

TWO ZERO ONE

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WINNER

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COVER ART BY LIZA VASILYeva



EDITORS' NOTES

The annual marking of your height on the kitchen wall. The tree that was barely noticeable four years ago and now covers most of the ground area. The growth of the exponential curve on the board of your math class. Growth comes in all shapes and sizes. At times it is detectable, such as when we stumble upon our Year 4 pictures in the attic, or when we blow out one more birthday candle. At times, it is barely distinguishable as months merge into years and suddenly we find ourselves like many of the Upper Sixth, trying to decide what the next decision, the next great adventure will be.

In our books, 2020 has been labelled as 'the worst year ever'. Yet, to me it was a period of growth. Dealing with the situation that faced us in March made me appreciate the little things that have made us into the individuals we are today. While some of us used lockdown to become the next Usain Bolt, Marie Kondo or even Gordon Ramsay, each and every one of us grew in some way. Confined to our rooms and thoughts, the undeniable ripple effects of the pandemic quickly demonstrated the importance of caring for oneself and others, to appreciate every single minute we had with our loved ones, our time in school and many more day-to-days that were abruptly taken away from us in March. All so suddenly, we faced the realities of life and its inevitabilities, propelling us to grow and change much more rapidly as life felt cut short.

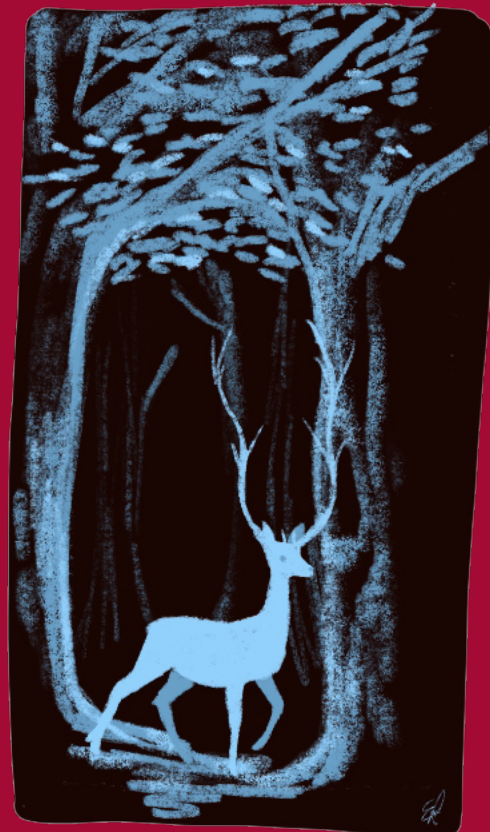
Amidst the seriousness and difficulties of the pandemic you may wonder what the Two Zero One can bring to your day. Unfortunately, this year we are not able to provide you with a beautiful, slide-it-into-your-bag edition. Yet, our contributors have come together to bring you one of the things that we often forgot to appreciate in our pre-pandemic crazy-business, the simple art of reading a vibrant and educative article. Maybe, it can accompany your morning coffee or your journey to work. Either way, this edition demonstrates the growth that our contributors and students have acquired as creators during the pandemic of 2020. ■

Laetitia de Belgique
Editor-in-Chief

Honestly, it was difficult to find the motivation for another issue. We felt depleted after the self isolation period, some of the most talented artists and contributors left the School. We miss them dearly, but the show must go on. As we work delicately on this issue and are constantly on the lookout for fresh blood, we remember that soon we will leave as well. We can all grow in one way or another, but in the end our ultimate goal should be to surpass our own expectations.

As my last independent issue as the publishing editor, I would like to thank the contributors and readers for their ongoing support. The next issue will be a collaboration by myself and the next publishing editor. I am certain that the quality aspect will continue to grow. ■

Maximilian Opegeym
Publishing Editor



Liza Vasilyeva
Illustration Editor

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LOCAL AFFAIRS

BROMSGROVE SCHOOL UPDATES

From enrichment activities to endless inter-House competitions, this term has done it all. The School has managed to remain productive and keep its student busy, despite current obstacles caused by the pandemic.

Saturday activities

If you thought that being in the D team could get you out of participating in various sports tournaments and competitions, such as netball, hockey and rugby, think again! Ever since the implementations of restrictions and year group bubbles, the School has made it possible for us to remain active by participating in year group inter-House competitions. House shirts were pulled out and gum shields put in. Every field was occupied by different competitions every Saturday as cheers of victory were echoed all throughout the campus. Despite not having the opportunity to take part in the traditional away-matches, spirits remained high and the competition was fierce.



House drama

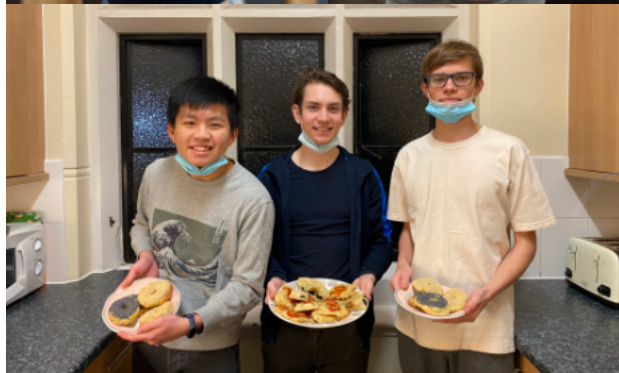
House drama was made possible by Mr Norton and his ambitious commitment to have some performances happening instead of a senior production. So far, Lower Sixth have successfully carried out their performances. Wendron-Gordon won the "Best Play" title, while Housman Hall claimed "Runner-up". Maria Macadrai was named "Best Actor" and Polly Dakin "Runner-up Best Actor". The performances were of such high-standard that the Headmaster gave out two "Adjudicator's Special Award" to Stefan Tarasov and the whole of Mary Windsor. The evening had a potent mix of humour and emotion, as well as voguish costumes and a wide range of accents.



Baking

In honour of lockdown rituals, students from each House had the opportunity to participate in the inter-House bake-off. Here are some honourable participants' creations.

This term was the best it could have been. Everyone remained positive and took advantage of all the opportunities offered which truly shows how strong our community is at Bromsgrove School. ■



Ioana V



LOCAL AFFAIRS

THE ARCHIVISTS' PAGE: BROMSGROVE DURING THE WAR (1914-1918)

The chapel bell resounded around the grounds as the students were engulfed by the smell of bright, freshly cut grass. Early summer, in the midst of the cricket season, the air felt light. Then it stopped. Traditions broke as the announcement of war monopolised the School, forever changing the average School day for the young boys.

One-hundred-and-six years later, mid-March, books were swapped for laptops, smiles for masks, and again traditions were halted. While their enemy was loud, ours was silent. Yet, the School grew, amidst the challenges of decades and months past.

Be it through the many recordings of activities throughout the war or through the editorials of the time, we are able to look back on what the students who remained at School did for the four years of the war. The power of history gives us the ability to look back on the heroism and resilience of previous students who were profoundly affected by the First World War, all whilst giving us the hope that School life can continue, even through troubling times.

While our enemies are different, COVID-19 has caused uncertainty similar to one of a world war. The OBs felt angst as violence raged around the world. Yet, in time, they came back to the wooden benches of Chapel and the Saturday afternoon cricket and rugby matches. And so, it will be for us too, as we look for reassurance of brighter days and restored traditions, while marking the School's history, just as previous OBs did. ■



The Bromsgrovian June, 1915

O. B. WAR LIST.

WE are asked to state that the War List announced in our last number was unavoidably delayed, as it had to be submitted to the Censor and revised. It has now been issued. Any O.B. serving or any member of the O.B. Club who does not receive a copy, should write to W. L. Moore, The Church House, Shelsley Beauchamp, Worcester. Copies are also on sale at the "Messenger" Co.

O. T. C.

The Corps is very grateful to two old Bromsgrovians:—Lieut.-Col. F. J. F. Edlmann, D.S.O., Northumberland Fusiliers, for his gift of a sub-target, a piece of apparatus which will be invaluable for musketry instruction; and Captain J. R. C. Dent, M.C., Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, for coming over on two occasions to take parades; it was our misfortune that his return to duty prevented him from coming regularly, as he had intended. Their kindness is very greatly appreciated.

An Examiner is being sent down from the War Office this month or next, to conduct an oral examination of those members of the O.T.C. who are taking the examinations for Sandhurst or Woolwich this year.

The following half-holidays will be devoted to O.T.C. work:—Wednesday, March 21st, Wednesday, March 28th, and Saturday, March 31st.

The following promotions are announced, to date January 26th, 1917:

To be Sergeants.—Corporal C. D. Metcalfe, Corporal J. Stuart.

To be Corporals.—Lance-Corporal N. H. Gurney, Lance-Corpl. W. A. C. Haines, Lance-Corpl. C. A. Ravn.

To be Lance-Corporals.—Cadet A. L. Hill, Cadet H. D. Lewis, Cadet J. I. Jordan, Cadet H. Merryweather, Cadet G. C. Oliver, Cadet A. Price i.

The following promotions are announced, to date Feb. 9th, 1917:—

To be Cadet Officers.—Sergeant H. G. Fowler, Sergeant A. G. Priestley.

The Bromsgrovian March, 1917

FOOTBALL MATCHES.

BROMSGROVE SCHOOL V. OLD EDWARDIANS' SCRATCH.

Result:

Bromsgrove School, 2 goals (10 points), Old Edwardians' Scratch, 4 goals 1 try (22 points).

LAYED at Charford on October 3rd. The School kicked off, and were at once pressed, until a good forward rush carried the ball back into our opponents' half. A kick from a mark made by Kerr further relieved the tension, but soon the School were forced to touch down.

At last the Scratch scored between the posts and converted. (0—5.) Another try by Morgan followed quickly, and was also converted. (0—10.) The School rallied just before half-time, and Pilcher scored, taking a good pass from Dewdney (5—10.)

During the second half the School played considerably better, but our opponents were still more than equal to the occasion, and scored two tries, one of which was converted. (5—18.) After some very interesting rushes the ball was carried well into our 25, and one of the Scratch dropped an excellent goal. (5—22.) The School three-quarters then attacked vigorously, and Rose scored a brilliant try between the posts for the School. This brought the score to 10—22, when no-side was called. Head's kicking and collaring at back was quite the feature of the game. Besides Pilcher and the old colours, Haines and Dewdney were conspicuous. The forwards especially packed well, and the dribbling was good.

Bromsgrove School.—J. S. Head; R. H. Chattock, A. J. Rose; H. L. Dewdney, A. G. Priestley; L. A. Kerr, P. D. Learoyd; G. A. Pilcher, N. T. King, C. A. Green, N. C. Hartley, T. F. H. Graves, E. N. Mylius, W. A. C. Haines, and J. S. F. Watson.

Old Edwardians' Scratch.—D. Hooper; J. S. R. Morgan, H. C. Price, G. Clark, W. G. Bott; H. Hawkes, W. J. Wall; E. Spencer, G. Spencer, L. W. Jackson, J. Jackson, V. Curle, H. G. D'Este, P. S. Marshall, and F. F. Line.

The Bromsgrovian April, 1915

SPORTS.

THE day fixed for the Sports turned out to be most brilliantly fine, quite contrary to the usual Sports Day weather, and under the sun's genial influence everything went off well. Although no invitations had been issued, there was a good assembly of visitors, among whom we were especially pleased to see Mr. Millington. The Mile and Half-Miles were run off before the Sports Day—on Friday, March 24th, and Friday, March 31st, respectively.

The following is the programme of events:—

Friday, March 24th.

ONE MILE FLAT RACE.

- 1—6 pts.—H. L. Dewdney (S.H.), 5min. 13-5th secs.
2—5 pts.—E. N. Mylius (G.H.), 5min. 4secs.
3—4 pts.—C. D. Metcalfe (S.H.).
4—3 pts.—B. J. Parkes (S.H.).
5—2 pts.—G. P. H. Carter (D.B.).

Parkes led most of the way, but was beaten in the last lap, and Dewdney won by eight yards.

Friday, March 31st.

HALF-MILE (A.).

- 1—6 pts.—H. L. Dewdney (S.H.), 2min. 14secs.
2—5 pts.—E. N. Mylius (G.H.).
3—4 pts.—B. J. Parkes (S.H.).
4—3 pts.—G. P. H. Carter (D.B.).
5—2 pts.—C. B. Hall (G.H.).

A good race, in which the winner just won from the second by a few yards in the last straight.

HALF-MILE (B).

- 1—5 pts.—C. D. Metcalfe (S.H.), 2 min. 21 3-5th secs.
2—4 pts.—H. D. Lewis (S.H.).
3—3 pts.—O. H. Billington (S.H.).
4—2 pts.—A. G. Head (S.H.).
5—1 pt.—H. W. Andreae (G.H.).

Metcalfe's time might have been much better if he had been pressed. Lewis had a fine race with Billington for second place.

Saturday, April 1st—Morning, 11.30.

I. LONG JUMP (A).

- 1—5 pts.—H. G. Fowler (G.H.), 18ft. 1in.
2—4 pts.—H. F. Alexandre (S.H.), 18ft.
3—3 pts.—H. L. Dewdney (S.H.).
4—2 pts.—N. C. Hartley (S.H.).

A rather disappointing event, since the standard was not once reached.

The Bromsgrovian April, 1916

Laetitia de B

LOCAL AFFAIRS

THE FURRY FRIENDS THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES OVER LOCKDOWN

The past six months have been very difficult for many people; being stuck at home, while only able to chat to friends and family over FaceTime, allowed out for one hour's worth of exercise a day and nothing else, boredom gnawing away one brain cell at a time. For most, however, the endless time away from work, and everyday life presented the perfect opportunity to embrace the time they have been given and get the furry friend that they have always dreamed of owning!

Some of my friends got cats, some got hamsters, but like many others my family and I took the plunge and fell right off into the deep end. We got a dog. We'd seen the movies, read the books, my mum had even had dogs when she was younger. A Heinz 57 called Rip who loved to rip up everyone's shoes and pinch people's picnics on the beach. Then a black lab called Beamish, the gentlest giant who loved to swim and chase sticks. So, we thought we were pretty prepared. We had wanted a dog for as long as I could remember, it was perfect. Get one now (in lockdown) and we could train it in the seemingly unending time we'd have before we had to go back to School, and reality.

After weeks of stocking up on puppy pads, toys and food, the day finally arrived. Our family grew by one member as Teddy entered our home and our hearts forever. He was a tiny white bundle of fluff when we first got him, with jet black eyes and oversized floppy ears, constantly tripping over his paws and chewing up anything he could find. Six months later, plants moved out of reach, tables chewed, stair gates deployed, boxes destroyed and copious amounts of doggy biscuit (and whatever else he could get his paws into) eaten. We

have a happy healthy golden retriever who loves nothing more than tummy rubs and splashing in muddy puddles. I wouldn't change him for the world. To me he is perfect; quiriness, crazy episodes and all. Whenever he steals my sock or slipper I just laugh and run after him to get it back. If he wants to play; be it fetch, tugger or chase around the kitchen table, we do it with his will. He has helped me grow significantly as a person; I have encountered countless new experiences and have become an expert in all things puppy. Now I know what to do when he's ill, how much exercise he needs and so on. I can deal with it all now. Before Teddy, life was completely different. I wouldn't do simple things such as pick up dog poop, and if a dog licked me it would freak me out a little. Now, I am happiest in the fields behind our house with the treat bag over one shoulder, running with Teddy to the bottom of the hill. I have discovered a new side of myself, someone who doesn't care how she looks while on a dog walk, or how crazy she may sound when talking to Teddy, telling him over and over that he is a good boy and rewarding him all the time even when he insists on eating horse poop!

I spoke to Mr Lane, a PE teacher in the Prep School, who also got a 'lockdown puppy'. Ozzy is a 4-month-old cocker spaniel, and this is what Mr Lane had to say about him, 'I was brought up throughout my childhood with a cocker spaniel in our family home, and during lockdown I decided to get one of my own, especially as it was an ideal time to get lots of training in! Ozzy was born on 21st June 2020 and has lived with me since early August.

He loves his food and is great company around the house... except for that one time when he chewed off the 'OK' button on my



TV remote.’ Ozzy has definitely helped Mr Lane grow as a person as he was able to recall previous experiences of owning a dog and use them to gain a whole new perspective on the matter. When you are younger and have a pet, no matter how much you promise to help look after them, your parents usually end up doing the bulk of the work. I don’t know about Mr Lane, but I certainly didn’t help my parents out with my pets as much as I should have, and I am fairly sure that a lot of people are the same. With all this time away from School over lockdown, Mr Lane is now able to say that he has taken the plunge and successfully managed to swim to the surface, with an adorable puppy in tow, and a whole lot of new memories to add to his childhood ones.

Someone else who stepped off into the unknown is Polly Green in Year 12. After wanting a dog for a while, she and her parents dived in headfirst, emerging with Monte, a very playful labradoodle. Polly told me that Monte has helped her grow as a person, as she learned that it is not just humans that suffer with mental health. Animals do too. Monte developed separation anxiety, meaning that he struggled being apart from his humans for any length of time and would get very distressed. Polly and her parents had to adapt to this, and due their resilience and persistence Monte is now very happy and playful. Examples like Monte show us that even in strange times like the one we are currently experiencing, there is always someone or something that needs our help and love for reasons that we do not realise. Animals get stressed too, not just humans and we have to look out for signs of it so we can help them, just as Polly helped Monte. COVID-19 meant that Polly had the time to make a positive experience out of a negative one, giving Monte the love that he needed and helping him become confident in his everyday life.

Someone else who decided that 2020 was the year of the puppy was Dr Whitbread, houseparent of Hazeldene and History teacher. She and her husband are now the proud owners of Loxley, a very loud golden Labrador. During lessons over zoom, Dr Whitbread told us all about how she has had to chase Loxley around her kitchen numerous times when he’s pinched things from the side. She had to learn how to deal with Loxley’s different traits, most notably the fact that he has a rather loud bark. Having to embrace what makes him different from other dogs has allowed Dr Whitbread to see that Loxley is perfect for her in his own special way. All dogs are different and have their own quirks, take Teddy for example, he loves to steal laundry from the utility room and race around the house and garden with it in his mouth while we run after him laughing. It just so happens that Loxley likes to announce his presence to everyone and everything all of the time. Due to the pandemic, Dr Whitbread has had time to address this, so now Loxley is a very well-behaved boy. You can instantly tell that by looking at him.

COVID-19 may have meant that we couldn’t see friends and family for months on end, that everywhere you look is a sea of masks and socially distanced individuals, but there has been a light at the end of the tunnel. For those who chose to go towards it, take the risk and see if it paid off, a puppy waited for them, ready to love them forever. As our puppies grow, so do we as people, and I for one believe that I am better off because of it. The real question though, is would you, the reader, take the plunge into a whole new world? Someday, somewhere there could be a puppy waiting for you, that could help you to grow into who you have always dreamed of being.■

Charlotte H



LOCAL AFFAIRS

OB LORD DIGBY JONES ON THE HS2

Interviewed by Liza V, Oli O & Maximilian O. Written by: Liza V & Oli O.

In a follow up to the exclusive interview with Two Zero One, Old Bromsgrovian and Member of Parliament Lord Digby Jones discusses the delays in the construction of the High Speed 2 railway and its potential benefits to less urbanised areas of the UK.



Art by Liza V

Why do you think the High Speed 2 (HS2) is being delayed?

For starters, I'm in favour of it but I wouldn't have built it where it's being built; I would put it up the existing pollution corridor so the West coast mainline, the M1 motorway and the Grand Union canal actually as they all go up the same half-mile corridor all the way from London to Birmingham.

I'd build a brand-new railway and I would put it straight up alongside the others because you've got a pollution corridor; you've got people who are living with noise, fumes and everything, and have been for the most part of a hundred years.

Why go and rape a load of beautiful countryside to do the same thing and get to the same place; I find that very difficult to understand.

So, there's one of the reasons why it was so delayed; there was such a public outcry about where it was going. We've had ten years of either coalition or small majority government so every MP's vote mattered; if you're an MP that's about to have a massive

railway go through their constituency, you can make a lot of trouble for a Prime Minister when they need your vote. With an 80-seat majority, you do what you like.

So, the political fervour and the route has caused a lot of delay.

There is also the great British tendency of NIMBY; not in my backyard. 'I think it's really great to have a railway... but not through my back garden; sorry it goes through yours by the way but not mine.' And Britain is very good at that. In fact, we're moving quite slowly away from NIMBY and into BANANAA; Build Absolutely Nothing Absolutely Nowhere At All. It's not just railways; in the time Germany built two high-speed railway lines and three airport terminals, we had held a planning enquiry for a terminal 5 in Heathrow.

We have all these barking mad rules about all sorts; they find evidence of a lesser spotted toad and for some reason the whole of the fifth biggest economy has to grind to a halt whilst somebody crawls out of Oxford University and picks it up and puts it in a box. And if the lesser spotted toad is so rare why is it on every building site in Britain? That's what I want to know. For all those reasons there's been delay and also it's been poorly managed.; there's a lot of people that have been handsomely paid who have not done a good job either in the selling of it or in the way that it's been dealt with. I think there's so much more that could have been done.

How beneficial do you think it'll be for the region and potentially Bromsgrove?

Firstly, we're a big wealth creating region in the West Midlands; 5.3 million people and

bigger than Scotland. Tell that to Nicola Sturgeon and she gets very upset.

At the moment, 37 flights leave Heathrow alone, not even including Gatwick, every day that do not cross saltwater. In an island that is twelve hundred miles long, that is immense because those slots in a congested airport should be flying to Beijing and New York and Sao Paulo and Mumbai; that's where those slots should be used, not to go to Edinburgh so we should be doing it by train.

There's also a capacity issue; our railway network, which was the first in the world, is absolutely full. So, if we want to get more freight off roads, cut pollution, stop all the degradation of the road networks and safety and let's get more onto railways and build more freight hubs so the distribution of freight is a five-mile distribution not a five-hundred-mile distribution.

In a world where we've been committed to zero carbon in the next thirty seconds, for some reason, that has to be done. So, in terms of your children, Britain will look entirely different from a transport point of view.

Secondly, we've got to connect the North of England to the south.

One of the reasons for the red Labour wall breaking in the north is that they felt utterly and thoroughly disconnected from London. London doesn't care, it doesn't bother, and it just ignores them, so when they had a chance to kick up a fuss they did.

They also need to be connected between each other. I wouldn't have started HS2 in London, I'd have started in Edinburgh with a branch in Newcastle, and through Leeds, then Manchester to Birmingham. But because the decision was made by Londoners, it went the other way.

We've got to get used to the West Midlands becoming the Northernmost suburb of London because if you can get from Birmingham international to Euston in 35 minutes, why would you buy a house in London that's half the price in the Midlands? You can work in London and live

in a nice part of Warwickshire. And if you think in 1945 there were farms between London Heathrow and London and now it's one great sprawling mass, so, in the next 10-15 years, Birmingham will just be the Croydon of the 21st century.

The good part of that is it will create wealth; there will be better jobs, better education and less pollution but the downside is the West Midlands will lose its identity and then you'll see that the one thing it's not doing is connecting Liverpool to Hull nor Manchester to Leeds yet that doesn't need to be fast, it just needs to be reliable. There should be money to build something across Britain; yet if there's anything that we don't do in this country, it's building things across. Look at all the motorways; they all go North-South.

Another issue in Britain is that we have a short-term environment for politics so as you build the HS2, some prime minister that probably hasn't been born yet is going to open it and they will get all the praise and the people now are the ones taking the kicking, so a lot of them won't do it because they won't get praised for it and they might lose office because of it. Failure is an orphan, but success has many parents. There's a problem with democracy.

I took the speed train from Shanghai to Beijing. It's fabulous, yet they built it in about five milliseconds and we're still, in relative terms, living in caves. In the short term it's going to bring huge economic benefits to the West Midlands, because of all the jobs while we're building it. Once it's in operation, it'll be more of a commuter line to London but if it means that HSBC moves their entire UK banking operation to Birmingham and Channel 4 moves their entire programme making operation to Leeds, that's a wonderful thing.

When I was your age, the only place that you could make money was London so it would be great if a pupil at Bromsgrove in ten years time thought "actually I can stay around here and have the same money-earning potential and the same if not better quality of living as they do in London". ■

Liza V & Oli O

LOCAL AFFAIRS

WHY DOES BTEC HAVE A BAD REPUTATION?

Many of you may instantly question; what actually is BTEC? As defined by the UCAS website: "BTEC stands for the Business and Technology Education Council. BTECs are specialist work-related qualifications. They combine practical learning with subject and theory content".

Contrastingly, Urban Dictionary has referred to BTEC as "A way of expressing something of lower grade. It is also used to refer to a dumb or idiotic person." It has become part of most young people's vocabulary to describe something which isn't as high a standard. It is used in sentences like "Reece James is a BTEC Virgil Van Dijk" or "Netball is BTEC Basketball". The term is also commonly used when talking about someone's knowledge. People will regularly use BTEC as a way to insult someone, for example: "how would you know the answer to that question, you do BTEC?" Students who do BTEC will often be shrugged off when it comes to answering general knowledge questions.

A common misconception about BTEC is that it is fully based on coursework and internal assessments. To many other students' surprise, the full 2-year BTEC course I am taking is actually 54% coursework and 46% externally assessed examinations. Additionally, 62% of large companies have recruited employees with BTEC qualifications. Furthermore, roughly 100,000 BTEC students apply to UK universities every year and their BTEC qualifications are accepted by over 150 UK universities and for relevant degree programmes on their own. I find that I often have to explain to others that I can actually apply and be accepted into universities with the qualifications I have, as BTEC is actually seen on par with A Levels.

Having done greater research to support this claim, I discovered that even Cambridge accepts students who opted for BTEC qualifications in Sixth Form. Granted that in order to go to Cambridge, it must be alongside another A-level, but it shows that Cambridge isn't an exclusive IB or A-Level

qualifications club which people perceive it to be. At Bromsgrove, students who were not straight A* candidates and did not achieve the grades to do A-Levels and are often still at School because of their sporting abilities. They are advised to do BTEC as it is a change in the way that one works, meaning they don't have to risk two years' worth of complicated work on a two-hour-long exam in the summer. They are able to spread their workload out evenly over the two years and can accumulate UCAS points along the way. There is no denying that BTEC does have some negatives, as some redbrick universities will favour IB or A-Level students over BTEC applicants. However, this is only a small portion of universities in the UK, there is still a vast choice of other institutes that do accept other qualifications. Unfortunately, at Bromsgrove we do not offer a wide range of BTECs. Nationally, there are over 2,000 possible BTEC qualifications available, contrastingly to the two options offered at Bromsgrove. Yet, BTEC can actually develop prominent skills that are required of university students. When you go to university, you are likely to complete a dissertation to get your grade and qualifications. Doing BTEC has taught me the skills of assignment writing and referencing, something which will have to be learned by A-Level students when writing their 20,000-word dissertation.

Deciding what course to take in Sixth Form is challenging. One needs to identify what learning method they thrive in and what their aspirations in life are. Ultimately, your peers should respect your decisions, be it doing the IB, A-Levels or BTEC. Yet, it is important to note that BTEC qualifications are becoming increasingly popular and an individual's decision to do BTEC courses should not be given a poor reputation simply because it is tailored differently to common Sixth Form options. ■

Tom C



study365.co.uk



targetcareers.co.uk

CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

HOW RUTH BADER GINSBURG UPENDED THE ENTIRETY OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT



Growing up, I often found it hard to idolise a person. While my classmates hung up posters of their favourite sports player or singer, I always saw myself as distanced from the individuals that were pictured in newspapers or seen on tv. Yet, recently, my attention was brought to a woman who has forever marked our society as one of the brightest of her time. A determined look, gavel hitting the table, glasses neatly placed on her nose, Joan Ruth Bader, was the second woman to serve the United States Supreme Court. More than that she was a prominent lawyer and scholar that constitutionalised the emancipation of women. This may instantly make you want to flip the page, as many flinch at the mention of American law and politics, particularly following the ambiguity and anxiety of the recent elections. However, I have found that in times of uncertainty, her words have struck

me as the pick-me up one needs when lost.

The 'coming-of-age period' is challenging for us all; not only because we face constant uncertainty and unfamiliarity, but because we have to learn to form our own opinions and ideals. In a world filled with debate and varying viewpoints, deciding what to think and how to respond to different individuals' perspectives is a hurdle many of us have to face. Making the decision to begin an 'uncomfortable' conversation on societal equality, especially from a 'youthful viewpoint', is taunting. I have often found myself being questioned by senior individuals claiming I was 'too inexperienced' or 'too idealistic', infuriating me as I desperately wished to bring light to matters that are still avoided in our society. While frustration seemed like the right response in the short term, I quickly came to see that Ginsburg's approach to some of

society's greatest issues was much more effective.

The rights and freedoms that Ginsburg fought for are still on the line today, and the only way to avoid regress on issues of equality and civil rights is to carry her legacy forward through empathetic, logical discourse. While fervent passion is commendable, Ginsburg's cases have proved victorious through her collected attitude and thorough research. As Justice Ginsburg is laid to rest, leaving an incredible legacy behind her, here is a roundup of wise words we all can live by.

"Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time."

Human nature has developed a sort of stigma against change as we desperately cling onto our comfort zones and traditions. While this is good, to an extent, it can be difficult for us to recognise that this attitude persists through opinions too. To the deception of many, it is impossible to change society and its viewpoints overnight. Patience was one of Ginsburg's greatest virtues as she dedicated her lifetime for women's equality knowing that real and long-lasting change would only be achievable in many years.

"I'm a very strong believer in listening and learning from others."

Our current society has an obsession with rapidity. In every way, we revel in a busy and quick lifestyle, having no desire for patience and reflection time. While I respect our wish to complete as much as we can in the time that we have, we can sometimes forget the experiences we learn from people around us. My appreciation for my environment has grown immensely as I began to perceive the values and life lessons that it provides me with daily. Be it through a neighbour, the florist from the Sunday market, your primary teacher or even your friend, you can learn from every individual about different views and opinions. Our ability to listen to them, even if we cannot seem to support their values, can only strengthen our understanding of the world.

"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

While there is a battle to be fought it is not something that can be done alone. The power that Ginsburg held was in her ability to unite. She faced criticism and forceful opposition, yet managed to win her cases through logic, composure and conviction, encouraging many more to support her cause. Emotion can become our greatest enemy in critical debates, demonstrating the importance of rallying support through serenity and valid argumentation rather than overbearing anger.

It is undeniable that Ginsburg's legacy will live on for centuries. However, she has most significantly altered our perception and application of both American and global political thought. A century after the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, Ruth Bader Ginsburg's pioneering career as a scholar, advocate, and judge stands as a monument to the power of dissent. RBG began the uncomfortable conversations many of us fear. It will take more than the dismantling of an outdated educational and legal system to fully achieve equality in our world. It took centuries, and tens of millions of women, to dismantle only a few of the many inequalities of our society. And no single one of them was more important than Ginsburg; warm-hearted, razor-sharp, and dauntless.■

Laetitia de B

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

WAS COVID-19 POTENTIALLY BENEFICIAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?



Art by Liza V

Reading the title, it is understandable how one can be shocked when seeing the word 'beneficial' and COVID-19 in the same sentence. However, the start of lockdown saw some notable improvements on our environment, making us question the necessity of a pandemic to make us pay attention to our surroundings.

Scientists have discovered that the environment and the COVID-19 virus are very interdependent. Due to there being a lot of restrictions and lockdowns in countries all around the world, travel by all modes of transport was limited.

As a direct consequence, oil consumption and gas emissions decreased. Between February and March 2020, there

were significant drops in nitrogen dioxide and carbon dioxide levels. NASA reported a 30% decrease in air pollution in the Northeast of the United States alone. New York saw a reduction of 50% in carbon monoxide emissions, due to traffic levels dropping by 35%. Furthermore, China's air pollution levels fell by a whopping 25%. In addition to that, great joy has come to the people of Venice. The water clarity in the famous La Serenissima's canals has improved, causing wildlife to return. Due to lack of tourism and motorised transport activity, the waters self-regulated to allow fish and various birds back into their habitat. Specifically, cormorants and ducks have returned and even laid their eggs in nests all around the city. Some locals were even spotted putting up signs to warn other

civilians not to step on or damage said nests. Usually, the famous canals would be overcrowded by boats filled with tourists that would secrete a lot of waste that would then build up on the canal floor. But the COVID-19 restrictions have prevented people from overusing the canals. The Venetians are very happy about this, as the vast majority of them have frequently protested against excessive tourism with their slogan of “No Grandi Navi” which translated to no more cruise ships. In their case, they’ve enjoyed their time in lockdown as it has allowed their environment to regain its health and beauty. Early predictions on the status of air pollution and overall pollution indicated that more improvements would follow.

However, this did not happen. Ultimately, people adapted to the state of lockdown and grew accordingly. Individuals started to find loopholes in the government restrictions so that they could do things that they would normally; which has then caused vehicle gas emissions to rise again.

In order to have long term positive effects on climate change, the world needs to lower its gas emission by at least 2.7% each year this decade so that the global warming levels are under 2 degrees. Even if there has been increasing advocacy on the matter, people are still not changing their ways in order to try to have a positive impact. We are all aware of the dangers and the damage being done to Earth, yet somehow, we are not convinced enough to make a change. In my Environmental Systems and Society lesson, we took a test by WWF to calculate our estimated carbon footprint. The results were shocking. It might be inevitable to have a larger footprint due to necessary travel, but it is important to try to compensate in other areas as well.

While COVID-19 had some positive effects on the environment, particularly during lockdown, it also led to the rise of new complications. Masks and sanitisers, now essential to our survival have posed a new set of issues for environmentalists. Every day birds get trapped in these masks and their lives are put on the line. This is

because after we throw the disposable masks away, they either end up in landfills or oceans. Gary Stokes, director of the Ocean Asia NGO, has reported that ever since the pandemic, there have been visible increases in litter wash up on a 100-meter stretch of beach in Asia. Most items found in these areas were one-time use masks and hand sanitiser bottles. This is an expected outcome, because more and more people are now using and disposing of sanitary products such as gloves and masks, each day.



Photo by Rosika G

Remember, it is important to properly dispose of masks after wearing them. This may seem like a small thing to do, but it makes a considerable difference. So, if you do choose to use one-time disposable masks, make sure to dispose of them properly or avoid using them overall. Before throwing your masks away remove the elastic bands on both sides of the masks, or invest in reusable masks instead. It’s the small amendments in one’s daily routine that make a big difference.■

Ioana V

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

HAS MESSI OUTGROWN BARCELONA?

Serena Williams, Virat Kohli, Mohammed Ali, Roger Federer, Michael Jordan, Marta, Mia Hamm; they all have something in common. They are labelled as the G.O.A.T. - Greatest of All Time. Cristiano Ronaldo, Ronaldo Nazário, Pele, Maradona and Lionel Messi. These are the G.O.A.Ts of football. Many people would label Messi as the true G.O.A.T. Nobody has scored 91 goals in a season, few score 60, even 30, but Messi, Messi scored 91 in 2012. This was actually the third year that Messi won a Ballon D'or. He was the first ever to win more than 2, and he's now the first to win 6, the only one with 6.

Johan Cruyff described Messi as a 'treasure'. Arsene Wenger named him 'the best footballer ever'. Jurgen Klopp decided that, for him, Messi is 'undoubtedly the best player in the world'. These quotes are a miniscule demonstration of the value and esteem people place on Lionel Messi. If such important people in the football community are so certain of Messi's greatness then how can ANYBODY have an argument against him? The answer is simple – Cristiano Ronaldo.

For nine seasons, they were enemies, for 180 minutes a season, fans were able to see the two greatest footballers ever, battle it out. For 9 seasons, entranced fans watched the El Clasico, they watched not only Messi and Ronaldo, but Ramos, Piqué, Xavi, Puyol, Neymar, Benzema, Bale, Modrić and Casillas. These are only a few among the impressive list. For fans of the pair, every statistic, every goal, every game played, it all matters. It's hard to compare the two when everything they do is so similarly impressive, relative to each other their achievements can easily become mundane, because, for them, they're normal but for others they're completely insane.

So, what actually sets them apart? One of the biggest arguments is: can Messi do it in other leagues? Ronaldo has played in the



Art by Feli Z

Portugalian Primeira League (for Sporting Lisbon), the English Premier League (for Manchester United), the Spanish La Liga (for Real Madrid) and Italian Serie A (for Juventus). Major clubs in huge European leagues have seen Ronaldo's magic. In contrast, Messi joined FC Barcelona as a 13 year old in 2001 from Newell's Old Boys in Argentina. He joined La Masia, Barcelona's world renowned youth academy, where he met Cesc Fabregas, Gerard Piqué, Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba (3 of whom still play for Barcelona and won the world cup in 2010). The world is aware that he can produce for Barcelona, he can turn a game and at times, destroy his opponents, but we've never seen him do it anywhere else. The only other adult team the world has seen him in, is the Argentinian National team and with no major trophies, aside from a runners up medal in the 2014 World Cup, as a team he has won nothing with Argentina since the Olympics in 2008.

If he moved and proved himself elsewhere, maybe one could make a decisive choice that determined which was the greatest football player between Messi and Ronaldo. Should Messi give in to the

pressure? Should he move elsewhere, show off his talent in another country, for another team, in another league? Obviously, one of the things that comes with being the 'G.O.A.T' is that there are always rumours. Previously, when rumours arose of a move for Messi, Barca fans wouldn't worry, Messi was theirs and they had enough confidence that it would stay that way (at least during that transfer window). However, the last few seasons haven't been the brightest for the club. Questionable managerial decisions after Luis Enrique had to step down (for familial reasons) led to the arrival of Enrico Valverde followed 3 years later by Enrique Quique Setién, who eventually was replaced in 2020 by former Dutch professional Ronald Koeman. Supposedly, Messi had fallen out with the club and this transfer window saw him pushing a move. This is possibly the most heartbreaking news a football fan can hear and Barça fans waited outside Camp Nou for news and to show their support for Messi.

Torres to Chelsea, Cole to Arsenal, Van Persie to United. Figo to Real Madrid. Football has a history of players leaving their fans distraught by their decisions, they will get over it, they'll recover, their friends and family will remind them 'it's only a game' but the tug they feel in their hearts, when they watch their guy, their player, step onto the field at a home game out of the visitors tunnel with a different jersey, a different number, a different team; that tug will never disappear. Messi is the epitome of loyalty, for Barca fans he is and will always be the greatest of all time, and they will support him no matter what. 17 years do not evaporate overnight, or ever really. Above all, Barcelona is the fan's club (one of the only clubs run and owned by the supporters – especially of this size).

If Messi has outgrown Barcelona and if he feels the need to move on, to prove himself to the entire world, to put the speculation to rest, once and for all that he is the best player, the G.O.A.T. Then Barca should respect that, the club should not stop him from leaving, the fans should not guilt him into staying. If anything they should see the opportunity. The opportunity for the entire world to unequivocally see that he's the greatest. He might be 33 but Messi will

still cost a hefty sum and teams will pay it, not only will he earn points for the table, score goals for the stats but he will bring money and major marketing possibilities. And, the opportunity for a restructure. If there's one thing that Barcelona needs more than they need Messi, it's a restructure and Messi's price tag will likely cover that fee. Barcelona as a club should re-evaluate, they need to decide what they're doing! Since Pep left and the era of tiki taka finished, they haven't bounced back. Perhaps Koeman is the man for the job and perhaps this season will be a year of collaboration between the captain and the manager and fans will finally see some cohesion and if not, then I believe the fans will understand. 17 to 18 years at a club, Messi has nothing to prove, he's a loyal and devoted player, the fans will miss him but they love him so they will be angry and sad and disappointed but they'll always look out for him and pray for him, and they'll always look forward to the day that he returns.

When Cruyff left, he returned

When Rijkaard left, he returned.

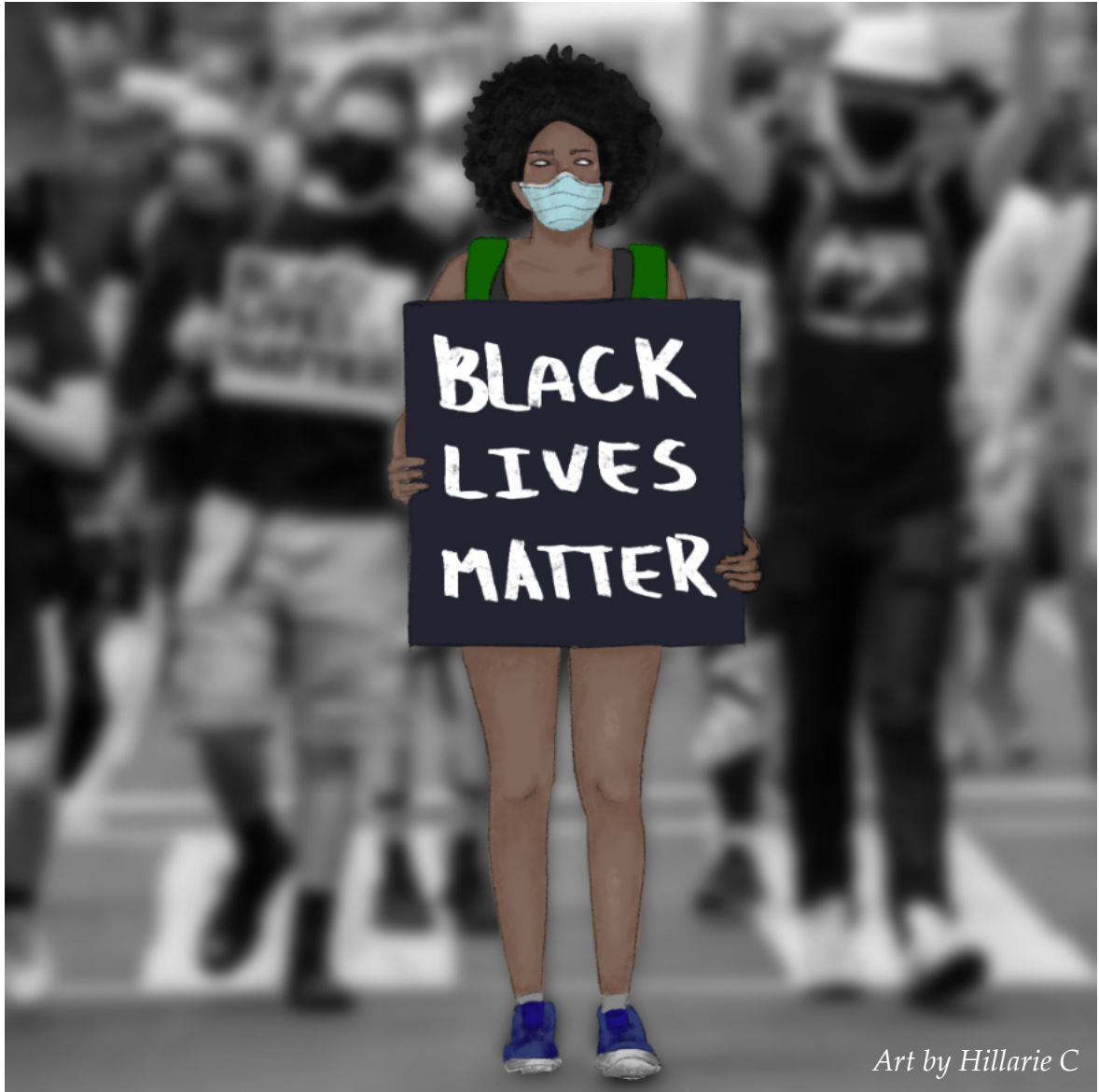
When Pep left, he returned

And if Messi left, then he too, would return.■

Emily C

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

BLM - THE GROWTH OF A NEW SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT



I felt hesitant when writing about the BLM movement, because although it is the root of society's contention on the problems of our generation and race equality, I do not personally struggle with the oppression that the movement is defying. Yet, while many around me are privileged enough not to be affected by racism, the BLM movement is one that is important for all of us to get behind as a community and as human beings.

Many have only just heard about the

movement due to its significant growth in June. However it was first initiated in the summer of 2013 by 3 community organisers: Alicia Garza, a domestic worker rights organiser in Oakland, California; Patrisse Cullors, an anti-police brutality organiser in LA; and Opal Tometi, an immigration rights organiser in Phoenix, Arizona. Although the main inspiration for the movement came from the civil rights movement in 1960s, it was also based off of the black feminist movement in the 1980s and the LGBTQ movement in 2000s. By creating BLM in

cyberspace as a social media forum, the organisation has reached millions of open-minded people that reject not only racism and police brutality, but similar issues such as sexism, misogyny and xenophobia.

Through the years 2016 and 2020, the movement continued to organise small protests around the country against police brutality and racism, with the main driving force being the deaths of at least 30 individuals as a result of police violence. The movement didn't become well-known until the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25, 2020, which captured not only the attention of America, but the global community. The Floyd murder on Memorial Day was particularly shocking due to its disturbing nature: a policeman knelt on the victim's neck for nearly 9 minutes until the point of suffocation, with the victim repeatedly screaming "I can't breathe". The murder immediately faced backlash, with people and supporters leaving their homes despite a pandemic to express their anger and frustration on the streets.

It is estimated that there were protests across 2000 cities in America and approximately 20 million people came out to protest in the US alone, with other protests taking places in cities such as London, Berlin, Amsterdam and many others. As a result of these protests police reforms were achieved in dozens of cities, with state and national legislation calling for changes in police tactics and training. The affair has helped to spread further awareness about racial injustice to other nations on the globe.

Whilst some protests retained their peaceful nature, other areas of the country assumed a more violent hue. Where protesters laid on concrete with their hands on their head chanting Floyd's words "I can't breathe", looters in cities not far off broke into luxury chains and even local mom-and-pop stores (some owned by black entrepreneurs) stealing products. Though this is deplorable, we should take into consideration other factors to this spontaneous and occasionally violent burst of outrage, notably the pandemic and Trump's reaction to it, not least the

horrendous aspect of the murder (and the fact that the perpetrators have not received justice). Trump's response and denial of the COVID-19 crisis has partly contributed to growing numbers of unemployment as businesses suffer losses in customers; studies also show that minorities such as blacks and natives are disproportionately affected by the disease due to inadequate healthcare and sanitary conditions. Trump's heavy-handed approach to the affair, as illustrated by the choice of a photo op at St. John's Church preceded by tear-gassing protesters in his path, has aggravated anger within the people.

Besides these evident facts, there is something that I'd like to ask myself and the people interested in the movement. Personally, I've never heard about the BLM movement until the murder of George Floyd, and since then it has become an international movement with millions supporting it and an enormous amount of publicity generated around it. But there have been so many black individuals that have been wrongfully blamed for crimes that they did not commit, and wrongfully imprisoned or executed due to police brutality. Why didn't the people protest as much for them as they did for George Floyd? Breonna Taylor was fatally shot in her own apartment earlier in March; How was her story only brought to light during, if not after the protests in June?

It is simple. These records of black individuals having their lives taken are present, but very little of them were filmed besides the George Floyd murder. Why does it take for people to have actual video tape evidence to take a stand for what they believe? The fact that so few people knew about the Black Lives Matter movement until actual graphic evidence of murder happening is concerning. The censoring of police brutality is to such a degree, that only genuine video footage is enough to bring light to this serious issue is a problem in itself. With this in mind, I urge you to read carefully about the movement and pierce the veil; do not forget the police brutality that has happened, whether it was filmed or not. ■

Sara M P

GLOBAL AFFAIRS

CORNWALL – THE UK’S FORGOTTEN NATION



Art by Laetitia de B

Cornwall; a rural, dainty county of England, home to picturesque seaside tourist towns, known for their pasties and their beaches. That’s what you were thinking of wasn’t it? Many see this place, as I did, with an ignorant, pretentious sense of innocence.

However, one can easily overlook the political issues in that area, or even the fact there are politics involved at all. Yet, within

this duchy of England is a long-standing nationalist movement, one which is now growing with renewed fervour. Though this movement does seem like it is purely of Cornish interest, it has a much greater relevance; it asks us to reconsider the meaning of the terms nation and state, and shows the core elements that are required for legitimacy within government, which has relevance and importance to situations all over the world.

When you first think of the nations of Great Britain, often four names spring to mind: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. All four of these nations bar one (that will be England) exist in what is called a devolved state, where a level of self-governance is granted to each nation, in the form of national assemblies, first ministers and individual representation whilst simultaneously being a part of the state of the United Kingdom.

But why? Why does the United Kingdom grant such individual governance to its constituent nations? Why does it not have a single, controlling, centralised government, since Great Britain is one state? This idea would make the political processes run all from London, which could bring efficiency and uniformity to the government in the UK. So why not?

The answer lies in the incredibly vast cultural differences and historical legacies that separate each individual nation. We can even trace these differences back to the Roman invasion of Britain in the first century, where the previously ubiquitous Celtic culture in Britain was forced into the corners of the country by the invading forces: North, to Scotland; West to Wales; across the sea, to Ireland and finally into the southwest leg of Cornwall. In the subsequent invasions and rulings of Britain these areas have remained as distinct separate regions. This movement of people away from the Romans, Saxons and various other invaders in Britain has led to a residual difference in national identity and culture in these areas, one that manifested itself in unique languages, practices and heritage.

The difference in culture was so vast, that in the late 1990s the UK government passed the Scotland Act, the Northern Ireland Act and the Government of Wales Act, giving more governance and individual assemblies to the respective regions. The government said that they granted more autonomy to these areas in recognition of their differences to the main body of Anglo-Saxon England, and that giving them more decision-making power was a display of democracy.

This is the main premise of devolution, and, as we will see, it is based on the idea that a nation of people should have the right to their own representation and protection of their culture and to be governed with their own interests in mind. For those such as Councillor Dick Cole, the head of Mebyon Kernow, the self-pronounced Party for Cornwall, there are a number of reasons why devolution is viable and needed. Cole, whose party is the most vocal supporter for Cornish devolution, talked to me about the form of civic nationalism that Mebyon Kernow practices, encouraging a passionate pride in the heritage and rights of the People of Cornwall, whilst maintaining a progressive, tolerant and inclusive nature, avoiding the ugly racism that can be associated with ethnic nationalism.

The picture of a devolved Cornwall that Councillor Cole presented to me was undeniably attractive; a local, decentralised government where hospitals are built closer, so one third of the population don't have to travel out to Devon to get healthcare, and where planning control is local, therefore development projects can be made in harmony with the environment and the needs of the people. Cole described to me the current political disconnection, where decisions about Cornwall are made in London, based on money instead of the people. It is the lack of representation on a governmental level, that particularly aggravates the people of Cornwall. With this in mind, it is easy to see why the promise of devolution, which is in essence, increasing the proximity of the government to the people, is so attractive.

The disunity and distance from governance has led to a multitude of problems in Cornwall. An example of this is housing, where the government is giving power to developers over local councils, who create housing for people wanting holiday homes, as opposed to affordable housing for the people living in Cornwall. This lack of understanding of Cornish issues, has led to a housing crisis. Stories circulate of people sleeping in tents and caravans, due to a lack of social housing, whilst developers build expensive houses for wealthier individuals outside of Cornwall looking for a second home. The

decisions made in London create more profit for the developers but barely take into account the people of Cornwall. They are indicative of the divorce of decision-making power that has fuelled the recent calls for devolution, and the reason why people want governance closer to home.

It is the premise of the problems of a lack of proximity, which has caused issues in the EU and other global institutions. Less than 10-20% of citizens identify as primarily European, with the majority seeing themselves as mostly a national of their country. How can Europe expect people to accept decisions made in Brussels, when the people see themselves as Greek or Spanish? How does the IMF expect people in Argentina to happily pay higher taxes when the decision was made in New York? Legitimacy of government is largely founded on its proximity to its people.

Although there are clear political, large scale problems with the removed governance of Cornwall, I also wanted to see the more human aspect of the issue, and the way that the people of Cornwall felt about their heritage and their relationship with, as well as their place within England and the UK. To do this I spoke with 15 members of the campaign group 'Kernow Matters to Us' (KMTU). This non-political group exists only, in their words, 'to give the people of Cornwall a voice'.

Their knowledge of Cornish culture first allowed me to find out what separated the people of Cornwall from the rest of England, essentially, what gave it the right to representation, what classified it as a nation. I was presented with a plethora of factors, ranging from language and landscapes, to the unique druid history, flags and festivals. Even the genetic makeup of those born in Cornwall differs from the rest of England and the UK. Through all of the facts about history, the stories of family heritage, or anecdotes of the legendary 'nearly home trees', I realised that what was happening, was an attempt to define the different parts that make up a culture.

These factors amalgamate to create those feelings of homeland and belonging that the members of KMTU spoke about and are the

common factors and experiences that bring together people to form a society and a community. They are the reason that people identify as 'Cornish' and not 'English' and it is the human foundation of similar movements in the Basque, Catalonia, Brittany, Bavaria, Nova Scotia and all across the world.

I saw how strong the feeling of home and family was in the passion and dedication of the people I spoke to, who came together from all across the world just to speak about their home. This feeling of shared experience, identification and belonging within a group of people is essentially what shapes a nation, whether they have a state or not. After my research, I think that in the future a Cornish assembly could be a viable, democratic, deserved option, which is supported by parties such as Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Democrats. This more modest form of self-determination would allow Cornwall a better ability to prioritise local issues, and protect local culture, business and agriculture, maintaining and protecting its cultural heritage whilst remaining a part of the UK.

However, this definition of a nation, as a group of people united by such shared experience brings up interesting questions for the future. In this globalised, ultra-connected modern world, shared experience and culture is no longer restricted by physical geography. Could we soon see nations form from the internet from people who have never physically met before? Will thousand-year heritages such as that in Cornwall be diluted by the incoming flood of international influences, or will we learn to live as global citizens, whilst also embracing our traditional heritage? It boils down to the meaning of a nation in today's society, and the sense of belonging and national pride that helps hold the world's state system in place. It has remained strong in Cornwall; we'll have to see if it can in the rest of the world too. ■

Nik G

TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE

THE COMPLICATED WAR BETWEEN SONY AND MICROSOFT

How the growth of the tech industry forcing Microsoft and Sony to adapt their marketing and technological focus.



The competition between PlayStation and Xbox products has been fierce ever since Microsoft launched their direct competitor to Sony's ultra-popular gaming console in 2001. The adversary that started with the PS2 and the original Xbox has carried on to the present day, but recently Microsoft seems to have backed down...

On the 18th of March the prayers of PlayStation fans were answered. Well, sort of. What actually emerged was not the explosive design that so many people were dreading, not the heap of exclusive titles that we are used to Sony releasing, but rather an incredibly technological and complicated conference for developers,

which left many questions unanswered. Xbox countered with a presentation of its own internals, which seemed to be very similar. Except, it was too late, Xbox was late to the party and no one cared about its revolutionary technology anymore.

Why was the PlayStation presentation so impressive? Well, there was an overwhelming score of numbers, teraflops, SSD speeds and vague comparisons, but little seemed to tie it in with real life at first. That was until thunder struck: the new hard drive was going to be 100 times faster, virtually eliminating load and boot times for games and the console itself... but how is this possible? Technology does progress

quickly, but can hard drives really improve so much in a mere 4 years? Has Sony hired a certified magician? While the concerns are very much logical, Sony is not lying. The 'next-gen' console really is going to be that much better than its predecessor, and software improvements play a large part in that.

When consoles had to be refreshed in the middle of the current generation's life cycle, Sony and Microsoft were not planning on producing revolutionary and mind-blowing updates. They were simply meant to extend the consoles' life range. They featured simple updates, like a more modern CPU, upgraded GPU and better BT/Wi-Fi connectivity. Yet the consoles turned out to be more impressive and could technically have been the basis for the next generation. However, neither company was ready. This is mainly because to call something next-gen, massive improvements have to happen. Nearly nonexistent loading times is certainly one of them. So, Sony decided to base its 'next-gen' experience on the sheer speed of its gaming interface.

The improvements in hardware are indeed impressive and allow the games to get more and more visually stunning, all while reducing loading times. The processor was upgraded, the graphics were upgraded (they now have more than twice the theoretical potential power), memory was doubled and, most importantly, the internal storage switched to an SSD. This is part of the reason why the PS5 is so quick. The SSD itself is 10 times faster than the previously used HDD. So, while the previous generation PS4 used to have a peak throughput of 100 MB/s, the new PS5 will have throughputs of around 1 GB/s.

However, you may have noticed that the numbers 10 and 100 do not really correspond, and you are completely right. Hardware internal storage improvement is only part of the whole system. The other factor of improvement comes from bypassing the CPU's bottlenecks and clever compression algorithms. The two improvements go hand in hand, as they are both responsible for reducing the time that is necessary to seek or locate the data on the system prior to the download. This is

achieved by using a specialised chip which reduces the strain on the main CPU, allowing it to locate the necessary files and decompress them straight off the GPU, which effectively goes around the CPU limitations. So, this essentially connected the storage straight to the GPU accelerating it vastly. This is exactly the other factor of 10, which allows games to be sought and loaded so much faster, which gives peak throughput of 10 GB/s. This is more than enough for any game currently available.

All of this will also be available on Xbox, but Sony seems to have the upper hand for now, as Xbox made exclusive titles, design and the performance of the CPU and GPU their focus during the presentation. However, most of the exclusive titles either got delayed, or are suffering other production issues. Sony, on the other hand, made a bold statement: the PC platform will take 'forever' to catch up. Surely, this should have given them an incredible technological advantage. Well... not quite, as it turns out that at Sony, forever is approximately five and a half months. This is how long after the PS5 technical presentation Nvidia launched their new RTX3080 graphics card, which aims to destroy and shatter. Interestingly, similar compression principles apply, so this feature is no longer the upper hand of next-gen consoles. Additionally, the graphics cards have gone on sale long before the PS5 or Xbox are expected to. The most confusing information is that Nvidia has full software integration help from Microsoft, its apparent direct competitor in the gaming hardware industry. At first glance this makes no sense whatsoever. Why would a company sabotage its own sales in such a dramatic way? Yet, upon close examination, the reasons are fairly clear.

First of all, Xbox and PCs with the RTX 3080 are not direct competitors. The Nvidia graphics card alone costs more than the whole Xbox console, so it is more of an exclusive for developers, video editors and individuals who are ready to spend incredible amounts of money on their gaming PC. Nevertheless, it still does drive down the sales of the Xbox to some degree. This is where the second reason comes in. Unlike PS for Sony, Xbox is by no means the primary source of income for Microsoft:

they sell much more software and business solutions, so Xbox is more of a publicity and innovations area. This is why Microsoft is shifting away from 'console warfare' and towards Cloud gaming software, where they could have an advantage in terms of technology.

In fact, Xbox is already being used to test such software. This is because subscription-based services have the potential to attract many more people than a 400-dollar console. Their service Gamepass is already available on PC and will soon come out on mobile platforms. The potential to play the latest games for PC and consoles on a mobile device is sure to attract a lot of people and make lots of revenue, even though Gamepass is currently barely breaking even.

So, Microsoft is not too disappointed with its current disadvantage to Sony in the console industry, as it plans to catch up by bringing full scale gaming to mobile. In fact, it is purposely sacrificing its position in the 'console warfare' as it plans to shift to online streaming altogether. The sole purpose of its mundane design is to force consumers into a habit of ignoring the console as a source of gaming and prepare them for gamepass on a psychological level.

Sony took a radically different approach and not only provided a breathtaking design, but also a completely reengineered user experience, which makes the PS5 feel different. While all this is mainly for the purpose of marketing, it does give consumers the tingling sensation of celebration. What does this mean for Sony and PlayStation? Better revenue, more consoles sold in the short term. However, they will struggle to adapt once consoles will be replaced by cloud gaming and possibly be forced out of the gaming industry altogether, but that will not be soon.

In the meantime, the next-gen consoles are as impressive as ever, bridging the gap and essentially becoming game-only PCs. This is sure to improve gamers' experience and make development for future games less demanding, as the adaptation of games to other consoles or PC will not take much

effort. This means that most games will be able to be streamed via services based on servers. Soon ray tracing, variable shading and other crazy advances of the CAD industry will be available on your tablet, without needing to buy a console or an expensive PC. This is why the next-gen consoles and the fading 'console warfare' impact a much wider circle of gamers.■

Maximilian O

TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE

FREUD

Psychological growth

When one thinks about psychological growth, for many the first person who springs to mind is Sigmund Freud. He was an Austrian neurologist who is credited for founding 'psychoanalysis', to treat mental illness and explain human behaviour. Over the length of his career, Freud wrote over twenty books on psychological theory.

Freud believed our adult lives are greatly impacted by experiences during our childhood, which shape our personality later on. The majority of his theories are engaged with the impact of childhood and how personalities are developed; his most famous theory is about the tripartite structure of the human mind, where each of the three parts balances off each other to create our personality: id, ego and superego.

As we grow, the mind learns how to balance conflicts between all three of these structures and develop to fulfil what each section 'desires'. Depending on which structure wins, these 'conflicts' will determine our behavioural tendencies and dictate whether we live life dependent on desire and pleasure or whether we internalise those desires and cooperate with social norms.

The Id:

Freud believed the most primitive of the three structures is the 'id', meaning one's identity. The id is associated with natural instincts, consisting of all the inherited components of our personality present at birth. The id is the unconscious aspect of our psych which responds instantly to basic needs, urges and desires. For example, a baby will cry in order to fulfil their instinctive desire to eat or drink. The existence of the id is thus necessary for survival. It is thought that a baby's personality consists only of the 'id' before developing an 'ego' and 'Superego' as it

matures. The 'id' remains exactly the same throughout a lifetime and does not change with experience or time. As it is unconscious, it cannot be affected by logic, reality or experience. Freud believed the id operates within the pleasure principle: this is the idea that every wishful impulse must be fulfilled immediately, regardless of the outcomes it may produce. Whenever we satisfy our id, we experience pleasure. However, when we are unsuccessful, we are punished with pain.

The Ego:

The next of these three divisions is the 'ego.' The ego balances the unrealistic id with the outside world. Freud theorised that the ego is the decision-making part of our personality: it represents reason as opposed to the id. Before deciding how to behave, the ego considers societal norms and etiquette. It tries to work out realistic ways of satisfying the id's demands, often compromising to avoid the negative consequences of breaking societal expectations (if one fully adhered to the id).

Like the id, the ego seeks pleasure and avoids pain. The ego cannot measure whether something is right or wrong; something is good simply if it achieves its end without causing harm to itself or the id. In comparison to the id, the ego is weak. The best the ego can do is attempt to direct the id in the right direction, claiming credit at the end as if the action were its own. In 1923, Freud said, it is 'like a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse'. If the ego is unsuccessful at using the reality principle and anxiety is experienced, unconscious defence mechanisms are employed. The ego engages in what is known as secondary process thinking, meaning that its decision making is more rational and orientated towards problem-solving. If one action is unsuccessful, a plan B/C/D is put into place and so on until a solution

is found. This is known as 'reality testing'. One feature of clinical psychology is working to enhance the control of the ego and help clients to assess their perception of reality through assisting the client to think through their options.

The Superego:

The final structure of the mind is the 'superego'. Essentially, the function of the superego is to control the impulses of the id, particularly those which are not socially acceptable, including aggression. It also functions by persuading the ego to turn to moralistic goals rather than simply realistic ones and to strive for perfection. The Superego consists of two parts: The 'conscience' and the 'ideal-self'. The conscience punishes the ego through guilt. For example, if the ego gives into the desires of the id, one might feel guilt. The ideal self is an imaginary image of where you want to be (eg: in terms of career or personality). Behaviour which falls short of the ideal self may be punished by the superego through guilt. The superego can also offer reward if we achieve an aspect of the ideal self; we may feel proud or self-satisfied.

The intricacies of the mind are endless and exploring it will further our understanding of our growth as individuals. Put simply by Freud himself, people are "simply actors in the drama of their own minds, pushed by desire, pulled by coincidence. Underneath the surface, our personalities represent the power struggle going on deep within us." ■

Polly D

Art by Liza V



CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

THE REWARDS WE ALL DESERVE

The word “reward” describes the benefits of having completed a task. It is important to outline the difference between a reward and a treat. A treat is a small pleasure that we give ourselves when we feel the need for extra motivation, while a reward is a “big treat” given for an accomplishment. Growing up, I often found it difficult to acquire a balance between work and rest, and particularly to find a rewarding activity that would help me find some tranquility amidst the craziness of School life. This is where my love for cinematography suddenly flourished, as I found myself spending my weekends curled up with a hot drink in my hand, mesmerised by the images flickering on my laptop screen. Now, with lockdown controlling most of our lives, our weekends will be quieter than usual. I therefore compiled a list of some classics that will give you that tiny recompense we all deserve during these challenging times.

Tatiana M



1. FREEDOM WRITERS

Modelled from the real-life Erin Grewell’s autobiographical book, ‘The Diary of Free Writers’, Freedom Writers depicts the story of a young teacher, Erin Grewell, that arrives at a School where many teenagers are members of street gangs. At first, it seems that she would not last a week with the daring wards. However, Grewell manages to win the students’ trust and create a friendly environment. Besides bringing attention to major global issues, such as racism, this film exposes the atrocities of a horrifying yet important matter – homicide. While the plot does have an unusual fate, it sheds light on topics of great relevance in our current society. Definitely worth watching in your free time, particularly for contemplative evenings.

2. MONA LISA SMILE

The free-thinking art teacher Catherine Ann Watson gets a job at a conservative women's college, where hypocrisy reigns behind the facade of well-being. The main character actively shares ideas of equality with her pupils, but her methods do not suit the headmistress — a woman of Patriarchal views. Director Mike Newell (“Four weddings and a funeral”) shot a visually impeccable story about the emancipation of American women, featuring impressive names: Julia Roberts, Kirsten Dunst and Maggie Gyllenhaal. Another classic which exposes key global issues that are still very much present in our current society, one I couldn’t recommend more.



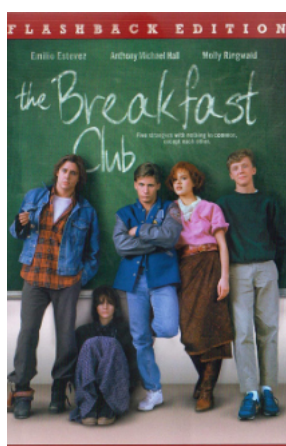
3. 12 ANGRY MEN

A young man from the slums is accused of murdering his father. The teenager is facing the death penalty, and it seems that his fate is sealed. Once in the deliberation room, one of the 12 jurors suddenly questions the circumstances of the case. A long discussion ensues, which turns into arguments and investigations. The film has repeatedly been included in ratings of the best works of cinema in history. This film gives you a basic understanding of the concept of a legal system, particularly of the intricacies of the American law. It highlights the process of conviction, specifically in cases in which an individual is sentenced for such a serious crime. This movie is enlightening in every aspect, definitely recommended for anyone interested in pursuing a career in law.



6. THE PROFESSOR'S BELOVED EQUATION

The Professor's Beloved Equation is a Japanese film based on the novel *The Housekeeper and the Professor*. The motion picture focuses on a kind and generous professor, played by Akira Terao, who is involved in a car incident, meaning his memory can only retain information for short periods of time. As he recovers, two prominent characters become part of his day-to-day: the housekeeper and her ten-year-old son Root. Over time, they begin to understand the beauty hidden in numbers, a topic that fascinated the Professor. Little by little, they begin to explore the fantastic world of numbers and equations, a world filled with love, warmth, purity and beauty. It helps them understand the joys of life better than ever. This film is particularly recommended for people who find mathematics a tedious subject, it will definitely change your perception.



5. THE BREAKFAST CLUB

'The Breakfast Club' is the second part of 'The High School Trilogy' directed and written by John Hughes, which also includes the films 'Sixteen Candles' and 'Ferris Bueller takes a day off'. All three works were recognized as the standard of youth cinema and became the Manifesto of a whole generation of American teenagers. In this film, we follow the story of five high School students, who have been made to attend a day-long detention, while writing an essay on the topic of their identity. Antithetical, the five have different backgrounds, ideals and aspirations. Their only common traits are their low expectations to befriend one another. Yet, the longer they are together, the more they find that unifies them. Many of you may question: why the name "The Breakfast Club" though? That you shall find out for yourself. A relaxing, humorous, yet thought-provoking, saturday-night film for all ages.

6. DEAD POETS SOCIETY

No offence, but shame on you if you haven't watched this masterpiece! This film takes place at Welton Academy, where academia is presented in the strictest and most conservative way. However, the new literature teacher, John Keating, is not one to follow the established rules, and explains to his students that their life is fleeting, encouraging them to appreciate every single moment of it. In response, his wards secretly revive the literary club - "the society of dead poets". The film is often studied as part of courses in pedagogy, psychology, and cultural studies. John Keating, played by the gifted Robin Williams, is an example of a teacher who inspires his students and helps them discover something new in themselves. I feel that it is paramount for any student to have this type of teacher, who stimulates students with passion and joy, daring them to be poised and dedicated to their ideals.



7. THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

A biographical romantic drama about one of the most famous scientists of our time. The film tells us about the scientific achievements of Stephen Hawking, his acquaintance with his wife Jane and his subsequent illness. For this role, Eddie Redmayne was awarded nearly all of the world's prestigious cinema awards, including the Oscar, the BAFTA and the Golden globe. The praise was well-deserved, as he truly embodied both the beauty and complexities of the life of Hawking, further amplifying the legacy that he has left for future generations. For any of you keen scientists out there, use this coming weekend to watch this life-changing film, you won't regret it.

CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIE MUSIC: A SHORT SYNOPSIS

Nowadays, the term 'indie' is thrown around carelessly without too much concern for whether the art in question is actually 'indie'. However, what is indie? In the most simplistic (and archaic) definition, it is releasing something without the benefit of a distributor which, in music, would be the label. But, how many self-proclaimed indie bands actually release albums without labels backing them? In truth, quite a lot, but the ones that you and I tend to know almost always have a publisher. So, if indie bands aren't ones without a publisher, then what are they? Well, indie is an umbrella term that is quite flexible in many ways. Indie as a genre is usually characterised by a sort of DIY, in the garage feeling, usually with guitar-driven songs and possibly controversial lyrics. However, like in a lot of other music, there's not really a concrete way to label something as indie. Simply put, it is just something you know when you hear it.

I would argue that the first real indie album was 'The Velvet Underground & Nico' which was released in 1967 by a band of the same name. Even though highly debated, I think this piece of art was the catalyst to the modern indie revolution. It might not sound exactly as you would imagine indie to sound like, but listen closer and you can hear the significant influence of this album on bands like The Strokes and even Sonic Youth. The reception of the album at the time wasn't great, to say the least. Due to the controversial content of the album, it was banned in most record stores and never got the chance to be played on the radio. However, around a decade after its release, the album started getting wide appraisal from casual listeners and critics alike. If that doesn't scream indie, I don't know what does. Modern reviewers generally rate the album with the highest scores. I think it's safe to say that the Velvet Underground's debut album is the embodiment of the phrase 'your kids are gonna love it'.

It is pretty much impossible to talk about indie without mentioning The Smiths. The Smiths were most prominent in the 80s where they capitalised on the popularity of college rock which dominated the underground scene at the time. Although not the first, the Smiths were one of the most influential indie bands, at least in the UK. The 80s were a time where synth-pop was a very prominent genre and people were getting hungry for simpler, guitar-driven music. They truly had all of that and even more to offer. With their self-titled debut album gaining popularity and positive reviews from lots of critics and the single 'What difference does it make?' reaching 12th in the UK singles chart it was obvious that their success was imminent. The Smiths redefined not only the foundation of indie music but of music in general. Even though they have had some rough patches with the media, specifically due to the controversial nature of Morrissey's lyrics and even more due to his political beliefs, the legacy of the band lives on and their impact is felt throughout the music industry.

Indie music has been in a decline of popularity recently due to the rise of hip-hop, however, I think that we are in the middle of a small renaissance of indie music at the current time with the culture associated with it becoming very popular over the recent years. Over time it has evolved and changed, as all things do. The movement is being spearheaded by bands like Mac Demarco, Parquet Courts and Bombay Bicycle Club who have broken into popularity quite recently, largely due to the fact that they have filled a vacuum in the music industry that lots of people were eagerly waiting to be filled.

Indie music isn't a genre that you can define fully. It stems from a desire for something new, unique, and truly inclusive. People like to see something grow and develop, even more so when they are directly involved with it. Indie music is on

the rise and you can help keep it that way. I encourage you to keep an open mind and explore the wonderful world of modern indie music. It might just be the most recent musical revolution happening right before our eyes.■

Arseniy S



Art by Liza V

CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

CORONA CONCERTS: THE GROWTH OF VIRTUAL MUSIC DURING COVID-19

Since the breakout of the global pandemic in early 2020, one of the most affected industries has been musical entertainment. In order to survive in the future, the music business must adapt to a new era of entertainment, with the future of live concerts perhaps in disarray.



How has the music industry been affected?

Live music is the lifeblood of the musical arts. Most people think artists make a living by selling and streaming millions of records. However, almost all artists make most of their money on road touring; in fact, only a small number of musicians actually make enough to live off just by selling records. For example, the highest paid musical act in 2017 was U2, earning \$54.4 million. However, 95% of these total earnings came from touring alone. It doesn't just stop there, Garth Brooks who ranked second in the 2017 rankings had 89% of his earnings come from touring. Even the metal maniacs Metallica whose

discography includes: ten studio albums, four live albums, a cover album, five extended plays, 37 singles and 39 music videos, only make 29% of their earnings from streaming and album sales.

So, when back in March the coronavirus outbreak shattered the world, some of the most affected people were musicians, having to cancel their shows and tours because of social distancing and lockdown measures. Some of these cancellations included: metal icons Judas Priest having to reschedule their 50th anniversary tour and pop treasure Billie Eilish having to postpone her 2020 "Where do we go?" world tour. Unfortunately, the list goes on with: Rammstein, The Eagles, New Order,

Slipknot, Guns 'n' Roses and Gojira all having to cancel or postpone tour dates due to the pandemic.

All this has meant that over the past few months, the music industry has had to completely rethink the way it portrays live music. With artists unable to even leave their home country, how could the music industry survive this ordeal?

The Growth of the "Virtual Concert"

When artists were forced to cancel shows, they had to take another approach, not only to make money but to continue to express their love of playing to fans. Very quickly, artists started to live stream mini acoustic sets. Asking fans to donate to charities set up to help tour crew like sound engineers, set engineers, instrument technicians and other "Roadies", as they are known to musicians. For example, the frontman of Irish band Snow Patrol, Gary Lightbody, started streaming live on either Instagram or Facebook and asked fans to donate to help fund furloughed staff.

But then, on Saturday the 18th April at 18:00, the future of virtual music was taken a step further when the WHO (World Health Organisation) launched their "One world: Together at Home" live stream. Created in collaboration with Lady Gaga the stream included artists like Alanis Morissette, Billie Eilish, Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day and Chris Martin from Coldplay. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO told the WHO newsroom: "We may have to be apart physically for a while, but we can still come together virtually to enjoy great music. The 'One World: Together at Home' concert represents a powerful show of solidarity against a common threat". All in all, nearly 21 million people viewed the concert across 21 networks, raising almost \$128 million.

Some bands also started doing ticketed livestream shows, on stage with lights and pyrotechnics... the full shebang. An example of a band who did this was Florida based, metalcore band Trivium. Having released their ninth, and latest album "What the Dead Men Say" back in

April, they launched their "A Light in the Distant Mirror" live stream on the 10th July. Streamed worldwide from Full Sail University in Orlando, the hour and a half setlist contained songs off their new album, with their back catalogue making an appearance as well. Tickets were \$10; with all \$100,000 made donated to furloughed tour crew.

It is evident that Coronavirus has wreaked havoc within the musical industry. However, the growth of the new genre "virtual musical/entertainment" has supplied hope to music lovers everywhere, forming a more than satisfactory substitute until artists can take to the stage once more.■

Hamish C

LIFESTYLE

A LAYMAN'S APPLICATION OF ECONOMICS

As is customary for any Upper Sixth student applying for university in the Michaelmas term, I was engaged in some reading to shore up some knowledge and ideas for my Personal Statement and was drawn particularly to the subject of economics, especially regarding the idea of growth. For the sake of the continued attention of any potential readers of this article, I'm not going to be talking about stock market fluctuations or in-depth analysis of GDP growth and comparison between nations. Rather, I'm going to be talking about growth as individuals (and a group) and how my reading of general economic theory might be applied, which might hopefully serve as an interesting aside from the numerous "self-help" books cluttered in any Waterstones or WHSmith store.

Economics students may be familiar with David Ricardo's law of comparative advantage. For those who don't, imagine two countries producing goods (e.g. bananas and apples). Suppose Country A can produce x amount of bananas and y amount of apples yearly, whereas Country B produces less of both bananas and apples yearly. While Country A might have an absolute advantage in terms of individual items (i.e. only bananas, and apples), it still stands to reason that country B should still produce either bananas or apples.

Why is this so? Because Ricardo argues, assuming free-trade conditions, that each country can increase overall consumption by exporting the goods which it has a comparative advantage of (and importing other goods which it does not produce). This is due to the existence of opportunity cost: each country must use government expenditure (i.e. money) in order to fund production. Country A still needs to buy machines or hire workers in order to produce bananas, which may come at the expense of doing the same to produce apples. On the other hand, it may cost (relatively) less for Country B to produce

apples than for Country A; therefore, Country B should specialise in producing apples.

For the more intuitive readers, you might realise how such a "law" can be compared to "non-economic" situations (disregarding any potential rebuttals that "everything is economics"). Thinking about the notion of absolute advantage, it may be easy to point to a number of high-flying academics/sportspersons/musicians in this School (and sometimes even a combination of the three) or videos of "prodigies" that go viral on YouTube or other areas of social media. For those who might not be as extraordinarily gifted, this might seem rather disheartening: the seemingly instant way in which they might grasp new skills and disciplines furthers this. If person A is absolutely better than me in every way, shape and form, then why bother exerting effort when it seems near impossible to match (much less beat) them?

Obviously, this is a pessimistic and highly flawed way of thinking. Why? Because bright and sharp and quick-witted as they are, these individuals still incur a cost: if not a financial cost to pay for accruing these additional skills (e.g. buying an instrument or paying for tutoring/training), then a cost of time (no matter how small). One can consider this time "wasted" or at least used in a less efficient way: they might have spent more time exploring another area that they enjoy/excel more. Since everyone has the same number of hours within a day, and the same number of days within a year, different individuals will often seek to acquire skills in "different" areas and specialisations; over time, these differences may become more pronounced. Expanded to the size of a wider community (e.g. in a town or city), each individual might benefit from exercising the skill that they are best at, simply by exercising them.

Yet, does this mean that you should only do what you're good at? What if your "true"

skill was that of cutting grass; does this mean that you should be predestined to be a grass-cutter for a living? Perhaps not. Ascribing such a deterministic view of humanity, where one's own future is guaranteed to lead to one outcome, may lead to tragic or even horrifying results. A less dystopian understanding or expounding of Ricardo's law might reject the idea of "absolute advantage", especially in areas of academia or sports/music/etc. We are always keen on the idea that if one works hard, we will eventually match and surpass those with innate talents: the jump between GCSEs (where one could hypothetically cruise through and cram in the last semester) and A-Levels (where this is no longer the case) might illustrate this. Thus, it might be argued that you should concentrate whether you want to acquire the relevant skills (and knowledge), rather than if you should (i.e. if someone else is already doing better than you). But as I've already stated, there might be individuals who excel already in the fields that you want to enter and are able to improve almost exponentially due to their already acquired skillset. Does this mean our efforts are wasted? Realising that one's talent could only go so far, and that one's hard work could only go so far (as much as one's parents or teachers encourage otherwise) is heavily disheartening and breeds internal and external resentment.

This article, which initially offered a playful application of an economic theory which seeks to bring a satisfactory answer to the issues of "absolute advantage" within daily life, unfortunately, ends on even more uncertain grounds, delving into a more pressing philosophical issue. The inherently meritocratic ideal of our society will always have some disparities of talent and skill, some of which will be undeserved. If in the chance that one person is really superior in their respective field in every way, then why should society allow other individuals to follow the same line of work even if they are relatively inefficient?

Maybe we have misunderstood the application of Ricardo's Law to daily life. While using this theory to mundane tasks might suffice as a humorous and simplistic observation (like washing the dishes and

cooking food, or doing research and presentations in an academic setting), it raises darker questions about how one can apply this to the functioning of society and our wider global community. Should the state really be about economic efficiency, where everyone should do what they are best at? Or should society encourage people's choices and careers given their goals and desires without worrying too much about their innate and unchosen abilities, concerning the individual's own self-satisfaction with the advancement of their talents? Such a question shall be left to our readers.■

Matthew C



LIFESTYLE

AUTUMN RECIPES

Leaves lying around the floor, fire crackling in the corner, a warm cup of tea in the hand. Sounds like the ideal autumn day doesn't it? Yet the ultimate source of comfort, particularly for the busy students of Bromsgrove School, are flavory, home-made, baked goods.

If you simply want to feel the taste of home during these cold autumnal months, or want to explore your inner Bake-Off candidate, here are some easy and delicious recipes to follow.

These are the recipes which are easy to make, delicious, and mostly associated with autumn.

Apple pie "Sharlotka."

If you ever need a relatively easy recipe that can be done within an hour, this is the perfect option for you. Ingredients can be found in any kitchen, and the process itself is not rocket science at all.

Ingredients

- 250 g of brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 250 g of flour
- ½ a teaspoon of baking soda
- 5-6 apples (I personally recommended to mix them with 2-3 spoons of sugar and 2-3 spoons of cinnamon)

1. Separate the egg yolks from the egg whites
2. Mix the egg whites with 125 g of sugar.
3. Separately mix the egg yolks with the remaining half of the sugar and add to the whites.

4. Gradually add flour and baking soda.
5. Cut the apples into thin slices
6. Mix them with sugar and cinnamon (optional)
7. Grease the baking form with butter and lay out a thin layer of apples.
8. Then spread the dough.
9. Put in a preheated oven at 180 °C for 30-40 minutes.

Carrot vegan cake

It is quite challenging to find a good vegan baking recipe mainly due to absence of the eggs; however, this recipe will shatter any prejudice you had before about vegan food.

Ingredients

- 650 g of carrots (6-7)
- 250 g of sugar
- 1/3 of a teaspoon of salt
- 170-180 ml of water
- 130-150 ml of vegetable/ coconut oil
- 465 g of flour
- 3 tablespoons of lemon juice/apple vinegar
- 1 teaspoon of baking soda
- ½ a teaspoon of baking powder
- Additionally – raisins or coconut (quantity up to personal preference)



1. Grate the carrots and mix them with

sugar. It is important to squeeze the juice from the carrots so the carrots mix better with the sugar.

2. Add the oil.

3. Mix all the dry ingredients in a separate bowl and gradually add them into the bowl with the carrots. Gradually add water, then vinegar/lemon juice and optionally raisins or coconut.

4. Cut the desired size of baking paper for the baking form and put it in.

5. Pour the dough into the form.

6. Bake at 170 °C for 30 minutes, then reduce to 150-155 C and keep for another 40 minutes.

Cinnamon rolls

I'll be honest, this is not an easy recipe, and is only worth taking on if you're somewhat experienced at cooking.

Ingredients

Dough:

- 50 g of yeast
- 500 ml of milk
- 500 ml of sugar
- 100 g of unsalted butter
- ½ a teaspoon of salt
- 7 tablespoons of flour



Filling:

- 4 tablespoons of butter
- 4 tablespoons of sugar (preferably brown)

- 1 tablespoon of cinnamon
- 1 egg

1. Pour the yeast into a bowl.

2. Melt the butter in a saucepan.

3. Add milk and heat up to 37 C.

4. Pour the yeast into the heated milk with butter, add salt, sugar and gradually stir in the flour.

5. Leave some flour to roll out the dough.

6. When the dough is shiny and soft, turn off the heat, cover the pan with a towel and let it sit for 30-40 minutes until the dough expands.

7. To make the filling, mix all the ingredients (except for the eggs) in a separate bowl.

8. Place the dough on a floured table, divide the dough into two parts and roll each one into a large rectangle.

9. Lay out the filling on the dough, but leave one end without it, so that it is easier to roll the dough into a roll.

10. Start to roll the dough into a loaf then cut it into individual rolls.

11. Place the rolls on a baking sheet and cover them with a towel for 30 minutes.

12. Cover the buns with raw egg and bake for 5-10 minutes at a temperature of 225 °C.

Tatiana M

Art by Sherry C

LIFESTYLE

THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF PARENTING PSYCHOLOGY

Are your parents too strict with you? How can different parenting styles affect the future life of a child? These questions can be relevant for many of us, whom despite our closeness to adulthood are very much still growing up.

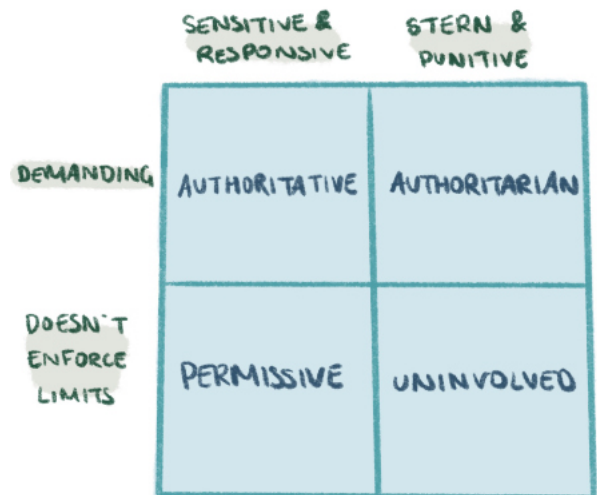


Art by Liza V

As a person who is quite interested in psychology, I will try to answer this question from a psychological perspective. I want to introduce you to the term “parenting styles”. It was first suggested by Diana Baumrind, a developmental psychologist who focused on studying parental dimensions. In one of the studies of her research, which is known as “Baumrind’s Parenting Typology”, she defined three different parenting styles that can affect a child’s behaviour: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. In recent years, psychologists also found a fourth parenting style: uninvolved parenting. They were based on two key factors: demanding or undemanding, responsive or unresponsive. Demandingness refers to whether parents expect their child to follow rules and punish them if rules aren’t followed. Responsiveness includes the presence of parents’ support and love towards their child.

For a long time I thought that there were no parents stricter than mine. Since I was fourteen I would always fight with them, defending my ‘basic human rights’ to hang out with my friends for a little longer or have a sleepover. During these three years that I was defending my right to have some fun, I noticed that the result of most of our arguments would remain the same: I stayed at home, being very, very angry at my mom and dad. From the first moment I started asking my parents for a permission to go to a concert, a sleepover or a trip I always heard the same phrase: “We will allow you everything when you’re eighteen”. In honour of the fact that I will turn 18 in less than a year, I am writing this article about how the strictness of parents can affect a child’s development and whether strictness can benefit the future life of a child.

FOUR PARENTING STYLES



Art by Liza V

Let's look at these parenting styles in a little more detail.

Authoritarian style

This is a demanding, restriction-heavy parenting style. Such parents will expect you to get perfect grades, be productive 24/7, be excellent at sport and play a musical instrument all at once, leaving no time for your personal life. They also tend not to consider your feelings while making a decision, as for them discipline is the most important aspect of raising a child. Most importantly, authoritarian parents expect you to obey their rules, however they rarely find it necessary to explain the reason for your expected obedience. Instead of discipline, like talking and reflecting on your own mistakes, authoritarian parents prefer to use punishment, to prevent their child from making the same mistake again. However, does this kind of strictness work and is it indicative of a successful child in the future?

In one of the studies (Kuppens et. al.) researchers have found that children of authoritarian parents had higher levels of hyperactivity, conduct problems, emotional symptoms and lower levels of prosocial behaviour compared to other children. In addition, the recent study (Luk et. al. 2016), showed that children of parents with an authoritarian parenting style were more likely to engage in acts of bullying.

Permissive Parenting

Parents with a permissive parenting style are the complete opposite of authoritarian parents. They don't expect their child to follow numerous rules and are very likely to let their children do what they want and solve their problems on their own. Such parents are very responsive, they are warm and helpful to their kids, and they value their child's emotions and desires. For some kids it may sound like a dream come true. However, does this parenting style actually have a positive effect on a child's personality formation?

In the study Underwood et. al. researchers concluded that children raised

by permissive parents tend to have increased levels of aggression during adolescence. In other studies, children of parents with this parenting style had lower levels of academic achievement, higher rates of alcohol and substance abuse, excessive use of television and lower physical activity levels. What I found really interesting is that some researchers believe that there is little to no difference in children's behaviour from families with authoritarian and permissive parents, with completely opposite parenting styles.

Uninvolved Parenting

These parents are permissive and unresponsive to their children. They rarely have time or energy to interact with their children and supervise them, like parents with other parenting styles would do. Parents with this parenting style tend to not show warmth and love and are more emotionally distant from their child. They don't expect their child to achieve something, and therefore put little to no restrictions and rules on their family lives.

The lack of love and warmth in a family has a negative effect on a child. Children who are raised in families with uninvolved parents are less likely to experience emotional attachment to their family. In the study of Nijhof and Engels, results have shown that most children with uninvolved parents didn't experience homesickness, like children with authoritative and permissive parents did, when they left for college. With uninvolved parenting, children can receive little discipline, supervision and feedback on their actions. Children with uninvolved parents usually struggle with concentration and good grades in school. As they grow, they tend to develop aggression and impulsivity, which can lead to more serious mental and behavioural problems.

Authoritative parenting

Authoritative parenting style can resemble authoritarian style, however, there is one criterion, which makes it the "optimum parenting style". In the table we can see that both of these styles require high

demandingness from a child. This means that both authoritarian and authoritative parents will expect their kids to follow a set of rules and have certain achievements. For example, they may expect their child to do exceptionally well in school or to be good at sports. However, it's the level of responsiveness, which makes these two styles completely different. Authoritative parents tend to explain to their children the reason why certain restrictions are imposed on them and why they are expected to achieve something. These parents provide a lot of supervision and emotional support to their children, they show love and warmth. Authoritative parents expect their kids to be able to independently solve most of their problems, but unlike uninvolved parents, they are ready to guide their children to make correct and responsible decisions.

Children raised by authoritative parents are more likely to be encouraged and motivated to succeed in their academic life and have a higher school performance. In the study of Piko et.al. , the results have shown that children with authoritative parents were less likely to undergo alcohol and substance abuse and were more protected from health risking activities like drinking and

smoking. These kids tend to be social, self-confident and independent, academically successful and well-disciplined.

It is vital to understand that a parenting style alone does not predict the entire future of a child. However, it definitely has a significant impact on a child's development and personality formation. I concluded that my parents belong to a group of authoritative parenting. I would say that my parents are strict and demanding. I am not allowed to do many things my siblings do. I can sometimes feel pressure because of what I am expected to achieve in my academic life. As we can see, strictness does not necessarily mean "bad" parenting. On the contrary, an adequate amount of restrictions can help a child become more well-behaved and self-regulated. Growing up with different types of parenting, does in many aspects affect how you develop as an individual. Who knows what my life would have looked like if my parents let me go to that crazy party or allowed me to do whatever I want? Something you may question too.■

Kate R

LIFESTYLE

GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY

“Just a reminder that when Shakespeare was quarantined because of the plague, he wrote King Lear.” This tweet had over 51,000 retweets, 250,000 likes, and 3,000 replies in early March, around the time the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Such an innocuous (and supposedly inspiring) message may carry deeper connotations than one may think.

During lockdown, I repeatedly heard many of my peers describe this as the perfect opportunity to maximise our productivity. Complete a two-week fitness plan. Learn a new language. Pick up a new hobby. A second not used for self-improvement seemed like a second wasted, leaving one to feel guilty at the end of each day for “not doing enough”.

‘Hustle culture’ is not a strange concept to many people, especially to Bromsgrovians. In the hamster wheel that is Bromsgrove School, there is always a drama production, a fixture, or a dozen other extra-curricular activities that one can be participating in, all happening at the same time. With public examinations cancelled, I had this voice in my head that told me that I should be using every one of the 86400 seconds we have in a day productively to compensate for the unexpected 5-month break. Part of this mentality was rooted in my desire for normality in a time when no one knew when things will be back to normal again.

We always try to strive to do our best whether it’s on the rugby pitch or in the classroom, but like all humans we burn out. When the world went into lockdown, it was difficult to remain emotionally unaffected by the cases rising rapidly on the news channels while still trying to fit into society’s idea of ‘productivity’. This was my burn out. I knew that I had to pause just like the world around me to give myself proper time to adjust to this ‘new normal’. Not the new normal as in singing happy birthday every time I wash my hands or wearing a mask to the supermarket, but living with my family and spending time with them after years of not staying at home for long enough periods of time.

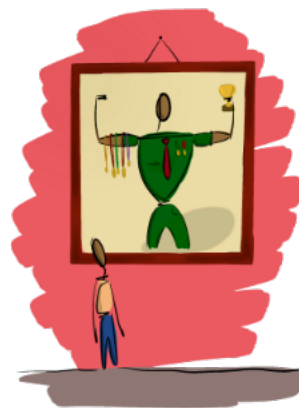
Our growth during lockdown cannot be merely measured by how many MOOCs we did or how many books we’ve read. I certainly don’t mean that growth is

spending all our time watching Netflix. What I mean is if you choose to be productive, question why. Are you adding value to your life or are you just killing time?

What is toxic about ‘hustle culture’ is the social expectation to function on four hours of sleep, and drink an unhealthy amount of coffee as proof of our growth and productivity. Over time, this becomes detrimental to our physical and mental health, leaving us worse than before. Our growth is not measured by how sleep deprived we are (much to the chagrin of those competing over how ‘little’ sleep one got last night), but how we approach each obstacle, building our sense of worth outside of our ‘achievements’ column on the UCAS application.

Taking care of our health is not selfish, and yes, not just during the pandemic but every single day. The importance of being resilient and practising self-care is often overlooked in our busy lives, but it is crucial in the long-term in all aspects of life to manage our emotional well-being. During these unprecedented times, most of us are lucky enough to be healthy and have our lives return to the circumstances before COVID-19, which is precisely why we should take time for ourselves and our loved ones, think about our growth as humans, our value beyond our work and who we are as individuals.■

Chantal W



Art by Lilly S

CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

THE OTHER SIDE OF CORONAVIRUS: HOW SOCIETY HAS GROWN

According to Henry Kissinger, the global pandemic will “forever alter the world order”. This statement is to a great extent correct. For many, the pandemic has been eye-opening: it has revealed the shaky foundations that much of the developed world is built on and reconnected us with what really matters in life, allowing us to grow as a society and as individuals. But will things ever go back to ‘normal’?

Leisure and Health

One thing is certain: We have been living too fast. Without our days structured into small carvings for ‘commute’ and ‘dinner out,’ we have had more time alone with our thoughts and developed a more deliberate, alert way of being. People have reconnected with the mundane elements of living that are often lost in the hectic nature of modern life, taking up new hobbies and interests, such as cooking and arts & crafts.

Earlier this year, as people began to embrace the outdoors, UK distributors quickly ran out of bikes under £1,000 and at-home exercise gear saw a staggering rise in sales. Gardens instantly looked more colourful and walls were freshly painted. The once desolate but beautiful countryside pathways are now buzzing with city-dwellers enamoured with their newly found love of a ‘good walk’. As ironic as it sounds, perhaps the pandemic will make us all physically healthier in the long run.

However, in a period riddled with job losses, deaths and isolation; coronavirus will have stubborn, long-lasting effects. It is estimated that up to 10 million Brits could need mental health support after the pandemic.

Work

In 2015, Bloom published a study which found that Chinese call-centre employees who worked from home were 13% more productive than other employees because they took fewer breaks and made more calls per minute. They were also happier and less likely to quit their jobs.

Yet, as many have found out, the blurring of work and home isn’t always a joyous experience and for a significant number of people, it simply isn’t feasible. For jobs that require a lot of teamwork, Zoom calls don’t provide the necessary motivation; and the emergence of demanding kids in their parents’ workspace has brought a whole new meaning to ‘difficult co-workers’.

If there is one thing that the pandemic has encouraged, it is flexibility. With online video conferencing having proven it possible, many are questioning whether companies will encourage employees to work from home. After all, it would render the expense of leasing costly office spaces inconsequential and allow for more malleable working hours. This would have substantial underlying knock-on-effects on the fabric of our society, making it easier for mothers to work and perhaps even lead to the extinction of the long daily commute for many people.

Cultural Norms

Today, covering your nose when you sneeze is common courtesy; Before the 1918 Influenza pandemic gave rise to the tagline “coughs and sneezes spread diseases,” it was not frowned upon to simply sneeze into mid-air, illustrating the radical ability of a pandemic to transform every aspect of our lives.

The coronavirus has forced us to rapidly change our behaviour and inevitably, some habits are likely to stick. Whether people will continue to don masks around town or consistently sanitise their hands is questionable, but it has been suggested that handshakes will never make a return and

the bowl of communal nuts in the local bar will never be replenished. We certainly don't need handshakes and salty nuts that only make you thirstier anyway, so perhaps this isn't such a detrimental result.

The way we shop

The ever-present fear of catching 'it' has led to an influx of online food shopping, with supermarkets struggling to keep up with demand. It is probable that the proven simplicity of deliveries has awakened us from the delusion that they are a 'faff' and many will continue to have their weekly shopping delivered straight to their door.

It's not just what we buy, but also the way we do it that has changed, with many opting to pay quickly and easily using their smartphone or contactless payment.

People have also started to realise how much money they 'throw away' on Costa coffees and gallons of petrol every week, causing a new wave of mindful spending. However, it has also made us realise how much we truly value the little things: Sparking up a conversation with a friendly dog owner, piling your plate high at buffets or lounging on a beach on a well-deserved holiday.

The Environment

Industrial activity having been shut down and flights cancelled, greenhouse gas emission and air pollution levels drastically diminished. In China, at the height of the country's response, NO2 levels were down by a staggering 38% from 2019 and levels of PM2.5 were down 34%. However, air pollution in China and around the world is quickly returning back to pre-Covid levels so it is imperative that countries use this pandemic as a learning curve; it is possible to reduce emissions and it needs to be done quickly.

Innovation

Some married on WhatsApp and others graduated on Zoom. COVID-19 has no doubt brought out our innovative sides. Additionally, more hospitals have been built

and more companies will develop different products in adaptation to the societal changes triggered by the pandemic. For many, the lockdown has given a new lease of life and even the confidence to start a business. In the words of Albert Einstein, "In the middle of difficulty, lies great opportunity."

While we have all grown to fear the long-term effects of COVID-19, not everything has been negative as we have adapted to the situation. So far, the pandemic has been a source of extensive innovation and learning, leading to a substantial growth of society and individuals alike. Nobody knows for sure when a trust-worthy and effective vaccine will eradicate COVID-19 but one thing is certain: the world will look very different when this does happen, and hopefully the growth we will have experienced will be for the better.■

Millie G-P



Art by Sherry C

LIFESTYLE

WELCOME BACK OBs



Art by Lilly S

As soon as the boy sat down, he could not wait to leave. After a long day of being usured from one classroom to another, he had been counting down the seconds until he could finally leave the school's iron gates and be free to spend the day as he pleased. He frequently imagined himself as an explorer, the likes of Phileas Fogg or Jim Hawkins, bravely founding new lands. Or, at least, any new lands that were possible to discover within the confines of his small town. However, since school was spent contained within iron gates, and his evenings under the watchful gaze of his mother, who violently disapproved of such nonsense, this afternoon was one of the only times when he was not watched after. But, it seemed, he was fated to wait longer still, as the entire school proceeded to file into the stone chapel for mandatory service.

The building was cold and vacant. The laughter outside faded as students shuffled through the back of the chapel, proceeding slowly down the aisle and slumping into their creaking pews. The seating was arranged in order of year groups - the idea being that the younger pupils were closest to the teachers - and the boy was usured into the front pews.

Here, the rows did not face the altar, but inward, the boy found himself hidden behind a cloister and could not see.

It was not as if this bothered him though. As the Reverend began his address - "there was once a man who had two sons" - his gaze drifted to the large glass window behind the altar. Sunlight poured through it, illuminating innumerable specks of dust. He watched with mild fascination as a piece hung in mid-air, as if motionless, before catching a draft and swirling downwards like a lone tendril of spider's silk and out of the path of the light. For amusement, he tried to see if he could find it again, but without the light it was impossible to see, and he soon gave up, returning his gaze once more to the window.

He could see the entire school stretched out behind it. He could map it almost perfectly in his mind: the walled flower garden bordered by purple wild flowers planted in neat boxes; the endless playing fields; the dark outline of the library and, then, beyond the school gates, a sprawling network of roads and houses, radiating outwards before being swallowed by dense woodland. Beyond that, he did not know. He had not yet ventured that far, nor did he know anyone that had. Once, when he had asked what he thought the next county was like, his father supposed it was just the same with more roads and houses and fields and schools. He thought of this often, the blueprint replicating on and on and on. The image made him restless.

The congregation suddenly began to rustle as the Reverend turned to the altar, bowed, and proceeded through the aisle. The organ erupted, filling the vacant walls with triumphant sound - and making some students visibly jump - before the doors opened, and they were released into the harsh sunlight.

Free at last. The boy and his friends rushed through the school gates to begin the long walk home. They were pirates, sailing over unchartered water. They chased each other down the street, arms raised as though they were swords, climbing trees as rigging before collapsing breathless in laughter.

But, after a while, his friends began to make their own way home, and the boy found himself alone once more on his path. Smiling from the memories replaying in his head, he spread out his arms and breathed in the fresh air. He did not want to go home just yet. The only question was; what would this lone pirate do now?

Cast away from his boat, thrown only a raft and some cloth by his remaining loyal crew members, this pirate fashioned himself a sail. Initially, able to remember the direction in which his mutinous boat had sailed, he slowly followed its course towards the promise of new lands. Then, the wind began to pick up. It frolicked with the sail, turned his raft this way and that until he could no longer remember the previous course. He called out frantically for help, but no one came. He kept calling and calling until his voice became hoarse, desperately paddling with some hope of hitting dry land, but there was nothing he could do to prevent the storm descending. The raft was tossed around as if it were a mere speck of dust in the air. The wind ripped the sail, the waves lashed, and sheaths of water came descending down upon him. The boy ran excitedly in circles around the narrow streets, twirling and jumping as he imagined his raft being turned in the water, before, as if a miracle, the seas became still, and the pirate found himself on dry land. New lands! The boy collapsed breathlessly on the ground, cheering in triumph.

Once he had caught his breath, the boy, who thought the pirate needed a well-earned rest and some food after all that he had endured, got up and started to make his way back home. But... which way to go? He had been so caught up with his fantasies that he had not noticed that night had fallen. In the daylight, like the School, he thought he knew every inch of this small town. But at night? He frantically turned his head, searching for some sort of landmark, but there was nothing. No buildings, no roads, no paths. Nothing but darkness. Panic began to rise as the boy whipped his head around in all directions and tears blurred the black silhouettes which loomed around him from every side.

He called out for help, but only a croak escaped, his voice hoarse from his play. No one heard. He called again, and again, and again, voice rising each time in panic. No one heard. Would anybody even be looking for him? Once he had left those iron gates the

School relinquished their responsibility for him, and his mother had no tolerance for such nonsense. She had always said that if he wanted to explore foreign lands so much then he should leave; perhaps she supposed he had finally done so. Maybe she was right; what nonsense it was to explore. All it had brought him was misery.

When he had called all he could, and cried all he could, the boy slumped on the floor in defeat and exhaustion. He pondered for a long time about the repeating blueprint of schools and roads and houses and pictured the point at which the woodlands dissolved into the sea. He imagined Jim Hawkins sailing endlessly upon that raft upon it, searching. The wind blew in circles that measly sail, causing him to circle around and around and around with no hope of direction.

He could not tell you how far he walked for, or indeed where he went, but it was morning when the boy found himself back at those school gates once more. Relief flooded him as he clutched them fiercely with both hands, feeling thankful for something solid and safe and recognisable. The iron was warm in the sun, and he leant heavily against them for stability in his exhaustion.

Children trudged sleepily passed him through the gates and he supposed he better follow them and make his way to the chapel. He glanced around with a new appreciation for familiar grounds, the checkerboard playing fields, the walled flower garden, even the library which proudly overlooked the open grounds below it. But wait. Since when were wildflowers in the borders dark purple? Where had the white ones disappeared to? New buildings stood tall along the walk to the chapel, and the way was full of people who bustled and swarmed around him, growing and growing in number as they drew nearer. People were hugging one-another, and excited chatters filled the air.

He was about to open his mouth to say that there was no way the Reverend would allow pupils to behave like this in the chapel, when the voice of that very man raised above the crowd.

'Happy anniversary, OB's. It is fitting to celebrate and be glad; you have all returned to us. Welcome back'.■

Lucia G

STORIES & POETRY

MARMALADE TOASTS

3, I roared loudly,
laughing,
mighty.

The world is there for me to take.
His broad shoulders navigate me through the crowd; proud.

5, I dare to do anything.
He pushes me forward,
I peddle as rapidly as possible,
another milestone.

Brushing away the tears after a fall, still too small.

7, first day of primary school.
Nervously looking around, my hand clasping his.
Lined, blue-veined fingers.
Little dots, spread like a milky way across his palm.
Cobalt-coloured stains on his index - marks from his pen.
Piles of paper,
yellow post-it notes,
an old CD player distantly playing "I have a dream",
attentively looking at his notes,
the pendulous glasses hovering above.
Zeal in his eyes, wise advice.

10, butter, marmalade, toast, crunch.
Lemon squeeze, sweet summer breeze.

Reading the papers,
raking the gravel,
cutting the roses,
daily inspections.

Snickering like the ten-year-old he used to be,
jokester of the school, April fools.

17, twirling around the dance floor,
sparkling eyes,
bow ties,
the last of five.

Laetitia de B



Art by Liza V

STORIES & POETRY

I WISH UPON A **STAR** TO BE ALL GROWN UP

One evening a little boy sat staring at the stars,
His grandfather sat at his side, in his hand, a burning cigar.
They sat in contemplation as the night ruffled their hair,
“I wish I was grown up” the little boy said, his voice filled with despair.

His grandfather laughed and shook his head,
“Well I want to be young again,” was what he said.
“Let me tell you a story about the happiness of my youth,
and what I’d give to be young and,” he laughed, “fully toothed.”

He made himself comfortable and put out his cigar.
The stars looked on in attentive silence, drawing ever closer.
“I once wished for the manhood that adult life possessed,
I wished to be a man with a beautiful lady, and a big strong chest.

Now I wish for days of play and lack of responsibility,
I wish for the Sunday afternoons, of effortless tranquillity.

I wish for the nights that led to early mornings,
The love of meeting the one, and gradually falling.

All the lessons I learnt through every heartbreak,
Every blissful morning, I want back, for just one retake.

I miss the smells of foreign lands,
The blue of oceans, the yellow grainy sands.
I remember the happiness of every New Year’s Eve,
Oh, what it was to be young, and so naïve.”



Art by Liza V

He looked up to the stars and sighed.

They gazed back with assurance and understanding.

“you see the stars see everything; they watch us grow,
They see every midnight kiss, every today and tomorrow.

They watch us cry and they watch us sing,

They see every summer, winter and spring.

But they can only watch and never take part,

They can't be broken or mended, from a hurting heart.

See the pleasure is the growing not being grown,

Otherwise you're left watching everyone else, all alone.”

He reclined back so he was lying down.

The stars seemed to draw closer in anticipation.

“Be bright in the darkness like a beautiful star,

But enjoy the growth, into what you are.

Never wish away a day, let alone your youth,

Look at the stars, they will tell you the truth.

Cherish every second and love every minute,

Grow with your body, and grow with your spirit.

For a shooting star, can make your wish come true,

But a shooting star never got the chance to grow like you.

Izzy W

STORIES & POETRY

THE GROWTH OF AN ENEMY

We read this with walls and gaps between us all.

Strange how a zoonotic spike crept from a Shitou cave down through our motorways and airways to land, in our immune systems.

How an asymptomatic threatening virus invaded our old, infirm and weak lives.

Not in the last 100 years have we felt so afraid of our neighbours as our population has dropped from this irrepressible, invisible enemy, North, South, East and West.

The spring was foul, as winter withered away.

Every soul felt alone day after day, and into the nights.

This wasn't anyone's plan, but we sat accepting how this year would feel so small, depriving for us all.

Placed in Lockdown.

The seasons always changed.

The shadows of others become heartening yet bizarre.

Not only did we survey the rain fall and the leaves declining from our trees, but we'd observe our watches until the bells of eight o'clock, yearning for the interval to clap for the carers.

Our economy bowed to Zoom and technology, laws were hewn over strapping material over our mouths 'preventing spread' to the weak.

You felt busy doing nothing.

Hand gels flourished as influencers popularised the idea of 'bubbles on zoom'.

The UK was in curfew and rules given like mothers to their young.

Half a year of grim living until signs told us all was going well.

'Eat out to help out' grew famous which shortly rushed to the growth of cases round the bustling businesses.

Our bright futures were rebellious to be found.

Will a vaccine come to rescue not just our people, but our planet, economy and development?

We have now become close because we care,

And the distance is moderated,

as there is one enemy we share.

Will the enemy change lives forever?

Will generations understand the meaning and sentimentality of hugs, kisses and a shake of the hand?

We all sit ready to pull out the Christmas trees, hoping that this storm will soon run out of rain, allowing us to never use umbrellas.

Olivia E

Photo by Rosika G

ESSAY PROMPT

We found essay prompts to be vital to our magazine, as they allow for individuals, who do not usually write essays to contribute.

The essay prompt for the next issue is:

“Freedom is never given; it is won” – is freedom a necessity or a prize?

How do you quantify freedom? Is it an essential for everyone or do winners deserve it above all? How is it expressed?

**Email Laetitia at
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TWO ZERO ONE

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Art by Liza V



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