

# The Tupton Hall Gazette

By Students, For Students

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## Editors' Note

This issue explores the world around us - from life in our classrooms to the challenges shaping society today. Our writers have tackled topics that matter: how lighting affects learning, the flaws in our voting system, and the importance of celebrating Black History Month.

We also look ahead to the future, with reflections on climate change, the message of Diwali, and the courage of figures like William Wallace. And of course, no October issue would be complete without some fun - from Halloween traditions to the global success of Taylor Swift.

Thank you to all our contributors for their effort and creativity. We hope you enjoy reading and find something here that informs, inspires, or simply makes you smile.

*With pride,*

**Milan T.**

*Editor-In-Chief*

## The Classroom Dilemma: Lights On or Off?

By Chloe C.

Artificial lighting is commonplace, worldwide and appears in many forms, yet they are often most

abundant in public buildings and spaces where a constant, predictable environment is necessary for the comfort of the majority. However, when in a classroom where comfort and wellbeing is vital for performance, what is the best solution?

The first ever lightbulbs were not the fluorescent bulbs or LEDs that we know today, but rather incandescent bulbs. These contained a thin, metal wire that glowed as a current passed through it. Fluorescent lights came to be in the 1930s and contained gases which lit up in the presence of electricity. Now, LEDs are the most common type of artificial light and work thanks to electrons. If an electron moves down an energy level towards the nucleus, it releases energy in the form of a photon - a basic unit of light. This release of light is only noticeable in certain molecules. LEDs are the go-to in modern times due to their energy efficiency, longer lifespan, and reliability.

Despite this, they are not issue-free. It has been reported that certain colours of LED light, such as red, white, or blue, can have negative impacts on migraine headaches, and the resulting photophobia, by increasing the pain experienced. Interestingly, it was only green light that reduced pain, and this worked most efficiently at low intensities. \* This may be due to green light producing the smallest electric signals in the retina and brain out of any other colour.

In a classroom environment, it is vital that everyone feels comfortable and ready to learn. Bright white LEDs like those used in schools are infamous for

causing headaches due to their blue light emissions, as previously stated, and flickering. This goes unnoticed by us, but LED lights flicker 120 times per second on average due to the AC electricity supply.



[Photo by Chloe C.]

If this is true, why do so many of us insist on always keeping them all on? While natural light is, of course, not exempt from inflicting pain, it is oftentimes less intense and does not flicker in the same way as LEDs.

By just turning half of the lights off in a room, it can greatly improve comfort and attitude of students. Sunlight has been reported to improve student performance by improving concentration, mental health, and decreasing stress. These conditions

are clearly ideal for students at any stage of their education, so why are they not utilised?

It is, as many things, not as simple as it appears. Although our upstairs classrooms have access to an abundance of light due to the skylights, it may be harder for a downstairs classroom to find adequate lighting from sunlight alone. It may also be too dark outside to properly illuminate a room, especially in the colder months. In which case, it would be appropriate to use artificial lighting, but it should never be viewed as a complete alternative to natural lighting.

Although artificial lights such as LEDs have a negative impact on headaches and therefore student behaviour, they cannot be eradicated entirely. As such, a shift toward natural lighting that still encompasses the benefits of trusty artificial lights may be the way forward in terms of improving student (and teacher) attitudes whilst in the classroom.

\*Study by Oxford Academic Journal 'Brain': Migraine photophobia originating in cone-driven retinal pathways | Brain | Oxford Academic

## **William Wallace: Scotland's Guardian**

By Josh R.

The United Kingdom has no shortage of historical and mythological legends, talked about by young and old, modest and rich.

From the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table to the myths behind the infamous Jack the Ripper. One figure that reaches a similar status amongst the British Isles is Scotland's own William Wallace. A symbol of rebellion and the fight against tyranny amongst the Scottish people, and one whose story this article will share to you.

Born around 1270, Wallace spent most of his life fighting against King Edward I, King of England, who invaded Scotland in 1296. Before his rise to prominence, he first acted in Lanark alongside 30 other men, burning English buildings and supplies and even killing the murderer of his wife the English imposed sheriff, William Hesselrig. This was only his first act of rebellion however as he next arrived in Scone, driving out much of the English forces and the justiciar of the area. Around July 1297, an attempt to take back the throne was made by Robert the Bruce, another legendary Scottish figure, however this attempt failed, pushing much of the Scottish forces into

hiding. However, William Wallace remained undeterred from his goal of freeing Scotland, as his most famous and successful battle occurred shortly after Robert's defeat.

After the failure of the Scottish armed forces, a large English Army was advancing into the Stirling area on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1297, seeking the capture and execution of William Wallace, and his close ally and friend, Andrew de Moray. The army was estimated to be between 8,000 and 12,000 men compared to Wallace's meagre 2,300 soldiers. The Scottish were outnumbered 4 to 1, yet despite these unfavourable odds, this seemingly impossible task was undertaken by Wallace and his men. Several factors including the English being funnelled through a narrow bridge and the Scottish having the high ground enabled William Wallace to defeat the undefeatable English Army. He drove them out of the Sterling area and humiliated the vast army, who suffered 5,000 casualties, compared to the Scottish whose casualties were so minimal they weren't recorded, save for Andrew de Moray, who died a few months after the battle from his injuries.

Both he and Moray earned the honour and title of "Scotland's Guardians", which he remained until a year later, during the decisive Battle of Falkirk. This was a failure for the Scottish

forces, with thousands of deaths that led William Wallace to retreat, resulting in him resigning his title and fleeing to France for a short time in 1299. Upon his return later that year, not much is known other than he continued resisting King Edward when most had surrendered, between 1299-1305, until August 5<sup>th</sup>, when he was captured by English forces, and executed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1305.



[Photo by Josh R.]

The following year, Robert the Bruce reignited the Scottish rebellion, successfully winning Scotland's independence, a feat which remains to this day, one of, if not the most, decisive moment in Scottish history. Yet, behind that feat was a man who fought when those around him surrendered. A man who won a

seemingly unwinnable battle in Scotland. A man who despite his losses, refused to give up his home.

William Wallace is remembered to this day as one of the most important Scottish figures, alongside Robert the Bruce himself. A monument in Sterling dedicated to the great Scottish guardian exists to this day, open to the public. There you can view the full story of Wallace, as well as see the site of the Battle of Sterling Bridge and the sword he was said to have wielded during his time fighting the British. His sacrifice is used by the Scottish, and the world, as a beacon for fighting injustice, tyranny and suppression, and in a time where these things are more prevalent by the day it's important to remember William Wallace, Scotland's Guardian, and his fight for the freedom of his people, a hero of not only Scotland, but to all free nations.

## **The Flaw in Britain's Electoral System**

By Zeph McNeill

Britain's voting system has long faced criticism for failing to fully represent the views of the public. The way our elections are structured often means that the balance of power in Parliament doesn't accurately reflect how people voted across the country.

## **First-Past-the-Post**

The UK uses a voting method called First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) to elect Members of Parliament (MPs). Each area, known as a constituency, elects one MP. The candidate with the most votes wins — even if they don't receive an overall majority.

This means that a candidate could win with as little as 30% of the vote, even if 70% of voters preferred someone else. As a result, the number of seats a party wins in Parliament can differ greatly from its share of the national vote.

For example, in the last general election, the Labour Party received around 33% of the vote but gained over 60% of the seats in Parliament. Meanwhile, smaller parties such as the Green Party earned nearly 7% of the vote but hold less than 1% of seats.

This highlights how FPTP tends to favour larger, established parties while making it harder for smaller ones to gain representation.

## **The Two-Party Challenge**

Historically, the UK has been dominated by two main political parties - Labour and the Conservatives. However, recent polling suggests increasing public interest in other parties, such as Reform UK, which some surveys show gaining significant support. Whether or not this translates into

actual seats under the FPTP system remains to be seen.

### **Possible Solutions**

Many reformers argue that the UK should consider proportional representation (PR), where the number of seats each party receives directly reflects its share of the national vote. For example, if a party won 20% of votes, it would receive roughly 20% of seats.

However, PR has challenges of its own. It could make it harder for regional parties, such as the SNP in Scotland, to maintain influence, since they only stand candidates in certain areas.

Another idea is to expand the House of Commons by adding additional seats that are distributed according to national vote share. This could make Parliament more balanced, although the practical issue of limited space for MPs would need to be addressed.

Alternatively, ranked-choice voting (also called preferential voting) could be introduced. This system allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives over 50% of first-choice votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and their votes are redistributed, until one candidate achieves a majority.

### **A Call for Reflection**

There are several potential paths toward making the UK's democracy more representative. As political views continue to diversify, discussions about electoral reform are likely to become more prominent. For now, though, the First-Past-the-Post system remains at the heart of British politics - for better or worse.

## **Black History Month: Honouring the Past, Inspiring the Future**

By Niamh O.

Every October, people from all around the UK are united to celebrate Black History Month; a time to honour the successes and struggles of black people both in society and throughout history. But where did Black History month originate from?

Black history month originally began in 1926 as a week in the United States by Dr Carter G. Woodson who was a Historian and believed that the achievements of black people should be recognised by society.

He hoped this would encourage the study of black history in schools and universities as previously African American history was almost entirely absent from educational systems. It was later changed to a month of celebrations, and by the 1980s the idea

had also spread to the UK where it is now honoured every October.

October was chosen for two reasons: it is the beginning of the academic year and traditionally in African cultures this is when rulers gathered to make important decisions. The month now allows for a time of reflection and to learn about the rich cultures and traditions that are often missing from our history books.

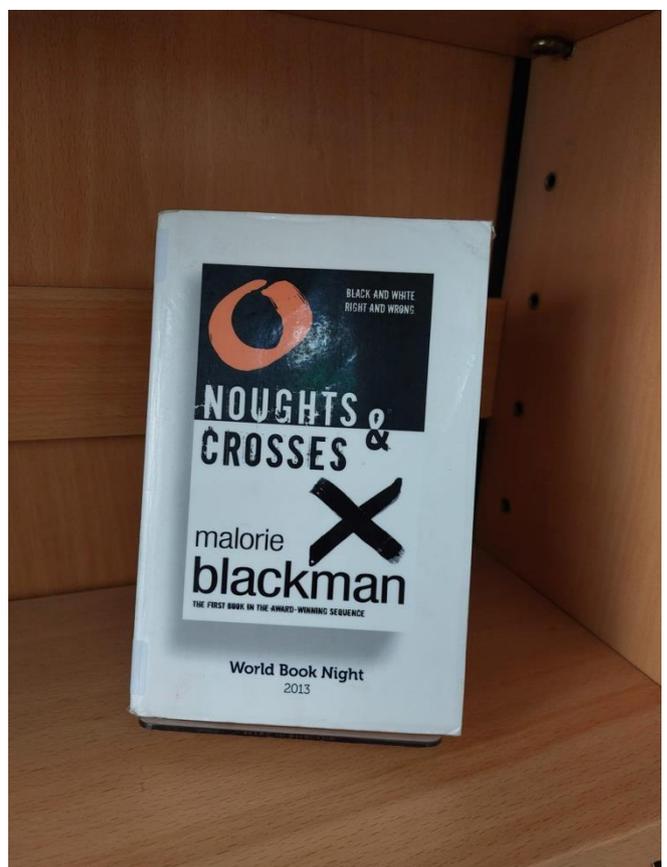
Here are some influential figures in the U.K who should be recognised for their contributions:

Walter Tull, a footballer pioneer and war hero, was born in Kent and became an orphan at the age of two. His story has only come to light in recent years. His talent in football was evident from a young age, and he was soon signed by Clapton FC. In 1909 he joined Tottenham Hotspur making him one of the first black professional footballers in the English Football League. Despite his amazing contributions to the team, he experienced intense racial abuse from spectators which was normalised at the time.

When World War 1 broke out, Tull enlisted in the British Army and in 1917 he became one of the first Black officers in the British Army - an extraordinary achievement. He demonstrated clear bravery on the battlefield particularly when he led his men on a night raid into enemy

territory. Sadly, he was shot and killed later during the war at the age of 29. At the time this was given very little media attention. In more recent times, there has been a campaign for Walter Tull to be given the Military Cross.

Malorie Blackman is a British Author best known for her “Noughts & Crosses” series which explores themes of racism, love, and societal injustice in a divided society. She was born in 1962, in London, facing the challenges of being a Windrush generation child. She was determined to play a part in changing black representation in UK literature. She has written many books for children and young adults often in the style of science fiction and fantasy to tackle moral and social issues.



[Photo by Chloe C.]

In more recent times her contributions have been recognised as she was the children's laureate from 2013 to 2015, being the first black author to hold this title.

So why does Black history month matter? While some may question the relevance of the month today, the truth is that Black History month is still incredibly relevant today as it is not just remembering and honouring the history but is recognising the ongoing issues still today.

## **Climate Change – How Can We Mitigate in the Modern World?**

By Iris F.

Climate change is the biggest threat facing humanity today and will impact our lives for the worst if we do not start to act now.

Energy is the primary source of climate change, but also the key to the solution. We can use energy and similar factors to reduce climate change through several ways; these include reducing fossil fuels, creating more sustainable land use, and following global agreements. In doing so we can reduce the carbon emissions that pollute the atmosphere every single day and prevent any more damage to the earth.

Reducing fossil fuels is crucial to combatting the climate crisis. They are used to produce energy. This allows access to electricity in our homes, allows us to heat our homes, cook in our homes. But it is more damaging than you would think. The trouble is we cannot cut out fossil fuels altogether because there is no other as reliable resource that can supply the whole of the earth's population. However, we can significantly reduce the extent of the supply we use day to day in our homes. By improving energy efficiency, through better insulation or increasing renewable energy use such as solar panels, we can make important progress in reducing our dependency on fossil fuels whilst also maintaining the supply that is necessary to our lives.

Energy also allows reliable transport and industry, both two of the largest consumers of fossil fuels. The management of energy and fossil fuels in industry is crucial because industry is the core of development, and by exploiting those fossil fuels we will soon reach an irreversible level of global warming. Nevertheless, we can mitigate this risk by simply improving public transport to become more sustainable and encouraging various industries to adopt cleaner production methods. By introducing these steps, we can overtime reduce the whole of society's dependence on fossil fuels

and move toward a more resilient global economy.

Sustainable land use is also a key action to reducing the levels of harmful emissions because it encourages efficient resource management and conserves biodiversity and the environment. By introducing practices such as afforestation (re-planting trees) and sustainable agriculture (farming supply that meets current demand and does not add to climate change) we can help to restore the degraded ecosystems whilst balancing the maintenance of the environment. This is because by cutting down trees it contributes to the enhanced greenhouse effect, which is where harmful emissions get trapped in the atmosphere, however afforestation contrasts this completely by reducing the greenhouse gases and improving the quality of the air. Practices such as these restore ecosystems and absorb carbon dioxide which significantly reduces the rates of climate change. Getting into habits like this ensures a greener future and increasingly conservative actions of the environment.

Another crucial way that we can help to tackle the ongoing climate crisis is through following through on global agreements made by the nations around the world. For example, the Paris Agreement. This was designed

to fight climate change with the help of many different countries; in doing so they would set targets to reduce emissions which in the long term protect the planet. However, the commitment behind them plays the most important role - the governments. They must be held accountable for their agreements of protection. The citizens also have a vital role in demanding action. Without this consistency, the efforts to reduce climate change will decrease and will have consequences concerning the strength of any other mitigating actions that we attempt to make.

And so, we conclude that tackling climate change relies on global cooperation and responsible actions from governments and people. Through the use of renewable energy, sustainable land use and global agreements - all of which are just some of the many factors that can be used to mitigate climate change - there will be positive changes to the atmosphere and the rate of global warming. This will ensure a noticeably greener future if we stay committed and will reduce the consequential impacts on the generations yet to come.

# Diwali: The Festival of Lights

By Milan T.

Every autumn, more than a billion people across the world celebrate Diwali, the Festival of Lights. It marks the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. Homes and streets glow with candles and lamps, families share food and sweets, and communities come together in joy and hope.

Diwali's origins come from ancient Indian traditions and hold different meanings for different faiths. In Hinduism, it celebrates Lord Rama's return home after defeating the demon king Ravana, when the people of Ayodhya lit rows of lamps to welcome him. It is also associated to the goddess Lakshmi, who is believed to bring prosperity and good fortune.

For Sikhs, Diwali coincides with *Bandi Chhor Divas*, marking the release of Guru Hargobind Ji from imprisonment. Jains celebrate the spiritual enlightenment of Lord Mahavira, while some Buddhists, particularly Newar Buddhists in Nepal, honour the victory of light and wisdom. Though the stories differ, each shares the same central theme - the triumph of good over evil.

Preparations for Diwali begin well before the day itself. Families clean and decorate their homes, buy new clothes, and prepare special dishes. At

night, houses shine with candles, diyas, and colourful lights. People visit friends and relatives, exchange gifts and sweets, and often end the evening with fireworks. In recent years, more families have chosen eco-friendly ways to celebrate, reducing fireworks and focusing on togetherness.

Diwali has become a global celebration. In the UK, major cities like London, Leicester, and Birmingham host large events filled with music, food, and performances that attract thousands of visitors each year. These gatherings reflect Diwali's growing role as a festival of community and shared happiness, open to everyone.

Beyond its beauty and celebration, Diwali's message is simple and timeless - even in the darkest times, light will always return. It reminds us to be kind, hopeful, and grateful for the good in our lives, and to carry that light forward into the world around us.

## The Origins of Halloween

By Evierose H.

Halloween, celebrated every year on October 31st, is a time for costumes, trick-or-treating, and spooky decorations. But where did Halloween come from? Its origins trace back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain.

Over 2,000 years ago, the Celts, who lived in what is now Ireland, celebrated Samhain to mark the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter. They believed that on this night, the barrier between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred, allowing spirits to return. To protect themselves, people lit bonfires and wore costumes made from animal skins and heads to scare away evil spirits.

In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III moved All Saints Day to November 1st, a day to honour saints and martyrs. The evening before became known as *All Hallows' Eve*, later shortened to Halloween. Around the same time, *All Souls' Day* on November 2nd was established to remember the dead. People would go door to door offering prayers or songs in exchange for food - a tradition known as souling. The treats often given were small cakes called soul cakes.

In the 19th century, Irish immigrants brought these customs to North America. Old traditions evolved - turnips once carved to ward off a spirit named Jack were replaced with pumpkins, which were larger and easier to find in America. This gave rise to the modern-day "jack-o'-lantern".

Today, Halloween is celebrated around the world with costumes, parties, horror films, and haunted houses. Though it has become more

about fun and fright than faith, its origins remind us that Halloween began as a way to honour the past and find light - even in the dark.



[Photo by Amelia P.]

## Taylor Swift: 19 Years of Music

By Amelia P.

As of October 3rd, global superstar Taylor Swift released her 12th hit album, "The Life of a Showgirl".

The album was released with a 12-song track list, her shortest album yet. But still her albums continue to break records every release. The album serves as a story showcasing her experiences in show business, love and past regret. With her recent

engagement to the US NFL star Travis Kelce, fans are eager to hear her outlook through her music in the same way she has been doing so for the past 19 years.

Taylor Swift has had a long and successful career, with a previous 11 albums achieving a total of 14 Grammys, 40 American Music Awards (AMA's), 49 Billboard music awards, 30 MTV Video Music Awards (VMA's) as well as many more.



[Photo by Amelia P.]

Most recently, she completed her record breaking "Eras Tour" in which she toured globally with 149 shows over a 21-month period, including 15 shows in the UK alone. It even had a Disney+ special, demonstrating her

profound musical impact globally as an artist.

Her musical impact has been especially well known after her first 6 albums were sold by her previous record label which resulted in the existence of the "Taylor's Version" (albums where she re-recorded her original "stolen" albums as an act of rebellion against the sale). Her dedicated fanbase were using "Taylor's Version" instead of the versions which decreased their value significantly and allowed her to buy back her music allowing her to finally own her entire discography earlier this year, after a long and tumultuous battle.

The act had a global impact on the music industry as it brought awareness to the rights of artists and music ownership and encouraged many artists to fight their contracts for what they want, a lesser discussed part of a musician's career.

Her global success has had a significant impact on the music industry and beyond. Her act has raised awareness about important issues, and even her widespread use of "friendship bracelets" at concerts has become an infamous trend. Additionally, her concerts have boosted local economies, with an estimated £300 million boost to London's economy because of her eight sold-out shows at Wembley Stadium, which holds the record for most sold-out shows by a solo artist.



[Photo by Amelia P.]

## **Final Note**

We'd love to hear your thoughts on this edition!

If you have any feedback, ideas, or would like to contribute to the next edition, please get in touch at [20tuttmi@tuptonhall.org.uk](mailto:20tuttmi@tuptonhall.org.uk).

Your opinions help us make each issue better - thank you for reading!