

# THE GEORGIAN

**TALKING HEAD**

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
WITH MR FORD

**QUESTION TIME**

WE GET POLITICAL WITH MP  
VICTORIA COLLINS

## PHOEBE GILL

ST GEORGE'S OLYMPIC STAR



# WELCOME MESSAGES

## MR FORD

It is a privilege to introduce this, the second edition of "The Georgian", which is the result of the dedication, creativity, and leadership of our talented students. From writing and photographing to editing and designing, our student team has led this project with enthusiasm and skill. Their commitment to capturing the essence of life at St George's is truly commendable.

This edition offers a vibrant snapshot of the extraordinary activity that has taken place across the school. Within its pages, you will find fascinating articles, including features on Phoebe Gill, both before and after the Olympics, a Q&A with Victoria Collins, as well as an interview with yours truly! There are also thoughtful pieces on social media, debating, chapel, and charity, along with contributions from subject leads covering most areas of school life. More than just a record of events, this magazine reflects the personalities, traditions, and indomitable spirit that make St George's such a special community.

My heartfelt thanks go to the editorial team for their hard work and inspiration, and to Mr Ellis, whose guidance and encouragement have been instrumental in bringing this wonderful magazine to life.

I hope you enjoy reading it as much as they enjoyed creating it.



## SCHOOL CAPTAINS

We are so pleased to write in this issue of the school magazine. We'd like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr Ford and the Senior Leadership Team for helping with a fantastic start to this academic year.

We want to both thank and wish luck to the Year 13's who have contributed so much to the school in the last year and have assisted us significantly. We hope to fill the shoes of our previous school captains and enhance what makes St George's such a special school, continuing to "aim higher"!

Lastly, we would also like to thank all members of The Georgian and Tolu for granting us this chance to highlight our values and for producing our school paper in all its uniqueness. We look forward to reading future issues!

## MR ELLIS

Thanks so much to all who have been involved in this edition of 'The Georgian'. After a wonderfully received relaunch in summer. Our aims were to continue with the values of the magazine, whilst making the articles more energetic, the design even more snazzy and slick, and most importantly to provide a blueprint for future issues.

This magazine is something that we are really proud of: we have added a layer of professionalism to go alongside our amazing student led team. Thanks to our associate editor Sam Stow and to our proofreaders, led by Hanalei S and Lisa M. I would also like to thank Charlie Rickett at 4-ds for all of his help with publication (an example of a parent who gives so much back to our community).

One of our other aims of this issue was to look to take 'The Georgian' beyond our school community and to be a publication that you could pick up when you are having a coffee, waiting for a hair cut or browsing in the local estate agent.

As a school, we see ourselves as being at the centre of the community, and this magazine gives us an opportunity to showcase so much of the good stuff that goes on at St George's.

I would like to thank our effervescent and efficient student leads (Tolu, Eleanor, Freya and Milly) for their stellar work, as well as all of the students, teachers and alumni who have been part of this issue. The next team will have big boots to step into!

## EDITORS

Hello, and welcome to The Georgian! Thank you so much for reading. In this edition we've had the incredible opportunity to interview our brand new headteacher Mr Ford, the amazing Phoebe Gill who competed for Team GB in the Olympics last summer and our wonderful MP for Harpenden and Berkhamsted Victoria Collins.

Watching the magazine grow as a community and a project this past term has been such a privilege and we cannot wait to hand over to our new editorial team and see what exciting new ideas they can bring the magazine. A special thanks to Mr Ellis once again for all his help this term, to Sam Stow for giving up his time to give us some outside wisdom, and to our designers Milly and Freya for working tirelessly behind the scenes. We hope you enjoy this issue!



# CREDITS

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## SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and organisations for their invaluable contributions to this edition of The Georgian and future issues. Special thanks to Sam Stow for providing the fundamentals that helped make this edition of The Georgian more refined, as well as for offering solutions for future editions, including style guidance and assistance with the magazine's printing process. We also want to thank Charlie Rickett, 4DS Solutions for his key role in printing for a second year running. We would also like to thank Mr Gnanendran for helping us find and install the right digital platforms to design this edition, and for generously answering all our enquiries.

We would like to express our appreciation towards Ruby S and Bella G for their invaluable help with the design aspect of this edition. Their creativity and fresh perspectives brought new ideas and approaches that we could never have imagined on our own. We are thrilled to place The Georgian into the hands of future designers and hope that this edition inspires even better things to come. We look forward to seeing what the future holds. Our gratitude goes to Hanalei S and Lisa M for their careful proofreading and attention to detail.

Additionally, we would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Williams, Mr. Ford, Victoria Collins, Mr. Finnegan, and Mr. Burrett for allowing us the opportunity to interview them. Finally, a note on the imagery used throughout this publication: all external imagery is not our own, and no copyright infringement is intended. As a school, we see ourselves as being at the centre of the community, and this magazine gives us an opportunity to highlight incredible moments at George's.



WELCOME



TO



THE

GEORGIAN



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# Ford Thinking

Mr Ford was appointed as the new Head of St George's last year. This interview provides us with an insight into him as our new head, but also into his wider interests

***Written by Tolu O (Y13) and Eleanor R (Y13)***

***Q: How did you get into teaching?***

A: I loved school. During my schooldays, I never thought I wanted to be a teacher but I had some great teachers, particularly my housemaster when I was in senior school. He was the head of the boarding house and was incredibly inspirational. For those of us living away from home, he was a great support – he was fair, he was kind, but he was firm. I ended up wanting to emulate him, as well as other teachers I looked up to. Then, once I left school, I got a summer job working in a language school. I did that every summer during university and I really enjoyed it. And I also took a gap year where I worked in a school as well, so I very quickly had a lot of different opportunities of working in a school environment. I think I got hooked on it!

***Q: Your previous job was at Berkhamsted School. What are the highlights from your time there?***

A: The most remarkable moment has to be when Queen Elizabeth II visited as part of our 475th anniversary celebrations. I'd just started in my role as Vice Principal, and I was involved in the planning and management of the whole day, right up until she left in a helicopter! My family were there as well, which made it extra special.

***Q: Berkhamsted is a private school. Would you say there are big differences between Berkhamsted and St George's?***

A: Honestly, no. When I visited St George's before my interview, I was shown around by Billy and Darcy, a school and house captain from last year, and the thing that struck me was just how similar everybody was in terms of the school's values, the ethos, the things that they

spoke about, and what they loved about the school. For me, it immediately felt like there were many similarities between St George's and Berkhamsted in terms of ethos and values, which made me feel really comfortable walking around the school from the off. And the more I went through that interview process, the more similarities emerged. There can be differences between state and private schools, of course, but the quality of teaching, the passion that teachers show for their students and the quality of relationships that students have with their teachers is not dependent on money, and I can honestly say that they are as good – if not better – at St George's as anywhere I've seen. We also have to remember that the issues that both pupils and staff have in independent schools are the same as the issues faced at St George's. And as a head I put a lot of emphasis on understanding the people within our community to make it work as well as possible for everyone. For me, that's crucial whether you're a state or an independent school.

***Q: What attracted you to St George's? Why did you want to apply for the role?***

A: I've always been in schools that have a particular kind of Christian ethos. I was really attracted to St George's because of its Christian heritage and being able to share in that with everybody who's been through the school. Most people who come to St George's have a church connection and it gives us a shared language, a shared set of values and some ideals, which are at least going to be similar.

**Q: If you weren't a teacher what would you be?**

A: I don't really know! If money had been no object and I could have done anything, I think I would have stayed at university for longer and completed a master's or something like that. I really loved studying theology and I drew it out for as long as possible. I was up at Durham and I did a year away in Sweden, then I came back and did my teaching qualification. Two other subjects I wished I'd studied more that could have led to alternative careers are History (I had to choose between History and Geography after Year 9) and Politics. I can imagine having pursued either subject, it may have led to a different career. That said, I think a lot of what a headteacher does is similar to being a politician! You're trying to balance interests, make decisions, work with different types of people, understand where people are coming from.

**Q: What are your hobbies outside of school?**

A: My biggest hobby outside of school is rugby and refereeing. When I have some free time the thing I spend most of my time, doing is being a referee for Hertfordshire. I go to clubs all around the county and referee both men's and women's games, and I also do that for the school teams as well. Again, I see similarities between refereeing and teaching – a huge part of refereeing is managing people.

You have to be firm and fair. You have to communicate really well. You have to make decisions really quickly under pressure. I really enjoy it. I used to play rugby but I got injured and I can't play anymore, so refereeing allows me to stay connected to the game.

**Q: What's one fact you would tell students to get to know you better?**

A: I think I revealed that in one of my house assemblies recently. I am a big The Lord of the Rings fan! Another thing would be my love of singing. I've always been in choirs since a really young age, never not been in a choir. I love singing in choirs that have purpose, like church choirs where you're constantly changing the repertoire and building up to a concert or some other event.

## Quick-fire Questions:

**Q: If you were a character from The Lord of the Rings, who would you be?**

A: Oh, that's quite easy. I'd definitely be Samwise. He's a loyal follower.

**Q: We know your favourite subject in school is RS. What is one you couldn't stand?**

A: Oh, that's really hard! I think some aspects of physics I found extremely difficult. But I did biology A-level, so I wasn't totally against the sciences.

**Q: What type of student were you in school? Teacher's pet? Class clown?**

A: I got involved in everything. I think I tried my hand at everything. I wasn't ever particularly successful, but I'd always put my hand up to clear up things.

**Q: Favourite comfort food after a long day of work.**

A: Since I am vegan, I'm going to say a vegan chilli con carne. It's a very comforting dish.

**Q: What's your go-to karaoke song?**

A: I think it would be Your Song by Elton John. It works for my vocal range!

**Q: What's your favourite memory from your time at school?**

A: I think it was playing corridor cricket with all of my friends when I was in the upper sixth. We had a row of single rooms and we would play cricket down the corridor. We always got in trouble for it but it was so much fun!



# Top of her Games

St George's Olympic star Phoebe Gill before and after Paris

*Written by Tolu O (Y13)*



**Q: Talk us through your last few months.**

A: Coming into the track season in May, I did my first 800m race in Belfast, and I hit an Olympic qualifying time in that very first race. It's all taken off since then, and ever since then, I've been contacted by people I've watched on TV for years. British Athletics also reached out to discuss the lead-up to the Olympic Games. I don't think I ever let myself believe I could get to this point because I didn't want to set my expectations too high going into the trials. Crossing the finish line 30 June at the British Trials and knowing I'd qualified was such an indescribable feeling. I never truly believed I could do it. Now, being able to say, "I'm an Olympian," feels absolutely surreal.

**Q: What type of race suits you best in the 800m?**

A: I'd love a quick race. I prefer it when it's fast from the first lap. I hate it when the first 600m is slow, and then everyone kicks in the last 200m. Coming from a cross-country background, I feel like I have good stamina, whereas some sprinters have a stronger kick at the end. But you never know what will happen. That's the thing—why stress yourself out with all the scenarios when you can't control what other people are thinking? You just have to stay adaptable.

**Q: What does a typical day look like for you?**

A: I'll talk you through a typical week. I train six days a week. Four of those are track sessions, one is a swimming session for cross-training to avoid injuries, and I also do two strength and conditioning sessions. The track sessions vary—some focus on speed work. I always take a rest day on Fridays because it's nice to have a day to look forward to where I can do absolutely nothing. That rest day helps me prepare for Saturday races.

**Q: Biggest sporting hero growing up**

A: My biggest sporting hero, who I actually met yesterday, was Dame Kelly Holmes, and it was just incred-

ible. I remember watching her on Gold Rush on BBC where she talked about the mental health challenges athletes go through that not everyone sees. It was really nice that she spoke up about it, and she's such a big figure in the sport. She's also played a major role in shifting the focus toward sports psychology. Aside from her, probably people like Keely Hodgkinson. This season is so crazy because I'm actually speaking to these people, and they follow me on Instagram now. It's like I'm trying not to let myself be a crazy fan because I'm racing alongside them, but it's hard because I've been watching them run for so long.

**Q: How do you handle pressure when racing against top athletes, including those you've looked up to?**

A: I think it's an athlete's mentality—once you're on that start line and you hear 'On your marks', you feel like there's no one else on the track. It's just me and the track. I do think I become a different person when I'm in my athletics mindset. I very much separate myself outside of running and inside competitions. I feel like people would find me more intimidating watching me warm up or being in a cool room before a race because you have to put your game face on. It can be a very stressful environment, and you don't want to seem fazed by anyone else. The fact that I'm going to be racing with some of my idols is incredible to me, and I feel like it will help push me. In the trials, I raced someone I've been a massive fan of, and I actually saw her in December during a training session. I went up to her and asked for a photo. The fact that I later raced alongside her at the British Championships and even managed to beat her is just incredible to me.

**Q: How do you feel about the increasing media attention?**

A: I've had a bit of practice. Like last year, there would be instances where Athletics Weekly would come up to me with a camera in my face, and I'd have to improvise on the spot. But it has definitely increased this year, especially leading up to the Olympics. It can be very overwhelming, especially as I'm just 17. To be fair, it's like having a normal conversation—it's just about being honest. What I don't like is when the media twists things, taking a different angle or using things that aren't honest or that they have no evidence to back up.

**Q: The Olympics are coming up—what is your aim?**

A: I don't really want to have a set aim. I just want to get through as many rounds as possible. I think when you put that type of pressure on yourself, it's mentally draining. I just want to have fun. It's my first time, and I have many years to come. I just want to take in the Olympic Village and enjoy every moment. I've never been at an event of this calibre before.

**Q: There was a viral TikTok trend about an Olympian obsessed with chocolate muffins, nicknamed “The Muffin Man.” Did you try one of the muffins?**

A: Yes, I did. I actually got locked out of my room because of it! I went late at night to get one, forgot my key, and ended up locked out the entire night. My phone died, and I had to sleep on the street, wandering around the Olympic Village. All that for a muffin—and it wasn’t even worth it!

**Q: Before your races what was your preparation like?**

A: I tried to stay in my room as much as possible to avoid getting stressed out by the environment. I really wanted to embrace the experience and take in everything around me

because I was so proud of just being there. I didn’t want to get overwhelmed by the idea of racing in a big stadium, because I had never had an experience like that before. I also watched Gilmore Girls to relax. My favourite episode was when Rory and her first boyfriend Dean broke up because, honestly, I didn’t like him!

**Q: What was your highlight of the Olympics?**

A: Definitely the feeling after the heats. That’s when I could finally take in the atmosphere. Before a race, you block out all the noise to stay focused, but afterwards, you can really appreciate the moment and soak it all in.

**Q: What do you think was your biggest struggle this year?**

A: Going into the British Trials was tough because I struggled with the pressure of meeting people’s expectations. The increased media attention was also challenging, especially as I have anxiety around public speaking. I don’t mind sit-down interviews like this, but speaking on stage can be very overwhelming. That said, I do think I’ve gained confidence from these experiences.

**Q: What tips do you have for people struggling with public speaking?**

A: When you’re on stage, focus on one spot or imagine you’re speaking to someone you trust, like a parent. I saw a quote from Kamala Harris that stuck with me: If you knew the Titanic was sinking, you wouldn’t care how you looked—you’d just focus on getting the message out. That’s what I try to do—focus on delivering the message rather than worrying about how I appear.

**Q: How do you feel about being a role model now?**

A: It feels strange because I didn’t think people really watched athletics! It’s lovely to come back and have kids tell me I’ve inspired them. I was once in their position, looking up to someone like Keely Hodgkinson, so it’s surreal to be that person for others now. To be a ‘role model’ now is weird because I didn’t realise people would care about what I’m doing and watch me. It has a bit of pressure around it but it’s nice to show that it is possible to do your dreams, to compete against people that are older than you, even though it can be stressful.

**Q: What’s your biggest pet peeve about the media?**

A: I get that they want big headlines to draw people into athletics, but it can be stressful when they predict outcomes or tag you in polls. It’s hard to ignore that kind of

attention when you’re already under pressure to qualify.

**Q: What other events did you get the opportunity to watch?**

A: I had the chance to watch a bit of everything, really! One of the highlights was meeting Adam Peaty, which was incredible—I used to swim before, so seeing him in person was surreal. I also got to watch Sky Brown skateboarding, which was amazing. And, of course, we all watched breakdancing—especially Australia’s performance. It was such a cool experience!

**Q: What’s more stressful: the Olympics or A-Levels?**

A: The Olympics is one race, one moment—it is so stressful, whereas A-Levels are an ongoing stress. I definitely think the Olympics.

**Q: When did your nerves peak during the Olympics?**

A: My nerves were at their peak during the qualifying rounds. Walking into the Olympic Village and realising the scale of everything was overwhelming. I kept crying on the way there because I was really overwhelmed with everything that was going on. And when I got to the Olympic Village, it was so massive and it was kind of hard not to get nervous because I realised I’m actually about to race—this is it! So I would say that it was definitely a gradual build up over the week or two of racing, but it didn’t really span outside of that period. I think the peak of the nerves was walking into the heats, not knowing what to expect.

**Q: Did you get the type of race you wanted in your heats?**

A: I wanted a fast race, and it was fast, but I didn’t expect it to be that quick. Normally you’d expect a heat to go through in two minutes or so. That’s what they did last Olympics, but we got through our heats in 1:58, which is quick for a heats. I think it might have felt quicker because normally if I go out that pace I’m at the front. However, I was going out at a fast pace and I was actually still in the middle, so that was something I had to adjust to.

**Q: Do you keep in touch with friends you made at the Olympics?**

A: It’s hard because elite athletes have such busy schedules, but we catch up at Team GB events and sometimes over social media. Sometimes I’ll exchange an Instagram DM with Laviai and Lina Nielsen, saying well done and comment on their Instagram posts, but it’s definitely hard given that these people are constantly travelling around the world training and if you don’t train together, you hardly ever see each other.



# Question Time

Harpenden and Berkhamsted MP Victoria Collins answers our questions on the job, the political system and her dream dinner party guests

**Written by Tolu O (Y13) and Eleanor R (Y13)**

**Q: What do you think the most important aspects of being an MP are and what do you think you can achieve for your constituents?**

A: I am an opposition MP, so the most important things I can achieve are: helping to shape national law that is impacting local people (around health and social care, cost of living, sewage and especially Special Educational Needs provision). I also want to be a connector in the community, to try to bring people together and find solutions. I think it's important to be out and about to represent what's important to you.

**Q: What have been your experiences of St George's and other local schools so far?**

A: At St Georges, I'm blown away by the interest of students and the quality of debate—I'm trying to take that into parliament. I like visiting schools because it's refreshing to see young people care about what's happening in their community, and the world. I love to hear good questions from people across all ages, and it keeps me grounded.



**Q: How do you feel about taking over a seat that was Conservative for so long?**

A: It's a very exciting prospect; it's a new seat that was actually made up of three Conservative seats before. But for me, the work has just started. I am excited to show how we can make a difference, and do politics a bit differently. So even today, I'm going around knocking on doors, talking about issues. I'm trying to do it differently. I want to be a voice in parliament for what matters to people here.

**Q: Following the recent US election results,**

**what would you say to any young girls who are disheartened about getting into politics after Kamala Harris's loss?**

A: For me it shows that it's more important than ever that our voices are heard. We have now reached 40% of women in parliament, it's exciting that this is the most diverse UK parliament that we have ever had. However, we have only just reached over 600 female MPs,

just one houseful, so we need so many more voices! As women MPs of all parties, want to represent issues that are important to women and young girls. It's more important than ever, so please don't give up!

**Q: Do you think first past the post is an effective voting system?**

A: No, it's not effective. For me, it shows that things changed slightly in the last election, but you had a lot of safe seats because of the current system. Perhaps a certain party would win no matter who ran. For me, that's not good politics. It does not represent people, people feel like they can't change, and it's not fair because one vote does not equal one vote when it comes to parliament.

**Q: Who is your all-time favourite UK politician and why?**

A: It's tricky - Paddy Ashdown was quite an inspiration because he was someone who really cared about the UK. In terms of the world, Michelle Obama, although she's not an elected politician. I'm inspired by the work of hers which I have read - she says: 'when they go low, we go high', I love that grace in the face of so much difficulty and trying to make such a positive difference.

**Q: What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

A: For me, it's when I can make a difference. For example, at Prime Minister's Questions, I mentioned one of our amazing local organisations who represent struggles in mental health, special educational needs, and the charity sector and how they're being failed.

**Quick-fire questions:**

**Q: Tea or coffee?**

A: Coffee

**Q: Starbucks or Gail's?**

A: Ooh, I used to work at Starbucks

**Q: Sky or BBC?**

A: BBC

**Q: If you could be in any other career path, which would you choose?**

A: An entrepreneur

**Q: What is your go-to comfort food after a long day?**

A: Ooh, I think probably chips.

**Q: If you could take any one book/movie/TV series with you to a desert island, what would you take?**

A: It's a bit heavyweight, but I've always loved The Shawshank Redemption.

**Q: If you could have dinner with any 3 famous people, dead or alive, who would you choose?**

A: So this guy called Erasmus—my history degree, he was a humanist. This morning another school asked me about Taylor Swift, so maybe her too.

**Disclaimer: St George's does not represent the political views of any favoured party.**



# Music to watch gulls by

Mr Finnegan picks his Georgian Island Discs playlist...

**Written by Tolu O (Y13)**

**Welcome to our very own version of Desert Island Discs. This issue, we are joined by Mr. Finnegan, the Deputy Head of Grant. He is here to share the eight tracks, one book, and one luxury item that he would take if he were stranded on a desert island...**

**Q: Welcome Mr. Finnegan. Let's dive right in. What's your first track, and why?**  
A: My first track would be On My Way by Phil Collins. It was part of the soundtrack to a Disney movie called Brother Bear. I was about seven or eight when it came out. My mum was going away on holiday and bought us the video to watch one afternoon. I've got two brothers and the story is about three brothers who fight all the time, just like we did when we were younger. It's just a very nice song that I don't listen to often but when I do it reminds me of my brothers.

**Q: Nice choice. What's your next track?**

A: I've got quite a range of songs in this selection. It goes all the way from opera to movie soundtracks and everything in between, and when I was at university, I got into house music. One song I've really been listening to recently is Roze (forgive) by Fred Again. It's a pretty cool song and I've seen him live a couple of times including on

a rooftop in London, where it wasn't really supposed to be happening. That was the first time I heard this song, so it stands out.

**Q: It's quite a diverse selection already, and we're only on track two! What's your third choice?**

A: My dad was always a massive fan of a singer called Barry White. He saw him perform at the Royal Albert Hall when he was younger. No matter the occasion, family parties, Christmas, whenever, we would always play this song, and it would never fail to get my dad onto the dance floor. When my dad's on the dance floor, everyone's having a good time, so it's wicked! The song is You're The First, The Last, The Everything. Whenever I hear it, I think of him, and it turns me into a little child again.

**Q: That's lovely. It's quite a memorable soundtrack so far.**

A: Yeah, 100 per cent! There's a lot of nostalgia and music linked to specific people and moments.

**Q: Which song has made its way to track four?**

A: We're on to opera now! It's Nessun Dorma by Pavarotti. Opera is not a genre that I'm a massive fan of, but just this one song, every time I hear it, it gives me the

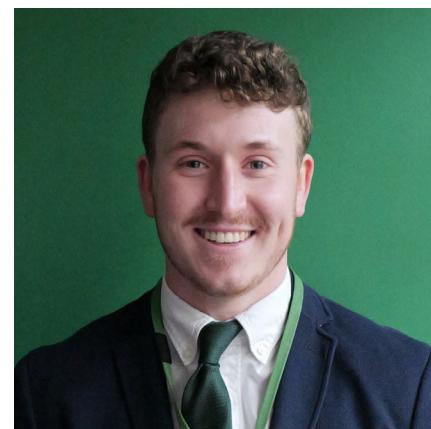
chills. Pavarotti had such a powerful voice, it's proper 'belt it out' stuff.

**Q: Great stuff. What's your fifth track?**

A: I'm a big, big movie fan. One of my favourites is Casino Royale—Daniel Craig's first one. I remember seeing it in 2006 when it first came out, and I thought, "This is so cool!" The opening titles of the Bond films have always been famous, and there's a song called You Know My Name by Chris Cornell. I absolutely love this song. It's got a poker theme, and it just works brilliantly with the movie. I know every word of it off by heart. It's one of my favourite movies and one of my favourite opening sequences, so that song definitely makes the list.

**Q: As a big lover of Bond movies, I've got to ask you what Bond character would you be...**

A: I'd love to be Q. I don't think I'm cool enough to be James Bond. Q is the guy who works behind the



scenes with all the gadgets, has all the nice cars, and the exploding watch. I think that would be quite cool.

**Q: And how about your sixth track?**

A: I'm going for Stevie Wonder son called Don't You Worry 'Bout a Thing. Again, it's another one that's very nostalgic for me. It reminds me of family, good times, and I like the main sentiment of the song – don't worry, it's going to be fine, the tough times will pass. It's very upbeat and motivating. It sounds like he's having a good time, and it's hard not to have a good time when you listen to it.

**Q: Great choice. Let's hear your penultimate track.**

A: My seventh song is from one of my favourite holidays. It was a skiing trip in my second year of university. We booked it just three days before we went. I was sitting on the sofa in my second uni house with two mates, and we just thought, "Why don't we go skiing?" I'd never been skiing before and I had no idea what I was doing, but it was one of the best times ever. One of the songs that played was Glue by Bicep. There was this moment when the sun was coming down and this song was playing. We were just going down the slopes listening to it on my friend's speaker, and I thought, "Life doesn't get much better than this."

**Q: Last but not least, what's your eighth track?**

A: I recently went to the Royal Albert Hall to see Top Gun: Maverick live in concert. I love a big orchestra, and the idea of

a massive ensemble playing is just amazing. Tom Cruise ac



tually came out and introduced the movie, which was a massive buzz. Top Gun: Maverick is one of my favourite movies, and the main theme is just fantastic – it's composed by Lorne Balfe who's one of my favourite composers. Listening to that live was unbelievable.

**Q: I'm going to have to ask you what is your all-time favourite film?**

A: Oh, now that's a big question! I think there's a different movie for every occasion—one for happy times, one for sad times, and all that sort of stuff—but one that I love for the story and the idea of it is La La Land. I love the music behind it, love the concept. It's one of those films I watch properly—it's not just on in the background. The lights are down, and I'm fully immersed



**Q: If you could take one luxury item to the island, what would it be?**

A: I love my sports, so I think on the island, I'd be able to find some sort of small coconut that I could hit with a golf club. I think I'd take a golf club to keep me entertained for a bit. I'm terrible at golf, but I'd make my own little course and that would be enjoyable.

**Q: And what book would you choose to take with you?**

A: I never used to be a reader when I was younger. To be honest, I saw it as a bit of a chore. But the older I get the nicer it is to sit in a hammock and read a book on a nice sunny day. I love that. One book I read recently, which I really, really enjoyed was Greenlights by Matthew McConaughey. I think it's a wonderful book. It's funny at times, sad at others, and teaches some valuable life lessons. He also talks absolute rubbish 90 per cent of the time, which I think is quite funny! It's a book I find myself re-reading all the time.

**Q: Thank you, Mr Finnegan! So you would take, the tracks: 'On My Way', 'Roze', 'You're The First, The Last, The Everything', 'You Know My Name', 'Dont You Worry 'Bout A Thing,' 'Glue', and the 'Top Gun: Maverick main theme', as well as a golf club, and the book 'Greenlights'. I wonder what our readers would choose?**

**'Tune' in next issue as we reveal the tracks and treats selected by another member of St George's staff.'**

# You CAN argue with that

## Our debating supremo and six of his charges discuss the joys of debating

**Written by Milly M (Y13)**

Midway through our annual house debating competition, I caught up with Mr Ellis and 'the Super Six', Cailin Earley, Charlotte Vos, Clara Annecchiarico, Freya Williams, Emilie Zilliox and Sophie Crisford to talk about all things debating...

**Q: Out of everyone in your year group, who would you least like to debate against?**

A: CE: Emilie because we get extremely competitive  
CV: Emilie we know each other's styles  
CA: Charlotte  
FW: Clara, we're often paired together  
EZ: Cailin  
SC: People who haven't debated before

**Q: Which teacher would you most like to debate against?**

CA: I think I would pick Rev Warner just because I've seen his debating style before, and I'd like to have a go at refuting his points.  
SC: Mr Ford, it would be very amusing to challenge the head of the school.  
CE: I'd like to debate Mr. Ellis as we both like to walk around the stage to command the space so it would be interesting to compare our styles on the same motion.  
CV: Mr Ellis, for round two of the teachers vs students debate!  
FW: Rev Warner as I enjoy finding loopholes in his arguments and would therefore find it interesting to debate against him  
EZ: The teacher I would most want to debate is probably Mr Tookey or another senior member of staff to question some of the school rules that I and many other students don't quite agree with! I think that could be quite fun

**Q: Which teacher would you least like to debate against?**

CA: Definitely Mr Ellis! His style is a lot more confrontational than mine, so especially in a rebuttal I think I would struggle.  
SC: The teacher I would least like to debate would be the Rev because I would enjoy challenging his opinions.  
CE: Miss Norris – She is a very strong, opinionated debater (which I like, but it results in heated debates)  
CV: Mr Buckley: because of his great performance with the Rev!  
FW: Mr Buckley as his style was really good at the recent teacher vs student debate  
EZ: I would least like to debate Mr Ellis because he knows all our tricks and styles so he would already have an advantage in the debate. However, I do also think it could be a very fun challenge.

**Q: Who are you most compatible with?**

A: CE: Emilie  
CV: Emilie  
CA: Freya  
EZ: Charlotte or Cailin

**Q: Do you remember your first debate?**

A: EZ: House debating in Year 8. I was so scared I had every single word prepared, but we won!  
FW: Year 8 - I was really nervous before but we won!

**Q: What do you think your best debate performance has been so far?**

A: CE: My best and favourite debate was with Sophie and we were debating about curfews for under 16s. We had so many papers and statistics to back it up, it was the first time I've felt 100% confident that I was in the right when I was speaking.  
CV: Emilie and I did house debate last year (2024) and we had a perfect score.

**Q: Has anyone had an interesting judge?**

A: CA/FW: Last week at the rotary we were judged by the Bard of Aylesbury! He was dressed up as a pirate which was new!  
CV/EZ: At the Roundwood debate, St George's hadn't lost anything that day and Roundwood hadn't won anything. It was clear we had the upper hand, but there was some 'interesting' judging from the guest judge!

**Q: What skills has debating given you?**

A: CV: Thinking on my feet and being confident with public speaking. Both of which I think are good skills to have.  
CE: Confidence is everything. If you believe in what you're saying, the room will believe in you as well.  
EZ: I agree with having confidence, but also being eloquent in what you're saying and not saying unnecessary things. It is so important to stick to the facts and statistics you know.  
JOE: A senior teacher came to our house debate this week and was blown away by the standard. He wants to see how this can be expanded across the school!





**Q: How do you think this will help you in Sixth Form?**

A: SC: I want to apply for School/House captain, and knowing I can deliver a speech confidently and clearly gives me hope for my applications. Also being a part of the Debate Club has meant I am able to talk to people around school with confidence including staff I don't know.

CA: It has definitely set me up for interviews for the future because you'll get asked questions you haven't prepared for, but you have to utilise your knowledge you already have. This is a skill I have learnt from debating.

**Q: What would you like to achieve with debating over the next few years?**

A: CE: I'd like to 'break' in the Oxford University parliamentary debates

EZ: Spreading it down to the lower school, encouraging younger years to get involved. So many people think they're too scared to try a debate, but actually it is not as scary as it seems.

**Q: What piece of advice would you give to any new Year 7 or Year 12 who was not sure about going to Debate Club?**

A: CA: I would say that you can always just try it out, it is a lot more interesting than people expect and it genuinely helps with public speaking and forming arguments. Plus you can always go just to watch.

SC: The advice I would give to any year 7 or 12 who is reluctant to join debating is to just give it a go, even if they don't think they will be good or that it isn't their thing, because there are so many valuable skills and opportunities to learn and take from it. Though it can be scary it is also a lot of fun and you are able to work with so many different people in the school and it's such a great thing to say that you have done.

CE: You're only ever going to get better so don't worry if you think you're not good enough. Being able to argue your opinion with confidence is one of the greatest skills in life.

CV: St George's Debate Club is a safe space to try something new, even if you're unsure as to whether it will suit you.

FW: Getting started is definitely the hardest part. The feeling of winning a debate you worked hard for and overcoming your nerves outweighs the apprehension, and the opportunities you get are unmatched.

EZ: My top piece of advice for anyone would be to come to Debate Club and watch the debates going on. In this way they can watch the discussions (and maybe even participate!) and they can start to figure out their own debate style – such as walking around and using hand gestures or being loud and passionate. It all depends on the debater and I think it is a really good place to start.

**Q: What are your hopes for this group of debaters?**

A: JOE: I genuinely think this is the best group of students I have ever worked with, and I am so excited to see what you can achieve. But also like Emilie said, I am excited to see what you guys can do to help bring lower school into this. For example next term, we have been asked to go into two of the Harpenden primary schools to lead lunchtime debates, which is such a powerful thing. I have been taking you guys to competitions for a year now! You have been competing for a year and I just think the future will be sensational.

**Q: What has been your favourite moment with St. George's debating so far?**

A: JOE: I think it was definitely taking these guys and Year 13s to the Oxford Union last year, and then in the back of my mind that they will be back there debating in a couple of years' time. I think this was a real eye opener into what is achievable, and I think this was one of my favourite moments in my career at this school.

**Q: What has been your biggest achievement with school debating?**

A: JOE: With debating overall I am just so proud to see how many children are involved in debating and these guys are at the forefront. I was really into debating at school, but I stopped it in Sixth Form and this is one of my biggest regrets from my time at school.

I eventually got back into it and was captain of my debate team at university. You guys sticking with this over the next two years will be sensational. For me, seeing House debating this year, compared to three years ago, is where I have really seen a huge improvement, and it makes me really proud. It has filtered down to so many students in school and you guys have played a huge part in it.

For me, debating is the highest level skill of any – being able to formulate arguments coherently up against the clock, working with a partner and against another team and being able to think on your feet are what make debating a unique and top-level discipline.

I am so excited for the next chapter in St George's debating history, working alongside these guys and with the rest of the debating talent that we have coming through. It is going to be an exhilarating couple of years!



# 1st X Lacrosse

Grace S (C)  
Libby W (VC)  
Eliza H (VC)  
Ella B  
Lexie D  
Issy E  
Emily F  
Molly G  
Annabelle G  
Millie H  
Bea J  
Eve J  
Lucie O  
Izzy P  
Amelie S  
Georgia S  
Abi W  
Lucy Y





# There's no substitute for

## How hands-on learning takes Science at St George's to the next level

**Written by Emma L (Y12)**

Over the past term, chemistry and biology have provided crucial insights into various scientific advancements and fundamental principles in the courses that I am studying. Additionally, our Science department organized a subject evening talk, giving Year 11 students the opportunity to gain personal insights and progress updates from Year 12s; giving a better understanding of the A-level courses of Science.

Earlier this term, in order to facilitate the subject selection process of the current year 11s, different subject departments of the school organised subject fairs and talks and of course, the science department actively participated by hosting an interactive fair where the year 11s could ask how the year 12s are coping and managing with the workload and stress, and a subject evening talk where Year 12 students shared their experiences and insights with Year 11s. It was a great opportunity for the students who were unsure about their choices as it could greatly affect their future university courses. These opportunities undoubtedly supported the students in making their decisions, even if the impact seemed minor. I personally found them extremely informative and useful when I attended a year ago.

In the chemistry course I am currently studying, the class conducted a distillation experiment. While this might sound simple and unexciting at first glance, we were fortunate enough to use the Quickfit apparatus, which is

far more intricate and advanced than the usual glassware typically used in earlier years. These specialized pieces of equipment allow for a much more precise and accurate distillation process, providing us with hands-on experience that is closer to the methods used in professional laboratories. The fact that our school has access to such high-quality tools highlights the exceptional resources provided by St. George's Science department. It demonstrates the school's commitment to offering students not just theoretical knowledge, but also the opportunity to work with state-of-the-art equipment. This access to advanced technology enriches our learning experience, as it allows us to understand complex scientific concepts more deeply. In addition to visual learning, the practicals help solidify our understanding by engaging us directly with the material. It's these kinds of experiences that make the learning process more interactive and memorable, ensuring that we are better equipped to apply our knowledge in real-world situations.

Similarly in biology, many people often find plant biology less interesting compared to other aspects of the course. However, when it comes to the genome-related topics, they truly spark my interest. The intricate processes of DNA replication, gene expression, and genetic mutations are fascinating. These topics connect to real-world applications, such as genetic engineering, medicine, and even the potential to cure genetic disorders. Understanding how genomes work opens up a world of possibilities in biotechnology and personalized medicine, which are some of the most exciting and rapidly advancing fields today. I was fortunate enough to handle biotechnology apparatus during a simplified Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) experiment. This is a widely used technique in molecular biology, particularly in diagnostics and research. The opportunity to work with such advanced equipment allowed me to experience first-hand how ELISA is used to detect and quantify substances



# experience

like proteins, hormones, and antibodies. Having access to this specialized apparatus at such an early stage of my education gave me a glimpse into the cutting-edge techniques employed in both scientific research and medical diagnostics. These practical experiences have certainly helped me a lot when it comes to writing methods and encouraging my problem solving skills in the process of it. Furthermore, it helps me visualise complicated processes including the ELISA test.

In real-life situations, the ELISA test is most commonly used for HIV testing. HIV is a sexually transmitted virus that, once it enters the body, remains irreversible. This virus can also be transmitted from a mother to her offspring during pregnancy, childbirth, or breastfeeding, making early detection and treatment critical. This led me to think about the potential of genome editing in the context of such diseases. Genome editing technologies, such as Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR), offer the possibility of correcting genetic mutations at the DNA level, and could potentially be used to treat ge-

netic diseases, including sickle cell disease, or cystic fibrosis. While still in its early stages, the idea of using genome editing to target and remove the virus or to prevent transmission from mother to child raises exciting possibilities for the future of medicine. The ethical implications and challenges surrounding genome editing are vast, but the potential for transformative treatments could revolutionise how we approach viral infections and inherited genetic conditions. This could potentially change the quality of life of some people by increasing the life expectancy and reducing the chance of individuals inheriting genetic disorders. This revolutionary approach to medicine could reshape healthcare, leading to more personalized, preventative treatments and ultimately improving the overall well-being of individuals around the world.

Over the past few weeks, conducting experiments has allowed me to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. It has enabled me to begin researching topics that I am passionate about, further deepening my understanding and sparking new areas of interest.



# The benefits of Drama

Taking to the stage is a great way to have fun, build confidence and develop a whole range of skills

**Written by Áine W (Y8)**



Drama is an art that is widely practiced and shared around the globe. There are multiple reasons why getting involved with drama can impact you thoroughly, inside and outside of St George's.

Most importantly, confidence. Public speaking is a very common fear, with 75% of people around the world suffering from it — many of them being young people. Performing in front of an audience helps you get used to speaking in public, which can reduce anxiety and boost your self-assurance. Facing fear can aid you in building resilience. Each successful performance can lessen the fear and increase confidence for future endeavours. Growing up, I was very reserved and shy. Until I acquired my love for performing. I don't

know where I would be today without Drama. Being part of a cast or 'team' creates a supportive environment, positively impacting your mental health, teamwork and collaboration. Teamwork is one of the largest components of Performance. A respected online poll from 2023 shows that 67% of people said teamwork is one of the most important pillars of life, as you will always be with people and need to learn how to work with people from all walks of life. It helps broaden your understanding and gain insight into different viewpoints, cultures, and backgrounds. Theatre also encourages you to explore lots of different characters. This aspect of theatre can lead to personal insights and life-changing self-discovery. Through playing different

roles and characters, you can further discover different aspects of yourself that you never knew were there. For example, trying out new personalities and views on life in a character, or even things as simple as finding out that you suit green hair. This fosters personal growth, self-discovery and a deeper understanding of your own identity.

Overall, taking part in drama classes both inside and outside of St George's can significantly improve your confidence, teamwork, skills, and open up many opportunities for self-discovery and many other aspects of life. Drama helps you grow as an individual in a variety of ways, and encourage you to release your full potential.



# Maths in the wider world

Far from being a dry, academic subject, Mathematics couldn't be more relevant to everyday life

**Written by Abi M (Y12)**

Mathematics is often seen as a subject confined to textbooks and classrooms, but in reality, it's much more than that. From the patterns we see in nature to the technology that powers our daily lives, Maths plays a key role in shaping the world around us.

One of the most awe-inspiring aspects of Mathematics is the way it shows up in nature. Take the Fibonacci sequence, for example. This simple mathematical pattern, where each number is the sum of the two preceding ones, appears in so many places in nature, like the spiral arrangement of leaves on a stem, the pattern of seeds in a sunflower, or the shells of snails. It's incredible to think that such a simple sequence underpins so much of the natural world.

Mathematics isn't just something we learn for exams - it's a powerful tool used in many fields to solve real-world problems. Game theory, for instance, uses mathematical models to understand decision-making and strategy, helping everything from businesses to governments make better choices. In the world of Computer Science, Maths is at the core of algorithms that power everything from social media platforms to video games.



Even in everyday situations, Maths is everywhere. Whether we're calculating a discount while shopping or figuring out how much time it will take to travel somewhere, we rely on Maths daily. With the rise of Cryptography, Mathematics is playing a central role in keeping our personal data safe online, ensuring that the passwords we use are secure.

Maths often gets a bad reputation for being difficult or dry, but a recent trip to MathsFest for our A-Level Maths students proved that there's so much more to the subject than numbers on a page. Held annually in the UK, MathsFest is a celebration of all things mathematical: an event where students and teachers alike can dive deep into the wonders of Maths, explore its connections to the real world, and even have a bit of fun along the way. This

year, a group of our A-Level maths students had the incredible opportunity to attend, with one Year 12 maths student saying "it was really interesting listening to how passionate the speakers were about maths and it encouraged me to learn more about their research". Upon arriving at the event, we were immediately immersed in a world of interactive exhibits, engaging talks, and mind-bending puzzles. Throughout the day, it became clear how heavily Maths influences the things around us from crowd control at festivals to arcade games, without us even knowing.

For some, Maths can be intimidating; however, one of the most important lessons we've learned is that it isn't something to fear. It's a subject that rewards persistence, curiosity, and a willingness to learn.

# Now you're talking my language

## Why English is a brilliant subject

### *Written by Lexi K (Y13)*



English serves as a vital and enriching subject that offers a profound sense of creativity and is taught phenomenally here at St George's.

#### ***Studying English A-Level***

The A level English Literature course is not only extremely captivating but also provides a reference point from which to reflect on the current world we are living in. For example, when studying John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi tackles many themes pertinent to modern society, A-Level students enjoy Webster's presentation of a powerful female heroine who denies patriarchal control in a

17th century society. Webster's ability to present such a powerful woman in a restrictive world is remarkable and he was undoubtedly ahead of his time. The class discussions on the text are so captivating and exciting! The relevance of Webster's text is to today's where we have seen numerous women torn down by societal pressures.

Another of our A-Level texts is The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead, which focuses on the narrative of an enslaved woman who defies multiple conventions in a 19th century American

society. The novel is highly

significant both historically and in the current world due to the continued prevalence of racial discrimination. The Underground Railroad was a network of people, both African-American and White, offering aid and help to people in the American South to escape slavery. Most enslaved people helped by the Underground Railroad escaped border states such as Kentucky, Virginia and Maryland. Whitehead's use of magical realism and speculative fantasy throughout the novel is remarkable in its ability to symbolise the parallels between racial oppression historically and the oppression which continues in the current world. The English department is fabulous in providing such creative and amazing opportunities that make the subject so enjoyable for so many students here at St George's.

#### ***Studying English GCSE***

The GCSE English Literature course features a range of texts which resonate with our world today. For example, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet which portrays the clear affirmation of the power of love over hate, providing a timeless theme and universal appeal. This text offers a range of opportunities for GCSE students and is extremely captivating to study,

offering a variety of ideas and creative discussion! Another extremely interesting text studied at GCSE level is *An Inspector Calls* by J.B. Priestley. Set in 1912 but written in 1945, class is arguably the most important theme in the play. Priestley's message is one that remains relevant today. The idea permeated throughout the text is that everyone has a duty to society and it will collapse if that duty is not honoured. The play is set before both world wars and at a time when the British Empire was still a force to be reckoned with internationally. Therefore it is repre-

sentative of a changing society and the issues associated with class divisions.

### **Other opportunities**

Alongside the opportunities English offers through studying the subject, there are several opportunities outside of the classroom! Last term the Year 12 and Year 13 were lucky enough to watch a production of *The Duchess of Malfi* at the Trafalgar theatre. The production, directed by award-winning Zinnie Harris starring actress Jodie Whittaker, who was described by the Evening Standard as "packed

with passion and grandeur". The Times described the production as 'acutely right for our times' through its large focus on the depths of the patriarchy against female resistance. Other opportunities include the House Creative Writing event and the Creative Writing Club which takes place every Monday lunchtime.

Overall, English has provided so many opportunities over the last term and continues to be the most phenomenal subject to study and enjoy!



# Creative genius

## This year's House Creative Writing winner

Create a piece of writing inspired by any part of quote below, with a maximum of 500 words.

“And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

**Mark 16:17-1**

Winning entry:

**Mel B, Year 9 Grant**

Staggering, retching, Langdon clutched his pounding head as he collapsed. Everything was dirty, corrupted, mud dragging him down. Never letting him free. His heartbeat was too loud. Bullets ripped through the air, but the scene was tinged with red. When he brought his hand to his face, it was wet and stained. This was it, he thought. There was no coming back from this; the realisation settled in his blood. The horrors had been dragged to another field (if they could be called fields, these graveyards of mud, blood and fallen bodies). It was just him, and the distant lull of battle, drowned by the pulse that screamed in his ears.

Distantly, he became aware of another man approaching. After a few moments, his vision focused, then tunnelled, as a face shone out from the hellish panorama.

“Lis...Lister?” he slurred, blood trickling into his mouth.

“Langdon?” the arrival responded, his crisp accent cutting through the haze of the invalid’s pain like gunshot through silence. “Come on, pal, time to get you back to the trenches.” But his body refused to submit to his brain’s feeble demands to rise. Surely it would be easier to stay lying down? To give up? He had a brother waiting for him. Maybe he would see him again. Maybe then the pain would fi-

nally cease. Why was he still suffering? When would it all be over?

“Lang.” the voice repeated, firmer and louder this time. Closer. Langdon felt calloused hands seize his shoulders and haul him upright, even as his head dropped further. But the older man’s touch flickered tongues of warmth through Langdon’s chest, reminding his heart to keep beating. His eyelids fluttered open – even the tiniest movement heartwrenching torture – and there was Lister, his beautiful, terrified face reminding Landon’s heart what to keep beating for.

“Li-” he choked, his own vomit lodged in his throat, blood still sputtering from his lip, bitter mixing with sharp. No poison could possibly taste worse. But he sucked on bitter, drew on sharp. It was how he had grown up, how he endured pain. Langdon had to keep fighting or he would fall. And oh, how far he had fallen.

A gentle hand brushed across his cheek, a tenderness he hadn’t known since his brother. “I’m here. I’m here.” the older man repeated like a mantra, like it would save him, cradling his comrade’s broken form. “It’s going to be okay. You’re going to be okay. Je t’aime...”

That triggered the ghost of a smile, Langdon’s face too exhausted to commit to anything greater. Lister’s heart shattered, each fragment shrapnel from a mine. He held Langdon’s wrist with one hand, the other carding through his hair, matted with blood. He held a faltering star in his arms. A universe. All he’d ever longed for, the home he had finally found. The light in Langdon’s eyes guttered out. Lister hadn’t known such a light could be extinguished, yet here they were. A sun weeping over a fallen star.



# St George's: a community of faith

## Christianity is at the heart of school life

**Written by Phoebe N-D (Y12)**

### **1 John 4:8 - 'God is love'**

This simple statement unifies us, not only as a school but also as a Christian community where we aim to demonstrate to one another the love that God shows for mankind through a range of both formal and informal activities centred around the existence of one building: the Chapel.

### **Prayer Meetings**

Every Tuesday and Thursday morning at 8 am, students of all ages across the school are granted the opportunity to come together for a time of peaceful prayer in the Chapel. Each person can put forward a topic of prayer and it is written down in a notebook. Once all prayer requests are in, that's when the fun begins! We bow our heads in reverence and pray together. You can pray aloud for all ears to hear and agree, or you can pray alone in your head - sharing your thoughts to God's ears only. Whatever form of prayer suits you, pour it all out to God and feel the peace that "surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Attending these meetings can be a great way to start your day positively and experience a unique sense of community in the company of fellow students

### **House Chapel**

From Monday to Thursday, the Chapel's numerous doors welcome the students from across the school for one

key reason: House Chapel! Starting at tutor base, each student - from their designated House - makes their way towards the Chapel and are seated according to year group. They sit in silence, awaiting and anticipating the message they are to receive from the Reverend Warner. House Chapel embodies the idea of St George's as both a learning environment and a Christian community, engaging the members of each House through hymns and scripture readings extracted from the Bible.

### **Chapel: Your Place of Worship**

Not only are the Chapel's doors open for House Chapel and morning prayer; they are open for you too! Need a moment away to pray? Head down to the Chapel in your free time and spend time focusing on you and your faith.

### **Christianity at St George's**

The Chapel is a building that encapsulates a Christian community in many of its aspects [not entirely sure this first clause means] - especially the Christian Union that is led by Rev. Warner. The Union gathers every Thursday at lunchtime from 1:30 pm and spends time reflecting on and embracing God's words and the teachings of Jesus Christ and his parables. Members have described the Union to have had a positive impact on both them and their relationship with Jesus.

Another aspect of the Chapel which embodies what it means to be a Christian community is the newly introduced student-led Bible Study Club, which was formed in December 2024 and currently takes place in the vestry in the Chapel every Wednesday at lunchtime from 1:40 pm. In Bible Study Club, we strive to gain a deeper understanding of the word of God and answers to why certain things are the way they are through the study of scripture. I'm the leader of the club, so if you're interested in joining or have any questions, feel free to ask!

### **Sunday Service**

Whilst the Chapel primarily serves the St George's community, it is also open to the public for a lovely service every Sunday, where a sermon is preached and hymns are sung, beautifully embodying the togetherness of a Christian community that is drawn together at the end of each week.

### **Events**

Furthermore, the Chapel is also open to the public when hosting special events such as the annual Carol Service that tests the senior choir's vocal range but most importantly spreads the warmth, love and togetherness of a Christian Christmas.



# Music to our ears

We spoke to Mr Burrett about Music at St George's and his love for the subject

**Written by Freddie C (Y12)**

## ***Where did your journey with music begin?***

I was surrounded by musicians as a child as my parents both play instruments and my first experience with an instrument was picking up a violin that my dad had brought home, I think, to repair. I gave that a go and made a relatively decent sound on it for someone who had never touched it before and my parents said that was something to pursue. I also joined a choir shortly after that, so that's where it all began for me. I was about 6.

## ***Being an OG, how has the music department developed since your time here as a sixth form student?***

Well it's the same building and a lot of the same ensembles, things like the Chamber choir, Jazz band, Senior choir, all of those sorts of things were still there. I think the music department caters better to classical musicians now than it did then - there wasn't an official Concert Orchestra in my time, the

way there is now, with a lot of fabulous string players and things like that, so I think extracurricular-wise that's been the main change since I was a student here.

## ***Beyond teaching music lessons, what does being a music teacher at St. Georges mean to you?***

To me it means a lot - you're trying to teach music not just as an academic subject, but as a potential career path or as a lifelong hobby, an inspiration for people to get involved in things, to express themselves.

There's a lot of people who want to do music for all of those different reasons and more, so you have to be aware of what different people want to get out of music in school and try and cater to all of them, so that's what it means to me.

## ***What's your favourite part about your job?***

Working with the students. Young musicians, in my experience, are far

more entertaining, enthusiastic, willing to just try anything regardless of difficulty, than a lot of adult musicians I've worked with. The enthusiasm that they bring both to their lessons and to the rehearsals is really really infectious and I love that part.

## ***Do you have any advice for young musicians looking to become more involved with music at St. Georges?***

Yes - present yourselves! One of the reasons we've now got this amazing orchestra is that we build a lot of our extracurricular provision around the students that we have.

Things like the boys choir have been running for the last few years because we had a great group of boys arrive in year 7 who really wanted to do something. Or even when I was here as a student there used to be a ukulele choir - very En Vogue at the time - because students wanted

to do that. Whatever your instrument is, whatever genre of music you are interested in or like to play, anything like that, let it be known and we will build something for you and get you involved.

***As a long-time performer and multi-instrumentalist, what are some highlights of your musical career?***

I'll do one from outside of school and one within because as a musician the work you do in a school, teaching music, is part of your journey as a musician and you stretch and challenge yourself in different ways. I think the highlight of my career, personally, would be a performance I did for the late Queen, when I was still a student at St. Georges with a fantastic youth jazz band I was in at the time, which was definitely a highlight, one that sticks out as a very very cool day, performing solos in front of Her Majesty. Within the school, I think the greatest achievement of the last few years was the orchestra's performance of 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' about a year ago at the Spring concert, which was a piece they worked on for six months. We had whole rehearsal days dedicated to it and it was a

very challenging conducting performance. For me as well it tested my musical abilities, which is what I really enjoy, so that was another massive highlight as an achievement I think.

***On the other hand, are there any moments you found challenging as a musician and/or teacher?***

I think everyone found the pandemic challenging for different reasons. One of the challenges with that is rebuilding afterwards; you go into lockdown, you come out of lockdown, you're finally able to do extracurricular again, and it's finding all of the people, reigniting that enthusiasm in them and making them want to get involved. This wasn't just a St. George's problem, this was a national problem, not just with young musicians, but adult musicians too. It was difficult to get people to want to come together

again. Trying to reignite that fire in people was the most challenging after-effect of Covid as a musician.

***Last question - potentially the most important - what music do you enjoy listening to in your spare time?***

I get this question a lot. I listen to a lot of different things depending on what mood I'm in. I'm known as a 'jazz specialist', so there's a lot of Jazz in my various playlists, but I'm also a choir singer so there's some sacred choral music for churches, but some of its secular and more popular things like that. It can be film music; pretty much you can find a style of music and I'll enjoy a song from it. There are bits of jazz I really can't stand either, so I listen to quite a wide collection of things, and I'm always looking for something else to listen to and enjoy.



# 1st XV Rugby

Dan P (C)  
Marcus T (VC)  
Matthew A  
Edward A  
Sam B  
Ivor D  
Findlay D  
Ife E  
Julian E  
Max G  
Seamus H  
Zach H  
Harry H  
Freddie J  
Rob L  
Archie M  
Eddie M  
Ronan O  
Patrick P  
George P  
Harry P  
Bertie S  
Timi W  
Yousha Z





# First past the Facebook post?

## We examine the complex relationship between social media, celebrities and politics

**Written by Skye B (Y12)**

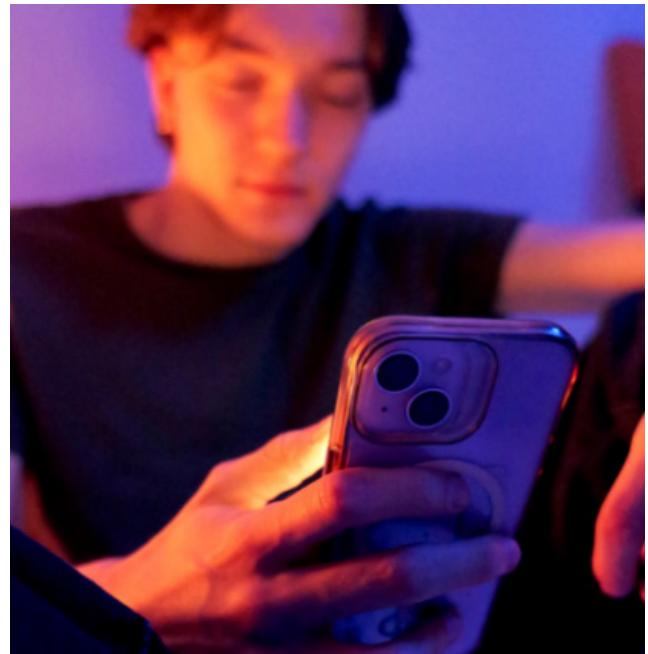
The rise of social media has significantly transformed the political landscape by making it more accessible, enabling widespread awareness, and allowing politicians to engage directly with voters. However, the same platforms that foster connection and awareness also create echo chambers, where algorithms amplify certain posts- often favoring sensational content or misinformation. This unchecked spread of false information can influence voter behaviour, particularly amongst younger demographics and shape perceptions and decisions.

While social media platforms have the potential to spark interest and encourage deeper political research, they instead validate existing biases creating echo chambers. This phenomenon is particularly prominent on X, where misinformation is frequently amplified. In fact, in 2023, European Commissioner Věra Jourová called for Elon Musk to comply with the Digital Services Act and stated, “X . . . is the platform with the largest ratio of mis/disinformation, followed by Facebook.”

Even prior to Musk’s acquisition of Twitter in 2022, the platform was already a hotspot for fake news. A 2018 study by three MIT researchers revealed that fake news stories were 70% more likely to be retweeted than factual ones.

It can be argued that misinformation is much more readily accepted, particularly due to Musk’s revamped blue-check verification system, which allows users to purchase verification. This has resulted in an increase in fake and impersonator accounts.

While social media offers individuals the opportunity to expand their political awareness and develop independent opinions outside of their domestic and social circles, the prevalence of false news, coupled with algorithms that push divisive content and political extremism, has deepened the polarization in our political landscape.



Social media has also given influencers, celebrities, politicians, journalists, royals and high-profile figures a platform to shape political discourse, amplifying their reach and impact on public opinion like never before. While this enables celebrities to raise awareness about issues important to them and highlight current events, it can also lead to the blind acceptance of an idolized celebrity’s views, creating uninformed influence over politics. Celebrities have been involved in politics for decades, such as Noel Gallagher’s endorsement of Tony Blair in 1997 and Muhammad Ali’s public protests against the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 70s. However, social media has dramatically amplified their presence and impact on political discourse.

During the US 2024 election, Kamala Harris utilised celebrity influence in her campaign. High-profile figures such as Beyoncé, who appeared at Harris’ Houston rally. This played a pivotal role in gaining voter support. However, their online actions arguably had a greater impact, engaging the Democrats’ key demographic of young, female, and Black voters. Videos and posts of the Houston rally gained enormous traction on social media, intensifying its reach far

beyond what it might have achieved otherwise. Additionally, Oprah Winfrey's virtual rally with Harris drew over 300,000 viewers on YouTube alone, demonstrating the power of celebrity-backed digital events.

Another influential figure in the election was Taylor Swift, known for her previous political engagement during the 2018 midterm and 2020 elections. Within 24 hours of Swift endorsing Harris on Instagram, over 400,000 individuals visited the U.S. voter-information site (vote.gov), highlighting her ability to mobilize voters. This shows how celebrities have considerable influence over their large, impressionable fan bases, many of whom are deeply loyal to their role models.

Harris's reliance on celebrity culture has drawn criticism, particularly from Conservatives. Notably, Donald Trump posted on his platform, Truth Social, "I HATE TAYLOR SWIFT!" just days after her endorsement of Harris. However, right-leaning celebrities and public figures have also played significant roles for the Republican Party, showcasing that celebrity influence transcends party lines. After Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter in 2022, Andrew Tate's account was reinstated, leading to a significant increase in his popularity across various platforms. However, he has since been banned from Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok for violating their policies. Figures like Tate, Musk, and Logan Paul played a significant role in mobilizing the 'bro vote' during the 2024 U.S. election, exerting substantial influence on the younger male demographic. In June 2024, Nigel Farage remarked, "Tate was a very important voice for an emasculated...", highlighting how right-wing influencers can more effectively engage certain demographics than traditional politicians.

While a YouGov poll indicates that only 9% of Britons support celebrity involvement in politics, certain influential figures have been commended for their influence. In 2020, footballer Marcus Rashford successfully campaigned for the government to extend free school meals during the summer break, benefiting over one million children in England which demonstrates how celebrities can use their platforms to advocate for significant social and policy changes, effectively mobilizing public support and influencing government decisions.



Social media has become a powerful tool in modern politics, enabling direct engagement between politicians and the public, this allows for rapid spreading of misinformation, a larger platform for hateful and extreme opinions and allows for people who have more conservative views to express views. However, this influence can be dangerous, as powerful figures like celebrities may promote extreme ideas through glamour and endorsements, adding to the spread of misinformation and division.



# Cool it!

## How can students and staff at St George's combat climate change?

**Written by Sebastian L (Y9) & Timothy C (Y9)**

Every year, the effects of climate change become more apparent – rising temperatures, devastating wildfires, and unprecedented flooding are just a few examples of the crisis we face. In 2024, the UN's latest report warned that time is running out to meet the global climate goals.



Climate change refers to long-term shifts in the Earth's climate, often driven by rising atmospheric temperatures, while global warming specifically describes the gradual increase in the Earth's average surface temperature. Both issues increase in severity each year, affecting the world around us in ways that can often feel distant, but stories of wildfires in California or flash floods in Africa underline the severity of an issue that is likely to directly affect more and more of the world's population.



Climate change is clearly a significant issue but what role can our community and St George's actually play in addressing these challenges? We asked Head of Humanities Mr Williams to explain what can be done on a local level, in Harpenden and within the St George's community.

"We can all make a difference, even with small changes in our lives. From doing 'Meat-Free Mondays' to turning down the heating by three degrees when we sleep or turning it off entirely during holidays, these small actions reduce personal carbon emissions. Instead of turning up the heat, consider wearing more insulating layers – these changes might seem minor but can have a big impact."



Mr Williams also believes that studying geography provides invaluable insight for St George's pupils. "Geography is a varied subject but when it comes to the topic of climate change, it provides education on environmental impacts and the methods we can use to reduce them."



Mr Williams

# Doing it for the kids

A look at the incredible work at Great Ormond Street Hospital and the GOSH Charity

**Written by Zara L (Y12)**

Great Ormond Street Hospital is one of the most renowned children's hospitals in the world, located in the Bloomsbury area of the London Borough of Camden. Founded in 1852, by Charles West, it was one of the first hospitals to dedicate its care specifically to children.

Since then, it has played a significant role in the history of paediatric medicine and in offering care to many children and families. Indeed, I have personal experience of the extraordinary work undertaken at GOSH, having seen the hospital play a significant role in saving the life of my cousin who required treatment for Nephrotic Syndrome, a kidney disorder that causes the body to pass too much protein in the urine. The symptoms consist of pain in your abdomen, swelling in your legs and ankles, fatigue and loss of appetite.

The hospital boasts a range of unique facilities and services – specialised care for a wide

range of medical issues, including bespoke wards and departments tailored to a child's needs, accommodation services for parents and loved ones to allow them to stay close to their child during difficult times, and the Zayed Centre for Research, which is devoted to advancing medical innovation.

There have been many notable achievements at GOSH, including: it was the first hospital to use X-rays on children; significant gene therapy research for combined immunodeficiency; it performed the first bone marrow transplant; many successful heart surgeries performed.

The GOSH Charity supports the hospital through funding, so that it can have cutting-edge facilities to save children's lives that go beyond what the NHS can offer.

*For more information on Great Ormond Street Hospital and the GOSH Charity visit [www.gosh.org](http://www.gosh.org)*



**GREAT  
ORMOND  
STREET  
HOSPITAL  
CHARITY**

# 1st VII Netball

Ellen M (C)  
Lottie H (VC)  
Ella B  
Mikaela D  
Issy E  
Molly G  
Chibugom I  
Milly M  
Grace S  
Lucy Y





# Aiming Higher: A Georgian

## A simple motto is the driving force behind a culture

### **Written by Elodie Cowan (Old Georgian 2015-2022)**

Any mention of the word “aim” may cause many of you to think of darts sensation Luke Littler. Others may be reminded of their Harpo-style Boxing Day shoot. But for a Georgian—past or present—‘aiming higher’ takes on a much deeper meaning.

From the moment a student steps into the Chapel on their first day, “Aim Higher” becomes more than just a motto; it becomes a way of life. This value, instilled in every aspect of every students’ experience, translates into a lifetime of purpose.

Harpenden, the town ranked by Savills as the most desirable place to live in the UK in 2023, is known for its affluence and ambition. The environment of the town breeds pressure to excel. Whether at a coffee morning or a parents’ evening, comparison and competition can be a common thread of conversation. Who received the best results in the class? How many hours of tutoring does your child have? Did your son make the starting lineup on Saturday?

For students, this culture can feel extremely overwhelming, even detrimental, during one of the most formative periods of their lives. However, when approached with balance and perspective, the ethos of “Aim Higher” serves as a guiding light. It encourages students to push themselves and support one another, fostering growth and unity. By tuning out the noise of comparison, Georgians learn to embrace challenges, strive for personal development, and cultivate the empathy and resilience that define the school as a community.

Looking back, my friends and I were swept along by a culture of competition, often driven by well-meaning, proud parents. Over time, we began to notice how subtle comparisons crept into their conversations. During lockdown, when we had had the time to reflect, we recognised the futility of these dynamics.



Together, we chose to focus on, and celebrate, each other’s strengths. Letting go of unspoken competition not only strengthened our friendships, but also intensified our supportive dynamic.

To outsiders, St George’s school is just a school when, in reality, it is so much more: a vibrant, lifelong community rooted in the wonder and curiosity of young people. It offers a breadth of opportunities in academics, sports, music, and extracurricular activities, alongside intense, meaningful friendships that endure far beyond the years spent together at school. Thriving in this environment means building these relationships, celebrating one another, and letting go of preconceptions—pushing each other to ‘aim a little higher’ in the process.

One memory that stands out to me was during a challenging time in my final year. Academic pressure (largely self-inflicted) and my drive to excel in all areas—conducting the choir, supporting my lacrosse team—really

# Journey

## of aspiration that underpins life at St George's



took a toll. Perspective is key. These events, which at the time felt all-consuming, were so incredibly rewarding. However, the constant worry about things I couldn't control or that hadn't even happened meant that I didn't fully enjoy those moments. I will always remember when a younger student approached me and thanked me for all my work during house music. That small act reminded me that "aiming higher" was not about grades or winning—it's about making an effort and creating an environment where everyone feels valued. It may sound cheesy, but these friendships and shared experiences become a source of strength and support. After surviving the hurdle of the awkward school days, they evolve into something that will last a lifetime.

"Aim Higher" also extends beyond individual ambitions, encouraging students to reflect on their place in the community and how they may be able to give back. While the 'Harpden bubble' can feel intense at times, it also instills gratitude and responsibility, teaching us how to use our privilege responsibly. From my friends'

experiences and my own, the transition to university life for us was relatively smooth because of the foundations built at St George's. Of course, it wasn't without its challenges, but the values implanted at school helped us to adapt more quickly than others. Mr Ede, my Head of House during my later years, often spoke about empathy and resilience. My best friend and I still joke today about how much he "banged on" about it, but the truth is, it has stuck. Even now, we think about how to apply those lessons in our everyday lives.

For alumni and current students alike, St George's is more than just an academic institution; it is a transformative experience. By embracing the school's values and ethos with balance and perspective, Georgians thrive in the present and lay the foundations for future success. Central to this experience are the people you meet along the way. This community, nurtured within the school, becomes a lifelong source of support. So, whether you have just started at St George's or this is your last term wearing the blazer, remember to aim higher—not in competition with others, but as a way to bring out the best in yourself and those around you.









AIM HIGHER