

BGS BUZZ



CHRISTMAS 2020



....what a year!

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Christmas Magazine - Editors' message

We've come to the end of the first term of this very, very different school year. Despite the restrictions resulting in an extremely slimmed down extra-curricular provision, impacting heavily on all of the exciting and bustling after school clubs, trips and house activities, we have continued to thrive in a caring, compassionate, hard working and stimulating environment. The BGS Buzz team has worked hard to bring you very interesting content which we hope you enjoy. From all of us, our best wishes for a well deserved break, for a safe and happy Christmas, and for a healthy and positive 2021!

- The BGS Buzzers



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With thanks to: Oliver Peetoom, Alison Balint, Joshua Chesterton, Mrs Snelling, Emily Ross, Damilola Hassan, Christal Izuchukwu, Peace Imarhiagbe, Felicia Graham, Heather Shaw, Ethan Perera, Jack Kenny, Katy Henderson, Mr Griffin.



Christmas Magazine - Headteacher's message

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the BGS magazine!

We mark the end of both a challenging term and a year like no other before it. 2020 will certainly be clearly marked in human history. As I mentioned in the summer edition, the importance of communication has risen to the fore. We have developed a variety of ways to communicate with each other across new divides imposed by Covid-19, to empathise with those in different circumstances than our own, perhaps more consciously than before. We must not lose this impetus to practice the empathy we celebrate in our school ethos which is demonstrated frequently in this magazine. Thank you to Miss Contini and her impressive editing team for such a rich publication.

It has been wonderful to have all our students back in school and for everyday life to feel close to normal at times. The simple challenges of teaching in a classroom where the teacher is confined to a box and cannot directly support students by working alongside them have been frustrating and wearing but we have all been very impressed with the respect our students have shown for staff throughout the autumn term. I think there has been a new appreciation for the role of school staff and indeed for school in general after the experience of lockdown. We are not yet back to our real normal in that our vibrant extracurricular life is still restricted but we can hope for better news next year as vaccinations gradually take effect. Might the summer term begin to shape up properly?

Our staff news is very mixed. We were very sad to lose Mr Hennessy, a member of our site staff who had been off throughout lockdown with cancer. He was a familiar face for staff and students alike as he chased us out of the buildings at lock up time. Mrs Caddock in the Finance Office leaves us at Christmas after more than 17 years of impeccable service. Ms Pearson, Head of Classics, has taught at BGS for more than 13 years during her adventures in the UK. She now returns home to New Zealand for a new adventure and Mr Risdon takes over as Head of Department. And Mrs Earl has completed over a decade as science teacher and Biology lead in the department. We thank all these staff for their years of commitment to BGS. Finally, our thanks to Miss Douillet who leaves as Mrs Meyers returns from maternity leave and resumes as Head of MFL and to Miss Reed who ran the department so effectively in her absence.

Just as students have appreciated school perhaps more than they realised, so our school community in general has been more vocal in its appreciation for staff working in difficult circumstances. I thank each and every one of you for your kind words and the support you have shown these past months. It has meant a great deal, particularly in those moments when it has felt like this might never end.

But end it will - it is in sight now. In the meantime, I would like to wish staff, students and their families a peaceful, perhaps quieter-than-usual festive season. We will rest and recharge, ready for 2021.

Mr Elphick



Jack Petchey Award

The Jack Petchey Award scheme continued with Mabbs, Prothero and Wellman Houses nominating winners for the months of September, October and November, a summary report was sent to the Foundation at the end of November.

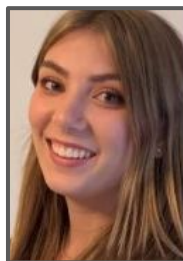
Congratulations to the September-November winners:

September Award
MABBS
Eleanor Creevy

Eleanor is a positive, caring person who has often helped in activities in school since year 7. She recently shaved off her hair for charity and raised lots of money. Eleanor has participated in House activities with enthusiasm for the past 6 years and is currently a House Captain.



October Award
PROTHERO
Emily Ross



Emily is the founder of the 7 Seconds club in school. She ran two face to face meetings last year and got students from all year groups interacting. She is also collaborating on the BGS Wellbeing Wall where she has a column for 7 Seconds. She is currently working on another project called 'Plant Positivity'.

November Award
WELLMAN
Tega Owede



Tega is a part of the student voice committee and he has actively changed the structure of the day by contributing to the changing of the school break times. He is always helpful and supportive of his peers and tries to solve problems for them to ease their school day. He is always cheerful and happy and he is generally a good person to have in the class.



Congratulations!



Sir Jack Petchey set up the Jack Petchey Foundation to inspire young people across London and Essex to work hard and reach their full potential.



Current Affairs and Issues



Mail in Voting in the US Presidential Election.

What was the fuss?

Whilst at this point, the question of who will take office on January 20th 2021 has been answered, with Trump having made multiple references to the 'next administration' within White House press conferences, the question to many is why was so much money put into trying to subvert democracy? Although, as we have seen multiple times before, Trump is not a stranger to authoritarianism when he does not get his way, why did Trump still choose to spend millions of dollars to attempt to overturn election results, despite him being 2/3 states away from the presidency?

The key reason, as has been heavily reported across mass media, is down to the presence of mail-in-ballots amongst vast swathes of the country-which just so happened to largely swing in Biden's favour. Through the multi-day electoral process, most swing states slowly swung in Biden's favour over the course of multiple hours due to returns from Dem-leaning population centres (which had the highest proportion of mail-in voters) coming in. So what exactly is mail in voting, and why was it such a key issue?



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 22h

There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people, anyone.....

[Get the facts about mail-in ballots](#)

38.8K

35K

119.8K



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump

Some or all of the content shared in this Tweet is disputed and might be misleading about an election or other civic process. [Learn more](#)

The Supreme Court decision on voting in Pennsylvania is a VERY dangerous one. It will allow rampant and unchecked cheating and will undermine our entire systems of laws. It will also induce violence in the streets. Something must be done!

[Learn how voting by mail is safe and secure](#)

To put it simply, mail-in-voting was not a novel concept created by the pandemic (as it may seem), but in fact a well-documented part of the voting processes of national, state-level and local elections in America-with forms of absentee voting dating as far back as the American Civil War. The simple process simply involves marking the candidate of choice, placing the ballot in the provided mailing envelope, and then mailed off. Although various right-leaning politicians and media sources, like Fox News, may attempt to claim that the mass utilization of this voting method was solely created to allow Biden to win, 33 million votes (25% of all votes) in 2016 were actually cast using postal voting.

So why has Republican opposition to mail-in-voting been so vigilant within this election cycle?



First of all it is important to note that both Trump and Biden held contrasting views on the merits of postal voting, with Biden encouraging his base to vote-by-mail, due to the risk of Coronavirus spreading, whilst Trump, playing into his largely skeptical view of covid, discouraged his supporters from mail-in-voting, and had questioned the validity of absentee ballots long before the election had even happened. The potential increased turnout that the mass intervention of mail-in-voting (which has been documented to correlate with increased Democratic support), could cause (and may have aided) Trump's defeat in the general election, due to a higher proportion of blue-leaning demographics being able to safely cast ballots. To an extent, Trump was correct with his assumption that mail-in-ballots would contribute to his defeat-with each of his swing state losses coinciding with more mail-in-ballots being reported.



What must be taken into consideration is that for the first day of election results, Trump consistently held large margins in key swing states, like Michigan, Pennsylvania and Ohio, due to the reluctance of Democratic voters to vote in-person (due to the pandemic). Trump's confidence at these early returns was all but exemplified in his early claim that he had 'won the election'-despite a)him being far under the 270 required to win and b)large percentages of the vote in swing states being unreported. The 'blue shift' that ended up coming within the days after-which has previously been categorized as a rapid increase in Democratic vote shares after mail-in-votes are counted-is of course through those pesky Dems stealing the election, come on!

Although Biden will eventually take office in January, we need to reckon with what Trump oversaw throughout the month of November. Countless legal challenges, lawsuits and recounts, some of which may end up totalling up to the 10s of millions, have ended up achieving next to nothing. What is truly not talked enough within this debacle is the fact that the US president, the so-called 'leader of the free world' is in effect attempting to subvert the Democratic process of an election defeat. Whilst Trump will eventually step down from office, what legacy will this election end up lasting over Trump? Although one can very easily argue against Trump, even the most ardent Liberal has to see the benefits in some of Trump's more humane policies, such as pulling out of multiple foreign wars, and ending some non-beneficial free trade agreements.

But what will future generations see when they see that a US president effectively tried to tamper with Democracy-the basic founding principle of the US! Whilst there will be a blowback amongst Trump's most ardent supporters for the near-future, whom you could argue depict more a cult than a political organisation, the Republican party is all but certain to fallback from Trump in the future.

Afterall, what future will they have if they support a man who effectively worked against the very constitution that they fetishize?

- By Oliver Suarez-Jimenez, year 12



World Mental Health Day

The 10th of October marked World Mental Health Day. As BGS, we took part in an initiative to wear a yellow item of clothing to show our support as a school community. The school made presentations to be seen during our Academic monitoring and activities such as questionnaires to do at the beginning of the school day.

Mental health day is so important as it's a day where, as a school, we can reflect and take a moment to ourselves. This year hasn't been how we have all imagined due to covid-19, from the closing of schools to having a second national lockdown with restaurants closed. Sometimes we just need a moment to reflect and understand that we are doing ok and if we're not that's ok too.



Mental Health is a state of wellbeing. It is our stress, emotional and psychological wellbeing all summed up together. It affects how we think, feel and act. It has the power to affect our relationships with others and can have an influence on the choices we make as well as our self esteem and the moods we are in. Our mental health is such a broad topic as there is so much to be said about it. The simplest definition that I would use is that it is our 'emotional health' which is just as important as our physical one.

The adjustment of coming back to school in September may have been rocky to more than one. It is a hard adjustment to get used to, especially if you were going to bed at 3am and waking up at noon and just at home not doing any work at all. It must have also been a huge shock to the year groups, and especially to year 11s and 13s.

It's important to take care of yourself in order to have a good mental health, the little things really make a difference such as:

- Keeping active: doing exercise regularly whether it's going out for a run in your local park or a home workout can really boost your self esteem and help you with your concentration.
- Take breaks: especially if you feel like your work just keeps on piling up. During breaks do something completely different you could read, tidy up your room or do some exercise.
- Eat well: have balanced meals. This really helps to maintain our wellbeing at a good and healthy level.
- Getting plenty of sleep: especially now that we are in school, sleep really helps and affects our concentration we have in class.
- Take time for yourself: do something you enjoy. This could be a specific sport, taking time to read or drawing. This will make you feel 10 x better.

- By Karol Escudero Mancera, year 12



Why does the climate crisis affect women disproportionately?

Women are leading the way towards sustainability with some of the most well known young activists and trend setters, but: why are they at the heart of this battle? Does the climate crisis really transcend gender roles or are there certain stereotypically “female characteristics” that lend themselves towards being green?

The climate crisis and human caused global warming is a very important issue, with people all over the world stepping up to help fight the negative impacts of our way of life. This call to arms and taking up the fight against irreversible damage is led by many young activists, and the idea of being ‘green’ is definitely trending. Yet a closer look suggests women might be shouldering the bulk of the roles in climate awareness. The internalised sexism of our current dogmatic social structures around the world means women, especially those in less economically developed and developing countries, are being disproportionately impacted by this crisis



Their traditional roles in the home as primary caregivers and duties involving water collection and food provision see women much more at risk of poverty in areas of natural disaster or extended droughts and flooding, in areas where a community might need to walk farther to provide water young girls are more likely to be taken out of school and in areas where a natural disaster has struck women have a disproportionate number of deaths, larger than those of men in the same region. The fact that women are less likely to have socioeconomic power than men means that even those who survive are being left stranded, are unable to regain stability amid the crisis, within areas with damaged infrastructure and job availability.

Women are undeniably disproportionately affected by the immediate effects of climate change, but are still relegated to subordinate positions. For example, they hold only 24.3% of parliamentary roles worldwide, Nor is equality reached in local politics. The policies put in place in the face of the climate crisis will never support men and women equally. How can we provide care and supportive infrastructure to each other when not everyone has a voice? Internalised sexism is still prevalent in our society and despite many steps towards gender equality there are still many areas where we fall short.



It seems as if women are leading the fight, especially in Britain, where social media is a large part of everyday life. We are surrounded by examples of men and women taking it upon themselves to help provide better and cleaner options and lifestyles, but more often than not advertisements are aimed at women. Are we being conditioned to expect higher levels of interest and care from women? There is more focus on inherently 'female' cosmetic products than male advertising sustainability to set themselves apart from the multitude of brands. Although in part this stems from the larger and more developed cosmetics scene, this inherently suggests and trains us to expect women to be more environmentally friendly. Furthermore, women still predominantly take care of household related decisions, such as cleaning products and food bought or products for children, as they are the more likely to be the stay at home parent or have careers in caregiving. It is clear that the people who purchase the everyday needs for their household will be influenced and have to consider these products more often, and be in control of the ecological impacts of their household. So by putting the largest environmental pressure on these regions of life, has society decided that girls should inherit this role?



Undeniably it's a step in the right direction, with many women being key players in the fight against the climate crisis. But is sustainability being branded as female? Environmental awareness may be becoming a female dominated discussion in our everyday lives (though they are in many places still left out of the decision making) and do we risk alienating those men who are more likely to be put off or forget about the problems not right in front of us. In any case, we still have a long way to go, and in the end it is everybody's fight to ensure we do as much as we can to return our planet to a stable, sustainable place in order to preserve everyone's future.

- By Lauren Dempsey, year 12.



Why We Should Stop Caring About What Other People Think

Years ago, how many I do not know, I read a very well-behaved book called "The Subtle Art of Not Giving a ****". Granted, whilst the message of the book is quite clearly evident in the title, the book is an amusing, often annoying read, as one struggles to convince oneself that they do not need any of the self-help this book is peddling, as life is already good enough. But is good enough really good enough? Is it enough to live for the weekend? For a two-week holiday in the sun once a year? For a fabulously monotonous life?

Look, I'm not here to give a book report, and market this thin, orange book as a cure-all for all existential problems; I am, however, simply asking that you gain a new perspective on life and more than occasionally take it under advisement. More than ever, as we brave the start of year 12, we are embarking on what I like to refer to as 'the start of the rest of our lives', and I am struck by how much people still care. Now, I am not renouncing being considerate or thoughtful, charming and pleasant, but I am renouncing allowing our perceptions of other people's expectations to run our lives. As has become evident through the lack of uniform, no one cares about other people. No one cares if your laugh is slightly too high pitched, or if your smile is too toothy. And especially no one cares that I've worn the same skirt every Friday for the past couple of weeks. People are much too absorbed in their own web of life, to notice, or care about the trivial issues we concern ourselves with everyday.

Thus, I invite everyone to stop caring; but only about the unimportant things, of course. The book mandates that we all 'stop caring about stuff that doesn't really matter to us, allowing us the time, energy, and emotional stability to focus on the things we truly care about. This should, in theory, allow us to enjoy the process of life, instead of needlessly pursuing some unattainable end goal, always just out of our reach, the idea of the person we could be living a happier, better, more exciting life. This is, of course, not me telling you that it is okay to not do your homework because it does not 'spark joy', as Marie Kondo would say.

For the past year or so, I have been trying to follow this book's (my own) advice, and though it has been hard at times, it has probably been the most liberated I've felt in half a decade. Naturally, we cannot, and also should not want to use this philosophy as an excuse for hedonistic expression, instead we should view it as a guide for contentment, as the book reinforces that we take responsibility for all our actions and their impact. It would be incredibly misleading for me to say that I am exceedingly happy every second of my life, but at least I feel in control of it; any misstep I make is the direct cause of any anguish, and any 'good deed' or positive choice is of my own volition because I simply want to do it; if you could not tell, it makes me feel pretty good about myself. Having said all this, I did just send my friend three minutes worth of voice notes about this article, pondering whether it was appropriate.

To me, this philosophy is a way of making space in your mind to really experience your life as it happens, to be an active participant in the present. By accepting responsibility for all my actions, I have become more self-assured, more self-confident, more self-aware, and other pretentious words that follow 'self-'. In keeping with the theme of my message, I will keep it short and sweet, as you probably have more important things to care about, but if I may, I ask only that you allot a small amount of your time to consider whether your needs and necessities, your priorities, are really all that important.

- By Alison Balint, year 12



Emily Ross' Only7Seconds club

Only7seconds is a mindset movement that was first set up in Pateros, Washington on the west coast of the United States. It was founded by a lovely lady called Kristin Wall, whose son Ethan was extremely ill and bedridden for a long period of time. During this battle with his health, Ethan started to enter into a depression as none of his friends reached out to see if he was okay. It was through this heartbreak of watching her son's mental and physical health suffer that Kristin felt angry that it seemed no one cared. However, she later realised that it wasn't that Ethan's friends didn't care about him and his health, but they never thought to reach out to check he was OK, because they were never told how important it was. Within their small town, Pateros watched so much turmoil unravel and 5 lives were taken due to suicide within a few months. This made Kristin want to research into suicide rates within the US.

She realised it only takes 7 seconds to send a simple text saying "Hi, how are you?" to a friend, and this became the premise of only7seconds. The message that "it only takes 7 seconds to send a text to someone telling them that you are thinking of them could be the difference between someone being here today, and not tomorrow" meant so much to Kristina and to so many others.

I became a supporter of only7seconds in the summer of 2019, but became a team member in February of 2020, becoming their youngest and first international team member! I believe that the message that only7seconds is spreading can help those not only suffering with mental health problems, but everybody.

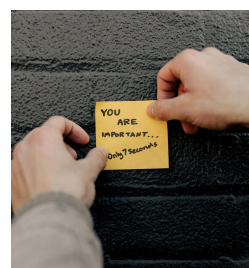
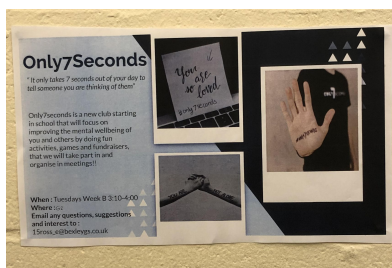
Right before schools closed due to the pandemic, I was able to host my first only7seconds club meeting: it was very successful and the feedback I received from those who attended was very positive. I have so many ambitions for only7seconds within school and would love it if others wanted to get involved. It's a great opportunity for CAS as it can count towards all sections; creativity, action and service.

It's so easy to get involved in any of the projects we have running, like our plant positivity project (created and run by myself) or our positive post-it challenge that is hosted world wide and so easy to participate in safely within school. All you need to join in with the positive post-its is a post-it note and an encouraging message, then place it anywhere around school.

I am waiting until things are back to normal to start up the only7seconds club again so all year groups can join in and benefit, but when clubs do return, I would love and appreciate some help running them, holding small groups, and coming up with activities (again all things that can count towards CAS).

If you have any questions or what any more information about this great cause I'd be happy to talk, just drop me an email to 15ross_e@bexleygs.co.uk

- By Emily Ross, year 12



Women in STEM.

Technically, I am a woman in STEM. I take higher-level physics and maths. I took these subjects because I loved them at GCSE. I hope to study physics at university and work in this sector too.

First of all, what is STEM? STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. STEM plays a crucial role in our everyday lives from machines to medicine, farming to industries, phones to rockets and much more as our society is becoming ever more reliant on technology and innovation. Not only that, but there are so many issues in the world such as food insecurity, water scarcity, child trafficking and loss of biodiversity to name a few. These are problems affecting humanity but could be solved or eased with the work of STEM. Ultimately, STEM is important and we need more people in STEM. But what about women? Why do we need more *women* in STEM?



Undoubtedly, there is a significant gender gap: according to the UN 30% of all female students select STEM-related fields in higher education and only 28% of researchers worldwide are women. Even in my physics class, there are 2 girls and 12 boys. But why is this the case? You could argue it's because of a lack of female role models, or because women are discouraged from doing STEM, or maybe other reasons. But personally, I don't think that's the case.

Why do we need female role models? Generally, a role model is someone who is currently doing what you want to do in the future and the whole point of them is that they inspire you to pursue your interests. Not that every part of their identity matches yours. It's very possible for a woman to go into STEM with a male role model. I personally don't even have a role model, I just chose to do physics because I enjoyed it, not because I looked up to somebody else. I am a woman and I study physics but these two parts of my identity are separate from each other.

I don't believe women are discouraged from doing STEM- quite the opposite actually. There are many programs that specifically help women wanting to go into STEM. I know In one of my physics classrooms there is a little poster that says "girls in physics" with the names of former female physics students and I remember an ECM day where we researched specifically female scientists from the past in one of the lessons. The fact that I am writing this clearly shows that there is a dialogue about women in STEM and a push for more women in STEM.



I cannot speak on behalf of all women but I have never been discouraged from going into STEM, nobody had told me I can't do physics or maths for IB or made me feel bad for wanting to pursue a future in STEM because of my gender.

I have many female friends who don't do STEM subjects and it always seemed natural that they wouldn't do these subjects- not because they're female but because I know them and I know that STEM isn't something they want to do, I've heard them complain about how much they dislike these subjects, I know that their passions are in something else. Not because they were told they couldn't but because they chose not to. That's all it boils down to - choice.

I believe that, in the western world at least, we have made massive strides in gender equality and for women wanting to pursue STEM there is nothing holding them back and we generally have the same opportunities as men with negligible differences. Men and women are very different, it's not a bad thing but it's something we have to realise. When you give the same opportunities to different people you can't expect the same outcome. To ask for an equal split is unreasonable. The only way to do that would be to manipulate the opportunities people get. This is not fair and doesn't give the two genders an even playing field - something we have been trying to achieve for generations. This is why I don't believe we need to push more women into STEM: because I am an advocate for equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome.

We shouldn't push specifically *women* into STEM but we shouldn't discourage them either. At the end of the day, gender is an arbitrary factor in how well someone can do their job. Why should we care if the people making our medicines are women? Or if the people programming our websites or building our bridges are women? All we should care about is that they did their job well, not that they were a man or woman.

I understand that pushing for more women in STEM is a well-intentioned attempt at gender equality but quite frankly it is counterproductive and patronising as it perpetuates the idea that women are helpless and unable to get by on our own terms.

At the end of the day, this discussion is about gender equality and the only way to go about it is to understand what is happening, see what is working and what is not. While pushing for more women in STEM was done with goodwill, it simply isn't helping to solve the underlying issue of gender inequality.

- By Aakankshya Adhikari, year 12



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Know the past, shape the future.



We stand together

A month in a year is all we spend
To look through an old history book.
So little time to comprehend
Hardly any time at all to really look.
The same great story is read to us
The one the curriculum likes.
Once read and spoken we make no fuss
This is where complacency strikes.

But now, now this is not what we will do
For now, now I see you.

It is the darkest nights it will occur
The sirens, the fight, the shot.
The entire encounter becomes just a blur,
And how long do we focus on this? The truth is, not a lot
A brief flash on the news,
The victims will appear
Each time it is someone innocent we lose
It sparks the spread of fear

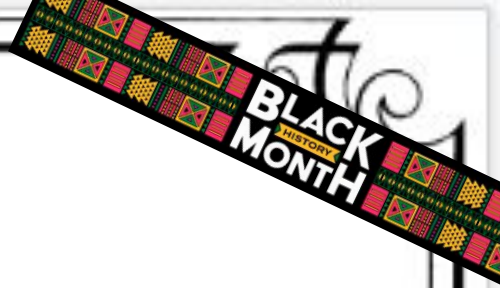
But now, now this is not what we will do
For now, now I hear you

You tell us of these events
How hard it is to live.
The deep separation it represents
When it should be love we give.
The stats we so regularly read
Will only seem to be a figure.
But that was a son, a lover, a friend- you plead
And yet we are taught to obey the killer.

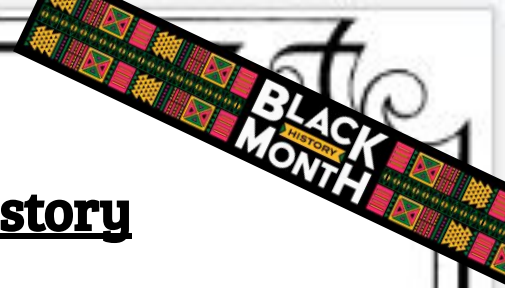
But now, now this not what we will do
For now, now I stand with you

Now I see every face
Now I write down every name.
Now I hear every broken voice
Now I feel the shame.
Now I will project every story told
Now I stand with you, and no injustice will remain

By Tallulah Price-Toplis



A Blind Eye to Black History



The start of the school year is for all an incredibly tense and difficult time, especially after the 'long summer' we all received. Amongst the chaos and frantic stresses facing the upper school in this pressing time, there has been an issue that I feel has been thoroughly ignored throughout this month, that being Black History Month.

Studying History at the higher level at IB, I came to a realisation that the first time that I was taught about Black History was when I was 16 and choosing to take history and further my education on my own accord. Throughout my entire time at school from primary to secondary, the only times I feel as if I have furthered my education on Black History has been during the odd assembly and power days where there is a lesson free and a space needs to be filled. The education we have been taught has been rushed, brief and unsentimental, and whilst I can agree that the inclusion of Black History is necessarily due to the school choice, there are things as a school community, particularly as students that we can do to get involved with and do our part.

Whilst some of you reading may argue, 'We learn about Martin Luther King, The Slave Trade and Little Rock', but that is barely skimming the surface. The real issue is that as students, we are only taught of black oppression, and never of black celebration. Only in recent years have many people discovered the celebrations of black culture, particularly within literature, stem, politics and art. By teaching of black oppression, and black oppression only, some may argue that the impression of Black History is boring and 'done to death', but by teaching the luminosity and brilliance of Black History, we won't only have something interesting and gripping to learn about, but will have the ability to be taught something we would otherwise not know. I will entirely acknowledge that within the past year or so, society has attempted to make a slight change in what we learn about Black History, but the lack of knowledge that I have, someone who has actively tried to educate themselves on history of all ethnicity, is embarrassing and disgraceful.





Additionally, some may argue that the relevance of Black History today is unnecessary and pointless as legally, the rights of all ethnicities are equal and fair. However that couldn't be further from the truth and racial injustices are being committed right now as we speak. To enhance this, I think it is important to speak about the story of Alexandra Wilson.

Wilson is a young lawyer, from London, who upon trying to access the court, was accused of being the defendant at every step of her entrance, based on the colour of her skin. From the 'Miss, you need to stand over there' to the 'You didn't need to dress up this nice', the experience was entirely mortifying and enraging for Wilson, an incredibly smart and esteemed lawyer.

The ignorance that Wilson faced whilst trying to enter the building and do her job, was due not to simple hatred, but the lack of education on Black History that the British public has received. Only untrue prejudices and stories of oppression are all that the British Public has been taught, a lesson that is important that we change.

Whilst the world could be doing much more, our school is making the change for better awareness and sharing of knowledge in order to educate in and out of the classroom. During form time this month, we've had quizzes and videos on Black History and enabled our school to broaden their minds to the celebration of Black History. Equally the work of Afro-Caribbean Society has been useful, and their sharing and spreading of knowledge has been amazing for the entire student body.

I'm not going to ask you to devote your life to educating yourself on Black History. I'm not going to make you agree with what I say. I know many people, of our age group, will disagree with what I have to say about this matter, but I implore you to listen. To acknowledge. Groups within our school are changing things, improving the education and educating themselves on the importance of Black History and what has been missed on our curriculum. We as a society are changing, and as a school, as a community and as individuals, it is important that we change also, otherwise we may continually live in an eternal state of ignorance.

- By Maya Bhogal, Year 12

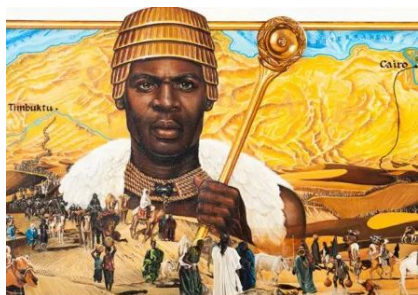


African Civilisations

As this information isn't taught in the curriculum, we feel that it is important to talk about the history of Africa and African civilisation. All we hear about Africa is slavery and colonisation and the corruption of today. But Africa is much more than that. It wasn't even called Africa until the Europeans came. The original name was 'Alkebulan' meaning 'Garden of Eden'. The name Africa actually means 'dust' but they won't teach you that, nor will they teach you the things in this article. We hope that as you read and enjoy the magazine you also learn something meaningful about African history and feel encouraged to learn more about your own history.

Egyptian Empire

Ancient Egypt was a civilisation of ancient North Africa, situated in the place that we now know as Egypt. The ancient Egyptians are known for many great achievements such as the construction techniques used for building pyramids and temples, an amazing system of mathematics and they made the earliest known peace treaty. Men and women were seen as equal and so were people of all classes, including slaves. They were very progressive people because very powerful women such as Cleopatra VII and Hatshepsut became Pharaohs. The government consisted of a Pharaoh and a king. The Pharaoh was the absolute ruler of Egypt and the king was the supreme military commander. The Ancient Egyptians were actually dark skinned with kinky hair, unlike the light skin people we see in drawings. The reason Egyptians now are light skinned is due to colonisation from the French and the Arabs.



Mansa Musa

Mansa Musa was the tenth Mansa (Sultan or Emperor) of the Mali Empire, which was an Islamic West African State. The Mali Empire is situated in what is now known as Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Western Sahara, Gambia, Guinea, Niger and Guinea Bissau. Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim and he is known for being the first black man to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. He was such a devout Muslim that he built a new Mosque every Friday. This was possible due to his wealth because he has been described as the wealthiest individual of all time. He was the largest producer of gold in the world which contributed to his immense wealth. We don't hear much about him even though he is the richest individual to have ever lived. We can't put an exact figure on his wealth, but we know he was wealthier than Jeff Bezos!



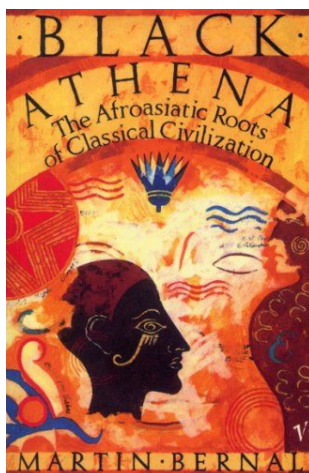
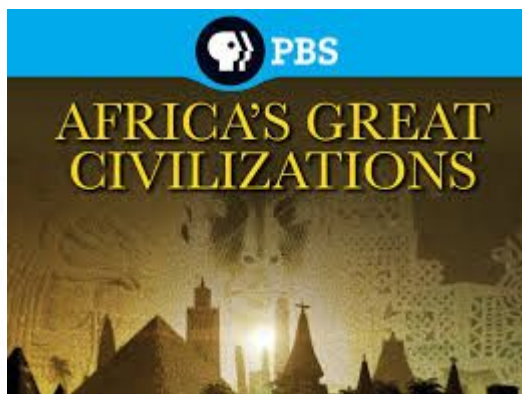
Kandake Amanirenas

Kandake Amanirenas was a queen of the ancient African Kingdom of Kush who was best known for skillfully defending her kingdom against the armies of the Roman Empire. She was the second of the eight Kandakes (meaning “great woman” and the equivalent of queen or queen mother) of the Kingdom of Kush which was located in modern-day Sudan. The queen's husband, King Teriteqas, perished in battle, leaving the responsibility to prosecute the war on Kandake Amanirenas and her son, Prince Akinidad. The course of war reversed when the new Roman governor of Egypt, Gaius Petronius, led an expedition of 10,000 soldiers to re-conquer territory and invade deep into Kush itself, pillaging, enslaving inhabitants, and establishing new borders for the Roman Empire. From her throne in the capital city of Meroë, she led the Kushites north to engage the Romans. After defeats by Petronius who occupied and ravaged the city of Napata, Kush failed to overwhelm the Roman garrison at Primis (today Qasr Ibrim).



Therefore, peace negotiations began in 24 B.C. in Dakka. Essentially, the peace agreement recognized a stalemate between Rome and Kush. Kandake Amanirenas had spared her people centuries of domination by successfully resisting complete conquest by Rome. Unlike other kingdoms on the edge of Roman Europe, Roman Africa, or Roman Asia, she did not surrender large areas of territory and was never forced to pay tribute or contribute material resources to Rome.

- By Tofunmi Onakoya and Deborah Akinbode, year 12.



For more information, we recommend the documentary series “Africa’s Great Civilisations” and Martin Bernal’s book “Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization..”



Henrietta Lacks' contribution to science



Henrietta Lacks was a 31 year-old poor black woman working as a tobacco farmer in Maryland, who was being treated for cervical cancer in 1951. The doctors at the time removed her tumour cells without her consent (which was typical at the time) and her cells were the first human cells that could grow outside of a human body, in a laboratory. This discovery was astonishing in the scientific world as her genetic material was a catalyst for many developments in areas such as vaccines, cancer and fertility treatments, which I believe is amazing! Lacks' tumour cells, which were originally affected due to her suffering from cervical cancer, also led to the development of the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccines used in many countries to protect young girls developing HPV infections leading to cervical cancer. Estimates even suggest that this vaccination will reduce the deaths from cervical cancer by 70%!

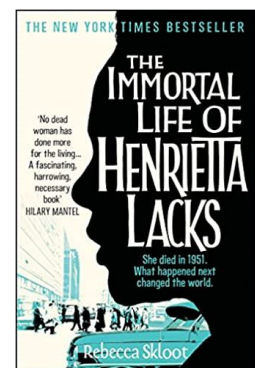


Her transformation of biomedicine was made famous in 2010 by a best-selling book named 'The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks', which highlights the ethical and medical aspects of her non-consensual cell extraction and is a story connected to the dark history of experimentation on African Americans at the time. It also sparked the legal battles over whether we control the things we are made of.

Her relatives were not informed about her cells being extracted and used for research until 22 years later in 1973, when a scientist called to request a blood sample. Her cells were a foundation for the now billion-dollar biotech industry and her relatives, who cannot afford health insurance, were not compensated for this major leap in scientific research. The book's author had said that the family had never asked for money; however, the family, still poor and at odds with racism and classism, possibly did not feel like they were able to ask, which is evidently a fault of the scientists at the time who did not even inform them about the cell extraction or the compensation they could earn.

Henrietta Lacks is someone who should be wholly recognised in the scientific world as a woman whose cells paved the way for groundbreaking discoveries such as the HPV and polio vaccine. Her exploitation by the doctors and scientists treating her and the further exploitation of her relatives should also be recognised and as an eye-opener to society about the ill-treatment of a suffering African American woman and her family.

- By Damilola Hassan, Afro-Caribbean Society Vice-President



Small Axe - Mangrove



The first episode of the film series *Small Axe*, directed by Oscar winner Steve McQueen, is based on the true story of The Mangrove Nine, a group of activists based in Notting Hill, London who campaigned against police brutality that black British people had suffered from during the late 60's early 70's

The names of the Mangrove Nine were:

- Barbara Beese
- Rupert Boyce
- Frank Crichlow
- Rhodan Gordon
- Darcus Howe
- Anthony Innis
- Altheia Jones-LeCointe
- Rothwell Kentish
- Godfrey Millett



BROTHERS & SISTERS ON TRIAL FOR DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF BLACK PEOPLE



What was The Mangrove and why was it so important?

The Mangrove was a Caribbean restaurant located at 8 All Saints Road, Notting Hill, west London. It was opened in 1968 by Trinidadian community activist and civil rights campaigner Frank Crichlow. In the film series, Altheia Jones-LeCointe (whose experience was acted out by Letitia Wright) describes the Mangrove as:

"A focal point for black people to come and sit, talk and exchange views. That is a rare and precious gift."

Why were customers in The Mangrove being harassed and what was done in retaliation?

The Mangrove was repeatedly raided by the police, on grounds of drug possession, despite a lack of evidence. In response, on 9 August 1970, the black community staged a protest, where 150 people marched to the local police station.





Violence between police and protesters led to a series of arrests; after considering a variety of options, including inciting racial hatred under the Race Relations Act and deportation under new immigration rules, the Mangrove Nine were tried for incitement to riot.

The trial that followed was the first judicial acknowledgment of behaviour motivated by racial hatred within the Metropolitan Police. The series clearly portrays the institutional racism and the discrimination within court cases pertaining to black people in the 60's and 70's.

The trial ended on Thursday 16 December 1971, and all the defendants were acquitted of the main charges of incitement to riot.

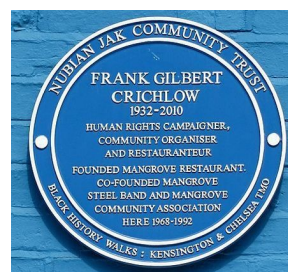


What happened after the trial?

The Mangrove restaurant and Frank Crichlow continued to be harassed for a further eighteen years. In 1989 his name was finally cleared at the high court. He accepted a settlement of £50,000, which was the highest sum ever paid in damages by the Metropolitan Police at that time.

In all Frank Crichlow faced three trials and was acquitted three times. He pressed for an apology from the police, but never received one. He closed the Mangrove for good in 1992.

Barbara Beese has stated that: "We thought we were gonna change the world back then. But still, when you look at the disproportionate number of black men in custody and the general climate we find ourselves in, we have to keep on fighting". It is clear that the police still had major flaws that heavily affected cases such as Stephen Lawrence's death in 1993, so although the Mangrove Nine were able to make history, this shows that the struggle for racial equality is far from over.



- By Micheline Adofo, year 12

Small Axe is available on BBC iPlayer:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p08vxt33/small-axe>



News from departments and extracurricular activities!



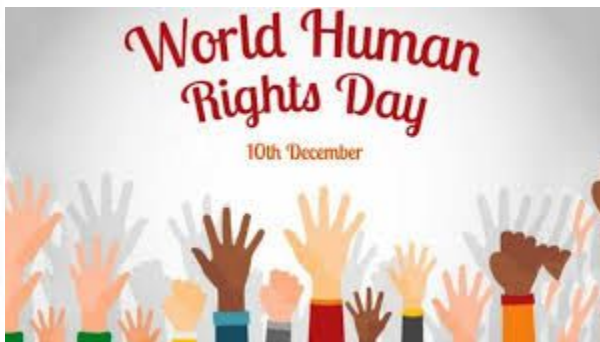
The FBCS Department celebrates diversity, equality and human rights.



This term in FBCS we have been learning about discrimination and inequality. We have learnt that "race" is a social construct and there are no biological differences between people of different "races". We have learnt that BAME people, and particularly black women are being grossly underrepresented in positions of power such as the Cabinet Office even though they make up a large percentage of the country. We learnt statistics such as 55% of LGBTQ+ students are victims of bullying because of their sexual orientation, which is a breach of human rights.

What are human rights?

Human Rights are the basic rights that every human is entitled to. There are 30 and they range from right to education to freedom of movement. They were drawn up in 1948 by the recently formed United Nations to prevent atrocities similar to those carried out in World War Two. However, it is not a legal obligation and has been breached by several countries. Such as innocent North Koreans being sent to Gulags and publicly executed for small crimes or the fact 40 million people are Modern Slaves three times the amount of the Transatlantic Slave trade.



What is being done to stop this?

December 10th is World Human Rights Day and the day in 1948 when they were drawn up. World Human Rights Day is to raise awareness and inform people of their rights. For the Year 8 FBCS diploma, we are participating in write for rights ([participate here](#)) which is a scheme to aid people whose human rights have been breached.

People sign up with their email address and name and it is that simple. Innocent victims such as Moses Akatugba, who was put on death row when he was only 16 for a crime he didn't commit, has had his sentence overturned because of the support from write for rights. I chose to campaign for 18 students who were assaulted and arrested by police for participating in an LGBTQ+ march in Turkey.

Human Rights in the UK

Human Rights have been breached by larger powers such as the UK and the US. For example, the fact that members of the Windrush Generation had been wrongly deported and denied basic rights. The Home Office destroyed documents such as landing cards and as most children had come on their parents' passports they could not prove their right to remain in the UK. They were demanded to show documentation from every year they had lived here. They often failed and were stripped of basic needs like healthcare and housing or placed in immigration detention centres.

Human Rights are under threat in the UK. Refugees are being faced with hatred and discrimination when they arrive. There are stark warnings from other countries such as Poland who have been limiting press freedom. Sadly, this is not being noticed and everyday people in this country grow more divided.

THANK YOU

Let's make this the biggest
Write for Rights yet!

Share this action now and increase
your impact

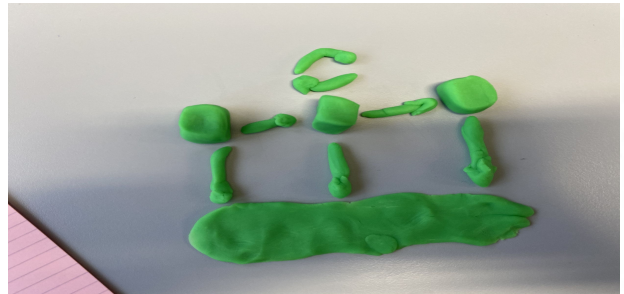


Psychology: Who said revision can't be fun?

Learning the IB psychology content can be tricky. However, something that can be trickier than learning the course? Revision. So why not make it fun?

After completing this term's work on how memory works, Mr Asker wanted our class to look over the studies we had learned. Due to the fact that we had learned 12 different studies, our class was most definitely not looking forward to something that could be so boring! In an attempt to help us enjoy revising, Mr Asker bought each of us a pot of Play-Doh.

We were allowed to pick different colours, and I can say the white sparkly colour was indeed a favourite!



With our pots of Play-Doh, we got into teams and each of us had to make a model of something that reminded us of the study that we picked. For example, there was a study about car crashes, so you could make a model of a car.

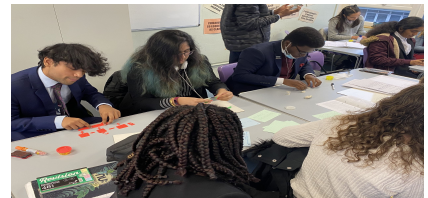
Afterwards, Mr Asker looked at every single model from each person in each team and he had to guess what study our models replicated.

Some of the models were questionable. Not even Mr Asker could guess them all and this did shock a few of us!

Although this was fun, it was hard for me! As a person who is not artistic in any shape or form, I did have to get some help from my peers.

Overall, I did enjoy this task, and I'm sure that the rest of my class did too. We were even upset when we had to do writing tasks for the next lesson!

This is why psychology with Mr Asker is our favourite lesson. He always manages to make it interesting and fun for us, and this allows everyone to engage and therefore the whole class enjoys themselves.



By Christal Izuchukwu, Peace Imarhiagbe and Felicia Graham, year 12



Despite the current restrictions on doing practical work in lessons BGS's budding future scientist have still benefited from a number of activities both as part of the curriculum and in addition to it.

The first Power Day of the year, saw all the Year 13 Chemists and Physicists completing experiments as part of their IA Coursework. Both departments were a flurry of activity with students completing original experiments that they had devised themselves. A huge thanks to the technicians who helped to make this covid safe and support the students to access this essential part of their course.



Arkwright Engineering Scholarships

A number of Year 11s are currently in the middle of the Arkwright Scholarship application process. With a bumper number of applicants this year, all looking to become engineers in the future, we are hoping for record numbers to be accepted onto this extremely prestigious support programme. I have every faith in the quality of our candidates and hope that the current climate does negatively impact their prospects. Best of luck to all our applicants!

Sci CLUB



Year 7s have been very disappointed to find that experiments are on hold during lessons. It is simply not safe enough to have a class full of bunsen burners without teachers risking crossing into student bubbles in order to monitor them effectively. With this in mind science club has tentatively started again this half term. A group of keen year 7 students have been delighted and inspired by a series of teacher-led demos that they can then attempt at home, using normal household objects. Most recently, students were given a kit to take home to make their own universal indicator and investigate if any of their cupboard ingredients are acidic or alkaline. I look forward to hearing how they got on with this in the new year! Ms Lusted. STEM Co-ordinator.





I'm an Engineer, get me out of here!



On two consecutive Wednesdays, M16 was bustling with the enthusiasm for the live chats with Space Engineers! Year 7 paved the way asking insightful and interesting questions. This was followed the next week by year 12. In both sessions I was very proud of how well our students engaged with the activity and managed to dig deep into the working lives of the engineers. It was a chance to find out about what it is really like to be an engineer working in the field of space exploration and investigation, and our students made excellent use of this opportunity. Mrs Lusted

On Wednesday 18th November, me and a group of Year 12 physics students had the fantastic opportunity to do a live chat with some space engineers and find out more about their careers. It was organised on the website 'I'm an engineer, get me out of here' where current engineers can sign up to volunteer for a text based chat with students who are interested in their field. We were very lucky to speak to four engineers: Marina, who studies landslides by using AI and satellite imagery, Tris, who builds science instruments for space missions, John, who works for the Airbus Space Engineering Academy and Yannick, who works on specialised sensors that detect radioactive material. The questions asked ranged from which subjects to take at school, to what the engineers like doing in their free time.* One thing that I learned from this session is just how diverse the field of engineering is, as well as how integral it is to our daily lives eg. Marina is currently working on predicting landslides near a road in Spain that could save many lives in the future! It was also very interesting to find out about the amazing experiences that these engineers' careers have lead to - during his career, John has broken a world record whilst carrying out a flight test of a new solar powered aircraft in the USA, as well as having visited schools with the astronaut Tim Peake's parents, while Tim was in space! This made me realise how exciting a career in engineering can be (who wouldn't want to meet Tim Peake!!), and helped me to confirm that it is something I want to do in the future. I think everyone who came can agree that it was a very enjoyable and informative session, and that it was great to talk to real life engineers currently in the field. Thank you to them for this opportunity!

If you're interested in engineering as a career or want to find out more, check out the website - <https://imanengineer.org.uk>. It is very easy to register and it will let you post questions to the engineers, vote for your favourites and even join the open live chat that takes place on Thursday's 7-8pm!

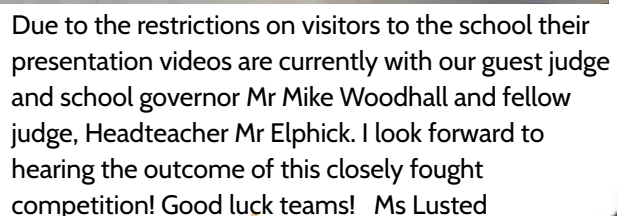
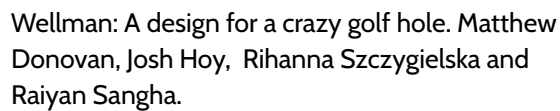
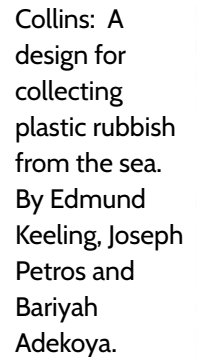
* In case you're wondering, taking physics and maths is probably not a bad idea. And as for hobbies, lego and building robots definitely came up! By Ugne Stanzyte, Year 12

I thoroughly enjoyed the chat with the engineers. We were warmly welcomed by the host of the room and then all of the engineers sent an introduction of themselves and their jobs into the chat. We asked an abundance of questions which were all thoughtfully answered. This experience was truly memorable as we were able to make contact with real engineers which had and are still working for recognisable companies such as NASA and the ESA (the European Space Association)! This was a once in a lifetime opportunity and I am extremely happy that I was part of this inspiring experience and I cannot wait to take part in future science club sessions!

By Louis Luckman, Year 7

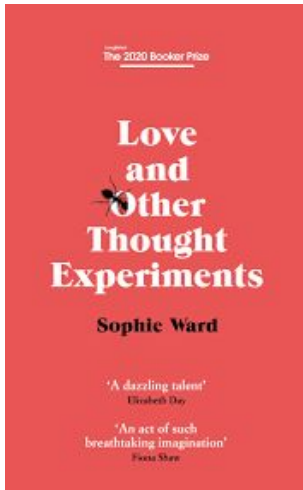


Johnson: A design to sustainably transport school children in a remote to access their school which is only accessible up a cliff.
Ravi Bhat and Amelie Leachman.



English department.

English Prefects Book Recommendations!



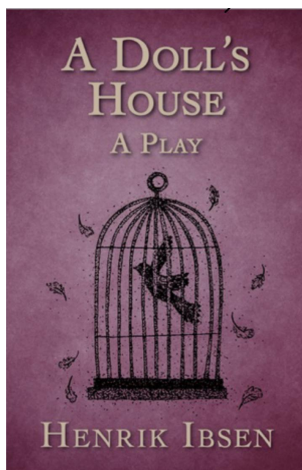
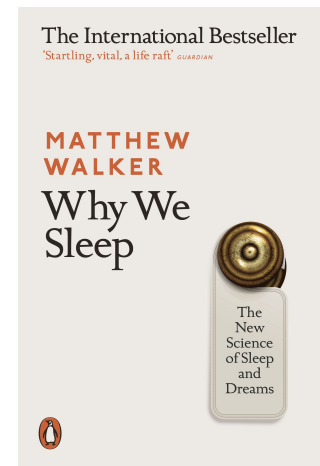
My recommendation is a book that has definitely resonated with me since I have read it. Longlisted for the 2020 Booker Prize, Ward follows the story of a couple, at a sore point of their relationship, when suddenly, one partner insists an ant has crawled into her eye. From then on, she feels an unwelcome presence living in her mind, and as her and her wife's lives progress, her mentality weakens more profoundly. Ward's accessible yet stunning depiction of a relationship, and all that affects it, is truly captivating to any reader of any age!

- Maya Bhogal

I would recommend a book called 'Why We Sleep' by Matthew Walker. It is such an important book to read about how sleep is such a vital factor that plays into our daily lives, our mental health, our physical health and so much more! The book itself goes into detail about the effects of sleep deprivation.

Nowadays, a lot of us teens tend to stay up really late and do not get the recommended amount of hours of sleep. I think from reading this book, you get a better understanding of how something so normal and so basic can get you so far in your life! Trust me, you will be so shocked after reading this!

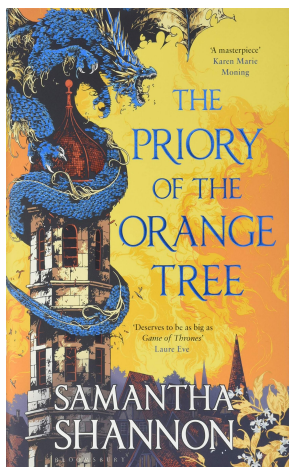
- Kristina Broeren



Henrik Ibsen's "A Doll's House" is a translated social drama on marriage but ultimately a play about spiritual rebirth in a modern world. It highlights concepts such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and reflects the prejudices women often faced in marriages where they were assigned to be subordinate. I recommend reading this play as it allows you to consider different perspectives in the context of Victorian society (with the benefit of stage directions that make it even better) and overall it's an interesting read.

- Petrina Mahon



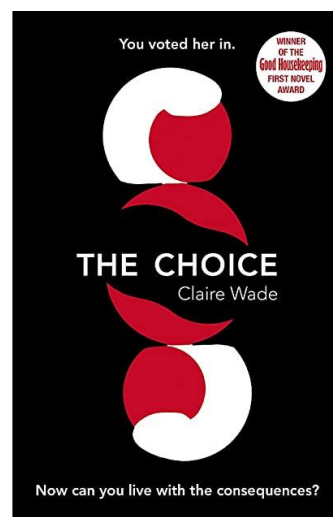


I would recommend the book 'The Priory of the Orange Tree'. It is a political fantasy told through multiple storylines and characters. The author has described the book as a "feminist retelling of Saint George and the Dragon" as the characters fight to defeat the prophesied 'Nameless One'. It is a compelling, if long, read that I would highly recommend for any fans of Game of Thrones or the Lord of the Rings.

- Sasha Waller

I would recommend reading The Choice, by Claire Wade, which is a very thought provoking book. Despite the fact that it seems to be far fetched at the beginning, you soon realise how easy it is with those entrusted with power to abuse power. Good intentions can spiral out of control. The government's idea to ban sugar and baking was intended for good however it soon got out of hand and the government became a dictatorship. I feel that it is very relevant to us in this day and age during coronavirus, due to the restrictions the government is putting on our lives (not in a bad way!)

- Jacob Orchard



For a brilliant and **very** comprehensive list of books and films recommendations for the Christmas Holidays, as well as a TV guide for screening times and dates during the festive period, click [here](#). Credit goes to Helen Smith from Eckington School.



English department.

Year 10 Anti-Online Bullying project

On Power Day, year 10s took part in a project to create some short films to raise awareness about online bullying. These were then judged by the year 12 Film prefects, who awarded the teams headed by Kush Borse, Ben Evans and Hannah Batt as the winners.

The Year 12 Film IB Prefects who judged the films said all films managed to convey the message of anti-bullying well, but Oliver Harrison said that the winning films 'made intelligent use of filmic techniques to provide entertainment. Even though they had limited equipment, the editing was very good.' Lauren Jones, one of the prefects, said that she 'enjoyed seeing younger years enthusiastic about film'. Well done to the Year 10s for their hard work and congratulations to the winning team!

Mr Griffin, Head of English and Film, who helped devise the project was really pleased with many of the films: 'Managing to plan, script, storyboard, film and edit a short film in less than 2 hours is no mean feat! It is something that it would take our Film IB students several days to do! The films are a bit rough and ready, but some of the concepts and filming techniques displayed were very impressive. Well done to the winners, and thank you IB Film Prefect judges.'

Maya Bhogal has interviewed Kush Borse and Tallulah Price-Toplis interviewed Hannah Batt for the BGS Buzz:

Maya: What is the film about?

Kush : The film showed a boy, who for his height was made fun of by his friends, but it wasn't all banter after the jokes continued. Every time the boy says to stop the person who he thought was a friend and ended up the bully would reply "it's only a joke" and hence the title of the film "It's only a joke". After the constant jokes the boy spirals into a depression, where he loses the will to even go to school.



Maya: What was the process of making it?

Kush : Me and my group were on a tight schedule, we had 2 50 minute periods one of which was for planning. Within the second half we had to act, film, edit and produce the film with no resources other than the school, our phones and ourselves.



Maya: What were your aims for the film?

Kush : As we needed to raise awareness for a topic we chose bullying as it was a topic we thought we could easily portray and send a strong message as these things happen in day to day school life.

Maya: Why do you think it is important that it was made?

Kush : In general it not only taught us about how what you can see as a joke others can be really hurt by it and that there is a fine line between banter and bullying but we also wanted to raise awareness for others to really help prevent anything like this happening

Maya: Did you enjoy making the film?

Kush : The film was great fun to make, although the topic is serious we often found ourselves laughing, purely as we are not Oscar winning actors and needed a couple of takes to get a decent shot.

Interview with Hannah Batt:

Tallulah: What inspired you to make the film?

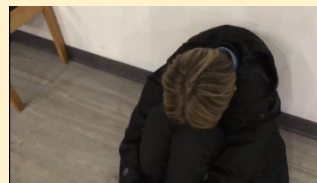
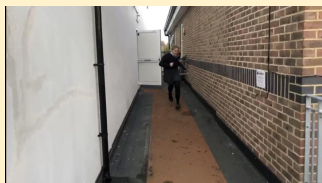
Hannah: I was inspired to make the film by the issues that teenagers face regularly and to raise awareness of the impacts that bullying can have on people's lives.

Tallulah: What are you most proud of?

Hannah: I am most proud of the finished product of the film after all my hard work. I found the camera work and editing to be a challenging task so it was very rewarding being able to see how it all came together at the end

Tallulah: How do you think the video will help with the anti-bullying movement?

Hannah: I believe that the video will help because it is presented in a way that is relatable to teenagers. Moreover, it demonstrates bullying in a holistic way by portraying both sides of the story with the victim and the bully.



- By Maya Bhogal, Tallulah Price-Toplis and Deborah Akinbode.





Christmas Geography Quiz:

- 1 - What country does Lapland belong to?
- 2 - What country donates the Trafalgar Square christmas tree each year?
- 3 - What country gets Christmas first?
- 4 - Father Christmas is known as "Pai Natal" in which European country?
- 5 - What country does Christmas Island belong to?
- 6 - Which country has a traditional Christmas celebration known as the Yule Lads?
- 7 - Where is KFC a traditional Christmas dinner?
- 8 - In what country are spider webs traditional decorations for Christmas?
- 9 - What's the name of the Welsh tradition of a wandering, singing Christmas skull?
- 10 - In Canada, what is Santa's postcode?

A GREEN CHRISTMAS!

Quick steps to be sustainable this festive period:

1. Shop locally, buy your food from local shops and markets. Not only does this support local businesses but you're more likely to find some special finds!
2. Choose to make handmade gifts, this saves money and puts your own love into the present you send.
3. Use eco-friendly paper to wrap your gifts, this minimizes waste as the paper can be reused and recycled efficiently.
4. Don't use wrapping paper, prevent wastage by using fabric wrapping or placing your gifts in bags.
5. Only cook the amount that you need, don't overbuy on food that you think everyone will eat if it does end up being too much and find ways to turn your leftovers into new meals.

- By Oliver Peetoom, year 12 and Mya Odulawa, year 13



Answers:

- Did you know that the legend of Santa Claus originated in Turkey with a Greek Bishop?
- The origins of Christmas trees date back as far as the Romans and Ancient Egyptians who used evergreen plants as symbols of everlasting life.
- Did you know that some countries use Christmas as a way to celebrate the dead? Portugal set places for their dead family members during a feast on Christmas morning known as Consoda.

1 - Finland
2 - Norway
3 - New Zealand (Balleny Islands)
4 - Portugal
5 - Australia
6 - Iceland
7 - Japan
8 - Ukraine
9 - Mari Lwyd
10 - HOH - HOH



Drama department

What is going on in the Drama department?

Unfortunately, the Drama department has been unable to carry out the annual Christmas production for all years. This loss has been greatly felt by the entire community at Bexley Grammar School as the productions rehearsals are usually in full vigour in the autumn and winter months, ready to perform in early December and welcome in the Christmas period.

However, each year group has still been able to carry out the most enriching drama lessons within their own bubble.

What is each year group in the lower school getting up to?

Year 7 Learning how to act with Shakespearean dialogue through studying 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'

Year 8 Working with Anne Frank with the objective of getting a sympathetic response from the audience.

Year 9 Creating Theatre in education plays, where they address issues affecting teenagers and try to teach them ways to not fall into these traps



- By Tallulah Price-Toplis





Congratulations!



THE HEADMASTERS
Christmas Card
Competition

Winner



By Sienna Alwan 7CPB



Welcome to the

Sophie Tea - glitter, 'body positivity' and making art accessible to all: How a young art entrepreneur blows the art world away.....



Sophie Tea is an artist who prides herself on making the art world more accessible to the younger generation, having broken free from the traditional gallery route and made her own name independently through her social media platform. As an artist, she focuses on celebrating the beauty of bodies of all shapes and sizes and promotes love and positivity through her online brand, bringing fans from all over the world and contributing to a new era of accessible art.

Sophie was one of the pioneers of the 'glitter body' craze, leading to thousands of people attending festivals decorating their bodies with gems and sequins after a picture of her doing so at Coachella 2017 went viral. This outfit was a very powerful statement as, although some found it untasteful, others found it extremely empowering and a perfect way for women to own their bodies.



This sudden fame gave her a lot of recognition and gave her work a lot of traction, allowing her to reach thousands of people with her art. After graduating with a first-class degree in Business, she then decided to pursue a career in art, although she didn't sell much at first. However, after her increase in attention as her social media platform grew, Sophie stated in an interview that: 'Four years on, I don't feel the need to work with a gallery as demand is already high... There are some progressive galleries - and I have worked with some - but on the whole, they can be quite an elitist world.' This has motivated her further to make her art even more accessible to those not usually interested in traditional art and break out from the restraints of the traditional route of art: 'My work is easily accessible and encourages people who may not have bought original art in the past to consider it. I pride myself on taking people's art virginities.' Now, she has more instagram followers than most galleries have visitors, and can reach so many people with her art.



Another interesting thing about her work is her business model, allowing customers to pay a deposit, then pay the remainder over 12 months, with no interest. This means her work is so much more accessible for her customers, giving them a chance to enjoy her art immediately and pay in shorter amounts over a period of time. This new approach to the art world encourages more young people to be interested in her work and is incredible for bringing into the art scene people who wouldn't usually spend time or money on it. Is this the start of a new era where high art is accessible to all?

One of her most recent collections, 'Send Nudes,' has been incredibly inspirational, discussing body positivity, empowerment and diversity, uplifting many women from across the world. She says, 'I never had the best relationship with my body growing up, so I always wanted to do a project on the female form.' She asked her followers if they wanted to be her inspiration and a part of her campaign, and if so, to send nudes.



Overnight, she and her team received over 1,000 images of women, including those 'all shapes and sizes and different races. People with scars, mastectomies, anything and everything. Every picture came with it's own unique story.' This project was a huge success, giving her a unique 'Send Nudes' show at the Carnaby Street gallery, where many women had a chance to partake in her nude catwalk celebrating the beauty of the female body.

Her work is incredibly significant in a society like ours which is riddled with insecurity and impossible beauty standards, as well as contributing to a world where art is freely available to all.

- By Heather Shaw, Art Prefect, Year 12.



Design and Technology Department

Designing our future in Medical Science



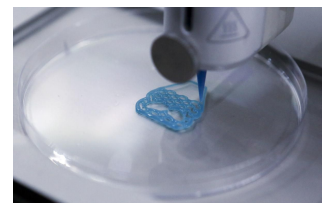
Bioprinting is the biological cousin of 3d printing. It uses a digital file to print an object layer by layer. However, unlike 3d printing, bioprinting prints out cells and biomaterials to create organ-like structures. To create a digital file normally a CT scan or a MRI is done to create a biopsy of the cell. After the biopsy, reconstruction is used to split the organ into thin layers. These 2d layers are sent to the bio-printer, where a liquid mixture of cells, matrix and nutrients called bioinks are placed into a cartridge and is deposited due to how the the file is, layer by layer. The pre-tissue is then placed into a incubator where it will mature into a tissue. During the post-bioprinting stage, the 3d printed structure is looked after to make sure the integrity and function of the object is not at risk. To maintain the object, physical and chemical processes are used, the processes send signals to cells to help control the growth and remodelling of the tissue.

Bioprinting is the future of medicine as there are hundreds of thousands of people who are in need of an organ transplant, however there aren't enough organ donors, as organ donors only donate if they can still live a full life or they donate their organs after they die. However there are many ways for the donation to fail as the organs that are being donated may not be healthy enough or the body may come to reject the organ itself and therefore damaging the organ, rendering it useless. With the help of bioprinting, there could be enough organs for every person on the transplant list. Another area where bioprinting can help is when a patient is in need of a skin graft, an area of skin which has been infected from a burn for an example, needs to be replaced by uninfected skin. This can be done from a skin donor but the skin needs to fit the right categories for it to be accepted by the new host. Normally skin is taken from one area of the patient and placed on the infected area. However there are still many problems with this as the skin could be rejected and the process isn't a simple copy and paste. Bioprinting can help as skin is an easier option for bioprinting as it will need less layers of a file.



Left: An ear 3d printed

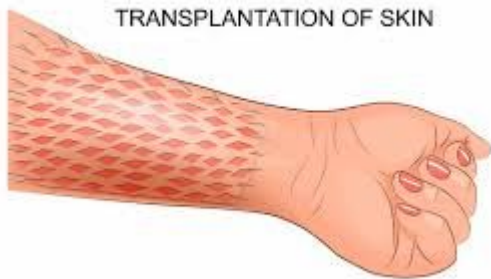
Right: A Bioprinter printing tissue



There are still limitations with bioprinting as the printers used for bioprinting need improvements as the resolution and the speed need to be increased. Also they should be compatible with a wide range of biocompatible materials. A higher resolution will allow better interaction and control in the 3d microenvironment. An increase in speed will help reach a commercially acceptable level therefore allowing a scaled up process. There needs to be more biomaterials themselves for the printer to use as we are limited by what we have now, a use of synthetic materials will help due to them being able to provide good mechanical strength and can promote cell attachment, proliferation and differentiation. Another limitation is the need of a vascular system, a vascular system helps feed the oxygen and nutrients. We can't use diffusion for every tissue as it only works up to 150-micrometer thickness. Without it the tissue won't develop properly.

On the other hand, bioprinting is already having an impact and can have a bigger impact in the future, we can print out organs and tissue to help with the testing of new drugs more accurately and eliminate the need for testing on animals. What is stopping scientist from adapting organs to help with lives in the future? Possibly in the future, we print tissues with imbedded technology or produce organs which exceed current capability or give us new features like unburnable skin. We could also increase the human life by printing and replacing organs and tissues.

Skin graft onto an arm



A bioprinter, printing a heart

By Jack Kenny, Year 12, DT Higher Student.



Design and Technology Department

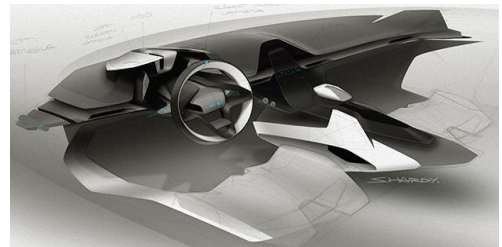
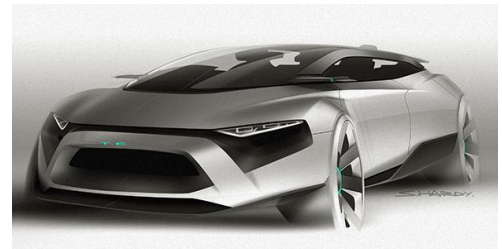
The Future Design of Cars

Currently we are in the middle of a revolutionary change in the automobile industry. 'There's a century of diesel-burning, hand-on-the-wheel vehicles in our rear-view mirrors, while the road ahead is driven forward by electric, driverless technologies. Somewhere between yesterday and tomorrow, however, is the vehicle that bridges this gap, and its spirit can be seen in the concept cars, TED Talks and patent filings of today.' If you manage to catch a glimpse of the 'future' you might see some trends that are poking their way through each design.

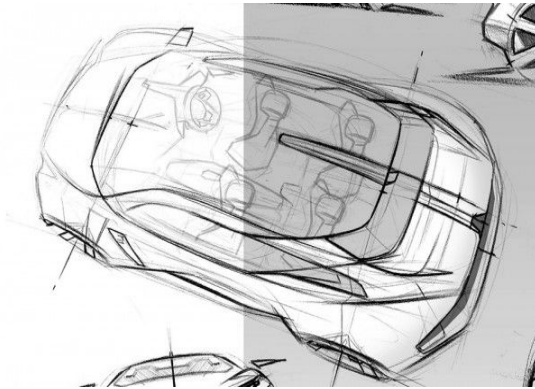


However, Concept cars aren't a new idea: they have been brewing in designers minds since the early 1900's, the first being the Buick Osceola in 1938. Its design in this modern age may seem basic but it was groundbreaking at the time. Housing hidden headlamps, integrated fenders, and powered windows all a first of its kind. It had such a positive impact on the industry that it influenced the designs of future Buicks to this date and Cadillac's at the time.

The visual real estate on the interior of the windshield is a prime location to display crucial information for the driver. With HUD (Heads Up Display) Technology a driver can see information about the car and the environment without having to take their eyes off the road as the instruments are all built into the windshield. This would not only increase safety when driving but it would also reduce eyes and neck strain allowing drivers to be even more comfortable in their cars. Alongside with driverless technology and voice-activated car operating systems drivers could control their cars with simple voice commands like 'hold speed at 55' and 'lights please' and these could be readily available by next year!



These cars are trying to address environmental issues that cars are known culprits of. That's why the future looks to be entirely electric and everything seems to have been planned for. Peugeot and Tesla are integrating negative-ion generators that have the ability to filter out bacteria and stop 90% of pollutants entering the car. Inevitably these additions would lead to cars eventually becoming self-sustainable and non damaging to the environment which is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream for any car designer.



Visualisation and drawing skills portrayed in the pictures here are heavily sought after by major car companies including ; Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Hyundai and BMW to name a few. They seek people who can provide a unique edge to their designs that break boundaries between reality and the unimaginable. These concepts for a car called 'Link' were designed by a car design student with an eye for futurism and minimalism. If this is the way our cars are heading, I'm all for it.

By Ethan Perera, Year 12, DT Higher.



HAPPY OLLIE DAYS!

coming soon!

make create paint skate

In 2021 DT are launching The BGS skateboard club. Making the decks from scratch, steam bending to shape and then painting..
Open to Year 8 and 9 initially.

Register your interest with Mia Millen and Lucy Avis-Clarke in Year 8



Leaving staff



Mrs Caddock

The lovely Mrs Caddock from the Finance office is leaving BGS after a staggering 17 years! Ms Contini has interviewed her:

What brought you to BGS?

I started working at BGS on 28th April 2003 in response to an advert in the News Shopper (paper copy) for a receptionist/finance assistant. At this time in my life I was a mother of 2 and had taken redundancy from my job at Lloyds Bank. I had been doing part time there after having my children. After a term of juggling a split job, I was given the opportunity to do all my hours in finance.

How would you describe BGS as a school community?

The house system in BGS goes a long way in encouraging a good school community. When students go out into the world they will be interacting with people of all different ages. Mixing with the different years at school gets them off to a good start on that. I think the peer mentor system along with productions and music concerts encourage a feeling of belonging and community spirit.

What did you enjoy the most about your work here?

I have always loved working with money and numbers, you've gotta love a spreadsheet! I enjoy the order that numbers bring and the perfection of our filing system is something to behold. Finance aside, I have enjoyed the variety of jobs I have been involved in over the years. Some that come to mind are making tickets for shows, bringing in new systems (parentpay, canteen biometrics, evolve trip module) sourcing weird and wonderful resources for lessons, preparing the school hall for our speech day meal and assisting with the catering for our 50 years celebrations. Transforming the school to a fully cashless system was a big one. So, what did I enjoy? Well everything really.

What are some of your favourite memories about your work at BGS?

Maybe I shouldn't mention this one, the Christmas time that a colleague and I heated some mincemeat pies in the microwave and set the fire alarm off! And then the time when we had a flood from above the Finance Office, twice! We had to evacuate and was lucky to be taken in by Mr Morgan. I don't know if he ever got over the shock of his office being taken over by us Finance ladies. But seriously, the Christmas concerts come pretty high on that list, along with our School Productions with students and staff from many departments pulling together to produce some outstanding performances. There have been so many school trips during my time here and it is also a great joy when staff come back in and recall how well they went. I've heard many amazing stories of the student's reactions to new cultures and experiences abroad. It always makes the hard work needed to get a trip to departure day worth every minute. The beginning of a new school year is also a joy, to see the new yr7's in their oversized uniform all keen and excited about the great adventure that is in front of them. My enjoyment of coming into work here has been greatly down to the good luck of working with Mrs Gibbs who retired in February. We got on well from day one and built up a catalogue of amazing memories which I am sure we will be reminiscing on in the near future when we are able to meet up. The addition of Mrs Short and Mrs Gallagher to our team just added to the enjoyment of work and proved that 4 females can work together happily supporting each other and without drama.

What would you like to say as your farewell words to BGS?

I really hope that both students and staff take with both hands the opportunities that BGS is able to give them, and remember we are all working for the same cause, to provide the best education money can't buy! And finally, there is a plaque in the Finance Office that may well sum up your view of my time here: "Every customer brings joy to this office, some when they enter and some when they leave" I know I leave you in good hands with Mrs Short and Mrs Gallagher taking over my duties and I'm sure Mr Walsh will keep a tight rein on all finance matters here. Just make sure you give them the right kind of joy when visiting. Thanks BGS it has been fantastic to be a part of you and my very good wishes for the future.

Wishing you all the best Mrs Caddock, you will be missed!



Miss Pearson

Just to make this year even worse we are saying goodbye to Ms Pearson, who has been teaching in the Classics Department for 14 years! Katy Henderson in year 13 has interviewed her for the BGS Buzz:

Q. If you could pass any wisdom onto the students at BGS or just give a final message, what would you want to share?

Make plans - get out and see the world, there is a lot out there. Stay in new places, experience the local customs and culture. Don't just stick to things that are "English". Be willing to learn and experience what is outside your immediate world. It will make you a better person who has a more well-rounded understanding of the wider world. Use the languages you are learning - make use of your education, you're getting a good one. Be brave.

Q. So you're moving back to New Zealand! It should be nice to be back there properly after so long. But what are the things you'll miss most and least about the UK?

There will be so many things to miss! Jumping on a plane and being in a different country 1-2 hours later! Going to shows, museums and visiting historical places. The variety of the geography, the culture and the countryside around the UK. I'll miss the Classics Dept trips to some of the most wonderful Classics sites in Europe - Rome, Sicily, Greece, the Bay of Naples. I'll miss the friends I have made in the Ultimate Frisbee community and the opportunities the sport has given me to travel within the UK and throughout Europe, USA and Canada. The variety of sporting fixtures to watch and go to. The 2012 Olympics were definitely a highlight for me. The thing I will miss the most is my friends. Since arriving here in 2005, they have become my overseas family and have looked after me.

What won't I miss? Brexit and covid-19.

Q. And on the same theme, what will you miss the most and least about BGS?

I will miss all the friends I have made on the teaching staff - those that are still here and those who have gone. The people who work here are kind and really care about the staff and the students, their well-being and their achievements. I have been very appreciative of the support of SMT throughout the last five years as HoD of Classics and prior to that as a teacher, especially their support of Classics that is a rigorous academic subject that teaches you all kinds of skills that could be relevant in any job! I will miss teaching Ancient History, especially learning and teaching about the Persians and some of the most wonderful literature that has been written (Homer-The Iliad). I will also miss the opportunities given to me by other Departments to go on their trips - thank you to History, Geography and MFL. The Classics Department - Miss Fisher and Mr Risdon. Also, thanks to Mr Morris, Mrs Stoddard and Mrs Savage who taught Year 7 Latin at various points in the past. Thank you to the SEN Department for your support and friendship. Also a massive thank you to the Year 9 tutor team - led by Mr Mackle, Miss Scott and Miss Anderson. You have been a wonderful team to work with. Best year group in the school!

What won't I miss? Remote learning and chasing after students who don't do their work.



Q. What has been your favourite memory here at BGS?

You're asking for the impossible! There have been far too many good memories to mention. Here are just a few: Miss Fisher dreaming that I had embezzled all the money before we went on a Classics trip; The Year 13s on a Classics trip in 2016 to Rome and the skit they did that had us in tears it was so funny!; Seeing my form class (9RPP) again in September after they had been off school since March; Teaching students about Ancient History and Classical Civilisation; Doing social activities with colleagues as well as lunch time chats; Snow days...

Q. Could you send a quick message to the teachers from the Classics Department? I'm sure they will miss you most of all.

Not only have the Classics Department been wonderful colleagues but they have also become wonderful friends. They go above and beyond their duty to provide and deliver excellent lessons to the students as well as extra-curricular activities. I have loved working with them in our tiny little office. One day I might understand more than 2 questions on the Times Latin crossword on a Saturday. I will miss you all very much but I know that the Department is being left in good hands and that you will achieve amazing things in the future.

Q. Do you have any future plans for when you go back to New Zealand?

My immediate plans upon arrival involve two weeks of managed quarantine in a hotel, before going home to my family. After that I plan to take a year out before finding a new teaching job in Wellington.

Q. I know that your current year 13 Ancient History Class is your all time favourite class, so I won't ask a question about that. Instead I'll ask given the choice would you rather have given up teaching lower school or given up going on the Classics trips?

Too easy - I'd give up teaching KS3. As much as I enjoy teaching Latin at KS3, I would go on a Classics trip any day of the week! There are so many Classical sites that we didn't get to, such as Turkey, the south of France, Spain and Roman Britain. Seeing, exploring and learning about these amazing places that you teach about can be incredibly moving and surreal, especially when you come from a country that was "founded" in 1840!

Thank you to all the students and staff who really make BGS a wonderful school. Good luck in the future and make the most of it.

*We will miss you
loads Miss Pearson!*



*Enjoy life in a competently
run and COVID free
paradise island...not
jealous at all!*

Mrs Earl



After nearly 10 years at BGS, Mrs Earl will sadly be leaving us. Lauren Dempsey, in year 12, has asked her a few questions about her experience and future plans:

Why did you become a teacher?

After leaving university I wanted to get into Science Communication and maybe work in exhibition design or an education department at a Science museum or wildlife park. I was advised to do teacher training as it can be a route into that kind of work. When I got started I enjoyed it a lot more than expected! There aren't many jobs that allow you to chat about things you're really interested in every day.

What is your favourite topic out of the subjects you teach?

This probably changes every year. I always enjoy teaching genetics though. It's like doing puzzles.

What is your favourite memory from your time at BGS?

I've been on lots of fun trips with BGS. The sleepover in the Science Museum, back when the current year 13s were in year 8, will certainly stick with me.

What has been the best thing about working at Bgs?

It's fantastic teaching students who ask brilliant questions and work really hard.

What advice do you have for BGS students next year?

Stay inquisitive!

What is the next thing you want to do? What is your next challenge?

I'm moving out of London so I'm looking forward to exploring a new bit of the country with my family.

What are your favourite Christmas traditions?

You can't beat a cosy afternoon watching Home Alone.

*Thank you
very much
Mrs Earl, and
good luck!*

*We are also saying
goodbye to Miss
Dowillet...thank you so
much and best of luck
in anything the future
brings!*



*From the BGS Buzz team,
Merry Christmas and....*



*....here's to a healthy and
happy 2021!*