

THE MO

Fantastic Beasts AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

NANOWRIMO

Could you write 50,000 words in a month?

"I AM AGAINST TINSEL"

The dos and don't of Christmas

READY, SET, BAKE!

GBBO - we remember you fondly.

TRUMP OR CLINTON?

The world wonders what will happen now

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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Written by the students for the students.

After a nice relaxing half term, we're back and ready with a fresh issue of The MO for you to enjoy!

It's crazy to think that already two months of school have passed and that 2016 is nearly over. But I don't think 2016 can be over without at least showing us a little bit of snow. So far, all we've had is a little dusting of frost, and temperatures slowly dropping closer and closer towards zero (and then inevitably past zero into the negatives); it has to be a sure sign that winter is coming. But here's hoping that we get a white holiday!

Meanwhile, to keep you feeling comforted and warm as you nuzzle up in blankets, the writers of

The MO have banded together to give you a smashing Winter issue! This month, we'll give you the ins and outs of the American Election, a reminder of what we have gained from the losses we have endured and finally some philosophy to keep you thinking.

Sadly, we have had to hold The Definite Article for December. Fear not, Mr Hewitt will be with you in the new year!

We hope you enjoy!

NC x

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A FANTASTIC FIND

Wizards, magic, New York and the 1920s. What more could anyone want?

Recently, I had my head buried in a textbook for something that would not aid my studies in any shape or form (well, not my muggle studies, anyway).

You would think that the book would allude to what new Harry Potter plot may be, but it is quite to the contrary. *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* is entirely factual with information about the creatures you may encounter in the wizarding world – creatures range from nifflers to fwoopers. So, I wasn't sure what to expect from the film; but I didn't know why I was at all apprehensive.

I have nothing but positive things to say about the film. Being able to experience the magic in a new time and setting, really connected me with the wizarding world; consolidating the dreams and questions we had about the existence of magic. It was not only the fact that we saw more beasts, but that we could see how our fellow witches and wizards from across the Atlantic live.

With a new protagonist at the wand, this film had absolutely everything - heart-warming and heart-wrenching moments. I cannot deny that the new cast of witches and wizards could not have been better, and you can tell that the whole film team put a lot of thought into their characters that came to life.

With Eddie Redmayne as the infamous magizoologist, Newt Scamander, he succeeded in bringing to life the character that was previously just a name on a textbook, and, in the process, brought a new dynamic to the magical world. With *Fantastic Beasts*, we were given the chance to see what it was like to be someone other than a student striving to save the entire world; it truly brought to light how Gryffindors aren't the only heroes.

Previous fans to the films need to keep in mind that this is not another Harry Potter film; but rather another story in the same world, so don't despair if you don't see your favourite trio. But just because it is in another time does not mean you won't recognise anything in this favourite world of ours.

I can assure you that to watch this film, you don't need to see the previous eight Harry Potter films to understand this one. You can be content with sitting back, relaxing and just watching *Fantastic Beasts*. If you aren't familiar with the magical world there is no Harry Potter jargon that you need to worry about, since our Queen of Literature has ensured that everything from the magical touch of on the production to the screenplay of the film flows seamlessly. Needless to say, JK Rowling has done it once again and created a story that everyone in the audience can get lost in and expanding on our imaginations for what the wizarding world really is.

As all good films should, *Fantastic Beasts* transports you to another world before coming home to imagine what could have been. So, to all my film enthusiasts, Potterheads and everyone else, I urge you to go see this film. You will laugh, you will cry, but most of all, you will enjoy.



“You sort of start thinking anything’s possible if you’ve got enough nerve.”

COMPETITION

For those who know that Harry is a true hero, that are fans of the Fantastic Beasts and who truly revel in Rowling this competition is right up your street.

WIN

The opportunity to have your work featured in January’s edition of ‘The Mo’ and the win a prize from the House Points cabinet!

All you have to do is write a 500 word story, or the opening of a much longer piece that is inspired by Rowling’s *Harry Potter*.

Hagrid, Hermione or Snape could be your inspiration; you could explore life after Hogwarts, St Mungos or Malfoy Manor. Think of this as your very own fan fiction and you really are the master of your own wizardry.

Entries need to: have a title, have your name on them, be typed and emailed to **Ms Redfern by 17th January 2017.**



NATIONAL WRITERS MONTH

Sophie Brown

It's the month of November, which for most people this will mean: chilly cold mornings; the thought of upcoming mocks and the desire for the Christmas holidays just to come a tiny bit quicker... But for a small minority of people – the writers that is – this is the month where we huddle down in our rooms with a cup of tea for company, while our fingers fly over keypads as we desperately try to achieve our goal set by National Novel Writing Month—or Nanowrimo for short.

What actually is Nanowrimo? Well, National Novel Writing Month is exactly how it sounds, on November 1st, writers begin working towards the goal of writing a 50,000-word novel to be finished by 11:59 PM on November 30. Throughout the month you upload your word count by competing in word sprints, attending events and finding inspiration from other fellow Nanowrimo writers. It sounds pretty intense doesn't it? I mean writing a whole novel in a month can sound quite daunting but actually this month is helpful for aspiring writers as it makes sure that the words in the brain can finally get down on the screen. If, like me, you're a procrastinating writer who goes through waves of writing for a couple of chapters a month, to doing absolutely nothing for the other six months - this program can really help spur you on, getting you over that dreaded "writer's block" and back to your beloved world of words.

Don't be fooled in to thinking that you can't write a novel in a month. A lot of famous authors use this opportunity to write their award-winning books, some of which include: *Water for Elephants*

by Sarah Gruen, *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern, *Cinder* by Marissa Meyer and *Fangirl* by Rainbow Rowell. Now, don't think that the novel has to be perfect by the end of the month – no one is expecting that! But what this month offers is the opportunity to finally get down your first draft and then you can use Camp Nanowrimo to edit those embarrassing first paragraphs until they're perfect.

So, what do you do if you are actually interested? Well by now it's a bit late to start – but there is always next year! My advice for you is to spend next October planning, because although it would be very, very nice just to write without planning, when you do come to write, you will be stumbling and tripping over plot points! So use October wisely, build up your world to the finest details, think out your plot making sure there are no loose links or gaping holes and start to get to know your characters. It's all well and good knowing their personality and name but what about the other stuff? You will want to make them as realistic as possible, someone you and others can relate to – flesh them out a bit: how are they going to develop; what are their deepest darkest secrets? Now it's the week before November, join up to the Nanowrimo website – they will sort out the finer details and help you finally start!

Then on the 1st... well, you better start writing!



S.C.I.O.N

SOPHIE BROWN

America and the rest of the world are now contemplating what America is going to be like under Trump. Has his victory shown the true colours of America and sparked a movement that is quite simply terrifying? Will all his promises of building a wall, kicking out the immigrants and getting rid of Obama Care happen? It's not very likely, but a world where Trump is president may not be a very pleasant one.

However, I don't want to discuss Trump. No! It's also exactly four months until the final novel of the Bone Season is released. A series, written by the young and talented Samantha Shannon, that follows the life of a girl called Paige in a new world where humans are in connection with spirits and ghost. It's been praised by thousands and has taken Young Adult Literature to a new level of reading, with the no nonsense female lead and the subtle mix of fantasy and sci-fi.

But why am I talking about a new book release when I was talking about the US elections? What's the connection you say? Well nothing much... apart from one word: Scion.

A word that means a decedent from a noble family.

A few days ago, Trump's company released a statement that said they have a new company name that deals with the "we" economy and the "boom" market. And this very company is called *Scion*. Although the company intentions are not entirely clear, it is something definite and something that is involved with Trump. But again you're saying – I don't see how this relates to a new Young Adult novel? Well, in this rising star of

a series, I forgot to mention that the genre of the books is dystopian. Dystopian. And in this dystopian world, people are controlled by an ever growing government that is moving across Europe called ... wait for it—Scion. Yes, Scion. Scion is responsible for imprisoning people who have control over their human spirit – in a simpler statement, locking up people who are *different* to them.

It's not just the names that are similar. The connection between the two scares me most. On one hand, we have a dystopian government who control the future, and here we have a man who could quite possibly start another world war. What I'm saying is, we might think that nothing much will change under Trump; but going back to the roots of sexism and racism – the roots we thought we were only just overcoming is frightening. Who is to say that our world isn't moving towards a dystopian setting similar to the ones we see on screen and on paper, the ones that all of us can't wrap our heads around because of the immorality of it?

Whilst Clinton may be walking quietly away from politics, in the novel we see Paige standing forth and fighting against the dangers of Scion. Here's hoping that in time there will be a real life Paige to stand against the 'locker room' banter, the threat of walls and the abomination of what Trump had spouted.



Trump VS Clinton

Alec Baldwin and Kate McKinnon took over the 'SNL' to show us their version of the USA presidential debate. And I must say, it was spot on.

From the precise re-enactment of the political celebrities, to the “shots” fired during the debate: it strikes me that the parody was a slightly “lemonade” version of reality.

When there are two devils on your shoulder, who are you going to vote for? We can all agree that this election had been nothing but a reality show. Lines were scripted and

But when it came down to it, all we want is a president who will keep their cool, right? And both candidates certainly seemed to present themselves as fairly unflappable—even with FBI investigations just days before the election.

No matter if you're a Democrat or a Republican; I think we can all agree that Saturday Night Live's parody was actually very close to the mark.



A WORLD IN REWIND

Tiggy Harris

As you can imagine, I write this with a very heavy heart. Quite honestly, when I woke to find the results of the US election I thought it was a joke. Disbelief soon turned into shock, then nausea, then reality kicked in and the terror began to spread. This bully, this buffoon, this billionaire, is the most powerful man in the world.

The American Brexit. The phrase not only sums up the shock and fear that this result has induced, but demonstrates an understanding of the connection, the magnitude of the global feeling. The worldwide shift towards the right is now undeniable and as long as people are exploited and feeling increasingly marginalised by the political elite, they will look for someone to bring them out of the darkness.

Trump managed to tap into this; he separated himself from the Washington elite and offered something different. He gave people a reason (however ludicrous) for their suffering and something tangible to blame. He promised them greatness.

This victory carries a clear message: the system simply isn't working.

Studies show that official US unemployment rate is only 5%, but real wages have barely budged for decades. The living conditions of American workers have been static or falling since the 1970s. The \$4 an hour average of private-sector workers in 1973 represented more purchasing power than today's \$21 average. Some 43 million Americans – one in six – are officially classed as living in poverty. Too many people are being left behind. With escalating inequality and falling living standards, it is no wonder that so many are becoming disillusioned. The tragedy is of course that instead of looking to the Jeremy Corbyn's and the Bernie Sanders' of the world, people are turning to the extremists because they offer a platform to express feelings of anger and hatred. There are cer-

tainly some echoes of history resonating in our modern world.

The scale of the global surge to the far-right is terrifying; characters like Farage, Szydlo, and Le Pen crop up on the world stage and are heard; aggressive bigotry is no longer written in an history book, it is a dark and modern reality. Trump's victory gives encouragement to the far-right everywhere; a world that could turn out to be this openly racist, Islamophobic, and anti-migrant. It encourages people to segregate themselves, to look down on each other, to push aside the disadvantaged. Make no mistake, this is creeping fascism.

The election of this businessman only legitimises the hate.

If this bigot can become the President of the most powerful country in the world, anyone can spread their intolerant, contemptuous prejudice, and do it freely.

If the President is a bigot, it becomes acceptable to dehumanise women. It becomes acceptable to terrorise ethnic minorities, to attack the LGBT+ community, to sneer at a disabled person in the street.

Trump shows people that racism, sexism, homophobia, and all the other forms of mindless hatred are not only acceptable, but justified, and he has brought this into mainstream politics and used it to win.



PHILOSOPHICAL RAMBLINGS:

DR MURRAY'S MORAL ARGUMENT

Philosophical Quote:

"He who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals." – Immanuel Kant.

I was set with the task of writing something philosophical that vaguely relates to Christmas. I failed. Christmas is a time of joy and good will and I've found most philosophies are about problems in the world, and usually involve some sort of death. So instead I've decided to talk about Kant's moral argument because, even though it's not remotely related to Christmas, it has the need for belief in not only a higher being but also in humanity's goodness.

Kant's moral argument was developed to prove God's existence, but even Kant himself said that it wasn't full proof and that there were much better theories that prove God. Nonetheless, the argument states that moral actions are based on reason, and good moral action comes from good reasoning. For example, you would help an old lady cross the street so she doesn't get hurt. This is what Kant would call a duty, it is what we 'ought' to do.

Duties are considered to always be right as they come from God, and God is said to be omnibenevolent (all-loving). However, Kant went one step further to explain how God makes the reasoning good. He suggested the idea of 'Summon Bonum', an afterlife that rewards all the duties (good actions) that can be found on Earth. It is essentially Kant's form of heaven, but this heaven is what makes good reasoning, good. Kant observed that usually bad actions would give an individual more—for instance, stealing rewards people with the object stolen. So, Kant believed there must be a place where good actions are rewarded more; this is Summon Bonum – the place that reveals the idea of what we 'ought' to do, and makes the distinction be-

tween right and wrong. From here, Kant said that God must have created Summon Bonum and therefore that in itself is proof of God. Of course, this is taking huge leaps in observation, but what's more interesting is how Kant said we should follow our duties.

Since our duties are rewarded in Summon Bonum, Kant believed they should be done just for that reason. Going back to the old lady example, Kant would think helping an old lady because you felt you should and it's the right thing to do, would be a good reason and you would be fulfilling your duty. However, if you helped an old woman because you were paid or wanted to impress your friends, then you aren't completing your duty as you haven't done the action just because you should. This in Kant's eyes was wrong, everyone should do what is right because it is right and for no other reason.

Kant's moral argument is focussed on the idea that everybody knows what they 'ought' to do. This is much debated as it suggests this is true of serial killers and rapists too. However, the idea that there are general morals that everyone follows is a sound one, whether it is from God, or not, is up to the individual.

At any rate, I hope we can all do what is right just out of the kindness of our hearts this Christmas.



THE GREAT BRITISH BREAK UP?

KATE MERCER

'What even is Bake Off without Mary Berry?'

Time to hang up the aprons, brush off the flour and close down the tent – the 7th series of the Great British Bake Off has ended. But since it's saying goodbye to the BBC, has the cookie really crumbled?

With 15.1 million viewers watching the final this year, and the entire show becoming the UK's most watched program in 2015, we feel that it is too soon to say goodbye to the original GBBO family of Paul, Mary, Mel and Sue. As the popularity grew year by year, we were horrified when Britain's Queen of Cakes and favourite 'TV Grandma', Mary Berry, announced in September that she would be leaving the tent forever as it moves from BBC One to Channel 4. Berry says that her time on the show has been a 'privilege' and an 'honour'; however, she declined the offer to move to Channel 4 out of 'loyalty' to the BBC, since, in her words they have 'matured' her over the years.

Moreover, Berry says that she is 'sad for the audience who may not be ready for change' – which is the majority of Twitter. 'Gutted' fans of the show have been mourning at the thought of Mary leaving, saying that they 'can't cope', 'it's the end of the world' and that 'The only person who can replace Mary Berry on #GBBO is the actual Queen'. But are Mary, Mel and Sue actually 'leaving'? With Mel and Sue deciding to not 'follow the dough' when Channel 4 takes over and Mary standing her ground, you can't blame them for doing what they wanted to do. While Mary stays with the BBC, it's Paul (Hollywood has signed a 3 year contract with Channel 4) and the show itself who leaving. Whilst Hollywood stated that he 'will miss Mary, Mel and Sue a lot', fans on

Twitter were calling him a 'traitor'. Overall, there's an classiness in the de-



parture of the three ladies of the GBBO team. Their quiet resilience has made them all the more respectful and understanding.

Let's not forget the comedy duo of Mel and Sue who have presented the show with a dash of delight for the past 7 years. First of all, we will miss them for their friendship. The chemistry between the friends on screen shows how close they are. It is clear that they really are enjoying themselves. While you're watching, you almost wish that you could stand alongside them and feel like you're part of their friendship too.

Secondly, they express British humour perfectly. If they're not bouncing witty comments to each other, they're poking their noses over the Baker's shoulders to make a cheeky comment, knowing that the bakers are cringing their way through it so they can get on with their meringues. However hard you cringe at their glorious puns, you can't help but adore the impact they both have on the show – personally, without them the show is toast!

Finally, the 6 words that make Bake Off great: "On your marks, get set, BAKE!"

For the 10 million of us who watch every week, we are of course gutted to see the end of an era; however, the show must go on. With three precious members of the GBBO team saying goodbye, there are rumours flying about who could will take the baton. Names like, veteran broadcaster Danny Baker, The IT Crowd's Richard Ayoade and Jamie Oliver have all been put in to the mix.

We may be contemplating the 2017 series with bitter sweet anticipation, but who knows... it might retain its magic. After all, we all love a reference to the soggy bottom!

DEFINING MOMENT

Rudy Farrell

My shoes slipped on the shiny airport floor, my laces trailing behind me as I stood, trembling as I took my boarding pass out of my pocket. I looked up at the destinations board, positioned above my head, watching as the times switched between every place in the world.

I saw a crowd slowly emerging, with heads all looking desperately for their flights. Their eyes darting from left to right, and back again. What about mine? Wonder filled my mind, as I waited, staring intently at this board; waiting for the moment I had been anticipating for so long. Then, the moment I have been waiting for had finally arrived.

Trying in vain to conceal my excitement, I took a long, slow, deep breath. I wanted it to last an eternity. Slowly and steadily, in a whirl of colour, the words I longed for

appeared one by one. I held my breath as I focused on the board. Then, letter by letter it became real.

There it was: **London to Beijing BA0039 London Heathrow (LHR) Terminal 5 scheduled Departure 16:35.**

Adrenaline filled my body with red hot excitement. The vast ocean of turquoise-hoodied teenagers engulfed me; I felt like a mere pebble amongst a forceful tide. But I am not a pebble; I am akin to this wave. I pulled my hood up and ran to join them, my head swimming with excitement. We formed orderly lines and began to move as one, much like Neptune's soldiers. Step by step, we made our way towards the tunnel, beyond which the giant BA aeroplane waited to take flight. I waited and stood proudly, like a regal eagle about to take flight. It was only then that a wide grin broke across my face. In twelve short hours, the wonders of China would greet me and I would be in an entirely different place.

SPORTS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

BBC Sports Personality of the Year is given out every December to an athlete with a great sporting achievement from some point within the last 12 months. The prestigious award has been given to sporting icons of the past such as Bradley Wiggins, after winning the Tour de France; Andrew Flintoff, for his Ashes triumph back in 2005; David Beckham in 2001, for his fantastic football achievements and Torvill and Dean all the way back in 1984, after receiving the highest marks ever in an Olympic ice dancing competition.

Many British legends have won the prestigious award, but who could this year? Could it be Andy Murray, who currently finds himself number 1 in the tennis ATP rankings for the first time ever in his career? Or could Anthony Joshua win it, after he became the IBF World champion? It could possibly be Mo Farah, who famously retained his 5000m and 10000m titles at the Olympics. Another name being speculated is also Jamie Vardy; the Leicester superstar had risen the ranks of football to lead Leicester to their first premier league title and produce one of the greatest underdog stories the world of sport has ever seen. All are admirable contenders but let's weigh up their 2016 achievements.

Firstly, Andy Murray has had a dream year in tennis. Not only did he win his second Wimbledon crown, but he also

retained his Olympic singles gold medal – becoming the first person ever to do so. All of this, along with a career-high 8 tour-level titles and reaching the top of the ATP rankings, which made him the first Brit to do so. This has made Murray the bookies favourite to take the crown.

Next there's Anthony Joshua. He has kept his 100% record in boxing and won his first ever world boxing title. He also became the first person ever to hold both the Olympic gold medal and be a world champion at the same time. Joshua is in the mix with the bookmakers being the 7th favourite.

But let's not forget Mo Farah, who also has a big chance of becoming sports personality this year. He famously retained his 5000m and 10,000m crowns at the Olympics in Rio. With Farah deciding he would hang up his running spikes in 2017, could it be an amazing send off for the man famous for the 'MoBot'. He's currently 5th favourite, but is the most likely to beat Andy Murray to the crown.

Lastly, you have the underdog. Jamie Vardy led the biggest sporting achievement of 2016; his goals fired Leicester to win the premier league. At 5000/1 before the season started, Leicester were already relegation favourites. However Vardy's record-breaking goals, which led to him scoring in 11 successive Premier League games, emulating a previous record set by Premier League legend Ruud Van Nistelrooy; which all led to Leicester winning the title. Although being against the odds to win the sports personality of the year at 150/1, why couldn't the underdog do it again?

IS STRICTLY STRICTLY FOR DANCERS?

The popular ballroom-Latin dance show has been on our screens for many years, but it begs the question: is the show something that is exclusive for only the dancers to watch?

Do you know your salsa from your samba? What about your cha-cha-cha, from your jive?

Perhaps a couple of years back, the question would have been nothing but a foreign language, but Strictly Come Dancing has become more than the glitter and glam, it has become a way of life. Whether they like to admit it or not, the British public has familiarised themselves with ballroom and Latin dances, as well as the terms that used to describe it. We are now able to make an educated decision on who to keep and who to resign to the dreaded dance-off., based not on celebrity credentials but on heel-leads.

But it makes me wonder, when Strictly started, was it done with dancers in mind or the public? Perhaps it was something that was edging towards those that know how to dance, but it's also possible that producers had altered the show to appeal more to the public. From there, the main thing the producers would have had to solve was to try and grab people's attentions – probably through the use of glitter – and then maintain that audience.

It's only logical that the next thing we must wonder is why we keep coming back to the classic dance show?

Maybe it's the fact that there isn't another show quite like Strictly , or the fact that we won't like the costumes and the glitz —it's not something we see on a regular Saturday night!

Perhaps it is the fact that the dancers are such a close-knit family, and it is their infectious enthusiasm for each other that keeps encouraging us to come back. Maybe it is the awkward gags Claudia and Tess make whenever they get the chance.

Or maybe, just maybe, it's the idea that if we really set our minds to something and work hard at it, we could eventually reign triumphant. At the end of the day, the winners of Strictly have managed to get there by learning a new skill and powering through with steely determination and an iron resilience to be better.

No matter what the reason, whatever they're doing on Strictly has obviously worked because we are now well into the 14th season, and everyone watching can only wait with bated breath as we see our favourites edging ever closer to the famed glitter ball.



WHAT'S IN A FLOWER

Tiggy Harris

Towards the end of October, little splashes of scarlet start appearing on the lapels of Britons everywhere; the paper facsimile of the flower from the First World War battlefields to show respect for those who died for Owens's *Old Lie*.

As the weeks pass, more and more don the red poppy until the whole country comes together in a carpet of red to grieve. Quite rightly, this annual display of patriotism is a constant reminder of the horrors of war and immeasurable carnage it causes.

It was the Channel 4 news presenter John Snow who first described it as poppy fascism.

The pressure to wear one has increased tenfold in recent years and those of us who no longer identify with the red poppy, or who choose not to participate in the traditional 2 minute silence are named as traitors by the media.

This is not an attack on innocent poppy wearers, or indeed the symbol itself. Nor is it about disrespecting the dead. The way to address war is certainly not to forget; all war victims should be remembered, but not just in those 2 minutes allocated for them – their memory should be used to ensure their suffering Never Happens Again.

People who choose to pin the red poppy to their clothes should feel perfectly free to do so, for many the symbol has not changed.

However, for others it has become something more. I am not alone in believing that this demonstration of grief has given entrance to the glorification of war by right-wing politicians. The ruling classes seem to use the memorial services as an excuse to glorify war by commemorating the 'heroic sacrifice' of the dead. It's not that the people caught up in war don't deserve our sympathies, but that the spirit behind Remembrance Day has a much grimmer reality.

We must question who is actually standing shoulder-to-shoulder with veterans at the Cenotaph, all of whom are donning the red floral tribute and are we really commemorating or authorising? Who are they mourning – the dead of Aleppo? Of Gaza? Of Srebrenica? Hardly.

The war dead are not a glorious or brave sacrifice. They are the innocent. Men, women, and children who are caught up in the carnage of politics. Commemoration without understanding is easy and *pointless* because if we're not learning the lessons of history, the danger is we repeat the mistakes of the past.

The usurping of the red poppy from a symbol of insurgent anger and grief first became apparent in 1981. The then Labour leader, Michael Foot was attacked by the media for 'disrespectful' attire when he wore a short, dark coat to the

ceremony as opposed to a long, dark one. It seems silly doesn't it? So why were the media scrutinising 'Pacifist Corbyn' and the outrageous depth of his bow last year? This obsession over appearance demonstrates how Remembrance Day has been twisted into nothing more than state propaganda. Only a few months after Foot's 'disgrace' Thatcher went to war in the Falklands; it seemed that as war once again became acceptable, the idea of Remembrance started to change.

The shift has lead many, myself included, to abandoning the symbol entirely. Instead of red, I wear white. I do not stand with those who preach the importance of war as 'self-defence'. I do not condemn those who choose the poppy in its original meaning; a symbol of loss and of suffering. Absolute abandonment of the poppy would leave the symbol completely in the hands of those with a vested interest in war to use it as continued justification for their crimes of war profiteering. To give you a taste of the sheer scale of their atrocities, the former US Vice-President, Dick Cheney made \$39 and a half billion from the Iraq war. I will not stand with them.

The white poppy represents all lives lost as the result of unnecessary war without in anyway condoning or glorifying these conflicts; it advocates peace.

A war to end all wars. The irony of this statement is infinite. Perhaps the clearest sign of change was the organiser of the annual poppy appeal, The Royal British Legion, changing their slogan from 'Never Again,' to 'Shoulder to Shoulder with all those who serve.' To me, the message is clear – we must 'support the troops' so the ruling minority can carry on their agenda.

In 2013, the WW2 veteran and activist Harry L. Smith said he'd be wearing a red poppy for the last time.

"I will no longer allow my obligation as a veteran to remember those who died in the great wars be co-opted by politicians to justify our folly in Iraq, our morally dubious war on terror, and our elimination of one's right to privacy," he declared.

Many of us think like Harry and it is not because we don't wish to respect the dead soldiers, or the dead civilians who were merely in the wrong place at the wrong time, but because we don't support the aggression or bloodshed that the British government wants Remembrance to legitimise.

True remembrance doesn't mean big processions, mass silences, or paper respects; it means 'Never Again.' This is something we need to remember.



REMEMBRANCE

When we think of remembrance, we think of those who died for us.

When we think of remembrance, we think of those who gave their lives.

When we think of remembrance, we thank them for their service.

But why then

do we forget to thank and remember the ones dear to us?

Why do we forget that thing that make us human -

the nature to love another.

When we think of remembrance, we think of those who changed society.

When we think of remembrance, we think of those who had courage.

When we think of remembrance, we think of those who saw life as a whole.

But why then

do we forget to remember our mistakes and as a society clearly fail to learn from them?

We should remember,
always and forever.

Remember.

Remember the colour of our skin,

The clothes we mask ourselves in,

The lifestyle we choose to lead.

We're all looking for closure.

When we think of remembrance, we should remember that we all need love.

When we think of remembrance, who should think of before ourselves?

When we think of remembrance, we should think of peace.

That's the best anyone would have wanted.

By Poppy Ki



If you would like to have your work featured,
don't forget to email:
themo@marlborough.herts.sch.uk

I AM AGAINST TINSEL

Christmas, for me, started last Friday when I decided to spend my evening sitting in pyjamas, heater on, reading the Christmas issue of 'Good Housekeeping', all whilst eating my first mince pie of the year. As I sat pouring over images of 'cosy cottage' and 'snow white' themed front rooms I noticed myself placing each photo into one of two categories: right or wrong. Frankly, the notion that 'blue is the colour' of Christmas makes me cry on the inside.

It was then that I was struck with horror at the realisation that I may be surrounded by people who do Christmas *wrong*. With this in mind, I took it upon myself to investigate this matter further. Here I present to you my Christmas survey. You may want to brace yourselves.

DECORATING THE TREE

We all know about the age old debate: real or fake; I'll leave that one for this year. However, I have also come to the realisation that some people *colour code* their Christmas trees. I know, horrifying. Furthermore, I fear I have opened the lid on another terrifying matter – tinsel. It had never occurred to me before that anyone, no matter how deluded, might have an issue with this beautiful, life enhancing, spiritually uplifting decoration. Apparently though there are some people in our midsts who are "against tinsel", finding it to be "tacky" and "weird". Here are some samples of other responses I received. (See the brackets for my Christmas thought police.)

"Last year we forgot to put the tree up until Christmas Eve and we ended up doing it while eating Chinese and watching 'The Italian Job'." (Chinese on Christmas Eve is just strange. Also you need to FOCUS people, the tree isn't going to make itself look gorgeous by itself.)

"We have two trees: one big, that we put all of handmade decorations on, and one really pretty one that we colour code. One has a star and one has an angel." (Two trees is just greedy.)

"My family has a frog we put on top of the tree." (Seriously?)

"A lot of our baubles are Disney related." (Disney has its time and place. And that is not on a Christmas tree.)

CONSTANTLY EATING

Inevitably, when I asked people about Christmas, most people talked about food – and in its own right, I have no problem with this. What I do have a problem with is people not choking down Christmas cake and pudding, even if they don't like it. As far as I can see, that's the whole point. It's Christmas and you're meant to eat it!

"No one in my family likes turkey. We normally have chicken, but this year my mum wants to try something different." (Different? Doesn't everything taste like chicken?)

"Our friends bring different dishes from their culture. We eat a lot of South African and Filipino food." (We get the point – it's cute – but it still isn't turkey.)

"We always have full English breakfast on Christmas day, or sometimes croissants." (Okay, nice idea and all, but honestly you need to save yourself for dinner.)

"Every Christmas Eve, my mum insists on staying up to make a gingerbread house." (We made one of those once. Never again. Seriously, never before have I heard such a heated argument about my sister's incapability to hold a slab of gingerbread straight.)

I AM AGAINST TINSEL

THE IDIOSYNCRATIC

Every family has those weird traditions they do without fail, but, let's at least do them right.

"We like to play Danish Pass the Parcel, involving presents, dice and confusion." (WRONG)

"Everyone in my family gets a new pair of pyjamas to wear on Christmas Eve." (WRONG)

"Most of our Christmas is spent watching Indiana Jones." (WRONG)

"After Christmas dinner, we all write down some memories from the past year on scraps of paper and set them on fire." (Cute, but WRONG.)

Honestly, I am alarmed by these results and I find myself concerned for the wellbeing of Christmas. With that in mind, here are a few things you need to do if you're going to do things properly:

- Everyone knows that politeness gets you everywhere. If you're going to write a letter/list for Father Christmas (Santa Claus is an abomination), it is crucial that a page and a half should be dedicated to quizzing him on the welfare of Mrs Christmas and the reindeer. Only then can you broach the issue of presents. Once sealed, all letters should be promptly burnt in the fireplace.

- A Christmas tree is only ever truly acceptable when it has to be trimmed to actually fit inside the front room, which father declares then 'looks like Narnia', and there is nowhere to sit. Next, it should be decorated with decorations that have been collected over the past 34 years and topped off with an angel. The fairy lights, along with hundreds of candles, should be placed in a hazardous manner around the house and only illuminated on the 21st December – the winter solstice, on which all family members should wear tinsel on their heads.

- Family should arrive for lunch on Christmas Eve,

during which leek and potato soup should be eaten (the only true form of soup) and the pickled onion challenge should be completed. This is a form of torture for the youngest in the family in which they eat a pickled onion for the empty promise of a five pound note.

- Christmas carols should be played on Christmas Eve, and Irish Folk Songs on Christmas Day with my sister on cello, my father on guitar, anyone who knows the words on vocals and yours truly on violin. The neighbours love us really.

- Father Christmas' presents should be left in a child's bedroom. Preferably all siblings should cram into the smallest bedroom in the house to sleep that night. Then family members should all cram into the same small room when opening commences. (The smaller the room, the more satisfying the feeling of being swamped by wrapping paper.)

- Before the opening of family presents on Christmas day, all family members should be dragged out on a walk by my father. No one's entirely sure why.

And aren't I so lucky to be able to be so picky? In England alone, there are 103,000 children who spend the whole of Christmas homeless. I strongly doubt they're worried about the colour of Christmas tree decorations. So, just remember this December, and any other time of the year, to be grateful for your family, your home and any the times you have. For all of our, and my complaints – we're the fortunate, and Christmas would be a better time if we realised that.

By Ruth
Mitchell-Fox



FESTIVE SPECIAL

CHRISTMAS ESSENTIALS

(SPANISH INCLUDED)

The holidays are just around the corner. Yes, I know, it feels like it was yesterday that we were celebrating it and wishing everyone a happy 2016 (oh, little did we know). But with the arrival of Christmas, comes the arrival list of absolutely essential essentials to Christmas. Let's be honest, Christmas wouldn't feel right without them.

Michael Bublé will make his annual short appearance, which will introduce all of our favourite Christmas tunes that we listen to whilst putting up our Christmas tree. In fact, I am listening to some right now to get in the mood as I write, as I sip into a delicious homemade hot chocolate – which is also another must-have. Because what screams Christmas more than a hot chocolate accompanied by cream and marshmallows?

A forever dream that absolutely everyone has is the thought of a white Christmas – filled with snow in which people can build snowmen, have snowball fights and getting the very old sleighs out of the garage and use them at least once in your lifetime. The hope, and even chance, that it will snow is what makes Christmas truly magical – as waking up every morning and looking out the window is incredibly spine-tingling.

Additionally, with Christmas also comes socialising; and if you are an incredibly awkward and shy person that might stress you out a little. So many Christmas dinners where family members will annually comment on how tall you've gotten, ask about your studies and the most dreaded question of all: about your love life.

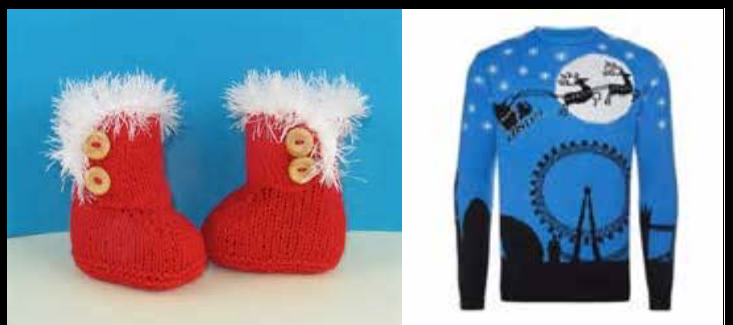
Although, Christmas isn't only about Christmas dinners; with it also come

Christmas parties – which are the very best. People dress up and look splendid, rocking the glitter and red lips like there is no tomorrow, and celebrate the season as what it is: incredibly fun. Moreover, what a better excuse to kiss your crush than to (accidentally) find each other underneath some mistletoe.

The fashion police might have to look the other way in December as the seasonal garish, down right frightening and utterly shameful Christmas jumpers are worn with pride. And let me tell you – the uglier and more voluminous the jumper the better.

Another fashion atrocity is also very common around this period: UGG boots. And I don't blame you for wearing them, who doesn't want to immerse their feet into what feels like fluffy clouds? But seriously!

My personal favourite thing about Christmas is that suddenly, people are much friendlier, welcoming and simply lovelier. But why wouldn't they? At Christmas time we are surrounded by lights that make everything glisten, beautiful decorations everywhere you go and most importantly; the chance of freeing the inner child, at least for a little while.



FESTIVE SPECIAL

And last, but definitely not least, the gifts...

Even if we tell ourselves that they don't matter, they do (and even if we only say it to ourselves), and shamefully, they always will. The whole exchange of presents might raise some eyebrows, and I am not for one minute suggesting that the only thing we want to open present after present. Far from it infact. There is something magical in seeing the faces of your loved ones opening the presents you have chosen for them. The notion of giving a gift at Christmas, well that has to be the epitome of Christmas itself, right?

THE SPANISH WAY

Now, for those of you who don't me I am Spanish, and there are some traditions that are a classically Spanish. When I was talking to the team about them there were certainly a few raised eyebrows. So, I wanted to share a few of my-Christmas traditions and to show you that not every body will be spending the festive season in the same way.

For starters, coming from a place surrounded by mountains renown for its skiing, a Christmas without snow had never an option. December means snow. It is that simple! In fact, it was the arrival of the snow that always set my festive spirit free – and I consider myself lucky for this.

Furthermore, the day in which we exchange presents isn't the 25th of December, but on the 6th of January. The 25th December is a day for family and faith. Which leads me to my next point: The Three Magic Kings. When my first Christmas in the UK was approaching, I told my friends about the Three Magic Kings and I was absolutely shocked that this wasn't a *thing* in England. Not only that – they had never heard of it. So I explained.

Spanish children are taught about the Kings and believe that it is not Saint Nicholas, or Santa who bring gifts for good boys and girls, rather the three Kings give gifts. Children write letters to

them on 26th December explaining how good and angelic they have been throughout the year and asking for presents as a reward. On the eve of January 5th, everyone goes outside to participate or watch the parade. It is all about seeing the arrival of the kings, to gather sweets that are thrown from their carriages, before going to bed leaving some milk and biscuits for the Kings, accompanied by some water for the camels that carry the Kings on their journey. The children then go to sleep hoping they have indeed been well behaved enough to receive the presents they have longed for and not simply pieces of coal (which are made out of sugar) instead.

Nevertheless, the hot chocolate, Christmas songs, lights and decorations and, of course, the Christmas tree are also a must-haves – and I believe they are a must-have anywhere you are if you want to have a basic, but beautiful Christmas.

XOXO, C



GINGERBREAD CAKE

Gingerbread Cake with Caramel Biscuit Icing

Ingredients

- 150ml full-fat milk
 - 3 tbsp black treacle
 - 225ml vegetable oil, plus a little for greasing
 - 375g plain flour
 - 3tsp baking powder
 - 1½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
 - 375g light brown soft sugar
 - 1 ½ tsp ground cinnamon
 - 1 ½ ground ginger
 - 3 good pinches of ground cloves
 - 300ml buttermilk
 - 3 large eggs
 - 3 tbsp dark rum (optional – replace with extra milk, if you like)
 - 1 ½ tsp vanilla extract
- For the caramel biscuit icing*
- 250g pack slightly salted butter, very soft
 - 600g icing sugar, plus a little extra for dusting
 - 300g full-fat cream cheese
 - 2 tsp vanilla bean extract
 - 200g smooth caramelised biscuit spread
 - 50g desiccated coconut, to deco-

rate

- Silver edible glitter

Gingerbread shapes

Method

Measure the milk and treacle into a saucepan (grease the measuring spoon with a little oil first and the treacle will easily slide off). Bring to a gentle simmer and stir until combined, then set aside to cool. Meanwhile, grease 3 x 20cm loose-bottomed cake tins with a little oil and line the bases with baking parchment. If the tins are any shallower than 4cm, line the sides with a deep collar too. Heat oven to 180°C/160C fan/gas 4.

Measure the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, sugar and spices into a large bowl, and then add 1/2 tsp fine salt. Mix the dry ingredients together with a large whisk; if there are any large lumps of sugar, squeeze these through your fingers until you have an even, sandy-textured mixture.

In a jug, whisk the oil, buttermilk, eggs, rum and vanilla. Add the milk and treacle mixture, and mix well. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry, and whisk into a smooth batter. Divide between the tins and bake for 25-30 mins until a skewer or knife inserted into the centre of the cakes comes out clean. You may have to swap the cakes over to cook evenly, but don't do this until they've had at least 20 mins cooking. Cool the cakes in their tins for 10 mins, then transfer to a wire rack, peel off the parchment and leave to cool completely. Once

cooled, you can wrap the sponges in cling film and store in a cool place for 4 days, or freeze for up to 2 months – the texture and flavour will be all the better for it.

To make the icing, put the butter and half the icing sugar in a large bowl. Mash together roughly with a spatula, then whizz with an electric hand whisk until smooth. Add the remaining icing sugar, the cream cheese, vanilla bean extract and biscuit spread. Mix again until smooth and evenly mixed. Transfer half the icing to another bowl and set aside. Use the remaining icing to stack the cakes and cover the entire outside in a thin layer – don't worry about making the cake look too neat at this stage, as any crumbs trapped in the icing will be covered in the final coat. Chill the cake for 30 mins and the remaining icing for 20 mins (remove the icing from the fridge 10 mins before the cake to soften a little).

5. When the icing on the cake is firm, remove it from the fridge and use the remaining icing to cover the cake. Smooth the sides using a palette knife, but leave peaks and dips on top for your snow scene. Top the cake generously with desiccated coconut, a dusting of sieved icing sugar and some edible glitter, if you like, then decorate the top and sides with gingerbread shapes. Should keep for 2 days.



FESTIVE SPECIAL

Christmas Music

Frost, family and festivity...

Christmas! It's that time of year when we recall how we saw mothers kissing Santa Claus; that we herald the start of rocking around a Christmas tree and in some bizarre alternate reality we joyfully sing about how we gave somebody our hearts but they callously gave it away.

So, if you are wondering what to put on your 'Jingle bell rock' playlist we have our top ten Christmas favourites.

So, 'pop pickers', here is our countdown from ten to one.

10. *I Wish it Could be Christmas Everyday*

9. *Jingle Bell Rock*

8. *Driving Home for Christmas*

7. *Merry Christmas Everybody*

6. *Do They Know*

5. *Winter Wonderland*

4. *Santa Baby*

3. *Last Christmas*

2. *All I want*

1. *Fairy tale of New York*

Christmas Films

Selection boxes need to be at the ready; tissues might be in order too, as we take you through some classic Christmas movies. With the Christmas TV channel, Netflix and smart televisions at the ready we are sure that there is a film here for you.

Love Actually (2003)

We were on the fence with this one, it can either be regarded as unbearably schmaltzy or a festive heart-warmer, depending of course, on who you ask. Love is certainly all around in this ensemble comedy-drama: even a school nativity play is an opportunity for romance.

Comic standouts include Bill Nighy

as an ageing rock legend who's reduced to competing in the race to land a Christmas Number One. This makes me cry every time I watch it – and I like that in a film.

Bridget Jones's Diary (2000)

Bridget, played by Renée Zellweger, thinks she might have met the man of her life in the delectable Mr. Darcy, played by Colin Firth; however, every sporting a hideous Christmas jumper she quickly reconsiders. Unlike Bridget, we know he's the man for her. This is a heartwarming, toe curling and wonderfully fuzzy film for Christmas.

The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993)

Leave it to Tim Burton to give Christmas a sinister and somewhat Gothic dark edge; although, this stop-motion animation still has plenty of heart, too. Jack Skellington (yes he is as his name suggests) is the anti-hero who decides he's had enough of Halloween and wants to stand in for Santa. It's silly, it's odd and it is terrific fun.

Miracle on 34th Street (1934)

There is a more modern version of this film, but there is something wonderfully romantic about the black and white cinematography. It takes you back to a different time. This is the ultimate in cuddly Christmas afternoon movies, this original stars Edmund Gwenn as Kris Kringle, who must prove he is in fact Santa Claus – not least to a young girl who has lost the true meaning of Christmas (as if you could!)

Home Alone (1990)

Despite being made before many of our readers were born 'Home Alone' is a timeless and perfect chil-

dren's' fantasy. Parents go on holiday, forget Kevin, their somewhat annoying but horrendously endearing child, and he has to cope. Kevin can eat ice cream and watch movies as much as he likes. He then has a poignant conversation with his not-so-nasty neighbor establishing moral values before getting the chance to invent some booby traps to catch burglars.

Elf (2003)

This has to be a true Christmas gift to the TV programmers; this festive comedy makes full use of Will Ferrell's man-child charm by casting him as a naive human raised by elves and thrown into a cynical modern-day New York. Highlights include a duet of 'Baby, It's Cold Outside', a mean father who learns to love his rather odd son and a trip through the Candy Cane Mountains.

It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

Let's put this in to post WW2 context for a moment... that in itself has something magical about it. This is without doubt a moving and snowy festive classic. In short it is a true delight. James Stewart puts in the performance of a lifetime as man who's given a chance to look at life with fresh eyes. It's timeless and perfect and everything that is wonderful about Christmas.

