



## Term Ends With Oakwood's Winter Showcase

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Welcome to the latest bumper edition of @Oakwood. A massive thank you to Mr Peacock, Mr Solly and Mrs Goodhew for all their hard work as well as the students and staff who have contributed articles.

It is always fascinating and humbling to read about the achievements of students at OPGS. We also should not forget the commitment and dedication of teachers and parents who made so many of these opportunities possible. For this my sincere thanks.

Can I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Enjoy an engaging edition.

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

Mr K.W. Moody - Headteacher

STRIVE

AND

SERVE

# A Christmas Carol Newspaper Articles

The English Department are proud to present 'A Christmas Carol Newspaper Articles'; Where GCSE students were able to use their creative writing abilities in response to the Victorian novella, Dickens' A Christmas Carol. As a form of entertainment, telling ghost stories at Christmas was a popular tradition in Victorian Britain.

Charles Dickens wrote a number of Christmas ghost stories including The Signalman, but the most famous of which is A Christmas Carol. Certainly, Dickens took his role as entertainer to his children, friends and wider family very seriously; one Christmas he spent hours rehearsing so he could put on a magic show for the young ones, with him acting as the conjurer.

Did you know that Charles Dickens had an enduring obsession with mesmerism? It's not so strange when you start to dig into it because you can begin to see how this belief informed his conception and presentation of ghosts and the supernatural within his stories. The themes Dickens addresses most famously in his writing are the state of Victorian society and its treatment of the poor, but his ideas about the workings of the mind come through in his work when you start to see his characters and their hauntings through the lens of his mesmeristic philosophy.

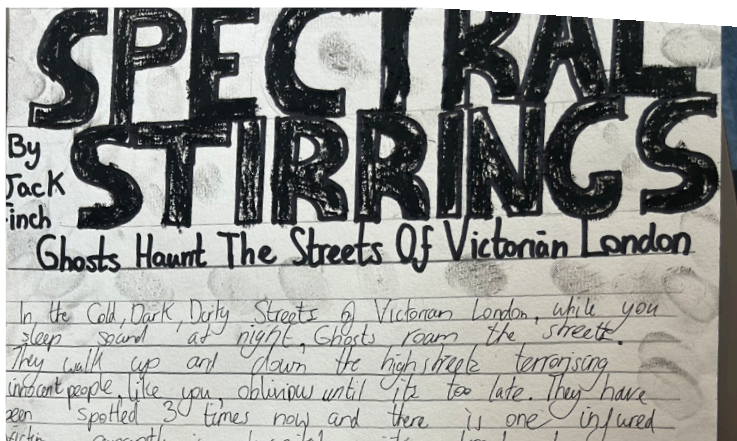
Even more curious still, is Dickens's rejection of Spiritualism; even though he had what his good friend and biographer John Forster called "a hankering after ghosts". Not that Dickens exactly believed in ghosts—but he was intrigued by our belief in them. Within this paradox lies the

possibility of ghosts, but also the continuation of the mesmeristic idea that actually these could be ghostly experiences of the mind. Despite his views on ghosts one way or the other, Dickens's popular journals helped establish the Christmas ghost story as a tradition.

Here, the English Department would like to celebrate the outstanding homework completed by Jack Finch and Ewan Masson (S10). The students were asked to write a newspaper article reporting on the ghosts that appear in London's skies at the end of Stave 1:

"The air was filled with phantoms, wandering hither and thither in restless haste, and moaning as they went. Every one of them wore chains like Marley's Ghost; some few (they might be guilty governments) were linked together; none were free. Many had been personally known to Scrooge in their lives. He had been quite familiar with one old ghost, in a white waistcoat, with a monstrous iron safe attached to its ankle, who cried piteously at being unable to assist a wretched woman with an infant, whom it saw below, upon a door-step. The misery with them all was, clearly, that they sought to interfere, for good, in human matters, and had lost the power for ever."

A Christmas Carol was first published on 19th December 1843. This story recounts the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, an elderly miser who is visited by the ghost of his former business partner Jacob Marley and the spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come. After their visits, Scrooge is transformed into a kinder, gentler man. The moral of the story is to join in the Christmas Spirit of sharing your time with loved ones, and with the gift of giving, Scrooge suggests he will donate a large, undisclosed amount to include "a great many back payments" to atone for the years he spent as a miser. As a changed man, Scrooge confirms "I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach." Tiny Tim finishes the story in the Christian tradition, exclaiming "God bless us, Every one!" This conveys perfectly the fellow feeling and good cheer Dickens was hoping to instil in his reader. We too, hope you all enjoy a very Merry Christmas.



# A Level Theatre Studies Trip by Oliver Kane

On Thursday 23rd November, I had the opportunity to visit the Gulbenkian Theatre in Canterbury to see a play called 'Feel Me' by our A Level theatre practitioners The Paper Birds.

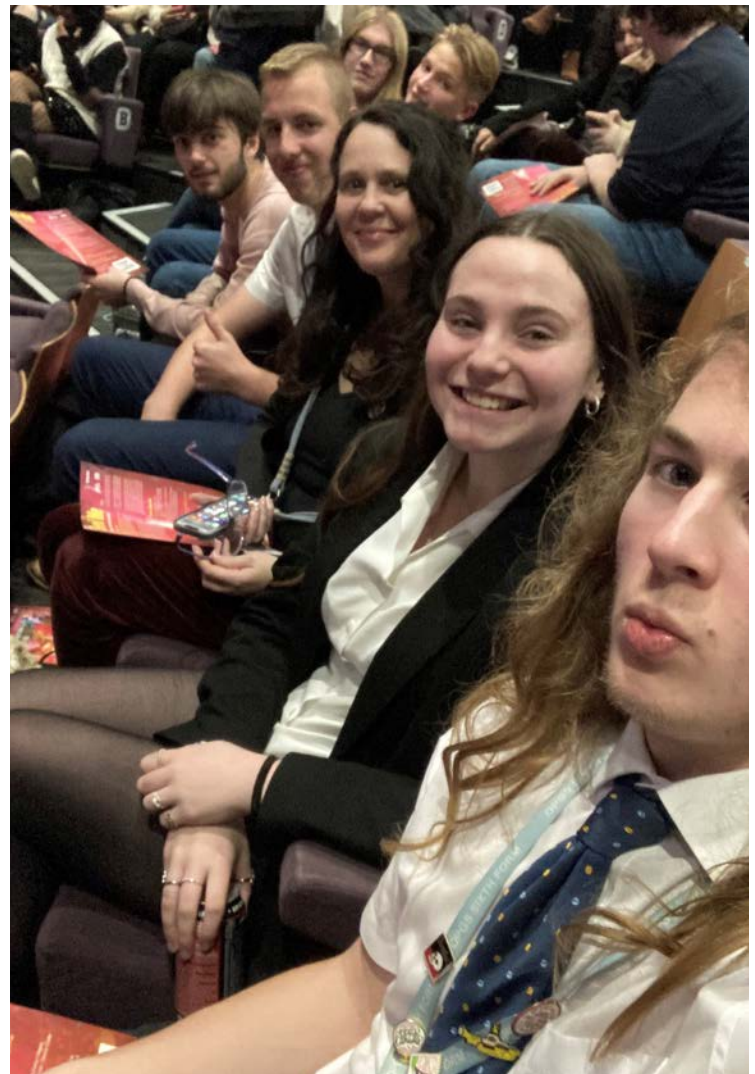
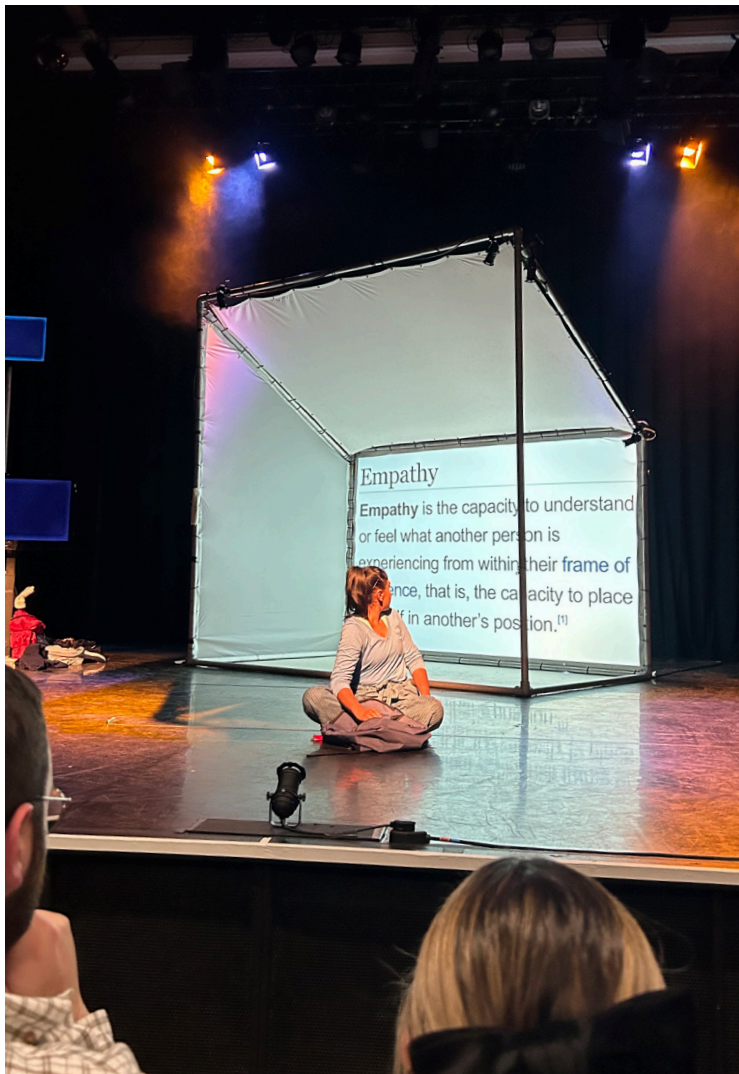
The play took a unique approach to the theme of forced displacement, and told the story of a refugee trying to seek safe shelter away from the conflict back home.

The Paper Birds decided to integrate the use of phones into their performance, and allowed the audience to make decisions based upon what they saw on stage. They asked questions such as how connected we felt with the topic, as well as how old we think the average refugee is. We had the opportunity to input our answer via our phones and see our answers appear on the numerous screens and projections that were on the stage.

I left the play, not feeling entertained, but instead a sense of exhaustion and disorientation, which I feel is what The Paper Birds wanted us to feel. They concentrated on the theme of feeling empathy towards victims of forced displacement, and showed the journey they go through. Sadly, the piece lacked empathy as the artifice, technology and lack of dialogue reduced our emotional conviction with the piece.

I spent some time afterwards, speaking to the lighting technician / sound designer, which gave me an in-depth understanding into how they integrated the technology into the performance. Although I thought the play fell short, the tech was inspirational.

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and I'm looking forward to be integrating some of the design ideas from 'Feel Me' into our next piece .



# Yr. 9 Maths, History trip to Canterbury

Yr. 9 students visited Canterbury and Canterbury Cathedral on December 1st for an enrichment day.

The trip had 2 parts. Students took a tour of the city centre and used their Maths skills to solve problems which might arise from a trip to the High Street. Problems such as changing currency, compiling the cost of a 2-course meal and some of the geometric patterns visible on a town tour. Students used a clinometer to measure the height of the cathedral and some other objects on their tour.

For the second part of the trip, students were given a guided tour of Canterbury Cathedral. The tour was led by local experienced guides who talked through some of the long history of the construction of the cathedral. They explained the significance of the murder of the archbishop, Thomas Beckett and gave an insight on how Canterbury Cathedral plays a central role in the Christian faith today.

Students completed three assignments on their trip and despite the challenging cold weather, all agreed that they had learned a lot about one of our most important historic buildings and cities in the country along with answering some Maths questions.



# Christmas Jar Competition

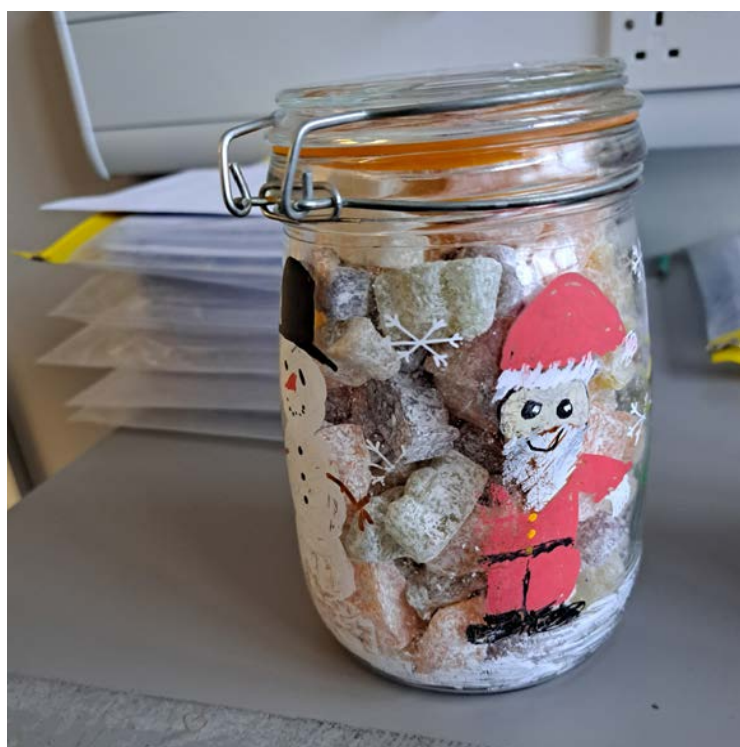
We as a school are grateful and ecstatic to say that we have received nearly 50 jars from the years 7-8.

The amount has blown our expectations out the water. All of these jars have been brimming with ingenuity, passion, and love. We have seen the hard work you have put into these jars, and it has torn us apart deciding on a winner and runner ups. There were so many factors and so much to think about. But we have decided!

Our runner ups were Leo Trandaburu and Fletcher Foster both of these candidates are in year 7. Both of them are adapting to a new school environment whilst grasping at the opportunity to earn points for their respective houses and earn achievement points for themselves. By undertaking this year's Christmas challenges not only have they strived for excellence in their personal development they have both taken time out of their day to make a jar. This will not only bring a smile to someone's face as they hold a jar brimming with love, joy, and sweets, but will also help our school's local charity dandelion time. By doing this selfless act they

have supported their school community as well as selflessly helping charity.

Our ultimate decision was swayed from the two runner ups to the wonderful jar made by Daniel Wood in T7. His jar was not only overflowing with passion and dedication, but it was also filled with small details that brought it to a higher level than our other submissions. His jar was hand painted, portraying a wonderful winter scene, wonderfully executed with snowmen and snowfall, together with a lovely Christmas pudding painted on the lid. Not only did he wonderfully execute the Christmas theme, but he also further brought it together by ensuring his colour palette was symbiotic with his choice of chocolates which paired wonderfully with his painting



# Creative Arts Enrichment Day

For the Year 9 Creative Arts Enrichment day students were selected to take part in an intensive work shop in one of the creative Arts - Music, Fine Art, Graphics, Design technology or Drama.

In Fine Art students studied Gargoyles exploring their history and meaning. Using this knowledge and reference images they created a number of designs for their own gargoyle adding colour to give their imaginative designs depth. After completing these designs students then made their own gargoyle from clay, carefully moulding and adding details following their designs. Having realised these designs students spent the last part of the day, completing a piece of creative writing, devising a story for their gargoyle. With this narrative as a creative starting point students then created a film poster or comic book cover for their story. The Art department was very impressed with the standard of the students' work and their engagement with the tasks throughout the day.



# Design Museum Trip

Design and Technology A-level students visited the Design Museum located on Kensington High Street. Students viewed exhibitions on 'Designer, Maker, User', 'Building Sustainable Homes', 'Skate Board Development' and 'Rebel – 30 Years of London Fashion'.

Rebel – 30 Years of London Fashion features nearly 100 innovative fashion looks from groundbreaking debut and early collections, many of which have entered pop-culture history — and launched global design careers. Highlights included the swan dress controversially worn by Björk at the 2001 Oscars, Harry Styles' Steven Stokey Daley outfit from his video for 'Golden', and Sam Smith's inflatable latex suit by HARRI from this year's BRIT Awards. There were collections and work by JW Anderson, Wales Bonner, Erdem, Molly Goddard, Christopher Kane, Simone Rocha, Russell Sage, and many more.

Building Sustainable Homes looked at how we design our homes to respond to the climate emergency? Architects are reimagining wood, stone and straw to design homes fit for the future.

Skate Board chronicled the history of skateboard design from the 1950s to the present day, from homemade, humble beginnings to today's professional and technologically advanced models.

Designer Maker User featured almost 1000 items of twentieth and twenty-first century design viewed through the angles of the designer, manufacturer and user, including a crowdsourced wall.

The trip allowed us to look at the wide range of roles designers play and their impact on our every day lives. We were also able to see how design and technology is changing and the importance of change for our planet.



# District Cross Country 2023

Once again Oakwood Park entered the District Cross Country at Mote Park with huge confidence that we would be able to perform great things.

With 3 strong squads being taken, Year 7, Year 8&9 combined and Year 10&11 combined, we felt that we would be able to compete, hoping to take the team competition in both Year 7 and Year 8&9, with those in Year 10&11 placing individually high.

The event was held on a wet, cold and horrible day, some would say perfect conditions for a Cross Country event.

The Year 7 boys were first to perform, with Josh Emin writing about his experience: "My experience for cross country was very fun and adventurous. This is because when I first got selected for cross country, I was very happy and I couldn't wait to go on the minibus with my friends and compete together.

When we arrived at Mote Park it was very muddy and wet. The race started, I fell over, but got up and sprinted. I caught up to those in second and first. I then realised how far the race was and had to be resilient and determined to keep going. The last half a kilometre I over-took third place and managed to hold off other attacks, crossing the finish line in 2nd place"



The team lined up with the others, wet and cold after their wait to start, but still determined. It was a close race to the finish, but all runners placed well and we are waiting for the final results for the team place.

To finish the whole event the Year 8&9 runners were ready to go. With high hopes for this group of runners led by Freddie and Oscar, our two regular club runners. We were hoping for some really high placings and hopes of taking the team event.





Oscar shares his thoughts on the day,

“During the race it was extremely tough and challenging but I can tell that everyone in the race endeavoured and tried their hardest. The race was muddy, cold and windy but still very enjoyable. It was amazing that so many of us were able to qualify for the next race! I hope that we do well in the next race.”

Freddie, as predicted dominated from the off and took the conditions in his stride. Leading the way around the 4km route, he took the lead early and never looked back. Completing the event with about a 7 minute advantage of the 2nd place athlete. The rest of the group were all extremely close together. Bunching up and working together to get around the course, really played into the hands of the Team competition.

It was a great day and we really have done ourselves proud.

The following students, due to their excellent performances have been selected to represent Maidstone District at the County Competition held in January 2024.

### Year 7 Boys

2nd – Josh Emin  
3rd – Zach Ward

8th – Leo Amartey

Harrison Smith missing out by one place, but is on the standby list with the District Organiser.

### Year 8/9 Boys

1st Place – Freddie Gibson  
7th – Ryan Kent  
8th – Kian Thorn  
9th – Marli Collier  
10th - Oscar Wharton  
12th – Will Newcombe

50% of the students who ran on this day have been selected, showing our depth of runners in these year groups. Oscar, being Year 8 and coming in the top 16 runners on the day.

### Year 10/11 Boys

9th – Sethe John  
11th – Jack Finch

66% of the runners on the day, now being selected to represent Maidstone District. What a performance, with Josh coming just outside the top 16.

All runners who competed should be extremely proud of themselves on a day that was extremely challenging.



# Opening of New Music and Drama Building

Nothing is more imperative to a well-balanced curriculum than that of the Creative Arts. These subjects are a culmination of all others: where Language, Science, and Maths fuse to form a piece of sheer beauty.

Such personal expressions sub-consciously utilise the whole of one's educational backing, and draws on emotions, memories, and uncharted feelings explored through one's preferred medium. As a keen actor and guitarist, the erection of such a building in order to foster the talent rooted throughout the school is unbelievably thrilling, and to which I am extremely grateful.

In this new space, exploring the innards of our brains through the output of scenes, songs and sound is considerably more natural, and the facilities that it provides are crucial in assisting the process for each production.

Such a grandiose building should be opened in an equally appropriate way. This was expressed in the form of a show with an eclectic variety of performers, spanning from mellifluous piano sonatas to hard-hitting dramatic pieces. Supplementary to this, the talented actor Louise Jameson opened the block, and prefaced all upcoming performances with a touching speech which elegantly explored all the wonders of the Theatrical and Musical world.



An investment like this is immeasurable, and its effects will span all throughout our school's future.

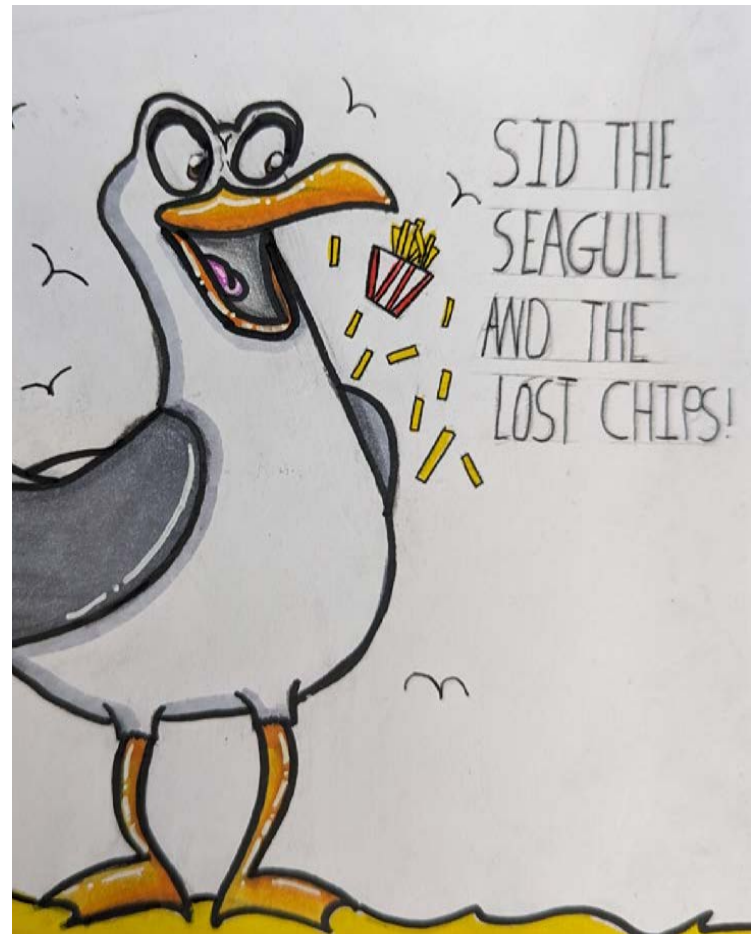
The opening of the Music and Drama block was truly fantastic. With Louise Jameson present, the whole building turned magical. Her glow enlightened the rooms she stepped in. There were some inspiring music performances, and the acting skills presented in front of the rows of bustling audiences were brilliant and so touching. I'm so glad we have been given such a golden opportunity to shine our talents with such glorious spaces and facilities.

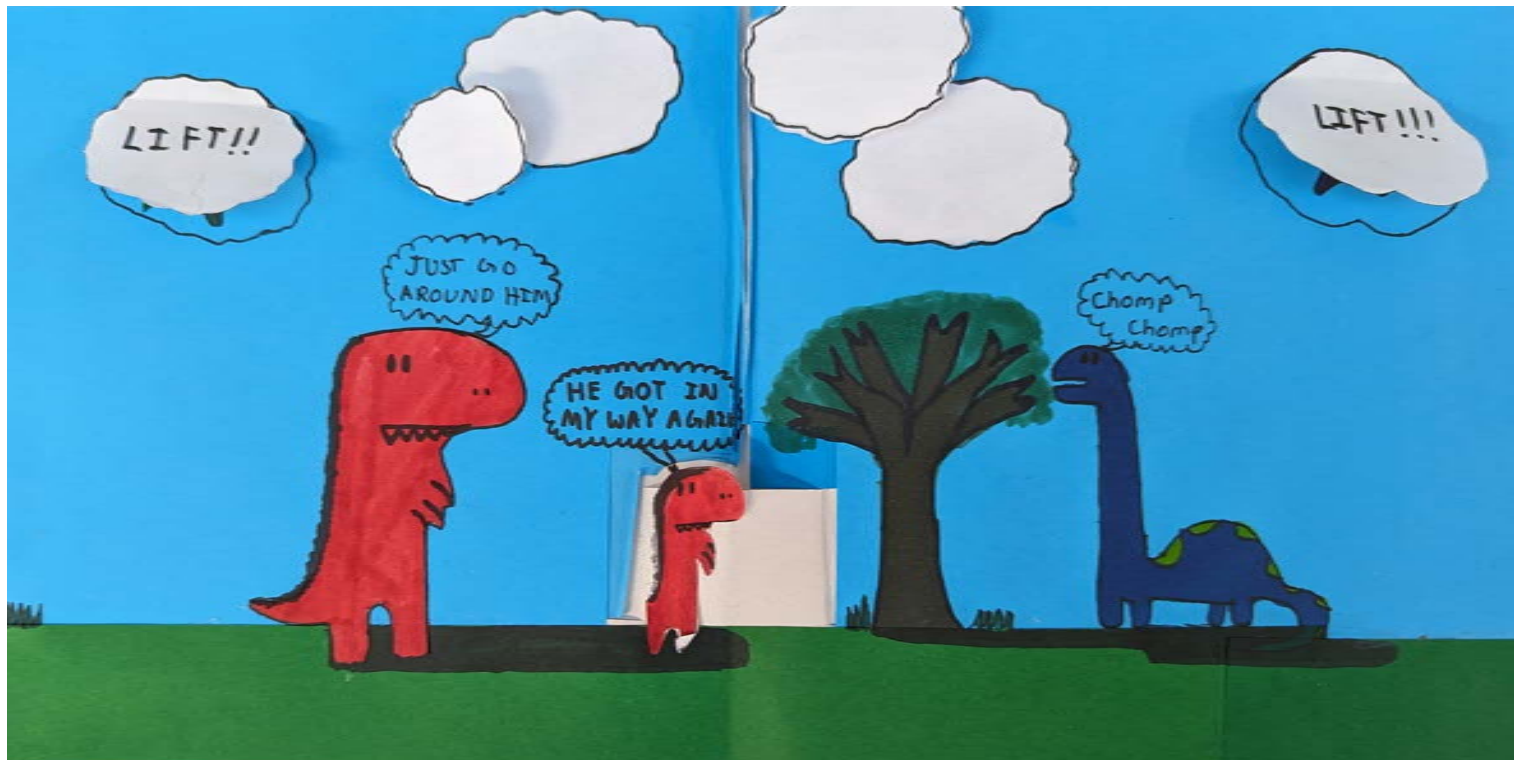


# Creative Arts Enrichment Day

For the Year 8 Creative Arts Enrichment Day, this year 30 students took part in a Graphic Design workshop creating children's pop-up books.

The day started with students exploring their own ideas on the theme animals & dinosaur's and coming up with their own title, as well as a character to meet the brief requirements. From here on the students then produced design ideas for a front and back cover, as well as a double page spread inside. Students then developed their ideas with a range of materials and techniques, as well as learning several techniques of how to add a pop out and/or flap to their book. The students engaged in the project producing some brilliant creative prototypes of a children's popup book, showing great skill, and understanding of what is possible for a graphic design student. The Art department will be creating a display of the work in school and wish to congratulate year 8 on their creative thinking and hard work during the day.





## Ethan Sparks FIM Mini GP World Finals in Valencia

The PE department would like to say a huge congratulations to Ethan Sparks who finished in 4th place at the recent 2023 FIM Mini GP World Finals in Valencia, Spain.

This is a phenomenal achievement given he was competing against the 34 top riders for his age group in the world, many of which who receive government funding to support their training and competition programmes.

Having finished 8th in the standings after day one, Ethan's performances went from strength to strength in day 2 of the competition. He achieved 4th and 3rd place in the next two races to qualify for the prestigious 'Super Final'. Ethan then executed another brilliant ride to finish in 6th place, giving him a final standing of 4th position. These achievements are even more remarkable given that Ethan is one of few entirely self-funded riders and one of three rookies who made it into the final three races of the competition, becoming the UK best newcomer rider to date. It was also Ethan's first outing at the track in Valencia, making his achievements even more impressive. We look forward to following Ethan's progression as one of the most talented world GP riders in the coming years!



# Year 7 Family Project Winners

We are delighted to announce the winners of this year's Family Project.

The hard work and beautiful masterpieces which resulted from the Year 6 to 7 Summer Holidays, are a real testimony to the varied cultural heritage of our school community. The recreations of key historical and cultural artefacts was beheld in an exhibition at the school's Open Morning in October and at the first Year 7 Parents' Evenings, shortly thereafter. As a result, staff, parents and students were encouraged to vote for their favourite pieces in the exhibition. We can proudly reveal that this year's winners are:

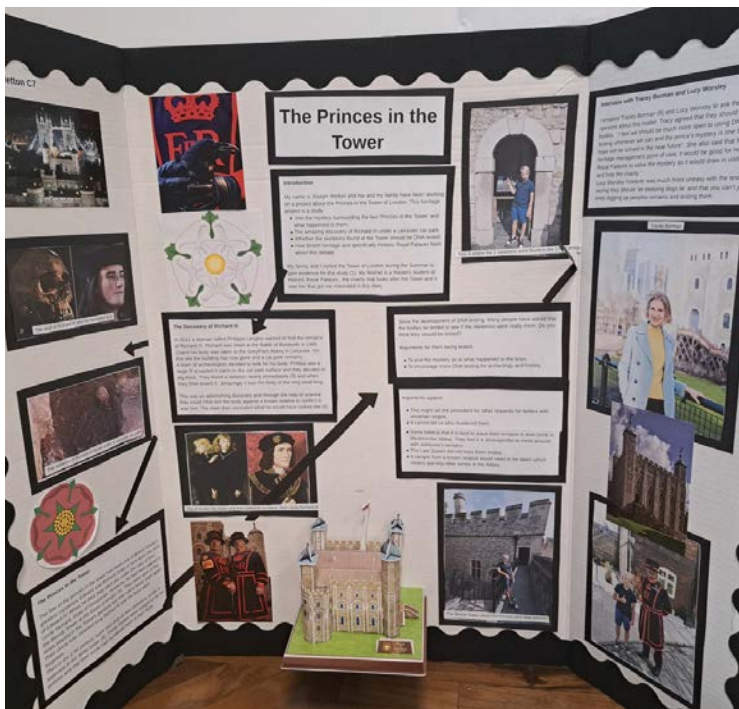


## WINNERS:

- Arlo Carr T7 – Mountain Bike Trail (Display)
- Thomas Jones P7 – Morse Code Machine (Working Model)
- Finnley White X7 – Photographer of the Famous (Written Project)
- Darius Golder X7 – Falcon Bomber (Artefact)

## RUNNERS UP:

- Wilkus Joubert X7 – Table Mountain
- Jake Pollard T7 – Rome Colosseum
- Jacob Lovelock S7 – Wieliczka Salt Mine
- Samuel Perks T7 – 100 Years of Disney PPT



The students were presented with a certificate from Mr Keeling Jones and Mr Moody in the Yr 7 Winter Celebration of Achievement Assembly. Well done to all those who took part, everyone who received votes has also been awarded achievement points for their commendable efforts! Congratulations!

# Film Club: Review of King Kong

The KS3 students who attend film club are gradually making their way through the ages of Hollywood cinema. Their most recent film was **King Kong, first released in 1933**. This black and white portrayal of the tale of an actress Ann Darrow (Fay Wray) and director Carl Denham (Robert Armstrong), who travel to the Indian Ocean to do location shoots for Denham's new jungle picture. Along the way, the actress meets and falls for rugged First Mate, John Driscoll (Bruce Cabot). Upon arriving at a mysterious island, Ann is taken hostage by natives who prepare her as a sacrifice to the enormous ape Kong who rules over their jungle. But when Ann is rescued and Kong is captured, the real trouble ensues.

Shackled in chains, Kong is taken to New York City and presented to a Broadway theatre audience as "Kong, Eighth Wonder of the World!" Ann and Jack are brought on stage to join him, surrounded by a group of press photographers. Kong, believing that the ensuing flash photography is an attack, breaks loose as the audience flees in horror. Ann is whisked away to a hotel room on a high floor, but Kong, scaling the building, soon finds her. He rampages through the city as Ann screams in his grasp; wrecking a crowded elevated train and eventually climbing the Empire State Building. At its top, he is attacked by four biplanes. Kong destroys one, but finally succumbs to their gunfire. He gazes at Ann one last time before falling to his death.

King Kong opened in New York City on March 2, 1933, to rave reviews, and has much long-standing critical acclaim; it has been ranked by Rotten Tomatoes as the Greatest Horror Film of All Time and the 56th Greatest Film of All Time. In 1991, it was deemed "culturally, historically and aesthetically significant" by the Library of Congress and selected for preservation in the National Film Registry. A sequel, titled *Son of Kong*, was fast-tracked and released the same year, with several more films made in the following decades, including two remakes that were made in 1976 and 2005 respectively, and a reboot in 2017.

But, what did the students who watched it at Oakwood Park think?

"The bit where she gets captured by King Kong was wonderfully amazing and interesting in its use of special effects considering the time it was produced". George Bareford

"I thought it was very good quality for the film in the 30s, including the special effects of Kong's movements and when they scaled it up and down to create the chase sequences through the city". Harry Maguire

"When I watched King Kong I really enjoyed the style of that they used to make this a great film to watch as a film lover". Adewumi Alegbeleye

"Kong was not very realistic but I still liked the film. In a way, I am still transported to the inside of the film. Just because it is an old film, does not mean that you can't get in there and enjoy it. If someone made an up-to-date version, I would love to see what has changed and what stays the same." Nathan Ross



## Year 7 Football

After a very competitive series of trials the Year 7 A team squad was selected by Mr Lewis and Mr Devonald, facing an extremely difficult first fixture at Tunbridge Wells Boys. The game proved an excellent match between two high quality sides with Harrison Smith getting the first competitive goal of the season and OPGS gaining a wonderful victory.

Since then the team have played fixtures against Norton Knatchbull GS, Dover GS, Howard School and Malling School with all games being very competitive. OPGS have played some wonderful football with Leo Amartey, Jake Pollard and Harrison Smith all getting on the score sheet during these fixtures. Leo Amartey scoring the goal of the season so far, and goalkeeper Ollie McCamley pulling off a series of magnificent saves. However, the physicality of sides like Dover GS and Howard School have meant that the team have been unable to turn excellent performances into victories. That said the OPGS defensive partnership of Blake Vince and Ollie O'Connell has proved formidable and alongside an ever improving midfield of Austin Hill, Dylan Waite and Harry Noone and wingers Hayden Goldsmith and Albert Richards there is a real sense of potential in the side.

We look forward to playing teams after Christmas where hopefully some of our boys have had a little growth spurt to match some of the opposition. Mr Lewis has been hugely impressed with the attitude and commitment of the side and looks forward to seeing the team develop into Kent champions over the next couple of years.

## Year 8 Football

The Year 8 B team have been in Maidstone League action this term and played in a mini tournament against Maplesden Noakes, St Simon Stock and New Line Learning, all of which are A teams. The squad managed to win two and draw one of their games on the day. In their first game they played Maplesden Noakes who were an even match and the game



finished 1-1 with a goal from Lewis Parris. The second game saw a convincing 5-0 win against NLL with goals from Leo Amartey and Harrison Smith, both stepping up from year 7 to help the squad on this occasion. In the final game of the day the team faced local rivals St Simon Stock. Player of the tournament, Lewis Parris scored a match winning brace to ensure that the U13 B team are in the hunt to play in the MSFA Cup Final later in the year.

## Year 9 Football

The year 9 Football teams are enjoying another successful season. The B Team beat Tunbridge wells GS in the ESFA cup which was an especially pleasing result given that they played at least two first team players. After a battling performance Aiden Durrell stepped up again to score the all-important goal deep into extra time. Having taken a corner, the ball found its way back out and Aiden faked to shoot before cutting back on his left foot and he then proceeded to curl the ball inside the far post, leaving the goalkeeper no chance. This sparked wild celebrations against a team that we have lost to in previous seasons.

The A team meanwhile, continue to progress in the ESFA Elite Cup, and I am pleased to say are now in the last 16, with the quarter finals in sight. In the last 32 they played a strong Eden Park side who arrived full of confidence and with 4 academy players from the likes of Arsenal, Tottenham and Charlton this was going to be a hard game. As expected, Eden Park started the



5th and I hope to report that the boys have put in another winning performance.

## Year 10 Football

The U15 A team have had a very busy and very successful term. After the disappointing end to term 1 (an away loss in the Kent Cup to Lenham) the squad, which has been ravaged by injuries throughout the year, had to be at their best as they hosted Beths GS in Round 3 of the ESFA Cup. Beths are renowned for being one of the better footballing schools in the county, so it was always going to be a tough encounter. Oakwood got off to a flying start and did not afford their guests the opportunity to draw breath as they raced out into a 3-0 lead in the first half, with two goals from Kabir Mogaji and one from Harrison Fryer. Beths responded in the second half with a goal of their own, but Mogaji completed his hat-trick to ensure the result.

stronger side, and it took a while for the OPGS players to adjust to the speed of the game. As the game progressed OPGS started to play their football whilst containing the opposition players, who grew increasingly frustrated. Prantor Nath had an exceptional game and consistently gained possession in midfield and drove the team forward. In the second half it was he who slipped the offside trap and found himself one-on-one with the academy keeper before slipping the ball neatly into the far corner. Eden Park responded with urgency and their casual approach changed to one of desperation as the clock ticked away. With 5 minutes to go they managed to deliver a cross that was headed in and took the game to extra time. A stalemate in extra time meant penalties as the light faded. Despite the antics of the academy keeper this did not help his side and both teams struggled to find the target. It was down to a great save from Levie Smith diving to his left which gave our captain Freddie Gibson the chance to take us through to the next round, which he dispatched. We look forward to going to Claremont School in East Sussex this week with a place in the quarter finals up for grabs for the winning team.

The squad then had to face Ravenswood, another one of the top 10 footballing schools in the county, in their second ESFA Cup game of the week. The game was a tightly fought encounter with Oakwood extremely unlucky not to have progressed after a 3-2 win in extra time by the visitors. Goals from Harrison Fryer and Ethan Ford forced the contest into extra time where the squad were unlucky to have a goal disallowed for offside and as there was no recognised VAR in place the goal was not given. The visitors saw their opportunity and grabbed a late winner.

In the Kent Cup having beaten Rainham Mark in the third round the A team now face Hundred of Hoo in the last 16. This match was played last week and having taken an early lead just before half-time Levie Smith came to clear the ball on the edge of the box collided heavily with the opposition striker. Upon arriving it was clear Levie was in considerable pain and had dislocated his knee. The match was immediately abandoned, and I would like to thank all those involved in caring for Levie prior to the ambulance arriving on scene. I am pleased to inform you that Levie is back in school today and remarkably with no further knee bracing or support. We wish him a speedy recovery and look forward to welcoming him back to the squad. The rematch is scheduled for Tuesday

Despite missing out in that ESFA Cup the squad were still very much alive in the ESFA Playstation Schools Cup where they were drawn against Hurstmere, who they had faced in last season's Kent Cup Semi-Final in which Hurstmere edged them out with a 2-1 win at the Gallagher Stadium. The game this year was also played on hallowed ground, but the surface perhaps not as true as the one on Whatman





Way. In another closely fought game it was Oakwood Park who deservedly won 2-0, with a brace from Harrison Fryer, who tormented the Hurstmere backline the entire match. The whole squad were immense on the day and a special mention to Alex Butler in the Oakwood Park goal, who made some vital saves, most notably a top handed fingertip clawing effort to keep out a shot that was heading straight into the top corner of the net.

Into the 'hat' for round 5 and the squad were again drawn at home, this time against Brampton Manor Academy, one of the biggest schools in London. This tie had a sentimental feel to it as injured captain; Oliver Roberts' dad is the principal at the school. All sentiment was put to one side though once the teams met on the field. Buoyed by the prospect of 'bragging rights' in the Roberts household the squad put on a sensational performance for their injured captain and won the game comfortably 4-0, with goals from James Grey, a contender for goal of the month from Jimmy Corney and a brace from Kyler Barton.

Round 6 awaits the other side of Christmas where the boys hopes of an 'away day' to Newcastle have been put on ice (for the time being) as they have been drawn, at home again against the winner of the game between Herne Bay High and Carshalton Boys College. Whatever happens from this point on, the squad are amongst the best 32 school teams in the country and should be immensely proud of their achievements this season.

## Year 11 Football

The U16 Squad have continued to grow in strength this season and despite an early exit in the National Cup, they are still competing in the Kent Cup. The squad had to travel



to The St John Wallis Academy on a Friday evening after school early in November. There is a saying about the best sides being able to get a result on a wet November evening and this was certainly the case in this fixture. With a squad that has also been hit hard with injuries this season, the U16's travelled to Ashford to play a team that had beat them in the previous season. Despite some issues with the floodlights, the squad played a good game against a technical and physical side and were still in it at 1-0 down until the very last moments. Harry Attwater managed to grab the equaliser which took the game straight to penalties, a lack of working floodlights helped the referee with that decision, one which suited the U16's more than their opponents.

With penalties being taken in conditions that it would have been testing for an owl to see in, let alone the goalkeepers trying to save a ball being hit at them from 12 yards, it therefore wasn't unexpected that it went to sudden death. Oakwood held their nerve with the winning penalty being scored by Josh Bruce, who calmly slotted the ball into the net.

Into the next round and another away day but this time to Tunbridge Wells to play Bennett Memorial school on a 4G pitch, again issues around floodlights as they were not switching on. As the lights eventually came on the boys sprang into action and won comfortably 5-1 to progress to the quarter finals and yet another away trip, this time to Charles Darwin school in the new year.

## 1st XI Football

A mixture of results for the senior team, with two wins, a draw and a loss in their four matches so far this term. The two wins came in both league and cup, the first a 1-0 win against St Gregorys school in round 1 of the cup, with the solitary goal coming from Harry Attwater which was enough to see the squad progress into round two. Their second win was against Dane Court, which was a comfortable 2-0 victory. A hard-fought draw v Borden (1-1) and then a tough loss to Chatham and Clarendon (away) 5-2. Despite the loss the squad showed a lot of determination on the day and the scoreline wasn't reflective of the game, but that is the nature of sport. The squad have evaluated their targets, and the aim is to try to be unbeaten in their remaining league matches and to focus on having a prolonged cup run in the new year.

# Frederics Maidstone

## Maximilian Patton X10

My experience visiting Frederic's.

On the 9th of November 2023, I had a French enrichment day where I went and visited Frédéric bistro in Maidstone town centre and the owner, Mr Allsebrook, told us about cheese, where and how it is made.

When we arrived at the bistro, we were seated in a small dining area in the front of the restaurant. In front of us lay a wooden table with five different types of cheese on it. The owner first talked to us about the three different animals who produce the milk for cheese which were: cows, goats, and sheep. 90% of all cheese made is from cows as it is cheaper due to the fact that an average milk cow can produce 250 litres a day, when sheep and goats can only produce 2-5 litres a day. Mr Allsebrook then explained that there are 3 different types of cheese production. These include farm, artisan and co-operative/industrial. These mean that you can either use your own milk and have a limited number of workers (maximum 9) or use other people's milk (within a certain distance) and have as many workers as you need.



Mr Allsebrook then went on to explain about the different types of cheese that are made, and he sells. The first cheese, which was called Comté, tasted a bit like Cheddar. Next was Mont D'or which was like brie. He explained that this one was fresh and only left to mature for 5 weeks, so it was still quite fresh and gooey. Then, he brought out the Fourme d'Ambert which was blue cheese. Mr Allsebrook explained how the blue cheese gets its colour; this happens when they extract bacteria from a cave and insert it into some bread where they leave it to grow mouldy and wrap it round the cheese allowing the mould to move through the cheese causing it to get its blue colour and famous smell. The last two cheeses we could try were the Reblochon and the Maroilles where were quite similar and tasted quite nice.

## Angus Kenny P10

I was extremely grateful for having such a fun morning and I have to thank the staff at Frédéric's for providing the year 10 French students with such an enjoyable and informative experience.

## Nathan Manser S10

We went downtown to go to the restaurant Frédéric's to learn about different French cheese and French culture. We were given an opportunity to taste some blue cheese, Comté and Maroilles. Also, we were taught about many other French foods such as boeuf bourguignon, tarte Tatin, ratatouille, macarons, and foie gras. Mr Allsebrook told us about how cheese is made and the different animals that are used to make it. Cows, goats, and lambs could all be used for cheese production and that cows were the most efficient as some can produce around 250 litres per day. Despite producing around 1 litre of milk per day, cheese made from lamb's milk is more expensive. The price of cheese also depends on how it is made. For example, farm-made cheese is more expensive as it is a better quality than mass produced cheese made in industrial settings as it is a lower quality. We also learnt about wine and how in the restaurant they have a round 5000 bottles of wine of around 1200 different types with the most expensive bottle costing around £1000.

# Freytag's Pyramid and Noughts and Crosses

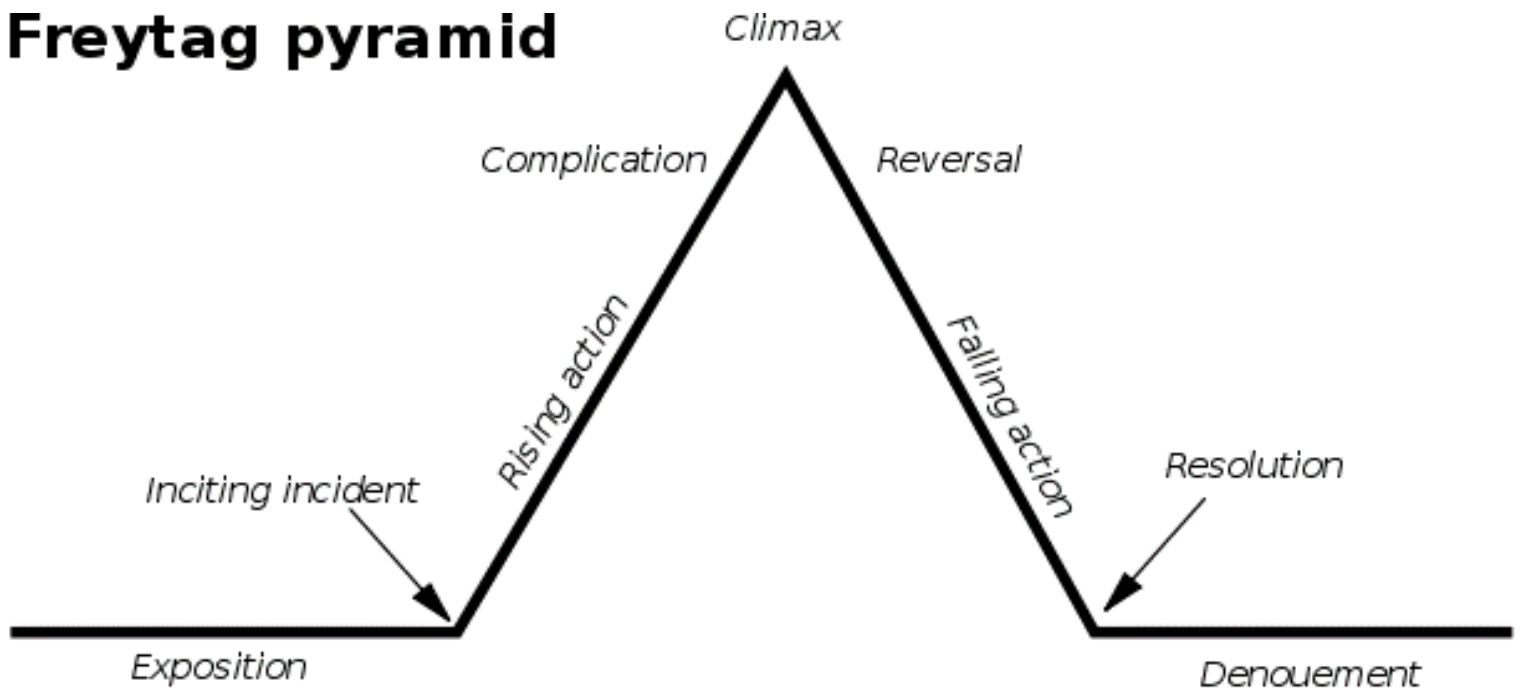
The English Department would like to celebrate the outstanding classwork completed by Omesh Sankpal, Nathan Walters, Prantor Nath, Zack Stones, Dylan Luton and Knight Vince.

The students were asked to map the progression of the plot of Noughts and Crosses using German philosopher Gustav Freytag's pyramid. Freytag used these five parts, following a pyramid structure, to analyse a 5-Act plot structure of a play, borrowing from the unified plot structure of Greek philosopher Aristotle. The five sections include: 1) The exposition (the introduction), 2) Rising action, 3) The Climax (often the turning point of a play with the peripetia), 4) Falling action and 5) The denouement (the resolution).

Noughts and Crosses, by Children's Laureate, Malorie Blackman is studied as their choice of novel at the start of Year 9. This novel is set in a dystopian Britain in which society is divided by racism. Dark-skinned Crosses are privileged in society over the light-skinned noughts. Against the odds, the main characters, Sephy and Callum, fall in love across the divide which leads them into danger. The couple, a modern-day Romeo and Juliet, whose family and societal norms forbid them to be together. The BBC adapted this thrilling tale into a television series, which aired on 5th March 2020. This is available on BBC iPlayer, perhaps something good to watch across the cosy, Winter months:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p082w992/noughts-crosses>

## Freytag pyramid



# Gymnastics National Finals

Leo competed at the gymnastics National Finals on Friday 27th October in Telford against the best gymnasts in the country.

He qualified in 1st place in September securing a spot for the SouthEast Regional team.

Despite a fall from the P.Bars, Leo competed extremely well and ranked 11th in the country as an individual. The South East team finished in a credible 3rd place!



# History Enrichment Day

History students enjoyed a 'Pomp and Propaganda' Walking Tour from Westminster to Trafalgar Square.

Along Whitehall they saw many historic sites including The Cenotaph, the Foreign Office, Horse Guards, Downing Street and Banqueting House. Westminster Abbey with its historic connections to monarchs back to Edward the Confessor including the Coronation Chair and the tombs of Henry VII, Elizabeth I and Mary



Queen of Scots. These are figures covered in GCSE and A-Level History. Students also walked the route which so many Kings and Queens had taken to their coronation and saw the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. It was a fantastic opportunity for students to experience 1000 years of national history in one Enrichment Day.

# IWM Duxford Visit

Miss Aldous: Our Year 8 History theme is 'The Pursuit and Impact of Empire' and to enhance students' understanding of Britain's role in the world in the C20th we visited IWM Duxford in Cambridgeshire in November. Two Year 8 students explain their experience and what they learnt:

## Oscar Wharton P8:

Visiting Duxford was extremely interesting and enriching because we could see all of the beautiful planes in person and be able to examine them. We were able to see how aircraft technology has been able to grow and develop throughout the years. We were even lucky enough to see the world's fastest carrier plane and one of the most important Spitfires in the world. During our trip we were even able to see a Hawker Hunter aircraft flying around the airfield which was exciting. When we went into the Operations Room we learnt how Duxford was a key part of the RAF's response to the



Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain because they were able to spot the enemy aircrafts coming in and help the response team meet them in battle. I really enjoyed this trip, and I am hopeful that the next year 8's are able to on this trip like me.

## Archie Spreckley P8:

Visiting Duxford was an inspiration. There were so many amazing aircraft to see that we wished we had stayed longer. Although it was a museum it made students think back to all the astounding and tough events that took place in the world, such as the Second World War. Most facts that we had learnt in history



were dated many years before we were born so we couldn't experience them ourselves yet Duxford gave us the opportunity to come face to face with some of the most amazing planes that had been fighting for Britain. One of the highlights of the day was that we could walk through the planes and see their amazing yet complex engineering. Although we saw many aircraft, we also saw many memorials scattered throughout the museum, such as the 'Roll of Honour' memorial and the 'Counting the Cost' glass memorial outside the American Air Museum. Duxford isn't just proud of their



would have been classed as a very modern invention when the wars began but monoplanes (one winged planes) were preferred for battle. This was noticed as we walked through the museum.

Another highlight of the day was when we were able to see the planes fly from the runway just as they would in the Battle of Britain. This was a treat because we were experiencing some of the world's most iconic planes in action. Overall Duxford was amazing and such a great experience. So many seeds of knowledge were planted into our heads we were full by the end of the day.



exhibits but they also held a key role in the Battle of Britain. Their aerodrome was used to fight off the Luftwaffe and because of the key role of Duxford the Germans couldn't get past the RAF and successfully invade England. There were many interactive sights throughout. One of them was a helmet that was attached to an audio which made you feel as if you were a pilot of a Supermarine Spitfire. This was great because it gave an idea of how hard it was to be a pilot. Over the years technology has changed and so has aircraft. It has refined as more have been created. Soon after planes had been built the biplane was created. This



# Literacy Advent Calendar

This year, OPGS have rolled out their tradition of celebrating the success of students, through a Literacy Advent Calendar.

How did this Christmas tradition begin?

The word 'advent' comes from the Latin word 'adventus', meaning 'coming' and officially starts four Sundays before the 25th of December, with the lighting of candles, hanging of wreaths and singing of carols in preparation for all the festivities. Although, advent calendars as we currently know them are relatively new, the origins of this traditional countdown began in Germany in the 19th Century. Back then, each day of advent was marked by either burning a candle for the day or marking walls or doors with a line of chalk each day until Christmas day. In the early 1850s, the first known handmade wooden advent calendar was created, then some 50 years later came the first printed calendars. Since that time the popularity and type of advent calendars that are available have changed considerably! From what we consider the more traditional cardboard advent calendars with images behind each door, to the more elaborate type with 24 or 25 individual drawers, each hiding a small gift.

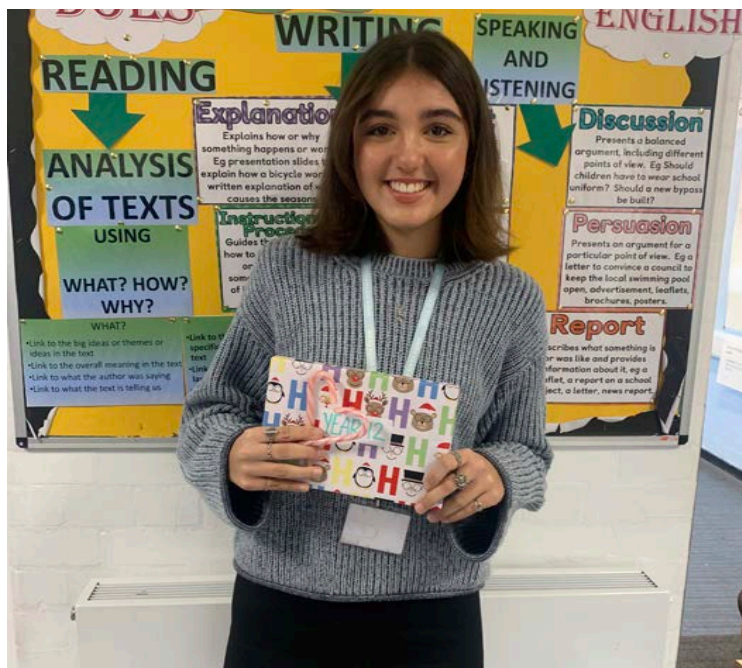
Throughout the month of December, we will be hosting a Literacy Advent calendar. We will



count down the days to Christmas in a unique and exciting way by making an Advent Calendar – but rather than chocolate there will be books behind the doors. We have carefully selected 24 books and 24 lucky students will be invited to open our advent calendar. These students are ones that have been nominated by their teachers demonstrating our 4 fundamental behaviour principles across the course of the year so far:

- 1) All members of the school community should be treated with kindness, respect and tolerance.
- 2) All students are expected to respect other students' right to learn and teachers' right to teach.
- 3) All members of the school community should strive for excellence and excellence will be celebrated.
- 4) All members of the school community should respect the school environment.

This fantastic way to celebrate the lead up to Christmas is orchestrated by Ms George, our Whole School Literacy Co-ordinator. Some of this year's exciting titles include *The Island at the End of Everything*, *I Must Betray You*, *Thief!*, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, *We Are All Made of Molecules*, *Atomic Habits*, *Purple Hibiscus*, and *The Count of Monte Cristo*.



# London Philharmonic Orchestra

On Thursday 23rd November, 21 lucky GCSE and A Level students enjoyed a trip to the Royal Festival Hall to see the London Philharmonic Orchestra perform a selection of orchestral pieces, conducted by Michael Seal and presented by Rachel Leach; sharing analysis and key musical terminology on several pieces with an engaging quiz for students to complete throughout the performances.

Angus Wong; year 10 GCSE student, wrote: "The school had kindly arranged a music trip to London South Bank Centre on the 23rd of November, where music students saw the well-known London Philharmonic Orchestra play a wide range of classical repertoire from Mozart to Copland, covering all the area of studies that students would need for their music GCSE exams.



During the concert, they were first introduced to the famous Beethoven Symphony no. 5 "Fate" in C minor, and through interactive questions and quizzes, they were taught about the sonata allegro form, movements in a symphony, and concerto forms. The concert ended on a high note with a beloved soundtrack by Howard Shore, the Lord of the Rings.

At last, they were offered a chance to visit the gift shop.

Through this trip, much has been learnt by the students with much joyful emotions and great enthusiasm".





# Music Enrichment Day

On Friday 1st December, 32 year 8 music students took part in an independent band project where they chose their band groups, instruments and put together a band performance at the end of the day.

There were a selection of songs to choose from and students needed to work on instruments with good timing, accuracy and technique to perform successfully to the class. Performances were rated at the end of the day and the winners were group 2: Alfie, Mide, Wande, Heath, Daniel and Toby... well done to all!

# PSHE Enrichment Day

On enrichment day on Friday 1st December, students in Year 11 were fortunate to partake in a number of PSHE workshops as well as sessions in which students were able to gain more information on post-16 options and the application process.

Students received a workshop delivered by a specialist facilitator from the School of Sexuality Education completing exercises highlighting the unrealistic societal standards set out for men and women. Students reflected on how many of these expectations are discriminatory, as society has led us to believe the perfect man and woman should be of a certain sexuality and race. They were educated on the forms of sexual harassment and how they can play an active role in reducing it.

Having just completed their PPEs and with GCSEs getting ever closer, Year 11 were also given a presentation by Kooth with the theme of exam stress. Students were not only made aware of the signs of stress but also reminded that it is a natural thing that everyone experiences. More importantly, they were

taught how to combat stress and where they can get support if they find that the pressure of exams has become too much.

The final workshop was an LGBT+ talk in which pupils were made more aware of both the positive and negative experiences that members of the LGBT+ community encounter daily and throughout their lives. Once again, Year 11 were reminded of how they can support members of the LGBT+ community and how they themselves can get support through charities which aim to help members meet similar people to share experiences with.

The rest of the day was utilised by students to set up their Kent Choices accounts with the help of Mrs Williams as IAG co-ordinator. This will enable them to apply for and look into the exciting post-16 choices available to them once they have sat their GCSEs.

Many thanks to Miss Ryan for organising the day, the teachers who supported us during the sessions, and of course to the various external speakers who made the day engaging and inspiring.

# History Department Awareness Day: Remembering Military and Civilian Service

OPGS respectfully marks Remembrance Day every year. Each year is designated a theme by the Royal British Legion and 2023's theme was military and civilian service.

Students learnt also about the contribution of a generation in uniform who undertook National Service from 1947-1963 as 2023 marks the 60th anniversary of the last serviceman to be demobbed. It is also the 75th anniversary of the Empire Windrush arriving in Britain. The ship carried more than 100 serving and former armed forces personnel from the Caribbean back to Britain who had provided military service during the Second World War.



Photos:

King Charles III

Victory Parade, 1919

National Service notice from 1956

Norman Harris who left Jamaica to serve in the British military (here in Singapore, 1967)



The young men's accounts of National Service show how they often experienced being shouted at by senior officers, tiredness during parade and marching; how they missed home and disliked having their hair cut short and how most could not choose their posting. Some experienced perilous danger on postings such as to Korea, 1950-1953. There were positives such as meeting people from vastly different backgrounds to themselves, camaraderie with other recruits, responsibility and opportunities to travel and learn skills. OPGS students accessed these stories through the powerful eyewitness accounts of those who did National Service. Students learnt how service often came at a cost to those called up. This highlighted why the Remembrance of service is so important.

# Remembrance Ceremony

Each year, OPGS commemorates the sacrifice of soldiers from the Commonwealth in our annual Remembrance Ceremony. Traditionally, this is held on the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month because The Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War, was signed 11th November in 1918.

Across this month, poppies are worn to show support for the Armed Forces community. The red poppy is a symbol of remembrance and hope, including hope for the future in a positive and peaceful world.

This year, the tone was even more sombre than the occasion demands, due to the bad weather on the day. The students and staff alike braced the rain in order to come together as a school community. This year, our Head Students, Tessa Rojo and Joshua Alchin, who spoke at remembrance celebration with their recitation of the Exhortation:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left to grow old:

Age shall not weary the, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.



This was followed by The Last Post being sounded.

After which, a two-minute silence is observed, allowing us to think about and reflect on the sacrifice of the soldiers. To signal the end of the two minutes silence, Reveille is sounded. Finally, the Kohima Epitaph is read:

When you go home, tell them of us and say,  
For your tomorrow, we gave our today.

This year, the whole school stood outside, to face the elements in the rain, to observe the Act of Remembrance on Friday 10th November. In Maidstone, the remembrance parade began at Week Street, then moved through The Broadway and Jubilee Square in Maidstone from 10:30am on Sunday 12th November. The procession then made its way back towards Week Street, after a salute from the Mayor of Maidstone, and the Commanding Officer. This was followed by the laying of wreaths. During the event Maidstone's Mayor, Councillor Gordon Newton, was joined by Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Castro RE, Commanding Officer of 36 Engineer Regiment and the Queen's Gurkha Engineers, to take the salute from the parade. Likewise, the national televised ceremony was held in London, observed by royalty, politicians, and leaders of the Armed Forces on Sunday 12th November.

The OPGS rowing club has once again grown in strength. Providing an opportunity for new rowers in year 7 and 8, we have maximum numbers attending the club. This is the first time since pre-Covid times that the club has been full (with a waiting list).

Jane, our coach, has been working with the students every Monday, supported by Matthew in Year 9. The two of them have been developing the new rowers' techniques on our indoor rowing machines, preparing them for the move to the water in April. The indoor phase of the season is hugely important, and our rowers have worked diligently and purposefully to ensure they will do well at that time.

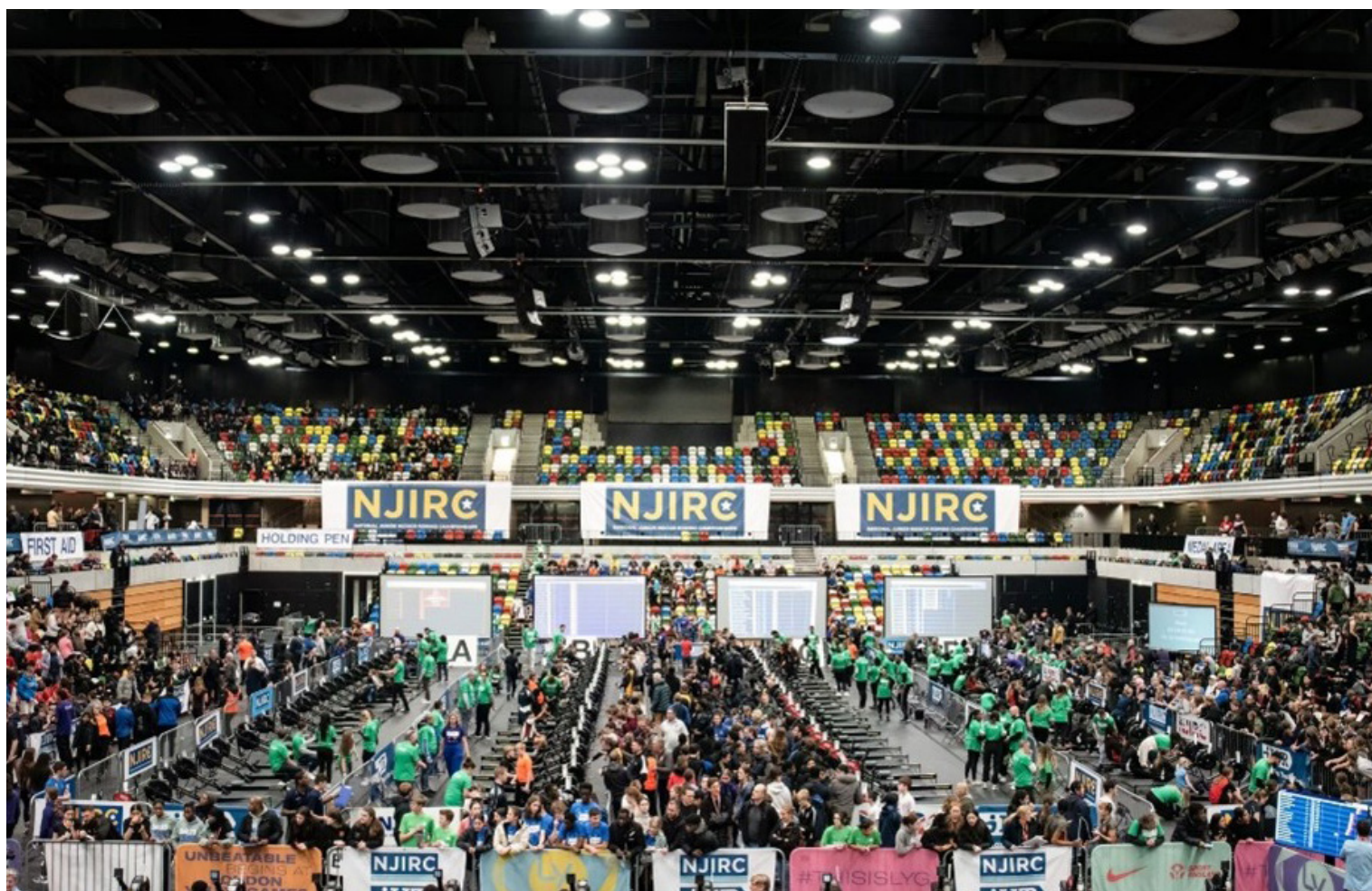
They completed their competency swim test on Monday 4th December at Larkfield Leisure centre. 20 rowers all dressed in shorts and t-shirts, completed a 100m swim

without stopping and then treading water for 3 minutes. Both not easy feats wearing soaking wet clothes. This is an important safety aspect for the group and prepares them for when they move to the water.

**Dexter Disley has written this report about his experience so far:**

"This year, my experience with rowing club has been amazing. The coach is great and has informed us with all the things we will need to know when we get on to the river. I will try to keep going with this club for as long as possible and I can't wait for when we go on the river in April."

We are looking to expand the rowing club so that the older rowers can continue their development and for the first time since 2019, we are looking at taking a squad to NJIRC, the national indoor rowing championships in March 2024, so watch this space.



# RS Enrichment trip

## God and the Good?

On the cold morning of Friday 1st December 2023, the year 12 and year 13 students studying RS made their way to London to watch Peter Vardy, a modern-day philosopher, discuss theories surrounding the existence of God, at Bloomsbury Baptist Church. On our arrival to Victoria Station, we made our way to Tottenham Court Road Station via the underground, to reach our destination of the conference, of which a wide variety of schools also attended. Vardy himself was an engaging lecturer, who involved students within his discussions, and even led a debate at the end surrounding whether or not conscience is a poor moral guide. During the lectures, we were able to make detailed and valuable notes, guided by Vardy and his PowerPoints, which covered parts of our A Level syllabus, and therefore being of great help to those who attended.



## God is good

The first section of Vardy's lecture focused on the statement 'God is good'. More importantly, he focused on 'What do we mean by God is good?' Two basic approaches were put forward as to what God is: a God that is outside of time and has no effect on our earth (akin to Aristotle's Prime mover), or a God who is within our time and temporal. The idea of God being outside of our time was argued by St. Augustine and St. Aquinas, but has been heavily scrutinised for the simple fact that nothing meaningful could possibly be stated about a timeless figure. The lack of meaningful language was what influenced Ayer into putting forward the verification principle, again consisting of two approaches. The Strong verification principle is empirical evidence which can conclude a statement, whilst the Weak verification principle is empirical evidence that only shows a statement to be probable. To counteract this, Vardy discussed the work of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Whilst a critic of religious language through his early years, his ideology changed as time passed. Most notably, he put forward an easy way of talking about God, as well as a reason for why some might find difficulty talking about God. He coined this 'language games'. He believes we are all culturally full of many (language) games, in that what terminology may make sense in some cultures may be disregarded as nonsensical in others. Applied to religious language, this provides a criticism in the idea of religious language being a jump in logic, as whilst it may be easy for the critic to disregard, for the religious follower it makes perfect sense, as it is part of their 'language game.' These were really interesting ideas, and allowed for us all to understand opposing views and arguments on the language used to describe God.

## Natural Law

The second lecture Vardy delivered to us and those at the conference was on the predominantly religious Natural Law, developed by St. Thomas Aquinas, which

linked in well with the pervious lecture, in which Natural Law was brought in at the end. Vardy covered how Russell used the Euthyphro Dilemma (a discussion between Socrates and Euthyphro involving Socrates asking Euthyphro if God is good because of God, or if good is simply just good) to try and disprove the existence of God. Russell argued that either God is the divine commander and author of morality, making him the dictator, and therefore what is good is just what God wants; or God is subject to some independent standard of morality and so is not supreme. Vardy then brought in Aristotle's ideas into whether Natural Law can justify God being good. Aristotle argued that something is only good when it fulfils its purpose – when studied in nature, it is clear that everything has some sort of telos. For example, we would be considered 'good' humans if we fulfil our purpose. Aquinas' principle of synderesis (to do good and avoid evil) was further drawn up on, which is the central principle of Natural Law, and how something may look good but may not actually be good – real vs apparent goods. Vardy further discussed Finnis and how he believed that we shouldn't act against the absolute values, similar to the primary precepts, leaving us with the thought of

whether or not love should be the basis of Christian Ethics.

## Conscience

The final lecture given by Vardy was concerned with the idea of Conscience. Vardy claimed that conscience is the weighing up of the consequences of a moral decision before it is made, which led to the introduction to Freud who said that conscience was the internalised voice of one's parents and is therefore relative to culture and community. This was significant as it would counter the concept of the previously mentioned Natural Law. He then brought up Immanuel Kant who created a term for rejecting one's inner reason which he dubbed 'unconsciousness.' Vardy then went on to discuss the concept of Radical evil which occurs when human's 'reject their inner reason and instead are dominated by their emotions and desires' which then led back into Natural law with Aquinas claiming that conscience is simply reason making right decisions with Philosophy entailing Rationality. The talk ended with a massive debate about whether personal conscience is a useful tool for moral decision making with there being many points for either side.



## Year 7 Rugby

Year 7 rugby has continued to grow throughout term 2, new faces have joined the club on a Tuesday lunchtime due to identification and encouragement throughout sessions delivered in lessons. Whilst we have been unlucky with the weather on match days this term, the boys have shown commitment to attend training and have been eager to develop their skills.

The one fixture we have had v Bennett Memorial was a huge success, with both original squad members and some new to the squad demonstrating their skills during a tough match. Organisationally, the squad have developed and we are seeing a much more strategic aspect to the game, the structure was much improved and a number of boys excelled in the less chaotic game. William, Zach, Harrison, Oreoluwa and Fergus, to name a few really excelled in their performances with their ability to run, dodge and pass effectively and strategically to break the gain line. Olly led the game well from his unaccustomed position of fly half allowing some of the players to direct their running to the right spaces on the pitch.

Defensively the boys tackling was much improved. The opposition were finding it much harder to break the gain line and our competition



at rucks in particular, caused the opposition issues in maintaining clean possession.

We are looking forward to the fixtures that are being organised for next term, knowing that the squad will continue developing their skills and strategies. Please keep checking our School Sports Website for fixtures as they are added.

Well done to all the players and I hope to see even more join training next term.

## Years 8&9 Rugby

Like other year groups the years 8&9 rugby squads have experienced a disrupted term due to fixture cancellations. Despite this the student's commitment to training has remained fantastic with thirty plus boys attending every Friday lunchtime. This has allowed students to develop in key areas of the game that include tackle technique, set pieces and the breakdown.

The year 8 team have played two fixtures this term, the first of which against a strong and athletic Chatham & Clarendon GS team. With strong runners in both teams this was an end-to-end game with tries being scored regularly throughout the match. Unfortunately OPGS lost two of their better tacklers to injury in the second half of the game which turned momentum in the favour of C&C GS who eventually went on to win by 25 points to 15.

The boys second fixture this term was the Maidstone Schools Rugby Competition qualifying competition at Aylesford RFC. This is always a great event with the boys getting to play against many of their friends from local schools and under floodlights. With six other schools in attendance the team played ten-minute fixtures in a round robin format. The competition started with a tough match against an aggressive Malling School team who resisted the OPGS attack for much of the game. Strong support play and work at the breakdown eventually led to a series of fantastic tries and OPGS running out 25-0 winners. The boys built on this performance to win their next three



matches against Cornwallis, NLL & St Simon Stock. The penultimate game would prove the toughest test of the afternoon against a fired up Aylesford team who knew many of the OPGS players through club rugby at Maidstone and Aylesford RFC. Some big early tackles and a try from Aylesford School showed that this match would be a real test of the work training we have done in term 2. The boys fronted up superbly and maintained a strong defensive line to keep the Aylesford School attack at bay, turning over possession frequently and using this to exploit gaps in the opposition defensive line as the game progressed. The team eventually went on to win the game by 20 points to 5, following this with a final victory against St Augustine's to remain undefeated and top the qualifying group. This means the team can now look forward to playing in the Maidstone District Premiership final following the Christmas break. Special mentions must

go to Adeposi Adeshina (who finished OPGS' top try scorer) & Aristotel Calvert (scoring three tries in his first appearance for OPGS).

Following the disappointment of a quarter final Kent Plate defeat to Bullers Wood School in term 1 the year 9 squad were looking forward to getting back to winning ways in term 2. The first and only game of this term was against a physical and well organised Chatham & Clarendon GS team at OPGS. Selection for this game was extremely difficult with over thirty students now in the squad. As such we fielded different XV's in each half, a credit to the talent and every growing skill level in this year group.

This posed challenges in terms of organisation and continuity in the first half with OPGS trailing by two points at half time, despite having taken an early lead. After some tactical changes and



advice at half time the team came out with renewed purpose, maintaining a strong defence whilst scoring three superb break away tries from our own half, two of which were scored by the man of the match Ayman Azeez. The game finished 28-17 to OPGS which was an excellent result against strong opposition that the team had lost to last season. Unfortunately the boys have experienced a series of cancellations for the remainder of the terms fixtures, preventing them from building upon this success. That said, we now look forward to more fixtures against other grammar schools in the new year.

## Year 10 Rugby

Throughout term 2, Under 15 rugby has been a little fragmented, with opposition teams and the weather affecting the fixtures we had organised. A number of those fixtures have been postponed to next term, please keep a look out for updated fixtures on our sports website.

The squad have remained focussed and continued to train on a Friday lunch, into period 5. This training has really paid off. The final fixture of term 2 v St Lawrence was an opportunity to demonstrate the newly developed organisational structure of the team. During the first half of the match the structure of the game was evident. Our pod system utilised to good effect with the likes of Teddy, Elijah and Vlad running directly with support from the other forwards. This allowed a good platform for Oscar to build an attack with our direct running backs. In defence, the tackling and pitch coverage from Remi, Barney, Barnaby and Jacob in particular to thwart the oppositions backs attack, was outstanding. Harrison was strong under the high ball, and Freddie Stewart like, running the ball back beating defenders each time to set a strong platform for our forwards, was great to see.

We have lots to look forward to next term, a number of matches and also the opportunity to train on Monday evening with the senior squads, under the direction of the Senior Coach Mr Evans. This will build towards developing our style of play, whilst also building cohesion with the current Under 16 players, who many of this squad will be playing with in the 2024-2025 season as part of the OPGS 1st XV.

Well done to all, keep up the commitment and we will be well placed to have a strong finish

to the season.

## 1st XV Rugby

Another tough term this term with the Senior squad. Training has been fragmented due to various factors including coach availability, weather conditions and player availability. This along with fixtures being cancelled have not really allowed us to build fully on the progress during term 1. That being said, the two fixtures we have played have tested our character, whilst also showing the development of the squad and individuals alike. Playing a well structured Simon Langton team was tough, our defence was tested to the maximum. The cohesion of the squad made Simon Langton play some high-quality rugby, being forced to create space rather than just run through our team. Leading from the front Alex, Logan, Charlie, to name a few, battled for possession, slowing down the attacks made by Simon Langton, pushing play wide. Whilst the match ended in a loss, the development of our defence structures was evident, and hopefully can be taken into future games.

The final game of this term was down at St Lawrence. Taking a depleted squad due to injuries and illness, St Lawrence kindly offered some players in true sporting spirit to play for us, and what a game we had. OPGS and St Lawrence players combined superbly to play a well structured and organised match. Fin, playing his first full 70 minutes at scrum half for the seniors, made decisions quickly and effectively putting our team on the front foot. Alex, Charlie, Dan et al all supported and lead from the front, setting up plays that our backs would be able to attack from with direct running from Josh and Levi, to name a couple. Woody, starting the game at number 10, a position he has never played, was a learning curve and whilst his decision making was good, it really developed when St Lawrence offered us their Belgium international player. This helped our structure and when Woody did slot into that 10 role again, it was clear that he had developed and taken on board tips from that player.

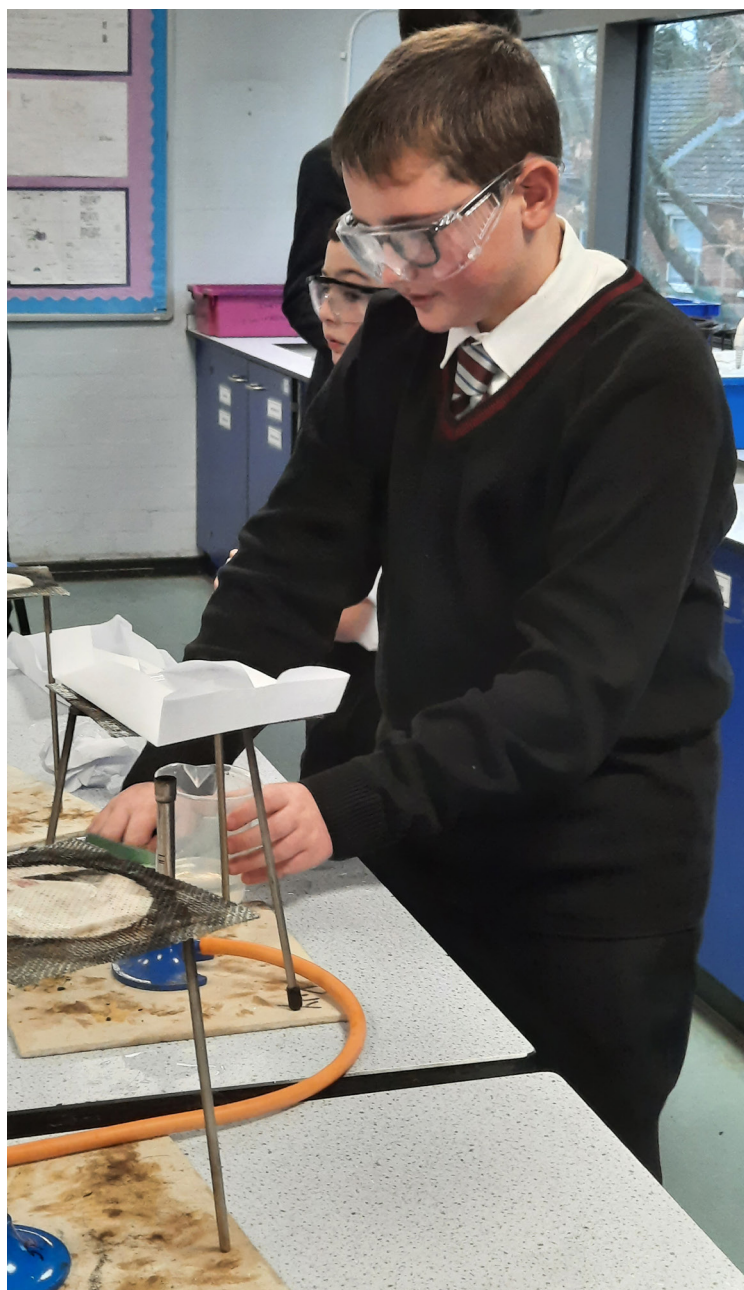
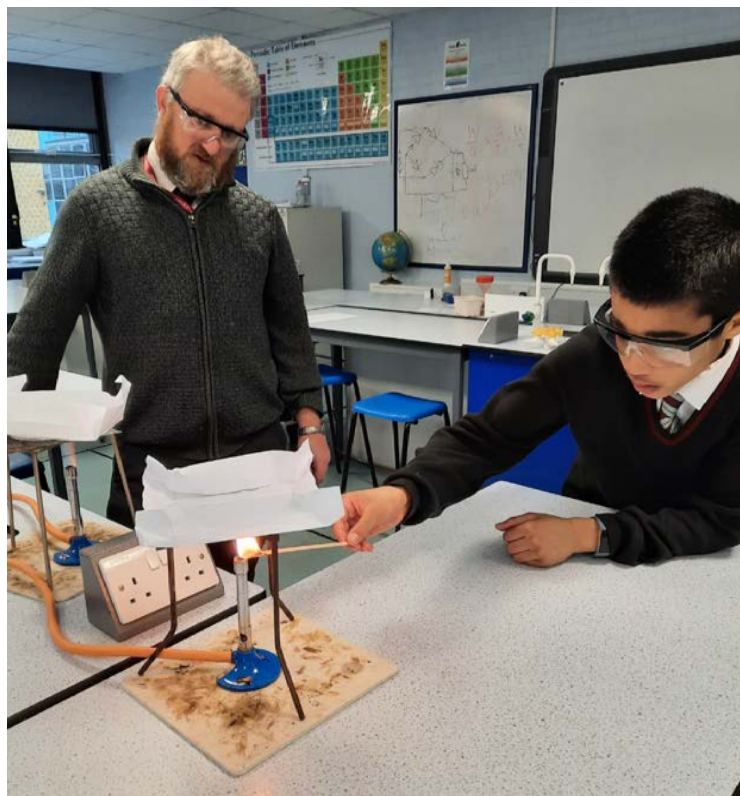
It was a great way to end this term and the boys should be looking forward to playing more matches and continuing our development next term.

**Well done to all involved.**

## Year 7 Science Club

Science Club runs for Year 7 every Thursday lunchtime, 1.30pm, in room 57. Science Club is run by our 6th form Science Prefect Team, supported by staff.

This week we had fun with the Ruben's Tube, which is a piece of equipment for demonstrating standing waves in a tube. One end of the tube is linked to a speaker, and the other is linked to the gas. There is a series of holes along the tube which allows flame to come through. We played some music through the speaker, which, in time to the beat, altered the height of the gas flames along the tube. This works best with music with a strong beat.



After the Ruben's Tube, we set up some paper boats over a Bunsen burner and learned why they don't burn if they are filled with water. The students made a paper boat and then placed it carefully on a tripod and gauze, 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 too low whilst there was water in the boat. Once the water had gone, the temperature rose, and the boat began to burn.

# Science Competition

In October the Broughton house competition asked the question

Which scientist has made the greatest contribution to understanding?

This opened a discussion as to how to judge this. Is the contribution of immunology pioneers, Jenner or Pasture more valuable than understanding nature at the atomic level (Rutherford)? Is pushing the limits of engineering by Brunel, or the communication of ideas to inspire the next generation what really matters. We had so many nominations that a meeting to decide the winner turned into a few meetings.

In first place was Finlay Barker 7T who nominated Tu Youyou for her work in developing Malaria treatment, saving many lives.

In second was George Hughes 7T for his nomination of Katolin Kaiko for her work on vaccines during the Covid pandemic.

Third place was awarded to Darius Golder 7X for his nomination of Carl Sagan who inspired many modern cosmologists with his television series and his contribution to public engagement in the NASA Voyager missions.

Well done to all entrants who all earned points for their house.



# A Festive Dive into Mexican Culture & Dia de los Muertos:

Embarking on a journey to explore the vibrant traditions of Mexico proved to be an enriching experience.

From crafting a Calaverita literaria to losing myself in the visually magnificent “The Book of Life,” diving into Mexican geography, and unleashing creativity through Calavera drawings, each activity bringing its own unique charm.

The Calaverita literaria, a poetic epitaph playfully poking fun at the living, allowed me to embrace the colourful and humorous spirit of Día de los Muertos. Crafting verses that humorously celebrated life and death was not only a creative exercise but also a window allowing us as students to enjoy and have lasting fun while learning about Dia de los Muertos.

Watching “The Book of Life” was a cinematic treat that beautifully captured the essence of Día de los Muertos. The vivid animation, coupled with a heartwarming storyline, transported me to the enchanting realms of San Ángel where it is all served to me on a golden platter. The film served as a visually captivating introduction to the cultural significance and colorful aesthetics of the celebration.

Exploring Mexican geography was like travelling across borders to discover this intriguing nation’s varied landscapes and rich cultural heritage. Acquiring knowledge about the expansive deserts, ancient towns,

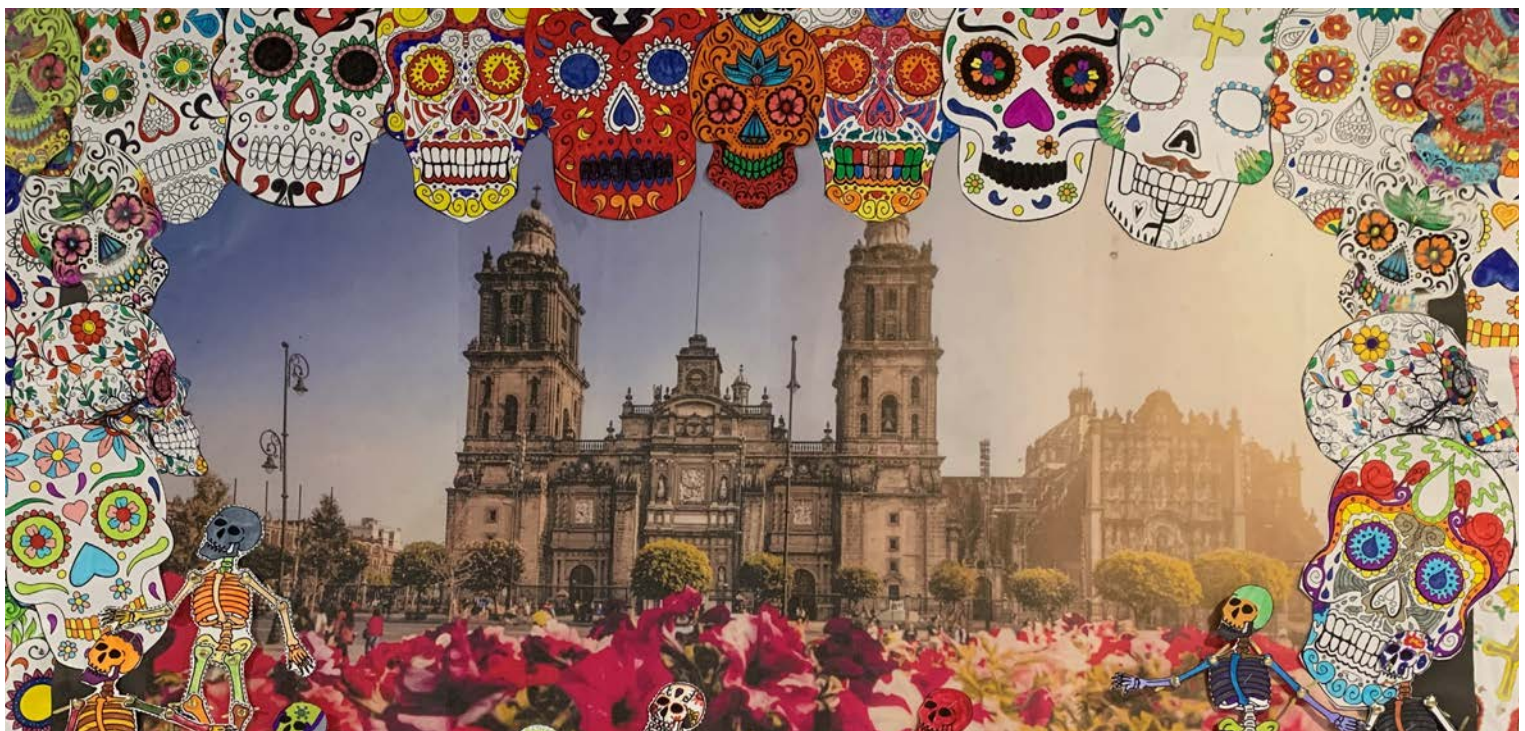
and fascinating historical figures like Hernán Cortés enhanced my comprehension of the context in which Día de los Muertos unfolds.

Drawing and puppeteering Calavera proved to be a hands-on, artistic exploration of the iconic skulls associated with the festival of Dia de los Muertos. Through the creative process, I was able to convey how I saw this historic emblem and recognise the importance of artistic expression in Mexican culture.

Choosing a favourite among these activities is a challenge, as each offered a unique perspective on the cultural richness of Mexico. Well and truly if I was to honestly pick a favourite, hands-down it would be awarded to ‘The Book of Life’. The cinematic choreography and effort put into making this film immersible to the viewer was spectacular, the film was immeasurably interesting that an hour had already gone by before I realised it and I was eager to see it through on my own.

In conclusion, the diverse activities given by the Oakwood Park Grammar School Language Department, provided a comprehensive understanding of Día de los Muertos, weaving together language, cinema, geography, and art into a colourful tapestry of cultural exploration. The joy derived from learning about a celebration in another culture is immeasurable, offering a deeper appreciation for the traditions that connect us all.

**By Opeyemi Kabir Mogaji (X10)**



# U13&U16 Kent School Team Table Tennis Championships

Congratulations to the U13 table tennis squad who achieved a school best result at the Kent Schools Table Tennis Team Championships in term 3. OPGS entered A&B teams into the competition, with all students having gained experience from playing in last year's event as year 7's. This experience proved invaluable as both teams started well to win opening matches against Brompton Academy (B team) and local rivals Maidstone GS (A team).

The B team then faced a tough second pool match vs. Rochester Maths School, last year's winners of the competition. Despite battling hard throughout all 8 matches the B team were defeated and moved into the U13 plate competition, facing Rainham Mark GS and a rematch against Brompton Academy in their semi-final group. Unfortunately the team lost against Rainham Mark GS team meaning that victory against Brompton Academy took them into a 3rd/4th playoff fixture rather than the plate final. St John's Catholic Comprehensive School were the opponents and this fixture proved an extremely tense and even affair with nothing to separate the teams who finished 4-4. After a nervous wait the competition organisers counted the points difference across all 8



**B Team Squad (from left to right)- Khanyo Ndlovu, Flynn Kemp, Ralph Dimmock & Alfie Pearson.**

matches to declare OPGS B the winners! This was a magnificent achievement for the boys who have very little experience of competitive table tennis and were competing against experienced club players.

Having recorded a confidence boosting win against MGS the A team edged out a strong Rainham Mark GS by 5 matches to 3 in their second round one pool fixture. This meant they progressed into a three team semi-final fixture against Brompton Academy B and Tunbridge Wells GS, last year's runners up. Having beaten Brompton Academy B (8-0) the boys produced a competition best performance to edge out Tunbridge Wells GS by 5 matches to 3. This result meant the boys were the first ever OPGS team to reach the final of a Kent Schools Team Table Tennis competition. Playing last years winners the boys entered the final as underdogs. This became evident when OPGS started slowly and trailed by 3-1 at the half way point. A phenomenal comeback led by wins from Jakub Druzkowski and Jack Goodwin left OPGS needing to win the last of eight matches to take the final to countback. Despite fighting to the very last point Oliver Roots was narrowly beaten by 2 games to 1. This meant that the boys would settle for a 2nd place finish and silver medal.



**A Team Squad (from left to right)- Oliver Roots, Archie Spreckley, Jakub Druzkowski & Jack Goodwin.**



The U16 team were in action the following week, looking to match the achievements of our U13 squad. OPGS entered two strong teams, both of which have represented the school in previous Kent Schools Table Tennis competitions for the last few years.

The B team were given an extremely tough first round group that included Gravesend GS and Tunbridge Wells GS, last year's winners of the U16 competition. Playing Tunbridge Wells GS first, the boys struggled to gain a foothold in most of the matches and were comprehensively beaten. Following an improved performance and win against Gravesend GS, the B team progressed into quarter final of the plate competition, knowing that they had a realistic chance of going all the way into the final of this competition. The B team won their quarter final fixture vs. Skinners B team (5-3) before facing St John's Catholic Comprehensive School. After eight highly competitive matches there was nothing to split the two schools, meaning that the overall result would go to countback. After a nervous wait it was announced that OPGS B team were victorious by a points difference of 72-58. This meant that the boys would now progress to the final playing against the Howard School. Despite several close games, it was a step too far for the OPGS B team were eventually beaten 7-1 against very strong opposition who had only lost narrowly to the OPGS A team earlier in the main competition.

The A team also faced a tough round 1 draw against



The Howard School & Barton GS, both of which had several top club and county players in their teams. The boys held their nerve in two extremely close matches to win 6-2 and 5-3 respectively. Stand out performances came from Jacob Pelc and Joshua Klein who won all four of their matches. This win led to a quarter final draw against a strong Norton



**A Team Squad (from left to right)- Jacob Pelc, Logan Baxter, Joshua Klein & Oliver East.**



**A Team Squad (from left to right)- Jacob Pelc, Logan Baxter, Joshua Klein & Oliver East.**



They then came straight back on against Skinners A team, knowing they had to be victorious to have any chance of winning the overall championship. An improved performance was enough to win this fixture by 5 matches to 3, meaning the team now needed Skinners A to cause an upset against Tunbridge Wells GS. Sadly this wasn't to be as Tunbridge Wells GS were victorious meaning they were crowned as overall winners of the Kent Schools U16 Team Table Tennis Championships. Despite the obvious disappointment reaching two finals was a first for OPGS and amazing achievement from the boys involved.

Knatchbull GS team, all of whom play out of Ashford Table Tennis Club. OPGS' experience told in this match as the boys won a series of tight matches to finish 6-2 and progress to a three-team semi-final with Tunbridge Wells GS and Skinners A. The boys faced Tunbridge Wells GS first and pushed them all the way to narrowly lose by 5 games to 3.

Both squads now look forward to the Kent Schools Individual Table Tennis Championships at New House Youth and Sports Centre on Tuesday 30th January.



# Year 7 Winter Celebration of Achievement Assembly

At Oakwood Park, we take the idea of honouring the successes of our students very seriously. As a result, each year group has their own assembly dedicated to just this, with awards accrued across each of the 3 'big' terms handed out to students in a hugely celebratory fashion.

This year, the Year 7s were able to take stock of all they had accomplished in managing the transition to Grammar School so far. Adjusting to the step up in teaching and learning, time management and their increasing independence in getting to and from school. This commemoration of the students' achievements included academic excellence, sporting successes and the power of literacy.

The students with the highest achievements points in the Year Group to date, suggest they have been successful in many of the areas highlighted above:

1st place – Leo Amartey 61 points (who also received 3 academic prizes, namely for Art, French and Spanish)

2nd place – Joshua Emin 58 points

3rd place – Jake Pollard and Kodi Walker (joint) 53 points

Similarly, the students who have shown they

can strive and serve, as a key member of the school community, were awarded the following commendations, each representing an area of the school principles:

- Kindness, Tolerance & Respect - Joshua Russell
- Striving for Excellence - Samuel Denton
- Excellent Attitude to Learning (Right to Teach & Right to Learn - Kodi Walker
- Contribution to the School Community - Ethan Turley
- Outstanding Resilience - Riley Minchington

Well done to all the students who also received a 'shout out' in their ability to demonstrate resilience through their 100% attendance. Well done to all the students for their excellent efforts, may this continue as we approach the New Year in Term 3.

'I am so proud of this cohort, they have become excellent members of the OPGS community. There have been plenty of successes across the first two terms and I am sure they will all continue to strive for excellence and serve the community. Well done to all the award winners.'

**Mr Keeling-Jones**





# Year 7 War Poetry Enrichment

During our most recent English Enrichment Day, focusing on the theme of remembrance, asked the students to tap into their empathy skills to try to consider what life was like for the individual soldiers who fought on the front lines and in the trenches in The Great War.

In groups, students were presented with real life primary sources to act as inspiration, using their groups' case study of letters home from Jack Symons, Albert Edwin Ripperton, Harold Watts, Sergeant William Albert Hastings, Acting Colour Sergeant Richard Gilson, and Private Edward Henry Cecil Stewart.

The students were shown a clip from the History channel, which aimed to convey the horrors of trench warfare, the realities of long periods of inactivity, with soldiers being exposed to the elements, the risk of gangrene, contrasted to their constant fear of dying

far from home. The students were asked to analyse how the truth of these conditions was conveyed through Trench Poetry, with the likes of John McCrae's rondeau 'In Flanders Field'. Students were given the opportunity to write their own poem about war, in the shape of a poppy, the international symbol of remembrance. Their responses were sophisticated, some well-structured with a regular rhyme scheme and thought-provoking. To finish the day, students watched the film adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's War Horse.

The Year 7 students were also asked to imagine they are a WW1 soldier and to write to a loved one at home describing the experience. The letters, showcased here, were written by Hudson Evans, George Hillier, Khalid Onatade, Percy Humphries and Owen Wright, Samuel Perks, George Hughes, Josh Emin, Dexter Disley, Archie Thomas, Thomas Relf, Finlay Barker, Joshua Rojo, Prayonn Sutharsan and Benedict Daniels (T7).



Dear Alexander,

I am currently in the trenches and I hope you are doing better than I am.

I look up from the paper and all I can see are the hopeless faces of soldiers whom have been thrown into the war like deer in headlights. There are non-responsive bodies laying on the damp, dingy floor like sardines in a rusty, broken, old can.

I miss the sweet melody of your voice flowing through the tranquil, thin air and I miss your beautiful, round hazel eyes glistening in the majestic sun.

But now without your warm, comforting presence I feel like, I feel like I am a shadow of my past self. Abandoned. The dark tunnels of Hell feel like they go on and on until the end of time. These trenches are shrouded with soldiers whom plead to retrieve their lost souls and to return to their loving families.

I hope to see you again and I believe you will



embark on many journeys during your lifetime. No matter what happens, you will always be my dearest, beloved sister. I love you Alexandra.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas

Dear mother,

I am pleased to be writing to you today from the trenches to tell you I'm not dead yet, but it is still a strong possibility. If you try to write back to me, I may not be able to reply, but if I do, just know that I was lucky.

I've been in the trenches for many deadly, sleepless nights and if I do sleep, I would dream of the horrors of the war I am forced to participate in.

The other day, I was forced to decide the undeniable decision of either deserting my only companion that I recently became close with or stay strong and fight for our lives. At this point, I can't even recollect the difference between surviving or dying – in the end everyone suffers the same fate, it's just a matter of when. After countless hours of relentless fighting, a miniscule amount of us are left to fight for

our country. Although we managed to win the battle, I will never forget the soldiers who fought beside me; my eyes will never forget witnessing the abominable events that have taken place in the field of blood covered roses, and bodies scattered dead in these wretched fields.

After a few months of blood and guts, you begin to question the leaders that tell us that we are fighting for freedom and a patriotic cause. All of us have families back home and so do our beserk enemies. You can't help but feel for them, regardless of what side they fight for...

Kindest regards and wishes, your son,

Tom

Dear Josh,

Here are just a few lines to tell you that I am alive. For now, at least. But it is not looking good. There are bombs firing left, right and centre – I try to sleep at night but the pain is unbearable. I try to make my country proud, but it's hard when you cannot sleep at night and you are consumed with insomnia. It's a blood-boiling, traumatic, travesty for all. This melancholy atmosphere haunts everyone around me like a ghost.

Once you enter this place you can never escape.

We are drowning in boredom, some of the lads are losing their sanity more and more by the minute. The stench of the trench is abysmal. Last night I was on lookout and what I saw will haunt me forever...

Our trench is number seventy eight, and I share it with three of my friends. It's a dump! Soon this place won't even be a trench anymore as we are being engrossed by suffocating mud on the so called 'walls'. It has rained day after day, night after night with no sign of slowing down.

The depressing scenes of the dead bodies littering the ground is too much to bear. I recall of all of their agonising deaths; that will be me soon. The crows surround us waiting for me to give in – soon that may be a possibility. Uprooted plants cover our long gone friends like camouflage.

Till next time (maybe),

Your brother