

# VERITAS

St Mark's Catholic School

No. 33 - SPRING 2024



# INTERNATIONAL Women's Day

## International Women's Day took place on 8th March 2024.

This year's campaign theme was Inspire Inclusion:

When we inspire others to understand and value women's inclusion, we forge a better world.

And when women themselves are inspired to be included, there's a sense of belonging, relevance, and empowerment.

When women aren't present, we must ask: "If not, why not?"

When women are discriminated against, we must call out poor practice.

When the treatment of women is not equitable, we must take action.

And we must do this each time, every time.

Collectively, let's forge a more inclusive world for women.

### **How will you inspire inclusion?**

St Mark's Students were asked to read about the theme and then make a collective or individual pledge as to how

they will inspire inclusion in their lives. Here are some of the inspiring pledges we received:

*Be kind to females and not be stereotypical or sexist about their gender.*



*We will tell everyone that everyone is important no matter what gender they are*

*To look at my surroundings and see - does anyone need help or comfort?*

*I will pledge to always include everyone in everything whether it is a group task or just having a conversation.*

*I will pledge to forge a gender equal world*

*We will promote equity for all genders, especially those who need encouragement.*

*I inspire inclusion by always make sure women are present and are included in all activities and encourage girls and women to do things they are afraid to attempt. It is important for us women to stand out from others and make a name for our selves in areas we aren't particularly noticed in to bring out the best in us and show we are.*

*Create spaces where everyone is welcome*

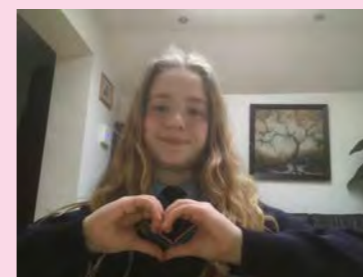
*Say thank you to more women for all they have done for us*

*By making sure no one gets left out*

*I'll try my best to forgive people I've had negative interactions with and try include them in certain activities*

*I pledge to include inclusion by asking people if they would like to part in the activity with me*

*I will challenge Gender Stereotypes, discrimination and bias.*



Welcome to the Spring Edition of Veritas. Over the past term students have worked hard and so many of them have participated in the wide-ranging activities offered beyond the curriculum. St. Mark's students have demonstrated their talents in art, music, sport and public speaking, and we were particularly proud of our Sixth Form students Zygy Lopez-Dyrka, Emma Nagle and Cara Stanislaus who competed in the Grand Final of the Rotary Public Speaking competition.



One of the highlights of the term was the Choir Festival. We welcomed the choirs of our local Catholic Primary schools to St. Mark's, and they performed with our own outstanding school choir. It was wonderful to see children and young people from the ages of 7 to 18 singing together.

We are also delighted to announce the launch of St Mark's Catholic School Alumni Network, and we are encouraging past pupils and former members of staff to register using the link on our School Website: <https://sites.google.com/st-marks.me.uk/st-marks-school-alumni/home>

Finally, on behalf of all of the staff, I wish you and your families a very happy and holy Easter.

Andrea Waugh-Lucas,  
Headteacher,

# St Mark's Alumni

We are absolutely delighted to announce the launch of the St Mark's Catholic School Alumni Network.

We believe the establishment of an alumni network will significantly enhance our wonderful school community by helping to:

- **Build a Strong Network:** Facilitate networking opportunities among alumni to strengthen connections and foster a sense of community and belonging.
- **Support Current Students:** Provide mentorship programs, tutor opportunities and career guidance to current students to help them achieve their academic and personal goals.
- **Celebrate Achievements:** Recognise and celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of alumni in various fields, inspiring current students and fostering pride in the school's legacy.

Past pupils and former members of staff can register on our school website

<https://sites.google.com/st-marks.me.uk/st-marks-school-alumni/home>

## Royal Academy of Arts Trip: Exploring French Impressionists

On the 21st of February, 30 Students (Including Year 12) from Year 10 who are studying



Art or French GCSE embarked on a trip to the Royal Academy of Arts to see an exhibition of 19th Century French Impressionists. This experience broadened the students' horizons into the world of Impressionism. As we eagerly set out on our awaited journey, we were welcomed with a bundle of different masterpieces from various collections that were also being displayed.

The tour guide guided us through the picturesque showroom, showcasing vibrant and aesthetically pleasing works by fellow artists like Claude Monet and

Edgar Degas. The Art GCSE students were given the task of drawing sketches of paintings they

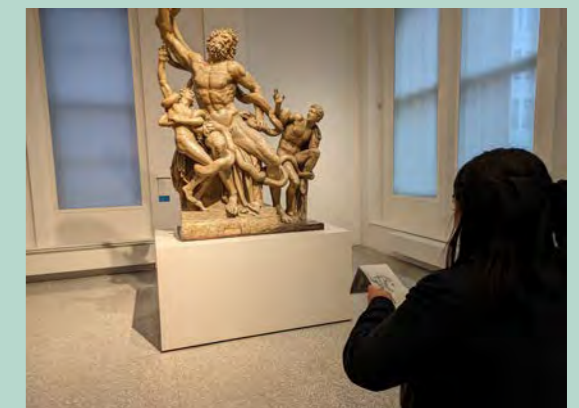


most adored in a small booklet, while French students engaged in a treasure hunt to find the names of artworks and their artists. I enjoyed sketching the paintings because it made me feel

like I was stepping into the artists' shoes and submerging myself in their use of flashy colours and understanding the meaning

behind their creations.

However, our adventure didn't end there! We were taken to another room where we were pleasantly surprised by a classical showroom. This showroom was composed of sculptures that were sculpted during the Hellenistic era. A notable feature was Leonardo De Vinci's painting, The Last Supper. Alongside the artwork, there was a hallway lined with poems, each attached to an artwork. These poems jumped into the deep meanings behind the



artwork and provided insights into the artists' mindset at the time.

Sadly, after this showroom, we had to bid farewell to the Royal Academy of Arts as we made our way back to school. This trip opened my eyes to the types of artistic movements in history and how art is one of the most important components of society.

Phedra Akai 10Ca

On the 1st March (St David's Feast Day), Mrs McGhee's year 12 Faith in Action class hosted a Krispy Kreme doughnut sale with tickets on sale at reception during break on Wednesday 21st and Friday 23rd February. Indeed, this fundraiser was possible thanks to the hard work of the sixth formers every week: designing colourful advertising posters, advertising to form groups and even convincing teachers of the bargain they would get if they bought a whole box! As a result, we ended up selling an amazing 420 tickets! (with all proceeds going to charities that St Mark's partners with). Moreover, it was a frenzy of excitement during breaktime at PC1 with hundreds of pupils coming in eagerly



to collect their genuine glazed Krispy Kreme doughnuts for only £1, with some students even collecting boxes of numerous doughnuts! Truly, thank you to all the staff and pupils who bought tickets, Mrs McGhee for guiding us through the process of putting on the sale, and the sixth formers who advertised or helped out with distributing the doughnuts during break on the day itself, without all of you this wouldn't have been possible, and I am sure that the proceeds will impact many lives for the better.

Valentina 12Willow

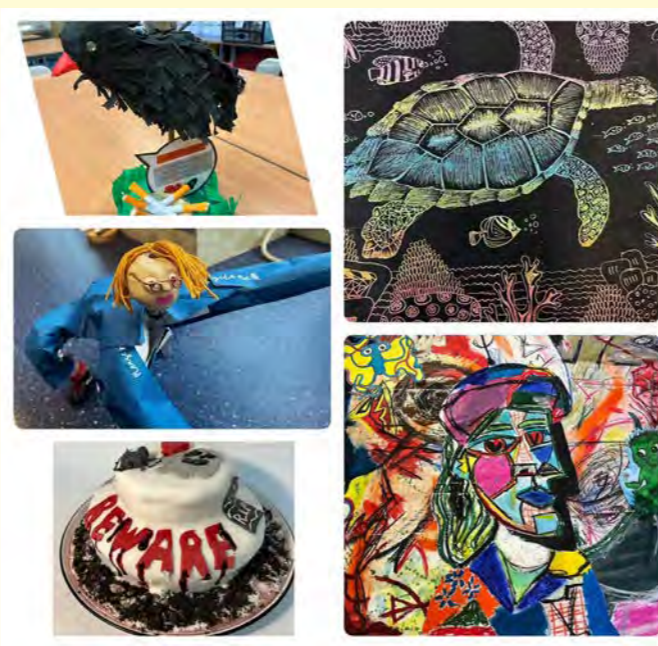




*On Friday 1st March, staff and students were treated to a wonderful exhibition of recent homework submissions from our KS3 artists. The room buzzed with excitement as everyone looked at the varied, creative work on show. It was lovely to see the support and enthusiasm shown in our school community. To see*



*more, please visit our art instagram page on: [st\\_marksartdepartment](https://www.instagram.com/st_marksartdepartment) for more images of the work made in our department!*



At the end of January, 100 of our year 9, 10 and 11 mathematicians, along with over a quarter of a million students nationwide, took part in the 2024 UK Intermediate Maths Challenge competition. This taxing 25 question multiple-choice test of their mathematical ability aims to provoke a different sort of mathematical thinking and problem-solving to the challenge provided by their maths studies in school lessons. I am happy to report that 62% of our entrants (compared with a figure of 40% nationally) have since earned a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award. Special mention should go to Phoebe Lawrence ( yr 9 ), Casper Kiczka ( yr 10 ) and Rihanna Jose ( yr 11 ) for attaining the prestigious Gold Award, and to Rihanna as the highest scorer from St. Mark's. Phoebe has also been invited to sit the follow-on round ( the even more prestigious UK Senior Kangaroo ) by dint of her performance in the Challenge. Congratulations to all our Award winners and well done indeed to all of our entrants for putting their brain power on the line yet again.

I know the students would like to thank their maths teachers for the smooth running of this year's Challenge, as indeed would I.

If any parents/guardians are interested in seeing the challenge posed to our Intermediate level students in this exacting annual workout of the grey matter, this year's and previous years' papers and solutions can be found on-line, initially at 'UKMT'.

**Prepare to be taxed, mentally.**

## Political Quizzing - Top Ten for St Mark's

Having secured a position in the top 50 by the end of Autumn term, year 13 politics students have made a huge leap forward in the intra-school politics quiz league. Competing with over 450 schools from both the state and private sector, year 13 students have tackled, each week, a range of questions covering UK, US, and global politics. Whilst a bit of fun, the questions are helpful revision and provide talking points for the latest political developments. Each student participates separately and the average score for our ten students in each year is then entered for the St Mark's score - demonstrating that they are avid followers of politics, year 13 end the season having secured tenth place in the league! Well done and a target for year 12 politicians to aspire to.



# Parliamentary Trip

School trips are something we all remember throughout our educational life and I am glad to say I will not be forgetting this one any time soon. After meeting at St Mark's, we then set out to walk to Hounslow Central to take the tube to the Houses of Parliament. I had never seen it so up close before and it was mesmerising.

After struggling to find out where the visitors entrance was, we took around fifteen minutes to get through security and we were escorted to the Margaret Thatcher Committee Room, where our workshop, led by the Electoral Commission, took place. The facilitators who ran the workshop worked alongside Kirsty Blackman, SNP MP for Aberdeen North, who was our guest speaker. Ms Blackman mentioned the reasons she became involved in politics at a relatively young age. Her main motivation was to help her local community in Aberdeen, which was particularly inspiring. She also talked about the role she had in examining the Government's Online Safety Bill.

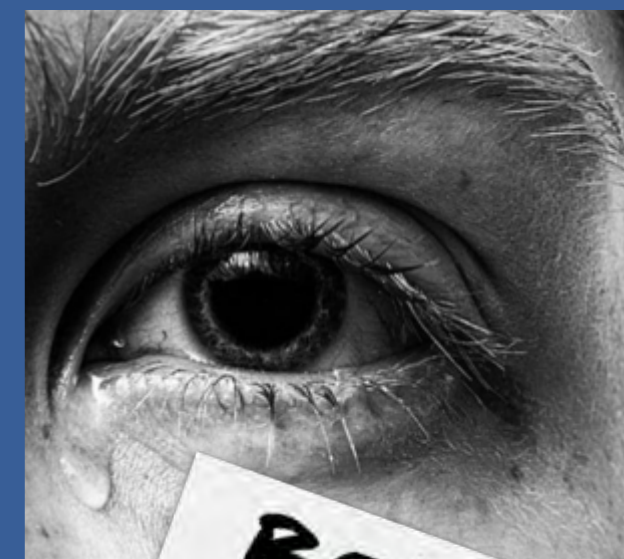
The Electoral Commission asked us, along with students from other schools, questions regarding the youth 'participation crisis' and why we think young people are not getting involved in politics. They tested various advertising campaigns out on us and we discussed possible incentives to maximise the youth vote.

After the session had finished, we were taken on a tour of Parliament. This was the most interesting part of the day. We were told about the history of Westminster Hall, the oldest part of Parliament and the reason why the lions on the lion mural on the floor had their eyes closed (Victorian sensibilities). We managed to sit in the Stranger's Gallery for part of a debate in the House of Commons (albeit not very noteworthy). We then crossed Central Lobby to the grandeur of the House of Lords, where peers were debating the contribution of the arts to society. It was most definitely my favourite part of the day. I wished there had been time to stay until the end of the speeches. Their Lordships had brought up the point of young people no longer taking up music A Level. This sparked my interest, seeing as I take music for A Level and was lucky enough to be in a school with sufficient numbers to offer music as an A Level. It then dawned on me that parliamentary debates are actually very interesting, even if you aren't taking politics A Level! I recommend watching what our MPs and peers are up to in the Palace of Westminster beyond the news headlines.

After lunch in the winter sunshine on the banks of the River Thames, Mr Crouch took us on the tour of the Supreme Court. As the Court was not sitting, we had the opportunity to sit in the chairs in which Supreme Court justices cross-examine and make decisions affecting us all. The day ended with a look at some judicial artefacts in the exhibition concluding a very memorable day.

Written by Trinity Aniyah Singh

The month of February and March at St. Mark's have been designated to celebrating Men's mental Health and breaking the stigma around it. I have always been very passionate about Men's mental health and the importance for Men to speak out about their emotions, and so when Mrs. Oakley and Ms. Joyce approached me asking for a team of young men to deliver the message, I couldn't have said yes quickly enough. Working alongside, Raiden (Deputy Head Boy), Krystian (Assistant Head Boy), Josh (Prefect), and Lennard (Prefect) we came together to present an assembly to the school on the importance of Men's mental health and sharing advice to help young men feel good about themselves. As someone who received counselling in the lower school and as Head Boy, I wanted to share my story to the whole school to enlighten my peers that it is okay to struggle and it's okay not to feel okay and hope to inspire the young men in our school to seek help if they need it and not to bottle up their emotions. Together, we also worked on creating a video of our wonderful students and staff, asking them what it is they like about Men in society. With this video we wanted to show our school all the incredible things men are and what they do, as well as showing them that they are appreciated. The video was very moving with heartfelt messages from fellow young men and teachers. A special mention goes to Lennard Gilbert in year 13 for all of his time dedicated to editing the video, including the extra long school days it created, however all throughout the process Lennard was motivated to make it the best it could be with its end goal, the message we were promoting. Despite doing our best to promote our message, we know that



**SPEAK ~~MAN~~ UP.**

as a community and a society we have a distance to go before we see a society where men find it easy to talk openly about their feelings. Statistics show that one man kills himself every 60 seconds, which totals to 1440 men a day, which quite honestly is horrifying and so I encourage you reading this article, male or female, to reach out to the men in your life, check in on them, show them how much sunshine they bring to the world. By doing this and starting small we can all create a huge impact on the world around us and together at St. Mark's, we should make it our constant mission to remove the bias. Together, lets break the Stigma.

Written by, Zygy Lopez-Dyrka Head Boy.

# YPRES

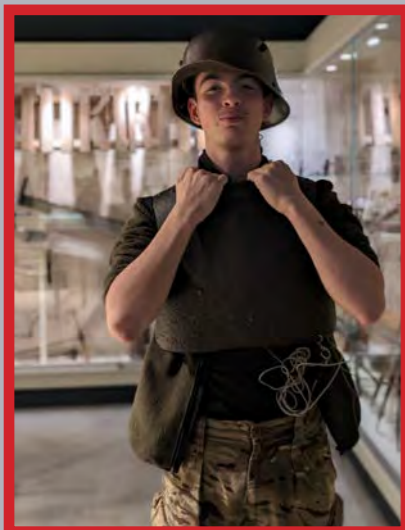
To start our adventure 45 students and 4 lucky teachers walked into a desolate reception area as if they were half asleep with a rucksack and a pair of walking shoes. Then Mrs Oakley gave a brief explanation and apology for the timings of procedures and then it began! Next we were split up into 4 groups directed by a St Mark's member of staff and then not long after we

were ready to board for our adventure. On the coach it was very comfortable and spacious with people gaming, playing cards and making memories. We picked up our tour guide, Steve, for the day who was formerly in the Army and the Metropolitan Police and a very knowledgeable historian! Eventually the South Coast was in sight as we made a stop at a food facility where I tried their lovely Hash Browns!

Life could have not been more surreal as we went past security and passport control to then be able to board the Eurotunnel which is a large rusty train that holds vehicles under the English Channel to Calais and onwards. What I can't stress though is how big this train is and how fast we were going. We must have been underground for 20 mins and then we suddenly popped up in France. We then made our short journey from Calais to Ypres, a historic town in

Belgium. Historic Ypres was the only place in Belgium not controlled by Germany but by the British. The first graveyard that we stopped at was near an old hospital called Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery. Here we saw the only woman to be buried in Belgium due to her honorable actions looking after soldiers. After a while of examining and paying our respects to different graves, including Chinese workers who were buried there, we jumped back on the coach for some lunch and one of the greatest museums of all time.

To get you in the mood for our next activity I want you to think of any major war museum in London and times it by 1000 as our next stop was a replica of life at war and it was out of this world. First, you go into the museum and are met with artifacts, replicas of weapons and machinery, certain types of gas used and of course the main event: a real life underground trench bunker and trench system which included bunk beds. These were highly uncomfortable and had mannequins creating life in the trenches and a fully protected ditch with air raid shelters. To finish, our lovely tour guide Steve brought uniforms and soldiers equipment which Alex (9Fi) wonderfully modeled for us with explanations and information to develop our knowledge of History. After a couple laughs, a picture with me with a rifle and a reason why peeing on a handkerchief was a good thing we managed to make it onto the bus ready to drive to our next destination but first I needed to go to the GIFT SHOP!



We then visited a preserved German trench system which has a clear map



of the planning used for victory. Well after 20 mins of many loops and races through the trenches and dugouts we then visited the biggest commonwealth cemetery called Tyne Cot. This has the biggest amount of soldiers buried here many graves marked: 'Known unto God'. To show our appreciation and gratitude for the experience and what the soldiers did on the front line we passed for a prayer as a school. Ashley and Matylda both put down poppy wreaths. Whilst we were here we got a lovely group photo with all of us and myself and Ronan found people we researched who were Augustus Davies formerly of Isleworth and Francis Alcock

who was Ronan's great, great grandad .



Finally it was time for us to enter the town of Ypres which was beautiful. We all had our euros ready for one thing and one thing only, the chocolate shop which I believe is the closest thing you are getting to Willy Wonka's factory on Earth! I mean they gave us free pieces of chocolate for our arrival and they were so welcoming.

Overall I think we all can agree that the trip was super enjoyable! We saw one of the greatest

museums of all time including two trenches, 1 Fisher pupil wearing a uniform and me with a milk chocolate bar in my pocket! But most of all, it helped all our WW1 studies to become real and we now completely understand the phrase:

*lest we forget.*

*by Felix Watts - Year 9*



# Languages for all Royal Holloway University

LFA is a programme run by the Royal Holloway University of London in partnership with the London Borough of Hounslow which has been introduced in St Mark's to recognise the hard work, language skills and commitment of our top linguists in our school. On the 12th January 15 students studying French and Spanish went on a trip to learn and find out where languages can take you. They met university language students and interacted with people who have benefited from having studied languages and who are currently using them in their careers.

The trip was a success and eye-opener as it gave our students the opportunity to reflect on how competitive the world is nowadays and how prepared they must be in order to thrive in an ever-changing society with an evolving business model.

I wanted to take part as I have always enjoyed learning different languages and I have considered studying it in the future. During the trip, we had the opportunity to have a language degree taster session in a language I haven't studied before - I had French. After this we had lunch and had a short tour of the campus with our student ambassador. Later on, we had a speed networking session with volunteers that wanted to share their passion about languages, we could ask them questions about their job and what qualifications they had in order to work there. Overall, the whole trip gave me a great idea of the university experience and one thing that I learnt that day is there is an incredible amount of jobs that you can have with a language degree- not just a translator or a teacher.

Dominika Krolik



Personally, I wanted to take part as I wanted to expand my knowledge of learning modern languages after university and receive greater help for my Spanish GCSE. During the day, we attended a taster lesson on a language that we'd never learnt, after we had a tour of the university, and then speed networking with people from different careers. Ultimately, I learnt of all the potential jobs that modern languages may help in and had a very educational and interesting day.

Jennifer Preknica



I wanted to take part as I am considering taking a modern foreign language as an A level and I think that learning different languages can be very useful for the future. During the trip, we took part in a taster lesson of a language that we haven't studied before. After the taster lesson, we had lunch and went on a short tour of the university campus. Later during the day, we took part in a speed networking session with many people that had a passion in learning many different languages. We had the opportunity to ask them questions about their jobs and how learning languages has helped them get to where they are today. One thing that I learnt was that you are able to start learning a language from scratch if you take it as a course at university.

Matylda Szibyak



## Year 8 - Problem-Solving

This term, the theme for the Aiming for Oxbridge sessions have been problem solving. Problem solving is an essential life skill as we are often surrounded by different circumstances everyday, some of which require varied responses. Analytical and critical thinking skills can assist you in your university applications and they are also valuable traits among employers.

In the first few sessions this term, we worked with friends to try and untangle a series of riddles and puzzles. Then, we were taught practical ways to approach a problem effectively. For example, it is easier to set about solving problems by visualising it on paper. Brainstorming produces a large amount of ideas quickly, and then organising them on paper may help to identify and correct flaws within your methods. Our skills were then put to the test when we were locked into an escape room, where we had to discover clues, work out puzzles and accomplish tasks.

Creativity is also appreciated in problem solving. In one lesson, we were asked to make a free standing bridge that supported weight up to 500 grams with only materials we were given. Some groups built beam bridges with paper straws, while others tried to construct suspension bridges connected with string.

And remember, most problems will not be solved on the first attempt. We have learned to stay resilient throughout the problem-solving process as mistakes could steer us to a more successful strategy. Techniques, resilience and practice will help you to get there sooner or later.

The Aiming for Oxbridge sessions have been absolutely wonderful and I would 100% recommend it to anyone that has the opportunity to in the future.

## Year 9

This term, the Year 9 Aiming for Oxbridge group have been taking part in an exciting project where they have had to apply their new skills and knowledge in a practical way. Mirroring the BBC's The Apprentice, students are competing in a series of business-related activities designed to test and challenge them across several subject areas.

Round 1 of the Apprentice, which was the problem solving task. Each group was given a booklet filled with different problems we had to solve. This ranged from music, science, maths, geography, Greek mythology, general knowledge and other questions that involved our problem solving skills. Along with this task, there was a twist. Students were not allowed to use the internet at all to solve these problems. In individual groups, they had to work together, use their own knowledge, old school research in the LRC and talk to knowledgeable people such as teachers or family members.

Groups were also given the money they could use to trade for answers with other groups. As this was a competition, there was a leaderboard created which was ranked based on the number of points each group had earned. The points were decided by the number of correct answers we had in the booklet and the amount of money we had returned in the final hand in. However, the leaderboard can change between every task so each group has the chance to be at the top. Overall, this task was all about problem solving skills, communication, teamwork, negotiation and creative thinking as a group.



# AIMING FOR OXBRIDGE

## Round 2: Medical Practice

The second task was a research project surrounding the topic of medicine. The groups had three weeks to prepare for a real-life medical clinic - diagnosing and suggesting treatment. Teams were given a booklet filled with information on 25 conditions ranging from deficiencies such as anaemia, to hereditary diseases like Huntington's

disease, to viruses including Ebola and Covid-19.

This challenge was not all about knowledge though; teams had to deal with some pretty difficult personalities to test their bed-side manner too. The Year 12 students who are looking to apply for medicine at University came up with different 'personas' and conditions to test the Year 9s, who donned their laboratory coats to really play the part! The knowledge and communication skills the Year 9s were able to demonstrate was remarkable and it was an incredible experience for both Year 9s and 12s! Team Biocentric came out on top, due to their cool, calm & collected manner and communication skills, as well as their enviable subject knowledge - but it is Team Divergent currently on top with incredible consistency. With only one more round to go...who will be crowned the St Mark's Apprentice Champions?



1st	Divergent	Misha, Thomas, Opemipo, Matylida
2nd	Biocentric	Wyurrica, Leo, Gabriel, Zoey
3rd=	The Aces	Selena, Nicholas, Gianna, Klara
3rd=	Dark Electron	Maryvonne, Luke B, Rhyz, Tasha
5th	Olympians	Phoebe, Luke D, Onome, Tiffany
6th	Traitors	Micaela, Felix, Elina, Tom S

*Now the students move on to Round 3: Book Publishing - all organised by the expertise of Ms Weir.*

*Teams are to become book publishers and create a hardcopy & audiobook version of a new children's book for the market. In a few weeks' time, in classic The Apprentice style, the teams must face a fierce panel of judges and pitch their idea, displaying how many signatures they have gathered from teachers to demonstrate that their book is worth investing in!*



Having stolen the show, winning every single award at the Hounslow Borough Rotary Public Speaking competition in November, St Mark's Junior and Senior teams had qualified for the District Final!



St Mark's were up against private schools and grammar schools - who were exceptional speakers and raised the standard of the competition...but not quite to the level of our incredible students. Our junior team were superb but agonisingly finished 2nd and didn't quite make it to the Grand Final - although Misha Mac and Luke Donnelly won best chair and best proposer respectively. Watch out for these young speakers...whilst they are small in stature, they are certainly big in voice!

**Youth Speaks' Rotary Public Speaking District Final 2nd Place**  
**Chairperson - Misha Mac**  
**Proposition - Luke Donnelly**  
**Opposition - Phoebe Lawrence**

**Youth Speaks' Rotary Public Speaking Outright Winners of District Final**  
**Chairperson - Zygy Lopez-Dyrka**  
**Proposition - Cara Stanislaus**  
**Opposition - Emma Nagle**

Our Senior Team made up of Zygy, Cara and Emma did however win the District Final and qualified for the Grand Final which took place on Sunday 10th March in Dorking!



This Grand Final involved competing against all winning schools across south and south-west England and included some exceptionally talented students. Zygy, Cara and Emma held their own against some of the best speakers in the country for their age range.

Whilst they didn't quite make it to qualify for Nationals - they absolutely did us proud with many in the audience arguing that 'St Mark's had been robbed'....and it wasn't just Mr Shore and Ms Weir shouting it!

Zygy did however get special

recognition in the final for his performance and was awarded Best Chairperson. Please do congratulate them on their achievements - whilst these students knew how close they were to the National Level, when looking back and reflecting on the immense success they have had, they should be incredibly proud of what they have achieved.



The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts is a world-renowned exam awarding body which specialises in the transformative power of the dramatic arts. The qualifications it offers specialises in training students in their performance and public speaking skills promoting creative, authentic and confident communication. While LAMDA exams cover a range of disciplines, we at St. Mark's currently offer the qualification in: Speaking in Public.

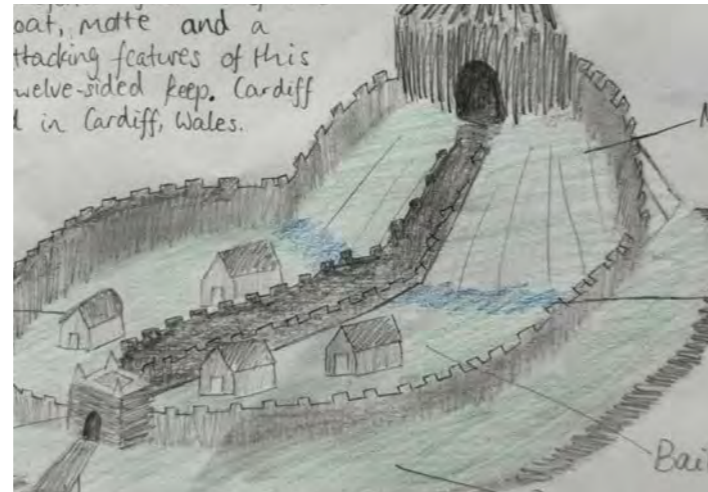
After two years of immense success with over 50 students achieving Distinctions in their final grades, a new crop of hungry Year 10 students have challenged themselves into the world of public speaking. Each week they will undergo specialist training in the art of rhetoric as well as being attending fortnightly mentor meetings where they are tasked with debates, presentations and challenges all surrounding speeches and public speaking. Watch this year as the students continue to amaze us with their voices on their exceptional journey to their LAMDA qualification:

Roisin Kynes	Rein Cortez	Schawnelle Dsouza	Katherine Dibley	Alexander Krawiel	Hanna Paluch
Niamh Smith	Daris Dias	Joela Bautista Soriano	Audrey Balangao	Victor Balduino	Ewelina Nowosielska
Julia Paluch	Michelle Deocampo	Rhys Mallari	Casper Kickzka	Loran Nawzad	Connie Norris
Roxanna Fara	Samuel Oloyede	Paulina Budarz	Ciana Drummond -Elliot	Ellaine Flores	Ebany Pereira
Jessica De Souza	Fiomica Fernandes	Porshia Fernando	Aishwarya Vettickal	Ozzie Parmesh	Rhia Fernandes
	Matilda Wardle	Nathan Creighton	Zachary Krawczyk		

Some of our year 7 historians have been taking part in a St Mark's tradition: creating Norman castles out of cardboard, cereal boxes, toilet roll holders, sticky back plastic and a variety of other materials to show the development from motte and bailey castles to the more sophisticated concentric castles which still dot our landscape. This year students were also given the opportunity to create animated castles using software such as Minecraft or to draw a sketch labelled to show all the essential parts of a Norman castle.



This year students were also given the opportunity to create animated castles using software such as Minecraft or to draw a sketch labelled to show all the essential parts of a Norman castle.



Ian Araujo (7 Fisher) explains how he tackled the task:

"Even though this project appeared to be easy, it was not. I tried to base my castle on the main features of medieval castle architecture. Daily items became the key objects my castle would be built out of. Cylindrical objects came in useful when creating the battlements. For example, tubes used to contain Pringles were put to good use. The crenels were made out of Forbo Flotex carpet planks to give the castle a powerful vibe. Fake grass was placed around the castle to give it a natural look. Polystyrene foam was used to construct the houses. All of these parts were created piece by piece in intervals to allow the glues and adhesives to do their work. To finish off the project, with authenticity, I added a moat, decorated with marine life and a drawbridge constructed with matchsticks bonded to the castle with a fine chain. Finally, plants and a portcullis were erected and put in their respective positions."



"First, I decided what material I was going to use. I used a piece of MDF then I got a bit of Astro turf and used a hot glue gun to secure it. After that I made fences to surround the village and castle. To make the round fence I put a rubber band on a round bottle and stuck mini popsicle sticks around with PVA glue and then coated it with some more PVA and waited for it to dry. Once it had dried I attempted to take it off of the bottle. Unfortunately, it was in a circle shape but was quite weak and flexible so I put duct tape round the inside to stabilise it. For the rectangular fence I simply got one long lollipop stick then stuck mini lollipop sticks along the long lollipop stick. I repeated this step three more times.

Following this step I decided to move on to making the motte. For the motte I used a light green grass covered hat. I was able to stick this down with a hot glue gun. Then I proceeded to make my weapon - the battering ram. For the rounded bit of the battering ram I had some assistance as we used the steam from the kettle to be able to bend the lollipop sticks. After doing the first step of battering ram I decided to make the base almost like an open box. Next I attached a string to the battering ram to be able to add the weapon, for this I used a pencil. Unfortunately it was not able to swing as far as I had hoped.

To make the houses for my village I drew out the house like a blueprint and added tabs to be able to construct it easily. To make a wooden effect I made the houses out of brown card and drew lines on them. I did the same for the castle. However I faced one of my first obstacles: glueing the roof for my castle together and being able to glue it on my castle. This took me a while.

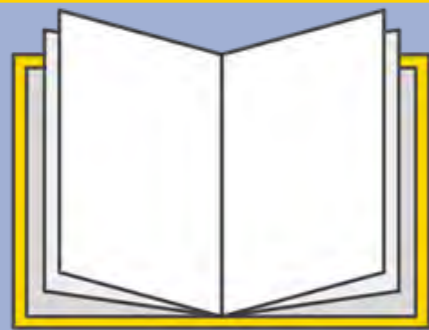
To raise the village for my moat I used a spare piece of astro turf and glued it on the turf I already had glued down then I got to glueing my fences, houses and castles down into position. The final stage was making my moat I got two different shades of blue and twisted them together I had to stick the ends with sellotape so they didn't come loose I then stuck it into the lip of my hat. For portable reasons I had to leave the battering ram loose."



Erin's motte and bailey castle:

By Erin Hughes-Kozlowski

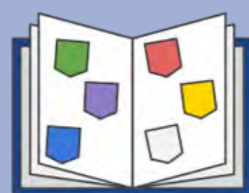
# CASTLES



# St Mark's Literacy Festival

This year we launched the St Mark's Literacy Festival to coincide with the week of World Book Day and celebrate our school wide commitment to literacy and our love of reading.

During the week there were a whole range of activities on offer to students. From quizzes to trails, book swaps to short story reading, the whole school spent the week celebrating and enjoying the amazing worlds of literature!



## House Poetry

*The Literacy Festival included the opportunity for some inter-House competition in the form of the House Poetry Competition. Students were challenged to get creative and compose a poem to celebrate everything that is wonderful about their House and its associated aspect*

*of Catholic Social Teaching. The poem could take the form of an acrostic, a haiku or an ode, as long as it told the reader everything that makes that House special. Each of the Heads of House, along with their House Captains, chose a winning poem for their House and these then went to our expert panel of Ms Waugh-Lucas, Ms Joyce and Mr Sheehan to choose the overall winner*

Inspired by Ernest Hemingway's attempt to write the shortest novel, the Six Word Story Competition was a challenge in concise storytelling, asking students to entertain, excite and enthrall us with a story that was just six words long. We had over 100 amazing entries to the competition and Miss Weir had the unenviable job of choosing our top three. A huge well done to everyone that entered a story and congratulations to our top three:

**1st Abner Cardozo**

"Lost keys found in unexpected hands."

**2nd Rhianna Jose**

"They danced, despite the music stopping."

**3rd Luke Donnelly**

"First glance, hearts intertwined, forever entangled."



## Six Word Story

Hidden around the school during the week were 12 quotes from different works of literature. Students had to keep an eye out for these and match them up to the 12 books that they came from. Why not have a go for yourself?

### Books

Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There by Lewis Carroll

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis

Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams

Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone by J. K. Rowling

Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

The Hunger Games by Susan Collins

The Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum

Matilda by Roald Dahl



## Literacy Trail

### Quotes

"There's no place like home."

"Why, sometimes, I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

"We are fashioned creatures, but half made up."

"Once a king or queen of Narnia, always a king or queen of Narnia."

"All the world is made of faith, and trust, and pixie dust."

"The books transported her into new worlds and introduced her to amazing people who lived exciting lives."

"One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world"

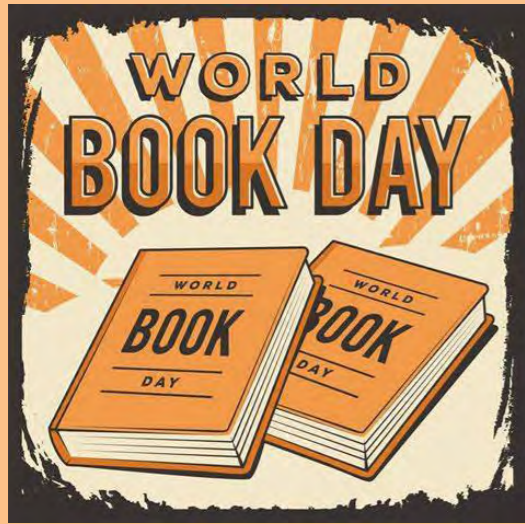
"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."

"Don't Panic."

"If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world."

"Mr and Mrs Dursley of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much."

"May the odds be ever in your favour."



On Thursday 7 March the whole school came together to celebrate World Book Day and a number of characters from literature could be seen in the corridors and classrooms as the teachers got involved and got dressed up. There were Where's Wallys to be found in the Science department, Little Red Riding Hood was spotted in the theatre (fortunately without the wolf) and the great bard William Shakespeare

made a visit to the English department! Students were able to take part in a special quiz, finding out which teacher was dressed as which character and answering some questions about the books they represented. During break time we also held a book fair where students could pick up a new book for free thanks to the generous donations of books made by staff and students. All of these activities led to lots of conversations about our favourite books. Perhaps you could try the quiz yourself?

Can you find out...

- What is the name of Bilbo & Frodo Baggins' house?
- What is the French name for the book Sleeping Beauty?
- What is The Artful Dodger's real name?
- When is William Shakespeare's birthday?
- What are the names of the three farmers that Mr Fox steals from?
- What is the name of Gangster Granny's grandson?
- What is the name of Wally's dog?
- Who saves Little Red Riding Hood from the wolf?
- What time is The Mad Hatter stuck at?
- Where do Winnie The Pooh and his friends live?
- Who is the Head of Gryffindor House?
- Which Word of the Week meant a lover of books?
- Where is Lord of the Rings set?



One of the highlights of World Book Day is also the opportunity for the whole school to share a short story together throughout the day. When the Wasps Drowned by Clare Wigfall was read in six parts at the start of each lesson of the day by Mr Shore, Mrs Brennan, Ms Davies, Miss Stewart and Ms John. Students were keen to find out what happened as the story unfolded and discussed questions around the plot, the characters and their predictions of what was going to happen.



Thank you to everyone who got involved in the St Mark's Literacy Festival and happy reading!





# SLIME MONDAY

Science week 2024 at St Mark's kicked off on Monday with a messy event taking place in lab 3. This involved key stage 3 students making slime using borax into the cup of warm water and mixing it with freshly made clear glue and adding a few drops of

food colouring and/or glitter to the clear glue and stir gently to combine. The students then examined some of the properties of this amazing substance. Unfortunately, the pupils were not allowed to take away their slime back home due

to health and safety reasons.

However, the students now have the knowledge and expertise for preparing homemade slime using simpler ingredients. The link below can be used for information about making slime without using borax:

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/how-make-slime-without-borax>



A lot of pupils displayed excellent knowledge about slime and how to change its properties - it seems that slime has become a very popular material to make these days and there are lots of resources online to make it safely at home!

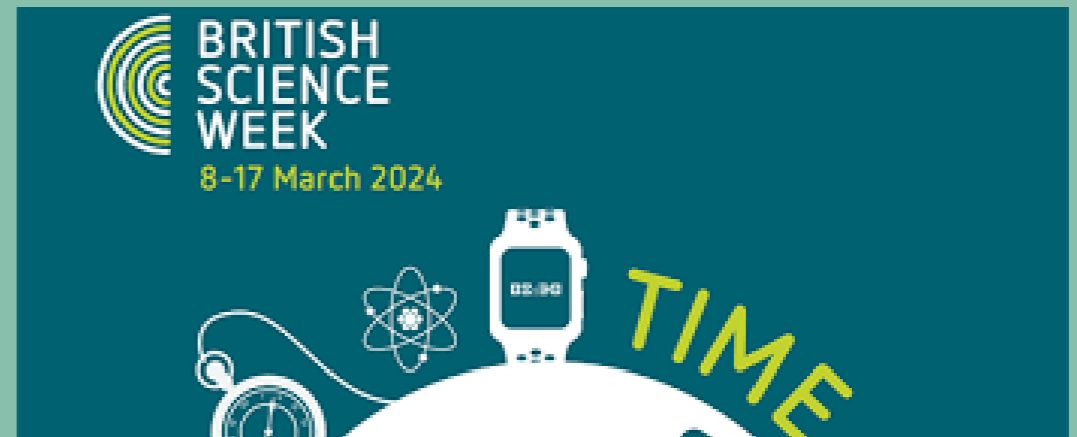
The pupils making slime had a varying degree of success. Some found out the hard way it is tricky to make it unless you use the exact quantity of the borax and the PVA. Others had some amazing samples and mixed colours. The activity generated a good amount of mess with the glassware and equipment and we are blessed in the Science department to have amazing technicians who are able to deal

with situations like this on a daily basis!



The theme this year for British Science Week was 'Time!' It's the 30th anniversary of British Science Week - we wanted the students to celebrate this huge milestone with us, thinking about the time since the week began, and looking to the future! Other areas the students were asked to think about regarding the theme were:

What about things that go very fast (the fastest animals, ways of traveling) or very slow (plants growing, building cities and large structures)?

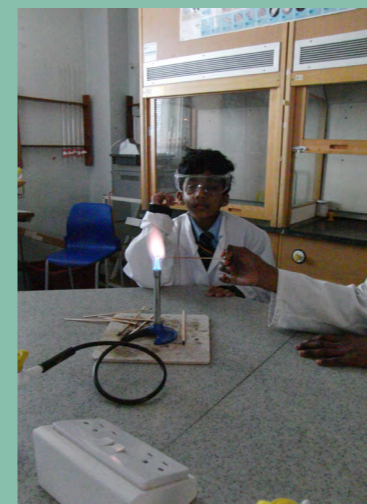
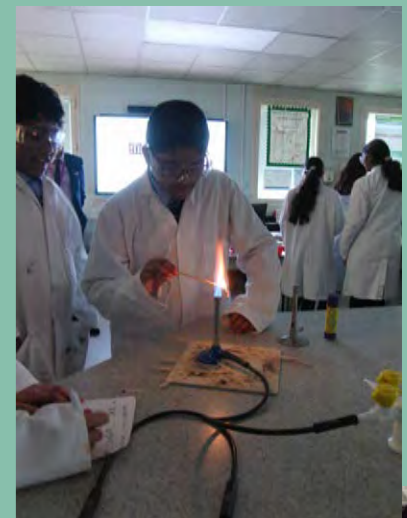


# FLAME TESTING TUESDAY

A group of twenty students were involved in the flames test using Bunsen burners. Students hold a soaked splint in a blue Bunsen flame to reveal the flame colour. Just as a fingerprint is unique to each person, the colour of light emitted by metals heated in a flame is unique to each metal. In this activity, the characteristic colour of light emitted for several metals could be observed.

When a substance is heated in a flame, the substance's

electrons absorb energy from the flame. This absorbed energy allows the electrons to be promoted to excited energy levels. From these excited energy levels, the electrons naturally want to make a transition, or relax, back down to the ground state. When an electron makes a transition from a higher energy level to a lower energy level, a particle of light called a photon is emitted and this produces a distinctive flame colour.



# FISH



Ms Kingsland and Mr Crone were looking at a dissection with two separate groups after school on Wednesday. By dissecting a fish head, students get to learn about the internal and external anatomy of a fish. They got to see inside a fish, first hand, and gain invaluable hands-on experience of dissection.

The first step was to place the fish on its side and locate the boney plate which protects the gills. They then cut the plate away from its base to expose the gills and then removed them by cutting them at the upper and lower attachments. They then removed the eye, cut through the cornea and extracted the lens. The students

then had the opportunity to appreciate that the lens is relatively large in size, and relate this to the importance of the eye to the fish.

The pupils showed excellent engagement in learning about the importance of practical work in the lab. It is at the heart of science, and is used to support and consolidate scientific concepts. It also develops investigating techniques and helps build, and master practical skills.

Additional support for this exciting event was provided by Mr Johnson and Ms Chatha in order to ensure that all students were able to carry out this dissection safely.



# MAKING BIRD FEEDERS

Friday lunchtime saw Ms Brennan and MS Chatha making yogurt pot bird feeders.

Making your own bird feeders is a fun and cost-effective way to help out the birds in your garden or outdoor space. Here is a link for making your own using a simple set of items:

- Lard
- Garden Bird Seed
- Clean Yoghurt Pots
- Sticks
- String



<https://cultivationstreet.com/make-bird-feeders/>

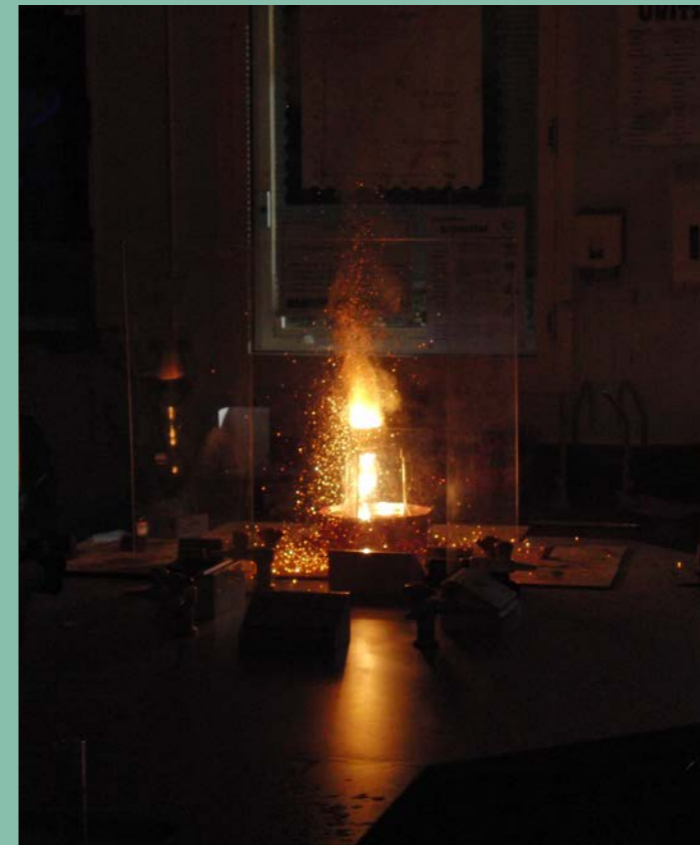


# BANGS AND EXPLOSIONS

The Friday afternoon of Science Week continued with a bang, literally! Explaining everyday risks is a critical task for any teacher - though the exercise can have unexpected effects, as some remarkable photographs reveal.

One demonstration used some teachers' hands in soapy bubbles filled with methane, and set fire to them, with flames that touched the ceiling (no damage though!). This was followed by a series of demonstrations, including 'screaming' jelly babies by Mr Yiu and the 'whoosh' bottles by Mr.

Windmill. A mixture of alcohol and air in a large polycarbonate bottle is ignited. The resulting rapid combustion reaction, often accompanied by a dramatic 'whoosh' sound and flames, demonstrates the large amount of chemical energy released in the combustion of alcohols.



Finally, the students were taken outside and treated to a selection of rockets powered by hydrogen and methane which



generated some loud bangs. Mr Shore and Mr Janman are experts in this very noisy and dangerous task and made full use of the chemical properties of these two gasses to create a very powerful demonstration!

**A brilliant way to end Science Week! The week was a big success and it definitely deepened the students' love and appreciation for Science! Thank you to all involved in any of the activities.**



*Well done to the Year 7 boys who are Borough Basketball Champions. They won all four pool games by at least 10 points in each of these matches. In the final they met the winners of the other pool, Green School for Boys. In a tight final held at St Mark's the Year 7s won 19-15. The Year 7s were never behind but at one stage in the third quarter there was only a point in it.*



Our girls' basketball continues to go from strength to strength with excellent numbers at training on Mondays. It was encouraging to see our Year 7 girls play an excellent Lampton team and come out victorious! It is hoped that the basketball at the school will continue to be developed with further girls fixtures planned for the next basketball season. Congratulations to all those involved in this year.



## **St. Mark's making a splash**

*St. Mark's students are currently enjoying free swimming lessons funded by London Sport. Two sessions run per week on Fridays and Saturdays where new or inexperienced swimmers have the opportunity to be taught how to swim by coaches from Hounslow swimming club.*

*The lessons are playing an important role in delivering a legacy for our much loved student Brian Sasu who tragically died in July 2022.*

*We are looking to continue this swimming programme and if you have a son or daughter who is non or weak swimmer, then please get in touch with Mr. Taylor in the PE department via email ([taylorp@st-marks-hounslow-sch.uk](mailto:taylorp@st-marks-hounslow-sch.uk))*



## **Last Gasp Year 8 finish the season on a high:**

After an up and down league season for the Year 8 football team, they finished on a high with a last gasp 3-2 win over Isleworth & Syon to secure their place in the top borough league for next season.

Deploying a new 4-2-3-1 formation, the game started at a high pace. After a tight opening period it was Azriel Stobier who opened the scoring for St. Mark's.

After a period of pressure it was Isleworth who drew level just before halftime.



After a slow start to the second half, Isleworth then took the lead. Could St. Mark's muster a comeback??

After so much effort and application, St. Mark's efforts were nearly undone after Isleworth's star player broke through but he was to be denied by an amazing save from Simeon Andorful.

That save inspired St. Mark's to push forward and they drew level when substitute Jacob Wise fired home from close range.

Everyone thought it was too late to claim the win but with virtually the last kick off the game centre back Alex Czuchryta pounced on a clearance from the Isleworth goalkeeper

scoring a lofted effort from outside the box.

The team should be congratulated on their efforts to finish the season on such a positive note and along with the other year groups they can all look forward to the new season with confidence.



## **St. Mark's Leaders leading the way**

*A group of 25 Year 9 students are currently studying a sports leadership level 2 qualification every Tuesday after school.*

*Run with support from Sport Impact, the group are being taught several key life skills which they can use in the future to help to lead and coach sports events within the school or within the local community and feeder schools.*

*The course leader has been extremely impressed with our students and we look forward to opportunities in the summer for the leaders to help inspire the next generation of sport stars in Hounslow at sports days and borough competitions.*



On the evening of Tuesday 26th February 16 ambitious students competed against each other for the victory of the Jack Petchey Speak Out regionals. From our very own school we had a determined student, Alexandra Krawiel, who shared her speech "There are rips in my fabric".

"There are rips in my fabric" is an outstanding speech about families and appreciation. Her last line "there may be rips in my fabric however it doesn't mean it's not as comforting, warm and vibrant as anyone else's". It emphasises that you don't need

perfection in order to be happy. Alexandra performed 12th out of the 16 competitors' and had a huge amount of pressure on her however still performed the best speech out of all. Suspense filled the room as the lights dimmed, second and third were announced and the crowd erupted with excitement. Finally, the time came to announce first place and screams, whistling and shouting echoed throughout the hall as Alexandra's name was called for first place.

The school is extremely proud of Alexandra's achievement and cannot wait for her

performance in the semi-finals. We wish her the best of luck!

### Letter from Jack Petchey Organisation

Dear Alexandra

Congratulations on your achievement at the Hounslow Regional Final last night! You should be very proud of yourself for doing so well in the UK's largest youth public speaking competition. You are now among the top 0.2% of young public speakers in London and Essex. Your Headteacher will be notified of your achievement and a press release will be sent to your local paper so keep an eye out for your name in the papers. We will update our social media outlets with your success so please keep an eye on Instagram, X (Twitter) and TikTok. I've also attached a couple of photos from the evening and more can be found on our website here.

I would just like to take this opportunity to outline the process moving forward. We hold 37 Regional Finals throughout London and Essex and from our 37 Regional Champions, 15 will be selected to go through to the Grand Final on 8th July 2024. These 15 will be selected by an expert panel at our semi final in June 2024 who will watch all 37 videos and judge them on the same four criteria as you were judged at your Regional Final: content, delivery, structure and positive impact. All Regional Champions will then be notified in June as to whether they've been selected for the Grand Final.



## Year 9 Geography Exploding Volcanoes Project

This term our Year 9 Geography students have been busy designing and constructing their very own explosive volcano. Students were challenged with ensuring the volcano was geographically correct, drawing on their knowledge from their current topic, as well as creating an impressive eruption.

Take a look at some of the fantastic designs & eruptions...



## Year 7

Chose an exhibition from the Natural history Museum and designed a bag based on that theme. They use the traditional Textiles techniques of block printing, applique and embroidery to embellish their designs



# Design & Technology



## Year 8

Students were asked to choose a social, ethical or environmental issue that interested them and design a T-shirt based on that theme. The T-shirt had to portray a clear message using tie dye, applique and embroidery to embellish the T-shirt



Around half a decade ago, I was told by my primary school teacher that there would be an opportunity to sing in a big school with lots of other different schools. Elated by this, I waited. But due to Covid, it never happened.

Fast forward 5 years and you get to the 6th of March, where our school welcomed 5 other primary schools to a massive performance that, one may say, was “The stuff of legends.”

The Choir festival is a collection of five primary schools. Along with our school, we performed some of the greatest renditions of classic hits. Each school sings 2 songs individually (one of a religious theme, and another with a more modern vibe.) and then it ends with a massive medley. This year’s medley had the theme of ABBA because it is 50 years since ABBA won the Eurovision song contest with Waterloo.

We would like to thank Ms Jackson and all the other Primary schools for putting this amazing compilation together and we can’t wait for what you are going to produce next year!

## Choir Festival

By Ryan Rodrigues, and Darius Dias  
10 Ca & 10 Fi



On the 1st of March, the year 12 and 13 A-level R.E. class had the privilege to attend an insightful lecture by Peter Vardy, which proved to be a very memorable experience. Meeting Peter Vardy was thrilling, and his words undoubtedly resonated with us in many ways. “You are defective” this statement was said by Peter Vardy himself aimed at individuals who wear glasses, in order to illustrate the insignificance of physical imperfections compared to moral ones. Amazingly, Peter Vardy conveyed his views passionately, demonstrating his knowledge with a perfect blend of seriousness and humour. During the brief intermissions students were allowed to meet Vardy where we were allowed to buy his book, and take pictures with him. Naturally, the year 13 class chose to do this and were delighted to witness his patience. One particularly striking moment within this experience was the opportunity the audience got to interact and participate by

having a debate regarding the question “is conscience something that is right to be learned through society?”. Here a year 13 student from our school confidently participated, along with many others from other schools. To conclude, the year 13 class received an autograph from Peter Vardy for our Ethics teacher Ms Jackson and Philosophy teacher Ms Heeney where he wrote a meaningful message to both.

## Peter Vardy Conference

