



COVID VALENTINE'S DAY

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

By Sienna Gillway, Year 7, and Freya Hanby, Year 8

Valentine's Day, celebrated on 14th February each year, is a holiday when we show affection with greetings and gifts. It has two different origins. Version 1 dates back to the 5th century, where the Ancient Romans were responsible for this holiday. Emperor Claudius II executed St Valentine and they named the holiday after him. Version 2 is linked to the Roman festival called Lupercalia in the middle of February – officially the start of their springtime. It's thought that boys pulled a girl's name from a box.

Although there are many versions of the history of Valentine's Day, we all celebrate Valentine's Day as the

most romantic day of the year.

However, this year we may not be able to see our fellow loved ones due to COVID-19. This may be very stressful for many people due to them having to spend the day alone. I am sure we will miss our loved ones this Valentine's Day for the same reason.

If you are alone this Valentine's Day, this offering of *The Torch* is packed full of suggestions about how you might celebrate the day. From baking biscuits to reading and cuddling up on the sofa with a romantic film, there's sure to be something for everyone.

Happy Valentine's Day, everyone!

Message from the Principal

11 February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we approach the February holiday, we have the opportunity to reflect on the last few weeks of the half term. Despite the national challenges and last-minute changes, we can be proud as a community of how we have responded to the recent lockdown. Our 100% live online learning offer is going well and is ensuring we deliver real learning, every lesson, every day, minimising the impact of students being out of the classroom. I would like to say a huge thank for the continued proactivity, effort and commitment from staff, students, and parents for delivering, engaging in, and supporting live lessons.

We often talk about our vision: delivering exceptional learning experiences that enable all young people to thrive in a competitive world and lead successful and fulfilling lives, as well as becoming a Beacon of Educational Excellence. The last few weeks have proven to me that when we all pull in the same direction, the possibilities of what we can achieve are endless. Of course, there have been challenges and bumps in the road, but due to our relentless pursuit of excellence and solution focussed approach, we have been able to offer our students a consistent educational diet in a far from ideal situation. As always, we will continue to reflect and refine our offer and look to make it even better.

The feedback you have given throughout this process, whether this be through the parent survey, at parents' evenings, via phone calls or emails, has been vitally important to us and has allowed us to understand our online offer from your point of view. This feedback has played a huge part in some of the changes we made, including the length of lessons, the after-school clubs and homework and the length of lunch time, to name a few. We have really appreciated the high number of supportive emails we have received from parents over the past few weeks. These emails and messages of support have lifted the spirits of staff in difficult times and have kept us focussed on why we are doing what we do. I would like to thank you for this.

Highlights from this half term also include launching our [new website](#) and [app](#). The website is now more representative of our professional approach and the app will enable more swift and effective communication



with parents, who additionally, will be able to see their child's report, progress and attendance at the touch of a button. We have also held our first Parent & Community Advisory Board (PCAB) meeting which is an initiative to gain further feedback and input from parents, carers and the community. We hope this will evolve into a prominent part of our termly and annual calendar. If you are interested in joining the PCAB, please contact the Academy on pcab@wathacademy.com.

As we look towards next half term, we know that at least some of it will still be held remotely. We have therefore continued our commitment to further improving our delivery, whilst also planning for the hopeful return of our students. As soon as we receive further guidance and instruction from the government, we will be in contact with parents and carers.

Thank you once again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Ransome
Principal

Teachers' Opinions – Gender

By Em Rodgers, Year 9

I wanted to use this as a topic of discussion as it is a subject very close to my heart and one I am extremely passionate about. I asked a selection of my teachers about their opinions and experiences, in hopes of spreading knowledge that might help others.

Miss Hunt – Art and Graphics

When asked how much she knew about gender outside of cisgender men and women, Miss Hunt said that she tries to educate herself as much as possible when it comes to gender fluidity. She also believes it is extremely important that the public are as educated as possible when it comes to gender, so we can best support people who may not identify as cisgender male or female.

I asked where most of her knowledge about gender comes from, and Miss Hunt said that she tries to research as much as possible, and that most of her knowledge comes from social media as she follows a lot of activists on Instagram, who use their platform to educate people on all sorts of issues, including gender. She also admitted to doing a selfless thing that I wish more people did online: the simple act of filling your page with happiness and making it a safe space for others. Another important thing that she does is research topics and gather the facts before coming to a decision on her opinions.

Miss Hunt was taught very similar things to us at school, moving on to highlight the importance of programmes such as Votes for Schools, and Life Skills lessons which are good at exposing students to topics that they may not come across in day-to-day life. This is still a big improvement to the small PSHE lessons she had at school that didn't include gender topics (and she only left sixth form in 2012!). However, she does think that more could always be done to ensure all parts of the community are supported and believes that we must continue to normalise gender related topics through education.

Mr Butler – History

Mr Butler said that he wouldn't normally even use the term 'cisgender'; however, he does know that some people are trans, and others identify as non-binary or gender fluid. He informed me that his wife is a counsellor and has had non-binary clients in the past, so has learnt a

little more from exposure to this than many others have. He also reads about gender on Twitter and has read pieces related to 'TERF-wars' by journalists and writers.

As he was at school in the 1970s and 80s, students weren't taught anything about gender, being instead educated on gendered topics, such as sewing for girls and metalwork for boys. Pointing out a huge strength in our school, he talks about how the History department at Wath is very conscious of the need to diversify our curriculum and we've had the opportunity to re-think much of what we teach as we have expanded KS3 to three years.

Mr Tullett – DT and Graphics

Firstly, Mr Tullett admitted that he had to look up what cisgender meant as it wasn't a term that he had really come across before. Some of the information taught in school has changed drastically, especially those terms used to describe gender; some of these terms weren't really in everyday use or even invented when he was at school himself.

He believes the opportunities that students have in school today for all genders is fantastic; long gone are the days of certain subjects being "for the girls" and others being "for the boys", which just reinforced gender stereotypes and hindered students from reaching their full potential. Coming from a Design perspective, Mr Tullett pointed out some of the most respected work is produced by women, such as at the work by architect Zaha Hadid, Eileen Gray or Margaret Calvert.

He also believes that there are several dedicated members of staff that students can talk to, who are highly skilled and are great listeners. Everyone is welcomed and everyone is valued.

Useful Links to learn more about this topic:

[What is cisgender? Meaning and definition of cis and why it's not a slur \(pinknews.co.uk\)](https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2019/02/21/what-is-cisgender-meaning-definition-cis-not-slur/)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/whatisdifferencebetweensexandgender/2019-02-21>

<https://www.bigtalkeducation.co.uk/rse-information-and-support-for-schools/sex-gender/>

Science and STEM Wath Academy

World Cancer Day Webinar

On Thursday 4th February, 58 Y12 and Y13 students joined an online webinar focused on working as a Therapeutic Radiographer in Oncology and the current developments in cancer diagnosis and treatments. Students listened to presentations by Michelle Simon (Therapeutic Radiographer, RePAIR Fellow); Hazel Pennington (National Macmillan Radiotherapy Clinical Fellow) and Jo McNamara (National Macmillan Radiotherapy Clinical Fellow/Admissions Tutor for Radiotherapy & Oncology at Sheffield Hallam University). Students were able to ask questions about the impact of Covid on cancer treatments and about the current developments in proton therapy. All students received a CPD certificate for their attendance and as recognition of a virtual work experience that students can use in future UCAS applications and interviews. Students followed up this experience with further work and developing their understanding of gene expression and cancer.

Below is a selection of some of the amazing work students produced in relation to the webinar.

Gene expression and cancer

By Matthew Saxton, Year 13

Cancer can be classified as a group of diseases that arise due to damage to the genes that regulate mitosis. It will have undoubtedly had an impact on all of our lives and is not a particularly pleasant topic, however increasing our understanding of how these diseases arise and how they can be treated will significantly benefit us in the fight against cancer. This article will examine the causes of cancer and the current action that is being taken to treat these illnesses.

We will firstly begin with how cell division and mitosis occur in normal, healthy cells. As you know, all somatic (body) cells must be replicated to replace damaged cells, allow for the organism to grow and allow for asexual reproduction in organisms such as green plants. This happens via a series of processes that collectively make up the cell cycle, with cell division occurring during the mitotic stage – mitosis, which is composed of

prophase, metaphase, anaphase and telophase.

As with all processes, mitosis is controlled by the sequence of DNA bases in the genes that are located on chromosomes within the nuclei of cells. This is because the sequence of DNA bases in these genes codes for a specific protein that will be important in this process. For example, the enzyme cyclin-dependent kinase 1 (Cdk1) is responsible for catalysing reactions involved in activating the cell cycle and is coded for by the CDC2 gene. Without these specific proteins, mitosis would not happen properly, and it is when cell division is not controlled that cancers can form.

The result of uncontrolled cell division leads to the formation of a mass of cells called a tumour. Tumours can either be benign or malignant:

Benign

- These tumours are generally less dangerous due to the production of adhesion molecules. This means they stick together and don't spread to other parts of the body.
- Surrounded by a dense tissue capsule and so remain as a compact structure.
- Can usually be removed by surgery alone and rarely reoccur after treatment.

Malignant

- These are more life-threatening, as they don't produce these adhesion molecules, meaning they spread to other parts of the body and produce secondary tumours via a process called metastasis.
- These are usually treated by radiotherapy/chemotherapy in addition to surgery.
- Reoccur more frequently after treatment.

Treatment of Cancer

By Josh Havenhand, Year 12

There are many treatments which are used in conjunction with one another to effectively treat cancer. Many of these treatments target the stages of Mitosis that lead to the formation of cancerous cells.

- Adriamycin and Cytosan help to stop DNA unwinding

Science and STEM at Wath Academy

prior to replication

- Methotrexate stops cells making DNA nucleotides
- Taxol and vincristine inhibit formation of mitotic spindle

Many of these are constituents of the drugs used in chemotherapy treatment. Other treatments of cancer include surgery – this is a procedure in which a surgeon removes cancer from your body. In addition, cancer can be treated through Radiation Therapy – this is a type of cancer treatment that uses high doses of radiation to kill cancer cells and shrink tumours. Other less commonly used forms of treatment include Hormone Therapy, Stem Cell transplants and Immunotherapy.

Unfortunately, cancer treatment, especially Chemotherapy, can have very significant side effects on the human body. This is most often because cancer treatment often targets areas in the body that have high levels of mitosis (cell division).

In the human body, some cells naturally have high levels of mitosis such as hair cells, this means that the cancer treatment may lead to an inability for the person to regrow their hair, however the treatment can still be highly effective and many people do undergo Chemotherapy each year.

Does Epigenetics suggest trauma can be passed from one generation to the next?

By Millie Birch, Year 13

The notion that trauma can leave a chemical mark on a person's genes, which is then passed down to later generations, is a topic which has always mesmerized scientists. Called epigenetics, this field displayed true development around a decade ago when scientists reported that children who were exposed in the womb to the Dutch Hunger Winter, carried an epigenetic signature on one of their genes. This was a time of famine where food stocks in the cities in the Western Netherlands rapidly ran out and many people were malnourished. Scientists later found long term effects on the children's health as they developed a higher-than-average body mass as they grew older.

Unexpected though it might be, there is now little doubt that epigenetic inheritance takes place. Experiments on

rates have shown that female offspring who received good care when young, respond better to stress in later life and themselves nurture their offspring better. Good maternal behaviour in rats transmits epigenetic information onto their offspring's DNA without passing through an egg or sperm. In humans, when a mother has gestational diabetes, the foetus is exposed to high concentrations of glucose and these high glucose concentrations cause epigenetic changes in the daughter's DNA, increasing the likelihood that she will develop this condition herself. Additionally, it is thought that in sperm and eggs during the earliest stages of development a specialized cellular mechanism searches the genome and erases its epigenetic tags to return the cells to a genetic 'clean slate'. However, a few epigenetic tags escape this process and pass unchanged from parent to offspring.

The complexity of cancer biology can be explained as the interplay between genetic and epigenetic abnormalities which drive cancer initiation and progression. For example, patients with colorectal cancer have been found to have less DNA methylation than normal, meaning higher than normal gene activity and more genes are activated to increase the rate of transcription. This increases the likelihood of a tumour forming. During tumorigenesis, the epigenome goes through multiple alterations, including genome-wide loss of DNA methylation and regional hypermethylation, especially in CpG promoter islands of tumour suppressor genes. It has been found that specific epigenetic signatures are found in nearly all cases of specific types of cancer. Therefore, epigenetics can be used as an indication for early detection, non-invasive screening, prognosis, and prediction of therapeutic response. The development of diagnostics has enabled tests to be taken early for cancer, brain disorders and arthritis by identifying methylation and acetylation relative to 'normal levels' to study particular genes. This results in early detection, early treatment and therefore higher survival rate.

Epigenetics is developing as a treatment of a variety of specific cancers with promising clinical data on several malignancies such as chronic leukaemia, lung cancer and breast cancer. It demonstrates that epigenetic therapy has the potential to overcome chemotherapy resistance and re-sensitize cancer cells to previously ineffective therapies.

Wath Academy Transition

Three Year 7 students share their experiences of taking the big step from primary into secondary.

Ruby Kay's Experience

For many, transitioning from KS2 to KS3 was scary, mostly because of people being older and taller than yourself or others, and also the worry of getting bullied, being tormented, their friends leaving them behind, falling behind in classes. Another fear is catching Covid and being a threat to people's lives, including passing it on, not just to friends and family members but also to teachers and staff. The consequence of Covid has not only affected everyday life but our school life as well, meaning we are having to wear masks, washing hands, putting hand sanitiser on a lot, not standing in hallways anymore. However, despite all the challenges we face this year, moving to Wath Academy has been a great experience so far.

Why did I choose to go to Wath Academy?

I chose to come to Wath Academy because nearly 80 years of my family has gone to it and I want to make everyone proud by accomplishing this goal of getting good grades and no mistakes in pieces of work that are vital towards my grades. Also, the type of school you go to reflects on your later life and degree. I hope that Wath Academy will help me get better at everything I need to work on. I also hope that that I can be able to get into a great sixth form from my options that I possibly will have.

Three things I have learnt since joining Wath Academy:

1. To always have a growth mindset no matter what.
2. To have great speed in lessons to get more information on my worksheet or in my book.
3. To never give up in my work or anything else that might have occurred throughout the lesson or even the lessons before or after that one.

Which key drivers I think I demonstrate the most:

1. Everyone is valued: I try and make everyone feel respected and welcome.
2. Never give up: I try and never give up and do my hardest in everything no matter if it gets hard in lessons.

3. Growth mindset: I always look for what I can improve and I hope I can get better at most of my work. I never say NO to work that I 'cannot' do; I do it and try my hardest.

Which subjects I enjoy and why:

I love a lot of lessons but here are 3 of the most enjoyable subjects for me:

1. I enjoy History because you get to write about the world's accomplishments and downfalls. Also, the teacher, Mr Thorpe, makes the work easy and fun to do; he is a lovely person to be around and helps out everyone in class. Mr Thorpe makes everything seem more exciting than usual and when we have something wrong, he makes it more clarified than other teachers. The lessons are really well produced and preformed as well.

2. Also, I like Art because that way I learn new skills and I get to do more of fun things and try different stuff out. My teacher for Art is Mrs Gracey; she is a lovely, kindhearted person who makes the lesson more hard but that bit of extra challenge is what I like to have. The lessons make me feel better because I express myself through her lessons.

3. A lesson I also find enjoyable is Design Technology. It is enjoyable because I love cooking; in fact I want to be a chef when I am older. I find it stressful but fun and I like what do in the lessons. My teacher is Mrs Code; she is a lovely person and makes everyone have fun in lessons.

My House:

I am in Carthage and I have some friends in my house. My house values include candidness, honesty, kindness, perseverance and strength.

What Golden Ticket adverts have I attended?

Since I have a 'lump' on my head (nothing to worry about that much, though I just can't get knocked), I couldn't do the rock climbing or laser tag, so I picked to go to watch a movie: *Home Alone 2*. It was really fun to go to and I really enjoyed it. We got popcorn and a can of pop. After the movie, we went home but I wished we could have watched more movies because I loved it so much! (*Continues on page 7.*)

Wath Academy Transition

(Continued from page 6.)

What extra curriculum club excites me the most?

History club, Drama club, book club and art. I love all of these so I want to share with people what I can do. All these that I have picked I love and would like to do again when we return to school.

Igrayne Whitelam's Experience

When I got to the end of Y6, I just felt so thrilled! Even though I was aware of the amount of homework we had to do in the holidays, I just wanted to go straight to Wath, so I attended both transition days and got straight to it. At the end of my second transition day, when I knew what house I was in and I was updated in the things we will do, I knew more and more about this school.

My first day wasn't so productive as we just got our timetables, met our tutors and met our tutor group, but it was a useful day for helping us feel like we knew what we were doing. As time went on, things got more challenging in the classroom, but I have realized that all the challenges have brought me progress academically, so the challenges are definitely a good thing.

I also think it is harder this year for Y7s around the country, who have previously been behind in their work due to COVID restrictions and didn't make as much progress, whereas at Wath, we all have improved in our schoolwork and have had less pressure than our previous year.

Ruby Leach's Experience

On my last day at my primary school, I felt really upset but a bit happy to be starting a new adventure. We spent the final day colouring and playing games, such as a huge Joe Wicks workout in the hall; it was so much fun and I always impressed my teachers when I would do it! After we had break, Miss Adams (one of my teachers) got us laptops and iPads so we could play a game called Kahoot and everyone really enjoyed themselves all afternoon. Before we went home, our teachers showed us a video of when we were all younger and I was feeling really upset because it was like they were my second family and I really enjoyed it

there.

When I moved to secondary school, I was nervous because it was different and the rules have changed, but the one thing I really enjoy at Wath Academy is the Golden Ticket event. I get to do these events with friends, meaning they are always really fun and I have a good time. The lessons I enjoy the most are PE, Maths and English and maybe Science, because I personally find them really fun to learn so I enjoy them a lot. My house is Troy and they represent curiosity, dedication, ingenuity, prudence and tolerance.

Get Involved: STEM Club

STEM club runs every Wednesday after school. Here's a round up of some events which have taken place so far.



In the first online STEM club, students were asked to complete a scavenger hunt around their home with a scientific twist! Equipped with a periodic table and their creative flare students were charged with finding as many elements as they could around their homes in just 10 minutes. The results were fantastic: from potassium filled bananas to neon bright lights, the students well and truly thought outside the box.

On Wednesday 27th January, the STEM club were entertained by the wizardry of Mr Billups as he performed a brilliant card trick. There were many "wows!" from the attendees. And the best of it was, the magician shared with the class the secrets of how to perform it. Don't tell the magic circle that, or Mr Billups will get expelled!

Join us each week for more amazing activities from Science, Technology and Maths!

Romantic Short Stories

A Surprise Romance

Alex Evans, Y7

It was the Wednesday before the Valentine's Dance, and Danny was alone... as always. It hurt more today than ever, his cold tears rushed down his freckled cheeks, and dropped onto the puddled ground below. He stood outside of his school, Eastbay High, he was cold and wet and shivering from the rain. Everyone else had an umbrella; nobody would share theirs with him. Why would they? Nobody liked him. Nobody helped him. Nobody cared.

But somebody cared... There was a new girl at school; she was in Danny's class, "She seems nice" Danny thought. No. Stop. You're not good enough for her. What are you thinking? Are you dumb? She's like the rest of them. Snap out of it. Who do you think you are? Mr Likeable? No. You're Danny Bennson. You're nothing.

It was lunchtime when the thoughts stopped. He had calmed down and was eating his corned beef sandwich. Everyone else sat in groups of friends away from him; he was sitting by himself. The new girl sat with her friends two tables away from him. He glanced sideways at her, trying to not make it obvious that he was staring. The group of boys at the table in front had noticed though and had come over to him. Go away, ordered Danny... in his head: he couldn't actually give them a piece of his mind. He could only watch as they stole his food from him. Nobody helped him. Nobody liked him. Nobody ca-

"Get away from him!"

Danny looked up, bewildered... Had the new girl just helped him? The boys scattered away, like frightened toddlers. "You okay?" she said; Danny saw her friends trying to usher her back over to them; she took no notice, she had already heard how they talked about him. "Yeah, thanks." Danny glanced up at her through his long wavy fringe, he saw her clearly now, long brown hair and freckled cheeks, like his. "What's your name?" she said, "Oh, it's Danny." he replied, "Nice name." he smiled, "Yours?"

"Pearl," she noticed her friends calling her back, "Well, I'll see you later then,"

"See you."

He was on the way to Maths class the next day when he saw her again, "Hi." she said, "Hi." he replied, "I've been thinking... do you, maybe... it's fine if not... want to go to the Valentine's Dance with me?" Wait. Did she just ask if I wanted to go to the dance with her? "Wow, I... I didn't expect anybody to ask me..."

"Oh, umm... it's ok if you don't want to."

"No! I'd love to!"

"So, I'll see you on Monday then."

That day, Danny's life changed, all he needed was someone to care.

A rare friendship

Igrayne Whitelam, Year 7

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

Aphelia was eight years old; Skip, Honey and Beauty had all died at the age of fourteen, they were springer spaniels. Aphelia and her parents went to Peterborough to get,

Tinker, a clumsy, strong, and mischievous little Cocker Spaniel. His eyes had only just opened when he was sold to the Hvitlam family two weeks old to be precise. The little girl who lived where Tinker was born was called Charlotte, she and Aphelia played with Tinker so much that on that day, he learned to properly walk.

Because he was so young, when Tinker was being took to the Hvitlam family car, he squealed after his dog sister: she cried as well. Aphelia felt terrible for her new puppy, but she knew that both would live a long and happy life together. The downside was that on the way home it was Tinkers' first time in a car and he did not like it. It wobbled and wobbled, and he trumped all the way home and eventually, all the windows in the car had to be opened due to the terrible smell. He curled up on Aphelia's lap and she clung to him like she was holding her own soul. When they reached their cottage, Tinker had no toys, or a bed of his own so Aphelia was willing to give him one of her stuffed toys that Tinker cuddled up and chewed

Romantic Short Stories

all night. Aphelia did not mind for she had plenty of other toys and felt proud to see such a little puppy playing with one of her old teddies.

Days passed and Tinker grew fond of his new family and he got his own bed, real dog food and dog toys (The toys barely lasted two minutes due to the lack of care he had for them—he just tore them up). Aphelia felt ecstatic because there was a brand-new addition to the Hvitlam family, and she began to call Tinker her little brother and her best friend. They became inseparable and Aphelia taught him to use his manners (It did not work) and Tinker began doing hunting and when the Hvitlams went fishing, he kept a look out for new fish friends. Tinker was always there when Aphelia needed him, he was there when she caught her first fish, when she drew all her best pictures, if she ever fell out with all her friends, when she was sad, he was always there he was Aphelia's best friend, her devoted and true little brother. Years passed and they had an awesome life together. Aphelia grew up thinking Tinker could understand what she says, how she feels and what she thinks because they were the best friends and Tinker always reacted to what was going on in the most necessary behaviour.

True Love

By Alex Cook, Year 9

“Mia!”

A boy called out to his friend, waving in excitement. He had just arrived at the park and was elated at the fact his long-time friend was there too.

“Hey Nick, how’re you doing?”

“Not bad mi amigo! Any hoo... let’s go.”

Nick proceeded to drag them across the playground to the swings where they rested, feet dangling ever so slightly. The teens faced each other and laughed as soon as they made eye contact before stilling once more.

“Look, can I say something absolutely mental?”

“You are mental? But, yeah, go ahead.”

“Ever since I’ve known you, you’ve always been there for me and I really want you to know I care about you.”

The blond laughed, throwing his head back as he snorted loudly. Thrusting his hands into the pockets of his hoodie, the shorter friend looked down, slightly disappointed with the reaction. There was something else though. He was also relieved that their friend had misunderstood them as he was saving them the embarrassment of telling him properly.

“I care about you too, after all, we have known each other for, like, forever.”

The brunette’s blue eyes met brown and they took a deep breath. They weren’t going to be weak and not confess.

“No, I care for you. I have since we were twelve. I’m in love with you goddamnit.”

Nick stayed silent looking at Mia with wonder in his eyes. The person in question was tensed, waiting judgement and ridicule.

“You’ve been in love with me for six years?”

“Yes.”

Their voice was small, and their head was still down, from both shame and embarrassment of confessing to the person they had admired and loved for most of their life.

“You’re an idiot.”

There it was the rejection. It was all crashing down around Mia. They felt as if their world had ended.

“I love you too.”

Warm arms encircled their waist and they looked up to see Nick inches away from their face. They buried their head into his neck and hugged him back tightly.

A few days later, while they were in the park again (this time as a couple), Nick asked Mia a question that changed the fate of this love story.

“Mia, what is your full name?”

“Michael Louis Anderson. People just call me Mia because it’s easier.”

The two boys go back to the swings where they shared their first sweet, love filled kiss of both of their lives. Michael and Nicholas were finally happy as they finally showed their true colours and were proud of it. After all, love is love.

Valentine's Day Specials

The Only-Very-Slightly-Horrible History of...

Valentine's Day

By Abigail Germany, Year 9

Valentine's Day; the twenty-four hour period of the year when we celebrate the ones we love by gifting cards (known as Valentine's Day greetings), flowers and other tokens of appreciation. However, how many of you actually know where the tradition originated from and why?

Like the majority of celebrations, the primary setting is Rome. However, the main difference between this story and others is the large amount of uncertainty about who the protagonist is. As far as historians know, there were many possible St. Valentines. One possible scenario that may have been the cause of the holiday is the butchering of the priest by the Emperor of the time, Claudius II Gothicus in 270 CE (Common Era). Apparently, when Valentine was in prison, he sent a letter to the jail-keeper's daughter and enclosed it with the words 'from your Valentine.' Also according to the tale, Valentine had fixed her blindness, making them good friends.

Some believe that St Valentine was a bishop from Terni, which is situated in the centre of Italy. However, it is probable that the two namesakes, mentioned so far, were actually the same person!

The final, well-known idea is that the saint was a rebel and did not follow the Emperor's orders that couples should not be married during the war. Some people think that he did this to spare men from going to war; they did not have to if they were married!

During the time that St Valentine was killed, a Roman holiday known as Lupercalia was popular. It is supposed that the event took place on 15th February. Lupercalia was a crude holiday; a group of Roman priests called the Luperci assembled in the cave where, according to legend, the creators of Rome, Romulus and Remus, were apparently raised by a wolf. The priests then brutally and grotesquely murdered a goat and a dog.

Then, they ran around the village slapping women with pieces of the dead goat dipped in blood as they thought it increased fertility rates. Later that day, names of the village's women were pulled out of a large pot and they would be paired with men for a year; these often formed marriage.

By the end of the 5th century, Lupercalia was seen as inappropriate and non-Christian for the first time and was replaced by Valentine's Day which was a much sweeter way of expressing love.

Valentine's Day Greetings were used as long ago as the Middle Ages but it wasn't until the 1400s as they started to gain significant popularity. The oldest greeting still in one piece today was written by Charles, Duke of Orleans, while he was jailed in the Tower of London! Years ago, hearts, Cupid and cherubs (plump angels) were most common images on the front of cards but now, they are modernised.

Valentine's Day is celebrated in countries all over the world! As well as Britain, places involved are the United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia and France. However, Valentine's Day only became popular in Britain in around the 17th century. Today, all sorts of people send greetings for different reasons. Now, it is popular to give a card to a friend and some schools even create post-boxes for schoolchildren to post letters into!

Now you know about why Valentine's Day exists, why not enhance the tradition yourself?



Above: This is thought to be the oldest surviving Valentine's Day card, dating from about 1790.

Valentine's Day Specials

Top 3 Movies You Must Watch On Valentine's Day

By Evie Germany, Year 7

Kissing Booth

Kissing Booth is a comedy and romance movie that will hook you in straight away. The story follows a girl who has a crush on her best friend's brother. However, if they form a relationship, it will break every rule that the inseparable friends have lived by since childhood.

Isn't It Romantic

Isn't It Romantic is a romantic, comedy movie that will make you laugh until your eyes start watering. This movie is about a woman, called Natalie, who lives in New York, and, one morning, when she was heading to work, a man tried to steal her belongings. Yet, in the end she ends up being knocked unconscious and when she wakes up she is in a love fantasy.

Tall Girl

Tall Girl is a romantic drama that will enhance your emotions uncontrollably. This film is about a girl who is taller than everyone else in her high school. One day, a transfer student comes to her institution and she forms an immediate crush on him. However, is this just because she's finally met someone of her height or does she really love him?

METHOD:

1. Firstly, preheat your oven to 190C / Gas mark 5
2. Mix the butter and sugar together until the mixture is smooth.
3. Stir in the flour, then, when it is smooth, gently roll your paste, on a work surface, until the paste is 1cm thick.
4. Cut into circles using a cookie cutter or sharp knife if you don't have one and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.
5. Line a baking tray with baking parchment and place the biscuits on the tray.
6. Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until the biscuits are pale golden brown. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool on a wire rack.
7. Remove the ready to roll icing from its packaging and knead until it is soft.
8. Lightly dust the work surface with icing sugar and roll out the icing using a rolling pin until it is approximately 3mm thick.
9. Cut the icing into heart shapes slightly smaller than the biscuits and stick them to the biscuits using a small amount of the writing icing.
10. Decorate the biscuits using the writing icing and the love hearts.

Easy Valentine's Day Shortbread Biscuits

By Evelyn Nixon, Year 7

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

125g of butter

55g of caster sugar

180g of plain flour

Pink and white ready to roll fondant icing

Love heart sweets

White writing icing

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

Feature: Romantic Reads

Mya Mcveigh-Judd, Year 9

Feeling a must-read on Valentine's day? Well, you're in luck! I have some love triangle conflicts and soulmate desires for you romantic fanatics out there!

Entwined by A.J. Rosen



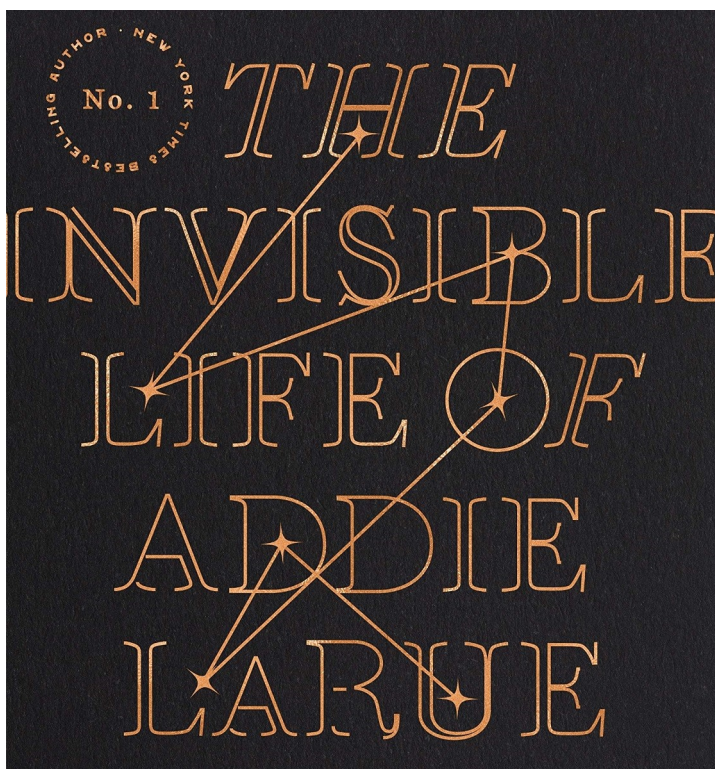
Avery, a headstrong girl descended from Gods and Goddesses, is getting older by the minute. She dreads turning eighteen for one particular reason... the Click.

Humans, at the start of their existence, were hungry for power, commencing a rebellion against the rulers, yet were defeated before the gates of Mount Olympus. Being part of the Hellenic human race, the leader of all Gods, Zeus, pursued splitting the humans into two halves with his lightning bolt. Chaos and havoc rebounded all over the land of the Hellenic; however, Gods—as well as humans—like to amuse themselves with drama...

This novel not only expresses intense connection and love, but it also represents the social class of the descendants of the Gods, and how materialistic values differ from Pure Royals to the Regulars. Avery Montgomery, a meaningless regular among the rest, despises finding her soulmate, her witty but determined ways had prised her into a love crisis. The book has my heart from the very beginning, Entwined hitches onto you and sends a rollercoaster of emotions you are not prepared for! So, buckle up, as Avery is not only

becoming fond of attachment, but risking everything for it...

The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue by V.E. Schwab



What would life be like if you were forgotten in a split second? No way of connecting with others, one blink and you're wiped from their memory.

Adeline suffers immortality, a condition only gifted by those who answer after dark. Her life is ridden with forced marriages and enduring a perfect feminine role model of 1714; however, Addie LaRue wants her freedom more than anything else and would give anything for it. Including her soul...

For 300 years she has been Jess, Claire, Zoe and Michelle, small hook-ups that could lead to something more, only ending to being forgotten. 300 years of being a ghost to others, her wish to belong to nobody else but herself plays monotonously on repeat. 300 years of making her own choices yet has no impact on anyone else but Adeline. 300 years of being unable to whisper her true name, she did not want to die as she lived, but now she finds herself living without a purpose. 300 years, of waiting for a change, until one afternoon, a mediocre New Yorker remembers her seven-freckled constellation.

I recommend this book with such urge because mythos and reality become one and the pitiful descriptions of her own isolation fall apart into a beautiful romance novel.

Feature: Romantic Poetry

Valentine's Poem

By Freya Hanby, Year 8

What is it? What do we do?
A bunch of roses or a trip to Peru?
A day full of contentment and love in our soul,
To be part of the Day is everyone's goal,

Valentine, what a good day!
A day where everyone can only say 'Yay'.

Lifetime Commitment

By Isobelle Fenton, Year 9

You bring me home one sweaty night,
And act like you will treat me right,
You buy me toys and gifts galore,
You all play with me more and more

And exciting new challenges arise,
It seems like I am your winning prize,
Then as my teeth come anew,
It seems there is nothing I cannot chew through

Soon as rolls of fat begin to disappear,
The new verdict becomes clear,
The large eyes just aren't enough,
Taking care of me is more than tough

Then one dreadful day you leave your home,
And leave me by myself, completely alone,
And as I wait eagerly behind the door,
I begin to realize you're gone, forevermore.

Simply Oxytocin

By Abigail Germany, Year 9

Valentines; the worst day of the year,
I hide in my bedroom just brimming with fear,
A kiss from a stranger?
Oh- do go away!
Love is just hormones: fake love, dead bouquets.

Why be so boring?
My friend texts while gawping,
Frankly,
There's no story,
Nor heartbreak nor glory.

I'm an Eleanor Rigby, the Sound of Silence,
There's one thing about those who don't know of
reliance,
They put themselves first, expect us to change
And it's always the good few,
Who must box up their rage.

So, that's why Valentine's is the worst day of the
year,
When I hide in my room and brim with the fear,
That I could be one whose heart could implode,
Love may be chocolates, bouquets and sweet dates,
But it's better for some to not use the risk gate.



World News: The Capitol Riots

By Laura Rodgers, Year 13

On 6th January 2021, a violent mob of fanatical Trump supporters descended upon and attacked the US Capitol in a violent insurrection against one of the major strongholds of American democracy.

What happened? – A Timeline of Events

12:00 pm: President Trump begins his speech at his “Save America” rally. He falsely states that the election was stolen and encourages the crowds to march to the Capitol.

12:30 pm: Crowds of Trump supporters who are not at the rally begin to gather outside the Capitol.

1:03 pm: Rioters break through barricades and force police officers to the base of the Capitol steps.

1:10 pm: President Trump ends his speech and encourages the crowd to march to the Capitol. He immediately returns to the White House.

1:30 pm: Capitol Police are forced to retreat up the steps of the Capitol by rioters. Trump supporters march from the Ellipse toward the Capitol.

2:11 pm: Rioters break a window on the northwest side of the Capitol with a plastic shield and the first rioter enters the Capitol through the broken window, opening the door for others, who begin to ransack various rooms inside, including Speaker Pelosi’s office and the Senate chamber.

2:13 pm: Mike Pence is removed from the Senate chamber and the Senate is called into recess.

2:14 pm: Rioters chase a lone Capitol Police officer up northwest stairs, to the doors to the Senate chamber. Police inside the chamber attempt to lock the doors. Officer Eugene Goodman leads the mob away from the Senate chamber while senators inside attempt to evacuate.

3:13 pm: President Trump tweets, “I am asking for everyone at the U.S. Capitol to remain peaceful. No violence! Remember, WE are the Party of Law & Order.”

4:17 pm: Trump later tweets a video telling rioters that he loves them, that they’re very special, and that they should go home.

5:40 pm: The interior of the Capitol is cleared of rioters and leaders of Congress state that they will continue tallying electoral votes.

Why did this happen?

Tensions had been gradually building in the preceding weeks, contributing to the sheer level of violence and

destruction. The main triggers were Donald Trump’s defeat in the 2020 United States presidential election, the subsequent false claims that were made by Trump and his allies, the inflammatory language used by Trump at his “Save America” rally and in his tweets and social media posts, and the sudden rise in right-wing extremism that the current socio-political environment in the US has caused.

What was the mob trying to achieve?

In the weeks before, Trump was seen desperately trying to convince both Congress and his supporters that he was the true winner of the 2020 US Presidential Election. He sued multiple states and made countless unsubstantiated claims in order to keep his supporters on his side. His attacks on senators and even his own Vice President revealed his growing desperation at the rally on 6th January. When his supporters realised this desperation, they set out to attack the Capitol with the following aims:

- to disrupt the Electoral College vote and overturn it in favour of Donald Trump.
- to steal and destroy the certificates of ascertainment for the Electoral College votes.
- to pressure Congress to overturn Biden’s victory.
- to capture and possibly kill lawmakers.

What happened as a result of their actions?

The rioters were met with extreme hostility from the media, the general public and politicians alike due to their involvement in what was essentially an act of mass domestic terrorism. More than 400 of the rioters were arrested with the help of over 200,000 digital media tips submitted to the FBI, and 182 were criminally charged, some on multiple charges, including:

- Domestic terrorism
- Seditious conspiracy
- Attempted assassination
- Vandalism and theft
- Insurrection

In the days following the riots, five fatalities were announced, four rioters and one police officer, and the injured amounted to over 200 people. Some Congresspeople like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez came out about their experiences and the terror they felt during the attack. The insurrection has also been named as one of the main catalysts for Trump’s second impeachment trial, which is due to start on 9th February 2021.

Feature: Lockdown Walks

By Isabelle Oliver, Year 7

Are you bored and are always at home? Well, you could go on one of these four walks which cost nothing.

Wath Wood

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

It is not much but it really is something special. I love going there and once you are actually in the woods everything feels much calmer and on warm days which are rare in Britain it feels cooler and the shade is nice because sometimes it gets quite warm which is surprising. I think it is beautiful and if you go there, I am sure you will love it; if not then here are another three!

Wath Lake

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

If you live close by you may be interested in this. Wath Lake has many paths and turns. It is great if you love cycling or fast mounting biking or if you like just going somewhere. Lockdown has not been the best for anybody, but it is nice to get outside. Occasionally, there are ducks to feed bread or sweetcorn and a cafe which is open and when you walk all around you can grab yourself a cheeky sausage roll or a tea/coffee and for a vegan or vegetarian a lovely flapjack.

Trans Pennine Trail

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

This walk was inspired by another one of the Torch writers who is very talented, Isobelle Fenton.

It is a nice long walk if you love adventure and peace at the same time who ever has been there before hopefully loved it. If it is not your ideal walk, I would keep reading. I have never been before I hope you will like it if you go.

Pottery Pond

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

If you or any one you know who likes long walks and yes long, this is the one for you. It is fun to go with friends or family in winter or spring is the best. If you like walking I highly recommend going there it is beautiful. First you go to Wath Wood then go through it for a while then if you see a green sort of fence walk through the gap at the side go past the back of where the horses are and walk along the path which is by the road cross then there is a sign which says Pottery Pond. If you do go, I hope you enjoy it.

News, Politics and Opinion

Ice melting rates speed up

Grace Clowrey, Year 10

According to a new study comparing ice melting rates from the 1990s to 2017, ice is now melting across the globe at a faster pace than ever before; between 1994 and 2017, the Earth has lost 28 trillion tonnes of ice – that’s the equivalent of a 100m thick sheet of ice covering the entire UK!

According to the lead author, Dr Thomas Slater: ‘The ice sheets are now following the worst-case climate warming scenarios set out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Sea-level rise on this scale will have very serious impacts on coastal communities this century.’ The study claims that there has been a 65% increase in the rate of ice loss over the 23-year period. Also, it shows that although ice used to be melting a rate of 0.8 trillion tonnes per year, 2017 saw the loss of 1.3 trillion tonnes of ice – the rate is increasing dramatically.

This global ice melting affects life across the world, from coastal communities to natural wildlife habitats by the coast. In addition to this, loss of sea ice can indirectly influence sea levels – Dr Isobel Lawrence said: ‘One of the key roles of Arctic sea ice is to reflect solar radiation back into space which helps keep the Arctic cool.’ This means that, as the ice shrinks, the Arctic will warm faster than anywhere else on the planet, due to more solar energy being stored on Earth.

The study used satellite data to examine all the ice disappearing on Earth – it was the first of its kind. It covers 215,000 mountain glaciers around the planet, polar ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctic, ice shelves floating around Antarctica and sea ice drifting in the Arctic and Southern Oceans.

Dr Thomas Slater said: ‘Although every region we studied lost ice, losses from the Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets have accelerated the most.’ Half of all ice loss was from that on land, including 6.1 trillion from mountain glaciers, 3.8 trillion tonnes from the Greenland ice sheet, and 2.5 trillion tonnes from the Antarctic ice sheet. This has contributed to a 35 millimetre rise in global sea levels.

It may be a very long time before even most of Earth’s ice has melted – but what affect will it have on the world if we lose much more? The seas are rising, and the Arctic is

heating up – how long until it is too late?

All about Coronavirus

Molly Knapp, Year 7

How it first started

Coronavirus first started in Wuhan, China, in late 2019, and is now a global pandemic. Animals started spreading the very deadly disease. The first case of Covid-19 (in the UK) started in a hotel in York on January 29th. The first national lockdown started March 23rd, 2020 and ended two months and a half later.

Holidays

Now, no one can go abroad! They only can if the government says so. If you do go on holiday, there is a massive chance that the government will change the rules here so that you will have to isolate in that place.

The Vaccine/the first person to get it

We are now using a vaccine that was developed at the beginning of December 2020. The first person to ever get the vaccine was a 91-year-old woman who lives in Coventry. She has now had her 2nd vaccine after 3 weeks of getting her first one.

The Rules and Symptoms of Covid-19

Currently, we are in Tier 4 all around the UK. The rules of Covid-19 mean we cannot go out of the house unless it is for a Coronavirus test or to go to the supermarket, you can only meet up to one other person from a household outside if it is to do exercise, you can only go outside for exercise, you have to social distance from other households and you must wear a facemask if you are over the age of 10.

The symptoms of Covid-19 are a high temperature, a new continuous cough and a loss of or change of sense and taste.

Schools and Jobs

Schools have had to shut down again for the third lockdown only this time it is for longer than 3 months. Every child must be at home unless their parents are key workers. The only adults that are allowed to go to their jobs is if they are a keyworker which includes: nurses, doctors, teachers and vets.



Review and Media



Is *Super Mario 64* As Good As Everyone Remembers?

Aidan Jennings, Year 10

Today I am reviewing *Super Mario 64*. I'm reviewing the 3D All-Stars version, on Nintendo Switch. If you want this game on Switch you need to buy it before March 31, 2021, as it goes off store shelves and off the eShop then and will probably never go back on Switch. Also, I'm only reviewing *Mario 64* and not talking about *Mario Sunshine* or *Mario Galaxy*. Now to start the review.

Negatives first than positives. I don't have many issues with this game, but I do have some. First of all, this game definitely shows its age. It has an awkward camera, which if you are used to playing modern games takes some getting used to, but once you do it isn't much of an issue. There are also sections of the game where you have to fly using a wing cap, and I hated these as it felt horrible to control. In the dedicated flying levels, you need to collect 8 red coins which because of its annoying controls, are really frustrating to get. Finally, I strongly disliked the final boss battle; (spoilers) in the final battle you need to grab Bowser by the tail and throw him into bombs. Grading him and throwing him are both easy, but timing the throws so he goes into the bombs is difficult, and unfun.

Time for the positives. The game doesn't have much of a story, but doesn't need it. The real draw of this game is the gameplay, and it feels incredibly fun to control. All the different movement options come together really well, and opens a lot of room for experimentation in levels. If there's a platforming section you're struggling with, try doing a side jump or a long jump, maybe see if you get above the section and drop down, there are always multiple ways to tackle a situation. Second, the music is some of, if not the best, video game music ever made. I'm willing to bet that you have heard at least some of the music from this game, even if you've never played the game before. It is simply iconic. Each and every location is memorable, especially Peach's Castle. By the end of the game, you will know that castle better than your own house. I think the music definitely helps every location be as memorable as it is. Some locations are better than others, but every single one has one or two fun starts to collect. The graphics might look outdated, but they definitely have their charm. This was also the first Mario game to have voice acting, and it's not bad, and much like the music, is

iconic (at least the voice acting for Mario is).

In conclusion, this is still a really good game, but it has aged. If you can look past that age, then you are in for a really good and memorable time.

I give Mario 64 an 8/10.

Karate Kid I, II and III

Isobel Clowrey, Year 8

The three main *Karate Kid* movies follow the story of Daniel LaRusso, a 17-year-old boy who moved with his mother, Lucille, to Los Angeles, and moving to his new high school consequently meant a brand-new set of bullies awaiting him. His mentor, Mr. Miyagi, was a maintenance man at the apartment they moved to, but later teaches him the art of karate with his many strange techniques. The story basically follows the regular story of a high schooler dealing with life, yet the movie doesn't exactly follow this trend and has many interesting twists and turns along the way.

As you watch the film, you can look out for the numerous cultural references perhaps made by the 'children of the 80's', such as "wax on, wax off" or the all-famous crane kick.

I would definitely recommend, after watching the original three *Karate Kid* movies, the new *Cobra Kai* series, which follows the life of Daniel's (who is now the over-proud owner of a car company) old bully Johnny Lawrence, who starts to rebuild the once proud and well-known name of *Cobra-Kai*.

Lost in Space – Netflix series review

By Grace Clowrey, Year 10

Lost in Space is a sci-fi Netflix series, and is based on a series from the 1960s of the same name. It follows the Robinson family – parents John and Maureen, and their children Judy, Penny and Will.

Following a massive impact event on earth, colonists are being sent to live on Alpha Centauri. However, when the space station is attacked, they are forced to evacuate, and end up lost on a mysterious alien planet. There are lots of dangerous situations, strange creatures and even an alien robot. But where did it come from? And what exactly attacked the ship?

I would highly recommend this series if you like family adventures, sci-fi and mysteries. There are 2 seasons



Review and Media



currently on Netflix, with a 3rd and final season hopefully coming at some point this year.

***The Prom* – Review**

By Em Rodgers, Year 9

“Everyone deserves a chance to celebrate.”

The Prom. A very recent favourite of mine, after being introduced to the Broadway musical it was based on, I just had to watch it, and mostly, I wasn't disappointed.

This film follows the story of Emma, a high school student in Indiana, who causes chaos when she makes the request to take her girlfriend to prom with her. The PTA believes it to be scandalous and that it sets a bad impression for other students, so, they make decision to cancel the prom. A group of narcissistic, down-on-their-luck Broadway stars hear about this story and decide to try and make a difference to Emma's life in hopes of being seen differently by the press.

I loved this film very much, the amazing cast accompanied by the stunning soundtrack makes for an entertaining and emotional watch for all ages. Its themes of acceptance and family love are bound to bring a tear to anyone's eyes, but the sharp contrast of witty humour and comedic songs are bound to make you laugh out loud. The story of a young, gay teen is bound to speak out to many people, alongside the strong moral of love everyone would be helpful to many parents and LGBT allies.

Overall I would definitely recommend this film; it is an amazing watch and the soundtrack is bound to be stuck in your head for weeks afterwards, It is currently available to watch on Netflix and the full soundtrack is on Spotify.

Things to watch on Disney+ (Part 2)

Emily Balaiss, Year 13

At the beginning of the first lockdown, we came up with a list with the best films and TV shows that were available to watch on Disney+, now that we are back in another national lockdown, here are some more great films and TV shows to watch on Disney+.

Films:

Hamilton: An American Musical

The story of the first treasury secretary of the United States of America, Alexander Hamilton. This award winning musical

written by Broadway legend Lin-Manuel Miranda was recorded back in 2016 at The Richard Rodgers Theatre in New York City and aired on Disney+ back in July because 'the world turned upside down'. With names such as Lesley Odom Jr as Vice President Aaron Burr, Daveed Digs as Maquis Lafayette, and Jonathan Groff as King George III, this musical extravaganza is definitely one to watch

Star Wars

Personally, I would recommend watching the original *Star Wars* trilogy; however, Disney+ has all 9 films (11 if you count *Rogue One* and *Solo*). The *Star Wars* films follow the adventures of the Skywalkers, the latest one released on Disney+ was *The Rise of Skywalker*. Each new trilogy presents a new evil for the main characters to defeat, whether it be the Sith, the Empire, or the First Order.

Descendants 3

The third and final film of the *Descendants* collection. This saga follows the children of three of Disney's notorious villains: Maleficent, Cruella De Ville, Jaffar, and The Evil Queen. Each film presents itself with a new villain for the core 4 (Mal, Carlos, Jay and Evie) to fight and save the Kingdom of Auradon. The 4 return to the Isle of the Lost to recruit more of the VKs (villain kids) to live a glamorous life at Auradon Prep.

TV Shows:

WandaVision

Marvel's first Disney+ original series. This series blends the idea of classic sitcoms with the Marvel Cinematic Universe in which Wanda Maximoff (Scarlet Witch) and Vision – two super-powered beings living their ideal suburban lives – begin to suspect that not everything is not as it seems.

Black is King

This film is a visual album that reimagines Disney's 2019 remade film *The Lion King* as a story for today's young kings and queens, and the tale of black families throughout history according to one of the film's directors, Beyoncé.

Suit Life on Deck

These two shows follow twin brother Zack (Dylan Sprouse) and Cody (Cole Sprouse) Martin and friends Bailly Pickett (Debbie Ryan), and London Tipton (Brenda Song) whilst they live on a cruise ship while attending school (every student's dream).

Feature: Urban Legends

Every edition, Isobelle Fenton (Year 9) examines an urban legend. Since this is the Valentine's edition, she decided to look into The Little Mermaid.

I'm sure we all know the story of the little mermaid film by Disney, but did you know it is based on the story by Hans Christian Anderson? This is the tale it tells...

Far below the surface of the sea, live the sea folk, mainly the Queen, and her 6 daughters – the princesses. The youngest, however, was the most beautiful of them all – the Little Mermaid. She loved to hear stories about the humans above. When she turned 15, she could sit on the rocks and watch the ships pass by.

She was watching a birthday celebration for a handsome prince, when a storm hit, sinking his ship. She dove down after the prince, leaving him on the shore by a temple. He woke, and saw the temple woman over him, mistaking her for his saviour, and they fell in love.

The little mermaid didn't want to become seafoam on the surface when she died, and so went to the sea witch, who offered her a potion to make her human in exchange for her tongue and voice. Once she was human, she couldn't return to the sea again, and could only get a soul if she married the prince. If she didn't, though, the dawn after he married someone else, she would dissolve into sea foam on the sea, and cease to exist; just like if she was a mermaid.

She drank the potion by where the prince lived, and woke on the shore, seeing the prince stood over her. He took her in, but every step for her was agony. Over time, they became good friends, though he never loved her. One day, after his parents encouraged him to marry, he asked for the temple woman's hand.

Soon after, they married on a ship, and the little mermaid, with no voice, was forced to stand and watch, as the ceremony proceeded. Afterwards, she looked to the east, to see the first light beginning to rise over the sea.

Then, her sisters emerged, but all their luscious hair was gone. They explained they gave it all to the witch, so that the Little Mermaid could live on, if she stabbed the prince with the dagger they were given, before day began. She took the dagger and found where the married couple slept. She raised the weapon above her head, but upon hearing the prince say his wife's name in his sleep, she dropped it to the floor.

Walking out to the edge of the ship, she threw herself off the side, just as the sun emerged, and melted into foam, as the witch promised.

However, because of the selflessness she had shown, she was given the chance to earn a soul. After 300 years of performing good deeds for humanity, she could rise up, to a place no mermaid had ever seen before – to the stars she had longed to see.

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

THE TORCH Journalists

This edition was produced by Ruby Leach, Igrayne Whitelam, Ruby Kay, Alex Evans, Evelyn Nixon, Evie Germany, Daisy Freya Hanby, Isabelle Oliver, Molly Knapp, Isobel Clowrey, Maxton Hutchinson, Emily Rodgers, Mya Mcveigh-Judd, Isobelle Fenton, Alex Cook, Abigail Germany, Aidan Jennings, Ngai Wa Yuen, Grace Clowrey, Laura Rodgers, Emily Balaiss and Miss Taylor.

Thanks also to Matthew Saxton, Josh Havenhand, Millie Birch, Miss Taylor, Mr Bishop and Miss Perry and all the other unsung staff members who help to contribute each edition.

If you are interested in helping to produce THE TORCH, please send an email to Miss Taylor at etaylor@wathacademy.com.

Photograph of the Month



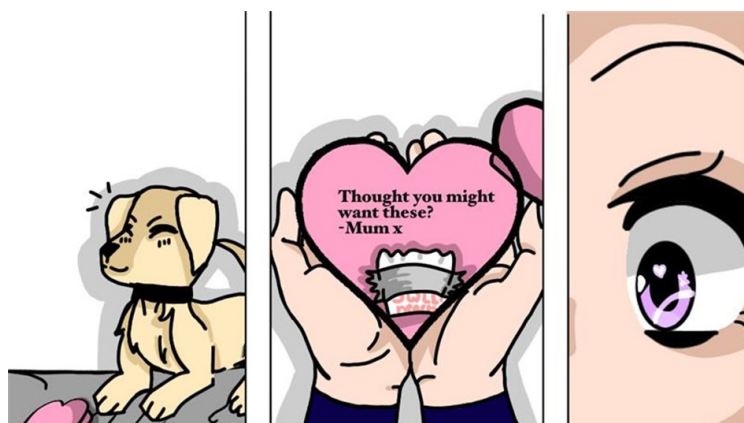
This month's very atmospheric photograph was snapped by Molly Knapp in Year 7, perfectly capturing the winter chill. If you would like to submit your own photograph to be printed, please email etaylor@wathacademy.com.

Below is a shot of the school taken by staff when the first round of heavy snow hit. Beautiful but frosty!



True Love from a Family Never Ends

Daisy Smith, Year 7



Non-Romantic Writings

The Tale of Schortipreh

By Igrayne Whitelam, Year 7

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

Maria was a young girl of four years, and she treasured the beloved doll that her father made her. She called her doll Schortipreh.

Maria had spent most of her life with her doll and never left him alone, but her family noticed strange goings on in the house. They found that Schortipreh had been given life from a spirit who lived in the house that tucked Maria in bed at night and was very kind but her parents didn't know about the ghost. Maria thought that she better not tell them because the ghost might get in trouble or her parents wouldn't believe her.

One month later, Maria died because she had once vowed to Schortipreh that when the time came, that she would lend Schortipreh her soul. Eventually, Schortipreh had become a living doll. Marias' family had rivals which Schortipreh began to collect and had kept them as prisoners in Marias' old bedroom keeping the door locked.

The night Schortipreh had locked up every single one of his enemies, it was the anniversary of Marias' death, he removed his enemies from Maria's bedroom and chained them to a bench not far off from her grave. He grabbed a handful of roses that grew beside her gravestone, ripping the petals off and throwing them into the air. All the petals stuck together and formed the body of Maria. Her tears cleaned the stains off his garments and once again she vowed to share her soul with him.

The next year, she and her family were at home, it was Maria's birthday and Schortipreh had came back to life, also, his tears had cleaned the sadness off Marias' soul, so from that day they both lived on.

Into the Flames – Frozen

Tackling Different Subjects with one Tale

Isobel Clowrey, Year 8

Elsa stood, frozen to the spot, as the blood-red flames licked at her feet. She could hear Anna screaming at her in the distance to move, to get out of the way, but she couldn't. It could've been shock, it could've been the fact that the trolls had prophesied this would happen, it could've been her anxiety. There were numerous reasons for why she was stuck, yet neither one could be pinpointed.

“Sister! Elsa! Listen to me, I'm coming!”

Sister? Who was that...?

Someone else shouted: “Fight it, Elsa, you need to be stronger than this!”

Another stranger. It wasn't worth it anyway; she knew how it would end.

“We need to put out the flames! Someone, help!”

The voices were growing more distant every second. Flames..? What flames? Wait, where was she? Who was she? Was she even a she?

Her head spun like a whirlwind around and around and by instinct she pulled her sleeves up and attacked her wrists with the long, delicate nails on her bony fingers, gouging deep into the pale flesh.

Elsa struggled against the dark and looming feelings of hopelessness – but of course sooner or later someone would get her out of this. For example, the pretty Northuldra girl – Honeymaren. That snapped her out of it.

Where is she? Is she ok? Thoughts rushed around her head.

Wait – flames! She was surrounded in flames! She spun around on her heels, seeing the flames seizing the bottom of her dress. Elsa gasped, and tore at the blazing fabric as it scorched her legs and her toes.

By impulse, ice leapt from her fingertips and covered the scene with a misty, delicate ice sheet, yet the flames just vaulted over and flickered closer to her.

Non-Romantic Writings

Vampire's Bane – Part One: City on The Brink

By Maxton Hutchinson, Year 9

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

Vampires! They are the plague of our land. They have been for centuries. They feed of the blood of our youth and corrupt our souls, bending it to the will of the Sanguine Lord, Father of Blood.

"These blood sucking monstrosities are devastating our population!" The king slammed his fist to the table and gritted his teeth.

The council of 7 glared at him, disapproving of his rage.

"And what do you propose the council do?" the council's headmistress began, not expecting a response. "They could destroy us with ease, we have no force powerful enough."

The king fell to his chair and sighed.

The town's people began to gossip and become enraged. Everyone knew that they needed to find some way to destroy the vampires. Who did not? They were scared for their friends. Their families! The night only brings terror as the vampires wake to feast on people oblivious to their presence.

As night fell, people hid from the beasts that woke to devour.

The night was brutal but soon the sun rose, giving relief to the town and its people as safety was restored. But there was no escape from the relapse. The army attempted to defend the town but the vampires' corrupting strength was too much for them. The next several days were just as blood-thirsty, ravaging, murderous. Their defences were obliterated, leaving the city weak and defenceless.

The Faceless

By Isobelle Fenton, Year 9

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

The Faceless Cast	They know only one thing;
Come marching	They must not slow
Forever onward	For if they stop to look around
No end to their mass	The Hunters will know
Searching for their Life	
	The Hunters will know
The brave Leader	
Heads the pack	Many fall victim to Death's mean gaze
No fault to its step	And leave a trail to the group's call
He hopes if he believes	Still, they must not slow
The others then can too	Because, as they do not know
	The Hunters will know

Sport and House Update

LOOKING AT THE HISTORY OF SPORTS

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

By Ruby Leach, Year 7

Nowadays, the most popular sport would be football (or soccer to some), with 3.5 billion fans. This hasn't always been the case, however; in fact, football as a game was only invented in the Victorian age.

Looking back into the history of sports, perhaps the most popular overtime would have been wrestling, as it is considered the oldest sport—so it's had many more years to entertain fans than other sports!

Of course, the popularity of sports has really expanded since the rise of the television and globalisation. In recent years, really large numbers of Americans began paying lots of money to watch people play and compete in athletic games.

Another reason why some sports can become more

popular is because they have been around a really long time. Interest often passes from one generation to another, with children being introduced at a young age to the teams their parents support.

Sometimes, sport could have been forgotten about and can grow in popularity as new fans rediscover them.

People are most likely to follow sports than to play them but it can be a really good way to exercise and socialise, so why not try, when the pandemic is over, joining a local team or getting involved in extra-curricular clubs at Wath?

There have been a lot of changes because of the pandemic, such as no fans in stadiums, but that won't really matter in the long run, because it will still be popular when we do eventually leave lockdown.

