C U R R I C U L U M  E N H A N C I N G  O P P O R T U N I T I E S
Holocaust memorial day, Senior Rugby Tour to Japan, Geography Field Trip, Stunning Academic Achievement, Mandarin Mooncakes, Sporting Update and ‘A Day in the Life’

E X C I T I N G  E X T R A C U R R I C U L A R  E V E N T S
UKYP, Junior Soloists’ Concert and sporting successes

W H O ’ S  W H O  I N  T H E  V E S E Y  C O M M U N I T Y ?
Introducing some new faces and Welcome Emerald House!

O L D  V E S E Y A N S :  W E  A R E  F A M I L Y
OV Interviews and appeals to the community

W E L C O M E
It is with my great pleasure that I unveil our new-look Veseyan. As ever, the content remains bursting at the seams with stories about our thriving school.

The year has got off to a flying start, with students embracing the challenges and excitement that a new academic year brings, and new and returning staff beginning the term reinvigorated and ready to build on the success of our 2019 ‘A’ Level and GCSE Results.

Read all about it inside!

Dominic Robson
Headteacher.
In September, we were fortunate enough to hold a Holocaust Day for Year 10 students. This involved student-led sessions in small groups, followed by an address by Holocaust survivor Paul Sved. Students in Art learned of how art can provide a powerful reminder of key historical events, particularly in a more emotive form than more textual methods of presentation. Students were then invited to design their own form of memorial to convey what they had learned.

In History, students discussed the factors that may lead to genocide and thought about ideas of responsibility. Students were also given a ‘virtual’ tour of the Auschwitz camps from our Holocaust Educational Trust Ambassadors, who were fortunate enough to visit the camps earlier this year. Students concluded by formulating an emotional response to the issues raised in the media of poetry and artwork. Some examples of notably high quality will soon be appearing on a display in the history corridor.

These smaller sessions were followed by Mr Sved’s address, in which he shared a powerful personal testimony. Students were particularly interested in hearing of the international nature of the Jewish Holocaust and seeing how Sved’s own Budapest became a place of danger. Sved also shared how the Holocaust impacted his own family. We were also informed of conditions in the camps, and students were invited to research key individuals. These included Adolf Eichmann and the infamous Josef Mengele, as well as more positive individuals such as Raol Wallenberg, remembered for saving thousands. This was followed by a series of poignant questions from students, clearly reflecting how much they had taken in. Questions involved the mental impacts of the Holocaust, the current political climate, the international response to the Holocaust, hate crime and the importance of respect.

Holocaust Day was an extremely valuable experience, and will hopefully create powerful memories for our students, the last generation to hear the first-hand testimony of survivors. We are particularly grateful to Joe Bardsley, Elizabeth Beesley, Ellie Mitchell, Neve Parkes Abbie Phelps for leading sessions for small groups. Particular thanks to Daniel Everett, Head of History, for organising the day. The day would have been impossible without the Holocaust Educational Trust, who enabled four students to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau and allowed survivor Paul Sved to travel and share his experiences.
KS3 Art Exhibition

The Bishop Vesey’s Art Exhibition has become a popular event over the past couple of years, following the 2018 sale held at Argentea Gallery, the 2019 event for KS3 was hosted in Old Big School of Bishop Vesey’s. It was extremely successful and many pieces of art were sold. Patrons of Bishop Vesey and parents all attended and saw the skill and hard work put into each piece. There were all types of photos, abstract art, football drawings, collages and Banksy styles all of which were extremely popular. Half of the money from each piece of art that was sold was given to charity to support a family suffering with MS, resulting in £687.40 being raised for charity. Along with the drawings and paintings, there were also sculptures by select pupils. Overall, it was a hugely successful event and hopefully it will carry on as a annual event for years to come.

Ben White 9R

Year 11 Geography Field Trip 9th October 2019

Each year, the Year 11 Students who study Geography for GCSE go on two field work placements, one based on human geography and another based on physical.

On the 9th October, we went on our physical geography field trip to Carding Mill valley in Shropshire to study the river.

At 8.15am the day began on the playground. After all the students had arrived, we set off in the coach. By 10.30am we were in the river, examining the velocity, the rock shape and the rock size to compare it to other points along the river, and see how the results changed. To measure the velocity we timed how long it took a ping pong ball to travel 10 metres. To find rock size we used callipers and to determine the size we rated it along a gradient from very angular to very rounded, using a sheet with photos as a guideline. Everybody engaged to complete the tasks.

Throughout the day, the process was repeated at five different locations along the course of the river. Along the way we got to see distinct geographical features first hand, like the V-shaped valley, interlocking spurs and even a waterfall.

Overall, the experience was extremely valuable due to the benefits of field work, as it provided us with a good investigation for the exam and developed our understanding of physical geography.

Liam McGrade, George Jacob and Ethan Finney.

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Liam McGrade, George Jacob and Ethan Finney.
Arriving in Singapore was a drastic change from the streets of Birmingham, with skyscrapers and architectural masterpieces embedded throughout the country. After catching up on some well-needed sleep, we visited the prestigious Singapore cricket club for a civilised meal before taking in the breath-taking views of downtown Singapore from the terrace. The following morning, we travelled to Sentosa island (a British military base turned tourist island) in order to let off some steam and relax on the beach before a busy day ahead. We were given the opportunity of going up the infamous Marina Bay Sands building offering views of the F1 track, sports stadium and stunning skyline. The first set of fixtures were held this evening against Singapore’s Oldham school in which both Vesey under 16’s and under 18’s put on impressive performances to defeat Oldham 27-5 in both matches to take a two to nil lead in the series of matches.

Upon arrival in Japan, we journeyed to the mountainous and rugby-centred village of Sugadeira, on the way visiting the Jigokudani monkey park where we were able to walk amongst Japan’s snow monkeys.

The second set of fixtures took place the following day at an impressive sports facility with glorious views. The under 16’s played a strong, travelling Urawa Grammar School team and put in a tireless and brave performance with a Clark Wells hat-trick leading them to a last second victory described by Mr Whiting as the ‘best under 16’s match he’s witnessed’. The under 18’s also put on a masterclass, displacing Daito Bunka High School 57-12 with both David Thomas and Seb Smith scoring two tries each.

Next up was the cultural city of Kyoto where we experienced the Daigoji temple complex with Japan’s oldest wooden temple before kayaking on Japan’s largest lake- Lake Biwa. The third set of fixtures proved to be the toughest against Kyoto Kogakuin High School who outclassed the Vesey boys, defeating the under 16’s 50-7 and the under 18’s 74-7. Afterwards, the first round of hosting began with the schoolboys and their families for two nights which was many boys’ most memorable and priceless experiences. The Kyoto school hosted a traditional Japanese tea ceremony and calligraphy lesson to give the boys an insight into everyday Japanese culture.
We advanced to Hiroshima on the bullet train, visiting the powerful Hiroshima memorial museum which put into reality the devastation caused on the tragic day of August 6th, 1945. The penultimate fixture was a combined under 18 and 16 side against Miyajama Technical High School with Vesey coming out victorious, winning 19-0. Following the match, we toured the opposing team’s school and visited the Miyajama island, viewing the Great Torii Gate and making lifelong friends.

The final leg of the tour was spent in Tokyo with half of the boys being hosted, enjoying the wealthier cultural side of Japan in Tokyo skyrise apartments. The others enjoyed a baseball match between Hiroshima and Tokyo at the Tokyo dome with an atmosphere on par with a premier league match! This culturally enriching and unforgettable tour was capped off with an amazing final set of fixtures against Kokugakuin High School where the under 16’s won 36-10 and the under 18’s 21-12, meaning the touring group won the series of matches 7-2. A big thanks goes to our staff team led by Mr. Whiting, for providing us with a smooth-running and memorable experience.

Mid-Autumn Festival Celebrations

Mrs. Wang's Year 8 Mandarin Class were lucky enough to be given the chance to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, commonly marked in China by drinking Chinese tea and eating mooncakes, a round pastry with a filling, which could be a variety of things, including: egg yolk, red bean paste, all types of nuts, lotus paste, and fruit paste.

They were a hit with the students and gave them a chance to further explore Chinese culture, undoubtedly benefiting their wider cultural knowledge and awareness.
Up those stairs from the vibrant Language corridor, covered with posters, colours and maps, past the all-important Big School corridor and to the passageway containing the second home to hundreds of students. Where but of course the library. A lovely librarian named Miss Brown awaits your arrival with a broad smile. “Good morning Adi!” she beams. I quickly take up the only seat left for the computers and finish off my online Maths quiz. “Time! Time to go!” shouts a voice. Well, it is time to “vacate these premises!”. I grab my bag and walk up another one of the countless flights of stairs at Vesey to my form room. My fellow friends are waiting to go in, all in deep conversation about whether Villa deserved the win last night or whether Leeds were just poor.

Registration begins with a blog rich with information, deadlines and notices. “Off you go to Lesson 1!” says Mr Greenwood. What better way to start off the day than Chemistry! Today we’ll be getting the results of our tests back! At last! What did I get?

My paper is handed to me: 89%. I’m very happy. “It was a difficult test, boys, so anything above 80% is a fantastic result”. I reflect on my effort What Went Well and how I can make my result Evén Better If I give a clearer definition of the term electrolysis.

Next is English. We are currently studying the 1930s novella ‘Of Mice and Men’. We analyse Curley’s Wife, the character. Lots of highlighting, lots of annotation. My book is packed with colours. The bell goes - time for breaktime!

I’ve been invited to the Headteacher, Mr Robson’s office for cookies. This meeting takes place every week with the top merit winners of the previous week to congratulate them on trying their very best and therefore gaining the most achievement points in their form. The Head goes around the table and asks everyone about several aspects of school life: what achievement in the past half term are they are proudest of, where they are going on holiday for half term etc.

We shake hands with Mr Robson and head off to period 3. It’s history with Miss Storey - good name for a history teacher right?

Today, we’ll be learning about why Henry VIII, a good friend in fact of our school’s founder Bishop Vesey, introduced the Church of England. As a group, we derive information out of information sheets and come to a final judgement that there were 3 core factors: personal reasons, wealth and power. Next up is my best of the lot, Maths. We are going to study the 3 index laws in Maths. I enjoy maths and the challenges that the problems pose at you. The bell rings again. Phew, it’s lunchtime - that Maths lesson went quick!

I speed off in the direction of the Clive Richards Music Block. Wind Band today is particularly crowded. I set up my music stand, get my notes ready, grab a few bites of my lunch and … Mr Buxton is ready to play. He says “Good afternoon team.”
Let’s begin with All About The Bass.” Today is our final rehearsal before our concert next week. We practise our 3 pieces, Director of Music, Mr Buxton is content with how our pieces are going and that’s the end of rehearsal.

After finishing my lunch, I go up the stairs again - my form room is on the top floor! Finally, for Period 5, I have the most exciting of them all: German! Sehr gut!

I’m lucky to have Mr Keeble. A teacher who keeps his lessons engaging, very fun and interesting but also gets across his points well - it’s tough teaching Deutsch with all the word order rules and the agreements! I have my own experience from running Year 7 German Club. This afternoon, we’ll be perfecting our use of the past tense. Bring! There goes the bell for the final time of the day.

“Auf Wiedersehen Herr Keeble!” I say. “Tschüß” replies Mr Keeble

That’s the end of another fantastic day at school… or is it?

No, it is not! How can you miss out on the brilliant afterschool opportunities here at Vesey’s!? I have afterschool hockey training. Post-warm-up, we set up dribbling drills and also work on how to get past the defender. We round the training session off by playing a mini-game in which my team wins 2-1.

That is now, officially, the close. What a day it’s been! Diving into 1930s America, searching for facts and figures about Protestant England, playing a terrific set of compositions, writing about the awesome art museum we visited on vacation in Belgium and improving my defending skills in Hockey: today had the lot! Who knows what’s in store for tomorrow.

Oh, I just remembered, it’s Friday!!

Year 11 ‘Drop Down Day’ 14th October 2019

Each academic year, year 11 have two ‘Drop Down Days’, which replace structured classroom lessons with activities. Seminars, activities and lessons are delivered by External Specialists, and are delivered to strengthen students’ practical application of skills and provide a deeper learning experience.

This year, our Year 11 cohort were lucky enough to have an interactive seminar led by Baasit Sidiqui, the Gogglebox TV Star, who runs motivational and educational workshops. They also watched a play, which taught about sexual consent and listened to a talk about the dangers of alcohol abuse. An eye-opening and thought provoking day indeed. Thank you to all of our guests who made the day possible, and to Miss Orlandini, Head of PSHE and Citizenship, for organising this experience for our Year 11s.
An excellent first half for Vesey sport across all year groups. There have been 70 rugby fixtures already with a nearly 60% win ratio against very strong opposition, an excellent start. In the senior section the 2nd XV have dominated all of their games winning 4 out of 4 convincingly. In the junior section the U’13 ‘a’ team lead the way and are still unbeaten, they look forward to continuing this form when they travel to Ireland over the start of half term with year 9’s on the Junior Rugby Tour. Year 7’s have had a busy start and are now beginning to develop as they get more match experience.

The girls rugby is flourishing with excellent numbers attending training each Friday and they look forward to more fixtures after half-term.

Hockey has experienced similar success, similarly boasting a 60% win ratio for all teams. The first team have worked hard in training and are starting to gel under the tutelage of Mr Lavery, with strong wins against Solihull and Loughborough so far. Both the 2nds and 3rds are unbeaten. The juniors are flourishing with fantastic numbers attending training and lots of fixtures coming up next half term for all teams.

For our rowers, as we come into the winter there is a greater focus on land training including our before school sessions which is regularly attended by over 40 rowers each week. Our next race is in Stourport on the 10th November.

The cross country team have made a good start to the season, with a string of second place finishes, despite injuries to key runners. The highlight was securing second place in the Sutton Park Pairs Race. Star performers so far have been Alex Stapleton and Laurie Barratt, who have both made very strong starts to their first season.
Stunning Academic Achievement

As well as helping to keep our students engaged and interested in the curriculum, curriculum enhancing opportunities here at BVGS undoubtedly contribute towards their academic success. See the most recent results table for GCSE and ‘A’ Level Results below.

GCSE students had a record-breaking year, with 73% of grades at 7-9. Our progress score is stunning: +0.68 putting us in the top 7% of schools nationally for progress.

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‘A’ Level results were once again outstanding.

We wish the Class of 2019 all the best with the next stage in their education and look forward to welcoming them back for Speech Day Friday 29th November.
After a close and competitive round of auditions, 14 boys made it through to the Junior Soloists’ House Competition Final. The event was held on the 22nd October, and parents of the boys as well as important Friends and Ambassadors of Vesey were invited.

The audience were treated to some truly stunning performances by both our soloists and the Funky Bishops. We are very proud of our music community here at BVGS, which continues to promote and enable our talented young musicians to flourish. With this much talent at this young age, we look forward to seeing the progression of our boys.

Congratulations to all entries for their performances. After adjudication by guest judge Alex Laing, Charlie Ward was announced as the winner, for his rendition of ‘Creep’ by Radiohead. See him pictured below on the left.
My experience in UK Youth Parliament

Anais Brindley

Since then, with the UKYP, I’ve attended residential, including Annual Conference in August, where all of members from across the UK met, debated and voted on issues to be added to the UKYP 2020 Manifesto.

We then privately voted on the most pressing issues that we wanted on the 2019 Make Your Mark ballot; we chose 5 UK wide issues and 5 devolved issues facing young people, including the current UKYP campaigns ‘Put an End to Knife Crime’ and ‘Votes at 16’. I chose to run Make Your Mark here in school, and students voted ‘Protect the Environment’ and ‘a Curriculum to Prepare Us for Life’ as the most important issue facing young people. In total the West Midlands got 101,319 votes, an all-time high, showing the outstanding scale of youth voice reached by the UK Youth Parliament, as Make Your Mark is the largest youth consultation in Europe! On the 8th November, the UKYP will sit again in the House of Commons, where we will debate the top 5 issues facing young people, as chosen by young people in the UK, to select our two campaigns for the coming year.

Being a member of Youth Parliament has also given me many other amazing opportunities over the past year, such as meeting with many local and national decision makers, influencing how youth services and charities act and what they provide, and I also was able to go to an APPG on Youth Affairs in Parliament, where young people were able to directly tell the national government what they should be prioritising for young people. I’ve been able to use my platform to show decision makers that young people matter, and that we need to be taken seriously in political discussion.

To get involved in the UK Youth Parliament, I joined my local youth council, the Staffordshire Youth Union, and ran in the following election. Youth voice is not just political. It is in everything we do, everything that is done for us and everything legislated affecting us, and I urge as many young people as possible to get involved, even if it isn’t through the UKYP, although it is a brilliant place to start.

The UK Youth Parliament has provided me with so many incredible experiences and opportunities over the past year to represent young people on a local and national level. As an organisation, it aims to provide opportunities for 11 to 18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. It isn’t hard to agree that young people aren’t listened to in political discussion, and that is what we aspire to change. It is so important that young people get their voices heard and UKYP is an incredible organisation that allows us to do that, through campaigns and the renowned Make Your Mark survey.

My year as a member of Youth Parliament began with my election in February where the young people of Staffordshire voted me as one of their 4 MYPs.
This year, there has been a first in Vesey History. 7E are the very first form in Emerald House. Miss Davis, Communications and Marketing Lead, took the opportunity to talk with three boys from 7E: Aadarsh Jagannathan, Seth Johnston and Subhaan Mehmood, to ask them about their Vesey experience so far.

The move to secondary school can be daunting, but it is fabulous to see that these three boys have managed it so well. Seth, Aadarsh and Subhaan all only knew one other student before joining Vesey, but have made a great start and spoke about the new friendships formed. All speak about their desire to make the most of the extracurricular offering here at BVGS, and have said they are completely amazed by the variety of clubs available to them.

Subhaan said ‘expressing myself through music and art is something I really love’ and is looking to join origami club, which Aadarsh and Seth are already involved in. All three have thrown themselves into sport, and having only been here for just over a month, have already tried rugby and hockey, Seth trying rugby here for the first time.

It was so lovely to meet with these three boys to speak to them about their first term in secondary school, making history as the first year in Emerald House.
New Faces here at BVGS

Here at BVGS we welcomed 16 new staff members this term. They are:

- Miss Davis – Communications and Marketing
- Mrs. Siddiqui – Head of Biology
- Mrs. Ashby – Head of Careers
- Mr. Kirk – Head of Computing
- Miss Bowen – Head of Design Technology
- Miss Orlandini – Head of PSHE/Citizenship
- Mrs. Fordham – Post 16 pastoral
- Mr. Khan - Physics
- Mr. Hazell - French
- Mr. Page - History
- Mrs. Parton - Maths
- Mr. McLoughlin - Maths
- Mr. Tuxford - Economics
- Mr. White - PE
- Mr. Sheffield - Hockey Coach
- Miss Xiaoyi - Volunteer Mandarin teacher

Read below a brief introduction to the roles of three of these 16.

I am the first Communications and Marketing Lead here at BVGS. Coming to Vesey from 2013-2015, as well as being the President of the School Council when I was a student here, has given me an excellent experience of the culture and values of BVGS. This has been crucial in helping me produce effective comms and marketing material. My role involves producing all communications material of the school: adverts, weekly newsletters and The Veseyan, as well as being involved in a number of internal comms activities and other events. I organised both the Peter Randon Memorial Service and the Junior Soloists’ Competition.

Miss Davis
Communications and Marketing Lead

Mr Khan
Physics Teacher

Here at BVGS I teach Physics to roughly 200 students, from years 7-10. For the Year 7 students, I teach them the more general science curriculum. I run drop-in sessions to help students as and when they need, but I am looking forward to scheduling in a more formal drop-in session time in the new half-term. It has been a pleasure to return to BVGS as a teacher, having formerly been here as a student. It is a real joy to be part of the ‘Vesey experience’ for the children I teach.

Miss Orlandini
Psychology Teacher and P.S.H.E Coordinator

My role at Vesey is different to any other teaching position I have had previously, given that I am now the Co-ordinator of PSHE and Citizenship alongside teaching Psychology. I am embracing the new responsibilities, and found it rewarding to see how much the Year 11’s reflected on their ‘drop down day’, which I organised. I am impressed by the inclusive culture at BVGS, as well as the high levels of motivation I see in my students. Students here want to learn and aspire to great things.
The OV Community is making significant and notable strides in engaging younger OVs. Next term, we look forward to the first ever Welcome Back U6th Class of 2019 Drinks here at BVGS on Thursday 19th December, and a sell-out OV Dinner on the 9th November. Until then, we remain engaged with connecting with OVs and hearing about their post-Vesey lives and experiences.

If you are an OV, Please keep in touch with us using the Alumni Network: https://alumni.bvgs.co.uk/homepage

Since the change in Editorship, distribution of The Veseyan has been undertaken at the School. In order to facilitate the distribution of The Veseyan to Old Veseyan Association Members, the labels for postage have been printed off at the School from a memory stick in the sole possession of the former Editor.

The labels have been stuck on by BVGS Interns as opposed to volunteer Old Veseyans. As further progress in the transition, it is intended that the Old Veseyan Association database be transferred entirely to the School to be held under their data protection rules.

Old Veseyan Association Members who do not wish their data to be transferred should advise either the School or the OVA (oldveseyannews@gmail.com). Whilst every endeavour will be made to accommodate those who opt out of the transfer, such advice may mean non-receipt of future issues of The Veseyan.

Appeals to the Community: Academic Seminars

BVGS is seeking to find ‘friends of the school’ and alumni to deliver presentations or lead seminars based on their own personal experiences. We would be delighted to welcome past speakers and are always eager to meet new ones.

These seminars have made a significant impact on our students. MedSoc was the first of our societies, and since the introduction of the society we have seen record numbers of successful applications to medical schools. We look to grow our other societies to experience the same success rate as MedSoc. Even if you don’t see your subject area listed below, please don’t hesitate to get in touch if you would be interested in sharing your experiences and career path with our students.

- MedSoc meets each week from 1.15pm – 1.50pm on a Friday lunchtime.
- LawSoc meets from 1.15pm – 1.50pm on a Monday Lunchtime
- EconSoc meets from 1.15pm -1.50pm on a Friday Lunchtime
- The other academic societies meet on a more informal basis, depending on the availability of guest speakers.

If these times aren’t suitable, but you would be interested in giving support by coming and speaking to our students at another time, or you would be willing to offer CV reviews or telephone interviews, please get in contact with David Goodwin (Head of Sixth Form) at: d.goodwin@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk.
OV Interview: Claudia Haywood  (OV 2013-2015)

Claudia came to Vesey for Sixth Form, from 2013-2015. She studied English Literature, Maths, Biology and Chemistry to ‘A’ Level. It was one day in a Sixth Form assembly, when a guest speaker from KPMG came to give an assembly about his career journey, that Claudia realised she wanted a career in accountancy.

During her time at Vesey she tried rowing, but was mainly committed to netball. She has ambitions to start playing netball again, at a Back to Netball session, which is held here at BVGS every Monday. When thinking about her Vesey experience, she has fond memories of the support she received from Mr. Grey, her Biology teacher, who supported and helped her greatly with the UCAS process. She also thoroughly enjoyed all the experiences she gained through her work as a Mental Health Officer, which saw her organise events in school to promote mental health awareness, as well as get involved with other projects at BVGS, such as the successful Growing Vesey, Growing Minds campaign.

After Vesey, Claudia moved to Bristol, where she studied Biochemistry. Her degree allowed her to further hone her scientific mind, as well as giving her the time to secure internships over summer, which enabled her to gain fantastic exposure to what life as an auditor in one of ‘the big four’ accountancy firms might be like.

Now an Audit Associate for EY, Claudia is embracing the challenges of a demanding career. She loves the team focused aspect of auditing, and was thrilled to discover there is a thriving community of OVs at EY, who provide her with a source of comradery through their shared Vesey Experience.

While the job often requires her to work long hours, outside of work Claudia likes travelling and golfing, and makes time every year to attend the BVGS Corporate Partners Golf Day. She is looking forward to attending her first OVA dinner on November 9th 2019.

We hope you have enjoyed this new-look Veseyan. This edition is the first ever half-termly edition and it has been truly inspiring to collect all of these stories and watch our young people succeed in the first term of the academic year 2019-2020.

Until the next edition, please keep in touch with us via our social media channels, as well as looking out for weekly newsletters via the ‘Newsletters’ section of the website and your emails.

Wishing you a restful half-term holidays.
Dominic Robson, Headteacher.

Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School  https://bvgs.co.uk/  @BVGS1527