

# MORELIFE

St Thomas More Catholic High School

**CHRISTMAS 2021** 

# IMPROVING EARLY INTERVENTION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

North Tyneside
Young Mayor Suzie
McKenzie, currently
in Year 12 at STM,
was delighted last

month by the progress being made on one of her mayoral pledges, to improve support for young people's mental health. Suzie takes up the story: "The idea is to improve early intervention when it comes to young people suffering mental health problems. The newly formed Mental Health Support Team launched last week on three double-decker vintage buses, visiting schools and community centres to talk to young people about their mental health. One of the first places the

"IT'S A HUGE STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND I AM SO EXCITED TO SEE SOME CHANGE."

buses visited was St Thomas More. Mental health in young people has been an issue for a long time but, like so many things, it is an issue that has been highlighted and worsened by the pandemic. Thankfully, even before Covid-19, there was progress being made in supporting young people's mental health. It has become more accepted, young people feel more able to ask for help and overall, it has become less of a 'taboo' topic to discuss. However, despite this progression, I felt more still needed to be done.

My pledge is to create better support in schools for young people's mental health and to ignite a change within these schools to improve the support for young people. I am very happy to see this new strategy being rolled out and these Mental Health Support teams being set up to support schools."

For more information on support available please see the <u>CAMHS</u> website.

# A CHRISTMAS BLESSING; JOYCE RUPP

- Let the Star of Hope blaze through discouragement, doubt, & disgruntledness.
- Let the Star of Kindness radiate through what you think, feel, & do today.
- Let the Star of Remembrance glitter in thoughts of good people & good deeds.
- Let the Star of Laughter sparkle in your eyes & in your smile.
- Let the Star of Joy dance in the corners of your heart that have forgotten to sing.



- Let the Star of Patience permeate that which you find difficult & irritable.
- Let the Star of Love encompass your heart, a ray of welcome for everyone you meet.

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**STM Dance Community** 

puts on a show

# **ADVENT CHARITIES**







Advent is always a good opportunity for prayer and giving, and 2021 is no different! Year groups have been busy thinking of others at this time of year, especially those less fortunate than ourselves.

Year 7, 11 and Sixth Form have been busy collecting food for local Food Banks so they have food in time for the Christmas season. In addition, some small groups of Year 7s have taken it upon themselves to raise money for some other charities. Anna Thirlaway, Molly and Millie Allan wanted to thank St Oswald's Hospice due to family connections, so have sold handmade bookmarks, raising £39 in two weeks. Olivia Wilson and Holly Moat have designed and sold handmade Christmas cards to raise money for a Neuroblastoma charity, while 70 have been selling Candy Canes to raise funds for Walking With, a North Tyneside charity supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

In Year 8, students have also been bringing in food items for the Food Bank. For every item they collect, they gain an entry into the "Perfect Day!" competition on the last day of term. In Year 9, students have been collecting toys and gifts for children in the North East for the charity Cash4Kids. In Year 10, students have been taking on a Good Samaritan Challenge where they do kind deeds for









each other and those around them in the four weeks of Advent. Some students in Year 10 have also organised a sweet raffle to raise money for the RSPCA. Living out the values of the Gospel through our actions, not just our words, is part of our Christian identity. Getting involved in

- Michael Thompson (Chaplain)

# **ANTI-DISCRIMINATION** LISTENING CAMPAIGN



Next term, teams of staff will be using all of the information gathered from the students to take action and build real positive change for the benefit of both current and future students at St Thomas More.

Stephanie

LOWTHER (Social

**Activities Lead)** 

likes getting to

know others &

8

Reuben REILLY

(Social Activities

Lead) listens to

everyone's ideas

and puts them

combining ideas.

voices and share their stories.

# **PINK DAY** 2021

After a crazy eighteen months, one of the events students in Sixth Form were most looking forward to returning was Pink Day; having seen the older students get dressed up in the past, now it was our turn. While we couldn't go all out this year to be on the safe side, the charities committee were out in force selling cakes across the school, and Sixth Form students did us proud with their efforts to dress up. Despite a tentative return to Pink Day, we still raised a fantastic £827.72 for Breast Cancer Care. Additionally, Annabel Holliman raised a further £230 by running a - Charities Committee









charity work at Christmas time is a perfect way for us to demonstrate what it truly means to be a Christian in today's world.

Adam GRAHAM (Treasurer) is looking forward to making a difference.



William BEATTIE (Vice-Chair) is always seeking to make a difference and improve school.



Zoe PARKIN (Communication \_ead) will listen to all opinions & take your views

Charles **McMANUS** (Procurement Lead) will raise any issues you might have.



**Brooke PYLE** (Peer Strategy Lead) enjoys working towards the changes we

Clarisse CRUZ (Secretary) wants to allow students more self-expression.



Max GODFREY (Chair) will fight for what every person in the school wants.

solve problems.

Matthew BRIGGS

(Assistant Treasurer) is a

good listener

and wants to

9

Zipi OIIAKO (Assistant Secretary) loves working with her peers to improve the school





Ava McANULTY (Assistant Peer Strategy Lead) enjoys trying to make school a better place

the school community.

forward.



The Student Council has a strong record of influencing positive change and improvement for students at St Thomas More and the new Student Council Members are energised to carry on its impressive legacy! The Student Council has met twice since the election and has already begun the necessary foundation work to highlight, address and discuss the key issues and concerns of our school community. The Student Council is looking forward to ensuring the school continues to thrive and is a positive and welcoming environment to be part of.

- Mr O'Connor, Student Council Coordinator

# WHAT IS JOURNALISM CLUB?...

Journalism club is open to all Year 10 and 6th form students every Tuesday lunchtime. It offers students the opportunity to write about the issues they feel strongly about and experiment with different types of non-fiction writing outside of their English classroom! This term we were lucky enough to have Darcy Nathan, a former student and freelance writer, speak to the students

about her experience of writing blogs and articles for online publications; this certainly inspired our budding journalists to consider where their writing may take them! www.stmacademy.org.uk for the articles in full! - Mrs McHugh

# **JOURNALISM CLUB IS...**

Protesters against the Chinese control of Hong Kong proposed "Five demands, not one less!", a motto that symbolized what protesters fought for — protests not to be regarded as riots, amnesty for arrested protesters, an independent investigation into alleged police brutality, and the removal of the extradition bill.

global attention. Frequently, protesters supporting the government met with pro-Beijing rallies, and Chinese President Xi Jinping warned against separatism, warning that any attempt to divide China would lead to "bodies smashed and bones ground to powder".

Two years after the mass protests, over 2,500 people are being prosecuted on various charges for their roles in the protests, according to the police. The authorities are still working through a backlog of potential prosecutions of the more than 10,000 arrested between June 2019 and March of this year. Nearly 300 protesters, mainly students

or college-educated, have been sentenced to prison as of the end of last year, a sizable number for a city with an incarcerated population of about 7,000 people. Beijing's imposition last year of a national security law gives prosecutors greater powers to target even more.

Many of the activists are contemplating a future in exile. Others struggle to stay committed to the cause for which they sit behind bars.

- Yasmin Lau and Joyce Misa, Year 10

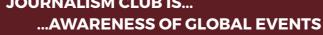
# **JOURNALISM CLUB IS...** ...TACKLING IMPORTANT **LOCAL ISSUES**

Spiking: A frightening new trend by Abbey McKenna and Sophie Lacey, Year 13

According to The Egalitarian, Newcastle is devastatingly placed fourth in the UK by number of spike reports in the past month. While spiking via drink was the most common method at 81%, spiking via injections was on the rise at 17%. As young women, we are not only angered and appalled that this is still an ongoing issue, but we are apprehensive about our safety when we go out.

Even though the government and other individuals in power have failed to take action in what could

become a life or death situation, women in the Newcastle community have joined forces and launched a campaign, Women's Street Watch using the power of Instagram, with the username @womensstreetwatchncl. The growing campaign, launched in September 2021, was in response to the terrible death of Sabina Nessa. Unfortunately, it has taken a young girl being killed for people to realise that something has to be done. When creating Women's Street Watch, they had a vision of establishing women-led women-focused safety groups to operate in the night time economy in order to reduce violence against women. In a survey of 3,220 women living in Newcastle, 3,124 said that they feel safer knowing the group exists, and the group amassed 10,000 followers within 24 hours. This is an amazing start in raising awareness and allowing women to enjoy their night without the threat or worry of being spiked.



In addition, supported by the UK, France, Canada, Australia, and the US, the protests in Hong Kong have gained







The importance of acceptance by Michaela Redpath, Nicole Infante and Ella Armstrong, Year 10

**JOURNALISM CLUB IS...** 

...EXPRESSING YOUR VIEWPOINT

We always try to fit in, to have a sense of belonging or to feel as if we are a part of something. Of course, it's always normal to try something new, however when we try to change ourselves just to feel validated amongst others, it could start to turn into an endless cycle of feeling drained.

Sadly, it may be hard to realise while in the cycle as we might be focused on finding ways to seek approval rather than thinking about our own feelings. We shouldn't be hard on ourselves for feeling as if we don't belong, since it will always take time to adjust to different situations as well as different people.

We should recognise that it is normal to have these feelings and that we should make sure that we are comfortable with ourselves. In all honesty, fitting in can be a positive experience. You may discover something new about yourself or begin to see your life as the way you want it.

Fundamentally, it is important to know yourself and embrace your identity. Be the person that makes you the happiest and comes most naturally to you. Of course, being influenced by people is natural and you're going to come across influential people in your life who will inspire you to try new things which could be good for you! Despite that, don't change who you are, but also don't deny those learning experiences; they are amazing life changers.



# **JOURNALISM CLUB IS...** ...ENGAGING WITH ARTS AND CULTURE

For the fourth book in 'The Hunger Games' series, instead of following Katniss and the change in rule of Panem after the second district uprising, Suzanne Collins does a complete u-turn as the world she has created throughout her trilogy is flipped on its head and we are introduced to the post-war capital after the first revolt.

So how does 'A Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes' compare to the main trilogy? From a personal perspective, I believe this is Collins's best book in the series, however, this was because I read this book fourth and began to draw lines and cross reference information about the characters and Panem between all three books, changing my opinions on characters that I never thought could be shaken.

Following Coriolanus Snow's time as a mentor, to the district 12

female tribute Lucy Gray Baird, is a storyline that is certainly surprising, where every chapter ends on a cliffhanger giving a need to read forward just a few more pages to see what happened. By the time the next few pages are read, which soon translates into at least two more chapters of reading, a stopping point is still nowhere to be found. Perhaps this continuous movement and little time to pause is the very essence of the hunger games themselves, which Collins manipulates with incredible skill, creating the most memorable book yet. - Keira Edwards, Year 13



# NEWS ROUNDUP



# **UKMT MATHEMATICAL OLYMPIAD FOR GIRLS**

At the start of the year, we participated in the UKMT Mathematical Olympiad for girls. This entailed working through 5 complex questions surrounding various topics in Mathematics. Although it was especially challenging, we ultimately found the experience rewarding, making us consider Maths problems in a different way. We found it was good preparation for exam technique having not sat any real exams for - Charlotte Devine and Aleksandra Szymczak, Year 13

# TYNE & WEAR CITIZENS NOMINATED FOR REGIONAL PRIZE

Earlier this term, we found out that Tyne & Wear Citizens – of which St Thomas More is a member – was nominated for the 'Outstanding Contribution to Social Change' award at the North East Charity Awards. Tyne & Wear Citizens use the process of community



organising to achieve real effective change in our local communities. Over the years, students at our school have been involved with campaigns around Free School Meals, young peoples' mental health, period poverty, and more recently around fair access to public transport for 16-18 year olds. Unfortunately we didn't win, but it was an honour to be nominated! - Michael, Chaplain



# YEAR 8 BOYS SAIL THROUGH COUNTY CUP 2ND ROUND

On Wednesday 24th November, having already overcome Bedlington in the first round, the Year 8 boys football team endured a very long drive to Tweedmouth for their second round match. Our students looked very strong in possession and took their chances in front of goal, finishing the match 8-0. Goals from W.Shannon (4), W.O'Hara, A. Humble, Z.Arnold and L.Wood, with man of the match W.Shannon. A great day out, the scoreline made the journey worth it. - Mr Knowles, PE

# **REMEMBRANCE 2021**

People say that coming to school in uniform on Remembrance Day is to pay your respects; it's more than that. Any discomfort we feel is nothing compared to the sacrifice our servicemen and women make on a daily basis, or to the horrors soldiers have experienced during the wars in the past and in the present. For students in any branch of cadets, Remembrance holds a huge significance personally. If you ask me, coming to school in uniform is the least we can do in support - Alicja Michalak, Year 12





# **RUNNERS GET A LITTLE MUDDY AT TEMPLE PARK**

On Tuesday 12th October students from Years 7 to 11 travelled to a rainy Temple Park to represent the school in Cross Country. Well done to Katie Otterson in Year 7 for winning her Year 7/8 race and to everyone else who participated, for the first time representing the school it was an exciting experience. The environment was electric with all the cheering voices. My highlight was definitely getting a little muddy because it just made the run more fun and enjoyable. - Finley Smith, Year 7

# STUDENTS SHARE COUNSELLING EXPERIENCES

Over the last couple of years, St Thomas More has been involved in a national campaign to get counsellors into every school in England, something we are extremely fortunate to have. Our ultimate goal is for the Government to legislate provision in English schools. On Saturday 20th November, four students in Year 12 attended the Regional Conference for the NASUWT teachers' union, where they shared the stories of young people who have benefitted from the counselling service. – Michael, Chaplain





# **LESSONS FROM AUSCHWITZ**

The Holocaust is known globally for the murder of six million lews, but what has perhaps been lost is the humanity of those victims. Over the course of several weeks I took part in live sessions, including listening to Eva Clarke, who was born on a coal wagon on the 29th April 1945, shortly before entering Mauthausen, a concentration camp in modern-day Austria. In order to truly remember the Holocaust, we must see these people as individuals rather than faceless victims. - Molly Owens, Year 12

# YEAR 12 GEOGRAPHERS BRAVE THE COLD

On Thursday 25th November, Year 12 Geographers embarked on the first fieldtrip of the course to Druridge Bay. This trip provided context for our ongoing Coasts topic, as well as giving insight into research methods that we may use for our coursework later in the year. We used an orange to measure longshore drift and a quadrant allowed us to see the changes in vegetation in the dunes as we moved inland. We rounded off the day with fish and chips in Blyth! - Niamh Goodacre, Year 12



# **CLIMBERS ACHIEVE HIGHEST POSSIBLE MARKS AT GCSE**

Year 11 GCSE PE students recently completed their Climbing assessments, worth 15% of their GCSE, at Sunderland Climbing Wall. The pupils were outstanding, with many using advanced climbing techniques to overcome overhangs and other challenges to reach the top of the 23m wall. Some achieved the highest possible mark. Tommy McAnulty said "it was a great experience and I really enjoyed it" whilst Jake Borg said "it was challenging and rewarding at the same time". – Mr Anderson, PE

# MASSES RETURN TO ST THOMAS MORE

For the first time since early 2020, we were able to celebrate Mass once again in our school community. It was a joy to finally welcome Fr Chris back into school in the First Week of Advent to celebrate with a group of Year 10 students. We now look forward to getting back to our weekly rota of Masses where we invite a different year group to participate each week with the support of the fantastic clergy in our family of local parishes. - Michael, Chaplain



# **INCREDIBLE WEEK FOR YEAR 8 SPORT**

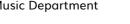
To say that mid-October has been a successful and exciting time for Year 8 sport would be an understatement. Our Year 8 Football team showcased a fantastic display on two occasions, including beating Benfield 4-0. As always we showed respect for our opposition and were humble in victory. If that wasn't enough, our Year 8 Rugby team also won a hard fought game against King's Priory. Great sportsmanship was on show as well as some astonishing rugby. - Zac Arnold, Year 8

# MUSIC RETURNS WITH A BANG (ALBEIT A VIRTUAL ONE)

The Music department are excited and a little disappointed to announce that they will be holding a virtual concert in the final week of term, which will be recorded and hopefully available on the school website. Unfortunately the risk of an in-person concert in the final week before Christmas was too high. Best of luck to all those performing, and we look forward to hearing how splendid you sound.



- Music Department









# CAREERS @ STM

Students at St Thomas More have had lots of opportunities this term to find out about future careers. Groups from Year 9 have worked with Software City in Sunderland on an enterprise morning, and some have had the chance for a 'Discover Uni' Day at Newcastle University. Students from Year 10 to 13 have had the chance to engage with employers in the areas of Law and Social Media Marketing, while our Year 12 and Year 13 Business students spoke to a representative from Esh Group about recruitment. More details of all of these on the website at www.stmacademy.org.uk.

On Friday 3rd December, Year 11 students had the chance to either come to a Sixth Form Taster Day here at St Thomas More, or to attend a college open day at one of our local colleges. Daniel, Robbie, Owen and James have written a few words about their various experiences.









I chose to try out some taster lessons at the school's Sixth Form. The day started with an assembly then we spent an hour with a Sixth Form tutor, who explained to us how the day would work out and what Sixth Form life was like. For the next four lessons, we had the opportunity to trial some lessons that would be offered to us next year. As well as being able to use the facilities in the Sixth Form block, we were also able to leave the school premises to use the local facilities, one of the many differences between Sixth Form and the main school. - Daniel Swabey, Year 11

The aim of the taster day was for students to experience life at Sixth Form, College or completing an Apprenticeship. This gave them a real flavour of what their next destinations could be like. Students said they enjoyed attending both colleges, Newcastle and TyneMet. Newcastle College stood out in particular as it had great facilities and the course which I really want to study. Talks from both colleges were informative and have helped us to make informed decisions about what we want to do next and where. James said "I thought it was an enjoyable experience and it has taught me more about what I would like to do in my own future." Some students attended an information morning looking at the routes to Apprenticeships. They gained an insight from Ask Apprenticeships which informed them of the current positions available in the North Tyneside area. Owen said "It was a good day and very helpful learning more about apprenticeships; it made me think about my second choice and that will probably be college if I don't get an apprenticeship". - Robbie Henderson, Owen Lant, James Feehan, Year 11

# If you get the chance to sit it out or dance... ...I HOPE YOU DANCE!

It was a pleasure to be able to hold a dance evening again, after an absence of two years. There was a wonderful buzz on the evening despite Covid 'security' dictating that we could only have the other students in the audience.

Two groups of Year 7s performed. Mrs Henderson's dance class performed a contemporary dance they created in Core PE and the Year 7 extra-curricular Dance Club was led by two of our Year 13 students, Roseanna Murphy and Charlotte Price, who taught them a musical theatre dance to 'Nicest Kids in Town' from 'Hairspray'. Four more of our Year 13 students, Karley Wright, Caitlyn Robinson, Emily Rutherford and Alice Fairbairn, also led a Year 8 Dance Club, who brilliantly performed a jazz piece to 'We go together' from the musical Grease. The Year 13s have loved leading the Year 7 and 8 students, who have been a pleasure to work with.

The Year 10 Performing Arts students performed superbly to Bob Fosse's 'All That lazz' and were so professional using their props such as hats and chairs. The Year 11 Performing Arts students performed two group pieces and a whole class piece of contemporary choreography to Florence and the Machine's 'Big God', which mesmerised the audience.

The Year 12 Performing Arts class performed two spectacular contemporary pieces to the Rolling Stones 'Paint it Black' and 'Skyscraper'. They used a mix of 60s style as well as Cunningham method in their choreography and were fantastic in their performance. The Year 13 Performing Arts students performed three duets, two influenced by Andrew Winghart's contemporary jazz style and one a funky commercial piece. The girls ended the evening with a fantastic homage to Bob Fosse and his 'Cell Block Tango' from the hit musical 'Chicago'. - Mrs Roberts, Dance





I remember sitting as a Year 7 watching the older ones. It is nice to think that younger students might now be looking up to me for inspiration.

- Hannah Hailes Year





Performing Arts is responsible for my decision to return to Sixth Form, and the sense of community we have is just that, a community. Lauryn Robison, Year 12





# YEAR 9 AMBASSADORS

Our Year 9 Ambassadors for 2021-22 have already proven their worth, supporting the student council elections and various other events in the school calendar. Here is your chance to meet them.



Atkin

Olivia



Bennett

Emilv

**Bowkett** 



Mayleigh

Bradshaw

Samandeep

Hyare





Clark

Clephane

Benjamin Donoghue



Eggett



Ionathan

Gaukrodger

Oleta

Hackworth

Adam

Haq







McAnulty

lessica



Palmejar

Paul

Isaac Pottinger

Jacob Rosser

**Avangeline** Sutcliffe



Kersey

Georgia Wilkinson



# **EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES**

It is always our hope that our students leave us equipped for a successful career, whether that be sporting or academic or anything in between. Below are a couple of examples we have received recently. If you or a member of your family would like to feature in a future issue, please e-mail alogie@stmacademy.org.uk.

# TO KNOW... **Lois Greenslade** <u>Age: 17</u> Position: LW

## How long have you played for Newcastle **United Women?**

I only joined this season - I had been playing for South Shields Ladies.

Mel Reay (Sunderland Ladies' head coach) spoke to Becky (Langley), I went over and trained with Newcastle, and I ended up

## If you compared yourself to one member of the men's squad, who would it be?

Erm, (Allan) Saint-Maximin, maybe. He's quick on the ball and pacy... or (Miguel) Almirón, maybe. He's very fast and gets into good positions, and does really well on the ball

# Football highlight to date?

Joining Newcastle is definitely up there and scoring last Sunday to get off the mark for the club was good too. In terms of in football generally, playing at Sunderland RTC (Regional Talent Club) was a good experience, which I really enjoyed, but joining Newcastle is definitely up there.

# Biggest football disappointment to

That's a hard question - I haven't had too many so far. I've not had any bad injuries - and touch wood never will! - so I'd say my first year at RTC, where I got game-time but not as much as I'm getting now. But I wouldn't really say I've had any setbacks up until now; everything's been onwards and upwards!

## Tell us about your life away from Newcastle United Women...

I go to Gateshead College, where I'm doing a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sports Coaching and Development, which is a good thing to have if I wasn't to do football. Away from college and football, I mostly spend my time with my family and friends, doing things that I enjoy doing - but football plays

# Footballing ambitions:

I think everyone's dream is to be a professional, play in the WSL and represent their country. That would be the big goal at the end, and I'm only 17 so I've got years on my side. Hopefully I can progress into being that player who can play in the WSL and play for my country. That's the overall goal,



and I'd like to grow with the club. It seems like there could be lots of positive changes made over the next few months and years and hopefully I can progress with the club. I think since joining I've already made progress and hopefully I can continue to do that as the club gets more investment. I would like to be part of the future plans and stay with Newcastle.

## Life ambitions:

In life, I'd like to keep enjoying football and being around the staff and the players, everyone that's involved, and being part of the set-up. Above everything, if you're njoying it then you play better and you're happier in everything, really.

# LOIS GREENSLADE 2014-2019

You may have been a bit preoccupied at the Spurs match on 17th October, days after 'that' announcement. In case you missed it in the UNITED magazine, Lois Greenslade, who left us in 2019, was featured as one of their up-and-coming players. Lois showed huge promise from an early age, and we are very proud of the progress she has made since.

# JODIE STEVENSON 2001-2008

My name is Dr. Jodie Stevenson and I had the absolute privilege of attending St Thomas More for my school career. Since leaving I have lived all over the place. I received my undergraduate BSc with honours from Sweet Briar College in Virginia, USA, then came back to complete a MRes at Northumbria and shortly after that I packed my bags again and was off to the University of Sheffield after being awarded a fully funded place and teaching fellowship to complete my PhD on adult attachment and psychological well-being. I am now a



lecturer of Psychology at the University of Lincoln which, for those looking into unis, is a great school and has an impressive psychology department...if I do say so myself. My work has also been published all over the world. In all honesty, I couldn't have done it without the support of the amazing staff at St Thomas More whilst I was there testing their patience, causing scenes, and not believing in myself. Whether or not I made an impression on their lives, they certainty did on mine – Mrs McCabe, Woody, Ms. Wilson, Mr. Clifford, and Mr. Curtis. I am alive and kicking - because of you all! Thank you all.

Recent publications: Akram, U., Irvine, K., Allen, S., Ellis, J., Drabble, J., & Stevenson, J. C. (2021). Internet memes related to the COVID-19 pandemic as a potential coping mechanism for anxiety. Scientific Reports (in press). Stevenson, J. C., Millings, A., & Emerson, L. M. (2019). Psychological well-being and coping: The predictive value of adult attachment, dispositional mindfulness, and emotion regulation. Mindfulness, 10(2), 256-271.

# **NEXT ISSUE EASTER 2022**

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