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Simply because we care more
The Headmaster, governors and staff of Watford Grammar School for Boys would like to thank the parents, alumni, friends and organisations who have supported the school during the year. Gifts of time, expertise and money to the school continue to make a real difference to the education of our students.

Friends of Watford Grammar School for Boys
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Thank you very much to all those who helped with the production of this year’s Fullerian.
“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

Harry Rée was parachuted into Occupied France in 1943 to work alongside the French Resistance to fight the Nazis. Operating under the code name ‘Cesar’ and the assumed identity of Henri Rehman, an itinerant watchmaker, Reé was a brilliant saboteur.

His invention of what became known as blackmail sabotage at the Peugeot works at Sochaux has assumed textbook status in the literature of subversion. The peacetime car factory was busily engaged producing arms for the Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht. Harry Rée went to see Roger Peugeot who ran the works and suggested he cooperate with internal sabotage in return for an agreement with the RAF to call off attacks on the plant – attacks that were costing civilian lives. The subsequent explosions within the factory destroyed a 600 ton press vital in the construction of tank turrets and doubtless saved many lives in the process.

However, not all operations were as successful and some of the stories could have provided source material for ‘Allo Allo’ – particularly since Harry’s French was coloured by a Mancunian accent, reminiscent of Allo Allo’s ‘English’ French Policeman – Officer Crabtree. One day, Harry and a young Frenchman on their bikes caught up with a petrol tanker – any petrol was clearly going to be for the Germans so this was a legitimate target. All they had to do was follow it without being noticed till it was going uphill and open the taps at the back to drain the petrol out onto the road. They managed it, cycling at top speed, lungs bursting, opened the taps … and were covered in slurry from a manure tank. They fell off their bikes into the ditch, overcome with excrement and laughter.

Harry Rée was never keen to romanticise his work as a spy. He recalls a French industrialist saying ‘You won’t like going back to being a schoolmaster after this!’ Harry’s response was ‘On the contrary, to get back to something constructive instead of blowing things up all the time will be a joy!’

Of course, that was what he returned to – first as a teacher at Bradford Grammar School and then as Headmaster of Watford Grammar School for Boys in 1951. In his interview, he was asked what he thought was the main quality he would look for when appointing staff. When reminiscing, he said that ‘an angel at that moment came and sat on the tip of my tongue, because I said, ‘generosity, in the widest sense of the term.’ A wonderful answer and he got the job!

Here are his first impressions of the school when he arrived in 1951: ‘It was an incredibly good school. It was an wonderful answer and he got the job!”

Harry Rée was certainly a man who was wont to explore, dream and discover, but most importantly, to encourage this spirit of adventure in his own students. In particular, he sought to encourage others to pursue as wide a range of interests as possible, and to take nothing at face value – to always have an open mind and question your own world view at all times as either the facts or your understanding changes. This is of course increasingly difficult in our current world where we are at risk of settling into our own echo chambers of discourse.

At the start of the Second World War, Harry Rée was a French teacher at Beckenham and Penge Grammar School and was therefore exempt from service in the Military as teaching was a ‘reserved occupation.’ However, at that time Harry Rée was a pacifist and conscientious objector, so he registered as one as a matter of principle. It is therefore somewhat ironic that just a few years later, by the age of 31, Harry was a war hero, with a DSO, OBE, Croix de Guerre, and Medaille de la Resistance. He changed his mind because his contemporaries were getting killed and he couldn’t see how he could stand apart; particularly since his father was part Jewish and it was becoming increasingly clear that pacifism was no match for the brutality of Hitler’s regime and its oppression of minorities.

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Here are his first impressions of the school when he arrived in 1951: “It was an incredibly good school. It was an
ordinary state school, of course. But the staff were quite exceptional ... I’ve always liked school teachers. But they were very conscientious. Very successful. There was a lovely atmosphere in the school. The teaching was very good and the staff were terrific in the amount of time they gave to the boys.’

Much has changed in education and in Watford Boys in the 67 years since those impressions were formed, some of which Harry Rée would surely rail against, but I suspect that he would still recognise those essential attributes amongst our staff today. The teachers at Watford Boys are truly exceptional and their dedication and generosity is evident to all and has helped to shape the lives of many generations of boys. It is my hope that this generosity of spirit is one that will be emulated by all of our students as they head out on their many and various adventures in life.

Our boys can and will set the course for the world in years to come. They will be the pioneers of new medicine, of oceanography, geopolitics and our understanding of humanity itself through art, literature and music. They will be the inventors, the computer programmers and engineers to build new infrastructure and they will help to correct the errors of previous generations, whilst undoubtedly making some mistakes themselves along the way to store up for the next. The cycle is relentless and invigorating. Hopefully a few will also make the choice to enter the noble and uplifting profession of education – it is a humbling, entertaining and rewarding job.

Paul Shearring is leaving the governing body of Watford Boys after an extremely successful decade in post as Chair of Governors. Whilst treasuring and sustaining core values and traditional practices, he has led the school through a period of significant change in the educational landscape. He was instrumental in securing the benefits of early conversion to academy status in 2010 and he was quick to seize the opportunities presented by the expansion of the school in recent years, with all of the capital grants that have followed. Most importantly, Paul's lifelong passion for the school has underpinned his approach to governance throughout – a passion rivalled only by his love for family and Watford FC. A brief summary of Paul's association with WBGS provides a measure of this devotion.

Paul is a former pupil of Watford Boys, distinguishing himself in many areas, but most notably on the cricket field, serving as 1st XI captain. During a very impressive and busy career in advertising, Paul retained strong links with the school, both as a parent of two WBGS boys and as a leading figure in the Old Fullerian Association: member of the OFA Golf Society and Cricket Club, organiser of the best attended and most enjoyable OFA dinners (so I am told by those who were present) and serial chair of the OFA. As a parent, Old Fullerian and Chair of Governors, Paul has attended and supported countless concerts, plays, sport fixtures and other school events. This enthusiasm and dedicated service to the school has been widely appreciated.

Whilst his capacity to reminisce and glory in the history of the school is undoubted, Paul has always been keen to recognise scope for improvements or opportunities to exploit as we adapt to a changing world. As Headteachers, we have both had the very great privilege to work with such an outstanding Chair of Governors and he will be missed. He has a rare talent for providing support and challenge in equal measure, saving Headteachers from themselves when required and providing faith and confident assurances as we embark on new adventures. This is not easily achieved; we have been very fortunate. Thankfully, Paul will still retain a link with the school as a trustee of the Watford Fuller Foundation, but he should have plenty more time to devote to his Marathon Walks for charity and his beloved Watford FC. However, the calendar of governing body meetings will no longer need to be developed with the Hornets fixture list in mind.

Friends of the School
Astronomy Evening
Journey to the Moon

Earlier this year, back in the winter when it was cold and dark, the Friends of the School organised and ran an observational astronomy evening with the support of the Physics department. The evening was held in and around the STEM centre and proved to be very popular with parents and pupils. The evening was called Journey to the Moon, and involved observing the moon and learning about its visible features and how it came to be there in the first place.

We started with some hot chocolate to get warmed up and then spent some time outside with a range of telescopes, some from the school and some very kindly borrowed from parents. Despite the fact that it was a freezing cold evening with snow showers, there were plenty of gaps in the cloud and we managed to get some really clear views of the moon in its waxing gibbous phase.

Following this, we went inside to hear some talks provided by Dr Clarke and Mr Hensman, about the moon’s features and theories behind its formation. At the end of the talks the sky had cleared completely and we spent plenty more time outside getting some great views and photographs of the moon.

The evening was a great success and special thanks must go to Dr Clarke and Mr Hensman for providing the talks, Allen Conquest and Jo Kent for their help with the technical side and in particular we must thank Deborah Bush for planning and organising the event. There will be another Friends of the School astronomy evening in the winter.

Friends of the School
The Friends of the School have had another busy year, raising money for the school through various events, including the annual Quiz Night, which featured a very popular music round, sung by Mr Cooksey, the Quizmaster; a Lower School Football Tournament; and the New to Year 7 Fun Day, at which all boys joining WBGS in September and their families were welcomed into school to meet their new classmates and take part in team-building activities, whilst the Friends of the School organised a BBQ, refreshments and a raffle.

This year also saw the launch of our Special Events series, created in direct response to a parent survey carried out by the Friends in 2017. There was a range of different events to appeal to all interests, including: talks on teenage mental health and well-being, and the moon; choux pastry masterclasses; a family fitness session; and a trip to the BRE Innovation Park in Garston. A Women’s Book Group has also been established and meets in the school library every half-term to discuss a new book. More events are planned for next academic year, so keep a lookout for notifications.

These events, along with the Big Raffle in October, and the continued support and participation from parents, staff and students, (for which we are very grateful) enabled the Friends of WBGS to raise £11,000 this academic year which will be used to buy equipment and resources for the benefit of all boys within the school. Donations made this year included furniture and equipment for the new STEM Centre and the provision of table tennis tables in the school playground, which have been enjoyed and well-used by boys in all years almost constantly since their installation, even in the cold and wet!

This year also saw the launch of the Friends’ own website which can be visited at http://www.friendsofwbgs.org (or accessed from the school website). Here you can find information, view photos and book tickets for all our fundraising events, as well find out about other activities we run, such as the second hand uniform shop which is open every Wednesday after school.

The Friends of the School can only continue to raise money for the school with the help and support of parent volunteers. We are always pleased to welcome parents who’d like to get involved in some way. You don’t have to attend meetings; help is always needed at our events, as well as serving refreshments at school concerts and parents’ evenings, and any amount of time you can give, however small, is appreciated. If you would like to get involved, or find out more, please visit our website or email us at info@friendsofwbgs.org. As well as helping to directly benefit the boys through fundraising, it is a fun way of meeting other parents and being more involved with the school community.

Amanda Rafferty, Chair, Friends of WBGS
Shun Asano, one of our Year 11 students, tragically died in January 2018. He was a young man who led a very full life, engaging with everything at school having been fascinated by the world around him from an early stage.

When he was in Year 8 he approached Mr Hensman to talk about astronomy and it was clear that he had exceptional subject knowledge and more importantly, took real enjoyment from reading and discussing all things related to space. In many ways astronomy was a perfect way for him to apply his scientific mind and to use his artistic insights when evaluating and appreciating photographic images of space. He produced some of his own meticulous hand drawings of constellations – beautiful, detailed and accurate drawings. From Year 9 onwards Shun voluntarily came to after school astronomy sessions, attended mainly by students in the two years above him. He would regularly contribute to discussions, but in a very understated and modest way and usually with snippets of impressive information. It was clear to Mr Hensman that the older students recognised his tremendous knowledge of all things space.

He was a brilliant mathematician too. In November he took part in the prestigious UKMT Senior Maths Challenge, which is taken by the best Secondary School students nationally (most of whom are Sixth Formers). He achieved a Gold certificate, which places him in the top 10% of all who entered nationally, something which only a handful of our Sixth Form Further Mathematicians achieved.

In Computer science Shun was curious to learn more, very dedicated, determined and extremely well-mannered. It transpires that he liked to dismantle (with permission, of course) our old, unused computers and take the parts home, for his own personal projects.

Speaking of personal projects, Shun didn't actually study music at GCSE, but he was keen to explore that realm too. At lunchtimes, he could often be found in the Clarendon Muse sequencing his own compositions on the computers. He also exhibited extraordinary creativity in his art work and demonstrated his eye for detail and skilful brushwork. His drawings and paintings of birds in particular are truly wonderful.

Shun was also a fine sportsman. Nick-named Shun “the destroyer of men” in Year 7 for his destructive runs and powerful tackles, he was a committed rugby player throughout his time at the school and he was in the A team throughout Years 10 and 11. He was regularly at practice and determined to seek continuous improvements to his game.

Shun was also an active member of the athletics team for 4 years and represented the school in 100m, 4x100m relay, pole vault and discus. He loved athletics and he really cared about the competitive element.

Although not a natural long distance runner, Shun regularly attended Cross Country practice, along with Hiroki, his brother, (when he was also with us at the school). In all 3 sports – Mr Beere reports that there was never a time when Shun didn’t give 100% and although he was not naturally effusive, it was on the sports field that he would smile and laugh with his team mates.

One of Shun’s books that his brother has kindly donated to the school is a beautiful hard back with silver lined pages, entitled ‘The Inventions, Researches and Writings of Nikola Tesla’. This will be held in the school library as a small act of remembrance in Shun’s honour. Rather fittingly, on the back cover is one of Tesla’s quotes – ‘Each day we go to our work in the hope of discovering.’ Shun did just that every day. He was an explorer of so many different disciplines and, in this regard, he has provided a wonderful example.

A memorial service for Shun was held at the school and a flowering cherry tree was planted in his memory. In Japan, the flowers of the cherry tree, or Sakura, are deeply symbolic - their short-lived existence taps into a long-held appreciation of the beauty and fleeting nature of life itself. For Shun, life was tragically short, but this tree will serve as a lasting reminder of his considerable contributions to this community and the impact that he had on those around him.
After years of planning and months of building, Watford Grammar School for Boys formally opened its new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Centre in a day of special activities and events on Thursday 9th November 2017.

With the cost of the building covered by external grants, the school looked to parents and old boys for donations towards the fixtures, fittings and equipment required – including top of the range kit that most former students could hardly have dreamed of.

Nearly 150 donors contributed to the fund, meaning that by launch day the boys were able to see much of the equipment they will be able to use in their studies.

Launch day began with the first ever lessons in the STEM Centre, which were taught by researchers from Imperial College, London, and included students from other local schools. Local outreach is a key objective of the new Centre. Member of Parliament for Watford, Richard Harrington, toured the building and joined a couple of lessons.

The guest of honour for the day was Lord Robert Winston, who spoke with a number of sixth formers before giving an inspirational talk to Year 7 students. He described himself as honoured to be opening the Centre and told the boys how lucky they are to have seven years of studying there ahead of them – a sentiment that really seems to be felt by the boys at the school.

In the evening, the school welcomed 200 guests to celebrate the opening of the Centre. Guests included donors, staff and those who have given to the school, whether financially or with their time. With music provided by Stephen Hussey and students Tom Watts and Eddie Cummins on the trumpet and saxophone respectively, it was enjoyed by all.

A particular highlight for attendees was the opening speech by Sir John Holman in which he recounted finding a World War II bomb in his office shortly after becoming Head of Chemistry! It was wonderful to see former staff come back and see the new development, with Martin Post, Mark Allchom, Peter Dilloway, Peter Nunn, Robert Chapman and Peter Buckley all in attendance.

The STEM Centre is now becoming fully operational with lessons and clubs taking place. The top floor conference hall is a new fantastic resource for larger gatherings, with the balcony offering spectacular views across the whole school site.

The school would like to once again thank all the parents who donated to the STEM Centre appeal; the interest and investment in our current and future students is deeply appreciated.

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Dominic Reed L6C and Hollie Rendall
Peter Shears

Peter Shears, a brilliant and very gifted former student, tragically died at the age of 20 in July 2018. He was well liked and respected by both his peers and teachers; appreciated for his wit, good humour and decency. He embraced life at Watford Boys to the fullest, playing a range of sports, socialising with a diverse group of friends and achieving great success academically.

Peter studied Maths, Biology, Chemistry and French at A-level, excelling in each subject and achieving As across the board. He went on to study Computing at degree level at Edinburgh University – a passion of his since he was young.

Exceedingly bright and capable, he made it his aim to question everything and anyone – not always to the delight of teachers. Peter studied at York House (he loathed the silly hats) before moving on to Watford Boys, where he found his academic direction.

Talking to Peter’s previous teachers is a heart-warming and enlightening experience. There is genuine sadness at this tragic loss. Most talk about his mastering of difficult concepts, some mention his analytical mind and work ethic, all talk about how personable and charismatic he was. Peter found that space which so few manage to occupy; being confident while retaining an air of virtue and respect.

Possessing a sharp mathematical and scientific mind, Peter also excelled in English; his previous teachers noting how he would engage with literature and culture in a sophisticated, often impulsive way. Despite this brilliance, he also had a deep-seated and burning passion for avoiding homework.

During his university exams for which he was underprepared, Peter spoke to his brother Will; apparently not in the least bit flummoxed or panicked, he simply said, “Chill, I’ll just have to teach myself the syllabus”. The perfect example of his brilliant, witty nature.

In many ways, Peter encapsulated what being a Watford Boys student is about; working hard, having the desire to constantly challenge or question concepts and ideas while simultaneously being exasperating and yet affable. In this way, Peter was a master.

His loss deprives us of a brilliant but often troubled and conflicted mind.

Peter leaves behind a caring and devoted family in mother Maggy, father Dan, brother Will and sister Mary, to whom staff and students at Watford Boys extend our sincerest and most heartfelt sympathy and offer condolences. Peter will be remembered here in the fondest of ways.

Oliver Clark

Editor’s Note

Many thanks to Dominic Reed and Jack Osmond who have taken the initiative with the design of the front cover, and contributed to the layout of the Art, and Design and Technology spreads.

Thank you to all the writers, staff and students, of the huge variety of articles and accompanying images this year.

I’d like to include a special mention to Deven Voralia, an ex student editor of the Fullerian who leaves us this year. Even though he has not been able to be as actively involved in editing this year, he has still contributed some excellent material.

Finally, thank you to John Donne, who puts the magazine together for us year after year, and continues to show remarkable patience when it comes to last minute addition and editing of articles. In addition, John works with our young cover designers giving them an opportunity to realise their artwork into print.

GA

Front Cover Design

By Dominic Reed L6C and Jack Osmond L6C

Our design for the front cover brings together the colours of the seven school houses and the architecture of the school’s seven buildings. This academic year is the first to have the new STEM centre, and the last to have seven houses. Vertical sections of each building have been simplified to a stylistic design, each using two shades of one of the house colours. The back cover of the Fullerian features the new house logos introduced this year, designed to reflect each school house and its origin.
In September 2017, all students in the Lower Sixth were informed about the national Young Enterprise competition - a competition centred on enabling young students to build an innovative business from the foundations. When starting the programme, we knew Young Enterprise would help us build the next multi-million pound business, turn us into leading business tycoons overnight and propel us into a life of great comfort and wealth away from the mundane routine of everyday working life - or at least that was what we dreamed. On a more realistic level, the competition would provide all students with the key tools and framework needed to succeed in the world of business, whilst simultaneously fostering the growth of our soft skills. After a series of strong business pitches given from a variety of students, three companies from Watford Boys were selected to participate in the competition representing the school. The three groups were ItTakes2, MisQuoted and Titan’s Edge.

Having heard of the well-recognised competition before, ItTakes2, the company that I was in, wanted to make a strong impression in the Young Enterprise competition as well as provide a substantial product which would cause significant improvements to the life of our buyers. With this aim in mind, ItTakes2 conceived a vast number of concepts that could serve this purpose.

After a few hours pondering over suitable ideas, a far harder job than we first anticipated, we came to the idea of creating a colourful, interactive storybook for Key Stage 1 students, uniquely combining numerical, literacy and comprehension skills along with an engaging story narrative to fully engage children at that stage of learning. It was from this foundation that The Quest for the Golden Binoculars was to form.

An important aspect of our Young Enterprise journey was the competition aspect of the programme. Whilst building our business, we were also fortunate enough to compete in a variety of competitions such as the IntuWatford Trade Fair, the Young Enterprise South-East Regional Finals and the Young Enterprise County Finals. In these competitions, we won the Most Innovative Product/Service Award, the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Award at the Regional Finals and the Company of the Year Award at the Regional Finals.

As a company, we have also managed to sell our KS1 book to a significant number of parents from a variety of different areas and backgrounds, and received some outstanding reviews.

Young Enterprise has truly been a beneficial experience for all of us. As a team we have seen our communication, team-working and organisation skills improve massively and we are hugely grateful for such an opportunity.

ItTakes2 would like to thank Ms Patel for the full support she has given us across the year and the continued support she has given us regarding future steps and business plans. We also want to thank our Business Advisor, Victor Chuntz, for his innovative and creative ideas, aiding us on our Young Enterprise journey. Lastly, we also want to thank Mr Chase for his initial belief in this idea, without which such a concept for a book would have remained just a vague idea floating around the Sixth Form Cafe on Friday lunchtime.

Ayodele Andrews L6C
MisQuoted is a fashion retailer specifically targeting the streetwear market. Our clothes feature ‘misquotes’ - made-up quotes satirising famous figures aimed at evoking feelings in the consumer for example "drop beats, not bombs" – Kim Jong-Un. As a group we felt that young people are not engaged enough in politics and the social sciences and decided to try and make them more relevant to youth. Unlike other streetwear companies diluting the market by copying big brands like Supreme and Palace, Misquouted is bringing in a new concept, allowing us to reshape the market.

As a result, our group was less focused on profit - rather on brand awareness, to make sure our message was being seen by the public. We achieved this awareness through the use of social marketing; we invested in Instagram and Facebook ads that targeted specific audiences, as well as promoting our brand through ‘influencers’ on social media.

Creating Misquoted was never about winning awards however our efforts have been recognised at several levels of the Young Enterprise competition; we won best company at the district, area and county finals whilst also picking up a range of other awards including best interview, best presentation and best marketing. Our aptitude at marketing has seen us win awards at all three levels of the competition. We made it through to the regional stage, but unfortunately didn’t succeed in making it to the national level of the competition. However, as highlighted earlier, we aren’t focused on winning awards - we want to contribute to real change within youth. Where the competitions have helped us is through improving several of our personal skills, the presenting aspect of the competition has made us more competent at public speaking and the interview component has given us more confidence at networking and communicating in a formal environment.

Unlike most other Young Enterprise companies that opt to shut down after leaving the process - we have ramped up our activity. Through networking we’ve been invited to sell our products at various different events this summer and we’ll be dropping our fourth release - our ‘Skaters, not dictators’ t-shirts, very soon - coming in baby blue, black and white. You can find our instagram at ‘misquotedlondon’ and our webstore at ‘misquoted.bigcartel.com’. Be sure to follow our social media for news about future releases and exclusive sneak-peeks of new products.

Reflecting on the Young Enterprise process, we’ve found the experience extremely rewarding - not only through the personal and organisational skills we’ve learned along the way but also through the satisfaction of knowing we were part of something successful. We feel that we’ve all grown as individuals as a result of the Young Enterprise scheme and would encourage any students moving into the Lower Sixth to seriously consider taking part - you won’t regret it.

Finally, we’d like to say thank you to our external business advisor, John Gage, for giving up so much of his time and expertise to make sure our company succeeded and to Miss Shah our advisor in WBGS.

We’d also like to thank Mr Chase, our centre lead, for working with Young Enterprise to make sure this opportunity was available and, of course, for giving up his evenings, transporting us to competitions.

Angus Finnegan 12F.
**Go4Set**

Over the Spring and Summer terms this year, two Year 9 engineering teams have participated in the Go4SET program, in which two industry mentors from the safety electronics company EATON came to assist us in developing an engineering project of our choice, based around a number of briefs. You can see the options we had at http://www.etrust.org.uk/go4set/go4set-projects-portfolio.

Our team chose the My Money, My Technology Project and as part of this we had to consider how we could create something, involving technology, that could save people money. We had 10 weeks to create this, along with a display board and report about what we had produced. We created an Android application called NuTrader, which takes a list of what you buy every week and proposes cheaper alternatives that you could buy instead, which you can then export and share. You can check us out at bit.ly/NuTrader.

The Go4SET competition day, which we participated in after completing our project, saw us displaying our project to some judges from engineering companies, along with employees at Leonardo, an aerospace company that works with the government to engineer our defences. It was an extremely enjoyable day and we got to show off to lots of adults. Our team won the best overall project prize, and the other team one pupil’s choice. As a result of this, we were both entered into the Big Bang Fair engineering Near Me fair at the University of Hertfordshire, College Lane Campus in Hatfield. If we come in the top three, we will qualify to the national competition, at the NEC in Birmingham next year.

I would thoroughly recommend the Go4SET program to anyone who has an interest in Computing or Technology, Maths, or even Art and Design, as we’ve certainly needed creative people in our group to design interfaces and marketing for our app. There really are a huge selection of opportunities available in Go4SET, and it’s all about showing you’re creative, organised, and can follow things through. I’d also like to give a big thank you to Mr Chase, who has helped us enormously with our project, printing things out, and generally organising for us, as well as our mentors, Pablo and B’Le.

Hamish Starling 9C

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**International Gastronomy week**

The Food Technology department ran its first International Gastronomy week in June. The aim was to celebrate the cultural diversity of our school through an international food week. It began with a competition to design a cultural dish, which will be made and served by the canteen; the winner being announced in September.

The lunchtime food fairs were bustling with pupils eager to watch their peers demonstrating dishes from various cultures as well as tasting the gastronomic delights made by pupils and staff. Pupils also took part in competitions like ‘link the dish to the country’ and ‘can you guess the spice’. This was a busy fun-filled week and brought our school community together to celebrate our many cultures through food. Mrs Zacharia would like to thank all the many pupils who took part as demonstrators, or made and donated delicious tasting samples.

HZ

Recently the food technology department hosted Gastronomy Week over Monday to Thursday of one week. This function had beautiful and scrumptious food samples and interesting and creative food demonstrations. It showed the hard work and great results that took place in the Food Technology department. I cooked a colourful paneer sample and a saucy chilli Kasava dish. All dishes that were made were incredibly tasty and had a variety of colours.
The chance to do original research in school does not happen often. However, the Higgs Hunter project provided just that opportunity to Lower Sixth students this year. We were partnered with Zooniverse (an online platform allowing everybody to take part in cutting edge science) and had access to their data from the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland. Guided by Dr Cianci and Dr Cerezo, we conducted a research project into the dataset over the course of the year. Our findings were presented to the Oxford Physics department and members of the Zooniverse team at a two day conference in June.

Two teams submitted projects from Watford Boys. The first was a statistical analysis of the reliability of the data from Jonathan Tsun L6T, Harshul Jolly L6C, Rikesh Chauhan L6B and myself. The second team (Akshat Tripathi L6G, Haseeb Khan L6G, Mehul Vyas L6G) developed a neural network for classifying the input data. The final group (who did not submit to the conference) used a portable particle detector to research into the physics behind the dataset (Lucas Dyson-Diaz L6B, Ebrahim Raja L6B, Roshan Patel L6C).

Nicholas Bush L6T

This created a vibrant atmosphere, which attracted more tasters and people. It was a fascinating and new experience, which inspired me to cook more challenging dishes that would also be healthy and nutritious.

Dhir Mistry 9T

The Gastronomy week allowed everyone to cook and try some cultural food, watch some food demonstrations and enter competitions about food. I came on Monday to demonstrate how to make chapatis and lots of people came to try food as well. I also went along on Thursday to try some food and watch the live demonstrations. It was a new experience for everyone and was a thoroughly enjoyable event.

Santosh Shah 9P

I enjoyed the energy of everyone, eating and making food. I found it exciting finding out about the food from the different cultures that are all around our school. I made and demonstrated pasta from scratch. So many people were surprised that I knew how to do it.

Cooking the food was really fun; on one day I made chapati with Gabriel, Finn and Christian, another day Gabriel and I made fried chicken and rice. All the food samples were exotic and full of flavour.

Finn Roberts 9P and Sachin Budheo 9T

We enjoyed the experience and it was exciting to learn how to cook from other people in our school and taste their food. We also cooked dishes from Japan and India; we found this enjoyable and we also had the help of Sachin and Finn when we made Japanese style fried chicken. I think that this activity is a really good idea and we should have this more often.

Gabriel Linington 9B and Christian Barden 9p

Higgs Hunter Project

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Nicholas Bush L6T
On Friday the 16th of March 2018, a visiting zoo came to the school and presented talks in the STEM centre conference room about a variety of different animals they had brought with them. They aimed to educate us about the animals in a fun and interactive way, allowing students to hold the animals and learn about them at the same time.

During the session, we were able to see many different types of animals from various parts of the world. Ranging from lethal desert scorpions and hairy spiders to cute meerkats and passive barn owls, there was quite frankly a lot to look forward to. The presentation involved a brief introduction of the animal, followed by the zoo staff teaching the audience some quite interesting facts about the animal (more on that later) and calling some of the students up to try and handle the animals.

Collectively, our personal favourite was the Golden Eagle, and we learnt that it was at the top of the food chain and that if it were to be placed directly on our hand, it would be able to produce 8 tons of pressure! We were amazed to find that it was even possible for an animal to do such a thing and really to witness the eagle in all its glory. Another notable part of the experience was a vivid green frog, which was less than half the size of the palm of our hand.

The cutest animals by far were the two meerkats. With their soft, furry bodies, these young mammals were a wonder to look at. What hit me was how the two of them would always stay in contact by calling out for each other. If one could not hear the other, it would begin to call without delay. Furthermore, we learnt that their soft structure makes it extremely easy to injure the creatures so we had to be careful around them. However, the zoo did teach us that meerkats come from a wild environment and should not be treated like pets, meaning that if they do not receive constant care from their “parents” (owners), they will slowly revert back to a wild environment which proves a massive problem to anyone who owns one.

Before leaving, we were finally able to see the star of the show - the giant snake. With its repeating scales and great length, we were very lucky to be able to feel its skin. In conclusion, we really enjoyed the experience and found it was a great way to learn about and appreciate the wildlife around us, whilst having great fun. Many thanks to the zoo for coming and to Mrs Butler for arranging the visit.

Saksham Sidana 10G Praveen Kathirvasan 10C

Translation Bee National Final

On Monday the 25th June 2018, I travelled to Cambridge with three other students to compete in the Modern Foreign Languages Translation Bee 2018. The three others that went with were Bob Chan, Hamish Starling, and Henry Peart. The college we went to was the Modern Language College (since Cambridge University is very big). It was an amazing experience and one we shall not forget.

We first started in the semi-finals where we went to a certain room. All of us were doing different languages and Bob and I were competing for German. We were calm, but the competition was really tight. After the semi-finals, we had our lunch break for 45 minutes and went into the main hall where the final took place. I want to congratulate all the boys that took part in the Translation Bee this year as they have made an outstanding effort. However, unfortunately only one out of the four of us managed to win a prize, which was me (4th place). But again, well done to the boys that took part, we all had an amazing experience.

Wasil Khan 9N
Careers Day

Wednesday 4th July saw the school welcome over 40 mentors, the vast majority of whom were old boys of the school, to the fifth annual Lower Sixth Careers Day in conjunction with the Old Fulleriens’ Association.

This year, the day involved a series of focused morning sessions. The boys heard talks from Russell Deane, Phil Hall and Matthew Sharkey on the importance of building a personal network and producing a CV that will get you in front of an employer. Derek Walker, a careers and recruitment specialist who has worked for major firms and universities, ran an excellent interactive session which showed boys how to introduce themselves to prospective contacts. The last morning sessions were taken by Samir Patel, Head Boy 2016-2017, on the transition from school to university, and from human resource specialist, Ian Ashcroft, on making yourself attractive to employers. The morning sessions helped prepare and inspire the boys for what would come in the afternoon.

After lunch for the mentors, the boys were split into groups of 4 and each mentor saw 5 groups for 20 minutes each. The mentors came from an enormous range of backgrounds; from medical professionals, to successful lawyers and bankers, research scientists, journalists and engineers. Boys were matched with their current interests to a degree, but the day also exists to broaden boys’ minds and to show them options they may never have considered before. We also welcomed a representative from the National Apprenticeship Service to give information about Degree Apprenticeships, an increasingly popular and credible choice for further study.

It was wonderful to see so many new faces coming to offer their support as mentors, as well as those who have attended for several years. The feedback from the boys on the day was very positive with many praising the morning sessions for showing them the possible benefits of participating as fully as possible, and for the calibre of the mentors overall. It has opened many of their eyes to the range of careers that are available which can combine their interests and strengths with their academic record and the advantages that having Watford Grammar School for Boys on your CV affords. Similarly, many of the mentors were impressed by the thoughtful questions from the boys and the enthusiasm even at the end of an intense day.

Careers Day is just one part of the Lower Sixth careers programme, which in itself is only part of what the school offers to students. This academic year we have welcomed a range of speakers (largely parents of current students) to give lunchtime talks to Years 9, 10 and 11. The aim is to continue to integrate information and advice about the working world throughout the boys’ education so they leave as well equipped with an idea of their future direction as possible.

Maths Fun

This year, students from all years have participated in many extra-curricular activities related to maths. Every Monday lunchtime, we have Maths Club in M4 where we practise maths questions from Hans Woyda (more on that later) as well as challenge questions and, sometimes, we discuss maths problems or puzzles from Numberphile (a YouTube channel). Many of us have also been privileged enough to participate in the Hans Woyda competition throughout this year. This is a competition which involves one boy from year 7-9, one from Year 10-11, one from Year 12, and one Year 13 student to be selected, and form a team. This team participates in one vs. one competitions against other schools, in which each player competes against their equal age group to earn points for their team. Last year we won the Plate final. This year we qualified for the Cup, but were unfortunately knocked out in the first knockout round. Hans Woyda is very exciting to participate in and to watch, so if you enjoy maths and competitions, I recommend that you come along to Maths Club.

Another extra-curricular Maths activity we’ve had the pleasure of participating in, is the UKMT Maths Challenge. This is a challenge that continues throughout the school, in which pupils sit a paper under exam conditions and are then awarded certificates based on how well they perform overall. The best performing students get to participate in the Team Maths Challenge which is a brilliant day where you compete in more quirky maths puzzles such as number crosswords and maths relays in your team.

Something else that was available to year 9 students this year was the RI Maths Master class series which was attended by Yueyang Han, 9N, and myself. Every other Saturday for a couple of months, we went to the University of Hertfordshire and attended lectures on a number of subjects including making our own Dobble games. As a result of attending these master classes, we will be able to attend a Maths Celebration day at the Royal Institution, along with Luke Powney 9C which should be thoroughly enjoyable.

Finally, on a cold, snowy day in February, about 10 of our Maths Club students were invited to take a trip to Camden to watch a series of mathematical talks. We braved the Metropolitan Line, and travelled to King’s Cross Station, a short walk from Camden Community Centre. Once there, we watched a series of talks from a number of famous mathematicians, including James Grime, on such topics as Physics of Chocolate Fountains, Game Theory, Mathematical Magic and Easter Bunnies, and exam technique. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day out, and I’d like to thank the Maths Dept. for organising that treat, and also for the other wonderful activities we’ve been able to participate in this year.

Hamish Starling, 9N
On the 8th and 15th of June, two groups of Year 10 students volunteered for the YOPEY Befrienders trip to visit Lancaster Court care home in Leavesden. YOPEY is a charity organisation which seeks to improve the image of young people in today's society. The charity runs a ‘Befrienders’ scheme, in which young people are presented with the opportunity to voluntarily visit and befriend lonely residents suffering from dementia in care homes, to show that we actually do care and that we do more good than we make trouble.

The visit began with a brief session of training. We were made aware of what dementia was, and what it leads to, including its symptoms, and we were taught how to behave with people who were suffering from the disease. We ventured into the psychology behind dementia, allowing us to pick up human interaction skills and social care skills. Dementia is a growing disease in the UK. We are likely to know someone with dementia, and we may even have the disease ourselves. This gave us vital information to prepare for a disease that we are likely to encounter at some point in our lives.

After a quick snack, we finally went to meet the residents of the care home. Half the group stayed on the ground floor which is called Oakwood and typically houses patients with dementia while the other group went up to the first floor which nursed patients with more long-term conditions. It is quite difficult to believe how much effort goes into every little thing in the home. Whether it was bringing a resident's jumper from their room or wheeling a resident to the lounge, the staff were buzzing around. Despite their demanding roles, they were all friendly and ready to answer any questions.

The moment we stepped into the room, we were greeted with immense joy and hospitality from the residents. They were all waiting to meet us. It was so easy to establish a conversation with all of them, and the nerves that we had all felt were gone immediately. Every single resident had a unique, lively and sociable character. Some were amusing, whilst some had amazing stories to tell and experiences to share. One woman we met was 100 years old! They were all so easy to relate to. But the best part was the sense of pride felt when you made someone happy. The residents loved being visited by someone who they could talk to personally.

But having a conversation with these people completely changed my perception of them. The elderly are seen as being boring and annoying when actually they aren’t.

We then had a quick tour of the care home and went to meet the second group of residents, who were also equally as amazing as those we met downstairs before we waved our final goodbyes. The residents were sad to see us go but we hope to visit them again!

We would like to thank Mrs Cox for organising this amazing opportunity to not only learn new skills but also experience something different outside of the classroom, as well as YOPEY and the helpful staff at Lancaster Court for giving up their time to teach us and host us with incredible hospitality. Being a YOPEY Befriender can really change your perceptions of dementia and the elderly. We would highly recommend it to anyone in year 10 next year.

Akhil Sonecha 10F
Praveen Kathirvasan 10C

Yopey Befrienders
YouThought - Alan Senitt Community Leadership Scheme

Run by Maccabi Streetwise, the Alan Senitt Community Leadership Scheme brings together Year 10 pupils from 4 different schools to gain skills and help them make a difference within their local community. Every other month, students take part in a session about leadership skills and inclusivity that leads them to run a project that will enhance their local community.

Alan Charles Senitt was a political activist who attended Nower Hill School in Pinner (where our first Seminar was held). He also acted as a leader to people from all faiths and backgrounds by implementing projects in local communities. The Alan Senitt Memorial Trust (a charity dedicated to his memory) has become a source to empower youth to become future leaders.

As mentioned before, we are planning, designing and will soon implement a community project ourselves to add value to our local community. As well as this, we are learning leadership skills that will become especially useful to us in later life. Furthermore, we are interacting with pupils from other schools allowing us to build better social skills and make helpful contacts for the future.

Our project is an online web based news site for teens, called YouThought. It is designed to combat fake news and provide a place where teens can easily access appropriate, interesting and targeted as well as factually correct news. Lots of news nowadays can be daunting for young people, with long articles that go on about financial statistics and tax rates which, quite frankly, have little relevance to our lives at the moment. Being teenagers ourselves, we hope to be able to direct readers to sites they will find interesting as well as produce our own content from the perspective of Year 10 students. Moderated debates and polls will also be held, allowing teenagers to have a voice whilst keeping conversation civil.

We will achieve this by creating a website that provides all the main news of the world to youths in the form of articles and videos. The videos are for those who are not particularly fond of reading. All of us will contribute to forming these written articles by putting in just a few minutes of our time. To raise awareness of our website, we have created an Instagram and a Youtube account to gain the attention of our target audience.

The venue for our first seminar was Nower Hill school. Firstly in the seminar, we introduced ourselves to each other with an ice breaker game. After we got to know each other, we were given an introduction to our programme and about Alan Senitt. We also had a very interesting talk about why leadership is important and what makes us/our team/our local area a community. We got to learn different aspects of working in a group with other people we do not know. Then in groups of mixed schools we came up with a mini community action plan which we had to do in 20 minutes and give a presentation about it. Then after we gave the presentations, we received constructive criticism and learnt how to give an effective presentation.

During the two months we had between the seminars, we had weekly meetings in which we researched and developed our ideas about the project and came up with a variety of ideas as well as assigning roles within the team. We were also given a task to create a 10 minute presentation about our project and our plan, the main points we needed to include were, “This is who we are, this is what we believe in/think is important, and this is why we are doing the project.”

For the second seminar, we visited the Ayesha Community Education School in Hendon. After several rousing ice-breakers, we, along with the other schools, pitched our ideas to the group, and following the presentation we received feedback and questions from our peers. After we adjourned, we took part in several workshops run by the Streetwise team which aimed to develop our leadership skill set; these included a budget planning session, a workshop based on group inclusivity (which we certainly had a lot to say about). Overall, getting to meet the other schools again, and learning the critical skill of leadership (whilst missing a day of school) made the day a success in our eyes.

This project is fantastic. It has allowed us to make an enormous difference to the lives of many people, while giving us an invaluable number of transferable skills. It is a great thing to be a part of, both for yourself, personally, and the wider community.

Praveen Kathirvasan, 10C Ali Shah, 10G Harry Soma, 10F Arnav Verma, 10C Avishar Dutta, 10C Dominic Dale, 10C James Rafferty 10B Saksham Sidana 10G
Malaria No More Challenge

In the summer term in Geography, Year 7 has been studying the geography of health. It is a fascinating subject and we have learnt a lot about how the location of a country or region can have such a big effect on the wellbeing of the people who live there. One of the topics that we focused on was Malaria. We discussed where it occurred, why it was such a problem in poorer countries and the stigma and shame that often follows a person after recovering from Malaria. After acknowledging that it was such a tragic disease that affects more than 300 million people, and kills 1 million people per year, we wanted to help.

Our chosen charity was the Malaria No More UK fund. It is a charity dedicated to supporting families and communities battling malaria, as well as trying to eradicate the disease once and for all. We wanted to raise money for this charity in a way that would be fun and challenge us to push ourselves. In the end we decided to do a 100-kilometre-challenge. The idea was that, as a form, we would go to the school gym and try to run, row or cycle a total of 100km (or more) on the gym machines. We all had forms to fill in and get sponsors from family and friends. It was a challenge, but we were ready!

We entered the gym on the 13th of June, and we could not wait. Straight away, we went on to the machines, eager to reach that total distance of 100km. It was great to see that everyone knew what they wanted to do: some went on the treadmills, some went on the rowing machines and some went on the exercise bikes. Half an hour later, we were all very tired but we were certain that we had done it.

As a year group, we raised over £1700 and covered a total distance of over 1500km.

It was a great experience and I would really like to do more charity work with the school as I really enjoyed it especially because I knew that we were helping others!

Matteo Nola 7N

Harry Bibring’s Talk

Earlier this year, in connection with Holocaust Memorial Week, Year 9 received a talk from Harry Bibring, a survivor of the Holocaust. He was an excellent speaker, and his description of life as a boy growing up in Vienna in the 1930s was both fascinating, and disturbing. He recalled how his life was turned upside down by the horrendous actions and laws of the Nazi party in Germany throughout the 1930s-1940s.

Mr Bibring recalled how his life before the annexation of Austria by Germany in 1938 was pleasant and comfortable. Although he said he had seen some signs of anti-semitism before 1938, it had never really affected him. He recounted how he went to school in an ex-palace, in Vienna, along with many other students, and how he had a passion for ice-skating.

Mr Bibring’s father was the owner of a clothing shop, in a middle-class sector of Vienna. However, after Anschluss (the German annexation of Austria) Mr Bibring described how this all changed. From the very beginning, his non-Jewish friends refused to talk to, or play with Harry or other Jewish children, from fear the Nazis would punish them. Not long after the annexation, after visiting his favourite skating rink, he was told he could no longer skate there, because of his race. As a 12 year old boy, Mr Bibring said he could not understand how something such as race would affect who was allowed to do something such as ice-skating. He talked to us about the range, and severity of the newly enforced laws.

Later that year, on the Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass) Mr Bibring’s father’s clothing shop was ransacked and destroyed. People were encouraged by the Nazis to attack and destroy Jewish homes, shops, and synagogues. Harry’s father was also arrested, and he, his mother, and his sister were forced to live in a cramped house, along with many other Jewish families. He recalled how they had no food, and were not allowed out, and how his sister had to escape to go and buy food for everybody. After his father’s release, his family decided they had to escape Vienna, so they attempted to buy tickets for a train to Shanghai. However, when his father, carrying all their remaining money, was robbed on his way to buy the tickets, Harry’s parents decided to send their children to Britain on the Kindertransport. So Harry and his sister came to Britain, where he has been living ever since 1939. Sadly, he never saw his parents again, and it is believed they perished as a result of the Nazi concentration camps.

Overall, Mr Bibring’s engaging story of the horrors of life, in Greater Germany, in the 1930s, was enlightening. He was a brilliant speaker, and his recount of his story was extremely interesting. His description of surviving the Holocaust was much appreciated, and enjoyed by all.

Lewis Macleod 9G
Lessons From Auschwitz Project

Just after February half term, Ethan and I went to Auschwitz 1 and Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camps in Poland. Without getting bogged down in the statistics, Auschwitz was the biggest concentration camp ever created, containing 40 sub camps. 1.3 million people were sent there and 1.1 million were murdered. This gives you an insight into the industrialised nature of the killing. The experience is organised by The Holocaust Education Trust and is called the Lessons from Auschwitz programme. It involves a pre-visit seminar, the day trip to Auschwitz and a follow up seminar to discuss the experience, as well as to decide upon and begin to organise a method of teaching others what we had learnt. 200 sixth formers from schools all over the South East also took part.

The day visit started at 5am and we were back in England by midnight - a long day, tiring, emotionally draining and, most of all, extremely thought provoking. We drove straight from the airport to Auschwitz 1 and were met with the infamous ‘Arbeit Macht Frei’ sign, meaning ‘work to be free’. This was intended to instil a false sense of hope into arriving prisoners. The most harrowing feature of this camp for me was how close the Commandant’s house was to the gas chamber. Just zoom from where the Commandant’s children lived in luxury, he was murdering innocent men, women and children. For Ethan, the most shocking moment came in one of the exhibition rooms, where there was a huge book of the names of the Jews who had died at Auschwitz. Although Ethan thought his surname was uncommon as most people spell Meller with an ‘or’ at the end, he found two pages of the book designated to the surname Meller, spelt with an ‘ER’ not ‘OR’. This showed us just how personal the Holocaust is to Ethan.

We were then driven straight to Birkenau. This is the biggest of the camps, and nothing can prepare you for the size. The rows and rows of converted horses’ stables went on for as far as the eye could see. Standing there, shivering, in the -10 degrees snow, in several layers, a big coat, and a woolly hat and gloves, we were freezing. We soon came to realise, those prisoners at Auschwitz would have been in thin pyjamas all year round, whether in 30 degree heat or -15 degree C. Although this does not compare to the mass executions that took place at the camp, the sheer conditions were enough to make us physically shudder. This taught us it is much easier now that completely understanding the Holocaust is impossible; however if anyone wants to attempt to begin to understand it then humanising by understanding it as an experience of individuals, is definitely required. It was this realisation that we had that inspired us to choose to carry out the Next Steps Project.

For our Next Steps Project, we brainstormed firstly what message we wanted the audience to take away. We agreed that we wanted to attempt to show that ultimately all of those involved in the Holocaust were humans, not just numbers in huge statistics. We decided to try to make the audience challenge their own stereotypes of perpetrators and victims, and subsequently give them insight into some personal stories. After we had agreed on this we began to discuss what kind of audience we felt would benefit most from our project and its message. Initially we thought sixth formers would be best as they would be the most equipped to understand, as it would be hard to get younger audiences to understand our message whilst trying to remain appropriate for them. However we then realised that for this very reason younger audiences get the least amount of exposure and opportunities to learn about the Holocaust. Consequently we decided to take on the challenge of getting our message across to an entire year group of Year 7, whilst staying age appropriate.

After discussing several ideas, we decided upon using various images of perpetrators and victims of the Holocaust in settings that looked unrelated to the Holocaust. However, we did not give our assembly a title, leaving it as the default Word PowerPoint title, meaning the Year 7s and their form tutors had no idea what the assembly was going to be about or who the images were of. This then resulted in them seeing every single photo as an ‘ordinary’ person. After we had shown them the photos we proceeded to explain about the story of each photo. We did this, as we wanted to try and demonstrate to the audience that ultimately all of those involved in the Holocaust were humans, not just numbers in big statistics. Humans that appear to be completely normal, even ‘good’, people are capable of being incomprehensibly bad to such incredibly innocent other humans, on industrial scales.

Colm Finnegan L6C
### Baking Club

I have really enjoyed baking club and have made some very delicious bakes. It has been a great experience and has boosted my cooking knowledge and confidence massively. Seeing my family devour all of my tasty treats has really made me believe in my cooking. In the after school class, Mrs Zacharia really helps you take pride in your food and teaches you at a swift but understandable pace. Overall, I have really enjoyed baking club and Mrs Zacharia and Mrs Parks have helped me every step of the way.

Riyan Shah 8B

### STEM Challenge

On the 1st of February 2018, selections of Year 10 boys were given the exciting opportunity to visit the Royal Masonic School for Girls for a “STEM” event sponsored by the Ogden Trust. The morning was run by the Engineering Development Trust and involved a “Trebuchet Challenge” as well as a careers carousel involving several speakers from the Engineering, Physics and Space industries to show how Physics could be applied to real life jobs.

The first step was to get briefed on our problem: we had to create a gravity or elastically driven trebuchet that would be capable of firing a projectile (in this case paper) over a wall and as far as possible after that. LEGO® Technic was used to create the structure, each piece having a different ‘price’ based on its usefulness. This meant as well as having to think about the effectiveness of our design, we had to minimise the material ‘cost’, something which will always be of importance in real-life tasks.

After splitting ourselves into groups, our team quickly realised that the use of an elastic band was far more effective than the weight. We went back to the drawing board and designed a new contraption that would fire the projectile as far as possible. Just over an hour later, it was competition time and each team tested their trebuchet against the wall. In the end, WBGS won with a team consisting of James Turvey, Jacob Haddo, Tom Wall, Thomas Farnsworth and Hasnain Rashid scoring the furthest distance.

Once the Trebuchet Challenge was over, we were given the opportunity to meet several STEM graduates from companies including TFL and the UK Space Agency. Talking with them gave us an insight into what working in an Engineering or Physics environment might be like. They also provided information about their apprenticeship schemes and training and sponsorship opportunities.

We would like to thank the Royal Masonic School for Girls for hosting us and also Mr Hensman and Dr White for providing us with this inspiring opportunity to get a real insight into Physics and Engineering outside of the classroom and accompanying us on the trip.

Dominic Dale 10C
The premise of a hackathon is simple – teams compete to build the most innovative solution to a problem in a fixed amount of time. Watford Boys held its first in July, with Dame Alice Owen and Queens Schools also submitting teams. The theme was “Improving the mental health and wellbeing of students”, and the forty students had just under six hours to work on their projects. A wide range of prototypes was developed, including a meditation game, a scheduling app, and educational materials for mental health. As far as we can tell, the hackathon was one of only a few ever organised at a secondary school in the UK, and we look forward to organising an even larger one for next year. The event was put together by myself and Rikesh Chauhan (L6B), and would not have been possible without the support of Mr Carr, Mr Adcock, and Mr Chase.

Nicholas Bush L6T

On the morning of the fifteenth of March, the IT suite at the back of the library was quiet; a low murmur of voices from the study area could be heard echoing faintly up the steps and the cool whistling of the spring breeze outside the window. However, all of this was about to change. By eight o’clock, students began trickling into the plastic chairs and by nine the clacking of keyboards filled the air. Our aim was to become reporters for the day; to research, write and report on the news, and experience what it was like to be a journalist as part of the BBC school report programme.

The day was split into three stages; the first of these was the research stage. For two hours at the beginning of the day our time was spent digging through news websites, searching for interesting stories to write about and checking facts. With so much to do, the pressure was on from the beginning, and an hour in, a hazy silence had settled over the determined students, ripping deep into the stories of the day and checking sources with extreme concentration.

The silence was broken as Ms. Woods, the organiser of our BBC school report, poured snacks from a plastic bag onto the table at the back of the room, triggering a mass migration to fetch chocolate bars, crisps and oranges (likely to fulfil the government’s healthy eating quotas). The effect this had on our productivity is arguable, but our morale was certainly elevated. An excited buzz filled the room as we moved into the second stage of the day: writing and producing.

At this point we had collected enough information to begin crafting our articles. It was eleven o’clock, and the near-midday sun blasted the stuffy room with intense heat. This, in tandem with the intense pressure created a blast furnace and difficult working conditions. Our only solace was the snacks that continued to be replenished as quickly as they were eaten. It did not take long for most students to get into the writing state of mind and begin the rhythmic cycle of checking sources, typing and finding images without copyright (perhaps a valuable experience, but certainly not an enjoyable one).

During this time period the filming also began. A myriad of complex and expensive-looking equipment had been set up at the far end of the room; an expansive green screen, towering lighting of shining metal and a professional photography camera perched upon a tripod. The plan was to broadcast the news live, but realising that it was unlikely anyone would be watching our stream during lessons on a Thursday afternoon, we decided instead to record it and show it in assembly. Our programme consisted of the major headlines of the day, an interview and a special report on the history of Cuba. Filming was difficult to coordinate in the generally noisy room, but after several failed attempts, our recording was complete.

By one o’clock, our articles were finished and the third stage of the day began; checking, reading, re-reading, interrogation, citation and re-reading. We drained the false information in our articles and, although tedious, we had no time to become bored; we were behind schedule and were constantly reminded of this by the ticking of the analog clock. As each article was successfully uploaded to the website, a weight was lifted off each of our shoulders. Finally, at three, our task was complete.

At the end of the day we were drenched in sweat, bloated from overeating and ready to collapse with exhaustion. But it has all been worth it; we had successfully written our articles and perhaps, more importantly, experienced some of what it would be like to be a journalist.

Luke Dale 10F
Christian Union

This year, the Senior Christian Union has been discussing a wide range of difficult theological topics, such as the science/religion dilemma and religious laws, based on Timothy Keller’s, ‘The Reason for God’. Christian Union prides itself on being an open space for people of all faiths; we have been joined by Muslims and Atheists interested in Christianity throughout the year. Christianity is an open religion for people of all backgrounds, and is not wholly represented by the elderly singing ‘Kumbaya My Lord’ on rainy Sunday mornings. The message is to trust in God and show kindness to all people regardless of any other factors.

Senior Christian Union meets on Thursday lunchtime in M5 and is open to anyone between years 11 and the Upper Sixth. Special thanks must go to Mr Matthews and Mrs Watson for giving up their lunchtimes to organise this.

Thomas Bartlett L6N
and Rudi Watford L6T

JSOC

The school’s Jewish society (JSOC) is a weekly meeting consisting of members from across all years and faiths. It is part of the United Jewish Israel Appeal’s initiative to increase knowledge and understanding of Israel and the wider Jewish community. It is achieved through informal education in the form of presentations and debates from external speakers and pupils within the school.

This year we had a fascinating session run by Tamir Oren. He sparked debate about life in a country continually at war and provided a safe platform for controversial questions to be asked involving the Gaza-Israel conflict. All opinions were welcomed and, when combined with a knowledgeable and experienced educator, a thoroughly thought provoking discussion took place.

This year has been very successful in terms of student attendance with an average turn out of 20 per week. As well as the informal education, a big part of JSOC is the food, as with any Jewish event. Ranging from chicken stir-fry to pizza, the food improves membership satisfaction and increases concentration spans. Next year, JSOC will be passed down to the next generation who will take it to new and greater heights, continuing its legacy.

Nathan and Joel Kelion U6B AND U6C

Whisky the School Cat

I got my cat, Whisky, and his sister, Liquorice, when I was six and they came as a total surprise because my sister and I had been asking for a cat for ages.

When they arrived, they were just kittens and were cute and small. For the first few weeks, they just lay on the sofa not moving very much, but touching each other. After a month, Liquorice decided she was brave enough to get off the sofa and, before we knew it, she started to cry for us because she thought she was lost, but Whisky went to comfort her.

When we lost Whisky, I was at my grandma’s house. Whisky really hated cars and that day, we’d taken him in a cat box to the vets to have him neutered. He’d been fine at the vets and they said he was the healthiest cat they’d had. He’d obviously recovered very quickly; when my dad was taking him back to the car after the operation Whisky managed to break the cage and ran from the car. We spent months looking for him and were really sad when we couldn’t find him.

In the end, we got another kitten called Mr. Whiskers, free. He needed another home, other wise he might have been put to sleep, but Dad said he wasn’t a replacement for Whisky.

When I first saw the cat at Watford Boys, I genuinely thought that it was Whisky, but then I thought my mind was playing mini tricks, but I sill liked the ‘school’ cat and at break I used to spend time stroking him.

The day my dad said we were picking up something, I asked if it was new and when he said it was old, I just knew it was Whisky.

Whisky has adapted very well to being back at his old home; it’s almost like he never left. He sleeps next to both of our other cats and is being very cute.

William McArthur. 7F

The staff’s perspective

A friendly cat appeared within the grounds of the school and it was initially assumed that his first home was on Shepherds Road and we were his daytime hangout. Fergus, as he became known, was very popular with staff and students, though there was some concern about his safety in the car park as he strolled from sunbathing in the main entrance of the school to sheltering in the Muse.

When it became clear that Fergus didn’t have a nearby home, staff took him to a vet for a checkup and Whisky’s true identity was revealed through his microchip.

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MSOC

MSOC is a society run at WBGS that seeks to enhance academic and social skills for the community, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The society is an excellent area with a plethora of opportunities. These include Jummah (Friday) Prayers, presentations, discussions, and debates in addition to Quran Sessions. On top of this, we also offer academic help to younger years with key subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and English. Our aim is to develop key skills in everyone so that they grow into more confident and knowledgeable people. We implement the character of the Beloved Prophet (May Peace and Blessings of Allah Be Upon Him) into ourselves to also become humble, kind and modest individuals.

Ibrahim Nazar

I enjoy coming to pray. It lets me keep up with praying 5 times a day. This is very useful. We also have presentations about our religion every Tuesday. It is a great opportunity to learn and we benefit a lot from this.

Ali Akber U6

Haroon Sohail (8C), Sami Ahmed (8B) and Haseef Haleem 8C all said that they enjoyed having the opportunity to pray in school and therefore not missing them. Sami said that he has learned new things about Islam that he didn’t know before and Haroon enjoys the Tuesday presentations. He explains that he learns whilst having fun and it is also a place where he can talk to his friends, and during Ramadan can have daily discussions about religion.

Haseef says that when he found out about MSOC in year 8 and started going to it, and the presentations it gave him a chance to be a better Muslim and he has also enjoyed the interfaith events in school.

Hassanat Khalid 8C encourages people of all faith to go along to presentations in E1 where MSOC takes place.

Ali Shah explains that during the holy month of Ramadan, MSOC hopes to organise Quran exegesis and translation sessions which will greatly benefit everyone in understanding the true peaceful message of the Quran. This will be in addition to the Friday sermons that will be based on topics relating to Ramadan.

Ali says that MSOC has provided him with many opportunities, including leading prayer. He has slowly but steadily built his skills through practice and words of encouragement from fellow students as well as Mr Zarin.

Watford Grammar School for Boys has a Prayer Room with an ablutions area, with both being close to the School Canteen. This makes it easy for the boys to complete their daily lunchtime Salah. They are also able to attend Friday Prayers in congregation with other Muslim boys, who may choose to observe this prayer. In addition we have weekly presentations and discussions on a large range of topics relating to the common faith of MSOC with regular attendees of other faiths, or none.

Mr Zarin MSOC Facilitator

Ignite

Ignite is a group that meets on a Wednesday lunchtime to discuss issues related to the Christian faith. It is open to all and it has been great to have boys attending from a number of different backgrounds this year. As well as discussion, we partake in lots of different fun activities and share a snack together. A highlight this year has been exploring Christian principles through the vehicle of the original Star Wars trilogy, such as ‘women in the Bible’, ‘light and darkness’ and ‘salvation and forgiveness’.

All students in Years 7-10 are very welcome to join us next year!

PM
Every Tuesday lunchtime in 206, Politics Society convenes to dissect, mock, analyse and learn about the political news of the week. Often the society covers the main news stories of the week, ranging from Trump’s tweets to Theresa May’s cabinet resignations and reshuffles. In addition we have occasional special events, such as a “May’s Mishaps” special looking back at Theresa May’s blunders, snap elections and miscalculations. One session we hosted a “North Korea Special”, looking at the Communist state’s politics in depth; we’ve even held a “Select Committee Special”, roleplaying a hypothetical select committee session. Led by Lower Sixth students and attended by students all across the school’s years, Politics Society has remained the best society at Watford Boys.

This year, we have been especially lucky in being able to arrange a wide range of speakers and events hosted by the Society. In the Autumn term, Baron Hastings of Scarisbrick gave a talk at the top of the STEM centre. Sitting as a crossbencher in the House of Lords, he vehemently defended his views across a wide range of topics – this included his controversial belief that the NHS ought to be privatised. His defence of the constitutional importance of the House of Lords was commendable and has certainly influenced my view on the unelected chamber in Parliament; he clearly described the public good it provides, though he failed to convince many others attending away from having an elected House of Lords. His fantastic talk set the stage for Richard Harrington, the MP for Watford to give a similar talk and Q&A session in the Spring term; it was especially interesting to hear from a government minister who was also championing the views of Watford within government. The Summer term was equally packed; Dorothy Thornhill gave a Politics Society talk in the final month of her 16-year long tenure as Mayor of Watford, convincingly and entertainingly defending the role of a directly elected Mayor and the crucial importance of local government.

The highlight of the Politics Society lecture season was undoubtedly the mayoral hustings that were held between the Liberal Democrat candidate, Peter Taylor; the Labour candidate, Jagtar Singh, and the Conservative offering in George Jabbour. Students and staff alike were relentless in their cross-examination of the candidates. George Jabbour's varied election history was brought up by some, as he had previously stood for the mayoralty of Doncaster, as well as standing in Welsh Assembly elections, amongst others. Jagtar Singh’s lateness to the hustings was mentioned often enough, especially by Peter Taylor who faced intense grilling on the state of the High Street as well as the troublesome Met Line Extension. Peter Taylor was eager to blame Labour’s Sadiq Khan for pulling funding; the Labour candidate shifted the blame onto the Tories for pulling funding from TfL. George Jabbour responded by criticising the Lib Dem’s management of the project and attacked their weak leadership. And so the cycle continued...

Running and attending Politics Society this year with my fellow enthusiasts has been a great pleasure and it has continued to be the best-attended society in the school with, by far, the best events and weekly sessions, no matter what J-Soc and the Economics students choose to believe! Thanks must go to Mr Ponte for his facilitating and encouraging role. If you’re interested in debating your political views, considering taking Politics A-Level, or simply want to widen your interests, come along to one of our sessions next year!

Akshar Abyankar L6C

22 SCHOOL LIFE
**Dr Cianci’s Italian Cookery Class**

Just before the end of term Dr Cianci tentatively offered to hold an Italian cookery evening for teachers. Numbers were limited; the school food tech kitchen can only house one form at a time and very quickly the signing up list was full. But who could be fail to be tempted by the three learning objectives: Cooking Italian dishes, learning the origin of some of the dishes and enjoying the food!

The class was split into groups and given the following menu:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antipasti</th>
<th>Primi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salvia fritta</td>
<td>Pasta con pesto alla Genovese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salsa tonnata</td>
<td>Risotto ai funghi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insalata caprese</td>
<td>Risotto alla zucca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involtini di zucchine</td>
<td>Pasta al pomodoro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polpette di melanzane</td>
<td>Pasta alla norma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruschetta</td>
<td>Pasta col peperoni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomodoripieni</td>
<td>Dolci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crostini con zucchine alla</td>
<td>Tiramisu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>julienne</td>
<td>Mele ripiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Torta di riso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macedonia con gelato</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each group was allocated two or three items, for example, one from the Primi menu and one from the Dolci menu, and under the guidance of Dr Cianci, (from the Maths department) people set to work. After a focused lesson, which everyone thoroughly enjoyed, the tasting took place outside the sixth fornt centre.

And to try at home:

**Pasta al Pomodoro**

**Ingredients**
- 500g or 1kg Fresh tomatoes.
- fresh basil (50g)
- 1 onion
- 1 carrot
- 500g dried whole-wheat spaghetti
- Celery
- Parmesan
-extra virgin olive oil and salt and sugar

**Method**

In a pan put 6 spoons of oil.
Add the finely chopped onion. Cook it until it gets brown. You can add a bit of sugar and water to caramelize the onions. Add the roughly chopped tomatoes, thinly sliced vegetables into the pot. Cook all at a medium heat without a lid for 30 mins. Add water if needed. Continue cooking until all the vegetable is tender. Cut the parmesan and the pecorino in slices.
Cook the spaghetti in a pan of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain the spaghetti, reserving a cupful of the cooking water, in case it’s needed for the sauce.
Add a lug of extra virgin olive oil, and then season to taste.
Add the spaghetti to the sauce and toss well, adding an extra splash of the reserved cooking water to loosen, if needed. Add the leaves of fresh basil on top and grate parmesan cheese.

**Kissing it Better**

On the ‘Kissing it Better’ programme two groups of Lower Sixth boys, one led by Dylan Gordhan and the other led by Ahilan Luxmanan, visit the dementia wards in Watford General Hospital as volunteers, providing the elderly patients with company and conversation that they may not otherwise receive. Many of the patients do not have visitors, and the priority of the clinicians and healthcare staff is to tend to the medical needs of the patients, meaning they do not always have time for much social interaction with the patients; this is where we come in. We play games with the patients, speak to them and simply just keep them company to help to take their mind of their medical predicament.

On our first day at the hospital, we were met by Colin (a volunteer) who gave us a quick briefing in which he explained the main purpose of the campaign, as well as providing us with some useful advice to get us engaging with the patients. He showed us to the Bluebell ward where we spend most of our time, though recently we have been visiting Winyard ward as well which is another dementia ward in the hospital.

The group tends to split into two for each ward and then rotate afterwards. Working in two wards has improved the experience greatly as it means we come across a much greater variety of patients and spend much more time with them so that we rarely have a pair of students sitting around without a patient to talk to.

When it comes to actually interacting with patients, for me the key is to get the patient to talk as much about themselves as possible in hope to trigger some of those longer-term memories. It is important to keep asking questions to those people you visit to try and stimulate these memories whilst also avoiding grey areas such as family, which could leave the patient missing their loved ones even more. Simply walking in with a smile on your face could trigger some happy memories and make their day.

The programme is very rewarding as it allows us to really improve the days of the patients we talk to. Even if the patients aren’t always responsive, it is evident how much they value and appreciate someone spending the time talking to them and taking an interest in their lives and their experiences. All of us on the programme have gained valuable skills of communication and patience; when we first started, many of us found it daunting to go up to a stranger and start a conversation with them, but now we are all very experienced and capable of this. We have also gained the skills of patience and empathy, as many of the patients in the ward have dementia and are therefore quite confused, so we have learnt how to communicate with them more effectively so that they do not become agitated. An example of this is that I realised that the patients got quite anxious if we asked them short term memory questions, such as ‘what did you do today?’, so I focused more on asking them longer-term memory questions about the jobs they might have had or what hobbies they enjoyed.

The programme is also a very good experience for students considering a healthcare profession, as it gives an insight into the hospital environment and experience of dealing with patients in a hospital setting. Just being in a hospital on such a regular basis is already an amazing experience in itself, as it has provided us with opportunities to learn about the roles of different healthcare professionals in the hospital and how they work together as a team. Even if we are waiting for to talk to a patient, we can simply observe what the members of staff in the ward are doing and how they go about their everyday jobs. It has given us a much better understanding of what actually goes on inside a hospital and which healthcare profession we want to pursue.

We would like to thank Mrs Bertram for taking us down to the hospital every week and for all the extra opportunities she has given us aspiring medics. We would also like to thank Colin at the hospital for taking the time in his busy schedule to give us the best experience possible. This programme is really something special and we have all benefited from it so much.

Ahilan Luxmanan (L6G) and Dylan Gordhan (L6F)
Working 1-1 or in small groups in Learning Support gives us the opportunity to look at topics in detail. Here 2 Year 8 boys explore the concept of square numbers kinaesthetically. Working with an LSA they practised times tables, learnt where square numbers come from, what they mean and the relationship between them, as well as practising Fine Motor Skills and teamwork.

CM

Philosophy Competition Winner Noah Buckle 10F

On The Existence of God Using Kantianism and Existentialism

(An extract) Introduction:

Theist’s presuppositions as to the nature of the world most frequently dictate that, in order for we as living beings to experience reality, there must exist a driving force, or ‘Unmoved Mover’ (as posited and developed by Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas respectively), but it is upon contact with metaphysics (that which is, literally, beyond physics) that these traditional geneses of faith begin to become skewed and radically begin to become inapplicable, hitherto being considered legitimate. This is not to say that metaphysics is incompatible with theism, but rather that in order for one to maintain their belief in an Unmoved Mover, they must adapt and take into consideration the implications of a branch so detached from traditional theory as metaphysics is. One attempt at explaining such a complicated relationship between faith and metaphysical concepts was that of German idealist, Immanuel Kant, as detailed in his seminal work, 1781’s ‘Critique of Pure Reason’, and whilst the impact of Kant’s writings is undoubtedly profound, Kant’s theories were not exempt from critique. This segment of the essay aims to convey the significance of Kant’s arguments regarding the phenomenal and noumenal world, alongside critiques of his works that, too, contribute to the significance of his philosophy in answering perhaps the most perturbing and crucial question faced by humanity, ‘Is there a God?’

Is Metaphysics Meaningless Conjecture (Debunking Ayer)?

“Ahh! That is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference at all to the actual facts of real life, as we know them.” ~ Oscar Wilde exhibiting his wonderful understanding of Philosophy

Before accepting metaphysics as an essential element of philosophical thought, one must first address the criticisms frequently directed towards it by empiricists, dogmatists and the like, as without doing so the foundation upon which Kant and many of his contemporaries focused their theories can be considered worthless, their buildings acting as no more than an elaborate graveyard of abstracticism. Indeed, those proponents of logical positivism value the field as yielding no crop, with famous advocates of said positivism, most notably Ayer and Hume, going so far as to suggest much of what we deem philosophical thought is baseless and conjectural, assumptions that would, if introduced in any other aspect of academia, be mocked and their inventors shunned.

If we are to hold Ayer’s criteria as the Gold Standard for Philosophy, his assertions, however, do not pass their own criteria; we need not debunk logical positivism, for it debunks itself. That is, the Verification Principle (a statement must be empirically or logically verifiable in order to be of any worth) provides the means to destroy itself, for it is neither true by definition nor empirically verifiable.

Equally, aren’t those who reject metaphysics on the grounds that it is largely speculative only contributing to its value, insofar as they are, by showing it to be primarily hypothetical, exhibiting the value of hypotheticals in criticising our false certainty in ultimately laughable ‘objective truths’? Much of Philosophy has undoubtedly contributed to our understanding of the world, and since Socrates’ pestering of Ancient Greek market-goers, philosophers have taught humanity to question blind faith, to question authority and, most critically, to question ourselves. Therefore, by devaluing metaphysics, it can be said one is devaluing the entirety of philosophy, by limiting us to commenting only with regards to what we know for certain (if such knowledge even exists), instead of what is possible beyond the confines of our minute understanding of the menial and minor.
Many of the boys enjoyed the Lateral Thinking Quiz immensely even going so far as posing them as riddles to fellow students throughout the day. It goes to show that when learning is new and fun, students embrace knowledge. Above all that is what Route 121 aims to do – enhance our students’ enjoyment of learning while developing their social skills in an engaging and supportive environment.

We also held a creative writing competition. Whilst there were many excellent entries, as with every competition, there has to be a winner. Robert Drake’s piece, titled The March, was awarded first prize by Dr Gunton. Robert and his Sixth Form buddy, Nikhail Vaswani, have managed to create an incredibly nuanced piece which cleverly draws parallels between the horrors of war and the adversity one faces when standing up for a cause. It was a chance for all the boys to exercise the skills they had learnt over the year and every one of them grasped that opportunity with both hands.

We look forward to another successful year for Route 121 with a new team of enthusiastic sixth formers to fill the shoes of those to whom we say farewell as we prepare to welcome a host of new students with open minds.

**Route 121 Creative Writing Competition**

**First Prize**

**The March**

We march past the starting line, but this isn’t a race. You’ve got the crowd chanting and the eager feeling to win. We are fighting the wars to stop wars and for peace to flourish. I’m the leader of the battle, however I’m not armed nor have an aim to kill. But I have something even better in my infantry. The wish to win. To win peace.

Our army starts our battle cry, ‘Fight Poverty Not War’ As we approach our enemy, the police come to break up. We start running and they start putting their shields up. We run into what seems like a brick wall. They start batoning our hopes away.

As we approach our enemy, the police come to break up. We start running and they start putting their shields up. We run into what seems like a brick wall. They start batoning our hopes away. We stay strong as I bark the order ‘Fight harder!’ A baton swings.

I wake up in peace but it’s not the peace I want.

_Written by Finn Roberts 9P and Ayodele Andrews L6C_

**Runner Up**

White beasts used to rule the iced filled land but now bottomless water fills the space which has been left. Every second of every day the bears flee their melting home like a bomb had just hit their home town.

Deep blue water that covers the vast, abandoned land is the side aspect of the disastrous environment that we have created. Smells of rotting bears filled the already polluted air with more pain and sorrow. Screams of cubs, plummeting into the great unknown, never to see sunlight again. He slowly rises to the surface with blood shot eyes, freezing limbs and a broken soul just because of human beings’ mistakes.

As each day burns by, the white beasts of the north instead of feeling crisp, solid ice beneath their monstrous paws feel only crumbly freezing limbs and a broken soul just because of human beings’ mistakes. Where were they?

_I wake up early. 6.00 am. I went down to the barn and climbed up the bales of straw - where I always went if there was nobody about. I could hear the stream at the bottom of the farm where my sister and I went to in summer. We always fished in it.

Dad woke up and we both went to check the sheep. Only Martha was there. She was the old one and was near her end._

_Where were they?_

_We ran out and looked about. Nothing. Dash, our sheepdog came bounding out of his kennel. He started sniffing the ground and then ran off in the direction of Big Hill. We chased after him and came to the muddy banks of the stream. There were hoof prints everywhere, on our side and the other side._

_We followed the tracks until we arrived at Ravine Hill. At the bottom of Ravine Hill was Ravine itself. Ravine was the deepest part of the land. There were ledges all the way down it like stairs. The tracks were less visible now because of the sandy ground, so it was difficult to see exactly where the sheep went. We were right on the edge and could see all the way down to the stream at the bottom._

_I caught a movement on one of the ledges! It was one of the sheep._

_I told Dad to get wood, rope and a metal hoop. He ran back and came back on the tractor. We made a hauling rope and got all the sheep out. We all went home and I had a warm bath then we had a big pie and then went to bed._

_By Elia Ali Lauzzana 7B and Ethan Chauhan L6G_
The Rampaging Chariots STEM scheme offers an opportunity to design, build and race robots against fellow schools in the area. The robot is driven by the team in a number of different categories: tug-of-war, sumo, assault course and two-a-side football. This year, the Rampaging Chariots competition day was hosted at the Leonardo facility in Luton, a massive facility which researches and develops technology for the military, most notably on fighter aircraft. During the day, we were given a tour of some of the laboratories which are used to research and develop radar technology in specialist rooms with foam to absorb all types of waves, including sound waves.

The robot kit itself is given to each school complete, and it is the job of the students to build the kit and decorate the robot. The robot uses a tank-like steering mechanism, with each of the sides of the robot powered individually by drills, with the diagonally opposite driven wheels allowing fast handling. The building of the kit was split into two different parts: the electronic circuit boards that drive the drill motors and gearboxes and the chassis itself in which all of the electronics and hardware are mounted. As a group, we decided that it was important to make our robot as light as possible to improve acceleration and handling on the assault course and in the football. Therefore, instead of making a heavy plywood chassis as had been used in previous years, we made the chassis out of glass fibre that we layered over a light foam mould. Weight was further reduced by drilling lots of small holes in the solid rubber wheels, like those found on wheelie bins, as we did not require all of their strength on the 8.4kg robot.

Unfortunately, we ran out of time to extravagantly decorate our robot using paint; however it was more than made up by our use of programmable LED strips on the back of the robot to spell out the name of our robot; Diode. It survived for most of the day before being partially pulled apart during our final football match of the day.

The competition took place on the 23rd June, and we arrived along with around 15 other teams, each team entering two robots. We entered our new robot, Diode, as well as the robot from two years ago, Error!, which was our heavyweight entry. We all took it in turn driving the robot, with the highlights of the day being Dominic Dale driving Diode to the semi-finals in the Assault Course and then as a team in the Football, where we narrowly missed out of a place in the final during a penalty shoot out. The whole team learned lots throughout the project, with the aim of going the stage above in the Lower Sixth and try and make an autonomous robot. Many thanks to Mr Chase who organised the club and helped us learn how to lay glass fibre.

Tim Hire 10G
UCL Observatory Visit

The UCL Observatory in Mill Hill is home to the university's telescopes, and, over decades, a huge amount of observational astronomy has taken place at this historical and important venue. On the 31st of January 2018, and thanks to Dr Clarke's contacts from his time working there, the boys of the Key Stage 4 Astronomy Society had the opportunity to visit it.

When we arrived, we first had a quick talk about the Observatory, before heading off to visit the telescopes. First was the Fry Telescope, a beautiful, fully manual, telescope built in 1862. After this, we took a quick break to do some safe and supervised observation of the sun through a hydrogen alpha filter, which was a great opportunity.

We then visited the Allen Telescope, a reflecting telescope purchased by the university in 1974/5, and a Celestron C14 Telescope, a more modern model that is completely automatic. Next, we visited the Radcliffe Telescope, a huge refracting telescope surrounding by an array of new and old computers.

Finally, we sat down for a quick talk about all manner of astronomy from some of the university staff and students, with topics ranging from exoplanets to calendar systems to (ironically!) star signs. Jacob Haddo 10N

Astronomy Society

Astronomers are not known for their sense of humour or ability to name things - spending £1055 million on the ‘Extremely Large Telescope’, succeeding the ‘Very Large Telescope’ of yesteryear. However, astronomy is open to all, no matter the size of your telescope. Over the past year, we have examined pop culture astronomy (black holes and interstellar travel) to the faintest supernovae (which reveal the age of our universe).

From September, we will be organising a diverse range of speakers involved in cutting edge research, who will also rate movies by scientific accuracy. Nicholas Bush L6T Jonathan Tsun L6T

Film Society

During the past school year, the WBGS and WGGS film societies have shown a film in the James Theatre on the last Friday of every month. This programme would not have been possible without the support of Ms Wright, the Friends of School, and the student organisers and will continue to run next year. It will be complemented by a new media society, which we would not have been able to set up without the support of ES Broadcast (esbroadcast.com), who donated a complete camera package to the school and offered training to students on how to use the industry technology. The society will offer students the opportunity to create a wide range of media for the school in a variety of formats, using equipment usually reserved for professionals.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please look out for notices in September. Nicholas Bush L6T

Economics Society

Legalising cannabis. A $1 trillion weapon. A world without cash. These statements seem strange to most, but here at the Economics Society, they are just some of the stretching and intriguing topics that we tackle. Committee members (Adithya Puravankara; Ayodele Andrews; Ashvin Kapilan; Ryan Tanna; Aman Gujral and Theesan Phillip Rajathasen) have had the privilege of running the Economics Society this year. The year kicked off with a presentation about the Film Industry, discussing how the lucrative business works, churning out billion-dollar blockbusters on a monthly basis. Sticking to an American theme, we examined ‘the military industrial complex,’ the reliance of the US economy on its large military spending.

Alongside our informative and thought-provoking presentations, we also collaborated with Watford Girls and held fierce, competitive debates on controversial topics such as Brexit and US tariffs, where we considered both macro and microeconomic effects. Amongst these fantastic events there were some insightful talks from old boys of the school who gave the members of the society some noteworthy advice.

The most recent of these talks was by Rob Angel, an Old Boy of the school currently studying at Bristol University and beginning his summer internship at JP Morgan. Rob gave us the opportunity to receive first-hand experience of the workings of the financial sector, and also how the application process leading into this sector functioned. All this was conveyed through Rob’s witty and engaging style and was a refreshing experience for many members of the Economics Society. Similarly, we had a talk by Jaykishan Ladhani who introduced us to a programme he is running called ‘Future Financiers’. This provides a platform for students to post articles so that it can be viewed by a large audience. Next we are looking forward to having Samir Patel (a previous Head Boy) who will be talking to us about the structure of banks.

We want to thank our Old Boys for their deeply insightful and engaging presentations. We would also like to extend our thanks to Miss Patel for her ongoing support and guidance throughout this process. As the supervisor of Economics Society, she has been a fantastic mentor to us and our fellow classmates. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Economics is subject that deals with the problem of allocating scarce resources to maximise social welfare, whether it be a business owner’s decision to buy a new machine or the government when deciding whether to invest in HS2. Economics has a far-reaching impact on all of our lives and at the Economics Society we hope we’ve improved people’s understanding of the subject.

By Ayodele Andrews L6C Adithya Puravankara L6G
Ryan Tanna L6P Ashvin Kapilan L6B
In the midst of unprecedented anticipation for summer exams, the Lower Sixth English students viewed Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' at the Globe Theatre on the 10th July 2018. With some having seen Paapa Essiedu's brilliant portrayal of Hamlet in the African themed production earlier in the year, we were excited to hear that Hamlet would be played, as was typical of some 19th century productions, by a woman. However, we soon learned that this would not be the only reversal of Shakespeare's original intentions: the prominent characters of Laertes, Ophelia and Horatio were all played by people of the opposite gender. Yet perhaps the most surprising element of all was the presence of a mute actress. Nadia Nadarajah played Hamlet's friend turned pawn of the new King Claudius, with the counterpart of Rosencrantz translating her sign language.

Despite the arguably rushed soliloquies and slightly unconvincing death, Michelle Terry's portrayal of Hamlet was nevertheless exceptional. Faced with a surprising number of helicopters above The Globe (interrupting the important scenes of the gravediggers and 'to be or not to be'), Terry conveyed Hamlet's wit and melancholy particularly well. Also convincing was the damaged relationship between Hamlet and his mother Gertrude, the widow of the former King and now wife of his brother Claudius. Hamlet's feigned (or perhaps real?) madness was additionally reflected in a wide array of costumes, such as the childishly painted suit seen in the middle passages, however there was a certain sense of abstractness found in the costumes of most characters, with Claudius' pantomime-resembling robes (and haircut), Ophelia and Gertrude's flamboyant dresses and the traffic light suits of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

As for the other aspects of the play, it was disappointing to see many pivotal moments cut, such as much of the gravedigger scene of Act V, although a sense of humour was maintained well in the earlier scenes with the slightly overused joke of Hamlet's rejection of Marcellus, as well as Polonius' proof that 'brevity is' indeed 'the soul of wit'. Many were also critical of the rushed and somewhat lazy duel between Hamlet and Laertes in the final scene. However, this served as an opportunity to see 'Hamlet' in a new light as well as revise our overall knowledge of the play, even if our view was blocked by a pillar.

Thomas Bartlett L6N
‘The Ferryman’ may not be the perfect play, but it certainly has enough charm to sustain interest throughout its lengthy runtime. As a play that some of us had already read through, the two English classes who went to see it expected two different things. One class experienced an entirely new story, whilst the other saw the realisation of a more familiar play. As a member of the latter camp, I must admit it was exciting to hear lines read with a bit more emotion than the slightly monotone mumble I was liable to hear in class.

Despite the play being set in Ireland, the playwright, Jez Butterworth, is not Irish. To some, this is scandalous and thus must be addressed right away. For example, Sean O’Hagan wrote in The Guardian that ‘ clichés and stereotypes of Northern Ireland abound’. It is admittedly easy to slip into the easy criticism of bashing the foreign playwright for misunderstanding and belittling Irish culture. However, I think this overlooks an overwhelmingly positive depiction of Ireland for the sake of focusing on the abuse of alcohol. Whether it is Uncle Pat at breakfast, or even the children around the kitchen table, alcohol is casually featured. But casual is the key word. At no point is Butterworth trying to portray the Irish as volatile and aggressive drunks. In the play it is Harvest time and, as such, it makes sense that celebration is happening. Instead of focusing on the generally positive representation of a family unit, critics such as O’Hagan pay too much attention to throwaway tropes. Perhaps the greatest triumph of all is the staging of ‘The Ferryman’. After a brief prologue, the wall of the stage rises to reveal behind it a greatly detailed kitchen in all its glory. On the surface this praise may seem slightly hyperbolic, but it would be no mean feat to list every detail gracing the stage. Everything from children’s drawings to pictures of a dead family patriarch help to decorate the walls of the stage. Dominic Cavendish of The Telegraph perfectly describes it as ‘the Armagh equivalent of The Archers’. In this sense, it always feels like the play is moving. The windows of the stage change from light to dark, and as characters exit the stage it simply feels as though they’re moving to another room. Butterworth truly excels in making the play feel alive.

As opposed to Butterworth’s direction, my only gripe was with the depiction of Quinn Carney, the protagonist. I was looking forward to seeing the character as he should be portrayed, as opposed to being read by a sheepish seventeen-year-old. However, we were greeted with what appeared to be the sole two emotions of anger and vacancy. When every tense moment is accompanied by what can be best described as a growl, it takes away any nuance. At risk of contradicting my earlier comments on alcohol, the best description of this portrayal would be to compare it to a drunk rambling at a bar. Whilst Quinn is not a raging drunk, this is simply the best description for the cadence and volume used in speech. It was disappointing to see such a complex character reduced to an angry man shouting the odds.

Finally, the controversial bloodbath to end the play must be considered. Even to some of my fellow students, this seemed like a sudden and overly convenient way to wrap up a few loose ends. But to me, it was an effective way of showing the brutality of life during The Troubles. Perhaps as a modern audience detached from the IRA, it is too easy to forget the devastation it brought. But families really were torn apart in the efforts to gain independence. Thus, the ending for me is necessary to show how the Carney family could never run from the inevitable. By no means is this a flawless play; the runtime is a bit padded out and acting occasionally branched into the hammy. But it is most certainly a rewarding play with high energy and genuine laughs. In this respect, I found this an enjoyable play above all else.

Daniel Booth U6T

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Want to make a difference in your local community?
Want to help individuals reach their full potential?
Want to make theatre inclusive and accessible for all? Then Herts Inclusive Theatre needs YOU!

Herts Inclusive Theatre offers the opportunity for you to volunteer at our weekly youth theatre based at Watford Grammar School for Boys. Additional opportunities are also available in Borehamwood and Hemel Hempstead. In addition, we offer the chance to complete the Arts Award, or assist you in accomplishing your Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Please contact the office on 01923 216951 or admin@hit-theatre.org.uk if you would like to join our lovely team of volunteers and start making a difference!
Poems of the Decade Conference

Our trip to the ‘Poems of the Decade Conference’ proved to be an insightful, detailed and enriching experience. Although many of the poets present aren’t currently on the OCR syllabus and therefore the conference was tailored towards the Edexcel A level course, the opportunity to have a question & answer session with some of the best poets in the country was a fantastic experience. The chance to meet five of the poets and hear them perform their work, looking in detail at particular language and grammatical choices was interesting. In particular, the explanation of the context behind the poet’s lexical choices was appreciated by much of the audience as they looked to include innovative points in their exam answers.

Principal Examiner for Edexcel, Katy Lewis, gave valuable feedback on last summer’s examination and gave candidates insight into how to do well, providing us with hints and tips to achieve the top band of marks. The day was introduced by William Sieghart, the well known entrepreneur, philanthropist, writer and broadcaster who founded the Forward Prizes for Poetry. Daljit Nagra, someone who has visited the school before, looked in depth at his poem regarding immigration and how he found life himself as a young migrant. However, what many found was a highlight of the day was a performance by World Poetry Slam Champion, Harry Baker, who performed convincingly whilst sharing his love of language. Baker performed his poetry in a rap-style which engaged the young audience who were mesmerised by his delivery and tempo.

Woman in Black Review

Year 9 were excited as we entered the Fortuna Theatre in Covent Garden. The posters of the Woman in Black were showing outside as we were led downstairs to a small theatre with a stage reaching towards us.

The audience anxiously waited for an eerie performance but we were presented with something different. The spine-chilling tale began.

The tale begins on Christmas Eve, when Arthur’s stepchildren invite him to tell a ghost story. Arthur is too disturbed by his memories to share his story aloud, so he writes it down.

In his story, a young Arthur Kipps, a junior solicitor, is sent to settle the affairs of Alice Drablow. He sees a woman dressed in black at Alice’s funeral, though apparently no one else does. At Eel Marsh House, a house beyond a causeway, Arthur is haunted by noises and sightings of the woman. Eventually a local man, Sam Daily, reveals the full story of how Alice Drablow’s sister, Jennet, haunts the house. He explains that a child dies each time the woman in black is seen. At the end of the story, Arthur sees the woman in black again and his wife and son die in a terrible accident.

I think the trip was very useful and I was very scared when the woman in black made her appearance and the actors were very skilled. It was an experience which will be very useful and I would recommend pupils see it, as it is a chance to revise the plot of the story in an exciting way.

I would like to thank Mrs Howard for organising such a wonderful trip. Also many thanks to Mrs Marshall, Mrs Cregg and Mrs Bains for coming.

By Magadev Adam Kuha Kumaran 9F

The British Library

The school trip to the British Library was a very interesting and enriching experience. My first impressions of the library were not what I had expected, as I was surprised by the immense size of it, and the vast number of different sections and amount of content within it.

We started the day with the ‘Sounds Familiar’ workshop, which I found particularly intriguing as an English Language and Literature student, because the content was directly relevant to many aspects of the course we had been studying at school. The workshop consisted of the presenter playing us audio recordings of examples of different accents and dialects around the UK, which really helped me to identify them, which has come to be useful in my A level studies.

Later in the day, we had another talk on contexts and their effects on literature. This talk also proved to be very useful in relation to my language and literature course, as it is very important to consider the contexts of the texts in our exams and how they have influenced the way in which the texts have been written. Furthermore, the talk was interesting as we found out stories about how contexts had affected authors throughout history. For example, we learned about how one of the leading authors of the Victorian era, George Eliot, was in reality called Mary Anne Evans, and had written under a man’s pen name in order to be taken seriously and respected, due to the high levels of sexism present in the 19th century. I discovered this through the use of the resources provided by the library, which proves how useful a tool it can be when it comes to studying English.

By Stephen Dowds-Jones L6N
School Play ‘Journey’s End’

From the 5th-7th December 2017, students of Watford Boys (including myself) performed in R. C. Sheriff’s wartime play: ‘Journey’s End’.

Set in a World War 1 dugout near Saint-Quentin, Aisne, the play gives a glimpse of what life was like for soldiers in the final year of the war. The story takes place between the 18th-21st March 1918, and follows various characters and their journeys (both physical and psychological) throughout these 4 days. This play was selected in order for Watford Boys to be able to commemorate the on-going centenary of such a devastating and significant war.

Under the direction of Miss Streets, and with the assistance of Miss Wilson, a stressful but enjoyable rehearsal period of around 2 months saw the play come together. Everyone had to give up their lunchtimes, after-school sessions and even some cold winter’s Sundays to tackle Sheriff’s long script - which challengingly fluctuates between humorous comedy and poignant tragedy throughout.

Meanwhile, the outstanding set was being designed and created by two L6B students: Matteo Ponzini and Zachary O’Malley. They were able to turn the St. James Theatre into a dark and dreary underground dugout, with only the war posters and homely crockery to distract from the rotting wood and mouldy sandbags. A huge thank you must go to the wonderful Art and Design Department, particularly Mrs Woods, Mr Brookes and Mr Ferguson, for bringing their expertise to the construction and assisting in the final assembly. The fantastic backstage team were also vital in making sure that the long list of props was sourced and in the right place for each scene. Thank you very much to our 10C stars: Dom Dale, Alex Chase and Praveen Kathirvasan.

The incredible replica military costumes, hired from Stage Style Costumes Ltd. looked wonderful under the lights, which were ingeniously designed and programmed by Jonathan King U6N, and helped transport the actors back 100 years. It really brought home how young the soldiers would have been during the war, seeing us teenagers in such smart and grown-up uniforms.

Lights went up at 19:00 each night and the play was performed in front of a paying audience, made up of various family members, friends, members of the Watford Boys School Community and also professional talent scouts and acting agents.

Even though the nerves were brewing, the actors all brought a real sense of professionalism and maturity to all of their roles. Benedict Longstaff U6B, fresh off the train from a (successful) interview at Cambridge University, was wonderfully compelling in his leading role and extremely convincing as the tormented, distressed but duty-bound, Captain Stanhope; Josh Patel 11N brought great maturity and sincerity to the very difficult and complex role of Lieutenant Osborne. The entire cast deserve a cheer, and it filled Miss Streets with great pride to see the commitment and talent from them all. Thank you to: Fred Roberts 10P, Saksham Sidana 10G, Saif Bashir 10G, Trey Tallon 11C, Dhillon Dodhia U6T, Kishan Perera U6T and Luke Dale 10F.

Saif (who played Mason in the production) claimed the show was “Epic! And anybody who didn’t see it really missed out!” Fred (who played Hibbert) added, “The entire production was a great experience and something that I really benefited from!”

All of the cast would like to thank everyone who was a part of pulling the play together. A fantastic team of Sixth Formers were instrumental in organising rehearsals and promoting the show. Thank you to: Luke Ashford U6C, Daniel Booth U6T, Harry Clements U6f, Srivatsa Garg U6T, Samee Hussain U6G and Charles Manieson L6P. We’d also like to than Nick Bush 6T for making a video of the production. It was definitely a team effort and a huge success that was rewarded with standing ovations for each of the three performances.

Archie Stevens 10P
Lehman found that children’s behaviour is negatively affected by necessary skill whatever job they end up doing. A study by James
example, they learn the basics of radio transmissions which could from a young age learn to hack their remote control toy cars, for
Imagine, though if it was worse and the missiles could be fired back before Hedy Lamarr came up with the idea of frequency hopping.
For hackers and malware is growing every day, you might be wondering why I think it’s a good idea to teach precisely these skills to the children of today.
Well, I have three key points to persuade you that we need these people: hacking teaches children problem solving; it will help them in their jobs and I even think we will be able to prevent future malware attacks by teaching about ethics.
The first point I would like to make is that learning to hack teaches children some skills which may be necessary in their jobs. Imagine what would happen if our Royal Navy sent out ships with torpedoes that could be hacked and blocked from hitting their target. This is what happened in the early days of the first world war before Hedy Lamarr came up with the idea of frequency hopping. Imagine, though if it was worse and the missiles could be fired back at their place of origin, destroying our own ships. Now, if children from a young age learn to hack their remote control toy cars, for example, they learn the basics of radio transmissions which could be applied when they work for the Navy, engineering our torpedoes.
Moreover, hacking teaches children to solve problems, a necessary skill whatever job they end up doing. A study by James Lehman found that children’s behaviour is negatively affected by their lack of ability to solve problems and statistics. Being able to solve your own problems is great for self-esteem and various studies have shown this to make children happier, more confident and more independent. We learn to think about the world as a set of problems with reasoned solutions.
So far, you must be thinking the problem with this is what happens to these children who now have the necessary skills to break into banks and online companies. Well, this is where PRE class comes in. In order to update this to the 21st century, I propose children learn ethics only and that most of their class time is spent learning how to ethically use their new skills. More than just this however, I firmly believe that we could actually lower the hacking offence rates by implementing such a scheme. This is because the children that would have been illegal hackers when they grew up will now have to learn the ethics behind it and this will hopefully stop them.
Finally, I’d like to leave you with some past successes. I’m sure you all know who Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak are. They were young in a time when being a “hacker” was considered a good thing; the term even features in the film Jurassic Park. When Jobs was young, he and Wozniak hacked the American telephone system to allow them to prank call the Pope. This kind of mischief is obviously not accepted in today’s society but it taught them skills they would go on to need - and could you imagine a world without your iPhone

A serious business
Put yourself in this position. You’re strolling through a busy shopping centre when, out of nowhere, you receive an uncontrollable urge from your body, telling you that you HAVE TO GO. By a stroke of luck, there happens to be a public toilet in the very shopping centre. You breathe a sigh of relief, thinking to yourself that you have just avoided a potentially embarrassing incident, but when you enter the toilet, you realise that, to your horror and disgust, you have to pay 50 whole pence to have the ‘privilege’ of using the bathroom! 50 whole pence!
We’ve all been there - public toilets that force you to pay money to use them, commonly found in stations and tourist attractions, which, in my opinion, is both inhumane and degrading. Firstly, why should there be a charge for being able to do something that you have no control of and no choice over? I don’t see ‘breathing charges’ or ‘sleeping tax’ or anything else that uses bodily functions as leverage for business, so why should toilets and bathrooms be an exception?
Secondly, we’re not talking petty five and ten pounds or small change that public toilets suck up. We’re talking big. Did you know that in the year 2014 alone, London Victoria station generated a phenomenal £2.3m from its public toilets? Furthermore, according to the BBC, the company Network Rail (which runs the stations) makes on average a staggering £5m per year! Imagine what our country could do with an extra £5m a year - helping reduce poverty and keeping our health service running smoothly, rather than the same amount of money being sucked up by one greedy company.
It’s at this point when some individuals may want to put forward a reason such as ‘It’s to keep the toilets in good condition.’ I genuinely do not believe that this is good enough to justify the costs that we are charged. Although cleanliness is important, there are many other free toilets which are clean and accessible so I see no reason to charge for a ‘toilet experience’ that you would get for free in the nearest McDonalds.
In addition, the Liverpool Echo reported that Liverpool Lime Street Station retained more than 50% of its money taken in by public toilets as profit! This means that the majority of the money earned by these companies doesn’t go to improve the toilet itself, but rather to the interests of the company. So in reality, we are paying more for the company than the actual toilet we are using - how is that acceptable?
My point is that action must be taken. Charges for public toilets must be abolished and made free for all, and not just in the UK, but all around the world, to appreciate the countries that do not have the facilities that we developed nations do. So next time you’re at a busy station and see an officer pointing to a sign that reads “£1 for toilet access”, just tell them: You don’t need to pay a pound to spend a penny.

Why learning to hack should be compulsory in schools.
17 million Britons were affected by cyber attacks in 2017. It took each victim 2 days on average to sort out their equipment and for a ransomware attack the average cost per person was £111 if their equipment was repairable. So in a world where the threat from hackers and malware is growing every day, you might be wondering why I think it’s a good idea to teach precisely these skills to the children of today.

We should do more to end poverty and world hunger

Good morning everyone, I hope you have had a good day so far. First of all, before I start, let me ask you all a question. Have you had breakfast? Who had breakfast? Put your hand up if you had breakfast. Now keep your hand up and look around you - you can all clearly see that the vast majority of you have had breakfast this morning. Now you might be wondering, hang on a minute why is he asking if we had breakfast, people don’t usually start speeches like that. Well, the reason why I am asking you is that around 50% of Britain don’t have time to eat their breakfast and guess what? 32% of them are pupils. They don’t have time to eat their breakfast. Really, they don’t. Breakfast is important for you, of course, you know that. Think about the people who could not even afford breakfast, don’t waste it. You need all the energy to get on with your day.

The topic I am going to discuss today, when you think about it, is a very important issue the world has to face. Sure you all have other problems you face in your life, like not doing homework, not revising for the test or messing up something. That’s nothing. You might think they are quite major problems in your lives, but trust me they are nothing when you compare your problems to the rest of the world. Nearly 1/2 of the world’s population, more than 3 billion people live on less than £2.00 a day. More than 1.3 billion live in extreme poverty, less than £1.00 a day. 1 billion children worldwide are living in poverty. And what is even more shocking is 22,000 children die each day due to poverty. More than a billion suffer from hunger. So, to summarise all these facts what I am trying to say is that, we should do more to end poverty and hunger!

A story from a different perspective.
Second place in the senior category of the national Rotary Young Writer’s Competition

The lion is in his enclosure in the zoo. He becomes aware of a boy standing absolutely still in front of him. He doesn’t even flinch. The boy’s eyes follow the lion as he wanders backwards and forwards the length of his enclosure. The lion is not worried but he is puzzled and curious by the boy’s strange behaviour. Unlike the usual annoying, noisy children around the zoo, the boy simply stands and stares, it is like there is no soul in his body.

The boy wonders why the lion has only one eye. Perhaps he lost it when he was captured by hunters? He thinks the lion must be sad. The enclosure, too, is a sad place with a solitary rock and dead trees surrounding the lion.

How does the lion feel? Every day he is surrounded by humans: the zookeeper, the Sunday artists who come to paint pictures of him, the mums, the toddlers, the rude children, making faces at him, sticking out their tongues, making noises, trying to make him angry.

Day after day, the boy is in exactly the same spot, watching the lion. The lion slowly becomes uncomfortable. Sometimes he wonders if the boy has been standing there all night, but he is a lion, king of the jungle. He calms himself down and returns to pacing the enclosure as before. On and on walks the lion as if he were walking back to his home in Africa. Though he has only one eye, he is immensely powerful. His muscles ripple as his golden fur brushes the wire fence of the enclosure.

The boy forces himself into the lion’s thinking, forcing the lion to ask question after question. The persistence of the boy tires the lion massively, wearing him out. At least the boy cannot be there next day, for the zoo will be closed to the public. No visitors allowed.

Wrong. Next day the boy is there, alone, all alone in an empty zoo. The lion has had enough. He stops, sits directly in front of the boy, and stares him in the eye, with his one eye, a fixed stare, not through him but right at him.

The lion realises he has a problem because he has only one eye. He doesn’t know which of the boy’s eyes to stare into. This has turned into a staring contest because the boy is winning. Suddenly, a single tear trickles from the lion’s dead eye. He is not sad but he feels helpless and angry; he a lion, King of the jungle, is being bested by a human, a mere human boy.

Then the boy does something strange, something unexpected. The boy closes an eye, and the lion feels more at ease, more calm, for he and the boy are now equalled. They look into each other’s eye. The zoo is silent and empty.

Nishanth Raj Dhinakaran 9F

House Writing Competition

Joint first: Sevak Juss 10N and Maheen Kasturiarachchi 7N
Commendations: Matteo Nola 7N and James Whitney 7N

Ist: Ben Smith 7F
2nd: Kayden Kukadia 7F
Commendation: Dylan Law 7F

Joint first
Shyam Chandarana 10P and Aarush Lal 10P
Commendations: Fred Roberts 10P

Andrew Grant 7B
Commendations: Shrey Chandarana 7B

Joint first
Rahil Shah 10T and Debayan Dey 7T
Commendations: Imran Omerdeen 10T and Max Bilbie 7T

Ishan Patel 8C
Commendation: Tauheed Iftikhar 8C

Thomas Connor 10G
Commendations: Andrei Makhoul 7G and Jacob Rickayzen 10G and Krish Desai 10G

Hamza Shahid 10 F
In February this year, eleven students went to Lumb Bank, in Hebden Bridge, a picturesque house roughly 15 miles west of Bradford. The 18th century house was once lived in by Ted Hughes, a spectacular poet. It soon became apparent why he picked the location - the landscape was rich with atmosphere, varying from chilly mornings to sunny afternoons. When we arrived on Monday evening, we were given some time to settle in, before being invited for the first of many meeting sessions. Despite having only just arrived, we were already beginning to immerse ourselves in the thought-provoking introductory exercises. We were introduced to our mentors, Tiffany Murray and Musa Okwonga - both excellent writers, and very interesting people. Throughout the week, they were usually around to talk not only about writing, but their own lives and adventures.

The next morning, we began a workshop session with Tiffany, who was eager to start us off with some brief advice, and then a writing activity. We were always encouraged to write as much as we could, and our first real activity of the day was no different. With a simple prompt, we were encouraged to write constantly without stopping. At the end, we shared our work, and then began some more activities, looking at extracts for ideas for our writing. We continued the activities with prose writing for the day, and were soon told by our teachers that we would need to write something - or some things - to put into an anthology at the end of the week and to read out at the evening session.

For dinner, we were organised into different groups, and each day one of these groups would cook and serve the evening meal. It was a good way to help us all bond further, and the chefs always received a round of applause. When we weren’t in workshops, we were relaxing in the spacious house, or preparing Friday's stories.

On Wednesday, Musa led the workshop and showed us some poems. We were to write our own, all while discussing what made different poems good, and trying to incorporate it in our own works. The poems written by the students were all excellent and filled with power and meaning, whether serious or funny. After lunch, we continued our poetry session and, in the evening, we were invited to a special meeting with an author who had dedicated her life to writing a biography of the Bradford playwright Andrea Dunbar. She told us about the difficulty of finding information about her, and the journey she took to find out about Andrea's story. Three students acted out an extract from one of Andrea's plays, Rita, Sue and Bob Too. After an enjoyable evening, we went to bed for Thursday's sessions with Tiffany. She told us more about writing different characters, and gave us various exercises for creating them.

By Friday evening, we had completed our anthologies, and we gathered around to recite our works. Some of the teachers also took part in reading the stories, and each and every one had been developed with the many lessons of the week kept in mind. By the end, we were all proud of ourselves, and we said goodbye to Musa and Tiffany for the last time. On Saturday, we headed back to Watford Boys, and while we had left Lumb Bank behind, we would take our skills and new friendships back with us.

Simon Thompson L6P

Arvon Writing Course

Deep inside a forest – no one knows exactly which one - three people live in a small house. Not much is known about these people apart from the fact that they are known as the Green Wizards. It is my aim within this book to compile all the information about them and form a compendium of all knowledge on the subject of the Green Wizards.

To start with, I would like to touch on who exactly these Green Wizards are. Unfortunately, information about them is very scarce – people who have come into contact with them either get put under a spell that makes them forget what the wizards look like or they are prevented from communicating it in any form. This makes things difficult. The only sources we have on their appearances are based on assumptions and conjecture. Perhaps one of the more famed interpretations of their appearances is seen on the hit children's TV show: 'George the Wizard'. This portrays them as two men and one woman,
all with grey hair and wrinkly skin, and all are dressed in long, green robes. This same interpretation of their looks is shared with the book ‘The World Wizard Compendium’. This representation of the wizards has been adopted across the world.

The next thing to look at is their name, the name of a group or society often tells you a lot about them – what they do, what they stand for, etc. – and in this case it is certainly interesting. One might be inclined to think that they are known as the Green Wizards due to the green robes that I mentioned before. To me, however, it seems as if the robes are a product of the name rather than the other way around. Instead, there is a rather interesting point that might lead to an explanation of their name. As most of you will know, wizards are notoriously un-eco-friendly. This does not appear to be the case for the Green Wizards though and such might just explain their name. Reports from those that have come into contact with the wizards have mentioned that after meeting them they have felt more inclined to help the environment and to protect it from harm – this is no doubt another spell of magic that the wizards have put in place to help push their agenda and ideals on the world.

This leads me on to my next point. A fair few of you reading this will probably be wondering why you should care about the Green Wizards. What I have told you so far does not mention anything about their exploits or why they are even important in the first place. The Green Wizards are what I would call ‘anti-wizarding wizards’. Throughout their time they have led or taken part in many projects to destroy the ideals and principles of the wizarding world. As well as the aforementioned differences with regards to the environment, there are also other, much more severe conflicts they are having with the wizarding world.

Their first act was destroying the Royal Academy of Magic after they had graduated (the reports of this disaster date the event to coincide with the first time the Green Wizard pamphlets started showing up at people’s doors) and since then, they have continued to damage and destroy several monuments and buildings designed for and by wizards across their globe. Buildings such as the Court of the Grand Wizards, the World Wizarding Museum, and Babingsham Palace (the marvellous palace that legend says was built by the first wizard in the world and dates back to the 14th century) have all been attacked, along with various monuments of world-renowned wizards across the globe.

All this information has led me to theorise that the Green Wizards want to see the abolition of magic and stop the adverse effects it has on nature. They also seem to be quite intent on pushing this agenda, especially since they went through the trouble of undergoing twelve painstakingly-long years of becoming wizards just so they could destroy the system from the inside. For a world such as ours that relies so much on magic, these people are extremely dangerous; it is no surprise they try their best to keep their identity secret. It is high time the governments of the world joined forces to track down and remove this threat to the world before it is too late.

Owen Lawson 11G

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**Sixth Form Book Club**

The English Department’s pitch hadn’t been very promising, to be sure: a mandatory book club, cakes and all, it sounded childish and geriatric at the same time. Imagine our surprise, then, that it was actually really nice. Neither childish nor geriatric, but breezy, casual and fun.

Questionable as some of her book choices may have been, the sage Mrs Marshall has managed to steer an interesting discussion about every book we’ve read in the last two years. Highlights have included what We Need to Talk About Kevin tells us about American current events, the role of authority in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest and the literary merit of frenzied gonzo drug abuse in Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas.

None of these discussions have been strained and stilted—the discussion always is just a case of being encouraged to come up with interesting views on the book and defending your opinion. Without wanting to sound like English teachers, this has genuinely helped us to think more critically and imaginatively about whatever we read.

If that sounds like an Assessment Objective for A-Level English, it’s really actually the opposite. The book club’s served as a gratifyingly open-minded remedy to the rather narrow English specification; it’s helped us remember that there’s a whole world of literature beyond Chaucer and The Great Gatsby, and there’s far more room for creative thinking and interpretations than what the mark scheme expects. For any sixth-formers not doing English, the book club could prove a welcome opportunity to keep an interest in literature alive, and get some lovely, relaxing discussions to boot.

In all, ‘Book Club’ may not sound promising, but Mrs Marshall has genuinely set up a nice, homely way to dive into some books and bounce your responses off other people. Even if you don’t fancy yourself enough of a book person for that, give one of the picks and one of the sessions a try, and you’ll be surprised at just how enjoyable a way to spend a Tuesday lunchtime the book club really is.

Adam Berbic U6F

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**Fathers’ Book Club**

The Fathers’ Book Club has enjoyed another year of rich and varied prose. I think the most appreciated text was James Joyce’s Dubliners, which engendered much praise for the collection of short stories (or is it a novel?). Fathers found the stories vivid, poignant and at times brutally shocking. Many found Evelyn Waugh’s Decline and Fall dated, although there was some admiration for Waugh’s wit and caustic humour. Laurent Pinet’s HHhH, an historical account (or is it a novel?) about the assassination of one of the architects of the Holocaust, elicited a fascinating division of opinion. Some found the narrative about the writing of the account annoying and questioned its worth; others found the story of the telling of the story to provide a compelling new angle on history.

The club also read the ‘teen fiction’ dystopian novel The Knife of Never Letting Go by Patrick Ness and a work of non-fiction, Midnight in Sicily, by Peter Robb. The group continues to flourish with a solid regular corps always looking to welcome new members. In September (11th) we will be discussing American Pastoral by Philip Roth, following the American heavyweight’s recent death. Meetings are held in the Muse on the first Tuesday of every half-term.

JM

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**The Fullerian 2017-18**

Adam Berbic U6F

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JM
Macbeth Drama Workshop

This term we were given a wonderful opportunity: to work with two members of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) in a Macbeth drama workshop. The aim was to look at the play as a whole - a play: a piece of drama not merely a script. Up till now our focus on the play had been almost purely analytical, as we study it as a text, looking at how the writing is structured and the importance of certain linguistic features. Now the school was hoping to open our minds and embrace the writings of Shakespeare through drama, looking at the play from a performer’s aspect and viewpoint, as we are normally just the audience.

Things started off slowly; no one wanted to perform in front of their friends, and the sense of embarrassment was palpable. But soon the guards began to slip as we played an introductory game, using Shakespearean words to call each other names. After that we were told about dramatic space and how to use it effectively. This was instilled in us through a simple exercise, in which the two actors, Ed and Natasha, shouted out random emotions and walking speeds and we had to move around the stage in a way that reflected their instructions.

Next, we began the real work. We were put into groups of twos, and each group was given the same script: a small scene involving Macbeth and Banquo. Here we tried to put different stresses on Shakespeare’s dialogue, which were also accompanied by hand gestures. This allowed us to explore how we felt the two men would speak the lines, forcing us to reflect on the reasons why Shakespeare chose the language that he did. For example, we used the ideas of flattery, represented by a tone of servitude and a stroking motion, and persuasion, shown by hooking our fingers, as if we were reeling them in.

This really helped us to encapsulate and understand the message of what Shakespeare was trying to convey within the discourse of this scene. After a bit of experimentation with scene and context, it was time to put our newfangled ideas into action. We put ourselves into groups and wrote a whole new context into the script, changing the staging as well to create a unique way of reflecting some of the key features of the script.

My group took on the idea of duplicity and power conflict that is explored throughout Macbeth. We decided to incorporate it into a setting of government, and took inspiration from the idea of a Face Time conference call; you can only see what the person on the screen wants you to see. This tied into the way Macbeth puts forward a strong façade, when inside he is in complete turmoil. Altogether the piece was effective in its creativity and simplistic performance, and really allowed us to put into practice all that we had learned during our time with Ed and Natasha.

I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop, as did everyone else who attended. I believe it has really helped heighten our understanding of Shakespeare and his works, and am therefore grateful to the English department, RADA and Mr. Clark for organising it.

Ben Buffery 11P

Macbeth Review

"Is this a flop I see before me?"

In the spring of 2018, Year 11 went to the National Theatre on the South Bank in London to see Rufus Norris’ ambitious interpretation of the tragic Shakespeare classic. Despite the fairly poor reviews from ‘The Independent’, ‘The Telegraph’ and ‘The Stage’, I think it’s safe to say that this wasn't a wasted trip for us.

On entering the concrete-block that is the theatre, the only word that can really justify the surroundings, was daunting. The 2500 seats, packed to the rafters with a variety of onlookers of different ages made up the audience. We could tell that there were high expectations.

The stage below us pictured more of a post-apocalyptic setting with one or two severed heads for effect but, alas, many of us thought that this little addition made the whole thing a little cheap. The set was centred around a giant revolving slope which many reviews have pointed out was a little unnecessary. The actors did look a little awkward trying not to slip over in front of the audience at times.

Nevertheless, seeing the play helped us to remember quotes for our exam, now that we have the ‘closed book’ system. In essence the staging of the play helped us to understand who said what and made it a little clearer in our minds. I think you’ll agree that watching a live-action retelling of the story is more beneficial than reading a book.

After a succession of stage slip-ups over a number of previous performances at the National varying from ‘Oliver’ to ‘Saint George and the Dragon’, this Macbeth performance was perhaps not the solution to Rufus Norris’ woes on stage. However the trip overall was vastly successful, well engineered by the English Department and headed by Mrs Marshall.

Tasman Townsley 11C and Oliver Tattersall 11G
Year 7 Activity Week, Tolmers

On my first day at Tolmers, I (and the teachers) were invited to do lots of activities straight away. This, surprisingly, was done with much ease. First I started off with the water wars - a thrilling activity that keeps you on your toes. My favourite part of the activity was watching the forfeits. It was hilarious watching people jump over a tiny water balloon popping!

As we trekked along the pathways, we came across our next destination - the sweeper. It was really good fun, but super competitive! My best ranking was first, but Sahil was definitely the king at it. He swept the floor with his amazing 5 first places.

Who could forget the best part of the day - mealtime! Smoky BBQ chicken, with wedges, crisp on the outside, soft on the inside - and the dessert! How could you resist? Getting to sleep was hard on the rocky surfaces and there were also so many weird noises.

Thursday morning was fun with great activities, food that almost blew me up. After lunch (which was delicious) we had a good rifling session. I hit the range 5 times, once towards the middle. Even though I was proud of myself, I heard of someone who once got 69.

Rafting was super fun, even though I got soaked. We first built the raft, which went smoothly, but my team did not know how to row for their life. We declared, well, tried to declare war with another group. Needless to say, we failed.

Then we had dinner, delicious as usual. There was also the England vs. Croatia Football match …let’s forget about that. Then we roasted by a nice, toasty fire and had marshmallows, which were scrumptious.

On the last day, we had a canoeing activity, with some people pushed in, some racing, and others over-turning (and then smelling of the water for the rest of the day). But we were all wearing life jackets so were quite safe. We then had a packed lunch and sang our final goodbyes to the tremendous Tolmers trip.

Andrei Makhoul 7G

Phasels Woods

Our journey from Tolmers Activity Camp to Phasels Woods started with the people who had already been to Phasels Wood coming and telling us that it was terrible so on the way over there we didn’t have very high expectations. When we got there we were welcomed by a team of staff that put our luggage onto a trailer, which took them to our campsite. We walked through a wooded area until we came across our tents. They were all squeezed up next to each other which made things feel safer.

We all went and sat around a campfire before being told the basic rules. All groups did two activities before returning back for dinner for which we were sent to in groups. Our dinner was given to us and we were told to eat it in a large tent. The food was nice and healthy and we had a very large amount of time to eat (even though there were many other schools staying).

We headed back to our camp for about an hour before going over to a field to watch the football. As soon as it finished we headed back to our tent to get ready for bed. We had about half an hour to clean our teeth and get things sorted. 9:30 was lights out (when everyone had to be quiet).

Ishaan Sharma and Dylan Balchin 7G
China is a fascinating country. Few countries possess the wide variety of experiences you will find in the Middle Kingdom. After a 10-year gap, the school wanted to return to China for an Economics and History trip.

We landed in a foggy (not “smoggy”) Beijing (which means North Capital). Straightaway, we could see the modern, vast architecture of the airport. Beijing Capital Airport’s Terminal 3, where we landed, was built for the 2008 Olympics and is the second largest terminal building in the world (only behind Dubai Airport’s Terminal 3). We met and were welcomed by our national guide, Jin, and a local guide, Regina.

Our first stop was a visit to the Hutongs, alleys that are formed by lines of “siheyuan,” traditional courtyard residences. A rickshaw ride took us through the narrow streets to the Zhang family. As one of the members had previously worked for the Government, they had more land. Our guide informed us how the land in that part of Beijing is very expensive (around 200,000 Yuan – £25,000 – per square metre). The Hutong visit was a good starter for us to absorb some of Beijing’s atmosphere.

The opportunity to walk in the area surrounding our hotel gave us a feel of our neighbourhood and daily life. A nearby supermarket sold a pack of 15 water bottles costing only 5 Yuan (63p) and it is advisable to drink bottled water. While the water supply is treated, the pipe and infrastructure delivering it is very old and therefore contains heavy metal pollutants. China treats water with a high number of chloramines.

In the afternoon, while many of the group rested, probably due to jet lag, some of us (4 students and 3 teachers) went to see the nearby Chaoyang Park. We had the opportunity to walk amongst lush trees, see unusual and wonderful structures and sculptures, and enjoy a roller-coaster ride.

The next day, our first visit was to the British Embassy, where Stefan and Richard gave us their background, an insight on what they do, and what the embassy is like. Stefan had previously worked in Islamabad, whilst Richard had had postings in Washington DC and Budapest to name a few. We then had the opportunity to ask some questions, which included what impact Brexit would have and what had lured both of them to work in the Foreign Office. Following this absorbing visit, we had lunch in a local restaurant; the dishes, again, were very tasty. Everyone was quite handy using the chopsticks. Chopsticks were first developed about 5,000 years ago for cooking, not eating. Currently, 20 million trees a year are cut down to make them.

A short coach-ride later, we were at the Temple of Heaven built during the Ming Dynasty. There were some excellent panoramic views from the Circular Mound Altar, and the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, the largest building in this complex, was impressive. We also tried out the Echo Wall, though there were so many visitors it was hard to hear each other’s messages.

On the way to an acrobat show later that evening, we stopped at a Starbucks/KFC complex. As in the more developed and developing countries, China is no different in having these well-known fast food outlets. Executive Chairman of Starbucks, Howard Schultz, once said, “China traditionally has been a tea-drinking country but we turned them into coffee drinkers.” There were not only coffee drinkers, but also frappucino drinkers because of the heat.

The acrobat show was spectacular with awe-inspiring acts. The highlight for us was a clown who had a very long pole with a drink’s can on top of it. We thought he would drop some on us, but, as it was a trick, all we saw was an open lid.

On Friday, we also had to prepare for an overnight train to Xi’an. We went first to Tiananmen Square. Tiananmen, meaning Gate of Heavenly Peace, is the seventh largest square in the world with an area of 440,000m². We saw the prodigious buildings surrounding the square, including the National Museum of China, Mao Zedong’s Mausoleum, the Great Hall of the People and the Monument to the People’s Heroes. One of the buildings was the Tiananmen Gate, through which we entered the Forbidden City. The Forbidden City is the largest palace complex in the world with 9,999 rooms (this number is one less from 10,000, which the Chinese believe to represent heaven) and it is also the centre of Beijing. The buildings were remarkable with several intricate patterns and designs. We were just amazed by the sheer size of the palace, considering when they were built in the early 1400s.
During our visit, many local Chinese people wanted to take tourist photos with us. After walking through the lush palace gardens, we had another lovely lunch before a visit to the giant pandas at Beijing Zoo. We were lucky to see a few as they not only sleep quite a lot, but there are also only 6 in the zoo's panda houses. Next was the Summer Palace, a resort for the Emperors. Like the Forbidden City and Temple of Heaven, the buildings were majestic with several intricate patterns along the walls with a scenic Kunming Lake. The Summer Palace is also home to the world's longest corridor measuring 785m.

Following a delicious dinner, we headed to Beijing Xi (or Beijing West) train station where, after airport style security checks, we boarded the overnight train to Xi'an (meaning Western Peace). Put together, all of China's railway lines could loop around the Earth twice.

On arrival at Xi'an Railway Station, we met Benny, our Xi'an local guide. He told us this interesting story: China is the shape of a rooster, and Shaanxi province is the heart of the rooster. Xi'an, the capital, is at the centre of the heart, meaning that it is in the centre of the world and universe. Xi'an is also the start of the ancient Silk Road from 1 BC. The train connection from Xi'an, whilst operating to Europe for a long time, has recently connected in the UK, and had its first delivery of around 200 Chinese-built Volvos.

Following breakfast, we went to the Tangbo Art Museum, where we tried our hand at calligraphy. We learnt the 8 basic strokes of Chinese script and the words for people, eternity and dragon. This was followed by a visit to a factory making replicas of the Terracotta Warriors. They were all very similar to the actual ones we would see later. The end of the factory was shop, after shop, after shop...

We visited Pit 1 of the Terracotta Warriors Museum. Built in the Qin Dynasty, there are currently around 7,000 soldiers though much area remains to be explored still. We watched a short film about the warriors and visited the other two pits. I was very surprised to see so many visitors (only around 25,000 of them), so our guide told us to stick together like “sticky rice,” one of many trip catchphrases which “stuck” in our heads.

That evening, we visited the Muslim Quarter, which was lit up in the colours of the rainbow. As we walked, we took in the vibrant night-life; the Bell Tower in lights was eye-catching. It was also an opportunity to show off and demonstrate our haggling skills, while buying some nice souvenirs, of course. There were piles of purses, pashminas, magnets, terracotta figurines and food stalls offering delicious local delicacies.

On Sunday morning, we visited a special school by Huiling, an NGO operating in 20 cities across China helping those with mental disabilities. The Xi'an special school receives most of its funding from parents and, in this case, some from Germany after a visit from former President, Joachim Gauck, in 2015. As an ice-breaker, there were performances, which included singing, dancing and a karate routine. We then had an opportunity to try some arts and crafts with the pupils, such as paper cutting, bead bracelets and drawing and colouring patterns on fans. We were all touched by the work undertaken by the NGO.

Following a buffet lunch, we visited the Xi'an City Wall, which was 14 metres high (taller than the Great Wall) and had a perimeter of 13.7 kilometres. We also had the opportunity to go for a bike ride...in 43º heat! Luckily, there were some air-conditioned buildings dotted around. We looked at the watch towers, crenels, and the breath-taking views of Xi'an; it felt like being in the clouds in the midst of several towers. We went back to the station and said our farewell to a helpful and jovial Benny.
We visited the Yonghe Lama Tibetan Buddhist Temple in Beijing, home to the world's tallest wooden Buddha; in all, it is 26m tall, 8m of which is underground. During our walk through the temple, we could smell the incense sticks, which all visitors – including us – could light. The architecture was lovely and the atmosphere was peaceful; it was like the eye of a hurricane – the calm in the storm of Beijing traffic and the hustle-bustle.

After lunch, we visited the Yanjing Brewery. As one of the sponsors of the Beijing 2008 Olympics, it was one of very few companies to record a profit after the event. Just upon entering, we could see the huge size of the site, further highlighted by a model we saw. We watched a very patriotic video, and had a tour of the factory and saw the vast quantities of the beverage being fermented, bottled and packed. In 2015, the Chinese drank about 25 billion litres of beer compared with the Americans, who drank about 18 billion litres, making the country the world's largest beer market.

The most anticipated moment was the beer tasting. 85% of all the beer sold in Beijing is Yanjing beer, and it has 11% of the country's market share. Yanjing beer tasted dry and light, perhaps coming from the rice, one of its ingredients.

Our final day was possibly the day we were all the most excited about as we would visit the Great Wall of China. After an hour's drive, we arrived at the Juyongguan Pass. In all, the Changchéng (Chinese for Great Wall) was around 50,000 km long but has been reduced to 21,196.18km (13,170.7mi). The mortar used to bind the Great Wall's stones was made up of "sticky rice." On our arrival, we were in the clouds; I mean, literally in the clouds as we were in the hills/mountains north of Beijing. Then, we started our climb along the pass. The climb from the bottom to the first watch tower was steep. The steps were thick and the gradient was vertiginous, but we all made it in one piece! As we climbed higher, the views became spectacular with the lush scenery blanketing the dramatic terrain. Only one word for it: wow! It was shame to say goodbye to the Great Wall, but the experience was priceless.

We had lunch at an enamel works, where we saw how pots were made, painted and engraved. On the other hand, if you wanted to buy one, it was expensive. There was one large pot which would set you back 1.6 million Yuan (around £200,000).

Following the visit, we stopped at the Olympic Park, where the 2008 Summer Olympics were held, and we saw the magnificent Bird's Nest and Water Cube. The design and architecture was awe-inspiring. We could see why the Beijing Olympics was a success. I took the opportunity to actually swim in the Olympic-size training pool at the Water Cube while others took photos and walked around the area, which was an experience to say the least.

My thanks go to Miss Shah for making the trip possible and coming up with the brilliant idea in the first place, Mr. Elmas (whose last involvement with the school was this trip), Mr. Ponte (whose Mandarin is superb, especially when singing) and Miss Patel for looking after us and making the trip even better. Further thanks go to Jin for his humour and entertainment, Regina for her wealth of knowledge and Benny for his infectious enthusiasm and, of course, "sticky rice."

Deven Voralia U6N
Canada Ski Trip

At Easter, I and 30 other boys went on the ski trip to Panorama Ski Resort in British Columbia, Canada. With a one week trip ahead of us, we all packed our bags and drove to Gatwick Airport. After two eight hour flights, we landed in Calgary; however this was not our final destination. We spent the night in a small hotel and, in the morning, we left for the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic Park. The park was only a few minutes away from our hotel so it was a nice destination to visit to break up our journey. There we went on the slopes and did tubing which involved us spinning ourselves as fast as we could down the icy paths.

Our second destination was Banff National Park where we only stayed for an hour to look at the views and have lunch. But finally, after almost 2 days of travelling, we arrived at the ski resort in Panorama.

We were fitted with our skis, poles and helmets and rode the chairlift up the mountain for the first time. As we arrived, our instructors told us we had some of the best conditions for skiing for that time of year. After skiing over the newly made powdered snow (without any injuries), we went to the hot springs outside of our hotel.

As you can imagine, the pools were packed, but that did not spoil our fun in them. We let our muscles relax and went to sleep for the next day of skiing. And so our week continued for the next 6 days.

On the last day of the trip, my group was allowed to go on any slope we wanted. We went down some blues, red, black and even a few double blacks. We were then awarded some certificates and began our journey back home.

On the last leg of the trip, we visited Lake Louise and admired the beautiful views and snowballs bashing at our feet. After that we left and arrived back in Watford.

The ski trip was enjoyed by all and I would like to say a big thank you to Mr Matthews for organising the ski trip and to the teachers who gave up their Easter Holidays to accompany us.

Joe McHugh 9G
During the summer of 2017, eight students, including myself, accompanied by Mr Roy, embarked on a journey to the ‘Sabbah’ Region of Borneo for a 4-week expedition. The trip was run by ‘Camps International’ - a global organisation that permits a wide range of students to travel on cultural and ethical journeys, providing them with memories to last a lifetime.

Without a doubt, I can honestly say that it was one of the most fulfilling and rewarding experiences of my life. Interacting with the local community and engaging in arduous and taxing project work with the residents of the villages left me incredibly inspired and appreciative of what it’s like to live in the UK.

Over the course of the first week we met our group, comprised of students from Watford Boys, Holmesdale and Ridgeway schools. We lived and worked at ‘Camp Bongkud’, located approximately three hours away from the airport on the outskirts of a small village with merely 2000 locals. It was there that we conducted our first ‘project’, which involved cementing a volleyball court for the children and teens, just outside the only primary school in the village. While it was a strenuous and demanding task, it was enriching to learn how to work in these conditions, integrate with our group and gain knowledge about the activities and jobs that Camps International undertook to aid the progress of industrialising the village.

That wasn’t the only thing we did while at ‘Bongkud’ as we also managed to gain some insight into the history of the ‘Tusun’ tribe and learn their dialect and cultural rituals, which was enlightening to see in comparison to traditions back home in the UK, as well as being able to teach some of the younger children some English and primary school games. The children there were very eager to be taught, and seemed to know a lot more than we gave them credit for!

It was from Bongkud that we travelled to ‘Camp Widu,’ which was a lot more of a rural, tranquil location, situated at the top of a steep mountain with a tiny community of about 200 people. Personally this was my favourite location as we lived away from civilisation surrounded by nature. Here we also concreted a volleyball court, encouraged by the locals, who were there almost every day, and we viewed wildlife and fauna that you couldn’t see anywhere else in the world, like the ‘Rafflesia’ plant (largest in Asia), whose flowers can span up to 2 metres in length. We relaxed by a flowing stream and were taken on a tour to see the village’s history, where they revealed artefacts and sculptures with interesting stories about their origin.

Our next location was Batu Puteh, where we really understood the concept of living with a bare minimum. Batu Puteh is located in the heart of the jungle and is only accessible
by river. We were able to hack away here with machetes at the vines encroaching the forest, and aid in the reforestation of trees and plants among the dense and muddy trees. Our project site was a half-hour boat journey every morning, allowing us to be privy to exotic wildlife (we saw Probiscus monkeys, kingfisher birds and even a wild Orangutan!).

After a tough four days in the jungle, sleeping on army beds and in mosquito nets, we were treated to a night at a BnB in a city called ‘Sepilok’, which by that point was five star luxury.

During the day we embraced the tourist attractions and managed to visit Sepilok’s famous Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre and their Sun-bear sanctuary. We made it just in time for feeding, and the orangutans were there in their element. It was a majestic sight, even seeing the young ones in the nursery.

This night of luxury led into two more days of relaxation at Camp Luanti near Bonkgud, where we rested up in preparation for our 5 day trek through the exotic jungle. At Luanti we were even treated to a foot cleansing by the ‘Garra Rufa’ (Doctor) fish, which was certainly an interesting experience!

Those two days of rest weren’t enough at all, though, before the difficult and gruelling jungle trek. With nothing but instant noodles, flapjacks, oranges and the bag on our backs we trekked 32 kilometres (20 miles) through the jungle, walking 6-7 hours each day and sleeping in hammocks that we set up ourselves. Despite it being an onerous journey, the walking each day, spirits raised by the music from our speakers and the chatter with the team, made it the best part of the trip by far. It was so rewarding successfully to scale cliff and rock faces and enjoy the view at the top, or successfully slip and slide down muddy terrain and reach level ground again.

After living in the mud and dirt for 5 days, we really did receive luxury in the form of the ‘Sabbah Teahouse’, where we spent the night treated to a juicy and delicious barbeque and told tales of our time in the jungle, even eating at a five star restaurant with a beautiful view (we all felt a bit out of place to be honest!).

It was by this point that our time in Borneo was coming to an end, so we made the trip to ‘Camp Tinangol’ for our final project. We worked hard to complete the layering of the road and put our backs into shifting logs and fallen tree stumps into safe areas. This hard work was rewarded as we were able to play Tug of War and hold a traditional sports day at the project site, near a stadium, where the entire village showed up following school and work hours.

It was a brilliant way to conclude the trip, and we reluctantly left to travel back to Kota Kinabalu, where we spent our final night all dressed up wandering the night stalls and food markets, before heading to the airport in the early morning for an emotional, yet expectant journey home, ready to see our families again.

Khushal Thobhani L6T
It was an early start, I realised, as I turned up at school for 5 am, but it was definitely worth it. I was going to the land of the free: America. After a 7-hour flight, we touched down in Washington. As we exited the airport, with the American flag flying proudly in front of it, the sky was a brilliant blue. We boarded the coach to our hotel, and experienced what it was like to be in American traffic jam - the same as a British traffic jam, only bigger. I also realised that our hotel was near the Trump Hotel, so I was sure to pick up a ‘Make America Great Again’ hat to show my appreciation.

We began Thursday by taking the coach down to the NRA HQ. We were quickly whisked into a presentation room where we heard a very passionate speech about gun use from a chief lobbyist in the NRA, Glen Caroline. He spoke very well and changed my perceptions of the gun issue. We then visited the White House, the symbol of power in the USA. Unfortunately, we didn’t manage to see Donald Trump, but I did get a picture of myself wearing a ‘Make America Great Again’ hat, in front of the White House - definitely a good decision. Next, we made our way over to the Washington monument, a tribute to the founding father George Washington.

We marched on to the World War 2 memorial, a vast stone expanse with a grand water fountain in the centre and saw the Lincoln memorial - inside which is the statue of Abraham Lincoln sitting in his chair of wisdom, the man who saved the Union from defeat during the Civil War. Next was the war memorial for the Korean War of 1950 -1953, which has an impact on global politics to this very day. It was very poignant to see the faces of fallen soldiers engraved on the stone wall, as well the statues of soldiers standing in the centre. Afterwards, we visited the Thomas Jefferson memorial. Inside was a grand statue of Thomas Jefferson, one of the great founding fathers of the nation. From there, we made our way to the memorial to Franklin Roosevelt, the architect of the New Deal that lifted millions of Americans out of poverty. Then we continued walking until we arrived at the Martin Luther King Jr Memorial, a tribute to the man who helped raise the issue of civil rights in America and improve conditions for many African-Americans.

That evening, we hopped on the bus to Ben’s Chilli bowl, particularly notable for Barack Obama visiting – his former seat was almost a shine to his greatness, surrounded by his best mugshots.

The next day was our visit to Capitol Hill, and I took many great pictures of Capitol Building glistening in the morning sunlight. We saw the Supreme Court building, one of America’s most powerful governing bodies and even saw the Supreme Court Room behind a red velvety curtain. Surprisingly, there wasn’t any mention of Trump or Russia, which was a relief. Afterwards, we visited the Senate, the structure that makes laws which affect all 50 American states. We then had a booked tour of the Capitol itself and saw the House of Representatives, where each state has 2 representatives.
in the House. I was particularly fascinated by the statue room, where each state has a statue that it chooses to send to represent its state – like the Thomas Jefferson statue from Virginia. Let’s hope there is never a Trump statue - knowing Trump, it’ll probably be in solid gold. After our tour, we left Capitol Hill for our main evening entertainment – a basketball game at the Verizon Centre. The two teams were the Washington Wizards and the Detroit Pistons, we supported the Wizards since they had a much better name. The game was very energetic and the atmosphere in the arena was incredible. The excitement of the night made it truly unforgettable.

Next morning, we strolled over to the Newseum near our Hotel. The Newseum is a museum that promotes the First Amendment of free speech and shows the evolution of communication in America throughout its history. The most notable exhibit there was the Camelot section, which details some of the history of President John F Kennedy, as well as sections of the Berlin Wall and even pieces of debris from 9/11 being on display. I truly enjoyed the late-night show host section, mostly because it showed video clips of late night TV hosts mocking Trump. We then visited the National Archives, which host a collection of key historical documents.

After this, we took the Metro to visit the Arlington Cemetery. This contains fallen soldiers from all wars America has ever fought, beginning with the Civil War from 1861-1864. A particularly powerful section was the grave of JFK and his family, which was marked by an eternal flame, burning to represent the spirit of the great president. We then headed to the Pentagon city before returning to the hotel. Our dinner was in a Texan-style BBQ, giving us a true taste of what it was like down South.

The next day, Sunday, would be our final day in the USA. Our morning began with frantic packing before we headed on over to Mount Vernon, the residence of George Washington, arguably the most important figure in American history. The area had outstanding natural beauty, with stunning views of the wilderness. His house was magnificent, although this was probably because he expanded it 3 times during his lifetime. An interesting fact I came across was about George Washington’s decision after the civil war. He could have made himself King, or even a dictator – in the end he returned power to the American people. This is a remarkable example in history as it shows a leader who truly cared about upholding democracy. This was the last thought I had as we headed to our coach, taking us to the very airport we had landed in. I waved goodbye to the star-spangled banner, looking forward to seeing the good old Union Jack again. After yet another 7 hour flight, we made it back to the UK. I was happy to be back and enjoy the rest of my half term. That was until I realised how much work I had to catch up on…

Osman Zaheer L6P
Cultural Heritage Youth Conference in Berlin

When applying for this youth conference in Berlin, I simply viewed it as a taxpayer-funded, three day holiday in Berlin that would bolster my UCAS Personal Statement with 300 characters of information. Almost naively, I applied for the course without considering how potent the issues it wanted to approach were; I was unaware, however, that upon returning home I would have a completely transformed perspective on history, culture and the problems of the past. The aim of the conference was simple: get thirty British and thirty German students to discuss their own cultural heritage, their national heritage and how we should preserve our heritage.

Foreseeably, there were a few barriers in our way before we could enter such deep discussion about exceptionally contentious issues but these were easily overcome and, in turn, the conference has left a lasting imprint on me of my understanding of history and culture.

I arrived at Heathrow Terminal 5 on a cold Friday morning, ready to meet the twenty-nine other British students who had been successful in their applications; slightly embarrassingly, I was the last person to arrive even though I had to travel by far the shortest distance. Some people had travelled from Monmouth, St. Andrews or even Belfast and had beaten me. Nevertheless, everyone shared the same anxieties of sharing rooms and spending a whole weekend with totally new people and once we all realised we were in the same boat, we moved on and most of us instantly started finding common interests.

Skipping forward to when we arrived at our accommodation, the Jugendherberge Berlin Ostkreuz, was probably the nicest building I’ve ever stayed in, especially since in Germany it is classed as a ‘youth hostel’. That evening we shared some of our preparatory work on some key themes of the conference and prepared for the next day. On Saturday we split into three thematic groups and toured Berlin; I took part in the art tour and discovered the meaning behind much of Berlin’s graffiti; we learned about styles, methods, and underlying reasons for the production of street art. Our guide, Aljoscha Tursan, a martial arts instructor and graffiti artist, showed us examples of street art in what was once East Berlin. We toured various ‘Höfe’, small squares surrounded by buildings, similar to mews, where each ‘Hof’ had its own artistic style. Aljoscha explained how many people used graffiti to express what they wanted to say and how they feel, as they may have been homeless, adopted or simply unloved. Many people graffitied their names across buildings, in his opinion, as an act of rebellion against everyday society, almost as a “middle finger” towards the society that had neglected them.

Later on in the day we toured Tempelhof Airport, built by the Nazi regime to be the biggest and most modern airport in the world. It stands in Berlin as a prime example of Nazi architecture – bold and oversized. Here we discussed the meaning of cultural heritage; if we keep the airport, we are remembering history but also leaving behind a marker of Nazi past. Conversely, if the airport is destroyed, we end up depriving future generations of a vital aspect of Nazi and Cold War history. This question was just one of many controversial debates that stimulated many discussions, especially on the last day. Before we returned back to the hostel, we had some free time to see the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag and the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin. On Sunday, we collated our ideas and ended up helping to create a professional film that would eventually be shown at the European Cultural Heritage Summit in Berlin.

My ‘epiphany’ of this conference manifested itself on the last day, when four Germans and I were discussing our history syllabi. I simply said, “Germans should be taught to be proud of their history, right?” and was greeted with expressions of near disgust; one girl couldn’t even bring herself to say what I had, for fear of ‘sounding like a Nazi’. It was a dramatic shock to all of us once I explained what our history syllabus consists of; Tudors, Victorians, the British Empire, all shown in a positive light. In addition, when we study negative parts of our history, we disconnect them from the present and absolve ourselves of any guilt. However, Germans struggle through sixteen years of history lessons where they are taught about World War One and World War Two, and how Germany is the sole criminal of all European history and must be forever guilty for its actions in the 20th Century. I couldn’t bring myself to imagine a history syllabus that was so self-deprecating.
Musician Dave Davies once said that “Exmoor is a sacred, magical place,” which was proven correct during a week in sunny September whilst on an A-Level Geography Field Trip.

Our adventure in the West Country started at Nettlecombe Court, a former manor house in the heart of Exmoor. We were greeted by Charlotte, our very enthusiastic and helpful guide for the week. After a rather interesting journey on the winding, narrow roads, our first stop was Wheddon Cross, named after the crossroads of Exmoor’s two largest roads. We had a look around the village and discussed what factors may affect the place meaning there. Mind you, we were so absorbed in admiring the beauty of our surroundings! It was an excellent first taste of the National Park and we headed back to Nettlecombe where we had a delicious dinner.

Another day, another topic: coasts and their management. Our destination was the quaint village of Porlock, where we measured the beach profile, albeit the experiment was quite rocky. We needed something a bit softer to our feet, so we went to Minehead. Famous for its Butlins resort and West Somerset Railway, we saw how the shoreline was protected through various means of management, including groynes, sea walls, and, best of all, rip-rap. We learnt how cost-benefit analysis was implemented to see whether it would be worth defending the coast. After that, we were free to explore what the town had to offer. As we returned, the relatively quiet seaside atmosphere was put behind us as one of the most entertaining football matches in history was played which produced a rivalry intensifying throughout the week…

We then stayed at Nettlecombe and took part in what promised to be one of the world’s muddiest experiments because the weather forecast promised a very wet day. The manor house was surrounded by rather steep hills, rewarding us with some of Somerset’s best views. On these hills, we measured the soil infiltration rate. Thankfully, the heavens did not open until later, when we were inside the manor house, and boy did they open. Whilst it was raining cats and dogs, we planned our coursework and came up with a range of wacky data collection methods; some were simple surveys, whereas others included a lot of maths (by which I mean a lot).

Fieldwork day came around quickly, a sign of us enjoying ourselves. For the first time in what felt like a long while, we went on a main road. The majority of us went to Minehead, whilst some went to Porlock. The weather was a complete contrast: the sun shining, the sky baby blue, and no clouds in sight. A huge amount of data was collected for all sorts of topics, such as place meaning, tourism and coastal management. This was done in good time as the reward for finishing early was managing to win almost everything in the arcade. This added to the marvellous delicacies, including cheese and chips. Back at the centre, we learnt several data presentation techniques, like using Google Maps to make a graph.

The end came too quickly and after a quick data summary session, we headed back home. It was a wonderful trip in which we were productive, learnt a lot, and breathed in the fresh, country air. Thanks must go to Miss Edmonds for organising the trip, Mr. Grinham for accompanying us, and Charlotte for helping us in our fieldwork.

Akshar Abhyankar L6C
The Geography field trip is often regarded as the highlight of year 10 and one of the best-run trips within the school. We started with a pleasant morning, arriving at school with plenty of time to discuss the week ahead before all eighty-two of us headed onto the coaches for the 3-hour journey, but it was definitely worth the 180 minutes of travel, as the Welsh landscape was stunning.

On our arrival at the Margam Discovery Centre, we were greeted by the members of staff who would be teaching us for the week. We had a few minutes to put our bags away and then we were straight into the classrooms for an introduction to the week ahead. This was followed quickly by a two-mile walk to experience Margam Park and some time to create a field sketch of our surrounds as practice for the next few days.

Dinner was exquisite - a recurring theme throughout the week. Afterwards, we had free time where we could either play football, sit in our rooms or talk in the common room where there were some intense rounds of the card game ‘Cheat’.

Tuesday was the first full day at the centre. We had the task of making our own baguette for lunch before breakfast, which consisted of cereals or a ‘Full English’. Quarter past nine brought another lesson where we had an introduction to the day before heading out to Cardiff Bay to investigate whether the regeneration project there had been a success. We created another field sketch of the bay and walked round to the redeveloped area where there were new hotels, restaurants, and offices - an ideal place to eat lunch. For many people, their baguettes had leaked due to the mayonnaise running. However, the delicious cakes we had been given helped make up for this. Our work continued by completing pedestrian counts and environmental analysis before heading back to the centre for a discussion based on our results. This was followed by dinner like the night before.

Our second day at the centre consisted of going to Newton and Porthcawl, areas that are often featured on the news when a storm hits the UK due to their position resulting in large waves on the sea walls. We walked along the coastline for forty-five minutes from Newton beach to Porthcawl whilst analysing sea defences and risks for the local area such as flooding, before having lunch in Porthcawl, a small town with a population of 16,000.

Thursday followed the pattern of the previous days, breakfast followed by an introduction to the day before we headed out to our location for the day. However Thursday was different as there was a break in the weather pattern; consistently during the week it had been sunny but in true Welsh fashion, it poured as soon as we got off the coaches to study the River Ogmore. We were meant to be in the river measuring rock sizes, river width and the speed of flow of water, all being recorded on I pads being held above water...

We first visited the mouth of the river, which is when the river meets the sea but quickly moved on due to wind chill. We then took measurements in the lower, middle and upper course of the river for analysis that evening. A couple of hours later, we arrived back at the centre completely drenched due to the rain and a few leaking wellies. The following evening was eventful with a surprise birthday celebration being thrown into the mix. We also had to start to pack and analyse our results from the river.

Friday soon came and we started the day by completing some exam practice questions and beginning to plan our write-ups of the trip. We left the centre at half-past eleven to arrive back at school just after normal lessons had ended. The coach journey was quite quiet as the teachers’ theory that everyone would be exhausted was correct.

As a year group, we would like to thank Miss Edmonds for organising the trip and Mr Grinham, Miss Field, Mr Chase, Mrs Cox, Mr Roy, Mrs Woods and Mr Carr for accompanying us on the trip.

Matthew Bennett 10G
Sixth Form Trip to Barcelona

In December 2017, the Spanish A Level group from Watford Boys Grammar School and the Spanish A Level class from Watford Girls Grammar School went to Barcelona.

Our hostel, the Urbany Hostel BCN GO, which is the first place I should mention as it was our home for the duration of the trip, surpassed all our expectations: 24/7 vending machines aside, the hostel had all the amenities and facilities we desired, and great street views from our room too.

We visited Puerto Vell, Barcelona's lively and scenic port, strewn with cafes and al fresco restaurants, ships blowing their foghorns, and gentle ripples of water crashing along the waterfront.

The rumble of Las Ramblas, Barcelona's main street, was absolutely unbelievable with beautiful stalls, street performers, and 1960s street lamps flooding light onto the street in the evening. As it was overflowing with great places to eat, our only regret is that we didn't get to try them all. The street also led us back to our hostel and towards any form of transportation, and was therefore often frequented by our group.

Of course, this was an educational trip, and the Spanish lessons, which we attended, were truly educational and informative. We learned, from a native speaker, about the current issue of Catalonian independence and why it is such a pressing matter for the country. This helped us improve our Spanish speaking skills and gave us a better understanding of the issues that the country faces.

Visiting the Sagrada Familia, my favourite part of the trip, was definitely an experience of a lifetime. Every inch of the beautiful cathedral had inscriptions or designs with deep religious significance. The inside was as impressive as the outside - if not better. Stained glass windows, my personal favourite, in every colour of the rainbow splashed the hall with colour, and the ceiling, designed in the form of a cross, left us all in awe.

For a bird's eye view of the city, we got on a cable car which took us to the Montjuïc, where we spent a while walking about, taking photos, and admiring the city that is Barcelona. While it wouldn't be possible to list everything we did in Barcelona, I can't end this article without mentioning our teachers, Mrs. Watson and Ms. Kotecha. Without them this trip would not have been half as much fun, informative, and relaxing, or possible at all. I believe that I speak on behalf of all the students on this trip in thanking both our teachers for the unwavering care and attention showered upon us at all times throughout the trip.

Nikhil Vaswani L6T

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This May half term a group of 44 students from Years 9 and 10, and 5 Teachers set off on a journey through Italy, part of it at least, from Rome in the centre of the country to Sorrento, further south. From Cathedrals to Pompeii, it was a brilliant trip.

Rome was a stunning city and more impressive than we could imagine. Unfortunately the hotel wasn’t the most comfortable (no air conditioning!) and the restaurant appalling (luckily Mr Pegler got us to shift to a much better one) but we had great pizza for lunch, lots of ice cream and plenty of snacks from a good supermarket. Rome is utterly full of various historical and religious sites; there’s a cathedral practically within every few miles, not to mention the enormous Roman buildings that remain, such as the Colosseum, or the Pantheon.

To summarise the trip in a word: walking. In that week we did more walking than in any other week, certainly in my lifetime. At the end of the week, our total steps were far over 100,000, and on one day alone we did 20,000! But it was all worth it as Mr Pegler led us from one fantastic site and sight to the next, never, to our knowledge, getting lost. The impressiveness of the city was accentuated by the huge number of Roman constructions we saw, including the Palace of the Emperors and the beautiful Ara Pacis. We also saw amazing sites from the Middle Ages and modern times, such as the famous Trevi fountain or the view from the top of the Vittoriano Monument, the gigantic marble extravaganza built to commemorate the first king of Italy. Add to this, statues by Michelangelo and Bernini, holy relics and golden ceilinged churches, it was all non-stop spectacle that just constantly wowed us.

After 2 packed days in Rome and an afternoon exploring the extensive ruins of Ostia, Rome’s port city, we were overdosing on temples, baths, theatres, houses and everything Roman. Exhausted we left the city on Wednesday and headed south with a stop to go underground in the catacomb of San Sebastiano on the Via Appia. Further south we stopped at Cassino where we drove to the top of Monte Cassino to visit the beautiful and famous abbey rebuilt after its total destruction in the Second World War. Mr Pegler taught us about the little-known but brutal battle that was fought here for 4 months in 1944. We finished with a very moving visit to the Commonwealth War Cemetery where thousands of British, New Zealand, Canadian and Indian troops are buried.

After another hour’s drive we began to see Mt Vesuvius looming in the distance and then had our first glimpses of the stunning Bay of Naples. We arrived at our hotel and were happy to see that it was very nice with lots of space, modern and with good Wi-Fi. The views from the restaurant were breathtaking; on this part of the trip the highlight of the week was Pompeii on the Thursday. All of us had studied it through Year 7 and 8 Latin and those of us doing GCSE Classical Civilisation were about to study it. It was here that those of us in Year 10 doing Latin

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**Classics Trip**

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50 TRIPS & EXCHANGES
completed our ‘pilgrimage’ to the House of Caecilius, even though we could only stand at the front door. It was the real thing and that made it not disappointing at all. We saw so much here but one highlight was the Villa of the Mysteries due to the amazing frescoes painted on its walls which has earned it the name the Villa of the Mysteries because nobody really knows what the frescoes depict.

The next day we visited the smaller but better preserved Herculaneum where one grim sight was the casts of the hundreds of bodies that were found in the boat sheds, reminding us that both here and Pompeii were victims of catastrophic natural disasters. So we had to visit Mount Vesuvius and that was an incredible site. It was now Miss Edmonds turn to be over excited as she experience great geography. We all took great ‘enjoyment’ in walking up the steep gritty track in the heat but absorbing the gorgeous views from the top and down into the crater. It was a wonderful place, and luckily nobody managed to hurt themselves on the rough way to the top. Many of us even managed to grab a rock or two as a souvenir, rather than pay 8 euros for a similar rock at the souvenier stall. The view stretching over the Bay of Naples was simply phenomenal.

The final day was spent on the opposite side of the Bay of Naples starting with a visit to the Ancient Greek town of Cumae. We got to have a look within the famous cave of Sybil, the prophetess, in which we observed a re-enactment of a visit to her deep in the cave, lit by torches and all spoken in Latin. We didn't know what was going on but it looked amazing! After a little exploring of the scenic ruins, Mr Pegler managed to convince some students that the site was famous for giant snails and they went off vainly looking for them only to be disappointed that they kept missing them. Another interesting place we visited was the National Archeological Museum of Naples, featuring a great number of both Greek and Roman statues of gods, heroes and emperors – and, interestingly enough, Darth Vader and Jabba the Hutt thanks to a Star Wars exhibition that was taking place there. The Museum contains all the treasures of Pompeii and Herculaneum and is stuffed with wall paintings, mosaics, statues, pots and pans many of which were already famous to us from textbooks or lessons. Less well known to us was the Secret Room whose contents have to remain secret for many good reasons.

This was also the last time Mr Pegler, the teacher who has led and organised the trip for many years, would be on the trip, as he is leaving in the new year to go and live in Germany. He will most certainly be missed. When asked about how he felt about having this as his last trip, Mr Pegler said: ‘In 25 trips no one has died, been expelled or arrested so it’s a good time to stop and quit while I’m ahead’. The hundreds of boys who have had the chance to be on a trip with Mr Pegler will all be grateful that he didn’t quit too soon. I would like to thank him for all his hard work and Miss Carr, Miss Edmonds, Mrs Short and Miss Streets for putting in so much time and effort in making the trip fantastic. It was certainly the best trip I have ever been on with WBGS.

Joseph Miller 10C

Battlefields Trip

After arriving at school for 5:30 am we eventually left for Dover at 6:00 where we took the ferry. After a painless crossing we arrived in France and drove for several more hours before coming to the Tyne Cot cemetery.

The rows and rows of almost identical gravestones emphasised the amount of death and destruction that had occurred here. There was also a cemetery marking the German dead from the Battle of Passchendaele, which had occurred nearby. It seemed more out of the way and less ordered than the one we had just seen. After this we went to the hotel before the Last Post service at the Menin Gate at 8:00 pm. At the Last Post service some of the staff and students laid a wreath. The next day was a busy one and so we left quickly and early to make sure we had time to get to the Somme and visit several sites on the way. The first of these was the Wellington Quarry and Newfoundland Park in Arras. This was where British and Canadian troops tunneled under German positions to plant explosives under their lines to help recapture Arras. Many of the painted signs and directions can still be seen on the walls, despite the water.

After this we visited Delville Wood Cemetery. As in Tyne Cot, the magnitude of the site and the number of graves was hard to fully appreciate. Next was one of the largest war memorials at Thiepval. Here a wreath was laid and time was taken to look around and try to appreciate the destruction caused by the First World War. Lastly, we saw an area of preserved trenches and a memorial specifically dedicated to a Newfoundland regiment that had participated in one of the deadliest battles of World War One. Several of the people mentioned on the memorial had been brothers and because the unit had been drawn from small fishing communities in Newfoundland, we were told that the area had been particularly badly affected when the battle didn't go well as many families had been affected by the loss of more than one member.

On the last day we again had to get up early, this time to fit in one last museum before heading home. This was the one at Sanctuary Wood where the trenches and surrounding wood were preserved in order to give visitors a sense of what the conditions were actually like. To this end it seemed effective. Earlier, we had also visited Ypres to see the St George's Chapel, where a plaque had been dedicated to old boys and teachers of Watford Boys Grammar School who had died in the First World War. While there, we also had a chance to visit Ypres market. Though we arrived home after dark, and tired, everyone who went on the trip appreciated the experience and enjoyed it.

Rafi Brister 10N
Iceland 2017 started at a fairly reasonable hour for a school trip - with check-in at Heathrow opening at 10:00, we didn’t have to be awake at 4:00 in the morning, which is nice. FL451 departed from London Heathrow at slightly after 13:00, and landed slightly after the scheduled arrival time of 15:00. We soon met our guide just outside the terminal.

The learning began almost immediately on the coach to Reykjavik, with our guide explaining the different types of lava we would see (A’a and Pahoehoe) and how Iceland was formed. The A’a lava forms jagged rocks, from where it has cooled quickly, whilst flowing at speed, and the Pahoehoe lava takes a long time to cool in a slow-flowing stream of lava creating smoother ‘ropey’ lava.

When we got to Reykjavik, we went to a small cinema, where we watched a video that went a little more in depth about the formation of Iceland, its lava flows and tectonic activities. The video also went in depth about the Northern Lights, a phenomenon caused by the collision of charged particles in the atmosphere.

After the cinema, we went to the hotel where we would be staying for the next five nights. The rooms were comfortable, and the food was always good and hot. The next morning after what was for some a good night’s sleep, we departed for Gullfoss (Golden Falls). The name suits the beautiful waterfall, where we learned of how it had, for some time, been under threat of being used as a hydroelectric plant, but was instead sold to the State, which has protected the site for tourism.

After Gullfoss, we headed for Geysir, a hot spring area surrounded with Geysers and boiling mud pits. The geysers ‘erupted’ every 7-10 minutes in spectacular fashion, throwing boiling water 20 metres into the air. The Great Geysir itself has been dormant for some years now, but it used to erupt up to 70 metres high. We also went to the visitor centre and shop, where we ate our lunch.

Having eaten, we boarded the coach for our journey to Thingvellir National Park. This is a UNESCO world heritage site, and has been protected since 1930. Within the National Park is a rift valley, caused by the Eurasian and North American Tectonic plates being pulled apart (constructive plate boundary) at a rate of just over 2cm per year. Thingvellir was home to the first Icelandic parliament, situated at ‘Law Rock’ (A natural amphitheatre with a high back wall which made it ideal for public speaking). After a walk through the park, and a talk from our guide about the parliament, we headed back to the hotel for dinner, and a bit of relaxation.

Once darkness had
fallen, it was noticed that the sky had very few clouds, and so there was a good chance of seeing the Northern Lights. Unfortunately, they weren't very strong, so we'd try again another night, which meant that after walking back to the hotel, a good night's sleep was had.

The next day we awoke to a beautiful sunrise. The day would be spent hiking in Thorsmork, a glaciated valley that is a very popular place for hikers. There were many picturesque views, and an old Norse house, where our guide explained how the early settlers of Iceland stayed warm in the freezing winters. After that, we proceeded to walk along the valley next to the river, with many of the boys exploring as we went.

Having spent most of the day in the valley, we moved on to Seljalandsfoss, a wonderful waterfall that was unique because of the fact that you could go behind it. This meant that you could take wonderful photos, and have a really good view of the surrounding landscape.

We returned again to the hotel, where we had time to use the Jacuzzi, and have another go at seeing the Northern Lights. This time we were a little more successful with the lights being clearly visible to the eye, but not the basic camera on our phones.

Next morning, we woke up an hour early to get to Solheimajökull, a massive glacier 200m thick that sits at the bottom of the Katla volcano, which is one of Iceland's largest volcanoes alongside Eyjafjallajökull (Eyjafjallajökull) which is the volcano that erupted in 2010. Katla's last major eruption was in 1918, when ash was thrown 14km high. The ash from that eruption is still on the glacier.

After attaching our crampons, and getting our ice picks (which weren't supposed to be used as picks, just walking sticks) we made our way to the glacier. The glacier towered high over us as we walked past the lake that meltwater had created at the foot of the glorified ice cube. Stepping onto the glacier, the beautiful wild shapes and curves were awe-inspiring, and despite being covered in ash, we could see just how deep the crevasses were. Our hike across the icy plain was great, and we even had the chance to drink fresh glacier water straight from source!

After the glacier hike, we drove a short way to another small cinema where we saw how Eyjafjallajökull's eruption in 2010 affected the nearby farm. We also learned what factors combined to make the massive ash plume so disruptive to travel across Europe. To end the day's travelling we visited a wonderful waterfall called Skogafoss. There was a large staircase to the right of the waterfall that we were able to climb in order to get a view of the water cascading into the large plunge pool below, where those who could bear the spray took photos of the 60 metre long drop.

Finally, after what was in my opinion the best day of the trip, we got back to the hotel. Before dinner there was just enough time for us to get into the Jacuzzi and have a shower before dinner. Then we got the best view of the Northern Lights we would get. The bright green trails swirled around the sky, like snakes in some mesmerising dance.

Wednesday was the last full day on the pristine Land of Fire and Ice. We started at 8 o'clock as usual with breakfast and making lunches. The first activity of the day was a visit to Hveragerdi, a village situated on a geothermal hot spot. The guide gave us a talk telling us about the challenges of living on a geothermal hot-spot, which included having houses being boiled and sucked into the mud pit of a geyser.

Having visited the shopping centre for the earthquake simulator, we made our way to a geothermal power station where we were told how most inhabitants of Iceland got their power - naturally occurring steam. We learned why there was such an abundance of geothermal hot spots, and how the steam was converted to electricity. Whilst at the power station, we also experienced an earthquake, many of which had occurred during our time there, but they had been too weak to feel. This one, on the other hand, was felt by all of us, as a low rumble coincided with gentle shaking.

Most of the day was spent in Reykjavik, shopping, eating, and experiencing the local culture (and perhaps purchasing some tat, to please siblings).

The next day was our last in Iceland, but despite this, we visited one of the most iconic attractions of Iceland: the Blue Lagoon. Approaching the sleek, modern visitor centre/café we walked through a wide corridor of a'a lava rocks, and past several pools of pale blue, murky water. Finally, after being admitted and having changed and rinsed (as is custom in Iceland, but we kept our trunks on obviously), we waded into the shallow lake of wonderfully warm, chalky blue water.

After that wonderful experience, we left the Land of Fire and Ice, all the wiser and all the more tired.

Alex Chase 10P
The trip led by Mrs Watson was the source of many memories for pupils who went to Murcia. We met at the school very early in the morning as we started our five-day Spanish adventure. We arrived in Spain full of excitement and were greeted with three kind and friendly “Monitores”.

After lunch, we went down to the beach directly opposite “Arbolar” where we were staying. The view of the sea was breathtaking and the sun shining bright. Every day, we would have Spanish lessons led by the Monitores, go onto the beach to either play some sports, such as volleyball or football, or to have a swim in the sea. We also did kayaking and sailing which was so much fun.

Our first excursion with the Monitores was to an ancient city called Cartagena. After visiting an amphitheatre we were allowed to explore the town square and eat some Churros (similar to doughnuts) covered in sugar and dipped in chocolate. The best part of it was when two of my friends and I witnessed a couple get engaged.

The second excursion was to a Spanish Market, which was huge. There were rows and rows of stalls selling fake Gucci and Armani wallets and tops from brands like Levi’s and Armani. One of the pupils in our group haggled a pair of trainers from 29 Euros down to 10 Euros!

The night before our departure back to England, we had a Salsa lesson and the Monitores hosted a disco that we all enjoyed, doing some karaoke songs.

When we left on the Sunday, none of us wanted to come back to the dull English weather but mainly due to the fact that we had enjoyed ourselves so much.

Kyeran Wright 9F

“Nos gustaría decir gracias a los profesores para llevarnos en este viaje, y también a los monitores. Especialmente a Ramón por hacernos reír con sus canciones. Además, pienso que nos hicimos muchos amigos nuevos y aprendimos mucho, cómo cocinar un gazpacho y una tortilla española también cantar canciones españolas con acciones acompañadas:

Soy una taza, una tetera, una cuchara, un cucharón, un plato hondo, un plato llano, un cuchillo y un tenedor. (Se puede encontrar en YouTube)

Gracias por todo...”

HamishStarling 9C
Finally, the 26th of May 2018 arrived and we gathered at the school, excited and looking forward to a week of fun. We took the coach to Dover and from there, the ferry to Calais. Upon reaching Calais, the rest of the lengthy coach journey began.

As we ate snacks, the sun began to sink and it was time for bed. We got out our sleeping bags and pillows and all settled down to sleep, expect for our superb drivers who stayed up all night to drive us to our destination.

The next day, we arrived at Azur Rivage, a fantastic site run by Rockley. The instructors greeted us and showed us to our tents before we went off to breakfast. Our instructors introduced themselves by telling us fun facts about themselves; one of them was an Olympic swimmer! They also gave us a safety demonstration that emphasised the importance of using sun cream.

We set off sailing straight away after being split into groups depending on sailing experience. The weather was a bit rainy but we had perfect winds for sailing. We sailed doing many different activities e.g. follow the leader, which involved the instructor driving her speed boat and our following her, resulting in some hilarious crashes. After sailing we had free time, during which we indulged on what we considered to be the best food in the whole of France, all sold from a glorious van; crepes, churrios, burgers, chips and lots more. We could then choose an activity and many of us chose sports which usually ended up with the ball flying into the lake and us spending an enjoyable 10 minutes throwing stones at it, trying to get it to shore.

Dinner was followed by evening activities that changed every day. One evening it was sports, where you could choose what you wanted to do e.g. football, basketball, badminton, teamwork activities or playing frisbee. Then came “The Challenge.” It involved getting utterly soaked in water, getting extremely muddy, and extreme tension between teams. PGL (Rockley’s opponents) had stolen our boats, and we were sent in to retrieve them. However before we could do that, our captain required us to be camouflaged. So out of nowhere a group of instructors came with buckets of mud that they threw at us until not a single person was left without camouflag. We were all covered in sticky, smelly mud. We then split into groups and were commanded to get our Beyoncé-aids, (buoyancy aids/ life jackets to you and me) and run up the pier and jump into the freezing cold lake, where we had to wade through a passage filled with mud and leaves. On top of it all, the instructors would be throwing mud at us from the shore. When we eventually found the boats, we had to put one of our team in it and drag them in the boat back to shore before anyone else and make a run for the showers. The pressure was intense!

One of the best times was spent on the beach playing football and other games whilst the teachers relaxed on the sand. Another amazing day was had when we went white water rafting. We set off in groups of eight to ten with wet suits on and had oars in our hands. As we sailed through the roaring rapids, getting splashed and soaking wet, we stopped off at a cliff not too big but quite high. We had the option to jump off this cliff into the water, which was met with great enthusiasm. Most people opted for the higher and scariest (though safe) of the two jumps. Our hearts started to race as they instructors counted down but it was the most exhilarating experience. We then swam with the rapids up to the boat for another jump, minus a few shoes.

After this adventure and lunch, we went to the mall to shop. Everyone brought sweets that would last them ages. As we went back to the coach we saw the teachers with trolleys of alcohol, which, to the teachers dismay, weren’t for them but as a thank you gift for the instructors.

On the evening before our final day we were treated to an unusual dinner that consisted of frogs’ legs, snails and mussels. Some thought yuck! Some thought yum!

The last day, as sad as it was, was the most fun. The intermediate and advanced groups got to join together to sail darts, which were huge boats with handles on the sides that allow you to hang out of them. The instructors even let us jump into the lake, do cool back flips and other stunts. Then came the last hours at Azur Rivage. Awards were given by instructors and teachers and thank you gifts were given to the members of Rockley staff. We said goodbye to our wonderful instructors and the fun was over. We got onto the coach for our journey back with a heavy heart and a longing to come back next year.

Sachin Budhdeo 9T
French Exchange

On Thursday the 24th of May, we travelled to France. We left early in the morning and the journey was long. We went by coach, and then we took a ferry.

We arrived in Lesneven in the evening. Lesneven is a very small town in Brittany. Upon arriving at the French school, we were greeted by our exchange partners and their families. After a nice dinner, I fell asleep quicker than I ever have done before.

Fast forward to the next morning, and we were in the French school. We attended our partner’s first lesson. Unfortunately, mine had German and German is the only language I do not take!

After eating lunch (fish, potatoes, melon and a chocolate mousse), we went to the local town. This was very interesting as it was a new experience. Next, we went on the coach to the beach. At the beach, we did sand sailing. A sand sail is like a wheelbarrow with a sail attached. To move it, you pull ropes to tighten or loosen the sail. The weather was great and everybody had a fantastic time.

Over the weekend, we were with the host families. They had planned exciting activities, so we had lots to do. For example, on Sunday, I went to Oceanopolis, the largest and first aquarium in France. It was similar to The London Aquarium, but everything was in French.

On Monday, we went to a different town with our exchange partners. It was by the sea and only a 20 minute drive away. There were lots of shops selling lots of different things. First, we took a bus that went through the town. Some sold souvenirs, some were bakeries, some sold food and some just sold ice cream. We had fun walking through the town and visiting all the shops. Next we went straight to the Go Ape centre that was another 20 minute drive away. Go-Ape was fun like the many other activities we had the opportunity to do during the course of the trip.

Tuesday was the day of our departure. We met at the French school and boarded the coach once the first lesson had started.

After an incredibly long journey, we finally arrived at the Girls’ school. It was almost midnight and everyone was very tired. We were back home after the unique experience we had had while in France. Thank you to all the teachers involved in organising this rewarding experience.

Akshay Bid 8T

Science Trip

On Thursday the 19th of April, four of us were chosen to represent the school at the Salters’ Festival of Chemistry. The aim was to encourage an appreciation of Chemistry and give us (and students from other schools) an opportunity to carry out interesting and unusual investigations.

Our adventure began with a train journey into Euston Square station and after a short walk, accompanied by Dr Sadler, we eventually arrived at the Chemistry Department at University College London. None of us realised quite how large the university was and how busy it would be!

After a quick introduction in one of the large lecture halls - telling us about the two activities we were going to take part in - the fun began! We were led to our lab stations where details of a crime that we needed to solve were waiting for us. Feeling like real chemists in our lab coats, gloves and goggles, we split up into pairs and carried out various experiments which enabled us to narrow down the suspects until we were able to discover which person had committed the crime (of stealing a trophy). We then had to write up our results and note down who we thought was responsible.

Once the first challenge of the day was complete, we had a well-earned lunch in a nearby park before getting started on our second task. This time we had to create a compound using the two solutions provided (hydrochloric acid and sodium thiosulphate solution) aiming to make the reaction take place in as close to sixty seconds as possible. The task was harder than we first expected and we soon realised we had to be really exact with our measuring, and work together as part of a team.

The day ended with a chemistry show where we learnt about the different side of solids, liquids, and gases. The highlight, however, involved watching and tasting liquid nitrogen ice cream being made! Overall, the day was a great experience. We really enjoyed using a wide range of chemicals and finding out how Chemistry can be used in everyday life.

Theo Adam 8T Enzo Lim 8T
Ski Austria

This year's ski trip took place in the same resort as two year's ago - Axamer Lizum, and on the 10th of February 2018, we departed from Watford and headed for Dover, a town that is famous for its white chalk cliffs. The ferry journey was turbulent, as the sea was very choppy. Everything inside was tumbling around, except the people, thank goodness! However, everything was more settled as we left the ferry and drove on through France and Germany.

It had taken roughly twenty-four hours to reach our final destination, but when we arrived, the mountains were topped with an abundance of white, powdery snow, and the entire sky seemed to be enveloped by fluffy snow clouds.

Our ski resort was situated on the outskirts of Innsbruck, a town famous for hosting the Winter Olympics twice, and therefore known as an Olympic town. On the first day, we all trudged up a hill, with great difficulty and reluctance, as it was covered with giant glaciers of ice. With immense relief, we entered our hotel rooms, where we quickly unpacked. Our representative, Simon, was great at organising our activities in order to keep all of the teachers and pupils fully occupied.

Personally, I felt that the first day of skiing was the most manic, as we had to wake up at 6 a.m. and rush around to gear up for skiing. All of the instructors were polite, kind and helpful. I kept falling down, getting lost and hurting myself, but even in the most difficult of times, my instructor was always there to teach me lots of new things to help me improve. As the days went by, things became better and better for me, even if I feared skiing down a challenging blue slope, I would try and push myself and in the end, I absolutely loved it.

On offer were scrumptious breakfasts, lunches and dinners. From the German schnitzel to pepperoni pizza, our stomachs were always full. The views were breathtaking; from the dining room, you could see the snow-capped mountains, glistening in the iridescent light of dawn. One evening, we went on a torch walk and enjoyed some delicious hot chocolate to drink afterwards.

On another evening, we travelled to the Innsbruck town centre and played a game of bingo against another school! Overall, this was a trip of a lifetime and to those who are thinking of signing up for a ski trip next year, do not be worried about anything; you will face many new challenges and conquer lots of fears, but in the end, you will have the time of your life and enjoy skiing. On behalf of everyone who went on the trip, a big thank you to Mr. Brookes, Ms. Dreiser, Miss Edmonds, Mrs. Short, Mr. Matthews and Simon for organising this spellbinding experience.

Aryan Kaul, 8N

History Trip to The Globe Theatre

On a bright, sunny Wednesday in June, half the members of the Year 10 History Boys embarked on a trip to The Globe Theatre on the South Bank of the River Thames. As part of our course looking at Elizabethan England, we are required to study a particular building in detail in order to assess its importance to society at the time, how it reflected the culture of the people, and how this opinion changed as a result of events.

The day started with a tube journey to Waterloo, luckily without any hitches as the planned strikes on the Jubilee lines had been called off. The Globe Theatre we saw is a replica of the original, which was burned down in 1613 when a theatrical cannon shot during a performance of Henry VIII caused the building to catch fire. It was rebuilt but then destroyed again by the Puritans at the end of the English Civil War in 1642 when theatres were frowned upon. Today's replica was built in 1997 to the same specification as the original theatre. Historians pieced together sources from the time in order to replicate the building. These included sketches of other theatres around during the same era, because there were no sketches of The Globe from the period. The tour also included information on the situation regarding theatres and actors at the time, as rogue actors were frowned upon and considered part of the 'able beggars' who were punished severely. It was during the Elizabethan era that theatres started being built and actors started working in one place, instead of performing to the rich and touring in pubs and inns.

While walking back to the station, we passed the Golden Hinde, which is moored further down the Thames. This was the ship in which the famous Elizabethan privateer, Francis Drake, sailed around the world from 1577 to 1580 bringing back looted treasure from Spanish galleons sailing to South America. Although the original ship disintegrated, this is one of two exact seaworthy replicas that have been rebuilt.

Thank you very much to Mr McDermott who organised both this trip and the sister trip happening a week later for the other boys studying history.

Tim Hire 10G

The Fullerian 2017-18
German Exchange

It was 7:00 in the morning of February 6th 2018: an ordinary day for everyone at the school, with the exception of a group of 40 boys and girls from Years 9, 10 and the Sixth Form, accompanied by Frau Webster and Frau Kotecha, who were heading off on a ten-day trip to Mainz, Germany. Mainz is the sister city of Watford, and this was the 53rd year that the exchange trip between the Watford Grammar Schools and the Schlossgymnasium Mainz had been running.

We started the trip with a short flight from Heathrow to Frankfurt, Germany, which went surprisingly swiftly, followed by a train ride from Frankfurt to the city of Mainz. As the destination grew closer we all grew excited to meet our partners and some were very nervous. We arrived to find them eagerly waiting us at the other side of the platform and we waved goodbye to our Watford friends as we left with our exchange partners, who undoubtedly made us feel very welcome.

Unfortunately, although we were missing schoolwork back in England, we found out that we had to compensate for this by attending school in Germany. The day after we arrived, our partners took us to German school (or Schule) which was a completely new environment and a very interesting experience, especially as we tried our best to comprehend what the teacher was saying using our basic level of German! It was intriguing to see how lessons were taught in Germany, or rather, not taught - we found, to our amazement, that if a teacher is ill or away in Germany, there is no supply teacher, but rather the students get a free period! When we all met up in the morning we talked about our experience with each of our partners and the lessons we had. While we were at school, some members of the sixth form were also undergoing work experience in Germany.

At midday, we walked into the town centre and had time to explore Mainz and its historic town hall (Rathaus). We were welcomed by the mayor of Mainz and he also gave us a talk about the town and its history, along with some free pretzels, which were a great addition. That evening we went bowling with our exchange partners, but it soon became clear that we had the slightly superior bowlers, with strikes all around.

The rest of the week we had the opportunity to tour Mainz, exploring the town in greater detail and visiting museums, such as the Gutenberg Museum, where the world-famous Gutenberg Bibles are kept. We found out that Johannes Gutenberg, the inventor of the printing press, was also born in Mainz, and we had a go printing our very own designs. On Friday we visited the nearby city of Wiesbaden and spent 2 hours in a trampoline park, which was one of the highlights of the trip.

On Saturday it was our opportunity to get to know the family a little more. My exchange family took me to Frankfurt to see the sights there, such as going up the Main Tower, a 200m high skyscraper giving us an amazing view of the city below. Arguably the best part of the trip was later in the weekend, when we embraced the excitement of the famous German Carnival (or Fastnacht). Four whole days without school, full of parading, colour, fun, laughing, floats and of course, how could we not mention the sheer number of free toys and sweets being thrown at us from left, right and centre. It was great seeing our exchange families having a good time together and enjoying themselves, while we got to try out some eccentric and delicious German food, such as ‘Currywurst’. Some of us even dressed up as part of the spirit! The floats also depicted a number of political satires and jokes and, with the current news affairs of 2018, we weren’t surprised to see Donald Trump and Kim Jong-UN at the forefront of the mockery, while Angela Merkel was also a prominent figure, as well as Brexit, rather surprisingly. It felt hard to imagine this kind of thing taking place in Watford at all, despite the cities not being too far apart in size. Another thing that seemed so unique was how united Mainz was, with the song ‘Wir sind Mainzer’ (We are the people of Mainz) being sung over and over.

After the excitement of the carnival, it was time to learn some history, whether we liked it or not, so on Wednesday, we went with our exchange partners to Bonn, the former capital of West Germany. We were taken around the ‘Haus der Geschichte’ (the Museum of History) and heard stories from Germans who were living during the time when Germany was separated. Afterwards, we were given some time to tour the city of Bonn and see some of its sights, one of which was Beethoven’s house in Bonn, which we wanted to see.

If all that history wasn’t enough, on the next day, we were taken to Osthofen, one of the first political concentration camps ever built in Germany. Osthofen Concentration Camp was built in 1933 and served political prisoners until July 1934. Despite the sunshine of the weekend, on that day it snowed heavily, and we were given a talk about Osthofen outside in the freezing cold, with snow up to our ankles. Somehow this was rather sombre, as it reminded us of the awful conditions at the camp only eighty years ago, where it would have been far colder. We were told of the harsh treatment and the daring plans, some of which succeeded, in an attempt to escape the camp. Thankfully,
there were very few deaths that occurred at the camp, and it was shut down after only a year and a half of operation, only to be replaced by far worse extermination camps across the country.

All too quickly came the last day, when the day began just as the trip had started, with another 2 hours of lessons in German school. Afterwards, we walked into town again and were given some time to shop and buy souvenirs. Some of us even had opportunities to try out some of the cake that Mainz had to offer, whilst others spent their time buying endless amounts of seuro ducks out of vending machines for our ‘families’, and of course, the families of our exchange partners who had looked after us so well over the ten days. It was a sad farewell, and as we rose up the escalator of the Mainz Hauptbahnhof (train station) and waved goodbye to our exchange partners (who we would see again in a month and a half when they came to Watford, but it was sad nonetheless), we found ourselves thinking about our experience and discovered that all of us have done something that we’ve never done before - go to a foreign country, live a foreign life and speak nothing but a foreign language for ten days.

The experience was amazing and we would highly recommend the trip to anyone given the opportunity. We found that our German speaking skills had improved by miles in just in the ten days from real life experience which can not be taught in a classroom, as well as having a great experience in the meantime. We’d like to thank Frau Webster and Frau Kotecha, as well as the teachers at the Schlossgymnasium Mainz, for arranging this amazing trip.

Finn Roberts 9P, Yueyang Han 9N

Palace of Westminster

The annual politics day-trip to the Palace of Westminster started this year in the Supreme Court. As it is the highest court of appeal in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and deals with many high-profile cases, it perhaps wasn't surprising that we arrived at the same time as several journalists and news companies who were all there competing to get a shot of a Rod Stewart look-alike, who arrived in a Bentley. This was Chris Mullins, CEO of Pimlico Plumbing who clearly enjoyed the attention even though he was being sued by an employee in a landmark case involving the gig economy. (He would go on to lose).

Once inside, we received an insightful talk that explained the role of the Supreme Court, the various different courtrooms in the building and details regarding recent high-profile cases. Although everyone on the trip would have liked to sit in and observe the court proceedings whilst we were there, the unimpressed security guards had other ideas. Roughly fifteen people were allowed in the courtrooms and the rest of the two classes on the trip were funnelled into a viewing gallery with a live TV feed. We left the Supreme Court knowing the main attraction was yet to come and, as we neared the Palace of Westminster, everyone was upbeat despite the dreary February weather. Once we got past all the security, we were introduced to our tour guides who apologised for the lack of heating in Westminster Hall and gave us an interesting and detailed tour of the Houses of Parliament. Whilst the sheer grandeur of the location was impressive, the highlight of the tour was undoubtedly learning about the quirky traditions maintained by politicians, peers and even the queen. Whether it be the taking of hostages by the monarch once parliament was in session, the queen’s secret toilet hidden behind a false panel or the wall-to-wall painting that has to be covered in the case of a French diplomatic visit, it had become clear that Parliament was about so much more than just politics.

After the tour, Mr. Horner had kindly organised a couple of Q&A sessions – most notably with Labour MP Gareth Snell – which gave us the opportunity to ask any questions we had regarding current politics as well as the suitability of politics as a future career option. Mr Snell offered some key insight into the workings of Parliament and especially about the prospects of the two party leaders in the nation’s spotlight (he believes Theresa May will not last until Christmas) and he somehow managed to get away without answering any tricky questions regarding Jeremy Corbyn's history as a “Soviet informant”.

After we had had the chance to ask all our questions and grab a bite to eat, we were fortunate enough to observe a Question Time session from the public viewing gallery. While there was no sign of either Theresa May or Jeremy Corbyn, we were all kept amused by the ever-exuberant Boris Johnson as he answered questions relating to his role as Foreign Secretary. Despite having the responsibility of maintaining order and control in the House of Commons, the Speaker – John Bercow – could be seen laughing out loud as Boris embarked on one wacky analogy after another.

While this trip was a thoroughly enjoyable experience, it is important to remember that its main function was to improve our knowledge and understanding of the Government and Politics course and a special thanks, therefore, must go to both Ms Riaz as well as Mr Horner for organising the trip and the speakers who answered our questions whilst we were there. I have no doubt that the trip will take place for many years to come and continue to be the valuable experience that it was for this year’s politics classes.

Connor O’Donnell L6G.
The first of our two Autumn Concerts took place on Wednesday 29th November to a packed audience in the Muse Concert Hall. The Brass Ensemble, led by Tom Watts, began the concert with the witty Cole Porter composition, Be A Clown, which included a multitude of percussion instruments ably played by our senior percussionists, Roshan Parmar, Paul Greally and Ashvin Kapilan. The second item was Ray Woodfield’s arrangement of some of Gershwin’s best melodies in his A Portrait of George Gershwin and the group were in fine form with this challenging work. After very generous applause, the Saxophone Ensemble performed Tango for Lisa and Yuppieville Rodeo, which gave all of the saxophone players a chance to shine with a short cadenza-like solo during the course of the piece. Our eight-strong ‘cello ensemble then played the dramatic Gonna Fly Now from Rocky and the challenges of the syncopated rhythms and high register demanded of the top ‘cello part were met with great skill by the ensemble and this was much appreciated by the audience. It was left to the Big Band to complete the proceedings for the first half with four pieces. Soul Bossa Nova, one of Quincy Jones’s famous melodies and later used as a theme tune for the Austin Powers movies provided a lively, carnival-style opening. Ellington’s Don’t Get Around Much Anymore gave Dhillon Dodhia and Matthew Kenny the opportunity to fashion a solo after some fine ensemble playing. Benedict Longstaff then took centre stage with his excellent rendition of Sinatra’s famous hit, I’ve Got You Under My Skin and Joel Kelion navigated the demands of the stratospheric trombone solo with great aplomb. A wonderful performance of Stevie Wonder’s Isn’t She Lovely, with great solos from Sam Finkelstein on guitar and Matthew Kenny on trumpet completed the set of pieces from this very talented group of musicians.

The two groups to perform in the second half of the concert were Crescendo Stings and Senior Wind Band. The former group performed the Presto from Gluck’s Sinfonia and this was followed by an excellent performance of Richard Kounitz’s seasonal piece The Siegh. The Senior Wind Band had been working on A Star Wars Epic during the term and performed the six movements, Duel of the Fates, Across the Stars, Revenge of the Sith, Princess Leia’s Theme, Imperial March and Star Wars-Main Title with great skill, providing a wonderful end to a superb first night of music, where every group excelled.

The Brass Band started the second concert with three contrasting pieces, played expertly: Marcangelo’s Clog Dance, Neil Hefti’s Cute, and Bill Conti’s For Your Eyes Only. The stage was then cleared for the Senior Choir’s excellent performance of Ecce Homo Qui Est Faba, perhaps better known as the theme music to Mr Bean and then Ned Ginsburg’s The Best Of Bond. Both pieces were very warmly received. The Junior and Senior Guitar Ensembles were programmed next with two short pieces that were very well controlled by the small groups. The Junior Brass Ensemble was next to perform with two pieces, It Don’t Mean a Thing by Ellington and Jingle Bell Rock by Beal and Boothe. These were excellent performances from a young group of players. To take us to the interval, the Friday Band, with a welcome addition of new Year 7 performers played three pieces. Their director, Stuart Quinan’s own Rock World, was followed by the atmospheric Finale from the Firebird by Stravinsky, beautifully controlled by this group of younger students. To provide a rousing conclusion to the first half, the group gave us an energetic performance of Philip Sparke’s Jamaica Farewell.

Following the interval, the Senior Strings played the first movement of Mendelssohn’s Sinfonie in D with great skill and energy and then, with the addition of the woodwind, brass and percussion players, the Senior Orchestra performed An American in Paris Suite followed by Elgar’s Pomp and Circumstance March No.1. The pieces were extremely well received, and deservedly so after much hard work had gone into preparing the programme. It had been a superb two days of music making. Congratulations to everyone involved in the preparations for the autumn concerts.
Prizegiving

Senior Prizegiving took place on the second day back after the Christmas holiday, on January 3rd. The proceedings were started by Reuben Gluck, who performed Ernest Bloch’s wonderfully evocative Prayer, from Jewish Life No 1, specially chosen with the guest speaker, Dame Helen Hyde in mind. The piece demanded great control - a beautiful lyrical line with great dynamic contrast particularly down to the quietest pianissimo - and Reuben certainly managed to achieve this in his performance. The musical interlude provided a complete contrast to the opening music. Eddie Cummins took centre stage to play Consuelo Velazquez’s Besame Mucho, a bolero and the most sung and recorded Mexican song in the world. The sound from Eddie’s saxophone was simply stunning, with every note having a life of its own, beautifully controlled and centred, sometimes whispered, sometimes strong. The Head Boy, Ralph Curwen, not only delivered a wonderful speech, but also then calmly moved over to the grand piano to perform exquisitely with the Fuller String Quartet in a performance of the opening movement of Dvorak’s 2nd Piano Quintet. This romantic chamber piece, one of the finest of its kind, gives everyone the opportunity to shine and it was brilliantly controlled throughout by the talented group of musicians, with Justin Ho and Nathan Kelion on violin, Andrew Lai on viola and Zac Clementson on ‘cello. A special mention must go to Andrew who is normally a violinist in the school orchestra, but learnt the viola part in a matter of weeks to cover for Tom Watts who was on a National Youth Orchestra course. For me, that was so typical of our musicians in school, real dedication, commitment and showing a real growth mindset.

Spring Concerts

The first of our two Spring term concerts took place on Wednesday 21st March and, for a change, the ‘Cello Ensemble started the proceedings with two pieces, Lascia Ch’io Planga by Handel and Flecha’s Riu, Riu, Chio. It is a great joy to see an ensemble such as this in action at school playing so well as it was not too many years ago that there were only a few cellists available to take part in school music. The instrument has had something of a renaissance since then! The Brass Band then performed two contrasting pieces most effectively, John Barry’s Bond theme, You Only Live Twice and Philip Sparke’s complex Finale from the Year of the Dragon. The Senior Choir also performed two contrasting works, Ramin Djawadi’s music from Game of Thrones and Mozart’s Gloria in Excelsis from the 12th Mass. The pieces were sung with great conviction and clarity and it was most pleasing to see the boys augmented by a selection of staff. The two Guitar Ensembles performed next, firstly the Junior group with the Air on a G string and then the Senior group with Dew Drops on a Misty Morn and Somewhere Over the Rainbow. The performances were extremely well received. The finale of the first half came with the Big Band and three pieces, the first of which was the classic American Patrol made famous by the Glenn Miller Big Band of the 1940s. This was followed by Neal Hefti’s Girl Talk featuring the silky saxophone sound of Eddie Cummins and to take us to the interval, another classic from another great Big Band leader and arranger, Ray Anthony. His Trumpet Boogie was performed superbly, with the trumpet section, in particular, being kept extremely busy by Anthony’s virtuosic lines!

The second half featured the Crescendo Strings with Ros Groves’s arrangement of Somewhere from West Side Story followed by another version of the Game of Thrones Theme. The pieces were played very skillfully and musically. To end the concert, it was the turn of the Senior Wind Band to perform their set of three pieces starting with Samuel Hazo’s Ride. This piece was a real challenge for the group with many time signature changes all at a very fast pace, but the group met the challenges very successfully. By way of a contrast, the second piece, Fantasy on a Japanese Folk Song, also by Samuel Hazo, was beautifully played with some wonderful melodic lines from the woodwind section and, no less important, the harp part performed magnificently by our special guest, Genevieve Watson. The final item of the concert was the foot-tapping music from Grease, which provided a great climax to the evening’s proceedings.

The Thursday evening programme started with a brand new piece for a brand new group, the Percussion Ensemble. Seven young percussionists took centre stage to perform a new work written by their tutor, Mr Jason Holling. The piece moved through a variety of colours before leading into the final climax: a great way to start the concert. The Friday Band then performed Katy Perry’s Firework and Mussorgsky’s The Great Gate of Kiev showing their flexibility in performing in two different styles very effectively. The Junior Brass Ensemble then performed Samuel Scheidt’s Galliard Battaglia from the Battle Suite, and Cecil Mack and James Johnston’s Charleston with some fine individual playing noted within the group. The Fuller Quartet had been enriched this year with the addition of Ralph Curwen as a pianist enabling them to tackle Dvorak’s Piano Quintet in A. The result was a wonderful performance exhibiting not only the technical skills of the group of musicians but also their wonderfully innate sense of musicianship. The Saxophone Ensemble performed two pieces linked by the performer and jazz composer Theolonius Monk. These pieces were played very well and enthusiastically under the direction of Sarah Brinkley. The Senior Brass Ensemble then completed the performances in the first half with Nacio Herb Brown’s Singin’ in the Rain, a real favourite of the group and it was played most musically. Their second piece was the wonderful evocation of Spain that is Lecuona’s Malaguena. One could sense a feeling of optimism that at any day soon the sun would shine!
The second half featured the two linked groups, firstly the Senior Strings and then the Senior Orchestra. The former group performed the Jig from the St. Paul’s Suite by Holst and then the first movement of the Bach Double Concerto featuring Justin Ho and Andrew Lai as the soloists. The skilful musicianship and technical ability of these two musicians was on show for all to see and this was a particularly fine rendition. The conclusion to the Spring Term concerts was met by the Senior Orchestra with an excellent rendition of Saint-Saens’s Carnival of the Animals. As the A level set contained six very fine pianists from a total of six students, the Director of Music decided that it would be an excellent idea to involve them all in one piece in one of their last concerts and so the idea of taking it in turns to play various movements of Saint-Saens’s masterpiece was born. The piece also drew on James Farnsworth’s double bass skills for the Elephant, Zac Clementson’s skills on the ‘cello for The Swan, and Christian White’s skilful positioning of just two notes for the Cuckoo. The whole affair was pulled together brilliantly by Josh Patel with his wonderful, clear voice delivering the poetic links before each movement was performed. Packed audiences had greeted both evenings’ varied and excellent performances with great enthusiasm, so many thanks once again for all the support from parents and friends alike. Once again, the boys had pulled out all the stops to deliver two days of outstanding music making - concerts to be very proud of.

Founders’ Day Events

We were all back at St. Michael’s for the second year running, with building works not yet completed at St Mary’s, so we didn’t have so far to go to celebrate Dame Fuller amongst others. The service opened with Bruckner’s wonderful motet, Christus Factus Est, performed by our Senior Brass Ensemble. This is a demanding piece and designed such that after climactic moments, there is a pause so that the sounds can echo around the open spaces of the church, and they did! This year’s hymns were Amazing Grace and Shine Jesus, Shine and Tom Watts was on hand to provide the beautifully evocative trumpet descant for the first of these. The Senior Choir performed the anthem Gloria in Excelsis from Mozart’s Twelfth Mass with great skill and energy and the final musical contribution was performed by Paul Greally, playing part of one of the Widor organ symphonies. This was a wonderful rendition that provided a fitting ending to the proceedings. The celebrations continued at school where a selection of musicians was on hand to provide musical contrast in between the narrative. Many thanks and congratulations go to Caleb Huang, Loshan Sabesan, Yueyang Han and Kaeshav Anand for providing the excellent music on this occasion.
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The Prizewinners and Performers’ Concert took place on the incredibly warm Thursday evening of our Arts Festival. Despite the concert clashing with England’s third qualification game in the Russian World Cup, there was still great support for the musicians that evening! We were treated to some magnificent solo performances from Aaryan Lal, George Digby, Bob Chan, Nicholas Watt, Kaeshav Anand, Shiv Rajababoo, Imran Omerdeen, Siddharth Nayar, Archie Stevens, Edward Chen, Tom Watts and Justin Ho. There were also fine performances from two sets of brothers, Ralph and Robbie Curwen with Rossini's William Tell Overture for piano duet, and Oliver and William Dunn with the Silver Sand Rag and Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy for flute and clarinet.

The Friday Band, always a mainstay at the summer concert performed Bruno Mars's Uptown Funk and also gave Archie Agnew and Kabir Kaul the chance to play the solo horn part in the second movement from Mozart’s third horn concerto, and they rose to the occasion quite superbly. The Junior Brass Ensemble, this year augmented to 19 members performed John Barry's theme from Goldfinger to great aplomb and the Senior Choir sang two lively, modern pieces, with great gusto, firstly Justin Timbrake's Can't Stop the Feeling followed by Pharrell Williams's Havana. To take us to the interval, it was the turn of the Staff Choir to grace the occasion, performing Green Day's Time of your Life and Lennon and McCartney's Hello, Goodbye. Only in their second year of existence, the members of the choir, including Mr. Cooksey, were in fine voice.

The second half of the concert started with two guitar groups and two guitar soloists and it was great to hear some fine ensemble clarity and the great dexterity of the solo players. The Crescendo Strings were joined by Tom Watts and Stuart Quintian on trumpet to give a fine rendition of the first movement of Boyce's Symphony No. 5 in D. The finale of the concert was reserved for the joint winners of the Rosebowl, Tom Watts and Justin Ho. Tom played the last movement of the Gregson Concerto for trumpet and Justin played the Polonaise Brillante in A by Wienawski for the violin. These two performances were simply stunning, both students fully deserving the accolade bestowed upon them. The Kienitz cup was awarded to Eddie Cummins and James Farnsworth for their wonderful support of eight extra-curricular music groups over seven years, Eddie on alto saxophone and clarinet and James on double bass. The Nigel Compton Cup was awarded to Dhillon Dodhia, tenor saxophone, and Ethan Honey, trumpet, both students who started their instruments when they arrived at Watford in year 7, going on to secure excellent results in their Grade 8 examinations this year. Surely an example to everyone, illustrating what can be achieved with a growth mindset.

It had been sad to hear about the passing of a great supporter of school music, Mrs Jean Walford, who ran the Fuller Memorial Library for many years. She was always very interested in the progress of young musicians at Watford Boys and attended the majority of our concerts, so it seemed very fitting to create a new award for music in her name. So the Jean Walford Rising Stars Award was presented for the first time to Kaeshav Anand, not only for his virtuoso piano performance at the Competition, but also for his excellent achievement in his first grade on the oboe.

As ever, it would be very difficult to showcase all of our instrumentalists in the one summer concert, so congratulations need to go to all those who entered the competition making it such a successful arena to display our talented student musicians. Indeed, Dr. Nigel Springthorpe, our excellent adjudicator at the competition back in April was overwhelmed by the standard of the performances. Thank you all for another highly successful year of music!

Staff Choir

The staff choir was set up in the summer term of 2017 and, on its first performance at the final assemblies at the end of last year, drew surprised gasps from the school audience as members of staff stepped forward from around the hall and began to sing. At the end of performance, there was appreciative applause from students who heard members from all corners of the school community - office staff, support staff, teachers, (including members of the senior leadership team and the Headmaster) join in a four part harmony rendition of a song by Green Day.

Rehearsals take place in the summer term only, and though some staff sing in choirs outside school, for many it’s their first opportunity to sing in a choir and is an opportunity for fun and a short escape from school emails, marking and lesson preparation. Membership of the choir is by willingness to attend rehearsals and perform in front of parents and students – no audition is required.

The school choir has been such a successful experience, socially and musically, that it has now become embedded into the School Development Plan and the Music Team Development Plan. Caroline Cox who selects a popular repertoire to reflect the occasions of performances directs the choir. This year as the Music Department was in Germany on tour at the end of term and will miss the final assemblies, the choir sang at the Leavers’ Lunch.

We are looking forward to next year and all members of staff are welcome to join.

Prizewinners’ Concert

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Sh

Opening Concert Season 2018/19

Saturday 17th November 2018 - 7.30pm

Clarendon Muse Concert Hall

Watford Grammar School for Boys

Mahler: ‘‘Totenfeier’’

Grieg: ........ Piano Concerto

Sibelius: ........ Symphony no 1

Conductor : Stuart Dunlop  Soloist : Anna Geniushene

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Rhineland Concert Trip

The romantic Middle Rhine is a river valley straight out of a diorama, with vertiginous cliffs, steep vineyards, and castles perched on virtually every hilltop and quaint villages. The scenery is the stuff of dreams and as a result of its charm and rich cultural heritage, UNESCO designated the Upper Middle Rhine Valley a World Heritage area.

We are lucky that the school has a long, deep relationship with this area - our very successful exchange with the Schloss-Gymnasium in Mainz. The 57 students, members of the Senior Orchestra, Senior Wind Band and Big Band, and 7 teachers, eagerly anticipated this trip.

After a surprisingly smooth 12-hour journey through some fantastic, panoramic landscapes, we reached Kaub. It is most well known for its location close to the 14th century Pfalzgartenstein Castle on an island in the middle of the majestic river, which our hotel overlooked. Our hostel, the Rheinsteig-Jugendherberge, was an 18th century building with great views of the Rhine.

The following day, we were presented with awe-inspiring views with a river cruise to the small, quaint town of St. Goar. Nearby is the famous Rheinfels Castle, the largest in the Rhine Valley, as well as Lorelei Rock; according to legend, the mellifluous voice of the Lorelei lured sailors to their deaths. At St. Goar, we immediately experienced the quintessentially German atmosphere, and noticed several souvenir shops selling cuckoo clocks and clogs.

On Friday, we performed our first concert later in Bad Bertrich, a small spa town in the Eifel region of the Rhineland, most famous for its health and fitness resort, as well as a natural spring. We performed in a rather large and beautifully maintained open square and were happy with the high attendance for our first concert.

The repertoire for our concerts was diverse. The orchestra opened with the epic Millennium by Richard Meyer, followed by a British classic, Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance No.1 (always performed at the Last Night of the Proms). We also performed a medley from West Side Story by Leonard Bernstein. We finished with Arturo Marquez's Danzon No.2, which was very fun to play! The Senior Strings played Bach's Double Violin Concerto, with soloists Justin Ho and Andrew Lai performing at the highest level as always.

The Senior Wind Band performed John Williams' dramatic Star Wars soundtrack, including the Main Theme, Duel of the Fates from Episode I and Darth Vader's theme, The Imperial March. The Big Band completed the concert, performing groovy hits, such as Pharrell's Happy and Stevie Wonder's Isn't She Lovely.

The next day, we arrived in Koblenz, the 3rd-largest city in the Rhineland. Our first stop was to the Deutsches Eck (or German Rock). This is the point where two of the region's most famous and important rivers, the Rhine and Moselle, confluence. The point is also highly significant for the nation; the flags for all 16 states of Germany stand there, as well as those of the EU and US.

Saturday’s concert included a superb solo, this time of Bach's Prelude and Fugue on the organ by Paul Greally. Once again, we were rewarded by a high attendance, with many people outside in the Florinsmarkt Square stopping to watch and experience parts of the wonderful repertoire. We were presented with a challenge – the acoustics – which we passed with flying colours, with the appreciative audience giving a long standing ovation at the end. We all felt thrilled by the response.

On Sunday, we went to Rüdesheim, a small town popular with tourists, especially in the summer. There, we visited Siegfried's Mechanical Music Cabinet, the first German museum of mechanical musical instruments. We thoroughly enjoyed the performances by an in-built orchestra, a fairground cabinet, and another cabinet with violins incorporated. For those who had sufficient funds, you could buy a music box of silver for 6600 euros. Apart from this, we had lots of free time to explore this typical, chocolate-box town through the narrow cobbles.

Our final concert took place in Bad Münster am Stein-Ebernburg, another small spa town in the heart of the Rhineland. What pleased us the most was that this attracted the largest audience of our tour, who listened to the riveting repertoire.

The venue was packed out and in addition, we had a constant flow of people passing the bandstand, either stopping or coming in! It was a great success. The pupils were thrilled with the stage and audience size, and we certainly rose to the occasion. Many audience members came to compliment us afterwards.

The days seemed to have flown by. On Monday, we made good progress by arriving in Calais two-and-a-half hours early, despite around two hours worth of stops, and arrived back at school at the reasonable time of 10pm.

The tour was a resounding success, despite it being the last concerts, and indeed, involvement with the school for our Upper Sixth students (including myself). The trip encapsulated the school’s opportunities and positivity that we have experienced over the last seven years. I was privileged to make extensive use of my German, and allowed to deliver the introductions for each concert, thanks to studying it with the wonderful Modern Foreign Languages Department that we have.
Now time for the Oscar winner’s speech...
Thanks must go to Roy, our tremendous tour manager with a wealth of knowledge and speaking like a native German. To our entertaining and skilled drivers, Mick and Paul, who encountered and defeated any obstacles thrown at them, including accessing the Eurotunnel train, contraflows, low bridges, and, most of all, their care, attention and safe driving.
Das deutsche Publikum hat uns viele Spende (tips) gegeben, also müssen wir natürlich Ihnen bedanckn. “Kleinwieh macht auch Mist,” or “small amounts add to something bigger.” Most of our audiences rewarded our group with generous tips of appreciation.
The school staff, as ever, were great company and made the trip what it is – an exciting, memorable experience. We would like to thank Mr. Quinlan for organising and leading a fantastic tour to the Rhineland. Mr. Hussey and Mrs. Cox, with their enthusiasm, also demonstrated their excellent leadership of the Senior Orchestra and Strings respectively, so profound thanks to them as well. Not to forget Miss D’Arcy, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Thoroid and Mr. Palmer for their contributions on the flute, oboe, trombone and trumpet.
“Übung macht den Meister,” a famous German saying meaning practice makes perfect, which held true for this tour; putting in the hours either in lessons, rehearsals or at home paid off. We all demonstrated our capabilities to the highest standard, the reason why the audiences gave such a large amount of tips.

Deven Voralia

Music Competition Winners 2018

BEGINNER PIANO
Dylan Mistry playing The Irish Grasshopper by Madeleine Dring.

LOWER SCHOOL PIANO
Kaeshav Anand playing the Toccatina by Nikolai Kapustin.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PIANO
Bob Chan playing Nocturne in C# minor by Chopin.

UPPER SCHOOL PIANO
Nicholas Watt playing Golliwog’s Cakewalk by Debussy.

BEGINNER STRINGS
Fred Roberts playing Landler by Carl Reinecke on the violin.

LOWER SCHOOL STRINGS
Siddarth Nayar playing the first movement from the Concerto in A minor by Bach for the violin.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STRINGS
Edward Chen playing the Introduction and Polonaise by Carl Bohm for the violin.

UPPER SCHOOL STRINGS
Justin Ho playing the Polonaise Brillante in A op. 21 by Wieniawski for the violin.

LOWER SCHOOL WOODWIND
Aaryan Lal playing Fred’n’Ginger by Geoffrey Russell-Smith on the recorder.

MIDDLE SCHOOL WOODWIND
Oliver Dunn playing the first movement of Sonata No. 6 by Bach for the flute.

UPPER SCHOOL WOODWIND
Ashley Hatch Playing Weber’s Concertino for the clarinet.

LOWER SCHOOL BRASS
George Digby playing A Trumpeter’s Lullaby by Leroy Anderson.

MIDDLE SCHOOL BRASS
Shared between Thomas Connor playing the Largo and Allegro by Marcello on the tuba and Owen Dunn playing the second movement of the Trumpet Concerto by Haydn.

UPPER SCHOOL BRASS
Tom Watts playing highlights from the Concerto by Arutunian for the trumpet.

LOWER SCHOOL PERCUSSION
David Roberts playing No one Knows by Josh Hompeae on the kit.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PERCUSSION
Shared between Praveen Kathirvasan playing Dance with the Devil by Cozy Powell and Lakeshman Rajaloganathan playing his own composition, both on the kit.

UPPER SCHOOL PERCUSSION
Peter Noren playing Welcome to Paradise by Green Day on the kit.

VOCAL CLASS
Archie Stevens singing If I Can’t Love Her from Beauty and the Beast by Alan Menken and Tim Rice.

GUITARS YEARS 7-9
Shiv Rajababoo playing El Caminante by Ernesto Cordero.

GUITARS YEARS 10+
Imran Omerdeen playing Unravel by Toru Kitajima

ENSEMBLES YEARS 7-9
Oliver Dunn and William Dunn playing Silver Sand Rag-anon and Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy by Tchaikovsky for flute and clarinet.

ENSEMBLES YEARS 10-U6
The Fuller Quintet; Justin Ho, Nathan Kelion, Tom Watts, Zac Clementson and Ralph Curwen (piano) playing the first movement of the Piano Quintet no. 2 in A op. 81 by Dvorak

BANDS CLASS

WORLD INSTRUMENTS
Sivanujan Sivakumaran performing Maha Ganapathim-Eka Thaalalim by Muthuswami Dikshitar.

OPEN CONCERTO CLASS
Tom Watts playing the third movement from the Trumpet Concerto by Edward Gregson

ROSEBOWL WINNERS
Justin Ho and Tom Watts

KIENITZ WINNERS
James Farnsworth and Eddie Cummins

NIGEL COMPTON WINNER
Dhillon Oohdia and Ethan Honey

JEAN WALFORD RISING STARS WINNER
Kaeshav Anand.
Year 11

Ben Roig

Angus Forrest

Abbieshek Prabakaran

Jaseepan Seralathan

Martin Hillman

Milo Walsh

Parth Pandya

David O’Brien

Daniel Miller
Lower Sixth

Nicholas Watt

Zach O’Malley

Saahil Arora

Dominic Reed

THE FULLERIAN 2017-18 69
DT Year 11

Fineas Ivan

David O'Brien

Zebedee Jacobs

Laksh Anand

Sid Rao
DT Upper Sixth

Sany Santhosh

Kieran Shah

Dillon Fisher

Romario Ranabahu
On the 10th and 11th of July an artist, named Sheila de Rosa, came to teach us about solar printing.

Sheila de Rosa is an amazing artist who uses a variety of different materials and processes, with printmaking as the main part of her work. She is currently running and owns an art studio in Tring, Hertfordshire, where she combines both her arts practice with educational work and commissions. Sheila has individual projects that are grouped around specific topics and brings new areas of interests into her style of art. She has a really positive attitude and is very dedicated, which shows in her ways of teaching in secondary schools and colleges. Sheila de Rosa was really calm and joyful and this rubs off in the room and everyone enjoyed the day. She was very inspirational as she helped us understand, practise and love a new style of printmaking, which is not one that we see every day, namely solar printing.

As we entered the art room, we were welcomed by Sheila de Rosa, who then introduced herself. She explained about the risks involved and how we could prevent anything dangerous from happening such as getting a cut. Our art teachers photocopied our drawings on transparent film and this image was to be transferred onto the light sensitive plates. Sheila brought us into the room where we would create our solar prints.

Solar printing is an exciting and highly creative process which enables images to be established onto metal plates by the exposure to sunlight or an ultraviolet light source, to produce permanent images which can then be printed multiple times. The plates are washed in water and can be printed. As a specialist in this field, Sheila showed us two different methods called relief and double exposure.

In the double exposure method, our images were photocopied onto a transparent film and the darker areas became the image. Then we placed a special aquatint screen with solar plate and exposed it to the light for ninety seconds. The aquatint covered the sheet of film with very small random dots, this was our first exposure,
Exhibition at the Mall Gallery

Once again the Art department has successfully entered and had accepted four students from year 11 and their work to the National Students exhibition at the Mall Gallery London.

The National Students’ Art Exhibition ran from 18th July 2018 to 21 July 2018 and featured work by some of the best young artists, aged 12 to 18, selected from schools, colleges and academies across the country.

This is a highly prestigious exhibition and a formal event which is attended by not only students, their teachers and families but is also open to the general public.

The work entered for this year’s exhibition included work by the following artists: Jaseepan Seralathan (two pieces), Daniel Miller, and Milo Walsh. The quality of the work was truly outstanding and the Art department is very proud that so many of our students were awarded exhibition space in this beautiful gallery and also awarded the privilege of exhibiting alongside professional artists and members of The Federation of British Artists (FBA) which comprises eight of the UK’s leading art societies, specializing in oil, portrait, marine, wildlife, watercolour, pastel, printmaking and sculpture.

G Woods

Over the summer break, the school went through numerous changes, one being the development to the Art block, much to the envy of those working in Technology. Previously there had been two dimly lit classrooms and a narrow side room in which the many sixth formers had been crammed into to work.

Since the developments however, three spacious and bright rooms have greatly prevented open areas occurring and allows us to make our images more tonal. Our second exposure is when the transparent images and the solar plate were sandwiched between a sheets of glass exposed to the light source for a timed period. This was for forty-five seconds which allowed the image to be transferred onto the solar plate which we then washed to get our permanent images; it was almost like magic at first. One thing I will always remember is when we washed our plates; everyone thought it stunk the room out like garlic bread. It is a very versatile artistic medium, explores different drawing types and vivid mark making.

Relief is also known as ‘single exposure’, where the engraved plate is inked up using a traditional print roller and picks up the raised areas only.

After we made our plates, we then set up to start printing and managed to produce a range of prints which we then learnt how to correctly name as if we were printing professionally.

Overall, I think we had great fun and really had a merry time with Sheila and we all wish we could do it for another day or even weeks. Furthermore, we were allowed to explore different materials and produce fantastic artwork to be proud of. We would like to thank Sheila de Rosa for her time to come down and teach us and it was a pleasure to work with her.

Saif Bashir 10G

New Developments to the Art Block

Over the summer break, the school went through numerous changes, one being the development to the Art block, much to the envy of those working in Technology. Previously there had been two dimly lit classrooms and a narrow side room in which the many sixth formers had been crammed into to work.

Since the developments however, three spacious and bright rooms have greatly benefited both the students and teachers, with an area now for completing work outside of lesson time while still having all of the resources to hand. On top of this, the Art department has updated its technology with new iPads, laptops and light boards pushing the students’ limitless possibilities further – if that’s even possible! With the role of digital technologies in the world becoming ever-increasingly used, it is important that the particular departments; especially Art, have kept up with this change. Access to applications such as Photoshop have been greatly beneficial for composing artwork. All in all, the developments have been a great improvement encouraging students in the lower years to carry on their interest in the subject.

Jack Osmond L6C
This season was the last time many of us would line up to represent the school, as we have done for the past seven years, and whilst there were a few games that were narrowly lost, there were also victories against some of the top local sides. Our first match of the season, against Richard Hale School, was played with some notable absentees and unfortunately resulted in a 27-24 loss but our performances only improved from then on.

Fresh from our opening match defeat, we produced a free scoring display to blow away St. Columba's College 53-20. This was made more impressive by the fact we played a portion of the second half with 14 men after Nathaniel, an ex-pupil of St. Columba's, managed to get himself sent off.

Other notable victories came against local rivals Haberdashers’ Aske’s and St. Albans schools. These two hotly contested games in which the latter went right down to the wire with the win coming from a Max Baker penalty in the dying minutes of the match were two of our best performances of the season, won with strong defensive efforts.

Overall, this season has been thoroughly enjoyable and will be remembered as a successful one. A big thank you to Mr. Dawson and Mr. Panter, without whom this season would not have been possible. Another thank you goes out to the boys who gave up their Saturday mornings to play, especially the Lower Sixth who helped make this season a memorable last. Congratulations to Ayo Fasanya, Player of the Season, and Nathan Kelion, Most Improved Player was Aidan Sharkey. I feel very proud to have played alongside and captained such a great set of lads, creating a lot of memories that will sit with me for a long time. We would also like to say thank you to Mr. Dawson, alongside Mr. Dooodson and Mr. Panter who all instilled a sense of professionalism within the group, supported us and organised training and matches throughout the season.

Craig Beeston U6P

Squad: Craig Beeston (Capt), Zakariyya Yunis, Harry Clements, Matteo Ponzini, Michael Onyekuru, Aidan Sharkey, George Hickey, Adam Tucker, Euan Wiley (Vice-Capt), Max Baker, Max Brown, Waleed Malik, Olutobi Odanye, Francis Appiah-Danquah, Thomas Milford, Maxwell Porter, Sam Boyce, Thomas Walsh, Ayo Fasanya, Nathan Kelion, Ethan Meller, Colm Finnegan, Haaris Malik, Peter Noren, Benjamin Plunkett

The First XV finished the season with a positive win ratio of 7 wins from 13 games, with the season culminating in a valiant County Cup Final performance – unfortunately falling just short. Both year groups involved this year have struggled throughout the school – lacking a sense of confidence which was reflected in the results from Years 7 until 11. However this year under the guidance of Mr Dawson, Mr Doodson and Mr Panter, an increased sense of belief was instilled.

The season started slowly with losses to Richard Hale, St Columba's and Merchant Taylor's Schools – the Columba's College game being one we really should have won (losing to a try in the last 5 minutes). But it was the County Cup where performances improved, with a substantial win over Parmiters School followed by an impressive win over St Albans in the Quarter Final. This win over St Albans was the highlight of the season for the team; whereby we managed to score five tries in the first 15 minutes of the game. The game was watched by a large crowd of students, parents and teachers (labelling themselves Mr Dawson's Barmy Army – led by Jacob Culshaw and Louis Harris with the drum). The intensity in both attack and defence enabled full control over St Albans throughout the game, which finished 32-17. We then recorded victories over Haberdashers' Aske's, Bedford Modern, Queen Elizabeth's Barnet and Bishop's Stortford High Schools as well as a victory over Verulam School to reach the County Cup Final. In the final we encountered very strong opposition in the form of Haileybury - an exciting prospect for the team to play one of the top rugby playing schools in the country. Although we were unable to beat Haileybury in the final, the performance was impressive in terms of the skill level shown in both attack and defence - notably because of the level of heart shown throughout. The Player of the Season award was won by Craig Beeston and the Most Improved Player was Aidan Sharkey. I feel very proud to have played alongside and captained such a great set of lads, creating a lot of memories that will sit with me for a long time. We would also like to say thank you to Mr. Dawson, alongside Mr. Doodson and Mr. Panter who all instilled a sense of professionalism within the group, supported us and organised training and matches throughout the season.

Craig Beeston U6P

Squad: Craig Beeston (Capt), Zakariyya Yunis, Harry Clements, Matteo Ponzini, Michael Onyekuru, Aidan Sharkey, George Hickey, Adam Tucker, Euan Wiley (Vice-Capt), Max Baker, Max Brown, Waleed Malik, Olutobi Odanye, Francis Appiah-Danquah, Thomas Milford, Maxwell Porter, Sam Boyce, Thomas Walsh, Ayo Fasanya, Nathan Kelion, Ethan Meller, Colm Finnegan, Haaris Malik, Peter Noren, Benjamin Plunkett

Squad: Shenal De Almeida, Nathaniel Oggunyi, Charles Manieson, Jake Lees, Nathan Kelion (Capt), Thomas Wright, Ayo Fasanya, Peter Noren (Vice-Capt), Thomas Stock, Daniel Ezekiel, Haaris Malik, Angus Finnegan, Kiran Vyas, Jamie Ivory, Aaron Manu, Rufus Brooks, Festus Mensah, Benjamin Plunkett

Nathan Kelion U6B

2nd XV

Squad: Shenal De Almeida, Nathaniel Oggunyi, Charles Manieson, Jake Lees, Nathan Kelion (Capt), Thomas Wright, Ayo Fasanya, Peter Noren (Vice-Capt), Thomas Stock, Daniel Ezekiel, Haaris Malik, Angus Finnegan, Kiran Vyas, Jamie Ivory, Aaron Manu, Rufus Brooks, Festus Mensah, Benjamin Plunkett
This year, our U16 only managed to play 7 matches, with big wins against Queen Elizabeth Barnet, St George’s, Bedford Modern Schools, St Cumbria’s College and 3 losses to Merchant Taylor’s, St Albans, and University College schools. Unfortunately we had 4 schools cancel their matches against us but, despite this, we all had a very enjoyable season.

We had some great highlights this year, with some excellent running rugby being played. Our backs operated well with Ed Stock controlling play at fly half, and Will Bishop and Josh Dawood offering hard running lines in the centres. James Simmons was a big running threat, carving through defences from fullback. Our forwards also came a long way this season with Tommy Wheeler securing any ball at scrum time and Jack Shute running the line out, which offered us a great platform from set piece. Aron Finkelstein and Billy Balchin were also very useful ball carriers, making lots of metres and offering excellent support lines.

We started the season well, with a very hard fought game against St Cumbria’s at home where, despite their late comeback, we secured a 29-26 win with some great running rugby on show. After 2 losses against very good Merchant Taylor’s and St Albans sides we recovered well with an excellent 54-0 win against St George’s School, Harpenden. This was followed by our most satisfying win as a team, against Bedford Modern School, a team we had absolutely no idea about, as this was our first fixture against them. Bedford requested to play a mix team and a lot of our non regular players really stepped up and despite a late comeback from Bedford our defence held strong and we saw out a hard fought 12-6 win. This was particularly satisfying as both of our tries were scored from well-practised backs moves. We finished the season strongly with a 22-12 win over Queen Elizabeths Barnet at home.

As a team we’d like to thank Mr Carr and Mr Davies for taking us for two of our matches, while Mr Beere was on paternity leave, to Mr Dawson for helping out with some of our training and to Mr Wallis for arranging all our fixtures. Lastly a big thanks must go to Mr Beere for running all our training and games sessions, allowing us to play our matches, and investing so much time in our age group over the past two years.

James Milford 11B

SQUAD: James Milford (Capt), Benjamin Adonis, Tommy Wheeler, Joshua Pressler, Kushal Budhdeo, Aron Finkelstein, Amash Shiraz, Jack Shute, Billy Balchin, James Milford, Edward Stock, Josh Dawood, William Bishop, Angus Forrest, James Ryan, James Simmons, Shun Asano, Ewan Cooney, Anthony Lau, Hayyan Khan, Ben Buffery, Oliver Tattersall, Jack Osborne, Robbie Curwen, Dion Wall, Siraaj Shah, Emmanuel Zewdu
It has been a tough but rewarding year of rugby for the U14s. The A team played 11 matches, winning 4 and losing 7. Despite the results, the boys made tremendous improvements in all aspects of the game. We came up against some tough opposition that we never stood down to. I'm sure the boys would agree that the best game of the season was the 24-39 defeat to St. Albans in the County Cup. Our first half was below our expectations, and we only managed a single try, whilst the opposition hammered on the points. Although our first half was disappointing, we gathered at half time and never let our heads drop. In the second half we mustered on and brought the game back, scoring 4 more tries. Our true team spirit and determination was outstanding in a tough defeat.

None of our success and improvement would have been possible if it wasn't for the excellent commitment from our coaches. Mr. Williams managing the team fantastically well and Mr. Eddon helping enormously with the coaching. The perseverance from both coaches was excellent and all of the boys owe them a huge thank you.

The season rounded off with the awards evening. Josh Adonis was awarded Player of the Season, and Ben Beesley Most Improved. Well done to all the boys, you should be extremely proud of yourselves.

**Ben Beesley 9F**
Squad: Ben Beesley (Capt), Deen Hussain, Harry Burke, Arham Butt, Ajay Chopra, Ajeet Prabu, Roshan Shah, Joshua Hurst, Faris Puffett (Vice-Capt), Joshua Adonis, Andre Childs Dos Santos, Owen Bunn, Matthew Schofield, Nathan Allen, Simon Kato, Daniel Goudarzi, Luke Powney

**Finn Mclean 8P**
Squad: Finn McLean (Capt), Suleman Ali, Fred Maggi, Haroon Sohail, Reuben Messik, Elorm Dumor, Ekiye Tobi, Pedro De Almeida, Jack Law (Vice-Capt), Zaki Brister, Ben Cutmore, Jesse Nwebube, Oisin McGuiness, Dilan Varshani, Shad Rasha, Mike Gray

After a tough previous season everybody in the team really wanted to improve and get some good results against teams that had beaten us last season. We kicked things off with a bad loss against a very good Richard Hale team but I'm sure that if we played them at the end of the season things would have been very different as, like last year, the improvement from the first match to the last was astronomical. A week later we came up against St Columba's College and although we were losing, there were some impressive moments with our first try of the season coming from the Player of the Season, Shad Rasha. An excellent performance against Magdalen College School secured us our first win of the season with Finn (2), Reuben, Zaki, Dilan and Shad among the try scorers. The final score was 30 - 15. A hard earned 40 - 30 victory against St Albans School was next with Reuben producing a fine kick to set up Jesse to score our best try of the game. It was at this point when we all thought that we could just turn up and win. St George's taught us the big lesson that you have to want to win more than the other team and we didn't that day. However, we bounced back just 3 days later with a convincing victory against Monks Walk School with Fred among the scorers. A couple of weeks later, we went off on the long trip to Bedford Modern School and despite our good performance, went home empty handed. The following week we played one of our best performances of the season in a tricky fixture against Haberdashers' Aske's School. After leading for large chunks of the game many players got tired and Habs capitalised leaving us empty handed.

Probably our best performance of the season was against Tring School. We had been told many times that if we didn't win then the Tring coach - Mr O’Gorman’s rugby teammate - would never let him live it down. We rose to the occasion and great performances from the likes of Dilan, Zaki, and Fred meant that we had done our coach proud. A couple of cancelled fixtures due to weather and pitch conditions meant that our season had come to an end. The many forwards who I have not mentioned have not been unnoticed and have been the driving force of our team from the first whistle to the last. All players who took part in any of our games this season deserve a huge praise for giving every game their all. A special thanks to Mr O’Gorman for all of the extra work that he did to give us as much chance as possible to improve as rugby players and to Mr Doodson for doing likewise for the B-team, who also had a great season.

At the rugby supper, Shad Rasha received Player of the Season and Haroon Sohail received Most Improved.

Well done to the whole team for a great and enjoyable season.

The season rounded off with the awards evening. Josh Adonis was awarded Player of the Season, and Ben Beesley Most Improved. Well done to all the boys, you should be extremely proud of yourselves.

**U12**

The first season for U12s has been very successful. At the start of the year, not many of the boys had played rugby before, but hard work has developed them in to excellent rugby players. After a slow start, we lost our first 2 games, but picked up to win 4 games consecutively. The run ended with a 5-2 loss against Campion School, however that was probably our best performance. Campion were an extremely well organised team, and although we were losing, there were some impressive moments with our first try of the season coming from the Player of the Season, and Ben Beesley Most Improved. Well done to all the boys, you should be extremely proud of yourselves.
Alex Lozowski

Congratulations to Premiership Champion Alex Lozowski! During his time at WBGS Alex was the starring fly half for the 1st XV. He went on to study Economics at the University of Leeds where he signed a professional rugby contract with Leeds Carnegie. After an excellent season at Leeds, Alex made a move to Wasps and then on to Saracens RFC in 2016. Alex has had an impressive 2 years at Saracens and he is now a regular in the England training squad and was instrumental in Saracens' win over Exeter in the 2018 Premiership final.

Watford Grammar School Rugby enthusiasts are very excited about the road ahead for Alex and we will be following his career developments closely. Alex has always been a keen supporter of WBGS Rugby and attended the end of season rugby awards in 2017 to meet some of the current WBGS rugby players.
Cricket

1st XI

The 1st team have had a tough season winning 3 games, drawing 1 and losing 6. We have been involved in some fantastic matches this season but unfortunately three of these losses came on the last ball of the match. Tom Stock won Player of the Season scoring 236 runs with three consecutive 50s to finish his WBGS cricket career. He has been a brilliant captain for the 1st team over the last two years. We are saying good bye to the majority of the 1st team. A big thanks to Ralph Curwen, Dhillon Dhodia, Rohan Pau, Tom Milford, Aushan Gosrani, Harris Malik and Shrey Parikh. Player of the Season: Tom Stock.

2nd XI

It has been a mixed season for the 2nd XI this year with 3 wins, 3 defeats, and 2 matches lost to the weather. We achieved victories against John Lyon, University College and Queen Elizabeth’s Grammar Schools. We also narrowly lost to Harrow School, which included an exciting 30 runs off 12 balls not out from Ralph Curwen, but we unfortunately lost out in the final over.

Johnny Napier was a standout performer with the ball and he improved hugely as the season went on, exemplified by a 5 wicket haul in the final match of the season against Haberdashers’ Aske’s School. Devang Arya was our most consistent bowler, taking one 5 wicket haul and being continually economical as a bowler, earning himself a call up to the 1st XI. Dylan Patel also bowled well throughout the season, also gaining a place in the 1st XI as a result.

James Ryan showed great maturity with the bat, including a vital 41 against St Albans School, and will hope to push on to the 1st XI next year. Romario Ranabahu scored an excellent 50 against Queen Elizabeth’s School, helping to take us to victory.

This season could be described as transitional, with a number of experienced Sixth Formers moving up to the First Team, and a hugely talented Year 11 group coming through. I must thank Mr Dawson for all the hard work he has put in over the season both as a coach and as an umpire; standing out there on a freezing April Saturday requires great commitment! I must also thank Mr Doodson for all his work and coaching.

Squad: Josh Pickard (C), Ben Plunkett (VC), James Ryan, Robbie Curwen, Romario Ranabahu, Devang Arya, Dylan Patel, Johnny Napier, Jack McRae, Jamie Ivory, Angus Forrest, Ebrahim Raja, Waleed Malik, Harry Kendal, Jacob Culshaw.

U15

The U15s enjoyed a good cricket year, winning 9 out of our 14 matches, losing 4 and drawing 1. We started this season with a tight defeat to St Albans School, losing by just 10 runs, but it did include a few highlights, including an excellent 50 from Sageeran Sudagar. However, we were able to bounce back well with a close finish against Queen Elizabeth Boys, with Shay Rafter finishing the game well. This was followed by a comfortable victory against Enfield Grammar School at the New Field.

However, this season, the main aim was at the National and County Cups, but disappointment followed as we lost two close matches against Ipswich School in the first round of the National Cup, and then to St Albans School in the
It has been a fantastic year of cricket for the U14s. Playing 13 games and winning 7 was an exceptional effort, considering our tough opposition. From Year 7, the boys have undoubtedly improved in all aspects of the game and should all continue to do so. I'm sure the boys would agree that our best game of the season was that against St. Albans School in the County Cup when we bowled them out for 73 in 16 overs, and a special mention must go to Ben Beesley who bowled 4 overs 5 wickets 2 runs. We knocked off the runs to win by 9 wickets. A true team spirit and determination shone through, which was unquestionably the key to our success. Furthermore, reaching the County Cup semi-final and just falling short was an immense effort against a tough Haberdashers’ side. Toby Elliott should be mentioned for an excellent 137* in the last game of the season as should Priyansh Gajera for another great year with the ball.

None of our success and improvement would have been possible if it wasn't for the true commitment from our coaches: Mr. Grinham managing the side extremely well and Mr. Samarasinghe tirelessly organising pitches and helping to coach us. We owe them a huge thank you. Well done to all the boys who represented the A team this year - you should all be very proud of yourselves. I shall look forward to another season of great success.

Squad: Joshua Adonis, Sayam Azhar, Ben Beesley (Capt), Dhruv Desai, Tobias Elliott, Neeyam Patel, James Stock, Kairu Edwards, Cem Harwood, Priyansh Gajera, Dhruv Kalavadia

U13

The U13s have made huge improvements after a tough season last year; they won 6 out of their 12 games with superb wins against St Albans, Dr Challoner's and University College Schools. The bowling has been a real positive with Rishi Chohan, Amveerjeet Gurung and Shayan Patel leading the way in the pace department. The spin twins, Husayn Merali and Yash Parikh, have taken over 20 wickets between them. Most Improved Player: Husayn Merali; Player of the Season: Yash Parikh.

U12

This year has been very successful for the U12 A team, winning 11 games but, unfortunately, losing to a well-drilled Hitchin School side in the County Cup Final. Our first game of the season was an impressive performance where we won by 119 runs to St Albans school with a brilliant batting display by the openers-Harry Grinham scoring 50* and Maheen Kasturiarachchi scoring 46*. After a set of easier games, we faced two of our hardest opponents: Haberdashers’ Aske's Boys' School and Berkhamsted School. In the Haberdashers’ match, we lost the toss on a dry, hard Haberdashers’ pitch and were asked to bowl first. A magnificent bowling exhibition halted Haberdashers’ to 105-8 off 25 overs, which thanks to a tremendous batting performance by Prabhdeep Singh who scored 67* led us to victory.
In great form, the team were looking for an unbeaten season and the next team in our way was RGS High Wycombe. Although High Wycombe were strong, the tight bowling attack restricted High Wycombe to 80- Kanishk Maherey taking 6 wickets in a grand bowling display. Our second County Cup game was against a strong St Clement Danes team.

After progressing into the semi-finals of the County Cup, we took on St Columba’s College, a team which had a consistent bowling attack. Fortunately, after losing an early wicket, Prabhdeep Singh took us to a demanding total of 122. A beautiful bowling attack limited St Columba’s to 59; a special mention to Debayan Dey who took 5-2 in the game. The next game was against Dr Challoner’s Grammar School on a batsmen’s pitch where Harry Grinham scored a majestic 84 in 22 overs, which carried the team to 122-6. Another consistent bowling performance by the bowlers kept the opposition to 80-8.

So far, our unbeaten record stretched on for a mammoth 9 games and John Lyon School were our next foe - Maheen Kasturiarachchi scoring his maiden century off 18 overs. The team set a huge target of 192-2 which the bowlers comfortably defended. Our penultimate game was the most troubling against a very talented Hitchin School side in the County Cup Final. Unfortunately, after a huge effort, we fell 36 runs short of the County Cup winners. An enormous well done to Harry Grinham who was highest scorer with 45. Our final game of the season was against New Hall School and we set a daring score of 122 with Kesi Edwards scoring a brilliant 45*. Fortunately, a great bowling display, allowed New Hall to only 109. Overall, this season has been brilliant with Maheen Kasturiarachchi, Harry Grinham and Prabhdeep Singh all being top scorers and Kanishk Maherey and Debayan Dey both getting 15 wickets. A huge thank you to Mr Dyson and the staff for putting a vast amount of time and effort into this season. Finally, I would like to thank the whole team for coming to all the net sessions and putting everything they had into this excellent season Hope to continue our success next season!

Squad: Maheen Kasturiarachchi (Capt.), Harry Grinham (Vice Capt.), Prabhdeep Singh (WK), Akash Hetti, Kanishk Maherey, Raahil Batonkee, Kesi Edwards, Yusuf Saleem, Debayan Dey, Vir Tanna, Sahenn Arya, Benjamin Burke, Neil Nair

Maheen Kasturiarachchi 7N

Not content to coach and stand by and watch, the staff of Watford Boys have again fielded their own winning team and added another Watford Observer Fourteen Plate to the WBGS trophy collection, beating Leverstock Green in the quarter final and Bushey CC in the semi final and then Watford Town in the final.

Captained by Luke Samarasinghe, the school team, playing its fifth final in seven years, kept their supporters on edge until the last delivery when they limited their opponents to a single to win by just one run.

Man of The Match was awarded to Jack Doodson, who took three wickets in seven deliveries across two overs without conceding a run to leave Watford at 30-3 in the fifth over of their reply.

Old Fullerians’ Cricket Club

This season the Old Fullerians’ Cricket Club celebrated its 70th anniversary in style with an unbeaten league season and promotion as Champions to Division 4 of the Chess Valley Sunday League.

The 70th anniversary was celebrated with a game vs a Chairman’s XI at the New Field, and it was great to see so many OFs in attendance either playing or watching the game. The Chairman’s XI won on the day with OFs Alex Lozowski and Joe Warren influential in the Chairman’s XI run chase.

The league campaign was very pleasing with over 30 OFs representing the side during the season. The team went into the final game v Cockfosters unbeaten and knowing a victory would secure the title. An excellent knock of 87 from Luke Samarasinghe saw the OFs win the game and win the league. Stand out performances during the season came from Liam David (highest score) 97, Bill Gage top league run scorer and James Dyson, best bowling 7-38, and 14 wickets in total.

The club is always looking for new OFs with an interest in cricket to join the ranks, so if you are interested in a competitive game of cricket on a Sunday, please contact dysonj@watfordboys.org or mattviks@gmail.com

JD
The 2017/18 season was a successful one with the U18s progressing to the East Final and National Quarter-finals at Tier 2 level, eventually losing out to Merchant Taylors’ School.

Over 90 games were played across 18 teams, with A-D fixtures at both U13 and U12 increasing the number of boys experiencing hockey at the School.

The season began back at October half term, when 24 boys from the U17 and U14 squads went to Eindhoven for a pre-season training camp. We were based at Oranje-Rood Hockey Club, and were fortunate enough to see both the Men’s 1s and Ladies 1s play in the Hoofdekasse. Both teams were fielding numerous international players and the quality of hockey on show was excellent. The tour was blessed with good weather, promising hockey development and excellent facilities, capped off with two very competitive fixtures for both teams.

It was a real eye opener to some of the younger boys, who had not been on the tour the previous year to see the size and scale of the hockey complex at Oranje-Rood and a brilliant opportunity to learn and develop from some of the International players who delivered some of the coaching sessions whilst out there.

The most pleasing aspect of the tour was to see the continued development of the players throughout the season, particularly at U17 culminating in the East final against Merchant Taylors’.

**1st XI**

The 1st XI had an outstanding season with a very good cup run in the National Tier 2 competition. Overall the record was played 13, won 9, drew 2, lost 2, with our two losses bookending our season. The first game of the season saw the 1st XI travel to Bancroft’s School for the first round of the National Cup competition. Despite having the better of the game, we were unfortunate to lose 3-2 and, as a result, we progressed into the National Plate (Tier 2) competition. Whilst the result was disappointing, the performance was not and this level of performance was backed up in draws against both Haberdashers’ Aske’s and Dr Challoner’s schools, each 3-3 thrillers. From there, the team embarked upon a 9 game winning streak, kicking off with a superb win against National Indoor champions, St. Lawrence School, away in Ramsgate. Wins against St Albans (3-0), Forest (3-2), The Leys (1-0), St. George’s College (3-1), an 11-0 thrashing of Woodbridge, MTS (5-1), Aldenham (4-2) and Langley Park (2-1) Schools followed to set up an East Final and National quarter final against local rivals, Merchant Taylors’. Unfortunately the result did not go our way, losing 5-1 to the eventual National Champions. It was a very rewarding season with the squad putting in a huge amount of time and effort. My thanks go to captain, Ralph Curwen, who was also Player of the Season, Aushan Gosrani, Most Improved Player and to all of the squad for their dedication this season. To our leavers, I wish you every success in the future, and I look forward to welcoming you back for Old Fullerians games in the future!

Squad: Ethan Meller, Thomas Milford, Connor O’Donnell, Aushan Gosrani, Ralph Curwen (Capt), Kailum Patel, Max Brown, Dhillon Dodhia, Tom Watts, Haaris Malik, Waleed Malik, Peter Noren, Max Baker, Alexander Marmor, Jack Aitchison, Sahir Patel
The second XI had a stop start season losing a number of fixtures to the weather. In total only five games were played, with the team securing 1 win, 2 draws and 2 losses. There were notable performances in the 4-4 draw v University College School from captain Harry Clements scoring a hat-trick and from goal keeper Tommy Wheeler in the 3-2 loss to St. George’s School. The highlight of the season was definitely the 2-1 win against St. Albans with goals from Clements and Beeston securing the victory. Our thanks go to Mr Dawson for his hard work, patience and perseverance with the team throughout the season.

Squad: Tommy Wheeler, Devang Arya, Luke Hardy, Varun Dodhia, Nathan Kelion, Romario Ranabahu, Benjamin Plunkett, Aidan Sharkey, Louis Harris, Oluotbi Odanye, Harry Clements (Capt), Daniel Ezekiel, James Cox, Craig Beeston, Jacob Culshaw, Jamie Ivory

This season has been a successful one for the U16s. It all kicked off with the county indoor hockey tournament where we were placed in the toughest of the two groups, having to play Merchant Taylors’ and Haileybury Schools to even have a glimmer of hope to making it out of the group. Thanks to our work rate and teamwork skills we thrashed Haileybury 4-0 and then went on to obtain a 1-1 draw with Merchant Taylors’, which meant that we came first in the group: a phenomenal achievement. We then went into the semi-final playing Aldenham but after a tough game it went down to penalty flicks. A well executed flick from Suli Manzoor put us into the final against Bishop Stortford who were the favourites. It was a hard fought game where we came back from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 after a well drilled short corner involving James Milford, Rob Curwen and Sahir Patel. Unfortunately we lost, but despite this we had certainly done ourselves proud.

These experiences had developed us immensely for the hockey season ahead and despite setbacks due to the weather we managed an exceptional performance against Dr Challoner’s. It was 4-4 and in the last minute of the game the ball deflected off one of the Dr Challoner’s player, rocketing into the air, falling to Ben Walldock in front of the goal who managed to control the ball, then burying it into the side netting. This brilliant display was replicated throughout the season, in particular in the last game against Aldenham School. We started off the half with a larger amount of possession firing away chance after chance, however in the last minute of the first half, Aldenham’s only chance was converted. After a good team talk from Mr Carr and Mr Dyson, we went into the next half thirsty for goals. Within 10 minutes we were already 2-1 up and we ended up winning 5-1.

Throughout this season we have had a number of good individual performances with a special mention to our outstanding goalkeeper Aaron Treon who has kept us in more games than we can count. In addition James Milford shocked us all scoring 10 goals throughout the season, including some outstanding deflections.

We would finally like to thank Mr Carr and Mr Dyson for all the effort they have put into our team this season: organizing training sessions, fixtures and coming with us to numerous tournaments.

The U15s started the season in blistering form with three wins and a two draws from their first five games. Victories came against Dr. Challoner's (2-1), Haberdashers’ Aske’s (4-2) and Forest Schools (7-1) with draws v St. Albans and Hitchin Schools completing the hockey before half term. Fixtures after half term were against arguably tougher opposition, with the side experiencing narrow defeats to both St. George’s and Kingston Grammar Schools. The season finished on a high though with a good victory away at Bishop’s Stortford School (2-1). In the end, the team finished with a record of: played 9, won 4, drew 3, lost 2. Player of the Season was James Foley. Our thanks go to Mr Dooodson for his hard work and coaching throughout the term.

The U15 Bs had a very strong season, playing 5 games and winning 4, losing only to St. George's School. The team scored an impressive 17 goals in their 5 games with victories coming against, Haberdashers’ Aske’s (3-0), St Albans and Aldenham Schools (2-1). A number of players in the squad were involved in the tour to Eindhoven, and it was really pleasing to see how much they improved over the course of the season. Player of the Season was Alex Richman. Our thanks go to Mr Dyson for taking the team to Eindhoven, and it was really pleasing to see how much they improved over the course of the season. Player of the Season was Alex Richman.

The U14B had a very strong season, playing 6, winning 4 and losing twice. Losses came to strong St George’s and Kingston Grammar School sides, but the team played well and battled hard. Wins came against Haberdashers’ Aske’s (1-0), St Albans (1-0), Merchant Taylors’ (5-1) and Aldenham Schools (2-1). A number of players in the squad were involved in the tour to Eindhoven, and it was really pleasing to see how much they improved over the course of the season. Player of the Season was Robert Drake. Our thanks go to Mr Grinham, who has coached the side for the last two seasons, for all his hard work, time and effort.

The U13s played 7-a-side mini hockey this season and we were able to field teams at A-D level. This meant that over 30 boys were involved in competitive fixtures throughout the course of the season. With the teams playing their first competitive matches this spring, it was always going to be a steep learning curve and whilst results did not always go in our favour the real positives were the speed of development as the boys became better hockey players. In total 23 fixtures were played at U13 level, with WBGS winning 4, drawing 7 and losing 12.


The U12s also got their first taste of mini hockey in the second half of the spring term this year. Like the U13s WBGS fielded teams at A-D level in two blocks against Kingston Grammar School and St Albans. In total 8 fixtures were played, with WBGS winning 2, drawing 2 and losing 4.
Before I dwell on what was another fantastic and successful season for Watford Boys Tennis Team, I would first like to commend Mr Roy for such a great contribution to tennis at the school. Sadly, Mr Roy will no longer be in charge of school tennis, despite having led it for nearly ten years. He has helped the school win numerous county trophies and has even led the way to National Finals – and that is only in my seven years at the school. He has a commitment and passion for tennis that I am sure the school will miss.

Our greatest success this year was the Senior Student Cup competition during the autumn and spring terms. Despite rather mediocre results initially where we only just survived after beating Haberdashers’ Aske’s Boys, Dr Challoner’s and Highgate School 7-6 in awfully close tiebreaks, the rest of the season may come as a surprise. We were able to proceed to the regional finals where we beat Framlingham School 8-4 thanks to a gritty singles performance from Max Venning and class from Sameer Kanji. We now found ourselves on the way to Bolton to take part in the National Finals for the second time in three years. I was quite eager to avoid the thrashing the previous team and I had endured two years previously. And avoid it we did, thanks to the boys putting in a fantastic shift for all two days, securing us a place in the top 4. Quite a feat indeed. Special mentions must go to Jack Shute who managed to play some of his best tennis at Bolton despite not having been in the team before the event, to Toby Wilkinson, and also to Gunraj Singh who did not come to Bolton but helped in our earlier draws all of which were an integral part of the team’s success.

The summer term saw the team enter a new competition with a new team. We were able to ease smoothly past our first opponent, Haydon School, beating them 12-0 with everyone looking sharp. Patrick Evans managed to find a way round not having a functional backhand and even Tom Watts managed to find his skill after having taken a 3 years tennis sabbatical. However, the next round proved far more challenging with the opposition even managing to beat our star player, Ali Habib. We lost 4-8 with a valiant effort that saw an end to our season and also to tennis at Watford Boys for me personally.

Clearly, this has been a remarkable year of tennis for the school. I must again thank Mr Roy for his contribution to school tennis throughout the year and my time at the school, and to the boys who I hope will repeat our successes.

Dhillon Dodhia U6T

The Under 15 Tennis B Team were more successful than the Under 15 As in their league this year and had another good run to the county quarter finals where they were narrowly beaten by Beaumont School. The team had won 3 of their group stage matches against Marlborough College, Edgegrove, Highgate and Longdean schools to progress through to the County quarter finals, where they went down 8 rubbers to 4 in a closely contested match. Special mentions must go to captain Thomas Connor in Year 10 and to Joshua Hurst and Harry Burke in Year 9. The U15 A team beat Sir John Lawes School, Aldenham School and Highgate in the group stage, but fell to St Clement Danes and Haberdashers boys this year and so did not qualify for the county knock out stage for the first time in 5 years. Irfaan Kanji had the highest winning percentage of the season along with Oliver Dunn who competed in all the matches despite carrying an arm injury; both will play for the Under 15 A team next season.

Dr

The season hit off to a spectacular start with a Year 7 qualifying tournament for the Road to Wimbledon main draw. This Year 7 event was won by Kayaan Chander who beat Dylan Yadav 6-4 in the final. This was then followed by a tennis tour to the Algarve in Portugal, where once again Dylan Yadav in Year 7, partnered Mr O’Gorman in the doubles tournament were unlucky to lose the title in a closely fought final to Mr Roy and Henry Peart in Year 8.

The main draw Road to Wimbledon Tournament which also had a field of 30 players was won by Irfaan Kanji in Year 9, who beat Eesa Siddiqi from year 8 in the final.

The Under 13 A Team comprised players from Year 7 and 8 and they reached the county quarter finals this year beating Aldenham School 12-0, Sir John Lawes School, and Highgate School 12-0 in the group stage. However, they were knocked out by St Columba’s School in a hard fought county quarter final match. Congratulations must go to the team of: Eesa Siddiqi, Kayaan Chander, Dylan Yadav, Aarav Banga and Henry Peart.

Dr
2018 was a successful and fun season for the U13B team. Led by Mr Roy, we had 5 fixtures which we played very well in and enjoyed. Our first game was an away fixture where we were unfortunate to lose 10-2 against a very strong Aldenham side, which had some high seeded players in their team. In our next game we played some very good tennis to beat a decent Longdean side, by 10 rubbers to 2. The next game was played at home, at West Herts LTC, where we had a very tight game against Roundwood Park. Both teams won 3 matches, out of the 6 normal ones already played. This meant that it needed to go to a deciding tiebreak. With both teams needing a win to go through, it was a very tense deciding match, but Roundwood managed to edge it, winning 10-7 in the tiebreak.

This meant that we couldn't go through to the quarters, but we still had some friendlies coming up. We played well against Highgate, only losing one match as a team and therefore winning 10-2. Our last match of the season was played against Haberdashers’ Aske’s School. The away match was played against a very strong team, and we could only manage to win one rubber, losing 10-2. There were lots of people who played in the tennis team, including Husayn Merali, Qaim Ali Ravji, Finn McLean, Raahil Batonkee, Archie Agnew, William Dunn and Hamish Watson. The season was very enjoyable, and many thanks to Mr Roy for organising the fixtures and taking us to and from the venues.

**Husayn Merali 8F U13B captain**

**U13B Regional Finals**

On the 27th of September, the Watford Boys U13B tennis team reached the Regional Finals. It was an incredible achievement to reach this far, as we faced a lot of competition in the area from schools such as Aldenham and Parmiters. We batted through challenging fixtures, beating tough opponents such as Haberdashers’ Aske’s to reach the finals. There were four schools in the tournament, which had all very strong teams, meaning that the title was all to play for. The first fixture was against Sandringham, but we only just lost due to the few close games in the singles matches. After a break to re-gather ourselves from the loss, we faced Kings Langley. In this fixture the team played outstandingly well, not losing a single match within the fixture! The WBGS U13s came away finishing a proud third in the region.

**Oliver Dunn 9T**

Squad: Oliver Dunn (Capt.), Joshua Hurst, Dylan Atkinson-Sergant, Alejandro To Salvatierra, Eesa Siddqi, Cem Harwood

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**Road to Wimbledon Tournament**

After being given the great opportunity of taking part in the school Road to Wimbledon tournament featuring 28 players from years 7-9 at Cassiobury Tennis Club, it was third time lucky for a year 9 who also took part in year 7 and 8. I am grateful for receiving this chance to progress further and just getting to the next round is something I am really proud of.

On the May bank holiday, the sun was almost as hot as it had ever been in England and it was tiring to play through the heat; however, I can definitely say that it was the proudest day of tennis in my life so far and all thanks go to the school. Unfortunately, I fell at the next hurdle, the regional knock-out stage, but hopefully, another Watford Grammar student can go far and beyond in this tournament - and may even be lucky and talented enough to advance to play on the Wimbledon courts.

**Irfaan Kanji 9F**

**Tennis Coaching**

Every Wednesday over the summer term, 26 boys from Watford Boys go down to West Herts Tennis Club and play tennis for an hour. The coach, David Shann, is great and he really helps you to improve. Sam Pullen Merrimen, who finished Watford Boys last year, also helps coach. I have definitely got much better over the course and I no longer need to call myself a beginner. The courses have been helpful an interesting, but most importantly fun for everyone.

**Owen Bunn 9N**
The tennis, the sun and the water were the key aspects of this brilliant trip. Although some may have needed cold water to wake them at the ungodly hour we did on the day of departure, the buzz meant that wasn’t required. Having headed from the school to the airport via bus, and then to Faro via plane, we were welcomed by our guide, Pat, before heading off to the local supermarket. This was where everyone spent their weight in money on their weight in food, to stack up for what looked like six years, and not six nights. A half-hour later we arrived at the unmissable five-star Ria Park Hotel and Spa in Vale de Lobo. The front entrance opened out into an open-plan palace-like ground floor. The stairs up to our rooms were close to royalty quality as were the, vitally, air-conditioned rooms. A grand TV, comfy beds and a fridge for all the chocolate we’d bought were waiting for us, but not for long.

Having settled in we were then shown the route down to the tennis club through quiet village roads, which we would walk every day from then on. We then experienced our first tennis session of the trip, across the fourteen courts at the club, with the help of a team of coaches led by Phil, based on backhand. Having had our tennis taster we then tested the food, full of carbs and varied, although the very popular chips remained constant. That evening, our heads hit the pillows and we slept like logs.

Tuesday brought a doughnut war at our banquet breakfast - which continued for every morning to come - and our first full day of tennis. The three sessions across the close to ten hours we were there, were tiring but great fun, and the enjoyment was shown as we filled close to every court in our time between sessions. Mr Doodson and Mr O’Gorman became competitive as expected, as a rally turned quickly into a match for them, whilst elsewhere, Mr Roy and Mr Gregory played in good spirits. That evening brought the big game that could be watched by all as we arrived back at Ria Park, and Liverpool took on Man City; one particular TV was swarmed by us, as the reds ran riot. The excitement died down soon enough though, as the hotly contested table tennis singles competition was running downstairs in the games room. It was eventually won by Aaran Patel, after some well-fought wins.

For the rest of the week, both singles and doubles tournaments were completed on the courts, tonnes of water was drunk, bottles and bottles of sun cream were disposed of, and plenty of chips were eaten at dinner time. But ten hours of tennis for six days straight had nothing but a positive effect on anyone, as smiles went all round, and very few disagreements were had anywhere around the camp.

After an amazing seven days of getting a tan, eating snacks and massively developing as tennis players, we left the hotel and headed back to Faro. The delay on leaving dampened no spirits and neither did the turbulence, as we looked forward to seeing our families and telling them all about it, before dropping into our beds.

The hard work of the teachers who set up the trip though, needs to be greatly appreciated. Mr Doodson, Mr O’Gorman, Mrs Messik, Mr Gregory and especially Mr Roy, did an amazing job of giving us a great experience of tennis and Vale de Lobo. This is a trip I would love to go on again, and I would recommend others to take the opportunity, too.

By Adam Barton 10B
It has been a good season with many team and individual accomplishments. Before I talk about our success, I want to give a big thank to all of the Year 9s and 10s that stepped up when we really needed them. Now on to our achievements. We came 10th out of 25 schools, just missing out on reaching the Plate Final by 24 points. We did even better on District Day coming 3rd out of 17 local schools with a first from Adam Serag, James Foley, Alex Hayes and myself. This result also came with some new school records. James Foley broke the 400m record; the relay team came a narrow second but still set a new school record and I broke the discus school and district records. Adam Serag broke the 1500m record with his new personal best and sprint finish to take 3rd place at the English school trials – an impressive achievement.

There are some memorable moments of the season. One of them was when we were short of athletes and Mr Beere had to put me (a discus thrower who can't run) into the 100m. I dreaded the moment but after coming last, I realised that it wasn't that bad but I still can't run! Another memorable moment was when Adam Serag was in his 1500m race and was about 200m behind first place with one lap to go; he decided to leave it late to pull out one of the best races I've seen, overtaking second place, but unfortunately coming 3rd due to a sprint finish and dip on the line. However, he this still gave him a new school record and personal best. I want to say thank you to everybody who helped us this season and all the athletics. I hope next the year 9 and 8 will do better and finish in the plate final or above.


On the 5th of July, over 800 students, teachers and sixth formers gathered at Woodside Stadium, ready for a morning of athletics. Despite the intense heat and mile long traffic jams, the day started on time with the Year 7 hurdles. It was a close race but Groves managed to edge forward for the win; Cassio won the Year 8 hurdles afterwards but Groves proved to be on strong form, coming first in the Year 7 200m sprint, followed by New and Fuller, showing the clear competition for overall first place between the three houses.

Other events carried on throughout the day, run by teachers and senior prefects; however the highlight was certainly a surprising victory for Mr Carr in the teachers’ 100m sprint. Mr Samarasinghe, as the defending champion, was expected to enjoy an easy win but Mr Carr caused an upset, though he suffered minor injuries from a final leap across the finish line. Louis Harris in L6G easily won the Year 12 100m, giving another victory to Groves House. Ahilan Luxmanan of L6G also gave his best in the 100m, crossing the finish line whilst running backwards in eighth place.

Sports Day finished with the teachers’ and sixth formers’ 4x100m relay, which was a close fought race between the joint team of Tom Wright (L6C), Varun Dodhia (L6C), Charles Manieson (L6P) and Louis Harris (L6G) and the teachers’ team, made up of Mr Carr, Mr Samarasinghe, Mr O’Gorman and Mr Doodson, who eventually won the relay. Thanks to teachers and especially the senior prefects, who manned the water station, helped with first aid and ran events alongside teachers, Sports Day 2018 was a success.

In the end, Groves proved to be the strongest House, coming first in the overall result for Sports Day. Though they didn't come first in any one year, they maintained a solid performance throughout Years 7 to 10, coming third in Year 7 and Year 8 and fifth in Year 9 – their second place in Year 10 gave them enough points to win outright. In the combined scores, Fuller came second, followed by New, Turner, Cassio and Platt, leaving Bushey House in seventh place.

Akshar Abhyankar L6C
It was a cloudy, cold lunchtime on Tuesday 20th March 2018. However despite the classic cross-country weather, spirits were still high among junior and senior athletes preparing to run. A 400m track had been freshly painted just in time for the highlight of the cross-country season: the Boyt Mile. The event, named after ex-student and cross-country runner Arthur Boyt, consisted of 4 laps around the track, resulting in 1600m or 1 mile.

At 1:35, Mr Boyt kicked off the junior race and Josh Hurst sprung into action with an exceptional start, setting off at a fast, but comfortable pace. Josh kept hold of his lead and finished in a respectable time of 5min 42sec.

Around ten minutes after the completion of the junior race, athletes involved in the senior race came up to the start line. A special mention must go to teachers, Mr Eddon and Mr Adcock, who also competed along with the senior runners.

Once again, Mr Boyt set off the race. Misjudging the pace, I set out reasonably slowly as a contrast to my fellow competitors who had achieved a good start. Scuttling through the pack, I swiftly made it to the leading position where I stayed for the remainder of the race finishing in a time of 5min 15sec.

Although I came first, I have been told of some exceptional competition from Peter Noren and Tom Wright who battled for 2nd place throughout the entirety of the race and even up to the home straight where the pair sprinted to reach the finish line at which Peter won the battle.

All in all, I congratulate everyone who participated in the event, I thank all the spectators and timekeepers who braved the cold to come out and watch the event and lastly I would like to thank Arthur Boyt for creating the race and sponsoring the trophies.

Adam Serag 10P

Overall, the 2017/18 cross-country team has had a successful year. We started the season off positively, continuing our success at the district event, champions for the 5th time in 6 years for the senior team, beating strong schools such as Haberdashers’ Aske’s, St Clement Danes and Parmiters. Before Christmas we also travelled to Guildford coming 10th out of 24 schools, meeting St Albans and Tiffin Schools for the relay events, and competing well against some of the top private school cross-country teams in the South East, still always managing to finish top state school.

After the Christmas break, we took part at the national open in Coventry, the team consisting of the top six runners in the school, Tom Wright, Adam Serag, James Foley, Ralph Curwen and Angus Finnegan. Finishing a respectable 23rd in the country out of 70 schools, this was the best result for 7 years: a fantastic achievement for the senior team.
Rainbow Laces

For a week in school, the boys laced up their boots with their rainbow laces in support of Stonewall’s Rainbow Laces campaign.

The campaign is designed for players, supporters, and coaches to demonstrate their support and acceptance for the LGBTQ community within sport.

The Games and P.E. departments were inspired by Nigel Owens who has shared his story in the media. Owens is one of the most respected referees in the world of sport, and is renowned for his good humour on the rugby pitch. He is very proud of being Welsh and is as at home on the pitch refereeing local children’s matches as international games. He is remembered for taking charge of New Zealand’s 34-17 victory over Australia at Twickenham in October 2015.

Refereeing a Rugby World Cup Final in front of over 80,000 people, with thousands more watching on TV has its own very significant pressures, but Owens has said that the biggest challenge he faced in life was being true to himself and accepting his homosexuality. When he was 26, he left a note for his mum and dad saying that he couldn’t carry on any more, but he didn’t tell them why. Fortunately he was found and his life was saved, but the fear remained of sharing his sexuality with others in the rugby community.

Owens said, ‘I was scared of coming out. Would sport accept me? I thought I would have to choose between carrying on refereeing and living a lie, or to give up refereeing to carry on with my life and be happy within myself. Nobody should have to make that decision of actually being yourself, or deciding to continue in the sport that you love.’

On the same day that the English Rugby team wore their Rainbow Laces in an international match against Samoa at Twickenham, members of all the School teams, having purchased a pair of rainbow laces themselves, wore them in matches against Aylesbury Grammar School to show their support for the campaign.

Every Saturday morning after Christmas, boys from every year group participated in our tour of the local 5k Parkruns in rainy (notably the St Albans Park run!), muddy and freezing conditions. This was a great way to increase our fitness and competitiveness against the top schools. Even Mr Beere ran a few of them which was very impressive and set a great example to the younger boys. All this was topped off by our traditional cross-country awards dinner at Nando’s where Oliver Davey, 8N, was crowned Most Valuable Junior Athlete and Adam Serag, 10P, won the Roy Sadgrove Award for Senior Cross-Country.

A huge thank-you to Mr Beere for running training, turning up to fixtures in all weathers and driving us back home through horrendous traffic after the events. Another thank you must go to the team for turning up in awful weather and giving maximum effort. It has been a pleasure captaining the team and I will miss school running greatly, it having been a huge part of my school life since year 7.

Alex Foley U6N. Captain.
2018 brought the beginning of the new Watford Grammar School for Boys Rowing Team run by Mr Wallis and Mr Carr. Practices were scheduled twice a week and experienced rower Matthias Keopp coached us in the run-up to the 2018 National Indoor Rowing Championship on Friday 9th March. The team was made up of members from Year 11: Josh Pressler, Billy Balchin, Aron Finkelstein, Will Bishop and Year 10: Joe Sewell, Tim Hire, Kaden Elsey and James Foley. Practice took place every week on Thursday after school and Friday before school. The competition required each boy to take part in an individual event, a 6 minute sprint for the Year 11s or a 5 minute sprint for the Year 10s but also in a team event called the boat race. This involved all 8 boys taking it in turns in a relay to see how far we could go in 16 minutes and 19 seconds, the record time achieved by Cambridge when they won the Boat Race in 1998. Therefore, a key part of our training was practising for the changeover which takes place after a rower tires.

The competition itself took place in the Lee Valley Athletics Centre with over 130 Concept 2 erg rowing machines which were linked up to a projector allowing spectators to easily see the progress of whoever they were watching. Initially, however, not all of the connections worked as expected, causing minor delays to the competition. Upon arrival, the indoor athletics track was bustling, either covered by machines or people. Tim Hire was elected the captain of the team and our first event, the Boat Race, began. This was a race for competitors up to Year 13 and was competed by a number of dedicated rowing clubs. In the end, Watford Grammar School achieved an impressive 5,072 metres in the time limit to finish 10th which was a huge improvement over the distances achieved during practice. A special mention must go to Aron Finkelstein and Will Bishop for some huge efforts during this sprint.

The individual events for Years 10 and 11 were one of the later events, so there was a lot of waiting around. Year 10 was first with the 5 minute sprint, with Tim Hire finishing 22nd with a distance of 1,366 metres, James Foley 69th with a distance of 1,285 metres, Kaden Elsey 78th with a distance of 1,271 metres and Joe Sewell 112th with a distance of 1,174 metres in a field of 142 competitors. The 6 minutes Year 11 competition took place next, with Will Bishop 22nd with a distance of 1,643 metres, Aron Finkelstein 25th with a distance of 1,596 metres, Billy Balchin in 34th with a distance of 1,481 metres followed close behind by Josh Pressler in 25th with a distance of 1,454 metres in a field of 42 competitors. Everybody had a successful day, and the team is looking forward to getting on the water for real this summer.
On the 1st of February certain individuals from the table tennis club got picked to be part of the ‘Jack Petchey’ Table Tennis Tournament at Crest Academy Neasden. The table tennis school team were (U13) Rahy Premji, Samir Murji (Capt) and Adam Murji; the U16 team players were Qaim Ravji, Hussain Merali and Amveerjeet Gurung, all year 8 students. The tournament we went to was the most important one we have been to as the winner gets to play in the national finals and the 2nd and 3rd placed qualify for the all London Schools finals.

When we arrived, we started warming up and when we were called in we were assigned into groups of four. The first and second in each group got through to the knockout stages (quarter finals).

I think we did amazingly well as Rahy Premji came first, Adam Durrani came second and Samir Murji came third out of 16 people in the U13s. This meant that in the final, Rahy and Adam were both nervous as they had to play each other which was a disadvantage as they both know each other's strengths and weaknesses. In the end it was good as the top three were from WBGS. They were both nervous but obviously there could only be one winner. In the U16s Hussain and Amveerjeet unfortunately didn’t get past the group stages but Qaim did get into the quarters were he was beaten by the eventual winner of the tournament, but they all played excellently as they were up against boys older and more experienced than themselves.

It was a really good experience for everyone as Rahy and Adam got medals and posed to have their photos taken. We all had a really good time and can’t wait for the next tournament.

Samir Murji 8G

Table Tennis

Oddballs Hats and Movember

The Oddballs Foundation was set up in 2016 to raise awareness of Testicular Cancer. Testicular Cancer is around 95% curable so early diagnosis and regular checking is important. The aim is to fit as many ‘check yourself’ guides into male toilets and changing rooms across the country. This will encourage males to check themselves regularly and in doing so detect any problems early.

Every other year, the entire sixth form have a very effective talk about testicular cancer during a Friday lecture slot on the importance of self-examination.

The Games and P.E. department this year, as a way of keeping a uniform games kit, raising money for charity, and maintaining the awareness of importance of self examination, bought in Oddballs bobble hats which were purchased and sold on a non profit basis (as all money from the initial purchase went to the men’s health charity).

In addition, as a School over 4 years, we have raised over £3900 for the Movember foundation, which is dedicated to improving men’s physical and mental health. Mr Dyson held an assembly encouraging members of the school to MOVE for Movember, with each house engaging in a competition to see who could raise the most money by engaging in physical activity. Leading a sedentary lifestyle is one of the biggest risk factors for preventable diseases, and early death. As a School we raised £1,652, with Fuller raising the most money as a house.

Well done to Mr Wallis and Mr Dyson who raised a combined £900.

GW/JD
Simon Groves and Drag Racing

And now for something completely different! Many people will recognise Simon Groves, an Old Boy of the school, as one of the more ‘senior’ players in the senior strings and school orchestra. In addition to his longstanding support of the music department, Simon is also the current Chair and Trustee of the Watford Fuller Foundation.

Outside Watford Boys, Simon has been a fan of drag racing since his first trip to Santa Pod Raceway in 1970. For over 15 years, in his spare time, he has taken off his accountant’s hat, donned a baseball cap and travelled to tracks around the world where he has been involved in a variety of capacities. He works as a pit reporter, blog editor, points compiler and links editor at Eurodragster.com, Europe's number one drag racing site. In addition, Simon is a director of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame and a trustee of its associated charity, the BDRHOF Benevolent Fund.

At the Santa Pod Racers’ Club annual dinner this year, Simon was delighted to be awarded the Alex Brachtvogel Memorial Trophy for Outstanding Service to Drag Racing.

Staff Yoga

Tuesday afternoons on the top floor of the STEM block have become something of a sanctuary for us this term. Mrs Rafferty kindly volunteers her expertise and time to offer all staff an hour of yoga, free of charge, on a come when you can basis. Some of us have done a little bit of yoga over the years but not on a regular basis. These regular sessions have proved how invaluable low impact, meditative exercise is for strength, flexibility and mindfulness. With yoga, there is no ‘ability’ to reach-you simply follow the poses, which are modified for different abilities, and as long as you are breathing correctly (this is taught!) then you simply do what your body allows itself to do. Everyone goes at their own pace at their own level of flexibility and strength.

After a term of regular Yoga our bodies feel streamlined, strong and our minds peaceful and able to cope with the daily stresses of life. Yoga is where body and mind can find restoration and the last ten minutes of relaxation is bliss!
Gaye Gunton

Gaye Gunton joined Watford Boys in 1987 and in 1988 she joined the Seneca department, which later became the Learning Support Department. Gaye's support, guidance, and help have been invaluable in helping students meet, and often exceed, their potential. Gaye's work as a SENCO has been instrumental in transforming the school, and many students have attributed their success to her help. Gaye has also been a fierce champion for learning and has transformed the way SEND was regarded at the school. By the time Holman had become Headmaster in 1994, Gaye had won respect and was transforming the way SEND was regarded. And so she has continued. Carefully and pragmatically, Gaye is more than a SENCO alone: she has become the humane heart of WBGS.

Those people who have been at the school for a long time will know that Gaye lived for some time in a small cupboard in which she fitted Learning Support Assistants, parents, students and resources amongst the furniture. Eventually realising that with the number and complexity of needs that the Learning Support department were meeting successfully Martin Post decided that it was time that Gaye's department and her assistants should have more room.

The new Learning Support department provides a small office for Gaye, larger areas in which boys can be taught, a computer area, social areas for eating lunch and also, very importantly, safe space areas.

In a year where tragedy hit the school, Gaye was wonderfully supportive to all affected, including both staff and boys and Gaye is so approachable that boys are rarely reluctant to go to see her – and always grateful for her help when they have been.

As one boy wrote "Dr Gunton provided the means for me and my brother to receive invaluable support during a very difficult period. We lost our father suddenly at 15 and 13 years of age and were left totally shell shocked as a family. Both of us would not be where we are now without the counselling support and academic assistance that we had during that time and while many teachers understood our predicament, there was no one who we felt had an eye out for us more.

Over the thirty years since Gaye joined the school, more and more students with additional needs have joined us and Gaye has always been willing to learn about the variety of needs we now cater for and work with the specialist teams that enable these students not only meet, but often exceed their potential. The Visual Impairment Team, for example, refers to Gaye's support, guidance and help over the time that they have been working with her and Watford Boys.

Past students have commented that their future careers have been influenced by their time as workshop prefects with going on to train as teachers. One student comments that as a result of support he received he successfully applied to be a paramedic with the London Ambulance Service and has attended major incidents in London.

An ex student writes that Gaye has an enormous respect and affection from those of who have worked closely with her and a huge boundless zeal and enthusiasm for helping others achieve their best, especially when the odds are against them. He remembers Gaye as a fierce champion of learning and was very proud to contribute to her mission as her Head Workshop Prefect in his final year at WBGS.

We wish Gaye all the best in her semi retirement, and hope she does have more time to spend with her family.

Andy Pegler

Andy joined Watford Boys as a new teacher in 2003 and has ensured that Classics is a success story at Watford Boys, and this is because Andy Pegler has been an inspirer and a tireless promoter of the subject. He has collected hundreds upon hundreds of our boys to see the sights, and very often given them the benefit of his own guided tour. These are not dry visits; our boys have wrestled and raced at Olympia, acted at Epidaurus and ‘gladiated’ at Pompeii. Many have gone on to study the subject at university. He has shown that the past is full of life, and he’s provided the heart and lungs.

Andy’s form room is chock-full of mock armour, weapons and staggeringly good models made by pupils from the past (or their parents). As a form tutor Andy has proved himself to be an absolute legend, providing the very best pastoral care. His inspirational style has been very much appreciated. He has unified every form under his tutelage whether it be through the Simpsons, an excess of Christmas decorations or, as most likely, an excess of humour and quirky style has seen him deliver amazing and memorable assemblies ranging from the delights of New Zealand to the bravery of past and present pupils who have served in various conflicts. Those who have listened to many of these talks will sorely miss these Cecil B. DeMille productions. He has without doubt established firm foundations for all the boys in his care and has ensured their ability to flourish as they pass through the school and beyond. Quite simply he has been a ‘maior quam vita’!

As chairman of the Staff Common room for a number of years, colleagues have appreciated Andy’s efforts to arrange social events, meetings and always announced these with a flurry of very witty emails. We will all miss his warm and imposing presence.

We wish Andy and his family the very best as they move to Germany.

Olivia Short

At the departure of Olivia Short, Watford Grammar School for Boys is losing an excellent teacher. Olivia was first spotted when she took a PGCE teaching practice here six years ago. We were very fortunate that she then accepted our offer of a job, as such flexible, dedicated, determined, hardworking, and young teachers of science are not easy to find. Whilst this might sound a little as though I have taken on a challenge to get as many adjectives into a sentence as possible, all of these positively do apply to Olivia. Initially, she focused upon teaching in the Chemistry Department, where we needed her to fill in numerous gaps in the timetable. Later, she moved more towards Biology. Olivia always loves to teach a little of both areas of our subject, keeping her hand in. She also teaches general science with clarity and aplomb.

A year into her five with us, Olivia took on the role of co-ordinating the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Following this in tenents experience, she became the Science Department’s Key Stage Three Co-ordinator, at which point we saw just how excellent a manager of people and resources she is. Subsequently, for the last two years Olivia has headed the Biology Department, making great strides with the team, whilst working alongside Jon Hensman and me in keeping the Science Department working as a cohesive unit.

Olivia decided to leave us when another school, closer to her home made her their Head of Biology. Our loss is Berkhamsted’s gain, and we wish Olivia a happy life and an inspiring career. She clearly cares for everyone around her, pupils and staff. Olivia has made many friendships here and we hope that she is able to stay in touch.
Paul Jelski
Paul Jelski joined the Physics Department in September 2009 having established himself as an experienced science teacher in his previous posts. From the outset, Paul made a big impression on his classes, with his mix of physics and science expertise and his broad knowledge of the role science plays in society. Paul's lessons are not for the faint hearted – students have to be interested, work hard and get involved. Paul has also made a huge contribution to the department in developing schemes of work, resources, and initiatives and he is very much someone with great ideas in making physics a 'real' subject for students. Sometimes frustrated by the traditional views of physics as a 'theoretical maze', Paul's aim is always to make the content accessible and relevant.

Paul is a great colleague to work with and we will miss his sharp sense of humour and, of course, the day to day chat that happens in a busy workplace such as a school. The good news is that he is continuing to ply his trade as a physics teacher and is moving to Ashlyn School in Berkhamsted. We wish him happiness and success in his new job and thank him for all of his hard work at this school.

Philippa Parks
Philippa is one of those members of staff you think will always be there. Dependable, organised, supportive, keen and truly committed. Working in various parts of the school over her considerable years of service she has proved to be most adaptable and multi–skilled. After 14 years she has decided to retire and a couple of paragraphs will not do her contribution to the school justice.

The Learning Support Department was her base for many years and colleagues from that area speak of the care with which she carried out her role and the support she offered to pupils with complex needs.

Philippa has been an outstanding Year 7 form tutor always putting the pupils first and building fantastic relationships with successive generations of students as they enter the school.

All who have been on the water with her have seen a modest yet immensely talented sailor in action, always willing to share hints and tips and to pass on knowledge. She has led multiple successful sail France trips allowing many boys from this school as well as girls from WGGS to learn new skills and to shine in this area.

In DT, Philippa has so often worked so many hours above and beyond what she has been paid for, skilfully teaching in the lower school (Textiles and Product Design) as the need arose. Una Beveridge and Helen Zachariah as Food Technology teachers have both spoken of her outstanding commitment to her latter incarnation as Food Technician, building pupil confidence and ensuring health and safety standards are maintained.

She has also driven the minibus countless miles to facilitate trips and has accompanied the Meera Shah and the African House building trips (by her own admission - way outside her comfort zone) raising her own funds to partake in these trips.

This has barely scratched the surface of her contribution to school life and many members of staff have their own memories of Philippa's can-do attitude, her professional approach to all she undertakes, her willingness to go above and beyond and her versatility and all jobs undertaken with that hearty laugh of hers.

We wish Philippa a happy retirement.

Helen Hartley
Helen first joined the Maths Department in September 2002 on the GTP programme and very quickly established herself as a high calibre teacher across the whole ability range. Her teaching is marked by an impressive concern for her students' development as mathematicians but also an efficiency in preparation and marking, which is the envy of many colleagues! She has also become a precious commodity as a specialist teacher for Statistics right up to Further Maths A Level and her expertise in this area will be greatly missed.

She has held various responsibilities in her time at the School, coordinating the Maths GCSE course for a number of years and serving as Treasurer for the Common Room. The "outstanding" lesson she delivered during an Ofsted Maths inspection in 2010 also made her the toast of her colleagues as it played a significant role in ensuring the Department received the same grading.

During her first stint at the School, she also memorably wowed colleagues with her performances as Kirsty MacColl and Agnetha Faltskog in the "Battle of the Bands" and "Teachers' Karaoke" respectively. More recently, the consummate "hostess with the mostest", she has not only taught her Sixth Form students Further Maths, but also shared with them her love of crochet (during the 25 Hour Maths event) and her famed "Pythagorean Flapjack" recipe, and was thrilled when one of them completed this final assignment and brought samples to the Leavers' Lunch. Helen will be greatly missed by us all, for all the fun, dedication and expertise she has brought to the Department, and we wish her all the very best for her future endeavours.

Meera Shah
Meera came to the WBGS Economics dept in 2015 and had an immediate impact. She was and is fizzing with energy and enthusiasm, displaying a boisterous charm and determined to improve outcomes for the students through innovation (which pleasantly shocked Mr Elmas). She has taken advantage of many opportunities during her relatively short time in the school, branching out into D of E and PSHE and also inaugurating the joint History and Economics trip to China which was very popular. Students and staff are sad to see her go and it is hard to see who could replace the force of energy that is Miss Shah.

Avril Pino
Avril Pino joined the department in September 2015, after successfully completing her first school experience placement as part of her PGCE qualification in 2013 and instantly established herself as an extremely popular member of the department with a "can do" no nonsense approach to teaching computing and ICT. Avril has made a massive impression on the boys; she has been instrumental in inspiring her students' passion and curiosity for the subjects as well as supporting their personal and social development. Avril's contributions to the department's operations cannot be overstated; for the past two years she has been the lead teacher for GCSE ICT, which has constantly achieved impressive results; she has been influential in shaping the department's current and future KS3 and KS4 schemes of work. Away from Avril’s department responsibilities she has been hugely successful as the school's Duke of Edinburgh coordinator, supporting a large number of boys, enabling them to successfully complete their DoE award at all levels. Avril is multifaceted member of WBGS team; not only has she taught Computing and ICT, she has also delivered Design & Technology and PSHE lessons.

Avril is a fantastic colleague; both the department and school will miss her determined, direct and energetic outlook; I will personally miss her advice, humour and candour; she will be a hard act to follow. We wish her all the best as she moves with her family to start a new chapter of her life in Chester.

Nick Carr
Nick Carr was an Old Boy who returned to us as a History teacher and, through his love of sport, contributed significantly to the sporting life of the school, particularly in cricket and hockey.

Nick is an excellent all round cricketer and, as well as coaching students, has helped propel the staff cricket team to consecutive silver county plate trophies. He has also achieved notable success in this year's team sporting successes.

Amazing, astonishing and astounding are just a few of the words that students and staff have used to describe Nick as a teacher and colleague. He will be truly missed in the department but will leave us with tonnes of resources, a powerpoint on everything we teach (many linked back to his passion for televised sport). He has been a great support for all our recent changes and has helped strengthen the department in many ways. He was also been an excellent cover supervisor and games coach from the day he started with us. In everything he has done he has both captivated and charmed students and parents to get the most from their time at Watford Boys - just as he had.

We wish Nick all the best for the future at St George's, Weybridge and thank him for all he has done.
Oliver O’Gorman

Olley joined us two years ago as a graduate assistant after experiencing the rugby life in New Zealand. I already knew of his pedigree as a player from our school circuit where my WBGS team played Berkhamsted School when he was stst XI captain and I was really excited to get him involved with our school sport.

From the outset, one could tell that he had a wonderfully natural manner with the boys and an infectious love for all sports. This was especially needed with our year 7 rugby players who, for the most part, are bemused by the odd shaped ball and he adapted his Teaching brilliantly to cater for all of them, giving them all the opportunity to represent the school.

This year he has been completing his Schools Direct teaching qualification. His organisation, commitment and diligence to this will certainly take some beating by future trainees!

Olley is a really good colleague and friend and has thrown himself into school life, going on many trips and really going above and beyond with his extra-curricular involvement. We will certainly miss him but wish him all the luck in his new role as PE teacher and Master in Charge of Eton Fives at Queen Elizabeth’s School in Barnet.

Dave and Karon Carley

Dave and Karon Carley joined the school in July 1999 as site manager and housekeeper respectively. The site was smaller in those days and since they joined, the school has grown with the addition of the Clarendon Muse, Sports Hall extension, STEM Centre, Household pavilion and numerous other building developments. The new site manager’s house ‘New Pastures’ provided Dave and Karon with a much needed sanctuary during this time, and provided staff with ample opportunities in the vacated property - the ‘old’ site manager’s house, the name it still has, despite housing a number of other staff.

Dave was responsible for growing the commercial lettings side of the school, which is now an invaluable source of income for the school. The site is truly a seven day a week operation.

Dave and Karon brought their own brand of Scouse (Liverpudlian) humour and hospitality to Watford, and were the life and soul of many a staff party. It is rumoured that Dave had a lookalike, who made an appearance once a year at the school dressed in red around December 24th. Dave always denied any knowledge of this though.

Dave has a fantastic voice, and one year won the teacher’s got talent competition. Karon’s warmth and ready smile will certainly be missed and both Dave and Karon always had kind word for those who needed help.

Dave and Karon were the ‘Mr & Mrs’ of Watford Grammar for nearly twenty years, living and breathing the school. We wish them well in their semi-retirement in Wales; a step closer to returning to the promised land up North.

Hilary Lyons

Hilary Lyons joined the school in September 2008 as a Science Lab Technician, having worked in the role in other local schools. Like all good lab technicians, Hilary is very organised but it soon became apparent that she has a forensic eye for detail. This has been massively beneficial to the Science Department, as Hilary has helped structure the format and timings of experiments and practical work.

Hilary’s most significant contribution has been as the Key Stage 3 Science Technician and the quality of resources and equipment used in this area of study has been developed hugely under her supervision and guidance. She has also been very patient with teachers (we know who we are), and her support and help in preparing for lessons has been invaluable. Above all, Hilary has been a thoroughly decent colleague to work with and we will miss her greatly.

We wish her all the best as she takes some time out to spend with her family doing what she likes when she likes.

Anthony Ferguson

Anthony joined us as Design Technology Technician during his year out from a three year violin making course. He has spent the year wholeheartedly utilising his considerable skill base to the advantage of the department, students and the whole school.

He has run a well-attended furniture club throughout the year on a Monday lunchtime, engaging with a lively bunch of year 7s, worked with sixth formers to build a violin that on completion will be played in school concerts, passing on his considerable skill base and passion for wood in the process.

As with other technicians in the past he has worked in all areas of the school, building play sets, mounting frames, fixing instruments and building equipment for the science and maintenance departments. He attended Sail France and has been a keen member of the school band, touring with them through the Rhineland at the end of term.

After such busy and fulfilling days he can always be found weightlifting in the gym or leaping on his bicycle for the epic ride home. He has been the most friendly, good humoured, helpful, caring and considerate man and he will be sorely missed. We wish him well on his return to his studies.

Phil Cartwright

Phil has been a well-liked member of the Maths Department during the year he has spent with us. He has shown a remarkable dedication to his students and has frequently given up his lunchtimes to offer additional support: something they have greatly appreciated and from which they have undoubtedly benefited. He has also been a great supporter of the extra-curricular activities of the School, helping at Maths Club and with various competitions and trips. The year has also ended in triumph as he has helped his Year 8 form earn a tenpin bowling trip as a reward for their fundraising efforts. We wish Phil the very best for next year, and are pleased he will be facing a much kinder commute in his new job at Roundwood Park School.

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How Dancing Helps Mental Health

In recent years, dancing has greatly increased in popularity and with an extraordinary wide range of styles, has grabbed the attention of many people of all different ages. Street dance, zumba and ballroom dancing are just some of the types of dance that appeal to people all over world. There have also been an increasing number of films (such as La La Land and The Greatest Showman) and television programmes (such as Strictly Come Dancing and Dancing on Ice) putting dance in a positive light.

According to the NHS, one in every four adults and one in ten children suffer from some kind of mental health issue. There is no doubt that dancing has fantastic health benefits. It helps us keep in shape, increase our co-ordination and improve our muscle strength. More importantly, though, is the fact that research has been done, which shows that dancing has many positive physical and psychological effects on people with mental illnesses. It increases people’s self-esteem, enables them to have fun while developing new skills and, according to The Guardian, gives people the chance to express feelings they might not have been able to put into words.

When people dance, mood-improving chemicals are released inside their bodies. They also have the chance to meet other people, acquire new friends and go to new places (for classes etc.). This helps people improve their mental well-being and be more enthusiastic and optimistic about life.

In conclusion, I believe that dancing is something that everybody should try! Who knows, they might even be quite good at it!

Theo Adam 8T

Senior Prefects

Head Prefect
Ralph Curwen

Leadership Team
Geoffrey Adeboye, Luke Ashford, Craig Beeston, Daniel Booth, Srivatsa Garg, Peter Noren, Micheal Onyekuru, Maxwell Porter, Deven Voralia

Prefects
Kabir Ahluwalia-Pandor
Ethan Honey
Amir Allidina
Thinejan Jegatheeswaran
Divyam Arya
Ronaldo Joslyn
Balaval Bains
Benedict Longstaff
Adem Berbic
Haaris Malik
Harry Clements
Thomas Milford
Callum Crockford
Rohan Pau
Shenal de Almeida
Joshua Pickard
Dhillion Dodhia
Kyle Pradham
James Farnsworth
Aidan Sharkey
Sam Finkelstein
Adam Tucker
Alex Foley
Rob Vangucci
Matthew Gibson
Euan Wiley
Darryl Gifts-Walker
George Wright
Eashan Gohil
Jeremy Zolnai-Lucas

Prizegiving 2016-17
Wednesday 3rd January 2018

Guest of Honour
Dame Helen Hyde DBE

Dame Helen Hyde studied at Witwatersrand University, South Africa. She gained a Masters in Theology at King’s College, London and also studied at the Centre for Holocaust Studies at the Institute of Education, London.

A career in teaching culminated in her becoming Headteacher of Watford Grammar School for Girls. During this time, she was Executive Headteacher at Rickmansworth School. She was a DfES Quality Assurance Advisor, visiting a variety of schools in various counties. She is an External Advisor to School Governors and an Executive Mentor to a number of Headteachers. Helen is a Board member of FASNA, Freedom & Autonomy for Schools – National Association. She became an Accredited Trainer for the Edward de Bono Thinking Skills in 2003 and a trainer for Buzan Mind Mapping in 2004.

Helen is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and the Imperial War Museum and has been a Holocaust Educator for many years. She was appointed Holocaust Commissioner and sits on the Educational Advisory Board of the Commission. She continues to advise the Board on Holocaust Education and is also an advisor to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. She is a national Religious Education Commissioner and organises and leads Holocaust study trips abroad for students and adults.

With the Vicar of Watford, Helen has set up the Refugee to Recovery Forum assisting immigrants in the local community. She is a Patron of the Rwandan Sisterhood working with survivors of the genocide and deprived women in Kigali and the Sparrow Schools in Johannesburg.

In 2012, Helen was made Dame Commander of the British Empire for services to national education and Holocaust education.

Dame Helen Hyde is married to Dr John Hyde and has two daughters, one of whom, a doctor herself, was educated at Watford Grammar School for Girls.
### Year 11
For excellence, effort and progress during the GCSE course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Jack Osmond</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Justin Ho</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Dylan Gordhan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classical Civilisation</td>
<td>Connor O'Donnell</td>
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<td>Computing</td>
<td>Sachin Chotai</td>
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<td>Drama</td>
<td>Solomon Linnington</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Simon Thompson</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Khushal Thobhani</td>
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<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Le Vesconte Prize</td>
<td>Ismaeel Yaqoob</td>
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<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Max Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>Kallum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>Brandon Chan</td>
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<td>PE</td>
<td>Kallum Patel</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
<td>Osman Zahoor</td>
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<td>German</td>
<td>Akshar Abhyankar</td>
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<td>History</td>
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<td>Latin</td>
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<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>Music</td>
<td>Ethan Meller</td>
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<td>Physics</td>
<td>Alexander Parpotta</td>
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<td>Philosophy, Religion and Ethics</td>
<td>Colm Finnegnan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product Design</td>
<td>Dominic Reed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science (double award)</td>
<td>Paul Field</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Hanyun Lui</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honest Endeavour</td>
<td>Tomlinson Prize</td>
<td>Nicholas Watt</td>
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<td>Excellence in GCSE exams</td>
<td>Dylan Gordhan, Justin Ho, Hanyun Liu, Osman Zahoor, Reese Patel, Khushal Thobhani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fullersian Prize</td>
<td>Dylan Osmond</td>
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### Lower Sixth
For excellence, effort and progress during the Lower Sixth course

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<th>Subject</th>
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<td>Art</td>
<td>Kit Gil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Harison Selvanayagam</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Paavan Halai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classical Civilisation</td>
<td>Thomas Barkshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computing</td>
<td>Nikki Patel (U6B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design and Technology</td>
<td>Dillon Fisher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Ralph Curwen</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Literature</td>
<td>Adam Berbic</td>
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<td>French</td>
<td>La Vesconte Prize</td>
<td>Aushan Gosani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Ralph Curwen</td>
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<td>Hockey</td>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>Ralph Curwen</td>
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<td>Robotics</td>
<td>Thomas Stock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Euan Wiley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>F W Thomas Prize</td>
<td>Benedict Longstaff</td>
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<td>Physics, Religion and Ethics</td>
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<td>Physical Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Craig Beeston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Aidan Sharkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young Engineers</td>
<td>George Wright</td>
<td>Jeremy Zolnai-Lucas</td>
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### Upper Sixth
For excellence, effort and progress during the Upper Sixth course

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<td>Applied Politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>J R Smith/Southern Prize</td>
<td>Jesse Rist</td>
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<td>W R Carter Prize</td>
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<td>Classical Civilisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computing</td>
<td>Neil Sayers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debating &amp; Public Speaking</td>
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<td>Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>F H Vince Prize</td>
<td>Shaan Gill</td>
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<td>English Literature</td>
<td>J F Smith Prize</td>
<td>Karl Tiemann</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
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<td>German</td>
<td>William Sullivan Prize</td>
<td>Nayen Vallabh</td>
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<td>Sir Frederick Pegler Prize</td>
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<td>Latin</td>
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<td>Product</td>
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<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>SPORT Rugby</td>
<td>Sir Stanley Rous Prize</td>
<td>Rohan Finnegan</td>
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<td>Hocky</td>
<td>Sir Stanley Rous Prize</td>
<td>Samir Patel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite Sportsman</td>
<td>FH Openshaw</td>
<td>Jonathan Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>Tommy Thompson</td>
<td>Harry Pettit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>Rod Daniel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport and OFA Prize</td>
<td>Jonathan Kennedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duke of Hertfordshire</td>
<td>Thomas Gwynne-Evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edinburgh Scouts</td>
<td>Lewis Morley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Neil Hart Prize</td>
<td>Nayen Vallabh</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Work</td>
<td>Lewis Taylor</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Governors’ Prizes for Services to the School</td>
<td>Rohan Finnegan, Jesse Rist, Gregory Wood, Samir Patel, Kishan Mistry, Kumael Bilgrami, Lewis Morley, Robert Russo, Thomas Gwynne-Evans, Thomas Cooney</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Woolams’ Prizes for Excellence in the A level examinations</td>
<td>James Bettinson, William Britter, Kishan Mistry, Nishil Patel, Samir Patel, Conrad Pinn, Gregory Wood,</td>
<td></td>
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