

THE SWAN

IN THIS EDITION...

Easter Egg Hunt!

Win an Easter Egg in our first Swan Easter Egg hunt!



Operation Christmas Child!

See how our students worked together to raise money for others in need.



Anti-bullying

See Nung's success in Anti-bullying by being awarded with the Diana Award.





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YOUR SCHOOL LOTTERY

CONTACT US

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www.ChristletonHigh.co.uk





Happy
Easter

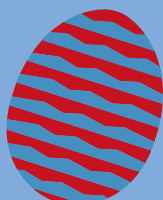
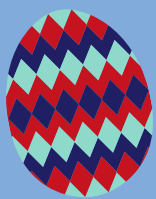


The Swan Easter Egg Hunt!

Throughout this edition of The Swan, we have hidden a number of these Christleton themed Easter eggs. How many can you spot? If you guess correctly you could win an Easter egg!

There will be a winner for each year group!

Send the number of how many you spot, your name and form to theswan@christletonhigh.co.uk by **Monday 19th April.**



The winner for each year will receive their Easter egg one week after the final submission date and will be contacted by email.

To submit your answer, please email your name, form and how many eggs you spotted to theswan@christletonhigh.co.uk by **Monday 19th April 2021.**

If there are multiple correct guesses per year, the winner will be chosen from this group at random.



HEADTEACHER'S REPORT



D P Jones
Headteacher

I hope you are all well! I wanted to begin by saying how great it is to have students back in school and how wonderfully they have re-engaged with school life.

Despite the difficulties of the second national school lockdown, there have been many positives to report this term.

- Our students have engaged fantastically well with our remote learning provision. Our data shows that approximately 90% of lessons have had a live element to them, and the vast majority of students have completed everything asked of them.
- Departments have continued to deliver their planned curriculum and assessment schedule, so we do not expect wide learning gaps for most students.
- Our Emergency Provision has seen an average of 80 students a day attend, and there has been a great atmosphere around the school – many were sad on their last EP day that it was coming to an end!
- Our amazing support staff, led by **Mr Smith, Mrs Rackham** and **Mrs Wong**, have established an extremely efficient testing facility – conducting some 80 tests per hour. We have been testing staff and students on Emergency Provision since January, and for the mass testing, we had a 95% sign up from parents. We have completed over 4000 tests on the school premises. I would like to publically thank all the support staff, volunteers and governors who have helped out since January – it was a big ask of them, and they have been magnificent.

HEADTEACHER'S REPORT



DP Jones
Headteacher

The successful return to school from March 8th was a welcome relief for everyone. Our students are very resilient. While the media and some politicians and educationalists speak of a 'lost generation' or 'catch-up' and 'learning gaps', we shouldn't rush to use and attach such negative labelling to our young people. Whilst many headlines talk about how bad things are, there are some stunningly good things happening, too.

I think that's a credit to all involved; to teachers, who have found new ways to work with students during the pandemic; to students, who have worked from home, lost face-to-face contact with teachers and friends – but have developed independence and found that they are tougher than they had thought; and to parents and carers, who have coped with the stresses of juggling their child's remote learning with their own work and life pressures.

Whilst acknowledging the impact of disruption and the lack of equity when it comes to things like access to tech and parental support, the fact is, the majority of our students will have had to be more independent in their learning and will have developed skills as a result. Although there have been many challenges across the year in terms of learning, we cannot assume that all children will be worse off than they would have been otherwise or that all have been affected in the same way.

Our recovery strategy is based on different phases of intervention. As in September, we must find out where every child is at – their social and emotional re-integration is as important as their academic re-integration and re-establishing social and emotional norms. Relationships are key in the first phase. We need to 'triage' – find out where each student is on their personal development path. If we get the diagnosis phase of the return to school right, students may even exceed normal expectations. Identifying what learners have achieved gives us a better understanding of what's required, leading to a more tailored provision and potentially better outcomes.





HEADTEACHER'S REPORT



We continue the rollout of our new **KASH** assessment and reporting framework and the

knock-on effects that it has on our internal quality assurance processes, such as ongoing department reviews and our self-evaluation process. Parents have widely welcomed the new reports, but we still have some work to streamline the resultant intervention programmes.

I'm pleased to announce that **Nung Sirisot**, in Year 13, has been elected as a Young Person's Representative to the Board of Trustees of the Anti-bullying charity, The Diana Foundation. I have previously showcased Nung and our Anti-bullying Ambassadors' work, and it's a great honour for Nung and the school to have this national recognition. Congratulations also to **Kathryn Gornall** in Year 11, chosen as one of six youth directors on the Good Future Board for the national Eco-Schools Programme – and all achieved via virtual meetings!

To update on other issues:



- Planning for next year's curriculum offer and timetabling has started, and we will announce some changes to the Senior Leadership Team shortly;
- We are in discussions with the Local Authority over some capital funding to improve the infrastructure of the school, which I hope will lead to some enhancement in both classrooms and study facilities;
- The current budget position remains strong, but there are cost pressures in the years ahead;
- We are consulting parents on some of the changes introduced this year that we are considering adopting permanently – for example, remote parents' evenings and staggered start/end times, staggered break and lunchtimes;
- Sixth Form applications are looking really strong for next year, but there are some difficult decisions to make, as always, in deciding which subjects are viable;
- Teacher assessments for Year 11 and Year 13 continue as we move towards the deadline for submitting Teacher Assessed Grades.

HEADTEACHER'S REPORT



In many respects, the term has gone better than expected. Staff have rallied round brilliantly, and students have generally been compliant. However, we are a long way from 'normal'. We operate under government restrictions, with the safety protocols introduced in September, still in place. Our curriculum offer is not yet fully restored, but we are working on plans to address this in the summer term.

I want to finish by thanking students, parents and staff for all their efforts during this tumultuous year – it has been a challenging and difficult period for all of us, with some personal losses along the way. There will be time to reflect on what we did and what we could have done, but as the Easter break nears, what we need more than anything is time to heal, re-engage as a school community and move forward with optimism and hope for better times.

However you spend the Easter break, I hope you all have a relaxing and enjoyable time.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

DP Jones | Headteacher



Remember...

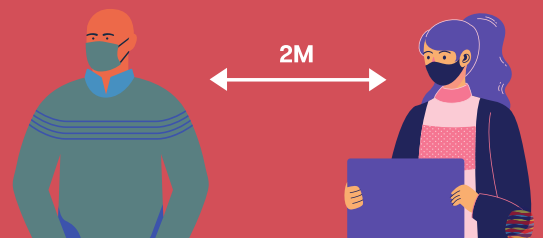
Wash your hands...



Wear a face covering...



Make **space** between yourself and others...





Helping you support our SCHOOL

Find out how **CHSA**, the school's **PTA**, have used your generous donations to support our children's futures.

Well, what a 3 months it's been! Since the last edition of The Swan, we have been locked down again, homeschooling again and home learning again. BUT.....when you read this, all being well, our children will be back at school full time and, even with the testing situation, hopefully moving forward back to 'normality'!

In the December edition of the Swan, I noted, in particular, the 4 key aims of the school's Curriculum Recovery Programme: Academic Recovery; Literacy and Numeracy focus; Wellbeing; Special Educational Needs. Despite the number of fundraising events being much reduced this academic year, the CHSA has been continually impressed with the support our school community provides towards these aims and are pleased to report the following activities:

- Allison Parkinson, Committee Member



Christmas Raffle and Match-funding

Thanks to your incredible generosity, we raised **£2,867** from ticket sales. It is an honour to say that one of our new parents of a Year 7 student secured employee match-funding from Barclays for the full amount, bringing our current total to a whopping **£5,734**. Thank you so much to everyone who bought tickets and to our two match-funding supporters for making a huge boost to our funds.



Hotel Chocolat Chocolate Tasting Evening

On the 4th March, the CHSA along with Martin, a representative from Hotel Chocolat, hosted 26 households to enjoy an evening of fantastic chocolate tasting, along with drinks of our choice (!) using all 5 of our senses (including 'hearing' chocolate - an elaborate joke!). Another **£130** was raised. Thank you to everyone who joined us.





Helping you support our SCHOOL

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Photography Equipment

Our students are enjoying the benefits of brand new Photography equipment this year just as they have every year since Photography has been offered here at Christleton High. This has been made possible by the hard work and generosity of The CHSA who have made regular contributions to CHS Photography. Their most recent gifts include new tripods and a new ring light and these additions have given CHS students an even more professional photography studio environment in which to work.

- Mrs R Pritchard and Mr M Hornby, The Art Department



Student Wellbeing and Welfare Room

From the bidding process last year, we were delighted to support the development of a student Wellbeing and Welfare room. The aim of the room is to create a safe, quiet space for learners to be able to discuss any issues and to be supported through any challenges they may be facing. Although not quite finished yet, we are sure it will be an invaluable asset to the care and wellbeing of learners at the school. Watch this space...



Remember...

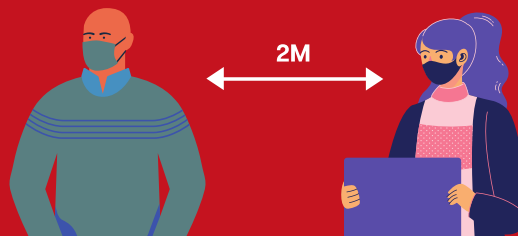
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Spring, Summer and beyond...

As you can imagine, this is a time when our school needs our support more than ever and CHSA are so grateful for your support, especially in these unprecedented times. so please check out the easy ways below to help. Once again thank you all for your ongoing support of our children's school.

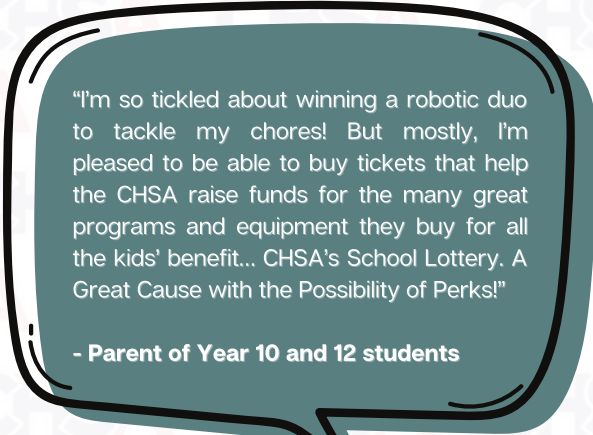
Your School Lottery – your lottery, our funds, their future!

Since our launch in June 2019, we have had almost **90 winners!**

BUT... the prize money increases with every new supporter who joins!

AND... the funds we make increase with every new support who joins!

Our current revenue is **£1,300** a year – help us double that in 2021 by signing up today.



This month's national prize – enter by April 21st yourschoollottery.co.uk (search for Christleton)



Share ideas: If you have a great idea for a fund-raising activity, please let us know at chairofchsa@christletonhigh.co.uk

Employee Match-funding

Many companies will match funding raised by an event you are involved with. If your employer offers this, please get in touch.

There's also a national weekly prize of £25,000

Plus the chance to win regular prizes like this one, which was won by one of our supporters in February!



ANTI-BULLYING



X



THE DIANA AWARD

As Anti-Bullying Ambassadors here at Christleton High, we were awarded the Anti-Bullying Ambassador School of the Month (November 2020) by the Diana Award. This was a massive achievement for us, as they have a pool of over 1,000 active Anti-Bullying Ambassador schools! First and foremost, we had a very successful beginning to our journey with a great vision to create a bullying free environment for everyone at school and encourage other people to carry out an act of kindness daily instead of 'bantering' around. However, we have had to rethink our approach and did it successfully as a team in spite of the pandemic. We managed to earn the Wellbeing Badge for our new reporting system, safe space for vulnerable students, mentoring system, assemblies and anti-bullying displays. Our hard work has improved the whole school community's culture; staff, parents, students, and the community have become increasingly comfortable with reaching out to us Ambassadors for help, or they used our reporting system (monitored by **SLT**, **SENDCO** and Heads of Year) for support.

Personally, I feel that our school environment is more positive than ever before, and students are committed to kindness which is still increasingly progressing as each day goes by. Every pupil in this school has represented our ethos (the 5 C's) loud and clear in the wider community with pride and passion to show our acknowledgement around the seriousness of bullying as a whole and for that at our school, we welcome ALL; if you see something, say something. On that note, please keep in mind you can never reach the top by pulling someone down, be an upstander, not a bystander.

Chosen Anti-Bullying Programme Coordinator & Chair of School Council - Soipheth (Nung) Sirisot 13.6





OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

FUND RAISER

Our form **8BY2** was asked to raise money for Operation Christmas Child. This charity sends shoeboxes filled with gifts for children across the UK and abroad for Christmas, who would not normally receive gifts (Samaritan's Purse organises this charity). We have raised £53 towards the charity, and there were two boxes bought with the amount we raised.



“ We wanted to help as we know we are so lucky. ”

The remaining £13 was used towards a local food bank. We purchased lots of tinned and dried foods while Mrs Woolley took them to a local food-bank. We wanted to donate our money because we feel children should not miss out on Christmas and have something to look forward to on Christmas Day. We also wanted to donate to the food bank because of Coronavirus this year, many people are losing jobs, finding it hard to pay for their food, and we wanted to help as we know we are so lucky.

Hazel Thomas - 8BY2

YEAR 7 GERMAN

DECEMBER 2020

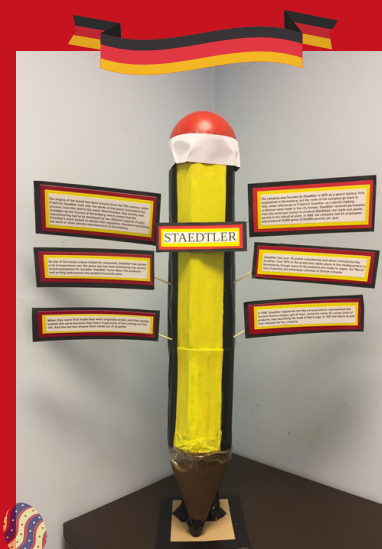
Long overdue congratulations are due to all Year 7 German learners for their amazing response to being asked to design a poster to reflect an aspect of our German themes, culture or industry. We were SO impressed by the variety of ideas presented to us and by the talent on display – Year 7 are clearly a very artistic bunch!

A special mention must go to **Luwe Hayes-Roberts** in **7K2** for going WAY above and beyond and producing this masterpiece – a large-scale model of a Staedtler pencil, which took our breath away! A future in German engineering, perhaps, Luwe? Anything is possible!

We would like to finish by saying a huge congratulations to all Year 7 German pupils for their amazing commitment and participation in lessons during lockdown. Year 7, your unending enthusiasm ensured that our Y7 German lessons were always the highlight of our day!

Well done, **7K1, 7K2, 7L1** and **7L2** – you are all amazing and an absolute pleasure to teach!

Mrs Jones
and Mrs
O'Malley





KITCHEN SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS

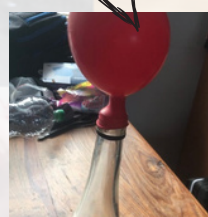
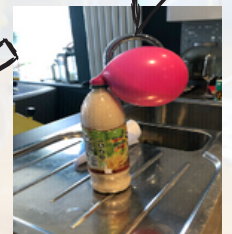
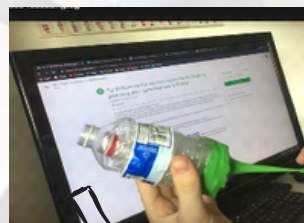
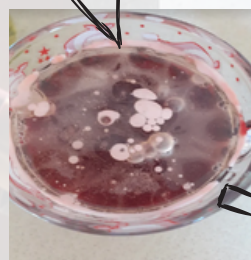
YEAR 9

During the second lockdown, Miss Woolley asked my form to do lots of experiments at home. We did fun Science kitchen experiments since we couldn't do the more important ones in school. Personally, I made a lava lamp in a cup. To do this, I followed the instructions carefully: I added food colouring to water, then I added oil and sprinkled salt to start the reaction. It was amazing that the lava lamp sparked into life easily. The other students did other projects like making ice cream, fizz in a bottle, balloon powered cars or rocket balloons. I am thrilled we got to do this because it made the lockdown less boring.

- Rebecca Efobi, 9Ba1.

During lockdown Miss Woolley asked us to complete some kitchen Science experiments at home. She wanted us to have some fun away from the computer screen. I mixed vinegar and baking power so they reacted together to make carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide was used to blow up the balloon through the bottle. For my second project, I made a balloon-powered boat using a fully-blown balloon and cut up cardboard. The balloon made it glide through the water until all the air had run out.

- Riley Sharp, 9BA1



LENS FLAIR

CHS PHOTOGRAPHY

We asked five CHS photographers to share their experiences of A-Level Photography and to share one of the photographs they've made whilst on the course. We love teaching Photography, and it's great to see that the students have enjoyed the creative freedom that the course offers, the level of challenge and support provided and the opportunity to make lasting friendships as part of our Art community. If you're interested in taking A-Level Photography or doing Photography as part of a GCSE in Art or your Year 7-9 art projects, please pop and see Mr Hornby and/or Mrs Pritchard during lunchtime in A13.

My favourite aspect of the photography course is the balance between practical and research work. The practical work allows me to be creative and experiment with different concepts and ideas. In contrast, the research work interests me as I can find inspiration and more on the context of the topic I am working on. Due to the class size, the teachers can give you more focused and specific feedback, which helps you improve quickly. Something I have found valuable and learnt from this course is managing my time as it isn't possible to leave photoshoots to the last minute. You have to plan ahead if you want to produce successful work.

- Lottie Astle

By Lottie Astle



By Lauren Morgan



LENS FLAIR

CHS PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is a wonderful subject that allowed me to become more confident in myself and my skills. At first, I wasn't overly confident in my knowledge of the subject. Still, the first year gave us time to experiment and develop ideas while also using professional resources and facilities. Some of the great experiences I've had on the course have involved expanding my knowledge and curiosity of the subject and my social skills and building strong friendships. Even if you're uncertain, you're given the freedom to experiment on where you want your photography to go and themes you'd like to focus on. This class was enjoyable and played a key part in building my confidence in my ability to form ideas independently, and that confidence has spread across all my A-levels.

- Lauren Morgan

Out of all of the subjects I did, photography was by far my favourite and not because, as people may think, it is easy... it's not. Workload wise it is one of the most difficult subjects I took for A-Level. However, I am still thankful that I took Photography. Having been new to the school for Sixth Form, the small class of people really allowed me to make actual friends in the school, unlike any other class I did. Work-wise, in each lesson, I feel like I improved in some way and that my photography and editing skills have been used to make photos I am proud of... like the one included in this article. In the early parts of the course, the work that you had to do for photography helped me stay organized and keep to a schedule which is important in any situation.

- Aeryn Dunkerley



LENS FLAIR

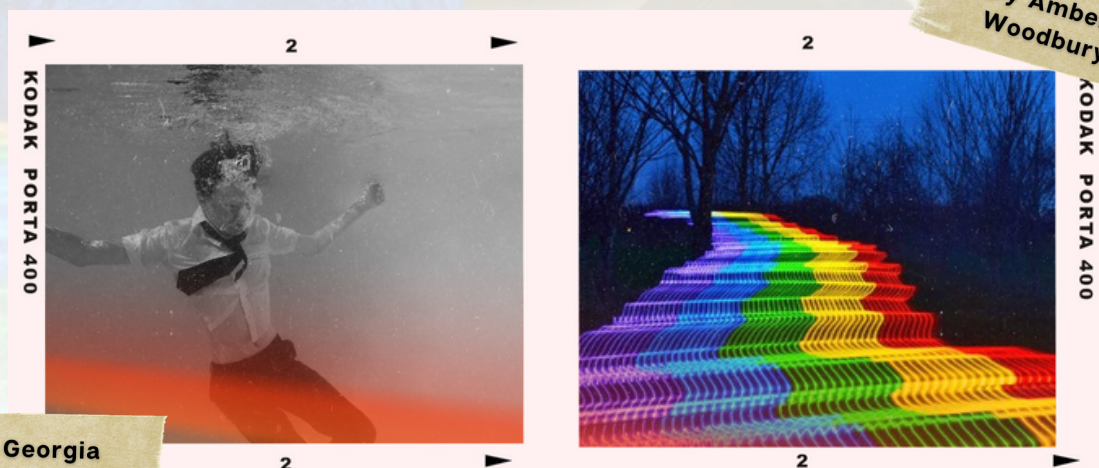
CHS PHOTOGRAPHY

I have really enjoyed participating in the A-Level Photography course at Christleton High School. The course has so many aspects of photography, including looking at the genres, such as documentary and portraiture, and the possibilities of enhancing or manipulating photos within Photoshop. I went into the course with almost no knowledge of photography and learnt so much within the first few months, which I developed through the rest of the course. It has helped expand my creativity and skills to take on to further education, hobbies, and employment.

- Georgia Thomas

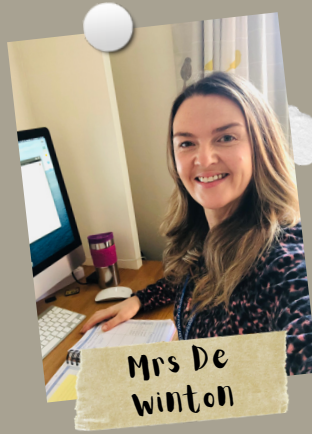
I've relished the new creative freedom A-Level photography has offered the whole way through the course. The course allows you to go from having very basic camera knowledge to feeling independent enough to explore your own photographic style, which is something other courses I take do not offer. We get to work with DSLR cameras and editing software in school, which allows our images to be of a high/professional standard. As a result, we have had many amazing opportunities to take part in 'professional practice'. One of my favourite things about A-Level photography has been mixing with new people and making new friends, and how supportive the department is and how focused on us as individuals rather than a group and the creative freedom we have to experiment with our own ideas.

- Amber Woodbury



By Georgia Thomas

By Amber Woodbury



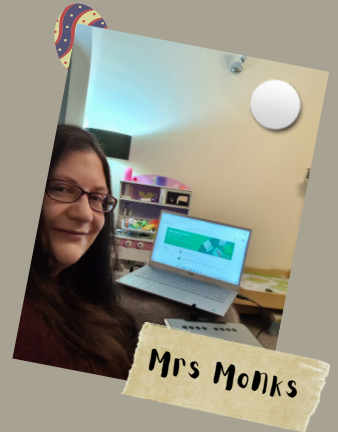
Mrs De Winton



Mr Cosstick



Mrs Bolam

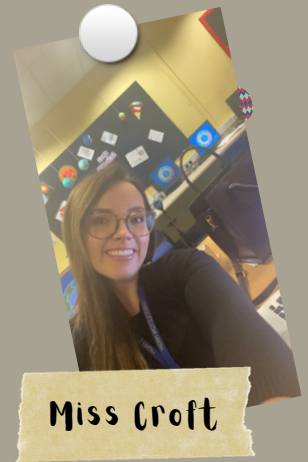


Mrs Monks

As we make the transition back into the classroom, many of us will be happy to see the backs of our computers and (in a lot of cases) cramped home-working setups. However, they have served their purpose well, and we're sure many of us hope we won't be going back again. Here are how some of our staff got on!



Mrs Humphries



Miss Croft



Mr Jones



Ms Hillier



Mr Gresty



Mrs Kelly



Mr Holmes



SKETCHBOOK COMPETITION WINNERS

Autumn 2020

At the end of the autumn term, Art held its usual termly sketchbook competition digitally. We were delighted with so many excellent entries and are pleased to announce the first, second and third place winners of that competition. Well done to all of you.

Year 7

Millie Secrette
Lilia Hartford
Holly Cooke



Year 8

Lucy Wilson
Paula O'Sullivan
Daniella Rewhorn



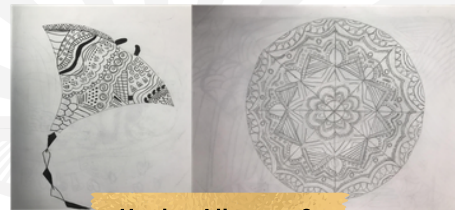
Year 9

Alice Jawara
Daisy Hearne
Sophie Mochrie

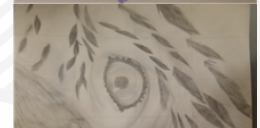


Here is how some of the winners felt when they heard they had done so well:

I was persuaded to enter the sketchbook competition by my friends, and I was so surprised because I never thought I would win. It has given me a boost in confidence in my art. - **Alice Jawara**



Haajra Ali, year 8



Megan Hannay, year 8



Poppy Slater, year 9



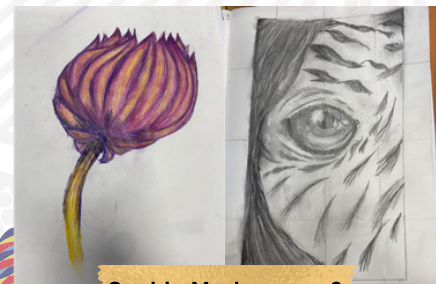
Isla Mackie, year 9



Amy Sadler, year 9



06-11-20



Sophia Marks, year 9



Holly Cooke, year 7



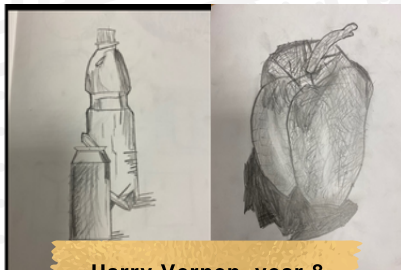
Mia Maddocks, year 8

SKETCHBOOK COMPETITION WINNERS

Autumn 2020



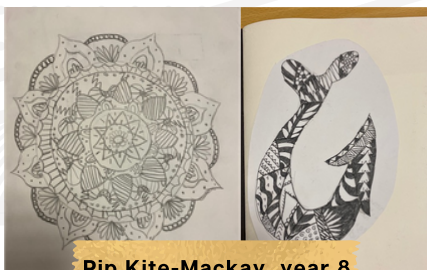
Lauren Evans, year 8



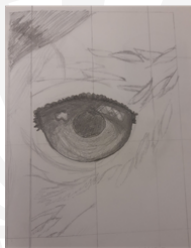
Harry Vernon, year 8



Pippa Prior, year 8



Pip Kite-Mackay, year 8



Anastasia Rex, year 8

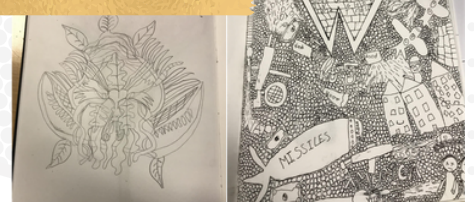


Grace Tittershill, year 9



Holly Heeley, year 9

Freddie Ogilby, year 8

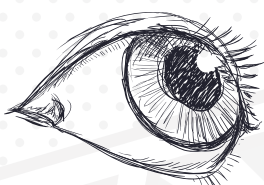


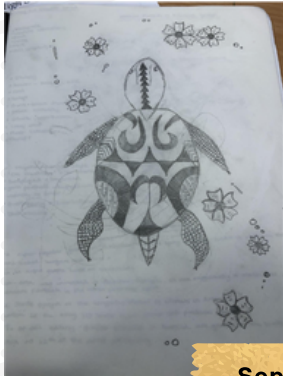
I felt thrilled when I found out that I had won the sketchbook competition!! I never thought it would be me and I was so surprised! Thank you to the teachers for choosing me! - **Lucy Wilson**

I don't normally win stuff when it comes to art, so I was surprised. I normally only care about winning at rugby but was very happy about coming third in the art competition. - **Sophie Mochrie**

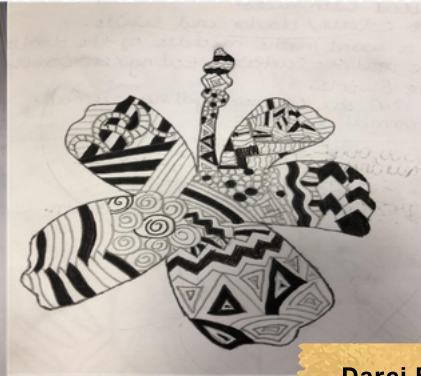
I was very pleased. I tried hard and felt like it paid off. - **Paula O'Sullivan**

I felt really proud when I had found out that I had come 2nd in the sketchbook competition. I love art, which made me excited and motivated me to try harder in my art lessons. - **Daisy Hearne**

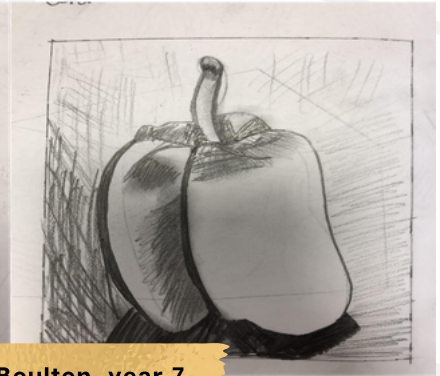




Sophia Timms, year 8



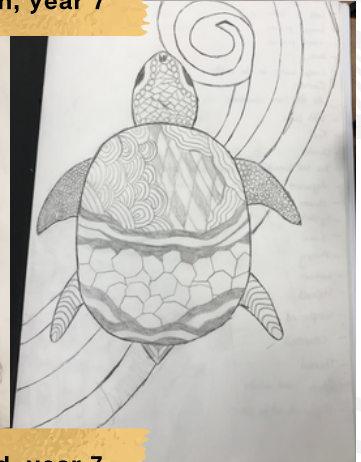
Darci Boulton, year 7



Millie Secrette, year 7



Lilia Hartford, year 7



THE WINNERS...



Paula O'Sullivan, year 8



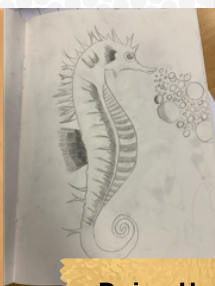
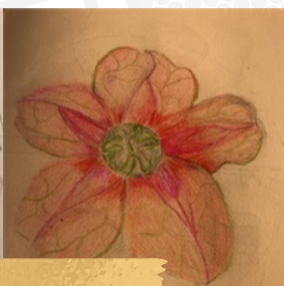
Lucy Wilson, year 8



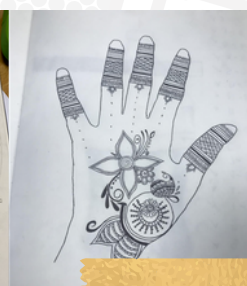
Daniella Rewhorn, year 8



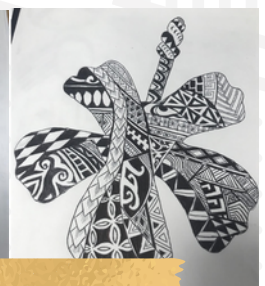
Sophie Mochrie, year 9



Daisy Hearne, year 9



Alice Jawara, year 9



TAKING SOME TIME AWAY FROM SCREENS

BY MRS REBECCA KENNEDY

Year 10 were given some different options to choose from to have some time away from the screen during their maths lesson. This was an opportunity to put their real-life maths skills to the test or even have a bit of 'me-time' for an hour.

Here are just some of the options:

1. Go for a nice long walk or run. Use your phone (in your pocket) or your watch to track the time and distance you have covered, and then when you get home, work out your speed in metres per second.

2. Check out the link below from the RSPB about a spot of bird watching in your garden/ local area.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9mvHqv9svE>

3. Sit and read your favourite book (not an ebook) for 45 minutes or so. Could you then calculate your average number of words read per minute?

4. Do a spot of cooking/baking.

5. Fancy getting active with some sports? Why don't you count how many 'keepy uppys' you can do in the garden in a minute? Repeat this around 10 times and find your average number of 'keepy uppys' per minute.

6. None of these ideas taking your fancy? Take a short walk to an elderly neighbours house to give them a socially distant hello, call your grandparents or another elderly relative that you have not been able to see for a while, and no doubt you will make them feel 10x better along with yourself.

See the next page to see how they got on!



Jemma Doherty did some baking!



Oliver Donald took his time to read.



Isabel Hopley did some reading!

Evie took her dog for a walk.... we don't think the dog was too impressed!



Alicia Wright did some reading!



Will Travers took the dog for a (very muddy) walk!

Katie Gwyther followed a recipe to make some delicious cookies!



Caitlyn Freeman followed a recipe to make some goodies!

Amy McDonnell went for a walk with her mum and the dogs!



Outdoor Walk
Open Goal
 10:09 - 11:00
 Chester

Total Time
0:50:36

Distance
2.59MI

Active Kilocalories
177KCAL

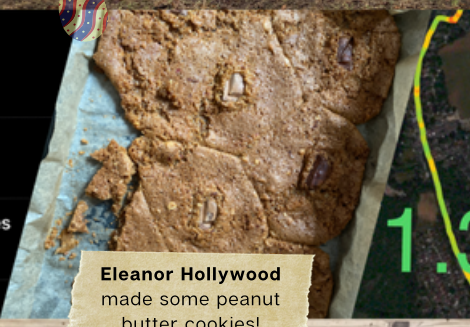
Total Kilocalories
228KCAL

Elevation Gain
93ft

Elevation
 ▲ 72FT MAX
 ▼ 29FT MIN

Avg Heart Rate
127BPM

Avg Pace
19'32"/MI



Eleanor Hollywood made some peanut butter cookies!



Joe Booth went for a walk and worked out his average speed!

Lewis Russell worked out average number of Keepy Ups

KEEPY - UPS

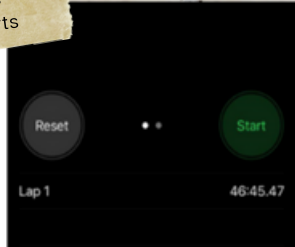
| | First | Second | Third | Fourth | Fifth | Average |
|---------------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|
| Number of keepy ups | 83 | 84 | 75 | 93 | 85 | 84 |
| | | | | | | |

Poppy Clark made some (delicious looking) Jam Tarts



distance = speed x time

805.17 seconds
 4.03 km - 4030 m
 3.06 ml
 $4030 / 2805.17 = 1.44$ metres per second



Simran worked out her average speed

FOCACCIA!

FROM MRS SALLY JOHNSON

All Year 7-9 students were set the challenge of designing and making a piece of decorative focaccia bread in their Food and Nutrition lessons during lockdown. Students could choose a range of different ingredients to create a beautiful piece of artwork in their bread. They were asked to be as creative and colourful as they liked whilst thinking about the ingredients they would use to add flavour and texture to their finished product. Here are some of the wonderful designs we received. A big thank you to everyone who took part- you have all risen to the challenge!

Here's what some of our students thought!

I really enjoyed making the focaccia as it was a good way to get away from technology for a bit, and it tasted great too.
- **Sophie, Year 8**

Making the Focaccia bread was really fun. I loved designing it! Making the dough was really easy and kneading it was fun. I designed the bread on paper and made adjustments as I went along. My design was a bear with red peppers, onions, rosemary from my garden and potatoes. It looked fab, and it was delicious! - **Clara, Year 7**

Making the Focaccia bread was one of the best lessons we've ever had! It was so fun to design it, and it was a great opportunity to use (and eat) the different herbs, fruits and vegetables. After it was baked, the toppings came out slightly burnt, but it was still delicious! - **Suzanna, Year 7**

Making Focaccia bread was fun. I have never made bread. It was enjoyable and terrific - **Will, Year 7**



See the next page for their results!





FINE ART

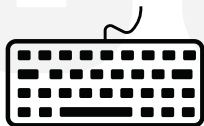
BY ELEANOR BOWDLER

Incorporating illustrative elements into your art not only makes your pieces feel very magical and imaginative but also is very fun, in my opinion. I am a huge fan of all things fantasy, and media such as Lord of the Rings, Merlin and Game of Thrones really inspire me in my art. In addition, I am heavily influenced by a lot of anime and manga artists, like Junji Ito and Studio Ghibli. Letting my passions and interests flow through my school artwork really helps me express myself. I think that in some regards it can actually make your work a lot more original than just completing your schoolwork the traditional way. I especially love to create paintings or drawings that feel like storybook illustrations, such as the frog pieces I completed, as I like to imagine a story behind each piece as I make them.

Even though showing technique, skill, and thought are probably the most important parts of the school, taking influence from your favourite shows, movies or books, and including stylised features from their aesthetics can create much more interesting and enjoyable pieces. Art should be expressive and personal, so it's crucial, I think, to make your work feel like your own and have the freedom to be creative even if it's not always to everyone else's tastes!



CYBERFIRST GIRLS



NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY CENTERS' "CYBERFIRST GIRLS COMPETITION"

During January 2021, two teams of Year 8 girls entered the National Cyber Security Centers' "CyberFirst Girls Competition". The girls managed to complete an impressive amount of questions, and I was astounded by their independence and resilience.

Unfortunately, we joined the competition late, and while we didn't make it to the following round, the competition provided fun and thought-provoking challenges. On occasion, these tasks stumped even us teachers. . . especially frustrating and time-consuming was an unbeatable game of noughts and crosses.

When the competition resumes next year, I hope the following Year 8's will be inspired by the enthusiasm and teamwork of the current teams, some of which have kindly left advice.



"It was difficult at times, and you might need a bit of help. But try not to get too much help because if you get to the next round, you won't know how to do it properly." - Harriet Polley, 8BY2.



"I really enjoyed the competition; however, it was hard at times because we didn't understand the question. Once we got help, it was alright, and we could get most of the other questions that were based on it done! For the next year 8s, try to fully understand how to do the question before you go onto the next and make sure you work as a team!" - Ruby Gilchrist, 8BY2.

girls who
CODE



With these words of wisdom and sufficient time next year, I'm certain our teams will reach the next round and have some fun along the way!

EXHIBITION

**ALL WORK, PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTICLE PRODUCED BY
EVIE BRADLEY, 11BA2.**

An exhibition is the public display of artwork. It is globally used in so many different ways to immerse people in a visceral experience. Art exhibitions, in particular, are intended to evoke creative engagement and a thought-provoking, inspiring experience.

Museums and galleries have not been immune to the impacts of the recession. However, they are still delivering impressive economic benefits thanks to increased tourism in the UK and an ever-growing public appetite for culture. Further financial support for museums and galleries will be needed in the future to ensure the arts and exhibitions survive.

An art exhibition in any form is scientifically proven to make people happier and more light-minded, demonstrating that even dull, clinical settings can be transformed when art is introduced. Art has the power to open up discussions about mental health, a topic that remains sensitive, as it helps to create warm, inviting environments that help support discussion and conversation about sensitive topics.





EXHIBITION

**ALL WORK, PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTICLE PRODUCED BY
EVIE BRADLEY, 11BA2.**



With evidence of growing and over-stretched health and social care budgets, it is logical to make more use of freely available community resources like galleries and museums. Especially for students with a true interest in art, exhibitions evoke awareness about global issues like the environment, conflict and poverty.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant impact on sales in the art gallery sector, particularly given the industry's reliance on events. The absence of physical events has significantly impacted the art industry; however, we hope to return to live events and experience the arts in real life in the next few months.

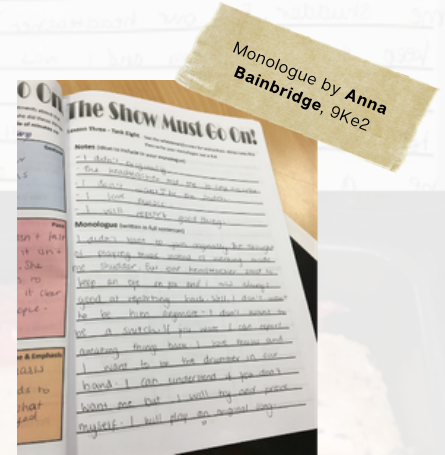
CREATIVE POINTS OF VIEW

Key Stage 3 students at Christleton High School have had very different experiences of creative lessons than they would have had under normal circumstances. COVID restrictions meant that Performing Arts, Art, and Design Technology have all come together as one subject known as PAD. Teachers from all three subjects have planned and prepared lessons to have the best experience possible under the restriction conditions. Lessons have been taught in the classroom and remotely at home. Students have learnt a wide range of skills, concepts and ideas and practitioners in each field. Some of these lessons have included making music using only your body as a percussion instrument, biscuit taste testing, colour theory, set design, understanding how music is used for advertising, architectural drawing and mechanical puppets.

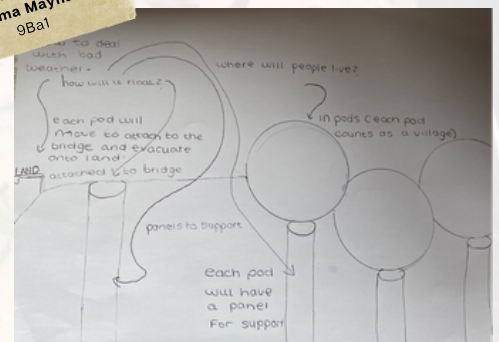
A questionnaire was given to students to voice their opinions on how the lessons were going, and so that staff could be sure students were getting what they needed for learning. The answers proved valuable for PAD teachers to continue planning appropriately for future lessons and discover what students felt about the lessons.

Students told us that they understand that we are doing the best we can for them in difficult times and situations as teachers. They are enjoying the PAD lessons, especially anything that is practical and creative. They enjoy lessons that have films (short documentaries) and recordings of teachers giving examples.

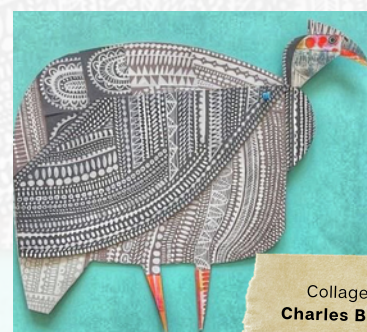
Although we are all looking forward to when practical lessons can return to normal, PAD has proven that school students and staff are working together and producing positive results.



Ocean City design by Jemima Maynard, 9Ba1



Focaccia Bread by Leo Corser, 9Ba1



Collage Bird by Charles Burns, 9Ke2



ePLATFORM

A LIBRARY STRAIGHT TO YOUR MOBILE



In January 2021, the Christleton iResearch Centre launched a new kind of library service, making reading more accessible to students and staff during the ongoing Covid Crisis. Using catch up funding allocated for literacy, we have purchased our very own school ePlatform, an online library collection of ebooks and audiobooks that students and staff members can browse and borrow anywhere, anytime. The ePlatform library includes a wide range of popular YA authors, including JK Rowling, Jeff Kinney, Jacqueline Wilson and David Walliams, along with more challenging novels, non-fiction and English set texts.

“This platform has been trialled with a wide range of lower school readers, of all ages and abilities, along with sixth formers and teaching staff,” said iResearch manager Miss Cowley. “During this time, it was well used and received positive feedback for its vast catalogue of titles, how easy it is use and its accessibility on both personal devices and school PCs.”

“ePlatform allows me to loan books with the click of a button. I can use it everywhere and I personalize it to fit me and my needs,” said Y9 student Hannah Heyden. “I’m really enjoying using ePlatform,” Ella Hassells continued.

“I like being able to read on just one page and being able to change fonts, colours and sizes on the settings.”

With book shops and public libraries still closed, and the iResearch centre still operating as part of the sixth form bubble, CHS has been endeavouring to make books more accessible to lower school students who can’t currently enter their school library and browse the shelves. Students are still able to get physical loans delivered directly to their form rooms by making

a reservation on their Reading Cloud accounts. “However,” said Miss Cowley, “I am hoping the addition of ebook and audio loans will give students more variety than ever before. Among our trial users have been students with impaired vision who are now able to enlarge text and change page colours to whatever is easiest on their eyes. Or students can rest their eyes and listen to an audiobook while relaxing or taking outdoor exercise.”

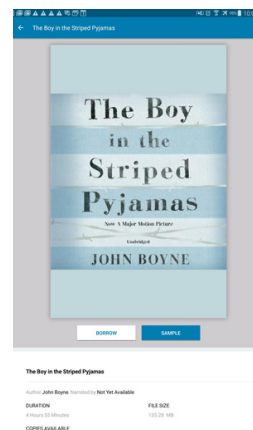
English staff and form tutors are now using ePlatform to promote reading for pleasure, to broaden student’s tastes and vocabularies, and set literacy-based homework. But students and staff alike can easily use ePlatform independently for their own enjoyment. To access the platform on a school or home computer, students should use the link below, logging on by substituting their own name in the username format below and using the universal password to access their personal accounts. If using a mobile device, then students can download the ePlatform app, and search for Christleton High as their library.

Christleton High Platform link:

<https://christletonhigh.eplatform.co/>

Username: firstname.surname

Password: Library1



For further instructions on how to use ePlatform, a video tutorial by librarian Miss Cowley is available on English Google classrooms, along with recommended reading lists, grouped by genre, interest age and available formats. If students or parents are struggling to find these links they can email **cowleyk@christletonhigh.co.uk** and Miss Cowley will be happy to assist you directly and answer any other queries you may have.



DofE

Focus on volunteering, physical, skill and life after DofE.

Since lockdown last year, the Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE students have been showing amazing resilience and motivation by continuing to work hard at the volunteering, physical and skill sections of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Although it has not been possible to experience the expeditions, students are awarded the special Duke of Edinburgh's Award Certificate of Achievement. They are recognised for their amazing efforts and achievements even if social distancing, personal circumstances or other challenges get in their way.

Here are a few activities:

Charles (Bronze) physical section - learning to become a better basketball player and learn to work in a team with others.



Henry (Bronze) skills section - the aim is to have a well-behaved dog. Henry and 4-month-old Boris have fun at puppy class, particularly the assault course. Both are growing in confidence and trust, which has developed out of their training sessions, and Henry finds it very rewarding.



Callum (Bronze) skills section - I have enjoyed making a range of food for my family to enjoy including baking and more complex dishes.



Evan (Silver) volunteering section - helping his community by litter picking to clean up his village.



Phoenix (Bronze) skills section - I learnt various techniques measuring, mixing, kneading the dough, shaping, proving and baking. I was really impressed with the final result. I enjoyed how the dough doubled in size and how it tasted.





DofE

Focus on volunteering, physical, skill and life after DofE.

Sophie (Bronze) physical section - to improve rugby skills and enjoy the sport.



Samantha (Bronze) volunteering at Chester zoo - I was really fortunate to be offered the opportunity to volunteer at Chester Zoo for my bronze DofE. I really enjoyed my time there, and learnt about lots of new things, for example, the illegal wildlife trade, which has opened my eyes to how animals are treated in other parts of the world, and how we can help them. With the help of the visitor engagement volunteers, I was able to go out into the zoo and answer any questions the public had about the animals. At first, it was quite difficult; however, I got more confident as the weeks went on and ended up enjoying it more than I expected. To finish our sessions, we had a celebration where I had to give a presentation on a topic of my choice, and my group chose sustainable shopping, thinking particularly about palm oil. It was an extremely rewarding experience, and I feel fortunate to have been given this opportunity.

Nieve (Bronze) volunteering at Chester Zoo - Each week, we would work with the zoo volunteers. We got a zoo uniform and would go into the zoo with the zoo volunteers to speak to the visitors.

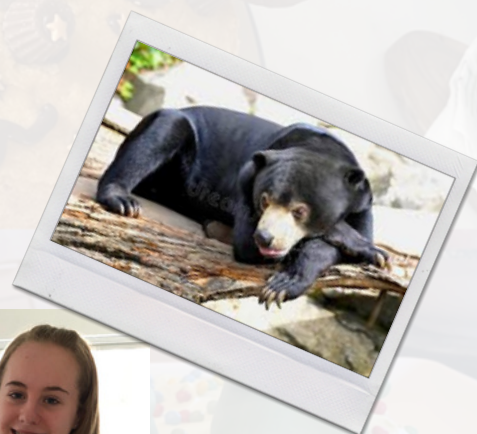
I also did a project on the sun bears. This is what I learnt:

- They get their name from the yellow or orange crescent marking on their chest, and each sun mark is unique to them.
- All the bears at Chester Zoo were rescued except the baby born in 2018 and is called Kyra, which means 'sun goddess'.
- They are very cute and are the smallest of the eight species of bear.

You can learn more here:

www.chesterzoo.org/our-zoo/animals/sun-bear/

Daisy (Bronze) skill section - enjoying learning new cooking skills, including baking her amazing birthday cake.



- Mrs Humphries, DofE Coordinator



DofE

Anna - going from Gold to university and into the police

I'm Anna, and during my time at Christleton High, I completed my Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE. I am currently in my 3rd Year at the University of Derby, studying Policing and Investigations and am also a Police Support Volunteer with Nottinghamshire Police. After graduating, I hope to become an Officer and work towards becoming a detective.

I have found that Police work relies heavily on personal skills such as situational awareness, teamwork, and the ability to make effective decisions quickly. Working through DofE, especially the expeditions, helped us all to develop and practice these skills. Working together effectively as a team, accurate map reading and adapting the route to changing circumstances were essential – especially during the Gold expedition when we found that the path marked on the map no longer existed and we had to divert around a boulder field.

Completing Gold DofE demonstrates to potential employers that I am driven, adaptable, committed and focused. As well as the skills I have developed being useful in job interviews and when I'm on patrol on the street, completing all three DofE levels was hugely rewarding, and I'm both glad and proud that I stuck with it. If you are considering it, I highly recommend going for Gold - you'll definitely get a lot out of it.



MATHS CHALLENGE

At the start of February, 70 year 9 to 11 students took part in the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge. The challenge involved several tricky out of the box thinking questions, testing the student's mathematical skills. Of those who took part, 11 students achieved a Bronze certificate, 10 achieved a Silver certificate, and 3 achieved a Gold Certificate, which is an amazing achievement! A special mention to Bianca Enache, Joe Roberts, Samuel Maclean and Alexander Maclean for making it through to the next stages of the competition held last week. We eagerly await the results!





WORLD BOOK DAY

ESSAYS FORMED FROM THE THEME 'ESCAPISM'

Here are some exceptional creative pieces of writing that students produced before and after Christmas. World Book Day's theme this year is escapism, and I think you can see the value here of allowing them to be creative with their minds, especially during lockdown! - **Mr Gresty**

STOLEN

BY NIAMH BYRNE-O'BRIEN, YEAR 9

I had been taking things since I was a young girl. It was not that I couldn't afford these things - because, of course, I could. Yet sometimes, it felt like that was why I stole so frequently. Everything was handed to me the day I announced that I lacked it in my life. However, I wanted to earn things for myself and get what I wanted, my way, knowing that what I had I owned because of my personal achievement.

It first happened when I was younger and in a shop on holiday with my parents. It was a small souvenir store thriving solely off tourists with money buying their handmade products. Yet, I felt no sympathy for stealing from such



a dependent shop, for it, did not matter to me if they would lose out on ten pounds. So, I took the seashell necklace off the shelf and slipped it into the pockets of my shorts as subtly as I could manage. My parents did not even notice when I began wearing it as they would have just assumed it was a gift or something I bought from my own allowance. I found over the coming years that no matter the value of what I took, my parents still made no comment. Sometimes I wondered if they ever suspected it of me, but then I was reminded that most parents have a blinkered view of never seeing that their own child could possibly lie to others or themselves.



I was ten when I first stole something of any real value: a watch. One of my father's friends had left his watch on our kitchen table and I recall waiting until I was alone to swiftly scoop it up with my hand before running upstairs and placing it in my jewellery box. I never wore it. I never sold it. I said nothing when my father asked if I had seen a silver watch. It is still in my jewellery box along with a couple of stolen rings, various devices and other tacks I had picked up and never put back.

I had never been caught and nobody had ever known of my habits, until two weeks ago.

It was near the time of my mother's birthday and I knew the present I gave her had to stand out amongst the plenteous presents she would yearly be gifted, ranging from chocolate boxes to designer clothes, and that was just from her work colleagues. Most of her gifts remained in cupboards, never to be used, along with the handmade bracelets I used to make her. I had now figured out that, unlike most parents, she felt no longing for a carefully crafted gift from her child, so I realised my present this year would have to be different and worth something more than simple sentimental value.



So, I took a trip to town and entered an old antique shop. I chose a place as unique as this because I knew it was possible that if I got her some item from any expensive chain store somebody else would have had a similar idea, so I wanted something different. The shop was small and packed with endless cabinets and stands piled and stacked with all kinds of treasure. Antiques were presented in a sophisticated yet chaotic kind of way. It was like Aladdin's Cave. Not long after my entrance, something caught my attention: a red ruby brooch. It was perfect. It also matched her favourite colour. I quickly swooped the gem off the pillow and briskly left the room without making eye contact with the woman at the till. She didn't see me. Pleased with my mission, I skipped home and wrapped up my gift, putting it in my sock drawer, hidden until the next day, the 16th of August.

When I woke up on my mother's birthday, I left my present outside her bedroom before leaving for school. Little did I know then how much I would regret that decision. When I reached the school gates, I winced at the thought of another six hours in a school I hated. I went inside. I sat down in class and it did not take long for the excited whisperings to reach me.



"Did you hear about that brooch? Apparently, a shop reported it missing, then people realised how much it was worth- thousands they say! Somebody must have stolen it!"

I felt a knot tie itself in my stomach and I struggled for air as I tried to process what I had just heard. It had to be the red brooch: it was too much of a coincidence to not be. I had no idea it was worth that much when I stole it! I remained silent as I contemplated my options. Echoes of the story bounced off the walls of the classroom as it was repeated with increasing volume.

I held myself together long enough to ask my classmates how they knew? What I was told was not what I wanted to hear.

Do you live under a rock? It's all over the news!

I remembered my exact thoughts: the news. Marvellous. The news my mother would watch in bed before leaving her room and seeing the same very brooch she had just seen on the television wrapped up as a birthday gift from her daughter. I should have panicked, yet I still wondered if, for the first time in sixteen years - she might even be proud.



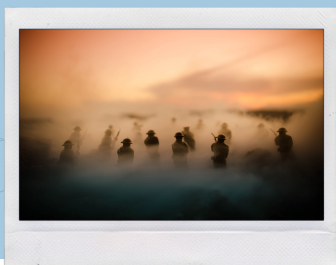
TRENCHES

BY DOUGLAS PARKINSON, YEAR 9

A bedroom. Idyllic and peaceful, the blue covers lay over a sleeping form. Light winter rain dropped daintily upon the rooftop. A new song started on the radio, stirring the form from its slumber. An eyelid opened, then closed again.

When it reopened, the bedroom was gone; the winter rain was gone, replaced with pounding artillery. Pierre Escobar stood with the men of his company in a trench. Rats squealed around them, running under the duckboards. Beside him stood a

man fresh from the recruitment agency. He had spent the last two days shouting about how excited he was, finally, to go up against the enemy. Although the big attack had arrived, the burly recruit was looking very green. Five minutes late, as usual, with his hat angled in a way that would appear suave, if it were seated on any other head, their commander came to brief them. He was a scrawny British man who had bought this rank with his family's money and not through his own skills. His London accent was thick as he spoke, giving orders.



"When the artillery ceases, you are to charge to the enemy trenches. When inside the trenches, kill everything that moves."

Pierre groaned. They had received these exact orders many times, and every time it had ended in a bloody battle for the German lines, with ungodly numbers of casualties for each side, and each time, he nearly joined them. However, as a low-ranking soldier, it was Pierre's job to do, not to plan. As the final artillery shell landed, they queued up on the trench ladders. Half of the men were spoiling for a fight, the other half, Pierre included, were dreading the whistle. As all things that one dreads do, the whistle came, and the first soldiers piled up the ladders. Unusually though, they were not torn by a hail of machine gun fire, as expected. There were no gunshots. The company walked warily across No Man's Land, all expecting to be suddenly hit by something.

They reached the opposite trench; they walked slowly through the seemingly endless maze of wood and bunkers. Deserted. Everyone was waiting to hear a scream, or a shout. After so many failed trench raids, the quiet was worse than gunfire.

Pierre and the burly recruit had split up to clear a German field hospital. All the beds were empty, save for one. A young boy, no older than sixteen, lay injured. His leg was bandaged and sweat rolled off his forehead like a waterfall. Weakly, the young German muttered words in his own language. Pierre could not understand them, but he knew the boy meant him no harm. Pierre, now crouching by his side, poured some cool, relieving water into the boy's mouth. He couldn't bring himself to kill him.

The German reached his frail hand into a pocket. From the depths of his uniform, he pulled a small family portrait. Loving parents stood in front of a house, with a young boy at their side. Pierre knew that this was the German's family back home, a family he may never get to see again. From the pocket again, he lifted a sketch of a girl, about his age. Weakly, he pointed to it, muttering the name Maria.

Pierre called for help. He knew he had to save this boy. What else could he do? Unfortunately, the first help that arrived was the burly soldier.

"It's a German, Pierre. Kill him!"

"Don't be stupid. He is just a boy. He's not old enough to die."

But they're evil, Pierre. They want to kill us."

"You think he wants to kill you? What he wants is medical attention!"

The burly recruit raised a rifle, aiming squarely at the boy's head.

"You can't shoot him. It's not humane!" Pierre cried out.

"He's not human!"

"Propaganda has scarred your mind."



Pierre got no response. The only way to stop this madness was to put himself between the gun and the boy. With a single step, he was now putting his own life at risk to defend someone he had met, just minutes earlier.

The burly recruit pulled the trigger.

A single shot ripped straight through Pierre and the boy. Pierre had not been worried about dying. Even as he saw the bloodied void in his stomach, he was sure he would be the exception, sure he would be the one in a hundred who survived. His main concern was getting blood on his new uniform.

He wasn't the 1 in a 100: he was dead before his eyes closed.

The burly man closed his eyes, regretting pulling the trigger even before he did. When he opened them, he was a frail man in a bedroom. Idyllic and peaceful, the blue covers lay over a sleeping form. Light winter rain dropped daintily upon the rooftop.

He was old now and had managed to forget most of what happened in the war. But that day stayed with him, forever...

DISCLAIMER

BY CHARLIE LOWMAN, YEAR 11

Disclaimer: any resemblance to persons or geese, living or dead, is mostly intended, as actually, this did happen.

There it is. Waiting, after all these years. Watch it. They can't be trusted, these geese.

Wait. Geese?

Of course. It all started on a sunny day, with an innocent visit to a reserve...

Picture the scene: it is sunny, the exotic and captive birds are persistently calling out, filling the air with watery cadences and overbearing honking. Paradise. Or so we thought.

There was an enclosure, filled with various species of geese: a writhing, seething pool of orange beaks and deep annoyance. A family stood by the fence, chatting and lifting their daughter up and over the rail to see the birds better.

Nothing more than an innocent method of bird watching, right?

Wrong.

In one of the nearer goose's heads, a single neuron lit up. Escape. Freedom. Other synonyms. It waddled forward, full of cold purpose. No, really. It darted forward, jabbing upwards with its beak, flapping desperately with its clipped wings, until it grasped the coat sleeves of its first victim.



The parents screamed and panicked, pulling their offspring back towards the comparative safety of the path, the “goose-less” domain. But alas, it was not to be. Having already displayed wisdom beyond its species, this goose proceeded to demonstrate a tenacity beyond its usual habit, hanging on grimly to the terrified child, riding the rollercoaster to seek glorious liberty. It dropped, landing gracefully on the concrete walkway, still flapping its wings and jabbing with its curved neck, a whirling and highly localised avian hurricane.

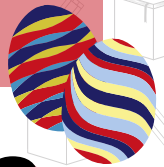
By this time, a second family had arrived, with a sense of purpose and a child in a pram. Hearing the desperate cries for

help in fending off a rogue goose, the pram was left unprotected, leaving a toddler vulnerable. The goose, having sensed an easy target, moved into attack, to break free from its shackles of free food and shelter...

A shout rang out: “Pick him up!”

The goose looked around wildly; desperately twisting and, turning, but it was too late. Grasped in firm hands, it struggled powerlessly as it was lifted again over the fence, back to its old habitat.

Legend says: it is still there, waiting - at least, it was when we visited again...



ARTHUR KIPPS RETURNS TO EEL MARSH HOUSE

BY LIBBY IRELAND, YEAR 8

I closed my eyes as I worked to steady the violent pounding of my heart. I couldn't walk away this time: I wouldn't. I knew that if I left to go home, unfulfilled once more, I may never be able to regain the courage to return to this place. This terrible, tragic, god-awful place, the place of my deepest and darkest nightmares. What was I thinking coming back here?

Even when I was a perfectly healthy, sane, young man of just twenty-three, I had not been able to withstand the horrors of Eel Marsh House without being incredibly traumatised and damaged. Now, I was older and wearier, not even close to possessing the stamina and strength I once had.

However, I realised with a jolt, the greatest difference between me and that man, thirteen years prior, was simply that I had become afraid. I had once been blissfully happy and perfectly content with society and its views on the supernatural. I dismissed strange stories with the typical arrogance of youth, often laughing to myself at the absurdity of it all. I considered myself superior to those who told such stories; those who were considered not to be of sound mind.



My time in Crythin Gifford had certainly changed me, leaving me a broken shell of a man. A man who hardly anyone ever heard speak. A man who would frequently become hysterical and shake over seemingly nothing. A man who woke up every night, reaching for Stella, only to realise she was gone. Suddenly, all other thoughts disappeared, and she was all I could think of, Stella. My lovely wife, who was ripped from me along with my poor innocent child.

I was reminded with a shock as to why I was here in the first place: to seek revenge on that woman, that heinous, hateful woman who had taken everything from me, my joy and laughter and innocence, all because of the unyielding bitterness and anger that she harboured in her heart.

I was overcome with emotion, and as I conquered her dreadful, wasted face in my mind once more, I was filled with such fury and hatred that my eyes glared as I began towards the house. I had considered what precisely I would do at this moment, in my head many times, and had struggled to devise anything much at all. After all, how could I hurt the woman the way that she had hurt me, when she had already lost everything that she possibly could? I pondered it almost obsessively, thinking of anything and everything that could possibly damage her. I finally came to the conclusion that there was nothing I could do, after all the reason that she couldn't move on herself was because she was so full of sorrow and anger at her child's death. She was unable to be saved, so most likely, untouchable as well. However, one winter evening, I was pacing around my living room when I thought of it.

There was a reason that the woman in black haunted Eel Marsh House. It was where she watched from a window as her son was dragged down into the depths of the sinister marsh, where he

eventually suffocated. The woman had haunted the place ever since she had died, and up until that day I had presumed it was just because she wanted to punish the living people that remained there. I had never thought that the true reason that the woman remained in that house after so long was because it was the only place with any ties to her son.

As I stood there in the rapidly fading sunlight, I recalled the pristine state of the nursery I had found, how nothing appeared to be a day older than when it was first purchased, even though the objects and clothing that occupied the space were very obviously from another time period. It seemed strange to me at the time, if the boy had been dead for so long why would his things be still in such good condition? It dawned on me then, that she had probably been the one keeping it so well preserved, in a desperate attempt to hold on to what remained of him.

"Yes," I thought to myself as I finally reached that back window, "This will work perfectly." The glass was smudged with year's worth of grime, but I could still see the inside of the room, with all of a child's toys laid out perfectly just like I knew that they would be. I searched in my pockets, first pulling out a sharp rock I had found on my way, and then a matchbox. Pulling my arm back, I took aim and sent the rock flying through the glass.



It shattered completely, it was presumably not a window of great quality, and a few shards landed next to my feet. I peered inside the now empty frame. The room was darkly lit, and a large bookshelf near the bed cast a great shadow over the room. A large part of me feared that the woman in black might be standing there watching me, so I lit one of my matches. It gave the room a warm glow, almost making it seem cosier and more comforting to look at. I could not see any sign of the woman, so I pulled myself into the poor, deceased boy's bedroom.

I simply stood there for a minute, as a wave of emotion crashed over me. I recalled the helplessness and fear that I had felt the last time I had stood in this room and could only hope that she would feel at least a small percentage of the utter despair that she had brought upon me. I strolled around almost absently, occasionally stopping to pick up a particular toy or trinket that drew itself to my attention. As I knelt down to put a china dog back on the bookcase, a certain book caught my attention. It was a large book of vintage children's tales, an exact replica of a book that my baby boy had also once owned. Images of my son flooded my mind, and



suddenly I could feel rage shooting through my veins. It choked me like a rope around my neck, and my arms lurched forward and in a matter of seconds I had completely upturned the bookshelf. The stories that had lined the shelves spilled out onto the carpet, and for every title I recognised from my own child, it felt like a fresh dagger through my heart. My fury consumed me, and it felt like my mind had disconnected from itself. I swept around the room like a tornado, smashing, destroying, throwing whatever I could get my hands on.

After what felt like a century later, I stood sobbing amongst the remains of a dead child's toys and possessions, their most loved clothes and trinkets. I felt grief overcome me - grief for my beautiful son and grief for the woman's son as well. It was cruel for him to be taken so early, but even crueller of her to take my boy, knowing full well, herself, the anguish and madness to which it can lead. Gradually, I felt myself begin to regain my calmness. Only the pile of books remained, and as I looked up from them, I was drawn to the flickering flame of the candle I had found on the boy's nightstand and lit. I reached for it in what felt like slow motion and held it conflicted.



But then I thought of Stella and my baby, and how much this would hurt the woman. I looked down once more at that book of children's fairy tales. I thought of the stories that occupied the book. Stories of beautiful princesses and brave knights that had rescued them from danger. Stories of monsters and villains, witches and hags that prevented people of good from reaching their happily ever afters. I thought of the villain in my tale, an evil spirit dressed in all black, and how she had destroyed my happy ending. I let my mind become hard, and with steady hands lowered the candle to the book of children's fairy tales and watched as it was engulfed in flames.

Once upon a time, there was a man who was sent on a quest to a strange land. A land where a house stood deserted in the depths of a silver marsh, and people whispered and watched but said nothing as they overheard his plans to journey to it. Unbeknownst to the man, however, there was an evil witch that lived in this house who cursed anyone who entered. A brave few advised the man to abandon his mission, to return home and settle back into the comfortable life that he had always known. Unfortunately, he was foolish and arrogant, paying no heed to their warnings and choosing to believe that they were simply delusional. So the man arrived at the house, and for days was forced to endure the screams of children and drowned souls.

The witch worked tirelessly to make him suffer, until eventually he was driven from the place entirely, vowing never to return. He prayed for her to find peace and happiness, but the witch's heart was darkened with malice and bitterness, making her merciless.

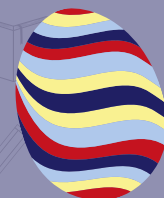
She let the man forget her but she never forgot him. Until one day, years later she revealed herself to him once more, and in just one second she tore everything that the man loved away from him. He became an empty vessel filled with anger, sorrow and regret.

The man's hatred for the witch devoured him from the inside, and he promised himself that one day he would inflict that same exact state of anguish onto her. And now, as he watched thick clouds of smoke envelop the house, the closest thing to happiness that he had felt in years warmed him from his head to his toes. He caught sight of the witch in a window, the same window in which she had watched her only child be dragged to his death all of those years ago.

The man met her gaze, and in that moment he could have sworn that he saw fire reflected back in the darkest depths of her eyes.

However, it was gone in an instant, replaced with such passionate grief and helplessness that the man began to laugh, almost maniacally, crouched in the cold water and reeds of the surrounding marsh.

He thought to himself that he had finally found his salvation and turned satisfied away from the witch's house and began his journey home. The man did not think in the moment that he had been filled with the same malevolence and heartlessness as the witch. It did not occur to him that in a way she had won, because she had reduced him to the villain of his own story, rather than the hero.





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