

Spring 2024

BGS BUZZ



Message from the Editor

Welcome to the Spring 2024 edition of the BGS Buzz!

This term might have been short, but it was absolutely jam-packed with so many events such as the various music concerts, World Book Day and British Science Week, school trips such as the Ski trip to Canada and the Geography trip to the Azores (which I was lucky enough to go on to!) and incredible achievements for our students, such as our Sixth Form boys winning the North Kent Cup..it is always such a pleasure to read all about these. I am particularly proud of the contributions that our students make to their school community, for example the incredibly thought-provoking articles they write for this magazine and the various events they organise, such as Culture Day.

What an absolute honour it is to teach at this school!

I would like to wish everyone a lovely holiday break and a well deserved rest.

School Magazine Editor: Ms Contini

BGS Buzz team: Scarlett Basquil, Zoe Handscombe, Hannah Benedict, Emma Murati, Michael Ato, Yu Xin Zhao, Hibah Ahmed, Malak Rezk, Poppy White.

Special thanks to: Mrs Snelling, the PE department, the Geography department, the Science Department, the Music department, the Drama department, and the English department.

Apologies if I have missed out anybody!!

Ms Contini



Message from the Headteacher

Dear all,

I hope you enjoy reading this latest edition of the BGS School magazine. It's packed full of interesting articles about school life or important topics from the wider world.

It really is a showcase of our students' talents. Thank you so much to Ms Contini and her team of reporters for bringing all of this together in such vibrant fashion. At the end of a term when we have celebrated World Book Day, it remains so important for all members of our community to keep reading and learning from other people's experiences and viewpoints.

Enjoy our magazine and have a wonderful holiday!

Mr Gilmore

House Results

YEAR 2023-2024



1ST MABBS

346 POINTS

Congratulations Mabbs!!!



2ND PROTHERO

338 POINTS

3RD WELLMAN

333 POINTS



4TH

KIRKMAN & COLLINS
303 POINTS



6TH JOHNSON

302 POINTS

MRS SNELLING
HOUSE LEADER

HURRICANE THURLOW

A Farewell Interview With Miss Thurlow

By Scarlett Basquil and Chloe Box



Miss Thurlow is sadly leaving BGS after 15 years. She has led the Geography department and Collins House with the energy and strength of a hurricane, allowing them to flourish and thrive under her guidance. The impact she has had on the school is absolutely immense, and she will be missed dearly by all of her students and her colleagues alike. However, we are also very excited for her as she embarks on some amazing adventures, and wish her all the best for this new, exciting chapter of her life!

Scarlett: Hi, Miss Thurlow. Why are you leaving and what are you going to do?

Miss Thurlow: Well, why am I leaving? For new exciting opportunities... and I really hope everyone at BGS always takes every opportunity that's available to them, especially when they're adventurous or they are discovering somewhere else in the world.

John, my partner, and I are going sailing. We've got 6 months, and a boat called Songbird and we're gonna sail away into the sunset. The boat's near the Isle of Wight, on the south coast in Gosport and we're gonna set sail on Monday 1st April. So hopefully it's not April Fools Day!

We are going to sail all the way along the south coast. We will stop off in Falmouth and Dartmouth and then the Isles of Scilly and all the way up to Scotland. In May & June we're going to the inner and outer Hebrides and to visit as many islands as possible, climb some mountains, walk on some beaches. I've also set myself a challenge to swim in the sea every day. We're going for an adventure!

Chloe: What is your favourite memory at BGS?

Miss Thurlow: I've got so many favourite memories. I had a form group when I started and they were in Year 9 and I took them all the way to Year 13. And literally yesterday, one of those students came into school, he's now 25, Bailey Stickings, and he was in my form: he did geography, he's got a geography related job now. I think probably my favourite memory is all those relationships you have, whether that someone's in your tutor group or your house or a colleague and you see people grow up and all those memories you make.

Scarlett: Leading on from that, what was your favourite trip at school?

Miss Thurlow: Oh, my goodness. Miss Contini and I went to Madagascar for a month on the World Challenge which helped us build resilience and we had amazing adventures. Probably Kingswood sticks in my mind as being...eventful. Iceland and the Azores were fantastic trips. I got taken to New York on the history trip. I've just been very lucky and I'm going to repeat myself but, every opportunity you get, take them and go and travel and explore.



Chloe: How would you describe the geography department in three words?

Miss Thurlow: Oh, the best. Simply the best. Out of this world.

Scarlett: So, what are you going to miss the most about BGS?

Miss Thurlow: So I think I've already said my best memory is the people. The people who make this place. It's an amazing community and everyone's very supportive of each other, they're striving together to do the best for every student. I've said that's what I'll miss but the people are the best thing about BGS as well. What am I gonna miss? Yeah. The people. All the lovely people.

Chloe: What advice would you give to everyone doing their exams this year?

Miss Thurlow: Believe in yourself. Do your best. Follow the advice your teachers gave you. Absolutely give it your best shot. And if it doesn't quite work out, the world will still be your oyster. You'll still have amazingly bright shiny futures.

Miss Thurlow: So I'm gonna ask you some questions. What are you going to remember about me or miss about me?

Chloe: Oh, Friday. Friday library lessons.

Scarlett: Friday Last period. The stickers!

Chloe: The climate change stickers.

Miss Thurlow: They're really sad but they're really good stickers. But they're all a bit miserable.

Scarlett: Sharing sweets on Friday.

Miss Thurlow: Oh, yeah. It sounds like we had fun. Go on then Miss Contini, what will you miss the most about me?

Miss Contini: The hurricane that you bring.

Scarlett: Hurricane Thurlow!

Miss Contini: Yeah, Hurricane Thurlow. I just think that if there's ever been a crisis or problem, you're the best person. You always know the answers. You always know what to do. And to have that reassuring presence. All the time. Yeah, she just knows. You know, you're a rock!

Miss Thurlow: She just called me a rock!?

Miss Contini: Very geographical...Haha. You rock!

Miss Thurlow: I love you all, I don't know what I'm gonna do without you...



WE LOVE
YOU
SO MUCH

**Bon voyage,
Miss Thurlow!**



Some memories from Madagascar...

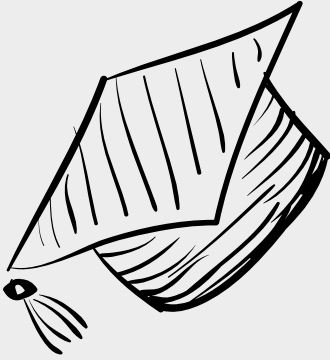


*Awesome current
and past students*

BGS UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE 2024

A well deserved victory for BGS students!

by Ashton Seager, year 12



WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE?

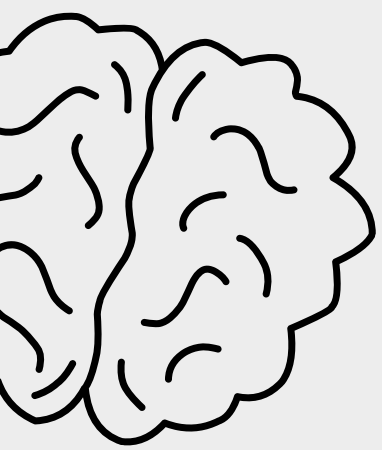
The Bexley Grammar School's University challenge is a competition between our school and the other 3 grammar schools in the Bexley borough: Beths Grammar School for Boys, Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar school and Townley Grammar for Girls. It's organised similarly to the real life University Challenge quiz show in which teams of 4 students and 1 substitute from universities around the UK battle to find the most intellectual team. As a team you must be the first to answer a 'starter question' for 10 points before the other teams and if answered correctly, your whole teams gets the opportunity to answer 3 separate 5 point questions that are loosely tied to the original starter question. After 50 starter questions, the team with the most points is the winner. Starting in 2022, the Bexley version works very similarly but instead of 1 team vs another, it's a single best of 4 teams to find the winners. After Beths won the initial 2022 Challenge, our year 13 team of Akeel, Harry, Daniel, Pamela and Ross won the 2023 edition which left our team of Leo, Zoe, Anqui and Imogen and I to retain the title, which we did after a tight battle with Chis and Sid that lasted all the way to the final 3 starter questions.



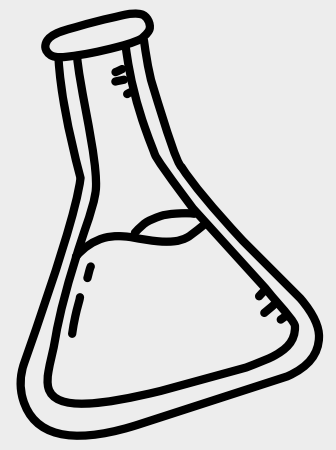
THE SELECTION PROCESS

Over the last two months, many of us in year 12 attended the in-school selection rounds hosted by our previous team and the head of sixth form Mr Martin to find the best combination of us for the team. Each Monday after school we had fun and enjoyable questions taken from the actual quiz show fired at us to find our team. Every week was an enjoyable experience with a less formal attitude than the final and we all enjoyed swapping round our teams to see who we paired with best until Monday the 13th of March when we found out our team. After a brief discussion with Mr Martin, me and Zoe were chosen as captain and vice captain with Anqui and Leo filling out the rest of the starting line up with Imogen as our substitute.

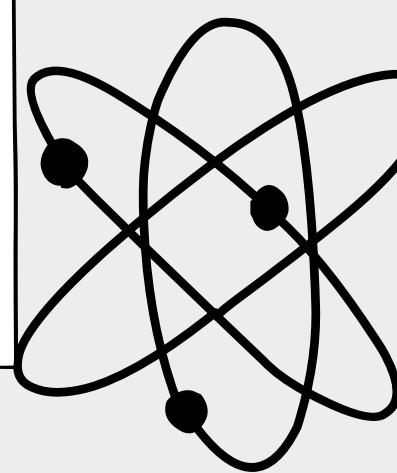




THE FINAL



On Wednesday 20th March came the final. Despite all the preparation and planning, my nerves still ran high which was not helped by the fact that in the audience we had around 30 teachers, headmasters, parents and students from the various schools with special guests of the former Mayor and current Vice-Mayor of Bexley: Nigel Betts along with former Prime minister Liz Truss, who had come to support her daughter on the Townley team. After an early lead by us, Chis & Sid took a massive lead of 75 points which us, Beths and Townley slowly picked away at for the first half. In the second half we moved ahead of the pack leading to us and Chis and Sid being neck & neck on 235 points with 3 questions to go.



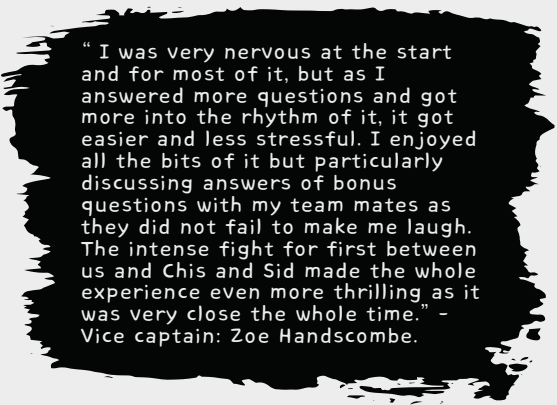
I can confidently say that my heart rate has been been so high for so long and it still continued to rise going into this 'play-off-esque' moment. So when I answered the 2nd to last question to confirm the win, I felt as if the heaviest weight in the world had been lifted off my chest. This led to the final question of "What East Asian art style was the late Akira Toriyama known for?" being a sort of victory lap after we answered correctly with "Manga" and the follow up questions were a great end to the competition with us jokingly answering Liz Truss as an answer to a question on Prime Minister's ages. In the end the results finished as:



1st: Bexley	285 points
2nd: Chis & Sid	235 points
3rd: Townley	180 points
4th: Beths	150 points

THE WINNERS

Zoe and I were presented with the trophy by the Vice-mayor. Afterwards, we were able to celebrate with Mr Gilmore, Mr Martin, last years team and our friends and family before getting a quick picture with ex-Prime Minister Liz Truss to top off the night.



"I was very nervous at the start and for most of it, but as I answered more questions and got more into the rhythm of it, it got easier and less stressful. I enjoyed all the bits of it but particularly discussing answers of bonus questions with my team mates as they did not fail to make me laugh. The intense fight for first between us and Chis and Sid made the whole experience even more thrilling as it was very close the whole time." - Vice captain: Zoe Handscombe.

THE FUTURE

After the amazing help from last years team, without which none of this would have been possible, Mr Martin has asked us to help choose next years team, which we happily said yes to, but we also have had other ideas that we would like to make possible. These included a possible continuation of the in-school practices as a club run by the team and also the possibility of making a house event out of the challenge.

Once again I'd like to thank everyone who was involved with the team from last years winners for coaching us, Mr Martin for selecting us and trusting me to be captain, the wonderful team across the borough that ran the event and the many people that came to support us and their respective schools. Finally I'd like to thank the rest of the team who made this a brilliant experience that I'd recommend to any and everyone who believes they have the ability.

Culture Day

What a time to be alive!!



Vibrant bursts of colour; the day began with a sea of students adorned in traditional attire from different cultures passing through the streets of Welling, showcasing the rich diversity of BGS culture. The air was filled with laughter, music, and students embracing each other's culture.

As the day went on, it seemed as if culture grew and multiplied as friends embraced others' cultures, adopted many traditional outfits, and discussed cultural traditions and international languages.

Packed with many cultural activities, many of which ran by our wonderful MFL staff, it was a day of discovery and cultural intermingling to the fullest !!

Then the main event arrived; beautifully decorated waves of students flooded into the theatre. The first annual Culture Day parade was about to begin. With the enticing aroma of cultural cuisines and the buzz of jingling Jili Kurdis, students across all years sat eagerly awaiting the festivities to begin.





Lights! Colour! Action! It all kicked off! Country by country, students paraded down the aisle onto the stage as adoring students cheered and clapped for their peers in celebration of each other's cultures and the undeniable presence and impact of diversity at Bexley Grammar School. Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, China, Ghana, Spain, Mauritius, Pakistan, Egypt, Poland, Nigeria; each country descended the steps and adorned the stage. Their wonderful strut culminated in a cacophony of wondrous applause and cheers. It was safe to say that Culture Day 2024 had been an astounding success.

Yet the day wasn't over. There was one final surprise awaiting the audience. Music erupted from the ceiling as the Year Twelves took the stage and performed a beautifully choreographed dance incorporating elements from all across the globe, notably with South Asian and West African influence. The dance perfectly embodied BGS's cultural identity with brilliance through unity. Just like that, Culture day 2024 was over and to round it all off performers and the audience alike danced to Cameo's "Candy".

A huge thank you to the culture day organisers at SEAS and ACS who all dedicated many hours of their free time and worked really hard to put everything together. SEAS and ACS run after school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays respectively in the sixth form centre and all are welcome. We hope to see more of us dressed up next year!



YOUNG ENTERPRISE



A HUGE SUCCESS!



Our Young Enterprise team has been very successful in selling our mood-sensory candles. We have sold several candles at markets, in school and online!! Here are a few words from some members of our team:

Being part of the Young Enterprise team has shown me the potential we can achieve when we are part of an innovative team. It has given me a newfound confidence and new skills which I can take forward and I'm very grateful for the opportunity.

- Yuxin Zhao

We had a great time being part of the media team of Young Enterprise, and we had our ups and downs. But we stuck together and just possibly made the best media team in the world. Our team was made up of five fantastic people, who 'all' contributed heavily towards the success of our social media platform. It seems easy, but there's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes! We're all working collaboratively and collectively learning how a business actually works! Most importantly, we're all enjoying the experience and having fun!

- The Media Team

My favourite part of young enterprise so far was seeing our finished product and feeling so proud of how it turned out. Also, hearing how successful our sales have been, has made the experience so much better. I have learnt several skills already and can't wait to sell more candles!

- Jasreen (Marketing manager)



ILLUMINA
SCENTS & SOUNDS

My favourite experience has been getting involved in a zoom pitch to explain our product. Even though it was nerve racking, all the judges were very complimentary! What I have learnt from being on Young Enterprise is the value of teamwork and making people feel heard and understood.

- James (Sustainability Manager)

After joining Young Enterprise, wanting to know how businesses actually work in real life, it was a great opportunity to learn about what goes into producing and selling products, in our case - candles! I particularly enjoyed selling at Spitalfields's market where we won best overall stall out of 50 teams! These experiences will really help me in the future, whether that's for interviews, for my studies or in general.

- Evie (Sales Manager)



If you would like to buy one of our amazing candles then please use this google form: <https://illuminacandles.co.uk/orders>



Current affairs and issues

SPORTING SPIRIT

THE HEARTBEAT OF BRITISH CULTURE



MICHAEL ATO, YEAR 12

Sport holds a sacred place in the cultural fabric of the United Kingdom. From the thunderous roar of football stadiums to the genteel grace of Wimbledon's Centre Court, sport is not just a pastime, but a continuous and defining aspect of British identity. It transcends class, age, and background, uniting people in shared triumphs and defeats.

Britain boasts a rich tapestry of sporting traditions, each with its own devoted following and storied history. Football stands as the undisputed king of sports, with fervent support for clubs like Manchester United, Liverpool, and Arsenal spanning generations. The Premier League, with its global reach and multi-billion-pound industry, epitomises the passion and spectacle of British football.

But the love affair with sport extends far beyond the football pitch. Cricket, often described as the quintessential English sport, evokes images of lazy summer afternoons spent at village greens or packed stadiums witnessing the Ashes rivalry against Australia. Rugby, whether in the rough-and-tumble of the Six Nations or the intensity of club competitions like the Premiership, embodies the values of strength, camaraderie, and sportsmanship. Tennis aficionados eagerly anticipate the annual spectacle of Wimbledon, where tradition meets modernity on the hallowed grass courts of SW19. The romantic relationship between Brits with motorsport sees thousands flocking to Silverstone each year for the British Grand Prix, while the allure of horse racing captivates audiences at iconic venues like Ascot and Aintree.



However, sport in Britain transcends mere competition; it is a reflection of the nation's diversity and inclusivity. The Premier League, for instance, boasts players from over 100 different countries, showcasing the global appeal of British football. Similarly, events like the London Marathon bring together participants from all walks of life, celebrating unity in diversity and the triumph of the human spirit.

Moreover, sport serves as a platform for social change and activism. From Jesse Owens challenging racial prejudice in the 1936 Berlin Olympics to the Rainbow Laces campaign promoting LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport, athletes and sporting organisations have used their platform to champion important causes and drive positive societal change. As Britain continues to evolve, so too does its sporting landscape. The rise of women's sport, exemplified by the success of athletes like Jessica Ennis-Hill and the England women's football team, signals a seismic shift towards greater gender equality and recognition in the sporting arena.

At its core, sport fosters a sense of belonging and community cohesion. Whether cheering on their local football team or participating in recreational sports leagues, Britons find common ground and forge bonds that transcend social barriers. The pub becomes a hub of communal celebration or commiseration, where strangers become friends united in their love for the game.

Sport also plays a pivotal role in shaping national identity and pride. Historic sporting moments, such as England's 1966 World Cup triumph or the iconic victories of athletes like Sir Mo Farah and Sir Chris Hoy, are etched into the collective memory of the nation, serving as symbols of resilience, determination, and excellence.

Sport is more than just a game in Britain; it is a cultural institution that permeates every facet of society. It embodies the values of teamwork, resilience, and fair play, serving as a powerful force for unity, diversity, and social change. As the nation navigates the challenges of the 21st century, sport remains a steadfast beacon of inspiration, bringing people together and enriching the tapestry of British culture for generations to come.



OPEN AI SORA

A BLESSING OR A CURSE?



EMMA MURATI, YEAR 12

Artificial intelligence, commonly known as AI, is a powerful and wide ranging tool enabling people to rethink how we integrate information, analyse data and use the insights we gain from this to improve decision making. In recent years it has shown how it's already transforming many walks of life affecting various industries globally, ranging from Healthcare and Finance to the arts and entertainment.

The recent development of OpenAI's Sora creates hyper realistic videos, which are up to a minute long, featuring highly detailed scenes, complex camera motion and "multiple characters with vibrant emotions", says OpenAI.

Like many, your initial reaction may be one of amazement followed by paranoia mixed with fear. With the current rapid rate of development of AI, many wonder how it will further develop and what it will be used for. It raises further questions relating to the possible loss of jobs to AI.

Open AI's Sora poses a direct threat to the entertainment industry, with worries that it will be able to both generate scripts and even finish video content with minimal human input causing concern to directors, composers, writers and other creative professionals. In many people's view, amateurs armed with Sora may be able to produce credible TV shows and films without hiring any human crew. This highlights the urgency to implement policies ensuring AI systems empower human creativity, rather than endanger it.

This development has sparked further concern due to current misuse of AI, this can be seen specifically in regards to female celebrities. Recently, sexually explicit AI images of Taylor Swift have been circulating on X, formally known as twitter, reaching over 45 million views, 24,000 reposts as well as hundreds of thousands likes and bookmarks. The post was live on the platform for 17 hours prior to its removal. This raises questions of how video-based artificial intelligence will be used once in the hands of the general public. Despite X's policies regarding manipulated media and non consensual nudity, both explicitly banning content like this on the platform, it does not stop images like this from being posted and shared, even for a limited time.

X posted the following public statement almost a day after the incident occurred addressing the issue.



This incident speaks to the real challenge of preventing deep-fake porn and AI-generated images of real people. Whilst some AI-generators implement restrictions to prevent such content from being generated many others do not explicitly offer such services, causing the responsibility of preventing such content from spreading to fall onto social media platforms which often can not respond and identify them quickly enough.

It has also been seen how AI can now replicate voices, which are being used to closely resemble the voices of real people achieving a variety of different accents and languages, including: English, French, Arabic, Mandarin, Spanish, Japanese and many more.

This can be done through systems being trained on a large database of spoken words, involving analysis of voice recordings teaching the algorithm to understand patterns in speech and implementing text to speech which the AI-generator can then mimic in the chosen voice. This directly affects the music industry with voices of singers and songwriters being used without the consent of the artist themselves to create music, which is then being shared and distributed generating mass amounts of profit on streaming services without the credit of the artists whose voice have been used.

Many singers have commented on this issue, including four time grammy winner, Ed Sheeran, stating his thoughts while chatting with Audacy Live at the Hard Rock Hotel in New York "I just don't know why you need it - if you're taking a job away from a human being that's probably a bad thing. The whole point of society is we all do jobs. If everything is done by robots, everybody's going to be out of work. I just find AI a bit weird"

This poses the question as to how AI will further develop in the future and ramifications of continued innovation. What ethical dilemmas do you foresee arising as AI continues to advance?

WORLD WAR 3 RUMOURS

WHAT DO THEY ACTUALLY MEAN?



MALAK REZK, YEAR 12

If you are active on social media, you are probably aware of the threat of 'World War 3'. But what does it actually mean?

As the Russian-Ukraine war nears its 2-year mark, tensions are at an all-time high. In an interview with German state broadcaster ARD on Sunday, Mr. Zelensky warned that if Russia struck a NATO country it would be "the beginning of the Third World War".

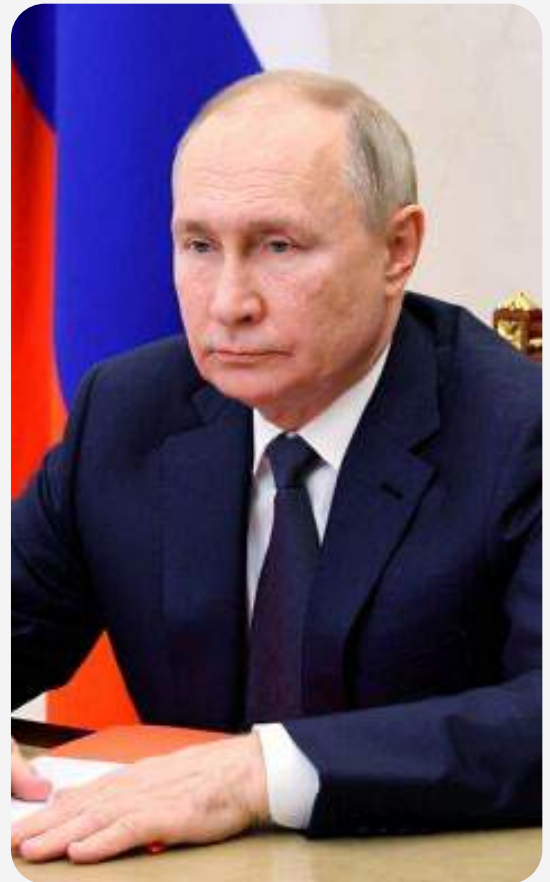
As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the United Kingdom is important to preserving international security. The UK is in a risky situation because of the escalating tensions with nations like China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran. The UK defence secretary, Grant Shapps, said that we are transitioning "from a post-war to the pre-war world" in a speech at Lancaster House in London on January 15. The position is further complicated by the UK's diplomatic relationships, historical connections, and strategic alliances with said nations.

During a speech at a military conference last week, Army Chief General Sir Patrick Sanders said that the British people should be "trained and equipped" to fight in a speculative war with Russia. This declaration demonstrates the gravity of the situation and the necessity for the UK to be ready for anything. It also calls into question the nation's present military prowess, the condition of its armed forces, and the defence budget.

As well as this, there is fear that there might be a draft because the idea of conscription has been brought up. Conscription was outlawed in the United Kingdom in 1960, therefore its return would represent a dramatic change in policy given the severity of the threat. The public's response to such a move would probably be divided; some would probably support it because it's a vital national security precaution, while others would object since it would result in the loss of freedom and lives. This highlights the importance of public opinion and cultural perceptions of conflict, which have a big impact on governmental choices.

Speculations about a possible conflict have also been fueled by NATO's recent declaration that it will mobilise 90,000 troops for one of its largest military exercises since the end of the Cold War. The UK would be expected to make a major contribution to this force, further attaching it to the possible conflict, given its importance as a NATO member. NATO's action also emphasises the value of international alliances and collective defence plans in the event of future world wars.

On the 29th of February, Putin gave his annual state-of-the-nation address to Russia's elites in which he warned about a possible war with the West. The comments appear to respond to French President Macron, who earlier that week did not rule out sending Western soldiers to Ukraine. In his speech, Putin warned against this and stated that any deployment of Western troops in Ukraine would have "tragic" consequences. In his speech, he claimed Western rhetoric threatened a "conflict with the use of nuclear arms and consequently the destruction of civilization".



As of March 9, NATO countries are rushing to station air defence missiles on Russia's border as fears of a potential conflict between Moscow and the alliance soar. The news comes as Vladimir Putin's right-hand-man Dmitri Medvedev took to X accusing the US of moving towards World War 3 footing. Lithuanian Defense Minister Arvydas Anušauskas said that the US-designed missile systems would be operational in his country - which borders Russia - later this year. The systems would rotate between different Baltic nations that sit in Putin's firing line. The expectation is that this principle would not be a one-off thing for several months but would cover all of our calendar months and significantly increase our air defence capabilities.

The possibility of a third World War is becoming increasingly apparent to the general public. The UK would undoubtedly be heavily involved in any future conflict, even if the reality of it would depend on a complicated interaction of many circumstances. Hopefully, international collaboration and diplomatic efforts will be able to stop such an awful situation, however, the ongoing debates and arrangements emphasise the necessity for the United Kingdom and its people to be ready for any event.



THE DEATH OF ALEXEI NAVALNY



BY YU XIN ZHAO, YEAR 12

Who was Alexei Navalny?

Alexei Navalny was born in Russia in 1976 and he studied Law and finance before entering politics and is most well known as emerging as a top opposition leader to Vladimir Putin's United Russia Party. He was an anti-corruption blogger and activist and was awarded the Sakharov prize for his work on human rights and was recognised by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience. Alexei was vocal on corruption in Russia as well as organising political demonstrations and promoting his campaigns. However in 2013-2014 Navalny received a suspended sentence for embezzlement, with many considering this sentence to be politically motivated. In 2013 Navalny took part in the Moscow Mayoral election and came 2nd but was barred from running in the 2018 Mayoral election.

In August 2020 Navalny was hospitalised after being poisoned with Novichok nerve agent and was medically evacuated to Berlin: he accused Putin of being responsible. When he returned to Russia in 2021, he was immediately detained for violating his parole conditions while being hospitalised in Germany. This sparked mass protests and in February 2021 his suspended sentence became 2 and a half years in prison and his organisations were later designated as extremist and liquidated. In March 2022 he was found guilty of embezzlement and contempt in court in a new trial which led to Navalny gaining an additional 9 years in prison. This was described as a sham by Amnesty International and Navalny launched an appeal against this charge but was rejected in June 2022. In August 2023 he was charged 19 years in prison for extremist charges.

In December 2023 Navalny went missing for 3 weeks but was later found appearing in the Arctic Circle corrective colony. On the 16th February 2024, Russian prison services reported Navalny had lost consciousness and they tried to resuscitate him for over half an hour but with no avail: it was confirmed that he had died at age 47. His death sparked major protests in Russia as well as other nations such as the U.S and accusations were thrown towards the Russian Authorities in connection with his death.

What do we know about his death?

Although there is very little information known about the details of his death, according to Russian reports, Navalny took a short walk where he collapsed and never regained consciousness. It was reported that medics spent half an hour trying to resuscitate him but it was then concluded that Navalny experienced sudden death syndrome.



His wife blamed president Vladimir Putin for his death, however Moscow says that he died of natural causes.



Navalny's constant activism against corruption in the regime would have made him a primary threat towards Putin's government and now he is dead.

How did other nations react to his death?

The vice president of the United States , Kamala Harris , stated ' Let us be clear, Russia is responsible' . Other prominent leaders such as France's president, Emmanuel Macron said on X that in Russia today, "Free spirits are sent to the gulag , where they are condemned to death" and he also saluted Navalny's "memory, commitment and courage". The British foreign secretary, David Cameron, added: "We should hold Putin accountable for this."

Alexei Navalny's death was a tragic loss with his contributions to getting rid of corruption in the Russian government and becoming a powerful opposition that placed him in the Kremlin's crosshairs.

ENDOMETRIOSIS

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES WITH ITS DIAGNOSIS?



BY POPPY WHITE, YEAR 11

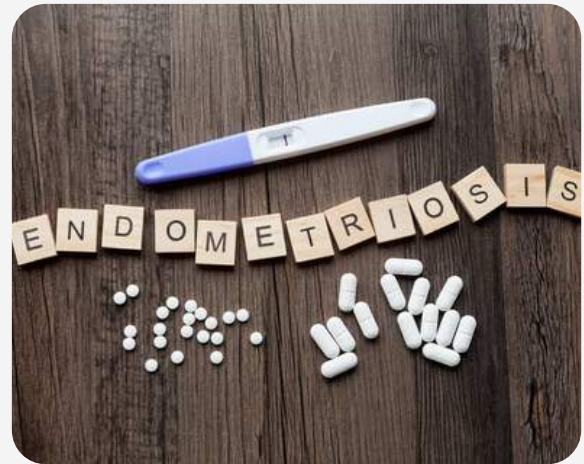
Endometriosis affects approximately one in 10 women of 'reproductive age' in the UK and yet 75.2% of patients report a misdiagnosis. Why is this?

The disease entails tissue similar to the uterus lining growing in areas outside the uterus, causing an amalgamation of symptoms: from chronic pain to depression and anxiety. Yet, for a disease so prevalent, with 176 million suffering globally and many still unaware, there is no cure - the only treatment focussed on lessening pain not eliminating it. Medical professionals recommend anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen for pain relief or more tedious treatments: hormone therapies with unpleasant side effects like mood changes or weight gain. The lack of treatment only adds to the hysteria around the disease, with some arguing that not enough money is being invested into research, possibly based on misogyny; this only elevates the crisis of misdiagnosis.

The disease is diagnosed via a 'surgical diagnosis' - without a laparoscopy (keyhole surgery) it cannot be confirmed, only suspected. Consequently, with both patients and occasionally doctors hesitant to undertake this, some medical professionals ultimately guess their diagnosis. Ovarian cysts and an infection of the fallopian tubes (salpingitis) are commonly mistakenly diagnosed, leading to women being prescribed futile treatment that will eventually lead to supplementary pain and progression of the disease. However, its enigmatic nature is due to a complete disregard for any awareness or research. In the UK, guidelines for the 'management of endometriosis' were not published until 2017, and authors of these have expressed that many similar agendas elsewhere have not been updated for 5-10 years.

1.5 million women in the UK are currently diagnosed, yet it is not listed as a research priority for the UK's 'National Institute for Health Research' or any organisation similar.

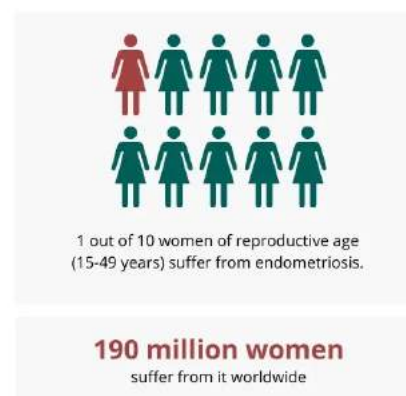
This demonstrates that although misdiagnosis is rife and a cure is non-existent, both the government and health organisations have not enough ambitions nor interests in attempting to rectify this. Moreover, the average time for diagnosis in the UK is 7.5 years, conveying how the ever-struggling NHS is trying to not only keep up with demand but also diagnose said demand effectively. Intensifying this, women who go untreated are more vulnerable to organ damage which will greatly impact fertility; this being demonstrated as 30-50% of sufferers are deemed wholly infertile, compromising their quality of life in some cases.



As of 2022, the government launched the 'Women's Health Strategy', aiming to diagnose and provide treatment with greater efficacy. However, only 10% of women with the condition report that their GPs had mentioned endometriosis in their first or second consultation; furthermore, half of women report having visited A&E and still not receiving the imperative diagnosis, suggesting this initiative is somewhat faulty.



It is evident that there's tremendous misinformation surrounding the disease: has its history as a 'women's disease' hindered our understanding disproportionately and, if so, would it be treated in the same fashion if it was contracted by men?



THE DEFORESTATION OF THE AMAZON RAINFOREST

COULD THIS UNIQUE AND BIODIVERSE PLACE BE DESTROYED
BY HUMANS IN THE COMING YEARS?



SCARLETT BASQUIL, YEAR 12

What Is Happening in the Amazon Rainforest?

The Amazon Rainforest is the largest and most biodiverse rainforest in the world. It is located in most of the Amazon River basin in South America and nine countries share the river. Most of it, 58.4%, is in Brazil and the rest is in Peru (12.8%), Bolivia (7.7%), Colombia (7.1%), Venezuela (6.1%), Guyana (3.1%), Suriname (2.5%), French Guiana (1.4%), and Ecuador (1%). Rainforests are very unique biomes that consist of tall evergreen trees that create a dense canopy and has hundreds of thousands of plants and animals in the 5.5 million km² it covers. Despite only covering 1% of the Earth's surface, the Amazon is home to over 10% of all known wildlife species - and probably many we don't know about yet! A few of the various animals include: jaguars, toucans, 10 species of primates, parrots, sloths, anacondas and dart frogs. The Amazon rainforest makes up over half of the world's remaining rainforest, but is rapidly disappearing.

Rainforests are not only important to the local ecosystem by providing a habitat and food for the wildlife, but also to the globe. It provides food, water, wood and medicine for local people and others around the world, as well as being vital to the climate as it acts as a 'carbon sink', with an estimated 150-200 billion tonnes of carbon stored in the forest.





One of the most important roles of the Amazon is being the home of indigenous tribes. More than 30 million people in over 350 tribes call the rainforest their home, many of which remain virtually isolated. The indigenous people have many cultural and historical ties to the forest as their ancestors have lived there for centuries. In fact, the name for the rainforest 'Amazon' was inspired by the Tapuyas tribe as the women fought alongside men, so the Spanish explorer Francisco de Orellana thought of the exclusively woman tribe, the Amazons, of Greek mythology.

The Amazon Rainforest faces many challenges: climate change is causing rainfall to decrease and conditions become drier so wildfires are more common, mining, urban development, and large-scale farming.

But the one that is by far the worst is deforestation, and it is usually due to one of the challenges mentioned above. Acres of the forest are cleared everyday to make way for houses, roads, farms, mines and much more. The gigantic trees, some of which have been there for over 4,000 years, are chainsawed, burned or felled in order to clear space for human use and to be used as expensive mahogany furniture. Commonly, space is cleared to make way for palm oil trees, which is very valuable as it is very versatile and used in many products: pizza, doughnuts, chocolate, detergent, shampoo, soap, toothpaste, and even lipstick. The list could go on as it is estimated that palm oil is in 50% of the packaged products we find in the supermarket. The problem is that the once diverse trees of the rainforest are changed to the monotonous rows of palm oil trees, severely diminishing the biodiversity as habitats and food systems have disappeared.

What Are the Impacts?

Everyone is impacted by the deforestation as it will increase CO₂ emissions and disrupt the water cycle, as well as the loss of wood and food sources. But, even though there are consequences for all, indigenous people have most likely been affected the most. They rely on the forest for shelter, food, water, medicine, resources and fuel, and unlike us, they have no other place to get these basic necessities from. Besides the obvious physical gains from the forest, it also holds cultural and spiritual importance to them as their ancestors have lived there for centuries and gives them their way of life. Horrifyingly, indigenous groups are sometimes mistreated by loggers and conflict arises. If this continues, these people, who have lived here since before it was discovered by Europeans, will have to abandon their way of life and move into cities as they no longer have the resources to support themselves in the rainforest. As a result the indigenous people have protested to have a say in what happens to their forest and to stop deforestation so that they can continue to live in their home and it will be preserved for future generations.

The biodiversity is also impacted as there is less and less space for it to thrive in due to deforestation. With continued deforestation over the past few decades 10 mammal, 20 bird and 8 amphibian species have gone extinct. This may not seem like a lot compared to the thousands of species that live in the rainforest, but all have a vital role in the food web. Over 10,000 species in the Amazon are endangered due to deforestation, harm from loggers, wildfires or over related reasons, including eminent species such as the jaguar, the spider monkey or scarlet macaw.



Species that haven't even been discovered yet may be close to extinction or even extinct now due to habitat loss. According to the UN, we lose around 88,000km² of the forest every year, which is roughly equivalent to a football pitch every 2 seconds. By 2100, all the rainforests in the world will be gone if the current rate of deforestation continues. That's 75 years. We need to do something to change this fate.



What Can We Do To Help?

The main reasons that the Amazon Rainforest is deforested is for timber or to make way for palm oil trees and cattle farms. So to reduce the impact of this by checking the source of new furniture you buy, reducing paper usage, and refraining from using products with palm oil in, such as some brands of soap, chocolate and makeup.

Most of all, we can seek to influence political powers and companies to create laws on deforestation, donate money to environmental charities, or minimise their use of rainforest resources.

In an attempt to protect the remaining rainforest, some areas have been made into national parks so the trees cannot be legally cut down. This maintains the size of the area and the nature in those areas has governmental protection. Local people and indigenous communities have even been involved in the creation of national parks as they have been trained to be park rangers or guards so that they can contribute to the efforts to save their home. Even though illegal logging still takes place, it's significantly less than in non-protected areas and although only around 49.4% is protected at the moment plans are constantly being made to create new parks. The future is looking hopefully to this one of a kind ecosystem, but there is still a lot of work that needs to be done so that it is not lost.



SILENCED SUFFERING

UNRAVELING THE DARKEST CHAPTERS OF THE SUDAN
GENOCIDE



HIBAH AHMED, YEAR 12

The Sudan Genocide stands as one of the most tragic and devastating events of recent history, unfolding in the Darfur region of Sudan. Beginning in the early 2000s, the conflict escalated into a humanitarian crisis characterised by widespread violence, displacement, and loss of life. This genocide is significant not only for its scale and brutality but also for the profound implications it holds for human rights, international intervention, and conflict resolution. Understanding the Sudan Genocide is crucial for grasping the complexities of ethnic tensions, political instability, and the challenges of peacekeeping in the 21st century. Moreover, it serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for global cooperation and action to prevent such atrocities from occurring in the future.

Unveiling the Darkest Chapters

Tracing the Troubled Past of the Sudanese Genocide

The Sudanese genocide, primarily centred in the Darfur region, has its roots deeply embedded in historical ethnic and political tensions. Understanding its history requires delving into the complex dynamics of Sudan's societal structure, resource distribution, and political power struggles.

The Sudanese government has historically been dominated by Arab elites, leading to marginalisation and oppression of non-Arab ethnic groups, particularly in regions like Darfur. The seeds of conflict were sown through discriminatory policies that favoured Arab populations and neglected the needs and rights of non-Arab ethnic groups.



The conflict in Darfur escalated in the early 2000s when rebel groups, largely consisting of non-Arab ethnic minorities, took up arms against the Sudanese government. They protested against marginalisation, economic inequality, and political disenfranchisement. In response, the Sudanese government, under President Omar al-Bashir, launched a brutal crackdown, deploying military forces and supporting Arab militias known as the Janjaweed.

The Janjaweed, armed and supported by the Sudanese government, unleashed a campaign of terror against non-Arab ethnic groups in Darfur. They systematically targeted villages, carrying out massacres, rape, torture, and looting. Their aim was not just to suppress the rebellion but to ethnically cleanse the region of non-Arab populations. Entire communities were displaced, with millions forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in overcrowded camps.

The Sudanese genocide resulted in a staggering humanitarian crisis, with widespread suffering and loss of life. According to estimates by humanitarian organisations, hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives due to violence, disease, and starvation. Countless others endured unimaginable trauma, including sexual violence and displacement. The international community struggled to respond effectively, with debates over the classification of the crisis as genocide and challenges in providing adequate humanitarian assistance.



Mukhtar al-Badri Mohieddin *"There are 150 people here. I knew many of them, Mohamed, Abdullah... Jalal," he says, pausing for a long moment before one name, Dr Youssef al-Habr, a well-known professor of Arabic literature. "It's just me left," he adds.*

Emerging from the Shadows

Assessing the Current Landscape of the Sudanese Genocide

As of 2024, the situation in Darfur and the broader Sudanese region continues to evolve, albeit with some notable shifts compared to the peak of the genocide in the early 2000s. While the intensity of violence has diminished, significant challenges persist, shaping the present status of the Sudanese genocide.

Following the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir in April 2019, Sudan entered a transitional period marked by political upheaval and uncertainty. The transitional government, composed of civilian and military leaders, has embarked on a path of reform, seeking to address long standing grievances and foster democratic governance. However, the transition remains fragile, with competing interests and power struggles posing obstacles to meaningful progress.



Abakar Haroun, a member of a group tasked with burying the bodies of victims, said the task took days.

"One day, I remember working from 8am to 6pm with colleagues burying people in a cemetery in the al-Shati neighbourhood," he said.

Samia Osman (not her real name) said: *"I counted 117 bodies in front of my house. We used to jump over the bodies to reach our homes."*

Forging a Path Forward

Building a Future of Hope Beyond the Sudanese Genocide

The future of the Sudanese genocide requires continued support and cooperation from the international community. International donors should fulfil their commitments to provide humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping support, and development aid to Sudan. Additionally, regional and international actors must work together to address cross-border challenges, such as arms trafficking, terrorism, and refugee flows, which threaten Sudan's stability and security.

Central to the future of the Sudanese genocide is the pursuit of justice for victims and accountability for perpetrators. This involves establishing credible mechanisms for transitional justice, including truth commissions, reparations programs, and trials for individuals accused of committing atrocities. Efforts to address impunity and hold perpetrators accountable are essential for fostering reconciliation, restoring trust in state institutions, and preventing future cycles of violence.

In October 2020, the Sudanese government signed a historic peace agreement with several rebel groups, including factions from Darfur. The agreement aimed to end decades of conflict and address the root causes of violence through political inclusion, economic development, and transitional justice mechanisms. While the peace deal represents a significant step forward, its implementation remains a daunting task, requiring sustained commitment from all parties involved.

Despite improvements in security and political stability in some areas, Darfur continues to grapple with humanitarian challenges. Displaced populations remain in camps, facing dire living conditions and limited access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and clean water. Moreover, the legacy of violence and trauma persists, exacerbating mental health issues and hindering community reconciliation efforts.

One of the key obstacles to achieving lasting peace and reconciliation in Sudan is the issue of impunity. Many perpetrators of atrocities during the Sudanese genocide have not been held accountable for their actions, contributing to a culture of impunity and distrust. Efforts to establish accountability mechanisms, including the establishment of a special court for crimes committed in Darfur, have faced challenges and delays, raising concerns about the prospects for achieving justice for victims.



"There were worrying reports of rape of civilians, including children, denial of humanitarian access affecting children's access to basic necessities and other violations of international law, including violations of children's economic and social rights," **UN Committee said in a news release.**

Building a stable and inclusive political system is critical for preventing the recurrence of conflict in Sudan. The transitional government must prioritise democratic reform, including the drafting of a new constitution, the holding of free and fair elections, and the promotion of human rights and rule of law. Meaningful participation of marginalised communities, including women, youth, and ethnic minorities, is essential for ensuring that the political process is inclusive and representative of Sudan's diverse population.

In conclusion, the future of the Sudanese genocide hinges on the collective efforts of Sudanese stakeholders and the international community to build a peaceful, inclusive, and just society. By addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting reconciliation, and ensuring accountability for past atrocities, Sudan can chart a path towards a brighter and more resilient future for its people.



Over 418,000 People Newly Displaced in Sudan

Number of internally displaced persons in Sudan in 2022, by reason



990+ people were reportedly killed and almost 1,200 injured due to conflict in 2022.



About 16 million people - roughly a third of the population - will need humanitarian assistance in 2023.

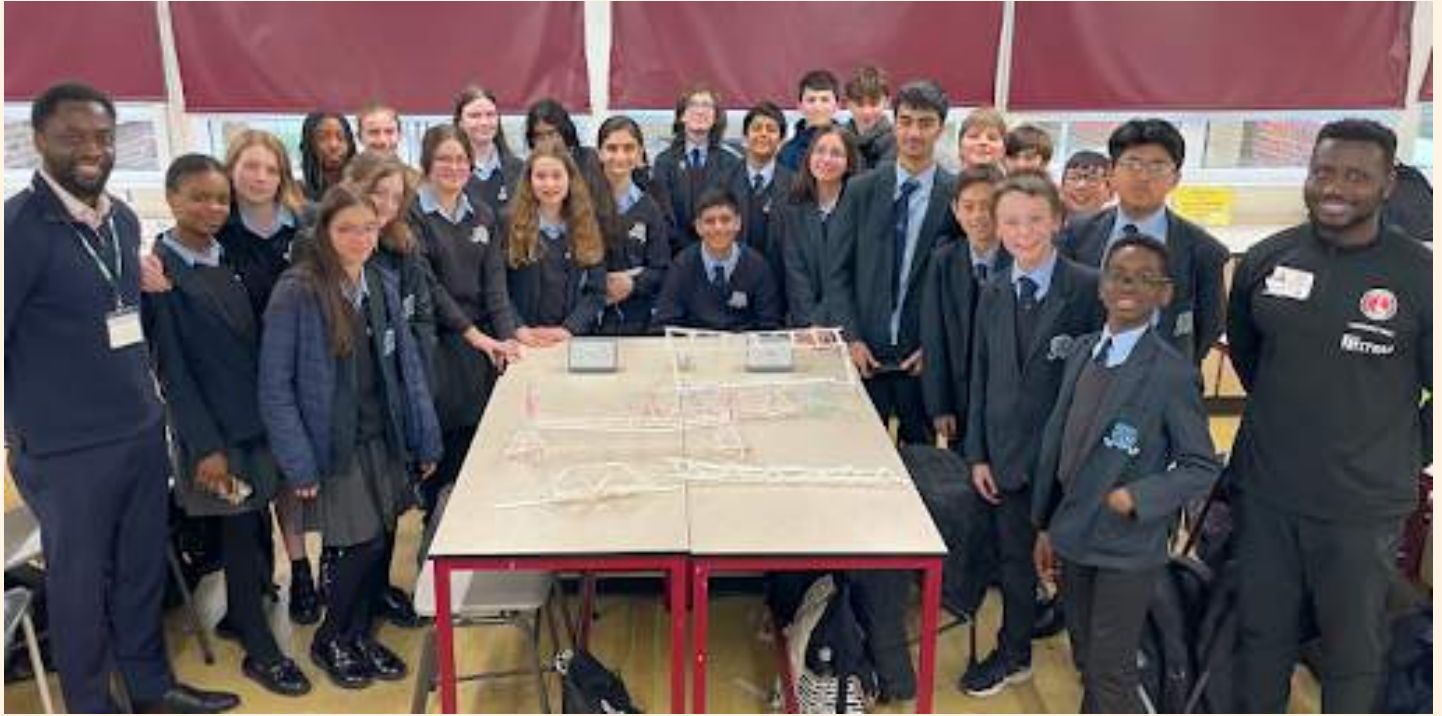
Last updated April 17, 2023
Sources: IOM, DTM via OCHA



A low-angle photograph of a cherry blossom tree. The tree's trunk and branches are dark and textured, extending upwards from the bottom left towards the top right. The branches are heavily laden with clusters of light pink cherry blossoms. Some green leaves are visible among the flowers. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The text "News from departments" is written in a black, cursive script across the upper middle of the image.

News from departments

STEM NEWS



HIGHLIGHTS

BRITISH SCIENCE WEEK

THE ROCKET SHOW

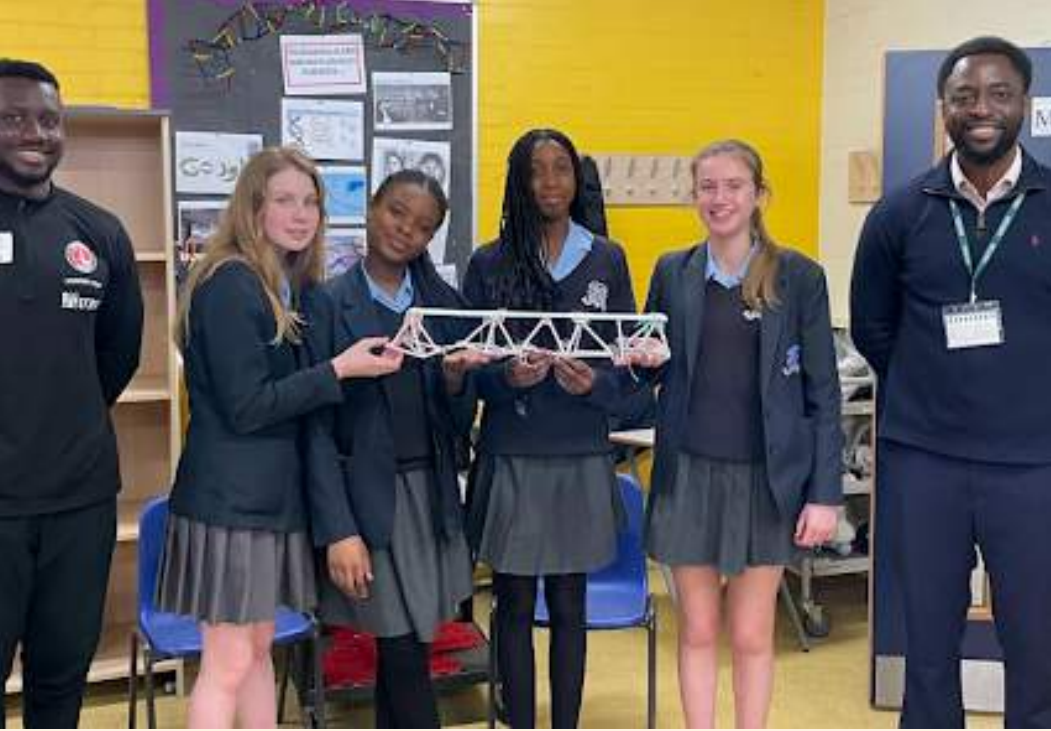
British Science Week is always a busy and fun packed time at BGS. Over the few weeks surrounding this event we have squeezed in four trips, a number of special science week lessons, form time science quizzes, a STEMfest collaboration project with Charlton Athletic and even a Rocket Show! And we are not finished yet. The legacy project this year is to put together a time capsule. Keep an eye out for more information next term about what the students have selected to go into the capsule.

Furthermore, as part of our Outreach Work in the local community, six of our year 12 science leaders will be visiting Danson Primary this week to deliver a special science week workshop based on the theme of time.

In previous issues you have heard from our students already about some of these events but here are a few photos of what they have been up to.

Ms Lusted





Chemistry in Action

This was a fantastic introduction to British Science Week which commences on Friday 8th March so please look out for more STEM events organised by the Science Department.

Mrs Moore

Head of Science

“On the 29th February, myself and a group of higher chemistry students went to the Chemistry in Action lecture at the Emmanuel Centre in London. In this lecture we gained an insight into multiple fields of chemistry that we could go into in the future and their current ideas and innovations in solving problems to do with society, the environment and industry.

We learned about the current progress on making batteries more sustainable by finding more environmentally friendly alternatives for their components while also trying to increase their effectiveness in supplying and storing energy.



In nuclear chemistry we were informed about the ways that nuclear waste can be recycled in order to decrease the amount of high level nuclear waste. Some fission products can be used in medicine to target metastatic cancer cells and in space exploration in the form of nuclear batteries. They debunked misconceptions and explained in detail how nuclear waste is disposed of and how rigorous safety regulations are, which definitely helped ease a lot of our fears about the disposal of nuclear waste affecting the environment

Then there was a panel of Chemistry graduates who gave their experiences in university and career decisions. We could go into chemical engineering with study years abroad and write a PhD on a cell's chemical signals or work in industry in analytical chemistry and do an iterated masters or even do an apprenticeship and specialise into crystallisation of medicine. What connected all of their experiences together was a love and curiosity for chemistry.

Since important tests are coming soon, a professional chemistry marker explained and clarified the questions on the papers and helped us avoid common errors with regards to the command terms in the question. As usual, always read the question.

An “Accidental” Material Chemist explained how she became passionate about material chemistry through opportunities offered by university and international competitions pushing science to its limits. She also wrote a PhD on creating a type of composite pellet that would be viable as a sustainable container of hydrogen to power cars, which involved lots of hands-on practical work and exploring different ratios of material to see new properties.

Finally we learned about the ways that synthetic chemistry can help diseases like snake bites in the tropics (a commonly disregarded illness). Current treatments include antivenoms which rely on knowing the species of snake for a specific medicine or having to deal with multiple horrible side effects from receiving many different antivenoms. Antivenoms are also really expensive, hard to synthesise and hard to transport due to their temperature requirements, so chemists have been trying to synthesise glycopolymers in order to replicate the properties of antivenoms in order to diagnose and treat snake bites while also increasing accessibility of healthcare to all people.

This was a fantastic learning experience which broadened our horizons with what we can do with the field of chemistry in the future.

Adrianne Yu-Mason 12DJG



Five of our top Chemistry students; Ethan Abbate; Scarlett Basquil, Leo Dhunnoockchand, Nathan Kuhn and Adrienne Yu-Mason were selected to attend the prestigious Chemistry Race held at the World renowned University of Cambridge.

This Chemistry Race is a new chemistry competition to the UK for teams of 3-5 sixth-form students organised by students at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford. The Race originated as a Czech competition Chemiklání at the University of Pardubice in 2015.

The teams race against each other in solving chemistry problems; whoever gets the most points within the time limit wins! Our Year 12 students competed against Year 13 students and attained a respectable position on the leaderboard.

Dr Numbere

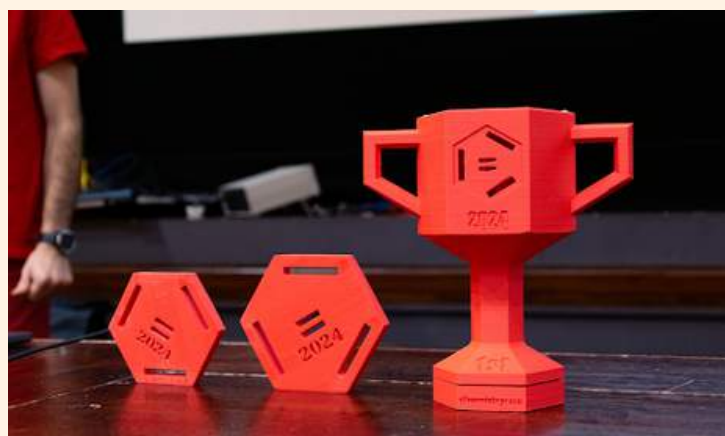


During the first weekend of half term a team of sixth form students, including myself, went to the University of Cambridge to take part in the annual Chemistry Race that was also taking place in Oxford as well. It was very exciting being in the lecture halls competing against other teams who were just as passionate about Chemistry - and winning! The BGS team worked hard to compete as many questions as possible in the two hour time limit, helping each other along the way. And although we didn't win, we had a fantastic time solving questions and having fun together. Overall it was an amazing experience.'

Scarlett Basquil 12DJG

During the half term holidays, I, alongside four other Year 12 students, had the privilege of attending the Chemistry Race in Cambridge where we would compete against around 60 teams of 4-5 people. The venue for the competition was a science lecture room which really gave me an insight into what it is like doing a science course at Cambridge university. The competition lasted two hours in which we had to answer as many questions as possible, but had to get a question correct in order to move on to the next one, which certainly was a challenge despite our combined knowledge of chemistry. All in all, it was a very enjoyable experience and I especially appreciated being able to meet people from other schools who were also looking to further their knowledge of science. I hope that BGS will get to compete in the Chemistry Race next year as it is a superb opportunity for any keen chemist.

Nathan Kuhn 12HJO



Royal Society of Chemistry top of the Bench Competition

Three teams were entered for the Royal Society of Chemistry top of the Bench Competition; where they were asked to create a poster on a Transition metal.

The following students were involved:

Dr Numbere

Metal of Choice	Yttrium	Platinum	Tungsten
Name	Transition troop	PAAT	SAAF
	Victor Klotins	Precious Nwaekpe	Adeleke Gabriel
	Kieren Suresh	Angela Luong	Adam Davidson
	Diana Grigoreva	Teddy Jerome	Sophie Black
	Devine Kapu	Alex Rizov	Freda Periera



When making this poster I honestly had no idea where to start. I enjoyed chemistry, but I wasn't really bothered about metals unless it was for a test. While reading the brief for what our poster needed to contain, I thought about what metal would be unique but also have enough to write about and I came across platinum. Recently, in a chemist lesson we learnt about how it was used as a catalyst to speed up the rate of a reaction and I thought it'd be a good transition metal to make a poster on. As we met up, Angela and I did some research on it and delved deeper into its uses in so many industries such as the medical and petrol industry and realised that platinum has such a huge impact in our lives.

Precious Nwekpe

PLATINUM

UNREACTIVE BUT USEFUL METAL

Atomic number - 78

Atomic mass - 195

★ 1735 ★

SOUTH AMERICA

At first, its significance was recognised, but today we use it to aid us in speeding up so many reactions!

Qualities that make Platinum a useful catalyst:

- Corrosion resistance
- High temperature stability
- Can facilitate many reactions

Abundance in Earth:

About 1 millionth of 1 percent

CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

Converts harmful gases such as carbon monoxides, nitrogen oxides and unburned hydrocarbons into less harmful substances reducing air pollution - accounts for 37% of its total demand

CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

Used in the production of nitric acid which is necessary for explosives and fertilizers. Also used to produce high-octane gases. They are also used when refining crude oil in order to produce high octane fuels

HYDROGENATION

When hydrogen is added to unsaturated compounds to produce a saturated alkane. This reaction can be used to preserve food and purify raw materials. Example: partially hydrogenated vegetable oil can increase LDL cholesterol and reduce HDL cholesterol

Occurrence in Nature

Typically found as a rare mineral, but often found as a by-product of other metal mining, particularly from ores containing nickel and copper. Extracting platinum from its ores is an energy intensive industrial process

Majority of the world's platinum production comes from primary sources rather than native platinum

However, the metal's largest use, accounting for 40% of its total demand is for jewelry, where it is used the alloy to make white gold. USA, China, Japan and India have the biggest markets for it.

PLATINUM IS AMAZING

d-Orbital structure on the surface of their atoms, allows them to temporarily stick to other molecules. The overall electron cloud is changed in shape allowing a rearrangement into a new compound

Interesting Facts

Rare and precious - rarer than gold and is sometimes valued more

Named after the stars - platinum comes from the name platina, which means 'little silver'. Named by Spanish miners who were looking for silver

Used in space exploration - used in components of spacecraft due to its ability to withstand high temperatures and harsh conditions

Hydrogenation

Pt

Platinum

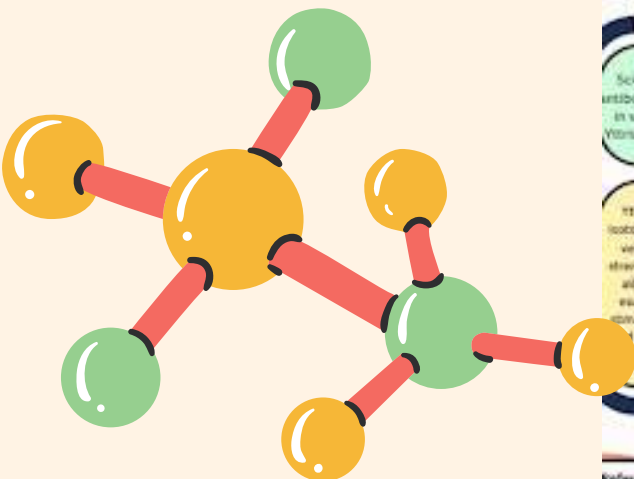
The actual poster making process was done in about an hour after I realised we had all these ideas, but it wasn't a poster. It was fun expanding my points, but making them concise enough that anyone who passes by can realise the significance of this metal.

It was an amazing experience to work with other year groups on a topic so broad. The competition allowed my group and I to think outside the box, as there were really no limitations to what we could have decided to do. I found the poster project really interesting and it has allowed me to learn more, naturally, about Chemistry in general, and an opportunity to work with others with similar interests. If given the chance, I would definitely recommend other students to get involved, as it was very beneficial and not a long project at all!

Angela Luong

A black and white line drawing of two test tubes. The test tube on the left is tilted at a steeper angle, while the one on the right is more vertical. Both tubes contain a liquid, indicated by a horizontal line, and several small circles representing bubbles are shown rising from the liquid. The entire illustration is set against a plain white background.

The winning poster



Biology in Action

‘The Biology in Action trip certainly provided a useful and insightful look into the multitudes of different careers and opportunities within the broad subject of biology. A small group of us, all higher biology students, attended the trip at Emmanuel Hall in Westminster, along with a few other schools too. The centre looked amazing, with amazing speakers there too.



‘Every lecture was around 45 minutes long, discussing various different uses of biology in everyday life and so many different career paths instead of the presumed doctor, dentist, or veterinarian that always comes to mind to a lot of people, including me, when a career in biology is mentioned. There were six lectures throughout the day, varying from exam tips to research expeditions, virology, and even methods of saving species from extinction, such as the Northern White Rhino, which was certainly very unique and interesting. To me, the most interesting lecture was the one on virology, with the speaker sharing her role in science and even sharing her method of discovering a once unknown outbreak of plague around 4000 years ago, which certainly inspired me to perhaps follow a career in that sector of science. Overall, the trip opened my eyes to many unique and exciting opportunities for me in science and widened my knowledge of the subject of biology and the impact it has on our living world.’

George Claydon Year 12



GCSE Science in Action 2024

On Monday 11th March, as part of science & maths week, around 30 students attended the Education in Action GCSE Science event at the Emmanuel Centre in London. We were given interesting talks from scientists and doctors about topics ranging from helioseismology to my favourite; organic chemistry. We were lucky enough to get second-row seats as we arrived early, which made the talks even better.

Our first talk was by Dr Tishtrya Mehta, an astrophysicist, who talked about helioseismology- the study of earthquakes on the Sun. The idea that we can find out about what materials are in the Sun and how stars work in general by listening to its vibrations, caused by fusion on the sun's surface. Dr Mehta also played us the sound made by the Sun (40 octaves higher so we could hear it).

'Then, a talk by Rebecca Nesbit- who is author of the book, 'Tickets for the Ark', and who has a PhD in butterfly migration. The audience participated in a poll where she asked us to choose who we would donate money to save, either honeybees or hair worms. Honeybees themselves have amazing symbiosis with humans (we take honey from bees and they in turn pollinate our plants). The population of honeybees is increasing every year, despite the overall decline in the number of bees. Then, we were introduced to the horse hairworm- a parasite which infects crickets causing them to jump into water; essentially making them commit suicide. We learnt to question why some species receive more funding and donations; e.g. appearance and cuteness.

The next talk was by Mikhaela Neequaye, on how plants have evolved to attract different insects; by replicating the scents of things that release smells to trigger specific insect pheromones. Several students participated in an onstage scent demonstration, including our own Jesse O!.

During the lunch break during I got BBC's Greg Foot's autograph on my coffee cup!



We had a session by Jen from Primrose Kitten, on revision! She pointed out common mistakes; how to answer questions based on keywords in questions and urged us not to just revise the night before by showing us a graph of Primrose Kitten's video views throughout the year. The night before the exam, views spiked ridiculously. She also pointed out good areas to focus on for GCSE science: to make use of the specification, remembering practical's and emphasising the importance of retrieval practice.

Next the presenter of the event, Greg Foot, gave us a talk about topics from his own show on Radio 1 and podcast: Sliced Bread, where he investigates trendy products to see if they are the best thing since sliced bread (hence the name). He talked to us about ice baths, toothbrushes and energy drinks. We were asked whether we think ice baths can improve our sleep. Roughly 50% of us thought that they did, and we were right. Ice baths cause you to shiver from the cold, this tires us out and helps us get to sleep faster and deeper. We also looked at toothbrushes and that manual vs electric makes no difference as long as you focus on brushing your teeth. The caffeine amount in energy drinks like monster was also shocking.

The last session of the day was on the Colourful Creation of Organic Chemistry by Dr Alex Baker. Organic chemistry is primarily concerned with carbon. In the 1820s, quinine was the early, miracle treatment for malaria. It prevented the malaria parasite from borrowing into red blood cells so it was incredibly sought. We also looked at different scientists, such as Friedrich Wöhler, who discovered isomers; compounds with the same molecular formula but different structures. It was interactive and fun because he used us throwing different coloured beach balls from one side of the room to the other to demonstrate that the wavelength of light absorbed is dependent on the structural formulae of compounds not solely on the elements in a compound, to explain how industrial red and purple dyes are made.

Afterwards I also got Dr Alex Baker's autograph on the bottom of my coffee cup. He is an inventor and pioneer of lateral flow devices and has renowned research on understanding and treating neglected tropical diseases and combatting health inequalities.

All in all we all learnt a lot from the day. Thank you to Miss Petrie and Mrs Gradley for chaperoning and organising this trip. Lucy Gowing

Message from Mrs Moore, Head of Science Department.

As we eagerly anticipate the arrival of Easter, it's a perfect time to reflect on the outstanding achievements of our students here at Bexley Grammar throughout the Spring term. As the Head of Science, I am thrilled to share some remarkable news and extend my heartfelt congratulations to all.

First and foremost, I want to extend my warmest congratulations to the eight exceptional students who have received offers to study Medicine, including the prestigious offer from Oxford University. Your dedication and hard work have truly paid off, and your accomplishments are a testament to your exceptional abilities and unwavering commitment to excellence. We eagerly await news from the remaining two students awaiting medicine offers, as well as celebrating the achievements of our three students who have secured offers to study Dentistry, one student with a Biomedical Science offer at Oxford University, and another with an Engineering offer at Cambridge University. Your achievements have made us incredibly proud, and we have no doubt that you will continue to excel in your academic pursuits.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of our students for their relentless determination and perseverance, as well as to our dedicated parents for their unwavering support and encouragement. Your partnership with us has been invaluable, and we are truly grateful for your ongoing commitment to excellence in education.

In addition to our university successes, I am delighted to announce that several of our Key Stage 4 students are applying for the Science Summer School at Imperial University. This is a fantastic opportunity for them to further explore their passion for science and engage in enriching academic experiences.

Our students have also been actively participating in various competitions, including the Chemistry Olympiad, Chemistry Cambridge Race, Top of the Bench, and the STEM competition with Charlton Athletic, with the finals scheduled to take place in the upcoming summer term. Your enthusiasm and dedication to these competitions are commendable, and I have no doubt that you will represent Bexley Grammar School with distinction.

Furthermore, our celebration of British Science Week was a resounding success, with this year's theme marking the 30th anniversary. From the exhilarating rocket shows to the creation of time capsules and water clocks, our students immersed themselves in a myriad of exciting activities. Additionally, our Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Science in Action trips provided invaluable hands-on learning experiences, further igniting our students' passion for science.

I am also incredibly proud of our Science Leaders who visited Danson Primary to deliver engaging science lessons. Your efforts in inspiring the next generation of scientists are truly commendable, and I have no doubt that your impact will be far-reaching.

Furthermore, I would like to extend my best wishes to our Year 13 and Year 11 students as they prepare for their upcoming exams. Your hard work and dedication have been exemplary, and I have every confidence in your ability to succeed.

In conclusion, I am immensely proud of the achievements of our students and the dedication of our entire school community. Together, we have achieved remarkable success, and I have no doubt that the future holds even greater opportunities for us to shine. As we continue on our journey of academic excellence, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to learning, discovery, and innovation.

Wishing you all continued success and a bright future ahead.

Warm regards,
Mrs Moore
Head of Science



CLASSICS DEPARTMENT

THEATRE TRIP - BACCHAE

On the 9th of February, the Classics Department organised a school trip to see the Bacchae, which is a play that the Classics students in year 12 are studying. The performance was put on by some students at UCL. The performance was excellent and started with a talk about previous performances of the Bacchae which I found very interesting.

The Bacchae is a play that was written by Euripides in 407- 406 BCE and performed posthumously in 405 BCE. It is a story about the king of Thebes called Pentheus.

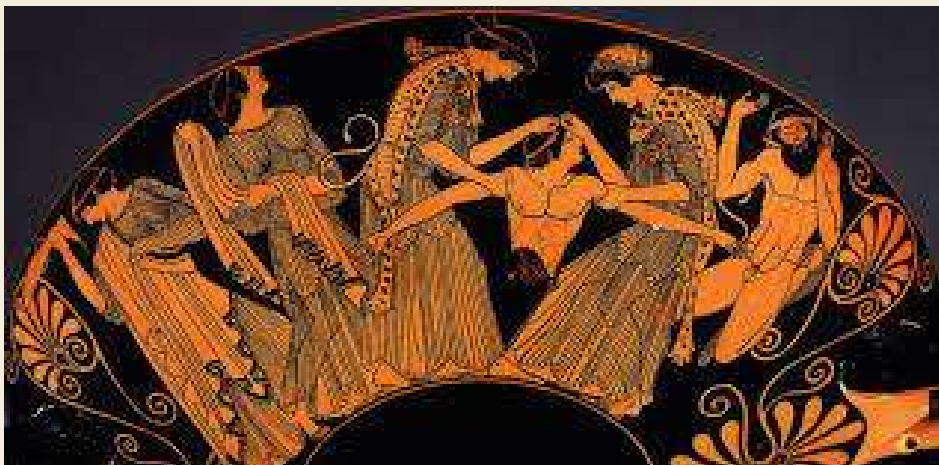
In the play he disrespects Dionysus, just as his aunts had done. Dionysus made Pentheus's aunts go mad before the play takes place. In the play Dionysus meets Pentheus in disguise and curses Pentheus in order to make him face his downfall, which leads to a gruesome end.



The play adapted this story very well in my opinion, they portrayed the maenads (which are crazed women who are followers of Dionysus) to be very free and crazy, which I think was very effective. I had not studied the play before the trip and I thought it did a very good job of telling the story so I didn't need to know the plot beforehand.

The trip itself was so much fun, and we all enjoyed an evening out, deepening our knowledge of Classics and of course, eating pizza and ice cream together.

Thank you to Ms Meacher and Ms Fisher for giving us this excellent opportunity and organising this trip for us!



The importance of speaking multiple languages

ANAGHA PAI 10LPV



Languages are not just a means of communication; they are windows into different worlds, gateways to diverse cultures, and keys to unlocking the beauty of human expression. As we navigate through the vast tapestry of our global community, languages act as bridges, connecting people from various backgrounds. They enable us to share our stories, learn from one another, and celebrate the richness of our collective human experience.

The importance of languages becomes even more evident in the realm of education and professional opportunities. Multilingualism opens doors to a myriad of possibilities, from accessing a broader range of literature and research to expanding one's career prospects on a global scale. Employers often value language skills as they enhance communication in multicultural workplaces and facilitate international business relationships. Learning and embracing different languages, therefore, not only broadens our intellectual horizons but also enhances our adaptability in an ever-changing world. Learning languages has made me a more well-rounded individual. It's opened my mind to new possibilities and has shown me that there is always more to learn about the world and myself. I'm grateful for the opportunity to study languages and I'm more excited to continue learning and growing as a multilingual person.

In conclusion, the importance of languages extends far beyond their practical utility in communication. They are the carriers of culture, the tools for building connections, and the means by which we gain a deeper understanding of the world. As we recognize the significance of languages, we contribute to the creation of a more inclusive, understanding, and harmonious global community.

What makes English so hard?



English is a difficult language. I don't want to think about how hard it is to learn as a second language (ESL), nor do I even want to acknowledge that it's the world's lingua franca. It could definitely be far, far simpler than it is at the moment. Or can? Can definitely be? Now I've stared at the word 'could' too much and can't un-see how odd that word looks now.

Even words like 'alien' and 'through' look absolutely bizarre. How do I know I'm not pronouncing those words incorrectly?

That's just one of the problems with English: the struggle with spelling and, in turn, pronunciation. If we were speaking German instead, which sounds exactly as it reads, those spelling tests from primary school would be futile.

There would be no need to do any spelling tests even if the words were some like 'Freundschaftsbezeugung' (demonstrations of friendship) or even 'Eichhörnchen' (pigeon). Let's not even forget the rule 'i before e except after c but only when it rhymes with bee' to spell words like 'receive' or 'friend'. And if you don't even know how to pronounce those words because you're learning English from a textbook, that makes spelling even harder because you can't even use this silly little rhyme if you're learning ESL (though fortunately, words are distinct enough for people to understand the gist of what you're saying though it may not be the most professional-looking). So learning individual words in English can certainly prove a struggle if you're used to much more phonetic languages (ie: most others). Another issue with the English language is tenses. Indicative? Subjunctive? Conditional?

What makes English so hard? cont...

Even those pesky ones like the future continuous and present perfect continuous? Is there any reason to make communication so incredibly complicated to discuss such a small thing? Quite frankly, it sounds absurd to me- we could have just stuck with the past, present, future and maybe the conditional tense and that would have been enough; tenses are truly head-scratchers even to me.

And these odd 'auxiliary verbs' to embellish sentences could easily be dropped out. Do we need to include the word 'do' to communicate a question? Is it necessary? I don't think so, even if it sounds like what we're used to.

Okay, this probably turned out to be a rant about the English language, but I just wanted to touch on some of the idiosyncrasies within the language. This is not to say that I hate my mother tongue- far from it. English, despite its many flaws as a language, is one that allows people from around the world to connect with one another. However, being the world's 'global language', it can be hard to appreciate the struggles that many non-native speakers face when trying to learn ESL. So it's important to recognise what makes English so hard for many people to learn, and thus meet those learners with some mutual understanding that English is not the easiest language in the world. Learning a language is not just about learning the syntax and vocabulary, it's about learning to empathise with people from all walks of life who speak the language too.

Ashna Adhikari (10YMS)



BGS succeeds in UK Linguistics Olympiad 2024



On Thursday 8th February, 16 BGS students from Year 10 and 2 students from Year 9 took part in the **UK Linguistics Olympiad 2024**, a language-analysis competition for secondary schools in which pupils solve language puzzles. The aim of this initiative is to encourage a lifelong interest in the world's languages.

The language puzzles were presented in the following languages for the Intermediate level, which was sat by 4 teams:

1. **Xhosa**, or isiXhosa: one of the eleven official languages of South Africa. Xhosa is spoken by approximately 10 million people as their first language, and by 11 million people as an additional language mostly in South Africa, making it the second most widely spoken language in South Africa after Zulu.
2. **Tariana**: an endangered language spoken in the Vaupés river area in Brazil, close to the border with Columbia. There are about 100 speakers left of Tariana, while there are a further 1,500 Tariana people, who no longer speak the language.
3. **The Adinkra symbols**: these are symbols that represent concepts, originally created by the Bono people (Ghana). They represent various concepts or proverbs and can be used to convey various morals or beliefs.
4. **Kannada**: a Dravidian language spoken by around 60 million people, primarily in the Karnataka state in south-west India. It is written in the Kannada script, and has a literary tradition dating back over 1000 years.



**UK Linguistics
Olympiad**



In order to solve these puzzles, students have to use a range of skills: pattern-recognition, analysis, lateral thinking and problem solving. What's most impressive is that competitors have to not only make these analyses mentally, but also put them into words in an explicit explanation of how the underlying system works in order to solve the challenge.

Find out below the amazing results they attained :)

Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5
Ashna	Bess	Hana	Anagha	Tianming
Lev	Kate	Ellin	Angela	Caitlin
Diep Anh	Abigail	Lara	Caitlyn	
Saimom	Charlie		Anshika	

- Intermediate level (Y10) three teams out of four were in the top 20% best attaining teams across the UK and have been awarded with a Bronze Award;
- Foundation level (Y9) Caitlyn and Tianming were entered as the only Y9 candidates and managed to score 70%, which is 2 points above the threshold for the Silver Award! This means that they were in the top 10% attainers in the UK

Team 1 - 71% (Intermediate L, Bronze)

Team 2 - 71% (Intermediate L, Bronze)

Team 3 - 63% (Intermediate L)

Team 4 - 68% (Intermediate L, Bronze)

Team 5 - 70% (Foundation L, Silver)



Geography news

Azores 2024



Over the February half term, 40 BGS students and 4 teachers eagerly left Heathrow and flew to the Azores in the Atlantic for 5 days. What ensued was a fantastic trip! All 40 students were outstanding ambassadors for BGS and many people we met commented on how our students were the best group they had ever encountered! The passion and awe was evident in every activity we did and all students and staff had fantastic experiences and took photos to capture their unforgettable time. Read on for some of the experiences shared.

Miss Ashman



The Azores trip was something that me and all my friends had been looking forward to for a year and it did not disappoint!

The trip was amazing and everyone had so much fun together. The highlight of the trip for me was the first geothermal pool which was an amber colour from the oxidised iron in the water (all our swimsuits stained orange but it was worth it!). It was a fantastic trip and I couldn't have asked for a better experience. Having free time every day in different places on the island gave us all an opportunity to get to know each other better and create close bonds with new people. On the third day we went into a cave underground and it was very interesting to see the rock formation of a dormant volcano! All the year 11s had so much fun together and it was definitely an experience I will never forget. Thank you to everyone who made this such an enjoyable trip!

Aqua Trumci, Year 11

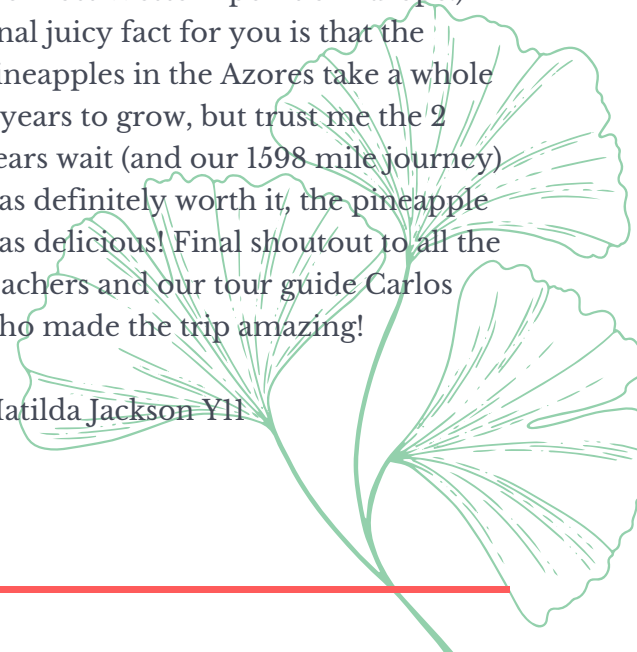






Going to the Azores was such an awesome experience! My favourite part was the geothermal pools, not only is the geography very cool, but it was lovely being in the relaxing, green environment. I would definitely recommend going to the Azores, from the hikes and views, to the waterfalls and geothermal pools and even the food, the Azores has so much to offer (and it is cool to say you have been to the most Western point of Europe.) A final juicy fact for you is that the pineapples in the Azores take a whole 2 years to grow, but trust me the 2 years wait (and our 1598 mile journey) was definitely worth it, the pineapple was delicious! Final shoutout to all the teachers and our tour guide Carlos who made the trip amazing!

Matilda Jackson Y11



YEAR 10 MATHS FEAST & THE MATHS SHOW

Year 10 Maths Feast



Advanced Mathematics
Support Programme®

**Another
BGS
success!**

On Friday 1st March, eight intrepid Year 10 mathematicians headed off to Thomas Tallis school to take part in the "Year 10 Maths Feast" organised by the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme.

This is a regional competition in which teams of four budding maths prodigies from local schools have to use their technical and teamwork skills to score points. There were four rounds:

- Round 1 - "TV Quizzes"
- Round 2 - "Calculator Cross-Number"
- Round 3 - "Mad Hatters"
- Round 4 - "Cubes and Rhombic Dodecahedra"

The questions were tough and I'm very proud of the way our students applied themselves and learnt how to work together. The team spirit was wonderful, and the results reflect this: "BGS Team B" came fourth, and "BGS Team A" won the competition overall.

The participants were Ashna Adhikari 10YMS, Caleb McCann 10DCC, Charlie Furlong 10DCC, Lev Griffin 10CPB, Lukas Schreiner 10VLT, Naima Mendjeli 10PDH, Ritadyumna Jinka 10VLT, and Urav Sirohi 10PDH.

We were also very ably supported by Malin Karasimov 13KSK, who kindly offered to help add up the scores.

All in all, an excellent day; the only mildly disappointing aspect being that, despite the name of the event, the food on offer was limited to tea and (non-chocolate) biscuits.

Mr Male

The Maths Feast was great! In teams, we solved a series of maths questions in three hours. We had one round of a crossword (but they were numbers, not words) and another consisting of logic, so it wasn't just maths that we did. Another round consisted of constructing a cube and dodecahedron out of paper and tape (see photo), which made sure the "feast" was a bit hands-on too. I would definitely do this again and massive thanks to Mr Male and Malin for giving up their time for us to do this!

Even better, WE CAME FIRST!!!!

Ashna Adhikari 10YMS



The trip was a great opportunity and was a lot of fun. There was a wide variety of Maths questions. My personal favourite was the construction of an Origami dodecahedron and an unusual-looking cube. We used twelve pieces of A6 paper and some sellotape. They were made to mathematical perfection and we scored full marks for them. Another favourite of mine were the logic questions they made our entire team think. One round was on combinations of hats three people could wear while complying with two rather basic rules. However basic the rules the questions did get more complicated but we did a team solve them successfully eventually.

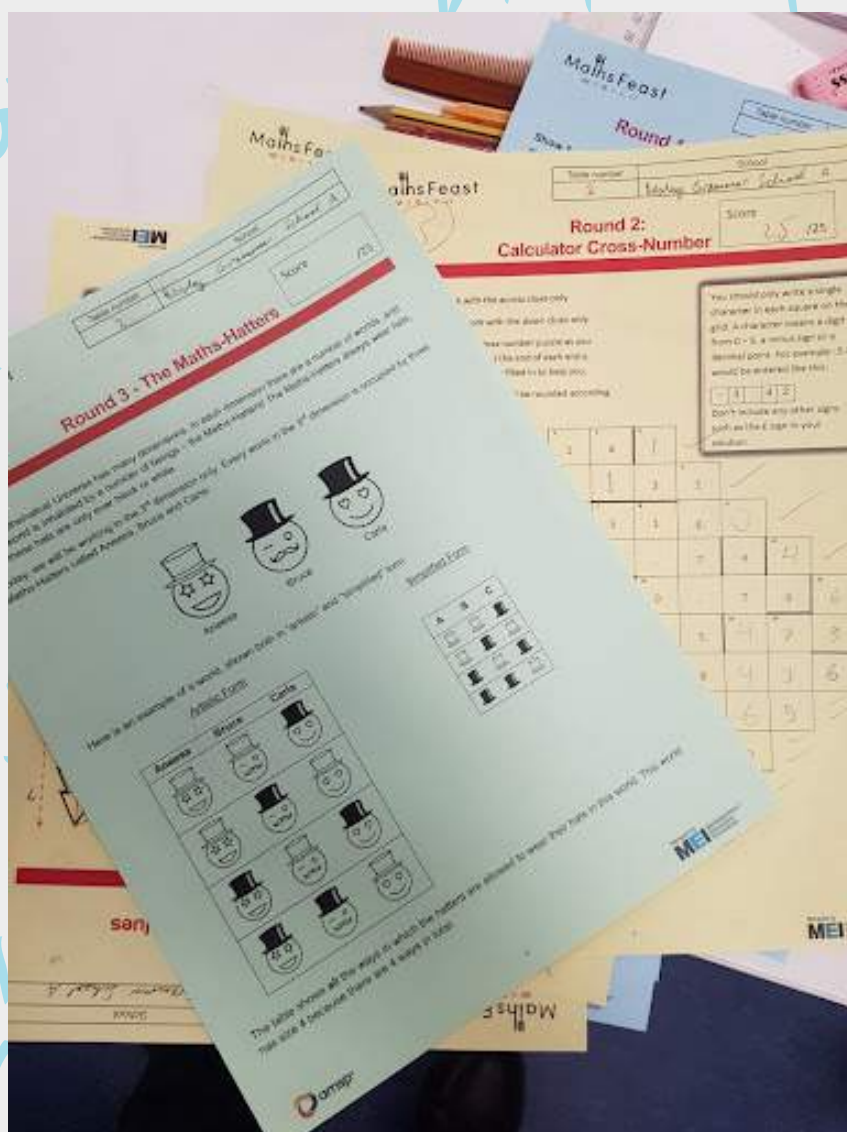
Personally, I was delighted by the fact that we won, which made the trip very worthwhile and I would certainly recommend this to the next year 10s. I am very thankful for Mr Male and the sixth former Malin for taking the time to organise and conduct this trip.

- Urav Sirohi 10PDH

It was heartening to see the students' enthusiastic attitude to mathematics, and great to see their mathematical skills nurtured as they solved the challenges. They certainly showcased their exceptional mathematical prowess in their collaborative efforts to tackle some quite complicated tasks. Congratulations to the young mathmos* for their superb victory.

- Malin Karasimov 13KSK

* "mathmo" is an affectionate slang term used to describe a talented young mathematician.



Congrats!

BGS Maths Show 2024

Our year 9s had the golden opportunity to experience an enlightening Maths Masterclass by guest speaker Michael Fletcher on Thursday 14th March 2024, in conjunction with International Pi Day! Michael captivated minds with real-world applications of probability and game theory, using nostalgic game-shows and humour. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Parents' Association for their invaluable contribution towards nurturing our students' academic growth and fostering a love for learning.

From Miss Goh



"In honour of Pi day, my peers and I had the opportunity to hear from Michael Fletcher, who gave us a great maths masterclass! The show was captivating and his ability to combine entertainment with mathematical ideas made the show enjoyable for everyone. Mr Fletcher's passion for maths was obvious in everything from interactive presentations to innovative riddles. My favourite part was definitely when my friend Samit and I went to the front to play a game inspired by the game show "Play Your Cards Right", where we worked together to work out whether a card was going to be higher or lower than the previous one, using probability, and we eventually won, with the help of our classmates. Overall, it was a great experience that we are all thankful for.

From Yasmin Mofakham 9MPM



In our recent maths masterclass with Michael Fletcher, we had the opportunity to explore the fascinating world of game theory! Michael used games reminiscent of those seen on TV, such as 'Higher or Lower', to illustrate various experiments and scenarios. A highlight was when he asked us to think about the probability of an 8 in the game based on the previous cards — 'higher or lower'! We left the course with a deeper understanding of how maths can improve one's game playing skills. Michael's enthusiasm and teaching style left us energised and curious to explore the subject further.

From Cédric Mamodesen 9ERE

English Department

World Book Day 2024

Year 7
'500 word short story'
competition

Year 10
Jack Petchey Public
Speaking Competition



Year 7 and 8 in some brilliant costumes and with some great book/prop combos!

World Book Day 2024

Y12 English Prefects Anh Nguyen & Leandra Fadiga

For this year's annual World Book Day, the busiest day in the English Department's calendar, we went all out with events and activities galore!

As always, we had our most enthusiastic readers dress up as their favourite book characters. This event took place on Thursday 7th of March 2024 and provided a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the joy of reading.



**Year 12 English prefects and teachers join in on dressing up too!
Can you work out which character they are?**



Ultimate Reading Competition

At BGS, World Book Day is a big deal, and we try to find extraordinary ways to celebrate it; and it usually involves a lot of healthy (yet fierce) competition. One such competition being... The Ultimate Reading Challenge. Students were asked to share a photo of themselves reading in a weird and wonderful location, and the winner was bestowed upon them a £10 book voucher!

A lot of funny and interesting photos were submitted, and it was nice to see so many students take reading to the next level, however there can only be **one winner**, and the student we chose was. . .

DRAKE (Y7)
who chose to
read in a bush?!



The runners up are Sophia (Y7) in Mr Gilmore's office



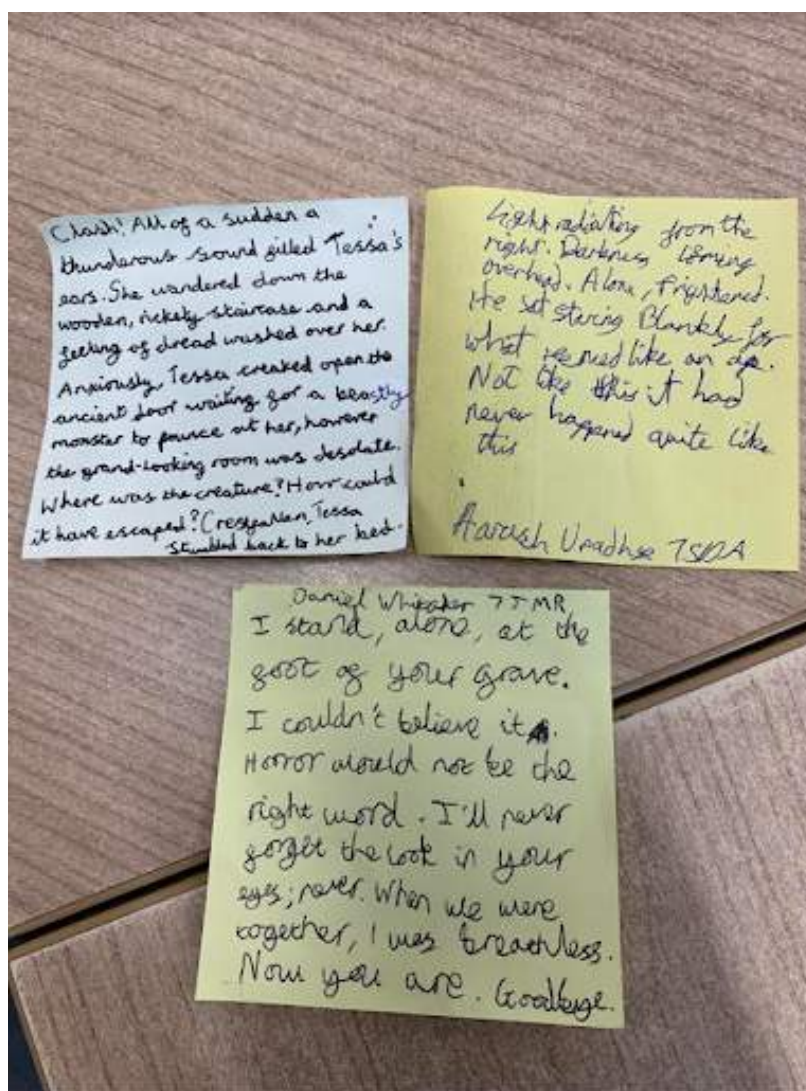
and Liv (Y8) under a chair

Post-it note Story Competition

Another one of our many competitions, students were required to write a short story on a post-it note and give their entries to Mrs Carey (the school librarian). While this may have seemed like an impossible task for many, a lot of students came through and there were a lot of creative and fascinating entries. After a lot of consideration and thought by a panel of Year 12 English Prefects. . .

... the winner was Aysu Batmaz

**and the runners up were
Daniel Whittaker and Aarush Upadhye (all Y7)**



The Write Up - Workshop with Ross Welford

Selected Y7 students were invited to participate in a Creative Writing Workshop with Ross Welford - author of The 1000 Year Old Boy. Here, these students learned directly from a published author various insights and knowledge of how best to express themselves through literature! Fun was had by all attendees, and it was a valuable experience for all!



Year 10 Jack Petchey Public Speaking Competition

This year, the year 10s were able to take part in the Jack Petchey Public Speaking competition. Those who signed up were trained in writing speeches then performed these to their fellow peers.

I was lucky enough to be one of the Judges and hear all of the Inspirational, creative speeches that were written. It was genuinely a hard decision to make as each speech made such valid points and were all well spoken and calculated in their speeches.

The results were:

1st place: Louis Luckman (pictured last on the right)

2nd place: Omolade Paul-Taiwo (next to Louis)

3rd: Hattie Pigott-Deayer (fourth from the left)

The judges were: Mr Husbands, Chizara and Astrid (English Prefects)

MC: Ms Adeaga

'It was amazing seeing what the year 10s could come up with in terms of their speeches and the creativity embedded into each of their unique speeches. It was an honour to be able to judge them on their desired topics and interesting to see how each speech was inspired by their own personal experiences.'

Astrid - Year 12 English Prefect

Congratulations to all who participated as you all did so well!!



Louis went on to represent BGS in the regional finals, held at Chis & Sid on Monday 18th March. He thoroughly impressed once again with his powerful, personal speech, and was unlucky not to place in the judges' final decision. The competition by that stage was incredibly tough, however, and he deserves our congratulations once again to have made it that far and to represent our school with such intelligence, poise and dignity.

Chizara - Year 12 English Prefect

Year 7 '500 word short story' competition

The annual Year 7 '500 word short story' competition produced some fantastic writing yet again. Every student enters, with winners from the six forms put forward for a panel of Year 12 English Prefects to judge. They thoroughly enjoyed doing so, commenting on the high quality of all 6 finalists. There could only be one runner-up and overall winner though, so congratulations to Isla Selby in 7JR (runner-up) and Yuna Cheung in 7JR (winner) for their inventive, ambitious and chilling tales!

They are both included here for your enjoyment. Well done Isla and Yuna!

Eventide

Ensnared in a nightmarish web of threads woven from human fear and dark matter. I, a mere Aetoi 623 for as long as this lasts and has lasted, found myself trapped inside the cold confines of the Eventide! *Wow - what an opening!*

It started as a whisper, a promise, an invitation to the unknown. Told we would unlock the secrets of space, but instead lured into the dark matter chamber of the Eventide. As the days unfolded, reality ^{seem to} warp and the ship became a distorted arena, a nightmare, a hallucination, a manifestation of fear.

Walking through a phantasmagoria of horror, malevolent dancing shadows whispered secrets of our biggest anxieties; it pulled us down into the depths of madness, taking us deeper down with each step. The ship, once a vessel of exploration, ^{corner of darkness, where breath} became a nightmarish carnival, ^{with} each step laden with dread.

The H.A. warnings were the ship's first tremors, sending cryptic signals warning us of the impending cataclysm. The rift torn in the fabric of spacetime unleashed an ancient force - preying on collective vulnerability. United by the torment of our nightmares, ^{granted} we found ourselves adrift in a maze of distorted perception.

In the navigation room, previously a room of endless exploration, Lieutenant relived his worst nightmares in an endless loop. The walls bled images mirroring the depth of his fears and time became a cruel puppeteer, manipulating his descent into madness like nothing more than a piece of clay to his hand.



For Commander, the control room transformed into a chamber of grotesque instruments. The ship's navigation mocked the feeble attempts of control and the stars outside morphed into the monstrous faces of us, subjects of failed experiments, ^{Commander's} leering at the helpless struggle of the

Our collective terror finally materialised at cargo bay, an abomination of dark and despair. Their faces contort with suffering, a horrific amalgamation of our deepest fears, that the malevolent force feeds on, growing stronger with each tremor of our terrified heart.

In attempts to confront the cosmic horror, a spark of resilience ignites between us from isolation. Facing the embodiment of our collective nightmares forged an unexpected unity. The monstrous entity, ^{weakened} by the defiance of its subjects, refusing to succumb to the tendrils of fear.

Reality ripples, finding ourselves back in the Eventide, the dark chamber safely sealed. The ship, scarred by the ordeal, floats in the silent abyss of space, carrying indelible marks of cosmic horror, unleashed by ambition. It drifts onwards, marked by a cautionary tale of those unwillingly becoming pawns in the pursuit of forbidden knowledge.

CUT!

by Yuna Cheung, 7JR

Congrats!

I woke up to the smell of burning. You can't trust Millie to do anything; she can't even cook bacon! It was 8am so I dragged myself out of my sleeping bag and ~~out~~ into the ice-cold morning breeze. The pink and orange ~~sky~~ sky illuminated the campsite. The grass was damp from the recent storm and birds chirped as they soared the sky.

"Good morning!" Millie exclaimed.

"Morning," Amy replied in her grumpy morning voice. Taking the hint that she didn't want to talk, Millie and I continued our attempt to fix the disastrous breakfast.

"Good morning guys," Jenny was finally awake. "I've lost my phone! You wouldn't mind helping me find it, would you?"

After what felt like hours of searching, we gave up. Something felt odd. Why had it gone missing? Had we been robbed? Were more things going to disappear?

I'd never liked the idea of camping. Why would you choose to stay in a tent in the cold when you can just stay home.

"Millie," Jenny said. "Can I borrow your phone for a minute?"

"Of course," she replied. "I'll show you where it is."

So they had left and me and Amy were left alone. She was never really my friend; always hiding in Jenny's shadow.

by Isla Shelby, 7NMG

She's just a bit odd.

Millie came back a couple of minutes later. She finally broke the silence.

"Jenny went to find a pay phone." Before anyone could reply, my phone began to ring.

"Hello?"

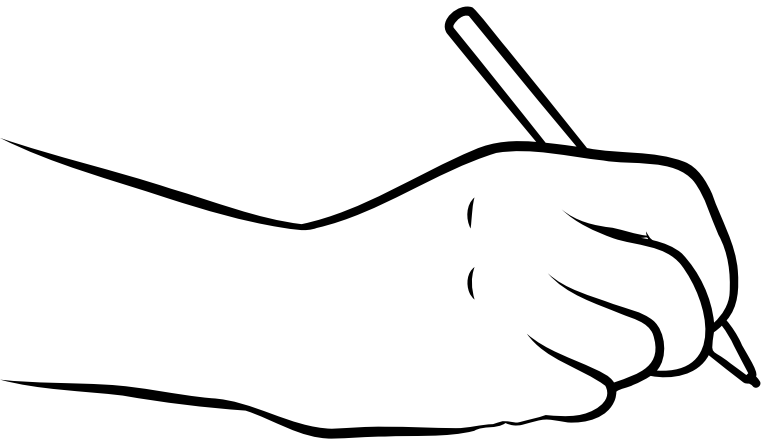
"Don't trust Millie! She's trying to set the campsite on fire! She told me in her tent, she said she could trust me. DON'T TRUST MILLIE!" said a firm voice. I knew it was Jenny pulling a prank.

"Who was it?" Millie asked.

"Just a prank caller," I replied.

Jenny came back after a while, she didn't speak at all; she just laughed. That night, I went to bed feeling awfully cold and sick to my stomach. What if it wasn't a joke?

The next morning I woke up to the smell of burning, but it wasn't bacon.





P.E. *news*

SPRING TERM 2024

Ski Trip to Canada!!

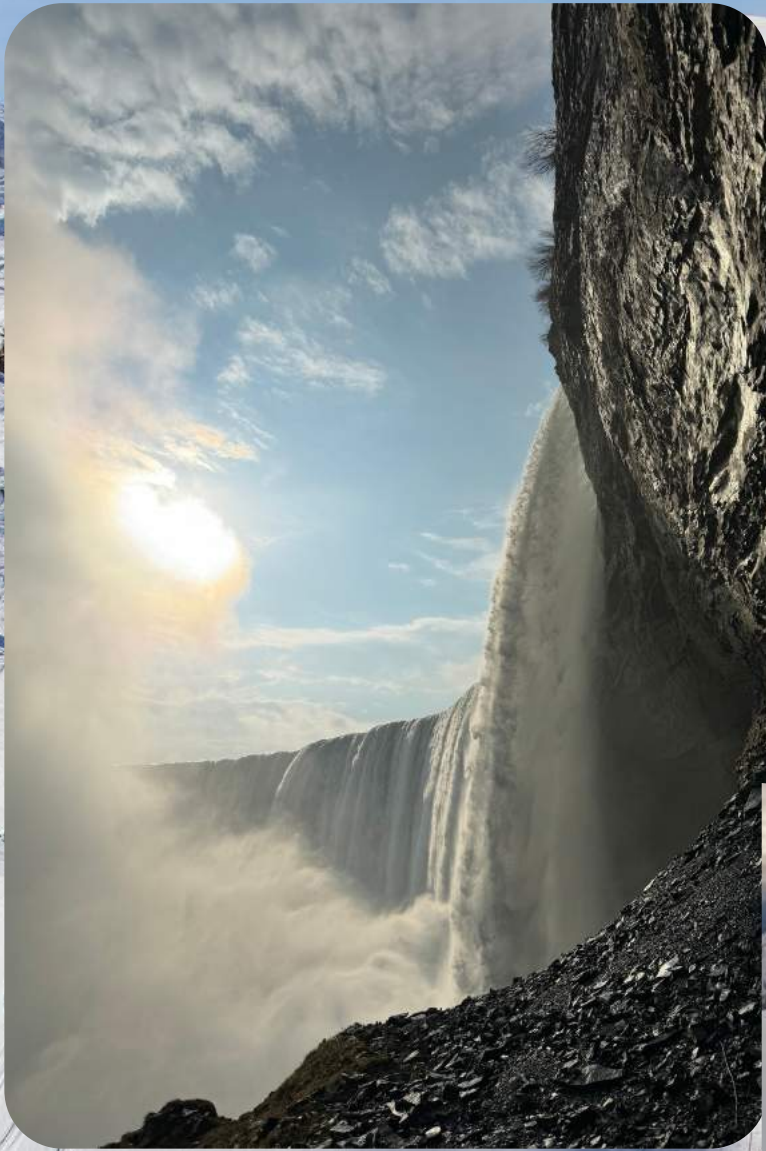
The skiing trip was one of the best experiences of my life. The first thing we did was go to Niagara falls which was very cool to see. Then we went to the shopping outlet which had all the designer shops. Once we got to Alberta we got ready to go onto the slopes. As I had never been skiing before, I struggled to understand the basics of skiing. Once I understood the basics I was ready to go onto the slopes on the second day. Skiing on the slopes was an unbelievable experience and something I would live to do again. When we were at the hotel we got to do some fun activities as well. We were able to relax in the pool and hot tub. We had a quiz night one night which was very fun. We also got to explore an ice canyon and on our last night we got to go and watch an ice hockey game. We also had prizes at the end of the week and I won the most improved skier. We also had Jerry of the day where if you did something funny it would be silly you had to wear a helmet cover the next day. I won it on the last day and got it for my fall up the slopes.

Alfie Wall 12AG



I had a great time on the ski trip and it was an amazing experience. It was nice interacting with people I had never spoken to before and I made lots of new friends. The first place we went was Niagara Falls in Toronto which was great to see in person, and we also went to a shopping outlet. After stopping off in Toronto we went to Alberta where we were so tired from all the travelling but woke up early and got straight on the slopes. The Canadian Rockies were amazing and the instructors took us through many different routes (I even got to do a black diamond). Even though the slopes were great, being in the town was lots of fun too. Exploring the town and going to a local ice hockey match on the last night. We also got to see an ice canyon during one of the nights and a quiz where everyone got involved. At the end of the trip prizes were awarded and I won one and got a pack of Hershey's.

Neve Morgan, 12DJG



1st XI Boys Football - Kent League Champions!

Bexley Grammar School 1st XI were confirmed as Champions of the league after beating Beths 3-2 on Wednesday 21st February. Thanks to an epic 2-1 win away at Gravesend in January with only 10 men (goals from Kyran Forbes and Liam Hutchings, brilliantly assisted by Riley Woods, BGS had their title chances in their own hands when they travelled to 2nd place Beths. Anything less than 3 points would have meant their bitter rivals walked away with the League instead.



1st XI League Winners 2024

Having arrived at Beths, there was drama over the kick off, as the pitches were playable, but it seemed that the opposition was nowhere to be seen. Thankfully, they turned up, slightly late, and the game was on. Beths started strongly and took an early lead, before Obi Igwe curled in a beauty with his left foot (the least he could do after missing a previous game!), before he then set up Riley Boyle to put BGS 2-1 up in a dominant first half display, the defence dealing with the Beths attacks, Dexter Gilchrist and Liam Hutchings putting in crunching tackles, Leo Ridge rampaging down the right hand side and Miko leading the line like an old fashioned number 9. Chances came and went, but as the second half started, former BGS student Arinze led Beths revival as they equalised with just over 20 minutes to go and the title was slipping away from our hands. However, a brilliant interception high up from Riley Woods saw him with a chance to cross for Mason McKenna to scoop the ball home for a well-deserved winner with just under 10 minutes to go. Obi hit the post late on, but the boys comfortably held on, thanks in part to Aidan Wicks' safe hands and game management, to secure BGS' first ever 1st XI league title. A brilliant performance, expertly led by captain Oli Knight. Mal Turner was a standout player, causing havoc for the Beths defence with his clever positioning helping to create space for the forwards, but everyone in the squad played their part.

It's been a pleasure to have coached the Year 13s since they were in Year 7. They've been a fantastic bunch of people and I've enjoyed every high and low with them over the years. We've had a number of cup finals (fewer than we should have due to covid), but this victory is no more than they deserve for their hard work, dedication and attitude over the years. A credit to all of the squad, who have contributed to this success throughout the school year!

The following players have made appearances this year: Aidan Wicks (GK), Oli Knight (C), Liam Hutchings, Mason McKenna, Leo Ridge, Dillon Walton, Riley Woods, Tayo Odumusi, Dexter Gilchrist, Jed Baulch, Hayden Ouattara, Mal Turner, Riley Boyle, Obi Igwe, Miko Bielski, Kyran Forbes, Jack Ristow, Sam Hood (GK), George Bell, Loic Ndoutoumou, JJ Adeduntun



Yr 11 N. Kent Cup Final 2022

Yr 7 2018

I cannot believe it's over already. It seems as if just a couple of days ago I was turning up as a nervous year 7 to the school football team trials. What a journey we have all come on as a team. I've had a great time playing for the school football team and the players and we would all like to thank Mr Martin for the effort he has put in to make this incredible journey happen for us. From training before school to away matches in Canterbury Mr Martin has put up with us for 7 years and we cannot thank him enough. This league win in our last game was a fantastic way to sign off. We played some of the best football we have ever played with lots of rotations, clever movement and intricate passes all over the pitch. Now the only thing left we have to win is the sixth form vs teachers match later on this year, I think we have it in the bag. I've heard rumours round the school saying that we were the Bexley Grammar golden era!

Well done to all the boys who have played this year and yet again thank you to Mr Martin!

Oli Knight



International Women's Day 2024 campaign theme - 'Inspire Inclusion'

The campaign theme for International Women's Day 2024 is Inspire Inclusion. When we inspire others to understand and value women's inclusion, we forge a better world. And when women themselves are inspired to be included, there's a sense of belonging, relevance, and empowerment. Collectively, let's forge a more inclusive world for women. Our Year 10&11 girls were lucky to experience a day incorporating a day of football along with lectures and workshops led by role models. The event was aimed at raising awareness around opportunities and career pathways for females in the sports industry and to coincide with International Women's Day. The aim was to inspire and empower young females to achieve their potential and broaden their horizons.



A couple of articles to read further about the mission.

[Women in Sport](#)

[Athletics and Inspiring Women](#)

Year 9&10 Girls Bexley Netball Tournament

BGS hosted a great afternoon of netball at the Year 9&10 Netball tournament in March. Our Year 9 team had a fantastic tournament beating all opponents other than a strong CSGS team. Our Year 10 B team showed great determination and improvement through the afternoon, securing a very impressive 3rd place. Our A team did not lose a game, beating many teams with convincing score lines, however after a draw with CSGS, we came joint 1st, gaining second place overall, only being pipped on goal difference.

All students played fantastically, showing all of the skills we have worked on at training.



Year 7 Girls Netball tournament

Not one, not two, but three Year 7 teams entered into the borough netball tournament against 13 teams hosted at our home ground. A testament of their dedication to training this year. Freezing conditions but smiles all round with our BGS 1 team achieving a respectable 4th place. Our sports prefects did a fantastic job with team management and officiating.



Year 8 Girls Netball tournament

Next up were the Year 8s heading to Chis and Sid in what can only be described as artic conditions. They were a pleasure to take; polite, hardworking and great ambassadors for BGS. Great result placing 3rd and 5th.



‘It’s a wrap for the netball 2023-2024 season’ from Mrs Kemp and Mrs Mallin. As always, keen and eager for every training session despite the weather. Now to look ahead at the sunny months for our Cricket, Rounders, Athletics and Tennis season. Co-curricular timetable will be out shortly.

KS3/KS4 Table Tennis Club

Table Tennis Club continues to be a popular way to start a Thursday for many pupils at BGS. Games have been competitive at times but the general feel has been one of great fun. Well done to all those who have attended regularly and have seen an improvement in their matchplay. We pause this club now until the next academic year so keep up the practice where you can outside of school!



KS3 Badminton club

A huge thank you and well done to everyone who has attended Badminton club this year. Everyone has shown real improvement in their skills! See you back on the court in September for more Badminton fun!



Y7 Boys Football

The Year 7 season was a great one for building the foundations for future success. That was proved by our most recent entry at the year 7 Goals Tournament. 12 players were selected to participate and split into 2 teams. Both teams played fixtures against other schools including Beths, Bexleyheath Academy and St Columba's. Unfortunately the tournament had to be cancelled towards the end due to the weather, but the BGS boys really had some brilliant results and were on course to challenge for 1st spot. Training continues to be well attended with over 30 pupils at times all pushing for a place in the squad for next year. We transfer from 9 a-side to 11 a-side in year 8. The fact that so many pupils have represented the school at some point this season will really be beneficial next season! For now, we turn our attention to cricket, tennis and athletics. I hope there is a similar level of engagement in these activities!



Y9 Boys Kent Cup

All season, the boys have been working hard to keep their undefeated streak in the Kent Cup alive with some very impressive performances against difficult opposition. This all came to a head on Saturday when they played in the final against Harvey Grammar School at the Gallagher Stadium, home of Maidstone Utd. The boys had a quieter than normal warm up and the pre-game talk was about focusing on a quick start and not allowing the opposition to play.

The boys took to their task perfectly and created a few early chances but Harvey's goalkeeper kept the scores level. Against the run of play, Harvey Grammar managed to score a free kick to give them an early lead but it was short lived. Bexley picked themselves up and after a string of excellent play, Jesse pushed the ball past the goalkeeper to equalise.

We managed to get the ball in the net again before half-time but it was ruled offside. 1-1 at half time. The team talk was all about pushing on and converting our chances. We knew that we wanted to score early in order to take this game away from Harvey Grammar and we did with one of George's huge throws, capitalised on by Maks. 2-1 Bexley.



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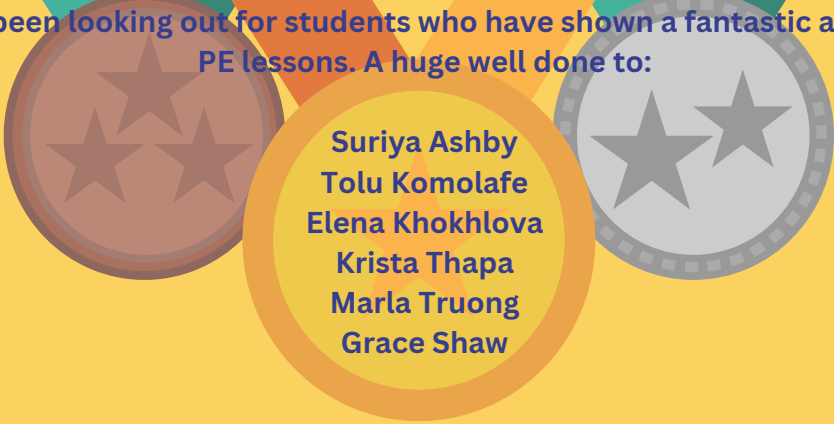
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In other football news, congratulations to the Year 8, 9 & 10 football teams on securing their places in the North Kent Cup Semi finals. Good luck to all the teams with whoever they face in the next round.

Achievements:

PE Lessons:

Well done to all students this half term for an excellent term of work in your PE lessons. PE teachers have been looking out for students who have shown a fantastic approach to their PE lessons. A huge well done to:



Suriya Ashby
Tolu Komolafe
Elena Khokhlova
Krista Thapa
Marla Truong
Grace Shaw

Netball Stars of the Term:

Year 7

Excellent effort within netball this term - dedicated and committed to training: Latika, Faye, Caitlin, Katie M, Lina, Rebecca S, Kendra.

Year 8

These girls have attended training and fixtures and shown true sportsmanship and excellent determination: Shreya P, Shraya, Alice, Isabella and Marla.

Year 9

Most improved: Shraya has been dedicated to training this term and has worked hard to be selected for the squad in games against other schools!

Yi Xin has been super in defence, she has shown strength in defence!

Performance: Lisa has shown great skill this term, dominating the centre court and bringing the ball down court with speed and power!

A huge well done to Poppy for her very impressive shooting accuracy in recent games!

Year 10

Most improved: Ayaka is one of our most versatile players, she is a master of the shooting circle but can also play in most centre court positions, this term she has been fantastic, really demonstrating her Netball skills!

Anagha has been dedicated to training this term and her performance in centre court has improved massively. Her play has been patient and steady in moving the ball through court!

Performance: Alice, even after injury, Alice has returned to training and games more determined than ever. She has played in a variety of positions and showed great defensive skills.

Isabella W has moved positions from defence to attack over the past term. In attack she has shown patience, speed and skill, she has hugely strengthened our front court!

Mrs Howard and Ms Leffen would like to say a huge thank you and well done to all Year 9&10 students who have come along to Netball this year- we have hugely enjoyed working with you and hope to see you all back at netball in September! We are also excited to celebrate the end of the Netball season at our trip to watch some super league netball in April!



NEWS FROM OUR SPORTS PREFECTS:

2024 Sporting Events so far... by Sophie Pooley

3rd January 2024: PDC World Darts Championship final

Luke Humphries, the current World Champion, beat 16-year-old media sensation Luke Littler 7-4. Many fans were rooting for Littler to become the youngest contestant to win the competition, and whilst he didn't win this time, he is definitely one to watch out for in the future.

2nd February- 16th March: Men's Guinness Six Nations Rugby Union

This much anticipated competition has seen some surprising and history making results this year! A thrilling Italy and France game ended in a 13-13 draw much to the surprise of many fans, who expected France to dominate the game. Scotland won the Calcutta cup for the 4th year running after beating England 30-21.

11th February: NFL Super Bowl

One of the biggest sporting events in the US is the Super Bowl. More than 200 million people tuned in to watch the Kansas City Chiefs play the San Francisco 49ers. After an exciting game, (and a half time performance from Usher!) the Kansas City Chiefs came away with a 25-22 win.

1st-3rd March: World Athletics Indoor Championships Glasgow

More than 650 competitors from more than 130 countries competed for medals in 26 athletics disciplines – 13 for women, 13 for men. The events included: pentathlons, pole vaults, shot put and many more!

23rd March- 27th April: Women's Rugby Union Six Nations Championship

This year marks the 23rd series of the Women's Six Nations Championship. Each year this competition inspires new generations and the immense support and promotion for women's rugby is evident!

Keep your eyes peeled for all of the exciting events taking place throughout the rest of the year :)



Music Department

Jazz and Curry Evening

On Saturday 27 January, students from the jazz groups at Bexley Grammar School put on our first Jazz and Curry evening! We had a variety of performances from our jazz groups, led superbly by Mr Laing, and with local catering from one of our curry houses in Bexleyheath we had a wonderful evening. Solos came from almost everyone, demonstrating the level of musicianship we have in our groups here at BGS, and we were also delighted to welcome back many ex-students.



KS4 Showcase

On Monday 29 January there was a KS4 showcase featuring students from Y10 and 11. There was a variety of solo and ensemble items from many of our students, and it was a real privilege to listen to some emerging talent from across KS4. Stand out performance was from Daniel Allen, Y11, with his teacher Mr Cooper, performing a piano duet of Pirates of the Caribbean. They even had to swap seats in the middle of the performance! We were also delighted to welcome to the concert some of our non-GCSE students, performing as part of the bands with some of our GCSE students. An entertaining evening was had by all. Well done KS4, and good luck to Y11 in your upcoming exams!



KS5 Showcase

On Wednesday 22nd February there was a KS5 showcase which allowed the Year 12's taking Music at the IB to show off their skills for the first time as they started to fill up their performing portfolio. On top of this we had the Year 13's performing their final pieces of performance before they were all sent off. That being said, both the Year 12's and Year 13's gave beautiful renditions of their pieces as many different genres were explored and through many different instruments.



Legally Blonde rehearsals

So far the rehearsals for the Musical this summer - Legally Blonde - have been fantastic. It's been so much fun learning all the new songs and choreography for the show all while wearing our fabulous bright pink t-shirts. Everyone always has their own unique ideas to add which is what makes the musicals so special. I feel like the cast are like a family as I have grown up with many of the members all while still getting to meet people that are new. I'm so excited for people to see what we have in store for this show and I hope you are too!!!

Guys and Dolls

On Thursday 29th February, the Legally Blonde cast and pit band got very lucky and were allowed to go on a fabulous evening trip to see Guys and Dolls at the Bridge Theatre next to Tower Bridge. It was an electrifying performance - we had standing tickets which meant we interacted with the actors and were in and amongst the throes of the whole show. Whether it was a tragic scene or a thrilling, exciting one, it was so much more emotional standing beside the actors as it happened.



It was a beautiful experience of flashing colour, lights, music and drama and I couldn't describe the feeling of being there, enthralled in the moment, better if I tried. The end of the show was spectacular; the raised stage lowered down to floor level and the actors formed a dance circle with us on the floor and we got to dance with them which was amazing. The whole show was wonderful - I'd recommend it to anyone!

Spring Concert - 'BGS in Technicolour'

On Monday 18th March the Music department hosted their annual Spring Concert this time being named 'BGS in Technicolour'. We had so many different ensembles playing starring people from so many different years. For me the highlight of the night was seeing so many different age groups of people from St Stevens' Primary School students joining in with KS3 Orchestra which was led by one of our own Year 12's to three different choirs and even the Jazz Groups.



I was really inspired by the professionalism of everyone on stage and how everyone played to their best and most of all really enjoyed playing for their friends and families. Be sure to look out for the Spring Concert next year since I can already tell you that it will be wonderful as new students of BGS will be showing off their Musical Talent. Sadly, this was the last BGS Concert for many of the Year 13s however I'm sure even if they were crying afterwards they were happy with all the work they have put in over the years and I'm sure that they won't forget all of the memories they made in BGS.

"Wicked" Trip!



On Wednesday 13th March, we went to Apollo Victoria theatre to see the matinee performance of the musical Wicked. The afternoon was great! The show was amazing, all the actors, costumes and songs were brilliant and it was great to listen to the whole of the soundtrack live instead of on YouTube or Spotify. Doing Music GCSE, it was even more enjoyable being able to listen to our set work 'Defying Gravity' live and get a feel of what the song is like when performing on stage. It was a great experience seeing Wicked live last week and I definitely encourage anyone to see it who hasn't already! Thank you to the Music Department for organising this!

Happy 
EASTER

*Eid
Mubarak*

