

# THE GEORGIAN

## WORTH A PUNT

*A Cambridge Admissions Co-ordinator explains why  
MORE people should consider applying*

## SEB JOHNSON: CHAMPION MANAGER

*How one St George's student took FPL by storm*



## FAREWELL MISS FOSTER

*The departing PE teacher reflects on her time as a Georgian and the 2025  
Lacrosse and Rugby tour*

# SPECIAL THANKS THE GEORGIAN 2025 TEAM

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## THANKS

It has been wonderful to work with such a talented team on this edition of The Georgian. Seeing students from across year groups collaborate to bring this issue to life has been so inspiring. We're so proud of what we've produced, and thrilled to finally share it. We look forward to some new Year 12s joining the team for our next edition! Thank you to the editorial team for keeping organised. The success of the previous edition set a high bar, but you've all approached this process with enthusiasm, and it's been a real pleasure to work alongside you. To the writers, we cannot thank you all enough for producing such a fantastic selection of articles (so many that we couldn't even fit them all in!) It's been such a privilege to read your submissions and see you all get involved. The Georgian aims to encourage writing, reading, and the Georgian Spirit amongst students, and you have all risen to the challenge beautifully. Thank you as well to the commercial team for distributing both this and the previous issue within the school and local community. Special thanks go to the design team, who tackled the challenges of learning new software and the time crunch towards the release date with grace and determination. The magazine looks incredible thanks to your hard work and perseverance. Finally, we owe a huge thank-you to our adult leadership team for making this project possible. Sam Stow generously proofread several articles and offered invaluable feedback and encouragement, always helping us steer in the right direction. Mr Ellis's constant support, encouragement and infectious enthusiasm have shaped this magazine from start to finish. We're also so grateful for his help in securing funding from the Cecil Grant Trust, which enabled us to use the design package that brought The Georgian to life.

We couldn't have done this without every one of you. Thank you all for making this such a rewarding and inspiring experience!

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# CAMBRIDGE ISN'T FOR EVERYONE, BUT

Mr Ellis and Hanalei Swain met with Gonville and Caius Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach Coordinator, Bethan Holloway-Strong, to discuss life at Cambridge and her top tips for the application process that deters many capable students from applying.



**HS: What would you say to people who feel as if being accepted into Cambridge is unattainable and there's no point in applying?**

Firstly, the odds of getting into Cambridge might be better than you think; on average, one in six applicants is successful. When I speak to students, they're quite surprised at that statistic. You could be one of those, and the only way to find out is to put in your application and see whether you're successful. Another thing that I would say is that the only way to find out if you're good enough for Cambridge, if you are predicted the minimum typical offer, is to apply, and that is still the main reason capable students don't get into Oxford and Cambridge. They select themselves out because they believe it's unattainable. There are loads of capable students out there who have a good chance of getting to Cambridge, but self-doubt stops them from putting their application in... If you're predicted at least the

minimum offer and taking the required subjects, then there's absolutely no reason why you can't be that one in six.

**JOE: Could you give us maybe two or three top tips on what you guys are looking for from a potential Cambridge student?**

Beyond the basics, such as being predicted the minimum typical offer and taking the required or highly recommended subjects, successful applicants are those who have explored their subject beyond the curriculum. That's what we call super-curricular activities, which are the key to making a strong application to Cambridge. They've reflected on the activities they've done: maybe some reading, a video they've watched, or a lecture. They've questioned it and they've linked it to the things that they already know; that's what we see in the best applicants to Cambridge. My number one top tip would be to do the super-curriculars, keep a record of them and make sure that you're engaging with them. The second one would be to do with interviews. I think a lot of students find the interview a very daunting part of the application process, and I think this is because it isn't something that we really practise all that much at A-Level or equivalent; a lot of our exams are completely written. You don't spend any time speaking or listening. A top tip is to practise talking out loud about your subject and thinking aloud. In the interview, you're going to be

specialists in the field.

They're going to ask you to do a maths problem or read a poem in front of you; therefore, you should practise literally thinking out loud, narrating your thoughts, and making sure that you can be heard in the interview.

**HS: How important are GCSE results when it comes to a chance of being accepted?**

We do look at GCSEs for Cambridge, and they do form a part of our academic assessment. But when we assess applications, we look at every single part of the application, so not just GCSEs but also your personal statement, your teacher reference, your predicted A-Level grades, your performance in any admissions tests or any interviews. Everything that we have, we look at, and GCSEs are part of that. Yes, they are important and we look at them, but we don't have specific cut-offs, and we always look at them in the context of the school in which you achieved them. What I will say about GCSE grades, though, is that there's a majority of successful Cambridge students who do have a good number of eights and nines; there's a significant minority who have eights, sevens, sixes, and then there's a minority who have all sevens and below. That is on average, but as I say, they're just one part of our assessment of the application; they are not more important than any other part.

# IT CAN BE FOR ANYONE

Written by Hanalei S (Y13), Ms Bethan Holloway-Strong

## HS: How would you recommend preparing for the all-important interview?

Beyond practising thinking out loud, I would just expose yourself to as much unseen material as you can. It's pretty much guaranteed that your interview is going to involve something that you will have never seen before. That's kind of the whole point of the Oxbridge interviews. They're meant to replicate the supervision or tutorial system, where you are going to be exploring things that you have not learned before. So that everyone is on an even footing, everybody's in the same boat. If you're interested in Maths or the Sciences, maybe try problems that would be on the end of the specification, or go to websites like 'Isaac Physics' or 'I Want To Study Engineering' and try some of those. If you're interested in the Humanities, maybe read some texts that you haven't read before at A-level- that might be poems, or texts in another language, or legal documents. Essentially, just try to expose yourself to these kinds of things so that you get used to the feeling of not knowing what's going on, as it will definitely be a feeling that most students will experience in the interview.

## HS: How would you describe a day in the life of a Cambridge student?

It really does differ so much depending on what you're studying, but I think most students would agree that the main difference between sixth form and university is that you have so much more

time that you can make your own. There's nobody telling you where to go, and what to do at what time. You might have a few supervisions booked in, a few lectures that you want to go to, but there's a lot of time you'll be structuring yourself – that may involve preparing essays or problem sheets for supervisions, doing some extra reading, maybe doing some past papers if we're getting into exam season, or doing extracurricular activities, hanging out with your friends or just relaxing. The average day in a Cambridge student's life is going to be very different depending on the Cambridge student. Some people get up very early, because they work a kind of nine-to-five, and then have their evenings free. Some people like waking up later, maybe going to a lecture as the first thing, then working into the evening; it really depends.



**JOE: The last time we met, you stressed that there are a lot of social opportunities at Cambridge, and the nightlife is better than some people expect. What would you say?**

Yes, definitely. I think that there is this kind of myth that Cambridge students are all work and no play, but our students definitely have time for a social life! I can't personally talk about the clubs too much because it's been quite a few years since I've been in one, and it's not going to be on the same

level as a big city like Manchester, London or Birmingham – but there is definitely a lot going on in terms of Cambridge nightlife. There are quite a few nightclubs, but there are also things like open mic nights, comedy nights and live music. All kinds of things to get involved with.

**JOE: There might be some really good students who might think "Oh, you know, I'm not quite good enough" or "Oh, it's not for me", but it could be for them, couldn't it? What would you say to those guys?**

I have this thing that I say, which is that Cambridge isn't for everyone, but it can be for anyone. University choice is so personal and, as I said about course choice, you need to choose somewhere that you are going to love spending your time – you're going to be there for at least three years. So, if you've come to Cambridge, maybe you've come on a visit, maybe you've just seen our social media or been on a college's website and thought "Oh, that looks nice, that looks like it might be something I enjoy", then absolutely it can be for you and, as I say, the only way to find out if you're good enough is to apply. We would just love to see more people applying, because there are so many people who select themselves out, who think they're not good enough. If you're predicted the minimum typical offer, and take those A-levels, then absolutely take that chance. It's one of your five choices, and who knows, you could end up here in Cambridge.

# IS UNIVERSITY WORTH THE DEBT?

*Written by Sapphire Hope (Grant, 2013-20)*

In July last year, I left the University of Bristol with a degree – and almost £50,000 in student debt.

If you have been living in the UK, Channel Islands, or Isle of Man for at least three years before starting your course, you are eligible for a student loan from the government. For full-time students, this is a minimum of £9,535 in tuition and £4,915 in maintenance per academic year, providing you live away from home. Ballooning interest rates on such loans mean repayment costs continue to surge.

The typical UK student borrower takes around 30 years to fully repay their debts, and currently, more than one million people in the UK do not earn enough to repay their student loans at all. 83% of people are predicted never to repay the full amount. On top of this, UCAS predictions show that university itself costs the average student £219 per week, excluding both rent and tuition fees.



This begs the burning question: is university actually worth it?

After seven years at St George's, 2013-20, I firmed my place at Bristol to study a Bachelor of Science in Politics and International Relations. I arrived in September 2021, after spending my gap year working in parliament.

I truly had the best time at university and absolutely love Bristol as a city. I made friends for life, captained my lacrosse team, wrote for the student

newspaper, and graduated from a Russell Group university with a 2:1. I also recently secured a spot on my dream graduate scheme – as a trainee reporter for The Daily Telegraph, which, like many others, I could not even apply for without a degree. I left Bristol, however, feeling somewhat unfulfilled. My course consisted of six contact hours per week in the first and second year, which decreased to just four in my final year. In years one and two, there were three seminars and three lectures. In year three, there were no lectures; instead, there were two rounds of two-hour seminars.

Most of my tutors had a mere 120 minutes of additional office hours per week. These were specified times where you could pre-arrange a 10-minute slot to speak to a lecturer, mainly to discuss essay topics. However, as most tutors were responsible for hundreds of students, those precious hours would get booked up pretty quickly.

If you didn't manage to bag a slot, then tough luck. Try again next week. But it would leave me wondering, what am I paying for?

This does not mean I only spent four hours a week studying. The vast majority of my work was independent reading or research. I felt like I was splashing nine grand a year to subscribe to an extensive reading list.

It was a different story for many other courses. While I was clinging onto my weekly ration of four teaching hours in my third year, my housemate, a dental student, had a strict timetable of 9 am until 5 pm every weekday. She truly got to see the fruits of her student loan. Studying a course like mine often led me to the conclusion that I was indeed subsidising others.

This brings me to my next point. Your value for money depends on your course. I went to university to get a degree, boost my CV, and hopefully get a job. If you are, for example, a medical student, then the training you pay for is far more vital.

With a job starting this month, I am one of the lucky ones. Hiring website Indeed recently reported that UK university graduates are currently facing the toughest job market since 2018. To make matters worse, the Institute for Student Employers found last year that the average UK employer received 140 applications per graduate vacancy, which was a 30-year record and a 59% rise from 2023.



Once you get a job, you do not start repaying your loan until you have an annual salary of more than £26,065. However, reports suggest some graduates are choosing to work lower-paid jobs in order to avoid student loan repayments, with others taking out external loans or even remortgaging their houses to fund such debts, according to The Guardian. I have these prospects to look forward to.



So, is it worth it? For me, the best things that came from university were my friends, my love for Bristol, and my employability. Now that I have left, I can admit that even though I don't really feel like I was taught enough about my subject, I still do not regret my choice one bit.

Like many people, my university years were my most formative.

You learn how to budget for your weekly food shop or what to do when the boiler is broken.

You grasp how to live with friends, clean up after yourself, and read a rental agreement (or at least get your parents to!). I could go on. These social life skills are hard to place a monetary value on. University is not always just about your subject; it is somewhere you go to grow up.

I think this should account for some of that cost. I might not be the next prime minister, but I certainly learnt a lot about myself.

My advice would be to look at all options available to you. University is definitely not for everyone, and it's not the answer to everything. Only around 14% of UK jobs now require degrees, in comparison to nearly 50% in the US, so a degree might not be the be-all and end-all for your career. For what I wanted to do, that was not really an option, but there are many opportunities for apprenticeships, traineeships, or vocational training for other professions. I would always recommend a gap year if you are still unsure. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

# CLIMATE CHANGE: CAN ST GEORGE'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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. But how does this global issue impact us here in school?

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, whilst stories of wildfires in California or flash floods in Africa dominate the news. But what about the local effects? How is the local community affected, and what role can our community and St George's play in addressing these challenges? Harpenden (the home of our school) is known as an attractive and affluent place to live, work, and study. Is our school doing enough to make a difference? Are we reducing our local carbon footprint and contributing, even in small ways, to the fight against climate change? To explore these questions, we spoke with Head of Humanities Mr Williams to gain insights into climate change from their fields of expertise.

## How does geography help us understand how Harpenden is affected by climate change?

Geography is a varied subject. But when it comes to climate change, it provides education on environmental impacts and the methods we can use to reduce them.

## What actions could Harpenden take to reduce its carbon footprint and environmental impact?

We can all make a difference, even with small changes in our lives. From doing 'Meat-Free Mondays' to turning down the heating by 3°C 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.

## Do you think St George's students are equipped with the knowledge to combat climate change?

Yes, through Geography and Science lessons, additional talks, and the resources available in the library, students have the tools to understand and act on climate issues.

## How does Harpenden's geography impact its ability to address climate challenges?



Written by Sebastian L (Y10), Timothy C (Y10), Mr Williams



Harpden's geography offers advantages. Our proximity to public transportation (such as links to London) reduces the need for cars. We also benefit from being in a country with access to electricity and technology, enabling us to monitor and reduce our carbon footprint.

### What role can St George's play in leading local environmental initiatives?

We could improve recycling, reduce food waste, and turn off lights and electronics when not in use. Even small habits, like sorting waste and turning off standby devices, can make a big difference.

### TEACHERS POLL: DOES ST GEORGE'S DO ENOUGH?

We surveyed the Humanities and Science Departments, along with a few other staff and asked whether they believe that St George's is doing enough to tackle climate change. Geography and Science staff were mainly decided on yes or no, with the other staff undecided.

### AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Some teachers shared their concerns and solutions for how the school could improve its environmental efforts:

**Lights:** Many buildings leave lights on overnight, wasting electricity. Turning them off would save energy.

**Computers:** Staff computers are often left running overnight—should these be powered down?

**Doors:** Open doors allow heat to escape unnecessarily. Closing them could conserve energy.

**Heating:** Instead of increasing classroom heating, encourage wearing school sweaters.

**Whiteboards:** Are we overusing electronic whiteboards? Could we rely less on them?

**Dining Hall:** Meat is always an option in the dining room. Introducing meat-free days could reduce the school's carbon footprint.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

While St George's has made ample strides in educating students about climate change, the poll results and teacher suggestions indicate room for improvement. Small, actionable changes could help the school to become a leader in local sustainability efforts.

**The question remains: will we take these steps to make a meaningful difference?**

# TET 1968: THE NIGHT THAT SHOOK AMERICA

Following the defeat of Imperial Japanese forces in World War II, East, Southeast, and Central Asia experienced a rapid succession of dictatorships, a flurry of wars after centuries of colonisation, and the spread of communism across the continent. Among the most significant events was the First Indochina War in 1946. After six decades of French colonial control over the Kingdom of Cambodia and the regions of Laos, Tonkin, Cochinchina, and Annam, the French expected these lands to be under their control once more as a key supply for coal, rubber, and rare minerals, once Southeast Asia was liberated from the Japanese. However, there was growing resentment towards the French and increasing calls for freedom. The French were driven out after the Viet Minh, led by Ho Chi Minh and supported by China, fought against them. This was followed by a complicated process shaped by the American policy of containment under President Truman, which aimed to prevent the spread of communism rather than fight existing communist powers.

The United States took particular interest in Vietnam, given its proximity to China. They took steps to ensure a capitalist government in the South, so the U.S. could profit from resource trade. Vietnam was split into a communist North under Ho Chi Minh and a capitalist South led by the unpopular and corrupt Ngo Dinh Diem. A referendum was scheduled for 1955 to decide whether the South would join the North. However, by that point, America had invested too much in maintaining its influence, so it blocked the referendum, which the North was likely to win. The turning point came with the Gulf of Tonkin incident. The North Vietnamese had already started fighting in 1955, and the United States had been looking for a reason to send troops. On August 2, 1964, two U.S. Navy ships were patrolling the Gulf of Tonkin near North Vietnam. They were unaware of an American operation at a Viet Cong radio station. When they saw several North Vietnamese ships approaching, they fired warning shots. The North Vietnamese mistook this for an attack by the U.S. and responded with torpedoes and gunfire. This led to President Lyndon B. Johnson passing the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, officially bringing the U.S. into the war on March 8, 1965.

*Written by ER Arnaud (Y13)*

Three years into the war, the U.S. was already set for inevitable loss. The American forces, mostly 19-year-old conscripts, had racked up thousands of casualties, unprepared for the Viet Cong's guerrilla warfare. American support was losing favour with South Vietnamese civilians, over 800,000 of whom were estimated to be dead. At home, the anti-war movement was growing, though support still existed from the wealthy and nationalistic. Then came the Tet Offensive, launched on January 30, 1968. The Viet Minh and Viet Cong executed coordinated surprise attacks on over 100 cities, including the capital. The most significant moment was the assault on the U.S. embassy. The horrors of war were broadcast unfiltered into American homes for the first time. Graphic images and events such as street executions profoundly affected public opinion. Journalists began questioning the government's narrative. CBS anchor Walter Cronkite, dubbed the "most trustworthy man in the United States," declared the war unwinnable. Protests surged, forcing Johnson to announce in March 1968 that he wouldn't seek re-election.

Although the U.S. committed more troops, public and congressional support dwindled, and the war grew increasingly unpopular. The Pentagon Papers, revealed in 1971, confirmed how administrations had misled the public. Globally, the Tet Offensive altered perceptions of U.S. dominance. For Vietnam, it marked a costly but psychological victory. The North regrouped, ultimately leading to the fall of Saigon in 1975. Without the Tet Offensive, the shift in media perception and anti-war momentum may not have happened, marking it as the point when the U.S. lost hope in Vietnam.



# WHY TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS ARE FOCUSED ON MENTAL HEALTH

*Written by Jessica O (Y13)*

In recent years, schools have placed an increased focus on mental health, recognising its critical role in students' development. As a sixth-former at St George's School, I have seen first-hand how mental health has become a central priority in education. But why is this focus so important now?



**Wellbeing Board, Student Services, St George's School**

## The Rise in Mental Health Issues

Mental health problems among young people are on the rise, with one in six children aged 5 to 16 having a diagnosable mental health condition. At St George's, these issues are actively tackled through support from tutors and Friday-Five talks, and the school provides strong pastoral support. Mental health challenges, such as anxiety and stress, are common, and the school strives to ensure no student feels isolated.

## The Link Between Mental Health and Academic Success

St George's recognises that mental health is closely tied to academic achievement. When students feel stressed or overwhelmed, their ability to concentrate and perform academically is affected.

The school's approach emphasises that a mentally healthy student is more likely to succeed. Regular check-ins with tutors and access to student services help students manage their well-being alongside their studies.

## General Education

Education today is not just about academics; it's about developing well-rounded individuals. St George's has regular PSE sessions incorporated into the curriculum, teaching students to manage stress, practise self-care, and build emotional resilience. The school also fosters open discussions around mental health to reduce stigma and encourage students to seek help when needed.

## Supportive Environment and Peer Mentoring

A key reason for the focus on mental health is the need for a supportive school environment. At St George's, the pastoral team and peer mentoring programmes ensure that students have the support they need. Peer mentors, especially from the sixth form, provide additional emotional support for younger students (Year 7s who are settling in), helping to build a strong sense of community.

## The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic heightened mental health challenges, with social isolation and uncertainty affecting students' well-being. St George's responded by amplifying mental health support, offering virtual sessions, and providing resources to help students cope with the impact of the pandemic. This focus on mental health continues post-pandemic.

At St George's School, mental health is an essential part of the educational experience. Students' emotional well-being, alongside academic success, remains a focus, ensuring we are fit not only for exams but for life's challenges. This holistic human-centred approach will continue to shape the future of our school and others across the country.

# A GEORGIAN ISLAND DISCS INTERVIEW —



## **What is your first track for the Georgian Island?**

I'm gonna start with an absolute banger – Mr Brightside by The Killers.

## **Mr Ellis said you'd put that!**

Well, partly because he doesn't like it. But honestly, it doesn't matter how many times you hear it or where you are; it gets everyone up and dancing! I saw The Killers at the O2 Arena earlier this year and they absolutely exceeded expectations.

## **A classic! And your second choice?**

Going back a bit in time, it's Guns N' Roses: Sweet Child O' Mine. This one's close to my heart, because I hear it every week when I watch my football team, Barnet – it's their song for coming onto the pitch. It always takes me to my happy place, especially last season when we came second in the National League.

## **And your third choice?**

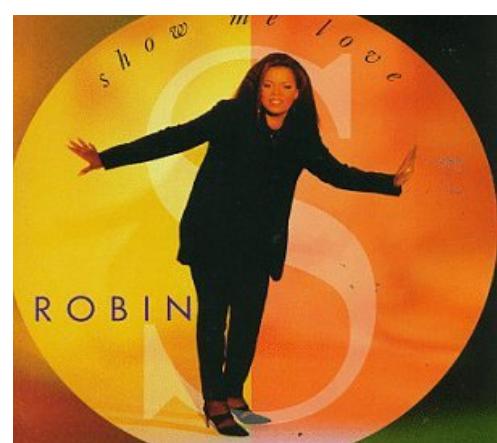
I'm picking Gala's Freed from Desire. I like my dance music, and the lyrics are all about finding happiness and fulfilling your own passions rather than material possessions – such a great message. And of course, it's also another banger!

## **A great selection so far. What's your fourth choice?**

For my fourth choice, Robin S, Show Me Love – a dynamic dance track that takes me right back to the '90s. That intro is iconic!

## **Very nice. Were you a dancer?**

Back in the '90s, yes. Good times!



## **And your fifth track?**

I've chosen (Sittin' On) the Dock of the Bay by Otis Redding – an old track that is on the mellow side. I spend several weeks a year in Padstow, Cornwall, and one of my greatest pleasures is sitting on the quay, watching the tide and people coming and going.

# UNCOVERING MR REYNOLDS' MUSIC

*Written by Ollie E(Y13), Mr Reynolds*

## Your sixth choice?

I'm going with Oasis – Don't Look Back In Anger. As the British band that had the greatest impact on me, I could have picked several songs from them, but this one is a masterpiece. That final line written by Liam Gallagher, “Don't look back in anger,” I heard you say / At least not today' is iconic. I saw them in 2000 at Wembley, and I'm lucky enough to have seen them again this summer.

## And your penultimate track?

The Jam – Town Called Malice. You probably haven't heard of this band, but for those old enough to remember, they were the band of the '80s for me. I've seen the lead singer, Paul Weller, in lots of different projects, for example, The Style Council and on his own, but nothing beats his anger and rebellion when he performed in The Jam.

## Last but not least?

To finish, a love song: Whitney Houston's I Will Always Love You. This song is dedicated to my wife, whom I met at Primary School. Many years later, we were lucky enough to see her in concert, and she undoubtedly has the most powerful voice I have ever heard. Whitney Houston, that is, not my wife!

## And what's your book for the Island?

It has taken me a while to figure this out, but the book I've chosen is called *Leading: Lessons in Leadership* by Alex Ferguson. Alex is a football manager, but why have I chosen him and his book?

Having worked in both business and teaching, with a passion for sport, I've always found leadership in different fields fascinating. I've read many books on this topic! Alex focuses on both key skills like discipline, control, teamwork and motivation, as well as less obvious aspects like delegation, data analysis, and handling failure – something I believe is a universal experience. His book reminds me that communication is the key behind all of these factors in leadership, and that's why there's a strong overlap between success in sport and business.

I think that's where we often let ourselves down. You never stop learning!

## ALEX FERGUSON WITH MICHAEL MORITZ LEADING



**And we are very generous on the Georgian Island, so you get one luxury item to bring with you. What would that be?**

Very kind of you! It is difficult to pick one from the many choices, but I have chosen football. Growing up, I always wanted to be a footballer – I practised constantly but was never quite good enough, so I became a referee instead, which was great, and I now watch football, which is great. I watch my team, Barnet, which has its ups and downs, but nothing beats playing. Now I have a grandson who wants to play football all the time, so if I've got a football with me, I can work on my skills and still convince myself I might just have made it as a player.

# MISS FOSTER'S FINAL WHISTLE: OFF TO

Miss Foster: an old Georgian, Lacrosse Coach, and Head of Women's PE. With her departure from the school at the end of the last academic year, Omika sat down with her to get some final insights into her St George's sporting career, and a sneak peek at what lay ahead for the 2025 Lacrosse and Rugby Tour.



## How has teaching sport changed over the years at St George's?

When we first started, we were very specific about sports activities, whereas now we're more generalised in sports skills that we teach, but I would say that we still teach the core sports. Not much has changed since I was at school, so it's been pretty consistent.

## Which sport do you secretly wish you were better at?

Actually, I secretly wish I were better at lacrosse. There's this big myth that I am good at lacrosse, given that I teach and run a lacrosse program, but most of the kids are better than I am.

## If you could have any super-power on the sports field, what would it be and why?

Super speed, because you can just do everything with that. You can take on players, you can beat your opponent,

you can run the length of a pitch, and you can score just quicker than everyone.

## If you could create your own PE lesson combining any two sports, what would they be?

I would probably combine rounders and lacrosse. Like lacrosse and rounders, just imagine: catch the stick, throw it in any direction, and run around the bases. Fielders can lose their sticks to throw them back in.

## Is there a particular moment or achievement here that stands out as your proudest?

I have quite a few moments that really kind of hit that. It's hard to ignore getting to the top eight in the UK for lacrosse and Nationals back in 2021. That was a huge achievement and definitely up there. We took the girls to America and Canada in 2022, and this year we're returning. Running the sport trips is one of the proudest moments for me, watching kids of all different abilities challenging and learning about themselves, as well as having that wider opportunity to experience life outside of the UK and the bubble of Harpenden. I think it's amazing.

## What do you think is the most important lesson students should take away from PE?

Resilience has got to be up there. When students leave school, decisions are made for them, and things go against them. You need resilience in life.

I think that always comes from PE through fighting hard for a win, being able to cope with the loss, working with teammates, looking after each other, and helping students to be ready to take on the world.

## How do you feel PE supports mental well-being as much as physical health?

PE gives a bit of a release. You're not sitting down, and you're not in a classroom. Your mind is occupied - your heart rate increases; more adrenaline and endorphins are released in the body. Naturally, all of those things mean that you are distracted from the things that you're worried about or feeling anxious about.

## What advice would you give to students who aren't naturally sporty but want to enjoy PE more?

My best advice would be that the more effort you can put in, regardless of your ability, the more you'll get out of it. So, as PE staff, we are never looking for people to be the best at things. If you put 100% effort in, even if you're standing in that rounders box, missing every ball, as long as you keep trying, you will reach success. This links back to that resilience. Therefore, although you might not be naturally sporty, you'll get so much more out of it if you try, rather than thinking, 'Oh, I don't like PE' or 'I don't want to try.' Putting in effort goes a long way over skill.

# CANADA AND BEYOND!

Written by Omika L (Y13), Miss Foster

## Can you give us a summary of what is to come in the summer, regarding the tours?

We are taking 70 boys and girls to Canada and America on a joint lacrosse and rugby tour. We are starting the trip together, so it's like a combined effort. The boys are staying in Canada, going from Toronto to Ottawa and Montreal; the girls are starting in Toronto, and then we dip into North America to the Lake Placid tournament, and then we meet back up with the boys in Montreal. The trip is mainly focused on bringing senior boys and senior girls together through sport. It's focused on giving kids a trip of a lifetime to experience sport in another country and hopefully experience great excursions and good camaraderie.



## What about the tour are you the most excited about?

I'm very excited to go to Niagara Falls again. It's a unique place that really takes your breath away. You know, it's absolutely magical. I'm also really excited to see how the girls and the boys would bond and the stories that come out, because kids love doing some funny things during the trip.

There'll be a lot of good stories coming back from the trip. I'm also excited to see how we will hold up against the Canadian and American teams.

## How does what's in store for this year compare to previous tours?

We have improved on the fact that we are able to take more players, so this year we have a rugby tour going. There hasn't really been a rugby tour since 2019, when they went to Australia. So personally, I think being able to offer a trip that combines boys and girls is really important, and that's been a big improvement. We've managed to raise more money, which, again, allows us to do more excursions and get a better quality kit. I've been on past trips; we're going to lots of similar places, so I know what to expect, and that naturally helps me to plan the free time as well as making sure that the kids feel happy and safe. So I think the improvements will come throughout the trip, but planning has been so much easier this year.

## What's next for you after the tour — any future plans you're excited about?



Unfortunately, I'm leaving St George's at the end of this year to take a break from teaching, and I am moving to the West Coast of Canada - I'm going to go and find a job, live in the mountains, around Banff and Calgary. I'll see where the wind takes me!

## What will you miss the most about teaching at this school?

I'll miss the traditions. I'll miss the House system. I'll miss the way that the House events work. I'll miss my friends, staff members, and the kids because they are so fun to teach. The kids at this school are really special to me - they're really nice, and always up for everything. The tradition, the House system, and the camaraderie between staff and the kids are going to be the big three.

## Do you have a farewell message for students?

My farewell message to the students is to dream big. There's a big world out there, and one that you probably don't know lots about at the moment. So, dream big, be ambitious, and have fun. Those are my parting words.

# IS THIS REAL, OR JUST A FANTASY?

It is a hot summer's day, around a month after the end of the 2024/25 Premier League season has finished. Isaac Bramall (IB) and Mr Ellis (JOE) sat down with Seb Johnson, who was still 'basking in the sunshine' of his extraordinary Fantasy Premier League (FPL) performance.

**JOE: What were the highlights for you last season?**

The amount of followers I managed to get on Twitter (X), I am at about 5,000 now, and some of the YouTube and podcast interviews have been really cool.



**JOE: How did you start your FPL journey, and what has got you to where you are now?**

I started playing when I was about five or six with my grandma and my uncle, but I didn't really understand it. I would pick the best players from the weekend before. I then started playing it properly in year 7 in our school's [FPL] league, where I started to learn the ropes. In the last two years, I have begun to understand things like effective ownership (technical term) and have begun taking it very seriously.

**JOE: Excellent stuff. So, on an average week last season, how long did you spend researching and looking at stats?**

Probably around three hours a week!

In terms of the game, Nottingham Forest vs Brighton was a highlight. It was 7-0, and Chris Wood scored a hat trick. Liverpool winning the league was also very important, as I had [Mohamed] Salah the whole way through. Doing my interview for them, doing interviews with ('FPL influencer') Gianni Buttice was also great. Also, the shoutout from Dharmesh Sheth on socials was great. My mum thought it was AI, but I knew Mr Ellis had arranged it.

**JOE: Give us your Twitter handle**  
**@Seb\_FPL**

*Written by Isaac B (Y13), James Ellis, Seb J (Y13)*

**.JOE: How would you like your FPL skills to be used in the future?**

I would like to get my A levels first (Good answer – JOE). I will keep doing my Twitter next year, but not as seriously, because Year 13 is a bigger year.

I won't be able to beat last year, but I'll certainly have a go!

**JOE: Bit of a curveball question here – what do you think FPL can teach you about life?**

It teaches you that you can sometimes make a mistake, but you can bounce back and recover. It does teach you patience; it might not pay off in the first week or two, but it will pay off. It definitely teaches you patience and the importance of not being too reactionary!

**JOE: As you know, I am a big FPL fan. How much of it do you think is luck, and how much is skill?**

I could be humble and say this year has been 100% luck, but obviously, it has not. I would say 60% luck, 40% skill. Clearly, you need things to go your way to do well, but you have to plan for the upcoming fixtures to do well.

**IB: Do you have any superstitions week by week?**

No, because I try to play looking at four weeks in advance. The week coming up, I tend to look at the next four.

**IB: Do you rely on anyone?**

Mohamed Salah!

**JOE: Have you had people ask you about FPL in your everyday life?**

I went to a wedding on Saturday, and they had all seen my interview following me the whole way through. Obviously, the teachers here take it very seriously, so it was nice to get many congratulations.

**JOE: What would you like to see us do as a school to promote FPL?**

I think we did quite well this year. We had 50+ people in the school league, and I had a few people message me on Twitter that I had never heard of before and said they were in the school leagues; that was quite nice. I think our school league does it quite well compared to other schools. We get quite a lot of people involved.

**IB: What are your ambitions for next season?**

I think the top 5K rank. Anything in the top 10K is good, certainly.

**JOE: We do have a trophy waiting for you as well!**

Oh, perfect.



# WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Written by Athena C (Y11)

Few aspects of any language shift as quickly as slang. With around 1,000 new words added to the English language every year, young people are often the first to coin words that reflect their generation. This article explores how slang has developed through the decades, from the Gen Alpha trends we witnessed last year all the way to Shakespeare.

## Slang today

Words that were once considered trendy by the 'Gen Z' generation, such as 'slay queen' are vintage and have opened the doors to more linguistic additions. Dictionaries in 2025 include words like 'mid', 'the ick' and, famously, the 2024 Oxford dictionary word of the year 'brain-rot'. So what do these words mean, and where did they come from? Let's take a closer look at 'brain-rot'. It all began with 'skibbidi', the first slang term unique to 'Generation Alpha' (those born 2010-2024). Then, a dozen equally confusing terms followed. 'Brain-rot' is the umbrella term for them all and refers to low-quality, low-value content found on social media and the internet. Written by Athena Campbell (Y11) It can be traced back to online videos like Alexey Gerasimov's 'Skibidi Toilet' series and 'Only in Ohio' memes. But what's particularly intriguing about these trends is not the entertainment value, but the way they are influencing the language we use.



To understand how slang is received across generations, I spoke with my English teacher, Mrs Farr, and tested her knowledge of 'Gen Alpha' terms. Here are some of the highlights:

*Just put the fries in the bag, bro - just get it done (correct)*

*Yapping - talking a lot, like a pesky small dog (correct)*

*Touch grass - to succeed, like a touch down in rugby (incorrect)*

*The ick - to feel disgust (correct)*

*Chat - communicate on social media (incorrect)*

*Crash out - relaxing (incorrect)*

*Mewing - trying to get a good jawline (correct)*

With a final score of 20/25, she admitted that social media, her students, and her own teenagers help her stay updated. Her personal favourite slang word? Awesome - a timeless term that's outlasted many trends.

## The 1990s

'Wassup? I'm going to see Oasis with my homey and it's going to be da bomb. Props to him for getting us the tickets - sike it was me no duh! I've got a fly outfit with lots of bling and a fresh haircut, it looks dope.' If you understood what you have read so far - congratulations! You are up to date with the 90s slang. The 1990s were a vibrant decade which saw the rise of the internet, grunge music and a more laid-back approach to life. This decade brought a mix of new technology and nostalgia for simpler times, which was reflected in the slang of the era. According to an ex Georgian, some students spoke 'egg language' so parents and teachers couldn't understand their conversations with friends.

To speak it, you put a 'dg' sound in the middle of each syllable of each word. So if you had a one-syllable word like *Star* it would be 'St - dg - ar'. But if you had a two-syllable word like *Christmas*, it would be 'Chr - dg - Istm - dg- as'.

## The 1970s

Bell-bottom jeans, disco balls spinning and groovy tunes playing - we have arrived at the 1970s. I interviewed my aunt, who lived through the era, to find out more about the slang that was used.

### What were some slang words you used/heard during the 70s?

Man, peace out, groovy, jeepers creepers, cool beans and boogie.

### Where did they come from, and why did people begin using them?

America had a significant influence on slang in England. For example, the rise of soul and disco music, which originated in the United States, introduced popular slang words like 'cool' and 'groovy'. When these songs were played in England, people started using the slang because they thought it was trendy. Additionally, American films and TV series, such as 'Saturday Night Fever,' 'Grease,' and 'M\*A\*S\*H,' were popular in England during the 70s and also included slang that people picked up.

### Were there any other ways that slang was picked up without the influence of social media?

Yes, Teen magazines such as *Jackie* and *Petticoat* were widely read by young people on a weekly basis and often included slang terms. As a result, people started using them in order to fit in and be part of the crowd.

## The 1940s

Let's travel back to the 1940s.



Imagine this, you're walking down the street and hear someone say 'You're the bees knees!' which means someone super cool. Back then, people had all kinds of quirky phrases. If someone was acting weird, they'd say, 'He's off his rocker!' If you'd got great news you were 'on cloud nine'. And one of my favourites, if someone described something as 'applesauce', it meant it was nonsense. So where did all this slang come from? There were lots of influences: jazz music, the rise of Hollywood, radio and even soldiers returning from World War II brought new words into the mix. Unfortunately, I don't have an interview for this decade, so I think it's time to 'beat feet' (to leave quickly) and on to the final era in this article.

### Shakespearean Times

Long before 'Gen Alpha' or 'Gen Z', one man helped shape the English language - William Shakespeare. Writing in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, he created over 1,700 new words, many of which we still use today. Terms like 'swagger', 'lonely', 'generous', 'manager', and 'green eyed monster' originated in his plays, along with expressions such as 'in a pickle', 'wild goose chase', and 'break the ice'. So next time you see someone dropping the latest slang on social media, give a nod to the Bard for laying down the linguistic foundations.

In conclusion, slang isn't just about cool phrases - it's a form of cultural expression that connects people to their time. Whether laughed about amongst your friends, shouted in songs, or typed in comments, slang gives each generation its own unique voice. And with new words constantly emerging, one thing's for sure: tomorrow's conversations will sound very different from today's.

# THE LOWER SCHOOL SHOW

Written by Timothy C, Verity S (Y10)

At the end of the summer term, the Lower School Drama Club put on a production of 'Daisy Pulls It Off' directed by Mr Wallace and co-directed by Miss Carter-Crosby. Students from Year 7, 8 & 9 put on gym slips and turned into the polite, posh, prim and proper students of 'Grangewood School for Girls', taking the audience back in time to the 1920s with their performance of the much-loved play.

Coming from an elementary school, Daisy Meredith - played by Tiana N, Year 10 - has won a scholarship to Grangewood School for Girls, "one of the most famous educational establishments in the country". Upon arriving, Daisy befriends another student, Trixie Martin - played by Verity S, Year 10 - and finds out about the lost Beaumont treasure that must be found to save the school from falling into the hands of the school governors.

The play follows Daisy and her life at Grange-wood, excelling in lessons, meeting the insufferable, stuck-up character of Sybil Burlington - played by Aine W, Year 9 - and hunting for clues as to the lost treasure's whereabouts.

After 5 weeks of rehearsals, the Grant Quad was transformed into a setting for the 1920s school and cast members picked up their suitcases and lacrosse sticks for the two performances on the 25th and 26th of June. With little forgotten lines and lots of brilliant acting, the cast gave the audience a fun, entertaining and exciting night to remember.



Kate Harvey- audience member on both nights:  
Did You Enjoy the Show?

Yes. I loved the way they used the set. I liked the actors and the accents. I was in it last year, so I'd definitely go and see it again to support others

Heather Hilton- crew member on both nights:  
How was this show different from other shows you've helped with?

Since it was in the Grant Quad, the actors performed to more than one angle, and got involved with the audience

What was your favourite part from a sound perspective?

During the scene when Monica [played by Felicity Fetherby] and Sybil [played by Aine Walker] were on the cliffs, we had waves and wind against the rocks.

What was your favourite part?

Seeing how Daisy managed to fight against all the challenges she faced, and when she made up with Sybil.

Would you do it again?

Yes. A thousand per cent!

Sophia Gladkow- played Alice in 'Daisy Pulls It Off'

What was your favourite part or scene?

My favourite part was meeting loads of new people and three times a week being with people and chatting with them at rehearsal. My favourite scene was probably the assembly scenes.

Would you do it again?

Yeah, definitely. It was so fun!

Huge thanks must go to the amazing actors, wonderful backstage crew and the incredibly dedicated teachers, as well as the support from the PSA and the eager crowd, including some especially enthusiastic Year 9s who returned for both performances, who all helped to make the evenings a success.



# MEMORIES FROM 2025 LACROSSE TOUR



*Squad photo, Lake Placid Tournament, with the Sexy Potatoes Team*



*Squad Photo, Buffalo team*



B team at the Winter Olympics Museum, Lake Placid Syracuse University Tour



Lake Placid Tournament - by the tent of an opposing team!



AIM HIGHER