



Senior Courier

26th February 2021

#REMOTELEARNING

Tolerance, Respect and Acceptance



This week's Senior School Chapel took LGBT+ History Month as its focus.

Dr Getman spoke about the need for recognition and respect for all people and emphasised that Jesus always used love to determine the meaning of scripture.

Mr Glaser echoed that respect is a key part of the Taunton School community and read from the Book of John, Chapter 1, Verses 16-19, a passage about love and acceptance.

Mx Wood talked about the LGBT+ community's struggle for social justice throughout the last century and urged our students to always stand up for what is right.

The message from all three was clear – Taunton School is a place which respects and accepts all people.

More Inside

Bake off Challenges

Creative Writing Competitions

Top Biologists

Maths Society Book Club

And plenty more....

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Marshall MasterChefs

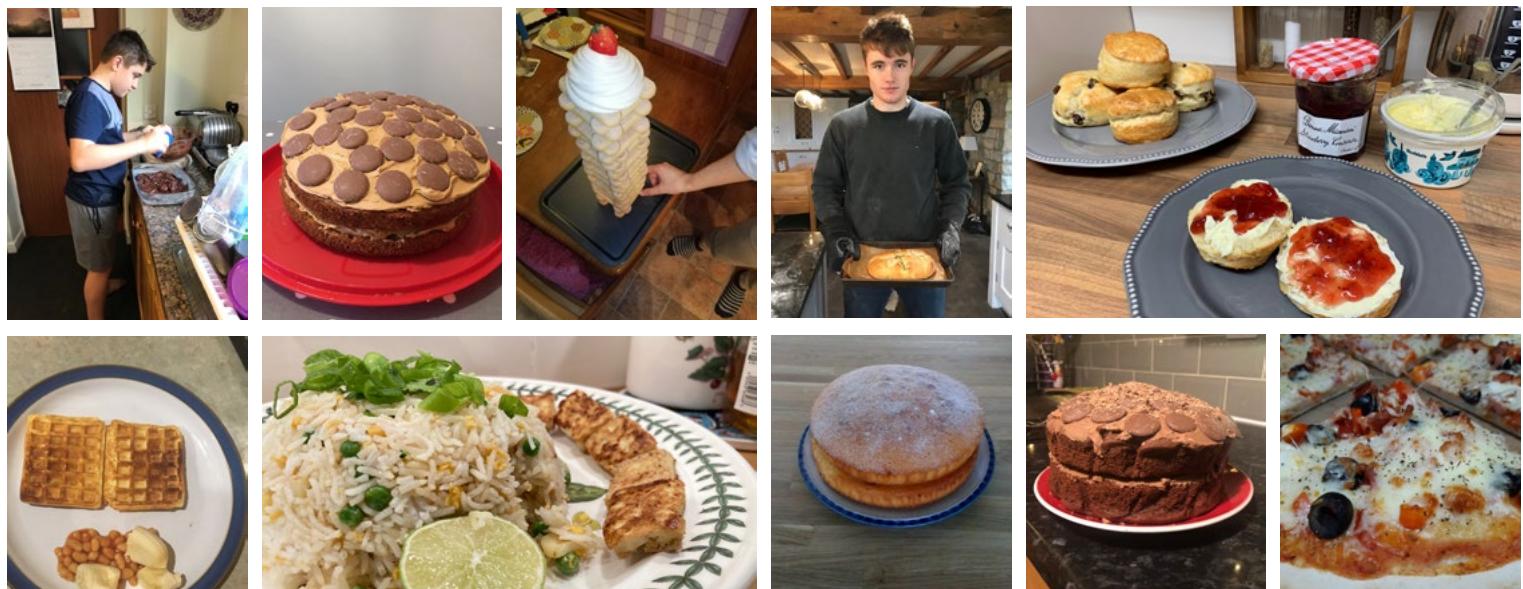
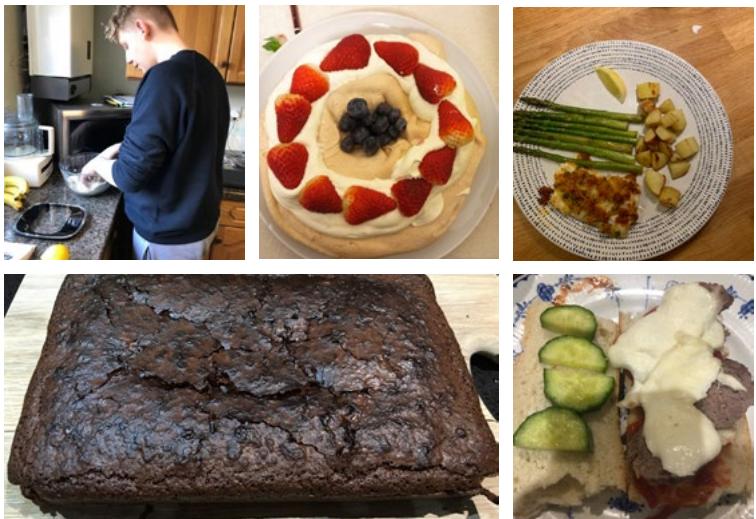
The boys in Marshall House have been putting their culinary skills to the test with a highly competitive MasterChef challenge. We've seen some impressive creations such as Spaghetti Frogat-Tarja, Cheesy Chorizo Crusted Cod and a gravity-defying 'Treiffel Tower'!

Winners were chosen after lots of discussion in the Senior Management Team with the eventual winners announced by Mr Glaser in tutor assembly.

Well done to Ben Mason for winning the Sweet category, Thomas Houghton-King for winning the Savoury category and Oliver Halliday as runner up.

As well as the winners, special mentions went to Freddie S Green and his sub, Seb Malleys Pretzels, Ed Kerslake's Waffles, Mrs Stamp's Cake and Mr Hallows' pizza.

Philip Edwards, Marshall Housemaster



Tea Time Concert

Wednesday's virtual Tea Time Concert showcased a superb variety of musical talent, from Bach to Jay-Z, classical to jazz, there was something for everyone.

Very well done to Matthew (Bach on piano), Daisy (Jean Francaix on saxophone), George - and his parrot Harriet-(Beethoven on piano), Ollie (Jay-Z's Empire State of Mind on drums), Rufus (Saint-Saens on French horn) and Isaac (Makholm on piano). What incredibly talented students!

The full recording can be viewed on the School Community Teams channel.



Top Biologists Announced

The pupils who have been nominated by their class teachers for outstanding effort, attainment and progress in biology this half term are:

YEAR 9

Meg Pocock
Szymon Wyrozumski

YEAR 10

Charlie Bedford

YEAR 11

Kate Blackmore-Greasley
Marnie Cairns

YEAR 12

Lauren Parker
Vasilisa Smychovich

YEAR 13

Phillip Pullicino

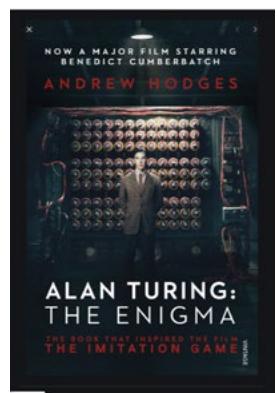
Pupils will receive a virtual 'Top Biologist' certificate and a prize when we can safely return to school. Well done to all!

Harriet Shaw, Teacher of Biology

Maths Society Book Club

Alan Turing - The Enigma

Recently the maths society book club had the pleasure to discuss Andrew Hodges' fascinating book called 'Alan Turing: The Enigma'. This passionately exhaustive biography of Alan Turing does a brilliant job in demonstrating Turing's undeniable contribution to the world of computer science and how gifted he was. He had, at the age of 24, conceived as a mathematical abstraction his 'computing machine' and had completed his, now famous, paper entitled 'Computable Numbers'. He was also responsible for decoding the enigma machine that helped Britain win the war. Although he is more famously known for his work in computer science, he also contributed to all areas of science. He combined all sciences with mathematics to solve real-world problems, and so was always one step ahead of everyone else. Tragically, he was not appreciated in his own time and did not deserve to die such an inadequate death. Genius is the only word that comes to mind after reading his biography. Turing is an inspiration to us all.



Laura Assanti, L6 Jenkin

Weirfield Valentine's Day Bake Off



Weirfield has always been a fan of the Great British Bake Off and each year we run our very own house version. This year's competition had a Valentine's theme, with the girls tasked to be their most imaginative and creative in order to come up with something special to celebrate Valentine's Day. They did not disappoint and submitted a fabulous array of cakey treats, from cupcakes to brownies, gingerbread to cheesecake as well as flapjack and fudge.

This year the competition was held virtually due to being away from school with the girls given a week to come up with their bakes. Whilst it was lovely to receive a steady stream of messages showcasing some impressive baking skills, it was also more than a little torturous that I was only able to see them and not actually taste them!

The standard this year was very high indeed and it was incredibly difficult to choose a Star Baker. As such, we decided to have several Star Bakers instead, with several prizes awarded such as 'Most Creative', 'Most Appealing', and 'Most Skilful'. It was wonderful to see so many girls take part and we are already looking forward to next year, although I am pretty sure there will be plenty more baking in Weirfield before then!

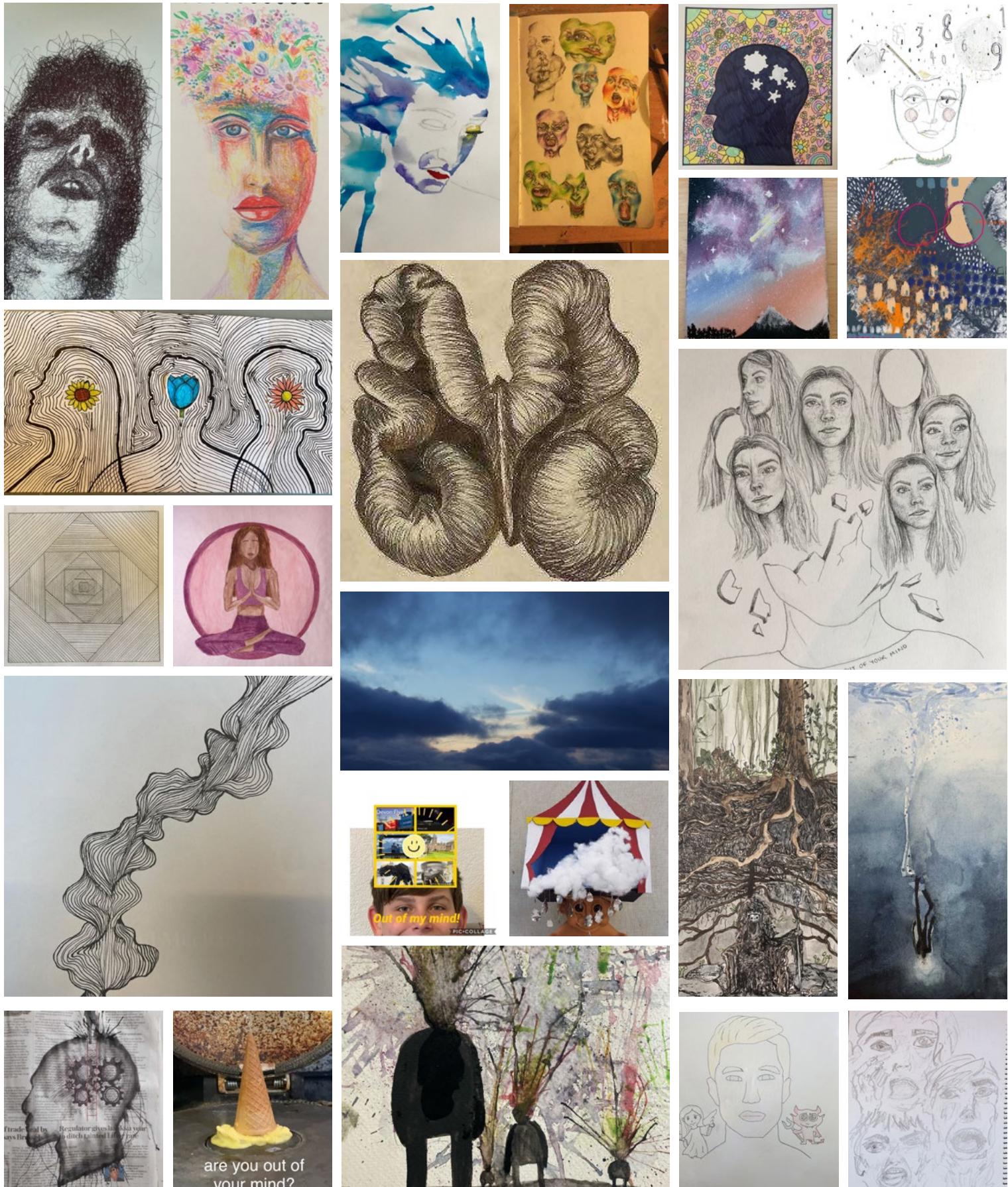
Laura Brayley, Weirfield Housemistress



Weekly Art Challenge

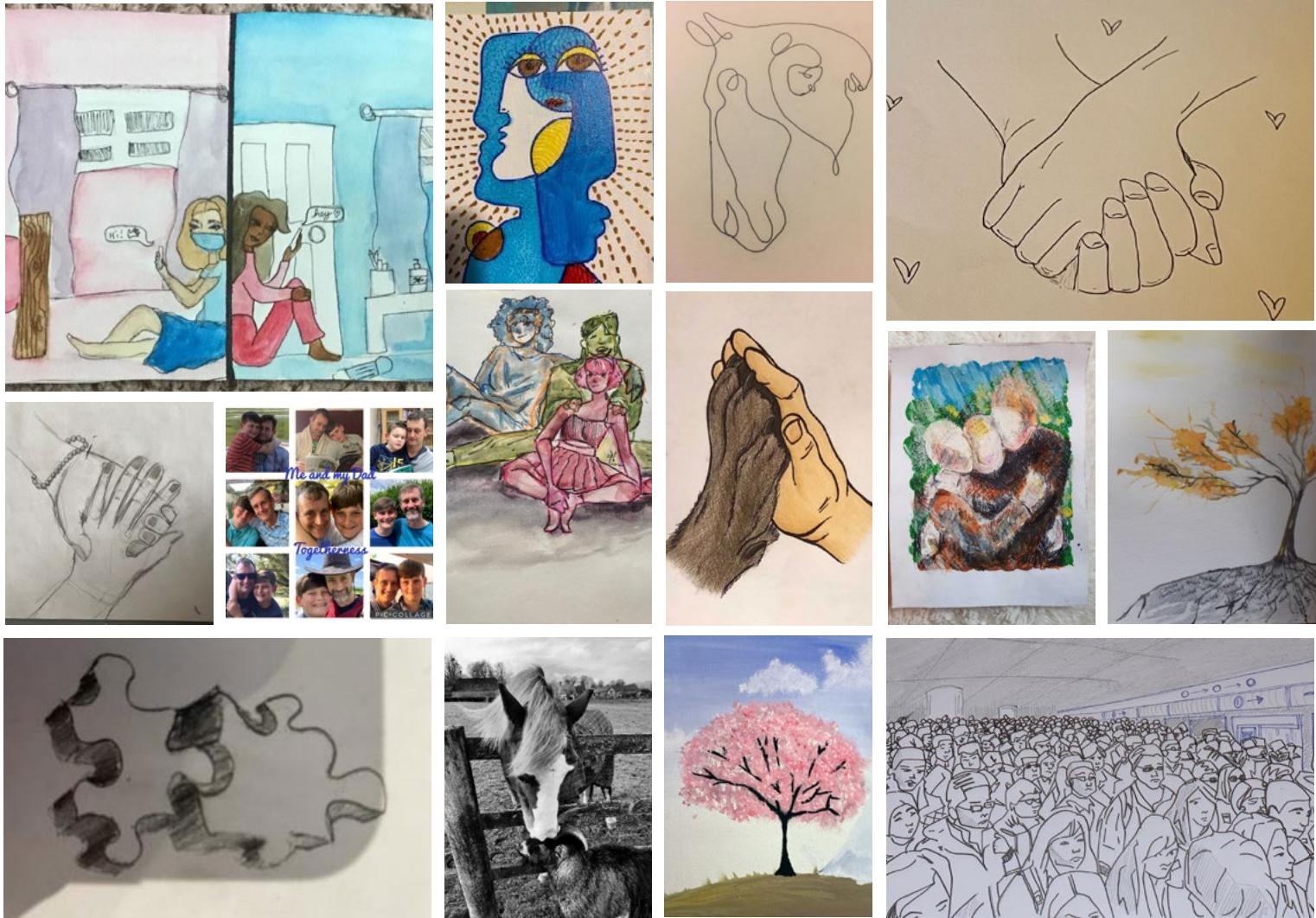
Each week the Art Department have set an art challenge - see more on [@TSArtDepartment](#) on Twitter.

Week Three - "Out of Your Mind"



Weekly Art Challenge

Week Four - "Togetherness"



Jenkin get baking!

The Year 12 Jenkin tutor group organised a Bake Off just before half term so that the girls across all of the year groups could have some fun together. There were two groups, chocolate chip cookies and vanilla cupcakes and the girls, and tutors, were talking, laughing and playing games throughout. It was just a shame that we could not eat the great bakes at the end. Everyone got a Paul Hollywood virtual handshake!

Joanna Evans, Jenkin Housemistress



LGBT+ History Month



I consider myself very fortunate indeed. I realised I was bisexual when I was in Year 9 (although in hindsight I always have been), I had a group of very supportive friends, experienced no homophobic bullying, and never had to officially come out to my parents, nor have to justify my sexuality to them. It has been a comfortable part of my life ever since. When Lockdown #1 arrived, and we all found ourselves with some extra thinking time, I realised I am also non-binary: that I am somewhere in the middle of the wonderful spectrum of human gender. This was something of a surprise

revelation at first, until further reflection made clear that – like my sexuality – it has always been true. My family, friends, colleagues, and students have been wonderfully affirming.

I consider myself fortunate, because many members of the LGBTQ+ community have not had – are not having – as easy, accepting, comfortable, nor safe an experience. Homophobia and bigotry still loom, both in individuals' private lives where they should be safest, and in the public sphere where it often goes hand-in-hand with broader systemic social injustice and discrimination: racism and xenophobia, ableism...

It has pained me that the author of one of the most successful book franchises of all time – whom I started reading when I was in year 6 – now openly expresses transphobic views. This author is not alone in doing so, but very few other individuals have such an enormous audience and influence. For one whose most famous protagonist stands against a foe who ranks 'purity' of blood above all, the hypocrisy cuts deep. Our children deserve better role models than those who would deny their existence.

I lived through the times of Section 28 (albeit unconsciously in my early years). Many other staff may well have taught in schools at a time when their lips were sealed by the spectre of prosecution should they dare to tell students that being gay was just as valid as being heterosexual. In 2011, eight years after Section 28 was repealed, the ghost of it haunted education again, when one politician added a clause stipulating that the benefits of marriage be part of the curriculum in academies and free schools. At a time when same-sex marriage was 3 years away from being legalised, the young members of the LGBTQ+ community were again being discouraged from being their truest self.

Thankfully, in 2005, two teachers took it upon themselves to establish LGBT+ History Month. They acknowledge the debt they owe to Black History Month in terms of the structure and framework of the event. Perhaps coincidentally, LGBT+ History

Month in the UK coincides with Black History Month in the USA, and vice versa. All marginalised groups have experienced their own unique, but linked struggles for equality in the face of individual and systemic injustice, which are far from over. As Emma Lazarus – an American poet whose most famous work is inscribed on New York's Statue of Liberty, welcoming the homeless, tempest-tost – once wrote, against growing American anti-Semitism: "Until we are all free, we are none of us free." Black Lives Matter. Trans Lives Matter. Queer Lives Matter.

The world can be a scary place if you don't feel like you fit in. Even throwaway comments describing something rubbish as 'gay' can hurt members of the LGBTQ+ community; one papercut of a thousand. This should not be their problem to "deal with". We are each responsible for our own behaviour, and must accept responsibility for it. The fight for equality depends upon us all standing proactively against social injustice, in all its forms. Bigotry will not be solved by social media posts or rainbow lanyards alone. Staff, students, parents: we all have a part to play in creating a fairer world...and not just in the month of February.

Mx Jay Wood



Further reading:

LGBT+ History Month: <https://lgbtplushistorymonth.co.uk/>

Stonewall, the charity for the LGBTQ+ community: <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/>

Mermaids, a charity devoted to supporting gender-diverse young people and their families: <https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/>

2BU, a local organisation providing support services for LGBTQ+ young people in Somerset: <https://www.2bu-somerset.co.uk/>

Carrington Library – Miss Lockwood has a huge selection of articles and resources!

LGBT+ and The Royal Navy



The armed forces like many institutions throughout the 20th century had to adapt to the changing world around them and one such moment for them was the decriminalisation of homosexuality within the armed forces. They still attempted to find loopholes in the law and many serving men and women were scared to be their true selves to their oppos (navy term for teammate!).

It wasn't until 21 years ago on the 12th January 2000 that the ban on homosexuality within the Royal Navy was lifted and since then they have made huge leaps and strides forward in terms of their diversity and inclusion. They have been marching proudly in Pride parades since 2006, in 2010 the Navy made it onto Stonewall's diversity champions programme and from 2014 transgender personnel were able to serve openly as the gender they identify as. All serving personnel also undergo a yearly update and training on diversity and inclusion which allows the Navy to update the fleet on the strides being taken forwards!

So what does this all mean today? It shows how a very long-standing organisation with very deeply ingrained rules and traditions has been able to become a very welcoming and accepting employer for all. The Royal Navy has its own LGBT+ network called the Compass Network who work as a point of contact and a safe place for LGBT+ serving personnel.

The Royal Navy and many of the other armed forces freely advertise their recruitment in LGBT forums and have conducted a large number of civil ceremonies onboard ships and establishments. The armed forces accept that they are by no means perfect but they have learnt from their history and are working to make sure that all LGBT personnel are proud to serve and are proud of who they are!

I am proud to serve as an Officer in the Royal Naval Reserves and to be a member of the Compass Network to help continue the great work the Royal Navy are doing towards diversity and inclusion!

Mr Thomas Dunn RNR, Theatre Technician



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!](#)



Advice from a Dragon

Our Business Studies students have received some words of wisdom from Dragon's Den star, Theo Paphitis.

He has penned a letter to our students telling them 'that with hard work anything is possible' and 'to choose a path you're passionate about.'

The letter came after our Head of Business Studies and Economics, Mr Stoddart, got in touch with Mr Paphitis to let him know how hard our students are working during this challenging time.



16 February 2021

For: All Business Students
Taunton School, Somerset
% Peter Stoddart
Head of Business & Economics

Dear Business Students at Taunton School,

I hope you are all well, in what we can all agree are the most unusual of times! Your teacher, Mr Stoddart, has been in touch and told me what a hard-working bunch you all are, and I wanted to simply say well done and keep up the good work.

You are working as students have never done before, but often out of mayhem comes opportunity, so as you embark on your important next steps, whether eyeing a future career, applying for a University placement or just trying to figure things out, remember that with hard work anything is possible. One of my favourite sayings is the harder I work, the luckier I get, and it is very rare that hard work doesn't pay off.

One thing I will say for your futures, is to choose a path that you're passionate about. It's so important that you enjoy what you do, and do it well, as this is often where the magic happens.

We know it's not easy at the moment, but out of the chaos many new and different opportunities will also come up, and it's up to you to choose which one is right for you.

Go for it,

Theo Paphitis
Shopkeeper



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.

External Writing Competition

The English Department are encouraging all creative writers to have a go at the 'Connell Guides' Short Story competition. You could even win a cash prize! You have until 14th May.

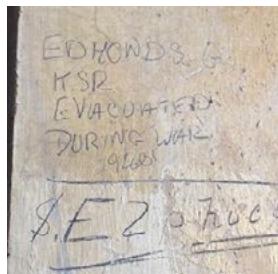
[For further details and a link to the external website, click here.](#)



Solving the Mystery of Graffiti in the Clock Tower

A recent foray into the School Tower revealed some interesting graffiti on the walls of the lower room below the tower itself. There are several dozen signatures of pranksters of mostly older generations who somehow managed to penetrate the normally locked trap door on the top landing to leave their mark for posterity.

A search for some of the names in old school registers has shown many to be genuine. The oldest appears to be that of F G Eashmond of Devon and dates from 1883-6, only about 15 years after the School's main building was opened. Frank Gregory Eashmond from Tiverton is listed in the earliest school register held in the archive.



The periods with the most names seem to be just after the First World War and around WW2. Perhaps these were times of laxer security; we know that during air raids in WW2 boys had to leave their rooms and bed down in the main corridor. Did a few daredevils use the general confusion for a quick trip up the tower? One interesting name is that of evacuee G Edmonds KSR 1940. King's School, Rochester in Kent was one of the schools evacuated to Taunton for most of the war.

Another intriguing signature is that of K A Coles (1936-41). Ken Coles was a day boy, so this may have been a daytime raid! He was still living in Staplegrove in old age and I recall him as an active member of Staplegrove Church. Unfortunately he died in 2016 so we are unable to ask him about his schoolboy escapade.

There are several names which cannot be traced in any registers, which raises the question whether these might be young domestic staff, many of whom lived in during the 19th and early 20th century. Some of these were not much older than the pupils and probably just as much up for a dare – which admittedly might have cost them their job. Two scrawls 'A

Hooper, Porter, 1904' and 'S Holmore, Porter at Fairwater 1925-35' would seem to confirm this theory. Two others, with the precise date of 27 April 1931, are J Hawker and J Huxtable, who have added 'of Taunton' after their signatures, suggesting perhaps the town rather than the School. Certainly both are absent from contemporary registers.

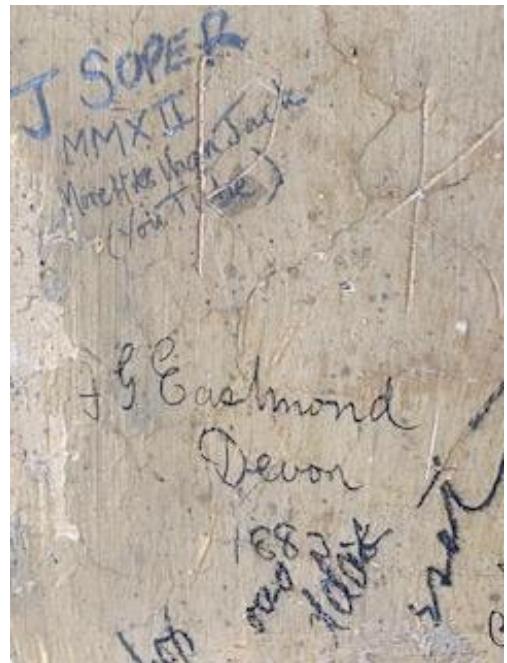


There was obviously a greater opportunity for nocturnal visits to the Tower for boys in houses accommodated in the

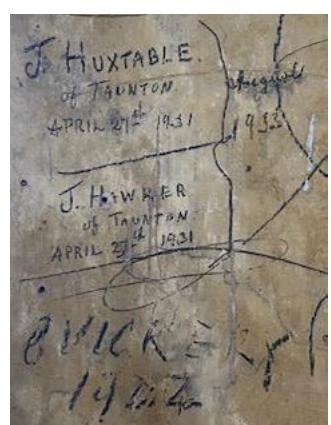
main building – School House and Winterstoke. However the latter was a junior house for boys under 14 who were perhaps less likely to go on night jaunts than older teenagers. From 1918-21 Fairwater was also housed in the main building for various reasons which may explain some Fairwater names from that era. A list of four friends (Walters, Nash, Besley and Owen) survives as a joint scrawl from 1919, when all were aged 17 or 18. Of these Nash and Besley were from Fairwater, Owen from Thone (a senior house then) and Lewis Walters was a School House Prefect – shame!



The shortage of names from the last 50 years suggests that tightened security had made access to the tower more difficult. Certainly as a resident master in School House for many years, I recall the trap door always being firmly padlocked, making the prank well-nigh impossible – though I wouldn't have been surprised at some of the boys of that era having a go. There is a 1981 name – C Hawker (unidentified) and just one from the 21st century, that of J Soper in 2012 (written as MMXII). This appears to be Jeremy Soper of Evans who was in the Lower Sixth in 2012. An adjacent scrawl mentioning YouTube suggests the graffiti are genuine. If so, was this another daytime escapade and how did he gain access? Had he found the trap door open whilst some maintenance was being carried out and seized his chance? Some day we must ask him!



Above: the earliest and latest



John Brown, School Archivist

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 31

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

Day 32

#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek: Have conviction. It makes you irresistible.

Day 33

#ChildrensMentalHealthWeek: Not in the wind nor in the earthquake nor in the fire... but in the still, small voice.

Day 34

It's supposed to be hard. If it wasn't hard everyone would do it. It's the 'hard' that makes it great.

Day 35

Never in the history of Calming Down has anyone ever calmed down by being told to calm down.

Day 36

Live the full life of the mind, exhilarated by new ideas, intoxicated by the romance of the unusual.

Day 37

For what it's worth, it's never too late to be whoever you want to be. There's no time limit. Start whenever you want. You can change or stay the same. There are no rules to this thing. We can make the best or the worst of it. I hope you make the best of it. I hope you see things that startle you. I hope you feel things you've never felt before. I hope you meet people who have a different point of view. I hope you live a life you're proud of, and if you're not, I hope you have the courage to start over again.

Day 38

#HalfTermTogetherness: It's like I always say, having a weird family builds character.

Day 39

#Feb14 - for cynics and romantics alike: No 1: If we were caught in a snowstorm in a tent on the side of a mountain and things were looking grim, she was the kind of girl who would smile, bundle close to me, and say something like, "let's sing a Christmas song". No 2: I've met Mr Wrong. I've met several Mr Reasonably Okays. And I've spent one very long afternoon in a bus shelter with Mr Halitosis.

Day 40

No we're never gonna survive unless we get a little crazy.

Day 41

Arguing with a teenager is like wrestling in the mud with a pig. Sooner or later you figure out that they're enjoying it.

Day 42

The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.

Day 43

Dear Monday, my mama don't like you and she likes everyone.

Day 44

There are two kinds of people: those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group; there is less competition there.

Meet The Head of Academic Scholars and EAL - Rick Kirtland

What is your job role and which age groups do you work with?

I have a few different jobs in the Senior School. I am Head of English as an Additional Language (EAL), as well as Head of Academic Scholars, and Head of Debating. I am also currently Acting Head of Classics and teach English in the English department. I work with Years 9 – 13.

When did you start at Taunton School and what did you do before?

I started at Taunton School in 2017. My previous post was overseas, at a leading British international school in Bangkok.

What led you into teaching?

A friend at university asked me to visit him in Asia directly after I graduated, so I took him up on the offer. While there, I studied an English language teaching qualification and taught ESL for 2 and a half years. I haven't looked back since. Twenty years later, I still love teaching – which is a good thing, I suppose!

Who inspires you?

Anyone who has the ability to maintain higher moral and ethical standards than I do – especially master monks in Thailand.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

Most of it, to be honest. Taunton School, in particular, is a very social place with great staff and so coming to work every day is a pleasure. The students are fantastic, too. I'm involved in a wide variety of different things and so no day is ever the same, which keeps things interesting. The thing I probably enjoy most is seeing students make massive leaps forward personally and academically; that's what makes the job most rewarding.

What do you find most challenging?

Avoiding the cakes and biscuits.

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

Simple: I just think about something else. I don't use social media or stick myself to a screen. I prefer to spend time with my family and read or go for a walk.



Quick Fire questions now...

Favourite film

Notting Hill.

Favourite book

Burmese Days (George Orwell). Pillars of the Earth (Ken Follett). Ethan Frome (Edith Wharton). Various historical-fiction books. Any books by Ajarn Brahm.

Hobbies

Writing. Reading. Discussing religion/spirituality/philosophy/metaphysics/ethics etc.

Any pets?

No. We have thought about getting a dog, but haven't yet. Maybe next year...

Favourite singers/bands

I don't really listen to much music anymore. Believe it or not, these days I actually prefer Thai music than Western music.

Favourite TV programmes/series

Downton Abbey. Only Fools and Horses. Good documentaries.

Any claims to fame

I work at Taunton School.

A tip for surviving lockdown

Keep things in perspective. It will pass.