

VERITAS

St Mark's Catholic School

No. 16 - AUTUMN 2017



Some of this year's prize winners.....

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HeadLine



Welcome to our Autumn Term 2017 edition of Veritas. I would like to start by thanking Mrs Cramer for producing the previous fifteen editions and to Mrs Forde for taking over this responsibility.

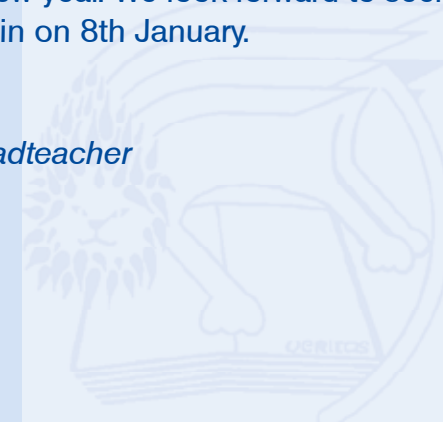
Veritas encapsulates so much of what is special about St Mark's Catholic School but it does take a big commitment to put it together each term.

We returned to School in September with a record breaking set of GCSE and "A" Level examination results. Our School Vision is all about fulfilling God given potential including academic potential and our students excelled themselves this Summer. Our GCSE Progress 8 score placed St Mark's in the top 1% of Schools in the country. Our "A" Level results were the best in the Borough with 75% of grades A*-B. The Sunday Times identified St Mark's as the thirteenth best Comprehensive School in the country. Well done to students, teachers and parents! We should all feel very proud of our School.

The vast majority of St Mark's students not only work hard but commit themselves to the wider life of the School as demonstrated in these Veritas pages – debating, charity activities, School productions, School trips, Clubs, House competitions, theatre visits, Sports teams and much more. Five years in the main School go by very quickly and it is so important to get involved, to make a contribution, to be challenged and to create some tremendous memories to look back on.

Can I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas and new year. We look forward to seeing the students again on 8th January.

Paul Enright, Headteacher



PUBLIC SPEAKING SUCCESS



It's that time of the year again where the Rotarians call for the voices of the future to express themselves at the Rotary Public Speaking Competition. With a great history in the competition, St. Mark's, of course, fielded three strong teams across the intermediate and senior levels looking to make our mark in the world of Public Speaking once again.

Our Intermediate team was made up of Joe Gibson, Alice Snell and Monet Munyoro, delivering their speeches on the notion that dance should be viewed as a sport. An enticing topic with

Alice's beautifully written speech and powerful emotion, sandwiched by Joe's audacious and energised introduction and Monet's inspiring conclusion. While small in stature, this team certainly showed they were big in character and voice, winning all available accolades and moving on to the regional finals in early 2018.

At the Senior level, again St. Mark's enjoyed immense success, yet the competition was fierce. Not only did we have to contend with the exceptional standard of speakers from across Hounslow Schools but also against each other, as we entered two teams! Team A made up of Valeria Atik, Joseph Nagle and Gabriel Millin, delivering professionalism, wonderful rhetoric and charisma...in that order. Team B



comprised of Tom Moreland, Oskar Burnetka and Harry Black – this team demonstrating intelligent sarcasm, welcomed controversy and beautifully articulated attitude...in that order. It was the Clash of the Titans – Socialism vs Monarchism, and the real winners were the audience, privileged to witness such a display of oratory ability, intellect and forward thinking.

Ultimately, Team A qualified and we wish all St. Mark's teams luck as they progress through this prestigious competition.



On Sunday 10 September, having won the London and South East regional final of the Catenian Society's Public Speaking Competition, Eoin Hanlon travelled to Manchester's Chamber of Commerce to compete in the National Final. Although no winner's trophy this time, Eoin argued passionately regarding the lowering of the voting age from 18 to 16.



Debating - Round 1 Godolphin & Latymer League

The first round was hosted at St Mark's, with only one group being able to qualify from a group of four for the knockout stages, we ended up in a group of 'death'. The debates were on vegetarianism and single sex education. An enjoyable time was had by all with all teams conducting themselves properly and debating at a high standard. All St Mark's pupils were in Year 7 and it was their first time debating; So well done to Lareina Simonds, Paige Byrne, Ava Nketsiah, Samuel Henry-Stumpe, Chloe Deocampo and Thea Kurukulasuriya. Two closely fought debates with St Paul's Girls School and North London Collegiate School for Girls ended in two defeats but a great deal of pride and experience.

ESU Schools' Mace

The premier competition for school debating got underway with Round 1 held at Lady Eleanor Holles School. St Mark's entered a young team, both Gabriel Millin & Joseph Nagle are in Year 11. The competition mainly attracts Sixth Form students and the top schools in the UK. We had to propose the motion that MPs should earn no more than the median national wage. The boys did well and won their debate and progressed into Round 2- well done! St Mark's progressed along with Hampton School and Lady Eleanor Holles leaving St George's, Orleans Park and St Catherine's licking their wounds.

Well done to the two youngsters, their first time in this competition.



MY CAMBRIDGE JOURNEY

Recently, I completed the process for applying to the University of Cambridge to study Human, Social, and Political Sciences (HSPS) at Homerton College. Like many other applicants from St Mark's this year, I found that the process was incredibly demanding, but also immensely rewarding. The support of the Sixth Form Leadership team, and teachers throughout the school, was outstanding, and has given all applicants the best chance possible in this process.

The application process began like all University application processes, in June 2017 at the end of Year 12. After signing up to UCAS, everyone submitted their very first draft of their personal statements to their form tutors on the final day of the Summer Term, and began the summer holidays safe in the knowledge that the application process was well and truly underway.

Upon returning to school in the Autumn, the process continued immediately. All Oxbridge and medicine applicants attended personal statement workshops every Wednesday after school to ensure that our personal statements were of the highest quality by the 11th October, the application deadline. Other students also attended the workshops every few weeks. Mr Longuehayne personally looked over the Oxbridge and Medicine applications each Wednesday, and put an immense amount of time and effort into ensuring that each personal statement was perfect. When the statements were ready, they were added to the UCAS forms, and each application was sent to the applicants chosen universities.

Almost immediately, students began receiving offers, but not from Oxbridge. The Cambridge and Oxford application process was still underway, and required extra applications, admissions assessments, and interviews. After Oxbridge received the applications, we received e-mails that instructed each student on how to fill out any additional forms needed, and these varied from student to student. Personally, I filled out a further application, which contained details regarding my A-Levels, and an (optional) extra personal statement, which I chose to complete. I also submitted two pieces of schoolwork to my chosen college. The deadline for this was October 22nd.

Each student applying to Oxbridge was required to take a specific test. My test, the HSPSAA, consisted of a comprehension section and an essay writing section, where I had the choice of nine essay titles. Other applicants took different tests, including the Thinking Skills Assessment for Oxford, and the BMAT for Medicine. These were taken in early November, and after the tests were submitted, each student had to wait for either a rejection letter, or an invitation to interview.

Many students were fortunate enough to be invited to attend an interview at Oxbridge this year, and I received my invitation 2 weeks before my interview date. In this window, the school offered me an incredible amount of support. I attended an interview workshop at the Jewish Free School, where each student was interviewed by 2 experts in their subjects. The school also ran a mock interview day, where each student attended a mock interview with Mr Longuehayne and Mr Enright, with detailed feedback after the interview. Finally, the school ran additional mock interviews. I was fortunate enough to have multiple mocks, including meetings with Mr Longuehayne, Mr Alexander, and Dr Callaghan. My interviews were on the 6th December. I attended 2 interviews, each with 2 professors, and was given a reading comprehension to complete. The interview process differs between Oxford and Cambridge, with Oxford applicants often being required to stay at the university overnight, for a number of days.



Each applicant is waiting to hear whether or not they receive an offer, and results will be sent to each student in January 2018, where conditions of any offers will have to be met by attaining certain A-Level grades. The process has been very trying, but each student will be able to take valuable lessons from the process, whether they get an offer or not. Personally, my interactive skills and confidence have developed significantly over the process, especially as a result of the various interviews, and my peers and I are incredibly grateful for the school's support and encouragement throughout our applications. Good Luck to anyone still awaiting offers from all Universities.

Kasie Brookfield

Eton Summer School Experience

At the end of the Summer term, four other students from St. Mark's and I were lucky enough to attend the annual 10 day residential 'Eton College Universities Summer School'. Designed to recreate the pressure and level of academia required at degree level, this intensive course is geared towards preparing students with an immense passion for their subject for application to their respective universities and to help further their knowledge and understanding in their chosen subjects.

My chosen subject to study was English literature and it was really exciting to discuss the subject with people of a similar age who were also heavily invested in the subject and had their sights set on reading it at university. A normal day would be structured around your chosen subject with three lessons in the morning/afternoon, the infamous Eton tea breaks being an hourly occurrence during this time. In my lessons, we were able to explore texts beyond that of the A level or GCSE syllabus from periods I had never encountered before - proving to be both challenging, but also extremely enjoyable. The course also offered excursions for certain subjects, the trips for English being a production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at the Globe and a visit to John Milton's cottage in a nearby town; other trips for different subjects also included visits to the Houses of Parliament and Cambridge University.

The course also allowed all the students to take full advantage of the incredible, and extremely expensive facilities which Eton has to offer. From swimming pools to a Greek amphitheatre, to a professional recording studio - the school has so much to offer! Each day there were new activities to try out, and despite a large part of the course focusing on developing your skills and aptitude in your chosen subject, a large emphasis was also placed on the social aspect, which in turn allowed all of us to build strong friendships with people doing completely different subjects.

The course was an absolutely amazing experience and something I would definitely recommend to go for if you have the opportunity. I returned with much more confidence in my own ability and skill, whilst also having an unforgettable 10 days and making friends who I am still in touch with.

Kieran Collingwood



YPRES

The alarm clock rings in my ear. My eyes are glued together with sleep and slowly I force them open. They begin to focus on the red flashing numbers, “4.30!” I groan with agony as I think of the time but then I think about the day ahead of me. That’s what propels me down the stairs into clothes and into the car. This is the first part of a very long journey to the War Graves at Ypres. The drive towards school wasn’t too long and soon we arrived at the car park which was damp with the night’s downfall. After registration we were on the road to the Euro-tunnel with a stop off for Breakfast. And so, after several hours we arrived in France, took our connection to Belgium and arrived in Ypres to begin our trip. First we visited Essex farm where John McCrae, the famous author of the poem “In Flanders Field” is buried. This was followed by a longer stop at Tyne Cot, the largest British cemetery for soldiers lost in World War One. The wind whistled in my hair as I placed down a poppy and cross on one of many graves: “In Flanders fields the poppies blow between the crosses, row on row.” After that we arrived at Langemark Cemetery for the German soldiers who sacrificed their lives for their country.

Our next destination was the preserved trenches. We were able to explore the muddy tunnels the soldiers would have lived in for months. Artifacts and weapons were on display and very intriguing to look at. Then then we visited a museum that also showed the trenches from the German point of view. It provided displays of weapons, gas, clothing and living conditions in the trenches. They even had an underground maze we could explore.

Finally we travelled to Ypres town square where the smell of chocolate and hot waffles filled my nose. We were able to purchase as much chocolate as possible, only if we could carry it home!

The journey home did not seem so long. We had experience of the route now and much to consider about our day. In what seemed only a few hours we were on Bath Road looking down from our coach window at our expectant parents, smiling as we reached home.

By Leanne Antido and Hugo Dawson



Year 13 Normandy Work Experience

From the 1st to the 7th of October, four students from the Year 13 French class had a chance to visit Normandy as part of work experience. We stayed at a welcoming youth hostel, Le Clos de l'Ancien Pressoir in the village of Commes, situated in the countryside.

We were lucky enough to be in a work placement which interested us. Two of us (Millie and Nathalia) were allocated college placements, Louise worked in the local Tourist Office, and I worked at the local newspaper called 'La Renaissance'. The first day was the hardest for all us to get used to despite us knowing that we would obviously understand something, after having studied French intensively! What could sound surprising is the fact that after two days, we were thinking of speaking French to each other which shows just how much we spoke throughout the seven hour work day. I had a fantastic time travelling to news events with the journalists and my colleagues who had to find out new headlines for publishing twice a week, Tuesday and Friday. I got to take part in a debate relating to the 'Prix de Bayeux' which were the town's awards for the most credible war correspondents, I was also present during interviewing the Mayor of Bayeux and found out more about the town's plans for the improvement of society. Personally, I would say it was quite overwhelming because I was also with adults for most of the time and I wanted to give the best impression I could; however that boundary was broken on the first day.

Normandy is very historic. We visited the famous D-Day landing beach, Omaha which overwhelmed us, as it was huge. We also got to see the fishing port, Port-En-Bessin. Since Louise and I worked in the centre of Bayeux, we had the chance to see the famous Bayeux Tapestry which was extremely impressive. What made the week even better was the beautiful weather which kept our mood up every day.

It was a worthwhile experience, despite the six-hour journey in a ferry which didn't feel good at all! In the end, we all feel that we're more confident in speaking French which is definitely of benefit to us for our A Level speaking exam. We learnt new words and phrases very day as well as slang words and as Millie and Nathalia were in a college with people the same age as us, nothing could be boring! We were able to immerse ourselves in the French culture, eat fresh croissants every morning, and see French people smiling all the time. Since I want to study French further at university I fell in love with France even more! We drove to Caen on Friday which was undoubtedly our highlight of the week and being able to spend a few hours there, still assimilating ourselves into French people's lives was amazing. We never knew that we could feel so close to the country after just a couple of days spent there. Getting to know new people also helped us become more independent as we were in a completely unknown workplace. It was a hugely valuable experience which taught us skills for life.



Paulina Motyl



YEAR 7 RETREAT

In the retreat we did multiple team-building exercises. I got to know more about my friends and peers. One of the activities was to write good things about our peers, that helped me know what other people think of me. Another of the activities was about David and Goliath and how David beat the giant with God's grace. This helped me in my spiritual life because now I know no matter how big or small the problem God will be there for you.

Romaric Thomas



I enjoyed all the activities I experienced during the retreat. It helped me by giving me courage to make new friends and not to be shy when talking to new teachers. I have made a lot of new friends being kind to them by sharing. When we did the puzzle activity in the main hall it helped me by showing me how great teamwork is.

Jonathan Joseph



My favourite part of the retreat was the team-building activities. I liked the other activities because they can help me get closer to God and talk to him but the team building helped me because we were in the chapel communicating with each other. The second activity that we did was writing a letter for us to read in the future. It is important for us to do these sort of things because it creates a nice environment around you. The last activity we did was God's Armor. It is important because it shows how much God loves us and it helps us grow in our faith.

Isobel Grant

Towards the end of September, Year 7 participated in an RE retreat. Our first activity took place in the chapel where we wrote a word describing someone else. Our next activity was when we had to write a letter to our future selves. The next time we will see it we will be in Year 11. Finally, we had our last activity when we had to work together in a group to solve a puzzle. It was lots of fun. Then we ended with a prayer. It was the best RE retreat ever.

Jayden Rodrigues



The School retreat helped me build my relationship with God. Firstly, we went to the chapel and we all had a piece of paper stuck to our back and wrote something nice on it that we think about them. Then we went to St Michael's hall, we used teamwork to get across the hall without touching the floor. After that we went to the theatre and reflected then wrote a letter to our future selves. We will open these in Year 11. Next, we went to the main hall and we had to use teamwork again to find missing pieces of a puzzle then make it whole. Lastly, we talked about Jesus and strength. This retreat helped me a lot because I got to talk and reflect on God more than I usually do.

Karolina Dziejma



My experience of the retreat was really good. It helped me understand that no matter if I'm rich, poor, ugly or good-looking, God is always there for me. It showed me my classmates' point of view of me and that teamwork is key. It was a very fun day and something to look forward to in your first year at St Mark's.

Bartek Szostak

CALLED BY GOD



Moonlight – A Level Media Trip

On Thursday 16th November, the A Level Media students went to Watermans Cinema in Brentford to see the multi-award winning film 'Moonlight'. The film itself had quite a perplexing, yet captivating narrative about a black individual tolerating a tough and difficult upbringing; an underdog story of a weak little boy who grew up to become something that, as an audience, was unexpected. It was interesting to follow the protagonist's journey and to see him change in character quite drastically. I could see a change in society in regards to race as time progresses – from a predominantly black environment to a mixed environment, which the producer had subtly, yet successfully portrayed. The film challenges a societal generalisation of black people and offers a representation that not all things are what they seem to be.

Don Ursua
12HBE



Economics Trip to Eton

A group of Year 12 A Level Economists attended a talk at Eton College. The Eton Keynes Society group were hosting and alongside them an Oxford lecturer and developmental economist, Kate Raworth. The author who has a book entitled 'Doughnut Economics' gave an interesting talk which questioned some of the basic assumptions of 20th Century Economics, including even the basic demand and supply diagram. While shocking the students, this did provoke some discussion and they will still have to learn it for the A level exam!! A version of her ideas can be viewed on the TED talk's site.



Monday 25th of September was the Day for International European Languages; an annually celebrated event at St Mark's. It celebrates cultural diversity of both students and teachers within our school community. Miss Stewart, the Head of Modern Foreign Languages at St Mark's, organised this year's event. International languages Day is a celebration and a reminder of the importance of modern languages and how useful they are when you live in such a huge diverse world.

Miss Stewart hoped that the day would enhance people's experience of modern languages, and to help people realise that English wasn't the only language they could discover. "Sometimes we don't remember that these languages [other languages like: French, Spanish and Italian] are spoken outside of the classroom and that they are key aspects of further life, outside of St Mark's. Languages from all over the world are extremely enriching" A variety of St Mark's pupils took part in activities throughout the day. At Form time, quizzes were taken to test students' knowledge of International affairs and different countries. Also at break a French and Spanish styled cafe was open for Key Stage 3 students to explore foods from different cultures. Additionally within KS3, a Form competition took place where the Form with the greatest number of languages spoken claimed the prize. One Form contained 23 spoken languages!

An altogether informative and exciting event, International European Languages Day was a great success!

PIPPA DAWSON

LIFE AFTER ST MARK'S

I have attended many 'Life after St Mark's talks'. They are always a joy to attend but this years was the best by far, in my opinion. The talk was on the 25th September 2017 and we had students from Warwick, Cambridge and St George's Medical School.

Patrick Sylla was a former student who continued his education at Cambridge studying Natural Sciences. Patrick is a great example of a hard working student who achieved his goals with perseverance. He also gave us links to his YouTube channel where he talks about complex concepts in chemistry and physics with the support of some of the Professors and research students at Cambridge. Having viewed them I found them extremely interesting and informative.

Laura Tanswell from Warwick also shared with us how, with hard work and focus, she got into one of the UK's most established universities.

Sanjana Shaunak from St George's gave us insight into her studies on her biomedical science course.

Overall, the talks were influential and inspiring and I am really looking forward to the next one.

Gareth Gbesemete-Kusenu 11 Becket



Patrick Sylla

SENIOR MATHS CHALLENGE

At the beginning of November, 32 of our brightest and best Year 12 and 13 mathematicians took part in the 2017 UK Senior Maths Challenge, a taxing 25 question multiple-choice test of their mathematical muscle.

I am happy to report that over 62% of them have since earned a Bronze or Silver Award Certificate.

A special mention should go to Louise Wiener and Piotr Gnap of Years 13 and 12, respectively, for heading their Year groups' results. Both were just 1 correct answer away from a Gold Certificate and entry to the Kangaroo follow-on round.

Congratulations also go to our 5 other Silver and 13 Bronze Award winners, and to the 4 candidates who were just 1 correct answer away from a Bronze Award!

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

Mr. Gold



In July, A level students were given the opportunity to experience life, as it is, outside of Hounslow. After Tom losing his passport (despite telling us repeatedly to keep an eye on our own) and an 11 hour plane journey, we landed, discovering that Miss Wade's roll mat had fallen off the plane – bet she was wishing she did the same! We have to admit, that when we arrived in Arusha at 5am, we were worried. There was no one around, the streets were dead. However, this couldn't be further from the truth, as the next day we were awoken by the bustling noise of Tanzanian locals.

Our trek up Mount Longido was painful. My legs still hurt. But reaching the summit was reward enough for all the hours of walking. The view made eating only a slice of pineapple for breakfast worth it; and this wasn't even the low point! It was an enjoyable experience meeting the Maasai Tribes, who were very accommodating, even showing us around their homes (Boma's). The most hilarious moment has to be Josh almost strangling himself with his own bag falling down the hill! When we arrived back to the hotel; I was pleased to find out I had a suntan, little did I realise it was just the mud!

The next few days consisted of preparation for the project; a week of living with the rural community of Nkoakirika. During this time we both aided in building a toilet block and provided a lot of entertainment for local children; the stars of which were Vicky and Alice, as their blonde hair and attempts at Swahili proved a successful novelty. This week also gave us a newfound appreciation for the education and infrastructure of our country, as we saw children missing lessons in order to carry water up to the school from a pump downhill.

We spent our final days on a safari tour through the Tarangire National Park (where we saw Luigi in the wild in the form of a warthog) and in Moshi, the town closest to Mount Kilimanjaro. Being away from home for 2 weeks in the entirely new environment of Tanzania was certainly difficult, and we were all pleased to be home; but the experience, I wouldn't have changed for anything.

By Sophie Dawson and Keira Moore



This year's high-energy musical, packed with larger-than-life characters, embraced both the nutty spirit of the legendary ska band and the gritty appeal of NW1, weaving iconic Madness songs into a dramatic London love story. On entering the auditorium, audience members met with the magically transformed space; 'Casey Street'. The transformation, aided by Mr Hook and the Art Club students was an inspired set of brickwork, and the Casey Street road sign, allowing for a world in which the story would unfold.

The performance introduces the young Joe Casey (Eoin Hanlon), a Camden lad brought up by his strict yet kind-hearted mother, Kath (Scarlett Clarke). Despite the absence of a father figure, Joe's solid upbringing, ambition and spirit earn him the title of 'Golden Boy'. That is, until his 16th birthday, when a desperate attempt to impress Sarah (Alannah Williams), the girl of his dreams, sees Joe stoop to breaking and entering – sparking a rollercoaster ride of action and emotion as he battles to get his life back on track.

Through the insightful narration of Joe's dad (Yousaf Chand), the audience follows two stories running in tandem, each offering a striking insight into the consequences of positive and negative life choices – but will 'good Joe' or 'bad Joe' ultimately prevail?

The high-octane production, directed by Miss Hutchison, provided the perfect opportunity to showcase the diverse talents of St Mark's students, and they did not disappoint.

During the musical numbers, the strong ensemble of more than 50 students' talents were truly brought to the fore – vivacious choreography and vibrant costumes provided many memorable moments. In 'Baggy Trousers', Reecey leads the way in causing chaos amongst hormone-high teenagers rioting in the playground.



During 'The Sun and the Rain', we see Camden High Street brought to life through the stallholders selling their wares to tourists, presented through a beautiful harmony of vocals and movement sequence.

Eoin Hanlon succeeded in portraying Joe's ever-evolving character, constantly shaped by the influences around him. He mastered the most challenging aspect of the role – seamlessly switching from good to bad and being present in every scene.

Alannah Williams offered an emotional portrayal of Joe's heartthrob Sarah, torn between her lingering affections for her first love and the need to focus on her career and future – with or without Joe.

Many of the more comical moments belonged to Michael Andrew and Cameron Fox, who proved a brilliant double act as Lewis and Emmo respectively – Joe's best friends, whose loyalty is pushed to the very limit. Rivalling the comedy duo were Billie and Angie, Sarah's best friends, played by Jessica Marsh and Ines Walker- the dynamic duo were on point with their one-liners; usually aimed at mocking the loveable Joe.

The devious Reecey, played by Ethan George brought a sinister feel to the performance, creeping onto the stage in his leather jacket while seeking to tempt Joe 'into the Lion's Den' and follow the beaten path to trickery and deceit.

The band, led by Mrs Jolly, were incredible! Their seamless transitions during the relentlessly pacy performance, allowed each rousing song to roll on to the next, keeping the audiences' toes tapping, many in the midst of nostalgia.

Joe's quick-fire changes from smart suit (bad Joe) to white tracksuit (good Joe), alongside the switch from red to green lighting, designed by Mr Shore, allowed the 'good' and 'bad' stories to run perfectly in parallel.

With such a quick turn-around from auditions to performance night in a matter of six weeks, the cast, orchestra and production team did themselves proud – a mad musical in every sense, a rousing performance and a giant of a production. Congratulations to all those involved!

THE BOOKSHELF

National Poetry Day

This was on 28th September this year. This coincided with our Open Day, so we had lots of poetry books scattered around for everyone to browse.

Students read their favourite poems in the LRC, which was filled with poetry all day long.

Darkness

The tune of darkness,
Spins around me,
Spreading its army of lies,
Making us feel like the Evil lurking.

Every step we take,
Feels like walking on fire,
What's happening to me?
I know its hell's ...liar.

The cracks get larger,
Consuming the earth,
Tearing the earth apart,
Who will survive?

By Ava Nketsiah 7CI

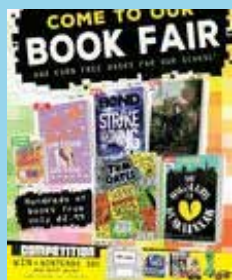
Black History Month Event

On 10th October the poet Tony Dallas worked with students from all Hounslow secondary schools. Our group of year 7 students produced, and performed some great work.



BOOK FAIR

A Book Fair came to the LRC at the end of November, giving students, and staff too, a great opportunity to snap up some bargains in time for Christmas!



The Hounslow Teen Read 2018,

The Teen Read for 2018 was launched in Hounslow's Paul Robeson Theatre on 16th November. The author Marcus Alexander announced the shortlist and talked about his books.

Students, from Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 will spend the next four months reading through the shortlist of six books.

This year's titles are:



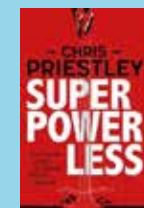
After the Fire by Will Hill

The things I've seen are burned into me, like scars that refuse to fade. Father John controls everything inside The Fence. And Father John likes rules. Especially about never talking to Outsiders. Because Father John knows the truth. He knows what is right and what is wrong. He knows what is coming. Moonbeam is starting to doubt, though. She's starting to see the lies behind Father John's words. She wants him to be found out. What if the only way out of the darkness is to light a fire?



Cuckoo by Keren David

Jake is an actor, a household name thanks to his role on the UK's most popular soap. But his character went upstairs to his bedroom six months ago and never came down again, and now Jake is facing an uncertain future. Add to that his dad's anger issues, the family's precarious finances and the demands of a severely autistic brother; Jake's home feels like a powder keg waiting to explode. It's easier to spend nights on friends' sofas and futons, but what happens when you feel like a cuckoo in every nest?



Superpowerless by Chris Priestley

To his mother and his best friend, David is just a teenager who spends too much time in his attic bedroom. But David is not what he seems. He has superpowers. He is a superhero with one mission: to save a man from drowning in a sinking car. He is also spying on his beautiful neighbour, Holly, who sunbathes in the garden at the back of his house. And Holly has a secret of her own. There is one last secret too – one David hides even from himself. When it is finally dragged into the light, David will have to face the truth – and face it superpowerless.



We Come Apart – Sarah Crossan and Brian Conaghan

Nicu is not Jess's type. He's all big eyes and ill-fitting clothes, eager as a puppy, even when they're picking up litter in the park for community service. Appearances matter to Jess. She has a lot to hide. Nicu shouldn't even be looking at Jess. His parents are planning his marriage to a girl he's never met back home in Romania. But he wants to work hard, do better, stay here. As they grow closer, their secrets surface like bruises. And as the world around them grow more hostile, the only safe place Jess and Nicu have is with each other.



Contagion by Teri Terry

Callie is missing.

Her brother Kai is losing hope of ever seeing her again. Then he meets Shay, a girl who saw Callie the day she disappeared, and his hope is reignited.

Their search leads them to the heart of a terrifying epidemic that is raging through the country.

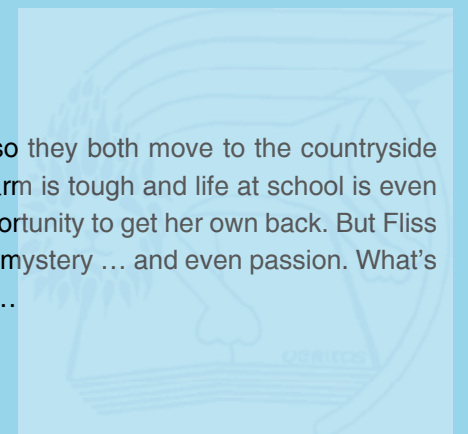
Can Kai and Shay escape death and find Callie?



Margot and Me by Juno Dawson

How can you hate someone in the present and love them in the past?

Fliss's mum needs peace and quiet to recuperate from a long illness, so they both move to the countryside to live with Margot, Fliss's stern and bullying grandmother. Life on the farm is tough and life at school is even tougher, so when Fliss unearths Margot's wartime diary she sees an opportunity to get her own back. But Fliss soon discovers Margot's life during the evacuation was full of adventure, mystery ... and even passion. What's more, she learns a terrible secret that could tear her whole family apart ...



HOUSE MUSIC COMPETITION

This year's House music competition, held on 21st November, was the toughest yet. The rules had changed this year which made it a remarkable experience. For the first time, there would be two winners, as contestants would be split into the pop and classical categories. Also, Year 11s and Sixth formers were allowed to perform, making this the most challenging year yet!

Watching all the different acts really opened my eyes to all the talent here at St Mark's. The atmosphere and vibes were extremely energetic and positive; the support from the audience was incredible – quite unbeatable. As it was the first time this competition was held in the theatre, the lighting and surroundings really contributed to an amazing night.

Personally, I was quite nervous as it was my first time singing in front of a big audience. If anything, this shows that anyone can participate in this competition. The classical acts made a significant difference this year reminding us how beautiful this genre of music is.

I really encourage everyone to give this competition a go as it not only helps boost your confidence and develop performance skills, but you also get to meet many new people from different year groups. In my opinion everyone did so well, from the guitarist in Clitherow to the group of singers in More and all the other acts from Champion, Fisher, Pole and not forgetting Becket. The fact that these young people performed in front of a full audience took great courage and throughout the night I admired that. Make sure to come along next year, get involved or even just come to support; it might inspire something you didn't know you had in you!

Talent is flourishing at St Mark's and it is amazing that there are so many opportunities here. So give it a try and I promise you won't regret it.

Nuttaricha Ngarmskullert (10 Becket)



Results

Classical

Pop

- 1st place: Clitherow
- 2nd place: Pole
- 3rd place: More
- 4th place: Becket
- 5th place: Fisher
- 6th place: Champion

- 1st place: Becket
- 2nd place: Pole
- 3rd place: More
- 4th place: Fisher
- 5th place: Champion
- 6th place: Clitherow



HOUSE CAKE DECORATING COMPETITION



WINNER - CLITHEROW

The annual cake decorating competition was as keenly contested as usual. Under new rules all Houses were given the same materials with 45 minutes to come up with their winning creations. The judging panel of Mr Enright and Mrs Fear were given the tough task of placing the cakes in order. The winners were Clitherow.

Pictures by Mary Soriano



CAROL SERVICE

The annual Carol Service offered both students and parents the opportunity to reflect on their spiritual preparations for Christmas. Scarlett Clarke (Y9) opened the service with a beautiful rendition of 'Once in Royal David's City' before the rest of the choir and congregation joined in. The orchestra gave great support to the singers and sounded very professional with all the different harmonies they were playing.

Both students and teachers led the prayers. Mrs Morillon and Miss Smith delivered ever-popular readings about The Annunciation and The Birth of Jesus. Students lit the wreath and offered up bidding prayers accordingly.

Kaya Ilska (Y11), Aleksandra Szostak (Y9), Jamie Cavill (Y10) and Justin Soriano (Y10) performed a stunning vocal quartet accompanied by Callum De Greef and Max Bilin on bass and drums whilst the choir sang a powerful version of 'Do You Hear What I Hear?' with intricate harmonies. It was an uplifting and reflective service that helped us all remember the true meaning of advent and Christmas.



On 9th of November 2017, sixty students from Year 10, divided into 2 groups, were chosen to participate in the Jack Petchey Speak Out challenge. The experience consisted of building up confidence by engaging us in a series of activities such as speaking in front of an audience, being able write our own speeches and presented them to the whole group.

The school day was divided into two: first, a few activities to warm up and learn the basic skills of how to make a speech. We learnt about YESSPEAKER, an acronym to remind us of the tips we must use to engage our audiences successfully. YESSPEAKER stands for: be Yourself, Eye contact, Structure, Pace and pause, Enthusiasm, Animation, Keeping it simple, Elevate your voice and Remember your personal stories. This was very useful and helped us later on.

After this, a few brave students were selected to make a speech in which they had to answer a question from our instructor. I was selected for that. I felt very nervous, partly because it was my first time of real public speaking, but also because I wanted to do well; the others felt like this as well. When it was my turn, the instructor called me forward and asked me a question. As I answered I remembered the YESSPEAKER but it was difficult to cope with pressure. It was not that bad. I can say I was not the only one that felt like that, because I could see my fellow students feeling the same pressure. However, it was a good learning experience and we helped each other through it.

After this, it was everyone else's turn. We went in our small groups and rehearsed. It was a lot of fun and it was a very interesting exercise because I got to know my friends deeper and got to know their likes and dislikes and what they enjoyed doing. I personally liked this exercise because of the closer connection we built with each other. This continued until the bell rang to signal the start of break.

After the break, the instructor told us that it was time to begin writing our speeches. We were mostly very, very afraid of this, because it sounded like a test and indeed it was. In fact, the best people would be chosen to speak out against each other and the winner would participate into the Regional Final. My speech was about discrimination and I felt it would be good.

The pressure was on. I was extremely nervous, I trembled like it was -40° in the room and I couldn't control my breathing properly. The fact that the instructor shuffled the names and they were random was not very helpful. I remember I would hold my breath each time he was going to say a name. The speeches were great. Alfie did a wonderful speech, which included every YES SPEAKER tip and it was about how people can sometimes not speak very highly about Hounslow. Alfie was able to persuade us that there were worse places in the world. The speech was inspiring and his words hooked the audience making it one of my favourite speeches. Later we had Sophie and her terrific speech about how doctors should have higher wages instead of footballers. It was great!

After everyone went up, it was time to decide and announce the winners. It was a moment of tension, before the names were revealed. The two winners were Sophie and Alfie, because of their amazing speeches. However, the other group's instructor was so impressed by her group that it was decided to pick a third winner. Eugene was picked, thanks to his wonderful speech about social media. These winners will continue to the assembly stage, where they'll have to deliver their speeches in front of the Year. I wish them good luck and I hope someone gets to the Final! The winners from the other group were Francesca Gilham, Saffron Hannon and Casey Muchiri. Well done everyone!

I can say this experience has improved my ability to speak in public, encouraging me to make eye contact and have a better recognition of body language. After this I feel a stronger and confident person, and this has impacted on me and the other students in an extremely positive way.

Joseph Das, Year 10.

TALENTS PROJECT

As a project for the Peer Leaders this term, Ms Byrne challenged us to raise as much money as possible from just a £5 note we were given. We knew this wasn't going to be easy, however, with hard work and determination we knew we could handle it.

Firstly we had to come up with our ideas on what could raise the most money in the two weeks we were given. Some people really used their God – given talents. Joseph Nagle, in Year 11, used his phenomenal pianist skills to raise money. Dillon Rajkovic, in Year 8, made wooden Christmas decorations out of scrap pieces of wood he found at home. This was very clever as it did not cost him a penny so made even more money at the end. Many of us raised money by buying or baking cakes then selling them at either the School, our local churches or even around our neighbourhood. This was a very good way and resulted in us making a lot of money. Overall, because of our hard work, we managed to raise over £400. The amount raised will be used to buy a crucifix for the new Sixth Form dining area.

This experience has taught us that to achieve your goal, you need to put time and effort in to it, but in the end, the result makes it all worth it.

Francesca Medri , Francesca Gilham Year 10



In October, our Year 12 students attended Ealing and Hounslow's Safe Drive Stay Alive performance that educates young people to make the right choices when driving or travelling as a passenger.

The four main causes of road traffic collisions are:

1. Speed
2. Distractions
3. Taking risks i.e. not wearing a seatbelt
4. Drink and/or drug driving

Ealing and Hounslow Councils in partnership with the London Emergency Services have run this particular 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' theatre production for a number of years. The performance is hard hitting but sends an important message. The SDSA team ask that parents and guardians do please discuss the main causes of RTAs with your sons and daughters. For further information on travel choices and learning to drive, visit www.yru.london





Senior Citizens Christmas Party 2017



On Wednesday 13th December some Year 12 students hosted, as part of their Faith in Action activities, a Christmas party for local senior citizens. The planning for this event began in September when we told our guests to put the date in their diaries. Beautiful invitations were then sent out inviting our guests. They came from Sandbanks Nursing Home, Vicarage Farm Nursing Home, Boswood Court, Cloisters Nursing Home and we also had guests from the parish of St Michael and St Martin's.

Many of us were involved in the activities on the

day but different groups of students had worked hard behind the scenes. We had bought gifts and wrapped them for every guest. Another group of students known as the 'Food Team' ensured all our guests were well fed with delicious party food, although, they

admitted catering for such large numbers (over 60) was somewhat stressful. With the help of our caretakers we served teas and coffees. The entertainment included bingo with Alex and Serece calling out the numbers.

Some of us were able to help our guests with this and enjoyed spending that time with them. The Liturgy Choir, with Miss Jackson's assistance provided beautiful singing. Lots of our guests enjoyed the sing along of Christmas classics at the start of the party. The 12B

group had decorated the Hall and we surprised ourselves at how well we had made it look, festive and party like. Ciara, Serece and Max hosted the event and Max shared some Christmas jokes the best one being that a broken drum is the best Christmas present ever. Why? You just can't beat it!

At the end of the party the weather was dreadful. Some of us got very wet helping the residents from nearby Cloisters return home – but we really did not mind. At first we found welcoming our guests

a little awkward, but some of us now have experiences and memories we will not forget. As they left thanking us we realised we had brought joy into people's lives in a very simple way. We hope all our guests have a Happy Christmas and we are going to think of other ways that we can reach out to these special members of our local community in the year ahead.



Simran, Meghna, Sumaya, Adriana, Samurai



CAFOD SOUP DAY

On 13th October a number of sixth form students had to put their culinary skills to the test, by providing hot delicious soup for hundreds of hungry students and staff to help raise money for CAFOD, and projects which help those who need it most. The Day was a complete success, allowing students and staff alike to unite over lunch in support of such a just cause, it was a humbling project to be a part of, whilst also

raising money for such a good cause.

The basic nature of the lunch allowed students and staff to consider what people throughout the world have to endure every day. The day was an example of the great community spirit that exists at St Marks, as money was raised, the lunch also allowed people to discuss the issues facing the current social climate we live in, whereby there

is such a huge void between the rich and poor, whilst also allowing students and staff to enjoy a meal together.

Oscar Crowe



In Faith in Action this term we have been busy fundraising for the Christmas parties we organised. Those of us in 12 D1 and 12 B1 Faith in Action classes took part in a fundraising car wash. A number of our teachers paid us (some of them far more than the asking price) to wash their cars. One teacher paid us not to wash his car!

Divided into groups we washed 2 or 3 cars on a rather cold Wednesday afternoon. It was hard work. We had to keep re-filling our buckets of water – it was an old fashioned hand wash - literally. Despite this, it was fun! It could be described as a team building exercise. We had to work together, but many of us took pride in the work and wanted to please our customers.

A far warmer and somewhat easier way to make money was our Krispy Kreme doughnut sale. Our teacher had driven to New Malden before school to collect the doughnuts. The company sold them to us at a concessionary rate so we could make a profit for charity. After great advertising we made just under £100 in less than 15 minutes. Our queuing system and sale was most efficient thanks mainly to Zola. We thank all members of our school community who have supported all of our fundraising activities AND we have more planned for next term!



ART

A number of Year 11 artists have been attending workshops after school where they have learnt how to make Photolithographs with Ms Wheeler. Many were amused by the equipment list which included white wine vinegar and toothpaste. Lithography being a process that exploits the reaction between the oil based ink and acidic vinegar solution and is developed from photocopied images on polyester plates. (The toothpaste is used to clean the polyester plates after printing so that they can be reused).



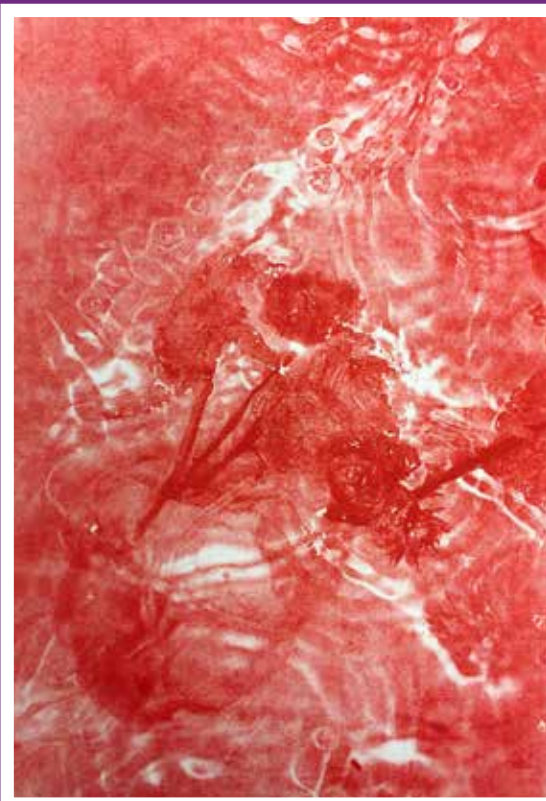
Alayna Chisholm



Carmella Kavanagh



Gwyneth Madrinan



Sara Nowinska



Renelina Duenas

YEAR 11 PRINTING

The printing was great fun. Students used their own photographs as starting points and created fantastic prints which have expanded their ideas and made valuable contributions to their GCSE portfolios. It is good to see the process extending into mock exam pieces. The cleaning was less pleasurable however, with everyone going home smelling of vinegar and sticky with vegetable oil!

The funding for these skills sessions came from Year 13 student, Zuzanna Rozanska, who was presented with the Jack Petchy Award following her contributions to Art last year. Zuzanna, a self confessed lover of print since GCSE, chose to spend her budget on the specialized materials needed to introduce this technique. She also joined the current Year 11 to produce lithographic prints of her own. Our many thanks go to her.



Filomena Vales



Patrycja Galezewska



Zuzanna Rozanska - Year 13



St Mark's

Sports

Year 7 Netball

Congratulations to the Y7 netball team who have won their first two netball games against Kingsley Academy and Rivers Academy with scores of 14-7 and 9-7. There are more game to come after Christmas. Well done to all the girls that have been coming to practice!

Year 8 Netball

One game played so far and a narrow defeat to Spring West Academy 5-7. Lots more games to play after Christmas! The turn out to practice on a Friday after school has been amazing! All keep coming and thank you to Mrs Morillon and Miss Heeney for all their time and effort so far in coaching the Y8 team this year.



Year 9

One game played so far and a win against Spring West Academy 18-2! Well done!

Year 10

Well done to the Year 10 netball team who have made a great start this year. Beating Spring West Academy 15-3 and narrowly losing to Gumley 5-7.

The team also made it to the semi final stage of the Borough tournament. Well done! Lots more game to be played after Christmas!

Year 11

Well done to the Y11 netball team who for the 4th year in 5, won the annual Borough Netball Tournament. Narrowly beaten in last year's final by Heathlands School, they were able to make amends by defeating the same Heathland team in this year's tournament at the semi-final stage.

The team then went on to face Chiswick in the final. They had been beaten by this team earlier in the league stage of the competition. However, the St. Mark's girls had got better and better with each game and were back to their brilliant best by the final. An incredibly close game, however, the St. Mark's Year 11 netball team were triumphant!

Well done to the whole team on a fantastic 5 years of school netball!



Year 7 and Year 8&9 Football

One game played so far for the Y7 football team and a 2-1 win against Gumley! A great turn out to practice so far! Please continue to attend after Christmas, where there are lots more game to play!



Year 9 Football

Super sub Zammit helps to send St. Mark's into the quarter finals!

An inspired 2nd half display from Leo Zammit helped the Year 9 football team overcome a tough Hatch End school 3 – 1 to reach the Middlesex Cup quarter-final. St. Mark's were immediately penned back in the first 10 minutes as they unfortunately maintained an unwanted habit of starting games slowly. This led to them deservedly falling behind 1-0.

As the half went on the defence held firm, excellently marshalled by goalkeeper Reiss Walker, who has recently been selected for the Middlesex County team.

The midfield started to get more opportunities to impose their game on the opposition but it was from a set piece late in the half from which St. Mark's drew level. A corner from the left from Tyler Falzon led to some head tennis in the Hatch End penalty area only for Romain Pallemagedara Don to stab home from close range.

The team knew at half time that they were lucky to be level at the break and that they needed to improve in the 2nd half. Coming on for the 2nd half were Roger Nicholson and Leo Zammit and it was to be important.

St. Mark's were on top from the start of the 2nd half and playing with far more confidence. After being introduced at half time it was the substitutes that combined amongst some neat one touch football on the edge of the area to set Tyler Falzon free to slot the ball home under the keeper.

Some more determined defending was necessary before a crucial 5 minute phase. Leo Zammit broke down the right before unleashing a shot that cannoned back off the post. However, he wasn't to be denied.

A further corner from Tyler came to Leo who rose like a salmon to fire a bullet header past the keeper and allow St. Mark's to see out the remaining minutes relatively untroubled.

Credit must go to the whole team on what was a real battling performance. They now have a tough looking draw away to Uxbridge High in the quarter finals – hopefully we will have some good news for the next edition of Veritas!

Team:

Walker, Zaballa, G Phealan, Richards, Smondulak, I Phelan (Zammit 35), Okolo, Rose (I Phelan 50), Pallemagedara Don (Nicholson 35), Awuah Darkoh, Falzon. GK Sub Fernandes



St Mark's

Year 7 football:

Wins after a tough start

The Year 7 football team has been working really hard to turn around early season misfortune and recorded an impressive set of wins over Reach Academy 5-3 and 11-4.

We have had high numbers at training, all really keen and wanting to improve. Hopefully, the squad can now gain confidence from these wins and look to go on an unbeaten run to the end of the season. Standout performances have come from Samuel Henry-Stumpe, Nojus Gorochovas and Arminas Petronis. Well done to all the boys involved.



Year 9 Basketball

After an opening defeat to Springwest the Year 9 basketball team showed their true ability with an impressive win over Isleworth and Syon. The team will now be hoping to beat rivals Lampton in what could be crucial to winning the Borough title this year. With excellent numbers at training, this team exemplifies what a positive impact The David Sheath sportshall has had on our sports provision as we are able to accommodate over 30 boys at training. Well done to all those boys who are in the squad.



Sports

Year 9 Sports Leadership

On 7th December a group of 26 Year 9 students attended the Oxford versus Cambridge Varsity rugby match. However, it wasn't just to watch the rugby on show but to help run a touch rugby tournament for over 200 local primary school children.

The students have been supported by the Varsity rugby program through a funding initiative that helps to develop leadership and confidence as well as to try and get students to aspire to study at Oxford, Cambridge or other Russell group universities.

The students had to help their teams develop strategies and help officiate each game whilst ensuring all the students were active on what was difficult day weather wise.

Our students were excellent representatives of the school and some were fortunate to be chosen to go pitch side to provide the tunnel for the players to reemerge for the 2nd half.

The Varsity rugby program is also funding a trip to Oxford University so students can sample and experience university life at one of the country's top universities – more details of this to follow in the next edition of Veritas.



Year 7 winning Christmas card designs from the Business and Enterprise Challenge raising money for the Mulberry Cancer Support Centre



Alex Zolnierczyk



Hannah Man



Jayden Rodrigues



Ace Santos



Thea Fernando