

## Welcome!

We hope you enjoy the second edition of our school paper. You'll find superb articles and illustrations created by students from Year 7 to Year 10 on topics from exam techniques to a short story about stealing the crown jewels.

If you have great news to share, why not contact our fantastic team via Ms Fitzgerald (Geography Department) and get your story in the next issue of *The Blue Coat Times*.

In this edition we include:

- A feature on KS3 students' efforts to support the TBCS Food Bank
- An interview with Ms. Threlkeld, Head of English and Media
- How best to prepare for exams
- Pistachio Minis recipe
- Jokes and Wordsearch corner – be in with a chance to win two free tickets to the school's production of *Mary Poppins Jr.*

## *#Proud To Be Blue Coat*



A timely reminder that love is in the air by Ella in Year 7

# The Winter Warming Challenge

Before Christmas, 9K1 issued a winter challenge to all Year 9 tutor groups to collect non-perishable food items for the TBCS Foodbank, with a Year 8 tutor competing too. 9K1 donated the most items, with the Year 8 tutor not far behind. We interviewed the winners and runners-up of the competition.

## 9K1

The proud winners and challengers of the competition, Ms Lamprecht's tutor were only too happy to tell of their success. When I told them they had won, the students were as stunned as Ms Lamprecht as they hadn't even been told. It is planned to run the challenge again next year, and they are hoping to open it up to the other year groups. *"But we'll put up a strong competition!"* Ms Lamprecht said.

## 8K2

To those who are students of Miss Seymour, you will know by now that she never passes up on a competition, and this one was no exception. The only year 8 tutor to participate, they weren't expecting to come anywhere close to first. When I told them they'd come second, they looked amazed. The students seemed thrilled with their result, but Miss Seymour vowed that they would come first next time. Though she didn't mind who'd won, if they were in Kites. Miss Seymour is the head of Kites. Let's hope that this wish lasts for next year!

Thank you, Miss Seymour and Ms Lamprecht. Well, done to you all!

By Ethan C.

A huge thank you to all who donated – your kindness goes to the struggling families of Basingstoke!



## An interview with Ms Threlkeld (Head of English and Media)

*Ethan interviewed Ms Threlkeld to find out her plans for the department, amongst other things...*

### **Why teach English?**

*"It is a very important subject for emotional and mental development. And, no questions asked, the best subject (I dare you to argue with me on that, other department heads)."*

### **How long have you been teaching?**

*"I am in my 11<sup>th</sup> year of teaching."*

### **What is the weirdest thing a student has ever said to you?**

*"They quoted from the 20<sup>th</sup> century as if it was far away in the mists of the past."*

### **Favourite book?**

*"Ooh, tough one. Far from the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy. It is one of the first books with a strong female protagonist."*

### **What are your plans for the department?**

*"I want to modernise and expand the curriculum."*

### **Do you have any field trips planned?**

*"My media group are going to Sky Studios in March."*

### **And finally, do you have a message for the students?**

*"Read a book - and make it a good one."*



## Building Success – Lego Club Update

There are many free after school clubs on offer from 3-4pm at TBCS. Lego Club is one of the longest running clubs and has had many leaders in its five years. Every session has a varied number of members, where Ms Lamprecht watches with a careful eye. Lego Club is pleased by its 'permanent loan' of the Lego Ninjago set from the library, and it continues to provide inspiration.

People have made a varied number of different creations, ranging from houses to 'weird cyborg things' as Ms Lamprecht put it. If you want to join, speak to Ms Lamprecht (P1.7) today!

## Mary Poppins Jr. Production Update

TBCS's production of Mary Poppins Jr. will be performed on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2026. The production team are very excited to be performing the show in the next few months and have been rehearsing regularly and devotedly twice a week after school, since November. Tickets will be available for purchase on Scopay.

Based on one of the most popular Disney movies of all time and the Broadway musical that played for over 2,500 performances and received multiple Olivier and Tony Awards nominations, Disney and Cameron Mackintosh's Mary Poppins captures hearts in a whole new way.

The jack-of-all trades, Bert, introduces us to England in 1910 and the troubled Banks family. Young Jane and Michael have sent many a nanny packing before Mary Poppins arrives on their doorstep. Using a combination of magic and common sense, she must teach the family members how to value each other again.

Mary Poppins takes the children on many magical and memorable adventures, but Jane and Michael aren't the only ones upon whom she has a profound effect. Even grown-ups can learn a lesson or two from the nanny who advises that "Anything can happen if you let it."

Look out for an exclusive interview with Mrs. Seaward-Ding, Head of Drama in our next issue! We'll make sure to keep you posted!

Don't forget you could be in with a chance to win two free tickets to the school's production of Mary Poppins Jr. by completing the word search on the back page and returning it to Ms Fitzgerald, Geography Department. Your entry will be included in the draw for the two tickets on 5<sup>th</sup> March.



# How to Prepare for Exams by Kundana

Feeling like you don't know where to start when preparing for exams. Look no further, here is a simple list of techniques for core subjects.

## Math

- Practise problems daily to build fluency.
- Keep a log of errors and review patterns.
- Mix easy, medium, and hard questions.
- Active recall of formulas and step by step methods

## Biology

- Use diagrams and flowcharts for processes.
- Make flashcards for key terms and definitions.
- Teach concepts aloud to reinforce memory.
- Blurting- write everything that you remember

## Chemistry

- Memorise essential formulas and rules.
- Practise balancing equations regularly.
- Redraw structures, ions, and mechanisms.
- Combine equations with visual models

## Physics

- Identify knowns, unknowns, and formulas needed.
- Draw diagrams for forces, circuits, and motion.
- Practise multi-step calculations.
- Turn problems into sketches or visual models

## English Literature

- Annotate texts for themes, devices, and character traits.
- Build a quote bank organised by theme.
- Practise analytical paragraphs with evidence.
- Active recall of annotations and quotes

## English Language

- Practise analysing language and structure techniques and tones
- Improve descriptive writing with sensory detail.
- Do timed reading and writing practice.
- Active writing practice in a limit.

## Leah's Recipe Corner



### Pistachio Minis

- Cooking time: 20 minutes
- Makes: 1 large tin
- Preserving: Stays good for as long as they last in an airtight container

**Allergen warning: Contains nuts, dairy and gluten.**

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons almond flour
- ⅓ cup + 1 tablespoon ground pistachios- Using a blender is recommended, or if you want to go old school, grind them by hand, which would essentially give a coarser texture
- ½ cup powdered Caster sugar
- ½ teaspoon cardamom powder
- ½ cup softened unsalted butter
- A couple drops of pure vanilla extract- *Dr. Oetker* is recommended
- Pinch of salt
- Whole milk- This is highly dependent on yourself; there are no exact measurements, it's a "learn as you go" type of situation!

### Method

1. Preheat your oven to 180°C/360°F and line a baking tray.
2. Cream the butter, sugar and vanilla in a mixing bowl using an electric mixer.
3. Sift all the dry ingredients in a separate mixing bowl: This is everything up to the cardamom powder, plus the salt.
4. Now dump this collaboration of flour and pistachios in the bowl containing the creamed butter. Mix well.
5. Pour the milk in gently and aim for a pancake-batter consistency, free of lumps and smooth as silk
6. Fill a piping bag with the batter. Whether you use a nozzle or just cut the end is up to you; personally, I prefer cutting it myself as it gives a larger opening. If you don't have a piping bag, use plastic zip-top bags (cut a small opening in the corner) or parchment paper cones.
8. Be prepared to stay in the kitchen for a while. Piping this on the baking tray made my arms fall off, but it was worth the effort. So, turn up your Spotify playlist, sit down comfortably and get pipin'!
9. Top with pistachio crumbs and into the oven she goes!
10. Baking these mini cookies in batches really saves time. Bake for 20 minutes, or until golden brown. And there you have it! Pistachio Minis!

## My teacher stole the Crown Jewels! (Part 1) by Ethan C

I remember the time my class had a school trip to the Tower of London. After an hour in a stuffy coach with a questionably qualified driver, we arrived at the visitor centre. To our amusement, the red-and-gold-clad Beefeater guards saluted us as we went inside. My history teacher had a very heavy-looking rucksack on, but I wasn't suspicious. None of us were.

Our tour guide met us outside, and her and my history teacher, Miss Greenby embraced like they were old friends, then whisked us around. From the White Tower: "Anne Boleyn still haunts this tower." To the Tower Green: "Seven people were executed here, including the Earl of Essex. If you look closely, you can still see a faint bloodstain on the cobbles."

At the end, she turned to us, that annoying grin fixed on her face. "And since you've been such a lovely audience, you can see the Crown Jewels!" But I'd noticed the look that passed between her and Miss Greenby. Was this the only reason?

Everyone oohed and ahed and looked extremely excited, my history teacher most of all. She rubbed her hands together with glee, checked her rucksack and then looked up guiltily. No-one said a word, though I was beginning to have a feeling at the back of my mind.

When we arrived at the Jewel House, we were met by a burly man, resplendent in black and red robes. His surly eyes lit up when he saw our tour guide, or at least the glare softened slightly.

"Hi Dad!" she squeaked excitedly. Then she turned to us with a grin. "You lot are very lucky to have the Keeper of the Crown Jewels' daughter as your tour guide." "Who's that then?" a boy at the back asked. Miss Greenby glared at him. She liked glaring. Apparently, it was the best way of expressing annoyance.

The Keeper unlocked the heavy doors and let us in. As was his job, he stood by the cases with the jewels in them, but our tour guide decided to stay outside. Apparently, she'd seen them so many times over the years and she had another group waiting in the visitor centre. They were so shiny and covered in a kaleidoscope of gems.

My history teacher walked to the front and stood next to the Keeper, holding a hand up for silence. It took a while for us all to settle down, but when she was satisfied, she began to speak. "Who here has heard of Thomas Blood?" she asked, peering around at us curiously. It rang a very faint bell in my mind. I thought it had been mentioned on one of the display boards in the visitor centre, but I couldn't be sure. Was he the guy who...? "Well," Miss Greenby continued. "In 1672, he tried to steal the crown jewels." Next to her, the Keeper snorted and pursed his lips. "Fat lotta good that did 'im!" he muttered. My teacher glared at him and he shifted uncomfortably.

"He befriended the Keeper's daughter and was allowed in to see the jewels. He brought three 'friends' and the Keeper welcomed them in. Once inside, they hit him with a mallet and knocked him out. Like this." With a small grunt, my history teacher lifted a mallet from her bag and hit the keeper over the head with it. We all heard the crack, and it was horrible. He cried out as he fell and my history teacher snatched a set of keys from his belt. I'd known she was acting suspiciously, but this?! Either this was a very interactive demonstration or... "Then," she said breathlessly "He unlocked the cases the Crown Jewels were inside. He flattened the Crown with a hammer, sawed the Sceptre in half and hid the Orb in a bag."

As she spoke, she unlocked the cases containing the Crown Jewels. Six inches of bulletproof glass were of no protection when you had the keys. Still with a faint smear of blood on, Miss Greenby slammed the mallet down on the Crown with a crunch. One of the Jewels popped off and flew across the room, embedding itself in the ancient

stone of the room. As we all watched, she pulled a small hacksaw from the bag and attacked a golden stick with a cross on the end with it. In a matter of seconds, it was in two pieces, and the Orb was in the bag. Then she rushed out of the door, followed by my overstimulated classmates. "Blood and his accomplices had almost escaped when the alarm was raised and they were caught, mere steps from freedom!"

We ran across the Tower grounds toward a large metal gate facing the river. The Beefeaters stationed there looked at us quizzically and one of them held out his pike in front of us. "We're late for our coach!" my teacher explained vaguely and the guards let us through. Our coach was still parked where we had left it but there was no sign of the driver. We all got in, with my history teacher taking the driver's seat. With questionable driving skills, and three wrecked lampposts, the bus zoomed out of the car park and onto the busy streets of London. My teacher had stolen the Crown Jewels! But it wasn't long before sirens began blaring behind us...

To be continued...

## Jokes and Wordsearch Corner

What has one in a room, two in a corner and none in a house?  
The letter R

What connects two people yet touches only one?  
A wedding ring

Did you hear about the two radios that got married?  
The reception was amazing.

## Wordsearch corner: 1st edition

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C H I M N E Y S V Y H G C X A
K H S F I R B I M N O D N O L
R O I E W A N O W L A E D A L
U O T L O N R F E G S N M Z E
Q I X V D E F L F X K P N L R
K X Z R E R K N S M L E V Y B
S K N A B Y E K W I J U F T M
D P O A T T K N G S D B O N U
S G A B D N A H W O H P Y E X
M W F I F X T T I Y S O O O R
N C T L V E W R W T E W Y T H
C O W C R Z R Q I F F K P D O
O E V S C U X P X U R N S B U
P O P P I N S C A J F Z N G W
A I P L N Z W W G M I N S F R
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Banks  
Debt  
Lamplighters  
Poppins

Children  
Handbag  
London  
Spitspot

Chimney  
Kite  
Nanny  
Umbrella

This word search is not only fun but has a reward at the end of it! Anyone who finishes this word search will get the chance to enter a draw to receive 2 free tickets to the Mary Poppins Jr show! All you need to do is print out a copy and give the completed word search to Ms Fitzgerald in D3.5 with your name and tutor clearly visible. Good luck!

The draw will take place of all the winning entries on 5<sup>th</sup> March at Newspaper Club.

## School Calendar - March 2026

05/03/26	5:00pm Year 9 Options Evening <b>Year 9</b>
13/03/26	All Day INSET Day <b>Term Dates</b>
19/03/26	All Day Year 11 Reports to Parents <b>Year 11</b>
26/03/26	3:30pm – 7:00pm Year 11 Parents Evening <b>Year 11</b>
30/03/26	All Day Easter Holiday <b>Term Dates</b>

