

@oakwood

December - 2019



Duke of Edinburgh Awards Night

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

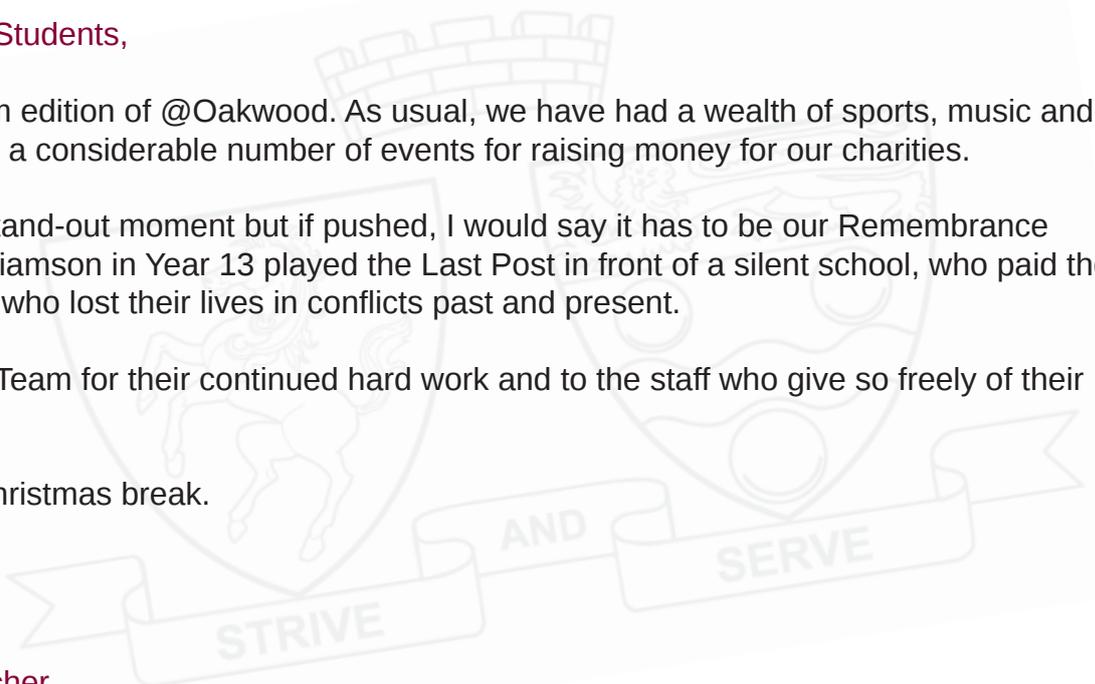
Welcome to the end of term edition of @Oakwood. As usual, we have had a wealth of sports, music and drama activities, as well as a considerable number of events for raising money for our charities.

It's always hard to pick a stand-out moment but if pushed, I would say it has to be our Remembrance Ceremony, where Max Williamson in Year 13 played the Last Post in front of a silent school, who paid their utmost respect to all those who lost their lives in conflicts past and present.

Thank you to the Publicity Team for their continued hard work and to the staff who give so freely of their time.

With best wishes for the Christmas break.

Mr K.W. Moody - Headteacher



Amnesty International: Write for Rights Campaign 2019

Sometimes a letter can change someone's life. That's the premise of Write for Rights, Amnesty International's global letter-writing campaign and the world's biggest human rights event.

Every December, Amnesty supporters across the globe will write millions of letters for those whose basic human rights are being attacked across a two-month period. It is especially poignant this week as Tuesday 10th December marks International Human Rights Day.

Their collective impact was undeniable. As a result, Amnesty International have chosen 12 deserving case studies to support again for this year's campaign and we have shared this with Y7-11 in form time, through their awareness day activities and having an Amnesty speaker, Co-ordinator for the charity in the South East, Graham Minter coming in to tell the students more in their assemblies for the last week.

Just some of the names in the 2019 case studies which Graham introduced the students at OPGS to during his assembly and that we have been writing messages of solidarity and letters to advocate change to include:

Sarah and Seán, who were charged with spying, could go to prison for 25 years for trying to save lives in the Mediterranean. They volunteered for a charity saving refugees from drowning. For this, Greek police locked them up for 100 days. Students have been writing to the authorities to try to get all charges against them dropped.

Marinel, whose village was destroyed by a typhoon which killed thousands and left millions homeless. Ever since, she's been fighting for the Philippines to take the climate crisis seriously, and for her people to get the help they need: "I want world leaders to commit to minimising the emission of greenhouse gases. I want them to help vulnerable countries, such as my own, adapt to the unavoidable effects of climate change." Marinel Sumook Ubaldo

Closer to home, young trans people face huge

challenges where their very identity is questioned. UK laws make life even harder. We need a new system that lets them legally register their true gender identity. OPGS students have been writing to ask the next Women and Equalities Minister to change the law. And it's not just letters; students should feel enabled to become actively involved in the campaign through signing petitions, emails, tweets, and sending postcards.

Every year, real change happens because of your letters and actions. Write a letter, change a life. Join us and Oakwood Park's Amnesty International Group by getting in touch with Miss Marchant or the Sixth Form team hoping to expand the number of activists involved in the New Year. Our Amnesty School Group have an action plan to put into place and would like you to join them in the fight for human rights. They meet every Tuesday in Miss Marchant's room on the top floor of the tower block, so do not be shy, go along next week to see how you too could become involved.



Year 9 Maths and History trip to Canterbury

Yr. 9 students visited Canterbury and Canterbury Cathedral on December 3rd 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 how to save money on the entry tickets to a tourist attraction, "The Canterbury Tales".

For the second part of the trip, students took 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 also used a clinometer to measure the height of the cathedral and some other buildings in the grounds of the cathedral. Students completed three assignments on their trip and all agreed that they had learned a lot about one of our most important buildings in Kent.



Creative Arts workshop

On the 13th November Year 10 Art and Graphics students took part in creative workshops to extend and explore new skills and materials as part of the Enrichment day programme.

The Art students undertook a workshop that allowed them to investigate Breeze block carving, using designs from their natural form projects. Students spent the day learning how to use chisels and mallets to carve out the rough shape of their block considering the three-dimensional nature of sculpting. Students were briefed on the safe methods to sculpt their blocks and how to effectively work to avoid key issues like the splitting of their block. Students then spent time refining their shapes with a range of different files and sandpaper. At this point, students started to consider the texture and surface of their final piece. Once their work had been refined, they spent the last part of the day painting and finishing their

sculptures. Students all created exciting abstract sculptures that will be displayed in school. The day was very successful with students learning a range of skills and enjoying the dynamic nature of sculpture.

The Graphics Students workshop explored a range of print making processes, this included Etching, Wood Cuts and darkroom printing. Students learnt how to etch their images on to a polyurethane sheet, apply ink and then, using the press, transfer their image to paper. Students also had a chance to create a wood carving using cutting tools, exploring the different styles that can be created through the process. Finally, students were given the chance to create darkroom prints of their digital images. Students ended up creating three separate pieces of work learning a range of skills and processes and enjoyed learning the varied techniques.



Next Events:

Second Hand-uniform Sale

On 16th January
at the Year 11 Parents Evening.
4pm – 6.30pm



Raffle Prizes needed! Please let us know if you can donate a prize.



Bingo and Pizza Evening



Friday 31st January 2020
7pm – 10pm

Gather your friends and family for a fun

Race Night!

Saturday 14th March 2020



Help us raise money to fund extra resources for OPGS

For more info email opgspace@gmail.com find us on Facebook @OPGSPA

Thanks for your support!

Design and Technology students visit Design Museum in London

Students studying Design and Technology visited the Design Museum in London to view the 'Moving to Mars' and 'Beazley Designs of the Year' exhibitions.

The 'Moving to Mars' exhibition allowed students to step into a full-scale Mars home and immerse themselves in the untouched beauty of the landscape. It shows how rethinking daily life for a zero-waste, clean energy-powered civilisation might help future generations on Earth. The exhibition featured immersive environments, about 200 objects including contributions from NASA, the European Space Agency and SpaceX.

The 'Beazley Designs of the Year' exhibition allowed students to discover the most innovative designs across fashion, architecture, digital, transport, product and graphic design from the past 12 months, as nominated by the public and design experts from around the world.

The students then visited the 'Designer, Maker, User' exhibition which features 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 exhibition covers a broad range of design disciplines, from architecture and engineering, to the digital world, fashion and graphics.



Oakwood Park Grammar School DofE Awards Evening:

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has steadily grown in popularity over the past 10 years.

This year saw 60 students sign up for the Bronze Award with a further 14 undertaking Silver challenge. The award, which requires the young person to commit to and complete a voluntary, physical and skill based activity for a combined 12 months, closely mirrors our school ambition to provide character building opportunities to our students that push them out of their comfort zones and challenge them to achieve outside of the classroom.

On Thursday 28th November, Norry Barber (Kent's County DofE Coordinator) visited Oakwood Park Grammar School to congratulate and hand out the completed Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh Awards to the 74 students.

It is so important for young people to take up these

enrichment activities outside of the classroom. Thank you to the staff at Oakwood Park Grammar School who give up their time to support these important achievements.

We hope to see a number of our successful Bronze Award students come back to complete their Silver Award this year, and for the Silvers there will be the opportunity to sign up to Gold – now that really is a challenge!



1st XI

The first XI are one game away from retaining their U19 Premier League title and only a victory over Dane Court on Tuesday 17th December would ensure this. A top two place is guaranteed which means another chance to defend the League Cup but a first place finish will secure home advantage for the semi final.

The deciding match of the season will prove to be a difficult fixture as we played Dane Court in the U19 Kent Cup this week and managed to beat them in a penalty shootout. The game was affected by the rain and the pitch but the squad showed their battling qualities to overturn a 2-1 deficit and level the match just before half time. Both teams had chances but neither took them and so it went to penalties. All four of our penalties, taken by Sam Harris, Sammy Tansil, Adam Jones and Luke Martin were expertly dispatched and a crucial third penalty save from Jacob Smith meant that Dane court needed to score their final penalty to have a chance. Fortunately for us he blazed it wide and the boys will play Borden GS in January in the quarter finals.

After the achievements of last season, to still be in with a chance to win the league and two cups is a testament to the development and evolution of this particular squad.

2nd XI

The second XI have also cemented a top two finish this season and are currently waiting on the result of another match to see if they have managed to win the league. It is a bit of a long shot as Harvey

still have two matches to play and will only require one win, but stranger things have happened. Even so, this is still a brilliant achievement for this squad and they should be proud of their development this season.

They are still in contention for the 2nd XI Cup and will play local rivals MGS in the quarter finals in the new year.

Junior football - Year 7

Both the A & B teams have had excellent starts to their Oakwood Park footballing journeys and up until recently were still competing in both National and County cup competitions.

The A team have come up against two tough teams in recent weeks and narrowly lost on both occasions. In the National Cup, away to a school in Essex the squad lost 2-1 and in the Kent cup vs Valley Park it was the same score line but it went all the way to extra time. A valiant effort and experiences that will serve them well in future matches.

The B team are still flying the flag and under the expert tutelage of Mr Curd (A Level PE Student) they have navigated their way through some tricky ties to progress to the Kent Cup 1/4 Final as well as the 5th round of the National Cup. They face two strong teams and if they manage to come through both of these tests then there is no reason why they cannot go all the way.

Green Club Article:

The Green Club, set up by Mrs Alltimes last term, consists of several students that volunteer their time every Friday lunch time, as well as a few members of staff, who are passionate about making an impact with locally sustainable projects, national environmental issues and wild life conservation.

This term Green Club has sown wild flower seeds, planted a wild cherry tree and an oak tree inside of the school grounds. They are also starting to convert the quad area into a wild life space, encouraging birds, insects and bees, by adding plants to the quad area, like heather and lavender.



Student Book Review: American Psycho

I have real trouble in explaining the appeal of this book. On the one hand it has some of the sharpest Dostojevskian ideas and observations, about how the wealthy people on Wall Street are essentially above the law.

This, wrapped up with a very wry and black sense of humour, creates one of the smartest comedies you may read. On the other hand, it is viscerally disgusting, borderline upsetting, and revoltingly surreal.

The story follows Patrick Bateman, a very wealthy businessman who works for a company called Pierce and Pierce, as anyone who has been in his company for more than a few minutes knows. We watch as he goes about his daily life, his lengthy beauty routine that uses around 20 different products and takes roughly an hour. We see him go to work and out to dinner seemingly every night. This is a man who is wealthy and knows it. He revels in his own "brilliance".

As the story progresses however, we see his other side, his vast ego fuelled by unseen levels of narcissism, his cold detachment from reality and his disturbing capacity to manipulate the others around him. The less people he has around him, the less diluted this becomes, unless, of course, he is with some business partners or friends; then he is on top form.

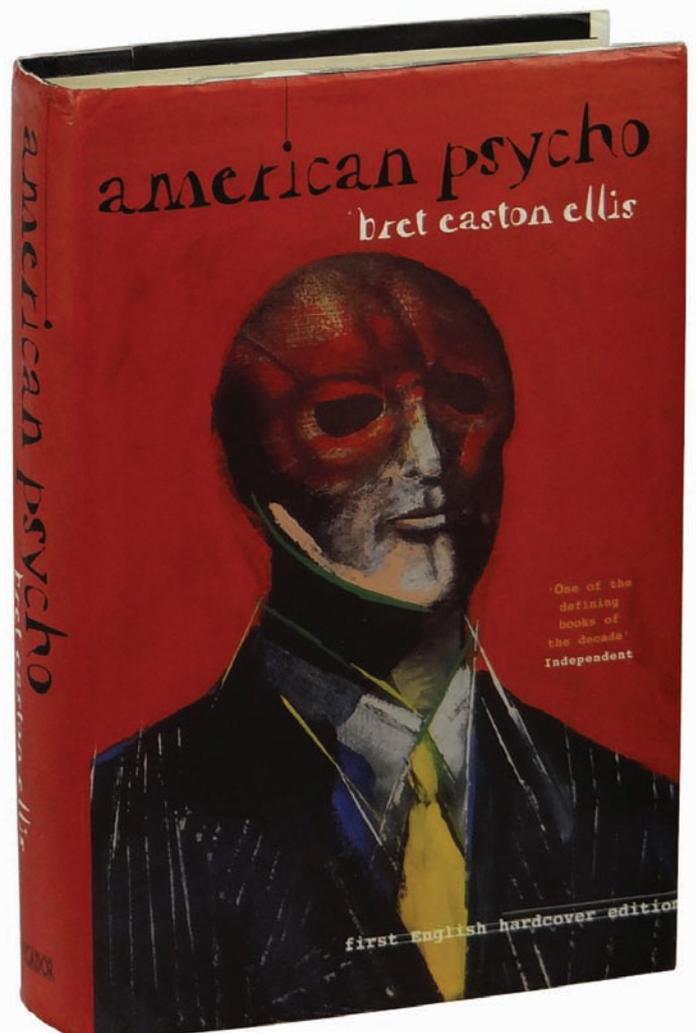
Around a quarter of the way into the book we are treated to the first kill that he "shows" us. We know that he has done more; he openly admits to slaughtering his girlfriend's neighbour, to his girlfriend. However, she is conveniently not listening at the time. Anyway, Patrick targets a homeless man, just after he and all his friends openly show their disdain for homeless people. This is one of the most jarring and nasty scenes in the book, as we are only given a small build up, and the imagery is far more graphic than we needed.

From this point, the violence gets greater and

more bizarre. We descend into his own madness, all the while the facade he puts on for his friends and work colleagues is slipping. He struggles to maintain the duality of his life, a theme which is a primary focus for the book. The obvious comparison is of course Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, the similarities are there but with even greater social commentary.

The shallow nature of himself and everyone else is on show. Openly demonstrating extreme disdain and then later taking an axe to his friend because he had, "a better business card than me". Behind the extreme gore and graphic violence there is an important message, one that does hold true to this very day, that these people do exist, they are out there, and they are completely invincible when it comes to the law.

By Max Curtis. Year 11.



Ghost Stories Drama Trip

On Tuesday 29th October, Drama Students from the upper school accompanied Mr Baker to see Ghost Stories at The Ambassadors Theatre in London for the live fright of their lives and with Halloween just around the corner, it was the perfect thing to see for the time of year.

A fully sensory and electrifying encounter, Ghost Stories as a stage production is the ultimate twisted love-letter to horror and an edge-of-your-seat theatrical experience like no other. Be it phantoms, poltergeists or simply a 'bump in the night', let's play a game with fear.

After exhilarating audiences across the world with record breaking, sell-out productions and a smash hit film, Andy Nyman and Jeremy Dyson's worldwide cult phenomenon Ghost Stories offered students a truly engaging and unique experience of immersive theatre. The 80-minute production runs straight through without stopping for an interval, and if you leave, even to pop to the loo the attendants will not let you re-enter the performance. Similarly, warnings advise against anyone under the age of 15 attending. The marketing of the show outside the theatre is unusual in that there are no production photographs, just stills and video monitors showing the shocked reactions

of audience members. An announcement at the end of the play asks the audience to "keep the secrets of Ghost Stories" so that new audiences do not have the experience spoiled with any prior information about the play. Some audience members did not have the mettle to see it through and during our performance 3 members of the public from the front row got up and left after just the dramatic telling of the first tale.

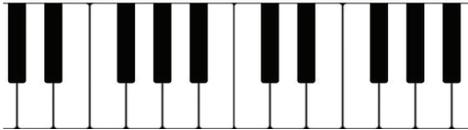
The story follows Dr Goodman, a Professor of Parapsychology (Andy Nyman) delivering a lecture on ghost stories. In the lecture he discusses a website featuring ghostly pictures, scienceofghosts.com. He has recorded interviews with three people who claim to have had a supernatural experience but the way they bring it to life is truly shocking, with some students screaming or hiding behind their scarves and coat hoods during the jump scares in the performance.

This piece of theatre offered the students an opportunity to experience some of the best professional performance, design and direction in 21st Century theatre. Post-performance, Yr12 students have been honing their skills as young theatre critics and Yr13 applying their skills of live theatre evaluation in their January PPEs.



MUSIC CLUBS 2019-20

1.15 – 1.45

<p>Monday Lunch</p>	 <p>Choir Yr7-13</p>	<p>Music Studio Yr11 only</p>
<p>Tuesday Lunch</p>	<p>Junior Band Yr7-9</p> 	<p>Music Studio Yr13 only</p>
<p>Wednesday Lunch + after school</p>	<p>Keyboard Club Yr7+8</p> 	<p>Exam Work 3.30-4.30pm Yr11 + Yr13</p> 
<p>Thursday Lunch</p>	<p>Keyboard Club Yr9-11</p> 	<p>Guitar Club Yr7-13</p> 
<p>Friday Lunch</p>	<p>Yr11 + Yr13 Practise Space</p>	<p>Senior Jazz Band Yr10-13</p> 

Go on, have a go.....

Harry Potter Warner Bros. Studios Tour

On Tuesday 3rd December, Yr 10 Media Studies students trekked up to Harry Potter Warner Bros. Studios in Watford. The purpose of the trip was for the students to analyse the film marketing for the Harry Potter franchise, as a comparable text to their set product for the Media Studies GCSE, which is the Bond film franchise.

Students analysed the shot types, visual codes, generic conventions and hints at the characters and narratives from the trailers, posters and social media in order to create a buzz around the release of a film as if it is an event not to be missed. Students were asked to compare the trailer and posters for Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone to Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2, the ways in which the marketing materials target and engage their audience are crucial to the understanding of the producers preferred readings of the film and how different audiences can respond to that.

The Warner Bros. Studio Tour is an annual occurrence for GCSE Media Studies students but

this year we were treated to some new elements including a new front of house entrance and café, the seasonal theme of Hogwarts in the Snow and the addition of Gringotts Bank.

The festive transformation began in the Great Hall, lined with Christmas trees decked with golden baubles and topped with witches on miniature broomsticks. The long dining tables were dressed as they were for seasonal feasts at Hogwarts, complete with Christmas puddings surrounded by real flames. The stage was decorated as it was for the iconic Yule Ball scene, as seen in Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire; students then had a taster of the incredible set dress featuring snow-covered Christmas trees, icicles and an orchestra of magical instruments. Whilst enjoying a Butterbeer in the Backlot Café, students were able to explore the Knight Bus, have a sneak peek indoors at Privet Drive and walk across the iconic wooden bridge with fake snow fluttering down outside, to truly add to the wintry feeling of the whole experience. At the end of the tour, the filmmakers created snow that never melts and flames without fire allowing students to get hands on with the different types of filmmaking 'snow', each selected for its ability to float like



falling snow, crunch under foot or glisten in the light like ice.

By far the most impressive section was their newest expansion, which allowed the students to walk through the wizarding bank of Gringotts, the Lestrange vault, and a gallery of goblins. Lined by towering marble pillars, the grand banking hall, decorated with three magnificent crystal chandeliers and finished with real brass leaf, also sports inkwells, quills, ledgers and piles of Galleons, Sickles and Knuts complete the goblin tellers' desks as seen on screen. The Prop-making department, led by Pierre Bohanna, created over 210,000 coins for the final two films alone. Students could take their time to discover the costumes and prosthetics belonging to Bogrod, Griphook and many other goblin bankers: each prosthetic mask took weeks to create, with every hair individually inserted and veins painstakingly painted by hand. Students then turned the corner to enter the depths of the Lestrange Vault used to store the treasures of Bellatrix Lestrange including the Sword of Gryffindor and Helga Hufflepuff's Cup, one of Voldemort's many Horcruxes. During

filming 38,000 pieces of rubberised treasure were created for the Lestrange vault including 7,014 Hufflepuff Cups. Whilst, the destruction of the bank vault is shown with smoke and fire, almost very Game of Thrones-esque, in that you can see the smashed columns and hear the dragon guarding it before you can see it stalk out of the smoke and charge towards you, breathing fire, in a very atmospheric and enthralling way, that makes you feel as if you are in a scene from the film itself.

Students finished off the tour by exploring the gift shop and once their workbooks for the day are collected in, the student with the most detailed note-taking will be rewarded with a pack of Bertie Botts' Every Flavoured Beans for their efforts.



History and Politics trip

Year 12 Politics and History Students travelled to London to explore our revolutionary and constitutional history.

At the Marx Memorial Library in Clerkenwell, students visited the room where Lenin, who was in exile from Russia in the early 1900s, wrote the revolutionary magazine 'The Spark'.

Hanging on the walls were banners which had been draped on the coffins of those in British battalions who fell fighting Franco's fascist forces in 1930s Spain.

The archivists talked to students about the importance of the Spanish Civil War in which 2,500 young men and women from the UK fought and 500 died. Students were allowed to handle archives on the war which included diaries, photographs and pamphlets.

They were shown a memorial to those who had died fighting, which in 2005 had been vandalised by neo-facists in Spain.

After lunch the group travelled to Westminster for a more democratic experience! They enjoyed the grandeur of Pugin's architecture and the gold leaf in the House of Lords. They trooped through the No Lobby and admired the stacks of Hansard records. Following the tour, students had fun forming political parties and seeing how they fared under different electoral systems.

Students were left with a variety of ideas of how to respond to political change. Year 12 will now be better informed on how to interpret the results of an election in which they could not vote.



Kent Invicta Award

This year Kent County Council held a competition to design the 2019 Kent Invicta Award. To commemorate the Kent Year of Green Action, Key Stage 4 young people across Kent were invited to design an award made from sustainable or recycled materials.

Back in September Year 10 Art & Graphic students started their design for an award to commemorate the Kent Year of Green Action. The trophy designs should be made from sustainable or recycled materials. Pupils were asked for it to have a 'Kentish' Theme and include the Kent County Council and Kent Invicta Award 2019 wording. All of our students were thanked for their time and effort in taking part in the competition. We then received the news that three of our students were picked to make their designs and submit them to the final judging panel at the Maidstone County Hall. Students designed the trophies in Art and Graphics and with the help of the Design and Technology department, made a prototype of their designs to take to the competition final event.

All three prizes went to Oakwood Park Grammar School students:

1st place – Callum Pearce (year 10 Art student) (his award is being used)

2nd place – Harry Cornwall (year 10 Graphics student)

3rd place - Morgan Estaugh (year 10 Art student)



M & S Charity Bag Packing

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, students from Oakwood Park Grammar School have been helping shoppers at Marks and Spencers in Maidstone pack their shopping to raise money and awareness of the Dandelion Time charity.

Joyeux Noël from the charity said – “Kindly read or convey my deepest thanks to your amazing team of volunteers for helping M&S customers to pack their shopping. In total you have raised an amazing £563.25 – which will be doubled with our fundraising Campaign. We are so proud of what you all did, in such lovely manner and professionalism. Everyone was very punctual, polite and helpful. Thank you so much to all of the helpers and thank you to you Archie Mitchell for being such a super star organising it all.

The money raised will go directly to the children

and families who come to Dandelion Time. Your time and effort goes directly in helping others and we are so grateful that you were able to come forward and give a bit of your time”.



Kent Schools Table Tennis Individual Championships

On Tuesday 10th December the OPGS table tennis squad went to the Kent schools Individual Championships at the Howard School. This is the final Kent schools table tennis competition for the year with all the leading schools in attendance.

The format consisted of a three player round robin group stage, with the winning player progressing to the knockout stages of the tournament. The 2nd and 3rd place players would then be entered into the plate competition.

OPGS were well represented in both the U16 and U18 competitions, entering a combined 19 students into both age categories. The U16 competition began at 12.30pm with several of the OPGS boys facing tough 1st round draws against county and national level players.

In the U16 competition Ashwin Knight was the only OPGS player to progress from the group stage into the main draw. This was a continuation of his fantastic form in the Kent team championships at Medway Park. Ashwin was then extremely unlucky to draw Jack Green (Herne Bay High School), England number 25 and the eventual winner of the U16 competition. Despite this he performed extremely well, challenging his opponent throughout the match.

In the U16 plate competition several OPGS students progressed into the later rounds. Notable performances came from Joe Flintan,

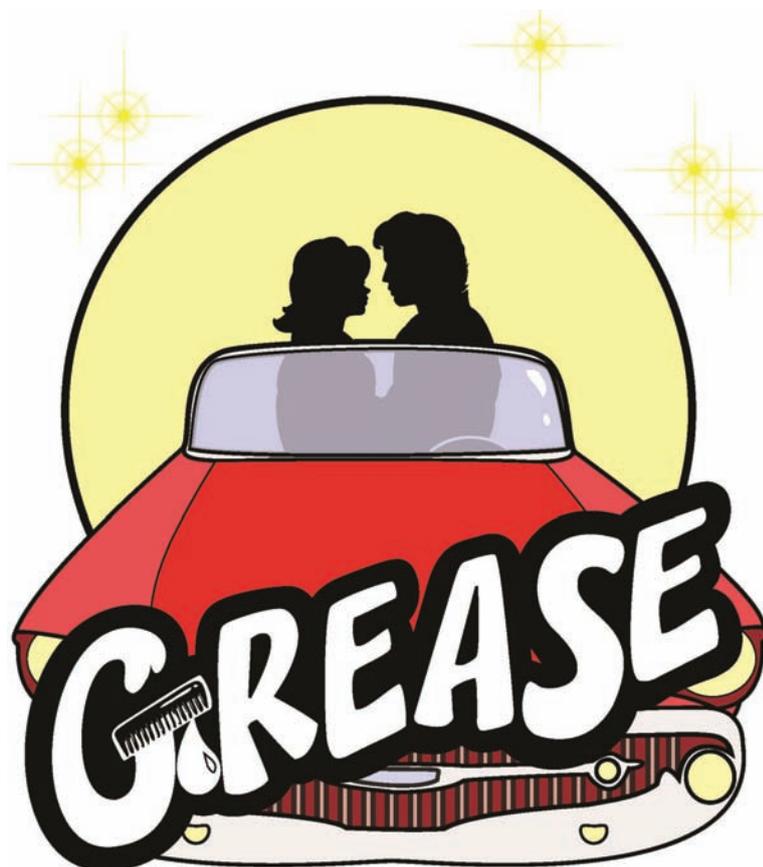
Jake Garret, Sam Malins-Thirlwall and Joe Scott. Having progressed through three rounds, Joe Flintan was unlucky to narrowly miss out on a final place. This did not deter him from producing an accomplished performance to beat the top ranked player from Norton Knatchbull School and win the U16 Plate Competition bronze medal.

Despite a smaller number of entries, the U18 competition produced some outstanding table tennis. Joshua Ball and Drew Cripps played extremely well to win a bronze and silver medal respectively.

Well done to all boys who represented OPGS at both the Kent schools' team and individual table tennis championships this year. This was the schools best year of results to date and bodes well for 2020-21 season where all students involved will have a final year competing in their respective age categories.



Oakwood Park Grammar School
Proudly Present:



Logo Created and Designed by Maggie Taft and Harry Bogosian

Monday 13th July 2020
Tuesday 14th July 2020
Wednesday 15th July 2020

Tickets on sale in May 2020

Kent Schools Table Tennis Championships- Team Event

On Wednesday 13th November the OPGS Table Tennis squad went to the Kent Schools Team Championships. This is the pinnacle of the school's county table tennis programme, with all the leading schools throughout Kent in attendance. The format includes a group stage where three teams play one another for a place in the round-robin semi-final. The competition then concludes with the championship final.

For the first time in the school's history four teams attended the event to enter the U16 age group. These students are OPGS's most talented players at this age group who have received weekly coaching from the Whitstable Table Tennis Club head coach during 2018-19 academic year. This has given students the skills and confidence to compete at such as high level.

The OPGS 'D' team opened the U16 competition against Herne Bay Academy & Greenacre Academy. Playing a Herne Bay Academy team that included two England internationals OPGS were beaten 7-1. The boys then played brilliantly against Greenacre Academy to win 6-2. Unfortunately, this wasn't enough to progress from the group stage and secure a semi-final spot.

The OPGS 'C' team were also handed a tough draw in a group with Norton Knatchbull GS and the St John's 'B' team. Having lost to Norton Knatchbull GS the boys showed great character to fight back from 3-1 down and draw 4-4 vs. St John's 'B'. Callum Rawlinson and Josh Seal both faced several match points to eventually win 12-10 in their final matches.

The OPGS 'B' team also faced strong opposition in the form of Maplesden Noakes 'A' and St John's 'A' team, last year's bronze medal winners. Having lost to St John's, the OPGS 'B' team won a sudden death game to beat Maplesden Noakes School 'A' team. Losing the first match proved costly as the St John's 'A' team won both their fixtures to reach the semi-finals vs. Herne Bay Academy.

The OPGS 'A' team finished the group stages by

recording convincing wins against a Skinners 'B' and Maplesden Noakes 'C' teams. Ashwin Knight leading the way for the team by winning all four of his fixtures in these two matches.

OPGS 'A' drew Skinners 'A' and Norton Knatchbull in what proved to be a thrilling semi-final round robin. After the first four matches vs. Norton Knatchbull the overall score was tied at 2-2. This set up a dramatic second phase of games where OPGS 'A' team held their nerve to eventually win 6-2 and set up a deciding game vs. Skinners 'A' team. After a brief rest the boys went straight back into action and suffered three defeats in the first round of games to trail 3-1. Despite fighting hard, the boys eventually lost 6-2 meaning that they would face St John's 'A' in the bronze medal match. This was an excellent achievement given that two of the Skinners 'A' team were playing national league table tennis.

In an extremely close bronze medal match the scores were tied at 2-2 after the first round of games. Leading 4-3, OPGS were now relying on their captain, Ashwin Knight, to secure the final win they needed for a third place finish. Ashwin won the first game 12-10 before losing the second 11-9. Tied 9-9 in the deciding game things could not be any closer! Playing some brilliant table tennis under extreme pressure Ashwin eventually won 11-9 in the deciding game. This secured a 5-3 win in the match and first bronze medal for OPGS at the Kent Schools Team Championships.

The boys who represented A-D teams should be extremely proud of their efforts in what was a fantastic day of competitive table tennis. All students will have one more year to compete at the U16 age group and improve on this year's results.



Charity Food Collection: Maidstone Day Centre

Homeless Care has been working in Maidstone for over 30 years, to support homeless and vulnerable people. Over the years their focus remains on helping people going through a difficult time in their lives and they do so through several projects.

Homeless Care is a registered charity and their main activity is running a comprehensive service for homeless men and women at Maidstone Day Centre in Knightrider Street. Food for Thought, is now going into its 15th year and in 2019, more than ever, in demand by homeless people who would otherwise go hungry. OPGS students are as keen as ever to donate to this extremely worthy cause, where food donations are sorted into type and date, then used to feed the homeless and vulnerable people of Maidstone. Surplus is being shared between the Salvation Army, Lily Smith House and organisations helping vulnerable residents of Maidstone.

Students were encouraged to learn more about the issues of homeless through their activities in form time and during our awareness days with our collection for food and toiletry donations for Maidstone Day Centre. This charity provides hot meals for the homeless and also runs a foodbank. Some people may have the misconception that homelessness is a choice and something that only affects adults, however, the recent media coverage and shocking homelessness figures for the UK in 2019. For example, according to the BBC child homelessness at Christmas's up 46% in 4 years this December, whilst recent research by the homeless charity Shelter has found a child in Britain becomes homeless every eight minutes. These harsh truths meant that students were able to have a much fuller understanding of the issue, and as a result, know how much each and every donation they give this year will make such a difference to someone who finds themselves destitute and vulnerable this Christmas.



OPGS Mock Election 2019

Representatives from all forms filled the Sixth Form Study Centre in the run up to our OPGS Mock Election. Candidates from the main 3 political parties plus the Greens, Libertarian, Monster Raving Loonies and Lord Bucket Head presented their manifestos and answered questions from the audience.

Policy announcements, which needed to be true to the real parties, varied from Conservatives replacing Trident with 'hunter-killer' submarines, Labour giving free university tuition, Lib Dems vowing to stop Brexit, Greens New Green Deal, Libertarians abolishing taxes, Lord Bucket Head giving out free lasers and the Monster Raving Loonies replacing our currency with bananas. Following the debate, an opinion poll conducted by our Returning Officer showed the Monster Raving Loonies ahead by a large margin. And who said that youngsters shouldn't be given the vote?

On 6th December 2019, OPGS students turned out to cast their votes. The results are below.

OPGS Mock Election:

- Y7: The Green Party
- Y8: Monster Raving Looney Party
- Y9: The Brexit Party
- Y10: Conservatives
- Y11: Conservatives
- Y12: The Green Party
- Y13: Conservatives

- Conservatives: 3 Seats
- The Green Party: 2 Seats
- The Brexit Party: 1 Seat
- Monster Raving Looney Party: 1 Seat

No party got the majority of seats. We have a hung parliament! So now we wait for the largest party to form a coalition with a smaller party to get 4 seats. I will let you know.

However, the popular vote shows a very different story. This is with all votes counted as one rather than dividing up by seats/years. No General election works like this, only Referendums. If we counted elections like this Hillary Clinton would have beaten Donald Trump in 2016.

- 1st Place: Green Party
- 2nd Place: Conservatives
- 3rd Place: Monster Raving Looney Party
- 4th Place: Labour
- 5th Place: Liberal Democrats
- 6th Place: Gremloids/Lord Buckethead
- 7th Place: The Brexit Party
- 8th Place: The Libertarian Party



OPGS Netball Team

On Thursday 12th December, Oakwood Park Grammar School engaged in a clash against Maplesden Noakes School.

In the first quarter Maplesden took the ascendancy with a superb middle range shot to get the game running. After this though, OPGS took a stranglehold of the first quarter especially in the attacking third, stringing together passes that outmanoeuvred the Maplesden defence. At the end of the first quarter the score was 12-3.

In the second quarter, Maplesden Noakes started a comeback with their goal attack seemingly scoring with ease. But, Oakwood maintained their lead at half time with score of 17-12

At half time supporters of the Oakwood team bought Oreos to boost the morale and energy of team members.

Oakwood then stormed through the penultimate quarter, they carried on their positive play with two key players substituted to change the dynamic of the game; this worked to Oakwood's advantage slowing the game down with their strategic passes which Maplesden didn't expect.

In the final quarter Oakwood did not give up and were determined as ever to win. The defence made crucial interceptions, bringing the ball back to the attacking third where shots were not missed. A combination of valiant teamwork and weekly training resulted in 34-16 at full time.

A special thanks to external coach Alison for giving up her spare time to coach the team. As well as Alice Daniel, the captain who has consistently encouraged girls to join and was persistent in getting game opportunities for the team.



Parents' Association

Thank you for supporting the Parents' Association by donating uniform, cakes and raffle prizes. By coming to our events; Year 7 Welcome Barbecue, Quiz Night, and refreshments, uniform and cake sales, you have helped us raise almost £2000 this term!

We are planning more fun events for next year, come along and join in the fun! If you would like to help at any of our events or stalls please email us opgsa@gmail.com

Here are photos of:- The winning quiz team 'Roses and Dragons',

The PA members helping at the Quiz,

A small selection of the donated cakes at our school cake sale.

Refreshments and cake sale,



OPGS Sixth Form : Awarded grant for School Exchange to Mexico

OPGS Sixth Form have been successful in gaining a £13,000 grant from the British Council for a Mexican School exchange in May 20th-28th 2020. This grant was successful due to the outstanding work OPGS has done in international links since we first took students to Ghana five years ago; including visits to Peru, USA and Chile and Easter Island. The British Council commended OPGS on their links with other countries and hope to support further initiatives of this type.

17 students and 2 staff have had their flights booked and paid for with this grant and look forward to travelling to Mexico in May 2020.

The exchange will take place with the British American School (BAS), which is located in the beautiful coastal town of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico (see below). It is a private school founded 30 years ago. Accommodation and food for students would be with host families at no cost to OPGS students. The Mexican School have also offered to pay for some activities and day tours as their sample itinerary below so we do not anticipate there being any costs other than spending money.

The British Council grant includes payment for the swimming with dolphins option below and even allows for a small amount of spending money per student. We are VERY grateful to the British Council for allowing OPGS Sixth Form this unique opportunity.

Sample Itinerary for School Exchange May 2020
All activities at school will be organized by the BAS, including:

- Elaboration of piñatas, Huichol arts, Clay work
- Participate in Mexican gastronomy (Mole and tamales by a chef from Oaxaca)
- Glassblowing technique demonstrated by an artist
- Mexican History class (Foundation of Tenochtitlan, Spanish conquest, and the Independence)
- Traditional Mexican dance.

DAY 1- arrival at airport, students are picked up

at the airport by host families and school officials. Stay the night in host families.

DAY 2 attend school with host students
Their lunch will be provided by the host families (no cost). They will take one of the activities offered by the school.

Evenings with host families, therefore students will take the same after school activities of host student.

DAY 3 Students will take the first two/three class periods.

Visit Puerto Vallarta: Malecon (boardwalk), Rio Cuale, must see places. Transportation provided by school (no cost).

DAY 4 Whole day at the BAS, activities organized by the school. We include the famous swimming with dolphins option. A marine biologist takes the students to teach them about dolphin conservation in the ocean NOT in captivity. They learn about the marine life and how to protect it.

DAY 5 Day trip to San Sebastian, transportations at no cost to students. Lunch provided by the host students.

DAYS 6-7 Weekends are spent with the host families

Day 8 – Return to the UK

Staff will be accompanying the group to Mexico and we welcome the Mexican students back in July. The dates have yet to be confirmed but are likely to be July 5th-17th 2020, which is during term time so students can experience school life at OPGS.



On the eve of Wednesday 11th December, guests were treated to a seasonal medley of music delights and dramatic readings from our Music and Drama departments.

The concert opened with 'My Favourite Time of the Year' to get everyone in the festive spirit, followed by the hymn 'Once in Royal David's City'. Then, some Sixth Form students put a modern spin on a well-known Christmas tale with their re-telling of 'High Tech Santa' which had playful rhymes and a nod to the age of the digital natives in the audience. 'Dreamscape' was a powerful ballad written and performed by Keran Ekeuh.

About half way through this deluge of acoustic treats, the crowd was brought alive and left whooping and cheering after Charlie Kish, Dillon Pinder and Ben Creasey performed an infectious rocking rendition of 'Johnny Be Good'. Whilst, with some intertextual links to the infamous tradition of the Peaky Blinders when one of their crew is killed, Ben Kinsman gave a heartfelt reading of 'In the Bleak Midwinter', followed by Alfie Kirk and Cai Golding with their harrowing piano performance of 'Feeling Good'.

Adam Zadi gave an extremely skilled solo performance of 'Maple Leaf Rag' which had everyone tapping their feet away to upbeat rhythm. The concert closed with Tom Foley's dramatic reading of King George's Christmas Speech from 1939 which spoke of imperial discourses and military might in a tone of voice that packed a punch in his forceful delivery. Lastly, the Sixth Formers grouped together in their Christmas jumpers to sing a slower, more meditative version of 'Winter Wonderland'; leaving the crowd feeling peaceful and joyful and injected with just the right amount of festive cheer.

Overall, the showcase of talent was really something amazing to behold and made one's heart glad we have so many talented musicians, singers and actors who love to practice their skills and shine. The atmosphere at the end felt magical, as their background throughout the concert, was the twinkling of ice blue lights flitting down the stage. Wonderful efforts to everyone involved and a special thanks to Mrs Bates and Mr Baker who helped to showcase the talents of so many students at yet another successful Winter Concert.



OPGS Remembrance Ceremony 2019

On Monday 11th November 2019, the students at OPGS gathered together as a whole school community to commemorate the annual Remembrance Ceremony on the anniversary of Armistice Day.

On this day, there are usually ceremonies at war memorials, cenotaphs and churches throughout the country, as well as abroad. The Royal Family and top politicians gather at The Cenotaph in Whitehall, London, for a memorial service. The anniversary is used to remember all the people who have died in wars - not just World War One. This includes World War Two, the Falklands War, the Gulf War, and conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Act of Remembrance consisted of a The Exhortation as recited by our Head Boy Max Fossett:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Then, Max Williamson a Year 13 performed a heartfelt rendition of The Last Post. This was respectfully followed by an observation of two minutes silence. The first two-minute silence in Britain was held on 11 November 1919, when King George V asked the public to observe a silence at 11am. This was one year after the end of World War One. He made the request so “the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead”.

The Reveille was sounded, again by Max to signal the end of our time of quiet reflection and thankfulness to those that lost their lives. Finally, The Kohima Epitaph was recited by Head Girl, Rachel Bird:

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

As a school community, we feel rather strongly it remains important for the students to be a part of the remembrance ceremony and show their respect. In our local community, in Maidstone, a commemoration was held at the war memorial in Broadway, opposite Maidstone West Station. A Service of Remembrance was also held there, followed by the laying of the wreaths, before dignitaries lead the parade back to the High St Street where the Mayor, Cllr Marion Ring, will take the salute in front of the Town Hall.



1st XV Rugby

The Squad have continued to be well committed this half term, training weekly with Mr Housden and Mr Da Costa Treleaven and they were ready for the tough set of fixtures ahead.

Our first match immediately after the half term was Maidstone Grammar, following the defeat earlier in the season they were hoping for a change in result. The first half started well, running in three early tries before Maidstone responded. The rest of the game was a closely fought contest both squads using their benches effectively to take it to the last few minutes unfortunately, at 25 – 24 ahead we allowed Maidstone in to score one final time taking the score to 31-25. Disappointing, but much improved from the 40-0 score line at the start of the season.

Beths were then still in the National cup so we had a good team training session on the Wednesday in preparation for St Lawrence, a good outfit, but one we knew could be a win if again we played to our ability and had our full strength squad. They visited us this year and the match started strongly, a dominant period of play by our boys led to the first try and a well worked piece combining forwards and backs. Unfortunately, St Lawrence's organisation and uncontested scrums meant they were able to dominate play for a period and scored some well worked tries. With some missed tackles and quick wingers we were found to be 36-7 down by the end of the game. This then bought us to our next fixture of Hayes. Knowing they would be another tough and well organised outfit we travelled to their ground knowing that we required to be organised and at the top of our game. On this occasion we travelled with a minimal squad due to university visits and injuries. However, this did not mean a one-sided match. The boys dug in and whilst Hayes scored some good tries, the try that we scored just before half time was the highlight of the half. Some quick hands, positive movement of the ball and strong running led to a well worked try and the boys held their heads high. The second half started well, scoring the first try and dominating a period of play. With the players beginning to tire and Hayes with a bench they started to dominate a little and ran in some opportunist tries. However,

the squad played to the end, kept going and the mantra of 'next try wins' is always a good one to have. Our boys scored last to take the moral victory on the day.

As always with this time of year, the weather played a part in our scheduled match v Simon Langton and we had to cancel the game, knowing we would play them in the new year. Sir Roger Manwood's were next on the fixture list, a long drive to Sandwich. This being a newish fixture to the list we were unsure what to expect. What a game, closely contested throughout, which was not represented by the result. Two quick break away tries and a last play of the half try for us took us in with a 21-0 lead. Confidence was high and the boys knew they were looking at their first win of the season. They came out in the second half and again it was a closely fought half of rugby. Both sides were trying to play rugby and the match could have really gone any way. However, a final few minutes with some confusion, we managed to score a fourth try and won the match 28-0. That long drive back was all the better with a win under our belts.

The final match of the term was against Kent College, our traditional final Christmas fixture away in Canterbury (generally because the sausage and chips is always too good to miss). A great game to finish the term with. The squad played some outstanding rugby, running the ball well on a wet pitch. The hands worked well and we moved the ball around effectively to take a 19-5 lead in at half time. After the traditional half time talk the boys started quickly scoring in the first few minutes to take the game away from the opposition. However, they did not stop playing and came close to scoring a few times. Strong defence and determined running we held them out each time. The final score of 47-5 was a good way to sign off 2019.

We are looking forward to our final fixtures in the new year of, Folkestone, Wilmington, Beths, Simon Langton, Buckswood and Bordon GS. Before signing off the season with the Kent Seven's and for the first time Rosslyn Park sevens tournament.

As always, many thanks to Mr Housden and Mr Da Coata Treleaven for their continued support and running of the team.

This has continued to grow this term with all year groups now playing fixtures. We continue to get good numbers of students out for training on a Tuesday and Friday and have now secured some more coaching support from one of the Year 7 parents.

The Under 12 squad have now played Maidstone, Sir Roger Manwood's Norton Knatchbull and St Lawrence, a great set of fixtures.

Playing Maidstone on the first week back from half term was a great test and really demonstrated our potential. Against a team who have been playing all term the boys played some superb rugby and pushed Maidstone to the end. To the point where there were 3 tries each until the final few minutes and a few tired tackles allowed Maidstone to take the lead and score again, running out 5-3 winners.

Following on we played Sir Roger Manwoods, again an unknown team but, giving more players an opportunity to play. The team scored some good tries and were defensively strong. Then it was Norton Knatchbull on a soggy, mud bath of a pitch, but what a game! The boys played open expansive rugby as well as demonstrating the ability to keep the ball alive in close quarters. Our final game of the term was against St Lawrence College. The squad have combined well and are

building ability and confidence each week. To be 3 wins from 4 fixtures demonstrates the ability and potential we have. We are now looking forward to the grammar league in the new year.

The under 13, 14 and 15 squads continue to develop and demonstrate the commitment needed to progress and prepare for next term's Maidstone and Grammar school leagues. The boys are showing some great play at the moment all developing their understanding of the game. We have had some challenging fixtures against Maidstone, Sir Roger Manwoods, St Lawrence, Kent College and Norton Knatchbull.

The highlights for these squads were the Under 15 match v Sir Roger Manwood's where a close fought match was eventually won by us 26-19, looking forward to a return next year! Then the Under 14 did well against Dover GS in the Kent Trophy, narrowly missing out on a win to progress to the semi-finals. The under 13 squad travelled to St Lawrence on Saturday morning (thank you to all parents who aided with lifts that morning) and with a minimal squad fought strongly and played some competitive rugby, but ultimately the lack of a bench cost us the match 5 tries to 3.

Rugby continues to develop and I thank you all for the continues support of all our teams.

Senior Maths Challenge

A large number of OPGS students recently took part in the Senior Maths Challenge and some achieved outstanding results.

This is a Maths competition open to all A-Level students in the British Isles along with a large number of international schools.

Along with a number of students achieving Gold, Silver and Bronze awards, 4 students qualified for the next round which is known as the Kangaroo. This is a challenging 1 hour exam consisting of 20

questions requiring tactics as much as knowledge. The four students who qualified were James Godsmark, (Yr. 13), along with 3 students from Yr. 12, Solomon Dubock, Samuel Lindley and Thomas Guy.

James Godsmark achieved a Merit in the Kangaroo Challenge (top 25%) whilst all other students achieved a qualification certificate.

Well done to all students on their outstanding achievements.

Sam Harris

Journalist in the Making

Sam Harris in Year 13 has won this year's Goldsmiths Young Columnist Award for his investigative journalism.

Can an event in the past cast new light on a current controversy? How has history shaped the burning issues of today e.g. Brexit, climate change, inequality? Are what appear to be new debates merely old arguments in a different form? This competition, for students aged between 16 and 18, aims to discover new voices in journalism, who can bring their knowledge of history to bear on current affairs. Entrants were asked to write 1,200 words on a topic in the news using a historical perspective.

This national competition was launched by Goldsmiths BA History and Journalism course convenor Dr Maurice Walsh and the university's Student Recruitment team to encourage emerging writers to use their knowledge of history to illuminate current problems by submitting 1,200 words on a topic in the news of their choice. The

team were on the look-out for the UK's best young opinion piece writer, with a £1,000 cash prize on offer for punchy work bringing historical insight to contemporary issues.

Dr Walsh said: "There has never been a time when history has been more important for understanding events such as Brexit and the rise of populism. Why is there a border in Ireland? Are the right-wing movements a re-run of the 1930s?"

"All these events – from Brexit to Trump to climate change – have engaged young people to an intense degree; they are clearly experiencing a sense of frustration over past failures. This competition is an opportunity to capture some of these new voices who can provoke fresh thinking about the major challenges of the present."

At OPGS, we are thrilled to have Sam's hard work and persuasive, insightful look at contemporary issues recognised by such a honoured academic institution.

On Monday 18th November, a number of Year 12 & 13 politics students attended a seminar by the Institute of the Americas at University College London on US Foreign Policy.

The evening focused on the evolution of US Hegemony from President Obama to President Trump, which directly links to the A-Level Government & Politics course. Altogether, the evening was extremely enriching, being led by two leading academics in their field, Dr. Zeno Leoni, a teaching fellow at King's College London, and Dr. Luca Trenta, a lecturer at Swansea University. After each academic gave an introduction to the research they had completed on US foreign policy,

the floor was opened to questions, of which many students took the opportunity to challenge the academics upon their findings.

Visiting a world leading university was of amazing benefit, as it allowed us to explore the wide range of courses available after completing our A-Level Government and Politics course. Being able to listen to, and question, professors who are experts in their field was also a great opportunity, as it extended our knowledge beyond the classroom. Therefore, the trip was greatly beneficial to our studies of US international relations, and I would recommend future events organised by the University to other students.

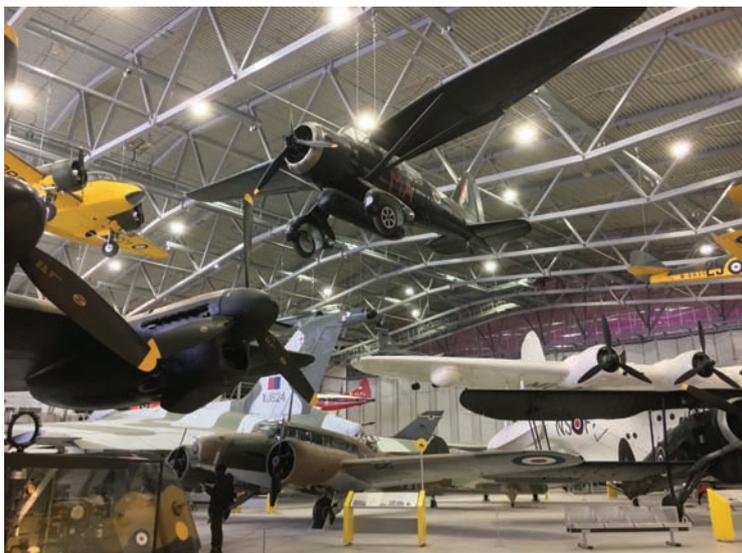
UCL Politics Trip

Year 8 Duxford IWM trip

Year 8 visited Duxford IWM to enhance their upcoming History topics of the First World War, Second World War and Cold War.

Students saw up close the incredible engineering of the aircraft and other military vehicles from the dawn of the Royal Air Force to those used by American forces at D Day and the high-tech bombers and reconnaissance planes used since these two global conflicts. Students saw, in the American Air Museum, sections of both the Berlin Wall and of the World Trade Centre - both symbolic of key moments in America's participation in European and world conflicts since 1945. Students also had the opportunity to see an RAF helicopter take off in front of them, to go on board a Concorde, see a Lancaster bomber and many other iconic British

aircraft. Such a range of aviation technology in one place meant students could explore the changes, developments and inventions which affected the course and outcomes of the conflicts they will study in Year 8 and beyond for GCSE.



Great Experiences: Year 8 French Trip

On Wednesday 13th November 2019, Year 8 and I embarked on our first ever trip abroad throughout our time at the school.

We all had to arrive at school for 6:00am so that we could catch our coaches to the Euro Tunnel, which is a huge train which you can drive onto. When all of us arrived at the train station, we had the opportunity to purchase a small snack as we would be on the Euro Tunnel for quite a while. My friend bought me a burger, as there is plenty of stores there.

When we drove onto the train, it was very big inside. It had enough room to fit our biggest coach! However, we were set to be on it for one hour, and if you needed the toilet you would have to walk down at least fourteen huge carriages, by that point you probably wouldn't need to go anymore. To pass time on the coach, I sat next to my friend, Brandon, and we watched some movies and we looked at our euro notes as we had not seen them before. You were allowed to bring money, so I brought twenty euros.

When we arrived in France at around 9:30, we all got off of the coaches and were surprised to see that we had arrived at a museum called 'La Coupole'. Once we had got inside the museum, the lady in there gave us some headphones and a strange mechanical box. What this piece of equipment does is that it tracks your location in the museum and through the headphones plays some



key facts which we had to note down in a notebook that we were given. We looked at some artefacts from the World Wars, such as an unmanned rocket called the 'V-1'. The museum was inside a German reinforced concrete dome near the town of St Omer, and in World War II it was planned to be a permanent launching base for V1 and V2 rockets. At the end of the tour around the museum, we had the opportunity to look around the gift shop as most of us had money. I bought a pencil sharpener in the shape of a tank, and my friend, Brandon, bought a tank keyring. As soon as we had finished in the shop, we went back onto the coaches to explore more of St Omer.

After around 25 minutes, our coach pulled into a parking lot and we all got off. All of us walked to the centre of the town and saw a huge white building which was actually a theatre. We all turned to a



page into our work booklet and followed our group leader (which for me was Señor Herrera) and started to walk around the town. We went onto a road and had a look inside different shops, such as a minimart, and answered questions about them. Soon, as we started to walk more up this road, there was a shop which was selling crepes, ice cream and waffles. One by one, we all started ordering different luxuries in French, and some people were videoing each other doing it as a competition. When I got up to the man, I said “je voudrais un crepe au Nutella et un coca s’il vous plait”, and the man gave me my Nutella pancake and coke! The crepe was stacked full of Nutella and was covered in sugar! It was very tasty! When we had eaten our treats, we all carried on answering questions until the time was up. All of us had a toilet break and got back on the coach so that we could go to Cite Europe, a huge shopping centre with lots of stores and more sugary treats!

Finally, our last stop: Cité Europe. All of us were buzzing to get inside and stretch our French tongues to the max. We all got off the coach and headed inside, where all of the teachers told us the rules before we went wild in the aisles. After they had told us what we could do, we all set off in groups and went in any shops we wanted to buy anything [appropriate] we wanted. As I went around, I was feeling hungry as it was around my dinner time, so I went and got a burger and chips from a French shop. Also, I went into this giant

supermarket called ‘Carrefour’ and brought three packets of sweets, one for me and two for my parents. I did try some of theirs though. Brandon and I went into the Disney Store and looked at some cool Avengers Endgame items, and the huge ‘Lilo and Stich’ plushies that were thirty euros each. We both then went into a shop called ‘Pick Wick Toys’, and I rode on this really good skateboard (as I love skating), but unfortunately it was twenty four euros and at that point I only had eleven (this was before I bought my dinner). At that point, I went and bought my dinner and those over-sized sweets, but luckily I had two euros left, so I went to a sweet stand and bought a plain doughnut which was completely covered in sugar. After around two hours discovering a French shopping centre, we all re-joined as a huge group to be sent back to the coaches and go home. Someone on my coach was extremely excited and decided to buy twelve baguettes, which were around one metre each in length.

As soon as we got back, it was about 7:45pm and we all wanted to stay in France. Unfortunately, all of us and the baguettes had to get off and go home. We all headed towards the hard court and entered our parents cars to tell them of all the amazing adventures that we had had in that one single day, and all the fun we had with teachers and French shop owners. I hope all you Year 8’s reading this had a great time as well, and for future Year 8s to enjoy it when they go next year.



Year 7 Family Summer Projects

For the second year running now, as budding Year 6 students looking forward to their summer holidays before starting their secondary school career, we ask them to get involved with a project with their family to be displayed in school.

The idea behind the project was to showcase our Year 7 students' project management and organisational skills whilst also nurturing their creative talents and cultural curiosity.

At Oakwood Park Grammar School, our ethos is centred around gaining a wider knowledge of the world and exploring new ideas as students take responsibility for their own learning. With such a wide range of possible outcomes for the project, a unique approach, resourcefulness and independence were all key attributes in the huge range of stunning and success projects we had on display at the first Year 7 Parents' Evenings in November. The enthusiasm, thoughtfulness and ingenuity of the projects was made clear and the calibre of the projects produced a truly wonderful exhibition to showcase the Year 7 students' excellent efforts. The horseshoe ensemble situated in the small hall during the Parents' Evening boasted a wide array of interactive displays such as the working music box which brought to life the street parades of Notting Hill Carnival to the battlefield recreations of 1066. One of the most remarked on pieces was the bust of Charles Darwin, surrounded by flowers, with The Origin of Species nestled below his beard. The multimedia versions included PowerPoints on the Battle of Britain, Leybourne Crash, the history of space travel and a visit to Spinalonga, the leper island off the coast of Crete. Similarly, the digital editing that went into the vlogs showed true technical mastery of the format.

Having said this, it was not just cultural and historical which were handed in but also some politically motivated pieces on plastic pollution in the oceans and threat of extinction of species from the current climate crisis which we face. The students showing their voice through powerful collages, which resonated with those who viewed them, just as much as any speech by Greta

Thunberg.

The sheer amount of time and effort which had gone into them really was overwhelming and led to some excited discussions as the students took time to see their work, as well as that of their friends, with their parents and teachers in an exhibition space they could be proud of.

Whilst the quality of the work meant it was extremely difficult to judge on who should be awarded for their efforts, it was decided the fairest way was to offer it up to a vote which students, staff and parents could be involved in. Therefore, I am delighted to announce the winner of each category is:

Artefact – Dylan Horner T7
Display – Ryder Tremain T7
Working model – Finn Holmes T7
Written project – John Furigay P7
PowerPoint – Ethan Hurley X7
Vlog – Ned Panting X7

Students that did not win the first prize in their category but who received many votes and so should have a special mention for their fantastic efforts are as follows: Calum Saunders, Oscar Miles, Ifan Bambury, Dylan Holmes and Alex Archer.

Lastly, I would like to say a massive well done to all of Year 7 who created work they should most definitely be proud of, and I know a number of departments have kept some of the items to use in the subjects they relate to, in future lessons and open evenings.

