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# QUICKSILVER

STUDENT'S MAGAZINE



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## Introduction

When someone hands you down the task of carrying on editing the English students' magazine of C.N.U, you feel kind of proud of yourself. You try to be better than you were last year, to bring some improvements and even a little spark of freshness. Last year we were neophytes, we tried to learn how to confront directly with such a big responsibility, but, in time, we have realised that it was only a test for our characters. This year, we have decided to take this test again, hoping for better results. If it hadn't been for our coordinative teacher, it would have been a great chaos and the result wouldn't have been the same.

Nonetheless, the deadline put some pressure upon us, but it wasn't an inordinate effort at all. After perusing each and every article, we have created a magazine wherein we indubitably put our mark.

Taking as role models our former students, managing to carry on this tradition of having an English magazine shouldn't have been that hard. And honestly, from the editors' point of view, it was a unique experience which put a stone brick to the foundation of our human beings.

Hoping the magazine will have the same effect upon you, the readers, we present its chapters:

*About us* - talent in sports, extra curricular activities, awards, implication and dedication - a few aspects which describe us are to be found in this chapter.

*From minds and souls* - students from all the bilingual classes, and not only, contributed to this chapter; which has proved to be our students' mirror.

*Miscellaneous* - reviews of good movies, music suggestions, interviews, jokes and so much more.

*Adriana Muntean, XI B*

## About us

### *Bis pueri senes*



In *The sense of the ending*, Julian Barnes draws the conclusion that “*I know this much: that there is objective time, but also subjective time, the kind you wear on the inside of your wrist, next to where the pulse lies. And this personal time, which is the true time, is measured in your relationship to memory.*” This is exactly what we have been through a few time ago, when we planned our class master's birthday surprise. The moment passed amazingly fast, but we enjoyed it to the last second of it.

Thanks to one of our classmates who is always keeping the accountancy and organizes us in this kind of situations, the moment was better than we had expected and everybody seemed to have a good time.

If I told you all what had happened with all the details, then we wouldn't have precious moments to remember, but some pictures could be shown.

Making people happy stays in our human beings' nature, somehow. Hence, when our class master showed that splendiferous smile, we knew our plan succeeded. We spent a beautiful time together, taking pictures and immortalizing the moment as it is to be remembered from now on as a special one.



In spite of all the moments in which we seem to not getting along with each other, somehow, in the end, we come to this formula, of a class which forgets about all the little quarrels they have and focus more upon one person: the one whose spirit is as twice as childlike as ours.

*Adriana Muntean, XI B*



## International Summer Camp

The first time I took into consideration an international summer camp was in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, when our English teacher brought us a book with varied options, great destinations and amazing activities besides the language courses you must attend. To my surprise, my parents were more excited and willingly to send me into this trip, than I was. At first I didn't really want to agree, as we were talking about a considerably sum of money, the other aspect was that of my leaving alone through so many cultures and nationalities. I have to admit I was a bit scared at the beginning, but I convinced myself that everything will turn into an unforgettable experience, knowledge gain and the chance to bind friendships with people around the globe, eventually.

In the summer of 2011, I chose Winchester College, England, as my 3-week summer camp and the place where not only did I improve my English skills, but I also learnt something about debating, rhythm and mime and theatre. During those 3 weeks we made trips to London, Cambridge and Brighton, where we had the chance to experience the English life by ourselves. As I had expected, the English do respect every rule they impose, they are very punctual, really respectful, they keep everything in order and of course their accent is brilliant. Every Sunday, the staff organized a mini-ceremony where every class came on the stage to present their project over the week in front of everyone. Every single person in the camp, from staff, teachers and other students were absolutely adorable and it was delightful to spend the time with them because everyone was happy and all they only wished to enjoy their stay in that place.

After the short period I spent in England, I kept in touch with most of the people I had met. Today, we still talk and plan to meet in one of the countries we come from, but unfortunately we haven't decided where yet. We are still taking everything into consideration so that we chose the best place.

Last summer I attended another international camp, but this time it was over the Atlantic Ocean. That's right, I am happy to say that I was lucky to visit one of the most thrilling cities in the world, not to mention the lights in the night, as this city never sleeps. New York represented for me a huge breathe and a hug coming from freedom itself. The schedule was different from that in England, as well as the activities and the classes, and something more, this time we made a group of 15 Romanian people around the country, went there together without knowing each other and came back as a family. In 2 weeks spent in America, hardly had we time to feel homesick as we needed every second to experience, enjoy and feel the city. We took a ride with the limo, watched the "Mamma Mia" musical, went shopping on the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, walked through Central Park, visited the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty (which isn't as huge as we are made believed it is actually) and we definitely we tried all sorts of food that the U.S.A. fool its citizens to eat and later on they become addictive.

Maybe you wonder whether I met Romanians or not while I was away or what is the impression of the foreigners upon us. To be honest, in both trips I was more than lucky to hear that people from other countries not only like Romanians, but they also compliment us. And I did meet Romanians in the U.S.A. and they turned to be friendly and nice. I actually felt great talking with them about their American Dream.

The purpose of this kind of voyage isn't only to improve your foreign language or to study after books, it is to discover yourself, to develop around strangers that afterwards you find to be your friends, to get to know the world with all its beauties and odd, to learn how to be independent but at the same time to know you can count on anybody at anytime, the main purpose of the trip is to live and enjoy life. Being away from home (family, friends, known places) might be hard for some people, but when you least expect you find out how great it is to vanish a little from your routine and embrace the unknown. No one ever said it was easy, but in the end you will learn more about your own person, you will make changes in your life and come up with new future plans or wishes.

To conclude, I would like to say that travelling around the world made me understand life better and everything that comes with it. I am happy now that I listened to my parents and I flew some miles away for a couple of weeks or more and I came back with memories, experience and lovely gifts that substituted my absence.

*Adina Narcisa Chiş, XI B*



## “The Galla of the Institutes of Art ”

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of march at the Cultural Center Reduta in Braşov, hundreds of talented artists from all the corners of the country came on the stage, at the “The Galla of the Institutes of Art ”, an event organized and accomplished by the Virtual Cultural Center “Artist for Arts”, with Andrei Coman as vicepresident of the center, main organizer and project coordinator.

As 24 cultural institutions in Romania had signed up for the Galla, the public was very excited by the diversity of the artistic moments but also by the talent of the artists. As organizer and artist, Andrei Coman opened the event by thanking the attendees and teachers for their involvement, support and the work they have put in their show. The well known musical piece by Laurentiu Cazan “Say something” opened the show



The public enjoyed two more extraordinary moments. Ilie Micolov, a well known artist in Romanian culture, despite his health problems, had an amazing recital, which made the audience stand up. Also, another wonderful moment was that of Cristina Bondoc, known as the finalist of the Megastar competition, as well as finalist of the Romanians have Talent and The Voice of Romania competitions.

The event ended in a galla kind of atmosphere, the competing institutes received numerous awards, the participants received medals and all sang wishing success to the second Festival " The Galla of the Institutes of Art".

### ROMANIA – 1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE - INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL “DEI GIOVANI” – PIACENZA, ITALY

#### An interview with Andrei Coman

2012 was a prosperous one for Andrei Coman, who as a result of the prizes he had received at national music competitions, put his mind into competing at an international music festival in Italy. After the national stage, he was selected to represent Romania at the festival, where he rose the country on the stage after his score in the 5 days, therefore receiving the Grand Trophy, First Place.

#### 1. How did you come across the idea of competing in the festival?

Having attended many national competitions in many cities in the country, I have collected numerous first prizes and special awards given to me by important personalities of the Romanian musical scene. I was therefore ambitious and wanted to try something more, that is how I decided to give it a try.

#### 2. What countries did you compete with and how tough were they?

In the competition there were many countries such as Bulgaria, Ukraine, The Moldavian Republic, Russia, Turkey, Algeria, India, France, Germany and many others. The competition was tight as each country had brought its best, and as it was a general arts festival the marking system was much the same for music, dance and theatre. Plain and simple, the best one had the chance to win, be it either with an extraordinary musical moment or an amazing number of dancing.

#### 3. Did you feel there was a different atmosphere from the competitions in our country?

I did. Whatever the results, we became very good friends and we still keep in touch. It is very interesting how foreigners appreciate and praise you although they do not know you. With their attitude they compel you to do the same, which in the end is wonderful.

#### 4. How did your life change after receiving this award?

Artistically, the change was radical. When you come back to your country with a prize like this, people start looking at you in a different way, you needn't ask others to promote you, they come to you to do so. Numerous doors have opened for me, I was approached by different artists and in the present I am expecting to have a musical cooperation with Laurențiu Cazan, who will write a song for me.



#### 5. What other plans do you have for the future?

At the moment I have musical collaborations with different artists, that I hope will come to a great result, I hope to write some songs of my own and I also want to start a cultural institutions named „Artists for Art” with my beloved colleagues, which will promote and support art and Romanian culture.

*Andrei Coman, XI B*

## “Unirea – 115 years”



This year our school had its 115 anniversary. Pretty old you might say but our colleagues proved us wrong by their incredible performance. They danced, they sang, they created a magical atmosphere at the Reduta Cultural Center. Everything was great, both students and teachers were delighted, and our school's Students Council did their best to succeed on this anniversary day of our school.

My job at the show was to take pictures so I hardly skipped a sight or two away from the stage. Everything started at 12 o'clock, after a long week of rehearsals, a day full of communication sessions on various topics that took place at school and lots of work done by everyone. My class has many talented students. This year, three of them got on stage and performed several beautiful songs.

The big surprise was Melisa Faydaver, who debuted with a piano solo. “At the beginning I was terribly nervous, but by the time my fingers touched the keys, it was just me and the piano, so nothing else mattered anymore”, she told me at the end of the show. Also, Andrei Coman and Salomeea Simon interpreted two very well-known songs : Sway and Stupid in Love.

But the heart-touching moment was when Codrin Crăcuț and Alexandru Toșu ( Alex also being one of my classmates ), as President and Vice-President of the school Student Council awarded the teachers with the longest career in our college. For them it was a surprise, as the awards came from us, the students.

Well, it wasn't easy. For you, those who watched the show, it must have been great (I hope!). But for those who made this day possible it was harsh time. We should thank them and hope for another great show next year, and the year after, and so on/ And let's not forget... Happy Anniversary, Unirea!

*Miruna Paiuc, XI B*



### **Shooting, one of my biggest dreams**

I have always thought how shooting would feel. I had never got the chance to do it, until last year when I took up this beautiful sport. I mostly thought of it as something else than it actually meant. It is not only about pulling the trigger and you can't compare this to what you see in movies. The perfect shot requires maximum concentration and self-control. And this is one of the aspects I really enjoy about shooting: it combines mental training with the physical one.



Besides, everything is done with much effort and nothing is easy. With ambition comes perseverance, but along with the competition there come the emotions. Sometimes, they're overwhelming and this could lower your chances to get the medal. Even though I try my best to be prepared for those competitions, sometimes it's hard when emotions overwhelm me. And the secret is they take us all down at some point. The key is to concentrate enough to overcome them.

Despite of liking it so much, this sport is not so popular in my city and this is another difficulty on my way to the top. The clubs in Romania don't have much money to support this sport, but I've seen a lot of examples of people who are now Olympic and European champions, so this is not such a disappointment when you really want to achieve something.

Even with those difficulties, at the end of the day I realise how much I enjoy doing this and living my dreams ever since I was little and I used to like shooting. It is not what anybody will do for a hobby, and it also helps me to focus at school on important issues and channel all my energy on gaining something.

*Ana Andrei, XI B*

### **The freshmen's ball**

The freshmen's ball, which has become a tradition in our high school, is one of the most awaited events by young students every year. I was thrilled to participate in the ball this year, this time as a member of the jury. Along with the new students, I felt the emotions I had felt in 2010 all over again.

Like in the past years, the talented students of our high school showed us what they could do, and as a member of the jury I had a very tough time deciding which of them was best and deserved the MISS & MISTER title. In the competition, the students had to dance, show their talents, answer general knowledge questions; this proved to be the most difficult task. Along with the other members of the jury, we gave marks for each stage of the competition from 1 to 10, which allowed us to have a hierarchy of prizes we had offered.

It was a very diverse event, I saw very talented musicians, dancers and actors, whom we all urged to continue their dreams.

*Andrei Coman, XI B*



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## Photography - my favourite pastime

Whether people accept it or not, memories fade away over the years and details become blurry. However, the human mind will rebuild those details as it wishes. So, storing memories is important not only for happy family moments, but also throughout history, for maintaining the truth alive or observing the evolution of society at a certain moment.

Documenting the events that change a nation are as important as little family moments. To a certain extent, they are far more important because photographs can send information which is far more alive and realistic. Photographers lock on emotions and scenes in a fraction of a second for the world to see and for the world to remember. All the disasters of the world, all its sadness or, on the contrary, all its joy, are to be transmitted in a more plausible way through photography than through an insignificant piece of paper that proves that event happened. All of those because when you see it in the way someone else has, your automatic response is empathy.



Photography plays a major role in history and in the future. The family photographer, war documentarians, photojournalists all have, had, and will have one of the most important jobs in the world: Capturing time. It is essential for us to know what happened before we were born, and will help our followers to know what happened before them.

Today we are referring to photography as something else than only a way to preserve time. At an individual level, we should think it helps us this way: through the new technology, photographs spread over the world. Not only do they help us create an identity online, but they also confer the persons we're communicating in this circumstance more trust. On the other hand, in a world which never stops its economic expansion, photography is a way of selling fast, profitably and efficiently. Think about what this world would be like without advertising, and therefore without any race for economic power. The conclusion here is that photography is a key factor to evolution.

In the end, we should value this invention at the right scale and what it does for human society. When you tell your story to the next generations you can show them exactly what happened, as it happened, not as your fading memory thinks it happened, so that they can relive everything they see, not only know it happened sometime, a long way back.

*Anca Vârsan, XI B*

## The Belgian-Romanian Project

### We gaan jullie missen

Here we are, back to our ordinary lives, preoccupied by everyday activities that we were used to doing before this experience took place. First of all, I want to make a short presentation of the school exchange between National College "Unirea" from Braşov and Onze Lieve Vrouwecollege from Oostende. This project implied 3 Romanian teachers: Mrs Magda Luca, Mr Laurenţiu Luca and Mr Ioan Halmaghi, 2 Belgian teachers: Mr Willem-Frederick Dorchain and Mr Bart Broidioi. There were 21 students from each country involved. The students had to prepare some projects in order to get to know each country better. The topics were varied, such as: history, geography, culture, social sciences etc.

I think I am not the only one who thinks that this experience was a great success, because not only did we manage to collaborate so well, but our projects were also absolutely fantastic (or at least this is what the teachers and parents thought), but we also created friendships, we felt a connection and we enjoyed every moment spent together.

Besides the activities that had already been prepared before the arrival, for example the trip to the City Hall, to Bran, to the Prejmer Citadel, to Poiana Braşov, and of course the charity actions made by the Belgians for the Romanian children from orphanage and for the older persons, we, the students, made sure that we had something prepared for every evening in order for them to be entertained.

We took them to different pubs, to bowling, table tennis, shopping and karaoke and dance night. One evening we organized a barbecue at one of the Romanian students' house, which was relaxing and great fun. We are proud of our work, we do believe it was worth the effort. As I said in the title we will miss our Belgian friends, we actually started missing them from the moment they left. - *Adina Chiş, XI B*

<<Recently, I had the chance of spending time with English speakers from Belgium. It was most definitely one of the greatest experiences I've ever lived. Sharing thoughts, ideas, knowledge about other country I've never visited before was better than a fairytale. I met an extraordinary pupil, Eline, who made me change my beliefs regarding racism, drastic punishments admitted by the legal system, the idea of helping unfortunate people and the love shared by two persons of the same gender (as in their country gay marriages have been legalized since 2003). They came here with the idea of Romania being the twin country of some African state, or at least related to it. I can't hide my pride that we (the Romanian students) have succeeded in changing their opinions about it. Hosting a foreign student for a week not only made me see the importance of loving my country as it is and moreover learning other languages, but hopefully I've gained a new friend.>> - *Miruna Plosceanu, XI B*

<<This experience was great. I don't think I can find any another word to describe it. Even though I was a bit scared about how Thibaut, the boy who became part of my family, would feel about Romania, all went well and he had a great time. I tried as much as I could to show him our city, how we are having fun, where we spend our free time and of course, how we party, so I took him to a friend's birthday party where we both felt great and he was delighted to meet my friends. Now what can I say, I miss him a lot. I can't wait for us to go to Belgium so that we could meet them again and experience the way they live. I can admit that this is the one thing I'll always remember about high school.>> - *Miruna Paiuc, XI B*

## From the mind and the soul

### Mystery

It was a rainy November evening, when I decided to go out. I felt a strange desire to go outside even if it wasn't for a certain reason. I just felt like searching for something and didn't know what. However, I put on my coat and left the house. While I was walking, I enjoyed the sound of rain mixed with the rustle of the people walking by. After a while, all of a sudden I caught sight of a small pub, which seemed bizarre but also familiar. Confidently, I entered.

It was small and cold at first sight, the furniture was dark brown, the lights embellished the subtle atmosphere with gloomy effects. The walls were painted in shades of burgundy and were decorated with a green vintage texture and black and white paintings. The place was nearly filled, I looked around the room and in the midst of those people, a man who was sitting at the bar, alone, perhaps drowning his memories, caught my eye. He was elegant and sober. Around his figure the air had a touch of arrogance in a mysterious way. He was unusual, unlike any other men there. I could notice he was gifted with a charm that couldn't be ignored. He was that kind of man that turned people's heads when walking in a room. Even I couldn't help sitting closer to him. The tension overwhelmed me and I felt I was trembling, but nothing showed, I was sure of it. I ordered a glass of red wine in order to relax and lessen the pressure which was floating all over. He was deeply in thought, while holding tight in his strong and tender hands the glass of whiskey he was relishing. His eyes were blue and benign, you could notice his soul reflected in them. Looking into his eyes was like drowning in a cold sea, constantly swimming without any destination. They had the power to freeze you and heat you instantly. He looked sad, the sorrow could be seen along with the taste of bitterness in his sketched smirk. He had built walls around himself, he always bricked in, burring his soul. He was handsome but different, reserved and thoughtful.

I sat there, for a long time, observing every detail, discovering his imperfections and habits. He was that kind of man you only meet once in a lifetime, that kind along whom silence isn't disturbing. I could have stared for hours and not get bored, his presence spoke more than his words. He remains a mystery to me, and always will.

*Alexandra Codrean, X D*



### Story with no beginning

If only I could remember the days before the accident...How was I? Was I friendly, was I a cold person, was I tender, loving, careful, or was I revengeful, selfish and ignorant? They say this man is my fiancé, but I look at him and I feel nothing: a bigger emptiness than in general. It's like I see him for the very first time, every time he comes to the hospital to see me, to show his love, to remind me I'm the most important person in his life, as if I ever knew. "I'm so thankful to God that you survived. I couldn't ever forgive myself if I would've lost you in that car crash when I was driving mad and tired..."

Hearing his honest remorse and the painful cry of his suffering soul, all I could think about was: "Yeah...and I thank God you are not ugly...or a total moron...and you have good tastes in clothes and flowers. You seem a good guy. I guess it could be possible for me to fall in love with you all over again."



I was feeling so mean and insensitive... but the superficial empathy that he would make me feel, gave me the exact same sensation that I'd have if I were to read such a story from a novel or even a cheap newspaper. That's right! My life is a story in a newspaper, and I have the feeling that, strangers that pity me and say all this fake kind words, seem to know much more about me and my life, than I do!

If only I could remember that missing piece of the past, I would tell them I don't need their mercy, their care and support! I just need the insurance to cover the costs from the hospital and I would be out of here! I need nothing but silence and solitude...and a newspaper that hasn't my pictures before/after the accident on the cover. If only I could remember

*Andra Drăgan, XI B*

## “Forgive Me, Child...”

### Chapter 1. Middle of Nowhere

The hands of time are always moving forward, never staying still. Never. For nobody. And seasons came and seasons went. And the same seasons came once again. The city remained the same, with little changes over the generations that came and left it, with black graffiti on grey walls and broken windows of deserted houses. That was the city. Unchanged since the very beginning of the end...

The house - just the same. Passed from generation to generation, with floors added along the time to create more room for children to play hide and seek inside, the house was one of the elements that stood in front of time, not allowing it to change something about it. And as the grass grew green, turned yellow and died under the snow, as children grew up, fought, yelled and then left in search of life and the other half, the house was left behind just as memory in their head. The courtyard had a single swing that was moving in the summer wind that blew warmly over the neighbourhood. The little gate made of black iron was creaking whenever the postman would push it open deliver the few letters that still came for the owner. And of course, there was the old fury dog, now blind and deaf to his surroundings, wiggling his tail only when the owner would approach him with food. To be honest, the house was old. And it was as if she grew roots on the soil underneath her, that gave her strength to remain unchanged with her beige walls and white windows smiling friendly to the visitors, with its warm lights playing inside as soon as the dark would creep at the windows from the outside. And there was this huge, white magnolia tree that was leaning its branches against the house's walls, spreading the smell of his beloved flowers from spring to late summer. The house was the only survivor of tradition in that middle of nowhere made of steel and concrete.

For whoever opened the door of the old house, they would have to step back a little and shake their heads. Was it all just a hallucination? Maybe their imagination was playing tricks on them... .. But no, everything was as it was seen. The house hid inside her a piece from a castle. The grandeur hid behind the shrivelled walls was telling the story of a life to whomever was interested in hearing. The large welcoming hall had its floor made of white and black marble, involving every step into a chess game. And then, on the right, the double wooden doors would silently open to reveal a study room, with a huge desk ruling over the shelves full of books with yellowed pages. In the two empty, leather armchairs you could imagine two children being scolded by their father, an imposing figure in the house. And then they would run into the kitchen, just across the hallway, at the back of the house, hidden from curious eyes by a now forever closed door. It was clean inside. The machines, the pans, the white table with a crystal vase full of withered wild flowers who refused to give away their petals and chose to die of thirst instead. It was clean inside. And then, the whole atmosphere would change at the sight of the semicircular living room, situated right across the hallway, its heavy double doors sliding to left and right easily, eager for you to see the chimney who's fire was dead right on the right. The red sofa covered by a multicolored blanket was right under the huge window, looking more like the smile of a youngster. And the black armchairs were just the sofa's cosy arms, stretching to welcome you inside the silence of the room. The carpet was still fluffy under the unseen feet and the wooden parket was still shiny as if it was just now polished by unseen hands.

Now, up the stairs. Oh, the stairs! Wooden stairs, with nicely carved and polished railing on both sides, leading to the second floor of the house. Closed door would welcome anyone who would dare to go up there. Closed doors that were ment to stay that way till wind would push down the walls, taking its life away. Closed doors behind which stories were told, fights took place, people cried and smiled at their own momentary mercy. One single door was slightly opened, letting a ray of light creep outside on the corridor, troubling the darkness of it. There was the place where you would find the solitary owner of the house, the last survivor of a generation gone with the wind... ..

The room wasn't small and nowhere close to being cosy for a single person. It was a bedroom. His bedroom. A room full of memories made on that king-sized bed with ravaged bedsheets, with tales to tell inside the bathroom's bathtub, letting only the lights of candle illuminate the room. The furniture was white: the closet, the dresser, both with elaborated ironwork for the handles, the two tallboys guarding the windows against nightmares that could fly in at any time of the night and the two nightstands, on both sides of the bed, full of pictures put on disply behind the yellow glass of the old frames. Only the vanity was made of black wood with silvery patterns on it, throwing back reflected and merciless looks through the broken, circular mirror. That was a whole universe for the old owner that was sitting by the window, watching the empty street and smiling at every car that would slow down in front of his house, only to speed away in seconds.

His tired eyes turned to the old clock that was ticking on the nightstand. It was that time of the day when no car would pass down the street. He sighed as he stood up from his place, his old bones creaking with every move. He needed to pee. Badly. The water he drank half an hour earlier made its presence known in his bladder. So he pulled his legs towards the bathroom. But then he stopped. The doors of the huge wardrobe were slightly opened. Why? He hadn't opened them in ages. And so, curiosity took over him and his fingers pulled the handles, revealing the inside of the closet. The clothes were still there on hangers, smelling of old and new at the

same time, bringing back to his mind many moments that back then confused his heart. He took a breath of that past and smiled as he ran his fingers through the fabrics of the dresses that were hanging in there, feeling both summer and winter touching his skin, hearing both laughter and cry in his ears while his eyes were filled with one single face: Yang Lyn Da, his beautiful wife...

*Elena Cătălina Fete, XII B*

### **A waiting hall**

As I leaned back and rested my head against the top of the chair, my eyelids began to feel heavy, but I knew I had to stay awake. I couldn't afford to miss the flight or to be late and as I had at least three more hours if not longer, I thought of observing people, of analyzing their body language, their vocabulary. I've always considered it funny to go to busy places to notice things like stress, joy, infidelity and all the rest.

The airport was a massive metal complex, full of business men and people rushing around, grabbing onto their precious belongings and offsprings. The sound of trolleys pierced ears in turn as they overtook the waiting swarm in front, drastically followed by a queue of family members. Somehow the intercom attempting crowd control managed to be heard within the blistering sounds of footsteps and languages



muttered from all over the world : 'Pardonez-moi !', 'Hola !', 'Excuse me !'.

All eyes were filled with concern and confusion, as though people were afraid of an eventual crash. Some of them, transferring their weight from one foot to the other or rocking forward, were reading a magazine, maybe trying to kill some time. Others just put their headphones on, but they still could hear the obnoxious ticking of the clock.

The smell of jet fuel, female perfume and impatience combined assaulted the senses with images of exotic escapes, with the sound of breaking waves and that kind of freedom that can only come from airports. In a chaotic atmosphere just like this one nobody complained about the lack of sleeping facilities. Everybody was satisfied with the simple waiting hall with chairs and somewhere at the end of the corridor the very clean toilets.

I spent almost three hours in the waiting hall, but surprisingly I wasn't bored at all, I even enjoyed it. The walls whispered some old forgotten stories of people who were travelling or, on the other hand, who were coming back to their beloved country.

*Alexandra Mocrei, X D*

### **The Craft of Travel**

When travelling, the best way to get to know a culture is not by guidebooks or museums, but by engaging their customs, crafts and habits. But is learning a foreign craft and then showing it to the world to be wished?

First of all, travelling throughout the world, we come across different cultures, people and what we ALL do is, we want to take a bit of those cultures with us. It is memorable when a local woman teaches us how to make a native piece of jewellery. However, this is where the problems appear. Think about it. You get back home, show that piece of jewellery, or clothing, etc., and by wanting to spread that culture, you begin commercializing it, and it loses its essence. Consequently, the people to whom that culture "belongs", become nothing more than commercial objects, losing their cultural identity. Do we really want that? To turn culture into a trade good?

It's not a bad thing however to spread awareness about a culture by advertising it. The more people know about it, and the more they spread it, the better the chances of that culture to survive. It is a good way to show culture to those that cannot afford to travel. We just have to know when and where to stop, so as not to turn culture into yet another fashion asset. It's up to us. We are the only ones who can keep culture the way it is. An experience.

*Horia Gheța, XII B*

## Bathe me (with your love)



Just like the sheets, the tear-stained pillow is cold.  
“Are you sure you are going to be alright?” H. asked and Donghae nodded, stupidly that. ‘No’, lingered on his lips but he could not hold H. anymore and H. leaves contented, forgetting to take back the sweet fragrances, the soft touches, the nights spent together with Donghae on the top of the roof, teaching him the names of stars. H. may have lied then....

Possible vs. impossible. Which is going to win?

*"I want to breathe underwater."*

*"That is impossible."*

‘Nothing is impossible, not tonight.’ Donghae thinks as unstained, transparent water slowly fills the tub and it seems like the stream has erased fear, loss, H. and everything. Still, something is bothering him; Donghae tries to put a finger on it but the only thing his fingers are touching is the hot water, lazily drawing circles on its surface; one disappears and another appears. Love came and went just the same. Ditto.

“Tonight is special.” Donghae whispers into the rising streams engulfing himself before the water does the same. ‘Bathe me with your love.’

From underneath everything is yellow, violet, white and a hundred one more colours.

‘Do not shock me.’

It is fascinating; the feeling of water flowing through his hostile being, through his nostrils, trachea, and a few seconds after, lungs are filled with blue. With eyes closed, Donghae gives in. All is calm; the silence in there is just perfect and there are no tears, no lost battles, no confusing thoughts, no more to dos; just a light feeling due to the lack of oxygen. The small words in the back of his head - hidden - spread in the water, staining it and Donghae cannot draw the line between memories and real facts, imagination, TV, world, dreams, stars and names anymore; they mix up to the point it is suffocating, torture some, but exciting at the same time.

The only thing visible, palpable, is regret and that was the thing Donghae was trying to put his finger on...

*Silvia Diana Ardeleanu, XI D*

## A Waiting Hall

I knew he'd be late as I had told him my plane landed at 14:30 and it was already 15:00. I felt betrayed by the one I had loved all those years and was never late to pick me up at the Frankfurt Airport.

No sooner had I stepped out of the plane than the humid jet fuel struck my nose with the speed of a hurricane. The thick fog wrapping the airport like a mystic veil gave the impression of having landed on a cloud. Escorted to the waiting hall, I couldn't help noticing the gigantic glass and steel building we were entering.

Never had I felt this anxious, although it wasn't my first trip to Germany. It must have been something in the air. There was a strong smell of cultural diversity, of mixed perfumes brought over from different parts of the world and unmistakable electronic equipment.

The waiting hall teemed with all kinds of people, humming bees around the hive. The fact that he ran late and didn't answer my phone calls gave me the chance of noticing things I'd never look for in an airport. Standing by the luggage claim section, waiting for my suitcase, I could feel the cold gaze of the security staff in the back of my head watching my every move. I tried not to lose my temper, and as the high heel-shoes became uncomfortable, I took a seat next to a French couple who were talking about their cancelled flight to Prague. The eye-catching duty-free shop located in a small corner of the hall attracted customers with its neat-shelved petty products. Countless people passed by, from exotic Hawaiian women with long, dark, healthy hair and caramel skin, to businessmen in black suits, wearing coloured ties and big families racing towards the departure lounge.

As I leaned back and rested my head against the top of the chair, I felt my eyelids growing heavy and the silhouettes passing by blurred with the magnificent track view behind the windowpane.

I woke up from my slumber at the vibration of my phone. It was him; I picked up, I heard his voice telling me he had been waiting in the parking lot for over thirty minutes. I was so relieved.

*Rebecca Luican, X D*



## When you ought to be dreaming

A sleepy head and a cardboard of coffee behind the fold of my yesterday's newspaper, because a few hours passed and with them another day, tells me that I fell asleep, some hours ago, maybe a few or maybe more, in the soft red armchair and I dreamt, I must have dreamt what was in front of my eyes: nothing, yet so many things.

I raised my head and I found myself on December 23<sup>rd</sup> having a couple more hours to wait. I started watching the sunbeams getting wider and entering the hall through the darkened walls of glass but the winter morning air and the pale sun rising took me for a moment far from the huge waiting hall which became overnight a silent and a sanctuary full of light wherefrom every minute hundreds of souls were taken apart and other hundreds were brought instead. The flashing lights of every plane landing and taking off were the dreams of every one of us, those still waiting.

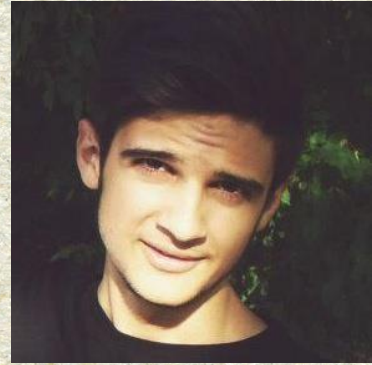
In the entire hall splashes of light started dropping on the floor and flowing back from it all over the place. I caught one, too, in the blink of my sleepy eyes. It woke me up for good, I'd slept tight all the time since I arrived, unbothered by the echoes of every voice and watched by the masters from every corner of the hall, I woke up in a world of mystery, the Denver Airport, that one world admitting two realities as that 'today' that Franklin said admitted two tomorrows.

As the time passed I began watching the people crowding in the queue of the flight so long expected.

A lock of wrinkled hair on my shoulder, and beyond it, the creepy face of an old woman sleeping, next to her another face and further other hundreds of faces, some of them expressing the happiness of Christmas, others hurrying, some raising their heads to watch the paintings at the top of the hall which made me feel like in a church's nave, and other people having such unexpressive faces as though they were immune to the rustle of the crowd but every one of them was part of the halo of Christmas atmosphere.

Tearing me out from my dreams, the crews were passing through the crowd with their sober attitude, all dressed in black and wearing the sparkling airline brands on their chests.

I took my place in the queue and handed in my ticket. I saw the gate attendant, dressed in red velvet and with the scent of dark coffee and wearing the brand on her headband, One world, one world of dreams, of dreaming and holding arms. I smiled, as she did, too wishing me a pleasant flight. Then I started my way dreaming.



*Theodor Trohnel, X D*

## Summer Love or when Shakespeare and Eminescu - our contemporaries

In reality no summer love story goes on miraculously. Every story of this kind ends as you wake up one late September afternoon, yelling at yourself "Enough, summer's over! and so you start wondering for why summer has to be so short on this Earth. But at least it exists, you know...

During summer everything is simpler. I have no clue why. But summer... summer is beautiful, sunny and there is no chance for something to go wrong... I mean, honestly, is there anything? In summer, you go to the sea side and there is... the sea. There you live in a completely different world, no one can stop you from doing what you wish to do. There, everything is forgotten, you live another life, an utopian one. There you love, you live, you forget, you forgive... you shape your body on a wave as if were your coffin. Your life is completely different from the dull one at home.

Everything is more intense. Just as Eminescu's Poor Dionysus, you see the world from another perspective. Maybe you have more eyes than the others, maybe they are stronger, maybe... maybe it's just mare's-nest. But it's unique, right? Your feelings burst and you'd never want to live without them. However, you'll find out that there is nothing spectacular in some things. But as you find out that you are in love, it'll be just as Shakespeare wrote Romeo and Juliet's story (until they ended up as dessert for infinity) on your back.

But it doesn't last. It's like being drunk, or in a dream.

You get sober. Summer's unreality gets more and more real as you walk on Autumn's Boulevard. You can't see as well as you did not so long ago and that love vanishes. You end up with a photograph, maybe two, a shot forever, a cigarette mark on your arm and with yourself. You end up alone, just as you always did. That's the price, to be honest. So that you'll be able to get back from where you left next summer. And so does Oberon send a stranger to glaze your eyes with a mystical flower. And the magic of that flower disappears the moment Bacovia steps in...

*Miruna Paiuc, XI B*

## The art of dreaming

In school, we usually learn how to improve our skills, our knowledge, but not our abilities. Nobody teaches us how to dream or understand our souls.

Nobody has ever told me a way to learn how to handle dreams... Are they fragile or not? Can all of them come true? Can they be stronger than bad luck and awful disappointments or are they just some mere desires which are to be forgotten day by day?

It depends on us! Why? Because in *My Story* WE are the dreamers! And so it should be in yours! If I let my dreams vanish and just remember them as that part of my life like an old toy which used to look very attractive in the showcase but never extraordinary enough to make me beg my parents for it, then I am not a dreamer! And I do not deserve this name, not even for a single second. Even if I am not a certified dreamer this does not mean that I cannot become one.

For me dreams are those ineffable moments which keep me breathing, living, thinking and solving a lot of daily problems, which make bad feelings vanish or they kick them out of our lives just like demons are thrown out by angels.

In our lives there were and will always be a lot of moments of failure. In such moments, when we see the others laughing with superiority and feeling untouchable, it is hard to get thorough. We cry, feel bad or wait for mercy but it is never useful. In such moments, dreaming is the key: we can get up, look around, and imagine the day when the roles will change in this extraordinary play called *life*. When that day comes we become the person we have always wished to be, so close to holding the future in our own hands.

However, for some of us, dreaming is the worst possible thing: we hope for something, but we never reach that. It could be that we are not trying hard enough or we live with the idea that a dream is not something that can be touched or turned into reality...

Years ago, someone wiser told me not to stop dreaming – ever! –, to put all my energy in every single strong desire that I have, and to do my best to realize it like it deserves and I do as well. Day by day, year by year, I have started to understand what he meant and I have finally found out that before him advising me, I was not dreaming. I was just fooling around without being strong enough to reach for and dive into my dreams. It is like when you believe. You are born with this ability, but you discover a bit late, sometimes too late, how to use it and not to waste such a treasure on worthless pieces of life.

The best part of this art is that everything about it is yours. Some people can tell you that it is wrong to dream, but not that your dreams are wrong, because every person has his/her own dreams, or at least he/she should have some. Life can steal people from time to time, can do the same with things, animals, houses, and even lands, but never with you dreams. They are in your heart and nobody will know about them when you ask a question. Moreover, they will never be too busy to hear your voice and born again and again or become stronger than ever.

Even if it is morning, or the middle of the night, dreams are your imaginary piano, the one that you can play anytime, it doesn't matter how loud or how different than the sheet is. Nobody will hear it, if you do not want them to, it will be awesome, just for yourself.

All of us have moments when life may look useless or actions boring, with no meaning... but when we learn to draw wishes like dreams, disappointment as food for them, believe as clothes when they feel cold and truth as vitamins to make them stronger, we will all become dreamers, smiling, thinking, and never looking back, because it will be a whole universe in front of us...



*Andra Cărăușu, X B*

## Simply, Me

I knew that I had to change something... To do something big... Big enough that when I grow old and I stand in the garden of my seaside house surrounded by my grandchildren, I can look back and say: "Yes, I've done that." But what should I do to achieve something so big, so important? I really don't know...

The wind was caressing my face and the sun was playing with my lips and with my thoughts. I was on the roof of my humble house looking at the old grumpy forest behind me. A cold wind was searching for my hands because, his friend, the little old sun was going to his bed to warm it up while some birds were taking a last flight to their nests. Nature was so kind and fresh, almost unbelievable.

"I would like nature to be everywhere" I thought." Then, I could go and feel the birds, the wind and the sun more friendly and more full of life than ever. I would like to do something like that! It would be a great thing to bring nature into the cities of the world! I would feel so satisfied!" These thoughts were crossing my mind and the smell of fresh air was changing them along with my mind "That isn't possible", I thought. My soul was so pure and innocent, I could have felt my whole future life in front of me... And again, I kept thinking about the house at the seaside with my grandchildren and my boy in front of me fascinated by the story about love and friendship that he had always loved to listen. I was so funny with my old wrinkles and with my glasses on the tip of my nose.

I had no idea what I was going to do with all my ideas that weren't matching each other. I couldn't think of a good opportunity to get out of that messy world. I couldn't do anything. I thought I couldn't do anything because first of all I was a lazy person and secondly, I was only a kid. Only a stupid kid with big ideas to make a better world.

My thoughts went on and on. It was getting late and I packed up all the things that didn't belong in the world of my little roof house.

Ever since that day I have understood one thing. That when you are young, you have to try and live your childhood. When you feel that your childhood years are over, you can think that you can change something. Until then, I am a child, and I enjoy every single moment of my last years as a kid. But that's just me. Simply Me...



*Mihai Cucu, X B*

## Poetry

### About you

Your touch is with me always,  
It's burnt into my skin,  
As soft and warm as sun rays  
When a summer day sets in.

Your soft voice - never silent,  
Forever in my ears,  
Serenading every moment  
And calming all my fears.

Your arms always enfold me,  
The strength of angels wings,  
They support and protect me  
wholly  
With the safety true love brings.

While I can never repay you,  
For the wonder you bring into my  
life,  
I can forever be true,  
And forever be a true love.

*Melisa Faydaver*  
*XI B*

### OUR QUEER LANGUAGE

" I think you already know  
Of though and bough and cough and dough,  
Others may stumble, but not you  
On hiccough, thorough, tough and through.  
Well done! And now you wish, perhaps  
To learn of less familiar traps?  
Beware of heard, a dreadful word  
That look like beard and sounds like bird.  
And dead: it's said like bed, not bead-  
For goodness' sake don't call it deed!  
Watch out for meat and great an threat-  
They rhyme with suite and straight and debt.  
A moth is not a moth in mother  
Nor both in bother or in brother.  
And here is not a match for there.  
Nor dear and fear for bear and pear.  
And ther's dose and rose and lose-  
Just look them up-and goose and choose,  
And cork and work and card and ward,  
And font and front and word and sword.  
And do and go and thwart and cart-  
Come, come, I've hardly made a start!  
A dreadful language? man alive,  
I'd mastered it when I was five!

-Unknown author

*Found by Miruna Plosceanu, XI B*

### Male vs Female language

A woman has a figure, a man has a physique;  
A father roars in rage, a mother shrieks in pique;  
And female bosses supervise, male bosses boss.  
Lads gulp, maids sip;  
Jacks plunge, Jills dip;  
Guys bark, dame snap;  
Boys punch, girls slap;  
Gobs swab, Waves mop;  
Braves buy, squaws shop.  
A gentleman perspires, a lady merely glows;  
A husband is suspicious: a wife, however, knows.

*Found by Miruna Plosceanu, XI B*

# Culture and civilization

## Crimes and punishments in the Elizabethan Era

The Elizabethan Era was a period of unruly society, where even the slightest crime-if suspected, was punished with considerable pain by ways of torture and sometimes death. In those times no laws or black mail could save a person convicted of a crime whether or not the accusations was legitimate.

The Era was split into two classes: the upper class and everyone else.

The punishments applied to all the people in spite of the separation of the classes. The worst crime a person could ever commit was treason and in this case torture was strictly and heavily employed. Another well known crime or the medieval times was sedition which meant the rebellion of the people against the laws given by the court. Also blasphemy was considered a highly convictable along with spying, murder and witchcraft.

Commoners were often convicted of thievery as well as begging, adultery and fraud. Though the commoners and the nobility committed different types of crimes, their punishments were much the same.

But until they were executed a long and hurtful process of torture was taking place. This was used as a tool to get information from the people that were suspected of knowing things they shouldn't.

The first of the many instruments used for these activities was THE RACK. In this torture device the convicts were fastened to one roller by the legs and to another one by the waists. As the interrogation progressed the rollers were gradually pushed inducing pain. Its first appearance is said to have been due to John Hollan the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Extor.

THE SCAVAGER'S DAUGHTER was another one which worked on the opposite principle of the rack, by compressing the body rather than stretching it.

One of the devices used for unusual convicts was THE DUCKING STOOL. This was usually applied to witches. It was believed that an accused that sank was considered innocent, while floating indicated witchcraft.

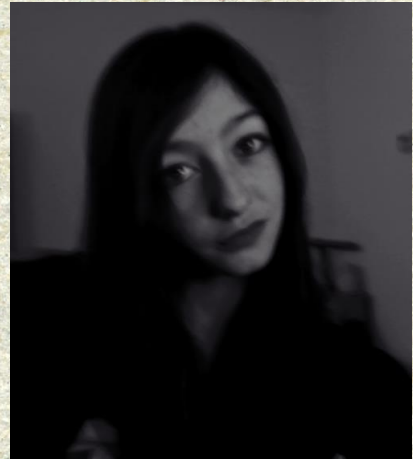
And the one never seen in action is THE IRON MAIDEN. This consists in a cabinet where people were closed and compressed by tons of needles. It is believed to be fictional but there were some artificial examples created.

But the most scary and cruel was by far THE WHEEL also known as "Catherine's wheel" and was used only for capital punishments always killing its victims in a slowly way.

Beside the devices medieval people also used easier methods like the branding irons which was utilized to mark certain categories of convicts: vagabonds, gypsies or brawlers; also they were torturing them by whipping, cutting or starving them in public place. Taking it to the extreme when they weren't cooperative they cut off various anatomical parts for instance fingers or the whole hand.

Today the Death Penalty is seen by most people as a taboo but in those times it was definitely not an issue. The only question was what form of execution the convicted person deserved. The least brutal was the beheading accorded to state prisoners or people of noble birth. A minister of the church was present also and they were given the choice of having their last words heard by the people gathered to see the scene. But there were other types crueller like the hanging which was reserved for the most hated prisoners. The hardest one was the execution by being burned at stake that was also one of the most painful. Mary, Elizabeth sister, sent over 300 protestants to death earning herself the name of Bloody Mary

Some of the famous people that were sentenced either by the rulers of England were : Anne Boleyn (Elizabeth mother), Thomas Cromwell (convicted as a traitor and heretic while Henry the VIII was marrying Catherine Howard executed two years later) and Thomas Seymour.



## British Healthcare System under the stethoscope

*“ Good healthcare should be available to all, regardless of wealth. “*



The NHS is the oldest and the largest single-payer healthcare system in the world. It was inaugurated on July 5, 1948 by the Britain's minister of health, Aneurin Bevan and from then on it was respected and appreciated throughout the world for the high standards of care given to patients. It is different not only from the Romanian one, but also from the other healthcare systems in Western Europe. Due to the efficiency, egalitarianism and comprehensivity it bases on, the NHS is appreciated and is taken as model by more and more countries.

Initially it consisted of a single national organization, but currently it is decentralised into four independent organisations, one for each of the countries part of the United Kingdom. Each service works independently, is separately funded and administrated, has its own legislation and provides treatment without discrimination. A great advantage is that the service is financed from mandatory national insurance taxation paid by employees directly from their salaries, being free at the point of use for UK citizens legitimately fully registered with the system and legal immigrants who can access medical care without payment. As a system based on a strong primary medical assistance, NHS is clinically and financially more efficient. The computer system “Choose and Book” offers the patient appointment to appropriate specialized clinics.

British hospitals are found on the list of the best in Europe and are the ones which achieved low mortality rates and British doctors are among the best paid in the world. Some of UK's most remarkable hospitals are:

- The Royal Marsden
- King's College Hospital
- Addenbrooke's Hospital
- The Wellington Hospital
- St Mark's Hospital



*Alexandra-Elena Minea. XI B*

## Five o'clock Tea

### Important history aspects

Afternoon tea may have been started by the French, according to the monthly newsletter called TeaMuse, in the writings of Madame de Sévigné, one of history's greatest letter writers on life in 17th Century France. In 1662, King Charles II while in exile, married the Portuguese Infanta Catherine de Braganza. As Charles had grown up in the Dutch capital, both he and his Portuguese bride were confirmed tea drinkers. When the monarchy was re-established, they brought this foreign tea tradition to England with them. Her influence made tea more popular amongst the wealthier classes of society, as whatever the royals did, everyone else wanted to copy. Soon tea mania spread swept across England, and it became the beverage of choice in English high society, replacing ale as the national drink.

Tea drinking became even more popular when Queen Anne chose tea over ale as her regular breakfast drink. Anne's character was once portrayed as a tea-drinking. During the second half of the Victorian Period, known as the Industrial Revolution, working families would return home tired and exhausted. The table would be set with any manner of meats, bread, butter, pickles, cheese and of course tea. None of the dainty finger sandwiches, scones and pastries of afternoon tea would have been on the menu. Because it was eaten at a high, dining table rather than the low tea tables, it was termed "high" tea.

According to legend, one of Queen Victoria's ladies-in-waiting, Anna Maria Stanhope, known as the Duchess of Bedford, is credited as the creator of afternoon teatime. Because the noon meal had become skimpier, the Duchess suffered from "a sinking feeling" at about four o'clock in the afternoon.

At first the Duchess had her servants sneak her a pot of tea and a few breadstuffs. Adopting the European tea service format, she invited friends to join her for an additional afternoon meal at five o'clock in her rooms at Belvoir Castle. The menu centred around small cakes, bread and butter sandwiches, assorted sweets, and, of course, tea. This summer practice proved so popular, the Duchess continued it when she returned to London, sending cards to her friends asking them to join her for "tea and a walking the fields." The practice of inviting friends to come for tea in the afternoon was quickly picked up by other social hostesses.

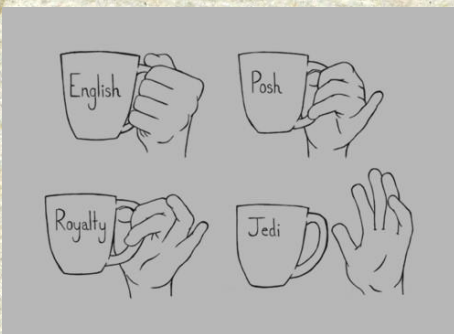
Traditional afternoon tea consists of a selection of dainty sandwiches (including of course thinly sliced cucumber sandwiches), scones served with clotted cream and preserves. Cakes and pastries are also served. Tea grown in India or Ceylon is poured from silver tea pots into delicate bone china cups.

Nowadays however, in the average suburban home, afternoon tea is likely to be just a biscuit or small cake and a mug of tea, usually produced using a teabag.

### Tea etiquette

*Pinkies up* -by placing one's fingers to the front and back of the handle, called pinching the handle with one's pinkie extended downward or to the side, *pinkie up*, it allows balance. It is not an affectation, but a graceful way to avoid spills. Never loop your fingers through the handle, nor grasp the vessel bowl with the palm of your hand.

*Napkins: placement and protocol* - A truly formal table has only one correct placement for a napkin, to the left side of the place setting. The napkin should be folded with the closed edge to the left and the open edge to the right. There are no exceptions.



*How to eat a scone* - Although some establishments will serve a sliced scone pre-prepared with jam and cream, this is merely a gimmick introduced to save time (It may now be "acceptable" but it will never be correct). . Simply break off a bite-size piece, place it on your plate, and then apply, with your bread and butter knife, the jam and cream. A fork is not used to eat a scone.

*Stirring tea and spoon placement* - Do not stir your tea, with your tea spoon, in sweeping circular motions. Place your tea spoon at the six o'clock position and softly fold the liquid towards the twelve o'clock position two or three times. Never

leave your tea spoon in your tea cup. When not in use, place your tea spoon on the right side of the tea saucer. Never wave or hold your tea cup in the air. When not in use, place the tea cup back in the tea saucer.

### **Tea time in literature**

Tea is certainly as much of a social drink as coffee, and more of a domestic, for the reason that the teacup hours are the family hours. As these are the hours when the sexes are thrown together, and as most of the poetry and philosophy of tea-drinking teem with female virtues, vanities, and whimsicalities, the inference is that, without women, tea would be nothing, and without tea, women would be stale, flat, and uninteresting. With them it is a polite, purring, soft, gentle, kind, sympathetic, delicious beverage.

According to a magazine, the first mention of tea by an Englishman is to be found in a letter from Mr. Wickham, an agent of the East India Company, written from Japan, on the 27th of June, 1615, to Mr. Eaton, another officer of the company, a resident of Macao, asking him to send a pot of the best chaw.

Do you have favourite tea scenes in the novels by Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, or the Brontë sisters? We started to make a list, only to find that tea is everywhere. Which important plot twists *don't* involve tea? At teatime, would-be lovers exchange longing glances; mothers choose suitors for their daughters; and rivals trade veiled insults in polite, singsong tones.

But when most people think of tea in literature, it's usually Lewis Carroll's delightfully absurd "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" that first comes to mind. Of all the many Dickens tea scenes, the most interesting one is the one of Pip and Estella in "Great Expectations." Tea is everywhere in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," which is an ode to inaction and paralysis.

### **Class differences and tea beliefs**

To start from the bottom, working-class people (mostly males) are said to drink especially with their *cooked breakfast* (bacon, eggs, sausages, baked beans, fried bread and toast) "industrial quantities of strong, brick-coloured, sweet, milky tea". In addition, putting the milk into the cup first or stirring the tea noisily or over vigorously is also considered a lower-class habit. The lower-middle or the middle-middle class people (stereo) typically drink "a paler, 'posher' version" of the working-class tea, and their brand of choice is Twining's English Breakfast, whereas the upper-middle or upper class members resort to "weak, dishwater-coloured, unsweetened Earl Grey". However, the "less class-anxious" upper middle or upper class people can also openly confess to liking *builder's tea*, which consists of strong tea, two spoonfuls of sugar and lots of milk.

To shed even more light on the matter of how an innocent cup of tea can be what gives away a person's social status, it should be mentioned that the quantity of sugar put in the tea is also another direct class indicator. To put even one spoonful of 3 sugar in your tea is somewhat suspect, more than one spoonful says that you are lower middle class at best, and more than two spoonfuls scream that you definitely belong to the working class.

Today, though many still enjoy preparing and drinking tea according to these British or Asian traditions, there are a number of modern tools and techniques that can make drinking loose leaf tea more convenient and appealing to a wide variety of people.



Anda Avrumuțoaie  
Denisa Botaș  
Adriana Muntean  
Anca Socaci

XI B

## British Nobel Prizes for Literature Now and Then

### Short history

A pacifist at heart and an inventor by nature, Swedish chemist **Alfred Nobel** invented dynamite. However, the invention that he thought would end all wars was seen by many others as an extremely deadly product. In 1888, when Alfred's brother Ludvig died, a French newspaper mistakenly ran an obituary for Alfred which called him the "merchant of death." Not wanting to go down in history with such a horrible epitaph, Nobel created a will that soon shocked his relatives and established the now famous Nobel Prizes.



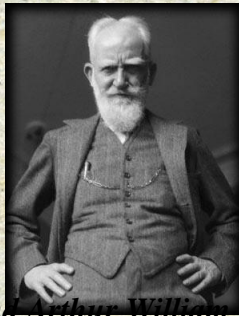
### The British Nobel Prizes in Literature

#### Rudyard Kipling

**Prize motivation:** "in consideration of the power of observation, originality of imagination, virility of ideas and remarkable talent for narration which characterize the creations of this world-famous author"



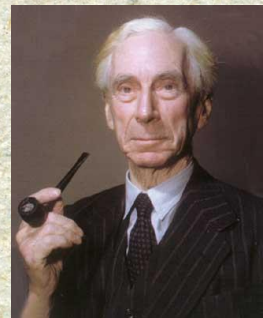
**George Bernard Shaw** wrote plays in order to illustrate his criticism of the English stage.



**Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill** was the Prime Minister of Great Britain.



**Bertrand Arthur William Russell** wrote scientific books.  
*"The Principles of Mathematics"*  
*Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*



Nobel Prizes for Literature were awarded to personalities which remained in history for their ambition and achievements. However, between 2000-2012 there were three winners:

- 1).V.S. Naipaul-2001
- 2).Harold Pinter-2005
- 3).Doris Lessing-2007

On a personal note, I'd like to say that history has changed. People used to be more involved and they were able to succeed in more areas like literature, politics or mathematics.

*Cristina Crizbășan, XI B*



## Is the English championship still English?

The modern England is really keen on football, like they love it more and more every year but the thing is that Premier League has stopped being so British, like in the past. Nowadays we have Spanish and Latin American good looking guys that have invaded Premier League and let's not forget about the Africans because it becomes a really big problem when the clubs have to deal with the leaving of their greatest players to the African Cup.

We all know that only the big clubs are, of course, the ones that have the money to buy and keep such players but lately even the poorly rated teams have started to transfer them and nowadays is really hard to find a 100% British team at least in the first two divisions. Some examples of non-English players that became emblematic figures of some teams are Thierry Henry which is the third all time top scorer and together with Cesc Fabregas and Robin Van Persie have been the most important players of Arsenal, a thing which is somehow understood as their French coach, one of the living legends, Arsène Wenger is the team pole.



Other guys that came and made history in a country that sees itself the centre of the world and became wanna-be for some young business men are the Arabs who now have the power of Premier League in their hands, but far from them the best known and controversial is the Russian Roman Abramovich, a less funny and richer version of the Romanian Gigi Becali, who throws away money for his team but never has the patience of a long-life project.

Everyone knows them, everyone loves them: they're the Spanish, the champions of Europe and of the world. I'm sure you all have seen at least once a match of the masters of the ball and have noticed some pretty faces there. Well, three of those beauties play for the biggest teams in England and they're very appreciated for their skills. David Silva, Juan Mata and Fernando Torres are the ones that drove crazy the lady fans of Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester City who are capable of anything for them and turned these boys into real sex-symbols like they're some famous actors or singers.

But we can't forget about the other kind of stars, the ones that will always shine, the living legends that have pure British blood and have left an indelible fingerprint on the Premier League. When you say Steven Gerrard you say Liverpool, when you say Frank Lampard and John Terry you say Chelsea, and when it comes to Manchester United you have a whole collection: Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Rio Ferdinand and Sir Alex Ferguson. This is actually the British football and they seem to lose from their celebrity because they're thought too old for their teams, but they'll always be the engines of physical and mental power for their clubs. Even the national team has recently started to lose from its nationality as no more than 2 years ago it had its first foreign coach, the Italian Fabio Capello and even a half English half African player is part of the current squad.

So where is everything going to? Have we lost our British spirit, guys? We can't just leave these invaders take over our reign! We are the kings of the world and we should respect ourselves more, as the foreigners do. Everyone considers Premier League the 1<sup>st</sup> championship in the world, even UEFA, which really appreciates our European performances, and we should be just proud that La Liga hasn't taken over us. We have the most amazing and spectacular matches. Where else in the world can you find a team that can both score and get 7 goals in one single game? Well, we have them all here. We don't need Spain's tiki-taka or Africans' speed, we don't want French technique or eastern money.

**WE ARE ENGLAND, so go go LIONS and you'll never walk alone!**



*Andrea Soare, XI B*

## British Army during the Victorian Age



The British Army during the Victorian age served through a period of great technological and social change. Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, and died in 1901. Her long reign was marked by the steady expansion and consolidation of the British Empire, and industrialisation and the enactment of liberal reforms (by both Liberal and Conservative governments) within Britain.

The British Army began the period with few differences from the British Army of the Napoleonic Wars that fought at the Waterloo. There were three main periods of the Army's development during the era. From the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the mid-1850s, the Duke of Wellington and his successors attempted to maintain its organization and tactics as they had been in 1815, with only detail changes. In 1854, the Crimean War, and the Indian Rebellion of 1857 highlighted the shortcomings of the Army, but entrenched interests prevented major reforms from taking place. From 1868 to 1881, sweeping changes were made by Liberal governments, giving it the broad structure it retained until 1914.

On Victoria's death, the Army was still engaged in the Second Anglo-Boer War, but other than expedients adopted for that war, it was recognisably the army that would enter the First World War. The Industrial Revolution had changed its weapons, transport and equipment, and social changes such as better education had prompted changes to the terms of service and outlook of many soldiers. Nevertheless, it retained many features inherited from the Duke of Wellington's army, and since its prime function was to maintain the expanding British Empire, it differed in many ways from the conscripted armies of continental Europe.

*Cristian-Dumitru Stanciu, XI B*

## **The Natural World – Stop its Destruction!**

Nowadays, the end of our natural world is the principal subject on TV programmes, on radio, internet and in newspapers. Moreover, people have been induced the fear of an apocalyptic end.

The end of the world is, in a big percentage, predicted by prophets. Their aim is their own interest in that they want, to make a lot of money with lies and uncertainties. In contrast, there come the scientists who have real pieces of evidence about the end of the world.

One of the pieces of evidence can be the global warming which produces a lot of catastrophic phenomena, like natural hazards.

Another proof is pollution. Pollution is a major problem that really ruins the ecosystem, the habitat of plants and animals and represents a real loss of fauna and flora. Pollution has begun to be a considerable problem all over the world because the people are unaware about their own faults. An old proverb says that nature never does anything without a reason, so, a simple grill made in nature can be a step towards disaster.

More than that, we all know about the progress in technology. We like to be always informed, we like to spend our free time on telephone or chatting with friends, we like to travel by cars or planes, but we never learn the consequences about the stained air that we breathe. A simple breath of unhealthy air can lead us to death. This can be a reason for the appearance of so many still incurable illnesses.

We all know that our source of oxygen is our forests, but where is our conscience when we cut a lot of trees for Christmas? A tree is growing during ten, twenty or perhaps thirty years and the same trees are cut without mercy in two or three minutes. Yes, it is in the spirit of Christmas to have a tree in your house at this celebration, but we have to plant trees to replace those cut down, in order to save our wood industry.

Besides, food can be another reason that leads to death. We don't know what we eat, food isn't natural any more, even fruits and vegetables are injected with different substances to quicken their growth.

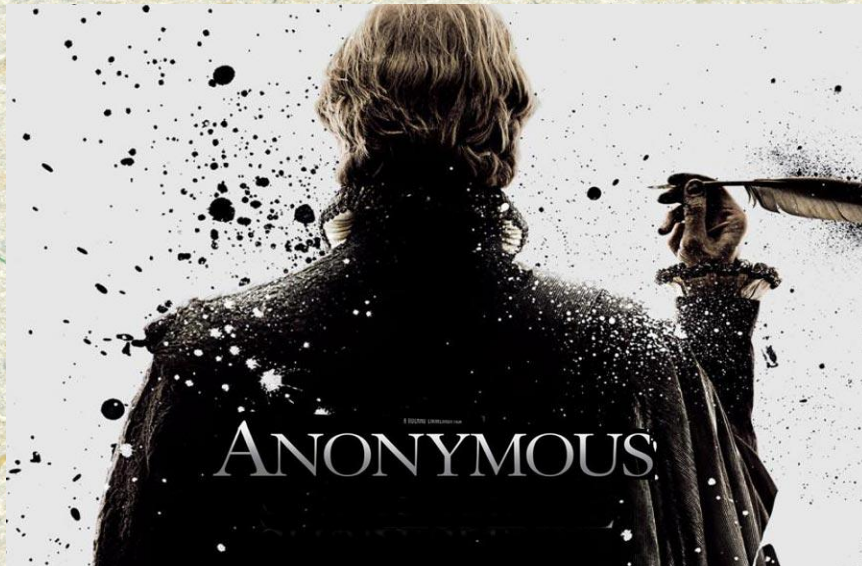
In conclusion, nature is a lively presence, it is part of our life, so it doesn't ask us to be brilliant, it just asks us to be rational. We should ignore and deny the lies of prophets and we should inform people that our life is in danger. The future is in our hands. Our ignorance providing what happened around us can produce a disaster, not for one particular person, but for us, as a generation.



*Iunona - Daniela Mitea, XI D*

## Miscellaneous

### Was Shakespeare a Fraud?



There's a lot of controversy around Shakespeare, and many tried to destroy him over the years, along with his work. After all, he's still one of the greatest artists who lived on earth so having contestants is somehow compulsory.

The movie „Anonymous” is a historical thriller and drama, directed by Roland Emmerich, which points out the hypothesis that Edward De Vere, Earl of Oxford was the real author of what is thought to be Shakespeare's work. However, the movie is based upon a groundless theory, speculating the idea that Shakespeare, the son of an illiterate provincial glove maker couldn't have been a genius. Instead, Edward de Vere will do: he's an aristocrat, is rich, cultured and refined.

„Anonymous” is about how Edward (played by Rhys Ifans) wrote everything -influencing everyone, from the English rabble to Queen Elizabeth the 1'st- and William (played by Rafe Spall) took all the credit. Moreover, the movie presents William Shakespeare as an infamous man, with despicable pleasures who would kill for what he desires.

Besides this, the movie stages one of the conspiracy theories according to which the Queen's Puritan adviser, William Cecil plots to takeover the throne. Everything is a tangled story, with political implications, according to which the son of Edward de Vere, born from incest, is to inherit the throne (so the mother is obviously, Queen Elizabeth, whose morality is strongly blemished).



I recommend the movie, for the ones among you who like good plots, mystery and historical themes and costumes. The acting and dialogues are very good and you can discover Elizabethan London as it's very well depicted.

Nevertheless, remember that is a Hollywood movie not a history lesson! And if you also consider that Mr. Roland Emmerich is the same man who strongly believed in 2012's world ending and directed a movie about it, than you can drag some rational conclusions about what could be *true* in this movie.

Veronica Borcea, XI B

## Elizabethan Superstitions

The superstitions that originated during the Elizabethan era were based on various beliefs and traditions. The historians opine that many of the traditional English customs were based on the myths and superstitions that date back to the Dark Ages. Ignorance and fear of the unknown, combined with a false conception of causation resulted in many superstitions during the Elizabethan era. Fear of the forces of nature coupled with a fear of the supernatural resulted in the belief in superstitions during the Elizabethan period.

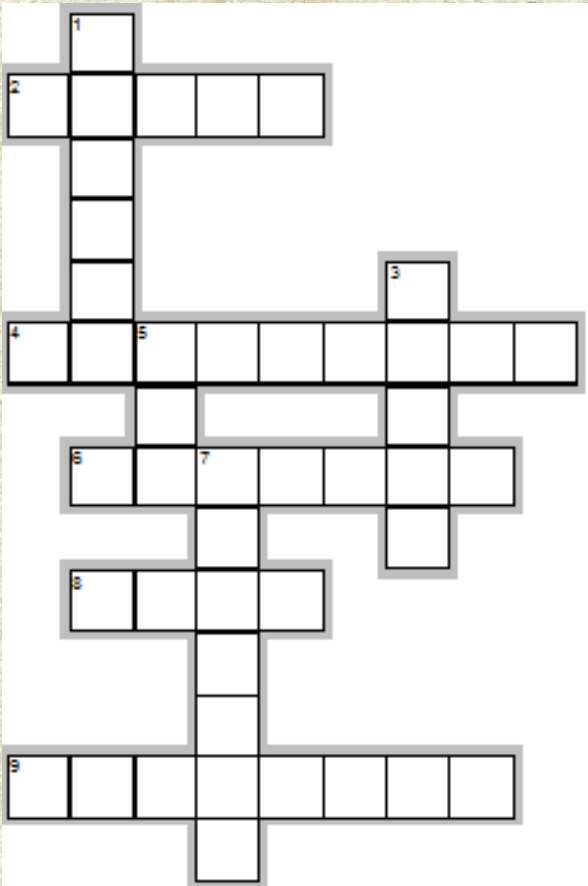
Here are a selection of superstitions which affected the daily lives of Elizabethans:

1. Saying "God Bless You" following a sneeze - Elizabethans believed that the devil could enter your body when you opened your mouth to sneeze - the blessing warded off the Devil.
2. It was unlucky for a black cat to cross your path ( Black is the colour associated with evil magic and a cat was strongly associated with a witch's familiar.
3. An eclipse was seen as an omen of evil.
4. The 'seventh son of a seventh son' was believed to possess supernatural powers.
5. You would see a vision of your future husband by pinning bay leaves to your pillow on the eve of St Valentine's Day.
6. The saying "Touch Wood" to prevent the evil eye was one of the superstitions that had originated during the Elizabethan era.
7. Shoes on a table - If you put shoes on a table it was very bad luck - inviting an imminent death.
8. Walking under ladders was considered to bring bad luck, as they were associated with the gallows and executions.
9. Spilling salt or pepper - seen as bad luck - the cost of these spices were extremely expensive during the Elizabethan era.
10. Sailors wore golden hoop earrings all the time. It is said that this was done so they would have gold to pay their fare in the underworld if ever they sink and drown.
11. Sudden loss of hair was also seen as unlucky. It supposedly meant that there would be health problems and financial turmoil. Elizabeth I had red hair and it was said that red hair meant that the person has a short temper.
12. The right hand of an executed prisoner was said to be lucky as it had the power to heal and it could give the bearer stealth.
13. A superstition that was most influential to them was that witches exist and they can cast spells on anyone. The spells were understood as so grave, they can lead to death. They were also blamed for mostly everything unexplainable — the plague, famine, diseases and low crop yields during harvest time.



*Anca Socaci, XI B*

## Oldies, but goldies



### Across

2. if you have ... it means that you are ill
4. in a state of chaos
6. we say something is ... if it has been created especially for someone, in the same way that you say custom
8. if someone is in a ..., it means that he is in a bad mood, or being grumpy; it is another word for a spy or informant
9. a ... person is someone who has absolutely no clue; synonym to clueless

### Down

1. according to a number of writers in the 17th and 18th centuries, it was originally a sailor's cheer or salute
3. if something great happened to you by chance that would be a ...
5. if something is ... it is awesome
7. this is a word that would be used to describe some food that was particularly good and probably sweet and fattening

*Adriana Muntean, XI B*

## Murphy's Laws

1. You will always find something in the last place you look.
2. The other line always moves faster.
3. Everyone has a scheme for getting rich that will not work.
4. Friends come and go, but enemies accumulate.
5. If it jams – force it. If it breaks, it needed replacing anyway.
6. The repairman will never have seen a model quite like yours before.
7. Build a system that even a fool can use, and only a fool will use it.
8. You will remember that you forgot to take out the trash when the garbage truck is two doors away.
9. The minute you get interested in someone is the minute they find someone else.
10. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.
11. If anything simply cannot go wrong, it will anyway.
12. Every solution breeds new problems.
13. There is always one more bug.



14. In case of doubt, make it sound convincing.
15. A bird in the hand is better than one overhead.
16. Anything good in life is either illegal, immoral, or fattening.
17. When you don't have much work ... all your colleagues will be busy.
18. Great ideas are never remembered and dumb statements are never forgotten.
19. If more than one person is responsible for a miscalculation, no one will be at fault.
20. If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

*selected by: Alexandru Constantin  
Alin Bordea , XII E*

## Someecards

1. You should stop worrying about your weight and start worrying about your boring personality.
2. I want your Valentine's to be a surprise so please tell me exactly what to do.
3. If you need to talk, I will pretend to listen.
4. I hate when people say they're "expecting" a baby. Like "We're expecting a baby but it could be a Velociraptor".
5. No, no, no ! I'm not insulting you. I'm just describing you.
6. No, I don't want to come to your dog's birthday party, freak. My cat is getting married that weekend.
7. Good morning! I see the assassins have failed.
8. Wow honey, the house is so clean ! Was the Internet down for a while today?
9. Your gift was absolutely perfect for someone who's not me.
10. Dear weekend, I swear the Weekdays mean nothing to me ! It's you I wanna be with ! Cheers!

*Selected by: Alexandru Constantin, XII E*

## Auto Pilot

Have you seen the movie „Click” from 2006? Adam Sandler is the protagonist of the movie which is a very good portrayal of how people live their lives now. Basically, the lesson we learn from it is that every moment in our life is worth our attention and we really *DON'T WANT* to skip them, because time cannot be recycled.

I remembered the movie when I read a so-called motivational article; something about how we should read a book instead of wasting so much time in front of the computer. And then I thought: „ am I any different from the others? Isn't it how most people live their lives, *procrastinating* ? Procrastinating so much that some of their actions, repeated, over and over again, become automatic?

The definition of automaticity is this:

„Automaticity is the ability to do things *without occupying the mind* with the low-level details required, allowing it to become an automatic response pattern or habit. It is usually the result of learning, repetition, and practice.”

How many of our actions have already become something automatic?

We wake up in the morning and take a shower, drink and eat, lock the door (but we don't always remember doing that, isn't it? ) take the bus, get to school...and then?...

Sometimes we say „I am here, but I am not *awake* yet” or „my brain *can't work* just yet, contact me after eleven”. Silly jokes, right? But what happens in time? One of the classes might be or get boring and our imagination strays again, we think of the past, something we like in the present and imagine thousands of ways of what our future might look like. We are not in the present, not in the classroom, not in our own bodies sometimes. Tragically, we do that when going out with our friends or shopping, or when we write our homework, we don't concentrate. We don't realise what we are doing and therefore we can't remember things.

What did you eat two days ago at lunch? (If you eat the same things almost everyday you will probably answer this question, but the point still stands.)

And if we allow our present to be mostly an „automatic response, pattern” how will we *ever* achieve that wonderful future we spent most time imagining? We get easily in the comfort zone! And is so hard to get out of there! Sometimes we realise that, by the fact that we are *bored. Bored with our life, with the scenery, same old actors...* But mostly we don't. Aren't we living then on „auto pilot”? Just like in the movie.

If you haven't seen it, watch it! If not because of the article, then because it is a comedy. However, I believe you *will* learn something from it. And if tomorrow you forget it and enter again your comfort zone, or maybe next week, at least you will have that piece of information in your memory and someday, you will remember again that is so important *to live in the present and build your future instead of wasting the present on dreaming of the future*. It is very hard for someone who procrastinates, I know, trust me.

But remember to love intensely the ones you love and to do at least a few things you have always wanted to do; find at least one great passion, or hobby and try something new as often as you can! Because in time, if you aren't satisfied with the future you have created, or *haven't created, to be more precise*, you will at least have some wonderful memories, and you won't feel that you have actually wasted part of your *life*. It is a very sad feeling, believe me.

Veronica Borcea, XI B

An English professor wrote the words :

"A woman without her man is nothing"

on the chalkboard and asked his students to punctuate it correctly.

All of the males in the class wrote:

"A woman, without her man, is nothing."

All the females in the class wrote:

"A woman: without her, man is nothing."

Punctuation is powerful

*Found by Veronica Borcea, XI B*

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6. **BESPOKE**—we say something is ... if it has been created especially for someone, in the same way that you say custom
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