

# BEXLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## Summer Magazine 2015



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# Headmaster's Message

We always approach the end of a school year with mixed feelings. Those students leaving the school will have feelings of excitement for their next steps in life, mixed perhaps with sadness at leaving friends and maybe some trepidation about their examination results. IB students will have received their results on 6th July and may already have more certainty about the year ahead as they enjoy the longest holiday they are ever likely to have. Year 11 students are also basking in the longest holiday they have had in years, most of them having taken a day to join us and external student applicants for one of three (very successful, re-modelled and far more student-led) Induction Days for the Sixth Form. Wherever they are headed, both Year 11 and Year 13 students have been a credit to the school during the stressful external examinations season and deserve to achieve excellent results. Year 13 have an impressive array of university courses lined up - best wishes to them all!

Another reason for having mixed feelings this year are the three losses from the school community we have felt this academic year. Just before Christmas, Mr Reg Bowen died after a battle with a long-term illness. Reg was an active and loyal supporter of the school for over 30 years, as a parent, grandparent, PA member and governor; for many of those years he was the Chair of the Governors' Finance and Resources Committee. Then in January, we felt keenly the tragedy of the sudden death of Harry Walford in Year 12 who had come to us in September and made a new circle of friends while keeping up his friendships from St Columba's School. Most recently,

in June, we were shocked to hear that Mrs McAllister, our Librarian had died suddenly at home. Her health had been fragile for many years but she had always soldiered on cheerfully and the gap she leaves after 26 years at the school is deeply felt. In every loss we have to look for the positives, the impact people had on our lives and the special place they hold in our memories. As a school community, we are strengthened as we pull together after these blows and as the best in us is drawn out.

During the Spring Term we said farewell to Miss Kosta in MFL and to Miss Peach, Head of ADT, who is now working at a Pupil Referral Unit. By the end of the term we will have said goodbye to Mrs Gerhardt (History + Y10 SAM), Mr Barrett (Maths), Miss Colaço (Maths), Mr Lupton (Maths), Ms Bartlett (Classics), Miss Jordan (Geography), Ms Banks (Head of English), Miss Price (MFL), Mr Omomowo (Science), Mr Gill (Maths) and Mr Briggs (Economics). We thank all these staff for their tireless contributions and their commitment to getting the very best from our students.

We are also wishing Mrs Kendall a peaceful retirement after 21 years of service to the school. She worked with four of the five Headmasters that have served the school and was PA to three of them. Her calm, kind and professional manner makes her a model for all to follow and as Office Manager and HR lead, she will be missed on a personal level by every member of staff. I am becoming all too aware of how much I will miss her as her final few weeks in school approach. Thank you for all your support, Chris.

Another year has flown by with a remarkable flurry of exciting events and rewarding experiences that are charted in our weekly newsletters. Scarcely a week goes by without something outstanding to celebrate and although the Public Examinations dominate the lives of so many students during the summer period, a succession of key events has continued: Year 12 UCAS evening, the New Year 7 Parents' evening, the BGS Top Universities Conference, the Sports Day and Summer Fayre (although a little chilly, it remained dry), an incredible Enrichment week completed by our final ECM day of the year, Language trips to France, Germany, Spain and Sardinia, the Sixth Form Induction days which I've already mentioned and, at the time of writing, final preparations for the musical production – 'Beauty and the Beast' - suggest we are in for another treat! The annual Art Exhibition is once again a showcase for the remarkable creativity of our students and we still have a Jazz concert to come.

I feel privileged in my role and I am deeply grateful for the commitment of our staff to make this tremendous variety of opportunities available to students. In turn, I am delighted so see so many students willing to help and to take on leadership opportunities with such dedication, enthusiasm and talent.

Finally, I would like to wish staff, students and their families a relaxing and enjoyable summer holiday. I look forward to welcoming our students back in September, refreshed and ready for another rewarding year.

S Elphick, Headteacher

## House Report Including report on the Jack Petchey Award Scheme June 2015

The House competition this year was again a close-run thing but, in the end, Mabbs were victorious. Having lost out by one point last year the celebrations on House Showcase evening when the results were announced were especially energetic! This year there were only sixty three points between first and last place; it was a very close run year. The final results were: Mabbs 393pts, Collins 372pts, Kirkman 366pts, Prothero 359pts, Wellman 355pts and Johnson 330pts.

Our Annual House Showcase event was held on the evening of 25th March and as 2015 marks the 60th Anniversary of the School we invited several former members of the school community: Mr Easterbrook, Mr Pullen, Mrs Williams, and Founder Miss Mabbs, Mrs Mason (Miss Kirkman). All invited guests, parents, staff and pupils alike were treated to six performances of the winning and second placed entries to the House Music, Dance and Drama competitions. Pupils from each House introduced their entry in turn and it was clear to see their enthusiasm shining through from Year

7 pupils to Sixth Formers. Mr Elphick presented the trophy to Miss Gabriel and her House Captains once the correctly coloured ribbons had been attached.



The past academic year has seen a few changes in the Head of Mabbs House. Miss Berridge took over from Mr Harris in September 2014 and then Miss Gabriel replaced her in January 2015. Each House has said 'thank you' and 'goodbye' to their House Captains and a new set have been appointed. Their first test of organisation and rallying skills was evidenced in Sports Day in June, a success all round. Thank

you to the PE Department for all their help running the events.

This year the Jack Petchey Award scheme continues to be linked with the House System, with six of the nine awards being voted on by the Houses. The first of the nine winners was Stacy Kindred (Collins House), for being dedicated to Collins House, taking part in numerous activities despite only being in Year 8 and for being a kind, generous and responsible member of the class who is always happy to help anyone. Meanwhile, Sarah Lasoye (Johnson House), for being such a central part of the life of the school. Everything that Sarah does is done with grace and modesty and for this reason she is admired and respected by staff and students alike. Next came Ashleigh Hunt (Kirkman House), for taking part in House activities since being in Year 7. She has now become a confident and inspirational House Captain who is very popular with younger students. She leads by example and she copes well with stressful situations. She is very supportive of everyone else and a pleasure to be around. From Mabbs

House, Orla McDermott won for being "a hardworking student who always strives to be better. She's incredibly kind, thoughtful and an amazing friend." Orla is "very kind - she helps younger children at Guides...", "and helps raise loads of money for charity." Jeyakrishna Jeyakumar won for Prothero because he "dedicates his time to helping others in need. He helps raise funds for his local hospice and is planning a sky dive in September to raise even more money. Whilst at the hospice he talks to the people there and spends time with them, helping them to relax and have a beneficial day" and "for his determination and perseverance in encouraging others to do their best and for being incredibly gifted in sports and athletics". Kyle Hopper Dowling (Wellman House) won for his work and time raising money, petitioning the council and personally building a local skate park for the children in their area to enjoy. In addition, Oluchi Ezeh (Yr12 Prize Winner) has time for everyone; she works exceptionally hard but finds the time to follow her interests. She directed and was responsible for a student production of A Streetcar Named Desire. She is an excellent representative of the school by being diligent, humble and gregarious with a wonderful work ethic. She's smart, kind and modest. Precious Olubari (Yr9 Prize Winner) won for her work and time spent helping others to read and write, taking part in the Read-a-thon, helping to raise money for charity, her time spent in the school library helping others, being a library prefect and her contributions in class which benefit other students. Emma McCaughey (School Council winner) was awarded the prize for her work with Charlton Upbeats, giving up her own time to volunteer, baking cakes and completing

### Prothero House

After a great year a few things have happened since Easter mainly the appointment of our new leadership team.

Prothero mentor and Secretary: Alex Bronsdon

Senior captains: Skye Willis-Barrett (sport leader) and Sanjog Gharti-Chhetri (Dance supporter)

Captains: Abi Falase. (Dance specialist leader), Paddy Crowley (Music specialist), Favour Olajide (chief organiser), Abu Garba (sport, Dance and music supporter)

House Drama leader: Conor Coakley

House Music Leader: Felico Lobo

They showed great success in enforcing the aim of full participation for sports day. This took a lot of organising and required support from the Prothero form tutors and students with the house. It was lovely to see the: 'yes I will do it!' attitude across all years. This commitment paid off as we have begun the battle with a win. Yeah!!!!!!!!!!!!!! So thank you all for getting involved

the Shine half marathon. All these winners have each received a £200 prize to be spent by the school on something that they have nominated. This includes the purchase of new games for the MFL department, a food mixer for Food Technology, furniture for the 6th form centre, a DJ for the Sixth Form Prom, visit from a Drama company and another from a children's author.

The winners have been invited to attend an Award Celebration evening in July to receive their medallions. This year for the first time the students of the school have nominated and voted on our first Leader Award and we have recently heard that our nomination was successful. The winner is Mrs Denise Green, Senior Mid-day Supervisor. Denise was a very popular choice from all year groups, she is in the school canteen, by the entrance to the school every morning, however it is clear that our pupils consider her to be the welcoming face of school. Here are some of the reasons Denise was chosen: 'In the mornings she always checks that you are OK'; 'she goes out of her way to ensure everyone has a great day'; 'she is always cheerful and makes everyone feel welcome'; 'she's always cheerful and gets to know the kids'; 'she helps you with any issues you have and is always happy to help and talk to you. Best dinner lady ever!' and 'her warmth is a great asset to BGS'.

Mrs J Snelling  
House Leader



and bring on the senior field and up-coming sporting events.

Mrs Mitten – Head of Prothero  
**Johnson House**

It has been a trialling year for Johnson. After getting off to a spectacular first place start with Sports Day, our fortunes shifted as we saw ourselves begin the long descent down the leader board which ended in a 6th place finish. Any other group of pupils would have soon become dejected by repeated defeat and thrown in the towel, but not Johnson House, who fought on in the face of impossible odds with tenacity, determination and perseverance.

So maybe we didn't win, but it was a fantastic year nonetheless. Alongside the usual sporting events, we also had 'High School the Musical' for House Drama (which without the 'Musical' bit became simply 'High School'), an electrifying performance of The Beatles' Twist and Shout for House Music and a House Dance performance which embraced an eclectic range of different dance styles and including pupils from Year 7 right up to Year 13.

As with every summer the time comes to thank our outgoing House Captains: Sarah

Lasoye, Godwin Okojie, Fatima Lee, Caitlin Moore, Mary Odonkor, Jordan Adelaide, Joe Marsh and Shannon Harris. The House Captains this year have a very hard act to follow.

Which leaves nothing other than to welcome our new House Captains: Senior House Captains Lauren Sweeney and Bethany Webster, House Captains Maisie Lau, Delina Michael, Lucy Battersby, Natasha Polston, and Assistant House Captains Lewis Murrell, Kyle Heslin-Rees and Conor Robertson.

The only way is up!

Mr Husbands - Head of Johnson

### Collins House

It has been another great year for Collins; finishing second place is wonderful, especially ince we've been in fourth place for the past two years. It has been an amazing year. House Drama was the best coming first in one of the big three, was amazing and second in House Music another of the big three was the icing on the cake.

I am very proud of the students' for their dedication and enthusiasm for house events. I have been blessed with excellent and hardworking House Captains for the past two to three years and more importantly the out-going team for 2014-2015.

We have had some successes: in junior boys' rugby, junior house table tennis, intermediate house cricket and girls rounders'.

As we round up the year , I would like to wish the out-going House captains good luck and all the best for the future: Senior House Captains- Joseph Masters and Thando Parker, House Captains; James Jones, Marco Farato and Katrina Collison. Thank you for all your hard work.

We all in Collins House would like to welcome the new House Captains for 2015-2016; Senior House Captains; Vicky Chivers and Synduja Jayatharan, and House Captains Monika Faulkner, Holly White, Pippa Cuthbert, Ryan Dubbey , James Chu and Jamie Allen. Good luck to you all. You have something to live up to ... Let's go for it this year, I know you can do it.

Finally, from me to everyone in Collins House, Have a wonderful summer.

Mrs M Lasoye - Head of Collins

### Kirkman House

First of all I would like to say a huge thank you to my outgoing Captains: Jamie, Ashleigh, Anveer, Celina, Bobby and Ross. They did a great year's work and should be very proud of what they achieved!

I am very happy that we are succeeding in such a range of subjects and that we have



such a lots of students taking part in many different events.

We won outright in both Cookery competitions, senior basketball, and Inter Rugby as well as some curricular competitions.

Our brilliant Drama entry (Nanny McPhee) came second, and was performed at the showcase which Mrs Meason (Miss Kirkman) attended. We managed a fantastic second (to an amazing Prothero entry) in the Dance; again, a testament to the hard work and sheer amount of talent in the House.

In Music we came third; thank you to all the non-Captains who took leadership roles here such as Poppy, Tom and Matt. Photography, table tennis, football were all other successes.

We came overall top in the Inter completion, so well done to the Y9s and 10s!

This left us in an overall position of third. Everyone should be very proud of this; as usual after the first event (Sports Day) were weren't doing so well, but the house pulled together and thanks to the Captains had some great results.

I'm looking forward to working with my new team: James, Louisa, Alice, Ben, Chris, Rosie, Regan and Sajana, so good luck to them!

Alice Fisher - Head of Kirkman

Mabbs House

I am very proud to say that Mabbs are top of the Leader board 2014- 2015! A colossal thank you needs to be given to my hard-working, vivacious and enthusiastic team

for the past season: the inspiring Senior House Captains, Rachel Gordon & Freddie Evans and supportive House Captains, Charlotte Williams, Jamie Ludford, Harry Wright, Charlie Fanning and Jarvin Ofosu-Yeboah.

I took over from Miss Berridge in January where the team were already on winning form. The swimming competition was a particular highlight, especially the relay race. I watched the students try with all their might to pull into the lead and win!

In all the events the House Captains tried their hardest to motivate and energise the competitors. In particular I was able to see House Dance and House Music flourish from inventive ideas to super spectacles with teachers and students congratulating their efforts. House Drama was also a performance to be proud of. We did extremely well in all events including: basketball, netball, football, cookery, harvest box challenge, badminton and house quiz. Please take a look at the Mabbs planter; the purple plants look Mabbs-nificent! All of these events lead to the success of Mabbs.

Behind the great team of leaders are the individuals who compete. A massive Mabulous thank you to all those students who tried their hardest in the competitions. I watched 2 Year 10 girls, who believed they couldn't play football, score two goals against a full team; a student in Year 9, who didn't believe she had any talent in photography, place 5 entries and contribute to our win; the Bridge team who allowed Year 8s to compete instead of the expert Year 13s to give them a sporting chance and I witnessed many students on Sport's day competing in races they found challenging. Without their energy, determination and sportsmanship we would not have won.

I am looking forward to next year's events. The new Senior Captains, Oluchi Ezech & Romilly Bobby and their House Captains, Ahad Azad, Rebecca Pellegrinetti, Josh Stringer and Solomon Tucker are already preparing for House Drama and are aim to retain the title of House winners.

Miss Gabriel Head of Mabbs

Wellman House

I would like to congratulate all the Wellman competitors on a very successful house year, our triumph as a house may not have come in the form of outright victory, but we showed our true colours (all shades of orange of course) by obtaining an incredible amount of sportsmanship points! We had an abundance of volunteers for most house competitions and managed to field a team for every event in the year. Both of these things are a testament to both the house as a whole and the hard work of our excellent house captains: Dan, Thulasi, Shannon, Kwame, Emily and Grace. Wellman was able to demonstrate its excellence during house showcase, recreating our first place entry to house music; an instrumental medley of Classical and Rock music, the highlights being the headline act with its pure singing with harmonies in the song in Dog Days are Over. and the chorus song which was a truly Wellman mash up of Roar by Katie Perry and The Eye of the Tiger. Though we were fifth overall, our intermediate students managed to come second in their category. Wellman house is eager to build on it strengths in the new house year, and has hit the ground running with a strong showing at sports day.

David Ward - Head of Wellman

thanks must go to Mrs Stoddard and Mrs Longman for organising the conference and ensuring that the day was as useful as it was.

Chris Goring – Year 12

Year 9 Trip to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, on 11 June

Fourteen Year 9 students, Mr Dufton and Ms Stoddard visited Lady Margaret Hall, an Oxford college with a particularly welcoming attitude and pretty garden. The students learnt about applying to the university, were shown round the college and the city (including the Natural History Museum which looks like a cathedral to science) and took part in some taster sessions to give them a little sense of how students learn at Oxford and Cambridge.

As always, the students can describe the experience best of all, so here are some comments from three of them:

"The trip to visit Oxford was outstanding and I enjoyed it more than I am able to express. I thought that the tour around Lady Margaret Hall was fun and informative; as was the trip around Oxford itself, which kept all of us, me especially, enthusiastic and excited to learn more and more about the city. The academic sessions were extremely enjoyable and I certainly got a sense of how hard-working students from Oxford are and how hard you must work to get into such a brilliant university. I believe that, although going to Oxford University seems like a dream, the trip has enabled me to see that with determination and an enthusiasm for learning, anything is possible. I would thoroughly recommend this trip and Oxford University to anyone who is thinking of going!"

Jake Rodrigues

"The trip to Oxford was really insightful and has made me want to go there when the time comes. The campus was extremely beautiful and the people were very kind. Unfortunately, there was a lot of traffic on the way back, but otherwise the day was good!"

Valerie Whittles

"My trip to Oxford University was a truly enchanting experience, with lush scenery, amazing architecture, fascinating heritage and an empathic & friendly community; I couldn't have asked for a better place to be! I won't lie, before I made it to Oxford I had prejudicially thought that the students there were awkwardly posh geniuses in elaborate suits and dresses who lived on a strict diet of crumpets and Earl Grey tea, but I was heavily mistaken; the students and society in general were very down to earth! I made

friends with many first and third-year students! The city was also a beautiful place, filled with intriguing museums, serene parks and fields and a world-famous copyright library, which has a gargantuan labyrinth underground, full of every published book in history!

It was wonderful to be in Oxford, and knowing that putting all my effort into my studies could get me there gives me a great incentive for all my GCSEs and A-levels. Overall, my trip to Oxford University was something I will never forget, for all the right reasons."

Timi Akinsola

Thank you to Mr Bradley for organising the trip, and we are sure it will be the first of many for our younger students.

Ms Stoddard

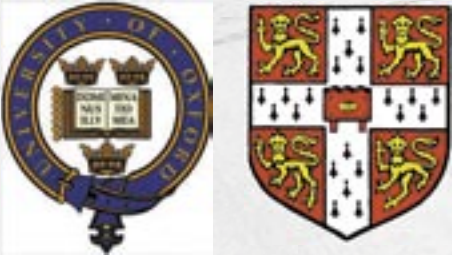


Visit to the London School of Economics

On the 16th of June my fellow peers and I went out on a trip to the London School of Economics. The university itself is one of the top Russell group universities and is considered to be one of the most prestigious universities in the world, always close behind other renowned universities like Oxford and Cambridge. We travelled there by train and were courteously welcomed with tables of appetizers. After that we were given an informative tour around the vast campus which I found was very remarkable. Our tour ambassadors, ranging from students who had just recently finished their exams and were preparing to graduate, were very polite and informative and keen to answer any questions we had. Throughout the whole day we were given talks and lectures that were, on the whole, extremely insightful and quite benefiting. My group and I even managed to gain access to the top of the university where we were bewildered with a magnificent view of London and all its hot spots. In summary, the trip was an inspirational and motivating luxury which I'm sure encouraged all who attended to strive towards success and go to university if that's what will help you reach your goals. I'd like to thank my teachers for granting me with this opportunity and I recommend all of you to visit a university and discover what your future holds for you.



Top University Conference 2015



On the 22nd of June, 2015, Year 12 students from a variety of local Sixth Forms were invited to a conference to help with the preparation for their applications to the country's most prestigious universities. The event, which saw staff from a number of high-ranking universities visiting the school, provided information about application processes, preparing for interviews and completing the personal statement.

The first session, run by our very own Mr. Husbands and Mr Morris, provided students with five core tips for their interviews

and offered them a chance to test their skills by interacting with students from different schools. Tips such as ensuring that you have prepared yourself for the interview and avoiding giving curt answers helped us as we began asking one another questions about our university ambitions.

After a short break, staff from a number of universities (including Oxford, Cambridge, UCL and Imperials) spoke about the admissions process for their institution. The discussions about the kind of grades that students would need to attain at first appeared intimidating, but made sure that those with such lofty ambitions were aware of the challenges before them. It was also intriguing to hear about a number of unique or new courses to which students may not have been exposed before; many of the courses focused around blending multiple subjects, suggesting that the future of university education may involve studying a wider range of connected subjects.

Next, students attended sessions focused on their fields of interests, allowing them to spend time with staff for their subjects. I was lucky enough to be spend time in both the English and the Modern Foreign Language sessions; both involved teachers giving the students extracts that could be used for Oxford aptitude tests and allowing us a chance to cut our teeth on some challenging material.

This was followed by a fayre for the universities, during which we were able to ask questions to former students of Bexley Grammar and the representatives of the establishments. The day concluded with an insightful presentation by Mrs Longman on the topic of personal statements, arming students with the knowledge to produce the best application that they can.

All in all, the event was a success, giving students the opportunity to interact with representatives of universities. Special



Imperial War Museum

On Thursday the 11th June, the year 10 GCSE history students spent the day at the Imperial War Museum, where they visited three exhibits regarding both world wars for their controlled assessments. The interactive and light-hearted “Fashion in the ration”, in particular, will be beneficial for the students when completing their GCSE coursework in September. Although all three were full of intriguing artefacts and engaging wartime stories, by far the most hard hitting and powerful was the museum’s infamous Holocaust exhibition; an exhibit so distressing that it is only open to those over 14 years of age.

As the hour long audio tour takes you through the lives of those affected most grievously during the Holocaust, the students found themselves met with such cheerless and heart-wrenching sights that many of them were forced to step aside to compose themselves. One of the most affecting portions of the tour hit the students like a brick wall as they found themselves standing in one of the very cattle carts that hundreds of people in the Jewish community had been transported, and even died in, during the Holocaust. Despite the depressing aura of the exhibit, it was one of the most interesting places I have visited, and the whole day in general kept the students captivated and eager to learn more.

Isobel Kaul – Year 10



Enrichment Week – Chinese Culture

China has a rich and colourful cultural history, and masks have played a major role in Chinese tradition for thousands of years. Chinese masks, depending on their function, are divided into several different categories, such as sorcerers’ masks, Tibetan masks, shaman masks and theatrical masks. Today, masks continue to be of great artistic and entertainment value. Also, Chinese masks have become highly desired items by collectors worldwide. Even in this day and age Chinese Masks are used within two main elements of Chinese culture. The New Year masks which are worn by Chinese people to welcome the New Year throughout the world. And the Opera masks which are painted and drawn on the faces of the actors and singers and are used to depict the traits and characteristics of the role each actor is playing.

The Chinese New Year Red Envelope is one of the favourite Chinese traditions for children since on New Year’s Day, they are given the shiny things with money inside! Instead of Santa Claus or presents under the tree, you get your glossy red envelope. Kids of all ages quickly learn the words for red envelope: “hong pao” in mandarin.

Chinese New Year Lanterns make great decorations and this time of the year, you see them popping up everywhere around town, the temples, the stores, homes, parks...



Mass Plant Event

In 2015 the Green Team has been very active cultivating all types of plants. In September Green team members borrowed a house planter and cultivated vegetables and herbs for an entry into the Royal Horticultural Society. In October they planted over 250 hedge-row saplings along the nature area. In March Y7 Green Team members entered the Capital Radio Grow your own lunch competition. In June, Y7 ECM day saw its first Mass Plant. Students were invited to plant a tray of seeds and propagate them over the next two weeks. Students whose seeds grew then brought them to the last Green Team meeting of the year, Friday 10th July at break in H3 and got 5 merits and a small prize. The Mass Plant was organised in conjunction with Greenwich University Sustainable Hub. Lauren Newbury, a research student and outreach worker, also came into BGS to give lessons on planting vegetables and herbs.

Mr Roberts



Finalists!

We had made it the ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales) BASE National Finals! We were on our way to Birmingham to compete and were all thoroughly excited. We had previously decided that it would be better for us to spend an extra night in Birmingham ahead of the competition and were therefore travelling up on Wednesday 24th, with the competition to follow the next day.

Our team consisted of Saffron Heuerman, Sarah Chart, Ben Jackson, Jake Try, Joe Naylor and myself, Hannah Milton.

We were up bright and early for the competition to begin promptly at 10am. We registered and then went to prepare ourselves for what was to come. As soon as the introduction speech had been given, we were thrown into the deep end with a series of challenging and pressured tasks. Some of the tasks included analysing the present risks to a company in a case study we had been given and thinking of possible strategies to encourage growth of the company in the TV documentary industry. Apart from an hour lunch the day was full of challenge, but as a team we responded well and were able to finish the day by giving a, albeit a rather short, presentation to a board of judges based our findings.

After this we were given a chance to network with ambassadors from accounting companies just Ernst and Young, PwC and Crowe Clark Whitehill. This was an amazing experience for young adults, such as myself, who are extremely interested in a career in accountancy. It gave us a lot of valuable skills that we can carry through into the workplace and will look brilliant on our CVs. We were all able to pick up on our mistakes and now feel that this experience has enabled us to make more informed choices in the future.

For me personally, I now know that a career in accountancy is where I see myself. I am even more interested in obtaining a school leaver position, with a company such as EY, once I leave school next year, and this experience has encouraged me to make the most of all the opportunities that come my way in the future in order to make my plans a reality. We are all extremely grateful to Mr Joe and the Business and Economics department for this wonderful opportunity.

Hannah Milton – Year 12



Tate Modern

Year 10 art students went to the Tate Modern last week to get some inspiration for their own coursework and projects in school. The museum proved to interest and satisfy the students with the first exhibition, Poetry and Dreams. If they were expecting the notoriously pretentious museum to be presenting ostentatious pieces of “art” (Joan Miro comes to mind), then they were surprised to find that the exhibition displayed exceptional paintings and sculptures, if a bit depressing.

They were most impressed by the Poetry and Dreams displays – the other exhibitions showed more of the expected Tate Modern-type art perhaps. Artists that wowed included: Ibrahim El-Salahi with his painting “Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams” depicting the things that scare you when you are a child; “Three Symbols” by Eileen Agar who featured frequently in the museum with her colourful work – brightening the often dark and melancholic rooms at the Tate, and a beautiful and completely mesmerising reconstruction of a sculptural body costume by Lee Bul.

Although it was a fun day out for the two classes, the collection of art they saw there will also help them massively in their own work and seeing different techniques and skills used is vital for creating the best work they can for their GCSEs.

Molly Johnson – Year 10



Ibrahim EL-Salahi, “Reborn Sounds of Childhood Dreams”



“Three Symbols”, Eileen Agar



Reconstructed costume by Lee Bul



# A year in the life of a Peer Mentor: Sarah Lasoye

Interview conducted by Natasha Polston and Holly Port

Before the yearly process of handing over the Peer Mentor baton, we decided to indulge in the experience of a previous Peer Mentor, Sarah. We wanted to understand her personal memories of being a mentor so that we could contrast ours in the future. Here's what we found out...

## How did you find the experience of becoming a Peer Mentor?

I thought it was a really wonderful experience! I think in Year 12, despite the brilliant hypothetical-mentoring you practice in training, nothing can really prepare you for the individual circumstances of the people you work with in your form. I was incredibly lucky to be assigned to a form where I could work with members from my own House, so we all got to know each other really well quite quickly. Being entrusted to help younger students going through very familiar experiences to myself when I was that age was an extraordinary experience for me, but this ensured that it was even more rewarding.

## Were there ever any moments where you thought being a Peer Mentor was too much? Were there ever any tricky situations that you felt particularly overwhelmed by? And if there were any, who supported you during these times?

Luckily enough, I never experienced this! As a Peer Mentor, you always come prepared to give as much help as you can in the

worst situations, but for the most part I never encountered a situation that I felt inadequate to help deal with. That's, of course, down to the fantastic job Mrs Prescott did in training us! You learn so much at that training day as well as at the frequent training sessions organised throughout the year. Add this to the wonderful support team at the school and I think you're equipped to manage a lot!

## What did you find tended to be the weekly tasks of a Peer Mentor?

Checking in on your form was the main task, but really it's up to the Form Tutor and your fellow Peer Mentor in deciding what you actually do with them. Fatima Lee and I thought it would be best to work in small groups, so we took out a group of four students for twenty minutes each week for a catch-up and a check-in with them in order to see if there were any problems. But also, checking your emails for any personal messages sent to you from your form members or Form Tutor as well as checking in with weekly emails from Mrs Prescott for any extra duties, announcements or training sessions.

## What have you taken from your experiences of being a Peer Mentor?

I think the experience has helped me to realise the importance of active listening. I hadn't really understood beforehand that most of the time, your job is hardly ever to dish out advice (which can be difficult to do so when it's tricky to grasp fully each person's situations), but to help the students build their own sense of self-con-

fidence, reasoning and conviction in order to address their own issues in the way they know is best.

## What will you miss most about being a Peer Mentor?

My form. Definitely. 8JR, you were a dream to be around as both a Peer Mentor and as a House Captain and I will never forget your impressive ability to change the topic of any conversation to a recent film or television programme. I will miss you all.

After listening to Sarah's experience of being a Peer Mentor, we are more excited than ever to welcome and meet new and current younger students on a weekly basis. For us the weekly meetings will be an opportunity to become more independent and conscious listeners, but more importantly a helping hand for the lower years (and hopefully we are less scary than the teachers!) We have finished our training with Mrs Prescott and the mentoring team, now all that's left is for us to plan our sessions and meet with you. We all look forward to a wonderful year full of amazing opportunities to get to know you all.

## The Peer Mentors for 2015-16 are:

Tommy Adefeya, Mahdi Ahmed, Jamie Allen, Hannah Arnold, Skye Barrett-Willis, Charlie Britton, Alex Bronsdon, Zoe Cain, Sarah Chart, Michael Fisher, Daniel Gibbs, Ben Jackson, Anna Jauch, Luc Legon, Cyrus Pacotho, Fiona Pereira, Natasha Polston, Holly Port, Connor Robson, Srivedan Sithamparapillai, Sophie Smith, Reece Strong, Lauren Sweeney, and Holly White.



# English News

## English Department – Recommended Summer Reads!



### The Versions of Us by Laura Barnett

This compelling novel charting the potential paths of the lives of two students meeting at university in 1958 up to the present day is an absolute must read for the summer. The story, which starts on the Cambridge Backs in 1958 and involves a dog, a bike and a puncture, features three alternative versions of the relationship between Jim and Eva: one where they meet and fall in love, one where they do not meet and one where everything goes horribly wrong. Laura Barnett explores the possibilities of who we will become and where we will go depending on choices we make along the way. While parallels with One Day by David Nicholls and the film Sliding Doors are inevitable, due to the fragmentary epic scale of the story, my favourite thing about this book is the creation of the two central characters and their relationships which are acutely and honestly observed. A great novel in which things do not always go the way we might expect.

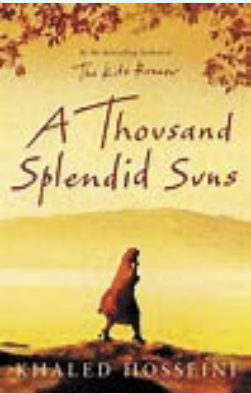


### The Secret Keeper

The Secret Keeper is a great summer beach read. Opening with the arrival of a stranger and an unspeakable act of violence, all observed by a sixteen year old girl hidden in a treehouse one summer's day, the novel's secret casts a shadow throughout and drives you to its startling conclu-

sion. Essentially this is a murder mystery, shifting between the 1930s, the 1960s and the present, and slowly, and pleasingly, unravelling its secrets to the reader. A novel to get lost in!

### Ms Hanington



### 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' by Khaled Hosseini

Set in Afghanistan, 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' is a gripping tale of survival and love. It follows the life of fifteen year old Mariam who is sent to Kabul to marry a man thirty years her senior. Twenty years later, Laila (also fifteen) joins this deeply unhappy and violent household. Set against the political upheaval caused by the Russian invasion and the subsequent rule of the Taliban, this novel focuses upon the intimate lives and the unlikely friendship between the two women. Despite the grim setting and storyline, I found this book to be inspirational and uplifting. Hosseini's ability to create a vivid sense of place is remarkable. It's a book that will stay with me for a long time...



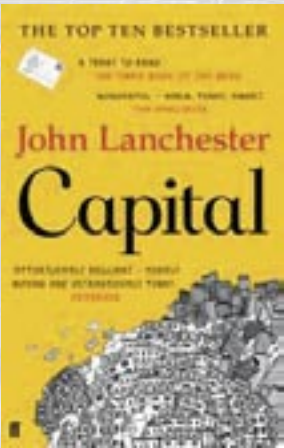
### Rendezvous with Rama, Arthur C. Clarke

'Hello Earth! Can you hear me?' After going silent for 7 months, as I come to write this the comet Robot Philae has made brief contact with Earth again and has again

fallen silent. What will happen next, nobody knows.

Rendezvous with Rama is Arthur C. Clarke's brilliant take on a manned space mission to intercept and land upon an asteroid entering the solar system. However, unlike Comet 67P, things are not quite as they seem. Rather than being an asteroid, Rama as it comes to be known is a cylindrical unmanned alien ship, inside of which is a landscape which stretches out like a corkscrew complete with rivers, cities and streets. Seemingly abandoned, Rama has been left to establish an atmosphere and ecosystem of its own, potentially over millions of years, and as it drifts ever closer to Earth it is down to a team of scientists to gain access and make their way across Rama's hostile landscape in order to try to unlock its secrets.

As with much of Clarke's writing, the emphasis on scientific accuracy and technical detail allow you to not only suspend your disbelief but begin to understand how elements of this could work in reality. So if we are still to hear from Philae, you can always settle for the next best thing: a Rendezvous with Rama.



### Capital – John Lanchester

Not to be confused with the somewhat weightier tomes by Karl Marx or Thomas Piketty, this 'state of the nation' (or capital city) novel is a thought-provoking, entertaining and compelling read. Based on the (loosely) intertwining lives of several very diverse residents of a South London street, it begins in the run up to the 2008 financial crash and ends several years later. I thought it was a convincing evocation of modern London life in all of its variety. There are lots of memorable characters, including a stressed banker, a prodigiously talented but very naïve young Senegalese footballer and a stoical traffic warden, and their stories deal with a whole host of themes, from success and love to death and envy. Clever AND fun, this is a great holiday read.



**A Commonplace Killing**  
**Sian Busby**

1946. The war is finally over, and the soldiers are coming home – to the great regret of Lillian Frobisher, who didn’t want her husband Walter to be killed, exactly, but certainly didn’t want him to come back to her either. Her wartime effort was to provide “comforts” to lonely GIs far from their wives and girlfriends; being faithful to boring, pompous Walter is not an attractive alternative. Murder seems almost inevitable. However, A Commonplace Killing is more than this: Sian Busby convincingly evokes a battered, corrupt London where the bombs have stopped falling but the bombsites are everywhere; where women have to humili-

ate themselves by flirting for a tiny luxury off the ration books; where black marketeers steal powdered eggs with the cunning they once applied to gold bullion. Britain may have won the war, but it is definitely losing the peace. The novel is based on two real murder cases of the period, but the realistic details of everyday life are its most remarkable feature. You can almost breathe the atmosphere.



**CLASSICS DEPARTMENT:**  
**what have our prefects been doing this year?**

Since September I and the other Latin prefect have been running Latin clinic after school to help struggling students in the lower years. Despite a slightly rocky start, the number of students attending has since soared, and it's been great to help them and to see the progress that has been made in their knowledge and understanding.

Also, this last year has been a tremendous one for Classics Club. Over its course, our loyal members have enjoyed learning about a wide range of Greek myths and legends, from Achilles to Athena, from Perseus to Persephone. It's been a huge amount of fun and I believe I speak for all the Classics Prefects when I say thank you to all the people who have attended the club and made all the work worthwhile.

In February, the Classics Department took 27 students to the Bay of Naples to visit Pompeii, Herculaneum and climb Mt Vesuvius. The students really enjoyed seeing the archaeological sites and actually climbing up to the top of the volcano that caused it all! As Matthew Clark said, ‘The trip to the Bay of Naples was one I will never forget and the destruction of the two cities



On top of Mt Vesuvius



Pompeii's amphitheatre

presents us with a unique snapshot of the past. I would recommend paying a visit to the area for anyone who has the slightest interest in the ancient world, as it was a truly memorable experience for me.’

Coming up in February 2016, the department is off again but this time to Rome, the city Romulus founded and where the Roman Empire sprang from.

Katie Chant, Luke Bennell and Matthew Clark

Year 12 Classics Prefects

**YEAR 9 CLASSICS: THE CALLIOPE WRITING AWARD**

This term the whole of Year 9 have been involved in the first ever Calliope Writing Award for Classics at BGS. Calliope was the muse of poetry so it is appropriate that our award is named after her. The epic poet Homer asked for her help in his telling of the Trojan War in ‘The Iliad’ and of Odysseus’ travels in ‘The Odyssey’.

Their task was to write a fictional short story about a person who had actually been to Aquae Sulis as evident on the tombstones found there. Using their knowledge of Roman Bath and of the the Roman Army,

the students had to create a historically accurate story about their character and explain why they were at the Baths and what happened to them.

The quality of the entries by all students was excellent and it was very difficult for the Classics teachers (RPP, AJF, SCB, TMR) marking the stories to whittle it down to three winners. I would like to congratulate all of Year 9 for the effort and imagination they put into their work!

The following students received a Certificate of Achievement for outstanding work: Mirci Gibbs, Cat Astier, Emilia Storry, Sammi Do, Ore Ogunbiyi, Jaskiran Matharu, Edward Baker, Bayley Moitra, Lucy Sargent, Aimee Steele, Robyn Lisle, Madi Baiguzhayev, Lara Holmes, Mia Aitkins, Valerie Whittles, Luke Tassell, Timi Akinsola, Codie Jones, Megan Jenkins, Gabriel Shrimpton, James Wold, Guilio Aguigwo and Samuel Masters.

The first place prize went to HELEN NORMAN of 9JED. Second place went to SUKRITI SHARMA of 9AMJ and third place went to JOSEPH TYE of 9AMJ.

Congratulations to all participants on making this an excellent competition and well done to all the winners.

Miss Pearson - HOD Classics



L- R: Joseph Tye, Helen Norman, Sukriti Sharma.

# Sports News

**BGS PE “Live Well” Initiative**

The 2014-15 school year has had a big push on promoting physical activity and a healthy lifestyle throughout. Here are some of the highlights:

**Key Stage 3**

- External specialist coaches have been used to provide free coaching at BGS for our pupils at clubs running before/after school. These sports include athletics, cricket and tennis.
- We have continued our strong links with Crook Log Sports Centre and we were fortunate enough to have a personal trainer provide a detailed theory session about how to improve their fitness. Crook Log gym also ran a couple of taster sessions for key stage 3 pupils with the aim of inspiring them to take up a gym membership in the future. Here are a group of girls towards the end of a tough spin class.



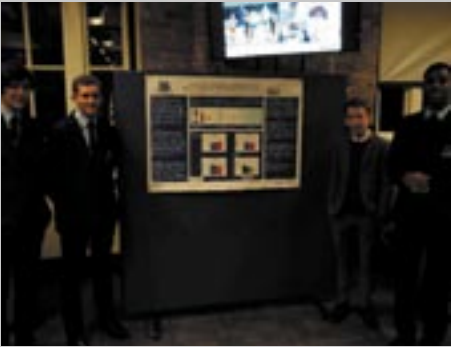
- Throughout the year we have entered BGS teams into a number of competitive events that take place in the local borough against other schools. Pupils have competed in badminton, table tennis as well as indoor sports hall athletics. A special mention deserves to go to the boys and girls badminton teams who got through to the finals which took place at the Copper Box Arena. Here are the successful squads.



- Heather Knight (England women’s cricket team vice-captain) provided BGS with some great experiences for pupils via the Sky for Living Project. Heather came in for 2 days and organised cricket coaching drills as well as informative theory sessions for our Key Stage 3 Gifted and Talented pupils. The pupils were amazed at the routine and dedication required to be a performer at such an elite level.

**Key Stage 4**

- Girls Legacy Day was also held at Crook Log Sports Centre. We were able to select 30 pupils from Key Stage 4 and send them to try out a variety of activities ranging from trampolining to Zumba. The girls all had a very enjoyable day will remember the opportunity and the events that they took part in for a long time. Hopefully some will take up these forms of physical activity on a more regular basis.
- As part of an attempt to work closer with universities to provide opportunities for our pupils we have made great links with the University of Kent this year. Pupils were selected to lead an investigation and then present their findings to highly esteemed academics and athletes. The pupils were supported by a PHD student who assisted with their data analysis and ways of representing their results and conclusions. The idea was to build the confidence of year 11 pupils at carrying out investigations in preparation for the IB. It has been really beneficial and we hope to develop the relationship further in the future.



**Sports Leaders**

Sports leaders courses have been run throughout the year. Level 1 (year 10) has a total of 64 pupils and Level 2 (year 12 pupils) had 14 dedicated leaders. Both level 1 and 2 have led a variety of events for local primary schools to participate in including the following:

- Level 1 - Kwik Cricket
- Level 1 - TOP SPORT/PLAY
- Level 1 - Hosted the North Kent Football Trails
- Level 2 - Hi Five Netball
- Level 2 - OAA Festival



- Level 2 – Primary School Links
- Level 2 leaders have been visiting local schools on a weekly basis and assisting with PE lessons.

• Level 2 Sports Leaders attended the Youth Sports Trust Young Ambassadors Conference. They were fortunate to meet top level athletes and develop a deeper understanding of what is involved in providing sports opportunities for the school and local community.

**All School**

- Bexleyheath Better Gym Membership Deal. Both staff and pupils have been actively encouraged throughout the year to join the local gym. A discounted rate was agreed and promoted throughout the school.
- Staff Sport has been carried out on a monthly basis and this included events such as volleyball, football, netball and ultimate Frisbee.



Interview with Olivia Piechota  
European Gold Medal Winner

**What inspired you to take up Judo when you were young? Do you see yourself continuing it long into the future?**

When I was around the age of six I wanted to take up a sporting activity. After trying out many different sports clubs from dance to Karate, (which I found quite boring) I joined a small Judo club which held place once a week in a local leisure centre. I have every intention of continuing Judo in the future as it is a sport I not only enjoy but have potential to continue to succeed in.

**What keeps you interested in the sport?**

The competitions are always exciting and something to look forward to! They involve travelling to many different countries in Europe too which means I have a chance to explore places I usually wouldn't, such as Bulgaria. However, the downside to travelling the distance to other countries is that school work and revision usually takes place whilst I am travelling which can be very difficult sometimes.

**What has been your worst injury caused due to the sport?**

My worst injury would be when I broke all the bones in my left hand and had to have plastic surgery.

**What are your recent achievements?**

Last weekend I won Gold in Poland at a European Cup. I also have won the British Championships seven times.

**Do you still get nervous when competing?**

I don't get nervous as much anymore as I've had to get used to large crowds. I find it most daunting when I fight in Finals though, as there are often larger crowds than usual.

**What has been your proudest moment?**

Last weekend was a particular highlight for me, since it was the first time I had won a European Cup. When it was announced that I had won, they played the National Anthem which was an overwhelming experience and also a surprise! I felt incredibly proud of this, especially because I was the only British person to get gold.

**What advice would you have for someone who is interested in taking up judo as a hobby and what qualities would they need?**

Firstly, you can't be too delicate as it is a rough sport! I also think that you need to



be determined and committed. I train every evening after school for two hours which is tiring but helps me keep my fitness levels up. I also think that people, when starting out, should enjoy learning the sport before they have to prepare for competitions.

Interview by Sarah Chart – Year 12

# Music & Drama

## Music department review

Starting a new school, making friends, settling in and joining new clubs and activities might seem to be enough challenges for the Year 7's in their first month at BGS, but this year, they were given an extra challenge: to perform on stage in front of a 200-strong audience, and all their year group! Thursday 2nd October saw the debut of the new Year 7 musicians who have recently joined the school. The Year 7 concert saw both performances from each music class and some students were brave enough to do a solo performance. Overall the concert was a huge success and we can be assured that the future of the music department is in safe hands.



Our year continued with a successful KS5 Showcase, featuring soloists from our A-Level and IB classes and songs composed by our Year 12's and a trip to see the London Philharmonic Orchestra perform some of the A-Level set works at the Royal Festival Hall. Our 6th formers also performed at the Marlborough School Carol Service in the last week of term, and sang at two Carol services on the last day. The big event of the Christmas term, however, was our Christmas Concert, which featured all the school ensembles and was a fantastic way to end the term.



In the new year, our GCSE students performed ensemble and solos at the KS4 Showcase, which will be submitted as part of their coursework. The Year 11's also attended a concert at the Royal Festival Hall, to hear some of their set works performed. We were lucky to receive 4 ipads in January, donated by the PA, and have been making good use of these in lessons, particularly to record our GCSE coursework.



The Junior Choir performed at the end of January at the O2 Arena, as part of the Young Voices concert series – an incredible experience for all involved. The Spring Concert at the end of the term was another highlight, with all our school ensembles performing to a very high standard.



The summer term has been equally busy, featuring our youngest musicians once again at the KS3 Showcase, giving them an opportunity to perform as soloists. We also heard the Junior Choir and Junior Orchestra. In Enrichment week, we were the subject of a film project, as educational provider "Sing Up!" came in to film our Music teachers in action to appear in their promotional videos. The 6th form enjoyed a recital and workshop by baritone Simon Wallfisch, as part of the London Song Festival. As I write this, we are coming to the end of a spectacular show week, and have only two weeks left of the academic year. However, we still have a day of ABRSM instrumental exams, the Jazz Evening, music at Speech Day and our exciting tour to Budapest to look forward to... Never a dull week in the Music Department!

Miss Swadkin, Head of Music

Music Tour to Tuscany 2014

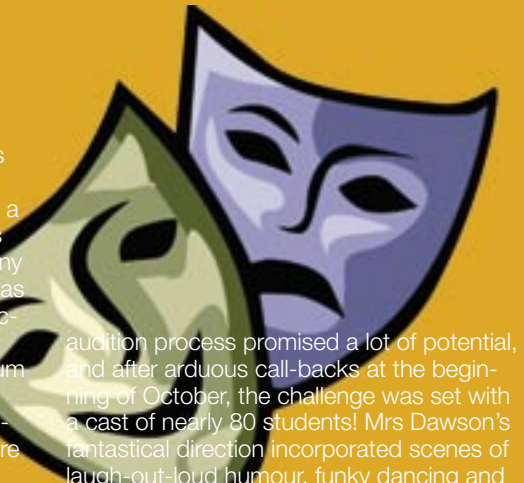


## All the world's a stage at BGS !

Bexley Grammar has always been highly renowned for its stamina in the dramatic department, with each year rolling out a set of exciting and dazzling performances for parents, teachers and fellow students to marvel over. This year, however, marks a new record for the school, with four plays opening in the main hall on top of the many exam performances taking place. What has made this record number even more spectacular has been the amount of student participation: casts reaching their maximum number, students co-directing alongside teachers, and two performances even being entirely student-run! From Shakespeare to Streetcar, Brighton pubs to the Mad Hatter's tea-table, let's have a quick trip down the dramatic calendar...

The year began to a highly ambitious start with the announcement that this year's Christmas show would be 'Alice In Wonderland', directed by Mrs Dawson. The

audition process promised a lot of potential, and after arduous call-backs at the beginning of October, the challenge was set with a cast of nearly 80 students! Mrs Dawson's fantastical direction incorporated scenes of laugh-out-loud humour, funky dancing and her very own wedding china, all of which came together to produce the mind-bogglingly fun tale that we know so well. Bethany Webster and Louisa Dodd shone in their shared role as the eponymous 'Alice', and gave her a heart-warming vulnerability that brought the whole stage to life.





Next on the list came 'One Man, Two Guvnors!', a show that roared into existence in a way never before seen on the BGS stage. The first noticeable difference amongst this cast of 8 superbly talented students was that they had no teacher directing them, supervising them or helping them at all. 16-year-old George Fuller, who wishes to pursue a career within stage-lighting, took on the momentous task of directing, producing and acting ahead of his application to the Brit School – in his words, Mr Elphick sure 'had a lot of...[guts]' to trust him! The play's headline performer Joshua Stringer caused uproar within the audience by downing a whole bowl of cold soup and somehow regurgitating it, and the cast of students ranging from ages 14-17 received their deserved credit on the last night with a standing ovation.



**Beauty and the Beast – a resounding success!!**

Following swiftly afterwards was another student-led production of a much darker tone. Senior Prefect Oluchi Ezech rounded up a cast of 10 students to perform in her edited version of 'A Streetcar Named Desire' donating all profits to 'PAPYRUS', a charity that very close to our school's heart. With an elaborate set, authentic costume and well-rehearsed South American accents, the audience were transported to the steaming location of New Orleans. Conor Coakley, who took on the role that made Marlon Brando a superstar, brought an intense and brooding portrayal of Stanley Kowalski to the stage that was both intoxicating and repulsing. The naturalistic performance and dark themes made for tense viewing, and the entire cast's dedication culminated in the violent climax of an unforgettable play.

To add the cherry on top of a wonderful year of BGS theatre, what else could be performed but a true Shakespearean play? New-comer teacher Miss Gabriel took on the task of directing a charming performance of 'As You Like It', with students from year groups 7-9. Rather than sticking with the crowd, however, Miss Gabriel characteristically changed things up and decided to set the performance on a traverse stage - the performance took place ground level in a catwalk-sized area, with audience either side. Charlotte Russo approached her role of undercover-and-in-love Rosalind with ease and comedic flare, and was further complemented by a cast of young and enthusiastic students who promise an even brighter future for our stage. I can't wait!

**Rosie Thackeray, Year 12**



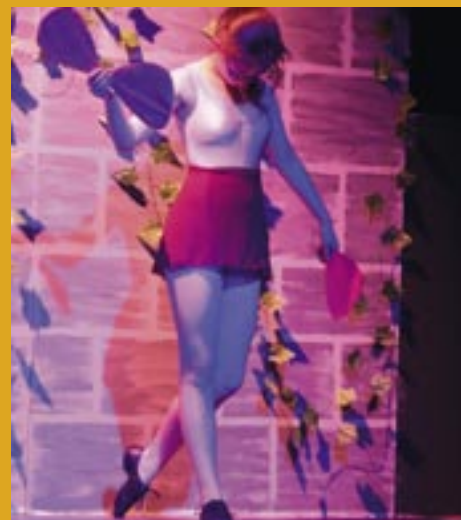
As all students and teachers alike drag themselves wearily to the finishing line that is so tantalisingly close - the end of the school year - the cast and crew of our annual school play once again manage to haul everyone out of the depths of their exhaustion and cause a stir of excitement for this year's production of Beauty and the Beast. The months of gruelling rehearsals and hard work put in by everyone involved has not been wasted, as from the moment the curtains were opened on opening night, to the final round of applause four days later, the plays ran seamlessly.

The on-stage connection between the actors was so authentic that even from the very back of the hall, craning your neck and frantically fanning yourself from the heat; it was easy to become lost in Belle's story and the hilarity of Cogsworth and the other all singing all dancing household appliances. But it wasn't just the talented acting that made the play remarkable, the amount of work going on off stage has been just as important. In my opinion one of the best parts altogether was the live band, made of students of all ages, flawlessly playing the soundtrack, conducted tirelessly by Mrs Love-Davies. Also a huge well done to Mrs Snelling and all those who worked on this year's set, as well as the lighting department, from whom I have been informed that operating hot, heavy spotlights in this summer's weather was not a particularly pleasant task.

The production was, as always, a brilliant end to the year and yet again showed the amount of sheer talent we have in this school. Thank you to Miss Swadkin, Mr Asker, Ms Hanington, Ms Fisher, Mr Ross, Mrs Dawson and Ms Thurlow and all of the

other teachers and students who gave up countless evenings and weekends to put the play together: it was definitely worth it!

**Isobel Kaul – Year 10**



# Art & DT

**School Art Exhibition.  
Molly Johnson – Year 10**

This year's A-Level and IB art exhibition is as strong as ever with a mix of sculpture, portrait and some excellent painting and drawings. No art student would ever tell you that doing a qualification in art is easy but once again the exhibition proves how worth putting all the work in really is. It is also such a great insight into the creativity and imaginations present at BGS. Seeing all the work put together in such an outstanding display is quite an overwhelming sight particularly for the teachers and students involved who have dedicated so many hours of their time to make their course work and final pieces the best they can be.





# MALL GALLERIES

## FEDERATION OF BRITISH ARTISTS

Every year schools and students are invited to submit work to one of the biggest national exhibitions in London. This year the Art department are proud to announce that both Regina Onodjamue studying IB Visual Arts in Year 13 and Susannah Davies studying A Level Art in Year 13 both were selected to exhibit work from thousands of entries. Both received certificates to commend them on their high standard of work and the Art Department are very proud of their achievements.

If you would like to view the work this can be seen from Tuesday 7th July until Saturday 11th July at the Mall Galleries, The Mall, London SW1.



Regina Onodjamue



Susannah Davies

# Geography

## Geography Review

By Charles 'The Rock' Britton 12TM  
As always, this was an eventful year for the Geography Department at BGS, featuring trips to assist students study everything from coasts to rivers to tectonics in the world around us.

Naturally, the cycle was initiated on September 30th when the Year 12 IB Geographers headed to the River Darent which runs from Westerham before joining the Thames in order to collect primary data on the river's characteristics. Geographers described the day as 'really enjoyable', 'despite the soggy feet where water levels exceeded welly height, the close shaves with falling in the River and the stinging nettles'.

The trips continued as a group of Year 12 AS students migrated to Dorset from 10th-14th October in order to absorb 'the abundance of wonderful landmarks and the remarkably beautiful geographical scenery.' The students investigated the effects of the 1990 flood of the River Swanbrook, which students later utilised as part of their case studies. They later quoted that 'Despite the terrible weather, the trip was very beneficial and entertaining.'

Then it was the turn of the Year 13 IB students on 17th November, erupting onto the streets of London to assess levels of urban development with a specific focus on public transport services. Branching from Notting Hill to the Docklands, the trip encompassed the socio-economic effects of international migration, gentrification and regeneration on the London landscape. It helped students to judge 'for ourselves the vast changes London has been through as well as the multiple changes between the different forms of transport London has to offer.'

The next wave of trips was the Year 9 trip to Seaford to evaluate the effectiveness of coastal management strategies employed along the coastline. They paid attention to coastal defences, the beach and land use. 'All in all, it was a great trip' the students agreed.

Finally came the Year 12 trip to Iceland on 26th March which was luckily not a natural disaster. I myself had the pleasure of experiencing the stunning scenery of this unique

nation. We examined everything from sea cliffs to the urban environments of Reykjavik and even lava tubes. My original opinion from my article still stands: 'it was the best school trip I've been on and the experience of a lifetime: a spectacular combination of breath-taking natural scenery, geography in action and calamitous hilarity,' 'It was truly unique and encapsulated my appreciation of Geography and of a country I've never visited before: although coaches, hairdryers and ice have definitely declined in my opinion.'



On the 16th and 17th of June, year 8 students went on a trip to the River Darent for our cross curriculum Geography-Maths project. We started the day by being split into three groups, then the work commenced!

We spent the morning jumping into the river, collecting and analysing data; width, depth, velocity, wetted perimeter and size and shape of pebbles, as well as searching for, and identifying invertebrate creatures in the cold water depths. From timing dog biscuits to tripping in the river, we really took the most from our unique trip.

With freezing feet and soaked wellies, we spent our lunch frolicking across meadows filled with flowers and playing fun football and Frisbee games.

After our tiring trip, we hopped onto the coach, spent 20 minutes driving back to school before being let home!

Although we'd been chilled to the bone with freezing water, it really was a fantastic experience.

**By Abbigail & Koner (8RPP)**



# Psychology **Fighting the Fear!**

## Fighting the Fear!

Back in November, following their abnormality studies, the Year 13 Psychology IB group took a trip to London Zoo to discover the characteristics and treatments available to overcome phobias.

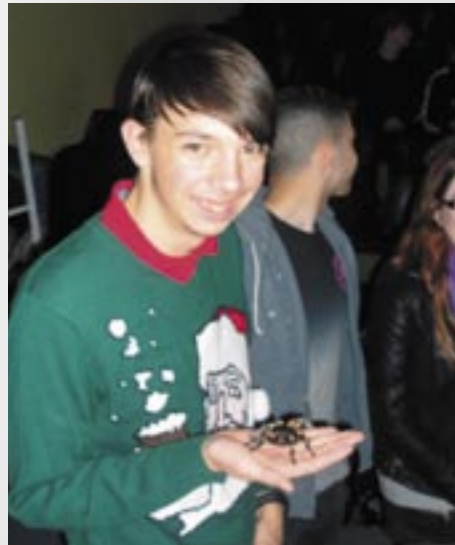
After touring the exhibits and taking part in some Mindfulness Meditation, students got up close and personal with a smashing furry, eight-legged friend called Rosie. Some even overcome their own fears and phobias.

## Year 12s Test their Memory

In March the Year 12 IB Psychology group got to meet Dr Elizabeth Loftus, one of the foremost American cognitive psychologists and experts on human memory; in particular the reliability of eye-witness testimony. In addition, Professor of Criminology, author and presenter of the Channel 5 series, Killers Behind Bars, David Wilson of Birmingham University presented his latest research about British Hitmen. Attempting to show the extent that media images of Agents and others like them, correspond to the reality of contract killing. The mismatch between what neuroscientists and psychologists think they know about the mind was eloquently presented by Professor Sergio della Sala's Neurobollocks lecture.

## Mr Ward's Friends help out the Year 11's Phobia treatments studies

Mr Ward kindly brought in his corn snake and red-knee spider to help students experience the emotional and physical arousal of specific phobias. Students were to try out the various treatments and assess their effectiveness.



# Languages

## Languages Round-Up

This year has been another jam-packed one for the MFL department and its students, with many events having taken place in-school, regionally and nationally. September kicked off with our 'Our Business Is Languages' event, hosted by BGS and attended by seven different Bexley Borough secondary schools at Greenwich University. It was closely followed by BGS International Week, with students from Years 7 to 10 enjoying a week of extra-curricular language and culture themed activities, registration in foreign languages, international quizzes and a day off-timetable. In November, primary schools visited our faux French market, Europa Town, led by our fantastic MFL Sixth Form students. There have also been many competitions – The KS3 and 4 writing competitions, the KS4 speaking competition, the KS3 and 4 video competition and the KS5 debate competition. The latter involved our very skilled MFL Sixth Form students debating the legalisation of cannabis with other students from schools across South East England in a variety of languages. On top of all this, there have been various outings such as the Sixth Form visit to Paris to see a French play and the Year 8 Japanese trip to the Japanese embassy, where students were able to try their hand at Japanese calligraphy and dance before eating at a London Japanese restaurant, ordering their food and drink in Japanese. Recently, our Year 8s were visited by French and German theatre groups, who delivered plays to them in the different languages. This year Year 12 Japanese students won a prestigious award for the design of the school's Japanese department's webpage. A big well done to students and staff for all their hard work and accomplishments.

## Miss Price



Germany was a truly spectacular journey for me and everyone who travelled there! The trip included a large variety of exciting experiences, which ranged from meeting many new people and making new friends (including the guest families that nurtured us during our stay in their homes); visiting awe-inspiring sights and monuments, including the magnificent gothic architecture of the towering Kölner Dom (Cologne Cathedral); the intriguing origin of the famous composer Beethoven and the events throughout his life, found inside his very own home; the absolutely breath-taking views from the ancient hilltop ruins Drachenfels (Dragons' Rock); seeing beautiful fields with lush

sceneries during the coach journeys themselves, all the while chatting with friends (or singing our hearts out with an atonal passion!) - the list is virtually endless, and every single bit of it made Germany a completely new adventure that I'll never forget for as long as I live!

Every single part of Germany was really fantastic, but to me, the best moment during the trip was definitely our journey to Phantasialand (Fantasyland), a famous German theme park filled with exhilarating roller coasters and jaw-dropping attractions, fit for only the bravest of hearts. It was there in which I unleashed my inner infant, as I frantically scurried across the park, riding every ride I saw along the way, including a water ride which soaked me beneath my skin, a massive rollercoaster that caused me to lose my voice due to screaming so hard, and a scary tower that had a ride that dropped you in complete darkness!!! It was a definite highlight of the trip, and I'd recommend going there if you ever travel to Germany yourself!

Overall, Germany was a great way to test my German language skills, all while immersing myself in a completely new environment and culture, with interesting traditions and delicious food! As I've said before, it's an experience I will never forget, for all the right reasons.

## Timi Akinsola



Having spent a week in sunny Malaga, the holiday blues hit us as soon as we touched down in Gatwick to the sight of typical English grey. However, even the dreary weather failed to put a damper on the week of fun and excitement 22 BGS students, and Mr Stewart and Mrs Meyer of course, had just experienced!

After an early start, a 3 hour flight with many very excited teenagers and one lost suitcase, i'm sure Mr Stewart and Mrs Meyer were relieved to wave us goodbye and send us off with our Spanish families! Amongst lots of hugs and shrieks of '¡Hola!', all the English and Spanish partners hurried off to spend Sunday evening getting reacquainted around a pool under the scorching Spanish Sun.

Next morning, we all met up at the Spanish school and shadowed our partners to their lessons throughout the day, feeling very



much like celebrities as we were constantly stopped and introduced to the other students. When school ended, several of us went out for lunch before meeting up with our teachers for a tour of the famous Picasso museum which was very interesting. The students then went on to a Moroccan restaurant for pre-dinner and crepes- we had around 6 delicious meals a day!



The next day, we had a guided tour of Malaga and the famous Cathedral, as well as lots of free time to wander the beautiful city ourselves. We were also all thrilled at the return of the missing suitcase! Following this, the English students and their partners all went to the sandy beach where we were joined by many other pupils from the Spanish school. We all relaxed, sunbathed and ate ice-cream until the sun went down.

Wednesday was our final day at the school and everyone was seeing the huge improvement in our Spanish speaking and understanding already, proving that listening to a lesson on DNA in Spanish really DOES pay off!

On Thursday, all the English partners visited the famous Alhambra Palace in the neighbouring city of Granada. The coach journey flew by, accompanied by our very loud singing of newly learnt Spanish pop songs! We had a few hours free time in Granada to shop and explore before climbing the cobbled steps to the palace which was a truly breath-taking and unforgettable visit. Mr Stewart and Miss Meyer even bought us ice-creams!

Friday was an action packed day and everyone was buzzing with excitement as we soaked up the sun in the huge water-park Aqualand! Whizzing down colourful slides, including the steepest free-fall slide in Europe (Kamikaze) it was a day we will never forget!





Saturday had arrived to everyone's dismay as it was our final day in Spain, which we spent with our families and many of us met in the evening for a final meal together. In the early hours of Sunday morning we met and said our goodbyes at the airport and there was not a dry eye in Malaga!

As well as making lifelong friends with our Spanish partners, it brought all of us closer as a huge family and we've even continued our Whatsapp group where we discussed daily outfits and adventures! Writing this brings a nostalgic tear to my eye but this would all have been impossible without Mr Stewart and Miss Meyer who were brilliant from start to finish, albeit insistent on speaking only Spanish!

Reflecting on the trip, I remember the amazing times we had as well as the constant laughter in two languages! It can only be described as the best week of our lives and I urge anyone with the opportunity to go and have the same fantastic experience!

**Kitty Munro 10RAH**

On the 16th June, 9 year 10 students travelled to Isili in Sardinia to spend 5 days experiencing true Italian culture. We stayed with local families that were all friends of Miss Contini. They were all very friendly and welcoming and we got on really well! Every night we would eat together at one of the host family's countryside house and we were given more food than you could possibly imagine! Our days in Sardinia were jam packed with fun-filled activities which included a museum trip that gave us an insight to the history of Isili, a visit to Nora ruins and a beach day for us to enjoy the stunning weather and a day in the woods which was hard work but worth it to see the spectacular views of Sardinia from a unique viewpoint! Something that made our trip extra special was meeting up with

some local Italian students that we have been emailing from back home in England for a while now! This helped with our Italian skills and we made some friends for life! On the last night we went to a local pizzeria which was absolutely delicious and a lovely way to end the trip! On Saturday morning despite desperate attempts to stay (leaving one shoe behind etc) we had to say an emotional goodbye to our families and head off for a day in Cagliari before flying back home. Overall we all had a fantastic time and made memories that we will never forget! Finally on behalf of all of us I would like to say a massive thank you to Miss Contini and Mr Dufton for organising the trip and taking us to Sardinia.

**Samantha King 10RAH**



**St Malo Trip**

On Tuesday 16th June, after an early start and a long coach journey, we finally arrived in the town of Saint Malo in France. It was a short, nervous wait until we got to meet our host families and head back for the night, but we had nothing to worry about as they were all lovely.

On the first full day, we went into the historic part of the town and had a guided tour of the area, which included a visit to the walls and a small walk among some of the oldest buildings left. It was very interesting to see the different building styles and also find out about the rebuilding of the city after the damage from both WWI and WWII. After this, we spent some time on the beach in the sun which we all enjoyed thoroughly (even if we couldn't go swimming!).

The next day, we visited the island of Mont St Michel, a beautiful and colossal cathedral dedicated to St Michael. Unfortunately it was extremely windy and it even rained, which made it all the more harder to walk up the multitude of steep steps. However, once we got to the top, we were astounded by the incredible view and lovely gardens - it made it seem worthwhile! Next we went to an aquarium in Saint Malo, and saw many wonderful sharks, fish, turtles and sting rays. There was even a submarine ride where we were able to go underwater; it was a brilliant experience and so much fun.

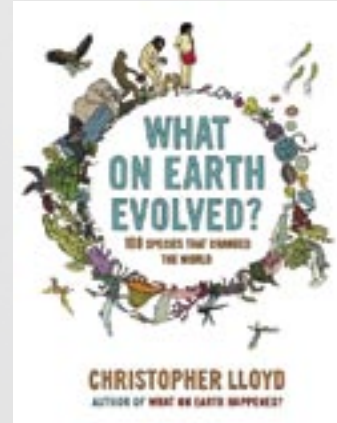
To finish our remarkable trip, we began with an early start by visiting the beautiful town of Rennes. Doing so, we were given the opportunity to stop by a crepe, chocolate and cheese shop; the best being, of course, the chocolate store. Upon arrival, your view was not only filled by chocolate nor the rich smell hitting you in the face but you began to feel a monster in your stomach roar and your mouth water fiercely. It was absolutely exquisite! Afterwards we made our way to a serene park where most students basked in the blaze of the sun. If that wasn't enough, the cherry on top was viewing a whole film, Jurassic World, in French.

We had another early start on the way back, but we can all agree that everyone loved the trip! We'd like to thank all of the staff involved for everything they did that meant we had such a great time that week.

**Emma McCaughey, Aimee Steele and Shivani Hindocha – Year 9**



# Science News



The A level and IB students have been great at getting involved with enrichment activities this year. Students have been out and about attending lectures, such as 'What on Earth Evolved' at the Linnaean society, and hearing from the Scientist who did the DNA analysis to identify Richard III's body. We were lucky to have Dr Ivan Wall from UCL visit the school to discuss his work on regenerative medicine and we were very proud of the excellent questions the students posed. Our year 13 IB classes braved the cold and damp to complete their ecology coursework in Surrey this year and we're looking forward to whisking the current year 12 IB groups to Norfolk in November. The spring saw us swabbing the school building for microbes as part of the Natural History Museum Microverse project and we should soon hear back about what they have found is surrounding us. Congratulations went out to the 10 students who did well in very challenging British Biology Olympiad competition and we're delighted that the school has been selected to participate with a pilot competition for year 12 students. Watch this space for how they got on. Most recently during enrichment week the A level students participated in a session led by the organisation Understanding Animal Research where they maturely tackled the scientific and ethical implications of animal research. Some even had a go at taking a blood sample from a (rubber!) rat. I hope all the biologists have a great summer and maybe spend a little time visiting some of the great museums and nature reserves on our doorstep.

**Miss Shaughnessy**





# Leaving Teachers



## Mrs Kendall Interview

### ***What do you wish you had known when you first started here?***

How time passes so quickly and how important it is to savour every moment because in the blink of an eye, time has passed.

### ***What is your favourite moment from BGS?***

I haven't really got a favourite moment, my memories will be of the fun we have had in the school office. I've just enjoyed working in this environment, having fun with all the ladies - they are an amazing group of people. I'll miss them all when I go. So hopefully they'll carry on having fun without me!

### ***What will you miss most about being at BGS?***

Just the company really. It's like one big family (all the staff, the teachers, the support staff), everybody mucks in and it's a nice place to be. I think that's why I've stayed so long. It's a home from home.

### ***What are your plans for retirement?***

I've got three lovely grandchildren, so hopefully I'll be able to see more of them. Eventually I'd like to do some voluntary work with elderly people (people even older than me!), just sitting and having a chat with them. Or maybe work in a charity shop. Just different things from being here. Not having to get up in the morning and come straight to work - I'll be able to linger over my first cup of tea of the day.

### ***Are there any hobbies you would like to develop?***

I've been researching the University of the Third Age. You can only join courses once you're retired and they do all sorts of things, so I'm going to research that and see if something takes my fancy, learn something new and meet different people. It's going to be a whole new way of life.

### ***If you could change anything about your time spent at BGS what would it be?***

There wouldn't be anything I'd change - maybe just the chance to do it all over again, because I've worked with lovely people. I've worked with four Headteachers - they've all been very different in their approach to work, but they've all been really lovely people to be with and I've kept in touch with all of them, which is nice.

## Interview by Rhianna Radley – Year 12



## Interview with Mrs Peach

### ***What are some of your favourite memories of being at BGS?***

I have so many special memories, but I particularly enjoyed some of the ECM events where we were able to spend whole days being creative in Art and DT. A workshop that stands out in my mind is when Mrs Whitehorn and I made swan sculptures with year 7 and then floated them on Danson Lake. Mr Crowley launched them for us and Mrs Denier took photos. It was a brilliant day.

### ***Do you miss teaching at Bexley Grammar?***

I miss all of my friends at BGS, particularly being part of the ADT department; my colleagues are so talented and we all shared our thoughts and skills to make sure the work within ADT was always developing. Pupils at Bexley Grammar have a very sophisticated approach to creativity and it was a pleasure to develop my own ideas about Art and Design in education in the light of their input and response.

I also miss the laser cutter. This was bought for us by the PA 2 years ago and it enhanced our work immensely. I am currently attempting to badger my new Head Teacher into buying one.

### ***What is your new job like, and do you enjoy it?***

I am now head of the Arts faculty at a Pupil Referral Unit. I am developing a creative curriculum that will complement the existing courses available to my pupils. It is hugely exciting to be given such a responsibility and to be able to start more or less from scratch. This is quite a challenge for me and I look forward to developing my teaching practice in this very different environment.

### ***And any other funny/silly things that happened whilst you taught here? Any anecdotes or things you think people might like to read***

There is one particular incident that still makes me laugh when I think about it. It happened in a GCSE Food Tech class a couple of years ago. It involved a hat, a school bag, a sink and a very innovative pupil. I can't go into any more detail than that as I would incriminate both myself and the pupil involved. Suffice to say I had to work extremely hard to put on my "very cross teacher" face at the time. What I really wanted to do was laugh heartily and pat him on the back for being so resourceful.

Mrs Whitehorn and I shared many a laugh. Again, I can't go into detail. We have a pact.

## Interview with Ms Bartlett

### ***What have you enjoyed most about your time at BGS?***

I've had a lovely time in the 8 years at BGS. When I first arrived, I was so impressed by the way students would offer to take my bag or hold a door open for me; say hello in the corridor - or remind me that I had them later! Students are just so lovely most of the



time. Many individuals have made a lasting impression on me - such as White Lightning (two of my A Level Classics students from years back) So many students are willing to see a teacher as a human being first and foremost - and that is what I've enjoyed most! My year 10 WJEC group Latin have been such fun this year and I would like to take the opportunity to wish 12SCB and Ms Symons all the very best for the future also. And of course there are the colleagues in my department - I want to say a big thank you to them for putting up with me!

### ***Has it changed in the time you've been here?***

Not much really. I do miss the karaoke event and I hope that it will be reintroduced. The Classics Department has seen the change of Ms Fisher to Ms Pearson, but that has all happened smoothly. We're still in the under stairs cupboard and M2 is still my Hobbit-hole! (I had to get a reference to Lord of the Rings in, you see)

### ***Can you share a funny/memorable moment?***

See above; and see Bayo below.....(he got a top grade in his GCSE exam) .....was always nodding off! Also, Calum Bradbury-Sparvell's and Sophie Madigan's "Dido and Aeneas" rap.....and the beautiful pencil sketch by Michael Hobbs of Aphrodite tying her sandal, which I had framed and still graces my living room.



## What are your plans for the future?

My partner Jerry and I are off to North Wales, where his family live, and I intend to have rescue chickens and a rescue dog and to indulge my love of bird watching, RSPB and the environment. It is outstandingly beautiful there - the Ceiriog Valley. Basically, I'm going to have some me time..... or as Ben Jackson said in my tutor group "You're having a gap year, miss." After 25 years of teaching I still love being around and working with young people.....they are the future and a very promising one at that.

## Mrs Gerhardt Interview

### ***What are some of your favourite memories of students or teachers at Bexley Grammar?***

I'd say that my favourite memories are of the students and particularly of my year group. I remember two years ago I went on the MFL trip to Germany with Mr Ward and Miss Thurlow and we went on the biggest rollercoaster at the park in Rhineland, when we got off we felt so queasy and all vowed never to go on it again! One of the funniest things that happened in my time at BGS was on the MFL trip again last year. I was sharing a room with Miss Colaco and Miss Thurlow. I went for a shower and when I came back all the lights were out so I thought I'd be polite and be as quiet as possible. Anyway, I got into bed and discovered that Miss Thurlow had replaced all of my bedding with maps! That was very funny; Miss Thurlow likes a good prank.

### ***What will you miss about at teaching here?***

The students really and the teachers, particularly my year group. Everyone is just so supportive and friendly and I've had such good fun with both the staff and students - I'll definitely miss their sense of humour! I am looking forward to new challenges at my new school but I really will miss my year group. I'll be very sad when I leave.

### ***What are you excited for in your new job?***

I'm really looking forward to being able to teach new and different topics to a different group of people. I am looking forward to the change although it is scary. I will miss everyone at Bexley Grammar but can't wait for the new challenges I'm sure I'll have at James Allen's Girls' School.

## Interview with Ms Price

### ***What have you enjoyed most about your time at BGS?***

I have really loved working with such great people - staff inside and outside the department, my form group and the students I have taught. On an MFL note, it has been great to work in a school where languages are held in such high esteem - I have thoroughly enjoyed helping to coordinate so many language events and seeing our students getting stuck into them!

### ***Has it changed in the time you've been here?***

I'm not sure if the school itself has changed, however, each year there seems to be more and more going on- more trips, more themed days, more competitions, which is a great thing!

### ***Can you share a funny/memorable moment?***

I can think of many both funny and memorable moments, however, one is when I was laying, hidden, under a desk in the MFL office, wearing a giant chicken mask, waiting to scare Mr Auckland, and Folabi walked in, asking where I was. Miss Reed helpfully showed him (!!!) and he didn't even bat an eyelid! Very normal behaviour for the MFL department, obviously!

## What are your plans for the future?

I am leaving BGS to be Head of the MFL department at Beths Grammar School. I'll miss working here and everyone so much, however, I won't be far away and hope to come back as much as possible for MFL Specialism events!



# Happy Pickle Pages

## Why Life's a Beach for Me

By Charles 'Beach-bum' Britton 12TM

With the days getting longer - and the Sun actually appearing every once in a while - it is only natural that I'm beginning to think of my annual holiday. What I find utterly unnatural however, is the almost shocking magnetism of tourists to these coastal wastelands known as beaches. Like geese they flock to the dunes battered by the ocean to bask in the Sun's rays and enjoy the sand and sea. And yet I seem to be absolutely repelled by them (as by most other seasonal icons, evidently) and I feel my chagrin in gaining little to no pleasure from these grainy ecosystems must be expressed.

So how does one criticise a coastal land-form? Well, I guess I could always begin with how deathly boring beaches can be; to look at, to sit on, in, under, at the edge of, the sea just a glittering mechanical sheet of chain mail before me. While little children are gleefully playing around for hours with crudely-made seaside souvenirs, all I can see is my childhood slowly drifting away with the tides. I look out of desperation to my parents, soldered by the searing heat of the Sun into their sunbeds and I realise all forms of entertainment are off (except for my beloved books, of course).

'But Charles', I hear the astute readers (or Ms Thurlow) argue: 'a beach is merely a natural construction, an accumulation of deposited sediment across the coastline. They are not there simply for your entertainment'. But still I find flaws in its supposedly 'natural' blueprints. Long story short: look at all this sand! The stuff gets everywhere. Once these little agents of death have riveted themselves to your skin, their grip is unshakeable, even in the darkest regions of the human body. Whip this stuff into your eyes and like a noxious gas it overrides your senses, and more crucially interrupts my reading.

Every ecosystem has its wildlife and boy, the typical beach attracts a unique biodiversity of migrating species. Take those with vexation trying to squeeze into last year's swimsuit, literally bulging from their rigid shells and those who decide to omit the whole outfit together. Naturally in some circumstances I'm willing to relax the almighty beach laws (especially for beach babes) but as these tourists become ever-more revealing I retreat further under my parasol. What ensues is practically a war for sunbeds between different nations. A soulless monstrosity waging across the landscape, a mad hotchpotch of Germans, Russians and the Great British tourist. Sadly their reputations are experiencing a period of decline following our horrendous displays of hypocrisy, ignorance and general loudness abroad.

Uh, where was I? Oh, yes! Although nature may not have designed itself to benefit me, it sure seems the well-oiled tourism industry is benefitting from it. I thought I was supposed to be relaxing on my holiday, yet I'm constantly interrupted by the incessant whirring noises of wandering merchants. Perhaps that would be too harsh. Besides, they're only trying to make a quick buck, or euro or yen or yuan or Turkish lira. Shame the same cannot be said for the densely-manufactured cafés and restaurants lining the nearby streets. The very presence of a beach sparks a diabolical rise in prices which does nothing but keep my blood pressure high, even if my blood sugar stays low. The economic situation on the beach is nothing less than a scandal.

Reader, when writing this article, I had considered berating summer itself, but I don't hate summer. Far from it. No, I hate every niggling mechanical protocol preventing me from enjoying the peace of the beach: the clearance I have to go through to simply attain a sunbed and those select undesirables who irk me until their batteries fizzle out with the lowering sun. Enjoy all Summer has to offer, reader, but do not become but a cog in its maniacal machine. I, for one, am off to enjoy my books in my back garden.

## Review: The Nether

Back in late April, I found myself queuing up at 8.30am to buy a ticket for ENO's production of 'Sweeney Todd'. The £10 tickets promised at such a time in the morning were of notably high demand, for I found 20 other people already in the queue ahead of me; so much so that by the time I got to the Box Office, the £10 tickets had turned into £75 in price. Disheartened at the prospect of not being able to enjoy an undoubtedly brilliant spectacle of theatre that evening, I found myself wandering across the road to The Duke of York Theatre, whose embellished front display promised an eventful show...

10 hours later, a meagre £10 out of pocket, and approximately 10 metres away from the show that I had actually intended to see, I was front row for a play that I had absolutely no knowledge of. The Nether had opened to huge success at The Royal Court Theatre back in 2013, and The Duke of York Theatre had kindly extended its run. The immediately striking feature upon entering the theatre was the intricate lighting decorating the extremely close backdrop (the stage was a mere metre and a half deep) and an equally hi-tech computer screen table with a chair either side. The images appearing on the backdrop imitated those of surveillance, and with the intensely personal nature of the staging, one could instantly detect an atmosphere of interrogation and mystery.

This unsettling atmosphere was confirmed

when an elderly man and a suited lady marched onto stage and took a chair either side of the table, and the backdrop became illuminated with videos filming their movements from different angles. This very sophisticated merge of film surveillance and live performance had echoes of the 2014 performance of 1984 at The Playhouse Theatre which I discovered, on later research, was produced by the same theatre company: Headlong. Agent Morris, played by Amanda Hale, began to violently interrogate the supposed criminal, Sims. Thrown in at the deep end, the audience were left to piece together the facts that brought them here: the year was 2050, the internet had become a realm where human beings could actually live temporarily, and Sims was at the centre of an organisation which allowed individuals to indulge in otherwise questionable measures.

Suddenly, the setting was transformed with the removal of the backdrop into an incredible, kaleidoscopic, fantastical world – decisively raised from the action downstage to symbolise its elevation from reality. This place is 'the nether', formerly called the internet, where human beings can become lost, morals can be discarded, and identity itself removed. Emotionally violent and thought-provoking, the play's incredible climax revealed a completely unsuspected twist which left me reeling. In an age where issues such as gender fluidity are receiving ever-growing attention, The Nether forced the audience to contemplate their own moral standing in relation to the extremes of human sexuality. Indeed, its careful presentation of these issues in an elevated reality allows us to interact with them from a purely physical perspective; while the vigilantly controlled nature of 'the nether' paralleled modern-day concerns for the future of our internet space. As 1984 is set to return to the West-End theatre scene this summer, I hope that Headlong grant The Nether an equally deserved revival; it was the best unscheduled £10 I have spent in a very long time!

## Rosie Thackeray – Year 12



# Happy Pickle Pages

## Nip the buds, shoot the kids

'As we shifted from village to village, we had learned that we were surrounded by gigantic walls'

Translated from Japanese by Paul Mackintosh and Maki Sugiyama, Kenzabur e's debut published work lashes out against the institutions that took Japan to war in the 1930's and 40's. Set during the later stages of WW2, the protagonist, 15 of his fellow reformatory boys and his infant brother are half evacuated, half imprisoned in a rural village where they are surrounded by mistrusting villagers, so different in culture that they embody the foreign enemy.

When a plague begins to descend upon the village, the townspeople flee, but in an act of spite and cowardice, they block the exit to their remote home. The boys, with their freedom cut off, have no choice but to remain and attempt to create a society of peace and co-operation, and within it develop a sense of tribal autonomy, heroism and burgeoning sexuality. However, the shadow of the war, brought inside by a deserter threatens to bring their idyllic lives down about their ears.

e's writing is not, however, simply reaction against the institutions he rebelled against in his youth. 'Nip the buds' also begins his legacy of sparring with the typical focus on "clarity" of previous Japanese styles. The translated language is deliberately cloudy, even deceptive and yet ultimately the key to novel is unavoidable: the repressive nature of a society based on obedience. Perhaps not as developed as e's later work, 'Nip the Buds' regardless remains a definitive vindication of his Nobel Laureate status.

## Guy Jackson – Year 12

### Review: Waiting for Godot

Waiting for Godot, written by Samuel Beckett between 1948 and 1949, has long been hailed as one of the greatest examples of absurdist theatre, a masterpiece of dark humour and melancholic ridiculousness. Despite this reputation, it is often considered a difficult play to perform: while there may only be five characters and one location, finding the correct tempo for Beckett's minimalistic piece provides more than enough of a challenge for most directors.

This production of Godot, directed by Andrew Upton, ran at the Barbican between the 4th and 13th of June, 2015, as part of the International Beckett Season. The play follows Vladimir (Hugo Weaving) and Estragon (Richard Roxburgh) who return to the same point each night and await the arrival of a **mysterious figure known** as Godot who ostensibly offers them some vague salvation. This production placed a strong emphasis on the humorous aspects of the text, emphasising the intelligent

wordplay and ludicrousness of Beckett's creation. Hugo Weaving shone as Vladimir, peppering his vivacious performance with subtle hints at the character's growing awareness of the aimlessness of the pair's existence. His delivery of jokes was aided by masterful physical comedy that manages to bring life to the largely empty stage.

Not that the emptiness of the stage is a criticism: the vast, grey barrenness of the post-apocalyptic set provided an excellent contrast to the lonely figures that wander through it. Perhaps the production's greatest weakness was its unwillingness to commit to the darker elements of Beckett's absurdist masterpiece: while the dark comedy was handled excellently and the ending toyed with tragic notions of the futility of the human experience, Upton's interpretation seemed to lack some of the pervading melancholy that makes Waiting for Godot such an inspired work. Despite this, the production did an excellent job bringing the rich ideas of the piece to the stage, ensuring that the audience was able to appreciate the intricate lunacy of Beckett's masterwork.

## Katie Hopkins – fame hound, polemic disaster and potentially the cause of suicide to thousands.

2015 is in full swing so we've already witnessed the new heap of has-been celebrities off-loaded into dead end TV shows: the likes of "Big Brother", "I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here" and weekday television made exclusively for the Actimel-lovers and snood-wearers of our nation. Many of us see these celebrities as role models or idols but since when does a controversial view mean that they are someone to be looked up to or be idealised when they offer nothing new to society?

I imagine that in some place somewhere - probably in a small desolate town where crickets and tumbleweed are found in considerable numbers - there is a warehouse packed to the brim with "celebrities", all battling brutally for the opportunity to break free and have the chance to rekindle the ever dwindling embers of past careers. Once the barrel has been scraped two or three times, you probably think there is nothing left but you must look a little closer because lurking at the bottom may be the loud mouthed, sexist, xenophobic and pretty much any other word ending in -ist or -ic, Katie Hopkins. She's resilient, I'll give her that: most celebrities crash into a humiliating pile of demeaning YouTube videos and embarrassing tweets by the time they come to the realisation that it is time to skulk back to wherever they came from with their tail between their legs. But no, sadly Katie Hopkins has been on our TV screens since 2006 when she appeared as one of Alan Sugar's minions, on The Apprentice.

For those of you who haven't had the privilege, Katie Hopkins is officially the most hated woman in Britain and I'm not surprised. Here are just a few things she has a profound opinion upon: you cannot be fat and beautiful; gingers are harder to love; gunships should be used to stop immigrants; tattoos are offensive and you can immediately tell what class someone is by their name. Oh, by the way, I should mention none of the above has a single thing to do with Katie Hopkins; they're just aspects of society that she has felt a burning obligation on which to comment. So, if you are an overweight, ginger, immigrant covered in tattoos called Tyler, you are probably at the top of Katie Hopkins's hit list – then again she probably features fairly high in most of ours.

One of Hopkins's recent ventures was to gain about half her body weight – 3 and a half stone – to show easy it would be to then lose this weight. She would show people that fat people have a choice, that they only have excuses, that they are lazy ad cost every taxpayer money. She even went as far as to say that if you are overweight and look in the mirror and are happy with what you see then you are lying to yourself. I think this is a fundamentally sick thing to try and achieve. She then proceeded to blame fat people for "making" her do this, as if all fat people were crawling to her on their hands and knees pleading, no begging, for her to perform this huge undertaking.

Hm, seems unlikely.

This is just one example of something a celebrity has done to try and prove their credibility in the world. Katie Hopkins take an opinion, presents it as fact and the weight of celebrity behind it gives it some kind of credence. Hopkins is not the only person in the world with objectionable opinions but it is her incessant need to share these opinions and dress them up as fact with, as far as I can tell, the only aim of making people feel worse about themselves. She chooses her targets carefully, selecting people that society has already deemed socially acceptable to demean.

Most of us fail to see these "celebrities" for what they really are – perishable commodities, expendable, tradable and a trivial distraction from a mundane reality until something better comes along.





# Happy Pickle Pages



## The 50 Word Short Storys

### Goodbye Weekend (Lost Boys):

They know it’s over, they just don’t mention it; the sea sprays a sheet of tangy mist onto their faces, cooling to leave salt encrusted on their dry, leathery skin. The sun slips into her evening dress, leaving the boys sheathed in a thick layer of silky darkness. It’s over.

*If you enjoyed these fifty word short stories, then you would be happy to know that the “We English!” club is running a competition for the best fifty word short story, and you could have the chance to win! All you have to do is write up your short story and email it to 09geddis\_j. The winning short story will appear in the next school magazine in the Happy Pickle pages. Remember, the short story must consist of a maximum of fifty words, so get creative and have fun!*

### Night – Elie Wiesel

I was recently recommended ‘Night’ by a friend of mine, who described it as a “deeply moving book about the Holocaust”. This, honestly, does not even begin to cover it. It is the first in a trilogy of books by Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, about his time spent in various concentration camps during the Second World War, and the way in which his entire life was changed forever.

I’m not ashamed to say that I cried, more than once, when reading about the horrors that Elie, who was only 15 at the time the book is set, was forced to face as the wrath of the Nazis entered his hometown of Sighet, Transylvania, and he was dragged around from camp to camp. As cliché as it may be, I simply could not put this book down from the moment I started reading it. From the very first page I became captivat-

### Lepus Chase

Denied the light of the sun. We ran, across fields flourished with its heavenly touch, concealed betwixt green stems grown. Yet grew fear, as a dog drew near. My comrade shivered. “Run” he said, and only rage and red was seen. And now, in my warren, I wait for half-light.

### The Red Temptress

I stood in stony silence on the patio, watching my son scouring the grass, nose pointed earthward like a septic sickle. Suddenly he paused; a fox. I sensed a warm nostalgia for nature in him, the effect of those celestial eyes. That’s when I had to whistle him in.

ed and swept up in Elie’s story, and found myself running alongside him on his death march, starving with him in the camps, fighting for my survival, at the expense of my family’s.

This book, like no other Holocaust related book I’ve read before, truly manages to capture the full extent of what life was like for those who found themselves set in the sights of Adolf Hitler. It is by no means a cheerful read, and will not leave you feeling content and amused. On the contrary, it will leave you raw, and shaken up, and rather empty. But the book is not to entertain, it is to inform, and to shock, which it certainly does. It is quite possibly the best book I have ever read, and while it may not be particularly light-hearted, it is an incredibly moving and thought-provoking insight to the past.

By Isobel Kaul Year 10



### The Boy Next Door

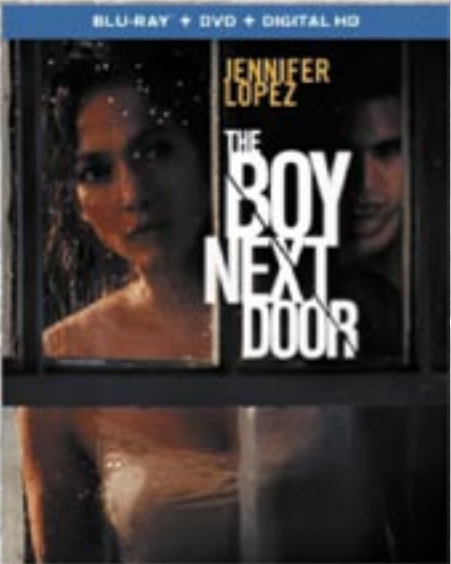
“Lazy, low budget, not-as-much-fun-as-it-should-be potboiler.” A charming review from the film critic website, Rotten Tomatoes on recently released film “The Boy Next Door”. Just another piece of evidence to add to the growing heap of inaccurate and exaggerated film reviews that take first-rate films and transform them into something no one would ever want to go and see – only on paper of course. Contrary to the bigoted thoughts of Tom Huddleston on Rotten Tomatoes, the film was actually a fast pace suspense thriller with a substantial plot, containing elements of humour and romance.

When a handsome twenty-year-old moves in next door, Claire Peterson (played by Jennifer Lopez) cannot help but be coerced

into some harmless flirtation. However, as the film progresses, Claire finds herself becoming Noah’s new obsession; a drug that he won’t give up, an addiction almost. The light-hearted start to the film darkens drastically in its build up to the chilling climax, leaving the audience paralysed with trepidation.

Everyone is entitled to their opinions but Rotten Tomatoes couldn’t be more wrong on this occasion (and many other occasions for that matter).

By Isobel Kaul and Molly Johnson. Year 10



# Happy Pickle Pages

### “Spy”

This James Bond spoof starring the hilarious Melissa McCarthy demonstrates that you don’t have to be a size 2 super model to be a kickass secret agent. McCarthy has starred in American sitcom, “Mike and Molly” and many American Films like “The Heat” and “Bridesmaids”. “Spy” only further proves what a versatile actress she is and will only help her career progress further.

As well as smashing the Bechdel\* gender inequality test, “Spy” will also render you helpless with laughter in the middle of the cinema! The protagonist, Susan Cooper, finds herself unappreciated in her basement job at the CIA. After an incident that leaves the regular field agents exposed, Cooper finds herself stepping up and accepting the job to go out in the field. Cooper is not alone in her mission, working alongside her is the sexually inappropriate Aldo; her goofy but loveable colleague Nancy, played by the spectacular Miranda Hart and the- the, well there’s just no words to capture the smug

incompetence of British CIA agent Rick Ford.

The onscreen chemistry between McCarthy, Hart and the rest of the cast is exceptionally natural and it’s evident how much the cast enjoyed producing such an entertaining film.

Molly Johnson and Isobel Kaul – Year 10



\* Bechdel: a test many film critics use to assert that women are under-represented in films. To pass the test the film must satisfy the following three requirements:

1. The movie has to have at least two women in it,
2. who talk to each other,
3. about something besides a man

### Bexley Grammar School Summer Fayre

The clouds showed mercy for this year’s Summer Fayre at Bexley Grammar School, for other than a bled splash, the festivities of the day were left dry and drench-free, allowing the fun-filled events to proceed as planned. The school’s Summer Fayre has experienced a trend of persistent rainfall in the past, and so it is a great pleasure to enjoy the tradition without having to hide under the roof of a gazebo to keep dry.

Popular events made a spectacular return this year, including the teacher stocks which were both relished by students and terrifying for their teachers. It was especially nice to finally see my Mathematics teacher Mr. Lupton learn a thing or two about maths, such as how many wet sponges it would take to completely encompass his face in icy water. Other teachers including Mr. Skinner and Mr. Goodman also had their fair share of the wet fury.

Guests were swept away by the live entertainment, as this year’s Summer Fayre saw the return of the Christmas performance of Alice in Wonderland. Guests could relive the experience of Alice’s (Bethany Webster) encounter at the Mad Hatter’s (Patrick Crowley/ Conor Coakley) tea party, with old favourites such as the March Hare (Luke Bennell/ Chris Goring) and the Dormouse (Josh Stringer/ Danny McGill). Full of laughs and lunacy, this performance certainly brought a crazy spark to people all around.

The smooth sound of Jazz filled the air, with the Big Band playing a few numbers which could get anyone up on their feet and swinging to the beat. The tunes were con-

ducted with Mr. Laing at the head, along with some groovy solos from Tom Barton, George Ross and many more.

The open rivalry between “Wellman Cakes” and “Mabbs Muffins” continued this year, leaving all guests satisfied with the sweet taste of cake. The “World Challenge” BBQ also came to the aid of any hungry visitor, serving them with sizzling hotdogs and the best freshly grilled burgers around.

Special thanks should go to the Parents Association for their active role in running various stools such as the popular plant stool as well as working in various other duties which helped make the Summer Fayre what it was.

Thanks should also be given to the house captains who helped amplify the proud spirit of their houses, especially during the sporting events. Seeing many captains patrolling the fayre with a sharp eye on things, talking through their secret network of walkie-talkies made me realise the effort needed to make these events possible. A shout-out goes to Chris Goring who made Kirkman proud by shaking his stuff with a pair of pompoms.

I’m happy to say that this year’s Fayre was without a doubt as thrilling success, raising a grand total that is yet to be finalised but certainly exceeded last year’s. Let’s hope that next year will be just as triumphant as it has always been!

James Geddis – Year 12

