



# ILLUSTRATOR 11

*May 2022*

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# Editor's Message

Although this has been a short half term, it feels like so much has been packed in! We wish all year 11, 13 and BTEC students good luck with their exams, and hope that although you will all be studying, make sure to rest and have time for yourself over half term.

We all hope that you enjoyed the debate last Wednesday. It was very well received and we hope to hold another in the near future so stay tuned...

We would like to encourage as many people as possible to get involved in committees, and have your say in the Sixth Form. For anyone who wants to know more about the committees, please contact any one of the head students who feature later in this edition.

We also welcome anyone who would like to write an article for us for future editions, so please contact us for more information. We are incredibly grateful for any contributions.

If you are celebrating the Queen's Jubilee then we hope you enjoy the celebrations. 

Finally, we hope that you enjoy perusing the eleventh edition of the Illustrator. Have a great half term and see you in a week's time for the final stretch of this very eventful academic year.

Happy reading!

**Davit, Megan, Amy, and Callum**



# Mr Alexander's Message

Well I cannot quite believe that we are nearly in June!

The Year 13 students had their Leavers' Assembly last week, which was emotional, with lovely speeches from both the tutors and their tutees with an exceptional saxophone performance from Kayleigh!

We will miss you and Good Luck!

Ironically, the Leavers' assembly is actually the start of the formal examination period, and our Year 13s are heavily involved in their final exams at TGS. Our Year 12 BTEC students are also completing their exams as well.

Congratulations to the new Head Students who have been appointed from Year 12, and are already organising a variety of activities to get involved with!

One event that the Sixth Form team have organised is the Higher Education Day on Tuesday 14th June, when all of our Year 12 students get the opportunity to see what university life and apprenticeships are all about, as well as attending the evening event where our alumni and parents give their experiences beyond TGS Sixth Form.

Our forthcoming Sixth Form Taster Day is on Wednesday 29th June and will be an opportunity for potentially 160 Year 11 students to experience what it is like to be a sixth form student for the day - exciting!

As always, it's a busy and demanding time, so remember to take time to be kind to yourself, get some proper sleep and look out for one another!

Wishing you a brilliant half term and looking forward to seeing you on your return!

**Mr Alexander**





# Head Students' Messages

"Being an external student to TGS, I want my role to represent that anything can be achieved in a short period of time with the right motivation and ambition. I would like to be known as someone who students can go to for advice or guidance on what they can do to help themselves and to help others, whether it be in school or in the community."

**Alana Hutchinson**

"As a student at TGS for 6 years, it is an honour to be one of the head students for the next year. During the coming year, I would like to increase the environmental awareness of the school, whilst also improving the student experience from an academic perspective."

**Megan Turner**



"I hope my time as head student will ensure every student regardless of their individualities get the education and support they deserve. We should all be entitled to a safe, positive environment surrounded by trustworthy and honest people."

**Alanah Reeve**

"My goal is to make sure that students feel safe and comfortable at school. I want them to feel like school is not just a place for academics, but a place to be supported emotionally - from the moment they arrive, and throughout their time at TGS. I'd like to support the school in further steps to equality and awareness."

**Ellen Dreau**



"I aim to improve the students' voice, increase connections in the local community and allow every student to have the opportunity to make a difference in TGS."

**Olli Race**

"Over the next year, I want to deliver the objectives set out by the Head Students to the pupils of this school, including working towards a better school environment which will lead to an improvement in the experience for the pupils and ultimately a better work ethic, as well as raising the public profile of the school."

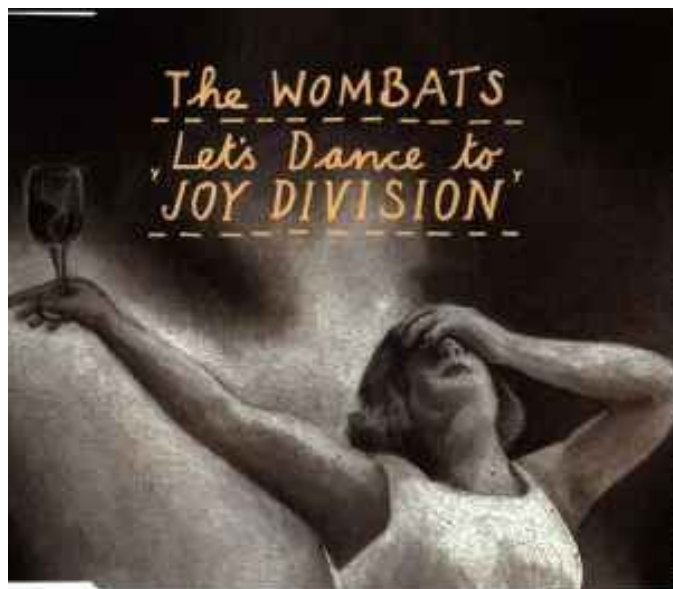
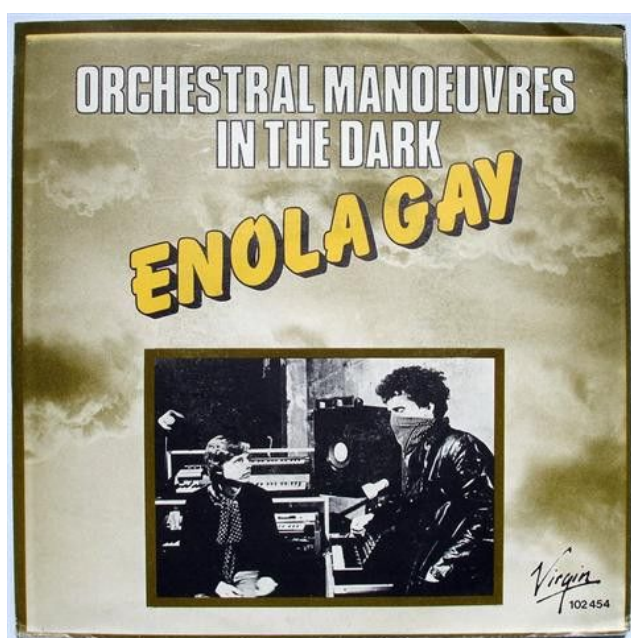
**Alex Mayles**

# First, Last and Everything

We interviewed Mr Bennett and the school chaplain Ian Copeman about their favourite music: the first song they bought, the last song they listened to, and the song they always go back to

## ***What was the first song/album that you bought?***

Enola Gay by Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark was released as a single in 1980. A synth driven song that made you want to dance. Yet it was a song that was asking questions about the first use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in Japan in WW2. I don't think most people realised that at the time! Enola Gay was the name of the plane that dropped the bomb, named after the pilot's mother! The record was bought at either HMV or Woolworths.



## ***What was the last song that you listened to?***

Let's dance to Joy Division by The Wombats from 2009. There is the irony and fun of an upbeat song written about a famous sad song called Love will Tear us Apart by Joy Division from 1980. If something has gone wrong it just cheers you up.

## ***What was the last song that you listened to?***

As I am writing this, I came across Interstellar by MiG 15, a young Liverpool band producing Indie electro pop. Now off to find some more of their songs on You Tube.

***What was the first song/album that you bought?***

I grew up in the 1960's and into the 1970's and pinched my big sister's records! Everything was vinyl then, either an L.P. (that is a long playing record with multiple tracks on it) or singles (which had an A and B side). That's the history lesson over! So I had a choice of groups like the Beatles, The Kinks, The Moody Blues and so on. It's the silly tracks that stick in my mind like 'I was born under a wandering star' from the film Paint Your Wagon and sung, in the loosest possible way, by the actor Lee Marvin. That was 1969 I think, and it reached number 1 in the charts. Then the comedy of the era beckoned with reboots of the Goon Show and the wonderful 'Ying Tong Song' with the B side of 'I'm walking backwards to Christmas'. Then the Monty Python records of course...

I tried to grow up a bit in the 1970's and finally got round to buying Tubular Bells by Mike Oldfield, brilliant.

I liked the '70's with the comedy records, glam rock, prog rock, punk, new romantics, reggae, ska, two tone, ooh mustn't forget Motown, it may be the decade style forgot but it had an eclectic mix of music styles.

***What was the last song that you listened to?***

The last song I listened to was played on my laptop and it was Simon and Garfunkel's 'Sound of Silence' which has the line 'Hello darkness my old friend...' which, believe it or not, is from

the Book of Psalms in the Bible. There, useless bit of information for you. I like a lot of Paul Simon's work and have several CD's of his. When I say of his, I mean I bought them not pinched them from him....

***What was the last song that you listened to?***

That's hard. There are a number of Christian worship songs that have a deep and profound meaning to me that I keep returning to, from hymns ancient and mouldy to very recent stuff that makes my heart leap and I want to sing and dance along with. One such song is 'Your love never fails, never gives up, never runs out on me [Higher than the mountains that I face]'. Sublime. I suppose my all time favourite though is Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony the Choral. He was completely deaf, yet the music is full of life, joy, and hope. My spirit is raised every time I hear it. Definitely one to be sung in the shower!





# Exploring the UK

During lockdown, many people could not travel outside of the UK, this led people to discovering the natural beauty that exists here, as opposed to a flight away. Some of the most picturesque places I have visited have been around this country, so here are two of the popular cities which I have been to if you want to get away, without the hassle or expense of an overseas trip.

## Bath

Bath boasts some of the most elegant Georgian architecture which makes it a popular place to visit, the most recognisable of its attractions being the Roman baths. These house one of the great religious spas of the ancient world where Romans would come to bathe in the waters of the natural thermal springs as well as worship the temple of the goddess Sulis Minerva. As well as the baths and springs themselves, you can also see the magnificent Victorian reception hall with an elegant domed ceiling. The terrace which you can walk around to get a more extensive overhead view of the baths is lined with Victorian statues dating back to 1894 depicting Roman Emperors. The museum within the baths is filled with models of the temples from the town of Aquae Sulis, as well as film projections of the types of people who used to live there so many years ago. As well as seeing what it would be like to experience life in these times, you can look at the typical material possessions that these people would have had including a collection of over 17,000 Roman coins.



To get even more of a comprehensive idea of the lives of the people who lived in Bath in the past, you can visit the fashion museum which displays a history of fashion in 100 objects. It celebrates fashion from the 1600s to the present day and allows you to see how style has progressed over time. Some of the items include Regency gowns from the time of Jane Austen, contrasted with modern pieces from Christian Dior.

The Royal Crescent is an interesting sight to see whilst in Bath, a row of 30 terraced houses winding around the city. These houses were built between 1767 and 1774 and are some of the greatest examples of Georgian architecture to exist in the UK. Other notable places to visit include Mary Shelly's House of Frankenstein, the Jane Austen centre and Pulteney Bridge.

# York

Visit the Shambles, a Medieval street, the buildings of which have still retained the same traditional architecture but with renovations to appeal to modern visitors. This street now houses boutiques, a selection of cafes and several other unique shops, the cobbled streets serving as a reminder of all of the history that exists here. It is also said that this area was used as inspiration for Diagon Alley from the Harry Potter films. For those interested in admiring the gothic architecture, it is difficult to miss the impressive Medieval Cathedral- York Minster- which has been labelled one of the worlds most magnificent Cathedrals. The city walls encircle York and consist of 2 miles of masonry built mainly in the 13th century. They provide a great elevated view over the city, and along the walk you can also see the Museum Gardens which has the remains of a Roman Fortress Wall and tower, complete with medieval stonework.



There is an attraction for almost everyone from the National Railway Museum and JORVIK viking centre to the York Dungeons if you want a contrast to the rest of your quaint and peaceful visit. York also has a 4000 year history with chocolate, holding an interactive tour where you can find out about this history and experiment with chocolate yourself.



As well as these places being great destinations to visit, they are also more convenient and can enable a more easily accessible trip which can be made spontaneously. You can also know that you have benefited your own country's economy and reduced your carbon footprint with air travel being one of the biggest contributors to climate change.

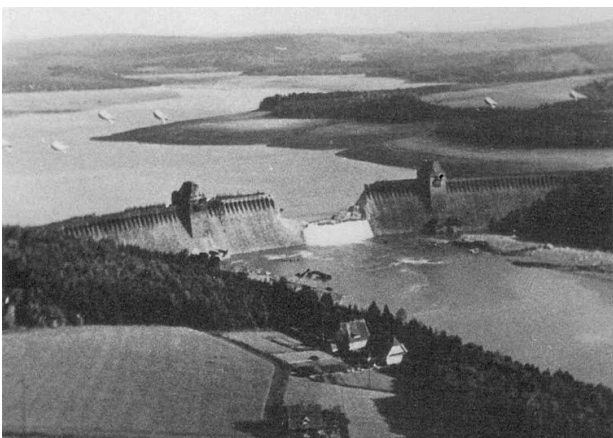
By Amy Allitt



# Historical Events This Half Term

Exploring the historical events that have happened on the dates of this half term from the 25 April to 27 May

Operation Chastise was an attack on German dams by 617 Squadron, a group Lancasters also known as the Dambusters. Led by Commander Guy Gibson, on the night of 16 and 17 May 1943, the Mohne and Eder dams were destroyed by "bouncing bombs", developed by Barnes Wallis, an engineer who invented a bomb which could skim over water surfaces, rather than explode on first impact. The bombing raid caused significant flooding in the Ruhr valley, as well as destroying hydroelectric power plants, mines and factories. The raid led to the deaths of 1600 civilians, with the majority of those forced labourers from the USSR in Germany, with RAF losses of 53 airmen, 3 captured by German forces, and 8 aircraft destroyed.



Anne Boleyn, the former Queen of England, was executed by a French swordsman on 19 May, 1536, following her conviction for adultery, incest and treason on 15 May by a unanimous jury.

Just 11 days later, Henry VIII married his third wife Jane Seymour.

1 May is a public holiday in some regions, though the history of celebrations in May dates back earlier. The first day of summer dates back to the Roman festival of Flora, *Floralia* celebrated every three years during May. More recent connotations of the celebration link it to communism, which celebrated International Workers Day on what once was May Day.



Oscar Wilde, an Irish poet and playwright, was convicted of "gross indecency" on the 25 May 1895, and was sentenced to 2 years hard labour, due to his same-sex relationships. In 2017 Wilde, among 50 000 men, was pardoned for his conviction under the "Alan Turing Law".

On 8 May, 1429, Joan of Arc leads troops of the Dauphin to victory against the British at Orleans.





Following the surrender by the German leader Donitz on 7 May, 1945, scenes of jubilation could be witnessed across the world the following day. London was packed with crowds, especially outside Buckingham Palace, where the Royal family and Prime Minister Winston Churchill waved from a balcony, being met with cheering and singing. In France, monuments were lit up once again, and in Belgium, the “all clear” air raid siren was sounded. In Iraq, a five day holiday was declared in order to celebrate the end of the fighting in Europe. However, not all felt the same joy, as the USA, Britain, and Australia, among others were still at war with Japan in the Pacific. This would continue until 2 September, following the detonations of the atomic bombs over Nagasaki and Hiroshima, ending WW2 after 6 years of conflict.

On 6 May 1954, Roger Bannister became the first person to run a sub-four minute mile at Iffley Road Track in Oxford. Although his record lasted for just 46 days, on the 50th anniversary of his achievement a 50p piece was released commemorating the event.



The Falklands war was a conflict between Argentina and Britain over sovereignty of the Falklands islands from April to June in 1982. Following Argentine occupation of the island in April, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher sent the navy and British troops to retake the islands as part of Operation Corporate. Following a series of British losses in April and early May, the first settlement to be retaken was Goose Green on 28 and 29 May. On 14 June, Argentinian forces surrendered after 907 deaths and 74 days of fighting, though the dispute over the Falklands remains unresolved.



5 May, 1821, French military leader Napoleon Bonaparte died whilst living in exile on St Helena, a British Island in the South Atlantic Ocean, though his cause of death has long been debated. At the time, it was believed that he had died of stomach cancer, though modern historians have put forward the idea that he could have been killed by arsenic poisoning, which was used at the time due to the inability to detect it when administered over long periods of time. However, arsenic was also used widely during the late 18th and early 19th century in glues, dyes, and even wallpaper, so his cause of death will remain a mystery.

# A World Without Humans



Scientists say that the world's human population represents just 0.01% of all living things yet has caused the loss of 83% of all wild mammals and half of plants. With this alarming statistic, it is only natural to have moments in which we contemplate the typical existential question of why, out of the overwhelming possibilities of our existence, we happened to be created. With the seeming insignificance of our creation in the grand scheme of the world, comes the equally frightening but opposing idea of how swiftly that existence can be taken away. This leads me to wondering, how different would the world be if none of us had been created?

If the whole concept of a human had never been formulated, if the collection of atoms that make up our physical being would never have come to create what we are today. The same exact basis of a world in every other way, but with the one exception of people like you and me, not being here.

The effect that humans have had on the planet is an extensive one, whether this overall impact would be considered a positive or negative one is difficult to measure, dependent on whose perspective you see this from. The truth is, it's impossible to say what the world would really look like, without actually seeing it play out. As we can tell from the seeming impossibility of statistics about our own existence, any matter of minute alteration could cause the earth to have a completely different formation, spiralling an unimaginably complex chain of events.

The way that humans have evidently contributed to the decline in nature due to our own self-serving desires, raises the question of whether we had not been here then would the world be an abundantly more wild, environmentally plentiful place?





Estimations suggest that the extinction rate on earth is more than 100 times what it would be without humans. This is unsurprising given the observable damage that we are inflicting on the earth with almost every action that we take from more explicit habitat destruction to the more concealed impact of just sourcing and consuming palm oil.

Without humans, scientists have determined that the world might look something like the African Serengeti all across the world, with large mammals roaming a more open landscape. There would not be the synthetically constructed, fabricated landscape that characterises the urban sprawl and rapid expansion of largely concrete towns and cities that are consistently assembled.

Though there would not be some of the modern inventions which make life so much more convenient, the living species that would exist on the planet would have adapted as we did before we became indulgent and superficial, so would have an instinctive intelligence encompassing all necessary survival skills. What have humans really contributed to the world, other than creating things that benefit them only? Nature exists on its own, we have been more of a hindrance than a help to animals, disrupting their system of natural selection by killing whatever we please. We even keep some of these animals in containment, for our own entertainment, watching them through a glass prison as if they deserve to serve us with a few hours of enjoyment.



We regularly prioritise ourselves over all other aspects of life, seeing ourselves as superior, followed by those closest to us genetically, with what we see as the insignificant species below us. All this considered, surely life would be better off without us.



This being said, we are here now, and arguably there was a reason for this, perhaps we will benefit the planet in some greater way many years from now when we have truly recognised the error of our ways. However, for now, it seems like our existence has little real value for anything that exists beyond our species, and consequent protective bubble of a materialistic world.

**By Amy Allitt**



# Book Reviews

**Review:**

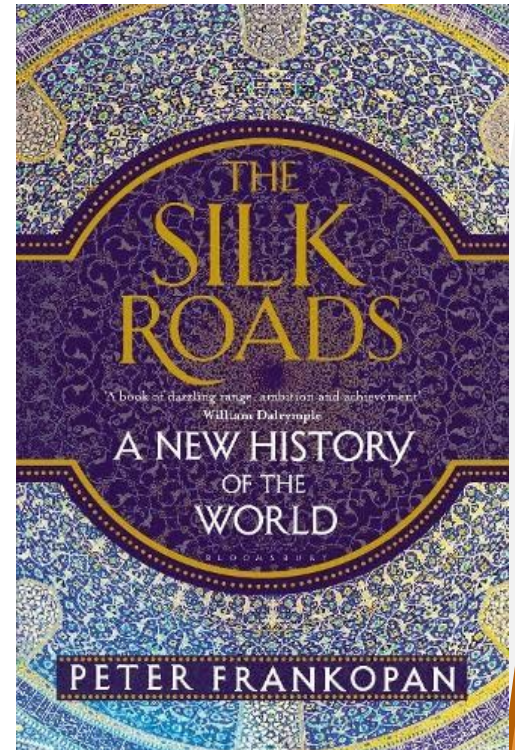
*The Silk Roads* is a non-fiction book that explores trade routes that connected Europe, Asia and Africa before the Romans, all the way up to the present day. It looks at the roads chronologically, as well as thematically, charting changes in religion, trade, conflict, and empire over time and space. The book gives the reader a sense of the vast connections between countries that have always existed, challenging preconceptions of a static world pre-globalisation and mechanisation. It most significantly shifts the centre of the world from Europe in the West, towards the Middle East, which used to be the centre of trade, where many religions developed and was a site of splendour, as many showed off their wealth through architecture, and knowledge. *The Silk Roads* also looks at the re-emerging significance of the Middle East today due to the importance of oil and the ongoing conflicts of religion and instability that occurs there.

**Title:** The Silk Roads  
(pub. 2015)

**Author:** Peter Frankopan

**Genre:** Non-fiction

**Relevant subjects:**  
History, Geography,  
Classics, Philosophy  
& Ethics



**Rating:**





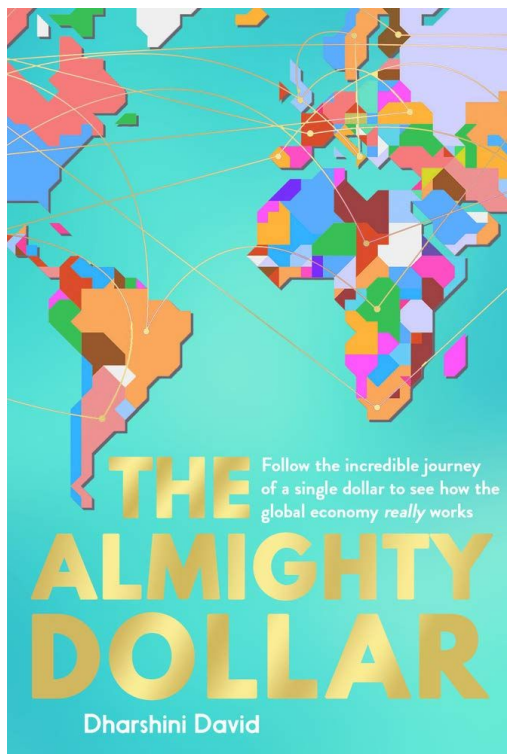
Each Half Term, Megan and Callum will be reviewing books that can be found in the Sixth Form Library, an excellent resource for further reading located just opposite G5. We would highly encourage budding readers to have a look round, the contents are perfectly curated for expanding subject knowledge.

**Title:** The Almighty Dollar (pub. 2018)

**Author:** Dharshini David

**Genre:** Non-fiction

**Relevant subjects:**  
Economics, Geography



**Review:**

The Almighty Dollar follows “the incredible journey of a single dollar” to illustrate in engaging fashion the intricacies of the global economy. This book takes you on a journey quite unlike anything else I’ve ever read: it starts with a single dollar being spent in a Walmart in the USA, and follows its cross-border adventure through China’s massive manufacturing plants, Nigeria’s industrialising economy, India’s expansive farms, Iraq’s oil fields, Russia’s arms trade, Germany’s housing market, and the UK’s financial services before returning to where it began. I was hooked from the beginning by David’s succinct explanations and analogies, and have realised just how fragile the balance of power in our world is.

**Rating:**



# The Battle Which Forged a Nation

26th of May, 451AD. Three hundred thousand Sassanid Persian soldiers amass on the barren plain, their war-elephants shifting restlessly under the weight of their metal armour and archer-towers. Opposite them gather a much smaller force, some noble, most peasants. Ordinarily, this should have been an easy win. Yet the soldiers facing the Sasanians are fierce, and they are desperate. For these are the men and women of Armenia, who have come to fight for their right to practise Christianity in their country.

Armenia at the time was under the control of the Sassanid empire, who occupied vast swathes of land in the Middle East including present-day Iran and Iraq. Compared to most of the other Sasanian-occupied regions, the Armenians enjoyed relative peace and freedom, being allowed to practise their Christianity with only moderate Sasanian resistance. However, when a new king ascended the throne of Sasanian, Yazdegerd II, things took a turn for the worse. The new king was not tolerant of any religions other than Zoroastrianism, a Persian belief system which worships the fire and sun. Although partly fuelled by religious intent, this move also proved to have a deeper political motivation when it came to Armenia.

Armenia was the first nation to convert to Christianity, in 301AD. This

meant an inevitable link with 'Church headquarters' in Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire (later the Byzantine Empire). This posed a serious threat to Yazdegerd because of a long underlying conflict. Ever since 53BC, the Romans and Persians had been at odds, locked in what some historians call a 400-year war. Therefore for one of their own sub-states to be so close to Rome was a big problem for the Sasanians, and they sought to remove this threat by removing Christianity, which kept the link alive.

The Armenians on the whole did not take lightly to this. Although there were some who suggested that yielding to the Sasanian demands would be best, many more were firm in their resolve to never give up their faith. In the end they made their decision:

"If you leave us to our belief, we will here on earth choose no other lord in your place, and in heaven choose no other God in place of Jesus Christ, for there is no other God but him. But should you require anything beyond this great testimony, here we are; our bodies are in your hands, do with them as you please. Tortures from you, submission from us; the sword is yours, and here are our necks."







**A mural depicting the battle, by  
Grigor Khanjyan**

Furious, the Sasanian king demanded to see the Armenian noblemen. They were brought before the king, with none of the honours normally afforded a foreign dignitary. Among them was Vartan Mamikonian, a strong military commander and important leader. In his court, the king demanded that the next morning the nobles would bow before the rising sun, or lose everything. Unyielding as ever, the noblemen faked their submission and returned home heaped with honours and gifts.

120 magi (Zoroastrian priests) went with them. The magi were tasked with converting the Armenians within one year of their new year in August. However, they did not make it very far into Armenian territory before being assailed by Armenian soldiers, who drove the magi off. With this, the Armenians entered into open rebellion. Vartan Mamikonian, after being persuaded to stay and lead the movement, assembled his forces and set about clearing Armenia of Sasanian soldiers, dealing Yazdegerd many stinging defeats.

At last, Yazdegerd had enough. He gathered an army of around 300,000 men and many war-elephants, and marched against Armenia. In response, Mamikonian gathered his troops, around 66,000 in all, and went to meet his opponent.

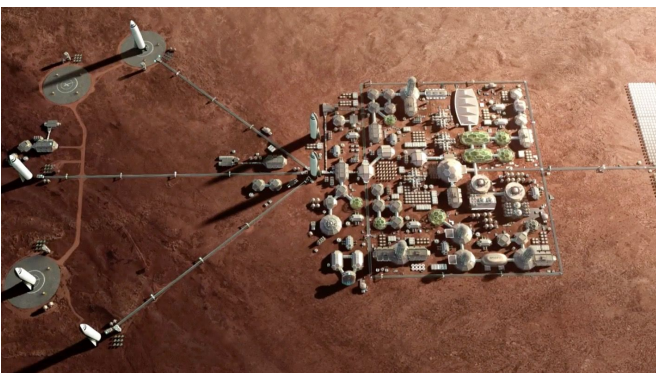
The armies assembled on the Avarayr plain, near mount Ararat. The Sasanians stood in anxious anticipation, their commanders barking at them, telling them that he who killed Mamikonian would be the greatest of all. On the other side, the Armenians all received a blessing from the priests, were baptised, and took Holy Communion. The stage was set.

The cold dawn of May 27th revealed countless bodies strewn across the plain. The Armenian historian Yeghisheh records 'broken spears and shattered bows were strewn all over and because of that the sacred bodies of the blessed [the Armenians] could not be fully identified; and there was a terrible panic and confusion over those who had fallen on both sides'. Mamikonian himself had been slain in the fighting, defending the rear of his retreating soldiers. The battle had been a loss for the Armenians, but very costly for the Sasanians. However, the Armenians were able to use the momentum of the martyrdom of Mamikonian to continue the struggle, eventually securing for themselves the right to practise Christianity freely in 484AD; a powerful series of events that continues to resonate strongly in the Armenian psyche, adding to the long and hopeful history of survival in the face of all odds.

# Should We Colonise Mars?

Almost everyone who's ever watched a sci-fi film has imagined a future where humans could transcend the so-called "final frontier" and become a multi-planet species, the masters of the Universe, perhaps even leaving Earth behind. Generally, these thought experiments have been set in the highly unpredictable far future (or a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away). However, there are some highly ambitious projects that want to turn space colonisation from fiction into reality, and reverse the gradual decline in public interest in Outer Space that has been observed since the conclusion of the Apollo missions. This raises the question, should we colonise Mars?

State-owned space agencies like NASA are of course interested in *exploring* and *learning* more about the Red Planet, and there are murmurs about sending humans on a landing mission perhaps by the mid-century. However, private companies like SpaceX (and its figurehead Elon Musk) have been much more vocal. Elon Musk has been quoted as saying that he'd "like to die on Mars, just not on impact" and that "if humanity doesn't reach Mars within my lifetime I'll be very disappointed". He wants to create a self-sustaining colony, and have bases populated in the tens of thousands by just 2040. The centi-billionaire has used his immense wealth and entrepreneurial skills to grow SpaceX into a genuine competitor in the space industry. Musk is far from alone; a Martian colony has been advocated by other entrepreneurs like Richard Branson, and even former astronauts like Buzz Aldrin. Nevertheless, Elon Musk is the most prominent and most influential player in this field, and unfortunately his plans have numerous oversimplifications and problems.



For one, if you have ever watched or read an interview with the man, you will notice that Musk is very optimistic of humanity's technological capabilities. Musk believes that getting humans to Mars is "easy" if we as a society have the will to do it and throw enough money at the project.



While we have successfully sent rovers to Mars, humans have never travelled beyond the Moon, which takes approximately 3 days. By comparison, Mars takes a minimum of 7 months to travel to. I say minimum because due to their varying orbits, the distance between Earth and Mars changes in a 26-month cycle. At their closest, Mars is 55 million kilometres away, but at their furthest Mars is 400 million kilometres away. Missions to Mars will have to adhere to strict timeframes, and travellers will have to endure 7 months of isolation, claustrophobia and anxiety that will cause extreme psychological problems. This doesn't even consider the impact *living* on Mars will have on the astronauts' wellbeing, but we'll get to that.

Beforehand, we have to deal with an immense logistical headache. What if unfavourable weather causes a landing to fail? What if a supply mission to a base veers off course leaving a colony without supplies? The amount of risks and variables involved will increase the cost of a Mars mission to the point of absurdity, and there are very few people who would rationally be willing to undertake such a stressful mission.

You could of course argue that all the trials and tribulations will be worth it. The potential rewards to be reaped on Mars are so great that the obstacles to getting there are trivial. There are varying reports as to how many mineral resources there are on Mars, and some have proposed using Mars as a base to launch missions to the exploitable asteroid belt, but good luck making them profitable with those massive shipping costs to Earth! Another idea Musk has spearheaded is to use Mars as "Humanity's Plan B" if a climate catastrophe renders Earth uninhabitable. Taking advantage of Mars would also supposedly solve overpopulation. Not only is this way of thinking incredibly disrespectful to Earth's environment, both from a scientific and spiritual point of view, it would also be astoundingly ineffective.



It is ridiculous to think that we could just ship off excess humans to Mars when, with a global population of almost 8 billion, even a highly ambitious colony of 100,000 would represent a 0.0000125% reduction. Much quicker, cheaper, and more selfless methods of population control would be by improving land use so that we make the most efficient food production, and through the initiatives of governments and NGOs to lower fertility rates in developing countries. Similarly, in this scenario, the 99.99875% of us who are left on Earth will have to bear the brunt of climate change brought about disproportionately by the emissions of the same class of wealthy people who would be the ones with the money to escape to Mars. Frankly, with less than 10 years to prevent 1.5 degrees celsius of temperature rise, we don't have the time to be fantasising about mockeries of science fiction.

Still, it's not unreasonable to find the idea of living on Mars cool, being a pioneer, going down in history! For a snapshot of what living on Mars would be like: let's use the closest comparison to a location on Earth: Antarctica.



Scientists living in Antarctica have to endure extremely cold temperatures (regularly as low as -50 degrees celsius in the South Pole during winter, and occasionally entering the -20s in the summer). Antarctic transport is also metaphorically and literally frozen, for half the year, with weather conditions too poor for restocking or even a rescue mission, so crew are stuck amongst themselves in the darkness. A phenomenon called “winter-over syndrome” has been observed amongst crew members, with common symptoms including depression, aggressive behaviour, and insomnia. Sounds awful? Well Mars has all of this and worse. Temperatures are believed to reach -120 degrees celsius, with an atmosphere 0.6% of Earth's, the addition of hazardous cosmic radiation that is believed to increase the likelihood of cancer, and gravity 38% that of Earth's, potentially heightening the risk of osteoporosis and cardiovascular diseases. Nobody knows what the impacts would be on foetal development, but it would almost certainly be bad for the healthy growth of an infant's cells, bones, and muscles.

All of these compounding factors would mean that residents of Mars would probably have to live in underground bunkers, emerging to the Martian climate on rare occasions, and always wearing complex protective equipment to minimise health risks.

One final point to address, that would supposedly negate the aforementioned issues, is the proposal of terraforming Mars in Earth's image. Ideas in this field usually relate to increasing the levels of greenhouse gases in Mars's atmosphere to raise the temperature and kickstart an Earth-like transformation. This could be done by importing hydrocarbons or ammonia from other objects in the solar system like Titan. NASA has also explored the idea of using orbital mirrors around the planet to reflect sunlight onto the planet. There is little scientific consensus on if this would be feasible, but either way all these ideas would be phenomenally expensive, and the question ultimately becomes "is this worth it?".

The reason colonising Mars is so hyped up, particularly by supporters of Elon Musk, is because it captures an innate human desire for fantastical solutions that blur the line between science fiction and realism, kind of like the Marvel Cinematic Universe, which places otherworldly technology in a realistic Earth setting. If, as a society, we still wish to make progress into space perhaps a more realistic option would be an increased presence on the Moon? As mentioned earlier, the Moon is much closer to Earth, and has arguably greater economic potential with an abundance of minerals, as well as traces of water locked up in ice. Moon exploration is therefore much more realistic in the short-term, while still benefiting humanity if (and only if) the economic value from the Moon can be fairly shared. For now, the Moon is treated as a "Global commons" meaning that territorial claims by sovereign states are illegal, and it is imperative that we prevent imperialistic domination by powerful countries, but one thing's for sure, our relationship with space could be about to change forever.

**Callum Ryan**

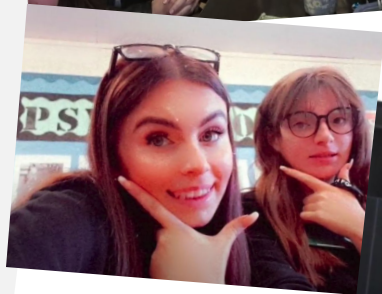




# Year 13: Goodbye and Good Luck!!









# Poetry Corner:

## The Great G-Block Expedition

*We set off at dawn, the frosty breath of morning enveloped us, clouding our thoughts, nipping at our ears. Our destination was the unscathed fortress: the unseigeable castle with an unremarkable exterior. We were looking for the Almighty G Block.*

*Our debilitating search for the Almighty G Block took us on an agonising whistle-stop tour of the realm of Cornard. We charged over its hefty hedgerows like a mother horse running to protect its foal. If we could find and loot the Almighty G Block, we would reap dignitas beyond our wildest imaginations. We had one shot, one opportunity. We Simply Could Not Fail.*

*With the hours already ticking, we were swallowed by the Almighty G Block's impenetrable cloak of mist. But, to our avail, we had a warrior of steel who could carve a path through - like a knife through butter - Percival the Pheasant.*



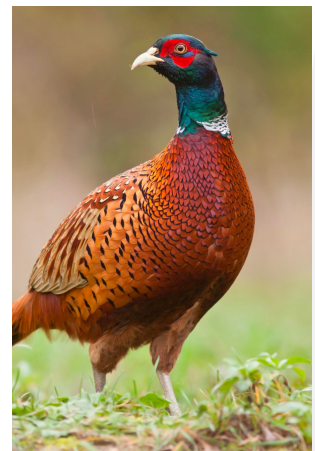
*Percival's ferocious crow was an earthquake in audible form, quickly dispersing our first obstacle. Of course, the Almighty G Block is not foolish, it knows that honour is the reward of valour, and there would be plenty more to come. We snacked on ripe fruit in the temporary relief that our target is in sight.*

*Our next nightmare was waiting in the wings. The preconception of the Almighty G Block as abandoned was about to be proven wrong. As we emerged into what resembled a car park, we heard a soft grumble. The kind of noise that makes you question your sanity when lying in bed. Before we could concoct a plan, a trio of ferocious minibuses emerged from the shadows. With sublime handling we were hunted down. Percival and I instinctively dived into a nearby bush for cover but my human partner in crime Joe had a much smarter idea. He lured the vans into a corner like a mouse taking on three iron-clawed cats. With incredible courage, he got two of the minibuses to crash into each other, then hijacked the third and smashed it right into Almighty G Block's walls. With that, we now had a way in.*



*In a state of delirium, we leapt into the bus-shaped hole left in the surprisingly thin walls; we'd already done the extraordinary, could we now do the impossible? Arriving in a dark dingy room, we suddenly felt a great chill engulf our feebling bodies. It was as if we'd been wrapped up in a storm for hours. Joe wondered if this undesirable climate was related to the Scottish flag hanging on the wall, but that's clearly ridiculous. At any rate, our shivers were quickly numbed by the discovery of a massive stockpile of Irn Bru, you could almost describe it as a shrine. Whoever once owned this chamber surely had good taste. We spotted a door in the room's corner but quickly stumbled upon our next problem, the doors required lanyards to open, and in typical Joe fashion, he'd left our "lanyards" at home, what a plonker! Although, as luck would have it, the Irn Bru sugar rush made Joe accidentally fall into the wall, who needs a lanyard when you have sheer force!*

*We had no clue where we were going from this point on, we'd emerged into a grey labyrinth of hairpin bends, like something out of The Maze Runner. We quite sensibly stuck together, as a trio we complimented each other nicely, and knew we might have to fight off some fiends to claim the Almighty Treasure. At a crossroads, we turned left into the Conference Centre. Decorated in colourful decor, it had a charming office feel to it, but our only discovery there was a half-consumed box of donuts, which disappeared as fast as we had found them. Following that dead end, our next series of turns led us to the Careers Hub, where the Almighty G Block's charm was truly put on full display. Several ceiling panels were missing, and water rhythmically dripped through. But behold! A bucket showing significant resilience. Out of admiration, we stuck five colourful ribbons round the bucket, and got on our way. Joe suggested taking a Chromebook before we left, but backed down when he saw a notice saying they had been "booked for period 2", never hurts to be polite!*



Looping round the west of the fortress, we thought we'd seen it all by now. Minibuses, Irn Bru, donuts, leaks, but we were in for our biggest shocks yet. Most rooms were decked out in fairly standard fashion, and we'd been pleasantly surprised by the friendly atmosphere. Then, we stepped into G9 and was unpleasantly standing face to face with none other than the big man himself: Boris Johnson.



"What are you doing here? Having a party again?" Joe asked

"As a matter of fact, you are trespassing on OUR turf, me and the squad are just trying to chill out", Boris responded.

"Boris is a great guy so hands off, Joe!" sputtered Donald Trump wearing a 'Sleepy Joe' mask.

"While I do disagree with the Prime Minister on just about everything, I must say this is a quite outrageous violation of parliamentary procedure!" - chirped Jeremy Corbyn disguised as Keir Starmer

"Free Scotland!" shouted Nicola Sturgeon

They may have resembled cardboard cutouts but they were flat out bent on blowing us to smithereens. G Block had been theirs, and they would not give it up without a tussle. As if on cue, the building began to shake; tumultuous winds accumulated outside; blinds on the windows shook feverishly; the roof groaned under herculean strain. We knew at this instant that we'd done what we could, now our only goal was the sweet relief of escape. At every moment we were living on the precipice of danger, left and right doors were unexpectedly flinging open, the Almighty G Block had woken up to our treachery. When a petrified Percival strayed from our escape route into a dark hall, it seemed that all was going wrong. Nevertheless, what we'd learnt in Almighty G Block was to expect the unexpected, and never give in to apathy.

When we entered the dark room, our minds became illuminated. The stage lights of the Drama Hall lit up, exposing what we should have known all along: the true treasure of Almighty G Block was the Excellence we developed along the way. They say the pen is mightier than the sword, and it's true. Stepping out of Almighty G Block one last time, having conquered it all, nothing - not even a flock of ravenous seagulls - was going to stop us.



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***Wishing you an enjoyable Half Term!***



Did you enjoy the Illustrator?  
Want to get involved?

We are a student team which aims to  
create one issue each half term.

There are lots of roles on offer,  
including regular writers and designers.

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You could write about your hobbies, a  
story, or a biographic piece, interview  
someone, review a film, recommend a  
recipe, submit some artwork or  
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[theillustrator@tgschool.net](mailto:theillustrator@tgschool.net),  
or come and speak to us.

Thank you!

Email: [theillustrator@tgschool.net](mailto:theillustrator@tgschool.net)  
Thomas Gainsborough School,  
Wells Hall Road,  
Great Cornard,  
Suffolk  
CO10 0NH



Instagram: theillustratortgs  
Telephone: 01787 375232  
[enquiries@tgschool.net](mailto:enquiries@tgschool.net)  
[www.tgschool.net](http://www.tgschool.net)