

# Gryphon

The Beechen Cliff Magazine for  
students, by students



**Term 1 2022**

**Black History Month**



## Our Editorial Team

**Olivia Laughton, Maria Ramadan, Adriana Barnes, Helen Turnbull**

## **A Message From Our Editors:**

**Hi everyone! Welcome back :) Hoping everyone had really fun summers ... and have recovered from any festival flus!**

**We're Olivia, Maria, Addy & Helen - the team of upper sixth students working on the Gryphon each term.**

**We'd love your support, so please get in touch if you have any articles, photos, artwork or ideas to contribute - it would be great to get some new lower sixth students on board too!**

**October is Black History Month in the UK, so many of our pieces this term reflect on and celebrate this event and what it means to us all.**

**Thanks for reading.**



# Interested in the Gryphon? Want to Join Us?

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Read this letter below!

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

I would like to take this opportunity to advertise an incredible student-led super curricular opportunity that we're looking to open up to our Lower Sixth students, in the form of contributing to our Gryphon Magazine, either in the editorial team or by submitting articles.

The Gryphon was started by a pair of Year 13 students in the Autumn of 2020 and has since expanded into an editorial team of six students and including articles from across the Beechen Cliff community. Its motto 'For the Students, By the Students' is reflected in the ethos of the current editors, who are keen to stimulate involvement in the Gryphon from all levels of our student body. With this in mind, along with their upcoming A-Level exams, the team are looking to work with the next group of students keen to take up the editorship of the Gryphon in a transition period in the New Year.

Whilst this activity is not compulsory for students to participate in, we would strongly encourage you, your son or daughter to do so. Participation in super-curricular activities where you can develop and share your own academic interests is an excellent way for students to demonstrate a broader commitment to their studies.

For those thinking of applying to university in particular, we would definitely recommend attending this event as universities place great value on super-curricular activities that your child has undertaken during their school career. In addition, writing or editing for the Gryphon is also something which can be put on CVs, Personal Statements and discussed at interviews.

Very few other schools are able to offer an opportunity such as this, which therefore presents a unique chance to make your or your child's university application stand out from others.

If you have any further questions about the Gryphon please get in contact with [headofsixth@beechencliff.org.uk](mailto:headofsixth@beechencliff.org.uk). If you, your son or daughter is already keen to get involved, then please contact one of the current editors at:

[@6laughton.olivia@beechencliff.org.uk](mailto:@6laughton.olivia@beechencliff.org.uk)

[@6barnes.adriana@beechencliff.org.uk](mailto:@6barnes.adriana@beechencliff.org.uk)

[@6turnbull.helen@beechencliff.org.uk](mailto:@6turnbull.helen@beechencliff.org.uk)

[@6ramadan.maria@beechencliff.org.uk](mailto:@6ramadan.maria@beechencliff.org.uk)

Best wishes,

Miss K Mather  
*Head of Sixth Form*



BEECHEN CLIFF



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# The Democratic Republic of Congo - the world's least publicised battleground <sup>P5</sup>

By Wilf Smith



**The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is once again the world's most neglected displacement crisis in 2021, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council's (NRC) annual analysis. The annual list of neglected displacement crises is based on three criteria: lack of funding, lack of media attention, and lack of international political and diplomatic initiatives. As it stands, the world's ten most neglected displacement crises are all in Africa. The DRC is at the top of the bleak ranking, followed by Burkina Faso, Cameroon and South Sudan.**

**The DRC has become a textbook example of neglect. It is one of the worst humanitarian crises of this century, yet those inside and outside of Africa with power to create change are closing their eyes to the waves of brutal and targeted attacks on civilians that shatter communities. The north-east of the DRC has been plagued by intercommunal tensions and conflict, with a dramatic increase in attacks on displacement camps since November 2021. 5.5 million people are now displaced within the country and food insecurity has reached the highest level ever recorded, with a third of the population going hungry.**

**The recent war in Ukraine has demonstrated the amount of support and media coverage that can be given to a nation under threat. You would struggle to find anyone in the UK who was unaware of Russia's invasion. Norwegian Diplomat and Politician Jan Egland has commented: "The war in Ukraine has demonstrated the immense gap between what is possible when the international community rallies behind a crisis, and the daily reality for millions of people suffering in silence within these crises on the African continent that the world has chosen to ignore." This is not to say that the media coverage and support to Ukraine is a negative thing, much the opposite in fact, but that there are larger global conflicts that are getting no publicity or aid, like in the Democratic of Congo.**





# The Democratic Republic of Congo - the world's least publicised battleground

By Wilf Smith



**Did you know anything about The DRC before reading this? The DRC is the 11th largest nation in the world, and the second biggest in Africa. If I told you that since 1996, the Democratic Republic of Congo has been embroiled in violence that has killed 6 million people, making it the bloodiest conflict since WW2, it certainly puts a much darker perspective on global ignorance.**

**As a history student, everything for me can be explained by looking back in time - specifically to 1884. The European powers sat down together in Berlin and drew lines on the map of Africa. The Berlin conference, as it is known, brought together different tribes - whether they be peaceful or not - and so formed Africa into nations constrained by artificial borders which paid no heed to geographical landscape. Tribes with separate cultures and ideologies, who barely understood each other, were unified under foreign agreement. In the DRC, approximately 700 local languages and dialects are spoken. The four largest tribes that have control over specific areas are the Mongo, Luba, Kongo and Mangbetu-Azonde. The tribes were traditionally isolated from each other due to the huge expanses of jungle covering the landscape. Forcing them into close contact was a recipe for utter chaos.**

**Europe still feels the guilt of their past actions and to combat this chooses to ignore the catastrophic consequences that affect millions in Africa. However, this is the equivalent of trying to ignore a fire that is showing no signs of relenting. Europe and the rest of the world have the ability to prevent millions of new casualties in the DRC and across Africa if they accept their role in creating the problem and use the resources and wealth at their disposal to end the conflict. The change starts with educating people about the DRC's struggle, which I hope I have achieved in some small way in this article.**





# How Does Racism Affect Mental Health? By Amelia Beare

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**We are immersed in a society today that regularly overlooks systematic racism towards minority groups. It is often imposed by those who have never experienced such discrimination and have marginalised the lives of people who should have been valued as equal. This discrimination can have a profound effect and takes a severe toll on the mental and physical health of those affected.**

**Racism can induce trauma which is classified as a mental health problem that can lead to depression, anxiety, stress and PTSD. Due to the stigma surrounding mental health, research has shown difficulties in overcoming the ongoing trauma people have experienced due to difficulties in seeking help and support. For example, accessing services to help surmount these feelings caused by prejudice can be difficult due to the fact that individuals can still experience animosity towards them by professionals because of their race. Additionally if the patient does manage to see someone who can help, the therapist/counsellor may not necessarily understand the culture of the person and therefore not be able to comprehend what that individual is experiencing.**

**An additional obstacle a BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) individual can face and one which predominantly**

**made an impression on me was the description of the perpetuated ideology that men of colour in several cultures should be emotionless, stand firm and shouldn't be comfortable with opening up.**

**The negative stereotypes on black men that society has created in accepting advice from others surrounding mental health is without a doubt completely unacceptable. There is a sense of shame and embarrassment in accepting help as they would not be conforming to the stereotype that was placed many years ago and practised by their parents. This can lead to a build up in unwanted emotions one should never have to feel.**

**Amongst the communities of BAME there are different approaches towards dealing with mental health. Having spoken to someone who is part of the BAME community who grew up in an Indian household where mental health was probably recognised but not spoken about, his family view was that it will build up your resilience for your future encounters given the racism that they had suffered. To suffer was expected as the norm.**



# How Does Racism Affect Mental Health? By Amelia Beare

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Racism can have a prolonged effect on people which I discovered when the individual I spoke to explained a racist encounter experienced at age 4 that still resonates in his life today. He grew up in the thriving industrial Midlands in the 70s when one day he was walking down the street holding his mothers hand when a “skinhead walked past and spat green phlegm” on his face. Despite the mothers frailness and lack of knowledge of the language, she swore at the skinhead because unlike him, this was not her first experience of racism. He described it as ‘she was able to react as she had learnt how to deal with it and had built up her resilience to it; it was routine existence’. At that moment, he wondered “Is this what the rest of my life is going to be like?”. At such a young age, despite knowing he was enough, it caused him to still question himself and his identity and later his ability to withstand the provocation.

Racism has regrettably been occurring in BAME’s people’s lives for a long time. For instance this man’s father worked in a factory in the inner city and in order to avoid being attacked for the colour of his skin, he would have to sneak out the back exit of the factory after every shift. Despite racist attitudes changing as a cause of the education provided

surrounding the matter, it still has a large impact on people today. For example, this man’s son has completed a degree in policing and has been working for 3 years as a Special Officer throughout the duration of the degree. However, he is extremely hesitant to do two years of probation on the street due to the instances of racism witnessed towards BAME police officers and the apprehension of experiencing the same and facing the inevitable castout syndrome if he took the option of whistleblowing. This is extremely unfair that he is unable to completely pursue his passion because of the fear he has as a result of his skin colour.

From writing this article and having a conversation with someone who had experienced racism I have learned a lot from my conversation with this man. It was shocking to me that we live in a society where people who face such extreme levels of prejudice and discrimination are told to keep their feelings contained and unshared. I feel it is important to share within our community, shed light on and start a conversation about the impact of racism, in an attempt to normalise the sharing of emotions and to make people recognise the effects of racism and the impact on their mental health.





# Prejudices in the Legal System

By Zack Balls

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The legal system in the UK is essential to upholding our morals and ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and justice is done. However, this is not always the case, and what is a symbolic and supposedly equal part of our society is rife with racial biases, which stems from historic racism that should not be a part of our society today, especially in such a key organisation. 51% of British born BAME people believe that the legal system discriminates against certain groups and individuals, and this is not acceptable. Racial bias' are prevalent in both legal and policing institutions which must be addressed. For example, Black people were stopped and searched for drugs at a rate nine times higher than that of White people, however the find rate was actually higher for White suspects, suggesting that there is less grounds to search black people, yet it continues to happen at a disproportionate rate. Furthermore, around 13% of the UK's population is BAME, however they accounted for 23% of the prosecutions in 2019. This shows that the BAME community are being prosecuted at a higher rate that is proportionate to the percentage of the population they take up. Similarly, Black men are five times more likely to be stopped and searched than White men, ethnic minorities in police custody are significantly more likely to be physically restrained than White people, and 40% of prisoners under 18 were from BAME

groups during 2014 to 2015. All of these facts show a significant disparity in something we deem to be key to our society functioning, and this must be addressed and adequately changed in order for our nation to become equal for all.

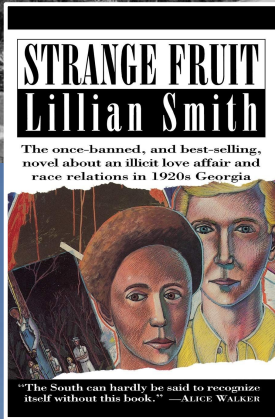
So what can be done? One idea is that there needs to be better representation of BAME communities in the criminal justice system. For example, in 2019 only 6% of judges and 12% of magistrates come from a BAME background, which is not in proportion to the population. Moreover, the government is actively trying to close gaps and increase equality, as seen in 2020, when Rt Hon Robert Buckland MP said that the government is working with the Magistrates Association to build awareness of disproportionality, and helped to secure £1m in funding to harness the power of sport to improve outcomes for BAME children at risk of entering the system. There are incentives to try to help increase the number of BAME lawyers, and to help them become a part of the judiciary. Whilst it is great that the government is taking the evident disparities and prejudices of the legal system seriously and are acting on it, many feel that it is not happening quickly or strongly enough. I for one hope that the unbalances of such a fundamental system will be eradicated in the near future, so everyone can live equally and without fear of being discriminated against because of their race.



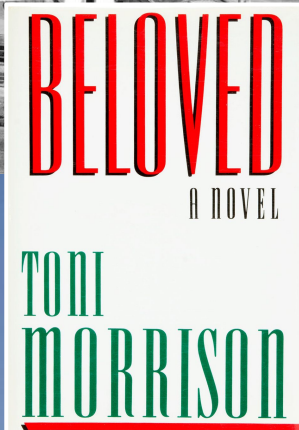
# BLACK HISTORY MONTH: BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

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By Olivia Laughton



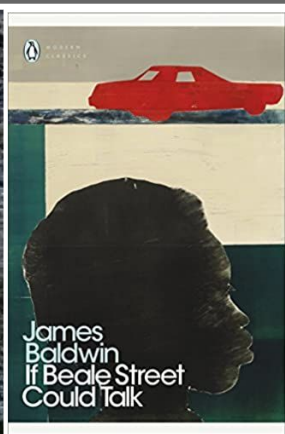
Strange Fruit is a 1944 novel exploring the tragedy and controversy of an interracial relationship. Named after Billie Holiday's infamous and powerfully emotive song, the novel explores the nature of black American identity in the 20th century.



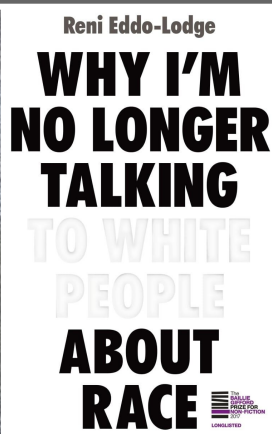
Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *BeLoved* powerfully considers the legacy of slavery and its effects on a family in Cincinnati, Ohio. Its magical realism through a malevolent spirit in the domestic sphere explores the way racial histories permeate the present, affecting the lives of African Americans to this day.



A non-fiction book by academic and author Angela Y. Davies, this book studies the experience of black women in America through a lens of marxist feminism. Looking from the slave trade up to the abolitions and womens liberations movements in the US, its a timely reminder of the myopia of feminism only considering justice for white women.



One of my favourite books, Baldwin's novel describes the racial and legal discrimination faced by two black families in the Harlem. A moving story of love in the face of injustice it is as powerfully moving and relevant today as it ever was.



Reno Eddo-Lodge's debut book in 2017 radically changed the way in which people talked about racism in Britain. As a more modern take on the issues of prejudice and discrimination, it is an illuminating and confronting read.

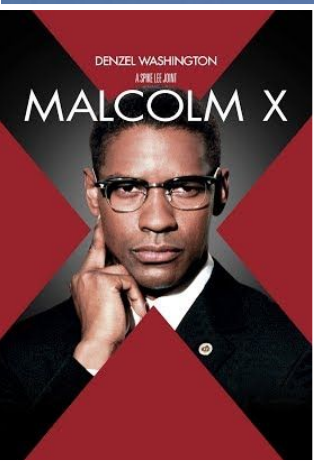


Evaristo's highly modernist novel follows the lives of twelve different characters, mostly female Black Britons, considering race, gender, politics and class. As recognition of its brilliance, it won the 2019 Booker Prize.



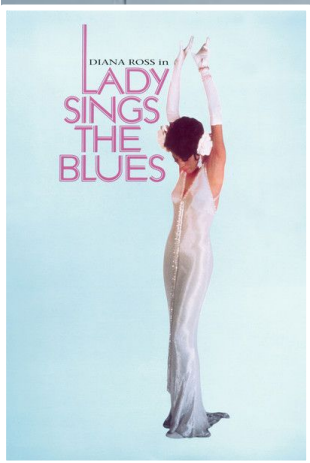
# BLACK HISTORY MONTH: FILM RECOMMENDATIONS

By Sam Williams



### Malcolm X, 1992

A tribute to the controversial black activist and leader of the struggle for black liberation with Denzel Washington giving an extremely grounded performance. Malcolm X is a film so significant during black history month as it conveys a story that is often not learnt in mainstream historic education. Malcolm X is a man who was not only a black rights activist but also a leader of the Islam Faith. His 1963 assassination is portrayed so vividly in this film it is hard to see why his story often is not held in the stature of other activists of the time such as Martin Luther King or Rosa Parks. 7.7/10 on IMDB



### Lady Sings the Blues, 1972

This film is a dramatic biopic of the controversial and adored 1950's singer Billie Holiday. It outlines her rise to stardom and highlights the challenges she had to overcome on account of her race. These aspects of her life story are rarely covered as widely as her famous battle with drug addiction. However, This film shines a light on the way she ignored the racist restrictions and still became incredibly famous with songs as controversial as "hanging fruit", attempting to make the upper class white populations of the 50's more aware of the barbaric executions of black people in the Southern states. She is a figurehead of racial rights as much as she is a talented singer and this is portrayed the best by this film. 7/10 on IMDB



### Mudbound, 2017

This film is a historical drama about post WW2 Southerners battling social hierarchy and racism on top of maintaining a stable living. The factual accuracy and portrayal of emotions by the talented cast make it a very informative and entertaining film, outlining the barbaric social conditions people of colour experienced throughout the 1900's in America. 7.4/10 on IMDB



# Why is Britain Always Looking Backwards? A reassessment of our relationship with the past.

By Olivia Laughton

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The next few decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be defining in many ways. Our global actions against climate change, missions to Mars and new technological and scientific innovations (to name a few) are ascending onto the international stage with rapacious force. Some countries are pioneering these changes, looking forward eagerly and actively engaging in creating this new and better world. Others, however, are stuck in the past, in sad, myopic reflections of the microcosms of their previous glory. And in this, Britain is the chief protagonist.

Britain's relationship with its past has never been easy – but it has been much, much better than its relationship with the future. Perhaps it's the inevitability of a nation at the tail-end of global significance, a once great empire facing isolation – as European relations freeze and the Union itself starts to crumble apart. But our past is not so glorious as we like to think, and the ideas of national heritage that we indulge in are often totally unfounded and the repercussions of these beliefs are affecting our nation's future. Pride is an innate part of human nature, but ours has so dramatically altered the way we look at our history as to distort it dangerously. WW2 is a prime example of the idealised, and prejudiced outlook we have on our past.

A survey by YouGov in 2018 found that a staggering half of Britons believed that Britain did more than the US or the USSR in defeating Hitler and bringing down the Third Reich. Compared to surveys in other countries, it is clear we view our history through a distorted lens of supposed national superiority. In France and Germany 56% and 34% respectively believed America to be the key nation involved in the conflict, closely followed by Russia. We see this unfounded pride in our WW2 actions everywhere – references are in TV adverts, in our statues and museums and (perhaps most belligerently) in the rhetoric of our politics. During the pandemic, Boris Johnson compared the national tragedy to the Battle of Britain, with references to the “blitz spirit” in an emotive appeal to the public. This toxic war rhetoric surrounded Brexit too, in a painful 2016 interview in the Telegraph Johnson stated that the EU was trying to create a fascist superstate like Hitler had wanted to. “Napoleon, Hitler, various people tried this out, and it ends tragically. The EU is an attempt to do this by different methods.”

To blame the politicians, however, does not defeat the cause. The reason the war rhetoric is so often used is because it is so effective: we enjoy hearing it; and are



# Why is Britain Always Looking Backwards? A reassessment of our relationship with the past.

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By Olivia Laughton



simply deaf to the historical facts. Instead, with Stalinist efficiency, we erase from our collective memories the ugly details that are preferable to forget. We like to talk about Winston Churchill defeating the cruelty and barbarism of Hitler but frequently fail to consider our own national heroes' dishonourable and iniquitous political past. For example, the negligible knowledge or national consciousness of Churchill's role in the Bengal Famine. In 1943 over 2.3 million people died of starvation due to a failed British foreign policy of diverting resources to help the war effort in Europe has been utterly wiped from our collective memories and school curriculums alike. In response, Churchill claimed the famine was due to the Indians "breeding like rabbits" and questioned how Mahatma Gandhi was still alive if the shortages were so awful. Indeed, even for his time Churchill was incredibly racist, and before the war following the disasters at Gallipoli he was, in public opinion, an inflammatory and unpopular character. These are again facts we tend to overlook. To many Britons today, Churchill is the archetype, the pinnacle of what it means to be British. Our nostalgic fixation on the past is never clearer than in our reverence and adoration for this controversial figure. In 2002 a BBC survey, millions

of voters declared Churchill to be the greatest Briton of all time, ahead of Shakespeare, Darwin, Newton and Elizabeth I. In 2020, Britons were quick to condemn the death of George Floyd and police brutality across the Atlantic, but when it came to questioning our own national hero, we became defensive and angry, refusing to admit to what was in front of us. We are incapable of taking the criticism of him as anything less than a direct attack on our national identity and are unable to appreciate his numerous political strengths whilst simultaneously acknowledging his shortcomings. In short, we are clinging to our statues because they are the last remaining relics of glory already long gone.



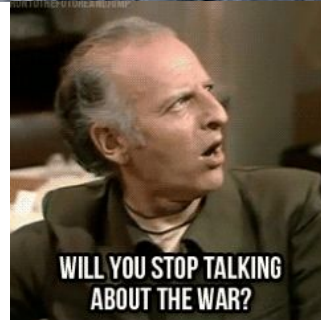


# Why is Britain Always Looking Backwards? A reassessment of our relationship with the past.

By Olivia Laughton



We laugh uproariously at that iconic “Don’t mention the war!” scene in *Fawlty Towers*, where John Cleese’s character Basil is incapable of restraining his WW2-related comments when a German family dines at the hotel. The satirical nature of the scene is genius, but it is staggering that it is still so ubiquitous 48 years later: we still can’t stop mentioning the war. But my point is not that we should stop talking about WW2 – quite the opposite: fascism is on the rise across Europe, seen very recently in Marine le Pen’s contentious election run in France and the rise of Meloni’s Reformist Party in Italy. The oppression of religious and ethnic minorities too is sadly still all too prevalent in today’s world. But often our focus is instead one of singular national glory which is incredibly unique to Britain. We need to seriously question what it is about the war that so defines our national identity – so much more than France, Russia, Germany, Japan, Italy or America – who all also played key parts. These countries have moved forwards, whilst of course remembering and commemorating the horror of those years, they don’t come close to matching the importance the war holds for us Britons – its more than history, it has become identity. WW2 is one example, but perhaps it is in itself stemming from an earlier period in



our history: the supposed golden age of the British Empire. Our need to assert global significance derives from this time, which we use idealistically and whimsically, as a comforting pacifier in the shifting scales of international importance. Collectively, we do not take on enough responsibility for the flip side of imperial power: this wasn’t just a glorious time of wealth, pride and honour- the imperial profits came at a cost: massacres, enslavement, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice and destruction. A bloody legacy we would do well to remember. Another YouGov survey in 2020 discovered that 30% of Britons believe colonies were better off as part of the British empire. The survey was international, and also found that Britain was far higher in this category



# Why is Britain Always Looking Backwards? A reassessment of our relationship with the past.

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By Olivia Laughton



than any other major colonial powers: France, Holland, Italy, Spain, Japan, Germany or Belgium. The link between the results of this survey and racial/religious prejudice or bigotry is not at all strenuous. Britain today is still rife with racism, and I believe that until we begin to understand our history more circumspectly, eradicating these archaic ideas of imperial supremacy, we cannot hope to make this country equal for all. This discloses a shocking level of selective amnesia in our society and vast gaps in our educational system too. As historian and academic David Olusoga explained how ‘the history of the British empire, the chapter of our national story that would have explained to my classmates why a child born in Nigeria was sat among them, was similarly missing from the curriculum.’

Baseless links to our imperial past surround many issues, including one of the most controversial of our time: Brexit. In an LSE blog in 2017, sociologist Dr Roch Dunin-Wasowicz described how “Brexit is intricately connected to Britain’s unaddressed and unredressed imperial past” describing it as “not only an expression of nostalgia for empire, it is also the fruit of empire.” The blog describes how “the prevalence of structural and institutional racism in Britain today made it fertile ground for the effectiveness of the Brexit campaign’s racist and dehumanising rhetoric of “taking back control” ” One of the most

divisive arguments in favour of Brexit is the idea of controlling our borders, repressing the entrance of desperate migrants seeking security within our nation. This is a complex issue, and not one that can be dealt with in a black and white way, but in some of the socio-political endorsements, underlying racism is apparent. Voting Brexit clearly does not make someone racist, but it is telling that “since the referendum, racist hate crime has increased by 16% across Britain, and peaked at a 58% rise in the week following the vote.” This historical rhetoric surrounding Brexit is dangerously out of touch. In our post-Brexit era the treatment of migrants has only worsened: the governmental announcement in September of a plan to deport migrants to Rwanda, a country infamous for its horrific human rights record, is a case in point.

What is needed to move forward is not the same old regressive rhetoric but something innovative and new. The past won’t simply return if we mention it enough; and it’s time our nationalism and collective pride was built on more equal foundations than our ex-colonial prowess and imperial glory, we need to find something that all Britons, whatever their gender, ethnicity or religion, can celebrate in unison. But to do this, we need to fundamentally reassess the way we understand our history, as until we do, we are incapable of moving forwards into the present.



# Race Disparities in Healthcare and Mental Health Treatment

## By Lucy Phillips

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The NHS was founded in 1948 with the aim to deliver free medical care that would meet the needs of everyone, yet the inequalities at an institutional level are still apparent in the 21st century. Alongside this, evidence suggests that people from ethnic minority backgrounds are at higher risk of detainment in secure mental health institutions. The combination of a lack of appropriate care as well as being at a higher risk of mental ill health makes it even more vital to combat this discrimination urgently. Research commissioned by NHS England in 2018 highlights the need for change in this area; its aim was to improve knowledge and understanding so that 'good practice and effective strategies may be implemented'. A few key statistics stand out in this literature review, the first being that people from African Caribbean backgrounds are three times more likely to be diagnosed and admitted to hospital for schizophrenia in comparison to all other ethnic groups in the study. With approximately 24 million people being identified with schizophrenia worldwide by WHO in 2022, it is a huge concern that there is an increased risk of this disease for African Caribbean people. Schizophrenia significantly impairs the way people perceive reality and is characterised by persistent delusions and hallucinations. The access to support that minority ethnic groups have is also

affected, with black and minority ethnic people being less likely to contact their GP regarding mental health care and instead being 40% more likely to access the services through the criminal justice system in comparison to white people. Accessing care at a crisis level not only has a negative impact on the NHS by adding to the pressure on these services, but also can be detrimental on individuals that are having to wait to get the support they need.

Ethnic bias and inequalities continue to affect the treatment and assessment of patients, beginning with a greater uncertainty from doctors when diagnosing mental health conditions. This research shows that clinicians may tend to focus on physical symptoms without acknowledging the effect that mental health can have on seemingly physical conditions. For example, some cardiovascular diseases are complicated further by depression, so it is important to take a holistic approach.

Racism and inequality have a huge impact on mental health, so it is even more important that this is addressed during treatment. The study has proven that people from minority ethnic groups are more likely to be medicated instead of referred to talking therapies which are key to recovery. This cycle of inappropriate and often traumatic experiences in the healthcare system for





# Race Disparities in Healthcare and Mental Health Treatment

## By Lucy Phillips

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**black people and ethnic minority groups is concealed, as health inequalities are not often discussed. The conclusion that this review reached was that policy makers needed to take action to provide better access and improve the experience in its services.**

**An earlier attempt to address these inequalities was the Delivering Race Equality strategy that was introduced by the Department of Health in 2005. It aimed to tackle discrimination with a five-year strategy that, in theory, would show progress in 2010. However, RawOrg compiled a statement in 2010 that believed this attempt ‘was not sufficiently resourced or sustained by government or other agencies.’ Alongside this, the official reports of the DRE programme fail to discuss whether it has succeeded in addressing institutional racism in mental health services, in the way it set out to do.**

**There is no doubt that the programme was needed, following the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and the death of Rocky Bennett in a mental health facility in 1998. The complex and ambitious DRE programme has had mixed outcomes, but it is important to learn from it and, as put by Jayasree Kalathil, ‘Let us hope that whatever is built from the legacy of the DRE programme will work towards creating safer services for all’.**

**In 2010, after the 5-year period in which the DRE programme was run, two further harrowing deaths of black men occurred that proved there was much more to be done. These deaths did not gain much attention but clearly show the remaining discrimination in mental health services. Olaseni Lewis died 3rd September 2010 after police subjected him to prolonged physical restraint during a voluntary stay in Bethlem psychiatric hospital. Nurses logged the incident as involving “violent restraint” and Lewis suffered brainstem death and his life-support was turned off in the early hours of September 4th. It wasn’t until a second coroners’ inquiry in 2017 that the restraint was ruled to be disproportionate, and it was found that the officers had failed to follow training on the restraint of people with medical conditions.**



*Olaseni Lewis*



# Race Disparities in Healthcare and Mental Health Treatment

By Lucy Phillips



The IPCC recommend a review of six police officers involved as a result of these inquiries, but all six were cleared by the Met Police in private hearings. Additionally, the trust that manages the hospital (South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust) received no charges but did make some changes as a result. “Seni’s Law”, known officially as the Mental Health Units Bill 2018, made multiple provisions to limit the use of force on mental health patients. It also required police officers to wear body cameras when working in mental health units, which would’ve been important evidence to get justice for Olanrewaju Lewis. Colin Holt was aged 52 when he too was restrained excessively by police officers on 30th August 2010. An inquest in 2015 concluded that the 3 officers failed to care for Holt after he had been ‘restrained in the prone position with his hands cuffed behind his back...which resulted in the compromise of his breathing and...caused his death by positional asphyxia’. The entrance of police into Colin’s property was also unlawful; he had the hospital that he was sectioned in and was now in private premises where police would need a warrant to enter. After an IPCC investigation, two officers were prosecuted for misconduct in public office however they were later cleared. PC Leigh retired from the force prior to the misconduct trial and PC Bowdery was dismissed following a hearing in

2015. Whilst both officers are no longer in the police force, it is clear there should be significant consequences for these actions that resulted in the death of Colin Holt who had no history of violence.



Many people are aware that racism is prevalent in society; the powerful protests after the death of George Floyd in 2020 shone a light on police brutality in America. Such cases may seem alien to British people, but the two deaths discussed above are just a handful of many cases in the UK. In 2020/2021, 85,268 racially aggravated offences were recorded. British headlines are not often filled with stories of racially motivated violence, but it is clear that police brutality and racism are not an exclusively American problem. There is plenty of work to do in acknowledging racism in the UK, with the first step being to educate and understand this discrimination.



# World Mental Health Day

By Helen Turnbull



Monday the 10th of October marks the World Mental Health day - a day where we all recognise struggling with mental health and the importance of speaking up about how we feel. It was established in 1992 by the World Federation for Mental Health, and the theme varies each year - the theme for this year is 'Make mental health and wellbeing for all a global priority'. With statistics showing 1 in 5 people having suicidal thoughts and over 8 million people experiencing anxiety in the UK (yet less than 50% of people able to access treatment), it is paramount that as students we speak up about how we feel, especially during these two years as we face decisions about our futures. Last week in the sixth form, teachers and mental health prefects led a profound assembly about their own experiences struggling with mental health. From anxiety and OCD, to self-harm and family issues, these testimonials shined a light onto the many issues that some face in their lives. But these testimonials represented the power of speaking out about mental health issues, as it sparked many open conversations about how we truly felt, instead of the conventional "I'm fine".

The NHS issued 'Small actions that can make a big difference':

- Taking time to do mindful breathing by breathing in and out slowly

- Planning an hour of screen-free time before bed
- Reviewing your to-do list and breaking down your biggest tasks into smaller, easier-to-manage chunks
- Taking a walk
- Seeing or getting in contact with a friend or loved one.

However, if anyone is feeling like they are struggling with their mental health, please get in touch with one of the following support staff at Beechen:

Susie Ingram and Tara Gretton (Solution-Focused counsellors), the School nurse and Mrs Price and Mrs Watts (Year 12 and 13 pastoral support) as well as the mental health prefects. All staff are more than happy to help us with our struggles - and look out for staff with green in their lanyards which means they're trained in Solution Focused therapy.





# In Black and White by Alexandra Wilson: Book Review

By Maria Ramadan

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**Alexandra Wilson grew up in Essex as the eldest of four children. Her mother is White British, her father is Black British and her paternal grandparents were born in Jamaica and came to England as part of the Windrush generation. She studied at Oxford University and was awarded the first Queen's scholarship by the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple, a scholarship awarded to students showing exceptional promise in a career at the Bar. In one of her most recent books, 'In Black and White', Wilson explores the scrutiny and misrepresentation many minorities face in the hands of UK legislation.**

**In her introduction of the novel, Wilson recalls one of the most traumatic events she experienced in adolescence: the brutal killing of her family friend, Ayo. Wilson states that "his death changed me", and as a result, sparked her pursuit for answers surrounding Ayo's untimely death. Though it was and still is an unfortunate exposure to violence and oppression, Wilson accredits the experience and how it influenced her future career and participation in Law. Her eloquent use of statistics alongside her array of established opinion, makes for a remarkable memoir of how much work there is still do be done for minorities coping with crime and violence within their communities in Britain. Even as children, violence and**

**racism posed as a consistent burden on families, causing irrevocable damage to generations to come. Though Wilson recognises the necessity for all crimes to be appropriately prosecuted, she reiterates from the beginning of the book that, "it is important for people who are accused of crimes to be properly represented in proceedings that are likely to change their lives". Here, she recognises the impact both prosecutor and defendant have on the fate of the other; how drastically they fight on opposite ends of the spectrum, as well as recognising, the permanent repercussions that can be inflicted on both individuals.**

**A stoic and balanced argument is sustained throughout the chapters as Wilson further speaks of her work in pro bono and defence cases, as well as her thoughts on how more women should be more incorporated in the practice of law. This is reinforced when Wilson argues that "women often feel more comfortable talking to other women about sexual harassment and sexism at work. The mere presence of more senior women may reduce the overall of sexual harassment in the profession." The wider argument of how cases of sexism in the legal profession should be combatted is addressed, as Wilson explains, that the impacts of the issues that women and minorities alike face can be reduced if these communities begin to band together**



# In Black and White by Alexandra Wilson: Book Review

By Maria Ramadan

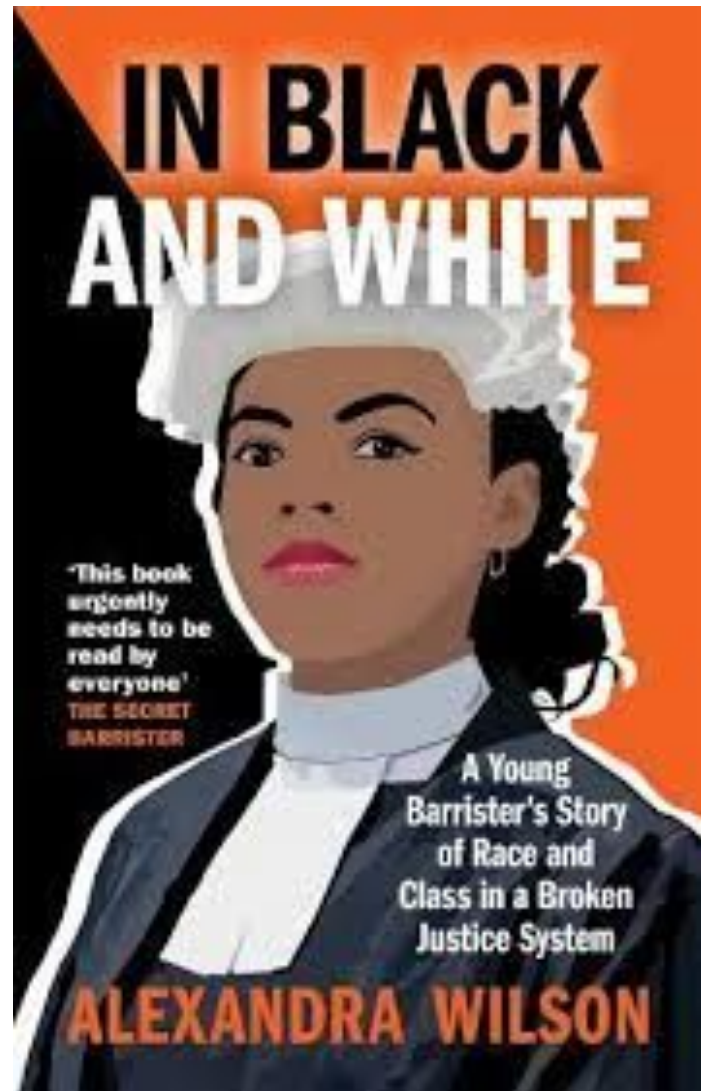
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and believe that a combined voice can augment the cause for change; that in standing together and protecting ourselves and others can in fact make a difference, even in the most prestigious and ancient fields, there is always room for improvement and adaptation.

argument is an inspiration to young people in every sector of society and in the appreciation of her heritage, conveys a powerful message that is applicable now, more than ever.

In the memoir, Wilson critiques the possibly outdated nature the Law upholds, suggesting that though legislation should act as a decisive boundary between right and wrong, it should never remove the possibility to improve and refine its ability to govern society. In her final summaries of the novel, Wilson admits that her career still remains emotionally challenging. Regulating her investment in her clients' lives and the relationship with her own life still proves a struggle that she tries to navigate daily. Yet, the strength that she gained from her sometimes tempestuous and "unconventional" background, can be viewed as paving the way for future individuals of minority and overlooked communities, to begin the climb up the ladder of law and legislation. Though it is a demanding and lengthy profession, the daunting aspects of it can be the most rewarding. Holistically, the novel is an eye-opening look into the broad profession of UK Law, that in my opinion, deserves the recognition and commendable insight it has received. Wilson's concise and witty





# Meet the Prefects!

By Will Mckim



**Olivia Laughton - Head Girl**  
What is your favorite part of your role?  
*Giving back to Beechen by making positive change. Also getting to spend time with Will, Azad and Lucy :)*  
On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?  
*A nutribullet for tropical smoothies.*

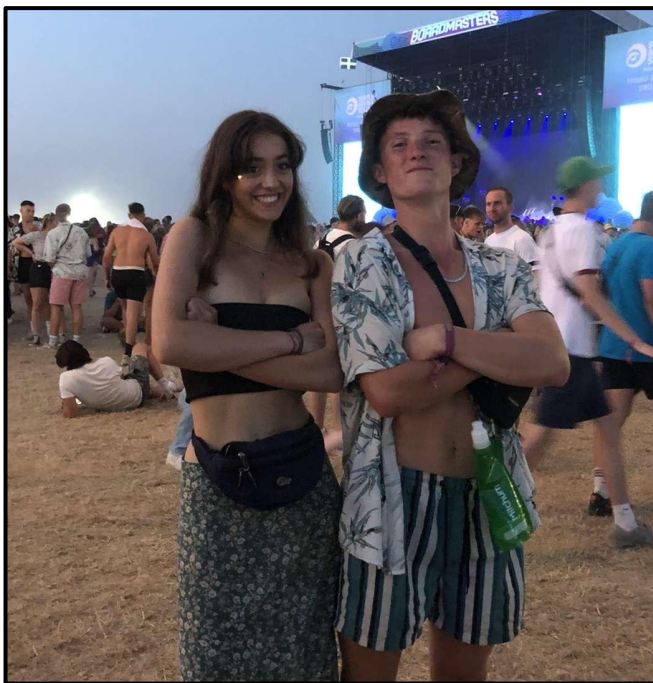
On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?  
*I would bring a surfboard because at least then you can enjoy it!*

**Lucy Craig Jones - Deputy Head Girl**  
What is your favorite part of your role?  
*I like being able to make a difference for the school and that my role allows me to do so.*

On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?  
*Probably sun cream - I burn easily and don't want wrinkly skin when I'm older.*

**Azad Ozdilek - Deputy Head Boy**  
What is your favorite part of your role?  
*Helping out the school in every way I can.*

On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?  
*Ethan Nash.*



**Will McKim - Head Boy**  
What is your favorite part of your role?  
*I love organizing events for the students and being a voice for the students to the teachers to make changes around the school to improve school life in general. One of the best parts is having a year 7 fan club.*





# Meet the Prefects!

By Will Mckim



**Charlie Stevens - Kipling House Prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**  
*Representing the greatest house in school and helping support teams in house events.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*A hammock so I can sleep very soundly.*



*welcomed when first joining the school.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*My airpods as I always need music!*

**Zack Balls - Byron House prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**  
*To get all the students and teachers of each house interacting with each other and to keep up a healthy competition between the houses to get the best of the pupils. I particularly like coming up with ideas that everyone will love and get involved with to ensure that the time spent at Beechen is as memorable as possible.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*A yacht so I could sail to multiple desert islands. ;)*



**Helen Turnbull - Shakespeare House Prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**  
*To bring the lower and upper school together through house competitions and activities, thus creating a more cohesive, family-like environment at school. I really enjoy my participation with the lower school and having the ability to give back to Beechen, as Beechen has given me so many opportunities. I like to be able to welcome students as i was*



# Meet the Prefects!

By Will Mckim



**Jodhi Matthews - Milton House prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*I like working with the other prefects to come up with new ideas which we can bring to the school, like talent shows, inter house events and fundraisers.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*My phone.*



**Jemima Read - Sport Prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*To encourage people to get involved in sports in sixth form and arrange teams and play other schools so that everyone can enjoy sport.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*Hockey stick*

**Kate Stephens - Sport Prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*To make sure people feel included in sports at school.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*A plane to get out of there!*

**Harry Stamp - Mental Health prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*Being able to express the importance of mental health awareness to as many people as possible and being an example as someone who is comfortable with talking about their feelings and encouraging others to do the same.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*I would bring a record player with records.*







## Meet the Prefects!

By Will Mckim



**Lucy Phillips - Senior prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*Being able to contribute ideas in meetings and getting involved with medsoc next term.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*An ipod to listen to music.*

**George Walker -Senior prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*Supporting other prefects in their jobs as I love helping other people because I enjoy seeing people happy. I also enjoy helping out with the rowing.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*Golf clubs and unlimited balls.*



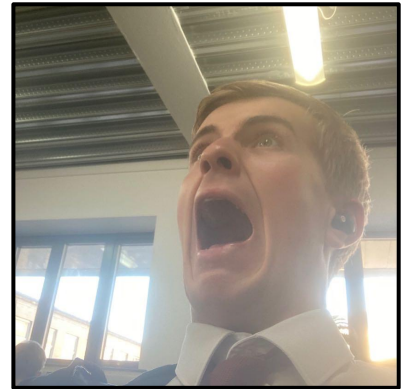
**Dan Eggleton - Senior Prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*I like helping with anything that's going on and supporting younger years with their learning and a major benefit is going into lunch early.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*A house.*



**Izzy Lucas - Senior prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*Helping to organize events with the other prefects.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*A king size bed!*

**Maria Ramadan - Social Secretary**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*Being able to bring the school together and event planning.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*A camera to capture the moment*



## Meet the Prefects!

By Will Mckim



**Sterling Smith - Senior linguist**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*My favourite part about my role is being able to make the school a better place and promoting language learning throughout.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*I would take a friend so it would be jokes.*



**Vita Wall - Senior linguist**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*Promoting and planning events involved with language learning and being able to interact with younger members of the school and encourage it.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*Mobile phone.*

**Siena Deane - Equalities prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*Seeing change in the school with more awareness against stigmas regarding equality.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*A boat with fuel to escape.*

**Amelia Hubbard - Equalities Prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*I enjoy working on spreading awareness of issues to do with prejudice but also getting to chat to lots of different people and helping them feel comfortable to be themselves at Beechen.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*My bed, because I get so impatient and annoyed if I don't get enough sleep.*





# Meet the Prefects!

## By Will Mckim



**Fergal McDonald - Social Secretary**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*I will plan events for the pupils throughout the year whether it be Bands night or the Variety show, creating a fun environment where year groups should be able to mix with each other.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*A tennis ball to give me something to do.*

**Paul Sejean - Community Prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*My favourite part is being able to interact with different people and try to help however I can.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*PlayStation*

**Siena Carter - Mental Health prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*Working alongside Harry to provide the best support the school can offer and being a friendly face you can talk to! I love being able to see a physical change in people being more open about the subject of mental health, but also stepping completely out of my comfort zone to help others.*

**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*I would bring an endless supply of chocolate!!*

**Sarah Clark - Community Prefect**

**What is your favorite part of your role?**

*Promoting relationships between upper and lower sixth. I really like how much I have to talk to different people and work in groups to gather and execute ideas, rather than working in isolation.*

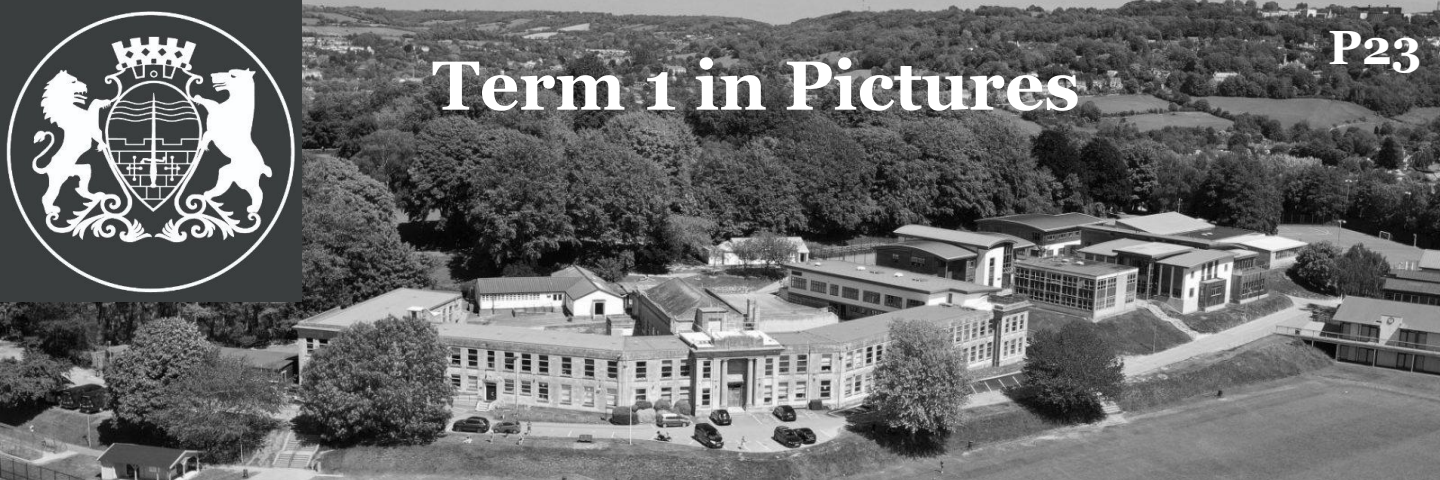
**On a desert island what luxury item would you bring with you?**

*A nice hoodie.*





# Term 1 in Pictures



# Our PTA



## PTA Team 2021/2022

We are a friendly group of parents/ staff aiming to raise funds to benefit the whole school. New faces are always welcome and we generally hold 6 meetings a year at the school. Get in touch, it's a great way to 'give a little back' and get involved with your son's school.

## How/where have past raised funds been spent?

Thanks to your help, we've been able to fund the following;

- New multipurpose clubhouse next to tennis courts
- Mental health wellbeing services
- Design and technology 3D printer
- Library renovation
- Atlases for geography dept.
- Printmaking equipment for the art dept.
- Camcorder for the DT/Science club
- Foreign film club
- New dictionaries
- Remote control car for car club
- Equipment for the sport department

Whilst there are the current restrictions in place, we've been unable to do our regular fundraising events. In the meantime, please support your school charity virtually and share these five charitable fundraising ideas with your family and friends. Thank you so much.

## Our Crowdfunding campaign

Please donate what you can afford.

<https://app.investmycommunity.com/ptabeechen2465>

Focusing on:

- Mental health services within school
- IT equipment
- Completion of the Clubhouse amenities

In total during the last academic year, we managed to raise an incredible £34,000 for Beechen Cliff!! Thank you to everyone who contributed and we would love to see even more of you involved in the Beechen Cliff PTA!





# Our Quick Links

## Sixth Form Prospectus

<https://www.beechencliff.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/bcs-sixth-form-2021-website.pdf>

## BCS Sixth Form Website

<https://www.beechencliff.org.uk/sixth-form/>

## BCS GCSE/A-Level Information

<https://www.beechencliff.org.uk/curriculum-assessment/exams-assessment/exam-board-info-2/>

## Beechen Cliff Mental Health

<https://www.beechencliff.org.uk/about/mental-health/>

## Extra Curricular Information

<https://www.beechencliff.org.uk/extra-curricular/>

## Boys in Mind

<https://boysinmind.co.uk/>

## The MSNP Trust

<https://www.midsomernortonschoolpartnership.com/>



# Gryphon

The Beechen Cliff Magazine for  
students, by students



**We would like to give huge thanks to everybody  
who contributed to this issue of GRYPHON.**

**If you would like to be a part of our next issue  
then please get in touch with one of our editors:**

**[@6laughton.olivia@beechencliff.org.uk](mailto:@6laughton.olivia@beechencliff.org.uk)**

**[@6barnes.adriana@beechencliff.org.uk](mailto:@6barnes.adriana@beechencliff.org.uk)**

**[@6turnbull.helen@beechencliff.org.uk](mailto:@6turnbull.helen@beechencliff.org.uk)**

**[@6ramadan.maria@beechencliff.org.uk](mailto:@6ramadan.maria@beechencliff.org.uk)**

**We cannot wait to hear from you!**