

5th April 2025

NEWSLETTER & HAPPINESS BULLETIN



By the members of Gateshead Youth Assembly

Welcome to our Spring and Happiness Bulletin

Welcome to our newsletter, we hope it finds you well. As part of our regular progress newsletter, we are incorporating a Happiness Bulletin.

Included in this newsletter, we have progress updates on each of our major and minor groups, along with next steps outlined for each project.

We hope you enjoy reading this and have a happy Easter!

If you want to meet us or collaborate on any projects, please contact valerieender@gateshead.gov.uk

Edda & Hannah, GYA Joint Chairs

Hi, I'm Maebh,
Hello! Happy Easter, I hope everyone is enjoying the longer days and staying well.

This term has definitely been my most productive as an MYP, not least because I got to speak in THE HOUSE OF COMMONS!? I had the most incredible time meeting the Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle and arguing the case for political education in secondary schools, and meeting so many other MYPs who do such incredible campaigns. We voted for our two key campaigns to be Votes at 16 and Period Dignity.

Secondly, I began my own personal campaign – Politics: Decoded! Within this I read a book about politics from Gateshead Central Library, break down its big ideas and link it to a news story that week – using this information to 'decode' what's going on in politics. My first episode is up now on my MYP instagram account - @maebhcareymyp

Finally, I have just had a meeting with my local MP, Mark Ferguson. Amongst other things, we discussed the government's commitment to Votes at 16, political education and barriers to jobs in Gateshead, as well as looking at Cardinal Hume's breakfast club.

It's been very productive and apologies this is so short – I am doing quite a bit at the moment! But if you have any queries DM me on Instagram or e-mail me at: maebhcmabhcary2006@gmail.com

Thanks,
Maebh

Book Review: Rashomon

"Rashomon," a seminal work by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, is a short story that explores the intricacies of human perception, truth, and moral ambiguity. Written in 1915 and set in the historical context of Japan's Heian period, the narrative revolves around a mysterious crime involving a samurai's murder and the subsequent testimonies of several witnesses, each providing conflicting accounts of the events. Akutagawa's masterful storytelling and psychological depth compel readers to question the nature of reality and the subjective nature of truth, making "Rashomon" a significant contribution to both Japanese literature and the broader literary canon.

The structure of "Rashomon" is particularly noteworthy, as it unfolds through a series of monologues delivered by different characters, including the bandit, the samurai's wife, and the samurai himself. Each character presents their perspective on the incident, leading to a dissonance that challenges the reader's understanding of the truth. Akutagawa's use of unreliable narration highlights the limitations of human perception and the inherent biases that shape individual experiences. The characters' motivations are deeply rooted in their desires and fears, revealing how personal circumstances can distort reality. This multiplicity of viewpoints not only enriches the narrative but also serves to illustrate the complexity of moral judgment, prompting readers to grapple with questions of ethics and accountability in a world where truth is often elusive.

Ryunosuke Akutagawa's "Rashomon" is a profound exploration of the nature of truth and human psychology. Through its intricate narrative structure and compelling characterizations, the story invites readers to reflect on the subjective nature of reality and the moral dilemmas that arise from conflicting testimonies. "Rashomon" remains a timeless piece that resonates with contemporary themes of truth-seeking and the complexities of human relationships. Akutagawa's work continues to inspire literary discourse, reinforcing its status as a cornerstone of Japanese literature and a vital examination of the human condition.

HAPPINESS BULLETIN

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The High Sheriff Awards:

On Tuesday 4th March 2025, Edda and Hannah, our joint chairs of GYA attended the High Sheriff's awards. This was a fantastic event during which many organisations involving young people received certificates and £1000 which will be used towards paying for travel for our volunteers at GYA.

Why Join GYA?

Interviewees are Maggie and Dylan

How did you find out about GYA ?

An assembly in primary school.

A career meeting at school and they recommended here for politics.

Why did you want to join ?

I wanted to join a project and do something fulfilling in my evenings and politics education in my school is terrible so this makes us able to learn about politics I want to make a difference in society and there is a huge disconnect in politics with the younger generation and so they disregard politics and so it allows me to make a difference and impact in young politics

What are you looking forward to doing here ?

Joining projects and having a say on how to make a difference in society.

Making a difference for younger people.

Interview conducted by Hannah

Book Review: Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children

Ransom Riggs' novel, "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children," is a captivating blend of fantasy and mystery that transports readers into a world where the extraordinary is commonplace. The story follows Jacob Portman, a young boy whose search for answers about his grandfather's mysterious past leads him to a peculiar orphanage on a remote Welsh island. The novel is notable for its unique narrative style, which incorporates vintage photographs that enhance the whimsical and eerie atmosphere of the story. This innovative approach not only engages the reader's imagination but also complements the themes of otherness and belonging that permeate the text.

At its core, "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children" explores the struggles of identity and acceptance through its richly developed characters, each possessing extraordinary abilities that set them apart from society. Jacob's journey of self-discovery is mirrored by the lives of the peculiar children he meets, who grapple with their own unique challenges in a world that often fears what it does not understand. Riggs adeptly weaves these narratives together, creating a sense of camaraderie among the characters as they navigate their shared experiences of isolation and the search for a place where they truly belong. The novel's pacing is well-executed, with suspenseful twists that keep readers engaged, culminating in a dramatic climax that leaves them eager for the next installment.

Ransom Riggs' "Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children" is a masterful exploration of the peculiarities that define us, set against a backdrop of enchanting imagery and a poignant storyline. The innovative use of photographs not only enriches the narrative but also invites readers to delve deeper into the themes of acceptance and the definition of normalcy. This novel is a must-read for fans of fantasy and young adult literature, as it challenges readers to embrace their own peculiarities and find beauty in the differences that make us who we are. Through Jacob's journey, Riggs reminds us that it is often our unique traits that connect us to others and ultimately shape our understanding of home.



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So, would you like to meet the 2024/2025 GYA members?

Aimee Fox	Daisy Thompson
Edda Stenbom-Moss	Aida Alecu
Benjamin Wardle	Lisa Bryson
Hannah Feher	Heather Nicholls
Kento Yamamoto-Thompson	
Hannah Craggs	Natalia Blackett
Joe Guariento	Dylan Cheetham
Maebh Carey	Daisy Todd
Aurora Williamson	Ntembe Mulenga
Bethany Mitchell	Gracie Thurm
Zuri Yearnshire	Azan Mohammed
Ellen Ward	Jake Tweddle
Nihad Moufareh	Maggie Booth
Emily Coulson	Jess Bertram

And, our members elected the following Executive Committee at our training weekend in November 2024

Chair Edda Stenbom-Moss & Hannah Craggs

Vice Chair Daisy Todd

Treasurer Brian Zasuwik

Media Rep Bethany Mitchell

Project Leads

Gracie Thurm

Daisy Todd

Joe Guariento

Our 2024-25 project progress

We are getting on with our projects, some take all year, some happen really quickly. As happens every year, these will be added to and amended throughout the year as we discover allies to work with, or, barriers we can't overcome within the year. We are always asked to get involved in other things throughout the year, so these will be added in future newsletters as soon as we can.

Feminism group by Daisy

Recently the feminism group have been working on making zines to educate people on various aspects of feminism that we are passionate about. For example clarifying misconceptions or feminist artists or famous feminists in history, this project has been a great opportunity to see how feminism is adaptable to all our different interests. In the future we are looking to find a way to share our opinions we have formed about feminism through sharing our zines or writing articles.

Hidden Disabilities by Jess

In the Hidden Disabilities group we are working towards a quiet room in the Gladstone Terrace building and a lesson plan for primary schools. The steps we have taken to produce the quiet room is a suggestion box to collect ideas. Then we made a list of the objects we want to buy including the source, the price and the quantity. We have also created a expectation poster for our quiet room.

The goal of the lesson plans for primary schools are to create awareness and inform primary school students on hidden disabilities. So far we have started creating slides and a script for a video that will be included in the lesson.

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More 2024-25 project progress

Mock Trials Write-Up – Nthembe and Bethany

On 11th February 2025, we hosted the first ever GYA Mock Trials in which we designed 3 full legal cases to be presented to the mock court. We assigned roles to the members of the Youth Assembly, ranging from jury and defendants to judge and prosecutors. It was a very fun event with opportunities for everyone to get involved, and we look forward to doing it again soon!

Planning

We began the planning for the Mock Trials around three weeks beforehand, and we had a lot of fun planning the cases to be presented. The cases included a devious dog who tore up Mrs. Hill's prize-winning flowerbeds, a diabolical encounter with a pie to the face which went viral, and a shocking vehicular manslaughter case. In the end, the PowerPoint we had been working on totalled up to over 90 slides, each with detailed descriptions of the nuances and circumstances of each case. We also provided the participants with guidance sheets, which included court etiquette as well as which points they should be arguing in the courtroom. It was really gratifying to see the finished product after all our hard work!

Cases

The first case, Hill v Barkley, contained the devious, flower-shredding dog, Sir-Barks-A-Lot in a case of private nuisance; the second case (Patterson v Crust v Clicks) explored the problem of assault and social media virality; the third and final case (R v Krashton) was one of vehicular manslaughter and this resulted in a guilty plea of 10 years and lots of debate.

Result

This experience was for fun and education simultaneously with fun debates and funny moments alongside serious debate and information on the English and Welsh legal system. The three cases took all our session time to get through (5:00PM-7:00PM). With a group that ranges from the ages of 11 to 18 it was certainly entertaining to hear opinions, debates and role playing.

Mayors Visit

A few months ago, we were delighted to host the Mayor of Gateshead, Councillor Cath McCartney at one of our GYA sessions at the Civic Centre. We were given the opportunity to ask questions and learn about the role of the Mayor in our local area. It was very interesting to learn about such a historic role, and the story behind the robes and mace were fascinating; for example, whoever is handling the mace must always wear gloves, and the robes have just recently been renewed. We learned that Mayors are responsible for chairing meetings, ceremonial events, and overseeing day-to-day services, and we also learned about the process of being elected for Mayor. It was an honour to be in her presence and to be taken to the Mayor's Chambers at the Civic Centre, where we got to see many rare and interesting gifts that are kept on display. We are very grateful for this opportunity to learn more about the history and operating of our area, and we hope to have similar opportunities in the future! We give a huge thank you to the Mayor and the Mace Bearer for taking the time to come and visit us.

Environmental Project by Daisy, Edda & Hannah

Over the last few months at GYA, our key group - The Funky Phoenixes - have worked hard to start their PowerPoint for a key bid and have researched on environmental goals for primary schools. We are working with other young people and council partners to design a really cool and engaging competition to get younger children fired up about climate change and what we can do about it. Watch this space!

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Easter nest cake

You will need:

For the cake:

200ml of vegetable oil
250g flour
6 tbsp cocoa powder
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
280 g soft light brown sugar
250 ml buttermilk
2 tsp vanilla extract
3 large eggs

For the nest:

200g marshmallows
100g butter
2 tbsp cocoa powder
75 g salted pretzels crushed
4 wheat cereal biscuits crushed
6 Cream Eggs
200g of Cadbury mini eggs

For the icing

100 g soft butter
2 tbsp cocoa powder
300g icing sugar
4 tbsp milk

Method:

Heat oven to 180C/160 fan / gas mark 4.

Oil and line 2 circular cake tins. Add the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, sugar, and a pinch of salt in a large mixing bowl. Mix with a whisk or wooden spoon until you have a fine sandy mix.

Whisk the oil and butter milk in a jug. Stir in the vanilla extract and eggs, then pour the wet ingredients into the dry and mix until there are no more streaks of flour. Divide the mixture into your two cake tins and bake for approximately 25 minutes. Test your cake by inserting a knife into the centre - if any wet mixture returns on the knife place it back in the oven for 5 more minutes, and check again. Once cooked, leave for 15 minutes to set on wire racks.

Next make the nest. Clean one tin and line it with some oiled baking parchment. Put the marshmallows and butter in a heatproof bowl and microwave on high for 1 minute, stirring halfway through. Continue to microwave in 20 second bursts until it reaches a runny consistency. Stir in the cocoa powder crushed pretzels and shredded wheat biscuits until combined. Tip the mixture into your lined tin and use the back of a spoon to create a nest shape. Leave it to cool at room temperature for a few hours or put it in a fridge to cool faster.

To make the icing, mix the butter, cocoa powder, icing sugar, and milk until smooth adding little more milk if it's still too stiff. Assemble the cake by, stacking the sponge with a layer of icing in-between, topping with icing and the nest. Fill your nest with your mini eggs and your cream eggs.

Finally, serve and enjoy. :-)



As always, if you want to come and talk to us or to get more information, please contact our support worker Valerie by emailing:

valerieender@gateshead.gov.uk