

# THE MAIDSTONIAN

2023 Edition



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# From the Editor

Greetings, and I am very proud to welcome you to the 2023 edition of the *Maidstonian* magazine. This student-led publication has a very long history (with the first ever *Maidstonian* magazine being created in 1885, when the school was located in Tonbridge Road!) and the last publication having been released just over 10 years ago now in the 2011/12 academic year.

A decade later, and Mr Hanratty, our amazing assistant-head and art teacher, took me out of a lesson and to the secret archives which I, in my 7 years prior as a student, had no idea existed until that moment. We walked past the countless artefacts of MGS's rich history and he began to show me some of the original works, asking if I would be happy to work on the latest version of the publication that the school had decided they were going to bring back. As an art student with an interest in graphic design, I naturally accepted this offer, having worked on designing my own book as part of my A-Level coursework project and being semi-proficient in using software such as Adobe InDesign which is what I used to make this magazine.

The creation and organisation of this publication has certainly been one of my most challenging projects to have worked on to date, with a lot to put together right after exams and within a month of a final deadline, and a lot of back and forth with Mr Hanratty chasing up images, articles

and names. However, seeing all the phenomenal things that MGS can accomplish within a year across all year groups has led (albeit now at the end of my journey as a *Maidstonian*) to a newfound appreciation for MGS and the slice of its history that I have been fortunate enough to witness.

MGS has certainly changed since the I began back in 2016, let alone since the last publication of the *Maidstonian* in 2012, but I am grateful to be the one who was given the opportunity to showcase the current form of MGS in 2023, including a rich insight by the students into their lives and moments that will no doubt form an important part of their history, let alone a part of the school.

Therefore, I hope that the work collected by students - written, photographed or created - allows you to enjoy the wide range of stories, reports, and aspects of the students in the MGS of 2023, and I thank everyone who submitted anything for the publication. Your work has not only been interesting to sift through myself as I put this together, but I hope that anyone reading this, be that now or in the future as they look in the same archive I went through before beginning to put together this 2023 edition of the *Maidstonian*, can find that same appreciation for MGS' wide variety of experiences and moments in time as I have.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank Mr Hanratty

for chasing everyone up and allowing me the opportunity to put this together, be that through the massive folder of files related to this publication, or through the many Microsoft Teams chats we had regarding feedback and changes to make this edition of the *Maidstonian* what you see before you.

I hope you enjoy all this magazine has to offer...



**Enrico Arapi**  
Year 13 - Corpus Christi House  
2023



# Field Trips



# Charting the Shores

## A Four Day Geography Field Trip to Leeson House

From the 18th April to the 21st April, Year 12 geography students ventured South West to Swanage in Dorset with the main aim of completing data collection to help construct their coursework...

### Day 1 – Tuesday:

A gruelling 6:15 am meet at Mote Park Leisure Centre came as a shock for most as we prepared for the long journey to begin soon after at 6:30. The coach journey was slightly relieved by an hour break at a services before it resumed as we made our way to our first destination – Boscombe beach. At Boscombe we met with the Leeson House staff and began to gather an insight of how the following days would pan out. Initially we got the opportunity to enjoy the picturesque beach enlightened by the positive weather, eventually we trekked towards the seemingly lifeless high-street where we began to conduct some human geography data collection. After wandering around Boscombe by our guide and main tutor, Matt, we returned to the coach to complete our journey to Leeson House, taking just under an hour as we passed the impressive properties that inhabit Sandbanks before passing Poole Harbour on a small ferry. Once we had arrived at Leeson House we started to settle in going through the tedious process of unloading luggage and being directed into rooms. It was from there where we got a formal introduction and welcoming to the premises, where we were soon shown to one of the classrooms situated on site to learn more about our objectives of the week and how things would be structured. This was to be followed by dinner in the evening, which for sake of trying to put a good image on Leeson House I'm not going to comment any further...



### Day 2 – Wednesday:

Our first full day at Swanage began with another early start, which was soon to be the norm for us all. Breakfast was consumed and it was soon time to make our way to Studland Bay so we could learn about how to use the data collection equipment appropriately to measure sand dune profiles. Our next stop was to Swanage Bay where contrastingly there are no sand dunes present, but we conducted practice on measuring the beach profiles in between different groyne taking a stratified approach to sampling. After completion, we

headed back to Leeson House for the remainder of our evening, in which we had to make some important decisions about how we would structure our coursework and what data we were planning to collect from either Swanage or Studland. Myself, as well as the majority of the group opted for Swanage, and more specifically, the physical data collection concerning beach profiles, groyne measurements and measurements of longshore drift. This evening preparation enabled us to plan out the most important day of the trip; the day concerning the construction of the essential basis of our coursework.



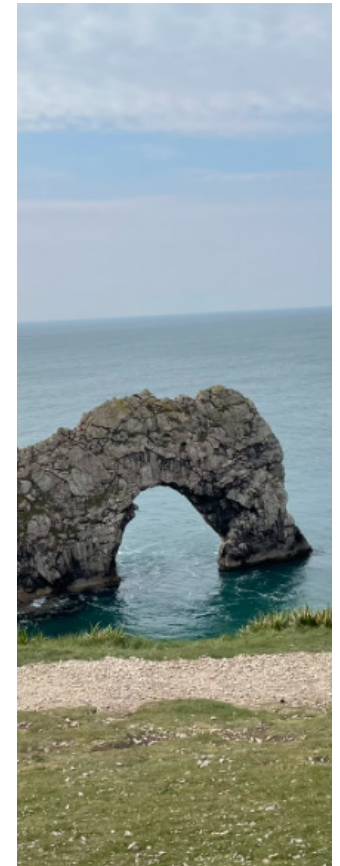
### Day 3 – Thursday:

As previously mentioned this day was extremely important for us all to capitalise on, to ensure we could gather a variety of data to perform analysis on within our coursework. We wasted no time hanging around in the morning as we headed straight to our desired location to gather the required data. The weather was vibrant and the vast bay of Swanage was impacted upon aggressive waves contrasting to its usual conditions expected, due to its geographical positioning. Aware of the challenge ahead of us we all began to start our data collection focusing on a range of different measurements (mentioned previously) which unsurprisingly ended up taking a long period of time. However, despite this task at hand we all managed to accumulate valid results after enduring the rigorous process involved in collecting some of these measurements – especially when reviewing the North and South side of multiple groyne, whilst battling against the incoming tide. A well-earned rest was needed as we headed back to Leeson House to review the data we had collected and later write it up into table

formats, or other appropriate research displays. Onwards into the evening, we all ensured some relaxation and went on to enjoy our last night at the residence, prepared for a slightly more chilled day to follow.

### Day 4 - Friday:

Our final day in Dorset had arrived quicker than we imagined, but we made no rush to hit the road back home to Maidstone. Our experiences weren't finished just yet as we travelled towards Durdle Door, gradually descending down the steep gradient to get a better view of the geographical arch and pristine beach below us. Soon after witnessing the sites Durdle Door had to offer, we advanced to Lulworth Cove where many more geological features were present, surrounding the tiny West Lulworth village. We took the time to enjoy the local village and the holy triple scoop ice cream they had to offer (which we were all desperately flocking towards). Unfortunately, time crept upon us and we made our way to the coach to embark on our journey home to Mote Park, rounding off a remarkable week in Dorset.



Written by Taylor S.

Year 12, College House



Hadyn Cutler  
South East

BBC PARLIAMENT

4 NOV UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT

IMPACT OF DISCRIMINATION ON HEALTH



Written by Hadyn C.

Year 10, Barton House

# From the Ballot Paper to the Commons: My Journey in Youth Voice

Back in late 2021, as we freshly emerged from Covid, I made a decision. This decision went on to completely change the course of my life, and yet it was as simple as filling out an online form. What did I do? I applied to stand as a candidate at my local youth council.

To most, this doesn't sound like much. I was getting questions at the time as to why I'd even bother. However, unlike most, I have an interest in politics, so when the opportunity came up it just felt like the right thing to do. I didn't think much of it at the time, but as election season neared, I decided to take it seriously.



Those who were in MGS back in November 2021 may remember my adverts, given that over half of the poster was made up of the words "Vote Hadyn Cutler" and they were in quite a few locations. And, it worked.

I distinctly remember when I found out that I won the election. It was in the evening after CCF, and I was walking to the station. I wasn't in the best of moods given that I had just got a terrible result in a maths test, but I saw the notification and it instantly made me so happy that I could've danced through the streets of Maidstone (I didn't).



I began to attend meetings and found a social circle for myself. They're still some of my best friends to this day. I was invited to stand as a candidate for member of youth parliament, and I thought why not? It was an internal election so I thought it would be easy. And, yet again, I won.

Things really started to take off from here. I was inducted into the youth parliament, started a website, and went to a conference hosted at the University of Hull. Three nights of pure, political fun. Then the summer holidays rolled around, and with nothing to do I decided to begin my next adventure. I decided, with the help of some of my friends, to set up an advocacy group. We have worked tirelessly to help better transport in our area and have garnered over 100 supporters!

And then, in what I consider to be the peak, I was invited to debate in the House of Commons. Most don't understand the significance of this so let me put it this way: imagine being invited to play football (or some other sport) on the most prestigious pitch in the UK. We are the only group other than MPs allowed to debate in that chamber, so it's a rare opportunity and NOT something I would pass up.



So, I went along. I mingled in Westminster Hall for what felt like hours, and then made my way to the chamber. The debate began, and I was one of the first to be called on. It was one of the most exciting yet nerve-wracking moments in my life (imagine having 300 other teenagers, some of the most significant figures in politics, and cameras watching you; I don't think most would cope well).

Looking back on it, I have no regrets. I'm glad I signed up to do this, and I'm grateful that I got to experience such life-defining moments along the way.

So, the next time you see a ballot for the youth council, consider putting that 'X' next to my name. I will be sure it isn't wasted.

# *From History to Reality:* An immersive trip to Pompeii, Herculaneum and Beyond...

On Friday 17th of February, 40 lucky students in Years 7 and Year 8 set off from school to Heathrow Airport.

We were going to Italy, to visit Naples, Pompeii and Herculaneum, furthering our knowledge of Roman civilisation and seeing some Italian culture as well. We were all so grateful for the opportunity and had an amazing time.

On Saturday morning, we travelled to the other side of the bay, with our eyes set on the towering Mt Vesuvius. First on the itinerary was walking up to the crater, because only then could we understand the area that Vesuvius destroyed and would destroy if such a violent eruption occurred today. I think it made us realise the magnitude of the impact if the volcano erupted in such a way again and helped us in understanding what the residents of Pompeii and Herculaneum experienced in 79 AD.

In the afternoon, after Vesuvius, we entered the ancient town of Pompeii. We had all studied this in Latin lessons, but although we had seen the photos it was so interesting to see everything in real life. As close to what those in Pompeii would have seen, as possible. We saw some amazingly preserved buildings, including the house of Caecilius (who the first Latin textbook follows), an amazingly well preserved house known as the house of the faun and many others. However, some of the most impressive things we saw were structures like the theatre and the temple of Isis because it gives so much more of an insight into the lives of Romans 2000 years ago. We all really enjoyed Pompeii because it felt like a moment of history that was frozen when the volcano erupted.

The next day we visited Herculaneum. Herculaneum was a more residential town compared to the industrial, busy Pompeii. It was affected by the volcano, however it was impacted in a very different way. Pompeii was crushed by the ash and pumice, whereas Herculaneum was destroyed by the lava. The lava cooled off very quickly and as a result some wood was left charred instead of totally destroyed. There were also more wall paintings – depicting Roman and Greek myths, the theatre or simply floral and decorative patterns – which really characterised some of the houses. We got to see amazing statues and also saw and discussed the remnants of those who tried to shelter from the volcano in the bathhouse as it was an important part of history. We all really enjoyed Herculaneum as we got to see how houses and homes would have looked like 1,944 years ago.

Another amazing experience we had was visiting a virtual reality museum. None of the staff had visited before so it was new to all of us, however we would all recommend it. Firstly, we were plunged into 79AD when the volcano was erupting. The film took us through the streets and up to the volcano when lava was bubbling in the crater and a large cloud of ash started to emerge. Many of us in Year 8 (who had translated the story when Vesuvius erupted) were taken aback at how violent the eruption was and how distressing it must have been having nowhere to go, where you could truly be safe. It was eye-opening, because you

thought of the real people who had died praying to the Gods, instead of characters in a story. We also got to see an amazing exhibition, which had many videos to watch, QR codes to scan and information to read. We found out about how the architects excavated Pompeii and Herculaneum, as well as some of the finds that have been most influential in our perception of Roman culture. One of these finds was the “House of the Tragic Poet”. It was one of the most richly decorated houses in Pompeii. Its name originated from a mosaic of a theatre rehearsal by a choir of satyrs, and it also had many frescos (wall paintings) depicting scenes like Ariadne being abandoned by Theseus.



On the Monday morning, before we travelled back to England in the afternoon, we visited many amazing places. We went down an ancient tunnel that was considered as an entrance way to the underworld. We discussed many Roman Myths about the heroes who had entered the underworld, including Heracles/Hercules, Theseus and the man who Romulus and Remus (the founders of Rome) descended from, Aeneas. We also got to visit one of the best preserved amphitheatres in the area, which was in Cuma. We got to go below the amphitheater, into where wild beasts and gladiators were kept before a fight. Our last event of the trip was visiting the Naples National Archaeological Museum. We saw amazing wall paintings, mosaics and statues, many of which were from Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Thank you so much to all the staff, tour guides and hotel staff. We had such a brilliant time and are so lucky to have the opportunity of such an experience.



Written by Henry M.

Year 8, College House

# Epic Odyssey

## Conquering Greece's Ancient Wonders, Souvlaki, and Socks-Off Ice Cream

In the first week of Easter break, a group of students from Years 9 to 13 embarked on a trip to Greece for 5 days to explore the sites of importance for the ancient Greeks, and absorb the great amounts of culture these places had to offer...

But, it was so much more than that. Let me give you a breakdown of this excursion, and the fun we had.

First, we had to start at the heart of Greece, Athens. Unfortunately, a dreary 9 hour wait at Heathrow airport following our flight being cancelled, with only a vanilla milkshake from cafe Nero to make it all better, meant we did not arrive until the evening. The next morning we headed out and visited the Acropolis museum where we saw some assorted pots and votive offerings to the goddess Athena, as well as architectural sculpture from the Parthenon on display. Our lunch consisted of us having a pretty decent souvlaki, and an ice cream that blew my socks off. In the afternoon, we saw the most important site of all, the Parthenon and the Acropolis. For those of us who had studied this significant site for GCSE classical civilisation, it really helped in truly appreciating the statement of power the ancient Athenians were trying to make in constructing a vast and highly ornate temple overlooking the bay of Salamis where they had defeated the Persians.

After our whistle-stop tour of Athens we boarded the coach for our next destination – Delphi. The travel between sites was stunning. Over the 5 days we drove along coastlines, through valleys packed with olive trees and



around winding mountain passes. Everywhere we the views of Greece's natural beauty was a feast for the eyes. Despite the journeys being long, there was much conviviality on the coach; a mixture of pre-downloaded films, guessing games and the occasional nap passed the time. At Delphi, we got to see the 'omphalos' (belly-button) of the world, the location of the ancient oracle and more beautiful views over a quiet and leafy mountain range. The museum was very busy and the room stewards were rather stressed, but we were able to catch a glimpse of some archaic statues, the impressive bronze statue of the Delphic charioteer and more pots for good measure. A personal highlight of the trip was our lunch stop at the picturesque village of Galaxidi where we were welcomed into restaurants to indulge in more souvlaki, while I imagined my life there.

Our third stop was Olympia. We took an evening "volta" along our hotel's boulevard, where all manner of souvenirs were purchased including a rather expensive Greek hoplite helmet (absolute stunner), a novelty T-shirt and a lot of honey. In the morning we began our excursion the site of the temple of Zeus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, of which one column is still standing. Very nice. A great race was held in the ancient sta-

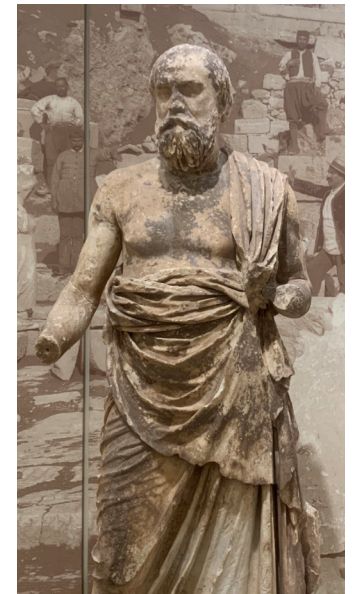


-dium and on this occasion, nobody was made to pay for the Zanes (statues of Zeus funded by cheats!). Then, we paid a visit to its museum, which consisted of, you guessed it, more pots, but also some amazing sculptures we had studied for GCSE classics that took my breath away. Following an impromptu visit to the museum of the history of the Olympic Games, we returned to the centre of town for another souvlaki for lunch, followed by ice creams. We then boarded the coach for Hotel Tolo where the group stayed right next to the sea for 2 days, a truly scenic location (even though the whole high street had been dug up!).

On our penultimate day, we visited Mycenae. We spent the time admiring the ancient city where we looked down on some incredibly fertile land in the alluvial floodplain. The Lion gate stood to amaze, and so did the tholos tombs, which we were able to enter but smelt of damp. Then, the museum. Short and snappy, we saw two swords kept in amazing condition and lots of gold...and pots! Next, we headed to a theatre, which had been modified by the Romans and onwards to lunch for the final souvlaki and ice cream by the sea (undefeated combo). We finished the day at one of the best sites of the trip, the theatre at Epidauros, where the acoustics were so accurate, you could hear a penny-drop from 15 meters away.

Next morning, (our final day) we began the demanding walk up the citadel of Acrocorinth, where unrivalled views were enjoyed, across both the Peloponnese and Attica from this singular spot, joined by the Isthmus of Corinth, the sea shining blue under the baking morning sun.

Overall, the trip was amazing: incredible cultural remains, good food accompanying the stunning views, and good company to share it all. This trip comes highly recommended!



Written by Luca M.

Year 10, Corpus Christi House



# Harvard Model United Nations

At the start of 2023, 24 MGS students visited the annual Harvard Model UN conference which takes place in Boston. Here are 3 attendees' thoughts about the experience of the trip...

**Lottie H.**  
Year 12, College House

In late January, 23 students and I from year 12 and 13 attended the Harvard Model UN Conference in Boston. We spent a few days sightseeing in New York, visiting various places – including Liberty Island, the Empire State building and the UN Headquarters. We then travelled to the conference centre – attended by over 4,000 students from across the world. From Thursday evening, we attended committee sessions which ranged in size from around 30 to 400 people. This involved representing our designated country, Ukraine (and one representing Indonesia), through formal debates and discussions about a certain topic.

A key aspect of the committee sessions was working collaboratively with delegates from different countries and forming blocs to draft papers, that you would present to your director and fellow delegates. We soon realised that we were working in a high-pressure environment, especially when you were given a short amount of time to gain useful insight from as many people as you could talk to. A particularly unique aspect to the committees were the 'crisis situations', that the committee I was on (UN Human Rights Council) received twice in one session. This is where you were proposed with an emergency relevant to current global politics, that you and your bloc needed to present and try to pass solutions for; for our committee's topic on digital human rights, we had to deal with a situation involving cybercrime that had affected many countries' databases and systems.



The conference was an entirely new experience that I am very grateful for – it pushed us out of our comfort zone and allowed us to meet and form friendships with students from many different countries. It incorporated skills of collaboration, negotiation and self-confidence which, having now developed further, we will carry with us throughout the sixth form and into the wider world.

**Jack B.**  
Year 12, Corpus Christi House

Walking into the hotel room I would be staying at in Boston the gravity of what was happening finally set in, 24 students from year 12 and 13 were representing Ukraine and Indonesia along with over 4,000 students from around the world representing their own countries. One thing I'll never forget

from this event was the people, the first night was spent socialising with students from Peru, Texas, California, Tunisia, Japan and Australia, a vast sea of students and there we were right in the middle of it.

As I walked into the first committee session I began to be nervous however I knew that the training we had gotten for months was finally coming into fruition. This committee session was stressful to say the least, messages were constantly being passed around and alliances being made and destroyed by a simple word muttered in a speech. It was my responsibility during this session to form these alliances and to figure out what countries were on our side whilst my partner Jack Kerner wrote down speeches that related to certain topics being discussed. The first time I had spoken was near the end of the first session, when you have almost 150 countries it's difficult to get your word in, however when I finally did the rush and excitement I had when about 30 letters were sent to me discussing alliances was unmatched.

One of the best parts of the trip however was the time between sessions this allowed for a couple hours of discussions with other delegates on certain topics. The rest of my time spent in the sessions was writing papers and draft resolutions these are vital for the functioning of the sessions as without these you cannot get what your country wants. The time spent with these delegates was an eye opener many different backgrounds of people were all talking to each other all with different viewpoints on the same topic (the nuclear proliferation treaty) the time I spent with these delegates roughly 134 representing 67 countries was amazing the teamwork I developed from within the school was easily transferable to these sessions and allowed me to get exactly what I wanted in the resolution. After we had finished this a vote occurred with 3 resolutions. The voting process was probably the most stressful part of the trip several days of work and late night research all coming together into 20 minutes of voting and amending parts of certain



resolutions. Thankfully when it came to our resolution we had 82 votes our resolution had passed by 7 votes, cheers erupted from all of us. HMUN was an experience I know none of us will forget, although MGS won no awards at the end we all returned with our heads held high as the trip in the eyes of everyone was a success.

**Joseph H.**  
Year 12, Tonbridge House

The 2023 Harvard Model United Nations trip was perhaps one of the greatest weeks of my entire life. As a school, we had 23 students representing Ukraine, and 1 student representing Indonesia. Staying at the Sheraton hotel in Boston was a surreal experience, and I will never forget when myself and all 23 other students walked into the lobby for the first time with our suitcases. Both nervousness and excitement flooded the air, and not a single one of us was backing down from the atmosphere. We all made friends with students from all over the planet and a lot of us are still in contact with many of these students. There are a plethora of great memories from the trip, such as running around finding a bite to eat in the food court, meeting foreign students on the first night, and (for me) eating a steak on the last day of the trip. The experience that comes above it all

was the committee sessions and the powerful debating about real life issues that occurred.

Entering committee for the first time was terrifying. I personally faced a general assembly of 126 people, and while I'm normally a confident individual, facing so many academics in one room made me feel momentarily out of my depth. However, I very quickly realised after making a speech close to the start of this session, that I was just as intelligent and skilled as anyone else in the room. The British accent of course helped in a room full of Americans, but many people I interacted with assumed that I had been practicing model United Nations for years, and were shocked to know it was my first time. I went on to speak 6 more times during committee in the following days, and I was praised heavily by many delegates because of my excellent representation of Ukraine.

The experience was so rewarding because it feels so easy to doubt yourself sometimes, and although we failed to take home any awards from the competition, myself and the others took away something greater than any piece of paper. For the first time, we knew that we were capable of so much more than all previous limitations we had ever put ourselves under. We returned home, limitless...



Written by Sebastian J.

Year 9, College House

# April 2023 Italy Ski Trip

## A Memorable Journey in the Italian Alps

On Saturday 8th April, 42 students and 5 teachers arrived at MGS for our skiing trip. We subsequently boarded the coach and left for Italy. When we reached Dover, there was still time to stop off at a service station on the docks. The whole journey took around 16 hours, and we stopped for breakfast on the way there, at about 8am on Easter Sunday!

We arrived in Aosta Valley at about lunchtime and went to our rooms to get unpacked. There were four people to a room, and the hotel was nice. We then went out to rent the skis, boots, and poles before returning to the hotel for dinner and bed.



The next day, we were up at 7am, and got dressed and had breakfast, then left for the ski hire at 8:30am. We collected our equipment before going up the mountain in a gondola. There were five groups. On the mountain for the first two days, it was warmer than back in England! After 5 hours of skiing and a bite of lunch, we returned to the accommodation, having returned our equipment. We showered and ate dinner, then went bowling. There was also an arcade, which was in popular use among all the students. We returned to the hotel, and most of us went to sleep quickly.



The following day, we had another 5 hours of skiing, and in the evening, we went to a nice restaurant in the centre of Aosta, where we had plenty of delicious pizza.

The day after, we skied once more for 5 hours, and, in the evening, we had dinner in the hotel as usual, then had a quiz in the breakfast room, which was great fun, featuring several rounds, one of which concerned Italy. I learnt that the start of a Marvel film was filmed in Aosta valley!

The next day was our last full day of skiing, and there was an awards ceremony at the end. The ski instructors came down to give certificates based on skill level and achievements, once more from 1 to 5, each level having merit or distinction available as well. This was followed by awards from teachers, for each group, in addition to awards such as "best bowler", reminiscent of the bowling that we had done on Monday. In the evening, we packed all our bags ready for the trip back, and went to the supermarket to stock



up on supplies (i.e. water and an inordinate quantity of sugary snacks).

On the last day, we had between 3-4 hours of skiing, and then went to the hotel and had an early dinner at 3:30pm, having loaded up the coach with our bags and hand luggage. Straight after dinner, we were back on the coach, on our way out of the Alps, with an incredible view of Mont Blanc. The next morning, we had a (very) early breakfast on the ferry, with bacon rolls and croissants, and orange juice. At about 8am that morning, we arrived back at MGS, after an incredible, rewarding experience skiing in Italy.

# Oxford Explored

St Hugh's College, Oxford University was founded in 1886 and is one of the largest colleges in Oxford. On the 21st of March, a group of student from Year 11 visited the college, university campus and city as part of the ASPIRE programme at MGS.

When we first arrived at the college, we were greeted by the outreach officer at the college who then led a presentation giving information on the university as a whole, the applications process and advice on how to be a strong candidate for Oxbridge. Shortly after, a 4th Year Chemistry student hosted a Q & A, giving us the opportunity to ask questions ranging from 'a day in the life' to what the food is like at the university.

This led into a tour of the college, its facilities and accommodation, giving us a real sense of what university life would be like, despite being out of term time. We visited the Junior Common Room (JCR), a communal space to relax with friends, conveying the key message that Oxbridge is not just about work, but about socialising and making the most of the over 400 clubs and societies the university has to offer.



One of the most interesting parts of the campus was the Howard Piper Library. Hushed inside we browsed the multitudes of volumes on offer, from topic areas we didn't even know existed, and this fascinated everyone. We were then served a complimentary lunch in the dining hall, eating with current students and staff, which allowed us to appreciate what mealtimes were like there, again widening our understanding of university life.



A walk through the city was next on the agenda – led by the outreach officer. We saw many of the university playing fields, the local park and some of the other college's accommodation and campuses. We even managed to stay dry, almost. On our journey through the city centre we passed parts of the picturesque Bodleian Library, exclusive to Oxford students, and featured in many films and TV shows such as Harry Potter and His Dark Materials.

We were then given a bit of freedom to explore within the city and most ended up in perhaps the largest bookshop we had ever seen, Blackwells. The rows of books stretched on and on, ranging from Nordic history to

modern politics, there was simply too much to see in one trip.

After returning to St Hugh's, completing our walking loop of the city, we said our goodbyes and returned back to MGS on the minibus. The trip concluded with a somewhat shaky rendition of the school song and good spirits.

Overall, it was a fantastic trip with a long highlight reel. Everyone learned a lot, got a taste of university, and had a great time while doing it.



# Journey Through June

## My DofE Practice Expedition

At the beginning of June, I participated in my DofE (Duke of Edinburgh's Award) practice expedition. We stayed at Hope Hill Campsite for two nights over a weekend. On the first day, we received briefings on everything we needed to know for our actual expeditions. This included how to use maps, health and safety guidelines, and planning routes for the practice expeditions scheduled for the following two days. I found this day extremely useful; I learned a lot of information that I wouldn't have known otherwise, which definitely helped me during the expeditions. We had the chance to pick our groups for DofE prior to this, which enabled us to prepare what everyone was doing and what everyone was bringing.



On the morning of the Saturday, we woke up around 7 o'clock, giving us enough time to dismantle our tents, pack up our supplies, and be ready to set off around 8:15. Everyone in my group was assigned a role, be it map reading, safeguarding the GPS tracker, or wearing one of the high-visibility jackets. This teamwork was maintained throughout the expedition and, I believe, it allowed us to be the first group to finish each day.

While our bags were heavy and the expedition was more challenging than I originally expected, the routes we took were undeniably beautiful. I don't think I had walked any of the trails before this DofE expedition. The weather was hot during our expeditions, necessitating a few rest stops. There were moments when our muscles ached from climbing massive hills or traversing bumpy paths, but my group persisted on their routes. Even though we got lost a few times, we pushed through and managed to complete the expeditions on both days.



Back at the camp, we had a lot of fun. Setting up the tents, cooking our food in the evening, and playing football for hours was truly enjoyable. Overall, I greatly enjoyed the practice expedition. I loved spending time with my friends, exploring beautiful trails, and learning new things along the way.



Written by Noah J.

Year 9, Barton House

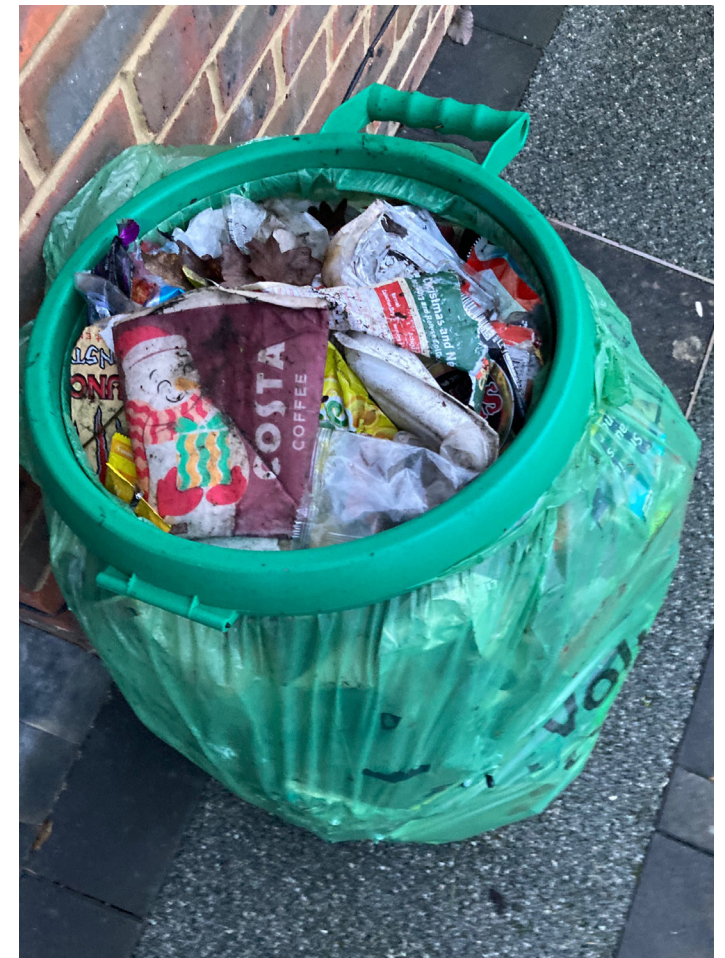
# Taking Action

## My Bronze DofE Journey as a Community Litter Picker

The DofE (Duke of Edinburgh award) is a great way to develop essential skills for future life and work. There are three sections to the award that each help to build these skills and these consist of volunteering, a skill and a physical activity. Each of these work on different parts of the essential skills. Specifically, for my volunteering activity I decided to do litter picking in my local community. My aim was to pick up 50kg of litter, to make a contribution to my community, and to make the area cleaner for all those living in it. I believe that clearing the litter will have a big impact on my community and litter picking in general would give you a sense of pride in making a difference to the world. The amount that you are picking up gives you a sense of achievement every time you complete a litter pick.

For my litter picking section of DofE I have been supported by a member of Maidstone Borough Council who agreed to be my assessor and supplied me with all the resources necessary to go out on the litter picks, including a litter picker and volunteer rubbish bags. I have so far been able to pick up 63.4kg of litter and I am nearly finished with my Bronze DofE volunteering section. I am really pleased with all the litter that I have picked up and happy I have exceeded my goal already but sad at the amount of litter that there actually is in my area.

I have picked in areas such as around my local supermarket and along roads around Maidstone and have noticed a cleaner area with less litter than previously, which makes me happy that I



have made a difference to the world. Furthermore, I feel a sense of pride in caring for the planet and knowing that I have done something to help against what is happening to it right now.

My time as a litter picker has been great and has inspired me to be kinder to the planet and to

think more about my actions, which I think is useful and instrumental to the protection of our planet. I highly recommend litter picking as it is a great way to make a difference even if it is just something small. Thank you to Maidstone Borough Council for helping me with my DofE volunteering section...

Written by Jonathon B.

Year 9, College House

# MGS Club Spotlight

## Growing Green Thumbs

The Enriching Experience of the MGS Gardening Club

**M**GS gardening club provides an exciting opportunity for students to connect with nature, learn about plants, and raise their green thumbs. The club offers a hands-on experience that combines education, teamwork, and environmental stewardship. Joining a school gardening club opens the door to a vibrant and welcoming environment. As you step into the garden, you will be greeted by an array of colourful flowers and arranged beds bursting with fruits and vegetables. The air is filled with the refreshing scent of soil and the gentle melodies of chirping birds.

In the school gardening club, we have the chance to learn through doing. Mr Morley-Brown and Mrs Ridgway guide us through the process of planting seeds, caring for seedlings, and tending to mature plants. You will discover the fascinating life cycles of plants, the importance of soil health, and the essential role of pollinators in our ecosystem. Being part of a gardening club means working together as a team. I learn how to cooperate, communicate, and share responsibilities with my fellow club members. From preparing the soil and watering the plants to weeding and harvesting, each task is crucial and requires everyone's involvement. By nurturing the garden collectively, we have developed a sense of ownership and pride in our accomplishments.

Furthermore, MGS gardening club provides a gateway to connect with nature. As you dig your hands into the soil, you will witness the marvels of growth and witness the transformation of tiny seeds into flourishing plants. Gardening also offers a tranquil and therapeutic escape from the



daily hustle and bustle of school life.

One of the most rewarding aspects of a school gardening club is reaping the rewards of your hard work. From picking juicy tomatoes and the gigantic beans to harvesting vibrant lettuce and fragrant herbs, I have experienced the satisfaction of harvesting the fruits and vegetables. The garden's produce can be used in school meals, shared with the community, or even sold to support the club's future endeavours. Joining a school gardening club is a delightful adventure that combines learning, teamwork, and a deep appreciation for nature. It also offers a space where students can explore the wonders of plants, develop essential life skills, and cultivate a sense of environmental responsibility.



Written by Adam W.

Year 7, College House

# Digging into the Past

## Inside the Historical Artefacts and Coin Club

**E**very Thursday lunchtime, a boring history room is transformed by some of the most studious students in the school. Historical Artifacts and Coin Club, in Room 107 and run by Ted W (Year 9, College House) who founded the club last year. It happens now and we are waiting for you to join.

At Historical Artifacts and Coin Club, you will experience a wealth of activities including:

- Metal detecting on the field, where ancient trinkets and treasures are lying undiscovered below the ground. Could you be the one to uncover them?
- Participating in many different coin-themed quizzes, where everyone competes to get the #1 spot.
- The owner of the club has a huge collection of coins, ranging from modern European currency through to ancient Celtic coins.
- Watching fascinating documentaries of a wide variety of historical topics, including archaeological digs.
- Finding out more about what it was like living in society in the past.



Personally, my favourite part of the club is the metal detecting, because you get to go out onto the field and, if you are lucky, find something precious. Our last expedition was well attended, with many people coming to help dig up treasures of the past. Armed with our metal detectors we worked in teams to identify the best areas to survey, scan and dig. Following a busy hour of digging, we returned with an impressive haul of loot and hope to return in the near future for further digs around the school. We look forward to seeing you soon.



Written by Ed M.

Year 7, Barton House

# From Classroom to Council

One Student's Drive to Empower Kent's Youth

**M**y name is Justice. I am currently a Year 9 Tonbridge House student, the Maidstone district representative for Kent's Youth County Council, and the head of the campaign group 'Feeling Safe in Kent.' Our group is actively working to address some of the most pressing safety concerns facing Kent's youth.

Let me share some of my achievements and the journey so far. My first significant accomplishment was being elected for a two-year term to the Kent Youth County Council in late 2021. Shortly after, we held elections for the positions of chair and vice chair. I was thrilled to run for the latter and was even more elated when I won.

As vice chair, my responsibilities included co-leading meetings, taking minutes, and attending Kent Youth Voice events where we focused on commissioning and creating crucial youth programmes. To enhance the council's functioning, the chair and I took the initiative to update many critical parts of our constitution.

The presentation at 'The Spirit of Try Angle Awards 2022' remains one of my favourite memories. I was given the opportunity to practice my public speaking skills and network with influential figures such as Sir Roger Gale, the Member of Parliament for Thanet, and Sue Chandler, the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services. This was a truly remarkable accomplishment.

Fast-forward to this year, we had elections for campaign groups during the first 2023 sessions. I was honoured to be chosen as the chair of 'Feeling Safe in Kent.'



Gaining practical experience working with other council members to support the sense of safety among young people in Kent has been an incredible experience so far.

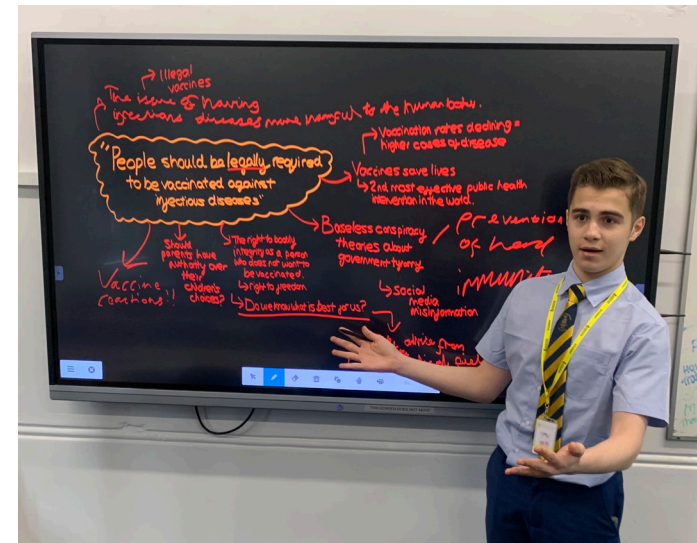
As of now, I have just finished presenting 'The Spirit of Try Angle Awards 2023.' It was immensely rewarding to confer these awards to the young individuals who richly deserved them. As I come to the end of this article, the question arises: what's next? Frankly, who knows? But I can assure you that I will continue to make every effort to maximise the potential of my circumstances.

In our collective journey to create a safer and more inclusive environment for the youth of Kent, every effort counts, and every voice matters. You can contribute in a variety of ways, be it through sharing your ideas, volunteering your time, or supporting our initiatives. Remember, change starts with a single step, and your step could be the start of something transformative.

Reach out to me and let's work together to ensure the youth of Kent feel safe and supported in every way possible.

# Voices of the Future

## Cultivating Confidence and Curiosity at MGS Lower School Debating Society



**I** established the MGS Lower School Debating Society in late 2021, and it has been a privilege to watch students progress with not only their public speaking skills, but also their confidence and self esteem.

We meet on a weekly basis and discuss current affairs in a largely informal manner, which allows students to share their views in a relaxed environment. Each term there is an overall theme to our debates, for example, earlier in 2023, our focus was social media and digital technology. We discussed important questions about the development of AI, privacy on social media, and even the impact of video game violence on young people.

I do my best to allow for a variety of opinions, and challenge the students on their views to culti-

vate a deeper understanding of the debates we have. Currently, the topic for the summer term is social issues, and this has included debates on issues such as gun violence, abortion rights in the USA, and the current debate surrounding gender identity.

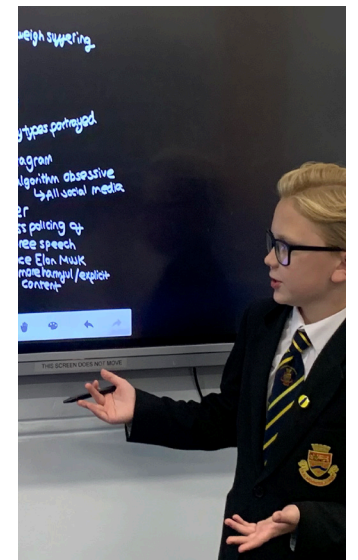
We often examine case studies relating to the topic at hand, for instance, when we discussed how to tackle extremism in the UK, we looked at various news articles about Shamima Begum, a British teenager who was radicalised by Islamic extremists who is seeking to return to the UK from Syria. This allows students to gain an in-depth understanding of how complex certain issues are, and this ultimately leads to a more interesting debate.

One of the most rewarding parts about leading the Lower School

Debating Society is that I am able to watch Year 7 students transform from being introverted and shy to becoming confident young people who are able to express their views in a mature way.

It has also been a privilege to watch friendships flourish and our weekly meetings have often led to amusing comments and discussions. A debate about privacy on social media quickly became a student-lead debate about which social media is the best, YouTube was the firm winner!

To any new Year 7 students, I would encourage you to come along to Room 5 on a Monday lunchtime and give the debating society a go. Challenge yourself to learn new skills, and you may have some fun along the way!



# Staff Interviews





**Interview with Mrs Fowler (MFL)**

**Mrs Fowler, you rejoined MGS at the start of the year, how has it felt to be back?**

*It was a great feeling to be part of the MGS community again, to see the students having grown up over the previous year whilst I was off on maternity leave and to see all the lovely language teachers again!*

**What has made you most proud this year?**

*I am so proud of so many things, that's what is so great about working in a school. People achieve stuff all the time and there's always so much to be proud of! I'm really proud of those in my year 11 class who made it to the exams at the end of the year, worked incredibly hard and performed brilliantly in their speaking exams, such a scary moment.*

*I'm also very proud of getting MGS's first cohort entered into the UK Linguistics Olympiad, I'm proud of one of my students winning a very prestigious translation competition and I'm proud of myself for doing my first exam season marking French speaking exams for the AQA exam board which was incredibly gruelling!*

*Also, I'm extremely proud of being part of the Shrek production - it was an amazing feeling to be part of that again as I used to do loads of that kind of thing as a student and it reminded me how important it is sometimes to take part in something bigger than yourself, where everyone is working together to achieve something awesome.*

**The Shrek performance was amazing, congratulations to everyone involved. Why is it so important for students to learn languages?**

*As you will all know, I believe that languages in the absolute best subject - it encompasses everything. Communication, literature, history, music, politics, geography, science - language is life! But students need to discover that for themselves of course.*

**Have you always wanted to become a teacher?**

*I have always, since a very young age, wanted to become a teacher. I've taught it comprehensives, private boarding school and now MGS. I am leaving the profession this year for a break after a decade of doing it.*

*I love the classroom, I love teaching and I love watching children learn. But it takes it toll. I may go back to the classroom one day but for now I'm going back to university and do more learning. I'm studying modern languages and literature again - I can't wait! Just hoping my student brain is still in there somewhere underneath mummy and teacher brain...*

**You will be sorely missed, you have been an amazing French teacher here. But if you could teach any other subject, what would it be and why?**

*I would teach performing arts if I could for obvious reasons - just so much fun!*

**If you could give any advice to all of the students in the school, what would you say? It could be academic or extracurricular?**

*Does anyone really want advice from their teacher? Well if you they do, mine is - choose joy.*

*In every moment, we have a choice as to how we react to situations. You cannot control anyone else, but you can control how to choose to respond to others. It is very hard to do, but if you always choose joy, kindness or compassion if you possibly can this will really help. Especially difficult for teachers, but it's always worth a try. The other piece of wisdom I always come*

*back to is that people will always forget what you told them but they will remember how you made them feel.*

*So I try to make people feel happy if I can!*

**Finally, how has the year gone in general for you?**

*This year has been, if I'm brutally honest, extremely tough. But I've learnt a lot and here I am still smiling!*

**Thank you so much, Mrs Fowler, for taking part in my interview. Everyone will be very sad to see you go, but we wish you luck with whatever you choose to do.**

**Luke R. - Year 8, Corpus Christi House**



**Interview with Mr Gokool (Maths)**

**Why are you currently teaching?**

*I teach to try and help children with their education for further future opportunities. This is to help the current generation thrive and make a difference to the world.*

**How has your academic year been?**

*It has been very enjoyable and I feel like I have made a positive impact. This is because of the extremely successful GCSE students this year; in addition to this, I have seen improvement in knowledge with my Year 7s.*

**Why do you teach maths?**

*I teach maths as I have always found that I have been good at it. This helped me persevere and achieve a B.Sc honour in financial mathematics. In addition to this, some younger students struggle with maths; I have always wanted to help people with difficult obstacles.*

**Timeo B-B. - Year 7, Barton House**



**Interview with Miss Payne (History)**

**Why did you decide to teach history?**

*I chose to teach History because the subject was always an interest for me at school. I had a fascination with how the past has shaped how we are today.*

*I also had some fantastic History teachers at school, 2 of whom I've remained in contact with since leaving! This really shaped my decision to follow in their footsteps, they were my inspirations!*

**What is your favourite thing about the subject?**

*My favourite thing about the subject of History is having a wealth of knowledge over such a long period of time.*

*Of course with History, it's totally impossible to know absolutely everything, but having a knowledge of people's experiences in the past is so fascinating.*

**What is your favourite topic to teach in history?**

*My favourite topic to teach in History is anything involving Russia.*

*I especially love looking into how different Russia was in comparison to the rest of the world in the early 20th Century, particularly how this evolved throughout the 20th century with the establishment of the Soviet Union all the way through to its collapse in 1991. So much happened in a fairly short space of time!*

**If you had a time machine, what is one historical event in the history of humanity that you would have gone back to change or stop?**

*This is a really tough question! There are so many events in history that I would stop!*

*Perhaps a less obvious one, but one event in history I would change would be the invention of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons have caused mass devastation: Hiroshima and Nagasaki being the main examples of atomic weapons being used, but also the threats and problems that have come as a result.*

*Even up until this day, nuclear weapons somehow find themselves as the topic of conversation when there are a breakdown in diplomatic relations between countries. It's quite scary!*

**If you would not become a teacher, who would you become instead?**

*If I wasn't a teacher, I would have liked to have done something to do with law.*

*I have a real fascination with how prosecutions work so a criminal lawyer would be of real interest. I also think I would have been a cracking detective, but I guess that's along the same lines!*

**If you had a chance to meet with a famous person, who would it be and what would you ask them?**

*If I had a chance to meet a famous person, I would meet the actress, Jodie Comer simply to ask her how she does different accents so well!*

*She baffles me!*

*Failing that, I would meet Alison Hammond: She is absolutely hilarious.*

**What would the students be surprised to find out about you?**

*The students would be surprised to find out that I've only seen around 3 Disney films in my whole life.*

*102 Dalmatians is my favourite which funnily enough, a lot of people haven't seen!*

**Lastly what advice would you have given to your 13-year-old self?**

*13 year old me would benefit from hearing that there is no need to worry so much.*

*Childhood years are so precious and I definitely worried about the future too much to enjoy it. Going to school and seeing your friends every single day is the best thing ever and I've only realised that as I've got older!*

**Henry M. - Year 8, College House**



**Interview with Mr Tuffins (MFL)**

**Why are you teaching?**

*Well, my experiences of being a teacher started when I was in year 11 on work experience in a local primary school. I found helping out there as a teaching assistant really rewarding and fun and by the end of the week, I had asked if I could plan and deliver my own French lesson to the class of year 4s.*

*From there, I have helped out with teaching in sixth form; gone on to teach English in Germany and in*



France; I've worked in primary, secondary and adult education and by the end of my degree, it seemed the right next thing to do. However, behind my own enjoyment of teaching, I owe the real reason to becoming a teacher down to the many inspirational and passionate teachers I was lucky to have during my time at school.

It was the wealth of knowledge they shared with me and their enthusiasm for their subjects which led me to wanting to be like them: to help others and to inspire and share a love of learning and my subject with others.

**How has your academic year been?**

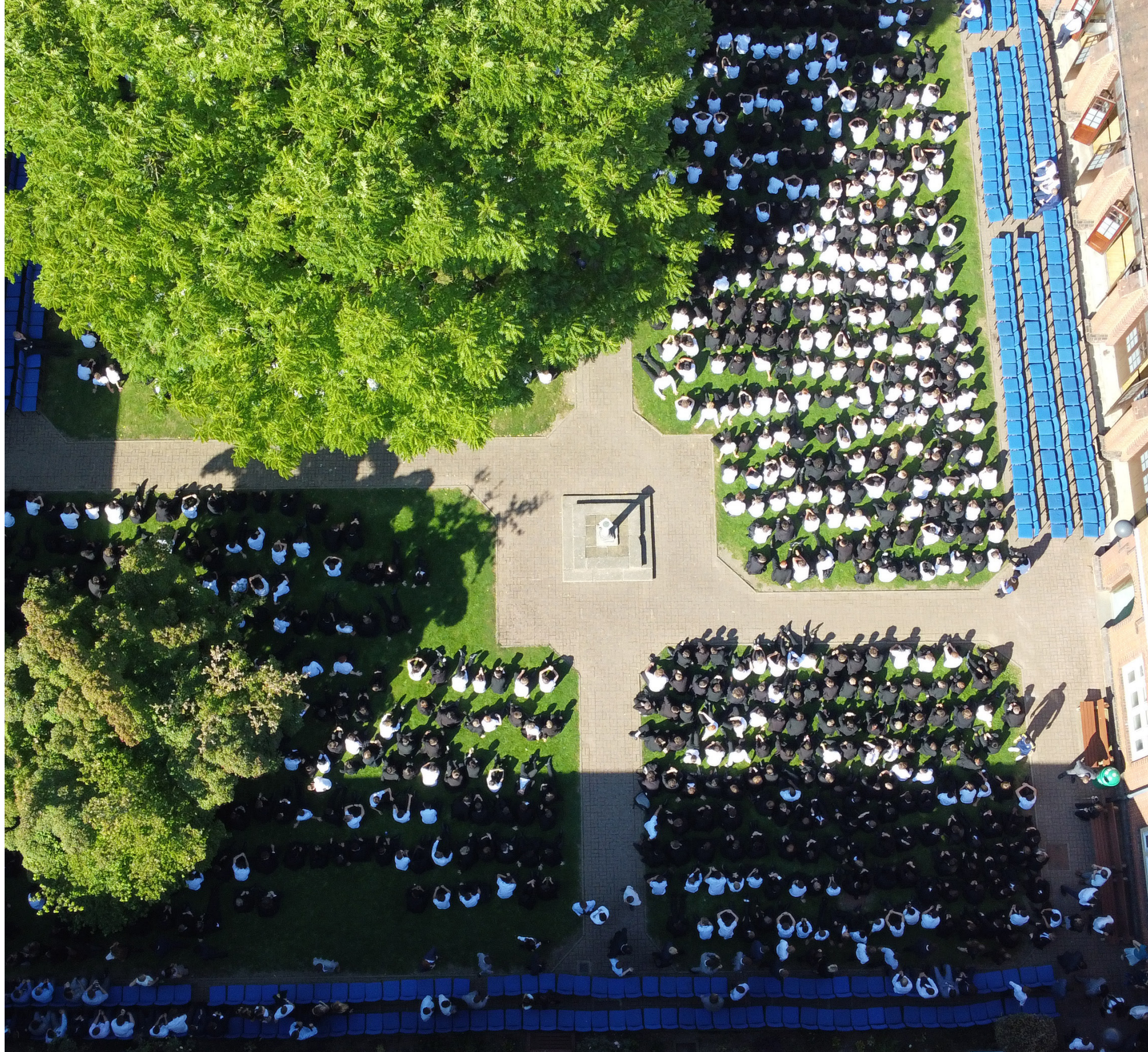
This year has been a particularly tough one for me, probably my toughest in the whole time in teaching so far! Teaching all German and no French, my timetable teaching almost all of upper school German, hundreds of mock exams and tens of real exams later and I'm somehow in July on the home straight...

However, with the craziness of the year have also come some real highs and achievements working with many students and hopefully I will come out with more experience and stronger going into the next year.

**What other profession would you want to do if you were not teaching?**

I have always thought about going into the civil service to pursue a career in diplomacy. I have also always wanted to work for an international organisation like the EU or UN, or even for the UK government as an interpreter or translator.

**Edward B. - Year 7, College House**



# Are Chickens Smarter Than We Think?

In this piece about chickens, I will discuss these two-legged, feathered creatures and all they have to offer. Having two chickens myself, I can ensure that all information in this piece is accurate. I would like to educate people about the loving and caring creatures that chickens are. There are many famous myths about chickens, as well as some surprising facts that I bet you didn't know. Let's get started.

## Famous Myths

Chickens can't fly - This isn't entirely true. While they can't fly in the same way as some birds, they can jump and fly onto very high surfaces, such as fences and even the top of my trampoline.

Chickens lay eggs every day - Chickens can't physically lay eggs every day. Their bodies need time to build up new eggs and rest. They also slow down or stop their egg production in colder seasons such as autumn and winter, primarily due to less daylight. Also, chickens require movement to lay eggs.

Chickens are stupid creatures - They just aren't. Chickens can be quite daft at times, but they are also smart animals. Chickens figure things out over time, such as where they live, where their food and water is, and they know how to get what they want.

Females need cockerels to lay eggs - Females don't need cockerels to lay eggs; they lay eggs regardless. The only difference a cockerel makes is fertilizing the egg.

Chickens are only raised for meat and eggs - While these are the main reasons they are raised, they aren't the only reasons. Others involve keeping them as pets or raising them for pleasure.

All eggs taste and look the same - This isn't true. Free-range eggs have a much brighter yolk colour and are tastier.

Chickens fear a lot of things - They don't. Chickens can be absolutely fearless at times. Comparatively, a chicken fighting a human is like a human fighting a T-Rex.

## Lesser-known Facts

Now I will share some lesser-known facts about chickens. I guarantee that you will not know at least three of these.

The first is that chickens can see further and discern more colours than humans.

Another is that chickens have leaders within their flocks. Chickens are also very good navigators and use the Earth's magnetic fields to get around. I bet you didn't know that chickens can count up to five from birth, a skill human toddlers don't master until around ages 4 or 5.

Finally, chickens are extremely protective of their young and make excellent mothers, taking care of their offspring until they can fend for themselves.

A recent study shows that chickens can demonstrate very sophisticated thinking skills. If you hide an object from a chicken, they will know it's still there, a concept even fully-grown dogs and young children struggle with.

## Sad Reality

I will now transition to the very sad and cruel life of commercially farmed chickens. These chickens are bred and slaughtered for meat to supply large restaurants and supermarkets, suffering greatly to provide inexpensive chicken products.

The chickens' 30-day life starts

on a massive conveyor belt that carries them to a sexing machine, which determines their gender.

All the female chickens are then placed on another conveyor belt. The males, who will not produce eggs and consume more resources, are killed, either by decapitation or gassing.

The remaining chicks then have their sensitive beaks burnt off by a white-hot iron to prevent pecking each other due to stress and cramped conditions. These chicks grow very quickly due to the artificial chemicals in their feed. This rapid growth is unnatural and results in chickens whose legs can't support their own body weight.

The chickens then must endure lying on a faeces-covered floor for the rest of their short lives, leading to painful infections. They can't even stand up to alleviate their pain.

On the 30th day, the chickens are sent to the slaughterhouse. They have lived in absolute agony for their whole lives. Many chickens don't even make it to the slaughterhouse and die beforehand due to various diseases and infections.

The living conditions for these chickens are simply hellish. As someone who owns two chickens, I know how happy and free these animals can be when treated well. This intensive farming can be stopped. Please consider reducing your consumption of chicken.

Remember the next time you're eating a McChicken that the chicken you are eating lived a life of suffering and was likely relieved to see its life end. Thank you.

# Learning to Learn

An insightful look into how Year 7s learn to study...

In Year 7 of Maidstone Grammar School, there is a subject called Learn to Learn in which a student learns how to use very useful skills for revision and studying. This course of study is only learnt in the first year of secondary school and it is extremely helpful. Learn to Learn covers lots of techniques to help revise and study for tests, GCSEs and A-Levels and how to manage time wisely.

## Mindsets

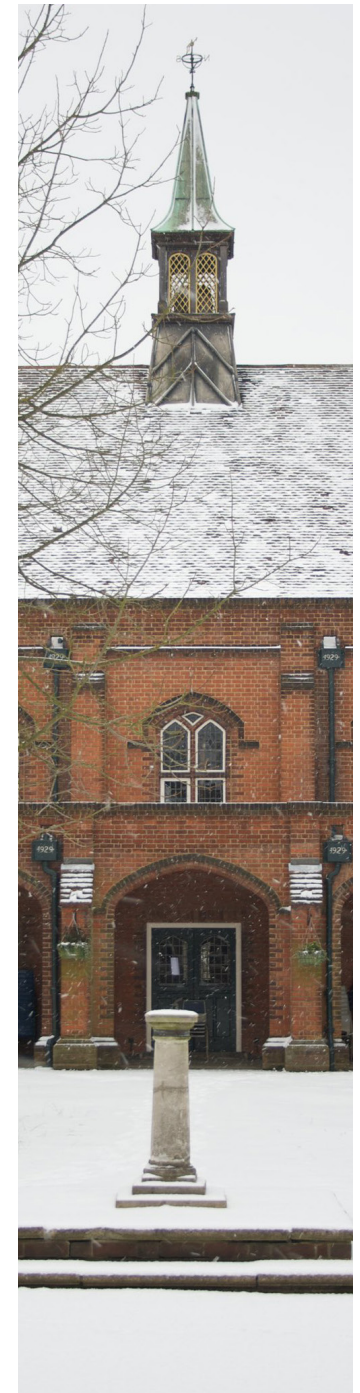
In this branch of study, we have spent a few lessons on mindsets. A mindset is how you approach something. A person can have a fixed or growth mindset. In learning you want to have a growth mindset. Having a growth mindset means you are open-minded to learning new things and you believe that you can become better if you try. There are a lot of features of having a growth mindset like believing that effort leads to mastery, intelligence and talent can be developed, mistakes are part of learning, seeing failures as opportunities to improve and think that failing is temporary, embraces challenges, welcomes feedback and viewing people's successes as inspirational. Having a fixed mindset, however, is a negative thing: it involves bad personalities that are opposite of a growth mindset. We have learnt that if you want to set goals and have a growth mindset, you can add the word "yet" to make it positive. For example, if someone said, "I can't code well" that would be having a fixed mindset because they would be saying that they aren't good at it now and cannot improve. Although, if they put "yet" at the end, it means that they are not good at it now but want to get better at coding. It is very important to have a sensible growth mind set because if you tell yourself, you can do something enough times; you will believe that you can do it.

## The Learning Brain

Your brain learns at every moment whether you know it or not. Inside your brain, there are these things called neural pathways. You can think of them as roads from point A to point B. Neural pathways are how your brain learns things, and as you get better at those things, the neural pathways strengthen. When you were learning how to do long division, you could think that your road from A to B was a dirt road that wasn't very clear. As you got better at doing long division, your road becomes more efficient, so you can imagine your dirt road eventually turning into a motorway. Different people have different ways to strengthen their neural pathways best. There are three ways to do this: hearing it, seeing it, or doing it.

## Note Taking

In Learn to Learn, we have learnt many ways how to take notes like using the Cornell Note Taking method, paraphrasing, and skimming and scanning. The Cornell Note Taking method takes the essential parts of texts and puts them down into a title, some headings, the notes, and a summary. Paraphrasing is putting a text into your own words, and it can be done by changing the order of certain words, using synonymous words, and keeping the main idea. Skimming is a type of fast reading that requires you to look through content quickly to understand the heart of the matter. Scanning is when you also read quickly but when you read, you don't give some sections of a text as much attention as others. I think that Learn to Learn is a very helpful subject that can assist students well when they need to revise and study. It can help pupils manage their time well and be effective when note taking and needing to have the correct attitude to learning.



# Sports



MGS Hockey



Athletics Team Photo



Under 16's Team Photo



Mr Hughes on College Charity Day

Mr Hughes 30 mile Challenge!		
6:27	MI 1	6:36
7:50	MI 2	6:37
7:41	MI 3	7:50
7:41	MI 4	7:22
7:36	MI 5	7:23
7:57	MI 6	7:22
7:36	MI 7	6:34
7:26	MI 8	7:17
7:37	MI 9	6:45
7:27	MI 10	6:36
7:21	MI 11	6:37
7:50	MI 12	7:23
7:22	MI 13	7:22
7:23	MI 14	7:23
6:34	MI 15	6:34
7:17	MI 16	7:17
6:36	MI 17	6:36
6:37	MI 18	6:37
7:23	MI 19	7:23
7:22	MI 20	7:22
6:34	MI 21	6:34
7:17	MI 22	7:17
6:36	MI 23	6:36
6:37	MI 24	6:37
7:23	MI 25	7:23
7:22	MI 26	7:22
6:34	MI 27	6:34
7:17	MI 28	7:17
6:36	MI 29	6:36
6:37	MI 30	6:37



Triathlon Bronze Medal - Hamish Reilly, Old Maidstonian, 2019 Corpus Christi House



Charity Day Netball



Year 9 Football Team



Karting - Freddie B - Year 8, Tonbridge House



Athletics - Theo R. - Year 10, Corpus Christi

# Kent Cup Win Against Norton Knatchbull

MGS wins 5-0!

Winning the Kent Cup final is an experience that I'll never forget. From the moment we found out at Hurstmere we were going to be playing in the final, the excitement and anticipation were palpable. We all knew that we had to bring our best if we wanted to come out on top considering we fell short in the two previous years suffering heartbreak in the final both times.

The day of the final was nerve-racking. We arrived at the stadium before the game, and the atmosphere was hostile. The stands were packed with fans from Norton Knatchbull, and the noise was deafening as they placed themselves behind our goal and amusingly chanted at our players (Ethan). We warmed up on the pitch, and I could feel the adrenaline pumping through the squad as we edged closer to kick-off.

As the game began, we started off weak. We couldn't control the ball and the pressure from Knatchbull was constant. We had to ride the momentum and defend for our lives as they came close to scoring on many occasions. The game was intense, with both teams giving it their all. It was clear that it was going to be a close contest.

As the game went on, the tension mounted. Every bit of play was crucial, and we knew that one mistake could cost us the game. But we stayed focused, and we kept pushing forward as a team. And then, finally, it happened. We found a breakthrough with one of our defenders, Harvey Thompson, heading home our first of the evening.

Norton wasn't going to give up that easily. They fought back harder than ever, and we had to



work even harder to keep them at bay. The minutes ticked by, and MGS took complete control of the game as we went on to score 4 more consecutive goals. We dominated for the rest of the game after our first goal and displayed a classy performance throughout. The tension was almost unbearable for the long anticipated full time whistle. And then, finally, it blew. We had done it. We had won the Kent cup final after our third attempt.



The feeling of joy and relief was indescribable. We all celebrated with each other and it was a moment that we will never forget. We had finally got our hands on the sought after trophy and we lifted it high above our heads with pride. As a collective we knew how hard we had to bounce back from the setbacks we experienced to achieve this, making the win much more sweeter.

Looking back on that day, I realise that winning the cup final wasn't just about the game itself. Leading up to that moment, it takes a lot of dedication to perform from 2 final losses but it was about the bond that we had formed as a team, which pulled us closer and gave us the edge to win in our last shot at the Kent cup. It was our Last Dance and it was all about the feeling of accomplishment that comes along with achieving something that you've worked so hard for, knowing that it is deserved. Thoroughly proud of these boys and showed what MGS football means, on the third time of calling; we answered.



Written by Alfie C.

Year 11, Barton House

# Balancing Academics and Athletics

## My Journey from MGS to Charlton Athletic



September 2018 was all about new beginnings for me and, as well as starting in Year 7 at MGS, I signed a 2-year contract with Charlton Athletic Football club.

I had previously been signed to an academy much further away and my parents and I decided that in the summer of 2018 I should trial at Charlton Athletic as we hoped it would be easier for me to juggle life as a grammar school pupil and an academy footballer.

Life at MGS wasn't easy at first and the transition to secondary school was harder than I thought it would be but by the end of term

21 had settled well and felt part of the MGS community even if the 7.30am bus pick up took a little longer to get used to!



Looking back on my time at MGS I guess the keyword for me has always been 'Balance'. Trying to ensure that I gave enough time to my studying and homework along with 5 sessions a week of football plus also trying to fit in the normal things like socialising with my friends and some much needed down time. But somehow with the support of the school and my family we did make it work and the 5 years have gone by in a shot.

MGS have continuously supported me throughout my time at Charlton and none more so than when I was invited to join their hybrid programme at the start of year 10. This meant that I spent

every Thursday at Charlton instead of coming to school, I got to experience life as a full-time footballer and still did my schoolwork in the afternoon in a dedicated classroom alongside my teammates. Mr Highway was a great source of support and guidance during this time and worked closely with Charlton's education department to allow me to make changes to my school timetable and still focus on my football development. I have no doubt that this support was a factor in me being offered a 2-year Scholarship contract with Charlton which begins straight after my GCSE exams. This is the next step in my journey as I become a full-time footballer in July.

I have been fortunate to still be able to represent the MGS football team and my highlight of this was back in April this year when our year 11 team won the French Cup. This was the third Kent Cup final our team had got to, but on the other occasions we had to make do with a runners up medal, but this time we beat Norton Knatchbull school to bring home the silverware to MGS... an evening I will never forget. A few weeks later I was honoured to win the Steve Clarke trophy at Charlton which is an award in memory of a lifelong supporter and I was chosen for my contribution to the U16 team and my own personal development. Both events were proud moments for me and my family and were a fitting way to end my time as a schoolboy.

Who knows what the future beyond my scholarship will be, but I know as a Maidstonian I will work my absolute hardest to be the best I can be. And in the words of the school motto one day I will look back fondly on my time at MGS.

Thank you to the teachers and staff at MGS for a fantastic 5 years, for always supporting me fully in my dream to one day become a professional footballer and for helping me make memories that will last a lifetime.



Written by Jacob S.

Year 11, Corpus Christi House

# Year 10 Football Team on Top

Thursday, the 11th of May 2023 marked the day that the MGS Year 10 football team triumphed over Aylesford in a tight game, which ended in a 2-1 win to the stones.

The lead up to the event and the team's first season together last year was incredibly influential towards the big win. This is because, despite it being our first season together, and we needed time to bond, and adapt to each other's playing styles, we had a large undefeated streak, with 13 games being either won or drawn out of the 14 games that we played. The only game that we lost was in one of our last games of the season, and was in the semi-finals of the district cup against Aylesford- the team that we beat in the district cup final this year. They were one of the only teams that gave us a run for our money in that 2021/22 campaign and, as a result, they beat us after a poor performance from the MGS boys. This result from last year therefore made them the favourites going into the game, but we did not let that get to our heads, and we stayed very strong mentally.

Now, to the game itself. This was the first time the majority of the team had experienced participating in an event like this, playing in front of an enormous crowd, under the floodlights at the Gallagher stadium. It included a timid start due to the nerves from the big occasion getting to us, and going 1-0 down within the first 10 minutes of the game. However, despite having to face adversity for the rest of the game, a jammy goal claimed by super-sub Gary Yovchev went in just before half time, tying the game up at 1-1, giving us the momentum we needed for the rest of the game. As the half-time whistle blew, the team headed into the changing rooms with our



heads held high, knowing we were back in it.

After an important team talk, we headed back out and were ready to give it our all and bring home the win. While all of the supporters were on the edge of their seats, not knowing what would happen next, Aylesford suddenly conceded a penalty from a hand ball, which was beautifully taken by our target man Louie Dayal, putting us 2-1 up, and giving us the upper hand for the rest of the game.

After the heart-wrenching last 15 minutes were over which included a brilliant skill, followed by a horrific mistake by me which almost led to a goal, the final whistle went, and MGS had won! The presentation after the game included the MGS boys lifting the trophy, and our "El Capitano" Alan Bachorski winning a much deserved player of the match award. This spectacular game concluded our 2022/23 season, and was an unforgettable experience for everyone to be a part of.



With most of the congratulations going to the boys after the solid performance and bringing home the beloved silverware, we also need to shine some light on everyone else involved, and the individuals who allowed us to get to the position we were in. These people included not only each and every one of our fellow Maidstonians who supported us along the way, but also the PE department and coaching staff as well, with both the tactical mastermind in Mr Saunders- aka Pep Guardiola- and also "One of Our Own" in the inspirational man himself Josh Taylor. Having this managerial link up was a dream come true, and was essential to the team performing so well, and for this, we are all extremely thankful for.

# A Journey Through Athletics

My athletic journey began around the age of 9 at my local club, Medway and Maidstone. Initially, I attended the odd session just to maintain my fitness and keep active, as I used to be a football goalkeeper. It wasn't long before I discovered that I was actually pretty decent at the sport. I was chosen to represent my primary school in a district sports hall athletics event, where I helped my primary school to win the competition. I finished primary school with personal bests of 2:33 in the 800m, 5:18 in the 1500m, and 20:21 in the 5km.

As I had to say goodbye to my primary school I started a new journey at my new secondary school where I began to still train once a week with the odd two times a week. I began to see lots of improvements as I smashed the sub-20 5km time, clocking in at 19:39 in October 2019. Then all of a sudden Covid hit, and I could not train at the athletics track and football was all cancelled. This was the turning point in my career as I began to train with a purpose and began to take athletics seriously. I started to train 2-3 times a week by myself or with a friend. I then had to wait patiently for the races to re-open.

It got to late season when they opened so I had one chance to beat my personal best in the 800m and 1500m. With the one chance I was given, I smashed them running 2:22 in the 800m and 4:47 in the 1500m, ranking me among the top 10 for under-13s. Year 8 started and track season managed to stay open even with the Covid going around. This is where I found my event the 800m. I was placed in my county championship for the 800m and managed to come 2nd against people a year older than me. That season, I slightly improved my 1500m time to 4:41 and drastically

improved my 800m time to 2:10, reducing it by over 10 seconds.

Fast forward to year 9 track and field season. The season kicked off with back-to-back wins in the county championships, where I won both the 800m and 1500m events. I first reached the national stage with a time-trialled race, where I ran 1:59 with pacers, ranking me first in the UK for the 800m. Soon after, I made it to the English nationals and comfortably got through the heat, ultimately finishing second in the final by just half a second. That memorable season concluded with my best times standing at 1:59 for the 800m and 4:18 for the 1500m.



# Rugby Through the Matches

A short overview of the rugby matches played over the year through snippets from the MGS Rugby Instagram page (@mgs.rugby\_)

## TONBRIDGE

Decent start to the season from the boys. Beating Tonbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys 24-5. Started off well with Jake Wilkinson parting their defence like Moses to go over the line. Then sadly not soon after the Tunbridge boys manage to respond following some poor defence. However, things picked up with Ethan Yates scoring out wide via a lovely miss pass from Jake Wilkinson, putting us ahead at half time.

The second half started string for the boys through some slick backs hands leaving Oli PB to finish in the corner. But things after started to get flat and we conceded penalty after penalty for 10 minutes.

However we did not allow them to score and in the last 5 minutes Rafe Lamb scored a brilliant solo try to round off the match. It looked decent for the MGS boys but we will need to get to the next level for Gravesend this Saturday..

## ELTHAM

A day full of success for the 1st and 2nd XV. The only way was up after the loss against Gravesend last week but the 1st XV exceeded all expectations, showing off some electric pace and passing plays, result in a 35-7 win. @josh.macmahon threading the needle for multiple tries and bringing home his first MOTM award of the season. Furthermore, an emphatic 61-7 win in under 70 minutes for the 2s demonstrated some brilliant running rugby. Ed Barrow claimed MOTM for his performance in that game. Unfortunately the 3rd XV couldn't make it a clean sweep but still a momentous occasion to put out 3 squads.

On to Skinners this Wednesday..



## SKINNERS NATIONAL CUP

Unfortunately our national vase journey comes to an end at the hands of a 34-29 loss to Skinners. Despite the scoreline, the lads showed tremendous grit, and an @e\_yates005 hat-trick kept us in the game until the end. The home support could be heard for miles and the pitch was even shaking. Although that might just have been the impact of @oli.pb1 touching down having plucked a perfect crossfield kick from the air. Our heads now turn to our next fixture against Beth's on Wednesday, which we must now train hard for as it's going to be a big one.

Try scorers-  
@ollieedale  
@e\_yates005 x3  
@oli.pb1

## St JOSEPH WILLIAMS MATHS SCHOOL (SJWMS)

MGS vs SJWMS 24-10

Today hosted MGS's Rugby day, filled with countless fixtures across all age groups topped off with the senior game.

The boys were fresh off a weeks break and ready to go against a physically strong Maths side (although this strength did not worry us). The boys started off poorly conceding early on in the first half around the edge, caused by a poor fold in defence. The boys, disappointed from conceding so early on, did not let this lead last very long. We quickly responded with a good lineout followed by some silky hands putting @tom.evans77 over in the corner. The rest of the first half consisted of back and fourth scrappy play, the opposition bringing us down to their standard and the half ended 5-5.

The second half however was a different story, the boys started strongly gaining great territory into the oppos 22. We kept it tight in the forwards, carrying it across the fringe. This drew their defence in allowing the back to send it wide and putting @oli.pb1 in the corner to gain the lead. The next 10 mins were all MGS, domi-

-nating the opposition both technically and physically, but we failed to score during this time. That saw until @jakewilkinson52 came on to mark his return. A quick and immense impact was seen as we once again get the ball in the oppos 22 within the forwards allowing for Wilkinson to spin it wide to @josh.macmahon galloping through a gap in the defence. Soon after this try the opposition seemed to lose their heads, one of their players attacking @sameaton22 leading to @ollieedale sorting him out. This allowed the opposition to get there first touch on the ball in our 22.

The boys defended tremendously for 10 mins on our own line but this tremendous defence soon crumbled after Macmahon received a yellow card for offsidess. Despite this yellow card it still took the opposition another 10 minutes to score. The boys, unhappy with this, decided to respond quickly. A loose ball was picked up by PB and with an exquisite offload sent Wilkinson through a gap. His lack of pace meant he had to give it inside for @rafe\_lamb to take it over the line to finish the game.

## CRANBROOK

The boys came into game day looking forward to this fixture with 3 MGS teams being put out for the second time this season, but this time looking for three wins.

The 1st XV lads were looking eager to finish the term well and this was evident in the first ten minutes. A lovely turnover at a breakdown allowed @josh.macmahon to gain some field position for a lineout in their 22. A beautiful set piece allowed for the forwards to start a monstrous maul that saw @daniel.wickins taking it over the line. It seemed the oppositions heads had already dropped and MGS responded quick with another try. Slick back hands found @davymckie in the wide channel (for some reason) but a beautiful grubber kick, rivalling that of Marcus Smith, found @e\_yates005 on the receiving end of it. Perhaps after this the boys felt a little overconfident and

switched off allowing the oppo to find a way through our defence in the wide channel and allowing them to get on the score board. A quick response was seen from the lads with us yet again gaining great field position being 5 metres out. Forwards carrying across the fringe allowed @josh.pettitt to spin it wide finding @e\_yates005 again on the wide channel to score his second of the match. However from here on the boys were lack lustre. We let Cranbrook get on the scoreboard at the end of the half with another scrappy poor try to finish the first 35.

The second half was not one to remember for MGS. It seemed as if the boys did not want to play and things were not going their way. Scrappy unorganised play after another saw MGS in a stalemate, unable to get on the score-sheet for most of the half. The Maidstone boys feeling as if Cranbrook had almost brought us down to their level. However Brook were unable to capitalise on this poor MGS performance. This allowed for a spark of good phases from MGS carrying up the pitch with a @davymckie line break, giving us good field position. @jakewilkinson52 spun it wide to the backs finding @e\_yates005 on the end of it again to complete his hattrick. Cranbrook

were able to respond with a try resulting from some poor defence again but it was too late for them to come back. Ending: 24-19 MGS.

## CHIS AND SID

Today rain arrived at Maidstone and so did Chis and Sid. It would be a momentous game that could decide the fate of our second term. Fortunately we started strongly, with a cheeky dink over the top from @jakewilkinson52, chased down by @andrew-jones. The wind must've been strong as Wilkinson failed to convert from under the posts. @davymckie carried us further in front, crashing over from short range following a monstrous maul. On the stroke of half time, following a string of poor discipline, Chis and Sid powered over for a score. However soon after, in the second half, @davymckie went over for his second with some exquisite footwork.

The game was made more challenging by a swift sin bin awarded to @josh.macmahon and the opposition applied extreme pressure to the MGS line. We did our worst Gerrard impression, letting nothing slip. Our ruthless defence was rewarded when @billy-marsden.\_ was poised to pounce on a Chis and Sid handling error,



punting it through to the try line before scooping it up majestically and scoring. The limbs were so unreal that even an oppo player got caught up in them. The ref warned us on our offside count, so @dewi\_beer called his bluff and got our second yellow card of the game. Consequently we conceded a consolation try through poor tackling in the wide channels. Not the end we wanted but a half-decent result nonetheless

FT: MGS 26-21 Chis and Sid

Notable mention to @oli.pb1 for getting in a big scrap and gaining a hard black eye

Defensive warrior:  
@edanharveyy

Best teammate: @oli.pb1

Relentless athlete:  
@daniel\_wickins

Creative attacker:  
@billymarsden\_

### **SKINNERS (This time a W)**

What a day.

Today faced a momentous challenge in MGS' fixture list, facing Skinners' at home after losing out by one try in our previous outing.

10:00 clock saw kick off take place and the game was on. A shaky start from MGS conceding a penalty allowing Skinners to get into our 22. Skinners set up a strong maul off the line-out and a pick and go saw them take the first score. However, the boys did not let this bother them. A strong kick off from @josh.macmahon allowed us to place immense pressure onto the oppo. This forced a handling error and gave us a scrum just shy of the 22. A mesmerising back move and a lovely assist from @billymarsden\_ saw @oli.pb1 score in the corner. The next 10 mins saw MGS dig deep in some immense defence and discipline to hold off Skinners. This effort was soon rewarded. We saw ourselves in their 22 with only one thing on our mind, a try. Many forwards phases soon saw @matthewmassett score on his debut. This gave us an impressive lead into half time, but the challenge was not over.



The second half started beautifully from the boys. @jakewilkinson52 decided to turn into prime Messi. A dummy from him saw him break the line and then a chip wide to the left. @rafe\_lamb recovered beautifully and gave an excellent offload back to @jakewilkinson52 to see him score a well deserved try. This firmly put the game into the hands of MGS reflecting their so far dominant performance. A slight slip of complacency after this try saw us concede a penalty try off.

### **St OLAVES**

Saturday was an emotional day as we made our final excursion to oppo territory of 2022. After only a few minutes of play, @oli.pb1 touched down for yet another tap-in, following typical clean hands from the backs. @e\_yates005 swiftly followed, running it in into an unguarded blindside - the oppo too concerned about the wave of destruction posed by other MGS forwards. They were right to be terrified though, as 5 minutes later we



crashed over with a maul, defended by one lonely player who evidently didn't get the call to stand off. @daniel\_wickins wasn't complaining as we went over. Our onslaught did not go unanswered however, with a string of penalties against MGS pinning us in our 22. Some poor shots and a penalty taken quickly led to the St Olaves 8 bulldozing over our line. The lads responded with continuous pressure, which was rewarded by @rafe\_lamb using the IQ we didn't know he had, touching the ball down after the opposition presented it back over their own line. A linebreak from the oppo 13 brought @josh.\_pettitt into action, axing him down. Pushing for a 5th try, @davymckie accidentally threw a perfect out the back offload to @owenreessss on the wing, who somehow had enough pace to breeze around the St Olave's defence from 30m out.

In the 2nd half, complacency crept into our game, missed tackles, penalties and a lack of precision allowed them back into the game. A grubber in behind our line was pounced on after a period of physical defence. For the next 20 mins, the quality of the game became lost and tensions rose. A scrum 5m out from our line gave them a chance, which was snuffed out by @jakewilkinson52 wrapping up the oppo no8.

Consequently he was yellow carded for offside, which he has adamantly protested ever since. St Olaves then shipped it down the line, using the overlap and dotted down. The highs of the MGS first half were all but lost. Fortunately, we proved we could still play, as @tom\_evans77 chased down a dink over the top, popping it to @josh.macmahon, who lumbered towards the line. Realising he wasn't quite quick enough, Muccy finds @davymckie to finish it.

FT: MGS 34-17 St Olaves. A mediocre result, not representative of our potential

### **DARTFORD**

With one eye on Judd next week, we faced a physically strong Dartford side on Saturday morning. With injuries scattered throughout the squad perhaps a weakened but still strong squad attempted to defend the fortress. Complacency fuelled the first couple minutes of the game with Dartford scoring a try in the corner due to a poor fold. MGS responded quickly, we made good territory up the field and established a line-out on the 5 metre line. A mastermind move implemented from Mr. Saunders led to @oli.pb1 scoring again (what a streak he's on, wow). @josh.macmahon converted for once. The next try saw some rare

@jakewilkinson52 brilliance, stealing the ball from the oppo 9 and slipping his way slowly past the rest of their team saw him scoring in the corner. Despite these scarce moments of brilliance from MGS the first half was a very mediocre performance from the boys.

The second half started slowly the first 10 minutes consisting of MGS dominance but unable to convert, perhaps perfectly seen through a beautiful backs move seeing @oli.pb1 break the line, but following his unselfish passing of the ball, @\_andrewjones did not have the pace to finish. A score did come in the end with @ollieedale finding himself on the wing, bodying 4 men and taking the ball over the line for our third score. MGS continued to dominate but a lack of composure led to us conceding penalties and free kicks. @antony.mcq who has ,surprisingly, been putting in some good performances recently (wonder why) and scored in the corner with a strong carry. A final score came from Dartford in the last play of the game with @jakewilkinson52 coming in at number 8, and despite him dominating the scrum, a loose ball was pounced on by the Dartford player leaving the game at 22-10.

This now makes it a 6 game win streak - looking forward to next week against Judd...



## JUDD

A day which provided an opportunity to show the progress of MGS rugby, but equally one where we were just slightly off pace. The first quarter was extremely tense, with both teams matching each other physically, making for a great period of rugby. Even @josh.macmahon made a great shot which showed the standards of the game. However we did soon let our guard down. Judd soon crashed over with a maul from the 5m line, which possibly led to a drop off in intensity from the boys. The oppo 10 then scythed through a hole in the disorganised defensive line for a second. Our situation was made more bleak when @davymckie hobbled off with an ankle injury. Fortunately we were blessed with having the man the myth the legend @callum.scudder3 to replace him. For the rest of the game we pushed on but simply struggled to get a foothold in their 22. Handling errors and penalties conceded restricted us from pushing Judd back. @oli.pb1 did cross the line in the second half, as our backs capitalised on an overlap, @rafe\_lamb throwing a classy bounce pass to @oli.pb1 who was in acres of space and beat the last defender to dot down for what seems like his 99th try of the season. Unfor-

-tunately this was simply a consolation as Judd added to their score on multiple occasions, making too many line breaks in the wide channels and they capitalised on these. Arguably if we were more clinical with the opportunities given to use, the scoreline wouldn't look quite so demeaning. Both @jakewilkinson52 and @e\_yates005 did burst through on separate occasions but we struggled to finish, much like @antony.mcg in a 100m sprint. Overall, not a bad performance, but improvements to be made. Next game: Simon Langton on Wednesday at 15:30, following the Second XV game against @trinitytitansxv earlier on.



## SIMON LANGTON

Following the second XV's tight loss earlier in the afternoon, the lads needed to put on a spectacle to brighten up the mood. @jakewilkinson52 got the message and within 5 minutes had received the ball in the backfield. He stepped one, handed off the next and breezed passed the fullback to finish under the post. However he then saw the gargantuan opposition forwards and got a bit nervous, pulling up injured instantly. The first half onslaught continued with @\_andrewjones finishing off a simple backs manoeuvre and @rafe\_lamb powering through the line with a hand-off and nifty bit of footwork to finish his 50m run. For once,

@josh.macmahon was 100% off the tee and we found ourselves 21-0 up at the halfway point.

The second half began with us being physically bullied a bit and after spending a while in our half, Langton ran over in the corner exploiting some poor defence in a narrow channel. We responded strongly, with @tom\_evans77 making his first catch under a high ball and offloading magnificently to @owenreessss who sped around the fringe of the opposition defence with ease, all while filling in at fullback after @\_andrewjones had been left blinded. Soon after, an @e\_yates005 linebreak provided the platform for @josh.pettitt to snipe from the ruck and score under the posts, giving us a comfortable 35-5 lead. Unfortunately we couldn't maintain this gap as a series of Langton tap and goes (they seemed to be allergic to kicking for touch) led to pressure on our jline, and they offloaded nicely, leading to a try in our corner. We were not disheartened, with cries of 'dinner time' ringing around the fortress led by @ct\_vening\_2006 at scrumtime. Despite this, we conceded a third after a poor fold left Lumbo exposed, defending a 3 on 1 down the blindside. We failed to add to the scoreline, @oli.pb1 being manhandled into touch due to the oppo wanting payback for him absolutely destroying their 10, in the final play, and it ended 35-17. A good result but the real performances will come out next Wednesday in the last game of the season.

## RAVENWOOD

What a way to end the season. We started the game typically, conceding to a tap and go, but the loyal fans knew this wasn't a reason to be worried and that a comeback was inevitable. @edanhavvey kicked off the process crashing over from our classic mastermind set-piece move, tactically not passing at the end of it to score. All this despite being a man down due to another @jakewilkinson52 yellow. Soon after, Ravenswood, having missed their conversion from underneath the posts (must be big Jake Wilkinson fans) opted to take 3 points from a penalty in order to apply some devastating

scoreboard pressure. 8-5 down, @davymckie channelled his inner PB - not sharing the ball and crossing the line from close range, driven over by a nice maul. HT: 12-8 with tensions flaring all over the place as the oppo brought a bit of Bromley culture to the prestigious M town. Second half began with good momentum and @davymckie went over for his second with a powerful drive over from close range, using his tough scouse genetics. Remembering that a hatrick scorer received a free curry after the game, he grabbed his third after the backs scythed through the defence and gave it to Dave on a plate. Having earned his korma and needing a breather that was him done for the day so he dumped a poor boy on his back and got himself a (harsh) yellow. The 14 of us left instantly conceded, getting battered by some big carries and a pick over the line. Feeling generous we allowed them to score again, our wide channels parting like the red sea to let the them break through and chip over to score. Realising it was only a 4 point game now, we turned it up a gear. A PB offload put Wilks through, before the two linked up a couple phases later to put @oli.pb1 in acres to score from a few steps out (surprise). By this point it should have been 100-22 but for some dubious finishing. No stress though, as @josh.macmahon put up a high ball for @billymarsden.\_ to elegantly grab from the sky and offload to @rafe\_lamb who put @e\_yates005 in for the score. With one play remaining, the game was wrapped up, but @antony.mcg had no mercy and decimated their team anyway, scoring from 55m out.



# U16s Basketball 2022-23

In our first year in the league, a blend of tall, quick, strong, and skilled players from both Years 10 and 11 made for a tremendously talented team that rolled through the season, playoffs, and into the Kent Cup Final. We received great support from staff and parents alike along the way.

Team captain Markuss Ebulins skillfully led the team, with Josh Odutola dominating the inside game whilst Jacob Stead piled on the scoring as point guard. With Manny Okeke's blazing speed, Ben Thompson's assists, Destiny Anosike's strength, Jayden Chilaka's athleticism, Atif Hossain's stealthy defense, Ruhaan Qudratiyaar's height, and Cody Fowler's outside game, all contributed strongly.



We defeated basketball colleges and fellow grammar schools alike, outscoring opponents by a 2 to 1 ratio whilst compiling a 7-0 record of friendly, league, and playoff fixtures. We knew we had potential, but no one including ourselves realized just how talented this squad was. The boys were so exciting to watch that we even had opposition fans cheering for us during away games.

An unfortunate blend of excessive fouling and injuries snatched the Cup winners medals from us, literally in the last second of the contest, a real heart-breaker. But it is exciting to know that half the team will be returning as Year 11s in the autumn, bigger, better, and hungrier than ever for that elusive championship.

We go again. Watch this space.

*Art Teacher/Basketball Coach*

*Written by Mr Ashenfelter*

# Serving Up My Volleyball Journey From Novice to Nationals

I have been playing competitive volleyball for the past 6 months for Maidstone Volleyball Club (MVC). But how did I get here?

I first joined the club in February 2022, having gained an interest in the sport from television shows and from seeing clips of it from the 2020 Olympic games in Tokyo. In my first few months I quickly grasped the basics and soon moved up to train with the older, more experienced group as I was "too tall and powerful" for my age group.

Since then, I have been training with the men's second team as well as with other year 10-13 players. I started being pushed more physically, as well as focusing on technique, and have recently begun to understand rotations across the court.

From December, I began playing in league games for the team. As I was "the new guy" I did not get much game time in my first matches, but nevertheless it was still valuable experience for me to learn and grow from. So far this year, I have taken part in three under 15 grand prix for the club, two being at the Boswells School up in Chelmsford (we came 3rd in one and 2nd in the other) and another in London (coming 4th).

I have been continuing to work diligently in and out of club time, playing memorable games including the semi-finals of the KCVA shield (which can be viewed on the Maidstone Volleyball Club YouTube) and an under 16 outdoor tournament at Ashcombe.

Recently I was asked to join the men's first team for next season, which I am extremely excited

about, but (even more exciting) I will also be participating in the Junior Volleyball All Nations event in London later this month for the UK boys team aged 15-18.

Thank you for reading, and I hope this article will interest you to start your own volleyball journey, or just something new at the very least!



*Written by Oliver B.*

*Year 10, Tonbridge House*

# Rowing to Glory

## A Year of Sweat, Oars, and Unforgettable Races



I began my journey at Bewl Bridge RC in May of last year, joining the learn-to-row programme. Bewl Bridge is a small club known for producing some of the best GB rowers, such as Emily Craig, and it continues to cultivate promising rowers for the future. I started getting a feel for the boat and developed my technique and strength.

After the first six weeks of the learn-to-row programme, I moved up to the development squad, practicing three times a week throughout the summer. In the winter of 2022, I had my first competition at Maidstone Head where I achieved 1st place in the J14 coxed quad and 2nd place in a J14 double. During the winter, our training focused heavily on strength and improving our erg scores.

Although I didn't qualify for the Junior Inter-Regional Regatta in the trials, I was selected by Thames South East to cox for our J15 boys quad. This year, I competed at OARsport, a national event for crews from all across the country; my J14 4x+ team finished 5th out of 49. We then participated in the National Junior Sculling Regatta, securing 4th



place in the A final (J14x+), narrowly missing out on a medal to Henley J14x+ by just 2 seconds.

Following this, we took part in the Ball Cup, where I won 2 silvers in the J14 2x and J14 x+ categories. Recently, I raced at Peterborough Regatta against some of the best school crews, finishing 4th in the A final even though we came 2nd in the heats overall.

My crew is now training harder than ever in hopes of securing a



medal at the British Junior Championships in Scotland this month, and at the Kingston Regatta next weekend. Rowing is a full-body sport that serves as one of the best cardio activities, building muscle mainly in the legs and back.

Currently, I am developing my skills in a single scull and am focused on improving my overall fitness and strength in preparation for the summer.

# Full Throttle

## My Journey through the World of Karting

Karting is a sport of both mental and physical challenges. Whether it's the exhilarating battles on track or the roughness of curbs and g forces working against you, it still remains, for me, the most fun and stress-releasing activity I can think of. My journey in motorsport started at Buckmore Park, a track some of you might recognize from the Sidemen's recent 24-hour race.

It was there, at the age of six, that I went out for the first time in a small 50cc bambino kart. From the moment I left the pitlane and rounded the first corner, I was hooked. I knew then that all I wanted to do was drive fast. My initial sessions were filled with spins, mistakes, and the odd overtake here and there. But as I participated in more sessions in the bambino kart, I started to develop and hone my skills, eventually winning races and largely stopping the spins.

After two years, I had grown out of the bambino and moved up to the 390cc karts, which I drove until last winter. It was in these karts that I experienced my first major crash, ending up under a barrier after being pushed wide by another kart. This was a significant mental challenge for me, as a ten-year-old, despite having witnessed - but not been involved in - large crashes before. Nevertheless, I overcame this setback and managed to compete at the front, even winning a championship in the category in October of the previous year.

Covid impacted us all, including the operation at Buckmore Park. In 2021, financial struggles led to the circuit being closed for six months of the year. Consequent-



ly, we had to explore other options. One such option was the Total Karting Zero (TKZ) national championship, an electric series with faster karts.

Competing on a national level in the TKZ was a major step forward in my career. My first year in the E-karts was extremely successful, with a fourth-place finish in the championship that included wins in the finals and heats.

2022 was the best karting year of my life. Thanks to my sponsors at The Pixel Farm, I was able to push myself further than ever before. I won four out of the six rounds in the TKZ Southern Championship and then clinched the National Electric Champion title in the National Final. To top it all off, winning the Buckmore Pro Series in the same kart where I'd had my first big crash was amazing.

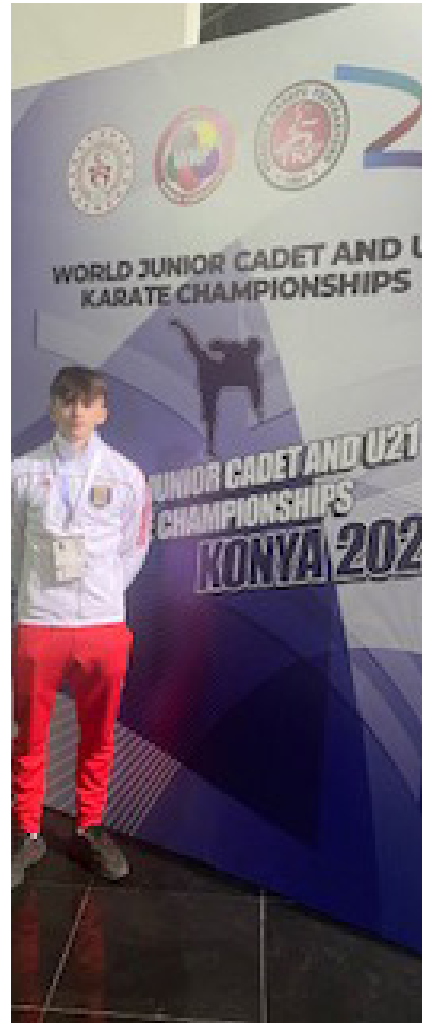
Karting has positively changed my life and I'm grateful that, thanks to the incredible support

of Scarab Sweepers, I'm able to defend my titles in 2023. It's clear to me now that overcoming the initial challenges I mentioned at the beginning has made karting all the more enjoyable for me and others.

2023 has started well, with two wins already under my belt in the TKZ Southern championship and continued victories at Buckmore Park. I'm excited for what the future holds.



# My Karate Journey So Far...



I started Karate when I was 5 years old, I enjoyed the discipline and confidence it gave me. Over time we started to go local competitions and I enjoyed the atmosphere and excitement of competing with other children my age, over time we went further afield and went to competitions in the Midlands. As I progressed through my belts I began to understand there was more to karate than just turning up for lessons, there was respect, discipline and helping one another to succeed.

Last year in July I went to the English Karate Federation National competition in Sheffield where I won a Gold medal in my age/weight category. The following Saturday I attended the EKF Bootcamp where I was selected to start attending England Squad training with the team.

It has all happened from there, in the last year I have been selected to represent England at The Commonwealth Karate competition in Birmingham in September and then selected for the WKF

Cadet Junior & U21 World Championships in Konya Turkey in October. I have also represented the South East Region at The Lion Cup in Luxemburg.

This has all been an amazing opportunity and I have now competed in many countries inc. Italy, France, Spain, Germany and Croatia. I have just moved into a new age/weight category and I am currently ranked 63 in the world. I now enjoy helping the little ones and being a role model to them.



# Brothers on Wheels

At the age of 2 we each got our first bike. At this young age, we loved going out with our Dad and we still do 12 and 10 years later. So that's how our Cycling journey started. We both joined our first club - "Club Cyclopark" in Gravesend - when we were 4 years old and each did mountain bike training every Saturday, where our passion for the sport grew. About 5 years later, we moved over to the road bike training at our club and found we enjoyed multiple disciplines of the sport.

As we started to get older, we realised we wanted to take our training to the next level. We joined a race club called "4T+ Cyclopark" which is for adults and youths, who we now train with and race for. This team supports us with races and a number of training sessions each week. We also attend a British Cycling Youth Development training session weekly. We also train at home & ride out locally.



We have done some very tough rides in our cycling journey, the following are just a few of them we have completed:

- Mont Ventoux in France which is a famous cycling mountain ridden in the Tour de France. It is a gruelling 21km at a steep gradient taking us up to over 6000ft high. We both completed this ride a few times from different sides of the mountain.

- Kent to Portsmouth - Matthew has done this 4 years in a row and Luke is hoping to do it soon, this ride is 120miles (193km) which we ride in one day

- Luke has also ridden rides in excess of 100miles (160km)

- In May 2023, we went to France again visiting a new area. Throughout this 5 day holiday, together we completed 496miles (797km) and 45,000 feet of elevation gain. We are both really

pleased with how we performed during this holiday. As well as being great training, it was also great fun!

- 2022 Official British Cycling Race Results:

Matthew - 20 Podiums & 9 First Places with the highlight being 5th place in the National Championships.

Luke - 9 Podiums & 3 First Places with the highlight being 1st place in Guildford Town Centre Regionals.

We are going to both continue training hard at this sport we both love and are dedicated to.

Hopefully in about 10 years' time, you will see both Luke and Matthew Fletcher in the Tour de France!!!





Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Assembly

# From the Captains



# From the Captain

A significant highlight of my year was the rugby season, which concluded with an impressive 10 wins and only 3 losses for this year's MGS side. This achievement makes it the best team Maidstone Grammar School has had in recent history. We managed to triumph over formidable opponents like Skinners, against whom we would typically be expected to lose, marking an exceptional season for our school.




As the year drew to a close, the perfect team was formed, which included Jess and me as school captain and vice-captain, respectively, alongside a remarkable roster of house captains and vice-captains. We are all eagerly anticipating next year's grand celebration of the 475th anniversary of our historic school.

Additionally, we concluded the year with a celebratory month dedicated to LGBTQ+ inclusivity. Among the highlights was the sixth form inter-house netball tournament, which was a great deal of fun. Corpus, the winners of the tournament, went on to challenge and defeat the teachers' netball team. An exciting event on the horizon is the teacher-student lip sync battle, in celebration of this month, which everyone is keen to watch.

This year, we also had very successful charity days, including one for Children in Need. During this event, many sixth form students participated in an 8-hour 'Badmintonathon,' raising a substantial sum of money. I'm excited for the coming year, when we can continue to support various charities and engage in more creative endeavors.

## CHILDREN IN NEED DAY



**SPONGE THE TEACHER**

**WHERE:** Outside Music Department


**WHEN:** Friday 18th November - Lunchtime

**STARRING:** Mr Seymour, Mr Rivers, Mr Highway, Mr Young, Mrs Coveney, Mr Norton and more!

**AND A VERY SPECIAL GUEST OF MR BAKER WHO IS LEAVING SO GET YOUR LAST CHANCE IN!**

**CASH ONLY**

1 Sponge: 50p  
3 Sponges: £1  
Mr Baker Premium: £1.50



**KEEP CALM AND SPONGE THE TEACHERS**

PIC•COLLAGE

# From the Vice Captain

## Navigating an Eventful MGS: Charities, Badmintonathons, & Harvard Adventures

This year has been very eventful for the students of MGS, ranging from charity events to school trips.

One highlight of the year, for me, was the Children in Need day in November. With the senior prefects engaged with their mocks, the task was left to the junior prefects to organise the entire charity day. Several prefects ran their own events, with an all-day long "Badmintonathon" played by Callum Scudder and Rafe Lamb, going from 7am until 4pm, which (as the name suggests) involved the boys playing badminton continuously during this time. Crossbar football was also a successful event held at lunch, primarily ran by Callum Birchall. The very popular sponge a teacher event was organised by Annabel Sender, and saw students paying money to throw wet sponges at some of the most prominent teachers in the school! This, as you can imagine, raised a lot of money for Children in Need.



There was also a cake sale, organised by myself and the rest of the 6th form, which proved challenging as all cakes had to be baked using the school facilities after school. Despite some minor hitches (like running out of eggs and baking trays!) the end result was very successful, with over seven hundred cakes being baked, and all ended up sold to ravenous students the next day.

Involved, and we prepared as much as possible but honestly, I had no idea what to expect. There were four thousand other students at the conference, all representing different countries, and they all seemed like they knew way more than me about their given countries. However, once the initial nerves subsided, I really got into it and I had such a fun time. I'd say the same goes for everyone else on the trip too - we were all so nervous but ended up making loads of friends with international students, but also with each other.



Another highlight of the school year for me was the Harvard trip in January. Twenty-two others and I were privileged enough to go on the trip to Harvard University in Boston. We spent three days in New York sightseeing, and then four attending the Harvard Model United Nations competition which was the point of the trip. MGS was representing Ukraine, and the way it worked was that every person was representing Ukraine in a different 'committee' so essentially we were all split up and put in different groups once we got to the competition. Before the trip, there was a lot of research in-

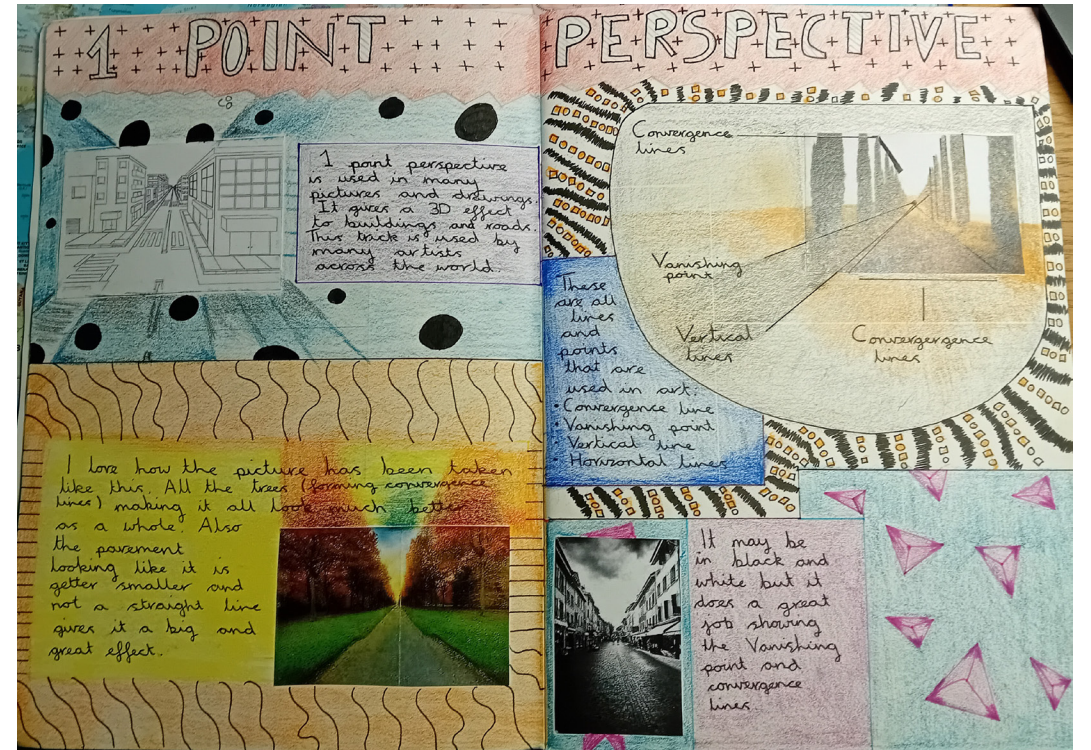
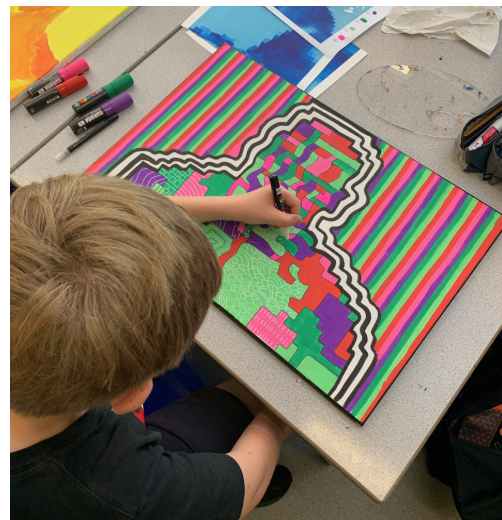
Some of my closest friends now I properly met on that trip. I never used to push myself out of my comfort zone, and if I was still at my old school, there would have been no way I would have gone on a trip solely to take part in a public speaking competition. So, I am proud that I pushed myself to make the most of an exciting opportunity, and if you are in the position where you can do that too, I'd highly recommend the experience.





Combined Cadet Forces (CCF) Activities

# Creative



Art Sketchbook Page - Oscar H, Year 8, Corpus Christi



Triptych - Ethan C, Year 11 Barton House



Photo - Douglas A, Year 7, College House



Painting - Eliza F, Year 13, Corpus Christi House

# Capturing the World Through a Lens

Photography is a universal language that allows us to express our thoughts and moods through simple but in-depth photos. My journey through the world of photography has been a roller coaster with my progression evolving over time including the ups and the downs. This has enabled me in recent times to explore landscapes, architecture and much more. I hope you enjoy reading my journey discussed below

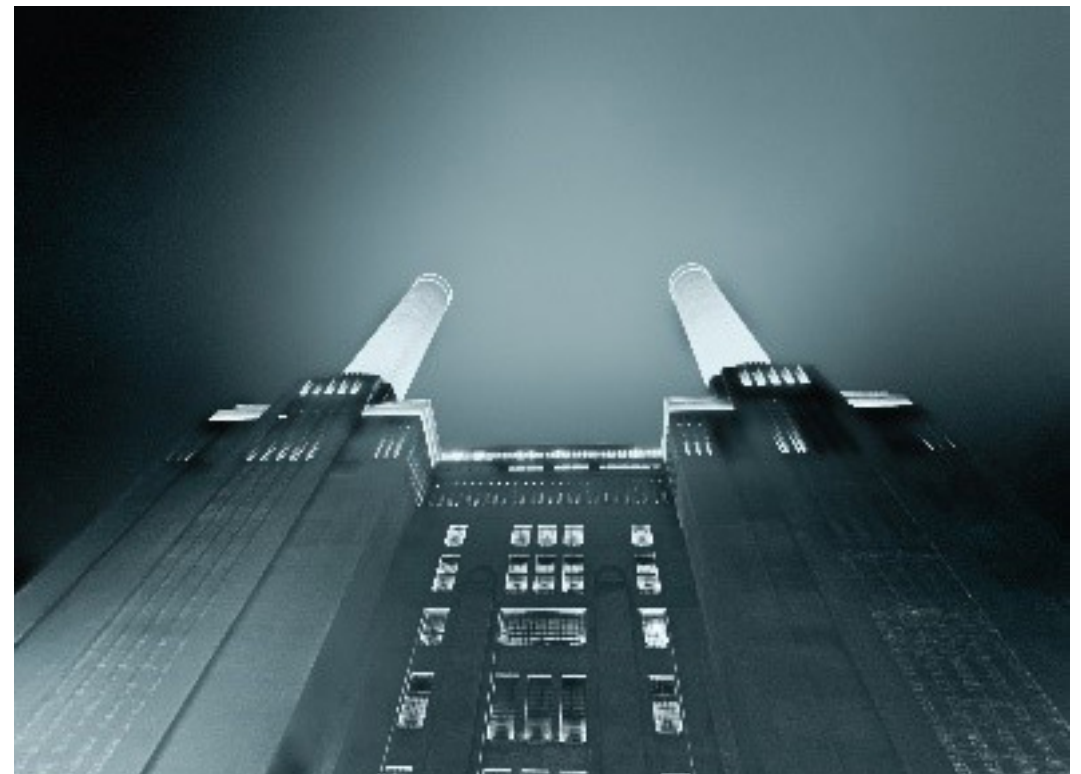
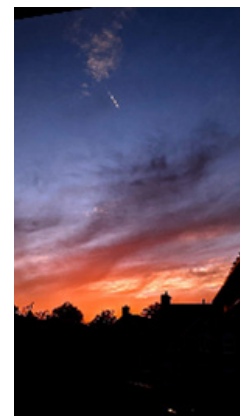
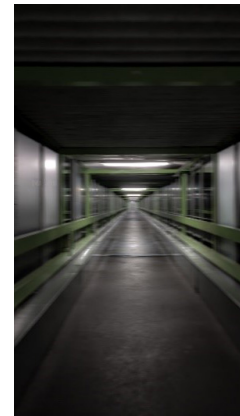
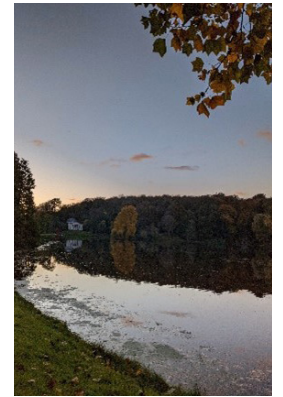
My journey began with taking photos just for fun on an old iPhone 4s around the age of 7. Despite them not being the best photos, it was still my imagination and thought process of what I liked and disliked which has still been relevant to my shots today.

I've always carried photography along with me and always had a phone with me just in case I find that perfect shot. I always believe that the most emotional shots find you and you just have to identify it. As time progressed, I managed to get a new phone (iPhone 7) at around 9 and despite again not nearly being as good as the phones/cameras we have nowadays, it was still great for the time.

My thoughts developed and my theory also came with that. I found certain aesthetics that grew on me over time and how I could achieve these to the best possible effect. I love light and tones whether this be skies, lights, bodies of water, or anything on those sorts of lines. I have tried other aesthetics/styles of photos, but it was finding out what worked for me best. I started to realise the true beauty of nature as I grew up and this was when I got my most recent phone which is a Google Pixel 5 at the age of 14. I took more photos solely on my phone to really show

you don't need an expensive camera. Sure it helps, but what I'm trying to emphasize is that anybody can do it, and anybody can capture what they want and desire. I've even won multiple competitions using my phone against people with top-end cameras.

To reiterate, it's a universal language and I think that's something really important in the world of photography. The following photos around are my progression in photography as I again think that they will tell you a better story than I can in these words...





# Student Creation Spotlight

## WRITTEN WORK

**"Maidstone Grammar School – A poem" by Ayush R. - Year 8, College House**

Maidstone Grammar School, a place of pride,  
Where students learn and knowledge is multiplied.

A rich history, a legacy to hold,  
Where futures are shaped, and futures are bold.

The halls echo with laughter and with cheer,  
And students strive to make their future clear.

With teachers to guide and classmates to learn,  
A community is formed, a future to earn.

From science to art, from math to the stage,  
There's something for everyone at this amazing place.

And as they leave its doors to go their way,  
They take with them skills that will last a lifetime every day.

So, here's to Maidstone Grammar, a shining light,  
A place where students grow and reach new heights.

May its legacy continue, may its future be bright,  
For all who pass through its gates and learn what is right.

**"Spring" by Henry A. - Year 11, Tonbridge House**

The first shoots break through  
The crisp earth with a jejune grin  
Arrogantly unaware of their innocence

Thinking themselves superior  
To their banal forebearers  
Yet as they continue to bloom,  
Their growth abates,  
Aware their aspirations are  
Utterly Unavailing

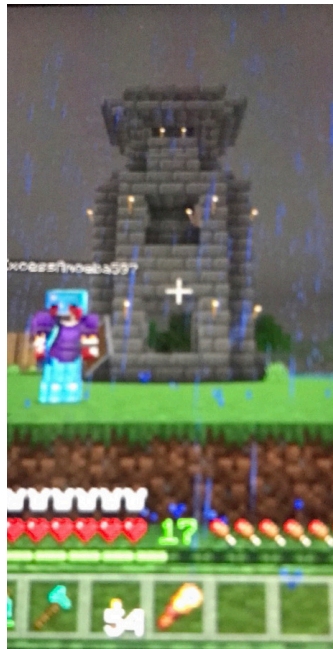
Their dwindling spirit subsides  
Only their scion bringing fulfillment,  
Since not sharing the same rashness

Enables them to revel in their youth,  
For one last dance

## MINECRAFT BUILDS



Aron C. - Year 7, Barton House



Thomas J. & Oscar W. - Year 8

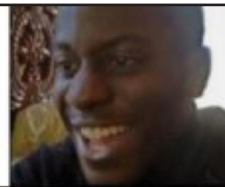
## MEMES

Me: has the best gaming weekend ever  
The math test on monday:



Remion A - Year 8, Tonbridge House

me having a good day at school:



the refectory is closed:



Selwyn R. - Year 8, College House



Thumbnail Design - Ayush R. - Year 8, College House



3D render - Ruben C. - Year 7 Tonbridge House

# House in Review



# Barton House Review

Hi everyone, I'm Neve, the House Captain for Barton House. In my spare time, I love the performing arts and I have a passion to be on stage - but most importantly I have a passion to allow everyone to be themselves and thrive in all situations. I also love to spend time with my friends, and enjoy going on beach trips especially with summer on the horizon.

I look forward to working with you all in September!

Salve! I am Jack, Barton Vice Captain. My distinct combination of intelligence, experience and empathy equips me to provide guidance and encouragement throughout our time together.

When not fulfilling my duties, I immerse myself in the thrilling world of mountain biking, where I find solace and excitement amidst challenging terrains. Additionally, the art of cooking allows me to express my creativity and passion for flavours. Exploring history is another fascination of mine, as I delve into the captivating narratives that have shaped our world.

I take pride in having achieved the rank of CQMS in the Army Cadets, a role that fostered my leadership skills and instilled values of discipline and teamwork. Furthermore, I had the privilege of participating in the Model Harvard Model United Nations, engaging in enlightening debates with global peers.

As Vice Captain, my primary objective is to cultivate an inclusive and supportive environment that nurtures individual growth.

If there's anything you need, feel happy to approach me with any concerns or aspirations, as I am committed to providing guidance and fostering unity within

our house and making it a place we can thrive.

Barton, brace yourselves for an extraordinary year ahead. Let's create lasting memories, conquer challenges, and celebrate collective accomplishments. Together, we'll leave a legacy of growth and camaraderie

- Jack



# College House Review

## WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

In September, we welcomed a new selection of dedicated students into the junior prefect team who helped alongside Year 7s with events such as open evenings, and with arranging charity days.

On the topic of charity days, in January we held our charity day. During that day we held a bake sale, thanks to the tireless effort of the prefect team and teachers spending their free hours baking cookies and cakes to be sold all around the school. Sweets were also sold at the gate before school, and during the day. Remaining sweets were then sold throughout the week to raise as much money as possible for the cause.

With the turning over of the year, there was also a turn-over in the senior leadership team with the unfortunate leave of the Year 13s for their summer exams. Representing College house now are Eloise as house captain, and Sam, Callum, and Josh for vice captains.

Recently, we have held form-time competitions, such as a book cover bunting competition. Special shout outs to Douglas Ardill of Cg8, Charlie Seeley of Cg3, Vis Valiyavilayil of Cg12, and Henry Cumberland of Cg13 for their spectacular contributions.



## WHAT CAN YOU LOOK FORWARD TO IN THE FUTURE:

In the year to come you can expect a wide range of fun and exciting events to get involved in, including in future charity events such as helping with the bake sales alongside the prefect team. Also expect to see many opportunities to prove what it means to be a part of College house, and represent the house in many inter-house competitions spanning beyond just sports.

We are so excited for everything coming up in this upcoming year, and can't wait for everyone to get involved!

# Corpus Christi House Review

As a house team, we have been exceptionally busy, putting in an unprecedented amount of work to create a successful and meaningful Pride Month. Throughout June, we set about organising a variety of events to show our support for Pride Month. In the week commencing the 12th, an inter-house netball tournament took place to identify the strongest team to play the staff in an emphatic match that saw many students watching and joining in with the crowd. This Pride netball event was envisioned to unite the school, and in particular the sixth form, as a collective to celebrate Pride Month.

Furthermore, during this week, we screened the successful film "Bohemian Rhapsody" in the big hall. This biographical musical drama acutely outlines the life of Freddie Mercury, an icon in the LGBTQ+ community. His success in life and resistance against prejudice create an inspiring narrative for the younger generation and students at MGS to be confident and proud of themselves, regardless of their identity.

The following week, we hosted a Pride BBQ in the quad, providing a platform for students to come together and enjoy a stellar performance from the Year 10 band. In support of Pride, they performed a plethora of songs from artists such as Queen and the Arctic Monkeys, creating a lovely atmosphere in the centre of the school.



Finally, as Pride Month draws to a close, Corpus Christi House wants to finish with a celebration of the relationship between Pride and music. On Friday, the 30th of June, we will host a lip-sync battle in the quad featuring songs by LGBTQ+ artists. We hope this event will further display the pride not only Corpus Christi House has, but the whole school's belief in supporting the LGBTQ+ community. Corpus Christi, as a team and family, will continue to uphold our beliefs and create a safe, friendly, and successful community to bring out the best in the students at MGS. Our main objective is to provide an inclusive environment and organise multiple events to unite the house and improve school life.



Year 12, Corpus Christi House

Written by Callum S.

# Tonbridge House Review

As we approach the end of this academic year, the prefects of Tonbridge house would like to take this opportunity to reflect on another successful year at MGS. This term comprised the stepping down of the year 13 Tonbridge team, and the appointment of the new team. We would like to thank this year's House Captain, Riwaaj Gurung, and his team of Vice Captains: Tom Parris, Tom Evans, and Georgia Gambling, who welcomed us into the Prefect Team under a year ago, and who have done so much for our house.

We would like to formally introduce the 2023-2024 Tonbridge Prefect team: Joseph Harmon, House Captain, and the three Vice Captains, Leo Grandolfi, Amrita Shathish, and Amelia Lee.

Throughout this year, Tonbridge has worked with the Head of House, Mr Holmes, the Deputy Head of House, Mr Taylor, the other houses, and the School Captain Team to organise events, charity days, and to provide a sense of belonging for the students of Tonbridge house. The winter term saw Christmas Jumper Day organised amongst the houses to raise money for a local homelessness charity, and the school's green agenda pushed. In the spring term, many Year 12 Tonbridge students, alongside other students, attended Harvard University for the annual Harvard Model United Nations Conference, with Maidstone Grammar School being the only UK school, to attend. We would like to congratulate all of these students for their excellent performance. Additionally, the Spring Term saw Tonbridge student Rafe Lamb appointed as the School Captain of MGS, and the school and his house congratulate him on this enormous achievement. The house teams together raised money for Comic Relief and Maidstone Mind last



term, both very important charities to MGS.

This past term has been a very busy one for the school community. Tonbridge would like to congratulate all of our students who received Junior and Senior, Half and Full Colours this term; we are very proud of every student who has contributed to Tonbridge house, and shown service to their school. On 26th May, the Tonbridge prefects came together to organise a non-uniform charity day for Mental Health Month, and delivered an assembly to each house on the topic of mental health. We'd like to particularly thank Billy Lane, who is Tonbridge's ambassador for mental health, and Hubertas Ramanauskas, who created an inspiring video for the whole school to watch. The school has been celebrating Pride this month, led by Corpus Christi House, and Tonbridge took part in a charity interhouse netball tournament, placing second overall. Finally, we welcomed the incoming cohort of Tonbridge Year 7 students with the House Teas, which were a great success. We look forward to welcoming new students into the Tonbridge community in September.



We would like to take this opportunity to mention our Head of House, Mr Holmes, who celebrates his 25th year at MGS in 2023. We'd also like to thank all Tonbridge Prefects who have worked hard all year in making sure events run smoothly - the work that students put in is always recognised, and we are extremely grateful to have such an active sixth form. We look forward to the upcoming year, particularly meeting our new Junior Prefect Team which will be appointed in the first term in September.

Tonbridge House aims to inspire belonging into each of its students, and would like everyone at MGS to feel part of a community here. We look forward to leading Tonbridge House next year!

Written by Amelia Lee

Year 12, Tonbridge Vice House Captain



# Year in Review



# Year 7 in Review

Starting off at MGS in September was different for all the Year 7s. I remember arriving at the front gate on the first day and everyone looking up in awe at our new school - a new chapter in all our lives. As we lined up outside reception, I distinctly smelled the freshness of the new uniform and heard the quiet chatter of excited voices. Some people knew others from primary school or outside of school; some knew no one. The start of the year was therefore exciting for some, but nerve-wracking for others. However, the tight community of MGS soon brought everyone together. Since then, we have all come a long way in our time as Maidstonians.

In September, Year 7 took part in a team-building day where we were able to meet our new classmates and get to know one another for the year ahead. There were many activities on the field we took part in within groups in our class. This was an enjoyable day for all of us, and we all felt that we were more confident around our classmates and could start to develop friendships with them.



On the last day of Term 1, the Year 6 Open Evening took place. This was a major event because it gave us (Year 7s) the chance to represent our school and show others how proud we are to be Maidstonians. This night was an enormous success, and everyone was proud to have delivered an insightful event to the prospective Year 6s and their parents.

Later in the school year, Year 7s attended a trip to Bletchley Park at the end of November. This was an amazing day for the entire year. We enjoyed learning about the decoding and deciphering that the professionals did at Bletchley Park during World War Two. Discovering the secrets of this fantastic place was an unforgettable moment for everyone.

By December, Christmas was drawing nearer, and we had already completed our first two terms. Everyone felt we had settled in and were comfortable in the MGS community.

In Terms 4 and 5, we were building up for our end-of-year exams in June. With everyone revising and paying extra attention in les-

-sons, by the time we had reached our last term we all felt prepared. Our exams came and went, and after that, we could relax and focus on the last exciting events. Extended Learning Week and Sports Day were entertaining for all of us and magnificent events that everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

Looking back on Year 7 now, I am proud of the journey that we have been on and the things we have achieved. This year has been the absolute best start that we could have hoped for. I am thankful to be at Maidstone Grammar School and for the fantastic first year we have had. I cannot wait to return next year for what I am certain will be a year just as good as the last.



# Year 8 in Review

For Year 8's, this year has been an interesting one as this is the year we chose and found out the GCSE subjects that we would be taking for the rest of our time at MGS (other than sixth form obviously).

As it drew close to our end of year exams, we were all delighted to find out that we didn't have to take an exam for Science as we had already taken one in February to decide if we could take triple science which were all pretty happy to hear this as this was one of the hardest exams we had to sit and was the main revision topic for many as it has the most content. When it came to our exams, most of us were fully prepared for whatever was thrown at us on the day of each test and from all the hours of revision and hard work, Year 8 did very well.

After all this speaking about exams, I feel like I have skipped the whole year and just talked about the end, so let's talk about some of the other things that have been going on.

Firstly, it cannot go without mentioning the court outside the library which the school had just got Astro turfed. We're not quite sure what they thought was going to happen but now it is host to a huge football game every day before school, break, and lunch which brings so many students together and I am sometimes part of.

The sun came out, blazers could be left at home and the bank next to the 3G was an ideal place to chill on a hot summer lunch time with your friends. Unfortunately, this was short lived as the area got fenced off!

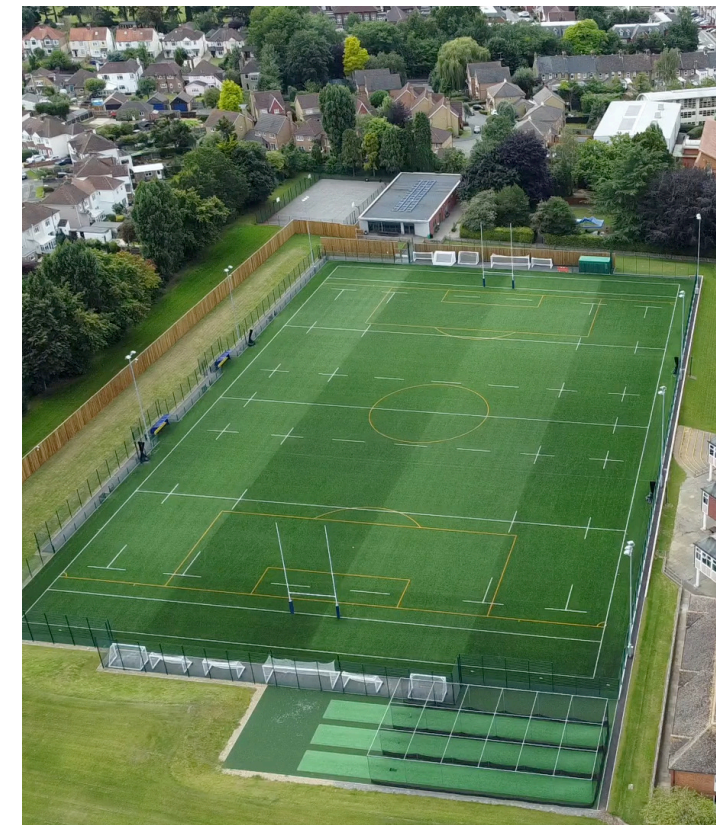
I could not go without mentioning Harrison Fordyce, who was a lovely member of the MGS Community, and I would like this to be a little nod to remember him.

Year 8 have done really well with sports and achievements this year, both in school and out, so well done everyone!

For most of us, the last few weeks at school are the best. It gives you something to drag you through all the tough exams and something to look forward to from the very beginning of the year (although it seems so far away at the time!).

Extended Learning Week and Sports Day have been a great way to finish off the year.

Let's hope Year 9 brings just as much fun and positive, memorable experiences for us all.



# Year 9 in Review

For me, year 9 has been a warm and welcoming experience to new things such as new subjects and GCSEs. Having chosen film studies, design technology and computing for my extra subjects I have had much fun in lessons doing projects and other forms of work. One of my personal favorites has been making short films in film studies, me and my friends had a lot of fun creating these mini masterpieces as we got to work together recording and editing the films, there were of course a lot of laughs along the way as well.

On top of this, I also got my first taste of proper exams, my year was introduced to more formal exams in the big hall where we did about 12 exams to help prepare us for what real GCSEs are like.



Towards the end of the year, we were faced with a business challenge event, this gave everyone in the year a chance to get taste of what it is like to work with a genuine business and face significant business problems. My group was tasked with helping a charity called The Rotary Foundation appeal to younger people more so that they could gain more volunteers for their cause. My group produced the idea to advertise more on social network platforms and other more modern forms of media.

During this year I have made many new friends due to many new classes being introduced to me. I have improved my grades in many subjects throughout the year and overall improved as a person. For me, year 9 has been a very enjoyable year and I am sure it has been for many other students. I will miss year 9 and all its fun and new things to do, however I am excited to move on to new things such as coursework and work experience in year 10, people moving into year 9 next year sure have a lot to look forward to.

Written by Kian C.

Year 9, Tonbridge House

# Year 10 in Review

Year 10 has been an eventful and good year, and for some, their favourite year at MGS. In late September we took part in the Bronze D of E expedition. It was very successful and a good way to start the year. After this, our rugby season started. This year was our most successful year with lots of ups and only a few downs.

Our progress was impressive considering all the challenges we went through in the previous years. With the rugby season cut short due to bad weather, the focus for Year 10 turned to the mock exams after Christmas. These mocks were only the second time doing a full run through of exams in the big hall; and our last before our first mock GCSE's in November. It was a very useful experience and has prepared us well for Year 11.

Our attention then turned to the football season, which is the most popular sport in our year, with four teams having fixtures and it is arguably the strongest team out of all the Year 10 sports clubs. The U15 A team had a great season, losing only two of the 15 games and dominating the majority of their fixtures, including winning the area Cup Final against Aylesford and losing out narrowly to Simon Langton in the County Cup semi-final.

A well deserved Easter break saw many of the Year 10 students partake in the school trips including a ski-trip and a trip to Greece. These were the first trips for many due to COVID-19 curtailing previously planned adventures. Many of our students who completed the Bronze award went on their Silver DofE practice expedition in June.

The CCF continues to be popular for Year 10 students, with many representing their respective sections in competitions up and down the country.

The summer term brought with it the start of the school cricket season with a very successful start, not losing a game until the middle of June, where they lost to Oakwood in the County Cup semi-final. There have been many new faces to the cricket team this season with several squad members being selected despite having never played before. It just shows that hard work does pay off and is recognised.

Most recently, the band Nameless, which consists of five Year 10 students, performed in the Quad for Pride month, performing Queen songs and many others too.

To finish off the year, Year 10 had their first work experience during Extended Learning week and, unbelievably, their first sports day!



Written by Ollie C.

Year 10 College House

# Year 11 in Review

I'm sure I speak for everyone in Year 11 when I say that this year has gone by unbelievably quickly.

While the focus has obviously been on our GCSEs, we've still managed to achieve quite a lot as a group, and have had some fun along the way.

In sports, there have been loads of milestones reached, like many of the rugby players playing senior rugby for the first time.

There were also many achievements, such as the football team winning the Kent Cup 5-0 vs Norton Knatchbull, which was well-deserved for the hard work put in throughout the season. The MGS senior first team won the East Kent Premiership title with a game in hand. This team consisted of six Year 11s, which was a great achievement.

There were also some important personal achievements, with Ed Skinner competing in weightlifting for Great Britain and Jake Worton fighting for England across Europe in Karate.

In November, we sat our first set of mocks which were over two weeks, and then in February, we tackled our second set which really got us prepared for our GCSEs, which we finished in June. Personally, I found the mocks harder than the GCSEs, which was a huge relief. I reckon the school did this on purpose to scare us into revising! On average, we each completed 27 exams, which is crazy to think, as it's about 54 hours of sitting in the same hall over a four-week period. We now have the anxious wait for our results in August.

We've just started a long and hopefully hot summer (which we've all massively deserved).

Lastly, I wish everyone the best to get where they want to be in September.



Written by Tom M.

Year 11, Corpus Christi House

# Year 12 in Review

My Year 12: This year has been filled with many ups and downs. The start of the year brought new faces and saw some of our group depart, boys with whom we had essentially grown up with at MGS.

Personally, I felt that the school dynamic changed significantly compared to previous years due to these shifts in student population. However, this change wasn't entirely negative. Although it was tough to see some close mates leave MGS and our community, it also opened the door for me to form new friendships.

The academic side of school felt entirely different once we moved into sixth form. Despite issues like teacher turnover in some departments potentially impacting learning, I noticed a higher level of efficiency in the teaching standards. I would particularly like to credit Mr O'Hanlon, who taught Geography with remarkable consistency, no matter if it was a Monday morning or a Friday afternoon.

A significant part of Year 12 was the increased amount of free time, especially for private studies. At first, it was a bit chaotic, as you would expect from a group of former 'Year 11s'. However, I noticed a transition from chaos to calm, probably due to a natural increase in maturity. Credit must also go to Mr Rothwell, who adopted a different approach from the previous sixth form supervisor. He took interest in our lives while maintaining the school's expectations, which made his requests to work feel less like nagging and more like guidance.

Other notable aspects of Year 12 include the freedom to leave at break and lunch times, and the opportunity to learn to drive. These were personal highlights of my year. The freedom to make trips to Maccies or play football as the weather warmed up



brought back memories of Year 11. We boys have grown up on such activities.

Ultimately, Year 12 has made me realise what is required for the coming year. It's been an eye-opening experience that encourages me to put my head down, work hard, and make the most of my final year at MGS. Even the lows of this year haven't overshadowed the good times and memories. My advice to those entering Year 12 is to embrace the newfound freedom, get to know new people, and enjoy the changing dynamics, especially those boys coming from MGS.



Written by Jack S.

Year 12, College House

# Year 13 in Review

Our year this year has been mainly preparation for our final A levels. At the start of the year though our exams still felt ages away, none of us felt prepared even for mocks that were set to either reassure us with good results, or give us a nudge, or a shove, in the right direction, whichever was more necessary.

The charity days early in the year are always bigger events for us year 13s as we really enjoy being able to run stalls like soak the teacher and similar things while we are at the top of the school, and don't have the stress of exams constantly looming over our heads.

As the winter came however, mock exams reared their head, I know I speak for many when I say plenty of us weren't prepared, so for those that were, well done. This was also the time that early applicants to university had to start applying and doing extra exams to gain their places.

The rugby season was fully in swing by this point, the most successful MGS season in recent history. Managing to conquer skimmers, and give Judd a strong run for their money, a top 9 team in the country. We ended our season 10 wins, 3 losses. The football season was also a major success. An unbeaten run all season resulting in our first league title in 11 years.

As the spring term began, we did manage some restbite from the stress with a gap in the exams, but only a short rest, as our full exams were drawing ever closer.

Writing this now, exams have finished, and I'm laying in the sun relaxing, waiting for results day. For some, this time is incredibly nerve wracking time as we wait for grades that could decide our futures.

I wish everyone goodluck in their futures, whatever path you take...



Saying  
Farewell...





### **Mrs Rathbone**

Although I never personally experienced her teaching first-hand in a maths lesson, Mrs Rathbone's support, guidance and compassion has taught me much along my MGS journey. She managed to make my first day at school a little less daunting than it could have been, and I'm forever thankful for her service to us as new and then mature students. As year 7s, she understood the problems we might face and all the anxieties surrounding school; but she also had the answers needed for the more complex intricacies of older year groups and could change tact and support us as we planned for our futures. Of course, she was a maths teacher (which was always helpful when you were stumped on a topic, as she took the time to explain), but she was also so much more than that.

Form time instantly became a relaxed and fun experience due to the environment of room 104, and this was determined by her genuinely kind and sunny personality. Mrs Rathbone always had ways of getting us to participate in challenges, games or just conversations, and she expertly managed the dynamic of vertical form systems. One of her ingenious systems - of which there were many - to get us to behave, was Clean Card Friday (back when conduct cards were prominent), rewarding us with sweets out of her own pocket every week, and using her creativity to help make life better at MGS.

She was real and understanding, which was why talking to her about any subject was engaging and felt natural. She always had our best interests in mind, and helped us logistically with important academic choices, offering herself to listen or just giving a helping hand when we needed it. I think everyone can agree, whether you knew her well or not, that MGS lost someone special when she left.

Thank you for investing in our futures Mrs Rathbone, we wish you all the best for yours.



### **Miss Collard**

I'm sure everyone will be upset to hear that Miss Collard is leaving MGS. Since she has been at this school, she has made an impact on many students' lives, whether they have been in her class or her form.

She always comes into school with a smile on her face and is always someone with whom you can have a friendly conversation. I will always remember how much fun our form has when she hosts our weekly quiz. Everybody is very competitive in attempts to get full marks, and she always laughs at our eagerness to win. She finds great enjoyment in announcing who won each week. She is also very involved in other activities within the school, like when she started the bunting competition for form time. Many students got involved in this competition, and it resulted in

some very stylish artwork that is still present in the English corridor.

The worst thing about Miss Collard leaving is losing her incredible teaching skills and her commendable work ethic, where she always puts 100% into all her lessons. I'd like to thank Miss Collard on behalf of all her students, her form, and the whole school for the effort she has put into MGS. She will not be forgotten, and we wish her the best for the future.



### **Mr Ferguson**

From the entire student body I would like to thank Mr Ferguson for his six excellent years at MGS. He arrived when I was in year eight and instantly made a huge impact with his interesting and personal assemblies where he used a myriad of sports and classics metaphors and references to help us engage with and prepare for our GCSE years. Throughout his period at MGS he has been a steady hand on the rudder of progress with his ability to engage all students of all ability.

Over the perilous period of COVID-19 he developed an early 'Oxbridge' group on Teams to help guide the higher achievers to greater heights recommending many additional resources and books to boost us to the next level and showing us how to access all the regular channels of help from the school we needed moving into, not just A-levels, but

However, it was moving into A-levels where we would like to particularly thank him. Mr Ferguson was instrumental in helping us through the tricky process of applying for university with him developing the 'academic journal' with Mrs Deo which, whilst was begrudgingly used by the student body at the time, proved to be highly useful in streamlining the process for writing personal statements.

On a personal note, it didn't matter how busy school life was for him, he was always willing to have a conversation, look through a personal statement or mark a practice essay. Mr Ferguson also taught me Classics for a year and his lessons will always stick with me especially those sat reading the play 'Frogs' with him explaining the 2,500 year old jokes and giving them hilarious modern context.

I would also like to thank Mr Ferguson for his work outside of the regular sphere of school, in particular his work with extracurricular societies like rugby but especially debating where he spent hours in contact with the forever unreliable student led university debating competitions to make sure they got arranged and even went out of his way to use his Saturday driving myself and a fellow student to a debating tournament at Oxford University. That kind of commitment to, not just the school, but the student body itself is beyond admirable.

But I think the most impressive thing is his drive. Mr Ferguson always had a side project; whether it was running the London marathon or training for cage fighting, he always found a way to push himself further and further which inspired the student body to push ourselves outside our comfort zone and become better people. A truly brilliant role model for the entire school.

We wish him all the best and hope his new school appreciates him as much as we do.

Thank you very much Sir, for everything!



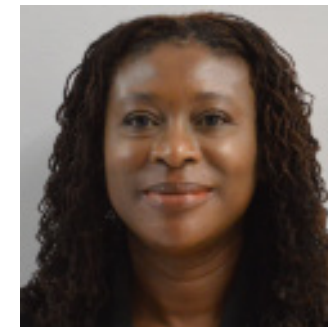
### **Mr Friend**

In every school, there will be individuals who work tirelessly to ensure students achieve their upmost potential, and sometimes, these actions go unrecognized by the wider student body. This is the case of Mr. Friend, who devoted his efforts to the students of Design and Technology whilst not even being a formal teacher. A few weeks ago, we bid Mr. Friend a final farewell after being at MGS for twenty-seven years. Here, we can reflect on the lessons he taught us and how much of an integral part of the DT team he was.

Mr. Friend joined Maidstone Grammar School in June 1995 with a passion for DT, fixing and mending. These passions went very far in the DT department as one student names him "Mr. Technology". Whilst speaking with Mr. Hall (a teacher of DT and a colleague of Mr. Friend) he constantly emphasized how kind and generous he was to everyone. The students also loved his great sense of humor and classic dad-jokes.

Mr. Cairney (an Old Maidstonian and previous teacher of physics) stated that Mr. Friend "held the DT department together" by relentlessly assisting students as an act of generosity. Mrs. Friend (the Head PA) described his work ethic as "old school" whilst simultaneously being incredibly skilled in the newly emerging digital technologies too.

With the sad departure of Mr. Friend, his heartfelt leaving speech was entirely focused on the students at MGS. His kindness, humor and legendary skill will certainly be missed within the whole DT department as well as student and staff body. From all of us, we hope you enjoy your well-deserved retirement and thank you for your decades of dedication to the school.



### **Ms Onah**

Dear Ms Onah,

Throughout this year, you have helped numerous students, including myself, develop their computing skills. It's unfortunate that you must leave. I'm confident many students would agree when I say that I've thoroughly enjoyed your lessons. The computing department won't be the same without you.

You've made all our lessons extremely engaging, which has fostered a stronger appreciation for computing within me than I had previously imagined possible. Under your guidance this year, I feel that my computing skills have greatly improved. I've also acquired new skills that I anticipate being useful later in life.

You're an exceptional teacher, and I hope future students will have the opportunity to learn from your extensive computing knowledge. Even though you've only taught us for one year, I am immensely grateful to have known you as my teacher.

On behalf of the entire student

body, we wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours. We know that we will never forget you. Thank you for being such an inspiring teacher.



**Miss Payne**

For some of us we have only seen or been taught by Miss Payne for one or two years but although this brief time together me and many others can say Miss Payne has made learning much more interesting and fun. For some of us, we've only seen or been taught by Miss Payne for one or two years. Yet, despite this brief time together, many of us can affirm that Miss Payne has made learning much more interesting and fun. She has gone out of her way to ensure we are well-prepared for exams. As a form tutor, she has also made form time more enjoyable, whether it be playing Wordle with the entire form guessing the word, or creating a countdown to Christmas with daily envelopes to open.

During lessons, the classroom would be full of jokes and laughter, and when work needed to be done, Miss Payne made sure it was completed. Even though she occasionally made some amusing faces during exams, we were always able to finish on time.

As a school, I believe we can all come together to thank Miss Payne for the work she has done as a teacher, a form tutor, and as the Assistant Head of Barton. In her role as Assistant Head, she has spent the year ensuring that students' voices are heard. If anyone needed help, Miss Payne would do her best to assist with their problems.

On behalf of the entire school, I wish Miss Payne the best of luck. I hope she continues to spread joy at the next school she will be heading to, and whatever happens after that. With that I say goodbye, good luck and will you please not distract your next school with weird funny faces during exams.



**Mr Knight**

For some, Mr Knight has not just been a teacher at Maidstone Grammar School, he has been a friend of everyone here and the school wouldn't be the way it is today if not for his warm-heartedness, positivity and what some may call humour. We have shared many memories together and I don't picture one where I don't have a smile stretching across my face, for there was never a dull moment with Mr Knight. Whether teaching me religious studies or simply passing me in the corridor, he would always be vibrant and full of passion. It's clear he is a man that does not view his role as a job but rather a passion and a hobby as he moulds students into the people we later become, I can say from year 7 to now year 12, I wouldn't be the person I am today if not for Mr Knight. Whilst you may not be here at the school anymore, your presence will certainly be felt in this community's culture and environment for many years to come.

Thank you for being the man you are and bringing such positivity to Maidstone Grammar School and best of luck to you in your future.



**Mrs Lynch**

Whilst mine and many others of our times continue here at MGS, yours is coming to the end. Through the various form times of reading, quizzes, and games, your oversight has helped us to develop into who we are today. Your support into our exams, allowing us to revise during reading time, the various conversations held after our reports to discuss how we can improve, and also helping us to understand where we can improve, has benefitted us all.

Additionally, the many events held during the time, such as decorating our form room for the Christmas competition last year, or assisting during the charity days, have shaped the form that is To10 into what it is today. You will certainly be missed by us all.

However, you are also a geography teacher. Whereas I personally didn't get to experience you teaching geography, I am certain those who you have taught have benefitted massively. The few times I did benefit were always useful, and insightful, and these have certainly helped out the various students you would've taught over the years.

Thank you for all the years you have dedicated to the school, through your teaching and form duties, and good luck on your future!



**Mr Conisbee**

Dear Mr Conisbee,

As you prepare to leave our school, I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for everything you've done for us.

Your dedication to keeping us and our school safe and secure has not gone unnoticed. You have gone above and beyond to ensure that we are protected from harm, and you have helped to create a sense of security and peace of mind for all of us.

You always made me feel like I was in good hands, no matter what. And although I didn't always appreciate it at the time, you were always there to listen, offer guidance, and provide reassurance when needed.

Thank you for everything Mr Conisbee. You have made a lasting impact, and we wish you all the best in your future. We hope that you will stay in touch.



**Mr Saunderson**

On behalf of the student body, I am saying farewell and good luck to Mr. Saunderson. He was an enthusiastic teacher who did his best to create a positive and fun atmosphere for his students; he was and still is a good role model to those around him.

Furthermore, the impact he has had on MGS - both teachers and students - won't be forgotten. The students who had him as a PE teacher know he gave 100% effort throughout his time at MGS and always wanted to see smiles on his students' faces. We thank you for everything you have done and wish you the best for the future. (I hope to see you in the pub again sometime!).



**Miss Lancaster**

Miss Lancaster is a bundle of joy who makes everyone feel welcome the moment they set foot in both her classroom and the school. She has helped both me and many others on their journey through MGS.

From the moment I became a Maidstonian in Year 7, entering through the school gates, she assured me that it would be the best five years of my life, and she wasn't wrong.

She is such a positive, caring, gentle soul who is willing to help with problems ranging from homework to having lengthy conversations about life outside of school. Whenever Miss Lancaster is seen around the school, she always has a smile that stretches from ear to ear, and without a shadow of a doubt, she can put a smile on anyone's face, no matter their struggles.

Miss Lancaster will be missed by everyone in the school and has truly had a positive impact on each student's life with whom she has had contact.





**Mrs O'Neill**

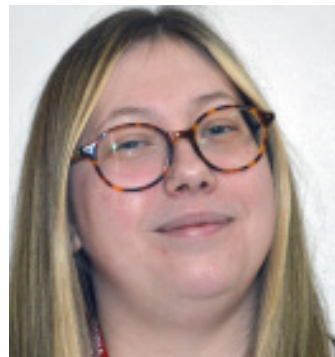
Mrs O'Neil has been integral to the workings of the school for seven years, working as the finance manager in the Bursary. She left us to start her retirement at the start of January and will probably spend some of her retirement in Australia, where her daughter recently moved.



**Mrs Harriss**

Mrs Harriss officially left MGS in January after serving 17 years as a cover supervisor. In that time, she covered thousands of lessons when teachers were absent. During her time, she was not only a popular face in the school, among both the staff and students, but she also brought a smile to MGS each and every day. It is a hugely important role in the school, and so we thank Mrs. Harriss immensely for her service and commitment to MGS and to the many thousands of Maidstonians she has supported.

Thank you, Mrs. Harriss.



**Mrs Barty / Mr Affleck**



Mrs Barty and Mr Affleck, who joined us in February last year to work in the Learning Support Department, left in spring to take up new roles. They have both been integral to the workings of the school, and we wish them well with their future pursuits.



**Mr Baker**

Mr Baker has been teaching business studies and economics at MGS for the last eight years, and he leaves us to become a head of department at a local school.

He will be dearly missed by all of the students who have studied his subjects and who have known him around MGS.



**Mr Cairney**

Mr Cairney, who joined the Physics Department in 2020, left us in April after three years to join another school to oversee their cadet force.

Mr. Cairney has not only shared his passion for physics with his students but has also led the army contingent within our CCF.

Good luck, Mr. Cairney.



**Mr Brown**

Goodbye to Mr Brown, who is an Old Maidstonian himself and is leaving after one year to begin his university placement after supporting the PE department as the PE technician.



**Mrs Grant**

Goodbye to Mrs Grant, who leaves to retire to the Cotswolds after being the school librarian.



**Mr O'Hanlon**

Goodbye to Old Maidstonian Mr O'Hanlon, who leaves after five years as head of geography to work closer to home.

His active teaching style brought out a genuine passion in all those who studied under him for his subject, and he will be a greatly missed part of the geography department.



**Mrs Byatt**

Mrs Byatt, a member of the office team, leaves MGS after 24 years. She has been a stable and friendly face in the main school office for nearly a quarter of a century. She has been integral to the workings of MGS, and I know that many will miss her support and friendly manner.



**Mrs Fowler**

Goodbye to Mrs Fowler, who leaves the teaching profession and her role as Head of French to start a Masters.



**Mr Campbell**

Goodbye to Mr Campbell, our head of D&T, who, after three and a half years, moves to Thailand to work in an international school



# In Memoriam: Harrison Fordyce

**M**y name is Lucas Botten, and I am proud to say that I was Harrison's friend. I first met Harrison in Year 7, and I became quite close to him in Years 9 and 10, where I found out that his friendly company and extreme humor were similar to mine. We would sometimes challenge each other to see who could drink Monster energy drink the fastest, and I remember the time he said he could chug hot chocolate from the refectory. He tried, and, well, it was too hot, so he declared defeat against the hot chocolate.

Adding to my memories of Harrison, I can recall last year's Halloween at Harrison's house. A few other friends and I had a good time with him, most notably spending time slapping each other with cushions and then going outside to throw eggs at each other and scare each other in the dark, something he was abnormally good at.

Harrison was a good man, and his many qualities made him easy to talk to once you started a conversation with him. I take pride in having the pleasure of knowing him and being a part of his life, which was cruelly cut short. He was fun, enjoyed a good laugh, and was always happy to hang out and support his friends and family, but above all, he was loyal, kind, and empathetic

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*Written by Lucas B.  
Year 11, Corpus Christi*

**H**arrison was the politest, kindest person I ever had the pleasure of meeting. He was a brother to me, whenever we spent time together, I can wholeheartedly say that those were the happiest moments of my life. There will never be anyone as amazing, funny, and worth spending time with than him. Words cannot describe how much he meant to me, and how much my friends and I will miss him.

Harrison was a quiet, self-kept young man and I first met him during the lockdown period in school, in which we became fast friends, solidified by the 1000 consecutive high fives we managed to accomplish within a break time. Slowly he became more social, interacting with more and more of us and showing a smile we had all grown to love. His messed up yet hilarious sense of humour lit up my life, he made coming to school worth it because I knew that if he was in, I was going to have a good day. Between the throat punches, back slaps and being pushed into bushes, our friendship grew, I couldn't tell you the number of videogames we played together, completing most too. Our longest game session was 16 consecutive hours of Xbox, a feat we had both found rather impressive, and I don't think I could've done it with anyone else but him. The stories and memories we shared could fill a library, and I loved every second of it.

Harrison's friends have all come together to share their personal stories and experiences of Harrison, he was very conservative, few people knew him as any more than a face in the corridor. Everyone deserves a chance to know who Harrison was, and the impact he left in our hearts.

There will never be someone quite like Harrison. Never someone as bold. As kind. As generous and as loving. There will never be someone to fill the gap that he has left, there was nothing more I could have asked for in a best friend. We shared the most amazing moments and memories, ones that will live with me forever. He was the one in GTA with all the heists that we pulled together. It was his house where we would spend hours and hours playing video games, it was him that carried me through all the missions, and it was with him that I was at my happiest. These last 3 years were my best be-

-cause he was there by my side, weather that was trudging through the woods, punching each other as hard as possible whenever a yellow car happened to unfortunately swing by (or a mini cooper) whenever I needed him, whenever I wanted him, another adventure would begin. It never mattered where we went, what we did, and who we were with, each other's company was more than enough to bring us out. Through the sun of summer and the bitter storms of winter.

Harrison loved his friends, he loved playing drums, he would forfeit an argument just so you could stop your rambling, or he would debate every opinion. We spend hours debating and arguing questions nobody else would ever ask, often with truly little research so half of our points were based completely off guesses. Random stuff like "is nothing something?" "Is your tolerance to spice nature or nurture?" Whatever it was, it was fun.

Most of you never got to know Harrison, and I hope now you understand who he was and how much he meant to everyone close to him. Everyone deserves a Harrison, and even though we lost ours, he will always be a part of each of us. So many stories I cannot say but that will live with us for the rest of our lives.

Thank you all for listening. We love you Harrison, I wish you knew it sooner, but I hope you know now.

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*Written by Ollie O'H.  
Year 11, Barton House.*

**THE  
MAIDSTONIAN**  
2023 Edition

