



THANK

Goodness

WADDES DON

Voice

magazine

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This term's cover picture shows a dramatic moment in Year 9 Interform competition as Frankie scrapes in for a home run against George. There's more sport in our Sports' Day article on page 24.



From the Headteacher

For this term's Voice, this column should really be called 'From the Senior Public Speaking Award' winner and not the Headteacher!

That's because what you are about to read is the speech that Niamh, the recipient of the public speaking award, presented to the students, parents, guests and governors at our Annual Prize Giving event in July.

As well as being a moving and heartfelt testimonial, it also gently and wisely reminds us all - adults and children alike - of the central importance of being kind: to ourselves and to each other.

As the academic year draws to a close, thank you to everyone in our community for all the many kindnesses that have characterised this year, yet again.

“*The mountains are getting higher and the skies are becoming ever bluer. In this universe, I am never alone*”

A brilliant artist named Yayoi Kusama said this in a poem titled 'This Mystery'; she's a woman who I believe truly knows the meaning of love, hope and humanity.

Good afternoon, my name is Niamh and I'm a year 12 student. I came to Waddesdon at the start of this year and I am honestly sad that next year will be my last. I truly believe I have found something in this school that I didn't know existed. A certain kindness I can't quite explain.

I've found teachers who care about who I am and who I want to become. Teachers who want me to do well and are so willing to do everything they can to make that happen. Even teachers who don't teach me, but know my name, and will have a chat to me, give me a smile or hello that completely changes my day. I've found adults that hear and respect what I have to say, however loudly or quietly I wish to say it. I've found a space where I can stand and talk about the things that I think are important, in assemblies, student groups and more.



Matthew Abbott

I have been given opportunity after opportunity, that I cannot pass up because I finally have the confidence to throw myself into them. I found that here. I have found a place where I do not feel insignificant.

I believe most importantly I have found people; my year group is full of such genuinely lovely human beings who I hope I can get to know more next year, and I am so grateful for my peers in my lessons, who I could not be more glad to have met. Each individual, unique and kind, who have taught me something new and who genuinely make my days brighter and easier.

I hope each one of you truly knows your worth.

I will never take for granted the importance of the people around me.

The people at Waddesdon are what make it so special to me. Students, teachers, staff of any and all titles.

You have taught me that in this universe, I am never alone. Thank you.”



TALL TALES

Five Year 7s with a winning way with words told their tales in a storytelling competition, judged by a panel of teachers. Alice sums up the story for us.

In English classes this half term, we have been learning all about myths and legends. For example, we looked at the origin myths like the story of Pyramus and Thisbe which tells us why mulberries are purple. We also learnt about the structure of origin stories and I did some more research at home. This helped me to plan my story as it gave me a rough idea of what to write.

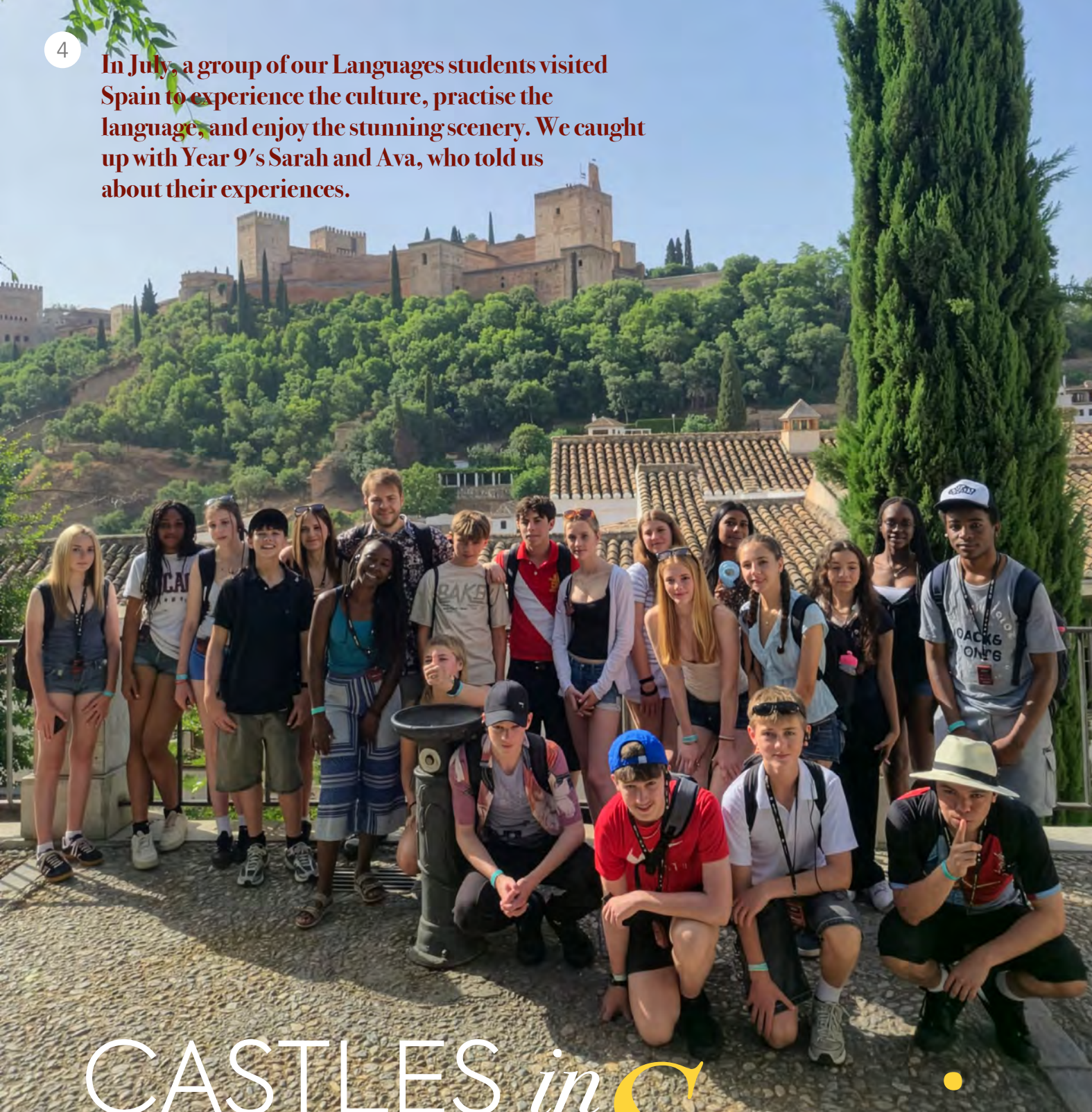
We then performed our stories in class and voted for which story would represent our form group in the final storytelling competition in front of the whole year group. I was chosen from my form!

The competition day came and I was quite nervous but also excited to start. I was called up and read my story in front of the judges (Mr Abbott, Mrs. Staiano and Mr Israr) and all of Year 7. Then the remainder of the form representatives had their turn and the judges went outside to deliberate.

Although I didn't win, it was a very fun experience and I also got a prize in the end. Everybody's stories were amazing and it must have been hard for the judges to choose a winner, but we were all happy, regardless of our placing.



In July, a group of our Languages students visited Spain to experience the culture, practise the language, and enjoy the stunning scenery. We caught up with Year 9's Sarah and Ava, who told us about their experiences.



CASTLES *in* Spain

In a Waddesdon first, Year 9 and Year 10 students had the pleasure of visiting the cities of Granada and Córdoba, where they could immerse themselves into the Spanish culture practising their language skills in a real world setting and learning about how different religions have inhabited and influenced the Spanish peninsula over the centuries.

During the visit, students explored the stunning Alhambra, wandered through the historic Albaicín, experienced a traditional flamenco performance,

visited the mosque-cathedral in Córdoba and practised their Spanish in real-life situations while ordering food, shopping, and speaking with local people. The trip was a fantastic success, helping students develop their confidence, cultural understanding, and appreciation of Spain's rich history. It was wonderful to see them embrace every opportunity, creating memories that will stay with them for years to come.

Sarah: The Spanish trip was one of the best trips I've ever been on and definitely one of the highlights of the school year.

Throughout the trip, we visited many fascinating palaces and church-mosques. They were incredibly interesting to explore and learn about. We had a tour guide at each site, which

helped us learn as much as possible about the history and culture of the places we visited.

As well as the educational activities, we also had plenty of free time. We went shopping, practised our Spanish in local restaurants, explored the city, and even went swimming.

It was extremely hot, so the opportunity to go swimming was definitely appreciated!

Overall, I think the trip was very well organised, with plenty of opportunities to have fun while still learning. There were so many memorable moments, and I will always remember this trip as one of the highlights of the school year.

Ava: From Thursday early morning to Sunday night, we visited Granada, a city full of history, winding streets and incredible views where we had the opportunity to experience Spanish culture beyond the classroom.

Throughout the trip, we visited some of Spain's most iconic landmarks, including the breathtaking Alhambra Palace, with its stunning architecture, beautiful gardens, and intriguing history. We also travelled to Córdoba, where we explored the spectacular Mosque-Cathedral, one of Spain's most remarkable historical sites.

In our free time, we wandered through Granada's numerous streets, discovering local shops, cafés, and



hidden corners of the city. One of the highlights of the trip was watching an authentic flamenco performance, where the energy and incredible talent of the dancers left everyone stunned.

Filled with laughter, unforgettable experiences, and lasting memories, the trip was one that none of us will ever forget.



Mr Bray, Artificial Intelligence Lead, explains how our AI steering group has enabled our students to be part of the discussion around the role of this important new technology in our lives.



Podcast



INTELLIGENCE Gathering

As my time as AI Lead over the past 18 months comes to an end, I would like to outline, briefly, our approach, which has been both practical and philosophical. It has kept the phrase 'human agency' at the heart of decision making around AI. To uphold this, we formed an AI Steering Group made up of students, who recently had the opportunity to be featured on the podcast 'Unbelievable'. I would like to hand over to our Year 8 members Shaun and Matthew to explain this more:

Over the last few months, groups of students have been meeting at lunchtime to take part in our AI Steering Group, giving us the chance to explore one of the most talked-about topics in the world today. Together, we have shared our own experiences of using

AI, debated whether it is having a positive or negative impact on society, and discussed how we think it should develop in the future. Everyone brought different opinions to the table, making each session thought-provoking and helping us understand just how much AI could shape our lives in the years ahead.

One of the highlights of the project was the opportunity to speak with two leading academics, Professor Nigel Crook and Dr Amna Whiston, for the podcast 'Unbelievable'. We asked a wide range of questions about the future of AI, its impact on education and society, and the opportunities and challenges it presents. Their insights

gave us a deeper understanding of the subject and encouraged us to think critically about the role AI will play in our future. You can listen to the full podcast by scanning the QR code above.

As a group, we hope to share what we have learned with the wider Waddesdon community by leading an assembly. This will be a fantastic opportunity to share the ideas we have explored, encourage others to think about AI from different perspectives, and inspire more people to speak up and join the conversation about this rapidly changing technology.



Despite reduced preparation time for their performance of *Skellig*, our Senior Drama students wowed the audience with this magical play. Lead actor, Year 12's Tom, takes us behind the scenes.

WINGING IT

July, 2026 marked the second year of Waddesdon's double offering of Drama productions. Until last year, our amazing musicals had been the single stand-out event until, that is, Miss Turner's take on *DNA* hit the new stage in the Sixth Form Building.

And now one year on, the initiative has continued and *Skellig* graced the stage to huge critical acclaim!

A cast from Year 9 to 12 worked together under the experienced and expert tutelage of Miss Turner. This production greatly differed to the regular school productions, no places to hide, no songs for one to redeem oneself in pithy, but powerful solos. All the action, all the effort, all the work, all the passion, all the creativity was left to stand on the floor of the sixth form auditorium.

After only sixteen hours of rehearsals the collective managed to achieve the seemingly insurmountable goal of a dramatic production, void of song, void of dance: just raw acting with

very little source material to base performances on.

The cast was helmed by Felix Satchel, a humble, quietly confident and diligent lead, who worked tirelessly to perfect the nuances of his performance and memorise his lines to an absolute tee. Needless to say, Felix achieved his goal in an outstanding rendition of 'Michael' a young boy whose family is struggling with an illness-stricken newborn, who then discovers a humanoid creature by the name of Skellig in the abandoned garage.

His stoic and commanding presence kept every other player in check, holding himself to such a standard that the other players could only dream of.

For one night only, David Almond's *Skellig* graced the stage and showed the strength and energy of the cast in the eleventh hour, and the unshakeable patience, and

passionate, unwavering, encouraging, and uplifting support of the excellent Miss Turner. Without our exquisite director nothing would have happened, and our untapped passion for the dramatic arts, void of song, would have been left to rot on Skellig's garage floor.



More Photos





FEST IN SHOW

WaddFest, our summer festival, lit up the school with music, dance, drama, art, light, colour and sound. As always, it brought the academic year to a close, celebrating the talents of our students. Year 12's Josh explains what makes it such a unique event.

Throughout the school year, as a new student, I have felt an ever-growing sense of community and a deep sense of belonging. WaddFest was a glorious culmination of so much: *Beauty and the Beast*, the Big Gig and all the musical events up to this point.

Waddfest preparation started sometime around May with the promotion video. If you have ever seen a WaddFest promo video, you would know that they are a teaser trailer for the day and how it is one of the only days where you can see the teachers not taking themselves seriously. If you haven't seen a Waddfest promo video, watch one now to hype yourself up for next year.

For all the musicians/music students during the two months leading to WaddFest, there is only one main goal in mind. Almost every lunch and breaktime you'll hear rehearsals throughout the music department, and that shared goal for all the hundreds playing is really unifying and it is very rare to see in schools.

When the day finally rolls around there is a very clear nervous excitement for basically everyone involved, but in that time is the setup of the two stages. Every music student in year 12 is taken out of lesson for the whole day to help set up, as it is a colossal job that needs as many hands-on deck as possible. This year's staging was the biggest ever for WaddFest, especially on the main stage which was a pleasure to have so much space to play on.





Set up and sound checking took almost the entire school day, but by 3pm everything was all up and ready to go. Around this time all the stalls, vendors, and vans come in and set up whatever they are running; one of my highlights was the green power cars which were awesome to drive around in. Even though I didn't get anything to eat from the food court, from what I heard it was divine.

Opening the day was the incredible Band Picasso which I'm pretty sure you can follow on Instagram. From then on, between the two stages,

there was something for everyone: from The Lord of the Rings theme on piano, to the rock band playing Youth Gone Wild, there is truly a song for everyone. A stand-out performance was the choir joined by all the Year 7s to be, even though many people (myself included) lost their voices, it was great fun to sing with all the future musicians of the school.

Towards the end of the day the acoustic stage closes with a finale by the orchestra and everyone comes up to the main stage to watch the Staff band play and have a laugh.

Just before the Funk Band comes and closes the night there is a brief sentimental moment where the performing arts teachers give out awards and thank the people there. And finally, the Funk Band. I must say that the energy during this set was phenomenal: I was loving it, the crowd was loving it; it was one of favourite times performing ever.

If you take anything from this short piece, please let it be this... Come to WaddFest next year!



FINAL DESTINATION



Some of our students were lucky enough to visit the hallowed turf of Twickenham to see the Premiership Rugby Final. Year 8's Isla and Year 12's Tom told us about an unforgettable spectacle.

Isla: I really enjoyed going to the 2026 Premiership Rugby Final (Northampton Saints vs Exeter chiefs). It was an amazing experience, and the atmosphere was incredible from the moment we got there. There were so many fans cheering, which made the whole day feel really exciting.

Watching the players compete at such a high level was entertaining and it was great to be part of such a big event. The trip made me enjoy rugby even more and gave me memories that I will never forget. I'm really grateful that I had the

chance to go, and I would definitely love to experience something like it again.

Tom: On Friday 20th of June, a small troop of students were sent on a pilgrimage to Twickenham stadium, on a glorious summer's day (unlike that of a usual rugby match) to witness the showdown between the rampant Northampton Saints and the hungry, underdog Exeter Chiefs.

After eighty minutes of gruelling battle between the two sides, the Saints came out on top, followed by the cheers from

the ecstatic Mr Dipple and some of the students. Joining in with the fervent shouts of "shoe army", the troop left the stadium and embarked on the journey back to school.

Whether it was their first time at a rugby stadium or their tenth, staff and students alike, the atmosphere was infectious and invigorating. Even for those with no proverbial skin in the game such as myself, or the enigmatic and commanding Mr McKenzie; who led us confidently and successfully throughout the day.





Our Year 8 Carnegie Shadowing group have been reading this year's nominated books. Finally they cogitated, discussed, ate snacks and watched the winner being announced. But did they agree with the choice? Luke tells us more...

This term around fifteen Year 8 students were involved in the Carnegie Shadowing. This is part of a national

competition, where books for young people could win the Carnegie prize. There are adult judges, and also the 'shadowers' who are students who also get to vote in a national competition for their favourite.

At Waddesdon, students with a love for reading were selected to attend a meeting after school every couple of weeks. We would read, compare and swap the Carnegie shortlist books. All of them had some form of message, showing how those who are different or challenged can adapt and enjoy their lives just the same as anyone else.

Some of the books I read were: *Popcorn*, a book about Andrew, a boy with extreme anxiety, *The Boy I Love*, *Birdie*, and *Wolf Siren*. I found some to be suited for younger age groups, but many were enjoyable and profoundly deep for those around my age too. After a few meetings we had to vote on which book we had enjoyed most, though our school choice was *The Boy I Love*, both national prizes went to *Wolf Siren*. As someone who has always loved reading, I found this competition fun and believe it may be something for people to aim for when they get into Year 8.



Our Year 12 students were visited by the Museum of Music History, who brought some amazing artefacts providing insight into the musical world of times gone by. Lily had a fascinating afternoon.

Museum Pieces

Recently, I was lucky enough to be involved with a fascinating visit from The Museum of Music History. MoMH is an organisation which preserves musical artefacts and uses them to teach people about the history of music. Two of their members came and spoke to us, bringing a selection of items from their archive. Year 12 musicians, and various Year 12 historians were involved.

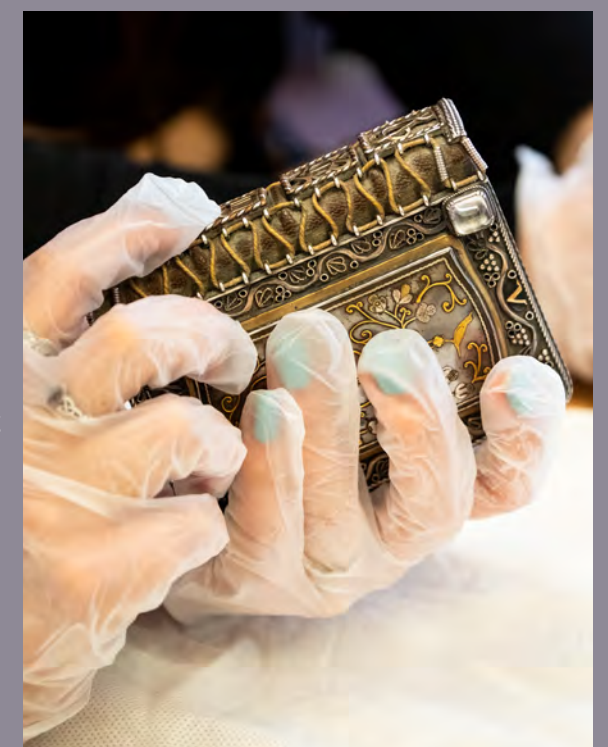
Amongst the items, there were a wooden block which was used to strengthen the fingers of pianists. Ironically, this ended up ruining their hands, which – for some – led to the end of their careers. There was also a Victorian Lady's guitar, which was just about playable! As well as this, they brought in a beautiful dress that was owned by renowned cellist, Jacqueline du Pre, who was known to play in a very expressive way on stage. Interestingly, the dress had a double hem because this was the only way to make sure it did not break on stage! There were also lots of historical papers.

One of my favourite items that we looked at was a small book, made from gold. The book contained a

cello score on the top line, with an accompanying piano score on the bottom line of the music. This was a particularly beautiful artefact connected to Princess Victoria and her close friend Beatrice Harrison. The book was bound together with a singular cello string, with artwork on the front cover that included pictures of different birds.

This can be linked to Beatrice Harrison's cello playing, which regularly incorporated the sound of wild birds, specifically nightingales. As well as this there was a jewel on the front cover, which symbolises unrequited love. The book is thought to have been a gift from one to another, presenting an important piece of queer history. This artefact showed us that music is more than just entertainment, it is a form of communication as well as a way of helping us understand history from a different perspective.

If Waddesdon are lucky enough to welcome The Museum of Music History back, I would highly recommend attending if you have the chance. Thank you so much to both members who gave up their time to show us the different artefacts, it was a joy to attend!



The BIG Question

This year's ITAG Week invited students to explore one of humanity's oldest and most profound questions: **Is There a God?**

Throughout the week, students from Years 7-12 had the privilege of hearing from leading academics and experts from a range of disciplines. Their thought-provoking talks challenged students to think deeply about philosophy, science, artificial intelligence, faith and the nature of existence.

We were delighted to welcome:

- **Prof Paul Heslop** - Mathematical Physics, University of Durham
- **Dr Joshua Sijuwade** - Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Birmingham

- **Dr John Nelson** - Lecturer in Greek, London School of Theology
- **Prof Nigel Crook** - Professor of Artificial Intelligence, Oxford Brookes University

Each day, students not only listened attentively to our guest speakers but also engaged in lively and insightful question-and-answer sessions. Students demonstrated remarkable curiosity, confidence and intellectual maturity, asking challenging and profound questions about faith, morality, suffering, free will, consciousness and the origins of the universe.

The discussions directly complemented the content studied within GCSE and A Level Religious Studies, particularly in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics. However, the week also encouraged students to develop wider life skills, including critical thinking, respectful dialogue, evaluating evidence and considering different perspectives on complex issues.

Form time activities throughout the week gave students the opportunity to discuss arguments for and against the existence of God, work collaboratively and take part in debates within their tutor groups. Engagement



was exceptional, with students demonstrating thoughtful reasoning and a genuine willingness to listen to and challenge one another respectfully.

A particular highlight of the week was receiving a signed copy of *Rise of the Moral Machine* from Professor Nigel Crook. Students were fascinated by discussions surrounding artificial intelligence and morality, and the book now serves as a lasting reminder of this exciting opportunity.

To celebrate student participation, form tutors selected a "Philosopher of the

Week" from each tutor group. These students were recognised for their thoughtful contributions, enthusiasm and engagement throughout the week. Winners received a certificate and a well-deserved sweet treat in recognition of their efforts.

ITAG Week 2026 was a tremendous success, inspiring students to think beyond the classroom and engage with some of life's biggest questions. We are incredibly grateful to our guest speakers, staff and students for making the week such a memorable and enriching experience.



From our Vicar

"End of Term Words"

When I was asked whether I could share a few words at the end of the school year, I am not sure that the first words that jumped into my head were quite what was intended.

Because what immediately came back to me was the rather naughty chant we used to shout at the end of the school year, as we spilled out of the building with our uniforms rather askew and our minds already on the summer holidays:

*We break up, we break down,
We don't care if the school falls down!
No more English, no more French,
No more sitting on the old school bench!*

I may be showing my age here — but I wonder whether anyone else remembers something similar? I am sure today's pupils are far too cool, and no doubt far more polite, for such things... although who knows what might still be muttered under the breath as the summer holidays draw near!

End of term is full of words. Some are shouted joyfully: "We've finished!" "No more exams!" "See you in September!" Some are said with relief: "I made it." "It's over." Some are said with sadness, especially by those leaving: "I'll miss you." "Keep in touch." "Thank you."

And some words may not be said out loud at all, but still sit quietly in our hearts: "I'm tired." "I'm proud." "I'm ready for a rest." "I'm nervous about next year."

The Bible has a great deal to say about words. Right at the beginning, God speaks creation into being. The words of Jesus bring healing, forgiveness, courage and peace. In the book of Proverbs we read:

*"Gracious words are like a honeycomb,
sweetness to the soul and health to the body."*
Proverbs 16:24

What a lovely thought for the end of term.

As we finish this school year, perhaps we might think about the words we carry with us into the summer — and the words we leave with others. There may be people we need to thank, people we need to encourage, and perhaps even people to whom we need to say sorry. And after all the busyness of the year, there are words many of us may need to hear too: stop, breathe, rest.

So whether your end-of-term words are "Hooray!", "At last!", "I survived!", or even "No more sitting on the old school bench!", perhaps we might leave the school year with some beautiful words ringing in our ears — words of blessing from Scripture:

*"The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace."*
Numbers 6:24-26

Wishing you all a peaceful, happy and well-earned summer break.

“As we finish this school year, perhaps we might think about the words we carry with us into the summer — and the words we leave with others.”

Our Vicar, Caroline Wainman, shares her end of term words, and encourages us to think about which end of term words have personal meaning for us.

Our GreenPower team was in action for the first time this season at Bedford Autodrome, with high hopes and a new carbon fibre car. Year 9's Joy tells us about how the action unfolded on track.

Race day: from practice to podium!

The tension was thick, as we suited up in matching jumpsuits, an anticipatory buzz running through the pre-race briefing. The scattered teams on all sides promised intense competition as we all made the final adjustments to our cars. Our only goal was to try our best out there as a team.

The warm-up

We filtered into the pit lane, nerves fizzling as the anticipation for the warm-up bubbled: drivers slid into their seats as their teammates hesitantly walked them off into the edge of the pit lane. Once all the health and safety boxes were well and truly ticked, the cars were sent off for the 90 minute practice race.

We started with our biggest drivers, then moved to our smaller drivers as it's a good strategy which makes the battery last longer and makes the straps easier to adjust as it's quicker to tighten then loosen which saves time that cars spend in the pit.

The track

As soon as I hopped into the car, it hit me that this was really happening and I really was here and doing

this! I checked each side, started the accelerator and sped off round the track.

The excitement of what I accomplished over: it was like I had energy in me that had no where to go, so I talked and enthusiastically explained about how the track worked and what it was like to my sister and her husband who came to see me race - my greatest supporters that day!

As we came back in from the practice, we went over the order for the first official race: we changed out our batteries for the first race and pushed the cars back to the pit. I remember absolutely legging it back to our set up to get some tape to Harry who was with the car before the race was going to start. I did make it, but that was the most intense moment. When they set off at speed, they almost blew me away with how fast they went around the track.

Race 2

After lunch, we went over the order of drivers for race two which I'd be racing in. As the last driver, I got to do the victory lap which made it sound really special and important to me!

I watched as each driver went round until it was my turn. I got into the car, pulled on the visor ready for action click, tick, brrr and I was off: it felt so freeing and whimsilarating (whimsical + exhilarating) that it felt almost like I was flying.

I understood what to do and how to

do it. I was determined to do the best I could. Whilst I was there on the spindle of speed, I saw some of my teammates waving at me. Unfortunately, I couldn't wave to them back as you're not allowed to take your hands off the wheel, but I nodded and felt this gush of pride and warmth: it was amazing and so absolutely worth it.

The awards

After I came down from the track - as my teammates wheeled me down to our set up - I got out and it hit me both physically and mentally that I really had done it as best as I could. We took a group photo and we headed up to where the teams were gathering for the

award announcements. I don't actually remember who came first, second, third etc but the main thing was that we had fun and we did get an award for the best portfolio which everyone was super happy about.

Our results were:

Black car (carbon fibre) = 18th place
Green car (my team's car) = 11th place
Yellow car = 9th place

We packed up our gear and said our farewells. We had achieved our main goal which was to do our best and have a good time.



CIRCUIT BREAKERS



More Photos

PITCH *Perfect*

With the World Cup in its final stages, it was a fitting time to welcome football author Matt Oldfield to the school to share his passion for reading, writing, and the beautiful game.

On 13th July Matt Oldfield (author of Ultimate Football Heroes series

plus others) came and gave engaging talks to Year 7 and 8 about his writing career, the many books he has published, and how important reading for pleasure is!

He also gave writing workshops to some students, helping them to develop their writing and think about setbacks they may have had to overcome.

Blake from Year 8 told us about his

experience of the day:

"Matt Oldfield came into talk to us today. I found him very factual, interesting and kind. The best bit was talking about all the books.

I am looking forward to reading my copy of 'Bellingham v Kane', which he signed for me. I enjoyed the workshop and wrote a story about amazing goals. I would love him to write a Leadley King book!"



Our Year 8 French students popped across the channel to experience the culture and language of France. Leo and Theo tell us about the fun they had, and what they learned.

Forty-four Year 8 students enjoyed a memorable visit to the Opal Coast in Northern France in May, taking part in a range of cultural, culinary and language-based activities. The visit provided an invaluable opportunity for students to experience French life first-hand and develop their confidence beyond the classroom.

During the visit, students spent time at a local snail farm, where they discovered how this well-known French delicacy is produced. The experience sparked plenty of curiosity, and a number of students showed real courage in sampling snails for the first time – a moment that will certainly stay with them...

Students also visited a traditional French bakery. Here, students were involved in a practical workshop, where they learned the techniques behind making bread from scratch with the support of a skilled local baker. It was a fantastic opportunity to engage with French culture in a truly hands-on way.

Leo: "On the first day we got on the bus and made our way down to Dover where we crossed the channel by ferry. After we got off the ferry, we went to a chocolate factory where we learned how chocolate was made and got some samples. Then we went to the hotel to get ready for laser quest which was super fun.

Both days were super fun, and it was an

amazing experience. I would definitely recommend the visit."

Theo: "It was an experience that I will never forget! It started off with going to a chocolate factory, then a visit to an aquarium and also to a bakery where we learned how French people make their bread. We ended the day going to the beach!

The next day was really fun as well where we went to a snail farm which was an awesome and new adventure as we not only got to hold snails, but we also ate them which was pretty cool! Later that day we caught the ferry home and made it back for 6pm just outside of Waddesdon. Wow what a fun and refreshing experience!"



I was delighted to receive a number of entries to last issue's puzzle from every year group in the school and some staff. I won't name and shame, but more staff got the wrong answer initially than the students. Obviously, the Maths department are doing a good job in encouraging you all to show your workings and check your answers! The prize goes to Jess Wheeler, well done Jess.

A football related puzzle this time, in honour of the World Cup: A very exciting game of football finished 9-8. How many different possible half-time scores were there?

Answers via Teams as usual please.

JUMBO

Fun!

Our Students in Years 7-10 took part in their activity days recently, enjoying the summer sunshine, fun and camaraderie outside and inside the school. Firstly, our Year 7s travelled to Whipsnade Zoo, for some animal magic.

On Friday 3 July, Year 7 students enjoyed an exciting visit to Whipsnade Zoo as part of this year's Activities' Day. The trip gave students the opportunity to step outside the classroom and experience one of the UK's largest zoos, home to hundreds of fascinating animals from around the world.

Throughout the day, students explored the zoo in groups, observing a wide range of species in carefully designed habitats. Alongside enjoying the incredible wildlife, the visit also supported their learning. Students were encouraged to think critically about the role of modern zoos by considering the ethical issues surrounding conservation, animal welfare and education. As part of a project, they were asked to reflect on whether they believed zoos have an important place in protecting endangered species or whether there are concerns about keeping animals in captivity.

The day was filled with memorable animal encounters, interesting facts and plenty of opportunities to learn about conservation work taking place around the world.

Gwyn: Whipsnade zoo was so much fun! All year 7 pupils enjoyed a great day out at the zoo, with highlights including the baby elephant that would not leave his mother's side, the curious butterflies that landed on our caps and the African Hunting Dogs that looked friendly enough to stroke, but turned out to be ruthless killers!

There was so much to learn, like the success rate of a tiger's hunt – only 2 in 10 outings would bring back lunch, but an African hunting dog would bring back lunch 7 in 10 outings! Also, the lions are fed carcasses and the male elephants are separated from the females to mimic what it is like in the wild. My favourite fact was about otters: they hold hands while they sleep, so they do not drift downstream – that is very cute! If you have not been, you must go!

Dhanvi, Yathgire: To start the day off we reached Whipsnade zoo by coach and it was about an hour's journey but a fun hour where we could chat with your friends. Once we reached there we were ready to start our amazing

journey around the zoo, meeting all the animals.

In my opinion my favourite animals were elephants and flamingo. The elephants (especially the baby) were so cute and the flamingos were like a piece of art: they were beautiful. In total we saw: red pandas, monkeys, lions, rhinos, camels, yaks, ostrich, giraffes, zebras... (the list goes on!). Finally, we all came back to Waddesdon School tired, but happy.

The visit was a fantastic success, combining learning with fun and giving students the chance to experience wildlife from across the globe. As well as creating lasting memories, the day encouraged everyone to think more deeply about conservation and the important questions surrounding the care and protection of animals.

A special mention must go to all of the Year 7 students, who represented Waddesdon School exceptionally well throughout the day. Their excellent behaviour, enthusiasm and respectful attitude made the trip an enjoyable experience for everyone involved.

At the start of July, Year 8 enjoyed two days of activities in Longridge.

Setting up camp was our first challenge - I was impressed by the willingness of some of the regular campers to help out those less experienced when pitching their tents. An afternoon of fun ensued, with students getting stuck into all manner of activities from rock climbing and laser tag on land, to stand-up paddleboarding, kayaking and raft building on the water. In the evening, we ate sausage and chips (from our friends at Oysters Fish & Chips, Marlow) then relaxed in the cooling temperatures. Mr Mac and Mrs Cook treated us all to the traditional cup of hot chocolate before we all attempted to get some sleep!

Friday morning started bright and early, with some rather dazed students sharing breakfast together. We were blessed with perfect weather which certainly made meal times much easier than they might have been – mainly an exercise in finding a little bit of shade rather than hiding from the rain or cold. Soon, the Longridge staff reappeared to take students off for 3 further activities during the morning and early afternoon. Some students had to be very organised changing in and out of wet clothes depending on the order they did their activities, a big "well done" to those students especially.

Long before most of us were ready for the end, it was time to pack up camp. Students did well to (eventually) squeeze their tents and belongings back into the bags they had come out of and we were soon ready to come home on the coaches which had mercifully turned up slightly early. There were quite a few students to enjoy a snooze on the way home, and I'm sure there were plenty of early bedtimes that evening!

Throughout the trip I was delighted by the way students worked together to overcome the challenges they faced. There was a real sense of pulling together towards a common goal, and I am sure some friendships have been cemented for life as well as some brand new friendships being forged. There were so many highlights from the trip, it is hard to pick anything out to mention here. I will, though, make special mention of those students who were particularly nervous about certain activities before the camp - especially those on water. These students delighted me with their resilience and determination to join in with their friends - they should be really proud!





PLAIN SAILING

Our Year 9s travelled to Willen Lake for water sports and more. Edie tells us about the fun to be had on land and in the water.

Going to Willen Lake with my year group was one of the best days ever!

Zorb football was absolutely chaotic from the start. Everyone was throwing themselves into each other and bouncing all over the place. At one point I ended up completely upside down in my zorb and couldn't get back up, and by the end I had a massive

headache from getting thrown around so much, but it was so worth it because it was hilarious.

My favourite activity was probably stand-up paddle boarding because there was always something happening. We played games like Simon Says while trying to balance on our boards, which was way harder than it sounds. Mr Wynn even fell off his board and completely lost it, which made everyone laugh. We also had to flip our paddle boards upside down and then work together to turn them the right way up again without falling in. I couldn't really stand up properly, but it

was still so much fun.

Sailing was definitely the hardest activity because it took a lot of teamwork. One person had to control the sail while the other steered the boat. We started with just two people in the boat, sailed out to a blue ball and back, then picked up another person each time until there were five of us all trying to work together in one boat. I almost tipped it over a few times, but we managed it in the end. Even though I wasn't amazing at all the activities, I laughed so much, made loads of memories, and had an amazing day with everyone.



Our Year 10 activity involved team-building exercises on the school field, encouraging students to work together, solve problems and enjoy themselves at the same time, as Bongwiwe explains.

The day started with our groups being placed together. Our group was with Mrs George and Mrs Staiano. Other than our questionable team name, we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, with me leading the way and our team collaborating with collective effort, despite the sweltering heat.

The day proved to be amazing despite inevitable doubts. Everyone was incredibly competitive, courtesy of Mrs Clark's backbone speeches. The Wise Up team also deserve a mention, as they inspired us, but also kept order. The

activities were very varied, encouraging problem-solving, team spirit and fun.

We were given popsicles for the afternoon during break which helped so much, with most of us getting cola flavour (which is underrated, to be honest!)

Our team's instructor was called Isaac: he was firm but fair, demonstrating friendly leadership. I appreciate the teachers for organising it and giving regular reminders about what was needed for the day because it was worth it. At the end of the day I gratefully received the Expert Team Builder award which is on my wall at the moment.

Over all, I enjoyed and powered through the day.

Mind the Gap!

Well done to the winning team in our groups of three.

Thanks, Wise Up!





LIFE *in the* FAST

As ever, Sports Day rounded off a celebratory week at the end of the term, with our students enjoying the friendly competition and sporting endeavour in the summer sunshine. As our students pushed themselves, the records tumbled, as Mr Kennedy tells us.

Despite it being one of the hottest summers on record, Waddesdon students did not let this deter them from giving their all to Sports Day! Teams were picked, practised, adjusted and then perfected before the day in question...

As the sun broke through, the students set the field alight with their performances, achieving personal bests, scoring points for their forms and, most importantly, completing each and every event, whatever the skill level.

The competitors were cheered on encouragingly by student supporters,

who in their turn were assisted greatly by the festival atmosphere which was generated through the music and dance provided by Mr Judson and his ensemble. This was complemented by the witticism and craft of Mr Barrett and Miss Turner whose compèring skills are without compare!

Once again some records were broken which is always amazing to see and congratulations to the following:

- Year 10 Girls' 4x100m Relay: 60.26s (10 MJB)
- Year 10 Girls' Shot Putt - Freya McCrea: 8m 90cm
- Year 10 Boys' Javelin - Will Burton: 46m 26cm
- Year 10 Boys' 200m - Eugene Douglas: 24.23s
- Year 10 300m - Harry Hunter: 42.22s

Finally, I would like to thank the WSA for their highly popular and thirst-quenching snacks, and all staff and students for playing and active part and making this community event so successful.

LANE



More Photos



Writing THE PAST



This year, fourteen Year 8 students embarked on the exciting challenge of writing their own works of historical fiction. Working alongside Mr McGregor and Miss Ogden throughout the Summer Term, the students attended weekly lunchtime workshops, where they planned, researched, drafted and refined their stories.

As part of the project, the group visited Waddesdon Manor, where they explored the fascinating story of the Cedar Boys. Students also had the opportunity to work with archival materials, gaining first-hand experience of historical research and receiving expert guidance on how historians investigate the past.

Building on the success of last year's competition, which focused primarily on the First and Second World Wars

and the interwar period, this year's entries showcased an even broader range of historical settings. From Aztec civilisation and Ancient Athens to the sinking of the Titanic, the Strasbourg dancing plague, and the story of the Cedar Boys at Waddesdon Manor, the students demonstrated creativity, imagination and historical understanding.

The strongest entries were submitted to the Historical Association's national historical fiction competition, while every story was carefully judged by our own panel: Mr Abbott, Miss Caswell and Mrs Staiano.

We are delighted to share the winning story via the QR code above, written



by Meriel, alongside extracts from four other outstanding entries selected by our Waddesdon judges.

Congratulations to every student who took part. Their commitment, creativity and enthusiasm made this year's project a great success.

Here are some excerpts from their work:

Meriel: 'He Who Fed the Gods with his Own Heart'

'... when life holds still for just a few seconds. When the moon meets the stars and speaks and when you finally realise life will never stop it will just

carry on going no matter what happens. Acceptance. Fear. Betrayal.'

Kat: 'Music Under Water'

'But the Atlantic didn't care. It took. It swallowed. All that was heard was screams and the cries of desperate people trying to fight for a chance to live.'

Leo: 'Dust and Bronze Beneath an Olive Sky'

'As I walked through the grand hall made of pearlescent white marble, all columns rose on either side of me and stone seats wrapped around my vision. I had never felt so small.'

Lauren: 'The Sacrifices of Talacaxipehualiztil'

'He looked like me when I was young. A messy mane of dark hair, pale brown skin, the colour of the forest and a sense of innocence I had lost long ago.'

Isla: 'The Summer of Dancing'

'It began with her toes. Tiny movements. Almost invisible. She noticed them while peeling onions in the kitchen. The tapping continued. Left foot. Right foot. Left foot. Right foot.'



Our Year 8 Beacon Group students visited Somerville College in Oxford. Alex tells us about his first impressions of an Oxford college.

In the morning we went to the buses and went on the drive to Oxford. We had a tour of the college, and it was quite large. There was accommodation for living in, a cafe for work and snacks, a dining hall for food (with pictures of all the principals) and a library. The library was vast with many tables and chairs to work in. The books were in the thousands, and it was very quiet.

We then came to a classroom to learn about the college and participate in an Oxplore workshop. We explored some big questions: Should robots be considered as humans? Do video games cause violence? Are online friends better than real friends? Should everyone speak one global language? These questions were very difficult to answer because these have been debated for long and hard, and there is evidence for and

against the question.

Somerville College was one of the first Oxford colleges to open lectures to women in a time where women were highly discriminated against. In fact, it was a women-only college. We then came to the restaurant to have our lunch (the food was excellent!) The trip was amazing and the college was one of the best I have seen. I will consider this for later in life.

Our Year 9 Food Tech students felt the heat in the kitchen as they competed in our very own MasterChef competition. With the dishes being judged by real-life top chef and alumnus, Ben Mabley, would they cook up a storm or crash and burn?

CHEF'S Specials

Lohan: Last Wednesday, our Year 9 Food Technology class took part in a MasterChef competition at school. The chef leading it was called Ben, and it was really exciting to cook with a real MasterChef chef.

I decided to make a carbonara, but unfortunately, I burnt the bacon!

However, Ben had a good laugh about it and joked that my bacon needed a coffin because it was so crispy. Everyone found it funny, including me, and his humour made the competition even more enjoyable.



I really enjoyed having the chance to test my cooking skills and see what I could produce under pressure. It also made me think about presentation and how important it is to make a dish look appealing as well as taste good.

One of the best parts was cooking alongside my friends. We all encouraged each other, had a laugh, and enjoyed the banter with Chef Ben throughout the session. It was a really friendly and fun atmosphere.



Ava and Isla won the competition. I wasn't too disappointed because I didn't think I was going to win anyway. Even though my bacon didn't go to plan, I was pleased with the effort I put into my carbonara, and I learned a lot from the experience.

Phillip: When I heard about the competition, I was excited to be judged and receive feedback from Ben, a professional chef at Hartwell House.

The competition allowed me to show my skills and cooking ability off whilst also being able to learn new ways



of cooking and preparing the dish I made. For the competition I decided to make a steak and chips to show off the ability to cook and season a steak properly and to be able to cook and prepare chips properly.

It was fun being able to be in the kitchen and receive live feedback from Ben while preparing the dishes. Although I didn't win, having the opportunity to participate in the challenge helped with confidence while cooking and being able to cook under pressure.



Luke: I liked when we did the Masterchef Competition as I got to show off my skills and hard work. Ben (the judge) unfortunately didn't like my food, but I had fun making it and trying other people's food. It was a very good day.

Charlie: Masterchef was really fun and exciting. I made burgers with a homemade bun and a cheese filling in the burger. One of my favourite parts was when Lohan burnt his bacon to a crisp and carried on cooking it.

Overall, it was a very good experience.



Not all HEROES Wear CAPES



Three of our Year 12 students attended a Carbon Heroes workshop courtesy of constructors EKFB at the HS2 site, where they were encouraged to think about how such projects can be made more carbon sustainable. It was all in a day's work for Christina.

Recently, Risha, Manal, and I had the amazing opportunity to represent our school in the HS2 Carbon Heroes competition.

Our mission was to brainstorm a solution to slash carbon emissions at the A41 HS2 site. It took hours of hard work, during which we picked up some vital real-world skills like teamwork, leadership, and how to write an academic report without falling asleep!

Every competing school was assigned a specific site compound and a

professional industry representative to guide them—essentially giving us a temporary corporate upgrade. We were lucky enough to be paired with our fantastic mentor, Anwen, who helped us navigate the engineering world.

Next came the pitch. We had to present our idea Dragons' Den style to a room full of project development experts. Walking in was genuinely intimidating, but thankfully, the "Dragons" turned out to be lovely, funny human beings instead of corporate monsters, which kept our heart rates at a reasonable level.

The following week, we attended the glitzy awards ceremony at Quainton Railway Station, accompanied by Mrs Staiano and Mrs Bridges. Now, can we talk about the catering? Because the food deserved its own trophy. We were greeted by an absolute feast: incredible Indian food, literal mountains of chicken nuggets, every sandwich and wrap variation known to science, and a dessert spread featuring doughnuts and brownies that we are still thinking about...

While our group didn't walk away with the grand prize—the competition was fierce, and the other schools had some brilliant ideas—we did not leave empty-handed. I was incredibly honoured to go home with the Mentor Trophy, a special individual award nominated directly by Anwen for standing out during the project.

Risha and Manal were the absolute best teammates throughout the whole experience, and we all went home proudly clutching our achievement certificates. It was an unforgettable experience, and I highly recommend that any student given the chance next term signs up immediately.

A massive thank you to Anwen for all her expert guidance, and to Mrs Bridges and Mrs Staiano for supporting us: we hope you had as much fun as we did!

(Unfortunately Manal wasn't available when our photo was taken, as she was being heroic elsewhere).



Our Year 9 Beacon Group Students took part in a mock trial competition. The case was imaginary, but the experience of a courtroom was real: what was their verdict?

On 21 March, the Year 9 Beacon Group stepped into the legal world to take part

in a mock trial competition. It followed weeks of preparation, where everyone spent hours putting together speeches, drafting questions, and going over their witness statements until they knew them inside out.

When the day finally came, the whole team threw themselves into their roles. Performing in front of real judges is no small thing — it's nerve racking, and you can feel every second of it — but the group handled the pressure brilliantly

and kept their focus throughout. The judges scored each team on clarity, understanding of the case and the law, and overall public speaking. The judges commented that we worked well as a team and our defence lawyer was recognised for their performance. We had an amazing experience and a real insight into the UK legal system and an experience none of us will forget. Everyone involved should feel genuinely proud of what they achieved.

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A Fond Waddesdon Farewell

We'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to all the staff leaving us this term for your love and service, and to wish you all the best for the future.



Mr Zucchi



Mr Carr



Mrs Hiscock



Mr Purchase



Mr Nilan



Ms Brown



Ms Shanmugam



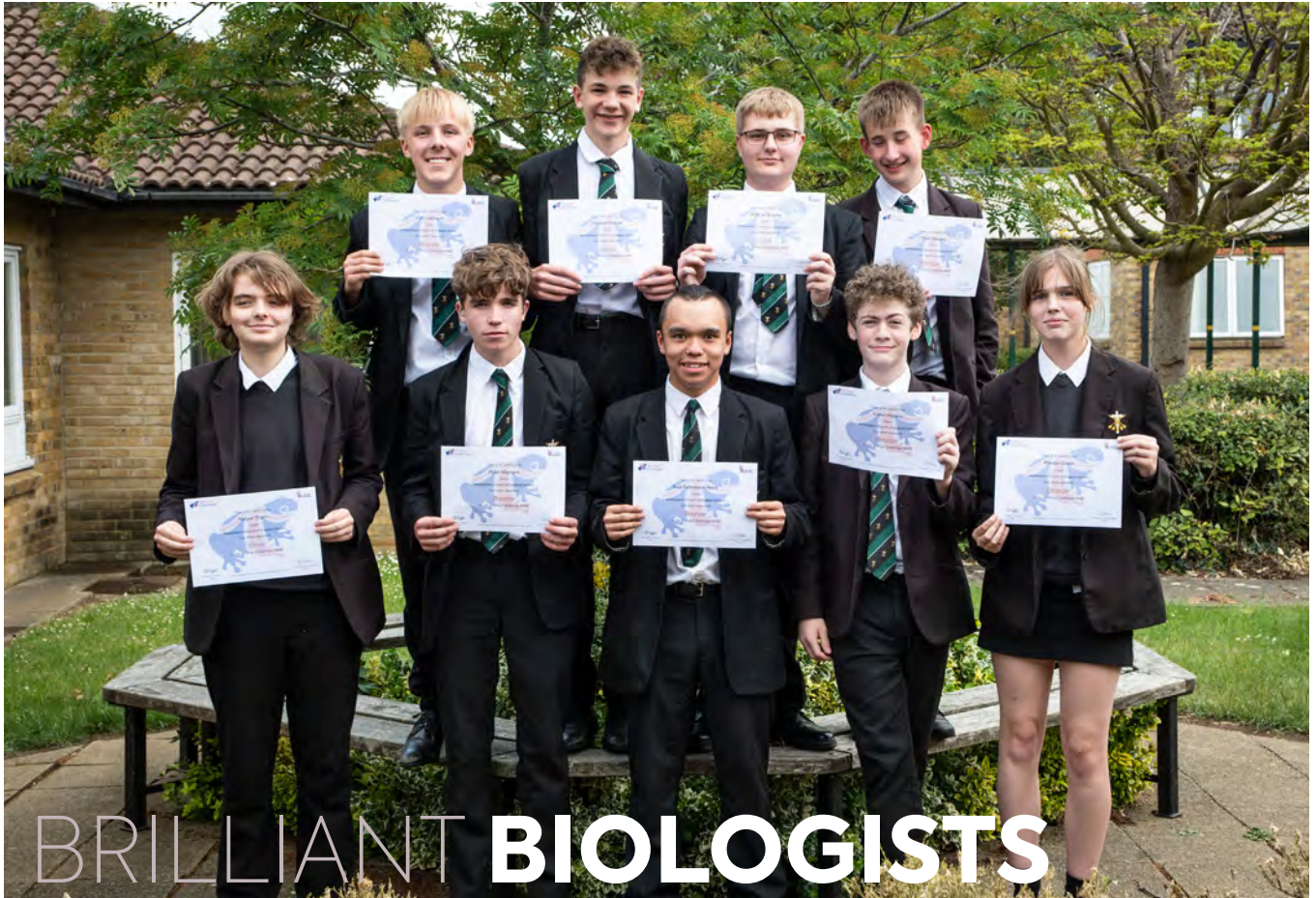
Mr Bray



Ms Stamatin



Ms Ripley



Year 9 and 10 Separate Biology students took part in the UK Biology Challenge, competing against thousands of students across the UK.

Questions are based on the curriculum, but also reward

students whose knowledge of the subject has been increased by reading books and magazines, watching natural history programmes, taking notice of biological items in the news and for having a general knowledge of the biological world around them.

From Year 10, Samuel, Megan and Andrew achieved Silver awards. Toby, Saul, Dylan, Callen, Phoebe and Oliver achieved Bronze awards. Many of our Year 9 students were highly commended and so we look forward to seeing what they can achieve next year!

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