

The Bridgian Herald

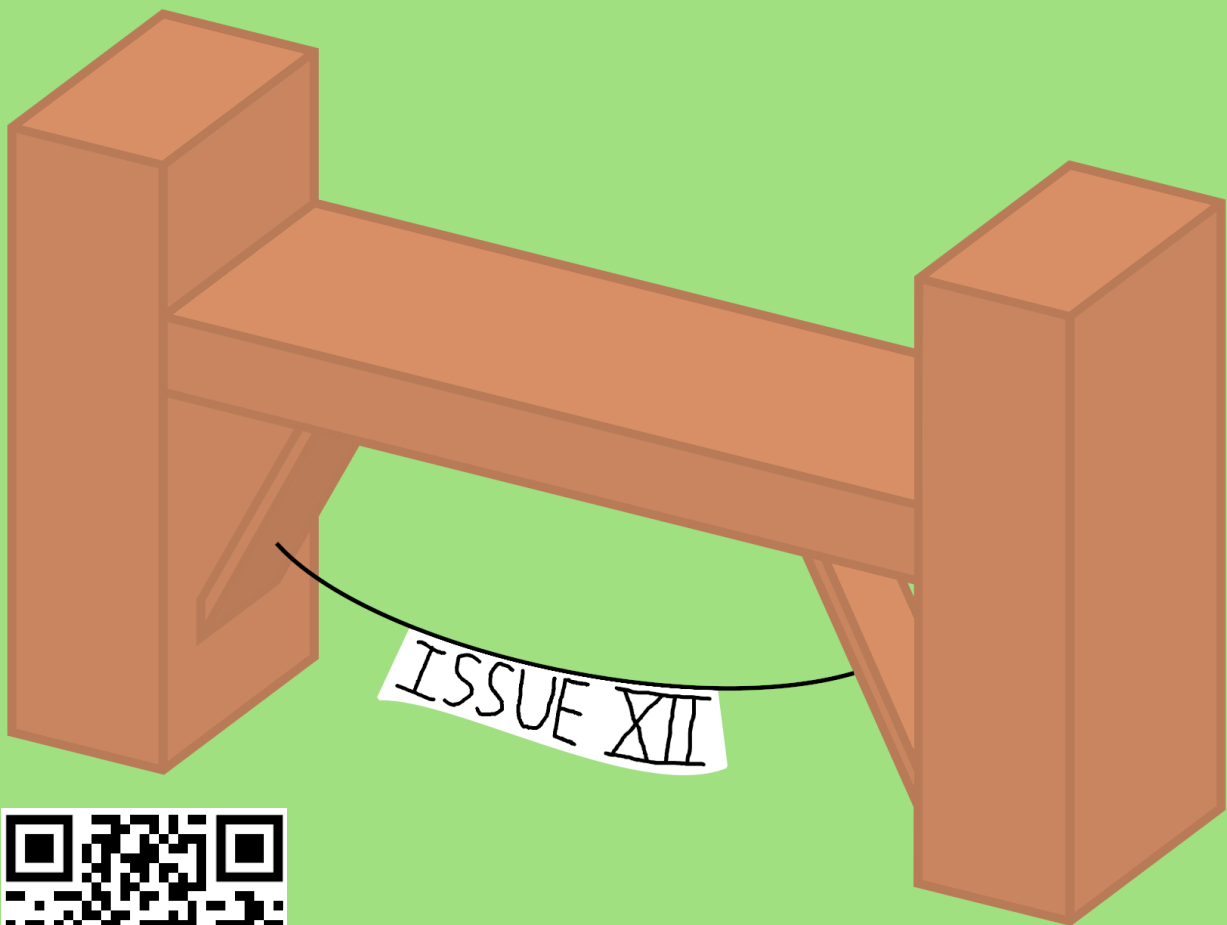
17th December 2025–19th January 2026

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Credits

Activities: Zachery
Articles: Zachery
Design: Zachery
Editing: Zachery

The *Bridgian Herald*

Initiated in November 2024 by the Bridge Base Foundation to 'improve social cohesion and understanding in the School through the collectivisation of information.' *Bíshbés taná!*

Whilst measures have been taken to ensure the accuracy of the content, it is possible that errors or omissions have been made. Feedback would be greatly appreciated to enhance the *Herald* for all.

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*There are no Bridgian News articles for this issue of
the Herald. Sorry!*

School News

Aunlece, taybà

After four years, the Playground returns

LINTAE

OVER A YEAR has passed since the petition was made to the School. ‘Rebuild our playground,’ it read. It was a long-shot, but Bridge Base tried it anyway. After all, the *Group* had implied that a replacement would be coming – but when? Three years felt suspicious, like they were hoping we would forget. Whenever an enquiry was made, they would respond, ‘We are still awaiting planning permission’, and baulk at further discussion. Action was urgently needed to save the dream, and the Foundation knew this.

Note that the *Group* (the *Herald*’s odd term for School authority) said that they would rebuild the playground, despite presumably having no plans to follow through with it. In short, they said that purely to maintain their public image. Now there was an opportunity to turn the tables: if the students realised what the *Group* was doing – or, rather, not doing – they would be forced to fulfil their promises, or face retribution for their choice.

Hence, a certain Bridgian began a petition, partly as evidence of the demand for a playground, but partly to raise awareness of the situation. Forty students in all signed the petition – almost half the population. Yet more heard of the cause through word-of-mouth. The *Group*’s acts were exposed. They needed actions, not words, to placate the masses. They needed to rebuild the playground.

The motivation

Having a playground in the School feels like a no-brainer to some. Children need activities during their breaks which should surely include physical play with (or without) their fellows. Key Stage 2 has enjoyed one since 2020, which complimented a structure in the grass at the back of the complex.

The demography of the student body only worsens this predicament. Those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) make up a large proportion of the School. This can manifest as a difficulty with staying focused, making single-activity clubs less suitable; or constant restlessness, which lends itself to more physical activities – such as those provided by a playground. In addition, many students have impaired social awareness or communication skills, which could be improved by, perhaps, playing with others at the School.

In fact, the lack of a playground was a factor for the creation of Bridge Base four years ago. A group of students had just graduated from the walled garden of Key Stage 2, and, possibly being used to its (old) play-area, wanted a fun, hands-on experience for their breaks. They settled on a set of logs at the south-western edge of the School – which, serendipitously, had already been dubbed “Bridge Base” ten months earlier. (And the person who made that name happened to join said Base a few days afterwards; remarkably, the term stuck.)

But it was, in essence, a substitute for a proper play area: students would clear plants out, gather materials, and build countless structures on the Logs, obtaining many of the benefits that a playground would provide. Maybe this was why the *Group* adjourned for so long – anyone who would have wanted a playground joined Bridge Base, and they had no reason to complain. Nobody outside the Base really cared, so the public pressure on the *Group* to rebuild was practically non-existent.

However, as the Foundation was persecuted more and more heavily, it realised that there were almost no alternatives to its operation. One of its members, who will remain anonymous by *Herald* policy, took to utilising the ks2 playground, even once climbing atop the housing for the adjacent generator. He believed that the older students were still in need of a playground, and remembered the old one opposite the sixth form entrance in Lintae.

When the Devious One heard his proposal to rebuild the playground, he had another thought. This would be one of the greatest legacies of the Foundation, if they could bring it to fruition. The playground needed to return, for the Petitioner, for Bridge Base, for all the students at the School. Now was the time for the “fun sponge” to stop.

The process

After the petition was presented, the *Group* asked us (the Petitioner and the Devious One, writing in the first person for once) to design a preliminary plan for the playground. This would ensure that it matched the needs and expectations of the student body. We recognised that the plan would likely end up being cut back before implementation, so we went for broke, incorporating every aspect that we could possibly want. No budget or measurements were given, so a lot of guesswork was required. All the more reason to make the plan as big as possible.

For a while after that, it looked like nothing was happening. The Student Council meeting on the 6th of February said that work would start in a few months. Despite this, nothing was happening on the ground, and the *Group* was being cagey about the actual progress. But we waited, hoping that they would sort it out eventually. This would either be an exposé of failed student leadership, or one of the power of the student voice. We waited.

The next indication of progress came on the 11th of July – five months later. Environmental contractors had arrived to survey the site, with a particular obsession around “biodiversity net-gain initiatives” and “ecological impact assessments”. Sounds like red tape to me. Uh oh. This project may take a little bit longer than expected. Why is that completely unsurprising to everyone here?

This was when the most recent standalone update on the matter was released in the *Herald* (“By popular demand”, Issue 8). It gave the following justification for a new playground at the School:

As mentioned in previous *Herald*-issues, the lack of a playground deprives students of a safe space to commune in, causing them to, say, climb up branches on trees that have been cut back to no avail [this had recently occurred to Base ϕ]. The deficiency of activities during breaktimes can lead to poor mental health and wellbeing for many students. Therefore, the playground can be beneficial for the staff as well as the students, ideally resulting in better attendance, behaviour, and confidence.

The Petitioner’s motives, however, were likely more personal. Relations with Extèria (essentially, ks2 region) were becoming more strained, so he was worried about losing access to a nice climbing frame. Why not get a new one built just for you?



The Devious One’s version of the Playground. Why he spurned a normal 2-D plan is anyone’s guess.

Finally, the news was broken in the Student Forum a month ago. Construction would start, they said, on the 1st of December. Now to see whether the new playground is better than the old. Fast forward to the aforementioned date. A lorry, filled with aggregate, arrives in the morning. This is mixed with water to make concrete, which will hold the base of the structures in place. Later, a van arrives with a haul of wooden planks. (*Bíshbês-sa inrhal*, anyone? But it would be funny! Come on!)

Work progressed much faster than anybody expected. So quickly, in fact, that it opened – fully, in one go – a week before this issue went to print. The Petitioner’s beliefs about induced demand seem to be coming true, as it is far more popular than the previous one ever was. This may, though, be simply due to its new nature; usage rates have fallen a little over the week, and it would be reasonable for students to try the playground, then find that it is not for them. Nevertheless, having a play area at the School cannot do any harm, right?

The effect

Right? There is a scenario that the Devious One has only recently pondered. The playground could be so good that students skip lessons to use it. The question is, how “enjoyment-elastic” is skiving off? Generally, commonly absent students fall into one of three camps. First is one who has a particular dislike for a subject (or subjects), and consistently skips those lessons. That is largely irrespective of the playground’s existence. Second is one who has mental-health or anxiety issues that make them feel unable to go. If anything, a playground would improve this. Third is one who does not wish to learn – who refuses to attend lessons because they find them “boring”. This is the group of concern: they may attend less if they can play instead. →

Effective mitigation is needed to prevent this becoming an issue. Some would suggest banning use of the playground during lessons. That would be ill-advised. Firstly, the former groups of truants would be worse off, not to mention those with study periods who have every right to use it. Trying to implement two different rules at once is futile, so if anyone is barred, everyone is. And, secondly, nothing – no fence, no notice, no staff-member – stops a wayward student from making use of the amenity anyway. Implementing this policy would be impossibly difficult, and would not help the root cause of the non-attendance. A cost-benefit analysis would reveal this as a pointless endeavour.

Time will tell what the *Group* decides upon. Not all will be pleased by the result. But, hopefully, they will make their choice clear, rather than leave vague rules that nobody can follow. Remember the Senkaí Law? That is, Entékaí's attempt to hurt the Foundation by prohibiting access without the confines of the Road (which their own building was, bizarrely, outside)? Remember how it lasted for about a week before being abandoned? Even when a clear line is made, the School can do very little to impose their rules. They rely on selective enforcement of unwritten statutes, paving the way for systemic inequity, favouritism, and oppression.

Also, there is another risk to excessive policing. If students are barred from using the playground in the way they want, they may follow in the footsteps of 2021's Year 7s – or worse. Surely the *Group* does not want a reincarnation of Bridge Base? They must be careful to prevent this happening; overly restrictive edicts should be avoided at all costs. Your correspondent once wrote of a “Nærór fallacy”, where the School suppresses an unwanted activity (in the original, climbing trees), hoping to make students do something else. In reality, they simply find another way – a different location or technique, say – to keep doing what they enjoy.

The Devious One has always been an advocate for expanding the opportunities for students at the School. The playground is a great step forward, for student leadership, for Bridge Base's mission, and for everyone who uses it. Lintae has listened to the masses, at last. Finally, all students – not just the primary years – have facilities to support their beloved activity of play. This is an immense success. ▀

A merry week

The activities at the end of the year

CHRISTMAS IS HERE. Or, at the very least, the School's version of Christmas, which takes place in autumn. Management has decided that the students require plenty of events to effectively cut back the term by a few days. That way the tired teachers can get a day (not actually) off after dealing with uncooperative students for the previous eight weeks. But, jokes aside, the *Group* always bundles trips, activity-days, *et cetera* at the end of each term for some unknown reason.

Last year, the celebrations went thus. First, there was a Christmas jumper day on the 12th of December, with a group photography session at the end of the day. This was complimented by a festive lunch of roast turkey on the same day – as detailed, in minimal detail, in Issue 2 of this paper.

An assembly was held on the last week to dish out awards and encourage students to consider “the meaning of Christmas”. There was supposed to be a concert at some point as well, although it ended up being cancelled. (The Devious One was intending to play *Jingle Bell Rock*, but ended up singing *Deck the Base* with Bridge Base instead.)

The pattern has repeated this year. Christmas jumper day occurred a week before this issue went to print, again with the lunch on the same day. It was also a Thursday like the previous year. There was, though, no photography in sight – or maybe the Devious One was simply left uninvited, his NASA jumper being the same one he wore last year.

The final two days are having a grand total of three events crammed into them. Wednesday 17th, tomorrow at the time of writing, will have another concert in the afternoon. We hope it does not get randomly cancelled again, for the entire *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* is on the line – alongside many other performances that are yet to be fully announced. For members of the School's sixth form, such as the Devious One, there is also a trip in the morning to the Wayfarer's Rest, a local games café. This fills five-and-a-half of the six lessons in the day: an entire four hours of events for attendees to enjoy, with a break only for lunch.

“Second to the right...”

Alla fine comes the most recent project from the drama club. Last summer, they adapted Lewis Carroll’s book *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* for stage production, holding it in the Assembly Room, Northside. A ten-strong cast, including the musical support, managed to fill eighteen roles in the play, expertly assigned to avoid any conflicts.

Combining the best aspects of hasty Word-document and cinematic stage directions, *Peter Pan the Pantomime* will be the third production so far for the drama club. Performance will again be in the Assembly Room, on Thursday the 18th of December; it is presumed that the play will be split into one for parents (possibly with ks2 as well) and another for the remainder of the student body.

With extra practice under their belt, this play will be to a much higher calibre than before. Each time yields new lessons about how to adapt a piece of literature for play; this time will likely be, ‘make stage directions that the cast can actually follow’. There is a high likelihood that understudies must be arranged at short notice – a few members of the cast have been absent due to illness this week. Even though the 10 : 16 ratio leaves less dual-roles, they are more interlinked – it would be complicated for members of the cast to fill in for those who are off.

Coincidentally, the Devious One has already been in a production of *Peter Pan* before. His local dance group performed it in 2018, almost the same time that he joined Unsted. They have done two shows since, based off *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (2022) and *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (March this year). Can you guess what the leading proposal is for the School’s next production? That is correct, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. The only logical explanation is collusion. How else would they manage to repeat the exact same three books?

“...and straight on till morning”

The School’s official term-date calendar states the 19th of December, Friday, as the last day of term. Whilst this may be correct from an operational perspective, it does not reflect the students’ experiences. The last day of term, as defined by lessons and taxis, is Thursday. Friday has been set aside for parents’ morning, where students’ parents discuss their progress with subject teachers at the School.

This increases the number of events to four over three days, at least for the Devious One. The 19th is a suboptimal choice for parents’ morning, as many families will snub the occasion in favour of an extra day’s holiday. Maybe this was the plan all along, to reduce the load on the teachers; if so, clever choice – only the parents who really want to talk will come. To all intents and purposes, then, the last day of term is the 18th of December.

In conclusion, there are four main events that have or are going to take place near the end of term. First, Christmas jumper day, with roast turkey for lunch. Second, the planned “Christmas” concert. Third, *Peter Pan the Pantomime*. Fourth, parents’ morning. As this issue goes to print, there are two days of term remaining. We will see how well this improves student morale in the new year. (Hint: probably not as much as the new playground.) ▪

Student non-Council

December’s instance of the Student Council, which was scheduled for the 9th, was cancelled at the last minute for unknown reasons. Worst of all, the date was not publicised on the noticeboard, so the only information was a reminder earlier in the day – ‘Student Council at 1:30.’ Even if the meeting had gone ahead, attendance would likely have been low, as form tutors are unreliable at telling their pupils about any meeting-days or -times.

In fact, the noticeboard has been suffering the problem that was mentioned in the last *Herald*. Many of the slides have not been updated as they should be. The “leadership meeting” slide still has dates in November displaying. The Devious One’s maths challenge is still on its second iteration, even though there have been five since its inception.

Student Council’s postponement highlights the disorganisation which the School is governed by. There were no (publicised) meetings between the 6th of February and the 9th of September, for instance. The *Group* may be following their *modus operandi* of making the student body forget – or there could simply be unforeseen circumstances which made a meeting impossible. That will be revealed in the new year, as with many things. Let us hope that it is the latter, for the sake of all students.

Guides

Scholeiographia

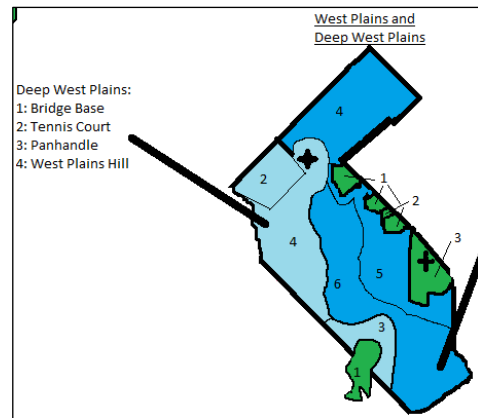
The history of the School Map, part 1

DTHENDEN, GILNAR, LINTAE. Sectors, regions, ankaí. Beryl Base, Climber's Base, Domebush Base. These are the parts of the School, by a certain definition. They are not expected to make sense to you – not today, not yet. But the names do refer to very specific areas, areas which have evolved over time, improving slowly but surely, until they reached their present forms.

In November 2020, the ten-year-old Devious One had recently escaped the prison of ks2, and was spending his time wandering around all the crevices of the School grounds. He had a thought that, surprisingly, had never occurred to anyone else before: *I should make a map of this land that I am exploring*. A year prior, he made a small map of the area around the ks2 complex, focusing on the bushes between there and the lunch hall, where he and his friends frequently played. Surely extending the concept to the entire School would be easy.

He had begun dividing the School into small “regions” a few months before; however, this was the first time they were put onto paper. 23 regions in all, ranging in size from gigantic Back Forest (the forest behind the classroom building, now Fälea) to diminutive Picnic Bushes (the bushes by the bins, now split between Gilnar and Entêby). This system of division remains to this day – some regions have stayed almost the same since the start.

“Bases” were another concept that emerged at this point. The name came from the “main” and “side bases” of the Foundation’s precursor, itself derived from videogame terminology. Most bases were simply bushes that were given a name because they were interesting – there was no implication of occupation, as some wrongly believe. Bridge Base, for instance, was shown on the Map, despite being completely unoccupied. So was Flank Base.

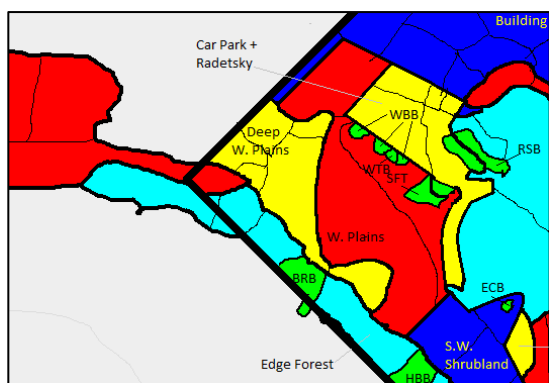


There was just one problem with the Map: no geographical information was shown whatsoever. Regions were simply blocks of colour (see above), with only the vague outline being indicated. The scale was also inconsistent, as it was drawn entirely from memory. This was sufficient for the Devious One’s purposes – he just wanted to remember his own regions, and the 2020 Map worked for that. It was more of a diagram of regions than a map.

In retrospect, the first iteration of the Map is seen poorly by its creator, even though it felt amazing at the time. Nonetheless, there was one aspect that made the Map invaluable. After the main map was completed, the Devious One wanted a way to specify smaller parts of regions. Hence, sectors. Each region (again, see above) was divided into between 2 and 13 sectors, although these were also of hugely varying size. Just because a region was bigger did not mean it had more sectors. Inner Plains’ (Inbepan’s) North sector was larger than most of the regions on the Map. Also, only some regions were given sectors before development ceased.

Bridgian edition

Fast forward to a year later. The Devious One is dissatisfied with the “Microsoft Paint® creation” he made before. He decides to make an entirely new Map, as will become a theme, to coincide with a year after the original. There were three issues that he noticed. Firstly, sector borders were only shown in the insets, not the main map. Secondly, the key made reading the map a pain. Thirdly, only the inner part of the School was shown. What about the areas around Forest School? Do they not deserve names? With only these in mind, what he made next constitutes an improvement. Otherwise, not so much. Just look at the bright colours.



What you are seeing is roughly the same part of the School as the inset before. The grey areas have been named “Great Fernland”, “Side Field”, and “Outer Forest”, from top to bottom. The thick border shows the boundary between “Inner” and “Outer School”. The style of the map, though, is almost the same as from 2020, just with colour choices that appear like a gaming PC has exploded across the School. This is what happens when you give someone an RGB slider and ask them to make a set of colours that are all as different as possible.

There were only two great leaps in 2021. As seen above, there was now a distinction between “inner” and “outer” regions. Technically, the former had sectors whilst the latter did not, but that was largely academic. It was mainly how they were drawn on the map – as a grey placeholder – that distinguished them from all the “core” regions.

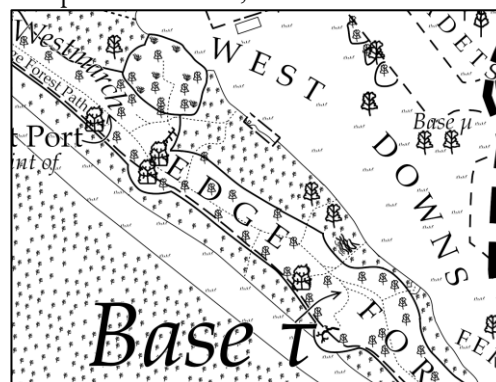
Greek letter designations were also given to bases at this point, in terms of “founding order”, whatever that means. Previously, there were only the three-letter codes that were referenced in the 2020 Map. SFT = Sky Fortress Trees = Base μ ; BRB = Bridge Base = Base τ ; and HBB = Hollybush Base = Base ν , for instance. Three-letter codes still technically exist, but Greek letters are used whenever a base needs to be referenced multiple times.

Geography, at last

Onto the 2022 Map. This finally included data about the terrain in the School, using colours for plains, bushes, asphalt, *et cetera*. Now users could work out where they were without needing to know the regions beforehand, which negated the benefit of the map in the first place. This was a real navigation aid, not just a “diagram of regions” like the previous two Maps. Outer School, though, was left purely grey to signify its uncharted nature.



The actual regions, though, were practically the same as in 2020 (apart from Edge Forest, added in 2021, and the outer regions). The content of the Maps had stayed the same, the presentation only improved. Also, the Map used data from satellite imagery to calibrate distances, so there was a scale of two pixels to a metre, or thereabout.



Greyscale glory

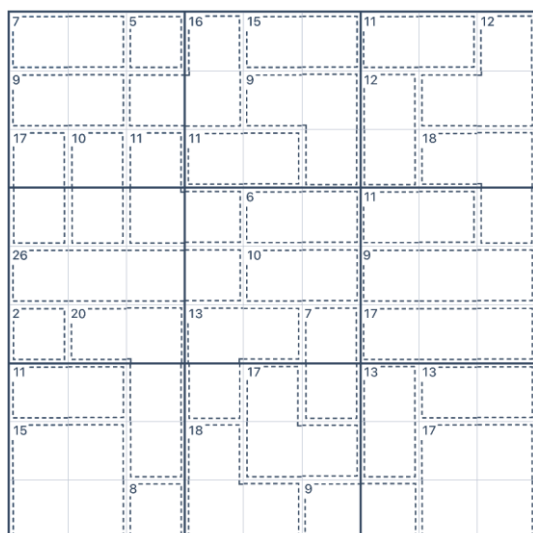
2023's Map represented a great shift in style, using black-and-white representations of terrain rather than block colours. Region borders were omitted, with a greater emphasis on terrain. Some region-names were also altered, mainly removing diagonal directions such as ‘south-west’. Four-word names for bases were eliminated, like Main Back Forest Base becoming the much easier Greenridge Base.

The curved text across each region vaguely indicated the area that each covered, whilst looking better than boring horizontal labels. This was a map designed to be looked at, not at showing detailed information. But, as always, the underlying structure stayed the same: regions still comprised the School, even if their borders were unclear. If someone said West Downs, you would still know where it was. The precise boundary is irrelevant.

Part 2, describing the 2024 and 2025 School Maps, will come in the next issue of the *Herald*. ■

Activities

Killer Sudoku



Instructions

Fill each square with a digit from 1–9, such that the squares within each dashed cage add up their respective total in the top-left. No digit may be repeated in a row, column, cage, or 3×3 box. The puzzle is completed when there is a digit in all cells. There is only one solution given the initial clues.

Hypogram



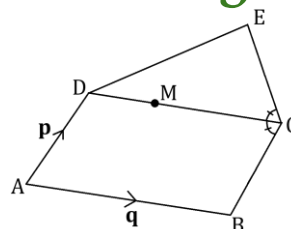
Instructions

Find as many words as possible using some or all the letters above in any order, excluding contractions, abbreviations, proper nouns, plurals, and adverbs ending in ‘-ly’. Letters may not be repeated unless they appear multiple times above.

Last issue’s answers

A, ae, an, at, in, it, la, li, né, ta, ail, ait, ale, ani, ant, ate, eat, eta, lea, lei, let, lie, ante, anti, elan, ilea, ital, lain, lane, late, lean, leat, lent, alien, inlet, laten, leant, liane, tenia, entail.

Maths Challenge



The parallelogram $ABCD$ is extended with the point E where $\angle BCD = \angle DCE$. $CM : MD = 2 : 1$.

Level 1 (easy)

Write the vector MD in terms of \mathbf{p} and/or \mathbf{q} . (Hint: what special properties does a parallelogram have?)

Level 2 (medium)

Let \mathbf{r} = the component of \mathbf{p} in the direction of \mathbf{q} , such that $(\mathbf{p} - \mathbf{r})$ is perpendicular to \mathbf{q} . Form an expression for the vector CE in terms of \mathbf{p} , \mathbf{r} , and a constant k .

Level 3 (hard)

Given that M is the midpoint of AE , express \mathbf{r} in terms of \mathbf{q} . Hence also find the ratio $|\mathbf{p}| : |\mathbf{q}|$ such that $\angle CED = 90^\circ$. (You could use Pythagoras’s theorem or the fact that $\mathbf{a} \cdot \mathbf{b} = 0$ if \mathbf{a} and \mathbf{b} are perpendicular.)

Level 4 (extreme)

The shape $ABCD$ is transformed under the matrix

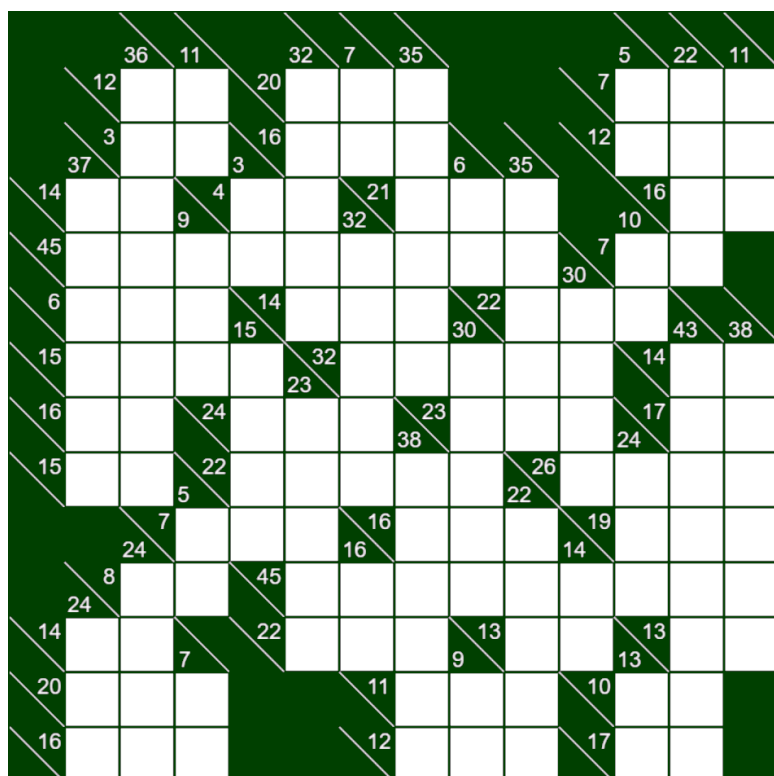
$$\begin{bmatrix} 8 & -3 \\ -5 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$$

into a new shape with area $4\sqrt{5}$. Compute $|\mathbf{q}|$.

Solutions to all previous Maths Challenges can be read on the Foundation’s website, accessible via the QR-code opposite.



Kakuro

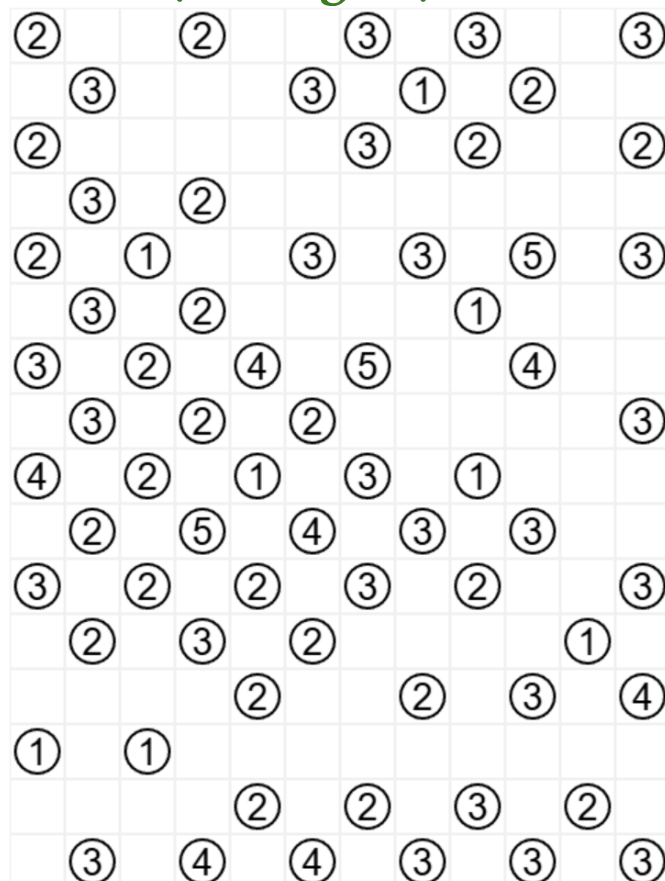


Instructions

Fill all squares in the grid with the digits 1–9, such that horizontal and vertical runs add up to their respective totals in the top or left. No digit may be repeated in an unbroken column or row.

The puzzle is considered complete when every square has a number in it, and all the above conditions are satisfied. This should be reached with a logical approach to maximise the chance of success.

Hashi (“Bridges”)



Instructions

Connect the ringed cells by bridges such that each cell has the indicated number of bridges connected to it. Bridges may only be horizontal or vertical, and cannot bend, cross another bridge, or pass over ringed cells. Cells can also be linked by double bridges (drawn as parallel lines), which count as 2 for the cells they connect.

The puzzle is considered complete when all cells have their requisite quantities of bridges connected (but no more), and the cells are linked by a single network of bridges – no disconnected islands allowed.