



ZOE PARKIN, BBC YOUNG REPORTER



In October 2020 I entered the BBC Young Reporter competition after being made aware of it by the English Department. I submitted a piece on the topic of bereavement and how it impacts exam year students. This topic is very important to me as in May 2020, my mum passed away. I soon realised that there is not enough support for bereaved students like myself and that unfortunately the support that is available is under a strict time limit. I also found it incredibly shocking that the maximum grade uplift is 5% and in order to be eligible the bereavement must have occurred within 2 months of sitting the exam.

This led to me entering the competition to hopefully try and begin to make a change. Coming runner-up in the

national coronavirus category allowed me to be the first person to interview the new Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel De Souza, who is willing to look further into this issue and hopefully start to make changes alongside the Joint Centre for Qualifications. She is definitely on the side of the students and wants to make sure there is enough support for pupils experiencing grief.

The competition allowed me to produce a news broadcast with the North of England correspondent Fiona Trott, who helped create the piece and allowed it to be broadcast on the national BBC 6 O'clock News on Thursday 18th March. I also had the opportunity to appear on Laura Kuenssberg's Newscast podcast, aired

on 19th March and available now on [BBC Sounds](#) (the first 5 minutes of the episode). The competition has been an incredible opportunity to experience the world of journalism and to observe what it is like to work within the BBC.

- Zoe Parkin, Year 11, for the BBC

**Year 11 girls
thinking on their feet**

02

**World Book
Day 2021**

03

**Poetry
in Performance**

05

**Incredible
Ex-pupil stories**

06

EASTER PRAYER FROM THE CHAPLAIN

God our loving Father, many of us have experienced great difficulty and anxiety over the last year, and we turn to you for strength and comfort. Easter reminds us that light will always overcome darkness and hope will always defeat despair. Help us to live out your Easter message of renewal and transformation, looking towards a future of love, compassion and solidarity as we emerge on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic. Amen.



Image credit: 'Risen' by Issie Ritchie

YEAR 11 GIRLS THINKING ON THEIR FEET

Lockdown, for some, has been an opportunity to reflect on our lives and to consider what we can do to support and commemorate others. Two of our Year 11 girls have used the time to raise money for very worthwhile causes.

Hannah Caroline writes,

"On the 1st January 2021 I set myself the goal of running 100km throughout the month (maybe more if I can) to raise as much money as possible for the mental health charity, Mind. I was blown away by how much support I got from family and friends, so have kept the page open to see how much more I can raise.

Mental health is such an important issue not only for me but for everyone at the minute. After seeing close family members battle with their mental health, especially with the currently situation, and struggling myself along with so many others, it got me thinking about what I could do to help. If you would like to support Mind please click on my [link](#) to donate what you can afford. Thanks."



For Sophie Wells, pictured above, her sponsored walk was to raise money for a cause very close to her heart:

"I chose the target of £300 because it can fund 6 days of equipment, research and vital investigations into Alzheimer's Disease, which can help improve diagnosis, care and treatment for people affected by the condition that my Grandma dealt with every day. I'm taking part in Memory Walk 2021 for Alzheimer's Society because I want a world without dementia."

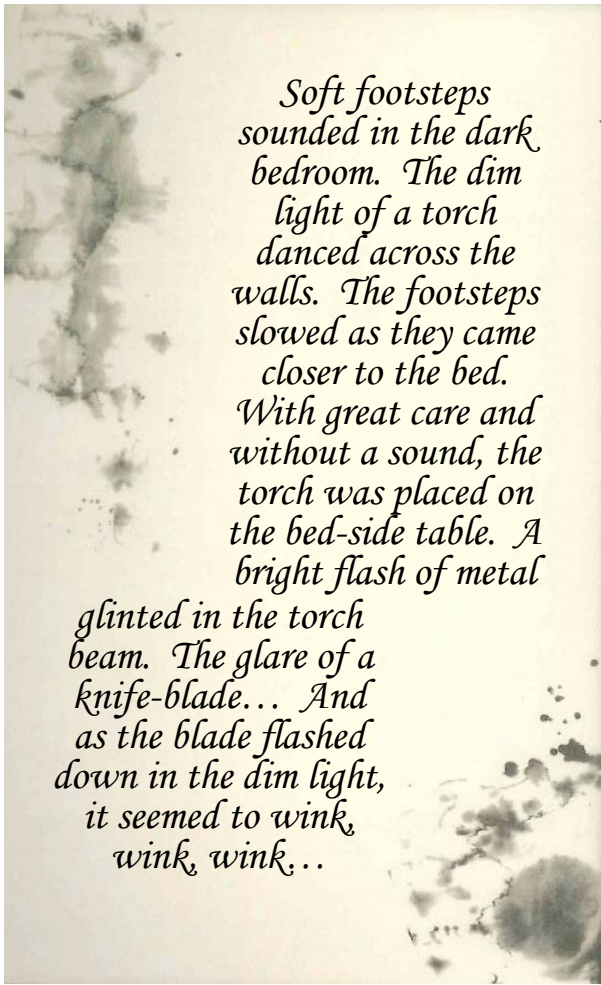
You can support Sophie by clicking on this [link](#).

GOVERNANCE UPDATE

We had an excellent response to the Parent Governor election, with ten nominations received for the two vacant positions. Thank you to everyone who got involved and voted through Parentmail, there were well over nine hundred votes cast. We are delighted to welcome the two successful candidates, Julie Bloomfield and David Campbell, onto the Local Governing Committee for a four year term of office. Please look on the Governance section of the school website to meet the full committee.



WORLD BOOK DAY '21



Soft footsteps sounded in the dark bedroom. The dim light of a torch danced across the walls. The footsteps slowed as they came closer to the bed. With great care and without a sound, the torch was placed on the bed-side table. A bright flash of metal glinted in the torch beam. The glare of a knife-blade... And as the blade flashed down in the dim light, it seemed to wink, wink, wink...

KS3 students celebrated World Book Day at home this year! They were able to listen to audio books on our virtual library and have a go at the quiz – 'Guess which teacher is reading'.

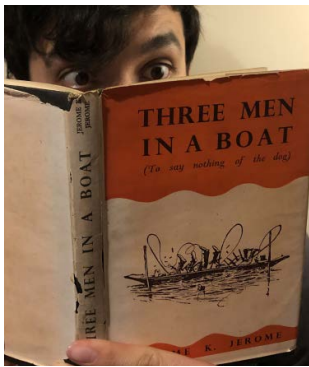
Each class shared our story in a day, which was 'Jon for Short' by Malorie Blackman (extract to the left). Every lesson that day began with the teacher reading aloud a section of the story, then students shared their reactions and made predictions about what might happen next. Like all great stories, it ended with an unexpected twist and there was a lot to discuss!

Students also had a World Book Day lesson in English where they took part in a range of activities from origami bookmark marking, to reading in a comfy spot around the house.

- Mrs Feeney, Literacy Coordinator

'GUESS THE TEACHER'

For any students who didn't get a chance on World Book Day (or any parents who are also ex-pupils), here is a small selection of the quiz. Answers can be found at the bottom of the page.



VIRTUAL LIBRARY 'BOOKCASE'


One of our Virtual Library 'bookcases', which are available through students' English classes on Google Classroom.

Mr Chidambaram, English, Mrs Feeney, English, Miss Flynn, PE, Mr Joyce, Maths

St Thomas More Audio Library: Bookcase Two








1. Click on a cover to listen along to some of our favourite books.
2. Which book might you like to read yourself?





LOCKDOWN ACHIEVEMENTS

Our latest Lockdown provided students with another opportunity to show their independence and creativity in the work that they were doing at home. A few examples can be seen here, from snowmen built by Mrs Borwick's RE class, to Mrs Grundy's Year 10 Artwork inspired by the work of Dutch graphic artist MC Escher.



ASITHA ANIL



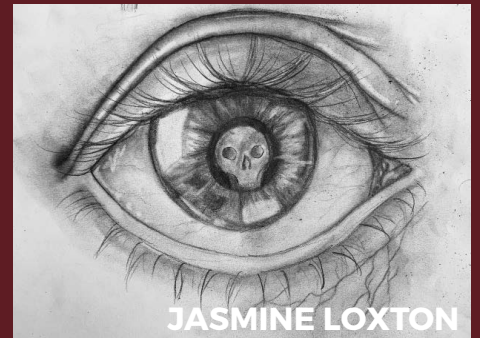
BEN BONNER



LAURA NELSON



FRED DIXON

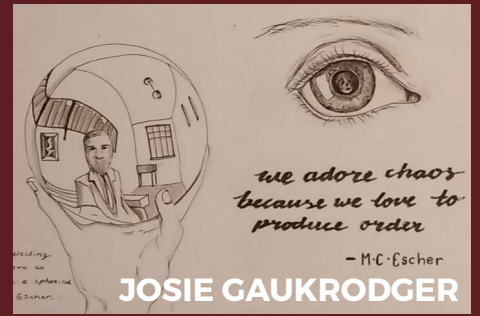


JASMINE LOXTON

With a more scientific approach to lockdown, Nathan Buchanan in Year 7 used his time to build a working Zinc-Carbon battery, which he used to power a clock. Nathan writes, "To create the battery, I used a silicon tube and added a graphite electrode as a plug to stop the mixture of manganese dioxide and graphite falling out of the bottom. A zinc screw was used to seal the



top. To put it in a simple way when the electrons go from one element to the next there is a positive charge, making electricity."



JOSIE GAUKRODGER



FIELDTRIPS RETURN

We were blessed as the weather was absolutely gorgeous and we said it could have been a summer's day if it wasn't so chilly! On the 16th, it was time for the Urban trip with Mr Murray and Mr Logie. Sadly the weather was rather rubbish, however this didn't stop us having a great and productive time! We started the morning by walking through the Ouseburn up to Shields Road in Byker in order to collect our first set of data. In my group we chose to study the question of whether



Back in December, Year 12 Geographers were lucky enough to be the first group to go on a fieldtrip since March 2020! On the 15th, we headed up to Druridge Bay with Mr Murray and Mrs Law to collect data for our Coasts topic.

Newcastle is a Post-Modern city. We continued along Byker Bridge into town to the Monument area then the Quayside! Once again, we collected data, however we got Greggs which obviously made things even better! Overall it was great to get out of school, have some fresh air and be productive at the same time!

- Isabel Hines, Year 12

Mr Murray EDIT: Fieldtrips will return again!



BORN TO PERFORM

As part of the Year 7 and 8 remote learning for English, students had lots of opportunities to read the fantastic works produced by other poets as well as write their own poetry. The Poetry in Performance competition took place during lockdown, open to both Year 7 and 8 students. They had to perform a poem they enjoyed, one they had written or one that was special to them. Entries from the students were creative, powerful and very inspiring.

The winning performance in Year 7 was from Ava Beattie. Cameron Quinn and Hannah Henderson were runners up. In Year 8, CJ Courtney was the winner and Jayden Stafford was the runner up. Students shown above are (back row left to right) Hannah Henderson, Cameron Quinn, Benjamin Nicholson, (front row left to right) Ellie Henderson, Ava Beattie, Bonnie Defreitas, Sonia Sandhu, Diya Regi, all Year 7.

- Miss Patel, English Dept

*Around a dozen children in
computer rooms all day,
But everybody else – they are all locked away.
Books are just waiting for one page to be turned,
No one is there, no one has learned.
No one to stuff them on the book shelf
and then go play,
You know why now – they are all locked away.
We're all at home working away,
Every second, every minute, every hour, every day.
It will happen – it will happen
– it will happen they say,
Someday we will be no longer locked away.*

Extract from 'Locked Away'
by Hannah Henderson, Year 7

Full poem, and others, available on the school [website](#).

*When I think of a Poem I think of a view,
A view that makes the same perspective
look anew,
If one were to say 'a ominous blue voyd',
My mind could wonder as it thinks annoyed,
Annoyed at the possibilities of the word a 'voyd'
All these words are worthless until the
imaginative cloud,
As one reads it aloud.*

*My view of Poetry depends on the subject,
As my passion varies in the affect,
The effect of the subject,
A poem without feelings is a poem without a soul,
As the Point of a poem is to express the passion
to create a moral control,
But I don't know,
I guess this is just my 'point of view'.*

'My Point of View' by Sam Owens, Year 8



EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

We have been particularly impressed by the work that has been done recently by some of our ex-pupils, particularly through these difficult times. Please help us to continue to inspire our young people by sharing your successes. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact alogie@stmacademy.org.uk and you could feature as early as the summer issue.

HANNAH LOWES 2005 - 2012

After leaving STM, I studied Neuroscience at the University of Leeds, followed by a PhD back in Newcastle, investigating neurodegenerative diseases. After six months travelling and volunteering in the South Pacific and South East Asia, I returned to Newcastle to take up a post-doctorate research position in a Parkinson's Disease Laboratory. Due to my background, and the ever-worsening pandemic, I transitioned from academic into a lead role within the local NHS trust in August 2020. Within this role, I helped coordinate the setting up of all new diagnostic systems within the trust. I also supported the development of the Integrated COVID Hub, designing the end-to-end process for this national COVID 19 testing centre. Following this work, I recently moved to QuantuMDx in Dec 2020, to help contribute to the development of the a new rapid COVID diagnostic system, and it was within this role that I had the opportunity to meet the prime minister and chat with him about the cutting edge technology we are developing.



REBECCA THOMAS 2011 - 2018

Covid. A word that represents a time when the world stood still, however working as a student nurse on my Adult Nursing degree throughout the pandemic meant it only got more challenging. Visiting was stopped, introduction of masks (which on a 13 hour shift is torture), long endless shifts, shortage of staff and patients being so poorly. My lectures were moved online and I was asked to work in Covid wards to help relieve pressures and provide helpful skills. I've sadly witnessed patients deteriorating rapidly from this cruel disease, but I've also been able to provide care and compassion at the toughest of times. This year has been heart-breaking, but it has made me the person I am today and I am proud of my achievements. The past three years as a student nurse have flown by; the sleepless nights, 13 hour shifts, endless essays and exams, but it means I have got my dream job (I just accepted a post at Cramlington Emergency Hospital). If anyone is thinking of studying nursing, do it! It's the best career in the world knowing you make a positive difference every day.



DAVID WRIGHT 2000 - 2007

After my History degree at the University of Manchester, I specialised as an exhibition curator. I always loved learning interesting things about the world and trying to make sense of what it all means, so this is a perfect job for me! I've worked with some amazing artists, writers, historians and academics and my job is about sharing their work with as many people as possible. I now work at Durham University, curating exhibitions and teaching the museum professionals of the future. Like most places at the moment, our galleries have moved online. Our latest exhibition, about histories of travel and tourism, is available [here](#).



NEXT ISSUE SUMMER 2021

Address: Lynn Rd, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE29 8LF

Phone: 0191 258 8340

Email: info@stmacademy.org.uk

Newsletter: alogie@stmacademy.org.uk

If your circumstances change and you need support: familysupport@stmacademy.org.uk

stmacademy.org.uk