

Present Tense

Your words, your paper



The diversity issue

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Young people fighting climate change Page 12

A newspaper for and by Aylsham High School students

If you're looking for help...

Bullying

AHS Friendly Faces

Friendly Face room near rm 11

Bullying UK

0808 800 2222

General

Childline

0800 1111

Family Lives

(previously known as Parent Line)

0808 800 2222

The Mix

0800 808 4994

Families of alcoholics

Al-Anon

020 7403 0888 (10am-10pm)

Bereavement

Cruse Bereavement Care

0808 808 1677

Young carers

Carers UK

0808 808 7777

Crime & youth justice (legal helplines)

Just4Kids Law

www.justforkidslaw.org

Victim Support

0845 30 30 900

Child Law Advice Service

www.childlawadvice.org.uk

National Youth Advocacy Service

0808 808 1001

Counselling

BACP

www.bacp.co.uk

Thinking of running away

Runaway Helpline

116 000

Disability

Scope

0808 800 3333

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Disability Rights UK

0800 328 5050

Domestic violence & abuse

24-hour National Domestic Violence

0808 2000 247

Refuge- Help for Teenage Girls

0808 2000 247

Women and Girls Network

0808 801 0660

Sexual violence helpline

0808 801 0770

Men's advice line

0808 801 0327

Survivors UK

www.survivorsuk.org

Support for drug addiction

Talk on 0300 123 6600

Equality & human rights

Equality Advisory Support Service

0808 800 0082

Gambling

Big Deal

0808 8020 133

Homelessness

Shelter

0808 800 4444

LGBTQ+

Stonewall

www.stonewall.org.uk

0300 330 0630

Looked after young people

The Care Advice Line

020 7017 8901

Mental health

Young Minds

Parents' helpline

0808 802 5544

CALL Mental Health Helpline

0800 132 737

The Calmzone

0800 58 58 58

Samaritans

08457 90 90 90

Money & debt

Step Change

0800 1381111

National Debt Line

0808 808 4000

Self-harm

CASS Women's Self Injury Helpline

0808 800 8088

TESS text and email service

0780 047 2908

Eating disorders

Beat

0345 634 7650

Sexual health

Brook

www.brook.org.uk

Refugee help

Migrant Children's Project

0207 636 8505

Cover picture credit: Tanya Wiseman

Editorial

This issue is focused on the forever important topic of diversity. As such we have articles written by and about different people in different situations, including educational diversity (home-schooling), neurodiversity (living with autistic spectrum disorders) and sexuality.

We felt this is what is important and should be addressed because, despite there having been huge, huge improvements in recent years, there is still so much that needs to be done to make this a world that we can all happily live in. This is mainly about better education and awareness of the numerous issues so we can learn from the mistakes of our predecessors and become a more inclusive and enjoyable society.

This is something that affects every one of us; we are all unique and deserve to be viewed as equals, despite our differences. This means that it is something that we should all work towards bettering for our own sake as well as that of others.



As with previous issues, we have reviews. But for the first time we also have puzzles and a cartoon.

We hope you find this interesting and enjoy it.

Noah

Meet the team . . .

Stevie Ashby, reviewer

Josh Blundell, cartoonist

Betty Booker, reporter and photographer

Frederick Bower, reviewer

Noah Crane, guest editor and reporter

Rosa Dunford, reporter

Nick Feistner, reporter

Summer Gotterson, reporter

Oscar Hyde, reporter

Rose Ling, reporter

Theo Pagan, reporter and photographer

Poppy Spalding, puzzle-maker

Cole Tibbitt, reporter and reviewer

Daisy Turville-Petre, teacher and mentor

Jacob Watts, cartoonist

Other contributors: Millie, Martha, Tom



Some members of our news team

Our supporters

Just Aylsham, for advice and for invaluable financial support.

Mr D Spalding, for guidance, for helping us define our editorial values and for believing in us.

Diversity

Aylsham has a reputation for inclusivity and acceptance. Cole Tibbitt asks what is diversity and what does mean for young people?

"It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength."

— Maya Angelou

Awareness of diversity - what it means and what it offers - is increasing with people becoming more aware, pushing diversity issues to the top of the news agenda. Many celebrities are coming out as LGBT+ and the fight for equality is seeing big wins in countries worldwide. But the battle for equality all over the world is far from won. Discrimination against people for being different is still very common, particularly in schools.

From September this year, there will be a new mandatory curriculum for relationships and sex education in secondary schools which includes same-sex relationships. This has been set out by the Department for Education. Similarly, primary schools will be required to teach about families which diverge from so-called traditional structures, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) households. However, this is not always the case in other countries.

Diversity includes race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, background and everything in between as well as gender identity and sexuality. With 7.7 billion people on this planet, everyone is different; everyone is diverse. And that's exactly what diversity is all about. Despite all the stories on the news and information on the internet and social media, a lot of people still don't fully understand what this term means.

This is what Diversity Club is for; to help people understand these issues, identities and ethnicities and that it's okay to be different through friendly debates. It's also simply a place to hang out during lunchtime on Thursdays and eat your lunch. Many

people think that it's just for LGBT+ people and don't want their friends to make any presumptions of their identity. This is not the case: Diversity Club is for anyone and everyone. That's the whole point of diversity - including everyone no matter who they are or what their background is and accepting them.

I've researched local schools and have yet to find one with a Diversity Club like ours. However, last year lots of local schools joined a national Diversity Week organised by a group called Just Like Us and I'd love for AHS to take part next year.

Bullying and discrimination are also big problems in schools and Diversity Club can help with that. 45% of LGBT+ people, for instance, have reported being bullied in schools for being LGBT and half report to have heard homophobic slurs often too frequently (The School Report (2017) and The RaRE Research Report (2015)). According to the Guardian, 40% of students in years five to nine from non-Anglo or European backgrounds have reported racist discrimination against them and 8 out of 10 disabled children were bullied.

The Equality Act 2010 was put into place in an attempt to prevent these numbers, and it did a decent job. The Equality Act made all discrimination against someone because of a 'protected characteristic' illegal. This includes hate crimes (physical or verbal abuse), exclusion and direct and indirect discrimination. The protected characteristics were: disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexuality.

Myself, I find some of these statistics shocking, as anyone should, especially as a quarter of the world believe that same-sex acts should be illegal, only just over a third of countries allow gender reassignment and a few countries even apply the death penalty. Many countries' governments and laws are also racist, sexist and overtly discriminatory. But what can be done? There will also be people who think this way, but we

can still make a difference.

The problem of homophobia, racism, and sexism clearly stems from either a lack of understanding and education as well as misinterpretation, or alternatively, because it's another thing people can ridicule. This means there is a simple solution: these issues must be taught more in schools. If children are shown that there's nothing wrong with being diverse in any way at an early age and how same-sex relationships work, many of these problems would be minimum or non-existent. This will be put into place from next September, but only in the UK. Other countries still have a long way to go.

But where does Diversity Club fit into this? Well, Diversity Clubs can help people to better understand diverse issues (to do with race and ethnicity as well as sexuality and gender). So if you'd like to know more, you could always go to Diversity Club or if that doesn't suit you, I have a couple of other suggestions. If you're looking for books, the library has rainbow flag markings on books with LGBT topics or that include LGBT characters. The Stonewall website has a glossary of terms and links to support groups near you.

If you're facing discrimination or bullying for any other reasons, the Friendly Faces and staff are always there to help.

www.stonewall.org.uk/help-and-advice

Cole Tibbitt





Friendly Faces from Aylsham High School and Bure Valley School at the 2019 Princess Diana Award Anti-Bullying Conference. Picture Credit: Mrs Connor

Aylsham High School Diversity Club

What? - Diversity club is a group of people who celebrate the fabulous thing that is diversity! After coming under new leadership the club hopes to expand to not just be a club, but a concept represented throughout the schools in events, displays and statements.

Why? - We love identifying everyone's differences and identities and making the most of being unique. As a group, we hope to encourage new acceptance, and develop an even greater feeling of safety in the school for any race, sexuality, gender, socio-economic status etc. There is still stigma in every crevice of any system including people, removing that tension around the school encourages inclusivity.

Who? - Anyone. We have no boundaries in the club, as long as you aren't discriminative in any

way! But it is ok to be negative when you talk to everyone about how you feel, there are no limits. Where? - Room 27! In the main building, second floor. There is a rainbow display you can't miss it!

When? - The club is held every Thursday lunchtime, but stuff will always be going on around the school.

What do we do? - The club is fairly new, so we are still developing ideas, however we will discuss politics, mental health, LGBTQ+ issues, and changes you want around the school.

It's not all serious, feel free to just come and hang out. Enjoy some snacks, and feel safe and happy. So come and give it a try, make a difference in the school. Feel safe and be happy.

Martha
Diversity Captain



Neuro-diversity: Autism at Aylsham

Autistic Spectrum Disorder is better understood than ever before. Rosa Dunford and Rose Ling take a look at what autism means to young people.

Neurodiversity, ASD, Autism Spectrum Disorder or as it's most commonly known: autism. Do you know what it truly means and the everyday effects it has on students that might just be sitting next to you? Because according to the Autistic Society, around 700,000 or more than 1 in 100 people in the UK could be autistic. That means, statistically speaking, for roughly 10 students in AHS, autism is all too real.

People underestimate just how many children and adults are affected by autism. According to the National Autistic Society, 700,000 people in the UK have some form of autism, which is nearly the equivalent of the entire population of Norfolk.

Albert Einstein, Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. These are all extraordinary and intelligent people are thought to have had an autistic spectrum disorder. And more recently Steve Jobs, Chris Packham and the hugely influential Greta Thunberg are known to have been affected by autism.

There are around 700,000 people on the autism spectrum in the UK – that's more than 1 in 100.

If you include their families, autism is a part of daily life for 2.8 million people.

National Autistic Society

Being diagnosed with autism is a life-changing process, for better or for worse. It can be helpful to know why you might be acting or feeling a certain way, and can be the start of developing ways to cope with ASD. On the other hand, being told you have an autism spectrum disorder can lead to you feeling isolated from your friends and family who may not understand the disorder.

Symptoms of autism vary hugely but can include: repetitive or anti-social behaviour; severe sensitivity towards

loud noises or bright lights; an unusually high IQ; difficulty making eye contact; and self-abusive actions.

Mr Sweatman is Head of Nurture Provision and works alongside the special education needs department and a team of expert learning support assistants supporting students right across the school assisted learning team. Over 100 of our students at Aylsham High School receive support to help them achieve their potential at school. No two students need the same support but among the many



Greta Thunberg outside the Swedish parliament. Picture credit: Anders Hellberg

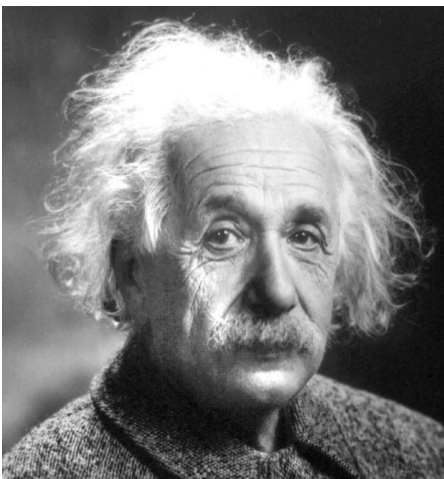
individuals, there are those who have to manage anxieties and autistic spectrum disorders. When interviewed, Mr Sweatman said:

"I think it is great that you are writing an article on autism. Awareness of any condition is an integral part of understanding more about the people around us. The big wide world is full of incredibly inspirational humans that learn to cope and overcome barriers and it's important, as a school, that we continue to play a huge role in this. Differences continue to be acknowledged and celebrated and I am very proud to be part of our Aylsham community."

Sometimes, it can be hard for some people with an autistic spectrum disorder to make friends. Because they seem different, some people may be at risk of being teased or left out. School students with special educational needs such as ASD are twice as likely as other children to suffer from persistent bullying. A study from the Independent in 2014 found that 40 per cent of parents reported that their autistic son or daughter had been illegally excluded from their school.

However, for many, the conditions associated with ASD can be far more positive than negative. When asked about her autism, world-renowned climate activist, Greta Thunberg said that although it makes her "different", she considers it a "superpower". In a radio interview, Thunberg said that she thinks without 'being different', she wouldn't have started the school environment strikes which mobilised millions of young people all over the world and even here at Aylsham.

Rosa Dunford and Rose Ling



Albert Einstein. Credit: Orren Jack Turner

Real life experiences from AHS students

Having Asperger Syndrome has had a very big impact on my life: it has caused ups and downs. Sometimes it makes me angry for a long time and causes me to have a tantrum, and I feel awful afterwards. But Aspergers has helped me to become the person I want to be.

At Aylsham High, I am in a supported class, because of the challenges I face managing my emotions. However, along the way, I have met a lot of wonderful people who are there for me. Some of these people feel the same as me, and some are living with other disabilities.

When I get older, I want to become a comic creator, novelist, and illustrator, and autism has helped me stand out from the crowds I thought I would never fit into. My incredible family and my perfect friends are my lifeblood; they have helped get me where I am today. Receiving a diagnosis of autism is a tricky thing to take in when someone tells you, and you will feel sad for a while, but I believe it's a superpower that will take you far.

Millie, year 7



Apart from all the negatives with ASD, there are also a lot of positives. As Greta Thunberg would say, it makes us different, but in a sort of superpower way. It's a sort of superpower. Autistic people often see things from a different point of view from other people; they think outside the box; they innovate. This may be what made some very successful autistic people successful. So apart from the negatives that come with autism, there are some real positives that come with the package and can change many people's lives for the better.

On a personal level, I find that autism possibly makes me more introverted and quiet. Though many people without autism are introverts, many autistic people are quiet and sometimes struggle with social interactions which can in fact make us very kind and thoughtful when you actually talk to them. This also stops them being loud and obnoxious like people can be sometimes. Again, this does not apply to all autistic people, just some. Another interesting facet of my personality I think is caused by my autism is my ability to read natural facial expressions very well. I think this only applies to a few autistic people, and some are even the opposite. I can tell when someone's feeling down or is bottling up something inside of them.

The most common symbol for ASD are the colourful puzzle pieces. The puzzle pattern reflects the complexity of autism and the colours show the diversity of people with the disorder and the family living with them.

Oscar, year 8

Just Loverly!



Some of the cast of *My Fair Lady* 2020. Photo credit: Tanya Wiseman

2020 will see our very own Mrs Martin return to her very favourite musical: My Fair Lady with a 40-strong cast of Aylsham students. Noah Crane gives us the inside track on what to expect this year.

My Fair Lady is a musical about a cockney girl called Eliza Doolittle who wants to be able to rid herself of her accent so she can work in a fancy flower shop. Luckily for her, she encounters Henry Higgins, a linguist who (for pride more than anything else) agrees to help her. The musical follows Eliza's struggles with her strict teacher.

This is (if tenuously) linked to this issue's theme of equality and diversity; it follows a girl stuck in a society obsessed with class and the

way you speak. But instead of confronting this, she just tries to change herself unnecessarily to earn the respect of people who couldn't care less about her.

This is Aylsham High School's 22nd yearly musical and will be performed in March. The cast is already working hard with rehearsals and it is going really well so far. We all come in almost every Saturday for six hours and many days after school to rehearse. There are numerous complicated dances to learn. As this is obviously a play which has a strong focus on accents, many of us have had to practise lots to develop new ones, which is always extremely difficult. Unfortunately, due to the two different classes in the show, the posh and cockneys barely see each other at rehearsals, but soon we will do more

in each rehearsal so there should be more overlap.

So many of us are already making friends within the talented and lovely cast and we all very much look forward to the months ahead leading to the show.

Tickets are on sale now from Mrs Wiseman in the AHS main reception on Wednesday lunchtimes or via www.ticketsource.co.uk.

Noah Crane

"We all come in almost every Saturday for six hours and many days after school to rehearse."



Page 3
 12.10 - GET ME TO THE CHURCH
 12.30 - RUN ACT 1 - SCENE 1
 - RUN ASCOT SCENE
 - RUN EMBASSY SCENE
 PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU ALL
 KNOW THE WORDS TO THE SONGS
 THAT YOU ARE IN
 1.30 - SHAWN'S REHEARSAL
 - WITH A LITTLE BIT
 - GET ME TO THE CHURCH

Clockwise from left: Mrs Fordham practises with the cast; Ali and Jess in duet; Alfie, Lola and Ali; the cast give a Christmas preview of this year's songs; is it all too much for Ali?; Mrs Martin and her cast. Photo credits: Tanya Wiseman.



Going underground: education from another perspective



Getting scientific at the kitchen table. Picture credit: Theo Pagan

Theo Pagan was home educated for more than five years, joining Aylsham High School in year 9. Here he uncovers just a little of what he learnt during his time outside the classroom.

Homeschooling is anything but new, but it's become a hot topic in recent years.

What is home-schooling?

Home-schooling is the education of children at home rather than in the conventional school system. Until recently the number of home-schooled children in the UK had been relatively low: in 2014-15 there were an estimated 34,000 children registered as home-educated. However, in recent years this figure has risen by 40% to 48,000 in 2016-17 (BBC, April 2018).

If there are so many of them, why are they so tricky to spot?

Home-schoolers are notoriously shy and difficult to locate in their natural habitat. As such, very little is known about their day to day habits and few have ever infiltrated one of their "meetings"*. Aged eight, to help understand why

their number has been increasing and to be the first to document their natural habits, I infiltrated the Aylsham's local home-school group "Barefoot Learners". Because of this, I became a deep cover journalist and spent 6 years posing as one of them to gather data to write this article. I was the first person to provide photographic evidence that Tai Chi is a widely practiced art among the home-schoolers.

That's real dedication! What did you learn?

The first thing I realised was that there are many varied reasons people choose the path of home-schooling, these are the most common:

- ◆ For some people, they simply wish to try something different and experiment with different educational methods.
- ◆ For others, they do not agree with the school system or simply did not get on at school (in some cases being bullied, fear of exclusion or mental health difficulties are the most frequently cited reasons).
- ◆ And finally there are people who for ideological reasons do not view education as important and have

other interests.

For whatever reason people choose, they almost always end up at a home-schoolers' group, like flotsam upon the shore.

That sounds nice, actually, what happens at one of these groups?

The goings on at home-schoolers meetings have no strict format and they can involve the practice of yoga, meditation, studying, ball games, construction of rocket launchers or simply talking

So what about when you're not hanging out at one of these groups?

Home-schooled people have a remarkable ability (rather like ninjas) to enter places such as museums without paying. Because of this a person practiced in the art of home-education has a huge variety of environmental, historical or educational facilities available to them. I myself have entered the Eden Project

The number of home-schoolers in the UK has risen by 40% to 48,000 in 2016-17.

for as little as £4.50 per person when the cost for an ordinary person would be over £ 20.00

Sounds amazing. Is that why numbers have been rising in recent years?

Actually, these factors are nothing new and do not explain the rapid increase in home-schooling. One possibility is "off-rolling" - the process by which some schools get rid of students who could do badly in their exams - in an apparent effort to boost their league table position or save money.

The reason off-rolling is such a scandal, is that many of these students who are predicted to perform badly in their GCSEs are often dropped from the school system to be educated at home, often with little or no educational support in place. A report by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) earlier this year found that more than 49,000 children had been removed from school rolls without explanation between 2012 when they entered secondary school and 2017 when were expected to leave.

But home-schooling looks like great fun. Who wouldn't want to do it?

Home-schooling is not to be undertaken lightly, it requires far more self-discipline and can be much harder work than normal school. Due to this, so-called off-rolled students are almost guaranteed to lose out on their education; students who struggle to cope with the school system are just as likely to struggle when it comes to continuing their education in a satisfactory manner at home where there is often little or no support. However, because they are no longer on their system, schools are free to leave them be.

So, what is the AHS view on off-rolling?

Our headteacher, Mr Spalding, is strongly opposed to the idea of off-rolling and has taken steps to ensure that AHS supports all students in need. Explaining his views, he said "Off rolling is not motivated by what's best for the student but is motivated by exam results. This is deeply unethical and treats children as widgets and not people." Aylsham High School does not partake in such practices and "our student numbers between year 10 and 11 (the period in which many students are 'released' from certain schools) actually increase."

Furthermore, some students have left the AHS to try home-education but returned to the school after a period of



Outdoor learning. Picture credit: Theo Pagan

time. After all as our headteacher said, "We have a great reputation for being inclusive and supportive to all students who may have been unsuccessful elsewhere, and we have a great track record of high academic results."

Ah, I guess home education isn't such an easy life. Is it worth it?

Home-schooling can be a very successful method of education if done properly. In my time as a home-schooler I have encountered many people who have flourished outside the school system. I have known people aged between 13 and 15 who have already taken several GCSEs and achieved grade 8s and 9s.

Therefore, home-schooling can potentially be an extremely effective alternative to the school system if people understand that it is not the

"easy alternative to school". And, if you want to really reap the benefits, it's going to be far more challenging than the conventional school system.

Experiencing home-schooling first-hand has been an extremely enriching helping me become the person I am today. For where else could I possibly obtain a hobby of collecting animal skeletons?

If anyone reading this is considering home-schooling just remember, "the first 20 years are the worst"

**Meetings, the collective term for a group of home-schooled children.*

Theo Pagan

Striking a balance



Betty Booker and friends Bibi, Libby and Hannah, join the Youth Strike for Climate in September 2019. Picture credit: Daisy Turville-Petre

Climate change is a topic on everyone's lips. But how can one voice challenge a sea of indifference from the worlds of business and politics? Betty Booker describes the thinking process of a young activist.

Whether you've heard on the news, found it online or just seen at school, I'm sure you all know about the recent Youth Strikes for Climate that have been taking place all over the world, the closest to us being in Norwich. Sparked by the Swedish 16 year-old Greta Thunberg, students have been striking from school on Fridays throughout the year.

The campaign called Fridays for Future is based around the idea that something needs to change in the big industries that produce over 70% of the world's carbon. Greta Thunberg's idea is that they won't listen to young people and the only way anything big has ever changed is by a mass movement. She said that the only thing young people have that governments and big corporations care about is school. The only thing they can do to make themselves heard is to give it up and go on strike.

Last month over 6 million people attended in 4,500 locations in 150 countries. I was one of them.

In my opinion the best way to have a big impact is it stand up and be counted and to strike. However I also feel that we all need to contribute to the climate crisis by making a difference in our own lives. If we all group together and we all don't drop that Coke can or don't leave on the lights downstairs overnight (even if it is scary!), we might just tip the balance. We all need to do our little bit, and if we all do that, then something big, a real change for the better, will be created before our eyes. You see this concept everywhere. For example on mufti days here at school: I only have to pay £1 and although that may seem small and insignificant to me, if everyone does it, we see amazing amounts going to charity, lots more than £1000.

My idea is that if everyone gave in that one pound; if everyone picked up that one wrapper and if everyone chose the greater good over convenience, chose what is right over what is easy, then we could change this world for the better. I think that you have to help in

every situation possible, in your house, in your school, in your village, and then you can look bigger like these climate strikes.

Betty Booker



More strikers. Credit: Daisy Turville-Petre

Climate change: a local and a global challenge

As the climate begins to heat up, Nick Feistner considers the risks facing our world and what we can do about it here at Aylsham High School.

Climate change is an issue affecting everybody around the globe. As you may already know the world is slowly heating up thanks to excess emissions in the earth's atmosphere. These emissions are trapping heat in from the sun which is heating up our planet. According to an ongoing temperature analysis conducted by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, the average global temperature on Earth has increased by about 0.8° Celsius since 1880. Although this number appears very small it has already had a devastating consequence on the planet we live on. One of the impacts of global warming is that it is causing the polar ice caps to melt. This is impacting the wildlife which live in these areas of the globe as it is reducing their habitat size. One of the main animals affected is the polar bear. The polar bear relies on large sheets of ice to hunt and catch its food. Without the ice sheets the polar

bear cannot catch seals so begins to starve. This has had a huge impact on the polar bear population with numbers plummeting 40 per cent between 2001-2010 from 1,500 to 900 bears in the Northeast Alaska and the Northwest Territories. Global warming is also having a devastating effect on the human race: rising sea levels are directly linked to the melting of the polar ice caps. As polar ice caps melt they add water into the oceans. These vast quantities of fresh water are causing sea levels to rise across the globe. This means that many low lying countries and islands could be submerged underwater in the near future if the rate of global warming doesn't slow down. For those living in places like The Netherlands, the threat is very real. Currently about one third of The Netherlands lies below sea level. This means that, if sea levels continue to rise, much this north European country could be submerged, which could result in significant population movement and potentially catastrophic risks to business and product production.

However, there still is hope. People have become aware of the situation and there are many projects and ideas designed to help slow down the rate of climate change so it is at a safe level. One project that you can help get involved with is recycling around the school.

As you are probably aware by now Mr Ravasse is leading the way to create a better environment that we work in whilst also having a positive impact on the wider environment. As you will see around school all the bins have been labelled with different coloured stickers showing what rubbish should be placed in which. If we work together to take notice of these stickers and the bins are used correctly, the amount of landfill rubbish produced by the school will be vastly reduced. This will positively help the environment as previously used items can be recycled and turned into new items instead of being buried underground.

So please think about what you are throwing away and place it in the correct bin. Together we can make a impact!

Nick Feistner



Eco Team Update!

It is now possible to recycle empty crisp packets at the school. Look for the rainbow crisp packet box in the dining hall and eat without the (environmental) guilt!



Aylsham High School Eco Team volunteers and the new crisp recycling facility. Credit: Guillaume Ravasse.

What is the value of truth?

This autumn's annual public speaking competition did not disappoint. With an imaginative array of fantastic speeches musing on the value of truth from Cherry, Tatiana, Etholle, Nathan, Amy, Jadzia, Noah, Rohan, Isabella, Florence, Emily, Beth, George and Theo, the judges had another challenge on their hands. However, with his original, thoughtful and entertaining words, it was Present Tense's own Theo Pagan who brought home the first prize.

Good evening, I am here today to talk about truth and I thought that the best way of showing truth visually was with this state-of the art, ex NASA lie-detector.

To illustrate how accurate it is I would just like to take this opportunity to say

how wonderful the teachers are at Aylsham High School and I am sure that they are the best in the country, if not the world.

To truly understand the "value of truth" one must understand the difference between **truth** and **fact**. Fact is an undeniable piece of evidence that can be proven over and over, tested and explored. Truth on the other hand is a little more, as we educated people say, "woolly". Truth may vary according to different perceptions of similar facts.

For example, you may have heard of a former BBC sports presenter called David Icke who now refers to himself as "Voice of Godhead". He fervently believes that the Royal family are in fact a race of interdimensional reptilian humanoids known as the Archeons. For him this is the truth, but as we all know this is complete and utter nonsense.

Therefore what we can draw from this is that truth is **relative**.

But to be serious now, in this day and age of social media and fake news it is healthy to have a cynical view on everything we are told. So then we may question statements issued by politicians and others who seek to influence our opinions. For it is all too easy for an idea to go "viral" as they say, in our world of Facebook and Instagram.

In our lives nowadays we are constantly inundated with information claiming to be truth, and it is our responsibility to accept that little of it may be comprised of fact. This is the only way to successfully navigate the sea of online information available to us.

Politicians throughout history have used the tactic of being economical with the truth to their advantage but never to the extent we are seeing in



Finalists for this year's Aylsham High School Rotary Club Public Speaking Competition. Picture credit: Jo Bates



Mr Spalding congratulates this year's finalists on their speeches. Picture credit: Jo Bates

modern-day politics, most prominently in the United States. This is deeply worrying to me as our leaders are losing sight of the importance of truth.

Unless truth is valued, our political system is weakened.

Now we move on to the "value of truth". After what I have previously made clear, fact is far more valuable than truth. However pinpointing the exact value of truth is difficult, but, after spending many hard hours toiling over equations, obtaining

different truths and calculating averages I have finally concluded that the value of a bespoke British truth lies between 83.5p and 85.2 pence per kilo.

Before I end I would like to say that I have the utmost respect for all my opponents and wish them the very best of luck.

Alas, my speech must draw to a close but I implore you to remember my parting message as:

If you value truth highly then it is best to find the facts for yourself because

secondhand truth can be subject to a spectrum of distortion from unintentional biases through to completely misleading fibs.

Thank you very much for listening and as Woody Allen once said, "Why ruin a good story with the truth?"

Theo Pagan

The Three Sisters

A story by Ella Thompson-Read, pictures by Millie Sykes

Once upon a time there was a storm. It billowed and raged for months on end. Its sharp talons dug into the rocks and threw waves around like rag dolls. It took many lives in its unearthly tantrum, balling its fists at the cliffs and kicking its untamed legs at the sky. In the middle of the storm was an island, the Isle of Lament.

On that rock lived three young women, each with their own talent. The eldest had enough beauty to charm any creature and had a voice as holy as the angels themselves. The middle child had brains, she would sit in the library day after day, and knew half the languages there to know! Yet, the youngest was different, she wasn't smart or beautiful, she was adventurous and dreamed of the sea.

One night, the sisters told stories around a campfire, the eldest told of demons and unearthly creatures, the middle child told of a sea and how Death himself had bound them to this desolate, craggy rock. Entranced by this tale, the youngest boasted of how she could sail out into the black ocean. Her sisters were outraged! It was common knowledge they would never leave. That night, the youngest snuck out on their boat, it was tattered and

had been in pieces when she first found it. After she nailed it and given it a lick of paint, it was in ship shape and raring to go. The night was cold and icy, but the sister was defiant. She pushed her boat into the sea, and the storm began...

The sisters wept. They howled at the moon and tore at the last remaining slivers of sun. Their hearts grew haggard and their eyes hollow. Their voices writhed and wriggled like snakes.

Death took pity on them, and swept down to the island in the form of an old, weak man. "Dear, sweet, fruitful misses, will you spare me food?" he said. They didn't even look at him. "I am a weary traveller and have sailed the sea for many days until my boat sank." The middle looked up. "My sister died in that storm, you are old, and know the art of hunting, leave us in peace," she spat. "Stop acting like a childish fool, look after yourself."

Death paused, "Not even a game of cards..."

The middle stood up, "Games are for children, and children die, like my sister. I will not take your hand in this foul game."



The sisters wept. They howled at the moon and tore at the last remaining slivers of sun.

Death was infuriated, he bellowed; "You are no longer a child, yes, but that is not an excuse to forget your joy. Your heart is stony cold, and however smart you are, you will never fill that gap." Thunder crackled, the sky split itself in half with lightning, and the middle child was no longer there. Only a rock, as hard [continued on page 18]

AYLSHAM HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS

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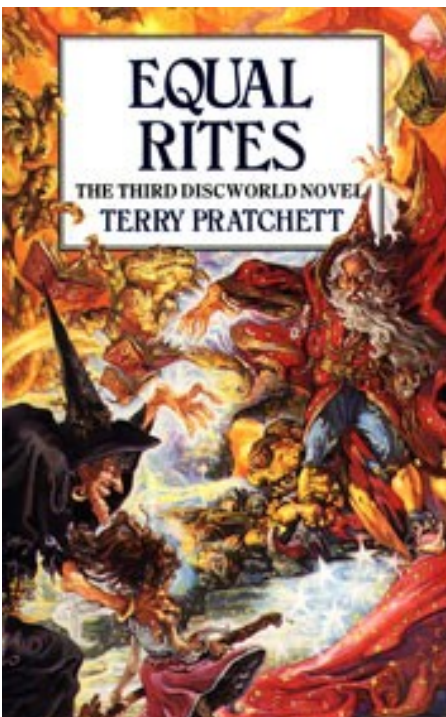
Reviews

Equal Rites

Terry Pratchett, Corgi

Equal Rites is an adventure fantasy book written by Terry Pratchett and it is the third novel of the Discworld series. Terry Pratchett uses fantasy setting, narrative and comedy to make this read one of the best I have ever read.

The series takes place on a disc-shaped world on the back of a giant turtle floating through space (confusing, I know). At the start of the book the



© Corgi

wizard Drum Billet's last act was to give his staff and protection to the eighth son of an eighth son - the world of magic being a very chauvinistic (not to say misogynistic) place - to become a wizard. However, excitement begins when we learn that he had forgotten to check something very important about the newborn baby...

I enjoyed this book because as well as telling a good narrative, it is funny and entertaining to read. At no point is it too slow and the pacing is very good. The story is refreshing as sections of comedy are littered throughout the book and it doesn't take itself too seriously. At the same time, Pratchett is able to tell an interesting and engaging story that makes you not want to stop reading. The characters are interesting, and the world-building is incredible. Overall this book is a very worthwhile read and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it throughout the summer holidays. Also, I will certainly recommend this book to my peers so they can enjoy it too.

Frederick Bower, year 8

Every Day

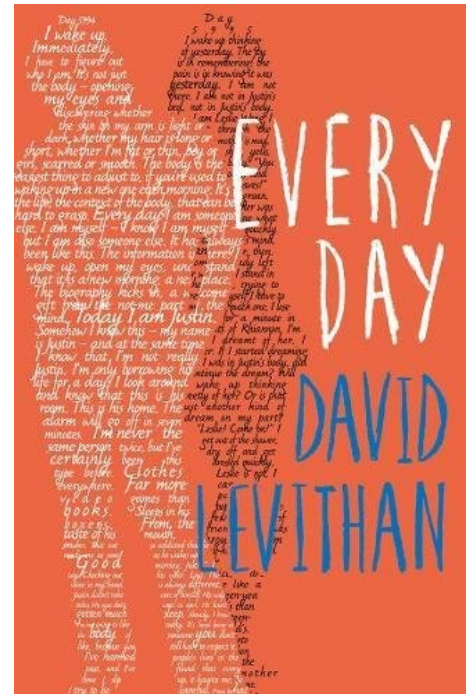
Philip Reeve, Egmont

About: It is about a person (nicknamed A) who changes bodies every day which causes him to feel confused, upset and alone. A, doesn't know if he/she has a family, where he/she is from. He/she isn't sure about their past or why it happens to him/her. Although,

this all changes when A meets Rhiannon...

Why I like it: I have never heard of anything like it before. I like it because it is unique, honest and interesting. Once I picked it up, I couldn't put it down.

Natalia, year 8



© Egmont

Don't forget AHS Book Group is in the library on Thursday lunchtime every Week 2. Bring your own lunch!



Games review: Boggle

How to play: Firstly, shake the letter cubes until they fall into place within the grid. Flip the timer and you have three minutes to spot as many unique words as you can in the 4x4 letter grid.

Words mean points, and the player with the most points wins. Although, only words not spotted by another player count.

Why I like it: I like it because it is a fast paced game requiring quick thinking, determination and a good

eye to spot distinctive words which your opponent may have missed.

As well as it being great fun, Boggle broadens your vocabulary and helps you think of interesting words whilst being under pressure, from the clock, which is needed for all subjects such as English and literature.

Stevie Ashby, year 8



[continued from page 15] as iron and as bleak ice. It was about a metre tall, and had the engraved message of 'just because you're old and grey, doesn't mean you can't shine another day. Children may see things you cannot, remember never to let childhood be



Death took pity on them, and swept down to the island in the form of an old, weak man.

forgot.'

The eldest was torn, her heart, her sanity, her family were gone. The storm grew louder, stronger, angrier. She whipped round, "THIS IS YOUR FAULT! IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!" she bellowed at the old man, the words whipped by the wind from her mouth. "I will give you one, and only one chance," he offered. "NO! NO MORE! MY SISTERS ARE GONE, AND NOW NO ONE WILL ADMIRE ME AGAIN, YOU SPITEFUL CREATURE!" she shrieked, slowly losing hope, breath and the will to carry on. "So, it's admiration you seek, I can help you with that..." he hissed. His hands shrank, his cloak disappeared, his skin turned scaly and green, and all that was left was a snake on the ground.

The eldest shrieked, she was petrified of all kinds of scaly creatures, especially the evil old man kind. "One chance... Don't blow it," she whispered to herself. Death slithered to the nearest tree and clambered to the highest branch. "You wish for admiration - I mean your sisters

back?" he hissed. "Then pick the sweetest apple on the tree." "Ha! Easy!" she boasted nervously. There were two apples, one was mouldy, and the other was a vision of glory, it was ripe, juicy and succulent. The eldest reached out and touched the apple, it was nice and sturdy, and it seemed untouched by the raging winter storms. "Take a bite..." he hissed. And so she did the most fateful mistake, she listened to Death himself. The apple was sour, it was squishy and rotten, and she recoiled in horror to see that the apple, the succulent juicy apple, was poisoned! Her eyes widened in shock, and saw, her sister perfectly fine and alive, climbing out of her boat, and onto the island.

That night, the storm had been deadly and the rain was torrential. The youngest was terrified and was frantically paddling away, but it was too late, she was in the eye of the storm. Then, just as all hope was lost, in the distance, she spied a light, it was her sisters, it must be! But little did she know, it was the lightning before the middle sister died. She paddled as fast as she can to the shore, but she wasn't met by smiling faces, no, only sharp, jagged rocks. She swerved her boat to the side, avoiding its obsidian claws. Relief tumbled over her as her boat landed on the island, and she scrambled up to the dunes, only to see her sister eat the poisoned apple.

The youngest wept, her salty tears were licked by the wind. Her sister was

slowly disappearing, first her arms turned to wood, then her legs and finally her beautiful emerald eyes turned grey. She had lost her sister and it was all her fault, she never should have left! But it was too late, she could do nothing. The youngest groped for the apple and, in one bite, swallowed it whole.

The golden sand dunes seemed to sway and dance in the wind like innocent children. A large, black rock stood broad at the tip, a heart engraved in its surface with a message. Beside it sat an apple tree, grand and tall, ancient over time, but just as beautiful as ever. It was said that many years ago, a girl was tricked into to becoming that tree, as she picked a cursed apple. Many told of a girl who had been turned to stone too, as she was stony cold and harsh as ice. This was a long time ago, as the tale was merely folklore. But I believe it, I believe every word, and it was said that the youngest survived, somehow. Apparently, she passed Death's test, and she was turned into a larger being than herself; the ocean. My mother used to tell me these stories when I was young, but I believe it, it's all true. I just know it! I can feel it, and sometimes I still hear their melancholy voices on the wind. Someday, I'm going to meet the youngest child, I just know it.

Ella Thompson-Read



She pushed her boat into the sea, and the storm began...

Pencil Case

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 Q E G A T I R E H B A C K G R O U N D H E P C E
 T W J Y T D T Z T L I F T S T E C W Y T F H Z P
 B N O I T A N I M I R C S I D T I I E L F N L A
 G M G V C U L T U R E P G F P J T D N A I M C Q
 L R C O D W E G E N D E R P R Q L U C E D C B Y
 A P A K I G N S Z R Z L X H H U W L H E Q J
 R I B G S D I V E R S I T Y V M V G P V M F
 B I S E X U A L L B Y M E F X C T L Y U
 V H J Q N Z Q Y F T U F P A A S T K
 F N I N C L U S I O N S N E I E
 A W N U S Q R L J E C Q L S
 E V O L J V A X E S A C
 G X Z A Q U B Y U M
 A X B A X X Q Y
 J L Y E E P
 Q O S W
 C A

ACCEPTANCE
 AGE
 ASEXUAL
 BACKGROUND
 BELIEF
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