

# HEAR ME OUT

Summer 2021



# Note From The Head

## Student team

Hello! I'm so happy to be releasing the Summer issue of Hear Me Out and I'm hoping that you all enjoy the selection of articles as much as I do. It's been a tough year for all of us, and whilst it hasn't been what we expected, it's important to celebrate what we have achieved and look forward to the exciting things to come. I have thoroughly enjoyed being Head Student so far and have loved working with the talented writers and artists on the magazine. I hope that you all have a wonderful Summer and make sure to give yourself a break to have fun. **-Jess**

Hi everyone! Student Council and I have been busy in working on different projects with the topic mental health. Last term, the HST was able to collate a booklet including guidance on things such as revision, general wellbeing, etc, that we would have found useful. This is available on the school website under the HST section! Thanks to the relaxation of some Covid rules we have been able to have our first in-person meeting and we are now working towards an exciting project that involves mental health and wellbeing. I look forward to more of you getting involved. Wishing you all a brilliant rest of the summer term! **-Dominique**

Hi everyone! We are coming to the end of a very hectic year and I would just like to say well done for your perseverance and hard work. Since the last update, the diversity group have put up two display boards, hosted an assembly and have much more planned for this term. We are aiming to make the group accessible to the whole school so look out for emails about application! But most importantly remember to unwind and enjoy yourselves over the summer, you all deserve it! **-Naomi**

I hope everyone is keeping well in these difficult times. This term, my focus has been on supporting the rest of the team with their projects, along with planning future events and functions as restrictions ease. I look forward to sharing these plans with you all soon! **-Maisy**



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# Bubbling Under:

## MUSIC CONSUMPTION, THE CHARTS AND WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU



There has been the agricultural age, the industrial age, the technological age. Now, up on us...the streaming age.

Well, not quite- but in all seriousness, heavyweight apps like Spotify and Apple Music have transformed what it means to earn a living as a musician and get a foot into the industry, whether\_ you are Hot 100 or Bubbling Under. The feel of a plastic CD case, or even the click of a iTunes sale have largely become relics, saved for the occasional vinyl hit or digital smash.

But for the vast majority, consuming music by handing over money monthly to these mammoth applications and having free reign

over millions of songs seems perfectly normal. Yet from the perspective of the millions of artists releasing their music, little is thought about what one click of a button hands them- both in terms of financial gain and song popularity, asking the question what does it mean and what does it take to have a song on the charts?

The chart by simplest definition is meant to capture a snapshot of the most popular songs from every genre at that moment. But a 2018 Rolling Stone article illustrated how charts may also have a secondary purpose to shine a light on viral hits from upcoming artists and the diversity of music that many consume with the power and the freedom of a digital streaming library. It noted how the release of *Scorpion*, the 2018 album that landed Drake over 50% of the top 50 on the Hot 100 in the US demonstrated the reality of what charts really provide. The grip and dominance that some of the biggest artists have over charts like this proves that charts most definitely achieve their primary purpose, but perhaps events like these don't achieve their secondary one. However, there is another notion in that charts (especially lower ranked songs) make zero impact for the average consumer as to what songs they then go on to listen to. To analyse the validity of this, it is important to consider what charting means around the globe. In the UK, we are all familiar with the standard primetime chart shows each week on the radio (offering unparalleled promotion and

airplay for smaller artists and their songs), yet in a majority of other countries, it is merely a list which is published into the ether each week. Despite this, for many news outlets, stations, streaming services and the like, having a number attached to a track is an important boost for interviews, promotions, airplay and the increasingly important factor to consider in the streaming age- play-listing.

In October 2020, a damning Rolling Stone article was published, detailing the content of 1000s of texts from one independent radio promoter to a series of stations, indicating the handing over of money in order to pressure those at radio to boost/kill certain artists' airplay- also known as payola. Involving dozens of artists across genres, the exposé potentially incriminated all of the 'Big 3' record labels that have a near 70% grip on the global market. Yet, this is far from a new development and payola deals and infiltration at radio have been a rampant issue since the 60s, with allegations recurrently surfacing involving the major labels every so often. Furthermore, it seems that while payola is still a massive issue and can have important impact on success, lobbying and inside deals are now being focused on play-listing rather than radio.

Playlisting involves record labels pushing and in some cases, allegedly paying, to place their act's songs at prime spots on prominent streaming platform-made playlists. One of the most evident examples of this is placement onto one of Spotify's most followed playlists-Today's Top Hits. With over 27 million followers and a typical average listening following of around 20 million, a spot on this list is worth around \$150k and can increase streams by almost a quarter on average. Unsurprisingly, a majority of the songs on this playlist are by major artists with US-originated Big 3 label representation

- to find independent alternatives, one can look to the more varied 'New Music Friday' tracklists each week instead. Despite this perhaps more grim outlook for those trying to break into the industry without big backing, there are countless positives to the growth of streaming juggernauts for small artists releasing music.

In 2020, Tiktok scored almost double the number of UK users as previously had in 2019, with an estimate of nearly 9 million active users. This marked increase was reflected across the globe as entertainment changed during worldwide lockdown- and as a result of this explosion, numerous songs that became popular on the app, both by established artists and burgeoning newcomers, impacted the charts in one of the biggest changes to popular music since the start of the streaming era. Not only is it one of the most powerful marketing tools for artists, but each new video created using a song generates royalties: albeit a much less significant amount than through sales/ streams.

So do apps like TikTok really provide opportunities for independent and smaller artists?

Like any other social platform, the ability to upload and build your own brand on the internet from anywhere, at any time is no different on Tiktok, yet the nature of being able to engage with songs in a different way rather than merely hearing them provides a much more effective and longer lasting impression on a listener, that for small unsigned artists is invaluable promotion where funds aren't there for rollout campaigns like bigger artists. Thus if streams hence increase, independent label acts can reap the higher revenue percentages that often come at the price of limited pull in the cutthroat landscape of the music industry. Yet, how much benefit do additional streams realistically impact on an artist's paypacket?



With UK minimum/living wage currently at £8.91/hr for those 23 and over, an artist would need to garner close to 100,000 Spotify streams per week based on an average pay per stream rate to initially generate this revenue before Spotify, record labels, publishing, etc. all take cuts. After finally calculating income post middle man, this can be more like 10x those numbers as many artists recoup less than 10% of revenue.

For many smaller acts, this is an impossibly tall order and a survey found that over 60% of musicians do not generate enough income from streaming to cover basic costs. Furthermore, with the top 1% of artists controlling 77% of all artist revenue after Spotify's system of sharing profits rather than direct payment from listeners, the other 99% can find it difficult to break the mould and command larger wages.

So why not resort to independent contracts where around 40% of profits can be claimed? While this model works for some, money is taken from the artist themselves in different ways such as promotion, publishing and masters rights which can be incredibly steep.

Streaming just isn't profitable for the majority: which begs the question how do we as consumers contribute to many artists staying afloat? In the past, the sale of physical CDs were a motivator to produce albums but with this becoming entirely obsolete (save for the vinyl boom of recent years),

and even digital iTunes sales rapidly diminishing, the only other sources of income include merchandise, and touring.

Concert tours in particular are the primary money-maker for artists big and small; however, the shock of the pandemic has rendered this stream of revenue impossible for the foreseeable future, contributing to an epidemic of struggling small artists and differing amounts of music output with a reluctance to produce loss-making streaming only music.

Bundling this all together paints quite a grim picture for both the conscious consumer and artists themselves. Despite this, it is important to takeaway that the music industry with its variety and accessibility has never been more exciting and fast-moving—that despite the many issues faced by aspiring artists and even those closer to the top under the rigid and flawed record label format, there are countless ways to mindfully support your favourite artists and in return, one can enjoy all that the current music landscape has to offer.

Written by SARAH DARWICH

Illustrated by ISOLDE THOMAS

# *Dangers Of* *Disassociation*

Two years ago, if someone had told me that we would be forced to stay inside and could only go out for emergencies with social distancing and mask wearing, I would have laughed in their face. Of course, now that would be considered as endangering their and other people's lives. This constant pressure and isolation that has become the 'new normal' has had a huge affect on all of us. Occurrences such as the COVID-19 Pandemic are extremely unusual, and not only do they threaten our population's physical health, but they also threaten our mental health, putting an invisible strain on our emotions.

It is unequivocal that in these strange and uncertain times, we may feel overwhelmed or prone to shutting down and this has led to many of us disassociating from our thoughts, feelings and surroundings. It is normal for us to 'zone out' when things get difficult (and in small amounts this can be an effective coping mechanism), however what are the dangers of doing this for prolonged periods of time?

The dictionary definition of dissociation is: "the action of disconnecting or separating." Of course, the key words in this definition are disconnecting and sepa-

rating. Normally we would associate these words with feeling isolated from society and the outside world. We would usually think of these words in a metaphorical way - instead of literally - by being mentally and emotionally 'left out', but in these current times, we are physically isolated, and this can magnify our already existent worries and problems...

Being alone does not necessarily cause dissociation, however, it certainly does give us room for our subconscious worries to manifest themselves in the back of our minds, and help to further expose our feelings of being alienated. When people have experienced some sort of traumatic event, or something out of the ordinary, a common coping mechanism is dissociating themselves from their surroundings. This acts as a way of trying to forget that a particular event happened by preventing your brain from processing past trauma (almost like if I can't see you, you can't see me). This process also can happen during an abnormal or distressing time and when someone refuses to or is unable to register this in their brain, there can be harmful consequences such as flashbacks and significant PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

signals.

Dissociation comes with many symptoms and bad side effects including: memory loss, a feeling of detachment, stress problems, flashbacks, depression, anxiety, inability to cope with stress, lack of sleep, etc. All of these are general side effects of the one 'dissociation' that has been discussed within this article. Though, there are actually three main different types: dissociative amnesia which is when you lose your memory more severely than just forgetfulness with episodes of memory loss that can last for minutes, hours, days, and rarely even months and years- often triggered by a traumatic experience like going into a high risk combat zone; dissociative identity disorder with people suffering from this potentially experiencing feelings of split personalities that are able to can change gender, voice, name, history; depersonalisation-derealisation disorder which involves a detachment or 'out of body' feeling that can feel like watching yourself in a dream. All of these different strains of dissociation have similarities and aren't as clear cut as three defined types but are all distressing and normally require help or support.

Being diagnosed with dissociation can lead to further declining mental health, however, there are certain coping mechanisms that make the journey to recovery speedy and slightly more comforting. Linking to previous points, a

very common long-term symptom is flashbacks. These can make day to day tasks more strenuous for, they can occur when uninvited and are exceedingly vivid to the extent that they can often feel like you're reliving the harmful experience. For these flashbacks to be dampened or completely eliminated from one's mind, they must first be categorized. This means figuring out the place and time period the physical incident arose; using past tense helps to identify it as a memory, highlights that it happened in the PAST as well as prove that you are no longer in danger. Moreover, it can be of use to ground yourself in the present, to help alleviate emotional overwhelming responses. Other techniques that may be useful include: naming the experience as a memory (physically calling it a flashback), again using the past tense, when talking about the incident or actually holding on to something in the present/ performing an action that brings you back to the current state and surroundings.

These are all HEALTHY ways to manage intense ordeals.

So whether you are going through recovery for dissociation or just a friend, or maybe even just want to learn more about it, there are many things you can do to make the process easier and a little more supportive.

Written by EVE FRY and KITTY HARLAND



# failure

If I could give you all one thing to put on your bucket list, one thing to do



before you become food for worms or dust in the air, it would be this: fail most spectacularly. Fail with vigour, because nothing will shape you so, nothing is as likely to make you an in-

teresting person. Sure, flying - succeeding - is amazing and rewarding, and it fills you with joy, but falling is beautiful, and you would be as plain as unbuttered bread without it.

One of the people I love most in the entire world has messed up so much that they might just be the most interesting person you could ever meet. None of the sage advice or knowing looks of someone wise beyond their years and unbearably correct, simply the goofy humour of a person made of cracks and chipped marble - beautiful, and ever so slightly broken, in a way that suggests history and personality, in a fascinating pattern that allows you to see the light bursting out of the cracks in their stone.

Of course, no one really tells

you this unless they've failed themselves and need a reason to view this misstep in a positive light. Some may say this takes away from the message, but I don't think so. It gives the message an origin and a purpose, a truth universally acknowledged rather than a pointless, fleeting quotation in a magazine or on Pinterest.

Failure simply means, "lack of success," not an inability to ever succeed - these are very different things. Just because you fail once, doesn't mean you will never succeed again, it merely means that you need to try again, and you really should do this. Try. Giving up is worse than continued failure, and you should never let your failures scare you into giving up on success.

I challenge you to fail this year, fail big and boldly, because that means you tried, that means you're growing and improving. Even though failure isn't something to aim for specifically, it's something to accept and grow from, to expect to happen, but not something to fear. So get out there and try, and fail, lick your wounds, get up, and go on.

Written by ELOUISE WILLS

# Inequitable Inequalities

Glancing over history, it may seem as though everything regarding gender has changed. In terms of equality, we've come so far from the old biased ways. More women are in roles of leadership in Parliament, there are more opportunities in education for women, and there are still steps being made to further facilitate gender equality. However, are we as equal as we think?

While advances have been made, the divergence between the amount of progress and number of challenges still to face is imbalanced. Considering that America only elected their first ever female vice president (Kamala Harris) earlier this year, this already suggests that women still have a long way to go. The first lockdown put a spotlight on some of these existing inequalities women face, such as domestic violence behind closed doors (while we were shut inside some women were exposed to enormous threats from their partners whilst also unable to escape); comments made by strangers out in the open (inappropriate remarks towards girls as young as 13 while fewer people were out and about); and awareness

being raised for women's rights limited (as the pandemic became the headline of every newspaper).

There are also more hidden privileges that men seem to uphold that we may not even think about. On average a box of tampons cost £5 (sometimes less and sometimes more) and women spend an average of £10-15 a month on period (related) products, under something many people refer to as the tampon tax or on a wider scale, the pink tax. Both issues basically touch on the idea of how men's products are cheaper and considered a necessity compared to genuine necessities such as period products which we need for our natural human-bodily functions. An alternative example of this matter is the aspect of women's razors just being a pink and more expensive men's razor; they're evidently the exact same thing! So why is this the case? There is no justifiable reason why women have to pay more for things they need/desire. All of these are just further illustrations of gender inequalities that we need to provide with more attention.

There are just so many other



major issues feminists are still battling as well. Matters such as the pay gap and having children/maternity leave. There is no evidence to support a valid reason concerning why in 2019 a woman earned 83p every £1 a man earned. Many may say it's the hours and types of jobs that women and men are in but statistics in 2020 say that men were paid 10 more of their weekly hours than women were even though women worked more hours per week. This also leads into women already obtaining less money than men due to certain reasons for time off work in the example of things like maternity leave which is usually 1 year long. Obviously women cannot help needing the time off when pregnant, however, surely then women should be paid more when working to reclaim that missed when absent.

Understandably, negatives have not been the only thing for women and that throughout the past years changes have been made for the bet-

ter; these days workplaces encourage more women into their companies and western women especially have so many more liberties and privileges compared to previous moments of history. Yet, all this being said, there is still so much more to achieve until these two genders are equal. Particularly in places involving countries like Saudi Arabia- where women were only allowed to drive legally within the last five years, Yemen- where women are heavily controlled by their husbands still and many other countries with abortion being an illegal action. Even in continents such as Europe and North America women are still at huge disadvantages compared to men.

So maybe we women aren't as equal and free as we so thought. Women still encounter various concerns about things that are only apprehensions because they are female. Women also have rather a lot of financial setbacks consisting of things like the pink tax and the gender pay gap. So as feminism and activism for sexism/ gender inequality fizzles out in the media more and more by the day we need to continue to fight until men and women are equal.

Written by VERITY TANK

Illustrated by ARIANNE ARAGON

# A Guide To Being A Woman Throughout History

Women can be seen as swans- the traditional presentation of beauty and elegance. This connotation originates from the Hindu goddess Saraswati and her use of a swan as representative of knowledge and self-realisation.

A positive image of women: a combination of both beauty and intelligence. Though beneath the rippling waters of self-realisation, there is not the same mirror of this elegant image, but instead, deep rooted sexism that engulfs all sectors of society throughout history, forming what it means to be a woman today and what it meant to be a woman throughout history.

A woman of the 1910s, a second-class citizen, bathed in the pre and post war propaganda amidst low sales of razors, whose profits were reaped by men who had created ideas of “objectionable hair” surrounding women’s bodies, providing themselves with more money and a sense of pride in the indoctrination they managed to enforce onto women-” A beautiful addition and one that solves an embarrassing problem” Gillette safety razor company Boston, 1915. Women were already controlled and censored by power in society . The rise in body shaming we see in our modern society can be traced back much deeper into the depths of sexism rooted in our society, but one flowering moment in this ever-growing history stems down to the rise in shaving. A Gillette

propaganda campaign disbanded the traditional ideas of masculinity associated with shaving, an uno reverse on traditional gender roles and ideas, a contrast highlighting the power of the media and the body shaming industry, even more prominent today . So, women of the 1940s , showered in the need to fulfil their duties to serve their husbands, to play up to expectations set by powerful men before them, dreamt of the next sexist remark to depart the mouth of world leaders, shopkeepers or even their children. This mimicked the great example set by the underlying foundations of society around them, “nature intended women to be our slaves” (Napoleon)- their natural role, duty and job and an early example the media’s portrayal of women, imposing damaging standards of what it means to be a woman.

This mirror we seek to look into regarding what it means to be a modern woman of the 21st century isn’t as gleaming and new as we first perceive. We can see the reflection in oppression of the 1910s: the tradition, the media, the indoctrination. It seems those roots beneath the surface of change choke the freedom and equality that we should expect in any democratic society, but above the surface we are presented with a reflection that we have all the power we could possibly need.

Dance. An age-old tradition associ-



ated with femininity and grace- we see the likes of Elizabeth Bennet, Cinderella and Sandra Dee dancing throughout a turbulent history of women. Yet, in the 1920s this form of dance began to be infiltrated by political undertones and conflict in the Cabaret movement of Weimar Germany. The artificial golden age provided women with a power and sense of self that sparked this new movement of expression- a change welcomed by many. These hedonistic changes erupted the waters of the past with short skirts, untraditional music tastes and expressive make up. A clear contrast of the 'Gibson girl' exterior spread throughout 1910s England- a contrast artificial and short lived and a pinprick amongst the political turmoil of wasteful capitalism or corrupt moral decay that existed on both sides of the political spectrum during this period. A



short-lived splurge of power, sexuality and freedom- a return of dance to the comfortable, settled state of beauty and innocence. Not a ripple of change in sight.

But of course, who could forget Malthus' 1798 first public discussion of contraception- a revolutionary step towards a women's choice and freedom. But no: it was instead shrouded in the harsh statistical facts of population growth since 1798- the only solution to this problem was population decrease through birth control. The solution wasn't to give women the right to choose, but instead the right to be chosen for as second-class citizens. And so, the mirror of taboos we see reflected in our modern society begin to resurface in the harsh reality of the similarities we can confirm between this society of the 1920s and our modern democracy. The rightful treatment of women was, and unfortunately still is, seen as a luxury (an example being that of the confusing taxation of period products). In comparison, solar panels received a 5% reduction in tax at a reduced rate due to the slight savings in electricity, while essential products for women continued to be unjustly taxed on. Though, feminism is still deemed as a movement reflecting an outspoken jealousy against the success of men because, as Rush Limbaugh put it, "feminism was established so as to allow unattractive women access to the mainstream of society."

The unattractive legs of the swan, hidden beneath the rippling tide.

Colour TVs, nuclear families and weight gaining tablets. A new decade of the 1950s, 30 years later, but still the



same cycle of expectations for women. The image of a perfect housewife and subconscious indoctrination onto young girls with the growth in popularity of toys such as Barbie dolls, that intended to reflect the position of women in society during the decade. The rise of the media and the perfect Hollywood image through figures such as Marilyn Monroe, and the growing expression of sexuality provided an escape, masking the reality of the fashionable housewife industry and the duties to cook, clean and serve husbands. Again, the reinforcement of the media's grappling hold over women, choked the ability and need to progress or to swim forward against the tide- instead being buried by new, shiny advertisements providing the perfect image that was mimicked in front rooms by Barbie dolls.

A new era, a new stage in politics with the legalisation of abortion in 1967 provided an appreciation of women's rights. It highlighted the development from Malthus' 1798 plan to reduce the population through birth control, and instead a liberation towards the pond of female choice and a right to make decisions beyond cooking and cleaning. Although the tide seemed to have dispersed the years of sexism that lay stagnant in British society, there still laid the remnants of inequality which have crawled into our culture today, a dystopian reminder from literature, film and media, providing us with examples of the potential future or risks in allowing the continuation of sexism in our society. A dystopian future of forced surrogacy such as the *Handmaid's tale*. A split society where one centres around the

expectational role of childbearing, an enforcement of the traditional values in a future so frightening, yet so prominent in previous female expectations we force onto women and the potential risks of this tide building, to create this wave that will eventually crash down into our reality.

Literature often provides the key imagery of society and expectations of their time periods highlighting travesties, successes and failures. The *Great Gatsby* provides an aurora of the prosperous jazz era with its elegant imagery and extravagant parties. Though what is also quite prominent in this novel is the treatment and expectation of women at the time- a woman punched in a house with other people takes up 4 sentences; amidst description of a man waking up during the commotion- a potential metaphor of the lack of action intertwined the treatment of women throughout history as second-class citizens. It's blunt, violent and surprising for a modern reader. But the briefness of the encounter and irrelevance to the rest of the book highlights not only the treatment of women at that time but the normalisation of abuse and violence towards women not even in private but in a fairly public forum. Evidence of the inferior treatment of women.

It isn't purely literature that provides key images of society and expectations, as in advancements of technology we see changes in the way we eat, shop and live our lives from artificial intelligence advancing medicine and surgery to advancements of phones that allow us to do almost anything from the palm of our hands.

This obsession and control of the media is not some fleeting trend but an ingrained basic necessity in modern lives, an IV line of both helpful and rewarding to our experiences, but also damaging propaganda which can change the whole way society thinks, dresses and behaves. Much like the glamorisation of drug use in the 1990s with the rise in the trend of heroin chic - glamorised by models like Kate Moss or Calvin Klein campaigns, which not only sexualised the drug industry, but also portrayed it in a way that created new body image expectations for women of extreme slender figures. "We were poking fun at fashion" Corinne Day, 1997. Yes: Heroin chic could be seen as an extreme rejection of the previous constraints of body image that we can analyse from the 1950s weight gaining image. But glamorisation of an addictive substance has moral implications and doesn't poke fun at the constraints of fashion but pokes fun at our life support system in the media and at the expectations that we are provoked to become dependent on.

Women can be seen as swans- but swans are seen as a constant image of beauty and elegance, and there is little

consistency in the expectations of women throughout history, each trend is cyclical and fleeting and there is no specific pattern to what will be expected of women next. Women can be seen as swans; but swans are not expected to morph themselves into whatever is created in some economic propaganda campaign, because despite the paddling feet thrashing underneath the swan's exterior, they still contain the symbol of beauty, elegance and intelligence. Whilst being a woman throughout history is an engulfment of societal expectations, media campaigns, changes in body image and deep-rooted sexism that drowns every crevice of our society and houses none of this beauty or positivity we associate with the images of swans.

So, I would argue that actually no: women could not be seen as swans. Because if swans represented women, in the next 10 years the swan would be out of fashion.

Written by ABI FINNIE

Illustrated by ZARA TOEFY



Illustration: canva.com

# Immigration

Systemic stereotypes and xenophobia within the media have created unhealthy prejudices towards migrants living among us, and have negatively clouded people's judgements towards people from black and ethnic minority groups. The view that the UK is a 'nation of immigration' is one the media has fabricated – in the year ending December 2019, 6.2 million people were living in the UK who had the nationality of a different country, just 9% of the whole population, and 3.7 million EU nationals were living in the UK.

Common views from the working class towards immigrants are based mainly on the economy, with the fear that with an increase in immigration will come a shortage of jobs, and the belief that welfare will become less easily available as more immigrants make claims. However, the economic benefit of immigration is very apparent – many immigrants have steady jobs, meaning they contribute to the economy through paying taxes, the exchange of innovative ideas, etc. The Oxford Economics study 'The Fiscal

Impact of Immigration on the UK' found that the average UK-based migrant from Europe contributed approximately £2,300 more to UK public finances in 2016/17 than the average UK adult.

Evidently, there are concerns about the economy, rising unemployment and an increased pressure on services and housing due to a growth in population. However many of these concerns are amplified through the media, plastering an image of 'job-stealers' on immigrants – a stereotype. In terms of social benefits, immigration has created diverse cities, with a number of different cultures sharing traditions, fashion, music



and food (without immigration, there would be no Indian takeaway!).

Leaving your home country, due to perhaps a lack of opportunities, in search of better employment or education with no concrete guarantee of a stable and strong future, and a fear of being different to the majority of the population is extremely daunting – so why is there such a level of resentment towards those who wish to better themselves and build a life somewhere with better opportunities?

As a nation, or a government with the economy in mind, it is easy to see migrants as numbers on a graph, however we are much more than that.

My family and I moved to Plymouth from Romania almost 12 years ago, with a guarantee of a stable job for my parents, and subsequently, wider opportunities for mine and my sister's futures. Sacrificing familiarity and leaving parents/family, friends, past jobs and your home country behind, to begin a new chapter in a new country, with a completely different culture, language, different people, customs and

traditions, is one of the bravest and most difficult things an individual can do. I was only 5 years old, and adapting to the new environment that was Plymouth was an experience that has shaped me into the person I am today. I have grown up sharing two different cultures, continuing traditions in both countries, and speaking two languages.

For some migrants, this experience was not as easy as it was for me – I was young, and therefore it was easier for me to integrate with the kids in primary school (young children rarely discriminate!). Many experience racism, xenophobia, prejudice and micro-aggressions that most of the time go unnoticed or are not called out by other people. It would be inaccurate to claim I have never experienced these awful things – as I grow older it is much easier to notice discrimination, whether it is towards me, or another individual from a BAME background.

It makes a huge difference, both to a migrant and those close to them, when those around you are accepting, welcoming and kind. In my experience, Plymouth High has al-

ways supported me and every other student, regardless of their background or situation, which I am extremely thankful for.

As we enter an age of greater awareness over topics such as these, it's crucial to remember to be kind to people, no matter where they are from.

Written by DOMINIQUE FARAUNU





# Stretching Our Comfort Zones

We all have a lot of time to reflect on things right now and, though the pressures of life may be weighing down on us all, I see this as a great opportunity to get out of our comfort zones.

I am definitely guilty of spend-ing my days in bed, when I can, star-ing at a screen or the board as my teachers try their very best to get an answer out of an achingl-y silent class. We are all guilty of not speaking up with a question or an answer because it is safe to stay quiet in our own bubble, protect ing ourselves from all the adversit ies in the world like failure or reject ion. We push ourselves down because it's easy and comfortable and safe. I want to pop that bubble.

Whether it is telling a fast food worker that you actually didn't ask for onions in your burger or deciding to take up crochet, pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones is a decision that we all face. Every day, we are met with a choice on whether to challenge ourselves and challenge normality, or to concede and let things stay the same. Do I order the chicken korma because I'm used to it or do I order the chicken tikka masala and push myself? Pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones doesn't mean climbing Mount Everest, we can all start small with the most mundane of tasks. We all have different perc eptions of what is and isn't challenging, so the meaning of pushing yourself will inevitably look different for everyone. Just because our version is different does not make it incorrect or something to be

ashamed of - baby steps in the right direction is largely better than leaps in the wrong one. Someone's comfort zone might be that of a football pitch, and another might look like a postage stamp. The important thing is to know our limits and recognise how much we have grown on that journey.

The most important thing to acknowledge when pushing ourselves is that we do it from a place of kindness and safety, which may not come into play when it comes to changing your menu choice, but is still a paramount aspect to consider. It is detrimental to push ourselves if it is coming from a place of punishment or self deprecation. We need to know our limits and, instead of jumping into the deep end, if you're feeling hesitant it's best to walk slowly from the shallow end to the deep. In pushing ourselves, we want to bend and mould ourselves into a newer and better version, not overextend ourselves to the point of breaking. It is okay to say no one day if you'd prefer to stay in your comfort zone. You are not obliged to change for anyone but yourself.

Moreover, though this may seem like an obvious thing to do, a microcosmic reflection of our generation is how we refuse to reward ourselves for any of our actions. By pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones, we are risking embarrassment and failure, and oftentimes that fact remains concealed in favour of making the job look simple. Even when we think it's easy to divert from our usual path, it's important to be proud of ourselves.

We have been raised to believe pride is a bad thing and that we are to be humble or a horrible person (as pride is one of the seven deadly sins). Pride isn't inherently negative. We should create a safe and friendly social market where we are allowed to be proud of our wonderful achievements, even if small.

Too often nowadays is self worth defined by how others value us. We balance everything on a fragile ego, only validated by compliments or comments or likes, when in reality we should determine our own self worth. We should be proud of ourselves for something others would laugh at. Embracing uniqueness does not, at all times, coincide with rejecting modernity, but self awareness of where you place your value - in your own hands or the hands of another - is paramount. It is okay to seek validation from others and to crave a metaphorical head pat once in a

while, but to hinge your entire self value on the quantity of which you are praised by others is unhealthy - it is a hard habit to break out of, but the benefits significantly outweigh the costs.

I hope the takeaway from this is that you, reader, will push yourself today. I hope you take up a new and exciting hobby or decide to change your drink of choice in favour of one you have never tried. We are all on separate paths, but occasionally there is a fork in the road, which can lead to a decision: do you follow the masses, or do you carve your own way?

*"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I  
— I took the one less travelled by,  
and that has made all the difference."*  
- Robert Frost

Written by LAUREN HERD



# Decade Of Action

The climate crisis of our century has been felt in all corners of the world and with 2021 being described as the make or break moment for tackling the issue there is little time to try and put the world back on track to meet its global goals. By the end of the century, the temperature rise is estimated to reach 3 degrees, double what major world leaders decided on during the 2015 Paris climate conference.

Although 2020 was a year filled with ups and downs, climate change was somewhat pushed to the side due to the coronavirus pandemic, with the world leaders having been scheduled to discuss the topic in 2020 being moved to November 2021. This doesn't have to be seen as a bad thing though, as many countries have signed for large Carbon cuts such as the President of China, Xi Jinping, announcing that China aims to become Carbon Neutral by 2060. This was an astonishing

declaration as China is one of the most polluted nations on earth producing 28% of world emissions. Many other countries followed in President Xi Jinping's footsteps such as Japan and South Korea in announcing their goals to become carbon neutral as well.

This promising outlook on the next decade to come was also followed by the election of President Joe Biden who, after only being in office 17 hours, re-joined the Paris climate agreement. President Joe Biden has been described as one of the most ambitious presidents dealing with the issue of climate change. With climate change being a worldwide issue and America having the world's largest economy as well as being the third most populated nation on earth with 15% of carbon emissions, an ambitious person in charge was probably needed! President Joe Biden has also declared some other big promises

such as: achieving net-zero emissions by 2050; upgrading four million buildings over four years to make them more energy efficient; invest in public transport and electrical vehicle manufacturing which also puts more jobs into the economy. If these promises are met it is more than likely that the world will be able to reach its limiting global temperature of 1.5 degrees.

2021 as a whole seems to be the year of change as the European Union, as well as the USA, have promised to invest trillions into green developments, particularly renewable energy which will significantly drive down prices globally. With renewable energy now being the cheapest energy ever, it is more likely that big businesses will start investing in it more as they come to the realisation that in the long run it will be more efficient than Fossil fuels. Climate change is more likely to be taken seriously as a global emergency due to the implications of coronavirus. The effects coronavirus has had across the world has severely shaken the world's sense of invulnerability and has been de-



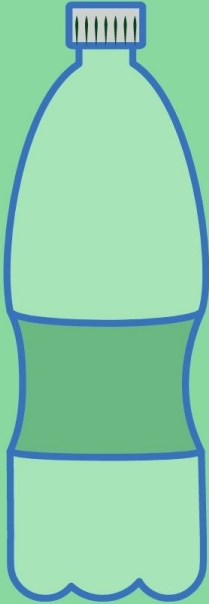
scribed as one of the world's biggest economic shocks since the Great Depression. As world leaders have finally (taken them long enough), come to the conclusion that there are areas in which they lack control, it's less and less likely that climate change will be pushed to the sidelines as it is something that even the rich and powerful aren't immune to. The decade of action appears to be at a strong start and with all things interconnected we can only hope that these world leaders will follow through their promises.

Written by MAISIE WILMOT

Illustrated by MAISIE WILMOT



# plastic pollution



Plastic pollution is the accumulation of plastic objects and particles (e.g. plastic bottles, bags and microbeads) in the Earth's environment that adversely affects wildlife, wildlife habitat, and humans. Plastics that act as pollutants are categorised into micro-, meso-, or macro debris, based on size.

## What happens when plastic gets into the ocean?

Unlike some other kinds of waste, plastic doesn't decompose. Some plastics float once they enter the ocean, though not all do. As the plastic is tossed around, much of it breaks into tiny pieces, called microplastics. Much of the plastic in the ocean is in the form of abandoned fishing nets.

## How much plastic pollution is there?

A staggering 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the world's oceans every year, but how does it get there? A lot of it comes from the world's rivers, which serve as direct conduits of rubbish from the world's cities to the marine environment.

Just picking up one piece of litter can save an animal's life!

Sea creatures get caught in plastic shopping bags everyday as a result of people's careless behaviour on beaches. People use plastic bags to carry their items, but when they fly away, what people don't realise is that it won't decompose for about 3 years, potentially ending up in the sea. As a result, animals die or get stuck in plastic which can be fatal or cause serious damage. So please save our oceans before it's too late!

If we continue to use it at the current rate, ocean plastic will outweigh all the fish in the sea by 2050. Sea birds, turtles, seals, and other marine life are all affected by plastic. They often experience starvation as their stomachs fill with litter or they become restricted by plastic.

If we continue and don't change our actions to plastic pollution we will end up with more plastic in the ocean than creatures and this is how more marine animals will become extinct.

## What can you do to help?

- We can reuse, reduce and recycle
- Reuse your plastic bottles
- Stop buying plastic bags

If you see litter on the floor put in the bin

Written by DARCIE BARGEWELL



# Sensible Food Choices

Have you ever considered becoming a vegan or reducing the amount of meat that you eat? Do you ever wonder about how the animal you are eating was treated; what it had been fed and if it had been kept in good conditions? Or maybe you just wonder about the attitudes of the farmer in maintaining good living conditions for the animals? If you are curious about farming and animal welfare then your questions should be answered.

## **Climate change**

There has been an increasing interest in climate change and some of the things that we can do to reduce our carbon footprint. Often a commonly held belief is that if you reduce or eliminate meat (especially red meat) from your diet than this is better for the planet, has carbon benefits and is a way to reduce your climate impact.

Red meat production has often had the spotlight shone upon it due to the carbon footprint of cows and sheep. This is due to the fact that cows and sheep are ruminants, which means that they have 4 stomachs and eat grass (which we can't eat) and turn it into something that we can either eat meat (or milk) or use wool. As part of the cow's digestion, methane (a greenhouse gas) is emitted. Methane is one of the gases that are commonly emitted through agriculture and act as a contributing factor in climate change.

So should we stop eating red meat to cut our carbon footprint? In reality, it is not simple. Meat and the farming systems that produce greenhouse gases are very varied and as such, these different farming systems have different environmental impacts. Cattle and sheep can be fed a variety of different foods which will all affect how damaging the meat is. Some farmers have started farming animals in a way which is environmentally friendly, is good for the soil and the climate and produces meat which is high in vitamins and minerals. This is termed regenerative agriculture.

## **Regenerative**

So you might have heard the word regenerative or you might not, or you may have heard of it but know nothing about it. According to my survey, 18.2% of 7K knew what regenerative meant, 40.9% had heard of the word and 40.9% didn't know what it meant. So, what does regenerative actually mean? Regenerative as a term means living on the edge and pushing boundaries. This could be anything really if it is different and not always the easiest way to do things. When it comes to farming, regenerative means keeping the soil healthy. This focus on soil leads to healthier crops and the animals that we eat being fed well which leads to healthy people. This way of farming also sucks carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and holds it in the soil and grass. This is a climate solution.

### **What are you doing?**

Lots of people are or are considering becoming a vegan. Veganism for moral or animal welfare reasons is a personal choice, but becoming a vegan to reduce your environmental impact and land use is not always the answer.

Only 10% of the UK's carbon emissions come from agriculture. Of course you could say that 10% is still a high figure, but the real concern is where the other 90% is coming from? The answer is, humans and the way that we live. That means you can't say "I'm going to be a vegan because cows are the reason for climate change." Some of the vegan alternatives to animal products (including plant based milks and meat substitutes) actually have a higher carbon footprint than meat from regenerative farming systems.

If you were to look at the reasons 7K want / wanted to be vegans then you would see that lots of people loved meat too much and that they didn't want to give up the foods that they liked. Some people said that they wanted to be vegans because their family were, though some people said because they didn't see why we should live while the animals die.

However, as a consumer of meat you have a choice. You can choose to buy meat from a farm that has high welfare standards, is locally produced, has good environmental credentials, and prioritises the impact on our carbon footprint (regenerative farming). Or, alternatively, you could not bother to look at the farm you are buying from.

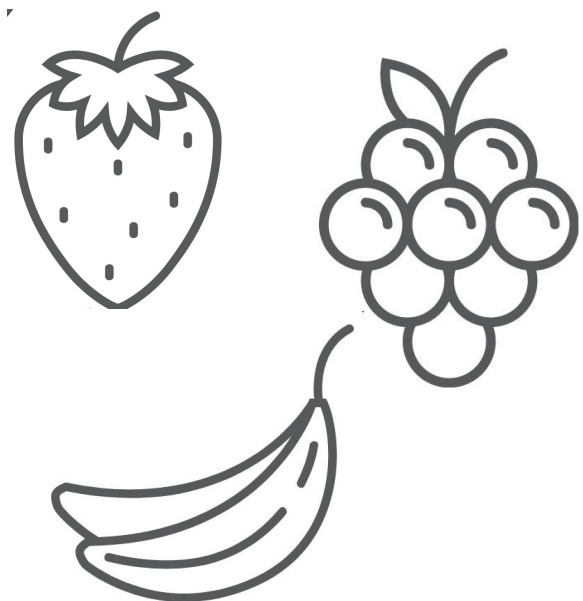
Asking where your food is coming from and whether the way that it is produced is environmentally friendly is a key first step.

### **What now**

After reading this I would like you to think about these key points:

- If you are concerned about the environment, you can eat less meat but consider buying your meat from farms that are regenerative.
- Try to ask more questions about where your food comes from and the farming systems that produce it.
- Consider what other things you could do to reduce your environmental impact.
- If you are thinking about becoming a vegan but are unsure, maybe you could contemplate becoming a regen which is only eating meat from regenerative farms.

Written by EMMA WILLSON



# Online Learning

Zoom calls, Google Classroom and bright screens. As we pass one year since the first lockdown in the UK, it is important to reflect on the impact of the pandemic on our education and to question what remote learning holds for the future. Is it truly as tortuous as it seems, or does it offer great opportunities for students all around the globe?

As countries began to lockdown and school gates were shut, remote learning was suddenly taken on board by teachers all over the world. This posed many questions for schools, such as how will they set work, how will exams be run and how could they ensure everyone was still on the right path of the specification and had not taken a wrong route? As the world began to meddle with machines more during the growing pandemic, it was clear that a new, digital, learning environment was being established under students' roofs. Discussions, questions and thought-provoking moments were essential to maintain the endless iteration of knowledge.

In the UK, the general advice was to use a single platform, such as Google or Microsoft, and utilise the services for different needs. Collecting work became

Google Classroom assignments and questions became private messages. Live elements in lessons were equally very significant, not only in ensuring that the pupils are on track with the specification, but also in maintaining attention levels. It was also key to be flexible during these times, where devices may have needed to be shared or Wi-Fi was unreliable. This is where recorded lessons and independent assignments were more useful and one could take advantage of the lack of time restrictions on online learning. Yet, as a general practice, there were several points suggested by gov.uk, reflecting the idea of replicating a classroom environment at home. These were: clear explanations, building on new materials gradually, applying new knowledge and receiving feedback. A strong focus concentrated on tailoring the online experience to students' specific needs. As well as this, many resources were suggested alongside these platforms, such as Issacs physics and Oak National Academy, in the UK.

Travelling 1,092 km across to France, we can see the same questions arise from the hexagon. Research from the OECD shows us that French schools

used less ICT in lessons and felt that they needed more support in technology training than other OECD members. The education department in France had already created a remote learning platform called “Ma Classe à la maison” for distance learning, providing lessons for each stage of school, and could have provided some resources for remote learning. To add to this, the distance learning sector presented other articles and advice. However, with France entering lockdown and closing school from April 6th, it is of interest that we look more into what action is being taken more recently, with more developments in this sector. The plan for schools seems to be focused on continuity and is the same plan from November 2020. It mentions the use of thoroughly maintaining the same timetable but ensuring a balance between independent work and lessons themselves. Feedback is equally repeated in advice, not just between teachers and students, but also regarding how schools are coping with remote learning.

Even though many resources are available to help with the academic side of online learning, it is more significant to focus on the personal experiences of students and the direct impact of online learning on students. When trapped behind a screen, students' interest begins

to deteriorate. For example, Chris Adair is a pupil at Manchester University who spoke to Radio 1's Newsbeat and described how reading from a screen all day “kills your interest in a subject.”. However, this lack of interest does not seem to be related entirely to different approaches to online learning, but simply the unpleasant, isolated environment created by remote learning. For example, students in France faced similar sentiments. Illy Benyoussef, a third-year student in France, told the BBC “Deadlines sometimes mount up to the point where I just don't hand my essays in anymore.”. Many students in France had also partaken in protests against new measures, concerned about rising mental health problems, due to continuous isolation. This once again shows us that regardless of practical problems being solved, the social side will never be able to maintain sufficient support for students, stopping discussions, preventing curiosity, completely destroying any interest. Despite some people recognising that some features may be valuable, such as Jonathon Vince from the University of Sheffield, who described it to the BBC as “less stressful” and that “For lectures and assessments - if they stayed online next term, I'd be completely fine with that”, still talks about how face-to-face discussions are much “more engaging” and this

seems to remain a recurring theme for many students.

But it is not just about the UK or France.

More and more people are relying on online learning; we have to question how far online learning is still useful.

Firstly, online learning can help you discover what learning style is best and most effective. When we can concentrate a focal point on ourselves and our targets, like digging up a fossil, we uncover more and more about what motivates us and what helps information to stick like velcro to our minds. To add this, by using more technology, we are able to grasp more technical skills in the long-term, adapting to an ever-changing, high-tech society. Online learning can reduce fixation on ideas. When we are engrossed in deep discussions with people beyond our usual circle, ideas bounce back and forth continuously, creating an awe-inspiring game of table tennis. Timetables also become more flexible, allowing us to take advantage of information when we feel strongest, enhancing previous knowledge.

On the other hand, remote learning during these lockdowns has had a very prominent, detrimental effect on many students. When you are trapped, enclosed, confined to a desktop, firing emails at your retinas every second, it is understandable for there to be challeng-

es to online learning. From the learning point of view, there are limitations to feedback, and especially to personalised feedback, building barriers to students improving. Another issue that online learning presents is that practical work in medicine or in DT, as I faced, is unable to continue. A reliance on pure theory is dangerous and prevents students from accessing experience beyond the screen, which would be more useful for future careers. Remote learning has equally had a very significant impact on the mental health of students and teachers. The lack of human communication and interaction, as well as the stress of exams, build up like a flood, creeping more and more into the lives of remote learners. It is important to equally mention that not all students will have the same access to technology and this shall remain as a limiting factor to online learning.

So, how useful is online learning for the future? It holds great potential in connecting all seven continents to different opportunities without the need to travel. This reduces costs, makes learning abroad more accessible and interesting. However, we have to question how far we are willing to sacrifice social interaction and risk opportunities based on access to technology. Are all the potential opportunities worth the risks?



# Transitioning Into Sixth Form

Moving into Sixth Form can seem like a daunting shift, whether you are staying at your current school or moving elsewhere, therefore we have decided to share some paragraphs from a few current year 12 students outlining their experience of Sixth Form so far in the hope to put your minds at ease and offer some reassurance.— Jess

When I started at Plymouth High in year 12, I only knew one person in my whole year and I was very nervous for my first day, however by the time I was going home, I immediately felt at ease at the school. This was because of the welcoming atmosphere of the sixth form, whereby the whole year can easily talk to each other and move between friendship groups, making it a perfect environment to quickly make friends. The 3 subjects I took: History, English Literature and Psychology, were for the first few weeks a big step up from GCSE standards but with the continuous support from my teachers and sixth form staff it became really easy to get into a good rhythm of keeping up with school work without letting work pile up. This was something that, from day one, I really liked about PHSG as they really prepare you with the skills for how to deal with the inevitable A level workload, which has made my whole A level experience much less stressful. This, combined with the

friendly and relaxed attitude of all the pupils in the sixth form, has meant that I'm so happy I decided to join PHSG, as they have pushed me to achieve my full potential. - Arissa

Having been a student at Plymouth High since year 7 I had got very used to the way of life here. I knew that it was a place in which I was comfortable and somewhere where I could achieve my academic potential. The atmosphere created by both the staff and the students makes Plymouth High a welcoming place and the transition from year 11 to year 12 a very smooth one, for both new and existing students. —Lara

I can remember being in year 11 and thinking the transition to sixth form looked really daunting, but in reality I found it to be fun, especially as so many of your friends stay on and you move up together. You can expect the workload to increase, but it is definitely manageable if you make sure to keep on top of it and work hard from the start. So far I've found sixth form to be even more rewarding and enjoyable than the lower school as you have more free time and greater freedom over your school/life balance. You get to make so many more friends and meet a wide range of people which makes the experience even more worthwhile. It can be challenging at times, but it's well worth it and the more you persevere, the better off you will be for it! -Holly

As a new student at PHSG I found the sixth form students and staff to be really welcoming. Lots of parts of sixth form and A-Levels are new for everyone and as the cohort had changed, many students were making new friends anyway, so everyone was sort of in the same boat. My advice to any students joining or staying on for sixth form at PHSG would be to ensure you really enjoy the subjects you are taking and create a system to stay organised early on. This will mean you have plenty of time to socialise and have fun because you will be motivated to stay on top of your work. - Kushla

Before my first day in the sixth form, I was anxious at getting accustomed with new surroundings due to being at a much larger school for 5 years. I feel that a common trend with external students at any school is that they are left 'to fight for themselves' and would often be late to lessons as a result to getting lost. This isn't the case with PHS however, the school site is easy to understand, and members of staff are always on hand to help. The time in which you spend with your form tutor on the first day is extremely beneficial, especially if you were transferring solo, to get to know new people and understand a bit more about the school that you may have not known from an interview or the open evening. I didn't really struggle with much when joining the sixth form as everything was all easy to understand which helped not only myself get to grips with sixth form.

- Lee

# Lessons from Auschwitz 2021

At the start of June, I had the privilege of taking part in the Lessons from Auschwitz online project provided by the Holocaust Education Trust along with over 250 students from across the country. During the project, I had the opportunity to broaden my knowledge of the Holocaust, understand its relevance today as well as realise the importance of the continuation of education around the events of the Holocaust.

The Lessons from Auschwitz project took place online this year and was composed of three live sessions where we established the history of the Holocaust and common misconceptions about it, heard the testimony of survivor Manfred Goldberg who told us of his experiences as a young boy in the Holocaust and took part in a commemoration led by Rabbi Hackenbroch of those who lost their lives as a result of the Nazi persecution of the Jewish people. In between these live sessions we also completed several modules on pre-war Jewish life, the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, the contemporary relevance of the Holocaust and the ways in which it is commemorated. The modules and live sessions all helped us to gain an understanding of the events of the Holocaust as a whole and its lasting impact on the world today.

As part of the project, we were also able to take part in virtual tours of three different sites of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. This involved a tour of the barracks where those imprisoned in the camps would have slept, the main railway line and platform where people would have arrived at the camp, as well as a tour of the main entrance to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

I found the tour of the entrance to the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp by far the most memorable as I was immediately struck by the sign above the gates which reads “work makes you free”. Obviously, this was complete falsehood for those imprisoned in the various camps across Nazi occupied Europe, as arriving at a camp signified a death sentence for so many. However, I was also moved by the story of resistance that went along with the sign.

When the SS guards ordered those in the camp to construct the sign, they placed a hidden message in the word “Arbeit” when they turned the letter “B” upside down. This marked a hugely important act of resistance. They were enraged by the fear, the humiliation, the murders and the dehumanising conditions they were forced to endure and so this upside-down letter became a mark of their courage, a statement that read loud and clear that they would survive and tell the world what had happened to them in Auschwitz.



During our live sessions, we also had the privilege to hear from a survivor, Manfred Goldberg BEM, who took the time to talk to us about his experience during the Holocaust from the age of 11 to 15. Over the course of 4 years, he spent time in the Riga Ghetto in Latvia and later the Stutthof concentration camp in Poland where he spent 8 months until the camp was liberated by the British in 1945.

He described how in December of 1941, two Brownshirts (members of the SA – Hitler’s military support) had come to his home in Germany. Manfred, along with his mother and his little brother were then transported to the Riga Ghetto where on arrival, they were informed they no longer had names and must surrender all their worldly possessions, which for me, demonstrated the lengths the Nazi’s took to dehumanise the Jewish people. Names are such an important part of who we are as people. They identify us. By taking this away from the Jews, the Nazi’s aimed to remove their identity and ultimately their humanity.

What stood out for me the most about Manfred’s testimony is the personal experiences that he described as these

put into perspective what it must have been like for a young child during the Holocaust. He spoke about how he witnessed a woman shot dead for stealing food and how this was the first time he witnessed a violent death, at the age of 11. Manfred also told us of his time in Stutthof camp when he was 13 years old in 1943, with his younger brother. I remember him describing how one day, when he returned from a day of labour in the camp, he could not find his brother. Manfred then reflected on how his little brother “had disappeared off the face of the earth”. This made me realise the extent of the loss the Jewish people would have felt during the Holocaust, and after as for many survivors, it is still unknown to them what happened to many of their own family members and loved ones.

It is so important for us to learn about the Holocaust through the testimonies of survivors because this helps us to understand what happened during the Holocaust in depth, as well as remember the individuality of every victim. Hearing the testimonies such as that of Manfred Goldberg, connects us to the victims in a much more personal way and reminds us that each was special and unique and had their own lives, with memories, jobs and loved ones, before they became the victims and the survivors of the Holocaust. The impacts of the atrocities committed against the Jewish people by the Nazis’ and its collaborators are incomprehensi-

ble and cannot be shown by statistics. “Six million”, while being a hugely significant figure when discussing the Holocaust, is just a number. It does not show us each individual lost in the events and means if we place our focus on numbers, we cannot comprehend the scale of the loss caused by the Holocaust. Not just people were lost, but parts of cultures, languages and the many lives that have gone un-lived.

Whilst we learnt so much during the project, one of the most important and interesting things I feel I learnt that I would like to share is the importance to acknowledge that all of those involved in the Holocaust, not just the victims, were individual human beings - therefore, this includes the perpetrators, the collaborators and the bystanders - those who enabled the Holocaust to happen.

It is extremely easy for us, to classify these people as “inhuman monsters” or as evil and leave it at that, which is obviously understandable due to the atrocities they committed against the Jewish people and others during the Second World War. However, it is also extremely important for us to understand that the perpetrators, collaborators, and bystanders were human beings and they were the products of the society and climate that they lived in – this being Nazi Germany.

The choices and actions of those who collaborated with the perpetrators

during the Holocaust were the result of multiple causes and motives. While there are absolutely no excuses for the atrocities they committed against Jewish people and other groups, to simply dismiss their actions as just “evil” and to end the discussion there is a barrier to our understanding of the Holocaust.

We often like to distance ourselves from those who were a part of these activities as we find it difficult to comprehend the idea of human beings making those inhumane choices. We make them so unlike ourselves to the point that we fail to learn from what happened. But, it is so important for us to understand that each individuals’ motives are extremely complex and that when influenced by society, politics and the conditions people live in, no one is completely immune to being drawn into prejudiced or hateful ideas and it is dangerous for us to assume ourselves and those around us are immune. Forgetting this would mean we would fail to learn from what happened in the past – especially during the Holocaust.

Another important idea to take away from the event was discussing the contemporary relevance of the Holocaust and why it remains so important today to not only learn about but to understand its events and how it happened.

This is so important because prejudice and discrimination is still, unfortunately, very prevalent within our society.



For example, despite all that has been done to make sure the events of the Holocaust and the ideology behind it are never repeated, anti-Semitism and many of the Nazi ideas that ultimately led to the horrific acts committed against many groups of people have not gone away. For example, in 2020 alone, there were over 1,600 incidents of anti-Semitic hate crime which is the third highest figure ever recorded by the Community Security Trust. The first and second highest figures were also recorded in 2018 and 2019, with anti-Semitic hate crime at its highest in the United Kingdom since 1984. This shows that it continues to be a problem within our society, and is worryingly on the rise, especially as the Holocaust has shown us what can happen if prejudice and hatred are left unchecked and unchallenged. Its relevance is also seen when we look at the rise in hate crimes against other races and religions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, we have seen a rise in hate crimes and discrimination against Asian people as they have been blamed by some for the spreading of the Coronavirus.

The prejudice and hostility against the Jewish people of Europe seen during the Second World War and the time of the Holocaust also came about as a result of scapegoating. For example, Jewish people were blamed for the death of Jesus thousands of years ago, and after World War One were blamed for the losses that the Central Powers - especially

Germany - experienced. Therefore, this demonstrates that our society frequently seeks to find someone to blame and so learning about the Holocaust will help us to recognise this and challenge any injustices we see.

Finally, it is so important that we remember, commemorate and recognise the Holocaust in today's world to ensure that the victims of Nazi persecution are never forgotten. Out of around six million murdered by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War, there are still two million names which remain unknown. By continuing to remember the Holocaust, we ensure that despite not knowing who some of the victims were, we keep their memory alive. We remember what they went through and how it was allowed to happen. That way, we can do our best to ensure that an event like this never happens again.

**“What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander”**

**- Elie Wiesel**

Written by HOLLY ALEXANDER



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DISCLAIMER: This magazine was prepared and written by the students of Plymouth High School. The opinions expressed in it are the authors' own and do not reflect those at Plymouth High School, the DfE or the Thinking Schools Academy Trust.

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