

AUTUMN ISSUE 2019

HEAR ME OUT



A Note from The Head Student Team...

SAJA - This Hear Me Out is about changing and growing. They say a change is as good as a rest, and some writers have proven that in this issue. Others showcase the difficulty of moving forward, which is something the Head Student Team are familiar with. We are bringing our time as a team to a close, and as rewarding as this year has been, it's most certainly an emotional term knowing it's the last. One of the goals I had this year was to bring the magazine to life. The exceptional work of the HMO team, and the feedback we've received, prove how successful the magazine has been. Hopefully this will only keep growing. After editing, reading, cutting and pasting this Autumn issue I've learnt that the only way to grow is to embrace change. The writers and artwork show how befriending the hardships, and not being afraid of the outcome, makes life more enjoyable. Thank you to everyone who's been with us, and helped us grow as a team, from the journalists to the artists and the teachers. We've got bigger plans ahead, so we aren't wrapping up just yet. We are taking our climate change movement further by meeting with MP Luke Pollard this term. We would never have demanded this attention if it wasn't for the demonstration led by the students. Be proud of the changes you've made, and keep growing.

TESS - Since the start of this new academic year we, PHSG, have already raised over £100 for our school charities: Mind and Devon Wildlife Trust, which is amazing. Our first charity event was the climate change movement on the 20th of September which the head girl team organised at school. Devon Wildlife Trust kindly donated some leaflets and posters in order to raise awareness and understanding about what the charity does and why their work is so important so at the event students were able to learn more about the charity and we also raised nearly £70. After this I received a very kind email from the charity thanking us for choosing them as one of our schools' charities and also for all the money that was donated. In October we had a talent show which showcased the extraordinary talents of the students at Plymouth High. We had a range of talents from opera to Irish dancing and I would just like to say a massive well done to everyone who took part because they were all incredible. It takes a lot of courage to perform in front of an audience. We raised an amazing £83 at the talent show and this money will be split between Devon Wildlife Trust and Mind. As my time as deputy head girl is running out, I would just like to say how much I have enjoyed my position in the head girl team and how much I've enjoyed working with Saja, Harriet and Stella. I'm very sad that we only have a few months left but I wish the new head students all the best and I hope they enjoy their time as much as I have enjoyed mine. I would also like to thank the charity ambassadors for all their hard work this past year- I have really loved working with you all! And thank you to everyone who has helped or taken part in the charity events!

STELLA - The first term back to school has been a busy one for all, but productive nonetheless. The Head Girl Team have been working on many new initiatives this term in order to complete the objectives we set at the start of this year. An exciting opportunity we got involved with this term was in the organisation of the climate demonstration at school. It was a great success and it showcased the true passion and awareness of the students. We are still working towards making our school more eco-friendly and will continue to do so in the last couple weeks before Christmas. In addition to this, it has been a privilege to work closely with the Student Council team this year. They have helped greatly in gathering the students' feedback on many of our new projects. I want to thank all the students involved with the Student Council and am excited to meet the new team next year. As well as this, it has been a pleasure to work with the new head teacher and we would like to thank him for all the support he has given us throughout this term and the enthusiasm he brings to the school. Being part of the Head Girl Team has been an experience that I will never take for granted and am so thankful for all the opportunities this role has given me. I want to wish the best of luck to the new Head Girl Team next year and to all the students and staff that work so hard to make Plymouth High so special.

HARRIET - Over the last year, and particularly the last term, the students at Plymouth High have all shown huge support and initiative in pushing for a greener school. Our climate demonstration at the beginning of the year was not only a protest, but highlighted the willingness of students to get involved and make a difference. Thanks to the hard work and support of the students, our own school demonstration was recognised and supported by Luke Pollard, our local MP, and raised awareness within the school of the need for change to individual lives, and whole communities. In our last few months we are looking to build upon our existing Ecobrick project, support the canteen's changes to reduce their harmful waste, support the Surfers for Sewage group in their plans, and hopefully reveal one last surprise initiative to make our school more environmentally friendly. This is a personal thank you from myself, and the rest of the team, to students who have been so involved and so supportive of our plans and events - you've been amazing!

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For Life Not School, We Protest

On Friday 20th September an estimated 4 million people from 152 countries stood united to demand action be taken to address climate change due to global warming. The school community came together to show our support with inspirational speeches from the head girl team, students and guest speaker Dr Hazel Gibson. There were also stalls to raise environmental awareness, to make plastic free pledges, support The Devon Wildlife Trust, make eco bricks and write to our local MP, Luke Pollard. It was a really great event, with students from all year groups and the staff making a commitment to change and sustainability.

Dr Hazel Gibson's speech was definitely a highlight of the event. Dr Gibson spoke about her work as a researcher of public understanding of geothermal energy at Plymouth University and how as well as discussing the issues surrounding global warming and climate change, we need to focus on solutions; using the analogy "if your house is on fire, you don't need people telling you that it is. And our house is on fire. What you need is people to tell you how to fight the fire."

The stalls around the courts were really interesting and varied. The plastic pledge stall was really thought provoking, reading all the promises people have made and

reflecting on all the small ways we can make a difference on a daily basis, from cutting out single-use plastics to becoming more conscious about recycling. But I wonder how many of those promises have already been forgotten? Big rallies and events like this are brilliant,

and so incredibly necessary as they are getting government and big companies to sit up and listen. But climate change is something we should be thinking about all the time. Every time we go clothes shopping, every time we go to put a tin can in the bin, every time we go to buy a single use plastic bottle from a vending machine, our impact on the wider world should be at the forefront of our minds. In the words of Greta Thunburg: "This is not a one-time thing, this is our entire future."

This is the speech Frankie made at the demonstration:

I sat next to a girl (about 7 or 8) on the bus home talking to her brother (about 5 or 6) about climate change. She said "We need to stop crying in the corner! We need to stand up... (but not right now because we are on a bus and I don't want you to get hurt)....and make a difference because it's up to us, because this is our life! We can recycle, and not waste water when we brush our teeth, loads of stuff that's super easy! We need to because no one else will!" Her five or six year old brother then said, if climate change kills us, will we go to heaven? The girl thought about it for a minute and said I don't know, some people think so, and I do! Some people don't think anything happens but I think that's sad for them but we have to love them too. I guess we need to be nice to people while we can, and not treat people differently if they aren't like us, because different is good!"

ARTICLE BY FRANKIE BALDRY
ILLUSTRATIONS BY AOIFE DAVIS
WEBB



Growing to Love Yourself

Being a teen can be hard. It's fair to say that adolescence comes with its ups and its fair share of downs. It is essential that we remember how important it is to love yourself and if not, at least accept yourself for the person you are.

We live in an era where young women are more vocal than ever and this is a beautiful and powerful thing which we should use to build each other up rather than drag each other down.



I think that lots of teen insecurity grows from the words of others which is why everyone should remember that lots of people are fighting battles you will never know about. This is why you should always be kind to others, being kind to others will impact your life positively as well because you will start to see life more positively (and therefore yourself).

Loving yourself can be a difficult thing, especially when there seems to be a 'self-hate epidemic' on social media at the moment. The way this is easiest for lots of students here at PHSG to enact is in the form of compliments: when someone compliments you, do you say 'Thank you' or do you deny that they are right (trying to appear modest)? Thanking someone for a compliment is different to being big-headed or self-centred. It is important to be proud of things that you like about yourself or have worked hard for. Thinking that you look nice or feeling confident in yourself is not a negative thing!

Confidence is a necessity for growing up and I know very well how difficult it is to achieve. However, it is important to do things which make you feel good about yourself. If you struggle with body confidence: remember that just because you don't look like someone you find attractive, it doesn't mean that you aren't attractive. Also, when you are scrolling through social media and see those beautiful people who look like models - it is important to remind yourself that you have strengths that they don't have; they may look like a Kardashian, but you know nothing about their personality. To avoid social media impacting on your body image, unfollow people who make you feel insecure or uncomfortable with yourself. I know that everyone says this and that's what we all get told but it does genuinely help! I know from experience that having unrealistic expectations of your appearance is not healthy or helpful.

If you feel like you need to make a massive effort to look good for your friends, because you fear they will judge you or not like you, you need some better friends! Friends should be supportive and fill you with confidence regardless of what you look like! Being surrounded by people who truly love you will massively help you to love yourself.

The process of growing to love yourself takes time. Greater confidence will begin to develop as you get older but it is important to remember that everyone has rough days and days where they don't feel their best. Just remember that you are a beautiful person inside and out, work hard, be kind and great things will come your way

ARTICLE BY JESSICA TOZE
ILLUSTRATION BY ALEX WALKER

all the time in the world

I start sixth form this year. Whenever I tell people that, or talk to people about it, one of the first replies I receive is: "don't think you'll keep your current friends". Until recently I didn't realise how damaging a thing that is to say and/or hear. Why do we do that? Why do we feel such a need to twist a moment of potential excitement and growth, into one of cynicism and loss? It's unnecessary, surely; and it's destructive, definitely.

Of course, common sense dictates that as you move through life, opinions, relationships, fashion sense (thank goodness) change. But for some reason, the only topic of discussion is the loss. Rather than appreciation of development and learning, we can only focus on what we no longer have - which, in my opinion, makes no sense.

This focus means people (often teenagers, as this mindset is impressed at such a young age) become unwilling to become attached and bond with our peers.

As a teenager, being constantly told that very few of your current relationships will remain constant throughout any period of your life is, ultimately, demoralising. Soon, it seems logical to limit the amount of meaningful relationships you form - meaning that there are then fewer people to lose contact with and less loss to be suffered.

Britain is the loneliness capital of Europe, with over 9 million people who say they are always or often lonely (51% are 75 or over so this does include younger people too) - could it be to do with the fact that society discourages people from bonding deeply with others? And instead, we are pushed towards pursuing career success, often within a "good" area, - after all, if you're sad, it's much better to be sad in comfort, right?

Another common idea presented within society is the complete and utter attention that must be focused

towards family. New mothers in particular are at risk of developing depression due to the isolation that a new born child creates - around 30% of new mothers experience Postnatal Depression (whilst hormone imbalance is also a factor, environmental and social factors also promote symptoms).

Furthermore, there is also an expectation even as children get older, that parents (often mothers) must always exhibit full-time devotion and commitment to their family. Whilst I do believe in the importance of a parent committing to the life of their child, I also value, highly, interaction with friends, or even family members, outside the immediate household.

I'm 16 and there's a lot I have yet to encounter and understand, but I know for a fact that if my social interaction was restricted purely to the people I live with, I'd give it a week tops before the insanity kicked in.

The bottom line is, no matter how much you adore your family and would give up everything you've ever dreamed of to secure their happiness: there is a great intellect gap between you and your children, and there will be an interest difference between you and your partner - problems faced on lesser scales during communication with friends. By talking to friends less, you are partaking in less and less meaningful conversations, relationships become strained and your thoughts slowly turn to mush. But no one tells us that, do they? Making sure your child has done their homework is obviously much more important than having a coffee with a neighbour.

In terms of the lives of young people, the stress, anxiety and sense of impending doom that comes with the exam period only further pushes the narrative that socialising is not an important part of life - academic achievements are priority

and mental health is a secondary issue that can be dealt with later. One of the first aspects of teenage life that is sacrificed during times of intensity is that of social. Friends meet up less often, under the prerogative that this will promote increased study time. However, to be brutally honest, it doesn't happen. I realised that I was doing the same amount of revision, however instead of spending time around my friends, I was spending increased amounts of time on social media. Thus, isolating myself, and gaining nothing from it - pain yet no gain, if you will.

That's when I stopped refusing to see family and friends in order to have more time to study, and instead just allowed myself to take whatever enjoyment I could from a horrible period of time - I so obviously needed it. On occasion, my friends and I even got some studying done (though this was rare, I think I did 2 pages of biology once before that idea was abandoned in favour of attending to my best friend's cat). However, I will say that when I did revise, it was worthwhile and purposeful - most likely fuelled by the satisfaction I felt from the social interaction with my friends.

GCSE exams sparked a whole variety of emotions within me: boredom at having to study subjects I knew I would drop as soon as the opportunity arose; frustration at the lack of care and understanding politicians seem to have of young people; but mainly a sense of disappointment. Disappointment that this is what society values: how many facts I can recall in various different subjects, how well I can remember physics equations that I will never use again, how accurate my memory is to recall entire quotes from a book I'm not allowed to have in the exam (which I still believe it a useless and ridiculous addition to the exam - I know *Pride and Prejudice* inside out, but there's no

way I can prove that without one specific quote that I didn't think to memorise).

I believe exams are important, honestly. They're a validation of hard work and effort; a way of communicating to other people your strengths as well as a goal - something to set your sights on and work towards. Here's the thing though: I'm sixteen - I don't really feel the need to work towards anything at the moment other than having enough cash to get a cool top I saw in a shop window.

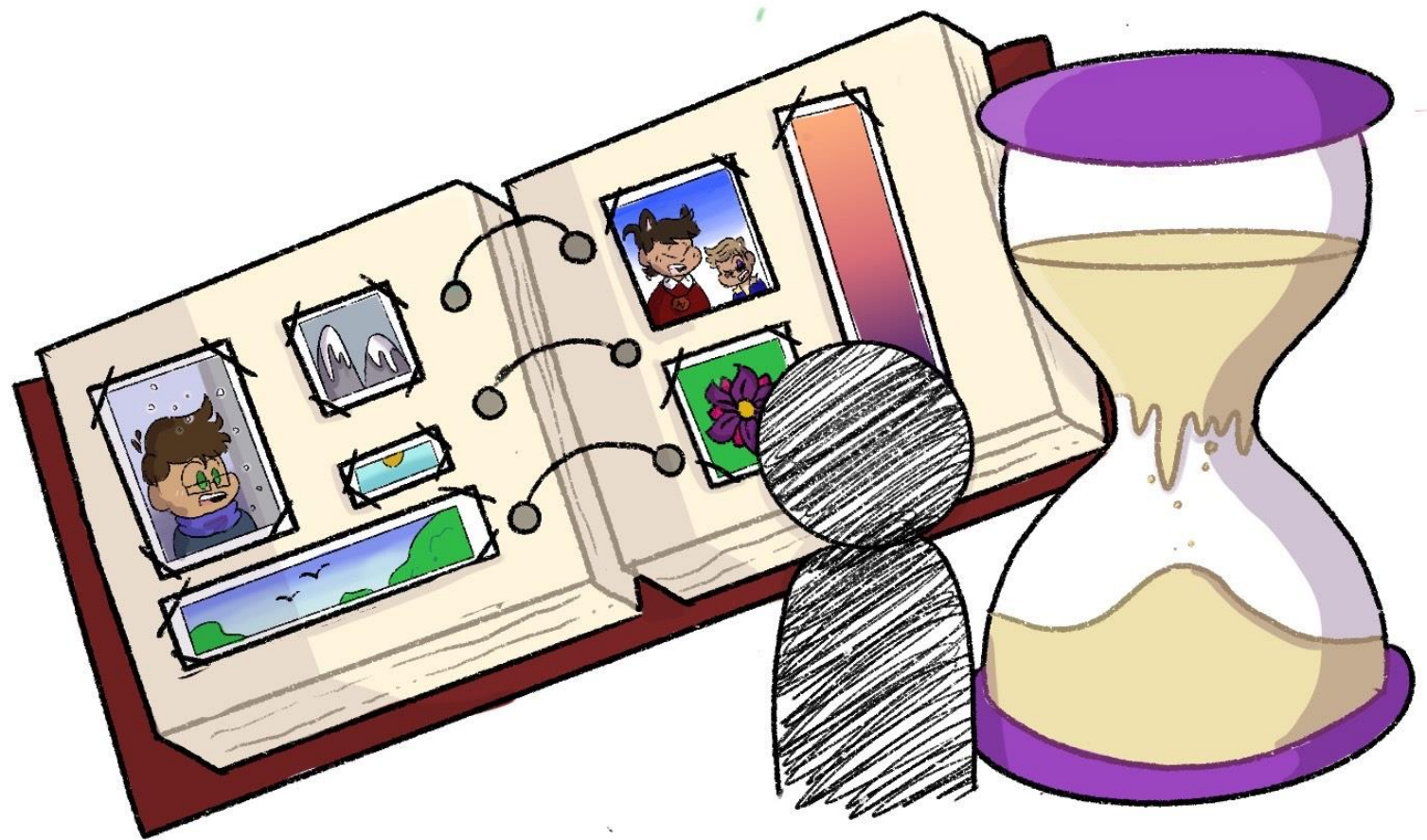
One side of me agrees with having all exams finished by 18 and being able to move on fairly quickly from education (unless chosen otherwise), and thus be able to start your own life as soon as possible. The other side of me, however, does not feel as though my youth should be centred around exams; the importance of which, at one point, was dictated by a man who appears as though he would be better suited to wearing a loud beach shirt, sat in Benidorm with The Daily Mail snorting how they need us more than we need them, rather than standing as a possible leader of the country.

At 16, shouldn't I be more concerned with which friends I'm meeting that weekend rather than the pros and cons of kidney dialysis? Of course, education is vital, all throughout our lives, but I'm going to be working until I'm in my mid-sixties - should I really stop having guiltless enjoyment at age 15? All I mean is, that's going to be a very small fraction of my life of simple fun: no mortgages, no kids and no pension scheme to worry about. Well, my 15 years are up and, put simply, I'm already looking forward to my retirement.

In conclusion (in an effort to feel as though I've reached one), I'm going to imagine I live in an ideal world where I can spend my youth being young and spend my adult life not regretting everything I didn't do, because it didn't seem "worth my time".

WRITTEN BY YMMA THOMAS

ARTWORK BY ARIANNE KAEIN ARAGON



A Sea of Change

Plymouth, a constantly moving, evolving and changing city: never shutting down. But living in the bustling, residential areas of our city it's easy to forget the naval heritage that surrounds it. If you delve deep into the history of Plymouth's past there are various homages to our maritime background around so many corners. The impact of the navy has always been extremely important. In the 1720s Daniel Defoe wrote:

"Plymouth is a town of consideration and of great importance to the public. It is situated between two very large inlets of the sea and in the bottom of a very large bay, which is very remarkable".

The navy has always been at the centre of what Plymouth was built around and sparked its economic and social growth. We can still see evidence of this prosperity today: Mayflower Steps, the dockyard, Plymouth Hoe marking times of exploration and discovery.

The basis of so many buildings and jobs, its heritage sails back for hundreds of years. The city has relied hugely on the business of ships, and the navy for its growth. It's key impact was on trade, and this helped create the city's character, influencing what we have today in our housing areas and docks

One of which includes Devonport. The naval fleet played a key role in WWI - with five of the fourteen ships lost in the Battle of Jutland in the North Sea having been based at Devonport. It was the major sea battle of the war, resulting in thousands of casualties. Today, Devonport remains a place of importance to many of its residents, with a park and modern facilities, and the Devonport Naval Heritage Centre. The Navy was supported greatly by Plymouth through other major conflicts, and was influential in times of exploration.

Stonehouse dates from the Anglo-Saxon period and was named after the Roman 'Stone House' that stood nearby. It had historic naval ties, including warships provisioned from the Royal Marines' barracks in the area.

Now a key meeting point and suburb filled with bars, cafes, restaurants, shops and galleries, Stonehouse hosts a wide variety of cuisine from various parts of the world, perhaps a reflection of past trading throughout the empire. With important connections to nautical history, but still remaining modern and innovative; Royal William Yard balances the importance of a modern space that has evolved to suit its environment and showcase its past.

This history is important for our current generation and the future, as it allows us to see the evolution of industries in our town. It has created jobs, such as those in the dockyard, and will most likely create more in the future. It creates a base for new ideas and challenges that could be encountered, helping us improve our society and most definitely the dockyard and the naval challenges it may face. The city's heritage reminds the current generation and that of the future, to become more aware of the impact Plymouth has had on the wider world and its impact - why do so many American tourists come here for example?

Subtle reminders situated throughout Plymouth remind us of the parallels with the past - trade today and trade yesterday. Still important to many people, trades and tourists Plymouth's architecture, position are something we should all take more time to study.

Key mentions in social platforms, news and media further show that Plymouth is still a town of great interest to the public and the city's history, particularly its naval heritage plays a major role in why so many people visit and why so many are proud of the city.

ARTICLE BY ABI FINNIE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GRACE DOBBIE



Book Review Corner

'The Testaments' by, the Legendary, Margaret Atwood

"You hold in your hands a dangerous weapon loaded with the secrets of three women from Gilead. They are risking their lives for you. For all of us."

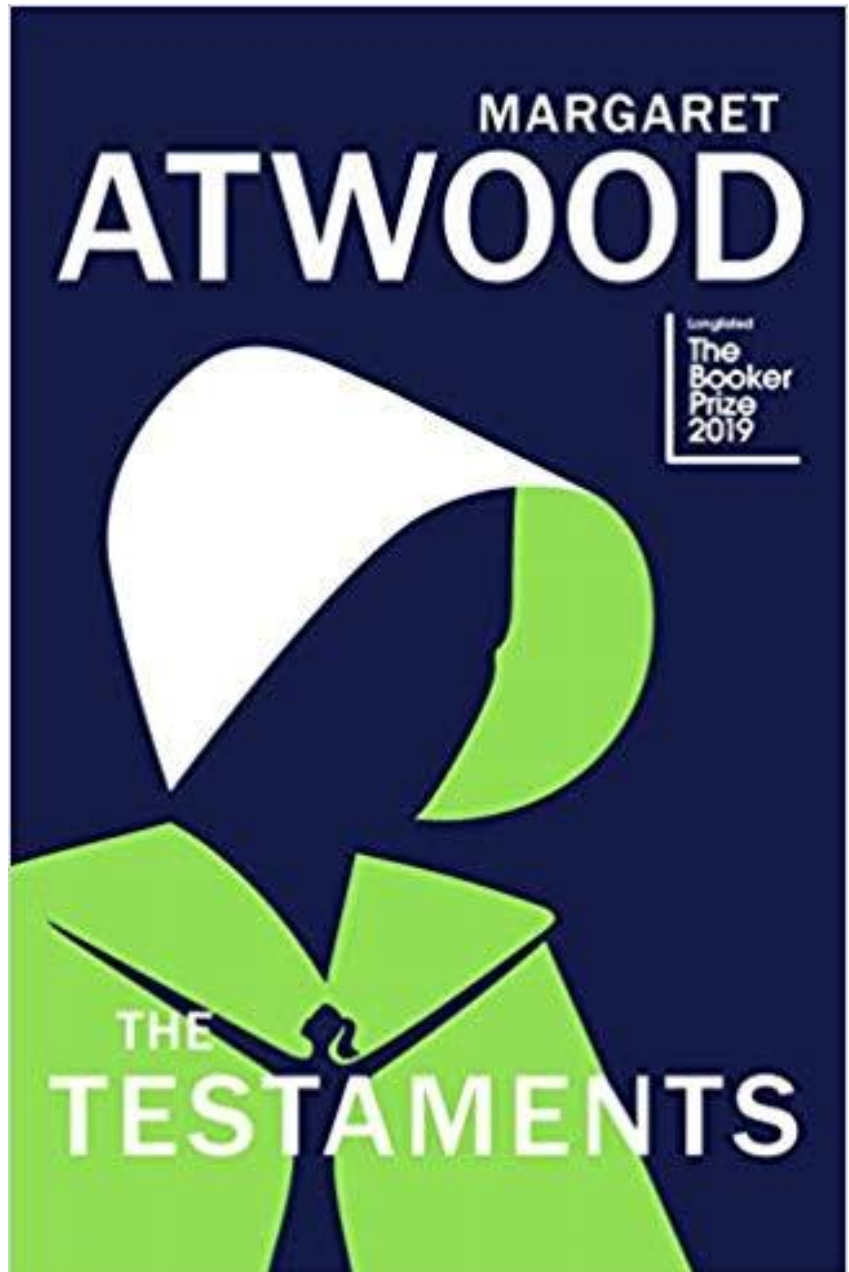
Known as the "literary event of the year", readers have been waiting for thirty four years for the much anticipated sequel to the Handmaid's Tale to be published. Set fifteen years after the first book, the book is written from the perspective of three narrators, all of which have a different view of Gilead. Compared to the Handmaid's Tale where we only have one narrator, the introduction of different narrators are refreshing. The testament of Aunt Lydia is a particularly interesting insight into the well-known character from the first book.

For those who haven't read The Handmaid's Tale, a handmaid is a woman who has been forcibly assigned to produce children for the ruling class of men (The Commanders). This is not a book to read lightly- it is a horrific portrayal of a possible future written by an extremely talented author.

While the Handmaid's Tale was mainly about one woman desperately trying to preserve her sense of herself as a human under the tyrannical Republic of Gilead, the Testaments explores the power women can have and the risks that they're willing to take.

The thrilling sequel is incredibly captivating, thought provoking and disturbing. It answers the questions left open by The Handmaid's Tale and is a beautiful conclusion to the modern classic

REVIEW BY CARYS SCALES



Career Advice from Page to Stage: An Exclusive Interview with The Doctor Who Cast

Best known for playing the ditzy scarecrow Worzel Gummidge (1979-81) in the children's sitcom of the same name, and for his time on Doctor Who (1970-74, 83) in which he was the third actor ever to play the role of the Doctor on television, actor Jon Pertwee would have celebrated his one hundredth birthday in July of this year. To pay tribute to one of my all-time heroes, I interviewed his BBC television co-stars about their time on Doctor Who, what Jon was like to work with and what advice they would give to students studying at Plymouth High School for Girls. I spoke to actress, author and director Katy Manning about her time on classic Doctor Who with Jon Pertwee, why she travelled to America when she was just eighteen, and what advice

Timothy: Have you always wanted to be an actress?

Katy: I never knew I wanted to be an actress as I was very shy, but everyone else did! I was very visually-challenged, which was not discovered until I was five and TV came into our living room. Radio voices were my friends, and I mimicked and played with voices for pure pleasure, one of my best skills to this day. I am still very visually-challenged, so when I wrote my first play, which I performed in the USA then recorded on audio with twenty-six voices, I wrote it all by hand which is so much easier for me... I find it more creative, like painting words.

Timothy: How was it training at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London?

Katy: I left proper school at twelve. I was more interested in my ballet and love of art and writing, so for two years, [I] was at a private tutorial school in London with only ten other students. Then at fourteen I had a private tutor - so to go to drama school with so many other like-minded people was very exciting. Back in the late sixties, drama school (... unlike today where it is separated into Technical and Acting) was three years of everything. On top of learning stage, acting and camera, we learnt mask work, make-up, stage management, directing, lighting, costume and much more. I discovered over my fifty years in three different continents, this was invaluable - especially when I started directing... I am so grateful, as through experience, I have realized that it's vital to understand and appreciate everyone's job in all the mediums. When I first directed, I realised exactly how useful this knowledge was. Being in a television show like Doctor Who before computers, was so exciting - watching all the different departments trying to create special effects from very little but pure creative thinking, small budgets, determination and sleepless nights!

Timothy: You went to America when you were just eighteen, what was the reason behind going there?

Katy: I was in New York after a very serious car accident, which landed me in hospital for two years and many surgeries, ending my dancing dreams... A holiday to spend time with my one tutorial school friend who lived there, and with my sister who also lived there (and was a very successful model), was [the] perfect way to heal and recover. I was spotted at a party by an MGM executive and my parents were flown over as they wanted to sign for a five-year period, but I decided against it and... [auditioned]... for drama school instead, and learn my craft that way.

Timothy: You played Jo Grant in Doctor Who alongside co-star Jon Pertwee, with whom you had a very close connection. What was he like to be around (both onset and away from filming)?

Katy: I couldn't have worked with a more fascinating, worldly, swashbuckling-adventurer than Jon Pertwee. It was like having a master class in comedy and character acting every day. A brilliant raconteur and my close friend on-and-off screen. We had so many adventures together and much laughter. However, on studio days once the cameras are in place, and there are no retakes... acting is a very serious business. Jon encouraged me with... wacky voices, keeping me warm, wrapping me in his cloak of knowledge while waiting to shoot scenes in freezing cold, wet, alien-looking locations. The whole team was a real family affair, and I learnt about all areas of TV from everyone. It was only my second job after leaving drama school, and I was like a little sponge soaking up everything from the incredible and inspirational people around me.

Timothy: What are your thoughts on the first female Doctor, Jodie Whittaker?

Katy: Jodie was exactly the right person at the right time to play the Doctor.

Timothy: Some of our readers might recognize you from CBBC's 'The Sarah Jane Adventures' too, in which you reprised your role as Jo Grant (now Jo Jones). How was it working with Matt Smith in comparison to Jon Pertwee?

Katy: I am a huge fan of the new series [of Doctor Who] since it started again with Russel T Davies at the helm. Coming back in the SJA (Sarah Jane Adventures) was so unexpected and a pure joy. I have worked with several Doctors on screen, and now in audio as Jo Grant, Jo Jones and Iris Wildthyme. Each actor... [brings]... their own special magic to the character of the Doctor. I love Jo. She grew up onscreen and even offered her life for the Doctors which says a great deal about her love and understanding of the Doctor and his universal mission for peace.

Timothy: How do you think Jon would've reacted to Doctor Who coming back to TV in 2005?

Katy: I'm sure Jon would be blown away that the show is still going, and is bigger than ever in ninety-nine countries. Especially as he said publicly that he didn't think it would continue for many years after Tom Baker.

Timothy: Lastly, do you have any advice for Plymouth High students reading this, thinking about their next steps into the wider world?

Katy: I wish you much success in all that you do [in] future... whatever career you choose. Remember, [for] acting, it's desire, dedication and discipline!

I spoke to actor Jon Levene about his time on classic Doctor Who with Jon Pertwee, his hostility to acting-legend Tom Baker, and what advice he would give to his younger self.

Timothy: When you started acting, you joined Equity under professional name "John Levene" to avoid confusion with a man already registered with the name "John Woods". Was this frustrating for you? And if you could change your surname again, what might you change it to?

John: I can tell you absolutely now it was the most frustrating thing in the world. I was born John Anthony Woods in 1941... [but] you have to join Equity to be able to get a paid job, with any acting or any TV studio. And of course,... the secretary said it was a closed-shop... that I have to do it very quickly, and that in six months' time my form would be filled, accepted and certified and I would become an official actor. I was going to go with John A Woods ... [however]... it all turned out that there was a man named John Woods, a very famous Shakespearean actor... I tried two or three other names like John Anthony, Anthony John, my Christian names, but none of them worked. At the end of the whole hour of trying to find a name, as I was walking out of the office, I looked out of the window and there was a boxing promoter in the shop opposite and it said "Harry Levene, Boxing Promoter". I ran back up to the office. And said "could I have John Levene?" and that's how I ended up with my name. What a mess it was... I would love to go back to my mother's maiden name, I really wanted to be John Anthony Blake.

Timothy: There are lots of people currently studying theatre studies at school, hoping to later go on to find a career in TV or film. What advice would you give to those people?

John: My advice would be direct and absolutely positive: you must think twice and very, very hard before you go into the entertainment business. Remember the word "entertainment" is the key to all of it. Forget the word[s] "movie star", "films", "money", "Hollywood", "Elstree", "James Bond", it comes down to entertainment. . If you do not have the talent, and I'm going to be totally frank here... you have to tell the truth to succeed in life... if you do not have a talent for singing or acting or the physical ability to do stunts and move beautifully, then you will be wasting your time. If you have medium talent, make sure you have a second string to your bow. If you are studying whatever it is, whether it be Science or Geography or Politics, you must have a

second string to your bow. Because eighty-nine percent of actors are out of work at any given day of any given month of any given year. Only fifteen to twenty-two percent of actors make a living, and only five percent make a fortune. So I beg you with all of my heart, as a man that had a latent talent, you must check what you're really aiming for before you give your life to acting.

Timothy: Before Doctor Who, you worked in a clothing store in London. What was it like? Was it your first job?

John: No it wasn't my first job actually. What a lovely question, and I thank you for that... I left Salisbury in about 1958, I think it was, and [then] I lived in Jersey in the Channel Islands... I became a menswear salesman... because I always loved being smart... This is a tip I will give you all whether you're young or old... scruffiness is the first thing that casting directors or anyone that would employ you in show business is going to look for. So in terms of working in a menswear shop, it taught me how to be smart, it also allowed me to get all of my clothes at a discount rate. But I must confess being smart and comfortable has given me, personally, all of the confidence I needed in this most extraordinary and difficult of businesses... That of show business.

Timothy: If you hadn't gone into acting, what other careers do you think you would have pursued?

John: I have to be honest with you and say, I wouldn't have known the answer to this until I was about fifty years old, I wish I had gone into the police force and been a detective. I will say this unashamedly; I have one of the most incredible eyes for detail... I was a private detective for two years and four months with an ex-Scotland Yard policeman, who had commissioned out of the police because he had had his leg almost taken off by a getaway car... He and I shared a private detective agency for two years. I would have loved to have been a senior detective for Scotland Yard. That is what I would love to have been.

Timothy: On Doctor Who, you were a Yeti, you were a Cyberman and then you were cast as Sergeant Benton. What was it like playing such a diverse range of characters?

John: When I got the part of the Yeti and the Cyberman I was just simply a walk-on. I was a younger man and it was just ten pounds a day which, I'm telling you, even today is nothing... I thought I would be a walk-on for the rest of my life... I was enjoying it because I went to different studios, and met lots of different actors, but... the director and the producer of Doctor Who saw the intent I had at seeing how things worked. You have to have an inquisitive mind, young people. You have to wonder... You have to have a belief... And that is when director Douglas Camfield and producer Barry Letts saw that I was so keen on this job. They gave me my break and I took it with both hands. And you see what happened.

Timothy: For those less familiar with classic Doctor Who, tell us a little bit about playing the character you're arguably best known for, Sergeant John Benton.

John: I never dreamt I would be an actor and of course, who would possibly dream of having a part so beloved by the public? And do you know what? I will tell you the truth, I believe... [the] popularity [of Benton] is down to the simplicity of this... My acting was never complicated. You were never going to look at me and call me the greatest actor in the world, but what you did do is you recognised... John Levene and it just worked. And I played Sergeant Benton the way I would have played my own life... There's no doubt about it, it has made my life richer, and more incredible than anything else in the world. Apart from being in love.

Timothy: What are your thoughts on the first female Doctor, Jodie Whittaker?

John: Jodie Whittaker is one of the greatest actresses we've got... The moment she opens her mouth with a marvellous Midlands accent... I think that her acting is absolutely unassailable. I think her part as the Doctor was brilliant. But I also have to add this: a lot of people did not like the transition from a male Doctor to a female Doctor. We are living in strange times. Would James Bond ever be a woman? No, I doubt it very much indeed... Did it work? I feel, sadly, that it did not. For no other reason than I think we are so used to seeing twelve male Doctors, maybe we've gone a step too far.

Timothy: You starred alongside Tom Baker on Doctor Who. What was it like to work with him?

John: Some questions leave one a little perplexed... When I started my year with Pat Troughton, I was in heaven. And then when Jon Pertwee came along for the next five years, I was not only in heaven, I was floating on the wings of angels. Because Jon Pertwee was the most giving, the most wonderful, the most multi-talented man I'd ever met. He was my mother and father's favourite comedian... And then Tom Baker came along. And everything changed. It changed because the ego that Tom Baker had to throw out at every actor opposite him was so destructive in its pointed accusation... As though you hadn't delivered your lines to him correctly, and that he was going to punish you for it. He was a man with huge ego, and I'm not knocking him for that. He was a good actor and he was a good Doctor Who. But when you work with an actor, which some of you will in the future... You will find that one out of every ten people are horrible... Most actors are generous; most actors are very gracious. It just happened that [with] Mr Baker, his ego was so big it crushed me under foot... Let me just say, I am pleased that that happened because I left acting because of that, and I became a producer and a director and a musician. So thank you Tom Baker for getting me into where I wanted to be.

Timothy: You also worked with the late, great Jon Pertwee. A man who would be one hundred years old this year. What was he like on and off set?

John: It was his heart, it was his talent, it was his empathy... Jon Pertwee was everything to me. [See,] I had a father that hated me... Sadly that's the way life is. Not everyone is in love, not everyone has a mum and dad that loves them... [but] Jon Pertwee made my life what it is today. And the week he died, was one of the worst weeks I've ever had, because I had just left him having been with him for two weeks... I send Jon Pertwee all my love, and [he's] everything I've ever dreamed of in a human being. I wait to meet him in heaven. That's how I feel about Jon Pertwee.

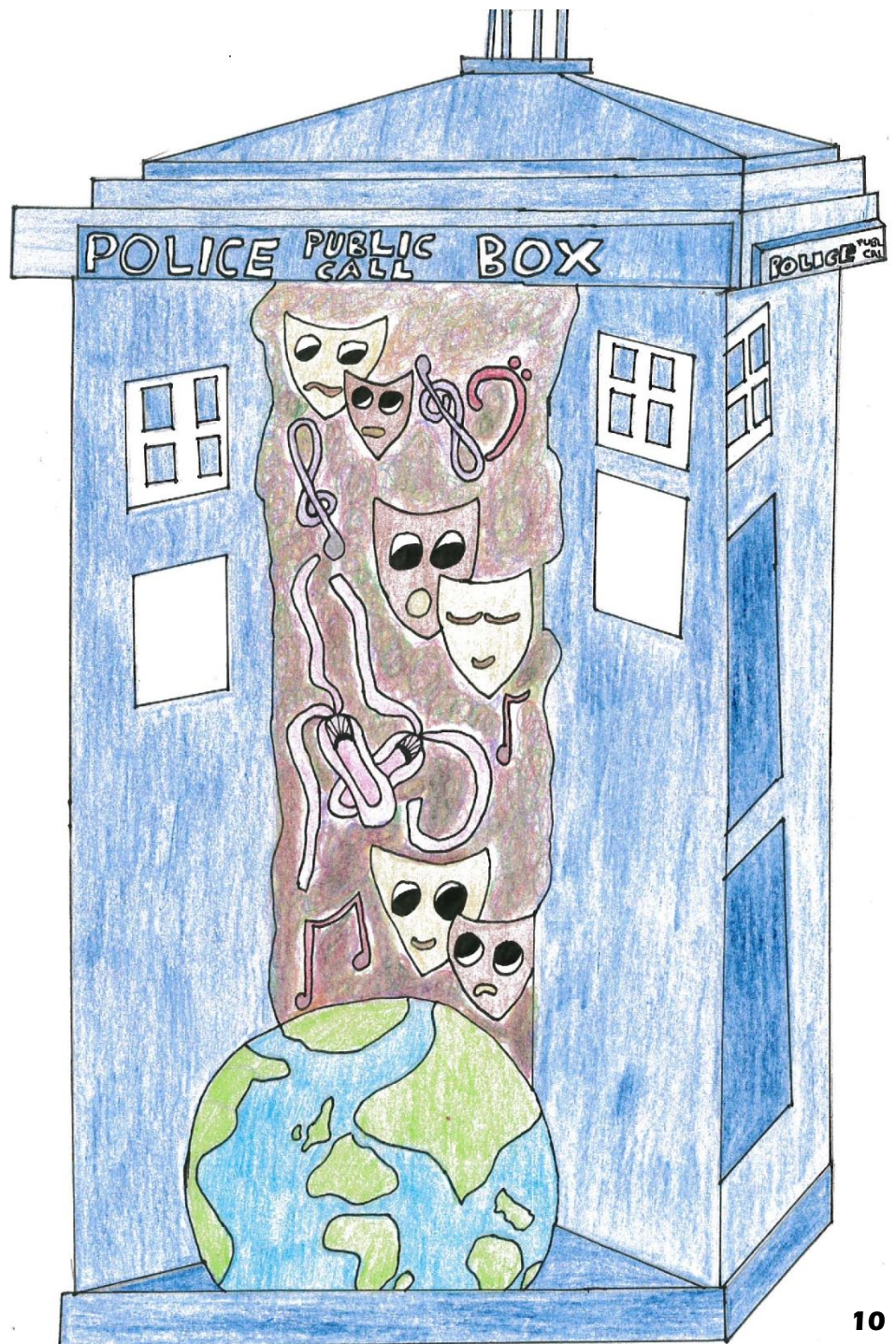
Timothy: Recently, you've done some audio stories for Doctor Who. Would you be open to reappearing on the television show?

John: Oh, what a lovely question. Oh, you know what the answer to that is! The answer is a New York Minute. It is yes, yes, yes!... I will say it boldly, and I will say it truly... If they had Sergeant Benton back for one episode, the viewing figures of Doctor Who would go up by one third, everyone knows that... If they asked me back, I would go there even to do one line... Sadly [though], Doctor Who is now gone for Benton.

Timothy: If there was one thing you could tell your younger self, what would it be?

John: I had meant to think about this much deeper... I would say to you: try not to be fearful. You're always going to be fearful of something... You have to focus on your life... Make sure you love your mum and dad. If you do love your mum and dad, do things for them... Otherwise you won't have that little bit of humanity that you need to grow up into the life you want to grow up into... Treat each other nicely, and if you do fall in love when you get older you must make sure that love is good and you must not betray that love, because you'll end up regretting it the rest of your life... Just be good to people.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY TIM BRETT
ILLUSTRATION BY ROSALIE ALLEN



The Carnegie Book Awards

Last June, several Year 8 students decided to participate in the Carnegie Book Awards. The Carnegie Book Award is an annual event throughout the UK where the top 6 books are chosen to compete for this award. Students from different schools meet up with others and sign up to read this selection of books and then create a slideshow to explain why their book should be chosen.

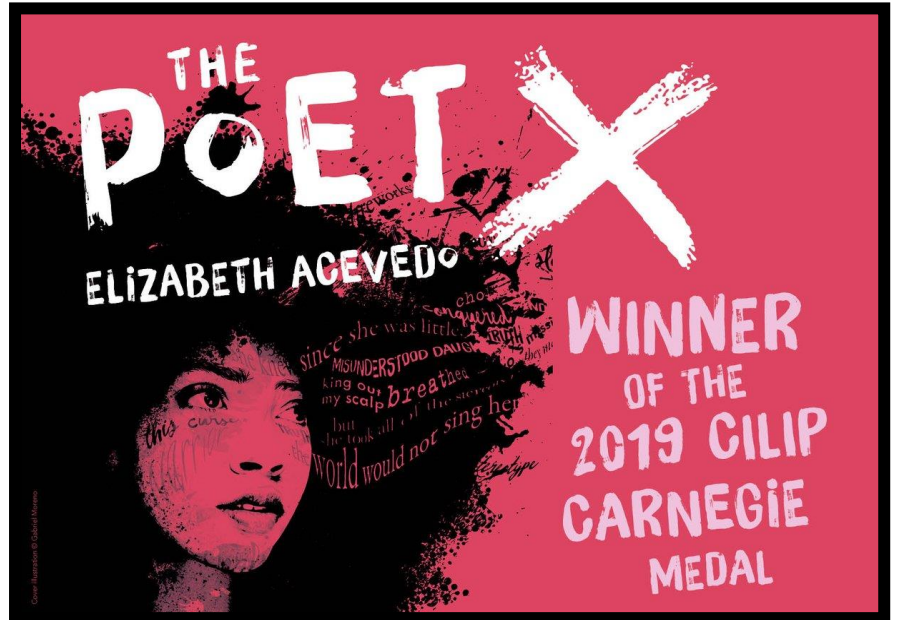
Students from Hyde Park came to Plymouth High for a day to present our slideshows to each other where we then voted for which presentation we think should win. The books this year, were

- Bone Talk by Candy Gourlay
- Skinful of Shadows by Francis Hardinge
- Long Way Down by Jason Reynolds
- Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo
- Rebound by Kwame Alexander
- Things a Bright Girl Can Do by Sally Nicholls
- The House with Chicken Legs by Sophie Anderson
- The Land of Neverendings by Kate Saunders

This year, Nancy, Anya, Lilly, Lucy, Hannah, Penny, Ina, Sofia, Hannah from year 8 and Ava from Year 7 took part.

The presentation that got the most votes that day was Anya and Lilly with the book Rebound. However, the overall winner for the official award was Poet X.

ARTICLE BY ANYA JOHNSON



"I only know that learning to believe in the power of my own words has been the most freeing experience of my life. It has brought me the most light. And isn't that what a poem is? A lantern glowing in the dark."

Lola Beal, Starring in Twelfth Night



Suddenly I'm wearing yellow tights. A cast member and fellow first-year is cross-gartering pairs of black nylons around my calves. My pantaloons are now very fetching bloomers, and I'm aware that I'm undergoing one of the most famous costume changes in theatre's history. And it's one that makes me look ridiculous.

A small jig and a lot of flirtation later, I'm changing once again. This time, I'm sitting behind the tent and I'm pouring the contents of my water bottle on to my hands and rubbing furiously at my heavily lined eyes. It's the closest I'm getting to tears on my level of talent. Cuffs undone, one sleeve rolled up, one garter falling down, belt missing and hair ruffled; my third and final costume change.

Then it's back to the patterned trousers, smeary grey makeup still stuck to my skin giving me a half-dead look. The gold glitter refuses to be rubbed away by any makeup wipe, I sparkle in lectures for days.

Where to now? The library? No - another rehearsal. Time to change again.

It's Shakespeare's Twelfth Night, open-air in the second quad of Brasenose College, Oxford, and I have a change to make.

I run from the library wearing my fatigues and the English student's staple, patterned trousers. I have an essay to write, but I'm putting my costume on. I'm Malvolio in twenty minutes It's summer, and it's hot, but I button my high-necked,

layered with a floral waistcoat and a thick belt, and I'm wearing pantaloons fastened with multiple safety pins. I sit in the common room and have my face painted and buffed and sprayed and given the most incredibly thick pair of brows. Costume change one.

It's the interval. I bustle up a staircase and dive into the loos (my makeshift dressing room - university drama is ever glamorous).

WRITTEN BY EX- PHSG GIRL AND PREVIOUS HEAD GIRL LOLA BEAL
Lola is currently studying English (in between acting) at Oxford University



Mr Underdown's Undertaking

Mr Underdown has written a personal note to the students at PHSG, and about his time here.

It is a real privilege to contribute to this addition of Hear Me Out and a chance for me to share with you what I have learned about our school since joining in September. From day one, all the students I have met, talked with and listened to have been superb. You should be very proud of yourselves, you are considerate, reflective and operate with a strong moral purpose. The way you responded to the anti-climate change day activities and the young minds day illustrate your willingness to act on what you believe in and your compassion for and understanding of those facing challenges. The support, encouragement and kindness that you have shown for each other during lessons, off site activities and free time is remarkable, and I thank you for it.

You will have joined PHSG for a number of reasons, probably high on your list was how it felt when you first walked through the doors along with the friendly and caring nature of everyone here. I'm certain that you will also have given thought to your academic outcomes. I know that many of our students have big dreams and plans for the future that require lots of hard work and dedication. Others are yet to decide which path they might follow, indeed, there will be people who have already left Plymouth High who haven't yet decided what they want to do. It is not when or what you decide to do that matters, but that you are ready and prepared to do it when the time comes.

You will all change and grow whilst at school and beyond. Many of you will swap and change ideas about your future many times, whilst others will be on a clear path. School should be about helping us to learn who we are, to prepare for the future and to become equipped with the

moral fibre and confidence to pursue what's important to us. I know that you work hard in your lessons and that your teachers do their best to help you to both enjoy and excel in their subjects. There will be times when you find studying a challenge, when learning about new ideas or solving complex problems seem just out of reach, but this is when you are on the brink of personal development. Change can be a difficult thing to cope with, leaving behind safe and familiar practices to embark on the new can be unsettling. However, what is new and tricky today, becomes familiar and understood tomorrow, it becomes part of what we know. You only need to look back at the things you have already accomplished to see that what was once new and uncharted, is now something you take for granted. You grow and change every day, it's just that sometimes it's not easy. Perseverance is the key. I urge you to make the decision to chase your dreams and be the best version of you that you can be. That version of you is not about one thing, it's about the whole package and that package is unique and valuable. The best version of you cannot be compared to anyone else, you are all individuals and we should celebrate that.

I would like to officially pass on my thanks to the Head Student Team. They have been wonderful ambassadors for the school, represented the student body with humility and determination and added to the rich tapestry that is Plymouth High. All four of them played a big part in helping me to understand our school, to find ways to investigate and act on what is important to our students and to host open days, parents' evenings and celebration events. They are a truly inspirational team and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with them. I am certain that the Head Student Team have inspired a good

number of Year 12 students to consider applying to become Head students and I wish all applicants good luck with the process.

Right from my first contact with the school, it was clear to me that our motto isn't just a slogan, it's what you all believe in and live out each day. I am delighted to be your headteacher and hope that you realise your dreams and ambitions whilst at Plymouth High.



The Legacy of Apartheid in South Africa

Nowhere have I felt so luminously and ashamedly white as in South Africa. Before travelling to the country, I felt prepared: I'd read articles about crime, knew to remain vigilant, knew not to go out after dark. But what I wasn't prepared for, was seeing two different societies, existing so separately under the façade of one national flag. Such divides may exist in other countries, but in South Africa it also has an undeniably racial element.

It is 25 years since Nelson Mandela became the country's first black head of state in 1994. It took only a night-time taxi ride from Cape Town Airport to realise that South Africa remains a country of two halves.

To our right, says the taxi-driver Wellington, *is Cape Town's biggest township*. In the 10pm glow of the highway, it is stacked sheets of glinting corrugated metal. In the daylight, it is little more. At the end of the drive we pull up into Camps Bay, an affluent palm-tree filled suburb looking like a southern hemisphere mimicry of Venice Beach Boulevard. As we tip Wellington and he drives away, it's impossible to not think about where he will be sleeping that night.

Dubbed the 'rainbow nation' and with 11 official languages, SA now prides itself on multicultural diversity in the wake of a history of racial segregation, but the entrenched social and economic side-effects of the country's appalling political history are obvious to anyone who keeps half an eye beyond the white-washed tourist experience. This seems particularly sickening in a country where Mandela and the rights he stood for are still so clearly deified; 'Thank you for your Legacy', reads a billboard hailing SA's old leader. But though there is much to be thankful for, in places it is almost hard to remember that such change as that implemented by the ANC ever occurred.

In 1948, following the election of the white supremacist National Party, institutionalised racial segregation, known as Apartheid, which encouraged state repression of South Africa's non-white population, began official implementation. After the end of Apartheid, racial intermixing became permitted, but to a major extent, still doesn't occur. Black populations remain stuck in the townships to which they were once lawfully confined, now through economic inhibitions to both physical and social mobility. The townships, though displaying regional disparity in quality, invariably create poorer standards of living than those experienced by white South Africans. Inequity of resources is key, with energy, water and sanitation infrastructure poor or non-existent in such areas. Newfound acquaintance Greta (an alias to avoid identification, demonstrating the controversy still connected with conversations about race-relations), is well-practised in impassioned discussions about the lives of South Africa's urban black population. A doctor in geography studying energy access in township

communities who's worked at a South African University for over 4 years, she provides a rare view into the country's urban reality. We drive past District 6, an infamous region of Cape Town, who's primarily non-white population was forcibly removed in 1966 after the 'Group Areas Act' designated the suburb to be a 'whites-only' area. Though the Act has long been repealed, people remain stuck. 'The Whites', Greta tells me, are reluctant to allow new black communities nearby, for fear it'll decrease the value of their homes. There is separatism in terminology too, a predominantly white area, like the affluent Camps Bay, is a 'neighbourhood', whereas poorer areas are 'townships' (officially a legal land-area definition but now used only for poverty-stricken regions). 'If it's a black community, it's a township', says Greta, demonstrating the way in which 'black' and 'poverty' have become synonymous in the country.

According to a 2014 study, 39% of the country's black African population were unemployed, compared to 8.3% among whites. This strikingly uncomfortable contrast continues to bring into question the extent to which Apartheid really is over. And it's not only the physical difficulty of travelling to find employment that feeds this figure, Greta explains how continued distrust and prejudice towards SA's non-white population makes employment-seeking difficult. After writing a reference for a man she'd employed for a research project from a township she was almost immediately contacted with questions about the legitimacy of the man's reference: 'they assumed he was lying because he was from a township', she says. How can people in such situations improve their circumstances when faced at every turn by suspicion and preconception?

This cultural aspect of Apartheid's legacy was perhaps the most surprising to witness. As an outsider to whom casual racism is, thankfully, not overly familiar, a process of slowly increasing awareness showed me the reality of everyday racism in South Africa. Large groups of black labourers under the instruction of a firm white boss; cleaners reprimanded for minutes straight; derogatory and sickeningly conspiratorial comments made by white landlords about their black staff: moments scarily reminiscent of Kathryn Stockett's portrayal of 1960s Mississippi in 'The Help'.

Observing such interactions highlights a deeply rooted social division. Differential addresses of 'sir' or 'ma'am' are juxtaposed with the superiority of 'boy', a term, Greta says, used freely by white South-African's to address their non-white counterparts. The effects of this are, according to Greta, much deeper than may initially seem obvious. She describes the way in which this can affect the entire mindset of communities, breeding fatalism and a sense of entrenched inferiority which is hard to shake. She describes the difference in the behaviours of people

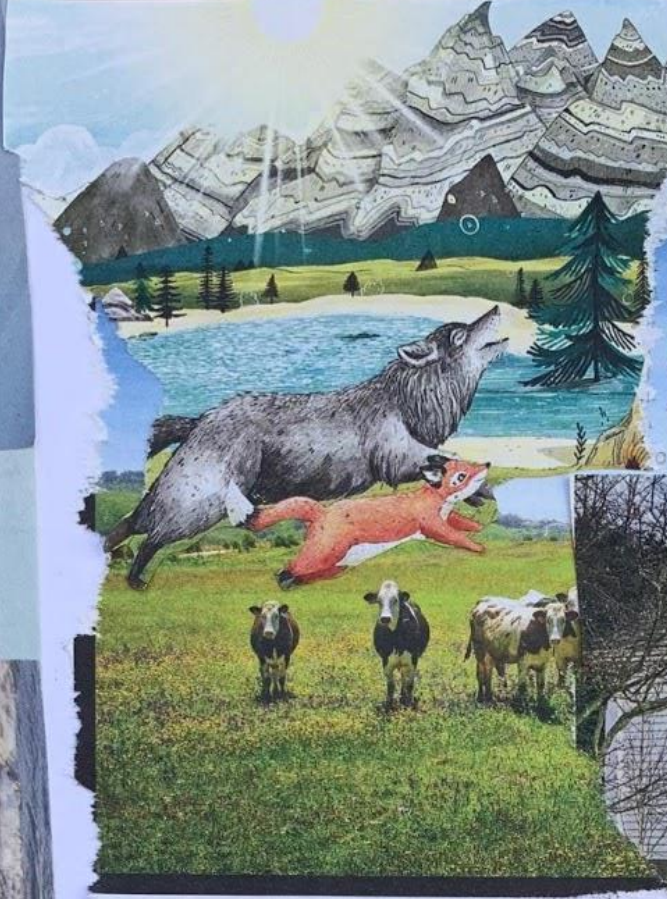
from other African Nations towards her. The behaviour of a jovial Zimbabwean cleaner who tells her to pull herself together on bad days, for example, contrasted with the differential 'ma'am's of her old South African cleaner. The difference, according to Greta, is Apartheid. There is something like typecasting in these explanations, broad generalisations that seem unfair, but it doesn't seem unfeasible that the legacy of something as catastrophic as Apartheid could breed such an uncomfortable parent-child dynamic.

Travelling through the country, it becomes clear that for every high-fenced, irrigated, 'white' settlement there is a sibling 'black' township to house the working population who complete jobs desired by white residents. In very rural areas, where agriculture thrives, huge thousand-acre farms have workers' buildings, inhabited solely by black labourers. There is a sense that, in certain areas, the 76.4% of the country's population who are black can become almost invisible; the silent populace ironing the bed sheets of tourists before disappearing back to slum-like townships every evening. When heard, the voices of South Africa's oppressed non-white population tell powerful stories of segregation and inequality in a way that an outsider cannot. 'No Land! No House! No Vote!', a book of first-hand accounts by the Symphony Way Community who were evicted without warning from their homes in 2008, communicates the sufferings of South Africa's oppressed from a perspective unachievable by a privileged, white, middle-class student like me. 'We thought we were telling the tale of the poorest, but...their truths, spoken in their sharp vernacular tongue, fly straight to the heart of the matter', states Michael Schmidt, an African journalist, as he describes the way in which the first-hand tales of the Symphony Way Community surpass the work of middle-class writers like himself.

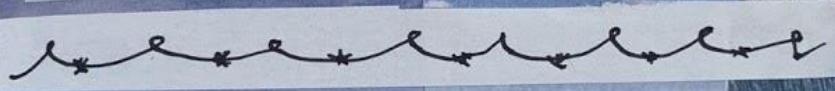
South Africa is often hailed as a place of hope, whose history represents the ability of mankind to progress towards unity and equality. These days rarely covered by western media, it is seen as a problem solved, but recent experiences have demonstrated to me the extent to which inequality and racism continues to thrive in the rainbow nation. It'd seem that the 'truth and reconciliation' of post-Apartheid policy remains widely unachieved. South Africa should perhaps instead be used as an example that no country is a box ticked in the war for equality, and no country is impervious to regression into old ways.

ARTICLE BY RUTH BAILEY HODGES
ARTWORK BY KITTY CALLARD

Fairy Tales



Keep out



Forgotten





The Verbal Abuse of the Orient

"Our role is to widen the field of discussion, not to set limits in accord with the prevailing authority."

Edward W. Said

Just as it would be incorrect to acknowledge only two genders, male/female, or describe Frankenstein's 'monster' as being simply *good/evil*, to realize two sides of the world, so saying "*West/East*" (or *orient/oriental*) would be to misunderstand the nature of the world.

Binary oppositions are the most extreme form of difference possible. *Birth/death*, *white/black*. Such opposites are common in our cultural construction of reality. At first glance we may think this is acceptable; a literary tool, a way to dramatise and separate a spectrum. But the problem with binary systems is that they suppress ambiguous or interstitial spaces. Any overlapping area, therefore, according to binary logic is a region of taboo in society.

Trump says things such as 'Islam hates us' and 'They're not coming to this country if I'm president.' The use of 'they' is the latter part of a binary, *we/them* which cements the notion of Western superiority, (the West and the rest). This has dangerous connotations to the ideas prevalent in the colonial period, where the West saw themselves as superior to the East, ideas secured by terms such as *coloniser/colonised*, or *advanced/retarded*, *civilised/primitive*.

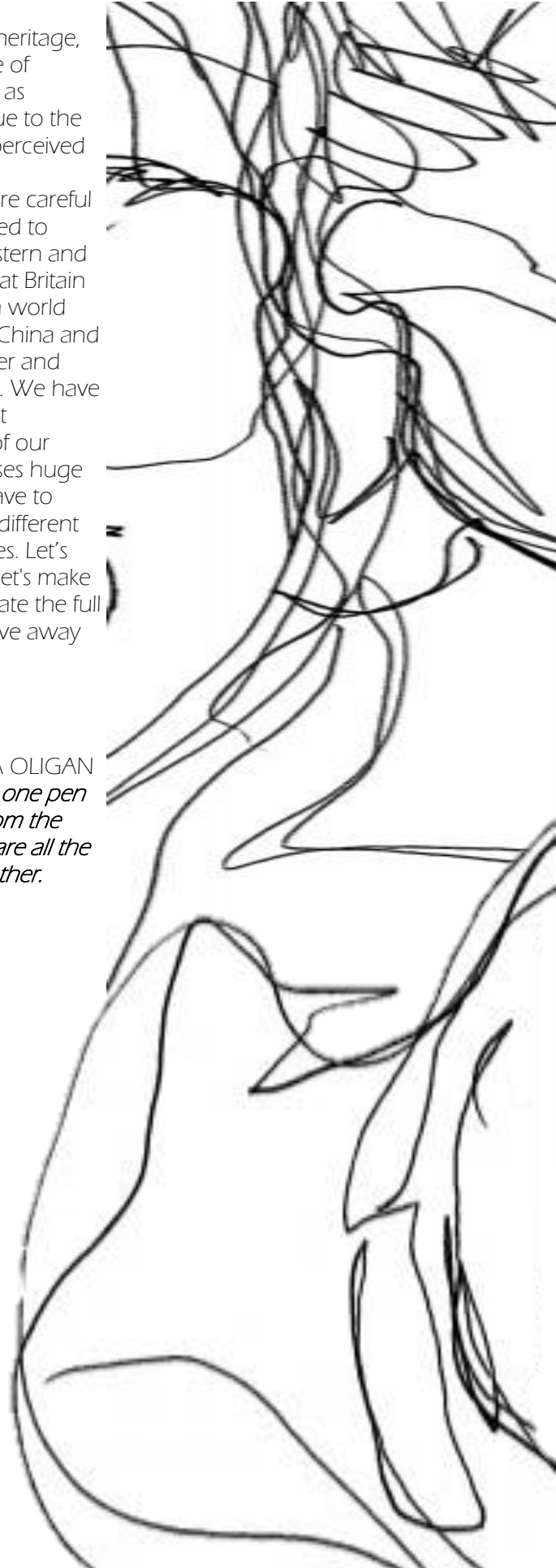
New theorists now perceive binarism to be violent, with one term dominant to the other; implicitly or even explicitly antagonistic. What I find worrying, is the normality of orientalist vocabulary and action in everyday society. The joke that 'all Asian people look the same', or the popularity of Western tourism to countries such as Vietnam or Cambodia where the '*active*' Western traveller moves in pursuit of seeing sights in the '*passive*' Eastern country are both unnerving examples.

Tourism often emphasises heritage, but that history is often one of colonisation, and therefore as travellers we often travel due to the attraction of what can be perceived as a 'superior' past.

We need to be more careful with our language. We need to overturn the notion of Western and democratic superiority. Great Britain can hardly be considered a world power today, especially as China and India are becoming stronger and more successful by the day. We have to stop using language that emphasises a binary view of our world, and which generalises huge and diverse regions. We have to recognise the varying and different cultural spaces and identities. Let's not be a world of Trumps, let's make a conscious effort to celebrate the full range of identities, and move away from binarism.

ARTICLE BY LOLA FRANCIS

ILLUSTRATION BY JULIANA OLIGAN
– *The artwork is created in one pen line, as Oligan gathered from the article that human beings are all the same, rotating with each other.*



Male Suicide is On the Rise

There are myriad stories. Men who seemed so happy. Men who were simply 'not quite themselves'. Men who had struggled with long term depression. Men who had a history of suicide in the family. Successful men who seemed to have everything to live for.

They all decided to kill themselves.

Official records state that in the UK in 2016, 4,508 men killed themselves and 1,457 women died as a result of suicide in 2016, but experts believe the true number may be double that. Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 50; claiming more lives than car accidents, heart disease or cancer. If suicide was considered a disease it would surely prompt a national emergency; yet here in the UK we have *twelve* men dying each day and hardly a word is spoken. The reasons so many men take their lives are mysterious and infinitely diverse – a complex web of social, psychological, biological and cultural pressures. But new scientific approaches are presenting unexpected avenues for disentangling the threads. Virtual reality experiments and artificial intelligence are revealing those most at risk and could even predict who is most likely to try and take their life. Meanwhile, theories of male 'social perfectionism' are throwing light on why men feel they have failed. Together, they offer the prospect of better prevention.

Is 'social perfectionism' the cause for male suicide being on the rise?

According to Prof Rory O'Connor, who runs the Suicidal Behaviour Research Lab at the University of Glasgow, changes in society are making men especially prone to the feelings of entrapment that seem to be a key driver to suicide as a means of escape. His laboratory works with suicide survivors in hospitals and other settings, and conducts studies in the lab to find links between suicide and psychological and social characteristics.

Some recent work, for example, has examined pain sensitivity. There is already some evidence that one of the reasons more men kill themselves than women is simply that they carry it through more effectively, using more lethal means. Working with men and women who had attempted suicide in a hospital setting, O'Connor's research supports this view. He found that men were less fearful about dying than women, and that men have greater ability to withstand the physical pain required to carry out more lethal methods of suicide. "There are many things in the mix," says O'Connor. He points out that whereas in the 1990s men in their 20s were the highest suicide risk group, they have carried their vulnerability with them as they got older, so now it's men aged 40-50 who are highest risk. There's evidence that this is linked with recent changes to male identity in society. "Traditionally the male was the breadwinner, provided for the family, and was defined by this 'job for life' idea. This has changed markedly in recent decades, and men are still struggling with that," he says. In particular, men may be struggling with something that O'Connor describes as "socially prescribed perfectionism". O'Connor's theory is that some men – the social perfectionists – are acutely aware of what they think other people expect of them, whether that be in work, family or other responsibilities. Men's social perfectionism can be judged using questionnaires asking how far they agree with statements such as "Success means that I must work even harder to please others" and "People expect nothing less than perfection from me." O'Connor has found a relationship between social perfectionism and suicide rates in a wide variety of populations, from the disadvantaged to the affluent. "According to my model, those who are highly aware of people's social expectations are much more sensitive to signals of defeat in the world around them," he says.

How technology can help decrease male suicide

"In experiments, you can't – for example – socially reject people to see whether that makes them more likely to kill themselves," says Franklin. "But now we can give [subjects] the opportunity to engage in virtual suicidal behaviours, using virtual reality, and study this in the lab." For example, Franklin's team is interested in testing a proposed link between social isolation and suicide which has until now been unproved. First, they exposed their test subjects to standard psychological scenarios designed to make them feel mildly socially rejected. Then they put them into virtual reality helmets, placing them in a scenario where they were standing on top of a high building. "We said to them: 'Okay, in order to finish the task, you can either step off the side of the building, or you can press the elevator button and ride down to the ground floor. Your choice,'" he says. Sure enough, some of those who had been socially rejected chose to jump. Franklin says there's now good evidence that this kind of experiment provides a good 'proxy' for real suicide attempts, so it has genuine value in studying many contributing causes of suicide. There are potentially thousands of factors that might contribute at least a bit – and each could be important, because Franklin's team has concluded there are no 'big' factors which can accurately predict risk. However, the human brain is incapable of finding patterns in such complexity of causes, believes Franklin. The only way of getting to the root of suicide causes is by using machine learning. "You give the machine every bit of information you have," he explains. "You say: we have these 500 people who died of suicide, and these 500 who didn't. Here's 2,000 bits of information about them all. Now you sort out the best algorithm for pulling those groups apart." This system could be potentially plugged into national electronic health records, both to find patterns of contributors

to suicide and to identify individuals' suicide risk. Amid the complexity, the data from virtual reality experiments and machine learning is likely to reveal psychological 'choke points', says Franklin, where preventative action may work on many fronts. One possible choke point his laboratory is currently testing is the idea of psychologically tricking people into believing they are not suicidal. "Our data so far indicates that how you conceptualise yourself is important: if you believe you are suicidal, you are more likely to engage in suicidal behaviours. So, say I gave you a pill that was actually a sugar pill, but I told you one of its side effects was that it made people less likely to engage in suicidal behaviours," he says. "Then I tell you that's particularly true for people whose pain sensitivity goes down after taking it. Then I trick you into thinking that your pain sensitivity has gone down. What would very likely happen is that you would stop believing that suicide was an option for you. We know the placebo effect is pretty incredible, and if we could just flip that conceptual switch, maybe you'd get a quick and powerful intervention."

There's already evidence about the effectiveness of some public health choke point initiatives, effectively making suicide more difficult to perform. Firearm suicide rates in Australia fell by 57 per cent in the seven years after a gun ban in 1997, and the number of paracetamol overdoses in the UK dropped significantly when a limit was placed on the number of tablets each customer was permitted to buy. In Detroit, USA, the Henry Ford Health System has reduced suicide rates by 80 per cent among service users diagnosed with depression, achieving its aim of zero suicides in 2009. Its model involves improving access to care, restricting access to lethal means of suicide such as guns, and holding staff accountable for learning and improving after each suicide. Health systems around the world are now using the Henry Ford approach as a model to reduce suicides among mental health patients.

Where to find help

If you are concerned about someone, talk to them and gently ask them if they're feeling suicidal. "It sounds scary, but there's no evidence that asking about suicide plants the idea in someone's head," says psychologist Rory O'Connor. "Indeed, there's some evidence that it protects people. Often the person whose suicidal feels relieved that someone has actually asked them the question."

Samaritans is a safe place for anyone to talk about difficult feelings, 24 hours a day. Phone free (UK/ROI) on

116 123.

The **CALM** helpline is for men in the UK who need to talk or find information and support. Open 5pm-midnight; phone free on

0800 58 58 58.

WRITTEN BY LEO MACKRODT
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAJA ALTAMIMI
MODELED BY SAM WILCOX



HEAR ME OUT

DISCLAIMER – This magazine was prepared and written by students of Plymouth High School. The opinions expressed in it are the authors' own and do not reflect those of Plymouth High School, the DfE or the Local Authority