

The Holmleigh Edition

May 2026

EDITION 5



In May's Edition:

- 🌻 Catch up on all the latest news in another busy term
- 🌻 Meet Assistant Headteacher for Sixth Form: Mrs Marsden-Green
- 🌻 A Day in the Life of the Office Team
- 🌻 Explore all the different cultures within the school
- 🌻 Meet more sporting talent amongst the students
- 🌻 Get an insight into the experience of the Battlefields Trip

The Holmleigh Edition

The enrichment groups rotated again and the new set of journalists are mostly from KS3 (as well as one Year 10 student and two Year 12 students) and I have been really impressed with how enthusiastically they selected their roles and how quickly they got into the work to produce them! There was a very positive energy in the news room!

It feels that Term 5 has been busier than ever, and there has been so much to report on, and so we are only bringing you a snapshot of all the goings on this term!

We have wanted to do a report about culture for a while now, so I am thrilled to bring you a new feature that delves into the multiculturalism in the school and also an interview that explores the impact of migration and having to adapt to life in Britain and British education. This is something experienced by many of our students, and I hope you find this interesting and insightful.

I also want to give a special thanks to Harley in Year 10, who came to be interviewed about the Battlefields trip and ended up writing us a paragraph about Ten Tors – clearly a contender for school newspaper enrichment in the future!

The front cover is a stunning shot from this event that really encapsulates the terrain and outdoorsy challenge for those involved.

We look forward to bringing you the final edition of The Holmleigh Edition in Term 6!

Ms Furleger (*Teacher of English/Head of Year 11*)

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Term 5: A term of trips and adventures

Created by Taten Rose, Hugo Morgan, Harley Maclean and Vicky Bogdanova

Term 5 has been a memorable one: trips, sporting events and big adventures have characterised the rainy April and May months, a lot of fun has been had and many memories made. As the year progresses, life at Holmleigh Park is busy but buzzing and exams are now in full swing for Years 11 and 13 with mocks ROAs on the horizon for the lower years.

The GLT football tournament

The year 8 boys had a GLT (Greenshaw Learning Trust) football tournament in Bristol where they came out victorious! The team was captained by Jenson Carpenter and his vice-captain Freddie Knight, along with the coach Mr Thompson. They faced teams such as Gloucester Academy and Henley Bank. It was a battle of skill and precision but HP High could not be defeated and came out triumphant. It was a fun-filled, action-packed day to remember!



The Ten Tors expedition



After months of rigorous training, 5 students from our school completed the 35 and 45 mile Ten Tors routes and successfully conquered navigating the unpredictable and rugged

Dartmoor terrain to complete the event.

Arriving at the event, there was a buzzing atmosphere of excitement and it was great for our students to meet and have fun with people from all around the South West.



Facing steep hills, challenging weather, and navigating entirely on their own, our students demonstrated incredible grit, teamwork, and resilience. This event was unbelievable for our students to experience and the memories they made from it they will treasure for the rest of their lives. Congratulations to everyone involved in overcoming this tough, rewarding experience and bringing home the medals.

Year 9 trip to Berkeley Castle

Year 9 went to Berkeley castle and I think most of us can agree that it was a very interesting trip! We arrived around 10am and we started off with an activity of guessing how old artefacts were and what the purpose was for them. After that, we had a tour of inside the castle and we learnt a lot of historic facts about what the castle has been through. After the really



excellent tour, we went to go eat our lunch on the grass and the weather was amazing! Finally, it was time to go home.



Overall, the trip was brilliant and a very fun learning experience and the school should arrange more trips like this one!

Engaging Enrichment

By Vicky Bogdanova and Hannah Vaughan

Over the past weeks, we have visited 2 enrichment groups: Warhammer and paper craft and we both agree that we were amazed at how unique they were, and how much we enjoyed each enrichment.

Warhammer with Dr Brown

As we entered, we were greeted by Dr Brown who explained what this game is and more details about it. In Warhammer, two or more players use their characters to compete with each other. You get to decorate characters, tanks, ships etc however you want but it can take up a long amount of time and can even be quite expensive. As we went around the room, we asked students the following questions:



Would you recommend this game to others?

“Yes and no because it’s hard to play if you are new to the game and it’s expensive. However, it’s a chill and fun game once you understand it.”

“Yes, if you are able to commit to it and you know you want to spend all the money and put all the effort in but no if you don’t think you will be able to commit to it or if you don’t think you’ll do it forever”

Is the amount of money spent worth it?

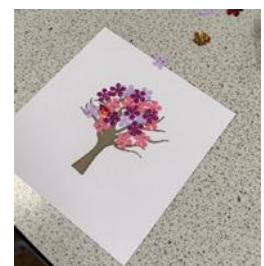
“In my opinion, it is since it’s a hobby for me and it’s very productive and the value equals all the time spent customising everything.”

“I think spending the money is only worth it if you are genuinely going to commit to the game and will do it for a life time as it takes up a lot of your free time”

Our overall opinion of this enrichment is that you have to be very productive and keen to keep up with everything in this game. It is very cool, interactive and a great way to make friends. If you are interested in battle and competition, you should pick this enrichment.

Paper craft with Mrs Myers

As we entered, we were warmly greeted by Mrs Myers who explained to us what they were up to and how she got interested in doing this enrichment.





In paper craft club, you get to design sculptures with paper and get to decorate them however you like with buttons, glitter, sequins, glitter glue, paper cut outs etc Mrs Myers said that she wanted to do this enrichment since she's a crafty/creative person and whenever she isn't doing Science, she is relaxing by doing crafts!

Would you recommend this enrichment to non-crafty people?

"Yes, since it is very fun and productive"

"Yes, since it's easy to pick up and it very relaxing"

What made you pick this enrichment?

"I really like crafty stuff and I knew I would like this enrichment - that's why I picked it!"

"Because I wanted to try something different and I thought this would be interesting as there are loads of things you can do with it"

Our overall impression of this enrichment is that it is very relaxing and a fun activity to do whether you're a crafty person or not as you are able to make new friends, create cool artwork and, overall, just experiment with everything on offer and create something awesome!

A Day in the Life: The Office Team

By Lucy Hill and Amelia Simick



Depending on our role in the office, we all arrive from before 7am up to 8.30am. When we first arrive, we turn on our phones and computers to answer emails and phone calls from parents and teachers who need our assistance. We also get messages and calls to inform us about a child's absence so we can alert their teachers and the attendance team.

We also print out and organise your cover work and room change for the day and take them down to your classrooms before students arrive to their first lesson of the day, so the morning tends to be very busy!

We like to prepare ourselves early as each day brings new challenges and new experiences or issues to deal with. While there are some regular things we do, there is also some unpredictability and you never know what issues may arise first thing in the morning.

More complicated situations we deal with daily are dealing with challenging or upset parents or carers who are sometimes unhappy with their child's consequence for their actions such as being sent to OSP or given a detention/prep. They often want information very quickly but it is not always possible as obviously teachers are mostly in lessons teaching. We must always stay calm and respectful during these situations and respond accordingly to the issue.

Our job is very complex and multiple skills are needed such as good communication skills, problem solving, patience and resilience. These are very important skills to have because we have many interactions with parents and students multiple times a day!

During the day, we have to interact with students by having their parents pick them up if ill or if a student has been brought to school late or are leaving early for a medical appointment. Sometimes they also come to the office for help with general enquiries or to pick something up that has been dropped off for them, like their lunch or P.E. kit!



The Battlefields Trip

By Reuben Ellis



In April of Term 5, staff took 50 pupils from across Years 9 and 10 to Ypres in Belgium to give them a realistic understanding of the Western Front in the First World War.

We ask Year 10 student Harley, who has been on the trip twice now, about the trip to find out more about it: the highs, the impact of the trip and why he would recommend it.

What was most memorable moment?

My most memorable moment was visiting all of the WW1 museums and being able to learn about the different perspectives. For example, both the Allied powers and the Central powers and the different experiences from all the countries involved.

What did you learn about the first World War?

I learnt about trench warfare and how it affected people, in particular the harsh conditions of the trenches, the diseases endured by soldiers and the extent they suffered. I also learnt about the different weapons used in the war: each country used different weapons. For example, the power and size difference between them was interesting.

What would you recommend about the trip?

I would recommend going to the museums where we learnt about what the trenches looked like, as well as different outfits worn in the war and how war impacted innocent civilians. There was tonnes of information. We also watched a video about the movement of the front lines over time and that was really informative and engaging.

What were you expecting? Were you correct?

I was expecting to go and learn about the trenches and different grave sites. I was correct, although we learnt about a lot of other aspects to do with the war too.



How did you entertain yourselves?

There was a games room where we stayed, which had a pool table, darts board and a punching machine so we spent a lot of our free time there. I even played pool against Mr Robinson and I won 3-2! We also just enjoyed spending time with friends, talking and creating fun on the long coach journey.

Did you enjoy it?

Yes 100% - it is probably the best school trip I've ever been on because you learn a lot, make memories with friends and – in general – I personally enjoy learning about the war.

Why did you return?

I returned because it was a really good school trip and it was really fun and I had a good time doing it.



What was Belgium like compared to England?

The streets were a lot cleaner, the people were particularly friendly and it seemed a very active country with more people riding bikes and being outside.

Sixth form: The students' perspective

By Josie Hillman

Going from GCSEs to A levels carries a range of emotions for students, whether that is excitement or worry. This section of the newspaper is to delve into the sixth form students' experiences so far, and the advice that they have for the younger year groups. There are both interviews of sixth form students who were new to the school, and ones who weren't in order to help you find someone who relates to you.



Year 12, Matthias T:

I take Maths, Further Maths and Chemistry - which is the main reason I went to sixth form instead of college. I felt that sixth form would provide me with a better opportunity to do Maths-based subjects as there is more structure. My transition from year 11 to year 12 was a bit difficult in the first couple of months because I was completely new to the school and it was a challenge to adapt to the pace of work load, but now that I have gotten more comfortable with the people around me and formed good friends, it's not as much of a challenge. The advice that I have for the younger years is to try and find a good group of friends, because it'll make the experience a lot better. If that doesn't work then try to get familiar with the people in your classes. Don't forget to have fun, but make sure you also take sixth form seriously.

Year 12, Adelin O:

I do Business, Applied Science, and IT for my subjects. I think that the main difference between secondary school and sixth form is that you get treated more like an adult, which gives you the opportunity to be independent. In terms of managing the transition between year 11 and year 12, I didn't find it too difficult because I went to Holmleigh for secondary school as well. However, I did make sure to put more effort into my subjects because the work load is very different and I know that I only have two years to achieve the best grades. If I could speak to my Year 11 self, I would tell her to do the homework she gets set so there is enough time to revise, and I'd also say that sixth form might not start out exactly how you want it to, but it will get better. You have the opportunity to meet more people, make new friends, and start afresh. Really, that is the most exciting thing!



Year 12, Nathan B

I am currently studying Maths, Further Maths and Physics. I came to sixth form for a multitude of reasons. For example, there is a better structure in sixth form compared to college, and I already felt comfortable here because I knew the teachers and came here for secondary school. This also helped me a lot with the transition from year 11 to year 12; I was already familiar with the environment, so I felt very laid back. I wouldn't say that there is anything that I am still getting used to in sixth form, but I would advise students in the younger years to choose a subject that they enjoy, and to consider what

they want to do in the future before choosing/confirming their sixth form subjects.

Year 13 Head Student, Elizabeth Oni

The subjects that I do are Maths, Physics, and Environmental Science. To manage my exam stress for these, I make sure to be disciplined with the workload, and use the support of my teachers and class mates. The revision techniques that work best for me are past papers and flashcards because it helps to find the specific topics that I need to work on. When I leave sixth form, I will miss the community that the school offers, because I think it is one of the best parts about Holmleigh. If I could give any advice to my past self or students in the year below, I would say the infamous line of... 'lock in'.

Year 13, Hakeem B:

I am currently doing an Applied Science BTEC, which can be very stressful at times. But in order to manage this stress, I find the time to relax and do the things that make me happy, which creates a good balance between my school work and social life, allowing me to not get too stressed. I normally use the Cornell notes method, where you divide a page into three sections for a: cue column, notes column, and summary. This helps me to retain the information learnt in class, and then I go on to use flashcards to ensure that I have a good understanding of everything. I think the best part about sixth form is the study periods we get, as it allows us to be independent in our revision and school work, which you don't particularly get to experience in secondary school. If I could give any advice to the students in the lower years, it would probably be to pay attention in classes, and to take GCSEs seriously.



Kimberley L:

I also take Applied Science, like Hakeem, but my revision techniques are quite different. I use a planner, where every day I do a different type of science revision. To make sure that this is successful, I set timers for each one to ensure that I spend an equal amount of time on all of it, essentially, setting my own personal details for specific tasks. I think the best part about sixth form is the independence that you get from it; my teachers treat me like an adult, so it doesn't make it as nerve wracking going into university or future careers. Although I enjoy this part of sixth form, I am definitely going to miss seeing my friends every day and the friends that I have from the lower years. If I had the opportunity to talk to my younger self, I would tell her not to go to college because I wouldn't take it as seriously, and that sixth form will give me the structure that I need to have the best results. The advice that I'd give to people in lower years would be to prioritise their sleep and mental wellbeing, so then you can concentrate better on school work.

Career spotlight: Mr Stokes

By Lucy Hill

How do you help students who struggle in lessons?

I try to listen to them and find different ways of explaining the problem/task. I try to remain consistent and notice when students are finding things difficult.

What or who inspired you to take this career path as an ICT teacher?

I enjoyed computers and people knew that I could explain things in a way that students could understand. I have a lot of patience, which really helps when teaching ICT.

Personally, what is your favourite year to teach?

I love Year 7 when they start as they are really excited and keen as they usually have not had computer lessons on real computers - they usually have had iPad lessons. Saying that, I have had lovely classes across all year groups at different points.

What is your favourite thing about working at Holmleigh Park?

I think the best thing about it is that we offer such a good deal for young people - there is something for everyone. I like that we are inclusive - no matter who you are and where you are from and what you can or cannot do - we welcome you here and so do the students.

What were your previous jobs before you came to work here?

I worked at an Insurance Company before I joined Holmleigh Park. I was a team leader in the Motor Insurance section. I also work as a mobile DJ at parties, weddings etc. I have been doing this for over 15 years now. I love music and really enjoy working with people to make sure that they have a great time. It can be very stressful but at the same time rewarding.

What is the difference from working here a while ago compared to nowadays?

Lots of differences - the main one being structure and routine. Students know exactly what is expected of them and how they can move forward. We now offer so many more opportunities for young people that were never available.

What other subjects would you have taught if you didn't teach ICT?

I have taught many subjects over the years including Maths, DT and Business Studies. I also started in the Behaviour Department with Mrs Kelly - I have come full circle and am back working with her now.

What are your favourite memories from being here for a while?

Even though my memory isn't the best, I can remember funny incidents with students and staff. Some of the staff have been great work friends and have really helped me along the way. I regularly see past pupils out and about and - without fail - they are always polite and friendly. They always talk of their time at school fondly and some wish they could go back and do better. That is a great experience knowing that you have helped a young person in some small way and that they are thriving and doing well.



Fun Fridays and House Competitions

By Reuben Ellis

Brilliant Badge Making with Kingfisher Treasure Seekers: 17/04/26

This fun and 'feel good Friday' included several arty and colourful tables, a metal stamp, and a whole lot of sweets and chocolate. Mrs Tucker from Treasure Seekers kindly gave her time to come in and make badges with students: all created with positive messages on them. It was a jam-packed fun Friday with an array of sugar filled treats from the tuck shop and £67 raised for the house charity!



Countdown Conundrums: 22/04/26

Guess what? For the third time in a row this year, English have decided to go with.... COUNTDOWN!!! This fast-paced game of words and a ticking clock takes no time to become a recognized fun Friday favourite. The students narrowly raced to be the first to solve the perilous puzzles to earn some house points for **Meteor**, **Typhoon**, **Javelin** and **Hurricane**. It's an unforgettable word and literacy challenge for the quick thinkers! This one is a classic but a favourite.



The one-line drawing : 29/05/26

Arty types and those up for a challenge grabbed a pencil, some paper and a steady hand for an artistic gallery to be made! They were all challenged to draw the famous Mr. Conway using a continuous line – no lifting the pen allowed. In third place it was... **Iman N!** And in second it was... **Poppy S!** And the grand first place title holds... **Ellis P!**

This was a thrilling and artistic challenge that provided something new and different for a grey Friday!

Wonderful Welly-Wanging: 08/05/26

Students charged down to the field for some wacky and wonderful welly wanging! Four houses. Four wellies. One winner. Three losers. And still typhoon wins! (Cheats as any meteor would say!)

Four players were selected from each tutor battling to the best at wanging a welly for their houses. This was a battle of power, strength and precision and a whole lot of outdoorsy fun!



CULTURE CORNER

By Rahnuma Nakhuda

Holmleigh Park is a diverse and welcoming school, each year embracing new students and celebrating everyone for who they are. With what feels like a thousand cultures and counting (not to forget nationalities too), our community is shaped by the languages, traditions, and stories that students bring with them. This diversity isn't just something we talk about — it's something you can see in our classrooms, hear in our corridors, and feel during the events and celebrations that bring us together.

To explore this even further, we asked our very own students and staff: *What's one thing you wish people knew about your culture?* Their answers remind us how much we can learn from one another and how important it is to create a school where every identity is valued.

What's One Thing You Wish People Knew About Your Culture?



"I am from India, more specifically I am a Gujrati from a place called Nani Daman. One thing I wish people knew is that no matter how irritable or stingy we may seem, in times of difficulty we are always there for each other. We can't bear to see each other in pain and will immediately run to help not just each other but everyone in need, regardless of differences in religion or identity."

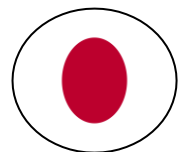
"Banana and Rice is a Very underrated combination to have."



"Nigerians are naturally joy bringers, due to the struggles we face in our country, our natural escape is to make each other smile - it is reflected in our charisma and outlook on life."

The Edo Tribe: "It's one of the oldest tribes standing in the whole of Nigeria and it has a lot of sophisticated art and has had and still has a lot of significant influence on West African Culture."

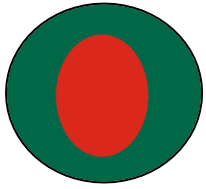
"It's not a trend to be Asian and the culture comes from deep history, The one thing I love about my culture is the clothing style on specific days of the year - For example the 'Kimono' worn in celebrations and 'Hantan' that is worn during the winter."



"I am from India, more specifically the state of Kerala. I would like to say that Not Everyone is a conservative, not everyone is Hindu, there are Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Atheists. Not to forget the food - not always spicy but flavourful and delicious every time."

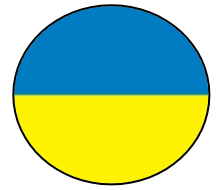
"My country has such a diverse population that our culture isn't so easy to explain, there's a link in our art, our languages, our work, our behaviour, our sport, our relationships, our hobbies."





Bengali culture isn't just Bangladesh. It's a region in south Asia that has been Politically divided into 8 divisions which are further divided into 64 districts."

"We are a very diverse country and we inhabit lots of religions."



"One thing I would like people to know is the fact that I am Gujrati but from East Africa and how we have been settled in Africa for decades. My culture has now become Eastern-African-Gujrati. Some of the words I use (native language) are words that have been changed and are not the words used in India. We have adapted vocabulary from Swahili and made it our own. For example, the word for Iron is "Passi" which is the word in Swahili."

"We are very hospitable people to anyone visiting and who comes to our country, even to anyone who meets us at home or in a foreign land/country."



"Brazilians are very ethnically diverse, many from European, African and Asian descent, thus embracing differences and similarities through customs (National) such as Music and sport."

"Spain is not all about its beaches and tourist locations. Spain has lots of Autonomous communities – which means each region is so diverse. So, your experience in one region may be completely different to another, so give it a shot and travel out to all the areas. We are a country rich in culture and are very proud to show everyone what we represent - (not just football either)!"





STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: Basit and Fayazullah

By Rahnuma Nakhuda

Education is not just a qualification; it is a journey of self-fulfilment and preparation for life. Many are deprived of this opportunity, and not everyone realises. Those that receive this blessing in disguise often take it for granted. Worldwide, millions may it be old or young, are forcibly displaced due to conflict. Many students come from homelands that have had their schooling systems erased. This article is written to give an insight into the difficulties that young people face when migrating: from struggling to understand lessons, to feeling isolated in classrooms where everyone else already knew the routines, to carrying the responsibility of supporting their families while trying to catch up academically - they face it all.

Joining me today are 2 incredible boys, Fayazullah and Basit. Both migrated during their teenage years, and joined Holmleigh Park towards the end of Year 9, just in time for the most critical academic period – the transition into Year 10 and GCSEs. We'll be hearing their personal stories of leaving home, the hurdles they faced in the procedure of migrating, trying to integrate into the British school system and the strategies they used to adapt and thrive. Their experiences show the resilience required to rebuild a life and education from the ground up heading above and beyond to success. Without further ado, let's begin!

When did you join HP high, and what were your first impressions of the school environment?

Basit: I came to the UK alongside my 4 siblings and parents around 2024, so that would be late Year 9 of the school year - the last remaining 2 or 3 weeks of year 9. This was my first time in an English-speaking school and Western country, and the environment was so unfamiliar, so confusing. It was extremely nerve wracking, especially not knowing what to do as part of the school rules and routines, as well as not knowing what to say. My English was very poorly spoken as the only language I knew at the time was Persian. I was just full of nerves and anxiety, scared of feeling like the odd one out.

Fayaz: I came to the UK, around late Year 9 too, alongside my parents and siblings. I have 6 siblings but 2 are still in Afghanistan and 4 have come to the UK with me. The environment was extremely unusual, very unfamiliar as I have never been in a Western country before. It made me increasingly anxious and nervous - and the language barrier made it difficult for me to communicate effectively and understand the lessons because Persian was the only language I was fluent in and it is very different to English.

Was there a specific moment, person, or event in those first few weeks that made you feel part of the school community?

Basit: One event that made me feel part of the school community was joining the Sport Teams 2 months after I joined. This helped me to open up and talk to other students more freely, and learn English by observing others in the team. When I first joined, my timetable was linked to another existing student who helped guide me around the school. Even though I felt pressured by the environment, I was happy to have a buddy like Liam to be there to talk to and listen to me, even though my conversations wouldn't make sense at times.

Fayaz: There were many things that were welcoming, for example Activity Week. This helped me to explore different parts of the school and take part in creative activities, and collaborate with other students. I spoke more, got to open up more, and interact more, overall having fun. I am grateful to the teachers who were so

supportive and didn't judge me but taught me to get more familiar with the environment. My timetable was linked to a boy called Eshan and he helped me get to my lessons and we talked on our way there together.



How would you describe the differences between the schooling and classroom system in Afghanistan compared to the UK?

Basit: In terms of education, Afghanistan is nowhere near compared to the UK; I would always prefer the UK system. It is much more developed, and has much bigger facilities. In Afghanistan, there was no access to top quality resources, no professional teacher, no teacher to be there for you when you would want to feel valued or heard. In Holmleigh Park, there is a school council and even safeguarding is always there at your service when you really need it.

Fayaz: The education system of the UK is nowhere near similar to Afghanistan. In the UK, schools are much more developed and have access to resources, books such as knowledge organisers. There's a much higher quality of education and I am able to develop as an individual. Holmleigh Park provides even a

safeguarding team, allowing us to empty out our emotions to a safe place without fear of what people would say or might do.

Are there any aspects you miss about Afghanistan? If so, why?

Basit: The aspect I miss the most about Afghanistan is my family members who are still there. For example, my grandfather and grandmother, who also played a part in raising me alongside my parents. I have formed an emotional attachment with them. They are a part of me. I also miss my friends who I would see daily but now it won't be possible. There will always be a part of me back in Afghanistan making me feel empty from the inside. Remembering the past and wishing for the things I miss can be extremely overwhelming making me feel suffocated or have minor panic attacks.

Fayaz: In Afghanistan, we had a community, a community of people who we saw almost every day such as our friends and even the neighbouring families! We were all a part of each other and shared the pains and happiness together, carrying each other's burdens. I miss my friends who I would meet up with every day, some even are childhood friends who I grew up with, and to leave them makes me feel empty. I miss my 2 siblings and other relatives back in Afghanistan, and I am constantly worried if they are safe or not. It is extremely overwhelming.

Many people are aware of the political situation of Afghanistan, what were your reasons for coming?

Basit: As many people already know, the unstable situation in Afghanistan means our lives are constantly at risk and so we moved for a safer and much more stable life. Myself and my parents want us to gain the best educational opportunities and live a better life.

Fayaz: I agree with Basit - our lives are threatened by death, and the uncertainty of the situation cannot guarantee much security. It became a necessity. My parents decided to move for a better quality of life and for me and my siblings to have the equal educational opportunities as every other child in the Western world has.

What would you describe as the toughest part of your migration experience?

Basit: The toughest part of my experience would be the decision itself. It is a BIG decision to leave your native homeland and become a migrant. Within the first month, many feelings overwhelmed me - depression, nervousness, anxiety. Other migrants will agree that your behaviour will definitely change - drastically - and you will turn into a different person. It is tough consoling and adapting yourself, but it takes time. I had to learn to trust time and the positive changes it brings with it.

Fayaz: The toughest part of my migration experience is to accept that it would happen. If something must happen and is destined to be like that, it will happen no matter what. The toughest part was figuring out what to do. How to do something? What is normal? Would my actions seem out of the ordinary? And then trying not to feel like the odd one out.

Another tough part is to celebrate everyone's differences. Back in Afghanistan, we were all from similar cultures (even though different regions have different ways of cultural practices) but in the UK, so many people migrate, diversity keeps on increasing. So, we must learn to be inclusive and mindful of everyone's emotions, not just my own because we are all interdependent on each other.

What advice would you give to an international student joining for the first time?

Basit: There's a lot of things you will do or would want to do which won't make sense. In the first couple of months after migration, there is this period of time of confusion, anger, wanting to go see your homeland again, anxiety, depression. It all comes at once and can stop you from becoming stronger. The main advice I would give is to keep communicating with people, have the courage to speak. Don't remain quiet because - if you do - you will just blend into the background and it won't be any different; there will be no change to how you were before. The more time you spend communicating the easier this skill will get - making you enjoy your surroundings more.

Fayaz: When you first arrive, accept yourself as you are. You will observe many differences around you. For example, everyone dresses differently, everyone has a different interpretation and viewpoint towards others from a foreign country - some may like you and some people will be rude to you. My main advice is don't get overwhelmed with these differences. Decide to keep your identity safe, and I know it's very easy to say but try not to lose yourself in the crowd but rather accept those differences and stand out. You should be proud of the culture you represent and the hard work you are putting in to achieve your goals.

What do you think were the most important steps you took to achieve your academic success and what are you most proud of throughout your journey?

Basit: I am highly grateful for my parents who used their own life experiences and gave me advice whenever I was uncertain. The teachers guided me a lot and still are really friendly. Mindset is key: I have a clear goal in my mind and base my actions on my goal. I like getting out of my comfort zone now - Push the limits!! The more you are challenged and struggle, the better the outcome. I am extremely proud of myself for adapting, accepting and training myself to focus on my goal and to face my personal challenges directly. I held onto myself through such intense emotions and have come out stronger than ever and will continue to be in the future.

Fayaz: Once again, I agree with Basit too - it's all about mindset. Keeping a broad view is very important - I have never compared myself to others because comparison will kill your natural talents and abilities. I am extremely proud of myself. I have been able to adapt and accept my troubles, facing it head first. I have held on to discipline and created a strong mindset. If it wasn't for me and my hard work, I wouldn't have achieved so much like I have today. My favourite daily reminder is to: "Be Better Than Yesterday". The present and the future holds so much more than you can ever imagine.

How has your friendship with each other helped you to develop? And was it deliberate that both of you picked Geography, Computer Science and IT?

Basit: It was a complete coincidence! I picked my options first then Fayaz did; we did not know we picked the same options. We both consider this to be a lucky charm for us in our journey. Who knows - things may have been different if we didn't have each other! Fayaz has been an amazing companion throughout as we both can relate to each other with our experiences. We both also push each other in terms of studies. For example, on days that I don't revise, Fayaz encourages me, and I encourage Fayaz when some days are rough.

Fayaz: We fill each other's gaps. For example, I help to improve Basit's English vocabulary as I know more vocabulary than him, and Basit helps me when I struggle with Computer Science as that is my weaker but his stronger point. After year 11, this will be the end of our journey. But of course, we will remain in contact with each other!

What are your future career goals and your next steps post GCSE?

Basit: I have applied for Sixth Form here at Holmleigh Park. The subjects I have selected are: Maths, Physics and Computer Science. One day I aim to be an Electrical Engineer.

Fayaz: I have a range of options in mind. One route I think of taking is completing an IB - International Baccalaureate at a College. It is an alternative to A level and takes the same time to complete - 2 years. The subject requirements are very different to A-Level. I have a variety of subjects I would like to study, For example: Maths, Global Politics and Economics.

What have the teachers said about Fayazullah and Basit?

Ms Furleger (Head of Year 11): "They are polite and hardworking students. They are very conscientious, dedicated any task they do and will complete to their best of ability. How they have fitted in and adapted, despite challenges others have been aware of, has been admirable".

Mr Lord (Computer science): "They are extremely keen and eager students, so friendly towards others! I wish I had a class full of Fayazullah and Basit - it would make my job so much easier!"

Mrs Taner (IT): "Fayazullah and Basit's Coursework has the highest coursework grade in the class! They are such determined and hardworking students - their progress goes above and beyond those in their class. Hats off to them!"

Mr Pennington (Geography): "They are extremely hard working and never give up. As a duo they work perfectly in sync and I know they will reach greater success in the future!"

Meet the Senior Leadership Team:



An Interview with Mrs Marsden-Green

By Josie Hillman

What does your role as Assistant Head Teacher/Head of Sixth Form include?

Head of sixth form includes ensuring that all students precede from education into their future, whether that be to university or going into apprenticeships but whilst gaining skills, experience and fun during their time here.

How does it differ from other SLT roles?

My role covers every aspect of a student's experience in sixth form. It covers the academic side, pastoral side, and it includes supporting the pupil's transition into the sixth form and out. This is different because the other members of SLT have one key role, for example, being in charge of behaviour.

What do you enjoy about being Head of Sixth form?

I enjoy being the Head of Sixth form because it includes every role, but also because I enjoy working with students between age 16 and 18. The best day of my year is in the middle of the school holidays when the students get their results and achieve their goals. I am privileged to be able to see that more than anybody else because of how rewarding it is.

What are some of the challenges you face in this job role?

One of the challenges I face is at the very start of the year when the students are picking their subjects. We put a lot of effort into making sure students choose the right subjects so that they have the best possible route for success for whatever they want to do. But it can be quite tricky as some students change their mind or don't enjoy the subject they are taking as much as they thought they would.

What encouraged you to go for this career?

As well as being Head of Sixth form, I am also a Geography teacher. I think what personally encouraged me to do this for my career was the love and passion that I had for Geography, as well as the fact that I enjoyed sharing how awesome this planet is to other people.

What is it like teaching sixth form students compared to students in the lower years?

It is more challenging teaching sixth form students compared to students in the lower years because of the complexity of the topics that we discuss. For example, I am teaching an A level geography class at the moment and am currently teaching them about the geopolitics of the middle east, which is extremely complex.

Did you go to sixth form when you were younger? If so, how did you find it as a student?

Yes, I did go to sixth form. It was very memorable because my Head of Sixth form was very bossy!

Do you miss teaching more often?

I definitely do miss teaching more often, especially the younger years, because there was more freedom from exam specifications. For example, if there was a volcano eruption that had happened the day before, I could easily change what I was going to teach and talk about the current geographical happenings instead.

How do you support sixth form students when they are feeling stressed with their exams?

We have a whole range of strategies that we use to support students, from personnel in the sixth form, to providing a dedicated space that is open before and after regular school times.

A spotlight on sport- Toby Brooks

By Taten Rose



What got you into Cross Country?

At Primary School, I won a lot of sports day races. Then, my mum's friend suggested that I join an athletics club called Gloucester Athletics club. I raced at the Gloucester primary school's cross country event and got better, which made me love the sport.

How do you train/warm up before a big race?

A week before a big race, I train twice a week on Mondays and Tuesdays with Tuesday being more intense. On the day, I have a good meal, including lots of calories, so then I can have lots of energy for the race so my legs don't give out during the race. Around 20 minutes before, I do a planned warm-up including dynamic stretches and static stretches.

What was your biggest low in Cross Country?

My biggest low was when I injured my Achilles heel in year 7 and then I couldn't compete in races for 8-10 weeks. Another low I experienced in Cross Country was when I got ill after a race in Exeter, which was a regional event for the South West.

What was your biggest high in Cross Country?

In years 5 and 6, I won the Gloucester School Cross Country Trials which led me to run for Gloucestershire in the Cross Country National final. Another high was when I beat my personal best by 10 seconds in a 1500m race in Blackridge Athletics club when I was only aiming for 4 seconds better.

What was your happiest moment in Cross Country?

This year, for the year 8 and year 9 Cross Country, I came 9th meaning I was in the reverses so I didn't think I would make it to the next round but after my mum got a message saying I was selected for the year 8 and year 9 Cross Country team for Gloucestershire.

What are your future goals and ambitions in cross country?

It is currently track season, so I will be running on the athletics track and will be competing in a 1500m event soon. I want to continue running and racing and hopefully beat my current PB in 1500m - it is 4 mins 41 seconds and I want to be below 4 mins 40 seconds by the end of the season! I also do 800m and am trying to beat 2 mins 15 seconds!





Career spotlight- Miss Llewellyn

By Amelia Simick

Why did you decide teaching as a career path?

I did not ever see myself as a teacher originally; I was on the path to work in a film studio that did animation and adverts for big brands. However, that job offer hit a few speed bumps right near the end, and the start date changed. I saw a job for 'Reading Co-ordinator' at Beaufort Co-operative Academy (my old school!), which was essentially a librarian role. When I started the job, I loved it, working with young people and encouraging them to be the best version of them they could be was fantastic. Working in a school felt like where I was meant to be, so even though I loved the librarian job, I made the decision to go to university and start my path to teaching. As they say, the rest is history!

Do you prefer teaching English or Media? Why did you choose to teach English and become a teacher of English literature?

Good question! They are both more similar than you would expect, and I don't know that I would have a favourite.

I love English because I have always loved books and plays; my parents would often find me hidden under the covers reading way past my bedtime, so, when I was deciding what to teach, that was the most obvious choice. English is so open to interpretation and I really enjoy the idea that everyone will look at a text and interpret it in a different way.

With Media, it's very similar. I love film and TV and the different ways that can be interpreted as well. But in teaching Media there is maybe a lot more to remember? We look at lots of Media products and lots of different theories as well, which can be a little tricky to teach - but I love them both as much as the other.

What is your most developed skill because of this job?

Communication. I have had to develop lots of ways and styles of communication depending on who I am talking to. The way I communicate will be different if I am talking to Mr Hudson or parents or a Year 10 student. Not only talking as well, but I also need to find ways to communicate messages to people without talking and then disturbing a class, which can be very tricky sometimes!

What was your experience as a student compared to what the school is like now?

I was a student here from 2009-2016, so I only experienced the 'Beaufort' days, and it was much more chaotic than it is now. Overall, I had quite a good experience at school, I enjoyed learning and was a very well behaved student (until I got to Sixth Form, but we don't talk about that!). The school was also much smaller in size and number of pupils too, so it was very different to now. The fact that I work here does mean that some of my old teachers are now my colleagues too, which was a bit strange at first, but I am used to it now.

I think that the school has a much better and supportive environment now compared to how it used to be. The lessons are calmer and students have the opportunity to learn in a disruption free space, which is very rare in some secondary schools!

What do you personally enjoy most about this school?

I think the thing that I enjoy most is the students. Each student is so unique and has their own views and stories and personalities. Each of them might learn in a slightly different way, and have different views on things, as well. 99% of the time the students are the reason I enjoy my days and enjoy the career that I chose!

How would you describe your teaching style?

Another good question! Calm, supportive and relaxed, but high expectations. I don't want anyone feeling on edge or dreading my lessons (I am sure there will be some that do, but I will blame the subject, not myself!). I always want my students to do their best and work the hardest they can. Working hard and trying their best is more important than perfection.

You also worked as the school librarian previously - what was this role like?

I loved this role! This is what first sparked my desire to work in a school and help educate the future generations! It was busy as there used to be English lessons that ran in the library every day; and I would often have over 50 students at break AND lunchtime. There was never a dull moment, and without that job there is no way that I would be in the role that I am in today; I am very grateful for it.



Miss Llewellyn as a Year 7 student at a spelling bee!

A sneak peek into the P.E. faculty

By Hugo Morgan and Toby Brooks

We asked some of the P.E. teachers about what led them to become P.E. teachers at Holmleigh Park! We also asked them about their academic background to discover what route they took to get to this role and career, as well as what their dream jobs were when they were at school!

Mr Addis

I studied at Hartpury University and studied PE and School Sport. A hidden talent that not many people know about is that I can do the worm. My dream job during my childhood was to be a professional rugby player.

Mr Foster

The University I studied at was Northumbria University (Newcastle). I studied Physiotherapy. A hidden talent that not many people know is that I can play a little bit of the guitar and I can also ski backwards (but not at the same time as playing the guitar!) My dream job when I was a child was that I wanted to be a professional rugby player.

Mr Caffull

I studied at Worcester University, and I studied Physical Education and Sports Coaching Science. I then completed my teacher training with a school in Evesham, and am currently studying for a doctorate in Sport and Exercise Science. A hidden talent that not many people know about is that I can dislocate both of my shoulders, which makes for a fun party trick. My dream job had nothing to do with PE, and I took a variety of GCSEs as I had absolutely no idea. It was only when I was introduced into cricket at the age of 15 that I fell in love with the sport and subject.

Mrs Sharples

The university that I studied at was the University of Gloucester. I studied sports education at my time there. A hidden talent that not many people know about is that I'm very good at remembering song lyrics! My dream job during my childhood was to be an astronaut, but from around Y7 I always wanted to be a PE teacher!

MAY

Facts By Sheila-Rose Brooks

- **May is named after a Greek Goddess called Maia and is associated with fertility and the blooming of flowers.**
- **May is considered a lucky month for US Presidents as none have died in May.**
- **A centuries old superstition claims it is unlucky to get married in May: *Marry in May and you'll rue the day.***
- **The May birthstone is the emerald it represents love and success**
- **The iconic Empire State Building in New York was opened on May 1st 1931.**
- **May's birth flowers are the Hawthorn (symbolising hope) and the Lily-of-the-valley (symbolising the return of happiness.**
- **In the southern Hemisphere, May is the seasonal equivalent of November in the Northern Hemisphere.**
- **There is a day called National Teacher Day in the US which is celebrated every year on the Tuesday of the first full week of the month.**
- **May is a month when garden and fields burst into colour with May flowers,**
- **May the 4th is known worldwide as Star Wars Day, which is a pun on the catchphrase 'may the force be with you'.**



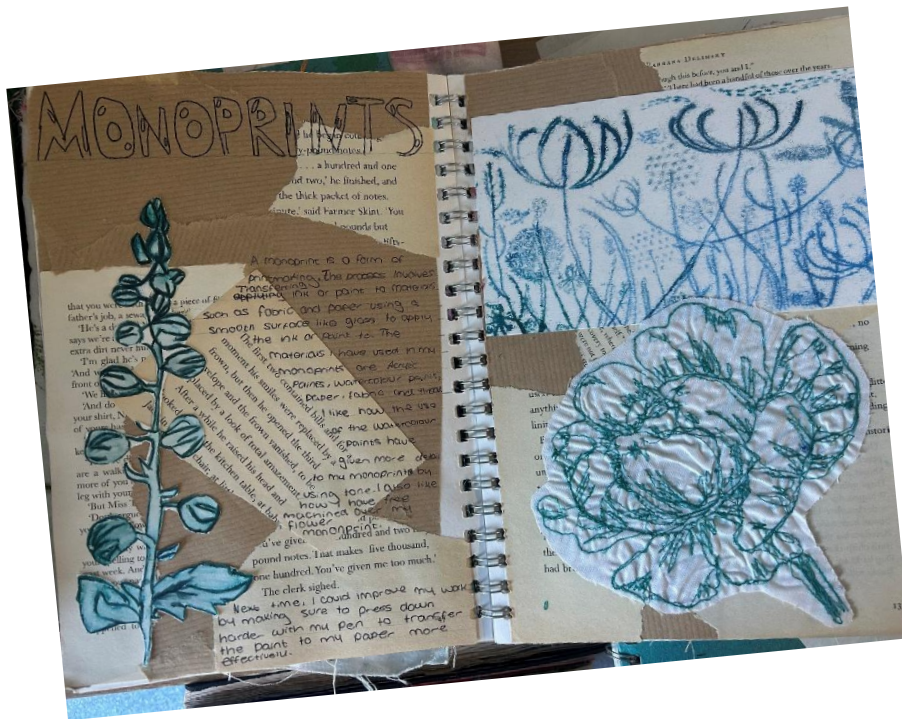
Facts By Sheila-Rose Brooks

- **We used to have 33 bank holidays before 1834. This was deemed excessive, so the government slashed it to 4!**
- **The first official bank holiday was Easter Monday, 10th April 1871.**
- **They are called bank holiday because they were originally created for bank workers.**
- **The UK has fewer public holidays than most countries: in comparison, Nepal officially recognises 35 public holidays each year.**
- **The UK has two bank holidays in May: Early May holiday (first Monday) and the spring bank holiday (last Monday).**
- **UK bank holidays were officially introduced by the Bank Holidays Act of 1871 so bank workers could attend or participate in cricket matches.**
- **If a bank holiday in the UK falls on a weekend, a "substitute day" (usually the following Monday) becomes the official bank holiday.**
- **There is no legal right to paid time off on UK bank holidays.**
- **In 2011, the UK government almost scrapped the Early May Bank Holiday by shifting it to October.**

A celebration of Art and Textiles from Term 5

Year 10 Textiles

Unit 1



Izzy
Woodridge

Ryan
Ireland





Brixie Neate



Mollie Vaughan