

Wallingford School Newsletter

Spring Edition - March 2024



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Bad Wurzach, German Exchange, Feb 2024

The end of the Spring term always feels different to the ends of the “long terms” at Christmas and in the Summer. There just isn’t the same sense of winding down – it is as if everything is powering along and then suddenly stops for the Easter break and this year is no different. We are a busy school with a huge amount going on!

I have to say “well done” to all members of the school community for all of their efforts over the past three months. There have been mock and practice examinations for our older year groups – and even some real exams – and a lot of great work from our younger ones. There have been fixtures and practices, a multitude of trips and visits and the undoubted highlight of our wonderful whole school production of *The Addams Family*. The House system has rolled on with a host of activities to take part in and assemblies this week have provided the opportunity to update the scores and standings at this point of the year. Everyone has played their part in the life of our school and we celebrate this.



As ever, this newsletter is just a snapshot of the life of Wallingford School but it feels like a pretty good one – please do enjoy reading it.

- Mr J Marston, Headteacher

The Addams Family



We were thrilled to present to audiences the Wallingford School's 2024 production of *The Addams Family* Musical. A month on from closing night, we are still delighted by the success of the show!

This choice of annual musical felt particularly appropriate considering the recent resurgence in 'Addams Family' popularity amongst younger generations, largely due to the 2022 Netflix series *Wednesday*, meaning the production sparked excitement for audience and cast of all ages.

The success of the performance was largely down to our collective enthusiasm and drive to produce something special. Students got involved in a multitude of ways from on stage, to backstage and design. Before rehearsals had even started, we were discussing set design, costumes, and choreography and sixth formers were given leading parts or leadership roles including choreographers and stage manager.

Our dedication to the production this year was fantastic but equally as important was our dedication to supporting each other. The entire cast and crew bonded and created a shared responsibility to look after one another, which was particularly important for us sixth formers who acted as role models to younger students. It was extremely special for those of us who have been in productions as younger students, who looked up to older students in the same way, to be on the other side of this relationship. For a successful performance, trust is vital and we felt our collective friendship created a wonderful sense of unity that translated on stage.

Since closing night we have been showered with overwhelmingly positive feedback and kind compliments from audiences. We were honoured to hear audience members expressing the opinion that this was their favourite Wallingford School production yet – no pressure for next year!

- Beatrice Marshall, Year 13, who played Morticia Addams



Barcelona!

It was the first time that we met...



Our Sixth Form trip to Barcelona was an unforgettable adventure from start to finish. Despite the early 2am wake-up call, the excitement was palpable as we embarked on our journey from Wallingford to Gatwick Airport. Flying to Barcelona felt like a dream come true, especially with the sun shining brightly upon our arrival. Once we reached the city, we hopped onto a coach and made our way to the hostel. With swinging chairs, a games room, and even a photo booth, it was the perfect place to kick off our exploration of this vibrant city.

During our time in Barcelona, we immersed ourselves in the rich culture and stunning architecture the city had to offer. Visiting Gaudi's masterpieces, Casa Milà (La Pedrera) and Casa Batlló, left us in awe of their organic and enchanting designs. The

following day, we delved into the world of art at the Dali and Picasso galleries, marvelling at the peculiar yet captivating works on display. From exploring Gaudi's park to admiring the grandeur of La Sagrada Familia to relaxing on the beach, every moment was filled with wonder and amazement. Ms Mummery even assigned each of us a "Gomad" (street artist) to whom we had to write a poem for, take a photo with, and more. Everyone enthusiastically got stuck into the task, and it turned out to be incredibly enjoyable! Not only were the sights we explored enthralling, but the opportunity to get to know each other better, in my opinion, added an extra layer of enjoyment to the trip. And let's not forget about the delicious food... Whether it was indulging in a fancy Spanish McDonald's or savouring local cuisine at various restaurants, our taste buds were treated to a delightful culinary experience! Overall, our trip to Barcelona was nothing short of phenomenal, and I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone seeking adventure and inspiration in a truly unique city.

- Bethan Toward, Year 12





Pat Granados Biodiversity

Our Biodiversity Garden Development Team worked with the Chiltern Rangers and Wild about Wallingford in the Pat Granados Biodiversity Garden in early March. They planted trees to make scrub areas, which will become great bird habitats, raked the meadow to increase the diversity of native wild flowers to support pollinators and insects, and litter picked the site. They even found a newt in our new pond and made the front page of The Wallingford Herald!





University Garden

Day one: Florence, Riley, Caleb, Iris and Vlad had the main job of planting trees and making a comfortable habitat for animals. They also mowed the grass allowing wildflowers a chance to grow!

Day two: We finished up the work left from the previous project, and raked up the remaining grass left for the wildflowers to grow. We planted some new trees including Wych Elm, Oak, Field Maple and Hazel, making sure to put in protectors to stop them being damaged by small animals and people using strimmers.

We had some spare trees, which we planted in our courtyard garden. We planted a copse in the corner and shrubs to make a scrub habitat for birds and small creatures to shelter in. We also piled logs by the pond to attract newts, frogs and other pond life.

Florence Western - *"We really enjoyed planting trees and made exciting discoveries of worms and bugs, showing we really are helping out the nature of Wallingford by doing this."*

Riley Greathead - *"I really enjoyed planting a variety of different plants on the mound."*

Caleb Ng - *"I liked finding different insects like beetles and many more."*

Iris Western - *"I had fun planting. Overall it was an amazing experience and I'd do it again!"*

Vlad Poliansky - *"I had fun hanging out with people who had the same passion for gardening as me!"*

German Exchange



The week beginning 19th February, thirty-four GCSE and four A Level students took part in an exchange with Gymnasium Salvatorkolleg. Over to Alyssa and Emma:

We travelled to Wallingford's twin town of Bad Wurzach to meet with students from the Salvatorkolleg. Whilst there we spent time getting to know German culture and practising speaking the language. We spent a morning attending the partner school with our exchange partners and had an afternoon speaking to the Mayoress.



We also visited the Bodensee (Lake Constance), the Zeppelin Museum, the Thermalbad Aulendorf, the Allianz-Arena, Munich City Centre and Neuschwanstein Castle.



Our last day was spent with our host families, all doing different activities to enjoy the final day in Germany.

The trip was an amazing experience, meeting new people and learning about a new culture. The best part for me was the tour of the Allianz-Arena as I found it very interesting to go behind the scenes. I would really recommend this trip to anyone considering it as it is a great opportunity to further your language skills and experience a new place.

- Alyssa Reeves, Year 12



Over the course of this week, we took part in several fascinating and exciting activities, including tours of Bayer Munich's stadium (Allianz Arena) and Schloss Neuschwanstein, as well as visiting Lake Constance and the nearby Zeppelin Museum.

We spent a half-day in lessons with our exchange partners, where I found the structure of both lessons and timetables very different to the UK.

The time spent with the family was equally interesting due to our differences – my partner's family was much bigger than mine which led to a lot of chaotic fun on our trip to visit Ulm.



The exchange has taught me several things – I learned a lot about the differences between colloquial and spoken German, as well as the southern dialects. Just as importantly, the similarities and differences between British and German society, particularly in education and home-life.



I am glad to say that I took part in this exchange and would thoroughly recommend the visit to anyone considering taking part in future years!

- Emma Carr, Year 12

Chitty Chitty Bang



Wallingford School students: Lizzie (Year 11),
Nelson (Year 7) & Evie (Year 10)

The *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* cast consisted of over 20 adults and had 2 'teams' of children playing a very important role. Three of these are Wallingford School students, who have developed their acting and dancing skills tremendously during the process. The cast rehearsed for well over 6 months before the show was performed at the Corn Exchange, Wallingford from 13th-23rd March. We were very lucky to have Rob Alderton as the Musical Director and, as the owner of Chitty Hire, we had the real stage car and it really flew!

It has been brilliant to see this show come together in the last month and be involved with bringing it to life.

**- Miss A Walker, Teacher of DT &
Stage Manager at Corn Exchange Wallingford**

g Bang



Credits to: Sinodun Players, Crescendo & Chitty Hire

This 'truly scrumptious' performance of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* has been one of the best experiences of our lives. Although there were intense rehearsals, the cast has been amazing, along with the fabulous behind the scenes team and the great friends we made along the way.

We both enjoy shows like this, but this experience opened a new world for us with a whole new level of professionalism. We were so impressed by the high quality of the cast, and loved meeting people who share the same passion for theatre. We couldn't believe the amount of work that went into this show and it more than delivered a great experience. While the cast are phenomenal, we'd be amiss not to mention the amazing set which really tied the performance together.

We will cherish this experience and it will always have a place in our hearts. Lastly, we would love to thank the directors, Rob Alderton and Caroline Malnick, for letting us be a part of this show, along with everyone else who helped make *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* so exciting and extraordinary.

- **Lizzie Pannett, Year 11 & Evie Hill, Year 10**



As usual, PE has been abuzz with events and fixtures over the last two terms.

Fourth term brings about the return of Ninja Warrior! A hubbub of activity filled the sports hall on the lunchtime of the competition, with a multitude of challenges to test even the most well versed in parkour. Eleven finalists made it through the tricky heats but only one could be crowned Ninja Warrior Champion 2024. In the end, Henry (Y11) managed to clinch the coveted title from 2023's champion Alfie (Y11), who also reached the final. Well done to every student who got involved this year, whether competing for the trophy or cheering from the sidelines.



The netball league has officially begun with so many students keen to play and represent the school! A particular mention to the Years 7 and 10 teams, who have shown some incredible resilience and hard work over the last two terms. Both Year 7 teams have had some notable wins against some very tough teams and the Year 10 girls came second in their netball tournament, meaning they progress through to the next round; Miss Hedges was very impressed!



We have had both league and cup football fixtures this term. Most notably, Mr Choi's Year 9 boys team are speedily progressing through the knockout stages of their cup, with both a 9-3 win and a 6-3 win so far; let's go boys! The Year 7 girls have started fantastically too, with two wins on their first fixture against Cranford House, one of them ending 7-0! We are very proud to announce that our Year 9 girls are football county champions! They fought very hard to win the match - well done girls!



Our cross country lessons have been a huge success in the last two terms, despite the miserable weather. In one such lesson, Mr Lyons challenged some Year 7s to a 'cross country eliminator', where students had to beat their partner in half a lap around the Bullcroft to progress to the next round in the hope of winning a cookie card! A MASSIVE well done to the six students who won these, they worked extremely hard and the prizes were very well deserved.

As usual, we want to say a huge well done to all of our active leaders and students that stepped in, often last minute, to help us run primary school fixtures in their own time - we really appreciate your consistent dedication!

- Miss S Allen, PE Technician

French Exchange



From 26th January to 2nd February, I took part in a French exchange to Oxford's twin town, Grenoble. Three teachers and a group made up of Year 10s and 12s travelled by Eurostar, the Paris metro and the TGV, to meet with students and teachers from Wallingford's partner school in Grenoble, Lycée Les Eaux Claires.

We spent a day with our host families, getting to know them and the area, on the Sunday. On Monday, we visited the French resistance memorial museum up in the Vercors mountains and took a walk in special snow shoes.

Tuesday and Wednesday were spent exploring Grenoble and speaking to the mayor, with an ice-skating trip with all our exchange partners on Wednesday afternoon.

Thursday morning was spent in the Lycée attending lessons with our exchange partners, whilst in the afternoon we climbed the Bastille and played escape games at the very top.

We travelled home on Friday after a very successful week in France. It was an incredible experience, and I would 100% recommend it to anyone who is considering going - you will not regret it.

- Alyssa Reeves, Year 12





A Song of Ice & Land



GCSE and A Level Geography students from Wallingford School spent three days in Iceland over half term, and Ms D Walker, Teacher of Geography, kept a diary, posted daily on the school's Facebook page. Here it is altogether, with links to each day if you want to check out more photos of the breathtaking scenery!

Day One

First day completed.

Wonderful scenery on the Reykjanes Peninsula! Lots of ice, thankfully no fire - just a fascinating relict landscape of previous eruptions.

Visits to Gunnuhver Hot Springs, Nesveger Crater, Bridge Between the Continents and an evening walk into Reykjavik centre - including Hallgrímskirkja Church.

An action packed first day and nearly 25,000 steps walked!

[See more photos of Day 1 on Facebook](#)





Day Two

Another tremendous day.

Up and off early to make the most of the day. Visits to:

- 1) Pingvellir - the rift where the European and North American continents are being torn apart.
- 2) Geysir - all other geysers around the world are named for this Icelandic one
- 3) Gullfoss - an amazing double waterfall which has created an impressive gorge of recession. A fabulous sight of water and ice.
- 4) Secret Lagoon - a traditional Iceland hot springs. A really relaxing hour to rest weary legs after lots of hiking across ice and through snow.
- 5) Last stop of the day was Kerið crater. An extinct volcanic crater with a frozen lake.

'Only' 20,000 steps today!

[See more photos of Day 2 on Facebook](#)

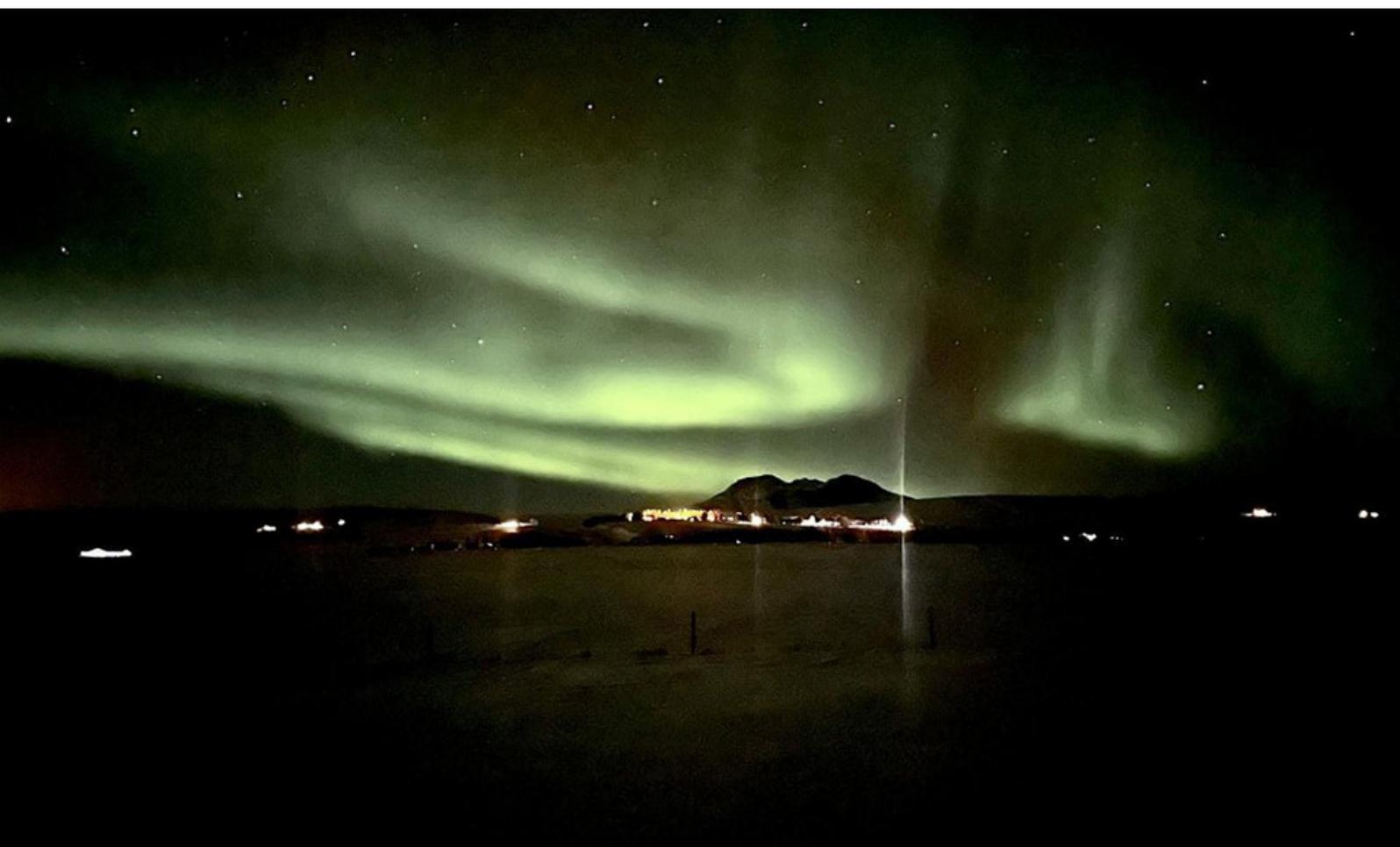


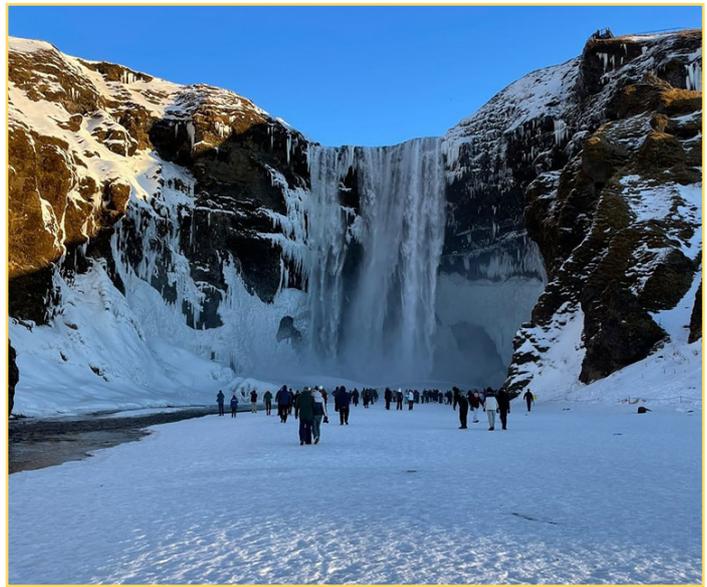


An addition...

6) We saw the Northern Lights. Yippee. What a treat. Absolutely wonderful. So mesmerising. A bucket list moment and a special memory.

[See more photos of the Northern Lights on Facebook](#)





Day Three

A day exploring the physical geography of the south coast of Iceland

The scenery has been spectacular. I'm afraid these photos don't do it justice because the scenery is just too vast, however they do give a sense of where we have been and what we have experienced.

1) The Hotel is right in front of Eyjafjallajökull - so a photo had to be taken.



2) First stop of the day - actually a stopping point to see Eyjafjallajökull and the farm that was most severely affected by the 2010 eruption.

3) Skogafoss - a stunning waterfall. Used in several movies including The Secret Life of Walter Mitty - absolutely incredible.

4) Sólheimajökull - we walked to the snout of the glacier. Another amazing view, and made us feel incredibly small. It was fantastic to put the size and scale of a glacier in perspective.

5) Reynisfjara Beach - a magnificent black sand beach with spectacular black basaltic columns (referred to in day one when we visited Hallgrímskirkja church in the centre of Reykjavik)

6) Seljalandsfoss - another beautiful waterfall (secretly my favourite). So sad to be our last stop on a wonderful adventure along the southern shore.

Thank you Iceland you have been amazing.

[See more photos of Day 3 on Facebook](#)

The Home of Art

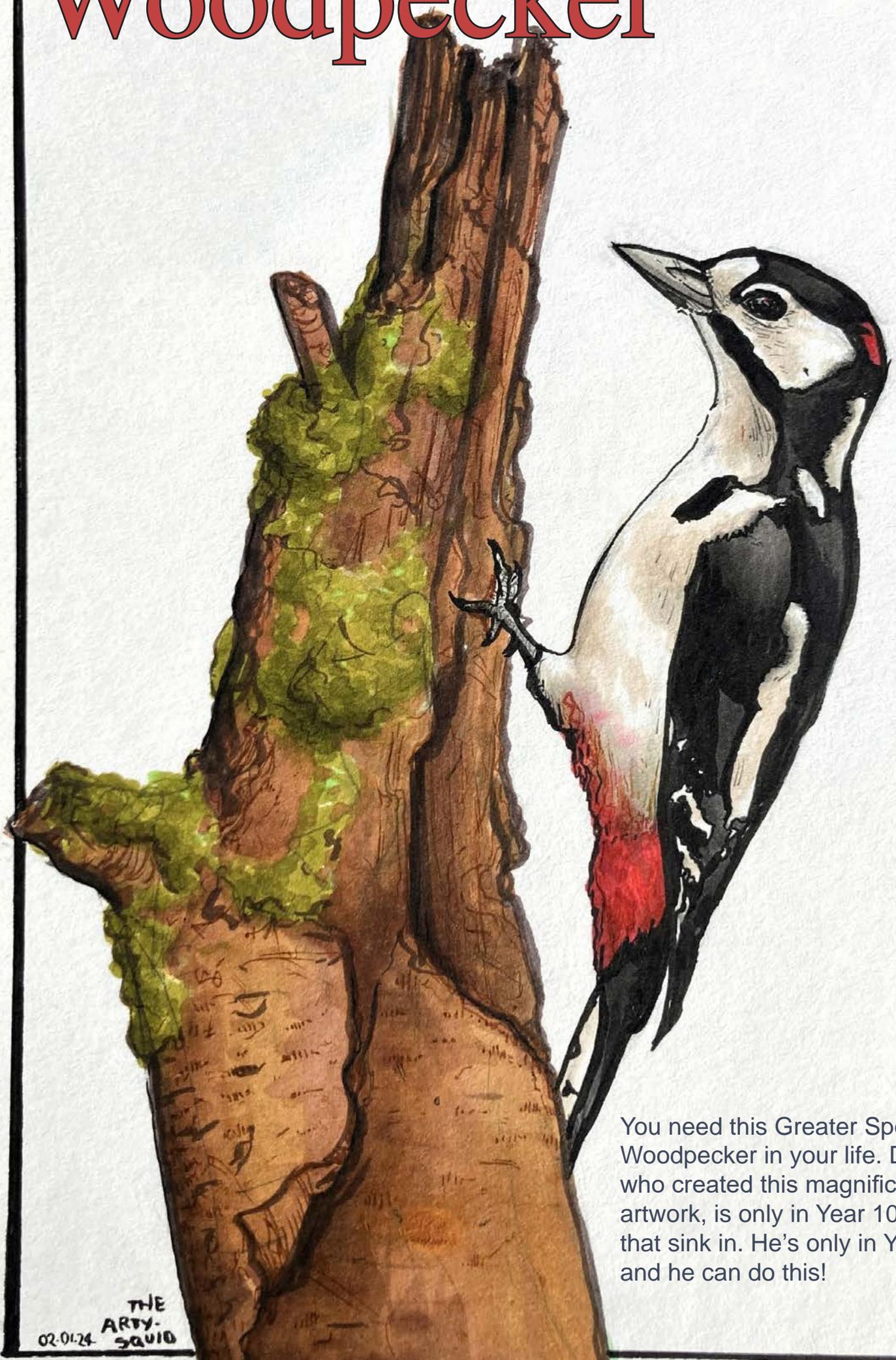


The home of Art – TATE MODERN! Lucky Year 10,11,12,13 artists and photographers visited the world's best gallery over two days. My word, we saw a lot of brilliant stuff! Warhol, Bacon, Picasso, Richter, Rego, Hockney, Liechtenstein, Huge (HUGE!) textiles, and Photography, are just the start of a long list of incredibly inspirational artworks. We are a lucky lot to live so close to this gallery. Thanks everyone for making this such a special and memorable two days of trips!

- Mr S Bowen, Head of Art



Woodpecker

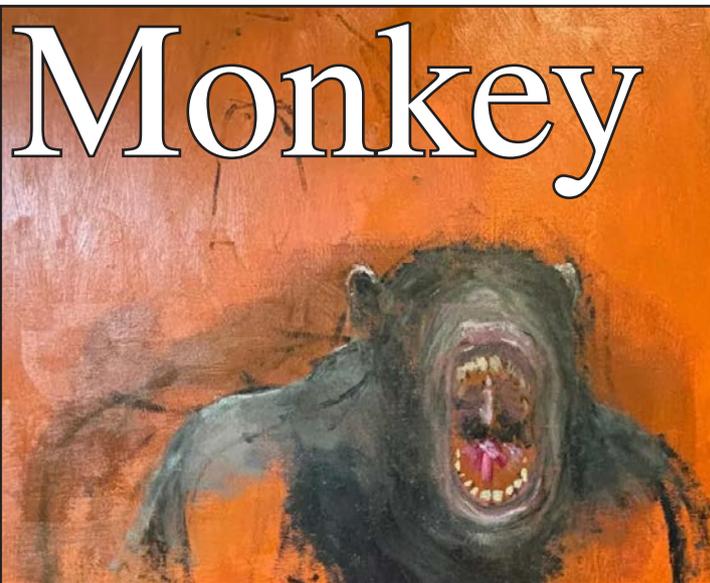


You need this Greater Spotted Woodpecker in your life. Daniel, who created this magnificent artwork, is only in Year 10. Let that sink in. He's only in Year 10 and he can do this!

THE
ARTY-
SQUID
02.01.24

Year 12 Portraits

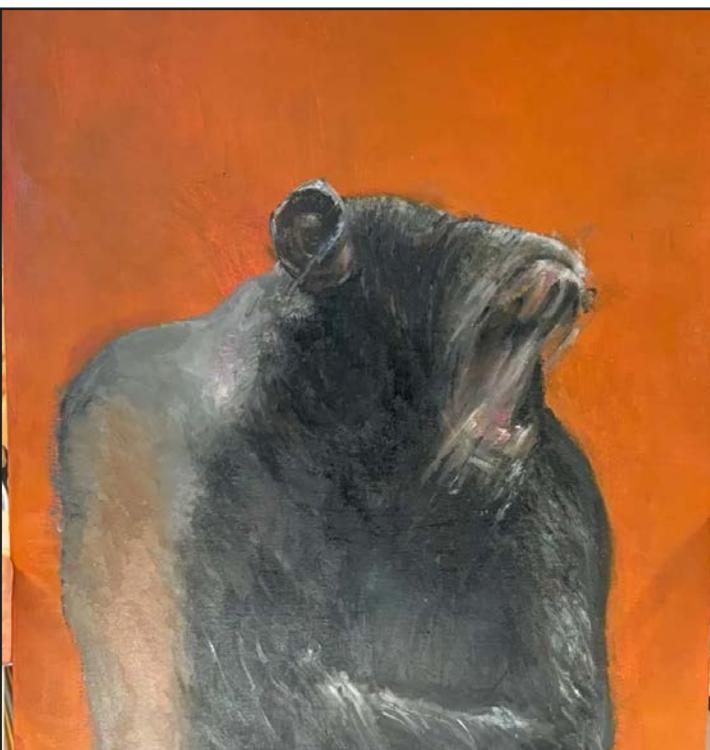
Here are four beautiful self-portraits by some of our talented Year 12 artists. Inspired by the work of artist Chuck Close, these A1 (i.e. HUGE) acrylic paintings sing. Thank you India, Anastasiia, Maia and Tymur. Incredible work. Channel the power of the diamond in all you do, people!



Truly terrifying.

Sonny has dug deep into our collective psyche and found the stuff of nightmares. These hellish portraits of eyeless apes form part of Sonny's astonishing Year 13 project into the human condition.

It works doesn't it? With all due respect, if this doesn't make you feel something... are you sure that you feel anything at all? Thank you Sonny for holding up a mirror to our souls.



Martha's Print

Martha + Ambition = this MASSIVE beauty!

Martha doesn't duck the big issues in this challenging work. Inspired by the amazing artist 'Coldwar Steve', Martha has put in some serious hours of work to create such a detailed and successful print. It took a lot of skill to combine line, areas of tone and blocks to create such an effective image with such a clear and obvious message. And it's important to point out just how big a linocut this is - we love it on every level!





ETHAN
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SPACE

4

PARTYGATE

PARTYGATE

ILLEGAL
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"A ROGUE
PRIME MINISTER"

LIZ FOR LEADER
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GUILTY

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POLICE

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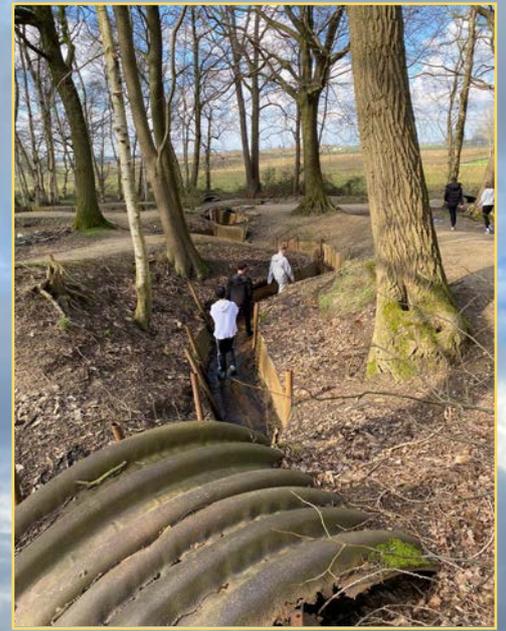
POLICE

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THANKS

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THANKS



My Time in Belgium

I was lucky enough to get to go on the Belgium trip at the beginning of March. We went to Ypres, near the French border. Here's how the week unfolded:

Tuesday

We started bright and early on the Tuesday, leaving school around 6:30am to catch our ferry at just after noon from Dover.

After arriving in Calais, we headed straight to our first war memorial of the trip: Vimy Ridge in northern France. This memorial, in the form of two very striking white limestone pillars visible for miles around, is dedicated to the thousands of Canadians who died in WW1 with no known grave. At the nearby museum, we looked around the trench exhibit which gave us a sense of how small the trenches were that the soldiers had to fight in!

Finally, we headed for our hotel in Ypres, where we had dinner and settled down for a good night's sleep!

Wednesday

Wednesday was our day to explore Ypres and its surroundings. We started with the Menin Gate, a giant arch with the names of over 54,000 soldiers who died in WW1 around Ypres and have no known grave. Sadly, it was hidden by scaffolding for refurbishing work!

We then proceeded through the colossal arch to the In Flanders Fields exhibition. Here, we learned about the personal lives of some of the people with stories related to the war, learned the history behind a pair of trousers and saw a setup of a tunnel that the Germans would have dug, and more! We also worked through what seemed like an encyclopedia of questions to answer in our activity booklets, before getting captivated by the LEGO model of the museum by the exit! After this, the entire group crammed themselves into a tiny chocolate shop and bought lots of chocolate.

Our next visit was to Hill 62. The highlight of this incredibly small museum was the trench exhibit: muddy, wet, dark tunnels. Some people were unfortunate enough to go in the model trenches with sparkling white shoes and come out with them soaking and covered in mud.

We then visited a variety of cemeteries around Ypres: Tyne Cot was a massive Commonwealth cemetery that we all looked for our own names on; Essex Farm, another Commonwealth cemetery, had a small exhibition of the types of field hospitals where John McCrae, who wrote In Flanders Fields, worked; and Langemarck was extremely eye-opening. It is a German cemetery, but, unlike the Commonwealth cemeteries, it is tiny and there are lots of mass graves- the Allies did not want to give Germany lots of space to bury their dead. It really was very humbling.

Thursday

This was our big driving day, as we visited three sites clustered together about two hours from Ypres in northern France. The first was Lochnagar Crater. 27 tons of explosives were placed underground by the British in 1916 in an attempt to break through the German lines. The attempt failed, and the British troops got massacred in what is now known as the first day of the Battle of the Somme, often considered the worst day in British military history.

After this, we headed to the Thiepval Memorial, a gigantic memorial to soldiers killed in the Battle of the Somme with no known grave. The scale of it was jaw-dropping: a gigantic arch, 45 metres high, with several surrounding arches. Stone panels around it were full of names. More than anything else, this gave us a sheer sense of the loss that happened in the Great War.

Our final cemetery of the tour was Newfoundland Park, a Canadian cemetery. The highlight of this was the giant caribou statue in the middle, looking out to where Newfoundlanders fought and died in the Somme. Like at Vimy Ridge earlier in the week, you could see the dips in the ground caused by the constant shelling.

We then returned to Ypres and took part in a fun quiz, testing us on whether we had remembered anything from our trip!

Friday

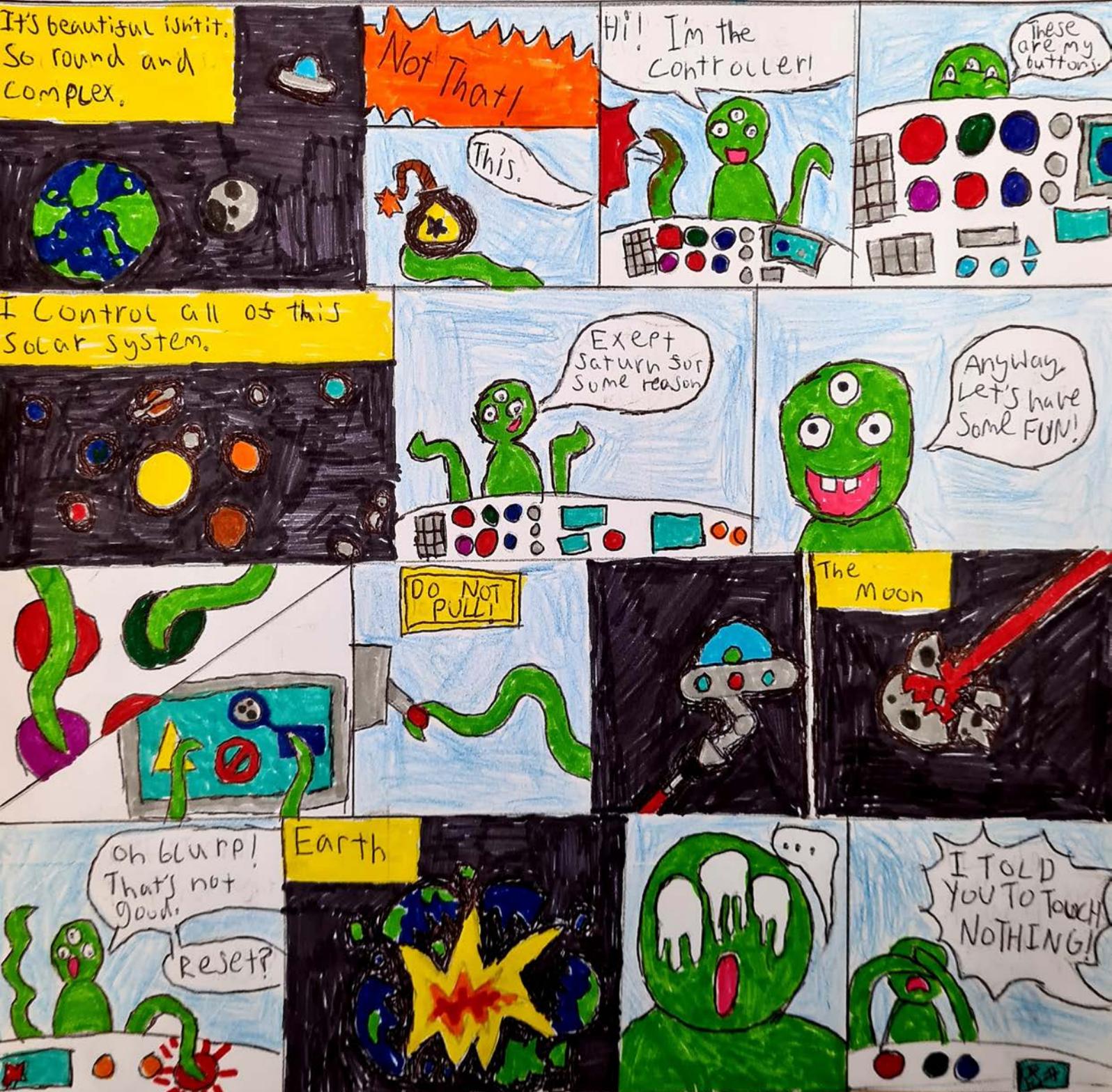
After three days of cemeteries, Friday was our fun day. We got to go to Bruges and, after going on a canal cruise, got free time to buy lunch, chocolate, waffles and souvenirs. The architecture was grand, and there was a very old-world feel, only amplified by the horses and carts giving people tours!

After spending an exorbitant amount on food we returned, tired and high on waffles, to our coach. After leaving Bruges at 2pm, we arrived back at school at 9pm, full of the joys of a trip that was, on the whole, quite good!

World Book Day: C & Drawing Compet

THE CONTROLLER

By Jex Lombos



Creative Writing Competition 2024

To coincide with World Book Day on 7 March, our librarians ran a creative writing and drawing competition for KS3. We received many wonderful entries, and it was a tough decision, but in the end we settled on the following winners:

Graphic short story category:

Jex Lombos (Year 9) for his out-of-this-world adventure 'The Controller'.

Narrative short story category:

Eliza Lombos (Year 9) for her thrilling tale 'Stiletto: An excerpt from The Mysterious Disappearance of Sarah-Rose'.

In the graphic short category, special mention goes to:

Joel Nichols (Year 7) for his creation 'Super Tortoise'.

We had so many fabulous and creative entries to our narrative short category in particular that we selected a shortlist of the best, so special mention goes to the following:

'The Madcap Adventures of Catwitch' by Cressida Kilby-Birch (Year 7)

'Bjorn's Revenge' by Hector Turner Fussell (Year 7)

'The Murder in the Playground' by Rosie Pink (Year 8)

'Love Struck' by Emmie Jennings (Year 9)

There are many more that we haven't been able to mention here, and it's great to see such a wealth of talent among our younger students. Anyone who's interested can read the winning entries here, or pop into the library to view a copy.

- Mrs Hanley & Mrs Saunders, School Librarians

Here's an excerpt from Eliza's winning short story:

Lucy Violets hated being out alone in the rain this late. She should have checked the bus timetable before she agreed to see the movie. It was dangerous this time of night - and quiet. Quiet enough to be startled by the vibration of her phone in her pocket. She ducked into a nearby alleyway dimly lit by flickering fluorescent light strips on the walls. They were mostly broken. The name flashing on the screen was Missi Jenkins. Lucy hurried to accept the call. When Missi calls, you answer.



“Lucy?” Missi whispered. Lucy was taken aback by her tone. Missi never sounded like this. She was always cool and calculating, yet elegant - like a panther in high heels. Lucy kept walking as the rain howled harder, crawling through her clothes and settling into her bones. “Lucy,” Missi repeated.

“I’ve done something terrible...”

“Done what?” Lucy asked, worried. She began to run as the rain turned to hail. The alleyway was darker here, and smelled of metal... and perfume? She stopped to catch her breath.

“I killed her, Luce!”

“Killed who? Is this one of your pranks again? Are the girls there?”

Lucy began to walk again, anger fuelling her steps. Another prank she’d have to pretend was funny. Another night ruined by the gang of brats she was only friends with to survive high school.

“No, no, it’s not a prank. This is serious!” Lucy didn’t quite believe her. Why is this alley so long? she said to herself. And so dark?

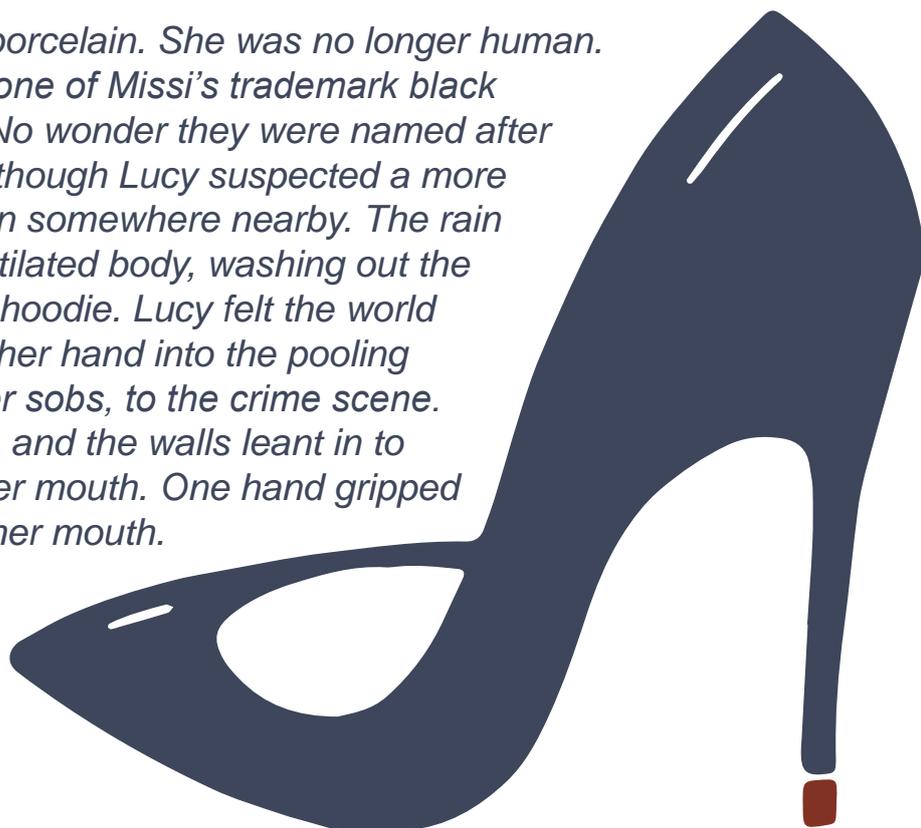
“I don’t believe you Missi. This isn’t funny.” She grimaced as her foot hit something hard and the puddle surrounding it seeped into her shoe.

“Sarah-Rose is dead, Lucy!” Missi yelled through the phone. “I killed her. I killed Sarah-Rose.”

“What?” Lucy whispered, and time seemed to slow as she looked down at what was blocking her path. Sarah-Rose’s mutilated body lay on the ground in a lake of its own blood. This was what had become of the victim of Missi’s bullying... of indirectly her bullying. This was partially her fault.

The girl’s skin was like broken porcelain. She was no longer human. She was a broken doll left to rot with one of Missi’s trademark black stiletto heels sticking out of her eye. No wonder they were named after a knife. They did the job just as well, though Lucy suspected a more conventional weapon would be hidden somewhere nearby. The rain hurled down to punch against her mutilated body, washing out the insults written in black marker on her hoodie. Lucy felt the world begin to spin as her phone fell out of her hand into the pooling blood, returning Missi’s name, and her sobs, to the crime scene. But as Lucy started to fall backwards, and the walls leant in to hear her cry, no sound came out of her mouth. One hand gripped her waist and another clamped over her mouth.

“We have a lot to talk about, Violets,” the dead girl’s voice snarled.



Young Carers Action Day



We celebrated Young Carers' Action Day throughout the school on Wednesday 13th March, with tutor activities and assembly talks from our Young Carers Champion, Mrs Emmerson.

A young carer is someone under the age of 18 who takes on a caring role or responsibility at home. This can vary in different circumstances but can include siblings with medical or special educational needs, or parents and grandparents with medical, physical or mental health disorders. If you think your child may benefit from some support, please email emmersonr@wallingfordschool.com or ask them to speak to their tutor.

We run a weekly lunchtime support group on Wednesdays in B12 for students to come and play games, talk or just relax. This session is supported by Poppy, one of our Year 13 students.



What our young carers think:

"Young Carers is a great place to go. I find it nice because I know every week I can look forward to Wednesday so I can get a break from everyone else. It's also really good because I get a chance to talk about anything I like. Mrs Emmerson is great, she helps a lot. Poppy is also amazing. She is a good person to talk to."

"Being a young carer can be quite hard. We have to face all of the everyday struggles in school as well as struggles at home. We have had to grow up much quicker than we should have, and do things for ourselves like cook and clean. There are a lot of young carers around that don't get recognised and aren't getting the support they deserve. The young carers group is so useful as you get to meet new people who are in the same kind of situation at home as you."

Noughts & Crosses:

Malorie Blackman

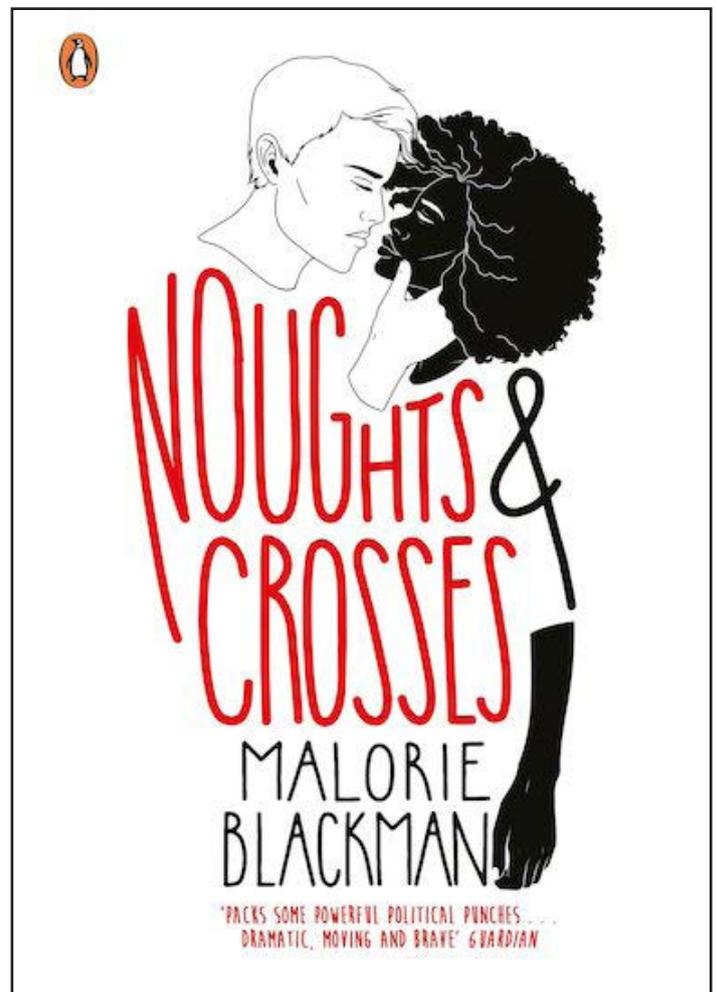
Talk

The Malorie Blackman talk we watched was an eye-opener. Listening to this incredible, funny, award-winning author talk about how her personal experiences influenced *Noughts & Crosses* really made me view the play in a different light, sparking a path of thought that hadn't occurred to me before.

When Malorie Blackman was in secondary school, she was told that she could never become an English teacher – an ambition she had had since she was quite young. “You could be a secretary,” her careers adviser said, clearly not realising how this young, black girl would one day impact the world.

From politics to everyday scrapes, Blackman twists a novel loosely inspired by the story of *Romeo and Juliet* into a startling inversion of our world. *Noughts & Crosses* reflects the hardest parts of Malorie's life, parts that she has never quite been able to let go of, that have shaped her life forever. From being the only black woman in a first-class train carriage full of white people, and the only one asked to show her ticket, to being told to throw away her dreams, Malorie Blackman is a truly inspiring woman who the world should never forget.

- Tilda Santer, Year 8



Poetry Live



On the 24th January, Years 10 and 11 embarked on a trip to The New Theatre, Oxford, to listen to poets discuss their poems and the intentions behind them. We listened to Simon Armitage (Poet Laureate), John Agard, Carol Ann Duffy (first female Poet Laureate), Imtiaz Dharker, Daljit Nagra and Owen Sheers.

This was an incredibly enriching trip as it allowed us to learn about the backstories and purposes of different poems. Each poet explained the reason they wrote each poem, be it inspiration from parents, loved-ones, losses or the need to inform the world about an issue they feel strongly about.

After their readings, they answered questions from students, giving us an understanding as to why and how these talented people became poets. We learned how to approach unseen poetry, both how to think about it in a logical manner and how to write for the best possible result. As well as learning about unseen poetry, we were also taught how to compare poems, whether they were ones we had already studied or were unseen, and how to write most effectively in either situation.

- Daisy Gray, Year 10

Stars Visit Silverstone...



Every academic year, subject teachers nominate a few hardworking students from each year group to be a Star. This happens twice a year and we have now collected the names for the second cohort.

As a school we really value this programme, and it is great to be involved in rewarding students for their hard work in lessons. The first cohort of Key Stage 3 Stars visited The Silverstone Interactive Museum, which they really enjoyed, and we are looking forward to taking the second cohort in April.

New for 2024, we have a trip for our Year 10 Stars to Wembley Stadium which we're very excited about. As well as seeing the stadium, students hear a talk about possible career paths leading to working in Wembley and the industry.

Could you be one of the next Stars? Keep working hard and next year it could be you!

- Miss A Walker, Stars Coordinator



CareersFest



On Wednesday 20th March, we took a group of 60 students to CareersFest 2024 at the Kassam Stadium. During the event students were able to speak to over 70 exhibitors to learn more about jobs, careers and training opportunities. They found out about a wide variety of roles and the skills needed by employers. They were also able to speak to education and training providers to learn about courses and apprenticeships. The headline sponsors at the event were Abbott, Blenheim and Pye Homes, Grundon, Howden Insurance, Morgan Sindall Construction, Persimmon Homes Wessex, and Science and Technology Facilities Council. As well as speaking to the exhibitors there were opportunities for hands-on activities to test skills in various areas. It was an extremely lively and successful visit.

- Mrs T Ward, Careers Adviser





Exhibitors told organiser OXLEP, “how impressed they were with the students, how well prepared, polite and engaged they were, and we can proudly say they felt they had better interactions with Oxfordshire students than they have had at other careers events in other counties that they’ve attended recently.”



Youth Work Charity Expands Services to Wallingford

Who we are:

TRAIN is a youth work charity that has been based in Didcot since 2002. We offer a range of services to young people aged 11 to 18 and are just about to expand into Wallingford! To find out more, you can check out our [website](#) or follow us on social media:

[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Follow our Wallingford-based youth work delivery team on social media to find out what we have on each week in the local area:

Yasmin Betteridge
she/her
Youth Worker

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TRAIN
inspiring young people
Registered Number: 1176258

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TRAIN
inspiring young people
Registered Number: 1176258

What we do:

Mentoring

We deliver group and 1-2-1 mentoring programmes at Wallingford School. To find out more about our mentoring programmes, please contact Georgina, our senior youth worker who leads this provision (georgina@didcottrain.org.uk).

SHOUT!

We also run a weekly LGBTQ+ youth group called SHOUT! for young people aged 11-18 in the Wallingford area. To find out more about this service, please contact Yasmin, our youth worker who runs this group (yasmin@didcottrain.org.uk).

Drop-In Sessions

In addition to these services, we run open access drop-in sessions for young people twice a week. During these sessions, young people can come together, relax, and access support from our qualified youth workers. These sessions will take place at our new Wallingford base – 9 St Martins Street, Wallingford, OX10 0AL. To find out more, please email Yasmin, who leads these sessions (yasmin@didcottrain.org.uk).

Detached & Outreach

We also deliver detached youth work in the local community, meeting young people in parks, town centres, and other places where they spend time – meeting them on their own terms instead of ours. Sometimes, we will do youth work in temporary locations, like parks, local events, and schools, which we call “outreach”. Follow our Wallingford-based youth work delivery team on social media to find out where and when we will be doing detached and outreach work in Wallingford!

Easter Half Term Activities

During the holidays, we organise trips and activities for young people. Follow us on social media to see what we have planned for the Easter break!

Here’s a project that is coming your way very soon: Artist / Graffiti Art Project at Winterbrook Bridge, Wallingford.



“We’re thrilled to have the support of [Wallingford School](#), [Didcot TRAIN](#), and [Youth Oxfordshire](#), who will be promoting the project to young people and lending a hand on the day.”

- Steve Holder, Wallingford Town Councillor (More information here: [Facebook](#))

House Events

As we reflect on the past two terms, our House system has been buzzing with excitement and spirited competition! Here's a recap of the action-packed events:

Term 3 Highlights:

Pancake Race and Remote Control Car Race: The return of these beloved events in our House Calendar brought forth fierce competition and thrilling moments. Congratulations to Bigg for triumphing in the pancake races and to Blackstone for dominating the car races.

Family Fortunes: Mr. Harpin's termly game show, Family Fortunes, provided an entertaining platform for students to showcase their general knowledge and camaraderie.

Term 4 Highlights:

Science Week Experiments: Miss Sutton orchestrated a series of engaging experiments during Science Week, offering students opportunities to earn valuable House points while delving into the wonders of science.

World Book Day Title Quest: Students embarked on a quest to locate teachers and record the books they were reading, promoting literacy and teamwork. This was followed up by several excellent performances of "Bedtime Stories" where students recorded themselves reading a young child's book for our local Year 1 students.

A hotly contested **Ninja Warrior** brought over 100 competitors battling it out to be crowned Champion of 2023/24. There is a lot of kudos given to the winner of this increasingly tough course! Congratulations to Henry in Year 11 who won this year. Seb in Year 7 took Silver and Izzy took Bronze.

Pi Day Celebrations: Pi Day brought forth impressive baking skills and mathematical prowess, with students showcasing their ability to recite Pi to astonishing lengths, some to 140 decimal places! And as you can see a number of lovely cakes, that I, unfortunately did not get to try!



Historical Figure Egg Design Challenge:

The History department introduced an EGGciting challenge where students were given free range to craft historical figures onto eggs. Creativity soared, with over 40 captivating entries, although oddly my creation of Jack Sparrow did not appear in the running for the winning egg!

Upcoming Events:

As we head into the final week of term, there are still thrilling events on the horizon:

House Matches in Football and Netball
University Challenge Final
Nominations for "A Good Egg" from each tutor

We extend our gratitude to all participants for their unwavering commitment and enthusiasm. Special thanks to event organizers and House Leaders for fostering a competitive yet inclusive environment.

Looking ahead to next term, it promises even more excitement with the return of mixed form football, rocket launching, and paper aeroplane throwing. Get ready to showcase your skills and House pride! Let's continue to embrace the spirit of healthy competition and camaraderie as we embark on the upcoming challenges.

- Mr R Lyons, Head of House System

Top Point Scoring Students - Term 4

Year 7	Benjamin Capo Bianco	Blackstone	72
Year 8	Katie Bolt	Blackstone	44
Year 9	Joseph Rhodes	Bigg	76
Year 10	Emelia Ratcliffe	Matilda	35
Year 11	Rohan Clark	Blackstone	39
Year 12	Hayley Johnstone	Blackstone	20
Year 13	Olivia French	Christie	15



House Totals so far...

1st Place	Matilda	5390
2nd Place	Christie	5160
3rd Place	Bigg	5025
4th Place	Blackstone	4995

Congratulations MATILDA!



Bigg House

It has been an action packed and exciting term for Bigg House. During our House assembly this week, we spoke about what the word 'House' means for us in the school context. From years 7 – 13 we are all interdependent on one another be it in charity events or competitions.

Following a slow start to 2024, we were victorious in the annual Pancake Race Competition. Well done to the teams who took part. In the House Ninja Warrior competition, congratulations to Seb in 7VAM for finishing 2nd place overall. In the History department's recent Historical Eggs competition, the Bigg Year 7 powerhouse was out in large numbers again. Congratulations to Ayda in 7JWA for winning the whole competition.

Elsewhere, we have emerged victorious in the World Book Day Title Quest Competition. Well done to the number of Bigg House students who participated and led us to victory. In a similar fashion, well done to Dylan & Alex in 7VAM for completing the Easter Word Hunt first.

There are a huge number of students with a very impressive number of Satchel House Points. In particular well done to Charlotte (Y7), Scarlett (Y8), Joseph (Y9), Sophie (Y10), Marta (Y11), Maia (Y12) & Lexie (Y13) for being the top points scorers in Bigg House.

With House matches, the Weakest Link, the Bake-Off, Inter-form Football, Sports Day plus several other events, we are excited to see what terms 5 and 6 bring for us as a House.

Happy Easter!

Mr Harpin
House Leader of Bigg

Blackstone House

Another busy term full of House events! In the short term straight after Christmas we continued with some of our annual events – a pancake race and the House Grand Prix. Blackstone managed to claim victory in the Grand Prix this year with some very talented racers from Year 7!

As we moved towards Easter we had a huge variety of events going on: Ninja Warrior, followed by Science Week, a Historical Egg Competition and University Challenge – something for everyone to get involved with!

If you haven't yet earned some House points for Blackstone through House events, the summer term will bring plenty of opportunities! Currently we have two students who have managed to achieve their diamond badge – Thomas Pool and Benjamin Capo-Bianco – well done! If you want to get to the next badge why not take part in an event next term? Coming up we have Inter-Form Football, Technology Day and the Paper Airplane competition to name but a few. Every person participating draws us closer to lifting the House shield!

I hope you have a lovely Easter and I look forward to seeing our talented Blackstone students taking part in many competitions next term.

Miss Sutton
House Leader of Blackstone

We have hurtled towards the end of term at the end of the House University Challenge, House assembly and completing their examination period and have

Wishing all members of the school community

Mr Marston, Headteacher

Christie House

Christie House – every term you inspire me even more! You have embraced every opportunity, taken part in a variety of events and earned a very impressive number of House points!

We have had a wonderful term filled with events, competitions, celebrations and achievements.

You have excelled yourselves with all your hard work during lessons and extracurricular activities, which have been rewarded with an incredible number of you achieving your House point badges. A huge well done to you all.

This term, you have tried new things as well as shown your extensive knowledge in University Challenge. We have seen your driving skills in the remote-control Grand Prix, your historical knowledge and creativity in the Historical Egg competition, your pancake flipping skills and your determination to take on the Ninja Warrior course.

I have been so proud of you all this term and your willingness to take part and embrace the Christie spirit. I hope you have all enjoyed this term as much as I have. I am very proud of every member of Christie House.

I wish you all a wonderful Easter and I look forward to seeing you all when we come back next term.

Miss Persse
House Leader of Christie

Matilda House

Another busy term! Firstly, a massive well done to all of Year 10 for completing their mock exams, and for all the efforts the rest of Matilda house have put into this term. There have been lots of opportunities for you to get involved, from the remote-control chaos of the House Grand Prix to World Book Day!

Participation is key to success and to everyone that has tried something new this term and just “given it a go!” a huge WELL DONE! Whether it has been through House matches in PE, a range of Science week activities, the ever-popular PI day or the brilliant Historical Egg painting competition. You continue to show great spirit and effort with all things inside and outside of the classroom.

Ninja Warrior also returned this term with a fantastic turn out of Yellow bibs! And with a 1st and 3rd place it’s safe to say we smashed it! There will be lots more opportunities to earn House points next term with The Weakest Link, Paper Aeroplane competition & lots more returning favourites.

I hope you all have a happy and safe Easter break and look forward to what terms 5 & 6 have to offer! Well done again Matilda house.

Mr Hinchliffe
House Leader of Matilda

pace and it has been a very busy four day week in school with House matches, the final assemblies, Easter egg hunts and lots of rewards. Our Year 10 students have also been conducted themselves quite brilliantly.

y a really good Easter holiday!



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Cover Photograph: Staff Garden Tulips, March 2024