



THE

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Wath Student Newspaper

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Meliora Spectare



GOODBYE, SCHOOL LEAVERS

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By Abigail Germany, Year 9

This term has certainly been one full of contentment, due to the gradual lifting of restrictions. However, as we near the Spring Bank Holiday, a wave of sorrow sweeps over the school, and across institutions all over the UK, as Y11s and Y13s begin to leave their secondary and advanced level education for a well-deserved break before they receive their grades (10th August for A Level; 12th August for GCSE).

It has been far from easy for this year's leavers: exams have been cancelled, replaced with grades from mock exams and in class assessments. A vast chunk of valuable Y10 and Y12 learning time was also taken away from them, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. In addition, potential learning experiences (such as school trips) have been cancelled, social clubs that would have helped to relieve the heavy burden of stress upon their shoulders have been stopped for safety reasons and, only in this school year, nearly a whole term has been spent in lockdown!

Yet, although these challenges have been forced upon them, they have, without a doubt, prevailed in these most inequitable circumstances. Instead of official GCSE and A Level assessments, the students have undergone three rounds of exams: two in the classroom and one in the hall. Bear in mind, that this

has all been in the space of one term! The Y11s and Y13s have demonstrated unwavering resilience and determination in order to achieve the grades they deserve. As well as this, they have attended period four or additional revision sessions, when everyone else goes home, to make up for lost time, due to the lockdowns.

To celebrate the end of their long journey, and to make up for some lost school memories, students spent their final week involved in a series of fun activities, from guest speakers to the sponsored walk (brought forward in the year) to an unforgettable leavers' assembly. They can also look forward to proms later in the year.

The Year 11s and 13s will be sorely missed by the whole of Wath Academy; their years of memories created at the school will not leave with themselves but, instead, be told as stories of inspiration to future learners. Pupils and staff members alike will always remember the leavers of 2021.

"Parting is such sweet sorrow that I shall say goodnight till it be morrow."

– William Shakespeare

Message from the Principal

27 May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

This week marks the end of the fifth half term. It has been great to have a sustained period of time with students in the academy. We have enjoyed returning to our routines and seeing students learning in class day in, day out.

Year 11

This half term also marks the end of an era for our Y11 students who have now completed their final assessments. I have shared on every given opportunity how proud we are of their determination, hard work, commitment and effort. They have faced challenges different to any year before them and have responded with resilience and positivity. For Y11 students who will be leaving us to continue their education elsewhere, we wish them luck and we hope they can look back on their time with us with fondness and many happy memories. A large proportion of students in Y11 will enter our 6th form and we are confident that they will be very successful. We look forward to welcoming them back in September for a new chapter in their journey.

Year 13

Year 13 students have faced significant disruption in both of their KS5 years; however, having seen them in the academy and how they have conducted themselves, you would not have known. We are confident that the challenges they have faced will stand them in good stead for the future. We would like to wish them luck in their future endeavours and we hope to keep in touch to hear of their successes.

In the last week, we have attempted to provide students in Y11 and 13 with some of the memories which they have missed out on; this included the Sponsored Walk, Sports Day, a trip to Alton Towers and their leavers' assemblies. It has been great to see them engage with these activities and enjoy them. We now look forward to the Prom and Leavers' Ball in the coming weeks.

Once again, Y11 and 13, we are incredibly proud of you, we cannot wait to hear about the successes and experiences you will have over the coming years.



New Year 7

Our transition programme is now beginning to gain momentum in preparation to welcome our new year group. We will be visiting primary schools, welcoming students during their 3 transition days, holding a parents' presentation, as well as hosting a summer school and a final transition day at the end of the holidays before they officially begin in September. We are very excited about welcoming our biggest year group to the academy in recent years.

Year 10

Our Year 10 students will be starting their Y11 Achieve Programme after half term; this starts with students attending an extra lesson each day between 14:45-15:45. This was a very successful strategy used with the current Y11 and is something we look to continue moving forward. Additionally they have had a session with ex-Premier League referee, Matt Messias, who will be working with the year group on aspirations and mental toughness next year. Finally, half of the year group engaged with an Oracy Workshop which was

sponsored by the Speakers Trust and Royal Museums Greenwich; the workshop is designed to develop their public speaking and confidence. It was inspiring to see the students developing the confidence and ability to deliver a speech to their peers at the end of the day. The remaining half of the year group will complete the workshop after half term.

Sponsored Walk

This week our students took part in our sponsored walk. It was great to see the full academy walking the 6-mile route for a great cause. We are currently still receiving the donations but we hope to raise a significant amount of money for Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice. Next year, we hope for slightly better weather!

We hope that you have a great half term. Thank you once again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Ransome
Principal

Upcoming Key Dates

Please see below for key dates in the coming half term to add to your diary:

31/05/2021: End of Half Term 5

07/06/2021: Return for Half Term 6

14/06/2021: Beginning of the Y12 Trial Exams

21/06/2021: Beginning of the Y10 Trial Exams

25/06/2021: Staff Training Day (closed to students)

30/06/2021: Y6 Parents' Evening

05/07/2021: Y6 Transition Days begin (for 3 days until 07/07/2021)

14/07/2021: Sports Presentation Evening, which will take place between 6:00pm and 9:00pm

16/07/2021: Final day of Half Term 6

10/08/2021: A Level Results Day

12/08/2021: GCSE Results Day

Please check the Wath Academy website at www.wathacademy.com for the latest updates, or follow us on social media platforms to get the updates as they happen.

STEM Programme

By Lucianne McTaggart, Year 12



Recently, Year 12 Biology students interested in STEM have taken part in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programme run by HEPPSY+ (Hepp South Yorkshire Plus programme). In this, we had to write a university style essay about the nervous system and how it is damaged. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and I feel as though it has provided me with many skills needed for university: essay writing, time keeping and independent learning. My favourite part of the programme was the research section as it allowed me to develop my independence and provided me with an insight into what university style learning is like.

In the first session, we were introduced to our tutor who provided lessons in order to help aid our learning. We attended weekly tutoring sessions, where we learnt new content about the nervous system. At first, I found this quite challenging as it was university style content which I had not yet experienced in A Level Biology. Our final assignment was to write a 2,500-word essay which was challenging at first, but after receiving feedback from my tutor I was able to develop my essay further.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and would definitely recommend it to anyone thinking of a future in STEM. It provides a great insight into university style teaching, preparing you for life at university.

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Latest Updates from Wath Academy

Y10 Oracy Workshop

By Grace Clowrey, Year 10

On Thursday 20th May, the Year 10s got to experience a communication-based workshop held by visiting staff for the duration of the day. It was titled 'Picture Yourself' and was sponsored by the Speakers Trust and Royal Museums Greenwich.

The day was spent in the English classrooms, where students learned tips and helpful advice to improve their confidence in public speaking.

For example, including the 5 Ss in your speeches and presentations:

Stride (walking with energy and purpose)

Stand (Don't move around at first, allow the audience to focus on you)

Smile (It relaxes you and your audience, and engages people)

Speak (Be ready to start speaking!)

Stay (When you have finished, nod or smile and take your applause before you leave the stage)

Throughout the day, Year 10 students examined the famous portrait of Queen Elizabeth I 'The Armada Portrait', which was painted as a result of the war with the Spanish Armada at the time; they learned about the symbolism behind it and how this story links to life today. Students also wrote and performed their own speeches, as well as linking them back to the portrait.

In my opinion, it was a very enjoyable way to spend the day, as I learned lots of new ways to improve my public speaking, which will help lots in the future, for example in job interviews.

KS3 STEM Club – Science

This half-term in the science weeks of STEM club, students have witnessed the spectacle of elephant toothpaste and have learnt the science behind this student favourite practical. They also partook in a movie music extravaganza where students discovered the neurological science behind our favourite movie music

tunes. By undertaking their own research, they learnt why music has the ability to make us feel so many different emotions from pure happiness to terror. I am sure they will never listen to movie music the same again!

Top of the Bench – Chemistry National Final

Emily H (Y11), Jenny H (Y10), Mya M (Y9) and Antoni C (Y9) represented Wath Academy and schools in the Sheffield region in the national final of the Royal Society of Chemistry Top of the Bench competition in April. They answered a range of questions based on different areas of Chemistry and competed against the best schools in the country. The team were exceptional in their approach and clearly demonstrated our key drivers of 'the highest expectations' and 'never give up', despite the winners of the national competition being Harrow School. A huge well done to all four students.

Y9 Separate Science Rolls Royce Project

Separate Science students in Year 9 will be given the opportunity next half term to work with Rolls Royce on an engineering project looking at the future of aerospace. This will involve working directly with the Rolls Royce engineers who are based at the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre in Rotherham.

Apollo 11 Escape Room

Two groups from Y8 enjoyed an Apollo 11 escape room this half term with the STEM Academy North.



Finlay J from 8T5 reported that "The escape room was really clever, I liked how there was a story before to set the scene and to help you find the clues and that there was lots of information about space and NASA"

Latest Updates from Wath Academy

Science in Industry Event

As part of Science Week 2021, our Year 9 students were able to watch some guest talks by various scientists in a variety of industries. With a spotlight on a different area of science each day, our students watched an assortment of talks to showcase the vast spread of scientific knowledge within our lives. 9L4/Sc watched two guest talks - one on 'Working in the Modern Rail Industry' and the second being 'Working in the Modern Sustainable Construction' as part of the '1st-4th Industrial Revolution' spotlight event. 9T5/Sc also took part in a guest talk, watching 'Motor Racing – Behind the Wheel and under the Bonnet'. This talk was delivered by Ollie Jackson, BTCC Race winner and Chief Engineer. This was part of the same Industrial Revolution spotlight event. Here, students learnt about how scientists are involved even in the sport industry, highlighting again how science is involved in all aspects of our lives.

Y12 Biology in Action talk

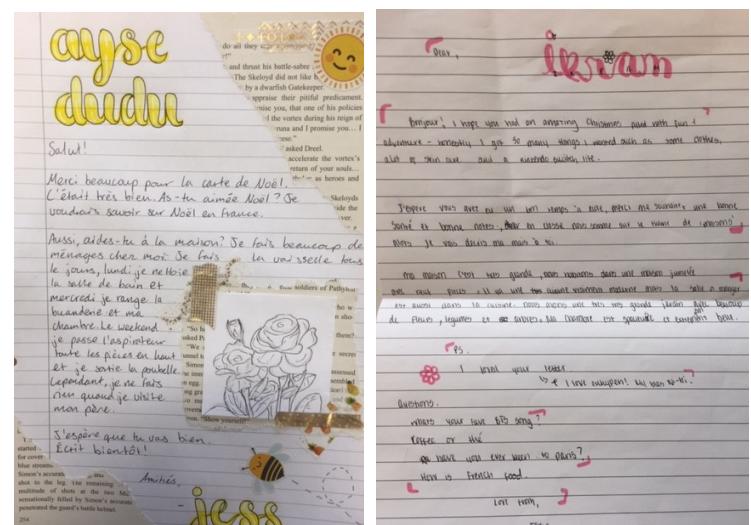
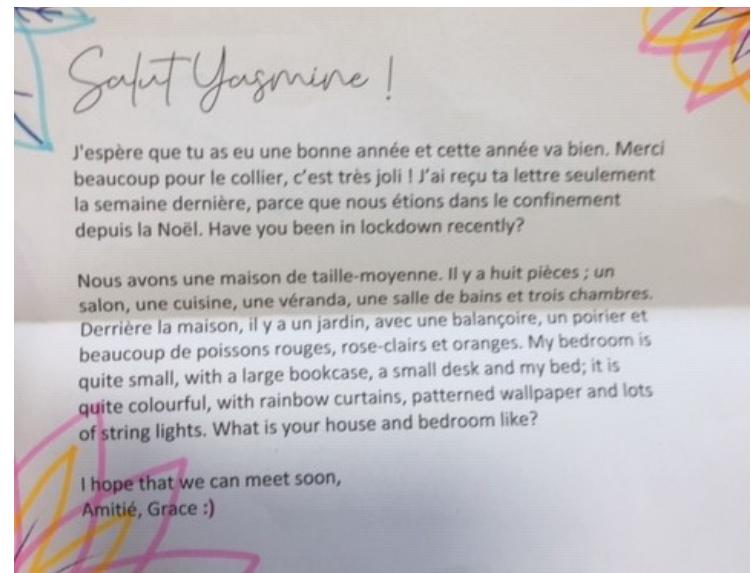
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The Y12 Biologists were, virtually, joined by some inspiring women in a variety of Biology-based STEM fields, provided by Biology in Action. Students participated throughout via an app, asking pertinent questions, and gaining insights into what it is like working in biomedicine, conservation biology and astrobiology, after a useful and refreshing session on exam success. Lots of our students are interested in going into the biomedicine fields, so gained useful information into the various paths into the field, as well as the various aspects of being a biomedical researcher. But not all Science happens in laboratories,

and the talk on conservation biology gave students a flavour of how science and technology can aid in helping conserve vulnerable species from cruel human exploitation. The last talk on astrobiology raised some intriguing questions and conversations around life beyond Earth, and the possibility of re-creating Martian conditions on Earth to test theories around life's limits. It was a great live event to participate in and left students with a greater awareness of where Biology can take them, with the right dedication and passion.

Y10 French Pen Pals

In March, Year 10 French students sent out letters to students in "troisième", the equivalent of Year 10, at a school called College Ennemond Richard in Saint-Chammond near Lyon. Students are currently waiting to hear back from their pen pals, who have only returned to school from lockdown recently. Below are a few examples of the letters students sent:



Spring Specials

A Snapshot of Spring

By Isobel Clowrey, Year 9

The pale blossoms drifted peacefully on the fresh breeze, which whispered and carried the leaves from location to location. The sky was a sapphire blue and the clouds non-existent. Birds chirruped anonymously in the trees. A peaceful day, to say the least.

Two children bickered obnoxiously in the background. The silence was broken. As they trampled over delicate early blooms and snapped finger-like branches, the birds departed, and it seemed as if nature was against them. One waved a large branch at nearby plants and vines tumbling down elegant trees.

But, as soon as they'd been, they were gone, off to destroy another setting deeper into the woods.

A Different Kind of Spring

By Alex Evans, Year 7

Did you know that the Slinky was made by accident? That's right! Richard James was working on a way to keep equipment steady and safe at sea, when he accidentally knocked some samples off of a shelf and watched as they fell down steps in a walking motion! Soon after this, his wife, Betty, named the spring: "the Slinky" after she had found the word in a dictionary; she later sold 400 units to a shop in Philadelphia; they were completely sold out in just 90 minutes! They later formed James Industries and sold the Slinky and Slinky-related products for the upcoming years. Even today, the Slinky is still a popular children's toy across the globe! This is just proof that failures aren't necessarily bad things, but just opportunities for the future.

Photograph of the Month

Voted most popular by members of the *Torch*, this month's photograph was taken by Em Rodgers in Year 9.



Feature: Medical Ethics

Lucianne McTaggart (Year 12) discusses medical ethics and why they are important.

Ethics play a vital role in medicine and are the underlying foundations and principles that are used every day in medical settings. These exist in 4 pillars: autonomy, justice, beneficence and non-maleficence. Medical ethics involve examining a specific problem and using values, logic and facts to decide what the best course of action would be.

The first pillar of medical ethics is autonomy, which requires the patient to have the autonomy of thought in order to make decisions regarding health care procedures. An informed decision is key in guaranteeing the patient has an 'active' role in their diagnosis and treatment.

The second pillar of medical ethics is justice, which states that the burdens and benefits of new treatments must be distributed equally amongst all groups in society. There are four main areas to consider when evaluating justice: fair distribution of scarce resources, competing needs, rights and obligations and potential conflicts with established legislation. This is visible in the NHS and the availability of free health care in the UK. However there are still many medical procedures like IVF that aren't classed as fair as these treatments are not equally available to all people due to the cost of them.

The third pillar of medical ethics is beneficence. This pillar is closely linked to morality and a medical professional's moral duty to state and promote the course of action that ensures good intent throughout. There are several factors that must be taken into consideration when deciding a patient's procedure: will it resolve the patient's problem, is this option compatible with the patient's circumstances, and does this option match the patient's expectations of treatment? This is important as it ensures professionals consider the individual circumstances of the patient and remember that what is good for one patient may not necessarily be great for another.

The fourth and final pillar of medical ethics is non-

maleficence, which requires that the procedure does not harm the patient or others in society. This ensures that the treatment being offered has more advantages than disadvantages and the harm caused to the patient is minimal. Non-maleficence is constant, unlike beneficence, in clinical practice: for example, when deciding what the best thing to do is if a patient suddenly collapsed on the floor or started to choke in order to reduce harm to the patient and prevent injury.

It is vital to recognise that medical ethics are a changing ideal and the ethics we consider now wouldn't have been acknowledged 30 years ago – and what we think is ethical now may change in the near future.

THE TORCH Journalists

This edition was produced by Alex Evans, Isobel Clowrey, Maxton Hutchinson, Em Rodgers, Mya Mcveigh-Judd, Isobelle Fenton, Abigail Germany, Aidan Jennings, Ngai Wa Yuen, Ellisia Bowman, Grace Clowrey, Liv Smith and Miss Taylor.

Thanks also to Lucianne McTaggart, Oliver Hanby, Asa Purves Miss Taylor, Mr Bishop and Miss Perry and all the other unsung staff members who help to contribute each edition.

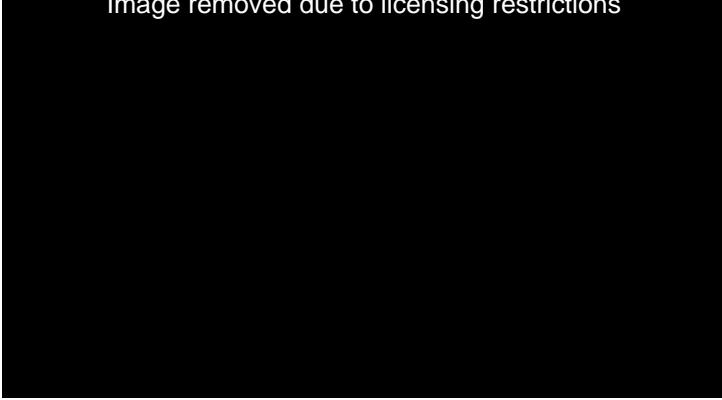
If you are interested in helping to produce THE TORCH, please email etaylor@wathacademy.com to let Miss Taylor know.

News, Politics and Opinion

“Total Rubbish”

By Isobel Clownrey, Year 9

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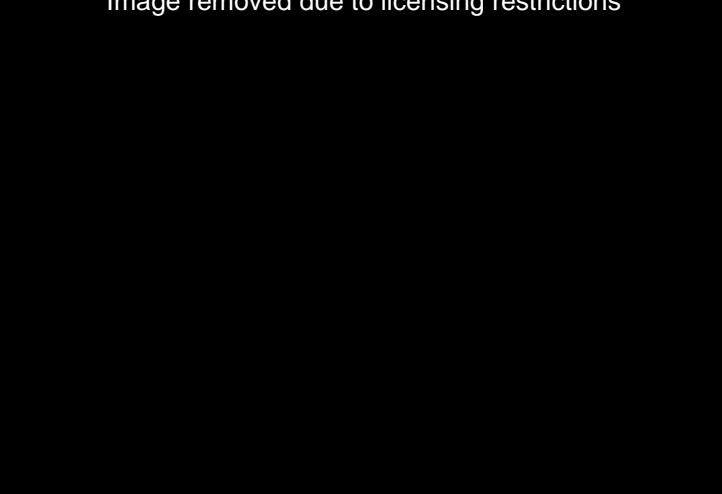


Boris Johnson’s alleged remarks on the COVID-19 situation, during a conversation on the topic of the third lockdown, have caused considerable unrest and criticism from both the opposition and the public.

During last autumn (2020), he had been reported (not yet to be based upon evidence) to have stated he would rather see the “bodies pile high” than take the country into a third lockdown, which has left many shocked and surprised.

Many other important figures, i.e. the Labour’s shadow Cabinet Office minister, (Ms Reeves), SNP (Alison Thewliss), co-founder of the group Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice (Matt Fowler) have also strongly criticized this remark and realised how problematic it could be.

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Other claims of wrongdoing from our Prime Minister include questions and allegations of his flat funding conundrum, where around £200,000 is stated to have

been spent on this refurbishment. Boris Johnson has described the row over the Downing Street refurb to be a “farrago of nonsense”, and despite the donation of £58,000 for the very same purpose, also stating there wasn’t “anything to see here”.

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Also, in the news concerning the PM, unofficial texts between him and the renowned Sir James Dyson have been leaked to the press. The topic is about how the billionaire’s employees would not have to pay extra tax when travelling to the UK in order to create ventilators for the public during the pandemic. Many have included messages such as pledges and promises, and Boris using his political advantage as the Prime Minister to achieve his goals. Many have been fired from positions in politics, due to unofficial meetings, agreements and conversations. The conversations include certain messages such as this conversation, “We are ready. But no-one seems to want us to proceed. Sadly, James.” Mr Johnson replied with, “I will fix it tomo! We need you. It looks fantastic”, showing the extent of the quick-flash decisions Boris is able to make, whether it be a national priority or not.

Fortunately for the PM, who is currently the second most popular figure in the UK, these various scandals appear to have no effect upon him. Despite the impulse power-based decisions and bad hairstyles, the recent local elections have merely increased the Conservative power base. However, doubts remain over where the PM is going with his attempts to ‘conquer’ the virus. Is Mr Johnson being too trigger-happy in his plans, and will his “increasing confidence” finally lead to his downfall?

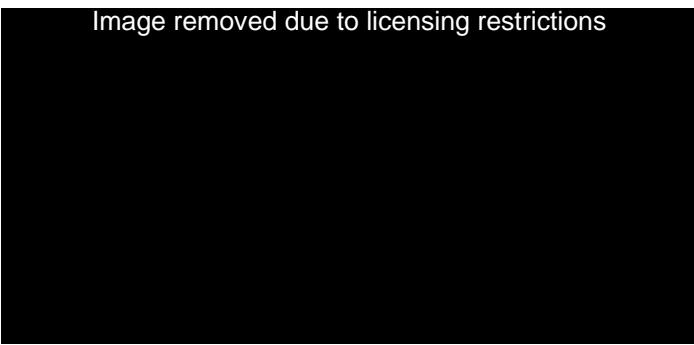
News, Politics and Opinion

Gene Therapy Breakthrough

By Mya McVeigh-Judd, Year 9

On March 25th, science has yet again made history by the very first known gene transfer from plant to insect. A species of whitefly, *Bemisia tabaci*, has stolen a part of plant DNA, into its own genome. The silverleaf whitefly, has been discovered with the specific gene: BtPmaT1, which is found in plants only, to prevent animals feeding on it. The portion of DNA taken allows the insect to be protected from leaf toxins, subsequently the whitefly is now able to get past the plant's defence mechanism and feed off the sugary sap and the leaf itself. Ultimately, these plants with toxins are completely harmless!

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However, this horizontal transfer has not been fully explained, the ability to transfer genes is still varied and unknown, due to scientists' expertise, they believe it is to do with an involvement with a virus- which can be transmitted from plant to insect and absorbed into the fly's genomes. This is achievable due to the fact a few viruses combine their own genome into the cells of its host.

This extraordinary finding comes with some complications, the gene functions by the whitefly interfering with the gene by using molecules of RNA. This disorders the functioning within the gene, which has left the whitefly liable to being harmed by tomato plants. Tomato plants and other similarly structured plants contain glycosides, which is now harmful to these silverleaf whiteflies, and when fed on, the fly afterwards is killed. Although this may be a negative for these pesky flies, this has now brought resolution in the science department, we could

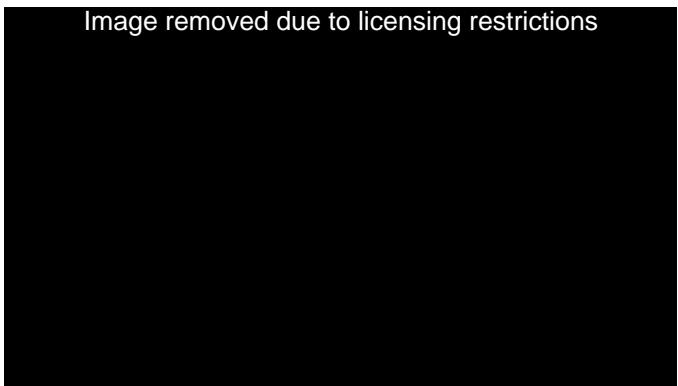
engineer plants to resist insects- such as the whitefly- from feeding on our crops.

Coronavirus Updates

By Lissy Bowman, Year 10

It has been more than a year since Britain had been hit by the pandemic, and most of our daily routines had to be stopped. COVID-19 devastated so many people last year and the world was hit hard by a sudden wave of a new virus. Everyone's daily routines had to change to stay indoors and everything shut down (minus all essential shops and hospitals) to keep everyone safe, and the usual norm has been put to a halt. Fortunately, the government are starting to relieve some restrictions and here is an update to them.

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We have now reached step 3 of the UK's roadmap out of restrictions. When meeting with someone outside, groups can be up to 30 and no more while inside, there can be only 2 households or 6 people. Not only have meet-ups updated but indoor entertainment spaces are also open to the public after being shut for some time. Entertainments like cinemas, indoor play areas and arcades still are having to practise COVID-safe precautions but can still be visited. A traffic light system has also been introduced for international travel: any red countries cannot be visited, amber countries can be visited but on return, the person must take 2 COVID tests and quarantine for 10 days, and for green countries, you must take a COVID test before entering.

Opinion: Wisest Disney Character

By Abigail Germany, Year 9

Friend Owl, Mufasa, Genie, Rafiki, Gramma Tala – the list of wise Disney characters is endless. Although it could be argued that Disney are only interested in throwing delicate princesses onto the back of any passing prince's steed, there is certainly a clear sense that they value intelligence, as shown through their creations.

If you were asked to describe Winnie the Pooh (honey addict and best friend of Christopher Robin) in three words, what would you say? Let me guess: greedy, comical and friendly. Yet, how many would say 'wise'? I would – I would indeed.

A little information...

The beloved character, Winnie the Pooh, was created by English author A.A. Milne and consists of four classics written by Milne himself: *Winnie-The-Pooh*, *The House at Pooh Corner*, *Now We Are Six* and *When We Were Very Young*. As well as this, there are two more modern sequels: *Return to the Hundred Acre Wood* by David Benedictus and *The Best Bear in All The World*, a book consisting of four tales, each by a different author.

The stories feature Pooh Bear, as he is commonly known, and his group of friends: Eeyore, a depressed donkey, Tigger, an energetic tiger, Kanga, a motherly kangaroo, Roo, Kanga's joey, Piglet, a timid... piglet, Christopher Robin, a young, though mature, boy, Rabbit, a born leader and control-freak, and Owl, the Strigiforme* elder.

As well as in literature, the stories of Winnie and his friends have been depicted in film and television. Film rights were purchased by Disney in 1961 and the huge company has renewed these every year – such a beloved tale was certain to be popular on a screen too! – and so it was; many featurettes, TV series and films were produced (*Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree*, *Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day*, *Winnie the Pooh and Tigger Too*, *Welcome to Pooh Corner* and *My Friends Tigger and Pooh*).

However, the most notable, and recent, of these is *Christopher Robin*: a live action adaptation released in

2018. The film features Ewan McGregor, Hayley Atwell and Jim Cummings, amongst others. The personality, and wiseness, of Pooh was expressed most perfectly here; his most famous sayings were included and Jim Cummings presented the bear accurately.

Quotes...

One of the clearest signs of Winnie the Pooh being the wisest Disney character is his quotes. The factor that makes these so clever is that they are built completely on the foundations of common sense. In today's society, particularly in schools, common sense is of no value; algebra and equations are thought to be of more importance and the assets required in being intelligent. However, so few of these high-achieving students understand the simplicity of sense. Yet, Pooh Bear is a great teacher of this. 'A bear of little brain'? – I think not.

~"People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every-day."

~"Doing nothing often leads to the very best of something."

~"What day is it?"

'It's today.'

'My favourite day.'"

~"I always get to where I'm going by walking away from where I've been."

Inspired, yet?

To conclude...

Winnie the Pooh has certainly faced much doubt during his long life, thriving in the hearts of children and adults alike, based on his personal claim that he is 'a bear of little brain' and Christopher naming him, often, 'silly old bear'. Yet, he is so much wiser than all of us – would you question if somebody told you nothing is impossible? Do you appreciate every day simply because you are alive?

In my heart, Pooh Bear will always be the wisest.

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*Scientific name for the owl species

Feature: Coronavirus Impact

By Liv Smith, Year 12

Warning: mentions of mental illness and difficulties

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every single one of us. Mental health as a society has been put under increased pressure. But how has this been seen in young people?

There are many factors to consider when talking about mental health. General experiences are online school and the academic pressure that comes with it, as well as the feeling of isolation and loneliness during this period. However, mental health is so individual to each and every person that it could be a range of personal, familial or economic issues with which young people have struggled. At the beginning of the pandemic, Young Minds (Coronavirus: Impact on Young People with Mental Health Needs, 2020) conducted a survey that showed 32% of young people felt that their mental health was worse than before the lockdown. Compare this to the summer of 2020, where 80% said they felt their mental health was worse. May has been Mental Health Awareness Month, yet so many people are still battling. Young people's struggle has gone undetected for too long and this needs to change.

Isolation has been something young people have had to deal with over the course of this ordeal. Time away from school and restrictions on socialising have left many stranded. We need social interaction to develop socioemotional skills, which allow people to establish meaningful relationships and emotional connections with their most significant adults (Feldman, 2012); it is essential to the development of young minds and has consequences on their adult lives if they are unable to form these attachments. It negatively affects mental health as positivity is increased with positive social interactions, linking with a stable and balanced wellbeing. Through the pandemic, this has been significantly limited. Children may have had parents, siblings or other members of their household, but interactions outside of this, especially with people their own age, have been severely lacking. Social isolation of this kind can trigger anxiety, obsessive or irrational thoughts and many other symptoms that can lead to deep mental health issues if not dealt with.

This leads me on to another point. Despite the obvious

decline in children and young people's mental health, little has been done about it. Preventative measures have been discarded by underfunded mental health services. Reactionary measures are in place, with the CAHMS crisis teams taking on the most severe cases, where the average wait time is 3 days (Leeds Community Healthcare). However, there are no obstacles to prevent young people reaching that situation in the first place. This inaccessibility is characterised by the waiting time of 37 days between referral and the second contact (NHS Digital). What makes this statistic even worse is the fact that it is pre-pandemic; furthermore, this is when young people finally have the courage to come forward, meaning many more are suffering in silence. How long must young people have to suffer with their mental health prior to receiving the help they so desperately need? Would it not be better to intervene before crisis or emergency point?

So, what changes can be made? In my view, preventative measures by CAHMS need to be taken as soon as a child or young person presents themselves as having problems. Mental health can no longer be dismissed as hormonal or "in the head". Moreover, mental health needs to be more accepted as something that can be spoken about. Just speaking about your worries can relieve a weight from your shoulders and decrease the chances of struggling alone until breaking point. Access points with friends, family or even mental health teams in schools or services like the NHS or Samaritans are there to help.

If you are struggling with mental health, please visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/nhs-voluntary-charity-services/nhs-services/children-young-people-mental-health-services-cypmhs-children-information/> for more information on how you can receive help.

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Feature: Our Place in the Universe

Isobelle Fenton (Year 9) examines why we are all incomprehensibly unextraordinary when we really think about it.

You may see yourself as an important figure, and, to some people, you are. But there are about 7.7 billion known people on the earth, each with their own problems, and each with their own perspective.

This means that most people on Earth will never have heard of you by the time you die. It's a dull thought, but if you change your perspective, it can be an advantage; if no one remembers you, no one will remember the mistakes you made; no one will mock you when you can't defend yourself; no one will say to people 'they were a bad person'.

But, the scale of unimportance continues far past the Earth, even past the galaxy we know as the Milky Way.

The Solar System

In our Sun's gravitational pull, there are 8 different, completely unique planets. I'm sure we were all taught the mnemonics to help us remember the names: 'My Very Entertaining Mother Just Served Us Nachos'. Some of you might remember that Pluto was a planet, but recently it was excluded, and became known as a dwarf planet, though its diameter is 2,376.6km (1,476.8 miles).

The well known planet, Mars – the place some people are looking to for a new home – doesn't sound that far away, but it is, on average, 225 million km from us. You have heard about the moon landings, and you know how important it was for us, but if, or when, we put people on Mars, they will be an incredible 986 times further from us than those astronauts were on the moon.

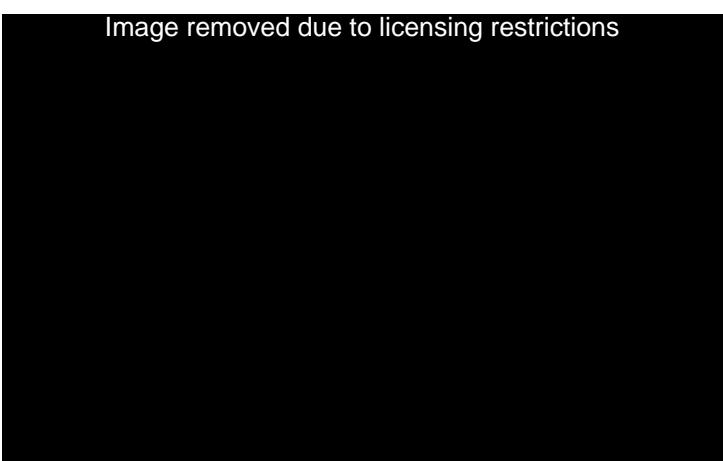
This means that it would take around 20 minutes to send a light signal from Earth to Mars, rendering instant communication, in case of emergency, impossible.

Voyager 1

We, as curious creatures, enjoy littering the vast

expanse of space with our manmade objects, such as the Voyager 1 Space Probe – the furthest object we have made and sent into space. It is 138 Astronomical Units from earth (Astronomical Unit being the distance between Earth and the Sun). Travelling at 17km/s (11 miles/s), it still won't break out of our solar system for 30,000 years. At some point on its journey away from us, though, it managed to take one of the most incredible images known to humans.

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This image is of Earth in the righthand 'stripe'.

It was best described by Carl Sagan, an American astronomer, who said: 'If you look at it, you see a dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it, everyone you've ever heard of, every human being who ever lived, lived out their lives. The aggregate of all our joys and sufferings. Thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines. Every hunter and every forager, every hero and coward. Every creator and destroyer of civilisations, every king, and every peasant. Every young couple in love and every hopeful child. Every mother and every father, every inventor and explorer, Every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every superstar. Every supreme leader, every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there. On a mote of dust, suspended in a sunbeam.'

Beyond The Solar System

The universe is measured by the different scales of groups of planets, stars, moons, and more. Just after the solar system in this scale, is the interstellar neighbourhood. From here, we use lightyears (the

Feature: Our Place in the Universe

distance light would travel in an Earth year, or 9.461 trillion km).

The closest star to us, apart from our sun, is called Proxima Centauri, which is 4.24 light years from us.

After this, there is the Milky Way, our galaxy we live in, over 100,000 light years wide. We have only sent or received radio signals about 200 light years into the galaxy from Earth, meaning that any life outside of this are completely unknown to us. There are over 100 billion stars and planets in our galaxy, almost all of which are completely invisible to the naked eye.

Next, we have the local group of galaxies, a total 54 galaxies spanning 10 million light years across. Then comes the Virgo Supercluster, containing at least 100 other groups of galaxies within it. However, this huge 110 million light year supercluster pales in comparison to the Laniakea Supercluster, a mind breaking 520 million lightyears wide.

Yet, this unbelievably colossal masterpiece is just a drop in the sea compared to the observable universe.

The Observable Universe

This impressive collection of stars, planets, moons, and more, is where we find everything we know about. It is home to 2 trillion galaxies, which equates to more stars than grains of sand on Earth. The distance from earth to the edge of the observable universe is 46.5 billion light years. This is all we currently can see, even with the most powerful telescope we can imagine. Even this makes one person seem like an atom in the entirety of Earth. And yet, no matter how small it makes you feel, there could still be far more beyond this.

What Could Be Out There?

In a simple answer, we don't know, and we likely never will. This is purely because the light from these places just hasn't had the time to travel at its trillions of kilometres a year, to reach us, even in the universe's almost 14 billion years' existence. And the

light from some places may never even reach us because some of these distant places are expanding outward from us even faster than the speed of light. This means that, even if humans never die, there will still be an unknown number of unseen places, which never will be seen by humans.

According to the Theory of Cosmic Inflation by Doctor Alan Guth, if we assume that cosmic inflation (the expansion of the universe) began at 10^{-37} of a second, and that the size of the universe before inflation began equals its age multiplied by the speed of light, this suggests that the whole universe is 150 sextillion times larger than what we can see now. This is 150, with 21 0s after it.

To help you imagine how incredibly infinite the universe really could be, think of it this way: the entire observable universe is a lightbulb, and the possible entire universe is larger than the previously mentioned Pluto. Imagine that lightbulb in the centre of Pluto, and that, inside this lightbulb we are completely oblivious to the existence of Pluto outside of us.

That is how unimaginably small you are.

You are an average person, on Earth, in a Solar System, in the Interstellar Neighbourhood, in the Milky Way, in the local group of galaxies, in the Virgo Supercluster, in the Laniakea Supercluster, in the Observable Universe, in a universe potentially 150 sextillion times larger than that, which is potentially filled with any number of habitable planets, and any number of species on those planets.

If you feel lucky to find a £10 note on the pavement, just remember how lucky you are to be reading and understanding these words, to live on a planet perfectly balanced in its position, in an unstoppable universe full of beautiful scenes. Think how lucky you are to be here and think how immensely minuscule you really are.

That is how you are special, and yet incomprehensively unextraordinary.



Review and Media



Harry Potter – Not So Magic

By Emily Rodgers, Year 9

Harry Potter. A universally loved book series, but one that has slightly fallen from public favour after controversy surrounding J.K Rowling. However, the books themselves, when explored do not seem like the picture-perfect children's books they are painted to be, or even something that should be given to children at all. Under the surface they portray and even promote some very serious and problematic things, many that were played off as fiction, despite their alarming similarities to real-world issues.

Racism

From the very start, these books show clear portrayals of racism, some being much clearer and more intentional than others. For example, one of the only black characters in the entire series is named 'Kingsley Shacklebolt', and one of the only Asian characters 'Cho Chang' two names that were picked by Rowling that show clear signs of what is just plain racism. Some points made in the book can be harder to find but are still important enough to the plot to have been written for a reason, not just accidentally, like the hatred shown to Hagrid, who is a half giant, or any other example of other magical creatures, namely House Elves, who are equal in intelligence to humans, but are kept as literal slaves by rich families and Hogwarts themselves.

Homophobia

Though it may seem a rather small example, homophobia is still hugely present in the novels, mainly focusing on the character of Remus Lupin and werewolves in general. Werewolves, when first introduced are described as violent and dangerous, who often prey on children and the vulnerable, but when the meaning is unpacked further is clearly a metaphor for AIDS, being described as a 'disease of the blood'. Remus Lupin is refused jobs at many places prior to securing a place at Hogwarts and struggles to keep his job after the other staff members find out about him being a werewolf, they fear for the students, believing they will attack them and 'turn them'. When these descriptions are compared against the fact that it is a metaphor for AIDS, and gay men in general, it becomes

clear about the true intentions of writing these characters in this way.

Ableism

Again, this is one of the most present issues in the novels, which went basically unmentioned in the films, with several characters referred to as Squibs (people who have magic heritage but no magical talent) being entirely erased when adapted for the screen. To begin with, Squibs are examples of what a disabled person would be in magical society, they are entirely banned from Hogwarts and are not allowed to possess any magical items, even though 90% of all subjects taught require little to no magic. Apparition is the only subject taught that takes magical ability, core subjects like Charms, Transfiguration, Potions and Defence Against the Dark Arts are a mix of theory and actual magic. Every single other subject requires no magic, and could be completed by anyone, so why are a specific group of people who would need extra educational support excluded from society, seen as lesser and not allowed to access basic education and public services.

Sexism

Despite the book being written by a supposed 'feminist', it is an extremely misogynistic book series that promotes and portrays many heavily damaging stereotypes and typical 'roles' for women. One example of this is Rowling's fundamental ideas of what qualifies a 'good woman' and what qualifies a 'bad woman' and how she uses gender roles to decide which one of these categories her female characters fall into. If you look close at a few characters, her typically 'good' women, those that are seen fighting for the 'right' things and the 'right' people are those such as Molly Weasley or Lilly Potter, both are married, unemployed and have children. Nymphadora Tonks is a good example of how a person can change between these categories, prior to her marriage to Lupin and her leaving her job to have a child, she is written as a rowdy, 'bad' women or those seen to be fighting for the 'wrong reasons' are those such as Bellatrix Lestrange, who is unmarried and has no children or Narcissa who is only redeemed in the plot after she was willing to sacrifice her life to save her son. Any other woman, those that are seen as a neutral party or only mentioned in passing, could be seen as 'irritating women', these characters tend to have



Review and Media



strong opinions are employed in positions of power, such as Rita Skeeter, the owner of a magazine, Aunt Petunia, who is not afraid to stand up for her family, even from a young age or Bertha Jorkins, who works at the Ministry of Magic who is described as 'gossipy and absent-minded'. There are no male equivalents to any of these character types, these traits are only found in women. Rape Culture is something that is seen throughout the novels if not promoted, associated with a group of women called Veela, who are said to be so beautiful, men are 'unable to control themselves around them' something that is written in detail when it comes to the Quidditch World Cup, men seen to be throwing themselves off balconies just to get closer to them. Fleur, a character introduced later, is half Veela and is subject to many unnecessary comments from various members of the Weasley family, up to, and including her wedding day.

Theatre Ink's *Blood Brothers*

By Oliver Hanby, Year 9

Theatre Ink's 2014 production of Willy Russell's *Blood Brothers* is surprisingly entertaining. As somebody who strongly dislikes musicals, this play was fun and imaginative. The cast was exceptional, especially the lead – Mrs Johnstone. While her Liverpudlian accent sounded more Irish, her acting is phenomenal. Right from the opening we can clearly see her working-class struggle, and from there onward, her performance is the most believable in the entire play. The staging is excellent as one scene flows flawlessly into another. The music and singing is okay for what it is, but I do, however, believe that people who enjoy musicals will thoroughly enjoy this. The whole play is very accurate with the script and sounds word for word.

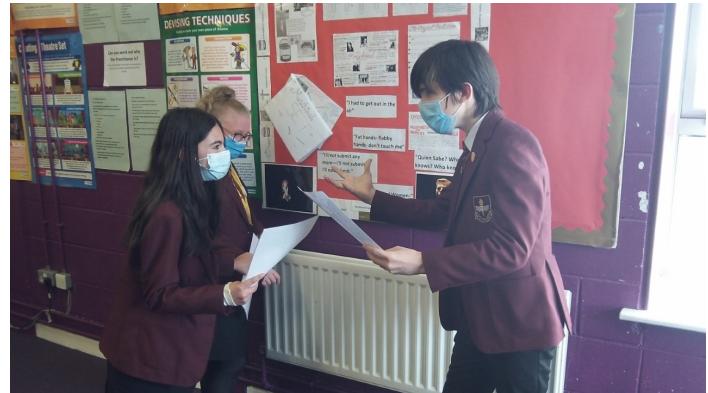
The Halcyon Review

By Lissy Bowman, Year 10

A great period drama, *The Halcyon* is set in London during the 1940s. The series is set around a posh, 5 star hotel in the Second World War and portrays London life through politics, family and work across the different social classes.

The series is hooking and full of drama to keep you on the edge of your seat. *The Halcyon* can be compared to *Downtown Abbey* but just a little more intriguing. With

Club Spotlight: Drama Club



This term, students have been attending Drama club after school.

During the lockdown, these sessions had to take place online but now that we are back in school the sessions take place in G1 and F2 on Mondays.

In these sessions, we have played drama games to help build our team building skills. We have also worked on a range of scripts and students have had the opportunity to perform to each other.

We are hoping to film and share some of these performances over the coming weeks so keep an eye out for them. If you would like to join Drama club everyone is welcome:

Every Monday Week A

Y7 in G1, 2.45–3.45 pm

Y9 in F2, 2.45–3.45 pm

Every Monday Week B

Y8 in G1, 2.45–3.45 pm

Y10 in F2, 2.45–3.45 p,

great reviews, *The Halcyon* is a must watch period drama and should be on your 'to-watch' list.

The show contains famous actors ranging from Edward Bluemel to Matt Ryan, creating a unique, dramatic scene.

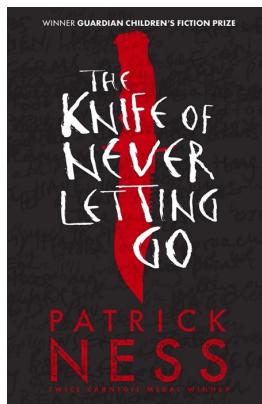


The Book Review



The Knife of Never Letting Go

Reviewed by Mya McVeigh-Judd, Year 9



Thoughts are scattered across a male-dominated town like lost puppies. Prentisstown isn't like any other town: it has no secrets amongst all. There is no privacy. These thoughts are called "The Noise". Everyone's inner thoughts are shared, which isn't always the greatest thing when

you have a manipulative, power-thirsty mayor willing to sacrifice anything for the reign of Prentisstown.

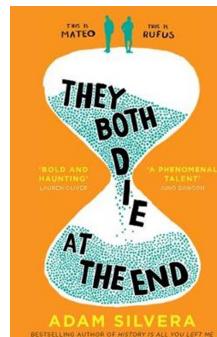
The extinction of women-kind has left those of Prentisstown occupied with labour and drunk Friday evenings. There are no joyous children running around the cobbled streets, only wheelbarrows of silage and reckless council members. The only child left is Todd, who is only weeks away from his birthday that would officially denote him as a "man".

When the first female seen alive in years appears in front of the gates of Prentisstown, allegedly originating from the old world, Todd is bewildered by the sighting of the girl, who has no Noise. Little does he know he will soon be struggling for survival with her outside the barriers of this misshapen town. Todd is surrounded and engulfed by lies, as well as forced on the run from Mayor Prentiss and his sycophantic followers. The boy has to leave home behind, including his family. The odds are against Todd, and a mute girl is the only thing keeping him alive.

This dystopian trilogy is full of action, teen-romance and symbolises innocence throughout all three novels - representing the quick sudden end to childhood and welcoming adulthood. I thoroughly enjoyed the first book and was hooked to read the sequels - it is a creative fiction full of suspense! If you prefer to be engaged by pictures, this best-selling novel has also recently been recreated into a film *Chaos Walking*, starring Tom Holland and Daisy Ridley.

They Both Die at the End

Reviewed by Grace Clowney, Year 10



If you were going to die today, would you want to know?

This is the premise of this YA novel by Adam Silvera. The world is mostly the same as ours, except for one huge advancement: a company – 'Death-Cast' – calls everyone on their last day, so they can prepare to live their final hours.

This book centres around two boys, Mateo and Rufus, who are both called at just after midnight on September 5th, and informed that they have less than 24 hours left to live.

They are total strangers, from completely different walks of life; however, they are both hoping to make a new friend on their last day. Using a popular app, 'Last Friend', they decide to meet up – for one final adventure.

This amazing book is an emotional read – even the title doesn't prepare you for its end. It is a heart-warming, heart-breaking journey, with strong friendships and romance – and a bit of sci-fi.

Later

Reviewed by Asa Purves, Year 11

Later, written by Stephen King, is a crime novel perfect for anyone who takes an interest in the genre, especially if they are already a fan of Stephen King.

The novel's main character is a young boy, Jamie, who has an unusual power: seeing dead people. Unfortunately, this power gets him into a life-threatening situation as his mother's ex-friend turns sour. After going through hell and back, Jamie eventually gets home safely, but learns something life-changing about his mother.

Overall, this is a fantastic book with its unexpected plot twists and thrilling story.

Feature: Star Signs

Abigail Germany and Mya McVeigh-Judd (Year 9)
look into the history behind astrology...

Where did Zodiac Signs originate from?

Zodiac signs are based upon your birth date- they vary depending on your month and day, these are known as your “rising sign”, which is meant to represent your ultimate characteristics or more commonly your dominant characteristics and appearance to others. However, in further decades, sun and moon signs arise - the moon represents who you are on the inside, whereas the sun depicts your identity and personality.

The variety of diverse zodiac signs’ origin is Babylonian astronomy, during the first half of the first millennium BC. Supposedly, the 12 zodiac signs were created by the Babylonians in 1894 BC, who lived in Babylon, one of the most memorial ancient Mesopotamian cities, which is located around the country Iraq today.

The sixth king of the Babylonian Dynasty, Hammurabi, created the first Hammurabi code of laws- a collection of 282 rules. Hammurabi was known to be the first of “law making” and creating a system for justice, crime and punishment.

As time progressed, Babylonian were known to map star constellations and fixed stars- the distinctive constellations were given a name (one of the 12 zodiac signs), holding some sort of significance.

They followed a 12-month calendar, that is used today, and assigned each month a zodiac sign- within a year the sun appears to be in front or in one of the constellations for the month, e.g., in one month it would be in Aries the next Taurus. People today still believe in zodiac signs and how they can relate to own our personality traits and appearances, even though the Babylonians lived for thousands of years, over 4,000 roughly.

Why do people believe in zodiac signs still?

There are multiple reasons why people in this generation still believe in zodiac signs. A passion for superstition and astrology may be one of them. One reason that supports this is simply because all humans search for answer to human life and seek an answer to explain personality, characteristics and reactions to

certain events; a narrative to explain their day-to-day life, past, present and future. Furthermore, having similarity to a religion, it helps support those who need it, maybe if they are struggling, they turn to a belief to feel better about themselves. Moreover, mental illnesses such as anxiety disorders and people who do not respond well to stress may look at zodiac astrology for guidance, perhaps, yet again just for comfort. Lastly, the historic element to zodiac signs and may intrigue those who like to prove an existence or truth to these horoscopes. On the other hand, some people do not agree with the existence of zodiac signs, and are even sinful to some religions, for example: Islamic culture disagrees with celestial beings (including tarot readings, horoscopes and anything else known to “predict future”) for the reason that only God has the power do such a thing.

Our predictions for June

Note: we are not astrologers or persons of divination so please do not sue if this is utterly wrong.

Aries (Mar 21–Apr 19) need to let others take the lead. **Taurus** (Apr 20–May 20) will get extreme joy from May as it is their birth month and will feel close to Venus and the Earth. **Gemini** (May 21–Jun 22) will have to overcome the speculations that they are multi-faceted but will enjoy the end of the month. **Cancer** (Jun 22–Jul 22) will learn that friends do not come easily and learn who the people who really care are. **Leo** (Jul 23–Aug 22) will learn that they are capable of much more than they imagined. **Virgo** (Aug 23–Sep 22) will realise that success can be met by simply being themselves. **Libra** (Sep 23–Oct 23) will find the time for self-love when they are let down by others. **Scorpio** (Oct 24–Nov 21) will experience success and regain their motivation. **Sagittarius** (Nov 22–Dec 21) will begin to rely on others. **Capricorn** (Dec 22–Jan 19) will find life easier, as they age, throughout June. **Aquarius** (Jan 20–Feb 18) will discover how much they need their friends. **Pisces** (Feb 19–Mar 20) will enhance their creativity more than they have ever done before.

PS: we apologise in advance if we have predicted certain death for your zodiac!

Fictional Features

The following is a short story called ‘Tobias and Adelheid’ by Abigail Germany in Year 9, which is inspired by *Heidi*, a novel by Johanna Spyri.

By Abigail Germany, Year 9

“Tobias, today you must complete some repairs independently if you are to become a fully fledged carpenter,” the Alm Uncle began. “You know where the Andros family live, I suppose?” he added with a grin.

“Father, I have not an idea of what you are implying but yes, I know very well where the Andros family reside,” Tobias answered with a roll of his eyes, as blue as the clear sky above them.

The Alm Uncle smirked; everyone in the village had noticed his son’s admiration for one girl in the village – Adelheid Andros, a delicate girl with golden hair and eyes just as blue as Tobias’. Yet, it was well known that she was weak and, apparently, a sleepwalker. Perhaps she didn’t cry at her christening; a definite sign of bad luck.

“Well,” Tobias said whilst collecting his tools. “I shall be off now. Like you said, if I want to qualify, I must do a good job! I hear Herr Andros has high expectations.”

More likely that you want to impress the young Fräulein, the father thought as he watched his son leave.

Tobias ventured through the peasant village until he found the Andros’ cottage, a crumbling building so disfigured it appeared that it may fall any minute, crushing the impoverished family inside of it.

Tobias knocked on the rotten wooden door, to which a broad shouldered man answered. His piercing eyes seemed to go straight through the trainee carpenter and a cold shiver ran down his spine.

“I’m here to complete your repairs,” Tobias stated, gesturing at the toolbox in his hand.

Herr Andros grunted and pointed down the hallway where a completely destructed wall stood. The stones lay all over the room and broken glass shards made the situation even more hazardous!

Just then, Adelheid waltzed into the room, a basket of strawberries in her dainty hand. Tobias spun around

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and started his work, timidly, whilst she talked to her father.

“How beautiful it is on the Alm, Father!” she cried. “I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw how ripe the strawberries were – and to say the snow only melted away last week!”

Just then, she became aware of the stranger in the room. *Is this my stalker? The carpenter the village had been gossiping about?* she thought to herself.

“Father, may I have a moment alone with this man?” she asked sweetly, a tone of persuasion in her voice.

Herr Andros nodded and stomped out.

After a few seconds, Adelheid mumbled, “Are you going to look at me?”

Peering over his shoulder, Tobias answered, “I’m looking.”

Adelheid suddenly cried out, almost as if she was in pain, “Ugh! Men: I just don’t understand you at all!” she exclaimed, waving her arms, “I know that you must be my secret admirer because you are the only carpenter in the village apart from your father and he is much too old! If you like me so, why can’t you bear to look at me?”

Tobias turned around properly then and looked into her eyes, deep enough to drown in. “What if I am your admirer? What difference does it make? I’ve heard the village gossip – you will certainly undergo an arranged marriage with a father like yours.”

Adelheid gasped and retorted, “Even if you were the last man on Earth, I would never marry you!”—she

Fictional Features

waved her hands yet again—"My father is happy with me and only me anyway. He wants to keep his little girl for as long as he can so he would never sell me to some rich man!"

Tobias smirked. She was much more of a firecracker than he expected; he was wrong to judge her by her weak stature. "Let me change your mind, then," he said with a shrug.

A smile crept across Adelheid's face. She nodded, her blonde locks bouncing, and then she flounced out of the room.

Little did they know that their meeting would lead to marriage, and then a curly-haired child named Heidi, after her mother, with blue eyes just as beautiful as her parents'. Little did they know that a loose beam would fall on the father and husband, killing him under its weight and, little did they know that this would lead to the death of the mother and wife, already weak from illness but the true cause utter heartbreak. Little did they know that their child would become an orphan, left in the care of her aunt and grandmother and, little did they know that she would be abandoned, yet again, and sent to live with her grandfather, the Alm Uncle, a secluded, grumpy old man, scarred by the death of his poor, poor son.

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Note:

This story contains characters from the real *Heidi* collection, excepting Adelheid's father who was never mentioned. This work of fiction takes place before the stories themselves.

A Dangerous Façade

A short story by Isobelle Fenton, Y9

In the sea of bobbing heads and meaningless conversations, there is still a person behind each face. Every new 'look', every individual personality, all silenced by the hand that controls us all.

Each time someone steps out of place, they aren't heard of for months, until, eventually, either we forget them, or they return completely different. Completely perfect.

Those who are forgotten about, well, no one knows. No one ever asks questions for the fear that they will disappear too.

No one ever spoke about the controllers - we only know not to - because rumours are that if you talk about them, you might not be able to talk about anything.

Ever.

The thing is, you never know what the worst punishment could be, because people don't tell you, or they don't come back. You can only hope that they aren't dead. You can only wish that they have found a better place than this.

I used to enjoy writing about my days, but recently I've noticed them becoming more sombre each passage. I don't know what's happening to the world to warrant this; I haven't done anything wrong. Then again, as far as I can tell, those who were changed did nothing wrong either.

There are no reasons to punish people for having opinions, for being different. However, clearly the controllers think otherwise, or they wouldn't be doing this.

I'm glad that I write this, because the only chance I get is between doses of 'medicine' - at night. People call it 'forget me medicine', but not openly. The 'unchanged' can only guess how they administer it. I'm willing to lose my sleep, though; I'm scared what they do to us will give me nightmares forever.

But my message to you reading this is...

Run, before they get to you too.

Fictional Features

The following is a short story called ‘Confined’ by Maxton Hutchinson, Year 9.

The corridors became more crowded by the second: millions, then billions of people appeared before my eyes. They surrounded me; the air was heavy. I could not get any air... It was like a ten-tonne weight was on my chest. I rubbed my hands on my face, my palms rough and wet with sweat. Everywhere I looked there was nothing but a sea of people scuttling around me, like I had blinkers on.

There was a noise... but too faint for me to make it out. It came again, this time clearer and louder: a low toned chime. Within a snap of a finger, everyone vanished...

Darkness filled the void.

In the distance, a figure emerged. As it drew nearer, my breath was fast and heavy. Closer, closer. The figure was tall and skinny... too skinny. It looks like a man. It stood before me, filling the dark void, and whatever it was... it was not human.

It was more like a void of moisture... Its skin was tightly wrapped around its bones. No muscle or fat, just skin constricting around bone, like a boa constrictor crushing its prey, ready for the feast of a lifetime. Its head jerked with a creak and a crack, as it clicked round to face me.

My breathing halted, my heart froze, and I was cold. Something sharp penetrated through my heart. It looked me dead in the eye; its deep coal black eyes dove into my soul draining me of my very essence. I felt weak and most of all... alone. Helpless, my vision blurry, I wondered if I was about to die. My stomach twisted in knots and I felt sick. I fell... slowly... My knees eventually hit the floor; my hand slowly followed. Gasping for air... There was no air... It felt like I was dying.

The sun peeked through a tiny hole in my curtains. A dream, just a dream. I crawled from my bed cautiously making my way to my wardrobe; I grabbed my blue skinny jeans and baggy t-shirt and slid them on, before flipping my hair forward then back, into a messy bun.

I reached up to grab a cup and add 1 teaspoon of ‘Dark Indulgence’, ground coffee with a splash of milk. The kettle pinged, signalling that the water was ready.

Right when I was pouring the boiling water, I felt a... a hand... on my shoulder. It felt cold and emotionless. It

suddenly gripped tighter, almost dislocating my shoulder. I tried my best to keep calm. Continuing to make my coffee, I pretended it was not there, but the hand... it moved, around my neck. Suffocating me. I placed the kettle on the worksurface. I was running out of air. Fast. I could not ignore it any longer! I grabbed individual fingers and tried to pry its hand from my neck: it was no use. I turned my head in an attempted to face whoever it was... no, whatever it was.

Seconds away from passing out, I heard a shout from downstairs. The thing suddenly vanished. I looked in the mirror, expecting marking around my neck. I moved my hand away slowly, still shaken from the events. There was nothing. Not a single mark?

Confused, I listen for another shout. It was my dad. Ugh! He sounded drunk as ever, so I paid no attention to it.

Listening to ‘One Too Many’ by Keith Urban and Pink, I finished my makeup. I whispered to myself a quote by Gwyneth Paltrow, “Beauty, to me, is about being comfortable in your own skin. That, or a kick-ass red lipstick.” I nodded: kick-ass red lipstick did me fine!

Coincidentally, as soon as I took my headphones off, my dad was shouting, “Where’s my drink?” He kept shouting and shouting, getting louder each time. He meant, ‘Bring me a 6 pack of beer!’ I took a quick sip of my coffee and placed my headphones on, resuming ‘One Too Many’.

I opened my bedroom door to be hit with the same pungent smell. BEER. I covered my nose with the neck of my t-shirt and continued downstairs. I took two steps. “Do you have it?” I used to bring him what he wanted when he wanted but no longer. I wasn’t his personal bartender!

Still covering my nose, I grabbed my cropped leather jacket and my boots and left. Being at home was not doing me any favours. I went to the forest because it was peaceful and calm. I could gather my thoughts easily as birds sang in the trees above. It was a safe haven to me, no drunk dads! Almost a second home to me.

I came here often to gather my thoughts and escape. That creature seemed to never show up in this forest.

Escape, safe haven, some may say I was weak, but I think I’m just... as Gwyneth Paltrow said... “kick-ass”!

Feature: Urban Legends

Every edition, Isobelle Fenton (Year 9) unpicks the story behind a common urban legend. This month is the turn of Smile.JPG.

The legend of Smile Dog is best known from the story of a woman called Mary, who saw the image in 1992 while working as a software developer. She was one of the 400 people who saw it, but she was the only one who spoke about it for a while. She had to quit her job and was mainly trapped inside her house.

An inexperienced writer searching for inspiration first heard about the legend on forums in 2005. A lot of people knew it existed, and Mary was the most mentioned, since the other people were anonymous.

Although the image cannot be found anywhere, there are a lot of fake versions around.

When you saw the original, you suffered from an immediate epileptic attack, and severe anxiety. The picture was said to be of a husky-looking dog, with shining eyes, and two rows of perfect white straight teeth, sat in a room lit only by the flash of the camera. The only feature other than a dark window is a bloodied human hand, seemingly reaching upwards for help.

It is said that the dog comes to the dreams of the victims, until the day they die, and tells them to spread the picture and their suffering will end. Mary said that in her dreams, she could not move, or talk, only look straight forward at the dog and the hand,

Image removed due to licensing restrictions

when he tells her to share the picture. Then soon after she saw the image, she received a floppy disc, with no label. She hid it for 15 years and didn't show anyone.

She died soon after she sent the email, and the husband said that he burned the floppy disc. When it was burning, he said it sounded like dogs growling.

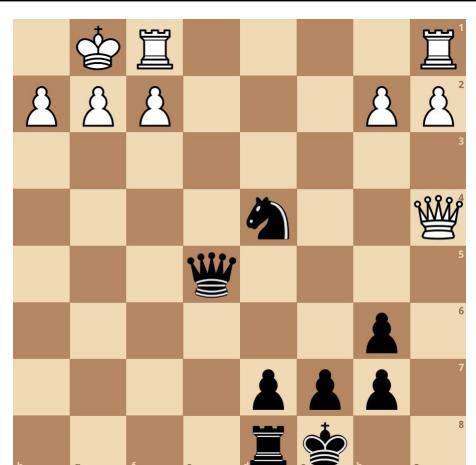
The man was sent another email soon after, with an image attached named 'Smile.JPG'. He considered what would happen if he made a video, showing the image as evidence. He considered: what would happen if he did that, then people could choose whether to watch it or not, but was he willing to do that to so many people just to save himself from the torture?

Would you be willing? Would you sacrifice everyone who watched it, only to live without the consequences?

Chess Solution

By Elliott Harris, Year 12

You may remember from last time that black plays next and must make one move to win. The solution is black knight to e2 check (forcing white king to h1). This then allows the black queen to take h2 check (forcing white king to h2), black rook h8 check (forcing white queen h4), and finally black rook takes h4 for checkmate.



Sport and House Update

MUD FLIES: SPONSORED WALK 2021



Although May is on track to be the wettest on record here in the UK, a little bad weather couldn't dampen the spirits of Wath students who took part in the annual sponsored walk to Hoober Stand in Wentworth, a 6 mile round trip taking around two hours. Students, encouraged to gather sponsorship money from friends and family, voted to raise money to support Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice.

The event took place on Wednesday 26th May, a few months earlier than the customary July affair in order to allow Year 11—who missed their Year 10 walk due to the national lockdown and school closure in 2020—to take part one last time, a fun way to end their Wath journey after the difficult assessment period

over the last term.

Conditions were far from perfect with rain steadily worsening in the run up to the event in the early afternoon. Students were released from Period 2 at staggered intervals to minimise bubble contact, and by the time Years 9 and 10 were making their way across the first field, the path was slick with mud, resulting in more than one sludgy bath. However, students showed their 'never give up' mindset and triumphed over all adversity, even when beset by flies.

A big thanks to organiser Mr Lines, the police and staff for their support, walking or marshalling, and of course to students for their energy and enthusiasm.

