



**AUTUMN 2020**

**HEAR  
ME  
OUT**



# A Note from the Head Student Team

Here we are! The Autumn 2020 issue of Hear Me Out, and my final one as editor. This year has of course had unexpected turns but I'm so grateful to still have been able to produce this project.

I think this year has pushed everyone's adaptability as well as definitely proving the point "you don't know what you've got until it's gone". That goes for things like social gatherings, but it's also been the case with our positions on the Head Student Team. Things get so stressful and we couldn't achieve what we planned to and now suddenly it's all coming to an end. We've passed on what we have to the new team for when they step in in January, and had to come to terms with the fact that actually, given the circumstances, we've managed to complete a lot.

After many recorded presentations, socially-distanced meetings and rough Google Docs, we've all managed to complete something to hold to our name. Mine of course, being Hear Me Out.

I cannot offer enough gratitude to the writers and artists who have been part of this edition of the magazine—an edition particularly personal to me as I wanted to end my final term as Deputy Head Student with a bang (and I could not have asked for a bigger one). I have full faith in the next team that they will not only maintain the level of this project, but also push it further! I leave it with nostalgia, but most importantly confidence and excitement.

**- Ymma**

This year has been a rollercoaster, but we're nearly at the end! For many of us, this year was filled with big plans that never got to be carried out. Nevertheless, you should all be very proud of yourselves and each other.

I am incredibly proud to be part of such an amazing school, where students have come together to raise awareness of the impact that we are having on the environment and how we can live more sustainably. Even though our plans for the year had to be put on hold, it didn't stop the eco club coming together to write a newsletter about World Oceans Day and getting involved with the notice board in the science corridor.

It has been an incredible privilege to have held a position on the Head Student Team for 2020. I have worked with some of the kindest and most hard working students within our school and I would like to say thank you to anyone who has helped the Head Student Team in any way this year.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to the other members of the team for making this past year so enjoyable - it's been a pleasure working with you!

**- Maddie**

I can't quite believe that my year as a Deputy Head Student is nearing the end. I have thoroughly enjoyed this year, although it has definitely been unexpected and challenging! We've all learnt to adapt to changes and develop skills to progress projects in the new environment. I'm so pleased to have worked with Student Council this year. They have shown incredible resilience as well as a very strong desire to support students in these difficult and uncertain times. The Student Council newsletters were a great way to stay in contact and support students throughout the summer holiday and I'm delighted they are published on the new school website. I'd like to thank Mrs Carter for her invaluable help and support with Student Council throughout the year. It has also been a real pleasure to work with Georgia, Maddie and Ymma; our work as a team has made the experience all the more special. Although we have not been able to achieve all we had hoped, we definitely treasure the opportunities we have had. For me, a particular highlight was the Carols and Mince Pies concert last Christmas, our first event as the new Head Student Team, and something that I will always remember. I feel sad that my time as a Deputy Head Student is coming to an end. This edition of Hear Me Out is the last for our team so I am pleased to be able to contribute an article to this magazine. Best wishes to the new Head Student Team, I am sure you will enjoy the experience as much as I have!

**- Zoe**

Hi everyone! First of all, thank you for reading Hear Me Out. This is such a great platform for us to get our voices heard and Ymma has done such a fantastic job organising this year's magazine editions in spite of lockdown. Ymma and her team of writers and artists have put so much time into creating this fantastic issue, so we all really hope you enjoy it.

Our Head Student experience this year has, of course, been quite different. The speeches we'd expected to give, the assemblies and events we'd planned to host were mostly unable to take place due to coronavirus, but this hasn't stopped us from making the most of our time on the team. I'm really proud of myself and the HST for adapting so quickly to the sudden shift online, where we managed to film videos for new students and the school archive, create our section of the new school website and host virtual events all from home. The charity zoom quiz for Devon Air Ambulance Trust was a particular highlight for me and I learned that, just because things are online, doesn't make them any less challenging to organise! I had so much fun though, and it was great to have achieved something to help reconnect the school. Even though the circumstances with which we were met meant I couldn't contribute as much as I'd hoped, it was a pleasure to be your Head Girl for 2020, and I have loved every minute of it.

**- Georgia**

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# Influencer Identities

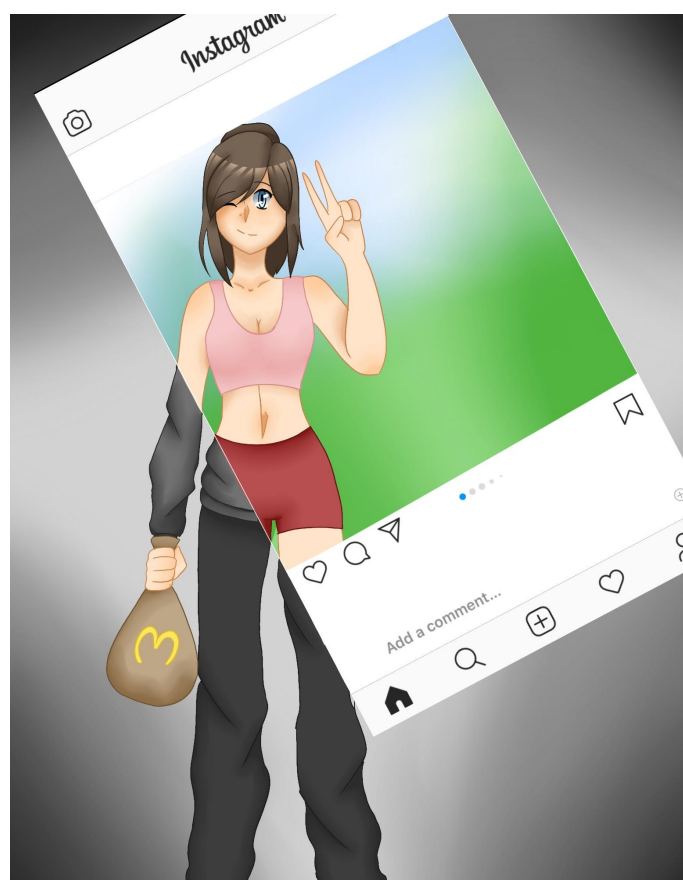
Exercise. It's now available to us on almost every platform, gone are the days of only going for a run or a walk. Now integrated into our phones we can find, create and try workouts, routines and exercises that can help us increase our fitness. Amidst an epidemic of obesity and overnutrition we are often quick to thank and devour the quick fixes that we can find quite easily in the palm of our hands. But in a world where many (often female) are constantly criticised for their body image, weight and choices, can we be feeding this destructive negativity heightened by our new social media presence?

Healthy lifestyles and high levels of exercise are often promoted at the leisure of the government in order to lessen the blow of a current obesity epidemic: proposing the eatwell guide, portions of fruit and vegetables, bike repair vouchers to help dampen the problem that may strain the NHS and other healthcare services. However, this type of work and promotion creates a very faint line between accommodating healthier, but moderated lifestyles that do not stereotype the perfection of primarily female bodies, and the obsessive diet culture that promotes any sort of variation from the proposed and perfected lifestyle and body image as shameful and unhealthy. Leading to a culture and generation showered in unhealthy idealistic imagery and increased feelings of low self-esteem and self-confidence.

Fitness influencers on our screens present themselves with the authority over fitness and healthy lifestyles, choosing to share an 'episode' or aspect of their lives every so often. This provides their income

and could encourage or motivate people to change their lives and enjoy exercise in a healthy and sustained way in order to provide them with a happier and healthier lifestyle and understanding of their bodies. But when we finish or choose to watch one of their perfectly crafted and executed workouts, we can then see their profile and discover the meticulously selected range of posed photos of dream-like locations, perfected bodies and decisions that provide us with the feeling of discontent, thus fuelling the media's need to present a damaging image.

Many people may see this sort of platform differently, it may inspire them and provide them with a role model and help on their fitness journey. But in a technolog-



ical world, where starting a YouTube channel requires no significant qualifications within the field of which they create videos, it's often wondered how reliable or truthful many of these fitness gurus claim or present themselves to be. Wearing some sports leggings and using some dumbbells seems to be the starting pack for any fitness influencer, using their society fitting body to promote the healthy lifestyle they have chosen to live. Looking deeper into many of these influencers' lifestyles, many claim to want to help and encourage people onto their fitness journey - good intentions and achievements that allow a proportion of people to happily perform their workouts and progress with their achievements.

But particularly now, with many of us having more time than ever, is it ever going to be harmless for perfectly shaped models and influencers to live on our screens. With the average age of owning a phone lowering to 10.3 years old, can we really be fine with allowing children to be open to the broadcast of societal expectations that we can see before us? Technology seems to be all around us, improving lives, access and the world - but beneath its new advantages lurk the problems that have always been present. Would we be able to change how people view this platform, can we destroy people's livelihoods and careers when we know exercise is good for us? But bypassing the problem with vouchers and TV advertising will not break the mould of reality that there is one box/expectation that we cannot all fit in. Despite presenting a different story there is not enough work being done to not only present a new way of living, but to actively take action and use power to destroy the two sided dice of 'fat' and 'thin', or 'right' and 'wrong'.

We know that expectations and views of society can change primarily with women's bodies. Over the last 100 years ideas and choices have rapidly diminished and been re-introduced, often promoted or taken from the rich and famous of that time period. In 1910, following the Suffragette movement, in order to divert attention from this rebellion for women's rights, a famous illustrator created the 'Gibson girl': a kind and soft woman with a small waist and curves to provide an aspiration for women that provided the new beauty standard and the 'ideal body'. However, jumping to the 1950s, the slogan "skinny girls are not glamour girls" and "skinny girls don't have oomph" was promoted with the 'talk of Hollywood' Marilyn Monroe rising to fame and magazine covers, with the sales of hip pads and weight gaining supplements rocketing in order to gain this new found body, then drastically broken in the 1960s where, following the approval of the birth control pill, many women now relied on diets to achieve the less curved and leaner body ideals. Finally, in the 2000s the new tanned, flat and athletic stomach meant the rise of Britney Spears and the Pussycat Dolls. This was followed by the rise of the Kardashians in the 2010s, and the curved model - with Kim Kardashian posting images on her social media pictured in a corset, much like the idealistic standards of the Gibson girl in the 1910s.

These drastic changes across multiple decades shows the speed at which our lives and media are influenced, as well as the influence those in the spotlight have over us, despite us maybe not knowing it. Even if we may turn to criticise these influencers who shroud our screens, creating unrealistic standards; can we ever under-



stand the pressure the media places on them, and how it holds the potential to ruin their careers, livelihoods and relationships with family and friends. This pressure forces them to balance on the pin prick of perfection on either side of a dangerous seesaw. And yet the mass media attacks the 'over-sexualisation' of women in the 21st century, whilst also attacking the 'lack of effort' from some women or the 'over-powering effort' of others that threatens the control of masculinity. This stems from an invisible handbook of feminine beauty that seems to confine women to one image and role, with no regard to their job, their happiness or their health (also diagnosed through how you are seen and appear on your social media presence).

With stars like Molly-Mae Hague being attacked for pictures of her body that she did not take or ask to be taken, and yet still with no reason whatsoever she was harassed for not presenting the perfected body image in all aspects of her life - sparking the debate around the pressures and lack of support we provide influencers that can push them to feel attacked and under-surveillance constantly. This criticism and her fame on the hit reality TV show Love Island, which commonly only presents 'beautiful' and 'healthy' women, provides the media with the glaring outlet for the perfected ideas of female bodies. This then simultaneously continues to fuel the later media coverage that leads to malicious and untrue media comments - all typed quite easily from the palm of our hands, yet something unlikely we would say/or have the chance to say to someone in real life. The ease and availability of technology may help us change the heating from our phones or look at who may be

spying on our houses, but it also provides us with a gateway to a potentially anonymous world where opinions can be broadcasted quite easily onto social media, with the signalling ping of our phones to follow. This creates this cycle of reality, attack, perfected, seen by millions, then back to perfection. Looking to blame the photos of perfection is a surface understanding of the real issue that frames itself around these people with millions of followers and with it, the impending doom of the risk of tainting a perfected and articulated image.

Trends are something so built into our society, it's hard to know if we could ever celebrate body image without a specific goal or shape; but with the new culture of exercise and constant availability to technology, it's hard to know if even we have truly progressed in this area since the 1910s.



Written by ABI FINNIE  
Illustrated by ISOLDE THOMAS

# PILLAR OF THE PROFESSION

The surface idea of medicine is a science-based career, fuelled by knowledge and understanding which allows us to be treated, cured and 'fixed'. However, beneath these surface ideas are key ethical and moral pillars of justice, that are just as important in this sector.

Ethical pillars are most prominent in the sector of palliative care and the different social, religious and economical issues that are intertwined with this branch of medicine. Any priority for care of the dying involves communication, involvement and support however alongside this remains ethical issues that are controversial.

In a society where there are multiple negative impacts of ageing: from reduced ability, wealth, loss of purpose, independence and high levels of loneliness - it approaches the key root where medicine and ethics become intertwined. This careful balance of autonomy (rights to decisions), beneficence, non-maleficence (not harming the individual), and justice revolves around the key ideas of maximum happiness and

treatment of the patient. However this simplified idea is often met with multiple problems from both a religious and non-religious perspective.

The heated issue of assisted suicide, euthanasia and other labels can land you with up to 14 years in prison in the UK, a crime which could be seen as judged unfairly due to the argument of care and acting in the best interests of the patient, or family member. Assisting someone in non voluntary, without consent, which contradicts the pillar of autonomy is illegal under the 1961 Suicide Act, this specific crime could end in 14 years in prison whereas euthanasia depending on circumstances is categorised as either manslaughter or murder and in extreme circumstances rests in life imprisonment. The definition "mercy killing" has both negative and positive connotations, questioning whether assisting a death or passively leaving someone to die are different from each other, or carries different weights of moral decisions. If we examine the religious connotations of these actions we can discover the

key moral ideas that churches such as the RCC offer: arguing against the devaluation of lives, and moral implications and effects that legal euthanasia could cause in this country. Alongside the fears of a future 'killing spree' for economic or social benefit.

But if we revisit the changes of age we can see the psychological problems of loneliness and mental health, the physical problems of pain, the technological problems of advancements and a changing society that can cause people to re-evaluate their lives and purpose in this society. The stigmatisation of both the old and young, and the divide this then creates, causing a lack of fluidity between the sharing of wisdom, opinions and help.

All of these problems, controversies and ideas result in the ethical ideas of death and religion becoming much more prominent in the medical profession and how these problems can then be dealt with.

Because ultimately medicine is a caring profession, it revolves around the care of all people, but when it becomes intertwined with moral implications it questions whether anyone will ever be pleased in how palliative care could be changed, adapted to potentially provide people with a choice, a decision and potentially an action. What is important to

remember alongside this, is the distinction between completely unethical, involuntary euthanasia, which breaks the key ethical pillar of autonomy, and voluntary euthanasia which involves autonomy and non-maleficence.

Something so rooted and intertwined within the profession can also provoke the most prominent and confusing problems. We can examine 'the best countries to die in', the ones that apparently offer the best end of life care or facilities for the elderly and compare them to our own centres and experience. The UK is actually 19th according to this study and sparking the question of the difference between countries, and why we seem to be lagging behind as the older generations increase. People live longer, people need to use the healthcare system for longer, older age often provokes new ethical problems. And with new ethical problems we constantly have to adapt and evolve to provide these services.

Although the surface idea of medicine may not always provide this view, the bridge underneath provides a clear connection which is slowly being uncovered and built upon.

Written by ABI FINNIE



# COMPARISON, CONFIDENCE AND COMPLETION

Before you make any assumptions about this article containing the most fervent remedies to living a happy life, let me tell you one thing: I've only recently discovered these tips and tricks myself. I'm no agony aunt (though I do act the part when friends have fallen out), I just want to offer some free advice that has served me well

It's hard to talk about our flaws, let alone embrace them. As humans we all want to present our best selves and we naturally search for the best in others, whether that's the best looking or smartest, or even something as simple as being fascinated by their smile. We hate to admit it but judging books by covers is ingrained in us from birth — we all actively fight against that instinct and try to be open minded about other people. So why is it so hard when it comes to finding the best in ourselves?

I am neither proud nor ashamed to admit I'm my own worst critic. I'm the one who questions whether or not I look good in an outfit, or scored high enough on a test. We have our own standards that we strive to reach, and sometimes we land just below the mark and beat ourselves up about it, no matter how much our friends tell us we've done amazingly. That sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach every time you feel inadequate is shared by pretty much everyone in the world. This article is not about stopping that feeling, it's learning how to accept it and move on from it.

One thing I recommend is surrounding yourself with the right people. Feeling like you're being talked about behind your back is never good, especially if it's by people you consider

close friends, so choosing good people who won't drag your mood down is a must. Over the years, I've collected a group of friends who really elevate me — I doubt I would be confident enough to write this without the support they give me every day. A lot of my friends are people I've known for what feels like forever, but some of them are new and I never get over the feeling of fraternising with someone; I love the fresh perspectives they bring and making that connection with people always makes me happier. My friends and I trust each other so completely and although we often poke fun at one another, we all make each other laugh, day in, day out.

Finding people who don't treat you badly is sometimes hard — we all work differently and it's inevitable you don't fit with some people. Like pieces in a puzzle, feel confident you have a place with people even if you haven't found them yet. I'm confident I was one of those awkward middle pieces that couldn't fit anywhere until the rest of the puzzle was pretty much complete, and that's completely okay. We can't always be a corner piece, easily identified and expertly slotted into place. We don't need to be ashamed of our identity and squish ourselves into spaces we don't fit — once you've found people like you, everything will click, and you'll be having more fun than ever before.

Smile at people. It's a lot harder with the added accessories like a face-mask but I always try to smile at people in the street (or at least squint in a somewhat happy fashion) to people that I come across. You never know what kind of day someone's having —

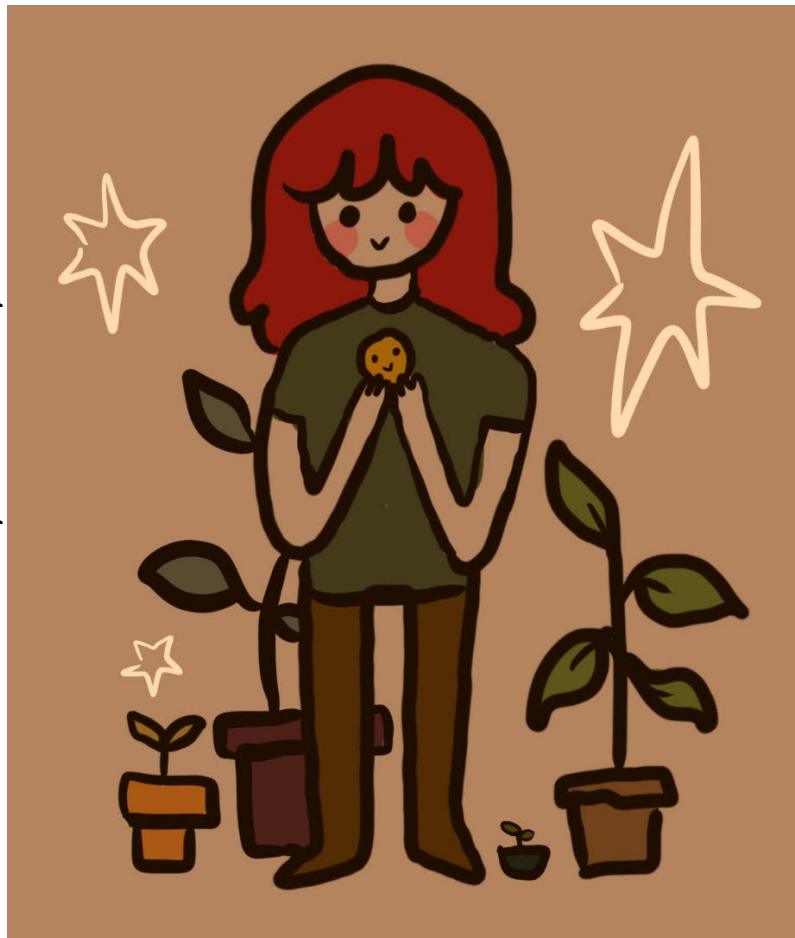
a small smile could go a long way for them, and knowing you potentially lifted someone's mood could go a long way for you. Although I promised you all not to fill this with scientific mumbo-jumbo, fake smiling actually releases endorphins (happy chemicals) which means it's directly benefiting you, whether or not your satisfaction is based on someone else's pleasure.

Bad days are okay. If you feel like everything is dragging or you can't focus due to the stress of having three pieces of homework due on the same day, don't aggravate the situation more by worrying about how much you're worrying. Take some deep breaths and realise this is not the end of the world. Don't go comparing negative events ("this isn't that bad, there are people starving in Africa") because it just invalidates your negative experiences, causing you to push them further down into that pit in your stomach. Deal with each bad day as it comes; know that there will no doubt be more bad days - we aren't robots with no feelings - but the good ones will far outweigh the bad.

As much as I could preach to you about the positive effects exercise has on the brain, being true to yourself is the most freeing activity you can take part in. Whether it was once or one hundred times, we've pushed ourselves into boxes and forced characteristics upon ourselves to fit in or stand out; following trends, like when everyone got fringes or bought pastel highlighters, is just a manifestation of this. We seek to belong so we make ourselves just like everyone else. With finding my 'people,' I have also found confidence in truly being who I am; no embellishments, no toning it down. I am who I am.

Comparison to others is never an easy thing to put yourself through, particularly if the person you're comparing yourself to is a genius - the one person you should compare yourself to is the you you were yesterday. See how much you've grown. See how much better at art you are now compared to year 5. Look at how your handwriting has changed. Change is good and necessary and it keeps us on our toes; roll with the punches and have fun doing so.

In the modern world, with influencers and celebrities setting the bar unattainably high when it comes to any and every task we partake in, I understand this can be tough. On the path of self discovery, it is more than likely you will get lost (in fact, I am certain I will get lost ten more times this week) — the one thing I urge you to do is work through the struggle of your own identity. Don't give up and be exactly like everyone else. Be the most authentic you that you can be.



Written by LAUREN HERD  
Illustrated by DAISY HORNE

# MORALITY OR MALPRACTICE

The topic of euthanasia is extremely controversial and there is apprehension on both sides of the debate, whilst it seems a black and white topic it becomes a lot more complicated when you delve into the different types and approaches.

Ultimately, there are two types: voluntary (where a person's life is ended at his or her request in order to relieve them of suffering) and involuntary (euthanasia is performed on a person who would be able to provide informed consent, but does not, either because they do not want to die, or because they were not asked). Inevitably there are points both for and against, eventually contributing to the overall argument that, in my opinion, euthanasia should in fact be legalised.

The law is the first factor. Currently euthanasia is a crime, however a 2015 poll showed that 44% of people would break the law in order to help a loved one commit suicide, if they had a terminal illness or were in intolerable amounts of pain, regardless of the prison sentence that entails. Despite the law, which is used as a deterrent, people would still put their view of what is morally right before the legal stance on it.

A consequentialist argument suggests the law should be changed in order to accommodate euthanasia because it will occur regardless of whether it is legal, however with it legalised it will be able to be regulated and therefore be safer. It could be seen as completely possible to regulate euthanasia and therefore keep it safe within the law. An effective way of safeguarding would have to include previous to his/her request for euthanasia a full review by not just doctors, but authorities and the patient's family, including a psychiatric review to test whether the patient is in the correct mind to decide. There are risks with regulating the use of euthanasia, however, inarguably it seems much safer to legalise it and regulate it. In both Belgium and the Netherlands, physicians notify their cases to a review Committee, meaning for the majority of cases the safeguarding aspect is very thorough and the process takes years ensuring security.

Inevitably, reviewing the ethics of eutha-

nasia is an imperative aspect of whether or not it should be introduced to the UK as part of the legal system. A popular ethical argument in favour of euthanasia is known as the argument of quality of life. In its simplest terms, the argument states that sometimes death is preferable to life, and when this occurs euthanasia is a more moral option than leaving someone to live.

However, there are different philosophical perceptions on the quality of life, for example an objective-list theory would suggest the quality of life is defined by how many objectively valuable goods someone has, for example knowledge, love and many more. Whereas a hedonist would argue the amount of happiness and pleasure a person derives from life is how the quality of life is measured. Again, another view on quality of life is the concept that such is marked by how many of their desires are satisfied.

However, regardless of the views people hold, it cannot be argued that someone in a negative state, or those with a terminal illness has a non-existent quality of life and therefore it is morally deplorable to disallow someone with a detectable insubstantial quality of life to be granted the right to die. This is because, in that respect, life is not worthwhile. Additionally, using Situation Ethicist Joseph Fletcher's ideas, it is perhaps much less compassionate and more immoral to passively allow death, rather than encourage active death. Situation ethics pays attention to the specific situation and circumstances whilst making a decision and holds no specific guidelines on whether euthanasia is acceptable, and therefore it is crucial to analyse whether or not euthanasia in that specific circumstance is the most loving action to take.

It should be a person's right to choose depending on their life circumstances, providing they are causing more suffering than contentment. There will always be ethical dilemmas in any medical procedure concerning life, however legalisation could undoubtedly benefit and function in the UK.

Written by AVA DAW



# Coronavirus Consequences



I'm Grace and in this article I will be answering this question using some online research, your experiences and mine.

## Mental Health

Recently I created a Google Form asking the students how their mental health was during lockdown and I got a lot of responses, so thank you for that. The responses varied with some saying that lockdown was very difficult with not being able to see friends making them lonely and being at home more often due to school and many activities not being able to run. Others said that lockdown was fine and they managed to stay social online with some even saying they enjoyed it as it was less stressful and gave them time to broaden their views and discover themselves. My mental health wasn't great; fortunately, though, I was able to receive some help. But many others weren't as lucky as me.

Lots of mental health based support was stopped due to COVID 19 which ultimately led to more depression and anxiety and recent reports show that NHS mental health services are at their breaking point.

## Education

A few weeks ago I asked my class for their opinions/feelings about education in lockdown and

now being back at school. I also received thoughts from the Google Forms. The overall response was that it was okay doing online work at the beginning of lockdown and they found they got into a pattern and managed to complete the work without too much stress. However, towards the end it got very tiring and the teachers weren't being consistent with the amount of work set/the difficulty. Students also said they found that it took a long time for teachers to reply to emails or mark work. My mum is a teacher so I do know that they found it difficult as they had to convert all of the work they normally do to be suitable for online learners. Now being back at school I have found it easy to settle back into school but I do feel school does have a different vibe because of the one way systems, masks and more. Some GCSE and A' level students have expressed concern about how their marks will be affected because of this virus. We'll just have to see what happens and if we can recover from this-but I'm sure we can.

Thank you for reading.

Written by GRACE BROWNBRIDGE



## **Be Vegan, Save the Planet**

### **Protect Animals**

Animals deserve a life too, right? If you are a true animal lover then going vegan is one of the best things you can do to stop animal cruelty. By refusing to pay for animal products, you reduce the demand for them, which ensures fewer animals are bred to suffer and die on farms and in slaughterhouses. Did you know that in the UK alone around 1 billion animals are bred and killed for food? This number does not include the fish. These animals deserve the right to live a happy life, just like we do.

We are led to believe that the conditions in which these animals live in are happy and humane like the farmyard scenes you see portrayed on egg boxes or on the TV: this is far from the reality. Factories want to produce meat and dairy products as quickly and cheaply as possible, so the animals are given the bare essentials to survive. They are tightly crammed into dirty sheds and most will never roam freely. Animal aid has investigated British farms and slaughterhouses, including so-called 'high welfare and 'free-range' establishments, and revealed horrific animal suffering and abuse. As soon as bullocks (baby male cows) are born they are taken from their mothers and killed. The heifers (baby female cows) are also taken straight away and put into the dairy industry, not even able to drink her own mother's milk

because humans steal it. As soon as the females can no longer produce milk to the highest standard and is no longer profitable, they are sent away to the slaughterhouse. Fish are dragged out of the water in huge nets the size of football pitches, with some nets reaching 10km in length. Non-target animals including dolphins, whales and turtles are often caught up and die, too. Some sea birds are in increasing danger of starvation as their food source, fish, is slowly disappearing.

Animals are treated by the farming and fishing industries as if they are unfeeling machines, alive only to generate maximum profit. But each fish, chicken, lamb, cow or pig is a sentient being capable of experiencing pain, fear, discomfort and distress.

### **Save the Planet**

Did you know that veganism is the single biggest way to reduce our environmental impact? Researchers at the University of Oxford found that cutting meat and dairy products from your diet could reduce an individual's carbon footprint by up to 73 percent. If everyone stopped eating these foods, they found that the global farmland use could be reduced by 75 percent, an area equivalent to the size of the US, China, Australia and the EU combined. Not only would this result in a significant drop in greenhouse gas emissions, it would also free up wild land lost to agriculture, one of the primary causes for

# VOUCH FOR VEGAN



mass wildlife extinction. Research reveals that the meat and dairy industry is responsible for 60 percent of agriculture's greenhouse gas emissions. The dairy industry is linked to excess nutrient losses and significant diffuse pollution to air and water. For one beef burger it takes a shocking 660 gallons of water which is enough for 135 people to take a shower: the scarcity of water is actually one of the biggest problems we face as the climate continues to change.

### **Be Happier and Healthier**

Anyone can be vegan! Vegan diets tend to include a lot more fruit and vegetables, which are rich in vitamins and minerals and high in fibre. Eating more fruit and vegetables can decrease the risk of diseases such as bowel cancer and type 2 diabetes. Vegans also tend to eat more wholegrains, soy and nuts, all which can help protect your heart. Meats are high in saturated fat (especially red meat) eating a lot of this can raise cholesterol levels in the blood, and having high cholesterol raises your risk of heart disease.

Being vegan can help you feel really positive and happy, knowing that you are not contributing to any animal cruelty and that you are helping the environment. You also may feel less depressed, your improved health could equal a better mood; you may notice a better quality of sleep and you may have decreased stress levels so overall it is better for your mental health.

Being vegan isn't as hard as you may think, many people avoid being ve-

gan because they think it is too difficult, but it's actually really easy! I know from my own experience, I was sceptical about the thought of being vegan but when I tried it, I really enjoyed all of the new foods and it made me feel healthier. There is a substitute for every food you could imagine which are just as good, I mean, why eat a beef burger which is bad for the environment and is made with animal cruelty when you can have a burger which is free from both and is just as delicious? Vegans on average are 20 pounds lighter than meat eaters which has many positive health impacts. Did you know that the average vegan lives nine years longer than a meat eater?

In general meat is gross: animal flesh is often contaminated with faeces, blood, and other bodily fluids. Animal-derived food is the top source of food poisoning. Scientists tested supermarket chicken's flesh and found that 96% of chicken packages were contaminated with campylobacter, a dangerous bacterium that causes 2.4 million cases of food poisoning a year.

If you have any enquiries or need any suggestions about which vegan foods to try, feel free to email me at

[grahamsophie18@phsg.org](mailto:grahamsophie18@phsg.org)

Written by SOPHIE GRAHAM



# Beyond Blue Monday

A new year, a new start. Supposed to be a chance for a better year, a happier year. Yet the 3rd Monday of the year is called Blue Monday, and is meant to be the most depressing day of the year. But should it be confined to a day? Of course not. In the same way we can't be expected to be happy all the time, 'cause we're not. I mean who can be? While juggling school, friends, jobs, families and anything else that pops to mind. Nobody should be expected to be happy all the time or expected to be sad all the time because they have depression. Mental health isn't black and white, in fact it's more like a rainbow; sometimes you're blue other times you're yellow however sometimes your colours are so blurred you can't decipher what you're actually feeling making answering "Are you alright?" or "What's wrong?" so much more difficult.

By why should we have to answer? Sometimes when people ask me those questions the only thing I want to do is tell them to leave me alone and slam a door in someone's face. In hindsight I probably shouldn't have, and just have given the generic response of "I'm fine." which is the universal language of "I'm not but drop it". But it's when that's the only way you respond, your feelings can grow like a snowball pushed down a hill and as it grows it gains momentum until it hits something and everything crumbles apart. But it doesn't feel like a snowball, it feels more like an avalanche and the smallest of problems can feel like the end of the world.

Written by LOIS BELLINGHAM



# BLACK LIVES MATTER

On Monday 25th 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black American man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during an arrest for allegedly using a counterfeit bill. Derek Chauvin, a white police officer, knelt and forced himself on George's neck for nearly 8 minutes. Officers J. Alexander Kueng and Thomas Lane restrained George, while officer Tou Thao prevented bystanders from intervening (the same bystanders who released the viral video of George's long, painful and heartbreaking death.) During the final two minutes of what seemed like hours of suffocation, George was motionless and had no pulse meanwhile Chauvin ignored onlookers' pleas to remove his knee from George's neck which he did not do until medics told him so. The following day, after videos taken by witnesses and security cameras became public, all four officers were fired. Two autopsies found George's death to be a homicide. Chauvin was initially charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter, to which was later added second-degree murder. The three other officers were charged with aiding and abetting second-degree murder.

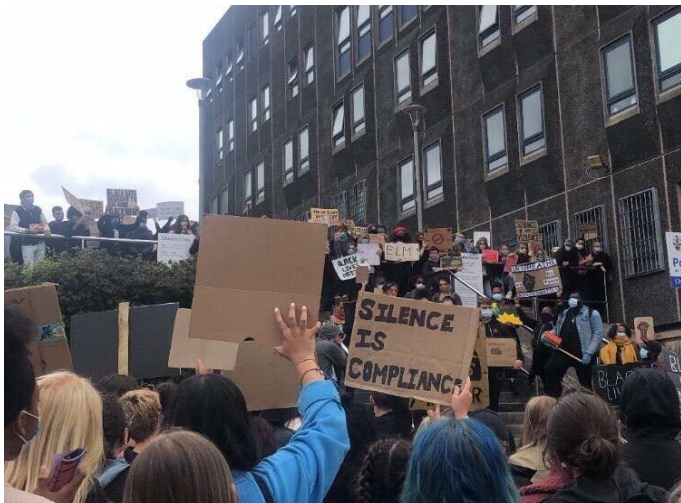


Photo taken by Hannah Tyrrell

Floyd's death triggered and resparked the BLM (Black Lives Matter) Movement against police brutality, police racism, lack of Police accountability, white privilege, and general racial injustice. In early June, the Minneapolis City Council took action to ban chokeholds and require police officers to intervene against the use of excessive force by other officers. Many people have seen the viral video of George's death but don't know the real events that happened that horrible day so I wanted to talk through it before I touch on other subjects surrounding the topic of BLM;

On the evening of Memorial Day, May 25, 2020, George purchased cigarettes at Cup Foods, a supermarket at the intersection of East 38th Street and Chicago Avenue in the Powderhorn Park neighborhood of

Minneapolis. A shop employee believed George had paid with a counterfeit \$20 bill. Just before 8:00 pm, two Cup Foods employees left the shop and crossed the street to an SUV parked in front of a restaurant near the shop, George was in the driver's seat and two other adults were in the car too. The employees demanded that George return the cigarettes, and he refused. The interaction was filmed by the restaurant's security camera. At 8:01, a shop employee called police to report that George had passed "fake bills" and was "awfully drunk" and "not in control of himself". At 8:08, Kueng and Lane arrived, briefly checking Cup Foods before crossing the street to George's SUV. Lane taps his flashlight on the window, alarming George. He asks George to show his hands, and taps again when he does not acknowledge. George apologizes as he opens the car door. Lane instructs him three more times to show his hands. Six seconds after the door opened, he drew his gun and ordered George to show his hands. When George complied, Lane holstered his weapon. Someone parked behind George's SUV began recording a video at approximately 8:10. Lane pulled George from the SUV and handcuffed him. At 8:12, Kueng sat George on the sidewalk against the wall in front of the restaurant. Lane asked George if he is "on something right now", and Floyd replied "No, nothing". Kueng told George he was acting "real erratic" and George said that he was scared. Kueng remarked that George had foam around his mouth, and George explained that he had been "hooping" (inserting drugs an\*illy) earlier on in the day. According to criminal complaints filed against the officers by state prosecutors, Floyd was "calm" and said "thank you".



PHSG 'Old Girls' Saja Altamimi and Juliana Oligan

At 8:13, Kueng and Lane told George he was under arrest and walked him to their police car across the street. George fell to the ground next to the car; the officers picked him up and placed him

against the car's door. According to prosecutors, George told the officers that he was not resisting, but that he was recovering from COVID-19, that he was claustrophobic and suffered from anxiety, and that he did not want to sit in the car. While Kueng and Lane attempted to put him in the car, George begged them not to, repeatedly saying "I can't breathe" and offering to lie on the ground instead. During his interview with crime investigators, Lane said that he first saw George bleeding from the mouth at that moment, which he attributed to his "thrashing back and forth, in the car and hitting his face on the glass that goes to the front seat. A Minneapolis Park Police officer arrived and guarded George's vehicle (across the street by the restaurant) and the two people who had been in it with George. At 8:17, Chauvin and Tou Thao arrived in a third police car joining Kueng and Lane. He asked if George was going to jail, and Kueng replied that he was arrested for forgery. George said "I can't f\*cking breathe" twice. Around 8:18, security footage from Cup Foods shows Kueng struggling with George for at least a minute in the driver side backseat while Thao watches. At 8:19, standing on the passenger side of the vehicle, Chauvin pulled George across the backseat from the driver side to the passenger side. George then exits the vehicle, possibly because he was pulled by Chauvin or possibly under his own effort. George, still handcuffed, fell to the pavement where he lay on his chest with his cheek to the ground. Chauvin kneels on George's neck. George stopped moving around 8:20, though he was still con-

and their videos were circulated widely on the internet. At 8:20, a witness across the street began recording a video showing Chauvin kneeling on George's neck, Kueng applying pressure to George's torso, and Lane applying pressure to George's legs, while Thao stood nearby. This witness stopped filming when one of the officers ordered him to leave. Also at 8:20, a second person, standing near the entrance of Cup Foods, began recording the incident. George can be heard repeatedly saying "I can't breathe", "Please", and "Mama", Lane then asked for an ambulance for George, "for one bleeding from the mouth". George repeated at least 16 times that he could not breathe. At one point a witness said: "You got him down. Let him breathe." After George said, "I'm about to die", Chauvin told him to "relax". An officer asked George, "What do you want?"; George answered, "I can't breathe". George said, "Please, the knee in my neck, I can't breathe." At approximately 8:22, the officers called for an ambulance on a non-emergency basis, escalating the call to emergency status a minute later. Chauvin continued to kneel on George's neck. A passerby yelled to George, "Well, get up, get in the car, man", and George, still handcuffed and face down on the pavement, responded, "I can't", while Chauvin's knee remained on his neck. George cried out "Mama!" twice. George said, "My stomach hurts, my neck hurts, everything hurts", requested water, and begged, "Don't kill me." One witness pointed out that George was bleeding from the nose. Another told the officers that George was "not even resisting arrest right now". Thao countered that George was "talking, he's fine"; a witness replied that George "ain't fine ... Get him off the ground ... You could have put him in the car by now. He's not resisting arrest or nothing. You're enjoying it. Look at you. Your body language explains it." As George continued to cry for help, Thao said to witnesses: "This is why you don't do drugs, kids." By 8:25, George appeared unconscious, and bystanders confronted the officers about George's condition. Chauvin pulled out mace to keep bystanders away as Thao moved between them and Chauvin. Bystanders repeatedly yelled that George was "not responsive right now" and urged the officers to check his pulse. Kueng checked George's wrist but found no pulse; the officers did not attempt to provide George with medical assistance. According to the criminal complaint against Chauvin, Lane asked Chauvin twice if they should move George onto his side, and Chauvin said no. A witness asked, "Did they f\*cking kill him?"



Venus Egonu (left) and Dominique Farauanu (right)

scious.

Multiple witnesses began to film the encounter,

At 8:27 pm, a Hennepin County ambulance arrived. Shortly thereafter, a young relative of the owner of Cup Foods attempted to intervene, but was pushed back by Thao. Emergency medical technicians checked George's pulse. Chauvin kept his knee on George's neck for almost a minute after the ambulance arrived, despite George being silent and



motionless. Prosecutors said that Chauvin's knee was on George's neck for seven minutes and forty-six seconds. Around 8:29, George was lifted by paramedics onto a stretcher, then loaded into an ambulance which departed for Hennepin County Medical Center. En route, the ambulance requested assistance from the Minneapolis Fire Department. At 8:32, firefighters arrived at Cup Foods; according to their report, the police officers gave no clear information regarding George's condition or whereabouts, which delayed their ability to find the ambulance. Meanwhile, the ambulance reported that George was entering cardiac arrest and again requested assistance, asking firefighters to meet them at the corner of 36th Street and Park Avenue. Five minutes later, the fire department reached the ambulance; two fire department medics who boarded the ambulance found George unresponsive and pulseless.

**George Floyd was pronounced dead at 9:25 at the Hennepin County Medical Center emergency room.**

George Floyd's death sparked the BLM Movement which was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, it was also nationally recognized for street demonstrations following the 2014 deaths of two African Americans: Michael Brown—resulting in protests and unrest in Ferguson, Missouri, a city near St. Louis—and Eric Garner in New York City.



*Photo from Millie Dinham*

George Floyd's death touched millions of people all over the world and began protests everywhere. People of all backgrounds showing up to play their part in making change. POC (People Of Colour) standing up for Black lives, White people standing up for Black Lives together! The Protests started off peaceful and were a beautiful representation of all people standing up for Black lives. Colourful posters, a balloon release made for Breonna Taylor (a 26-year-old African-American emergency medical technician who was wrongfully shot in her home in Kentucky), memorials made for George and many other black people killed wrongfully in the arms of the police, 8 minute silence for George,

people kneeling with fists up showing their gratitude, people coming together and organising petitions and funding websites but then this all turned around.. there were those who expressed their outrage and pain through violent means; such as vandalising shops. This was when the true level of police intervention methods at the time became apparent to not only the citizens of America, but also to the rest of the world. Police started to backfire at protestors by using tear gas (mace - a chemical weapon that causes severe eye and respiratory pain, skin irritation, bleeding, and blindness. In the eye, it stimulates the nerves of the lacrimal gland to produce tears), flash grenades, rubber bullets, smoke guns and batons. People are now only realising how the police system was never broken; it was built this way!



*Photo taken by Layla Tyrrell*

White people throughout history have always been portrayed as "higher" or "above" Black people and POC, this is often known as White Supremacy (the belief that white people are above and should dominate other races.) Then there is White Privilege (the advantages white people experience due to their race; and don't carry the worry, for example the luxury of not fearing discrimination due to skin colour) Here are some examples of White Privilege that exist in every aspect of day-to-day life, and can easily go unnoticed:

#### 1. Having a positive relationship with the police (generally)

White people will grow up thinking of the police officers as a source of safety if they were ever in danger, while many Black people see them as the complete opposite. Let me give you an example, my Dad a Black man was followed by a police car down his street as a child and was confronted by the police who suggested that he didn't live there and if they heard of any trouble around the area they would know who it was.

#### 2. Having the privilege of being favoured by school authorities

Black children from the early ages of 3 are being excluded from Nursery. One of the biggest issues for the school systems is natural hair, there appears to be issues when young children are wearing their natural hair out but when they get protective styles like box braids, cornrows or twists children are still penalised. I myself also came across a boy who said that, when Ofsted came round his secondary school they gathered all the Black students and locked them in the sports hall with a few basketballs and let them go once Ofsted had left!



Photo from Madison Herd

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Having the privilege of living ignorant of the dire state of racism today.

One of the things privilege can do is lead you to be out of touch with the struggles other racial groups face, both on a social and systemic level. White people do not experience these struggles, and therefore are

not in a position to fully comprehend the gravity of problems within our society today, regarding race, especially as white people don't have to go through it they don't realise how bad it is.

This subject of racism and the whole BLM Movement is very personal to me because I grew up being mixed race in a predominantly White city (Plymouth being in the top five out of the whitest cities in the whole of the UK) I am so lucky to not have experienced half as much racism as other people in the UK and that's why it is so personal for me to try my hardest to make change. I am privileged because of my brown skin and I want to use my privilege to stand up for Black lives, so one of the things I did was go to the BLM protest a month or two ago. We stood outside of the police stations and peacefully protested. It was such an empowering experience. One that I will cherish forever. And on that note I just wanted to say that it's a privilege to educate yourself about racism instead of being forced to learn through experience, our platforms and voices are the key to change, so let's take that onboard and make a difference! This is the world we live in. Don't be a bystander. Do something. Speak about it, educate others, keep signing petitions and donating, support Black businesses, protect Black men and women, protest and protect Black people within the LGBTQ+ community!

**Black is beautiful, Black is strong.**

**BLACK LIVES STILL MATTER!**

Written by TIANA PEREIRA



Malack Abuelbashar speaking at Plymouth's Black Lives Matter protest:

*"People ask me where I'm from and I tell them that I was born in Manchester. Then they say "No, where are you from?" I was born in Manchester. Just because of the colour of my skin doesn't mean I'm not British."*

*"Someone I know wrote the n-word in someone else's book and showed it to me, and laughed. Why? Why? Why to me? Why is that funny? Then he scribbled it out, and just continued with his day."*

Filmed by Layla Tyrrell

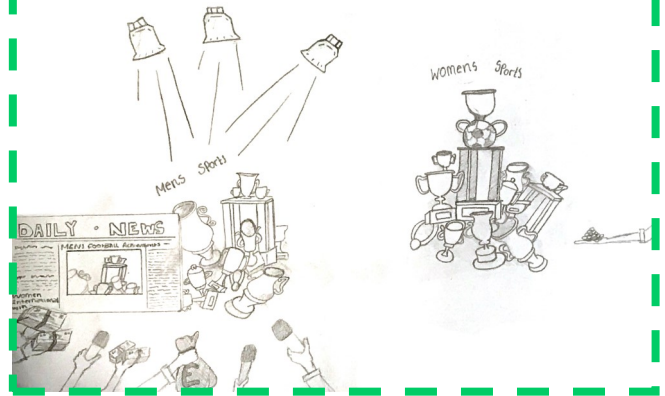


# Sexism in Sport

2020: the year everything shut down. The year we all stayed home and were driven into such complete boredom that we decided to take up something new. When considering a new hobby many turned to trying a new sport, after all there are so many to choose from. There's almost a sport for every type of person. However, whether it's running, football, netball, swimming or any other activity, what is the biggest burden most if not all sports carry with them? Sexism. Often women in sport fall short because of this, although sexism in sport can go both ways and men can be the ones at the disadvantage.

In sports that involve distances, like cycling or running e.g, women often do shorter distances. Why is this? Women are more than capable of performing as well as men do. As a long distance runner myself I've seen first hand the sexist distance difference in sport. At a cross country running event, across the different age groups, girls/women do 1 or 2km less than the boys/men in their age group. Another example of the sport's sexist system is the common distance for a women's cross country race compared to a men's. A women's is 6-8k while the men's race is 8-10k. This cannot be fair when women can do this distance the same as men can, if not better than some. Why do women not do as far as men? Some argue that women just aren't as physically capable as men especially when it comes to running. Whilst men are often faster or stronger than women, this may be just because it's been put in women's heads from young ages that because we don't run or swim or cycle or whatever as far that men are automatically better. Maybe if we did have the same opportunities as men in sports like running maybe society would see women showing their full physical capability and proving they're just as good as men.

Although women and men these days can invariably do any sport they pick, the problem that still hangs over them is if the sport they pick is a 'girls/boys sport'. In most primary schools across the country boys and girls are separated at a young age when it comes to sports. At my primary school, when we were in year 3 we were separated into boys and girls. The girls throughout the year played hockey, netball and rounders while the boys did rugby, football and cricket. We didn't get to choose what we did, we just accepted



it. So from such a young age we had an outline of a 'boys' sport and a 'girls' sport. The sexism in this guides women and men to often be turned to specific sports. Overall every sport should be for everyone and it shouldn't matter who you are: don't be guided by sexism and try to encourage your family and people around you to do the same.

Yet, one of the biggest issues in sport today that involves sexism is the publicity of women's sport teams compared to men's sport teams. This has always been a problem and seemingly continues to be. Think of the men's England football team, they earn *lots of money and are always put on the news when they have matches or have done something and they've been used in plenty of adverts throughout the years. Now think of the women's England football team, I personally have never seen them in an advert or on the news. In fact, the only time I have ever seen them on the news was when they were speaking out about the comparison between men and women's teams. Women again are missing out and it isn't just in football; rugby has the same issue. Many sports where it wasn't traditional for women to play have this issue, even though in this day and age women should have equality in their sport.*

If you didn't or don't think sexism in sport is a big issue, you need to think again. As a girls school we should be raising awareness toward this problem because loads of us do some sport and in each one there is definitely at least one form of inequality. This sexism could affect us when we want to take our own sport to the next level.

Written by VERITY TANK  
Illustrated by MAISIE WILMOT



# ABUNDANCE OF ATTITUDES



One of my pet peeves is when you are having a conversation with someone about something, and suddenly they start to get annoyed that you don't agree with them, or keep trying to bring up an already tedious subject.

These disagreements often lead to both parties talking, but neither listening. By the end of the conversation, there has been neither a point made, nor a solution found.

There are two main definitions of the term opinion, both worthy of mentioning. An opinion can either be:

- a view or judgement formed about something (not necessarily based on fact or knowledge);

as well as

- the beliefs/views of a group of people.

In the thirteen years that I have been alive, I have encountered many people who are very set in their opinions and if you don't agree with them then, in their eyes, you are despicable.

For example, let us turn to social media. I know that we get a lot of hate about it: "social media is dangerous and is frying your brain" and "you are ruining your mental health" from parents and teachers constantly but, to be honest, it is the perfect illustration of my point.

Anonymous voices get to wield peer pressure against all age groups, making us all have the same beliefs. These posts and tweets can make us self-conscious and more vulnerable to the unmerciful, ravenous eyes of society. For example: "If you aren't vegan, then you support animal cruelty!" or "you have to like TikTok or else you're

lame."

Honestly, I don't understand why we all *need to be the same*. We all have *different views and needs*. Our *upbringings are all different from each other*. What kind of world would it be where we are all alike? All perfect clones of aesthetics and the shallow, picturesque side to society? What is a world where diversity is frowned upon? It's boring! That is what it is!

Did you know that in 2018, statistics showed that there were around 7.594 billion people on Earth? Billion! Just imagine how wonderfully refreshing and exciting all of these peoples views must be! How emotionally and culturally multifarious their opinions are. But we can't hear them, cannot reach them over the walls we cower behind, too afraid to be different, to hear differently, to see differently.

This way of treating opinions as weapons is unacceptable!

They should be something to treasure, to gift upon the world!

In everyday life, there is a lot of noise; the noise of opinions crashing into each other, confusing themselves for facts, points and solutions. Whilst you may be passionate about your views, this method of sharing and eye-opening is proving itself to be ineffective, fruitless. Perhaps, perhaps if we just slowed down, just for a moment, we could start to sort through this cacophony of noise: to find places for varying opinions, where they can be accepted (or at least acknowledged) by all.

Written by EVE FRY

# *Be the Light in the Darkness*

Plymouth High School for Girls has a long-standing relationship with the Holocaust Educational Trust. Many PHSG students have taken part in the Holocaust Educational Trust's programmes, become Ambassadors for the Trust and have shared their experiences in our school. Holocaust remembrance is important to us at PHSG, therefore we will be marking Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 on the morning of 27th January to remember the six million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered. All tutor groups will receive a PowerPoint presentation explaining more about Holocaust Memorial Day. The presentation will include stories from Holocaust survivors and prompts to encourage discussion on the different forms light and darkness can take.

***Be the light in the darkness* is the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2021.**

We learn about the Holocaust in our History lessons at school and I am sure I speak for many of us when I say that the Holocaust is a difficult period of History to learn about and understand. As part of Generation Z, one of the last generations to have the opportunity to hear first-hand from Holocaust survivors, we know our responsibility to stand up and say 'never again'. When these Holocaust survivors are no longer here to tell us their stories, the responsibility to remember and commemorate the Holocaust falls to us; to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust lives on and the horrors of the Holocaust are not forgotten. This is why it is so important for us to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

## **What is Holocaust Memorial Day?**

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place each year on 27th January, this is the date Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated.

Holocaust Memorial Day is a national day of remembrance and commemoration in the United Kingdom. It is a day dedicated to the remembrance of the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust and the millions of other people killed under Nazi Persecution and in the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.



*"Together we bear witness for those who endured genocide, and honour the survivors and all those whose lives were changed beyond recognition."* - Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

## **What does *Be the light in the darkness* mean?**

The darkness represents the depth humanity can sink to. There are different kinds of 'darkness' for example, identity-based persecution, misinformation and denial of justice. 'Being the light' is the way individuals and communities resist that darkness for example, acts of solidarity, rescue and illuminating mistruths. This theme encourages us to reflect and analyse societies during and after genocide.

Every year the Holocaust Educational Trust organises the *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project. Plymouth High has been participating in the *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project for over thirteen years. Miss Tomalin coordinates the programme at PHSG and took part in the project eleven years ago. The educational project consists of four parts: an orientation seminar where participants hear the testimony of a Holocaust survivor and learn about pre-war Jewish life in Europe, a one-day visit to Poland where participants visit the former Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, a follow up seminar where



participants reflect on the visit and then the final part of the project, when participants return to their schools and communities to share their reflections on participating. Every year two PHSG students take part in the project, I was one of the students selected to take part in the 2020 *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project, but this was unfortunately cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier this year, Abbie and Farah (Year 13 2020 leavers) took part in the Holocaust Educational Trust's *Belsen 75* project, a commemorative project to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp by British soldiers. Abbie had also taken part in the *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project in 2019. Abbie and Farah shared their experience of visiting Bergen-Belsen with me:

*"Seeing the mass graves was possibly the hardest point of the day, the reality hits you. The most heart-breaking thing of all, is that nobody knows who lies in which grave."*



On the side of each of the mass graves there is an estimate of how many people are buried in that grave. Abbie and Farah visited a mass grave with an estimated 800 people buried. This was particularly poignant for them as this is roughly the same number as the number of pupils at PHSG. This made them think of the 800 not just as a number, rather 800 people who all have their own stories, families and lives. It is essential for our generation to have this experience and so important that Abbie and Farah can share their experience with me and everyone at PHSG. Abbie and Farah have now become the light in the darkness by learning and passing on their reflections and experiences.

I end this article with a quote from Anne Frank, who died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen just before the liberation of the concentration camp on 15th April 1945. I believe this quote sums up the importance of learning about the Holocaust and why we must not let these events be repeated. We must not forget the darkness of the genocides. We must also remember that there is always light and light can take different forms. In remembering, we will all become a light and ensure that the stories of the survivors and the tragedies of the Holocaust are not forgotten.

*"What is done cannot be undone, but one can prevent it happening again."*



Written by ZOE CHRISTIE

*With many thanks to Miss Tomalin, Abbie, Farah and the Holocaust Educational Trust*

Wildfires. Natural disasters. Widespread discrimination, racial violence and social unrest. Tragic aeroplane crashes and deadly explosions. The world grinding to a halt under the cloud of a devastating pandemic that has irreparably changed so many lives.

Surely 2020 has to be one of the most momentous and traumatic years so far in history- and who knows what is looming behind the corner as it draws to a close. So should we be delighted to wave goodbye to this year as we head into 2021 or should we accept the changes and lessons it has brought us in preparation for the years to come?

536 AD. A year proclaimed by medieval historians to be the worst year in history. A year when fog covered much of the globe- temperatures plummeted by over 2 degrees in one summer- harvests failed and people starved. If that wasn't enough, a devastating volcanic eruption occurred in early 536 scattering ash across the Northern Hemisphere. Perhaps considering the significant climate emergency we are creeping towards, these climate and natural disasters don't seem as alarming as they should - but in the Dark Ages of the mid 6th century, these events catalysed long periods of struggle and hardship, without the equipment and knowledge to bounce back from them. Now we can be thankful that, through the difficult moments, sometimes society can spring back to normal pretty quickly and attempt to learn from its mistakes. As undeniably painful as 2020 has been to so many people, the future

is tomorrow, be that good or bad.

Okay, but pointing out the hardships faced thousands of years ago doesn't weaken the blow that the many disasters this year have struck on our lives, does it?

It's easy to forget, in the chaos, and disruption, the positive things that have happened this year. They are few and far between but should be noted nonetheless. For example, decades of hard work paying off in Africa - where wild polio was declared eradicated from the continent recently - something that less than 25 years ago affected 75,000 children across Africa.

However, many of the best moments experienced this year were born out of the frightening and unusual circumstances thrust upon us. Amidst the tragedy and difficulty of quarantining, people came together, came together to donate in tight times, to unite to raise money, to support and protect those working hardest to help others. These acts of unity brought some light to a period of darkness that unintentionally provided some positives. One of which being how the complete halt brought to transport and industrial processes cleared air pollution faster than years of lacklustre attempts to reduce emissions ever could.

But it wasn't only COVID-19 that brought welcome growth. In May, the world was shocked at the brutal murder of George Floyd- a senseless crime of which all 9 minutes were captured on camera and shared to the globe. This tragic moment however wasn't and isn't

an isolated incident, as the black community faces institutionalised racism and brutality every single day in the US and internationally too.

# 2020: A Year

## Can we call it the worst one yet?



This crime, though horrifying, brought to light so many other victims such as Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and so forth - a never-ending list of innocent lives taken purely because of the blind hate that weaves through too many. It is still difficult to come to terms with these conditions as we continue to see violence and injustice, but those affected can perhaps find some peace with the revolution it has sparked, with so many now refusing to back down and give up their fight for freedom and justice until the battle is won. A battle that has also led to widespread awareness and education for many about the privileges some do and do not have.

It can be so overwhelming comprehending the hardships many endure at all times, every day, around the world; however, hopefully these low points can only bring about change and progress for years to come.

So should we be glad to be rid of one of the most tumultuous years in many people's recent memories? Or should we embrace it as we move forward? Undoubtedly, no matter what positives can be drawn out of 2020 - it has been for so many so tragic and frightening, as too many were forced to confront sudden loss and unrelenting struggles. 2021 is a fresh start for some, as we begin to boil down the craziness and the pain that has plagued us these past months. Despite this, it is foolish to say that things will change completely by the strike of a clock on New Year's Eve, but with the love and unity we have found ourselves to be capable of, perhaps there is a better year ahead.

Written by SARAH DARWICH  
Illustrated by GRACE DOBBIE



# THE BEAUTY OF LOCKDOWN

As I sit down at my computer to write this, I keep catching myself gazing out of my bedroom window at the beauty of the city centre here in Plymouth. Not too long ago, this would have been just the simple scenery of the outside world – a regular city full of regular people, all grey and drab with the dull mist of a South-West English county that has just been hit with a day of showers. And yet, after the experience we have all gone through over the last six months, I doubt I will ever see anything as “just” again, because it is too small a word for a world so vast and ever-changing. For this new outlook, and many other reasons, I am grateful for lockdown.

COVID-19 will never – could never – be a positive event. I would like to clarify that fact first. But just because an event is tragic, doesn't mean it is all wasted. 2020 has been mankind's wakeup call: from serious issues such as the BLM movement getting more coverage, to the simple act of caring about our neighbours – it seems as though the world is trying to tell us something, and although many may choose to view this message as a revolt or revenge, I see it more as a chance to change and grow.

In this spirit, I would like to address how for many of us, lockdown was a time of self-reflection. Whether that be thinking about how our behaviour has affected people, how we are tackling our work, how we treat our planet or how we treat ourselves; I haven't come across a single person who hasn't learnt something about their own life during lockdown.

Personally, I came to the realisation that shame is a wasted emotion. This is a lesson that I don't know if I would ever have truly learnt without such a life-changing event



that allowed me to deal with myself on my own before coming back and having to present these improvements to others. For example, before lockdown I would probably never have written this for the school paper, too scared of what people would think of my writing. That being said, this belief isn't a constant in life and even the most confident people will have days of doubt – it's just that lockdown helped more people to have a, “what the hell,” attitude, due to the fact that we now know that on any given day our freedom to roam and explore life could be taken away again.

Through my eyes, it has been impossible to avoid acknowledging the positive side of lockdown. Six months of restrictions against seeing our gorgeous city, not being able to see friends and family and not being in school, has its positive points for growing as an individual, but also in the aspect that we now should all hopefully appreciate our world a little more. It will never again be “just” a walk through the city, “just” meeting up with friends or “just” a view, it will always be so much more than that – it will always be beautiful.

Written by ELOUISE WILLS  
Illustrated by MEGAN WRIGHT



# BOOK REVIEW CORNER

## BALLET SHOES BY NOEL STREATFIELD

As a child the author of 'Ballet Shoes', Noel Streatfield, was always interested in the theatre. She spent ten years as an actress, and she used all of that experience to bring her stories to life, often writing about characters who sought to make a career in the performing arts. 'Ballet Shoes' is probably her most famous book and is a personal favourite of mine.

'Ballet Shoes' is the story of three very different girls, whose lives are thrown together by unique circumstances. All orphans, Pauline, Petrova and Posy, are adopted by an eccentric fossil collector making these diverse characters the 'Fossil Sisters'. The story is set in the 1930s and the girls share the struggles of education, adolescence and poverty. Under the watchful eye of their guardian, Garny and the kindly Nana, the girls argue, fight, laugh and ultimately work together to help them achieve their ambitions.

*"It is all very well to be ambitious, but ambition should not kill the nice qualities in you."*

The book tackles head-on some of the real challenges you must face if you want to follow your dreams, and the sisters, though quite disparate personalities, all share the drive to succeed – something which we can all relate to here at PHSG!

Petrova wants to be a pilot, Pauline wants to be an actress, and Posy, as the title suggests, wants to be a ballerina. Noel Streatfield makes these issues thought-provoking as well as entertaining, and the book contains some useful lessons in life, as these quotes show rather well:-

*"Here is something I want you to remember: when a dreadful thing happens to a person as it happened to you, there are two ways to take it. You can let it make you cross and bitter, or you can accept it, and because you know what it is like to be hurt very badly, let it make you a nicer person."*

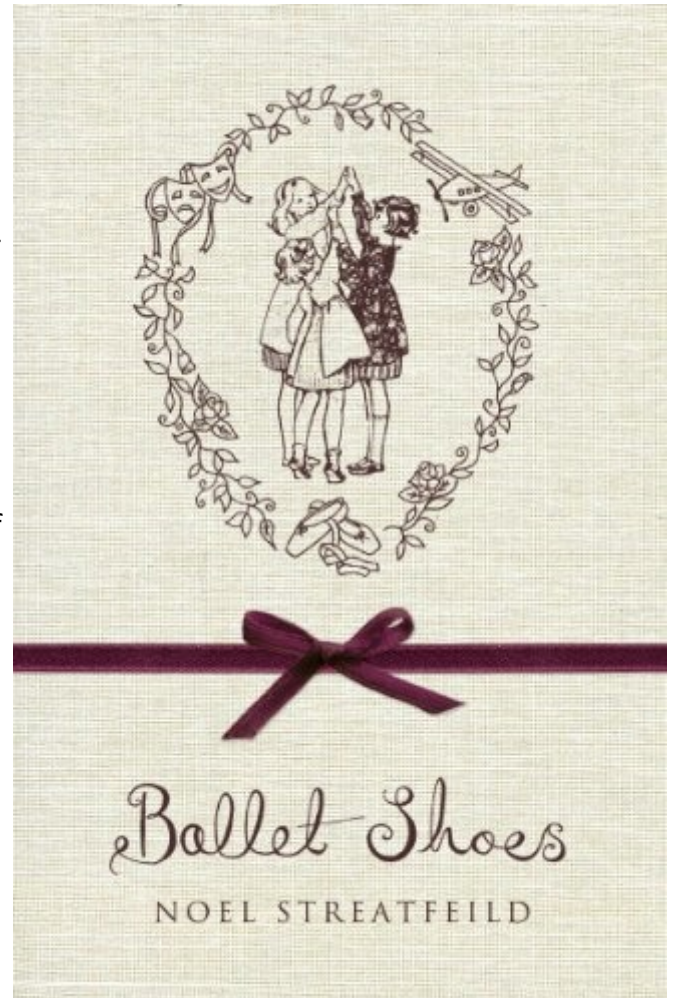
Although the book was written in 1936 the language is mesmerising - full of the most delightful words for wordaholics like me - and as we follow the Fossil sisters' stories we are drawn in page after page. By turns funny, sad, painful, glamorous and ultimately joyous, Ballet Shoes is a classic which I'm sure you will enjoy.

Everyone who reads it asks the same question as Petrova:-

*"I wonder" - Petrova looked up – "if other girls had to be one of us, which of us they'd choose to be?" "*

I would be Petrova. I wonder which one you'd choose?

Written by LUCY BEASLEY



# Essence of EPO

The extended project qualification (EPQ) is, simply put, a year long independent study project which, when finished, gives you a level 3 qualification that can help you when you apply to university and in any future careers from the skills that you gain from its completion. You can write a dissertation, create an artefact, put on a performance or investigate something.

When you're told that you have this big project that you have to do, and that you can pretty much do it on anything you like, it's as if you are five years old again - you're in a sweet shop with a £5 note and you've been told you can buy whatever you want. You either freeze in shock or, your head is suddenly filled with all of these great ideas of what you're going to do.

From the start, I had a vague idea of what I wanted to do my project on, but actually finding something that interested me enough to spend a year of my life learning, writing and basically becoming an expert on presented me with a challenge.

At that point in time, I wanted to go into medicine. Immediately, my list of potential ideas was shortened a lot. I thought about the areas of medicine that interested me - namely, medical ethics and the law. I then thought of euthanasia.

Even now a few weeks after the deadline, I still can't quite put a finger on what exactly drew me into wanting to write a dissertation on assisted dying and the law. I think it was pure curiosity. Something I would tell anyone who is interested in completing an EPQ is that you should pick something that you are curious about, that will challenge you in a good way and make you think in different ways. This also helps you to stay motivated and argue your case.

One of the great things about EPQ is that it is flexible to you. I had approached

my dissertation in a way which gave me plenty of time to make changes to my self-set deadlines which I found to be very beneficial when anything unexpected came up. To be truthful, I did change my schedule multiple times, particularly when my workload was getting more difficult to manage. However, being flexible in my plans allowed me to stay on track.

Something I am grateful for that I did from the start was make a list of all the links of websites I visited which had useful or interesting information, with a brief description of what the website was. This makes finding specific information much easier when you are writing your final project and also compiling a bibliography. Another thing that I am grateful for is that I had a vague idea of what information I needed. Never underestimate the power of a sub-question. They kept my research focussed and ultimately helped me to structure my dissertation.

One of the biggest pieces of advice I would give to anyone writing a dissertation for EP is to put your references in as you go and use a dedicated website which allows you to save them as you go! It saves so much time and allows you to keep track of everything.

Originally, when I was thinking about how to tackle the gargantuan task of writing the main dissertation, I thought that sitting down and planning it all out at once would be the best way to do it. I also thought that starting with the introduction would be the best. That may work for some people but for me, every time I looked at the top of the google doc, the little black line flashing, I couldn't find the words to start an introduction. So, I started writing the main part of my dissertation instead - this was much easier.

My advice for any writing section of



the project would be to work in a way which suits you. Don't worry about what other people are doing. This project is yours and you can do it however you wish - work to your strengths.

For me, the hardest thing was genuinely not knowing how to write it. Yes, I had written countless essays before, but none as long as this, none as important. EPO makes you build hugely upon all previously gathered essay-writing knowledge that you have, which is why it is valued highly by many universities.

I wish from the beginning I had been more open-minded in regards to change and knowing that it is okay. With something like this, you are bound to make mistakes and it is important to learn from them. You are also bound to take on way too much. You must be open-minded when taking on EPO - whether it is towards deadlines, motivation or actually writing. It helps.

For a self-led project, with the deadline seeming so far off, and in some ways not real, motivation can sometimes be hard to come by. Some people have magical powers and can somehow maintain consistent levels of motivation throughout their project but I know for many people they experience ups and downs with their motivation and that's okay - as long as you stay on top of it.

Looking back now, there are a few things that I wish I knew when I took on EPO.

It's okay to find it hard. It's also okay to find it boring. It's okay to not want to do it anymore and get frustrated when you can't seem to write the correct thing. It's also incredibly rewarding. Knowing that you have put in lots of hard work (hopefully) and that you have produced a great piece of work (most likely), is a reward in itself.

My advice for people doing EPO (or thinking of doing it) consists of a few things.

- Set yourself lots of little tasks. Whilst your list at the beginning may seem

very long, every time you get to cross one thing off that long list, you are closer and closer to being able to say that you are finished and it gives you a sense of achievement.

- Complete your diary as you go along! It is very useful for when you come to the presentation and evaluation so be sure to fill it with lots of detail and write about your feelings - reflect on what you've done and how you feel about it..
- Your EPO teacher can be a beacon of light when things are getting tough. They are there to support you through the year and be a sounding board for all your ideas. I am incredibly grateful for the support that I received from all of the teachers who coordinate EPO.
- Write about something that interests you. This makes you actually want to do the work and means that you are more likely to finish on time, or with time to spare to make sure you've done everything right. I found it also makes it easier to form arguments for and against what you're writing about.
- Don't be too hard on yourself if you find it hard. It is perfectly normal to find things difficult. If you need help, don't be afraid to ask for it. Find someone you can talk to and bounce ideas off. For me, my mum helped me to develop my ideas and stay on track as I am definitely prone to going off topic!

Finally, what you put into EPO you definitely get out of it and it can be incredibly rewarding. There is no harm in giving anything a go, or changing your ideas. I guess my final piece of advice would be to just go for it, even if you're not sure that you want to do it, you may just find yourself enjoying it.

Written by MADDIE HARPER

# *Hear Me Out*

*“And all at once, summer  
collapsed into fall ...”*

*- Oscar Wilde*





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 Local Authority.

Artwork by  
Taylor Simmons

There is 1 imposter among us

