The Whit Gift Review

W

[Image of a skull covered with text]

Text on the skull:

- Talk and the loss of a will
- Determination and mental health
- Symptoms that would
- People where the
- Clinical term 'talk of suicide'
- Point is that
- Activity the act
- Of suicide
- Commit that is
- Classical
- The
When asked to edit a new school magazine, I wanted something which reflected the full range of exploits from boys and staff alike. Why not, I thought, structure it according to five ideal values, so that the magazine is, in part, an embodiment of an ideal Whitgiftian or pupil?

In actual fact, it was decided to call the publication ‘W’ – an offshoot of the Whitgiftian which could generously accommodate the full diversity of individual voices and achievements at the school. Whitgift is by its nature a broad church, and it is celebrating this difference which helps give us a unified, singular identity in our community.

In fact, the letter ‘W’ itself developed as a digraph, a combination of two letters to represent one sound, and there is perhaps no better metaphor for the togetherness of our shared existence in the beautiful surrounds of Haling Park. I hope that our school and staff leavers, some of whom are recognised in this magazine, will continue to think of themselves as ‘Whitgiftians’ or ‘Ws’ – joined with us and in our thoughts wherever they go in the future.

And to suggest that the multiplicity of daily activities at the school can be contained within five simple characteristics is a reductive fallacy. In truth, it could have been any number of qualities that are displayed in the school’s corridors and classrooms, but perhaps the ones chosen offer an impressionistic insight into life at our school.

Editing or dare I say ‘curating’ the content for the magazine has provided me, a teacher here for five years, a keener and deeper understanding of all that the boys and my colleagues do. In his Ways of Curating, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galley, pronounces:

“There is a fundamental similarity to the act of curating, which at its most basic is simply about connecting cultures, bringing their elements into proximity with each other... You might describe it as the pollination of culture, or a form of map-making that opens new routes through a city, a people or a world.”

I hope you will take the time to examine the map that the subsequent variety of articles, poems, and images represents. Enjoy making connections between them, their authors, and the School. And, if you are sufficiently intrigued, a reaction provoked by any good map, come and visit us again.

Words / Mr Ben Miller, Head of Academic Enrichment
Photography / Whitgift
Five values

There are times – not perhaps frequent enough – when we pause to wonder why we do what we do. It happens when life changes, or something significant happens, or at the turning of the seasons. As we look back on this Whitgift year, we can certainly list plenty of achievements. But why do we do what we do, and what for?

One answer surrounds us every day. The Founder’s portrait at the entrance, the mural above the Dining Hall corridor, our very coat of arms proclaim non si quia patuer – who endures, conquers. The words are fascinating: to a linguist, the patuer sounds wrong, clashing with the more regular finito, universally known through Caesar’s veni, vidi, vici, and yet it’s a regular verb all right: patuer, to endure, allow or permit. Somewhere in the distance is a derivation from pin, to hurt (as in pain, or in fact fiend), and the link to a word I do know, the French pâtre, is very much present. That verb is definitely a negative: it means to suffer. So this is a seemingly passive, patient motto: put up with life and you will win through.

Or, surely, perseverance: get through life’s slings and arrows. We are not here forever. Whitgift seems to say, and a determined sticking to what we believe through fashion and change, is the true virtue. The Ahnhouses sitting stubbornly aside the Whitgift centre seems to say that too, and it’s a charge to us to stick to what we believe.

Alongside such perseverance, complementing it, must come a sense of the making of the new. I greatly admire, for example, any talented gardener, and the creation of light and shade, of colour and line, through work with soil and seed is, for me, magical. At Whitgift we see that most obviously in The Duke of York Water Garden, but also in the other open spaces which have been created for us all to enjoy: Andrew Quadrangle, Founder’s Garden, and increasingly in small informal patches of garden around the site.

We see it too in a theatre design, such as Claudia Calamatta’s evocative design for The Government Inspector, and in some of the School’s iconic architecture – Big School, the archway to the Old Library, the innovative curved roof of the PAC.

Alongside such excellence, complementing it, must come a sense of the making of the new. I greatly admire, for example, any talented gardener, and the creation of light and shade, of colour and line, through work with soil and seed is, for me, magical. At Whitgift we see that most obviously in The Duke of York Water Garden, but also in the other open spaces which have been created for us all to enjoy: Andrew Quadrangle, Founder’s Garden, and increasingly in small informal patches of garden around the site.

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As we look to the future, and consider the next phase of the site’s development, our commitment is to have great architecture, not merely the flash of a moment. We are not here forever, Whitgift seems to say, and a determined sticking to what we believe through fashion and change, is the true virtue.

But what is the purpose? What is Whitgift missioned to be? Whitgift is a school. It teaches, it leads us to want to strive for something new: that too, and it’s a charge to us to stick to what we believe.

The Editor’s five values seem then to make perfect sense to me. They are not perhaps ground-breaking (though much that is done in their name can and should be) but taken together they can, and will, guide Whitgiftians of this and future generations towards great things.
curiosity
In response to his essay on, *Answering the Question: What is the Enlightenment?* (1784), Kant responded with what would become the Enlightenment’s resonant motto, *sapere aude* (‘dare to know’). Kant was urging his audience – presumably the literati of late 18th century Europe – to reject dogma and superstition in favour of the unyielding light of reason and science. Whilst Kant bequeaths a great deal to the human condition, his most important contribution was to make space for the opening of the mind (what Kant and later thinkers would call the ‘public sphere’) without which our intellectual horizons would be limited. That ‘opening of the mind’ in the late 18th century led to the *Philosophers* reworking the Western world’s understanding of the sciences and man’s place in a moral universe where the existence of God is questioned and questionable. And it is that opening of the mind that I want to address in this piece. I want to distil my thoughts on the meaning and importance of intellectual curiosity, and I want to look at the potential perennial dangers that avow to control the open and liberal mind.

The proverb, ‘curiosity killed the cat’ suggests that an enquiring and inquisitive mind is somehow lethal and dangerous. Indeed, a literary cat that let curiosity get the better of him, T.S. Eliot’s *Macavity* is portrayed as dastardly, underhand, wily and a ‘master of depravity’. Nevertheless, curiosity, with its double meaning of interest and peculiarity, is a hallmark of good taste and moral decency. Those that lack curiosity or interest are somehow morally defective; the inability of some humankind to find joy and excitement in finding out new things, however niche, are somehow lacking in humanity. You see this lack of humanity thrives in non-democratic societies. Totalitarianism requires for its success the removal and extinguishment of curiosity; as a member of the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* or citizen of the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea, you are required to obey perfunctory slogans, take part in mass marches and accept unquestionably the inerrancy of the potentate’s commandments. All these orchestrated and choreographed human activities are, in short, an attempt to squeeze out curiosity, which is an innately democratic impulse, from the human psyche. Curiosity has no point *ipso facto*; it has, as Einstein senses, ‘its own reason for existing’. It need not account for itself or justify itself in relation to anything else.

The spirit of *sapere aude* is under assault in Britain specifically, and in the English-speaking world more broadly in the second decade of the twenty first century. Curiosity, like the cat, is in danger of being killed off. The growth and tentacular reach of conceptual curiosity-killers such as ‘safe spaces’, ‘trigger warnings’, ‘no-platforming’ and other paraphernalia of the ‘snowflake’ thought police pose a real danger. The apostles of ‘fake news’, propped by the so-called Alt-Right, from 4Chan to the White House, pose a danger too, especially to the young, into thinking that the ‘deep state’ and the pillars of the Establishment rig and dissimulate reality, concealing and pacifying the truth behind a smokescreen of national security, the rule of law and consumer affluence. Indeed, the bloviating hard men who condemn the ‘liberal’ media as ‘fake’ – Putin, Le Pen, Trump – are themselves the peddlers of ersatz news, and ultimately suppressors of curiosity by seeking to disillusion young minds that the world is rigged against their favour.

We need to reclaim *sapere aude*. We need to be unashamedly curious about all manner of things. Whitgift is a ‘safe space’ for curiosity; I see it everywhere. Walking past Dr Ralley’s Brian Cox-impersonating bravura performances at the Senior Physics Society, or Mr Smith’s spellbinding ability to tell a yarn, or the much-needed academic stretch midwifed by Mr Miller under the banner of PRISM, curiosity is something that infuses all nooks and crannies of the School. I leave you with this: curiosity is the best protection against what Socrates described as the ‘unexamined life’ or, as J. S. Mill unfavourably put it, curiosity prevents you becoming a ‘satisfied pig’!
The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.

Albert Einstein

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hilst it may not seem like it with 10 minutes left of Period 7 on a Friday afternoon, every Whitgift boy is by nature academically curious. That is, they have a ‘strong desire to know or learn something.’ Perhaps this desire originates from a competitive spirit to surpass the results of their peers, a university offer for a dream course motivating the hard work, or just an innate interest in a given topic area. Regardless, curiosity is undoubtedly a driving force in a Whitgiftian’s education.

Dr Stephen Law, eminent philosopher from Heythrop College, in his recent Academic Enrichment talk entitled ‘Why we believe what we do’ accentuated the importance of willingness in the learning and acquisition of certain beliefs. It is this curious disposition within Whitgift pupils, to critically analyse information they come across in an inquisitive and interested manner, which leads to the formulation of personal beliefs and stimulates individual thought.

Of course, a crucial role in developing this virtue lies with the staff. Research from a 2016 psychological study conducted by Pierre-Yves Oudeyer highlights the significance of the ‘bidirectional causal interactions between curiosity and learning.’ This concept manifests in the teacher-student relationship greatly at Whitgift; students exhibit curiosity in a given subject matter provided by the teacher and the teacher responds by facilitating further investigation for the student. The significance of inter-pupil relationships also cannot be understated in refining curiosity. I myself have felt the benefit of countless debates in the Sixth Form Centre over the past two years.

Similarly, attraction to sports or the performing arts at Whitgift is met with the same alacrity by the staff. Opportunities such as WAVPA or learning a new musical instrument not only allow another method of self-expression for students but also inculcate the similar importance of rehearsal which leads to refined success in sporting competitions and the classroom. The great range of clubs and societies at the disposal of pupils represents another outlet for interests which reside beyond these areas.

Altogether, curiosity is a necessary trait in order to fully experience all that Whitgift offers its pupils. I have developed my own curiosity most through being given the opportunity to give my own PRISM talk on the topic on ‘freedom.’ My academic interests have flourished as a result of the personal interest and superb pastoral care extended to me both within and beyond the academic curriculum. For this I can only thank my teachers, who have helped me cultivate this curiosity. I am sure it will be a vital asset as I enter adulthood as an Old Whitgiftian.

Words / Christian Wilkinson, U6KAR
Art / Sean Louis, L6JWL
In this dystopian, postmodern interpretation of Shakespeare’s seminal tragedy, director Rufus Norris, alongside an experienced cast, produces a unique rendition of Macbeth. Norris’s lead actor, Rory Kinnear, starring in a number of Bond films as well as the lead in the National Theatre’s Hamlet, embodies the troubled and introspective Macbeth that Shakespeare’s writing demands.

Kinnear’s co-star, Anne-Marie Duff, successfully portrays the manipulative and possessive nature of Lady Macbeth, flipping traditional gender roles between Kinnear and herself, and ultimately stealing the limelight from her counterpart. Duff, a prominent figure in UK theatre, as well as an accomplished actress on the movie-set, most notably the 2015 Suffragette, emanates the strength of a character able to dominate the stage from beginning to end. This is portrayed to such an extent that Norris is quoted to have said “she is the one controlling the play”.

This role reversal and fraught relationship is most prominently seen when it is Lady Macbeth, and not Macbeth himself, who welcomes King Duncan to their home. Lady Macbeth is given this responsibility ahead of her husband as the representative of the Macbeth house, once again overturning the traditional gender roles of Shakespeare’s period.

However, despite these strong performances, the production is not without fault, with its launch into the dystopian future always being destined to divide. Norris’s attempt to modernise the play removes some of the Shakespearean poetic intensity and grandeur, leaving the production feeling a little prosaic and flat. The talents of Kinnear and Duff go some way to rescuing the gravity that is ‘lost in translation’, but Norris’s changes hamper a promising start, with the audience almost unsure whether they have entered the right theatre.

This has ultimately led to damning reviews by critics unable to detach themselves from the traditional Macbeth they know, with the play being blasted ‘a failure’ by some. Yet with such radical modern updates it is almost wrong to view and compare the play as a rendition of a classic, rather than as its own entity.

Regardless of opinions on the apparently Mad Max inspired setting, the gigantic steal rampart in the centre of the stage, or the brutalist bedroom of the usurping King and Queen, the production continues to boast a wide range of excellent performances. Kevin Harvey’s Banquo is powerful and evocative, perfectly presenting the loyalty and moral uprightness that Macbeth could never grasp as king.

Furthermore, the casting of the Weird Sisters in Beatrice Scirocchi, Anna-Maria Nabirye and Hannah Hutch brings an eeriness to the production. Whatever may be said about Norris’s modernisation of the play, the strong acting ability shown on stage certainly presents an uncomfortable but intriguing viewing, and gives an alternative and fascinating perspective on a Shakespeare classic.  

Words / Joshua Tyler, L6NLB & Sam Diamond, L6AHM
Illustration / Jon James
For the May bank holiday weekend, a group of First Form students had the literary adventure of a lifetime at Chiddingstone Castle in Kent! We met many authors at the literary festival – including Lauren Child, the children’s laureate, who gave us insight into her unique blend of words and pictures. Cressida Cowell, the author of the How to Train Your Dragon series, also let us into a few secrets about her new The Wizards of Once books (I bought a book and got it signed). But my real favourite was Abi Elphinstone because of her infectious enthusiasm and sense of humour.

We also listened to Diana Henry, the Sunday Telegraph food writer, who described her food with vivid sensory details (such as “getting drunk on olive oil”) in her new book, How to Eat a Peach. This inspired us to put our own food-writing skills to the test as we faced the ultimate challenge... a three-course dinner at the 16th century Hengist restaurant in Aylesford. The meal was to die for!

During the three-day trip, we were always immersed in our imaginations. When we weren’t listening to authors, we had the chance to do our own creative writing in the beautiful grounds of the castle. As we sat near the lake, I imagined that we were on a tropical island, and that we only had each other for company.

We also watched a play based on an old Romanian folktale, with characters such as Golden Boy, The Emperor, Empress and the Winged Horse. It was a combination of puppetry, music and storytelling. It opened my eyes to a completely different type of performance!

I made some great friends on the trip who I shared pizza with as we watched the sun go down and who cheered me up when we had to leave the festival. And I made some new non-Whitgift friends at the Storymakers workshop where we wrote stories inspired by pictures.

This was the perfect trip for anyone who loves books and making friends.

Words / Bakari Leon, U1DPS
Photography / Jon James
Would it transform Christian Theology to refer to God as Mother?

Curiosity to refer to God as Mother? Would it transform Christian Theology which is a derivative of this. God being that, “women should remain silent in churches,” and the alienating effects for women that God’s male famous claim that, “if God is male then the male is God,” is being harnessed by Feminist theologians due to the historical validity of Mary Daly’s faith that, the “special presence” of motherhood, is riddled by hierarchy and patriarchy, defines her conclusion that the title of God must be reassessed due to continuing to refer to God using purely masculinity pronouns. Clearly, the distinctly male features of God precede the occasionally attributed, and overall inconsequential, symbolism of God comforting, “as a mother comforts her child.”

The insignificance of God’s feminine properties manifests most obviously in the formation of the Holy Trinity; The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. The first two are gendered as male, and the theology of The Holy Spirit derives from the neuter Greek term of ‘pneuma’ meaning breath or spirit. Moreover, this seemingly neutral characterisation of God in the form of the Holy Spirit is also given the gender of ‘He’ and ‘Himself’ in Paragraphs 683 and 687 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Consequently, it is safe to assume that reference to God as Mother, and the inevitably female pronoun of ‘she’ which this posits, would transform Christian Theology linguistically as referring to God like this is unprecedented in doctrine. In fact, perhaps the only recognition of God’s femininity arises in Valentinian and Gnostic scriptural and mystical, and even in this case, female aspects of God as ‘dyad’ are still presented as inferior to male traits according to an article by theologian Kathleen McVey. However, Jennie S. Knight does submit that, “passion for images of the divine as feminine has grown in recent years after the publication of Mulieris Dignitatem. The reality is much more complex, and by referring to God as ‘Mother’, ‘God remains always the same God, yet His real name was good.”

Theology is often a niche intellectual topic but, “God remained always the same God, yet His real name was good.” The reality is much more complex, and by referring to God as ‘Mother’, “the emergence of feminist theology is embedded in the large political, cultural, and social configurations of its time.” The symbiotic relationship between Christianity and women in society is riddled by continuing to refer to God in a gendered way.

Empower women as well as providing a platform for the discussion of all aspects of life, including Christianity. Altogether, it would definitely transform Christian Theology to refer to God as Mother; a positive transformation in fulfilling the notion of there being neither male nor female. [97] Words / Christian Wilkinson, UKAR

Art / Nathaniel O’Toole, U6AH
Mr Gyimah, Minister of State for Higher Education and MP for East Surrey, visited Whitgift School in June, to talk to a group of A Level Politics students, and answer their questions.

He began with a discussion about the current political climate, and how unpredictable it had been in recent years. Rather topically, the first question referred to the immigration issue that was occurring on the US/Mexican border, as Mr Gyimah had publicly criticised the policy on Twitter. The Minister argued that no matter the situation, the most vulnerable should never be negatively affected, with young children and toddlers being separated from their families. The student responded to his answer by questioning how his actions may affect relations between the UK and the US. Rather frankly, the response students received was that no matter how much pressure is placed upon the White House, Mr Trump will do what Mr Trump wants. However, in a more constructive tone, the visiting MP suggested that a relationship where we do not directly communicate with the US about certain situations and our standpoint is not a relationship worth having, and so had no qualms about his public disapproval for the policy.

Mr Gyimah was then quizzed on more domestic issues to do with his constituency, such as why a young voter in East Surrey should support him in the next election. He went on to emphasise the importance of defending the greenbelt land situated in East Surrey, in retaining quality of life, whilst also showing support to issues more prominent to the youth, such as housing opportunities in these areas. Perhaps more relevant to the pupils involved was the necessity of going to university, especially with the burden of student loans. The East Surrey MP was focused on how important further education is to us as individuals, leaving discussion of financial matters to one side. He believed university is also an excellent experience as well as an academic tool and saw the transition between school and the workplace as far more fluid for those who go on to university. The introduction of specialised two-year courses was also mentioned, as a method of training and earning a degree to go into a specific area of employment. This idea had been talked about as a way of increasing opportunities for those who wouldn’t normally look to further their studies at university.

In the next set of questions, a subject particularly close to Mr Gyimah’s heart was brought up: student mental health, and how we can combat increasing student suicide. Shortly after our Q & A, the MP called upon staff and tutors at universities to be in closer contact with parents, and described how better communication could help to protect students. He appeared to be particularly proactive about this subject, and for current students, this enthusiasm to help was encouraging to see. Next, the impact of Brexit on students was debated, particularly its effect on courses such as Erasmus (where students studying in British universities are given the opportunity to study for a year abroad). Mr Gyimah seemed certain that Brexit would not affect these opportunities, and deals involving courses such as Erasmus would be kept firmly intact, another encouraging promise. The meeting was finished with a group photo and some individual chats with students, before the MP rushed off to his next appointment of the day!
I n today’s world, curiosity is a key to unlocking the mysteries of the universe. Simon Armitage, a poet with a passion for the unexpected, is a prime example of this. His poetry is a testament to his intellectual curiosity, as he explores the unknown and the unusual with a keen eye for detail.

It is this curiosity that led him to write his first collection of poems, ‘Zoom’. Armitage’s poetry is a journey through the unknown, a search for meaning in the chaos of the universe. He is not afraid to ask the hard questions, to delve into the depths of the human psyche and explore the philosophical underpinnings of our existence.

Armitage’s poetry is not just a poetic journey, but also a personal one. He uses his poetry to reflect on his own experiences, to explore the world around him, and to engage with the wider world. His poetry is a dialogue between the poet and the reader, a conversation that invites the reader to think deeply about the world around them.

Armitage’s poetry is also a celebration of the power of language. He uses language to create vivid images, to evoke emotions, and to convey complex ideas. His poetry is a testament to the power of language to connect us to each other, to the world around us, and to the depths of our own minds.

Simon Armitage is a poet who is not afraid to explore the unknown, to ask the hard questions, and to engage with the world around him. His poetry is a celebration of the power of language, of the human spirit, and of the quest for meaning in a world that is often chaotic and confusing.

Words / William Butler Denby, U6MCT
The physics of peacocks

The very peacocks we coexist with at Whitgift provide us with a visual example of a striking physical phenomenon: iridescence, a concept I hope to explain in this article. But there is more to link Physics and peacocks than light alone.

SOUND AND MATERIALS

During the summer mating season we all become familiar with the squawks of peacocks. These sounds are detectable to the ear because of their frequency – 400-20 000 Hz (Durrani & Kalaugher, 2016). Although the duration of the sound is typically just 1-2 seconds, these pitches fit almost entirely within the hearing range of a teenage boy (20-20 000 Hz) and much of the sound is above the 8000 Hz that most would consider tolerable. The illustration (above) shows an example of a sonogram (frequencies produced against time) for a peacock’s cries – note the layers of harmonics within each sound.

Another means for a peacock to attract a mating partner is, of course, to spread its feathers wide and shake! The stem of a feather behaves like a string, with one end fixed, forming a node, and the other open – an antinode. Like any musical instrument, a standing wave will be produced if the frequency of the forced vibrations matches that of the natural frequency of the system (depending on tension, mass and length) and resonance will occur with large visible amplitudes. The longer a peacock’s feathers, the more energy required to rattle them, which is perhaps an indication of muscle strength to a prospective female!

Incidentally, this rattling also produces a sound. The initial ‘shiver’ of a peacock to straighten its feathers is high in frequency, but during the ongoing ‘dance’ the frequency is only 2.8-4.2 Hz (Durrani & Kalaugher, 2016), thus rendering the sound ‘infrasound’ and undetectable to humans. One might imagine that tones at this low level could be heard as musical notes to a fellow peacock. While sounds of any kind are produced by vibrations of particles and travel as longitudinal waves, this is the opposite end of the scale to the ‘ultrasound’ that is used in medical imaging of the human body, for example.

With the material properties of the feather in mind, Robert Hooke, famed for his law of proportionality, was the first to report on having examined a peacock feather under a microscope. Barbs of the feathers appear discrete to a passing observer but in fact consist of tiny projections or barbules that cause the structure to behave as a whole to oscillate as one, giving the plume overall distinctive resonant frequencies. So why is it that the eyes of the feathers remain relatively still? More recently and with the upgrade to an electron microscope, James Hare has discovered that the eyes are bound by even tighter hooked barbules, rendering their own structure rigid (Ouellette, 2016).

LIGHT

Let us now consider some of the visible phenomena demonstrated by these unquestioningly beautiful peacock feathers. Unlike the melanin responsible for the typical coloration of humans and other mammals in the pigments of both skin and hair, the colours of different regions of a peacock feather have been shown to be related to the barbules of which a particular section is made. Different types of barbule have different optical properties on a nanoscale, acting as optical fibres rather than surfaces, and with different sections reflecting and enhancing different wavelengths (or colours) of light (Nave, 2004).

This is an effect known as structural coloration, whereby the otherwise brown barbs also reflect blue, turquoise and green light, giving the feathers their vibrant appearance. Those who have spared more than a momentary glance at a peacock will also have noticed the change in apparent coloration with the angle of view, an effect termed iridescence. A fascination with this very observation has gripped scientists for centuries, such as Newton, Fraunhofer and Darwin, and emerges through thin-film interference, which can also be spotted on soap bubbles or oily puddles. Thin-film interference is caused by the neighbouring of light-transmitting materials with different refractive indices – a measure of the net speed of light in the material. Upon striking the oil surface film, some of the ray of light is reflected (AD) with a phase change of π radians – a wave approaching as a crest will depart as a trough, and vice versa. The remainder of the ray enters the oil and is reflected or refracted upon striking the water-based layer, but in this case the refractive index, a measure of how the speed of light is slowed, is lower than for oil and so there is no phase change (ABC).

Depending on the difference in path length between ABC and AD and in comparison to the wavelength, the rays can interfere to boost or reduce a particular colour since light from the sun contains a spectrum of visible light wavelengths. The appearance will change depending on the location of the eye of the observer, and so perhaps we all see a ‘different’ peacock even when peering at the same organism!

The study of physics and life science is interdisciplinary, demanding curiosity and creativity. These attributes are expected of our very best university applicants across all subjects but including the natural sciences. I would challenge all readers to ‘notice’ more about the links between subjects in the world around them and to come and tell us about what you have found at a PRISM event or Academic Enrichment lecture. Words / Miss Emma Mitchell, Head of Higher Education Photography / Whitgift
YOU LIVE IN MY DREAM STATE

DULL FACED
PASSING ME BY

CAN I GET
A KISS?

AND CAN YOU MAKE
IT LAST FOREVER?

SOLOPSM OR BENEVOLENCE

kindness
If you are lucky enough, you might remember amongst the chalkboards of your childhood, occupied by grainy handwriting and oceans of pedantic green ink, the strange type of teacher that rose above it all and did you the small kindness of being different.

A Small, Precious Kindness

For me it was a tall streak of a man with a Karl Marx beard and Ernest Bevin glasses. He was smug about his place he knew he would occupy in the future memoirs of his students. Mr. Hawthorne would glow a deep scarlet with his cleverness when he had planted the seed of an idea that his students had never considered before. The more ridiculous the notion, the more radish-like he became. He would fill the afternoons that should have been thick with paper aeroplanes or limpid love letters to the girl at the back, with grand ideas. “Iraq is all about oil! Oil! That’s it!” or “Why the hell do you think you’re British? It’s much more fun being English” or more intoxicating. I knew then, as I still know now, that I would commit my life to them.

The school was a 1970s prefabricated building, erected as the old grammar school was torn down in both the physical and the abstract. The common understanding was that the children of potters and miners were never going to amount to anything intellectually. I lived with this legacy: we were dressed for doing rather than thinking in polo shirts and jumpers; instead of technical subjects our timetables were filled with studying ancient tongues our timetables were filled with religious. When I stand at the front of the class with expectant pupils ready to learn I think not of politics or American foreign policy. Hawthorne was proposing an idea, stir up controversy, argue, provoke and inspire. He encouraged the libertine impulse. He was a witch doctor providing the medicine that would cure us out of being boring.

I realise now that I am at the coalface, so to speak, the value of the gift he so kindly gave to me. I treat it to this day with supreme care and I try, as best I can, to pass it on. Teaching, in my opinion, is not a grand, heroic calling, but a small, precious kindness. In the recesses of memory, kindness is never abstract but often takes the shape of faces, words or actions. When I stand at the front of the class with expectant pupils ready to learn I think not of scholarship or exams but humane kindness. It looks like a bushy beard and a pair of Ernest Bevin spectacles.

Now, thanks to Hawthorne, his words were made flesh. He taught us that through reading we could care about Ayatollahs in distant lands, films made in 1930s Germany or American foreign policy. Hawthorne was proposing reading as a way of life. Hawthorne’s principles were intoxicating. I knew then, as I still know now, that I would commit my life to them.

The notion that someone could be reading several things at once astonished by this as I’d never seen any other teacher so much as carry a magazine let alone multiple, thick tomes. The school was a 1970s prefabricated building, erected as the old grammar school was torn down in both the physical and the abstract. The common understanding was that the children of potters and miners were never going to amount to anything intellectually. I lived with this legacy: we were dressed for doing rather than thinking in polo shirts and jumpers; instead of technical subjects our timetables were filled with studying ancient tongues our timetables were filled with technical subjects. How Mr. Hawthorne ended up at such a school so antithetical to his whole approach, I never discovered. He was a man of the Left, and, in the end, he may have succumbed to the idea that he was doing the right thing by teaching pupils from all backgrounds. More likely, it was a product of chance; after all, where is Hawthorne’s ideal home? Where is the ivory tower? More likely, it was a product of chance; after all, where is Hawthorne’s ideal home? Where is the ivory tower? Room 2B in one school, 5A in another? Small flowerings of sweetness and light created by good, honest people in a low, dishonest decade.

We left his noble tutelage and entered the heady new days of Sixth Form life. Months later, we heard that he had left the school. I have tried to track down Mr. Hawthorne, to no avail. However his kindness remains. The kindness to bend the rules, reveal the unwieldy idea, stir up controversy, argue, provoke and inspire. He encouraged the libertine impulse. He was a witch doctor providing the medicine that would cure us out of being boring.

I wonder if he still carries books around, volume after volume teetering above his head. Do the piles get shorter as he dodgers into his late-style?

I realise now that I am at the coalface, so to speak, the value of the gift he so kindly gave to me. I treat it to this day with supreme care and I try, as best I can, to pass it on. Teaching, in my opinion, is not a grand, heroic calling, but a small, precious kindness. In the recesses of memory, kindness is never abstract but often takes the shape of faces, words or actions. When I stand at the front of the class with expectant pupils ready to learn I think not of scholarship or exams but humane kindness. It looks like a bushy beard and a pair of Ernest Bevin spectacles.

Words: Mr Adam Alcock, Teacher of English
Photography: Robert Baker
Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous and considerate. Showing kindness should in fact be easy, as to do so does not make huge demands on our time, does not take a lot of effort and costs nothing in monetary terms.

In our wonderful school, kindness is demanded and is expected of all of us. The importance of demonstrating kindness towards everyone is part of being a Whitgiftian. The simple act of holding the door open for someone, saying “Hello Sir/Miss” to our teachers in the corridor, thanking members of staff for their hard work and dedication, and being respectful to others are all part of a normal day at school.

In the modern world where technology is king and money is a god, some have lost sight of the importance of kindness. People’s positive feelings, self-confidence and self-belief can often be shattered by the push of a “dislike” button on Facebook or Instagram or by mean and hurtful text messages. However, at Whitgift, the School aims to help us students to recognise and appreciate that we are all individuals, with different skills and interests – all aiming to become well rounded, compassionate human beings.

From the very first day at Whitgift the value of kindness is emphasised. Throughout our activities, be they academic, sports, arts or drama, we are encouraged to take pride in our fellow students’ successes and, more importantly, are inspired by our teachers and staff to show sympathy and empathy towards our peers when things do not go so well.

Whitgift School, which is part of the Whitgift Foundation, was in fact opened in 1596 because John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury at that time, wanted to do something to help educate the young people of Croydon. His act of kindness resulted in the establishment of the Whitgift Foundation. Today it educates young people in three different schools and provides excellent care for the elderly. Our school offers generous scholarships and bursaries, which enable many students to receive a brilliant education and to avail themselves of the wonderful opportunities it provides.

Whitgift was founded on the ideal of kindness. Although dating from the late 16th century, this is as relevant today as it was back then.
In this article, I want to explore the concept of kindness as a virtue and how we might encourage the practice of kindness more effectively within the life of Whitgift School.

Affection, gentleness, warmth, concern and care are all words that are associated with kindness. While kindness can sometimes carry the sense of being naive or weak, that is not really the case. Being kind requires courage and strength and a willingness to understand the other. It is an important interpersonal skill that can be cultivated and developed.

Kindness is regarded as a virtue in the Judaeo-Christian tradition and is seen as a key aspect of the nature of God, especially in the Psalms. Kindness is not just a duty or an ethic; it is an expression of personal virtue that flows from and is rooted in love, which is the basis of all true virtue. Kindness and compassion lie at the heart of the teachings of all the world’s religions and spiritual traditions even though they are not always made manifest in practice. In a recent book by Karen Armstrong, there is a call for a ‘Charter for Compassion’ for practical action from the world’s religions to practise more loving kindness and care towards humanity and the planet.

However, it is not only in religion but also in evolutionary biology that the practice of kindness is seen as central to our nature as human beings. Many of us associate Charles Darwin and the theory of evolution with the concept of ‘survival of the fittest’. This is usually associated with selfishness, meaning that to survive (a basic instinct) means to look out for yourself first. But Darwin, who also studied human evolution, did not see humanity as being biologically competitive and self-interested. He believed that we are a profoundly social and caring species: he argued that sympathy and caring for others is instinctual.

Current research supports this idea. Evolutionary psychology has shown that devoting resources to others, rather than having more for yourself, brings about lasting well-being. Kindness has been found by researchers to be one of the most important predictors of satisfaction and stability in relationships. Being kind can strengthen our relationships and generate a real sense of satisfaction in life.

A key aspect of the ongoing vision for Whitgift School is in creating a sense of community where all are valued – pupils and staff – and where we are constantly looking out for and supporting others. However, to create a true sense of community, we must look outwards as well as inwards. The work we do with our boys in supporting our local community and in promoting charity is an important test of the integrity of our communal life as a school, and how kindness is practised amongst us.

Part of my role as Charity Co-ordinator is to encourage all of us to be thinking of the needs of others in this country and across the world; we do this by supporting charities and engaging our boys in local community projects. We are currently supporting the work of two international charities: Magic Bus and Bees for Development. Magic Bus trains children and young people living in poverty in India to have better life skills so they can access a better education and opportunities. Bees for Development trains young people in Ethiopia to draw a sustainable income from beekeeping. We have also been involved locally in Croydon with providing Christmas presents for the homeless and are currently collecting aid for Syria.

There is so much more we can do and I hope that the vision of charity will grow and become an integral part of school life. Kindness is also about telling the truth in a gentle way when doing so is helpful to others. Honesty, delivered in a loving and caring way, is an important part of a trusted relationship. The courage to give and receive truthful feedback helps us to develop flexible thinking. This is an important aspect of the kind of education that we are seeking to foster in the School: encouraging our boys to be more self-reflective and critically aware so that they develop independent ways of thinking that will equip them better for the complexities of modern life.

Kindness also includes being kind to ourselves. Do we treat ourselves kindly? Do we speak gently and kindly to ourselves and take good care of ourselves? Or are we so self-critical that we fail to see the good in us and hence in others?

There are different ways to practise kindness. One way is to open your eyes and be active when you see people in need. Do you notice when someone could use a helping hand? By practising more kindness we help to make our school, our community and our world a better place.
Bibi, Can You Hear The Rain?

Bibi, listen to
the dripping drops of the liquid sunshine,
the tippity taps of
the rain on the
Window sill,
The little baby drops of
Drizzle, plummet
Down to earth.

Bibi, Can You Hear The Rain?

Plip, Plop, Plippety,
Plop, Plip, Plop, Plippety,
Plop.
The rain performed a
Tango, and then performed a
10/10 dive, even better than
Tom Daley’s perfect dive.

Bibi, Can You Hear The Rain?

Violent Gravity, drags the infant and innocent raindrops down,
Into a dark and stormy abyss of a bleak, grey slab,
That goes on for miles and miles,
Ahead.

Bibi, Can You Hear The Rain?

Time,
Time passes,
And things can only get better, for
Bibi.

Fabulous flowers sprung from their slumbers,
Waving and smiling happily,
At me,
And I smile.
And I ask myself,
‘Bibi, Can You Hear The Rain?’

Words / Bakari Leon, U1DPS
Photography / Axel Antas-Bergkvist

My Sister

My sister,
From birth came needles and tubes.
So small and so helpless.
When I was young,
I was her guide.
Hand in hand we ventured.
Through complex play barns we explored.
Life was fun and free.

My sister,
Now a teenager.
Enclosed and shut away.
For her those good times have faded.
A lifetime of struggle, and judging eyes.
Always being ‘Special’.

Doctors,
Examined and questioned.
Why do you not see what she can do?
You already make her a failure by what you do.

My sister,
Every morning the struggle begins.
‘It’s too hard for me’;
‘It’s boring’.
A struggle to hear a sound,
From directions she cannot locate.
So life becomes full of surprises.
Really too much to take.
Speeding cars,
And dangers all around.
I become her ears for sound.

My sister,
Thought to phrase takes much longer.
Many do not wait,
And speak for her like they know her thoughts.
She smiles,
With her voice is taken away.
She tries to sign,
But many don’t know that language,
And struggles to make herself understood.

My sister,
Stutters and blocks on words,
Not like me that has many.
She makes her needs known from a smaller pool.
Amazing really,
Creative aplenty.

My sister,
For books she flicks from picture to picture.
She cannot read and understand as I.
Moving words that change around.
All the letters moved and used.
A new word found.
A gift I say,
Extraordinary in its own way.
Oh numbers,
She loathes.
Avoids whenever she can.
Would I swap places with her?
No way,
That is too much struggle every day.

Words / George Frost, U1XHT

Voices

I hear the voices; the shout
Penetrates my ear, my brain bombarded
By the bellow, the picture on the page cut out
For only me to see. All others disregarded.
It felt like only yesterday my mother
Was here, whispering her soothing stories into
My ear. But now the words, one after another,
Blast into my ear, twisting, turning like a corkscrew.
I stare, I watch, I see the voices contest
With the others. They struggle with emotions
Inexperienced and new. They’re hatchlings in their mother’s nest.
Unable to move. They want to see the world’s beauty, the oceans,
But I still hear the voices penetrate my ear.
The voices in my head, they are too difficult to hear.

Words / Ben Lord, LST1U
creativity
It is a common cry amongst people of my age; we were promised, in the science fiction of our youth, a gleaming 21st century of flying cars, hoverboards, interstellar travel and personal jetpacks. None of it, needless to say, has come to pass. Meanwhile, we conveniently ignore the things that have come to pass – things that were literal science fiction when I was young; Douglas Adams’ *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* was a store of knowledge accessible anywhere, and by anyone – today’s smartphones go well beyond even his vision. Dreams of harnessing nuclear energy, of creating electronic minds that can do so much of the drudgework of human existence, of communicating and projecting our images across vast distances – each of these are now so commonplace that we think nothing of them; they are commoditised, and have no more impact in our life than the turning on of a tap or the flicking of a light switch.

We live in a world that seems obsessed with progress, and with the real, practical things that humanity can do to further that progress. Can we stuff more transistors onto a wafer of silicon? Can we produce diodes that light independently, to give our televisions deeper blacks? Can we track our location ever more accurately, so that we can find the nearest coffee bar a few seconds more quickly?

We forget the importance of two key questions. What has driven these changes, and why do we even want them? The straight answer to both is the same: creativity.

Firstly, what has driven these changes? Einstein famously advocated the creative imagination over all else. His *Theories of Relativity* have their seed in a daydream – “What would the rules of the universe look like if I were to travel on a beam of light?” It is a common writing exercise to keep a list of “What if...” ideas, in order to inspire new worlds. Ones that you will recognise may include, “What if there were a secret school for magicians, hidden from muggles?” or “What if the world was invaded by monsters that reacted to the slightest sound?” or even “What if a day in the life of an Irishman was told in epic terms?” If one looks at the big ideas of today, they read like an author’s book of ideas: What if you carried a device that could access all of human knowledge? What if cars ran on electricity cells, not fossil fuels? What if shopping came to you, rather than you going to your shopping? The fact is, creativity is central to human progress in any field, not just within the creative arts, as we might imagine.

The second question, as to why we want these changes, may be answered in a similar way. Progress is certainly a good, in and of itself, but it is imagination that is at the forefront of much of society’s progress. We strive after technological progress because it allows us to be entertained in more immersive, more spectacular ways; we look for progress in the arts because we love the new, and the challenging. Our lives are not made easier by new ways to tell a story in the cinema, in a computer game, or on the written page: they are, however, made richer.

The simple fact is that there is a human need to progress, and it is deep within us. That progress, however, is driven by those with great imagination, and the fruits of that progress serve to widen and deepen the imaginative world in which we live.

Whatever our passion, therefore, be it mathematics, science, literature, fairness, sculpture, philosophy, charity, languages or economics, creativity must be both our motivator and our inspiration; the means and the end of our endeavour. Without it, we are mere automata, repeating the work of those before us. And we will never get our jetpacks.

Words / Mr Ben Prestney, Head of English
Illustration / Jon James
A compelling story off the page and onto the stage. Knowledge of all the outside preparation needed to bring skills acquired from these insightful courses deepened my design, and stage management. The ‘behind the scenes’ into staging a play, as the course focused mainly on Young Technicians’ course also provided great insight of theatre, all contained within a two week span. The ‘NT to Create’ – an event in which young minds come part in courses with the NT including ‘Summer Space Fuelled by my interest in film and television, my first course with the NYT was during an Easter holiday, a ‘Masterclass for Screen Acting’. However, I was also motivated to immerse myself in theatre, and so I took part in courses with the NT including ‘Summer Space To Create’ – an event in which young minds come together to devise interesting and thought-provoking theatre. While writing HoopLoop Holes, I was heavily inspired by classical works of tragedy including Sophocles’s Antigone. One of the integral themes running throughout the play is conflict between siblings and the importance of family. In many ways I drew comparisons between the relationship which Eteocles and Polynices share (a once loving, now hateful one) with that of Milo and Cyril within the play. Both sticking to the conventional tropes of Greek tragedy and occasionally subverting them played an essential part in the creation of my drama. I have thoroughly enjoyed the creation process this year for the ‘New Views’ competition, since it has not only reignited my passion for writing about deeply complex characters even further and push them to extraordinary lengths. My 30 minute play, HoopLoop Holes, is a tale of two brothers who share a relentless feud after one profits over the other unjustly, eventually resulting in disaster and tragedy. While writing HoopLoop Holes, I was heavily inspired by classical works of tragedy including Sophocles’s Antigone. One of the integral themes running throughout the play is conflict between siblings and the importance of family. In many ways I drew comparisons between the relationship which Eteocles and Polynices share (a once loving, now hateful one) with that of Milo and Cyril within the play. Both sticking to the conventional tropes of Greek tragedy and occasionally subverting them played an essential part in the creation of my drama. I have thoroughly enjoyed the creation process this year for the ‘New Views’ competition, since it has not only reignited my passion for writing about deeply complex characters and their interactions with each other, but it has also given me the confidence to continuously pursue all aspects of the performing arts.

The NYT also played a major role in developing the skills necessary to create my submission for this year’s ‘New Views National Theatre Playwriting Competition’. The roles given to me by the NYT as well as those in multiple school productions like Hamlet, The Government Inspector, and A Few Good Men have given me the ammunition to understand the actor’s perspective within my piece, further granting me the insight necessary to create my own theatre. This allowed me to develop the characters even further and push them to extraordinary lengths. My 30 minute play, HoopLoop Holes, is a tale of two brothers who share a relentless feud after one profits over the other unjustly, eventually resulting in disaster and tragedy. While writing HoopLoop Holes, I was heavily inspired by classical works of tragedy including Sophocles’s Antigone. One of the integral themes running throughout the play is conflict between siblings and the importance of family. In many ways I drew comparisons between the relationship which Eteocles and Polynices share (a once loving, now hateful one) with that of Milo and Cyril within the play. Both sticking to the conventional tropes of Greek tragedy and occasionally subverting them played an essential part in the creation of my drama. I have thoroughly enjoyed the creation process this year for the ‘New Views’ competition, since it has not only reignited my passion for writing about deeply complex characters and their interactions with each other, but it has also given me the confidence to continuously pursue all aspects of the performing arts.

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An extract from Alfie’s Play.

Milo: (Looking over the trail left by the criminals) You know, I bet these robbers must have got lost. I don’t blame them.

Cyril: Why’s that? Because it’s so bloody massive?

Milo: Pretty much, yeah. How’s the flat?

Cyril: Oh, you know, holes in the walls, floorboards are damp. The usual.

Milo: Are those mice still in the walls? Do they make the holes?

Cyril: They’re not mine, Milo. Rats. They’re rats.

Milo: Right.

Cyril: And yes, they do. I’m starting to think there’s a whole family back there.

Milo: Yeah. You know, I am really sorry to hear that. I know it’s not the best right now. But you’ve got to keep your chin up.

Cyril: Keep my chin up?

Milo: Yeah, that’s it.

Cyril: I think I’ll make it by just fine. I don’t know, maybe I’ll make another killer app and earn millions.

Milo: Hey, that’s not fair and you know it isn’t. You’ve got to let it go. We were kids, Cyril.

(At this point, the small garage on the stage left lights up slowly, showing two younger teenagers working hard around the room, pinning up ideas and debating with each other)

Cyril: We weren’t kids. I was nineteen, and you were twenty one. Don’t say we were kids. You knew what you were doing.

Milo: And it’s not my fault you didn’t. I was thinking for the both of us, Cyril. I swear to God.

Cyril: Do you remember the first time we cracked it? The moment we finally completed the code without any flaws? (The boys in the garage silently cheer and smile, having made significant progress) That had to have been one of the happiest moments of my life.

Milo: Mine too, don’t you forget it, Mister. I remember it just as well as you.

Cyril: It was great, wasn’t it?

Milo: Incredible, yeah.

Cyril: I remember Mom coming in and cheering with us, even though she had no clue what was going on.

Milo: That’s right. And Dad would sometimes come in to check on us, trying to understand what we were doing.

Cyril: Do you remember that time we accidentally started a fire? And we were stuck with only one curtain for the next two years?

Milo: Oh my god, yeah. That was crazy. Mom and Dad said that they weren’t going to buy us a new pair of curtains. But then we ended up going to the store anyway and I wanted the dark purple one but you kept talking about how it wouldn’t fit the room, and then…

(He keeps rambling on for a second or two before Cyril cuts him off, having gone from a moment of genuine, happy nostalgia to his previous state of inner hatred)

Cyril: Milo. Milo. Stop.

Milo: Okay… But, again Cyril, that was years ago. Things are different now.

Cyril: Oh you’ve got that right.
Sanford Meisner, practitioner of naturalism in theatre, once said that ‘an ounce of behaviour is worth a pound of words’. The best theatrical ensembles fulfill this characterisation of acting, because although the heart of theatrical writing might be dialogue, the heart of performance is not only dialogue but all else – all attributes of human behaviour. The ensemble-player may have little or no lines of dialogue in a piece, but in creating a world of a play (a real world, with real bystanders that behave as bystanders do) the ensemble is the path to an authentic setting and authentic drama. Not only, though, might we refer to the ensemble as the larger body of characters not central to the main plot, but more the company of actors as a whole.

The company mentality that has driven theatre, and particularly repertory theatre, since theatre began has meant that the ensemble is, and always has been, at the heart of theatre. Theatre in its recognisable and documented form opens with the ancient Greeks, who valued the ensemble more highly than we do today, even, in the form of the ‘chorus’. For the Greeks, the chorus was not there to suspend disbelief in the fiction, in fact, they were in no way naturalistic, but instead told the story with songs and poetic verses sung in perfect unison. Unison is a characteristic of the ensemble that has been borrowed by the rest of theatre history: the key to a successful ensemble piece, from Sophocles to Shakespeare to Loesser is absolute unity.

The team is a strong one with immeasurable camaraderie, and each actor knows the others well. Although perhaps lacking Meisner’s refinement, a young Michael J. Fox once compared the family at their supper to an ensemble: ‘The oldest form of theatre is the dinner table. It’s got five or six people, a new show every night, same players. Good ensemble: the people have worked together a lot!’ The Whitgift drama family have shared tables in our dining hall day in, day out, for many years, and all of our actors spend most of their time in the same building – especially the boarding students, who live together. In performance the same applies: each one of Whitgift’s core actors can read one another onstage like the words on the page of the script, and hopefully that comes across in performance.

The adaptability of our ensemble has meant that they have gone from providing the very sound of our musicals to the aesthetics and messages of our most involving plays. They can at a moment’s notice be funny, harmonious in song, tragic in their story or striking in their size and image. It is indisputable that the ensemble of actors at Whitgift is something unique and very precious.

Words: Jude Willoughby, L6HLN
Photography: DFPhotography
“Creativity is intelligence having fun” said Albert Einstein, and I agree with him. Creativity should not be kept in a locked box, but rather everywhere, like the air we breathe and the water we drink. I often see creativity as a child inside adults, the spark to the fire of imagination that leads to success and wonder.

Though we all have the mental capacity to be creative, it seems that we cannot harness it properly. We should not let doubt prevent us from being creative, as the esteemed artist Ai Weiwei puts it: “Creativity is the power to act,” so if we act, though it may be frowned upon, you yourself would have created something no one else has ever done. You are and forever will be special. This may sound sappy, but bear with me.

One should not merely see mistakes as problems, but see them as paths to improvement. “Mistakes are the portals of discovery” said James Joyce, and, again, it’s hard to disagree. Without mistakes, we would not have gone to the moon, we would not have WiFi, we would not have democracy, fire or even paper, the medium via which you read these words.

John F. Kennedy said that “A man may die. Nations may rise and fall. But an idea lives on.” If you were searching for a definition of creativity, I cannot provide one: “It’s impossible to explain creativity. It’s like asking a bird, ‘How do you fly?’ You just do,” (Eric Jerome Dickey). We need to learn how to unlock the creativity inside to make the world better for ourselves and us all.

Well, how have I used creativity at my time at Whitgift? I have prominently used it in Design, Technology and Engineering, creating whatever I can imagine, into something tangible. Within these subjects, if not all subjects, creativity drives you forward. Nikola Tesla would not have created a lightbulb that can run off an AC current, nor inspired years of Sci-Fi fanatics to create art styles and games after him. Nor would Elon Musk have named his company after him due to his influence on the modern day and its culture. It’s awe-inspiring. Also, in Music, Debating and even Mathematics, creativity unlocks new doors to create new paths for making our way of life more exciting and unfathomably more significant.

In Literature, H.P. Lovecraft would not have created Cthulhu; H.G. Wells the Martian “Fighting Machines”; Orwell the Thought Police or “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others”; Huxley’s Brave New World; Shakespeare’s Macbeth and The Tempest; Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes. The list goes on. Creativity is no doubt the cause of all inspiration and works known to man.

In Music and the Arts: Beethoven’s, Mozart’s, Haydn’s, Handel’s, and J.S. Bach’s work would not have existed. Beethoven was deaf and yet still created some of the most influential music the world has ever heard. Mozart was five years old when he composed his first piece. J.S. Bach simply started as an organ player. We can do whatever we want, as long as we are creative and put our mind to it.

Strive.

Strive to be creative. Strive to be unique. Strive to be great.
We live in gender-fluid times, but then theatre has always been so. Shakespeare, of course, would have seen his great female roles performed by pre-pubescent/pubescent boys and the Victorians saw the great Sarah Bernhardt perform the role of Hamlet. Sibyl Thorndike played Oscar Wilde’s Lady Bracknell like a man in drag, and we have seen a number of men take on the role in the light of this, including our own Oscar Nicholson. Recently theatre audiences have seen a female Lear and Othello. Lady Macbeth asks dark powers to ‘unsex me here’; Macbeth says he will do ‘all that doth become a man – who dares do more is none.’ The masculine and the feminine ebb and flow in us all.

Now, into this particular spotlight, innocent and unwitting, comes the force of nature and supreme thespian that is Luke Ward. Alice in Wonderland seemed to me an excellent First Form Play, because of its iconic status, because it is a work of unique genius and because it has a very large number of roles. It also, and here is the elephant in the room, has an eponymous female protagonist who is never ‘off-stage’.

It would obviously have made no sense, from an educational point of view at least, to import a young lady to play Alice and I was very clear with myself that I would not dress a young boy up in petticoats and crinoline – the fact that Lower School boys really do like doing this sort of thing did not sway me in my resolve. In my first year of teaching at Whitgift, I was involved in a production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s HMS Pinafore and the sight of First Form boys, elaborately costumed and heavily made up as the Female Chorus of ‘sisters, cousins and aunts’ is a disturbing memory that ‘will not go away’…

If this is my particular problem, so be it, but I was in charge and the decision to make Alice male was mine to make. In fact, there is very little in Lewis Carroll’s original that indicates Alice is a girl – she rebukes herself for crying, ‘A great girl like you!’, but tears are not the sole preserve of the female, as this great boy can attest, nor is that loss of innocence that must inevitably accompany visits to Wonderland and that place through and beyond the Looking Glass. So, ‘My name is Alice – James Alice.’ With apologies to Lewis Carroll and his adaptor, Adrian Mitchell. I though it worked well – having Luke Ward in role certainly helped…

I’m clearing out my books to clear my mind,
And also, I’ll admit, to clear some space.
The books are sanguine: their expression kind.
They don’t resent the gaps they leave behind,
But where’s the knowledge that I should replace?
I’m clearing out my books to clear my mind.
I liked to think my books made me refined,
Even perhaps conferred a hint of grace-
The books are sanguine: their expression kind.

My life with theirs was cruelly intertwined –
 Where can I hope those words will leave a trace?
I’m clearing out my books to clear my mind.
I’d take to action were I so inclined,
But I’ve no chance of winning such a race.
The books are sanguine, their expression kind.

Should I be glad to quit the fatuous grind
Of chasing words my poor brain must abase?
I’m clearing out my books to clear my mind.
The books are sanguine, their expression kind.
From Oz to Wani. From Capital FM to Spotify ‘Who We Be’ playlists. From 5’8” to 6’7”. From incompetence to eloquence. From insecurity to security. Seven years at Whitgift has been a long time. I’ve seen myself develop from a boy looking to fit in, to a man on top.

Life at Whitgift started out differently to how I’d planned it: two years on the sidelines due to my multiple knee operations saw me spending the majority of my time either at the library or the hospital. But both of these locations allowed for an expansion of my vocabulary, as I developed my reading interests from the Alex Rider series and the Diary of the Wimpy Kid, to books of an autobiographical nature in order to further my knowledge of the world and the people in it.

I never thought about writing poetry until 2012, when I turned a spoken word piece written for my grandfather’s funeral into a full poem to be performed at the Whitgift School Poetry Night. I didn’t actually think that what I was writing was poetry. I just wrote what was on my mind and tried to style the rhythm in the same manner as whichever musician was current at that given moment.

In 2013, arguably the top three rap artists of the 2010s all dropped albums – J. Cole, Drake and Kanye – meaning that I found myself trying to combine multiple styles whilst expressing what was on my mind. Thankfully, my music taste has developed exponentially since then, especially considering that before I joined Whitgift my taste relied on the classic Now That’s What I Call Music! CDs.

But it was not until the summer of 2016 that I started to translate the lyrics in my old journal into poetry again. On the last day of school before our GCSE exams, we had the “Whitgift Cypher” where on Puntabout the whole year gathered and started battling each other over a beat. I came on last as I wanted to perfect the lyrics I was about to spit. It was at that moment that I realised my talent, with the rhymes coming naturally as I destroyed the cypher – a hip hop term for the other rappers assembled in the group.

Despite this memorable experience, it took a further two years to get to where I am now, as I write poems in my spare time in order to express what I observe and experience. I think the poem Baba MI best shows this as I reflect on both my personal experience and the experiences of those around me.

It’s not only about what you know; it matters who you know. Connections are the key. Successful people chill with successful people. You gotta think about who you bring to the table. My mother always told me “Bad company corrupts good character.” She has always known best.

We’ve got the English lit

When I think of poetry
I think Krept, Weezy, KDot
These guys just flow on the spot
What you call a freestyle
Is poetry off the top
When you hear poetry
You think Shakespeare
The old bloke that wrote King Lear
But I’m here to change the view of your peers
Telling them poetry ain’t nuthin to fear
Take for example Krept
A brother from Heath
Who’s seen his fair share of beef
Yet when he rhymes
He forgets about time
And just speaks his mind

Look at Kendrick
A man aiming to rival the great Hendrix
A platinum selling artist who just won a Pulitzer
A rapper, not about is that why you don’t call him a lo-oo-ser
But tell me dis
If a flower bloomed in a dark room would you still trust it?

What’s a rap without a beat?
Poetry ain’t no weak feat
Go read the lyrics of Last Night in Lagos or DAMN
Or even watch Kanye at the Def Poetry Jam
What you will find is poetry laid the blueprint
For rap, as a matter of fact.
perseverance
Society has a tendency to praise talent. Educationalists talk of ‘gifted and talented’ students and we at Whitgift are no different, with good reason. One need only consider the myriad extraordinary achievements of our own pupils, or those of our many famous alumni, such as Elliot Daly or Neil Gaiman, to name but two. And yet there is another quality, equally if not more important, which receives far less attention – that of perseverance. Our own school motto so succinctly captures the essence of this virtue: ‘vincit qui patitur’ – he who endures, wins. This quality abounds so spectacularly among our student cohort as to almost beggar belief. We enjoy so much success at such a remarkable level that it is sometimes easy to forget how much hard work goes into these triumphs. There must be no doubt that to achieve a national or indeed international accolade, be it in sport, music, drama, or academic pursuits, requires an enormous dedication of time and effort.

The school motto bears further unpicking; the Latin verb ‘patior’, with its English cognates of sympathy, empathy, and pathylogy, has perhaps more of a sense of suffering than simply enduring. Indeed the word perseverance takes its roots from the Latin ‘per’ – through, and ‘severus’ – serious, grave, strict. Thus to succeed, one must not simply endure, but indeed suffer to reach those Elysian fields of success. Anyone who has sat through a session of public exams and all that entails will know this all too well. Perhaps ‘no pain, no gain’ would be a more pithy translation of our motto.

More interestingly, we derive the word passion from ‘patior’, and it is surely this too, which so handsomely epitomises everything so laudable in Whitgift’s brightest and best: their sheer passion and enthusiasm for the things they study and do. When we congratulate one of our own for their talent in achieving great things, do we do them a disservice? Should we instead congratulate their perseverance? Or is this to buy into Malcolm Gladwell’s theory of 10,000 hours, with anyone capable of becoming an expert through enough practice, a little too literally?

With all this talk of derivations, I feel a classical analogy is needed. Sadly, the majority of Roman examples of perseverance (and there are many – Rome wasn’t built in a day, after all) invariably result in an act of genocide (the siege of Masada) or hard-fought territorial conquests (Germania, Pontus, Carthage, you name it!) and so I will pivot to the Greeks, and one of their more famous victories born out of an extraordinary act of perseverance. In the late summer of 490 B.C., the Persian forces of King Darius, intent on subjugating the Greek peninsula, were repelled at Marathon and driven back to their ships by a much smaller Athenian army. The Persians, bloodied but not beaten, set sail for Athens whereupon to destroy the city. That same Athenian army, exhausted from a full day’s battle, in which they had been so vastly outnumbered (6:1 by some accounts), and clad in full armour, marched the 26 miles back to Athens to see off the Persians once more. The modern marathon derives its distance from this extraordinary act. Their efforts saved the city and arguably western civilisation as we know it. If that’s not perseverance, I don’t know what is.

Words / Mr Miles Thompson, Head of Classics
Photography / Whitgift
MALTESE MARVELS – TABLE TENNIS

On the back of a very successful season last year, with the U19 team winning the National Championships in a very closely fought final, this year’s aim was to repeat that victory and be selected to represent England at the World Schools’ Championships.

This year’s journey began in our very own Marilar Halls with our team taking on Wallington Grammar and King’s College School. This saw us win two comfortable matches 8-0 and we progressed to the London Schools zone finals. By this time we had just heard that we had been selected to represent England at the World Schools’ Championships, which would be taking place in Malta in April. This was a very exciting achievement and we were all looking forward to a week in the sun; however, our focus had to be on the Nationals and on repeating last year’s win. We did just that, overcoming Morpeth School and Ernest Bevin College 8-0 and 7-1 respectively.

Next stop on the journey was Bristol where we suffered a setback. Our teammate Jason fell down the stairs at the hotel the night before our next match and was unable to walk. This meant we would be going into this next round with only three players and, with only 16 teams left in the competition, our chances were now looking worrying. However, victory was on our side and the next day George, Reiss and I won all of our matches relatively easily. The final stop on our journey to the Nationals was Leicester. Matches relatively easily. The final stop on our journey to the Nationals was Leicester.

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The single event was challenging for everyone. Reiss took on a very tough Chinese opponent; Jason was against a Polish player ranked in the world top 100 for juniors; and George played the number seven in Europe for cadets. Finally, I had the Slovakian number one junior who was also in the top 50 in the world. None of us won our group stage so we were entered into the friendship doubles. This was a fun event in which we played with randomly selected competitors from other countries.

Although we didn’t manage to win anything, the competition was great fun and a once-in-a-lifetime experience. We would like to thank Mr Beck, Head of Table Tennis, and Goran Maric, our table tennis coach, for their support.

Words / James Smith, L6KSC

THE WHEELS GO ROUND – CYCLING

The omnium is one of the most demanding cycling races. It comprises track cycling’s major races all grouped into one day of events. The winner is the competitor who accumulates the most points; the higher your place, the more points you get. In the U16 category it entails a one-kilometre time trial, a devil, a scratch race, a sprint and a points race.

The kilo is the first event and possibly the hardest. It sounds simple: you have to cycle for 1,000 meters as fast as you can. But don’t be fooled, this is a difficult race: the short length means that there is no opportunity to pace yourself - you have to sprint the whole way. It usually takes just over a minute. However, because this is such an intense race you have to warm up for about 30 minutes before. This not only prepares you for the kilo, but also gets your body ready for the day ahead.

After the kilo, it’s time for the devil. In this event, the last rider in the peloton is pulled out of the race. This goes on until there are two people left in the group who have to sprint for the win. The devil, as its name suggests, is the most mentally demanding of all the events. You always have to be aware of your position in the peloton and make sure you have an ‘escape route’ if you are boxed in.

Then it’s the scratch. This is the simplest of all the races: the winner is the cyclist who crosses the finish line first after a set amount of laps. It usually comes down to a sprint finish.

After the scratch is the sprint. This is usually done in a keirin fashion: riders must form a line behind a motorbike (derny) which gradually builds up speed. It pulls off the track when there is a lap and a half to go, allowing the riders to sprint for the win.

Finally, there is the points race. The dreaded points race. This is like a scratch but every couple of laps there is a sprint for points. The fastest sprinters get the most points, which are added on to each competitor’s total score over the whole event. This race can really mix up the leaderboard and you can gain or lose lots of placings.

Mentally and physically demanding, the omnium really is the cycling event that has it all.

Words / William Gilbey, LSCEB

THE WHITE STUFF – SKIING

My name is Augustin Bozzetto and I race down mountains. I joined Whilgift in Year 7 last September and have represented Whilgift in two skiing competitions at the British Independent Ski Schools Championship (BISS).

Back in November 2017, the BISS competition took place at an indoor
MAKING WAVES - WATER POLO

Water polo is often recognised as the toughest Olympic sport. It requires a high level of fitness, mental strength and as well as a good grasp of strategy.

I would like to credit my parents who encouraged me to start water polo. They inspired me to push through the difficult moments and to believe in myself. I have learned that the most rewarding way of achieving that goal. Then you need to plan and manage your training and school work. Water polo is a high-level sport that requires strength, ability, speed, technical skill and strategic game-playing vision. It takes hard work and perseverance to train even when you don’t want to go. You are required to listen and accept advice and you will have to make social sacrifices. It’s about taking opportunities and believing in your ability. This is made possible with the help and support of the people around you.

I was fortunate: after a few years of training with my coach Claudio Fierro, he put me forward to Whitgift as a potential water polo scholar. The water polo programme at the School had only been going for a year and I was its first recruit. I am incredibly grateful for the many opportunities that this scholarship has given me. I am also thankful to the School for its support and to having some fun, too: as well as playing snowball fights, we tried sledging, luge and bowling.

March was another busy month for me as I competed in the British National Championships, where all the best British swimmers compete. This time it was on my own. I came 17th in my category of more than 100 boys – no small feat. This was a brilliant end to an exhausting week. For a few days we felt like everyone was being encouraged to enter Whitgift and every team was coming off our resort and many boys and girls came to congratulate us at the resort and everyone recognised us at the resort and we were proud, as this was my first (and probably not the last) victory with Whitgift.

THE AMERICAN DREAM - GOLF

My passion for golf started when I was in Year 7. I acquired my first set of clubs from a family relative. I think the advantage of the free golf lessons everyone receives as an Upper First Form student. I was inspired by the energy of Tim Woolard, Whitgift’s professional coach, and in just over a year - through hard work, dedication and persistence - I gained my handicap down to single figures. This allowed me to represent Whitgift at U15 level and in the HMC Fencing Championships. That year, however, I was unable to play in the national finals due to an injury and I continued to use the School’s facilities to improve my technique.

In 2014, Mr. Kendrick put me on the Scholars Golf club. This enabled me to have weekly lessons with Matt Antell, the highly respected PGA Advanced England and Surrey golf coach. This produced immediate results in getting my handicap down to scratch.

In 2015, after I had recovered from my injury, I represented the School team in the national championships. After this tour, I was offered – and accepted – a golf scholarship at the University of Minnesota.

Now the Alpine season is over and the indoor ski season has begun. I train with a few other boys from the Whitgift Ski Team every week at an indoor skiing centre in Hemel Hempstead.

I have a few more competitions coming up this summer and I am looking forward to our next Whitgift ski trip in October, which will be at the biggest indoor ski dome in Europe, called Landgastflug, in the Netherlands. Words: Toby Roberts, U5BDG

BACKING EACH OTHER TO THE HILT - FENCING

As my time at Whitgift draws to a close, I would like to extend my thanks to Andrew Bonner, Wilfred Chin and Tariq Roach for allowing me to be a part of that competition. For this day, it remains a highlight of my fencing career.

Words: Conor Head, U6SRP

THE EARLY BIRD - ROWING

Rowing is a sport of tireless dedication, toughness, pain and prowess. However, it has also been an incredible part of my time at Whitgift, sport, often overshadowed by rugby and hockey. But, with its ever-growing popularity and my enjoyment of it, I thoroughly enjoy this sport of its boys and coaches, rowing is now really going somewhere.

5.45am. I open my eyes. My first thought is: Why on earth am I awake? Five minutes of groaning later, I get up. After getting dressed, my brain begins to function and a lingering dread establishes itself: what torture will be this morning? At the same time, there is a feeling of excitement. An hour later I am in the gym; the faces of my teammates look equally weary. There is a sense of collective duty, however, a knowledge that the training must be driven. We went home run-endured suffering pain through our legs and lungs, we lie on the floor, gasping for air. Fuzzy visions connect and we look around at each other. Have we just reached a new level of performance? Of course it hurt, we knew it would, but what we always knew more was that it was worth it.

Whitgift rowing, and its growing contingent, is becoming a central part of the School. The squad rows out of Moleysey Boat Club. The biggest hindrance to rowing at Whitgift is the school’s location: the hour’s drive to the river makes it difficult to compete with schools that can row in their lunch breaks. Despite this, the U16 quad has three water sessions a week, including a four-hour session on a Saturday afternoon. For me, the hardest blow was being selected for a U16 quad, which meant missing out on competition runs, racing squad regularly train on a Saturday. The top squad often has four or five of us thinking about Mr Green’s The early bird – rowing.

In 2015, after I had recovered from my injury, I represented the School team in the national championships. After this tour, I was offered – and accepted – a golf scholarship at the University of Minnesota.

Words: Toby Roberts, U5BDG

Back to text
My day at Twickenham - Rugby

It is every rugby player’s dream to play at Twickenham. And, for the U15 squad, this dream became a reality when we reached the final of the National Cup. Our opponents, Manchester Grammar, were a team we knew very little about.

Our journey to the ground was different from usual; normally, there is music blasting out of speakers and flowing conversations, but on this day there was complete silence. Driving into the famous car park at Twickenham really focussed our minds. Excitement grew when we were escorted towards the England dressing room and were told that this would be our changing room for the day. Everyone began looking for where their favourite player usually sits, and, surprisingly, we ended up with a prop sitting in Jonny May’s space.

Before the game, we had a brief training session where we all had one eye on the opposition: it was clear it was going to be a dogfight. Mr Norris did a great job of calming the team before kick-off. One message he gave us was, “Not many people get to play at Twickenham, even fewer win. Do your best and enjoy yourselves!” I was now determined to make sure we were all going to be winners.

For a moment the referee had us lined up in the tunnel and as the teams were announced we ran out on to the famous turf. The game was a tight affair; we managed to get the crucial first score but Manchester Grammar kept clawing back. It was a very physical game with neither team allowed to play any fast-flowing rugby. The second half continued in the same style until the last ten minutes when our ‘never give up’ attitude carried us through, as it had done in many previous rounds.

The match finished in our favour and we were crowned National Champions to the delight of the Whitgift crowd. What a way to conclude an unbeaten season!

Words / Connor Slevin, L5SEH

Bouncing Back - Squash

Sport, and squash in particular, has been my passion. Whitgift has provided me with everything to realise my dreams. The amazing facilities and fantastic staff have been the springboard to bounce me back from long-term injuries to achieve my goal of becoming the number 1 England junior squash player. Sharing that journey with my teammates at Whitgift has given me some special memories, especially winning the National Schools Trophy in 2017.

I am really grateful to all at Whitgift for instilling in me the need to focus on hard work and ambition, which I believe will help me to pursue my new set of goals at Columbia University. Here, I will be the first European squash recruit on their Ivy League programme.

Words / James Wyatt, U6SBB

Whitgift has provided me with everything to realise my dreams

James Wyatt (picture, left)
Perseverance is a characteristic that any person should want to have, and it is particularly important to obtain this quality at school, before moving on into adulthood. Determination, willpower, old-fashioned hard work – whatever you want to call it – it can take you further than you think.

When most people think of perseverance, running a marathon or carrying on in battle, perhaps whilst injured, is what normally comes to mind. However, I think that we could stretch this pre-conception further, to within the grounds of Whitgift. Perseverance is shown by all, every day, although it may not appear that way. We normally see perseverance here at school as the Sixth Formers revising hard for A Levels or IB exams, rather than the Year 6 with his head in a maths book trying to be prepared for his end-of-unit test. Both are examples of perseverance, and we find more often than not that those who do persevere will succeed.

It’s not just in the classroom that we see this though. It could be the U13D team aiming for an unbeaten season or the 1st XI preparing for a national final – both have persevered in their training in order to achieve. It could be a young piano player putting in one last practice ahead of a Grade 1 exam or a highly talented pianist rehearsing for a huge concert. Again, the scale of the achievement is unimportant. Both have persevered in order to achieve.

In my year group alone we have seen the results of such perseverance, across the academic curriculum, sport and the arts. The football, hockey and rugby sevens teams have all won national titles this year as a result of countless training sessions, without which the story might have been different. A boy in our year was part of a champion Maths Challenge team, who put in the effort to prove themselves as best in the country. Last but not least are the boys who took part in the Lower School production of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe last year, which went down a huge success. This year’s production of Lord of the Flies will I’m sure will be fantastic, too, and it’s easy to underestimate the dedication during rehearsals that is required to get a large show like these off the ground.

As we have seen, perseverance at this school is shown in multiple forms, no matter how big or small – clear evidence that the results are worth risking the effort and the fear of failure. So, next time you think of perseverance, try to broaden your definition, as it is just as important to remember the minor successes as it is the major ones.

Words / Finlay Webb, U3HJH
Photography / Whitgift

From major to minor

It could be the U13D team aiming for an unbeaten season or the 1st XI preparing for a national final – both have persevered in their training.
My name is Krystof Kohout. I am 17 years old and I come from the Czech Republic. In 2014 I came across the Whitgift International Music Competition when my teacher at the time told me about auditions for this event taking place in Prague. I was absolutely delighted when I was invited to Whitgift to compete in the semi-finals and subsequently in the finals, as it was my first time performing in the UK. Unfortunately, at that time, I did not win the competition, but the experience certainly made me a better musician.

In 2017, after lots of practice and hard work in the intervening three years, I applied again and was thrilled beyond words when I was awarded First Prize and also the Headmaster’s Scholarship – this suddenly turned the opportunity of studying at one of the most prestigious schools in the United Kingdom into an incredible reality. I have now been studying at Whitgift for almost a year. I greatly enjoy my musical life here, with violin lessons with my amazing teacher Mr Ivo Stankov, weekly chamber music sessions, as well as plenty of orchestra experience. In terms of my academic studies, I am grateful to have the possibility, for the first time in my life, to combine music studies with academic subjects, since in the Czech Republic I had to study at two different institutions – a specialised music school and an academic school. Here I am able to broaden my passion for music to the widest extent, both performance-wise and academically, as well as continuing with my other chosen subjects. Alongside this, I am thankful for having the opportunity to attend Junior Guildhall at Guildhall School of Music and Drama every Saturday, where I meet a number of musicians from London and all parts of England.

Looking back, the Whitgift International Music Competition was a fantastic experience and a great push forward for me as a musician. I was impressed by the School and the high level of the competition, but also by the friendliness and inspiration that I felt from the organisers and other competitors. I enjoyed the supportive and caring environment of the whole event, capped-off by the truly special atmosphere of the gala dinner and exceptional musical performances.

I am beyond grateful to Whitgift and its amazing Music Department – within the four days of the competition my life took a new and exciting path, and I haven’t looked back.

Words / Krystof Kohout, L6HLN
Photography / Jordan Mixson
ambition
A total of 120 national titles across a variety of sports have been won in the last five years; an impressive number of Old Whitgiftians have gone on to play sports at the international level; and orchestras and choirs have performed at venues as distinguished as the Royal Albert Hall. In 2017, 44 pupils achieved straight A*/A at A level.

Achievements are not just limited to prospectus-worthy statistics. One boy in my year set up his own theatre company and has already produced a sell-out show. Another boy is training for a marathon to raise money for charity. I myself have been entering essay competitions throughout Fifth and Sixth Forms, and I am very proud to have won two and received one commendation. They require a considerable investment of time and energy, but are a great way to expand your knowledge beyond the curriculum (and are a great boost to UCAS applications, for the cynical amongst you).

But none of these things simply drop out of the sky; we have to want them. It is this desire that we call ambition, and because it inspires us to act, it also enables agency, that most human of qualities which we might loosely define as a capacity for action, or as an ability to produce change. To be ambitious, then, is to be human.

We often describe our teachers as “inspiring”, but what we really mean is something rather more precise: that the teacher in question inspires us with a desire to learn more. This is perhaps the purest ambition we can have, in the mode of Socrates’ dictum, “the unexamined life is not worth living”. An “education” literally means a “leading out”; our teachers’ main role is to guide us out into the adult world. But when we leave school, we should not simply become passive cogs in the machine, going through the motions – rather we should have the ambition (and the agency) to change the world.

A note of caution, however, must be sounded. If ambition can improve lives, it can also damage them. Alexander Pope once called it the “glorious fault of angels and of gods”, and we should share in his ambivalence. As a virtue, ambition is the driving force of progress; as a vice, it finds manifestation in the worst ways. The most ambitious of angels was Satan, and we should obviously not take him for a model! Advising Whitgiftians to “Be Ambitious”, with no qualifications whatsoever, would be totally remiss. Instead, we must ensure that we keep our ambitions virtuous; that we recognise our goals for what they are and evaluate them accordingly; and that we select our methods carefully, because ambition without moral bounds and limits is liable to become avarice.

Having covered these important caveats, I want to end on some more positive advice about ambition. Perhaps that university place or that spot in a sports team seems out of reach. Perhaps that new drama production would require memorising too many lines. Perhaps you think that musical mastery is beyond you. And you would probably be right – at first – because doing these things off the bat would be unrealistic. Our big goals can only be reached by setting little ones continuously: one more book, one more line, one more rehearsal, one more repetition. Maybe we won’t reach the lofty heights we first set out for, or maybe our desires were always more modest, but we will still have grown as human beings along the way. As we all know, the journey is more important than the destination. One of the Delphic maxims is the helpful “know thyself”; but I propose the following modification: “fulfil thyself”. Ambition is the only thing that can help us here.

Words / William Butler Denby, U6MCT
Photography / Mars Williams

To be ambitious, then, is to be human
It somehow connotes, in this country at least, a self-serving egotism as you chase down those ahead, above, around you, in pursuit of realising those dreams of yours. To be kind or respectful or hard-working is desirable: you’ll make people proud if you embody any one of those traits; in fact, you’ll make an excellent friend or colleague. But ambitious?

Shakespeare’s most tragic heroes often fall on the sword of ambition. Hamlet is unable to process the murder of his father by his uncle Claudius ‘for mine own ambition’; both end up dead. Macbeth, seemingly full of the ‘milk of human kindness’, is undone by his wife’s ambition for ‘the future in the instant’; again, both die. Julius Caesar is brought brutally to his untimely end by Brutus and the conspirators for his ambition to reframe the republic as a monarchy. Brutus declares over Caesar’s fresh corpse, ‘he was valiant, I honour him, but, as he was ambitious, I slew him’; unsurprisingly, neither survive.

An Elizabethan audience would have recognised and believed in the virtues and sanctity of kingship and God. There was a natural order not to be disrupted or interfered with at any cost for fear of reprisal. The body counts at the ends of these tragedies serve as gruesome reminders for anybody whose hubris and ambition might be tempting them to act in their own interests.

But what of ambition for others? Or shared enterprises? At Whitgift we encourage a culture of the ensemble in Drama where no one person is a star and the collective ambition of the Company - to tell the story in the best possible way - is shared by all. The boys (and girls) are ambitious for the project and for each other. They know that there are no small parts, only small actors, and that to work hard for the Company is to be ambitious for the production and the audience’s experience. I’ll let you, our audience, determine whether it works or not, but I firmly believe that placing the needs of the whole reaps much greater rewards than ploughing one’s own lonely furrow; after all is said and done, those rewards will be carried forward individually as well as collectively.

In today’s increasingly insular and secular society, where we seem to prefer to socialise online rather than in person, the notion of collective spirit is, arguably, diminishing. We risk retreating into ourselves, becoming a nation of navel-gazers. So I would suggest to all Whitgiftians that, if you are not already, you are ambitious for each other and the School community. That you work hard with your classes, your clubs, your teams and your societies to achieve your common goals. It is what our staff do every day because we are ambitious for our students. And it should help you realise your own personal ambition in a more meaningful way.

But what about those exams and jobs and ‘getting on’ in the real world? Well, whilst you do in the main revise and sit the exams alone, it is the culmination of a shared ambition with your parents, teachers and classes; they are only too happy for the success you achieve. And when prospective employers dismiss a candidate’s application after interview for ‘lacking ambition’ it is more often than not because they lack ambition for the organisation to which they are applying, not their own personal ambition.

And imagine how much more can be achieved if Whitgiftians take this ambition out into the world beyond the gates of Haling Park? A cleaner, happier, fairer future will not be realised alone.

So, ambition? Not such a dirty word after all.
It occurs to me that I spend seven hours every day having conversations about lies and falsehoods.

The poet seems to break down at the end of this lyric, unable to continue rendering poetry from the subject, very much playing into Adorno’s bands. But by saying “this is more than enough” Hill has written a poem about the unspeakable nature of his subject. The strange interjection in brackets “(I have made an elegy for myself it is true)” speaks to Adorno directly – he admits to the poem being as much about himself and his own reckoning with Europe’s past as the “undesirable” victim. It is an elegy rather than an elegy of the little 10 year old child being described. I read Hill’s poem as an admittance of the subjective nature poetry and also a celebration of it. His chosen subject is his own faltering over the Holocaust and the ability to explore it.

The Holocaust as a subject is the hardest one to broach but I contend that it is a legitimate subject for literature and that it deserves a literature. These two poems represent the summit of Holocaust poetry so far. Celan and Hill indirectly explore the subject and make the very difficulty of expressing ideas about it part of the thematic fabric of their work.

I suppose Adorno’s great error is his equating “criticism” and “art”. After all, we are all agreed that “self-satisfied criticism” is out of place when attempting to understand Auschwitz. But poetry and art are more than criticism and more than mere facts. They can contain truth even about the Holocaust. It is a different kind of truth that we see in these two poems: a ceaseless circling, a kind of trepidation in the verse; the words subscribe to subconscious truth dealing in impressions, fuelled by anxieties in expression itself. These intellectual and emotional tumults have been contained in poetry for posterity. They will give a gift of truth, like all great literature, to those who attempt discovery, which cannot be gained by any other means.

“Harmless fires” because the fires burn not the living but the already dead.

The critic and philosopher Theodore Adorno famously said that there could be no poetry after the Holocaust and that the truth would remain in the ashes. This is one of the most contentious statements in all criticism. In his book *Prisms*, he says: “To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today [...] Critical intelligence cannot be equal to this challenge as long as it confines itself to self-satisfied contemplation.”

To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. In Adorno’s view the Holocaust created an irreparable chasm in the European mind, a wound that was so destructive that it effectively broke the mimetic impulse. To reflect the world in its true grotesque and evil reality is beyond the powers of, as he calls it, “self-satisfied criticism.”

However, literature is not self-satisfied criticism at its best and there are ways of representing even the most disturbing events. There are two poems which I think are: the greatest proof against Adorno’s argument and present deeply disturbing mimetic accounts of permanent suffering. The first poem, ‘Death Fugue’ is by Holocaust survivor Paul Celan. It is poetry of the first order. It is an incantatory, dream-like series of impressions. Celan has abandoned any effort to produce an easy narrative. The repetitions and thunderous prophetic visions culminate until we are left with a simple and haunting juxtaposition between the golden hair of “Margaret” and the ashen hair of “Shulamith”. Many of its images are self-annihilating paradoxes: “black milk”; the temporal confusion of “sundown” and “daybreak”, the haunting impossibility of “duging a grave in the breezes” which captures the inability to dignify the deaths of the 6 million, instead having to settle for a grave of ash in the air as the bodies were incinerated. It is a perplexing poem because it is unlike anything else we have read. Celan himself said:

“Only one thing remained reachable, close and secure amid all losses: language. Yes, language. In spite of everything, it remained secure against loss. But it had to go through its own lack of answers, through terrifying silence, through the thousand darknices of murderous speech. It went through. It gave me no words for what was happening, but went through it. Went through and could resurface, endured by it all.”

The poem certainly is not “self-satisfied” criticism as Adorno would have it, but a reflection of a deeper, personal truth; a mimetic reckoning with the scar of the Shoah which destroyed his parents’ lives and perhaps drove him to commit suicide in Paris, 1970.

The second great poem to challenge Adorno’s dictum is by an English poet who has only recently passed away. Geoffrey Hill, a poet interested in history and remembrance and who gained a reputation for being “difficult”. This poem is called ‘September Song’. It is one of Hill’s shortest poems. It gains its power from what it avoids saying. It works as a kind of elegy to a young victim but without directly referencing any kind of suffering. Instead, Hill ironically tries to describe the victim in high literary terms using words from the sonnet phrase book (“undesirable”, “untouchable”, “roses”) all of which are pregnant with tectonic ambiguities. He describes the Holocaust as “routine”; these bureaucratic words ripple through the poem: “estimated”, “passed over”, “proper time”. The poet is disturbed by the ruthless efficiency, theTrademark, the “patented leather”, of Nazi death squads. He turns away from trying to describe the girl and her Holocaust experience directly to this beautiful and moving stanza:

September fatuss on vines. Roses flake from the tull/l The smoke of harmless fires drifts to my eyes.

Undesirable you may have been, untouchable you were not. Not forgotten or passed over at the proper time.
Turner's *Slave Ship* was first exhibited in 1840. It conveys the terrifying power of the sea like few other paintings. In the foreground, one sees the gore of dismembered body parts, the chains and bonds; in the background, the bloody, incarnadine sunset infusing the sea. In the centre-left the battered slave-ship itself is tossed powerlessly by the waves. Ruskin wrote a five volume treatise entitled *Modern Painters*, the primary purpose of which was to defend Turner's violent and Romantic departure from the techniques of the Old Masters. Of the *Slave Ship* he said that:

> the whole picture [is] dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions— … the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable Sea

According to Burke, the sublime is that which has the power to compel or destroy us, as distinct from the beautiful. He relates it specifically to the ocean when he asks if a level plain can

> … ever fill the mind with anything so great as the ocean itself? [No] … The ocean is an object of no small terror. Indeed, terror is in all cases whatsoever … the ruling principle of the sublime.

A modern eco-critic, Steven Mentz, goes further, transforming Burke's felt terror into realised danger. He writes:

> The oceans … figure the boundaries of human transgression; they function symbolically as places in the world into which mortal bodies cannot safely go.

The sea is undeniably dangerous, what Burke and Mentz have to say is often applicable. But there often runs, if you will excuse the pun, a countercurrent, of aesthetic or emotional desire for the sea. The sea is not always so terrifying.
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.
Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Cargoes...

The poem is static and imagistic, with no finite verbs – the closest we get are present participles, but these remain within a singular, immediate image. There is no realised narrator, no I; Masefield does not declare himself. It is close to a camera lens: objective, with little personal investment. There is no terror, no sublimity, no real sense of aversion; it is pure aestheticism, the beginning of a countercurrent.

Thalatta! She is our great sweet mother
Epi oinopa ponton. Ah, Dedalus, the Greeks. … Thalatta!
Looking out over Dublin Bay:
Call of the running tide … may not be denied'.
Would say, they ‘must go down to the sea again’ and ‘the
desire: ‘I must go down to the sea again’. And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick’s over.
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the wheel’s kick and the wind’s song and the white sail’s shaking,
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-roe;
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick’s over.
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More personal and more powerful is Masefield’s other famous poem, Sea Fever.

I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel’s kick and the wind’s song and the white sail’s shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea’s face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the sea again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the sea again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull’s toys and the whale’s toy the wind’s like a wooded knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-roe;
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick’s over.

Whether the ‘lonely’ of the first line is a transferred epithet I am not sure. Is Masefield lonely or is the sea lonely? Perhaps an ambiguous state works best: that way they provide reciprocal company. The next two stanzas begin with that refrain from which all else can begin anew for Masefield: ‘I must go down to the seas again’. This is the ultimate Freudian repetition-compulsion: Masefield has clearly been down to the sea before (hence the again); now he relives this desire in poetry, seemingly thwarted in reality. The ‘trick’ of the last line is sailing terminology for time spent at the helm. But Masefield makes it a nonchalant metaphor for life, in the spirit of the last line of Henley’s ‘Invictus’, ‘I am the Captain of my Soul’. For Masefield, the sea is both life and a way of life; it is an enabler and a provider.

But Masefield’s sentiment is by no means modern. Incidentally his wife, Constance, was a classicist, and there is a curious parallel between his poem and a famous incident in Greek literature in Xenophon’s Anabasis. There were 10 thousand Greek mercenaries, of whom Xenophon himself was one, hired by Cyrus the Younger to seize the Persian throne from Artaxerxes. But after they failed, they were forced to undertake an arduous journey to get home. When they see the Black Sea from Mount Tzheches, this happens:

[And very soon they heard the soldiers shouting, ‘The sea! The sea! The sea!’, and passing word along. Then indeed all the rearguard turned also running ...]

Like Masefield, the sea is their salvation; indeed Masefield would say, they ‘must go down to the sea again’ and ‘the call of the running tide ... may not be denied’.

Joyce later quotes Xenophon in his Ulysses. Early on in the novel, Buck Mulligan says to Stephen Dedalus when looking out over Dublin Bay:

Epi oinopa ponton. Ah, Dedalus, the Greeks: … Thalatta! Thalatta! She is our great sweet mother’

‘Ourselves’ here means our source, our essence. There is a communal element to the sea, because everyone was born from it. Incidentally, three of the things which the girls find are proto-human organisms; and all are rendered in anthropomorphic terms. Most striking is the mention of ‘alone’. The child of the sea is perpetually a lonely child; and the sea is the ‘great sweet mother’. The sea is both life and a way of life; it is an enabler and a provider.

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I want to compare briefly three other American poets in addition to Cummings. The first extract is from Emily Dickinson; the second and third from Longfellow and Whitman.

I started Early – Took my Dog – And visited the Sea – But no Man moved Me – till the Tide Went past my simple Shoe –
(From Dickinson’s ‘I started Early’)

For Dickinson, the sea is male and to be avoided; she ends the poem by running back to the town. But the two
male poets seem to have a longing to return to the female sea’s comfort and embraces.

All! What pleasant visions haunt me
As I gaze upon the sea?

... My soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea,
And the heart of the great ocean
Sends a thrilling pulse through me!

The feminine essence which has given life declares its origin but remains inaccessible to the male poet; he is restricted to an almost erotic gazing, and longing, to the feeling of only a ‘pulse’ of potential. I wonder, then, if poetic fascination with the sea has something Oedipal about it. In myth, Oedipus returned to his mother and had sexual relations with her unwittingly. Freud turned this into a complex in which the male child unconsciously wants to possess his mother. So when Whitman asks the sea to ‘dash me with amorous wet’, is this on one level simply a child-like euphemism?

The contrary to mother is father; to sea, land. Following the Oedipus complex line, the land must be rejected. In American literature a cultural movement becomes aligned with this process. Emerson was one of the early literary theorists in America; he believed that Americans, having rejected their European forefathers back in the Revolution, must maintain a state of continuous originality in their art. But if Europe has been rejected, what is left? Only the American landmass itself.

Hence Whitman’s most powerful images of desire are often of the sea, at the expense of the land. In Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking, Whitman concludes: ‘the sea whispered to me’, it gave birth to him. And he is not more Emersonian than in On the Beach at Night Alone: ‘As the old mother sways her to and fro singing her husky song / ... I think a thought / ... of the future’, a metaphor for the sea’s semi-erotic reunion, the return to origin with the sea’s waves and poetic prospects. In

For the secret of the sea,
O to have life henceforth a poem of new joys!

Whitman’s descriptions of the land are ironic, however, because the sea has as much ‘tiresome sameness’ as the streets – or even more. I suppose the difference is that if Whitman is restored to the sea, his up till now incessant Oedipal competition with the land is finally over.

What I quoted from A Song of Joys is echoed in concentrated form by the couplet The Untold Wane:

The untold truant by life and land we’re granted,
Now voyager sail thou forth to seek and find.

Unfulfilled and unsatisfied, Whitman rejects life on land, and heads towards the sea. Although this is not a heroic coupler by rhyme scheme, it is heroic in sentiment. The last four words in particular refer me to the end of Tennyson’s Ulysses, which I suspect Whitman read:

... that which we are, to ere,
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made steep by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Tennyson’s Ulysses, and Joyce’s from earlier, take their titles from the latinised name of the hero Odysseus from Homer’s Odyssey. Amongst other things, the Odyssey is a poem about a nostos, which means a returning home via the sea, to his home island, Ithaca. The terror of the sea is often personified as the anger of Poseidon, the God of the Sea, who hounds Odysseus throughout the poem. But Odysseus is still on the wine-dark sea; his home is an island, intimately connected with the sea; he has survived for us as the archetypal marine voyager, whom Whitman can emulate.

Paul Valery has said that ‘no poem is ever finished; it is abandoned’. Homer composed the oldest extant poem in the Western cannon and is still being picked up and continued. The etymology of a ‘poem’ refers us to the Greek verb ‘poiein’, which means ‘to create’. The poets of the sea are the creations, the children of the sea. ‘Abandoned’ on land, Masefield and Whitman seek to return on their own nostos, to gain what Hart Crane, in the opening quartan of Passage, termed an ‘improved infancy’, a better childhood from the sea, starting over again.

Where the cedar leaf divides the sky
I heard the sea.
In sapphire arenas of the hills
I was promised an improved infancy.

An ‘improved infancy’ and ‘sea’ are associated more than just rhyme. What he is ‘promised’ cannot be found in the terrestrial hills, but only in the sea. Hart Crane was to kill himself by leaping into the Gulf of Mexico – clearly he didn’t find it that terrifying, but rather infinitely attractive and morbibly intoxicating.

But what I’d like to end on is this thought. Crane’s tombstone reads ‘lost at sea’. Was he lost, or was he found? Or is he more reflexive; did he find himself in the sea, his great Oedipal ambition?

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Words / William Butler Denby, U6MCT
Photography / Whigift

Hans Woyda Report

Hans Woyda was a rewarding and exciting competition, as it combined both interesting maths problems with a thrilling competitive format. The element of teamwork also helped to make Hans Woyda an enjoyable experience, since we had to get through three box matches (a box match being a match against one of four teams in your group) followed by a series of knockout matches to ultimately win the competition. The competition has a lot of history behind it as well; a mathematician called Hans Woyda created the event in 1989 but then sadly passed away a short time after. It was then named after him in the hope of inspiring young people to be involved with Maths.

One thing that separated Hans Woyda from many other mathematics competitions was the style of the questions. Unlike an exam-style, multiple choice quiz, Hans Woyda put a time limit on each question individually to add an extra sense of tension. One match would consist of seven rounds, with some rounds being done in pairs, some as a whole team, and some as a race to see who could get the answer first. There was a large range of question topics, including algebra, geometry, mental arithmetic and probability.

Our team this year was very strong, with Shintaro Nishiho in the Year 13 place, Nichika Waragai representing Year 12, Anant Gupta in the Year 10 – 11 place and Kai Lam covering the Year 7 – 9 spot. The combined effort of everyone was enough to win the competition, but ultimately came down to the very last question. The score was 41 – 41 and the first Year 13 candidate (from either school) that answered the question correctly would win the competition. Excitingly, Whigift answered the question first, winning the final.

Overall, Hans Woyda was a great experience, from the very start to the very end. My favourite part about the competition was its format and style of questions, as they allowed for a variety of mathematical aspects to be tested as well as involving many elements of teamwork. Everyone did extremely well throughout the competition, which is clear by Whigift taking the win.

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Words / Anant Gupta, L5ATS
Photography / Wu Yi
DR MATTHEW LAKIN
Matthew joined us four years ago and given the sheer range and volume of his involvement in this period, it is hard to believe that it is such a short time. Joining us fresh from writing his Doctoral Thesis at Oxford, Matthew threw himself into teaching, gaining an outstanding grade in his Teacher Training. Intellectual rigour, academic curiosity, hard work and plenty of fun have characterised his teaching approach. Lessons have been fast paced and allowed for plenty of productive digressions and his recruitment rate at GCSE and A-Level is amongst the highest in the department. With encyclopaedic subject knowledge and the ability to relate to all age groups, Matthew is a rare teacher.

Politics is a passion of his and he was never shy in showing where his own views lay, but could respect the views of others, provided they could support their views. An avid Brexiteer, he was quite unabashed that others disagreed with him quite unabashed that others disagreed with him as a very strong opponent of No Platforming and debated the issue to a packed Big School. Because he was always happy to support their views. An avid Brexiteer, he was quite unabashed that others disagreed with him quite unabashed that others disagreed with him as a very strong opponent of No Platforming and debated the issue to a packed Big School. Because he was always happy to support their views. An avid Brexiteer, he was quite unabashed that others disagreed with him quite unabashed that others disagreed with him as a very strong opponent of No Platforming and debated the issue to a packed Big School.

In summary, we will all miss him greatly. He has made a rare and highly significant impression in such a short time.

Words: Mr Keith Smith, Head of History

SAM THATER
Sam joined our Languages Faculty in January 2014 from Lingfield Notre-Dame where he had previously risen to be Head of First Form. His energy, organisational skills, ability to motivate, and his intense passion for his subject made him a natural fit for Head of Spanish on the Departure of Pablo Muñoz. Sam has continued the Spanish Department’s long tradition of enjoyable lessons with a big emphasis on immersive use of Spanish and embedded cultural teaching, whilst giving literature and film a prominent role and encouraging an academically rigorous approach. Under Sam’s auspices the Spanish Department’s extra-curricular offering has thrived, with he and the other Spanish teachers organising a plethora of trips, exchanges, speech contests, theatre features, a spelling bees and other opportunities designed to stretch and entertain our students of Spanish. It is perhaps no surprise that a number of recent students have opted to pursue Spanish degrees at university, and indeed Tom McDonald (Spanish and Arabic) and Jerry Amokwandoh (Spanish and Classics) both started at Oxford this academic year. So successful was he as a Head of Department, that the School invited him to take on another very significant role and from September 2016 Sam became Head of Spanish. In this role too, Sam has excelled. His drive, enthusiasm, charisma and the time he devotes to individual students has kept the IB pupils on track, and it is a testament to his dedication both that the recent IB results have been outstanding and that the number of pupils opting to pursue the IB at Whitgift is at a record level. Despite holding two substantial roles within the School which keep him very busy, Sam has found time to coach the U13B football team and accompany the biennial football trip to Dubai. Sam will be hugely missed but we are delighted that his move to Dubai will be a mentor to Heads of Departments as well as other teachers and will help develop the school’s ethos. The school could not be in safer hands; there is no harder working member of our Common Room. He is a wonderful colleague and supporter of pupils with applications for university, including Oscar Melbourne who in October 2016 became the first OW to study Economics at Cambridge.

As Mr Fernie leaves us for a new ‘Jerusalem’ and who accomplished the radical without, as he did he have such extreme vices. He worked for some may seek the limelight as a ‘deserved’ part of their leadership, Mr Fernie shies away from it, instead preferring to spend his time meeting boys, parents and staff to offer invaluable counsel. Mr Fernie will be moving to Epsom to take up a role as a leader in teaching and learning. He will be a mentor to Heads of Departments as well as other teachers and will help develop the school’s ethos. The school could not be in safer hands; there is no harder working member of our Common Room. He is a wonderful colleague and I know I join Whitgift School in wishing him and Katie every success in the future.

Words: Mr Ben Turner, Deputy Head of Sixth Form

ADAM COTTON
Adam joined the Languages Faculty in May 2012 after a short stint in the world of publishing. His teaching is heavily influenced by his unashamed love of grammar and the linguistics training which he received as part of his French and Linguistics degree at St Hugh’s College Oxford; he opens his pupil’s eyes to the wonder of language per se and they leave his tutelage not just loving French but more knowledgeable about their own language and keen to pursue as many languages as possible. After periods as Assistant Head of First Form and Assistant Head of Sixth Form, Adam became Head of French in September 2015, conducting a substantial overhaul of teaching methodology and resources. His emphasis on raising expectations and imbuing lessons with academic rigour has reversed the decline in numbers studying French, and the enthusiasm of pupils for French has been noticeably higher with him leading the Department. He has made excellent contacts in the world of French education beyond the School, recently organising for example a very successful French debating competition at Whitgift for other independent schools in London and the South East. Adam has spearheaded the introduction of linguistics as an academic discipline at Whitgift, running Polyglossia (a society for Sixth Form Linguists), organising a linguistics symposium, supporting students with applications for university, including Oscar Melbourne who in October 2016 became the first OW to study Linguistics at Cambridge. In his Second-in-Languages role Adam has supported the daily running of the Faculty and taken on a number of projects, including taking a lead on expanding the scope of our Linguistics Awareness Course for the Lower First. This exciting course now includes modules on phonetics, etymology, dialectology and hieroglyphics, offering our Lower First a truly stimulating introduction to the world of languages and providing an excellent springboard for future study. Adam leaves us for arguably one of the world’s best international schools - Tanglin Trust School in Singapore, where his special brand of good humour, academic rigour and hard work will ensure that he is as highly valued as he has been here.

Words: Mr Andrew Hunt, Head of Modern Languages

OLLIE FERNIE
Any readers of last year’s Citizen Clem by John Biewill tell you that it is a ‘must read’ for those with, shall we say, progressive tendencies. Biew outlines the journey of a man who many would consider to be one of Britain’s greatest prime ministers: Clement Attlee. Churchill once described Attlee as ‘a modest man with much to be modest about’, but as the years went by and the Second World War unfolded, there grew a fondness and mutual respect between the two men. Attlee was a man with great principles and who accomplished the radical without, as Biew puts it, radical affluents. He did not need the fanfare or adulation sought by Churchill, nor did he have such extreme vices. He worked for the greater community without being a slave to dogma and with an obvious integrity that allowed him to talk to all sides.

As Mr Fernie leaves us for a new ‘Jerusalem’ at Epsom College, I have been reflecting on some may seek the limelight as a ‘deserved’ part of their leadership, Mr Fernie shies away from it, instead preferring to spend his time meeting boys, parents and staff to offer invaluable counsel. Mr Fernie will be moving to Epsom to take up a role as a leader in teaching and learning. He will be a mentor to Heads of Departments as well as other teachers and will help develop the school’s ethos. The school could not be in safer hands; there is no harder working member of our Common Room. He is a wonderful colleague and I know I join Whitgift School in wishing him and Katie every success in the future.

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Words: Mr Ben Turner, Deputy Head of Sixth Form
BEN TURNER

Ben Turner roved into Whig’s view and the History Department one sunny morning in September 2010, part of an exciting, debonair, and frankly intimidating intake of new staff. He made an immediate impact with boys and staff alike. An exceptional historian, his political leanings may not always have aligned entirely with some in Department, but there will be a poster of the Iron Lady atop his new desk, doubtless. Sadly his attempts to replace the youth-speak ‘peak’ with ‘zenith’ have failed to gain traction. He has been a regular presenter in assemblies, not to mention the man I/C General Studies. His ‘30 things I Wish I’d Known Before University’ session has become a mainstay of the calendar and one sometimes feels the Sixth Formers learn more in that hour than they have over the previous two years. There is no doubt that he has been the favourite teacher of many an Old-Whig.

He has worked incredibly hard for the boys over the last eight years and especially so in his most recent incarnation as Deputy Head of Sixth Form. He has felt their every up and down as if they were his own. One need only talk to any of the students he has supported, be it pastorally or in their study of History, to get a sense of how valued he is by them. Boys and staff alike have been the lucky participants in the myriad trips he has organised ranging from the dazzling chimneys and lunch rooms of Hampton Court to the glistening peaks of the Italian Alps. His role as Chair of University Challenge, alongside fellow historian Mr Yates, has gone down in ‘history’ (Bamber, Jeremy, eat your heart out).

As a pastoral leader within the School he has supported the boys with fairness, kindness, and, most importantly, a view to their achieving their very best. He has brought similar virtues to bear on the staff biscuit ration as Chair of the Common Room and we could not be more grateful. He leaves us to become the head of all things pastoral at Wimbledon High. Their gain is our loss, but I cannot think of a better man for the job; clearly neither could they. We wish him the very best of luck.

Words / Mr Miles Thompson, Head of Classics