

BGS BUZZ '22



CHRISTMAS EDITION 2022

Message from the Editor

Welcome to the Christmas 2022 edition of the BGS Buzz! As always, it has been so amazing to see the wonderful things we have accomplished this term, and to admire the creativity and talent of our students.

Wishing you all a great Christmas break!

School Magazine Editor: Ms Contini

Reporters: Scarlett Barber, Sophie Spigno, Lydia Walker, Harry Watts, Jessica Hine, Kay Whalley, Ava Gordon-Collins, Talhellah Townsend, Aleksia Gjoka, Jesse Oshogwe

Many thanks also to: Mrs Chan, Mrs Goddard, Mrs Hassan-Smith, Mrs Snelling, Mr Otley - apologies if I have missed out anybody!!

Message from the Headteacher

We've finally had a relatively normal autumn term, including music concerts, the school play, numerous sports fixtures, a range of house events and, of course, our core function: the daily teaching and learning of which we are so proud. Our prospective year 7 open mornings went extremely smoothly and seemed well-received and our open evening for prospective year 12 students was equally smooth and positive. We look forward to reaping the rewards of these in due course. (I am very encouraged by some recent data from the local authority which tells us that over 40% of the 337 first choices for BGS's 192 places for Year 7 in September 2023 are female; our gender balance appears to be righting itself again after a few years of being too boy-heavy.)

Of course, in addition to all the usual events, we were delighted to welcome an inspection team from Ofsted back in October, unusually with 4 of the five inspectors being HMIs (many inspection teams have only 1 or 2 HMIs). Retention of our 'Outstanding' status is a tremendous validation of our relentless drive to continuously improve and has been proved even more impressive with the publication of recent statistical analysis by Ofsted which demonstrates that 80% of previously outstanding schools that were inspected during 2021-22 were downgraded. Ultimately, our students are our school and the inspection process is based heavily on exploring their daily experience of school. Our students were open and honest and spoke eloquently about their experience. Thank you to all of you - you did us proud!

We've had our challenges this term, such as a flood in the girls' changing room and, more recently, the total power failure which resulted in an unexpected school closure. Student absence has been high and staff have also been struggling with winter viruses and then the snow and freezing temperatures have added to the pressure in the run up to the Christmas break. However, once again, despite widespread fatigue and illness, students have been very sensible as we finish the term with good-natured celebrations.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Mr Gilmore on his success in gaining the headship of Bexley Grammar School from Easter. We are already working together on a handover to ensure a smooth transition. I am envious of Mr Gilmore as he takes the school on the next steps of its journey of excellence. I wish him and the school every success.

This magazine demonstrates the full return of the vibrant life of our school. Thank you to Miss Contini and her brilliant editorial team for this rich, creative publication. I wish staff, students and their families a wonderful festive season and look forward to a refreshed and healthy start to 2023.

Mr Elphick

House News

AUTUMN TERM

HARVEST BOX 2022

THE CALENDAR OF HOUSE COMPETITIONS RESUMED UPON OUR RETURN IN SEPTEMBER. FIRST WERE THE JUNIOR AND INTERMEDIATE HOUSE FOOTBALL AND NETBALL COMPETITIONS. JOHNSON WERE VICTORIOUS IN BOTH OF THE NETBALL COMPETITIONS WITH COLLINS AND WELLMAN WINNING THE JUNIOR AND INTERMEDIATE FOOTBALL. THEN JOHNSON WON THE SENIOR NETBALL MAKING IT A CLEAN SWEEP AND WELLMAN THE SENIOR FOOTBALL.

THE HOUSE HARVEST BOX COMPETITION WAS HELD AFTER SCHOOL AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER WHERE STUDENTS FROM YEAR 7 - 9 WERE GIVEN SOME BASIC RECYCLED MATERIALS, THEY BROUGHT MORE OF THEIR OWN IN HOUSE COLOURS AND THEN HAD AN HOUR TO DESIGN AND MAKE A BOX:



COLLINS WERE FIRST WITH PROTHERO SECOND, MABBS, WELLMAN, JOHNSON AND KIRKMAN.

HOUSE COOKERY 2022

NOVEMBER IS THE MONTH FOR HOUSE COOKERY, INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR. THE INTERMEDIATES HAD A 'TECHNICAL CHALLENGE' TO MAKE CHOCOLATE BROWNIES AND THE SENIORS THEIR 'SHOW STOPPER' - A CHRISTMAS THEMED CAKE, BISCUIT OR DESSERT. PROTHERO TOOK FIRST PLACE IN THE INTERMEDIATE COMPETITION AND JOHNSON FIRST IN THE SENIOR COMPETITION:



HOUSE MUSIC 2022

HOUSE MUSIC WAS THE BIG COMPETITION FOR THIS TERM, THE THEME THIS YEAR WAS 'MUSIC FROM THE MOVIES'. EACH HOUSE PREPARED AN INSTRUMENTAL PIECE AND A SECOND PIECE FOR THEIR CHOIR. THE SCORES WERE OUT OF A POSSIBLE 36 POINTS, RESULTS WERE AS FOLLOWS: 1ST JOHNSON 33PTS, 2ND COLLINS 30PTS, 3RD WELLMAN 27PTS, 4TH, KIRKMAN 24PTS, 5TH MABBS 20PTS, 6TH PROTHERO 17PTS. THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR SOME OF THESE ENTRIES AT OUR HOUSE SHOWCASE AT THE END OF SPRING TERM.

HOUSE POINTS TO DATE

AS WE FINISH FOR CHRISTMAS THE CURRENT STANDINGS ARE AS FOLLOWS



1ST WELLMAN

189 POINTS



2ND JOHNSON

182 POINTS



3RD COLLINS

176 POINTS



4TH PROTHERO

167 POINTS



4TH MABBS

146 POINTS



6TH KIRKMAN

143 POINTS

MRS SNELLING
HOUSE LEADER

OTHER HOUSE NOTICES

WE HAVE RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION FOR 2022/3 WITH THE CATEGORIES BEING: JUNIORS (YR7 & 8) TRAVEL OR SPORT. INTERMEDIATES (YR9 & 10) STREET PHOTOGRAPHY OR STILL LIFE. SENIORS (YR 11- 13) ARCHITECTURE OR MOTION. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERY STUDENT THAT WISHES TO JOIN IN TO ENTER A PHOTOGRAPH (OR AS MANY AS THEY WISH) FOR CONSIDERATION, EACH HEAD OF HOUSE WILL SELECT 6 PHOTOGRAPHS FROM EACH CATEGORY FOR THE FINAL JUDGING. FOR THE YOUNGER STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE PARTICIPATION MARKS FOR THEIR DIPLOMA (IN YR7/8) THIS IS AN EASY ONE TO GET THOSE MARKS.

UNFORTUNATELY YET AGAIN WE WERE UNABLE TO HOLD OUR ANNUAL SWIMMING GALA DUE TO CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND OUR CONTROL.

JACK PETCHEY NOTICES

THIS HALF TERM THE STUDENTS HAVE NOMINATED AND CHOSEN THREE JACK PETCHEY GOLD AWARD WINNERS. FOR SEPTEMBER IT WAS MIA NGUYEN, NOMINATED BY PROTHERO HOUSE, OCTOBER MAISIE SPENCER, NOMINATED BY WELLMAN HOUSE AND NOVEMBER, ANNA MURATI NOMINATED BY MABBS HOUSE. ALL THREE STUDENTS HAVE RECEIVED THEIR CERTIFICATE AND PIN BADGE AND HAVE EACH SPENT £300 TOWARDS NEW EQUIPMENT FOR THE PE DEPARTMENT, THE SCIENCE AND THE DRAMA DEPARTMENTS.

MRS J SNELLING
HOUSE LEADER & JACK PETCHEY COORDINATOR.

BREAKING NEWS!!!!

MR GRIFFIN IS THE WINNER OF THE
COVETED JACK PETCHEY LEADER AWARD!!!

CONGRATULATIONS

WE WERE ABLE TO MAKE OUR NOMINATION FOR THE 2022 LEADER AWARD AT THE START OF DECEMBER. STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO NOMINATE A MEMBER OF STAFF WHO DESERVED TO BE RECOGNISED FOR GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND IN THEIR DAILY SCHOOL LIFE. I AM PLEASED TO SAY WE HAVE JUST HEARD THAT OUR NOMINEE, MR D GRIFFIN HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR THIS YEAR'S AWARD. HERE IS WHAT WE SENT AS THE REASON FOR HIS NOMINATION:

FROM THE STUDENTS:

MR GRIFFIN IS ALWAYS EMPATHETIC AND HE ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO CONTRIBUTE IN CLASS, HE ALWAYS HAS A SMILING FACE. HE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT ENGLISH AND HE PASSES THIS ON TO THE STUDENTS, HE KEEPS BOOKS ALIVE. MR GRIFFIN MAKES ENGLISH (A COMPULSORY SUBJECT IN THE IB) ENJOYABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME FOR ME AND HE SUPPORTS LITERACY ACROSS THE SCHOOL. HE IS KIND AND CONSIDERATE AND EVERYONE ADMIRES AND LIKES HIM, BOTH STUDENTS AND STAFF. HE NEVER GETS FLUSTERED, EVEN IN THE FACE OF OFSTED!

FROM SENIOR MANAGEMENT:

THIS HONOUR, SURELY THE MOST IMPORTANT ACCOLADE A TEACHER CAN RECEIVE, IS WELL DESERVED: DAN HAS BEEN A KIND, TIRELESS AND SUPPORTIVE MEMBER OF STAFF FOR THE 20 YEARS HE HAS BEEN AT THE SCHOOL. AS HEAD OF ENGLISH, HE HAS A DIRECT ROLE IN THE CAREER OF EVERY SIXTH-FORMER AND SHOWS THE UTMOST CONCERN FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM; HAVING SINGLE-HANDEDLY SET UP THE IB FILM COURSE, HE HAS ENABLED GENERATIONS OF STUDENTS TO RESEARCH AND CREATE WITHIN THIS FIELD; AS A FORM TUTOR, HE IS A TREMENDOUSLY IMPORTANT DAILY FIGURE IN THE LIVES OF HIS TUTEES, FOR WHOM HE IS A ROCK. I HAVE READ THE DOZENS OF UCAS REFERENCES HE HAS WRITTEN OVER THE YEARS; EACH IS METICULOUSLY CRAFTED, AND SHOWS HOW WELL HE KNOWS EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT. A VITAL SKILL THAT DAN BRINGS TO HIS TUTEES IS THE CONSCIENTIOUSNESS WITH WHICH HE ADVISES THEM ABOUT THEIR CHOICES, THUS PREVENTING DISAPPOINTMENTS AND WRONG DECISIONS. MOST OF ALL, I THINK, IT IS HIS INNATE GOODNESS AS A PERSON THAT THE STUDENTS RESPOND TO: HIS SHEER KINDNESS, UNFLAPPABILITY, GENEROSITY AND INTEGRITY SHINE OUT. HE WILL BE OVERJOYED TO RECEIVE THIS AWARD - CHARACTERISTICALLY, HE WILL ALSO BE VERY SURPRISED

THIS SUCCESS NOW ENABLES US TO APPLY FOR A LEADER AWARD GRANT OF UP TO £1,000 TOWARDS A PROJECT THAT BENEFITS THE SCHOOL.
MR GRIFFIN WILL HAVE A FEW MONTHS TO DECIDE WHAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SPEND THIS GRANT ON.
MRS J SNELLING
HOUSE LEADER & JACK PETCHEY COORDINATOR.

Current affairs and issues



WOMEN, LIFE, FREEDOM,

ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTS IN IRAN



BY SOPHIE SPIGNO, YEAR 12

For the past 3 months, protests and civil rebellion have been raging in the streets of Iran, seeing over 500 people killed including children, at least 1000 injured, and thousands arrested, the protests were triggered by the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22 year old Kurdish woman. Amini was beaten by the morality police in Iran following her arrest for violating Iran's mandatory hijab law. Authorities deny this, stating she died of natural causes, however, suspicion arose as eyewitnesses stated they saw her being beaten by the police. The protests originated in Amini's hometown of Saqqez and quickly spread across the country.

Following the Iranian revolution of 1979 Iran introduced an obligatory dress code for women regulated by an interpretation of Islamic ideals this meant all women had to wear the hijab and many women who chose not to wear the hijab were subject to violence and harassment. In 1983 a law was introduced stating that women who appear in public without the religious hijab will be sentenced to whipping of up to 74 lashes.

In the last decade, Iranian society has experienced significant changes seeing young women being much more liberal about hijab rules. In response to this the guidance patrol - Iran's morality police have launched several correction campaigns, through verbal warnings, violent arrests, and re-education for the women they deem to be wearing the hijab incorrectly.

Since 1979, protests against the mandatory hijab have been common. A protest was held between the 8-14th March 1979 on International Women's Day being one of the largest. Another example is the protests from 2019-2020, in which protesters freed two detained women and attacked a guidance patrol van. Two representatives of the Iranian government separately said improperly veiled women should be made to feel unsafe, highlighting the corruption and misogyny of the government in Iran.

The morality police also known as the Guidance Police was established in 2005 and its purpose is to enforce religious laws such as women wearing the veil and dressing "modestly", rules of public behaviours such as public displays of affection, and meetings between men and women in public places. They have the power to fine people as well as punish "offenders" from warnings to public beatings



Iran is a theocracy, which means it is governed in the name of God and laws are based on Islamic teachings. In Iran, the Supreme Leader is appointed by a small group of religious officials and is believed to embody the power of God. This is currently Ali Khamenei and has been for over 30 years. Iran is not a democratic country despite having some elements of democracy such as elections and parliament; this is because the unelected Supreme Leader's power is final and not under the conditions of any other institution. Every part of the Iranian government is heavily controlled by the Supreme Leader, he appoints half of the Guardian Council, which has the power to block laws and candidates from standing for elections. The other half of the Guardian Council is chosen by the Chief Justice who is also appointed by the Supreme Leader; it's therefore evident that every part of the Iranian government is heavily orchestrated and controlled by the Supreme Leader, eliminating any democracy.

Lately, the movement of protest has intensified and become more frequent in most major cities as well as spreading to smaller towns across the country. The people are demanding change and asking for equality, basic civil rights, an end to the current political system, women's rights, and the freedom to make choices independently. There is a huge struggle for change to take place due to the system being designed to withstand and resist public opposition due to its repressive nature and supreme control enabling this. Not only are political opponents jailed meaning there are no alternatives to such a regime, but it is also difficult for any opposition to build momentum and support as it's often crushed by the corruption within the government and police.

The initial characteristics of the protests were anti-hijab and pro-women's rights; however, the angle has moved to be against the regime entirely garnering support from many groups particularly those anguished by the ideologies of the regime whether it be due to being a woman, an ethnic minority, religious minority or LGBTQ+. Unlike previous protests in Iran, for the first time, protests involve people from all sections of society and age groups and have spread across dozens of cities and towns. As a result of the BBC as well as other independent media being barred from reporting inside Iran it is difficult to verify what is claimed by state media, however, thanks to social media, activists, and human rights groups the truth is being revealed.



Social media has been a powerful tool used in these protests, a famous movement being videos of people cutting their hair in an act of rebellion and support for Iranian women. For many Iranian women, hair is a symbol of beauty that is decreed to be covered by the hijab due to the extremism of the regime. Despite the hijab being empowering for many, the problem is the lack of choice, freedom, and expression as a result of the hijab being forced upon them. Hair cutting has been a historical symbol of rebellion in Persian history and therefore was adopted as a movement for the protests. Many high-profile celebrities worldwide as well as politicians joined in with this movement showing solidarity for women in Iran. During the football World Cup, it was also noted that the Iranian football players stayed silent during their anthem in apparent support of the protests.

Despite the violent efforts and brutality from the police and Iranian government to end the movement the protesters show their strength, courage, and resilience and fight for their rights and freedom. The protests are ongoing and as a result of the civil unrest, there are talks to abolish the morality police. One way in which people here in England are showing their support for the people of Iran is through peaceful protests outside the Iranian embassy; following one month after Mahsa Amini's death, flowers were placed and prayers were said. There are also several petitions which can be signed, one of which calls for the UK government to take action against the regime, for example maintaining sanctions and introducing a visa ban on people linked to the Iranian regime.

The situation in Iran is a clear indication of how society can be left desperate and deprived at the hands of its government due to corruption and systems of injustice. It also highlights the individual and collective struggle for freedom, which is a recurring battle in history. The determination and undying strength of the women living in Iran and those actively fighting their oppressors are unbelievably commendable and despite the progress made for women's rights in many regions of the world in some places, like Iran, women are still greatly abused and mistreated and it's something that must be acknowledged.



THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

AND A WORLD CUP MARRED BY HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES



BY SCARLETT BARBER, YEAR 12

Qatar, a small country located in Western Asia with a population of just 3 million people, is the host country of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Yet, due to the high popularity of the World Cup and the values underpinning society in Qatar, there have been many questions regarding the decision to host the competition there. With 32 teams, and thousands of fans wanting to watch their teams compete, many have questioned whether it was the right decision to host the World Cup in such a tiny country - one in which the values that underpin their society's beliefs generally contrast many others. From human right issues, draconian punishments surrounding issues like the LGBT+ community and women Qatar has been heavily criticised for its laws and values, and FIFA for their decision to host here.

The announcement of Qatar hosting the 2022 World Cup came in 2010, causing a ripple effect of backlash from fans across the world. In the following years, many investigations were held to try to uncover any covert corruption behind the decision of the vote after worldwide questioning of the result of this decision. In 2014, FIFA announced that "There are certain indications of potentially problematic conduct of specific individuals", and following, over many years, 11 out of the 22 committee members who took part in the vote in choosing Qatar as the host country were either fined, suspended, banned or indicted due to what were believed to be corrupt actions. Moreover, the former FIFA President, Sepp Blatter said "For me it is clear : Qatar is a mistake" and later even said that "Of course it was also about money" (referring to countries, not individuals). It is quite significant that the former president of FIFA himself said these things, seemingly hinting towards the corrupt manner in which Qatar won the vote in 2010.

But what are the problems with Qatar, and why do so many people disagree with their principles? According to the Guardian, 6,750 migrant workers from Middle-Eastern countries (such as India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh) have died since 2010 in Qatar - these Migrants had come over to seek work in the construction sector in Qatar, building stadiums as well as other projects like metro lines, costing the country over £200 billion. This number, however, contrasts with figures given by the Qatari government, which is said to be between 400 and 500. Amnesty International tells us that "the government failed to implement and enforce reforms, enabling abusive practices to resurface and reviving the worst elements of kafala (the sponsorship-based employment system)", and also tells us that not only do Migrant workers continuously fall victim to wage theft from employers, but they also have terrible working conditions - living in slums and working in 40-50 degree heat, with few breaks and little access to water. A large part of the issue here is the Government's lack of mobility in ensuring things change - they've imposed these laws but haven't kept strict to them, meaning many companies have continued to exploit these vulnerable workers.



Moreover, Amnesty International also tells us that "Under the guardianship system, women remained tied to their male guardian" - for example, their father, brother, husband etc. Additionally, women have to get permission from their male guardian to do things such as marry, receive some forms of reproductive healthcare, work in government jobs and travel until a certain age. Family laws also make it hard for women to divorce their husbands as divorced women are unable to act as their child's guardian, and the father becomes their primary carer by default. Women also have no legal protection against domestic violence or marital rape. The government disputed findings on the discrimination against women from the Human Rights Watch, pledging to investigate and yet by the end of the year, no such investigations had taken place. Therefore exemplifying how the government's lack of enforcement has led to the neglect of these people, taking a big step backwards in the social movement for the better treatment of women.





Finally, there are also a number of issues regarding the rights of members of the LGBTQ+ society. In Qatar, they impose the Penal Code (2004), which criminalises the act of sexual intercourse between two people of the same sex. Both men and women are criminalised under this law, and it can lead to a maximum of 7 years in prison. The constitution of Qatar also designates Islam as state religion, using Islamic law as the main source of legislation, operating under an interpretation of the Shari'ah law which allows for the death penalty as punishment for same sex relationships and intercourse. Moreover, in October 2013, Qatar was one of a number of Gulf states proposing to introduce tests to prevent LGBT individuals from entering the country - these were medical checks which could supposedly detect an individual's sexual orientation. Luckily, this proposal was rejected, saving people from the humiliation of a very invasive testing, as well as the discrimination of these LGBT+ members. A Qatar world cup ambassador (Khalid Salman) even said that "[Homosexuality] is damage in the mind"

To Conclude, we can see that there are many issues surrounding Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup : from getting chosen in the first place, to basic human rights issues. It has resulted in outrage across the globe, even including teams at the world cup. For example, the 7 European Teams that planned to wear the 'One Love' armband (as a sign of inclusion and anti-discrimination) but abandoned the idea after FIFA said there would be sanctions for anyone who did. Germany in particular, disagreed strongly, the Captain reportedly wearing the armband under his shirt, taking a team photo covering their mouth and the team supposedly even planning on taking FIFA to court. Actions like this will be the cause of the change we need and challenging these ideas is vital. Football is an inclusive sport, and yet corruption seems to be changing the nature of the game, leading to the question of whether we've lost the real meaning of football.



The LGBT+ Alliance's bake sale has raised just over £200 in aid of the charity Give Out, which supports LGBT+ folks in the Middle East and North Africa and had a special Qatar appeal! Thank you to anybody who contributed!

ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE UK

PAWNS IN A CRUEL GAME



BY ALEKSIA GJOKA, YEAR 12

Controversy has sparked up following the Home Secretary, Suella Braverman's, attempt on cracking down on the increase of refugees this past year- with about 40,000 asylum seekers coming by boat in the past 12 months. Specifically, she brought light upon Albanian refugees whose statistics have significantly increased from about 50 per year, to 800 last year to about 12,000 in 2022. She states she will 'tackle the invasion' and began what many have condemned as a xenophobic outcry in the public, questioning how best to deal with the predominantly single, young Albanian men arriving in the country. For example, reporter Sophie Corcoran (famous for her right-wing beliefs) posed the question of 'if it is not an invasion, what is it?', citing the sudden influx of refugees and beginning an all out war on asylum seekers.

Just a few days later, Andrew Leak, 66, threw two to three firebombs at Manston detention centre in Dover which was knowingly struggling with the surge of asylum seekers coming onto British shores nearby. Once he planted the devices, he drove to a petrol station and ended his own life. At first the police did not suspect any xenophobic or terrorist ideology, despite the clear motivations based on the current political climate on refugees, until mental illness was crossed out as a factor on the attack. The police has been criticised for ruling it as a hate crime at first.

With all this in mind, it is no surprise that the British-Albanian population had a peaceful protest at Westminster Bridge. On November 12th, beginning at 11am, Albanians set up a protest at either end of the bridge with flags propped up, Albanian songs on speakers and protesters cheering 'we are not criminals'. Around 2,000 people showed up and with increasing amounts of police officers patrolling and controlling the protest, the protestors eventually flooded the streets in cheers- causing a blockade.

This protest, however, became controversial due to a man draping the Albanian flag over Winston Churchill: this was one day after Remembrance Day and seen as disgraceful by the English population. Nigel Farage, a famous right-wing and populist politician, stated: 'These people care nothing for our country or sacrifices of the past', outright blasting the demonstration.

Despite the obvious concerning xenophobic outlooks on the surge of asylum seekers, some argue it can be detrimental to the British population if there is a sudden influx of many immigrants that they can't handle. For example, the same detention centre in Dover that was firebombed had over 4000 immigrants inside, but only places for about half of that number. Considering that 75% of these immigrants will have been accepted as asylum seekers into the country, it comes as no surprise that there will be trouble making space in Britain for them when the country is already in the worst economic state it has been since the past few decades.

On top of this, some asylum seekers have been titled as criminals as they give a false excuse of being used as modern day slaves to be accepted into the country. Despite this having no backing, the authorities claim it is concerning that mainly single, young men are entering the country on no other basis other than economic issues; on top of this, many asylum seekers who were not accepted to stay in the country have been said to be missing as they escaped custody before being deported back to their country of birth.

Although, this is mainly speculation on whether the rush of immigrants are mainly criminals coming to spread it in Britain, and should not be allowed to incite xenophobia on Albanian people. Edi Rama, the Albanian Prime Minister, had much to say on this issue: 'Targeting Albanian as the cause for Britain's crime and border problems makes for easy rhetoric but ignores hard facts.', explaining how Britain should make efforts to better hold their borders and is not a matter of Albanians but of their own government.

Following this, the government responded by spending £63 million to France to better prevent crossings of immigrants across the English Channel. Rishi Sunak himself stated that the problem still may persist despite paying a hefty sum to try and halt it entirely, making the spend obsolete. As well as this, since 2018 they've paid a total of 200 million to France to try to cut the crossings, but have ultimately failed. This deal was to increase France's patrolling officers by 40%.

While we still may be waiting for results on its efficacy on the number of immigrants coming, it also poses a large safety issue for them. For example, last year, 31 immigrants drowned in the Channel after their boat had sank. Just a few days ago, another small boat carrying people crossing the Channel sank, with four people dying in the bitterly cold waters.

With all this in mind, it's clear to see there is a real danger for those coming to Britain by boat illegally and is causing severe problems across the country economically, ethically and socially.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN BRITAIN

BY KAY WHALLEY, YEAR 12



SEWAGE SPILLS ON CORNWALL BEACHES

On the 31st of October of this year video footage was recorded of seawater being filled with raw sewage waste on St Agnes beach in Cornwall. Additionally, on the 4th of September sewage was discharged into the sea, causing several pollution warnings to be issued across beaches along the Devon coast. These included Ladram bay, Dawlish town and Paignton Preston Sands.

Warnings to swimmers by the government were issued as untreated sewage can contain bacteria, viruses and parasites. These - in humans - also cause maladies such as gastro-intestinal issues, rashes, flu-like symptoms, skin swelling and eye infections.

The threat of untreated sewage waste in water sources like the ocean doesn't just threaten human health, it also threatens marine environments. Sewage can contain excess nutrients, which may not sound harmful at first, but these nutrients fuel harmful algae which can drain the environment around them. Raw sewage also kills fish and smothers coral reefs, which are already ecosystems which are at risk.

As we can see, sewage spills aren't just a nuisance to swimmers and bathers, they are a threat to our health and the health of our seas.

This has not been the first of the sewage spills in the UK in the past few years. In 2021 alone there were over 300,000 sewage discharges into rivers and seas, causing harm to those who swim in the water sources and the ecosystems within them.

The group 'Friends of the Earth' believes that this increase in sewage discharges and spills is due to the lack of laws and regulations protecting the environment from the UK's separation from the EU in 2020.

Previously, the EU gave us 80% of our environmental laws and when the UK left the EU in Brexit, these laws were discarded. However, the government planned to replace all EU environment laws by 2021 to keep the environment as healthy as possible without the strict guidelines the EU had previously made mandatory. Some of these laws have seemed to weaken compared to what they were in the EU. For example, following the Devon and Cornwall sewage spills, the government announced a target to improve prevention of sewage spills (especially those caused by storm overflows) in or near public water by 2035.

This while being a good advancement doesn't have much of a short term effect on the sewage spills that are currently occurring.

On the other hand, the recent increase in these sewage spills may also be due to the increased rainfall we have been experiencing. Increased rainfall flowing into damaged sewage pipes can flush the sewage up and out of waterway pipes and into the ocean. It also increases how much sewage is carried from septic tanks to the ocean below ground and 'runoff' above ground. Leading to more damage to coastal ecosystems, rivers and lakes.

More action needs to be taken to ensure reductions in sewage spills on our coasts.



OIL SPILLS ON CORNWALL BEACHES

According to the [bbc.co.uk] website, swimmers were warned to not swim in Whitsand bay, Cornwall after a fuel spill polluted the beach. This occurred on the 2nd of November this year. Just two months after the sewage spills on Cornwall beach.

Surfers came out of the water covered in a fuel, believed to be gasoline or petrol by Mr Cochran - the coast guard on duty that day.

This is an example of a type of oil pollution called 'fouling'. 'Fouling' is defined by oil covering and causing physical damage to organisms who come in contact with the oil. This is commonly seen in marine animals like sea otters and seabirds when they are recovered from the ocean slick with oil. This oil on their bodies often destroys the insulation that they get from their fur and feathers, leaving them vulnerable to hypothermia from the water.



Oil on sea bird's wings can also reduce a sea bird's ability to fly, leaving them more vulnerable to predators.

The oil spill was also incredibly concerning when considering the longer term effects that the toxic properties of oil present to humans as a species and the wider environment.

Looking back to the sea bird example, if said creature first becomes unable to fly and thus is vulnerable to predators they are more likely to be killed and consumed by larger fish that we may fish and consume. The oil the predator ingests from the 'fouled' sea bird will remain in their system. This in turn is passed to us as we consume them for any of our meals. Even non lethal amounts of oil can be very dangerous to consume. Causing: stunted growth, abnormal liver development, changes in heart and respiration rates and even an impairment in reproduction when in our bodies.

It is clear that oil spills are incredibly harmful for our health and the health of ecosystems - be they marine or on land.

How can we prevent them?

In Pembrokeshire, a hairdresser has developed human hair mats from surplus hair in the salon. These hair mats are able to absorb multiple times their weight in oil, making them incredibly useful in combating oil spills like what was reported in Cornwall.

The charity 'Matter of Trust' already implements these mats to filter storm water in drains and to soak up oil spills on beaches and larger spills from ships or oil rigs in the ocean.



*Awesome current
and past students*


TEENAGE PROBLEMS

by Jesse Oshogwe, year 10

As we all know, being a teenager is pretty hard in this day and age. With constant pressure from exams and the lack of likes we get on our posts, a lot is bothering us. On a more serious note, young people often have their worries, fears and problems ignored - or even worse - infantilised. Adults often write articles about the problems teenagers go through, which leaves their advice unrelatable. But have no fear - because now you have me to expose these common and severely undermined issues.

I would like to introduce you all to a new section in the magazine, "Teenage Problems". In this section, I will be writing about problems many students here at BGS, and probably outside of BGS, struggle with.

These problems are often undermined or not taken seriously enough. I hope you enjoy your read of this section and be sure to think about our topic for the first issue:

A cartoon illustration of a girl with dark skin, wearing a teal sweater and a blue skirt, pointing her right hand towards a large blue speech bubble. The speech bubble has a white outline and contains the text 'Low self-esteem issues [body image/academic achievement]'. There are also some small white circles near the girl's hand, suggesting motion or emphasis. The background is white with some faint green lines on the left side.

**Low self-esteem
issues [body
image/academic
achievement]**

Self-esteem is the way we perceive and value ourselves. What we believe and our opinions of ourselves influence our self-esteem. It's not common for people our age to have low self-esteem; 85% of the world's population is affected by low self-esteem.¹ Whilst this number is worryingly high, it can also help us understand that we are not alone in how we think. Our self-esteem can vary in different areas of our lives, such as our skills in sports, how we dress, how we look and how we speak. All of us have insecurities, and all of us can know what it feels like to have low self-esteem, no matter what area it is in.



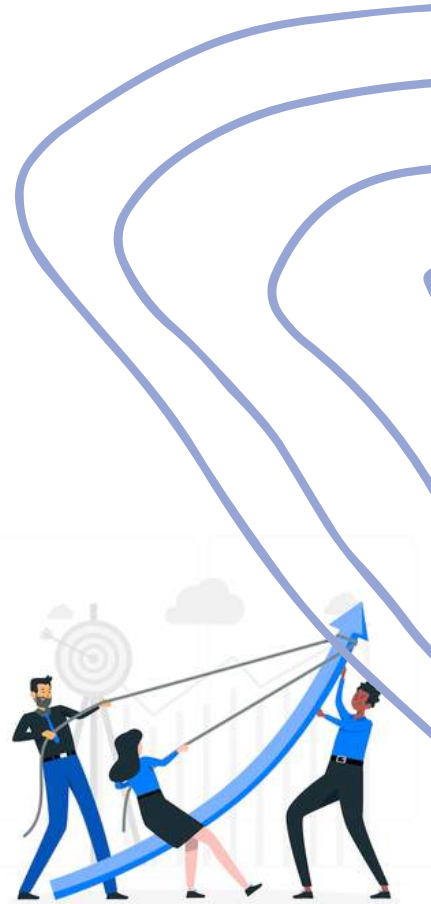
One issue we face is low confidence in our body image. Having an unhealthy body image leads to us wanting to change how we look in negative ways, such as through eating disorders, self-harm and drug intake. With the rise of social media in our lives, it is more common to feel as if your body isn't good enough and resort to these methods to try and better ourselves as best we can. What doesn't help is that people online can be brutally mean, as many feel empowered by the anonymity behind a screen. Experiencing cyberbullying, which can negatively impact our mental health, is not a rare occurrence. But not only social media causes these feelings, even real-life situations can cause similar effects. 50% of respondents in a survey I conducted stated that friends/family members cause them to feel negatively about their bodies. We should know that what we say, no matter how "minor" we believe it to be, can have drastic consequences on how those we care about feel.

Making changes in what you do is a good way to improve your body image. For example, being around people who uplift you, and do not constantly insult you and drag you down is one of the best ways to feel better about yourself. People who can constructively criticise and give advice are the ones you should consider your real friends. You need to also learn how to appreciate yourself. If you never learn to be thankful for what you have, and what you are - you will constantly be looking for ways to change drastically. Accept there are things you would like to change but do not make hatred for yourself the reason you want to change, change because you want to make yourself even better. Remember to start small when trying to implement something new in your life. We all want to start off huge and accomplish a lot, but starting small is much more achievable and realistic.



Another issue many of us can relate to is low self-esteem in academic achievement. Many people I know, including myself, have had doubts and even shame about their academic performance - even if it wasn't objectively bad. Many people I've talked to see a 7 as something to be disappointed about; yet a 7 is equivalent to an A. This can be due to the high expectations that have been set for us to live to. Many students feel stress due to these expectations and this can reflect in their grades. High-stress levels can cause a decrease in academic performance, and further perpetuate this stress. We need to realise that at times these insane expectations of getting straight 9s may be desirable, but often unrealistic.

There is no easy way to improve your grades, doing so will take a lot of hard work and time, but it will be worth it. Other people who get 9s aren't just born with the innate skill to be working at that level, they worked for it. If you work hard and genuinely put time and effort into your academics, you will see results. It will not be fun, and it will not be easy, which is why not many people get high results. There is a reason you are where you are today, clearly, you have the intelligence to reach this level, all you need is the effort to get there. Strive to do the best you can do every day, but not to the point where your academic performance is a higher priority than your well-being.



The action needed to help combat low self-esteem starts with us. Reach out to your friends, talk to people you trust and be open with how you feel about yourself. If you mostly think negatively about yourself, try to say at least one thing you like about yourself every day. This small change to your mindset can bring forth huge results in your life. This quote by Salma Hayek puts it beautifully: "People often say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and I say that the most liberating thing about beauty is realizing that you are the beholder."

**Remember that only you can
define who you are, no matter
what other people think or say.**





Thank you all for bearing through my section!

Before you continue with your reading, please spare 3 minutes to answer this form. I want to know what you guys want me to write about next!

[\[Answer here!\]](#)

Once again, thank you for reading and have an amazing winter break. Hope to see you all soon.

Bibliography

- ¹ - Guttman, J., Psy.D. (2019). The Relationship with Yourself. "Psychology Today."
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/sustainable-life-satisfaction/201906/the-relationship-yourself>



TEENAGE PROBLEMS

BY

JESSE OSHOGWE

BGS Homegrown talent.

***ABI FALASE:
FEARFULLY AND
WONDERFULLY MADE***



FROM BGS TO THEATRE WRITER, PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR

BY MS CONTINI

Abi, it is such a pleasure to talk to you and I am really looking forward to hearing what you're up to! So, what are you currently doing?

Likewise! So, I'm a writer and director at the Almeida Theatre, which is a theatre in Islington Angel, and I'm also the participation associate. So that means I direct the Young Company, and it also means that I facilitate workshops. I come up with creative plans, I produce free events. I do a lot of producing, writing, directing for the young people of the department.

I'm also currently a freelance director and freelance writer. For example, next week I am going to be at the National Youth Theatre teaching devising there. As well as that, I'm going to be the associate director and movement director on R and D, which is research and development of my friend's play, Spooky Action at a Distance, which is about co-dependency and stuff like that.

At the Almeida, I'm currently directing two young company plays, one for 14 to 18 year olds and one for 18 to 25 year olds. So I'll be juggling four projects next week, which is going to be interesting...But I'm looking forward to it, and I'm trying to get as much rest as possible where I can.

How do you do that? How do you manage such a busy work schedule when you have all these things going on and also look after your wellbeing?

Managing your physical and mental wellbeing is probably harder than you would think. I feel like it gets to a point where you just know that you have to push through and you have to say no to certain things. I know that I probably won't have a social life next week.

But I know that after these next few weeks, I'll get a really good rest. Over Christmas, I'm going to take time for myself and make sure that I try to go to the gym. I try to fit in as much exercise as possible because I feel like it safeguards my mental health. Also, I try to be around my friends and be around my loved ones whenever I can. It's important to be surrounded by love and people who love me.

Tell me a little bit about your journey, getting to where you're at now. Not only your qualifications, but also your biggest challenges, what made you the happiest, the proudest in these years?

You know what's crazy? I've been so fortunate, so very fortunate! I studied theatre and professional practice at Coventry university, and it was an amazing course. I felt like not doing an acting course and doing a course that is about being a theatre practitioner in the real world really helped shape who I became, because I knew writing and directing well, and I knew that directing is what I wanted to do. I wanted to also produce some stuff.

So as soon as I graduated from Uni, I started at the Almeida as a participation intern. And it was an internship that was meant to be for ten months, and I did a bunch of different tasks. For example, I was the assistant associate director on the Young Company shows, and then I was helping out with admin, also doing some assistant producing. But unfortunately, COVID hit a few months into that... And because I didn't get to completely fulfill the internship in the way that was meant to, they extended my contract and from there I became a participation assistant which is a step up from there. After that, I became participation associate.

Trusting God is a big part of dealing with my queerness and my faith and understanding that any direction life chooses to take me in, I got to lean with it and rock with it and hope for the best.

...I have to have faith in the fact that as the Bible says, "I'm fearfully and I'm wonderfully made" and if God didn't want me to be like this, he should have made me different. I am perfect because God made me.

So now I take creative lead in the department when it comes to working with young people. Like I said earlier, I am currently directing my first Young Company shows. But I've also written the scripts with two co collaborators, and it has been such a blessing to work with them because they are so talented and it's always helpful to have other eyes on the work that you're creating. But in April my contract is ending so I'm going to be a freelance director writer from April, which is kind of scary. But I know that God has got my back. God has not fulfilled me yet. So just going to keep on rocking with it and hoping for the best.

So obviously faith is a really important aspect of what motivates you and what keeps you strong?

Yes, but it's been a very difficult line to walk, I'll be honest, in terms of decolonizing my faith. It's very easy to forget that Christianity originated in the Middle East. A lot of people think about Christianity as the white man's religion but that's not true. So it's important for me to stop and think about that, especially because I'm queer as well, and trying to get those things to align is so difficult sometimes. But I have to have faith in the fact that as the Bible says, "I'm fearfully and I'm wonderfully made" and if God didn't want me to be like this, he should have made me different. I am perfect because God made me. I even find it difficult to refer to God as "he", because I don't believe God has a gender. That's part of decolonizing my faith and sort of thinking about when I picture God. Not thinking about a white man with long hair in the sky, just thinking about what other pictures can I form of God in my head? So that keeps me grounded and trusting that whoever God is, whatever form God takes, whatever shape, God has a plan for me. And I've just got to trust that.

And whatever I don't know and whatever I can't figure out, it's not for me to drive myself crazy trying to figure it out. So that's what is keeping me sane leading up to this place where I wouldn't have the financial security that I've always had. Trusting God is a big part of dealing with my queerness and my faith and understanding that any direction life chooses to take me in, I got to lean with it and rock with it and hope for the best.

I love that quote that you mentioned! I think I should have it up in my classroom.

It's very important to to lean into that, cause I feel like it's so easy to lose yourself in this world, especially if you are black, queer, technically I'm a woman but I don't really identify as a woman, there are so many hurdles against you...and feeling like, if you could have chosen any other life, would it be this one? Probably not, but you just have to let go and trust God, and trust the plan, and understand that you just gotta keep it stepping no matter what, and loving yourself and accepting that you deserve love feeds into your self image and makes you push harder. Once you value yourself, you can push through a lot, cause you're like "You know what, I deserve good things and I will push for good things!".

Are you still involved in the church?

No, I don't go to church anymore. I had a traumatic experience with my church that I've been in since I was 8 years old, directly linked to my sexuality. And I realised that the Bible says that "When two or three of you gathered in my name, I am with you", so even conversations like this feel like a sort of church to me.

Once you value yourself, you can push through a lot, cause you're like "You know what, I deserve good things and I will push for good things!".

How do I make sure that at the core of everything I do is love? Because God is love. So how do I make sure I show love despite the fact that the world is set up to hate me?

In biblical times, they didn't have megachurches; they would go into people's houses, they were in the streets, they were communing with people. I feel like the best sort of evangelism for me is personally letting my light shine, and letting myself be a positive beacon to anybody. I don't know if I'd call myself a Christian, I definitely believe in Jesus Christ dying on the cross for my sins. I don't go to church anymore as the community I need isn't in that building specifically.

However, the community I do need is talking to other people about faith and exploring that that means and what shape that can take. I feel like faith is a personal thing, and I'd rather sit and talk with someone for two hours about it, and how to make sure I'm a positive influence for people around me, how do I make sure that at the core of everything I do is love? Because God is love. So how do I make sure I show love despite the fact that the world is set up to hate me?

That was so beautifully expressed...Let's talk about your art and your writing. What kind of stuff do you write? Is there a specific topic you're interested in? Where do you see your art going?

I'd like to say that what I like to create is feel-good social realism. I feel it's important to comment on the world, but when you are black, queer, assigned female at birth, every time you see art reflected at you, you see your pain reflecting back at you for the most part. It's always something that is traumatic or something that speaks to race and stuff like that. I feel like you can comment on stuff like that but I like to have fun, so I like to write comedy drama. So for example I wrote a comedy drama called Super Zero which is about a black girl who reluctantly becomes a superhero and the journey she goes on, and that got me shortlisted for a BBC script writers competition, which is how I got my agent now.

I wrote another script called Vibing in Purgatory, which is semi-autobiographical. It's based on this whole thing about seeking the grace of God and wrestling with queerness at uni in a new institution that is set up for a straight, white man - cause on top of all that stuff I'm neurodivergent as well. So this girl meets the physical manifestations of her inner saboteur, and it comes up as a genie and represents all your intrusive thoughts, all your anxieties, they come up in the form of this one very cheeky character. That script is with a bunch of different production companies at the moment, so I'm waiting to hear who wants to auction it, to buy the rights to the story, so hopefully I will get to start developing it and then hopefully in a couple of years you'll see it in your screens...by God's grace!

The 14 to 18 show is about a group of kids who start protesting the current government and instead of going to juvie they are sent to run their own village, so it's about the shape that takes and the antics they get up to. And then the 18 to 25 show is about co-dependency with people, sleep, fitness... those shows will be happening in January - which is exciting but also not very much time, but I'm excited because it's the first project in my entire career where I had complete control of my team and the artistic journey and it feels very much like something I have conceived from the very beginning which is super important to me.

What are your best memories of BGS, what did you enjoy the most?

Chilling in the FBCS office when things were too much was definitely one of the highlights...but one of the biggest highlights was being a House Captain! I genuinely enjoyed it, especially as home life was quite difficult at the time, it was amazing to be part of something bigger than me. And can I just say that I've never lost a House Dance whilst I was in charge! Especially the Year 13 House Dance, it was one of the best memories.

I feel it's important to comment on the world, but when you are black, queer, assigned female at birth, every time you see art reflected at you, you see your pain reflecting back at you for the most part.

I tell every young person that walks in to the rehearsal space that their ego won't last in there, you can't serve the piece the best if your ego gets in the way.

In fact, I would love to recreate it again with professional dancers.

Also doing Sports Day and running around like a headless chicken - that last minute thing of finding someone to do a race nobody wants to do...

And my performance of Tweedle Dumb in Alice in Wonderland is still unmatched! But also performing in A Streetcar Named Desire, which Oluchi Ezech [a fellow student] directed, was amazing - especially as Streetcar is playing at Almeida theatre right now, it feels like a full circle moment!

What advice would you give to our young students who are thinking about a career in theatre?

I'd say just get out there...don't worry about the end point, I think it's more about the journey. I tell every young person that walks in to the rehearsal space that their ego won't last in there, you can't serve the piece the best if your ego gets in the way. Do theatre or drama school, but think about the skills you can add to your toolkit; some of the best artists I know have a great learning spirit. Always think about what you can learn and inform your own practice, be a sponge! Go out and see plays as much as possible - there are so many free tickets or discounted tickets for people under 25; I spent my whole life trying to provide these opportunities to young people and I have kind of neglected myself.

If you're trying to get into arts, be a part of that world - it's about being proactive and having a humble spirit, wanting to learn and contribute. There's so many young actors companies you can audition for - for example Tramshed, The Bush, Brixton House - these places are accessible.

Also, make stuff, write scripts, film them, put them on Tik Tok...a lot of artists aspire for perfection but they get frozen in that anxiety, but I say just do it!

One thing that I really appreciate about my life is that I am surrounded by people who believe in me. I have always been motivated by the constant belief of others. Nobody, not even my mum, has ever discouraged me from taking this path. I don't have imposter syndrome because people have always affirmed my talent. When I told my mum I wanted to do theatre I was expecting a whole speech trying to dissuade me, but she was like..."Yeah, Do it! You're good at it, you're passionate about it, so go for it!"

One thing that I really appreciate about my life is that I am surrounded by people who believe in me. I have always been motivated by the constant belief of others.



If you're trying to get into arts, be a part of that world - it's about being proactive and having a humble spirit, wanting to learn and contribute.

For tickets to Abi's shows, click on <https://almeida.co.uk/whats-on/almeida-young-company-double-bill-the-village-/rush/15-jan-2023-22-jan-2023>

MY EXPERIENCE AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT



*Yep that's me
when my hair
was longer of
course*

HOW DID I GET HERE?

First of all it may seem weird to decide to up and leave your home country, leave everything you know and leave everything you're comfortable with behind, but for me it was a pretty clear decision that if I wanted to pursue the future I envisioned, staying in Jamaica was not an option for me. I had always dreamed of bigger, better things that Jamaica couldn't offer based on the resources that were available to me. I know it sounds cliché, the whole 'Small town girl, big dreams' trope, but it was my reality. I'm not going to lie and say I woke up and decided that I was fine with leaving my friends and family behind in hopes of somehow getting into a school; it took months of independent planning, research about different sixth form programmes (A-Level, IB, CAPE, TOPIK etc.) to plan around that and then planning back up plans while simultaneously understanding my own interests to see what I could get out of exploring different options. After all that, the International Baccalaureate was the only thing that really impressed me with the wide range of subjects it had to offer, including some subjects that I had never heard of

A LITTLE INTRODUCTION

For everyone reading this magazine, let me introduce myself. My name is Tahlellah, Tally for short and for all those who are struggling to pronounce it while reading this. As you've read from the title I'm not from here, I'm from Jamaica and I've lived there my entire life. Needless to say, it's been a pretty big change from a small island to a much much larger island and there are still many things that I'm not quite used to. Apart from the common question of what it's like living in Jamaica and what the life of a student from another country is like, I'm sure you're wondering about how I decided that I wanted to do the IB, how I ended up here at Bexley Grammar School, my feelings of the school thus far and how I'm adjusting to life in London as a whole.



*My year 11
graduation picture.
The same time I
started my research*

. However, the only problem left was 'Where am I going to do this?' I knew that in Jamaica there were 2 schools in the entire island that did the IB, but they were private schools with tuitions of £22,885.90 for two years (\$3,944,000JMD) and £20,375.78 (\$3,479,094.78JMD). I hope I don't have to tell you that those weren't options. So, I went online again to find another solution.

At this point, it seemed as though the more I researched the less and less likely it seemed for me to pursue my dreams. I searched for IB schools on every continent possible, Africa, Asia, The America's, Australia, but all I saw were implausible, improbable options. Thankfully, when I got to the UK there was some hope until I learned what an independent school was. Yes, I didn't know that independent school meant private school. With the guidance of my step-dad, who has been living here for a considerable amount of time, I was able to understand a few of the cultural barriers that were in my way. After several hours of more research, I had narrowed down my options and I'm sure you can tell which one won, because if it wasn't Bexley Grammar then you probably would have had something else to read in this section of the magazine.

However, I got here in a way you wouldn't have exactly expected. During this time, I was in year 11, trying to figure out my next step to sixth form. As it turns out, you had to apply for a space in sixth form a school year in advance and I had already missed the deadline; yet another slap in the face. So, disappointed, I went back to high school to do my first year of sixth form. When application time finally rolled around, I already knew what I wanted, and, with no solid back up plan or second options, I applied to Bexley Grammar (to all the year 11's reading this don't do what I did, have a back up plan). Before you can get the happy news of my acceptance, there was another obstacle. During this time, I didn't get the regular open day so effectively I applied and got accepted to a school that I had no clue what it looked like. Scary. The reason for this was because I was still in school in Jamaica, but thankfully, my stepdad was able to go to the open day for me, but it just didn't feel the same.

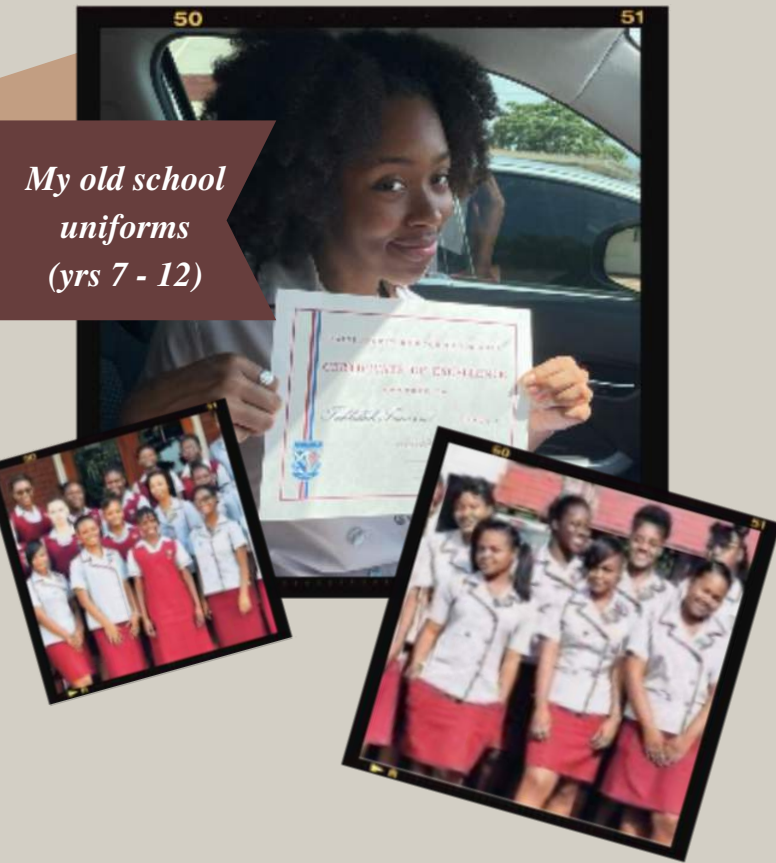


After several agonising and anticipatory months, the time finally came for me to travel to England for the first time to live there. I got here about 6 weeks ago, I know, not that long, and now I can say that I go to Bexley Grammar School. I already know you want to know about how I'm getting on and finding everything so I'll just skip to that part. I had great first impressions of the school and my first thought was how big it was in comparison to my school in Jamaica. Everything to me is new and beautiful; yes I know how odd that is to say because you've lived here all your life so I don't think we'd share the same sentiment on that one. By the time you're reading this, I have been at Bexley and in London for about 3 months and I already feel welcomed by the friends I've made here, teachers and other members of staff.

There were and still are a lot of different things that I haven't quite gotten used to or that I found weird like inset days and week long half term breaks and open days (in Jamaica you don't get to view the school(s) you want to go to. Based on your 11+ exams, the government puts you somewhere), but the longer I'm here the more I accept and discover about myself and my environment.

WHAT MADE BGS SO DIFFERENT?

*My old school uniforms
(yrs 7 - 12)*



My school was built on 2 main principles, upholding legacy and strictness. "No braids, no wigs, you must wear the correct size knobs in the lowest piercing on your ear, no hoop earrings, you must wear black hair accessories, shoes must not be patent or suede, no jumpers are to be worn over your uniform..." and the list goes on. These are just some of the rules that you have to abide by without exception. Everything was scrutinised from, if you looked like you brushed your hair properly that morning to if your socks were folded correctly at your ankle to how you sat in a chair with the expectations that you should look flawless and effortless. Being that I came from an all girls school, there could be endless social commentary on unfair gendered expectations, but you'd be sitting or standing reading this article for hours. My reason for making this distinction is that when I came to Bexley and wasn't met with that same rigidity, it felt freeing and a bit daunting at the same time.

At the same time, the school environment isn't the only thing I've had to get used to since I got here. One word... cold. If you remember, I come from the sunny island of Jamaica and the difference in temperature is stark, to say the least, especially since the seasons are changing. At the same time, I love the gloomy weather and love seeing how the seasons have changed as once vibrantly green leaves delicately dance and tumble to the ground as they fall off the trees, sporting their new burnt orange, yellowish colours. The first few days I noticed each switch from summer to autumn to winter, I was absolutely mesmerised (and still cold). Even now that the trees lay bare and the snow piles up and collects in the leaves' stead, the wintery wonderland that is the light fluffy-looking snow is still a marvel, as I look at it with a three year old fascination.

Despite not having been here for very long, some of the marvels I've described still never cease to amaze me. It continues to baffle me how friendly and approachable teachers and students are. Rather than having some sort of abstruse hierarchy that makes everyone have to tread lightly with each other, I find that teachers and students understand each other and have real compassion and understanding for one another's situations (I mean, I can't speak for everyone's experiences so I don't doubt some of you, if you've read this far, are shaking your heads in disagreement thinking back to that one situation, but I get it I may be a little naive... just bear with me from an outside perspective). Coming from the school that I did and the sixth form that I have in Jamaica, the focus on strict rules and rigidity, or lack thereof, at BGS in terms of the accessories and the hairstyle you choose to sport was astounding to me.



WHAT MADE LIVING IN LONDON SO DIFFERENT?

However, the simple pleasures you get to enjoy here, like experiencing all four seasons, is something I've never known until now. Little things like being able to see my breath in a little cloud as I exhale, makes me excited every time (come on, admit it, it never gets old). To put it into perspective, imagine, for only a moment, that all you knew was 30 degree summer heat, the occasional heavy rain and only seeing those pretty autumn colours in stock photos online. Imagine that you never really got to experience that transition from summer to autumn to winter and all the little awkward stages in between. It's kind of like getting a bad haircut and seeing it grow out and get better. Some days your hair looks great and others not so much with the awkward choppy parts that are growing out to match the rest. What I'm trying to say here is, something as simple as experiencing that transition from season to season is an invaluable experience for me.

MY LITTLE GALLERY



DEALING WITH GUILT

Nevertheless, I continue to explore new possibilities and activities that were once unavailable to me. While I battle the bitter cold and debate getting out of my warm bed every morning, I still don't know what I would be doing had I stayed in Jamaica. In a way, I saw no future for myself past high school in that country, aside from misery and a feeling of helplessness in doing things I don't want to do. Everyday that I'm here, I think 'This is the way my life is supposed to go'; the path that I was meant to take, even though many steps along the way felt so foreign. It was weird how at ease I felt when I first landed here. Yet, at the same time, I felt I might be betraying the wishes of my close friends back in Jamaica, even though I knew I had their full support after I left.

Though I had a sense of belonging and purpose the moment landed, it didn't erase any feelings of guilt about leaving my friends behind knowing that they, too, would long to be in my place or in a position resembling it. Jamaica, as idyllic as it appears and is on its surface, is not an easy place to pave your own dirt road when the material for that pavement must be given to you by someone else, rather than already being equipped with those materials through the fruits of your hard labour. I already know that I don't need to feel this crippling guilt because I have ample support but I can't help but think sometimes 'What if everyone who wanted to do something great had gotten equal opportunity or the best environment for them to grow?' Unfortunately, I can't allow those thoughts to constantly preoccupy my mind because I can't waste my one chance pondering hypotheticals.

FINAL THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

What I'm getting at here, is that my experience thus far has been eye opening, shocking and unlike anything I've ever experienced before. However, those amazing experiences can sometimes be overshadowed by my guilt, sadness and longing for those who I know deserve equal opportunity to share it with me rather than me experiencing these new thrills alone. Although some of those negative feelings may be overwhelming at times, I wouldn't have decided any differently.

News from departments



BGS Drama production



By Harry Watts, Year 12

On the 7th of December 2022, a full house enjoyed opening night of the BGS Drama Department's production of detective comic caper 'Emil & the Detectives', based on the 1964 movie of the same name, which in turn was based on the book by German author Erich Kästner, following 10 year old Emil Tischbein (played in turn by Rayaana Siddiqui and Freddie Morgan) who travels to Berlin by train, having 140 marks (a lot of money in 1929 Berlin!) stolen from him by the enigmatic "Mr Snow" (Chizu Chiegbu and Diego Hughes) in the process, leading Emil to recruit a plucky team of kid detectives to help him find Mr Snow and the money before he leaves the city and Emil's mother finds out!



Speaking with cast members Alex Innes, Emily Atkinson and Holly Kinsella, it's clear that everyone taking part massively enjoyed themselves, both onstage and off.

“We’ve really enjoyed rehearsing the show” Alex said “It’s a fun show, and we hope the spirit of the detectives rubs off on the audience”. “There’s been a lot of excitement around the show” Emily added “I think it’s one of the best shows we’ve ever done, both in acting, but in production value as well”. “It’s definitely a lot more fun, and it even feels more professional” Holly noted “We’ve got a live band and singers, there’s an element of interaction with the audience”.



This is by no means exaggerating, as the show is bursting with production design, a decadent tribute to the 1920s, accompanied by a live band right next to the audience, conducted by IB Music student William Henderson, who also composed all the music for the show, including an all-cast Charleston. The technical side of the production is just as impressive, with sound design created by Tom Dalrymple, lighting design by Robert Humphreys, Jack Blowfield and Tadana Muhaso, projections created by Samuel Parsons and Joe Petros, and costumes by Wyatt Knox-Newman and Greg Maksym.



There's no questioning the camaraderie between the cast, as the ensemble scenes are packed with creative moments from start to finish, filling each scene with life and movement, and vivid individual performances by students from every year, making every part of the stage a treat to look at. There's certainly no shortage of talent at Bexley Grammar!



Finally, speaking with the cast and crew, one theme reoccurs, and that's praise for director Mr Otley. From his dedication to long after-school rehearsals and his "directorial ability and wit" (Alex Innes), everyone wants to extend a gigantic thank you to Mr Otley "for putting up with us", as so many have put it.

So, to all the detectives, the adults, the old ladies, Heinrich the goat, and of course the incomparable Mr Otley, bravo, and roll on next year's production!



THE REVIEWS ARE IN!



*Fantastic in every way.
they were all brilliant-
Thank you for the fun
and quality!*



*Awesome show. Fabulous Cast. fantastic
music. So wonderful to see so see such young
talent. Congrats all*



*What a great show. so much love and
awesomeness in the room*



design and technology news

POWER DAY 2022



P O W E R D A Y 2 0 2 2



During Power Day, we had three amazing senior chefs visit our school to share their knowledge and skill with us. Chef Adam and Chef Daniel were senior sous chefs from a lovely French brasserie called Zedel in Piccadilly whilst Chef Mirka came from a high end cafe in Chelsea called Colbert, all part of the same group which includes the Wolseley in Belgravia. First we were given a step by step demonstration of how to debone a whole chicken. Once we deboned the whole chicken we left the carcass to boil in an extra large saucepan to make a real stock which we eventually turned into a broth for our coq au vin. We then made schnitzels, by learning to butterfly a chicken breast, panne and then fry off, in oil or an air fryer. I personally had so much fun frying my schnitzel because it is not something you would do very often and it was exciting to get that exposure. After that we reduced the stock and added double cream to make a delicious, mouth-watering coq au vin. Last but not least, Mirka taught us how to make fudgy, chocolate brownies. They were so delicious Needless to say it was an amazing day and full of new skills that we can use in the real world , excitement and experiences. I thoroughly enjoyed the Power Day. Thank you so much for getting these high profile chefs in.

Jessica Wong Year 10



drama and design



We had lots of fun creating the refreshments for Emil and the detectives. From branded mineral water, sweets and chocolate, branded cakes and biscuits. Watch this space as we start to work with other departments and promote our school in the wider community.



MUSIC DEPARTMENT

BY MRS GODDARD

A JAM PACKED TERM!

How is it only December yet it already feels like a packed year?! The music department continues to grow and flourish across the school community, and it only happens because the students that join us want to go the extra mile by participating in performances and events.

Y7 BBQ - JAZZ BAND

In September, George Greenland Y13 wrote a piece of music especially for Improv group, who performed it at the Year 7 BBQ. George has performed with the school's jazz ensembles since he started in Year 7, so is very experienced in working in jazz! He worked hard to rehearse the group and took on feedback for his composition so that it was the best it could be and would work to entertain parents and Year 7 students. Well done George!

Y7 CONCERT

In October we had the annual Year 7 concert. It is a rite of passage for all our students to sing 'Billy the Kid' and the Gospel Music medley! We also had performances of 'A Million Dreams', 'Rhythm of Life', 'Siyahamba' and 'Wonderwall'.

The Y7 concert was a truly spectacular show - it was a shame that COVID prevented our year group from doing it! It was so heartwarming to see parents gleaming with pride at their children, they were brilliant. A big thank you to Ms Goddard, Ms Eacott and Ms Casling for making the event possible.

Written by Hana Ostrowski, Y9 Music Prefect

IB RECITALS

In November our Year 13 students presented their music recitals. As part of the IB music course they have explored a wide variety and range of musical genres and each and every one of them presented pieces that were thoroughly enjoyable to listen to.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

On Monday 28 November, our musicians came together to perform at the annual Christmas Concert. We had a wonderful array of music, from music from films (such as Ratatouille and Home Alone) to jazz standards and contemporary rock and pop. It was wonderful to see so many new faces from our Year 7 cohort (the Junior Choir/Junior Orchestra collaboration was absolutely roof-raising!) and everyone from students to parents had a wonderful time.



EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES

Our Y13 Will Henderson has played a pivotal role in Drama's production of 'Emil and the Detectives'. He has composed music in the style of 1930s German music to accompany the play, rehearsing his band and working with the cast to ensure that his music supports their work on stage. What a fantastic effort Will, well done!



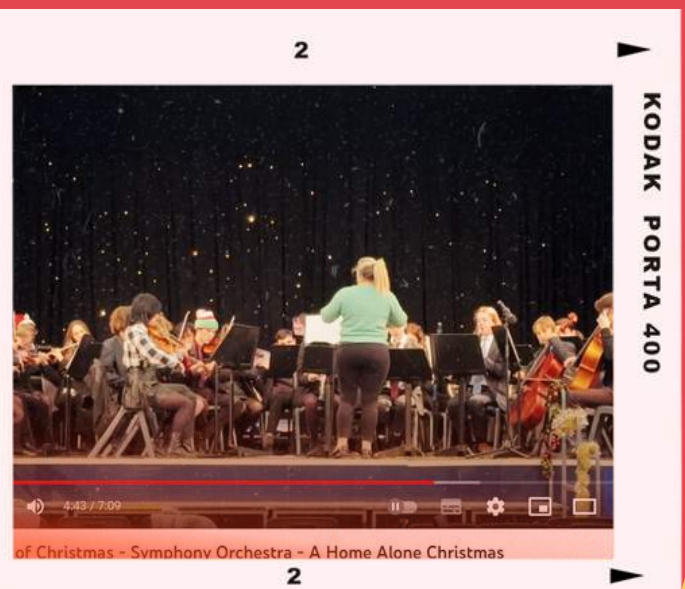
12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Noah Hanley-McClatchie, another of our talented Y13 students, has recorded a number of music ensembles over the past few weeks and presented 'The 12 Days of Christmas' on the music department's YouTube channel. Each evening, a piece of music was released along with a donation link for the Evelina Children's Hospital, a charity that Noah was passionate to raise funds for. You can check out all the performances by clicking on this link [here](#).



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM (@BEXLEYGSMUSIC) AND ON FACEBOOK (SEARCH BEXLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT) FOR MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATES ON CONCERTS AND PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES.




MARLBOROUGH SCHOOL CAROL CONCERT

To round off a busy Autumn term, Mrs Goddard took 30 members of the Senior Choir to perform at the annual Marlborough School Carol Concert. Marlborough School is a secondary special school, and our Senior Choir went to sing carols with them. In addition, our Y12 IB Music students arranged and performed a variety of music for the event, learning about how to rehearse a small ensemble effectively. Well done to everyone involved!











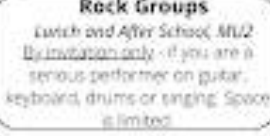



FANCY TAKING PART IN ONE OF OUR MANY ENSEMBLES?

All of our music ensembles will happily take on any new members! Are you a budding keyboard player interested in playing orchestral music? Are you a secret cello player? Do you want to sing your heart out on a Friday lunchtime at Junior Choir? Come and join us - all the information on the picture below!



MUSIC EXTRA-CURRICULAR ENSEMBLES 2022-2023

Monday  <div> Clarinet Ensemble <i>Ac Mon, MU2</i> Led by our clarinet teacher for those Grade 5+ Clarinet </div>  <div> Flute Group <i>Ac Mon, MU1</i> A group for flutes! Must be grade 5+ </div>	<div> KS3 Orchestra (Y7-9 only) <i>Lunchtime, MU1</i> All orchestral players welcome - must be having music lessons on an instrument </div>  <div> Chamber Choir <i>After School, MU2</i> A small vocal group for Y11-13 <u>By invitation only</u> </div>
Tuesday  <div> Junior Jazz (Y7-9 only) <i>Lunchtime, MU1</i> Wind, brass, rhythm section (piano, guitar, bass and drums) Grade 1+ Must read music </div>	<div> Big Band <i>After School, MU1</i> Wind, brass, rhythm section (piano, guitar, bass and drums) Grade 4+ Improv Group continues after for exceptional performers </div> 
Wednesday <div> Symphony Orchestra <i>After School, Hall</i> Wind, brass, strings, percussion including Piano - Grade 4+ </div> 	
Thursday <div> String Group <i>Ac Mon, MU1</i> For violinists, violists, cellists and double bassists of all levels </div> 	 <div> Senior Choir (all years) <i>After School, MU1</i> 16-part choir, singing modern classical to pop and beyond </div>
Friday  <div> Samba Band <i>Ac Mon, MU1</i> Led by our drum teacher <u>By invitation only</u> </div>	<div>  Junior Choir (Y7-8) <i>Lunch, MU1</i> Open to all singers. There will be a trip to Young Voices at Wembley too! </div>
<div>  Rock Groups <i>Lunch and After School, MU2</i> <u>By invitation only</u> - if you are a serious performer on guitar, keyboard, drums or singing. Space is limited </div>	
<div> <p><i>Coming soon...</i></p> <p>Come and meet the family in our music production 'The Addams Family'! Be part of the cast, crew and show band. We will be performing a 4-night show in July 2023. Watch out for further details and audition dates!</p>  </div>	

FANCY LEARNING AN INSTRUMENT?

It's never too late to learn! If you are at all interested in learning a musical instrument please do complete the form on the link here. Speak to parents and family first just in case - but who knows, maybe this time next year you could be part of our Christmas Concert?! You can learn anything, from DJ and decks to piano, clarinet to violin and trumpet to trombone. We offer instrument hire too. If you're not sure which instrument is right for you, please come and speak to a member of the music department!

MATHS INSPIRATION SHOW!

A Year 12 Trip

An inspiring Maths lecture show for 15-17 year olds.

On 29 November, a group of intrepid Year 12 students took the train up to London to see the Maths Inspiration Show in the Phoenix Theatre in London's glittering West End. The students learnt about how maths can be used in all kinds of fascinating ways, from designing a football stadium, to juggling, to predicting the behaviour of a crowd at a rock concert.

The speakers were (from left to right):

Host: Jennifer Rogers

Aoife Hunt: The Shape of Escape

Paul Shepherd: Simply the Best

Colin Wright: Patterns, Predictions and Juggling



"The maths inspiration show was a very interesting experience. We saw three different speakers who each talked about three different interesting topics that linked to maths and showed us how mathematics can actually be used in the real world. It was interactive and the three hours went by really quickly. We had the opportunity to ask questions and be involved as they asked the audience for volunteers. I definitely recommend going for anyone who finds mathematics an exciting subject."

Vanessa Mitkova 12SH

"The Maths Inspiration trip gave us a detailed insight into the application of mathematics in a variety of different careers and hobbies. Each speaker was both entertaining and informative, demonstrating the role of maths in each of their careers - structural engineering, crowd control, and even within entertainment such as juggling. It was interesting to understand how the maths we learn in school can be utilised in ways that may not have been apparent before (such as using maths to create social distancing guidelines in 2020). The interactive elements were also fun to watch and allowed us to join in and ask questions."

Ben Huggett 12ECG

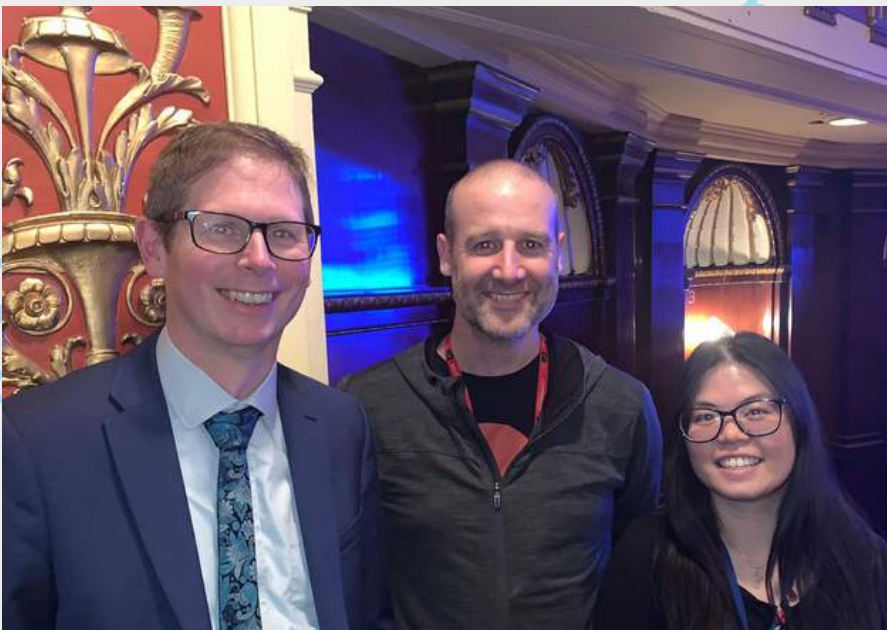


At Welling Station, on the way to the lecture, our students could hardly contain their excitement!



"Niall Orton 12MCS bravely volunteered to participate! His walking speed was measured and used to mathematically model the behaviour of a crowd at an outdoors event.

The students also met maths author and YouTube icon, Matt Parker!



Mr Male and Miss Goh were equally thrilled to have a chance to talk to Matt Parker, author of "Humble Pi" and many other excellent popular maths books. He told us his next book will be on Trigonometry, which seems a very brave move, from a commercial perspective.

STEM NEWS



by Ms Lusted -STEM Coordinator

HIGHLIGHTS

ICE CITYZEN ENGINEERING COMPETITION

It has been an incredibly busy term for STEM at Bexley Grammar!

There have been more clubs than ever before in addition to lots of STEM activities in lessons. Year 13 have completed the practical element of the IB course with dozens of individual experiments taking place over four days.

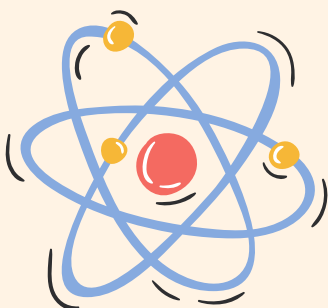
QUANTUM AMBASSADORS PROGRAMME

TOP OF THE BENCH COMPETITION

STEM POWER DAY

ICE Cityzen Engineering Competition

For the first time we entered four teams for the ICE Cityzen Engineering Competition. The process is still underway but they have completed four online tasks so far. Teams had to balance the demands of different sectors to make improvements to their virtual cities. Only one bridge sank completely! The next phase is to produce a video describing a change that they would make to our local area. Keep an eye out in the newsletter for news of how they get on.



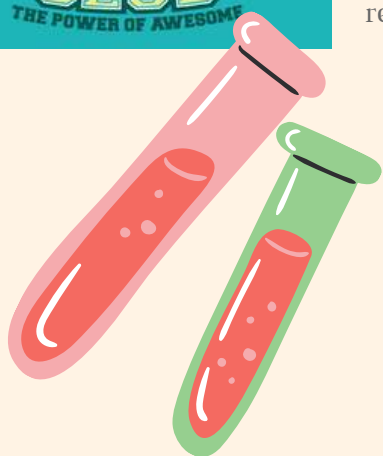
Quantum Ambassadors Program

A record number of year 12 students got involved this year to work with our ambassador Vincenz Pucino and find out all about the weird and wonderful world of quantum physics!



Key stage 3 and 4 clubs

As usual there are a wide variety of clubs available to key stage 3 and 4 students. From robotics, to chemistry, to building your own skateboard, students have been getting stuck in and getting the most out of what we have on offer. If you want to hear more about these clubs please see the STEM page on the school website. You can hear from students, see a photo gallery and even read some reviews of the science books and documentaries that our students recommend.



Why Go to Science Club?

Science Club is a place for students to explore their scientific skills and interests, whilst doing fun and interesting experiments. This enhances a student's knowledge and skill in the field of science. Taking part in Science Club is an enjoyable way for children to engage with science from an early age.

We can spend time doing experiments that are not always possible to cover in your Science lessons.

What Do We Do in Science Club?

In Science Club, we, of course, do fun experiments. These experiments include finding out how dense different liquids are by making rainbow stacks, or tearing open nappies to explore how they soak up liquids. One experiment which I enjoyed the most was when we made lava lamps with oil, water, food colouring and an Alka-Seltzer tablet. From this, I learnt that Alka-Seltzer combined with water forms a gas called carbon-dioxide. The gas is lighter than the water and oils, so it bubbles.

When and Where is Science Club?

Science Club is on a Wednesday lunchtime in M8. It is hosted by Mrs C Lee. We hope to see you there!

**Henry Mann
7NRC**

Science book reviews:

Every year the Royal Society runs both a Science Book Prize and a Young People's Science Book Prize. They chose their favourite six books written in the last year in any area of science. It is a great platform for aspiring writers and also a great opportunity to promote an interest in STEM for our students.

This year we bought all the 'adult' books and the three most age appropriate Young Person's books for the library and ran a competition of our own.

Adult category:



Young Person's Category:



Students read the books and submit a book review and here are a few of our favourites:

'Hot Air', by Peter Stott.

When you think of climate change, what's the first image that comes to mind? Wild smoke fumes from factories billowing in the air? Uncontrolled blazes erupting in the middle of a forest? Or oil spills wreaking havoc on miles of the ocean, tainting the perception of the home of marine animals forever? It would come as no surprise, then, that climate change would evoke such strong feelings of contempt for the world, but as a person, who are you to make an impact? After all, the people in control of most situations in a country should be the government, right?

In fact, even these prestigious people didn't realise the true impact of their actions until about 2000, which isn't that long ago if you think about it; only 20 years ago, primarily due to the work of climate scientists.

Peter Stott was one of them. He trudged through numerous climate meetings, presenting the facts only to be met with anger and denial. After accumulating a wealth of knowledge, this is what he was met with: climate change denial, at its very beginning.

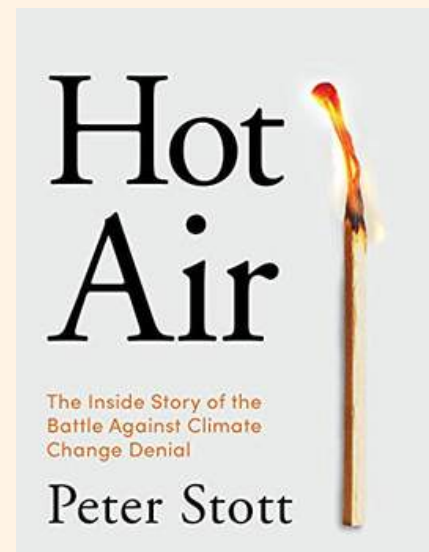
I would have thought that government bodies would have listened to him, taken his word into account. At least, that's what I would have done. I would have asked for facts, details- but that's not what they did. He was dismissed by them numerous times by numerous people, including the likes of politicians like Nigel Lawson. I was shocked. How could such science be shoved under the rug like that? There had to be something that would make them listen, at least a public outrage.

Until his idea was finally accepted: climate change is a real phenomenon. In a world where this is the status quo, who knew how much effort was required to get this through? Stott had to make models, compile research from scratch and find people to defend him. After that, you can't forget trying to convince the public that it's real.

When it came to finally getting the word out, his points backed with raw evidence clashed with the points of deniers who insisted that the temperature was going down rather than up- an archaic belief that had been disproven since 1990! The BBC, preaching for impartiality, broadcasted both of these views with equal value. It made people think: what's the truth?

In schools, there was a climate change documentary about to be shown called 'An Inconvenient Truth' detailing the true impact of climate change. But it was illegal because it was considered propaganda! I considered that outrageous.

And yet this circles back to my first point: is it really the government that we should rely on for climate change action, even with the likes of climate change deniers in such an untouchable body? I believe that this will lead to people not taking action for it. There are small things that you can do to improve our world, even if it makes you seem like a mere cog in this infinitely complex machine of society: reusing, recycling and even packing up uneaten food from a takeaway to eat for later. These small things can save our planet. Though they may not help the hole in the ozone layer recover faster, at least we can contribute to a greener world somehow.



By Ashna Adhikari

Fourteen Wolves, by Catherine Barr

This is a story of the wolves' homecoming.

Set in Yellowstone Park, this story highlights the importance of wolves in nature. It is about a simple environment where all the wolves are killed by hunters leaving the ecosystem to collapse. My favourite part of the story is the part where the fourteen wolves are released into the park, since there is so much description on the beautiful changes in Yellowstone.

I found it quite interesting how one new species can change its environment beyond recognition in the span of a few years. This book really implicates that.

I would honestly recommend this book to anyone, whether they like nature or not, because it is so simple yet tells so much.

by Andrey Polyarush

What is the book about?

Set in Yellowstone National Park (Wyoming, USA), Fourteen wolves is about a pack of wolves revitalising the local area. Prior to this, wolves were hunted down at Yellowstone till there were no wolves remaining. Due to this, the food chain was greatly disrupted, and the grass and soon the landscape became barren. This way of life for the animals continued, until in 1995, a long battle between government officials, lawyers, scientists and conservationists decided that it was time to let wolves into the area. In Canada, fourteen wolves were caught and travelled to Yellowstone. There, they adapted to their new habitat for ten weeks - if they were set out in the wild immediately, the wolves' instinct would have guided them back to Canada. They were then set free, with each wolf given a number and a radio collar. Furthermore, they have formed packs, each rightfully named after the local creek they roam: Crystal Creek Pack, Rose Creek Pack and Soda Butte Pack. Despite that local ranchers and hunters did not favour the decision, the wolves roam the area. Changes - drastic changes - occur, for the better as well. The local ecosystem is back on track, animals return, the land looks fresh and lush as it once were. Finally, Yellowstone National Park had recovered from years of distress.

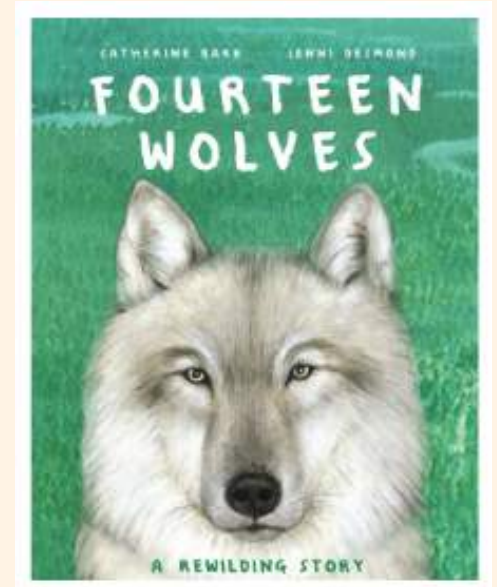
What did I like about the book?

In my opinion, the book was wonderful. Desmond made amazing illustrations of what had happened, which makes it easier to understand what the book is trying to say. Since it is based on a true story, all the events are true - they are also said in an interesting, yet informative, way. The book also described, in detail, what occurred during the events. Barr also uses many writing techniques that make the reader want to read on and on. In addition to that, she makes the reader feel as if they were there, at that time, at that place. It first describes the events beforehand of the main event - this gives the reader knowledge for what is to come. In the book, there is the constant theme of "recovery". Great vocabulary, as well as vivid language, was used throughout the book such as emotive language. It also makes the reader think deeply as to what had happened because the synopsis talks about opposing that wolves are good creatures which is contrary to the point of the book. Navigating is also quite simple - each page has a heading with a description and the entire book is split into 3 parts. Therefore, it can be said that Fourteen Wolves deserves a great score.

What did I dislike about the book?

Unfortunately, there is nothing negative to say about "Fourteen Wolves", except that the illustrations are sometimes unclear to see and the sentences are short and don't give as much information as others.

by Nibodh Shrestha



A (very) short history of life on earth, by Henry Gee

Henry Gee starts the book with the formation of Earth and a brief overview of how this planet came to be, with its lava spewing everywhere and no signs of life at all.

At least, until membranes began to form. Then into prokaryotes, then eukaryotes, and so on. You may think that Gee glossed over all of this to get to the exciting part (the part about the evolution of man), but no. He details the adaptations of other species and how they came to be, while still keeping the story intact. Life still carries on.

He talks of the turmoil of species, of the great mass extinctions of various periods in time. About great events that caused everything to disappear off the face of the earth. It was tremendous considering the lack of building blocks these species had and they simply picked themselves up again and carried on evolving.

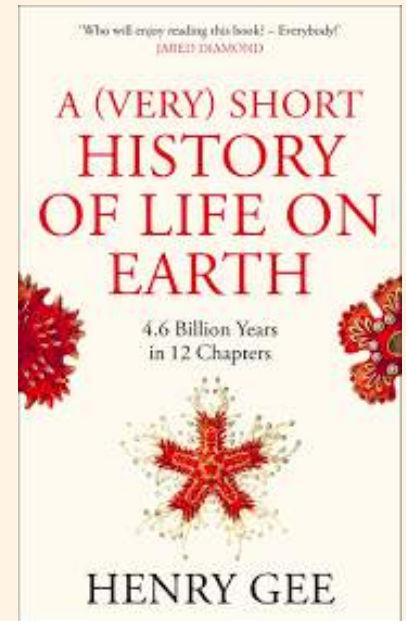
The entire time, I was fascinated by how clever these species were despite lacking the level of consciousness that we humans have today. From the development of the anus in sponges to the bipedality of the homo Erectus, Gee demonstrated the endless horizons of evolution in such a simple, intuitive format- with added timelines as well. Throughout this story, he zooms in on a more relevant aspect than the one before to clarify everything for the reader so that you're not confused as to where exactly in time we are. This timeline soon zooms into the part about the evolution of man, so don't despair. You'll soon be important in this story as well!

Despite the feeling of importance that you may feel reading about the homo sapiens, you may also think that there are nihilistic undertones throughout this story. I, for one, certainly felt insignificant while reading this; one day, the last homo sapiens will take their last breath.

One day, the world that we live in will be painted with luscious greenery and the modern world will be modern no more. And you won't be able to see any of it, because you will have decomposed. You will turn into the next species' biofuel and you can't do anything about it.

And yet, at the end of the book, he reminds us that we might still make our mark on the world- perhaps a couple of millimetres of sediment added to the ground. Perhaps we will be documented by another, more intelligent species than us (though we certainly are an exceptionally smart bunch of cells). Or maybe... there will be no trace of us left.

I would still strongly recommend this book, despite the feelings of insignificance Gee brewed in me. But I guess that's how the world works. Nobody will care if you discover a new way to tie your shoelaces, or if you feed an entire village in the millennia to come, but *carpe diem*!



By Ashna Adhikari

Top of the bench competition.

Recently, I was invited to take part in the RSC's Top of the Bench chemistry competition. We met after school and worked in teams of four: two year 9s, one year 10 and one year 11. The regional heats consisted of a variety of chemistry-related questions. Some of these were trivia (but always related to chemistry in some way), some involved puzzles like anagrams while others were more closely-linked with the concepts covered in GCSE chemistry. Overall it was a fun experience, and a great opportunity to work as a team to tackle some slightly different problems to the ones typically seen in class.

Samuel Bowring, Year 11



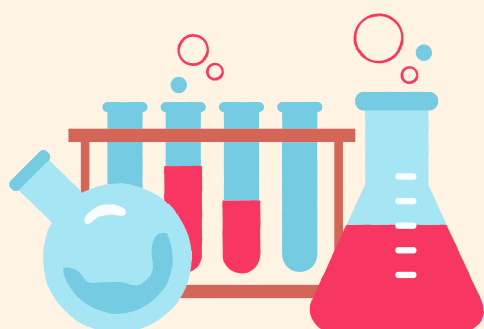
On Thursday I took part in the chemistry top of the bench competition. It was a great experience and really tested my knowledge. It was so fun working with other years to get to the answers too. It is something I would definitely want to do again and I hope we did well this time!

Matilda Jackson, Year 10



On Thursday the 1st of December, Me and 11 other students took part in the regional heats of the 'Top of the Bench' Chemistry Competition. In each of the three teams, there were 2 year 9s, one year 10 and one year 11. Together as a team, we tackled challenging chemistry problems as well as problem solving tasks and trivia. It was an interesting quiz and a great opportunity.

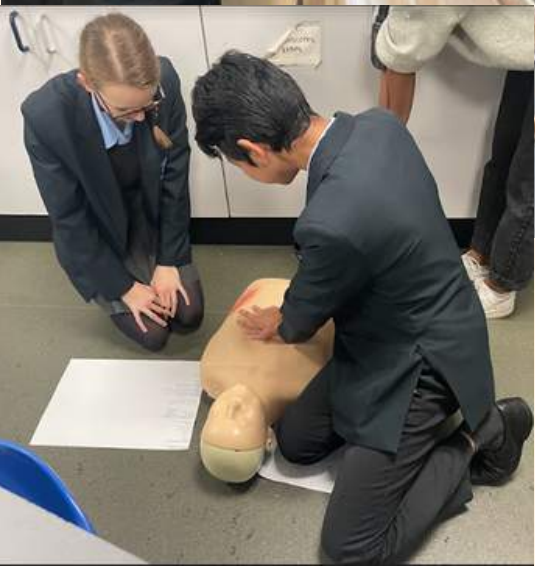
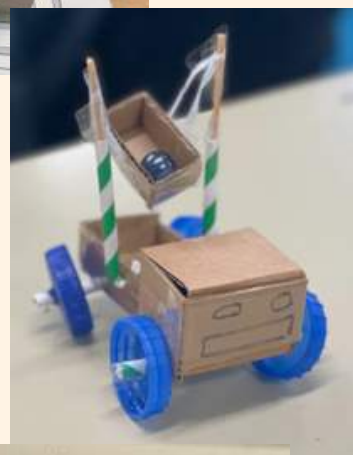
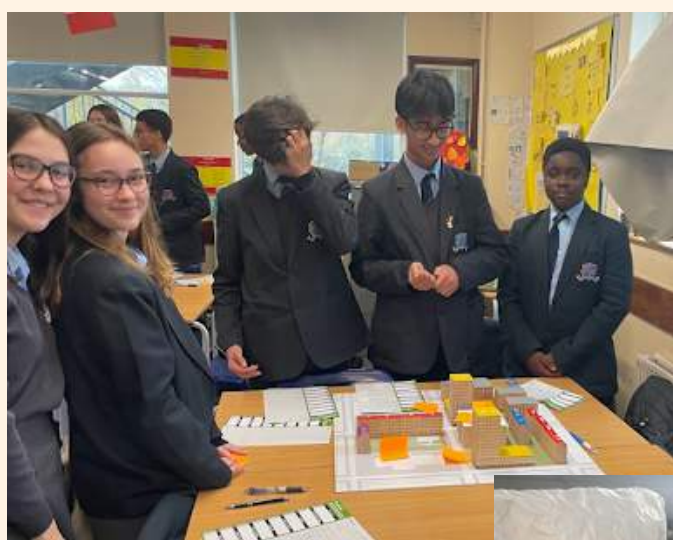
Louis Luckman, Year 9



Power Day

On November 29th the Power day had a STEM theme for years 9 and 10.

A number of exciting workshops were run including engineering, architecture, emergency medicine and computer science. Hopefully, the students were inspired by the industry professionals who worked with them on the day. Additionally, this may help some of the Year 9s to think about the options for their GCSE subjects which they will be choosing in the new year.



FBCS NEWS

How is winter celebrated around the world?

by Ava Gordon-Collins, year 12



AS WE APPROACH THE RUN UP TO CHRISTMAS IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS ON EVERYONE'S MINDS, BUT CHRISTMAS ISN'T THE ONLY HOLIDAY CELEBRATED DURING WINTER. ACROSS THE WORLD THERE ARE MANY CELEBRATIONS DURING DECEMBER AND JANUARY.

Hanukkah:

Hanukkah is a widely celebrated Jewish festival that remembers the recovery of Jerusalem by the Maccabean Jews, it is observed for eight nights and days and this year Hanukkah will begin on the 18th December and end on the 26th. This festival is observed by the lighting of the Menorah - a candelabra with nine branches. One candle is placed above the others and used to light one every night until all eight candles are lit on the final night of the festival. In religious terms the holiday is relatively minor as it does not come with corresponding obligations however the holiday has huge cultural significance.

In the 167 BCE the second temple in Jerusalem was looted and Judaism was outlawed. The Greek leader who had taken over Jerusalem ordered for an altar to Zeus to be placed in the temple and pigs to be sacrificed there, this led to a revolt from a small group of people called the Maccabean Jews. They defeated the Greek army and recovered the temple, when they recovered the Menorah that had been there they found that it only contained enough oil to burn for one night however a miracle occurred and the oil burned for eight nights, thus began the celebration of Hanukkah.



Makar Sankranti:

Makar Sankranti is a Hindu festival dedicated to the worship of Lord Surya. It falls on the 14th of January every year and marks the end of winter and the beginning of a new harvest season. The consumption of meat and alcohol is strongly discouraged on this holy day. While the festival is celebrated all over India, different states in the country have different customs and traditions: in Gujarat it is celebrated by flying kites and eating sesame seeds, in Punjab bonfires are lit to worship the god and perform rituals, in Bihar and Jharkhand the celebration begins by swimming in the holy river Ganges, in Assam the celebrations last an entire week and games like pot breaking and buffalo fighting take place on the actual day.



Winter solstice:

The winter solstice is the shortest day of the year and is celebrated in many cultures as a way of bringing light to the darkest time of the year.



In China, *Dong Zhi* is a time for the family to get together and celebrate the year they have had. It is thought to have started as an end of harvest festival when farmers return from the fields to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Based on the traditional Chinese celestial calendar the holiday is generally celebrated between the 21st and 23rd of December.

In Peru, the winter solstice comes in June rather than December. *Inti Raymi* was originally celebrated by the Inca in honour of the sun god before the arrival of Spanish colonists. The festivities included feasts and sacrifices (often animals but sometimes children) but the holiday was banned by the Spaniards as it went against Catholic beliefs. However it was revived (with fake sacrifices instead of real ones) in the 1900s and is still celebrated today.



In Iran, the Persian festival *Yalda* has been celebrated since ancient times, it marks the last day of the Persian month of Azar and is traditionally viewed as the victory of light over dark and the birthday of the sun god Mithra. Special foods like nuts and pomegranates are eaten and some families stay awake all night to watch the sunrise.

St Lucia's Day is a festival of lights celebrated in Norway, Sweden, and some parts of Finland on 13th December. The holiday honours one of the earliest Christian martyrs, St Lucia, who was killed by the Romans because of her religious beliefs. To celebrate St Lucia's day, families have their eldest daughter dress in white and serve coffee and baked goods to other family members. The festival signals the beginning of the Christmas season in Scandinavia. Before the Norse converted to Christianity, they celebrated the winter solstice with bonfires meant to scare away evil spirits, after adopting Christianity they incorporated the legend of St Lucia into their celebrations and now the festival of light combines both pagan and Christian traditions.



Kwanzaa:

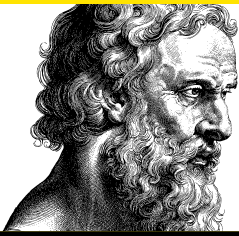


Kwanzaa takes place from the 26th December to the 1st January and is a celebration of African-American culture. It was based on West and Southeast African harvest festivals - the name Kwanzaa comes from the phrase *matunda ya kwanza* which is Swahili meaning 'first fruits' - and created by the activist Maulana Karenga in 1966 as a way for Black Americans to celebrate themselves and their history in a society that discriminated against them. Karenga was a major figure in the Black Power movement of the 1960s and 70s and his goal was to spur a 'cultural revolution', he said that "the cultural revolution gives identity, purpose, and direction".

Kwanzaa celebrates what Karenga called 'The seven principles of Kwanzaa': Unity (*Umoja*), Self-determination (*Kujichagulia*), Collective work and responsibility (*Ujima*), Cooperative economics (*Ujamaa*), Purpose (*Nia*), Creativity (*Kuumba*), and Faith (*Imani*).

Families that celebrate Kwanzaa often decorate their houses with colourful African art and fresh fruits. Children join in the celebrations and celebrate and give thanks to their ancestors, drumming and music are also key elements.





The Philosophy Before Christmas

Tahlellah Townsend, year 12



Have you ever thought about philosophy but you're not too sure if you're smart enough for it or just doubting yourself? This will **definitely** make you think again. As we look to the great thinkers of the past and present, you may find yourself thinking about philosophy in your future.

Holiday Greetings to all my readers! Today, I have a very special gift to impart on all of you before the holiday season and that is the gift of Philosophy. Ok so, I have a strong feeling that many of you have already thought about flipping past this page to start reading another article, but I ask you to stop licking your finger to turn the page and put the page down. You might want to continue reading.



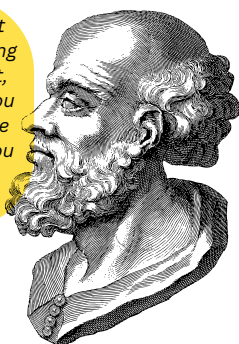
Philosophy is not as complex and far-removed from everyday life as society might think it is. Actually this may surprise you but technically, you're already a philosopher... and so is everyone. As long as you have beliefs and opinions that you're willing to defend, deeply discuss and debate, then I'd say those are grounds for you to be classified as a philosopher in training. Many people when they think of philosophy, they think of highfalutin words/phrases (kind of like the one I just used. It is just a fancy word for fancy words) and Shakespearean language they could never understand. *'Thou shalt not approach daily living with unfavourable malpractice, as this diminishes one's vitality and fancy for the essence of living'* (it helps if you read that in a really posh accent), but I'm happy to tell you that that is not what you'll commonly encounter with philosophy. Another stereotype related to philosophy is that you need to have lots of money or it's a discipline specifically for 'smart' people. What I have to say to those stereotypes is, **ABSOLUTELY N-O-T!** As I said before, anyone, anywhere, at any time can be a philosopher irrespective of age. As long as you have ideas about anything as big as say... contemplating if what you see right in front of you actually exists or if the universe exists to as small as say... wondering whether or not the ocean is a blue-green or more of a green-blue. In addition, your own perceived level of intelligence has nothing to do with whether or not you can philosophy. Frankly it's impossible to not philosophise anything, in my opinion.

Now that I've told you what philosophy is not, I'm sure the question you're thinking about is what it is? Well, you've got me there. I don't know and you might be thinking to yourself 'What do you mean you don't know? You're the one writing this article. Shouldn't you have at least that definition pinned down before you write about something?' and in any other circumstance I would agree with you but you see it isn't that simple, pinning down a singular universally agreed upon definition of philosophy is difficult to say the least. I could just give you the dictionary definition of philosophy, but it doesn't exactly encompass all of a philosopher's responsibilities. Philosophy is more about the practice of formulating ideas, coming up with counter-arguments and questioning/challenging societally accepted concepts of 'good' and 'bad' or 'right' and 'wrong' given the context under which that judgement is made rather than a strict academic discipline, then again that's up for debate.



In my opinion philosophy is less about getting answers and more about asking the questions, but that's up for debate. However what I do know is that philosophy covers such vast areas of human knowledge and seemingly unperceivable possibilities that narrowing down a definition as a philosopher in training myself would still be doing it an injustice, although...that might be up for debate. Even though some would say that a philosopher's job is to cast doubt on other philosophers, but say it with me, that is up for debate.

"Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not, remember what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for"
-Epicurus



"There is no genius without some touch of madness"
-Mencius

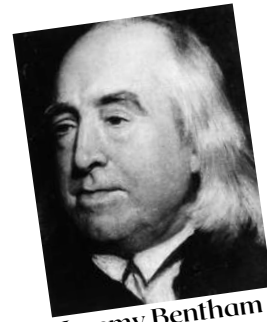


However the different philosophers would have different takes on the purpose of philosophy. In keeping with the Christmas theme, we'll be taking a trip back in time to the Philosophers of Christmas Past, in ancient China and Greece, because maybe from them we can understand what philosophy is all about? Some of you may have heard of Confucius in ancient China c. 400 BCE, he was a philosopher and politician concerned with morality. In his view, philosophy is very social and about how people would conduct themselves in any given situation. While he does necessarily believe that there are fixed rules for behaviour and what is right and wrong, he believes that people can become better by practising the right rituals and being 'virtuous'. Meanwhile, around the same time in Athens, ancient Greece, Socrates was forming his own purpose for philosophy. Socrates, too, was concerned with the morality of people. In trying to find a clear set of universal truths he landed on a firm belief he upheld until his death. He believed that material things such as wealth and power don't lead you in the direction of true happiness. While this idea may seem plausible now, in his Athenian society that would have been considered unfathomable.

While both these early philosophers covered different aspects of being human, such as beliefs, happiness, conduct/behaviour, right and wrong, etc. they were of course limited to their times and societies and their situations that their theories applied to. I'm hoping you have realised that times have drastically changed (if you haven't noticed then you might want to take a look at your calendar) and to an extent have become more complex. In fact several years in the future, people still discuss what the true purpose of being human is if there is a purpose at all, but what I do know about ancient philosophers' beliefs is that they clearly didn't believe in first and last names. However, all jokes aside, it's not to say that some still of their beliefs don't hold up today but there are more situations in modern societies that create holes in the original where their argument may not have the same weight that they used to, but that's up for debate..

After talking about some ancient philosophers, while their work is still used/debated today, it is still slightly outdated and conservative for the trajectory our current society is going in. If we jump forward just a little bit to the 20th century on a trip to the Philosophers of Christmas Present, they would have a slightly different take on what philosophy might be/involve. And plus after talking about all these ancient men, it's time for the women of philosophy to shine. Elizabeth Anscombe, a female philosopher in the 1930's surrounded by men in that discipline, made a name for herself in the realm of moral philosophy. I know those are a few big words compounded together to talk about language surrounding how we talk about 'good' and 'bad' actions/conduct but I promise you don't encounter too much more fancy language than that. Much of the 20th century was dedicated to tackling language in philosophy and how we then apply that to everyday life. Unlike the philosophers of ancient times, science has played a key part in providing some 'explanations' for more abstract ideas such as gravity and reality; even those concepts are still up for debate especially in philosophy.

At that time, they believed all philosophy could do was prove precision in defining every language as science covered the rest. Anscombe questioned many of her male, non-religious counterparts and made waves in the social expectations of the times. Her ideas about moral language and the uselessness of obligation or duty were shocking for the time. Her most popular published paper outlines all of her lines of argument which opposed schools of rational thought/ Kantianism (for any of you reading that want to give her paper a read it's called Modern Moral Philosophy, which you can scan and read some of at the end of this article). Although Anscombe's arguments are well-structured, they are not definitive and are always up for debate.



Jeremy Bentham



John Stuart Mill



Elizabeth Anscombe



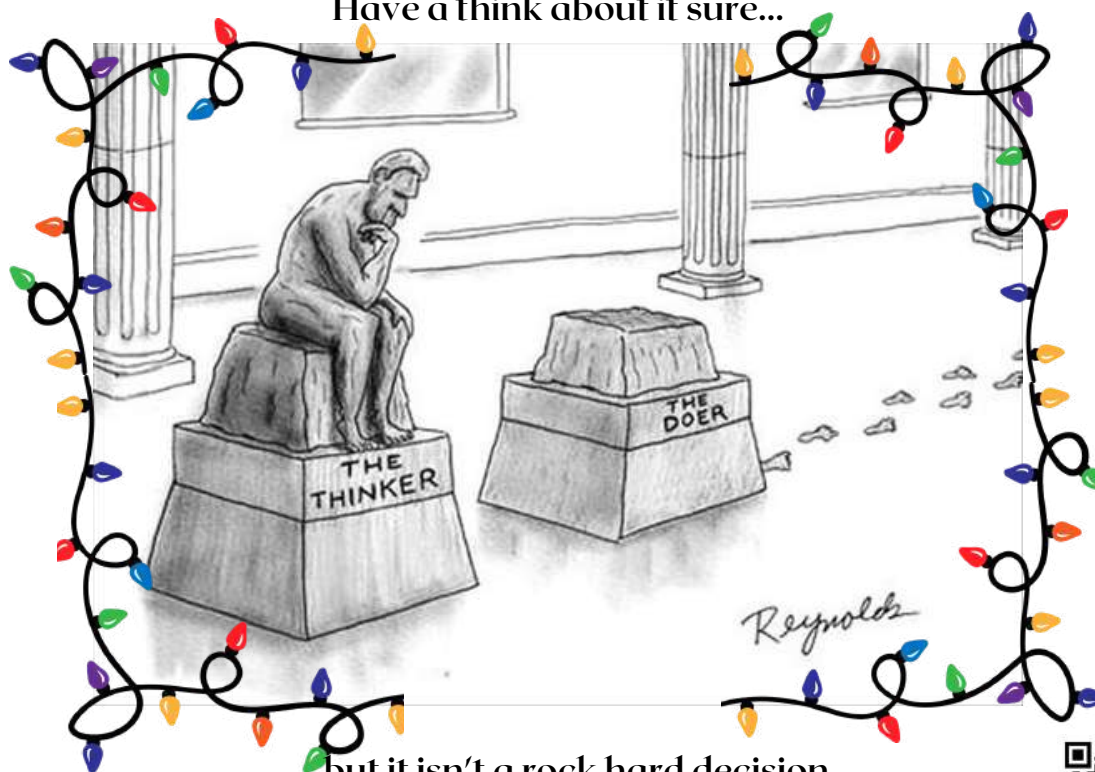
Bernard Williams



Ludwig Wittgenstein

Now, I have a feeling you've caught on to the whole Christmas Past and Present motif so I assume you have an idea of what's coming as we visit the Philosopher of Christmas Future (we may not have to travel too far to visit this group, in fact we might just have to stay where we are). It might seem a bit backwards to look at the philosophies of people yet to come and frankly it's impossible as the future hasn't become the present yet. Just like the Ebenezer Scrooge movie I stole this idea from (A Christmas Carol (2009) with Jim Carey as the voice of the main character, highly recommend you watch it, but that's besides the point), it is important, in my opinion, to take a look at the possibilities of the future to see what needs to be done in the present to potentially alter the course of the future. How might we take a look at the philosophical ideas of the 'future'? The answer is simple... go to a mirror and look at it; in that mirror you'll see a philosopher of the future. And for those who didn't catch that, you, the readers of this article, are the philosophers of the future. Take a look at your ideas and beliefs, talk about them with other people that share and oppose your views, doubt your beliefs, question your beliefs, try to understand where they came/come from, what are they rooted in, look for research verifying their possibilities and research that denies their existence. That... there... that ability is what makes you a philosopher. Whether or not, after this article, makes you study philosophy at higher levels in the future or inspires you to pursue it academically, is up for debate. However, your capabilities to think outside of the box and have discussions about the world with a deeper philosophical meaning and the possibilities that can arise from your discoveries/epiphanies no matter how big or small, regardless of your age or experience, wealth or training in the field, is not up for debate.

Have a think about it sure...



but it isn't a rock hard decision.
Be boulder than the rest!



English Department

Highlights

Senior Book Club
Jendella Benson's Hope and Glory

Creative Writing Club

Open evening



By Claudia Chris-idahosa, English Prefect - Year 12

The term is drawing to a close and the English department is ending things on a high! Over the term students have studied a variety of texts (poems, plays, novels) from different time periods and backgrounds. Year 12 students spent some time studying Gwendolyn Brooks, who was an African American poet, author, and teacher. Her work often dealt with the personal celebrations and struggles of ordinary people in her community. She won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry on May 1, 1950, for Annie Allen, making her the first African American to receive a Pulitzer Prize. Brooks's poem "the mother," is one of her most well-known poems (see picture below). We loved it for its emotional complexity and sensitivity on a really difficult topic: abortion. The poem is an intricate portrait of a woman who has had an abortion, and it manages to ask political questions without taking an obvious for-against stand in the abortion rights debates.



[illegible]

On the 15th of November, BGS hosted the Open Evening for year 11 students that are considering BGS as one of their Sixth Form choices. The English department was busy with so many students going in and out; the prefects were very engaging and answered all the burning questions both parents and students had. It was a very successful event and we look forward to seeing all the potential students next year!


BGS
Creative Writing Club
Open to Years 7-9
J18, Wednesdays,
3.15 - 4.00



Banshees of Inisherin - Martin McDonagh (2022)

Film review by Emily Sceeney, Year 12

Released in October this year, this tragicomedy is McDonagh's 5th feature film and arguably one of his best. It follows two friends (Padraic and Colm) living on a remote island off the Irish coast at the tail end of the Irish Civil War. All they have is each other which is why Padraic's life is thrown into despair when Colm no longer wants to be friends. For what initially appears to be a simple, or even dull concept, the film is anything but: the story spirals into a nihilistic nightmare with progressively darker twists and turns as undercurrents of desperation and resentment intensify.

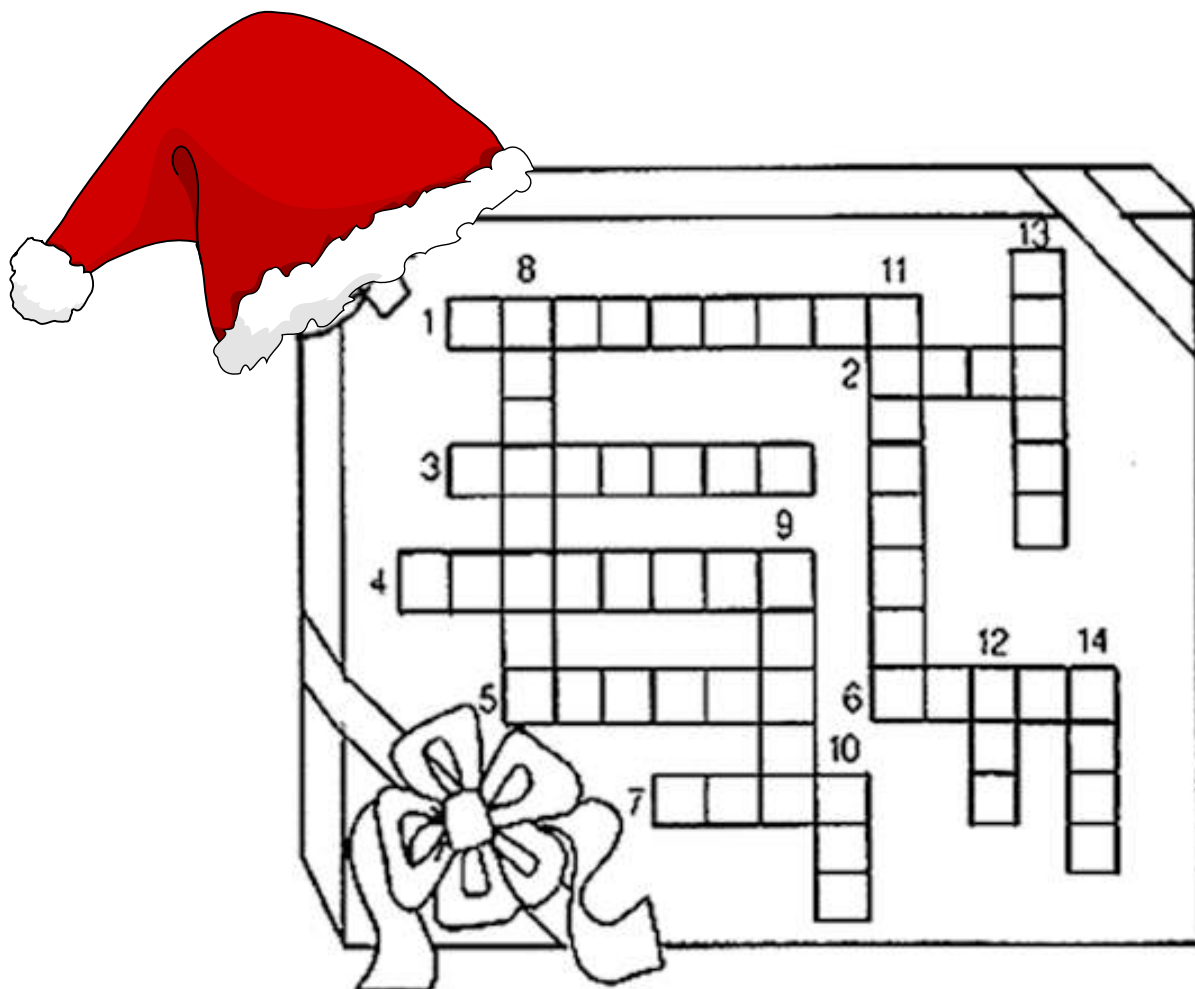


The standout of this film is undoubtedly the acting; Colin Farrell delivers perhaps his best performance, striking the perfect balance between frustration and grief, yet he does not outshine his co-star Brendan Gleeson whose subtle performance is as haunting as it is funny. All the supporting roles blend superbly to build this surreal yet authentic Irish community as the cast's chemistry is tone-perfect, equal parts comedic and gut-wrenching.

The film also hits the mark with its gorgeous cinematography and atmospheric score and is definitely one of the best films released this year. Be sure to check out if you haven't already!

4.5/5

Now to set the mood for the holidays, we have a crossword for you to complete!
Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Across

1. Hang these on the tree
2. Evergreen or pine
3. Frosty is one
4. You give and receive these
5. Tie this on your package
6. A Christmas color
7. For the top of the tree

Down

8. Rudolph
9. Jolly toymaker
10. Color of Santa's suit
11. Hang this from the mantle
12. Santa's Helper
13. Santa's transportation
14. Christmas carol



ART DEPARTMENT NEWS



Art careers talks at Gerald Moore Gallery

by Jessica Hine, year 12

ON SATURDAY 1ST OCTOBER, I HAD THE VERY INSIGHTFUL OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND A SERIES OF CAREERS TALKS AT GERALD MOORE GALLERY, ELTHAM COLLEGE. MUCH LIKE MANY STUDENTS ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH ART, I WAS CLUELESS AS TO WHAT KIND OF JOB WOULD ALLOW ME TO PURSUE MY PASSION FOR ART, WHILST ALSO ALLOWING ME TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHANGING WORLD AND STILL EARNING MONEY. HOWEVER AFTER ONLY A FEW HOURS, MY IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE WERE ALREADY BROADENED.

I HIGHLY ENJOYED THIS DAY TRIP, AS IT EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY IN MANY ASPECTS OF OUR WORLD, AND WITH JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF SOME JOBS INVOLVED WITH THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY, I BECAME A LOT MORE OPEN MINDED AND EQUALLY EXCITED TOWARDS THE JOBS I COULD APPLY FOR IN THE FUTURE THAT WOULD BENEFIT THE WORLD, WHILST STILL ALLOWING ME TO PURSUE MY PASSION FOR ART.

"THERE IS NO GREATER THING YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR LIFE AND YOUR WORK THAN FOLLOW YOUR PASSIONS – IN A WAY THAT SERVES THE WORLD AND YOU." – RICHARD BRANSON

Sofia Coombe - art history/curating



THE FIRST SPEAKER OF THE DAY WAS SOFIA COOMBE, A WOMAN WHO BEGAN HER CREATIVE CAREER PATH BY ACKNOWLEDGING HER PASSION FOR FILM, BEFORE WORKING IN LONDON FOR 10 YEARS AS A MEMBER OF THE MARKETING TEAM FOR MGM STUDIOS AND UNIVERSAL PICTURES. SHE DESCRIBED HOW HER CAREER PATH EVOLVED FROM BEING PART OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY (WORKING FOR MAJOR MEDIA COMPANIES, TRAVELLING THE WORLD FILMING MUSIC FESTIVALS, ETC), TO BECOMING A CURATOR OF ART EXHIBITIONS FOR RESEARCHING, PROMOTING AND DOCUMENTING CONTEMPORARY ART DERIVED FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA. HER CURRENT CAREER AS A CURATOR FOR THE ART WORLD DATABASE HAS ALLOWED HER TO CONNECT WITH MILLIONS OF ARTISTS PART OF THE ASIAN COMMUNITY, AND SHOWCASE THEIR INCREDIBLE ARTWORK. AN IMPORTANT INSIGHT THAT SOFIA SHARED WITH THE AUDIENCE WAS THAT IN ORDER TO SUCCEED, ONE MUST NEVER BE AFRAID, AND INSTEAD SHOULD FOLLOW THEIR GUT INSTINCT. IN GENERAL, MANY OF US ARE HELD BACK BY OUR FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN, AND THE OVERPOWERING ANXIETY EXPERIENCED BEFORE TRYING SOMETHING NEW, WHICH ULTIMATELY PREVENTS US FROM SUCCEEDING IN NEW LIFE EXPERIENCES, WHETHER THAT BE IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS OR JOB OPPORTUNITIES. SOMETIMES EVEN JUST ATTEMPTING THE JUMP PROVES THAT YOU CAN ACTUALLY ACHIEVE WHATEVER YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO, YOU JUST NEED TO BE BRAVE AND FOCUS ON WHAT COULD POTENTIALLY BE A SUCCESS, RATHER THAN FUTURE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE NOT EVEN ARISEN YET. STOP THINKING ABOUT THE "WHAT IF'S", INSTEAD THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW, IN THE PRESENT, THAT CAN HELP YOU TO BUILD THE FOUNDATION OF A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE.

Tara Mustapha - video gaming



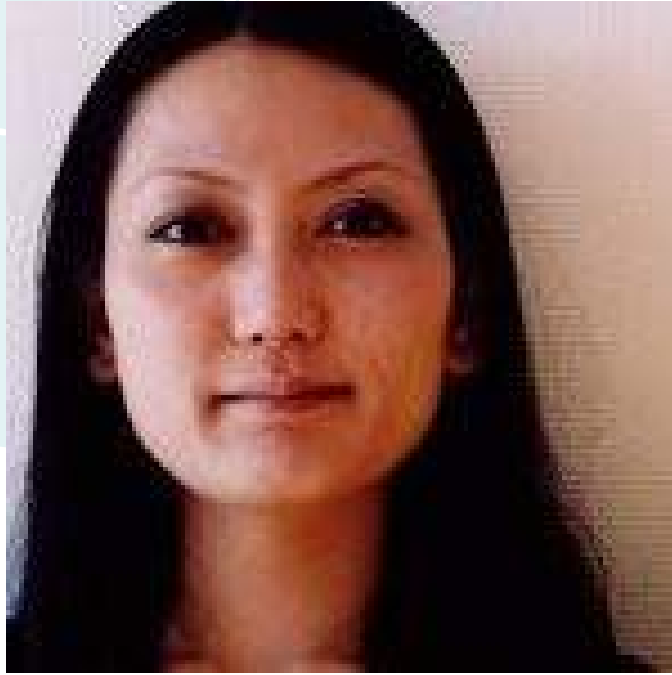
TARA MUSTAPHA IS AN AWARD-WINNING GAME DESIGNER AND PRODUCER, AS WELL AS CEO/FOUNDER OF CODE COVEN, A BUSINESS CORPORATION THAT AIMS TO AID MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES IN ACCESSING A CAREER IN THE GAMING INDUSTRY, MORE SPECIFICALLY THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNICAL SKILLS WHETHER THAT BE THROUGH DESIGNING, PROGRAMMING OR PRODUCING VIDEO GAMES. TARA ENLIGHTENED THE AUDIENCE WITH THE SHEER NUMBER OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES INVOLVED WITHIN THE GAMING INDUSTRY, EXPLAINING HOW GAMING HAS BECOME A MARKET OPPORTUNITY LARGER THAN THAT OF TV, FILM AND MUSIC COMBINED. BEFORE HER TALK, I HADN'T REALISED THE IMPACT THAT THE GAMING INDUSTRY HAS ON SOCIETY - INSTEAD OF JUST BEING A FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT, TARA EXPLAINED HOW THIS ART FORM IS USED TO CONVEY SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MESSAGES, AS WELL AS ALLOWING PEOPLE TO PRACTISE USING THEIR INSTINCTS RATHER THAN JUST LANGUAGE. AFTER A QUICK SEARCH ON GOOGLE, I WAS ABLE TO INVESTIGATE THIS FURTHER - I FOUND OUT THAT PLAYING VIDEO GAMES ACTUALLY INCREASES THE AMOUNT OF GREY MATTER IN THE BRAIN, ASSOCIATED WITH MUSCLE CONTROL, SPATIAL AWARENESS, MEMORIES AND PERCEPTION. ACCORDING TO HER STATISTICS, ONLY 45% OF GAMERS ARE FEMALE, AND 85% OF GAME DEVELOPERS ARE CAUCASIAN - WHAT TARA WANTS TO ACHIEVE IS TO FULLY DIVERSIFY THE GAMING INDUSTRY BY MAKING THE JOBS INVOLVED ACCESSIBLE TO ALL, AND TO EMPOWER THOSE WHO NEED THE CONFIDENCE TO THRIVE.

Charlotte Bovis - Architecture



THE THIRD GUEST SPEAKER WAS CHARLOTTE BOVIS, AN ARCHITECT INVOLVED WITH THE MULTI-AWARD WINNING BRITISH DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE STUDIO, HEATHERWICK STUDIO. CHARLOTTE BEGAN BY INFORMING THE AUDIENCE OF THE LARGE PORTION OF TIME AND EFFORT THEY WOULD HAVE TO WILLINGLY LOSE IN ORDER TO QUALIFY AS A PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECT - IT IS A LIFELONG JOB THAT TAKES A MINIMUM OF 7 YEARS TO QUALIFY, THEREFORE IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT BECOMING AN ARCHITECT, YOU MUST MAKE SURE YOUR PASSION AND DESIRE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO BECOME ONE, WHILST ALSO POSSESSING THE DETERMINATION THAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO SUCCEED IN THE INDUSTRY. I WAS EXTREMELY FASCINATED BY THE STUDENT PROJECT THAT CHARLOTTE HAD DESIGNED DURING HER TIME AT OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY - HER IDEA CONSISTED OF RIB-LIKE STRUCTURE PLACED BETWEEN THE NARROW ALLEYWAYS BETWEEN BUILDINGS, WHICH ALLOWED PEOPLE TO CONTINUE TO WALK THROUGH, BUT ALSO HOLD COMMUNITY AMENITIES ABOVE. FOR EXAMPLE, A ONE PERSON CINEMA (THE FILM COULD ALSO BE VIEWED FROM THE OUTSIDE BY PASSERS ON THE STREET), A MINIATURE LIBRARY, AND EVEN AN ENDLESS SWIMMING POOL. FURTHER FORWARD IN HER CAREER, CHARLOTTE ACTUALLY HELPED DESIGN STRUCTURES THAT WERE PHYSICALLY BUILT, ONE EXAMPLE BEING THE VESSEL, A TOURIST ATTRACTION LOCATED IN NEW YORK CITY. I WAS EXTREMELY IMPRESSED BY THE AMOUNT OF DETAILED THINKING THAT HAD TO GO INTO EVERY SINGLE STRUCTURE SHE DESIGNED, MORE SPECIFICALLY THE WAY IN WHICH THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF CERTAIN MATERIALS WERE CONSIDERED, AND HOW STRUCTURES COULD BE DESIGNED IN WAYS THAT COULD IN FACT BENEFIT AN AREA SOCIALLY, ECONOMICALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY. IF YOU ASPIRE TO BE AN ARCHITECT IN THE FUTURE, I DEFINITELY RECOMMEND WATCHING CHARLOTTE BOVIS' FULL TALK ON THE GERALD MOORE GALLERY WEBSITE ([HTTPS://GERALDMOOREGALLERY.ORG/CAREER-DAY/](https://geraldmooregallery.org/career-day/)).

Ayako Lay - graphic design



THE LAST TALK THAT I ATTENDED WAS THAT OF AYAKO LAY, A WOMAN WHO PREVIOUSLY WORKED IN A SMALL CLUB IN TOKYO, BEFORE BECOMING A WEB/GRAPHIC DESIGNER FOR JOHN LEWIS. IN THE 90S, AYAKO WORKED IN THE SMALL CLUB 'KISS', HOWEVER THE COMPANY ENDED UP BEING SHUT DOWN, AND SHE WAS IN SEARCH FOR A NEW JOB THAT WOULD STILL DRIVE HER PASSION FOR MUSIC, BUT ALSO HER PASSION FOR ART AND DESIGN. AYAKO MADE THE DECISION TO LEAVE JAPAN AND HEAD TO THE UK, WHERE SHE WOULD THEN LEARN ENGLISH, HOWEVER SHE ENDED UP RETURNING TO JAPAN TO WORK FOR A COUPLE OF RECORD LABELS, BEFORE SAVING UP THE MONEY TO RETURN TO THE UK, WHERE SHE WORKED AS A GRAPHIC DESIGNER FOR BOOMBOX RECORDS UNFORTUNATELY, AS TECHNOLOGY ADVANCED, THE POPULARITY OF RECORDS BEGAN TO PLUMMET, THEREFORE AYAKO HAD TO FIND A JOB THAT SUITED THE CURRENT CLIMATE. SHE WAS THEN INVOLVED WITH PLANETPATROL, A COMPANY THAT MANAGED EVENT WHERE LIVE MUSIC AND LIVE ART WOULD COLLIDE - AYAKO WOULD MAKE LIMITED EDITION PRINTS OF THE ART CREATED DURING THE NIGHT. MOST RECENTLY, SHE JOINED THE WEB DESIGN TEAM FOR JOHN LEWIS, AND HAS SUCCESSFULLY CREATED BEAUTIFUL WEB PAGES FOR JOHN LEWIS CUSTOMERS, WITH HER JOB INVOLVING ART AND ADVERTISING WORKING HAND IN HAND. THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE THAT I TOOK AWAY FROM AYAKO'S TALK WAS THAT IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL, YOUR INTERESTS MUST EVOLVE IN ORDER TO ADAPT WITH THE CHANGING WORLD. YOU MAY FIND THAT YOUR PASSION/DREAM JOB IS INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE, THAT BEING WITH THE CURRENT TRENDS OF TODAY, AND THAT IS OK- YOU JUST NEED TO RECOGNISE THAT YOUR DREAM JOB MAY NOT BE AS ACHIEVABLE AS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN THE PAST, THEREFORE YOU MUST ADAPT AND FIND A JOB THAT IS SOMEWHAT LINKED TO YOUR PASSION, STILL ALLOWING YOU TO CONTINUE DOWN THE CREATIVE PATH.

MERRY
Christmas

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

