



Senior Courier

22nd January 2021

#REMOTELearning

Sporting stars join remote learning line-up



An Olympian and an England cricketer joined virtual lessons this week and shared their unique insights into elite sport.

On Saturday, Olympic Bronze Medalist and Team GB pentathlete, Kate Allenby MBE, joined over 100 students for a Q&A on the topic of "What attributes create the perfect athlete". She was asked questions about her sporting career and achievements and how she managed the demands of being a top level athlete including the psychological impact. She also offered some words of advice on how to face life in lockdown.

On Monday afternoon, Somerset and England cricketer Tom Banton spoke to students about his career so far playing at both national and international level.



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Heads Up: Looking for Good News

by Lee Glaser, Headmaster

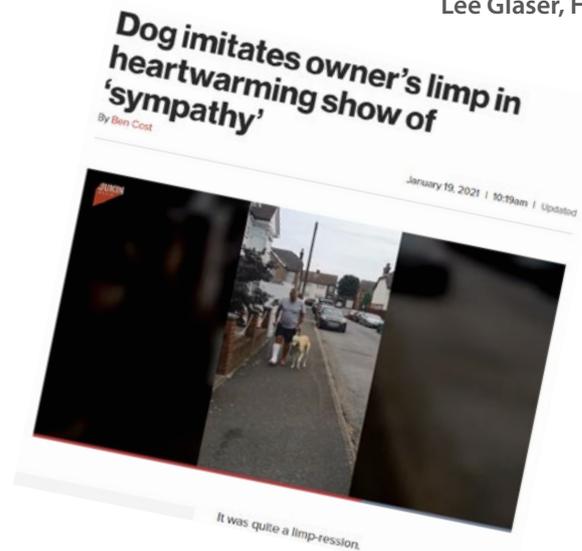


I think I have become a news addict. I know I'm not the only one. I have noticed that I am spending an increasing amount of time reading news websites. As my newsfeed is tailored to my interests by big brother algorithms I am being fed even more articles about Covid, education, American politics and sport. It is quite clear that most news agencies focus on the negative. Even when there is good news it is buried amongst the bad.

And so I have been reading articles that are inherently negative and the algorithms therefore assume I enjoy bad news and feed me more of it. Time to break the cycle! There is lots of good news out there and lots of positivity. You just have to look for it. So, I have developed a trick (I think they are called hacks these days). I bet I'm not the first to think of it but I'm proud of it. For every article I read that is based on bad news I search for two that make me smile. This morning, my efforts have been repaid. In amongst the negative news is a different type of article. Not the one about Love Island stars on holiday in Dubai (not sure why that is in my news feed!). It is about a dog who developed a "sympathy limp" after his owner broke his leg. A story about loyalty, compassion, love and humour. I've clicked on it many times with the aim of convincing my newsfeed algorithm to send me more happy stories.

Amongst the difficulties we are all facing there is humour out there. There is positivity. There is kindness. Sometimes we have to look for them but they are there. But we won't see them if we focus on the bad news. Let's look harder for the good news.

Lee Glaser, Headmaster



Parents: How can you support remote learning?

As parents, it can be hard to support students in this unusual situation of remote learning. However, there are a few things that students can do to try to ensure a more successful experience.

Creating an environment that is conducive to learning: This could be a corner of a room or space that is dedicated to learning and reading. This is not always easy at present when many households are having remote working and schooling taking place. It is easy in the world of portable devices to fall into the habit of sitting on a bed or sofa but in terms of psychologically getting ready to learn, a designated working area helps. It aids concentration and focus and also means that when not working, the space can be left symbolises a step away from learning for a break etc.

Establishing a routine: Routines are personal things and unique to each individual. A visual planner, calendar or digital organiser is essential to keep track of everything that takes place online, with lots of apps available to support this.

Following a normal routine can help to ensure that the student is ready for remote learning, so rather than rolling out of bed and switching on a device, try to encourage a normality. For example, getting dressed, brushing teeth, having breakfast etc before switching on to engage in tutor time.

Review expectations: Establishing expectations can be beneficial. How does the family communicate when individuals are in live lessons, meetings etc? What are the expectations surrounding breaks and leaving screens? When and where will exercise and fresh air take place, can this happen as a family?

Encourage self-regulation: It is impossible when remote learning to avoid devices and screens. It is possible to reduce distractions however by turning off notifications from apps like Instagram and Messenger or setting limits on the amount of time permitted on social media each day. If you struggle with this, there are even apps that will help you to restrict various aspects of your device to help focus and concentration and apps that are designed to help with remaining focused.

It's also important that students recognise when they start to feel lethargic, distracted etc and to use breaks effectively between lessons to help alleviate these feelings.

Encourage time away from screens: Exercise is vital, particularly our students who are used to a lot of physical activity in a week. It is key to their physical and emotional wellbeing and also helps with focus and the ability to feel positive. There are lots of suggestions at school for activities and challenges to engage and motivate students in different types of activities.

It is also very easy at the end of a remote learning day to switch off the laptop and switch on the television. Encouraging students to pick up a book, magazine or newspaper and read something not a screen has been shown to be hugely beneficial.

Emma Pike
Head of Teaching and Learning & Head of PE

Celebrating Student Successes

Congratulations to the following students for their excellent achievements:

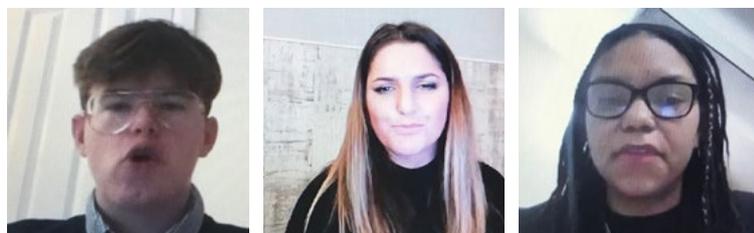
RSM Makena Nesbitt awarded Master Cadet

Highest award that an Army Cadet can achieve and Makena is the first from Taunton School and only the second CCF Cadet in the South West



Debating

Well done to all the students involved in the online English Speaking Union Competition.



THE BURKE DEBATE

"This House believes that students who refuse vaccination against Covid-19 should not be allowed back into school!"

Chair – George Knowles

Proposition - Hanna Wittek & Rowan Mandeville

Opposition – Alfie Joseph & Dan Aziz



Music

Well done to all the performers in last week's Tea Time Concert.



Congratulations to all musicians in their music exams at the end of the Autumn Term.

ABRSM Practical			
Rufus Hetherington	French Horn	8	Pass
Hetty Christopher	Piano	6	Distinction
Mina Li	Violin	7	Merit
George Knowles	Singing	8	Merit
Lily Bramston	Singing	5	Distinction
Charlotte Hatcher	Singing	3	Pass
Cecilia Fawden	Viola	1	Distinction
Sebastian Dean	French Horn	7	Merit
Daisy Hickson	Clarinet	ARSM Diploma	Distinction
ABRSM Theory			
Oscar Baker	Theory	5	Pass
Tony Wang	Theory	5	Pass
Trinity Practical			
Charlotte Hicks	Singing	8	Distinction
Eliza Hopwood	Trumpet	8	Distinction
Jack White	Trumpet	3	Merit
Fraser Lewes	Trumpet	4	Merit

Cricket

Well done to Joleigh Roberts who has been selected for the Western Storm Academy Programme.



Netball

Well done to Grace Kellett for being selected for Team Bath Netball, Exeter Hub and Isla May for being selected for the England U19 Roses Long Squad.



Highest number of awards for D of E students

The DofE scheme is a major part of the school's co-curricular offering, with well over 300 students working toward Bronze, Silver or Gold awards. Our students have not allowed the current health emergency to dampen their spirits - with 166 signing up this year at all 3 levels, the highest number of awards started at any centre in Somerset. 13 participants from Taunton School have already completed awards since the beginning of 2021, and I look forward to more over the coming months.



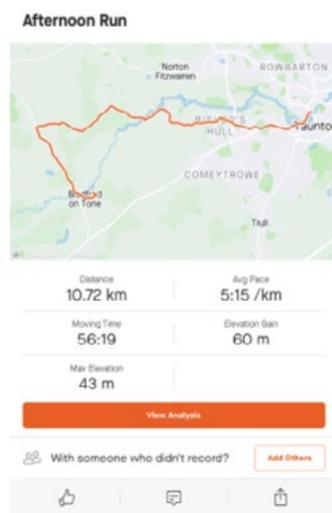
In order to gain the award, students need to take part in four challenges. They need to develop a skill, work on their physical well-being and volunteer; as well as taking part in a self sufficient expedition. The current situation has had an obvious impact on their ability to complete these challenges - but, as always, the students of Taunton School have not let this stand in their way and continue to work toward their awards. We are lucky, our overall co-curricular offer allows students to work toward their challenges and this remains the case while we are online: virtual sports sessions, virtual CCF activities, continued musical instrument lessons and concerts, online debating and other clubs all allow the pupils to continue working toward their awards.

To support their volunteering challenges, Taunton School pupils are doing things such as helping to renovate gardens, supporting pupils (including those from other schools) with their online school work, supporting neighbours that are shielding and supporting local communities for example with litter picks or renovating community spaces. There is no doubt in my mind that TS pupils are making a positive impact during these difficult times and I applaud them for it.

We have been able to take expeditions out already this year and hope that we will be able to do so again later in the year if restrictions allow. The DofE awarding bodies have created a new certificate of achievement so participants can still get recognition even if they are unable to complete this part of the award. Even lockdown, however, has not stopped our pupils from preparing for their hoped for expeditions - with online learning, quizzes about maps and practical navigation tasks being undertaken by many.

The DofE award has been designed to encourage young people to try new things, to move out of their comfort zones and to help them recognise the importance of service to others - perhaps it is now, more than ever before, that the scheme is needed the most. I am so pleased that so many Taunton School pupils continue to take up the challenge.

Philip Edwards, DofE Coordinator



2019/20 TS Participant Achievements

1105 hours
of learning a skill

1066 hours
of Physical activity

1534 hours
of volunteering in their local
community with a social value of
£6672.90

'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.

Want to learn about your emotions and improve wellbeing for young people? Go to www.mymoodcoach.com to find out more!



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

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER MY MOOD COACH



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...

Weekly Art Challenge

Each week the Art Department are setting an art challenge. The first one was called 'Underneath the surface' and we have had some fantastic entries and look forward to showcasing them in the next edition of the Courier.

Look out for the next challenge via [@TSArtDepartment](https://twitter.com/TSArtDepartment) on Twitter.

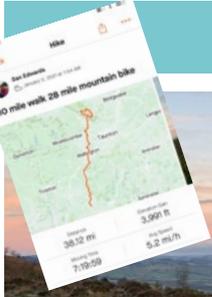
If you'd like more information, contact Miss Dillon (Lucy.Dillon@tauntonschool.co.uk) and/or Dr Hammer (Lotte.Hammer@tauntonschool.co.uk).

We look forward to seeing how inventive and original you can be.

The TS Art Department



Fundraising for Exmoor Search and Rescue



Over the past few weeks, in the rain, dark and cold, our intrepid 10 Tors hopefuls have been completing a challenge of 38 miles (the distance around the historic Exmoor Forest) and each aiming to raise at least £100 for the local charity Exmoor Search and Rescue. ESRT searches for and rescues lost and vulnerable people. Whilst much of that work is supporting the Police in urban searches, it also means that if our pupils are out on the hills for outdoor pursuits, we are safe in the knowledge that there is a group of volunteers who can provide expert medical care and rescues where the statutory emergency services are not able to do so.



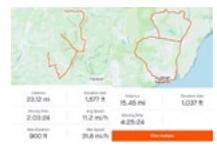
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her inner Bear Grylls by hosting her own 'World's Toughest Race' with a 22 mile bike ride, one mile sea swim, four mile paddle board and then 15 mile coastal walk. It was great to see pupils getting their families involved as well, with them often joining the pupils on parts of their walks. And these were genuine challenges - quite apart from weather considerations, some made sure it was hard work, for example Tom Yap and Maxime Bell carried rucksacks of 20kg (and made their walk really count as they picked up litter along their way), and Tom McConnell completed the full 38 miles of walking in a single day along the Jurassic Coast taking 12 hours! Some lucky adventurers even had snow on their travels; Verity Winsor and Seb Dean had to cope with all of the seasons thrown at them on their bike ride.



These pupils have shown true Taunton School spirit, taking up the mantle of the challenge and exceeding our expectations in terms of their fundraising. Their support for this local community charity has been overwhelming with an astonishing £4250 raised - a huge thank you to all that donated. This money will be going towards a new Incident Control Vehicle which is vital to ESRT operations, and has been made possible by the efforts of our very own Taunton School community.



Caro Wedgwood, Head of Biology/EPQ Co-ordinator

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 1:

So. If you're mad, get mad. Don't hold it all inside. Come on and talk to me now. Hey! What you got to hide? I get angry too. Well, I'm alive like you. When you're standing at the crossroads, don't know which path to choose, let me come along... 'cos even if you're wrong... I'll stand by you.

Day 2:

In politics stupidity is not a handicap.

Day 3:

Phil: Do you ever have deja vu, Mrs Lancaster? Mrs Lancaster: I don't think so but I could check with the kitchen...

Day 4:

Tremendous things are in store for you! Wonderful surprises await you.

Day 5:

For well you know that it's a fool who plays it cool by making his world a little colder.

Day 6:

'I don't know many things with any certainty,' she said 'But snuggling feels important.'

Day 7:

No school without spectacular eccentrics and crazy hearts is worth attending.

Day 8:

Hamburgers! The cornerstone of any nutritious breakfast.

Day 9:

The only people for me are the mad ones. The ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn burn burn...

Day 10:

We want the finest wines available to humanity. And we want them here, and we want them now

Day 11:

Even a stopped clock gives the right time twice a day... We are indeed drifting into the arena of the unwell. Making an enemy of our own future. What we need is harmony, fresh air, stuff like that.

Day 12:

An optimist: someone who figures taking a step backward after taking a step forward is not a disaster; it's more like a cha-cha.

Day 13:

(On homeschooling six year olds) But it's been no bed of roses. No pleasure cruise. I consider it a challenge before the human race and I ain't gonna lose. And we mean to go on and on and on and on...

Day 14:

(In praise of the mighty six-year-old children at Taunton School – whose sweet voices chant the following in their 'mindful moment' – and of six year olds everywhere): Let us be kind in what we think, in what we say, in what we do – to ourselves, to others, and to all living things.

Sporting Stars chat to students

Continued from front page...

Speaking shortly before flying to Abu Dhabi for a T10 tournament, he talked about the different pressures of playing short form cricket compared to the traditional format and what it's like playing alongside legends of the game. Students also asked him for tips on how to improve their technique. The session was hosted by former England Cricketer Marcus Trescothick who is part of Taunton School's cricket coaching team.

Hayley Mortimer, Assistant Head of Co-Curricular at Taunton School says, "We felt incredibly fortunate to virtually welcome both Kate and Tom to Taunton School this week. They were both so generous with their time and wisdom and left our students feeling inspired. In a time when our school community can't be together in person, we are proud to be able to offer our students these unique opportunities to learn from elite sports men and women."

Words of Wisdom from the Mental Health Team

IF YOU WOULD NOT SAY IT TO A FRIEND, DO NOT SAY IT TO YOURSELF

UNKNOWN

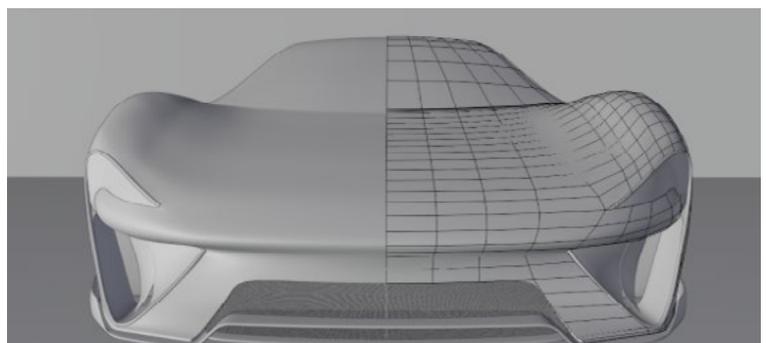
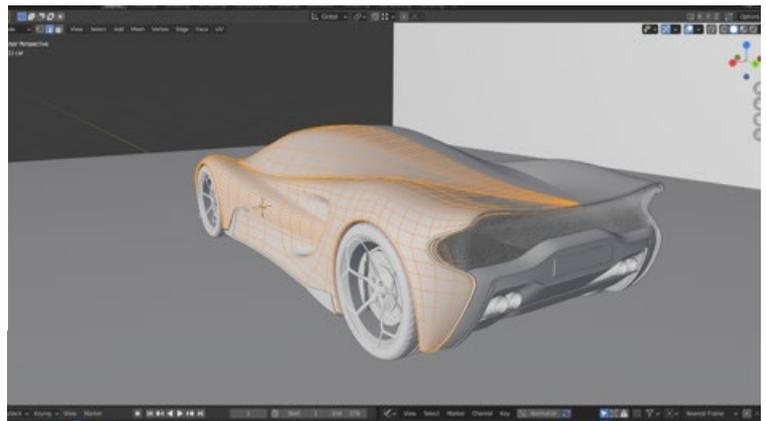
Why not make contact with a friend you haven't spoken to for a while?

You are somebody's reason to smile

DT profile: Dan Edwards

This week's profile focuses on Year 13 AL product design student Dan Edwards. Dan has been a visual active part of the department since Year 9. He is a student who has excelled in all areas of the subject, but has really found his feet with CAD. Initially Dan became an expert using Solidworks and has since moved to Blender platform, developing his skills at school during lesson time. Due to his interest in this area he spent a lot of time independently working on his skill level. Dan is looking at Engineering based courses once he completes Year 13. Below are examples of his work.

Glyn Bough, Head of DT



Success for Laura

Congratulations to Laura Assanti who completed her Oxbridge Online Research Programme earlier this month. Her research Project was on Protective mutations in humans. It was a very successful experience for Laura and she received very positive feedback from her tutor.



At the start of the Autumn Term Laura scooped a coveted prize of a scholarship on to one of Immerse Education's Cambridge courses. Laura entered the essay competition over lockdown to win a scholarship to the Oxbridge Summer School 2021 to study a course in Biology. She was successful with her essay entry 'To what extent is human behaviour genetically determined?' and was awarded a partial scholarship to any educational course within the programme.

Joanna Evans, Tutor

Cooking with Mr Sestaret

Sestaret Kitchen is BACK! By very popular demand, Mr Sestaret has donned his apron (and a fancy hat) to dust off his culinary skills. For this edition he bakes the perfect accompaniment for one of our online 'Performing Arts Cafes' or 'Tea-Time Concerts' - scones! Why not take a break and have a bake yourself? Let us know how you get on. [Watch 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!](#)



Scholarship application deadline - 25th January 2021

There is still time to apply for an IB Scholarship before the deadline this Monday.

These are open to both internal and external students who are currently in Year 11 and are looking for Sept 2021 entry.

Find out more [here](#) or email registrar@tauntonschool.co.uk

TAUNTON SCHOOL

IB Scholarship

Application Deadline: 25th Jan 2021

Meet the Director of Music, Mark Cracknell

What is your job role and which age groups do you work with? I'm the Director of Music in the Senior School

When did you start at Taunton School and what did you do before? I started in 2003. It doesn't feel like it can possibly be that long ago! I took over as Director of Music in 2007. After leaving music college I was a freelance pianist and accompanist, working in the UK and in Los Angeles for a time, I was also official accompanist for BBC Young Musician and various other competitions. My first role in a school was at Wells Cathedral School as accompanist and performance coach to the specialist musicians. I then wanted to have more influence over the holistic musical progress of young people so did a PGCE in Bath. I still perform as an accompanist professionally and do the odd solo recital and concerto too!

What led you into teaching? My experience at Wells working with young musicians in a school setting made me realise the transforming power music has in school life and I wanted more of it!

Who inspires you? No specific one person but I love seeing people who are passionate about what they do and take the time, care and dedication to do it to the best of their ability. Whether that's in music, sport, science or in any walk of life.

What do you enjoy most about your job? The day to day variety and being close to music. We have built a fantastic team of music teachers who are great to work with daily, the pupils we get to spend time with are great and we are lucky enough to have the support to be able to put on large and small events, which we love doing. To make music is good for the soul and we get to do that every day!

What do you find most challenging? Admin – I'm not great at it and have an annoying habit of always having something more pressing or public to do!

In what ways has the music department had to adapt during the past few months and how has this changed again during lockdown? As I said before we have a fantastic team and they have kept our individual music lessons going virtually with great success. We have had to learn the basics of recording and editing to put ensemble performances together and look at new ways to maintain our musical profile and pupils' enthusiasm for music. Not easy in a virtual world. I am massively proud of the things that we have achieved as a team, the concerto competitions still going ahead last term, the virtual Autumn concert and the 24 advent calendar items performed through December. We also had to adapt our choirs to socially distance, with fewer singers and at least 2M between them, that took some getting used to but resulted in some really excellent performances in the Harvest, Remembrance and Carol services.



How do you switch off from work at the end of the day?

In many ways – I have a beautiful family, including Clementine who is now 13 months! I enjoy running and support Ipswich Town who, I should point out, used to be a fantastically good football team!

Quick Fire questions now...

Favourite film Apollo 13 – inspirational film – how to fit a square peg in a round hole.

Favourite book I am a big fan of Billy Connolly so loved reading his most recent book, 'Tall Tales and Wee Stories'. A totally different book is 'The Boy, the mole, the fox and the Horse' by Charlie Mackesy – totally wonderful and beautiful in every way.

Favourite instrument Has to be the piano – obviously!

Hobbies Music, sport, reading, cooking, wine!

Any pets? None at present, although I've killed quite a few goldfish in recent years (RIP BillyBob and ChocolatePants).

Favourite singers/bands I had a soft spot for Deacon Blue back in the day but I love all music!

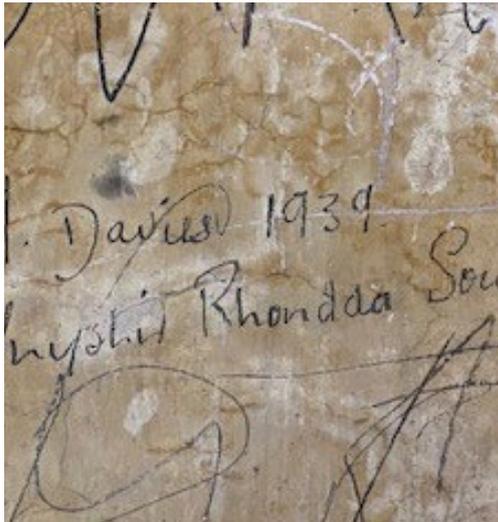
Favourite TV programmes/series All time Frasier, but recently Succession too!

Any claims to fame The biggest one is that I met Frank Sinatra briefly when I was playing in America the year before he died.

A tip for surviving lockdown Keep active, go outside and smile!

A fascinating insight, Mark - your claim to fame is hard to beat! Thanks for keeping our spirits up with some wonderful music performances at a difficult time.

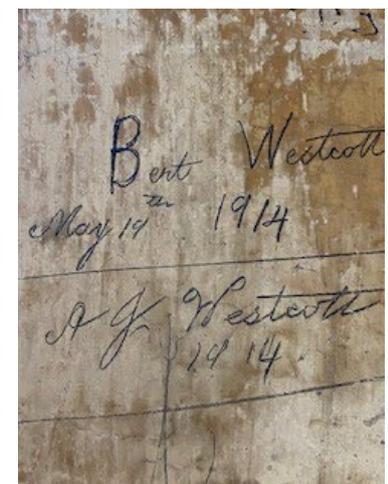
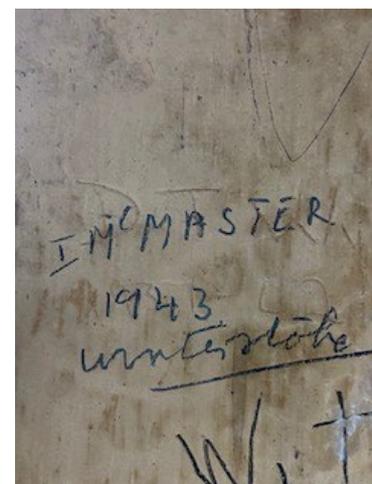
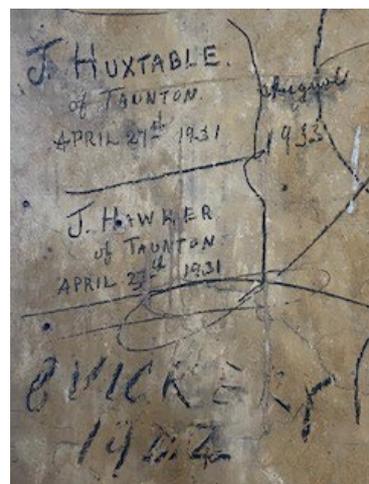
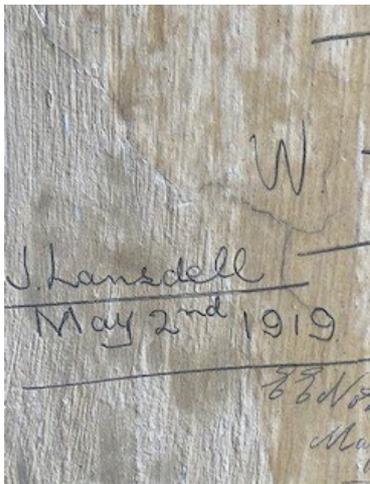
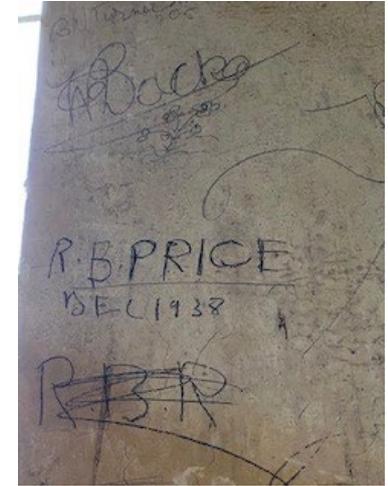
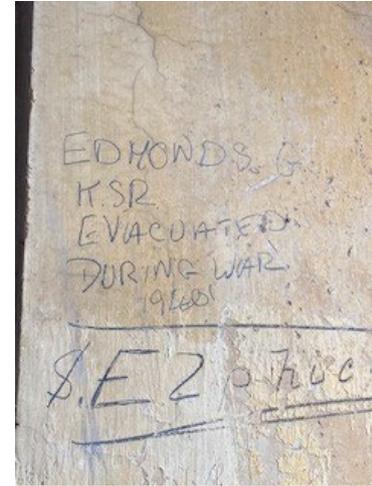
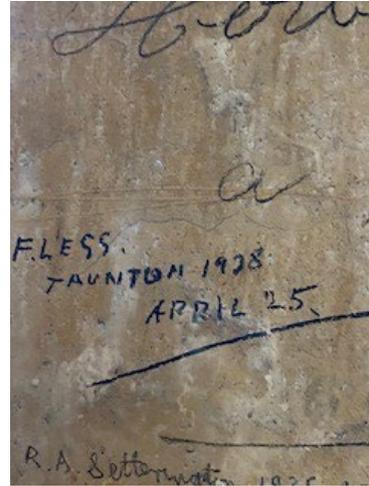
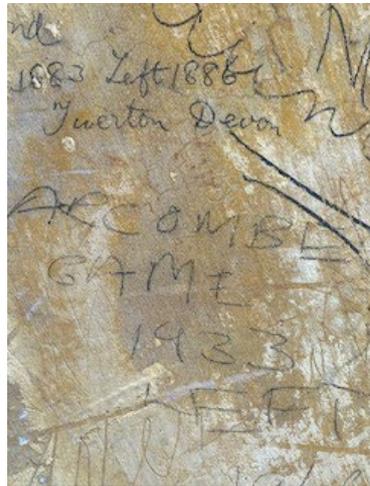
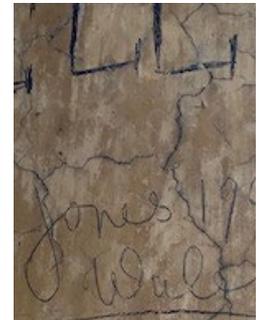
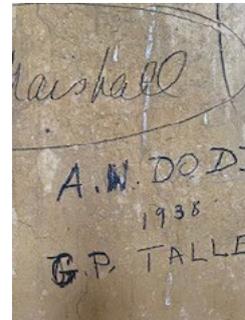
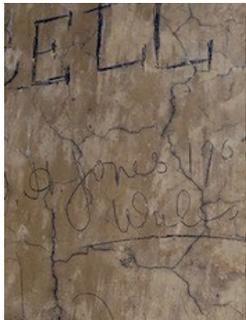
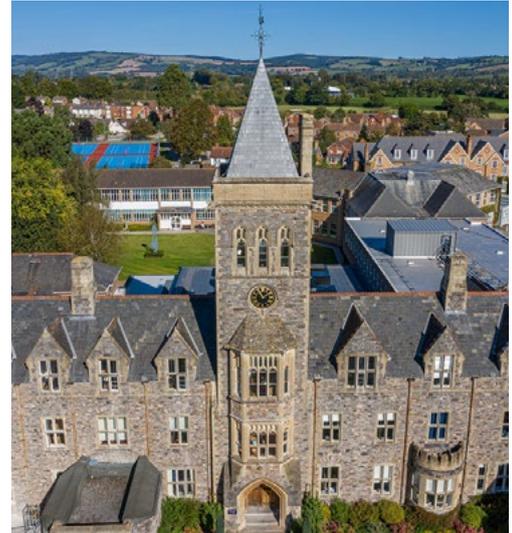
Mystery in the Clocktower



We're fascinated by these photos of graffiti in the clock tower taken at the end of last year by an electrician

They date back as far as the 1880s and are most likely the scrawlings of past students and staff. Our archivist is doing some research to see if he can find any stories behind the names on the wall - we will keep you posted about what he uncovers.

If you recognise any of the names, do let us know! Email marketing@tauntonschool.co.uk



The Socrates Society

The Socrates Society, better known as SocSoc, existed back when I was in year 9, but its founders moved on to pastures new without finding a successor, so there it was left. However, after growing my passion for the subject of Philosophy (largely thanks to its fantastic teaching department) during my time in the senior school, I knew that once I got to Upper Sixth, SocSoc had to make a comeback. So with the help of my Religious Studies classmates, posters were made, a schedule was drawn up, and word was spread; all building up to our first meeting, where the five of us waited apprehensively to see if anyone would actually turn up. Thankfully, lots did, and the society has become a great success! Highlights include: 'Regional Manager' Calum's hilarious portrayal of Karl Marx, a bizarre digression from the life of Plato to Ancient Greek romance, and Jack's head-spinning thought experiments.



This term, we have vowed to continue SocSoc, despite the obvious setback of not being face-to-face where philosophic discussion is best cultured. I began the term's sessions by exploring Crito, one of Plato's dialogues in which our society's namesake, Socrates, finds himself imprisoned and awaiting imminent execution - a fellow philosopher in lockdown. The framework of civil obedience was dissected, hopefully leaving everyone who attended with lots of food for thought.

Next week, we are trialling a new meeting format: 'Change My Mind'. Upper Sixth Harry will be proposing a notion - that women should not be paid as much as men in sport - and it will be everyone else's job to convince him otherwise. It promises controversy and contention, a philosopher's nectar!

The return of SocSoc has so far proven to be very welcome, with badges and a mascot being recently introduced. We look forward to it (hopefully) continuing long after our departure!

Ben Jackson, Year 13

Coming soon to SocSoc...

CHANGE MY MIND

Guest speaker Harry Kent proposes:

"Women should not be paid as much as men in sport"

Think you can change Harry's mind? Join SocSoc on Monday 25th January at 4:15pm, in the 'Student led Co-Curricular' Team to take part in the debate, or just enjoy the show.

