



# Broughton House Win The Double

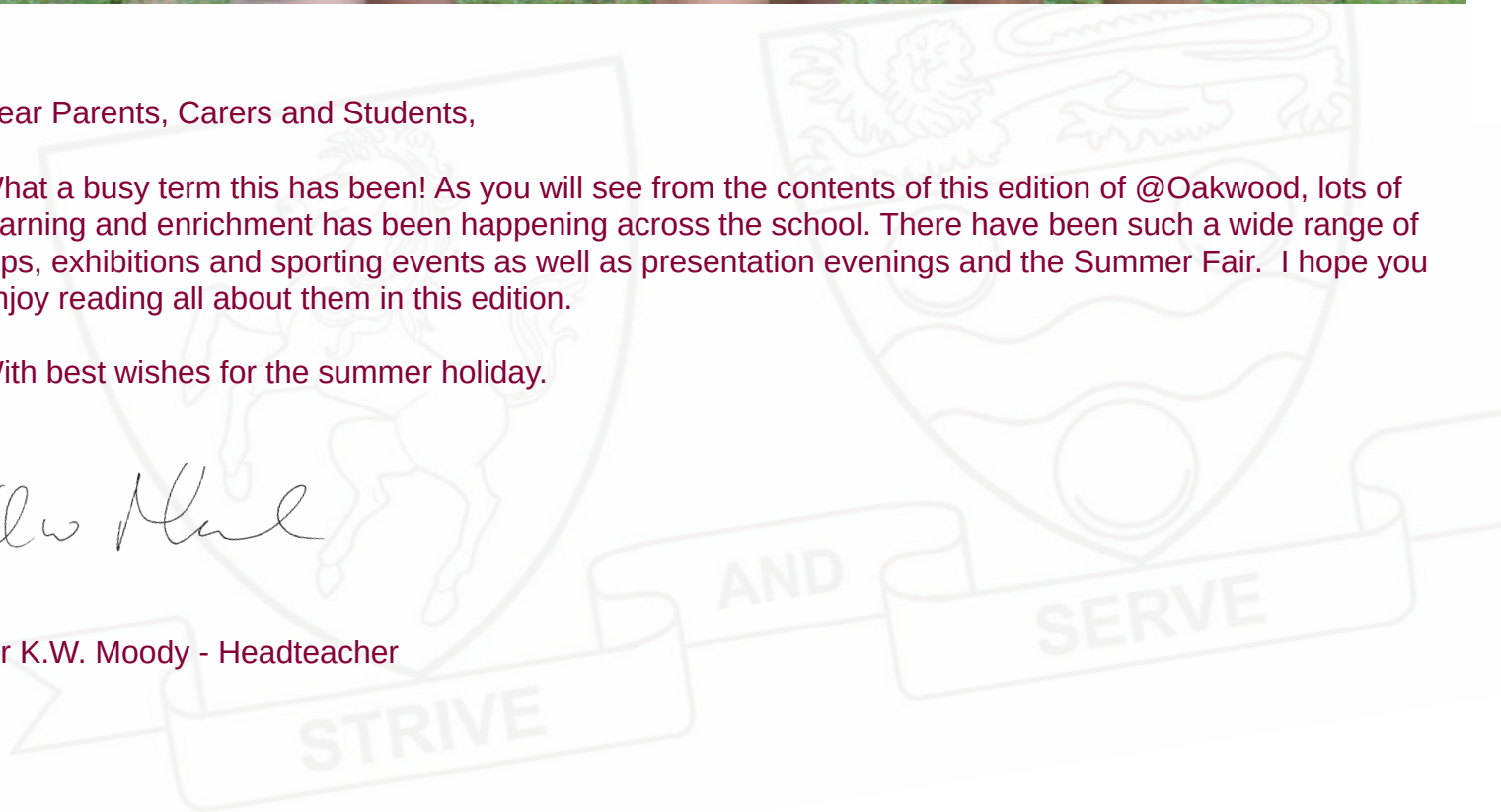
Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

What a busy term this has been! As you will see from the contents of this edition of @Oakwood, lots of learning and enrichment has been happening across the school. There have been such a wide range of trips, exhibitions and sporting events as well as presentation evenings and the Summer Fair. I hope you enjoy reading all about them in this edition.

With best wishes for the summer holiday.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K.W. Moody'.

Mr K.W. Moody - Headteacher



# Addams Family Production

Students and staff have been working hard to stage their version of the Addams Family production with many hours put into stage design, prop design, lighting, sound, music, acting, dancing and singing.

On Tuesday 11th – Thursday 13th July, students took to the stage to give a fantastic and memorable performance which captivated their audience.

Ms Buckley said...

'It has been my absolute privilege to have the pleasure of your children's company working on Addams this year . I have the best job in the world !

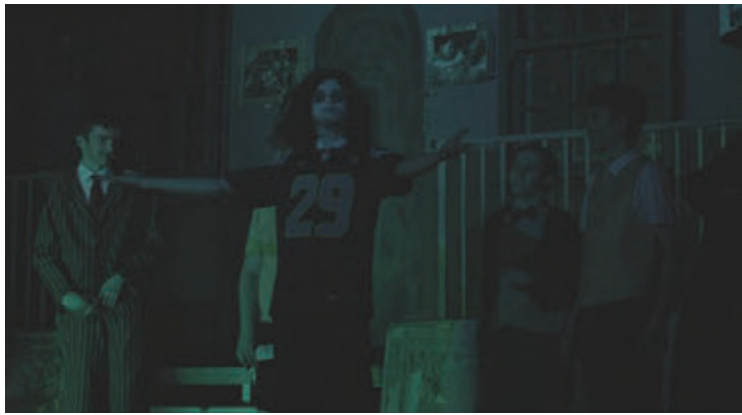
What does a director do ? I have many answers to this question , the one that remains the same is this ... they create an opportunity for self expression and self belief ! Nothing is more important than challenging yourself and failing , picking yourself up and succeeding .

I often get asked "How is your show going ? " and I always say "it's not my show! it takes a village !" I am lucky to have been able to be a part of a strong community that love making a show a success

and never accept defeat .

I am proud of every member of cast and crew and know that Addams is just the start of a family that will grow new branches and stronger roots'.





# Biology Field Trip

On the 9th of June, our current Year 12 Biology students went on a trip to the Wildwood Conservation Trust for their PAG 3.1.

Whilst they were there, they completed many different tasks starting with a simple capture-recapture of woodlice to estimate the population size, ensuring the marking did not inhibit the woodlice survival. Next, they moved on to measuring the levels of plant biodiversity in two different areas of woodland which were coppiced in different years. Finally, they were toured around the animals being cared for at the zoo to see the amazing work that they are doing for the conservation of native animals.



# Cambridge Chemistry Challenge

Students took part in the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge. This competition aims to stretch and challenge students interested in chemistry. Students sat a 90minute exam paper and all that participated performed extremely well and were awarded the following:

Gold award – Joshua Harman

Silver award – Sam Wilson and Chandler Castellani

Copper award – Amily Aby, Dzifa Agbevey, Josh Alchin, Bradley Bruce, Harry Curd, Jamie Dickson, Dylan Greenwood, Freddie Harper, Owen Hurely, Flynn Rainey, Isaac Smith and Krishna Sookun.

Congratulations to all students who participated.



## The Lower Sixth Competition

Cambridge Chemistry Challenge Lower 6th

# Cancer Research Walk

Year 12 Prefects had an early start on the Sunday morning of the Cancer Research Walk this term. OPGS Sixth Form always supports The Weald of Kent Rotary club with the walk organization, fund collection and refreshment preparation.

Club members to ensure the smooth running of the walk and were therefore vital in the fundraising process. The walk offered routes of 3 miles, 6 miles or 9 miles and walkers departed from Harrietsham and headed off up the Pilgrims Way. The Prefects deserve particular praise as many of them had examinations the next day! The walk raised over £22,000 for Cancer Research.

Our Sixth Formers worked alongside Rotary



Beneath the bluish-violet sky of a British night, I couldn't help but think of the scene of my first step on the English land.

The place that I have lived in since I was born, I shall leave. I miss that place and the people I love. It feels rather outrageous to see my motherland become a "habitat" for maniacs and criminals, seeing ridiculous news every day from thousands of miles away.

Night, ah yes, night, a moment for me to communicate with myself. Olive taught me to treasure moments with the people I love, sharing the stories of her father-in-law. Have I left without any regret?

Have I tried my best spending time with the people I care? I began to think. "Yes, perhaps." "Yes." "Yes."

"This place is no longer safe for people to live." "Mmm, perhaps." Two voices in my head discussing. "Anyway, it doesn't really matter to me, to be honest," I mumbled. I felt sorry for my homeland, that it and its people shall not suffer this. "But what can I do?"

"Hello, I'm Angus. I'm from Hong Kong." This is my identity, and no one shall take that away from me.

I love our language, I love our culture, I love our place...

## Year 7 Drama Enrichment

Year 7 performed in a condensed Shakespeare performance of *The Tempest*.

They then were set the challenge of creating a box set design for a key scene from the play. The photos show some of the work produced by the students with the winning design lit up.



# English Schools Athletics Competition

On Thursday 29th June I travelled up on the coach with the Kent team, to Birmingham.

I was picked up on the bus at 11:45am, where I put my suitcase and belongings on the bus for the journey. The journey up was quite long, taking 5 hours to reach Birmingham. I finally arrived at around 3:00pm. We were quickly ushered to a group meeting with all the Kent athletes, where I was given my sponsored kit, keycards and other information. I then went to my room, where I met my roommate, a hammer thrower, and prepared myself for the big day ahead.

I woke up on Friday at 5:30 am and met with the rest of the Kent team, feeling quite tired and very nervous. I then ate breakfast and gathered my stuff ready to travel to the Alexander Stadium where the Commonwealth Games were held last year). It took only 20 minutes to arrive and I then had the opportunity to watch some of my team mates' race while waiting for my turn. At 10:45 I began my warmup. One hour later I was taken to my call room, where I was registered and given my numbers. At 12:15 I walked up to the start line

preparing for my race, I looked at my competitors feeling very nervous, as I was up against some of the best athletes in England and most of them were Year 9! Being one of the younger competitors I knew I had to run one of my best times to qualify for the final the following day. Knowing this, I rose to the occasion and ran 4:13.9 a personal best by 5 seconds, and a new club record. I finished 4th in my heat, 1 place off immediate qualification but because my heat was significantly faster than the other two, I qualified as a fastest loser, meaning I was in the final the following day.

I did not manage to run any faster in the final (I was really tired), despite this I still managed to finish 2nd out of all of the Year 8s. I really enjoyed the occasion with a very large crowd watching, including many of my friends and family back home watching the livestream.

Overall, it was a fantastic experience, I made some great new friends and am now ranked number 2 over 1500m in the Country for Year 8.

By Freddie Gibson



# Geography Field Trips

On Tuesday, 27th of July, the Year 12 geography students went to the former London Dockyards in order to see an example of regeneration in a former industrial area to gather data and information for the A-Level Geography NEA.

The trip entailed a visit to the Museum of the London Dockyards, which featured an in-depth look into the vibrant, bustling atmosphere of the area in the 19th century, through to the decline and rebirth of the 20th century. It was an interesting view into the changing landscape of the area.

Afterwards, we set off to examine five sites across Canary Wharf and the Isle of Dogs, each representing a diverse look into the past and present of the area. From the towering glass financial hub of Canary Wharf (formerly a Docklands for unloading cargo), to the leafy housing of Cubitt Town (formerly to house the area's industry workers), and the farm at Mudchute (a former wasteland composed of displaced mud), all connected by the desire to improve and progress. Furthermore, the excellent public transport system, courtesy of the recently opened Elizabeth Line and the iconic Docklands Light Railway (DLR), meant for a seamless and reliable journey.

I would like to express my gratitude to the OPGS Geography Department for this privileged and unique look into one of London's most iconic locations. - By Charlie Haisman

On Wednesday we set off towards Maidstone. Once we arrived at Fremlin Walk we were briefed about what to do during the day. Mr Baird and Mr Mayes were great about explaining any safety precautions we should take.

We were sent off in groups to visit all the different sites. For each location we did pedestrian counts and conducted land use surveys. If the work was completed, we were given complete control to visit sites in any order and at our own pace. It was great to learn about how Maidstone has changed over time, especially the High Street and Travelodge's history.

My group had finished just over half of the sites before we had to check in with the teachers to show our progress. Since all my group knew Maidstone well, we were able to easily navigate round and occasionally bumping into Ms Vansen and Ms Dickens at the sites to make sure we all right and to ask if we needed any help.

Overall, the day was extremely valuable for my NEA as I managed to gather data as well as being great general revision for regeneration in my local place. - By Harrison Wright

On Monday 3rd of July, the Year 12 geography students went to the site of Camber Sands and Dungeness in order to see an example of coastal management at the seaside, in order to gather data and information for the A-Level Geography NEA.

We got the coach down to Camber Sands and set off to do a transect of the sand dunes. This involved measuring the angle on the sand dunes and also vegetation coverage. After that we went to investigate the groynes and underwent the same procedure. This is to show us the effectiveness of the groynes and how they have built up the beach. We then went back on the coach and went down to Dungeness where we picked two different points along the coastline and do the same method to show how the sea defences are put in certain places to protect things, like the power station in Dungeness and the houses in camber. - By Joe Kelsey





# Year 7 Creative Arts - Enrichment day – Graphics.

31 students were split into four groups and took part in a Graphic Design challenge for the day. Their brief was, in their groups, to design concept ideas/products for the SET, COSTUME, MARKETING & MERCHANDISE, suitable for the HANSEL AND GRETEL production shown the Royal Opera House later in the year.

The actual Hansel and Gretel show is a mischievous opera-based production, on the much-loved German fairytale, but as a group they could set the date and location the production. For example, one group did Hansel and Gretel set in a futuristic space setting, and another decided to set it in Ancient Japan. They were allowed to choose the materials they were going to use for each product, which included, felt-tip/pro-markers, pencil, colouring pencil, paint, or oil pastel etc. Students worked well throughout the day creating exciting ideas and products for each aspect of the challenge. Once completed,

they spent some time in the afternoon presenting to the class their ideas and products they had come up with. The enrichment day was designed to improve students' creative problem-solving, build understanding of career pathways, explore the connections between STEM and the arts, and develop students' empathy skills needed to design for an audience and other target audience groups. They produced some excellent graphic design work, which will hopefully be displayed in school soon.



## U12 Cricket Team

Both the U12 A & B Cricket teams got their season underway at the start of May with games vs Bullers Wood and Sir Joseph Williamson's respectively. Being their first competitive matches for the school it was encouraging to see the boys play with the spirit and determination.

The A Team managed to post 83 runs for only 3 wickets in 16 overs which set a tough chase for the opposition. An excellent bowling display saw the visitors bowled out for 47 runs. It was a similar story for the B team vs Sir Joseph Williamson's who were put into bat by Oakwood and then managed to bowl them out for just 25 runs. The chase didn't take long and was reached before the fifth over. With both teams progressing into the next round of the Kent cup they were drawn against Ravenswood in both competitions. Despite both teams not being able to win these matches they played valiantly, with standout performances in the season from Alfie Pearson, Will Grey, Josh Rogers & Connor Russell, the squad will be in good shape for next year.

## U13 Cricket Team

The U13 team were drawn away to Dartford in the second round of the Kent Cup and went into the game full of confidence. Batting first the hosts set a total of 120 to win. Despite a positive start the squad fell short of the target but would go into the plate competition where they would play Wellsey House in round 3.

We elected to bat first which looked like a poor decision as the team only posted a modest score of 70, but the runs were in the bank, and it was a defensible total. The squad rallied and bowled and fielded for their lives and managed to bowl them all out for 54 for a 14 run win.

The next round saw a nice trip down to Canterbury to play Junior King's School. The hosts won the toss and elected to bat and were restricted to 117 for 9 after 20 overs, which on a decent pitch looked chasable. After a lovely spot of tea, (cake and sandwiches) the group were refuelled and ready to chase the runs down. Unfortunately, we had a batting collapse that the England team from the mid 90's would have been proud of, which resulted in the team being all out for 36, but credit to King's who had a lengthy bowling attack.

Special mentions to Oliver East and Tom Campbell for their consistency with both bat and ball.

## U14 Cricket Team

The U14 cricket team have enjoyed a positive season under the guidance of Mr Devonald and Mr Keeling-Jones. The boys started the summer term with a tough U14 Kent Cup fixture vs. Eltham College, one of the strongest cricket schools in the county. Having lost the toss OPGS were dismissed cheaply before Eltham College reached their victory target for the loss of two wickets. Despite a difficult first game the boys showed great resilience to comeback in their U14 Kent Plate



fixture vs. Norton Knatchbull GS. After winning an important toss the OPGS bowling attack all chipped in to dismiss NKS for 90 runs. A 'Bazball' style run chase followed where the team reached the victory target with 8 overs to spare!

This set up a quarter final fixture vs. Radnor House at the beautiful Holmesdale CC in Sevenoaks. On a baking hot day OPGS lost the toss and were asked to bowl first. Captain Harrison Fryer and James Gray were superb in the opening 6 overs, taking key wickets to reduce Radnor House to 35-4. Unfortunately two dropped catches led to a destructive innings from the Radnor House number four batsman, smashing 68 runs from 40 balls. Chasing 160 runs to win from 20 overs, Angus Kenny (42 not out) and Roman Brooker (30 runs) batted brilliantly, mixing good running and boundary hitting for a 50 run partnership. Late wickets eventually fell meaning OPGS ended up 23 runs short of their target. This was still an excellent performance against a very strong Radnor House team that had several district and a Kent player in their team.

Some of the squad have also had the opportunity to experience U18 cricket this year, giving them the experience needed to play regularly in 2023-24. A special mention should be given to the U14 captain, Harrison Fryer, who has led the team well this year whilst scoring runs and taking wickets in most of the above games.

## U15 Cricket Team- Kent Cup Finalists

On Tuesday 20th June the U15 cricket team capped a brilliant season by contesting the U15 Kent Cup Cricket final against Simon Langton Grammar School at Wye Cricket Club. This was the boys second appearance in a Kent Schools Cricket Association final having won the U13 Thunder Trophy during the 2021 season.

In previous rounds the team won a series of hard fought games against Rainham Mark GS, Langley Boys Park Boys School, Bennett School, and local rivals Maidstone Grammar School. Highlights from these games included match winning knocks from Ryan Ward (46 runs) and Finn Holmes (27 runs) to chase down an imposing target 146 runs from 20 overs against Langley Park. Having missed this game Ben Taylor came back into the team to score a brilliant 96 runs when opening the batting in our quarter final match vs. Bennett School. Supported by Will Aldrich (42 not out), OPGS reached a season highest total of 189-4 from 20 overs. The





boys then faced a tense and competitive semi-final match vs. Maidstone Grammar School. Sent into bat on a bowler friendly surface and long outfield the team showed great determination to reach 120 runs from 20 overs. Some outstanding fielding (with four run outs!) and tight bowling from Louis Merenda and Ryan Ward restricted MGS to 110-6 from their 20 overs. This was another impressive performance that gave the boys confidence going into the final that was played the day following this semi-final fixture.

Arriving early at the ground (even after a detour to Tesco!) the boys went through some fielding warm ups to settle their nerves prior to the game. This was a big occasion for many of the boys, some of which who had only started playing cricket when joining OPGS in 2020.

Having won the toss, Ben Taylor and Ryan Ward didn't hesitate in sending Simon Langton in to bat first on a green and damp looking Wye CC wicket. Despite this the bowling attack faced the daunting proposition of a Simon Langton GS team that mostly play district cricket and have two players in the U15 Kent team, who play alongside OPGS' Ryan Ward. The first four overs didn't go to plan with any loose bowling punished by the Simon Langton top order, taking them to a score of 34-0 from four overs. Wickets from Jude Wigmore, Louis

Merenda and Will Aldrich bought OPGS back into the game and restricted Simon Langton to 134 runs. This was still a tough target given the quality of opposition and bowler friendly playing surface. Opening the batting, Ryan Ward and Ben Taylor found it hard to break the infield thanks to accurate bowling and a lack of pace in the wicket. This eventually led to a mix up where Ryan was run out without scoring. A huge shame given his previous performances and the experience he could have provided for the run chase. Ben responded brilliantly to this setback and expanded his game to bat through the entire innings, scoring 50 not out. Unfortunately, this wasn't quite enough to win the game despite Woody Hall and Fin Holmes also making good contributions. OPGS finished on 102-5 from 20 overs, eventually losing by 33 runs. Despite losing the final the team should be extremely proud of another very successful season where they have reached the final of the most prestigious junior Kent Schools Cricket Competition. Well done to the entire squad who have contributed to this success- Ryan Ward, Bent Taylor (Cpt), Woody Hall, Fin Holmes, Will Aldrich, Harvey Lowe, Josh Bruce, Louis Merenda, Jacob Killick, Oscar Miles, Jude Wigmore, Rocco Macias & Morgan Taylor. The challenge for next season is to now try and replicate this success at U18 schools' cricket next season!

# Year 9 History Enrichment Day to IWM Duxford: Technology, Power and Politics

On the 21st July all Year 9 students attended the IWM Duxford History Enrichment Day.

At this famous site, which was a crucial base for the Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain and the Blitz in the Second World War, students followed an enquiry into how technology has shaped warfare over time. They were fortunate to see a Spitfire taking off and landing, as well as an American Air Force Osprey from nearby Mildenhall. When exploring the exhibits, they saw how the engineering behind flight developed from the First to Second World Wars and into the Cold War. A section of both the Berlin Wall and the World Trade Centre in the American Air Museum displayed the increasing power of Britain's American ally. The most powerful parts of the day were the visit to the 1940s Operations Room where students saw how reports of Nazi bombers heading over Maidstone to London led to a scramble at Duxford of the pilots charged with defending the skies and the



moving testimony of a Second World War evacuee who held Year 9 entranced with his first-hand accounts of life during the Second World War. The whole History Department were very proud of Year 9's focus and enthusiasm throughout the day and we hope it has both informed them about these topics and inspired them to find out more in future.



To celebrate Pride month, across June, the OPGS Library have created a display to showcase LGBTQ+ authors and texts which tell the story of such characters, to huge critical acclaim.

The history of Pride month goes back to the Stonewall riots, a series of gay liberation protests in 1969 in the USA, but it has since become an international holiday, in particular with large parades in both London and Brighton in the UK.

To raise awareness of mental health, their display houses both fiction and non-fiction texts which engage with mental health issues but also promote strategies to cope with these, in practices such as mindfulness.

Lastly, their final display is to drum up hype about the release of a new publication, The Night

Animals and The Hunt for the Nightingale by Sarah Ann Jukes.

Her latest novels are beautifully told, touching and hopeful, in their story of family and friendship; of dealing with mental health issues; and, of finding the strength one needs to deal with grief.

Sarah Ann Jukes writes books for young people. Her YA debut *Outside* was nominated for the Carnegie Medal Award 2020, shortlisted for Mslexia's Children's Novel Award, and longlisted for the Bath Novel Award. *The World Between Us* has been published in multiple languages and her Middle Grade debut *The Hunt for the Nightingale* was Editor's Choice in *The Bookseller* in 2022. *The Night Animals* was Waterstones Book of the Month for January 2023. Jukes is an experienced creative writing tutor and also works for Oxford University. She lives opposite a graveyard in Oxfordshire with her partner and cat. Follow her [@sarahannjukes](https://www.instagram.com/sarahannjukes).



# Mentoring at St Augustine's

Recently our newly appointed OPGS Senior Prefects and some of their eager peers have joined a mentoring system with our neighbour school:

St Augustine's. Students having difficulties in their school life, whether that be academically or socially, have the opportunity to talk to OPGS' own experienced and mature students to gain an insight into ways to cope or conquer difficulties. Conversations may only be about interests or how school is for them, but, the importance of communication and problem solving is taken away from each session. Sessions run 2pm to 3pm on Wednesday, providing an escape from a full day of lessons in order to help stimulate enjoyment within education and school. As an individual taking part in order to help others, I have taken a lot away from the experience; my communication skills have grown and my understanding of different methods of approaching others has developed largely.



## Political Cartoons

Politics students are often encouraged to analyse and reflect on political cartoons, but one of our students is trying his hand at producing his own satirical cartoons by combining his love of Politics and Art.

Arek is one of our Senior Prefects and studies Art, Politics and Psychology. He joined our Sixth Form after studying for his GCSEs at Cornwallis. Much of his work reflects on global politics but he also turns his hand to satirizing the British government. Arek says the secret to a good cartoon is the combination of two news events into one cartoon. He is inspired by illustrator Ralph Steadman, who is also a family friend. Arek is planning to study Politics at university where he is hoping to contribute to the student newspapers. Arek is also known for his questionable impressions of politicians!



## HASS (Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Faculty)

### Overview:

As the academic year draws to an end, it is important to reflect upon the HASS related events including debates and lectures here at Oakwood. Such opportunities have provided much to think about in the world of HASS, indulging students in up-to-date affairs and fostering a passion in one of the many topics covered over the last year.

### Debates:

Debates have encouraged students to research a chosen topic and refine arguments in order to debate their view and respond to counter arguments proposed by fellow students. These debates are performed in front of HASS students who propose questions to further the depth of the debate. Debating is a crucial part of developing a deeper understanding of complex issues such as the monarchy or the minimum work requirements proposed following strike action. The diversity of opinions expressed during these debates has created an empathetic and conducive learning environment and has deepened students' knowledge of current affairs. Debates this year include: Should we abolish the monarchy? (Pictured) To which the answer was 'Yes'!

As we go into Year 13, our debates continue with all students required to speak at least once.

### Lectures:

Equally, the sixth form team have led thought-provoking lectures on global issues ranging from the earthquake in south-eastern Turkey and the rescue effort to find survivors, to the law and the idea of mens rea (guilty mind) where we looked at controversial cases of the past. These lectures have invoked intellectual curiosity within students, igniting a passion for further reading in a chosen subject that extends far beyond the classroom. Lectures have been crucial to the students of Oakwood in furthering their knowledge of global issues and has empowered them to become active participants in the modern world.





# Mrs Lewell's Retirement

We would like to wish a fond farewell and offer our thanks to Mrs Lewell, who leaves us after 30 years of outstanding service to the school.

It is hard to quantify her contribution to the school, but she has been a brilliant teacher of Geography, Head of Department and a pastoral leader before entering Senior Leadership as an Assistant Headteacher and latterly a Deputy Headteacher.

Her quiet efficiency and organisational skills came to the fore during the Pandemic and so many of our colleagues have benefitted from her kindness and support as indeed have literally hundreds of pupils because of her inspirational teaching and insistence on high standards. From next year we will be marking her contribution to the school by the introduction of the Lewell Award for the most outstanding performance at A Level – a fitting testimony to her time with us.



On Tuesday 4th and Thursday 6th July from 4-6pm, OPGS hosted this year's New Designers' Exhibition. An eclectic and diverse showcase of talent from the Art, Graphics, DT and Media Studies departments.

Students work from Year 10 to Year 13 was on display, in its surreal, thought-provoking, and intertextual richness, even being unapologetically political at times. The students have worked hard in their non-examination assessments, across the course of the GCSE and A Level, to produce these innovative productions and it is truly inspiring to see the results.

In Art, the students are able to develop a theme across 3 workbooks which culminates in a 10 week long project for their final exam. Some students explored the relationship between books and nature, with a depiction of poaching of rhino horns in a graphic way; others looked at the personal traumas surrounding the refugee crisis; others still depicting ways to find escapism in the tumultuous times we live in today.

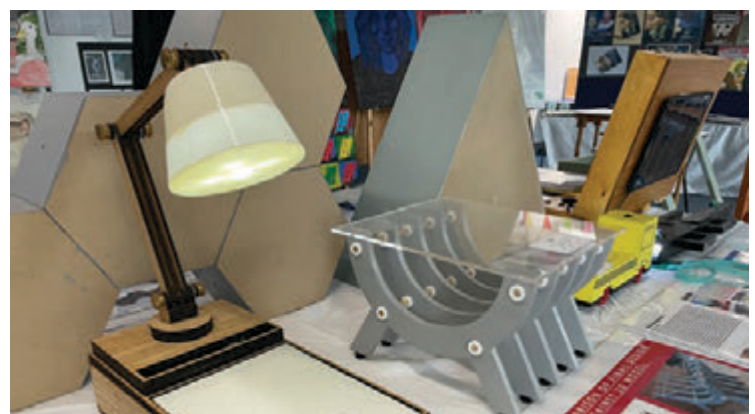
In DT, students had created practical solutions to a postal storage system, a gardener's wheelbarrow and seat combined, and some ingenious hexagonal storage solutions.



In Graphics, the impact of mental health in sports was explored, as was a tongue in cheek graphic novel for humour pitched at both kids and adults alike.

In Media Studies, GCSE students had to create a theatrical release banner poster and DVD cover for either a rom-com or sci-fi film. At A Level, the students were tasked with creating 4 printed pages of a mainstream glossy magazine, that would challenge the representation of issues in an interesting way. As a result, many students tackled the representation of sustainability with regards to food, fashion trends and travel in their increasingly eco-conscious representations.

Year 12 Art and Design – Arek Zurawinski  
Year 13 Art and Design – Eleanor Reeve  
Year 11 Design and Technology – Daniel Airey  
Year 13 design and Technology – Ethan Cornish  
Graphics – Robin Hammond  
Year 11 Media Studies – Brandon Toledo  
Year 13 Media Studies – Phoebe Davis



On Saturday 17th June, OPGS held it's first Summer Fair. This event was arranged by the Parents Association and was part of their wider plans to raise funds for the school.

The event was held on the school's hardcourt and saw a range of stalls and activities set up to support the fund raising. A range of traders set up stalls on the playground, arriving from 08:00am, setting up gazebos and arranging their products for sale. There was everything from candy stalls to kitchenware and the Parents Association took the opportunity to sell its pre-loved uniform. The school invited the incoming Year 7 students, who will be joining us in September 2023 and it was wonderful to meet the some of the new families joining us.

The games area was set up on the field and included some classics like Beat the Goalie, Splat a Rat, Play Your Cards Right and A Game of Chance. A climbing wall was also set up on the field, thanks to the Lower Grange Farm Kent Scouts and proved very popular with visitors. Many of our Year 7 students volunteered to support the day, welcoming visitors and running stalls with some of the 6th form prefects. We are very proud of these students and their commitment to the school.

We do want to take the opportunity to thank all that



attended and all families that donated a prize to the raffle. Many local companies were extremely generous and we are very grateful. Congratulations to all the winners.

We are looking forward to finding out the final total of funds raised, which we believe will be in excess of £1000. We are also looking forward to hosting the event again next year!





# Peer Education Project

Year 12 Senior Prefects have been Peer Mentoring Year 7 classes this term. After a period of training led by The Mental Health Foundation, Ms Ryan and Mrs Williams, the Prefects went out to classrooms at afternoon registration and delivered a series of sessions on how students can look after themselves and their mental health.

Through class discussion, Year 12 Prefects allowed students to reflect on how to empty their stress buckets, the importance of sleep, of friendships, of kindness and of a healthy body image. Year 7 students are also led in a regular mindfulness practice which allows them to create a calmer mental and physical state. By acting as Peer Educators, the prefects can develop their organization and teamwork skills, as well



as reflecting on their own mental health. Peer to Peer support is one of the strengths of OPGS. Sixth Formers guide younger students through the challenges of growing up in 2023.



# Presentation Evening 2023

As we approach the end of the Summer term, it is that time of year, in which we get to celebrate the school's successes at our annual Presentation Evening.

This year, the ceremony was held on Thursday 29th June with OPGS Alumnus and Senior Civil Engineer Sam Jamaa giving a speech.

The evening began with a video 'Review of the Year' looking back at some dazzling moments across the last academic year; a showcase of artistic feats, trips exploring subjects outside the bounds of the classroom and students who have excelled themselves in national competitions to master a specific skill. These students are the heart and soul of a school who is proud of its community and the individual contributions, which showcase their excellence, give us a lot to be simultaneously proud of and humbled by.

After the lower school awards were given out, by the respective Directors of Study, there was a captivating musical interlude, Sonata No. 8 Pathétique 2nd Movement by Beethoven, performed by Angus Wong in Year 9. Then, the upper school awards and Music and Drama ties were punctuated with a dramatic performance by Henry Bullivant and Harry Marsh from Year 10, who brought to life a harrowing scene from the trenches in R C Sheriff's Journey's End. On a much more vivid note, the essence of the jungle was brought to life by Theo Merritt, also from Year 10, who recreated a scene from Fairytale Heart by Phillip Ripley.

Following which, we had the sports colours awards, appointment of Head Students and the Senior Perfect Team. There was a moment of hushed silence for Mr Moody's recognition and thanks to the long term staff service of both Ms Bevan, Deputy Head Teacher and Mr Smith, Director of Study for Year 9.

Mr Jamaa's closing speech was very moving, because he shared a personal story of his life at and beyond school, but also because it was a refreshing reminder to accept help from others at times when one might need it, and also be that

helping hand to fellow students, to help them achieve their goals. His speech was one that breathed life into community, in the truest sense of the word, that although we aim to strive for excellence, make our mark on the world whether that be through good grades or in industry thereafter, but also that we do not do so alone, and that together we are stronger.

It is always a wonderful end to the year, to be able to clap and clap again, the academic prizes and individual talent of students to work hard every day in their school career to strive for excellence. A tradition at Oakwood that remains at the heart of the school calendar, and one we look forward to celebrating again next year.



On Wednesday 7th June, Oakwood Park Grammar School welcomed over 60 Primary School students to take part in our football session hosted by Mr Smith with the help of Mr Lewis and some of our Year 8 students.

Thankfully, the sun was on our side and the students took part in a series of matches, switching leadership and football roles throughout to have a chance at experiencing new matches and responsibilities each round. It was an enjoyable afternoon with some students even going on to play another official football game once the session ended. Thank you to all the staff and students for making it a success.

Oakwood Park Grammar School also hosted 30 primary school students on Thursday 6th July to get creative and try their hand at creating their own robotic hand in an art session. Our expert teacher Mr Edwards, alongside Y13 art prefect Sophia, hosted the session teaching the students how to craft an intricate design on their robotic arms whilst working with a range of materials and colours to make them 3D and abstract. The students listened attentively to each instruction and went home with a new masterpiece.



# Read and Review: Where the Light Goes

We have, once again, been given one of the first opportunities to read and review a publication by The Reading Agency. This is a Young Adult Fiction book, *Where the Light Goes*, aimed for readers aged 14+ as it deals with issues of mental health, effects of the internet and suicide.

As a result, the English Department, has nominated two Most Able students – one for English Literature and one for English Language – as a way in which to celebrate their excellence in the subject, from each of our Yr 10 classes. This novel is a heart-wrenching exploration of rage, love and bereavement from bestselling prize winner Sara Barnard.

Sara Barnard lives in Brighton and does all her best writing on trains. She loves books, book people and book things. She has been writing ever since she was too small to reach the 'on' switch on the family Amstrad computer. Her latest novel looks at the intersection of family and fame, the impact of the internet and what this means for the youth of today; as real-life tragedies like the death of Caroline Flack, tell us.

The book is about Lizzie Beck, who is one quarter of British pop sensation The Jinks, who launched their career via a reality TV talent show and rose straight to fame – and in Lizzie's case, infamy, for her tumultuous relationship with her boyfriend, stints in rehab and candid confessions about her mental health Instagram are all over the internet. To Emmy, though, she will always be her older sister, Beth, the person whose footsteps she intends to follow - except now she can't.

Forced to face a world without the guiding light of her bright, brilliant big sister, Emmy must wrestle with the impact of private grief, public scrutiny and discover who she once was and who she will become, now that Beth is gone.





# Ryan Hughes Memorial Tree and Plaque

On 7th July the friends and family of Ryan Hughes gathered in Aylesford at a birch tree planted by his closest school friends in his memory.

Next to the tree, in the picturesque river-side park, is also a plaque with the inscription 'Forever in our thoughts'.

Ryan's father, Daron Hughes, spoke very bravely and movingly about his son. He thanked the large group of Oakwood Park students who had come to the ceremony and also the school for their support over the past 16 months. He said how important Ryan's friends had been and that Ryan's family were grateful for the 'joy they brought to him and that, whatever choices he made at the end, we will always believe that when it came to his friends, Ryan consistently chose well.'

Also attending the ceremony was local MP Tracey Crouch who spoke to Ryan's friends about the importance of looking after one's mental health.

This is a theme very close to the staff and students at Oakwood Park Grammar School where students in Year 12 act as Peer Educators on mental wellbeing to the youngest pupils. The school has recently

won a wellbeing award for their programmes to raise awareness of mental health issues.

In 2022-23 OPGS Sixth Form will be working with The Samaritans in their Sixth Form PSHE sessions.

As Ryan's friends, leave Maidstone to attend universities across the country, Ryan's tree will continue to grow and flourish and be a calm place for them to return to and remember Ryan.



# Sociology Research Trip

Year 12 Sociologists put what they had learnt in their lessons on Youth Subculture and Ethnic Diversity to use as they visited the East End of London during an Enrichment Day in June.

The day began at the Museum of London Docklands which epitomizes the regeneration of a previously industrial area into a space for recreation and education. Students learnt about the input first of slavery and then immigration on the structures, culture and sociology of the East End. Their understanding of the diversity of the East End was developed as they walked through Whitechapel market while the call to prayer rang out from the East London Mosque. These students of Crime and Policing were also witness to a police raid which brought into stark reality their studies into the relationship between the Met Police and Londoners. Lunch was had in the curry houses of Brick Lane, before a tour of the street art that adorns many of the walls of Shoreditch. Many students were struck by the combination of art and protest in the graffiti. Another tube journey took us to Highbury Fields, the site of the first Gay Liberation Front March in 1971. Before heading home, students had time to reflect on what they had seen, some of which are published below. Thank you to Jasper B who was our trip photographer.

## The Flower

A flower grows in the waste out east,  
Towered over by great grey beasts  
Vibrant in colour and fresh to touch  
This flower blooms from the rough.

It's beauty allures the common man  
A place to sit hand in hand.  
Such unity is golden in a time of woe,  
But the time will come, and it will go

Plucked by fingers of rotten greed,  
The flower forced to serve a different need.  
In a vase up high and behind the glass,  
Painted pink, it becomes a farce.

Petals droop and the stem dries up,  
Dead in the sight of those corrupt.  
But way out there, another grows  
To once again, become a show.

Barney Howarth

## Brick Lane Graffiti

Brick Lane is a place in London rich in culture, diversity and history. It was called Brick Lane as it was the main road used to transport the very bricks that make up London. This is a leading reason for the large amounts of diversity due to the higher immigration rates needed for labour. This has resulted in a diverse and colourful environment with artwork depicting political views, and expressions of culture and ideologies.

The range of art varies from art to catch the eye to pieces of art with much deeper meaning used to bring many words into a simple powerful image. Many pieces of art highlight the views of the immigrants towards capitalism through a Marxist lens where others are used as an expression of individual values and views.

The purposeful intention of this art is metaphor for the life of Brick Lane, a place of incredible surface beauty but laced with deeper meaning, it is a lens into the life of minorities by using their own words and expression. The art highlights the colourful nature of Brick Lane and its residents but also highlights the political views held by many of the artists.

Even though to the normal eye Brick Lane is just a colourful place to enjoy the many curry restaurants and food stalls, to those who know where to look it is a hidden message demonstrating the political views of the ethnic minorities in this cryptogram.

## Alex Harvey



## Capitalist Incorporation of Street Art in Brick Lane

Most of the graffiti was done by individual people, used as a platform to express their views. However, there was an increasing amount of misuse which replaced individual artwork with corporate advertisement in the form of street art. The style and size of the advertisement sought to make it similar to what the independent artwork was trying to achieve through vibrancy and text style. Many people have attempted to illustrate messages through their art pieces often to depict their political views or grievances in society. The advertisements which have been integrated into this street art at odds with its original intent. For us the artwork was surprisingly moving and allowed us to deeper consider the capitalist influence within our society. This reiterates the differences between independent street art which is a form of protest within society and airing grievances, providing a metaphorical voice for those who feel they cannot speak up. This shows how the street work from a capitalist perspective undermines the purpose of the powerful, politically independent art. This artwork reflects the fact that there are not ideological barriers to contribution in political activity, but rather large social barriers within the context of modern Britain.



# Parents Afternoon Spanish classes

OPGS parents have recently enjoyed a series of three after school Spanish classes to prepare them for the holidays. They can tackle the airport, deal with any problems that arise during their trip, for example a visit to the pharmacy, and, perhaps what is everybody's favourite, order Spanish food. Thank you to those parents who took part and to Mrs Moreira for her infectious enthusiasm when delivering the sessions. We wish those visiting Spain this summer good luck with their new Spanish skills and we would love to hear how useful your new language skills were.



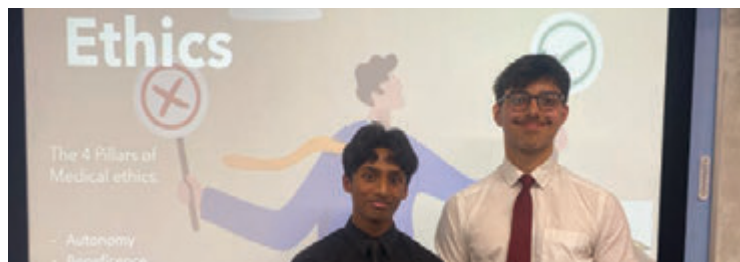
As we come to the end of this academic year at Oakwood, it is essential to reflect upon the many STEM related events that have taken place. As the Head of Sixth Form STEM Faculty, I will be writing a report that highlights the exciting debates and lectures that members of the Sixth Form have been conducting throughout the year. Additionally, I will incorporate relevant scientific advancements and current affairs as I believe it is important to understand what is happening in the world of STEM.

## Debates

Sixth formers are encouraged to research a topic and

debate it with other STEM students. They complete this in front of all the STEM students as they try to prove their point and convince everyone they are right.

These are a few of the debate titles along with a brief overview of what happened:



Title	Overview
Should the NHS be privatised?	This debate focussed on the cost and quality of the NHS if it was private and referred to countries where this is the case, such as the USA. The against side argued that it would be more expensive and so poorer people would suffer. The for side argued that the facilities and treatment would be of better quality due to people paying for it.
Should AI be used in medicine?	This debate focussed on the pros and cons of AI and if it could be applied to medicine. The for side argued that AI could help increase the efficiency and develop our medical knowledge further. The against side explained the problems with giving AI this much control and how AI can not compare to humans in this field.
Should we build more nuclear reactors?	This debate explored the environmental and practical implications of creating more nuclear reactors to replace fossil fuels. The for side talked about how fossil fuels are destroying the planet and are also running out. They explained that renewable energy is too expensive to create and is unpractical. The against side warned of the disadvantages such as nuclear waste and the lack of knowledge we have about nuclear power.

# 2023 Sports Day Report

On Friday 14th July our Year 7-10 students represented their houses in the school's annual Sports Day competition. Having been postponed from the week prior, wet weather now threatened the event with showers and high winds forecast.

Despite this, our students approached the event with amazing enthusiasm and excitement, ready to compete for both the Sports Day Cup and House Sports Shield, the latter of which combines both sports day results and enrichment points from throughout the school year.

In last years event, Broughton House broke Sadler Houses' sequence of victories to win both the cup and shield competition, much to the delight of Miss Bevan, house captain Mr Lindsay and all his students. Could Sadler house bounce back this year, or would Fisher, Hazlitt or Wilberforce emerge as new winner in 2023!?

The PE staff and 6th Form students began setting up the field at 7.30am in cold and gloomy conditions, with everyone checking weather forecasts and hoping the programme could run to schedule. The atmosphere began to build as students and staff arrived at the field, gathering in house areas parallel to the 100m section of the track. Following a brief welcome from the PE department, the morning session saw students compete in a vast range of athletics and 'open' events that included the tug of war, spartan warrior, golf chip challenge and speed chess. This gave all students the opportunity to challenge themselves both physically and mentally, doing everything possible to collect points for their respective houses.

Below are the students who excelled in the track and field events, breaking longstanding school records to win their events. Special congratulations must go to Freddie Gibson who broke three track records in remarkable fashion, surpassing the 1500m record by an incredible 18 seconds! This was following his





recent 2nd placed finish in the U14 English Schools Championships.

Year 7:

- Kacper Wilkosz (Fisher)- 23.76 metres in the Discus (previous best 21.22 metres)

Year 8:

- Freddie Gibson (Broughton)- 2 minutes 15.93 seconds in the 800m (previous best 2 minutes 24.96 seconds)
- Freddie Gibson (Broughton)- 4 minutes 45.28 seconds in the 1500m (previous best 5 minutes 03.23 seconds)
- Freddie Gibson (Broughton)- 43.82 seconds in the 300m (previous best 44.23 seconds)

Year 9:

- Olaremi Scott-Boyle- 25.59 seconds in the 200m (previous best 25.96 seconds)
- Oliver Fryer (Broughton)- 42.48 seconds in the 400m (previous best 43 seconds)
- Enzo Kinlov (Hazlitt)- 11.88 metres in the Shot Put (previous best 11.87 metres)

Year 10:

- Sethe John (Fisher)- 5 minutes 27.43 seconds in the 1500m (previous best 5 minutes 27.72 seconds)

The morning programme finished with the highly anticipated 4x100m relay races. Students' teamwork and speed were tested under the pressure of 600 students and staff cheering for their houses. Despite deafening noise levels, not one baton was dropped in the exchanges and most races were decided in the final 50 metres! This left Broughton, Fisher and Hazlitt houses separated by less than 50 points heading into the afternoon penalty shootout and rowing competitions. Massive thanks must go to both Mr Keeling-Jones and Mr Devonald for

expertly adapting the programme of events to avoid the showers that persisted until lunchtime.

After a well deserved break, students and staff went to both the main hall and hardcourt area for the afternoon competitions. The rowing competition included a mix of both individual (A&B) and team races. Following a total of 12 races, Hazlitt and Broughton houses could only be separated by just 2 points! The penalty shootout competition provided similar drama with Mr Rhys (Head of Maths) showing that age is just a number with a number of fine saves in goal! Broughton maintained their consistency across all events by finishing in joint first position alongside Fisher House. Would this be enough to repeat their double winning feats of 2022!

All staff and students then gathered on the hardcourt for the Sports Day presentation ceremony. After an anxious wait Broughton house students and Ms Hillier (Broughton Head of House in Mr Lindsay's absence) went wild having received the news that they had won both Sports Day Cup and House Sports Shield again. This was an amazing achievement given the strength of competition they faced throughout the day. I would like to thank all the students involved for the effort, resilience, and sportsmanship they showed throughout the competition. Thanks must also go to staff across the school who delivered the competition with great enthusiasm and spirit in horrible weather conditions. Seeing the school community together and enjoying another brilliant Sports Day was a great way to end the term and school year. I hope all our students enjoyed the event and have a brilliant summer holiday.

Year Group	Broughton	Fisher	Hazlitt	Sadler	Wilberforce
<b>Morning Session- Athletics &amp; Open Events</b>					
7	161	124	144	120	74
8	141	148	137	114	110
9	147	122	164	121	132
10	122	168	78	118	128
Total	571	562	523	473	444
Position	1	2	4	3	5
<b>Afternoon Session- Penalty Shootout &amp; Rowing Competitions</b>					
Penalties	30	30	26	8	26
Rowing	68	60	70	56	54
Total	98	90	96	64	80
TOTAL Sports Day Cup	669	652	619	537	524
Place	1st	2nd	4th	3rd	5th
Sports Enrichment Points	140	80	100	80	80
TOTAL School Sports Shield	809	732	719	617	604
Place	1st	2nd	4th	3rd	5th



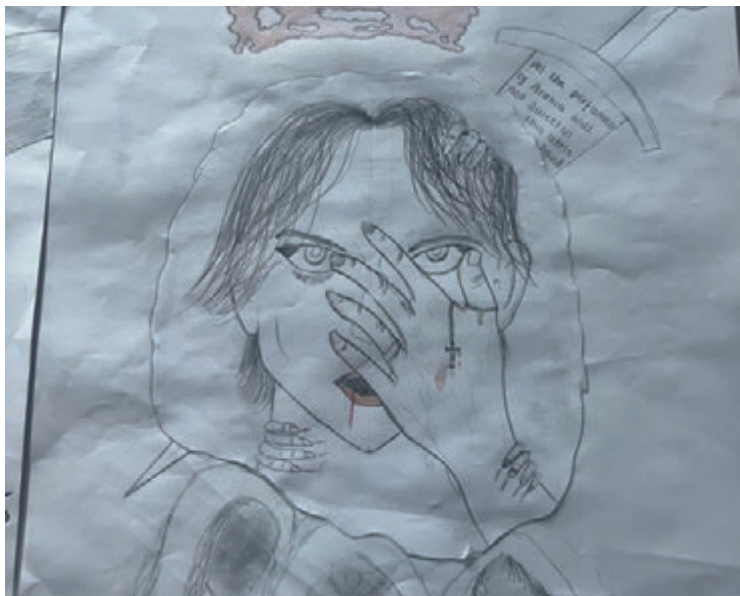
For our recent enrichment day, the English Department spent the day exploring how Shakespeare constructed a variety of strong female characters across his plays.

The ability to make connections across texts and to recognise stock character traits compared to a more challenging representation of females on stage in the Renaissance era, will undoubtedly serve the students well across their GCSE course but it also helps them to access a breadth of literary heroines beyond the bounds of the curriculum. Students were able to analyse the uncharacteristically feisty females of the Elizabethan Era through the characters of Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Desdemona in *Othello*, and Ophelia in *Hamlet*, amongst others.

Students were also introduced to how the stories

of these leading females have been updated with the times, with the likes of Halsey's feminist interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*, and the RSC's recent gender flipped production in Justin Audibert's version of *The Taming of the Shrew*, "We are somehow not shocked by the traditional version but when we see a mother selling her sons off that feels transgressive. I wanted to see what it would feel like when the male voice is not the dominant one".

Students were then given the chance to do their own Shakespeare inspired recreations, including, a dramatic performance of a short scene from *Romeo and Juliet* that explores gender roles in an interesting light, an artistic rendering of a famous female character from a Shakespearean play, or write a poem or short story inspired by one of Shakespeare's female characters. The photos show what the students came up with...





**On Monday 26th June, Year 10 students came off timetable for 3 days to take part in Work Related Learning.**

The programme was an intense and demanding set of sessions and flip learning, which got students to work on their teambuilding skills, and set problems to real life business challenges, in the style of The Apprentice tasks, on which the students had to present viable solutions.

The first day was focused on soft skills-based learning with 4 unique workshops delivered by professionals in their field, focusing on each of the following: Creative Thinking, Risk Taking, Communication Skills, and Team Work. After lunch, students were given a briefing from the business partner, in which students have a team meeting to discuss their approach to the business challenge, to allocate out team roles, to outline the parameters and design a questionnaire (if required) to ask people in the locality how they are impacted by the issues arising in their specific business challenge.

Day Two, Tuesday 27th June, began with an initial team meeting, carried out to make sure all team members know what tasks need to be completed by the end of the day and set short/ longer deadlines for everyone in their role. The afternoon was more strategic and analytical, whereby, the teams regrouped for another full team meeting to discuss their findings from the questionnaire and other research. Students were expected to draw clear conclusions on which

they could try to troubleshoot the problems facing their particular business challenge. Students had to think about not only the 'big ideas' but also the very practical logistics of costings, risk assessments, use of social media benefits and its potential drawbacks. Students need to script their presentations for the business partners, writing and rehearsing with cue cards and a PPT to back up their findings.

The third and final day, Wednesday 28th June, saw students present in their form groups to the business partners before the finalists from each sector were whittled down to present to business leaders on stage, in the hall, in the afternoon. Students thought about a range of topics such as how to streamline customer feedback and usability of communication services for Golding Homes, how to improve the reach and recruitment of young people into swimming lessons, how to create and facility a festival celebrating art and culture with local talent to be held at Mote Park. The breadth of the work related learning tasks and formality of the business challenge give students a sense of independence and ownership over different personality traits, so they can use their personal strengths to benefit the team as a whole, and the aim of the challenge was to provide practical solutions to some real life problems for local councils and companies, who had in turn given up their time to share their expertise across the 3 days. This year, the students presented some out of the box ideas, in an erudite and well prepared and well-resourced manner, that meant the judging panel were impressed by the level of this year's entries.



# Year 8 Win Maidstone Cup Final

It was a warm May evening at the Gallagher Stadium where OPGS played Wrotham School in the final of the Year 8 Maidstone Cup.

This was the second meeting of the season following losing to them in the semi-final of the Kent Cup in what was a controversial game for several reasons. This set the scene for what would again be a great footballing occasion but for the right reasons.

Oakwood started brightly and played the best football in the opening stages creating a number of chances, which we could not convert. Wrotham, who battled hard, could not get close enough to our players as we

moved the ball quickly in the right areas and when losing the ball quickly closed down the opposition and regained possession. Wrotham always offered a direct threat going forward but with an exceptional defensive display were limited to very few chances and shots on goal. Marli Collier again made a valuable contribution and scored all three goals in another hat-trick performance in a final. This on its own does not tell the full story of a team performance where every single player contributed to the result. Every player wanted to set the record straight following our previous meeting. The message was clear, it is Oakwood Park Grammar School who continue to be the strongest side in Maidstone and one of the leading schools in Kent Football.



# Year 8 House Sports Enrichment Day

Inter-house sports competitions run across all year groups throughout the school year, culminating in the school sports day to determine the final standings.

Each provide OPGS students with an opportunity to transfer learning from PE lessons into a competitive environment whilst representing their school house.

On Wednesday 21st June Year 8 students competed in Ultimate Frisbee, Softball and Cricket inter-house sports competitions. Students were superb throughout the day, maintaining their enthusiasm and effort levels in extremely hot temperatures. Sadler were the eventual winners, prevailing by just two points from Broughton House in second.

All students should be extremely proud of their efforts and now look forward to Sports Day on Friday 14th July. This will determine the winners of the overall inter-house and sports day cups for 2022-23. Broughton students will be keen to repeat their double winning achievements from 2021-22!



## Year 7 Creative Arts - Enrichment day

For the year 7 Enrichment day, the Year was split into 5 groups with each group taking part in a different creative Art for the entire day. These included Art, Drama, DT, Music and Graphics.

In Art, students took part in two tasks through the day, they started the day by picking one of 4 competitions, these ranged from the local competition to produce work based around Moat Park to national competitions creating work based on the new book by Sf Said Tyger; to international coemptions that asked students to create work based on animals that were going extinct. Once students had picked a competition to take part in, they had to research their topic and find suitable resources to work from. They then had to design and create a piece of artwork in either A4 or A5. They also were allowed to choose the materials they were going to use this included, felt-tip, pencil, colouring pencil, paint, or oil pastel. Students worked diligently on these through the day creating exciting artwork on a range of

topics. Once completed they have the ability to enter their work in the competition. As students finished the first task, they then took on the 2nd brief, designing props for the Oakwood Park musical Addams Family, students had to create weird and curious objects to dress the set with made out of clay. students worked on these till the end of the day producing creatures and objects to give the set depth. The students worked hard throughout the day, creatively engaging with all tasks producing amazing artwork and displaying their passion and talent for the subject.

In DT, students were designing and building model rockets. The students looked at weight and aerodynamics to see which rocket would fly the highest.

In Music, students were Samba drumming and in Drama the students were involved in stage design.

# Year 7 Creative Arts Enrichment day photos



# Read and Review: Wendington Jones and the Missing Tree

We are thrilled to announce, that we at OPGS were successfully chosen by The Reading Agency, to receive 10 x copies of *Wendington Jones and The Missing Tree* by Daniel Dockery, hot off the press from publishers.

As a way to celebrate a culture of excellence within the English Department, 2 gifted and talented students from a range of KS3 classes were able to get a copy of the novel to read and review.

Students devoured the text, and their reviews showed how much they embraced this opportunity to read for pleasure with comments such as:

“I particularly liked the drama and emotions between the friends and family members. I would recommend this book to adventurous people who like to be surprised by plot twists”.

“I liked a lot about this book but, overall, I would have to say I liked the mystery element surrounding the tree of life”.

If that does not tickle your tastebuds, perhaps this more detailed synopsis of the plot will...

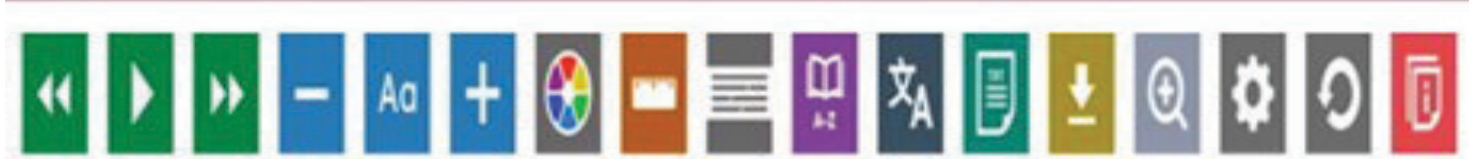
Wendington Jones has her world abruptly up-ended when her adventuring mother dies in a car crash in late 1920. Left in the care of her Grandmamma and her valet Rohan, Wendington receives a parcel in the middle of the night, seemingly from her dead mother. It's half of a manuscript from a book her mother was writing, and describes a mystery surrounding the mythical Tree of Life. When Wendington reads that the tree could have the power to bring her mother back to life, she throws herself into finding the remainder of the manuscript and solving her mother's mystery. However, her initial attempts are laced with danger. Other people also seek to find the Tree of Life and Wendington has to trick, fight and talk her way out of many perilous situations. Does Wendington have what it takes to complete her mission? Enola Holmes meets Indiana Jones in this epic story of mystery, adventure and learning to live with grief along the way.



# Recite Me software makes OPGS website fully inclusive

OPGS are very pleased to be able to introduce to staff, parents and carers, and students our new website feature, which increases the accessibility of the site. This is another step taken in ensuring we are a fully inclusive community.

Recite Me is an assistive toolbar that can support people with a range of needs to be able to access the school website and the essential information contained within it. The Toolbar looks like this.



Users of the webpage can access the accessibility toolbar by clicking on this icon, which should appear at the bottom of the page.



The Recite Me accessibility tool bar can help people with a variety of needs to access the important information which is on the website, like policies and newsletters. For example, it can support people who are;

- English as an additional language – The translation tab will translate the web pages and documents (including PDFs) into most languages and will then read the pages aloud.

- Visually impaired – The text options tab can increase the size of the font as well as the background colours of the screen. For example, individuals with Irlens Syndrome may benefit from using the colour wheel tab to switch the background to a colour of their preference.
- Dyslexic – Many people with dyslexia find the glare of white paper/backgrounds interferes with their ability to see text clearly. The colour wheel option will allow users to change the webpage colours to those they are more able to see.

We would encourage all members of the school community to log on to the website and click the accessibility button to see for themselves what Recite Me may be able to offer them. If you have any questions about Recite Me and how it can help, please contact Mrs S Craig, Deputy Headteacher, [SCraig@opgs.org](mailto:SCraig@opgs.org).

## An Exceptional Learning Experience

At OPGS we believe in high quality teaching and learning that engages and challenges each and every student, and excellent standards of behaviour to create a positive learning climate. We offer a wide range of opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom.



It was with great pleasure we were able to re-introduce our whole school effort to give back to the local community, with the return of the OPGS Volunteering Day.

On Tuesday 23rd May, the day consisted of 476 students visiting 21 organisations. Years 8-10 volunteering in community projects around the Maidstone area, staff enjoyed a day supporting students to become well-rounded, thoughtful, resourceful individuals. From picking up litter, digging gardens, driving all over Kent, to cleaning boats the students had a fantastic day and helped to make a real contribution to our local community, as well as form lasting memories and learn teamwork, leadership and organisation skills. As the many photos of students on their activities and reports sent to the school are testimony of, the day was a great success, with many positive about the behaviour and attitude of the students who took part.



## Volunteering Day reports written by OPGS students:

### Volunteering Day at St Michaels and Angels Church

By Lukas Hanusch (10P)

St Michaels and Angels Church is not too far from the school; we helped them clear up the grounds around the church to make it visually look nicer. We arrived at the church and decided to split up into 3 groups painting, weeding and removing trees.

I was a part of the removing tree group which tackled

multiple shrubs and trees around the grounds of the church. We used a saw to cut off branches of a small tree and drilled holes into the trunk. Then we administered a poison into the holes to properly kill off the tree. This ensured it wouldn't grow back from its trunk. After that we moved on to remove a shrub called Japanese Knotweed (its sap is an irritant which causes rashes, so we made sure to wear gloves). Japanese Knotweed is highly invasive weed in the UK so by killing it we ensured it wouldn't spread through the community.

Later in the day we continued removing plants and weeds around the church and other buildings in the area. We removed all the rhizomes and roots of the weeds so they wouldn't grow back.

Our volunteering day was successful; also rewarding as we improved the look of the area and helped support our community.

### Art Volunteering Day – Children' Centre Project

By Sophia and Izzy - Art prefects (Isabel Haywood, and Sophia Pelc)

On the 23rd May we were welcomed by Sunshine Children's Centre in Maidstone, along with, Mr. Edwards, Miss Chiappini, and 12 Year 10 students. Our aim was to transform their outdoor area into a warm and positive environment that the young children and families can enjoy when visiting the centre.



# Volunteering Day 2023 cont...

Sunshine Children's Centre aims to offer information, advice and support to parents, as well as integrated childcare, early learning, health services, family support and parental outreach. Therefore, helping to create a stress-free environment for the centre was the most significant factor when creating and renewing the space for them.

The task at hand encompassed a range of projects including: making colourful three dimensional elements and paintings that would then be arranged in the outdoor space and mounted onto the surrounding fences; redesigning a space that was set aside for a mud kitchen that needed cleaning, renovating and improving; the restoring and enhancing of a small vegetable patch; and the repairing and redesigning of a fairy garden, as well as other small jobs to improve the space.

Prior to the day the team created large wooden mythical creatures and representations of insects such as butterflies, ladybugs, dragons, fairies, and unicorns. These were then hand painted in the first half of the day and varnished, then fixed artistically to the fence to create magical scenes by one team of students. In addition to the fencing decorations, we helped to craft large flowers and butterflies out of wire, feathers, bamboo and coloured plastic sheets in order to add to the fantasy theme of the scenery. Another team of students also helped to clear and arrange a play kitchen, and compose a small fairy garden, using gravel to construct tiny, pebbled pathways. A small allotment was also dug ready for planting with edging added to help protect it. Finally, a small area of the fence was improved to help stop pebble dash from falling onto a nearby public



walkway.

Throughout the day everyone pulled together to help each other complete the different projects and make sure that the final outcome for the Children's Centre was of the highest possible quality. We had a fantastic time working with the Childrens Centre and would enjoy doing many more projects like this one in the future.





# Volunteering Day 2023 cont...

Some comments from the organisations that they went to:

## Communigrow

I just wanted to write and thank you for arranging for your boys to come and volunteer at Communigrow.

What an absolute credit to your school, they worked so hard, were polite, helped each other, worked brilliantly as a team together.

It is such a shame that teenage boys get such bad press, these young people could not have been better behaved. It really was a pleasure to have their company for the day.

We would welcome them back (and other boys from your school) any time

## From Loose Primary:

We just wanted to write an email to say how well the four Yr 9 boys, that we had at our school yesterday, behaved and conducted themselves.

They were genuinely helpful; digging out planters, painting the EYFS area and helping our KS1 children with their sports lesson. They were exceptionally polite and helpful and a credit to themselves and your school.

From Maidstone Care Centre

I just wanted to take a minute and say thank you for sending us volunteers yesterday. I hope they all took something away from the day. Our residents enjoyed the day with them all very much.



## Head of Rosearce School

Can I say we were really pleased to welcome 10 former pupils back into school for your volunteering day and some of our Year 5 and 6 pupils loved the football tournament that was organised by your school today.



# U18 Cricket Team

This season has been a frustrating one for the U18 cricket team. Despite being a team full of talent, team selection was difficult throughout with many of our students sitting their GCSE PE exams this summer. As a result the squad probably lacked the experience needed to perform consistently enough in all three aspects of the game, often losing key moments in games that would ultimately decide the result.

The boys began term 5 with a an U18 Kent League fixture vs. Beths Grammar School. Winning the toss, joint captains Tom Lenham and Harvey Moore had no hesitation in asking Beths GS to bat first. Despite one of the Beths GS openers reaching 32 runs, wickets fell regularly at the other end to stem the run rate and leave the score at 55-5 after 10 overs. Stand out bowlers were Sajid Masood (18-2), William Hodgson (6-3) and Harrison Scott (15-3). Having restricted the visitors to 79/9 Ben Taylor started his season in style by scoring 45 from 42 balls to secure an 8

wicket victory for OPGS.

Having then received a walkover vs. Borden GS in round 2 of the U18 league the team faced a tough Kent Cup match vs. Sir Joseph Williamson Mathematical School. Despite SJWMS playing in the U18 Kent premier league OPGS batted first, accumulating 127/5 from 20 overs. This was a defendable score given the slow nature of the pitch. Ryan Ward and Tom Lenham then led the way with the ball, sharing three wickets between them to leave SJWMS struggling on 52-5 from 10 overs. An unexpected SJWMS counterattack shocked the OPGS bowlers who struggled to gain the consistency needed to build pressure and break the sixth wicket that won SJWMS the game. Two further league games followed with loses to Gravesend GS (by 6 wickets) and The Judd School (64 runs) meaning the team didn't progress into the U18 league knockout stages. Despite a tough run of results the boys should be proud of the improvements they have made as individual players and a squad this year. With improved availability I am very confident the team will bounce back in the 2023/24 season.



# The History Club - Read and Review: Tudor Children

Students at OPGS were thrilled to be selected to read and review the non-fiction account of *Tudor Children* by Nicholas Orme. Their reviews were published on Waterstones and sent back to the publisher, for first feedback on an exciting new depiction of this historical period, from a childhood perspective.

You might often find yourself wondering what it would be like to grow up in a different era – So, what was it like to grow up in Tudor England? How were children cared for? What did they play with? What challenges did they face?

In this richly illustrated and lively exploration, leading historian Nicholas Orme provides startling detail to what it was like for children of the Tudor period. From birth and infancy, Orme explores a breadth of the children's experiences, including the games they played (some still going today) like Blind Man's Bluff and the songs they sang, such as 'Three Blind Mice'. He shows how social status determined everything: from the food, clothes, education and work.

Although childhood and puberty could be challenging and difficult time, it was also a valued time of learning and development. By looking at the lives through the lens of a child's viewpoint, we are able to gain a richer understanding of the era as a whole.

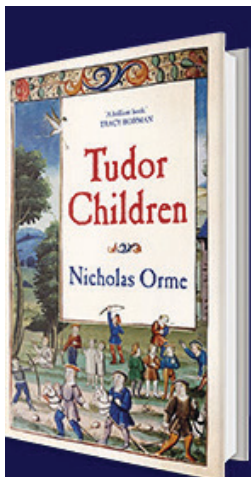
Please see the reviews of our students below, to

see the insights they learnt, through a true stretch and challenge to their reading repertoire, made available to them by Miss Aldous, Subject Leader for History at OPGS.

"I liked the book because it contained really interesting sources that were very clear and vivid. We read the chapter about schools and education. I liked learning about the schoolmaster and how some of the children stayed behind like at a boarding school. The school day in Tudor times was very different and I liked learning about that. One of the schools we read about together was in Eton and it was one of only two boarding schools in England with the other being in Winchester. Overall I really enjoyed learning about schools in Tudor times because this can tell us a lot about the society."

"This book was incredibly interesting and informative about Tudor children. We read about Tudor schools and how grammar schools functioned. Some were very small in size which shows this type of education was not available to everyone. The pictures were very detailed showing primary sources including the images of the room where students had their lessons. These helped me understand and visualise the information."

"This book was very informative on information about the Tudors. I enjoyed the section about schools which we read. It was interesting to see how religion was so connected with learning in schools. I found the clear chapter headings helpful to direct us to the points we wanted to read about. Next we are going to look at the Growing Up."



**'Endlessly fascinating and impeccably researched ...  
This brilliant book provides the missing piece of  
the Tudor jigsaw'**

TRACY BORMAN, author of *The Private Lives of the Tudors*