

# Maths Challenge Champions

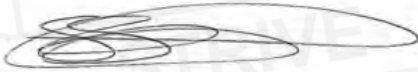
Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the first edition of @Oakwood of the academic year. It feels very strange to be writing this knowing we are already in the last week of term. It has gone so quickly!

Mr Peacock kindly sent me a list of all of the articles which feature in this edition ahead of publication and I find it astonishing that so many impactful things have taken place in just 8 weeks. My own personal highlights have been the MacMillan coffee morning and our Open Events. It is the first time the school has hosted a MacMillan event and it was heartwarming to have so many students and families donate, but also to have families come in and share their own personal experiences regarding living with cancer or people affected by cancer. I was so proud of how the Senior Prefect team came together to make it happen. The 11+ Open Events were also brilliant to experience. The Saturday involved the majority of our students coming into school and touring prospective families. I loved watching our new Year 7s proudly showing off the science labs as much as I loved watching those in Year 13 telling families how Geography was their favourite subject and how the school is supporting their aspirations. The staff and students of this school are what make it so special and on these days, everyone shone.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of @ Oakwood  
With thanks to the Media Team,

S L Craig  
Headteacher





# Year 7 Family Projects

To mark the transition from Year 6 to Year 7, we ask our new students to project manage a trip to a place of cultural significance with their family, the outcome of which is to be displayed in school, upon their start to Year 7.

The idea behind the project is to showcase our Year 7 students' leadership organisational skills whilst also nurturing their ingenuity, 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 re-



sponsibility 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 our Open Morning and the first Year 7 Parents' Evenings in October. The calibre of the projects produced is truly a celebration of the Year 7 students' excellent efforts.

The eye-catching exhibit which ran the length of the hall, boasted a wide array of interactive displays such as a Morse Code machine, The Oval Cricket Ground with sounds and lights, A fossil dig and a display of the Kandy Essla Pagaent. Some of the most remarkable pieces was the mystery surrounding Crime scene at Whitechapel and the Cricket grounds. The models of HMS Ocelot, Spitfire and other war planes, Wembley and the history of Wim-







bledon. In addition, we were able to display some truly touching family histories given to photograph, and family holidays and trips to local museums and wider educational visits. It was also lovely to see some family links to places around the world and a history of their family in Africa.

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 will be announced, once the votes have been collected and counted at a prize giving assembly after half term, so watch this space!



# Year 7 Enrichment Day –

The 2nd October saw Year 7 experience their first Enrichment Day at OPGS, and what a day to start with. As part of the transition programme, we use the first day as an opportunity to promote teambuilding skills, work the students with new people and push some beyond their comfort zones. This year we brought in WiseUp Team building to host the day for us.

The year group were split into 15 house groups, three for each house, and were challenged with various activities through the day following the 'WiseUp Hub Challenge'.

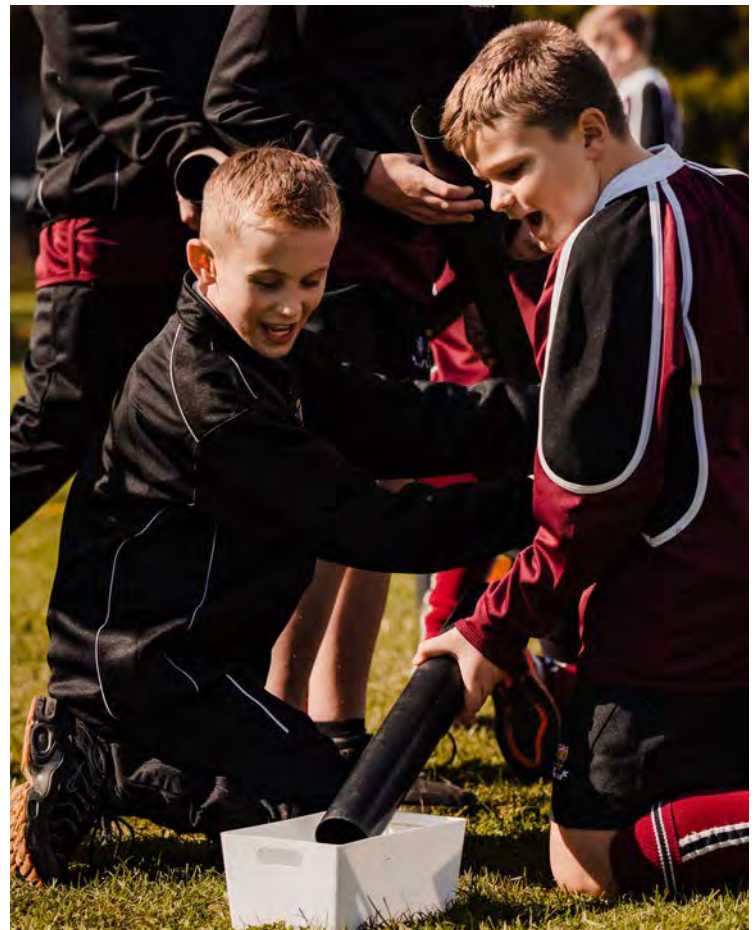
The day consisted of 28 different challenges for the teams to complete.

Each challenge was magnetically placed on the side of the van; taking one at a time, each team had to collect a challenge, locate it on the school field and then work together to complete the challenge before returning the card and selecting a new one.



Despite the wet morning the students all approached the day with enthusiasm and focused on the house competition.

As is traditional, we enjoy adding a little competition into the day. This time, it was a house challenge; which groups will achieve the highest average score across the activities they complete. As the students completed their activities, members of staff







Adam N, Leo S, Andreas K

The overall House positions were:

1st – Hazlitt

2nd – Fisher

3rd – Wilberforce

4th – Sadler

5th – Broughton

It was a fantastic day, and we thank the WiseUp team for their work and the students for their amazing work ethic and team building skills. Well done all.



were guiding, at times providing guidance, and then guide the students to a score in five different areas; planning, communication, working together, motivation and then an overall score on how they feel they completed the task. Each area was discussed and scored as a group decision, with support from staff talking them through each category and providing feedback and aspects to improve on.

The day was a great success, with the students growing and developing as the day moved on. Each group were becoming more confident, students planning more strategically and completing tasks more efficiently.

At the end of the day, the WiseUp team totalled up the scores and placed each team and then combined each house group to an overall House winner.

The top three teams were:

1st Fisher Group 5 – Ben C, Chidiebere E, Mesham D, Marcel M, James M, Chaudhary S, George W, Sammy N, Finlay D, Aarudhira N, Luca M

2nd Hazlitt Group 9 – Noah C, Javier P, Dylan B, Harry K, Milo M, Oliver J, Reilly H, James S, Tito A, Charlie F

3rd Hazlitt Group 7 (Joint) – Alex G, Ethan I, Arlo B, Ken D, Bertie B, Ethan G, Mandinu R, Elliot S, Simon T, Sonny D, Hugo J

3rd Wilberforce Group 14 (Joint) – Albie C, Euen H, Noah B, Samuel J, Sehandu P, Charlie W, Jude H,









# OPGS - Primary School Maths' Challenge

Friday, October 5th 2024, the Primary Maths School Challenge, is one of the best days of the year. This is a day that all of us look forward to in great anticipation. This year, the calibre of teams was higher than ever with many of the teams having been previous winners, such as Palace Wood, Ditton, and more.

The day was split up with four rounds. The first round was a mixture of challenging questions to get the students' brains working. One question was: A large cube is made of 64 smaller cubes – how many of the smaller cubes have exactly two faces showing?

The next round was a logic puzzle, which impressively Allington Primary, Place Wood, and Roseacre Junior all got full marks in! The students were given several confusing clues and had to work out which teacher taught which subject in which room number and what their favourite shape was. A famous example of this problem would be the Einstein Zebra Riddle, which apparently only a small proportion of the world can actually solve! So for students to have done so well, really shows what little geniuses they are!

Initially, each team could work in fours, however for the third round they were split up. They worked in two pairs of two and could not talk to the other pair. One would wait on the answers from the other



pair before they could even answer their question – making it incredibly difficult and stressful, feeling as though the other pair were waiting on you.

And the final round, after a long day, involved a lot of movement! The students had to walk a long distance to a station to even pick up a question, and then walk back to their desk to complete it. Some probably spent longer walking than doing maths, as they had to walk with their answer, then ensure that it was correct before they could even collect their next question!

It was great to see a whole room doing maths with a smile on their face!





The final standings were very close, with just a few points between the teams.

The final standings were:

1. Allington – 155
2. Madginford – 149
3. Roseacre Junior – 144
4. King's Hill – 141
5. Valley Invicta – King's Hill – 126

seeing you next year.

A big thank you to the Yr. 11 and Yr. 13 prefects who helped out on the day.

YR. 11 PREFECTS

Well done to all taking part, we look forward to





# Día de los Muertos

Welcome to the day of the dead! This Year 10 enrichment day was based on the Mexican festival celebrated on the 1st and 2nd of November!

The Day of the Dead is believed to be the only days when the dead souls return from the afterlife to the current world if remembered by loved ones or friends.

The dead are believed to only be able to return through a special altar called the ofrenda (offerings in Spanish) when food, drink, games, and other things the deceased liked in their time alive would be placed alongside a photo of the deceased.

For the enrichment day we completed an organized cycle of activities throughout the day from learning about the day to even taking a virtual trip to Oaxaca, Mexico.

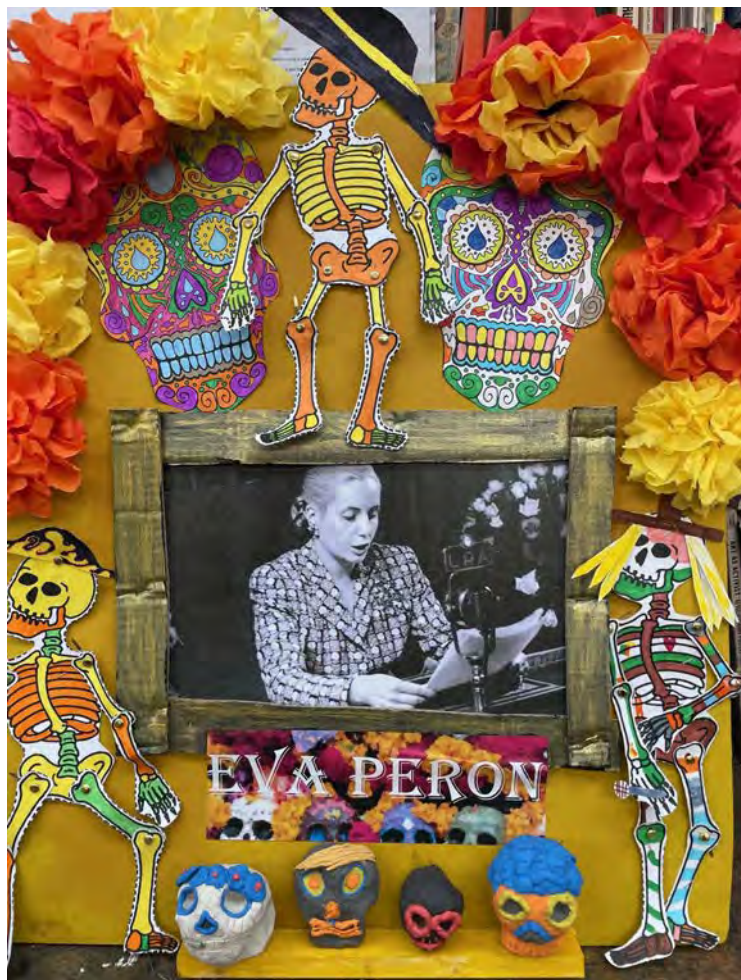
To start off we learnt about how the day was brought about and what sort of things Mexican people do on the day, we watched a video with facts about it and then watched a small section of a huge festival filled with colors and people in very vibrant



apparel. I found it all super interesting and informative as I didn't know there was a special type of bread they make for the day called pan de muerto, or bread of the dead!

Secondly, we went to the art rooms to make our own ofrenda for a Spanish celebrity. We made our own cempasúchil (marigold) flowers, skulls, banners, and mini skeletons. I really enjoyed this period as creative arts and crafts are fun to me.

Third we made our own calaverita literarias poems which are poems that are a satire of a person or thing. It's all a joke that runs without any formalities and is commonly done by children and adults alike in Mexico. They usually end in some sort of death







or sudden ending. I wrote my one about year 7 students and ending with them going home for the day as an example.

Fourth, we watched a segment of the "Book of Life" film which is a tale about 2 boys who are fighting for the love of a girl. This story takes place over the Day of the Dead and we got to see all the decor, ornaments and vibrant festivals in the mortal world and the land of the remembered while watching a fun movie. I especially loved this period as the film is very good!

Finally, we took the long-awaited virtual trip to Mexico and made a slideshow of our trip, from the streets with markets to ancient temples and structures, it had it all! In the lessons we were photo-shopping ourselves onto the photos and hiding ourselves in different places on the photos, that was fun to do.

The whole enrichment day was a lot of fun and informative picking up new Spanish words and information about the Day of the Dead.

## The September Broughton House Challenge was on the subject of Physics.

Pupils were asked to think of a great challenge that Physics could solve. Winners were selected on the originality of their idea solving genuine issues confronting human progress. The winner was Rowan Kirkham of 9X who suggested that through using physics (and some engineering) we can solve the worlds water supply systems, improve irrigation of crops and reduce waste through leakage.

Rowan pointed out that there is plenty of water for everything we need largely clarified by the weather system, so no need for costly desalination plants. It only needs to be supplied to the right places.

Dexter Disley of 8T came second with a suggestion of reusing the international space station instead of destroying it as currently planned. Kai Kamundi of 9P was third with a suggestion to reduce space travel carbon by using a Space Elevator.





# The OPGS podcast by the people, for the people.

An exclusive interview with the founders and producers of the podcast revealed the inner workings and behind the scenes of recording, filming and producing the podcast.

With the idea originating from year 13 student Benji (year 12 at the time), during his time on the student panel, he and Mrs Craig toyed with the idea for a school-based radio station. After much time and consideration, they settled on the podcast as a more cost-effective option, which they have progressed with in the last few months- and have a prospective second episode in the making. The episodes can be accessed through the school website!

Whilst the dream of a radio station is still possible for years to come, the podcast is evidently “a good start because it’s pre-recorded and you don’t need to be ‘live-on-air’”, which for the current moment has proved successful. But it hasn’t been easy, and the podcast team had strived to release the pilot episode before the end of the academic year just passed. So, a congratulations to the team, you should be proud of what you have produced!

In the interview, Mrs Craig, Benji and I explored what we wanted the podcast to mean “and the purpose we

felt it could serve in the school”, and we felt it to be an important method of communication, but not just for notices and academia but for encouraging a culture of warmth at oakwood. Mrs Craig wanted to kickstart her new position with “something a bit different and a bit fresh” and she has definitely brought that to the filming studio with her great leadership and humour. Stay tuned for episode 2 where we start a segment called “feature a teacher” with Mrs Craig as the first honorary guest.

Later in the interview, Mrs Craig and Benji admit that there were challenges in the production of the podcast, such as compatible timings for meetings and technological issues, but they were all cancelled out by how “really joyous” it was to film and “seeing how nervous everyone was about it at first but then actually just come out of their shell and just really enjoy it”. Benji claimed to enjoy the opportunity for oracy and that “actually being able to create something without doing art or graphics is quite cool.”

If you’re year 11 or year 12 and are interested in joining the podcast team, please contact either Mr Solly or the OPGS podcast [podcast@opgs.org](mailto:podcast@opgs.org). The podcast team are looking to continue the “legacy” of the podcast and embrace a new team of students







who will resume the podcast. So, whether your forte is sports, music, current affairs or politics; bring your own expertise to the table at the OPGS podcast!

Whilst Mrs Craig will be sad to see the podcast team go after year 13, she is excited to welcome a new cohort and share the responsibility of the podcast with them as the year goes on.

“I’ll be honest, I’m going to find it difficult when you as a cohort move on, because, when you work with a group of young people on something from its inception, and then you’re suddenly the only one left behind, I think that will be quite challenging for me. And also, as well I’m going to have to step back from it this year a little bit anyway... so I’d like us to make sure that we are upskilling people, and it becomes this sort of cyclical process” – Mrs Craig.

So, all abroad the podcast train!

## Oxbridge Applications

Fran (Cambridge University student and OPGS Alumnus) came into school to help humanity students Joe and Evie with their Oxbridge applications.

Year 13 Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science applicants were supported by Year 12 science students, Mr Wathey and Dr Carlisle with practice MMI (Multiple Mini Interviews) stations.





# OPGS Parents and Friends Association AGM

The Parent's and Friends Association welcomes all Parents and Carers to our AGM: Thursday 21 November 2024 6:00pm to 7:30pm in the school library.

To be charity compliance compliant, OPGSPFA will need to vote in a Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary. To support our fundraising activities, communications and workload, OPGSPFA would benefit by also having a Pre-loved coordinator and a Social Media coordinator. These five roles will form the committee; committee members are required to be Trustees of the OPGSPFA charity.

If you have knowledge or want to upskill, please consider taking on one of these roles. Our team is really supportive, no-one is left on their own.

Many hands make light work, and funds more resources and enrichments opportunities for all OPGS students.

## Volunteering with the PA

As a volunteer you can make a positive impact upon the lives of young people whilst giving something back and making a positive impact to the heart and soul of our community – OPGS!

Being a volunteer for OPGSPFA will significantly support your core professional development. Research shows volunteering is highly beneficial for both volunteers and their employers because it shows commitment, the ability to think strategically and engage with local community, making you a valuable asset to any organisation. Volunteering for OPGSPFA will help strengthen, develop and sharpen your skills, bring new experiences and perspectives to your workplace, and meet people from different professional backgrounds.

The Parents and Friends Association are all parents and carers of OPGS young adults, and we fundraise to enhance pupils learning experiences and enrichment. We are all volunteers, doing this valuable work around our

jobs and family life. If you can offer anytime to help support fundraising activities, please come to the AGM - 21 November 2024 6pm to 7.30pm

We really appreciate any time you can give: setting up or putting away pre-loved sales, selling pre-loved and refreshments, helping at fundraising events and discussing fundraising ideas.

## Pre-Loved Uniform

We need more donations! We take all uniform and the new style PE kit. Please leave clean uniform and new style PE kit at the school office.

The Parents Association sell Pre-Loved at the year 7 to 11 parent consultations.

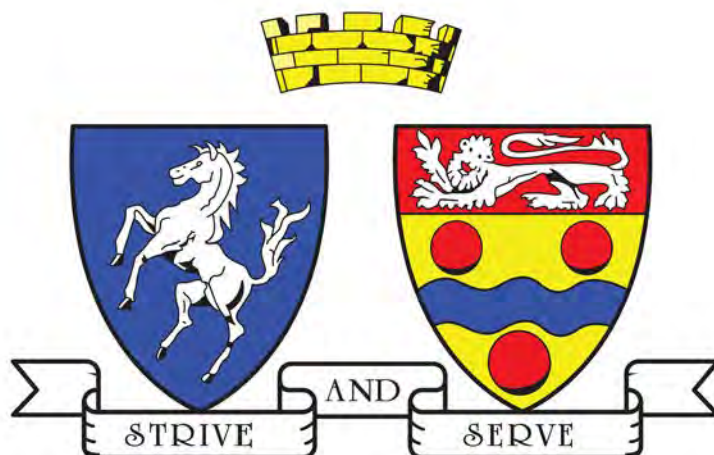
## Other ways you can support the PA

It is really easy to sign up for Easy Fundraising and nominate OPGSPFA.

You can earn free donations for OPGSPFA every time you shop online. Online stores include Amazon, M&S, Tesco/Morrisons/Sainsburys groceries, John Lewis, Ebay, Just Eat, Argos - there are 100s of stores.

Get the app on your phone and do all your online shopping via Easy Fundraising to raise free donations for OPGSPFA.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/oakwoodparkgrammar/>





Our annual 11+ Open Morning was held this year on Saturday 5th October 2024 from 9am – 1pm. It is an exciting chance for prospective families to meet teachers and learn more about the passion for their subjects and the ethos of the school, whose motto is 'An Exceptional Learning Experience'. In attending, families were able to tour the school, with existing students acting as guides, around the school site.



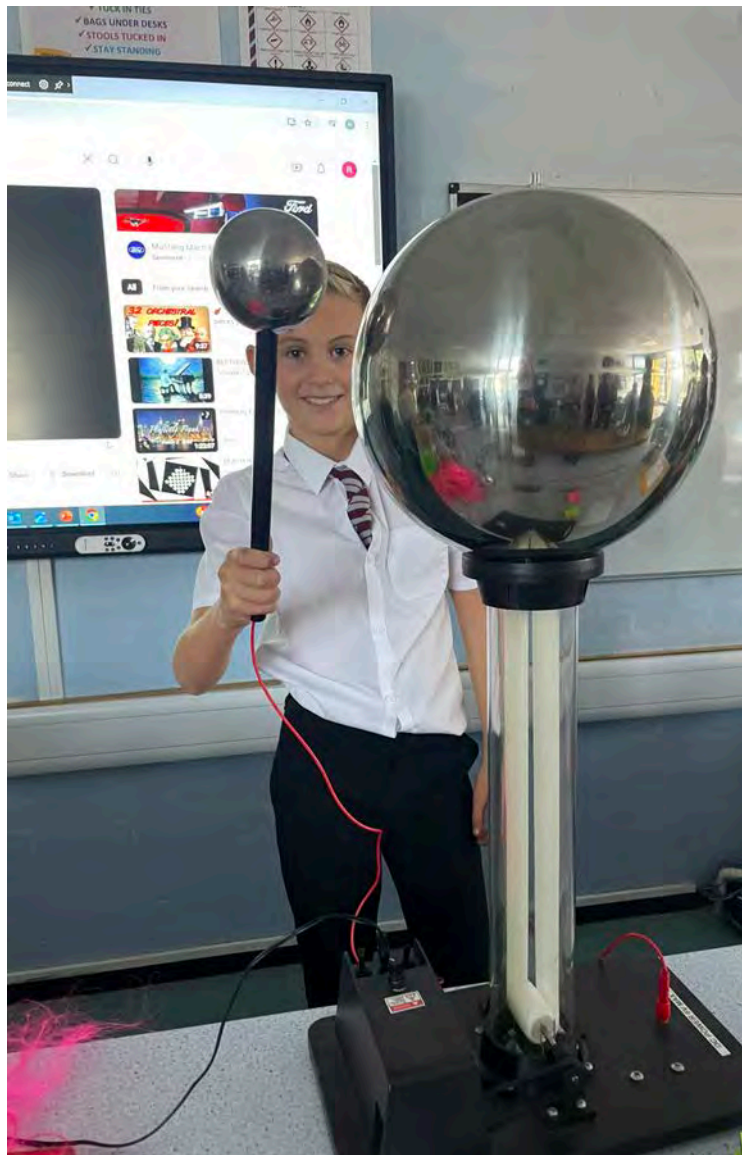
There was a wide range of exciting opportunities for students to get involved with, including a living museum with the History Department's recreation of WWII 'The Blitz'; the English Department's seasonal offering of a spooky Gothic Literature room, wherein students could approach the table with the bubbling cauldron to create their own poems, akin to Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Raven' poem, inspired by similar scary images; students could also test their knowledge of movie trivia in 2023 with a film quiz in Media Studies. In the meantime, Science were conducting experiments, DT were making rulers, Drama students put on an improv performances and PE had football and rugby games in action on the Sports Field.



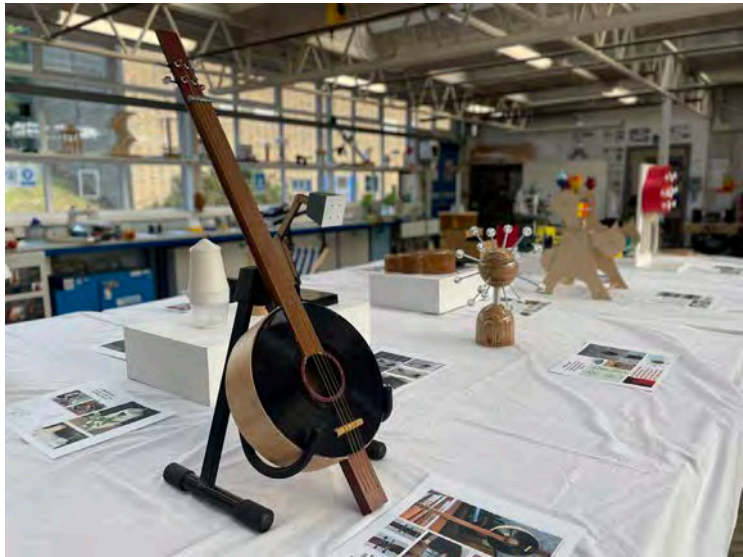
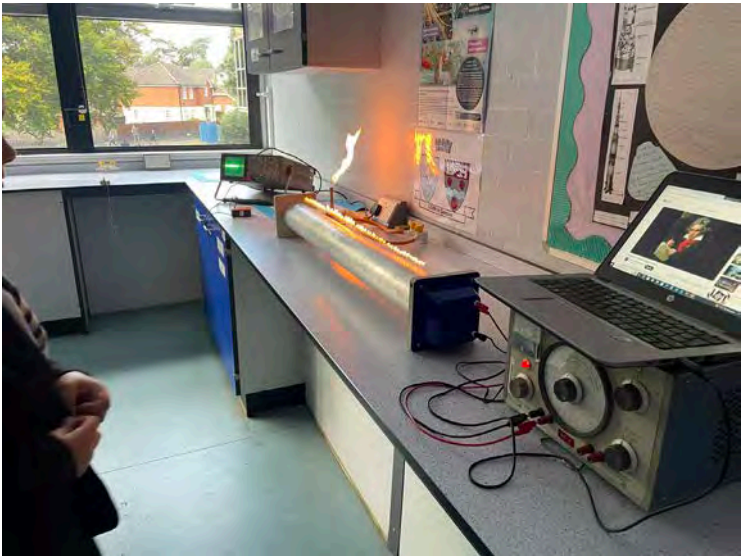
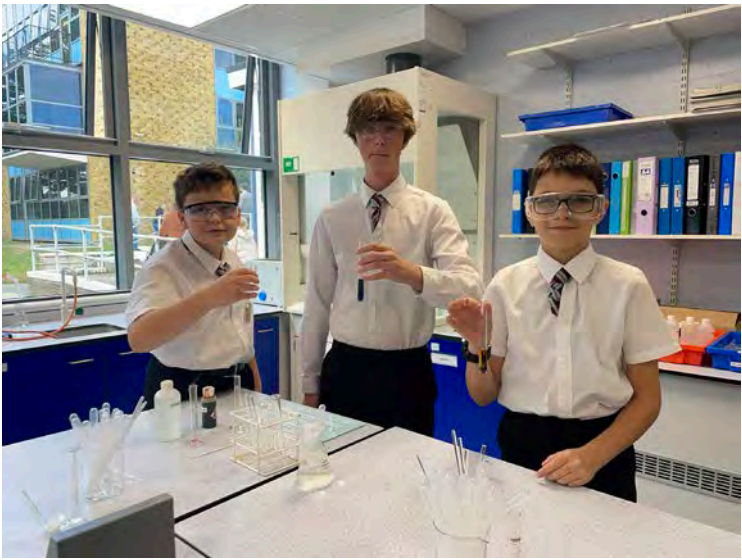


This event showcased a real flavour of the talent and enthusiasm students have for their educational careers at OPGS. Some of the school's core values, such as, striving for excellence in every lesson could be seen in the array of subject areas and departmental specialisms that were exhibited across the course of the morning.

This flagship event was followed by a series of Open Mornings, when families can come into the school and get a real sense of life at OPGS, watching learning take place, as lessons unfold in the everyday timetabling of the school day; asking questions of their student guides who can be counted upon to tell the truth of what lessons really look like; and observing students tackle those higher order thinking questions, deep in discussions in the middle of their topics for this term.









## Year 7 Rugby

The focus of year 7 rugby this term has been player recruitment and preparation for the competitive fixtures due to start at the beginning of term 2. There have been excellent numbers attending both lunchtime training & the Open Morning practice session where students trained in front of prospective OPGS students and their parents. With most students new to the game, the boys have been developing the core skills and game understanding needed to play competitive rugby. We are really excited about the talent in this year group and look forward to seeing the boys develop and improve across the season. Our first fixtures will be against Holmesdale, Malling & Aylesford School in the Maidstone District Rugby Cup. The team will then play several friendly fixtures throughout terms 2-4. If your son is interested in playing rugby, then please encourage them to attend the Tuesday lunchtime rugby club in term 2. I look forward to updating you on the team's successes in the coming terms!

## Year 8 Rugby

Much the same as Year 7, we have wanted to try and develop our squad numbers for the Year 8 squad. With our competitive fixtures due to have started in week 6 of the term, we wanted to ensure we had numbers to select from and create a squad with depth. We started the season with a friendly against Bennett Memorial, a school who we have had quality fixtures with in the past. Much was the same this time, with both teams getting 'stuck in' to the game. Players showing that they had developed from last season, making some quality runs, tackles and competing at all levels. However, with Bennett Memorial, their Number 8 was an extremely powerful runner, who when in space was able to score quickly, taking the match away from us. This gave us a clear focus for training. However, with games being postponed by other teams, we lost a little momentum with training and the squad. Also, the draw of basketball club on a Tuesday has meant that some of our players took up other opportunities in term 1.

We are looking to go again next term,

promoting the club and working in lessons with the students will see the squad grow. We have several friendlies lined up and the newly created Maidstone District League, rather than tournament. Rugby is looking good for the rest of the year, and we look forward to the challenges that are ahead of us.

## Year 9 Rugby

The Year 9 rugby started this season with the introduction to two cup competitions. The first a national cup and the second the Kent Shield. The goal set for the squad at the start of the season was to reach the Semi-Final of the Kent Shield and to progress as far as possible in the National Cup, a new competition for us as a school.

Our first match was against Gravesend Grammar School in the National Cup. With a strong squad we had high expectations. Arriving at Gravesend GS we had a quick warm up before the game started. The match was closely contested, whilst scoreless for the first quarter, before we made the breakthrough, finally crossing the line with a well worked try out wide to the left. The match continued to be a close game, with Gravesend GS scoring two well worked tries and OPGS scoring another unconverted try, taking us into half time 12-10 down. After a quick half time talk and some key targets to improve on in the second half, the match was going well. Gravesend GS started to find their feet and they were beginning to play through the phases and build pressure on us. Whilst we tried to hold on, the lack of substitutes and a couple of key injuries meant they were able to score two further tries, both of which were converted. This meant the score was 26-10 at full time and we were out of our first cup.

Our next match was due to have been in the Kent Shield competition, where we had been drawn to play Sir Roger Manwood's GS. Due to staffing issues at Sir Roger Manwood's, we were handed a walk over win, never the way we really want to progress, but we take what is handed to us. This put the team into round 2 and a fixture against the winners of Beths





v Canterbury Academy. Again, not through the want of trying neither of these teams had managed to put a team out meaning they had withdrawn from the competition, putting us through to the Semi-Finals. The competition is never one with many rounds, but without playing a match, we had reached the target of reaching the semi-final. This is a game to be played against Norton Knatchbull GS early next term. Our target has changed! We now want a spot in the final and the hope to bring home the Kent Shield for a third time in six years.

In preparation for this fixture we played St Lawrence in what has been described as a brilliant performance. The teams defence and line speed was superb, putting lots of pressure on the opposition. We played well in attack, creating numerous opportunities and finishing scores well. Finishing the match as 30-5 winners.

The boys are looking forward to the rest of the season. Our team in this year group is growing with over 20 players now training on a weekly basis with the Under 15 squad. A great chance for both teams to progress as they move towards senior rugby in year 11.

## Year 10 Rugby

The year 10 rugby team have made a positive start to the season despite close losses to Norton Knatchbull (24-10) and Tunbridge Wells GS (17-7) in their opening two games. In both fixtures second half lapses in defence and handling errors denied OPGS victory. Following this disappointment the team have bounced back with an excellent comeback win against Bullers Wood School in the U15 Kent Shield. Having lost to this school last year, the game began in ominous fashion with Bullers Wood taking an early lead through physical forward play that exploited missed tackles from the OPGS defence. At 17-0 down, the game changed in momentum thanks to a brilliant counterattacking try from player of the match,

Ayman Azeez. Weaving through the opposition defence with power and speed, Ayman broke numerous tackles to score from inside his own half. This lifted the teams' spirits who scored several unanswered tries before defending bravely in the final minutes to complete a 42-30 win. The boys have since been training well for their next fixture against local rivals Maidstone Grammar School. Having beaten MGS in year 7 the team will be keen to repeat this feat in their National Bowl round 1 fixture on Thursday 17th October. They then look forward to a Kent Shield quarter final match vs. Harvey Grammar School on Tuesday 22nd October prior to half term.

## 1st XV Rugby:

The season opener for the 1st XV was scheduled on the first Wednesday back after the summer holidays. This was due to have been against Marsh Academy, a match that would have helped prepare for the season ahead. Unfortunately, due to clashes this was not able to take place but it gave an opportunity to get the squad together to plan for the season. Numbers were not quite as expected meaning that we would have to reconsider the fixture list to create Under 16 and Under 17 fixtures, rather than a full under 18 schedule.

The under 16 team began the season with a match against Maidstone Grammar School in the newly entered School Sport Competition. The lack of time together to develop a cohesive team meant that the game did not go as planned, but it certainly gave the squad something to focus on and set goals from. Further under 16 fixtures will follow through the season, something we have not had previously. The season will include friendlies and later in the season the Maidstone District League.

The first Under 17 fixture was against St Lawrence College, a team who are usually strong and produce some well drilled players. This was not different this season, however, with the experience of the sixth form players mixing with the under 16's, the cohesiveness and leadership was extremely different to that of the previous match. We flew out of the blocks and took a quick lead, something that is unlike an OPGS team. Morale was raised and Will Aldrich scored the first try of the season, putting us 5-0 up within a few minutes of starting. We then continued to dominate the match whilst St Lawrence College shook off the long journey from Ramsgate. They then responded with a





well worked try, but as with us, they missed the conversion leaving the game all square. The first half was a closely fought match with periods of dominance for both sides. With only a few minutes left on the clock the first half closed with a St Lawrence penalty and an extremely well worked try, meaning they took a 15-5 lead into the half time talks.

With players speaking positively and confidence growing, we knew we were in the game. However, within a few minutes of the second half, injuries hit and key players were lost, providing the upper hand to St Lawrence College. We held our own following two converted tries by St Lawrence College, before Abraham scored a superb pick and drive try, pushing his way over from 10 metres out. This helped with team confidence but we were unable to hold on and St Lawrence College took the match away from us. The consolation was a try from Kester to finish the match.

With the team out of the national competitions we had a couple of weeks before heading down to Marsh Academy. Confidence was high, whilst only a small squad travelled due to unavailability, we were happy and looking forward to the challenge of meeting the team who knocked our Under 15 team out of the Kent Shield last season.

Taking the field, led by captain Ryan Ward, we again flew out of the blocks and scored the first try with a brilliant individual effort from Charlie Beale, spotting the gap and hitting it hard. Marsh Academy came back at us, throwing all they could to break us down and get through to score. After about 15 minutes of continued pressure they managed to do so. This didn't change the teams mentality and with a few small adjustments and

refocused players, we responded with three great team tries, two scored by Remi and the other by Barney. This meant that OPGS took a 20-5 lead into the half time talk.

Coming out for the second half, we weren't really switched on, maybe the lead made us complacent. Marsh Academy scored two quick converted tries, bringing the score line to a one point difference. Now we knew we were in a match, we had seen the danger players from Marsh step up.

The half remained close, with both teams trading tries, first Remi ran in a second, this time converted by Charlie, but Marsh responded with two more. With only 12 minutes left on the clock Marsh took the lead. What could OPGS produce in response? As we piled on the pressure at scrum and ruck time, Fin managed to pounce on a loose ball from a scrum, taking on the gap and sprinting to the line; Charlie kicking the conversion for two extra points. It was back to a single score gap. Thankfully with only two minutes on the clock, Ryan managed to take a superb line, breaking the defence of Marsh Academy team and having a clear run to the try line. 39-31 being the final score.

We are really looking forward to the rest of the season and the hope for some good quality wins.





On the 1st October, 60 of our Sixth Form students took part in the UKMT Senior Maths Challenge. This is a national competition sat by hundreds of thousands of students across the UK and also many overseas schools take part.

The students have 90 minutes to answer 25 questions that require outside of the box thinking and problem-solving skills that are much harder than anything they'd do in class.

This year 56 of the 60 students got certificates. The requirements were: Top 50% of participants = Bronze, top 16% = Silver, top 8% = Gold. It is incredibly competitive to get a certificate, so for this many of our students to get one, is very impressive. Furthermore, 19 got a silver and 13 got a gold. Everyone who took part should feel very proud of themselves.

One of the silver certificates awarded was to Alfie Wagon, the only Year 9 student who sat the paper. This is an amazing achievement, since the other competitors would have mostly been 4 years older than him. As a result of his performance, he was gifted two UKMT Maths Challenge books to help foster his love of maths and we look forward to his mathematical development in the future.



Another stand out performance from a non-Sixth Former was Elliot Ford who achieved a gold certificate. He performed so well that UKMT has specially invited him to take part in the next round where only the top 8000 in the country take part. Other students invited include Matthew Sandman of Year 11; Sebastian Lane, Marcus Choi, Joshua Kwong, Joshua Bruce of Year 12; Ethan Woodward, Austin Lam, Hallee Lou, Lucas Dick, Tyler Payne of Year 13. This is an amazing achievement that only a select few in the country will take part in, so to have so many students just from our school take part really is something.

There is an even higher round, for those students who perform at a top 1000 level. These students get invited to the British Maths Olympiad and this is the route of those students who are selected to represent the country in the International Maths Competitions. Both Aston Cheng of Year 11 and Arthur Mak of Year 12 will be taking part in this round and competing alongside the top 1000 mathematicians across the country. We wish them the very best of luck.

Below is an example of one of the students' favourite problems from the challenge. Can you answer it?



Five friends are dealt two cards each from a set of twelve cards. The cards are numbered 1 to 12 inclusive. In turn, the friends declare the sum of the values of their two cards. Paolo scores 4, Quinn scores 11, Romy scores 16, Stephen scores 19 and Thomas scores 20.

Which of the following statements is true?

- A Paolo has card 2      B Quinn has card 3      C Romy has card 5      D Stephen has card 7  
E Thomas has card 11



# OPGS Basketball

The Year 9 and Year 10 basketball club at Oakwood Park Grammar School is in full swing this term. We are excited to be preparing for the possibility of OPGS's first (ever) basketball fixture against another school.

Our club's focus is not just about learning the technical aspects of basketball—although we certainly spend time on that—but about organizing and playing in a way that helps each student maximize their potential. We emphasize understanding the strengths of each player on the court and finding ways to use those strengths to give us the best chance of winning. One of the core principles we teach is communication. Basketball is as much a mental game as it is a physical one, and learning to communicate effectively

on the court is crucial. These skills not only help in basketball but are also transferrable to other areas of life, such as schoolwork and personal relationships.

Perhaps the most important aspect of our club is the emphasis on fun. While we want to win games and develop strong players, we also want to ensure that everyone is enjoying themselves. This balance between competitiveness and enjoyment is essential in creating a positive basketball culture at OPGS. In the meantime, our weekly practices will continue to be a space for learning, growth, and, most importantly, fun. We look forward to seeing the club develop further and to cheering on the Year 9 and 10 students as they take to the court for the first time in competitive play.

# OPGS Football

## Year 7 Football

Being selected to represent one of the year 7 football teams is always a great achievement and honour; the process of selecting 30 students from the 80+ that trialled was an incredibly difficult one. The one thing that we tell our students, however, is that the door is always open for those that didn't make one of the squads, so they should keep working hard and trying to impress during their PE lessons.

The Year 7 A football squad has made a dream start to the season, winning 4 out of 4 games, scoring a remarkable 20 goals while only conceding 5. The students commitment and teamwork has been evident in every match, highlighted by two standout victories: a 7-3 triumph over Ravenswood School and a solid 4-1 win against Cornwallis Academy.

The team's success is further boosted by their strong cup runs, as they remain in contention for two national cups and a county cup, with the Maidstone District league campaign still to come. It's clear that this is a squad with plenty of promise and ambition, with every player contributing to the collective goal.

Key performers include Andreas Koffas and Tito Arogundade, whose technical ability and creativity have been vital. Sonny Dinning, a player who leads with determination and energy, Jude Higman, known for his composure and vision, and Bertie Hayward, whose consistency and organisation of the defence has set the tone for the team. Together, these players have formed the backbone of an exciting squad, characterised by their willingness to learn and dedication to playing for each other.

The team's prospects look bright for the rest of the season, with both cup and league challenges on the horizon. Expectations are high, but this group of players is more than capable of rising to the occasion.

The B team have only played one game but an exciting 6-4 win vs the Orchards Academy has the squad brimming with confidence for their upcoming games v Simon Langton GS (Thursday 24th October) and Hurstmere School. Both will be tough matches but hopefully in the next addition of @Oakwood we will have a little more to report for the B team .

With this strong start, the team is poised for a fantastic season ahead!





## Year 8 Football

Following extensive trials in July and again in September a squad of around 26 players have been selected to represent the school year 8 A&B teams this year. This is always a tough process because we are lucky to have so many talented players at Oakwood Park GS. This year saw the change from 9 to 11 aside, bringing about a change in formation and the need for players to adapt to playing on larger pitches. Many new faces have been added to the squads this year as some players have progressed considerably during the summer break. Mr Devonald also took over as manager of the year group and manages both A and B teams so he can ensure player development throughout the season.

The Year 8 B team have played in several practice matches against the A team and this has provided stiff competition but also highlighted to the players the step up from B to A team is not huge. Often it can be the physicality, confidence and students' ability to affect the game that are the key factors.

The B Team have had only one competitive match in the Kent cup and were convincing winners against a newly formed St Johns Catholic Comprehensive School team, winning 7-1. There were impressive performances from Khalid, Benedict, Oreo and Lucas

who are representing the school side for the first time. Tougher competition lies ahead in the next round when we play Tunbridge Wells Grammar School who with an intake of 300 students always prove to be challenging opponents. I look forward to informing you of the teams progress in the next edition of @Oakwood!

The A Team have also welcomed new faces to the squad and many players have been asked to play in different positions as Mr Devonald identifies the team and individual strength and weaknesses. The team have yet to fully gel and gain the cohesion that comes with playing alongside each other on a regular basis. They have had mixed results winning 7-1 against Darrick Wood School and 8-0 vs Lenham School either side of a 4-0 loss in the ESFA Cup to Wrotham School, the current Kent Champions. We will no doubt meet Wrotham School again later in the season and we look forward to reversing this result. Harrison leads the way with three goals this season, closely followed by Luke, Leo and Josh on two goals each, indicating that this side will be an attacking threat throughout this season.

## Year 10 Football

The U15 football team has experienced fluctuating results so far this season. After an initial defeat to Dover GS, they bounced back impressively with a



commanding 5-1 win against the same opposition in the Kent Cup. However, this was followed by a 5-1 loss to a strong Kingsdale team, highlighting the squad's need to find greater consistency if they are to succeed.

With plenty of matches left in the Maidstone league, there is still ample time to turn things around. The squad also faces a crucial Kent Cup clash against Harvey GS after half term, a fixture that will be pivotal in keeping their dream of reaching the U15 Kent Cup final alive.

Standout performers include Will Minchin, Ayman Azeez, and Marli Collier, who have all contributed significantly to the team's efforts. The squad will need to build on their strengths and find consistency as they push forward through the season.

## Year 11 Football

The year 11 team have developed over the last 4 years and have many outstanding football prospects who represent the school at senior U18 level for either the 1st or 2nd XI teams. Mr Devonald has taken the managerial lead and has again added new players to the squad. The team has played two matches, and the signs are very promising for the season ahead. The first round of the ESFA National Cup was played away against a physical and aggressive Bennett Memorial School team. OPGS' class prevailed and the team won a close game 4-3, with Harrison scoring two goals sandwiched between goals from Kyler and Kabir. In the Kent Cup we played Norton Knatchbull GS who we had previously managed to beat 6-5 last year. This year the team performed brilliantly despite the loss of Harrison to injury within the first 5 minutes and other key players as the match progressed. Winning 7-1 the team displayed their individual quality and collective team spirit. Our next game is against MGS in the ESFA Cup, and we hope all players will be available to reaffirm our position as the leading football school in Maidstone.

## 2nd XI Football

The senior football teams are selected from year 11-13 students who trial at the beginning of the season. They play in two Kent Schools Leagues with games every Wednesday from September to December. It is a privilege to be selected for either team and the 2nd XI is often the 'birthing pool' where new talent is allowed to develop and grow in anticipation that they will make the step up the 1st XI next season. As such a balance is struck between older more experienced players and the younger year 11 students who may

be playing against opponents up to three years older than them.

Following an impressive defensive display against local rivals MGS we took our first point of the season against a side that was unbeaten in the league until today. I am writing this article having inflicted MGS' first defeat this season in the East Kent Division 2 League. Two goals in an outstanding performance from year 11 student Simeon Newell, alongside impressive performances from Oliver and Hayden, who have formed an impressive centre back partnership. Team captain Ted Norris shares Mr Devonald's excitement of a successful league campaign. An impressive 6-0 win over Simon Langton Grammar School was followed up with another good performance against Harvey Grammar School. On this occasion we were unable to finish chances created and let the win slip through our fingers, conceding a goal in the last 3 minutes to finish 2-2. The most disappointing result was a loss against Borden Grammar School (5-1). With players drafted into the 1st XI at short notice this was not a fair reflection of the teams' capabilities and reinforces the need for players to show commitment and dedication when representing the school at a senior level. The team currently sit third in the League behind MGS and Norton Knatchbull GS who we have yet to play home or away. I look forward to updating you on the development of the squad and results in future editions of @Oakwood.

## 1st XI Football

The 1st XI football team began the season with a challenging 4-1 defeat away to MGS, but they have since bounced back, remaining undefeated in the league. They secured two important wins against Norton Knatchbull and Queen Elizabeth GS, drawing 2-2 against Simon Langton, a result that felt like a loss after being 2-0 up. Despite that disappointment, the squad's determination to fight for each other has been evident in their performances, and they are steadily building momentum as the season progresses.

While the squad has shown promise in attack, there's still work to be done defensively if they want to challenge for success this season. Currently sitting third in the league, their upcoming match against Rochester Maths GS next Wednesday will be pivotal in keeping their league title ambitions alive.

Standout performers include Harrison Fryer, Kyler Barton, and Jacob Johnson, all of whom have been key to the team's performances so far. The squad has also benefited from the excellent leadership of their captain, Josh Bruce, who has helped guide them through this crucial phase of the season.



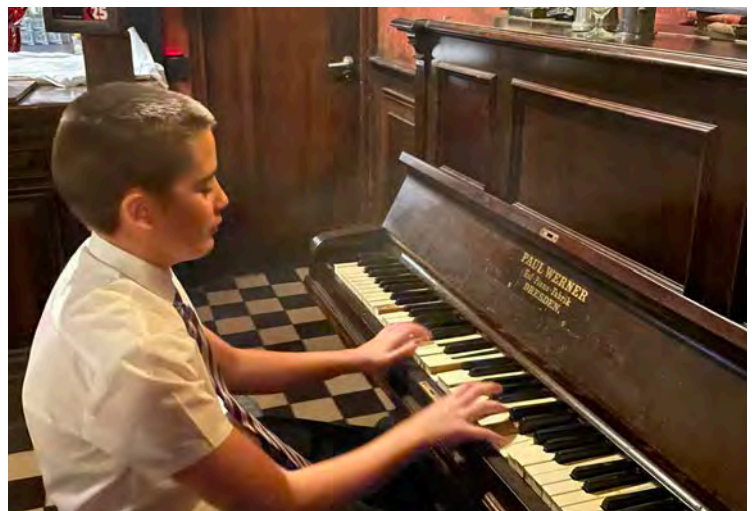
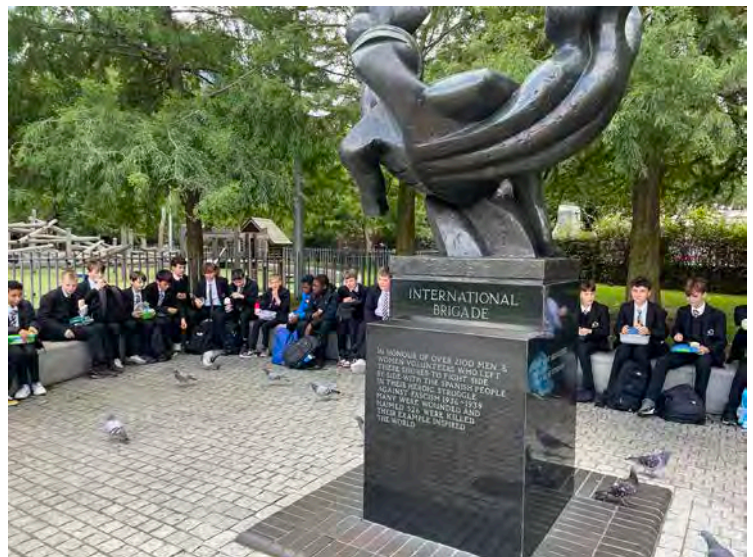
# London Dungeons Trip

On our most recent Enrichment Day, the English Department took the whole of Year 8 to visit the London Dungeons. The purpose of the trip was to learn about London's gothic past and to use this as the inspiration for creative writing.

This goes alongside our Year 8 scheme of work, in which students are introduced to a wide range of Gothic texts and generic conventions, as a springboard for their own atmospheric descriptive writing. Students study extracts from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and *The Red Room* by H.G. Wells. Mr Taylor Richardson, Subject Leader for English said: "A goal for the English department this year is to take



students out of the classroom and provide opportunities to enjoy new experiences. We hope that in addition to learning more about London's gothic past, the students made some great memories that they'll be able to look back on in years to come".





The London Dungeons is the perfect place to enrich the students' understanding of all that is grim and gothic, as they were invited to scream and laugh their way through an immersive journey into our capital city's dark past. The actor-led shows made for a lived experience of a hysterically horrible history.

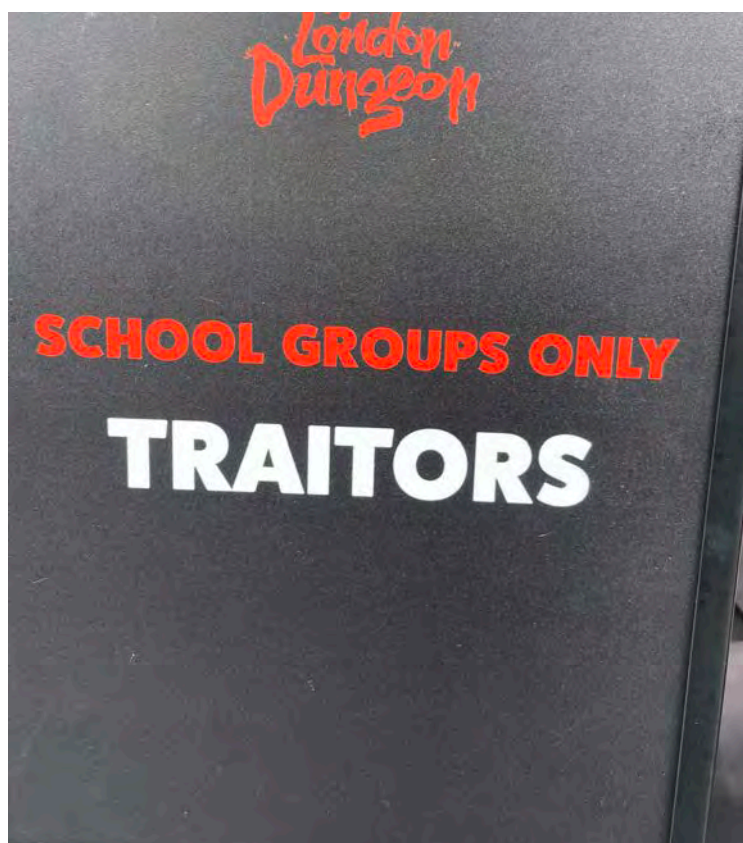
Upon entering, the students were invited to split into groups of criminals and traitors. Students were able to step into 1,000 years of history through the descent in the medieval lift. They could hear the grinding cogs and chains, as the winches strained, on the way down. Luckily, they arrived safely at the river docks of the Thames. Then, beyond the city gates, students entered a dark, rat-infested tunnel that winds back beneath the city of London, where they can learn of Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Next, students strolled along the stinking streets of London in 1665 with death and disease surrounding them at every turn, but it's not only the plague they had to survive, but the stench of just how smelly the streets of London really were; uncover why the plague spread across the capital; and watch out for the cry of "Gardyloo" as the locals empty their chamber pots into the street.

Thereafter, students ventured to into 1621 and were able to witness the witch trials under King James I. Students entered the bowels of Newgate Prison



and saw Elizabeth Sawyer, The Witch of Edmonton, awaiting her execution. The interactive shows also included a pit stop at Sweeney Todd's, the demon barber of Fleet Street, Mrs Lovett's Pie Shop and the Whitechapel labyrinth, that was home to the horrific Jack the Ripper murders of 1888.

On a more light-hearted note, students were also able to take a 'Skelfie' with a skeleton and at different parts of the tour, the teaching staff were locked in jail cells by the character actors, allowing the students to explore elements of our history first hand. Similarly, students loved getting their hands on their own gruesome souvenirs at the gift shop at the end of the tour. With the weather on side, they even had time to enjoy an ice cream, underneath the London Eye.





# MacMillan Coffee Morning at OPGS

On Friday 27th September, Oakwood Park hosted a Macmillan Coffee Morning. The cancer charity suggests by donating your coffee morning money, it means they can act to do whatever it takes, for people living with cancer. The idea is that different venues can host an event, and bring people together over a slice of something nice.

Parents, grandparents, new and old staff came in to have a chat over a hot drink and slice of cake



– the choice of which was abundant – due to the many very generous donations we had received, from home baked brownies to orange-soaked muffins. The selection on offer was really quite dazzling. The senior prefect team took the lead in manning the stall across the course of the morning. The Learning Resource Centre was transformed under the Macmillan colours of green and white checked tablecloths, bunting and quiz sheets. As well as this, an interesting talking point for those in attendance, was the Yr 7 Family Project models which proved to be the perfect centrepiece on each table.







across the UK, big and small, help raise vital funds to support the 3 million people in Great Britain living with cancer, from the moment they are diagnosed, throughout treatment and beyond. Our Headteacher, Mrs Craig said "Thank you to everyone who contributed to the coffee morning on Friday, it was a wonderful event!"

To add to our total on the day, for those who could not make it on the day but still wish to donate, or to thank people for their efforts in the cake making and bake sale, OPGS have set up a Justgiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/CM24067826>

We have currently raised a further £85 on here, but our aim is to get to the £250 target. Every penny counts and we thank you in advance for helping us reach our goal, for such a worthy cause!

To go alongside the sweet treats, we had a grandparent volunteer to sell her handmade bracelets, with a variety of colours and charms, with all proceeds also going to Macmillan. This stall brought even more vibrancy to the event and meant people could also leave with a keepsake. At breaktime, the students were invited in, to join members of their family and also donate money in exchange for some cake. At which point, the calm atmosphere became abuzz with the excitement, as students and parents could enjoy the event together.

Assistant Headteacher, Miss Ryan, was thrilled "It was a lovely morning, a real pleasure to be a part of. The prefects were fantastic! We have raised £398. I'm glad such an amazing organisation exists and is able to support people through such difficult times".

Donations from thousands of Coffee Mornings





# Year 11 Second World War Enrichment Day

As part of their Paper 1 Warfare Through Time unit, GCSE students must show knowledge of specific events and sources from London in the Second World War.

To support this, Year 11 were transported back to this period by the overnight transformation of the History Department into three different zones exploring key issues around why London was a target, how civilians prepared and how their lives were affected by bombing. Using



a range of newsreels, propaganda posters, newspapers, eyewitness accounts and artefacts, students learnt the key features of this period and developed their source analysis and evaluation skills to ask their own historian enquiry questions. They also completed research online about some of the disasters of the Blitz. Year 11 excelled themselves with their focus and enthusiasm and we hope they found the day memorable.







# House Prefects Leading by example!

To aid the transition from primary school to secondary school, the House Prefects have been working with the year seven form groups to support them with organisation, using school resources and building relationships within the school community.

Above are Angus Kenny (House Prefect) and Rowan James (Fisher Prefect) leading the first session with S7.

Miss Woollett  
Student Wellbeing Lead



## Karting Championship

Congratulations to Gustavs Usakovs in Year 12, who won the Nordic championship this year and won a ticket to world finals in Italy. He will be representing his country at the biggest karting event. From each country only the best karting drivers will have the opportunity to compete there.





# Frederic's reviews

Today we went to the French café "Frederic". There we were given a presentation about French culture and food. We were told about different pastries such as Tarte Tatin. After this, we were told about dishes in France such as duck breast and how it is made.

Then, we were told about different types of cheeses such as blue cheese. Cheeses come with different stamps to show the quality of the product. Green means it came from a farm, red means it came from a factory. It takes 30L of milk to make 1kg of cheese. This is important as goats' cheese is valuable as they do not produce lots of milk. Cheese is a very popular ingredient in French cuisine. We were told about the dangers of bacteria in food due to the process of cell division known as mitosis. We were given different cheeses to taste; they had a strong smell and flavour. Some of the cheeses were soft like butter meanwhile some of the cheeses were harder to consume. Overall, this was an amazing way to explore French culture. Merci! Au revoir!

By Ben Gibson 10C

Today, we walked to town and went to the French restaurant, Frédéric. It was an exceptional experience due to the exquisite cheeses, such as: Roquefort, Maroilles and many more. Ulric Allsebrook, the owner of the restaurant, named the lovely place after his youngest son. He talked to us about the cheese and the wine. He said the cheese was made from different animals like a cow, a goat and also a buffalo in Italy.

Then he talked about the tantalising taste of the wine and why they keep it in oak barrels. They do this to enhance the rich flavours as well as the oak also mixing with the wine, this brings a new enjoyable flavour.

Ulric showed us the stamps that they put on the cheese which tell us if it's made on a farm, or industrially. He said that the farmers have to be delicate with their animals as if they forget to milk them, the animals will become ill and won't be used for cheese anymore.

By Charlie Ansell 10 C

This morning, we went on a walk to Frederic's through town and had a talk from the owner (Ulric Allsebrook). He told us a lot about different cheeses and how they are made and matured. He told us that cows produced 10 kg of cheese per 100 litres of milk they produce a day. We then went around town to complete our worksheet.

I tried all the cheeses but sadly I didn't like any of the cheeses. I felt like they were stronger than the cheeses I would normally eat. We then went back to school by walking. We had a fun time going to Frederic's because I've learnt lots of things about cheese which I didn't know before.

Ben Jones 10x





# Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards

After a very successful training and practice three days in September we finish the month off with the Year 10 assessed expedition. This was our biggest cohort since covid with 87 students taking part. The sixteen teams walked 30km over the weekend in the Tunbridge wells area including Penhurst, Frant and Crowborough.

The students carried a 60litre rucksack for the weekend with their tents, food, sleeping bag, roll mat and their personal kit. They planned their meals and cooked them on a gas Trangia in the field. The weather was bright and dry but a cold night for the students, but they all coped. We are pleased to say they all passed. with the assessors from KCC saying they were credit to the school.

## George Goodyer S10

DofE was an amazing experience. We walked almost 30km over the weekend with a large, weighty bag on our back, carrying our food, clothes and tents. Thankfully, the weather was on our side, so we all stayed dry, well, most of us did. During our time as a group, we all strengthened our friendship bonds and found out more about each other. We all really enjoyed DofE and the sense of accomplishment that comes with it, reaching the tops of hills, reaching that next checkpoint. I would highly recommend to anyone as it is a wonderful thing to endure.



## Laurence Lester S10

Over both the two weekends our group attended at DofE, we learnt a lot about survival skills; including how to pitch a tent, basic first aid and how to cook a balanced meal using a Trangia. Although the weather was bad the day before, it didn't stop us enjoying DofE, and the countryside of England. After the final day of walking, I felt a sense of accomplishment after being self-sufficient for 2 days, whilst being able to read maps to get from one place to another. I would personally recommend doing DofE because I have learnt a lot of new skills and learnt a lot about myself and more about my friends/group.







## Oakwood Park Grammar School was delighted to welcome back the Class of 2024 to collect their A Level results.

Three students are taking up places at medical school: Gabriel Charles, Tom Larchet and Tessa Rojo. The healthcare sector will benefit too from other OPGS students, such as Isabel Masterson (A\*A\*A Psychology), Jacob Flitton (AAAB Physiotherapy) and Head Student Charlotte Soan (AAAA Pharmacy) joining those professions.

OPGS students will provide many of the country's future chemical engineers with chemists Chandler Castellani (AAAA\*) going to Edinburgh University, Joshua Harman (A\*A\*A\*A) heading off to Southampton and Owen Hurley (AAA\*A\*) to Bath. Computer Scientists abound, with Kyle Dolan



# A-Level Results



(AAAA\*), Harrison Wright (A\*AAA) and Jacob Whittaker (AA\*A\*) all going off to study the subject.

Our engineers span a variety of fields, from Head Boy Josh Alchin (A\*A\*A\*A) who has chosen Aeronautics and Astronautics at Southampton to Krishan Sookun (A\*AAA) who prefers Electronic Engineering at Imperial and Ali Eddama (A\*AAA) who plumped for straight Engineering at Kings College, London.

Humanities students have also achieved highly at OPGS with Jessica Bonner (A\*A\*A\*A) going to study History and Politics at Southampton, Finlay Crowe (AAA) leaving for Exeter to study History, Ben Hanusch (A\*A\*A B) heading to UCL to study Urban Planning, and Head Student Erik Ogilvy (A\*A\*A B) has chosen Manchester university to study English Literature.

A final mention goes to Aidan Miller who with A\*AA continues his love of Maths at Queen Mary University of London.

OPGS is also excited for students heading straight into the workplace. Oli Kane joins the technical crew of ATG Entertainment as an apprentice working on 'Stranger Things', Charlie Haisman joins the National Crime Agency and Evan Harris takes up a Data Analyst apprenticeship. The staff at OPGS look forward to hearing about the adventures of the Class of 2024 when they return to school at Easter for a Celebration of their Achievement.



# Black History Month 2024 Reclaiming Narratives

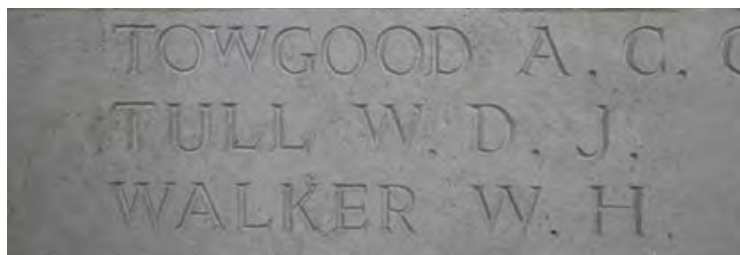
This year's Black History Month theme is 'Reclaiming narratives' and this inspired an Awareness Day session in October on Walter Tull and his experiences as a black man in the British army in the First World War.

Students learnt about how he had faced racism when playing professional football before joining with others from his team to fight in the Middlesex Regiment and rising to become as an officer before losing his life in March 1918. In many ways his experiences were typical of the time: trauma and 'shell-shock', danger, camaraderie and bravery. However, it was very unusual for someone of African descent to be an officer and was clearly a mark of how valued he was by his superiors. Students were encouraged to follow up his story by visiting the Library where many texts are available telling under-told narratives from history.

Found out more:

<https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zbqxbdm>



Black History Month

October 2024



**RECLAIMING  
NARRATIVES**





