

World Poetry Day (21st March)

Thought for the Week: "Poetry: the best words in the best order."

Wellbeing Focus this Term: 'Take Notice.'



Aspire & Achieve Together

Quickfire Week

The week in bullet points

- ◇ Our Year 12s attended a UCAS Exhibition Trip on Friday, where they were able to engage with representatives from the Russell Group Universities, Oxbridge and Universities from Europe, to help them to identify pathways to pursue after their A Levels.

This Week (Week A)

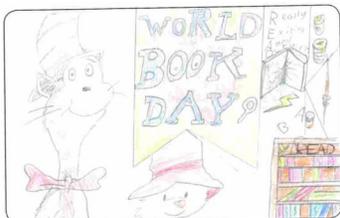
- ◇ Wednesday 20th March: (and every Wednesday until W/C 22nd April) Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Training 3pm-5pm
- ◇ Friday 22nd March: Apprenticeship Fair for Year 12 and Year 13 students. This is being held at Strood Academy.

Competition Time

Our talented students are always getting involved with activities outside of school. We are pleased to congratulate Raza Hasnain, Daniel Stikans and Rhys Gulliver in Year 7 who have all entered a writing competition as part of celebrating 900 years of Leeds Castle, Kent. The winning stories will be placed within a time capsule and buried in front of the Castle, only to be opened 100 years from now at the Castle's millennium. Well done to these young men for applying their creative thinking and English Language skills to write a short story about castles and time travel, and we wish you all the best with the results.

Following World Book Day last week, we would also like to encourage students to engage with a competition to design a National Book

Token. One lucky winner's design will be made into a real-life National Book Tokens gift card, to be distributed across bookshops nationwide in time for Christmas. Well done to Jason Gardiner in Year 7 for already submitting his intricate Doctor Seuss inspired entry (see above.) Students who wish to enter have until the 12th April to submit. Details are on Show My Homework.



Trip Payment Schedules

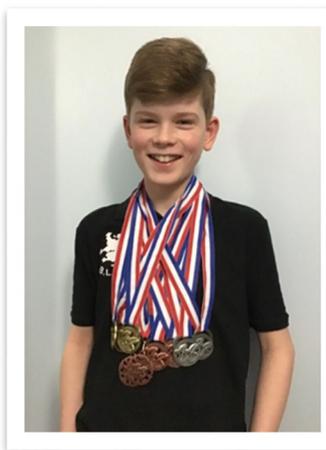
Japan: Third instalment of £295 due 30th March.

Norfolk and Normandy: Final instalments are due.

Croatia: Deposit of £150 is due.

Swimming Gold

Congratulations to Ethan Willard, Year 7, who recently competed in the Black Lion Open Development Gala. This was held at Medway Park Leisure Centre on Saturday 2nd March. Swimmers from across Kent Swimming Clubs participated in events covering all four strokes and distances from 50



Metres to the 100 Metres, along with the 100 Metre Individual Medley. Ethan's fantastic swimming meant he beat his personal best in all nine of the events he entered, and achieved a large array of medals: Three golds, two silvers, two bronze and two fifth places in his age group!

Ethan says: 'I have been swimming with the club for about 18 months and since we got a new coach, Martin, back in January my swimming has improved a lot. To the extent that I knocked over 11 seconds of my previous 100m individual medley time, 7 seconds off my 100m breaststroke and 5 seconds off my 50m backstroke. I train three to four nights a week, doing one and a half hour sessions. I really enjoy training and competing and I am so pleased to have come away with nine medals and nine personal bests. It makes all the hard work worthwhile.'

Congratulations on your successes, Ethan, and keep up the hard work! We look forward to seeing where your swimming journey will take you next. Thank you for being a Holcombe Hero.

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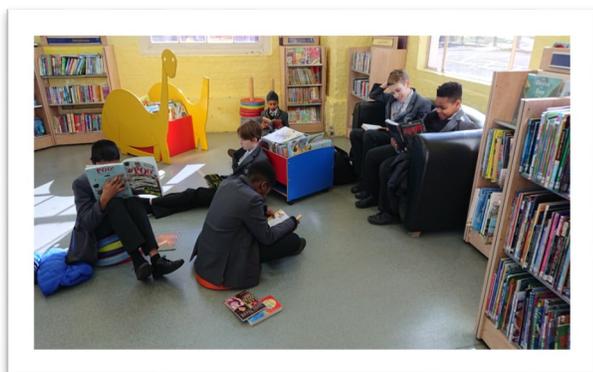
World Book Day

World Book Day was last Thursday the 7th March. To celebrate, Mr Still, Miss Carpenter and Miss Goodwin visited the local library with a select group of Holcombe's most avid readers from Year 7.



Here is what Miss Goodwin says about it: 'At the library, the students listened to extracts from Young Adult novels, including 'Young Sherlock', a funny poem or two and some disgusting facts that the boys loved. They were then given a tour of the library and its services and spent some time browsing the shelves and taking in all the library had to offer. As you can see from the photos, many of the students found a good book to get stuck into; some even used their library cards to take a collection home.'

It's great to see these students taking some time out to enjoy a book or two. We are proud to have joined the nation this World Book Day in celebrating reading and the power of a good book.



Parent Survey Feedback

We have collated the feedback from the Year 7 and Year 10 parent surveys that went out to parents last Term, and we are proud to report that 91% of Year 7 parents, and 90.5% of Year 10 parents, agreed their children are happy at School. More positive feedback included that 95.55% of Year 7 parents, and 93.65% of Year 10 parents, said their children feel safe at School, while 93.33% of Year 7 Parents and 85.71% of Year 10 parents said they would recommend our school to other parents. These statistics are very positive and show Holcombe is continuing to listen to its students and aspire for excellence.

Sixth Form Mentoring

Our fantastic School Captains' team (made up of nominated Sixth Form students) have been meeting with students from across the School this week to establish the new 'Student Forum' for our Student Voice. The feedback collected from the meetings was discussed in form time, and representatives from each class in Years 7 to 12 were invited to attend. School Captains will now feed this back to the Heads of School and make suggestions on enhancements to current services and provision. The insights drawn from these meetings will help us to understand and reflect on the student learning experience and to prioritise where actions should be made. Thank you to the Captains Team, and to the Form Captains throughout the school, who contributed to this initiative.

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Parliament Visit

Tyler Cook, Year 11, was lucky enough to be invited to visit the Houses of Parliament last week! Here is what Tyler says about his day in Westminster.

'As a member of the local Conservative Party, I had the privilege of being invited to a free tour of the Houses of Parliament and a talk with Kelly Tolhurst, MP for Rochester and Strood, Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility. I learnt a lot about current affairs on both a party level and the national level during Kelly's talk and Q&A session, including many things the party is doing but are not typically talked about in the media. I learned a lot about work being done for workers' rights, small businesses and young people, especially apprenticeships programmes, an issue close to me due to the fact I want to go through the paralegal and solicitor apprenticeships post 16. I got a unique insight into Brexit, directly from a Member of Parliament and minister who has been on both sides of the Brexit debate and has had a lot of first-hand experience dealing with Europe through her role.

The tour itself was much less about current affairs and more about the history of Parliament and how it runs. The tour started in Westminster Hall. We learnt about the beginnings of the Houses of Parliament and the different rulers that oversaw the construction of the different buildings. Next, we entered the House of Commons, following the pathway an MP would take if they wanted to vote 'no' on a bill. We learnt a lot about the smaller details and traditions that have been going on for centuries and also many other incidents. One of the most notable things about the Commons Chamber is it is very small, much smaller than it seems on TV. When the chamber was destroyed in WWII, many architects suggested it should be built bigger but Churchill wanted to keep the dimensions similar. He wanted a rectangular chamber (contrary to most of Europe which had adopted semi-circular parliaments) because he wanted to face his enemy, not see them over his shoulder. He also wanted to keep it small to preserve the intimacy of Commons; he

wanted his enemies close. Next, we went to the Queen's Chambers and followed the route she would take on the state opening of Parliament and finally, we went through the House of Lords. The House of Lords does not typically make it to the news as often but it was still very interesting learning about the differences in the structure, power and politics of the two Chambers.'

Thank you Tyler for this detailed insight into the world of Westminster!

Pictured below: Tyler with MP Kelly Tolhurst in Westminster Hall.



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HOLCOMBE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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Dates

Thursday 28th March	Year 8 Parent Consultation and Options Evening 4:30pm-7:30pm
Friday 29th March	Holcombe Association Disco for Year 7 and Year 8
8th-22nd April	Spring Break
Tuesday 23rd April	Term 5 starts
Monday 6th May	May Day Bank Holiday
W/C Monday 6th May	Year 7, 8, 9 Prelims (core subjects only)
7th-10th May	Norfolk Trip
10th May	Year 10 Finance Exam
Monday 27th May -Friday 31st May	May Break
Monday 3rd June	Term 6 starts
Thursday 13th June	Year 5 Taster Session
Monday 17th June	Year 10 Internal Examinations
W/C Monday 24th June	Year 12 Prelims
24th-27th June	Normandy Trip
Thursday 27th June	Year 6 Induction Day and Evening for parents
W/C Monday 1st July	Year 12 Work Experience Week
2nd-3rd July	Sixth Form Induction
Thursday 4th July	Senior Prizegiving
Tuesday 16th July	Founders' Day
Friday 19th July	End of Term