



# English and the Library in the Newsletter

## BBC Radio 2~ 500 Words First Round Success

Anis Houmani and Hari Rehal achieve a place in the next round!

For the last 10 years BBC Radio 2 have been running 500 Words: a short story competition for young people in order to get them excited about reading and writing.

The idea is simple: you write a story about whatever you like and your story is judged without regard to spelling, punctuation and grammar. There is only one condition: your story has to be 500 words long.

This year we are pleased to announce that Anis Houmani and Hari Rehal have made it into the final 5000 entries which will go on to be judged and eventually whittled down to the last 50. Being one of the final 5000 may not seem like much, but it is when this competition had close to 135,000 entries this year!

Well done to Anis and Hari on this fantastic accomplishment.

***Mr Husbands, English Department***

## NEWS LETTER



October 2020

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## BBC Radio 2 ~ 500 Hundred Words

### The Big Race

It was the final race of the Formula One season. It was early afternoon and Richard was still sleeping. The evening before, he had sprained his ankle but hadn't told his team. Richard's 14 year old son, Diego, realised his dad wasn't well enough to race and came to a decision - he was going to drive and he was determined to win!

Diego dressed in his dad's racing overalls (he was almost the same size) and slipped on his helmet before sneaking out of the room. He scurried past security and into the paddock before strolling calmly into the team garage. His dad's mechanics were looking excitedly at their screens and Diego greeted them with a nod, just like his dad, before climbing into his dad's car, belting up and pressing the "start" button...

The car rumbled to life like a lion awakening from a lengthy slumber. The team engineers spoke to Diego in his earpiece, asked him to do a couple of gentle laps to warm the tyres and then stop at position five on the starting grid (that's where his dad had qualified yesterday).

Diego did exactly as he was told and was soon comfortable driving the car. After two laps, he brought the car to a halt and signalled to his mechanics that all was well with a quick thumbs up (he had seen his dad do that). Diego breathed a sigh of relief whilst waiting for the other cars to take their positions.

The race lights overhead glowed red and everyone began to rev their engines, creating a thunderous sound. One by one, the lights turned green and Diego took his foot off the brake and the car sped off down the track.

Unfortunately, by the first corner, Diego had dropped a couple of places and was struggling to hold his position for the next few laps. Suddenly, the radio came to life and he heard his dad's engineer: "Richard, take it easy!". Diego calmed down. A few laps later, he closed in on one of the cars that had overtaken him at the start and managed to overtake at the following corner.

Diego then saw a race official waving a yellow flag and heard his radio again: "Incident on next corner!". He saw a cloud of smoke and noticed that three cars had crashed ahead of him and a fourth was stuck in the gravel like a beached whale. That meant he was now second!

Just then, he heard a familiar voice on the radio. It was his dad - and Diego knew he had been rumbled! He felt a bit sick - but he couldn't stop now as it was the penultimate lap. He heard his dad's voice again. He was telling him to push on as the car ahead was slowing rapidly. Diego knew this was his chance. He pushed the accelerator to the floor and overtook the leading car on the final straight as they approached the chequered flag. Diego knew he had won!

***Hari Rehal, Year 7***







## BBC Radio 2 ~ 500 Hundred Words

Dear Diary

June 28<sup>th</sup> 1939

Hi, it is I Robert and it is my first time writing in you. I caught my eyes on you while walking down a street and I had to have you, so I stole you. Nazis are currently attacking my home country; Poland, because we are 'Jewish', how pointless, right?

June 30<sup>th</sup> 1939

Sorry I never wrote in you yesterday, my family and I were busy trying to find a suitable and safe place to go into hiding. My Father has two friends, Richard and I think the other one was Thomas. They were kind towards us and helped find a worthy place to stay in.

July 1<sup>st</sup> 1939

Finally, after all this time we found a place although it is worse than where we used to live and is kind of stuffy for the three of us. I am not certain how long we have to stay here, but mother said it would not be for too long. I really wish we could go back although it is too risky.

July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939

Today at school there was a big attack and many of my schoolmates were taken away as hostages. Luckily I got away, but I have a huge amount of guilt in me; I really do hope they are safe. Anyway, Thomas provided us with some very delicious food today and Richard brought us warm clothes and beds.

July 9<sup>th</sup> 1939

I was just sitting and I overlooked a soldier until he made a noise, in the distance, reloading his gun. My family tried not to make any noise possible or else we would be found out and taken away. It was the most petrifying day in my life.

July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1939

I just have news from father saying that both Richard and Thomas were found out and were killed by the Nazis, how cruel! We are not going to eat impressive things anymore and probably survive on just rations, so I will need the energy, night.

September 18<sup>th</sup> 1939

It has been a tough month and we have been taking turns to get rations, going in the night to find them.

November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939

A tall, bulky soldier and a bunch of other comrades saw me in the white light of the moon and they chased me. I scurried away as fast as I could. I'm sure I got away but I cannot be too sure as they have found out where we are.

December 1<sup>st</sup> 1939

I told my father about the incident and we have been planning to leave the country to Switzerland and have a fresh start in the new year. I have heard the people are nice there and there is no war so we can live normal lives again, finally!

December 31<sup>th</sup> 1939

Tomorrow is New Year, I cannot wait, we are all packed and already driving towards Switzerland. I am looking forward to it.

January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1940

We have finally arrived in Switzerland. It's awesome!

Anis Houmani, Year 7





## 500 Hundred Words Second Round Success

The water was a beautiful deep blue. The waves gently lapped against the side of the boat, and the sun shone harshly down from a clear blue sky. I leaned over the edge, and cold, salty spray splashed onto my face.

"You ready?"

I jumped, and nearly fell into the water. Alex caught me, and I smiled at them.

"Yep."

"D'you think we'll find any *treasure*?"

"What are you, a pirate?"

They laughed.

"No, but I still like the idea of being rich."

"Me too. C'mon"

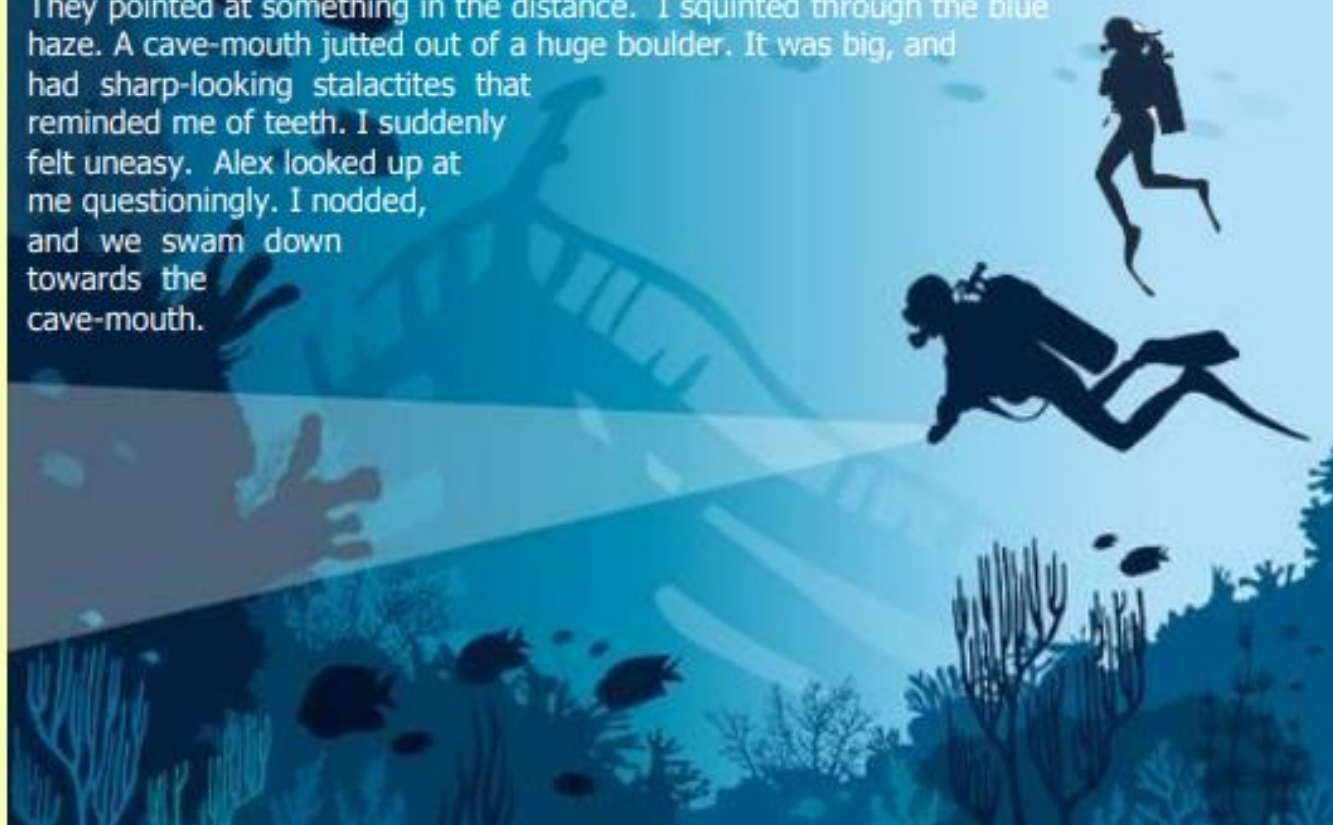
We adjusted our SCUBA gear, and jumped into the icy-cold water. I shivered.

"Shouldn't the water be warmer this time of year?"

"It's the North Atlantic, it's never warm."

I sighed, and swam down under the blue waves.

The water was a beautiful deep blue. It was everywhere, and seemed to swallow everything. A huge school of tiny, silver fish swam past my face. Alex tried to catch on, but it was faster than them. They laughed, then suddenly stopped swimming. I frowned. They pointed at something in the distance. I squinted through the blue haze. A cave-mouth jutted out of a huge boulder. It was big, and had sharp-looking stalactites that reminded me of teeth. I suddenly felt uneasy. Alex looked up at me questioningly. I nodded, and we swam down towards the cave-mouth.





The water was a beautiful deep blue. The rockfish slept. It dreamt of swimming through the Sea, and eating the prey. To rockfish, all was prey, from the smallest smallfish to the biggest hunterfish. Most of the prey feared the hunterfish, because it was big and fast and had many rows of sharp teeth. But the rockfish was bigger, and faster, and had more teeth. Besides, the hunterfish was still prey. The rockfish smiled in its sleep, as it imagined some unsuspecting prey swimming into its open mouth. It was hungry.

The water was a beautiful deep blue. The inside of the cave was smaller than it had looked from the outside. The stalactites looked even more like teeth from up close. The darkness seemed to swallow everything. I touched the cave wall, and it felt weirdly soft and smooth. I felt my unease grow.

The water was a beautiful deep blue. The rock fish woke. It could feel something swimming around in its mouth. Prey? Of course it was prey, for everything that moves is prey to the rockfish.

The water was a beautiful deep blue. The inside of the cave was dark and empty. I tapped Alex on the shoulder to tell them that we should leave. They looked up, and their eyes widened in alarm. They tried to say something, but all that came out was bubbles. I frowned. They pointed behind me. I turned, and saw the cave-mouth close with a snap.

The water was a beautiful deep blue. The rockfish swallowed its prey, and went back to sleep.

***Sophia Marian, Year 8***





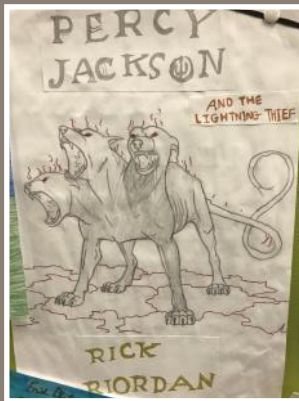


# Year 7 Book Cover Project

It has been wonderful to welcome the new Year 7 students and get to know which books they enjoy reading, and to gather their book recommendations for our library. I have also loved looking at their book cover designs, which they worked on over the summer.

Through some feat of engineering involving hundreds of drawing pins, I have managed to fit all of the covers onto my display board. I hope they enjoy seeing their beautiful designs on display. I will also choose a few to frame for our library walls, and I have a noticeboard that needs brightening up, so I will try to keep as many up as possible. Well done Year 7!

***Mrs Carey, School Librarian***



# World Book Day 2020!

On Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March, the most important date in the English department came again: World Book Day! Students, both young and old, took part in a large array of literary-themed activities, such as: guess the prop; quizzes, and 'drop everything and read'.

There were so many amazing costumes! The Year 7s get more creative each World Book Day. At break, everyone who dressed up (including teachers and the English prefects) gathered in the Library to take a group photo. There was a diverse range of characters, stretching the entirety of the literary canon. My favourite costume had to be Mr Griffin and Mrs Carey, who made a great Mr and Mrs Twit.

At 2.50pm, everyone in their lessons put down their pens and swapped it for a book. 'Drop Everything and Read' showcased just how important reading is, even if it is a mere 15 minutes a day. Plus the school was the quietest it has ever been!

The Year 8s were very lucky and were visited by Sufiya Ahmed, the author of *'Secrets of the Henna Girl'*. Budding creative writers received a great



WORLD  
**BOOK  
DAY**

5 MARCH 2020

## NEWS LETTER



12<sup>th</sup> March 2020

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workshop delivered by Ahmed herself and got to talk with the author.

World Book Day is also the chance for some (friendly) competition. Each form worked to find out what the English teachers were dressed as. There was also 'guess the prop', where students had to identify iconic book items. How could I forget to mention the quiz, made by the English prefects and Mr Morris? Each key stage had its own quiz designed to test the extent of their literary knowledge.

World Book Day is always a jam-packed fun-filled day as well as an amazing chance to celebrate the importance of literature. Massive thanks are owed to Mr Griffin, Mrs Carey, and the entirety of the English department and English Prefects, who helped to organise the day.

**Jenni Lake, Year 12**



## Our fabulous students are hitting the books!

I just wanted to share some of the Library statistics for the last 3 years, as a celebration of the wonderful readers, we have at this school and how they are reading more and more.

School Year	Total number of books borrowed
2016/2017	4965
2017/2018	6870
2018/2019	8111



I am so proud of how much the students at BGS love reading, and they are always eager to give me lists of books they would like me to buy, or tell me about the latest books that are coming out. As with all schools, the library budget has decreased over the years, but still the students are able to access a varied collection of new books, which is largely due to funding from the PTA, and donations from students and parents. As you can see from our statistics the books are very popular, so a big thank you from me!

**Mrs Carey School Librarian**



# No Pens Day

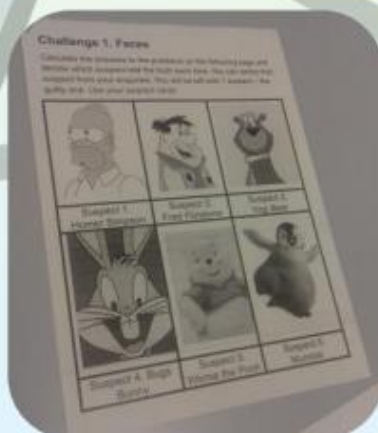
## Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Today was No Pens Day for Year 7 and the students at Bexley Grammar relished the opportunity to take a break from our normal routine and have some fun! We had English first and last period and had been prepared in advance for the fact that we would be leading the lessons with our own presentations on a subject of our choice. This meant advance planning and rehearsing at home. Our teacher would be assessing us on our speaking and listening skills and even though we were all initially very nervous, we had no reason to be as it was a thoroughly enjoyable experience, allowing everyone the opportunity to speak in a semi-formal way. In maths, we had a very different lesson from the usual ones: we were decoding a series of equations and trying to figure out the details to a robbery which had occurred. This was really enjoyable and challenging and took us a little bit out of our comfort zone. Our team was one of two that worked it out correctly - the key being communication and collaboration with the group - and we were very pleased with ourselves. On some occasions throughout the day, we found it hard to not break the rule and reach for something to write with! Some teachers even found themselves itching for a pen! All in all, No Pens Day was an exciting and challenging change and well worth the wait.

**Grace Taylor, Year 7**



Who took it	Fred Flintstone (suspect 2)
What was taken	It is a big box of celebrations mmmm Sc 10
Where it was taken from	
Why it was taken	I just love chocolate, I was going to eat it all myself.







## Library News

### Anthony McGowan trip

I had the pleasure of taking a group of students to see the author Anthony McGowan at Central Library in Bexleyheath. His talk was captivating, funny and moving, as he described his life growing up in Leeds with little money and attending a school known for the brutality of both its students and staff. Our students, particularly enjoyed his tales of school bullies getting their comeuppance in gruesome (and graphic) ways. They asked some excellent questions and discovered that Anthony got his inspiration from a variety of books, from Dante's *Inferno* to *Mr Gum*.



We have Anthony McGowan's Barrington Stoke book series in the Library if any students would like to borrow it - it is aimed at teenagers who want to read something short, with simple language, but that has a plot that is both gritty and funny.



Anthony's new book, *Lark*, has been long listed for the Carnegie Medal this year, so I am hoping that it gets shortlisted and our new Carnegie reading group will get to experience this wonderful writer too.



***Mrs Carey, School Librarian***

### Read for Good - Sponsored Read

For World Book Day we are launching a sponsored read for the charity Read for Good. You can sign up to read as many books (or chapters of books) in 3 weeks as you can, and raise money for new books for terminally ill children in hospital. Last year we raised **£282.12** for this excellent charity, and this year we are hoping to beat it!

Any student wishing to take part can sign up in the Library and collect a sponsorship pack. The student who raises the most money will be given a £5 book voucher.

For more information about what the charity does, please visit their website :

**[www.readforgood.org](http://www.readforgood.org)**

***Mrs Carey***







## Library News

### Sharing Book Recommendations

I am hoping that some of you have found that reading has been a useful distraction during this difficult time. It would be lovely to share some recommendations in this newsletter if any of you have read a book that you think others would enjoy - parents and staff welcome too, I will also add my book reviews each week!



If you have a recommendation, please can you email it to me ([carey\\_r@bexleygs.co.uk](mailto:carey_r@bexleygs.co.uk)) - it wouldn't need to be a big book review, maybe just a sentence or two describing the type of book and why you enjoyed it?

I hope everyone is keeping well and safe, and I am looking forward to when we are all back in the Library together again.

***Mrs Carey***

### Trinity Schools Book Awards Ceremony

On the 12<sup>th</sup> March our reading group attended the Awards Ceremony for our reading group, at the City of London School. We had the pleasure of listening to Nicky Singer, Andrew Norriss and Tanya Landman explain how they created their characters, came up with their stories and how they avoided distractions during the writing process. Each school had voted for their favourite book and the overall winner (as well as our winner) was *I Have No Secrets* by Penny Joelson, which our group were pleased about. After the ceremony there was a chance to read the book reviews that the students had submitted, and to view the artwork that some had made for the 'creative response' competition. We were inspired to try to make a Lego sculpture for our entry next year!



Thanks to all that took part, and to Mr Griffin, who came with us!

***Mrs Carey, School Librarian***







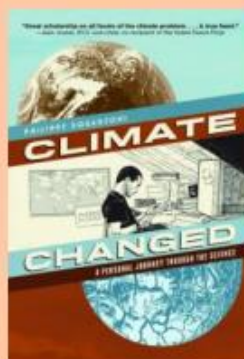
## Learn more about climate change thanks to our PA

One of the subjects that the students talk to me about on a weekly basis is climate change - they love to discuss the things that they, or their parents, already do to help the planet, as well as their ideas for the future. The PA has generously given the Library money to develop a collection of books on climate change, which cover the causes of climate change, look at the future impact on the planet, and give useful tips on how to reduce your use of plastic and the carbon footprint of the foods that you buy. Most of the books are non-fiction, but we also have a beautiful graphic novel called *Climate Changed* by Philippe Squarzoni, which I am sure will be very popular with our students.



The clever and creative Year 12 Library prefects Anouk Ardouin-Nesbit and Azeezat Hassan have made a beautiful display, so please come to the Library to take a look. The books will also be promoted via the Geography Department's new Environmental noticeboard ~ also thanks to our wonderful PA!

*Mrs Carey, School Librarian*



## Fully Booked Quiz

On Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November, we went to the Central Library in Bexleyheath to compete in the '2019 Fully Booked Quiz' and we won. We all had a really good time and enjoyed using our book knowledge to compete against the other schools!



*Matilda Jackson, Year 7*



Congratulations to the Year 7 team, they were fantastic and answered questions on rounds like 'Books to Film', 'Who Am I?', 'Food Glorious Food' and 'Lost in Translation'. I explained to them before the quiz that it didn't matter if they won, it was just about having fun...They assured me that I was wrong! I am very proud of them and their competitiveness.

*Mrs Carey, School Librarian*







## The BGS Book Exchange

As we start the new academic year, keep your summer reading habit alive by visiting the BGS Book Exchange!

Students from all year groups, and staff, can pick up a good read for **FREE** from the BGS Book Exchange located in the area just outside Reception in the main building.

This is a great way to recycle books you have finished reading and which are gathering dust on your shelves. If you have any books you would like to donate to our Book Exchange, please ask your son/daughter to simply add them to the bookcase just opposite Reception or drop your donations off at Reception where they will be warmly welcomed.

Thank you for all your support!



## Book donations and TSBA reading group

It's been a fantastic start to the year and the students have been enjoying visiting the Library and borrowing books. It's been wonderful meeting the new Y7 groups, and many have already signed up to be Library Assistants.

If any of you have books you no longer need and would like to donate, I will happily take these off your hands and they will be eagerly borrowed by the amazing readers we have at BGS. All books are welcome, even if you think they may be a little young for our students they probably won't be as they love rereading *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, David Walliams and Jacqueline Wilson!

Any Year 7 and 8 students are welcome to sign up to take part in the TSBA reading group that I will be starting next week. Anyone wishing to sign up can pop up and speak to me, or email me at [carey\\_r@bexleygs.co.uk](mailto:carey_r@bexleygs.co.uk) by the end of Friday 27<sup>th</sup>.

*Mrs Carey, School Librarian*







## Trinity Schools Book Award Reading Group

Our reading group is off! We have had our first two meetings and already enjoyed one of the Trinity Schools Book Award books on the theme of 'Stand Up, Speak Out'.

Based on our first impressions, we were expecting *Beyond the Wall* by Tanya Landman to be our favourite, and for *Mike* by Andrew Norriss to be our least favourite, but after the first week of reading the books this has turned out not to be the case, proving that we really shouldn't judge a book by its cover.



I have also been in contact with the author, Nicky Singer, whose "emotional, gripping and dystopian" (our students' three word book review) novel *The Survival Game* is part of the book award, and she has kindly sent me some postcards for the students. She has also confirmed that she will be one of the authors that we get to meet at the awards ceremony in March, which the students are already looking forward to.

**Mrs Carey, Librarian**







## TSBA reading group

It was the final week of the Trinity Schools Book Award reading group, and some very talented Year 7 students baked us book related treats to celebrate. Zoe Allen made Harry Potter cupcakes, and Matilda Jackson and Deya Dimitrova baked chocolate chip cookies that spelled out 'Book Club'. They disappeared in seconds.



I tested their knowledge of the books with a Kahoot Quiz, which was won by our superstar reader, Amelie Leachman (Year 8). We all voted on our favourite book, which was *I Have No Secrets* by Penny Joelson, a murder mystery where the detective is a 14 year old girl with cerebral palsy, who is unable to communicate. My favourite was *The Survival Game* by Nicky Singer, a fantastic thriller about climate change and people trying to flee countries on the equator which are now inhabitable.

It was a pleasure meeting each week with the students in this reading group, and we are looking forward to seeing both Penny Joelson and Nicky Singer, as well as other authors, at the Awards Ceremony in March.

**Mrs Carey, School Librarian**

