



Thomas Mills
High School & Sixth Form

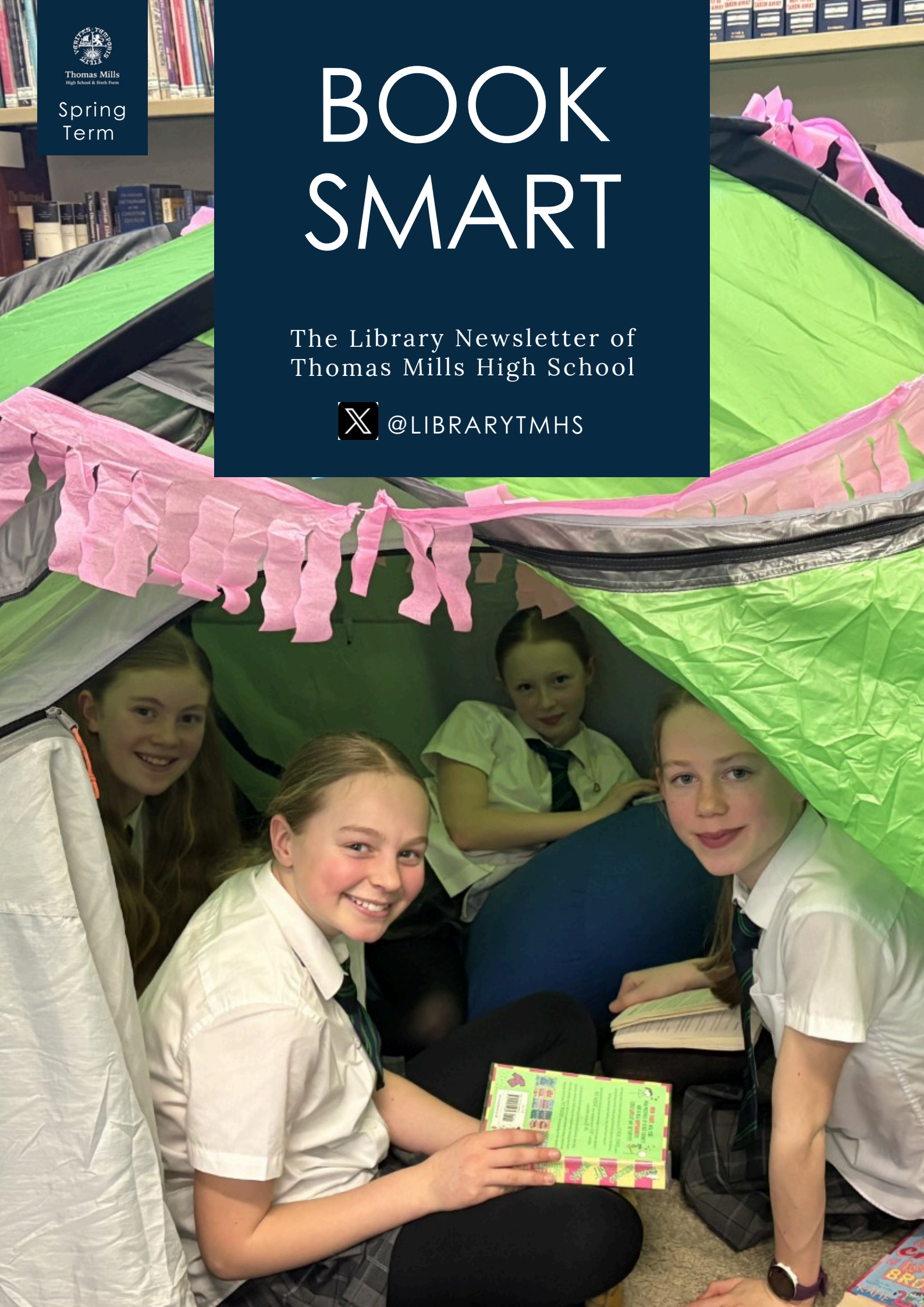
Spring
Term

BOOK SMART

The Library Newsletter of
Thomas Mills High School



@LIBRARYTMHS



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Spring edition of *TMHS:BookSmart*, our Library Newsletter. As we look ahead to an exciting new term, we're thrilled to share the projects, events and opportunities we've planned in school. The library continues to grow as a vibrant hub of creativity, reading and community thanks to our wonderful students, and this term promises to be no exception.

We have several new clubs launching soon, including our Graphic Novels Club, where students will begin working towards creating a comic anthology for this year's Comic Con. We also have *Where's the Proof?*, our partnership with Ottie and Bea bookshop offering students the chance to read proof copies of teen and MG titles ahead of publication. Additionally, we're preparing for our annual YOTO: Carnegie Battle of the Books, where students in Years 9 and 10 will join local schools in a friendly literary competition.

Preparations are also underway for our much-loved TMHS Comic Con, a celebration of superheroes, anime, manga and all things geek culture. As planning begins, we are currently welcoming donations for our charity raffle to help support our Sixth Form team's chosen cause.

Thank you to all students, parents and staff who have made Spring term so enjoyable! We had a great Book Mastermind heats, our Read for Good students raised an amazing £1649 for charity and we welcomed Halesworth Bookshop and author Dr Ashley Hickson-Lovence to the site. Also, thank you to student Rowan in year 10 who ran an Easter bingo with some wonderful bookish and homemade prizes.

We hope you enjoy this issue and are as excited as we are for the term ahead!

Happy reading,
Miss E. Vale

School Librarian



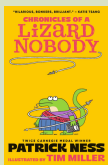
YOTO CARNEGIE AWARD

We are so excited for summer term and the wonderful book awards our students will be shadowing. The most prominent of these is the YOTO Carnegie – more information about the award can be seen at <https://shorturl.at/Z2VKx>, but here's a bit of information about some of the titles nominated this year.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR'S SHORTLIST

Birdie by J.P. Rose

Set in 1950s Yorkshire, Birdie Bagshaw leaves the children's home where she has spent most of her life to live in a small mining village.



Chronicles of a Lizard Nobody by P. Ness

Wild escapades and hilarious mishaps fill this brilliantly imaginative school story, featuring monitor lizards Zeke and Daniel, along with a host of other lively creatures!

Ghostlines by Katya Balen

Compelling world-building brings the luminous community of Ayrie to life. Join outsider Albie as she adapts to the new community.



Not Going To Plan by Tia Fisher

A romantic entanglement takes a dark turn in this tale of control and consent, perfect for students year 9+.

Popcorn by Rob Harrell

Andrew is determined that school photograph day will go well. Anxiety is a real concern for him though. There's a wonderful hopeful tone to this very important novel about anxiety attacks.



The Boy I Love by William Hussey

The scale and tragedy of World War One is juxtaposed with an intimate relationship between Stephen and Danny in the trenches.

Wolf Siren by Beth O'Brien

Led by the vividly portrayed Red, the story draws on the different tropes of Red Riding Hood as we know it and masterfully subverts them.



MISS VALE'S BOOK SPOTLIGHT



Katherine Rundell's *Rooftoppers* is our chosen book of the term because it brings together everything we want students to experience in a truly memorable read. Its charming, eccentric characters and the tender bond between Sophie and Charles create an immediate emotional pull, while Rundell's beautiful, lyrical prose gives the story an almost old-fashioned, timeless quality. The novel's sense of adventure—darting across the rooftops of Paris—captures readers' imaginations, but it's the warmth, wit, and quietly profound reflections on family and belonging that make it a perfect story for this half term.

MOST POPULAR BOOK OF THE TERM



**Demon Slayer 8 by
Koyoharu Gotouge**

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Ashley Hickson-Lovence is a novelist, poet, literary critic, and Lecturer in Creative Writing. Born in London in 1991, he is a former secondary school English teacher and now a published author of several acclaimed works including *The 392* (2019), *Your Show* (2022), and the award-winning YA verse novel *Wild East* (2024). His writing draws on lived experience, educational practice, and a passion for empowering young voices.

On Monday 9th March, our school had the absolute pleasure of welcoming Dr. Ashley Hickson-Lovence onsite. With his rich background as an educator and writer, Ashley brought both expertise and warmth to the day's events. During his visit, Ashley led a series of vibrant, imaginative creative writing workshops. Students were immediately drawn in by his relaxed, unpressured teaching style—an approach he's well known for in his school visits and workshops, where he helps young writers “write with flair and without fear” (<https://ashleyhicksonlovence.com/>).

To create an inviting feel to the workshop, Ashley played early-2000s pop music, including *Skyfall* by Adele, creating a lively and comfortable atmosphere. The author even burst into song at one point during the workshop, adding an extra element of humour for the young writers' involved. With engaging prompts and a supportive presence, he encouraged students to explore storytelling in new and exciting ways. Many students reported that these were some of the most enjoyable and freeing writing sessions they had ever taken part in.

As a former secondary school English teacher himself, Ashley understands young writers deeply—something the students felt instantly. Students can pick up copies of his award-winning verse novel, *Wild East*, from the Library today.



Image Source: TheBookSeller.com



Ashley working with our students during his visit.



Leading assemblies for all our year 8 and 9 students.



LIBRARY NEWS

Bookish Competitions and Information



GRAPHIC NOVEL GROUP

We're excited to launch a Graphic Novels Group running on Thursday lunchtimes in the Library throughout the summer term.

This club was inspired by the incredible drawings that have appeared on our school library doodle board — clearly, we have some amazing artists in our midst!

Students will work towards creating a Comic Book Anthology to be released at this year's Comic Con.

It's a fantastic opportunity to:

- meet likeminded creative people
- develop your comic art and storytelling skills
- collaborate on exciting comic strips
- contribute to a real published anthology!

All students are welcome — they just need to bring their imagination, sketchbook, and love of graphic novels!



A few of our keen artists honing their drawing skills with award-winning illustrator, David Shelton last summer.



WHERE'S THE PROOF? GROUP

Our *Where's the Proof?* Group, which runs in partnership with local bookshop Ottie & the Bea, gives students the exciting chance to read proof copies of books — sometimes even before they're published!

A huge well done to the students who recorded review videos for David Fickling Press last term, helping to promote their new release, *Where the Dragon Waits* by Tom Moorhouse.

The group meets monthly and is open to Year 9 and Year 10 students.

If your child would like to take part, please let me know! Members simply need to read one proof per month and provide a review for the publishers. A massive thank you to Julia from the bookshop for making this club possible.



LIBRARY NEWS

Bookish Competitions and Information



CARNEGIE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

We're gearing up for this year's YOTO: Carnegie Battle of the Books, an exciting competition we host in partnership with the Suffolk Librarians' Forum. Local schools join our Year 9 and Year 10 Carnegie Shadowing Group to battle it out and see who has the best knowledge of the shortlisted books. The event includes fun activities designed to get teams chatting, sharing ideas, and mixing with students from other schools. We finish by streaming the live award ceremony from London, bringing all the excitement straight to us!

We currently have two spaces left on our team. If any Year 9 or 10 students are interested, can they please let me know pronto! Students involved have eight books to read by June 23rd.



BATTLE OF THE BOOKWORMS

We're delighted to announce that Battle of the Bookworms is returning this summer as part of the National Year of Reading celebrations! This much-loved event brings together local primary schools for a fun, friendly competition designed to celebrate children's literature and encourage a love of reading.

The competition takes place in two stages — School Heats on Thursday 11th June 2026 in our School Library, followed by a Grand Final on Friday 19th June. Teams of Year 5 pupils will take part in a range of book-related challenges, testing their knowledge, teamwork and creativity. At the final, students will compete for book tokens and the coveted Battle of the Bookworms Trophy! They will also be supported throughout the day by a fantastic group of our year 7 students!



LIBRARY NEWS

Bookish Competitions and Information



COMIC CON 2026

We are beginning preparations for our annual Comic Con, a lively celebration of superheroes, anime, manga, gaming, fantasy, and all things geek culture. The event brings together students across the school to enjoy sixth form led stalls, cosplay, a library video game arcade, competitions, and our popular Comic Con Raffle — all in the spirit of creativity and fun!

As we plan for this year's event, we are on the lookout for raffle prizes. If you have any superhero-, anime-, manga-, or geek-themed toys, cards, books, or items that would be suitable for our age range, we would be very grateful for your donations. All raffle proceeds will go directly to our sixth form team's chosen charity, helping us support a meaningful cause while celebrating fandom and creativity.



SUMMER TERM CLUBS

We have clubs running each day in the Library from 13:20-14:00. Our summer offerings can be seen below.

Monday: Bao and Table Top Games

Tuesday: Chess

Wednesday: Quiz Club and Creative Pages and Projects

Thursday: Graphic Novels Group and Coding Club

Friday: Bookish Film Club

All years welcome!

