



*English  
& the Library*  
**NEWSLETTER**

Open Day 2021

Achievements, stories &  
events of the past year from  
the English Department  
& the Library

**NEWS  
LETTER**



12th October 2021

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INTELLECT, EMPATHY &  
COURAGE

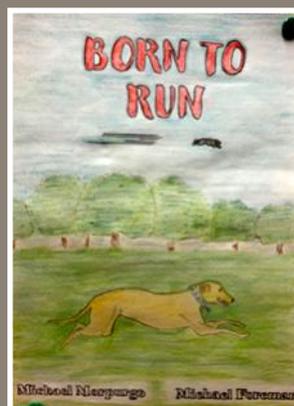
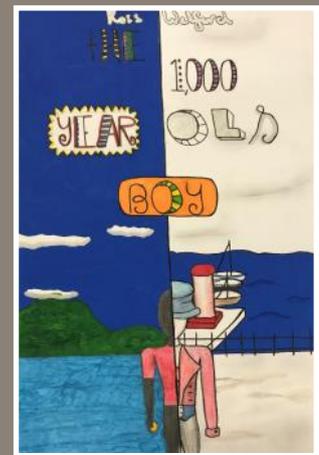


# Year 7 Book Cover Project

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

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

*Mrs Carey, School Librarian*



# NEWS LETTER



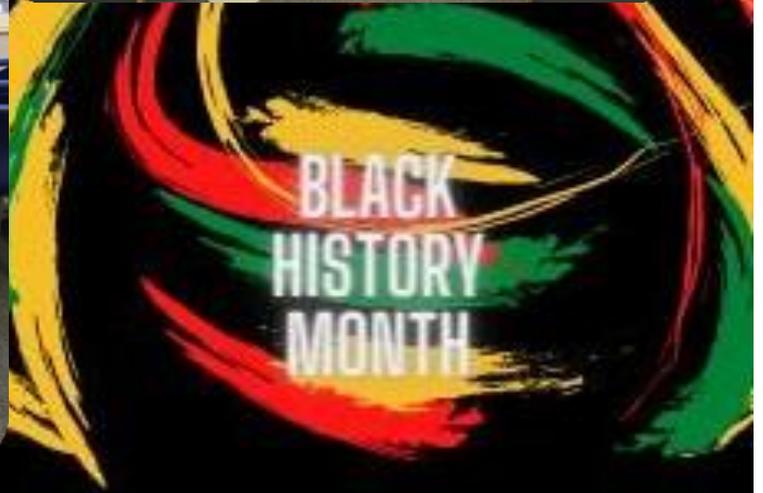
15th October 2020

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## Black History Month in the Library

A big thank you to Samantha Hayes-Holgate (Year 13) for donating her Jack Petchey prize money to the library and helping to increase our book collection celebrating Black History and authors. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions not all students will be able to visit the library to see the collection, but if you visit the Virtual Library on Google Classroom I am posting information about our new books during the Black History Month. If you would like to borrow any books, please email [carey\\_r@bexleygs.co.uk](mailto:carey_r@bexleygs.co.uk).

*Mrs Carey, School Librarian*





# STAR STUDENTS OF THE WEEK



## English Star Student

### A Smiling World

Imagine the World as a better place,  
With a big smile plastered on every face.

There will be no rubbish on pathways and streets,  
The seas free of toxic chemicals and plastic debris.

Food will be grown with love, no poisoned meat.  
With gas free commuting, fresh air we will breathe.

Imagine the World as a better place,  
With a mammoth smile resting on every face.

No one will starve, for even a day.  
All animals cared for, there will be no lonely stray.

Each child will be raised with love and with care.  
Having sweet dreams at night, playing happily by day.

Imagine the World as a better place,  
With a gigantic smile adorning every face.

The bullies will convert to say thank you and please.  
The wars would all stop, leaving brothers in peace.

No lying, no thieving, no drugs, and no crime.  
When needed, all aid will get there right on time.

Imagine the World as a better place,  
With a pleasant smile accessorising every face.

The new World will leave us all colour blind.  
As we shall leave all our differences behind.

We will have good leaders, not selfish or mean.  
Let us work together to fulfil this dream.

Imagine the World as a better place,  
With a glorious smile enriching every face.

***Karan Abrol , Year 7***





## Book Review

### Go Set a Watchman by Harper Lee

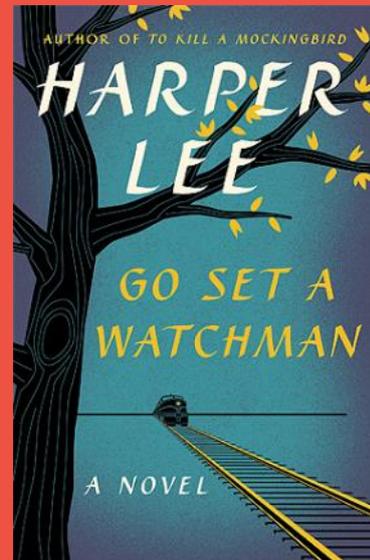
The book, *Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee is very rewarding if you take time to read it. It talks about topics that are difficult to talk about such as racism and sexism. The book is set in the 1950's and main Character Jean Louise Finch is a woman in her 20s who returns to her hometown Maycomb, Alabama only to see everything has changed and people she knows do not like it.

At the start we hear of what has happened without her and also of her past in Maycomb County. We learn that her older brother died of a heart condition a few years ago in his 20's. She and her brother used to play together with a friend who came by in the summer. Her brother's friend Henry Clinton (Hank) lost his parents and was raised by Jean's father to be a lawyer like himself and they work together. They have a father and son like connection and both are hard working. Hank wants to marry Jean, she is not sure. They go to her childhood home, swim and talk about their childhood and how they would pretend to go on adventures and be heroes. Jean also remembers a time when she was in trouble at school and her friends all claim responsibility for the act, thus saving her and showing the power of people coming together. Hank tells her how Black people can afford cars but do not have insurance or licence, when they drive past a car with speeding Black people. One day her childhood cook Calpurnia's grandson kills a pedestrian as he was speeding while drunk. Although Calpurnia was like a mother to her, she meets Jean coldly but politely, this makes Jean sad. Atticus agrees to defend him, but only because he does not want NCCAP to come to Maycomb as they promote equal rights.

One day Jean sees a racist leaflet called *The Black Plague* in her father's study.

She follows her father and Hank to a meeting of Maycomb County Citizen Council, a group who are pro White supremacy. She remembers her father defending a Black man who was wrongly accused of rape in the very same building when she was a child, she is shocked at how her father had changed so much. She tells Hank she won't marry him and argues and swears at her father. She plans to leave Maycomb, never to return, but her Uncle Jack comes down, slaps her to stop her and tells her not to idealise her father, as he is human. He encourages her to think for herself and to go set a *Watchman* that is to use her own conscience. She realises that Atticus is in the Council, so he knows what they are planning, goes to apologise and pick him up. He says he is proud of her for thinking for herself. At the end of the story she decides to stay back in Maycomb, Alabama so she can help bring about change.

It was a great all round experience to learn about racism, politics and sexism in 1950s America. However, it also made me think that we still have racism in our society and people we look up to can also sometimes make mistakes. The book has encouraged me to think for myself.





have racism in our society and people we look up to can also sometimes make mistakes. The book has encouraged me to think for myself.

My mother and I read together as we had two copies, this was helpful as we could discuss themes and it helped me make sense of the complex story. I would recommend this to my peers, but do feel it is more useful to read with the class or discuss it with someone else to understand it truly.

I am now going back to *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, which I had started in the summer but never got around to finishing it.

Karan Abrol, Year 7

### Book Review

### *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick

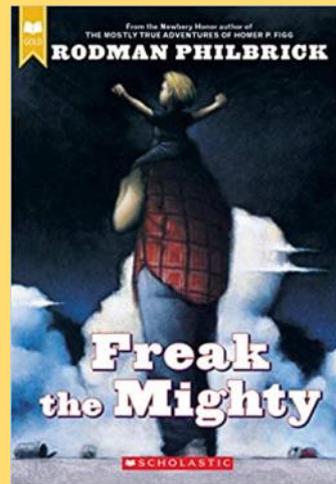
*Freak the Mighty* is a touching book about an extraordinary friendship that can bring a smile to many faces. We learn about two young boys, Maxwell Kane and Kevin Dillon who both are in the same grade. They meet each other when Kevin moves in next to Max. Their Mothers had been friends during pregnancy and they both went to pre-school together.

They both have disabilities that they conquer together while supporting each other. They have fun playing imaginary games and learn of each other's lives. Both go through tough times and even end up in a dangerous kidnapping incident where Kevin saves Max using a water gun and a mixture of liquid and food items.

Unfortunately, Kevin dies without knowing what was really going to happen to him, he thought he was going to hospital to get a new body. Maxwell is both angered and deeply saddened by this, but he then uses a blank book that Kevin gave him to write about their adventures, which is this book and moves on in life remembering his old friend.

I would recommend this to my peers as it can make them happy during these difficult times. It is a heart-warming story which can give them hope for whatever challenge they wish to accomplish.

Karan Abrol, Year 7





## English Star Students

Well done to Ariana Laing and Dylan Banks in 7PDH for their amazing work ethic so far. Here's a snippet of their impressive entries for the 500 Word Short Story competition:

Ariana:

*Blinking furiously, his surroundings came whirring back into view. The blurred faces of worried nurses staring down at him dominated his vision and the bleeping of machines filled his ears. It wasn't hard to work out where he was, but how and why he was there, he did not know. He later became aware of the smell of strong medicine and knew that he was not the only one there. Reaching for his glasses, he realised that his arm would not move in the direction he wanted it to. Confused, he tried again. The same happened the second time and by the third, he had completely given up. Something had happened since this morning and one thing was clear to him... it wasn't good.*

Dylan:

*A booming voice echoed across the plane; it was the Captain.*

*"Don't worry everyone! Just a little bit of turbulence, we will get back to our smooth flight as soon as possible".*

*That is what everyone thought, but by the weariness in his voice, I knew something was up. I tried not to think about it. Then another 'bit of turbulence' shook the whole plane again. But that was not my concern. My concern was the ear-piercing alarm that rang throughout the plane: everyone was screaming.*

*I grabbed the nearest oxygen mask and thrust it onto my face. I immediately went into the brace position. I could tell we were getting nearer to the ground as the seconds went by. My life flashed before my eyes, sweat trickled down my forehead. I panicked, I screamed, I was terrified, I was shaking. All these emotions were triumphed by fear, what would happen next? I was surely going to die.*

**Year 7 English  
500 Word Story Competition**

**The Process...**

1. Write your 500 word short story.
2. Check and edit your work using tips from the workshop with Erin Everleigh.
3. Submit your final draft to your teacher to be assessed by the deadline your teacher gives you.
4. Your class teacher will choose a class winner by the second week after half term.
5. The English prefects will judge the best stories from this selection.

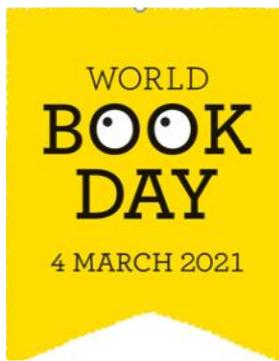
**Winners will receive**  
Two copies of their story published in a short story collection  
Editing tips from a published author

**All Year 7 pupils who enter the competition**  
will receive a copy of **BAILEX**  
Volume 1 by Erin Everleigh  
(More details to follow)

BGS English in association with Little Ox Press and Wordsmithers Academy







Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March is World Book Day! It is a shame we cannot celebrate in person, but we look forward to our virtual events. Please look at the upcoming events, run by the English Department and our school Librarian, Mrs Carey ([here](#)). Hopefully you'll be able to participate in a few of these .

### Author's Workshop

During the last week, students from the lower years were invited to join in a virtual meeting with author and illustrator, Liz Pichon (thanks to Mrs Carey for organising this). They learned how to doodle in the style of the illustrator, whilst also participating in a Q&A. Here is a sample of illustrations and reflections from the attendees:

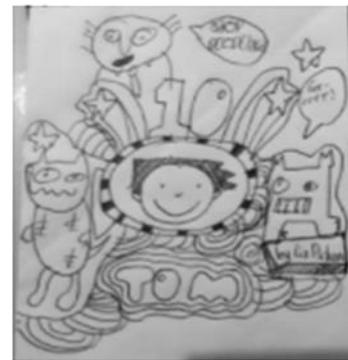
The event began at 2pm, with Pichon showing us a collection of doodles that she had drawn. She read an extract from her newest book, 'Ten Tremendous Tales', in celebration of ten years of Tom Gates! She read an extract of Tom recalling his conversation with Delia after she was told to babysit him. It was a very good story! All in all, it was a really cool event where we learnt tips for writing and drawing. I really enjoyed learning how to draw Tom Gates.



Anis Houmani



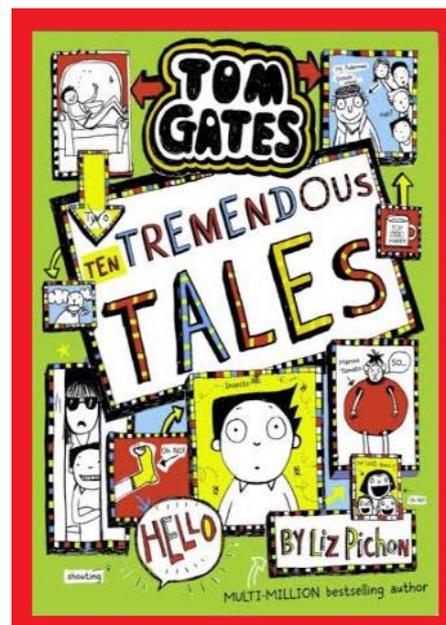
Elizabeth Smirnova



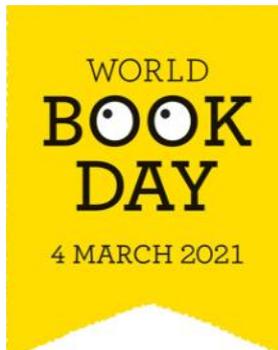
Isabelle Raphael

The live stream with Miss Pichon was very exciting as the Tom Gates book series was one that I loved when I was in Year 4. The call was very interesting as there were a variety of activities. These included: drawing, asking questions and hearing stories about Pichon's writing. *I enjoyed the doodle session, as it* was very interesting to see how she creates her illustrations. One thing I didn't anticipate was that she answered our questions, which gave a more personal touch to the event. Overall, it was a good experience and I hope we have more events like it in the future. Due to the pandemic, it has been impossible to go on trips, but this was just as fun!

Aggeliki Mirza, Year 7



Jessica Davis, Year 7



## World Book Day 2021

It's been a very busy week in the Library and English Department this past week! There were a series of events and competitions to celebrate World Book Day on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March. In addition, we celebrated International Women's Day on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Please take a look at the [attached slides](#) for a few of the highlights from World Book Day. Well done to everyone who took part in any (or all) of the events - a few of the competition runners up have been included in too. Please check out their entries. A special congratulations goes to our winners of the World Book Day competitions: Aaron Sharma 7LPV and Zoe Allen 8VJA. They each have won a £10 book voucher!

Below are their winning entries.

### ***Ms Adeaga, English Department***

**Ultimate Book Reading Challenge**

And the winner is...Aaron Sharma 7LPV



**Post-it note 10 word story competition**

...and the winner of the £10 book voucher goes to...

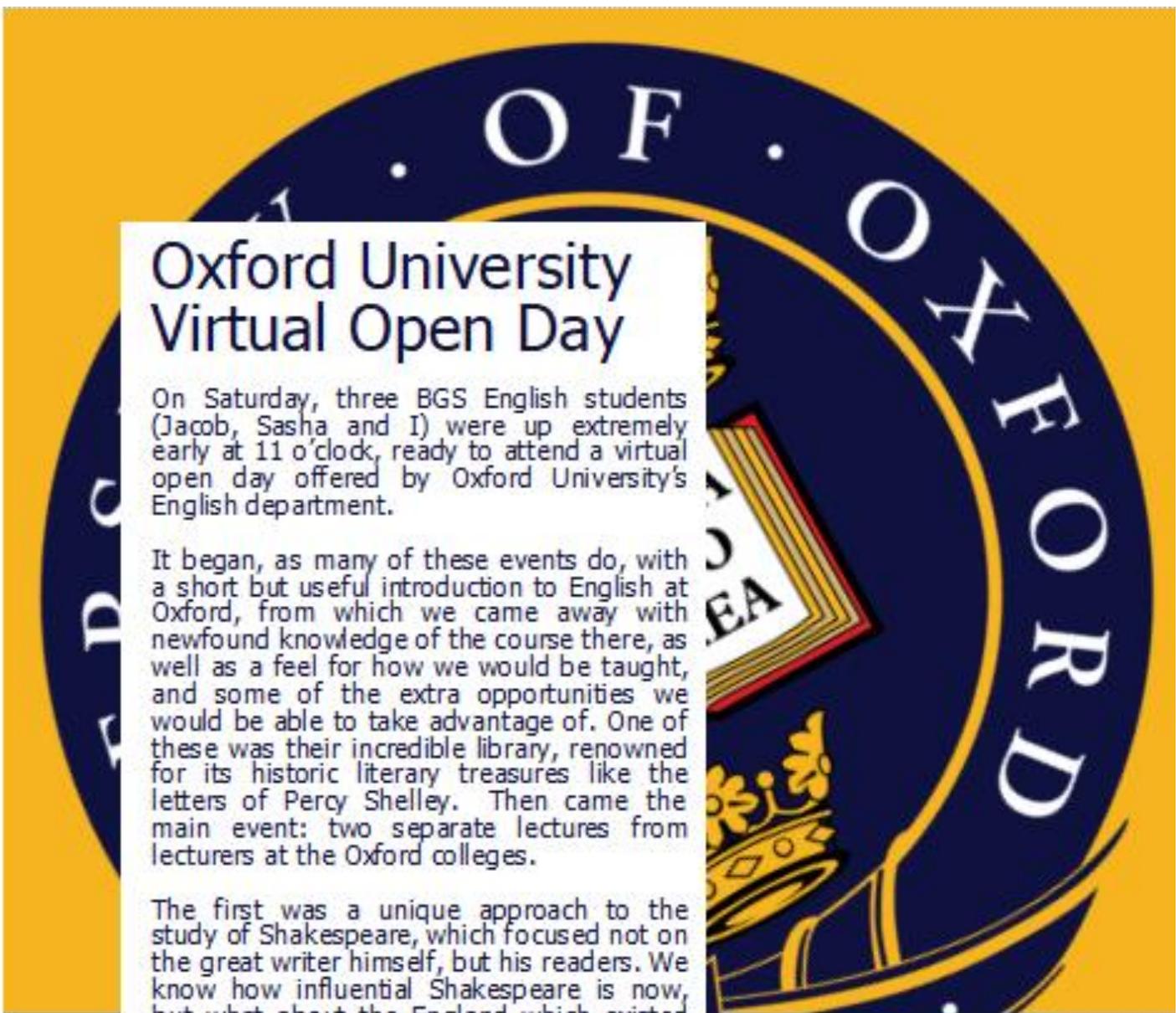


**Zoe Allen**

**8VJA !**

Breathing heavily, she crept around the corner.  
And then -  
ZAP!

For International Women's Day, please look out for a themed English lesson this week. Well done to Emily Falegan, our English Prefect.

The background of the page features a large, stylized crest of Oxford University. The crest is circular with a dark blue border containing the word 'OXFORD' in white, serif capital letters. Inside the circle, there is a shield with a golden crown on top and a book with a red cover and white pages. The shield is set against a golden background. The entire crest is centered on a yellow background.

## Oxford University Virtual Open Day

On Saturday, three BGS English students (Jacob, Sasha and I) were up extremely early at 11 o'clock, ready to attend a virtual open day offered by Oxford University's English department.

It began, as many of these events do, with a short but useful introduction to English at Oxford, from which we came away with newfound knowledge of the course there, as well as a feel for how we would be taught, and some of the extra opportunities we would be able to take advantage of. One of these was their incredible library, renowned for its historic literary treasures like the letters of Percy Shelley. Then came the main event: two separate lectures from lecturers at the Oxford colleges.

The first was a unique approach to the study of Shakespeare, which focused not on the great writer himself, but his readers. We know how influential Shakespeare is now, but what about the England which existed centuries ago as he wrote? How prevalent and revered was he then? Using satirical pictures, hand-annotated notebooks and a publishing company selling their product with dubious marketing techniques 400 years ago, Shakespeare's effect on the literary world was shown to be as important as it is today, with his works being widely studied and interpreted.

After this dip into Elizabethan England, we jumped forward to the Victorian era, and to two of its famous writers, Arthur Conan Doyle and Oscar Wilde, and again looked deeper into how they were received by their audiences. The Sherlock Holmes novel *The Sign of Four* and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* were both released at the same

# NEWS LETTER



11th March 2021

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time (in the same magazine even) to the same Victorian society, but while Doyle's was met with widespread acclaim, Wilde's caused outright anger. Why did novels which both explored realism provoke such different reactions? Although many disliked the homoeroticism of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the question went far deeper morally. While one novel used detail quite obviously to create the classic detective feeling of mystery, the other subverted this to create an almost disturbing feeling of moral detachment in the midst of shocking events.

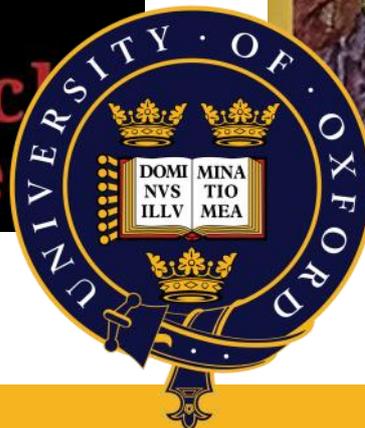
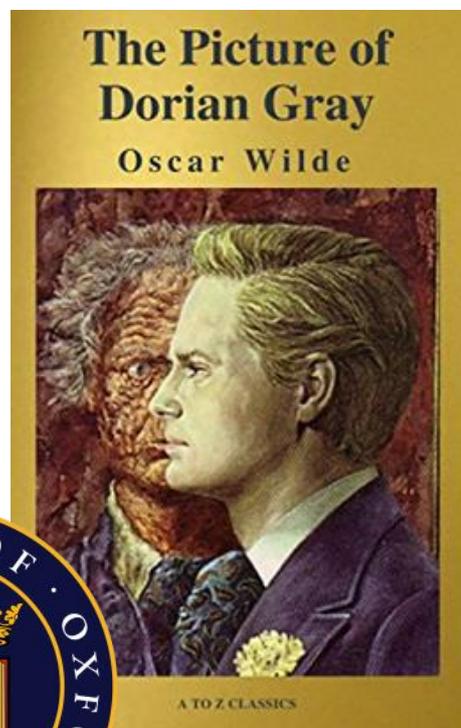
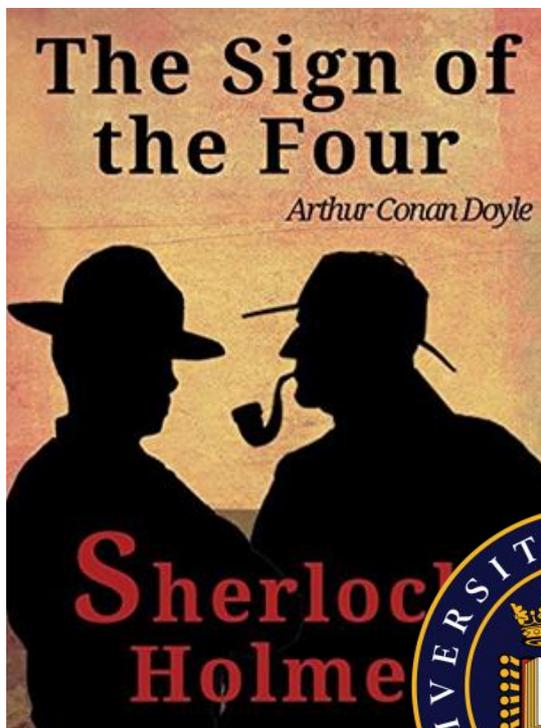
The lunch break was meant to be an hour, but the lecturers were caught up with so many questions that the discussions carried on right through, the pair struggling to keep up with a hundred attendees who had just sat through two thought-provoking talks.

After this was a quick introduction to the application process to Oxford University. This definitely reduced my worries at applying, with the aspects much clearer than before.

Finally there came a short Q&A with English students at Oxford, where we learnt some top-tips for interviews and got a flavour for the university, and we were nicely surprised to see an ex-BGS familiar face, Kate Leadbetter, answering some of the questions.

Overall, it was an incredibly insightful experience. Thanks to Ms Stoddard for the opportunity.

***Lucas Zurdo, Year 12***





## Online Book Group

This term I was able to run an online book group on Monday afternoons, in which we read books that were suggested by students. These included *Once* by Morris Gleitzman, *The Black Flamingo* by Dean Atta, *Time Travelling with a Hamster* by Ross Welford, *Liclle Bit* by Alex Wheatle, *The Boy in the Tower* by Polly Ho-Yen, *The Darkest Minds* by Alexandra Bracken and *Boy Under Water* by Adam Baron. It was great to read such a varied selection, and each book sparked lively debates over characters and plots, my favourite of which was about whether or not we would travel in time to save humanity, or just to eat tacos. It was the highlight of my week to be able to discuss these books with the students and I have now purchased copies for the library if others would like to read them.



*Mrs Carey, Librarian*





## English News

*We are living in an increasingly digital age. In the UK alone it has been estimated that secondary school children spend a total of over 6 hours a day on their screens. The Telegraph newspaper reiterated this point by suggesting that British children were spending nearly 2 days a week on their computers and phones. As a result, far less time is being spent on activities such as reading and writing for enjoyment. Yet it has been proven how beneficial creative writing is, especially with regards to mental health. It has been found to build confidence, self-expression, better communication skills and improve mental and emotional health. The much loved author C.S. Lewis emphasised the importance of writing when he said, "You can make anything by writing." With this in mind, the Year 7's were set the task of writing a 500 word story. The writing competition encouraged children to read more for enjoyment and write using their imagination. The results were very impressive and showed a wealth of talent! The winning entry from each form was judged by the English prefects and a prize given to the gold, silver and bronze recipients.*

*Each week, we will feature one of the stories from the budding authors. Please see below for this week's story and a list of all the winners.*

*Jacob Orchard, 12MCS*

### *Class Winner*

*Eva Wang 7KJP*

*Louis Luckman 7REL*

*Rebecca Kidby 7ACR*

*Leu Griffin 7CPB*

*Karan Abrol 7AJW*

*Naima Mendjeli 7PDF*

*Isabelle Gorman 7LPV*



## *Tag, you're it!*

*A bloodcurdling scream ran through the atmosphere as somewhere, somebody collapsed to the floor; the starry night loomed over their lifeless body. Who was to be the victim next? Nobody except "The Gamer" knew. Lights flickered off as humans across the globe huddled in trepidation - each one praying to be spared. It was nights like these that Elaina hated the most.*

*"Alright Sami, remember not to let ANYONE get close. It's very dangerous out there okay and I don't want you getting hurt," Elaina recited, her heart pounding. Her son's round, hazel eyes gleamed up at her, his bones shaking from excitement.*

*"Thank you mum for letting me go to school!" Sami exclaimed, bouncing with anticipation.*

*Elaina hurried him out, double checking their bags. As she drove closer to Sturton Oaks primary school, all she could do was hope that her dear boy would be safe.*

*The squeaky wheels of a trolley traversed the parking lot. There was nobody but Marisol-who was humming faintly. Her pastel strawberry-pink hair floated in the breeze, streaks of blue arising. Her glossy, emerald eyes gazed up at the sky. Fluorescent colours were spread across the landscape, infusing to make a magnificent sunset. There were golden birds that swooped by, evergreen trees that dotted the landscape and for a moment the world seemed blissful, but it couldn't stay that way.*

*Like blood seeping out of a wound, crimson bled out the sky as an icy breeze waved over. Marisol trudged towards her bike, the rubbery handle a metre from reach. Suddenly, a cough emerged from the shadows. Marisol spun round with fear and curiosity.*



*the world seemed blissful, but it couldn't stay that way.*

*Like blood seeping out of a wound, crimson bled out the sky as an icy breeze waved over. Marisol trudged towards her bike, the rubbery handle a metre from reach. Suddenly, a cough emerged from the shadows. Marisol spun round with fear and curiosity. Her brain was like a tug of war. Should she go? Steadily, she crept across the parking lot when a green glow flashed into Marisol's face as a figure appeared.*

*"You, you... you're it." She whispered, her breath trembling.*

*The face of a middle aged man slowly smiled, emanating a creepy aura. Yet, in his eyes there was a despairing glint and Marisol knew what he was going to do. She gasped and dashed round the empty cars, running for her life. Her heart pounded as the footsteps of "it" drew closer and closer. A cold, chilling hand grasped her shoulder; like a deflated balloon she plummeted to the floor and the last words she heard that day were, "Tag, you're it."*

*"Name: Marisol, apparently being chased by "it" but managed to escape. We think she fainted from exhaustion." A monotonous voice stated.*

*Marisol's eyelids fluttered as light re-entered her body. She was in a plain chair in a plain room; "How boring" she thought to herself. She noticed the gleaming police badge that spelled "Elaina", pinned on a woman's uniform. Marisol felt different; her body tingled with power. Was... she "it"? Her eyes widened with horror, her heart dropped. She had to cast this terrible role over to someone else or... she'd die.*

*"Can you tell us what happened yesterday? If you can, we might*



*“Elaina”, pinned on a woman’s uniform. Marisol felt different; her body tingled with power. Was... she “it”? Her eyes widened with horror, her heart dropped. She had to cast this terrible role over to someone else or... she’d die.*

*“Can you tell us what happened yesterday? If you can, we might be able to stop this cruel game” Elaina inquired softly. Marisol felt tears welling up as she mumbled guiltily, “I, I was chased around the parking lot by “it” and, and, he kept repeating the same phrase.” “What was it?” Elaina responded. Marisol’s shaking hand gripped Elaina’s soft shoulder and whispered, “Tag, you’re it”.*

*Eva Wang, Year 7*





## English News

**500 Word Short Story 'Bronze', 'Silver' and 'Gold' Winners:**  
The English Prefects have now decided on the top three 500 Word short stories from the year group. Please click on the [attached video](#) of the announcement of the 'Bronze', 'Silver' and 'Gold' Winners.

A massive congratulations goes to everyone who participated in the competition, but in particular, to the top three pupils!

Very well done.

### *The English Department*

**Year 7 Short Story Winners' Reading Circle**  
The Year 7 Short Story winners came after school, on Friday 19<sup>th</sup>, to read their winning stories to each other. I was particularly impressed by how positive and encouraging they were to each other. We had such a lovely time!

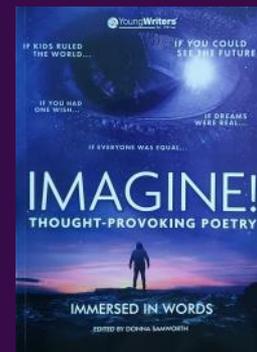


### **Brand New Year 7 Creative Writing Club**

The short story winners have inspired the creation of a brand new Creative Writing club for Year 7 pupils. Although places have now been filled, please email Ms Adeaga ([adeaga\\_s@bexleygs.co.uk](mailto:adeaga_s@bexleygs.co.uk)), if you are in Year 7 and you'd like to join the waiting list.

### **We have a Budding Celebrity in our Midst...**

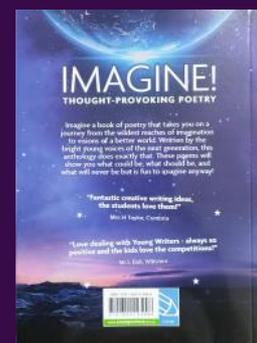
Congratulations to Karan Abrol for winning two writing competitions! He has recently been published in a poetry collection (along with the 500 Word Short Story that is yet to be published). For the poetry collection, Karan's poem was the winning entry out of 8000 others! What an amazing achievement. 😊



Please see below - pictures of the anthology, Karan's poem and an [exclusive interview he took part in with English Prefect, Emily Falegan](#).

Keep up the great work Karan! (I'm sure he will digitally sign autographs if you ask nicely).

### **Ms Adeaga**





## Year 7 500 Short Story of the Week

### An Eye Is As Beautiful Without Eyelashes!

The ground wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry as thick clusters of fine lines of keratin tickled the glazed wood. The red cheeks of the surrounding people were lined with salty tears as the air was pushed aside by the petrified cry of the girl named Eclipse Wilson.

Her birthday was 1/8/2008 (The day of the total eclipse in some countries) and since then she was a normal girl: average grades, being mildly bullied, and trying to fit in. You could say she was normal; up until the diagnosis. 3 words seem to be evident: fear, no, help.

First the biopsy, they think no, they are in denial. Then the confirmation, the fear, the future. Next the anticipation, the journey: "Help", the word echoed in her head as well as the car, with the thought of the square building and the Red Cross.

The girl and her parent walked, dragging their feet - past the psychology clinic, the stand of bells, until they were there: chemotherapy!

It was traumatic! Needles (her fear) were everywhere. Everywhere! Pain ever present at the thought of the situation. A civil war raged in her head, as bad as real life, reality or fantasy? Realisation or the feeling of safety?

Time blurred: she was confused. It was night and the fatigue was setting in. The day had gone twice as slow, yet she had half as many memories. She wasn't sure if that was good or bad. She wasn't sure if she wanted to remember this.

She cried that night. They all cried that night. Aunts crying to uncles while they held back their tears to be 'men'. Cousins cried to each other along with grandparents and friends. Despite that, no one cried as much as the young girl herself. She knew she had cancer and denial was nowhere to be found. Almost like it had disappeared! Behind the closed curtains of the mind much more was now going on. Anxiety, depression. But worse still, insecurity. Her keratin, her hair. Her eyelashes were the single thing she wanted most. She found a passion for makeup but that never quite filled the void.

Talking did though! She had a brother who helped her believe that an eye is as beautiful without eyelashes.

Life was all the same for the next months of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, yet with gradual improvements.

After around a year the miracle had arrived today was the celebration of that. The air is now pushed aside by the fast pace skipping of eclipse herself not to mention the Ding Ding of the bells around her. The Bell was Rang in the ward earlier, but this was different! This was everyone! Everyone who had felt the pain was now feeling the relief. The sweet relief. The Bell now had a symbolic significance in her life driving everything she did: outstanding grades, no bullied and no fitting in. It was almost normal, but the sensation of strength was always present. Amazing strength!

**Louis Luckman**



## Year 8 Poetry

Please see below, work from **Mia Millin**. Pupils were asked to write a creative response to 'Clown Punk' by Simon Armitage. Great work Mia!

### *Mrs Underwood*

The bucket of water sits heavy on my shoulders,  
as I walk along the road where I grew up  
I see all of the normies  
with their perfect marriages and little laughing children,  
driving by trying desperately not to stare,  
and I wash their windows.

They think I don't notice,  
when they talk about the way I dress,  
or see the disappointment in their eyes,  
when they read the words so violently engraved into my skin,  
I can almost hear their eyes rolling  
"Think what he will look like in 30 years time"  
but I still wash their windows.

As they sit in their cars averting their eyes  
The portals to their souls  
I wonder if they will ever know  
The depths of the art on my skin  
I wonder if they will ever know  
The depths of the scars within  
but I still wash their windows.

They would call me a Zebra,  
covered in stripes from head to toe,  
instead they look at this artwork  
judging the beauty of my camouflage  
from past memories of childhood  
intricately painted in patterns so cleverly designed  
to disguise the pain  
but I still wash their windows.

Every word they say tears me apart,  
Lions snacking on my flesh piece by piece  
protecting their pride from a walking Van Gogh  
as their window wipers graze my knuckles  
if they looked behind the grimy glass  
they would see  
something that would scar their kids much more.  
but I still wash their windows.

So that my son doesn't have to.

**Mia Millin**



## English News

### 500 Word Short Story of the Week

#### Corruption

"Come on, Anastasia." My brother, Peter, grasps my hand tightly and drags me along an icy road, our feet skidding clumsily. Hordes of people surround us, screaming in unison, their voices resounding against the biting cold that always seems to settle here in Moscow. I try to pull away, but that makes Peter hold me even tighter.

"This is for the good of our country," he says, his eyes set dead ahead - I have never seen him look so determined.

"What if our parents see us?" I whisper, as though afraid they might hear me. I can't bear to think what would happen if they knew - Peter and I would probably be disowned from the family and called traitors for the rest of our lives.

It is obvious that Peter hears me, but instead he drowns out my question by shouting along with his comrades.

In the distance, there comes the sound of shouting people, but I know it is not more protests. The police are coming.

At this point, my fear overwhelms me. I try desperately to yank my hand from Peter's firm grip, but he shoots me a look so unlike his usual bubbly personality that my arm goes limp and I allow myself to be carried along by the other protestors.

I hear yells and screams of pain, as the police force brutally crash through the lines of justice fighters. Only a few metres away, people are being beaten over and over again by the ugly batons the police always carry: their pain is etched across their faces, but they stand their ground. To my left, dozens of people are carrying... golden toilet brushes? Maybe I was right in thinking that this is downright crazy.

Something is wrong. I can't feel Peter's hand in mine. I scan through the crowds, a wave of panic enveloping me. I need him - I can't be alone!

"Help!" A shout reaches my ears, and my head snaps instinctively towards the sound. I would know that voice anywhere. I begin to run, shoving aside anything in my path. The only thing I care about right now is Peter.

Several feet away, I can see Peter being dragged along by three police officers. At this, I pick up my pace, ignoring the aggravating stitch in my side, and fighting through the wall of pain I feel with every step. I don't seem to be





getting any closer to Peter, and I taste the saltiness of tears that now seem to be streaming down my face. With one last desperate cry, I scream his name - there is no reply. I stand motionless in the snow, oblivious to the shouts and violent clashes around me.

There is only one thought in my head.  
I am living in a world of corruption.

**Isabelle Gorman, Year 7**

## Sign up for the Carnegie Reading Group Thursdays from 3.10pm to 4pm

Thanks to funding from our wonderful Parents' Association I will be able to run the Carnegie reading group this year. It will take place on Thursdays in the Library and is open to Year 7 and Year 8 students. We usually have a huge number of students signing up so I may have to pull names out of a hat if we get too many students wishing to join.

Here is some more information about the books that we will be reading this year: <https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/cilip-carnegie-medal-shortlist-2021/>. We read a book each week, discuss and review it, watch videos from the authors and then you will have some fun activities to do in your groups.

If you would like to take part please let me know by Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May. The first book group will be on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May.

**Mrs Carey, Librarian**  
[carey\\_r@bexleygs.co.uk](mailto:carey_r@bexleygs.co.uk)





## English News

### 500 Word Short Story of the Week

#### The Box of Sin

It was terrible, they said. With a glowing blue face that extinguished to lull its predators into a false sense of security and a head like a silver box, its body was littered with small black ridges emblazoned with strange glyphs. The man who had brought this creature to their land came in a glass box full of little buttons, and he along with the creature was being burned at the stake at sunrise for witchery. The Proctors tried to smash the strange glass box which they said was some sort of magical artifact and kept the creature, who by many murmurs was now christened the box of sin, along with the witch, in the deepest dungeons of the castle. *A witch... A witch could perhaps save my sister...*



It was my shift in the kitchens and I crept down the stairs to the dungeons, pausing only when I noticed the stink of human faeces hanging awkwardly in the air. It was too late to turn back. There, right at the base of the cells, was a dirty young man dressed in the strangest clothes. He was clad in some sort of rough blue trousers and a purple tunic with a hood, and the moment he saw me he jumped up as far as his chains would allow him. I shrank back, nearly sprinting back up the stairs, but stopped when he spoke in a strange. "The laptop! Please! Take it with you!" I stared. "What is a *lato*?" I whispered, terrified of discovery and confused to the point of laughter. He stared at me with large, chocolate brown pleading eyes. And then he told me. His name was Adrius. He had come from the 25<sup>th</sup> century to try and prevent the deadly disease that had slaughtered most of his kind. But instead of travelling ten years into the past, he had jumped back to 421. On his "lato" was a "fomla" that could cure the disease. To be utterly frank with you, I didn't understand a bit of what he was saying, but I kept mute about my sister and bided my time.

We ran. And the worst thing is, we almost made it. We jumped in the box, or as Adrius called it, the *time machine*, and Adrius started furiously hammering numerous buttons, the *lato* wedged tightly under his arm. Spider webs of blue light began to wrap like vines over the time machine and I gaped in awe as below us a tiny wheel began spinning. This was magic. More than magic. Then the engine started up with a crackle of light. And so did the gunfire. Crossbow bolts ripped towards us, one nearly smashing the glass. "Don't let it smash the glass!" he cried out. "If we have even one puncture our air will be sucked out and our lungs will explode" I stared up at him fearfully. He seemed to make a split second decision in his mind. Then he thrusts me the *lato*. "Take this", he muttered in a low whisper, "And give it to them. Tell them I'm sorry if I couldn't make it". He ran out of the door. At once bullets peppered him, ripping open his fragile body and spewing sheets of red. I yelled at him to stop, the glass doesn't matter, but my voice caught in my throat. There was a strange wrenching under my feet and then everything was gone.



I woke up. There are strange men and women all around me, wearing ridiculous white cloaks. They look confused.

And here's how I got here. I'm writing this diary as the only medieval child to live in the "present" (It is kind of the future for me). Someone wanted to put me in a zoo, but a child's agency stepped in. Anyway, this disease was fixed when they found the formula on the lato. I visit Adrius' grave every day. It's empty of course.

Like me.

***Naima Mendjeli, Year 7***

# STAR STUDENTS OF THE WEEK



## English Star Students

It's safe to say that the past week has been a very impressive one in terms of the work produced in the English Department! Please see below for some of this work.

English teacher, Mrs Moreton, would like to make a mention to the following Year 11 students for exceptional creative writing pieces in their recent assessments.

- ★ Tyler Applewhaite
- ★ Zoe Campbell
- ★ Daisy Cripps

There have also been some exceptional pieces of work in the lower years.

Year 7 - ★ Millie Laming did an exceptional PowerPoint on 'Hawk Roosting'

Year 9 - ★ Jamie Wardle did a really imaginative piece of creative writing inspired by 'Of Mice and Men'. Please see below:

I slowly approached the top of the hill, forcing one foot ahead of the other. Brushing past the overgrown greenery, a narrow disguised mud path followed. I winced from the sunrise of the new day. I caught my first glimpse of the ranch; the fields of barley were caught by the rays of sun, giving the illusion



they were made from gold. Birds swirled around my head, casting their shadows. Their songs of morning were interrupted by the rustling of leaves. A lone cloud overhead, drifted away in the wind. Leaves danced past me as I squinted my eyes for a better look.

A rickety fence darted across the outskirts of the farm, a thin wire rusted after years of service. With the slightest amount of pressure, the gate let loose a loud screech, stopping the birds' melody. My footsteps were the only sound as I ran my hand along the wood, coarse chunks held on to the rotting wood and gave off tingles of pain.

My eyes focused on the barn in the centre, a thatched roof, worn down from constant rain and wind. The coat of paint had faded away a long time ago, all that was left was a faint grey, reminiscing what it used to be. The door gave way with almost no force, and then we were enveloped in darkness.

# STAR STUDENTS OF THE WEEK

# 500 Word Short Story of the Week

## Erós Electraar

A woman left a cardboard box outside the orphanage, slid a note, hesitated, picked up the baby, warmly kissed his forehead and placed him back gently. She scanned the street, before walking away briskly. When Reverend Isaiah picked Kobi up that night, he thought it best not to tell anyone about the message.

The Reverend raised Kobi lovingly, with care and close attention. At five, he was stronger than everyone in the orphanage, including adults. He was called to lift the sofa, to retrieve what rolled under; to carry groceries or to open jammed doors. He got first prize for every sport. Now by fourteen, he has not only grown in physical strength but also had a strong sense of justice. He couldn't see the vulnerable being hurt or bullied. Reverend kept a worrying eye on him, teaching him to control his strength through music, stories and poetry.

Kobi was the smartest in school and finished all assignments in mere seconds, to sneak out and roam the streets. It wasn't unusual to see him beating a thug who snatched from a tourist or punching a goon who robbed a store. He instinctively gravitated towards crime scenes. One afternoon, he saw a shady character approaching Reverend, who was tending the garden and immediately sensed trouble. His shoulders tensed, fists clenched and he got into fight mode. On getting closer, his



# NEWS LETTER



13th May 2021

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jaw dropped. It was like looking in a mirror! The man was an exact image of him but older, with evil eyes.

Retreating into the bushes, he saw the man thrust a diary towards Reverend. "I found this in her room, return my son", he said threateningly, "He has unimaginable powers and once I transfer my *electraar*, he can extract and harness energy from his opponents. We will rule the World and destroy all weaklings!". "Never" replied Reverend and before he could move, the man grabbed his cloak menacingly, "how would..." he bellowed, but Kobi jumped out, pulled the man off the Reverend and on to the ground in one swift move. The man bounced back in a flash. Equally swift, agile, strong and ruthless, they remained entangled in an intense fight. "Rule these weaklings!", he commanded. Kobi glanced towards Reverend, a fatherly concern emanated from him. In this moment of distraction, the man cornered him and charged a current from his forehead into Kobi's, transferring the *electraar*. He fell unconscious, the man hauled him onto his shoulders but before he could escape, the police arrived. "Go with the police, I'll be there soon", said Reverend as Kobi regained consciousness.

"Your mother bailed you" said a young officer walking him towards Reverend and a petite, nervous looking woman. "This is your mother", said Reverend warmly "She was overpowered by the Villian, who had to transfer his powers to a son or lose them. Your mother left you, so you could grow up to be kind and compassionate and use the powers for good". Kobi's anger dissipated.

The villain got a long sentence, being wanted for an untold number of heinous crimes. Kobi returned to his mother. "I want to earn back your trust", she said, as her genuine smile radiated in the room, "You are now Erós Electraar, fulfil your destiny!"

***Karan Abrol, Year 7***

## STAR STUDENTS OF THE WEEK



English Star Student

Creative Writing based on 'Of Mice and Men'

Promenading through the Salinas Valley my face was drenched with sweat as if I had planted my face in a river. I waded through the different bushes until I found a spot to take a rest in. I was feeling lethargic so I foraged for some beans. However, I noticed that it had gone quiet. I looked around to make sure Lennie was not availing himself to anything stupid or harmful. Lennie was walking around peeking over grizzled wiry bushes in an attempt of finding a mouse. I called him and he jumped. He had an imploring look in his eyes. I interrogated him and asked if he was looking for a mouse, he denied vehemently (I was used to him lying to me). I cursed to myself and thought of the wonders I would have if I just desisted him. But I couldn't. As I got the



beans out of my bag I caught sight of some squirrels collecting nuts and hiding it in trees. They utilized a certain synergy, working expeditiously garnering with toggling tails, bronze nuts in their mouths they make out a chubby smile; almost as if parading persuasive pride in their work and the fruits of their labour. I laid my head down on my bindle bearing my head, heavy of thoughts. To my right I caught a glimpse of a trail of ants heading towards the tree to defend their nests against common enemies. Soon it was getting dark, I cajoled Lennie into finding some wood in order to warm up our beans. Whilst he had disappeared into the depths of the Valley, I gazed at the sky which was a blanket of black; the stars in the sky gleaming as scattered little grains of sugar across a black canvas. Lennie had come back safe and he had started a fire. We ate our beans and the fire was dancing to the rhythm of the whistling trees which were engulfed in emerald-green blankets. Shortly, the fire started flickering and so did my eyes. I slowly shut my eyes with a rejuvenating sensation of excitement for tomorrow...



I woke up with a serene smile whilst the birds were chirping together. The gracious sky was tranquil. There were lenticular clouds and the sun had successfully managed to fit itself into the pocket of the sky. The sun was like a ball of scintillating stars. As I looked around, the sun abundantly emitted golden rays of light softly kissing my skin giving me one thing and one thing only; hope. I avidly walked towards the bunkhouse whilst trying to avoid the impenetrable blades of grass and weed which looked like it had not been cut in years. I was utterly enthralled but stopped and stared at it profusely. In front of me stood an undernourished and puny building. My mind was clouded with an insurmountable amount of worry and a hurricane of emotions aroused me. The broad building contained negligible cracks on the windows which were too stained to see through, a charred roof which had rectangular tiles missing. Signs of hope voraciously disappeared from my face. But. I did not let that stop me. I needed this. Me and Lennie both needed this. I started walking incessantly towards the hand-hewn door. I paused. I thought to myself. The door stood there inviting me in. I knew that this was a new chance and a new challenge for me and Lennie. As soon as I walked through that door our path to our dream would start. The door was a portal to a new start. I took one last deep breath.

Cautiously, I turned the notch of the door and stepped in...

***Agshana Jegatheesan, Year 9***





## Carnegie Reading Group Virtual author event with Manjeet Mann

Every Thursday for the last few weeks, Year 7 and 8s have been meeting Mrs Carey in the Library for the Carnegie reading club. In this time we have read lots of books, but my personal favourite (as was many's) was Run Rebel by Manjeet Mann. I loved the inspiring story and the layout was so interesting. Run Rebel is laid out in a verse form, which originally I thought I would hate, but it has now become my favourite format. We had the great opportunity to attend an event with Manjeet Mann. We learnt lots about the Run Rebel writing process and heard her very inspiring story. I will definitely remember her advice and journey as a writer. And I can't wait to read her new book!



### ***Matilda Jackson, Year 8***

I really enjoyed the event with Manjeet Mann as I got to know more about the author than I previously knew before. Manjeet talked about her new book called The Crossing, which is based on the real life tragedies of the refugee crisis, and Run Rebel, which is about an 18 year old Indian girl fighting for her freedom, her sister's freedom and her mother's freedom. Manjeet told us that Run Rebel gives anyone and everyone the resilience and determination to do what's right. During the event, one of the questions asked was "If Run Rebel's protagonist was a boy, would it be different?" Manjeet replied saying it would've been very different because boys have more freedom than girls and are allowed to do almost anything they want. Because this book is about a girl, having a boy as the main character would be very different as in some cultures, boys are more valued and respected than girls, which is very unfair. The idea of The Crossing started in 2015, but for Manjeet Mann, it was in 2020 the book really started, pen to paper. She explained that she works with charities to help refugees and has seen what these unfortunate people have experienced. This is how the idea of The Crossing was triggered. Even though we all had to wear face masks and social distance ourselves, the event was very interesting and pleasant to be part of.

### ***Nimrat Matharu, Year 7***

The event was very interactive. We were able to ask questions and get our long awaited answers, from Manjeet, who was very friendly and interested by our queries. We got to hear, not only about the book and upcoming projects, but about her personal life and the experiences that made her the award winning author she is today.

### ***Aggeliki Mirza, Year 7***

