

BEST OF THE BETHS



THE BEST OF MARCH

BEST OF THE BETHS



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YEAR 8 HOUSE FOOTBALL

FAEQ OJELADE 8B



It is Thursday, the 14th of March in 2024. The day where the debated question would be put to rest “Which house is the best at football in Year 8?” There were only two possible answers - Abbey, the reigning champions, and Wickham, 4th place the previous year.

Now that day, I had other plans, to revise for German in third period. Looking back, I myself am not sure what it is that made me want to witness the matches, but something did. So I embark on a walk to the fields, and a bit far ahead of me is a crowd of people. Yes, a crowd of people crowding a football pitch, where the match between Hurst and Cray for third place is happening.

I don't see much, all I saw from that was Hurst players celebrating making the score-line 2-0 in their favour. Maybe I got carried away in meeting others that were also there; that's likely what made me miss it. It ends 2-0 to Hurst, meaning they won the third place position, so a quick congratulations to them.

At some point in the closing stages of the 3rd place match, the distant sight of (predominantly) red and blue shirts is present. Brampton and Eardley are dueling for 5th place, and by the time I get there, I'm informed that the score-line is how any football match starts: 0-0. And as I spectate for another 10 or so minutes, it stays that way... both sides trying to find the breakthrough, but all attempts were to no avail.



YEAR 8 HOUSE FOOTBALL

FAEQ OJELADE 8B



Football matches as close as those are just like battles of attrition. Both teams kept up the attack and pressure where they could, but regular time (however long it was) was not enough to settle it. It had to go to penalties. At this, I'm like "Oh HELL NO..", reason being Brampton lost the fifth place match on penalties (2-3 p.) a year prior after a 2-2 draw in regulation time with Hurst. This year was actually redemption however, because Adam and Jubreel scoring for Brampton and a series of saves from Saaq ensured 5th place for Brampton.

After celebrating with the Brampton players, I make my way to the deciding match, Abbey vs Wickham. Nobody had found the breakthrough. It was 0-0 the entire time. Maybe a clue to that was me not hearing a roar over at the 5th place game. Then a minute or two later, Abbey win a throw-in near the Wickham box. After it's thrown in and passed to Pamilerin, he hits it to form a medium-paced shot that drifts through to goal. It finds the right side of the net. Abbey go 1-0 up, and in crucial time...

In the remaining minutes, there is more press from Abbey than Wickham, and that nearly results in a 2-0 lead for Abbey. Nate shoots from range, but the Wickham keeper saves. I soon return to B10, sacrificing seeing the end of the match live. Abbey were getting their smiley-face banner from last year's 1-0 triumph (over Eardley) ready to celebrate. I hope they lifted it high, because when that whistle blew, it was confirmed.



YEAR 8 HOUSE FOOTBALL

FAEQ OJELADE 8B

The debated question of “Which house is best at football in Year 8?” had its answer. Abbey were champions of house football again.

So with that, what I would say about the results of that series of house football is that the pecking order may be quite close. Now, with that statement, I could do a few things : i.e. make an excuse for Brampton coming 5th when we have (in my opinion) a very good team, or speaking in general, to name a couple.

Eardley were runners-up last year. Brampton were literally last place. Now, they were in the same match as one another. Maybe this signifies that Brampton have made gains on the silver-medallists from last year, which I would say is a good step forward. Now, Eardley were (obviously) top of EHW then as well. Presently, they are at the bottom. It may be a range of things from Wickham and Hurst stepping up their game more than Eardley did. It could also be that Eardley may have been better than at least one of the other two, but injuries/bookings/whatever else that happened may have plagued their campaign in the lead-up to the last place result. Maybe this shows that you need to be pin-point in your performance not only as an individual, but as a team. If not, then you may be punished (as seen here, big-time).

(TO ALL EARDLEY PEOPLE READING THIS, I AM NOT TRYING TO TAKE INFINITE JABS AT YOU, IT'S REALLY THE BEST EVIDENCE I HAVE TO SUPPORT MY STATEMENT. I AM SINCERELY SORRY IF YOU ARE OFFENDED BY THIS.)

From an Abbey perspective, I think they should really be wary of the state of competition around them and know that it is close out there. However... I will say, they do a very good job at staying on top, and they should be proud of that. Not too proud though, as anything can happen next year. That goal from Pamilerin to win them the title HAS to be the goal of his life, and if it isn't, I'm not sure which one from his collection is.







YEAR 8 HOUSE FOOTBALL

FAEQ OJELADE 8B

With all of that aside, congratulations to Abbey on winning house football for the second year in a row, and a massive well done to everyone that took part (commiserations Wickham, better luck next time, okay?). What will happen next year? God knows, but time will tell. What I know, personally, was that this series of house football was one to remember. (;

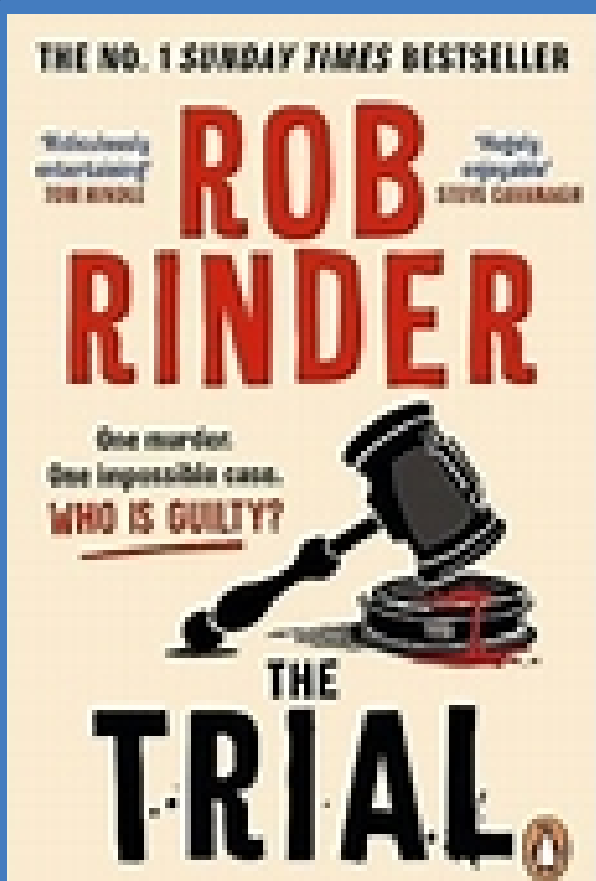
By the way, there is a bonus Word document in conjunction with this article (which I know is extensive).

LINK - https://bethsgrammarschool-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/22b-ojelade_beths_bexley_sch_uk/ESyXjJF2Mc5MvhxKkRZbH5MBuzKuLrgzqSn4TVz76eqv5w?e=pop5EL

<u>Pos.</u>		<u>Y7P</u>		<u>HOUSE</u>
1)	-	[1]		Abbey
2)	+2	[4]		Wickham
3)	+2	[5]		Hurst
4)	-1	[3]		Cray
5)	+1	[6]		Brampton
6)	-4	[2]		Eardley

THE TRIAL BY ROB RINDER

ISAAC SPENCER 10C



This book appeared on my dining room table one March morning. I approached it not knowing what to expect and with an open mind. I'm glad I did, as this book was a pleasant insight into the inner workings of the legal system. It didn't overly complicate anything but still managed to build up an intricate story and set of characters. The author, Robert Rinder is a popular 'TV judge' and barrister who was called to the bar in 2001. He attended pupillage at 2 Paper Buildings and gained a tenancy at 2 Hare Court. The main character of the book, Adam Green's experiences are based on Rinder's own experiences of pupillage and working at the Old Bailey. This gives the book an authentic and believable tone all throughout.

The book opens with the death of D.I. Grant Cliveden's murder. A much-loved detective and national treasure who dies from Botox poisoning – an immediate point of intrigue that has the reader hooked from the very beginning. Throughout the course of the book, we follow trainee barrister, Adam Green, as he tries to get to the bottom of this murder while simultaneously battling for his client: Jimmy Knight, the accused killer of Grant Cliveden.

This builds an interesting and engaging whodunnit which effortlessly goes alongside the courtroom drama. Along the way, Adam makes countless astonishing discoveries about his client, the case, and his own family. The story is made up of many detailed layers that are gradually peeled away. Just when you think you've reached the centre of the mystery, another layer is revealed that blows whatever theory you had completely out of the water. This makes this book an engaging and fun book. I kept finding myself wanting to read more and could hardly put it down towards the end.

However, there are a few negatives. Firstly, there is undeniable sense of repetitiveness that lays in around the middle of the book. The middle in general feels like filler and erratically grasps at any content possible. This content is usually wholly irrelevant to the story and feels tedious to read even though it is the most light-hearted part of the book. Secondly, there are four very similar characters who, although obviously meant for the mystery of the plot, are quite confusing at times and feel clumsy. Finally, the ending is overall quite satisfying, but it lacks all the finality that it could've easily included. The main story line isn't left on a cliffhanger, but the minor details oddly are.

Overall, this is a delightful, short read (around 300 pages) that transports you to a world of late night working, detective work and incomprehensible motives. I would recommend to anyone who likes whodunnits and anyone interested in Law.

THE STAND REVIEW

THOMAS BARRY 10C

Stephen King is one of the most prolific authors of the 20th century, with a massive catalogue of books across his career, many of which have been adapted into iconic films, such as *The Shining*, *IT*, *The Shawshank Redemption* and *Pet Sematary*. While King is best known for his horror novels and has the title 'King of Horror', he's written in a wide range of genres, including fantasy, science fiction and crime. King has spent most of his life living in rural Maine, a fact that has influenced much of his work, with a majority of his novels either being set in Maine or having characters from the state. I think King inserts heart into all of his writing, with even his darkest works like *IT* having themes of trust and friendship. With Stephen King, I feel like I come for the classic horror concepts like vampires, ghosts, and demons, but stay for the rich characters and the close bonds King builds between them.

The Stand, originally published in 1978, is an absolute monster of a book, and King's longest, with my copy reaching a staggering 1325 pages. The book is a modern epic, detailing the events of a post-apocalyptic America, following a viral superflu infection that wipes out over 99% of its population. Soon, the survivors begin to feel the supernatural presence of two opposing forces of good and evil, and around each a new society begins to form, one in Las Vegas, Nevada and the other in Boulder, Colorado. The book tells the stories of many varied characters, involved in the grand struggle between light and dark, including Larry Underwood, a rising pop singer, Frannie Goldsmith, a young pregnant woman, and Nick Andros, a man who is both deaf and mute, as well as many other intriguing characters. *The Stand* has strong religious messages of righteousness and temptation, deeply woven throughout.

While not all of it is particularly interesting or groundbreaking, King manages to prevent *The Stand* from getting boring, through the use of his excellent characters. Characters, who across the book grow and develop into their best and worst selves. For a book focused on an ultimate evil and an ultimate good, *The Stand* is very nuanced, with some of the characters who succumb to temptation remaining very sympathetic. In my experience, the villainous 'Trashcan Man' was one of the characters I rooted for most. I'd say *The Stand* is quite a strange book, with a jarring mix of highly disturbing scenes, as well as sillier aspects, that I personally found quite hard to take seriously. I think 'Trashcan Man' exemplifies this feature of the book, which I wouldn't necessarily call an issue. The book is full of reoccurring phrases and mantras that continually remind you of what different characters are about, and what their central motivations are.

I think that when *The Stand* gets good it gets amazing, and by the end you really feel for the characters as if you know them. One of my favourite parts of the book was towards the end, once its main conflict had subsided, and although the great tension of the plot had been lifted, the characters still had more to suffer through together. I think overall, *The Stand* might be my favourite Stephen King book I've read, but *Salem's Lot*, another that is similarly long with a large cast of characters, also comes close. If I have one main criticism of the book it's that it felt at parts unfocused and could have together in the end, in a way that reflecting its key themes more. I've been reading *The Stand* for so long. It's such a long book and I don't read much. It feels weird now that I've finally finished.



UCL QUARTER FINALS

OLUWANIFEMI AJIBOLA 10A

The anticipation was high as the 2023 - 2024 UEFA Champions League Quarter Finals draw took place on Friday, March 15th, 2024. The draw yielded thrilling matchups that promise to deliver Top Quality football action. Many of them feature previous UCL winners; 3 of the last 4 winners of the prestigious title are present in the quarter finals!

So with that being said, mark your calendars for the following fixtures:



Tuesday 9th April 20:00PM:
(2nd Leg 8 days later)



Arsenal vs Bayern Munich

- Arsenal have appeared in the Finals 1 time (Loss)
- Bayern have 7 Finals wins and 5 losses



Wednesday 10th April 20:00PM:
(2nd Leg 6 days later)



PSG vs Barcelona

- PSG have appeared in the Finals 1 time (Loss)
- Barcelona have 5 Finals wins and 3 losses



Real Madrid vs Man City

- Real Madrid have 14 Finals wins (Most in league history) and 3 losses
- Man City have 1 Finals win (From 2023) and 1 loss



Atletico Madrid vs Dortmund

- Atletico Madrid have appeared in the Finals 4 times (all losses)
- Dortmund have 1 Finals win and 1 loss



On Saturday 1st June, the UEFA Champions League Finals are set to take place in the iconic city of London, England. Football fans from around the world will gather to witness the 69th season of the competition.

SORA AI

TAY MCKEOWN 10B

While AI image generation itself is a more recent development with the first rudimentary AI only being made in the 50s with rudimentary checkers and chess engines and AI image generators only being made in the 1970s, there is no doubt that in recent years AI has exploded in popularity with AI chatbots such as ChatGPT becoming extremely widespread to the point that you won't go a week without seeing someone using it.

Now, the company behind ChatGPT (OpenAI) has made a breakthrough in AI video generation, with what previously were completely unintelligible now being on the level that you can mistake them for real photos.



AN IMAGE FROM A VIDEO GENERATED BY SORA



AN IMAGE FROM A VIDEO GENERATED BY STABLE DIFFUSION

The reason this is such a huge achievement is because of how AI works. AI itself has no idea how the different objects in an image interact, so an AI being able to convincingly replicate reality is huge.

However, this level of accuracy does raise some questions about the future of copyright laws. Already this year, we have seen Pocketpair Studios releasing a game remarkably similar to "Pokémon", and if studios are already getting away with making extremely similar designs, what will happen when generating assets becomes as easy as writing a prompt?

This level of accuracy is not without flaws though.

Sora often struggles with accurate physics, as well as often duplicating bodies in crowded scenes.

FA SUPPORTS NEW ENGLAND KIT DESIGN



ANKUR SINGH 10C

The FA has defended the St George's Cross design on its new England kit, saying "it is not the first time" different colours have been used.

The body said it understood what the flag "means to our fans", and it will be "displayed prominently at Wembley tomorrow - as it always is".

Nike said its design was to celebrate the 1966 World Cup team, adding it was "never our intention to offend".

Both the Prime Minister and Labour leader criticised the design.

A row over the 2024 home kit - which costs up to £124.99 for adults and £119.99 for children - erupted on Thursday, with politicians and sports figures weighing in on the topic.

Speaking to reporters, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said he preferred the original and the national flag was a "source of pride" and identity.

"When it comes to our national flags, we shouldn't mess with them because they're a source of pride, identity, who we are, and they're perfect as they are," Mr Sunak said.

Meanwhile, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer told The Sun the "flag is used by everybody, it is a unifier, it doesn't need to be changed".



FA SUPPORTS NEW ENGLAND KIT DESIGN

ANKUR SINGH 10C

In a statement, Nike said: "We have been a proud partner of the FA since 2012 and understand the significance and importance of the St George's Cross and it was never our intention to offend, given what it means to England fans.

"Together with the FA, the intention was to celebrate the heroes of 1966 and their achievements.

"The trim on the cuffs takes its cues from the training gear worn by England's 1966 heroes, with a gradient of blues and reds topped with purple. The same colours also feature an interpretation of the flag on the back of the collar."

England's senior team, captained by Bayern Munich's Harry Kane, will wear the kit for the first time on Saturday, when the team take on Brazil in a friendly at Wembley Stadium.

Midfielder Declan Rice, as well as Lioness striker Alessia Russo, both told England Football they rated the new kit as 10 out of 10.



ONE DAY

RONNIE PARSONS 11H

'One Day' is a newly-released Netflix series based upon the novel of the same name, revolving around characters Emma Morley & Dexter Mayhew and their on-and-off relationship that spans over many decades. There is 1 season - of which contains 14 episodes - and each episode is usually dedicated to one year, spanning from 1988 at the start to 2007 by the end. Before progressing any further, please do note that this article will contain spoilers; so, if this plot does interest you, I advise you to stop, go and watch the show, then come back once you have finished.

To be brutally honest, the first few episodes of One Day did not entirely catch me. It was initially presented as a love story much like any other presented in media and television, and, speaking quite frankly, a trope that I am too very much bored of. However, looking back on it now, I have to admit that I was entirely wrong. The first few episodes, despite their lack of 'action', per say, were the building blocks for a story that I - and I am sure many others, too - could not have seen coming.

The thing that kept me going through the first few episodes was the character of Emma Morley. Despite how slow the plot seemed at first, and how uninterested I was with the majority of the characters, Emma always stood out. She was funny, witty, honest, smart, intelligent, and ultimately, kind. Truly, she was someone that anyone would be lucky to have in their lives. Though it may sound ridiculous, I found that I attached myself to her character throughout the progression of the show.

However, as for the other main character - Dexter Mayhew - my opinions were entirely different. For the majority of the show (I would say around 90%), I viewed him as nothing more than a self-serving, self-absorbed, greedy, irritating & pretentious man that only wanted Emma when it fit him and his needs. The scene within Episode 7 - in which he is at a restaurant with Emma and begins to discredit her teaching capabilities and ambitions - whole-heartedly triggered a sense of fight-or-flight within me. Honestly, I do have to give props to Leo Woodall for portraying a character so well that such anger was inspired in me.

Though, despite all of this, everything changed within the last episode: Emma Morley died. Primarily, it ruined me. I am not normally the first one to admit it, and I am, in actuality, usually a very large critic of such popular shows, but Episode 14 brought me to a state I do not even wish to speak about, let alone repeat. The way in which her death was dealt with by surrounding characters, such as Dexter, made me so upset to the point that any pre-existing feelings I had towards them totally disappeared; it was ultimate and whole sadness.

ONE DAY

RONNIE PARSONS 11H

I do believe what really 'hit home' for me was the prior attachment to Emma that I have spoken about. The suddenness of her death - the way Dexter roamed the rooms they once formed memories in - the references to the time that the two had robbed from them - Arthur's Seat, the death day quote, the chasing after Emma, the party; everything, truthfully, amplified her death to a point that was wildly embarrassing for me.

So, overall, here's my last set of opinions having watched the entire show. Emma Morley stands as one of my favourite fictional characters of all time, and I say that with the utmost confidence. Something about her - various somethings about her, actually - I found myself resonating with, and she was an undeniably likeable character. With this, contrary to my prior words, I found myself liking Dexter by the end of the show, too. What he had to go through during the last episode is a type of pain - torture, moreso - that I could not wish on my worst enemy. He was a very strong individual that ended up earning my respect and empathy as a result.

This would not be a complete review if I did not mention some of my favourite side characters, either - ones of whom did also contribute to the plot, even if their impact was small. Tilly, for her humour and loyalty to Emma - Graham, for his suddenness and inappropriately-timed words - and Sylvie, for her ultimate kindness; despite what was implied during the first few episodes in which she was presented. And no, I will not be mentioning Ian. Anyone who watched the series can understand why, I'm sure.

Overall, if you have watched this show, I would like to apologise on behalf of the screenwriters and directors. No show should be permitted to prompt such feelings of sadness. However, on a more serious note, I do hope you enjoyed it, and I think the series does communicate a wider message: value all the time that you have. If you love someone, tell them - you do not know if they'll be here tomorrow.



THE 6 NATIONS



MICHAEL SHIELDON 10W

As the Six Nations has just concluded on the 16th of March 2024, here is a round up of the always amazing tournament after another year. The last 5 tournaments have seen 4 different winners, England in 2020, Wales in 2021, France in 2022 and Ireland in 2023 and this years tournament in 2024.

This is one of the great things about this tournament: as it only has 6 teams (England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, France and Italy), it's a pleasant surprise to see a wide variety of teams win most years, although saying this, the country many question about the inclusion of in the tournament, Italy, have never actually won the 6 nations.

This year was rather one sided. Ireland, who are currently one of, if not the best in the world right now, had swept the park, winning by 5 points, which may not be a huge point gap but was accompanied by a point difference of 84, when second place France only had a point difference of 6.

The tournament didn't go so well for last place Wales who only, having been champions 3 tournaments prior, had the poor record of 5 losses, 0 wins and 0 draws, only getting points for the 4 try bonus which means if you score 4 trys in a singular game then you get one extra, or in Wales case, one solitary point.

Now looking forward to next years competition, assuming no serious team injuries, it's looking like another win for Ireland as they have a much more all round squad with much more squad depth than the other competitors, with a lot of youth talent. England seem like they have a great chance every year but with the absence of the main man Owen Farrell, it's looking like more of the same.



	Team	W	L	D	Pts
1	Ireland	4	1	0	20
2	France	3	1	1	15
3	England	3	2	0	14
4	Scotland	2	3	0	12
5	Italy	2	2	1	11
6	Wales	0	5	0	4

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR EASTON

EDWIN DE-BEN ROCKSON 11C

Roses are red.
Storm clouds are grey.
The 21st of March,
was World Poetry Day!

The Interviewee for this month,
who you'll have guessed, no doubt,
is our very own Dr Easton!
Here's what we spoke about:



What inspired you to pursue poetry?

First of all, it was my love of poetry and how much I've read and taught it over the years. That's the main thing. Also, through teaching students, and the interesting and perceptive things they say. It comes from my career. It also comes from my love of other types of culture – music particularly inspires my work, and also films and paintings. But the specific thing that started me writing poetry was that my niece was born 6 years ago, and the first poem was about her, which led to all the other poems.

What is your favourite book?

I'm going to say the poetry of W.B. Yeats – William Butler Yeats. He is the poet who inspired me the most. My love of poetry began as school because I studied his work for A-level. Without Yeats, I would not have become a poet.

What was it like obtaining your PhD?



It was actually quite thrilling to write my own literary criticism. It was hard work, but stimulating and challenging. Going to the British Library, doing research for hours, just being with my books – I loved it.

What is one thing you recommend everyone does at least once?

Go and see a live concert by your favourite band / artist / performer. I worry that, because of Covid and ticket prices, young people aren't doing that as much as my generation did, and it's just about the most exciting thing you can experience.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR EASTON

EDWIN DE-BEN ROCKSON

Why do you think English is important in society?

Lots of reasons. First, it is the foundation of all other subjects – even Maths and Science need literacy skills. That's the straightforward reason, but in a more profound way, English Language and Literature are an art form, and the arts are a fundamental part of what makes us human. The arts and humanities are under threat in universities and in the wider culture due to cuts in funding, but it's vital that they are allowed to thrive; English is absolutely essential to that. For all its faults, this country has always excelled at the cultural and creative industries – they are central to our character. It's very important that this is not lost.

Buttercups are yellow.
Violets are blue.
Thank you, Dr Easton,
for this month's interview!

Learn to appreciate the Arts,
Music, Theatre, Painting.
Without them, there'd be no movies
to watch, or songs to sing.

With that in mind,
lets thank our English teachers.
Our Shakespearean schoolers,
and poetry preachers!



BEST OF THE BETHS



A Note of Thanks

Thank you for reading this edition of the newsletter!

For the month of March, we looked at some of the biggest sporting competitions, both globally and within Beths. With over 1000 pages of literature and screenplay being analysed in this publication, this edition perfectly encapsulates the literary spirit that March embodies, with its range of celebrations from World Book Day on the 7th to World Poetry Day in the 21st!

With that said, I'd like to wish my fellow Year 11 students good luck for the upcoming GCSEs. With just under 6 weeks remaining, they're fast approaching! And don't forget to check out the next edition of the Newsletter!

-Regards from the Best of the Beths Newsletter team.