Christmas is coming

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Editor's NOTE

It's my favourite time of year! Not only is it Christmas, but it's also my birthday. This year I'll be basking in the cosy warmth of the log burner, gorging on cream crackers and cheese, and spending time with my family. What I love about Christmas is the sense of normality it brings. Amongst the chaos that is school-life, it's easy to get lost in tasks and you forget the bigger picture. Christmas is celebrated worldwide and even if you don't celebrate it, it's almost impossible to ignore the twinkling lights and Christmas trees which make winter-wonderlands out of our neighbourhoods. No matter what you do this Christmas, take the time to be grateful for what you have, where you are and who you are with.

Welcome to the first edition of Castell Alun High School's student newspaper; The Hive!

Lois Parry
This year marks one hundred years since the end of the First World War. Armistice Day this year has fallen on Remembrance Sunday, 11th November, to mark a hundred years since the Armistice was signed and the fighting ceased. Many stories from during the war period have since been discovered, none more fascinating than the huge role that sport, in particular football, had on the war. I am sure you have all watched football or played it at one point in your life, whether you have enjoyed it or not, the story of football during the First World War is certainly a very interesting one.

Huge numbers of men that played in a local football team signed up for the war. One of these men was Leigh Richmond Roose, a footballing legend from Wrexham. He was a superstar goalkeeper who was described as a "prince among footballers". When he left school, he went on to study at Aberystwyth University, and in his first year as a student, not only did he play for the local town club, but was also selected for the Welsh team 24 times. He also played for many leading clubs including Woolwich Arsenal, Everton, Aston Villa and Sunderland.

After completing his studies at Aberystwyth, he studied medicine in London. When World War One broke out in 1914, he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps despite never completing his medical studies because of his thriving football career. He won the prestigious Military Medal for his bravery during the war. On 7 October 1916, aged 38, Roose was killed in action in the battle of the Somme. His legacy, however, lives on, as his name is remembered and his remembrance plaque was unveiled in 2016 at Aberystwyth University.

One huge influence that football had during the war was
the emergence of the women's game. As we know, women's sport was pretty non-existent during this time. This was something new, a revolution in sport in general. During the war, more than 9,000 women worked in munitions factories, helping the war effort. Many set up their own football teams. The most famous was Kerr's Ladies FC in Preston. They continued to enjoy success until women were banned from playing in Football league grounds in 1921.

It was even used as a recruitment tool! Football was widely used as a tool for recruiting men for the forces. The text on one particular poster is a direct appeal from the Secretary of the Football Association for "GOOD SPORTSMEN" to "ENLIST NOW" and help the other "GOOD SPORTSMEN" who are so bravely fighting Britain's Battle against the world's enemy.

Of course, we cannot forget the Christmas truce of December 25th 1914. Many letters and diaries from at the time describe the game of football between the British and German troops. This embraced the idea that football is a means of bringing people together.

Who knew that football had such a huge role in the First World War? This game, which made a significant difference to how people lived their lives during this time, and brought people together in some of the most horrendous situations, just goes to show that as Colonel Harry Fenwick, (the commanding officer of the Footballer's Battalion) said, "Football has a wonderful grip on these men and on the army generally."

So, when you next play football or watch a football match on the TV, remember the impact it had on so many different aspects of society at one of the toughest moments in world history, and that such a simple game could bring rivals together for Christmas.
INVICTUS GAMES 2018
held in Sydney, Australia

BY MISCHA WILLIAMS Yr 9

The Invictus Games have been changing lives since they were set up in 2014. Founded by Prince Harry, they are a sporting tournament for ex-military men and women who have been injured as a result of war. It gives them the chance to compete in a variety of different sports, in different levels of disability. Many of the competitors have suffered life changing injuries as a result of war and the Invictus Games offers a chance for them to take part in something extraordinary and meet lots of other inspirational people. And they definitely are inspirational.

The 2018 Games were held in Sydney, Australia, and hosted 500 competitors from 18 different countries. The teams competed in 11 sports over a week, and what a great week it was! Team GB came home with 28 gold, 22 silver and 22 bronze medals. This made a total of 72 podium places. 14 of these medals came from the swimming team. With 4 golds, 6 silvers and 4 bronzes it was an impressive week for disability swimming. Michael Goody secured double gold in the Men’s 50m backstroke and the Men’s 50m Freestyle and then went on to win bronze in the Men’s 50m Backstroke.

Michael was a Senior Aircraft Officer with the RAF. He was hit by an IED (improvised explosive device) whilst on patrol with the RAF Regiment in Afghanistan. He was trapped under his vehicle for three hours and suffered a composite fracture to his left ankle. Due to his injuries he was forced to return to the UK. However, when he returned home Michael found it hard to manage with his lack of independence.
“It was really frustrating” said Michael in an interview with the RAF Benevolent Fund. “I couldn’t drive my car, which was a manual one, and to get around I had to rely on friends and family”. Over the next two and a half years Michael had 14 operations to repair the damage to his foot, but none of these were successful. His walking was badly affected, he had severe damage to his knees and his hip and lower back were very painful. So, when his surgeon told him that he’d have to go through another year of surgery with no guaranteed success, he made the tough decision to amputate from the knee down. Flash forward to now, and Michael has taken part in 3 Games and has won medals in every one of them.

Michael’s story has inspired lots of other ex-military men and women to try disability swimmers, such as Mark Ormond. Mark competed alongside Michael in the recent games, and won 2 golds and 1 silver. Mark was a Royal Marine who was also injured by an IED whilst taking part in a routine drill in Afghanistan on Christmas Eve 2007. Mark lost both his legs and his right arm, and became the first triple amputee to survive Afghanistan. After many operations and surgery Mark decided to enter the UK Invictus Games swimming team and participated in the 2017 Games, and again this year, where he won double gold and silver. In an interview after his win, Mark said, “Never in a million years did I think I’d be here”, Ormond told AAP (American Association of Paediatrics). “The first time I went in a swimming pool after my injury, I nearly drowned and I was a pretty strong swimmer before Afghanistan. I didn’t expect to live never mind win a gold medal, and now I’ve got two.”

As well as Mark and Michael, many, many more incredibly brave and inspirational former armed forces personnel took part in the games. The games give back independence to those that have lost it, and give them the chance to meet others who have been through similar experiences. It also inspires others to take up sports, whether they are ex-military, disabled or not. The Invictus Games have been changing lives since 2014, and I think we all hope they continue to do so for many years to come.
LONELINESS
at Christmas

BY SOPHIE KEENAN Yr 9

Christmas. The most wonderful time of the year. Presents, family arguments over who was cheating in the board game, eating food until you nearly burst; time to spend with family and friends. However, for many this is not the case.

In a 2017 study by Age UK, it was found that nearly a million older people feel lonelier at Christmas, two fifths of whom have been widowed. Sadly, these elderly people, who in the past made Christmas a magical day for everyone involved, now face crushing loneliness. Many feel like Christmas is just another day.

Think of your most amazing Christmas memory. For almost all of you, it will involve an amazing present or fun filled time spent with a loved one, memories you will share with your family and your friends. Not alone. These elderly people have memories like that; but now face the stark and harsh reality that they will no longer make new memories on Christmas, and instead are faced with a soul destroying loneliness.

Unfortunately people who face this may be closer to you than you think, like a widowed grandparent or great grandparent that lives alone far away. Perhaps you know an elderly person who will spend Christmas alone.

It is heart-breaking to think that someone should have to spend this beautifully festive period alone. So, what can we do, to fight loneliness at the most wonderful time of the year?
1. **Invite** a lonely family member round for Christmas or maybe dinner.

2. **Take** a lonely person you know out for a walk or a day out, possibly a Christmas market.

3. **Volunteer** at your local care home for the elderly.

4. **Volunteer** for Age UK's telephone friend service.

5. **Carry out** a small act of kindness that could make someone's day.

However, of course it is not just the elderly who are alone at Christmas. It is simply awful to think that in 2018 we still have people who are isolated from family and friends. Many younger people also face being alone at Christmas. This is why you should see what you can do to help anyone feeling lonely at Christmas.

**Christmas is a wonderful time of year for so many, but we need to see what we can do for those that dread the thought of feeling abandoned at Christmas.**
Japanese Exchange Trip 2018

BY GRACE DAVIES Yr 13

On the 26th of July, 6 families waited eagerly at the Beaufort Park Hotel, jumping at the sight of a van or minibus or anything that could carry Karen and 4 students. Then finally, we met the new members of our families.

It’s safe to say that over the following week, family life with our student seemed normal, and the idea of having a house without them, almost alien. It is difficult to put into words the bond you share with them, and how much I miss them all.

However, I have an inordinate amount of memories and stories to tell, that I’m sure I’ll recount until everyone is sick of hearing “when I was on the exchange...” or “when I was in Japan...”. Our time in Wales was marked with such good group and family activities that I’m sure captured the familial atmosphere of Wales, as well as memories of just students, doing and talking about things that shouldn’t be talked about with parents around. While visiting castles in the rain and posing for hilarious pictures was the best of times, I enjoyed the time we spent doing spontaneous ABBA jam sessions, and teaching the students the words to all of their hits, as well as Michael Jackson’s finest. I feel that these impromptu situations really showcase how close our entire group was and how we really all grew in confidence around each other. Watching everyone boogie and mess around with ridiculous amounts of glittery face paint at the festival made me realise how quickly strangers can become family.

Whilst I’m sure saying goodbye to the students for the parents was difficult on the 6th of August at Manchester Airport, the final goodbye for us at Shiroishi-Zao Train Station was
heartbreaking, as we suddenly left the true family we’d gained over the course of the exchange. An incredible amount of hugs were shared, as well as pictures taken, and of course an unreal amount of weeping and sobbing on everyone’s part. The sudden arrival of the train and the hurried movement of all of Jess’ bags, along with everyone else’s, meant that we parted in a far more wrenching fashion than any of us wanted to, and with assurance from our chaperones, we cried on that train for over 40 minutes, the longest ever.

The whole train journey was made up of us recounting our experience and of course bringing on new waves of tears every time. Hot topics included the fated camping trip where Lucy got frazzled leading to Chizu’s dad putting his hand on her shoulder and making a sizzle noise, and also the breathtaking barbeque where Lucy and I got tricked by Yurika into eating beef tongue. As well as Chloe putting up the tent in record time and discovering that five people cannot lie in a straight line to sleep without discussing at length where the middle on the tent actually is. Other topics were the good looking lifeguards at the water park, my inability to cut noodles straight and how often we got lost. Yet, it was agreed by everyone that both festivals were the highlight, learning and nailing the dance from the festival in Zao, as well as sampling the amazing food at the Murata firework festival, and wearing our beautiful yukatas.

I’m so thankful, that not only did the exchange forge a bond between myself and Yurika, and in turn reinforce the relationship between Murata and Flintshire; but also that I’ve made 5 friends for life in Chloe, Jess, Alex, Andy and Lucy. I know that wherever we go in the future, we have a unique experience that ties us together forever.

Overall, saying this was the best experience of my life sounds cliche and overused, when in fact it barely covers the love I have for this adventure and everyone who helped make it happen.
Going the Extra Mile for Nightingale House

BY JAKE GOLDSMITH, JOE PARRY, DAVID JONES, NATHAN EVANS

Nightingale House is a charity that helps terminally ill people for the duration of their lives. They also support the families affected by the individual's illness, during and after the process. Our year 11 Business project, “Nige's Trust”, originates from Jake's Dad (Nigel Goldsmith). Nigel Goldsmith unfortunately passed away from a brain tumour earlier this year, in Nightingale House Hospice.

Nightingale provide comfortable living spaces, wonderful food, a garden which the patients and their families can enjoy together. The hospice also take care of all their patients in a dignified and friendly way, often making genuine friendships with their patients, which is a comfort for the patient and their family.

So we decided to form Nige's Trust to not only remember Nigel but to also give back to Nightingale.
On the 23rd November, we decided to take on a challenge called ‘The Sandstone Trail’, a 34 mile walk through Cheshire.

The walk itself was grueling and psychologically exhausting, the landscapes were rough and steep, yet beautiful and very different to what any of us had seen before.

At times we struggled to keep going, but we found the strength and determination when we reflected on what Nightingale does and of course Nige’s legacy.

To donate to Nige’s Trust and Nightingale House Hospice, go to:

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/nigestrust
The Student Guide to: BREXIT

BY SOPHIE PAXTON Yr 13

We are all aware that Brexit is a very confusing matter, so let’s walk through it step-by-step:

What is Brexit?
The word Brexit is short for “British Exit” and is the word people use when referring to Britain’s decision to leave the EU.

What is the European Union (EU)?
The EU is a group of 28 countries in Europe which trade with each other and allows anyone to move easily between the countries to live and work. Britain joined the EU in 1973.

Why is the UK leaving the EU?
On the 23rd of June 2016 a public decision, known as a referendum, was held. The voters were asked one question: Should Britain leave or remain in the EU? The UK made a historic decision. It voted to leave the European Union.

More than 33 million adults voted, of which around 52% voted to leave and around 48% voted to remain.

Why did people vote to leave the EU?
Some of the reasons people voted to leave the EU include people wanting to have greater control over immigration in Britain, the dislike for the way in which Britain has to follow rules set by the EU and the money the UK pays into the EU spending pot.

Why did some people vote to remain in the EU?
There were so many vital reasons as to why voting remain was the right thing to do but here are some of the core reasons:
· Around 2.5 million people are employed in the UK as a direct result of our EU trade, and nearly another million indirectly because of that relationship. People feared the loss of jobs if we were to leave.

· Our membership of the EU allowed every business the right to trade in a market of over 500 million people in 28 different countries.

· People believe that leaving the UK will cause an economic crash that Britain will be unable to cope with.

What has happened so far in Britain's Brexit journey?

The vote was only the beginning and since then discussions having taken place between the UK and the EU. The negotiations have been surrounding how the UK will leave the EU known as the "divorce deal". The negotiations are not primarily about what will happen after the UK leaves the EU.

The divorce deal is formally known as the Withdrawal Agreement.

What does the Withdrawal Agreement include?

It outlines how the UK will leave the EU, not what will happen once it leaves.

What will happen next in Britain's Brexit journey?

A vote will take place on the 11th of December in which parliament will decide whether it will accept or reject the Withdrawal Agreement. The deal also needs to be approved by the European Parliament - one of the organisations which helps make EU laws. Its 751 members (known as MEPs) come from the EU and are elected in their own countries. The European Parliament will vote on the deal early next year.
MISOGYNISTIC Stages & Melodramatic STALLS

BY JOSH BERDOUK Yr 11

Misogyny is often rife within the great operatic works of Verdi and Mozart, but no love epic or Greek tragedy can match the melodramatic affairs of those watching in the stalls.

As they say, “Cosi fan Tutte”; all women are the same. And “a woman does little” but “chatter a great deal”. You may be surprised to find I am in fact quoting the libretti of ‘The Magic Flute’ and the title of ‘Cosi fan Tutte’.

Females in opera have always suffered a chronicle of tragedy, misery and gender-based victimisation, of which one can only succumb to if part of an exclusive club; known as femalehood. The titles of many works are unforgiving themselves. As aforementioned, Mozart’s ‘Cosi fan Tutte’ denotes that all women behave the same.

From what one can see so far, opera tends to objectify its heroines. The role models created through the female characters is rather appalling too. The ‘helpless maidens’ always chose violent soldiers and abusive men as lovers such as ‘Don Giovanni’. Their portrayals of their feelings towards men, furthermore, contradicts the view we contemporarily have. Either from disease, murder, or most commonly suicide for their unfaithful lovers, women in opera always meet a grizzly ending.

All of this portrays the female characters in opera as ‘drama queens’; destined for death and misfortune and inferior servants to the men they are caged by. Pretty misogynist, right? No.
Those in the stalls, the circle, gods or in the royal boxes for that matter, squinting through their opera binoculars they hired for £25 from their velvet seat for which they paid well over a week’s wages, can stop criticising the beautiful art on stage they have paid to watch. Neither Verdi’s nor Mozart’s intentions were to raise awareness of inequality within the world, achieve political correctness nor pass the Bechdel Test. That’s because Baroque, Classical or Romantic opera isn’t PC.

I don’t believe that the alleged warriors for equality in the arts are doing any good when they criticise an opera libretto’s lack of political correctness or respectable feminine role models in pieces written 200 years ago. The fault lies in the interpretation. What do you care if an opera has any role models or not? What does anyone care whether or if the underlying messages are good to teach the next generation or not? It is an opera. An opera. Not a public service announcement; not a citizenship lesson nor a documentary about equal rights.

Opera is bold, it’s ludicrous and the stories behind them almost amusingly unrealistic. Thus, when one takes an opera as a representation of the real world, they become offended by the injustice to its female characters. But that’s what they are; characters. Fiction belongs in the fictional world; and reality, here, in the real world.

Opera is a chance to see into the extremities of imagination and artistry. So at the climax, as the strings sing sorrow, the brass resonate murder and the timpani roar finality, appreciate the pure grandiose and genius of the music and the emotion the ambition of the tragedy in an opera evokes in you.
MUST-WATCH Christmas Movies

BY LOIS PARRY Yr 13

1. Miracle on 34th Street

This is my all time favourite Christmas movie. A beautiful story about an old man (Santa) and a young girl who grows up not believing in Christmas. The modern world and the age old traditions of Christmas collide and learn to accept one another in this truly magical Christmas movie.

2. Nativity

Let's be honest, we all wished we had a teacher like Mr. Poppy. Watch as Mr. Maddens (Martin Freeman) makes a promise he can't keep, resulting in possibly the best musical version of the nativity story in history.

3. Love Actually

A star-studded cast makes for the essential Christmas rom-com following the lives of love-stricken individuals as they prepare for the holiday season. Includes names such as Emma Thompson, Alan Rickman, Keira Knightley, Liam Neeson, Colin Firth and loads more!

4. Arthur Christmas

The words my seven-year-old self feared the most; “Santa hasn’t been this year”. Lucky for little Gwen, Arthur Christmas is determined that NO child will go without a present, even if it means flying half way around the world in a rickety old sleigh with nine OAP reindeers.

5. Home Alone

I would be a bit more annoyed than Kevin if my parents forgot about me and went to Paris ... actually it’s not unlike the time my mum went to Spain without me on my sixteenth birthday...Anyway, Home Alone is an amazingly inventive, fun movie and makes you appreciate the value of family. Warning: DO NOT try anything you see in this movie at home.
6. The Grinch

Jim Carrey stars as this jealous, green...thing in The Grinch. The 2018 remake stars Benedict Cumberbatch but I haven’t seen it yet so let's talk about the original. Dr Seuss’ Grinch is grumpy, sour and hates Christmas, kind of like my Granddad. But little Cindy-Lou is desperate to help him enjoy the magic of Christmas.

7. The Nutcracker and the Four Realms

Want to make your Christmas even more magical? Head to the cinemas to watch this enchanting version of Tchaikovsky’s The Nutcracker. Disney manages to recreate a beautiful story through stunning visuals, flamboyant costumes and a witty cast.

8. A Muppets Christmas Carol

Putting all childhood fears of Kermit aside, the Muppets Christmas Carol is a heart-warming performance of Charles Dickens’ famous novel, probably exactly as Dickens envisioned it...

9. The Polar Express

I must admit, this isn’t my favourite Christmas movie, yet it is undeniably a firm favourite amongst Christmas fans. The lovable Tom Hanks multi-roles in this dream-like story which teaches the value of friendship, bravery and Christmas spirit.

10. Elf

Do I even have to explain this one? Buddy, an overgrown Elf adventures into New York City to find his biological father. Not my favourite Christmas movie, but definitely a must-watch to feel the Christmas spirit.