



The W.A.T.C.H. Word

Elizabeth Bird: CHS Events Editor

Emily Prentis-Hart: Sports
correspondent

Sophie Sysum: Journalism Editor

Alice Fuller: Lead Journalist
Vera Vitiello: Journalist
Amara Akadonye: Journalist

Rosie Guy: Media Editor

Joe Cox: Media Correspondent
Maddie Underwood: Book Critic



Meet our Competition Finalists

by *Alice Fuller: Lead Journalist*

As you may have read or seen around the school, we recently ran a competition to recruit the next generation of W.A.T.C.H. Word journalists. We had many applicants and struggled to select the four journalists that would become new additions to The W.A.T.C.H. Word.

So, this month, we decided to do something a little different and give you the opportunity to read our finalists' articles. As you will undoubtedly see, the four competition winners have a range of styles, techniques and voices. We took a liking to these and thought they would make great additions to The W.A.T.C.H. Word. As an early Christmas present, watch out for two bonus articles that we thought deserved an honourable mention as well!



The Importance of Biodiversity

Preservation by *Vera Vetiello, 10HM*

The preservation of biodiversity is a critical aspect of the environment that I am deeply passionate about. Now I think you are asking yourself what is biodiversity? Biodiversity refers to all living species on Earth including humans. It plays a vital role in maintaining the balance of ecosystems, providing essential services such as pollination, water purification, and climate regulation. Unfortunately, human activities, including deforestation, pollution, and climate change, have led to alarming rates of habit loss and extinction of many species.

Protecting biodiversity is not just about saving individual species; it is about ensuring that the ecosystems that support all life forms, including humans, remains safe. Healthy ecosystems contribute to clean air and water, and overall well-being. For instance different agricultural systems can enhance food production and reduce pests and diseases. Would you prefer breathing filthy air, wash yourself and drink contaminated water and eat food full of pests and diseases or make a little effort in helping our home? Moreover, preserving natural habitats can lower the impacts of climate change by avoiding carbon and regulating local climates.

To preserve biodiversity, it is essential to promote sustainable practices, support conservation efforts, and raise awareness about the importance of protecting our natural world. Initiatives such as creating protected areas and restoring degraded habitats can make a significant difference. By sharing deeper understanding of biodiversity and its benefits, we can inspire collective action to safeguard our planet for future generations. The urgency of this issue cannot be ignored; the time to act is now to ensure a thriving environment for all.



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Saving the Bees One Flap at a Time

by Emily Prentis-Hart 9HM

There are way more things to bees than people realise...

Social bees such as honeybees and bumblebees often live in nests or hives which are above or below ground however most solitary bees nest in the ground. Bees have many different locations that they are found in such as marshes, sand dunes, soft cliffs, wetlands, gravel pits, sea walls and way more.



Did you know UK bees are being helped by a B-Line Transport System, they are a series of 'insect pathways' running through towns and the countryside. They are a solution to the loss of flowers and pollinators, linking up existing wildlife areas together like a railway that weaves across the landscapes. Bees also have a waggle dance! It's a clever way of communicating to let other bees know where to go for food.

A cool fact about queen bees is that if they die the workers in the hive can create a new queen bee by feeding a young larva a special food called 'royal jelly' the larva will then turn into a fertile queen. They typically live for about two to three years but some can live up to five years, they also can lay up to three thousand eggs per day, fertilized and unfertilized. Unlike worker bees the queen bees have a smooth stinger so they can sting multiple times without dying.

The Importance of Recycling

by Amara Akadonye, 7HM

What is recycling?

Recycling is when you separate plastic and cardboard waste from general waste. This happens because materials such as these can be remade into new products.



How can we recycle?

Some areas of Gloucester can have up to four separate bins [General waste, cardboard, plastic and food waste], but most just have a recycling and general waste bin. By Breaking up your waste into these categories, you can ensure that waste can serve new purposes for so many different people.

What difference does it make?

As previously said, recycled materials can serve new purposes, but can also prevent land and water pollution. Pollution is the consequence of littering and is a major issue in many places at the moment. Recycling can help decrease the amount of pollution in oceans and on land because plastic waste can take anywhere from 20 to 500 years to decompose, and even then, it never fully disappears; it just gets smaller and smaller. Meaning that one plastic bag can pollute the earth forever. so don't forget:

Reduce, reuse, recycle!



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Tigers Ticking Away *by Madison Underwood, 8HC*

Tiger conservation (the protection of tigers) has been going on for decades. July 2024 it was recorded that there has been a 250% increase in tiger numbers in Thailand's Western Forest Complex (WEFCOM) over a 15-year period. 2007-2023.



Elsewhere, tigers are still under pressure due to poachers. But Thailand's DPN (Department of National Parks) has implemented high-quality patrolling, insulating tigers and their prey from poaching and habitat destruction. "We see very strong correlations between better law enforcement and the recovery of tigers," said Jornburom.

Alongside the immense efforts to enlarge anti-poaching patrols, WCS and the Thai government fought for 2 decades to monitor its effects. In 2004 the team made great efforts to set up cameras to capture images of tigers. But why would they do that? They did this because each tiger has a unique stripe pattern, setting up cameras allow scientists to identify individual tigers. Senior scientist Somphot Duangchantrasiri led this work. He then went on to publish it in the journal, Global Ecology and Conservation.

As an apex predator of WEFCOM, tigers are a sign of a healthy ecosystem and environment. Since the regrowth of tiger population there has also been an incline of the prey population. Such as an endangered species of wild cattle appearing in parts of the forest they have never been known to inhabit before. There has also been an incline in sambar (a large, elk-like deer) because of the incline of tigers. This happens because tigers need prey to survive.

Honourable mentions

Save the Bees *By Olivia Maxwell, 9HM*

The bees are in need. Bees are vital to this planet. Not only do they prop up our ecosystem (pollinating our trees and wild flowers, supporting mammals, insects and birds) without bees and many other insects in the UK, it wouldn't be long till our ecosystem were to collapse! So please save our bees, save our planet... help.

How to help our bees?

Bees / pollinator decline may be a convoluted issue, however it is not impossible. And there are many things we can do-one step at a time! One thing you can do is go chemical-free for honey-bees. Any pesticides and herbicides (synthetic) are incredibly toxic to bees, just by minimizing the uses of these would not only help the population of bees but also provide a balanced ecosystem! REMEMBER: you don't need these negative pesticides for your garden to thrive, you can do just fine with them!

Finally, one other way to help preserve our bees is to support bee habitats! This could just be by going to organisations that give pollinator gardens/ habitats to bees, or maybe just by making a plant habitat yourself e.g bee-friendly blooms in window boxes!

Just...please save the bees!





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"DROWNING IN THE FUTURE: HOW MELTING ICE CAPS ARE SINKING OUR WORLD"

By *Philia Sanoj, 10HM*

WHY IS THIS CONCERNING!?

"Oh, it's just a bit of water," you might say, but this issue is more worrying than you think. The polar caps are melting faster, and the consequences might be devastating. As the environment's temperature increases, these ice sheets are shrinking which causes the sea levels to increase.

This is not only a problem for Arctic wildlife but for us too. It has been a threat to coastal cities and millions of people. The question is no longer if sea level will rise but how much and how soon.



MAIN CAUSES AND EFFECTS?

Global mean sea level has risen about 8-9 inches since 1880. The primary cause is global warming, driven by greenhouse gases. As the ice melts, it adds freshwater to the oceans, raising sea levels. Humans also play a major role. The way we use the land, industrial pollution, and black carbon. Changes in ocean currents are also contributing to the rise in sea levels. This leads to habitat loss, disrupted climate patterns, and shifts in ocean ecosystems.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Reducing your plastic use can have a surprisingly big impact by leading to fewer emissions from production processes. Encouraging recycling is a mindful way to reduce waste and conserve resources.

Reducing energy consumption helps lower greenhouse gas emissions. Switching to renewable energy doesn't emit greenhouse gases and reduces dependence on fossil fuels. The more we understand the causes and effects of melting ice caps, the better equipped we'll be to protect our planet. Every small action can lead to changes, so let's all play a part in preserving the future.





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Meet our Competition Finalists

by Alice Fuller: Lead Journalist

So, with great examination and determination we picked our final four: Vera, Emily, Maddie, and Amara. Each person had a unique quality which went into creating their incredible articles.

Vera: Her article was on Biodiversity. Her well researched article blew us away with its fabulous facts and punchy personality. We look forward to seeing how she tackles the challenges of our main articles!

Emily: Her article was on bees! We chose her because her article was overflowing with fun facts and an energetic voice to match. We hope to see what new elements she'll add to the ensemble of the paper.

Maddie: Her article was on Tiger conservation; we enjoyed her roar-some statistics and the silky-smooth flow of her writing. As we enter a new chapter, we look forward to seeing this come out in her book reviews.

Amara: Her article was on recycling! We loved her article because it emphasised the importance of recycling, what it is and how we can make an impact to our own environment. Watch out for her festive history lesson later in the paper!

If you sent in an article, we want you to know that every single one was amazing, and we struggled to pick only four. If we had the ability, we would have taken all of our applicants. We hope to expand greater in the future so keep your eyes out for the next opportunity to join the team!



January's Announcements



- With the start of a new year, watch out for new elements of the WATCH Word coming into publication!
- January 7th sees the Year 7's You are awesome breakfast. If you're one of the winners, from that event, enjoy!
- The Evening of January 8th is the schools Celebration of Success evening. 19:00 - 20:30. Join us to celebrate our school's wonderful achievements!
- January 20th sees Year 11 and 13 having their School Photos done. Don't forget to look your best!
- There are two inset days in January. One on Monday 6th January, one on Friday 24th 2025! Enjoy your lie in everyone!



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CHOSEN HILL EVENTS PAGE



December's House Competitions

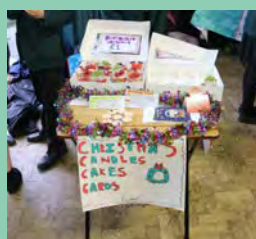
By Rosie Guy, Social Editor

As the clock slowly ticks away through December before Christmas, Chosen Hill has hosted many events to get everyone in a festive mood.

Firstly, something most people do around Christmas time: Christmas tree decorating! Whether your tree is an explosion of colour or a simplistic white and blue, decorating Christmas trees is a fun experience for everyone each year. This was certainly the case for the house Christmas tree decorating competition. Four trees were set up in the main school hall for each house, and at the end of the decoration the best tree was chosen. The lights and the baubles on the tree gave an aesthetic vibe and made it most pleasant to look at when sticking to their house's colour scheme. Students from all year groups got involved in decorating their house's trees and, by the end of an energetic decorating session, all the trees looked beautiful; a thought mirrored by those who came to see them.

But Chosen Hill wasn't finished with festivities yet! Kicking off our Ofsted Inspection, the Year 7's took to the Main Hall for their annual *You are Awesome Fair!* If colour and lights are what you find aesthetically pleasing, then this was the place to be. Even before you stepped through the door the colours from the stalls and the lights hung up around the room made it feel like a cosy, bustling environment. Year 7's manned their stalls, eagerly awaiting the crowd of Sixth-form students who huddled about their stalls, waiting eagerly to see if they had won anything or receive a sweet treat they had just bought.

After asking some of the Year 7's what their favourite part was, it had to be either the stall providing colourful hair extensions or the adorning faces with adhesive jewels. This was a stall run by a couple year 7's and turned out to be one of the most popular stalls, with people leaving with red and green in their hair, or jewels glinting on their face. By the end of the event, the students had raised a whopping £750.07, the second largest amount of any *You are Awesome Fair* on record!





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CHOSEN HILL SPORTS PAGE

December's Sports Achievements

By Emily Prentis-Hart, Sports Correspondent

With the cold coming in, not many sporting events have taken place this December, but there were a few brave souls that endured the wet and the wind.

This month started with a trip to Cardiff to watch Wales against Ireland; supporting Ms Fishlock's Sister: Jess Fishlock. Wales came out in top, securing their place in the 2025 UEFA Women's Championship with a 1-1 draw!

We then moved on to our dance show: 'An evening of dance: Emotion in motion'. With over 100 students involved and each performance reflecting joy, confidence, and resilience, it really was a night to remember. There were solos, duos and group dances all choreographed by the students themselves!

The tenth of the month saw our Year 9 boys ruby team playing in the Plate County Quarter Final. After a breath-taking score of 53-0 against Rednock, they will now play Sir Thomas Richs at the end of January, so stay tuned for the result of that game.



Christmas Feasts from Around the World!

By Vera Vertiello, International Correspondent

Christmas dinner. The centrepiece of festivities. Traditions vary significantly between Britain, South Korea and Mexico. However, they all reflect the unique history and culinary preferences of the countries they belong to.

In Britain, a traditional Christmas dinner typically features roast turkey, stuffing, and an assortment of vegetables such as Brussels sprouts and carrots. This meal is often accompanied by rich gravy and cranberry sauce, followed by classic dessert like Christmas pudding or mince pies. Family gatherings are central to this celebration; emphasizing warmth and togetherness that familial community brings.

By contrast, South Korea has adapted Christmas into a more modern celebration, while some may enjoy a roast chicken or special rice cakes, it is common for families to opt for Western-style meals, including pizza or fried chicken. Christmas in South Korea is also marked by vibrant decorations and gift exchanges.

Different from the others, Mexico offers a festive twist to Christmas dinner with traditional dishes such as tamales and bacalao (salted cod) or enchiladas (tortilla with meat, vegetables and cheese). Families often gather to enjoy variety of foods, including pan dulce (sweet bread) and ponche (a warm fruit punch). The celebration is characterized by colourful decorations and lively music, emphasizing community and joy.

Each country's Christmas dinner shows distinct cultural nuances, highlighting both traditional and modern influences that shape their festive meals.





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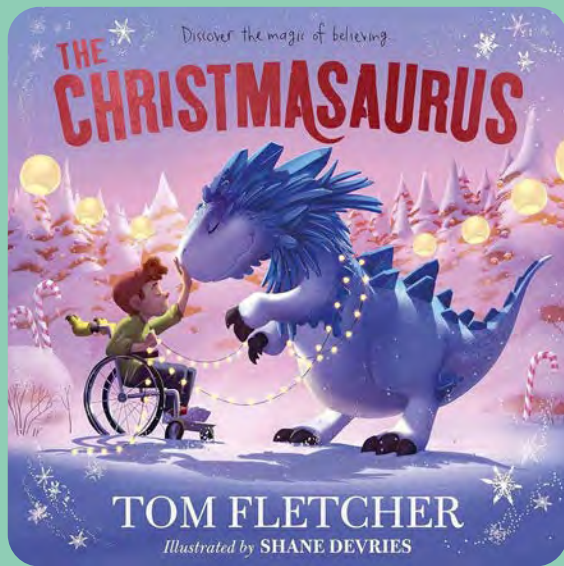
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Book of the Month



The Christmasaurus

By Madison Underwood

Tom Fletcher

The Christmasaurus is a friendly, heart-warming story about William Trundle, a young boy, who finds a very festive dinosaur in his living room. But this is only the start of their magical, mystery adventure back to the north pole. Along William's journey he meets an elf called Snozzletrump, Brenda Payne a mean girl at school and Hunter a malevolent man.

In general, I think The Christmasaurus is an amazing story for any age group (even adults). With its fun story line, it incorporates Christmas magic, whilst still being a book you don't want to put down. Within this seasonal storyline, the novel manages to open

your eyes in a new light, providing what life is like at the north pole and a fun insight to the fact that elves only speak in rhyme.

Although this is a lovely story, I felt that having William be a depressed and immensely bullied kid went too far. I liked the fact it added a backstory, but they could have dialled it down a bit.

Overall, I loved this story and felt like it was the perfect book for the Christmas season. Even if you're older, I think it's a story your younger siblings would love to hear.



The History of Santa Claus

By Amara Akadonye

We all know Santa as the jolly, bearded man, who flies across the world in one night, but has he always been a Christmas character?

Santa Claus goes by many names like Klaus, Father Christmas and many more but was originally known as St Nicholas. St Nicholas is the patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, children, brewers, pawnbrokers, toymakers, unmarried people and students.

St Nicholas merged with the English character Father Christmas to create the mythical and festive character 'Santa Claus'. But why him and not any other patron saint? St Nicholas was the saint of toy makers and children, which fit perfectly with the role of Santa Claus.

When Santa Claus first began to exist (3rd century) he wore green to show that spring was coming. However, when he wasn't wearing green, he wore long white coats to resemble snow and ice. Soon, he started wearing red after the iconic coca cola adverts in the 1900's.





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Media Corner



Movie of the Month The Grinch

Mosier, USA, 2018

Christmas movies are a staple in almost every home. From the nativity, all the way to the nightmare before Christmas, we can hold a massive variety of Christmas cheer! The Grinch is known to be a festive filled film, it will leave you feeling unimaginably jolly!

We start in a town called Whoville, where Whos' enjoy all aspects of life. However, they have a special bond towards Christmas. As soon as December starts, all of the Whos' goes full Christmas mode. But, up in the dark, eerie mountains, just north of Whoville, lives the Grinch and Max, his cute dog. Whilst the Grinch despises Whoville and its occupants, he especially loathes Christmas. So he devises a cunning, dastardly plan to steal Christmas once and for all. Will this end the fun?

This film is the perfect for kids, because of its light humour and funny jokes. All of the characters have the immaculate Christmasy feel that fits seamlessly into this time of year. From the frosty skies, to the maniacal mastermind, this film really has it all!

My favourite character in the film is Cindy Lou Who. She has such a sweet, charming personality that you cant help find adorable. She's adventurous, audacious and a brave little girl. She will jump from mountains cliffs, to trying to trek through to the north pole. She's such a lovable character to see and whenever I see her on screen, it's always a joy. If you like animated, Christmas movies that are family friendly, you will absolutely love this movie!

5*****

Video Game Highlight: Animal Crossing

Here at The W.A.T.C.H. Word, we enjoy all genres of games – from high fantasy and adventure, to relaxing, brain-soothing games. Nintendo, however, do it all; no better example exists than their iconic game: Animal Crossing! So, what is there to love about this picture-perfect paradise?

You arrive on an island where Tom Nook, one of the main characters, introduces you to your new life. Tom explains all that you can do in Animal Crossing and tells you to have fun! From there, you meet a plethora of unique and quirky characters, all with their own interesting personalities.

In my opinion, this game is the perfect relaxation activity that can turn a stressful day, into a calming night without a worry in mind. This game lets you take it at whatever pace you work at. It's fun designing mechanics really allows you to express tons of creativity and lets you, be you! Never do you have to stress. Never do you have to worry. Never do you need to go fast, or slow. It's pastel, cute, and charming looks really immerse you in the tropical mood. The subtle crash of the waves, the quiet squawk of the seagulls in the distance, and the possibilities being infinitely long of what you do is the most charming point.

My favourite villager out of the abundant selection, is Bob, the lazy cat. He has been chosen, because of his smug face, and an unusual birthday: New Year's Day!

If you like chilled out, relaxing games, this is for you!

5*****





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Meet the Teacher

What is your role in school?

I teach French and Spanish, and I am Head of Year 9. I also musically direct the school productions, which has been a lovely way to get to know some of the students that I don't directly teach.

What do you enjoy doing at the weekends?

At the weekend, I love going to the Tivoli cinema in Cheltenham, or meeting up with friends to go for a walk around Pittville Park. I also perform in shows outside of school so often have rehearsals to attend!

What is your least favourite food?

My least favourite food is a tricky one as I love most things. But given that it's December, I'd have to say Brussel sprouts... I think they're gross no matter how much gravy you put on them!

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

I've always wanted to go to Canada, especially French-speaking Canada. I'd also love to go to Disneyland California as I'm a big Disney fan.

Do you have a secret talent? If so, what is it?

I love singing but I don't think that's very much of a secret! My other secret talent would probably be that I'm not bad at DIY - I love decorating and painting (walls, not canvas!).

If you didn't work in a school, what job would you want to do?

If I didn't work at Chosen Hill, I'd probably be working in translation - I used to work as a translator and project manager before becoming a teacher, and had some pretty exciting clients like Fifa, Nestlé and Costa.

If you could ask any celebrity to dinner, who would it be?

I would absolutely invite Lin Manuel Miranda to dinner, as a big fan of his music!

What's a book you think everybody should read?

I think that everyone should read the Fault in Our Stars by John Green - it was my favourite book as a teenager and I still enjoy it now.

What item on your bucket list are you most looking forward to doing?

I don't really have a bucket list, but I would love one day to save up and travel more.



Ms Poole



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Meet the Pet

This month's perfect pets are brought to us by Ms Bishop, Chosen Hill's Communications, Marketing and Fundraising Officer. Snowy, Rusty and Colin are three young donkeys that love all things outdoors!

They love running around together, especially in the rain once it has gotten really muddy! They are all very sociable and always up for a cuddle or a scratch behind their very large ears.

They are really loud, especially first thing in the morning when, we can usually hear them braying any time from 7am!

If you would like your pet featured in next month's The WATCH Word send a short description, and your cutest picture, of your pet to TA@chosen-hill.gloucs.sch.uk.



From all of us here at The W.A.T.C.H. Word, we hope you've had a very merry Christmas and we look forward bringing all the latest news from a very happy new year!

