

MGSNews



MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER | WINTER 2023

From the Headteacher

Welcome to the MGS Christmas Newsletter 2023. Behind this front page you will find a wonderful mix of news and success stories that have taken place since the start of the year that we wish to share with you. From

the very warm weather and the whole school photograph in September to last week's Christmas Jumper Charity Day, Maidstonians across the school have come together to create such an enjoyable and memorable start to the

School's 475th birthday year.

Across our two pillars of learning and belonging we have seen significant developments. We have seen nearly 300 new Maidstonians begin their MGS journey, we have opened our new Sixth Form Study Centre to support the needs of a growing school, and we have seen a jam-packed extra-curricular and enrichment programme with hundreds of Maidstonians contributing to the wider life of the school. In addition, within the classroom we have been focusing on good retrieval practice and adaptive teaching techniques as well as further developing the use of devices and ICT. But, the two significant developments that we have been working on this year have been on our own learning as well as the promotion and assessment of reading. Staff learning and the desire to improve our own skills is key in seeing an improvement in student learning. And, promoting the love of reading and how it supports learning is going to see a huge difference in many areas such as the ability to communicate well as well as promote a love of discovery and imagination. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to these and the numerous others areas of the school.

At the end of every term we sometimes need to say goodbye to those students, members of staff and friends of the school who are leaving the MGS community. Well this term we are saying goodbye to three and saying hello and welcome back to two. The two we are saying hello and welcome back to are Miss Sandhu and Miss Deo. This time last year we

said au revoir to them both as the left for the year to have their respective babies. These babies are now almost one years old, and the time has come for Miss Sandhu and Miss Deo to return to MGS. Welcome back to them.

The three members of staff we are saying farewell to are Mr Tuffin, Miss Whitehead and Mr Traube. Mr Tuffin and Miss Whitehead have both worked here for just under two and a half years, and in that time have supported the MFL and science departments respectively. Mr Tuffin is taking a break from teaching to pursue other interests, and Miss Whitehead is leaving to take up a post of teacher of chemistry at a school further into London. Mr Traube has worked here for three years, also in the science department, and leaves to begin a new post in a school locally. Please join me in thanking these members of staff for their service to MGS.

Finally, I wish to also acknowledge the entire staff body. The level of commitment from the staff during 2023 has once again been exceptional. I have always said that Maidstone Grammar School is a close-knit community, and within that community sits a close network of staff who care a great deal towards each other and to the school. Thank you to them all.

Have a wonderful Christmas, Happy New Year, and when we return in 2024, the real celebrations of the 475th anniversary will begin.

Mr M Tomkins
Headteacher



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All of our year groups are special, but our Year 7s who joined our community in September hold a unique distinction – they are the 475th cohort to join MGS.

This academic year marks the school's 475th anniversary since the Royal Charter was issued in 1549, founding the school.

You might notice that our branding on this publication, online and elsewhere has been updated to reflect this significant anniversary year, and many exciting events to celebrate the milestone will take place throughout the academic year.

We look forward to updating you on these events in the next two issues of this newsletter.

Learning to Learn

By Fenix C, Year 7, Barton House

During the last two terms Learning to Learn has been busy, as we have covered many topics. We started off with how to effectively use our school planners. This included recording full details of all tasks set, checking planners and Teams every night and noting down important information and reminders into the planners. In addition to this, we learnt how to set an after-school routine of packing our bags every night for the next day, and how to break up homework into chunks so we don't overwhelm ourselves with lots of homework.

Following on from this, we looked at setting SMART goals. SMART goals are taken from an acronym that is S-Specific, M-Measurable, A-Attainable, R-Relevant and T-Time/Bound. SMART goals are a goal that is clear about what needs to be completed to achieve it, a way to measure if you have completed your goal, a goal that can be completed within your power, a goal that states how it will help to meet your overall goals as a student and a set time when you need to complete it, keeping yourself accountable.

The last topic we have learnt about is the Cornell Note Taking method. This note taking method is where you split your page into two pieces making the right side larger than the left with a clear title, date and your name. When you use this method, you will write all the basic, small notes in the right-hand column and then summarise all the little points into one main key point on the left. We used this method to learn and take notes about the Learning Brain. Interestingly, our brains are made up of Neurons (over one hundred billion of them), which are joined up by neural pathways. Furthermore, whenever we learn something new our brains will eventually make a neural pathway and that is how we remember things. When we were

covering this topic, we discussed having either a Growth Mindset or a Fixed Mindset. A Growth Mindset is when we feel and believe that we can learn and build on our mistakes (being positive). A fixed mindset is the opposite of this, and is the negative belief that intelligence is fixed, the avoidance of acknowledging mistakes and ignoring feedback that can help you learn. An interesting point is that people often switch back and forth between both mindsets, so being aware of them can help prevent this. The learning brain theory was discovered by a psychologist called Donald Hebb and is a well-known theory which is often critically analysed by students in universities.



A Message from the School Captain & Vice Captain

By Rafe L, Year 13, Tonbridge House & Jess R, Year 13, College House

This academic year has been a busy one for the prefect team. We started off the year helping out at the 11+ exam morning for out of area students. This had a very early start of 7am on a Saturday, and (half asleep) we supervised the Year 6 students taking their exams, but it was very rewarding to see them come out the hall with big grins on their faces.

After this event, we had various year group information evenings, the Career Fair and open mornings, in which the team undertook welcoming and organising duties. The appointment of the junior prefects in mid-September was a huge help, as our team expanded just in time for the MacMillan Coffee Morning. The event raised a lot of money for and was very popular with students. So much so, that we ran out of cakes half way through! The Year 6 Open Evening was another huge event for the team, and all prefects helped the departments prepare while the rest of the school was on half-term break. We then organised the excitable Year 6 tour guides, welcomed guests and took tours round the school. This event was also so exciting to be part of – the atmosphere around school and the team was electric!

Half term brought even more events, with the largest being the Fireworks night on the 4th November. Despite the rainy conditions, our prefects showed up with smiles on their faces, ready to sell tickets, keep order and provide vital communication between the Parents' Association and the firework team. The most recent event that the team organised was for Children in Need on Friday 17th November. Year 12 junior

prefect Rhys stepped up to the role of organising an all-day One Bounce-A-Thon, and prefects Callum, Leo, George, Navadeepsai organised an all-day Badmintonathon. Jess organised a cake sale, which proved challenging considering all cakes had to be baked in the food tech rooms. However, with the team's help, this turned out to be a fun endeavour, and all 800 cakes were sold the next day during break time to hungry students! We can't wait to see what 2024 has in store for us, and can't thank the prefects enough for their continued help.



Barton House Update

By Neve B-D, Year 13, Barton House

This Winter Term has been one of many successes for Barton House. On the first day of term, we welcomed our new Year 7s and Year 12s into the house and hoped that they would enjoy their MGS and Barton journey as much as the older years do. Many Year 7s were nervous to join a school so much bigger, but through sharing forms with older Barton years and being helped and supported in form times, we hope they are having the best time and enjoyed their team-building day.

A few weeks into the term, we held applications for Junior Prefects and after much deliberation, we have a team of 11 who are ready to help run Barton House and are full of house spirit.

Barton has had an especially successful term due to running and promoting Anti-Bullying Week, full of assemblies and a Silly Socks Day to raise money for anti-bullying charities. Anti-Bullying assemblies were especially important as we shared such an integral message to the rest of the school about standing up to bullying when you see it, to create an even happier and safer environment within MGS, something which Barton students feel strongly about.

Barton has also been full of sporting achievements, as we have Daniel W from Ba2 being the first-team captain, representing Barton in Rugby, and leading the team to many victories.

In Football, we see so many Barton members contribute and lead their teams to victory across all the year groups, and so many Barton students

support their sporting peers, as we also saw in the Autumn Showcase where many Barton students came to see their peers who were performing.

Additionally, we saw the Barton Sixth Formers take part in a Netball tournament where we came in 3rd place, but not without putting up a fight.

Finally, our greatest achievement this term is our second-place position in terms of House Points, as we have 2480 points, only 110 points behind College. Well done to everyone for their hard work and continue to work hard so we can take first place next term.

An account from a Barton Year 12:

"This term has been an eventful one for me as well as for the rest of the Barton community. While others were adjusting to the new school year, I spent my time adjusting to learning to use crutches as I broke and dislocated my ankle playing for the school rugby team. As those who have been injured know, the mental toll of an injury is far worse than the physical toll, however, Barton House supported me every step of the way, especially my form, Ba4. They kept in contact with me while I was in the hospital, for which I am grateful for, and I have been able to keep up with the workload that Sixth Form brings. The Barton teachers helped a lot, with one of the teachers moving the entire class downstairs for my convenience."

- Kiran S L



College House Update

By Eloise S, Year 13, College House

During this first term, we have been up to all sorts of activities within College. We started the term on a very good note, after finishing the previous House Cup in first place and achieving the highest amount of awards on Speech Day. We kicked off the term by placing our efforts in revamping all of the slightly dated boards and organising a team of upper sixth helpers within a committee. The new Junior Prefects also helped by selling cakes on the Macmillan Coffee Morning, with the proceeds being donated to cancer research.

In October, a team of sixth-form students participated in the inter-house netball. While we may not have won, they put in all the effort they could. We also hosted the first of many Big Quizzes, an event where all College forms met in the Big Hall to participate in the weekly quiz against each other. The result was a tie, with CG10, CG12, and CG14 all scoring 17. In November, we held the first College House Council meeting of the academic year. Working alongside students of all years, the senior prefects were able to draft all of the important changes the students wanted, although we had to turn down the request for a swimming pool!

College students the opportunity to design a new logo for our house, with many submitting their designs. The chosen design belonged to James S, Year 12. Working closely with James, we created a new logo that incorporates our motto of Diversity, Belonging, and Respect. The logo itself is a replica of the tree in the quad, under which our house is

situated for assemblies. We are really proud of the logo and hope that it can become a legacy.

Another important aspect is the selection of those who will help develop College in the future. At the beginning of the year, we chose our new Junior Prefect team, who work with the Senior Prefects to assist with the running of College events. The new Junior Prefects are Benjamin B, Beth McG, Evie S, Liam K, Thomas Y, Isla T, Tom E, and Molly R. They're here to help, so look out for them around the school!

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In the upcoming terms, we have many exciting things planned for College, including a whole College photo, a board-game exchange system, and a variety of new inter-house competitions for all year groups.



Corpus Christi House Update

By Thomas H, Year 13, Corpus Christi House

Starting off a new school year is always difficult, but Corpus Christi House has taken it in stride. At the start of Term 1 we appointed our new Junior Prefects from a very tough selection of Year 12 candidates. They have been an integral part of the team so far, including their role in the Year 7 Open Evening and the school's annual Fireworks night. We are highly appreciative of their help so far, and we look forward to receiving their House Captain applications in the New Year.

In October, Corpus took part in the Inter-house netball tournament. Continuing from our Sports Day success in the summer, and with the help of students across both Year 12 and Year 13, Corpus came out Victorious! A big congratulations to the efforts of everyone who was involved.

In November, Corpus House participated in the 'Badmintonathon', where we played Badminton for eight hours for Children in Need. This Charity Day along with its bake sale raised a lot of money, aligning with Corpus Christi's goal to be more involved in raising money for charity throughout the academic year.

In December, we hosted the form Xmas decoration competition, led by our Junior Prefects. Preparations are looking promising so far, and we look forward to seeing lots of creativity! Mr Norton, Callum and Tom from the Senior Prefect team also lent their voices out to Christmas Song Humming Challenge, which we will be releasing in the final week of term. We look forward to seeing the result of both competitions soon.

As for 2024, Corpus Christi is focused on supporting our students and training our Prefect Team to be able to understand and assist with any concerns. From the New Year, we begin Safeguarding Training for our Prefects who are spread across our vertical forms throughout the House – our aim being to act as approachable figureheads in support of our student base.

Following on from this, Corpus Christi is delighted to help get involved with and support MGS's 475th anniversary celebrations – which we encourage everyone to look forward too as it is an exceptional and unique achievement for the school. Our Prefect Team have been working hard, cooperating with our Head of House, Mr Norton, and Deputy Head of House, Mrs Coveney, in providing opportunities for Corpus Christi House. We hope to keep being innovative, creative and high-spirited, and we look forward to bringing more ideas and events to the school for 2024.



Tonbridge House Update

By Amritha S, Year 13, Tonbridge House

This academic year, Tonbridge has enjoyed a wealth of events and activities, strengthening both intra-house and inter-house community. We started the year on a positive note, coming second in Inter House Netball, which saw sixth formers across all houses engaging in friendly competition even if they had never played netball before. It was also inspiring to see the new Junior Prefects already very committed and eager to offer support at school events, such as our annual MGS Fireworks and Open Evening.

With the formation of the House Council, it has given Tonbridge students from all year groups the platform to communicate their ideas and important issues with the rest of their house, aiming to develop student experiences. Our house unity was prevalent during the "Write for Rights" campaign, with all forms taking part in writing letters expressing their support for individuals who are a part of Amnesty International.

Tonbridge's Vice Captain Leo G helped set up an 8-hour badminton event, raising significant sums for Children in Need. Additionally, Tonbridge's House Captain Joe H, as well as Tonbridge's Vice Captains Amelia L and Amritha S have secured Oxbridge interviews for their chosen courses.

The house spirit has been building up, with many students eager to earn more house points and trying to get involved in the MGS community. We look forward to the New Year and the more opportunities and events that are to come.



Army Section Activities (so far)

By RSM Luke T, Year 13, Barton House

During terms 1 and 2, the army section has engaged in various activities, spanning the basics such as how to wear kit with the new intake of year 9 cadets, to more complex subjects like model building in the field on an overnight exercise that took place in October with year 10 and above. The time the new recruits have in the CCF will provide them with numerous opportunities to challenge themselves not offered to those uninvolved, to become the best they can be, and enjoy a full and rich experience. Not to mention the personality traits that will be instilled in them in the form of CDRILS (the expectation of all cadets), which stands for courage, discipline, respect for others, integrity, loyalty and selfless commitment, as well as the ability to thrive as a group. The year 9 recruits are heading to Mereworth woods on the 9th and 10th of December, to conclude their basic training with the fieldcraft aspect – this will involve basha building, cooking in the field, camouflage and concealment, stalking the enemy and more, as their first field experience as a cadet.

The majority of weekly CCF sessions involve a mix of lessons, and practical training for all cadets in some capacity. These lessons are taught by NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) who have received their CFIT (Cadet Forces Instructional Training) certificate, permitting them to plan, write up and deliver lessons to their students. Most of these graduates are between the years 12 to 13 as of now; they have a multitude of experiences to base their knowledge on, to pass it down to the recruits in the most effective manner possible. Cadets

from year 11 are currently undergoing the CFIT process with Sgt. O'Grady from the cadet training team, involving lesson planning and teach-backs (both theory and practical) to become qualified.

In the last week of September, the army section sent a fireteam of four to the CADSAAM (cadet skill-at-arms meeting) competition at Pirbright. During the competition, the team was faced with a fire control assessment, an advance to contact match, and an attack and reorg match – a varied and challenging task, that tests technical ability, physical stamina and decision making – against other CCF and ACF sections. They received silver medals in two shoots, and bronze in one, resulting in third place overall, breaking the previous MGS record. On top of this, one of our Corporals achieved the bronze medal for overall score in the over 16s category. This was the third time firing live rounds for some of the cadets that took part, so it goes without saying that they were very successful.

We are beginning to plan for competitions on the way in the New Year, physical training, further extracurricular training and advanced learning sessions will be present soon, to get the cadets to an even higher standard, to give them the best chance at succeeding.



Navy Section Update

By Chief Keira B, Year 13, Tonbridge House

Since the start of the year the navy section has submersed itself into a vast array of activities for all the years to enjoy. After introducing our new year 9s we dove deep into teaching them the basics of the Royal Navy such as core values and key lessons such as first aid and navigation that will be important in their everyday lives. We also have introduced new integral parts to the functioning of our section through our new Area officer Colour Sergeant Shakespeare and welcoming Commander Hughes, a family member of one of our cadets.

A key part of what we do is drill. The disciplines behind drill both for the section and for the individual is fundamental for a successful cadet. As well as teaching the year 9s drill, we made sure the rest of the cadets' drill was ship-shape and ready for the November remembrance parade where we showcased our skills throughout Maidstone high street. This was a new experience for the year 10s as this was their first time doing such extensive activities, however they sailed through it. As well as making sure drill was tip top, uniform was important immaculate, especially with the new PCS (Personal Clothing System) which some of the senior cadets are seen to be wearing which is more similar to what true Royal Navy personnel would wear on their day-to-day.

After Christmas, we plan to continue to learn the theory side of Powerboating Level 2, in the hopes the practical side can be done when the weather gets warmer. An annual trip of going to Britannia Royal Naval College (BNRC) is also in order, in which cadets will see what goes on

in the life of a Royal Navy Recruit and the many activities that go along with that. There is also the Clyde Fleet Tender trip during the extended learning week where the many skills learnt throughout their time as cadets is tested through a relaxing but tasking week on HMS Clyde.

This year so far has brought experiences come true, especially with the navy being the most inclusive section, being the only section to have female cadets in leadership roles, with one overseeing the goings-on as the Head of Section. This has led to a fun, alternative way of experiencing the true waves of being a member of the Navy Section: and what an experience it has truly been.



Activities of the Royal Air Force Section

By Cadet Sergeant David R, Year 13, Corpus Christi House

In Terms 1 and 2, the school's RAF Section got involved in a diverse range of activities, engaging in activities from pilot training to leadership development. The year started with welcoming this year's cohort of 20 year 9 recruits. The experiences they will be offered over the next couple of years include many that go beyond traditional classroom learning, and they will hopefully develop valuable life skills, foster an interest in the fascinating world of aviation, and create a sense of responsibility and discipline. But it's not just the recruits that benefit here: for much of their basic training, cadet NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) lead the delivery of essential air cadet knowledge like airmanship, navigational skills, first aid and weapons handling, as well as proficiency in marching drill. This way, older cadets that have learnt and shown sufficient leadership skills are able to apply these by instructing the recruits, planning their own lessons, and thinking up new activities to keep them engaged.

For years 10 and above, the past 3 months have included leadership development training, including learning how to teach. This training was delivered by senior cadets that have participated in various leadership courses, and by the end students showed themselves capable of delivering short lessons themselves in engaging and well-structured presentations. All cadets were able to pilot some of the different quadcopter drones that the section owns, and taught principles of flight with the aid of a realistic flight simulator setup. The RAF section also took part in representing the school at the Maidstone Remembrance Parade this November. Early in September several cadets were given a pilots-eye view of the world of charter aircraft at the Air Charter Expo at Biggin Hill. Highlight of the term for those able to attend was a day of air experience flying in gliders from the fleet at VGS Kenley in south London.

For many of the sections more experienced cadets, the main focus of the past month has been to train as a team for the prestigious Royal Air Squadron Trophy, a competition held at a regional and national level. The competition team (or 'GT' team), made up of 13 members selected from across the ranks and age groups, performs in disciplines including ceremonial drill, marksmanship, and Command Tasks. These are simulated military-based scenarios in which the team is assessed in its ability to perform well under high-pressure conditions, while optimising all available resources, requiring exceptional leadership and outstandingly good team dynamics to be successful.

The GT team recently placed 3rd at the regional competition, meaning we will now move on to compete against the 15 best schools in the country at the national competition.

I look forward to the opportunities to come in the new year, particularly the possibility of getting cadets airborne in training aircraft and continuing our recent success at the Royal Air Squadron Trophy.



HMUNC Preparations

By Isaac M, Year 12, Corpus Christi House

Preparations are well underway for the annual Harvard Model United Nations Conference held in Boston, Massachusetts, which is now less than two months away, with excitement for the trip building. Our delegation of 24 MGS students has been receiving itineraries and making early plans for our free time- particularly in New York, before we head on to Harvard University, where will be simulating the United Nations with thousands of other delegates from around the world.

The preparations have been academically taxing, exciting as they may be. Around a month ago we received the committees we would be representing for our two countries, Senegal and Kyrgyzstan. Once we had selected our committees, we have spent this past month extensively researching our countries and the topics we will be representing them in during the conference. I will be representing Senegal in the Human Rights Committee and whilst this is interesting, it is something which I did not know much about previously, as you can imagine. So, I have spent the last month researching Senegal, and specifically its position on Human Rights and how that relates to food insecurity, which is the topic of my committee.

The other delegates have similarly been working on their own committees and this has been really impressive to see. All this research will be used in our position papers, which is a one-page document for each person to explain what their country believes on the specific topic they will be discussing next month at conference, mentioning the history

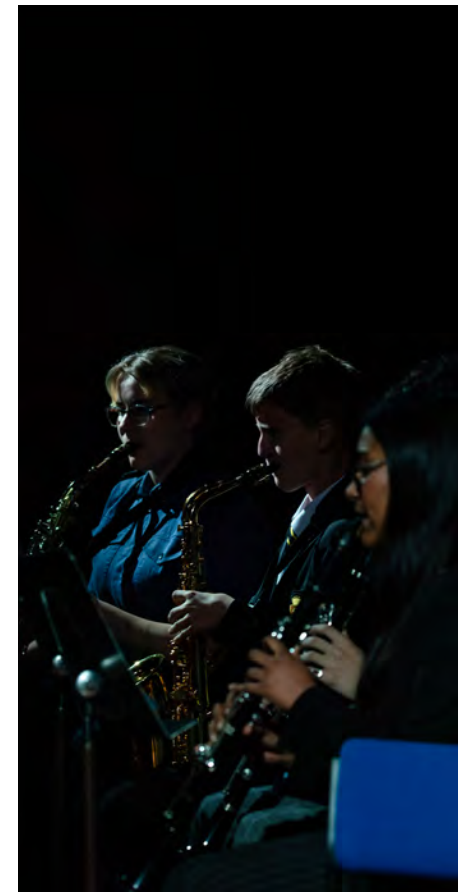
and ambitions of the country they represent.

We are aiming to have the first drafts of these before the Christmas break and while this will be difficult, I'm sure that with all the hard work shown both in session and in our own time we can create some really good position papers to take to conference, to ensure that we can have as strong a conference as possible. This is only possible thanks to Jack in Year 13, who was the previous head delegate and has been brilliant in assisting our preparation with his experience and willingness to help. We are incredibly thankful to Jack for giving up his time every week and preparing us so much better than we would be otherwise. Thanks also to everyone else in the delegation who have all been kind and positive throughout especially with challenging circumstances. I have only good things to say about the whole delegation. I am looking forward to a great conference.



Autumn Showcase

Our Performing Arts Department's Annual Autumn Showcase took place at the end of Term 1. The event featured songs from 'Dear Evan Hansen' and 'The Avengers', an extract from 'Fantastic Mr Fox', and more. Thank you to all those that attended the excellent event and thank you also to our wonderful students for their performances and Performing Arts staff for their hard work and dedication to making the event a success.



NHS Visit

By Desire A, Year 9, Corpus Christi

Hello, everyone. My name is Desire Anosike. On the 3rd of November, I visited Maidstone Hospital to learn about the various facets and roles that contribute to the NHS as it stands today. We explored areas such as cybersecurity, team management, and operations. It was an amazing and eye-opening experience, especially beneficial for someone like me who is deeply interested in the sciences but also aspires to pursue a career in law. I was accompanied by my classmates and other Year 9 students.

This experience taught me that the NHS hires not only doctors and nurses or those with a medical background but also fills various positions essential for maintaining a nationwide organisation like itself. While there was an emphasis on the less expected roles within the NHS, we also gained an in-depth overview of more commonly recognised departments, including radiology, accident and emergency services, and anaesthetics.

Our group of approximately fifteen was split into smaller teams, along with students from other secondary schools. We wandered around the hospital, engaging in hands-on activities relevant to each department. A particularly memorable moment was when we used the DR ABC acronym to assess the symptoms of a high-tech mannequin, which was a fun and educational experience.

Overall, this was a rewarding and memorable experience. I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to participate and to have been a part of it.



Expedition Memories

By Edward B, OM 2023, Corpus Christi

In July, a group of MGS boys embarked on a trip to the New Forest in Hampshire for our Silver Duke of Edinburgh expedition. We arrived at the New Forest late on Friday night, in preparation for an early start on Saturday. After some final route planning in the morning, we began our first of three walks. Each walk had to be 16km, and every group was required to be out walking for a minimum of seven hours a day. Despite these demanding requirements, every group not only completed the three days of walking but also enjoyed it – even if we were thoroughly soaked by Monday afternoon. The New Forest boasts a diverse landscape, ranging from deep ancient forests to thick marshes and windswept plains. At times, this made the expedition more challenging, but more often than not, we found it captivating.

The expedition provided more than just an enjoyable weekend of camping and walking. Above all, it was a resounding testament to the teamwork within the MGS community. Many groups consisted of a mix of friendship circles, and in my group's case, even year groups were combined. Nevertheless, each group displayed genuine camaraderie during the expedition, elevating the enjoyment of the weekend.

For anyone considering undertaking DofE, I can honestly say that you will forge some of your most cherished school memories on a DofE weekend with MGS. Despite the less than stellar food and occasional lack of sleep, participating in DofE is unequivocally worth it!

CADSAAM Competition

By Julius W, Year 13, Barton House

Over the weekend in Term 1, I lead our Army Shooting Team on an exhilarating shooting competition hosted at a military base, offering a diverse array of shooting ranges. The weapon of choice was the LA98 A2 rifle which shot 5.56mm rounds, with each member of the team spending well over 100 rounds throughout the competition. The competition was tough, as we faced off against 17 other Combined Cadet Force (CCF) and Army Cadet Force (ACF) teams.

For most of the competition, all weapons started loaded, however there were a few points where we had to quickly get into position, load and take aim within the time limit of the challenge. The targets comprised of figure 11 and figure 12 targets which rarely stayed up after being hit, adding the extra challenge of having to remember where the target was and stay in position.

The first challenge, "Fire Control Assessment," unfolded in five intense parts. Part one required precision, shooting a figure 11 target at 300m (about the height of the Empire State Building) while prone within a 6-second window with 5 rounds. Part two involved a trench scenario, shooting the same target at 200m with another 5 rounds. Part three demanded a dynamic approach, requiring a 5m run to the 200m firing point, going prone, and taking a shot with time constraints, followed by 4 more shots. Part four tested our skill in kneeling position at 100m, and part five involved prone shooting at a target 100m away within 12 seconds using up the rest of our 10 rounds.

The second challenge, "Advance To Contact," proved to be the most demanding. It was broken into three parts, each testing various aspects of marksmanship and physical endurance. Running 100m, adopting various positions, shooting at 4 second targets from 300m away, while out of breath and having to adjust to the recoil of the rifle while kneeling tested our abilities and was by far the one I personally found most challenging.

The final challenge, "Attack Reorg," introduced variability with targets popping up and down at different distances. Part one required a strategic approach to utilise a magazine of 20 rounds efficiently. Part two demanded precision in shooting at targets with irregular intervals, while part three involved alternating shooting targets at varying distances (200m – 300m) while sitting.

Despite the challenges, we proved to be brilliant sharpshooters. The experience was not only physically demanding but also mentally stimulating, pushing us to adapt to changing scenarios rapidly. The rewarding aspect of the competition was not just the thrill of the challenges but the satisfaction of surpassing the achievements of MGS teams from the past 16 years. The impressive teammates I had with me was a highlight of the whole weekend. We left the base and headed home with a silver medal for advance to contact, silver for fire control assessment and a bronze for being the third best team in the competition. I also left with an additional bronze medal for best over 16 cadet overall. The amount of hard work and dedication they put into the competition was reflected in the medals we left the competition with.



MGS Sport

By Mr T Highway

Welcome back all to another year of sport! It is my pleasure to give you the round-up of all things sport here at MGS for the academic year of 2023/24, which has begun as busy as ever. In addition to the focus of rugby in these first two terms, our students have also competed in football, basketball, table tennis, and cross-country, across all year groups. I would like to congratulate all students on their impressive start to the sporting calendar, and I extend my thanks to all staff and parents who have made this possible. I hope you enjoy.

Rugby

Seniors

While many of us were still enjoying our summer holidays, the senior rugby players were in for pre-season training under Mr Saunders as they looked to start another successful rugby campaign. Their extra minutes on the training ground have been put to very good effect, with both the 1stXV and 2ndXV holding winning records going into the Christmas break. Alongside this, the reintroduction of a 3rdXV has made it possible for all players to gain valuable experience, including the strong intake of Year 11s who have been keen to make their mark. Highlights of this term feature a run into the 3rd round of the National Bowl after dominant victories against St Lawrence and Ashford, and a very successful block against St Olaves which saw us score a combined ninety-seven points and conceding none. Tremendous effort from all the boys, and a special mention for Ahmed A of Year 12 who has made the Team of the Week the most out of any player across the school.

Year 10

Plenty of rugby has been played across Year 10 so far this year, in

part thanks to the brilliant cup runs they have had. Some extremely well-fought performances landed them in the Kent Cup semi-final against Sir Joseph Williamson's. The team put everything they had into their performance, refusing to lie down against what was a very physical opposing side. Despite being narrowly bested, the boys should be incredibly proud of their efforts that day, and across the rest of their games, which also saw them reach round 4 of the National Cup. Meanwhile, the B team have had their share of success including a well-deserved 22-0 win vs Dartford. With many students eager to be involved in the two teams, coach Mr Seymour has had a welcome selection headache these first two terms.

Year 9

Our Year 9 teams have faced some incredibly strong sides this year, but have performed admirably nonetheless. The B team in particular have had a number of games where the sides have been separated by just a handful of points. Their 32-27 win at home to St Olaves was one of the finest performances they have put in, while in the A team fixture against the same opposition, our boys defended resolutely to not concede a single try. Great spirit shown by these Year 9 students under their coach Mr Owen – a deserved Christmas break ahead.

Year 8

What a phenomenal few months of rugby it has been for our Year 8 teams. At the time of writing this, both the A and B teams have remained unbeaten for the entire first two terms, with just one game each left to play. It is clear to see why this is the case – the boys have been playing with fantastic style and effort, the latter demonstrated by

near darkness every Thursday with Mr Hughes. Quality is in abundance in this year group which has led to C and D teams also being put out, with all four teams in action in some highly competitive fixtures against the likes of Dartford and Judd. Just Ravenswood stand in their way to an unbeaten record, so well done to all boys involved, and best of luck for that last fixture.

Year 7

For all but a handful of students, these first two terms have given our new Year 7 cohort their first ever taste of playing rugby. The boys have taken to this new challenge with great enthusiasm, with over 100 of them attending training and representing the school in fixtures. Under the coaching of Mr Hewson, our new rugby players have shown rapid progress, evidenced by some fantastic performances such as a 20 try haul against Cranbrook, and all six teams going unbeaten against Dartford. Well done to all of you, and a special mention to Simon H and Lochlann A who collectively have made our Team of the Week across the whole school eight times.



Football

Seniors

I will try to do the senior footballers justice in what has been an incredible start to the year for them under the coaching of Mr Hughes and Mr Smith. Starting with the Year 11s who have done very well to secure places in the senior teams while also still representing the Year 11 team. We didn't have to wait too long for the piece of silverware this season as the 2ndXI clinched their East Kent 2nd Division title with games to spare, and are hunting the double as they are still in the Kent Cup. The 1stXI's Kent Cup fate is still to be determined as is the case in their competitive league, but all the talk has been on their outstanding National Cup run.

After passing through the first few rounds very swiftly, they came up against a very tough Buckswood team on a memorable Friday evening. Fiercely contested from the first minute, it was an end-to-end game with the opposition edging themselves in front. But spurred on by a packed crowd, the boys dug deep and after finding an equalizer, super sub Ollie S scored two beautifully taken goals to win the game 5-3, sparking wild celebrations.

Somehow, this performance would be topped in the next round. Again playing at home, our boys found themselves 2-0 down at half-time against Wilson's School despite looking like the better outfit. When the boys had a goal disallowed for offside midway through the second half, and no VAR available to prove otherwise, it looked like it might not be their night. However, with the time ticking, Alan B expertly slotted home a free-kick to pull one back, and they went looking for an equalizer. Throwing bodies forward

with ten minutes to go, the ball ended up falling to Jack S on the edge of the box who rifled a first-time shot into the bottom corner to draw the game level in spectacular fashion. Not content to go to extra-time we continued to pile on the pressure, and almost as if a script was unfolding before us, Alfie C curled a wonderful strike into the far corner to complete an unbelievable comeback. This group of young men have twice defied the odds with incredible self-belief and resilience, putting themselves into the Round of 16 of the National Cup to be played next term – we are all looking forward to it.

Year 10

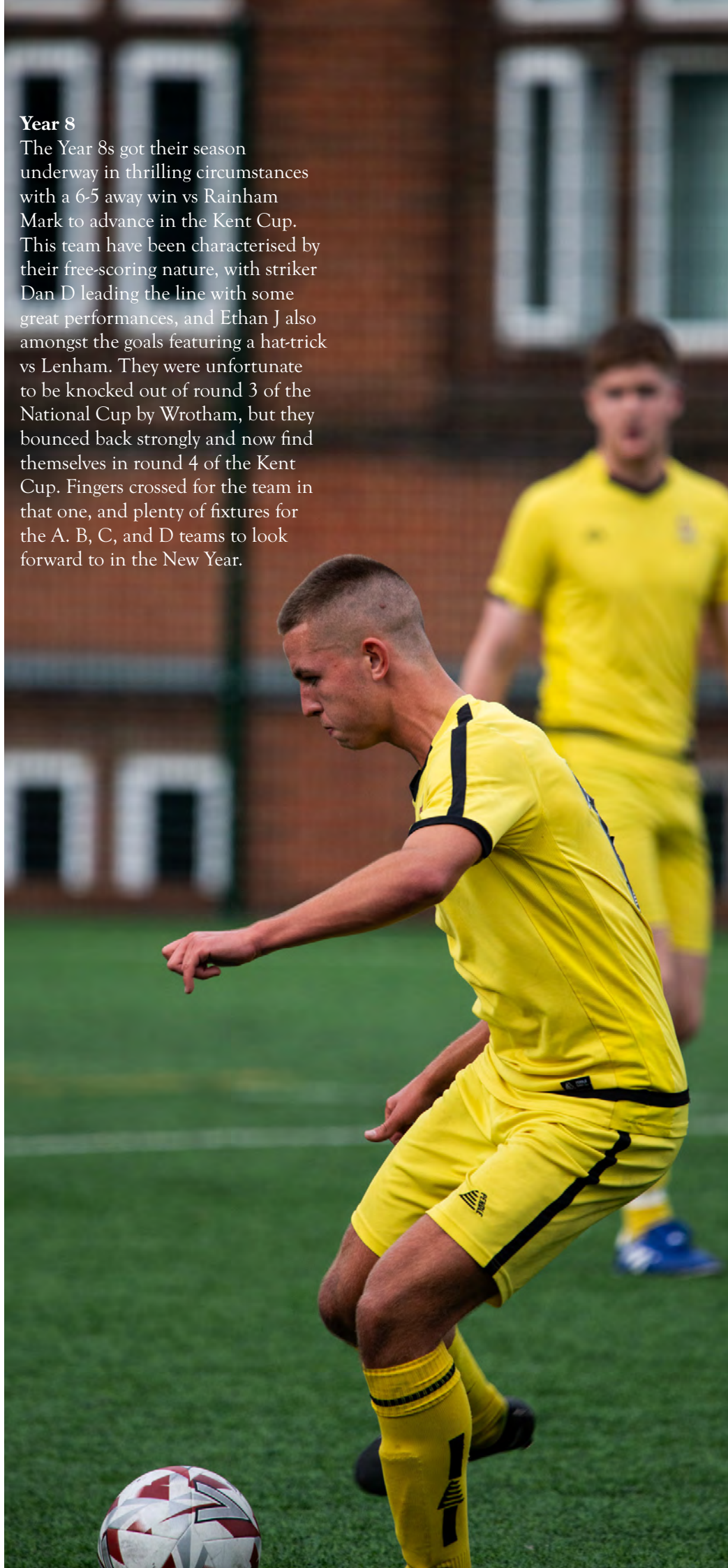
The Year 10 A team got their season off to a great start with a 6-1 victory over Bennett School in the National Cup. Unfortunately a tough draw against Hurstmere in the next round saw them get knocked out, but undeterred by this they marched into the 3rd round of the Kent Cup after beating Rainham Mark 2-0 away from home. Two clean sheets in their last two games and some top performances from the likes of Indy P round out their year so far. The majority of the A and B team games will be played in the new year so they will be looking to carry forward this good form.

Year 9

Both the A and B team have been in action for the Year 9s so far this year. Eleven matches have been played between them with all eleven matches won, returning seventy-five goals for and only fourteen against. This outstanding effort sees the B team already in their Kent Cup final following a 9-0 semi-final win over Harvey Grammar. Meanwhile, the A team, through to the 5th round of the Kent Cup, are also in the Round of 32 of the National Cup. Exceptional performances all-round from the boys, including that of midfield maestro Sachin B and centre-back George N.

Year 8

The Year 8s got their season underway in thrilling circumstances with a 6-5 away win vs Rainham Mark to advance in the Kent Cup. This team have been characterised by their free-scoring nature, with striker Dan D leading the line with some great performances, and Ethan J also amongst the goals featuring a hat-trick vs Lenham. They were unfortunate to be knocked out of round 3 of the National Cup by Wrotham, but they bounced back strongly and now find themselves in round 4 of the Kent Cup. Fingers crossed for the team in that one, and plenty of fixtures for the A, B, C, and D teams to look forward to in the New Year.



Elsewhere...

Basketball

Well done to those in the MGS basketball teams, who have made a successful start to their Kent League fixtures. Some very close encounters across the year groups, with the U16 team holding a 100% winning record so far.

Table Tennis

Our table tennis players recently visited Howard School to participate in the Kent Table Tennis Tournament. Both Junior and Intermediate teams competed well in an event that featured nationally ranked players, with the Intermediate team securing a 3rd place finish despite the challenging opposition.

Cross-Country

All year groups competed in the first round of the cross-country championships. The students braved some very tough conditions so well done to all who were involved.

Other Mentions

Congratulations go to Gabby B who has been training with the England U18 rugby squad, and to Rafe Lamb for his representation in the Kent rugby squad.

Thank you all for reading, have a well-deserved rest and see you next term. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Mr T.Highway
Memories ~ Growth ~ Support



Debating Forum

By Amelia L, Year 13, Tonbridge House

One of the student-led societies at MGS is the Debating Forum, a group of students from Year 11 to Year 13 who take part in weekly debates and competitions. Any Sixth Form student can establish their own society, however there is a handful that are passed down each year and therefore are well-established within the school, the Forum being one of them.

This year the Forum is being run by myself, Amelia L, and Joseph H, both Sixth Form students keen to continue the success of the Debating Forum ready to be passed down next year. Our society runs every Tuesday after school, with thought-provoking motions and topics accessible to all ranges of skill.

Our aim is to teach students how to debate and form an argument, not what to think about certain topics, and therefore we often find ourselves having to challenge what we believe, and in that develop a stronger and more considered argument. Students are given both a motion (what they will be debating) and the side of the argument that they must support, before having 15 minutes to prepare. In this time, technology cannot be used, so all the debates are formed of students' original ideas.

A traditional Parliamentary debate comprises 4 teams made up of 2 students each. The aim of a debate is not only to help your side of the argument to win, but also your pair exclusively, and therefore must prove yourself to be stronger than another team arguing for the same thing. Each person is given 5 minutes to speak, which is daunting at first, but soon becomes a comfortable amount of time to speak for.

One of the reasons we encourage debating is that not only does it challenge your preconceptions and your mind, but also teaches public speaking through a large amount of practice. This year we have welcomed new year 11 and 12 students to the Forum who are currently learning formal parliamentary debating, and we are always happy to welcome new students of all skill-levels to join. The point of our society is that you learn to debate, and so for students who have never done this before, like myself, but are interesting in expanding their skill set and strengthening critical thinking skills, we would love to see you on a Tuesday afterschool.

Every year the Society enters a team to compete against other schools. MGS is proud to be one of the only state schools to attend these competitions. This academic year we are set to host the Cambridge Schools regional competition and look forward to competing against other young debaters who share our passion.

If any students from Years 11-13 are interested in learning how to debate, we would love to welcome you!

Karting Success

Congratulations to William S (Year 10 College House) who retained his Junior Champion title in the Southern Series with Total Karting Zero after a hard won battle in September. Good luck to William in the three National Championship races coming up where he hopes to retain his National Champion title.



Fireworks Spectacular

Thank you to all those who attended our Parents' Association Fireworks Spectacular in November. Thank you also to the vendors, staff, student helpers, and in particular, our wonderful parent body for making the event a great success.



Youth Voice Wrapped

By Hadyn C MVP, Year 11, Barton House

This year has been an amazing one for the youth voice scene, and I'm here to act as your guide through it. In this article, we'll detail what our local youth voice forums have been up to throughout 2023.

Kent Youth County Council (KYCC):

Kicking off the year with newly formed campaign groups and projects, KYCC spearheaded a diverse range of initiatives. Key campaigns included Mental Health & Wellbeing, Free School Meals & Tackling Poverty, Climate Change & Environmental Action, and Feeling Safe in Kent.

The Mental Health and Wellbeing campaign took on a unique form—a podcast featuring six episodes, each addressing pivotal questions posed to service groups across Kent. Details regarding the release of this podcast are expected to be disseminated by the Council shortly.

The Climate Change and Environmental Action group took on the responsibility of holding local businesses and schools accountable for their environmental impact. Collaborating with Countrystyle waste, conducting surveys of schools, and organising the Big Kent Youth Voice Litter Pick in August were among their noteworthy initiatives.

In response to the expanding membership of Feeling Safe in Kent, the group decided to split into three subgroups: Personal Safety, School Safety, and Public Safety. Initiatives included self-defence lessons in Maidstone and elsewhere, addressing the issue of vaping in schools through presentations and resources, and reviving the "Ask for Angela" scheme, set to launch initially in Canterbury and subsequently expand throughout Kent.

UK Youth Parliament (UKYP):

The representatives of UK Youth Parliament in Kent played a pivotal role in advocating for extended/universal free school meals. The year commenced with participation in YouthCon in London—a training event fostering networking among MYPs in the Southeast, coupled with training sessions on effective representation. In March, details of the "Food for Learning" campaign in collaboration with the Child Poverty Action Group were unveiled.

Significant behind-the-scenes efforts ensued, including separate discussions on vaping with the Principal Trading Standards Officer for Kent, hosted by KYCC, and participation in a government call for evidence on the same matter. However, we swiftly refocused on Free School Meals at the UKYP annual conference, a weekend residential event involving political and policy discussions and interactions with ministers, as well as MYPs from across the nation.

Following extensive lobbying efforts through "Spill the Tea" meetings with local decision-makers, November marked a pivotal event in the UKYP calendar—the House of Commons sitting. The MYPs engaged in debates on Free School Meals, resulting in a commitment to advocate for appropriate financing and funding for an extension of free school meals until February. The corresponding bill is slated to undergo further discussion in the Commons.

And that's 2023 in the world of youth voice. Keep in mind that this is a limited coverage, so make sure you stay informed by following KYCC and UKYP on social media. Otherwise, merry Christmas and have a happy New Year.



Aquae Sulis

By Harry B, Year 9, Tonbridge House

Recently, there has been a trip for Latin, business, and classics students to the city of Bath, or as the Romans called it 'Aquae Sulis.' We, as Latin students, visited the city to see the ancient Roman Baths. The complex, or 'thermae,' was attached to a temple, dedicated to the goddess Sulis Minerva. This is not a Roman goddess, nor a Celtic goddess. The Romans decided that one of their goddesses, Minerva, strongly resembled a Celtic god, Sulis; and so, they decided to merge them, hence 'Sulis Minerva.' Very imaginative. She was the most important goddess to the citizens of Aquae Sulis, because of the natural hot spring. The only one in the UK, it was said to be 'fons sacer', the sacred fountain. This is because the water came out at a very lovely temperature, exactly 49 degrees Celsius, and poured out a million litres of water a day. This water is rich in minerals, specifically Iron, and was said to have healing powers if drank.

Not only this, but the spring is the entire reason for the creation of the baths: it supplied perfectly heated water for the Romans to bathe in, with no maintenance of heating rooms below needed. As such, what with the Romans believing the water to be sacred, and have healing powers, and to be a place where you could communicate with Sulis Minerva (this was done by throwing an inscription into the hot spring, hence why there is a temple attached), the Romans seized the opportunity to create the most extravagant baths in the Empire. They made huge, vaulted ceilings up to 30m high, a staggering measurement for any Roman living at the time. It was active as a

functioning bath for hundreds of years and saw very many Roman emperors come and go. It was the staple of the city, and the spring was continued to be sacred until the fall of the pagan gods.

Students got to explore the depths of the baths, walking in the footsteps of people who had lived 2 millennia before them. They also were allowed to drink this so-called 'sacred water,' which tasted very strongly of iron and was very warm, but I actually quite enjoyed it. Students could also choose to have an audio guide take them around, giving them a deeper understanding of the lives of the Romans. Students toured through a museum, seeing ancient Roman artifacts and evidence of real emotional feeling on the notes to Sulis Minerva.

Overall, it was an incredible trip where all students gained an extremely deep insight into ancient Roman life.



Roman Baths Excursion

By Jeremiah A, Year 11, Tonbridge House

The Business trip to the Roman Baths was an amazing, exciting and informative experience where I and several others thoroughly enjoyed learning about the history of the place and in business terms, its unique selling point and how it uses segmentation.

The approximately 3-hour journey from Maidstone to Rome Bath began at 7am and everyone on the bus was tired but excited about what was to come. After what seemed like forever we finally arrived, and it was beautiful, the first thing that stood out to everyone was the Roman Bath, the steam coming out from it also gave it a more alluring aesthetic but the algae was off-putting, we were then informed algae grows there almost immediately because it loves sunlight and reacts with it.

After an introduction we were allowed to split up and venture around the facility whilst doing activities like observation of the ages of people or what people are doing whilst looking at certain aspects of the place like the Spa. I and my friends first stop were to try the spa water, I was hesitant at first but after a lot of pressuring I finally gave in, it was disgusting and it had a strong metallic taste, and we were told this is because of the numerous amounts of minerals in the water, for example iron.

We enjoyed observing the live actors who acted as typical people from the 2nd century. We learnt about how swimming in the Roman Baths is dangerous and was dangerous, due to the lead poisoning from the bottom of the bath. After a quiz on the age categories in different pictures of people visiting the Romans Bath we left, on the way back we had a fun karaoke night.



Bletchley Park

By George G, Year 7, College House

Back on 19th September, Year 7 students all visited Bletchley Park over three days. We discovered that the Bombe, an electromechanical device developed by a team led by Alan Turing in 1939, was crucial in detecting settings for the ENIGMA machine. This breakthrough enabled Allied forces to decipher Nazi encryptions during World War II. Interestingly, the Bombe was not a computer and did not perform numerical calculations. We learned that it changed settings every 24 hours and could handle up to 159 quintillion combinations daily.

Our visit also highlighted the strategic placement of Bletchley Park in the countryside to avoid blitz and bomb attacks. Additionally, we explored the importance of secure passwords in the digital age. We realised that using the same password for multiple accounts poses a significant risk, as it gives hackers access to personal information, including online banking and identity details. Therefore, it's vital to have a memorable yet complex password. We tested this by using an online password checker, and I was surprised to find that my password could be cracked in 20 minutes. After returning home, I changed it to a more secure one, which would take over 5 million years to crack.

The trip was an enjoyable and educational experience for all of us in Year 7, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have visited such a historically significant site in codebreaking history, dating back over 80 years.



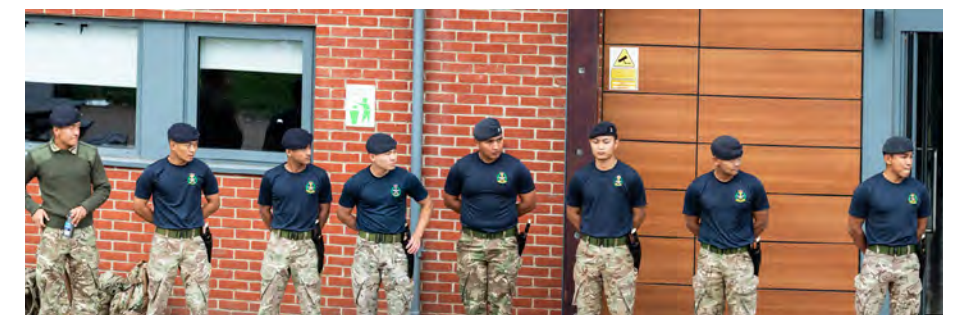
CCF Remembrance Day

Our CCF cadets taking part in the recent Remembrance Sunday Parade in Maidstone



Gurkha Kukri CQC Demonstration

MGS is proud of our strong Nepalese links amongst staff and students. Earlier this term, we were delighted to welcome representatives of the 69 Gurkha Field Squadron, demonstrating their traditional "Khukuri" Close Quarter Combat skills.



Anti-Bullying Week

There was an array of wonderful socks and ties on display for National Odd Socks & Wear Your Own Tie Day on 13 November as part of Anti-Bullying Week.



Experimental Archaeology Club

The Coin Club members have decided to be more creative and have rebranded themselves as the Experimental Archaeology Club. Last term they started having a go at making model roundhouses. This term, the air drying clay was out and plans are afoot to do some medieval cooking next term too.



Dungeons & Dragons

By Sebastian J, Year 10, College House

This year, the MGS Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) Club has grown drastically, from one group and 5 members last year to two groups as of term two. As the popularity of the D&D Club has increased, the decision to split the group has allowed each player to be involved to their full potential.

Dungeons & Dragons is a tabletop role-playing game (RPG) that combines storytelling, improvisation, and strategic gameplay. It was first published in 1974 and has since become one of the most popular and influential role-playing games. In D&D, players create fictional characters with unique abilities, backgrounds, and personalities. One player takes on the role of the Dungeon Master (DM), who serves as the storyteller, referee, and creator of the game world. The DM describes the setting, presents challenges, and plays the roles of non-player characters (NPCs) that the players encounter. The game is typically played with a set of specialized dice, including the iconic 20-sided die (d20). Players use these dice to determine the outcomes of their character's actions, such as attacking monsters, casting spells, or attempting to pick a lock.

This year, the first party have travelled open, cultivated plains in search of bandits, finding them in a ruined, abandoned village, defeating those above and below ground, bringing them to a crushing end, finding treasure and flooding a cave. Having acquired the help of the local King, they received the quest to find out the cause of recent disappearances in the local forest, Menthan Wood. Having arrived at the edge of the forest, they caught a bear for food, but saw that it was in some way infected. They travelled on through the unnaturally dark forest, eventually finding the abode of an old wizard, where they successfully killed a centaur, and found encrypted orders. They travelled further West, and found a small, abandoned group of huts, where they found a magic ring. At night, one of the trees nearby, was investigated by the party. They found that it was infected, and periodically released some sort of spores. However, the tree uprooted itself and attacked them, rendering two members of the party infected, and raising more of its allies from the ground. The party eventually defeated the abominations, and that is how far they have come this year.

We are always welcoming new members, and if you wish to play, we have sessions every week after school on Monday in Room 03 from 15:30 to 17:00.



Gaudeamus

Year 7 were taught our school song 'Gaudeamus' by the senior prefect team back in September. This was the first of many times that they will sing it in their lives at MGS.



BHM

In October, as a school, we celebrated Black History Month through our assembly and tutor time programme. Our library also added to our Black History Month activities with book displays and suggested reading.



1st XI Success

A massive congratulations to our 1st XI football squad for making it to the last 16 in the National Cup, after defeating Wilson's School 3-2 in a thrilling game on Wednesday 6 December.



The Wedding Singer

By Sebastian F, Year 10, Corpus Christi House

I have greatly enjoyed being a part of our school Musical: The Wedding Singer so far and cannot wait to perform it in February 2024. It is an honour to be working with such talented people on such a big project, and it has become a part of my life at MGS, the cast my family.

Rehearsals started promptly in September after the summer holidays, and we got straight to work. Auditions were held at the end of term 6 last year so we could crack on immediately with a few newcomers who joined at the beginning of the year. We started with a read-through of the script, everyone singing along to all the songs, and getting to grips with their characters and starting to wonder how they can develop them to add to the show and its brilliance. We covered the songs with the ensemble first, then focused on the dances, choreographed by Miss Mckelvey, which add so much life and joy to the performance. The band starting rehearsing too, soon providing a backing track to the fantastic singers we have in the cast.

Despite the cast being smaller than last year's performance of Shrek since it was age restricted, the rehearsals are so lively and full of noise, everyone's energy making up for the smaller numbers. I am so looking forward to showcasing the sheer talent and fun the cast brings, and sharing the enjoyment of the experience. If you are at all interested in music, drama, or performing arts as a whole, I highly recommend getting involved with the department's extracurricular activities, as there are plenty of opportunities to be involved, including school bands, being a part of the tech team, costume and set departments, and in the cast of the shows themselves. I'm having a wonderful time myself, and absolutely cannot wait to perform come next year.

Make sure to buy your



Team Building

There was lots of noise and excitement from Year 7 on 8 September as they have worked together to creatively solve problems on their Team Building Day. Thanks to the Problem Solving Company for providing an excellent experience for our new Year 7s.



Year 12 completed a series of team building and problem solving activities on 13 September. The activities focused on building relationships as well as developing thinking skills, resilience and dialogue.



Whole School Photo

The entire school, students and staff, assembled on 7 September to have our whole school photograph taken. This event takes places every few years and this year's photograph is particularly special as it marks our 475th year.



Open Events

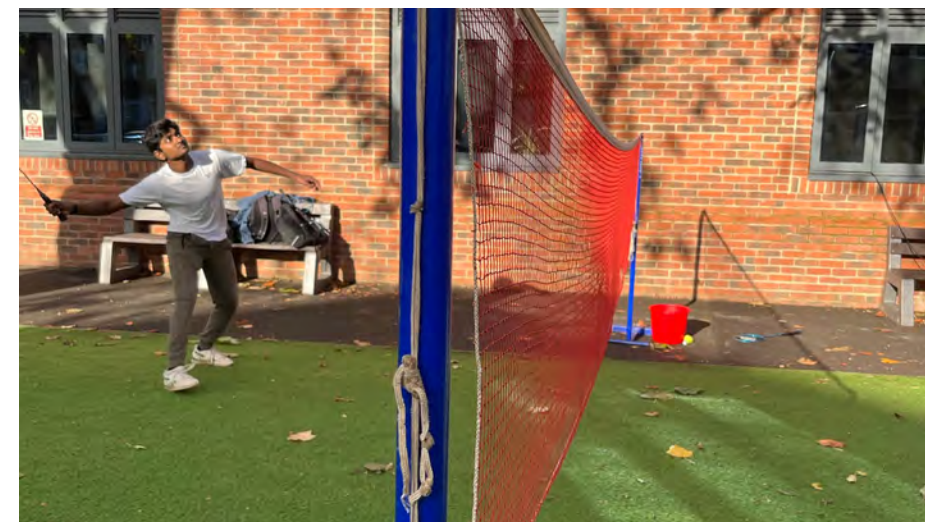
Thank you to all the Year 5 and 6 boys and their families for visiting us during our open events. Thank you also to all our amazing Year 7 guides who proudly led tours around their new school.



Children in Need

Navadeepsai S (Year 12 Barton House) George O (Year 12 College House), Callum S (Year 13 Corpus Christi House) and Leo G (Year 13 Tonbridge House) competed in an 8-hour Badmintonathon to raise money at our recent Children in Need Charity Day.

Thank you to all those who contributed donations to this event:
https://www.gofundme.com/f/mgs-badmintonathon?member=30650853&sharetype=teams&utm_campaign=p_na+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer



Consent

All of our Year 12 students recently received training in relation to consent as part of our Inspire to Belong Sixth Form PSHCE programme.

Recruit Camp

A successful time was had in the field for the army Cadet Recruits at the Army Cadet Recruit Camp in December. Well done to the cadets on their efforts in Camouflage and Concealment, Basha Building and Navigation.



Everest

By Navadeepsai S, Year 12, Barton House

Maidstone Grammar School is gearing up to celebrate its 475th Anniversary in style with a number of exciting events. One of the most anticipated events is a trek to Everest Base Camp during the Easter holidays 2024. The trek will be challenging, and strenuous, it involves a group of approximately 25 students and 5 staff members. The group will embark on the journey with the aim of reaching the base camp of the world's highest mountain, which stands at 5,364 metres. The journey will take us through some of the world's most breathtaking and awe-inspiring landscapes and test our endurance, strength, and resilience.

To ensure that we are fully prepared for the upcoming trek, we have put a considerable amount of effort into our training. We have participated in and organised several practice walks, which have been instrumental in building our physical stamina and mental endurance.

So far, we have completed two practice walks, and we have two walks left, the last of which will take place in Snowdonia National Park. These walks have been carefully selected to simulate the terrain and conditions that we will encounter during the trek.

To ensure that we are physically fit and able to maintain a steady pace, we have been recommended a minimum of 3 to 4 hours of aerobic exercise per week, combined with our long walks. This will help us build the endurance required to successfully reach the base camp. We are committed to putting in the necessary effort to ensure that we are fully prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

As a student at Maidstone Grammar School, I am eagerly looking forward to this trek. I am looking forward

to experiencing some of the world's most breathtaking landscapes and building memories that will last a lifetime. I am also excited about the opportunity to bond with my fellow trekkers, share experiences, and form lasting friendships.

In addition, I am anticipating the opportunity to put my training into practice and see how far I have come since the start of my preparation. I am confident in my abilities and ready to face any challenges that may come my way, knowing that I have put in the necessary effort to be fully prepared. Overall, I am thrilled to be part of this once-in-a-lifetime experience and am eager to make the most of it.

A Level Results Day

We were delighted to announce an excellent set of A Level examination results in August. 61% of all grades were graded A*-B, 29% of all grades were graded A* – A, and 37 students achieved at least three A grades or better. Particular recognition must go to the four students who gained three A* grades and the one student who gained four A* grades. The excellent performance across the School means that many of the students achieved their university offers:

- 59% of students gained places at the UK Top 30 Universities (from the 2023 Complete University Guide)
- 40% of students gained places at Russell Group universities
- 5 Oxbridge places (4 Cambridge, 1 Oxford)
- 5 medicine places (including one at Cambridge)



GCSE Results Day

We were delighted to announce an excellent set of GCSE results in August. 43% of all subject grades were graded 7 to 9, 25% of all subject grades were graded 8/9 and 95% of students gained five 9 to 4 grades including English and Mathematics. 27 students out of a year group of 208 achieved at least eight grades at Level 8 or higher, with 15 students achieving at least a Level 8 in ten of their subjects. One student did outstandingly well achieving a Level 9 in every one of their subjects.



Warhammer

Fridays after school can mean only one thing...Warhammer Club!



Joe Meloy Visit

Our Performing Arts department was recently treated to a visit from Joe Meloy, who is currently starring as the Dame, Mrs Smee, in the Hazlitt Theatre pantomime. Students listened to Joe speaking about the ups and downs of working in the Performing Arts industry followed by a Q&A session. A massive thanks to Joe for his time.

Musings from the Penthouse: 475th Year Celebrations #1

By Icarus, OM

By now, everyone in the school, the Old Maidstonian Society and others will have been made fully aware of the school's magnificent reign in Maidstone over the last 475 years. Whilst there are no magazines or similar which date back to 1549, there are some accounts taken from memories of OM's as well as a number of accounts and documents in the Archives. I will not dwell on the actual birth of the school by Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, 1st Earl of Hertford, Viscount Beauchamp, KG., PC. who was also known as Edward Semel and later fell into disrepute for his mismanagement of government (What changes over time? Not much.), ending up in the Tower of London and being executed (Current politicians beware!!)

The earliest item that I have found is the School Rules of 25th April, 1574 as ordered by the Maidstone Burghmote. I have abbreviated them in order to save boredom. -

- **1st** - Acknowledging God to be the author of all good gifts. At 7.00am every day the Master and all scholars are to humbly kneel and make prayers.
- **2nd** - After prayers, teaching and apposing scholars until 11:00am when they shall go to dinner. Following dinner, all scholars shall return at 1:00pm until 5:00 or 6:00pm for teaching, then depart for the night after making their prayers.
- **3rd** - The Mastr. shall have his house and wages during his life, not being convicted or some notable crime, as to be a
- **4th & 5th** - concern payment to the Master during periods of illness of himself or in the school.
- **6th** - None shall be taught in the School but first the Mastr. be spoken with by his or their friends and the Mastr. shall have them to understand such points of the Statutes as appertain to the Scholler that is to be admitted.
- **7th** - None shall be admitted to the Schoole who for his evil demeanour hath been expelled any other School.
- **8th** - Those Scholers whose friends dwell out of the liberty and Parish of Maidstone at his admission shall pay to the common box of the School xijd and every Town Child of Maidstone or of the same parish hereafter admitted iijd which shall be employed to the maintenance of common books needful in the Scholl as a Dictionary and other like.
- **9th** - Also considering the



common gamester or haunter of Taverns or Alehouses, not sound in Religion, Prodigal in apparel or other extraordinary expence.

coldness of the School it is thought good that evry Schooller put in the School shall pay yearly at or before Mayday alias the first of May yearly towards School a Matt and iijd and to have no more person for a meal and Matts but only a iijd and to be employed to that use and to no other use.

- **10th** - Lastly the Mastr. shall in the week call his Schollers to account how they have frequented Divine Service and for their behaviour in the Church at sermon time.

(The above are all as listed in 'Memorials of All Saints' Church' by W.B. Gilbert and 'Antiquities of Maidstone')

One has to assume that the Master had a better spelling knowledge, and also that the monetary values were 'iijd' as 3 pence and 'xijd' as 11 pence. What the 'j' stood for I do not know - maybe 'silver' as the following Elizabeth I coin illustrations show -



Did I say 'What changes?' Much by the looks of it!!

In 1576, Rowland Stubbersfield, M.A., was the third Master of the school from 1575 through to 1585 and was paid quarterly as can be seen from the receipt opposite.

Mr. Stubbersfield was succeeded by Thomas Symondson (1585 - 1628), who has a little anecdote about him, on the Kent Online Parish Clerks website in that -

"Symondson was a member of the Common Council. In 1621 he was excused attendance at their meetings on account of his great age, and his presence being also required at the school."

Regrettably I don't have any idea of when he was born but 43 years of teaching and managing the lives of boys must have taken its toll. School Uniforms are first referred to in 1222 when the Archbishop of Canterbury mandated that boy students wear a robe-like outfit called the 'cappa clausa'.

In the 16th century, charity school pupils were given second-hand clothes. In 1552 the Christ's Hospital charity issued an obligatory uniform for its scholars designed to emphasise their low status with a russet (later blue) coloured cassock. Breeches were not worn until 1706 when they were provided for the sick and weakly, then later for all pupils. The pupils of the Free School (MGS) were wearing breeches by 1780 when the sketch below was made.



We have a number of accounts of what life was like during the school's time in Corpus Christi buildings, but that will do for Part 2.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year. May also the world's regions experience a Peaceful New Year as well.



Careers Update

By Mrs S Acaster, Careers and Enterprise Manager

A quick note from the Careers Team to reflect on the events from the past two terms and highlight the events coming up in Terms 3 & 4.

Applications!

Making applications is an important focus of these two terms.

- All our Year 13 students will have made their university applications, through UCAS, or started applying for employment and apprenticeship positions for when they leave MGS in the summer
- All our Year 11 students will have started the application process for their 6th Form, college or apprenticeship places for next year. Application support is part of the Yr11 PSHCE lessons.

Year 11 Careers Meetings

- Throughout these two terms our Year 11 students are scheduled individual appointments with the Careers Team to get impartial information, advice and guidance about their Post-16 Options and future career and study plans

Year 12 Information Evening: 14th September

Year 11 & 13 Academic Interview weeks: 11th-22nd September

- An opportunity for all Year 11 and 13 students to meet individually with their tutors and discuss progress in school and plans for the future

Higher Education Fair: 20th September

- Our annual Higher Education Fair was open to students (and their parents) in Year 10 and above, from MGS and other local schools, and provided an opportunity to talk with representatives from a variety of universities, colleges and apprenticeship organisations. This year we had 50 exhibitors and over 1000 visitors, so a very successful and informative evening for all.

Year 11 Information Evening: 30th October

Year 11 Sixth Form Open Afternoon: 31st October

- The open afternoon enabled Year 11 students to talk with subject teachers and find out more about the A level courses available at MGS

Year 8 Careers Days: 6th-7th December

- Our Year 8 students took part in a series of practical activities designed to help them investigate a variety of occupations and get ideas about the different careers that might interest them in the future. They learned how to research and gather information to make informed decisions, undertook teamwork tasks and budgeting exercises to find out where their earnings will go as an adult! Additionally they listened to presentations about the new GCSE subjects available to them at MGS.

In Terms 3 & 4 the following activities will be taking place:

- **Year 12 individual Careers Meetings**
- **Year 8 Information Evening:** 4th January
- **Year 11 Post-16 Options Evening** for students and parents: 18th January
- **Year 12 UCAS Evening** for students and parents: 5th February
- **Maidstone Apprenticeship Fair at Mote Park** for Year 11 and 6th Form students: 8th March
- **Year 11 Meetings with SLT:** 11th-15th March
- **Careers Afternoon for Year 9-13 students:** 14th March



Upper School Speech Day Prizewinners

Friday 8 September 2023

Year 11

Samuel T	Subject Prize	Art
Benjamin B	Subject Prize	Biology
Joshua H	Subject Prize	Business Studies
Deyan A	Subject Prize	Chemistry
Henry S	Subject Prize	Classical Civilisation
Kiran S	Subject Prize	Computer Science
Thomas E	Subject Prize	Design Technology
Alex A	Subject Prize	Drama
Samuel T	Subject Prize	English Language
Thomas C	Subject Prize	English Literature
Henry A	Subject Prize	French
Dylan C	Subject Prize	Food Preparation & Nutrition
Joseph P	Subject Prize	Further Maths
Henry S	Subject Prize	Geography
Matthew C	Subject Prize	German
Henry S	Subject Prize	History
Henry A	Subject Prize	Latin
Kiran S	Subject Prize	Mathematics
Joseph P	Subject Prize	Music
Samuel T	Subject Prize	Film Studies
Jacob S	Subject Prize	PE
Conall McL	Subject Prize	Physics
Leo F	Subject Prize	RS
Malachy D	Subject Prize	Sociology
Isaac G	Subject Prize	Science
Alex A	Subject Prize	Spanish
Benjamin B	Lubbock Prize for outstanding GCSE Results	
Henry S	Top Scholar for Barton House	
Matthew C	Top Scholar for Corpus Christi House	
Anshul P	Top Scholar for College House	
Henry A	Top Scholar for Tonbridge House	
Charlie F	Parents' Association Prize Barton	
Joseph S	Parents' Association Prize Barton	
Ethan B	Parents' Association Prize College	
Joseph G	Parents' Association Prize College	
Toby M	Parents' Association Prize Corpus Christi	
Thomas C	Parents' Association Prize Corpus Christi	
Daniel G	Parents' Association Prize Tonbridge	
George F	Parents' Association Prize Tonbridge	
Charlie F	Commendation Art	
Alexander F	Commendation Art	
Conall H	Commendation Art	
Ethan B	Commendation Biology	
Thomas E	Commendation Biology	
Andrew S	Commendation Biology	
Matthew C	Commendation Business Studies	
Joel P	Commendation Business Studies	
Kiran S	Commendation Chemistry	
Henry S	Commendation Chemistry	
Thomas E	Commendation Chemistry	

Benjamin B	Commendation Chemistry
Ben C	Commendation Classical Civilisation
Thomas C	Commendation Classical Civilisation
Joseph S	Commendation Computer Science
Benjamin B	Commendation Computer Science
Joshua O	Commendation Computer Science
Daniel G	Commendation Design & Technology
George O	Commendation Drama
Alfie C	Commendation English Language
Joshua H	Commendation English Language
Isaac B	Commendation English Literature
Conall McL	Commendation English Literature
Joshua O	Commendation English Literature
Alexander F	Commendation Film Studies
Joshua O	Commendation Film Studies
James S	Commendation Film Studies
Alexander E	Commendation Food Preparation & Nutrition
Corey H	Commendation Food Preparation & Nutrition
Toby M	Commendation Food Preparation & Nutrition
George O	Commendation Food Preparation & Nutrition
Matthew C	Commendation French
Charlie F	Commendation French
James M	Commendation French
Joshua O	Commendation French
Henry S	Commendation French
Matthew C	Commendation Further Mathematics
Anshul P	Commendation Further Mathematics
Clarke O'S	Commendation Further Mathematics
Henry A	Commendation German
Toby M	Commendation German
Ethan B	Commendation Geography
Thomas C	Commendation Geography
Conall McL	Commendation Geography
Joshua O	Commendation Geography
Kiran S	Commendation Geography
Thomas C	Commendation History
Benjamin B	Commendation History
Joshua H	Commendation History
Joshua M	Commendation Latin
Alex A	Commendation Latin
Benjamin B	Commendation Latin
Kiran S	Commendation Latin
Anshul P	Commendation Mathematics
Joseph P	Commendation Mathematics
Thomas E	Commendation Mathematics
Charlie F	Commendation Music
Cameron H	Commendation Physical Education
Isaac G	Commendation Physical Education
Harvey T	Commendation Physical Education
Dayn A	Commendation Physics
Benjamin B	Commendation Physics
Joshua H	Commendation RS
George F	Commendation RS
Alexander McL	Commendation RS
Toby M	Commendation RS
Harvey C	Commendation Sociology
Alexander McL	Commendation Sociology
Samuel T	Commendation Sociology
Benjamin B	Commendation Spanish
Leo F	Commendation Spanish
Angel V	Commendation Spanish
Matthew C	Commendation Science
Joshua H	Commendation Science

Year 12

Amelia L	Subject Prize	Art
Amelia McG	Subject Prize	Biology
Oliver S	Subject Prize	Business Studies
Marc V-G	Subject Prize	Chemistry
Amritha S	Subject Prize	Classical Civilisation
Robin F	Subject Prize	Computer Science
George E	Subject Prize	Design & Technology
Benjamin C	Subject Prize	Economics
Kai R	Subject Prize	English Literature
Hubertas R	Subject Prize	Film Studies
Aoife H	Subject Prize	French
Benjamin C	Subject Prize	Further Mathematics
Taylor S	Subject Prize	Geography
David R	Subject Prize	German
Amelia L	Subject Prize	History
Aoife H	Subject Prize	Mathematics
Hubertas R	Subject Prize	Media Studies
Amy F	Subject Prize	Music
Edward L	Subject Prize	Music Technology
Mollie S	Subject Prize	PE
Judah M	Brian Simons Prize	Philosophy
Robin F	Subject Prize	Physics
Amelia L	Subject Prize	Politics
Benjamin L	Subject Prize	Psychology
Kieran L	Subject Prize	Sociology
Oliver S	Subject Prize	Spanish
Benjamin W	Barton Parents' Association Prize	
Julius W	Barton Parents' Association Prize	
Samuel F	College Parents' Association Prize	
Charlotte H	College Parents' Association Prize	
Catherine D	Corpus Christi Parents' Association Prize	
Connor V	Corpus Christi Parents' Association Prize	
Joshua V N	Tonbridge Parents' Association Prize	
Richard S	Tonbridge Parents' Association Prize	
Amelia McG	Commendation Business Studies	
Basil J	Commendation Business Studies	
Tobi E	Commendation Business Studies	
Aoife H	Commendation Economics	
Marcel R	Commendation Economics	



Year 13

Enrico A	Senior Prize	Art
Toby H	Senior Prize	Design and Technology
Freya McL	Senior Prize	Politics
Levente V	Senior Prize	Mathematics
Joseph McC	Senior Prize	Music
Lucas P	Senior Prize	Music Technology
Keon G-F	Senior Prize	Physical Education
Ewan C	Senior Prize	Philosophy
Amirah O	Senior Prize	Psychology
Dylan O'S	Crosthwaite Prize	Biology
Dylan O'S	Crosthwaite Prize	Chemistry
James H	Crosthwaite Prize	Computer Science
Levente V	Crosthwaite Prize	Physics
Dylan O'S	War Memorial Prize	Business Studies
Joseph B	War Memorial Prize	Economics
Thomas C	War Memorial Prize	Film Studies
Joshua H	War Memorial Prize	French
David R	War Memorial Prize	German
Joseph F	War Memorial Prize	Media Studies
Amirah O	War Memorial Prize	Sociology
George S	War Memorial Prize	Classical Civilisation
Rohit C	Philips Prize for History	
Ryan K	Bossom Prize for Further Maths	
Lucy S	Monckton Prize for English	
Joseph F	Gilbert Prize for Geography	
Dylan O'S	Randall Prize for Top Scholar	
Cara B	Top Scholar for Barton House	
Ryan K	Top Scholar for College House	
Joseph B	Top Scholar for Corpus Christi House	
Levente V	Top Scholar for Corpus Christi House	
Freya McL	Top Scholar for Tonbridge House	
Ronish R	Barton Parents' Association Prize	
Hangyung T	Barton Parents' Association Prize	
Adam S	College Parents' Association Prize	
Lucca J	College Parents' Association Prize	
Eliza F	Corpus Parents' Association Prize	
Luke E	Corpus Parents' Association Prize	
Lily H	Tonbridge Parents' Association Prize	
Deevsh R	Tonbridge Parents' Association Prize	
Joseph B	Commendation Art	
Eliza F	Commendation Art	
Beatrix R	Commendation Art	
Duncan D	Commendation Biology	
Edan H	Commendation Biology	
Logan C	Commendation Biology	
Henry W	Commendation Biology	
Lucca J	Commendation Business Studies	
Anthony P	Commendation Business Studies	
Adam T	Commendation Business Studies	
Eliza F	Commendation Business Studies	
Levente V	Commendation Chemistry	
Edan H	Commendation Chemistry	
Caitlyn B	Commendation Chemistry	
Deevsh R	Commendation Chemistry	
Harriet A	Commendation Classical Civilisation	
Jack W	Commendation Classical Civilisation	
Thomas W	Commendation Classical Civilisation	
Samuel P	Commendation Computer Science	
Rhonish R	Commendation Computer Science	
Charles W	Commendation Computer Science	
Duncan D	Commendation Economics	
George H	Commendation Economics	

Samuel L	Commendation Economics
Adam S	Commendation Economics
Ryan S	Commendation Economics
Rachel B	Commendation English Literature
David P	Commendation English Literature
Joseph R	Commendation English Literature
Noam G	Commendation Film Studies
Finlay T	Commendation Film Studies
Anastasyia D	Commendation Further Mathematics
Geogia L	Commendation Further Mathematics
Rhonish R	Commendation Further Mathematics
Ivy R	Commendation Further Mathematics
Hangyung T	Commendation Further Mathematics
Charles W	Commendation Further Mathematics
Nicholas B	Commendation French
Callum B	Commendation Geography
Duncan D	Commendation Geography
Luke E	Commendation Geography
Lucca J	Commendation Geography
Evie McK	Commendation Geography
David P	Commendation Geography
Hannah S	Commendation Geography
Adam T	Commendation German
Callum B	Commendation History
Rohit C	Commendation History
Freya McL	Commendation History
Rhonish R	Commendation Mathematics
Adam S	Commendation Mathematics
Ryan K	Commendation Mathematics
Dylan O'S	Commendation Mathematics
Ryan K	Commendation Media Studies
James T	Commendation Music
Harriet A	Commendation Philosophy
Daniel G	Commendation Philosophy
Keon G-F	Commendation Psychology
Evie McK	Commendation Psychology
Rafferty W	Commendation Psychology
Luke E	Commendation Physics
Hannah S	Commendation Sociology
Jack W	Commendation Sociology



Special Prizes

Abishek P	Carter Cup for Cricket
Oliver D	Maidstone Football Cup for Rugby
Richard M	Clubman Cup for Soccer
Joshua V N	Bruce Malcolm Cup for Golf
CSM Luke T	Duffield Cup for Shooting
CWO Henry N	Heard Cup (RAF)
RSM Liam E	Lamprey Cup (Army)
CPO Thomas L	Sir Henry Moore Cup (RN)
Toby H	Design Trophy
George S	Howard Cup for Classics
Connor V	Mary Clark Prize for Drama
Samuel T	Paul Evans Prize for GCSE Fieldwork
Callum B	Richard Clark Cup for Fieldwork
Duncan D	Hodges-Pocock Geography Prize
Cara B	Jane Matek Prize for Science
Nicholas B	Christopher Turner Cup for Excellence in French
James T	Ben Babington-Browne Memorial Music Trophy
Joshua H	Claydon Prize for spoken French
David P	Daniel Carlton Trophy
Jake W	Chiefy [CPO Gude] Prize
Jack W	Debating and Public Speaking Plate
Lucas P	Expressive Arts Cup
Felix G	Martin Passmore Cup
Joseph B	Gary Stock Prize for Improved Performance in Sixth Form
Thomas W	Dr Christine Hart-Scott Award in memory of Ernest Hart OM
Harriet A	Neil Turrell Prize
Lucas P	Jubilee Prize for Service
Enrico A	Gravitts Prize for All Round Achievement and Service
Georgia G	David Kerr Cup for Outstanding Leadership
Samuel L	Streatfield Manning Prize for Service & Influence in the School
Ethan Y	Lawrence Prize for Leadership & Influence in the School



A Message on Behalf of the Old Maidstonian Society

The OMS is a thriving community that aims to unite MGS alumni, pupils, and past and present staff both in person and online. Membership, which is absolutely free, is also open to former Governors and members of the Parents' Association Committee.

With members around the world, the OMS serves as a valuable platform for many to stay in contact and keep up with news. Many of our members are able to attend reunions and gatherings in person, and we strive to make these events as rewarding as possible.

Attending an OMS reunion is not only enjoyable but also represents the best way for our alumni to support the Society. Your participation helps us sustain our regular activities and events. If you are already a member, we encourage you to extend this invitation to your network. Invite friends to join the OMS and participate alongside you.

Spread the word and help us enhance our alumni programme, making it even more enjoyable and successful.

As a member of the Society, you will automatically receive news updates, information about reunions and events, and the OMS Newsletter. It's a great way to keep in touch.

To become a part of this vibrant community, click the link below to join the OMS:

<https://www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk/memform/>

Olim Meminisse Juvabit

Key Dates for your Diary

Tue 2 January 2024
Thu 4 January 2024
Tue 9 January 2024
Thu 11, Fri 12 & Mon 15 Jan 2024
Thu 18 January 2024
Fri 26 January 2024
Tue 30 January 2024
Mon 5 February 2024
Fri 9 February 2024

First Day of Term 3
Year 13 Virtual Parents' Evening 3.45-8pm & Year 8 Information Evening 7-8pm
Year 11 Virtual Parents' Evening 3.45-8pm
Post 16 Opening Mornings (9am-10.30am)
Post 16 Open Evening 4.30-7.30pm
Charity Day
Year 8 Virtual Parents' Evening 3.45-8pm
Year 12 UCAS Evening 7-8pm
Last Day of Term 3

Mon 19 February 2024
Tue 5 March 2024
Wed 13 March 2024
Fri 15 March 2024
Tue 19 March 2024
Mon 25 March 2024
Thu 28 March 2024

First Day of Term 4
Year 9 Virtual Parents' Evening 3.45-8pm
Careers Fair
Sports Relief Charity Day
Year 7 Virtual Parents' Evening 3.45-8pm
A Level Presentation Evening for 2023 leavers 6-8pm
Last Day for Term 4





Olim Meminisse Juvabit

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Founded in 1549 | Headteacher Mr M Tomkins BSc NPQH

