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A Verulam School Publication

Issue 16 November 2014





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# Reflections on why I chose to join Verulam 6th Form

When I was in year 7 in 2009 69% of students in the Sixth Form at Verulam achieved A\* - C grades at A level. Five years on and I am now in the Sixth Form myself. Last summer 79% of our students achieved A\*-C grades at A Level. I am hopeful that my year group will out perform these results too.

I am not only proud to be a member of the Verulam Sixth Form, I am also grateful for the facilities and support provided in terms of the new Sixth Form block and the new study support teachers who aid us in our study periods.

Since I became a member of the Verulam Community in 2009, being under the guidance of my Form Tutor, my class teachers and even my friends, Verulam has always encouraged me to achieve to the best of my ability. Five years on, I feel that Verulam has instilled in me the drive and ambition to work hard and achieve the grades I will need in order to go on to the university of my choice.

The goal is excellence and my friends and I are extremely honoured to be striving for that goal supported by the staff at Verulam.

**Fahidul Islam**



## Parents and Staff Reading Group

If you enjoy reading and discussing the books you have read, why not come along to the Verulam Parents and Staff Reading Group?

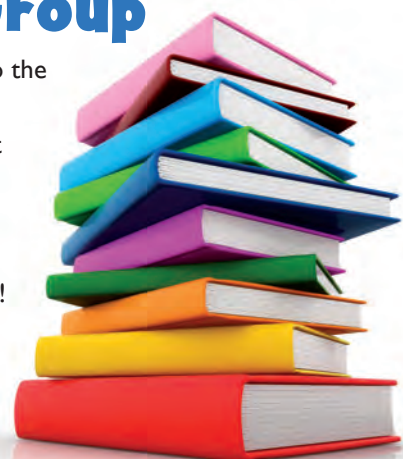
We meet once each half term, discuss our chosen book and decide as a group what we will read for the next meeting.

Our group is friendly, welcoming and always ready to welcome new members.

We are currently reading 'Stoner' by John Williams and/or 'The Cat's Table', by Michael Ondaatje. Feel free to just read one of these titles, both of them or neither!

Come along and enjoy our informal discussions and help choose our books to read for the New Year!

Thursday 11th December, 7.00pm at Verulam School.



# Open Day - from the Year 7 guides' point of view

On 4th October we held the Verulam School Open Day. The Year 7s who had been at the school for about five weeks had the opportunity to be guides and show parents and children around our school.

I was quite nervous at the start, but when I started giving a tour, I felt absolutely fine. There were interesting things on display for adults and children to look at as we went around the school. Overall, it was very interesting for students, parents and children. It made the children a bit less nervous about secondary school because they got to visit the different departments and get a feel for what it is like. I think it was a very successful event and I'm looking forward to next year's Open Day.

**Tyler Cartwright**

Open Day was an amazing opportunity for families to come and look around our school. As tour guides we had training sessions on the Wednesday and Friday before the event. Then it was decided that we were ready. But we were always ready – this is our school and we are proud to show families around. Families were impressed and we all had a great time.

**Nick Abuaku-Addai**

Open day – the untold story

Open Day is one of Verulam's most important days as it is our time to shine. Most parents of boys at the school have experienced being taken on a tour and have been impressed by the Year 7 who took them around the school. But have you ever thought about how your tour guide is feeling? For the new tour guides it is like being in the middle of an exam. You don't know what to expect next or really what the answer should be to that question you weren't quite ready for. The hardest part of the day is when you first meet the family you are going to tour with. We are trained as to how to greet our guests and we are given a route to follow, but most of the time the family have specific subjects they want to see – they don't know you have a route to follow! This is where it gets difficult, because your whole plan can be demolished and you have to play it by ear.

Talking to other tour guides, a common problem was the awkward silence between the tour guide and a shy Year 5 or Year 6 child. We found that the best way to get the child to feel more comfortable is to talk to them about their favourite subject at school.

**Ethan Philips**





# Cinderella!

## A reimagining of a classic fairytale

*Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess who had the divine name of Cinderella...*

# STOP!

Everything that you might know about the gorgeous Cinderella is in fact a lie. I am going to tell you the despicable, twisted truth about Cinderella.

It all started years ago, when to her despair, Cinderella's poor mother, and then later on, father too, passed away leaving Cinderella all alone with her Step Mother and two baby step sisters. Logic dictates that Cinderella would be cruelly treated, but in truth, the opposite happened.

'Hurry up you decrepit old hag!' she would cry. Now, the poor Step Mother waited on Cinderella hand and foot and had to look after the pure, innocent babies too. Cinderella often stated that the babies would be disposed of if they cried just once more... Cinderella loathed it when the babies cried. She would shout, spit, go bright red with anger - but what you never want to see Cinderella do when something annoys her is... remain calm. As astonishing as this may be, it's a guarantee that she is thinking of something devilish and perfectly evil to do in retaliation.

I'm afraid to say that our story is grim and it gets considerably worse from now on.

It was a boreal night, the ongoing strikes of thunderous lightning raged outside, meanwhile the babies and Step Mother huddled together to keep calm so that there would be no crying. Suddenly the babies whimpered. They shook; their lower lips were quivering. To their mother's despair a tiny tear trickled uniformly down each of their cheeks. Boom! The thunder cracked and simultaneously the babies wailed.

As you would expect, Cinderella calmly walked down the stairs and gently, ever so gently, explained that she needed money for some new divine glass shoes to impress the Prince as he was looking for a bride. Speaking more violently now, she proposed the following: 'we shall sell the babies in the market tomorrow! This is your last night with them.' She then laughed, a blood-curdling laugh.

All through the night the Step Mother wept and wept, she prayed and prayed. Unexpectedly, two turtledoves, that were brilliantly magic, heard her prayers and went straight to the Prince.

The following morning, to her surprise, Cinderella found herself answering the door to the great Prince himself!

'Hello', the Prince graciously greeted her, 'Are you Cinderella and do you live with your Step Mother?' he enquired.

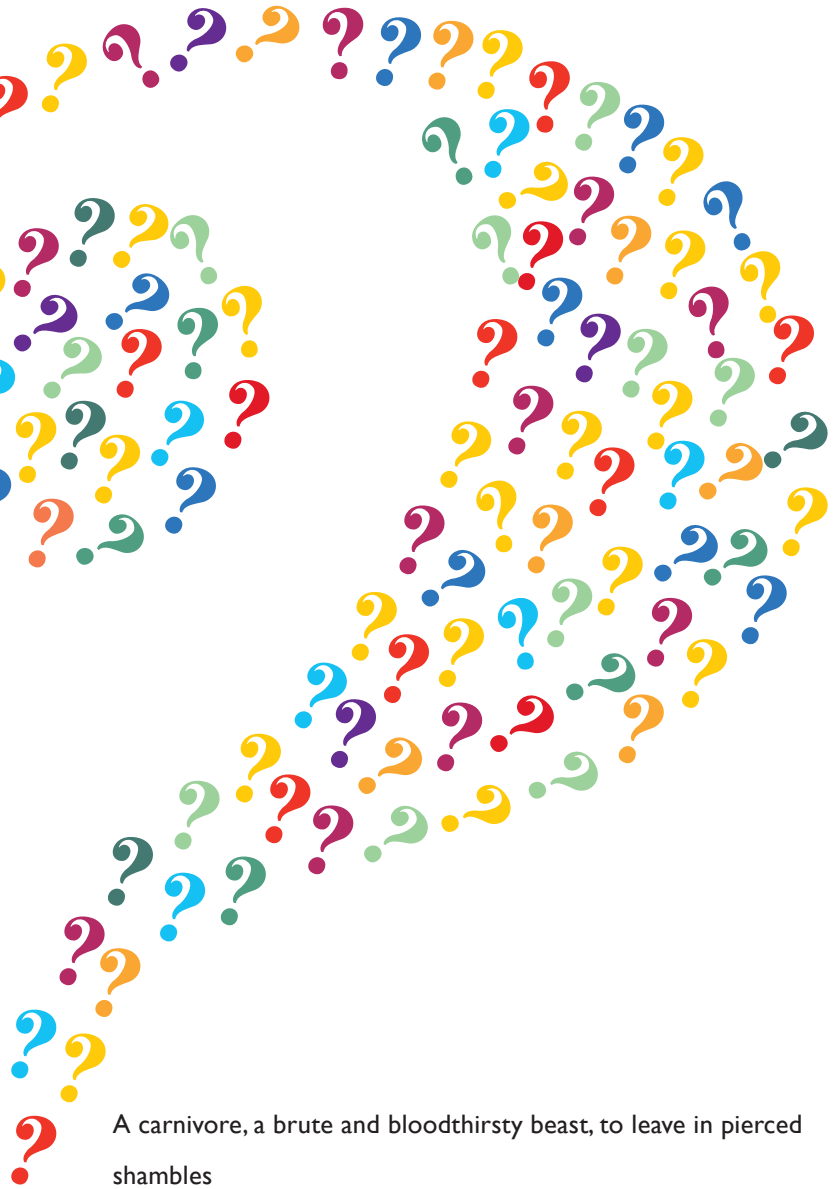
'Yes', she tentatively replied.

Swoosh. Plop. That was all the evidence he needed. With one swipe, he chopped her arrogant, selfish, vile head clean from her shoulders and that was the end of Cinderella.

Don't you fret though, the Prince fell in love with the Step Mother and took her and the babies to live with him in the palace and they lived happily ever after.

# Riddles

I... am a long, skinny, brainless and lifeless snail,  
Cut by the blades of steel,  
Guided by an external force.  
I leave my entrails in a pattern,  
On a long, blank canvas.  
My entrails? Sacred.  
A necessity among stable communities,  
Bound in the scriptures of the history of mankind.  
Their weakness?  
The viscera of a band, the key ingredient  
In any good balloon.  
The external forces? Prospects  
Trained at a very young age,  
To master the art of guidance.  
At the beginning, it's a constant struggle.  
But by the end, it's second nature.  
All entrails  
Tell a different story,  
Paint a different picture,  
Make a different sound.  
I am wielded by every common man  
As a weapon of war  
On the children of nature  
The catch?  
I am neither a sword, nor a sceptre, nor a saw of any kind.  
And the point?  
Can be found at the end of my body, and in the entrails I leave  
behind.  
What am I?



A carnivore, a brute and bloodthirsty beast, to leave in pierced  
shambles  
A selfless victim, vast and pale, amongst the prickled brambles.  
With teeth so sound and strong and sharp it leaves no blood  
at bite,  
To its helpless victim, lifeless before it strikes, with an air of  
precision and mite.  
A tooth itself is double-pronged, shaped like an 'n' or 'u',  
With a piercing blow it changes shape as it cuts you through  
and through.  
But teeth are sacred in the mouth, must be replaced a ton,  
And once it strikes, the teeth remain – it cannot be undone.  
If forever chomps and snaps and eats, the food for which it's  
meant,  
But never rests, and is never full, its stomach never spent.  
And while the food is food for it, it's food for no one more,  
It has no foes, and has no woes, this helpful carnivore.  
What is it?



# ECCO Club reviews

My favourite ECCO club at Verulam is card games and chess club. There are many card games you can play such as Yu-Gi-Oh, Pokemon, Magic, Lord of the Rings cards and Vanguard. Also, you can play chess with your friends if you prefer. My favourite card game is Vanguard. It is great fun to play with your friends. It is about strategy and some luck! The best thing about this club is that it runs every lunch time but you don't have to go every day if you don't want to. It is great to have something to do and somewhere to go at lunchtime where you can have fun and meet friends as well as making new friends.



Daniel Coleman

## Badminton Club

If you like to keep active then you will like badminton! Badminton is an enjoyable sport involving rackets, shuttlecocks and jumping! At Verulam Badminton club is on a Tuesday for year 7 pupils and Thursday for years 8 and 9. It is held at lunchtime. Badminton is one of my favourite clubs because it is not overly competitive and it's a fun sport that is easy to learn. So, whether you like sport or not, you should join because it's quite social as well as being good exercise. In year 7, when I first joined, I didn't know how to play badminton. When I joined it took me two sessions and then I knew what I was doing. I then progressed and I took part in the badminton tournament for the house sports competition.

Tom Tillin



## Chess Club

Cool, calm, clever, all these qualities are shared by genius tacticians and strategists. Chess is a great game that enables young people to test their skills against others. It teaches you skills that cannot be found elsewhere but can help in everyday life as well as in lessons. Chess Club is held in S3 at Verulam. If you are a novice or are new to the game and find it appealing, just come along and we will help you to improve. Join in and test your skills while meeting new people and doing something interesting with your lunch time.



Ridwan Abdullah

## Knight Club

Knight Club is all about using your imagination to adventure through towns, cities and dungeons to collect loot and create a more interesting character. When you begin the club you are given a choice of characters. I chose a Norse character with high intelligence and low strength. My character was also son of Loki, the brother of Thor.

I like Knight Club because it is different to all the other ECCO clubs and because it alone uses your imagination and literally anyone can come along to Knight Club on Thursdays after school until 5pm in the English classrooms. Knight Club has helped my education as well as being fun because it lets me create imaginative ideas that I can use in my writing and it can also help to develop my maths skills.



Andrew Lawrence



# ECCO Club reviews

## Karate

Karate ECCO is fantastic! I go to Karate ECCO Club every Monday after school and even though I have games last thing on Monday and so have to come back to school to attend the club, I still go to Karate because it is amazing. I recommend going to Karate as it boosts your confidence; keeps you fit and you can learn new skills. Karate is great because you do not have to be overly super clever in maths or able to write heaps and heaps of pages in English, you just have to be dedicated to learn more and have a heart to push yourself that little bit further and you will succeed. Karate is fun to learn and there are many competitions to take part in. You do not have to worry about the other members of the Club as we have a fun, but strict, coach so we are taught about discipline and self defence.

**Jermaine Ehigiator**

## Dodgeball Club

Dodgeball ECCO Club is awesome because all of the sessions are games once you have learnt the rules and techniques involved. We play a tournament where we split into six different groups and play ten minute matches then switch. It is fun because we are trying to win the title of Dodgeball. We don't win any prizes – it just feels good to win! The club is organised by Mr. Connolly; he is a kind teacher. You win if your team has less people on the bench at the end. Everyone is really encouraging and friendly to you. The rest of your team encourage you when you get the ball and throw it saying things like: 'Come on Ollie, you can do it!' I dread the time when lunch is over and the session ends because I want it to go on forever. I know it can't. I would really advise anyone to join in!

**Ollie Merriden**

## Maths Club

Maths Club starts at 1pm allowing you time to get your lunch and fuel yourself ready to face the challenging and subtle art of problem solving in maths. The Club provides a good structure and use of maths techniques to problem solve. We are working towards preparation for the United Kingdom Maths Challenge for KS3 later in the year. These skills will also help us when we begin our GCSE course as there is more problem solving involved in the maths syllabus now.

I participated in the Maths Challenge last year and am pleased to say that I did extremely well. I was second in years 7 and 8 and received a gold award which meant I was in the top 10% of the country! I would like to continue going to maths club to hone my skills so that I can make it to the top 1% in the country! I am inspired to do this because Mr Lai and Ms Cornmell, the teachers who run Maths Club, provide amazing problems with ingenious techniques to solve them! If you have an interest in maths and want to meet and work with other like-minded people come along and join us!

**Johnny Mawditt**

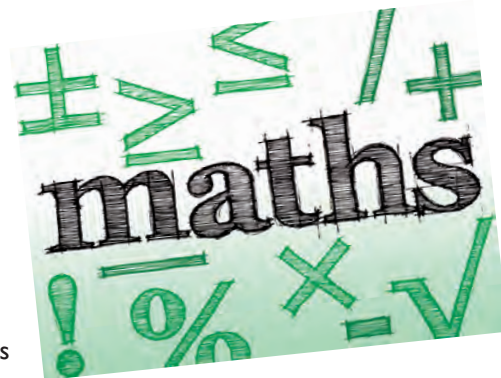
## Media Club

Are your aspirations to become a film maker, actor, editor, director or camera man? Well, come and join Media Club. Let the buzz of film making strike!

The Club runs every Wednesday lunchtime. We use a range of professional equipment such as tripods and Sony film cameras. We also use Apple mac's Final Cut Pro to edit our films.

I wanted to join Media Club because I want to be a film Director. In addition to working on the film side, we also have to learn to work as a team and sometimes with people we don't know so well so it is a good learning experience on lots of levels.

**Noah Prigmore**





# Hemel Hempstead: go upside down in the freestyle park!

Have you ever been snowboarding? This is the best and most brilliant sport ever invented!

Performing fantastic tricks like the 360 degree Indi and many more. When you land a 360 degree indi perfectly there is no greater feeling of achievement. Practice after practice after practice – you have to try so hard to land it perfectly. The effort is worth it though.

There are a lot of young people and older people trying to perfect tricks and improve their performance. It is very hard to get a sponsor though because they tend to only come to watch once a year and there are so many people who would love to impress a sponsor. I think sponsors should come much more often to watch for new talent.

Many more people should be trying to snowboard all year round. Snowboarding is hard, but when you start any new sport it is difficult to learn the techniques needed. However, it is a very social sport. Every Friday in Hemel Hempstead there is a freestyle park and lesson to help develop skills. You can learn and impress your friends and family who are watching – and maybe you can impress a sponsor too!

During the session on Fridays the features put out for us to use are the white lines rail; the triple box; double box; and the up down box. The second layer down is the kicker; medium kicker; or the large kicker.

The equipment I use for freestyle includes body protecting equipment for my back and thighs and waterproof trousers and jacket. I also protect my wrists, wear gloves, helmet and snowboard boots. I have my own board because the boards you can hire are beginner boards and are too slow for me now. I also have my own boots because mine are freestyle boots.

You might be wondering how I got into this sport: well, my original sport was football, but I got a bit bored of it and was looking for something a bit different to have a go at. I asked my mum if I could snowboard and she said 'yes' and I've never looked back.

**Ali Thomas**





# Mud & Sweat = Cross Country running

Getting into the Cross Country team is such a good experience. Initially we had the trials for the Mob Race. This involved the top fifty from year 7. The Mob Race involves a 2 to 3k race around Sandringham School fields. The top 12 from Verulam would be selected for the Verulam Cross Country team. Verulam did extremely well overall, coming second, just losing out to Sandringham School. I was lucky enough to get into the Verulam team so I now get to take part in a number of other races that lead up to the District Championships at Verulamium Park.

**Elijah Slocombe**



## Cross Country

Pumping your legs up and down, you have to use every ounce of your body muscle to even have the slightest chance of winning.

At Verulam we work hard in all our amazing sports and one of the most enjoyable for me is cross country. Stamina, speed, strength and tactics are all key features that you need to achieve in cross country running. Everyone can get involved, however, only the best are rewarded with the incredible honour of representing our school.

It all starts off with the very tense trials, the result of these trials then narrows the field to the final fifty top runners. Those fast paced runners go head to head in the extremely intense Mob Race with students from all around the county competing for glory. The top twelve Verulam boys then earn the fantastic honour of competing for Verulam in the Cross Country League.

In the Leagues the extreme athletes have to battle it out if they want to compete in the National Championships. Once the leagues and races are over, the school PE staff have kindly given up their time to focus on intense training with the runners. When you finish cross country training your body will be extremely muscular and be ready for anything that comes your way.

**Zak Goldman**

## Football Focus

The Year 8 Football Team got off to a great start this year winning 7 – 0 against St. Clement Dane's School. The match was at the Clement Dane's ground. It was the first match of the season. Everyone was very nervous as we entered the football ground. We had to uphold the good Verulam football reputation. The pressure was on. The referee blew the whistle, Verulam dominated from the start. The first half of the match was very tense at times but got off the mark with a cracking goal by Tom Carmichael. Our goalie, Rukh Gupta saved three consecutive shots in great style. At the end of the first half Sam Mistry scored a brilliant goal striking the ball into the right corner of the goal. Half time came and our team could hold their heads up high. After a short break the match was on again. Only five minutes into the second half we scored again and this time it was courtesy of Jarvis Wilkins, with a great build up play. Sam Mistry scored another goal putting us 4-0 up. The goals just kept

on coming for the mighty Verulam; supplied by Dan Bannerjee and our super-sub Tristan Edwards who scored two goals which ended the game 7 – 0.

The team played an outstanding game in the first round of the county cup. We have high hopes for the games ahead of us and look forward to bringing home the cup for Verulam.

**Fletcher Hedge and Stanley Maisey**

