



The Marlborough Oracle

April, 2016

Written for the students, by the students

Welcome back, everyone! I hope you all had a fabulous Easter break and finally caught up on some well-deserved sleep!

Now, I would love to say we can just sit back and look forward to that joyous, last day of the school year, but unfortunately for many of us the Summer Term isn't just plain-sailing. First, we must endure some very long, very taxing hours of revision in the lead up to exams; exams whereby the final letter grade will determine our futures. Seems ridiculous doesn't it? Well don't worry; the temples in my head are pulsating too, so at least we're all in it together...

To help you through this incredibly stressful time, this month's edition of The MO is filled to the brim with all kinds of exciting, and thought-provoking pieces that will give you a much needed break. Our feature this month considers Sexual Assault Awareness Month; we look at what it means to be a woman today and the discrimination that we still live with. We also have updates on everything that's been going on around school and some wise words about exams!

Enjoy!

- Your Editor

The opening of Bly Wilding's very spooky *The Graveyard!*

The graveyard seemed more deathly than usual that night. I didn't know why, but it may have had something to do with the fog and the thick, choking air that came with it. As I walked past the graves of the newly dead, I noticed silhouette of a woman standing by the infamous "The Dead Tree." Its lanky branches hung loose and limp like a dead man's arms. Upon reflection the tree, the mist and the murk were all fitting for this fateful night.

The figure came closer. It stared at the ground, kicking its heels like it was dancing. Her dark robes hang loose - an abyss of black.

Slowly, I walked past her, desperately trying to stop my attention being drawn to her hollow expression. Head down, I walked towards the gates. Just as I thought I had escaped and had left the graveyard behind I heard crying. The crying wasn't loud or even angry; it was more of a willowy sob.

I wanted to turn and run, but I considered myself a nice and wholesome person and couldn't leave somebody who so clearly needed my help. As I got closer I asked if she was okay or did she require my help. The sobbing stopped. Silence. Cold, deadly silence. I waited for answer but none came. Reaching my hand out I went to touch her on the shoulder. As my fingers made contact with her shoulder the ghoulish figure turned to face me.

As A Girl

Written for the students, by the students

I have been a girl for 17 years, 7 months, 1 week, and 4 days; I have been living with the consequences of my gender for all that time.

When I was five I was told I shouldn't be playing with the car toys because they were meant for the boys; I should play with the princess dolls or in the miniature kitchen. When I was nine I was told I should watch what I ate because that's what "real girls do". When I was fourteen I was told I shouldn't swear because it was unladylike and when I was sixteen I was told to never walk by myself late at night.

It wasn't until recently that I ever thought about these statements as being connected; I never imagined that I was only being told these things because of gender stereotypes and that society still has a medieval rulebook for how women are expected to behave.

When I walk down the street I catch men looking or pointing me out to their mate; they might catcalling and then get offended when I ignore them - so instead they shout abuse. Every incident makes me feel the same: ashamed, isolated and embarrassed. I start thinking that maybe if hadn't worn this skirt, or if I had walked another way home, or if I wasn't wearing make-up then maybe it wouldn't have happened - because society has taught me that it is *my* fault. The men think they're paying me a compliment, they think I'm rude when I walk away because society has taught *them* that a woman's physical appearance is all that matters and it's okay to shout at her for it.

The shocking statistic that in Britain, a woman is raped every 6 minutes, but only 5.7% of reported cases result in the perpetrator's conviction horrifies me. In fact, only 15% of victims of sexual violence choose to report the crime to the police, and one third of people believe if a woman is flirting she is partially responsible for being raped. I could write a novel on gender inequality and the expectations of women, and how they are constantly being used to blame and shame women for the actions of men, but instead I'll say only this: No matter how far we may have come in the name of equality, as long as we are victim instilling the idea that girls are at fault when they are physically or sexually abused, we have a *long* way to go.

When I talked to my friends about the gender inequalities in I couldn't help but notice a huge divide between the responses of the girls and the boys. My female friends listed hundreds of things from feeling insecure about wearing certain clothes, to feeling angry and devalued by the wage gap. Every single one of them was able to share an experience where they had been made to feel ashamed and belittled by men – strangers – on the street. When I asked them why they hadn't reported it they shrugged and seemed to accept that "it's normal". Normal? My male friends didn't say any of this. They shrugged too but instead suggested that things are pretty equal now!

As a feminist, I believe the biggest barrier to change is public ignorance. Many women don't realise that what they experience every day is sexism because it is normal. Many men don't even notice that society is inherently misogynistic because it isn't happening to them. Before we can begin to bridge the gap between men and women, we must first accept that a bridge does indeed exist.

To begin with I was angry with my male friends. I couldn't fathom how they had reached this conclusion when women make up half the world's population and yet represent 70% of the world's poor. How can they reach this conclusion when every day 39,000 girls are forced into early marriages (that's 27 girls a minute), and when one in four women over the age of 16 are physically or sexually abused? Then I realised, I could reel off statistics until I was blue in the face but I can't make them see what I see because what happens to me just doesn't happen to them.

Of course this isn't to say that this is the opinion held by all men; there are many male feminists and men who do understand the struggles that women face. There is a vital role for men to play in this battle, and it isn't as detractors or naysayers, but as allies, agents of change and beneficiaries.

The battle for gender equality isn't a battle against men, it is about people prejudice and we will not win unless everyone, regardless of gender, is with us.



Tiggy Harris

Equal Play, Equal Pay

Written for the students, by the students

Why the United States Women's National Team (USWNT) is asking their federation for equal pay - and why they actually have a case.



Carli Lloyd, who scored a hatrick in the World Cup Final and was voted 2015 World Player of the Year, is one of the five players suing USSoccer for gender discrimination.

Whenever a female athlete, in any sport, suggests that they should be paid the same as their male counterparts, there are always plenty of people prepared to shut them down. Once you've discounted biological arguments about fitness and physique, the one issue that reoccurs again and again is revenue – that age old thing, cold hard cash.

Interestingly, in 2015, the United States women's national team (USWNT) made a profit of \$20 million from ticket sales, merchandise and TV revenue, whilst their male counterparts actually made a financial loss. The USWNT have won three World Cups, four Olympic gold medals, and are still paid less for winning their matches than it seems the men do for merely showing up!

The USWNT have won three World Cups and four Olympic gold medals.

Potentially stereotypical views of America are true - they love winners. On the return from their World Cup winning exploits, a crowd of 44,000 went out to watch the USWNT's first victory tour game. For context, the men's team's most recent friendly did not come near to reaching a five-figure attendance, despite it being played against international fierce rivals, Canada.

The USWNT were paid a total of \$2 million for winning the 2015 Women's World Cup – a total that was far less than their male counterparts got simply for qualifying. Little needs to be said about the male soccer squad stumbling to an early and unimpressive exit.

The motto accompanying the lawsuit is “equal play, equal pay” - but with their match successes there’s every reason the USWNT should be asking for more.



Why I Love English

Written for the students, by the students

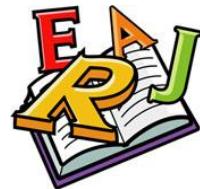
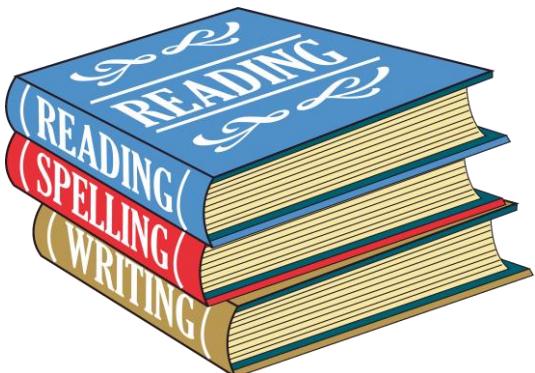
This month, some of our students and teachers have been discussing why they love English. Here are some of the things that they said:

I love English because it helps me use lots of different vocabulary in lots of different ways. Also, when I read a passage of text it makes me feel excited as I wonder what will happen next. Additionally, English helps me in many different aspects of life.

Raffi Roberts

I love English because learning about different types of books is really fascinating as well as educational. Writing our own creative writing pieces is really fun. It helps build our imagination and our punctuation. Being really independent with our writing really helps me and extends my mind so that I can be the best I can.

Jessica Persuad



English is definitely my favourite subject; my teacher is friendly, the class work hard and my teacher makes the lessons really fun. I really enjoy my lessons as there is always something interesting to do. In previous lessons we have been learning about persuasive techniques; however, I particularly like writing creative stories.

Lydia Edwards

English is wonderful; you learn so many different styles of writing and there are so many genres and different forms that everybody can find at least one area that they will enjoy. I love reading – it allows you to escape.

Mia Pavic

English is all about the idea of escapism. It is the idea that you can leave your preconceptions behind and start to see things from a different perspective. However, for me the thing that I adore about my subject is that it's all about writing. The pen can glide across the page and builds something fabulous that engages, moves, and can challenge a reader.

Miss Fogarty

Wise Words

With the end of the school year drawing ever closer, it can only mean one thing, (although we wish it meant hot summer days relaxing), we know all too well it means the start of exam season. I'd much rather hibernate for two months and resurface into the world once exams are over, thereby avoiding any revision or responsibility!

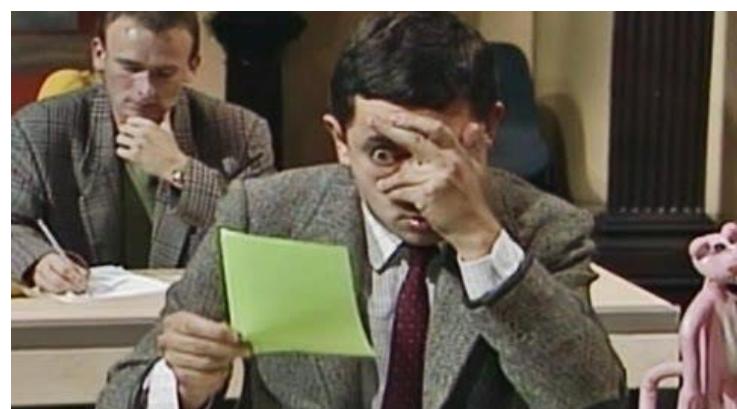
I remember putting revision off at every possible opportunity, claiming I'd "do it tomorrow" or that I "deserved a break". What did I deserve a break from? Probably procrastination! I still thoroughly enjoyed my "well-deserved breaks" and felt absolutely no guilt about it until mid-April. One night I was finding it impossible to sleep; so I started thinking. Long story short, my completely normal, sane thinking led to a crazy episode of stress where I came to the realisation that my FIRST REAL PROPER EXAM was weeks away. Should I not have come to that realisation I probably wouldn't be preparing for A-Levels.

I knew straight away that I needed to knuckle down. I wasn't just letting my teachers down but I was also allowing myself to fail. For me, failure is possibly the most depressing thing to feel; so I did what I had to do. I turned off Netflix, got out of bed and got into gear. I guess sometimes you need the fear of failure to give you a real kick up the backside and show you what you can really achieve.

Once I started I found that revision wasn't actually *that* bad. You realise you do know "stuff" and the achievement on results day is worth every minute.

I can't lie, reducing the time I spent socialising and having fun was the most difficult part, of revision. However, it is only two months until the summer holidays. So, to all Year 11 students: GCSE's are really important. They are your gateway to college or sixth form, or any other route you decide to take. You need to start revising, but little and often is fine. Just relax, prepare yourself, and you'll see they are nothing to lose too much sleep over.

So basically, what I'm getting at is that although facing the reality of exams is probably not something anyone wants to do, the best thing you could do for yourself is try your hardest and stop stressing. Stress never helps a situation! Take some time for you to chill out and don't overwork yourself. Wishing the best of luck to all of those sitting exams in the upcoming months; do yourselves proud!



China Trip 2016

Written for the students, By the students

After two years of patient planning and preparation, 36 lucky Year 8 and 9 students embarked on the trip of lifetime over Easter, to one of the most enigmatic and magical destinations in the world – China.

Spanning 12 days and including 5 major cities, the trip allowed us to experience some of the great wonders of the world: climbing the Great Wall of China; walking among The Terracotta Warriors; sampling authentic Chinese food, and experiencing the tranquillity of ancient Buddhist temples.

We found China to be a country of contrasts. Aided by knowledgeable local guides (and our own Mr Ballantine), we learned that sprawling mega-cities, like Beijing, encompassed 28million people and covered an area the size of Wales. In contrast, the lush city of Guilin – a highlight for many of us – provided stunning scenery and the chance to cycle through the countryside and meet colourful locals. These included 80 year old Kung Fu Master Mr Pan, who took the opportunity to show us some of the dying heritage and traditions being eschewed by the younger generations.

It seemed that we proved extremely popular with the friendly locals; they never missed the opportunity to say ‘Ni hao’ or to have their pictures taken with us. Luckily, the glorious weather enjoyed on the trip, provided ample opportunity for some stunning snaps. These included pictures of: the colourful Reed Flute Caves; the impressive Forbidden City and the imposing political centre of China, Tiananmen Square.

To conclude, our incredible trip, we visited Shanghai and saw just how wealthy modern China had become. A dizzying climb up the World Financial Centre (the second tallest building in the world) offered breath-taking vistas of the famous Pudong district, which, in just 30 short years, has transformed from sprawling farmland to the epicentre of commerce.

No trip to China would be complete without a journey on the world famous Maglev – a floating train capable of 600km/hr. With heavy hearts, we boarded the plane for a 12hr flight home, agreeing that China had exceeded all our expectations.

All the students would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Ballantine for giving them the trip of a lifetime.



Moving Through Movies, Ghosting Our Way In Games

Written for the students, by the students

Nowadays video games and films are seemingly becoming more and more entwined. Some relish the prospect of having TV episodes to accompany their gameplay (as presented in new release *Quantum Break*), whilst others are rather repelled and outraged about the lack of missions, hours of exclusive and untouched content. Now, whether you may sway more one way than the other, you can't deny that films and TV shows are having an increasing impact on what video game developers are releasing.

Yes, although films do inspire video games, video games also seem to be inspiring directors and producers. This may not necessarily benefit the box office overall. For example, with the recent release of 'Hardcore Henry' hitting cinemas the film seemed to act as a trial run for a first person shooter that could easily have been mistaken as a game walkthrough. Harsh? Perhaps. We need to accept the fact that in today's climate, film isn't guaranteed to draw vast audiences or generate amazing reviews. It seems that gaming is inspiring audiences.



Jake Cox

There are only a few certain, special types of video games that manage to develop a storyline with characters worth caring about. These ones, I believe, have a wider audience in mind and will ultimately create more revenue and a memorable stand in gamers history. There will always be a predicament about losing gameplay hours because a greater focus has been put on the storyline, plot and characters. In short, true gamers may see the developers as creating film, not platforms! This is where many may argue films have begun to influence the interactive virtual world far too much, but again, one must accept that not everyone has the same tastes and certain companies cater more to certain audiences.

It is clear that our future ahead as a society will be subjected to more trials of what works and what really doesn't. However, it's just something we're all going to have to bite the bullet for if we want to find an equal balance and ultimate way of enjoying visual and interactive entertainment.

IMO (in my opinion...)

Written for the students, by the students

8th March was International Women's Day. It passed almost without notice. Unlike Valentine's Day, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day and every other made up holiday. Why? The long and short of it is because International Women's Day does not validate our current political system or, if you like, our political 'lifestyle'.

Valentine's Day celebrates 'the couple' – the foundation of the familial unit that forms the building blocks and consumer drive of the capitalist state. Mothers' Day celebrates 'the mother' – the woman whose role is defined by her relation to a man, and her provision of children. And Fathers' Day – well. What can I say? The man. The big M. The dude who should be loved and revered for his financial and physical support to his family, and, by extension, to the state. Patriarchy is inherent within Capitalism. M. Herrman argues that in a patriarchal society those without status and pecuniary wealth are without value. And let's face it, for most of history, those people have been women... Point of information: International Women's Day was extensively celebrated in the Soviet Union.

Now, I'm not trying too political.

We seem to live in a society in which people are afraid to say what they think. People don't like saying who they're voting for; they don't like discussing religion; and if you bring up politics at a dinner party, you may as well have tattooed your forehead with 'not to be invited again'. Perhaps it's because we're British. But when did 'British' become a code word for easily embarrassed but intensely judgemental? Actually, the British population, historically speaking, has been far from submissive and unafraid to use its own voice. Take the clock tower at the centre of St Albans – built by the peasants following the revolt of 1381, and specifically designed to be taller than the abbey, because the ordinary folks wanted to show the clergy who was the real boss.

So you know what? I'm not afraid to say what I think. I do not condone a political system which takes from the hands of the many to give to the hands of the few. A political system which enforces a lifestyle based on outmoded and degrading gender roles. A political system which is not only encouraging but necessitating the destruction of our planet. That system is capitalism.

I know that many people may disagree with me, but I'm still not afraid to say what I believe. For most people Communism signifies 'the end of days', the death of the individual and totalitarian dictatorships run by men with strong accents and even stronger facial hair. By all means, disagree with me. AND TELL ME THAT YOU DISAGREE. The work of Michel Foucault suggests that it is only through 'discourse' (in other words the 'dialogue' and 'conversation' that exists between all written and spoken ideas) that our perceptions of the world are able to develop. So, really, you're doing us all a favour by having an opinion.

Another popular misconception about Communism is that it entails the abolition of free speech. If Marx could hear you now, I'm sure his reaction would be something along the lines of 'Lol FAM'. Marx himself was forced to leave Paris because of his '50 Shades of Cray' political ideas. So I'm genuinely positive that he had nothing against it. Especially seeing as it would have made the life of his family and his financial situation a damn sight easier.

Furthermore, if you truly believe that freedom of speech and freedom of press exist in the modern capitalist society – you're kidding yourself.

IMO (in my opinion...)

Written for the students, by the students

Censorship is everywhere. Things that remain unreported remain unknown to the general public. And honestly, you only have to look at Fox News and the Murdoch tabloids to know that the Western press has some pretty funny agendas.

People think that Communism ‘goes too far’, and that some kind of ‘Animal Farm’ effect is predetermined by the very suggestion of its principles. Not true. Ask yourself: do I believe in equality? Truly, do you believe in equality? And then ask yourself, do I believe in the idea that an individual should own land, resources or power over another person’s livelihood? In my opinion, no man has the right to buy and sell the earth for private gain. And yet that is what Capitalism promotes.

I have been called a ‘commie’, a ‘feminazi’ and a bunch of other things too vulgar to write in a school newspaper article. I don’t care. And that’s not an aggressive ‘well I don’t care because you’re wrong anyway’, it’s more like ‘you have your opinion and I’m glad that you have it, but I don’t understand why you feel the need to resort to insults to prove your point’.

International Women’s Day didn’t exactly ‘make headlines’, and, in a way, I’m glad because it means that Capitalism hasn’t corrupted the spirit of the holiday yet. But in another respect, I’m very sad. Well not sad exactly, I’m not really a sad person, I mainly do anger. So yes, I’m angry.

I’m angry because society isn’t moving forwards. Not in any meaningful sense. Perhaps I’m just young and idealistic (which, at any rate, I hope is true), but I want to think that stuff is going to change. Because actually, I don’t want to live in this world, in this economy, in this political system, in which my labour is worth more than my sum as a person. This is why I’m going to keep saying what I think. Because if I can help make anybody think twice, about International Women’s Day or anything else, then I could be helping to change things for the better.

Something has got to give. And I’m hoping that it’s going to be Capitalism rather than our Planet/ the Oppressed Classes/ our Humanity and Compassion/ insert meaningful noun here.

Frank West



The Definite Article

Written for the students, by the students

We know that the “whole world is a stage” and that “we each have our part to play”, so what with it being the Bard’s birthday we thought that we should head over to Seacole. We asked Mrs Blount and Miss McCarthy to “swear not on the moon, the inconstant moon” but to be honest and definite in this month’s Definite Article!

Which literary character do you most resemble and why?

Miss McCarthy: I most resemble Luna Lovegood - I'm quite a daydreamer, and caring similar to lovely Luna.

Mrs Blount: Rabbit from ‘Winnie the Pooh’; I’m always pointlessly trying to organise people.

If you had to be a hero or villain which would it be and why?

Miss McCarthy: I occasionally identify with Moriarty's sense of craftiness, but not half as evil as him!

Mrs Blount: A villain, they are far more interesting

What is your most prized possession?

Miss McCarthy: The beautiful books I have accumulated throughout the years.



Mrs Blount: Can children be a possession? If so, then my children! Or, my house... or my cat!

What subject did you find most challenging when you were at school?

Miss McCarthy: Definitely Chemistry. Balancing equations was not my cup of tea at all.

Mrs Blount: Maths or Physics.

Triumphing can be tricky, but what personal triumph are you most proud of?

Miss McCarthy: Passing my driving test was possibly the most exhilarating moment ever.

Mrs Blount: Successfully bringing up three lovely, well-rounded and happy children.

Miaow or woof? Why?

Miss McCarthy: Woof woof. I'm a dog lover - they are extremely loyal.

Mrs Blount: Miaow. Cats are so much better. Clean, tidy, and much less trouble- when they give something back they really mean it.

Tell us, what is your guilty secret?

Miss McCarthy: I can eat a wheel of oven baked brie and bread sticks!

Mrs Blount: Not telling!

Other than your own, whose lesson would you most like to be in and why?

Miss McCarthy: Mrs Price's - she is so humorous, knowledgeable and has reams of stories to share.

Mrs Blount: I'd quite like to go back in time to my own schooldays and relive

one of Ms Adams' history lessons or Mr Evans' English lessons. Both were a big inspiration to me.

We all have one, so what is your regret?

Miss McCarthy: I truly regret not learning to play the violin as a child.

Mrs Blount: I have no regrets – however, sometimes I wonder if I did too much too young.

If you won £1,000,000 what would be your first purchase?

Miss McCarthy: Buy a house by the beach in Mexico - utter bliss.

Mrs Blount: I'd pay off my mortgage and then I would go on a really expensive holiday.



Things you didn't know about your English teachers!

1. Mr Downey can twist his arms inside out to create something really strange and sinister!
2. Ms Redfern is from the West Country and would describe something fabulous as being “gert lush”.
3. Miss Fogarty likes to read books about witches and wizards.
4. Mrs Baker used to work at Watford FC.
5. Before coming in to teaching Mr T used to be a stand-up comedian.

Heads of School

Written for the students, by the students

After the recent election we have five new Heads of School who will be taking over from Ella Molloy, Max Oliver, Kathleen Mitchell-Fox, and Ellis Allan in June.

Ella, Max, Kathleen, and Ellis have done a fabulous job and we will be sorry to say goodbye – everyone at The MO wishes them the best of luck for the future!

We would now like to introduce, Abbie Sullivan, Erin Mitchell, Nour Taray, Kim Kusman, and Eli Rees as our Heads of School for 2016/2017. Here are some words from Abbie, Kim, and Erin:

Kim Kusman:

I am super excited to be one of the Heads of School. I can't wait to be able to voice your opinions and give back to the school so thank to you to everyone who voted for me. I really enjoy singing and performing and the subjects I am currently studying are: Biology, Psychology, Sociology and Business Studies.

Erin Mitchell:

I have recently been appointed as one of the heads of school and I am really happy to have been given this opportunity. I want to use my time in this position to build upon the projects started by the previous heads of school, as well as implementing some of my own ideas. In particular, I would like to develop the House system so it is more widely utilised around the school and celebrates both academic and non-academic achievements. I am determined to fill my role to its fullest potential and enjoy my year as part of the heads of school team.

Abbie Sullivan:

I've just been appointed one of the Heads of School, and I'm thrilled to have been given this position, which offers so many opportunities. I have a few ideas that I'd like to implement around school, such as an outdoor garden to be worked on and designed by students which will be an area to relax and enjoy quiet lunchtimes, and an ambassador's scheme which offers support to students in primary schools during the transition into secondary schools.