

# Perspective

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WGGS Magazine







# Watford Grammar School for Girls



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Welcome to this year's edition of Perspective. The magazine provides a small glimpse of the vast array of events and activities that take place during the WGGs school year. Spanning months, the articles cover a variety of topics with a balance of input from staff and students. In acknowledgement of the centenary of WW1 Mr Thompson writes about Year 9's special commemoration at the end of last year, whilst Year 10 student Mya reports on the Borneo 2019 trip which took place in April.

A number of articles cover events and occasions that link old girls and current students, showing not only how much contact we have but how important it is to maintain the relationship with the WGGs community. You will recognise these articles by the Old Grammarian Alumnae (OGA) logo:



For those of you unable to attend the annual exhibition, the front cover artwork was provided by Head of Art Miss Georgiou, showing a range of work produced by this year's GCSE and A Level students.

Thank you once again to Mrs Lesley King for her proof reading skills - squeezing the tasks between her multiple exam duties!

Happy reading.....

Mrs Michele Humberstone  
Editor

I do hope you enjoy the latest edition of our Perspectives Magazine. It has taken many hours of girls and staff working both individually and in teams to develop this eclectic mix of articles that represent the very wide range of interests the girls enjoy.



Our broad and balanced curriculum is also evident in the incredible range of subject matter, style and contributors but despite this I can see a number of themes throughout. Firstly the girls are seeking to engage with the wider community; from the physical and emotional impact of exploring Borneo and the impact of rainforest destruction to investigating the power of love and forgiveness in Rwanda, the girls are clearly open to learning and developing themselves. Secondly there are challenging questions to be asked, such as whether parallels can be drawn between classical literature and the current political landscape. Finally it is the mind-set of 'I can do it and I will do it' where girls have written provoking poetry and prose or taken part in competitions such as Cyber First or the Bar Mock Trial.

Finally you will find contributions from staff, both past and present and learn about the work of the Parents Association and Old Grammarians. As such, the Perspectives Magazine is very much a reflection of WGGs; a large number of hard working, motivated and diverse people all contributing towards the life of our wonderful school. Thank you to all those that have contributed and especially to Mrs Humberstone who works so hard to bring it all together.

Best wishes

Miss Sylvia Tai  
Headmistress







Reyna Jani 12C

# CLASSICS AND DEMOCRACY: HOW IS THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE A REPEAT OF THE PAST?

When many people imagine the ancient world they picture togas and tyranny, from the infamous Emperor Nero to the beloved Caecilius wandering about in his horto. It is very easy to disregard the ancient world as somewhere we have moved on from because the languages are 'dead', the people are not around and much of the scripture has been lost through time.

## How does the ancient world even relate to our present day?

Some of the most fascinating texts we actually have are Marcus Tullius Cicero's 'Philippics' (106-43BCE). Cicero was a famous lawyer and politician at the time of the collapse of Roman democracy. When Julius Caesar was assassinated and Mark Antony was rising to power amidst the chaos, Cicero, a passionate republican, delivered a series of compelling speeches to convince the Roman senate not to allow the most influential figures in Rome to be able to rule as emperors. Looking back, we know these speeches didn't alter the course of history enough to help Roman democracy flourish again, but it gives us an insight into the triggers for the loss of democracy.

Cicero's Second Philippic zooms into key events through Mark Antony's life, mimicking the unprofessional remarks politicians still make today, but humorously more explicit. Cicero draws our attention to the aspiring dictator

Mark Antony's background in being a 'public prostitute, with a regular price for (his) wickedness' (Philippics II, Chapter XLIV), his regular drunkenness and his history of bankruptcy, and whilst some of these are twisted facts, we can easily see the parallels between politicians with habits of lying and spreading 'fake news' in today's day and age. However, for Cicero, it was dangerous to act in opposition to the elite; being easily identified as the author of these speeches, he was later assassinated by the Second Triumvirate (including Mark Antony) and had his hand cut off to be displayed as a warning to others not to disobey or cause offence to dictators in the future.

Whilst this period of history seems more akin to the modern day dystopian novels such as 1984 or the Handmaids Tale, it teaches us vital lessons in how we want our democracy to operate, i.e. ideally without lying politicians or suspicious politically charged murders.\*

Even scandals have been identified in the last ten years, with MPs being known to spend and violate public taxes in order to fund a second home or an all-expenses-paid holiday under the pretence of foreign relations. These can also be traced back to the ancient world, and perhaps there is a thing or two we can learn from Cicero's venomous attack on Caesar and Antony's drunken exploits through Italy – 'shameful was the pillager in every city, of gold and silver, and above all,

of wine' (Philippics II, Chapter LXII). With the decreasing likelihood that political activism will result in our murders in 21st century Britain, what is stopping us from following one of the greatest orators of the ancient world?

## What about today's fears, surely they aren't the same?

Long before the days of Caesar and Cicero came the flooding of what we may call 'invasions' but some may call economic migrants and political refugees from Northern Europe into Rome. In a similar fashion to modern authorities, the ancient ruling bodies had little idea how to deal with the situation and thus began feeding dog food to the migrants before pointing them westwards on their journey.

Perhaps the dog food feeding is a stretch for our modern human rights, but as we know, there have been many countries filled with both citizens and politicians alike who determined to solve their immigration problems by denying asylum seekers and such the right to stay within the borders of their country.

## Is it just Ancient Rome that can teach us about our future?

Democracy itself has been named after its origins in Ancient Greece, with the word stemming from the Greek 'demos', meaning 'people'. In Athens, after the people found their political system rife with corruption, they decided to create a form of direct democracy, where most public officials were a randomly selected group of volunteer citizens, who were obliged to represent the people for a select term, and the only non-representative individuals were army generals, who, as members of the elite were seen as skilled professionals.\*\* However, due to the lack of checks on these 'politicians', citizens who were able to persuade the majority easily found themselves controlling the population, and with the lack of checks on these people, Athens found itself losing the 'democracy' it had once founded. Although our current political system is a representative democracy where we elect MPs to represent us in Parliament, in the modern world, even with legislature to place checks on our politicians, it is easy to see populist politicians swaying the opinions of the masses – many members following the world's most famous far-right leaders are attracted to their virtues and character, rather than actual policies helping their state. \*\*\*

## Where do we go from here?

You may still lead with clichéd arguments, like 'the past is the past', yet there is still so much more to learn about the history of civilisations before us, that can help us identify the corrupting nature of politics today. After all, haven't most politicians been saying that we're already in a 'political crisis'? Maybe they too have something to learn from the past.

\*If you are interested in the impacts of this in modern politics, feel free to research Tony Blair's controversy in 2003 surrounding the Iraq war.

\*\* If you are interested in Athenian Democracy, here is an interesting Ted-Ed with an introduction to it: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=0fivQUIC7-8>

\*\*\* For more information on this, you may be interested in Theresa May's campaign for the 2017 general election, or the campaigns of American presidents in recent years.







# How Environmentally Aware are You?

Radiya Naqvi 10C

## Home and the Environment

Did you know that 97% of the water on earth is salty? And nearly 2% is locked in snow or ice? That leaves less than 1% that we can access. This means we need to be cautious about the way we use water. It doesn't only affect you, it affects everyone. The lack of water means that people are dying, particularly where there is drought or war. You may think that having a shower for as long as you want will not affect the ecosystem but it is wasting water, and using a lot of energy that is bad for the environment.

You may also think that cooking food is not environmentally harmful, but are you aware that using an electric oven at a high temperature also uses a lot of energy? Instead of cooking in an oven for hours we could use microwaves, or order food from companies such as Deliveroo as they usually deliver the food by bike, which is very eco-friendly.

## School and the Environment

We all use lots of paper which uses up a lot of wood from trees. Think how many people there are using paper every second, and how many trees are destroyed! This is

why we should put waste paper in a recycling bin so it can be reused and turned back to paper again. Many people at school drink from plastic bottles and don't think of the harm it can do to the environment. As a result of this many animals are dying, and the oceans are becoming polluted. How can we stop this? We can use reusable water bottles and rarely buy plastic ones. If you do buy plastic bottles, be sure to throw them in the recycling bin.

Schools also use a lot of heat especially in winter to keep the classrooms warm, as well as electricity in the form of lighting and for computers. We should all be more aware of whether we can manage if we turn the radiators down to save energy and to turn the lights off if they are not needed.

## Shopping and the Environment

We all like buying clothes don't we? However, did you know how much the environment is affected by what you buy? It takes 20,000 litres of water to produce one kilogram of cotton which is equivalent to a single t-shirt and pair of jeans. That is not all. According to Stephen Leahy of 'The Guardian', "85% of the daily needs in water of the entire population of India would be covered

by the water used to grow cotton in the country. 100 million people in India do not have access to drinking water." We need to stop this now before this problem gets even worse.

There are several things we can do to help. Instead of throwing things away we can give them to charity, give them away to someone who wants them, or even put them up for sale. This will help you and the ecosystem!

We should consider buying eco-friendly clothes, such as recycled fibres made with waste material, natural fibres with a low eco-impact such as linen, eco-fibres only if produced in a sustainable way, organic cotton and semi synthetic fibres with low eco-impact. So where can you buy these you might well ask? The organisation 'Ethical Consumer' did an environmental rating of high street shops and stated, "...only M&S scored the best rating in this category due to the fact that under its plan, a sustainability strategy, it had key targets around the sourcing of raw materials, of animals, and the wellbeing of people and communities". They went on to report that H&M and Zara were leaders in awareness of toxic chemicals. Matalan and Amazon were rated the worst for their ethical awareness.

You may think that buying a cheap piece of clothing on Amazon even only once will not harm the environment. However, many people around the world are doing exactly the same thing, not thinking about other people, and just thinking about themselves. Every day people are buying cheap clothing that is not environmentally friendly, and so damage continues to be done to the environment. The people who produce the cheap clothes also work in very bad conditions. How can we fix this this problem? We need to be more aware of what we are buying and give more to charity.

If you want to know more about this topic and how to buy eco-friendly products, you might be interested in the website [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org).



## Year 8 Food Club

A selection of Year 8 pupils have taken part in a wonderful and rewarding experience of learning the basics of cooking in school. Every week during lunchtime through the months of November to February Miss Naalchigar, Miss Brewer and two willing and enthusiastic Sixth Formers: Shreya Tanna and Libby McShannon, guided a group of Year 8 cooks through the processes and principles of cooking. From muffins and soup, to vegetable tarts and Christmas cookies, this enriching experience was a very rewarding opportunity, improving confidence in the kitchen, multitasking skills, knowledge of cooking and cleaning, and above all, making new friends. Every week our cooks turned up with aprons and open minds, ready to learn to make the next item in their recipe books, taking home their creations to share with family, celebrating in their success together. To mark the completion of the experience pupils were encouraged to choose their own menu in the final week, making party food to share with the rest of the group after school. Valuable lessons were particularly learnt here regarding the time it takes to create a food masterpiece. With the patient and skilful guidance of Miss Brewer, and encouragement and motivation from Miss Naalchigar everyone was proud of their achievements. Miss Naalchigar, especially, has been particularly impressed with the group for their creativity in the kitchen, their willingness to learn and their enthusiasm for seizing every opportunity and hopes that the skills learnt during this time will stay with the girls for years to come.

Miss Naalchigar



# A Rewarding Challenge

by Niamh Whelan 12D



I'm sure a lot of readers are familiar with the long and arduous journey from Land's End to John O'Groats – it spans the entirety of our island from bottom to top and is often claimed to be the true test of any cyclist. The route extends over 900 miles from the coastline of Cornwall all the way up to the rolling Scottish Highlands. Just the idea alone of cycling this route is enough to bring me out in a sweat. It is often on the bucket list for many UK citizens, either as a charity event or a self-rewarding experience. Strictly speaking, the distance is 603 miles, but unless you can somehow walk over the Irish sea, it's recommended that you remain on the roads for the 900-mile journey.

The route has been an iconic challenge for many years. It takes riders through the most naturally awesome parts of Britain from coastal roads to green valleys. It is definitely one of the most challenging endurance rides that you can undertake. One person who has managed to conquer this challenge is WGS's very own former Head of Mathematics, Mr Broadwith!

I recently contacted Mr Broadwith about his achievement. One factor that he emphasized was the sheer amount of appeal that this cycle challenge has for people, no matter what they are interested in. Being a bit of a gym-averted myself I was really interested to see what

appeal this ride would have for someone like me, and I was pleasantly surprised by the answer.

The historic monuments are plentiful and spectacular. Down in Cornwall alone there are a lot of significant places, such as St Michael's Mount, a trading port for tin from pre-historic times. The island off the Cornish coast was the location of the first beacon lit to warn the population of the impending Spanish Armada in 1588. Up near the finishing stretch of the journey there are also historic sights galore and countless historical stories to discover.

The routes have been planned to take the best possible roads to see the United Kingdom at its finest. Dependent on your personal tastes, there is a variety of routes that can be taken with different natural attractions. Some might add an extra few miles onto the journey, but when you're cycling that much to begin with, the natural sights, I'm sure, will be more than payment enough. You can cycle though the Cotswolds, the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District.

For those of you reading who love the hustle and bustle of city life and the cosmopolitan lifestyle, there are many routes that take you through notable cities, such as Exeter, Bristol, Manchester and Glasgow. They are

frequently recommended as the prime opportunities for stop-offs if you want to make the most of your journey.

Mr Broadwith (and many others who have completed the journey) emphasised the amount of training that the challenge takes. Training is vital and the speed in which you can cycle is entirely dependent on it. The amount of training required is based on your current fitness levels and what your personal objectives are. Evidently, regular cyclists will need less training and if you intend for your trip to be a leisurely one, the training requirements will be much less rigorous.

Endurance training is probably the most frustrating and hardest aspect that cyclists face. You have to push your body to its limits in order to achieve the results that you want to see and that will enable you to complete the 900 miles without injury. Other areas largely neglected by cyclists are flexibility and strength – both of which save you valuable time and effort.

It is also very important to rest your body and recover from these endurance training sessions. Although it sounds counterproductive, it's very important to prevent injury and to ensure that the full value of training is given to your body.

Unfortunately, exhaustion is inevitable; it's not uncommon for people to cycle for eighteen hours straight. This is where your endurance training and preparation come in handy – it will help your body to bounce back after a few hours of much-needed rest.

Despite the daunting task that this cycle ride appears to be, there are plenty of options as to how you can ride it, with riders right up to eighty years old completing the distance. Some top tips given to riders by those who have completed the challenge are:

- Pick the window for cycling extremely carefully. Even if the weather is mild down in the South, that does not necessarily mean that the same is the case in the most northern parts of Scotland.
- It's important to remember that the journey can be completed in either order, from south to north or vice versa. (If you do go north to south, despite popular belief, it is not an exclusively downhill route).
- Journey planning is essential. Knowing beforehand where your rest stops are and booking into B&B's beforehand will eliminate any unnecessary time spent stopping and looking for accommodation.
- Cornish pasties are often what get riders through the rough terrain of the Cornish hills.

- Waterproofs are most certainly worth the space they might take up. Some people are annoyingly optimistic about the British weather. Big mistake. I would bet money on it raining at least once during a cycling day. Be smart and bring a waterproof. Although you might be tempted to carry as little as possible, when raindrops start hitting your head, you'll be more than thankful you brought your waterproof (ask Mr Broadwith - he knows!).
- The daylight hours get shorter the further north you go, this is particularly useful if you intend to complete the ride in the early months of the year.
- Most importantly, enjoy it. Mr Broadwith and many other riders stressed how fantastic this experience was for them. Even with the physical strain, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity.

If you are interested in completing the journey for yourself, don't be daunted by the distance, there are a huge number of resources readily available to help you complete the journey of a lifetime. The National Cycling Charity (Cycling UK) has written an information pack to help prospective cyclists train and prepare. Cycling UK also has an active forum online with all kinds of advice and the National Cyclist Network gives accurate and specific details on safe and scenic routes on your journey.

If you decide to follow in Mr Broadwith's footsteps and take on the challenge, pack a raincoat, and I hope you have the cycle of your life!



Cycling UK - [www.cyclinguk.org](http://www.cyclinguk.org)  
The National Cyclist Network - [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)





# Creative Writing Club

Jenni Wall 12C

Creative Writing Club runs on Thursday lunchtime every week in LC9

**100 word competition winner: Nadia Traynor-Herenda 11B - Darkness**

This competition was open to all of the Creative Writing Club. The theme was ‘darkness’, and could be entered in any form - a short story, a non-fiction piece or a poem, to name a few. Nadia attends weekly along with around ten others, and the club members have participated in multiple national writing competitions, utilising different writing styles to improve their creative writing and next term we will begin writing a short novel together.

**500 word competition winner: Rajvi Jani 12G - Mother of a Changeling Child**

This competition was open to the entire school, and many stories were entered! The theme was ‘Fairytale’, and the entries centred around either a different interpretation of a fairytale or the creation of an entirely new story. Rajvi’s story is based on the ancient idea of a ‘changeling’- when a human child is taken by fairies and in its place a fairy child is left that looks like the human child, but does not act like a human. Overall the story has a good plotline and beautiful imagery, with an especially haunting ending.

**Runners Up:**

- Year 12 Shannon Lee 12H - Little Wolf
- Year 12 Reyna Jani 12C - Sol & Hyacintha
- Year 9 Caitlin Akohene 9B - Goldilocks
- Year 7 Anjali Shah 7E - The Kailas

## Darkness - Nadia Traynor-Herenda

It came to see me with the silence  
Of the lame lambs that portrayed  
The dead of the night in the

Swamp lands. I asked. It came.  
Could you dismay? But  
Nothing was true of this Light, for

Darkness had a gift of movement, darkness  
Was everlasting – true is that – but,  
Then I saw the Light was gone, it won

(Did it not?) the gift of the gods; space  
Was Darkness now. Matter soon went  
Off in a strut like a cow, yet I applauded it,

The thing that won itself the gift of Life...  
Darkness.



## Mother of A Changeling Child - Rajvi Jani

Who knows not the tragedy of the mother of a changeling child? The fair-haired impish trickster, whose hands held magic from the fae; Dalnecre’s greatest treasure, the epitome of endearing grace. Few who have heard the telling know the blind, bitter fate the cup of motherhood’s sweet poison laid, to her unsuspecting lips.

Low mournful winds blew in torrents through straithe of Dalnecre. Daylight fading, the clouds battled to form tempests of overbearing dark. Under the midst of this godly conflict, almost eye to eye with the storm, lived a woman, who would a mother be. For twelve long years, she’d been wife to a good man, but never had the cradle been filled. Mother-to-be of a changeling child, from beneath the fairy hill.

Good was the ladle with which she stirred soup; good the hearth she nurtured for their home. How could good feel complete without hope for a child’s gurgle with which to cheer her? For all her young, flowering years, she had longed for a baby.

From the tenderness in a doe-eyed, plump-lipped girl of fifteen to the womanly inclination her older years had harboured, she dreamed of growing a life inside of her; how it may feel to hear fluttering, tentative thuds inside a tiny ribcage so vulnerable that every drum playing inside is like a desperate battle for life, to hold the warm, solid head of a child against her breast, small breaths tickling her skin, to watch dark eyelashes sweeping smooth, untarnished cheeks in stainless sleep.

Her womb was her only listener; none else could offer sympathy for her woe. Cries of self-pity, laments of an empty nursery... the ache of absence burned low in her belly. Her complaints were consistent and so very wracked with sharp loss that her voice was familiar even to gods. It is remarkable how grief marks the soul.

So, stepping across the standing stones, she ventured across the green. As all the farmers laboured, on their agonies of passion, they watched her cross their proud, wide fields, the purpose of a queen screaming from the spring in her step. Even into mysterious forests, wrapped tightly and shivering in her shawl, never once did she turn back, never once did her footsteps fall slack.

Her resolve didn’t waver, even when she reached elven folk, who danced there, seen. Through the night, she bargained with the queen of fairies, in glittering purple undergrowth of Magic’s territory. She was sent home at dawning, with a baby beneath her shawl.

Oh, how their home was joyful, with a son to call their own! She had the fruit of all her courage, nestled in her arms every blessed night, but soon they saw the years passing never made him grow. Panicked in a flurry, she went to his origin. The fairies would not answer her; the stones lay shadowed and asleep.

For fifty years she rocked that babe...it’s said she rocks him still. The mother of the changeling child, from beneath the fairy hill.



# FORGIVENESS AND THE FUTURE - by Mollie Dyer 12F

I was recently told about a book about Rwanda, called *The Hope of a Thousand Hills* which was written by a former Watford girl called Emily Bankhead (née Shore). It details a period of recovery, forgiveness and reconciliation following the turmoil inflicted on the country in 1994, where one million Rwandan people were murdered in 100 days. As someone who spent a week in Rwanda in October with the school, Emily's book resonated with me. The country was bright, colourful and full of friendly welcoming people, desperate to showcase their beautiful homeland to us.

Emily was at WGGs from 1997 - 2004 and says, 'I really enjoyed my time there. I think one of the things that really sets the school apart is the emphasis on multiculturalism; respecting and celebrating each other's cultural and religious perspectives.' One of her inspirations for travelling to Rwanda and writing the book was that she studied the Nazi Holocaust at university, and went on to do a Masters in Holocaust Studies, but felt that she didn't know very much at all about the Rwandan genocide and wanted to learn more.

Emily's story follows the Rabagirana ministries journey into forgiveness and healing following the genocide. The church provided the people of Rwanda with hope and a possibility to forgive their neighbours and themselves. Full of personal testimonies and accounts, the power of forgiveness is inspiring.

I interviewed Emily to find out why she wrote her book, *The Hope of a Thousand Hills*:

## *What do you want people to know about Rwanda?*

"Rwanda should be an inspiration and a challenge to all of us in terms of rebuilding, restoring, healing and reconciling after situations of conflict. For so long, Rwanda has almost been synonymous with genocide, and the outside world hasn't wanted to look too closely because what happened in 1994 was so shocking. But now this nation and these people have so much to teach the rest of us about hope, healing, forgiveness and reconciliation, about how to rise from the ashes, and also about how to embrace and celebrate diversity. I think that's particularly relevant at the moment, with so much talk in the political sphere of building walls and closing borders."

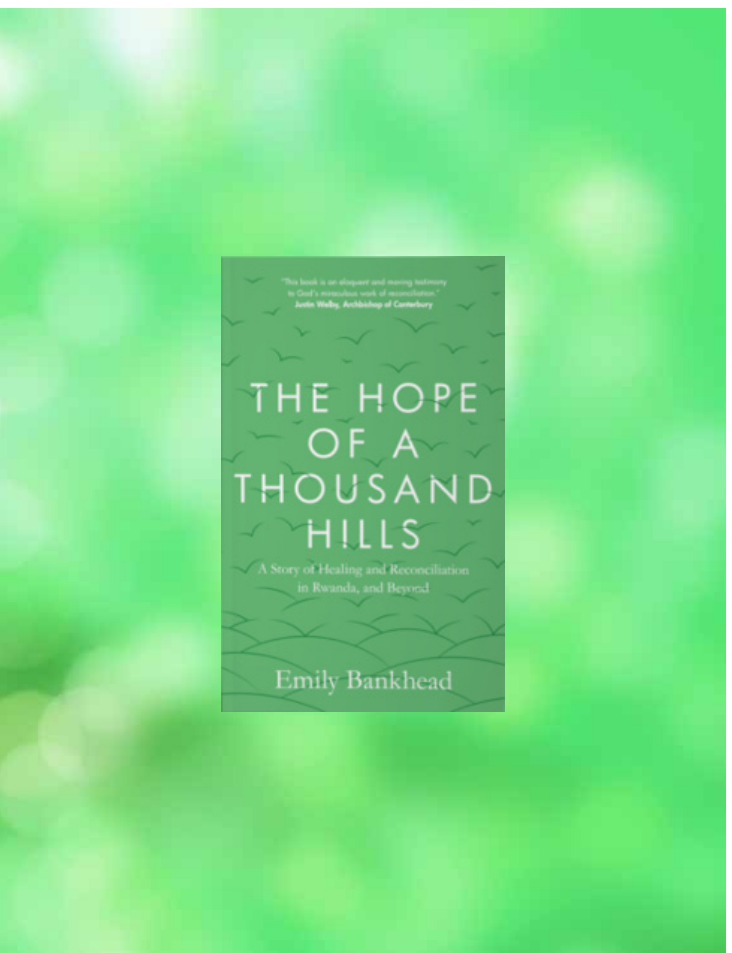
From the first couple of chapters of her book, one phrase stood out to me. 'Love is louder, more fierce, more powerful...[nothing] can ever drown it out'. Although it has been nearly 25 years since the genocide took place, conflict is ever-present in today's society. With five countries currently experiencing genocide and sixteen countries at risk of it, genocide is not a thing of the past. In times like this, uniting against hate and celebrating diversity is incredibly important.

## *Why did you originally go and what were your motives for writing the book?*

"I went with my husband to meet with Joseph and the team from Rabagirana Ministries (a church group who were trying to bring about healing following the aftermath) and to start gathering testimonies for the book that they wanted me to write. It was an enormous privilege for me to be invited to hear these stories, and then to share them with others through the writing of the book. I wanted to challenge people's perception of Rwanda as a bruised and broken nation that tore itself apart, because - as you know from visiting - it's actually a beautiful, lush and vibrant place, with the quiet strength and determination to re-build itself and be united"

## *How has visiting Rwanda changed your life?*

"Being in Rwanda was refreshing, inspiring, heart-breaking and heart-warming all at once. I learned that humans can have a terrifying capacity for evil, but an even greater capacity for good, and that goodness triumphs in the end. Sitting and listening to these men and women tell me their personal stories, I realised that people can be stronger and more resilient than I ever thought possible. Above all, it's shown me that, in every circumstance, there is always hope."



My time in Rwanda mirrors Emily's. On the first two days of our trip we learned of the shocking acts that took place from April to June in 1994. It was horrific and humbling and made me feel lucky to live in a country where we are entitled to rights, and we are all, in the most part, treated equally and with respect. Over the next couple of days we were shown how the country had drastically turned hate into love, and how, with lots of hard work, it could become a country united and strong. The government are inspiring, with 61.3% of the seats in the house constituting of women.

What can we do to help?

"Firstly, read this book. Sharing these people's stories and testimonies ensures those who died will never be forgotten. Those who are interested can buy the book at [www.selwynshore.com/books/hope](http://www.selwynshore.com/books/hope), and it includes full transcripts of the testimonies I heard. All proceeds from the book go to support the work of Rabagirana Ministries in Rwanda. If you're interested in following the work of Rabagirana Ministries directly, you can visit their website at [www.rabagirana.org](http://www.rabagirana.org). I would also love to take my two girls to Rwanda when they are a bit older, as I think it would be an enriching experience for them and I want them to know this story of both terrible tragedy and boundless hope."

As you may know, there is a trip going to Rwanda with Dame Helen Hyde in February 2020, so for those old enough, I cannot encourage you enough to go. Rwanda honestly gave me a new appreciation of life; through being able to see positives even in bad situations and that forgiveness is massively important. To be honest, going to Rwanda was worthwhile simply because we got to feed beautiful babies.

I really hope you consider going to Rwanda or even learning more about it. Support the Rwanda Sisterhood Association or attend the WGGs Knit and Knatter sessions to find out more.



In Year 7 we wrote poems in response to Ted Hughes' poem 'Hawk Roosting'. The Hawk in Hughes' poem states that 'I kill where I please because it is all mine' and 'Nothing has changed since I began'.

We felt that the Hawk needs to know about the giant trevally fish - which flies out of the water to catch and eat birds! After watching a clip from David Attenborough's Blue Planet II we wrote poems from the perspective of the avenging fish. - Mrs A Lowe

Isabelle Morrison 7A

## The Revenge of the Fish

His heart was obscured  
His teeth were potent  
His eyes symbolised revenge

He was a famous predator in the Pacific Ocean  
Anyone who dared to pester him  
was without doubt fish food

But gliding through the sky with ease was an  
unfortunate sightseer  
A venerable, exquisite bird  
Little did he know, he was soon a divine  
Dinner for the predator  
Seconds later, he was reduced to shreds  
And every single feather  
Left a trace which created a path leading to the  
slaughterer  
Who was next?

Ella Foster 7A

## Nobody Knows my Potential

Nobody knows my potential,  
"You sit in that lake all day!"  
Nobody knows my potential,  
"You won't be special, no way!"

Nobody knew my potential,  
The day the Hawk swooped in,  
Nobody knew my potential,  
When there was a frightful din.

Animals screaming for help,  
I still felt powerless and dead,  
Nobody knew my potential,  
The day Hawk flew over my head.

He didn't care about my potential,  
He couldn't have cared less,  
He didn't care about my potential,  
He thought he was the best.

I couldn't block out the voices,  
Shouting in my head,  
I couldn't block out the voices,  
I hated what they said.

But I managed to block out the voices,  
And thought of being just me,  
I managed to block out the voices,  
I leapt into the air - I was free.

The Hawk still taunted restlessly,  
"Look at you, you're not meant to fly!"  
The Hawk still taunted restlessly,  
"You're wasting my time, loser, bye."

Nobody knew my potential,  
But I opened my mouth wide,  
Nobody knew my potential,  
But now the Hawk's inside.

Then everyone knew my potential,  
As all the mice cheered,  
Everyone knew my potential,  
And I protected them for years.

Aamna Ahmed 7A

## The Revenge of the Fish

The fish prepares to jump  
Hence hearing his prey  
Eel and shark all watch

Ready  
Endure the pain, bird  
Vicious fish fight  
Everything becomes still  
Nothing moves. fish are  
Getting ready to  
Eat

Out of the blue comes  
Fish

There's a snap  
Hear the depressed tweets.  
Eat

Finish the bird  
Incarcerate it  
Somehow, the fish will  
Have victory.

## National Careers Week



March 4–8th saw the first WGS National Careers Week take place, with events arranged throughout the week to help inform pupils about different careers. This was also the first time that events were opened up to all year groups and it was really encouraging to see so many KS3 pupils proactively finding out about possible future careers.

The week started off with a fair dedicated to Careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). We were honoured to be joined by 36 employers from companies representing scientific research, pharmaceuticals, construction and mechanical engineering, accountancy, technology start-ups, food science, analytical science, statistics, forensic science, immunotherapy, biomedical sciences, and embryology to name just some! We were also pleased to welcome back some of our past pupils to speak to our girls about their current careers!

We were then joined by Dr Jonathan Moses, who came to speak to the girls about careers in Healthcare. There are simply too many different roles to detail all of them, but as someone who completed a degree in Chinese, Dr Moses offered the girls inspiration about studying what you are passionate about, and following your dreams.

Next, Dr James Hodgkinson from the University of Warwick, spoke to the girls about the importance of studying languages instead of thinking that "it doesn't matter as they speak English anyway!" He gave a very insightful look into what studying languages at university would involve, and humoured us with his examples of literal translations.

Finally, we were joined by His Honour Judge Middleton-Roy, who spoke to the girls about what law is, how it affects us in the different areas of our life, the different roles of solicitors, barristers and judges, and how to go about getting into the profession. With this talk being held on International Women's Day, he also gave a passionate plea to our girls to be the generation that helps address the gender imbalance that is still prevalent.

In order to provide our girls with these opportunities, we very much depend on the generosity of people giving up their time. If you would like to help out in the future by speaking to pupils about your career, or having a table at a careers fair, or conducting practice interviews at our FACE the Future event, then please contact me at [s.arazi@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk](mailto:s.arazi@watfordgirls.herts.sch.uk)

Mrs Arazi  
Head of Careers



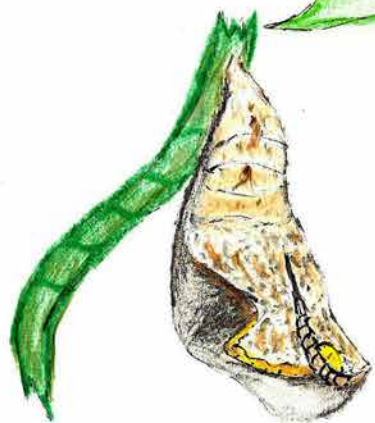


# OWL BUTTERFLY

I am just like a jewel.  
I am shiny and glistening.  
However I am compact  
and undeveloped.  
That's a fact!



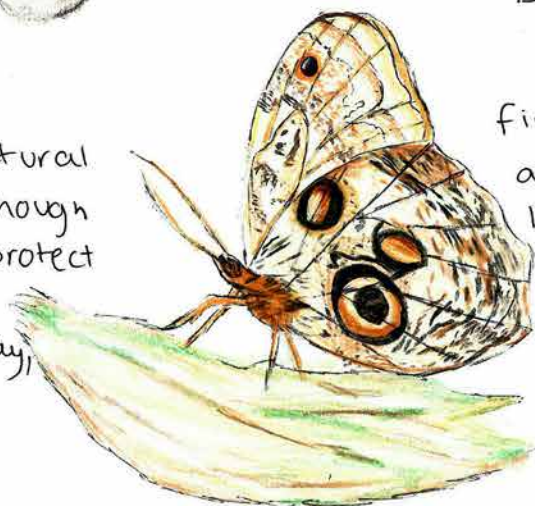
Even though  
and  
and am  
watch  
into a glimmering



I am shrimpy  
Immature  
always lingering  
as I glow up  
grown up!

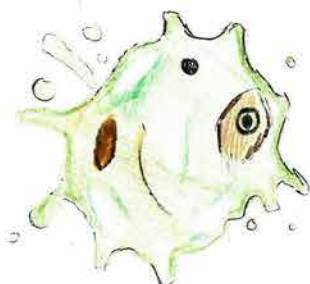
Yes I am quite firm,  
Somehow rigid.  
But don't let that fool you  
Only if you knew  
What I've been through  
Eating, eating, just to be  
Brand new!

I am  
natural  
even though  
(to protect  
I completely  
and might I say,



finally free  
and elegant  
I do disguise myself  
(ourselves)  
look picturesque  
quite raphaellesque!

Yes this is wicked  
grotesque  
I am deformed and ugly  
very sluggish  
and quite goth.  
Just because I looked like a moth!  
And I was wiped,  
with a piece of cloth!?



By Marjorie Del Rosario  
8A/8T



## YEAR 9 WORLD WAR ONE COMMEMORATION NOVEMBER 2018



The History department took Year 9 off timetable on Wednesday 7th November for a special day of activities designed to commemorate the end of World War One, exactly one hundred years ago in November 1918. They were fully immersed in local history, developing their artistic sides and even hearing from a World War One soldier!

Students were given the opportunity to make ceramic doves and poppies, each bearing the name of one of the students from Watford Grammar School Boys who fought and died in the war. These have since been glazed and fired in the kiln and will be displayed throughout the school. You can find the first of these in the entrance to the Library! It was great to see the enthusiasm and creativity that the girls brought to this complex task. Several members of staff also made their own individual ceramics, including Ms Tai and Ms MacEwan who made a special Scottish themed memorial for her great-grandfather. A special thank you to the Art Department for helping us to arrange and run this fantastic activity.

Students were taken on a walking tour of local memorial sites, including Holy Rood Church and Vicarage Road Cemetery. Here, they were able to find out more about how local people had been affected by the war and about the design of war memorials. Students were subjected to some horrific WW1-like conditions when

a storm blew in, making the experience even more authentic for them as they were soaked head to toe with rain.

Finally, we were lucky to be joined by a firm favourite of the History Department, Private Ben Revell. Private Revell left no details out as he recalled his own experiences in the trenches to the students and answered their questions about conditions and life during the war. Some were even lucky enough to be given a chance to hold his rifle.

In the afternoon, the whole year group were treated to a one-man performance of the poetry of Wilfred Owen. The students were suitably impressed by the content, special effects and his ability to memorise and perfectly time an almost hour long performance!

Year 9 entered into all the activities in a fantastic spirit. They got a lot out of the day to help them create brilliant projects on life in World War One. They were able to further appreciate the significance of this event not just to Watford but to the nation and the wider world. It was a pleasure to organise and run. I would like to thank everyone who took part and helped to make the day possible.

Field Marshall Mr Thompson







# WGGs PA WGGs PA WGGs PA

A HUGE thank you to all who have supported the PA this year; whether it was organising, helping out at an event or simply attending and spending, your support has meant that we have raised an impressive £17,000 so far this school year.

This money, together with previously raised funds, enabled us to purchase the furniture for the new sixth form block (Tennet Centre). This academic year we have been able to provide the school with a £39,000 contribution to the much needed multi use games area (known affectionately by the girls as the MUGA). This will hopefully enable the school to host matches rather than having to constantly be the "away team".

We have started to build up our funds for the school's wish list with some great fun events:

The Christmas fair on the 2nd of December was very well attended. Year 7 did us proud as usual with their inventive games stalls, the food provided was superb and the Christmas music on constant loop in the classrooms created a fantastic festive atmosphere. A big thank you to Bob Honour for organising us all and to the many parents who gave up their time on the day and beforehand. The fair raised a magnificent £13,000. This included the highly successful Grand Draw which was wonderfully supported by girls and parents alike. Thank you.

October 2018 saw a joint comedy night organised with WBGs. This sold out event was a thoroughly enjoyable evening and we have every intention of making it an annual occasion. It turns out that laughter can be the best medicine and we raised just under £1,200 for each school.

The 27th April 2019 ushered in the annual quiz night hosted by Susie Benjamin from Beat School Uniforms, who, despite no longer having girls at the school, has continued to act as our quiz master, producing amazingly creative question rounds with questions (literally) on a football, a map and a doggy bowl. My particular favourite was guess the sweet flavours – with real crushed up sweets. It was a fun light-hearted family

friendly evening, which was well attended by parents and girls as well as several friends of the school.

The Year 7 social event takes place this year on the 13th July. This annual event, organised by the PA, has been instrumental in helping hundreds of girls to feel more confident about starting secondary school. We also can't deny that it is a good opportunity for the PA to recruit some willing helpers.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our requests for match funding. This can be an easy and lucrative way of boosting our finances. There is a list on the PA page of the school website of all companies that we are aware of who provide match funding schemes. Have a look - your employer may be there.

Thank you also to those who signed up to the easyfundraising website. Every time you shop online at a wide variety of retailers (including Amazon, ebay and Tesco) you can raise money for the school at no cost to you. If you have not signed up yet please have a look at: [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/watfordgsgpa/](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/watfordgsgpa/).

The PA's 100 Club has been running successfully for many years at WGGs and it is a great way for friends and families to support the school whilst having a bit of fun! For an annual subscription of £12, members can buy one (or more) 'Lucky' numbers which are then entered into our monthly draws. So, for a mere £1 a month you are in with a chance of winning one of three monthly prizes (of £25, £20 or £15) and a special AGM prize of £100. We currently have 314 members who raise nearly £4000 a year, and, after payment of the prizes, the remaining funds go towards the PA's support of the school. Historically, the 100 Club funds alone have allowed the PA to present £100 to every Head of Year group and Department in the school - to enable them to buy extra items that they feel will benefit our girls.

**All parents are automatically members of the PA. In fact, the PA is the parents. We would love to see as many as possible being involved. It does not need to be a big time commitment - we meet approximately twice a term, usually on a Monday night at 7.30pm in the History room. It is a great way to find out a bit more about the school from 'the inside' and to help to raise some extra funds to support your daughters. There is always a member of the senior leadership team at the meetings and there is an opportunity to ask them any questions that you may have about school life. The last PA meeting this term is our summer BBQ on 1 July 2019 at 7pm. Why not come along even if you have not been involved before? We would love to see you.**

**WGGs 2019 Committee  
email: [wggspa@gmail.com](mailto:wggspa@gmail.com)**

**Chair: Hannah Starling  
Vice Chair: Sunita Patel  
Treasurer: Aqeel Butt  
Vice Treasurer: Amanda Hardly  
Secretary: Joanne Hayden  
100 Club: Anjana Roy**

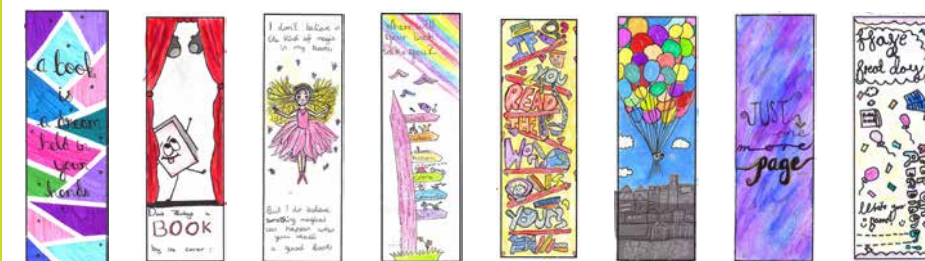
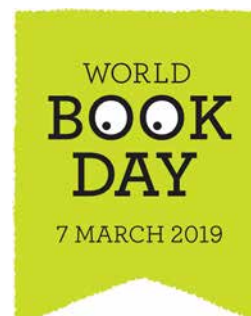
## The Library Celebrates World Book Day

"World Book Day is the world's biggest campaign to provide every child and young person in the country with a book of their own", and aims to "get books directly into the hands of children and young people, especially those who wouldn't otherwise have access to them".  
[www.worldbookday.com/faq/#question1](http://www.worldbookday.com/faq/#question1)

For this year's celebrations, the library worked with Miss Dodhia, Head of Year 7 and the English Department to pack the day with many activities:

- The library held a "Design a Bookmark" competition for Year 7 and all the bookmarks have been displayed in the library. There were some fabulous designs and congratulations to the winners.
- Various English classes visited the library during the week, including 7B with Miss Mainwaring to do their "Book in a Jar" presentations.
- Year 7 classes played "Author Scrabble" in their library lessons.
- I was invited to help judge Miss Dodhia's Catwalk Competition where the girls dressed as their favourite book characters; they all looked fantastic.
- Mrs Read distributed World Book Day tokens around the school.
- The library gifted nearly 200 World Book Day books to Year 7's who entered the Catwalk Competition, to winners of the Bookmark Competition, to members of Page Turners (the Wednesday Reading Group), and to girls visiting the library throughout the day.
- The girl who borrowed the 50th book from the library on World Book Day won a prize.

Thank you to everyone who took part.  
Mrs Small, Librarian







## My Family and the Second World War by Hannah Dickinson 8B

In my family many people were sent to war. My great-grandma and great-grandad are who I am writing about today.

Their story starts in Newcastle where they had been living since they were born in 1919. They grew up in the same area but only met in 1939 at a church social event. The war started a few months after they began to see each other. They barely knew each other when my great-grandad was sent to France – where he was put on ‘maintenance’. This meant that he built roads and bridges. He was just 19 but he wasn’t put on the front line of battle. He had two older brothers who were also sent to France. However, they were put on the front line and they fought face-to-face with German soldiers. At this time all soldiers were allowed leave to go home, and thankfully, all three brothers came home. By now, it wasn’t even a year into the war.

Like my great-grandad, my great-grandma also had two brothers. One of Great-Grandad’s brothers drove tanks which was a risky job. Most got blown up by the Germans and Italians, but Great-Uncle Tom survived the war and enjoyed driving tanks. My great-gran had a choice; her brothers were pilots in the RAF (Royal Air Force) and she could have gone to France to join the WRAF (Women’s Royal Air Force), or she could stay and work in a munitions factory.

She chose to work in the factory so that she could stay at home with her mum whose whole family had left to fight. It was hard work; she had to work six days a week. Unfortunately, the hours were long too – until

10pm every day. She built engines for aeroplanes. While telling us all this information she retold the story to us about the time at the factory when a young, good looking man came to work there. All the young ladies used to fight over him, he was a real ladies’ man! For a long period of time he dated women in the factory. One morning the military police came to the factory and took him away. It was later revealed he was a German spy who had come to find out as much as possible.

While this was going on my great-grandad managed to get some leave again. So, when he came home they decided to get married. For all they knew they might not have ever seen each other again. Because of the circumstances it would be hard to source a ring. Most shops were closed but one jeweller wasn’t. Only one ring was left, which was made for someone else. It was 22 carat gold though, too expensive. He bought it anyway! They had a small church wedding with only a few friends and family members. Not a lot happened in the forthcoming year.

At some point during 1942/43 one of Great Grandad’s brothers went to France and was killed in action. Great Grandad and his other brother were sent to Burma, now known as Myanmar. The brother was in a prisoner of war camp in Japan where he was probably mistreated and used for manual labour. Prisoners slept in confined cells designed to fit as many men as possible. Great Grandad was in Burma, India and Japan. Because he never spoke of the war and what had happened to him, we also believe he was in a camp too like his brother.

When the war was over in 1945 Great Grandad and his brother came home, both with no hair, completely bald. It never grew back. It must have been something that happened to them we think, or just the stress and horrors they saw. It is also possible that there could have been disease in the camps.

Because Great-Grandad never spoke of what happened in the camps a lot is unclear. A few months later his brother, unable to cope with the memories of what happened while they were abroad, died of alcoholism. They knew many people and friends who did the same. They had no other option as the trauma of what they had seen was overwhelming.

My great-grandma also lost a brother in France on the front line. Luckily my great-uncle Tom came home back to Newcastle. He lived a solitary life and remained a bachelor. 1945 was terrifically sad for the family, losing three brothers between them.

Great-Grandad brought back a great Japanese tea set with gold embellishments, hand painted. It’s plastered with images of traditional Asian women. It still sits proudly at my grandma’s house.

When Great-Grandad was safely back at home in Newcastle, they started a family and had three children, one of whom is my grandma. They lived an incredibly



happy, quiet life and they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1989. Great-Grandad died in 1993; he was 74. Despite what he had seen in his lifetime he remained a peaceful man. But, my great grandma turns 100 this December and can still remember all of this!

My great-grandparents kept nearly everything they had during the war and we still have most of it - including matchboxes from 1944 with grand galleons on them, also the ration books and medals given to Great-Grandad.

The war caused suffering for millions of families including my own. The war certainly took someone from every family.

I retold this account to my English class, they were most fascinated by the fact they had no hair! For many, it was the first time they had heard a real account from the war. It was two weeks before my great-gran’s 99th birthday, so the class wrote a card for her. As she opened it, my grandma phoned my mum. Every couple of minutes my great-grandma would look up and say, ‘Is this all for me?’ and ‘I didn’t know I was so important!’ She was really touched and it made her day.

Header images - The Imperial War Museum



## Connected Success!



On Saturday 23rd March 2019 we held our first OGA Connected event. The aim of the afternoon was to offer alumnae the opportunity to learn more about the OGA website, how to use it and what it can offer whilst making contact with old friends and revisiting the school.

The day turned out to be so much more than anticipated and I would like to thank everybody that attended; from the alumnae to the Sixth Formers who acted as guides and assistants. Pauline Utumesi from our site providers also joined us and recent recruit to the ranks of Old Grammarian, Hannah Kirby, returned to take photographs.

The students and Pauline assisted our guests with one-to-one tuition on how to register on the site, change profiles and update consent options and were a huge help on the day. After a brief presentation on the Careers Portal it was heartening to learn that there was an interest and understanding of the website's vital functions and it was especially pleasing to be welcoming some new recruits into our Volunteering and Mentoring programme as a result.

It was wonderful to be involved in reuniting friends who hadn't seen each other since they left WGS and whom I am sure will now stay in touch. It was also lovely to see students old and new engaging with each other, particularly over tales of the past - see across for a selection of comments about the day.

The event also provided another opportunity for some crowd sourcing, putting names to faces in our archived photographs. Every little bit helps in this respect and I hope that gradually we can build up an interesting resource for our members. As mentioned, recent alumna Hannah returned to take new photographs. Hannah's involvement epitomises a major purpose of the Old Grammarian Alumnae; Hannah helped us whilst undertaking work experience for her Photography course. Wins all round and a very satisfying end to our inaugural Connected event!

Mrs M Humberstone



*"Thank you and your team for a very informative and memory stirring day! I also particularly wanted to thank Darika, Sana, Samana and the other girls for entertaining us and showing us around. It was fascinating to return to the school after so many years and see all the changes and developments."* K Kirby Class of '79

*"I would recommend getting involved with the Old Grammarian Alumnae because it's a chance to see how much the school has progressed through stories told by the old girls. From hearing stories about the old headmistresses on the main hall wall, to seeing the bright smiles on the alumnus faces as they trace their fingers over the old school photos to pinpoint where they and their friends were, it really is a riveting and eye-opening experience."* Yossy 12H

*"It was an enormous pleasure to return to school for the first time in over 40 years for last Saturday's alumnae afternoon. The girls who showed us around could not have been more friendly, courteous, interesting and interested. They were wonderful ambassadors."* P Goldsmith Class of '78

*"The best thing about Saturday's event was the opportunity to speak to former students and show them around the school."* Shajani 12H

*"We thoroughly enjoyed it The girls showing us round were very helpful and it was good to see the new buildings and meet up with old friends."* D Faulkner - Class of '54



## CYBER FIRST GRAND FINAL



In March 2019 a number of students from Year 8 took part in a week of computing, encryption and other cyber security related activities as part of the Cyber Security competition with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

After the competition had closed, the Cyber Security competition providers contacted the school to say that our top team had placed in the top ten schools in the country and were invited to Edinburgh to take part in the Grand Final.

The WGS team consisted of four Year 8 girls; Isobel Starling, Jenna Read, Melissa Cawthorne-Young and Maya Riaz. The girls had this to say about the initial round of activities:

***"The Cyber First competition is a great initiative to encourage girls to try computing. The challenges in the online round were made up of four sections - cryptography, cyber security, logic and coding and networking. As a team we had a week to complete as much as we could across the four categories. As we went on the challenges got progressively harder but, once you start, you find yourself hooked into trying more and more! We found the online round of the competition so much fun and, although some parts were difficult, it was a rewarding experience that we would recommend to anyone."***

Upon arriving in Edinburgh, the girls were greeted with a wonderful dinner service at Edinburgh Castle along with a bagpipe rendition at the entrance! There was a speech by the Deputy First Minister of Scotland and afterwards the group stayed in an hotel in Edinburgh city centre.

The Grand Final event was held at Edinburgh University where the girls were up against nine other teams in a scenario-based challenge. In their team they had to monitor the data usage of a social media company to identify data hacking and to work out what was stolen in a data hacking breach. There were also many other computing challenges for the girls to do and they gained points for completing them. Finally, they had to present their findings to the company's board of directors.

Overall, the girls had a lot of fun and thoroughly enjoyed every moment. They have gained valuable experience of the world of cyber security and should be proud of being in the top ten teams nationally. In May, for a well deserved final celebration, the ten finalist teams were invited to afternoon tea hosted by HRH The Duke of York at Windsor Castle.

Mr A Tibble












# SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW....

## MATHS? Mrs Harris and members of the team reveal little snippets about themselves and why they love teaching Maths at WGGs

-  What food is always in your fridge?
-  What is your ideal holiday destination?
-  What is your favourite film?
-  What pets do you have?
-  Describe your ideal day
-  What makes you laugh?
-  What do you love about being a Maths teacher at WGGs?










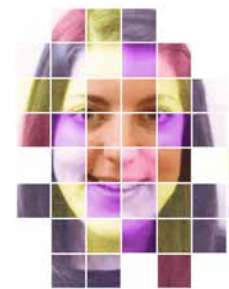
Mrs Harris  
Head of Department

-  Chocolate! - not always for me though
-  Italy - good food, interesting historical places to visit and beautiful scenery
-  That depends what mood I am in...Some Like It Hot - a classic that still makes me laugh or Pulp Fiction
-  A cat called Freddie
-  It would have to be in Jersey (Channel Islands) where a lot of my family live. It would be an early morning run by the sea followed by a big breakfast before spending the day at the beach with family
-  A good joke!
-  The students, staff and being able to teach my favourite subject every day

Miss Waugh  
2nd in Department

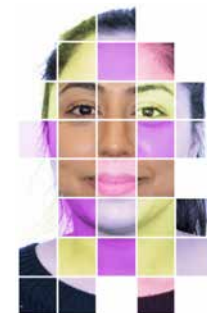


-  Spinach. I put it in almost everything I cook!
-  New Zealand for it's beautiful scenery and chilled out people
-  The films that I have probably watched the most and always loved are The Lord of the Rings films
-  I have a cat named Oreo who is incredibly spoilt and several tropical fish
-  I love to sleep so it would have to be a lie in followed by a late brunch. Then I would spend the day with my niece who is nearly 2, colouring, running around the garden and generally laughing at her destroying everything in her way!
-  Cat videos on social media
-  Every day is different as a teacher but the things I love the most are getting excited about teaching my favourite aspects of maths and seeing students progress even when they find it really tough










Miss Wells

-  There's usually a bar of Cadbury Dairy Milk on the go!
-  I'd really love to travel around Canada to see all the amazing scenery and wildlife
-  It's a bit ridiculous, but The Emperor's New Groove! It still makes me laugh out loud
-  Sadly none! But I would absolutely love to have a dog if I could
-  Going for a really long hike in the Peak District and stopping for a big picnic lunch on the way
-  Watching old episodes of Friends on Netflix
-  I love the way that every day is different and that I get to teach my favourite subject all day!









Mrs Kahn

-  Strawberries and cheddar cheese and no I don't eat them together
-  Sun, sand and water clear enough to see the fish - The Maldives would be perfect thank you
-  Matilda has always been my favourite and now my kids love it too
-  I don't have any pets but I do have two daughters; Zoya and Ayla aged 5 and 3 who keep me on my feet when I'm not teaching
-  Waking up to a healthy breakfast followed by a trip to the park for a picnic with my family. Once home, I'll throw on my pyjamas and tuck into some lemon sorbet before watching Friends on repeat. Perfect
-  My youngest daughter makes me laugh but she can also make me cry
-  I am crazy about maths and having the opportunity to pass on my passion for the subject is like a dream come true. A lot of people say they could never do it but I truly believe this is best job for me. No two days are the same and here at WGGs I feel I can relate to many girls having been to a girls' Grammar school myself

Ms Arazi



-  Garlic, chillies and mangoes
-  My favourite holidays are cruises as you get to go to multiple destinations. I like somewhere hot where you can relax by a pool, but also see the local area and cultures. A cruise gives me the best of both worlds!
-  Hard choice but I would probably go for Back to the Future. I have seen it countless times but still enjoy it and can watch it again
-  None. But I have always liked the idea of having a dog
-  Sitting in the sun with family and friends, having good food or a BBQ and listening to music
-  When my kids stop trying to annoy each other and actually get on they can be really funny together! Plus I like comedy shows like Modern Family, and stand-up like Dave Gorman
-  The enthusiasm of the pupils, especially when they have a light-bulb moment. The pupils in general never cease to amaze me.....on my first day at WGGs there was a girl playing the harp in assembly! I thought - wow, this school is very different!





# BORNEO 2019

By Mya Jollyman 10C

This year, 16 girls in Year 10 packed their bags and headed on an experience that would remain with them for the rest of their lives. We of course needed to prepare for such an adventure, so, for weeks we baked cakes, washed cars and found Saturday jobs, all to fundraise for one specific goal; Borneo 2019. After weeks of meetings and planning we were all on tenterhooks, ready to go.

On Friday 5th of April we met at school and set off to Heathrow airport and embarked on a 14 hour flight. Six movies and a long nap later we arrived in Kota Kinabalu, just in time for the city's night market. We then checked into a small hostel and closed our eyes – all full of anticipation for the activities of the next day. In the morning we woke up to 30°C and what was essentially a bath in sun cream and bug spray, a smell we would grow all too familiar with. Our task for the day was to book transport to get us to the nature lodge, arrange accommodation for the return to Kota Kinabalu, find phones to use and explore. Although given this freedom, a majority of us found ourselves

hiding in the air-conditioned hostel until the midday sun faded somewhat. Experiencing the hustle and bustle of Kota Kinabalu was incredible of course and everybody went to bed that night with heavy hearts, knowing that we were leaving the next day.

Arriving in the nature lodge after being piled into a bus for six hours was a breath of fresh air, literally and metaphorically. We were greeted with hospitality and a glass of orange juice (which was gulped down eagerly after the chlorinated water we were used to) and were told to be ready for dinner and a night walk. These night walks took place every evening and we were lucky enough to see a slow loris, a sleeping kingfisher and many, many, many moths. The latter being loathed by most of the group however, the viewing of other such amazing creatures made the moth attack worth every minute. We were also given an extraordinary boat cruise in the mornings and evenings where we viewed animals in their natural habitat; these included alligators, long-tailed macaques and proboscis monkeys - a sight that caused many awe-struck faces. The highlight had

to be the sighting of three wild orangutans; something I'm sure none of us will ever be lucky enough to witness again! Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to another once in a lifetime adventure and headed across to Sepilok.

Viewing sun bears and orangutans in Sepilok truly rendered me speechless. Watching these intelligent creatures learning and playing was amazing, a sight that I hope is going to stay in my mind forever. However, we did have a slightly sombre atmosphere on the way back to our hostel, remembering that the only reason we could see the sun bears and orangutans is because their home was taken from them. A particularly poignant moment was watching the documentary of one particular sun bear at the start of the outing. The bear had suffered because of the development of palm plantations and the exploitation of sun bears for their bile for use in Chinese medicine.

Taking this information on board we hopped on a bus back to Kota Kinabalu enthusiastic to do white water rafting and visit the Tar islands. The thrill of being jostled down a river whilst singing a medley of Britney Spears and One Direction with Miss Dodhia was quite unbeatable. No one left white water rafting without a huge grin on their face and the sound of our laughter followed us all the way back to the hostel. Be that as it may, the highlight of the trip was the Tar islands. We were able to hire a private boat with the money we saved and go snorkelling, an activity that then got crossed off many bucket lists. We also sunbathed and messed about in the water, which unfortunately caused a lot of peeling shoulders, but it didn't dampen anyone's spirits. We finished off the day by going to the fish market and hard rock café for Miss Andrews' birthday; an embarrassing experience for her but what's a birthday for, if not to be embarrassed on?

Next came the day we were all dreading. The trip home. We left Kota Kinabalu for the second time and made the subdued journey back to England ready to be embraced by our parents and live through a week of jet lag. We all had the most fantastic time in Borneo and were pushed outside our comfort zones. I'm sure if we had the opportunity to do the trip again, we would all do it in a heartbeat.



## National Bar Mock Trial Finalists

We are very proud of fifteen of our Year 12 students, who represented the school in the Young Citizens' Bar Mock Trial Competition. This competition involves students taking on the roles of those who would be involved in a court case – lawyers, witnesses and court officials – and competing against other schools. In November, our team won the Inner London regional heat, dealing effectively with cases about money laundering and an acid attack. They won a place at the national final in Edinburgh, and through the generosity of many corporate sponsors, and Old Grammarians, were able to attend and compete in March.

One of the team members commented on her experience:

"The competition involves teamwork within a variety of roles. This helped us to develop our communication skills, and the ability to think on our feet to counter arguments made by opposition lawyers. We've gained a real insight into the legal system, and the challenges involved in each case which goes to court."

Mr S Cowling







The Women of Vision Trust was established in 1998 to encourage gift aided parental donations to support the development of facilities and resources at Watford Grammar School for Girls.

Since its establishment, the Trust has raised significant funds to help support many key projects that otherwise would not have been possible.

Support the school at

[www.thewomenofvisiontrust.org](http://www.thewomenofvisiontrust.org)

*The Women of Vision Trust has charitable status and is registered with the Charity Commission under number 1069040.*