

SPRING 2018 ISSUE 16

Et Cetera

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL

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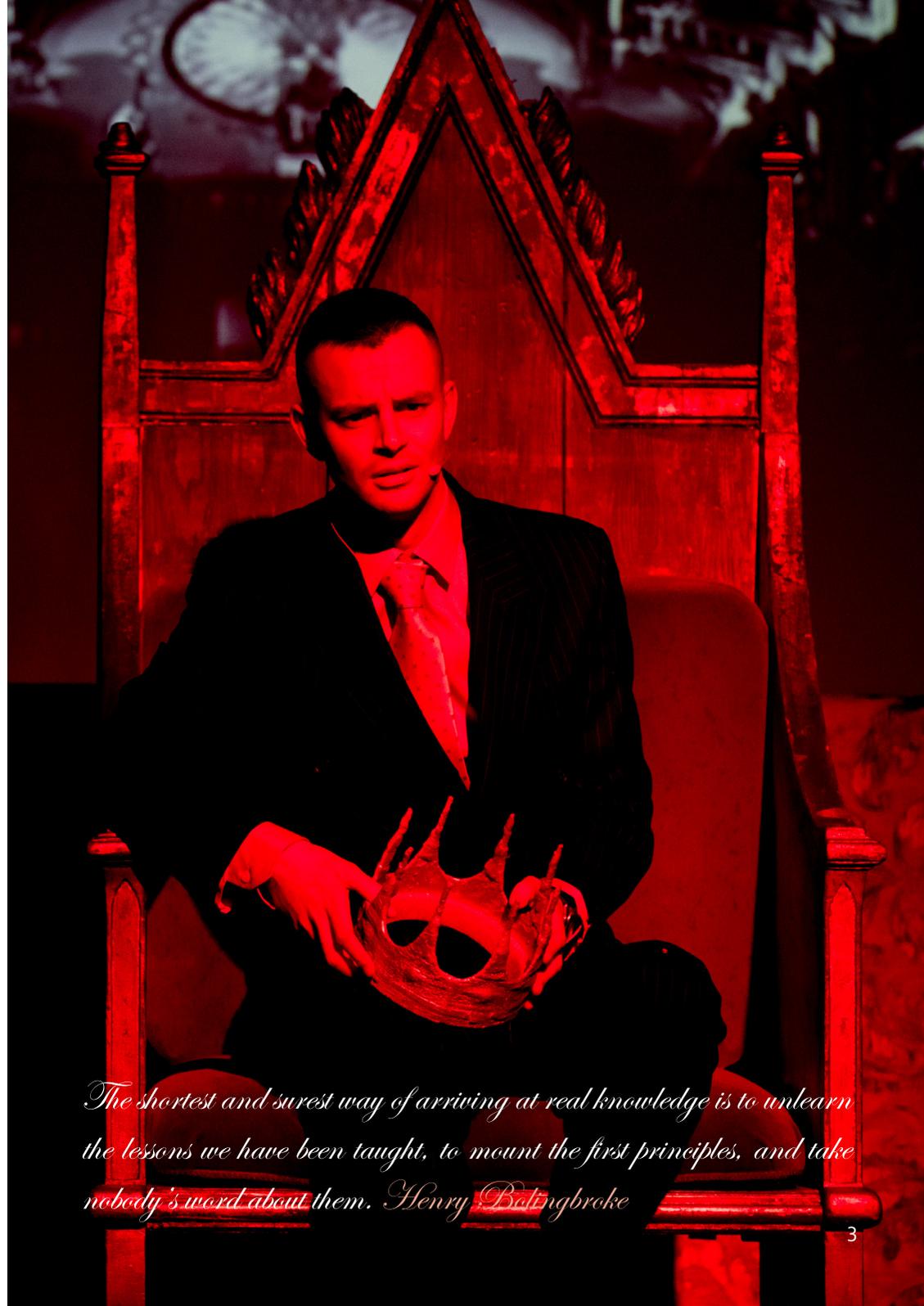
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SNOW ETC.....
In the bright mid-winter

Cover shot: Tom Cruise

HEAD'S INTRODUCTION

Saturday 3rd March. The snow is fast disappearing as I look out of my study window over to Thorpe Lodge. Seeing students these last few days in the snow was joyous. We had a debate: to let them out to throw snow or to keep them in (these days of risk, health and safety!). We went for the innocence of snowballing and watched students have fun, get wet and be children. I reflected that given the last serious weekday snow in London was a long time ago, that our eleven year olds had hardly ever known it. Growing up in the 21st century is a serious business. The snow was thus a joyous moment, students playing with something simple and free. Of course we stayed open. Born in the north, I regard London snow as very feeble! It was a late weather episode and misleading given the proximity of examinations and another year in which to make their mark. Each year the tasks are harder, and each year we worry that we will not keep pace. Being in the top 3% of schools has its price. Last Sunday I had the pleasure of watching eighty year 11 students come into school for a morning of mathematics with their teachers. Priceless: stunning effort from students and breath-taking commitment from teachers. It has been quite a term of fun. Our charity Shakespeare, *Richard II*, saw Mr Orr (Bolingbroke) chase Mr Robson (Richard II), Mr Seed (Duke of York and John of Gaunt) for thespian talent. Ms Nightingale and Ms Murray were perfect 1950s in their 'new look' dresses (yes, this was a Netflix 'The Crown' inspired production). Fun to one side, we have had the opportunity to mark a record: ten students have offers from Oxford and Cambridge. Mind you, there are offers from Durham, UCL and Imperial that are higher. It is as hard to get there as it is Oxford and Cambridge. We have, as ever, been well visited by other schools. I was fascinated by a visit from the Head of a school in a very big academy chain: an 08.00-17.00 teaching day, no February half term, an eight day winter break, silent corridors, no talking over lunch. Goodness. Schools are different. I am humbled daily by children: there is a year 12 'A' level history student who has a younger brother, I have had some experience of both - their characters take me to all that is best in human nature; I suspect that is an outdated feeling for the 21st century - indeed - it is probably not even a politically correct thought. Ah well, there it is, one day we will arrive at the notion of individuality, not labels. We might even return to the idea that people's values matter as much, if not more, than their Progress 8 score.



The shortest and surest way of arriving at real knowledge is to unlearn the lessons we have been taught, to mount the first principles, and take nobody's word about them. Henry Bolingbroke

RICHARD II



Allusions to treachery, the squandering of wealth, the destruction of England's heritage, the celebration of its history, the promise of a renewed land and a restored dignity, the hope of our elevated place in a new world. There were no intended political allusions in this year's Shakespeare Revisited production of *Richard II*, but – given the subject matter – parallels are challenging to avoid. But this has been a long tradition in the play's history. Shortly after the play was written in 1595, Queen Elizabeth II is reported to have said about her own context of subterfuge, 'I am Richard II, know ye not that?' and, as a play about rebellion and king killing, its fierce political battles for just and upright leadership dominate its narrative. Our production, set in the 1950s accompanied by Matt Monroe and images of vintage Ashes battles, drew on the richness of Netflix's *The Crown*'s visual palette. Richard's swagger, his defiance and fury and his self-celebration captured the pitiful posturing of Matt Smith's portrayal of the Duke of Edinburgh. Robert Orr's Bolingbroke had all of the principle, pragmatism and pathos that Claire Foy exhibits so well in her embodiment of the monarch. The raging of their rivalry, reverberating across the body of the play, culminated in Richard's infantile handover of the crown, rolled along the ground to settle at Bolingbroke's feet. It was a striking moment of drama. Aside from this centrepiece of the narrative, there were a

number of other exquisite performances, not least from our very talented student actors. The first year of our inclusion of students as part of this charity event, was a triumph that we are determined to repeat. Performances from Omar Ait El Caid, Tibor Kljajic and Alex Perez were deft, assured and kept the rest of us on our toes – not in competition, but trying at the very least not to be entirely outdone! Perez' Baggot was a wistful and contemplative character, delivering the news of the Welsh Army's disbandment with heartfelt sorrow and moving naturalism. Omar and Tibor offered a complementary energy and engagement on stage that gave pace and interest to the play's action. Daniel Seed's multiple parts (the Duke of York and Gaunt), showcased his versatility and his impassioned "Sceptred Isle" speech brought patriotism and loyalty to the fore in an otherwise farcical and foolhardy tragedy. Naina Nightingale was characteristically charming on stage in her various guises and Vanessa Murray's part of Queen and Benjamin Arnold's portrayal of Aumerle were deliciously and delectably doleful, drawing out the humanity of Richard's closest relationships. This all was much fun. And all carried out (from rehearsal to performance) in a week's work for primary schools, for our studious A Level English students studying the text, for parents and Friends of the School, and all in aid of our fundraising efforts! Next year? Suggestions welcomed.

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON
ASSOCIATE HEAD



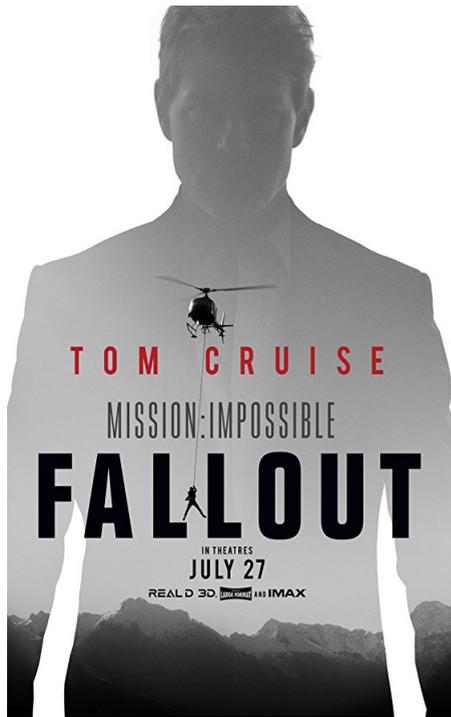
A BIGGER BOOK

On a freezing cold January morning, in the depths of west London, early birds could have observed Mr Hall and myself struggle to lift a 66kg box into a black cab. There was purpose to our endeavour beyond human endurance or some attempt at a shared physical fitness routine. A couple of days before, Celia Birtwell, the renowned textile designer, had called the school and offered us a copy of David Hockney's signed, limited edition, book, *A Bigger Book*. Published by Taschen as part of its Sumo collection, it measures, when open, some 200 x 70cm. The book contains 450 prints and begins in 1953, when Hockney, then 16, was studying at Bradford School of Art. It includes his breakthrough in 1960s swinging London, his life by Los Angeles pools in the 1970s, his recent series of portraits, iPad drawings and Yorkshire landscapes. There are also drawings, photo-composites, multi-perspective collages, stage designs and

multi-camera video works, reflecting his endless passion for experimentation. Never before has Hockney's oeuvre been published in such scope. This is a visual survey apart from a single page of 15 sentences handwritten by Hockney. It begins: "A book like this shouldn't have much text ..." The absence of text encourages people to rely on their own eyes, he believes. "I do think pictures should speak for themselves." The book had been gifted to Celia by Hockney. They have been friends for over 50 years and he has painted, drawn and printed her innumerable times; most famously in 1971, in her Notting Hill flat with Ossie Clark, *Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy*. The book has been placed, with Celia's approval and direction, in the school's atrium, to be seen, pondered and enjoyed by students. How fortunate and richer we are to have such wonderful 'friends'. We have written to David to thank him. Might we even get him here.

DAVID CHAPPELL
ACADEMY HEAD





AT THE MOVIES

A quiet weekend in February saw our building once again turned into a Hollywood film set. Actors, runners, grips, make-up artists, lights, cameras and many many extras, squashed into the school. On this occasion we were hosting the crew of *Mission Impossible 6 - Fallout*. Director Christopher McQuarrie took his place and action pursued. Cameras were poised and focussed in the atrium on the fourth floor. Whilst I had hoped we might be witnessing Tom Cruise crashing through the glass roof in pursuit of some heinous villain, it was not to be; though the possibility has not been ruled out for number seven! The film is scheduled to be released on 27th July 2018, and will be the first in the series to be released in RealD 3D (whatever that might be!). Avid readers of *Et Cetera* will recall Steven Spielberg filming in school a couple of summers ago. This edition reaches you as a timely reminder that *Ready Player One* will be in a cinema near you from 30th March.

MR DAVID CHAPPELL
ACADEMY HEAD



SPEAKER SPEAKS

Not for the first time John Bercow came to speak to the Sixth Form. Witty, erudite, clever (so clever) he began with entertainment and charmed the students. Is there a more generous person? His warmth, passion and generosity certainly struck a chord with students, a number of whom were minded to write to Mr Hall and say that Mr Bercow's talk had inspired them. He spoke eloquently about his 'life' in parliament, about his role as speaker (and some of his predecessors). He commented on the tensions a MP feels (loyalty to party, to parliament, to constituents, to conscience) and how these are variously reconciled. The Sixth Form felt that what shone through was his utter commitment to fair-mindedness and equality; a driven passion for justice and tolerance. All of these qualities laced by a potent capacity for public speaking. 'A' Level English students took mental notes about sub clauses and sentences which, whilst infinitely complex, were abundantly clear.

MS FAYE MULHOLLAND
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



SURGICAL PRECISION

What do a squid, a rat, a rabbit and a frog all have in common? Ask a member of our dissection club and the answer is simple: they have all been cut open and examined on a Monday evening by our intrepid band of aspiring surgeons. Dissection club has been running for three years and continues to be one of our most popular extra-curricular activities. Each week, new animals and plants are procured and put under the scalpel. Ariana Alexander, Year 8, who is a stalwart at the club, is enthusiastic in her praise: "I am considering being a surgeon, so from that point of view I find the club just brilliant but more importantly I simply find animals fascinating, so this is a great way to learn more about them. What diverse animals like a squid and a rabbit have in common is more surprising than the features they don't share!" Outside the laboratory, our annual science week ran from March 5th to 9th. It kicked off with a nod to International Women's Day when we screened the film *Hidden Figures* on the Monday evening – the story of female mathematicians at NASA both surprised and inspired students. The

science began in earnest on Wednesday when students took part in a project designed by Imperial Cancer Research, an institution with which we have growing links. On Thursday, our annual Science Fair attracted record numbers of entries and visitors. The entire Hall was taken over by a diverse range of projects answering numerous questions, 'can a human generate truly random numbers?' to, 'which type of cat food makes my cat jump the highest?' and, 'can you spot scientifically spot a fake smile?'. The quality and scientific discovery was stronger than ever so it was difficult to choose a group of winners to take part in our annual visit to London Zoo. The week ended with a bang on Friday as students took part in a parachute design competition that involved throwing eggs off the 4th floor of the school's atrium. The grand finale was a giant implosion that was strong enough to crush a barrel in front of amazed students' eyes.

MR DANIEL SEED
DEPUTY HEAD

A FEAST OF IDEAS

"Read, absorb, annotate, précis, pose questions. Affix to your bedroom walls, or maybe the kitchen fridge." Such were the instructions to Year 8 by Mr Hall as he presented them with eight sheets of dense prose on the 1917 Russian Revolution. "Think of it not as a piece of homework", he mused, "but as a feast of ideas!" The task was the conclusion to a lesson that had relied on a silver gilded mirror, a carrot, some smoked salmon, a two day old sausage roll and a small jar containing just over six pounds in small change. Not what one might immediately reach for when faced with the task of explaining to students how the Russian Revolution was in fact a series of revolutions in the Russian Empire during 1917; or how these events destroyed the Tsar Nicholas II and the Tsarist autocracy and helped create the Soviet Union; but such were the props relied on by Mr Hall. Students listened with eyes wide open, minds engaged and questions abound as they took a journey looking through the eyes of an illiterate Russian peasant using out of date agricultural techniques, making redemption payments to the state, whilst watching the rich

landowners profit from the land without lifting a finger. With their senses alert and their bodies transported to 1917, students debated justice and fairness, the inevitable emerging resentment, and how rapid industrialisation combined with urban crowding, led to increased political awareness and the emergence of social revolutionaries. There was little time to pause for breath. Teaching is about capturing hearts and minds, about making the frequently uninteresting into something awe inspiring. In planning for learning, our teachers consider this very point in the construction of each of their lesson plans - the 'inspire and enthuse' moment, making the lesson and (more importantly) the facts recallable. So Mr Hall's lesson was just one of a few cover lessons. Regardless, expectations remain the same, right down to who will be history star of the week. This week's winner: Ajani - for his exceptional research and presentation on the part the First World War played on the transformation of the Russian Empire - neatly condensed in exquisite prose limited to 500 words!

MR DAVID CHAPPELL
ACADEMY HEAD





JOURNEYS THROUGH SPACE AND TIME

On Wednesday 7th March GCSE History students found themselves transported back three hundred years to Restoration England and the foundation of the Royal Observatory. Wigs (and dubious French accents) in place, Mr Orr and Mr Holloway adeptly captured the spirit of competition between Louis XIV and Charles II that prompted the construction of the observatory in Greenwich. Ms Eades and Ms Halfpenny donned their lab coats in the spirit of scientific discovery of the age and helped place the developments in their wider historical context. The experience offered an opportunity to refresh and consolidate students' understanding of the historical environment that will feature on their examination paper this summer through a humorous take on the events surrounding it. Two days later, in the early hours of Friday morning, steeped in a slightly more sombre note, a group of excited Year 8 students set off by coach for a

long anticipated whistle-stop tour of the Belgian battlefields of World War I. Having studied the events leading up to the conflict in Year 7, students relished the opportunity to tread the same ground as those young men who had made the same journey to the continent one hundred years ago. Poignant walks of the graveyards provoked reflections on the loss of youth detailed on the headstones, whilst the reading of war poetry led students to consider the realities the fields once witnessed. This was followed by a walk through of a section of the trenches still preserved, then to the excellently detailed Flanders Fields museum and finally, with moods lifted, an obligatory stop at a local Belgian chocolate shop. Home exhausted for a Sunday to recoup energy.

MR ROBERT ORR
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



WE DAY 2018

The challenges faced by our students vary considerably in both nature and depth. One element that unites all young people – perhaps that should simply read 'all people' – is the need for affirmation. WE Day is concerned with providing just that: a life-affirming experience for the young people who attend. WE Day is a powerful, life-changing event that combines the energy of a live concert with the inspiration of extraordinary stories of leadership and change. WE Day brings together world-renowned speakers and award-winning performers with tens of thousands of young people to celebrate their contributions and kick-start another year of change. Twelve of our students experienced the event at the SSE Arena in March, which featured motivational speakers and celebrities focusing on building self-esteem within young people. Attempting to get students to speak of anything other than the event was a considerable task for weeks afterward, such was the exhilaration it generated.

MR JOE HOLLOWAY
ASSISTANT HEADTEACHER



NEW YORK

If the trace of the choir's progress represents a steady rise, singing in Carnegie Hall, New York, marks an astronomic leap. In our most ambitious venture yet, thirty representatives from the school choir and the music team are set to sing alongside the internationally acclaimed choral group *The King's Singers* as part of their 50th Anniversary concert on 23rd April 2018. The music is our hardest yet: a specially-commissioned work by Nico Muhly represents the most fiendish and frenzied of the repertoire: cross rhythms, atonality and irregular compound time signatures (not to mention quintuplets) across all of its one hundred pages. But what an experience; what an opportunity; what a joy! We are so very grateful to all who have supported the school choir and given so generously over the year at our various fundraising events, to aid and assist our transatlantic journey. We look forward to sharing in our summer term edition of *Et Cetera* some of the momentous memories we will have inevitably made!

MR NICHOLAS ROBSON
ASSOCIATE HEAD



IN THE BRIGHT MID-WINTER

After a lengthy journey by road and air to the Southern Alps, sleepy morning eyes opened their hotel curtains on Sunday morning to be welcomed by a picture perfect postcard of Pra-Loup ski resort in France. Nestled some 2500m above sea-level at Uvernet-Fours in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, the view was a thick blanket of bright white snow stretching across the resort to the mountains in the distance. After a hearty buffet breakfast forty four adrenaline-fuelled students and six eager members of staff began their daily 300m walk from the hotel to meet their instructors Julien and Florence. The four hour lessons were the perfect opportunity to improve techniques and develop skills from the snow-plough to the parallel turn. These were put into practice on the picturesque mountain passes and exhilarating slopes. The weather for the majority of the week was beautiful sunshine and had the days had the feeling of a

crisp spring morning. In every direction we turned, the views were breath-taking, resulting in many photographic memories. After the slopes, students returned to the hotel for some recuperation and sustenance. There were a variety of après ski activities to keep the students entertained. From participating in an evening of ice-skating followed by crepes, to challenging the staff at ten pin-bowling. There was even the opportunity to witness a professional ski show and fire-work display after dinner at a local restaurant. At the end of the week awards were given to Lizaveta Kirkizh (Year 9) and Tommaso Gorini (Year 7) for overall skiers of the week and the unsung 'hero' of the trip went to Pavel Shaulko (Year 8) for his all-round positive attitude, behaviour and approach to every element of the trip. And, it may be thanks to Freddie Bercow's lovely letter of thanks if a visit happens next year.

MR LUKE FULLER
LEAD PRACTITIONER

DEPARTING US TOO SOON

The school's Leadership Team has been very stable for years. My eighteenth year, David Chappell's eighteenth year, Ross Wilson's sixteenth year, Daniel Seed's fourteenth year, Frances Hirst's twentieth year, Richard Northover's eleventh year, Nicholas Robson's tenth year. Times move and it is with some trepidation that I announce here Mr Seed's planned departure in May to another Deputy Headship near his home. Mr Seed plans headship and is seeking a challenging school to widen his experience. Ms Hirst is obliged to leave to care for a number of her family and Mr Northover's circumstances have altered his long-intended stay. I have been proud of all of these dedicated colleagues who have each brought something very special to Holland Park. They are well-known to this school community and will be much missed by me and by many.

WORLD BOOK DAY

Thursday 1st March saw Holland Park celebrate a very wintry World Book Day. With London blanketed under a cover of fresh snow for some it may have been just the sort of day to curl up by a fire with a good book. Not so the students and staff of Holland Park who were in school and took time in the day to celebrate the very best of the written word. Students were encouraged to share their favourite stories in their tutor groups while the considerable artistic talents of the student body were tested in the challenge to create their own design for a National Book Token that could see its way into bookshops across the country.

A SPORTS TOUR TO MALTA

The PE Team are assembling a squad of 30 of our finest athletes for their European Sports tour to Malta. They will be the beneficiaries of training sessions during the day from elite coaches and they will use their newly acquired skills during fixtures in the evenings against local club teams. In preparation for their continental excursion our students have undertaken additional training sessions with their PE teachers to prepare them for this challenge. Mr Mitchell and his team are feeling confident about the opportunity to showcase the talents of their teams abroad. We look forward to seeing the silverware.

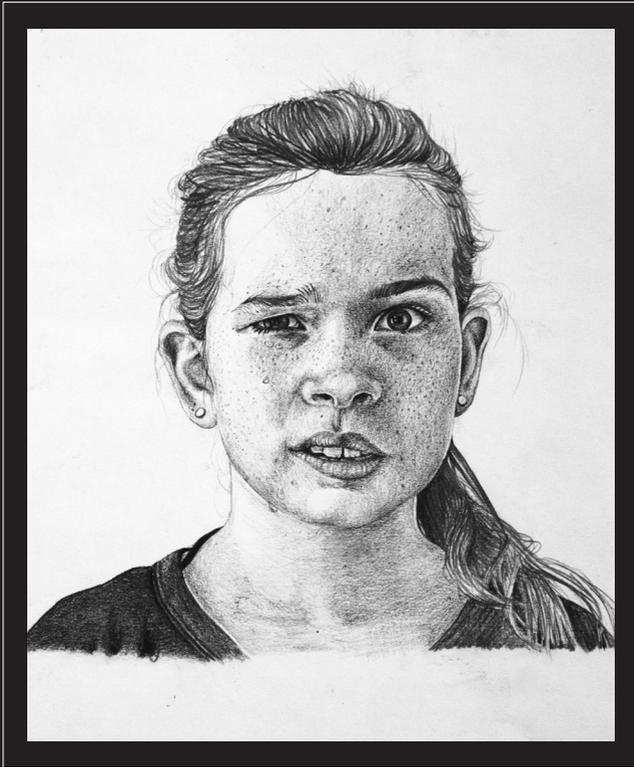
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN

Thursday 8th March was International Women's Day. The theme this year, #PressforProgress, aimed to motivate and unite communities to think, act and be more gender inclusive. Now, more than ever, there's a strong call-to-action to press forward and progress gender parity. First observed in 1909 in New York, the day commemorates the movement for women's rights. As part of this year's commemorations, students led a number of whole school initiatives. Students in Years 12 and 13 planned and delivered a PSHCE session exploring the feminist movement to all tutor groups in school; students in Year 11-13 transformed classrooms at lunch time to celebrate intersectionality and cultural diversity; teachers profiled women of significance in their lessons; Mr. Curtis launched this month's 'Cultural Capital' contest themed around feminist literature with the winners being accompanied to the 'Votes for Women' exhibition in the Museum of London; and Sixth Form students were invited to a showing of the film 'Ladybird'. Throughout all our activities we collected money with all contributions being donated to the Women's Refuge.

OXBRIDGE SUCCESS

Following the superb success of 10 students in Year 13 securing offers to Oxford and Cambridge (a bumper year - and not at all bad for a year group of 70!), younger students thought they might also like a taste of the action. So, on Saturday 3rd March, sixteen students from Years 11 and 12 were taken by Ms Mulholland on a visit to Cambridge University. Sidney Sussex College, hosted us for the day. Students talked to current undergraduates about the life of a Cambridge student, the work they undertake, the structure of courses, what makes Cambridge unique, the admissions process and the often-dreaded Cambridge interview. Our students were taken on a tour of the city and visited the Fitzwilliam Museum to explore their permanent exhibitions. The (somewhat chilly) afternoon was spent on a punting trip along the River Cam where we were treated to a brief history of the city and its most prestigious colleges. The visit afforded students the chance to bust any myths and preconceptions they might have had about the institution ahead of their applications to university in the near future.

Designed and produced by
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