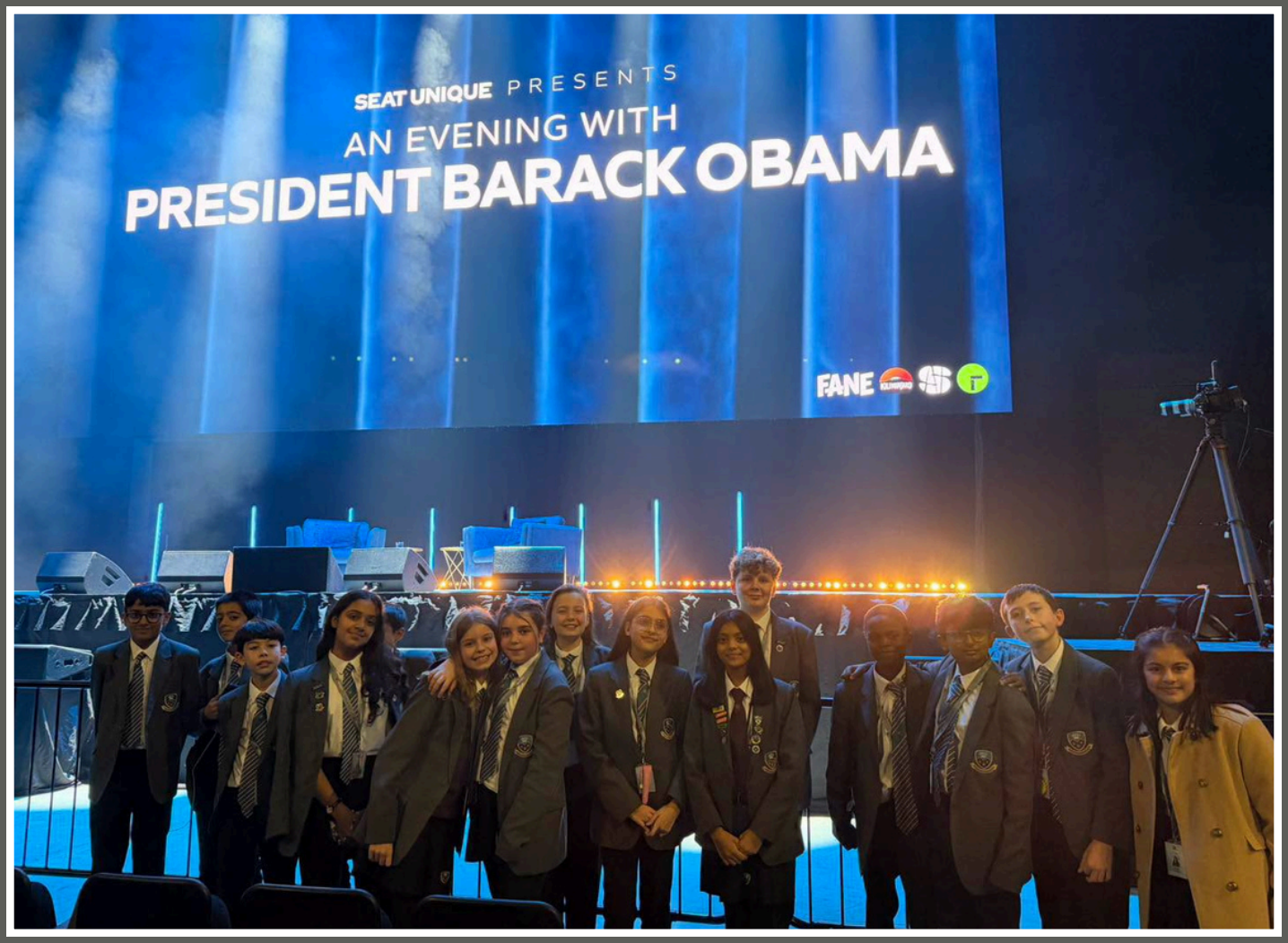
THE SHARPLES SPOTLIGHT

FOR THE STUDENTS, BY THE STUDENTS



ARTISTS:
PIPPA MOSS

SEPTEMBER EDITION

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UMAYMAH PATEL
SAFAA KHANNAT
AVI PAUL
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MARYAM ELNAGAR

FEATURING NEW SECTIONS, CHALLENGES, ARTICLES AND MORE!

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome back readers to The Sharples Spotlight! I hope you've all enjoyed the first half term of this academic year and have already been *'Learning, Dreaming and Achieving'*. For those of you new here The Sharples Spotlight is our very own, exclusive magazine, *'by the students, for the students'*. Created by students, written by students, edited by the students, for the students. This year we're ready to provide you with another huge selection of articles, artwork, puzzles and much more!

Before I let you go and read, I'd also like to appeal to you all to join our brilliant team. We are always looking for new and talented writers and artists so if you or someone you know is interested contact me at 23moosak@sharplesschool.co.uk. However, we are no longer taking requests for photographers due to the sheer amount of interest. Thank you to everyone who has already got in touch this year. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase your creativity, improve your skills and it looks great on Gold Tie and college applications in the future. We love seeing new passion and interests expressed every month. Articles can even be submitted anonymously for those of you who prefer to play your role in the background. We meet every Thursday in T2, so get yourself down, we can't wait to see you there! Who knows, perhaps you could be in my position next year. All work can also be submitted to me by email, we love to see 'one-off-articles' from outside of the team. This opportunity is for everyone, whether you enjoy writing or not. This could be the perfect opportunity for you this year. If you're going in Year 10 it's time to think about a Gold Tie, and for everyone else this looks great on SAC, Silver Tie, Interact and even ambassador applications.

This month we have multiple articles by our new Y7s. I'm looking forward to seeing their progression in skill over the next year. As expected they have brought their own creativity with them, one of my favourite pieces of work is by Maryam ElNagar, who has written a riveting horror story. Well done Maryam!
We also have for you a celebration of Black History, an informative article on a the Hindu celebration Durga Puja, and of course the crowd favourite- Teacher of the Month- as well as much more.

I'd also like to remind you about the writing competition we are currently running- more information is on the poster on the next page. Remember choose ONE hobby you enjoy and write an article about it. This could be your favourite football team, something artsy you like doing, a review of your favourite book and so much more. 50 RP for the winner.

Thank you for all your support, I'd love more feedback from YOU so if you do have a thought drop me an email, I'd love to hear it.

- KHADIJA MOOSA - EDITOR

COMPETITION!



Write an informative article about ONE hobby or interest you have!

WINNER GETS 50 REWARD POINTS!

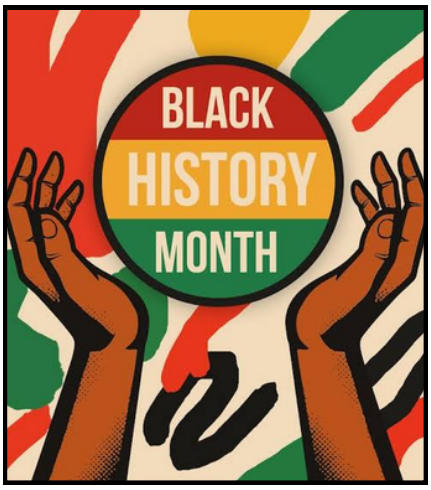
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BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Hey readers! This article is on an important event this month, Black History Month, and in line with this year's theme *honouring our communities* I will share a bit about black individuals' involvement in the history of and our present day communities, their cultures, and more.

But first, a bit about this year's theme *honouring our communities*. The idea is not to celebrate just the world-famous *Rosa Parks* or *Nelson Mandela* and other famous names of history but our unsung everyday heroes. The teachers who nurture and instill knowledge, our nurses and health professionals who work tirelessly, social workers who battle an array of problems from fires to crime, community helpers, just a friendly face and everybody else in between.

Unsung heroes also exist in the black rights movement, and while Martin Luther King did play a big part in the movement, it is unfair to give credit to just him or a handful of famous activists. We all know Rosa Parks' to be a brave woman who refused to give up her seat to a white woman, but did you know that she wasn't the first, and was one of many to refuse? On the 2nd of March 19, nine months before Rosa Parks, 15 year old Claudette Colvin was arrested for the same crime: refusing to give up her seat to a white woman. Civil rights activists worried her age and outspokenness would damage the respectability of their campaign. Another hidden figure was Ella Baker, who helped build organizations like the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); she preferred quiet background roles like mentoring students, who then went on to drive the front lines of the movement. Black people have struggled throughout history to fight against unfair prejudice, slavery and rascism and continue to fight today, this month is all about fighting the narrative and letting the Black community feel proud and supported. I know that when some students heard that I was writing a black history month article they were more than eager to share their cultures and a bit from their perspective about their history. So, this next paragraph is all about the vast and unique cultures, which cover the continent of Africa.



First, a glimpse on Africa in general, the roots of all humanity, not just black people. In the whole of Africa there are over 2000 languages spoken, 54 independent countries, and over 3000 distinct ethnic groups/tribes like the Masai, Zulu, Hausa, Yoruba, Oromu, or San tribes. Arabic is the most widely spoken language overall, primarily in the north of Africa, while Swahili is the most widely spoken indigenous language throughout East Africa. Interestingly, pyramids - a big part of what we know to be part of Egypt's history, aren't really the oldest pyramids in Africa. Sudan is home to centuries more ancient pyramids than Egypt!

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Ancient Egypt is also believed to be the birthplace of the Afro comb, a symbol of Black strength and power that boomed in the 1960s-70s. Africa also has many other landmarks and stunning natural scenery. It is home to the Sahara Desert, vast savannas and rainforest, millions of unique species, and the infamous Mount Kilimanjaro (the highest free-standing mountain above sea level in the world, at 5,895 m)

The African people are famed for their bright and eye-catching textiles, although being such a large continent clothing styles differ throughout. For example in Northern Africa clothing is heavily inspired by Middle-Eastern dress such as the kaftan and djellaba, whereas Southern Africa is known for vibrant patterns, intricate beadwork and heavy cotton textiles. A large part of Black identity includes their famous afro hair, which can be described as a naturally curly, coily or kinky hair which typically forms a rounded voluminous shape. This kind of hair can be hard to manage and falls outside of the traditional Western beauty standards, which leads to many Africans in Western countries, particularly women, struggling to love their hair. However, this month is all about Black pride so for all the young black individuals reading this, be proud of your hair, and learn to love it as it is.

Zooming in on Nigeria, Aaminah, a Nigerian student, has shared her views on black history month.

She views black history month ‘as a month where the history of black people, their success, and strengths are portrayed in a way that gives people the strength to be themselves no matter what others say or view them as’. She has shared that she is from the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria, one of the three main tribes out of approximately 371. Her 66 year old country's independence day is also coincidentally on the 1st of October!

Mount Kilimanjaro and the savanna

Black History Month is not only a time to look back at the achievements and struggles of Black people throughout history, but also a chance to recognise the people around us who continue to make a difference every day. Whether they are activists, teachers, healthcare professionals, or simply individuals who proudly share and preserve their culture, their contributions help to shape the communities we live in today. By honoring both the well-known figures and the unsung heroes, we gain a fuller understanding of history and the importance of diversity, resilience and unity. This month, let’s celebrate the stories, cultures and achievements that continue to inspire future generations and strengthen our communities.

-ANONYMOUS AND SAFIYA IBRAHIM

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TOTM- MRS SOLOMONS

For this month's TOTM (Teacher of the Month), we sat down with a familiar and much-loved face at Sharples: Mrs. Solomons from the history department! A "self-professed geek" who has been teaching at our school for 11 fantastic years, she brings incredible energy and passion to her classroom every single day.

Reflecting on her journey into teaching, Mrs. Solomons initially started out wanting to be a marine biologist! However, her love for the past won out, leading her to study History at university and launch straight into her teaching career here at Sharples as her very first school. When she was first job hunting, she interviewed at a few different schools. On one eventful day, she had two interviews lined up—one interactive interview here at Sharples and another (boring one!) elsewhere. After seeing what Sharples was all about, she accepted her position right here, and the rest is history!

When she isn't busy inspiring students with tales of the past, Mrs. Solomons keeps herself very busy. Between looking after her three young children, her spare time is filled with hobbies like running and reading. When it comes to books, she loves diving into different genres like historical fiction and fantasy. And like many of us, she admits to indulging in a bit of "trash TV" over the summer holidays to unwind!

Family plays a huge role in Mrs. Solomons' life. She has been with her partner for six years, and they have three wonderful children aged 5, 3, and 1. If that sounds like a handful, the household is complete with a 7-year-old Westiepoo dog named Winston which she calls her pride and joy. How adorable!

When asked about her favourite holiday she chose Easter, because all three of her children celebrate their birthdays in the spring months. As a family, they love getting together, going on caravan holidays to recreate childhood memories and visiting favorite spots like Spain and the Lake District. They also enjoy taking skiing lessons together at the Chill Factory.



This is Winston the Westiepoo

Whether she is bringing history to life in the classroom or balancing a bustling family life with her three kids and dog, Mrs Solomons is an absolute star of our school community. Her dedication, warmth and enthusiasm makes her the perfect choice for the 'Teacher of the Month!'

-UMAYMAH PATEL AND MAARIYAH MATADAR

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DURGA PUJA

Durga puja is an important festival for Hindu Bengalis around the world during Autumn. We celebrate for 5 days unlike many Hindus who celebrate over 9 days called Navrati (9 nights). This year it starts on 16 October 2026 to finishes on 20th October2026.

We celebrate because we believe in good over evil. When the other Hindu gods were unable to defeat the demon king, Mahishasura, they each gifted Goddess Ma Durga one of their most powerful weapons, which is why she has ten hands to carry them all. We worship the Goddess Ma Durga because she defeated Mahishasura. She killed him and saved the world from darkness and chaos.

5 days of Durga puja

Day 1: Maha Shashthi - Formal beginning of the main festival and the arrival of the Goddess.
Day 2: Maha Saptami - The start of major daily worship.
Day 3: Maha Ashtami - One of the most sacred and spiritually days of the festival.
Day 4: Maha Navami - The peak of grand worship before the farewell.
Day 5: Vijayadashami (Dashami) - Final day of Durga Puja and Navaratri

How do we celebrate?

Over the five days we wear new traditional clothes, offer flowers and prayers (called Pushpanjali) in our local temples or community marquees (known as pandals), and receive prasad (blessed food).

During Durga puja we perform Arati. This is a Hindu religious ritual of worship in which we light candles and flames in a lamp called a diya. It is fuelled by ghee (butter), waved in a clockwise motion before the sacred deity. During Arati, drums (called dhaks) are played whilst prayers are offered. Many women also perform a devotional dance known as Dhunuchi.

Durga puja is not just about the religious festival, its about bringing people together to pray, dance and eat prasad to celebrate good over evil. During the festival we also reunite with family and friends that we may not have seen all year.

-AVI PAUL

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STAFF OF THE MONTH

Welcome to this issue's Staff Member of the Month! This month, I have chosen to interview one of our school receptionists, Ms McKenna, who works in our school's Admin Department, where she is responsible for managing any communication between parents and processing data that teachers or pupils need.

A former Sharples pupil, she has always loved history and had always wanted to be a history teacher. She was taught by Mr Savage during her time here and it is one of the things she has continued to pursue her passion in, despite not having many set hobbies. However, she enjoys working with all of the departments within our school as she then has the opportunity to interact with many people as she adores being helpful and ensuring that our school runs well.

One piece of advice that she would like to give to students is that she believes that working hard and being positive will get you far. She explained that whilst you may not be able to control your circumstances or what happens to you from time to time, it is vital for you to remember that you can always control your attitude, as it will give you a much stronger mindset as bad things don't always necessarily lead to even more difficulty, but rather they can help you to move forward.

Thank you very much to Ms McKenna for agreeing to be interviewed for this edition and I hope you enjoyed reading it!

-FATIMA ISMAIL

JOKES COLUMN

How did the piano get locked out of its car? **It lost its keys**.

Why don't oysters donate to charity? **Because they're shellfish.**

Want to hear a construction joke? **I'm still working on it.**

A priest, an imam, and a rabbit walk into a blood bank. **The rabbit says "I think I'm a Type O."**

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THE NIGHT OF THE DEAD

I woke up with a jump. It was midnight, on Halloween. Outside, the sky was inky-black, the shadows of flickering pumpkin lights and owls dancing on my curtains. I wasn't sure why I had suddenly woken up—maybe a bad dream. I hopped out of bed and tip-toed to the bathroom. As I felt my way around the darkness, something was strange. A deafening silence. None of the gentle snores coming from my sister's room, no humming noises from the radiators. It was too quiet. *Deathly quiet.*

And then I saw it. The jagged red stains on the wall, standing out starkly against the bright-white paint. I reached out, and my fingers sunk into the thick, metallic substance. It was blood. I took a sharp breath and opened my parent's bedroom—NO ONE WAS THERE. The bed was neat and tidy— *no one had slept in it.* My heart started to pound like a drum, fear flooding my body. I felt a gust of icy wind seep into my bones and tickle the hairs on the back of my neck.

"Mother?" but my own voice petrified me, and I shuddered with fear. And then I heard it.
CREAK! CREAK! CREAAAAK! The stairs moaned—and someone, something was climbing up them. For a moment full of relief, I thought it was my mother. But it wasn't.

I could make out something coming up those stairs. "He-l-lo?" my voice stuttered and my lip trembled. I searched my whole body for courage and held on to it, hoping my fear would not smother it.

"DEATHHH…," came a whispering, croaky voice. It felt so close, so cold, so ghastly. And then a silhouette emerged from the darkness...
I froze in my spot, scrunching my eyes so I didn't see it. I couldn't speak or move. Dread and pure terror locked me into place, and the realisation that I was alone and helpless hit like a hurricane. I was praying that someone, anyone would help, but there was only me, *that,* and the terror filling my world.

I opened my eyes… and there was… Mother. My mother. But instead of her kind, beautiful face, it was chalk-white, her red eyes piercing through the darkness, dressed in a ragged white gown. Her sinister, mirthless, brittle smile stretched distortedly under her cold eyes.
It was a ghost. Mother was dead.

Before I could scream, the ghastly ghoul glided towards me, as I dug my nails into the wall behind. I shivered as her piercing cold breath seeped into my face, the smell of rot and decay so strong. I dropped to the ground with a deafening thud and all the life snapped out of me…

-MARYAM ELNAGAR

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HALLOWEEN: A HISTORY

As we all know, Halloween is coming up. However, not a lot of people know about the history of it. Read on, and find out all about Halloween…

ANCIENT CELTS, AND SAMHAIN

Over 2000 years ago, the ancient Celts celebrated a festival called Samhain on November 1st in Ireland, the UK, and Northern France. It marked the end of the harvest and the start of winter. People believed that on the night of October 31st, the boundary between the living world and the "Otherworld" became very thin, allowing spirits, ancestors, and supernatural entities to cross over. Celts lit large bonfires and wore animal skins, masks, and disguises to trick or scare away the ghosts or wandering spirits. This is still celebrated in places today!

CHRISTIANIZATION AND ALL HALLOWS' EVE

In the 8th century, Pope Gregory III moved All Saints' Day (also known as All Hallows') to November 1st, to honour saints and martyrs. November 2nd was later designated as All Souls' Day to pray for the dead. The evening before All Saints' Day became known as All Hallows' Eve, which was eventually shortened to Halloween.

TRADITIONS

- **Jack-o'-lanterns**: Rooted in Irish folklore about Stingy Jack, people carved scary faces into turnips, potatoes, or beets with glowing coals inside to ward off evil spirits. Irish immigrants later brought the tradition to North America and used the native pumpkins instead.

- **Trick-or-treating**: Evolved from medieval English souling, where poor people went door-to-door offering prayers or songs for soul cakes, as well as Scottish guising.

- **American Expansion**: 19th-century Irish and Scottish immigrants brought these customs to the United States, where the holiday transformed by the mid-20th century into a community- and candy-focused celebration.



-SAFAA KHANNAT

GUESS THE COUNTRY:

ANSWERS AT THE BOTTOM

1



4



2



5



3



6



1. St Kitts and Nevis 2. Tajikistan 3. Kenya 4. Niger 5. Estonia 6. New Zealand

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