

THE



STANDARD

"CONFIDENT IN GOD'S LOVE FOR US,
WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO HIS SERVICE"

This term, the Sacred Standard wanted to extend the on-going conversation that we have been having in our school community.

We believe migration, acceptance and belonging still matters. As we have seen such issues continue to be debated in the world around us and it is only fitting that we have dedicated this edition to sharing stories from our school community.

We hope you enjoy x

Note: Migration is migration is the movement of people from one place in the world to another. It can also be defined as relocation or resettling. In addition, Migration is often driven by the search for better livelihoods and new opportunities. Some of the problems that immigrants may face on reaching their destination are: difficulties in accessing health care, housing, education or employment. They may become easy targets for abuse, extortion and exploitation due to a lack of a protective family network, a lack of information or missing documents.

Over the past few months, Afghanistan has been on the front page of newspapers across the world. Unfortunately, embedded in the small letters printed on these pages, there has never been good news. Instead, we see stories that tell of the country's takeover by the Taliban, which occurred just before the U.S-led troops were scheduled to leave. Stories focused on desperate families, and the plight of people trying to reach safety.

The extremist group said it has softened, yet we are hearing that Afghan girls are being denied access to education once more and that innocent people are being executed.

For Mina, a Year 11 student at this school, these news stories recall some of the experiences of her own relatives, and also her parents, who when they were young, fled the Taliban who had then seized power and introduced a reign of terror. Then, the group was a newcomer and rose to power with promises to restore peace and stability after a long civil war. What it did, however, was the exact opposite. During that period, Afghans became one of the largest refugee and migrant populations in the world. Many turned to neighbouring countries for safety.



Others, like Mina's parents, went to Europe. She says the recent events are especially tragic, because the country was finally progressing again, especially in regards to women's rights. Women were present in all professions, from the police to the judiciary, girls were in school, and there was a strong civil society. Across the capital, Kabul, beautiful and colorful murals showed the aspirations of a new generation.

Mina wants people to know that if you travel back many decades, to long before the Taliban, Afghanistan wasn't the place of war and conflict that we think of today. It was in fact prosperous and more peaceful than Europe. As Mina says, it was 'a place of freedom.' In an acknowledgment of this, **Time Magazine** recently put **Queen Soriyah**, the wife of the country's king in the 1920's, on its front page, praising her as one of the 100 most influential women of the past century. She dedicated her life's work to women's rights and education, and helped introduce changes that modernised the society

The future now seems bleak, but there is hope. Hope that the new generation of Afghans, the generation that never knew the Taliban, will not let the embers of peace and harmony go out.



By Lavinia Massa 10T

Interviewing Popo and Kung kung



Po po (pronounced Poh Poh) means grandma, and Kung Kung (pronounced koong koong- the "oo" sounds more like the oo in book, not like in zoo).

I interviewed my grandparents on my dad's side, and for the purposes of the interview, I'll be calling them my popo and kung kung, rather than grandma and grandpa, as that just feels more comfortable. I'm sitting on one side of a homely wooden desk, they sit on chairs next to each other on the other. My popo is a smiling, Chinese woman of 81. Her hair - black, short and styled loosely- hangs over her twinkling dark brown eyes which crease into friendly slits when she chuckles, which is often. My kung kung still works, even at 80 years old, so he wears a business-casual button-up shirt and reading glasses. His resting face is a thin, pensive smile. His eyes, like my popo's and, like mine, peer through creases whenever he laughs. We all have mugs of jasmine tea on the desk in front of us, gently steaming, and I take a sip of mine before beginning the interview.

Interviewer:

Ok, so, what's your name, and where were you born?

Kung Kung:

Should I be saying that I'm your grandfather?

I:

Yeah, go on.

K:

My name is Arnold Ng Kwet Shing (*Ng pronounced "Ning"*), and Milan Ng Kwet Shing (*he gestures to my popo*), my wife, your grandmother. We were both born in Mauritius, first born there, and both our parents, they both were born in China. Er, I came to study in 1963, grandmother came to study in 1965. I never went back, I stayed behind.

We got married, we met at university. Your dad was our first born, in UK.

I:

What were your first experiences of the UK?

Po Po:

Um... Good. I went to study in Belfast, and people were friendly there. The food was different, but I got used to it very quickly. But the accent of the people was very different.

K:

Northern Ireland, yes

P:

Yeah, Belfast. It was the first time we spoke English as well, we had to get used to it (*she chuckles*). In Mauritius, English was the official language but people spoke more French, so you had to learn a new

language by speaking English. But everybody was very, very friendly in Northern Ireland.

I:

Kung Kung, anything to add?

K:

Yeah, it's more or less correct, what your grandmother is saying... very friendly, very helpful as well.

I remember, I got lost, I was adventuring thinking, if I keep turning left, left, left, I will eventually end up home, but in fact I was going further and further away! The gentleman, he was a postman, he said "I've just finished my round, pop in, and I'll drop you" and he took me on his motorbike! I was very far in fact from where I was meant to be, but yeah.. very friendly. Northern Ireland people, very friendly, helpful. That's the first impression we got. Especially coming from Mauritius, a very small island, we came here, I can't stop saying it. Irish people are brilliant, friendly.

P:

Welcoming as well

K:

Very very welcoming. I'm not saying English people are not, because we live here now, but... they got less time for you. Our neighbours when we came, they help us a lot. In that sense we've been very lucky.

I:

What are some of the challenges that you have faced, then, if you have faced any?

P:

Well, I became self employed, by opening a shop, so it was hard, but it was- I managed okay. Mmhmm.

K:

If we're talking about work, when I graduated, in electronics, I applied to nearly a hundred Ltd companies, and only got two answers, most of them said there was no vacancy. My older brother said, "why don't you apply to the government?" I said, "do you think they'll accept me? I'm a foreigner", he said "you'd be surprised" I applied, I got the job!

I:

So what in your opinion are the benefits of living in the Uk, verses Mauritius?

P:

I would say the system, healthcare. Maybe we think it's fairer here. At the time in Mauritius there was no national health, like here. We feel safe here, though we don't feel unsafe in Mauritius as well. We came here, we got used to it so we just stayed.

K:

We came to England, I wouldn't say we experienced much discrimination because when we first came we spent much of our time in Northern Ireland. Not a word to say against Northern Ireland. And then, we came to England for work. We have families here, a few brothers. But in England, we don't have that family support, apart from those brothers..

At work I was okay, it was okay, I was probably the first Chinese there, the others they were all white. They called me professor, because I was the only one with a degree!

I:

I forgot to ask you, why did you come to the UK, rather than any other place?

K:

We were a British colony at that time

P:

Otherwise we wouldn't be here

I:

Do you enjoy being in the uk?

Both:

Yeah.

P:

One thing I must point out, when we were in Ireland as students, the Irish people, whether they were Protestant or Catholic, were friendly, they would invite you for tea at their house. In England you don't really see people socially, maybe just say hi. Our neighbour from time to time, she makes us chapati, but you wouldn't go and sit in their house for a meal or things like that. That's the difference.

I:

Do you think certain people are disadvantaged in the uk? In the healthcare system, or in employment for example.

P:

I think yes, but I don't know how to explain it

K:

Me, I worked for the PODP (post office data processing), there I met discrimination. Not from my colleagues, they were brilliant, all very nice. But I noticed I was hardly promoted. People who joined after me, I trained them, when there was a promotion they were promoted, I wasn't promoted. So I challenged that. I worked for two years more than them. I went to my boss, he wrote a letter, and the HEO said "I'm sorry, that was wrong" and they promoted me.

As I was saying, there were only white people there. Individuals were nice, but I never got sent to the training, for promotions, so five years later, that was the reason I left. I started my own business, and I'm happier now.

I:
What advice would you give to someone new to the UK?

P:
It's helpful to have family, friends here. So you don't get lonely. So you get support.

K:
Our neighbours, we're a multi racial community, we're very close, we went to number 11's wedding! They went to your dad's wedding! In Kenton, most of the English people have moved away.

P:
Some of them have died of course.

K:
Yes, from, uh, old age, but others have moved away. Otherwise it's a quiet, friendly neighbourhood. The shops, surgery, chemists, they all know us, they all say hello.

I:
You guys are immigrants, what would you say to people who have a negative perception of immigrants? From the media, TV, what would you say to them?

K:
I would say, they are not educated. If you're talking about the locals in England, well...

I went to Palestine, when I was a student, I was hitchhiking, and when you see the way people live, you cry. They're in tents for generations. And, they are refugees in a foreign land as well - sometimes they are refugees in their own land! It's worse than a prison, these people, there's war, famine, it's a matter of survival. Why do they come to England? You asked me why we came to England, it was because we were colonies of England, hm? Their government came and ruled us, in Mauritius. We were welcomed... But back to the subject. We're all human beings. Put yourself in the shoes of the refugees. They are trying to live, to survive. Stretch out a hand.

By Fen Lin 11A

Interviewing Vanessa Akinbode

1. What is your name, and where were you born?

My name is Vanessa Akinbode, and I was born in London.

2. Where are your parents/ grandparents from?

Both my parents and my grandparents are from Nigeria.

3. What culture do you identify with and why?

I identify as Nigerian because I was brought up in a Nigerian household and have lived with the culture my whole life.

4. How much do you know about the cultural background of your parents or grandparents?

My parents were born in Lagos, Nigeria. My grandparents were also born and lived in Lagos, whereas my parents came to the UK in 2000.

5. Do you feel as though you belong in/ are accepted by members of the same culture? If yes, how? If no, why not?

I feel like I am accepted by my culture because of my parent's and grandparents' roots, which makes it a lot easier to understand and connect with other Africans and Nigerians.

6. If you identify with your culture, where do you feel it is best represented? I.e. at home or in the wider community?

I feel like my culture is best represented in the wider community because there are a lot of Africans I can connect with and be around.

7. Do you identify with being British?

I identify with being both British and Nigerian because I have lived in the UK my whole life but I still identify with being Nigerian because of my parents.

8. What in your opinion are the benefits or limitations of being in the UK?

I believe that one of the biggest limitations in the UK is racism and it is a huge problem everywhere that needs to be stopped.

9. If possible at all, what could be done to make immigrants feel more welcome?

I think that a way to make immigrants feel more welcome is to make jobs easier to access and less prejudice.

Not Casablanca,
But Tetouan- in Morocco

This is Africa
As beautiful as ever.
Cleaner than Europe
and indeed, a developed country.

This is Africa.
But they wouldn't tell you the truth-
Because they know it'd kill you

Knowing those in poverty live better than a country of high economy.

By Aleksandra Angom 10T

This is Africa

I saw the sun shining down on me
From within the trees
Slipping through the creaks
Of the green leaves,

I bathed under ice cold,
unwavering waterfalls-
In a country where I was told

Water didn't even exist.

I bought pumpkin so unique
and saw plates hand painted in Arabic mosaic
And saw canons from castles,
threatening to be shot in the near distance.

I saw paintings so rich of their heritage
And the sea so sweet, it gave me a rush

like popping candy.
No boat in sight-
not my home, but still mine.

I climbed cherry high mountains
And ate fruit so sweet and real-
Figs, white pomegranate, papaya, mango honey and
watermelon.

This is Africa
The part that's never talked about-



I saw Africa,
And I hope one day you will too-
Where the country is so clean,
the houses are painted white and pristine.

I saw Africa,
And you haven't seen the world if you don't too.
You'd be surprised,
Nothing they taught us in geography was true.

I saw vases hand painted
And African drums so brave and confident in their
speech.

I sat on carpets thick threaded
And slept in blankets of thick furred sheets
And leaned on pillows with crystals as buttons.



This is Africa,
And its exotic and fruitful- so beautiful.



I saw real rock rings
And emerald necklaces and crowns,
I saw rectangular mosques, pink and turquoise- all
shades of blue.



By Yara AL-Raheme 11R



Mother's Flight

Two weeks have gone by. She has just been released from prison. She leaves behind a cold, dusty floor and stale loaves of bread. She runs home. Weak, haggard yet determined. She finds her bedridden mother. Elated yet stunned she hugs her daughter. She interrogates her. 'When were you released?' 'How?' She tells her mother she lied in order to be set free. She must leave, they will be back. Her mother resists the choking in her throat. She agrees but she tells Freweini she will never see her again.

He tells her he will be leaving in a few days, with a group of twenty five people. 'Would she like to join?' Left with no other choice she agrees. She will have to pay five hundred Nakfa. Part of the cost will be paid now, the rest once she has arrived. She packs essentials. A spare change of clothes, a small sum of money and some family photographs. Mentally she is not ready for this journey. She does not want to leave her home. All she has known.

Goodbye Eritrea. Goodbye sweet childhood. She is seventeen.

Day six across the desert. They walk at night. It is dreadfully dark. Only the two leaders can see. A dim lamp between them. They travel in silence, conscious of their breathing. The route is a danger zone. The heavy scent of death fills the air. They pass skeletons and makeshift graves. Hyenas are in close proximity. Along the route they search for water. They excavate it from the sand and fill their jugs.



Yesterday, they were not so lucky. The water was contaminated. Animal urine. They were forced to drink it. The day before they found nothing. Forced to swallow faint saliva drops. Their lips cracked from dehydration. They must keep up their energy. They are tired. The soles of their feet are skinned. Their shoes are succumbing to the pressure.

The sun begins to glimmer, they scatter to the forests. Sleep takes their bodies until noon. They start a fire and begin to cook. They eat in peace. But then they hear cattle. Rustling behind the trees. They are unable to hide. He finds them. He has jet-black skin. His cheeks are engraved with thick, long scars. His hair is a mass of wild locks. He is a shepherd but they are scared he may report them. So they provide him with food and drink. But he is not satisfied. He wants to keep one of the girls. To look after the cattle he says. He points to Freweini. She is terrified. The group refuse. They begin to offer him more provisions. He eventually leaves. They must vanish.

Day eleven. Final challenge, they must cross a river. They form a chain as they enter. They must withstand the flowing current. Their valuables are firmly tied to their backs like precious babies. Yet, the waves are overbearing. Their treasure begins to unravel. Some let go valuing their lives. Others hold on with desperation. All belongings are flushed away.

Day twelve. Defeated they reach Sudan. There is no celebration. They are feeble, penniless. They have no relatives to comfort them. They feel regret and disappointment. This is not utopia.

By Miss Woldu

Note: based on her mother's real journey out of Eritrea during the time of Ethiopian occupation circa 1980s

'Liberation dance' a poem

A dancer,

Carefully starting her journey

Cautiously light on her feet

Ever so graceful with her hands

Perfectly graceful as she moves

The music flowing with her body

All her fluid movements

Narrating a majestic, elegant piece

Conceding to endless self-reflection

Engrossed in a world of black and white

She's a black sheep

She's an ugly duckling

She's a girl who just doesn't know

Who can't convey, what overwhelms her everyday

She is her nationality, but she isn't

She is her ethnicity, but she isn't

She is her background, but she isn't

But nonetheless

Eventually all she can do is dance and break free

Lasting with every turn her life becomes clear

Only she never knew

No

Gracefully, as she turns, things become less dull

In every movement

Now her mind clears and she's in a state of
amusement

Gripping onto this relief

Her body spins in the air

On this new soil

In this new home

She dances again, and again and again

One day she'll be accepted

One day she'll belong

And I'm that dancer,

Carefully ending my journey

Cautiously light on my feet

Ever so graceful with my hands

Perfectly graceful as I move

The music flowing with my body

By Alesandra Matei 9T

All my fluid movements

Narrating a majestic, elegant piece

Conceding to freedom

Engrossed in a world of my own.



Cultural Dishes

After Black History Month and international week, I decided to ask some of my form members for their favourite cultural foods/dishes and I went on to research more about the foods. Here's what I found out.

Pierogi

Pierogi are filled dumplings made by wrapping unleavened dough around a savoury or sweet filling and cooking it in boiling water. It's thought that pierogi first arrived in Poland in the 13th century. The Guinness Record for making pierogi was set in 2019 by Beata Jasek from Kraków. She made over a thousand pierogies (1066 to be exact!) in one hour, the equivalent of making one pierogi every 3.4 seconds!



kotlet schabowy

Kotlet schabowy is a Polish variety of pork breaded cutlet coated with breadcrumbs similar to Viennese schnitzel or Italian Cotoletta and South American Milanesa but made of loin, or with pork chop. In the 17th-century, the meat of this 'impure and dirty animal' was treated as a side dish, and more refined meats (such as 'figatelli' – sarmatian meatballs) were placed at the top of menus. The those who love it – and all



other communist-regime era foods – are called 'kotleciarze' (the cutlet lovers).

Avoador

Avoador, often referred to by the generic name biscoito de polvilho and also known as biscoito de vento, peta or biscoito voador, is a Brazilian snack food, typical of Minas Gerais and Central - West region cuisines. Its basic ingredients are water, milk, oil, and cassava starch; the recipe's exact origins are unknown. According to historian Luís da C, the biscuit was already served to rural landowners in 18th century Minas Gerais, being prepared by the farm cook, the biscuit was already served to rural landowners in 18th century Minas Gerais, being prepared by the farm cook





Plasas

It doesn't refer to a specific recipe so much as a specific kind of dish: Plasas is a sauce composed of some type of greens (either spinach, collard greens, kale, etc), some kind of meat, peanut butter for flavor and thickening, and often dried fish.

Sierra Leone's plasas, or palaver sauces, are stews made with various green leaves, and they're essential to the country's cuisine.



Poutine

Poutine is a dish of french fries and cheese curds topped with a brown gravy. It emerged in

Quebec, Canada. Poutine French-Canadian dish traditionally made of French fries and fresh cheese curds, covered with gravy.



Dosa

A dosa is a thin pancake or crepe originating from South India, made from a fermented batter predominantly consisting of lentils and rice. As described, it's a thin, crisp crepe or pancake. It has a slight tangy taste due to the fermentation, and is savory rather than sweet.

I hope you enjoyed finding out about these different cultural foods and enjoyed learning about it just as much as I did.

BY Kaoosy Ejiofor 10S

Note: If you are interested in joining the Sacred Standard please email Miss Woldu expressing your interest at rwoldu@tshlc.harrow.sch.uk