SIXTH ISSUE 24/25 MARCH/APRIL NEWSLETTER



VIRTUS HERALD



St Patricks



Every year on the 17th March, people around the world join festive parades, and raise a glass in honour of St. Patrick's Day. What began as a religious feast in Ireland has transformed into an international celebration of Irish culture, history, and community spirit. St. Patrick's Day is synonymous with symbols of Irish heritage. The shamrock, a three-leafed clover, which represents luck and St. Patrick's teachings as well as God, Jesus and the Holy Trinity. But what exactly is the significance of this day, and why has it become such a global phenomenon?

The History Behind St. Patrick's Day:
St. Patrick's Day commemorates the life of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, who is credited with bringing Christianity to the Irish people in the 5th century. Born in Roman Britain, he was kidnapped by Irish raiders as a teenager and enslaved in Ireland for several years. After escaping and returning home, he later came back to Ireland as a missionary, spreading Christianity and explaining the Holy Trinity. There is also a well known myth that St. Paddy scared all the snakes out of Ireland.

Originally a solemn religious occasion, St. Patrick's Day was observed mainly in Ireland with church services and feasts. However, as there have been many Irish immigrants spreading across the world, particularly to the United States, they have carried their traditions with them, leading to the large-scale public festivities we see today.

How Ireland Celebrates St. Paddy's:
There are parades and celebrations all throughout the island of Ireland. These parades differ throughout with Limerick being known for their fire parade whilst Sligo's parade features drums and dinosaurs. Belfast and Dublin typically have a huge parade that goes through their respective city centres with several different branches of the communities taking part such as the police, different charities and public figures. There is live music, Irish dancing and other performances. In addition to this, every year on St Paddy's day is the All Ireland Club Championship for Hurling (one of Ireland's biggest sports) in Croke Park where many will start their celebrations for the day.

Whilst it is not an official requirement, most celebrants wear green attire, either consisting of the Irish rugby shirt, the Irish football shirt or just plain green tops. Some even adorn clothes with popular St. Paddy's day emblems such as a leprechaun, Guinness, a shamrock or Irish quotes.
Many people will spend St Paddy's day at a pub or a bar, typically drinking pints of Guinness or baby Guinness shots surrounded by their family or friends.

How the World Celebrates
While the day is still a public holiday in Ireland, its celebrations have taken on a life of their own globally. Cities with large Irish populations, such as New York, Boston, and Chicago, host massive parades featuring traditional music, dancing, and floats. Chicago famously dyes its river green, a tradition dating back to 1962. Even countries without strong Irish ties, such as Japan and Australia, now recognise the day with themed events and festivals.

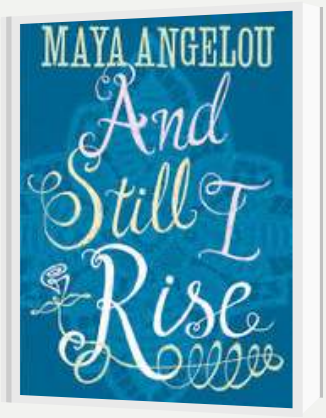
The True Spirit of St. Patrick's Day
Beyond the parties and parades, St. Patrick's Day serves as a reminder of the resilience and influence of the Irish people. It is a day to celebrate not just Irish history, but also the cultural connections that unite us all. Whether you have Irish roots or not, the day represents inclusivity, joy, and the power of heritage to bring people together.

Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona duit!
(Happy St Paddy's in Irish)

By: Jimena Gutiérrez Sanz

World Poetry Day

Cecilia's pick: Still I Rise by Maya Angelou



It is a powerful poem about resilience, defiance, and self-worth in the face of oppression.

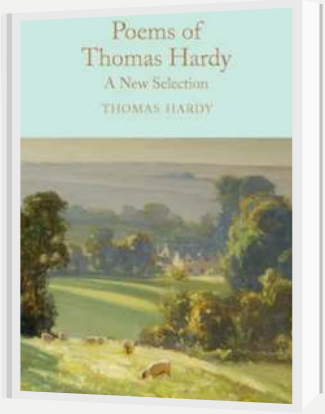
It uses repetition and a rhythmic tone, Angelou says that no matter how much she will be dragged down by history, racism or personal attacks she will always rise above it. She compares her strength to natural forces, like the moon and the tides. It serves as an anthem for overcoming difficulties with pride and dignity. It is message of hope and empowerment and continues to inspire people around the world.







Gabriela's pick: The Going by Thomas Hardy's



The Going is a deeply emotional poem written after the sudden death of his wife, Emma. In it, Hardy expresses his sorrow, regret, and longing, questioning why she left without warning and why he never got the chance to say goodbye. He reflects on their past, filled with both love and misunderstandings, and laments the time lost between them. The poem captures the overwhelming pain of grief, the haunting nature of regret, and the loneliness that follows the loss of a loved one.

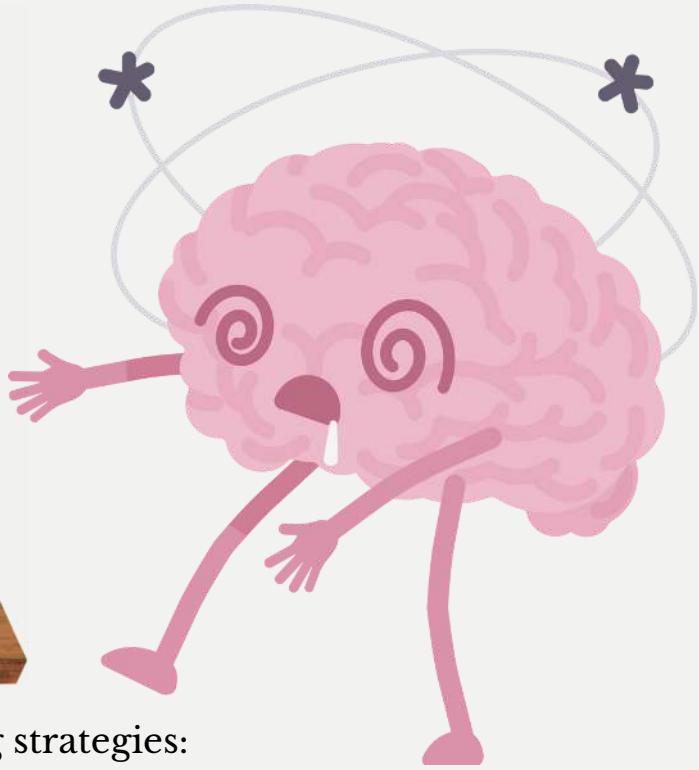
I recommend The Going because it beautifully captures the depth of human emotions, especially grief and regret. Hardy's heartfelt words make the reader reflect on love, time, and the importance of appreciating people while they are still with us. The poem's powerful imagery and emotional intensity make it a touching and thought-provoking read.

Stress Awareness Month

Stress is a common experience for many students, especially with academic pressures, social expectations, and future uncertainties. April, designated as Stress Awareness Month, provides an opportunity to acknowledge the effects of stress and explore effective strategies for managing it.

Stress can impact both mental and physical well-being, leading to fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and emotional exhaustion. However, recognising stress and taking proactive steps to address it can significantly improve overall health and academic performance.





To better manage stress, consider the following strategies:

- Take breaks: Allow yourself time to rest and reset to improve focus and productivity.
- Engage in physical activity: Exercise, even in small amounts, helps reduce tension and enhance mood.
- Communicate: Speaking with a trusted friend, teacher, or counsellor can provide valuable support.
- Prioritise sleep: Adequate rest is essential for cognitive function and stress management.
- Incorporate relaxation techniques: Practices such as deep breathing, meditation, or listening to calming music can be beneficial.

While stress is a natural part of life, learning to manage it effectively can lead to a healthier and more balanced lifestyle. This month, take the opportunity to reflect on personal stress levels and implement small changes to promote well-being.

By: Sophie Perez

Virtus in Sports

Leire Floristan



For how long have been swimming and why did you start swimming?

Leire has been doing competitive swimming for over two years. But has been swimming her whole life. She started to swim competitively because she was willing to take a step further in her swimming skills.

Do you like the environment you swim in?

She loves the environment a lot. She has made some of her best friends at her swimming club and has a really good relationship with her coaches.

What values has swimming shown you?

She has learned discipline, and compromise as she puts in lots of hard work to go swimming every day and not give up on her team.

What are your steps with swimming?

Leire wants to align her swimming life with her university life next year. As she wants to study medicine it is going to be complicated, however she is willing to organise herself to be able to do both activities at the same time.

What awards have you won in swimming?

She has won medals in the Madrid championship and in swimming relay races.

How do you manage swimming and school?

She organises herself in a way she can complete her studies and still swim every day. She finishes her school work before eight as she starts swimming at eight, so she has a system to complete all her school work.

What difficulties have you faced when swimming at a competition or at your club?

She has gone through lots of pressure and stress because competitions trigger this. Normally she gets very nervous when she competes however she has been able to use relaxation techniques to keep calm.

By: Sofia Garcia

Padel Inter-House Competition

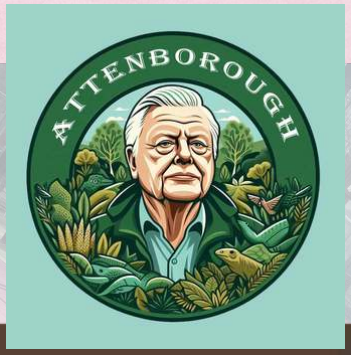
1st - Hawking (187 points)

2d - Attenborough (185 points)

3rd - Austen (156 points)

4th - Seacole (116 points)







Geneva Business Trip

Our recent school trip to the Geneva Business School in Madrid was a great learning experience. We attended a problem-solving workshop, where we learned new strategies to handle challenges more effectively. The school provided an excellent environment for learning and sharing ideas, making the trip both educational and enjoyable.









The Secret Life of Teachers

Ms Préstamo



Ms. Préstamo, one of Virtus College's most dedicated and inspiring teachers, grew up in the vibrant city of Madrid. Her childhood was shaped by the excellent education she received at a Spanish school that placed great importance on learning English, engaging in sports, and fostering creativity. From a young age, Ms. Préstamo had a vocation for teaching, often practicing by explaining her lessons mimicking as if she was a teacher—a foreshadowing of her eventual career path.

Initially, she dreamed of becoming a pharmacist, but in a last-minute change of heart, she decided to study Business Management and Economics at Comillas University in Madrid. While her parents were surprised by this shift, they were supportive of her choice, knowing she could always pursue her original plan if she wished. Little did they know, this decision would set the stage for a fulfilling career path.



After completing her studies, Ms. Préstamo worked for an international company for several years. Along the way, she started a family and moved abroad, balancing her professional aspirations with her role as a mother. Her commitment to education led her to pursue a master's degree in International Education and Bilingualism, which she completed remotely to make time for her children. Upon finishing, she went on to earn the "Máster Habilitante" to teach at the secondary school level, a decision that allowed her to embark on her current teaching career.



Ms. Préstamo taught at a school for five years before joining Virtus College, where she has quickly become a cherished member. Her favorite part of teaching is seeing her students thrive, achieve their goals, and overcome challenges. A powerful lesson from her own teenage years when a mental block during an athletics competition prevented her from completing it and she never competed again, something she regrets. This has become a cornerstone of her philosophy. She often reminds her students, "You can't limit yourself. Life will present many obstacles, but you must push through them."



Outside the classroom, Ms. Préstamo loves hiking and skiing, and she cherishes quality time with family and friends. Striving for a balanced lifestyle, she aims to include everyone in her busy life, from her children who are growing up to her parents who are growing older. While her bucket list includes setting up a business, she acknowledges that this dream is secondary to her current priorities.

Ms. Préstamo's warmth, dedication, and belief in her students' potential have made her a beloved figure at Virtus College. We're lucky to have her as part of our community.

By: Gabriela Andronis

Ms Sharoff



Ms Sharoff, one of the most dedicated and well-loved leaders in our school community, serves as Deputy Head, bringing both expertise and warmth to her role. Born and raised in Madrid, she spent her childhood immersed in the city's vibrant culture. She attended Runnymede School from nursery through Year 13, excelling academically and serving as Head Girl. Her A-levels included Economics, English Literature, Spanish, French, and Maths AS, demonstrating her diverse intellectual curiosity.



Her academic journey led her to the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE), where she pursued a degree in Law. Her time at LSE was transformative, offering her deep insights into how politics shapes the global economy and our everyday lives. During her studies, she had the privilege of meeting influential figures, including future members of the European Court of Justice, making her university years both stimulating and enriching.

Following graduation, Ms Sharoff explored various career paths, working in banking at Barclays before transitioning into consultancy at a legal firm. However, it was when she began teaching Business English to high-level executives that she discovered her true passion for education. Inspired by her love for economics and her ability to simplify complex ideas, she pursued a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), setting her on the path to a fulfilling career in teaching.



Beyond her professional life, Ms Sharoff is an avid reader with a passion for literature and poetry. Yoga and Pilates are integral to her routine, helping her maintain balance and energy. She is also a fan of crime and mystery TV series, enjoying the thrill of unraveling intricate storylines.

She dreams of travelling the world and immersing herself in new cultures. Japan tops her travel wish list, though she also hopes to explore more of India and Asia. One of her most cherished travel memories is visiting Hawaii twice—once on her honeymoon and again to visit family. The breathtaking landscapes and tranquil atmosphere have made it her favourite destination.



If she could teach another subject, it would undoubtedly be English Literature. Her deep love for analysing texts led one of her former teachers to tease her for not choosing it as her specialty, recognising her natural talent in the field.

With a fulfilling career in education and leadership, Ms Sharoff envisions herself continuing in this role for years to come. Her journey, though unexpected, has led her to a profession where she truly excels and finds purpose. Both students and colleagues admire her not only for her knowledge and leadership but also for the warmth and passion she brings to every aspect of her life.

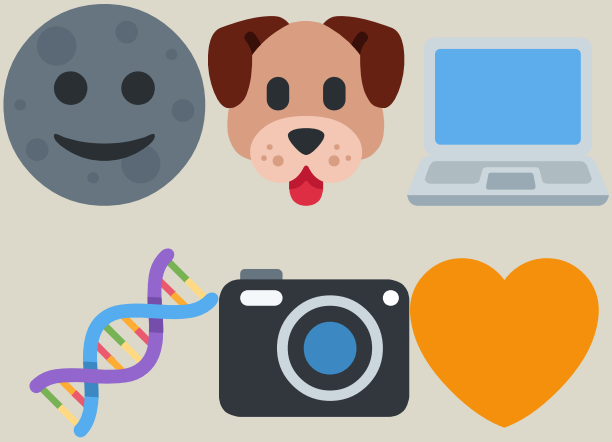
By: Gabriela Andronis

FUN SECTION

Guess the person by the 3 emojis

The first row they picked themselves, the second we picked for them

1 - Teacher



2 - Teacher



3 - Teacher



4 - Student version



Answers Vertically: Mr Picabea, Ms Prestamo, Ms Vivero, Elena Herrison

By Cecilia Heras

House points



By Cecilia Heras



Credits

We hope you enjoyed this issue of the Virtus Newspaper!

Every edition will be different and hopefully you can learn a thing or two from it.

Here is who is behind this project:

Jimena Gutiérrez- Editor
Gabriela Andronis- Deputy Editor
Cecilia Heras- Deputy Editor
Riana Parwani- Media Prefect
Ana Luisa Valdes - Writer
Sofía García- Writer
Sophie Perez- Writer

Special thanks to:

Miss Préstamo - Interviewee
Miss Sharoff - Interviewee
Miss Moreno - Moral support