

Meopham Monthly



Cover art by
Maia Kierans

Meopham School Student Magazine
Issue 22: June 2024

WELCOME

Hello! Welcome to our June issue of Meopham Monthly. This issue features updates from the latest projects around school, information articles on the war in Gaza, D-Day and Pride, an interview with our new Head of Year 8 and our popular Wellbeing Corner and pets gallery.

If you would like to submit a short story, article, poem, photos or anything else for our future issues, please contact the team at MSS-magazine@swale.at or come along on a Thursday lunchtime in to EN4 any time from 12.25-1.20pm.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

Issue 22 Editor: Jack Hollis

NEWS

On Friday 7th June, we asked students in years 7-10 to volunteer for our Big Litter Pick competition in aid of #thebighelpout2024. Ten randomly selected volunteers from each year group competed to clean up our school and the surrounding site. The volunteers filled over 18 bags between them with the Year 8 team winning the day with six bags! Moe's Ices kindly donated ice cream rewards for the winning team in aid of their volunteering efforts! A great afternoon in aid of a great cause.

More pictures in The Gallery, page 11.



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**With thanks to everyone who
contributed this month:**

Nshira Ansah (Yr8)
Miss Biscoombe
Sophie Chable (Yr10)
Mia Colledge (Yr8)
Dilpreet Dhesi (Yr8)
Mr Goldsmith
Mrs Greenwood
Jack Hollis (Yr8)
Charlotte Hooker (Yr13)
Maia Kierans (Yr13)
Keira Martin (Yr10)

Florence Maclean (Yr10)
Poppy Palmer (Yr12)
Amelia Rogers (Yr8)
Archie Scanlan (Yr8)
Freddie Sherlock (Yr7)
Kyran Standen (Yr8)
Helaina Tomlin (Yr10)
Mr Vilday
Summer West (Yr10)
Mrs Williamson

NEWS BREAKDOWN

By Jack Hollis (Year 8)

ICC ARREST WARRANTS FOR NETANYAHU AND HAMAS LEADERS

This month's news breakdown revolves around the newly released ICC arrest warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu and HAMAS leaders. But who are these people? What does this mean? And why is this significant? Let's break it down...

What is the ICC?

The International Criminal Courts (or ICC) are a collection of courts located in the Netherlands that deal with extremely serious crimes, primarily 'crimes against humanity' and 'war crimes'. The ICC works closely with the United Nations meaning they are an impartial (unbiased) body whose primary responsibility is to see justice carried out against some of the most dangerous people on Earth.

Who is Netanyahu?

Benjamin Netanyahu is the controversial Israeli Prime Minister whose actions in Gaza have been highly criticised by his own citizens, foreign politicians and several Human Rights groups. The ICC believe he has broken international law and want him to stand trial.

Who are the HAMAS Leaders?

Ismail Hanlyeh is the head of HAMAS, a Gaza based terror organisation who want Palestine to be recognised as an independent state. On the seventh of October they launched an attack on Israel that saw the deaths of hundreds of people as well as many Israelis being forcibly taken to Gaza. Again the ICC believes that Ismail and his deputies have broken international law.

What does it mean?

These arrest warrants mean that should Ismail or Netanyahu travel to any of the 124 nations signed up to the ICC they will be contractually obliged to arrest them and expedite them to Holland to stand trial. However they can only be arrested should they leave their own country to one that is signed up to the agreement. This means that they can do something similar to Vladimir Putin and just stay in their own nations.

Why is this significant?

For the last few decades many powerful Western Nations, such as the UK, USA and plentiful others have supported Israel and traded weapons with them. This warrant could be a turning point in allegiances and perhaps questions will be asked as to why Israel has been given the support it has despite its accused war crimes.



PRIDE 2024

By Dilpreet Dhesi (Year 8)



From Saturday 1st June until Sunday 30th June it is officially PRIDE MONTH! Here is just a quick reminder of what Pride is:

- Pride month is the celebration of the self-affirmation, dignity, equality and increased visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and other people in the community.
- Studies have shown that 80% of the global population class themselves as heterosexual/heteroromantic (Straight), 3% as Gay, Lesbian or Homosexual, 4% as bisexual, 1% as pansexual or omnisexual, 1% as asexual, 1% as "other", and 11% don't know or won't say.
- There are several famous people that you may know that came out as members of LGBTQIA+ community such as players on the Lionesses. However, just because people love or think differently, it does not mean that they should be treated differently. Tolerance is about respecting others, no matter who they are.

Here are some quotations from people that are part of this community or are big supporters, reminding you to be yourself and no one else:

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences." — Audre Lorde

"You have to go the way your blood beats. If you don't live the only life you have, you won't live some other life, you won't live any life at all." — James Baldwin

"Some people are blind or ignorant, and you can't be that prejudiced and hateful and go through this world and still be happy." — Dolly Parton

"Hope will never be silent." — Harvey Milk

"There's nothing wrong with you. There's a lot wrong with the world you live in." — Chris Colfer

"Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life; define yourself." — Harvey Fierstein

COMPETITION!

Create a badge for staff to wear that encourages kindness and inclusivity. You can do this by hand or digitally (at home). Any designs must be submitted to Miss Williams in HUMS7 by 1st July.

MR VILDAY'S VIEW

Views from a latter-day Viking

And so, I finally near the end of my journey with Meopham School. Although I officially retired in April of this year, my final, final end date is June 30th. I think that's when I will really feel that retirement has started.

One thing I'm often asked, usually with an expression on the questioner's face suggesting they already think I'm mad, is why on earth would I be a teacher. I have to admit, there have been a few times in my career when I have wondered about my sanity in doing this job, but the fact I stayed in it for 28 years must mean I was mostly enjoying it.



Me at the start of my time at Meopham, 1998/99.

So what have I got out of teaching, or in particular out of teaching at Meopham?

A few years ago, a colleague of mine retired after a similar length spell of being at Meopham and the Head Teacher at the time had tried to calculate just how many students that teacher had taught. My own attempt at doing that calculation for me came up with a figure of around 3,000 students that I have taught directly, but that then doesn't include all the ones in my House when I was Head of Rand House or all of the students I worked with on stage shows, the festival of Culture and other events I helped with. A number of those students have stayed in touch, and that's been nice to see how they have moved onwards and upwards after leaving here.

Teaching at Meopham enabled me to develop the confidence, through delivering assemblies, to get up on stage and perform. I compered our wonderful Festival of Culture for a number of years. That meant I was introducing all the acts, two days on stage, and having to cover any technical difficulties that might crop up.

I played guitar once, supporting some students who wanted to sing at a charity event we held. I think the fact they asked me to play a Justin Bieber song put me off doing that again!

I also learned a lot about what's involved in putting on a play or a musical. I have worked with extremely talented students, some who have gone on to have great success in the entertainment field. I've built sets for shows, been the stage manager controlling all the behind-the-scenes activities and I have acted. I was really happy to be asked to play Professor Marvel in our production of the Wizard of Oz. I was offered the choice of reading from the script or learning the lines. I thought it would be disrespectful to the other actors if I cheated with a script, so I learned my lines. I had 3 page of script to memorise and that gave me an incredible respect for those students, much younger than me, who were working through 10, 20 or 30 pages of lines.

CONTINUED...



On stage as Professor Marvel with the multi-talented Jade Catchpole in 2013, Wizard of Oz.

What I probably enjoyed most was being a Head of House. I was Head of Rand House for 5 years. In those days the Houses were all about competitions and charity work. My House won the House competition each year I was in charge. This is because I quickly discovered that students respond very well to chocolate, so my House assemblies were mainly about rewards, which then inspired the students to get as many house points as they could. They did this largely by being positive around the school and getting involved in events and activities.

Of course, I also need to mention the very many wonderful members of staff that I've worked with

and become friends with over the years here. They are the people who have kept me balanced and I hope I've returned some of that support to them.

And so, to the students. I have taught a few students here who I have certainly not gelled with and who it has been difficult to get the motivation to want to work with them. But they would be an incredibly small minority. The majority of the students I have encountered over the years have been polite, sociable and mostly really wonderful individuals. You never know what sort of day you are going to have as a teacher, but you like to think that you've made at least one student stop and think differently about something. I wasn't put on this world to teach; I've always felt I came in to school to educate students how to learn. If you can learn independently then you are set up for life.

As to my future, it will involve lots of walking, lots of photography, rediscovering my art skills, travelling to every interesting place I can think of in the UK and generally relaxing and enjoying life. The five-day weekend I have at the moment is wonderful and I can only think the seven-day weekend from July onwards, will be even better.

It seems fitting that on my last day in school I will be compering the Year 11 leavers event. We will say good-bye together.

It has been a lot of fun teaching here. Covid seemed to put a lot of things on hold so I hope that some of things that have made my time here enjoyable can start to reappear. I would love to be coming back here to watch incredible stage shows like the ones I had the privilege to work on.

The Viking is now signing off from the teaching life.

Alltaf Vikingur!!

D-DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY

By Freddie Sherlock (Yr7) & Jack Hollis (Yr8)

D-day was on 6th June 1944 although it was supposed to be on 5th June 1944 due to bad weather it was delayed. Many people young and old risked their lives to rescue the French from the Nazis.

Boats were taken across the Channel from England and landings took place on Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword beaches with troops from the UK, Canada and the USA. Airborne attacks were also used. Some of the traps used to try and deter soldiers were called Czech hedgehogs and Rommel's asparagus.

The name D-Day actually means Day-Day. Many people thought that it actually was called designated day. It was also known as Operation Overlord.



As well as the heroic bravery and sacrifices on the Normandy beaches themselves, much of Operation Overlord's success was down to those whose stories are nowhere near as well known as they should be:

Christian Lamb - Women's Royal Navy Service

Christian was born in Edinburgh as the daughter of a Rear Admiral. Christian was an intelligent young woman gaining a place at Oxford University when she left school. Due to the Nazi threat, Christian gave up her place at Oxford to join the Women's Royal Navy. Aged only 20 she was promoted to Chief Wren and was tasked with plotting courses for warships. She spent hours in the underground war rooms constructing plans based on maps of the beaches. If her plans were wrong or the courses plotted incorrectly the ships could have become stuck in shallow waters and the landing ruined, resulting in catastrophic casualty rate. She survived the war and is now 103 years old.

Juan Pujol - (1912 - 1988) MI6 Double Cross Programme

Juan Pujol lived in Lisbon and originally wanted to conduct espionage (spying) for Britain however MI6 didn't trust him so he began to spy for Germany. Instead of spying, Jaun stayed at home reading British newspapers and reported whatever they said to his Nazi superiors. Eventually MI6 found out about Juan's web of misinformation and hired him, and gave him lies to tell the Germans. Eventually his bosses asked Jaun about the D-Day landings: Juan told the Germans that the Allies would land in Calais when instead they landed in Normandy meaning that the main German Army was stationed in Calais at the time of the invasion, making the landing much easier and at a lower casualty rate.

INTRODUCING MR GOLDSMITH

By Jack Hollis (Yr8)

Q1 - What Job(s) did you have before getting into teaching?

When I first left school I joined a few of my mates who did things like painting and decorating, during that time I became a fully qualified plasterer and I still do a few plastering jobs in the half term.

Q2 - If I got a time machine and told you when you were my age that you would become a Teacher or more specifically a Head of Year, would you have believed me?

When I was 14 my careers advisor made me do a quiz and at the end said I was going to be a PE teacher or a Police Officer. I wasn't overly shocked by this as there was always a part of me that really loved sport.

Q3 - What is your favourite biscuit?

Probably a Bourbon, quite original, sometimes I can branch to a custard cream, they are sort of the same.

Q4- What do you hope to achieve with our year group?

First and foremost, I want everyone in Year 8 to be achieving their target grades or above their target grades. I also really want to prioritise wellbeing and making sure everybody is happy when they are at school. Along with this, I want to make sure that we can provide support for those who need it.

Q5 - Have you got a preferred sports team?

Originally I was a big Brentford supporter but my wife's family were Chelsea all the way so I chose to support Chelsea to keep things easier. I now have a season ticket and we watch them whenever we can. I also have ties with the Fulham Academy as I played there as a child. My children play rugby so we always go to support their team.

Q6 - What is your top priority to address with Year 8?

Routines, I want to get students into routines. It is clear that some routines are not being practised, for example, the fire drill. This is also affecting punctuality, the amount of lateness is not acceptable and we need to sort that out and fix the system surrounding it.

Q7 - How do you feel about joining Meopham School?

Well, I have been teaching for 23 years, but when you join a new school it is a completely blank canvas and you have to start again and rebuild that credibility and the respect that you have earned so I am excited and nervous.

Q8 - How would you describe yourself in 3 words?

Committed, hardworking and driven.

THE GALLERY

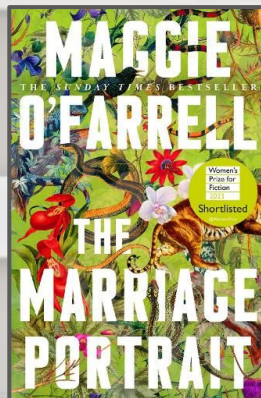
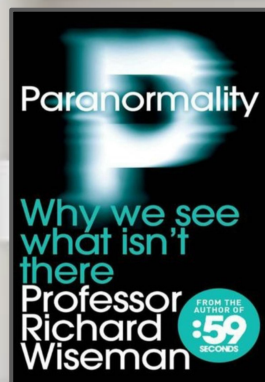


THE GALLERY

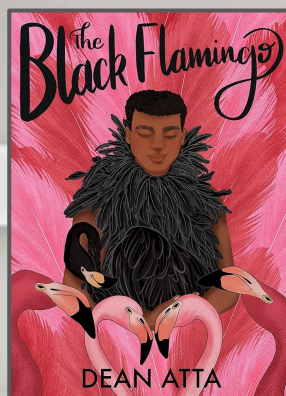
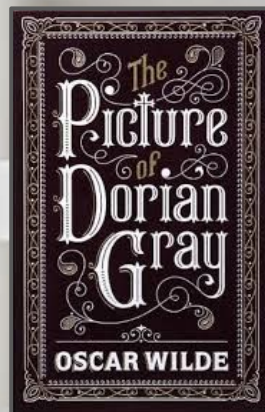


Photos by Mrs Greenwood on the Big Help Out litter-picking day!

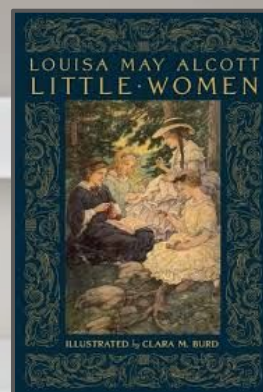
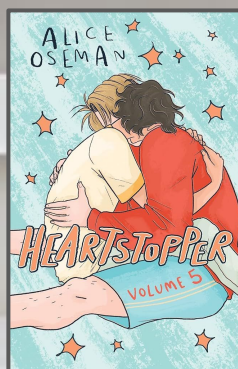
BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS



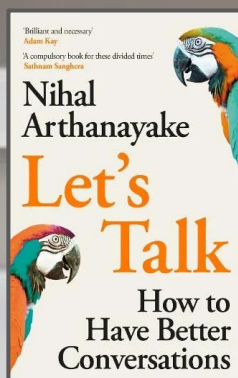
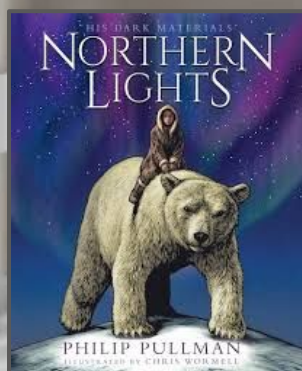
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9/10



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If you have a recommendation, or would like to write a review for a future issue, email us at MSS-magazine@swale.at

BOOK REVIEWS

Let's Talk by Nihal Arthanayake

Review by Jack Hollis (Yr8)



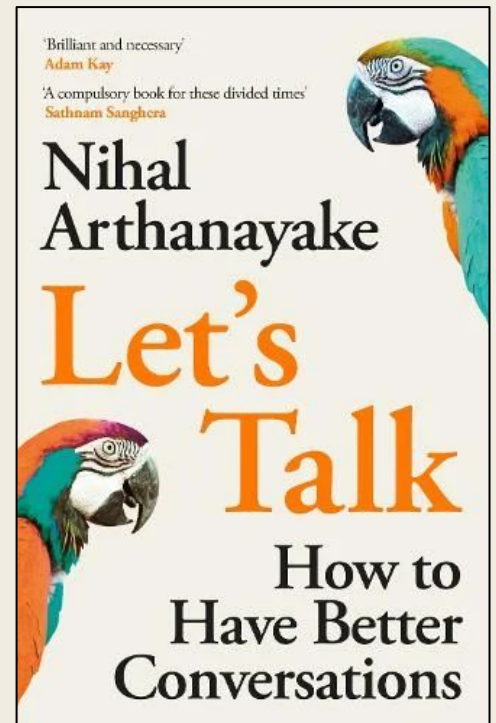
Recently I found myself in my local library looking for a good book when Lets Talk appeared in the corner of my eye. I was intrigued and decided I would take a break from the brilliant Karen M. Mcmanus (whom I highly recommend) and try something a bit different. How glad I am that I did.

Let's Talk dives into the history of conversations, how they are structured and how we can have better conversations in our day to day lives. The book is expertly written by Nihal Arthanayake who explores the earliest of conversations and how we can 'co-exist' with those with vastly different views to our own. One of my favourite aspects of the book is how we create honest open discussions about anything we fancy, which I think is so important a we become more distance than ever due to the internet and mobile phones.

The book also contains plentiful facts, here are some of the most interesting:

- ★ The word 'conversation' originally meant illegal sexual activity;
- ★ The mere visible presence of a mobile phone whilst talking to somebody degrades a conversation significantly compared to when phones are put away;
- ★ The idea of a chat over coffee is nothing new, as early as the 18th century coffee houses were being used primarily at the time as debate clubs.

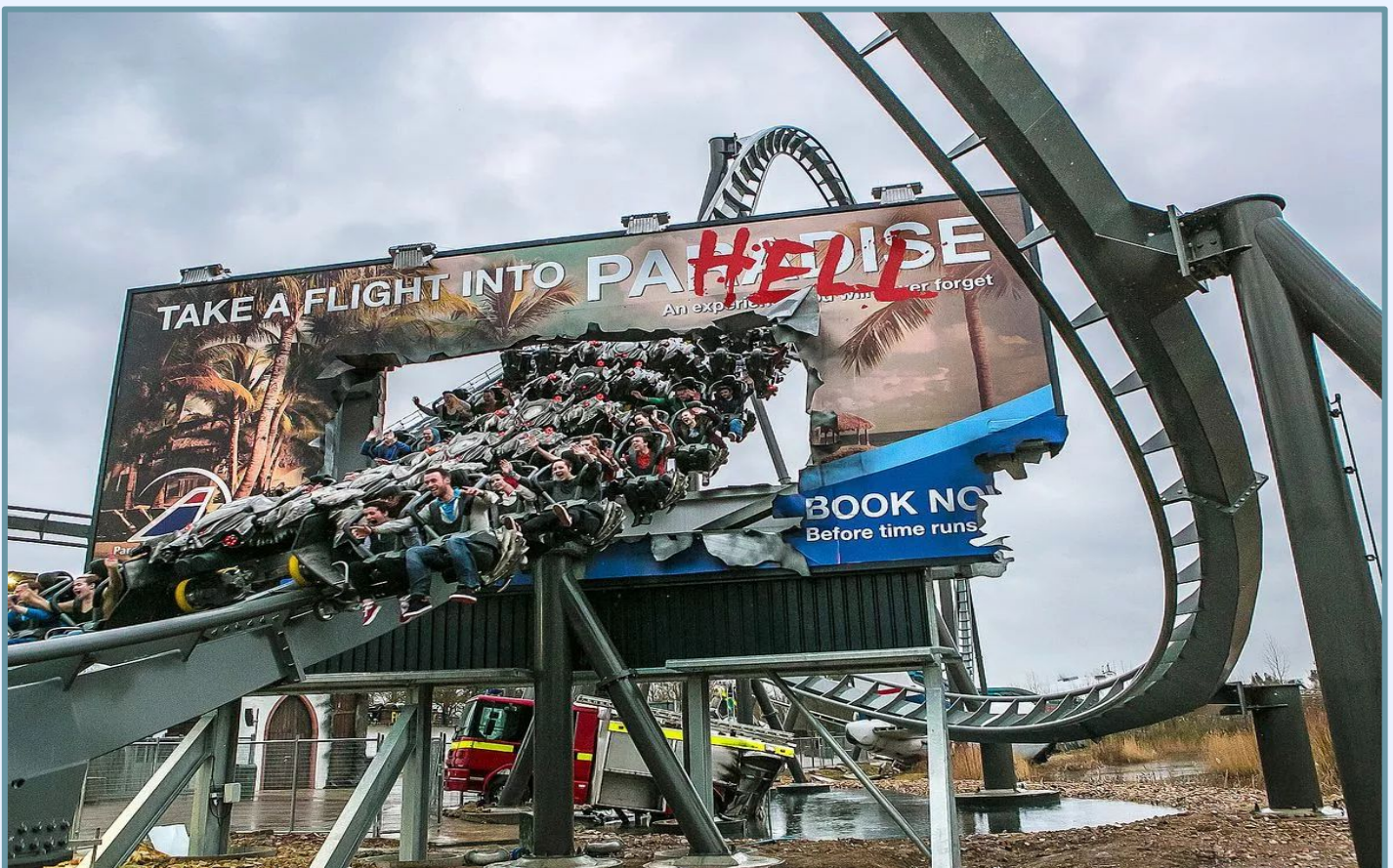
This truly is a great book. I would certainly recommend it to anyone interested in oracy or just those who enjoy a chat every once in a while.



THORPE PARK TRIP

By Archie Scanlan (Yr8)

The Thorpe Park trip for Year 9 on Thursday 16th May was a magical experience, every ride was exhilarating, thrilling and heart racing and at every turn was magic. The first ride we went on, The Swarm, was a very well-themed ride that I highly recommend you go on next time you visit. The next ride we went on was The Walking dead, it was a really immersive experience, even in the queue it felt like you were being chased by zombies. Then we went on Nemesis Inferno: Nemesis was a extremely fast paced ride, when I went on it for the first time I couldn't even stay still in my seat. Then we went on Tidal wave, it was very fast and I was soaked from head to toe. Then we went on Storm Surge, which I was actually able to dodge the water cannons and my friends got soaked instead! I had a really amazing time and I would love to go back and I highly recommend you go there as well. Especially since Hyperia has officially reopened as of the 11th of June.



The Swarm

DISTRICT CUP WINNERS

Boys' Football team (Yr8) interviewed by Mia Colledge and Dilpreet Dhesi (Yr8)

How did it feel winning the cup?

Charlie Avery: "It felt good as it was the first cup final win for Meopham. Overall it was a good team performance and I felt that I had a big responsibility as captain."

Kenzo Adedayo: "It felt fun but as it was calm, it did not feel like a final but felt very good to win."

What happened over the course of the match?

Charlie Avery: "The match went well as we came back from being down by 2 goals. By the end of the match it was 4-4 and lead to penalties, where Lee Martin scored the winning penalty to crown us victorious. We played the formation 4-2-4 and by the end of match Frank Measures was chosen as man of the match."

Kenzo Adedayo: "Across the match the overall team performance was very good and it felt amazing to lift the trophy."

Mr Whittle: "In my opinion Mackie Reed put more effort into the team than I did, which helped the team win. During the match the team showed a lot of team spirit and worked hard despite the challenge and after some tactic changes, at halftime, we brought the cup home."



STEM CLUB

By Poppy Palmer (Yr12)

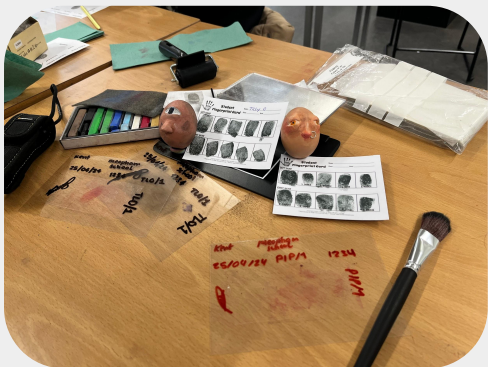
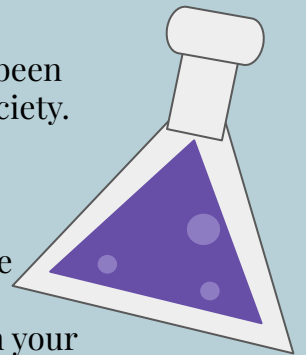


Introducing the STEM & Forensics club to the Meopham Monthly!

Here at STEM club we hold the initiative aimed at fostering a passion for the sciences and technology among our students. This club is designed to provide hands on experiences, encouraging creative problem solving and inspire the next generation of innovators. And we hope to bring updates on all the wonderful activities we perform here in the magazine.

Why choose STEM?

In today's rapidly evolving world, proficiency in STEM fields never been so grand and important to our society. These disciplines drive the advancements and aspirations in countless areas that impact our daily lives. So why not cultivate an interest in these skills where you could grow to make a mark in your future or to impress your teachers.



What to expect:

Thanks to the wonderful Miss Orange, each week is a new experience with bundles of knowledge. So far we have explored topics such as the bones in our body, how to extract your DNA fingerprint and even making slime. So come and join in on the fun!

Join us:

Science 3, Thursday after school-3:10-4:00pm

The STEM club is open to all students who have a curiosity about the world and desire to learn through exploration and experimentation, outside the boundaries of the ordinary classroom.

If you have questions either visit the club or find:

- Miss Orange & Miss Eaton (STEM leader)
- Tilly Orange & Poppy Palmer (STEM ambassadors)



STUDENT LEADERSHIP

By Miss Biscombe and Student Leaders

Student leaders have been busy with a number of projects underway:

ECO afternoon

In May, students launched a special ECO afternoon where those with a passion for the natural world dedicated time to improving the natural spaces in our school. Students collected bags of rubbish and debris from the school site to make it more pleasant for both students and wildlife. Well done for giving up time in the service of others.

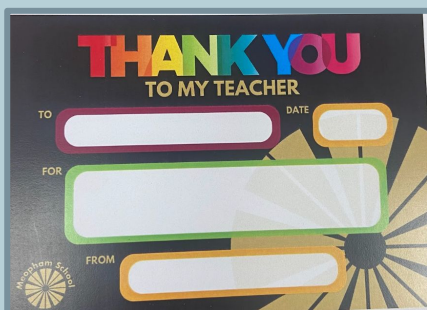


Headteacher Interviews - words by Mackie Reed (year 9)

“A panel of students from the school leadership team were given the opportunity to meet and interview the candidates for the new headteacher role. From the start of the process we had to choose some challenging questions to test the applicants. We wanted to see if they would fit in well with the Meopham School community and hear their ideas on how to lead our school to an even greater future. We spent two days interviewing the candidates for the job and providing feedback on who was the most impressive. It gave me a great opportunity to develop my communication and teamwork skills. Thank you to Luke, Hollie, Henry, Helaina, Jack and Dilpreet, who joined me in this important leadership role.”

School Council Survey

School councillors have launched an important survey this term to investigate student attitudes to homework, behaviour and learning. Councillors are looking forward to gathering views from across the school and sharing these important findings with the senior leadership team to help with planning for the next academic year. Thank you to Jack and Dilpreet who have been leading this initiative.



Appreciation Postcards

Student leaders gave out more than 600 THANK YOU TO MY TEACHER postcards in term 5. Well done to every student that has taken the time to acknowledge and thank a teacher. Another well done to the huge team of student leaders who distributed and collected the cards. We have loved seeing how these small gestures can brighten someone's day.

WELLBEING CORNER

By Sophie Chable, Keira Martin, Summer West and Helaina Tomlin (Year 10)

Going on walks

When you're feeling upset or not your best, going on walks could help your mindset and wellbeing. It doesn't have to be a big walk, just enough to clear your mind. If you really want to you can listen to some music as well so there can't be any distractions. Going on walks also helps you do your daily amount of exercise so your body can be healthy as well as keeping your mind healthy.

Music

Music is a massive contributor to helping people's wellbeing. It can help people by reducing stress, decreasing depression and decreasing anxiety. Music can help people to express their feeling and emotions. Listening to music can also help to be more sociable.

Morning routines

You can kick-start the day with a short mindfulness routine. This can be by doing breathing exercises, short yoga sessions, colouring or listening to calming music before you wake up. You can also go for calming walks to clear your mind before you start your day.



THE MEOPHAM (PET) FAMILY



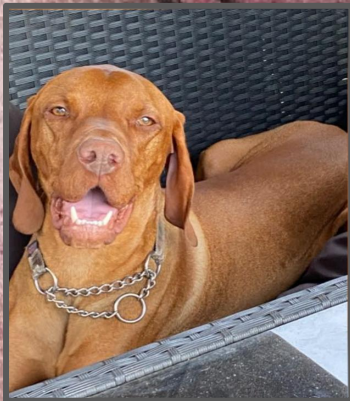
Pus Pus - Archie S



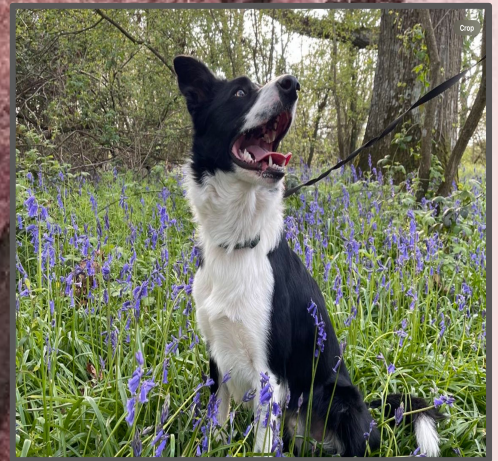
Bear -Poppy P



Lady - Kira L



Ripley - Helaina T



Rover - Kyran S

If you would like to share a pet photo for a future issue, email it to MSS-magazine@swale.at, along with a note of your pet's name.

Summer has begun

Poem by Amelia Rogers (Yr8)

Flowers are blooming,
Spring is now done,
I am assuming,
That summer has begun.

Song birds sing a summery song,
Throughout the day,
And all night long.

Grass is greener,
The sky is bright blue,
The air is now cleaner,
The waters more refreshing too.

No more buildings,
Covered in snow,
Just beautiful flowers,
And the sun's gorgeous glow.

Flowers and blooming,
Spring is now done,
I am assuming,
That summer has begun.