

The Muse  
Easter Edition 2018

Easter Egg  
Tasting  
House  
reports

Book and Film  
Reviews

World  
Book Day

BGS

Happy Easter!

& MUCH  
MORE



## A Message from the Chief Editors

As Chief Editors, we would like to welcome you to the 2018 Easter Magazine. Our team has been working diligently to produce a wide variety of articles in this term's edition, ranging from reviews of films and trips to highlights from the Spring term...we even indulged in an Easter Chocolate Taste Test! With articles covering a wide range of topics, there is much to be read and enjoyed in this edition of 'The Muse'. Have a great Easter holiday from all of us in this term's Magazine Team!

**Isabelle Merralls and Jake Rodrigues, Year 12**

## School Magazine Team

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## **Welcome to the Easter edition of the School Magazine**

Welcome to the Easter edition of the BGS magazine. We will be in our 11th and final week of the Spring term when this is published. Where did that time go and how did we manage to fit so much activity into that relatively short period?

The Spring term flies by as students in the upper school settle to some serious preparation for the examinations ahead of them. We've had two ECM days, four Parents' Evenings and three 'Acceptance Evenings' (to which we invite external students to whom we have offered Sixth Form places for September).

Four overseas residential trips took off over the half term break: a Classics trip to Greece, the bi-annual Economics and Business trip to the USA, the annual Ski Trip by the PE department, this year to Spain, and a second trip to the USA, by the History and Politics Department. Soon after half-term, we started hosting a group of Japanese students from Keio High School, Tokyo, with which we now have an exchange program. It was that week that the snow disruption arrived but thanks to our unflappable Mrs Everett and the commitment of the BGS host families, the exchange went ahead very successfully with some changes to the original plan. Several other school activities were disrupted, including PE coursework activities and World Book Day, but staff and students worked hard to ensure the activities were completed later.

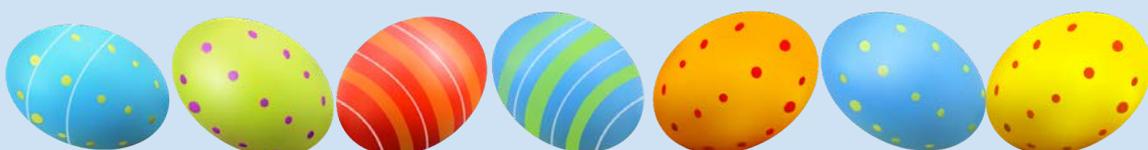
The House 'year' ends at Easter and once more the best of the Music & Dance (combined this year into one) and Drama competitions are about to be showcased and the winner of the House Cup awarded. Participating in House activities continues to bring out the very best in our students, their courage, commitment and cooperation. It also celebrates our exceptional student leadership and exemplifies the developmental influence of our House system throughout the school.

We also used the Spring term to formally re-visit and test what makes us continue to be an outstanding school. We used the current Ofsted framework and several external experts to have a close look at ourselves and our practices in order to celebrate what is outstanding and to put a spotlight on areas that need further development. This objective and focused self-evaluation has been extremely useful in celebrating our many outstanding qualities and in directing us to improve in some specific areas. It has also given us a clear direction for our next School Improvement Plan.

During the summer term you will see the launch of our new website, following an interim 'holding' site. We are moving to a new platform that is mobile-friendly in order to make the site more accessible to the average user with mobile technology. It will also make it much easier for us to update regularly, compared to the rather clunky platform with which we currently operate. I hope you enjoy the final product and find it far easier to navigate and to use on the move.

Thank you to every member of staff for your sustained commitment to our wonderful students through this busy term, despite the disruption from the extreme weather. Parents – thank you for your support this term, particularly from those of you with children in the examination year groups where they are feeling the pressure. And to students – thank you, keep focused and build on your successes. Happy Easter to all!

**Mr Elphick, Head Teacher**



## House Report March 2018

This term is the final one in this year's House Competition and each House has been making a final push towards reaching that top position. We have had House Chess, Quiz, Photography, Boys' Basketball, House Bridge, the final judging of the House Planters and our inaugural House Music & Dance competition. Unfortunately, the Girls' Football was cancelled due to bad weather.

This year the Photography competition was judged by Mrs Wieck, our former Head of Art. The winning photograph in the Junior competition is:



This was from the category – Word Art: Spell a word with a minimum of three letters and a maximum of six using shapes you frame with your camera.

The winning photograph in the Intermediate competition is:



This was from the category – Society in contrast e.g. chaos & calm, night & day, rich & poor.

The new combined House Music & Dance competition was held in February where each House had to choose an artist or band from the 70s and perform two dance numbers within three musical pieces; if they wanted to they could perform one of their dance numbers to a recording rather than live music. Mrs E. Stagg, a former teacher and one of our current Governors, and Sam Haughton, former Head Boy working in Musical Theatre, joined Miss Swadkin, our Head of Music, in judging this competition. Mabbs were victorious with their performance of music and songs by Stevie Wonder.

The House Showcase will be held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March, (tickets may still be available at the time of publishing <https://yourboxoffice.co.uk/events>) where parents and students will be able to come along and see some of the entries from the House Music & Dance and the House Drama from the 2017–18 House Competitions. The winners of the Competition will be presented with the House Cup by Mr Elphick.

**Mrs J Snelling, House Leader**



## Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January, I was lucky enough to take part in the Jack Petchey Speak Out workshop with some of my fellow classmates. It was run to enable us to gain the communication and public speaking skills we would need in the future (e.g. for interviews). It took the whole day to complete and started off with everyone introducing themselves; however you had to be more inventive and dramatic than just stating your name and what you liked – which was a challenge for me as I was never very good at drama! Then we moved on to discussing different techniques you could use when making a speech and the importance of your hand gestures and tone of voice.

After break, we tried our hand at impromptu speaking, which was very daunting for a lot of us, and then we began to write our speeches. Everyone was really nervous as we had to fill ninety seconds without the use of any notes. We were given half an hour and an extended lunch to finish any preparation we needed and then the speeches began. There was a wide variety of topics, ranging from racism to food waste; however they were all very inspiring in their own way. I was, unfortunately, picked to go last and spoke about the importance of volunteering. Then Gloria – the facilitator from the Speaker's Trust – chose four people to go on to the assembly final, to be held in a few weeks.

Overall, it was a thoroughly enjoyable experience, which has given me more confidence when speaking in public and lots of useful life skills that I am looking forward to using in the future. I would like to thank the Jack Petchey foundation for running the training session and Mr Husbands for organising it.

**By Charlotte Allen, Year 10**

*Edited by Diveen Dler*



**CONTINUE FOR SUBJECT NEWS**





# MUSIC

## Satyagraha at ENO

On January 30th, the Music Department was lucky enough to go on a trip to see the dress rehearsal of an opera about Gandhi's early life by Philip Glass at the English National Opera. The theatre was very beautiful and we were well accommodated. Philip Glass writes music in a minimalist style, and being shown this new style of music confused us at first, but as we got into Act 2 it started to become clearer and we began to really appreciate the music and the story line.



**Maddie Hansford and Eleanor Wenbourne, Year 10**

## The Beat Goes On

As a reward for all our hard work so far this year, Mrs Eacott arranged for all Year 9 students to participate in a samba-reggae percussion workshop provided by the company 'The Beat Goes On',



combining Afro-Brazilian musical styles to create a hybrid genre of music native to places such as Argentina, Brazil and Jamaica. The workshop lasted an hour and gave everyone an opportunity to play two instruments that were mostly foreign to them, such as djembes, agogô bells, snare drums, tamborims and surdo drums. After going

through the way in which to play each instrument and the individual beat for each, we were led by director Ollie Tunmer into a composition, similar to the ones played through the streets in Brazil. Having tried out our first instrument, we then sambaed our way to our second percussive instrument, which we were briefly introduced to by Ollie and started to play, as we were now led by members of our group instead, creating new, unique rhythms as a class. Throughout our workshop, Ollie told us more about samba-reggae music and its history as he explained the culture of the instruments. I thoroughly enjoyed this workshop due to its unparalleled experience and complex cultural roots. This was, I believe, extremely beneficial for our year at this stressful point in our lives, as we are about to choose our GCSE options, and should be offered to more students at BGS.

**Alison Balint, Year 9**

*Edited by Diveen Dler*



## Music Quiz Night

On Saturday 3rd February, the Music Department hosted its annual fundraising quiz night. This year, it aimed to raise enough to buy practice pods for musicians to rehearse in. While in previous years the event has taken place in the sixth-form centre, this time so many tickets were sold that it had to be in the hall instead.

At 19:15, the evening's competitiveness began. While the different competitors (including myself) put their heads together over the first table round, the Year 13 music students (plus four younger students) provided musical accompaniment with many well-known jazz features. This table round – name the Monopoly street – was followed by various unique quiz rounds and a second table round, all in two halves. Quiz categories ranged from 'Guess the Disney character' to 'Guess the instrument', and even my own personal favourite: 'Trump or Chump?' Of course, President Trump has made more than a few "unusual" comments, which makes it difficult to tell whether all of the quotations we were given were really by Trump or another 'chump'.

In addition to the original quiz rounds and professional musical accompaniment, there was also a raffle draw to end the evening. The prizes – consisting of various chocolates, biscuits, and whatever else participants generously donated – would have been a great bonus to the evening. However, given that none of them went to me, I'll just gloss over this detail. Likewise, given that our table did not win, I won't spend much time telling you that the winning table received their goods in wine and chocolate... and the runners up also got some chocolate... and even third place got a bag of lemons. Just my table that won neither quiz prize nor raffle prize, then.

Ahem. Actually, all tables thoroughly enjoyed the evening, regardless of winning or losing. A big thanks to Mrs Snelling for organizing the event; to the Year 13s who wrote the questions; and to the musicians who performed for us. In total, £780.80 was raised through ticket sales and raffle tickets.

### Samuel Masters, Year 12





## **Geography** Spring term round up of Geography

The Geography Club has had an awesome Spring term, after the success of the globe hunt around the school before Christmas, students have been keen to get creative and make a range of “geographical” models. The students have tackled tornados in a bottle, with varying degrees of success and a fair amount of water going over themselves and M17! Now students are making volcanoes that will be ready to explode; this has seen students working collaboratively to design, make and paint their models.

The x2 planters that the club took over this year are now showing sign of life as the bulbs begin to come up and we are now looking forward to seeing the variety of flowers and bright colours in the coming weeks. A little weeding was required and more work is going into the two planters in the coming term. The club will be sowing seeds from around the world after the Easter break with students picking both flowering plants and vegetables to grow. This new venture is possible thanks to funding from the school PTA.

30 Year 11 Geography students attended a one day GCSE revision conference in London. This gave students a range of top examination tips, revision support and resources as well as covering the key topics and themes of the course. The day was hugely beneficial as it also gave support for the Unit 3 paper, which includes the pre–release resource booklet.

The Year 7 classes have been out and about collecting data on the weather around the school, this is the first time that we have conducted this study. The Year 7 have completed some amazing work and written up their findings, using graphs, weather symbols and maps.

Ms Higham’s Year 8 classes have been creatively engaged in a range of world biomes. This has involved students researching and presenting their findings, with amazing videos, songs and speeches on eco–diversity and threats that biomes face. An impressive effort from all students.

Year 9 have enjoyed studying about the city of Lagos, and have explored a range of urban issues, including poverty, slums and how to improve the lives of the urban poor. A highlight across all of the classes, was the video on “Vocal Slender”, the singing and musical sensation; his story and music have brought the lessons alive!

Year 11 continue to work hard and take advantage of the support sessions that run on Monday after school in M17. The students that have year 12 Geography prefects mentoring them, continue to meet once a week to both go over topic and case studies as well as develop examination skills. So far those that have attended have seen a boost in their confidence and results.



Geography has also started a twitter account, for all the latest juicy facts and links to up–to–date geographical news and articles. Why not sign up and join the conversation at [@JulceOnTheLoose](https://twitter.com/JulceOnTheLoose).

The Year 13 IB students are near the end of their courses and we wish them luck in the IB examinations after the Easter break. **The Geography Department.** *Edited by Jake Rodrigues*





## Prizes for Bexley Grammar School Art Students at the Young Art in Bexley Exhibition

We were delighted to hear the news from the Bexley Civic Society who organised the 42nd Exhibition of Young Art in Bexley competition at Hall Place this March.

Josh Morris and Max Dawkins were awarded a 3D prize for outstanding work, along with Dana Lewson who obtained a 3D certificate of Merit with their inspiring recycled sculptures. These were a response to plastic pollution which impacts our wildlife.

Amber Prior, Emily Hoang, Lisa Mekharef and Elena Storry were also awarded a Highly Commended Certificate of Merit for their excellent work.

Linda Hubbard commented on how high the standard of work submitted was and she looks forward to seeing more of our students' work next year.

**S. Harrison**  
**Head of Department**

*Edited by Chloe Bui*

## Visit to the Tate Modern Art Exhibition

The trip as a whole, in my opinion, was a fantastic experience. We were able to explore the different mediums and techniques used by different artists to create pieces of art that held interesting meanings behind them. What intrigued me was how individuals could interpret the same painting or sculpture in different ways, depending on their perspective.

When we were at the Tate Modern, we also had the privilege of visiting a workshop, where we saw many students working on their own projects. Visiting the different stations and trying out the activities, was an enjoyable experience; we were able to have an insight into the weird and wonderful things that they work on. All in all, it was a unique opportunity to see and do things we may not have thought we would ever do, which was wonderful.



**Joy Hui**

*Edited by Isabelle Merralls*





## DRAMA

### Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" – The Junior Production

To mark 10 years of performing Shakespeare at Bexley Grammar, the Junior Production present "Romeo and Juliet". This heartbreaking story is performed by extremely talented year 7– 9 students and is set in the 1920's era and it is the first of this kind of Shakespeare play to be performed at the school.

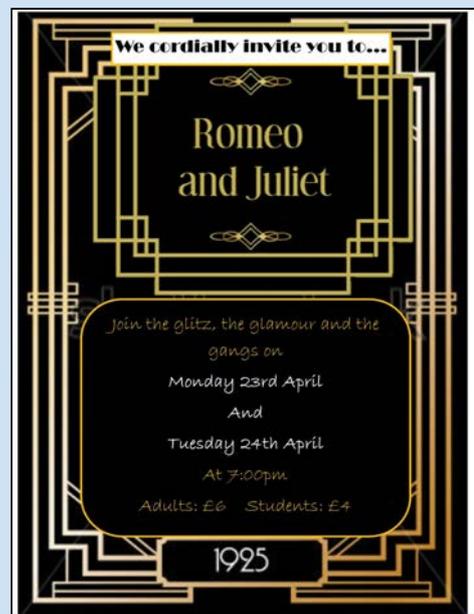
The cast have been rehearsing alongside a very busy school calendar since January. A shining performer in this production has said:

*"I love the rehearsals because we get to know each other as cast and have fun working together. It is really great to see the other cast members creatively build their characters and laugh whilst doing it. Being a part of the cast has really shown me how much time and effort the teachers and the students put into really polishing the play and how much time it takes to learn lines and cues. I really enjoy being apart of this amazing production!"*

**Mya Fewell, Year 7**

The play will also be performed in three local primary Schools which is always a fantastic experience:

*"I enjoy doing "Romeo and Juliet" because you have so much fun during rehearsals and you make new friends. I'm looking forward to performing for different primary schools as it gives them an opportunity to watch a different style of play and I feel proud to be performing to a younger performance."*

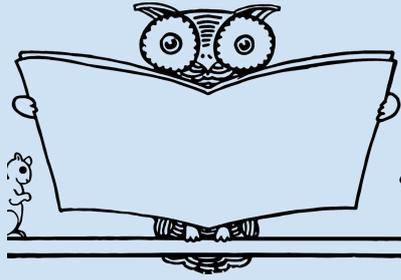


**Anya Scothern, Year 8**

Accept your invitation to join the party, the glitz, the glamour and the gangs on **23rd April** (Shakespeare's birthday) and Tuesday **24th April 2018**.

*See you there with your 1920s sparkle and swagger!*





# ENGLISH

## Poetry Slam at the Bexleyheath Spine Festival

A strong team of poetical Year 7–9 students were given one month to create and perform at the Bexleyheath Poetry Slam competition. On Friday 9th February they were invited to a workshop with the prestigious spoken word artist Kat Francois who not only gave hints and tips on how to write beautiful poems, but also performed her poems to the students from all over the Bexley borough.



Exactly a month later, the 6 students collaborated to produce a fantastic approach to the subject "home" and "time". They captured the poetic devices excellently and executed the telling of the poems with passion.

One of the students believes that *"the workshop was one of the most inspiring and creative events I have experienced because we got to hear a taste of other people's poetic talent. Seeing how people write and express themselves was truly fantastic, considering they were just strangers to us.*

*When we arrived at the Slam I just felt a really strong positive energy about in the room and I loved every bit of the nerve racking, but truly fantastic, experience. I am really happy that I got to have that chance for me to write freely and creatively about my feelings for other people that don't know who I am to listen to".*

**Mya Fewell, Year 7**

We look forward to using the feedback we were given at the next Poetry Slam competition in 2019.

**Ms K Gabriel**

*Edited by Samuel Masters*



## Year Eight Public Speaking Competition

To start the new term, all Year Eights began a new unit of work in their English classes: speeches. A competition was run across the whole year group in three rounds. Around two students from each form made it to the finals, on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January... in an assembly... before 200 peers... Public speaking is always a little daunting to say the least. Every Year Eight should be very proud of themselves for doing this – especially the finalists. But there could only be one winner: Max Dawkins.

I started off the same as everyone else – one of nearly 200 people wondering what to do their speech on. I personally wanted to do mine on politics, but thought my listeners might not be as interested in common affairs. Then I thought, what original subject could I do a speech on? So I wrote the title – ‘Speeches’ – and all my possible suggestions. I read through them all, and one stuck out to me... the title itself! I would deliver a speech on speeches. The first stage was in front of the class. We were graded by our English teacher and about a third of us were shortlisted for the second round. Here we performed our improved speech, which was now judged by each other in the class. From our class, Eloise and I were put through to the finals: a performance before the whole year group. Unfortunately, I forgot we had to get to the hall earlier to prepare; I had just put on my football kit when I had to get back into my school uniform! We were then given time to prepare, in which we could test out the mic and how far our voices would carry etc. We then waited as the rest of our year poured in and we commenced! The whole process was a lot of fun and I think we all enjoyed it.

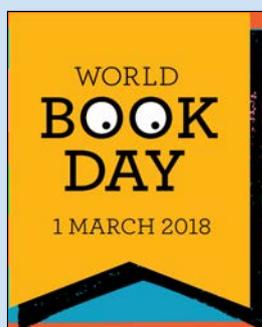


**Max Dawkins, Year 8**

*Edited by Samuel Masters*



## World Book Day



Once again, this year the school had planned a whole host of original events to celebrate World Book Day, on the 1<sup>st</sup> March. Yet as the most aware of you will have observed, this coincided with the snow days, when the school was closed. So, we did nothing for World Book Day. Article finished.

No! This school wouldn't really be put off book celebrations by a bit of snow! In truth, we simply delayed the celebrations by a week.



During the day, students and staff could come in with a prop, from which others could guess which book they were thinking of. I saw quite a few Harry Potter wands in the corridors, and Mr Griffin had his Arsenal scarf. Personally, I took in 'the precious... *Gollum!*'

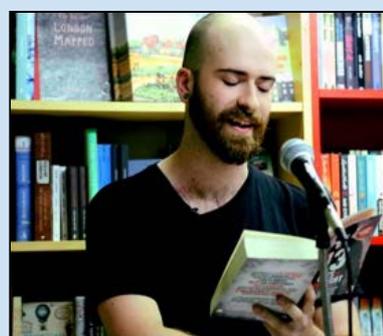


For Years 7–9, there was also a twenty-minute 'drop-everything-and-read' session, at a random unexpected time in the school day. Our school has held this tradition for many years now, and I still fondly remember being able to take some extra time out lost comfortably in a book (as opposed to lost helplessly in a maths problem).

In addition, Year Eight enjoyed a particularly special event this



World Book Day: a visit from a published ghost-story author, Leo Hunt. His books are available from the school library. The whole year group received a door-opening lecture from Mr Hunt, in which he explained how



he likes to go about his creative writing. Adding to this, some students were selected to attend his creative writing workshop during the day. Who knows? Perhaps one day we'll see their own writing published too. (See longer article about this visit by Mrs Carey).

Yet what about the upper years? Open to the whole school was the book freecycle: staff and students' no-longer-wanted books donated over the past couple of months were spread out in the canteen, for anyone to help themselves to. I took two classic novels for myself, and also saw many conventional works and comic books taken to other new homes. No books should be wasted; there will always be a willing reader somewhere!



There were also two book quizzes: one for Years 7–9, and another for Years 10 up. I thought I did pretty well on the complex questions (such as 'What is a catharsis?'), even if I didn't do so well on simple name-the-book-of-this-cover. I guess I'm just cursed to overthink all things. Still, there were two Tolkien-based questions – and in case you haven't realised, Tolkien is easily the best author of all time – which makes this quiz perfect.

One final thing to mention is the after-school Kahoot quiz, held in the library. As all students will know, Kahoot is an interactive quiz website, popular in this school. Teams were booked with Mrs Carey – a big thank you to her for organising this!

In all, (delayed) World Book Day was a distinguished, fun-packed day for all – staff and students alike. Students were even given a £1 book token to spend. Special thanks goes to Mrs Allen, Mrs Carey and Mr Griffin, and to the English prefects who helped organise these events.

**Samuel Masters, Year 12**

### **Year 7 Short Story Competition**

Year 7 have been taking part in the Radio 2 500 word short story competition this term.

Students were taught lots of different ways of approaching and writing exciting short stories. Students were encouraged to upload their stories to the Radio 2 competition and we wish all Y7 students luck with their entries!

Each class chose 3 winners, who were then narrowed down to 3 top entries by the English prefects, Dylan Moody and Evie Tonks. The Headmaster had the unenviable task of placing the 3 winning stories into Gold, Silver and Bronze place.

Our winners this year, who have been awarded book vouchers for their endeavours are the following: **GOLD** place **Ben Huggett 7SMK**, **SILVER** **George Box 7ERR**, **BRONZE** **Maddy Hosier 7PLR**.

The winning 3 stories are below for you to read and enjoy. Also included is a highly commended story written by **Josie Collett 7PLR**.

**Mrs Allen**



## GOLD Ben Huggett 7SMK

### It's Me

'Time flies by when you're having fun'. That's the saying— and it's true. My life was fun. I was only 11 when it happened. But now it will never be the same again. If I remember rightly I walked out onto a road and a speeding red car turned the corner. And that was it.

Now I'm in a strange white room. A room that's so bright, it hurts my eyes to look around. There's no one here. I hear a voice. "Emily Redhill". I hesitate. I must still be in hospital. When I turn around, I see an old woman dressed in white robes who tells me, "Your mother awaits you, third corridor on the left."

And with that she's gone. Getting out of my chair, I walk to the door. Then all goes black.

I open my eyes, as if for the first time. There are people staring at me so I attempt to shuffle backwards, but I stumble. The feeling in my legs is back, but not in the same way as before. A woman, outside what looks like prison bars, says "I'll take her. Let's call her Daisy." With that, she reaches out to grab me, but I struggle helplessly. No! I shout. Give me back to my mum! How dare you! My name's Emily not Daisy! She's with a young boy who is jumping up and down, with a cheesy grin on his face. How has this happened? Surely it's not allowed! And even worse she throws me into a cage! This is child abuse surely!

Once we get home, she lets me out of the big cage. I run off but my ear really itches. I itch behind my ear for a few seconds, then I realise they're laughing. Annoyed, I run upstairs. I don't plan on staying here though— this place stinks of fish! I'm guessing they used to own a cat. I'm going back to my mum! But before that, I think I'll shut my eyes for a while.

A while later, I run back down the steep stairs and just as I reach the bottom, a rolled up piece of paper comes through the letterbox ;it's a newspaper. They're so boring. I'm still so tired so I walk away and find a nice comfy spot on the sofa.

The boy then walks in. "Come on Daisy! Go get the newspaper!" he orders. Who do they think I am— a slave? Hopefully if I do this I can finally relax! I walk out into the hallway and grab the newspaper. Slowly and reluctantly, I walk back to the boy and drop the newspaper, but as I do, I read the headline— 'Girl in East Sussex hit by a car and died. 11 year old Emily Redhill was hit by a car going way over the speed limit.' – Hang on— that's me. And it's just then when I realise. I have fur. I have a tail. I'm not Emily— I'm a dog.

## SILVER George Box 7ERR

### Potato Trump

I recovered these sacred food texts... I hope they help the next generation of food learn better from their grim history...

This was an ordinary chip. In an ordinary Tesco's. But he was different. From his strangely orange skin colour and strange rivalry with the sweet potato chip Kim, to the way he was obsessed with building a



wall between them and the Mexican enchiladas...Potato Trump was a strange chip. As strange as a fat chip in the middle of fries (which Kim was).

One day Potato Trump saw a little sausage from a Russian pig saying "I'll help you gain presidential control over the chip world. All you need to do is send me some of your weapons." Potato agreed and they shook hands.

Once his rival was out of the way, he set to work. Building the wall and becoming the subject of many chip memes. He was mocked and booed by the fans of his rival. But he didn't care. He had the entire USC (United States of Chips) at his command. He had power and money and the yellow house all at his fingertips. He bought toy cars and toy aeroplanes to fly around Tesco at night. This was his dream wasn't it?

But somehow the money and the fame didn't really make him happy. During the election he had lost the special connection with his wife and kids. They were who really made him happy. He decided to take his wife out to the fancy part of the shop and together they shared champagne and chocolates. He took his kids out to the toy section and let them take whatever miniatures they wanted. They had so much fun!

Finally he felt ready to take on Kim in aisle 6 with the sausages and British cod. With their green bean blow darts and pea bullets they advanced from aisle 8... to 7... and finally to 6.

What happened next was total chaos. It was almost as if World War Three was going down. The shopkeeper sure would get a darn surprise when he came to open the store the next morning. There were North Korean steaks flying everywhere to meet their British counterparts; German sausages versus the Russian ones and the chips launching themselves at Kim Jong Un's fris like rockets peppering each other with pepper spray and spraying peas everywhere from tiny SMGs, ARs and Pump shotguns: it was complete bedlam in there. The battle raged for almost two hours until all the food ran out of energy and could shoot no more pea ammo.

The two great— sorry did I say great?— I mean mad leaders agreed peace terms and arranged for all the food to come together to celebrate in aisle one. There was to be a grand ceremony and plenty to drink.

## The Party

Kim and Potato rose to stand on the podium and were poised to shake hands, smile for the cameras but something went wrong...

As Kim and Potato were shaking hands and smiling no one noticed the knife leaving Potato's pocket until he slit Kim's throat...



**BRONZE Maddy Hosier 7PLR**

**Experiments**

The world. A strange thing really; it seems so strong and mighty, yet we have to be so careful with it. We love to have our feet planted on solid ground, but it can all disappear.

I crash onto the sofa, finally able to relax for the weekend. I gaze out of the window. On one side the sky is red like blood, as the sun sinks beneath the rolling hills, framing the edges of my view. There is beauty there, so abundant that it doesn't surprise me how the birds sing each morning, how people paint the reddened horizon. But the other window shows a different view. Space. It fills me with wonder, the emptiness that goes on forever. But there is something sinister about this endless void, something about the unknown that makes me want to turn away; my eyes are glued to it...

My mother calls me into the kitchen, and I reluctantly pull my eyes away, dragging myself into the room. I missed the urgency in her voice.

"Look...we have something to tell you," she said, tears filling her normally twinkling eyes. What was going on? Why the wait? Just tell me what's happening!

She points to the floor, where there's a growing puddle, where the seawater is flooding our house. Then, as I turn my gaze to the ceiling, I realise that it is collapsing. We don't have a faulty house; the sky is pressing down on us. It seems as if the whole world is against us. My mother tells me that we will be permanently moving to our underground bunker and lab. I have no problem with that – I'll do anything to stay alive.

I never see my parents anymore – the only thing I see is the ever-growing pile of dead animals outside the lab door. There's something happening here, and the experiments aren't working either. But something's definitely going on.

As I go to collect the dead animals today, I realise something – there aren't any. It sounds like something has finally been achieved in there.

My alarm beeps, the high-pitched sound piercing through the silence of the night. With every step, my heart pounds faster, so loudly I'm worried it will give me away. It's finally time to figure out what's happening behind those doors. As I cautiously open them, I gaze at my surroundings. Everywhere I look, I see pictures of sea creatures and gills. Of course! Even I guessed it in the back of my mind. All of the land is disappearing, but the water is somehow staying put. If we want any chance at survival, we have to live underwater.



*Three months later...*

I take a deep breath before swallowing the pill. I plunge my head into the water, and breathe. Yes, breathe. It works. Thanks to my parents, the human race lives to see another day. I swim towards the buildings, preparing myself for a new start. But after all this time, I am so thankful for parents.

*Highly commended: Josie Collett 7PLR*

*The End*

The window of my little room is steamed up. I lift a frail, quivering hand to wipe it clear, and a truly beautiful sight meets my tired eyes: the winter morning is as golden and crisp as a freshly picked apple. A thick blanket of snow carpets the fields, and a crinkled ribbon of icy water, reflects the rays of the early morning sun. I lie back onto my wonderfully warm and comfortable bed, and before I can stop myself, I drift off into a deep slumber.

The moment my eyes close, a dim light flickers on inside my head— a tiny flame. It is like I am being played a film; a small baby, with sapphire—blue eyes, flailing its arms and legs. I feel a terrible, heart—wrenching pang. My son. So long ago, yet I still remember. One of the only things I can remember actually, but then I suppose, how could I forget? He was an angel— my angel... Then suddenly, the image is extinguished; the flame put out, and I am left again in the impenetrable darkness of my lonely mind.

When I can 't bear it any longer, I open my eyes, and wipe away the tears. I mustn 't let this pain overcome me, I must do something! But a gentle knocking at the door has sounded, and in my weakened voice, I croak,

'Enter?'

The hinges creak, and there in the doorway, is a man with kind, blue eyes...

'Hello mum,' he whispers, 'how are you?'

'Oh, hello darling, I didn 't realise you were coming!'

He walks over and sits on the bed, clutching my cold hands. I look up at him, but it is no longer my son. Instead a stranger, who clutches not my hands, but a clipboard.

'But, where is my son?'

'Your son? I don 't think he 's been here, dear,' they say, glancing at a man in the corner, with white hair.

'Died, years ago...' he mutters, looking at the floor. And then he stumbles over to the door, and vanishes. The stranger gets up, and quickly follows him out. I don 't understand, but I 'm too tired to think now.



Time stretches on.

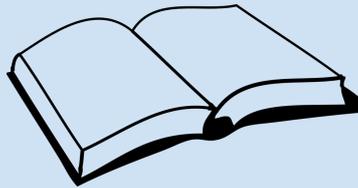
The old man is back. I feel I should know him, though I do not. I hear snatches of conversations, like a badly tuned radio:

'Not long now...Stay strong...feels no pain...'

My mind is growing tired. Sleep beckons... But then a light, brighter than any other imaginable, bursts on inside my head. I gaze in awe at it, for it does not hurt my eyes. And as I stare, a speck appears in the centre, growing ever larger. I struggle to keep looking, for I know that I must! But I need not wait any longer... There he is, standing before me, surrounded by a hazy glow. He reaches out a hand.

'Come on mum, time to go.'

And we fly. Over the snow, over the river, and up, up, up, until the light takes us both...



## Library Report

### World Book Day Author Visit



We were thrilled to have the author, Leo Hunt, join us for World Book Day (the second). He gave a lecture to all of Year 8, which was a fascinating insight into how he wrote his ghost story, '13 Days of Midnight', and created the gruesome characters in 'the Host'. The students had lots of excellent questions for Leo, including how he chose the names for his characters, which writers inspire him, how the publishing process works and even how much he earns!



Leo then ran 2 workshops with some of the Year 8 students, during which they had to create their own ghosts, answer a quiz about them, and then write an introduction to their story. Leo was amazed at how creative our students were, and how exceptional their writing was. We had a frustrated child prodigy ghost, a Banshee/Psiren cross that lured people in and then murdered them with her screeching and a ghost that had decided to be evil because in life he was nice and it hadn't

got him anywhere. It was great to see the students so engaged with their writing, and one student told me he was going to go home and continue his writing as he was enjoying it so much.



### Author Workshop for World Book Day

Today we met the amazing author, Leo Hunt, writer of the book '13 days of Midnight.' The entirety of Year 8 had a lecture in period 2, and people who were specially picked by their English Teachers attended another workshop. We got to create our own ghost and write a scene of us meeting them! Leo Hunt's books are a great thing to read if you like a good ghost story.

**Scarlett Cunningham, Year 8**

### Missing Titles competition

Congratulations to **Baidehi Sarkar (Year 10)** for recognising all of the missing book titles and authors in the poster – she wins the £10 book voucher.

**Mrs R Carey, Librarian**

### Trinity Schools Book Award

This term a group of students took part in the Trinity Schools Book Award, calling themselves 'The Ruthless Readers'. Over the course of 2 months they read and reviewed 8 books on the theme 'A New World'. They created books trailer videos, comic strips of their own experiences of entering a



bewildering new culture, and were film directors who had to cast and edit to transform their books into films. The group were extremely enthusiastic about the books that they read, and chose "The Declaration" by Gemma Malley as their winning book.

The students were set to attend an awards ceremony with four of the authors, but unfortunately this was cancelled due to the snow. Anna Hardie (Year 7) entered a wonderful book review (below) for the 'Best Review Contest' of the book *Welcome to Nowhere* by Elizabeth Laird.

A huge thank you to the PA for the money that they provided for us to take part in this reading challenge. The students were really engaged in it, and hopefully it will be something we can run again next year.

**Mrs R Carey, Librarian**



## TSBA Award Book Review: Welcome to Nowhere – Elizabeth Laird

*Welcome to Nowhere* is a beautifully written book by author Elizabeth Laird. I particularly loved the setting and the different people in this novel. It is all about the main characters: – Omar (aged 12, who tells the story) and Musa (Omar's brother, aged 14, who has cerebral palsy). They live in the city of Bosra, Syria with their mother, father (Baba), brother (Fuad aged 5) and two sisters (Eman aged 16 and Nadia aged 1). They are all one big happy family until Baba gets a new job and the family move to Daraa. At this time people are angry with the government which is leading to protests and war. The family try to escape and make it to a refugee camp in Jordan. Life is brutal and to make matters worse Baba goes back to Daraa to earn money, but unfortunately Baba is killed, and Musa becomes head of the family. Soon, Nadia falls ill and they must travel to London to see a doctor. But will they make it there on time or even make it at all?

I really loved this book as it has a great balance of sad and happy things. I loved the bits when they were at the camp as I am always learning about the battle and it was really good to learn about how the war affected civilians. This was a very emotional book as many people were affected by protests including the main characters – it just shows how bad it really was.

*Welcome to Nowhere* was easy to follow, although it got a bit confusing when the riots were going on as there was so much happening in just one bit of the book. I guess that is what a riot is supposed to be and reading it makes you feel a bit confused and worried for yourself and the people around you. I don't think I would change anything about the book as it all makes perfect sense, and without any bit the story line would fall apart. This book is unique as I have read many books but nothing like this, this book is extraordinary!

*Welcome to Nowhere* has to be the most superb book I have read in a long time. I was so addicted to *Welcome to Nowhere* I had to read it not once, not twice, not even three times but four. I read this splendid book a whopping four times and then I took it out again to look things up. My favourite part has to be the scene when they are travelling to Jordan, because it makes me feel empathy for them and they help people along the way which is really kind. I also love the fact that it ended on a cliff-hanger and I was left with so many questions about what they will do next! I feel like there should be a sequel, then another sequel and then a prequel.

I would recommend this book to anyone who likes reading stories about adventure and action as Omar and his siblings have a little one for themselves. The age I would recommend is 10 to 15 but many adults will also love this book. It involves teenage drama, action, adventure.

I really loved *Welcome to Nowhere* and I hope that anyone who has read it or will read this book will enjoy it as much as I did! *Welcome to Nowhere* is overall a very positive and super book!

**Anna Hardie, Year 7.**

*Edited by Diveen Dler*



# COMPUTER SCIENCE

## BGS Student reaches Bebras Challenge Finals

Talented student Thomas Stewart from Bexley Grammar School was invited to the Department of Computer Science at the University of Oxford on Sunday 28 January as a finalist in a UK-wide computing competition – The UK BEBRAS Computational Thinking Challenge.

Reaching the final of the Senior age group is an impressive achievement, as 14,402 students entered the first round of the Senior age group category (14–16). Thomas was among the top 60 highest achieving students invited to the final round in his age group, and was presented with his finalist's certificate at a prize-giving ceremony at Hertford College.

The UK BEBRAS Computational Thinking Challenge, supported by Google, is designed to get students excited about computing and computational thinking. It is a problem-solving contest with questions inspired by topics in computer science. In the first round, held in their own schools, students have to try and solve as many problems as possible in the allotted time. There are six age categories. The highest scoring students from the four oldest age groups (Elite, Senior, Intermediate, and Junior) were then invited to the Department of Computer Science at Oxford for the finals over two weekends in January and February.



*Thomas Stewart (10MCA) receiving his final round certificate from Peter Millican, Professor of Philosophy at Hertford College, University of Oxford.*

For more information, see [bebras.uk](http://bebras.uk) or contact Helen Wilcox, Communications Officer, Department of Computer Science, University of Oxford, [Helen.wilcox@cs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.wilcox@cs.ox.ac.uk), tel: 01865 610692.



## CONTINUE FOR TRIPS



## **YOUNG ENTERPRISE TRIP** The Walt Disney Company Trip

On Monday 26th February, Wiktorina and I went to The Walt Disney Company as part of Young Enterprise.

We started the evening with presentations and the first was by Jane Gaskin Smith who was the corporate brand manager; she explained to us just how important it is to maintain a respectful brand and be able to appeal to universal consumers. Next was Germano Romanelli who is part of the creative team at Disney and deals with advertising. He showed us the processes that Disney takes to promote a product or film and how they visually execute within their company to attract people towards their company. The last presenter was Kei Phillips who was also part of the creative team but her main role was to break down products and criticise them to improve and develop them. She told us how vital it is that we thoroughly analyse our brand and business to ensure that we exceed a consumer's expectation by having the best possible quality product. The trip gave us a lot of useful information which will ensure that we will succeed in the Young Enterprise competition!



**Diveen Dier, Year 12**

### **Young Enterprise**

Every year our school participates in the Young Enterprise Company Programme. This is an international competition held by Young Enterprise, who are a charity organisation. Participants come up with their own company and product, which they design and manufacture and then sell. This year, the team consists of 25 Year 12 students and we have named our company ProPortion. At ProPortion, we are endeavouring to manufacture and sell a new product – the Smartshaker – that we believe will help to combat a growing problem surrounding salt intake in our current society. We work as a team to help provide you with an alternative to life at the table. Our aim is simply to help you have a healthy lifestyle without a hassle, through allowing you to monitor your salt intake and ensure that you don't consume too much salt, which can lead to a variety of health problems later on in life. We created the Smartshaker as we care about you and your health, and want to provide you with the means to care for yourself and your health too. We are here to provide you with an affordable way to keep yourself healthy. We have done very well in this competition in the past, but this time we want to go even further on in the competition. For this we need your help, so please follow us on our website and on our social media, where you can find out more about us, our product and our journey.

Website: <https://proportionltd.wordpress.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ProPortion-YE-924247864419429>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/ProPortionYE> (@ProPortionYE)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/proportion.ye/> (@ProPortion.YE)

**Drishiti Alam**, Edited by Jake Rodrigues



## SCIENCE TRIP RSC Chemistry Competition

Last Friday, myself and two other Chemistry students were invited to the National Schools' Analyst Competition Regional Heat hosted by Queen Mary University of London. When we arrived, we were shown into the chemistry lab where Dr. Sheriff outlined the task: complete two experiments, answer the questions and do the calculations. This seemed fairly straightforward. We were quite confident at first, until they announced the title: 'Titrations and IR spectroscopy'. We glanced at each other in confusion, as we realised we knew absolutely nothing about IR spectroscopy. Luckily, Dr. Numbere whispered some quick tips as she left the lab to go to the teachers' meeting. We donned our lab coats, glasses and gloves and hoped for the best.



We started with titrating potassium hydrogen phthalate. After arguing about how to pronounce 'phthalate', we collected our equipment. The mass balance, which had a glass cage around it, was astonishing; just putting your hand into the container was detected. Then, we made our solutions. Unfortunately for Valerie, she needed to shake the solution of potassium hydrogen phthalate for 10 minutes before it dissolved. Having set up the equipment, we started our titration. A titration is used to find the 'endpoint' of a reaction – when all the chemical is neutralised. This is shown by a colour change (using phenolphthalein the solution turns pale pink from colourless). We stared at the flask intently, holding our breath, whilst adding sodium hydroxide drop by drop. When we finally spotted the pale pink, we knew the endpoint was reached and we collectively breathed a sigh of relief, as the experiment was complete.

We repeated the experiment with citric acid. Whilst the other two were titrating, I was nominated to complete the IR spectroscopy. I fiddled with this alien machine to somehow produce a percentage transmittance graph for the two chemicals. Dr. Numbere had mentioned to 'look for the peaks' in the graph, so we selected the common peaks that we found between the chemicals and the data sheet. From this, we deduced which bonds were present in the phthalate and citric acid. Supervisors were marking our practical skills during the experiment. We were cautious not to break anything, as it would have been expensive to replace. Standing up for the whole experiment was a challenge in itself!

Once we finished the experiments and tidied away, we had 2 hours left to finish the calculations and questions. We sped through them until we got to the last page, which were questions about infrared spectroscopy. It was rewarding that we managed to work out the answers to questions on a topic that 4 hours previously we didn't know existed. Luckily, we checked our work and realised our first answer was wrong. This meant that every other answer was also wrong but we managed to re-do all of our calculations before the time was up.

Even though we didn't win the competition, we really enjoyed ourselves and felt like proper bonafide scientists! Thank you to Dr. Numbere for organising this wonderful event.

**Corinna Duzendorfer, Year 12** Edited by Diveen Dler



## **HISTORY TRIP YEAR 12 and 13 HISTORY AND POLITICS TRIP TO...** **NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON**

After meeting at the wonderful time of 2:30 in the morning, we embarked on our journey to Heathrow airport and took off on our transatlantic flight. The flight was long and tedious and we ran out of things to do! Once we got to Washington D.C, we were shocked, as it was nothing like we expected – it looked similar to the UK and not like the huge, grand scenery that we had pictured. Our hotel had a gorgeous view of the Capitol building, and we were able to relax there until dinner. We all slept soundly that night!



On Saturday we woke up eager for our first full day! After filling ourselves up with an American breakfast, we set off on the short walk to the Capitol Building. When we reached the building, we were in awe of its grandeur inside and out. Once inside, we were welcomed by our friendly tour guide who showed us the impressive artwork within the building and the fascinating history behind it. Following on from our visit we walked to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History where we found amazing exhibits ranging from War Exhibitions to First Ladies...we even saw Bill Nye the Science Guy's lab coat!

Sunday marked a hectic day with an extreme amount of walking as we visited the historic memorials within Washington, as well as some of the wonderful museums they have, and we were even able to see the White House! We started by walking from our hotel to the Thomas Jefferson memorial, getting to see a bit of the city and a lovely foggy view of the Washington Monument along the way, and then we circled around a body of water to see the Franklin D. Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln memorials. They were beautiful, and we were especially shocked at the amount of time and effort that had gone into the memorials, with many important quotes scribed on the walls which still resonate today. After that, we walked to the White House, and we were shocked at how much smaller it looked in real life! During the evening, we enjoyed some bowling along with pizza, and we had a chance to relax after the immense amount of walking!

On Monday, before we waved goodbye to the US Capital City, we had one last stop at the Pentagon, the home of US Defence. After an intense security check we were taken on a guided tour by a US serviceman, we were particularly taken aback by the two 9/11 memorials which were situated both inside and outside of the large Pentagon building and paid a fitting tribute to the 125 fatalities from the attack. We headed back on the metro one last time before boarding a coach to Philadelphia (Making sure to stock up on American snacks such as 'Cheetos' and 'Lays'). When we arrived in Philadelphia we went to the Liberty Bell Museum, tried a Philadelphia Cheese Steak and then attempted to burn it off in a group race up the infamous 'Rocky Steps' (Mr Martin was slightly disappointed by his defeat!). Next, we boarded the coach to our final destination...NEW YORK CITY! As the famous landscape came into view our singing skills were put to the test as we belted out the Alicia Keys hit 'Empire State of Mind'. Stepping off the coach we were minutes away from the flashing lights of Times Square and ready to explore the amazing city in the coming days!



Tuesday was a personal favourite – we got to see a lot of New York! We started with a buffet breakfast at Applebee's, which was delicious, and we caught the Subway to the Statue of Liberty Ferry with very full stomachs. The journey to the Statue of Liberty was gorgeous, with a spectacular view of the New York skyline as we went across the Hudson River. The Statue of Liberty was so much smaller than we had expected, but still very impressive, and the Ellis Island museum that we viewed afterwards was very interesting, as it informed us about the history of immigration in New York. We then visited the 9/11 Museum and Memorial, which was so moving and an experience that we will always remember, as it was incredibly informative and we learned things that we never would have previously known. After an amazing dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe, we visited the Empire State Building, which was a highlight of the trip; the view was beautiful and showed us just how large New York City is.

On Wednesday we headed to the United Nations building where we were stunned to see the General Assembly meeting room. It was quite amazing to see the podium where famous world leaders have stood to give empowering speeches. After leaving the UN, we took a short walk to Grand Central Station where we felt that we were in the opening episode of 'Gossip Girl' in the midst of its beautiful gold decor. The next stage of our trip was very much shopping focused (much to our delight) and we were taken to the 'Largest Department Store in the World'... Macy's! Not only did we do hardcore shopping in here but also in nearby shops such as Sephora (where most splurged their

money...including Miss Scott and Miss Fuwa!). After shopping we went to Central Park for ice skating. This was a fun experience as everyone tried to stay standing, despite wobbles (Well done Mr Goodall!!!).

On our last day in New York, we had the whole day to explore the city in groups, and we decided to do a fierce amount of shopping! There are so many shops in New York City, as you can imagine, and we were constantly walking up and down and back and forth visiting as many as we could! Unfortunately, at 4pm

our shopping was cut short and we had to get the coach to Newark airport to board our flight. Our overnight, 6 hour flight went quickly, and we spent it watching films with about an hour of on-and-off sleep. As the sun started to rise, we knew that our trip was sadly at its end.



Overall, this once in a lifetime trip was a fantastic experience which we would recommend to anyone studying History & Politics in the Sixth Form. Of course, this trip would not have been made possible without our fantastic teachers: Mr Goodall, Mr Martin, Miss Scott and Miss Fuwa...THANK YOU!

**Mia Atkins and Isabelle Merralls, Year 12**

*With Contributions from Shivani Hindocha and Evie Tonks, Year 12*



## Year 12: Safe Drive Stay Alive



Year 12 is not only an important year for the start of our IB studies but we are also reaching an important milestone because at 17 we are able to learn to drive. On February 2nd, the whole year group travelled to Greenwich Theatre to watch an evocative and informative performance by people who have had personal connections to vehicle crashes. We heard heartfelt stories from servicemen who have witnessed disastrous crashes and also parents of dead children and people who have been impacted by crashes. Whether driving is an aim or not, this trip was an eye-opening experience and will make us even more thoughtful when we take to the roads...

**Isabelle Merralls, Year 12**

## MFL TRIPS Year 11 Language students attend King's College London Workshop

On Thursday 11th January, a group of Year 11 language students, including myself, were privileged enough to have been selected to attend the *Our Business is Languages* workshop, which was held at King's College London. The event, which was wonderfully organised by the MFL department, consisted of various business simulations, including talks from Commerzbank, Barclays and the BBC, all of which were both insightful and engaging. I felt particularly lucky to have listened to Hugh Sykes (a journalist at the BBC) who recounted his many experiences abroad, and how he has used languages throughout his career. As part of this he recounted tales from his reporting time in Russia, just after the collapse of Communism. Being a Russian student myself, I really empathised with Mr Sykes and took a real interest in the events he recalled. After a very enriching day I can definitely say that my love for languages has grown and that I am looking forward to using my languages in the future, both here at Bexley Grammar and beyond.

**Reme Maton, Year 11**

## Italian Exchange

On the evening of Friday 2nd February, a group of seventeen Year 12 and 13 students were excited to meet their Italian exchange students, arriving from Siena. Over the course of the following week, we engaged with these students to develop both our Italian and their English skills. On the Saturday morning, we all took part in a short treasure hunt around Bexleyheath, allowing us to get to know each other. Some of us then went to explore the pleasures of Bluewater, which, coming from a small town, our Italian friends thoroughly enjoyed. Sunday was spent with families – my student, Emma,



experienced unusually deserted Central London streets whilst cheering me on in the Cancer Research Winter Run, then, afterwards, being scared at the London Dungeons!

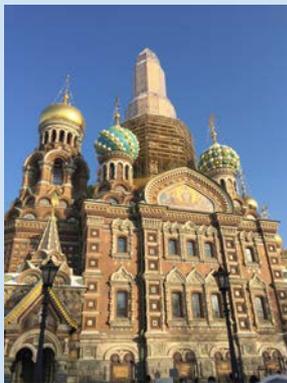
The students spent Monday in BGS with us, sharing in our normal IB lessons. We enjoyed "speed dating" in our Italian lesson, getting to know the other exchange students, without using our mother language. On Wednesday we accompanied the Italians around Greenwich, seeing the Meridian line and the Cutty Sark, before taking a chilly riverboat trip to the South Bank then on to Covent Garden. To round off the visit, we enjoyed a dessert together at Creams, then said farewell to our students on the Friday morning. We are all very excited to be seeing them again, when we travel to Siena in April, where we can practise more of our Italian.

Thank you to the MFL staff, especially Mrs Rubbera, for arranging this opportunity for us.

**Matthew Lay, Year 12**, Edited by Lauren Bir

## **Russia Trip**

On the morning of the 12th Feb, 26 of us arrived at Heathrow airport for our flight to Moscow. Despite a slight mishap to start off with (always triple check the times before your flight), we arrived in Russia and experienced the Russian "spring": -10! The following days were filled with visits to beautiful churches, traveling on the subway and, of course, Red Square.



All with lots and lots of pairs of socks! One of the most memorable experiences was perhaps visiting a Russian school (School 2104) and practising our Russian with the students there, who seemed very interested in the Queen! Before we knew it, our short two days in Moscow were over and we were on the overnight train headed to St Petersburg. After the incredibly low temperatures in Moscow, we had hoped the more western city would be warmer. However, when arriving at 6am in -17°, we realised it wasn't quite the case. St Petersburg felt much more European, almost like Amsterdam with canals which had all frozen over.



Again, there were more incredible churches, my favourite being "The Church On Spilled Blood" as it was filled entirely with mosaics. On our last day, we visited Pushkin, an area just outside of St Petersburg. There we visited St Catherine's Palace and its beautiful gardens, which was an incredible way to end the trip before our flights home.

Thanks to all the teachers who organised it and made it such an incredible trip! **Alice Brayford, Year 11**



## **ECONOMICS TRIP** For Y13 to New York and Washington

During the February half-term holiday, five teachers from the Economics and Business Studies Department took 42 Year 13 students on a tour of Washington and New York. Over 5 days we walked a minimum of 100 km and ate what seemed like a lifetime's supply of ham and eggs for breakfast. Students and staff had a really wonderful time. I asked four female students to write their account of the trip.... in addition to making the most of everything the trip had to offer, their singular focus on food impressed me!

### **J. Joe. Head of Department**

#### Friday



Passport in my left, suitcase in my right, friends by my side: the story starts. Aside from my desperate need for caffeine, excitement was high, made even better by the arrival of the one, the only, and the wise Mr Deliss. After an 8 hour plane journey the teachers decided no rest for the wicked. We embarked on a night time journey to Washington DC's very own Chinatown. As first nights go, this was certainly a memorable one.

#### Saturday

We started the day off early and had our first taste of an American breakfast. Bagels and waffles were the staple dish, and let me tell you now, the British versions can't compare to these calorific, sugar-filled treats. The Americans were kind enough to let bygones be bygones and gave us a tour of the Capitol Building, something us Brits weren't too fond of a hundred years back when we burnt it down (and who says British people are always polite \*scoff\*). After grabbing a quick and rather pricey bite to eat, we headed towards the Lincoln memorial which stands proudly opposite the Capitol. The scene of Lincoln, overlooking the reflecting pool in the cold air, with the sun's rays breaking through the slightly cloudy skies was a picturesque sight indeed (in actual fact, we actually took a picture – oh, these modern times we live in).

#### Sunday

Sunday was an early start for us all as we packed our bags – and as much food as we could into them – on our way to New York. After an hour-long karaoke session on the coach, we arrived at the famous Rocky statue and the Rocky steps in Philadelphia. Our next location was visiting the Liberty Bell, which was definitely worth the frizzy hair and wet socks! After taking photos (and a photo-bomber in one) we resumed our journey to New York.

This road trip was exhausting to say the least. We all unloaded our suitcases as we got off the coach and took a moment to take it all in. New York. Tall skyscrapers, yellow taxis, hot dog stands, bright lights and...tall skyscrapers. This was a huge city!

#### Monday



Monday was a walking day – we explored the streets of New York and all it had to offer. In our free time my friends and I decided to go to Carlo's Bakery from the series 'Cake Boss'. Nobody could decide what to get, so you would think that each person would get something different so we could all have a taste of more than one treat, but no, not us; we all each got the same Cannoli in the same flavour and scooped it by ourselves. What a smart bunch.

We ended the day by all coming together and visiting the Empire State Building; although 84 floors may sound daunting, the view was amazing. Although we couldn't stay for long – it felt like negative fifty degrees up there – we made our way to Wendy's where we dug into some classic American cheeseburgers, fries, and milkshakes before having a short shopping spree in Hersheys and coming back to some late night TV.

### Tuesday

After filling up on a hearty breakfast buffet, we took a scenic walk through New York to the United Nations headquarter building, making sure to pass iconic areas such as the picturesque Grand Central Terminal and stare at the numerous skyscrapers that made up the New York skyline. The tour of the UN was exciting and it was especially interesting to learn more about the UN sustainability goals, something we had recently covered in Economics lessons.



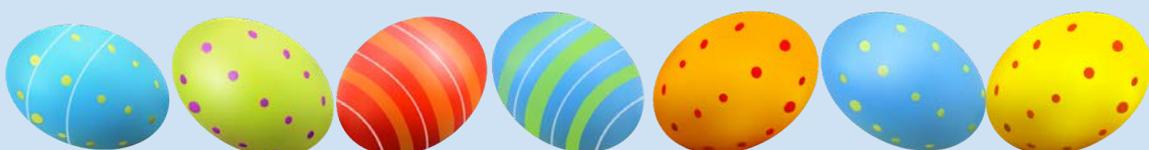
After, we took a short break for lunch, dining at Panda Express, which was highly recommended by Mr Joe and did not disappoint, before heading to Macy's flagship store on Herald Square, the largest department store in America, for a little bit of shopping. We were given a talk on sales techniques and schemes used by the store, from its opening in 1902, to attract in customers and make them subconsciously buy items they didn't need,



before being let loose to explore the 7 floors of incredible American clothing and shoes.

### Wednesday

Yet another beautiful breakfast came our way at Applebee's as we rolled out of our beds and into Wednesday, and, it being Valentine's Day, Love was in the air for couples all over New York. While some couples got beautiful displays of affection, we were just excited to share a romantic moment with the \$2 pizza from down the road later on in the day, and what a beautiful moment it was.



With the day ahead of us, we took the Subway and made our way to the Iconic Lady Liberty via ferry. Although, despite the lovely views, some of us arrived at Liberty Island looking just as green as the Lady herself! We then took some lovely photos, posed like 'models' for a group photo, and made our way to Ellis Island where we spent some time in the local museum.

After our little marine adventure, we were then taken on a tour of the Financial District, notably the New York Stock Exchange and Wall Street. Here we learnt some interesting facts about how things are run and also about the Wall Street bombing in 1929. We learnt that the chipped walls of the J.P Morgan bank was because of this and trading was still happening in the stock exchange even after the bombing, until someone had to calmly walk to the bell and ring it to stop trading for the day. This incident killed many but the stock exchange opened again for business the next day!



We were also taken to the Ground Zero Memorial where it was a painful memory for some as we remembered those who lost their lives in 9/11. It will forever be a loving memory for us all when we look back in years to come.

#### Thursday

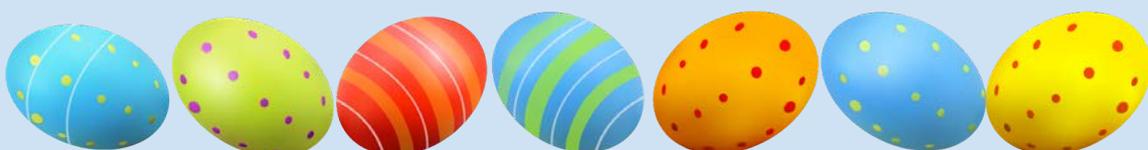
It was our last day in New York and some of us were finding it hard to part with the fact that the days of cheap pizza were over.

But before that sad moment came to pass, some of us went to Tiffany's & Co to relive the moments of Audrey Hepburn before a conclusion stop at Central Park where we were able to sit and take in the New York skyline one last time.

Of course, none of this could have been done without the amazing teachers who organised and dedicated so much time to us and this trip to bring about such an informative and enjoyable experience, so thank you to Mr Deliss, Mrs Pearman, Mrs Harris, Mr Brown and Mr Joe who came on the trip with us!

**Natasha Sidhu, Yagmur Sisman, Swechha Kansakar, and Ambra Vivian, Year 13.**

*Edited by Dlveen Dler*



## ECM Day Trip to Powell–Cotton Museum Kent

On ECM day we went on a really great trip to a museum right down in Kent. I'd done a bit of research about it, but was still blown away when we got there. First we went on



a museum safari – it was called a safari as the main part of the museum was all the artefacts and animals that had been brought over from Africa in the late 1800s, by an explorer named Percy Cotton–Powell. I've never seen so many stuffed animals! All in the name of science! The museum was so nicely laid out in galleries that were easy to navigate. We were told about all



of the old taxidermy practices. We were allowed to touch an actual lion's paw (see photo) – it was amazing!

We learnt how an African potter named Mbitim made coil pots back in 1933, and then we all went into the workshop and had a pottery session and made our clay coil pots, which we were allowed to take home.

After lunch and some free time walking around the museum we all went home, having all really enjoyed a great day out.

**Year 7 Student**

*Edited by Dliveen Dler*

## MUSIC Opera Trip

*Satyagraha* is an entirely untraditional minimalist opera, written by the esteemed Philip Glass. His elegant and simplistic composition – accompanied by incredible puppeteering – conveys the story of Gandhi during his early years in South Africa, following the evolution of his ideas of nonviolent protest – a revolutionary force of change. Sung entirely in Sanskrit (a standardized dialect of Old Indo–Aryan), this unusual concept seems as though it would struggle to engage the audience, however *Satyagraha* is awe–inspiring.

We were so fortunate to watch this masterpiece in its rehearsal stage at the English National Opera in London. I think I speak for everyone when I say that I am so thankful for the chance I had to see such a beautiful and enlightening production; it was unlike anything I've ever seen before. Stunning.

**By Emma Damiral–Wood, Year 12**



## **THEATRE**

### **Amadeus Trip**

On Wednesday 31 January, ten Year 12 students went to the National Theatre to see Michael Longhurst's version of Peter Shaffer's iconic play *Amadeus* featuring Lucian Msamati as Salieri and Adam Gillen as Mozart. *Amadeus* is a story following Salieri in his ageing years, reflecting on his past and all the horrible things he has done with his life, including his famous claim that he killed Mozart.

It was a great experience and an excellent play in a wonderful theatre and having previously watched the movie of *Amadeus*, it was interesting to see a different interpretation of the play. It was particularly interesting to see the differences between the movie and the play. For example, I was shocked when Mozart's father was only mentioned in passing, whereas in the movie he plays a pivotal role. In the moments where the movie falls down, the play improves and it was much better at getting the historical accents than the movie where everyone appeared to be either American or English with the few exceptions of Salieri and a number of the King's advisors having German accents.



The play also used light and music to full effect throughout the performance. There is an especially good scene that shows Salieri's condemnation by God and his rage against his futility as shown by the use of the great white light bearing down on him. However, in the movie, this scene, despite still being impactful is rushed over and is nowhere near as powerful as in the play. If I had to name a flaw, it would be that *Amadeus* is too annoying and I understand that he is supposed to be irritating in order to show how annoyed Salieri was by him and how unjustified Mozart was in his eyes. However, in comparison to the movie, he has no likeability and we are supposed to identify with him a little to show the monster that Salieri is becoming. In the movie Mozart is quirky and unorthodox but still likeable to a degree – though this is a minor flaw for the play considering how little it chooses to focus on Mozart.

Overall it was a fantastic interpretation of a classic play; a must see for anyone fond of musical theatre.

**Patrick Maslin, Year 12.**

*Edited by Jake Rodrigues and Isabelle Merralls*





## SPORT The VAR Debate

The Video Assistant Referee, or VAR, is a relatively new reviewing system employed to permit officials to make the correct decisions in football matches. It was first introduced into English football on 8 January 2018 in an FA Cup match between Brighton and Crystal Palace, where a Brighton goal was checked for a handball infringement before being granted as a last-minute winner. However, in recent matches in the system's trial period in the FA Cup, VAR has caused controversy overshadowing the games themselves.

On paper, the system should work faultlessly and in doing so, alleviate any controversial decisions. The referee needs only to speak to the official reviewing the footage, or hurry over to the sideline to make a decision using the benefit of hindsight. As a result, diving, dangerous tackles and foul play should be dealt with to bring about decisions that few can argue with. However, the use of VAR in FA Cup matches has significantly overshadowed the games themselves and caused more controversy than it was set out to reduce.

Liverpool vs West Bromwich Albion was a match that I would rather forget, but the spectators will remember it more for the technological reviews rather than the result. The FA Cup clash began with a sublime chip from Firmino at the Anfield Road end, but a combination of poor defending and lethargy from the Liverpool defence saw West Brom take a swift 1–2 lead.



VAR soon took centre stage in the fixture: Craig Dawson headed home from a corner, much to the disgruntlement of the home fans; however, the West Bromwich fans seemed asymptotically muted in their celebrations. Referee, Craig Pawson, called for the VAR as the players made their way back to the halfway line, in what seemed a desperate attempt to salvage anything from the game for Liverpool. Andre Marriner, the video assistant referee, correctly adjudged footballing veteran, Gareth Barry, to have impeded the Liverpool goalkeeper in an offside position, and as a result, the goal was chalked off. The drama was not to end there.



Moments later, a Liverpool attack saw Mohamed Salah go down in the penalty area under the challenge of Jake Livermore. After much deliberation, the referee trudged over to the sideline to review the collision, with the aid of replays. Football is a fast-paced sport and decisions using the VAR



system are designed to provide verdicts after some conferring from the video assistant referee or the referee themselves. This decision took over 4 minutes to complete and led to further confusion on the pitch regarding the decision, with the players becoming cold and some suffering from cramp as a result. Although Liverpool were twice beneficiaries from these decisions and failed to capitalise on them, losing 2–3 at home, even the home fans were not entirely convinced by the system.

Most, if not all, football fans want football matches to be fair and to talk about the quality of the football rather than the negative effects of modern technology in a once traditional game. Whilst it is widely accepted that something needs to be done to lessen controversy in football, it seems that the VAR system must be refined before the FA consider unleashing it on the rest of English football. It is evident that the system will be time-consuming and will slow the game down considerably at the cost of decisions that are ultimately dependent on another person's judgement; another opinion. VAR simply aims to remove the possibility of human error, but at the same time it could be seen that some of the excitement of the game is ultimately removed. There are definitely situations and matches where VAR would be extremely useful, for instance Liverpool's recent matches against Tottenham and Manchester United, but at what cost?

Football is not a game painted in black and white and maybe the "beautiful game" is not ready for modernisation.

With VAR being introduced into the 2018 World Cup in Russia, technology in football is a whole different ball game.

**Jake Rodrigues, Year 12**

*Edited by Diveen Dler*

### **Year 12 Football: Spring Term Round-Up**

Following the last round-up, we were able to win 2 out of a possible 3 games, taking us into 3rd before the Christmas break. The Spring fixtures were severely affected by adverse weather conditions and cancellations, which set the tone for the length of the term regarding the league matches.

Our first match of 2018 was an away trip to Beths, which some would consider a local derby! Conor managed to open the scoring before we conceded two goals in the second half, giving Beths the highly-contested 3 points. Shortly after, we faced Dover Grammar School in the Kent School's Cup Semi Final. At half time it seemed that both our free-moving football and our passing behind the defensive line, proved to be effective in this game; we secured a comfortable lead. The second half was primarily concerned with game management; we saw the game out with a strong defensive display, particularly by winning the ball in the midfield. The match finished as a 3–0 victory and as a result, we progress to the final against Simon Langton Grammar School!



At the end of January, we travelled to face a strong Charles Darwin School side in our next league match. The game was competitive from the start, with the first half finishing 0–0. We limited Charles Darwin to very few chances throughout the game, but on the occasion that the opposing striker drifted in behind our defence, David in goal was equal to any advances. As a whole, the match was very physical and it was through our rigorous attacking endeavours that we managed to break the deadlock and maintain the 1–0 lead until the end of the game.

Weeks later, Christ the King came to BGS for the return fixture in the league, since we had already played them at CTK. After another strong start to the game, we went 1–0 up with a goal from Conor in front of the home crowd. Christ the King's persistence paid off midway through the second half with a fast-paced punt upfield, followed by a second from a freekick. The game proceeded to end as a disappointing 1–3 loss, given we conceded a third goal late on in the game.

Having played these matches, we then had matches against Blackfen School, Farrington's and Hayes postponed due to adverse weather conditions. We are currently 3rd in our league, with 3 games in hand. At the time of writing this article, our home game against CTK is our most recent game and indeed our last before the upcoming Kent School's Cup Final. We look to continue our hard work on and off the pitch to compete in the final next term!

**Jake Rodrigues, Year 12.** Edited by Edward Baker



## REVIEWS

### Darkest Hour Review

'Darkest Hour' focuses on the the election of Winston Churchill to power after Neville Chamberlain (Ronald Pickup) fell out of favour and the Conservative Party scrambled to find someone else to lead Britain in war. This leaves Churchill in a seemingly impossible situation as he attempts to reason with a Conservative Party and a King that is hell bent on hating him, or at least making sure that whilst he is in office he cannot do anything but what they tell him to. He then struggles to force them to acknowledge that this war is inevitable while internally coping with the consequences of his actions and wondering whether or not he is making the right decisions.



First of all, I have to mention the prosthetics in this movie are mind blowing; you would have no idea that it is Gary Oldman playing Winston Churchill, if you didn't already know. However, it is not just the makeup that is brilliant. Gary Oldman is fantastic as Winston Churchill, bringing a certain eccentric charm and doggedness that most deservedly won him that Oscar. And every other actor in this movie plays their



role to perfection with the stand outs being Ben Mendelsohn as The King and Kristin Scott Thomas as Clementine (Winston 's wife). All of the characters go through really interesting story arcs that really make you think, even those that aren 't connected with war, like Clementine 's that comes out of nowhere but is a really powerful moment. Also, it is certainly interesting to see a movie where the main character is for the war, surprisingly, quite a refreshing change from all the movies that are anti war to the extreme. It handles this a bit too patriotically for my liking but, apart from that, the film does a very



good job of showing Churchill's inner conflict about what is right and his acknowledgement that maybe he is wrong and maybe they could reason with Hitler. It benefits that the cinematography in this film is fantastic, as should be expected of Bruno Delbonnel (who has previously worked alongside Tim Burton in Dark Shadows). I especially loved his use of darkness (much like a Burton movie) to highlight how alone Churchill (and therefore England is) in this political environment. If I had to find a problem with the movie, it is

how much is made up and I know that in any movie about history you have to take some artistic liberties to make the film more enjoyable, however, when close to half of it and a lot of the key scenes are fabricated it does make you question whether anything in this movie actually happened. It also can be said of this movie that it does idolize Churchill when in reality he wasn 't this perfect man that he is represented (or we remember him) as. However, if you forget about historical accuracy, then the movie is fantastic and extremely hard hitting in the way it tackles issues of War and political power.

Overall a solid 8.5/10

**Patrick Maslin, Year 12**

*Edited by Jake Rodrigues*



### The Last Jedi Review

The sequel to one of the oldest and most popular ongoing movie series of all time has been released. It follows directly on from *The Force Awakens* with Rey finding Luke. She starts her training in the force despite Luke 's resistance. Meanwhile, the rebellion keeps barely outrunning the empire, barely managing to stay

alive now that they can be followed through Hyperspace. Finn and his new friend, Rose, have a plan to stop this, involving them leaving the ship to try and find a hacker who could break into the destroyer chasing them. Can the Rebellion and the Jedi order survive?

Straight out of the gate, I despised *The Force Awakens*. I thought it was a lazy retread of *A New Hope* that risked nothing and produced something so incredibly corporate and bland (with some nice special effects). So how does this movie compare? Well, it is infinitely better than the aforementioned movie



because it at least attempts to do something new and build on the lore of Star Wars instead of changing nothing.

Let us start with the protagonists, who are all pretty good. Leia and Luke, in particular, really stand out with their characters going in very different directions from what you might expect, and great performances from both Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher (despite Leia having a very weird scene very early on).

But what about the new characters? All the characters added in this movie are – for the most part – pretty good. It is particularly nice to see a woman who doesn't subscribe to Hollywood's usual, thin-as-a-stick representation of women. However, they both do have some moments that are either nonsensical or feel a little heavy-handed. The returning cast all have interesting story arcs that deviate from the *Star Wars* norm, with Poe and Finn's relating to vengeance over survival being really interesting. Rey's arc, however, sticks to generic ideas about inheritance, and she still remains a bit of a Mary Sue. The only intriguing parts are those that relate to Luke.

Yet enough about the heroes; what about the villains? In my opinion, wasted. Both Andy Serkis and Adam Driver are amazing actors who have time and time again proved that. But Snoke is shunned to the sidelines whilst Kylo Ren, who in *The Force Awakens* at least had some intimidation and a cool design, becomes a whiny little character with a terrible origin story that makes no sense – very similar to Anakin in the prequels.



Apart from that there isn't really much else to talk about. There is some good action, with one standout lightsaber battle at the end. The plot is nothing that interesting: very generic *Star Wars*, on the run from the Empire. It's really the characters that drive this movie (as it should be). So overall it certainly has its faults but, despite this, it is still a solid movie with some good ideas at play – [7/10](#)

**Patrick Maslin, Year 12**



# POLITICS AND COMMENT

## 10 Reasons Why I Should NOT Become Prime Minister

Enough! Too many people have told me recently that I ought to run for P.M. Why? Okay, so I love arguing. But there are some very simple reasons why this proposal is entirely impossible!

### 1. I'm honest

Unlike the dishonest government. "And a dishonest man you can always trust to be dishonest. Honestly, it's the honest ones you ought to watch out for. You can never predict when they're going to do something incredibly... stupid." (Alright, perhaps Jack Sparrow isn't the greatest source of political wisdom, but the point still stands: governments are always dishonest, making me unsuitable for the job).



### 2. I'd never stop arguing

Parliamentary debates would last forever – worse than this Brexit disarray! Especially if Neku – my favourite argument antagonist – leads the opposition.

### 3. I'm not an upper-class snob

With the exception of May (who is too ineffective to be considered a proper prime minister) most heads of government have been so.

### 4. I'd destroy the 'Special Relationship'

Sorry, but if Trump wants to make a mess of the world, he can try it alone. I won't kiss his feet to save our economy.



### 5. I'd sack Gove and Boris X



No wait; that would be useful.



## 6. I'm not a Tory

Like I said, upper-class snobs (the politicians, not their public supporters).



## 7. I'm not Labour

Much better than Tories; I just don't see jam and bicycles as a state priority.

## 8. I don't fancy greying in the space of 4 years

Seriously, look at Cameron or Obama. My dad tells me I shouldn't worry: I'll be bald before 30 (rude). But that misses the point. I don't want that stressful a job, thank

## 9. I'd sack half the cabinet

I have to admit, May shows remarkable tolerance towards the Brexiteers. How does she do that? I'd have dismissed the lot of anarchy-advocating revolutionaries. What's wrong with party unity nowadays?

## 10. I have a brain!

Need I bother explaining? I wouldn't scuff up school education, nor make advanced education impossibly unaffordable. I wouldn't reverse a "strong and stable" government into a weak and wobbly one, nor alike myself to the notorious President Nixon by repeatedly pledging "I'm not a quitter" (wait until March 2019; we'll see the irony). Most importantly, while I would listen to the people, if a small majority (say, 52%) voted for what most later realised was a mistake, I'd allow a second say.

There. Clearly I am neither stupid nor selfish enough to meet the job requirements of P.M. Instead, I plan a much less corrupt political career: become undisputed leader of Russia. First, migrate there. Next, become a trusted, influential party administrator for the President. Finally, upon his unexpected



death, manipulate his policies to remove all democratic opposition and install my own regime through the Putin Enrolment Programme.

– What's that? That plan's taken? By a notorious mass-murderer?

Oh. Well, at least *modern* Russia runs more efficiently than *our* government.

**Samuel Masters, Year 12**



## The Politics of Korea

The greatest rivalry in modern political history unexpectedly thawed in the 2018 Winter Olympics. Due to increased tensions between the two Koreas since the ascension of Kim Jong Un, North Korea has haphazardly participated in the Summer and Winter Olympics. The two Koreas claim that their nation is the true Korea and each nation claims the entire Korean Peninsular. Both Koreas do not recognise the other as a legitimate country. Additionally, the threat of war has been fermenting in the region because of North Korea's nuclear capabilities. So the news that the two countries would march together under one banner in the opening ceremony came as a shock to the world. We have yet to see the full implications of all the recent events that surround the peninsular, but we can explore the political history of the region in order to help us understand what is happening in Korea.

The origins of the first ancient Korean civilisations are unknown but the kingdom of Gojoseon is the earliest recorded state to have formed in the north of the peninsular with the tribal confederation of Jin in the south. Both may have formed around 400 BCE. The Chinese Han dynasty invaded the peninsular and replaced Gojoseon with colonies around 108 BCE. Over the next 700 years, Imperial China would slowly lose its grip over the north of the peninsular and the Silla kingdom would emerge to unify most of the peninsular (the vast kingdom of Balhae contested the north of the region which extends beyond modern-day Vladivostok). This set a precedent for the political makeup of the area for the next millennium wherein one polity, the Goryeo and the later Joseon dynasty, would rule the entire peninsular. After the brief existence of the Korean Empire, the Empire of Japan invaded the peninsular and declared it a protectorate in 1905 and then annexed it as a dependent territory in 1910. This continued until 1945, when Japan was defeated by the Allied Powers. Since the global influence of Britain was diminishing, Korea was split between two regimes: the USSR and the USA. The north went to the USSR's sphere of influence; the south went to the USA's. The two puppet regimes recognised themselves as the sole legitimate Korea. The Cold War led to the Korean War which did not result in much political change and tensions continue to the present day.

North Korea has been under the rule of the informal Kim dynasty since the start of the Cold War. After Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un was appointed as the Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army in 2011 and as the First Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea in 2012. The current Supreme Leader has frequently conducted illegal nuclear tests and successive South Korean Presidents have refused to engage in peace talks because of this. Despite the divisive tension, the desire for political unification has always persisted due to Korea historically being one country for a thousand years. Kim Jong-un himself has stated that he desires dialogue to take place after the international pressure placed on North Korea. One can hope that this thaw is permanent and the two Koreas can reconcile their differences.

**Dylan Moody, Year 12**



## Gun Crime in America

As a recent survey has shown, roughly 400 million firearms are owned by the United States population of 323 million, of which 39% were handguns. The surge in firearm ownership and usage in the 21st Century is both scary and dangerous; a poll taken last year confirmed that the large proportion of gun-related crime is the main cause of citizens buying guns. Out of 16,500 murders committed in 2016, roughly 75% were committed using firearms, not all by individuals who had used a gun before.

On 1 October 2018, a gunman opened fire on concertgoers, killing 58 people and leaving 851 injured. But beyond these statistics, this shooting has reminded us of the dangers of the Second Amendment to the American Constitution, which should protect the right of the people to bear arms, but not encourage them to do so. Also important here is the time at which the Constitution was written. In 1791, America did not have a regimented army, but instead encouraged different states within the US to arm themselves. This amendment was necessary, as neither the police, nor the army existed to keep peace on the streets, and therefore holds less legitimacy today.

### So why do people in America still buy weapons?

There are many reasons such as paranoia, peer pressure, and even fashion – protection does not even seem relevant to some. On the 14 February this year, 17 people lost their lives at a Florida high school in Parkland. Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School is not the first to be attacked, but many individuals have decided that this should mark the end of all atrocities of its type, and that firearms should be outlawed. In reaction to this, Donald Trump said, “My prayers and condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible Florida shooting. No child, teacher or anyone else should ever feel unsafe in an American school!”

Despite this, many feel Trump has been unresponsive to the rise in gun crime. A national march on Washington took place on the 18 February, organised by survivors of the shooting. The protesters chanted: “Shame on you!” towards US lawmakers and the President. Mr Trump said last year he would “never” infringe on the right to keep arms – the Second Amendment – but it seems now that he may not have a choice.

**Sonny Pring, Year 12**

## International Women's Day

The 8th March is International Women's Day. This year gave us the opportunity to discuss issues that come under gender equality, so it wasn't completely female orientated. The theme this year was Press For Change, which was inspired by the #MeToo movement that began on twitter, and the recent controversies in the film industry.

The UN began to recognise International Women's Day in 1975, but it was a major event 66 years



before that. Every year since, the UN has focused on a single particular issue and based on that, a theme is decided. This year it was 'Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives'.

Similarly to the Press For Change theme, this year the UN focused on a global movement for women's rights, equality and justice especially for women who have been victims of sexual harassment. The UN want to carry on the conversation from the recent headlines, so that the outcomes of these conversations can turn into actions, to start the change that is needed for women within many industries and nations.

Women across the globe took to the streets to demonstrate their frustration at the inequality in their countries, in order to show leaders that something must be done. Many women were protesting for equal pay and against workplace harassment. One of the main messages from International Women's Day 2018 was that women and men must work together to combat issues of inequality because the fight cannot be fought by women alone.

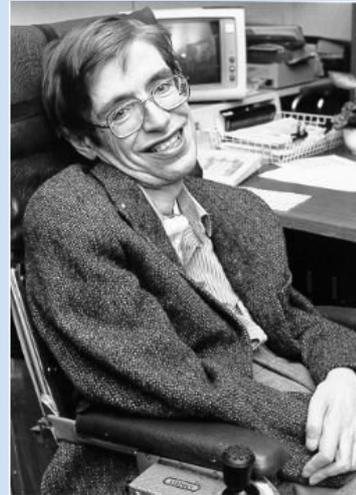
**Shona DeSouza, Year 12**



## Stephen Hawking: An overview of the life of one of society's most brilliant minds (1942–2018)

To most people, the news of this great man's death came as a shock, as he seemed virtually immortal, and as an unpleasant misfortune, as over the years he not only made an impact on physics and the way in which we look at science but also an impact on our lives as a symbol of perseverance, self-efficacy, and hope.

As many of us know, Hawking lived with a type of Motor Neurone Disease called ALS, or Lou Gehrig's. The disease affects your muscles, spine function, and brain cells, leading to a gradual decrease in movement and after a certain amount of time, death, as the muscles receive less and less signalling from the brain. When he was diagnosed at 21 nobody thought he would see his 25th birthday, let alone be able to live until the well-lived age of 76.

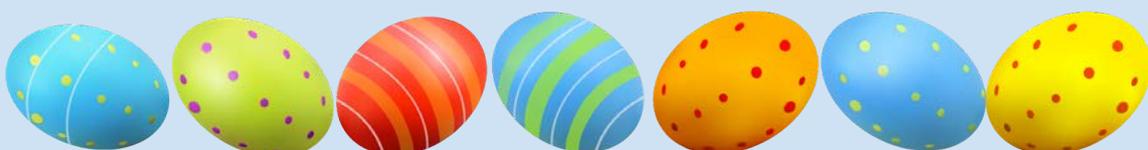


Hawking was a physicist who shone a light on the universe's most obscure and unexplainable mysteries, specifically Black Holes and The Big Bang. In 1970 he applied Einstein's theory on singularities within black holes to the universe as a whole, changing our perception of it entirely. He also aided in the explanation of the Big Bang by finding that quantum fluctuations – tiny variations in the distribution of matter – grew into the galaxies within the universe due to strong gravitational forces making matter clump together.

The Guardian interviewed Hawking in 2011 and he expressed his view on death by saying, "I have lived with the prospect of an early death for the last 49 years. I'm not afraid of death, but I'm in no hurry to die. I have so much I want to do first", and as we can see from his amazing life, he did more than enough for the world as we know it. He passed away peacefully on the morning of March 14th 2018 at his home in Cambridge. May we view him as a perpetual inspiration and take his following words into heavy consideration:

***"However bad life may seem, while there is life, there is hope."***

**Gabriela De Vasconcelos Garces, Year 12**



## Mindfulness

We have been attending this course for the last 8 weeks, and within these sessions we have learned multiple techniques which will help us to overcome the everyday stresses which we encounter at school. It has been very helpful in understanding the processes of our thoughts and in overcoming stress. This has been really helpful as we have our Part 1 exams coming up soon, and through learning relaxation techniques we are able to face the upcoming stress..

The 9-week course was devised by the Mindfulness in Schools Project (MISP) and features a lesson every week from the “.b” (pronounced dot-b) curriculum. Each lesson of the course focuses on a separate mindfulness skill and has taught us techniques to encourage stress relief and concentration through the means of both practices and analogies.

In our penultimate session, we looked at the poem below. We found that this helps us to understand and embrace our emotions, rather than to turn them away:

### Guest House – Rumi

*This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honourably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.*

We would encourage anyone who has the opportunity to do the course to undertake it, most especially with exam pressure and school stresses becoming ever present. A huge thank you to Miss Brand for running the course and for motivating us throughout the nine weeks!

**Lauren Birch and Jake Rodrigues, Year 12.** Edited by Edward Baker, Year 12



# EASTER CHOCOLATE

## Taste Test!

It feels that as soon as our advent calendars have been put in the bin, retailers already have a large variety of Easter Eggs flooding the shelves. At the most chocolatey time of the year, we at the magazine have partaken in a blind taste test to decide what are the best chocolate delights on the market. We sampled 7 chocolate treats ranging in price and voted on their taste, texture and appearance to get a combined overall ranking. Here is how we got on...

### 7TH PLACE

**HOTEL CHOCOLAT** 88/150

Elizapeck Tiddly Pot  
£2



These tiny chocolate drops failed to excite the team who scored them 32/50 for taste, 35/50 for texture and 21/50 for appearance. Despite being a high-end product, the chocolates were too small and were tasteless unless you had more than one...luckily you get lots in the pot!!

### 6TH PLACE

**ALDI** 90/150

Dairy Fine Egg  
65p



This egg is a perfect bargain for those not wanting to splurge on their chocolate fix. We were pleasantly surprised by the cheapest egg in our selection and ranked it 30/50 for taste, 33/50 for texture and 27/50 for appearance.

### 5TH PLACE

**CADBURY** 91/150

Dairy Milk Egg  
£2



The nations favourite brand failed to win over our taste buds as we ranked its taste 31/50, texture 30/50 and appearance 30/50. Although we still seem to love the classic sweet taste of Cadbury, we have discovered better suitors on the market that are great Easter treats!



## 4TH PLACE

**CADBURY**

**96/150**

Buttons

Free with egg (usually £1 per pack)

Although these small indulgent buttons are a snack enjoyed all year round, we decided to rate these chocolates alongside our other small samples. We rated the buttons 38/50 for taste, 29/50 for texture and 29/50 for appearance, which shows that these indulgent buttons are still a favourite!



## 3RD PLACE

**M&S**

**98/150**

Chicky Choccy Speckled Eggs

£2

The name itself is a bit of a mouthful, as were these fairly large 'mini' eggs, which, despite their unappetising vibrant colours, proved to be a delicious bite-size treat. We placed these third for their taste, rated 33/50, texture rated 38/50 and appearance rated 27/50. These were the winners of best textured egg!



## 2ND PLACE

**CADBURY**

**108/150**

Mini Eggs

£1

Our taste buds were not fooled by the classic Cadbury Mini Egg which comes in second place. The eggs were voted well by their taste 36/50, texture 37/50 and appearance 35/50, making them a favourite among chocolate lovers as they were voted 'Best Appearance'!



# 1st place!

**ASDA**

Chocolate Egg and Soldiers

£3

111/150



This collection of chocolate was the most expensive but the best egg we tried in regards to its taste (41/50) and overall appeal. This set includes a mixture of white chocolate and milk chocolate 'soldiers' with a small hollow egg...and even a reusable egg cup! We conclude that this own brand egg is the best value for your money, with a great texture (36/50) and quirky appearance (34/50) to ultimately make a great treat for all chocolate lovers!

**Isabelle Merralls, Year 12**

## **TEACHER BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS!!!**

**Miss Brand Recommends:**

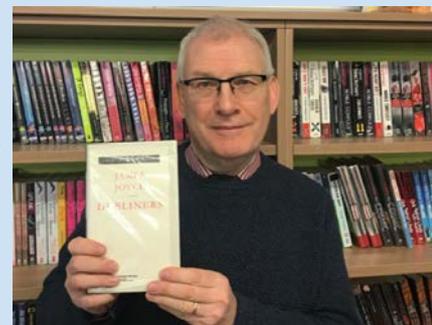
***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak**

Some books will always stay with you, and for me, *The Book Thief*, is one of those stories that I will never forget. The story is set in Nazi Germany at the start of the Second World War and follows Liesel, a young girl who is forced to move home because her Mother can no longer afford to look after her. When her brother dies, Liesel steals her first book (The Gravedigger's Handbook), which she learns to read with the help of her new Father in order to help distract her from her haunting past. Once she has learned to read, Liesel begins to realise the importance of the written word and wants to share this love with other characters that she meets. What I found particularly intriguing about this novel, is the fact that the story is narrated by Death, whose philosophical comments added another perspective to this already touching story. Personally, I found it an emotional tale of a young girl's struggle to make sense of the chaos around her and a reminder of the power of books and their ability to touch your soul.

**Mr Morris Recommends:**

***Dubliners* by James Joyce**

The greatest collection of short stories ever written. *The Dead* is my all time favourite short story, I think it's tremendously wise and beautiful. I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in short stories!



Miss Brazier Recommends:

*A Place of Greater Safety* by Hilary Mantel

It's a bit large so you'd have to read it during your summer holiday but it literally picks you up and puts you right down in the middle of the French Revolution. You can literally smell the blood. It is an amazing book. I would HIGHLY recommend it.

Mrs Belton–Owen recommends:

*'The Optician of Lampedusa'* by Emma Hane Kirby

This is a new favourite of mine and I have many books that I have loved to read, but what makes a MUST READ is the powerful message within the story.

The book is based on true events and highlights the risks that people are willing to take to arrive at what they hope will be a better life in Europe. Yet it also encompasses a group of lifelong friends living the dream before this is changed by a harrowing event. The book, in places, is a difficult read and perhaps this is what makes it so important today, as it makes you question the wider issues surrounding migration to Europe and the impacts this has on a range of people and places.

This is a book of our time and a must read, if nothing else, to challenge your perceptions of the migrant crisis. There is a copy in the library in school!

Mr Martin Recommends:

*Dominion* by C.J. Sansom

It is a "What If" history book as if Winston Churchill didn't become Prime Minister and Adolf Hitler won WW2 because Britain surrendered against the Nazis. It's an excellent read, make sure you read it.

Mr Griffin Recommends:

*'How Not To Be A Boy'* by Robert Webb

This is a very funny, very moving read. Written by Robert Webb (one half of Mitchell and Webb, of Peep Show fame) it takes on the subject of modern masculinity, and how trying to 'be a man' is often a source of real unhappiness. It's thought-provoking and thoroughly entertaining—I'd recommend it to everyone!



Mrs Carey Recommends:

'The New York Trilogy' by Paul Auster

An excellent cross between the modern day detective novel and an existentialist exploration. It's a good read, really easy and quick.

Give it a try!



Dr Symons Recommends:

'Die Verwandlung (The Metamorphosis)' by Franz Kafka

This short story of a man who wakes up one morning from uneasy dreams to find himself "transformed into a gigantic insect" asks more questions than it answers. Kafka's brilliant and tortured narrative is intriguing, disturbing, comic and tragic all at once, and I can read it again and again.



Mr Brown Recommends:

'The Feast of the Goat (La fiesta del chivo)' by Mario Vargas Llosa

I was recommended this book by a good friend of mine, who's Spanish and lives in Salamanca, and I hadn't known anything about it at all. It's completely the opposite of anything like the magical realism of García Márquez— this is reality, it's brutal and

it's a really compelling read. It's based on a true story, which I didn't realise until I actually did a bit of research afterwards, and

that makes it all the more interesting for me. Please, if you've got

any interest in literature or history or politics, this is an ideal book for you to read – very readable, you won't put it down and I thoroughly recommend it to you.





Mrs Stoddard Recommends:

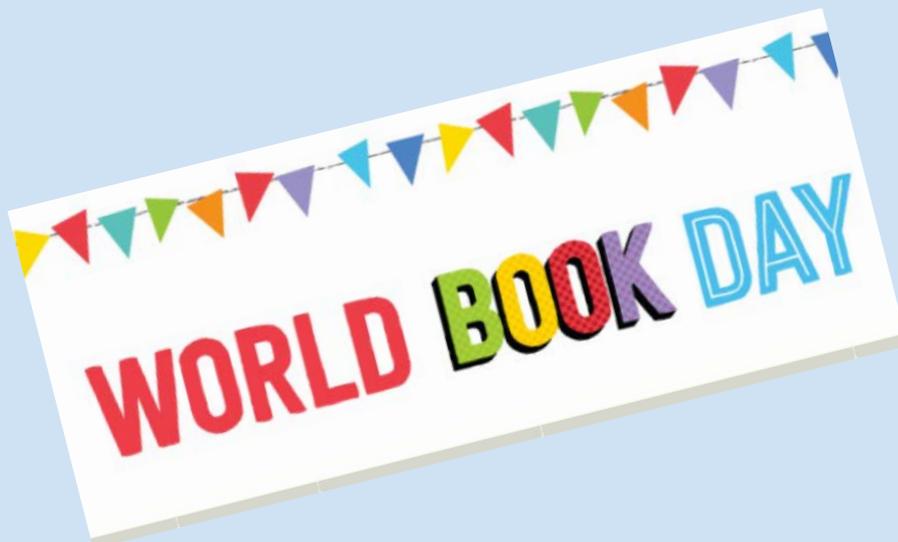
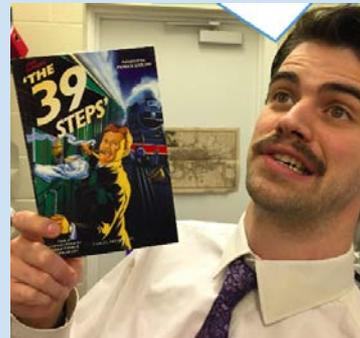
'The Dawn Watch' by Joseph Conrad

'The Dawn Watch' gives the historical background to 'Heart of Darkness', one of Conrad's greatest classics, and has so much relevance for the state of Africa today as well, that it's one of the most interesting books I've read recently.

Mr Otley Recommends:

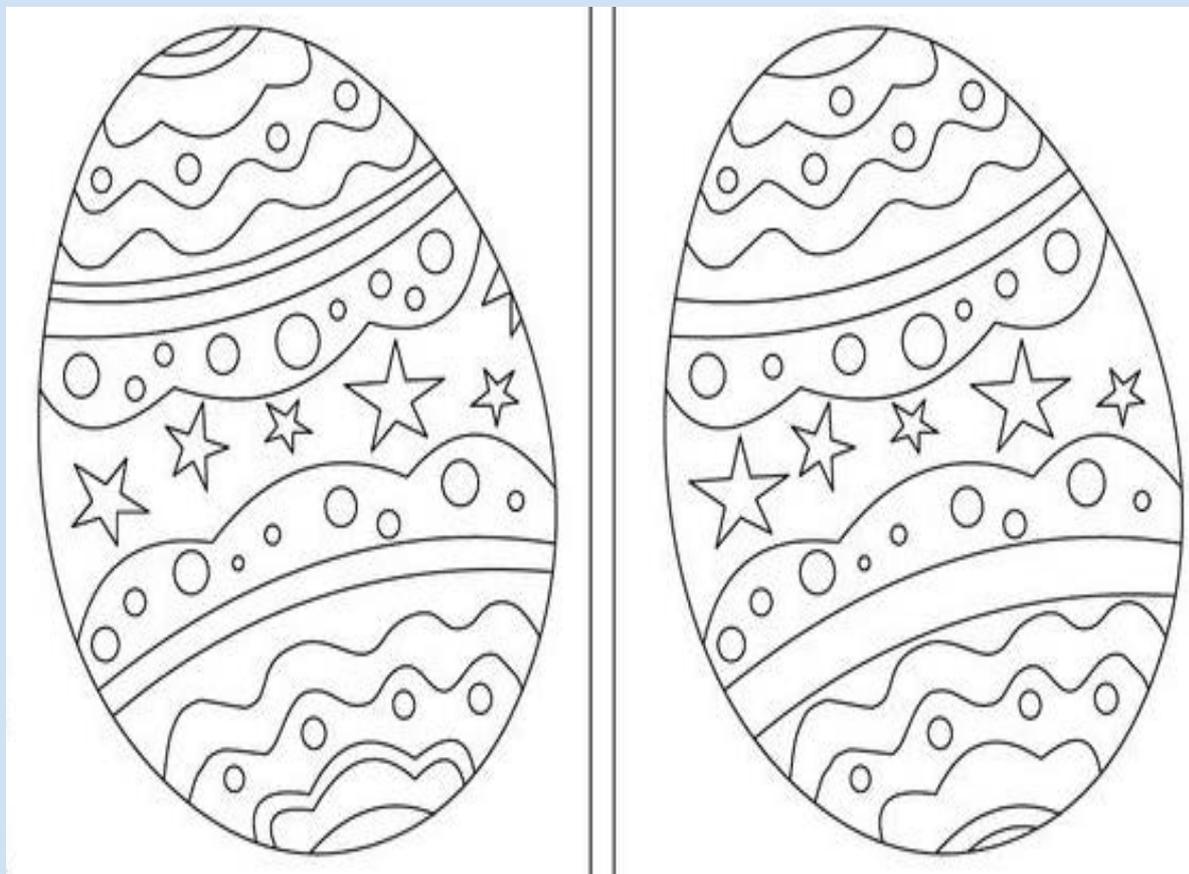
'The 39 Steps' by John Buchan

I was always rather fond of this play as I saw it when it first opened in the West End; it's funny and silly— but also tells a deeper story about our duty to be good to each other and human qualities. I am also in this play at the moment, so I don't even need to read the book as I learnt all my lines... though I do have to walk around for a week with this moustache! Cheerio!



GAMES AND MORE...

**Spot the Difference!!**



### Upcoming Films...

- 1) Avengers Infinity war  
April 27th
- 2) Deadpool 2  
16 May
- 3) Oceans 8  
22nd June



### Upcoming Albums

- 1) Anne Marie  
Speak Your Mind  
27th April
- 2) James Bay  
Electric Light  
18th May
- 3) Snow Patrol  
Wilderness  
25th May
- 4) Lily Allen  
No Shame  
8th June



Isabelle Merralls, Year 12



## **STOP PRESS!**

On Wednesday night **Kirsty Moore (10SFG)** attended the Jack Petchey "Speak Out" Challenge Regional Final at Trinity Church of England School and competed against 16 competitors from all of the secondary schools in Bexley.

Kirsty was fantastic and managed to come in second place, winning a trophy which will be put in reception, a £50 amazon voucher; she will also be a judge at the regional final next year.

Kirsty's speech can be viewed at the link below. Please congratulate Kirsty if you see her on your travels.

<http://www.speakoutchallenge.com/kirsty-moore-runner-up-jack-petchey-speak-out-challenge-bexley-regional-final-2017-18/>

<http://www.speakoutchallenge.com/bexley-regional-final-2018/>

Mr Husbands

English Department and Head of Johnson House

**BGS Young Enterprise** – BGS Young Enterprise have just won four awards (a new school record) Five of us students from the team of ProPortion, the school's Young Enterprise team this year, went to compete in the South East London Finals, on Friday 23rd March 2018. Before the date of these finals, we had to submit a company report which we would be judged on. On the day of the finals, we had to set up our own trade stand, in a way in which it would attract the judges. We decided to set it up like a café, using an open sign and a red-checked tablecloth. We also had our own fake chips, ketchup, mustard, pepper and, most importantly, salt. We asked our judges to pour the amount of salt that they would usually consume on the chips and compared it to the recommended amount of 0.5 grams of salt on an average portion of chips. We even had our own banner! None of the other teams had their own banner, meaning we stood out amongst the others. We even had a video ready for the judges to see at our trade stand which showed them our journey. We also had a team interview with the judges where they asked us lots of challenging questions which we all had to answer as a team. Additionally, we had to do a presentation in front of the judges, the other teams and other visitors. We spoke with as much energy as we could, adding some really cheesy jokes during the presentation. We also had our own amazing video on facts about salt, made by a member of our team. We worked very hard to do well in this competition, Skyping each other on weekends and spending every lunch practising our lines. We all even chose our attires to match the colours of our logo: we all wore white shirts and us girls wore green bows in our hair, whilst the male in our presenting team wore a green tie! We were judged by 3 different people and were eagerly awaiting to find out the winners of the different awards. We did very well, out of the 8 awards that were given out, we won 4! We won:



- Best Company, Bexley
  - Best Team Interview, South East London
  - Best Presentation, South East London
  - Best Report, given by the Rotary Club of Sidcup
- We hope to do well in the East London Finals in May. Wish us good luck!

A big thank you to Mrs Harris for all the support she has been giving us!

Drishli M Alam, Y12



**Chloe Bui, Year 12**

