



5th February 2021

#REMOTELearning

Marking Children's Mental Health Week



STAY SAFE, STAY
POSITIVE
WE'RE IN THIS
TOGETHER

At Taunton School, mental health is not an issue we shy away from.

We seek to be a school where any student who is struggling with their mental health can feel comfortable accessing support and we equip our staff with the tools to offer it. Even whilst our community is apart, this support remains firmly in place for our students.

All week we have been taking part in Children's Mental Health Week. On social media we have been sharing words from our students and staff on how we can all take care of our mental health, especially as

we navigate through an uncertain time.

Exercise, cooking and staying in touch with friends are just some of the brilliant recommendations.

Take a look at our Facebook page to watch the full videos:

[*TSI Prefects Relaxation Techniques*](#)

[*Jasper, Year 12*](#)

[*Woody, Year 12*](#)

[*Ed Burnett's message on Time To Talk day*](#)

[*Evans House*](#)

[*Jenkins House*](#)

More Inside

Weekly Art Challenge

Meet the Head of Biology

The Everyday Philosopher

Out and About for Teenage Cancer Trust

And plenty more....

Next Senior Courier: 26th February 2021

Wills East enjoy 'virtual' social

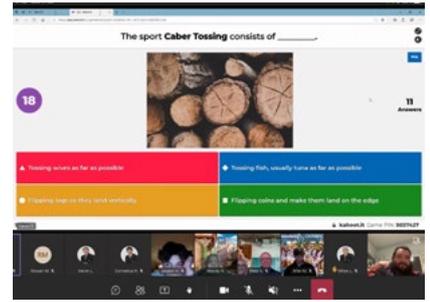


On Wednesday 3rd February the Wills East lads met online for a House social to break the week up.

Sadly some couldn't attend due to time zone constraints, but it was great we had a chance to get together and play a few games; and to enjoy each other's informal company again.

The quiz podium consisted of 1st place – Cornelius Keith Rous, 2nd place Nathan Hobson & 3rd place Rowan Mandeville.

Hopefully we can do this again, in person, very soon.



David Tarr, Housemaster Wills East

Out and About for Teenage Cancer Trust



In a third lockdown where the days are shorter and frosty weather looms, it can be easy to find yourself staying inside and glued to screens. With this in mind, the Year 13 BTEC Sports and Exercise Science students have planned (and started!) a virtual event, Out and About for Teenage Cancer Trust. The event has two objectives: to encourage members of the school community to remain active and to raise money for a great cause. Throughout the month of February there will be a number of fitness/active challenges for participants to take part in. Due to current restrictions house competitions have been limited therefore we felt that this was also a perfect opportunity to add that competitive element and house spirit to our event.



Participating students will be representing their houses and staff will be combining to form the staff team! Some of the challenges set last throughout the month such as 'the house who has clocked the most active days across all members'; others are weekly challenges such as 'the furthest distance you can cover in a week'. Further examples are 'the longest amount of time you can exercise in the period of a week', 'who can create the most creative image using their route on Strava' and of course 'which house can raise the most money'!

The class decided that for this event, we wanted to raise money for Teenage Cancer Trust, a charity that provides support to individuals from the age of 13 to 24. Their support includes providing specialist nurses to support teenagers or putting on events that provide them with memorable experiences. It's a great charity that really appreciates all the support it can get.

Every week leaderboards will be posted showing the different houses' progress and also the top participants and fundraisers. Our JustGiving page can be found using the link below; we really hope that people will support us in raising money for such a great cause, alongside keeping active and healthy.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/taunton-school-out-and-about-in-february>

Max Fletcher, Year 13 BTEC SES Student



Pre-Med students chat to GP



Last week, the Lower 6th Pre-Med Group had the chance to talk to Dr Dan Bunce, a GP who also volunteers for Exmoor Search and Rescue. We discussed a variety of topics such as the day-to-day schedule of a GP, the length of time that it took to get where he is now and the aspects of his job that he enjoys. Dr Bunce has been in several areas of the clinical environment, from ICU and A&E to currently working in a GP surgery. As such, the talk helped shine a light on the various opportunities that are available after finishing medical school, and the pathways open to junior doctors. Dr Bunce was asked what he thought the single most important skill was for a doctor and he immediately said 'communication', citing examples and reasons why being able to communicate clearly was key to a successful career. It is always great to hear a first-hand account from someone who is currently working in the medical field; it was certainly enriching for all of us.

Alfie Joseph, Year 12

Exeter Chiefs Rugby Talk

Last week Exeter Chiefs rugby ex-player and coach Gareth Steenson joined aspiring rugby players in the Senior School for a virtual Q&A about his successful playing career. Hosted by Director of Rugby, Nicolas Sestaret, also a former Chiefs player.

Gareth Steenson retired from playing for Exeter Chiefs rugby club last year after winning the 'double' of the European Champions Cup and the English Premiership title. He is now at coach at the club.

During his career, he won numerous titles including the Championship title, LV Cup, two Premiership titles, Champions cup (European title) and the 2016 Golden Boot (Premiership).

On Thursday, he talked about his background and his pathway into professional rugby. He didn't find the success he wanted in Ireland so he moved to England to follow his dream. We also covered his struggles, his preparation, his daily routine, his diet, the best opponents he has played against and his best match.

Gareth gave a real boost to our students and encouraged them to carry on working hard because everything is possible in life as long as you stay positive, work hard and are consistent.



Still time to enter Wildlife Photography competition



Taunton School Wildlife Photographer of the Year "SEASONS"

At this time of year, as the seasons change, you will see lots of activity and no small amount of beauty in the natural world...

To mark this, the Biology Department invites pupils and staff to submit an entry which includes:

1. A photograph which represents the term "Seasons".

and

2. A short written description of where the photo was taken and why it fits the category of "Seasons".

Photos should be submitted to liam.dempster@tauntonschool.co.uk by email, as a jpeg file.

Text should be included in that email.

Prizes for the best three entries will be awarded and suitable ones will be displayed in the Biology Department.

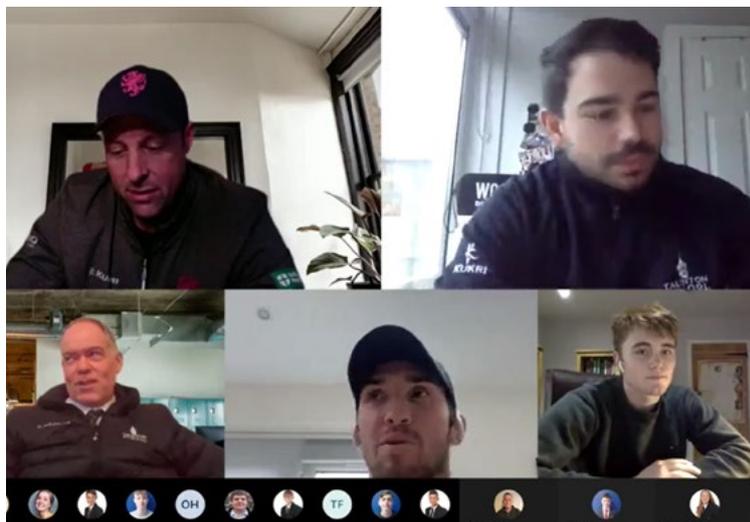
Closing date: Sunday 21st February

England Cricketer meets students virtually

England and Somerset Cricketer Craig Overton joined us this week for a sports session with our students.

As well as 'fielding' questions about his career he took time to give some insight and tips for sports performance and improvement both on and off the pitch.

[Watch the clip here.](#)



Woodyer House share thoughts on staying positive

For Children's Mental Health week, the Woodyer girls have been sharing things that makes them smile during Lockdown and keep them feeling positive- they also shared inspirational quotes to keep us all going as well!

We are continuing with our Fab Fridays this week with an online Scavenger Hunt this afternoon after school, another opportunity to be together, have fun and make each other smile.

Jane, Year 12: 'Happiness is enjoying the little things in life.'

Tessa, Year 12: 'Happiness is the best make up.'

Stasi, Year 13: 'When it rains, look for rainbows. When it's dark, look for stars.'

Alice, Year 12: 'The best way to cheer yourself up is to cheer someone else up.'

Blanca, Year 12: 'It always seems impossible until it is done,' 'The struggle you're in today is developing the strength you need tomorrow', 'Every day may not be good... but there's something good in every day'.

Jasmine, Year 10: 'Do what you have to do until you can do what you want to do', 'Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning how to dance in the rain', 'Expect nothing, appreciate everything'.

Kate, Year 11: 'My dog keeps me happy'.

Erin, Year 10: 'Calls with my friends and family are helping me get through lockdown'.

Arabella, Year 13: 'Online scouts and ballet are keeping me happy during lockdown'.

Freya, Year 13: 'I make sure I have something to look forward to doing everyday. Whether it be something as simple as going on a walk, or baking'.

'My Mood Coach'

CALLING ALL SIXTH FORM STUDENTS!

Would you like to be part of a project by a leading university which aims to understand emotions and improve mental health in young people?

Researchers at the University of Exeter are leading a project which involves recruiting young people aged between 16 and 22 years to learn more about mood, emotion and mental health in

young people, and to test whether mobile self-help apps can promote emotional

wellbeing. The study brings together the latest research on self-monitoring, self-help techniques and cognitive behavioural therapy so that young people can learn about their own emotions, develop resilience, and build well-being. Understanding what influences young people's emotions and wellbeing is very relevant now because there is already evidence that COVID and all its restrictions and economic effects have negatively affected mental health for young people.

The project involves 13 collaborators from across Europe, including the UK, Germany, Spain, Denmark and Belgium. In the UK, the trial involves the University of Exeter, University of Glasgow and University of Oxford.

As a school that recognises that importance of looking after your mental health, we think this is a brilliant project for Taunton School students to get involved with.

To sign-up, go to www.mymoodcoach.com. Participation involves completing online questionnaires at the start and again after 1, 3 and 12 months and using the MyMoodCoach app regularly.

If you have any questions, speak to Mr Burnett.



STUDENTS AT TAUNTON SCHOOL ARE INVITED TO JOIN ONLINE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

Sign up to MyMoodCoach - an international study to understand emotions and improve mental wellbeing for young adults aged 16-22.

We know times are tough, and signing in to our free app each day can help you look after your mental wellbeing, whilst also contributing to vital scientific research.

Learn about your own emotions, help others, support cutting edge science AND earn up to £60 in shopping vouchers!

FIND OUT MORE AT
MYMOODCOACH.COM

FOLLOW US

 @mymoodcoachuk

 @mymoodcoach_uk

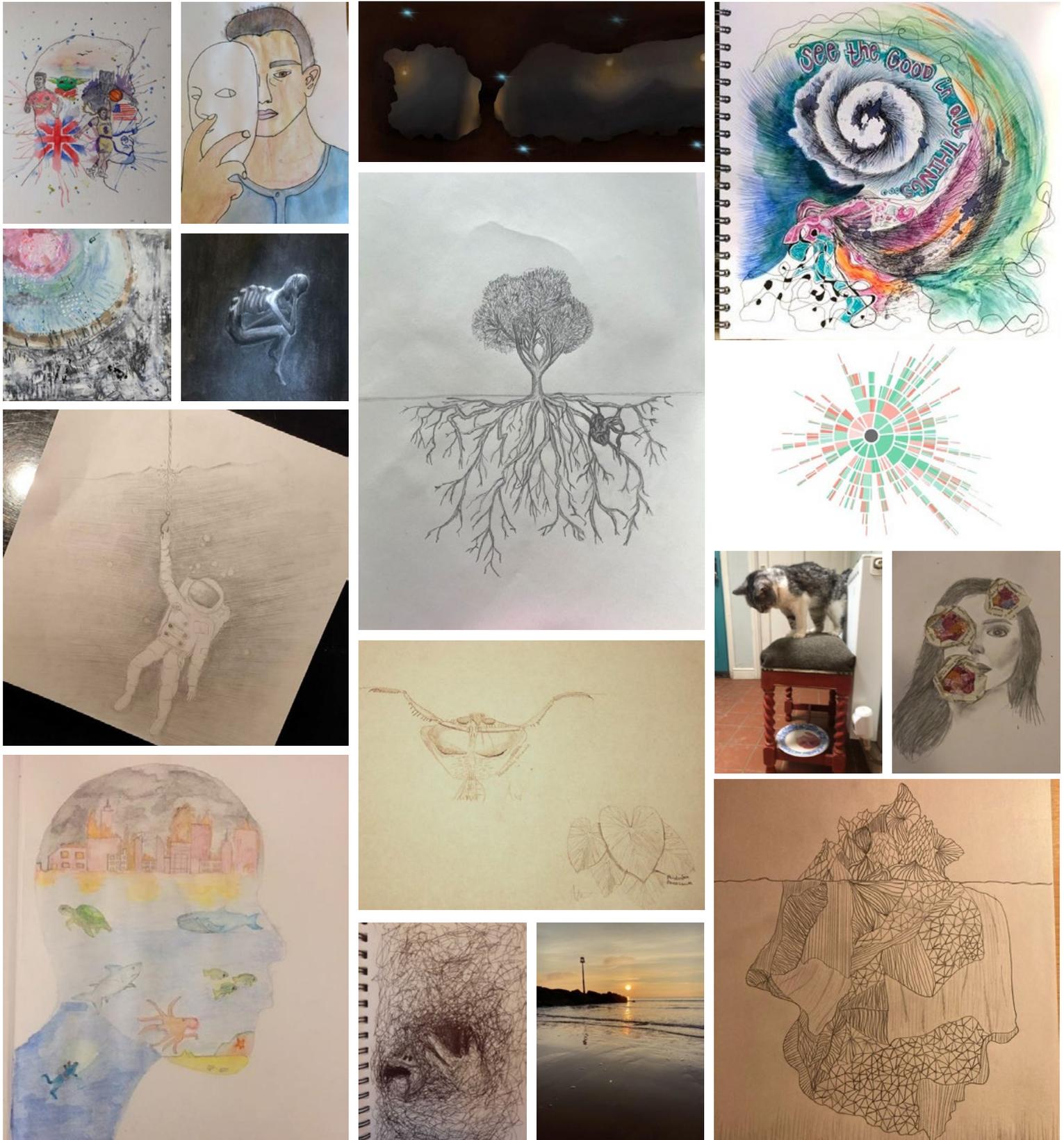
 

Weekly Art Challenge

Each week the Art Department are setting an art challenge. Look out for the next challenge via [@TSArtDepartment](#) on Twitter or in Assembly Notices. If you'd like more information, contact Miss Dillon (Lucy.Dillon@tauntonschool.co.uk) and/or Dr Hammer (Lotte.Hammer@tauntonschool.co.uk). There have been some fantastic entries so far and we look forward to seeing how inventive and original you can be.

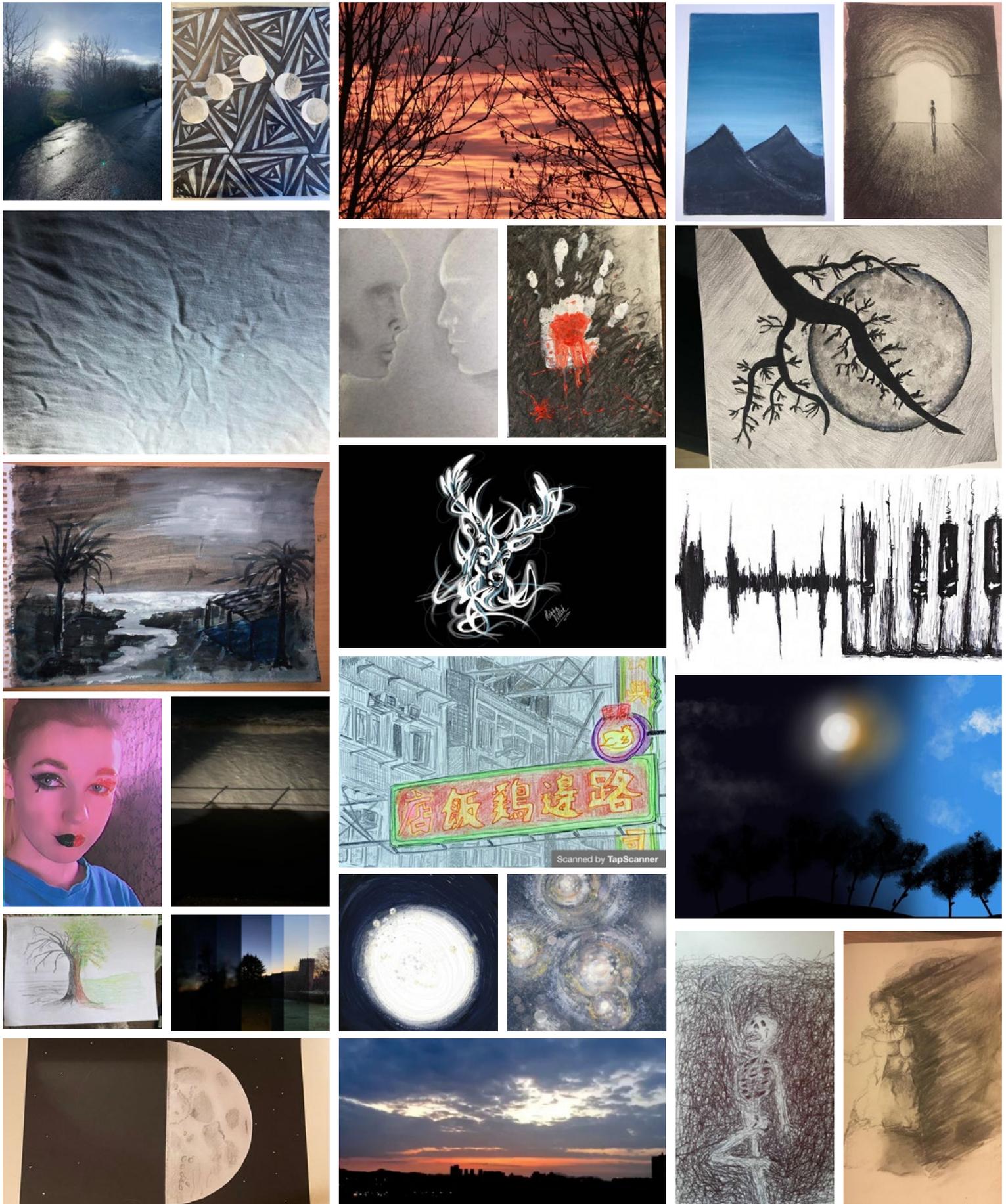
The TS Art Department

Week One - "Underneath the Surface"

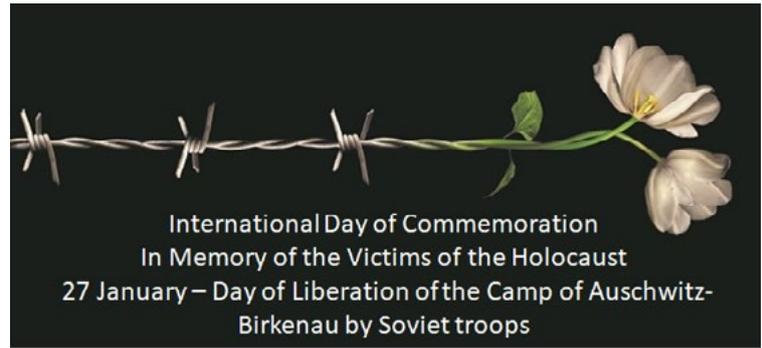


Weekly Art Challenge

Week Two - "From Dark to Light"



Marking Holocaust Memorial Day



Last week in Chapel, our Chaplain Eliza spoke to the students about Holocaust Memorial Day, marked each year on 27th January. It was on that date in 1945 that the Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by Soviet troops.

Initiated by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, it serves as a reminder of the 6 million Jewish lives lost during the atrocity.

The theme for this year is 'Be the Light in the Darkness' and seeks to highlight the ways that individuals and communities have resisted darkness before, after and during genocides.

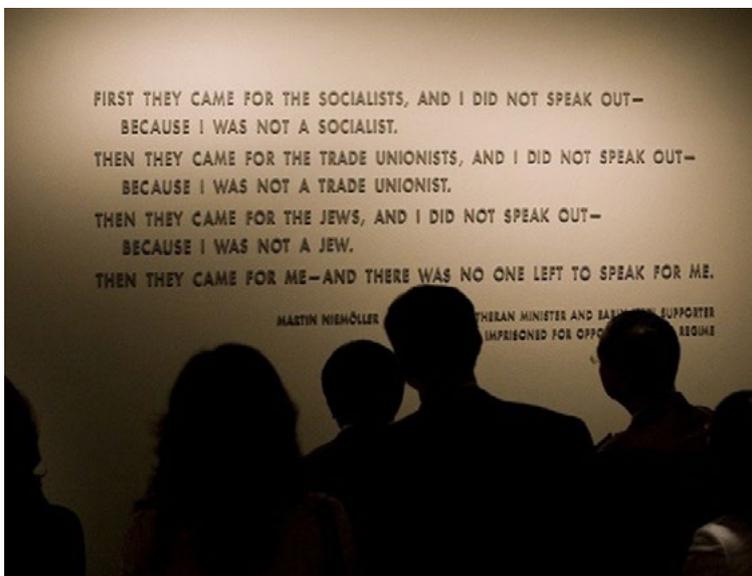
Despite the very different challenge the world is facing at the moment, the theme has relevance to the darkness we are all witnessing daily as we live through a global pandemic.

Eliza referred to the words of Amanda Gorman, the American poet who recited her poem 'The Hill We Climb' at the inauguration of President Biden last week. She shared the lines, 'And even as we grieved, we grew' and 'There is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we're brave enough to be it' which have a poignancy today.

Eliza urged our students to remember we are a school with a global outlook where students are encouraged to be caring, principled and embrace the identity and culture of others.

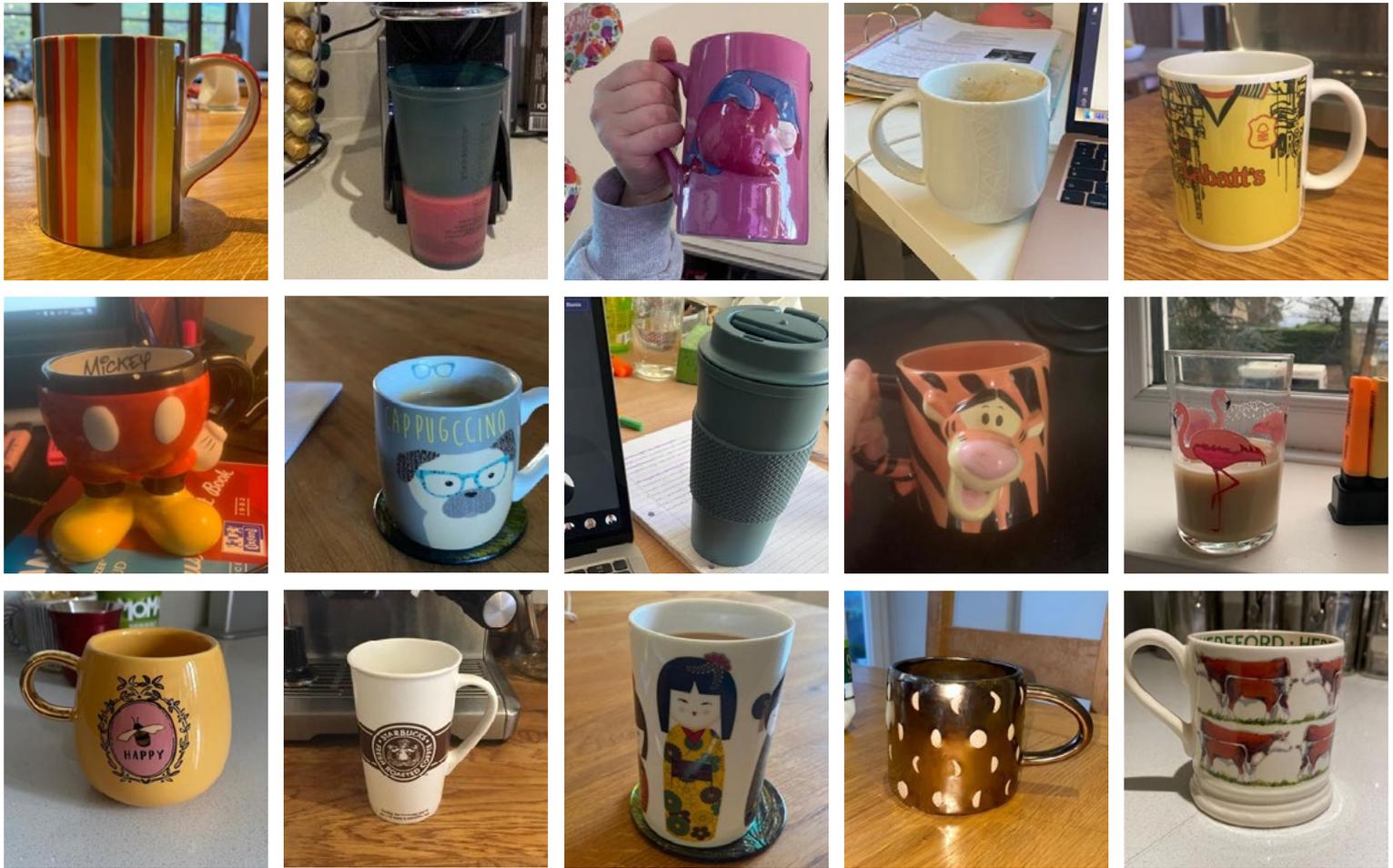
She ended by evoking the words of Martin Niemöller, a prominent Lutheran pastor and an outspoken critic of Adolf Hitler:

**"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out— because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."**



Mug of the Day

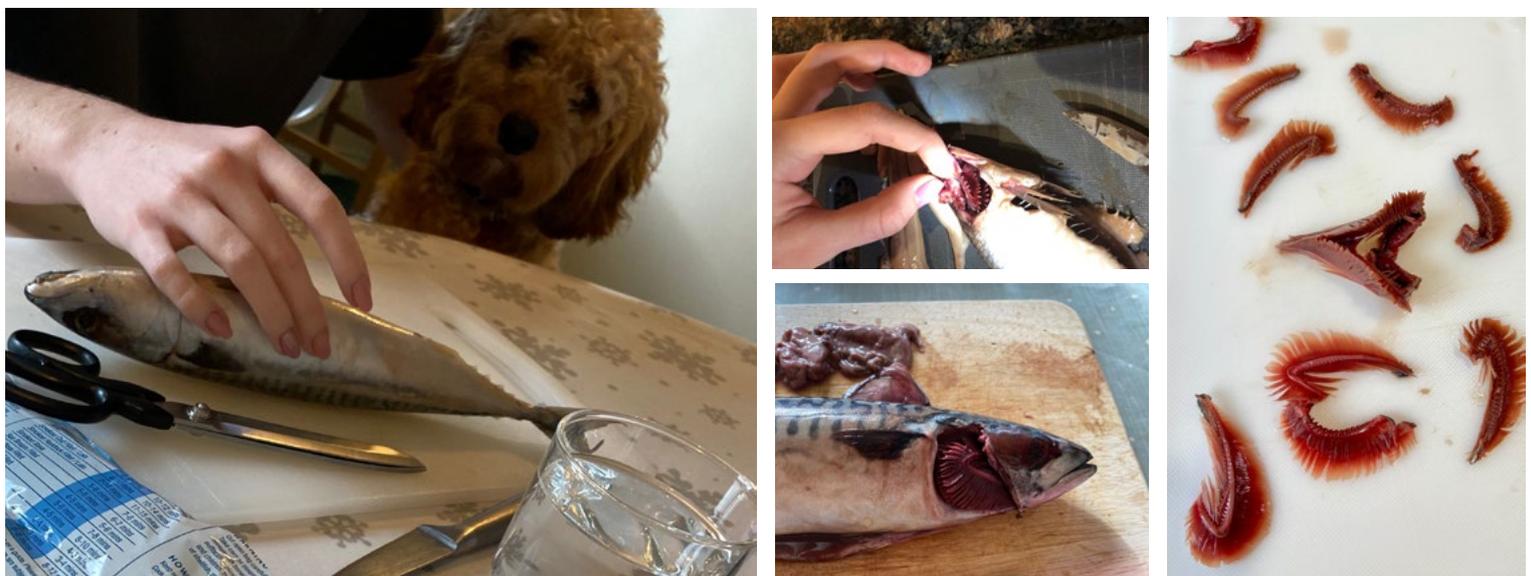
We're all having lockdown experiences that may be very different. However, Jenkin Year 13s have been sharing their 'mug of the day' to maintain a connection to each other. The group have not been shy in sharing their choice of mug to see them through the day! Mr Bough has offered his favourite mug to contribute. I wonder if you can guess which one?



Something fishy going on in Biology

This week our Year 12 Biology students did some fish dissections and they had great fun. They were primarily looking at the gas exchange system but had the opportunity to look at other bits of the anatomy.

Caro Wedgwood, Head of Biology/EPQ Coordinator





At Taunton School, we firmly believe in being an inclusive community in which everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, feels comfortable to be themselves.

We encourage our students to celebrate diversity and to stand up for what they believe in. Throughout this February's LGBT+ History Month, we will be sharing the thoughts of our students and staff as they reflect on the lives of significant individuals and important moments in LGBT history. Keep an eye on our social media channels for more.



This time students, parents and staff are all invited to showcase their creative skills.

Inspired by the 2020 'Narrative Essay Contest' we are cordially inviting EVERYONE to write a 250-500 word piece about 'A Meaningful Life experience'. Take a look and get writing:

www.nytimes.com/2020/01/07/learning/personal-narrative-essay-winners.html

Entries to alexandra.cutts@tauntonschool.co.uk by the end of Spring Term.

Best entries will be published in our summer 'Ink Blot' publication.

Watch this space also for external competitions...

Foodboxes for local NHS Hospital staff



The school are supplying 300 boxes a week to Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton to support frontline NHS staff working throughout the pandemic.

Starting last week, the food parcels were delivered to the Wellbeing Hub at the county's largest acute hospital. Providing a nutritiously balanced meal, they be available to staff 24 hours a day.

The meal boxes have been made possible thanks to the philanthropy of a former student and will be freshly prepared daily by the school's in-house catering team.

During the spring lockdown last year, some 2100 meal boxes were delivered by the school to the hospital and it is hoped this figure will be exceeded this time around.

Graeme Barclay, TS General Manager says: 'We are delighted to once again be able to donate these meal boxes to the fabulous team at Musgrove Park Hospital as a thank you for the selfless work they do each and every day. As a school, we strongly believe in the importance of giving back to our local community, especially during such a challenging time. It was wonderful to hear words of appreciation from staff when we made the first deliveries this week.'

The Everyday Philosopher

...wit and wisdom for every day of lockdown

#WeAreAllPhilosophers



Embarking on each fresh new lockdown dawn with a reflective gem for the whole Senior School Community, the PRE Department would like to share with parents and friends alike the past fortnight's daily dose of the unexpected, the unlikely, and the underrated.

Everyday philosophy for tackling lockdown, philosophically – one day at a time. Read on!

Day 15

Worrying is like a rocking chair: it gives you something to do but doesn't get you anywhere.

Day 16

There's always a sunrise and always a sunset and it's up to you to choose to be there for it. Put yourself in the way of beauty.

Day 17

I want to share something with you – the three little sentences that will get you through in life: Number 1: Cover for me. Number 2: Good idea boss! Number 3: It was like that when I got here.

Day 18

O Master grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love with all my so-ou-OUL!

Day 19

(Because it's Monday... and you know you love it really...): I figure life's a gift and I don't intend on wasting it. You don't know what hand you're gonna get dealt next. You learn to take life as it comes. To make each day count...

Day 20

You is kind, you is smart, you is important.

Day 21

I dream of a better tomorrow where chickens can cross the road and not be questioned about their motives.

Day 22

(On lockdown togetherness): "Well, that escalated quickly" is our family motto.

Day 23

It was only a sunny smile, and little it cost in the giving, but like morning light it scattered the night and made the day worth living.

Day 24

Sometimes I just want someone to hug me and say, "I know it's hard. You're going to be okay. Here is chocolate and five million pounds."

Day 25

I am not an early bird or a night owl; I am some sort of permanently exhausted pigeon.

Day 26

#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek: You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.

Day 27

#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek: So, this is my life. And I want you to know I am both happy and sad, and I'm still trying to figure out how that could be.

Day 28

#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek: Phil: It's the same thing your whole life: 'Clean up your room. Stand up straight. Pick up your feet. Take it like a man. Be nice to your sister. Don't mix beer and wine, ever.' Oh yeah: 'Don't drive on the railroad track.' Gus: Er, Phil, that's one I happen to agree with...

Day 29

#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek: I can and I will. Watch me.

Day 30

#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek: It's a new day, it's a new dawn, it's a new life for me. And I'm feeling good...

National Apprenticeship Week



National Apprenticeship week is a national event designed to inform and educate young people about anything and everything to do with career routes and apprenticeships after school or college.

Taunton School will be taking part in this event and therefore all week (9th - 12th February) we will be sharing events, activities, webinars, case studies and even vacancies with you via our Careers Teams Channels.

If you are interested in an apprenticeship this is a great time to find out all the information you need and start the conversation with us and your parents.

The theme for this week is 'Build for the future' and as we begin to move past Covid-19 what a great time to think about something positive and start to look at building your future. There are already hundreds of vacancies being advertised so it's a great time to be considering an apprenticeship.

Each day will have a theme and as well as live events and info, we will also be posting vacancies from a different sector each day.

In order to attend the UCAS events you will need to register at: <https://ucasapprenticeships.online-event.co/registration/ucas-16>

All of the other themes, vacancies and events will be posted in the Teams chat so you can join in.

Alice MacNair, Head of Careers

Proposed schedule for National Apprenticeship Week 8th - 12th February 2021

Time	Theme	Event	Vacancies
Motivational Monday 8th	Launch	Assembly by Marie Howard and a talk for parents.- Student Activity Pack	Top Pick- some of the best schemes around!
Talking Tuesday 9th	Astrazeneca apprentice case study and Armed forces videos.	UCAS Event-online apprenticeship fair 12-6pm	Sport/leisure/Hospitality/Armed Forces/Health
Wisdom Wednesday 10th	Quiz on Apprenticeships available	11.30 The Big Assembly	Law and Education
Thoughtful Thursday 11th	Subject link posters out	11 EDF talk-Thomas Thayer Taunton School only	Industry/Engineering
Fantastic Friday 12th	Time to reflect and action plan	Last year's UK team awards out.	Business

Cooking with Mr Sestaret

This week in the Sestaret kitchen we were treated to an easy-to-follow recipe and a firm favourite at many a school Match Tea - flapjacks!

Next week is a Valentine's special where YOU can decide whether it's spaghetti bolognese or red velvet cake on the menu.

[Vote here.](#)



Fitness Fridays

During lockdown, Friday mornings are #FitnessFridays with our very own Mr Thompson. Every week we will release a short, easy to follow at home fitness routine for our whole community on social media. [Click the link for this week's challenge!](#)



Meet The Head of Biology and EPQ Co-ordinator - Caro Wedgwood



What is your job role and which age groups do you work with? I am Head of Biology and EPQ co-ordinator. Alongside this I run the lower 6th Pre-Med programme which helps to prepare our pupils for applications to medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science. I also do a bit of games teaching and CCF. This means I work with pupils of all ages in the senior school.

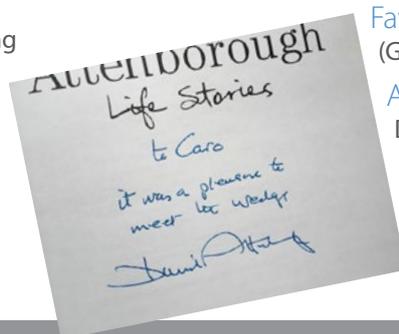
When did you start at Taunton School and what did you do before? I joined TS in September 2011 as Teacher of Biology. Prior to that I had taught in two schools, one rural, one city, working as a biology teacher and a day house mistress in both.

What led you into teaching? When I was at uni I was stuck on something, and after a bit of research I realised it had been in my A level but I had zero recollection of it. That really shocked me, that a subject that was so interesting had been made so unmemorable by the way I was taught it. To put it simply I thought I could do a better job! So I volunteered in a primary school and did some lacrosse coaching for universities and absolutely loved it. Biology, without doubt is the most interesting subject as we get to talk to our pupils about life.

Who inspires you? My mum. She left school at 16 and her home life was very complicated when she was young. But she has always made the best of every situation and without doubt is the kindest person in the whole world. If we were all as good as her at putting other people first the world would be a much better place.

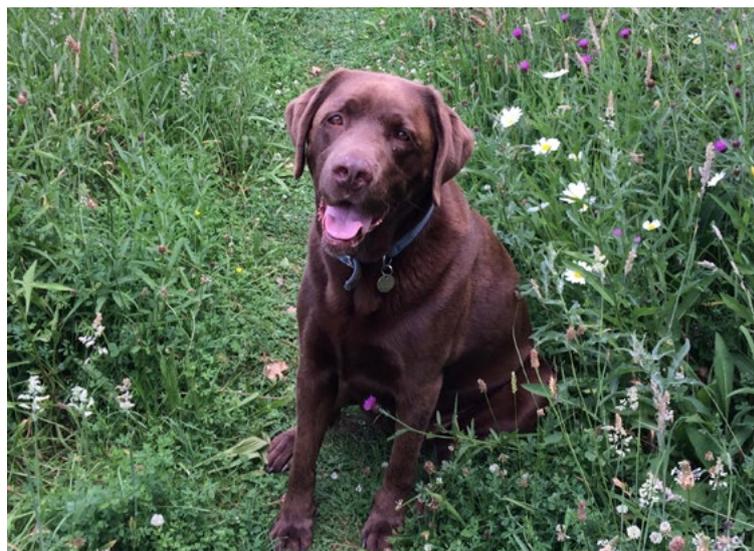
What do you enjoy most about your job? It is so interesting. Not just the biology (which clearly it is!) but the people I work with. Every pupil is different, and will approach learning differently. Teachers need to adapt to that and it keeps us on our toes. And seeing how other colleagues tackle situations differently to how you may have done it. Every day I feel I learn something new about people.

What do you find most challenging? Getting hungry! Teachers are on their feet all day, and we jump from one thing to another often with no time to take a break. I also need to balance my day job with triathlon training as I am preparing to compete for GB in both the World and European sprint championships as an age grouper in 2021. I burn through a lot of calories!



How do you switch off from work at the end of the day? Swimming, running, and cycling. I've always felt it is important to do things that make you feel like you, and are not just defined by your day job. When I'm training my head is empty of any thoughts other than the activity I am doing. And (in non-COVID times) I've got a great bunch of friends I do these things with and they make me laugh, a lot!

Tell us a bit about your Labrador Larry's role at Taunton School. Larry is a registered Therapy dog with the charity Pets as Therapy. He started off visiting the children's ward at Musgrove and then began visiting the staff and pupils at TS. People find it both comforting and relaxing to be around a dog so in a busy school it is nice to be able to give him a quick cuddle at break time in the main corridor. At times he has had one to one time with staff and pupils who have been able to take him for a short walk and reset during a stressful time. Animals don't judge, and they love you unconditionally. In fact that is Larry's default position; that everyone is awesome, that you don't need to prove yourself to him, he automatically knows you are friends. So when life is getting tough, it's good to have a four legged friend that you can go and sit out on the front with, and will do his best to give you perspective, because in those moments you mean the world to him.



Quick Fire questions now...

Favourite film – The Power of One

Favourite book – Philip Pullman's Dark Materials trilogy

Hobbies – Triathlon and fixing bikes

Favourite singers/bands – London Grammar

Favourite TV programmes/series – Man Down (Greg Davis)

Any claims to fame – I was invited to meet Sir David Attenborough when he gave a lecture in Bristol.

A tip for surviving lockdown – Do not compare yourself to others. You do you and you'll do fine.

Connection

One can admit, with relative ease, that the well-being of the human race as a whole has taken somewhat of a hit in recent months as a result of a global pandemic; a situation that many of us didn't think we would experience in our lifetimes. We have faced challenges not many have before and spent more time by ourselves than our modern society deems appropriate. It's been a time where people have struggled, where people have fallen into emotional and mental holes and fought their personal battles. It's been a time where people have been forced to learn what it is to be quiet, and a time where people, from all corners of the world, have come together as one to fight a common enemy.

I doubt very much if, in the history of the human race, the nations of the world have ever come together as one. What a powerful moment in the life of humanity this will be; a time where global balance has been challenged, where international ethics, equality and equity have been brought to the fore and everyday people have raised their voices in one saying, as spoken by United States Inaugural Poet (2021) Amanda Gorman:

'We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors,
characters and conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our future
first,
we must first put our differences aside.'

Connection, through communication, shared values, or simply that which makes us human, has allowed people to thrive and live through challenging times. Remember that, in all our shared sacrifice and struggle through a pandemic that has challenged the very fabric of what it is to be a 'community', to be 'communal', to be 'human', we have remained together, holding on to our community and fighting for our freedom.

We have been gifted with an amazing ability to stay in touch with one another, over social media, messaging platforms and video conferencing tools, and must remember that this ability has allowed us to remain positive and support those around us. We have been able to check in on Mum and Dad, Granny and Grandpa, Sister and Brother with not much more than the touch of a button, and they too have been able to check in on us. Communication has been paramount to maintaining some aspect of positive mental health and supporting family and friends throughout the coming months is all that society asks of us as individuals. We aren't alone, although it may at times feel lonely in these lockdowns, and we must not focus too much on the struggles we have as individuals.

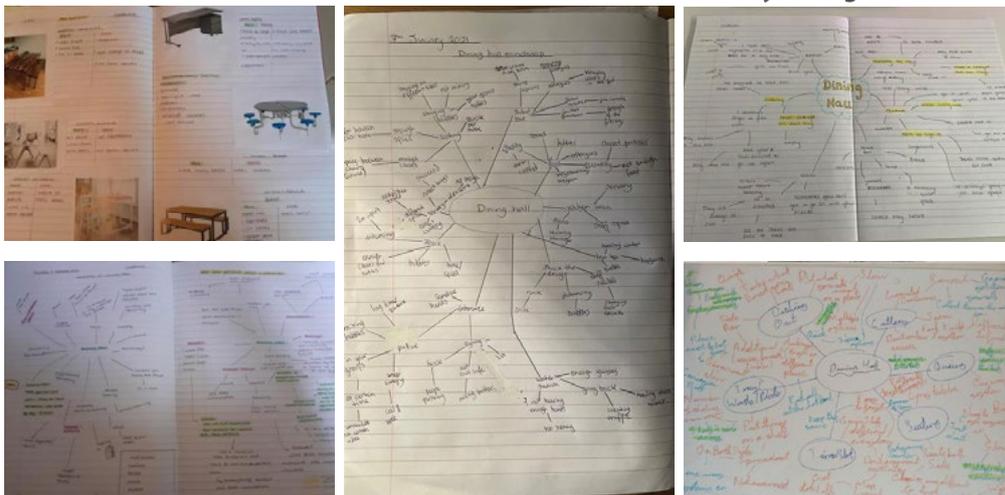
It is all too easy in times like this to focus on the negative and dwell in the personal silence we spend large portions of our day in. We cannot forget, however, the challenges we have overcome in the past year to maintain not only our shared liberty and freedoms, but also to maintain and support our friends, families, and our own human body.

There may be further struggle ahead, but as long as we each take responsibility to look after ourselves as well as those in our close circles, every single one of us will find we are not alone, with someone always standing next to us to provide that all important support, friendship, companionship and help.

Ben Wilkinson, TSI GRA

Year 9 DT students explore dining hall ergonomics

Year 9 Design Technology students have been working through a project linked to the new dining hall. First-hand user feedback is very important to the success of a product, and system ergonomically. Year 9 are exploring this. And yes, negatives are as important as positives for improvement.



Glyn Bough, Head of DT

Lockdown Playlists



Thank you to all of you who have nominated songs to be added to the playlists. At present we have two on the go.

Remember you can add songs from this [link](#)

[Click here for the student playlist.](#)

[Click here for the staff playlist.](#)

I will let you decide who is better. Please keep the nominations coming in...

Hayley Mortimer, Assistant Head
Co-Curricular and Outreach

Year 9 PRE - philosophical reflections on Covid-19

COVID has brought a new dimension into many of our lives. For each of us, our experiences have been very different; some of us have found good and a new lease of life, but some have been met with loneliness, suffering, and even loss. Whilst we have been very lucky with our access to technology, to sustain us through the various lockdowns and restrictive measure we have had to take to stay safe, it is only a satisfactory supplement for the social engagement we are usually accustomed to here in Taunton School.

One thing the PRE Department, here at Taunton school, are keen to advocate is the use of philosophy as a toolkit; not just survival, but for flourishing. Our Year 9 students have been studying what it means to be human since the start of the year, and as part of a piece of reflective work to bring this area of their studies to a conclusion, they were asked to provide philosophic reflections on how COVID has had an impact on them and their lives. Many of them rose to the challenge and provided some outstanding pieces of reflective work and it is our pleasure to share some of them with you here.

Frazer Dougan, Philosophy, Religion and Ethics teacher.

How has lockdown changed me and what will I know be grateful for?

by Olivia Brown

When this is over, I can be thankful for,
No masks to wear and full shelves in stores.

I will be able to learn face to face,
And meet lots of people without getting a legal case.
The sound of live music will play through my ears,
My wellbeing will be good with no COVID fears.

Before Lockdown I took my social life for granted,
But now realise I cannot even see friends, like Boris has ranted.

I will now be grateful when there are parties to go to,
I can sit in a restaurant with no guidelines to review.

I won't feel trapped, stuck at home,
I can travel far, maybe a trip to Rome.

Having now been in lockdown quite a while,
It can be hard to force a smile.

We are surrounded by it like a flame,
We all sit inside wondering who to blame.

With glum faces and angry thoughts in your mind,
There is too much time to think, with a decrease in happiness in quarantine.

But our thoughts can develop, our aspect on the world too,
This will all be worth it in the end; we just have to push through.

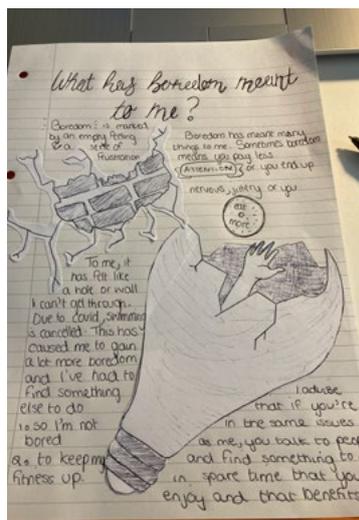
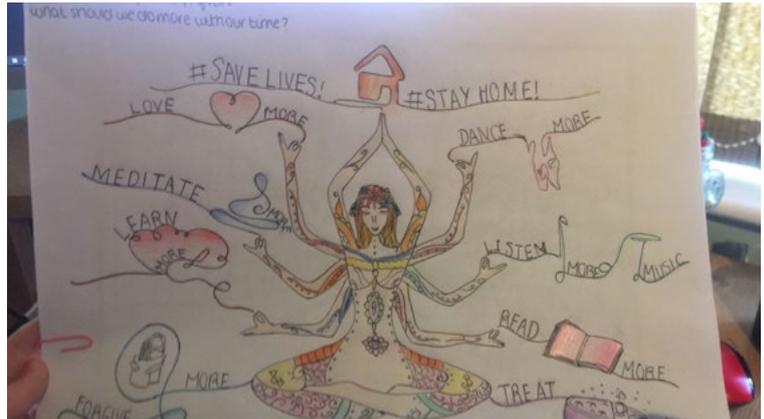
Maybe a new hobby can be abused,
Or maybe a new belief can be pursued.

A walk outside to clear minds of anxiety and fear,
To erase the fact, we have been trapped away from what could have been a fun year.

But there is no point feeling down about the situation we are in,
It is a time to develop yourself, or at least to begin.

Afterwards, there will be thousands of grateful people,
Who look at the world and are much more thankful.

And if there are any in a dark place in these times,
Everyone shall get through it; I say as I write these rhymes.



Reflection on Covid 19

Will the world change after the pandemic is over?
If the world goes back to normal, I think that the world will change slightly. People's attitudes may change to small actions, but I mainly think that people lifestyles will change because they have explored themselves a lot more.

Has Covid made everything worse?
Covid has ruined a lot of things for everyone over the past few years, and even taken a lot of lives. I think that after this everyone will not be feeling the best, but we will all just have to persevere through the rest of lockdown together.

Does Covid make us look at life in a different perspective?
Covid has proven to us that we should appreciate the small things more like just going to school. I think that if the pandemic ever ends, people will be more grateful for everything.

Should we limit our freedom to help others?
I think that we should limit our freedom to help other people. By obeying the rules, hopefully it will stop the virus spreading as quickly. Even though it is a tough time for everyone, I think that we have to listen to the rules and do what is best for everybody.

Should people be punished if they break the rules?
I think that there should be a small punishment if people are caught breaking the rules. As some people are making their lives on the front line when they are just going out and living a normal life which is also killing people. The punishment shouldn't be too big, only something like a fine.

Does Covid make us think about the real meaning of life?
I think Covid has changed many of us in different ways and has got us thinking about how lucky we were. I think that it brings out the people who are selfish and are breaking the rules, and the kind-hearted people who are putting themselves out on the front line to keep everyone healthy. It really shows who people actually are when a global pandemic breaks out.

