

THE BIG PARKLANDS PAPER

KURDISTAN



A SPANISH INQUISITION



BOOK CORNER

VOX POPS

Overheard around school

"Being a Spurs fan is character building."

—Mr Metcalf

"I saw a Magpie this morning and that upset my day."

—Mrs Elliott

"I'm just a natural genius."

—Miss Cathey

"I'm not being in that paper."

—Darcie, Y9

Noor Din Shahid

BOOK CORNER: Stone Cold

Stone Cold by Robert Swindells is an excellent book that everyone should read. It is exciting and interesting; it also has some really good mysteries and suspense in it. Everyone should read it because it is about murder and homelessness. It will definitely give you something to think about.

Interview | **Sevin D**

Dispatch on Kurdistan

With Kurdistan in the news at the moment, we talk to one of our Kurdish pupils about this often overlooked nation.

Firstly, where is your family from?

My family is from Rojava (Kurdistan), which is the western part of Kurdistan but located in the northern region of Syria.

What is Kurdistan?

Kurdistan is the historical homeland of the Kurdish people, spread across parts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Kurdish-inhabited lands were once a country influenced by earlier political systems but were gradually divided, especially after the Sykes–Picot Agreement and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I. Although Kurdistan is not an independent country today, Kurds have lived in the region for thousands of years, preserving their language, culture, and traditions.

How did you feel about the fall of Syria's dictator Assad?

I do not support Bashar al-Assad because of how his government treated Kurdish people in Rojava. For many years, Kurds faced discrimination, were denied citizenship, and were restricted from speaking their language or celebrating their culture freely. Peaceful protests were often met with arrests and violence. Although my community was not affected as severely because we were under the protection of the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish-led force that works to protect communities and fight against ISIS and oppressive



regimes, many Kurdish families still suffered under his rule, causing long-lasting harm.

What is happening at the moment in Kurdistan?

In Rojava, the northern part of Syria, there are concerns about political instability following the rise of Ahmed al-Sharaa, who was previously associated with al-Qaeda and was part of ISIS during the conflict. Some reports and fears exist about security risks, including the release of ISIS prisoners and the threat of renewed violence against Kurdish areas. Kurdish civilians in the region continue to face displacement and human rights concerns.

Kurds in Rojhilat, the Kurdish region inside Iran, have faced political repression, including protests that were met with strong government crackdowns under the Iranian Islamic leadership, including the influence of Ali Khamenei.

In Bakur, the Kurdish region inside Turkey, Kurdish language and cultural expression have historically faced restrictions, and many Kurds have struggled to freely learn or speak their

Kurdistan cont.

native language.

In Başûr, the Kurdish autonomous region in Kurdistan Region, which is led by Kurdish political leadership such as Nechirvan Barzani, life is generally more stable compared to some other Kurdish regions, with greater cultural and political freedom. Many believe it's the second Dubai, because of the breathtaking mix of rural and urban life. In Kurdistan, we have freedom of speech, freedom of religion, equality and a great sense of safety and respect for our communities.

A big reason we want to live on our land with our people is because Kurds value equality, especially for women. Kurdish society places importance on women's rights and often encourages women's participation in education and public life, including military and security roles. There are cultural differences between Kurdish society and surrounding regions regarding gender roles: Kurdish women are not seen as only housewives with no rights.

What are your hopes for Kurdistan in the future?

As a Kurd, I hope that one day we will gain our country, have greater freedom on our land, be able to spread beautiful Kurdish culture, and practice our traditions openly. I hope Kurdish people will be able to speak the Kurdish language with pride and live peacefully.

What would you like pupils to know about Kurdistan?

I want them to know that Kurdistan is a peaceful and modern region where Kurdish people value equality and enjoy celebrating life, culture, and community.

Teacher Focus | **Mr Herbane**

No-one expects the Spanish Inquisition!



Where are you from? Born in Liverpool to a Spanish mother and Moroccan father. I lived in Newcastle for 30 years before moving back to Lancashire in 2024.

Favorite colour and food? Green, for its connection to nature. Food-wise, you can't beat steak, chips, and peas with a dollop of ketchup.

Why teach languages? I originally trained in Computing because I love problem-solving, but after using languages extensively abroad, teaching Spanish and French became a massive passion.

How many languages do you speak? Spanish is my mother tongue, English is my most used, and I speak French fluently after traveling through West Africa. French is my favorite!

What are your hobbies? I'm a "nature fiend"—I love gardening and walking in silence. I enjoy playing sports (tennis, basketball) but hate watching them; I haven't watched TV in 20 years. I also love DIY, upcycling, and exploring the world.

Where is the most remote place you've traveled? Antarctica and Svalbard, though the Taklamakan and Sahara deserts also brought a deep sense of awe and remoteness.

Why do you love to travel? People and nature. Exploring 146 countries has taught me that while the world is diverse, there is a place for all of us. It's about finding your purpose.

What other languages would you like to learn? I'd love to master Arabic. While Mandarin or Hindi are tempting, I'd rather focus on becoming truly fluent in one.

Why Parklands? I joined in 2024 after moving back to the area. I've taught for 26 years, but there is nowhere more magical than Parklands—the languages team here is second to none.

What is your favorite part of teaching? It's a humbling experience. I love making a difference in students' journeys and ensuring every person knows they matter and has a place in our school.

If you weren't a teacher, what would you be? I've been a DJ, translator, and farmhand, but my dream job would be working for the United Nations.

What was the happiest moment of your life? Graduating, celebrating my Mum's 80th birthday, landing in Antarctica, and reaching Everest Base Camp.

Future aspirations? To continue my journey at Parklands, eventually retire to a campervan, and keep traveling to experience new things.

Interview | **Tommy M & Dan W** (Egypt Form)

