



# THE LINK

*A fortnightly Newsletter for the pupils, parents and staff of  
St Michael's Catholic College  
Issue 224 - February 2024*

## Year 9 Students visit The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropometry in Cambridge and discussion on the Benin Bronzes with Professor Rob Law!



Fourteen Year 9 students visited Cambridge in January to study the university's controversial Benin Bronze collection and visit the famous Pembroke College.

Please find some of their reflections below:

On Tuesday, I, along with a dozen other Year 9 students, went to Cambridge. Surrounded by ancient artifacts with lots to teach us about history, we were given a tour of the museum. Highlights included a 2 million year old stone axe, a totem pole and some Benin Bronzes. After our visit, the next stop was the 3rd oldest college in Cambridge University, Pembroke. There we walked around the majestic gardens marvelling at the intricate designs on the buildings. After that, we went into the chapel which was built in 1665. It was interesting to see the names of the ex pupils who had carved their names onto the stools, with some dating back to the early 18th century! We had our lunch overlooking the river Cam which Cambridge was named after. Finally, we headed back to the station at the end of a great day.

Thank you Mr Magnoff. - *Joseph L., 9RU*

The museum has truly beautiful artefacts such as the Benin Bronzes. The Benin artefacts refer to thousands of metal and ivory sculptures which were taken from Nigeria in 1897. The British sacked Benin City taking numerous irreplaceable artefacts. We had a brilliant tour guide who also asked us our opinion on whether the artefacts should be returned to Benin. He told us by playing devil's advocate that some of those artefacts were created from copper and bronze traded with the leaders of Benin for slaves and that, therefore, some Civil Rights groups in America thought that they should not be returned to their descendants in Africa today. Personally, my favourite was the Japanese warrior armour or the (Tatami Guosko) which was a distinctive complete suit of armour worn by the samurai. The whole armour including the helmet folds almost flat to pack for travel.

Overall, this experience was great as I had the opportunity to see beautiful artefacts. A massive thanks to Mr Magnoff and Ms Hurley for taking us on this trip.

*Matthew F., 9DA*





## Year 9 Students visit The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropometry in Cambridge and discussion on the Benin Bronzes with Professor Rob Law ( Continued)



When I went to Cambridge to see the Benin Bronzes I only had one main question which was 'If the artifacts weren't made in Britain and if they don't belong to Britain why are they still here and why haven't they been returned?.' I thought that this was a very straightforward answer but I was obviously wrong because there is an argument as to why people don't want them to be returned back to Africa and why people want them to be returned to Africa.

The Benin Bronzes were made up of bronze and brass and they were made by professional guilds who worked in the royal court of the Oba (King) in Nigeria, Benin City. They usually contained a commissioned portrait of an ancestor of the Oba. The Benin Bronzes are a significant piece in African History, as they are a piece of evidence that Africa was a civilized place with civilized people way before its colonization.

In the late 1800s the British empire was growing rapidly. The Oba of Benin at the time (Oba Ovonramwen) prevented the Royal Niger Company from forming a monopoly in that area.

In 1897 a British Trade Mission, which was apparently a peaceful trade mission, was attacked on its way to Benin City where all but 2 British people died. In February 1897, Britain retaliated leading to the Benin Massacre. So many people died that people weren't able to give an exact figure on the loss of lives. The palaces were all burned to the ground and the bronzes were looted from Benin. They looted over 900 historical artifacts from Benin and proceeded to call it their "spoils of war". The British also executed and exiled all the chiefs. This was the end of an independent Kingdom of Benin.



The British were able to take over the Kingdom of Benin and say that their attack was justified because it was against a "barbarous" kingdom.

Professor Law explained that some people want the Bronzes to stay in European Museums because they were made from the profits of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and that the descendants of African slaves in USA, in particular, don't think that it's appropriate to send the objects back to the descendants of the Oba in Nigeria. He also said that by being in European museums they could bring attention to the brutality of colonial Britain. He also explained that the Benin Bronzes in Cambridge are actually having their ownership transferred back to Nigeria and then loaned back to the museum but that the process is being slowed down by paperwork.

However, I think that the British should return everything they stole from Africa along with compensation and an apology because the British did not have the right to steal everything from Benin and make it seem that it was justified as "spoils of war." Africa is missing a big part of its History and that's because of the British colonization. It's important that the people of Benin should also be able to engage with these important cultural artefacts. Osatohanmwon I.K., 9DA

## WINNERS!

All winning entries will be buried by the Mayor of Southwark, Michael Situ on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February during Diversity Week!

Congratulations to:

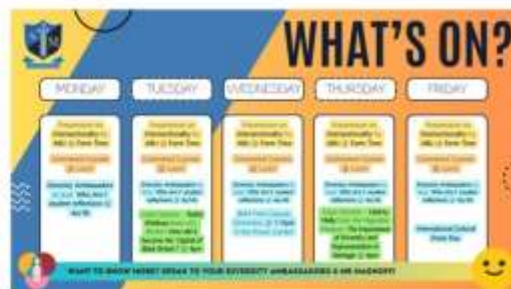
Adrian N. 12DA - £20



Keziah A. P. 10VI - £10



Mirabel M. 9DA - £5



### International Research Project Update!

#### Causation research update

Professor Arthur Chapman



Professor Arthur Chapman, Head of Department for Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment at UCL's Institute of Education delivers thanks and updates on his research project with St Michael's Year 8 and Year 9 students. Early indications are that our students have made significant cognitive leaps during these History interventions and that their efforts will shape History teaching and learning internationally in the years to come!  
Well done everybody!

**Kings' Scholars + for Year 10**  
Every Thursday 3.30-4.30pm - G08



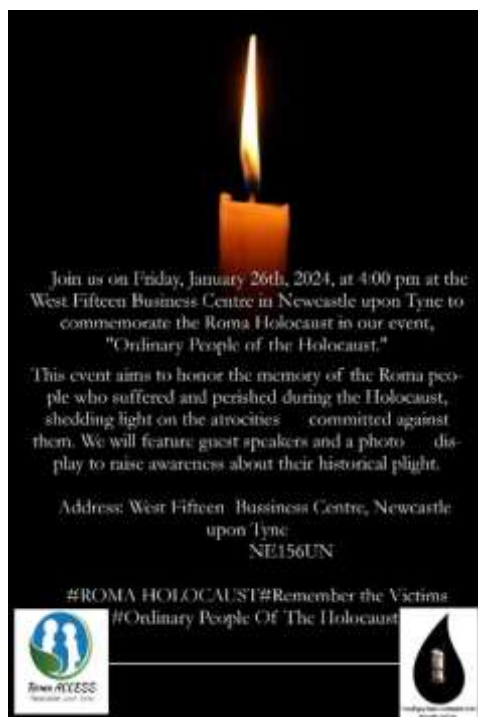
8 <sup>th</sup> Feb
22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb
29 <sup>th</sup> Feb
7 <sup>th</sup> March
14 <sup>th</sup> March
21 <sup>st</sup> March



## Holocaust Memorial Day: The Roma Holocaust

*By Joshua B Year 7 Anne Frank Ambassador*

Every year, on 27<sup>th</sup> of January, the world commemorates the victims of the Nazi regimes in Europe, during the II World War. The Holocaust is known as one of the worst atrocities of humanity and the slogan of the Holocaust commemoration is “Never Again!”.



The social media poster of the event in Newcastle

On 26<sup>th</sup> January I joined my father, who was invited to participate to an event in Newcastle to commemorate the Roma Holocaust. Roma, the people generally known as Gypsies (a word considered a slur by many Roma) are the second largest victim group of the Nazis during the Holocaust but very little is known by the general public. This is the reason why the Roma Holocaust is referred to as “The Forgotten Holocaust”. In general, European societies show ignorance towards the Roma population, no matter if it is about the past, present or future. Roma are the least represented group in our society and they are not part of any decision making process.

On 27<sup>th</sup> of January, I went with my father to visit the Holocaust Gallery at the Imperial War Museum – a very interesting, accurate and emotional exhibition. It starts with the life before the Nazi regime, continues with the rise of the Nazis, the Holocaust and liberation of the survivors. At the exit of the gallery are screens with survivors’ testimonials, which are very touching. Although it was a very interesting experience, I noticed again the ignorance towards Roma: from thousands of exponents only very few were referring to Roma. This is again the effect of lack of representation.

However, it seems that the situation is about to change. During the event in Newcastle, It was officially announced by Nick Kemp, the Leader of the City Council, that a location for the erection of the Roma Holocaust Monument has been allocated in Newcastle City Centre. This has been made possible due to the efforts of Nicu Ion, a member of the Newcastle City Council, the only Roma local councillor in UK. It is intended that the monument be unveiled on 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2024, when the Roma Holocaust Memorial Day is commemorated. A fund-raising campaign will be launched soon for the realisation of the Roma Holocaust Monument. This is a very good example of good Roma representation and community support.



Left to right: Joshua B., Anne Frank Ambassador – St. Michael’s College; Virgil Bitu, ROTA Chair – Roma Organisation for Training and Advocacy; Cllr. Nicu Ion – Newcastle City Council; Jamie Driscoll – Mayor of the North of Tyne Combined Authority; Florin Fleican, Executive Manager – ROTA; Robert Vaszi, Director – Roma Holocaust and Documentation Centre; Costel Septeleanu – local Roma community leader.



The only exponents that refer to Roma in the entire Holocaust Gallery at the Imperial War Museum

### Paper Dreams Unfold: Art Club's Enchanting Origami Extravaganza



In a recent after-school art club session, Mr Howe guided students into the captivating world of traditional Japanese craft of origami. The atmosphere buzzed with excitement as our KS3 students, armed with vibrant origami paper, embraced the art of precision folding. The session seamlessly blended hands-on experience, creativity and teamwork. As the room transformed into a gallery of unique masterpieces, it became clear that origami had not only introduced students to a new artistic medium but had also ignited a spark of innovation and collaboration within the art club community. The successful origami session stands as a testament to the club's commitment to cultivating creativity and self-expression among its young artists. - Mr C. Lomax



### Racial Justice Sunday



Sunday 28th January marked Racial Justice Sunday in the Archdiocese of Southwark, which was commemorated with a Mass held in St George's Cathedral. As part of St Michael's wider work with the community, the Chaplaincy Team sent representatives to attend this Mass, at the invitation of Canon Victor Darlington, the head of the Commission for Promoting Racial Justice and Cultural Inclusion in the Archdiocese.

It was truly inspiring to see such a commitment towards promoting diversity and inclusion within the mission of the Church, and in his homily, Archbishop John Wilson

delivered a very significant message: there is no place for racism. There was also a focus on celebrating cultural heritage, with the bidding prayers read in the languages of different communities within Southwark, and a procession at the beginning, highlighting the plethora of cultures and communities who are all united through God's love. Many thanks to Canon Victor for the invitation, and all those who represented St Michael's by attending. Let's spread the spirit of this message through our words and actions, every day. *Miss R. Casey*



## Chaplain's Corner

### The Word of the Lord



### A reflection on this...

#### Prayer for Bosco

Eternal Father,

through the resurrection of Jesus

the good news of Your love has touched the world.

By our baptism we are reborn as your Children of Light.

Through the work of Your Spirit

Your new creation continues to unfold

In dreams for our future

Watch over Your Salesian family.

Inspire us by the prompting of Your Spirit:

that we may dream new dreams

and our youth may find wisdom in visions.

Give us a courageous heart,

a bold voice and openness of mind,

and above all else, ears that listen

As you speak through events and our dreams.

Amen

Miss Casey, Chaplaincy Co-Ordinator

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

- 7 Bosco had their first form Mass in the college Chapel, they were welcomed by Fr. Keith and all students were active in the formation of the liturgy
- Year 12 CAFOD Leaders attended their second day of training, where they heard of the story of the fishermen in Liberia who CAFOD are supporting with new technologies to help them find the location of the fish and avoid certain danger. They are busy preparing an assembly on this to begin the Lenten period and highlight the work of CAFOD who the college will be supporting during Lent.
- On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024 Miss Casey and Student Chaplains attended the Racial Justice Sunday Mass at St George's where the message of cultural and racial equality was beautifully shared
- Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January was the Feast of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dream of Don Bosco, Mass was held on this day and students were invited to share messages to showcase the Dream of RUAH alive in our college.
- Students in Year 9 have spent Friday afternoons on retreat, lead by Miss Casey, focusing on the Dream of Bosco, students were asked to write songs and the Dreams and Hopes of being a young Salesian and for their own futures.





# 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.

## ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS



### Breakfast Club Reminder

Breakfast club is running from 8am every morning

All students can get **free** porridge or toast

**Free fruit now available at the request of the Student Parliament**



## HALF TERM

From Monday 12th February 2024  
To Friday 16th February 2024

## EASTER HOLIDAYS

From Friday 29th March 2024  
To Friday 12th April 2024

## 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; we will not hold any responsibility for any item lost.**

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

