



# BEST OF THE BETHS



≡ International Women's Day ≡



# THE BEST OF MARCH



# **BEST OF THE BETHS**

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# International Women's Day

**By Riley 10W**

International Women's Day is celebrated across the world on March 8th every year. But how is it celebrated, and why is it so significant?

## How did it originate?

The idea of an International Women's Day came from a German politician and women's rights activist Clara Zetkin. In 1910, she proposed the idea to 100 women from 17 different countries at a conference for working women in Copenhagen. The idea was very well received, and the conference agreed unanimously that this should go ahead. Initially, it was only celebrated in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Denmark in 1911, and it wasn't until 1975 when the United Nations recognised it and began celebrating it. The history behind the date on which it is celebrated is interesting; a war-time strike saw Russian women take to the streets, demanding "bread and peace". The date of this strike was the 23rd of February on the Julian calendar (which was used in Russia at the time), but on the Gregorian calendar, this was the 8th of March. The Tsar was forced to abdicate the throne, and the new government gave women the right to vote.

## How is it celebrated?

International Women's Day is recognised across the world, and in some countries, it is a national holiday. In Italy, "la Festa della Donna" is celebrated by giving mimosa blossoms. In the USA, March is women's history month. The president issues a proclamation every year congratulating the achievements of American women. Also, in China, women are given half a day off of work. The colours associated with this day are purple, white and green which come from the colours of the Women's Social and Political Union in the UK in 1908.

## Why is it important?

There has been lots of progress made toward equal rights for women over the last century. For example, after five years of protests and lawsuits, the US Soccer Federation became the first federation in football to pay both men and women equally. However, there is still a long way to go, especially during protests in Iran following the death of Mahsa Amini, after allegedly breaking rules surrounding head coverings. The overturning of Roe v Wade by the US Supreme Court essentially ended the constitutional right to an abortion for women in America, with power now within the hands of individual states to create new rules surrounding abortion. This sparked huge uproar in the US, as many felt this undid many years of work for women's rights and abortion laws. These current events highlight the need for International Women's Day and its significance in today's society.

# St Patrick's Day

By Nathaniel 10A

St Patrick's Day, also known as the Feast of Saint Patrick, is an annual religious and cultural holiday held each year on the 17th of March to celebrate the anniversary of the patron saint of Ireland's death. The holiday has evolved over the years into a celebration of Irish culture with parades, music and dancing and it is celebrated in over 200 countries, including Ireland and Monserrat.

St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland and its national apostle. He was born in Roman Britain and was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave at age 16. He later escaped, but returned to Ireland and was credited with introducing Christianity to the Irish. In the centuries after his death, which was believed to have been on March 17th, 461, the mythology surrounding his life became more heavily ingrained in the Irish culture. One of the most well-known legends of St Patrick is that he explained the Christian Holy Trinity (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) using the three leaves of a native Irish clover, the shamrock. Now, the shamrock is used as a symbol of Ireland.



Since the ninth or tenth century, people in Ireland have been observing the Roman Catholic Feast Day of St Patrick on March 17th. Interestingly, the first St Patrick's day parade took place in the US, rather than Ireland, in St Augustine, Florida. More than a century later, homesick Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched in New York city on March 17th 1772 to honor the Irish patron saint. From there, enthusiasm for the St Patrick's day parades grew in many US states, including New York and Boston. Each year in New York, nearly 3 million people line the 1.5 mile parade route to watch the procession, which takes more than 5 hours. This parade is the worlds oldest civilian parade and the largest in the US, with over 150,000 participants.

One icon of the Irish holiday is the Leprechaun. The original Irish name for these figures of folklore is "lobaircin" meaning "small-bodied fellow." Belief in leprechauns is thought to have stemmed from Celtic belief in fairies, tiny men and women who could use their magical powers to serve good or evil. In Celtic folktales, leprechauns were cranky souls, responsible for mending the shoes of the other fairies. Despite only being minor figures in Celtic folklore, leprechauns were known for their trickery, which they often used to protect their much-fabled treasure. Leprechauns have their own holiday on May 13 but are also celebrated on St. Patrick's, with many people dressing up as the wily fairies.

# Decline of Religion

By Victor 10H

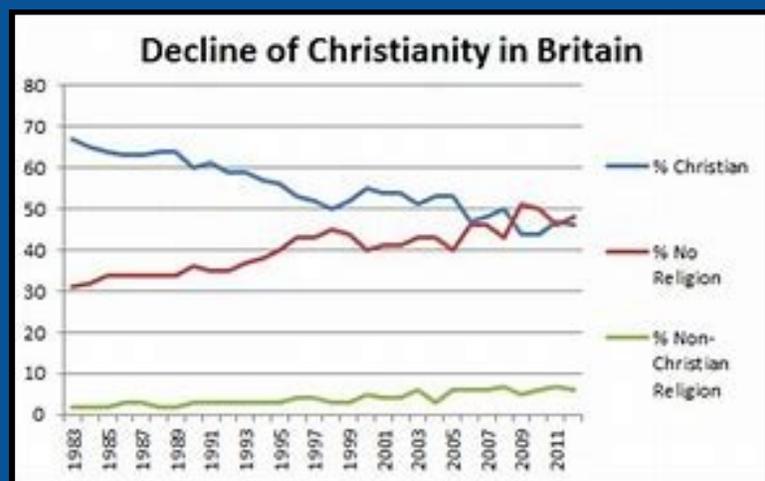
Back in 2021 and 2022, the UK Government took a census that happens every 10 years nationally. Data from this mass-survey showed a huge decline in religion and consequently a huge spike in atheism and agnosticism among the British population. The government's Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed that 46 percent of the population in England and Wales (27.5 million people) described themselves as "Christian" in 2021, down from 59 percent (33.3 million people) in 2011. This effectively means England and Wales are no longer majority Christian nations, despite a long and rich history of the church intertwining itself with English culture. It seems the two bastions of old village life – Pubs and Parish – are very much disappearing, as alcohol consumption has been going down as well (averaging 14.3 units in 2005 to 10.8 units in 2019).

There are a variety of reasons for this. The most important factor is the process of secularization, which refers to the declining influence of religion in society. No longer are our laws dominated by religion, or religious leaders in power over the country. This means they are less able to shift the country's laws to align with God's teachings the way we see in the Middle East and other staunchly religious states where religion still dominates the country's leadership. As society has become more secular, people have been less likely to identify with or practice religion.

Demographic changes along with changing attitudes only accelerates this effect. The UK has experienced significant demographic changes in recent years, with immigration from non-Christian countries contributing to a more diverse religious landscape.

This has led to an increase in religious pluralism, which may have made it harder for any one religion to dominate. This influx of religious diversity has also led many people to become more sceptical of religious institutions and beliefs. This may be due to a range of external factors as well, including increased education, exposure to different worldviews as well as cultures and religions, and scandals involving religious leaders.

Younger generations are also less likely to identify with religion than older generations, and this trend has been observed in many countries around the world. This may be due to a range of factors, including changing social norms, such as the proliferation of movements that directly oppose religion, greater exposure to alternative world views, and a greater focus on individualism and personal autonomy over community.



# Decline of Religion

By Victor 10H

Although this effect seems irreversible for the foreseeable future, it's not to say religion has lost all its benefits. Religion offers answers to questions that cannot be answered, such as the meaning of life or the birth of our universe. It also provides a sense of wellbeing, spiritual peace and enlightenment, which is what many people want out of religion. After all, there is no better environment for distraction-less meditation and focusing on yourself than an hour of church or the like. People also tend to enjoy the community of the mosque or your parish, or any other example as well, where they feel like part of a group.

Although these benefits sound attractive, it seems many people feel like religion's cons simply outweigh the pros. Of course, these aren't the sole factors that lead to the decline in religions – there are a million cultural and social micro-factors that orchestrate the downfall, but these are by far the ringleaders of the movement, or rather so, disappearance of one.

# The Woolf's Works Ballet

By Harvey 9B

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of March a group of Year 9s went to the Royal Opera House in order to see a ballet. This event was held, in particular, for schools to come and watch.

The ballet “Woolf’s Works” consisted of 3 Acts. They were called “I Now I Then”, “Becoming” and “Tuesday”, which are based on the novels of Virginia Woolf, an author who lived in London in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The acts were separated with 10-15 minute intervals, in which you could buy refreshments or stretch your legs. The composer Max Richter wrote the music that accompanied the ballet. All of the acts featured elements of relationships with the protagonist. The stories themselves were based on previously written novels; these were then obviously turned into pieces for ballet.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Act

The ballet started with a single dancer and huge spinning rectangles of wood with the middle taken out. We then saw multiple other dancers who had a special connection to the protagonist (the main dancer). For example, two of the dancers seemed to kiss, which is a clear sign of affection!

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Act

This part featured science fiction, fantasy and futuristic technology. During the interval leading up to this, a shiny ‘carpet’ like structure could be seen being placed on the floor of the stage. This was evidenced by the neon lights used during the performance, which seemed to bounce around the room and create magical walls of blue light. The clothes also changed in this act, as many of the dancers could be seen wearing shiny gold clothing, which strikingly reflected the neon lights shining above them.



# The Woolf's Works Ballet

By Harvey 9B

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Act

This Act encompassed the elements of life and death, by starting with a suicide note from the protagonist's husband. The background at the time was a moving picture of the sea, which covered the top half of the stage. This created a dark area to walk from backstage to center stage, which was used to create a sophisticated effect of the performers appearing 'out of thin-air'.

In this Act children could be seen dancing, which may have been used to show the stages of life for a person as they were replaced by older figures.

## Conclusion

Overall, the experience was wonderful and an adventure of the mind. Colors swirled and gleamed to represent emotions, which was further enforced by the speed/volume at which the orchestra was playing.

I would love to see this again as I truly understand the story presented.

# Charlie Bronson

By Subeeshnan 11H

Charles Bronson is a notorious criminal, famous for going under many aliases, and is officially known as the most violent prisoner in the UK. As most may know there have been talks about him being released on parole and whether he should be released in or not. As well as voicing my opinion, I will also talk about what the general public think.

Charles Arthur Salvador, (formerly Charles Ali Ahmed) commonly known as Charles Bronson, was born as Michael Gordon Peterson on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1952 in Luton, Bedfordshire. He was one of three sons of Eira and Joe Peterson. His aunt, Eileen Parry is quoted as saying: "As a boy, he was a lovely lad. He was obviously bright and always good with children. He was gentle and mild-mannered, never a bully; he would defend the weak." Peterson lived in Luton from the age of four, but when he was a teenager, his family moved to Ellesmere Port, Cheshire where he started getting into trouble. By the age of 13, he was part of a gang of four robbers and was in juvenile court after he was caught stealing. He enjoyed fighting from an early age and was often absent from school. From this he committed armed robbery, joined underground street fights, assault on prison guards, held possession of firearms and held people hostage.

As well as committing these crimes and going to jail, Bronson had good talents such as art, especially in the field of cartooning. Many of his artworks were put on display in the London Underground but were later removed by an unknown for unexplained reasons. Many of his artworks were then on sale, one raised several thousand pounds for his mother to have a holiday after the upset of him attacking 12 prison guards at HMP Woodhill. In 2016, Bronson auctioned one of his artworks to raise money for the treatment of a child with cerebral palsy. In 2009, March 13, the film, Bronson, which loosely follows his life, was released in Britain, starring Tom Hardy as Bronson.



Though years of solitary created health and psychological problems that made interaction difficult for Bronson, he remained in top physical shape, claiming to do 172 press-ups in 60 seconds and 94 sit-ups in 30 seconds. He even published a book in 2002, Solitary Fitness, detailing in how to develop a fitness regime with minimal resources and space.

*I'm the king of the press-ups and the sit-ups. I've already said I once did 25 press-ups with two men on my back, and I've squatted with three men on my shoulders! I've been making prison fitness records for as long as I can remember. Show me another man – a man half my age – who can pick up a full-size snooker table. I can.*

# Charlie Bronson

By Subeeshnan 11H

*Show me another guy who can rip out 1,727 press-ups in an hour. I can ... I once went eight years without using weights, then I went into a gym and bench pressed 300lb ten times. I'm 5ft 11in, I weigh 220lb and I feel as strong as I did when I was 21 ... There's something deep inside me that pushes me on. I'm a solitary fitness survivor." - Charles Bronson, 2000.*

Many people in the UK have contradicting views, some thinking that he has learnt his lesson and has reformed from his violent tendencies and some believing that if released he will be more violent due to confinement. In parole Bronson said he is now a "born again artist" and "almost an angel". In a Mirror News poll, 1,864 of people wanted to see him freed, with 748 preferring him to stay behind bars. In my opinion, i believe he should be released as we can see his experience and point of view in prison and learn more about his life. As well as this we may even see Charles Bronson take on his artistic side and change his life.



# Obesity

By Mustafa 10H

Basically put, obesity is a medical problem that many people attribute to leading an unhealthy lifestyle. While this may be true for some individuals, the reasons of obesity are frequently inherited or related to underlying medical conditions and in today's media and among my close friends, there has been much discussion on whether obesity is a societal or personal problem. I won't present 4 PEE paragraphs on the subject, but I do want to first clarify a few points: the word "fat" is not negative, it is an adjective; "plus-size," "heavy," and other adjectives that are like "fat" are not any less harsh, and being overweight does not imply that you are unhealthy or irresponsible.

Obesity is a problem, no matter how you go about it, and that's not to say one can't be comfortable in their own body or that they can't love themselves if they are fat, however (alarmingly) it's estimated in the UK that "around 1 in every 4 adults and around 1 in every 5 children aged 10 to 11 are living with obesity". This is detrimental to the older generation as having excess amounts of body fat can lead to health conditions such as coronary heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Some may say that if you have a BMI of above 30, you should simply lead a healthy lifestyle and that doing so will solve all your problems, this is false – some people are genetically more predisposed to gaining or maintaining weight and society needs to recognise this.

To summarise my opinions in one paragraph would be to do the argument wrong, but for the sake of my article, obesity is both a social and personal problem – socially we should strive to be as accepting of all body types but consecutively we should understand that body positivity is, in both extremities, only applicable if the person is not having physical troubles as a result of personal choices. People are often made to feel that their body shape is not enough for others and even when we say not to care about others' opinions, negative comments do cause a lot of dysmorphia which is a mental issue.

# My Favourite MTV Unplugged Performances

By Samir 10C

## Nirvana at MTV Unplugged

My favourite MTV Unplugged performance of all time is my Nirvana's performance on MTV unplugged in New York in 1993. It is widely considered to be one of the most iconic performances in the history of the show. The performance took place just a few months before the suicide of lead singer Kurt Cobain and truly showcased the bands strip down style and more intimate and acoustic nature as well as displaying Kurt Cobain's emotional vocals. The set list contained many of Nirvana's most popular songs such as 'About a Girl' and 'Come as you are' as well as a long lasting rendition of David Bowie's 'The Man Who Sold the World'. The performance was also recorded and made into an album which remains one Nirvana's most popular works. The night has become legendary due to its intimate atmosphere, with the band sitting on stool in front of a small, candlelit audience.

## Eric Clapton at MTV Unplugged

The legendary guitarist Eric Clapton concert at MTV is held with the highest regard. The performance was also recorded and released as an album where it won multiple Grammys including Album of the Year 1993. Praised for its raw intensity, this event also held a personal value to Eric Clapton: Conor Clapton, his son, had tragically died the year before the concert and Eric performed 'Tears in Heaven' which he had written for his son as a tribute, which has met by a standing ovation. The most notable songs played by Clapton were his famous 'Layla', 'Tears in Heaven' and 'Old Love' as well as blues covers such as 'Before You Accuse Me'.

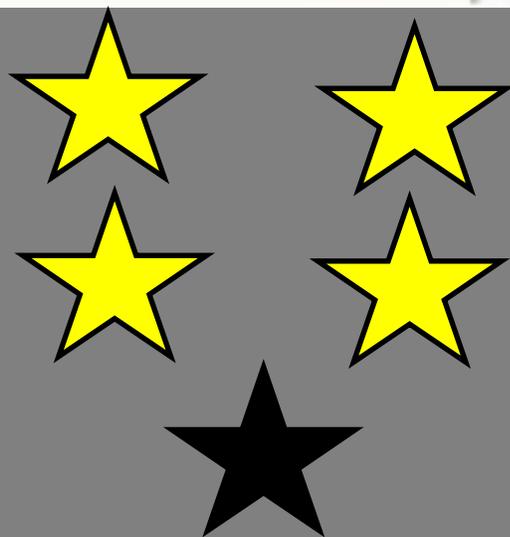
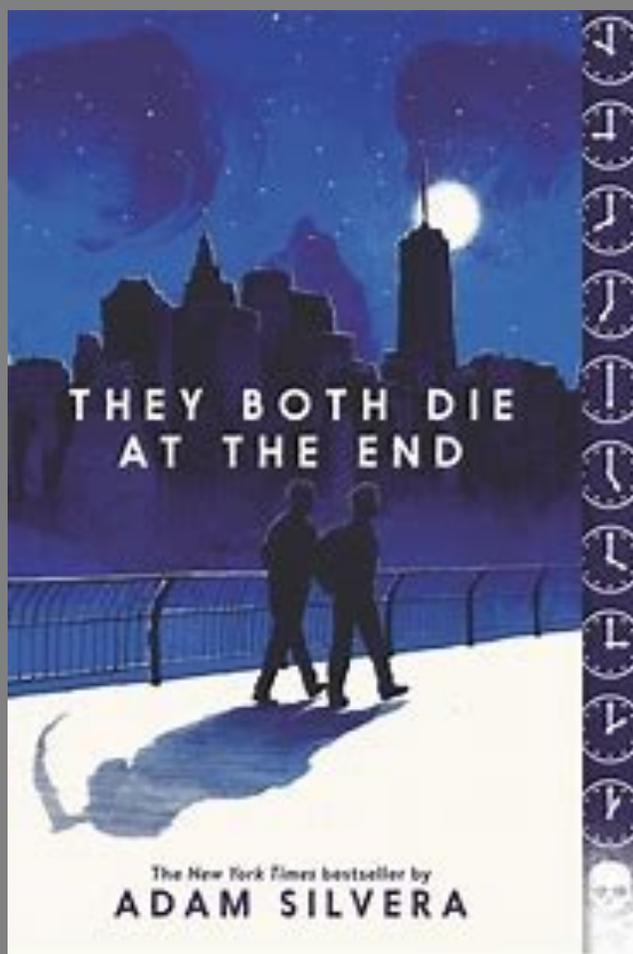
## Jay Z at MTV Unplugged

This performance was truly a ground-breaking moment for Hip-Hop, the first time a rapper had ever been on the show. This moment in 2001, Jay Z demonstrated his lyrical ability and adaptability to adjust to an acoustic setting and truly ascended into a Global Superstar, creating an album that was nominated for Rap Album of the Year at the Grammys. Jay's performance featured Pharrell Williams and the Roots as guests. Additionally the night featured a live band, incorporating elements of different genres such as rock and soul into the set list. Notable songs performed included 'Hard Knock Life', 'Big Pimpin', 'Izzo (H.O.V.A)' and 'Jigga What, Jigga Who'.

# They both die at the end - Book review

By Femi 10C

They Both Die at The End is an interesting title for an interesting and carefully crafted story. The book is a science fiction novel set in dystopian New York. 2 teenagers, Mateo Torrez and Rufus Emeterio are informed by Death-Cast (the defining feature of the dystopia) that they will both die at some point in the next 24 hours. Over the story, their separate paths meet, as they work together to really live their lives before their inevitable demise. The selling point of the book are the themes of mortality and the inescapability of death. The writer asks the question 'Do you really want to know when you die?' There is no objective answer, therefore it is up to the reader to form their own opinion. The element of the story that interested me the most was the use of contrast in the 2 main characters. Rufus and Mateo are foil characters, before AND after they become Deckers. Mateo is an awkward, anxious and isolated teenager; he is a relatable character, however, he lacks the drive to push the story along. Luckily, Rufus is impulsive, motivated and blunt. Despite their contrasting personalities, they complement each other and trigger each other's development. Rufus helps Mateo become more open and take more risks, while Mateo helps Rufus appreciate the little things in life. If I had to suggest anything that could have been improved, Rufus' backstory should have been incorporated into his character better - to prevent the feeling of it being plastered in. Overall, this book perfectly explores the motifs of life, death and friendship, the characters are interesting, and the pacing is well crafted. As a coming-of-age story, I'd recommend They Both Die at The End to people 13 and up. I argue that the book is intended for generally older audiences due to its darker themes. I'd give this novel a 4/5 rating and I also recommend reading it. If you do



# The Nigerian Election

By Adriel 10W

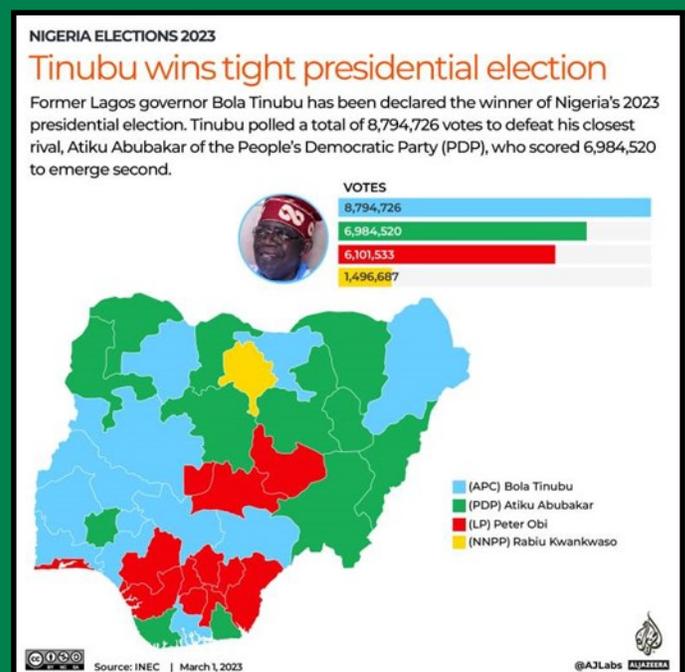
On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2023, Nigeria held their routine general election in order to decide who would take over their current president, Muhammadu Buhari, after he had served an 8-year term. A total of 18 candidates campaigned for the top job, but only three had a realistic chance of winning, according to opinion polls. Those were:

**Bola Ahmed Tinubu:** A 70-year-old member of the All Progressives Congress (APC) government party. He has enormous power and is seen as a political godfather in the south-west region, but he has long been the target of claims of corruption and poor health, both of which he rejects.

**Atiku Abubakar:** A 76-year-old and the candidate for the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the largest opposition party of the APC. He has previously run for president five times, losing each time. He spent most of his career in positions of authority, serving as a senior civil servant, Olusegun Obasanjo's vice president, and a well-known corporate figure. He has been charged with corruption and cronyism, which he rejects, just like Mr. Tinubu.

**Peter Obi:** A 61-year-old who ran for the underdog Labour Party and was tipped to upend the two-party system that has controlled Nigeria since the end of military dictatorship in 1999. Although he was a member of the PDP up until last year, he is viewed as a relatively new face and is incredibly popular among young Nigerians and on social media. From 2006 to 2014, the affluent businessman presided as governor of the south-easterly Anambra State. His backers, known as the "OBIdients" say he is the only candidate with integrity, but his critics argued that a vote for Obi is wasted as he was unlikely to win.

These were the results of the presidential election:



# The Nigerian Election

By Adriel 10W

The general election was notable for its initially high projected turnout and mostly peaceful voting, but it was marred by reports of vote buying, voter intimidation, attacks on polling units in some areas, unpunctual electoral officials, and allegations of outright fraud; the Independent National Electoral Commission officials' failure to upload polling unit results to the INEC result viewing portal, as promised, exacerbating trust issues in the election. Opposition arose as state results began to be announced on February 26<sup>th</sup> at the national collation centre in Abuja, as the data had not yet been uploaded fully in accordance with the law prior to their announcement. These conditions alongside proclamations condemning of INEC from onlookers and common society bunches drove the Abubakar, Obi, and Kwankwaso missions to address and afterward authoritatively reject the reported political decision results by February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Due to fraud and violence, all three main opposition campaigns, as well as some civil society organizations and former President Olusegun Obasanjo, urged the commission to rerun the election. In the meantime, the Tinubu campaign praised the commission and demanded that PDP spokespeople be arrested for "inciting violence." Following the compilation of all state results, INEC Chairman Mahmood Yakubu declared Tinubu the winner early on March 1. Abubakar, Obi, and Kwankwaso responded by rejecting the results and promising to challenge them. Peter Obi claimed on March 2 that he had won the election and would show it, but as of March 11, this has not happened.

# Did you know that there's a tunnel under Ocean Blvd: Lana Del Rey (DYKTTATUOB)

By Ronnie 10H

On the 24th March 2023, Lana Del Rey released her new album 'Did you know that there's a tunnel under Ocean Blvd'. The album, as a whole, is an exploration of her self-identity and aspects of her that we have never heard before; such as details about her family, or even her personal search through different genres in which she has never sung before (e.g. trap). Throughout the album, she makes callbacks to her previous records -- such as her reference to *Venice B\*\*ch on Taco Truck x VB*, her reference to *Norman F\*\*\*ing Rockwell* on the title track, and more. Below, I will briefly describe 4 songs that are my personal favorites from the album.

## A&W

A&W explores how the media portrays women, specifically in America, and the stigma around different topics like the shape of one's body, consent, et cetera. It is split into '2 parts', so to speak, with the first 4 minutes or so being quite heartfelt and emotional and the second half being quite upbeat.



## Sweet

Sweet is a classical love song with a melody that truly satisfies its audience. Though the theme of the song may seem generic, Del Rey places her unique twist on it so that it must be recognised as one of the best on the album.

## Candy Necklace

Candy Necklace is an eerie-style song about tragic love, presenting the topic of romance as haunting. It uses elements of melancholy that were seen consistently throughout one of Lana's old albums, *Ultraviolence* (2014).

## Peppers

Peppers is unarguably within the top 3 of DYKTTATUOB. Featuring Tommy Genesis, the two's voices effortlessly collaborate to allow Lana to explore the trap genre with Genesis' sample from one of her previous songs supporting the track.

Overall, this is arguably Lana's best album in her whole discography. I strongly urge you to go and give it a listen even if you presume you're not into her, or her type of music, as each song is different.

# An Interview with Mr McBeth

## By Edwin 10C

Key Stage Leaders have their work cut out for them. They oversee multiple year groups and are an integral part of the inner workings of schools everywhere. I was grateful to have the chance to interview Mr McBeth, Key Stage 4 Manager. Here's how it went:

### **Why did you choose education?**

*Because I believe that a child's education is their passport to life. Teachers and school leaders have a responsibility to provide this. Teachers prepare all other professions. I always wanted a job where my life would be lived in service to others and I felt that teaching and educating young people was the way forward for me. It's about equipping people for life, and it's about giving them the skills that they will need to succeed once they leave school. Children get one chance at an education, and we cannot afford to get this wrong.*

### **Any hidden talents?**

*I do swimming. I tend to practice roughly 2 or 3 times a week, and in my opinion, I reckon I'm quite a good swimmer.*

### **What qualities do you think are most important for teachers to have?**

*I think, first of all, a genuine interest in young people - a genuine willingness to teach and want the best for them, regardless of their background. I also think the ability to work hard and never give up on a child, and be adaptive; look for different ways to support children. I think also that teachers need to know their subjects inside and out, back to front, and should think carefully about how they communicate that love for their subject to young people. Teachers need a degree of leadership skills too as they need to lead learning in their classrooms and also shape and lead the lives of the young people that they teach. Children deserve the best and we as teachers have a responsibility to deliver this day in day out.*

### **What is your favourite thing about teaching?**

*I do enjoy working with young people. I enjoy teaching them new concepts they've never seen before, and I like seeing them master the content. I like supporting them on their journey to the next step of education. I like hearing them talk about ambitions and helping them to secure them. And I like the interaction in the classroom and finding out what they think and seeing how their thoughts can be further developed. Certainly, one thing I love about Beths is the diversity: I love that we are a very diverse school. I learn from the students and they learn from me. When I look at them, I see them as the next leaders in industry and love knowing that I am helping them to get there.*

# An Interview with Mr McBeth

## By Edwin 10C

### **What do you think are the biggest problems in education today?**

*I think nationally, some schools have struggled to reintegrate students back into school following lockdown and the pandemic. There's always issues with funding. We're expected to do a lot with very little. With the rise in inflation and the rise of the cost of living, it's making schools more expensive to run – more expensive on an already limited budget (although I do not need to worry about this!). If the government want us to deliver a world-class education, then funding for education should be seen as an investment for young people rather than an expenditure.*

And while we're on the topic of hardworking teachers, I'd like to thank all of our teachers and staff for all the work they do. With strikes becoming more and more frequent, it's becoming more apparent that as a country, as a society even, we don't appreciate the work teachers do. Thank you to not only Mr McBeth, but all teachers around the world. Without our teachers and educators, we wouldn't have doctors, lawyers, engineers and all the other jobs that we place such high value in. Thanks, not only from me, but from Beths as a school.



# **BEST OF THE BETHS**

**Thank you for reading this edition of the newsletter!**

**This month, we look into a whole range of topics, from International Women's Day and St Patricks Day to deeper looks into different parts of the performance industry. We hope you loved hearing about this variety of stories, provided by students, for students.**

**Please let us know what you liked about this article and what you would like to see more of in the next one:**

**[msstevens@beths.bexley.sch.uk](mailto:msstevens@beths.bexley.sch.uk)**

**And if you celebrate, have a great Easter! If you don't, have a restful break. See you next term!**

**-Regards from the Newsletter Team**