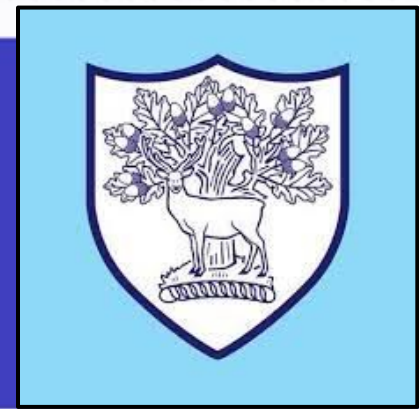


Mini edition

Park Life



Edition 7

I get up when I want, except on Wednesdays

Party in the Park (House)

Festive fun at the sixth form Winter Ball

By Laila Haines

Sixth form students danced the night away on Friday 12th of December at the annual winter celebration.

More than 120 year 12 and 13 students donned their finest and braved the chill of the night to attend the event which was hosted in the school.

As well as music and dancing, pizzas and drinks provided by the canteen.

Year 13 student, Grace Baldwin

said that the event, organised by the student leadership team with help from Mr Holland, Mr Wicks, Mr Jones, Mr Earl and the site team, had been a night to remember.

“The photobooth was so much fun. We ended up squeezing about eight of us in there and the pictures still came out well.”

Mr Wickes, head of sixth form, said that it had been a successful night and that he had been impressed with how well organised the event was.



House events

Winter Wonders

Written by staff reporter



PARK HOUSE SCHOOL 2025

This year's winner of the annual Winter Wishes competition, Sienna Cloete from year 11, saw her winning entry sent out to parents as the school's official Christmas card.

The event, which attracted huge participation from across the school saw hundreds of students submit their own offerings in the hope of scooping the top spot. One entry was chosen from each house and the final vote was held on Wednesday 10th of December to decide the winner.

Finalists, Elizabeth H from year 7 represented Albert with her festive entry of a hedgehog on a mushroom, while Tess M from year 9 submitted an artistically represented tree and landscape for Chaffey. Elsie P of year 10 won a lot of admiration for her cute drawing of a mouse and snowflake but it was Joseph's entry that ultimately drew the judges eye.

Ms Taylor, Head of Art said: "Our Winter Wishes Card competition was a wonderful success. Pupils from across the school produced creative, festive designs, with many examples of outstanding artwork that made judging very difficult. It was lovely to see so many pupils taking part and attending lunch time and art club sessions to make full use of the art resources.

Thank you to all pupils for their entries and to everyone who supported them. The creativity and enthusiasm of everyone involved truly captured the spirit of Christmas!"

3rd place - Elizabeth H, Year 7



2nd place - Tess M, Year 9



4th place - Elsie P, Year 10



X-mas revue

Christmas Cabaret

Written by Staff Reporter



Demon hunters, scientists and pirates took to the stage on the last day of term as part of the 2025 Christmas Revue. The event started with lip sync battle from the heads of house, followed by an energetic dance routine from PE and a piratical performance from English. Science then made their debut with the Periodic Table Song, followed by humanities and a sparkly display of APT and then the Grinch by the sixth formers. Mr Bouzida and his mum (Mrs Bouzida) received rapturous applause for their duet, while maths finished with every teacher's worst nightmare - the song that includes the numbers 6 and 7.

A year 8 student said that it had been a really enjoyable event: "I can't really choose a favourite bit because it was all really good. It was so funny when Dr Yuan accidentally came out by himself and got the biggest cheer.

"I'm pretty sure some people had little tears in their eyes when Mrs Bouzida came out while Mr Bouzida was doing his song. It was quite cute."

After the performance during period 4, some year 11s wondered what crime Mr Howe had committed to deserve being forced to wear cat ears and hold up a picture of the k-pop demon hunter cat/tiger 'Derpy' but conceded that he had done a good job of pretending to paw the air.



Politics

Should 16-year-olds get the vote?

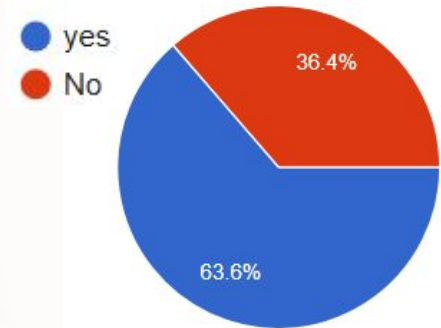
Written by staff writer



Deciding the future of your country is a big task: you've got to know something about the politics of the parties you're voting for, you've got to make a reasoned and rational decision and you've got to do what you think will benefit the majority rather than your own self-interest. So, baring all that important stuff in mind, let's look forward to the next general election – due some time before August 2029 – where 16-year-olds will, for the first time ever, be given the vote.

Now, some of you will have already reached the age of 18 – here's looking at you years 9 to 13! – but that means that some of our current year 8s will also qualify to vote. The question is, is this one giant leap for teen kind or a stumble in the dark for democracy?

We asked you what your opinion was in our new interactive poll and you voted overwhelmingly in favour.



Our journalists had mixed opinions...

No, it's a bad idea...

- Lara, year 8: "16-year-olds are still growing and their brains aren't developed enough to make those sort of decisions."
- Elianne, year 7, says: "I'd probably just vote for the party with the coolest name."
- Eila, year 7, says: "Some people might not make sensible decisions. There are some students who would vote for someone who said 'six, seven'".

Yes, let's go for it...

- Amelie, year 8 says: "We will make the right decision because we'll be the ones who will be most affected by them in the future."

Did you know...

*In 2016 the British public were asked to vote on the name of a polar research vessel and decided, by an overwhelming majority, to name the £200m ship *Boaty Mcboatface*, proving that even adults might not always make rational decisions.*

Frosty fun

Weird Winters

Written by Sofia Hipsey Santana



Winter might be a time of gathering around the fireplace and dreaming of warmer days to come in the UK but other countries have some strange customs to help them while away the colder months...

Radish festival in Mexico: Oaxaca holds an annual Noche de Rábanos (Night of the Radishes) on December 23, where intricate sculptures are carved from large radishes.

Hiding brooms in Norway: Norwegians hide their brooms to prevent them from being stolen by wicked spirits.

South Africa: Eating Fried Caterpillars For a truly unique Christmas food experience, some in South Africa enjoy the Pine Tree Emperor Moth caterpillars, which are high in protein and covered in festive green and red hues.

KFC Christmas Dinner in Japan: Thanks to a successful marketing campaign in the 1970s, eating Kentucky Fried Chicken has become a popular, albeit non-religious, national Christmas tradition. Demand is so high that orders must often be placed weeks in advance.

Christmas Pickle in Germany: A tradition where the last ornament hung on the Christmas tree is a pickle, and the child who finds it receives an extra gift.



Czech Republic: Shoe Throwing Unmarried women stand with their backs to their front doors on Christmas Eve and toss a shoe over their shoulder. If the toe points towards the door, the woman is predicted to get married within the next year.

Sport

Not just for the boys

Written by Sofia Hipsev Santana



Scrolling through the Park House Newsletters and instagram page, one thing really stood out to me: our boys do brilliantly at rugby but what about the girls? Rugby has always been a male dominated sport but they're not the only ones who want to play. Now, our small but determined team have set out sights on The Rosslyn Park Nationals 7s, the world's largest school rugby tournament and we're looking for girls to join us. We started off with a small team of 7 but our numbers have recently swelled to 18 - from just two year groups - and we'd love to have even more.

Rugby is a national sport and we have a championship winning women's team in The Roses but as a school sport for girls it has traditionally been under-represented in favour of netball and other non contact sports. It is possible that some girls might be put off by the idea of tackles and tries but it isn't all about that. In rugby, everybody matters: you can be tall, short, speedy, there is a position for every one of us. You belong to a group immediately. Your teammates have your back on and off the pitch. It is also confidence building and nothing feels better than nailing a tackle, crushing through a scrum or making a break.

We're hoping to have enough players for the next Rosslyn Park tournament coming up in March 2026. So, if you think you'd like to give it a try, come to rugby training on **Fridays from 3-4pm**. No experience is necessary, just bring yourself - and maybe your friends - and give it a try.



*The Red Roses:
England's
female
rugby
team.*

Short Story



The Reminder

Written by Amelie Walsh and Lara Vargas-Meyer

I hate Christmas. It was never a good holiday for me. Everyone only likes it for presents. They burn the turkey, get the wrong present and sing Christmas carols badly. Not just that, but people get offended whenever I say “,Meh, it’s alright”. I look over to my neighbour’s driveway, full of bright lights and a massive christmas tree engulfed in decorations. So brash, so fake.

“I need to get away from the horrendous Christmas lights” I blurt out, directing my dejected steps towards town.

I hate the bustling crowds and head to the only place that I genuinely like: a tatty old Christmas shop that sells ancient bits of bric a brac. It looks like it hates Christmas as much as much as I do.

I walk in, like always the smell overwhelms me like a pungent hug, my eyes adjust to the darkness. On a table directly opposite I spot a slightly tattered looking book with Christmas illustrations on it, like one my mum used to read me when I was little.

I pick it up and a strange sensation comes over me. It feels like I am being flattened. My whole body begins to tighten, I can barely breathe.

Suddenly, the sensation is gone...but so is the Christmas shop, so is the book.

I look around. I’m outside in a snow covered field but there’s something odd about it. It’s not a real outside, it’s like a set from a play, like someone has designed it.

Out of the corner of my eye I spot movement. Something is coming, something big. I turn to face it, ready to fight, but the fight drops right out of me, just like my jaw nearly drops to the floor. It’s a snowman - a gigantic snowman - bearing down on me with the most cheerful smile on its icy white face.

It speaks, not with its mouth but with its mind. I can hear its voice in my head but the little lumps of coal that make up its mouth don’t move at all.

“You are here because you don’t believe,” it seems to be saying.

“You’ve lost the magic that makes life special so we decided to remind you.”

I frown, ready to snap back like I always do to my parents but staring up at this big snowy block, I stop. There was something familiar about it; it looked just like one I’d made as a child.

Softly, something by my side takes my hand. I look down and a tiny bear looks up at me.

“Come and have tea with us,” the bear grins.

It drags me along and I have to crouch to follow as it leads me into a tiny hollow in a tree. Against any understanding I have of physics, the room opens out into a huge dining area. Fairytale creatures and forest animals seem to be engaged in some huge feast, just like one of the illustrations in the book mum used to show me.

I should be terrified - I’m either seriously ill and hallucinating or I’ve actually been sucked into another dimension populated by things that shouldn’t exist - but for some reason, I’m not. In fact, I feel fine; better than that, I feel peaceful, like I’ve finally come home.

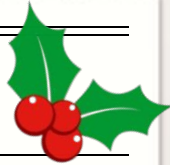
The little bear looks up at me and strokes my hand.

“This is your imagination,” he whispers. “You haven’t been here for a while and your world has become dark but we wanted to remind you that we’re always here, if you need a break.”

I look around at the joy in front of me and frown. Is all this inside of me? Am I capable of creating so much happiness?

The tightness comes over me once again and I’m back in the shop gazing down at the book. I look around but no one seems to have noticed anything odd and nothing has changed so I put the book down carefully and turn and leave.

But outside I realise something has changed: me. I feel lighter, happier, knowing that deep inside myself is a place of joy.

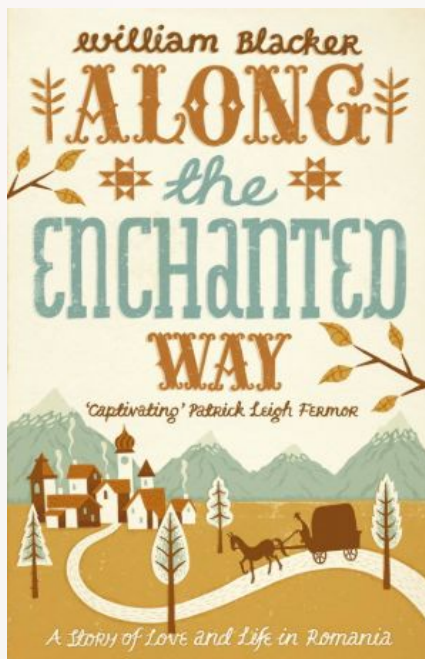


Book Review

by Ms Dolton (Book Club)

Along the Enchanter Way

By William Blackner

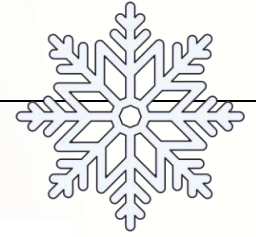


Along the Enchanter Way by William Blackner is not a book you rush through. It is a reflective, gentle, and quietly thoughtful memoir, and it asks the reader to slow down and pay attention, not just to the text, but to their own way of seeing the world. Rather than telling a straightforward story, Blackner offers a kind of inner journey, one that unfolds through observation and reflection rather than action.

What stood out to me most was the tone of the writing. Blackner does not lecture or try to convince the reader of anything. Instead, his voice feels calm and considered, almost as though he is sharing thoughts he has spent a long time sitting with. This makes the book feel personal and sincere, and it becomes easy to trust the ideas he explores. A central idea in the book is that enchantment still exists in everyday life, but is often overlooked. Blackner suggests that modern living encourages distraction and speed, pulling us away from moments of presence and quiet awareness. What I appreciated is that this idea is explored through small, ordinary experiences rather than grand philosophical claims. This gives the book a grounded and realistic feel, making its message more believable and relatable. At times, the book does feel slow, and readers looking for a strong plot or clear direction may find it challenging. However, I felt that this slowness was intentional and meaningful. It reflects the book's message that depth and understanding take time, and that not everything needs to move quickly to be valuable.

Overall, Along the Enchanter Way is a thoughtful and understated book that invites reflection rather than demanding attention. It stays with you quietly, encouraging you to notice more, rush less, and reconnect with a sense of meaning in the ordinary moments of life.

Pictures and Puzzles



Word Search

P	R	I	P	I	Q	V	X	A	H	Y	Q	U	Z	J	I	D	H
Z	Y	F	I	A	C	V	C	W	O	R	Z	I	G	M	S	S	X
P	T	C	B	H	N	V	P	A	L	P	O	F	K	I	K	P	B
V	N	R	S	O	T	T	E	A	L	W	L	Z	O	N	B	R	Q
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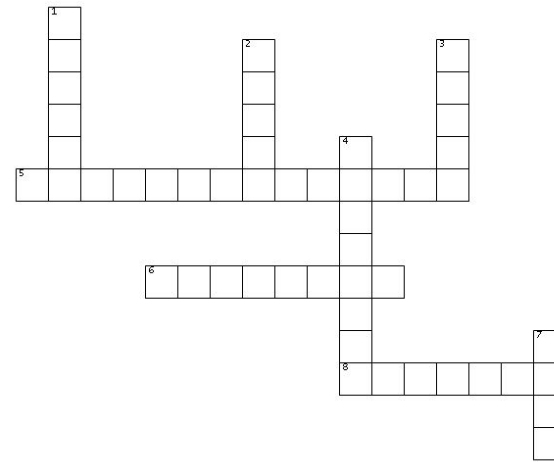
PANTOMIME
MINCE PIES
BOXING DAY
CRACKERS

SPROUTS
PUDDING
SLEIGH
TURKEY

HOLLY

Contributors:
Sofia Hipsey Santana
Eila Suggitt
Elianne Swingler
Lara Vargas Meyer
Amelie Walsh
Laila Haines
Ms Meyer

Crossword



ACROSS

- where you find presents under
- pulls santas sleigh
- its frosty the ----

DOWN

- reindeers pull it
- person who delievers toys
- santas helpers
- what do you find under the tree
- need this for a white christmas