

The Holmleigh Edition

July 2026

EDITION 6



In July's Edition:

- 🌻 Catch up on all the latest news in the final term
- 🌻 Meet Deputy Headteacher: Mr Park
- 🌻 A Day in the Life of the Exams Team
- 🌻 Find out about the Year 11 leavers assembly and prom
- 🌻 Discover how Year 6 got on when they visited!

The Holmleigh Edition

I can't believe we are already at the end of the school year and we are very proud that the school newspaper is now well established. I know that the readership has grown and many people now look forward to its publication, and enjoy the articles: we get some really lovely comments and we are really thankful for the positive feedback.

In this issue, we bring only a snapshot of what this term offers for the students – it is thriving, feels completely non-stop and there is something going on every day. Students get to enjoy sports day, house matches, reward festivals, celebration assemblies, trips, activities week and so much more.

In preparation for next year, where we plan to run the front cover as a student photography competition each time, we held a staff photography competition to have the winning shot as our front cover. Students chose the theme of 'Summer at HP' and really enjoyed judging the photos and selecting the best front cover. A big congratulations to Dr Masters who won with the winning shot!

Once again, students have worked with focus, determination and positivity and we look forward to bringing you The Holmleigh Edition again next academic year with some old classics that have been established and new creative features too.

Have a lovely Summer and enjoy the recommendations of places to visit!

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

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Term 6: A term of trips and adventures

Written collaboratively by the student journalists

In the final term of the year, Holmleigh Park students have had to face one of the UK's hottest heatwaves. Students have persevered through the incredible heat working to their limits as usual. It has been busy with Year 11s finishing their **GCSEs** and Year 13s completing their **A-Levels**, whilst Years 7,8,9 have done their **Rank Order Assessments (ROAs)** determining their sets for next year.

The hard work is (mostly) done and, as the term has progressed, the final fun begins with all the traditional sporting events, celebrations, rewards and trips that have become an important and much anticipated part of the school culture.



July brings the summer term **house matches**! This Summer, the boys did Cricket and the girls did rounders, which have been so close this year with all of our four houses doing fantastic! This year's house matches have been more brilliant than ever and is a popular event that brings the school community together: competitively but with a great spirit and attitude! There could only be one winner though and Meteor took the crown for this with Hurricane in 2nd position, Javelin 3rd and Typhoon 4th.

Another massive event is obviously **sports day**, which took place on Monday 6th July. Students were competing all day and the whole school gathered together on the field for the grand finale of races and relays. This is a long-standing tradition with houses sat together with painted faces and cheering one another on. There were some impressive speeds and some close calls but it was Meteor again that took 1st place: clearly a sporty house!



At the end of the penultimate week, the **final house cup winner** was announced and the glory went to HURRICANE with over 20,000 points. This earned them a fun filled day of celebration on the inflatables on the field. They won in attendance as well as house points making it a well-deserved triumph.



The final week brings **Activities Week** – a welcome end to the year with a chance to do different things and experience new adventures. Year 7 had a thrilling time at Adventure Bristol on the high ropes, Year 8 spent a day at the lakes doing water sports in the sunshine – always a glorious trip – and Years 9 and 10 took a trip to West Midlands Safari Park. All trips were enjoyed immensely and students got to get out of the classroom and make memories of their school days.

We are signing off now and wishing everyone the best Summer: See you in September!



Engaging Enrichment

By Amelia Simick and Lucy Hill

This year, in our first year of the enrichment programme being embedded into the timetable, every student has been able to experience 3 different enrichment activities. However, being part of the school newsletter has meant that some have been privileged to get a sneak peak into even more activities. This term we paid a visit to Music and Crochet...

Marvellous Music



During Music this past term, the students have been playing the drums and guitar. The enrichment has a lot of different rhythms and everyone was enjoying themselves when we entered. They even played as a group all at once like an orchestra to a song called 'Yellow' by Coldplay. Everyone was smiling while playing and it was like everyone was coming together and in sync. Whilst they were

drumming and playing guitar, they also got to practise by doing other beats and rhythms.

Teamwork plays a huge part in the Music enrichment. Students are able to work together from different years, who they would not have met yet otherwise. This enrichment brings determination to the students to continue going, even if you forget to play a beat or mess up the rhythm. This work helps students in the future if they ever needed to continue going while struggling, but also allows them to tap into their natural love of music and create some memorable musical moments.

Creative Crochet

When we entered, it was a very calm and relaxed space for the crocheters. Mrs Pellatt was explaining what they were creating and what they had made before to explore different ideas and creativity. She gave us more information about crocheting and how it can affect someone's mood. Mrs Pellatt



also explained that this enrichment can explore exciting skills, make new friends and be a new hobby that you can practice.



Recently, they have made scrunchies and decorative butterflies and lots of different things that you can make with ease. This enrichment may be difficult to start with but once you practice more and get the hang of it you can become really talented and skilful. Students have found it confusing but also really relaxing to do when stressed. Crochet enrichment is well recommended to others because of its calming creations and crafting involved. Plus, it is always good to learn a new skill. Students have also mentioned that it only takes a few lessons for your skills to develop and to understand it fully without difficulty.

Finally, after lots and lots of weeks of enrichment, students have developed many skills and created new friends. Recently for students, we have been busy going through the enrichment booklet selecting enrichment groups and activities for next year. There are many new exciting options that we are all excited about, but will have a long wait till September to find out which we have been given.

Some enrichments have boosted confidence, like drama, and others have explored creativity, like paper craft. All of these wide mixtures of enrichment choices have given students opportunities to try do different things outside of their comfort zone with new people to develop new connections.

Overall, everyone has had loads of fun in their enrichments and will continue to throughout the following years ahead at Holmleigh Park High School.

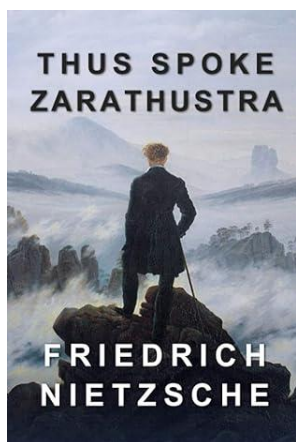
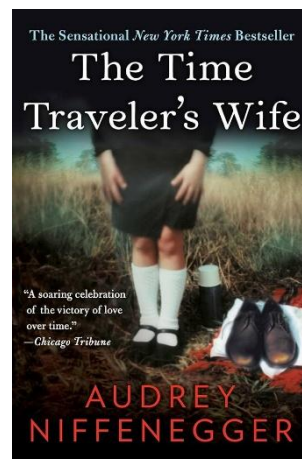
What's your favourite book?

By Taten Rose

We all know that English Teachers love reading, so we asked them what their favourite book is to give us all some ideas for some summer reading!

Ms Furleger:

One book that I loved was *The Time Traveller's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger. I was really cynical about it when it first came out because I did not think I would get into a book about a character who travels in time, but I read it within days, it completely won me over and I have loved it ever since. It has also been made into a really watchable and believable film. It is a mix of Science Fiction and Romance and is ultimately about a man who has a rare genetic disorder that causes him to travel in time - sometimes to the past, sometimes to the future and always without his control. It is about the impact of that on him, his life and his wife who spends her time waiting for him to return.

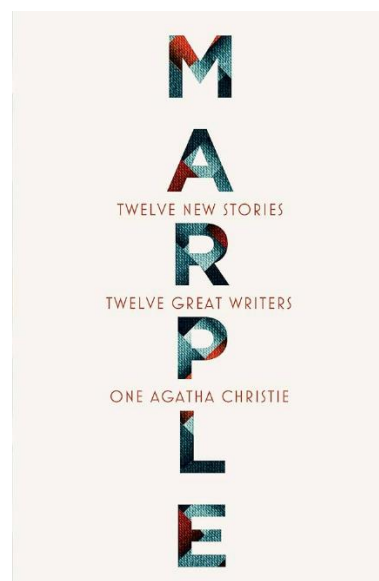


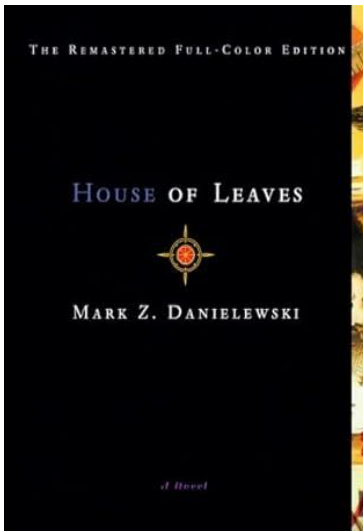
Mr Silverstone-Rogers:

My favourite book is '*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*' by Friedrich Nietzsche because it changes the way you see the world and yourself through an intriguing allegory. It is like a manual for self-realisation, individuality and psychological resilience. A challenging read and definitely one for book lovers but one that will leave you thinking for ages...

Miss Himpson:

A book I would recommend to students and staff alike is '*Marple: Twelve Stories*'. It is a collection of short stories edited by Naomi Alderman, written by twelve different crime writers featuring Agatha Christie's famous elderly sleuth, Miss Marple. Whether you are a fan of the Queen of Crime or not, I would recommend this book because each story is uniquely entertaining in its own right.





Mr Pearce:

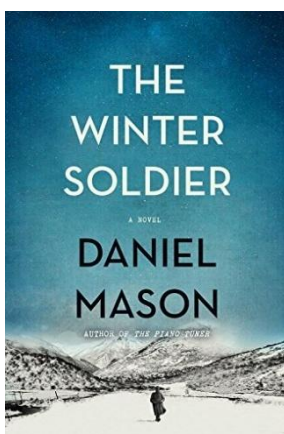
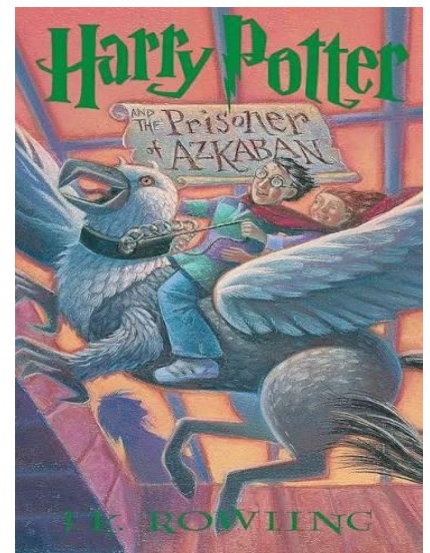
My favourite book is '**House of Leaves**' by Mark Z. Danielewski. *House of Leaves* by Mark Z. Danielewski is a mind-bending, labyrinthine horror novel that explores madness, obsession, and perception. The story is told through nested, overlapping narratives that forces the reader to physically navigate a dark, shifting maze. The words overlap, change direction and contain the stories of three different narrators, in three different time periods - all at once. House of Leaves is the sort of book that creeps you out long after you put it down. In the words of the author, you will be: "fighting with everything you've got not to face the thing you most dread, what is now, what will be, what has always come before, the creature you truly are, the creature we all are, buried in the nameless black of a name. And then the nightmares will begin."

Mrs Gully:

My Favourite book is: Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban.

Obviously, it is pivotal part of the immense and hugely popular Harry Potter series.

This one is dark and scary and the characters have grown up quite a bit, but you can't really read this without reading the others. But they are all well worth it, especially to get to this unforgettable one in the series.



Miss Hewlett:

My favourite book is *The Winter Soldier* by Daniel Mason. Set during WW1, it tells the story of Lucius, a 22 year old medical student, who is sent to a remote hospital outpost in the Carpathian Mountains where he finds all the other doctors/physicians dead or severely ill. With the help of a nurse, he ends up running the hospital and caring for sick and dying German soldiers who have been injured in battle on the Eastern Front. It then evolves into a love story between him and the nurse, but has a tragic ending. I love this book because it is very moving and gives a very raw depiction of the brutalities of war.

A Day in the Life: The Exam Team

By Vicky Bogdanova and Hannah Vaughan

We start about 8am in the morning, although it is often earlier when we are in mock or exam season. Our job is a really huge one and lots of planning and logistics go into it to make it smooth, successful and be sure that we are managing everything in line with regulations.



We start planning mocks, ROAs and official exams in July for the next academic year. We plot them out onto a wall chart, dates are agreed with the relevant teachers and middle and senior leaders, and then, nearer the time, we ask staff for the test papers. We create a timetable and we organise our invigilators to come in and help. We plan catch up sessions in advance and we create everyone's exam ID cards and attendance registers.

Meeting needs and adapting exam procedures for individuals is another key part of our job. We are very lucky at HP that we have the ability to use quieter rooms and spaces with computers to help students. We also have reading pens and dictionaries to help our EAL students. We work closely with Mrs Price and Mrs Daniell to understand what our SEN students need and we make sure that they get their needs met.

Some of our biggest challenges are the number of students, space within the school, having enough invigilators and very hot weather! There is a lot to think about and making sure the students are happy and comfortable is our number one priority! There are also sometimes needs that arise on the day, particularly when it is an official exam as it is inevitable that sometimes students will be unwell and need a change of seating or support to get through the exam. Obviously, they can't miss a GCSE or A-Level exam so we just work to make them as comfortable and supported as they can be.

A complex aspect of the job is around the legalities linked to formal exams. We are bound by the rules of an inspector service known as JCQ, and have lots of rule books and deadlines that we need to follow. We must keep lists of every student and every exam. We also need to keep seating plans, attendance registers, behaviour logs, incident logs and a list of access needs for each exam room. We can have up to around 6-8 exam rooms sitting exams at the same time.

When exam papers arrive, these have to be signed into our school secure exams room with 2 people present. They then must be signed out by 2 people on the morning of exams too. Teachers are absolutely not allowed to see them or enter the exam room. There are lots of rules to follow! These are just the basic ones we have to follow for every exam.

We are also responsible for reporting any malpractice to the exam boards, for reporting sickness of students on the day and dealing with worries from staff and parents who all want the best for you! We also have to enter every student for every exam and it's really important that we get that correct! Another key thing we do is printing and creating all of the data reports that go home with your ROA and mock exam results.

We like to try and greet you all before your full year group exams and check on you all, as well as build a bit of a rapport so we can set you at ease and get you used to completing exams and following strict exam conditions. The job is very busy and very stressful but very important and we genuinely love it.

Welcome Year 6: Induction Day

By Amelia Simick and Lucy Hill

Over the course of two days, Year 6 students from multiple different primary schools visited for a taster session of Holmleigh Park to discover how we operate, what we expect and get them used to the school, lessons and teachers. Students were able to meet their tutors, their Head of Year Ms Furleger and Deputy Head of Year Mr Pearce.

Students started their day with an assembly with the Year 7 team and Mr Mortimer – our transition coordinator – who had met so many of the students already. They then had a tour and some tutor time with different activities that helped them get to know each other and the school. They also had an introduction to English or Science lessons and sat some crucial tests to determine their classes for September. They also enjoyed a choir session, singing together and having fun – something they do once a fortnight in Year 7.

At break and lunch, they got to know one another even more with dancing games and basketball shoot outs. They got to sample the school food and get a flavour of what they can get involved in, and there was a real buzz amongst the Year 7s to be!

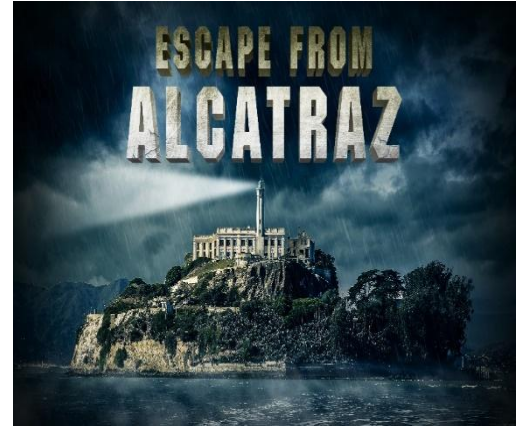
At the end of the day, they finished with an assembly, enjoyed an ice lolly in the sun and later went to Air Hop – no doubt an absolute highlight of their day where they could bond even further.

Overall, the day went smoothly and while leaving the gates one student asked ‘Can I start now?’ which shows that they are excited and ready to become secondary school students in September.

Recommendations: Days Out!

By Hugo Taylor and Toby Brooks

"For a fab holiday activity - try an escape room! There are so many around that offer different themes and difficulties and are such a laugh to do with both friends and family! The excitement of unlocking secret doors, completing themed tasks, and solving physical clues will get you laughing, possibly arguing, but ending in an amazing sense of achievement! Even better: it suits all weather! Top it off with a cheeky freakshake to replenish that brain power used and it's the perfect way to spend a couple of hours!"



-Miss Brooker



"For a fun day for younger children from age 2 to age 12, I would recommend a soft play in Stonehouse which is called Go Bananas.

It is close to Junction 13 of the M5 and they have a lovely café for grownups. The Café is in the middle of the soft play so parents can keep an eye while enjoying their delicious cake or coffee.

There is a separate section for toddlers, which is a safe environment for them to have fun while their older siblings are running around.

My advice is to book online as it is always busy."

-Mrs Guennec

"Crickley Hill is 15-20 minutes away from Tuffley just off the A417. The land is owned by the National Trust and boasts commanding views over the Gloucestershire countryside; at some points and on a clear day you can see the Brecon Beacons in Wales. It is a fantastic place for an afternoon walk with the family, as it has options for all walking abilities. For example, there is a pram and wheelchair friendly walk. The highlight is the hill itself which boasts thousands of years of history. Last settled at the end of the Roman period, archeologists have found evidence of human settlements dating back to the Neolithic period (4000 BC). You also have the option of a cafe, which has an excellent selection of icecreams."



-Mr Thompson

"Slimbridge Wetlands Centre is in Slimbridge between Gloucester and Bristol. It can easily be reached by car from Gloucester (leave the M5 at J13), and there are bus stops (number 65) and Cam/Dursley train station is not far away. My family have been going to Slimbridge for years, simply because it is an amazing place! There is something for everyone:



- A variety of birds and other animals - otters, eider ducks and flamingos are some of my personal favourites!
- Indoor and outdoor adventure play areas including the famous 'Welly boot land' (watch out, the water's cold!).
- Vast wetlands with hides for keen bird watchers. If you're lucky, you might spot cuckoos, oystercatchers and even kingfishers.
- Duck feeding
- Canoe safari
- Pond dipping
- Talks and tours
- Cafe, refreshment pods around the site
- Gift shop

-Mrs Greenow



"Westward Ho! Is a small town located in North Devon (around an hour from junction 27 on the M5). The town itself has something for every seaside lover. From Go Karts to crazy golf, water hoverboats to surfing lessons, paddleboarding to an outside natural pool, there is something for everybody there.

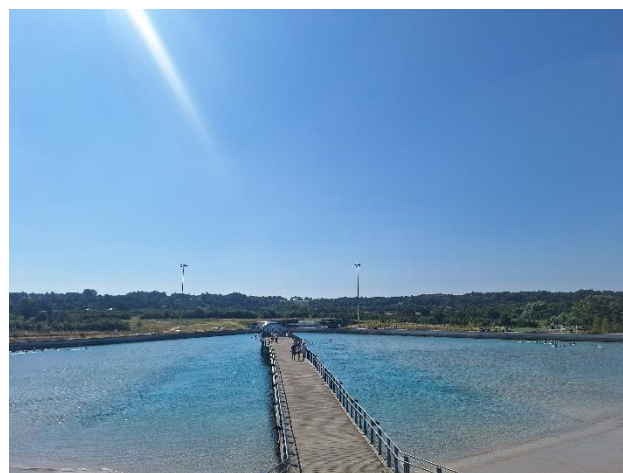
For the more relaxed person, there are plenty of spots to put your feet up and watch the tide come in along the golden beach, balconies on local pubs and cafes offer the

best views across to Lundy Island (which you can travel to via ferry)! For accommodation, hotels, B&Bs, camping sites are all available for all types of holiday goers to make the most of an amazing location for a weekend away.

Top Tip: Make sure to get a locally-made ice cream from the Hockings van near the sea wall, it is the best ice cream you will ever taste!"

-Mr Caffull

"Located just off Junction 17 of the M5, The Wave is a fabulous choice for both free fun or the experience of trying something new! It is a man made 200m surfing lagoon where you can try surfing or just mooch about. They cater for all ages from age 4 upwards and prices vary depending on what sessions you book.



Alternatively, you can be a spectator and enjoy the feeling of being near the 'sea' and watching the surfing. There is also a café/restaurant that does tasty food and treats, a playground, a shop, and a small skate ramp. If you love it, you can even camp on site. It's an outdoorsy experience for an afternoon or a day if you want to surf. My biggest tip is: take a scooter or a bike to cycle the long road from the car park to The Wave as it is quite a distance and much more fun on the wheels!"

-Ms Furleger



"One of my favourite places to visit in the summer holidays is Cotswold Water Park. We've been a few times and there's always plenty to do, whether you want to spend the whole day being active or just enjoy a walk around the lakes.

If you like getting on the water, there are loads of activities to choose from. There's an inflatable aqua park, paddleboarding, kayaking and canoeing, and there are places where you can go for a swim too. If that's not your thing, the walks around the lakes are lovely and it's a great place to take the dog for a stroll.

There are also a few outdoor shops to have a look around, which I always end up wandering into! There are also tasty places to grab something to eat. My favourite has to be the pizza place. The wood-fired pizzas are delicious and there's often a DJ playing music, which gives the whole area a really relaxed, fun atmosphere, especially on a sunny day."

-Mrs Sharples

Year 11 prom – a deserved celebration

By Josie Hillman



After months of stress and revision, the Year 11s have finally finished their GCSEs, and gotten to the stage that they have all been waiting for... PROM!

Prom is an opportunity for students to dress up, let their hair down, and have true fun with their school friends. They get to celebrate their last ever time being with all of the people that

they have grown up with since they were eleven, and other friends made along the years, and also their teachers to mark the end of their time together.

Prom is important for Year 11s because it allows them to embrace everything that they have worked so hard for and all of the memories that they have made. Not only does it emphasise the end of their secondary life, but highlights the new opportunities that they are going to make and new people that they are going to meet.

To make this memorable for the Year 11s, it was held at Hatherley Manner as a big BBQ, so that the students felt that they had the opportunity to mingle with every one and walk around the area, instead of being sat down formally the whole time. This was the first time the school has done a BBQ for prom, instead of a sit-down meal, and it worked extremely well! Everyone was talking to different groups of people that they wouldn't normally have in school, and people were dancing and singing as if no one in the room was watching.

Not only this, but there were student awards and teacher awards that were given out to create even more fun. Olivia and Riley had no competition when they were awarded best entrance, considering the fact that they arrived in a helicopter! Moses I and Nancy E were awarded Prom King and Queen, whilst best dressed went to Mimi M and Tatenda M. Mr Mortimer won most sarcastic teacher, and Mr Pearce won funniest (although he was in charge of the voting system so it could have been rigged in his favour!).





All in all, the Year 11s had a fantastic time at prom and got the opportunity to celebrate their last five years at Holmleigh Park High with a night of love and laughter. The rom committee and Mr Pearce did a fantastic job organising it and hopefully they had a good after party, and we will be looking forward to seeing them again

on results day on Thursday 20th August!



Career spotlight: Mrs Kingston

By Hannah Vaughan and Vicky Bogdanov



What is your favourite year group to teach?

I don't have a favourite year group to teach; I enjoy different things about each year group. I do have favourite projects though, and these tend to be exciting projects that allow my students to be creative and collaborative: the Year 13 installation project for example. Through my role as charity and community coordinator, I get to see the very best of our students. Seeing them working together to support our House Charities makes me feel very honoured to experience our students at their kindest and most thoughtful.

What previous jobs did you have before teaching, and did you enjoy them?

I had several jobs before I trained to be a teacher - one of my favourites was working for a company that supported adults with learning and developmental needs. During the day, I worked in the day centre providing 1:1 and small group art activities and, during the evenings, I supported the adults with cooking and self-care. I was also a post person for a summer in my 20s. I loved the work but it was the wettest summer, and I got told off for delivering soggy letters more than once!

What do you personally enjoy about working in this school?

There are lots of things I love about working at this school. Some of the things that I love were evident on my interview day (in 2007!) - the staff camaraderie, the supportive nature of colleagues and the spark and enthusiasm of the students. I have worked in the building over such a long time that many things have changed - the Maths and D blocks did not exist when I arrived! As the management of the school has changed, some of the structure and policies have also changed - each change has brought more opportunities for the students learning here. I feel proud to belong to a school community that has always put the students' development, experiences and learning at the heart of what we do. I really enjoy the balance that we have achieved here at HP between high aspirations and hard work and opportunities to engage in meaningful activities to develop 'soft skills' like teamwork, leadership and adaptability.

If you didn't choose to be an art/photography teacher, what would you have chosen?

I have always fancied being a florist. I love flowers and the outdoors. I would like to grow my own flowers and sell them. I would like to be a bee keeper as well! I love my role as Eco Lead as it allows me to spend time outside in the school grounds, I look forward to helping students turn their ideas about our outdoor spaces into reality over the next few years.

What inspired you to teach Art/Photography?

I have always had a keen interest in Art. I have been painting, drawing, collecting and creating since I was very little. I initially chose to study in the sculpture department at university but moved to photography in my second year. I like its immediacy and its ability to tell a story without words. I think Photography is an art form that is accessible to everyone. There are many photographers that have been an inspiration to me: Lee Miller (surrealist photographer) is notable.

What is the biggest struggle with teaching Art/Photography?

I absolutely adore teaching Photography. There is nothing that is difficult about teaching the skills and techniques, it is a pleasure! The one thing that can be tricky is if students have opted for the subject because they think it will be easy and don't have a passion for it.

What is the most rewarding part about seeing a child succeed in Art/Photography?

I love seeing my students develop in confidence with their ability to communicate visually. Photography is a language - a language of images and symbols that is understood around the world. I always enjoy seeing the world from each student's point of view and appreciate their enthusiasm and creativity.

Fun Fridays and House Competitions

By Reuben Ellis

The Masked Singer (22/05/2026)

On Friday 22nd of May, students made their way down to the performing arts block ready to hear whether HP's staff were good at singing or absolutely terrifying!

A game of guessing who is who as teachers sang inside a questionably large costume live on stage was hilarious. It wasn't just music and drama staff; it could have been anyone and Miss Fahy impressed with her singing skills!

Worldle (05/06/2026)

For this fun Friday, students were faced with a game of guessing the country based on the clues provided by the Geography department. Based on the popular online game, students had to identify the country outline and mark it down on their sheet, next to what they think is the correct answer! This was quite challenging as some people had never even heard of some of the countries that came up!

Scientific Sudoku (12/06/2026)

This classic game of numbers was remixed into an all-new game of extravagant elements! Students took part in a three-level difficulty game, with level one being the easiest and students working towards the hardest level (and higher house point rewards!)

Cornhole (26/06/2026)

HP's take on the old game of throwing bean bags into a hole on a wooden block! Better than it sounds, this fun Friday saw students throwing their bean bags towards holes with different difficulty levels: getting it in the smallest and farthest hole earned students 5 points; getting it in the middle hole earned you 3 points and the largest and closest hole earned you 1 point. Classic game of highest points wins!

House Charity Cake Sale (01/07/2026)

Staff and students embraced their inner Great British Bake Off skills and put them to the test in order to donate their baked goods to the HP cake sale. 50p for some, £1 for others, there was a variety of delicious and tempting cakes available to students. In total, this contributed to raising a whopping £301.50 for the four HP House charities over the week long of events! Go HP!

Culture Corner

By Rahnuma Nakhuda

Exams might be universal, but the ways people try to survive them definitely aren't. Across the world, students lean towards rituals, ancient traditions, and little superstitions to boost their luck before a big test - from symbolic snacks to forbidden words to full-on ceremonies. These practices might not guarantee top marks, but they reveal something far more interesting: How Culture shapes the way we cope with pressure, hope for success, and try to outsmart fate. In this fact file, we're diving into the fascinating exam-day customs that make stress a global - and surprisingly creative - experience.

What do different cultures do to avoid bad luck or guarantee success before a big exam?



Right before stepping out of the house on exam morning, we eat **Dahi-Cheeni (Yogurt with Sugar or Jaggery)**. The belief is that curd is like a mind coolant that keeps the candidate calm. Practically, yogurt acts as a natural cooling agent for a stressed stomach, while the sugar provides a burst of glucose to fuel the brain during the test.

Sticky foods are the ultimate good luck charm. Students eat **Yeot** (a traditional sticky taffy) or **Chapssaltteok** (sticky rice cakes) so that the knowledge will literally "stick" to their brains and help them pass.



Pouring Water Behind the Student: As a student leaves the house on exam morning, a family member will pour a glass or pitcher of water onto the ground behind them. The accompanying phrase is "**Su gibi git, su gibi gel**", which means "**Go like water, return like water.**" It symbolizes a smooth, fluid journey without any obstacles or disruption.

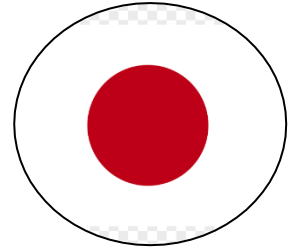
In Denmark, it is considered bad luck to wear your student cap, which you officially obtain after your final exam, but you have to actually try it for sizes before that, so when you are done, you should jump over it to dispel the bad luck. Speaking about which exams you don't want to draw supposedly makes it so that they are drawn. Saying "**held og lykke**" (good luck) brings bad luck, so you should say "**knæk og bræk**" (snap and break) instead.





Students avoid eating **bananas** before a big test. The Vietnamese word for sliding or slipping (*trượt*) is heavily associated with failing an exam, and since banana peels are notoriously slippery, they are off the menu.

Eating KitKat! - Pronounced as "kitto katto" (きっと勝つ), the chocolate's name is similar to the phrase "kitto katsu", meaning "surely winning", making it a good candidate for a good luck charm.



Before national university entrance exams, families often prepare **Doro Wat** (a rich, slow-cooked spicy chicken stew) served with **Injera**. Eating this hearty, festive meal with family the night before the exam gives the student the physical stamina and emotional grounding needed to tackle hours of testing.

The "Anointing" of Pens: In heavily religious communities, it is a massive tradition for students to bring their exam stationery—specifically their calculators and black or blue pens—to their church or mosque the Sunday or Friday before exams. Religious leaders or parents will pray over, bless, or "anoint" the pens to ensure they write only correct answers and do not fail or run out of ink mid-test.



(China, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea): Many students **avoid washing their hair** in the days leading up to major exams. In Chinese, the word for hair (发, *fā*) is the same as in *facai* (发财), meaning to get rich. Washing it is believed to "wash away" good luck.

At Oxford and Cambridge, students are required to wear formal academic dress called **Subfusc** (a dark suit, white tie, and black gown) to sit their exams. To bring good luck, manage stress, and signal their progress, students wear a carnation pinned to their lapel: **White Carnation:** Worn for the very first exam of the season. **Pink Carnation:** Worn for all the intermediate exams in the middle. **Red Carnation:** Worn for the final, concluding exam. It is considered bad luck to buy your own carnations—they must be gifted to you by friends.



Student Spotlight:

Diana Canadas Ortiz



In Edition 5, we explored the experiences of Afghan students who migrated to escape conflict, yet it is equally important to understand migration from a different angle - one not centred on hardship, but on growth. To broaden the perspective of this project, today I'm speaking with two sixth form students- Diana and Shalom - whose journeys highlight the opportunities they've discovered, the strengths they've developed, and the ways migration has shaped who they are becoming. This is a short, reflective interview designed to highlight growth, confidence, and new beginnings.

Can you tell me a little about yourself and what you enjoy doing?

I am a Sixth Form student studying English Literature, History, and Politics for A level. I chose these essay-based subjects because I truly love the feel of writing, and how it makes me feel focused in the zone. I especially love History as I love learning about generations before me and the events that helped shape society today. What I enjoy the most is studying and expanding my knowledge - even outside of the school curriculum. For example, watching Historical Films feels very artful and meaningful, being able to take away key lessons from them. A fun fact about me is that I have visited more than 50 Museums here in the UK which makes me appreciate the humanities even more.

Where does your cultural background originate from?

I was born and raised in Brazil, specifically its state of 'The City of San Palau' (most commonly recognised as the "New York" of South America). I would say my ancestry is quite a diverse 'culture bomb', with my paternal side being a mixture of Japanese and Spanish, and my mother a Portuguese. Although we weren't strictly religious, we would follow the traditional customs of Catholicism of Iberia.

What was the main reason your family decided to move here?

We moved to the UK in 2016 (I was around 7 years old) at the time Brexit was going to happen, as we thought this was our last chance to fulfil our wish to come to Europe. We viewed Europe as a place full of equal opportunities for everyone. My parents wanted me and my other siblings to have a much better education and overall opportunities to help shape our future for the better.

What part of your culture are you proud to share with others, or perhaps a key moment you distinctly remember?

I love our strong emphasis on community and how close-knit we are—not just with family, but with friends and neighbours alike. Brazilians are incredibly open; we truly embed ourselves in each other's lives so that no one is ever left isolated, but rather lifted up by this communal spirit. My

family, in particular, loves a good party paired with traditional dishes. Whenever I eat Brazilian food, it never fails to bring back a wave of nostalgia and all the wonderful memories tied to it.

A key moment for me would be the world cup of 2014. I can clearly remember, after 4 years of anticipation leading up to it, and throughout the entire month the tournament was hosted, the community spirit never died down but rather soared to a whole new level. The streets would be painted like the Brazilian flag, local street vendors packed with customers and neighbourhoods would go wild!

How do you think moving to a new country has given different opportunities?

In Brazil, I went to a free, government-funded state school. Most low-income families send their children there, so the schools are often working with very limited resources. They try their best, but things like class sizes, funding, and support systems aren't always the same as in private schools. Sometimes students could feel a bit unsafe or might be struggling at home, but the school doesn't always have the capacity to notice or help.

When I moved to the UK, I immediately felt the difference. Here, state schools treat everyone equally regardless of differences and the teaching quality feels much more consistent. I felt really welcomed. There are safeguarding teams who actually check in on students and make sure you're okay, not just academically but personally too. It made me appreciate education so much more. Having this kind of support and opportunity has been one of the most positive parts of moving here.

How has this given you the chance to grow as an individual in comparison to before?

In terms of personal growth, the biggest area of growth for me has been communication. I used to be extremely shy and introverted, especially around adults, and moving here initially made that even harder. When I first joined school, teachers would speak to me in English but the only language I knew was Portuguese. I remember just standing there with a blank face, wishing I could respond. As I gradually learnt English and could communicate, it made me realise how powerful that ability truly is. Being able to express myself, to connect with people, to articulate my thoughts clearly - it felt like a gift I had never fully appreciated before. It made me more confident, more social, and it showed me just how much I've grown compared to the person I was before. Now, my friends joke that I haven't stopped talking since!

Has living here changed what you hope for your future and your career options post A level?

I would like to have a career associated with becoming a lawyer: more specifically an Immigration Lawyer, as I have personally experienced what it's like to immigrate and to put my knowledge to greater use in helping those in my position. I have 2 routes in mind: ideally Plan A would be to do an Apprenticeship, but Law is a very competitive field, so Plan B would be University.

The Year 11 Leavers Assembly

By Sheila-Rose Brooks



On Tuesday 16th June, only a day after the final GCSE exam, the Year 11 students returned dressed in a creative version of school uniform with shirts ready to sign and the final farewells ready to be given.

The assembly started with a beautiful song called Somewhere only we Know by Eloise Medd and Sienna Porter, who have the most incredible singing voices and who have sung at so many school events over the years.

Mr Hudson gave his speech to the year group, in particular praising their attitude throughout the exam season and that was swiftly followed by Isla Haines singing 'What a Wonderful World' which was very moving.

Ms Furleger, who has been by the year group's side since Year 7, took an important moment to remember Phoebe Symons and give a message about appreciating life and being thankful for the choices they have in life. As well as this, she reminisced about their 5 years – remembering the Year 7 camp - and how far they had all come in that time. The rest of the Year 11 team –Mrs Pottle (previously Murray) and Mr Pearce - both gave a little goodbye speech and they showed a video montage of all of the goodbyes from all of their teachers with some humour, memories and advice for the future.



Gbolabo then sang They Live in You – showcasing his beautiful voice with a beautiful song and, after more video messages from teachers and past teachers, they finished with a group song of Our Last Summer whilst then watching a reel of photos from Year 7 to Year 11 to remember all their best moments!

Every student also received a personal goodbye later from a teacher who had chosen to write to them, and then the shirt signing began and went on for over an hour! An ice cream van was on the bottom playground and everyone enjoyed a sweet treat in the sun as they took their final hugs, signed the last shirts, took their final photos and said their last goodbyes.

They will be missed as they have been such a fun, conscientious and positive year group!

Meet the Senior Leadership Team:



An Interview with Mr Park

By Josie Hillman

What does your role as Deputy Head Teacher for Curriculum and Assessment include?

There are lots of different aspects to my role. Most importantly, I am responsible for all the departments in the school. This includes making sure that the teachers teach the right things and teach it well, so that the students get the very best grades. I also organise parents evening, write everyone's timetables, have lots of meetings with the staff, and I am always on duty. To top it off, I always make sure to check that students feel safe and happy around the school.

How does it differ from other SLT roles?

All SLT members have their own roles, but - in my role - if Mr Hudson isn't here, I am responsible and this was the case recently when he went on Paternity Leave. I also work with all the assistant head teachers and all key stages.

What is one low and one high that stands out the most in your job role?

The lows that I face in the job role are if something bad happens to a member of staff or student. For example, if a student passes away it's very difficult to navigate and we obviously experienced that in 2025. Highs are the things like results day when students come in and are delighted and overjoyed with their results.

What are some challenges that you face within this job role?

One of the main challenges I face is trying to make sure that everyone 'gets a good deal', essentially meaning that students get a good education and members of staff are happy in their job role. This is particularly challenging if members of staff are not in school, and I have to organise the most effective cover teacher for that specific lesson.

How has the school changed since you've been here, and what is the strangest part about it?

I started working at Holmleigh Park in 2001, so I have been working here for 25 years now. In terms of physical changes, it is very different. The sixth form centre, the H block, and the Maths block weren't here. Instead, there were tennis courts, and the Maths block was the temporary classrooms and the caretaker's house. Although this aspect of the school is very different, I don't think that the students have changed massively. The only differences between the students now, and the students that I used to teach when I first started the job here, are their better sense of what is right and wrong, and their much better passion to be successful. I think the strangest thing about being a teacher here for so long is that I see parents that I've taught on open evenings and parent evenings because their children now go here!

You used to teach Maths, but have been teaching PE more often. Do you miss teaching a more classroom based subject?

My first job role here was Head of Design and Technology, so I taught metal work, wood work, electronics, design etc. Then I taught Maths and - over the last two years - I've started teaching PE. I do really miss teaching Maths, because I find it a really satisfying subject to teach. It's really nice when it finally clicks for students.

When you were younger, were your aspirations and goals to become a teacher?

My dad was a teacher, so I was always determined I wasn't going to be one myself. Before I became a teacher, I had a job that involved making furniture in London, and, although I did really enjoy doing that, I didn't want to do it for the rest of my life. This led me to have a go at teaching something similar to making furniture so that I could still do what I loved but in a different type of way.

Do you have any career goals that you still want to achieve?

I want the sixth form and year 11 students to achieve amazing results, but in terms of my own career goals outside of school I'm not really sure. I really enjoy what I'm doing and I don't think that I would change it; it's a really good community and I get on well with all of the staff. I don't think I would want to be a headteacher, because I'm quite happy in this job role.

What are some interesting things that are on your bucket list?

It's on my bucket list to do some travelling - I'd like to go back to Africa, and trekking in Nepal. It mainly just involves going to places and having experiences. I'd like to trek the length of the Pyrenees, take the train from London to Istanbul and cycle across France.

What is your favourite part about interacting with the students?

I really enjoy greeting students on the drive and in the corridor, and having conversations about what's going well for them.

How do you switch off from work now that your children are older?

I do lots of different activities that I do now that my children are older. These include: playing Padel, cycling, going on holiday, seeing old friends, gardening, and reading. The book I read recently is called 'When the cranes fly south' which I really enjoyed, but my all-time favourite book is 'Grapes of Wrath'.

What is one fun fact about you or your job here?

I have only ever taught at two schools, Holmleigh Park being one of them!

Student Spotlight:

Shalom Apologun



Can you tell me a little about yourself and what you enjoy doing?

I am a sixth form student who studies Applied science, Criminology and English literature. Ironically, even though I take English literature, I've always been more drawn to watching films rather than reading books. Music is a huge part of my life too; I love to sing and Nigerian music is always my go-to soundtrack. I'm especially fascinated by mystery and the justice system, so you'll usually find me watching crime documentaries in my free time. And a fun fact about me - I have a part-time job as an afro braider, it's creative, social, and a part of my culture I genuinely enjoy representing.

Where does your cultural background stem from?

I'm Nigerian and grew up in Delta State, which is a huge part of who I am. My Mum's from Delta state too and is part of the Isoko tribe. My Dad's from Edo State, part of the Igara tribe. At home, Pidgin and English are basically my everyday languages, and I can understand Urhobo pretty well even though I don't actually speak it.

What was the main reason your family decided to move here?

We moved here in 2024. I was aged 15 and joined Holmleigh Park at the end of Year 10. I would say we mainly moved to gain security. Nigeria has low chances of getting jobs and unemployment rates are quite high, and it could be dangerous at times too around some areas. Similar to what Diana said, the UK felt fairer and abundant with opportunities for a stable life, and much more democratic and orderly in the way things were run.

What aspect of your culture are you proud to share with others?

Nigerian music is something I'm genuinely proud of — our artists, our sound, the whole vibe. I love to carry my Nigerian self around with me regardless of where I am, and music plays a big special role in my life as it's been alongside me during the good and bad times. I've always loved the range of languages across Nigeria and often wish I could speak more of them. I also get nostalgic about the food; even the snacks back home had a uniqueness that's hard to find anywhere else.

How do you think moving to a new county has provided different opportunities?

Migrating to the UK opened up a completely different kind of educational experience. Back in Nigeria, school was very focused on cramming - learning information just to pass exams rather than truly understanding it. The system was much more traditional and stricter, and a lot of the learning depended on teaching yourself outside the classroom. The content and the teaching style were also very different from what I later found in the UK.

Coming here changed that. The education system felt more supportive and focused on helping us understand the material instead of memorising it. Teachers were patient with me, such as Mr Hobbs, who always took the time to explain things properly. I appreciate how lessons here move at a pace that allows

everyone to learn, and how the environment feels equal while still maintaining its own kind of discipline. Overall, the move gave me access to a style of learning that really works for me.

What was it like coming to Holmleigh at the end of Year 10 — did anything about that transition feel difficult?

Coping with the education system here was difficult at first. GCSEs felt overwhelming because the content and teaching styles were so different, and arriving right towards the end of the year made adapting even harder. There were moments when people could be rude, take advantage, or even look down on me which made fitting in feel like a challenge. I often felt confused, lost and genuinely lonely. Sometimes it felt I was constantly behind so - for me - the pressure to catch up seemed intense. My coping strategy was dedication and resilience. Honestly, those challenges did get to me but not giving in to them was one of the best decisions I made, and I was also praying to God for things to get better and they did eventually.

How has this given you the chance to grow as an individual in comparison to before?

In terms of development, there has been personal and academic growth. Back in Nigeria, I never saw myself as a “maths person,” but over time I became really good at it. This gave me the confidence to take Core Maths for A level! The same happened with English - my creative writing skills improved far more than I expected making me realise English is another one of my strengths.

Although I seem more reserved than before, my confidence has increasingly grown behind that quietness. Over time, my mindset became highly optimistic, and I can understand the world around me better than before. For example, I've become much more observant. This has helped me recognise when people are pretentious toward me, but I choose not to react to it, the maturity behind this choice helps me to ignore negativity. Instead, I direct all my energy into my studies, making a clear goal for those A* grades!!

Has living here changed what you hope for your future and your career options post A level?

I want to be a criminal lawyer because I get intrigued by crime cases. I watch crime documentaries often and I'm impressed by the way cases are unravelled and solved. This is why I also think of being a police officer but the things that hinder me about the police profession is the 'on-call status' of the job which means you have to be ready to return and respond to duty at any moment's notice. This is not convenient for me as I plan on having a family in the future, and also the brutality of the job unsettles me too as I have to see traumatic things that happen to people. Yet again, I want to be somewhere in that criminal world role because it really tests my critical thinking. I love a good challenge, and criminal law is the ultimate test for all my skills!

A Run for Riley: An Act of remembrance

By Vicky Bogdanova



June hits again and the tragic loss of Riley Davies floods staff and students with grief and sadness. On Sunday 14th June, Riley's family, friends and teachers did a run in Cheltenham at Cheltenham Running Festival for him. People ran from 1 mile all the way to half a marathon raising money in memory of Riley. There is a GoFundMe that has raised £2,826 so far. This money that is being raised will go towards prizes for an Art competition in memory of Riley and the legacy he leaves behind.

Riley was a very artistic, creative and friendly person and this will be a great way to remember the character he was.

The Art competition will be launched in September, and will be an annual thing that will become an important part of school culture. We hope this can support Riley's family in keeping his memory alive and inspire young people to get creative inspired by Riley.

On the day of the run, the atmosphere was very positive and buzzing with a mixture of sadness and grief. These feelings led the teachers to be very motivated to complete the run. This run is important because it shows the special legacy of Riley and his family showed great strength on the day in order to honour and remember him.

The teachers who participated are comfortable with running with long distances but still found the run challenging and a battle to get through, but they made some decent times in either the half marathon or 5K. They put up with the pain and completed it since it's a wonderful opportunity to show Riley's family that they are seen and not alone.

Riley will always be remembered and loved through his art and brilliant work that he produced and the school look forward to the creation of an art wall where the winners will join his art pieces – a very fitting memorial and tribute.

GoFundMe

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/prn62-run-for-riley>

A spotlight on sport- Nathaniel Bennett

By Taten Rose



Can you tell us a little bit about fencing?

Compared to sports like football and rugby, which are physically demanding, Fencing is a combat sport that is centred around strategic thinking. There are three types of Fencing: Saber, Foil, and Rapier. I specialise in Foil Fencing.

The differences between these 3 types are linked to the type of sword you are fighting with. Foil swords are longer than the swords used in Saber and Rapier.

What got you into fencing?

When I was in primary school, I went on a trip for a week and I took part in activities every day. On one of those days, we did Fencing. It taught us how to stand and how to move around at a rapid yet smooth pace whilst at the same time trying to score. This combination sparked an interest in me.

What level are you in fencing?

The levels for fencing are not set, but, as you improve, you move up to higher tiers. Currently, I am in the age group "14 - adults" and I am on silver level. I earned Silver in October 2025 (bearing in mind the highest rank is gold!) When you become a coach, you can get to platinum level.

How often do you train?

I train on Wednesday for an hour. The lessons teach us how to pull off specific moves and tricks needed for winning tournaments. My coaches Brian and Craig walk around and watch us attempting our moves. They are always on standby telling us what to do if we get the move wrong and how to improve. Every last Wednesday of the month, we have "Boxnight sessions" where we do training matches and use actual scores.

What was your biggest moment in Fencing?

In December 2025, I played a doubles tournament with my friend in Bristol. We came second out of seven teams!

What are the Physical and Mental challenges of Fencing?

Physically, I am quite tall, which in most sports is a blessing, but in Fencing gives my opponents more space on my body, so they have more chances of being able to touch me and score. When I play smaller opponents, it's much harder for me to find surface area to score. Mentally, it is easier to think about other things during a match and so that can distract my focus.

What was the worst injury you have ever suffered or the biggest risk you've taken?

Before matches, we do a 2-hour training session which can make me feel extremely fatigued and it makes my body ache all over. My biggest risk in Fencing was during the tournament in Bristol as mentioned before. We each had 4 matches to play. After I finished mine, I saw my friend was completely exhausted, so I stepped in to play his final match for him despite the fact I too had drained my energy.

What are your Future goals for Fencing?

My future goals for Fencing are to become a coach and reach platinum rank. I want to follow in my coaches' footsteps because they have always supported me and made me become the player I am today.

One goal for my playing career is to be more like a professional fencer and to have made it far in Fencing. I want to do Fencing as a full-time sport and not just a side sport.

What other sports do you enjoy playing?

I really like playing snooker as I always used to play snooker with my grandad. It is not based on physicality but more on strategy and critical thinking. I also enjoy playing Rugby and Basketball. This is because I am tall which makes it advantageous for me to score more points and be the main shooter!





Facts by Sheila-Rose Brooks

- Despite being enjoyed as a sweet summer fruit, watermelon is also classified as a vegetable and is a cousin to cucumbers, squash and pumpkins.
- Places located above the Arctic Circle experience the "midnight sun," where the sun never sets for weeks at a time during the summer months and the sun is visible at midnight.
- Metal structures like the Eiffel Tower can grow up to 6 inches taller in the summer due to thermal expansion as the iron heats up.
- In the United States, July is officially designated as National Ice Cream Month, a tradition established by President Ronald Reagan in 1984
- When the Northern Hemisphere is experiencing summer, the Southern Hemisphere is experiencing winter, and vice versa, due to the way Earth orbits
- The hottest weeks of the Summer (often in July and August) get their name from ancient Rome. Romans noticed this sweltering period coincided with the rising of the star Sirius (the "Dog Star").
- Summer is the warmest season of the year, driven by the Earth's axis tilting towards the sun.
- Because sound waves travel more quickly through warm air, thunder from summer storms tends to create a louder, more rolling sound.
- The summer solstice is the longest day of the year, which happens on June 21st. In the UK, it provides about 16 to 17 hours of daylight.
- Warm air rises quickly during the summer, forming giant clouds that cause more lightning and summer thunderstorms than any other season.



By Sheila-Rose Brooks

- A dog crosses the river without getting wet, and without using a bridge or boat. How?
- First, think of the colour of the clouds. Next, think of the colour of snow. Now, think of the colour of a bright, full moon. Now, answer quickly: What do cows drink?
- What breaks yet never falls, and what falls yet never breaks?
- The person who makes it has no need for it; the person who buys it has no use for it. The person who uses it can neither see nor feel it. What is it?
- An electric train is headed east. Where does the smoke go?
- It can't be seen, can't be felt, can't be heard, and can't be smelled. It lies behind stars and under hills, and empty holes it fills. What is it?
- What four-letter word can be written forward, backward, or upside down, and can still be read from left to right?
- What is at the end of the rainbow?
- What word in the dictionary is spelled incorrectly?
- If you drop me, I'm sure to crack, but give me a smile and I'll always smile back. What am I?

Summer Recipes

By Fuchsia Dalley-Jefferies

COOKIE ICE CREAM SANDWICHES

INGREDIENTS:

- MINI CHOCOLATE CHIPS
- EGG AND EGG YOLK
- FLOUR
- BAKING SODA
- CORNSTARCH
- SALT
- VANILLA
- BUTTER
- WHITE AND BROWN SUGAR
- 3 CUPS (540g) of your favourite ice cream



STEPS TO MAKE:

Mix all ingredients together until you get a creamy cookie dough mix.

A medium cookie scoop is the perfect size for proportioning your cookies. At the end you will have 12 ice cream sandwiches.

After all of the cookies cool completely, you can assemble your ice cream sandwiches. There's no need to soften your ice cream prior to starting this step, though if your ice cream is particularly hard to scoop, give it a couple minutes to slightly soften.

Flip a cooled cookie over and place 1 generous **ice cream scoop**, about 1/4 cup or 45g, on top. Use your scoop to gently spread the ice cream to the edges. Sandwich a cookie on top, then pick up the assembled sandwich and gently press it all together in the very centre to make a compact sandwich. And I mean a VERY gentle press because if you press too hard, the cookies could break.

Roll the edges in mini chocolate chips, sprinkles, or even finely chopped nuts. This little extra is not only tasty, it's **actually functional** because it holds the ice cream in place.

You can enjoy the cookie sandwiches immediately, but I recommend freezing to set their shape. You can decorate it however you like.

Answers to the riddles:

- *The river was frozen*
- *Water*
- *Day and night*
- *A coffin*
- *Electric trains don't produce smoke!*
- *The dark*
- *Noon*
- *The letter W*
- *Incorrectly*
- *A mirror*

A celebration of Art and Textiles

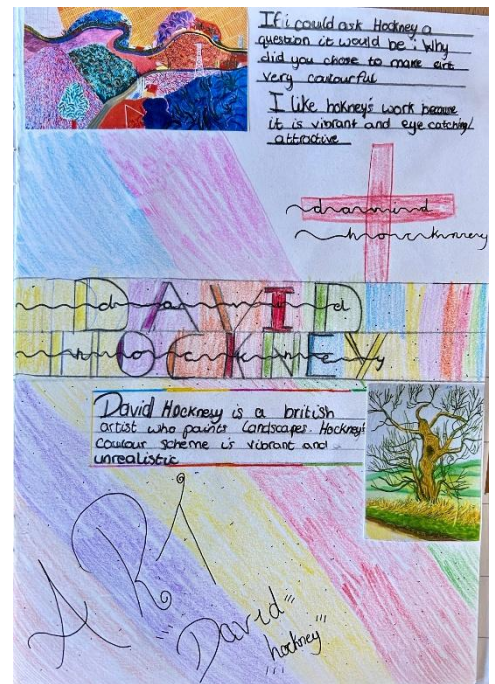
3D Sculpture Enrichment





A selection of Year 7 Art Work





A selection of Year 8 Art Work

