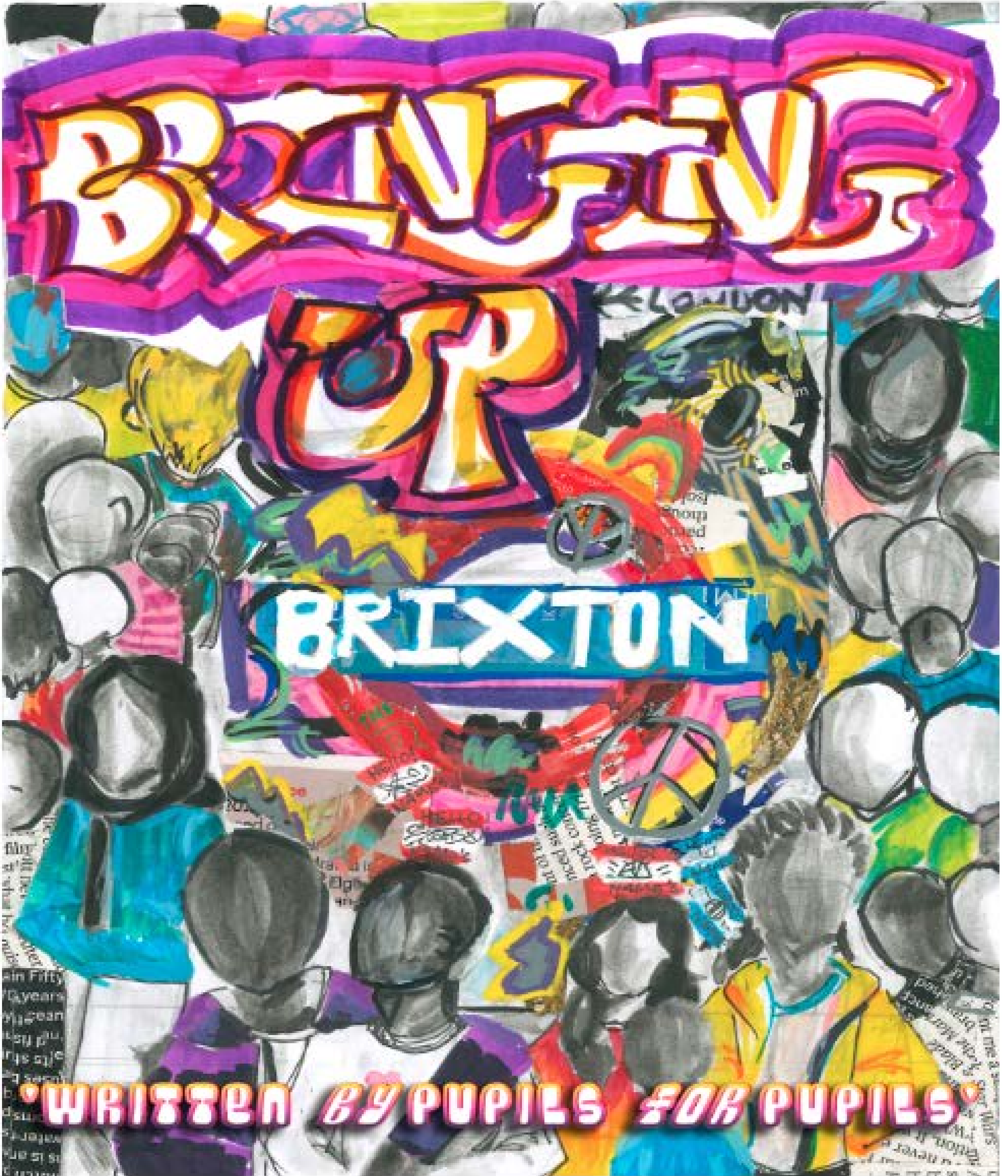


PLATANOS COLLEGE



'WRITTEN BY PUPILS FOR PUPILS'

KS4 NEWSLETTER



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EDITOR'S WELCOME

Welcome to the 15th Edition of the Platanos College Key Stage 4 Newsletter.

We are excited to bring you this term's Newsletter, which covers a range of topics such as the rise of Artificial Intelligence, health issues including Crohn's Disease and Mental Health and the effects of product branding on young people.

In addition, we are thrilled to introduce our Specials theme for this term: *Bringing Up Brixton*. This term's Newsletter explores a range of issues and views from our peers, about what it's like growing up in the local area. We inform you about the history of Brixton, the Windrush Generation and key statistics about the area, whilst also sharing our views and those of our peers about the issues facing us as young people growing up in the area. As part of our Special Edition, we are very excited to share with you an interview we recently had with local hero Solomon Smith, the Founder of Brixton Soup Kitchen.

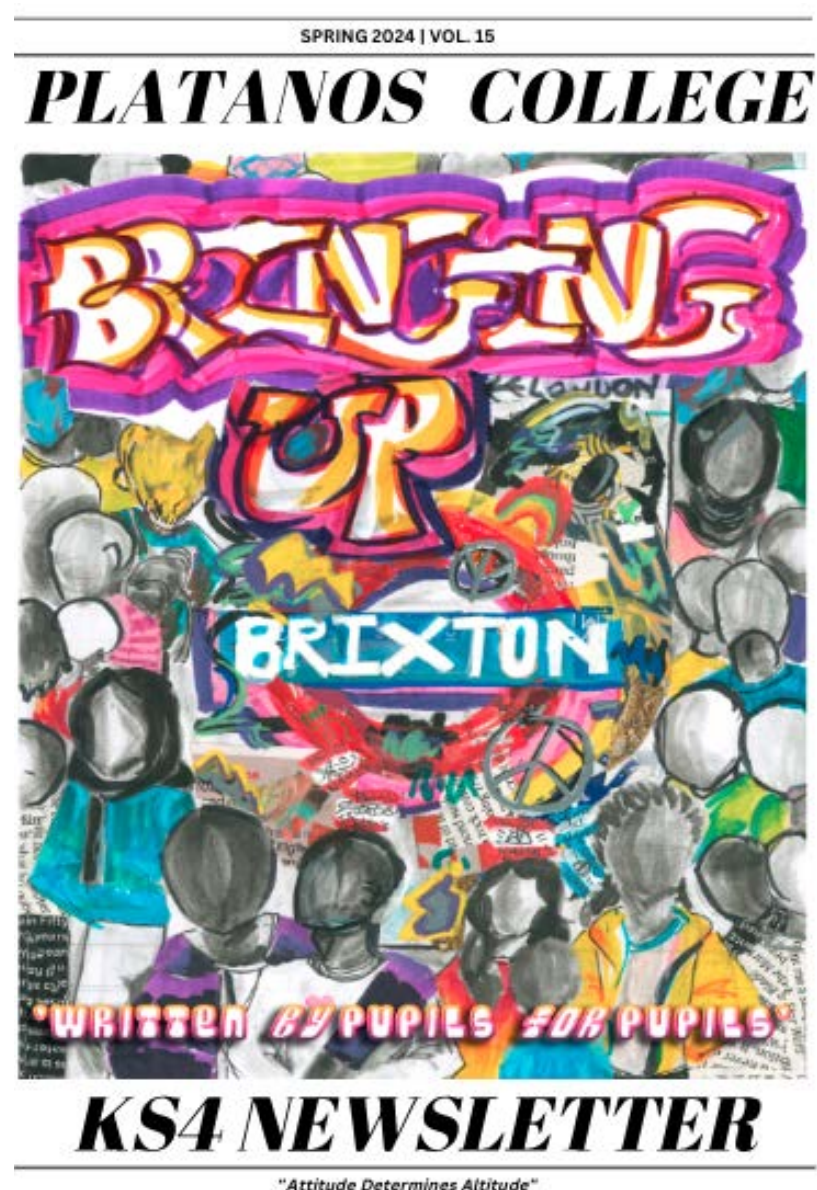
As usual, we also bring you a range of interviews with our peers,

staff and with a business owner, as well as advice from a past pupil.

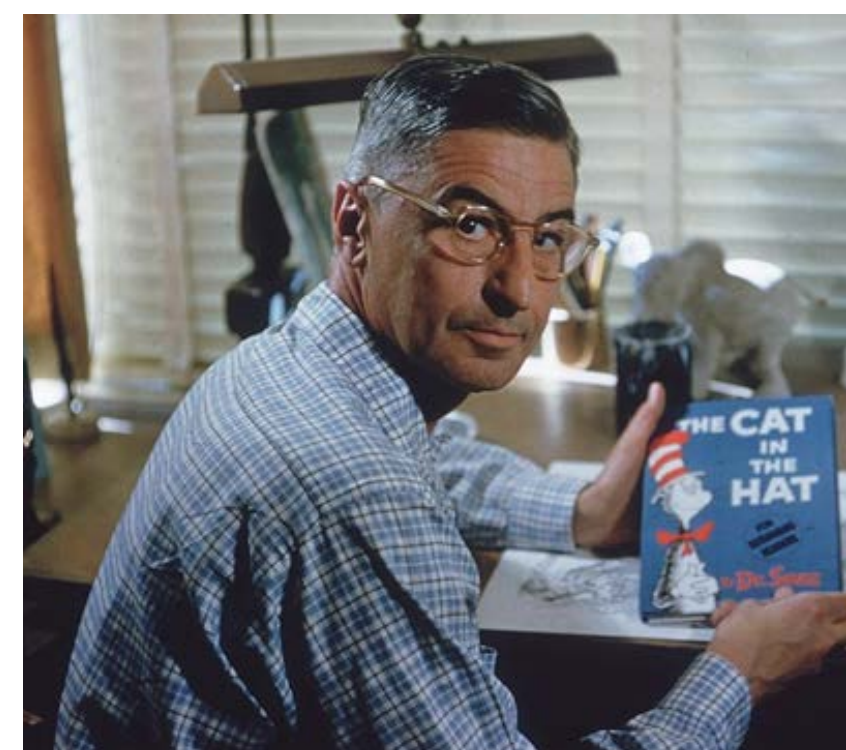
We hope that you find this term's edition of the Key Stage 4 Newsletter both informative and interesting.

On behalf of the whole Key Stage 4 Newsletter team, we wish you a relaxing Easter break and also wish the Year 11 pupils the best of luck as they prepare for their final GCSE examinations.

*Faith Jabbar, Editor-in-Chief.
Moyin Idowu, Co-Editor*

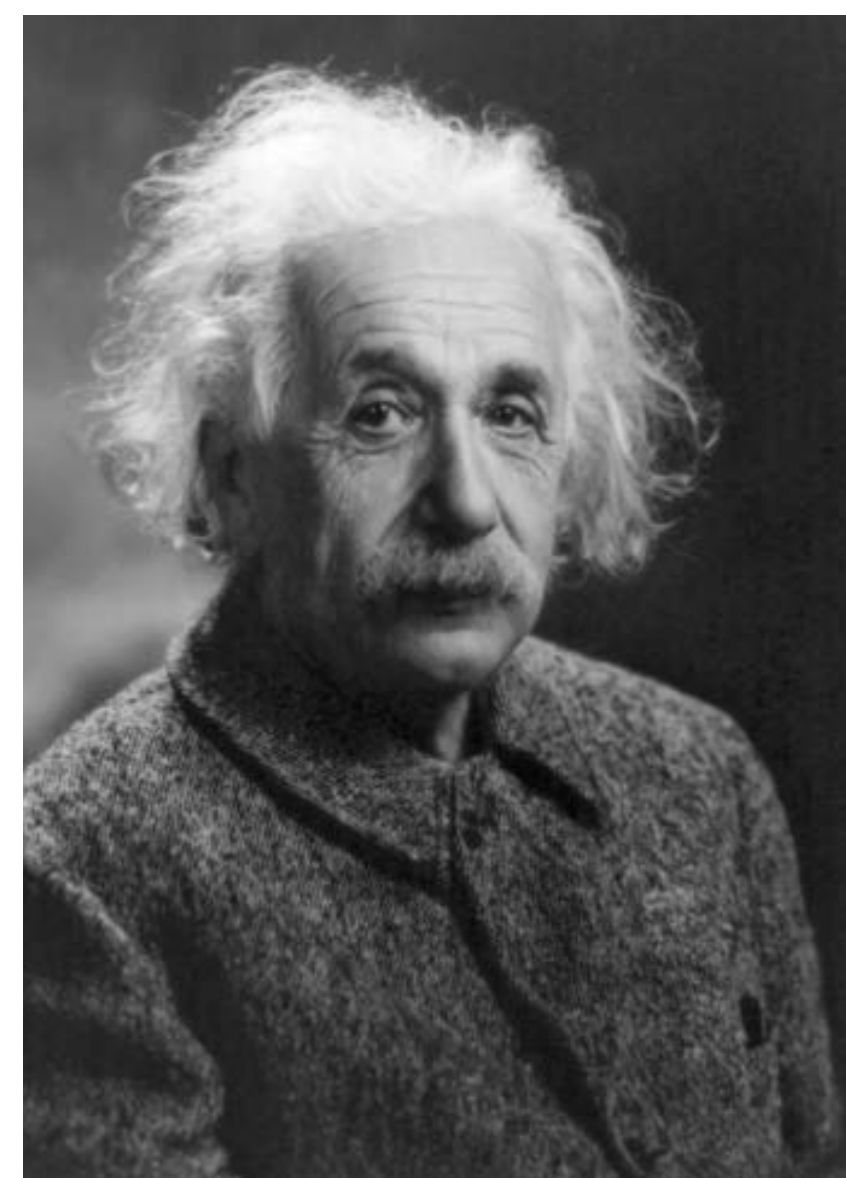


*Front cover by Teana Tran
Back Cover Poem by
Stephanie Camacho Pinto*



"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose."

— Dr. Seuss



"Education is not the learning of facts but training of mind"

— Albert Einstein



learning lounge

60 SECOND SIXTH FORM INTERVIEWS!

WRITTEN BY TAHIRA UDDIN AND SIDGE KAKOU

The inaugural cohort of Platanos College Sixth Formers are now well over half way into the first year. So we thought it would be interesting to ask them for their quick-fire responses to some key questions! Here's what 3 Sixth Former, Bradley Chogllo Guaylla, Iman Sakir and James Philip had to say....

What courses do you study?

Bradley: Psychology, Law and Art

Iman: Law, History, English

James: Law, English and history

Why did you choose these particular courses?

Bradley: Psychology and Law consist of discussions and debating.

Iman: I want to study Law at university and all three subjects compliment each other well.

James: I want to pursue becoming a Solicitor.

How does A Level teaching differ from secondary school?

Bradley: It's more serious, there's more to take in an

you always have to be on top of coursework.

Iman: There's more independent study.

James: There are more debates and more conversation during class.

What made you choose Platanos College Sixth Form?

Bradley: For the new experience because it's a new and upcoming Sixth Form

Iman: I'm a former student so it feels comfortable joining the Sixth Form.

James: I enjoyed Platanos College as a secondary school pupils and wanted to stay.

What's your favourite part of your course?

Bradley: Inclusivity: everyone's opinion is shared.

Iman: The freedom.

James: It's unique and being able to make my own choices.

Would you recommend Platanos College Sixth Form and why?

Bradley: Yes - there are many A-level courses on offer.

Iman: Yes, because of the excellent teachers.

James: Yes, I have had a good experience so far.

If you could go back in time, what advice would you give yourself this time last year?

Bradley: Study harder!

Iman: Study more!

James: Keep studying.

What are your ambitions for after Sixth Form?

Bradley: I want to go to University and study Architecture.

Iman: I want to study Law at University.

James: I want to go to University and study Law.





GCSE REVISION TIPS FROM OUR PEERS.

WRITTEN BY TEANNA TRAN

Sometimes the best people we can learn from are our own peers. We asked Year 11 pupil Uhunoma Obayagbona for his top tips.

What obstacles did you have during your exams and how did you overcome them?

I would say my biggest obstacle can at times be a lack of self-discipline. This lack of discipline could often lead to extensive periods of time being wasted as well as resulting in me subsequently feeling guilty about the time that I wasted, which could have actually led to me getting my work done.

To limit this, I try to restrict my phone use and try to make sure it's not within arms reach, as well as reducing the intervals of time I spend revising to allow for more frequent breaks.

What techniques did you find most effective for studying and why?

For me I find flashcards super effective for content-heavy subjects such as History and Science. I use a flashcard app called Anki

that implements spaced repetition and active recall (which basically means regularly re-visiting information by forcing you to think and spacing out your revision in order to counter the forgetting curve).

For subjects like English Language and Literature, I find the best way for me is to actually do the past papers and give them to my teacher to mark and give me feedback. It's really important for me to do these papers under time conditions to get a taste of how it will be in the actual exam.

To summarise, flashcards help me to remember the content and past papers help reinforce my knowledge as well as helping to develop my exam technique;

At the end of the day, this is the most important thing as, no matter how knowledgeable you are on a certain subject, if you're not able to transfer that to an exam paper then you won't get a grade that is reflective of your true ability.

If you could give a small message of advice or support to your peers in Key Stage 4, what would it be?

Always try to complete your work when you need to; avoid delaying it. You're going to have to do it at some point, so it's better that you just do it when it's set, instead of being burdened by the thought of you having to do the task later.

Also, stay disciplined, establish a strong work ethic and give yourself breaks and rewards.





THE UNSEEN WORLD OF CROHN'S DISEASE

WRITTEN BY ZAHRA QURESHI

Did you know that Crohn's disease is a chronic condition that affects millions of people around the world? But what exactly is it?

Crohn's disease is a kind of sickness that makes your gut hurt and bleed. It can make you need the toilet a lot, lose weight and have a fever. Sometimes it can cause other problems like holes, infections or narrowing in your gut, or even cancer. Crohn's disease can be different for everyone: some people have mild or no pain, whilst others have a lot of pain that makes it hard to do anything. You can rate your pain from 0 to 10, or use words like none, low, moderate or severe. You can also measure how bad your Crohn's disease is with some scores, like the CDAI or the HBI. The higher the score, the worse the disease.

No one knows why some people get Crohn's disease, but it might have something to do with a person's genes, immune system or the germs in their gut. What we do know is that Crohn's disease affects a lot of people in the US and the UK; to find out if you have Crohn's disease, you need to see a doctor who will ask you questions and examine you.

Diagnosis takes place through tests that involve looking inside your gut with a camera or taking photos of your gut. However, it can sometimes be hard to tell if you have Crohn's disease or something else, like IBS. In fact, many people with Crohn's disease are diagnosed wrongly at first.

Sadly, Crohn's disease can't yet be cured, but it can be treated with different things that can make you feel better, stop the inflammation and live a normal life. Treatment includes taking pills, administering injections or even having surgery to remove or fix parts of your gut. Changes to diet and lifestyle, such as quitting smoking, relaxing more and avoiding certain foods are also likely to help.

You might wonder why as a writer for the KS4 Newsletter, I am so keen to write about this issue; it is simply that this matter is very close to my heart as my mother was diagnosed with Crohn's disease a few years ago. Since then, I have witnessed the challenges of living with this condition; it can be a real struggle dealing with frequent flare-ups, side effects and hospital visits, and the amount of medication

she has to take is almost sickening.

Crohn's disease is a chronic condition that affects millions of people around the world. It is a complex and unpredictable disease that can cause physical, emotional and social problems. It is a disease that needs more awareness, research and funding. It is a disease that deserves more compassion, respect and empathy.

Imagine having a disease that causes you constant pain and discomfort. A disease that makes you run to the bathroom dozens of times a day.

A disease that makes you lose weight and appetite. A disease that makes you feel tired and weak. A disease that makes you miss school, work or social events. A disease that makes you worry about your future and your health. A disease that makes you feel alone and misunderstood.

This is what many people with Crohn's disease go through every day.

They suffer in silence, as their condition is often invisible and stigmatised. They face discrimination, ignorance and prejudice from others who do not understand



their situation. They struggle to find adequate care, support and resources and can be left feeling hopeless, helpless and worthless.

But they are not. They are brave, strong and resilient. They fight every day to overcome their challenges. They find ways to cope, to adapt and to thrive. They have hopes, dreams and aspirations. They have families, friends and communities who love them and care for them. They have stories, experiences, and wisdom to share. They are valuable, worthy and beautiful – it is about time that society as a whole recognises the challenges faced by people who have to contend with this at times debilitating disease.

We can all educate ourselves and others, donate to or volunteer for Crohn's disease charities, support or join Crohn's disease advocacy groups, or by simply being kind and understanding to people who have Crohn's disease. Together, we can make a positive change for people who have Crohn's disease.

EXTRAIESTINAL SYMPTOMS OF CROHN'S DISEASE

- Joint pain**
including peripheral and axial arthritis
- Anemia**
low red blood cell count
- Mouth sores**
including canker sores or ulcers
- Skin conditions**
including erythema nodosum and skin tags
- Liver**
gallstones or hepatitis
- Kidney**
kidney stones

MEDICALNEWS TODAY

Intestinal Symptoms of **Crohn's Disease**

PACE HOSPITALS

- Difficult to pass stools
- Pain and cramps in the abdomen
- Feeling of an incomplete bowel evacuation
- Bleeding in the rectum
- Urgency is passing bowel
- Persistent diarrhoea
- Anal fistulas / Anal fissures



GCSEs: SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVES

GCSEs

We all know that our 5 years at Platanos College culminates in a series of dreaded but critical exams – the GCSEs! These are an important stage in the academic journey of pupils across the country. However, the pressure to perform well in these exams and achieve a high enough grade to pass, get into the University of our choice and to kickstart our dream careers, can be overwhelming and stressful!

There is no doubt that GCSEs have a significant impact on pupils' psychological and physical health. I say this as someone who overthinks things a lot, and being agitated over my future after my GCSEs is something I often ponder upon. Perhaps you are like me? Perhaps you are one of the many Key Stage 4 pupils who struggles to understand a particular topic or subject? This is completely natural and it's important that we recognise that we are neither the first ones to feel

anxious or confused or worried, nor will we be the last.

According to a study by the National Education Union, young people with poor mental health are three times more likely to not pass five GCSEs including Maths and English, compared to their peers. Nowadays, many GCSEs are assessed exclusively by the end-of-course examinations - this can be extremely stressful for those of us who do not naturally perform well in exam conditions.

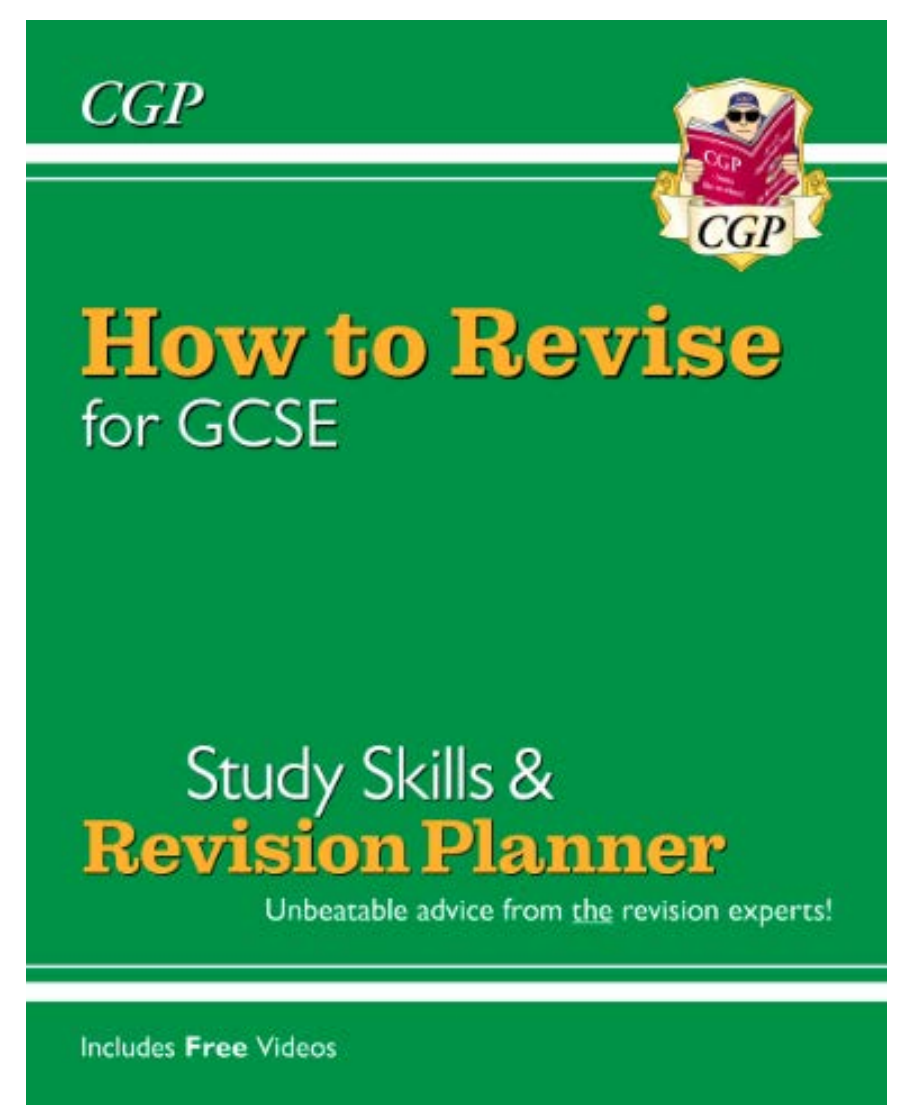
Physically, the effects of stress of these GCSEs can lead to students having health problems, such as lack of sleep, poor diet, lack of exercise and even self-harm. It is important to always seek advice and support if you feel you are struggling; this can be from school or from external support networks and helplines.

Whilst we all know that GCSEs are important and we should definitely prepare to give ourselves the optimum opportunity to do well in them, it's also wise to consider the bigger picture: remember that GCSEs are just one part of your academic journey and you will get

through them. They don't define your worth or your future! There are many paths to success and our GCSEs are one of them. After all, there is a quote that speaks for itself and is a fact about life: *"There is no success without failure and losses in life"*. As the writer and very inspiring motivational speaker Zig Zagler once said *"You don't have to be great to start but you have to start to be great"*

So, take that very first step: believe in yourself and know that you have what it takes to eventually succeed!

Good luck! You can make it happen!





QUICK-FIRE ROUND TEACHER INTERVIEWS

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVES

We asked Ms Cooke, Mr Kabaka and Ms Mansell to take part in a quick-fire round interview! Here's what they had to say....

Why did you choose to be a teacher?

"I felt that young people had a bad presentation in media. I wanted to see all that young people are capable of doing."

Ms.Cooke

"For the opportunity to impact the lives of young people in a positive way and to help them to enjoy the subjects that I enjoyed in school - particularly Science."

Mr.Kabaka

"I started studying Art History and then I started working as a waitress. I knew that I wanted to do something with Art but I didn't know what. My mother was a teacher, so she suggested I try it to see if I liked it - I ended up loving it!"

Ms.Mansell

If you had the option to do a different career, what would it be and why?

"Working in Publishing or even ICT because I really like computers and everything is digital now, so it's a really exciting time to be in this field." *Ms.Cooke*

"Becoming a Fine artist would be fabulous, so I could write about art and make art all day!" *Ms.Mansell*

I would probably be still be working in Education and would be a university Lecturer." *Mr.Kabaka*



Mr.Kabaka

What qualifications did you need to get to where you are now?

"Good A-levels and qualifications at GCSE." *Ms.Cooke*

"A University Degree in something that's Science related, so I did Electrical and Electronic Engineering and I also needed to obtain a

"

teacher qualification."

Mr.Kabaka

A relevant Art degree, plus good A Levels and GCSEs, as well as a PGCE to become a teacher." *Ms Mansell*

What were key parts of your journey to where you are today?

"I was Head Girl at school, then studied at one of the best Universities in London."

Ms.Cooke

"I went to a state secondary school and stayed there for Sixth Form where I did my A-levels. I studied Art History and then MA Contemporary Art Theory part time whilst teaching around the corner in Brixton, before starting here at Platanos College."

Ms.Mansell



Ms.Manswell



“I studied Engineering at university in Wales before doing my PGCE. During the PGCE, student-teachers get put in placement at schools and this was the school I was placed at.” *Mr.Kabaka*

What got you through the challenges of your journey?

“My own motivation and to make my parents proud.” *Ms.Cooke*

“I don't like to fail.” *Mr.Kabaka*

“Good friends, good family, good lecturers and the pupils and the art - plus we learn as much from pupils as they learn from us!” *Ms.Mansell*

What key advice would you give our Key Stage 4 pupils?

“Start revising from Year 10.” *Ms.Cooke*

“Don't leave revision too late; it's better to do a little bit every day than to try to do a lot in one day.” *Mr.Kabaka*

“Trust your instincts, take creative risks and remember - you don't exist on your own.” *Ms.Mansell*

Can you give our Key Stage 4 pupils a quick-fire take-away message?

“Take creative risks and move with kindness, compassion and empathy.” *Ms.Mansell*

“Choose a career that you'll love.” *Ms.Cooke*

"Failure is a bruise - not a tattoo." *Mr.Kabaka*



Ms.Cooke





HOW AI CAN CATAPULT COMPANIES INTO COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

WRITTEN BY MOHAMED JOHAR

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a game-changer in today's commercial world; it is reshaping how businesses work and how they interact with their clients. Companies are now using AI to help them to analyse data, identify trends and make accurate predictions.

In addition, AI helps businesses to become automated and therefore more streamlined and efficient; this in turn, reduces the risk of human error and allows workers to focus on strategic tasks. For example, AI-operated chatbots can handle customer questions efficiently and can understand and reply to customers' everyday language. This is made possible by Natural Language Processing (NLP).

Astonishingly, AI can also pick up on how customers feel; with this kind of intelligent sentiment analysis, businesses can identify problems early on and swiftly deal with them, which in turn, boosts customer satisfaction.

Another way in which AI can help businesses is in helping to streamline supply chain management. They do this by forecasting customers'

needs, streamlining stock and managing transport more effectively. AI can analyse data trends and in doing so, accurately forecast and predict customer demand. This in turn, enables companies to have the correct goods in the correct areas at the correct time.

However, despite its evident advantages, AI can pose problems for businesses. For instance, the expense can be considerable. Furthermore, businesses are legally required to ensure that there are no breaches in data privacy or security – this means that companies have to trust AI to manage



In addition, the insights that businesses gather from AI, helps them to truly understand any shifts in the market and rival business plans. AI is also excellent at identifying gaps in the market; this in turn, empowers businesses to make smart decisions on products, marketing and pricing.

delicate and confidential client details.

It is therefore clear that whilst AI holds much promise in its ability to enable businesses to run effectively and efficiently, ultimately transparency and accountability must have some human responsibility, to ensure that AI works in an ethical manner.



INTERVIEW WITH A PAST PUPIL

WRITTEN BY ALESSANDRA RIOS

We interviewed past pupil Yoela Rios, who left Platanos College 2 years ago and is now studying in Islington.

What are your current academic goals and how do these compare to your previous ones?

My academic goal now is simple: to finish university and acquire a stable job. My academic goal beforehand was to understand, work and learn at the same speed as my peers, due to my dyslexia. I believe now I have accomplished that to an extent.

How did Platanos College guide you in your career path?

So, right now I am studying Biomedical Sciences and wish to be a Veterinarian nurse. I was able to figure this out by the immense support and help from the teachers at Platanos College. They made me explore options that I hadn't thought about through workshops and trips like KidZania.

How did Platanos College prepare you for further studies?

I think I really took the motto "*Attitude determines*

Altitude" to heart and have continued to try my best to stick to it. I also strongly believe that the teachers shaped my mindset to prepare me for the future.

What advice do you have for current Key Stage 4 pupils at Platanos College?

It is important to revise and pay attention but it is also important to remember that you are still a teenager, so with that in mind, it's okay to appreciate the time that you have. That doesn't mean to slack off, but to make the most of these years in all ways possible; to look back and know that you tried your best while still having fun at Platanos College.

What do you remember most about Platanos College?

I'd say what I remember most is Year 11. Year 11 was - in my opinion - the best year, as I liked the Drop down sessions and seeing all my hard work finally being shown through GCSEs. Not to mention the memories of my friends and I.

How would you describe the change from Year 7 you, to who you are today?

Year 7 me was very insecure and withdrawn but through the years, I feel I have developed into a better version of myself in all aspects thanks to the environment around me.

What do you miss most about Platanos College?

I truly miss everything: the teachers telling bad jokes, the boxing club, Wednesday's option time, the pupils messing around and the friendships I made. I think Platanos was a very crucial era of my life.





HOW TECHNOLOGY IS TRANSFORMING TOMORROW

WRITTEN BY LUCAS LIN

There is little doubt that in the 21st century landscape, technology is the key catalyst for major changes in the spheres of Education, Medicine and the economy.

Let's take Education for example.

How can we use technology for education? Well, when it comes to technological advances, classrooms are no longer confined to four walls; instead, the art of learning is expanding into a boundless arena of possibilities. The usage of smart devices, interactive whiteboards and online platforms has transformed the way we learn. Virtual classrooms exceed geographical barriers, enabling students to engage across the globe.

Indeed, Covid showed us just a little of what can be achieved outside of the classroom walls, enabling our lessons and teachers to be brought that much closer to home.

In post-16 and post-18 Education, technology is enabling university students to engage in interactive simulations through Virtual Reality, for instance in practising surgical procedures.

Indeed, in the medical domain, technology stands as a revolutionary changemaker.

But it is not just in the realms of Education and Medicine that we are seeing the groundbreaking advances of technological advancements. Technology also facilitates the creation of virtual communities that go beyond geographical boundaries.

For instance, social media enables individuals to connect based on shared interests and common values. As these digital communities evolve, they hold potential to provide support networks, thereby creating a sense of community and belonging. And what better use of technology than to bring people together?





CAN AI TURN FANTASY INTO REALITY?

WRITTEN BY HIEU HOANG

In recent years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a worldwide phenomenon in modern media, captivating audiences with its portrayal in Blockbuster films and popular video games. From the dystopian future of the Terminator film franchise, to the ethical conflict presented in I, Robot and the interactive game Detroit: Become Human, AI has taken centre stage, raising questions about the impact of advanced technology on society.

James Cameron's Terminator franchise began in the 1980s and saw a world where self-aware AI, known as Skynet, waged war against humanity. While the scenario may seem far-fetched, the concept of machines turning against their creators raises important ideas about the potential risks associated with AI development.

Indeed, experts in the field emphasise the importance of responsible AI research to prevent unintended consequences.

In I, Robot, the narrative unfolds in a future where robots are an integral part of daily life, governed by the Three Laws of Robotics. The film follows Detective Del

Spooner as he investigates a mysterious death.

When it comes to the more interactive side of modern media, Detroit: Become Human offers players the chance to shape the narrative through their choices, in a world where androids are not only sentient beings, but demand equal rights. The game dives into the moral complexities surrounding AI and invites players to consider the consequences of their decisions - fight for peace and rights or violence and rebellion. This immersive experience reflects the growing interest in AI's societal impact and potential to shape our future.



While these fictional portrayals of AI often present a dystopian world, it is essential to acknowledge the real-world advancements in AI technology that hold the potential for positive - and negative - change. AI is increasingly being integrated

into various aspects of our lives, from Healthcare and Education to Transportation and Entertainment.

However, it is crucial to balance innovation with morality in all our decision making when it comes to the advancements of AI.

As AI continues to evolve, the intersection of fiction and reality raises important conversations about the ethical, social and economic implications of advanced technology. Society must actively engage in discussions surrounding AI development, ensuring that it aligns with our values and contributes to the improvement of humanity, the solving of world-wide concerns and the sustaining of the planet. The portrayal of AI in modern media serves as both a caution and an opportunity to shape the future.





crime & conspiracy

KILLER NURSE: LUCY LETBY

WRITTEN BY MOYIN IDOWU & HALA HARIZI

Last year you may have heard about the horrific case of Lucy Letby, a former neonatal nurse who was found guilty of killing babies between June 2015 and June 2016. But how on earth did Letby go from being a poster girl in NHS promotional material, to serial killer of innocent and vulnerable babies?

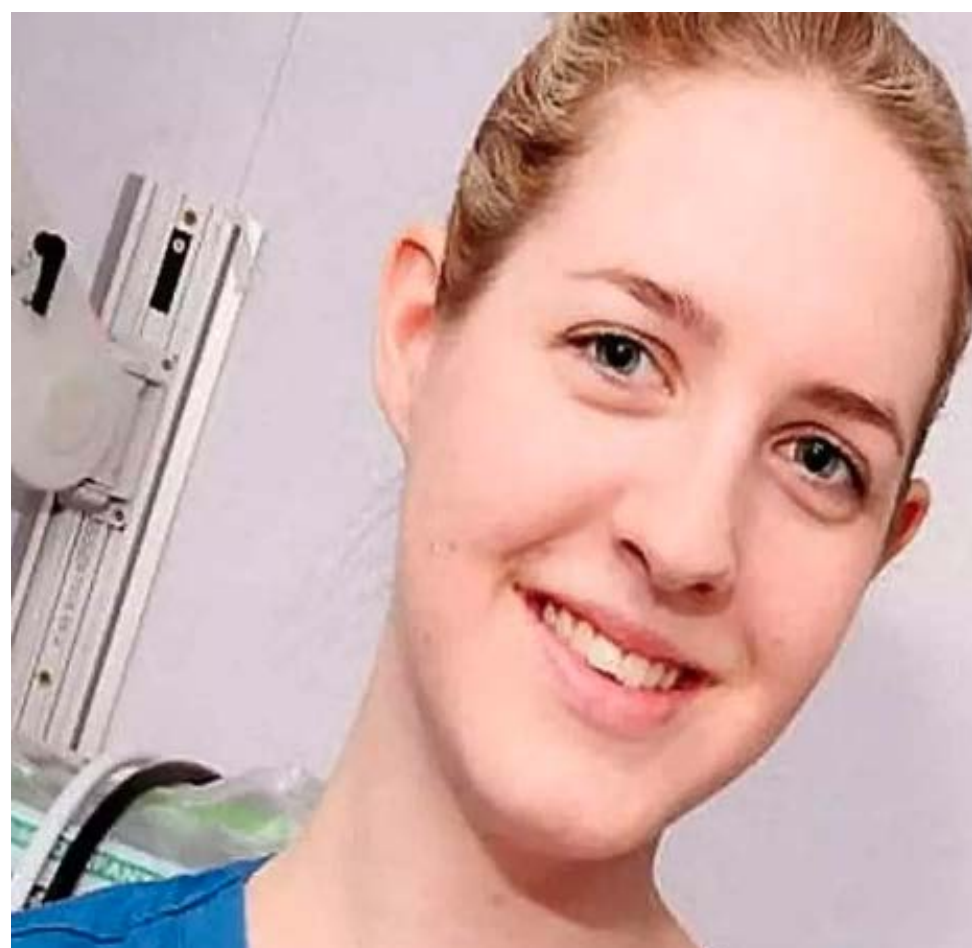
Letby was born on 4th January 1990, in Hereford, Herefordshire.

The only child of a Finance Manager and Accounts Clerk, Letby studied at Aylestone School and Hereford Sixth Form College. Lucy was reported to have had a difficult birth herself; this consequently led to her choice of career. According to her friends in secondary school, *“Everything that she did was geared towards that ultimate goal of becoming a nurse”*.

Lucy pursued her nursing dreams at the University of Chester, where she worked as a student nurse for three years of training. She undertook placements at Liverpool Women’s Hospital and the Countess of Chester Hospital. Letby graduated from University in September 2011.

In 2012, Letby became a registered nurse at the Countess of Chester Hospital. Just a year after her career kicked off, a staff profile stated that Lucy Letby would be responsible for caring for a wide range of babies, requiring varying levels of support. Among these babies were some of the most vulnerable due to prematurity or complications.

However, in 2016, just four years into her career, Letby was removed from clinical duties due to an Investigation into her actions. Prior to this, she was moved from night to day shifts due to reported suspicious behaviour. An informal review was conducted in June 2015, revealing details regarding four unexplained collapses that occurred in the same unit.



Three death cases were also reported in the same month - all while Letby was on shift. The committee investigating the deaths classified them as medication errors; many believe that if they had been classified as serious incidents involving unexpected deaths, Letby would have been caught sooner.

Months later, in February 2016 the Lead Neonatologist concluded a Review investigating five unexplained deaths and collapses within the Unit that Letby worked on. Their investigation determined that the only common factor in these cases was the presence of Letby.

In late June 2016, the Hospital Trust's Executive Directors met to discuss further action; by this time, seven unexpected deaths had taken place within the unit.



After police investigation, on 3rd July 2018 Letby was finally arrested by police on suspicion of eight counts of murder and six counts of attempted murder. It was suspected that she had injected babies with air, put insulin in their feeding bags or had thrust a nasogastric tube down their throats – all of which could kill or seriously harm the newborns.

In court, one father stated that the death of his twin babies *“has destroyed me as a man and as a father.”* Another father whose daughter survived but was left with life-changing disabilities including blindness and quadriplegic cerebral palsy, described how she was born prematurely and against all odds *“God saved her”* but then *“the devil found her”*.

In August of 2023 33-year old Letby was found guilty of the murder of 7 babies and the attempted murder of 6 more. She was given a very rare whole-life order, meaning she will never be released from jail.

However, the question remains, how exactly did Letby get away with her crimes for so long and what can be done to prevent such tragic events from happening again?





WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE KILLING OF BRIANNA GHEY?

WRITTEN BY AISHA BASHIR

On the chilly day of 13th February 2023, a 16-year-old named Brianna Ghey was mercilessly and senselessly murdered by her two supposed 'friends'.

On that fateful day, Brianna was expecting to have a fun catch up with Scarlet Jenkinson and Eddie Ratcliffe. However - allegedly motivated by Brianna's transgender identity - the two lured her to a secluded place where they stabbed her twenty-eight times.

Shockingly, this heinous crime took place in daylight. Brianna's body was later discovered by a man walking his dog.



At the start of the investigation, police denied the killing had been a hate crime. However, it emerged that Brianna had faced severe bullying at her school simply

for being a transgender girl. This took a severe toll on her mental health and she was also hospitalised for an eating disorder.

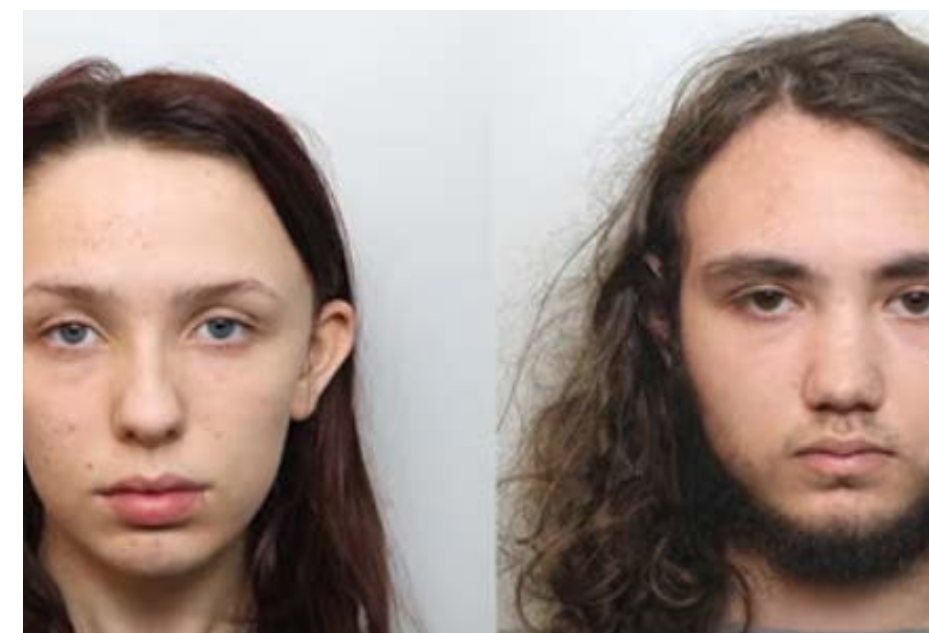
The judge, Mrs Justice Yip told both defendants - who, at 16 years of age, were named in the media - "You picked Brianna because you both thought she would be an easy target...You both took part in a brutal and planned murder which was sadistic in nature and where a secondary motive was hostility towards Brianna because of her transgender identity."



After the verdicts were announced Esther Ghey, Brianna's mother, stood outside Manchester Crown Court stating, "Brianna was larger than life, she was funny witty and fearless. We miss Brianna so much. Our house feels empty without her laughter. To know how scared

my usually fearless child must have been when she was alone in that park with someone that she called friends will haunt me forever. Prior to the trial I had moments where I felt sorry for the defendants because they had ruined their own lives as well as ours. But now knowing the true nature and seeing neither display or ounce of remorse for what they have done to Brianna, I have lost all sympathy that I may have had previously."

However, in what some say was a remarkable act of compassion, Ms Ghey also pleaded, "Please have some empathy and compassion for the families of the young people convicted of this horrific crime. They too have lost a child and must live the rest of their lives knowing what their child has done."



Peter Spooner, Brianna's father stated: "It's impossible to point out words on the murder of my child has affected me. I never stopped



loving her and never will... She was a beautiful girl to be proud of. I hate how her life was brutally taken away from her."

Is there anything we can learn from this brutal case?

In February, Brianna's mother revealed the trolling she has received since she started campaigning for the law to force mobile phone companies to take more responsibility for ensuring children are safe from harmful content. She is campaigning for social media apps to be barred for under-16s and wants software to be installed on children's phones, which can then make parents aware of any inappropriate material.

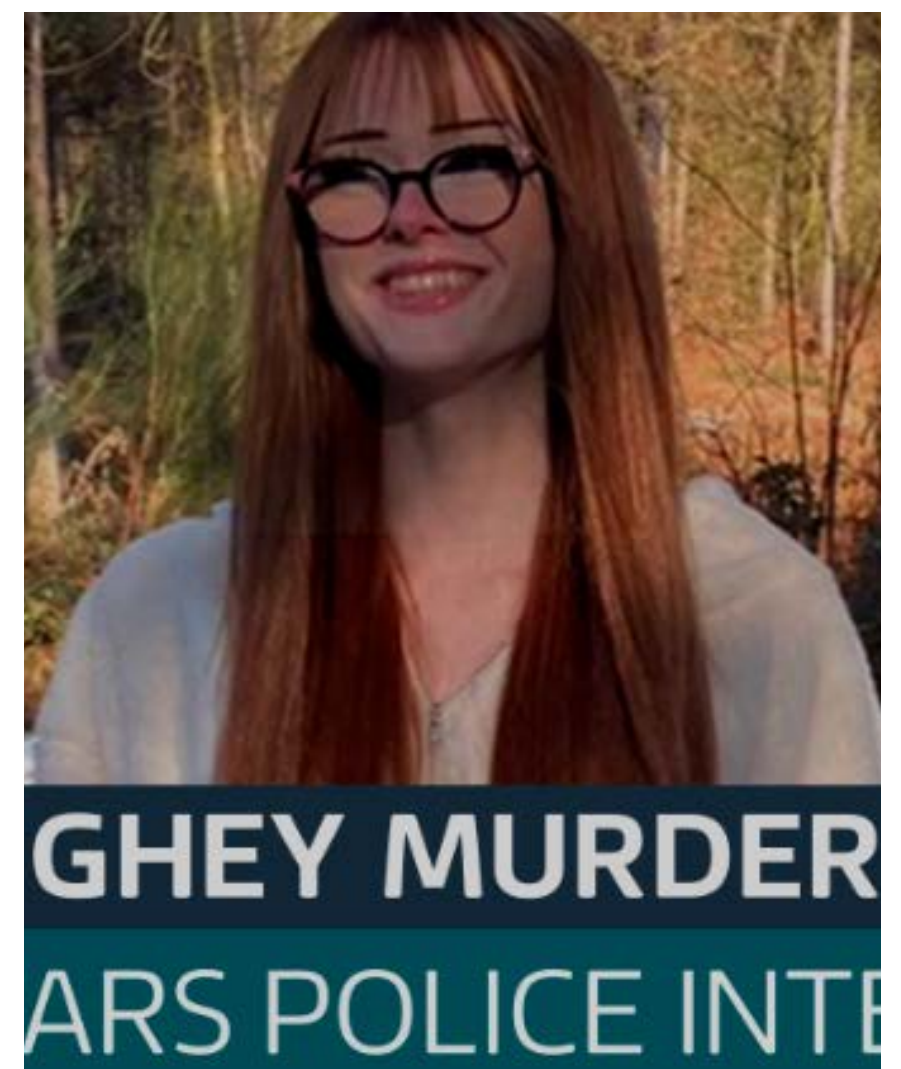
After the trial of her daughter's killers, she stated that the murder had been carried out, *"not because Brianna had done anything wrong, but just because one hated trans people and the*

other thought it would be fun."

So, what can be done to protect transgender individuals from hate crimes?

And what can be done to protect children and young people when it comes to social media? One thing is for sure: there seems to be a long way to go in both - as the tragic killing of Brianna Ghey demonstrates.

One thing is for sure: there seems to be a long way to go in both - as the tragic killing of Brianna Ghey demonstrates.





60 YEARS ON FROM THE ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY

WRITTEN BY SAMUEL VANELA LUCAS



Did you know that last November marked the 60th anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States of America? He was elected in January 1961, but unfortunately, his Presidency did not last very long as he was tragically assassinated in November 1963.

Born on 29th May 1917, in Brooklyn, Massachusetts, Kennedy grew up in a politically influential family. Before entering the world of politics, he served in the U.S. Navy during World War 2, for which he earned accolades for his bravery and heroism.

Before becoming President, Kennedy began his political career by serving as a U.S. Representative

from Massachusetts and later, as a U.S. Senator. It was during this time that he was able to establish himself as a charismatic and visionary leader.

In 1960, he successfully ran for Presidency as the Democratic candidate. In the General Election, Kennedy faced Republican Richard Nixon. The televised debates between Kennedy and Nixon played a crucial role in shaping public perception. Kennedy narrowly won the election, making him the youngest person and the first Catholic to be elected as President of the United States.

On November 22nd 1963, President Kennedy, along with his wife Jacqueline Kennedy, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson and Texas Governor John Connally, was riding in an open convertible through downtown Dallas.

Shockingly, at approximately 12:30 p.m. Central Standard Time, as the motorcade passed through Dealey Plaza, Kennedy was shot in the head and neck, which tragically led to his death.

Lee Harvey Oswald, a former Marine was arrested later that day but denied involvement in the assassination.

Two days after the shooting and while in police custody, Oswald was fatally shot by Jack Ruby, a Dallas nightclub owner as he was being transferred to a different jail. Ruby claimed he wanted to spare Jacqueline Kennedy the ordeal of a trial, but conspiracy theories have led to speculation about each man's involvement ever since that fateful week.

In 1964, a report concluded that Oswald fired the shots from a sixth-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository building, and that there was no-one else involved.





As a result of the Kennedy assassination, there has been an increase in security measures for successive Presidents.

Significant Events During Kennedy's Presidency

**Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962 - Kennedy skillfully navigated the United States through the tense standoff with the Soviet Union.*

**Alliance for Progress - Kennedy initiated the Alliance for Progress with the aim of ensuring economic and social development in Latin America.*

**The New Frontier - Kennedy's domestic agenda focused on civil rights, space exploration and economic growth.*

**Space Race - Kennedy played a pivotal role during the early stages of the space race by committing the United States to land a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s.*

**Civil Rights Movement - Kennedy was committed to the Civil Rights Movement, with Martin Luther King Jr stating that one of his speeches was "one of the most eloquent, profound and*

unequivocal pleas for justice and the freedom of all men ever made by any president."

**Inaugural Address, 1961 - This was one of Kennedy's most memorable speeches where he urged Americans to "ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."*

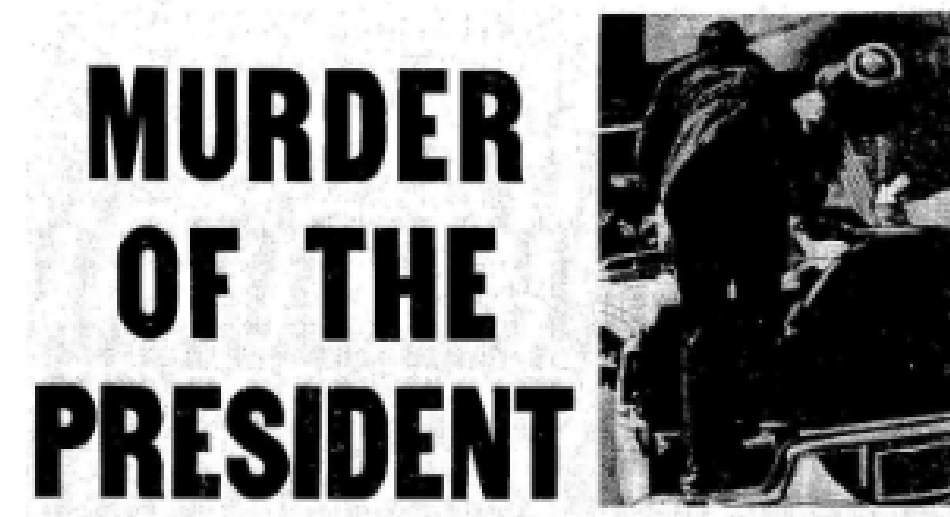
Assassination Conspiracy Theories

**Multiple Shooters and Grassy Knoll - one of the main conspiracy theories is that there were multiple shooters involved in the assassination. Some suggest that a second gunman fired from the grassy knoll, an area near Dealey Plaza. Witnesses reported hearing shots from different directions, which would imply that Oswald did not act alone.*

**Mafia Connection - Another theory implicates organised crime, suggesting that the Mafia was involved in the assassination due to Kennedy's cracking down on the mob.*

**CIA Involvement - Some conspiracy theories relate to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) having a plot to*

assassinate Kennedy. Theories suggest that elements within the CIA were unhappy with Kennedy's policies, particularly regarding Cuba and the Bay of Pigs invasion. Allegations range from actual direct CIA involvement, to claims that they had knowledge of the plot to assassinate the President, but chose not to intervene.





inspiration station

REMEMBERING BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

WRITTEN BY EMNET KETEMA

On 7th December last year, the literary world mourned the loss of Benjamin Zephaniah. We have all probably studied Zephaniah's work in our English lessons at some point in our time at school. Indeed, he was a renowned British poet, writer and musician. Known for his powerful poetry and activism, Zephaniah's life and work resonated with the diversity of multicultural Britain, leaving a lasting impact.

justice and equality.

In his early years, Zephaniah discovered his passion for poetry. He started writing and performing at an early age, using his words to shed light on social issues such as racism, poverty and injustice.

The vibrant and multicultural area of South London, became one of the most significant stages for Benjamin Zephaniah's poetic

His words inspired individuals to stand up against injustice, fostering a spirit of resilience.

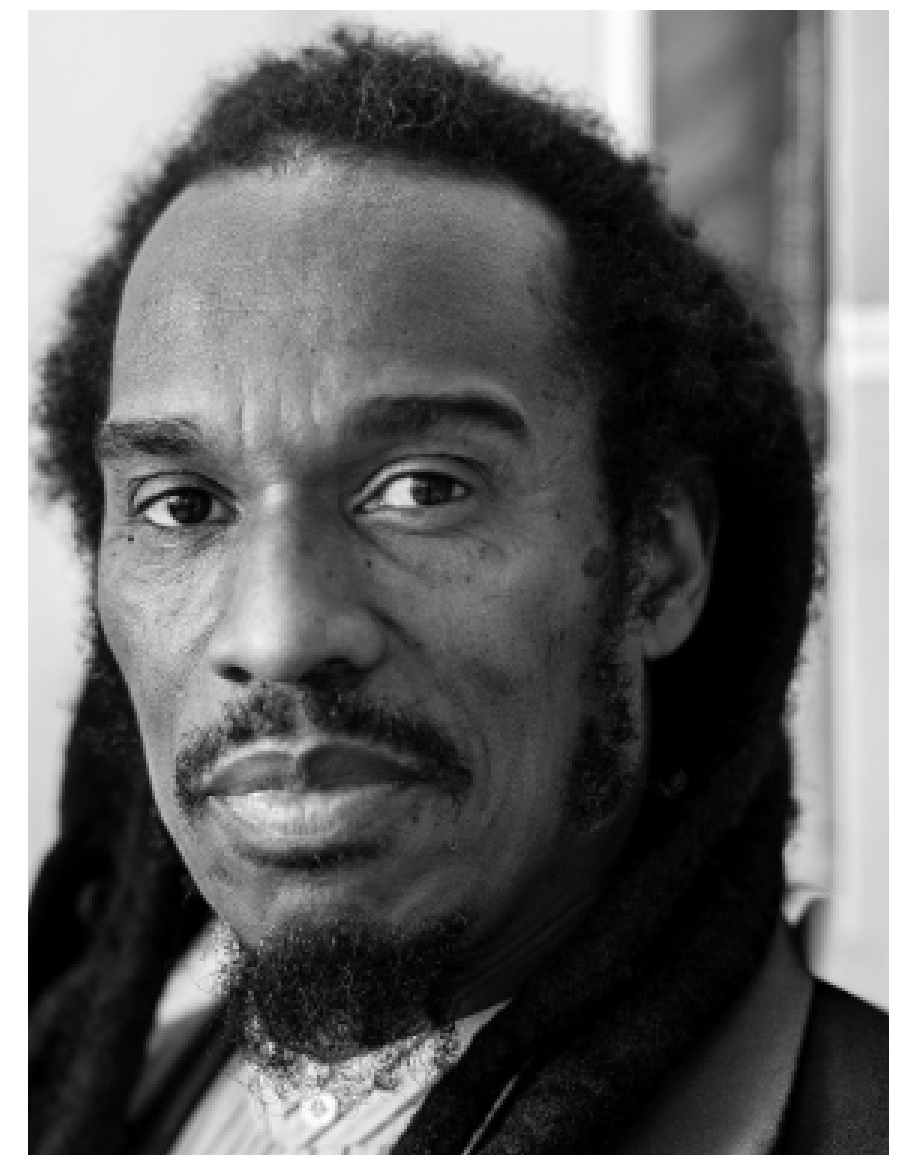
Zephaniah's poems, essays and speeches continue to inspire young people and his visits to local schools truly demonstrated his love of sharing his passion with the world. He used his platform to highlight the struggles faced by marginalised communities, prompting conversations and spurring change. Many would say that his work broke borders, bringing people from all walks of life together with a shared purpose.

However, Zephaniah's contributions to society were not limited to his poetry. He actively engaged in community initiatives, working towards positive change. From organising



Born on 15th April 1958, Zephaniah experienced a rough childhood in Birmingham. When he was nine years old he decided to stop eating animals and as an adult was an animal rights' activist. He faced discrimination and racism, which ultimately shaped his worldview and fuelled his determination to fight for

performances and activism. His connection with the community was profound and his words resonated with Londoners and immigrants to the UK, who faced their own struggles and challenges. Through his poetry, he addressed issues such as police brutality, gentrification and racial inequality, giving a voice to those who felt alone.





workshops and discussions to mentoring aspiring artists, Zephaniah used his skills and experiences to lift others up.

His belief in the power of education led him to establish writing programmes for young people, empowering them to express their own voices. By sharing his experiences and offering guidance, Zephaniah encouraged future generations to embrace their unique identities and fight for a better world that promoted fairness and equality.

Recognised by the British Honours system for his achievements, Zephaniah chose to turn down an OBE. When asked why, he stated that *"I've been fighting against empire all my life... How could I then go and accept an honour which puts empire on to my name?"*

Benjamin Zephaniah's life and work touched the hearts and minds of many, leaving an indelible mark on the UK and on the world. His powerful poetry and unwavering activism continue to inspire change and encourage individuals to stand up against injustice.

When he died last year of a brain tumour, The Independent called him *"the heart and consciousness of Black Britain."*

Benjamin Zephaniah may no longer be with us, but his words and influence will forever resonate. Through his poetry, he taught us that our voice has the power to shape the world we live in. His memory will remain a source of inspiration for generations to come.





GOTTESMAN'S GENEROUS GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING

WRITTEN BY MOHAMMED JOHAR

Last month students at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine were called to an assembly, where one of the College's former professors, Dr. Ruth Gottesman made an astonishing announcement: she stated that the College would be getting rid of all tuition fees for Medical students! As you can imagine, the extraordinary \$1 billion donation will ensure that that students can pursue their medical goals without being tied down by limitations on their finances.

But what brought about such amazing generosity? With a history spanning more than fifty years, Dr. Gottesman is very closely connected to the College. Her remarkable deed acts as a beacon of hope for those who wish to become doctors or pursue a career in Medicine.

There is no doubt that beyond the walls of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Dr. Gottesman's influence is wide-reaching within the local community – not only does this show the life-changing potential of Education, it also helps to open Healthcare to a wider demographic of students and future healthcare workers.



Indeed, according to the College's demographic breakdown, nearly half of those studying Medicine are White, 11% are Hispanic or Latino, whilst only 5% are Black. However, this in direct contrast to the area of the Bronx where the College is located and where 44% of residents are Black and 56% are Hispanic or Latino. As student Dominguez Paez said, *"I feel like what I'm most excited to see is seeing an increase in applications that reflect the population in the Bronx...Because now they know that they have the opportunity to afford going to medical school."*

Did you know that compared with UK universities, American colleges are extremely expensive? In fact, last year, US medical students accrued an average of \$250,995 in

student loan debt when they graduated!

The Albert Einstein College of Medicine itself charges students \$59,000 per year in fees. Dr Peter Campbell, a professor at the college stated that the news Dr Gottesman presented the students with created what was *"unquestionably the happiest day"* he had ever experienced in 20 years of teaching: *"I've never seen 20-something year-olds collectively that happy in my life. There was just so much pure happiness."*

Some would say that that Dr Gottesman's generous donation is truly the gift that keeps giving; afterall, as we all know, Education can help pave the way to success and happiness.





THE HISTORY OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

WRITTEN BY JASON TRAN



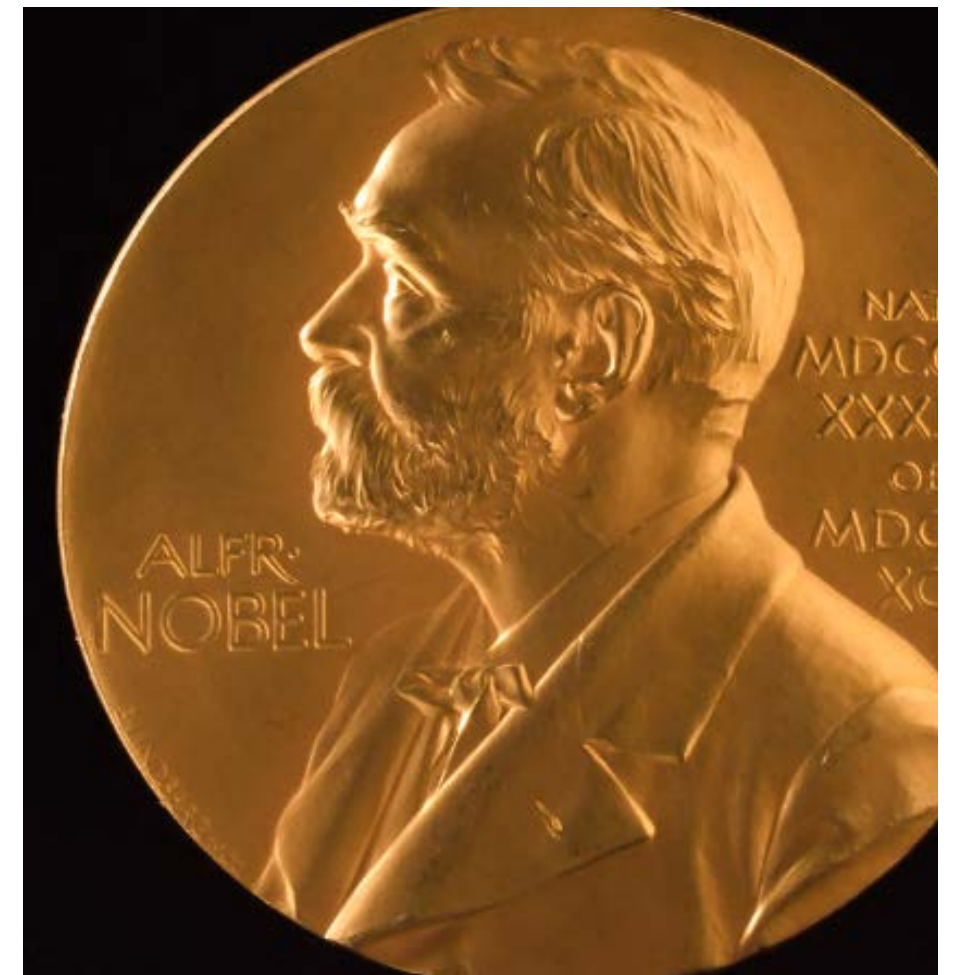
The Nobel Peace Prize has a rich history that dates back to its establishment by Alfred Nobel - the inventor of dynamite - in his will in 1895. Nobel, a Swedish Chemist, Engineer and Inventor, left instructions for the creation of the prize to be awarded to the person or organisation that makes the greatest contribution to promoting fraternity between nations, the abolition or reduction of standing armies and the establishment and promotion of peace congresses.

The first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded in 1901, and interestingly, the recipient was not an individual but two organisations: the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Institute-de Droit International. The Nobel Committee recognised their significant efforts in humanitarian work and promoting International Law

Over the years, the Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to a diverse range of recipients, including political leaders, activists and organisations and Movements that have made significant contributions to peace. Some notable Laureates include Martin Luther King Jr. (1964) for his role in the American Civil Rights Movement, Mother Teresa (1979) for her Humanitarian work, and Nelson Mandela (1993) for his efforts to dismantle the Apartheid system in South Africa.

Nonetheless, The Nobel Peace Prize has not been without controversy, with the selection of laureates sparking intense debate and criticism at times. One such example is the awarding of the prize to Henry Kissinger in 1973 for his role in the Vietnam War negotiations - a decision that generated considerable public outcry.

In recent decades, the Nobel Committee has recognised the impact of grassroots Movements and global issues. For instance, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Malala Yousafzai and Kailash Satyarthi in 2014, for their courageous work in advocating for children's rights and education.



In 2023, The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Narges Mohamadi, for her activism against the Iranian government; unfortunately, she was still incarcerated when it was awarded to her, but her two children accepted it on her behalf. Her speech - smuggled out of jail - stated "*The Iranian people, with perseverance, will overcome repression and authoritarianism.*"

The Nobel Peace Prize continues to be a prestigious and influential award, shedding light on individuals and organisations committed to making the world a more peaceful place. Despite occasional controversies, it remains a symbol of hope and recognition for those striving to build a better and more harmonious world.



office of opinion

DO PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES GET THE TREATMENT THEY DESERVE?

WRITTEN BY RUWEDA NOR

Mental Health: a complex issue, often stricken with prejudice and taboo across communities. And yet, we all have mental health and owe it to ourselves to protect it.

But the question is, do patients with mental health needs get the correct treatment they deserve? Individuals facing mental health difficulties often turn to those close to them like peers, family members or a trusted adult.



However in some cases this is virtually impossible. Unfortunately, the stigma surrounding a decline in mental health can cause those in question to be perceived as “crazy” or “insane”. This negative social

attitude instils fear, causing people to shy away from getting treatment they need as they are afraid of being ostracised by their peers and families.



According to MIND, every year in England, 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem.

Each week, 1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem such as anxiety and depression. So it is clear that treatment and services need to be available and timely to ensure the best for patients.

However, it is clear that sadly, when people seek help, they do not necessarily receive it. This is the case in many circumstances, where patients’ needs are perhaps underestimated, or wait times for getting care are far too

long.

In the period between 2022 to 2023, there were over 13 thousand clinical negligence claims reported to NHS England. According to The Guardian, millions of people in England with mental ill-health don’t seek NHS help, whilst many who do, face long delays and a “poor experience”.



Meg Hillier, the Chair of the Commons Public Accounts Committee, said that failure to treat patients quickly can have awful consequences that last a lifetime:

“I am concerned that children and other other vulnerable groups are more likely to have a poor experience of treatment, if they manage to obtain treatment at all.”

In addition, reportedly the amount of people with common mental health problems went up by 20%



between 1993 to 2014. It could be argued that a main cause in the decline in people's mental health today is our usage of social media. In our society today, using social media has become a coping mechanism, allowing people to de-stress and share their feelings online: a supposed safe haven.

However, we all know that social media is not necessarily the sanctuary it might appear to be.

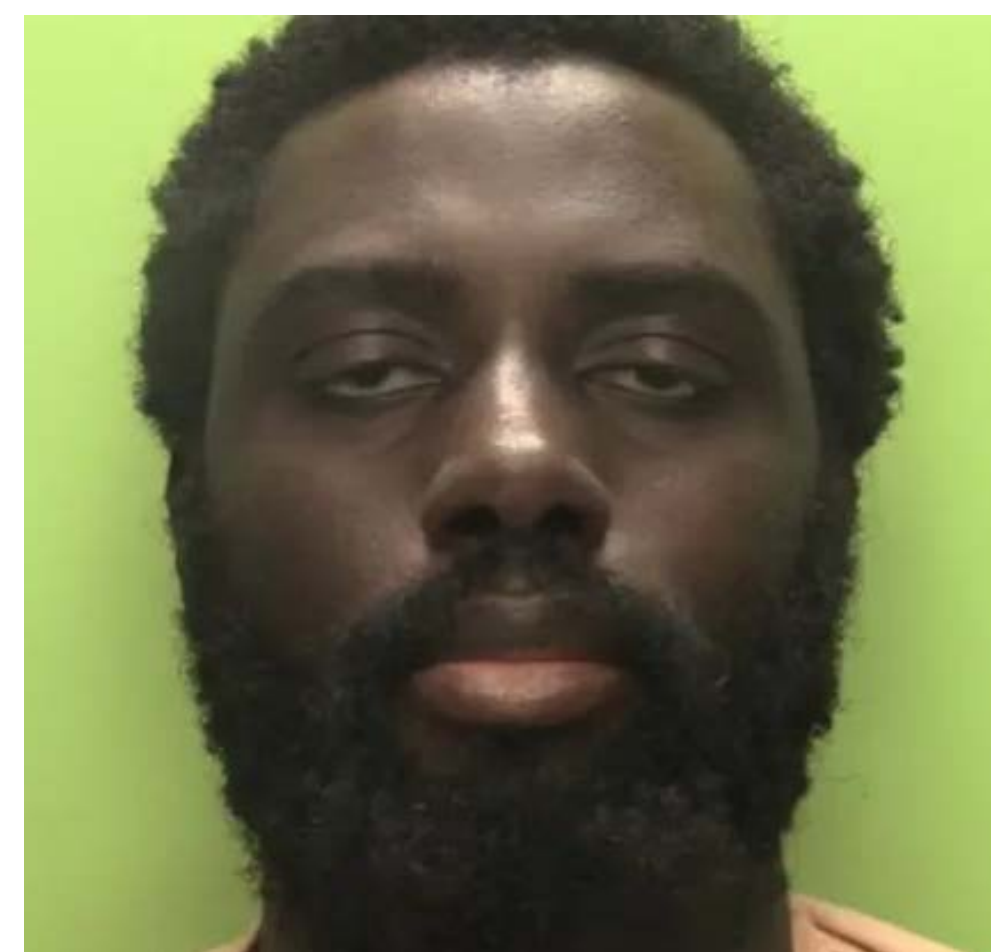
And what about when Mental Health services fail? In extreme circumstances, this can have a devastating impact. Back in January, The Department of Health announced that a special review would take place into Nottinghamshire Healthcare Foundation Trust; this was commissioned following the trial of Valdo Calocane, who was arrested after killing 19-year old students Grace O'Malley Kumar and Barnaby Webber, as well as school caretaker Ian Coates who was 65. Calocane was known to Mental Health services and had been treated for paranoid schizophrenia.

At the end of his trial, a judge handed down a hospital order at Calocane's sentencing for manslaughter on the basis of diminished responsibility. It was revealed that he had been detained 4 times before the killings.

Health Secretary, Victoria Atkins said that *"It is crucial that our mental health services ensure both the care of patients and the safety of the public. I hope the review provides the families and public with some much-needed answers, and that it helps the trust to improve the standard of mental health care in Nottinghamshire."*

Whilst the Calocane case is thankfully rare, it is clear that failure to provide mental health support to people who need it can cause further stress for individuals and can have potentially devastating consequences.

Surely, we need to prioritise mental health care in the UK, and now?





DO MAJOR BRANDS PLAY ON OUR INSECURITIES?

WRITTEN BY INAYA ROSE AND ZAKIYA ROSE

We all know that come July before the school year is even over, retailers bombard us with their Back to School advertising. And why not? UK families reportedly spend a whopping £1.2 billion on getting their children ready for the new school year. So it is no wonder that all major companies want a piece of the action.



Back in September, major cosmetics company Rimmel released an advertisement for their Back-to-School season, featuring influencer Lana Jenkins, who is 25 years old. What was their headline caption? *"Get ready to slay this back-to-school season."* Many viewers criticised the advertisement, claiming that it was irresponsible and implied that girls would only be truly ready for the new school year if they wore makeup.

In fact, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) ruled that the advertisement should not air again because it *"played on young girls' insecurities about their appearance."* The company that operates as Rimmel London, stated that the advertisement was not intended to promote the need for makeup. Furthermore, they claimed that the wording *"get ready to slay this back-to-school season"* was intended to motivate and build confidence in young girls. But is this what they achieved? Or were they sneakily playing on the insecurities of schoolgirls across the country?



In addition, the company claimed they were targeting an older audience, but - as the ASA pointed out - the phrase "Back to School" would clearly be interpreted by customers as the time of year



when students return to school and college after the summer break. They argued that the advertisement's vibrant pink colour scheme, books and star emojis and the fluffy pink pen held by Lana Jenkins was clearly targeting younger audiences. Additionally, they stated that the word "slay" implied that young girls needed to wear makeup to succeed in school. The ASA concluded that the advertisement was found to be irresponsible as it exploited the insecurities of young girls regarding their appearance.

But it is not just Rimmel that has faced backlash recently. You might have seen the H&M advert that features two primary school girls appearing with the slogan *"Make those heads turn"*. The founder of Mumsnet criticised the campaign, saying it *"should never have been created in*



the first place", while social media called the campaign "vile" and "disgusting". Consequently, H&M released a statement in which they apologised for any offence caused and promised to review their campaign presentations in future.

Justine Roberts, Founder of Mumsnet said that "users have long been concerned about a sexualised culture creeping into the lives of children - which is why we launched our Let Girls Be Girls campaign in 2010." The campaign calls on retailers to pledge not to sell products that in any way present children in a sexualised manner.

So, what is your opinion on this matter? Are major brands guilty of creating inappropriate advertising campaigns that sexualise children or play on their insecurities?

Have you noticed any such campaigns when browsing websites or shopping on the High Street? Surely, the safety and wellbeing of children and young people should always come before profits?





DOES OUR GENERATION FACE PREJUDICE BECAUSE OF OUR AGE?

WRITTEN BY PICETRA NYARKO-CROFFIE

Have you ever felt you've been treated unfairly because of your age? There is little doubt that unfair stereotypes exist when it comes to teenagers: apparently we are selfish, lazy troublemakers!



What adults don't seem to realise is that teens today face a range of challenges that older generations just didn't. Sure, we benefit from developments in technology, but then again, this brings negative consequences too: cyber-bullying from the rise of social media and being at risk from predatory behaviour on the internet are just two examples.

Whilst we can't ignore the fact that many teenagers take their freedom a little too far, it must be acknowledged that when we do exercise our right to freedom of speech, we are often labelled as rude and disrespectful.

Surely this isn't fair? Does our generation get judged more because of the mindset of who maybe assume we're incapable of doing things as successfully as they would expect? Surely no one should be pre-judged on their age?

We asked our fellow Key Stage 4 pupils what they think when it comes to our generation facing unfair judgement. Here's what they had to say...

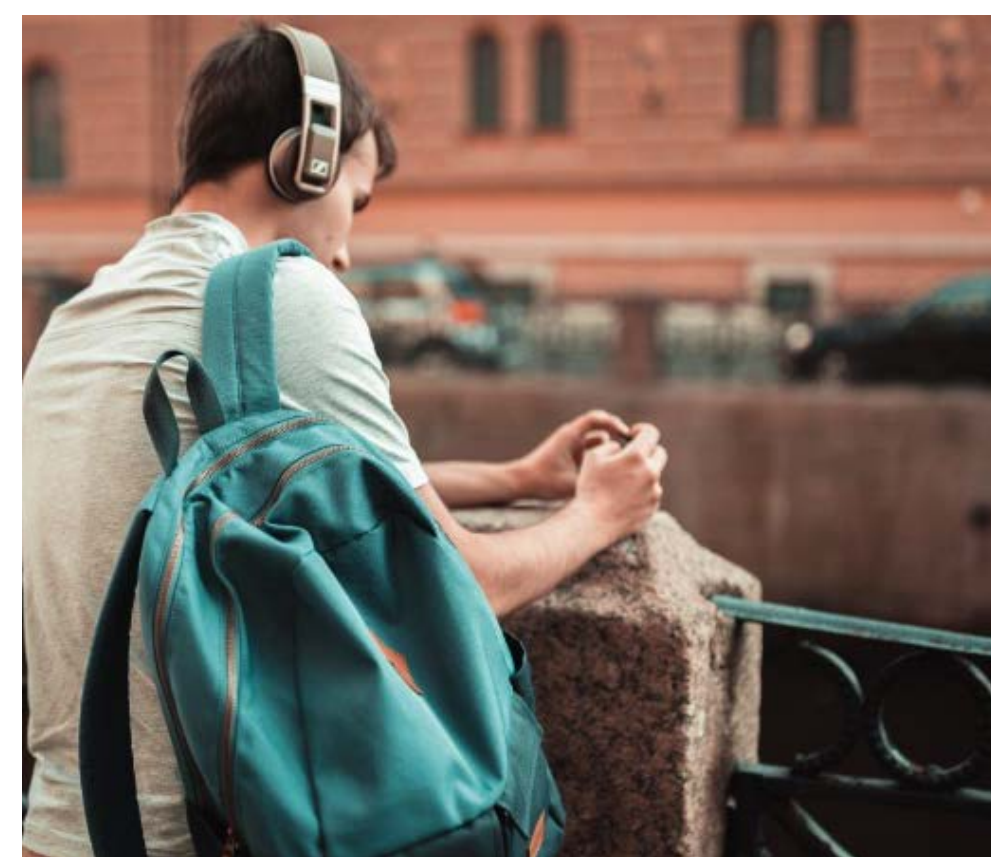
"Sometimes I think adults aren't used to us having our own ambitions" Alaa

"Often adults think we are entitled." Hanan

"It really depends, because sometimes adults can be quick to judge us, but we are also guilty of helping to create negative impressions at times." Iara

"I think sometimes adults judge us because they aren't used to us having more freedom than they had when they were our age." Madinah

"I don't think they always judge us, but when they do, they can be very quick to call us ungrateful and entitled!" Maria





WHY GAMING IS GOOD FOR YOU!

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL PERSAUD

We all know that many young people our age love to game; lots of people play games for hours and hours and some are even lucky enough to make a career out of Games Design.

However, many adults are concerned about the effects of gaming on children and young people. For instance, gaming can affect eye sight and easily have an adverse effective on academic performance. Therefore, it's a good idea to keep track on how many hours a day you are gaming for. It's advisable to take breaks and only play for a regulated amount of time.

The more sinister side of gaming is also worth considering. Let's not forget the case of Breck Bednar, a young victim of a groomer who manipulated him through gaming and then ultimately lured him away from his family and murdered him. Whilst this is an extreme and thankfully rare case, it is definitely worth considering the potential risks involved when it comes to exposure to criminals through gaming.

However, whilst being wary of the risks, we should also consider all the benefits of gaming. For instance, a young person who is naturally very shy and quiet and who may

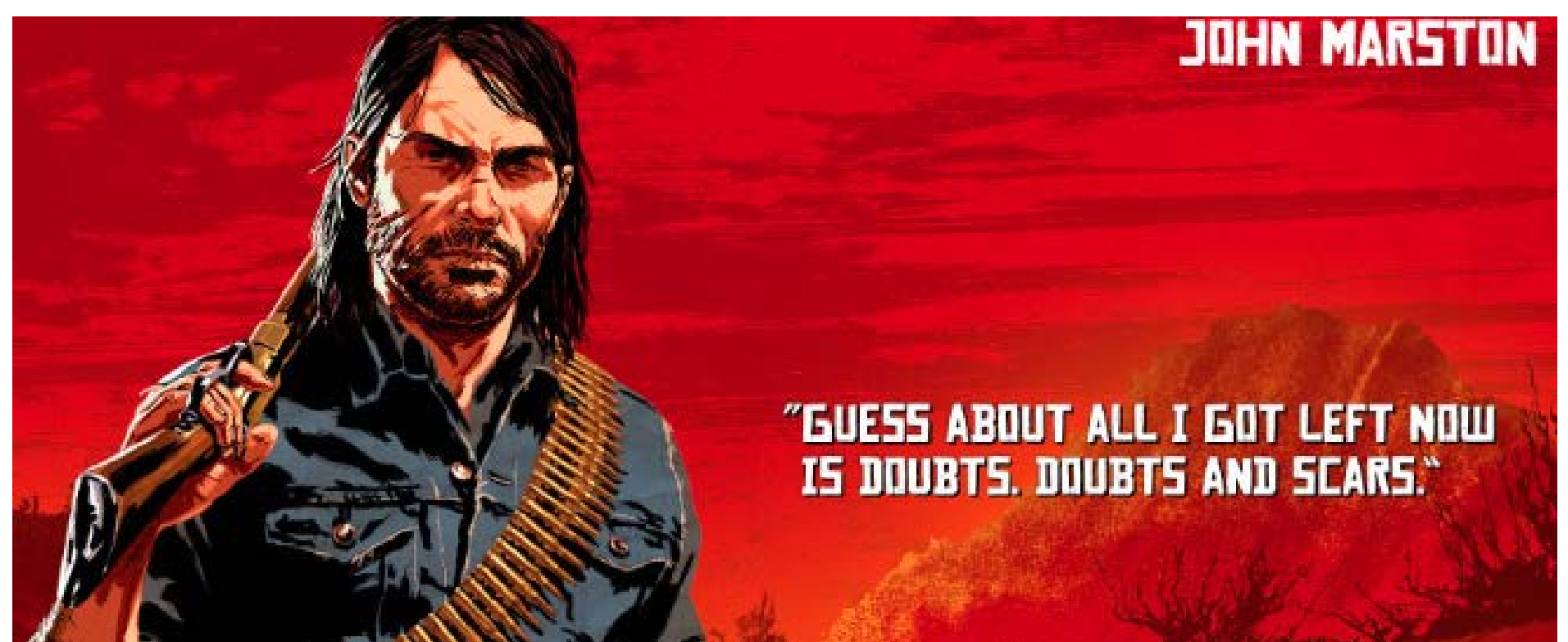
find it hard to make friends, can find gaming to be a really helpful and useful way to interact with people.

Furthermore, gaming encourages us to work as a team in order to complete an objective and win. It can boost your drive to succeed again, so it can motivate players to communicate with other gamers; ultimately it can help boost confidence, team-working skills and encourage us to develop communication skills.

Another benefit of gaming is that it can enable us to be better equipped at dealing with anxiety and stress due to all the exams and tests that we are flooded with as young people. It's easy to feel that mountain of pressure weighing down on us; however, gaming can relieve

stress, enabling us to relax, have fun and detach ourselves temporarily from the challenges of school. This in turn, enables us to return to our academic work with a fresh and rejuvenated mindset. Moreover, in gaming, we see lots of ideas that can inspire us. For instance, playing multiple games can challenge out brains to multitask and co-ordinate strategies effectively, whilst also nurturing our creative skills. When we play games, we also learn the game mechanics and develop coding skills. These skills can be used to create our own games, whilst also boosting memory capacity through recall of details such as maps and locations.

So, there is little doubt that whilst we all need to be aware of the risks involved in gaming, there are also a multitude of benefits can help us become more rounded and skilled individuals.





SEXISM: THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVES

Sexism is a pervasive issue, not just in the UK, but worldwide and it infiltrates every aspect of society.

Let's take the Education sector for example: according to a study by the National Education Union, sexist language, gender stereotyping and sexual harassment are commonplace in UK schools. Furthermore, it is evident that gender inequality in the Education system can limit opportunities for girls and young women and can perpetuate attitudes that can lead to gender-based violence.

Don't forget however, that we are very lucky in the UK to have access to education for all: in some countries, girls are denied an education. Malala Yousafzai, who was tragically shot by the Taliban for her outspoken views on girls' education in Pakistan, states *"Extremists have shown what frightens them most. A girl with a book."*

Socially and in the workplace, sexism has a long and profound impact on opportunities for women. Women are often paid less than men for doing the same jobs and are underrepresented in positions of power and influence. This



in turn, has an adverse effect on diversity, decision-making and policy development.

Historically, we know that in the UK, women have been excluded from many areas of public life including politics. As a writer and feminist Audre Lorde once said, *"I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own."*

So, whether you are a young man or woman, consider how you can make the world around you more fair and inclusive for girls and women. What small changes can you make to ensure that no woman is denied freedom or rights?





SHOULD PHONES BE BANNED IN SCHOOL?

WRITTEN BY ZAHRA QURESHI

What's the first thing you do when the bell rings for the end of the day? For many of us it's turning on and checking our phones: there is little doubt that people nowadays tend to be glued to their phones and check them whenever they can.

However, recently there has been talk of a national ban on mobile phones in schools. In fact, back in February, the UK government introduced plans to prohibit phones in all schools across England, to improve behaviour and minimise disruption. Ultimately the aim is to create a more focused and productive learning environment; the decision aims to address concerns related to distractions, cyberbullying and pupil well-being.

The proposed ban comes as a response to several pressing issues: firstly, minimising disruption is a key issue. We all know how potentially disruptive phones can be in the classroom and a ban would mean the risk of being distracted by a phone is negated.

Secondly, those in favour of a ban argue that online bullying is brought into the classroom through the use of phones in

schools. By restricting phone usage, schools hope to create a safer environment for pupils.

The government is basing its proposals on some key evidence, including calls from UNESCO to banish phones due to research showing that screen time negatively impacts educational performance and mental health.



In addition, the government is responding to parental concerns about children's screen time and the addictive nature of smartphones. In fact, did you know that ParentKind's National Parent Survey, revealed that 44% of parents are concerned about the sheer amount of time their children spend on screen time? This figure rises to 50% when it comes to secondary pupils.

In order to introduce the ban, schools are being advised to

prohibit phones from school premises altogether or provide secure storage facilities so that phones can be safely locked away during school hours. Alternatively, some schools may collect phones upon arrival, only returning them to pupils at the end of the day.



Education Secretary Gillian Keegan, emphasised that schools are places for learning and mobile phones can hinder that process, thereby preventing or minimising academic engagement. She stated *"schools are places for children to learn and mobile phones are, at a minimum, an unwanted distraction in the classroom."*

While some critics argue that phones can be educational tools, the government believes that the benefits of



of a distraction-free classroom outweigh any potential advantages.

In the coming months, schools will adapt to the new guidelines and educators hope to see improved focus, reduced disruptions and enhanced pupil well-being.

But, what do you think about this proposal? Would you be happy knowing you could not access your phone in school? Here's what some of our Key Stage 4 pupils had to say about the ban...

Year 10 pupil views

"I think the ban would certainly make a difference to people's learning. I've watched pupils just scroll through Snapchat instead of paying attention to the work."

"I think the ban isn't necessary and schools just need to be more rigid when it comes to phones. They should increase the surveillance. They need to be able to put trust in pupils to not go on them to help them grow."

"I think the ban isn't necessary because the school doesn't have people who constantly use their phones in school as it's against the rules. At Platanos, just keeping a tighter surveillance should be enough"

"A ban would do nothing but make pupils impatient. They'll be more focused on getting their phones at the end of the day to chat with friends or family, which I think defeats the whole point of less screen time"

Year 11 pupil views

"In emergencies, it's important for pupils to be able to access their phones."

"During lessons, pupils definitely shouldn't be allowed their phones. But they should have them during breaks and lunchtimes."

"Phones are far too distracting in class and can affect pupils' mental health."

"Some people are so used to using their phones to socialise, that they stop being able to socialise effectively in person - this can have an impact on our friendships with our peers in school."

So what is your view? Should phones be banned in school or not?





ARE PARENTS' PHONE HABITS DAMAGING CHILDREN AND TEENS?

WRITTEN BY YASMEEN QUERESHI

Did you know that studies have shown that the rates of children reading have dramatically decreased, falling to the lowest levels in 20 years? A survey by Beano Brain shockingly found that over half of children don't read. Why is this happening?

Well, evidence suggests that children are likely to mirror what their parents do and around 56% of parents decide to scroll on social media instead of picking up a book. 1/4 of children says that they see their parents relax with a book. This seemingly innocent act of parents using phones in front of their children, only serves to teach young people that using a phone is preferable to reading.

Furthermore, children who do read can often face criticism, sometimes because their book of choice is deemed something they shouldn't read as it's seen to be too childish, like a comic. In fact, 20% of children said they felt they were being shamed for the books they chose to read.

Research suggests that children whose parents read with them, tend to do better at school and choose to read for pleasure. However, not all children are fortunate enough

to have this experience. In fact parents who don't read to their children or listen to their children read aloud can hinder success. In addition, parents who endlessly scroll on their phones may be unintentionally influencing their children's habits – and not for the better.

We also asked the opinions of pupils and teachers on this matter. Do they think parents' mobile phone usage puts children off reading?

"I personally feel that young children tend to mirror their parents' actions, so if they see their parents on the phone, they will also want to do the same. However, if children see their parents pick up a book or two, they will tend to do the same."

Moyin

"If parents read to their children, they're more likely to develop the skills they need to succeed at school. In contrast, if they copy their parents over-use of phones, their reading age and ability to concentrate will be limited."

Thamanna

"Recently, I've made a real effort to read books I like out loud to my son as he falls

asleep, even if they're not children's books. I do this because I became painfully aware that he was seeing me scroll on my phone far too much - instead, I want him to see that reading can be something we all can *choose* to do and enjoy, rather than something a teacher is making us do!" *Ms Thompson*

"I find it sad to hear that children are aware that their parents are using mobile phones as a way to relax. It is clear that the parents of children who are encouraged to read with their parents achieve better outcomes. Therefore, there must be some form of change for ensuring parents are accountable for modelling the correct behaviours for their children. I recently read that children are going to primary school and they are picking up books only to swipe, rather than physically turning the page. Perhaps we parents need to be more self-aware and reflective of our own behaviours and how we spend our precious time with our families." *Mr Hawkins*

What about you? What is your experience on this matter and do you think parents need to be more conscious of their phone habits around their children?

Bringing up Brixton

LIVIN' IN DA LONDON

WRITTEN BY MALIQUE FARRELL

*My experience as an immigrant to London
written in Antiguan Creole.*

Livin inna London, a one grand adventure
From di iconic sights to da diverse
culture.

A vibrant wey di culture roam
A place wey no dog a live pon road.
From di Caribbean flavours to di markets
delight

Livin inna London, mah feel di vibes so
right.
Although it's not like the Caribbean wey
di light shines bright
Livin inna London wey di light rarely
shines,
It's either grey or black and white.

Di hustle and bustle, di city's vibrant beat
Every corner tells a tale, every street a
different treat.

Try nah fi miss di bus inna London
If yah miss it, it a go be long gone

Not only will it be long gone,
It will have you late for school
Which is bothersome.



TIMELINE OF BRIXTON

WRITTEN BY ALINA AHMED

1816: Vauxhall Bridge opened. This led to the development of housing in Brixton.

1820: Surrey House of Correction opened on Brixton Hill. Later renamed Brixton Prison.



1824: St. Matthews Church was built on Rush Common.



1862: Brixton and South Stockwell Rail Station was opened

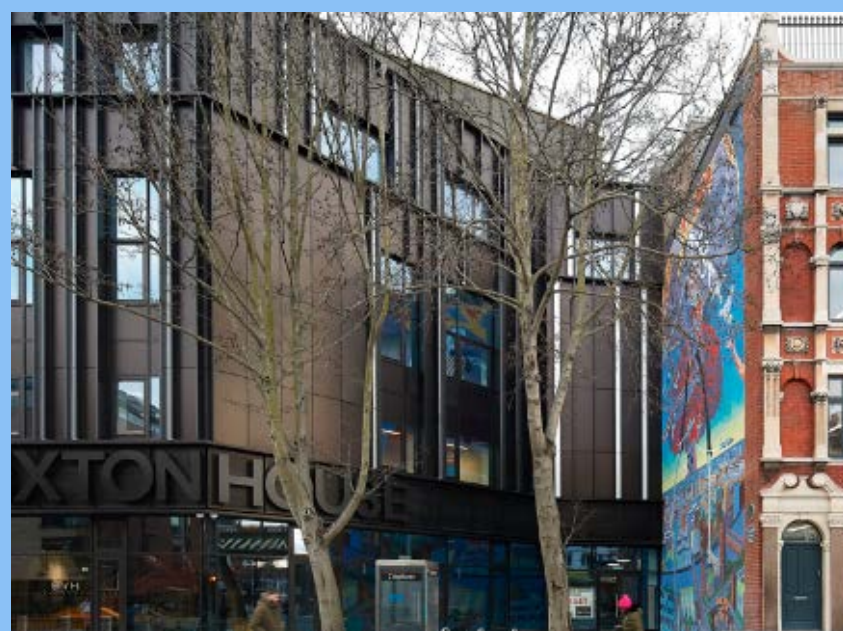
1873: Vincent Van Gogh lived at 87 Hackford Road. Whilst there he drew the house.

1860-1890: Brixton developed into a major shopping center.

1880: Trams led to development of Brixton Hill.

1893: Tate Central Library opened.

1896: Brixton Theatre opened next to Brixton Library.



1900: Lambeth Council established.

1916: Brixton bombed during a Zeppelin raid.



1924: Brixton Market built for street traders



1940s - 1950s: Immigrants, particularly from the West Indies and Ireland settled into Brixton.

1981 Brixton was the scene of riots



1999: Brixton market was the site of the first of three attacks know as The London nail bombings

2010: Windrush Square opened.

2015: A Reclaim Brixton protest was held by local residents

2023: Now Brixton is famous for its rich history and cultural significance.

WHAT'S IT LIKE GROWING UP IN BRIXTON?

WRITTEN BY MOYIN IDOWU

We asked Keystage 4 pupils what it is like to growing up in the local area.

“It was a vibe growing up around here. I had many friends; we would go riding bikes around Brixton. It was fun.” Daniel

“Growing up in Brixton was hard, but It was fun regardless, because you get to meet people from different backgrounds.” Klearna

“I love the different types of people and the different varieties of culture.” Iara

“I love the different people you meet, houses with a deep and historical background and the shops.” Faith

“I love the diversity and having people from all over the world in our local community.” Mr Kabaka



“It can feel like if you’re not strong in Brixton, you could crumble, but it is also a bustling place where different cultures unite.” Ivanildo

“Growing up in Brixton prepares you for the real world and the challenges you might face.” Klearna

“I find the history behind how Brixton became what it is today fascinating.” Faith

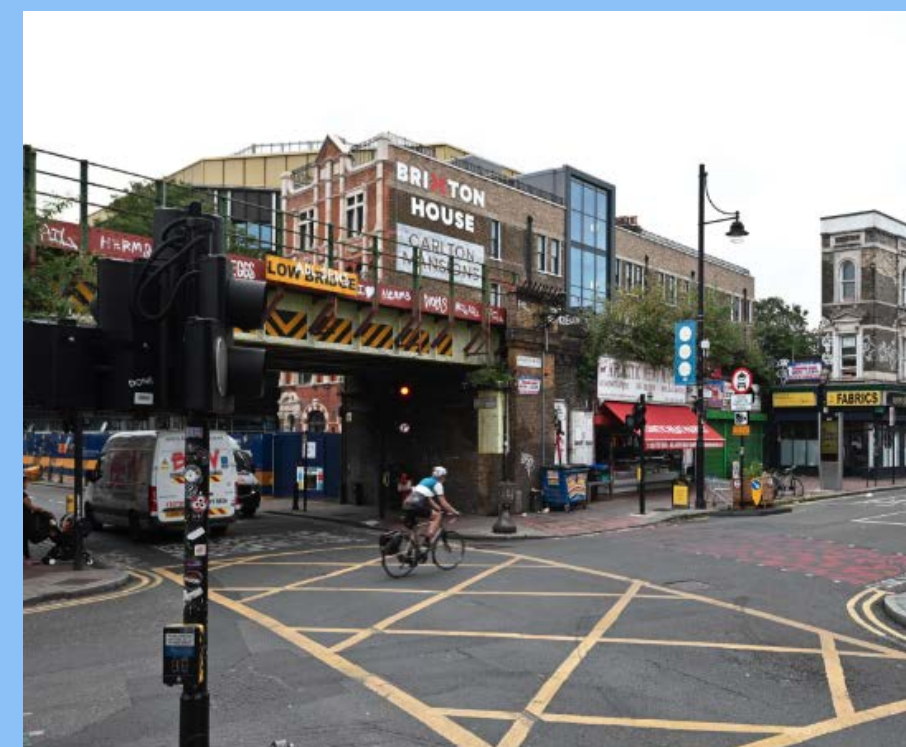
“If you would describe Brixton in one word what would it be?”

“Cultural.” Klearna

“Colourful.” Mr Kabaka

“Historical.” Iara

“Crowded.” Bruno



CRIME IN OUR LOCAL AREA

WRITTEN BY RUWEDA NOR AND MICHAEL PERSAUD

London, in recent years, has been a city of contradictions: on the one hand it is proud of its rich cultural heritage, but on the other hand, under the façade of sophistication is a perpetual problem – crime. Here we explore some of the crime trends that have shaped London’s landscape in recent years and compare these with our local borough of Lambeth.

Street-level theft is one of the most common crimes in London, often perpetrated by criminals using e-bikes or scooters as a getaway vehicle.

There have been many reports of pickpocketing and purse snatching incidents across various London boroughs, especially in crowded tourist areas.

Opportunistic thieves have continued exploiting unsuspecting victims in London - despite public awareness campaigns and increased police presence in crime hotspots.

Gang-related violence prompted by territorial conflicts also known as ‘postcode wars’, have made London a murder capital.

The most common crimes in Lambeth are violence and sexual offences, with 10,104 offences recorded during 2022.

Lambeth's least common crimes are possession of weapons, with 243 offences recorded in 2022.

Lambeth Council has confirmed that its 2023-24 Strategic Assessment identifies key priorities for the period to 2030. These include:

- Violence Affecting Children and Young Adults under the age of 25
- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Violence linked to Lambeth’s Town Centres and the Night-time Economy
- Gang Violence and Exploitation
- Reducing Reoffending
- Counter Terrorism
- Hate Crime
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Substance Misuse

Crime Hotlines

999 - for Emergency of if a serious offence in in progress

911 - for non-emergency incidents

0800 555 111 - to report a crime but you don’t want to be identified

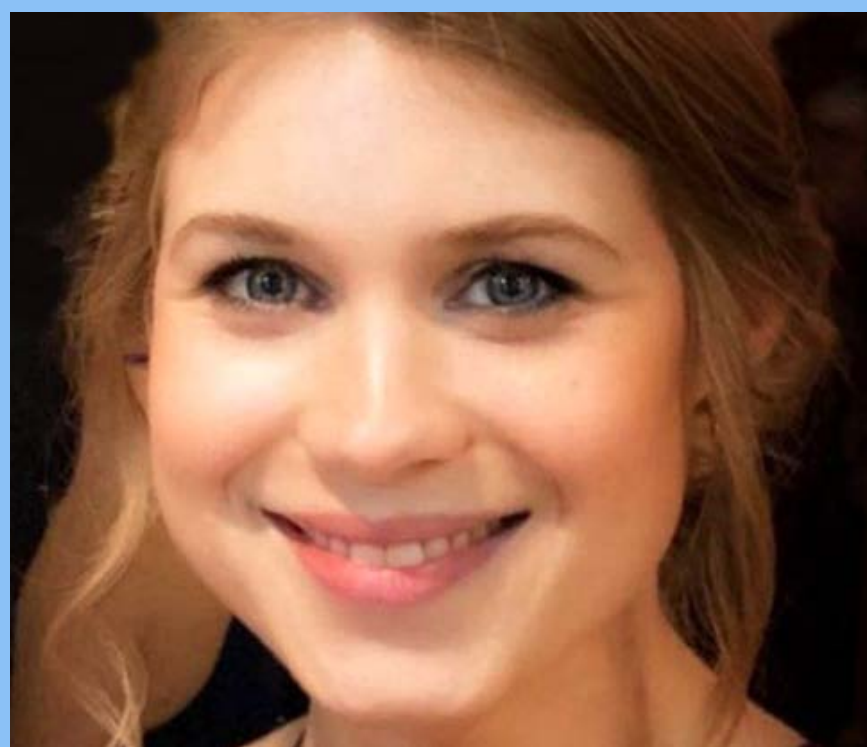
**On 31st January 2024, a woman and her two children were attacked with a corrosive alkaline substance in Clapham by Abdul Shokoor Ezedi, who fled the scene. Ezedi's body was found in the River Thames just under a month later.*

**On 1st March 2024, a shooting occurred in the same area. Consequently, three people were rushed to hospital.*



**Did you know that Lambeth is among the top 10 most dangerous boroughs in London?*

**The abduction and murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021, led to an overhaul of the Police, mass demonstrations and protests and the arrest of a number of officers who were guilty of misogynistic, violent or abusive behaviour and communications.*



**The overall crime rate in Lambeth in 2022 was 103 crimes per 1,000 people. This is worse than London's overall rate of 95 per 1,000 residents.*

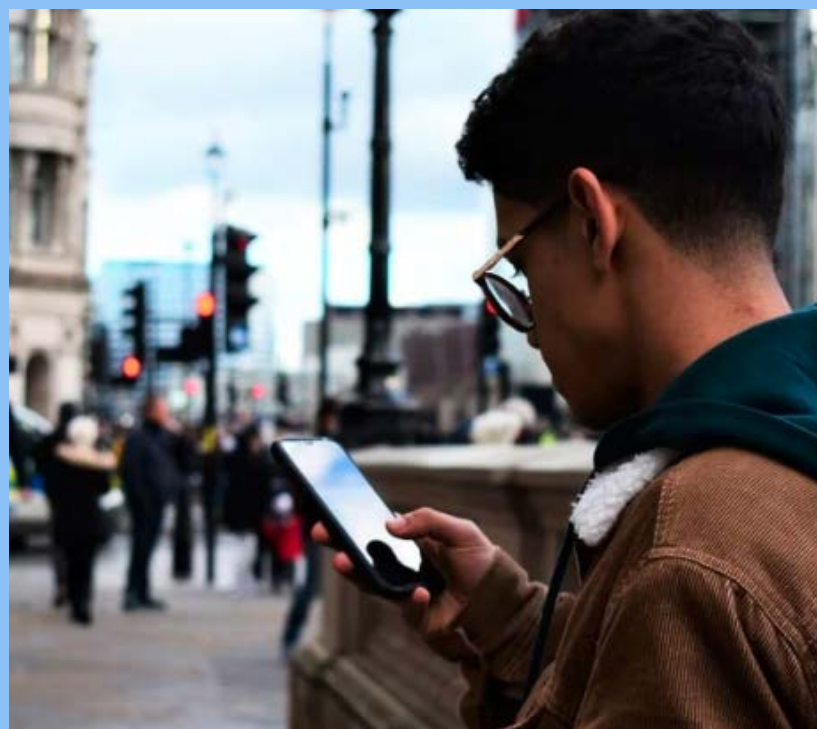
**In February 2021, Lambeth had the worst crime rate in London for other theft, with 214 crimes reported.*

There is little doubt that crime is pervasive in inner city London, with Lambeth being no exception. So, what can we do to keep ourselves safe when out and about in the local area? Here are our top tips!

- **Avoid wandering around in late evenings, especially in secluded areas.**



- **Do Not Use Your Phone on the street as not only can it be attractive to opportunistic thieves, it can also distract you from being aware of who is around you.**



- **Walk in groups or with a friend.**



- **Remember this acronym: A.B.A or Always Be Alert – be aware of your surroundings and those in your vicinity.**
- **If you go out, make sure your parent or carer knows where you are, who you're meeting and what time to expect you back.**



THE HISTORY OF BRIXTON

WRITTEN BY MICHEAL PERSAUD

Have you ever wondered about the history of Lambeth? Well, we thought you'd be interested to delve into the history of a key area of the borough - Brixton. Read on as we unravel the past and discover the colossal journey that made Brixton what it is today.

1920s

In 1925, Brixton attracted thousands of people as it housed the largest shopping centre in South London. Not only that, it had thriving markets, cinemas and pubs. At the time, Brixton was the shopping capital, containing three large department stores and some of the earliest branches of what are now Britain's major national retailers. Even to this day, Brixton Road is a bustling shopping area.



1948 - 1973

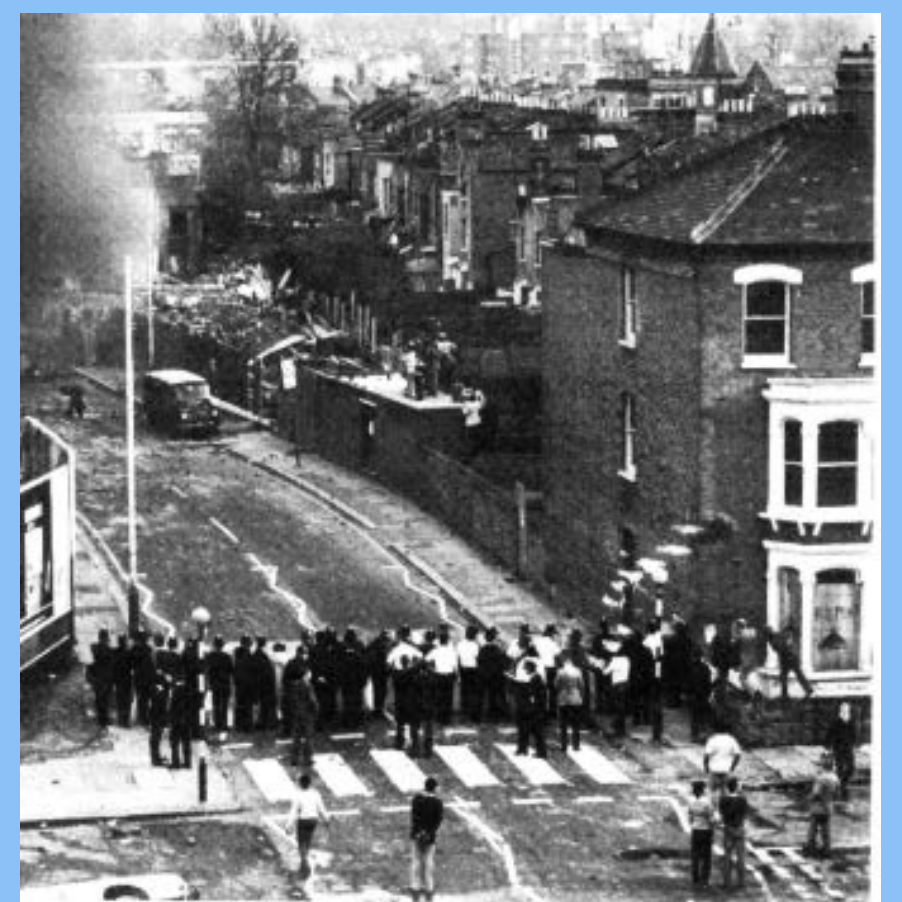
1948 saw the first wave of West Indian and Caribbean immigrants embarking from Jamaica to England to find work and fill the post-war labour shortages that the UK was facing. The ship, HMT Empire Windrush, had 1027 people on board; other ships to the UK followed and it is this group of people who are known as the Windrush Generation. The jobs they tended to undertake were as manual workers, drivers, cleaners and of course, nurses



in the newly-formed NHS. Whilst many immigrants intended to stay in Britain for a couple of years then head back home, the majority of immigrants did stay permanently in the country.

1980 - 1990

In April 1981, Brixton found itself facing terrible social and economic problems, high unemployment, high rates of crime and poor housing. The Metropolitan Police began Operation Swamp 81 at the start of April, its aim being to address crime in the area. This was largely done through the



repeated use of so called 'sus law'. This essentially allowed police officers to stop and search any individual who they deemed to be 'suspicious' of possible wrong doing. Dressed in plain clothes to avoid detection, police arrested 1000 people.

However those arrested were mainly young black men. Public outcry at this resulted in a riot that reportedly involved 5000 people; this resulted in 279 injuries to the police, 4 injuries to members of public and more than 100 vehicles being burnt. Consequently, 82 arrests took place. Following the riot, the government ordered a public inquiry into the events.



As a result, the Scarman report was published in November 1981 and found evidence of disproportionate and indiscriminate use of 'stop and search' powers by the police. The report made a number of recommendations and led to a fresh code for police behaviour in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the creation of an independent Police Complaints Authority in 1985.



WAKING UP TO WINDRUSH

WRITTEN BY RANYAH NURHUSSIEN

It has been 75 years since the HMT Empire Windrush docked in Tilbury, Essex, carrying passengers from the Caribbean to the UK. But who were the Windrush Generation?

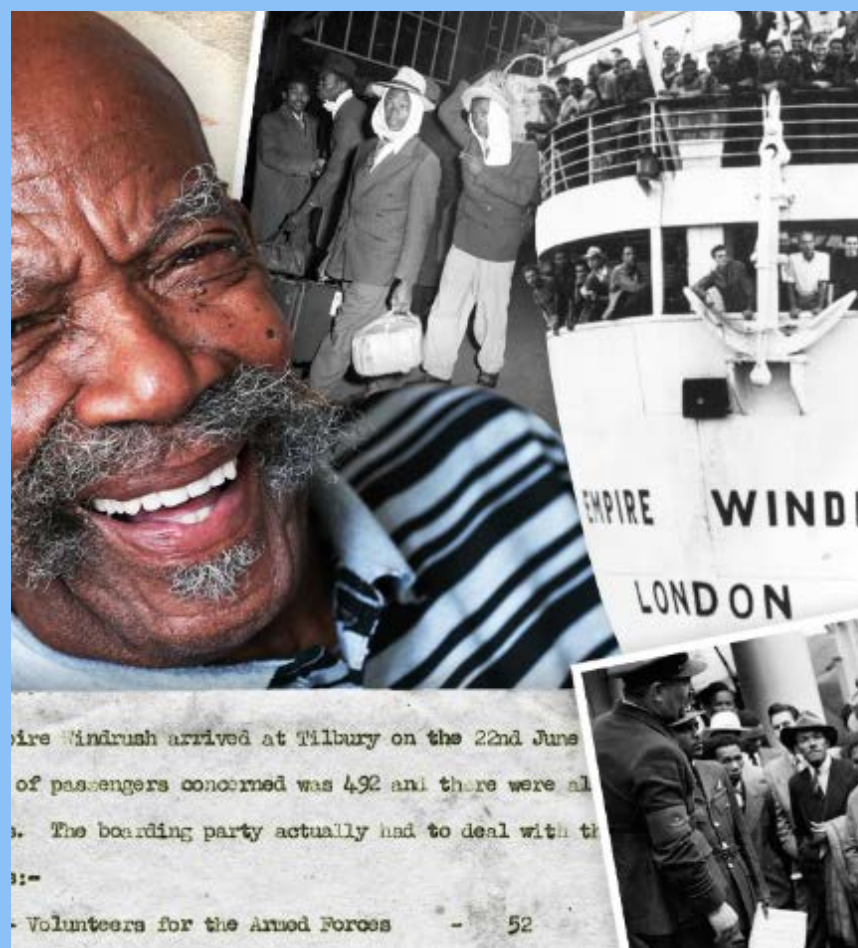


The Windrush Generation were the 500,000 people who emigrated from the Caribbean to Britain in the period between the arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush on 22nd June 1948 and the formation of the Immigration Act 1971. Travellers came from countries including Jamaica, St Lucia, Trinidad, Barbados and Grenada.

But why did they come to the UK in the first place? Well, following WW2, the British government was in need of more workers to help fill the labour shortages and rebuild the UK economy. At the same time, Caribbean countries were also struggling economically, so job vacancies in the UK offered an opportunity for both Britain and those from the Caribbean.

The people of the Windrush generation came to the UK as they thought they would have better opportunities in life and they could acquire well-paid jobs. Unfortunately

however, their arrival wasn't always welcome and they faced much racism and discrimination. In fact, often the only jobs they could get were the ones British citizens didn't want - lowly paid positions or work that was physically challenging.



Many of the Windrush generation settled in London, in places like Clapham and Brixton. This was because the nearest employment exchange to the shelter (which was in Clapham), was in Brixton; many of the original migrants eventually found accommodation in the area.

As well as their important contribution to the work force, the Windrush Generation had a significant impact on British culture. They introduced Caribbean culture, art, sports, traditions and customs to the UK.

You may be aware that back in 2018, The Windrush scandal was exposed. This related to those who were unlawfully detained, had legal rights removed and were threatened with deportation – it highlighted the awful treatment of the Windrush Generation. In fact, there were at least 83 cases of wrongful deportation from the UK by the Home Office. Despite having lived in the UK for decades, the individuals concerned were told that they needed certain documents to remain.

However, a Review into the scandal concluded that it could have been avoided and was caused by failings in the government, stating that “*ignorance and thoughtlessness*” had fuelled the issue. Indeed, the Review went on to say that there had been “*profound institutional failure*”, which had ruined people’s lives.

One of the worst cases was that of Albert Thompson, who had first arrived in the UK as a teenager. Having lived in the country for 44 years, Thompson was informed at his first radiotherapy session for prostate cancer that failure to provide a British passport would result in a £54,000 fee for the treatment!

As MP Diane Abbott - whose own mother was a member of the Windrush generation - said, *"it isn't necessarily the money, the inconvenience or the tragedy of being deported, it is the insult to people who always believed they were British."*



BUSTLING BRIXTON

WRITTEN BY EMNET KATEMA

We all know that Brixton is renowned for the multi-cultural mix that has shaped the very fabric of its community. This eclectic neighbourhood offers a captivating glimpse into the rich tapestry of diverse cultures intertwined within its streets. From its deep-rooted Afro-Caribbean heritage to its vibrant art scene, Brixton showcases a truly unique and dynamic cultural image.

Brixton's Afro-Caribbean influence is at the core of its cultural identity. The streets come alive with the loud rhythms of reggae and soca and the tantalising aroma of Caribbean cuisine fills the air. Local markets - the most famous of which is Brixton Market - offer an array of fresh produce and exotic spices, allowing visitors to experience the flavours of the Caribbean firsthand.

Brixton's culinary scene is a true reflection of its multicultural makeup. From traditional Caribbean jerk chicken to Ethiopian injera to the rich flavors of Lebanon, the neighbourhood boasts a wide range of culture serving up a delightful fusion of flavours. Food markets, pop-ups, and trendy cafes make Brixton a food lover's paradise.

But it's not just in the local dishes that you'll experience the cultural richness of Brixton. The area is also a hub for street art and graffiti, serving as an open canvas for both established and emerging artists. The vibrant murals that adorn the neighborhood's walls reflect the community's passion for artistic expression and social activism. Artists aim to highlight and celebrate the diversity that Brixton embodies.



Throughout the year, Brixton's bustling calendar is packed with multicultural events and festivals that celebrate the various communities that call this neighbourhood home. From the Brixton Splash - a vibrant street party honouring Afro-Caribbean culture - to the Lambeth Country Show showcasing the best in Caribbean and British music, there's always something exciting happening in Brixton.

Well-known for its strong sense of community and grassroots initiatives, Brixton is home to those who seek to empower and unite its residents. Local organisations work tirelessly to create a welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds. From community gardens to cultural workshops, these initiatives ensure that Brixton aims to be an inclusive and harmonious neighbourhood where everyone feels at home.

Brixton's diverse culture is a testimony to the strength and resilience of its community. From its Afro-Caribbean roots to its vibrant arts scene, this neighbourhood embraces and celebrates its multicultural heritage. Through music, art, food and community-driven initiatives, Brixton stands as a shining example of how diverse cultures can come together to create a vibrant and harmonious tapestry of life.



HISTORY OF BRIXTON MARKET

WRITTEN BY BEE YAN'KYAA

At some point you have probably ventured down to the Brixton Market area. But have you ever thought about how it first started?

From its humble beginnings as a neighbourhood street market in the 1870s, Brixton Market has always been a hive of activity. The major purpose of the location back then was to sell fresh produce, fruits and other necessities. Over time, with vendors from around the globe contributing their distinct items and tastes to the neighbourhood, the market started to represent the multicultural make-up of Brixton.

During the 20th century, Brixton Market was known for its vibrant street vendors and busy atmosphere; the market was often packed with customers buying a variety of items, from handcrafted items to exotic spices. In the 1920s and 1930s, road widening in Brixton forced market traders from their existing pitches; as a result, the arcades were built for them to trade from.

In 1928, the well-known Market Row on Atlantic Road was designed, whilst



Granville Arcade was built in 1937 and is now known as Brixton Village.

Did you know that the famous Electric Avenue, which is itself part of the street market was built in the 1880s? In fact, it was one of the very first streets to have electric light, hence the name.



However, Brixton Market has suffered its share of difficulties throughout the years, just like any other historic market. The market's spirit triumphed despite threats from economic downturns and shifting consumer behaviour. As a new generation of traders and businesspeople brought

vitality to the streets of Brixton Market, the area saw a renaissance in the 1980s. Visitors from all across London and beyond flocked to see the market, which became a symbol of tenacity and communal spirit.

Nowadays, Brixton Market and its surrounding areas are lined with an eclectic mix of stalls, shops and cafes. Like all retailers, it has had to contend with the meteoric development of online shopping. However, through the years Brixton Market and



its surrounding areas have housed an eclectic mix of stalls, shops and cafes. Another, more recent challenge occurred in 2015, when Network Rail tried to close the premises under the railway arches on Atlantic Road for refurbishment purposes. However, this was a controversial move, with traders arguing that rents would be increased by 350%. This culminated in the local community setting up the Save Brixton Arches campaign along with the traders, claiming that carrying out the plans would lead to the “*death of Brixton.*”

Sadly for the campaigners, in 2017 trading mostly ceased under the arches as the plans were approved. Many locals are concerned about the perceived ‘gentrification’ of Brixton, which could not only change the landscape of the area but also drive out traders and locals who cannot afford to live and work there anymore.

However, Brixton Market maintains its efforts to preserve its historic charm whilst also embracing contemporary lifestyles. You can fully immerse yourself in the sights, sounds and flavours of London's lively streets at this cherished site, which is equally popular with locals and visitors.



FAMOUS FACES OF BRIXTON

WRITTEN BY JOHNSON CHUKWU

We all know that Brixton is a thriving neighbourhood. It has a rich history of fostering creativity and resilience and is responsible for having created many notable and powerful people who have made a lasting impression on the world. Here, we check out some of the most notable residents of Brixton, who have all contributed to the vibrant and varied history of our local area.

David Bowie

Musical chameleon David Bowie - who is arguably one of the most well-known and innovative musicians in history - was raised in Brixton. Brixton, where Bowie was born and lived for the first 6 years of his life, played a significant role in his life experiences. When he died in 2016, many fans flocked to pay tribute at the mural of him in Brixton, which happens to be just round the corner from his childhood address in Stansfield Road.



Linton Kwesi Johnson

Dub Poet Laureate Linton Kwesi Johnson was born in Chapelton, Jamaica, and eventually relocated to Brixton during the 1960s. Johnson is frequently recognised for having popularised the dub poetry subgenre, through which he addresses social and political themes. Johnson's work is heavily influenced by the thriving Caribbean community of Brixton.



Zadie Smith

Born and bred in Brixton, Smith's first novel *White Teeth* resulted in instant fame and multiple awards. Smith's work reflects the diversity of Brixton through an exploration of multiculturalism and human relationships and identity.



John Major

Born and raised in Brixton, John Major is a former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Having been raised by working-class parents, Major's experiences in Brixton influenced the way he saw social and economic problems, which inevitably impacted his policies as Prime Minister.

These famous faces of Brixton have undeniably inspired or affected generations of South Londoners as well as people nationally and globally - with their enduring legacies, be these in Politics, Music or Literature. And there is little doubt that with the cosmopolitan, diverse and creative spirit of the local area, Brixton will continue to be home to many more legends, long into the future.

IS THERE A HOUSING CRISIS IN OUR LOCAL AREA?

WRITTEN BY AISHA BASHIR

Homelessness is a rising problem in the UK, with poverty being its main cause. Did you know that in our local borough of Lambeth, 623 people were seen sleeping rough out of a total of 4,389 counted on the streets of London in 2023? This makes our borough the 3rd highest among other boroughs in terms of the number of people seen sleeping rough. This is shocking!

Furthermore, Lambeth is also the 44th most deprived local authority in England out of 326, and the 9th most deprived in London out of 32. The most deprived places in this borough are Brixton and Stockwell, as well as some places in Norwood. In fact, did you know that 1 in 4 people in the borough lives in poverty?

Studies have shown that in communities where people spend over 32% of their hard-

earned cash on rent, homelessness rises quickly. Lambeth itself is facing a housing crisis due to the acute housing shortage; there are over 40,000 people on the social housing waiting list, which is more than any other London borough. Households in Lambeth need a yearly wage of over £57,000 to afford to rent a two-bedroom flat in the borough. However, the average household income is around £38,000. So, it is easy to see the problem here; this gap in the affordability of rent and housing compared with real-life salaries, is why homelessness is rising steeply.

Towards the end of last year, Lambeth Council ran a consultation on their new housing plans for the borough. Councillor Maria Kay, the Cabinet Member for Better Homes and Reducing Homelessness stated that *“Our biggest priority is to deliver more affordable housing to Lambeth's residents, especially more social housing. Over the coming years, Lambeth will aim to deliver more new council homes for local people.”* She blamed the lack of funding from central government, promising that

the borough is *“determined to make the best use of the properties we already have. We'll do this by reducing the time homes are left empty, tackling social housing fraud and through a range of other measures.”*

Kay also promised that Lambeth would have *“a compassionate approach right at the heart of how we deliver Housing and Repair Services”* and would tackle problems like damp, mould, fire safety and protection for vulnerable residents such as those who were victims of domestic abuse. She also noted that *“Homelessness is a blight on our borough that we want to tackle in every way we can”* arguing that *“Lambeth is one of the best performing councils in London on this issue.”*

So, what are your views of the issue of homelessness in Lambeth? Is it something you think is a serious concern and if so, what can be done about it?



INTERVIEW WITH BRIXTON SOUP KITCHEN

WRITTEN BY THAMANNA ALI, YASMEEN QUERESHI, MOYIN IDOWU AND IARA CHAVES.

We were really excited to have the opportunity to interview Solomon Smith, Founder of Brixton Soup Kitchen, which provides those in need with food, drink and a warm, comfortable environment.

Why did you set up Brixton Soup Kitchen?

I set up Brixton Soup Kitchen because I felt that, although there are already quite a lot of organisations and charities supporting homelessness, I didn't think they were supporting areas such as Brixton and Peckham enough, so I felt like I had to do something about it myself.

How did you go about setting up Brixton Soup Kitchen?

It mainly started off through social media, contacting people for things they didn't want, and using that to give to those in need.

How do the people who use Brixton Soup Kitchen feel about the service you provide?

We get so much great feedback from the people

who use it all around the world. The feedback we get on a daily basis is what strives us to keep doing what we do because it shows that we make a difference.

Do you feel the social issues you are concerned about are reflected across London or just locally in Lambeth?

This is a worldwide problem, so for us, even though we are based in Brixton, we get people coming from North, East, South and West. People come from Birmingham, Manchester, Brighton and we've also been doing a lot of work in Miami, Jamaica and Toronto. We can find it hard to focus less on the local community, especially when we go abroad.

Do you think the social issues you're concerned about have been getting better or worse in the last few years?

Unfortunately, I think it is definitely getting worse, the reason for that being things like the current cost of living crisis, which doesn't affect the homeless only - it includes people who do have a home as well.



What do you think can be done by the local council, local businesses and residents of Lambeth to help people in need?

I think a lot of the time - especially with local businesses - they're more focused on their business and keeping it afloat. Instead, what they should do is put money aside to organisations like Brixton Soup Kitchen and donate monthly funds so we can help more families, help more homeless people and help more people through the struggles of poverty.

As you know, we are pupils of Platanos College in Lambeth. What could we do as young people to address some of the issues that concern you?

Right now, a lot of young people are using social media and I think it can be utilised in a way that benefits society rather than hinder it. If the younger generation could experience a time without social media they would be lost and that's what we had to deal with growing up. We had limited technology all we had was a small game console, and now every kid has a phone and sometimes multiple devices

to themselves. There are so many apps that can be used by you, not just to gain followers and likes, but to speak up about social issues and impact the community. We at Brixton Soup Kitchen use social media to get support but it is more influential for younger people. At your age, you are able to create change, starting from now, whereas I started later on. I wish I had started at an earlier age.

What are your hopes for Brixton Soup Kitchen in the future?

I always say that one day, hopefully we won't need to be using Brixton Soup Kitchen, but if the need is still there, then I would like for us to open up more centres. I hope to open up a hotel for homeless people, but they will be doing the catering and cleaning and all sorts; not only will it give them accommodation, but an opportunity to work and earn their own money. It will be run by homeless people, for homeless people.

What is something you wish you could tell your younger self when you first created Brixton Soup Kitchen?

I wish I could tell my younger self to start now, as soon as possible.

You're in Year 10; I wish that when I was in Year 10, I could've created something then. You shouldn't feel that you have to be a certain age to start a business: that's a lie. You can start at your age - in fact, it's best to start younger because when you grow up you will regret not having started sooner. I would definitely say to start now.

Do you hope more people will become aware of the issues those in need face today?

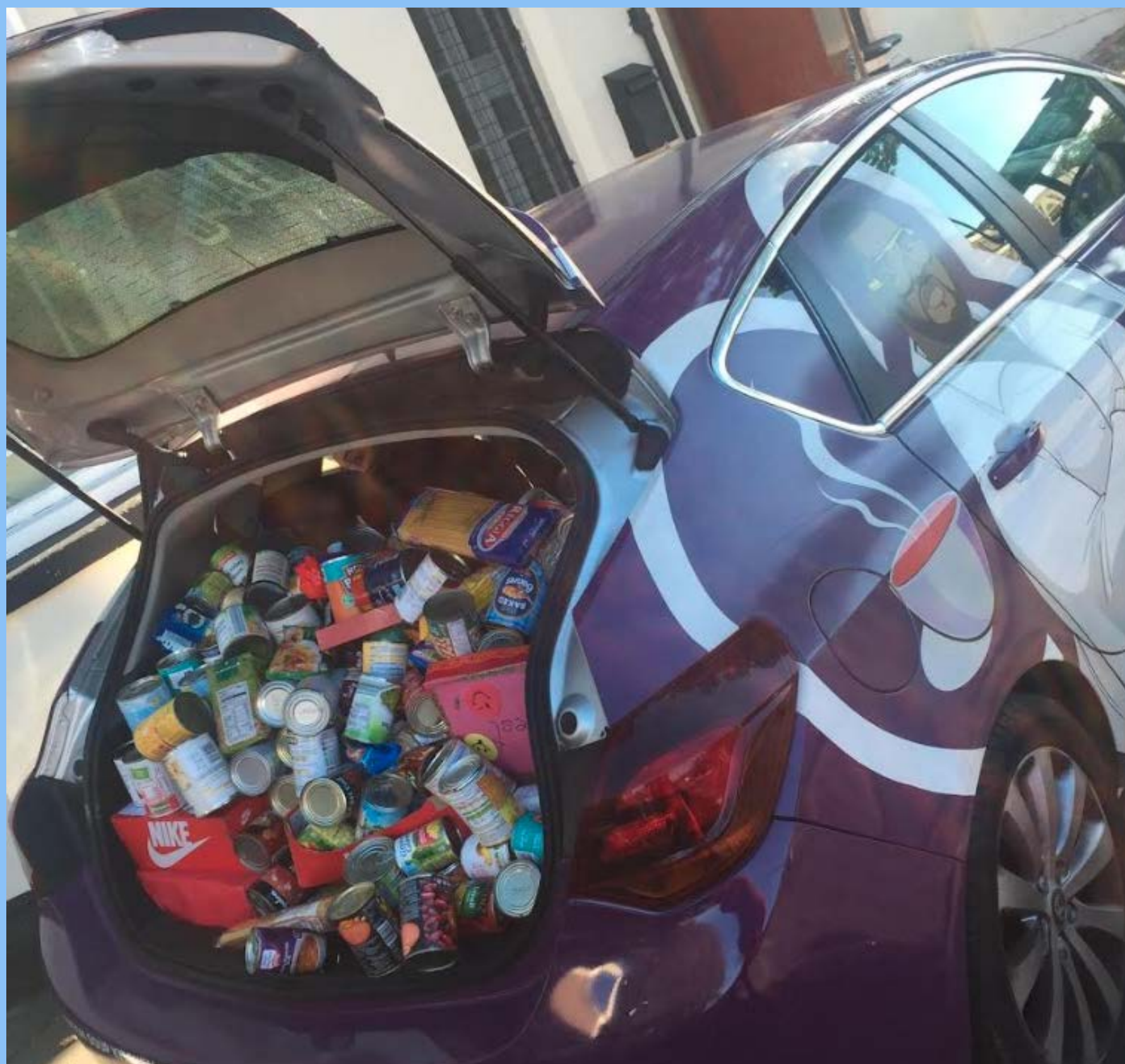
Certainly. When we're going through something, especially as young people, we tend to let pride overshadow the need to get help. Pride is one of the biggest killers. People are too embarrassed to speak up about what they are going through or embarrassed to say how they feel. I think people should let go of pride and speak up about the issues of today.

In terms of Lambeth specifically, do you think there is anything in the local area that affects what you are doing or the challenges that you face?

Lambeth is a borough with some of the highest rates of violence and crime in London and even in the entire UK. Because of this,

people tend to forget about homelessness. They'll focus more on other societal problems, for example, youth crime, teenage pregnancy, drug misuse. Homelessness is often shunned and forgotten about. I believe that the government needs to focus more on homelessness and take more responsibility for it.

We were genuinely inspired by the work that Solomon and all the volunteers at Brixton Soup Kitchen do to help our local community and we even talked about ways that we as pupils of Platanos College could partner up with them in future, to help serve the local area. In the meantime, think about small things you could do to help those in need, for example, donating food to your local food bank.





community corner

IDRIS ELBA CALLS FOR ERADICATION OF KNIFE CRIME

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CAMACHO PINTO

Back in January Idris Elba, a famous British actor known for his TV and film roles, took part in an event in Parliament Square where clothes were laid out to represent those killed by knives on UK streets. The event was part of Elba's Don't Stop Your Future campaign, which works with local communities to counteract serious violence.

Did you know that in the year ending September 2023, England and Wales had recorded 48,716 offences involving knives or sharp instruments? And these are only the ones recorded by the police – what about all those that go unchallenged or unnoticed?



As part of the campaign, Elba shared some insightful ideas on how to tackle this issue, emphasising the importance of raising awareness about

the dangers of carrying a knife.

Elba also highlighted that there is a greater need for community engagement, urging individuals, organisations and the government to work together to help create and provide a safe place that can support those young people at risk of knife crime.

Elba called on the UK government to ban the selling of 'zombie' knives and machetes, urging this matter to be fast-tracked to help save more young lives.

Elba even accused the government of not giving the plague of knife crime "the focus it deserves". Back in the summer of 2023, Prime Minister



Rishi Sunak set out plans to ban more weapons and give police extra powers to seize machetes and zombie knives. However, when these plans will actually come into force, has not been disclosed.

There is little doubt that the increase in knife crime and use of deadly weapons in the UK needs to be addressed in order to ensure the safety of young people today. As Elba says, society "can't stay silent as young lives are lost to brutal and heartless crimes".





DO YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY STAND A CHANCE OF GETTING ON THE PROPERTY LADDER?

WRITTEN BY UHUNOMA OBAYANGBONA



Even though we've not yet left school, most of us would assume that at some point in the future we'll be able to own our own property after-all, it makes sense that some of the money we earn as working adults will go towards a place that we can reside in and call our own. However, over the past few decades houses that would once have been deemed to be seemingly affordable, have skyrocketed in price. Consequently, getting on the property ladder is now a dream for many young people rather than a reality.

But, what's happened to cause this? Let's rewind about 70 years ago to the 1950s, where the average house price was about £1,891 (about £82,903 in today's currency). One of the factors that contributed to the affordability of homeownership in the 1950's

was the economic boom that followed after World War 2. This, in conjunction with the introduction of long-term mortgages with low deposits (the amount you need to pay in full to secure the property), made affording a house accessible to the common person. However, within the 1970s, house prices increased drastically, with the average house price quadrupling within this decade (from £4,378 at the start of the 1970s compared to £21,966 by the end of the decade).



Whilst the average salary did begin increase, this decade also saw the widening discrepancy between earnings and house prices. From then on the average prices have just continued to rise quite rapidly, with average house costs in 2019 being £212,694 (just compare that figure to the one in the 1950s)! Let's be

clear here: in order to buy a property and get a mortgage from the bank, you have to be able to prove that your income will enable you to meet the monthly payments. However, nowadays most people's salaries are no match for the average property price.

It is clear that the story history seems to be telling us is that with each passing year, homeownership is becoming more of a luxury than a tangible goal that one could work towards.



The average price of houses in England alone is £306,000 - a price that for most of use is way out of our price range. But why has the price tag of homeownership dramatically increased? Well, one of the main factors that contributes to the rise in house prices is the fact that demand for houses is increasing. Economically speaking, if demand increases faster than



supply, then prices will inevitably increase.



So what does this mean? Well, sadly for the majority of us, it means that home ownership may well be something we never achieve – unless we inherit a property or money to put towards one.

In an ideal world, many of us would wish to some day buy a house to call our own. But with the seemingly incessant growth of house prices, it seems as though the possibility of being able to afford one might be out of this generation's reach.



Demand for homeownership has been increasing more rapidly than supply within recent years, and so one of the natural consequences of this is an increase in house prices. Another reason that contributes to the increase in house prices is the fact that the alternative – namely, renting – is also expensive. Like homeownership, the cost of renting has increased more rapidly than incomes have. However, whilst the prices of houses are increasing more rapidly than renting, it is still more economically worthwhile to invest in a house rather than opting to rent one. But the problem persists that many people simply cannot afford a house on the salaries they're paid.





INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW PAPADIMITRIOU, DIRECTOR OF SIMPLY INGREDIENTS

WRITTEN BY MOYIN IDOWU, IARA CHAVES, FAITH JABBAR AND DAMARIE SMITH

We were lucky enough to interview Andy Papadimitriou, the CEO of Simply Ingredients about his family business.

How did you first start your company Simply Ingredients and what motivated you?

My father created Simply Ingredients – it's a family business. It was started in 2008 and I joined in 2010. In terms of motivation, I think at the time there was not much motivation because of my age (20) - I think I was just trying to find my place in life. Part of my training to get into the business was to become a baker, which I thought sounded quite amazing. It gave me the understanding and confidence to select/supply ingredients to the bakery industry. From then onwards, my motivation started to change and my passion grew.

How long did it take you to get to where you are now?

I would say about 10 years. I worked for the bosses at the top for a long time. My Dad was very patient with me but there was a lot of criticism; as a young person, accepting criticism is tough but there

was a lot of that. But it took about ten years.

How did you go about finding your customer base?

It took quite a while, because to know your customer base you need to know your business and your industry and again that takes time and experience. I think what I had to do was find products people are not selling yet - finding something that will add value to the industry, then go and out and sell that to the customer base as something new and exciting.

What products do you sell?

Flour, wheat flour, bread flour. We make different types of flour depending on our customers' preferences. We also use enzyme technology, which helps us make specific types of bread for specific produce. Enzymes are the future because they help reduce manufacturing costs and help the bread-making process become more efficient, naturally.

What challenges have you faced in your business?

I am quite lucky to get into a business that has already been set up, but what I can say is cash flow in a business is always a struggle. I have to buy the product from a supplier and then sell to my customers where credit terms will be agreed. The challenge is to get a longer credit history with suppliers (45 days) and to get customer payment terms as 30 days. This gives you positive cash flow. Essentially you have 15 days then, of cash flow to build the business.

How do you produce flour?

We get grain from the farmer delivered in a truck and it will then get tested to make sure it meets its requirements. Then it goes into a mill, which washes the grain and puts it into silos, depending of the quality of the grain. The mill will draw from the silos, depending on the flour you are trying to make, then the grain gets washed again to remove all impurities. Depending on the mill, there are normally 5 levels that the grain has to go through the grinders (roller mills), so it where it will get finer and smaller until you get the flour that you'll recognise.



What kind of support have you needed to grow your business?

My dad. Just my father being there in terms and financial support and just any kind of support in general. As a family business, my father - being the creator of the foundation - hardly let his son make any mistakes, and I think that helps you grow not only in business but as a person.

What are your dreams and aspirations for Simply Ingredients?

I think I would like to see Simply Ingredients become more international and still retain that family feel, because I think you can get lost when you start working with all those big corporate companies, then you become corporate yourself without realising it.

What personal challenges have you had to overcome in your journey so far?

I have grown up with significant dyslexia that was diagnosed at 9 years old. At that point, I couldn't write my surname and my parents had to send me to a specialist dyslexic school. At the time, it made me feel different and I was unsure of what I could

achieve. But I got on with it and with the right support, I worked through my GCSE's which were a challenge. I had a reader and a writer for certain subjects. I have never used it as an excuse to hold me back. Rather, I have found ways to overcome it - for example, using Speechify to help me with reading long documents and Grammerly to help with my spelling and punctuation.

Now, at 34, I run my own successful business and it's more of an achievement for me as no one knows, such as my clients: I just get the job done. I don't waste time overthinking things that could make them bigger issues than they actually are.

What advice would you give Platanos College pupils who are interested in starting their own business?

I would say just get out there, even if you aren't a hundred percent sure - just go ahead and try; do the best you can.





cacophony of colours

MY LIGHT

WRITTEN BY YASMEEN QURESHI



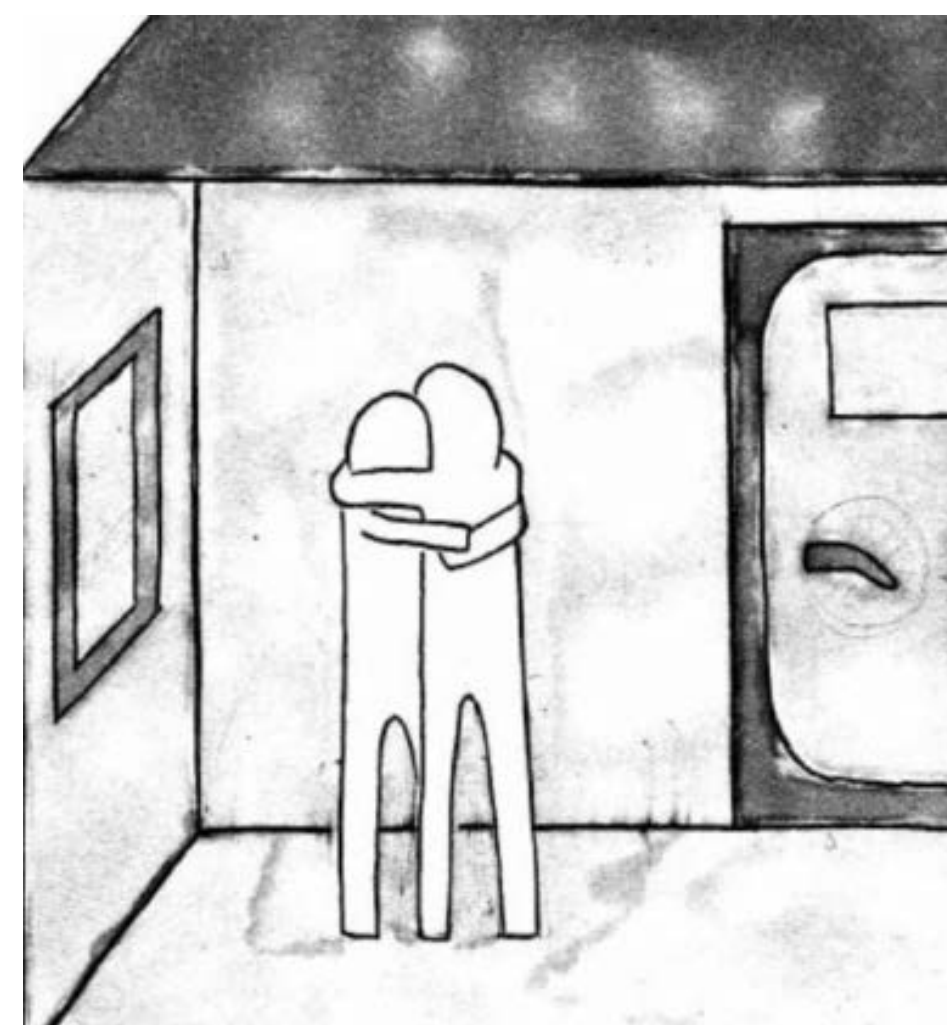
You are my light,
My leading way.
But you are my whole.
Without you I'd be gone.
You are my friend not foe,
And for that I thank you.

You are my helping hand.
In this world I am helpless,
But you are the builder.
Without you I'd be a
crumbling building.
You are my support,
My ride or die.
And for that I thank you.

You are the dark hole.
In this world you don't exist
But you stick in my head
And feed off my emotions.
You make me feel.
And for that I thank you

You are nothing new.
In this world you are my safe space.
Without you I'd be lost
But I can't venture off,
Scared to leave.
And so I follow you.
And for that I hate you.

You are my heart and head.
Bound together ,
Will I be OK?
If I let go
Can I survive or will I-





INFERNO'S EMBRACE

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVES



Who will step back in such anger
and rage?
Wonder what'll happen with each
turn of page?
Who will put this tiger in its cage?
That'll come to you and tear you
apart
Making sure you make your mark.

I can slowly feel all this wrath
crawling inside
As you embark upon this unknown
ride
Who'll settle down this
uncontrollable flame?
You should have known this was
no game.

Now I've taken over this game of
yours
Put you inside a brand new frame
Hoping you feel all the shame
Are you ready now, to take the
blame?





TWISTED

WRITTEN BY YASMEEN QURESHI

My twisted mind
Whispering lies
Lies of the heart
Cries of the mind

These little lies so agonising
And antagonising

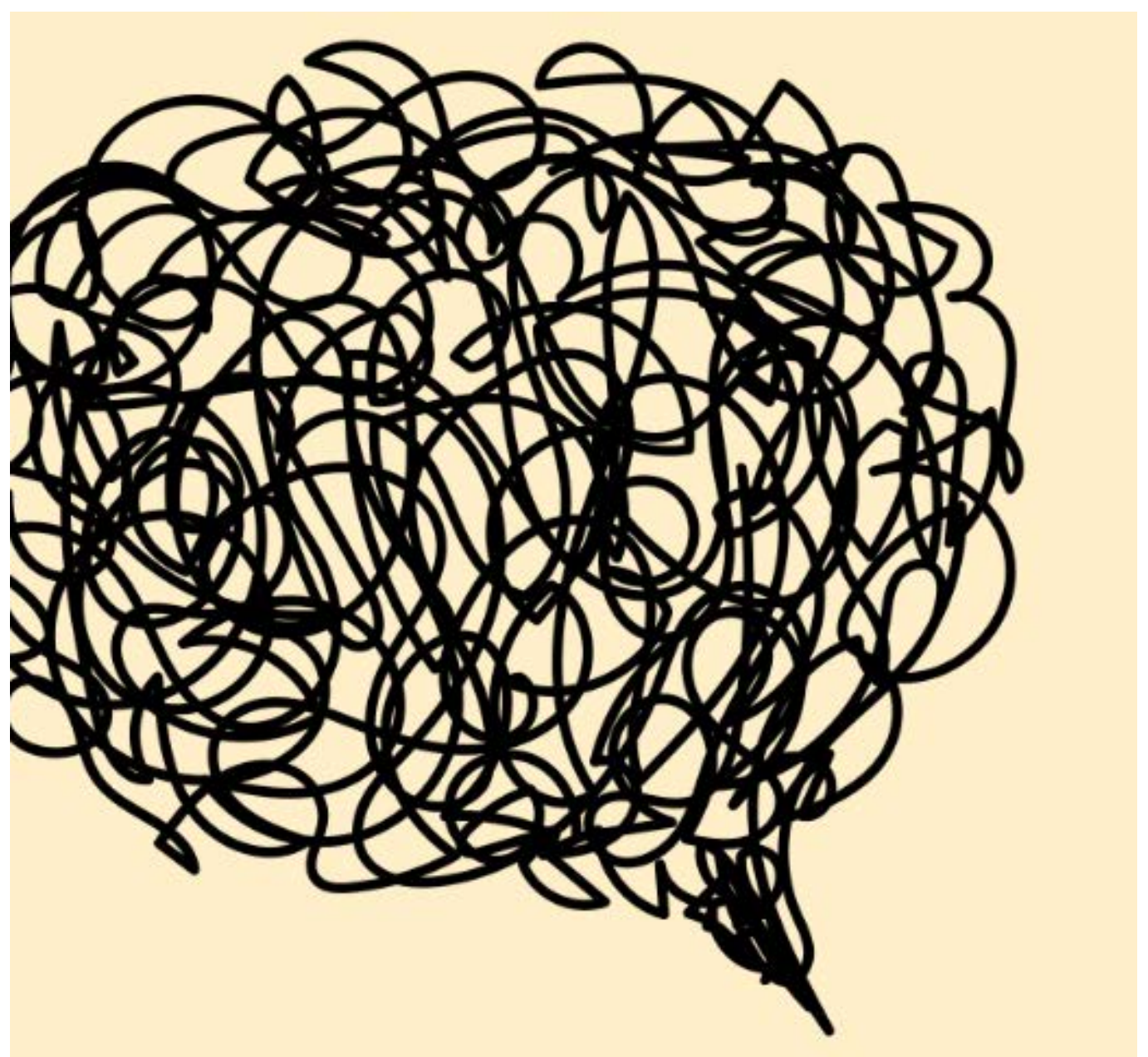
I can't help but believe what they
murmur.

To fall into the trap of my Winding
heart
Where right is wrong
And wrong is right.

My twisted mind playing games.
Games tugging at my thoughts
Trapping me until I break

These little games so Heart-throbbing
And bone-chilling...
I can't help but play to the end.
Maybe at the end of these lies and
games is something more

The thing I desire the most:
The spark of Truth.





THE ROOT OF AN UNFORGETTABLE RAGE

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVES

Who will step back in such anger and
rage?

Wonder what'll happen with each turn
of the page.

Who will put this tiger in its cage?

That'll come to you and pull you apart
Making sure it leaves a mark.

I can slowly feel all this wrath and
vengeance crawling inside of of me .

As you get on this ride

I'll have you all eyed.

So you had better not hide!

or you'll lose all your pride

You're the one to blame:

What's your aim?

Who'll settle this uncontrollable
flame?

You should've known this ain't no
game

Now I have taken over the game,

Put you inside a new frame.

Hope you feel as much shame as
possible

Now look who's miserable

Crying

Begging

Regretting

DESIRE'S MASK

WRITTEN BY ZAHRA QURESHI

Love and obsession

Are hard to tell apart.

They both make my heart

Beat fast and smart.

Is it love or obsession

That drives me to you?

Do I want to possess

or cherish you true?

You are my everything -

My sun and my moon.

Your arms are my heaven,

Your smile is my boon.

You are my addiction

My drug and my cure.

You fill me with passion

And you make me feel pure





IN THE MIRROR

WRITTEN BY SURI DAGI

Looking into mirrors is an ordinary thing to do: it's hardly something you make a big fuss about - you just do it naturally. But the majority only look into mirrors to get a glimpse of their appearance and pay very little attention to the actual mirror itself.

I wish I could give an eerie haunting introduction to the house where the story I'm about to tell you took place, but in all honesty it's a very simple flat that a girl had been living in with her mother for the previous 7 years of her life.

I've never paid much attention to the mirror in my bathroom, purely because the one in my room was of better use. But this was about to change...

On a random Tuesday evening, I decided that I wanted to use my bathroom mirror as I needed the bright lighting that my bathroom had.

It wasn't long before what seemed like blonde coils of hair - a complete contrast to my raven locks - caught my eye. I've always been a person who's quick to brush stuff under the carpet - in fact, it takes a lot to intrigue me



enough to act upon any suspicion I might have. And that's what I did: brush it under the carpet. I told myself it was the rays of light playing with my eyes. After all, I barely used this mirror: what did I know?

A couple of uneventful weeks passed: I went to work and came back as normal. My mother did the same. Not that it mattered; we barely exchange two words with each other throughout the day. She can't stand me. She doesn't say it outright of course. She doesn't need to. The brick wall between us was built the day her partner left her. She claimed that I was extra baggage and that's the reason he left. But I knew the real reason he left her was because of her miscarriage.

I found myself using my bathroom mirror more frequently, after realising how much more convenient it was. I found myself brushing my teeth at 2am. It was a Friday and I had no work the next day. There wasn't an out of world experience. This was a completely normal thing to do in fact, but the word 'normal' completely exited my head after I saw the same blonde coils of hair in the corner of my mirror. What kept me looking this time was the fact they looked 3D; they couldn't be disguised as a mere reflection anymore

I surprised myself as I reached out and tried to touch them, but to my utter confusion and slight disappointment, the coils disappeared out of sight and all I felt was a flat glass surface.

After that night, the 'brushing stuff under the carpet' mindset disappeared. All I could think about was the mirror. My blonde hair was long gone; I had dyed my hair jet black as soon as I hit 15 and had never looked back.

So, what was it? Some sort of psychological mind trick being played on me? I couldn't get a grip of how that made sense, to see something so vivid and



3D-looking inside a mirror that completely disappeared before I could touch it. I could hardly tell my mother about it; she would have laughed at me or probably just ignored me and made a mental note that I need help. I realised that the only way to give myself peace of mind was to find out what it was that I was seeing. I found myself googling my exact situation, only to be hit with multiple disorders that I could potentially have - schizophrenia being the main one. I sighed heavily as I shut my laptop and found myself in front of my bathroom mirror again. I stared directly at it for 20 minutes but saw nothing except my own blank expression staring right back at me.

I returned to my room feeling a wave of disappointment wash all over me. This was quickly replaced with curiosity as I found myself in my mother's room looking for old photo albums. Why was I doing this? I didn't have a straight answer for myself, but a thought that was lingering constantly on my mind was the fact that my natural hair was so similar to the one I kept seeing in my mirror.

I found myself flicking through, stopping every time I saw myself grinning

mischievously in photos with my head full of golden locks. However, there was no answer to any of my questions. I closed the book as another wave of disappointment flooded over me.

Just as I was about to put the album back, I felt a piece of paper drift to the floor. I picked it up and unfolded it, only for it to reveal my mother in a hospital bed with a baby in her hands. A baby with a head full of golden locks. I was about to put it back until I saw the man in the photo. It wasn't my dad; it was her ex-boyfriend. And the date was certainly not my date of birth.

I was shocked to my core. As soon as I gathered my thoughts, I rushed straight to the bathroom. And there they were, the golden coils, getting larger and larger as they slowly took over my mirror entirely. *'What are you?'* I found myself asking the mirror, whilst holding back a laugh knowing that I may well have completely lost it. But instead of hearing my own laughter, I heard a voice whisper, *'you must find the paper with the seal on it; it's closer than you think.'*

Immediately I started turning the bathroom upside down, frantically throwing

everything and anything in my sight on the floor. Adrenaline was rushing through my blood; I could hear my heartbeat. This only increased as I saw a red stamp covering a white envelope. I ripped through the paper, not hesitating for a single moment. There was a single piece of paper with 4 sentences on it - 4 Latin sentences. The subtitle simply stated, *'read to mirror closest to where you found this envelope, for you are the chosen one.'*



Ever so slowly and with shaking hands, I found myself looking in the mirror and reciting the words I saw on the paper. As I found myself repeating the sentences for the second time, the golden coils took up less of the mirror and I started to see facial features emerge. I took this as a sign that whatever I was doing was right, but those words were taken right out my mouth as I heard my mother burst into my bathroom with a



blood-curdling scream.

'WHAT ARE YOU DOING?'

she bellowed, as she snatched the paper out my hand.

I shoved the photo of her in the hospital bed with a baby that was not me and watched as her face dropped.

'I'm sorry darling, I'm sorry. I'm sorry about everything. This wasn't how you were meant to find out. Yes, I did give birth, to a girl, to your sister. But it wasn't long after giving birth when we realised she was very ill. She wasn't a normal baby. She had multiple complications and life for her would have been very painful both mentally and physically. That's why I decided to put her life to an end. And that's why my partner left me. You were never to blame.'

I stood there in disbelief, not able to process everything that I had just discovered in the past 10 minutes. But before I could respond to my mother, I felt a wind of air coming towards me at full speed, dragging me forcefully towards the mirror.



My mother must have seen this too because she desperately held onto me and didn't let go.

But it was too late. Before I knew it, I was inside a glass box, watching my mother stand there hopelessly in shock. I wanted to bang on the glass and say *"I'm here mother, it's okay,"* but it was no use.



'Hello Sister,' were the last words I remember hearing. My final memory, before pitch darkness clouded my eyes.





I AM FROM BRIXTON

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CAMACHO PINTO

I am from Brixton...

A place full of life, where there are
many bright and beautiful blends
Of culture, beliefs and lifestyles.

From bustling streets to colourful
murals
Each place tells a story.

I am from Brixton...

A place to show pride and express
Our backgrounds and nationalities

Where music fills the air,
Reggae to hip-hop
So everyone can hear.

Where the creative spirit lives
In the legacies of artists and
musicians.

I am from Brixton...

Where so many different flavours
come alive,
Curry, Chicken, Fish and spices.
A symphony of aromas so strong
They make your tastebuds
Dance and sing.
Every bite is a fusion of cultures
Taking flight.

I am from Brixton...

A community so full,
True and strong,
Where unity and resilience
Will always belong

Where the people face challenges
And all stand side by side
Supporting each other to bring
Brixton prosperity, love and pride.

So let us all embrace
Brixton's vibrant energy
So we can always smile with ease.

I am from Brixton and for me it is
Where I will always want to be,

For I am part of its legacy.

Stephanie Camacho Pinto

