

# The Gryphon

April 2021

**INSIDE:  
FEMALE  
LEADERSHIP  
SPECIAL**  
Interviews,  
articles,  
competitions  
and much  
more!!!!



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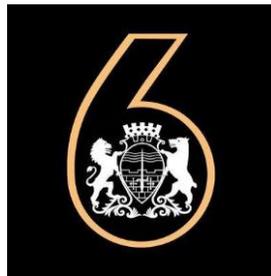
A Magazine for the Students  
... made by the Students



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Beechen Cliff



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## Thank you Covid Testers!

This is the first magazine since our return to physical, rather than virtual, school. As a result, it is time for us to pay tribute to all of the incredible work that has gone into ensuring that our return to school has been as safe and Covid-secure as it possibly can be. This has happened in so many ways from senior management who planned our re-entry, to teachers who devised our lessons and to the support staff who made sure that students could return to school in the most normal and reassuring way possible. Yet the prospect of returning to being in school has been only made viable by the team of Covid testers who were responsible for delivering, administering and overseeing the series of school based tests that were required upon our return. The team that, as of last week, had given out 4500 tests, whilst wearing personal protective equipment throughout on top of their normal jobs. The team that stepped up and volunteered themselves to ensure that the students of the school were protected against this truly terrible virus to the best of the school's ability. On behalf of, I'm sure, the rest of the school, we thank you for everything you've done and we pay tribute to the immense contribution to our return that you undertook which was done on an entirely voluntary basis. Thank you.

**Toby Hawkins**



Let's be clear as well, the process of organising and administering the testing of a school of over a thousand students is no easy one. This is especially so when you consider the limited guidance that was provided from the government, the stream of abuse that school staff have had to put up with from sections of the media throughout the pandemic and the continual waves of problems that have come at schools constantly over the past twelve months. ⊥

With every hurdle, it appears that the staff of this school consistently rise to the challenge, always finding a solution and always putting the welfare and education of the students first. The achievements of the team of Covid testers cannot go unnoticed, nor overstated. No doubt many of us as students were desperate to get back into school, to be amongst our friends and peers, seeing our teachers face to face and engaging with the opportunities that come with being in school, yet that simply wouldn't have been possible without the work of the Covid testing team and every other member of staff who contributed to our return. As was mentioned before, thank you!





## The Stigma Around 'the Feminist'

Do you consider yourself to be a feminist?

There is a wide misconception that those who call themselves a "Feminist" consider women to be superior to men, think that women deserve *more* rights than men, or even, are 'men-hating'. However, feminism and misandry (dislike and prejudice against men) are not synonymous. Feminism allows people to look at the world not as it is, but how it should be. Women *and* men are worthy of equal human rights: the feminist movement is not in place to disempower men, but instead to advocate equality of the sexes in all areas of society. The movement intends to place women on the same pedestal as men, so that it is a fair playing field, not to give women an unjust advantage. Perhaps the root of this fallacy is people thinking that women and men *are* in fact equal in society nowadays, and that giving women any more rights would put them above men, that it is 'going too far'. But it is paramount that these people understand that, although it may not be obvious to you in your environment, the discrimination and oppression that women face, nationally and globally, remains prevalent today.

**Ava Masani, Lottie Cooper and Georgie Charlesworth**



The discussion of feminism triggers a defensive response in many people and the conversation is all too often dismissed to avoid conflict or discomfort. Rather than avoiding these important exchanges, people should choose to engage, and try to listen to the other person's opinion. It can be very easy to overlook someone else's discomfort or problems when you can't see them, however it is incredibly important that the young men of this generation listen to the stories of their friends and sisters. Lots of young men and boys think that when we talk about harassment we are referring to the worst case scenarios, usually meaning either rape or abuse. But actually it is the 'little things' that have a detrimental effect on women's confidence on the street. These 'radical feminists' are in fact striving to benefit everyone - both women and men.

Feminism benefits men as well. The equality of the sexes is in everyone's best interest, as it would allow men to be freed from both toxic masculinity and the society that imposes set standards. Instead of being repeatedly told to "man up", we should instead aim for a society where men are not frowned upon when opening up about their emotions



As Canadian author Justine Musk said, “The enemy of feminism isn’t men. It’s patriarchy, and patriarchy is not men. It is a system, and women can support the system of patriarchy just as men can support the feminist movement.”

Let’s face it; women will not be able to initiate a turn around here by themselves. Men are needed to make a permanent difference. Feminism requires support from everyone. It is not a women’s protest against men, but instead an opportunity for all of society, women, men, older and younger generations, to come together and create change. We should all be feminists.



## An Interview with Mrs Salmon

A Wednesday afternoon in the library may at first appear insignificant but it is in fact the scene of a remarkable educational balancing act and perhaps “balancing act” is the best way to describe what it means to be both a mother and a Head of Department. A perennial support act, this year Mrs Salmon became the protagonist as she took the reins of the English Department on an interim basis to cover Mrs O’Higgins’ maternity leave and it has hardly been an armchair ride.

Mrs Salmon’s role as an intelligent woman with authority is one she described as “essential” in an all boys school, despite her belief that the only requirement for an authority role should be ability. Throughout her years as a teacher, Mrs Salmon has “never had an issue that was gender based” and faced no issues while training to become teacher, which is unsurprising as 76% of teachers are female (Gov.Uk). At Beechen Cliff, the school is proud to have a good gender balance on its senior leadership, with four of the ten most senior roles in the school filled by women, and two of the five Heads of House being female.



Mrs Salmon revealed to The Gryphon that she works “at least one day of the weekend” and while our society is becoming more progressive, the expectation is still that the mother is the primary carer and perhaps that is why so few women are in senior educational roles.



During the Covid-19 school closures, a Mumsnet survey of more than 1,500 women found that 79% agreed that “responsibility for homeschooling fell largely to me” and 77% agreed that “it was impossible for me to work uninterrupted”. Mrs Salmon told us that her family have been “very supportive” throughout her temporary command but also admitted she is “at work longer” and that, in term time, she can “never really switch off” and in the holidays it takes “a few days” to do so. On the topic of education during lockdown, Mrs Salmon was keen to insist how her and other teachers felt “frustrated” and “undervalued” by the media and their portrayal of how Covid-19 has supposedly halted education, despite her and her colleagues' tireless work to keep us learning.

Ultimately, while Mrs Salmon may not be the permanent Head of English, her tenure will always be momentous. For a woman to balance the duties of motherhood and run a faculty is nothing but remarkable. While she may be in the minority at the moment, let us hope that as society repairs itself from the Coronavirus pandemic we see more intelligent women in authority.



## Understanding Autism

**A Q&A on a commonly misunderstood genetic disorder, with a diagnosed individual.**

**Q: What do you think is the most misunderstood aspect of autism?**

**A:** Neurotypical people believe we are weird or unnatural, when we are actually very normal people who just happen to have a different neurological pattern within our brains that make us think in a different way.

**Q: What are your favourite attributes of having ASD?**

**A:** For me personally, my photographic memory because I then find it so much easier to retain and remember facts and knowledge than the 'normal' neurotypical person does. I also feel I benefit from my heightened senses, as it really feels like having superpowers!

**Q: What is the best way to approach a person with autism?**

**A:** Speak to us like normal people. I cannot vouch for everyone, as there is a saying 'once you've met one person with ASD you've only met **one** person with ASD', meaning the disorder is different in every single diagnosed individual, but for me personally, I prefer if people don't even know or recognise that I have the diagnosis. This is because then I don't feel like I have automatically been put into a 'weird' stereotype. I want to be myself around people without worrying about all the stigma attached to the label.



**Q: What helps you on a day-to-day basis?**

**A:** Having a set routine really helps me through the day. It means I'm able to visualise everything I need to do and if I meet any distractions I can put myself back on track without experiencing any extra anxiety.

**Q: Did the diagnosis provide support for you in any way?**

**A:** The diagnosis definitely gave me security, as I was then able to explain to peers and teachers that I had a reason for not understanding them completely. It also helped my confidence because I could be supported in school in a way that helps me understand things.

**Q: What are the main qualities of autism you can see within a diagnosed individual?**

**A:** Firstly, autism is such a massive spectrum. If you are low functioning you are more likely to be in a specialised school, whereas if you are high functioning you are more likely to be in a mainstream school. Quite often, you wouldn't even recognise someone with high functioning autism until you get to know us, as we are able to mask our symptoms very well. Generally, though, we all have at least 4 out of 5 qualities that give us our diagnosis. These qualities are:

**Difficulties with social communication and interaction**, which can be either subtle or obvious.

**Self-stimulatory behaviour**, which I prefer to call self-soothing behaviors. These again can either be subtle or obvious movements that I do when my senses or mind have become overloaded.



**Extreme special interests** is another and these can be to do with anything for example trains, languages, TV shows etc.

**Heightened senses**, such as not being able to wear clothes because they are itchy or not eating foods because of their texture. We are also very sensitive to noise and smells, an example of which would be strong perfume.

The last one is **theory of mind**, which is the ability to understand how someone else might be feeling which many of us struggle with, as we have to learn how someone's feeling instead of knowing it intuitively.

Every human can have any one of these qualities but it is likely all the qualities put together in a package that makes a person autistic.

You can find out more about autism from the National Autistic Society: <https://www.autism.org.uk/>





## Ramadan

I come from a Muslim Egyptian background. I've noticed that many people often avoid learning about Islam or Islamic practices. This tends to be because of the nuances of aggression and sexism, encouraged by the media, and whilst there are aspects of the system built around the religion that are sexist, it's a small part of so much more. Ramadan is coming up this April. To an outsider, Ramadan is usually perceived as a painful time of fasting and discipline, however it's entirely the opposite. Ramadan for a Muslim is a time of forgiveness, light, generosity, love, partying and spiritual refreshment.

During the night, in a Muslim country like Egypt, there's endless food, parties, discos, light, noise and life. Nighttime during Ramadan is emblematic of everyone's exhilaration and sanctity. Life and vitality is in the air and everyone feels it. You may not believe in God, or Allah. You may be atheist, or agnostic like me, but the shared energy and love of people in Cairo on a scintillating Ramadan night, was what my younger self could only see as Allah. Perhaps, as a child, you imagined God as the classic big, old, white man with a white beard. But having experienced Ramadan, as a child, God wasn't a material, graphic man. God was the tangible life, the happiness and the energy that circulated in the city.

**Nazra Hawash**

Ramadan isn't a fanatically religious tradition, as it's sometimes regarded. Above all, it's a time of sharing and love. In Muslim countries, during Ramadan and Eid, no one goes without food and water at Iftar. Iftar is the meal after sunset that breaks the fast, when everyone eats together. My family's meal was always spread out on the floor on newspaper in the biggest room (a table wasn't big enough for the amount of food and people) and everyone would eat with their hands; Chicken, fish, rice, mahshi, koshari, molokheya, and more. In Egypt, throughout Ramadan, there will always be a place to eat at Iftar, whether that's with strangers or loved ones. I remember driving from Hurghada to Cairo with my dad during Ramadan; At a stopover, because it was very close to Iftar, the man who owned it offered that we join him and his family for food, even though we were complete strangers. It was a shock to me then but, as I now know, no one is a stranger during Ramadan.



Nazra and her family celebrating and eating their Iftar meal



## Q & A with Miss Mather

**Could you outline for us your path to becoming a teacher?**

I didn't realise I wanted to be a teacher until my final year of university. I had very grand plans to be a very high up hotshot lawyer in London and I just realised that I don't like confrontation or sitting in front of a computer all day, which were really the only options for a career in law. Then I looked at my skills and, you know, I like people, I like young people and I like having no two-days the same. I thought right, let's be a teacher.

I did my postgraduate and then I got my first job as a 'run of the mill' law and politics teacher but had to leave after just four months due to the school realising that law and politics wasn't a viable option for them to offer due to student numbers etc. I had to find another job and the post of Head of Law and Politics came up at Beechen so, yeah I just went for it really. I just thought 'well I think I can do it'. Every year since, internal jobs have come up and I always think if opportunities come up, you should go for them. Fortunately I've always got them and so here I am now!



**Do you think it's easier or harder to get into teaching, as a woman, than compared to a male colleague or is there no difference?**

To get into teaching, I think it's the same. When I did my training, we had a very even mix of male and female trainees. I also don't think progression is necessarily different either and that it's more that, in any job, women might worry that there are barriers for them that wouldn't be there for male equivalents. Things like maternity leave or going part-time with children, which obviously affect men to some extent, but you have to question if women are progressing as much as men. For me, I never think of gender as an issue but I know it would be for a lot of people and it causes a lot of internal questioning and anxiety of 'am I good enough compared to this male counterpart?'

**What obstacles did you encounter personally and what obstacles do you think women encounter more generally when they're trying to progress their career?**

For me, I think it's mainly kind of self doubt, some of which does come from being a woman. When you look at management positions, so many of them are filled by men that, as a woman, you begin to question why that is. This encroaches your own doubts and self belief. I think that's a national picture as well, which means it becomes a systemic problem.



**Do you see any difference in working in a mixed sixth form and the all boys side of the school?**

Generally speaking, the main difference in sixth form when you bring mixed sexes into the equation, there's so much that the boys can learn from the girls. This is in terms of manners, in terms of what's acceptable and what isn't acceptable, in terms of respect. Equally, it works the other way as well so a lot of the girls can learn from the boys. I think that until the boys at Beechen get to Sixth Form, sometimes they don't see the difference that when you bring in some strong female characters, they don't take any nonsense! Suddenly you see the boys realising that something they thought might be acceptable is maybe not, and that's so interesting to see happen so quickly at the start of Year 12.

**You had your daughter when you were quite young - would you be willing to outline what that was about or what the circumstances of it were? Feel free to say no.**

Yeah sure! So, I was in Year 12, Christmas of Year 12, when I had my daughter and it was all quite a surprise. I just thought either I could just drop out of school and have that 'what if' hanging over me, or I could just do everything I can and pass that down to my daughter. Luckily my mum was able to help out and my daughter went to nursery at the youngest possible age. I ended up going back to school six days after giving birth and never missed a day after that!



A big part of my mindset is there are a lot of people out there who go through a lot of difficult things so I didn't let it stop me. It didn't really stop me doing anything except going on holiday with my mates to Ibiza!

**How did you find dealing with doing A-Levels, having a baby, and trying to start a career all within a very short time period?**

I think the main thing was not knowing any differently. It's a bigger issue to be doing the normal three A-Levels and have your spare time taken away from you, whereas, because I never had that normality in Sixth Form, I didn't know any different. I think, generally, that the view in society that women will stay at home and have children is quite damaging. There's a lot of work that needs to be done to combat these traditional, archaic views of the woman as the 'stay at home mother' who can't go and work, because it is possible and there's a lot of help out there to enable that as well.

**Who were your role models when you were growing up?**

David Attenborough and my granny. She was just happy all the time!





## **What do you think has been the most pivotal moment in the campaign for gender equality?**

Surely women getting the vote has to be one of the biggest parts of that. As a left-field suggestion in terms of law, something I think is quite powerful is that until 1991, so incredibly recently in the grand scheme of things, it was legal for a husband to have non-consensual sex with his wife because 'your wife is your wife' and 'they must consent because you're married'. It wasn't until a quite high-up legal case in 1991 that they actually changed the law, so for the first time ever a husband could be convicted of raping his wife. I think the precedent that set, in terms of that relationship, was very powerful.

## **When are we going to get a female President of the United States?**

Well, let's say 2024 and hope for the best shall we! Whether it's Kamala Harris or someone else and on either side of the fence, I don't mind, but I think it's about time isn't it?! I'm going to be optimistic and say 2024.



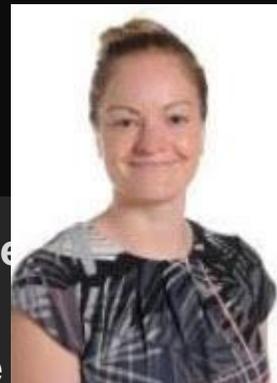
## Q & A with Ms Sullivan

**Firstly, what was your pathway to becoming a teacher?**

Good initial question! When I was at school, I actually wanted to be a broadcast journalist and so I initially chose my A-Levels based on that, so I chose Drama, English and Media Studies. Then I was told that actually if I wanted to go into journalism, I should instead study history or politics. 16 year-old me was like 'Hell no!' to politics so I chose to do History A-Level and it was whilst I was doing that, I realised I wanted to read history at uni and become a history teacher. I'd also, whilst at university, done a lot of work with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds as a mentor on Sutton Trust summer schools. This meant I also had experience working with young people so it was the love of History A-Level and working with young people that made me want to be a teacher. I read history at Bristol university for my undergraduate degree and then went to Cambridge for my PGCE.

**As a woman, would you say it's easier or harder to become a teacher than a male counterpart?**

Not at entry level, no. In fact, when I was training, there were 20 of us in my cohort and only 3 guys, so going into teaching, I don't think your gender makes a difference. I think that, at higher levels perhaps, women are underrepresented, but that's just my perception.



## **What obstacles did you face in becoming a teacher during your career progression?**

Finance was an obstacle for me as a student. I came from a single parent family and I had the full university loans and maintenance grants.

Once I was in the career, I guess the main issue most teachers face is time. The time pressures we're under and being able to do the job as properly as we want to is very difficult. That can also make it more difficult if you're wanting to progress because it's hard to fit in the extra stuff you want to do in order to prove yourself.

## **What's it like being a female member of staff in a predominantly boys' school, compared to a mixed school? Are there many differences?**

Not in the classroom. I mean, I did have more behavioural issues when I started here but I think lots of that was down to me being a new teacher, and that's normal at every school. I would say that, around the school, there are certain occasions when the boys don't respond to me and my instructions in the same way that I'd observe them respond to 'other' members of staff.



## **Why do you think that's the case?**

I think it's not just a problem in a single sex school and that it's a wider, societal issue. Even at my last school, quite often the older year groups would have an issue with following a female member of staff's instructions and it's also quite often that if a male member of staff joins in, then the demeanor of the conversation would change. Of course, it's not all students and it's certainly not just Beechen, but it's definitely a wider issue in society.

## **You're one of the most senior female members of staff within the school in your role as Assistant Head - how does it make you feel?**

I did feel a lot of pressure when I joined. I felt pressure over simple things as well, such as what I wear to work. Being the only woman, at the time, on the core senior leadership team, I felt like I needed to be smart and professional, which is quite easy for a man - suit and tie - but for a woman, there's more of a grey area. Even with small things like that I was thinking very carefully about. What I will say is that the rest of my team very much advocated for me and I got an immediate feeling of how much Mr Davies and Mr Markall, my direct line managers, wanted me to succeed and were very supportive of me.



For example, when I first joined, I was sat around the table in the Headmaster's quite formal office and I did experience imposter syndrome, thinking things like 'will I be able to live up to expectations?' or 'am I meant to be here?', but they both constantly tried to bring me into the conversation during meetings. That made me feel like I'd settled in well and was actually having a positive impact.

**As a politics and history teacher, what would you say was the most pivotal moment, so far, in the campaign for women's rights and gender equality?**

I would say there's probably two that spring to mind. Either the Women's Liberation Movement that started in 60s America, following the Civil Rights campaign, which spearheaded the beginning of changes. Recently though, I think we've seen regression in how women are treated because, whilst we may have equal rights in the eyes of the law, that's not happening in daily practice. Therefore, the second one is the #MeToo campaign following the Harvey Weinstein allegations and prosecution, which started lots of conversations which was very powerful, and a lot of conversations I think a lot of men found shocking, about 'everyday' things women go through and what our daily experiences are like.



You know, this includes things like name-calling or being touched inappropriately. Regarding the perhaps more obvious suffragette movement, you can change the law so women can vote but that wasn't enough to change people's behaviour.

**What would be the thing you most want to see happen in terms of improving equality and specifically equality for women?**

At a national level, it has to be greater representation. That means that if we have to have purely female ballots or ballots solely for BAME people at elections or job interviews, etc, then that's the way we've got to do it because there's a reason we don't have more women and BAME people coming up through the ranks. That's due to societal prejudice. If we have to take action to have greater representation, then so be it. We need the next generation and younger generations to see people 'like them' in important roles, to have those aspirations.

**When are we going to get a female President of the United States?**

At the next election? No. In 25 years? Maybe but I still think it's unlikely. In 50 years? I think it'll be highly likely we'll have one by then.



## Q&A with Mrs Thompson

**I've heard you've had quite an interesting career and career pathway - could you tell us a bit about that?**

So my degree was in economics and politics which leaves you at the end of three years with not really being 100% sure of what you're going to do with it! I kind of fell into a role in newspapers. At the time, it was health and safety and quality assurance, but that slowly developed into a HR role. I was working down in Southampton and they moved me to regional HR so I covered the South West region, which is why I ended up in Bath. I continued with HR and then I had my children and we decided I would take a few years off. At the time, I'd conducted a massive redundancy programme and made nearly 100 people redundant because printed newspapers were dying and that kind of almost broke me. It was really hard. So I decided I actually really wanted to go into education and I thought 'I'll do teaching!'. I started by volunteering at a primary school as a Teaching Assistant and then applied for a teaching and admin role at a local primary school. It was clear that admin in schools is where I should go, so, for the last 15 years, I've gradually worked my way from a general admin assistant, through to HR manager, to a school business manager and I did my diploma, and then I applied for this job. Then this role has sort of become what it is now, really.



I was taken on as the Head's PA but actually it's changed to become an administration manager because I cover so many areas. Now I do HR, health and safety, financial planning support for staff, I'm a governor representing support staff. And in the last year I've taken on Covid as well!

**Would you say it's easier or harder to get to the position you're in as a woman than for a male equivalent?**

I think that any role for a woman is harder because we are our own worst enemy. I've come across very few women who relinquish the 'home' role when they take on a big role at work. In that respect, we're always serving two masters. Most men I've worked with, they do their job but they're not also having to schedule dentist appointments for children, or sort out vet appointments for pets, or think about what's for tea when they're doing that. It is hard to get to this role in education. I think that the barriers are falling rapidly and I'm hopeful about that. I think the biggest challenge for us is that we hold more than one role.

**So you started your career in news - what was that like for you because it's known to be, for everyone, a very intimidating environment?**

So I started in a magazine printing company and I was the only woman and I was 21, just out of university, so I had to run around teams of men and essentially tell them they were doing things wrong.



I found the best way to do that was with humour and being respectful and on the whole, they were superb. I was never shy of making my opinions known, but I've always done it in the best way I possibly can.

I moved away from the magazine side of the company to go to the HR aspect fully and actually I found that the women in that environment were far more difficult than the men. Really defensive and really protective of their role. You know, it's a pressured environment, it's sales and target orientated. I was in HR so I was the one sorting out disciplinaries if they weren't meeting targets and it was 'bang, bang, bang!', so, you know, it was a very tough environment. I did enjoy it but I didn't enjoy seeing it collapse and so I've always fallen back into roles where I look after people. That's what my job is now!

**When you spoke about the fact the women tended to be more defensive than the men, do you think that's because of the more pressure women are under?**

I think so, yeah. In my whole time there, we never had a problem with sales targets with the females because they would work so hard to never be in that position. That was always interesting. It was always the men who were able to relax a bit more because they felt more secure in that environment. The women were always hard working, always arrived first and left last. It was a really interesting baptism of fire from working predominantly with men, to then go into that environment.

**As a mother, how do you feel, especially regarding the news about Sarah Everard, knowing that that's what your daughters could go through when you send them off into the world?**

Partly incredibly excited for them. You trust them to make good decisions, you trust them to make safe decisions, but it is the minority of people that things like that happen to. My niece lives within a stone's throw of Clapham Common and she walked through that area of Tooting Sarah Everard did nearly every night of her life. She's lived there for 5 years and never had a problem, aside from the usual calling out etc, but she said 'there's nearly 7 million people living in that London area and that's just one person'. It's a part of our life, we don't want it to be part of our life, but there's always going to be something that is a danger. If we spent our life avoiding it, we wouldn't live our lives, so I hope for the best. I trust them to make the right decisions, I hope that the experiences they've had equips them to be able to handle those sorts of situations and just... got to let it fly, haven't you. They know if they've got a problem, they can contact us but we can't live their lives for them, and they know we'll always be there to support them.

**Is there a single bit of advice or a message that you would give to all the female students in sixth form, and more generally, going forwards? What would be the thing you say?**

I just think be happy! Do you know what, we chase and chase and chase for what we think is our dream because that's what's expected of us. Forget it all, just be happy. We've been through hell for the last 18 months and, you know, I've got plenty of friends who slogged through university, did degrees in medicine, became doctors or did their law degrees. They've cracked up in the last year and are now living on, you know, I've got two who are living on fields in caravans because they just couldn't take their role anymore because they were so unhappy. The only thing I would say to anybody, and I say it to my girls, is 'I don't care what you do, so long as you're happy', If you're happy, then life is easy.



## Art in Lockdown

Art has played a far-reaching and significant role in lockdown. Art has taken inspiration from many places: people's fears, isolation, inspiration and heroism.

The beginning of lockdown saw people turn to art to express themselves in the unfamiliar situation that they suddenly found themselves in. Many of us will remember that families took part in The Rainbow Trail. The trail saw households draw, paint and create spectacularly colourful rainbows to place in their windows. The rainbow quickly became an iconic symbol for the NHS and was used to entertain children on their daily walks, boost morale and lift people's spirits. Artist Damien Hirst created two limited rainbow prints with his famous butterfly wing motif that sold for £300 and £1,000, with all proceeds going to NHS charities.

Many people have discovered the importance of art to their wellbeing and the joy it has brought to others, particularly in unprecedented times of uncertainty and darkness.

**Katie Osmond**



**@Covidartmusuem** on Instagram is a modern art museum, showcasing talented artists that have produced artwork during the Covid-19 crisis. Many of the pieces take inspiration from hygiene, vaccinations and masks. These art pieces can connect with many, including the themes of isolation and the fear that we have experienced during this pandemic. However, other art pieces are inspired by hope and optimism with a focus on accomplishments during the lockdown. This focus on the positive through art gives many confidence that even though it is a hard period for everyone, there are also good things to look forward to.

Covid Art Collection links:

[https://www.instagram.com/p/CFNle-gDI8w/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/CFNle-gDI8w/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

<https://www.singularart.com/en/collection/in-times-of-covid-19-1749>



Conceptual  
artwork by  
Damien Hirst



## Animation - 'Just for Kids'

In the last couple of decades, the number of live action remakes of animated films being churned out by film studios has increased exponentially. The main culprit of this is, of course, Disney, who kickstarted the trend back in 1994 with the live action remake of *The Jungle Book*, and has since released 16 more remakes of Disney classics such as *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin*. Other remakes are in the works, namely *The Little Mermaid* and *Bambi*. With each release rarely living up to their animated counterpart, I ask myself the same question. Why?

It's a cash grab. If there's one thing that Disney loves more than profit, it's profit from something they've already profited from but all over again. In most cases they'll recycle the same story, stripping a movie of all its classic Disney magic, throw in some household names like Will Smith or Emma Watson and send it out to the box office. The depressing thing is that it works tremendously well. All of their live action remakes have grossed at over \$100 million worldwide. Now, it would be unfair to say that these movies on their own are not enjoyable and I'm certainly not discrediting the performances of any actors in these films. The *Cinderella* remake was made very enjoyable thanks to the brilliant performances of Cate Blanchett and Lily James.



I just wish that film studios and we as consumers wouldn't dismiss animation as a lesser art form so quickly.

These days, if someone were to ask you what your favourite TV show was and you replied with an animated show, you'll most likely be met with the response "Isn't that a kids show?". 'I must not have got the message when we decided to base the value of a piece of art on its perceived age demographic' is my response! Many animated movies and shows have meaningful and valuable lessons, lessons that are often missed as the target audience is too young, or they are overlooked by an older audience due to the preconceived notion that "animation is just for kids". This has led to a significant decrease in the quality of animated films in recent years, due to them being taken less and less seriously. The result is half-baked films like *Boss Baby*, a film with excruciatingly bad attempts at 'wacky' humour and a lazy story. Animation studios now know that all they need to do is make a film that will entertain a small child for an hour and a half in order to make a profit. Live action remakes and this backwards attitude towards animation is slowly taking the real beauty out of the artform.



Animation is an expressive and versatile storytelling medium and is not being utilised to its full potential in our current media. First and foremost, animation opens gateways that allow us to express stories and characters that could never be interpreted in live action. A prime example of this is Disney's *Lady and the Tramp*, a film with expressive characters that carry a charm that can only be achieved by animation, yet Disney still decided to remake it in live action. The live action remake of *The Lion King* has the same problem; the emotions of the animals conveyed through the animated medium just doesn't translate to live action. Secondly, animation is an action lover's dream. With animation there are almost no limitations in creating action set-pieces or fight scenes, meaning it's far easier to create captivating action than it is when there are requirements for things such as stunt teams, safety precautions and wire work. Two of the best examples I can think of for this are *Avatar: The Last Airbender* and *The Legend of Korra*, both from the same studio. Both are excellent examples of how animation facilitates new incredible concepts for action and the way its used in film and TV. Not only this but the former also has some of the best world building and character development in the world of television.

# The Gryphon



Finally, animation is simply a way of creating beautiful landscapes and worlds far beyond anything in our imaginations. As with action, there are no limits to what incredible scenery can be created with animation. Studio Ghibli perfectly demonstrates this with its gorgeous landscapes, finely detailed and intricately designed cities and towns and it's incredibly immersive and enchanting worlds. Whenever you need a wallpaper for a computer or phone, just look up Studio Ghibli stills and you won't be short of options, though personally I would recommend either *Kiki's Delivery Service* or *Spirited Away*!

So the next time you're scrolling through Netflix, bored out of your mind, consider watching an animated film or show. You might surprise yourself.

Artwork from 'Spirited away'



## The UK and the Future of our Military Capabilities

Recently, the government released a 110 page dossier on our country's current and future military standing. This document was a full review of the British Army, the RAF, and the Royal Navy and what needs to be cut or altered to provide maximum efficiency. The Prime Minister has pledged a massive new cash injection of £16.5b for the Ministry of Defence (MOD), as well as reallocating different assets for the branches of the military.

One of the more controversial changes that has been put forward was the decision to cut a large amount of aircraft from the RAF. This includes 9 Chinook helicopters, 14 Hercules transport planes and 24 Eurofighter Typhoons. The decision to engage in such drastic cuts for the air force has angered many, as after many years of cuts for the MOD it does not seem fit to commit a large amount of forces overseas. However, to offset these cuts the PM promised to expand the military's high-tech equipment, including brand new hunter-killer drones.

# The Gryphon



This shift from having people on the frontline to a computerised and technologically advanced military shows the world that the very nature of warfare is changing, as more and more countries are committed to expanding their arsenals of unmanned vehicles. This is due to the fact that it removes the aspect of losing your own troops and, controversially, removing the more human aspect of direct killing. An example of this change in direction from manned to unmanned aircraft was demonstrated during the Armenian-Azerbaijan war, which saw Armenia's forces completely decimated by Azerbaijani drones. This is the pathway the future of warfare is taking and we will most likely see that the UK's military will be almost fully robotised by the turn of the century. As the nature of conflict shifts with the times, the question is whether our military will adapt to these new requirements or if it will stick with a traditional 'boots on the ground' doctrine.



Chinook helicopter

## Extract from a novel by Oskar Rees, Year 11, “Francis”

After a week in that pipe-dripping, water-plipping, stomach-flipping establishment people call a *sanitarium*, I have finally broken free! Finally. *FINALLY!*

I feel like a parolee emerging into the watery sunlight after a long-term imprisonment as I walk out today. I feel like a vampire. *Stand back, guys! Garlic at the ready!* Like a prisoner marking tallies on the wall, I should have kept some sort of journal of my time here: *Day One of Captivity: I planted some vegetable seeds. Day Two of Captivity: I talked to one of the nurses. Day Three of Captivity: I surprised even myself by eating some oatmeal. Day Four of Captivity: I baked a red velvet cake. Day Five of Captivity: I killed a fellow patient.* Hahahaha! I had fun! And it was a formative experience; really it was! (Kudos to my darling brother there!) Because what walks out of this place today is a *NEW MAN*. A snowman de-iced. A vampire defanged. *A - NEW - MAN!*

You don't really believe that, do you? Good, you should be thinking twice about believing it. Because it isn't true. My tongue has fashioned a lie - a white lie - once again. The truth is, I've never felt so bad. I feel like Brooks Hatlen in *Shawshank Redemption*; a man readily losing touch with the outside world; a bewildered undesirable stuck in a never-ending time-lapse; a rabbit trapped in some far-flung hutch. The traffic lights are beeping louder than they used to, the cars are moving faster, the commuters are even looking happier than before. *Who would have thought it?*

Dermot advised that I made the room in Colditz my own, so I would have something to occupy the mind, to pass the time. Tack a Rita Hayworth poster to the wall, learn how to cross-stitch, practise my Spanish, start growing my own bonsai tree, that sort of thing. *You know what they say, Frank: a watched pot never boils.*

NO! I don't want to tempt fate. As soon as humanly possible, I was out and gone, and running back home. ARGHH! Home sweet home! It isn't home, though; not really. And it is definitely not sweet...



## Charity Run for Bath Mind

On Sunday 21 March, Joel Parry and I participated in a 26 kilometre run around Bath in aid of the mental health charity, Mind.

This was organised by The Star Cricket Club. The Club has realised, especially over the last 12 months, the vital importance of staying in touch, checking in with each other and keeping active. In order to raise funds for Bath Mind, it decided to organise an event in which people could take part in various distances, ranging from walking 5 kilometres to running a 26 kilometre lap around Bath, significantly over half a marathon. Joel and I chose to do the full run, starting and finishing at the Star Inn.

Due to the current restrictions, the runners set off from differing locations and at various times. Joel and I began at 10:20. We started off running through Victoria Park, following the route that then took us around the outskirts of Bath, running through the Two Tunnels and along the canal path. We were lucky in that the route was reasonably flat, apart from a few challenging hills, including one at the finish! We completed the run in just over 2 hours and were both extremely pleased with how it went.

Bath Mind supports the essential mental health and wellbeing needs of hundreds of people across Bath and North East Somerset. They have adapted these services to include remote support and care wherever possible, in order to continue their practices throughout the pandemic. As a result, the charity urgently needs funds to enable them to meet the increasing demand for mental health support and to help them cope with the additional strain placed on its services by Covid-19 measures.

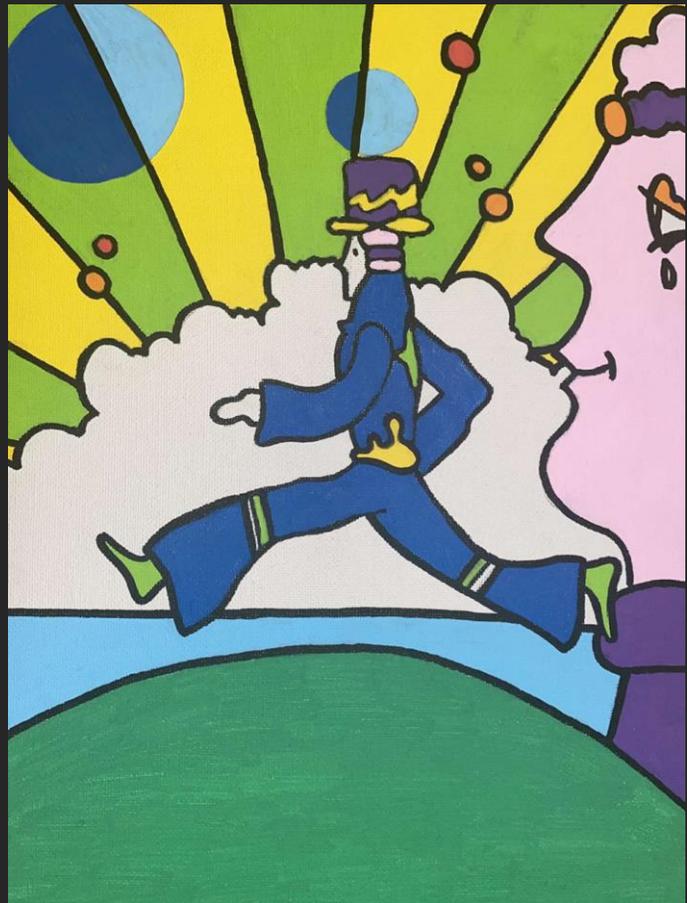
So far an incredible total of £4,296 (and counting) has been raised for this worthy cause. If you would like to donate further the link is

<https://justgiving.com/team/starccbathlap2021>. Thank you!



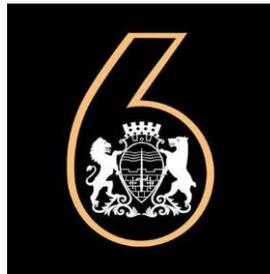
## Competition Time!!

This edition's amazing cover art was provided by Will Davies. However, if you fancy yourself as an artist (or if you want to try something new) then send in your best pieces of artwork to any one of the editors and you will be in with a shot of your art appearing as the cover of the next edition of the magazine... Good luck and we look forward to seeing what you come up with!





Beechen Cliff



A special thanks to everyone who contributed to the magazine!