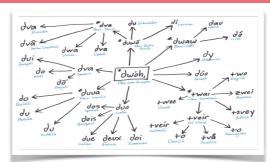
The Scholar Ship

"True progress is to know more and be more and to do more." - Oscar Wilde

The Origins of the English Language

Mr Johnson reports on the incredible story of how English made it from its Proto-Indo European roots to the present day



On Tuesday 21st January, Miss Wright delivered a talk to the Studd Society, the School's senior academic society, about the evolution of the English language. Her wide-ranging talk began by looking at the Proto-Indo European roots of many European languages and traced that through the ages to the present day.

At university, I studied some linguistics, but this was mainly about reconstructing Proto-Indo European or the sound changes within a language and how gradually each sound within each language is regressing to a monosyllabic grunt: "uh". Miss Wright provided me and the students with a fascinating new way of looking at how languages evolved, talking about the influence on English from other languages. The sheer number of times this island has been invaded and conquered means that English has been exposed to many different outside influences during its history. Each of these other languages and cultures has left its own mark and it was great to be able to spot some of the patterns in words borrowed from other languages - from Old Norse to ancient Greek to the Indic languages.

Miss Wright also went some way to explaining why English has a much larger vocabulary than many other modern languages, as each new invader has brought their own word for an object, emotion, action, gradually building up the synonyms available to a native English speaker. This talk left me pondering how English will continue to evolve in the future and the further influences yet to leave their mark. What is clear after Miss Wright's talk, though, is that I was wrong at university to study language change only in isolation; that the study of our language is also the study of our own history and culture and how that has been molded by those we come into contact with.

Upcoming Events



February 15th-17th Y9-10 Scholars' Retreat Chellington Centre, Bedford



February 24th -March 3rd Year 11 & 13 Mocks



February 28th, 1630 Library The Water Supply Challenge

Academic Endeavour (Platinum)

Ayoola Oshiyemi

PSHE Pupils of the Month

Charlie Gillam Ollie Dawson

Headmaster's Distinctions

Alys Cope Yasmin Ridgers Rachel Ilori Maya Govindasamy Nanayaa Zuta Phoebe Graham Jessamy Lloyd Jessie Jordan Toby Chavasse Zara Mansfield
Caterina Brigliadori
Joel Sheldon
Thea Chavasse
Ilai Mate
Zoe Neylan
Katie Pugh
Yvonne de Viliers
Victoria Jeffery

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A Scholar, a Dinner and an Enigma

Head Scholar, Xanthe Jones, recounts her excitement at hearing Dr James Grime speak at the Academic Scholars' Dinner

Dr James Grime. I would be lying if I said that I wasn't extremely excited when I found out that he was to be this year's guest for the Scholars' Dinner. As a major maths nerd I have been known to spend a large chunk of my free time watching many of his videos on Numberphile, a YouTube channel he is part of. In fact, I started writing this article while watching his video about Superhero Triangles, because everyone knows the only way to improve superheroes is to add some maths.

It wouldn't be too far from the truth to say that Dr Grime is a part of the reason I am now looking to pursue a higher education and a career within the realm of maths. Two years ago, I attended MathsFest with the school, where Dr Grime did a talk about the maths of codebreaking. He mentioned a book, called the Code Book, which I later read, and I guess the rest is history. I sit here, about two years (and a week) after meeting him for the first time, having just spent a wonderful evening at last night's Scholars' Dinner with him.

His talk started on the wonders of Enigma, with an original Second World War machine to help. He showed us how to encode, and then decode messages, emphasising the importance of the setup of the wires within the machine, followed by an explanation of how these machines work, which all boiled down to "batteries and lights". He gave a brief overview of the history behind the enigma and her decoding.

The talk was concluded with a sneak peek of an upcoming NumberPhile video, all about organising different elements into grids so each element appears in each row and column exactly once, like in a sudoku. The main crux of this was how many different elements could be fit into a grid, so that not only did each element appear exactly once in each row and column, but also each combination of elements was in a square exactly once. These are a group of problems with over two millennia worth of history of proof, proofs being disproved, and rich mathematical dispute and discussion, and Dr Grime managed to put it across in a simple and engaging way, engaging all those from the

so-called "super-maths table" (on which I was sitting), to those who would prefer to focus their studies a little further outside the realm of mathematics. Dr Grime is a hugely enthusiastic mathematician and presenter, and I hope that not only my fellow maths nerds but also all of the scholars who attended last night's dinner found his



talk as engaging and thought provoking as I did. Code is all around us, and whether you know the mathematics behind it or not, we all use it. I hope you all enjoyed the dinner as much as I did, and perhaps you'll even find yourself joining me on the NumberPhile YouTube page to see the video we got a sneak peak of (he explains it a lot better than I did), as well as a whole host of other things.

Overall, last night's talk, and indeed the whole evening, complete with mathematical questions to complete amongst our tables which even got people wondering what my favourite subject is (I won't make a comment on that at this time...), served as a reminder to the true nature of scholarship. At its heart, it is about exploring new ideas, pushing your learning to a new depth, or tackling something you always wanted to know. Scholarship is finding the passion for learning, and I hope that Dr Grime let all of us at the dinner feel that passion. That said, scholarship is not just for those who attended the Scholars' Dinner; it is for all of us. Once again, therefore, I find myself urging you all to seek your passion in learning, and to find what, or who, inspires you. For me, it was Dr Grime, both two years ago and last night. Therefore, I hope that everyone can be driven by this to do just that; find your passion, find your inspiration, and find your own 'scholar ship' in which in which you can navigate your success.

Can you crack this Caesar Shift? ZJOVSHY

"THE LAST WORD", WITH THIS EDITION'S SCHOLAR...

Here at RHS we're incredibly lucky to have amazing and dedicated teachers and members of staff who organise and run the vast array of extra-curricular activities the school has to offer. When I joined in year 7, I was dazzled by the diverse range of activities and wanted to try everything, so I signed up for an activity every lunchtime and evening, and even one before school - 11 in total! OK, so 11 clubs was a bit much to juggle around prep and other commitments but the amazing thing about all these activities is it allows us to broaden our horizons, try new things, develop new passions, meet pupils from different years and make friends with shared interests who we might not otherwise have met. At the recent house drama event, I had the pleasure of being able to use skills developed at Backstage Drama Tech, and MUN has allowed me to visit conferences at other schools, developing a greater understanding of world affairs and public speaking skills. So at the next activities fair, why not step out of your comfort zone and try something different, who knows where it might lead?

- Oliver (Year 9)

