



THE STOPSLEY NEWS AND MEDIA TEAM PRESENTS...

# THE STOPSLEY SOURCE

FRIDAY 13TH OCTOBER 2023

Welcome back for another edition of The Stopsley Source! We have almost made it through the first half of the new term at Stopsley, and we have all settled back into routine.

In this week's issue, we have a range of articles from our student journalists for you to explore, ranging from Zuzanna's explanation of Black History Month and everything Stopsley has done to celebrate it, to Katey's exploration of the history and origins of Halloween and its traditions.

Priyan in Year 9 has written some warm words of encouragement to the new Year 7 cohort, celebrating the milestone of their first half-term, as well as talking about Stopsley High School's very successful Open Evening, which took place last week.

As if that wasn't enough, we also have an article from Tanmi discussing the Hindu festival of Durga Puja and Vijaya Dashami, in-keeping with our theme of the month, Diversity.

We hope you enjoy reading all the contributions from our fabulous team this week, and have a lovely weekend!

**Young people and adults can contact the NSPCC helpline, Report Abuse in Education on: 0800 136 663 or Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)**



@STOPSLEYHIGHSCH



## Open Evening

On the 5th of October, Stopsley High School hosted an exciting Year 6 Open Evening, providing prospective students and their families with a glimpse into the dynamic world of education offered at our institution.

Approximately 500 families came along to investigate our school, and some of our very respectful students had the responsibility of taking them on a tour of the school, visiting all the departments where staff had organised fun challenges for them.

Thank you to all the families and students who attended the Year 6 Open Evening at Stopsley High School. We hope to see you soon as part of our vibrant school community and look forward to the prospect of your child joining us for an exciting educational journey.

Thank you, too, to all the brilliant volunteers who led tour groups or helped within departments, and to all the staff who worked so hard to make Open Evening special.  
- Priyan L, Year 9

## Black History Month

October is Black History Month, and this year's theme is 'Saluting Our Sisters'. 'Saluting Our Sisters' means showing appreciation to Black women throughout history whose contributions, ideas, and voices were ignored.

Some Black women whose achievements you can celebrate this month are Olivia Morris, Evelyn Dove, Kanya King, Jaqueline McKenzie, Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon, Claudette Colvin, Chinyere Nwanoku. Black History Month is raising the profile of these women and others, highlighting their contributions throughout history in all sorts of fields from sport, to science, to literature.

Black History Month was started in 1915, about half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery. It was started by Dr. Carter G Woodson, an American historian, author, and journalist, and founder of Association for the Study of African American life and History (ASALH).

At Stopsley, we have many ways to celebrate Black History Month! For instance, in the library, Miss Wrigley has created a display with books by Black authors or featuring Black characters; the English department have created a display with book recommendations from Black authors; the History department is offering lessons about Black history; the Music department is offering African drumming, and some very confident students helped Mrs Gatenby with special Black History Month assemblies last week.

You can celebrate Black History Month in many ways, like reading books by Black authors, cooking or eating food from Caribbean and African countries, listening to music made by Black musicians, enjoying art by Black artists and creatives, and many others!

-Zuzanna H, Year 8

## Durga Puja and Vijaya Dashami

Durga Puja is an annual Hindu festival originating in the Indian subcontinent which pays homage to the Hindu Goddess Durga, and it is celebrated because of Durga's victory over Mahishashur. It is celebrated all over the world by the Hindu community, but it is particularly popular in the Indian state of West Bengal, and other states like Bihar, Assam, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and some other countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

Durga Puja is a ten-day festival of which the last five days are the most significant. The Puja is performed in homes and public, featuring a temporary stage and structural decorations, known as pandals. The festival is also marked by scripture recitations, performance arts, celebrations involving traditional dance and music, gift-giving, family visits, feasting, and public processions.

According to Hindu scriptures, the festival marks the victory of Goddess Durga in her battle against the shape-shifting Mahishahur.

Thus, the festival emphasises the victory of good over evil. During Durga Puja, the primary goddess worshipped is Durga, although this celebration also includes other major deities of Hinduism such as Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity), Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge and music), Ganesh (the god of good beginnings), and Kartik (the god of war). In Bengali traditions, these deities are considered to be Durga's children, and Durga Puja is believed to commemorate Durga's visit to her natal home with her beloved children.

The festival begins with Mahalaya, which is believed to mark the start of Durga's journey to her natal home. Primary celebrations begin on the sixth day (Shashthi), on which the goddess is welcomed with rituals. The seventh (Saptami), eighth (Ashtami), and ninth (Navami) days are marked as the main days of worship with recitations of scriptures, puja, and social visits to elaborately decorated and illuminated pandals. The festival ends on the tenth day, known as Vijaya Dashami. A tearful farewell is offered to Goddess Durga as she leaves her father's house for her husband's. A procession is carried out where people carry worshipped clay idols to a river or other body of water, and immerse them for dissolution.

Vijayadashami is observed for different reasons and is celebrated differently in various parts of India. In the northern, central, and western states, it marks the end of Ramlila and commemorates the god Rama's victory over the demon king Ravana.

In those places, towering sculptures/models of Ravana, symbolising evil, are burnt with fireworks, marking evil's destruction. The festival also starts the preparations for Diwali, the important festival of lights, celebrated twenty days after Vijayadashami.

As our theme of the month is diversity, let us all join in to explore the beauty of each other's uniqueness and appreciate our different cultures and backgrounds. With that being said, for those of you who are celebrating any of these festivals or perhaps something different, we hope you make the most of your time and enjoy!  
-Tanmi T, Year 9



## Year 7's First Half-Term at High School

As you step through the doors of high school, you are embarking on a new chapter filled with opportunities for growth, learning, and discovery. At Stopsley, our new cohort of Year 7s have now almost finished their first half-term. We have been thrilled for you to join our school, and we're confident that this will be a memorable and transformative period in your lives. High school is a time of transition, where you will not only expand your knowledge but also develop important life skills, make new friends, and explore your interests. Here are a few key points to keep in mind as you continue on this exciting journey:

-Embrace Change: Starting high school can be both exhilarating and nerve-wracking. Embrace the changes with an open mind and a positive attitude.

Remember that it's normal to feel a mix of emotions, and you're not alone in this experience.

-Set Goals: Think about what you hope to achieve during your time in high school. Whether it's academic success, pursuing a hobby or sport, or making new friends, setting goals will help you stay focused and motivated.

-Get Organized: High school can be more demanding in terms of homework and assignments. Developing good organisational skills early on will help you manage your workload effectively

-Explore Interests: High school offers a wide range of extracurricular activities, clubs, and sports teams.

Explore your interests and try new things. It's a great way to make friends and discover your passions.

-Study Hard: High school academics are important, so make sure to put in your best effort. If you encounter challenges, don't hesitate to seek help from teachers, tutors, or classmates.

-Stay Balanced: While academics are crucial, remember to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Make time for family, friends, hobbies, and relaxation to avoid burnout.

Remember, you are not alone on this journey. Your teachers, parents, and the entire school community are here to support you. We believe in your potential and look forward to watching you grow and succeed during your time in high school. Welcome again, Year 7s, and let's make this year the best one yet!

-Priyan L, Year 9

**THE POP UP FARM** presents  
**PICK YOUR OWN PUMPKINS THIS HALF TERM**  
OPEN DAILY BETWEEN  
**SAT 14TH & TUES 31ST OCT**  
PLUS SELECTED EVENINGS  
WITH LIVE MUSIC & BAR  
f THEPOPUPFARM @THE\_POP\_UP\_FARM  
BOOK AT [THEPOPUPFARM.CO.UK/INFO](http://THEPOPUPFARM.CO.UK/INFO) OR SCAN TO BOOK  
The Pop Up Farm, M1 Junction 9, AL3 8HT (FREE PARKING)

## History of Halloween

Halloween is one of the most widespread holidays in the world, with many different customs and traditions in many cultures. This article will go over the history of the famous celebration and its place in modern culture.

Halloween originated 4-5 millennia ago from the Celtic celebration Samhain. The Celtic calendar had 2 halves: light and dark, and Samhain marked the transition, translating in Irish as 'end of summer'. A part of Samhain was about celebrating the dead and connecting to spirits.

The spread of Christianity and Catholicism that came with the Roman invasion forced many Celtic and Pagan traditions to evolve or be repressed. As a result, many of these traditions adapted to fit Christian narratives. Samhain became All Saints Day, or 'All Hallows Eve'. Halloween then grew from All Hallows Eve as a less secular version of the holiday.

Trick-or-treating, Jack-o'-lanterns, and Halloween costumes go as far back as the original Celtic festival. Animal costumes were worn during Samhain to protect against hostile spirits. In the early celebrations of modern Halloween, children wore costumes and received money or fruit in return for artistic offerings like songs and jokes. In the 30s, Halloween merchandise grew to the pre-made costumes that children and adults wear today.

Trick-or-treating also dates back to Samhain, as it was popular back then to play tricks and blame it on evil spirits. These tricks survived until the emergence of Halloween, and parents wanted to not only stop these tricks but also ensure the safety of their children. Thus came trick-or-treating, trading the incentive for children to play pranks on Halloween with the promise of candy.

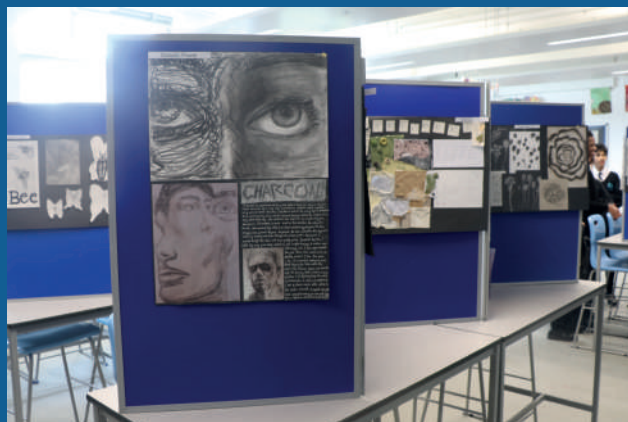
According to the legend of 'Stingy Jack', the Jack-o'-lantern has an interesting origin. As the tale goes, Jack tricked the devil into turning into a coin to pay for drinks, but then kept him trapped in his pocket with a cross. Jack made a deal with the devil to let him go, but the devil could never claim Jack's soul. When Jack died, he was refused heaven but the devil couldn't take him either. Instead, he was forced to wander the earth with a coal in a carved-out turnip, known as 'Jack of the Lantern'. The Irish originally carved turnips and potatoes, while Americans later switched to pumpkins.

Like almost all holidays, Halloween has—for better or worse—experienced modern commercialisation. In 2022, the UK spent an estimated 687 million on Halloween spending, and it is predicted that we will spend 777 million this year. A quarter of Brits also bought a pumpkin, spending over 25 million on pumpkins in 2022. There is much discourse about the commercialisation of holidays, with some saying it hurts tradition and lessens the meaning of the holiday, while others think it's harmless to celebrate holidays regardless of their evolution.

We hope this article has taught you something new about Halloween or holiday traditions in general. Have a happy Halloween (if you celebrate it)!  
-Katey O, Year 8

# HEADTEACHER'S LETTER

Dear all,  
We had our first ever KS4 Art Pop Up exhibition yesterday where all our GCSE Art students were able to show case their work and engage in meaningful discussions about their sources of inspiration and reflections on what to improve on in future pieces.



I also wanted to highlight to you all some exciting upcoming events to encourage your children to participate in. We have the auditions for the Festive Extravaganza taking place on Wednesday 18th October 3:15 - 4:30pm which is open to students in all year groups to participate in. There is also the Year 7 Halloween Disco taking place here at school between 5pm - 7pm on Tuesday 31st October. Fancy dress is strongly encouraged with a prize for the best costume.

For our parents and carers of Year 11 students we will be hosting our Post 16 evening here at Stopsley High School Thursday 19th October 5.00 pm - 7.00 pm. This is a valuable opportunity for you to see first-hand the courses available in Post 16, in the local area and what students can expect in terms of the Post 16 experience. During the evening, providers from local Colleges and Sixth forms will be delivering talks to provide information regarding courses that they offer. You and your child will be invited to sign up to 3 x 20 minute sessions via a google form for the providers that you wish to hear from. Please click here to sign up.

It was wonderful to see so many smiling faces on Tuesday as we had the photographers taking photos of our students and staff. For those students who were unavailable to have their photos taken we will be having a further session on Tuesday 31st October on our return from the half term break.

Have an enjoyable weekend everyone,

Ms Hand

