

Hitchcock Library



Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow



Christmas 2025 Newsletter

It's in the news



It seems incomprehensible that it is the Christmas holidays already.

We've had a busy Autumn term with Open Evenings, Year 6 Open afternoons, author visits, events held in the library such as the BeeSociety presentation, Model UN and many more.

Being involved in all these events helps ensure the library is at the centre of the school continuing to provide a silent place to study with up-to-date books and magazines to read or just somewhere quiet to read in a busy school day.

We have some new library duty students this year so we are very pleased to have Thomas, Om, Ekaksh, Essa, Joseph and Bob joining James, Kulan, Lenny and Sasha out this autumn.

The Library displays not only highlight important events but also provide a focus for your reading and introduce new books to read

MINECRAFT



HALLOWEEN



SOCIAL AWARENESS



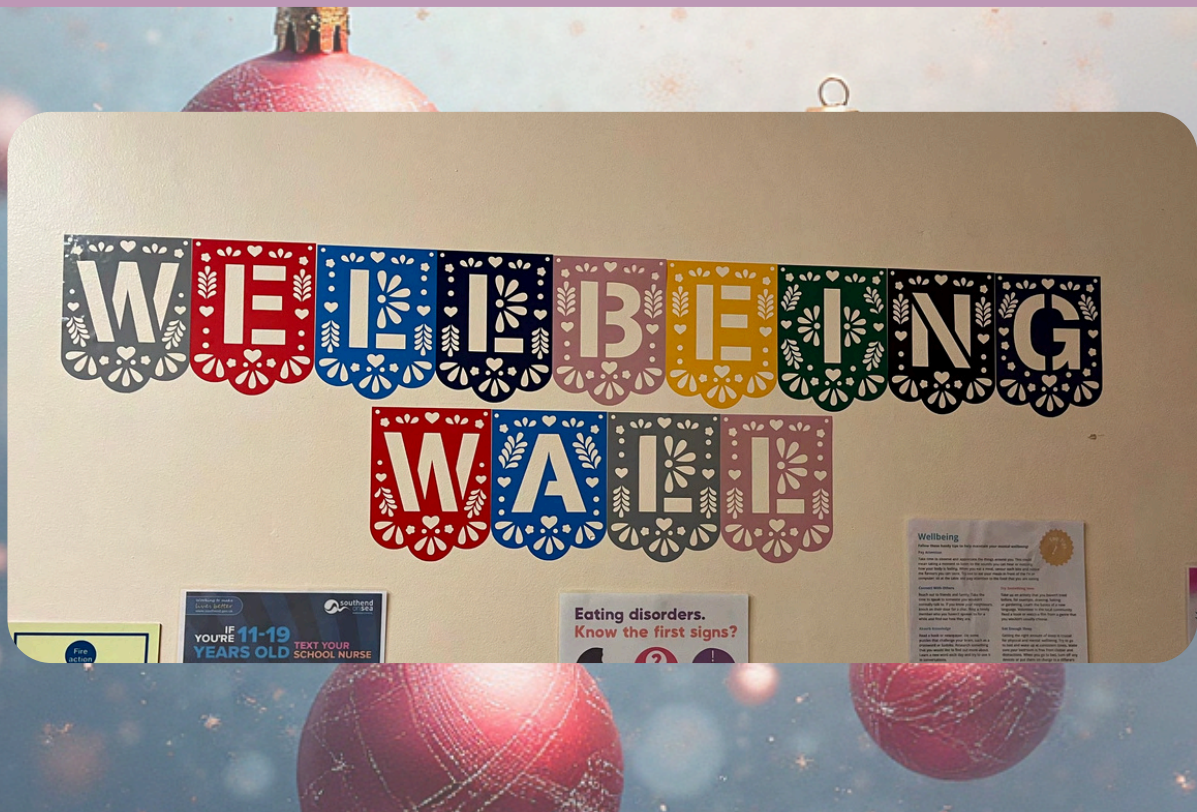
BLACK HISTORY MONTH

DON'T FORGET TO KEEP READING BOOKS TO COMPLETE THE READING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



PARENTS ASSOCIATION AND OSA SUPPORT

We are grateful to the Parents Association for funding a new Cricut machine for the library. This handy cutting device will help us craft fresh resources and displays. You can find an early example on the Wellbeing Wall in the Sixth Form Centre, with more designs coming in the New Year.



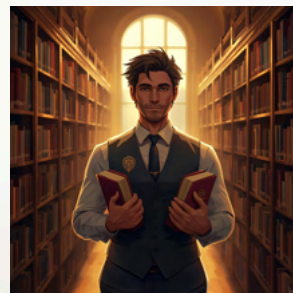
The library has also been supported by the Old Southendian Association providing help with items such as the Book Trust year 7 free books and the costs of the veteran's lunch. Without the support of these two amazing groups we wouldn't be able to offer these experiences. We thank them for their support this year.



**The Old Southendian
Association**

Sustaining Friendships...

Library Ambassador Daniel says...



In gaming, at about Christmastime every year, the industry comes together for the famous awards ceremony “Game of the Year”. This ceremony is all about celebrating the incredible games that have been made across the past year, and being a casual gamer myself, I thought it would be a fun idea for me to present my Book of the Year, where I look at all the books I have read this year (though many of them weren’t released this year, and gave my favorites in a couple of categories. So, without further ado:

Best Nonfiction – thinking fast & slow

This year was an interesting one for me, as it was the first time I’d ever properly read nonfiction works. Thinking fast and slow (which was suggested to me by Mr. Baker – thank you sir!) is a psychology – based book that teaches you about Daniel Kahneman’s Nobel-prize winning research in a simple way, without compromising on the depth of the knowledge provided. Kahneman teaches you about the physical changes that can show the amount of effort one’s putting in to a task, how unconscious bias affects our everyday life, and more. I cannot recommend this book enough, both to Psychology students, or anyone who wants their thinking revolutionised.

Best Fiction – Shadows of Self

Anyone who knows me even vaguely well will not be surprised by this pick, and yes, I am fully aware that I glaze Brandon Sanderson at every available opportunity. But honestly? He earns it. Shadows of Self, the second book in the Mistborn Era 2 series, perfectly balances fast-paced action with surprisingly thoughtful character work. Set in a world transitioning from swords to steam engines, the book explores themes of progress, justice, and identity, all while still delivering the kind of plot twists that Sanderson is infamous for. The character of Waxillium Ladrian continues to be one of my favourite protagonists to read, and the emotional weight Sanderson manages to pack into what is, on the surface, a fantasy detective story is genuinely impressive. I will, once again, apologise for t — but not enough to stop.

Best Poetry – I Still Believe in Miracles

Poetry has always been a genre I’ve struggled to fully engage with, but I Still Believe in Miracles really surprised me. The poems are deeply personal without feeling inaccessible, and they manage to capture quiet moments of hope, doubt, and resilience in a way that feels very human. Rather than being overly abstract, the writing is grounded and emotionally direct, which made it far easier for me to connect with. It’s the kind of collection you can read in one sitting, then find yourself coming back to individual poems days later because a particular line stuck with you.

Best Kids’ Book – Diary of an 8-Bit Warrior: Shadow over Aetheria

Although clearly aimed at a younger audience, Shadow over Aetheria was a genuinely fun read. Set in a Minecraft-inspired fantasy world, the book does a great job of combining humour, adventure, and surprisingly solid worldbuilding. It doesn’t talk down to its audience, and instead embraces creativity and imagination wholeheartedly. Even reading it well outside the target age range, it was hard not to get swept up in the story — and it’s easy to see why this series is such a hit with younger readers.

Best Comedy – How To (Randall Munroe)

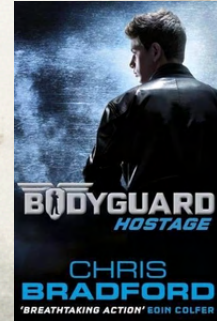
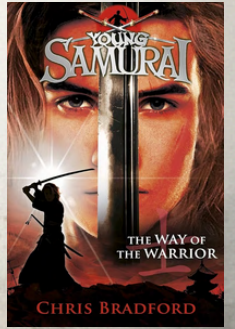
Randall Munroe’s How To is exactly what you’d expect from the creator of xkcd: absurd, overthought, and genuinely hilarious. The book takes simple, everyday problems and answers them in the most impractical ways possible, using real scientific reasoning taken to its most ridiculous extreme. Despite the humour, there’s also a surprising amount of actual science in here, explained in a way that’s accessible and engaging. It’s one of the few books this year that made me laugh out loud consistently — which is a harder achievement than it sounds.

Book of the Year – Mao: The Untold Tale

If I had to pick one book that left the biggest impression on me this year, it would be Mao: The Untold Tale. It is an unflinching, deeply detailed examination of Mao Zedong’s life and legacy, and it doesn’t shy away from the scale of the human suffering involved. While it’s a challenging read at times, it’s also an incredibly important one. The authors combine rigorous historical research with clear, compelling writing, making an otherwise overwhelming subject understandable without ever oversimplifying it. More than any other book I read this year, this one fundamentally changed how I understood a major historical figure — which, to me, is exactly what a Book of the Year should do.



HE'S BACK! AUTHOR CHRIS BRADFORD VISITED US ON 18/11





**WORLD BOOK
DAY 2026**

ANDREW LANE

We are pleased to announce that author Andrew Lane will be visiting us for World Book Day 2026!



Many of you will be familiar with Andrew's series of Young Sherlock Holmes novels which has now been adapted for a new Amazon Prime series directed by Guy Ritchie and set to be released in 2026.

Andrew is also behind the series 'Lost Worlds' as well as novels based on the world of Doctor Who.



We can't wait to welcome him next year. In the meantime, find out for yourself a little more about him by borrowing one of these books from the library.

Check out page 23 for some Young Sherlock themed puzzling.....

Booktrust Bookbuzz

In November Year 7 students were treated to a book of their choice from a selection of titles as part of the National BookTrust Bookbuzz programme.

All 16 books available were carefully selected by a panel of librarians and teachers.

Authors included former SHSB visitors Chris Bradford and Simon James Green as well as award winning writer Katherine Rundell.

We hope the students have enjoyed reading their new books.



Oh Bertie!

Nothing beats a visit from our very own therapy dog, Bertie
(and his human Tricia!)





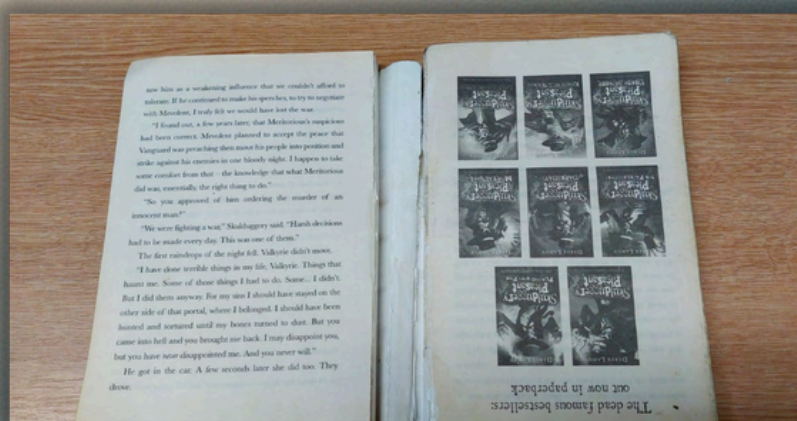
BOOK DONATIONS



Over the last couple of years we have asked for book donations of popular titles

The library has been gifted many fantastic books after bookcase has been cleared out.

One of our regularly borrowed titles finally came to the end of it's borrowing life



We were able to go straight to our spare books cupboard and replace it with a sparkling new copy thanks to the generosity of our parents.

Thank you for helping us keep lots of lovely new books on our shelves.



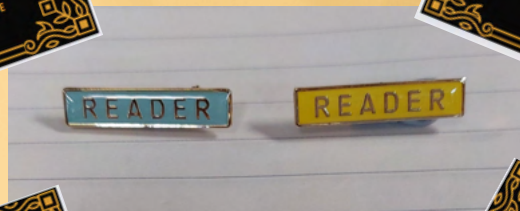
We always welcome donations of popular books



Reading Achievement Award



Lots of students are currently working towards their Reading Achievement Award. To qualify for this award, students must read 12 books from the school library each term. Students must fill in a short online form about each book they have read. If a student reads 12 books in a term they will receive a certificate. If they read 12 books for all three terms they will receive a badge. We hope this encourages reading for pleasure amongst the students.



Books of 2025



We've rounded up picks from Waterstones, Browns Books, Penguin, The Guardian and The Observer, to bring you what the 'experts' consider some of the best reads of the year. Do you agree?



Capitana

Cassandra James



Sunrise on the Reaping

Suzanne Collins



Shadow Thieves

Peter Burns



Traumaland

Josh Silver



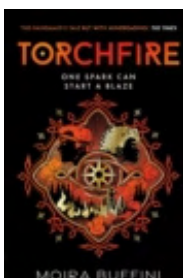
Glorious Rivals

Jennifer Lynn Barnes



The Otherwhere Post

Emily J Taylor



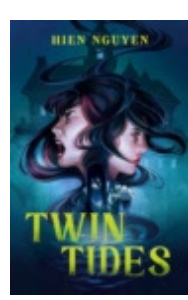
Torchfire

Moira Buffini



The Uninvited

Ross Mackenzie



Twin Tides

Hien Nguyen

We're having a Home Alone Christmas

Guess the famous line from the movie from the scene photo



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



Answers on
last page of
newsletter

VETERAN'S LUNCH

Friday 14th November

Another very successful Veteran's lunch was held in the gorgeous MRA and was attended by some extra visitors this year including the Mayor and Madam Mayoress. We had many veteran charities represented including RBL, Royal Naval Associations, BLESMA, Korean War Veterans Association, OSA, Royal Engineers, PARAs, Royal Hospital Chelsea, Christmas Island Veterans, Black Arrows pilots, RAF Association and also WW2 evacuees. I think it was our most attended yet for the variety of associations. We had a super time and so many of the veteran's commented on the interest of the students and their fascinating question but especially on their polite manners. Huge thanks to facilities, the kitchen staff, IT, Miss Foreman and so many other helpers on the day especially the fabulous Prefects. Here are a few photos of the day.



VETERAN'S LUNCH

Friday 14th November



VETERAN'S LUNCH

Friday 14th November



HOME ALONE^e Recipes

Recreate the recipes from one of our
favourite Christmas films

“Highly Nutritious” Mac and Cheese

2 cups macaroni
1 tsp cornflour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp garlic powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp onion powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp mustard powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp turmeric
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp black pepper
1 tsp chicken stock
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
2 tbsp unsalted butter
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups grated mature cheddar cheese
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup grated Gouda

1. Cook pasta according to the package instructions, drain and set aside.
2. Mix together all the ingredients apart from the pasta, butter, cheese and milk.
3. Over a medium heat melt the butter. Add the spice mixture and stir.
4. Pour in the milk and cook for 1 minute.
5. Add all the cheese to the pan and stir until melted.
6. Stir in the cooked pasta and serve.



Snow Sliding Shakes

Serves 2

2 cups vanilla ice cream

½ teaspoon almond extract

½ cup coconut milk

½ teaspoon salt

2 heaped tablespoons
sweetened coconut flakes

1. Add all the ingredients
except coconut flakes to
a blender. Blend for 30
seconds.

2. Pour into two tall
glasses. Top each glass
with the coconut flakes
and serve with straws



It's beginning to book a lot like Christmas in the library





Festive boredom busters

Get your (ice) skates on!

Garon Park, Southend, 11 December - 5 January

Lakeside, 14 November - 4 January

Riverside Ice Rink, Chelmsford, 6 December - 2 January



He's behind you! Panto Season

Cinderella, Cliffs Pavilion, 13 December - 4 January

Aladdin, Chelmsford, 28 November - 4 January

Elf the Musical, Palace Theatre, 3 - 6 December



Let it glow!



Enlightened Colchester Castle Park. 12 - 28 December

RHS Glow, Hyde Hall, 21 November - 27 December

Enlightened, Hylands Estate, 28 November - 3 January

Light up the Night, Scott's, 27 November - early January

Events further afield...

Hogwarts in the Snow, Warner Bros Studios, 15 Nov - 18 Jan

Festive trail through time, Transport Museum, 27 Nov - 4 Jan

Festive Tunnel Walks, Postal Museum, 6 - 19 December

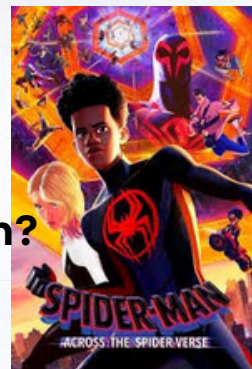




Tinseltastic TV

BBC

- David Attenborough's Wild London
- The Traitors at the Proms
- Royal Institution Lectures: Is there life beyond Earth?
- Oppenheimer
- Spider-Man: Across the Spider Verse



Amazon Prime

- Red One
- The Man Who Invented Christmas
- Christmas Eve
- How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Disney+

- Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw
- Phineas and Ferb Recap: Percy Jackson
- Percy Jackson and the Olympians
- Discovered by Disaster



Netflix

- A Boy Called Christmas
- Carry-on
- Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey
- Scrooge: A Christmas Carol

Sky

- A Minecraft Movie
- Mission Impossible - The Final Reckoning
- Amadeus
- Karate Kid: Legends



MINECRAFT

Festive games for all the family!



Dreading the annual family Trivial Pursuit showdown? Find yourself edging towards the door at the mention of 'Charades'? Why not mix it up a bit this year with some of these....



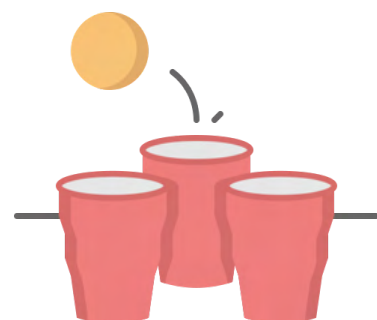
Place a pile of small marshmallows at one end of a table and a bowl at the other. Players see how many sweets they can move into the bowl in one minute by sucking them up with a straw. Can also use chopsticks instead of straw.



Players sit with a cup/bowl of cotton wool balls. Blindfolded they must try and spoon the balls into other cups in front of them.

Spread marshmallows across a table, two players compete to get as many marshmallows into their bowl...whilst wearing plastic cups on their hands

Spread gift bows across a table. Players are blindfolded and then must see how many they can scoop into a bowl using only a fish slice/spatula.





Brain Teasers

Young Sherlock word search



Assassin
Deduction
Espionage
Leech
Sherlock

Bite
Detective
Intelligence
Mycroft
Snake

Blackmail
Disguise
Kidnap
Mystery
Venom

Conspirator
Eglantine
Knife
Psychic
Virginia

Maths Square

	-	4	-		-7
-		×		÷	
9	+		+		18
+		-		-	
	+		+	5	14
-5		20		-2	

Fill in the missing numbers

The missing values are the whole numbers between 1 and 9.

Each number is only used once.

Each row is a math equation.

Each column is a math equation.

Remember that multiplication and division are performed before addition and subtraction.



Answers



HOME ALONE QUIZ

- 1- Fuller go easy on the pepsi
- 2 - Keep the change ya filthy animal
- 3 - I made my family disappear
- 4 - We slept in
- 5 - Bring me back something French
- 6 - You guys give up or you thirsty for more
- 7 - A lovely cheese pizza just for me
- 8 - We're the wet bandits
- 9- It's only my imagination, only my imagination

Maths Square

3	-	4	-	6	-7
-		x		÷	
9	+	7	+	2	18
+		-		-	
1	+	8	+	5	14
-5		20		-2	

Young Sherlock Wordsearch

