



# OPGS Wins The Maidstone Schools' Cup Final

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

A warm welcome to the latest edition of @Oakwood. As ever, the publicity team of Mr Peacock, Ms Goodhew and Mr Solly have worked hard to produce an excellent set of articles and photographs.

From the lovely celebration of the Year 11 Leavers' breakfast to Year 13's final day. From the Senior Sports Dinner to the Celebration of Achievement afternoon of last year's A Level students, there is a wonderful amount of events to celebrate here.

I hope you enjoy reading.

Best wishes

Mr K.W. Moody - Headteacher

# The Addams Family Production

**THE ADDAMS FAMILY, a comical feast that embraces the wackiness in every family, features an original story and it's every father's nightmare:**

will need a ticket request letter and wise pay account to purchase tickets in advance.

Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family—a man her parents have never met. And if that wasn't upsetting enough, Wednesday confides in her father and begs him not to tell her mother. Now, Gomez Addams must do something he's never done before; keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday's "normal" boyfriend and his parents.

Tickets are on sale NOW . Tickets cost £10. You



This year, six students from Year 13 were entered for the **British Biology Olympiad**, a national competition for Sixth Form students that challenges them to apply their existing knowledge of Biology to a series of new and challenging contexts ranging from genetics, to microbiology, to medicine. Students are assessed through two multiple choice papers completed electronically. This year all of our students achieved a medal which is a brilliant set of results:

**Lauren Mulvenna – Bronze Medal**  
**Harry Randall – Silver Medal**  
**Rhys Wenborn – Silver medal**  
**Joe Hussey – Gold Medal**  
**Joshua Ingram – Gold Medal**  
**Alex Stone – Gold Medal**

Congratulations to all our students who took part this year. If any Year 12 students are interested please speak to Mr Wathey.



## Connor Russell signs with Gillingham Football Club

Connor Russell recently received the news that his contract with Gillingham Football Club has been extended for another 2 years, meaning he will be with them until the end of 2025 at least.

Connor was also voted by his fellow teammates for the U12 player of the year 2022-23, which is seen by many as the highest accolade to receive.



## Words of Power

The Words of Power idea asked students to think about what words they have encountered which can change their perception of the world through positive thinking, as part of school activities around world book day.

Favour Ochonma of 9P came first due to his entry and explanation.

Christian Mecha 9T and Ifan Bambury 10T were runners up.

“Imagine a bank account that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. At night, the bank deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course? Each of us has such a bank, its name is time. Every morning, it credits you 86,400 seconds. Every night it empties the account. Time not spent on something meaningful is written off as a loss. You must live in the present on today’s deposits. Invest your time to yield great returns in health, happiness, and wealth.” – Marc Levy, *If Only It Were True*

I really like this quote because I find that it has a simple yet deep and truthful meaning. We don’t use the time we are given properly each day, and putting it as a number as large as 86,400 helps me

to understand that there is little to no reason as to why we shouldn’t slow down and do something useful with our time when we are given so much.



# Duke of Edinburgh Expedition

After a very successful training day in the sunshine, the boys really excelled on their practice Bronze DofE expedition.

From hiking, to route planning, to cooking, all groups completed tasks successfully. We're pleased to say that the assessors from Kent County Council were extremely impressed with not only their strong abilities but also their respectful and polite manners. These groups have set a high bar for their final assessed expedition in June! Congratulations to all who participated on a fantastic weekend.



## Eco Ambassadors

Last term there was some fantastic volunteer work from students showing great leadership skills around the school to build a greater ethos of sustainability.

To show our appreciation, Mrs Alltimes has awarded four students, Isaac Pixley Young, Morgan Taylor, Cohen Clark and Reuben Pixley-Young, who are the first to receive an Eco Ambassador badge for their commitments each week with Green Club. They have worked on inspiration projects around the school to support other students and raise awareness of environmental issues students/staff can support. We are extremely proud of these four young men, for their passion to make environmental changes to ensure our school members as well as the school site are sustainable. We look forward to continuing to work with them and other students, to promote a positive outlook on sustainable thinking.



## Oliver Fryer – Millwall Contract

Oliver Fryer has been offered another two year contract at Millwall, which is an amazing achievement. Oliver has balanced his academic studies, which are also outstanding, with his extra curricular commitments to Millwall and the school.

Oliver represents the school U14 football, cricket and athletic teams, highlighting that he is very much a student who can excel in sport and academia.

Well done Oliver.



# Ethan Sparks Podium Position

Young motorbike racer, Ethan Sparks, is currently in Year 7 at OPGS. This home grown talent from Maidstone is starting to be recognised on an international level.

A British rider has previously never won a Moto4 race in Spain, so it truly is a historical moment proving talent can prevail.

Ethan competed in the ESBK Spanish Championship at the Aragon circuit, earlier in the year, and this led to his most recent success. Prior to this, Ethan has shown his grit by excelling after moving up a class in the Mini Cool Fab Championship at age 9 in August 2020, competing against riders sometimes up to 4 years above him and after healing from a broken foot.

After an eventful weekend, with a technical in the Qualifying race, only giving him 2 lap times, it meant he was facing a near impossible feat, with a starting position of 22nd on the grid for the Sunday race. This was down to an unfortunate crash in Race 1 on Saturday, but luckily Ethan was okay. On that fateful Sunday morning, Ethan was deemed fit to race by the medics and set the quickest time in warm up in the morning. It was the longest 5 hours waiting for his race at 4pm. Nevertheless, the conditions were perfect, and Ethan had set the bar for himself, he would challenge for the win.

It was a tense race with positions changing constantly right up until the final lap, when Ethan came round the final corner in the lead, and got the drive to the line, only holding the riders off behind him with a mere 200th of a second. What a tremendously exciting way to finish.

This race meant Ethan is the first ever British winner in the Moto4 Championship - making history for the UK. They have never played the national anthem for Great Britain on that podium for that class before, with Ethan being the first to achieve this accolade.

Ethan's most recent win in Valencia, is from a tournament that is the most competitive field for this age bracket. The championship has up to 30 riders, from countries across the globe. The Spanish understandably dominate the class, with

huge sponsorships to give them vast financial backing and thus bigger teams behind them. Ethan is racing with the backing of a privateer team, with little to no sponsorship, just sheer talent and determination driving him!

This is a full-time commitment for Ethan, his family and his team, juggling the balance between school and racing at the weekends. To illustrate this point further, Ethan is also entered in the FIM GP World Series in Austria and raced in Round One on 20-21st May 2023, his calendar is taking him all over the continent and is non-stop. Despite this, Ethan is so conscientious, hard working in all aspects of life, and extremely humble about his achievements to date. As such, we wish Ethan the best of luck for his next race and will be excited to continue to follow his racing career as he moves forward.







# Sixth Form Celebration of Achievement Ceremony

The OPGS Sixth Form Team and Subject Leaders were delighted to welcome back the students who left us in September 2022.

OPGS Celebration of Achievement ceremony was held in April and provided an opportunity for our ex-students to receive their subject awards and A Level certificates. Parents, ex-students and teachers chatted over drinks and a buffet about the adventures of life after school, whether it be university or the world of work. Ms Hern, Director of Sixth Form, wasted no time in arranging dates for our student guests to come back into OPGS as mentors and careers advisors. The OPGS network is a vital resource for our current students seeking advice or work experience. In addition, our OPGS Alumni provide valuable insights for our current Year 12 into how to prepare for the challenges of university life. Beyond this, it was lovely to see how much our ex-students had grown into themselves during their first year away and gratifying to be greeted again by them and their families with such warmth.

Amongst the prize winners, special congratulations goes to those were selected for the following awards:

R. H. Voice Prize for Service to the School  
Emma Ring Prize for Overcoming Adversity

Head Boy Prize  
Head Girl Prize

Ann-Isabel Olujohungbe  
Lorraine Smith  
Amelia Jessop  
Tom Homewood  
Fran Ward





# French Enrichment Day

The first session was with Ms Roux and we looked at games that French students may have played in the playground. I enjoyed it very much and some games intrigued me.

Period 2 was the French Escape Room. Our form was split up into 6 teams. The rule of the game was the first team to complete all the challenges wins. Some challenges were hard, and my team were unlucky having the harder ones first.

After break, we looked at Spanish games that Spanish students may play. It included 4 corners, where a person in the middle must reach the corner of a square before the players on the outside reach it. A game where a person in the middle calls out a person from the outside in the circle and they must run and catch it to prevent themselves being in the middle. The last game is called the scarf game. This game needed the form to be split into 2 teams and they had to run and grab the scarf in the middle and bring it

back to their team. When both players had their hands on the scarf, there is a bit of a contest to earn their team points.

The last period was the Spanish Escape Room. The escape room was digital and you had to complete questions, each section of the escape room gave you a number which you had to remember to open the door to escape with the numbers entered in a keypad. After completing the escape room, the whole class competed against each other in a Spanish quiz. The Spanish quiz had emojis before the quiz started which were displayed. In the middle of the quiz, there were power ups to give you an advantage to sabotage other players and a gift option to give other players points to boost them up on the leaderboard.

Overall, I enjoyed the enrichment day with the variety of activities.

**Rayyan Aziz 8C**



This term, we had a languages enrichment day consisting of loads of fun activities.

For French, we did French skipping which is what kids in France would do on a daily basis in school. We also did Lost in Translation but with French words. This was a fun way to see what people in France would do in their schools as well as a little bit of practice for French.

For Spanish, we played four corners which is a game in which 4 people on 4 different corners have to switch corners with other people without their spot being taken by the person in the middle. We also played a game in which a group of people (big or small) have a ball and a person in the centre and they have to bounce the ball in the centre and call out a persons name on the outer ring. If the person catches it, the person previously in the middle carries on and continues to say another name. If the ball hits the ground, then whoever let it touch the ground goes in the middle and the game continues.

Will Hicks 8C



# Unhidden Histories: Year 8 learn about Empire Soldiers in the First World War

Miss Aldous says: As part of their sequence of learning on The Pursuit and Impact of Empire, Year 8 students have been learning about the contributions and experiences of soldiers from the British Empire in the First World War.

Just this month, historian David Olusoga has been awarded a BAFTA for his work both in front and behind the TV cameras and has said in his press interviews that he is most proud of the way his platform and profile has enabled him to address the hidden histories of Empire soldiers.

The History teaching profession and the History Department at OPGS are addressing this too. Students have learnt about the enormous and vital role played by soldiers from the British colonies and dominions. With no conscription outside of mainland Britain, all those who travelled, fought and died did so as volunteers.

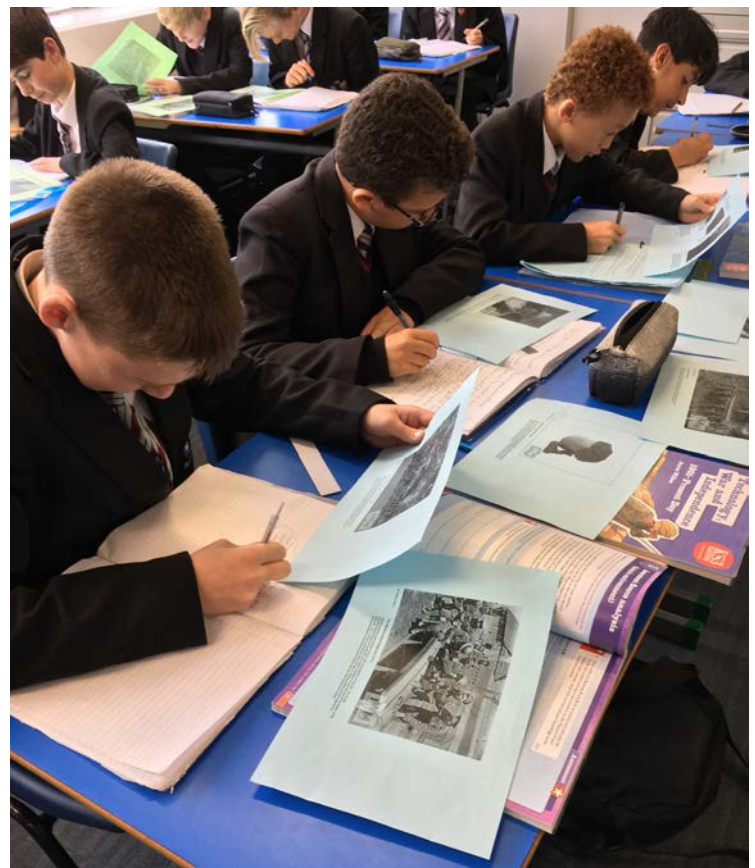
Vast numbers of men signed up: 1.4 million from India, 600,000 from Canada, 100,000 from New Zealand, 400,000 Australia, 130,000 from South Africa, 120,000 from Britain's African colonies and 15,000 from the West Indies. Soldiers from the colonies were often given jobs involving physical labour such as unloading trains and digging trenches. This did not save them from trauma, disease and death, but does show how they were treated differently even when fighting for the British cause. In the months and years after the



war their sacrifice was often unrecognised, for example with limited war memorials or publicity.

Our students now have knowledge of the huge contribution of Empire soldiers and as a result a fuller and deeper understanding of the First World War.

Find out more here: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-black-british-soldiers-who-were-deliberately-forgotten>



# Junior Maths Challenge

On the 28th of April, 70 specially selected young mathematicians, from Oakwood Park Grammar School, took part in the Junior Maths Challenge. This is a National competition for Years 7 and 8, where the best mathematicians answer a series of out of the box questions that test their maths beyond the classroom.

Those students who perform in the top 50% attain a bronze certificate, those who are in the top 16% attain a silver, and those who are in the top 8% get a gold certificate.

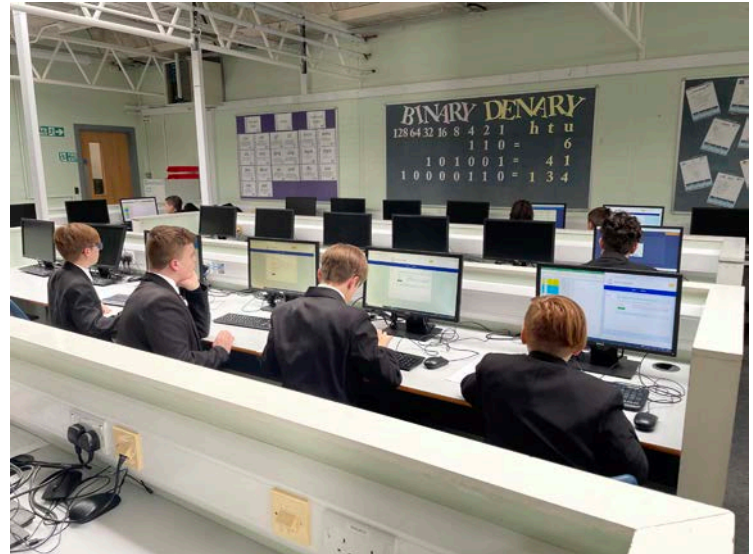
Around a quarter of a million students take part in the Junior Maths Challenge, and the top 8,000 are selected to take part in the Junior Kangaroo, which is the next stage of the competition.

This year we have 8 students who have been invited to the Junior Kangaroo, which is an incredible feat. And one who has been invited to the Junior Olympiad.

Each student who was selected to take part should be proud of themselves, and a big congratulations to all.

And especially a big congratulations to those who made it to the Junior Kangaroo:

Arthur Bullivant, Noah Cruickshank, Jakub Duzkowski, Elliot Ford, Noah Halliday, Tamas Kovacs, Kevwe Makelemi, Kishan Paranthaman.

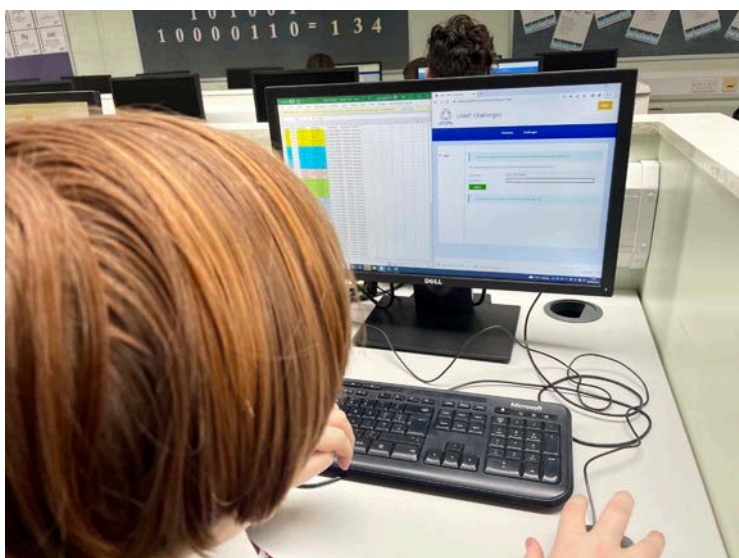


And to Isaac Wenborn for being invited to take part in the Junior Olympiad.

Please see the list of Headteacher's commendations to see which students have achieved what certificate. If your son is on this list then they have been given a physical certificate also!

We run a Maths Challenge club for the Year 7's and 8's of a lunchtime in room 83. It is great to see so many of those who turn up to these sessions do so well, including all but one of those who have been invited to the Junior Kangaroo/Olympiad.

Keep up the great work, and we will keep you informed of the Junior Kangaroo results, which is to take place on the 14th of June.  
The Maths Department.



# Year 13 Leaver's Day.

The class of 2023 celebrated their last day in school with a farewell assembly, followed by a BBQ on the field on Friday 12th May – with some rather changeable weather threatening to put a dampener on the plans.

Students joining us in the hall for the assembly were surprised to see photographs of themselves and their peers taken as toddlers and at primary school, sent in by parents in secret, producing much hilarity from the audience. The Head Students then made moving speeches and presented awards voted for by Year 13 students. Notable winners were Ben Madden voted 'Most Likely to be Prime Minister', 'Best Dressed Student' went to Brandon Currie and 'Most likely to be a Professional Sportsperson' won by Alex Stone. Unsurprisingly 'Most likely to Cure Cancer' went to Owen Jenner and 'Most Appreciated Student' was won by Emily Speake. Teachers were also awarded with much treasured certificates for passion for their subjects, life advice, humour and sarcasm. Mr Kedzia received the loudest round of applause as the most inspirational teacher. Students then had the opportunity to make memories, taking photographs in our newly created OPGS photo booth. Thank you to Mrs Craig for her creativity.

Despite the weather, Year 13 were able to enjoy the barbeque food on the field. Many thanks to Mrs Knight (parent of Ashwin Knight) and Mr



Ramkhalawon for their excellent culinary skills, and to the newly appointed Year 12 senior prefects for serving. Thank you also to all who helped and supported the day.

For some students, it truly is the end of an era, with those who have attended since Year 7, leaving Oakwood Park in Year 13, as well-rounded young adults. Whereas, for the students who joined in Year 12 it has been a journey of self-discovery in which you find another type of friendship, a robust sense of humour and personal growth. Certainly, our students have proven to be a fantastic year group who are ready to make their way in the world, carve out a better future, and pursue their passions through their higher education, apprenticeships, or career choices.

The Sixth Form Team, and the rest of the staffing body, truly wish Year 13 success in their exams and a prosperous, fulfilling, and happy future in all they strive for in life after OPGS.



# OPGS

## ★ SUMMER FAIR ★

★ Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June ★  
10am - 1pm



**Chess Tournament**  
**Climbing Tower**  
**Splat a Rat**  
**BBQ Food**  
**Raffle**  
**Welly Toss**  
**Cakes & Cookies**  
**Ping-Pong-Pot**  
**Drinks & Snacks**  
**Coin Roller**  
**Penalty Shoot-out**  
**Pre-Loved Uniform**  
**Bottle Tombola**  
**Trade Stalls**  
**& Much More!**

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Member Association

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**WEST FLOORING**  
and  
**Meadow Gas Services**

★ **FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY** ★



# Year 11 Leaver's Assembly: Class of 2023

It is with mixed emotions the school celebrated the class of 2023, who have spent their educational career at Oakwood Park Grammar School and are now passing out as young men.

The day started in form groups, as per usual for the students, to share the daily routine walking through those familiar doors, one last time.

On arrival to the hall, the students were greeted by many staff who had come to give their best wishes and congratulations. Mrs Hillier had collated many photos from trips and visits to commemorate their time at OPGS through the years.

Each form sat together and enjoyed a full English breakfast and collected their leavers T-Shirts personalised with the names of everyone in the year, in the shape of 2023. It was fantastic to see the students reminiscing on the journey they have all made together over the last few years. They all signed each other's shirts and many staff got involved walking through the rows of students, commenting on the jovial positive atmosphere.

Mrs Hillier awarded some fun certificates, supported with some amusing anecdotes much to the enjoyment of the whole year group. The boys receiving their awards did so in the good spirit.

The main message of the day was centred



around the school's wish for everyone to continue to experience success in life, to be confident in their next steps, in whatever form that may take. Students were asked to go forward by cherishing the values and beliefs they have developed in their time at Oakwood Park: Kindness, Tolerance and Respect.

With that, we wish Year 11 the best of luck with your exams and look forward to seeing many of you back in the Sixth Form.



# U14 Maidstone Cup Final

The Year 9 team played their Maidstone Schools Cup Final against Maidstone Boys GS on Tuesday 23rd May at the Gallagher Stadium.

On an evening that was starting to show the signs of a warm summer, the opening exchanges between the two teams certainly had some added heat and it was MGS who settled the quicker of the two teams and looked dangerous attacking down Oakwood Park's left channel. Despite playing the majority of the first 15 minutes in their own half, it was Oakwood who had the best chance, when Kyler Barton picked up the ball on the edge of the area and wriggled past three defenders before seeing his shot from an acute angle tipped over the bar.

MGS shook that scare off and then proceeded to take the lead after Oakwood's failed clearance





fell to the oncoming MGS midfielder to slot home from 18 yards. Oakwood had been here before against MGS, in the Kent Cup, and had made a comeback, (from 2-0 down) to win, so a one goal deficit was not something that deterred them from their gameplan.

The game started to settle around the 25-minute mark with Oakwood moving the ball much more quickly in the midfield, which then allowed them to push higher up the pitch. With the pressure building on MGS, Oakwood found an equaliser out of a ball played behind MGS' back three for Harrison Fryer to chase down. He managed to turn, what was a hopeful ball into an equalising goal by forcing a rushed clearance from the MGS centre back which ballooned into the air for Fryer to then dink over the out rushing goalkeeper highlighting his speed, strength, and bravery to get Oakwood Park back in the game.

Oakwood seized on this change in momentum and started to threaten the MGS goal more frequently and came close when a devilishly delivered free kick from Teddy Wood was scrambled away. Oakwood's second goal, which would turn out to be the winning goal, came when they were defending an MGS attack. The ball fell loose on the edge of the Oakwood Park area and was picked up by Barton, who proceeded to skip past two MGS midfielders and into space, the speed in which Oakwood transitioned from defence to attack was extraordinary, Oliver Roberts was quickest to support Barton and Fryer, creating a 3 v 2 situation. Barton timed his pass to Roberts with the perfect amount of weight on the ball for Roberts to glide past his man on the right and then drive into the MGS area where Fryer was waiting for what he hoped would be an easy tap in. Roberts showed all the attributes that contributed to his selection as the team captain this season. He was in a position where he could have gone for

glory himself but decided to pass the ball square for Fryer to smash home, a brilliant (and unselfish) choice at the end of a brilliant move.

As the end of the first half approached, MGS had two freekicks in dangerous positions which they were unable to capitalise on and so Oakwood went in at the interval 2-1 up.

The second half saw Oakwood look solid throughout limiting MGS to speculative chances from outside of the area which did not cause any panic in the Oakwood Park ranks. Whilst being more compact, Oakwood still threatened when they attacked, Kabir Mogaji was pushed up front and caused the MGS defenders to panic with his direct and aggressive style of play. He was unlucky not to have scored on two occasions, the first from a brilliant solo run from the halfway line saw his shot, (equally brilliantly) blocked by one of the MGS players. The second opportunity again came from an Oakwood transition which saw an interchange between Barton, Jan Druzkowski and James Corney to find Ethan Ford in space on the right, Ford drove a wicked cross to the front post where Mogaji was lurking, but the finish went agonisingly wide.

With time running out the Oakwood Park defence held firm with some outstanding collective defending from Oliver Fryer, Harrison Munday, Woody Lyons and Iwan Cronk who thwarted the last few attacks on the Oakwood so that goalkeeper Alex Butler had truly little to do. James Grey, George Francis, and Tom Carty also played major roles not only on the night but over the season, which saw Oakwood secure the Year 9 cup.



# 2023 Senior Sports Presentation Evening Report

A huge thanks to all the parents, students and staff that attended this years Senior Sports Presentation Evening at the start of term 5.

The event was a great success with several students recognised for their individual and team achievements during the 2022-23 season. Special congratulations must go to this year's awards winners (see below) who have all enjoyed outstanding seasons in their respective sports.

Following the awards presentation, we received an inspiring and motivational talk from this year's guest of honour, Jamie McAnsh. This covered both his life and sporting experiences, giving our students a range of memorable life lessons that our year 13's will take into their future sporting careers. I would like to thank this year group for 7 years' service to school sport in which they have enjoyed a range of successes at district and county level despite the disruptions faced due to COVID.

On behalf of the PE department and school I would also like to say a huge thank you to Mr Housden, our outgoing 1st XV Rugby coach who ends 37 years of service the school sport this year. He has coached the 1st XV rugby team for the last 5 years, leaving a legacy in this sport for years to come. We wish him the best for his move to relocate with family in Cambridge.



## Outgoing Senior Captains

- Callum Rawlinson (1st XI Football)
- Owen Hurley (2nd XI Football)
- Matthew Hill (1st XV Rugby)
- Tom Lenham (1st XI Cricket)
- Harvey Moore (1st XI Cricket)

## Clive Thompson Award (Most Improved Player)

- Martin Nunn (1st XI Football)
- Noah Dingle (2nd XI Football)
- Alex Smith (1st XV Rugby)
- Sajid Masood (1st XI Cricket)

## Managers Player of the Year

- Joe Scott (1st XI Football)
- Brodie Davidson (2nd XI Football)
- Fin Gibson (1st XV Rugby)
- Harrison Scott (1st XI Cricket)

## Players Player of the Year

- Fin Appleby (1st XI Football)
- James Tricker (2nd XI Football)
- Joe Stone (1st XV Rugby)
- Tom Lenham (1st XI Cricket)





### Top Goal/Points Scorer

- James Tricker (Senior Football)
- Mackenzie Leason (Senior Rugby)
- Harvey Moore (Highest Wicket Taker)
- Ben Taylor (Highest Run Scorer)

### Outstanding Achievement Award (County or National Level Representation)

- Freya Brown (Kent Hockey)
- Joe Stone (Heptathlon)
- Jude Fanthome-Hodgson (Kent Hockey)

### Housden Hall of Fame (Academic & Sporting Excellence)

- Tom Lenham
- Joe Scott
- Alex Stone
- Harvey Green
- Sajid Masood



### Team of the Year Award

- 2nd XI Football

### Service to School Sport Award

- Alex Smith
- Ruben Caley
- Jacob Flitton
- Owen Hurley
- Ethan Wambari
- Matthew Hill
- Luke Burt
- Oliver Cane



# Eco Awareness Art

A small group of Year 9 students, who have shown exceptional talent in art throughout KS3, were invited to take part in an exciting project, creating a series of artworks to be displayed around the school exploring the environmental issues that we face today.

The students were allowed to design their own artwork and had access to a range of materials, including both 2D and 3D, exploring found objects and traditional processes. The work was carefully completed over 6 weeks after school, with students carefully refining and developing their ideas. Jack Finch, Ned Green, Ahmed Lutfi, Oliver Weston,



Max Patton and Ben Prior decided to create two large pieces of artwork to raise awareness on climate change and single use plastics. We are very proud of the student's hard work which led to them producing creative ideas that are stunning, yet meaningful. These will be displayed on site for years to come and hopefully be inspiring to the school community.

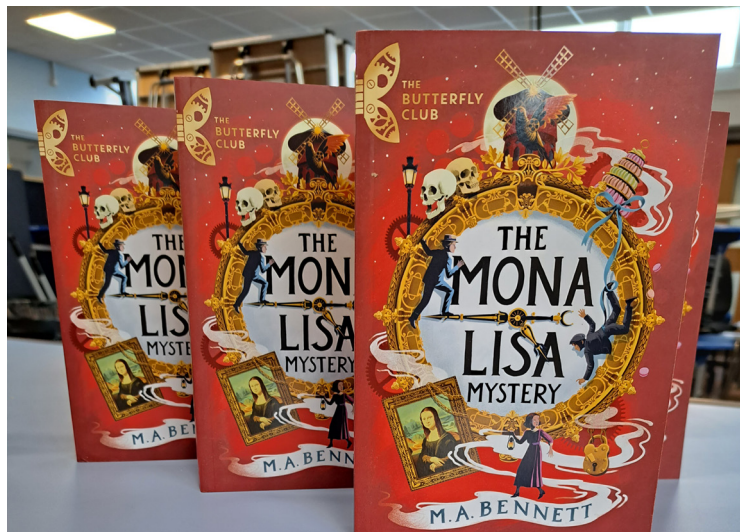
# The Butterfly Club Series Author Visit: M A Bennett

We are still buzzing off the success of the author, M. A. Bennett's visit, early this month.

Her most recent novel came out less than 2 weeks prior to her being in school and we are the first organisation to have her in to talk about the new release, *The Mona Lisa Mystery*. This was the third book in the series, and in this adventure, the 3 protagonists travel back to find who stole the Mona Lisa from the Louvre, a relatively unknown painting before it was taken, but now a priceless work of art due to the infamy it received after being recovered. In 1911, Vincenzo Peruggia stole da Vinci's masterpiece from Paris and later brought it to Florence, where he had it on his kitchen table for years. It was thought he enjoyed looking at her and that she was smiling for him.

Bennett's summary of the plot brought about an extremely interesting discussion on the rightful place for such valuable objects. The repatriation of Mona Lisa to Italy is something the people of her home country are proud of, in fact, the Italian's erected a statue of Peruggia in his hometown to celebrate his attempts to restore to the country what they see as rightfully theirs.

The students sat extremely attentively whilst Bennett presented on some fun facts with emojis about key historical moments like the sinking of the Titanic in *The Ship of Doom*, the excavation of Tutankhamun's tomb in *The Mummy's Curse* and when the Mona Lisa was stolen in her latest



novel, *The Mona Lisa Mystery*. The idea of time travel and *The Butterfly Effect* were also explored. The students engaged in the session brilliantly, asking a lot of thought-provoking questions about the plots and how to write a book at the end of the session. Students were given the opportunity to pre-order the books for a signing by the author on the day, and since then, across both year groups more books have been ordered, to enable students to enjoy reading for pleasure because after being in the talk, they were hooked!

M.A. Bennett was born in the north of England to an English mother and a Venetian father. She loved history so much she studied it at four different universities. She also studied art, worked as an illustrator, an actress and a film reviewer. Now she has her dream job of being a writer and her books have been translated into more than 20 languages. She lives in London - the home of Greenwich Meantime – a place that has inspired the key theme of time travel throughout this thrilling series of books.



# Year 9 PSHE Making the Right Choices Enrichment Day

On April 26th all year 9 participated in a PSHE enrichment day led by a range of charity organisations to extend their knowledge and understanding of key wellbeing, health and emotional topics.

Each session was aimed at allowing the students to make informed choices and knowing where to get help and support if they face difficult challenges.

Metro Charity talked to students about the importance of Sexual Health, Consent and STIs. Students discussed what makes a healthy relationship and the pressures of sex. They also explored the different types of contraception and witnessed a condom demonstration, to understand the correct way to use barrier protection, an essential life skill to avoid unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

The Kenward Trust led a talk on their Think Differently campaign. This is aimed at educating students on Drugs, Alcohol and the Law. Andy spoke to students about his previous addiction issues, how he overcame these and the impact drugs had on his life, and the criminal activities he got involved in as a result. Students discussed how family, friends, jobs and health can all be affected by drugs and alcohol addiction. The Kenward Trust runs a helpline for anyone affected or in need of help on 01622 812603.



During the day year 9 were also visited by the Kent Magistrates Team. They learnt about the role of criminal courts and what happens if an offender is taken to the crown court. Students were shown some memorabilia from the prison system, this included uniforms. The magistrates showed students what the consequences could be for certain actions and the impact on individual and family lives.

The final volunteers to visit year 9 was from Homeless Care. The team discussed with students why people become homeless and addressed some misconceptions about poverty and different types of homelessness. OPGS contributes to the Homeless Care charity every Christmas with the food collection, an essential supply of resources for the charity. Students were encouraged to think about how their own acts of kindness can contribute to the wider community.

We would like to thank all the volunteers that visited our year 9 pupils, for sharing their valuable advice and unique life experiences which should aid our OPGS students in making the right choices in their own lives.

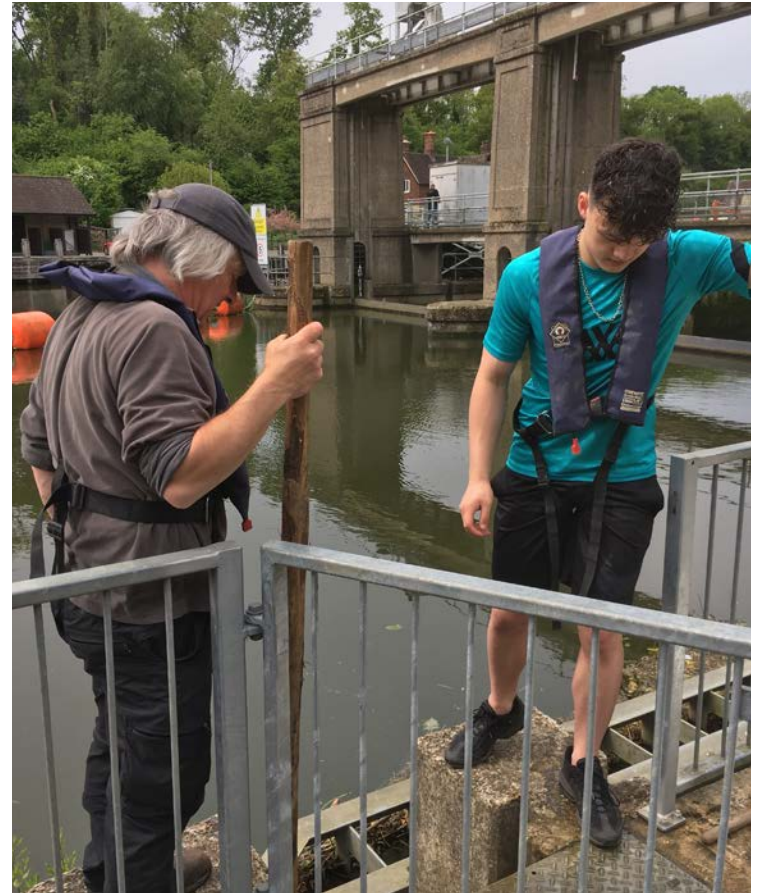




On Tuesday 23rd May 476 students in years 8,9 and 10 took part in Volunteering Day.

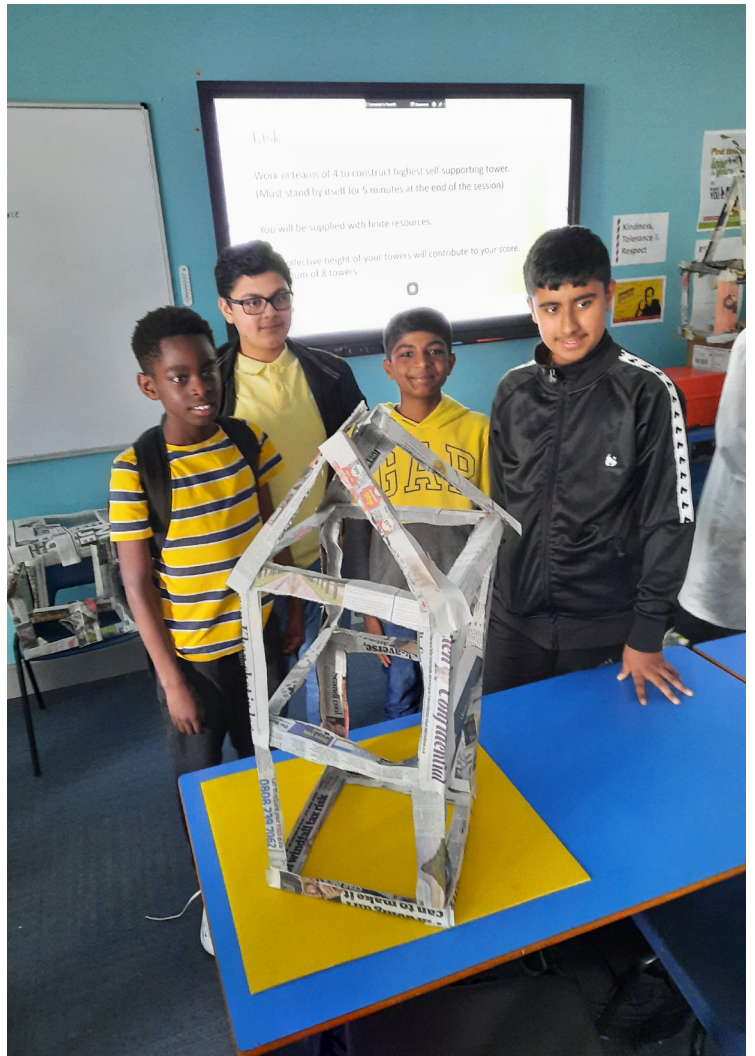
The day was aimed at giving students an opportunity to give back to their local community, develop teamwork, leadership and organisational skills and engage in a range of interesting local services.

Students took part in a range of activities from the Maidstone Borough Council Litter Pick to cleaning the boats at Mote Park. The school organised 21 placements across the Maidstone area including conservation projects at places like Communigrow, supporting the elderly at Maidstone Care Centre, renovating Children's centres to cleaning sporting



facilities. 224 students also arranged their own volunteering with many students arranging to return to over 60 different primary schools across the county to aid the younger students. Other students arranged to fundraise, support local Churches, support elderly neighbours and many other wonderful activities. Please can we thank all organisations, schools and staff for taking part. Well done to all the students for their hard work on the day.





# Charity Cake Sale

On Tuesday 9th May, the Head Students and Senior Prefects organized a cake sale to raise money for Spadework and Air Ambulance. We managed to raise a successful sum of £72, all of which will go to the charities. Thank you to those who donated - it was greatly appreciated!



# Wellbeing Award Verification

On 24th April, OPGS were awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools.

As you will be aware, Deputy Headteacher, Ms Bevan, our SENCO, Ms Worrall and our PSHE and Student Wellbeing Lead, Ms Ryan and a team of student Wellbeing Ambassadors have been working towards this national accreditation. This award is testimony to the fact that mental health and wellbeing sit at the heart of our school life.

The Wellbeing Award supports schools to create a culture in which wellbeing and mental health can thrive. The school was, of course, not working from a standing start in our work on wellbeing; we have a long-standing reputation for outstanding pastoral care within the context of a selective setting and we have always prided ourselves on knowing pupils as individuals. We are also fortunate to have an experienced pastoral team in the form of Deputy Headteachers and Directors of Study and all members of the school community are aware that 'Kindness, Tolerance and Respect' is a fundamental value of our school. Nevertheless, we saw the Wellbeing Award for Schools as a key self-evaluation tool to drive further improvements.

The school is continually working to offer high-quality, ongoing professional development so our staff feel confident responding to students' needs individually and as a collective, in terms of nurturing our school community, to foster the growth of students, into well rounded young adults.

We would like to thank the staff, parents, students and governors who were interviewed as part of the verification process. The verifier commented "This is a school where staff (and others) are prepared to 'go the extra mile' to support a member of their community struggling with their mental health or wellbeing and this is known and appreciated by those who have either sought out or been provided with assistance because their need was spotted." As such, it is evidence of our positive culture in the school which posits emotional wellbeing and mental health as the responsibility of all.

We will share with the whole school community our action plan for academic year 2023-2024 at the end of the Summer Term. We were really pleased that parents liked our wellbeing newsletters, so do look out for our next edition at the end of this term.



# Year 7 Science Club

Science Club runs for Year 7 every Wednesday lunchtime, 1.25pm, in room 57. Science Club is run by our 6th form Science Prefect Team, supported by staff.

We've taken part in lots of interesting activities in Science Club over the last four terms, including creating colourful rainbows using different chemicals, building Cartesian Diver demonstrations to help explain the nature of pressure, and making methane bubbles and sparklers. Methane bubbles are made by bubbling gas through a bowl of water with washing up liquid in it, scooping off the resulting foam, and setting light to it. The photograph shows Mr Lindsay at the exact point the methane bubbles caught fire in his hands, which is exactly how it was supposed to happen. It was a definite "wow" moment.

One of the most enjoyable things we've done is have fun with the Van de Graaf generator. The generator creates static electricity which can make your hair stand on end if it is long enough. As you can see from the photographs, our 6th form Science Prefects also got involved, wearing the colourful wigs over their short hair. Some of our Year 7s have longer hair and it started to stand on end when they put their hands on the generator. The last photo shows Mr Hoskins using the generator at our Open Day earlier in the year.

Another interesting subject was learning how paper boats don't burn if they are filled with water.



The students made a paper boat and then placed it carefully on a tripod, before filling the boat with water and setting the Bunsen burner underneath it. The water heated up and started to steam, but the paper did not burn until the water had boiled away. This is because the temperature of the paper was just too low whilst there was water in the boat. Once the water had gone, the temperature rose, and the boat began to burn. Our next subject will be looking at flight, and what makes a good aeroplane. We'll have a competition to see whose plane will fly the furthest in the classroom. We're all looking forward to that.

