramatic climax and the reader feels the tension growing but, although Richard has hinted at the

ending, is still shocked at the last page. Personally, this section was the main part where I could not put the book down and I am still thinking about the end of the epilogue.

My only criticism would be that, at times, the plot can ramble, which is understandable as it is a reflection on events that happened years ago. This can be tiring at times as the writer

attempts to get past bits where it feels like nothing is happening. However, the characters were so interesting and complex that it is worth it to read between the lines at the underlying meanings of all their interactions and I would definitely recommend it.

**Alice Brayford, Y12**

## **BGS Culture Club reviews**

### **“The Importance of Being Earnest”**



On 26th September, as part of Bexley Grammar's Culture Club, a few other peers and I went to the Vaudeville Theatre on the Strand to watch Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest". The play is based on the idea that the main character, John Worthing, is an inventor of a fictitious brother (Ernest), and uses this brother as a disguise to go wherever he pleases, doing whatever he wants,

without judgement from upper class society on his own person, for the sole reason that he can blame it all on his brother.

Having been first performed in 1895 and set in the late Victorian era, one could assume the play to be very dated and unsuitable for an audience of sixth formers in some ways. Although the incredibly witty dialogue and satirical take on such an era makes the play timeless in its comedy, and refreshing in its triviality - it's not meant to be taken seriously, and Wilde pushes this to its extremities, blatantly foreshadowing, throughout, how the play will eventually result.

Having never read any of Wilde's books, or seen any others of his plays, I am certain that this was the ideal beginning for how to start Wilde's literature due to the fact that it gives an incredible insight into Wilde's wit, and having been one of his less meaningful plays, the play is very easy to watch as nothing really is ever on the line. Moreover, the fact that the stakes are so low for the characters increases the comedy, as the dramatic irony of the characters worrying about what they think is everything - and that the audience knows as meaning nothing - emphasises how meaningless Victorian society essentially was, creating in some ways a dark humour that is reconciled delightfully with the obvious but perfect, happy ending that alludes to - again - the frivolity of everything that was taken as sacred. You

get an almost fictitious and false feeling of happiness at the end, as it all works out so well for everyone, due to the small and reckless mistakes of the characters, meaning that nobody really deserves any of the ending content. But, this isn't a problem; Wilde only wants to show that it doesn't, and that nothing really does, matter. And, for that, it is hilarious.

By Theo Taylor, Y12

## “It’s True, It’s True, It’s True” Review

On 17th October, a small group of Sixth Formers visited the New Diorama Theatre in London to see “It’s True, It’s True, It’s True” as part of a Culture Club trip.



Just a one hour play, “It’s True, It’s True, It’s True” dramatises a rape case from 1612 in Rome. For me, this was particularly powerful as the Breach Theater Company used the original manuscript of the trial, which had been translated into English from Latin and is so real that you are really invested in the outcome of the

case.

Firmly a feminist play, “It’s True, It’s True, It’s True” explores the story of famous baroque painter, Artemisia Gentileschi, who was raped at fifteen by her painting teacher, Agostino Tassi. The audience learns fairly early on that Artemisia only goes to court two years later because she realises that Tassi will never marry her as he promised and she cannot live with the shame of not marrying him after what happened. This is only the beginning and the play manages to show how little has changed in the past four hundred years, but also how women have been oppressed throughout history.

Personally, one main reason I enjoyed the play so much was that, despite the depressing nature of the play, and how it tackles inherent sexism, it manages to still feel empowering and there is a triumphant, uplifting feel to the ending, despite the outcome of the trial. It feels like such a change from the constant anger and the feeling that everything is getting worse that seems to be everywhere in the news recently. It also incorporates classic baroque paintings, such as Judith Slaying Holofernes (and the many different versions of this painting) and a funny re-enactment of Susanna and the Elders.

It is a very ambitious play which manages to be very political, heartbreaking and empowering all in just one short hour.

Alice Brayford, Y12



# “Chicago” review

On 28th November, the Sixth Form Culture Club took a trip to see the musical “Chicago” at the Phoenix Theater near Charing Cross. Set in Chicago in the Jazz Age of the 1920s, it tells the story of Roxie Hart, a young woman who is sent to jail for the murder of a man she was having an affair with and her quest to be acquitted, rather than hanged, but more importantly: to be in the papers!

Despite “Chicago” having been written nearly one hundred years ago, I found its portrayal of fame and its fickle nature oddly apt in our modern society, with the obsession many people have with becoming internet-famous, only to soon become “irrelevant”. Roxie is a character based on the infamous murder trial of Beulah Annan and, upon realising that she needs to raise \$5000 for the best lawyer in town, sets out to make the headlines. But of course, fame is only temporary and this wonderfully satirical musical makes this only too clear to the audience. Roxie is blissfully ignorant of this and is soon caught up in the crazy world of showbiz, convinced the whole city will remember her forever.

Perhaps my favourite feature of “Chicago” was the band - instead of being hidden away, the jazz band were part of the set. The characters were often incorporated

into the band and seeing the musicians play live not only evoked the jazzy “roaring twenties”, but meant that the whole audience could see how skillful the players were.



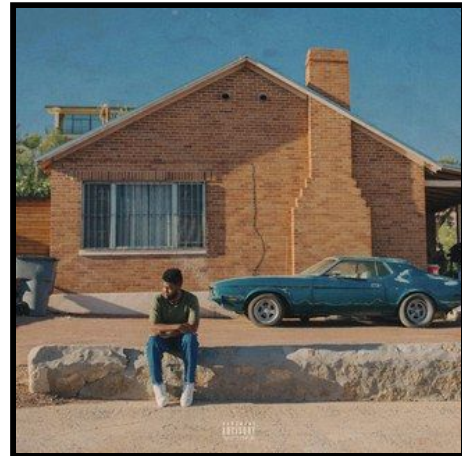
All in all, it was an amazing show and the singing, dancing and music was incredible. After all, it is “a story of murder, greed, corruption, violence, exploitation, adultery and treachery - all those things we hold near

and dear to our hearts.”

By Alice Brayford, Y12

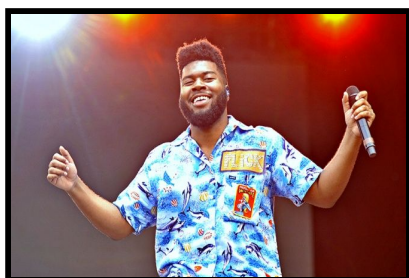


# Suncity - Khalid: Music Review



**Suncity - Khalid:** On 19th October, rising R&B/Pop artist Khalid, 20, released his second project of his professional career as a musician.

The *Suncity* EP - which had much build up on Khalid's social media - consists of seven songs, one of which is an interlude. Recently, Khalid received the key to the city for his home town, El Paso, Texas, which he has represented in many of his songs - and that is detailed in the short intro to the EP titled "9.13". Prior to the album, Khalid released a surprise single entitled "*Better*", which peaked at 18th on the official charts and has spent seven weeks in the Top 100. *Suncity* follows Khalid's 2017 album, *American Teen*, which received widespread critical acclaim and multiple Grammy award nominations. On *Suncity*, Khalid's subtle, subdued and soulful style shines through on all of the tracks. "*Vertigo*" introduces us to the sort of singing he adopts across the entire EP, a passive and relaxed style with basic rhyming schemes that are easy to listen to. In the chorus, Khalid shows off some of the vocal ability we are used to hearing in previous tracks he partakes in - *Another Sad Love Song* and *Silence* (by Marshmello) being some examples. On "*Saturday Nights*", Khalid's traditional catchy, smooth flow is evident. He puts in some effort on the final chorus to reach the high notes fans know he is capable of.



"*Better*" has a steady, more mainstream rhythm to it, with beats backing up his echoed melodies. It's a feel good track, with a gradual crescendo across the three choruses which results in a tune you can dance along to. The title track, "*Suncity*", comes at the end of the

EP and features 23 year old New York based artist, Empress Of. The track has Spanish feels to it, matching the trend of 2017 ("Alexa, play Despacito"), while Khalid even adopts some unfamiliar Spanish lyrics. Overall, Khalid's style is - and always will be - easy on the ear. On *Suncity*, the young singer reiterates his talent, and the control he has over his voice. However, it's not his most ambitious set of tracks by any means. Unfortunately, there's too much similarity between the songs, and not enough range of notes shown off by the talented artist. I feel, with all the ability he has - and although this EP is still of a good standard - it isn't his

best work to date, and it doesn't reach the heights his first album *American Teen* did. I'd still recommend giving it a listen however, as "Suncity", "Better" and "Saturday Nights" are great quality, catchy songs. Rating: %.

Elijah Reynolds, Year 12

## The Lyricist

### (E)=Explicit

**"Capital I'm raising like I'm through punctuating / Or..."** - *Wale ft. Melanie Fiona & J Cole, Beautiful Bliss, 2009, (E)*

Wale was raised in the "Capital" of the USA, Washington - he is raising capital, as in making money - and capitalising the first word of the sentence after "punctuating". Wale could be saying he's making lots of money from some form of shady business. However, this could lead to "capital" punishment if one gets embroiled in it.

**"So can I live? Or is my brother tryna gun me down? Scuffle a couple rounds till we hear the thunder sound. No lightning, clash of the titans, and after the violence a moment of silence..."** - *Capital STEEZ, Free The Robots, 2012, (E)*

Capital STEEZ - real name, Jamal Dewar formed the rap group Pro Era, fronted by Joey BadA\$\$\$. But in this song, STEEZ shows off his lyrical ability and rhyming scheme brilliantly. Unfortunately he's not still around to prove himself a little more. May he rest in peace.



**"How could I make sense when I got millions on my mind?"** - *Post Malone ft. Quavo, Congratulations, 2017, (E)*

The literal meaning of this line is obvious, as Posty questions how he is supposed to make sense of things when he's so distracted by the money he wants to make. However, the double meaning and homophone of "sense" becoming "cents" enhances that meaning of the fact that he wants to make a lot of money, not just cents which is the lowest value of American currency.

**"Young black brudda, I'm a stylish G / Man, I put the IC in IC3"** - *Dave ft. Fredo, Funky Friday, 2018, (E)*

In this line, UK rapper Dave references the money he makes with a play on words, saying "IC" as a homophone for icy, which implies he owns a lot of diamonds. "IC3" refers to a police code for identifying suspects of an African/Caribbean ethnicity. Following much controversy surrounding police brutality targeted towards black ethnic groups in America, this is a political line which Dave truly demonstrates in "Question Time".

**"She's been on the web lately, / Said maybe she'll be my Gwen Stacy, to spite her man (to Spider-man)"** - *Eminem ft. Ed Sheeran, River, 2017, (E)*

Another Eminem classic in his hit song, River, with Ed Sheeran. Despite the failure of the album that this single came with, Eminem still delivered some great punchlines like this

one. **“Gwen Stacy”** is a well-known romantic interest **“Spider-man”** character, devised by the late, great Stan Lee. But by saying **“to spite her man”**, the double meaning is effective in portraying both implications of the line - in that being with Em is in spite of her current partner. In the very same song, Eminem delivers lines like **“She’s on his back like a jetpack”** and **“So I revert to the studio like hole-in-the-wall diners, / Don’t have to be reserved in the booth”**, maintaining his high status in the rap game.



**“And bro got the 9’, no Ibra, / Love to finesse like FIFA”** - *\$kru ft. P. Shivvy, Paprika, 2018, Available On Soundcloud, (E)*

The **“9”** refers to the football shirt number given to star Swedish striker, Zlatan **“Ibra”**himovic. Then the consecutive line refers to the first, with a comedic reference to popular sports video game franchise, FIFA. To **“finesse”** is to curl a shot in football, but also to steal in common slang, suggesting some more negative underlying meanings in this track.

**“I’m like the word ‘gold’ but I hold no L’s”** - *Quadeca, 2020, 2016, (E)*

YouTube rapper, Quadeca - who has recently risen in popularity thanks to his **“Styles Of Rap”** videos and diss track against popular YouTuber KSI - delivers a great song here, with smart bars and varying flow. Saying **“I’m like the word ‘gold’ but I hold no L’s”** hints that he’s a God, with the whole song revolving around how he will be successful in 2020.

**“I said I hate rappers, I hate rappers, / D\*mn right, I hate rappers, / I’m outta this world like E.T. / You add A-H, that’s hate backwards”** - *King Los, Mercy (Freestyle), 2012, (E)*

This bit of pure genius is delivered with a self-condescending introduction of **“I hate rappers”**. However, the punchline references famous 1982 film, E.T. Los mentions adding the letters A and H to make E.T.A.H which is hate backwards - and after repeating **“hate”** in the previous lines, this wordplay is relevant and witty.

### **Quick-fire Quips:**

**“Reinvent the wheel just to fall asleep at it, skrrr”** - *Chance the Rapper & Snakehips & Tinashe, All My Friends, 2016, (E)*

**“It’s like you gotta sell your soul for them to pay attention”** - *Kodak Black, Calling My Spirit, 2018, (E)*

**“Yeah, gold in my mouth, I don’t talk cheap”** - *KYLE ft. Lil Yachty, Hey Julie!, 2018, (E)*

**“But these ain’t even punchlines no more, I’m abusing tracks / Leaving instrumentals blue and black / I’m in Marty McFly mode, so tell em’ that the future’s back”** - *Joey Bada\$\$ ft. Capital STEEZ, Survival Tactics, 2012, (E)*

### Lyrical Rap Song Recommendations:

- *Polo G, Gang With Me (Many Men), 2018, (E)*
- *Chris Brown & Joyner Lucas, I Don't Die, 2018, (E)*
- *Tory Lanez, Lucky You Freestyle, 2018, (E)*
- *Eminem & Joyner Lucas, Lucky You, 2018, (E)*
- *Tyler the Creator & Jaden Smith & Alexander Brettin, Pothole, 2018, (E)*

Elijah Reynolds, Y12

## A Star Is Born (2018) - Review

A Star Is Born symbolises the journey of a talented musician from anonymity to widespread fame, whilst showing the development of a passionate yet troubled love story.



The protagonist, Ally, played by Lady Gaga, encapsulates the feelings of many in this world, who have talent but are simply too humble or shy to share it. Her rise to fame begins when the famous Jackson (played by Bradley Cooper) is returning from a show, when he has his driver pull over to hear Ally performing in a drag bar. Their spark from the onset is easily identifiable, and Jackson is well and truly infatuated. He brings her to the spotlight, and, though her initial disdain for fame is evident, this rapidly changes in her rise to stardom after meeting her agent. She becomes an archetypal celebrity figure, gradually conforming to her agent's 'suggestions', and the development of Ally as a character could be argued to question society's moulding of celebrities and how there is a dissipation of creativity and originality as one progresses into their celebrity status. Still, the audience are made to feel joyous for Ally's success as we have seen her 'story' from beginning to end, and know she is a genuine character who deserves the best.

However, the film's main theme is undeniably love. The statement "love conquers all" may be generic but it is certainly applicable to this film. Though initially seeming like an ideal 'love at first sight' situation, there are many drawbacks in Ally and Jackson's relationship: she keeps having to re-organise his life and the

persistent difficult circumstances he inadvertently creates, and his downward spiral into addiction seems to drag him too far into the past in the opposite direction to Ally. Nevertheless, the melancholic undertones that reverberated throughout the movie were seemingly overshadowed by the eventual unity of the two lovers as husband and wife. Ally becomes his safe haven, holding him up in the vicious celebrity world he was once an integral part of. His ostensibly powerful masculinity is revealed to be a facade, and their honest relationship, built on firm foundations of strong communication, allows them both to flourish in each other's presence, for better or for worse.

Though the plot takes a darker twist and Jackson commits suicide, it is important to note why. The media and the external pressures he faced, including that of Rez, effectively broke him, in addition to his troubled past, despite the strength of his relations with Ally. It is also powerful to note Ally's reaction; she is understandably devastated, and performs a song that Jackson had written but never performed himself, in a tribute to his death, where she refers to herself as Ally Maine in what is a heartwarming yet heartbreaking finale.

Brandon Lynn, Year 12

## October Comic Con 2018

Once again, MCM Comic Con London announced its dates between the 26th and



28th November with a star studded lineup of celebrities, large scale companies, small scale companies and even freelance artists and designers hoping to sell prints, art pieces and much more. I mostly go for the large companies exhibiting at the event, mainly games companies like Bandai Namco, Nintendo etc.

I, as always, grabbed a bunch of friends and we headed straight for the ExCeL centre in London, trying to arrive there at the sweet time of 12 (the perfect time, where there is just the right amount of people and all the stalls are finally open) and, of course, I was completely awed by the sheer amount of people there. It took us a total of an hour just to enter the

venue from Prince Regent station (for some unknown reason, Custom House ExCeL DLR station wasn't open that day); however, once you had walked in, got your bag checked and got the (tightly put on) bright pink wristband, the venue was ours to explore.



To be completely and, rather harshly, honest, I found the venue quite boring this year, with little to nothing that interested my own personal likes. If I were to list the few things I did like at the venue, it was the food stalls there (despite lines stretching all the way from one end of the hall to the other) and the games on show. What I loved so much about

the year previous had all gone; no Japan Center stall to buy Asian sweets and drinks, no RWBY voice actor panels (I was personally waiting up to a year for this) and definitely no big games. However, Bandai Namco didn't fail to showcase their 2 new games which grabbed the attention of nearly everyone there by placing free demos of their new games, "*Jump Force*" and "*My Hero Academia - One's Justice*" before their actual release date.

It took quite a long time but the time waiting was quite worth it when my friends



and I quickly grabbed ahold of 2 controllers connected to one of the PS4s and began to play the game for ourselves.

All four of us played a total of three games each (me winning every game, naturally) before being quickly told to get off and give it to other people waiting too.

Despite the game areas being the only thing I liked about the place itself, there was definitely another massive attraction for me, which was the wide array of cosplays ranging from animé to games and each showing off their own personal skills associated with cosplaying. Some costumes were more common, like Harley Quinn, others large groups of storm troopers, 2B from *Nier Automata* and even Space Marines from *Warhammer* which was extremely impressive to see.



MCM Comic Con, despite not seeing anything you might like on the website or on the show guide, is still an absolutely amazing event to experience and I will always be back every year on both May and October events. I look forward to the next



7

MCM London on May 2019 and I hope to see so much more and experience so much more. I recommend going to Comic Con to everyone reading this (Plus it counts as CAS for any of the Year - 8s / Year 12s - 13s) and it's just an overall great day out.

Ning Sang, Y12

## Zelda: Breath of the Wild

### Year-in Review

It really doesn't feel that long ago that this quaint Nintendo switch exclusive was released. I remember what first caught my eye about this video game, back in March of last year, was its idyllic, cartoonish setting which made it stand out to me among other open-world titles. Despite this, it has taken me far too long to finally get around to playing it.

Well, I now realise this really wasn't a game to sleep on. We rejoin Link in yet another of his quests to save the kingdom of Hyrule but, unlike a lot of other titles in the series, adventuring takes centre stage here. And it has to be said, Nintendo, if nothing else, has nailed the feeling of exploration; wandering around the grassy fields of Hyrule, climbing up mountains, listening to that beautiful soundtrack makes this game a genuine pleasure to play.



However, *Breath of the Wild* is far from just a walking simulator. Sprinkled around the map are towns, settlements and challenges, all of which offset the

exploration, resulting in an experience which is never a chore to pick up and play because there's always something exciting around the corner. But, what really tops off the entire experience for me is the freedom with which the player is able to approach the game. Link's new range of abilities means that there are always several ways to solve a puzzle or problem which really makes the playthrough feel unique. This freedom coupled with the intricate puzzles are what can make the game feel strangely challenging and yet so satisfying to play: and you don't have to browse the community for long to see the insane things skilled players are able to pull off thanks to the scope of what is possible.

The game isn't, perfect however, and there are some issues, one of which is the occasional emptiness of the map which can sometimes feel repetitive. The same problem can also arise from the puzzles which can vary from complex and exciting to completely forgettable and uninteresting. However, in such a huge game, these issues are all but guaranteed to arise and can easily be overlooked.

To conclude, this game is what Nintendo does best; pure, undiluted fun. If you want a funny, entertaining and above all relaxing experience (and happen to own a Nintendo Switch), then I assure you, *Breath of the Wild* will not let you down.

Thomas Barra, Y12

## Horizon: Zero Dawn



*Foreword: I've seen a lot of sites giving Horizon: Zero Dawn incredible reviews, with 10/10 being abundant across the board, and I can't quite understand why; maybe it's a result of the massive hype surrounding the game, maybe they're inflating their scores to account for the newly released Nintendo Switch, or maybe they're just seeing something I'm not. Either way, here is my honest (and unpopular) opinion on why Horizon Zero Dawn is not as good as the critics may tell you. Let's go:*

*Horizon: Zero Dawn*, or 'Generic McGenericGame' as I like to call it, wouldn't know an original thought if one walked up to it and punched it in its Dinosaur Tower-shaped face. It feels like I'm playing *Ubisoft: The Game*, aka another open-world action game with bows. It even has climbable towers to reveal the map! (If you weren't aware, this trope has appeared in easily the last dozen Ubisoft games released.)

"But the Dinosaurs!", you may cry, and I shall direct you to *Far Cry: Primal*. "But, the generic mentor/father figure who'll inevitably die!" (it's not a spoiler if everyone sees it coming, leave me alone), and for that, I ask that you look at literally any other game, EVER!

See my point yet?

"But John, you forget the plot!" Ah, now that is an interesting one, the plot... Let's see:

The mistake many people made with *Horizon: Zero Dawn's* plot is thus: confusing an interesting mystery for a good character. To explain my point, we shall now discuss the basics of storytelling - one of the key parts of good storytelling is drawing your audience in and getting them on your hero(ine)'s side; in most cases this is achieved by invoking empathy, for obvious reasons - if you can get your audience feeling for your character, then they're immediately on your side.

*Horizon: Zero Dawn* attempts this: we are introduced to the mentor destined to die (just admit it) and almost instantly we feel empathy for him - success! Where the game falls down, however, is in getting us to like the main character, for we are never told enough about her. Literally, I couldn't name a single trait Aloy has.

No doubt, the mystery itself is interesting, who doesn't like a good quest to discover your own origins? But the main character is just so uninteresting it's impossible to care. Great, she has some hobbies! Why do I care? We need a reason to care and, until we get that, the plot will just never work. The game simply throws you straight in the deep end of the industry's most generic mystery-RPG.

Then we get onto the graphics, much praised. Even I - Scrooge himself - will admit that on a PS4 Pro, the game looks beautiful and runs beautifully, but (and this is a big but) like many recent Playstation games, *Horizon: Zero Dawn* falls into a trap: 'looking great' on a PS4 Pro in boost mode, and 'running' on a standard PS4 (still the majority of PS4's owned, by the way). On that note, let's talk about PS4 performance: not good. The game runs like a one-legged poodle, barely hitting 25fps in many points, let alone 30. And yes I am fully aware that it has become the

done thing to laugh at critics talking about frame rates, but quite frankly, some of the drops in this game are beyond rubbish.

To sum up: Never played *Far Cry 3*, or *4*, or *Primal*, before? Or perhaps you think you'd like to play them again... in third-person, at 25fps? Brilliant! *Horizon: Zero Dawn* is the game for you! Otherwise? Give it a miss.

6/10 - "Like my ma always said: you can't make a silk purse from a sow's ear"

John Wyllie, Y12

## Tech Topic Corner

In today's tech topic I want to talk about 'fork' GPUs.

As anyone with even a passing interest in tech and gaming knows, graphics card prices recently have been through the roof. This is largely due to cryptocurrency miners buying all the stock in bulk - basic supply and demand requires the price of the remaining few to increase.

As a result, I've been hearing a lot about so-called 'fork' Graphics Cards recently - theoretical new GPUs with full gaming functionality and no mining ability; so let's dig into this and - hopefully - dispel a few myths:

First off, a little background info: there are only two graphics card manufacturers - known as the 'founder' brands: AMD and nVidia, and each manufacturer has a roughly equally priced range of high end cards, capable of both mining and gaming. They are supposedly in competition but neither particularly ever undercuts the other. Maybe they have an agreement, who knows?

### POINT NUMBER 1: PRICE

The argument - in fact the main argument for the existence of 'Forks' in the first place - goes like this: Because miners would not be buying up all the cards, making stock scarce, and thus pushing the price up, the price could be "reasonable" (and stable - fluctuations in prices of crypto have massive effects on prices of GPUs at the moment).



Makes sense, right? Unfortunately not. With the complete control over supply that being sole manufacturers grants AMD and nVidia, changes in demand largely don't affect price. Or rather, drops in demand don't push prices down. Because the manufacturers will simply limit supply to counter it. (Upward trends in demand will always result in a price increase, however.) Now, we can be pretty sure manufacturers would be engaging in this decidedly consumer-unfriendly practice, because it will maximise each of their profits. Sure, nVidia or AMD could undercut the other and drop their price at any point, and people would - largely - buy from them. But why would they? The status quo (a de facto two-sided monopoly - both companies employing the same consumer-unfriendly pricing and stock control policies) is perfectly profitable for both, and will remain so for the foreseeable future. In Fiscal 2017, AMD reported net profits in the dozens of millions (\$43 million) and nVidia in the thousands of millions (a staggering \$1.666 Billion in American money, although only \$1666 million in *normal* terms). So... what exactly is in it for manufacturers?

## POINT NUMBER 2: PRACTICALITY

The argument, similarly to the price argument, is that they could sell crypto cards in bulk to miners, and sell fork cards to gamers, maximising their profits from both demographics.

But... Why would they do that? Why would they waste all the expensive R&D in developing this magical 'fork', all the money marketing it, all the money producing an entirely new product, when they could simply sell their traditional product to miners and gamers, keep supply below demand and keep upping the price? It's essentially a licence to print money...

That is, until the inevitable crypto crash. When the bubble pops, and it all comes falling down, what will nVidia and AMD do then?

Simple: fall back onto gamers, and return to the old price points; a dear shame for the profit margins, but hey, milk it while it lasts, right? But what if this callousness annoys gamers? Who cares? Gamers have nowhere else to get cards. The manufacturers can be as consumer-unfriendly as they like, gamers have to buy from them if they want a card - and gamers always want cards. But what if the demand from gamers can't keep up with old levels of demand? Easy, just restrict the levels of stock you release and keep printing that cash! I'll say it again: when manufacturers have total control over the supply of the product, downward trends in demand tend to have little effect on price. This is Monopolies 101. Now don't try to tell me it's not a monopoly - yes there are 2 manufacturers, but they'll both be doing this, it just makes business sense. Call it a cartel, kick and scream about 'fair'... all it is is companies making as much money as possible at the expense of a consumer who can go nowhere else.

And last, but not at all least:

### POINT NUMBER 3: POSSIBILITY

This one's simple: advocates for 'Forking' gleefully assure us there *is* actually a way to make a card great for gaming and useless for mining, but is there really? The short answer is no. The long answer is that there are ways, ways which - for the sake of accessibility - I shall not go into, but that mostly involve detecting the type of work the GPU is doing and self-limiting performance to restrict those operations. However, these checks and restrictions also have a knock-on effect on gaming performance, and aren't exactly guaranteed to work - the instant one miner finds a way around it, all miners know and the system collapses. All this, of course, leaving alone quite how the regulators would feel about a device self-limiting performance to force consumers to buy something else (hint: it's not positive)...

IN CONCLUSION: The suggestion, while great hypothetically and a cool talking point, is impractical for the businesses involved, infeasible and expensive for research departments, impossible to actually pull off, and entirely worthless for the companies involved. Maybe it pays for us consumers to think like a business every once in a while?

John Wyllie, Year 12

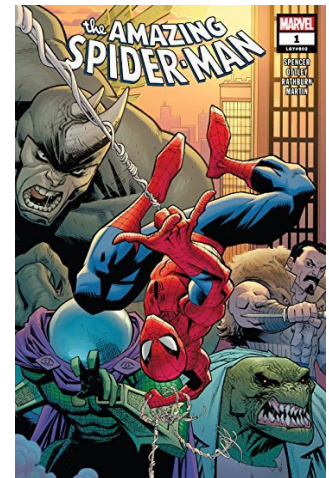
## Stan Lee In Memoriam



On November 12th, one of the biggest entertainment legends of the 21st century sadly passed away at the age of 95. During his long career, he worked his way up from the bottom, making Marvel into the cinematic and comic giant that it is today and in the process, provided entertainment to millions, giving us some of the most deep and compelling superheroes ever made.

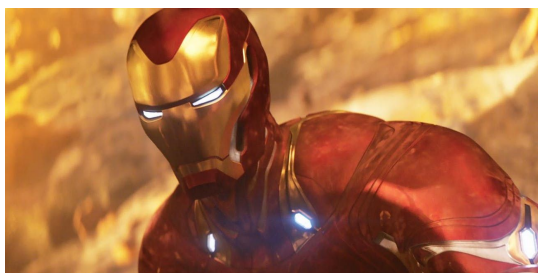
Stan Lee had always dreamed of being a writer but began his comic book career as an intern at what was then know as Timely Comics in 1939. However, it took only two years for him to become an editor. Stan Lee joined the army in 1942 but kept his creative work going while he served. When he returned to his position after the war, he faced the collapse of the industry as comic book characters became less exciting to the general public and comics were wrongly blamed as the cause for many societal issues.

However, when the 1960s came around, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby became the creators of one of the most successful comic book groups ever, the Fantastic 4. Between 1962 and 63, the pair then created even more of the most iconic superheroes ever, with characters like Spider-Man, Iron Man and Doctor Strange hitting the shelves.



Stan Lee's ability to ground these powerful superheroes in reality was what really made Marvel such a success. Despite their powers, Lee made sure that readers were able to relate to the characters and made sure that they were deep and layered while also being role-models for many of the readers.

During the 80s and 90s, Stan Lee became determined to bring his creations to the big screen. However, despite the success of the Spiderman trilogy (2002-2007), Hollywood films starring the likes of the Fantastic 4 and Captain America never truly became mainstream until Robert Downey Jr's Iron Man in 2008 launched the hugely successful Marvel Cinematic Universe.



In the last few years of his life, Stan Lee finally saw his creations become as successful as they deserved. He always kept in touch with these projects as well, with his cameos in the MCU movies becoming some of the most funny and iconic moments in cinema. His devotion to creativity and story writing helped many people

over the years and brought endless entertainment to millions. Although he is gone, his spectacular works will hopefully reach many more in years to come.

Thomas Barra, Y12



# Horoscopes for 2019

While I don't claim to be a psychic or have any mystical tendencies, I do love a horoscope. When life is so sudden and unpredictable, it's always reassuring to see that astrology at least has faith in where I'm heading in the future, because believe me, I haven't got a clue. So whether you've got your crystal ball at the ready or your sceptic eyebrows are arched, I can only request that you sit back, find your zodiac sign and read what the 'future' has in store for you...

## Aries (March 21 - April 19)

For you time management is key, you may feel inclined to put more effort in at the start of the year however this attitude needs to be maintained. You could be quite accident-prone this year as well, so be cautious and take time so that you don't hurt yourself. Your social life may receive a boost by September as four planets enter your orbit.



## Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

Next year may be a chance to set a personal goal, one that will improve who you are as a person; you may find that others come to aid your cause. Be careful with your finances and perhaps reduce your intake of sugary foods. Later in the year you'll feel a boost in vigour and finding friends among other earth signs (Virgo & Capricorn) is crucial.



## Gemini (May 21 - June 21)

Venus will remain in your orbit between April and August, which means that your life will flourish with opportunities during this period; however, in May you will have a very important decision to make. The middle of the year may also be a time to meet people who are mentally similar to yourself and form lasting friendships. Be careful with your throat and keeping emotions bottled up.



## Cancer (June 22 - July 22)

Next year may be a true test of your character with trials and tribulations from May to September. Due to Saturn's year long orbit, you might have more responsibilities than usual in 2019. It's important that you're not afraid to stand up to opposition and there's no point in finding faults in yourself. Many old friendships may end this year as you realise that certain individuals are not good for you.



### **Leo (July 23 - August 22)**

Your future prospects are cloudy due to no major planets in your orbit, however, October should be a month of high energy for you. Poor planning could be a major concern for you in the coming months however it's time to join a team or society. Impeccable hygiene is a must next year as infection could be a health risk factor.



### **Virgo (August 23 - September 22)**

If you haven't already experienced change this year then 2019 will prove to be a very special year indeed, although there will be times when you will need to show restraint. Through the middle of the year Jupiter will be in your orbit, which could bring a lucky streak and allow new people to enter your life. Compared to other signs your health should be without parallel, yet weight gain is still possible.



### **Libra (September 23 - October 23)**

Through a close friend or family member, benefits will come to you between February and April and this could be your year for artistry and creativity. I must recommend being in the company of at least one Gemini, despite both being air signs, you'll get on like a house on fire. Morale might be your greatest issue so make sure you persevere in times of hardship.



### **Scorpio (October 24 - November 21)**

A potentially exciting year for you with an increase in enjoyable activities and sudden changes in old friendships could spice up your life. No matter what you choose to do this year, with four planets in orbit and half of these in water signs, you shouldn't have to look far for support. Overindulgence might be your downfall so take everything in moderation.



### **Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)**

You may find that your life is getting a bit cluttered so it's time to cut things back. Pluto will enter your orbit which could make your year more intense and demand more from you. It might seem like you're not moving forward in life at the start of 2019 however, you may need to appreciate that there's nothing wrong with standing still from time to time. Do not overstrain during physical activity.



### **Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)**

Your year might start off with uncertainty due to an unresolved issue from the end of this year but by February you should have come to a decision at last. 2019 is also a good year to set up a goal with your commitment being at an all time high. In March you may take on more responsibilities such as dietary awareness due to the consumption of dairy and fats posing your greatest risk.



### **Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)**

You might feel different this year, based on decisions you made over the past two years. Between April and August you may need to improve your social life and there's no better way to do that than befriend your fellow air signs (Gemini & Libra). It may also be time for personal pursuits as these should be favoured by Neptune's orbit. Try to relieve any physical pressure on your body.



### **Pisces (February 19 - March 20)**

For your sign, 2019 could be the year of unusual events, you might develop rebellious tendencies as you try to break free from the tedium of everyday life. This may lead to you seeking new experiences but it's important that you stay true to yourself; either way, the planets in your orbit suggest that you'll have support no matter what you do. Make sure you're prepared for allergic reactions.



# Wellbeing in the New Year

It is important that, as this term draws to a close and we prepare for a New Year and new term, that we make time to care for our wellbeing. A new term brings many opportunities both academically and in extra-curricular activities. However, as academic pressures increase it is inevitable and completely normal for many of us to be stressed, which can cause a lack of motivation and trigger other mental health problems. The mental health charity Mind lists five ways to wellbeing on their website and I challenge all of us to try and do one thing from each of the five ways in the new term and beyond.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing are:

Connect- Rather than sending an email or a text message, why not talk to the person face to face or put five minutes aside to talk to someone to find out how they really are?

Be active- Exercise doesn't have to be intense for you too feel good. Why not swap getting the bus to school if possible and walk instead, or do some light exercise such as yoga when you wake up in the morning?

Take notice- Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and 'savouring the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities. Taking notice could include taking notice of how others are feeling or trying something new for lunch once a week.



Learn- Continued learning is necessary throughout life, some ways that we can learn, as well as academically, include: reading new books or the news, doing crosswords or sudoku and researching about a topic you've always been interested in but doesn't appear on the curriculum.

Give- Research has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing. Acts could be as simple as holding the door open for somebody or complimenting another.

As well as the Five Ways of Wellbeing it is also important that we take time for ourselves. My favourite things to do when I am stressed and feeling overwhelmed include watching Youtube and Netflix, taking a long bath, taking a nap or going to bed early (you'd be surprised how much this one helps) and just distancing myself as far as I possibly can from what is making me stressed (which is a lot harder than it seems, so don't worry if you also find this difficult.)

Mariah Bennett, Year 12



**STOP PRESS!!!!!!**

## Current House Standings Dec 2018



1ST KIRKMAN 199 points



2<sup>nd</sup> COLLINS 194 points

3<sup>rd</sup> WELLMAN 180 points

4<sup>th</sup> JOHNSON 172 points

5<sup>th</sup> MABBS 150 points

6<sup>th</sup> PROTHERO 135 points



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**MERRY  
CHRISTMAS**

