



# THE LINK

**A fortnightly Newsletter for the pupils, parents and staff of  
St Michael's Catholic College  
Issue 212 - 20th March 2023**

## **Brilliant Year 7 Scholars Graduate at King's College, University of London!**

St Michael's is celebrating the success of fourteen Year 7 students as they graduate from The Scholars Programme, a national university access programme. These students were encouraged to think and work independently across seven tutorials with a subject expert PhD researcher. During the programme, they studied a History focused module on "*Windrush, Migration and Belonging in Modern Britain*" and then completed a challenging final essay which was given a university-level grade. All fourteen students graduated and were singled out for praise from their PhD tutor. As a reward, these students attended a prestigious graduation ceremony at King's College, Guy's Campus, University of London. Shyann M. and Adham A. further distinguished themselves by delivering articulate and inspiring speeches to an audience of academics, undergraduate students and other schools. - Mr Magnoff

Please find Filip S. reflections on the day below:

On Tuesday 21st February 2023, all fourteen students from the Brilliant Scholars programme became alumni from this event. This event took place in the King's College London Medical Campus. To add on, this experience was not only a graduation but also a chance to explore the university and the lifestyle within it.

In the morning, the students arrived at the medical campus. They started their graduation ceremony with a starter session. The scholars reminded themselves of the different skills they used throughout their time at the programme and whilst writing their final essay consisting of 1,500 words. After that, the group learnt about university. The students acquired the knowledge about what degrees there are and the journeys of the student ambassadors to university.

After gaining so much information, the scholars had a tour around the medical campus. The facility (which focuses on medicine) was opened in 1173. The graduates had a chance to look at the chapel, medical rooms, the library and the lecture rooms.

Around 12:00 it was time for the graduation ceremony itself. Every student was proud of their achievements in this exclusive and exceptional programme. Each student was called up, one at a time, to claim their certificate and have their picture taken.

The students summarised their experience. Each student was applauded. However, two students managed to construct and deliver a speech. Adham (one of the graduates that gave out a speech) said "I would like to thank our school for giving us such a wonderful opportunity. In addition, I would also like to thank Dr. Jairam - our tutor". The students then officially ended their journey with the Brilliant Scholars.

In conclusion, all the students (now alumni for the programme) enjoyed their voyage with the Brilliant Club. Each scholar learnt about university and the topic they studied. However, everyone (all the students that took part) wanted to thank Mr Magnoff (their teacher who took a directorial role in this event) for the wonderful opportunity he had organised for them. Filip S, 7VI



## History Students go to Berlin!

Thirty two St Michael's 6<sup>th</sup> Form History and Politics students spent 3 days in Berlin during February to contextualize their A Level courses and gain a greater understanding of the world we live in. Whilst in Germany they retraced the steps of some of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most traumatic and pivotal events, explored Europe's largest public nuclear bunker, visited East Germany's most brutal Stasi prison and ate too many sausages. Please find Zach S.'s reflections on the trip below. - *Mr Magnoff*

Recently, the school visited Berlin as part of a History trip for a weekend. The trip was intended to tie into our A-level course on the Cold War but it went beyond the global conflict to look back to Nazi Germany and how it was affected by the Cold War. For those unfamiliar with the city, it's been the capital city of Germany through all of modern history which means it was the centre of the nation from the German Empire during WW1, through the rule of the Nazis, to its division during the Cold War between the Soviets and the West and all the way to the modern day. Being significant for so long has left Berlin effectively **scarred by history and importantly these aren't scars which they attempt to hide** - instead they choose to highlight them. Throughout, there are constant preserved reminders of the effect which History has had, especially Nazi rule and the East-West division of the city during the Cold War. Beginning with the reminders of Nazi rule in Berlin, there is an atmosphere of **profound remorse and loss but simultaneously there's a sense of victory and triumph over fascism around memorials relating to World War Two**. There are essentially three types of reminders of WW2 in Berlin which we saw during our trip. These are in the order in which they were left - the marks which the Battle of Berlin left, the memorials to Soviet losses in the war built by the USSR and memorials to the victims of Nazism built by Germany. The subtle marks were easy to miss but fascinating. These were bullet holes left in buildings from street-to-street fighting between Soviet forces and the final Nazi forces, many of which **were children who'd been brainwashed and enlisted into the army for the final defense of Berlin**. The fact that these marks were so numerous and relatively common really emphasizes the brutality of the fighting and the insanity of Nazism, fighting to the very end even when it was clear that defeat was inevitable and to recruit children to die for a lost cause. This made it clear to me that Nazism is effectively a cult which seeks absolute commitment to a leader even until death and is in its ideas and actions irrational and suicidal.



Then there are the memorials which the Soviets built to their losses, which were by far the highest during World War Two. We visited three of these; a museum built in the house where the Nazis surrendered Berlin, a memorial to Soviet losses in Tiergarten and the main Soviet war memorial in Treptow Park. While the museum was fascinating for its preserved Soviet bias on the war and historical significance and Tiergarten was noteworthy for its scale already, by far the most striking was Treptow Park. Treptow was a **shocking, huge monument to the USSR's losses**. Approaching it you can see opposite to its entrance there was a statue of a Soviet mother, to commemorate the families who lost people during the war but across from that there is the actual memorial. This is a huge area with sixteen stone slabs commemorating the war from the Soviet perspective through carvings and the primary focus in the centre, a 12 metre (~40 feet) tall statue of a Soviet soldier wielding a sword in one hand and carrying a German child in the other while crushing a swastika under his foot. This memorial served as a striking reminder of how the Soviets viewed themselves as liberators rescuing Germany from fascism rather than there to oppress Germany and while it's **debatable whether Soviet policy reflected this after WW2**, it's a **striking image to remind Germany of what was lost to free them from fascism and who was now in charge**.





Finally, there are the two memorials we visited built by Germany to commemorate the victims of the Nazis; the “Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe” and the “Memorial to Homosexuals Persecuted Under Nazism”.



Both were difficult to fully understand but emotionally impactful. The first memorial which was to the Jewish victims of The Holocaust was an area covered in stone pillars which got increasingly taller as you walked through it. Descending into the memorial you feel confused as you try to find reason to the pillars in their number or height or some other feature but it all feels so meaningless; in my opinion it is intended to have a very personal meaning to each person who enters and to me that meaning was that the pillars had the aim to confuse you, their irrationality representing the irrationality of the crime that they represent.

The second memorial was more personal to me as a queer person but no more or less significant. The memorial to LGBTQ victims of Nazism was much simpler and smaller, a large grey box in the woods with a hole in it through which you can see two men kissing in a movie. I don't know how much meaning the memorial was intended to have but to me the light of the movie in the dark and unnerving box showed how gay people were hidden away under the regime, forced into hiding by violent persecution.



These very different monuments all reflect the scars left on Berlin, Germany and Europe as a whole by WW2, from the victims of The Holocaust and Nazi violence and the allied soldiers who died to liberate it, to the brutal street-to-street fighting which it took to finally destroy the cult of Nazism as well as the brutality of the Stalinist regime that followed.

While historically significant, the scar of Nazism wasn't the main reason why we went to Berlin.

We went for the scar left across the city by its division between the East and West during the Cold War between the four allied powers and then West Germany and East Germany; especially the mark left by the Berlin Wall which surrounded West Berlin from 1961 to 1989. We saw two traces of this, the remnants of the wall and the Stasi (East German secret police) Prison.

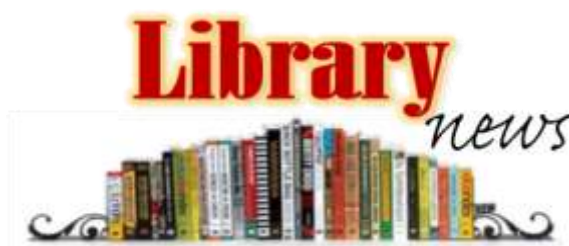


The wall which divided East from West from its overnight creation was extensively marked by preserved parts of the original wall, metal poles along where it used to run and markers of where tunnels dug under the wall to get to the West; all to commemorate what had happened in a physical way, to make it easy to connect to the impact that the wall had in dividing families, isolating West Berliners and preventing East Germans from escaping to the West.

However, despite how impressive the extent of the preservation of the wall was, the highlight of the scars of the Cold War was the Stasi Prison. This is a preserved prison complex on a formerly hidden road, in a neighborhood entirely occupied by Stasi officials. The prison was so overwhelming, in large part, because it had been kept as it was, with interrogation rooms and prisoner rooms preserved as they had been when the Stasi were active. It's not really an experience that can be described and keep its impact, it has to be experienced personally but, to provide a taste, I will describe the conditions in a cell. In the average cell, there was one bed that was made of wood and there was a bucket. If you were lucky, your room would be small and have no windows so you couldn't tell if it was day or night and every hour or so a Stasi officer would approach the door silently, turn the lights on and look inside to check you were sleeping facing upwards and if you weren't you'd be woken and harassed to sleep correctly. These conditions were what political opponents of East Germany were subjected to from the end of WW2 until 1989, psychological torture, little sleep and total isolation.

As a Londoner, I found Berlin to be a fascinating city because, in Berlin, it's impossible to forget about the crimes of the Nazis, the division of the city or about any of its scars due to the huge preserved monuments globally pivotal events. History here is visible and immediate and so becomes unforgettable because it is constantly present. I found this trip very moving and I would recommend it to anyone in 6th Form...especially if you're studying History.





### March Book Review Winner

Matey in Year 9 and Hermý in Year 13 win house points and a free book.

#### The Silent Patient

I would recommend 'The Silent Patient', a thriller by Alex Michaelides even if you would not consider yourself a passionate reader as it is a quick read that will have you wondering throughout the chapters.

You can even finish reading it in a few days; many who have read this find themselves in the position of not being able to put it down. Set in London, a woman (Alicia) murders her husband and then becomes completely silent ever since even during her psychological treatment. Her doctor (Theo) attempts to uncover her motive.

The plot twist when you come to the realisation of what genuinely happened will be unexpected. The storytelling and plot twist intrigues readers and truly immerses you in the suspenseful and paranoid nature Michaelides portrays as you attempt to uncover the mystery yourself. *Hermý C. – Year 13*



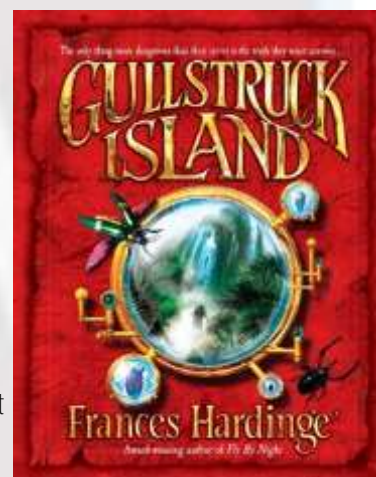
#### Gullstruck Island

As this fantasy of the world of Gullstruck unravelled, the true imagination of the author, Frances Hardinge blossomed.

On the island, mighty volcanoes were explored with their own story and actions, beetles, messengers warning evil and mainly the child called Arilou who is able to fly with her mind, leaving her body. But as she flies around, she discovers the true villages of treachery, where sinister actions take place by the hunters and suffering of innocent people.

This book has complex thoughts and is adventurous throughout. Personally, this gave me the interest to carry on reading, developing my mind and understanding the colourful adventure it brings.

I would highly recommend it and rate it 4 stars out of 5. *Matey Y. – Year 9*



#### **Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge**

Congratulations to Gabrielle B. and Nathaniel L. who took part in the Southwark regional final of the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge on Tuesday 7th March, competing against several other secondary schools in the borough. Both students' speeches were passionate and thought-provoking.



#### **New Books in Library!**

Southwark Library has now given us eight new books for the library! They are:

- All The Bright Places – Jennifer Niven
- Incendiary – Zoraida Córdova (x2)
- The Maze Runner – James Dashner
- Cogheart – Peter Bunzl
- A Monster Calls – Patrick Ness
- Defy The Night – Brigid Kemmerer
- Murder Most Unladylike – Robin Stevens
- The Secret Detective – Ella Risbridger

They are available from Ms Hoang in the library.





*The Word of the Lord*

Luke 1:26-38

Six months after Elizabeth knew she was to become a mother, Gabriel was sent from God to Nazareth. Nazareth was a town in the country of Galilee. He went to a woman who had never had a man. Her name was Mary. She was promised in marriage to a man named Joseph. Joseph was of the family of David. The angel came to her and said, "You are honoured very much. You are a favoured woman. The Lord is with you. \*You are chosen from among many women."

When she saw the angel, she was troubled at his words. She thought about what had been said. The angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid. You have found favour with God. See! You are to become a mother and have a Son. You are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great. He will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the place where His early father David sat. He will be King over the family of Jacob forever and His nation will have no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I have never had a man." The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come on you. The power of the Most High will cover you. The holy Child you give birth to will be called the Son of God."

"See, your cousin Elizabeth, as old as she is, is going to give birth to a child. She was not able to have children before, but now she is in her sixth month. For God can do all things." Then Mary said, "I am willing to be used of the Lord. Let it happen to me as you have said." Then the angel went away from her.



*A reflection on this...*

At this time when we look to the important women and female role models in our life, we look to the ultimate Mother and Model Disciple of us all – Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven. We say that she followed Jesus before she even knew him, a message to show us how we can take chances and make choices to better the lives of others, especially in this time of Lent.

**What's been happening in the faith life of the school?**

- Working alongside Ms Coulbeck and the Year 9 drama club, once again the Year 7 Faith in Action team put on a sustainable fashion show to mark the time of Purim in the Jewish Calendar. Jewish people dress up to commemorate the story of Queen Esther saving the Jews from certain death. This inspired the first ever, Bermondsey Fashion Week. KS3 classes all had special lessons to learn about this annual event celebrated worldwide.
- As part to the Lenten Charity Scheme DaCosta House threw a carnival during lunch times, with fair ground games and snacks. Thank you to the DaCosta tutors, Leaders of Learning and students for a great event.
- Miss Casey, Miss S Etemewei and Ms Cadahia accompanied 15 students to Flame on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March. It was a day filled with laughter, music, inspiration and all in attendance were able to witness the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament led by Cardinal Vincent Nichols.
- Reconciliation services are taking place each Thursday during Lent. We thank all priests who have given their time to support our pupils in these sessions.





Flame is the largest catholic gathering in England. It took place exactly 150 days before the World Youth Day in Lisbon and borrowed the Scripture from WYD, “Mary arose and went with haste”, and crystallised it into the theme “**Rise Up.**” Rise up after the pandemic, Rise up as young Catholics, Rise up as Mary did.

There were about 8000 people attending the flame concert at Wembley Arena. Seeing so many people gathered in one place was a fantastic experience. Many music artists performed during the event sharing their life experiences and faith in God. Going to the event, I was expecting a boring few hours and constant prayers, however it was surprising to see artists like:

*Gunwa B* (rapper, photo 1)) who received the Urban Music Award as well as published his book titled, *Unpopular culture* where he railed against status quo and encouraged the youth to live happy fulfilling lives being themselves.



*Faith Child* (photo 2), a contemporary Christian artist and presenter, his music is a blend of Rap, Electro and Pop.



Adenike (photo 3) singer and songwriter was a contestant in The Voice in 2020. She was my favourite as she somehow managed to get the whole crowd to sing the same lyrics at different times and it all sounded great together!



In between the performances, the church officials spoke about the main theme of Flame 2023, encouraging everyone to “rise up” and take action in their lives, rise up to save the planet for future generations and to spread the word of God and tell people about the Catholic faith.

Flame finished with the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. During a day filled up with music, dance and fun it was easy to simply forget the real reason why we all came there. The Adoration of the blessed sacrament allowed us to reflect on the day and remind us that God wants everyone to feel joy and be happy but we should never forget about Him. In summary, Flame was one-of-a-kind experience. Ethan K, Year 8







# Safeguarding Officers



**Designated  
Safeguarding Lead:**

**Ms Jo Nottage**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
j.nottage@stmichaelscollege.org.uk



**Safeguarding officer &  
Deputy Designated Lead:**

**Mrs Debbie Freegard**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
d.freegard@stmichaelscollege.org.uk



**Safeguarding Officer:**

**Ms Tania Rughooputh**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
t.rughooputh@stmichaelscollege.org.uk



**Mr Allan Daly**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
a.daly@stmichaelscollege.org.uk

**Overall Responsibility:**

**Ms Felicity Corcoran - Principal**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
Email: [contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk](mailto:contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk)

Important Notice from the Safeguarding Officer - there is a copy of our Safeguarding Policy on the College Website. A hard copy of this is available in the College Office.

## SPRING TERM 2022-2023

## HOLIDAYS



### Year 10 Kings' Scholars Programme

Year 10 Kings' Scholars should meet from  
3.30pm-4.30pm on each of the below dates;

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January  
Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> January  
Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February  
Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February  
Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March  
**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**  
Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March



### EASTER

Monday 3rd April 2023

To

Friday 14th April 2023

### Bank Holidays

1st May

8th May (King's Coronation)

### Lost property

Please make sure your child's property has their name on, this makes it easier to reunite lost property to its owner.  
Please don't bring expensive property to school;

Please note that all lost property that is not collected will be disposed of at the end of each half term.



Contacting the College - Direct parents access to college via email  
[contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk](mailto:contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk)

For absence please phone: 0207 237 6432 Option 1



Llewellyn Street, London SE16 4UN

Tel: 020 7237 6432

[www.stmichaelscollege.org.uk](http://www.stmichaelscollege.org.uk)

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