

News, opinions, short stories, pets, photos, and more!

MEOPHAM MONTHLY

**Meopham Schools'
Student Magazine**



ISSUE EIGHT – DECEMBER 2022



Cover Art by Shanice Jarvis

WELCOME

Hello! Welcome to our December issue of Meopham Monthly. Our December issue focuses on winter and the Christmas spirit, including Christmas crafts, book reviews, poetry and an exclusive double page of the Meopham (Pet) Family! We also have an interview with the amazing poet, Theresa Lola, see below.

If you would like to submit a short story, article, drawing, poem, photos or anything else for our future issues, please get in touch with the team at MSS-magazine@swale.at or come along on a Thursday lunchtime to English 5.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

Editor: Robyn Fitzpatrick (Yr 12)

NEWS JUST IN!

Poet Theresa Lola visited our school on November 9th, giving assemblies and teaching lessons to students all across the school. Some members of our Editorial Team pictured below [Maisie D, Charlie G, Ashe R, and Robyn F]



received the incredible opportunity to talk to Theresa privately, to discuss her life as a poet. You can find out more about this interview on pages 15-16.

CONTENTS

Welcome and News	2
Contents and Contributors	3
Christmas Day	4
Christmas Compendium	5
Mr Vilday's View	6-7
Christmas Creativity	8
School Council & Enrichment	9
The Gallery	10-11
Book Recommendations	12
Book Reviews	13
Theresa Lola - Visiting Poet	14- 15
Welcome to Meopham School	16
Wellbeing Corner	17
The Meopham (Pet) Family	18-19
Christmas Patchwork Poem	20

**With thanks to everyone who
contributed this month:**

Nshira Ansah (Yr7)	Freya Hicks (Yr7)	Harriet Pritchard (Yr7)
Florence Baker (Yr7)	Jack Hollis (Yr7)	Ashe Reeves (Yr13)
Harry Bradford Denton (Yr7)	Charlotte Hooker (Yr12)	Stella Santamaria (Yr8)
Charlie Cloke (Yr7)	Darcey Howlett (Yr7)	Jenna Searle (Yr12)
Megan Cole (Yr8)	Sienna Hurrell (Yr7)	Sonny Selwood (Yr8)
Charlie Cooper (Yr7)	Penny Ingles (Yr9)	Fin Sparks (Yr7)
Dolly Darby (Yr7)	Shanice Jarvis (Yr7)	Georgie Turvey (Yr7)
Maisie Davidson (Yr8)	Silver Kesby (Yr7)	Mr Vilday
Erin Feeney (Yr7)	Molly King (Yr7)	Axel Waterson (Yr7)
Charlie Gannaway (Yr7)	Charlotte Millen (Yr12)	Kira Weston (Yr7)
Harry Gower (Yr8)	Maia New (Yr12)	Josh & Jay Williams (Yr7)
Luke Halls (Yr7)	Jenson O'Neill (Yr7)	Rose Wilkinson (Yr7)
	Lucy Parker (Yr12)	

CHRISTMAS DAY

By Charlie Gannaway (Year 7)

Christmas day is a fun and exciting time when we get given presents from our family and friends, but why do we actually celebrate it?



Christmas day is a religious day celebrated on the 25th of December. This day marks the birth of Jesus Christ, who many believe is the Son of God. Christmas isn't only celebrated by Christians, it's celebrated by a multitude of people all around the world (including those who aren't religious at all!). It is a special day which brings family and friends together to spend quality time together. Christmas day is also a day of giving gifts and many people give gifts to friends and family as a tradition.

Fun Facts about Christmas !

- ☆ Did you know, people leave presents in different rooms depending on where they're from?
- ☆ Did you know, Jesus was born in a stable?
- ☆ Did you know, Christmas is full of different symbols?



Year-Round Joy

Christmas is full of shiny things
That sparkle, gleam and glow;
These holiday pleasures dazzle us,
And yet, deep down, we know...

That Christmas has its special gifts,
But our year-round joy depends
On the cherished people in our lives,
Our family and our friends.

A Poem By Joanna Fuchs

CHRISTMAS SONGS RATING

By Shanice Jarvis (Year 7)

- Jingle Bell Rock – Bobby Helms 7/10
- We Wish You A Merry Christmas – Love To Sing 9/10
- **Santa Tell Me – Ariana Grande 10/10**
- Last Christmas – Wham! 7/10
- Holly Jolly Christmas – Michael Bublé 7/10
- Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town – Carpenters 9/10
- All I Want For Christmas Is You – Mariah Carey 8/10
- Rudolf The Red-Nosed Reindeer – 8/10
- Frosty The Snowman – Gene Autry 7/10
- Winter Wonderland – Michael Bublé 8.5/10
- Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree – Brenda Lee 7.5/10
- Silent Night – Frank Sinatra 5.5/10

Note: this is my opinion! What do you think ?

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

By Harry Gower (Year 8)

1. What did one eye say to the other? Between you and me something smells!
2. What do you get if you cross an elf and Stormzy ? A wrapper!
3. What do you get if you mix Santa and dough ? A Christmas cookie!

INTRODUCING 'THE GRINCH'

By Dolly Darby (Year 7)

The onion-eating monster absolutely despises Christmas, despite it being the most jolly time of year. He hated the decorations. He hated the songs. He even hated the weather!

MR VILDAY'S VIEW

Views from a latter-day Viking

Happy Saturnalia!

As a famous man once said “So here it is Merry Christmas, everybody’s having fun. Look to the future now, it’s only just begun”. And so begins my Christmas trivia quiz.

Question 1 Who sang the lines quoted above?

Of course, Christmas is famous for its songs and carols. The Twelve Days of Christmas seems to be a particularly cruel song when you look at it.

Question 2 – In the song, how many gifts did my true love give to me?

If you get the answer right you’ll realise why it’s cruel, after all, where will you keep that many birds in your house?

“In the pre-Christian era, as the winter solstice approached and the plants died, pagans brought evergreen boughs into their homes as an act of sympathetic magic, intended to guard the life essences of the plants until spring. This custom was later appropriated by Northern Europeans and eventually it becomes the so-called Christmas tree.” Dr Sheldon Cooper.
So now you know why we have Christmas trees.



Question 3 – How tall was the tallest Christmas tree cut for public display?

Mistletoe always brings about thoughts of romance: kissing under the mistletoe. What’s not so romantic is that the name comes from the Anglo-saxon ‘mistle-tan’ which loosely translates as ‘little dung twig’.

Question 4 – True or false – Mistletoe only appears in the winter.

I’ve already mentioned a couple of Christmas songs, and new ones appear every year.

Question 5 – What is the biggest selling Christmas song of all time?

MR VILDAY'S VIEW

Views from a latter-day Viking

It's about this time of year that many people are starting to get their Christmas cards organised and sent off. The lazy ones amongst will often write Merry Xmas as an abbreviation.

Question 6 – Why is Xmas short for Christmas?

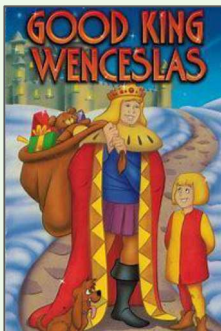
Most people are counting down to next Christmas the moment that Christmas is over. 25th December is a very important date to many people around the world.

Question 7 – Who decided that Christmas would be on December 25th?

A lot of houses will have the brightly coloured Poinsettia flower on display at Christmas



Question 8 – Which country is the Poinsettia native to?



Christmas Joke –

How does Good King Wenceslas like his pizzas?

Deep pan, crispy and even.

Question 9 – Which country was Good King Wenceslas king of?

Question 10 – “Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht, Alles schläft; einsam wacht” is the start of the German version of which Christmas carol?

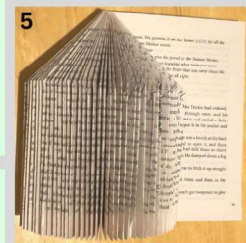
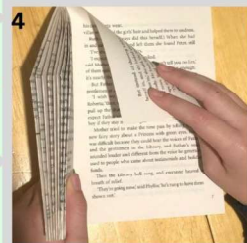
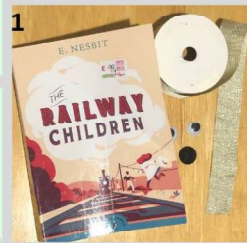
If you think you know the answers to the 10 Trivia questions, then email them to me at andrew.vilday@swale.at. First correct answers will receive a prize that will almost certainly involve chocolate.

Hope you all have a wonderful Christmas when it finally arrives, and a Happy New Year

CHRISTMAS CREATIVITY

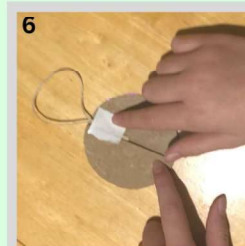
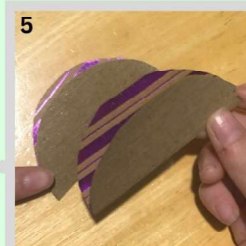
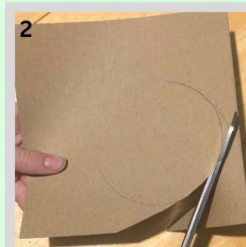
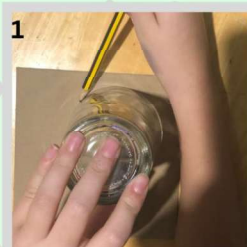
By Silver Kesby (Year 7)

How to make a Christmas Hedgehog



Find an old book from a charity shop for this project, not a family favourite!

How to make a Cardboard Bauble



SCHOOL COUNCIL

By Stella Santamaria (Year 8)

The School Council for 2022-23 is here to try to help make our school a better place, with a better environment.

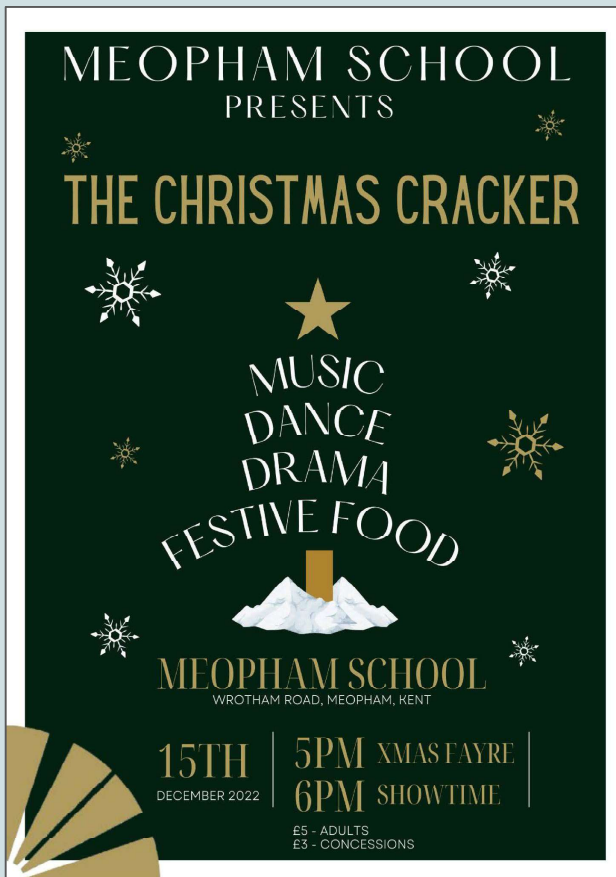
HERE ARE OUR SCHOOL COUNCILLORS:

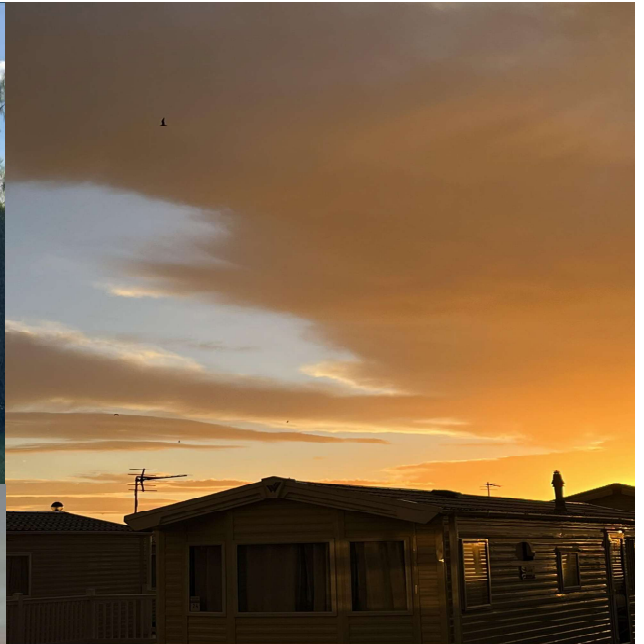


Year 7 - Dilpreet Dhesi - Harriet Pritchard - Jack Hollis - Alex Holden
Year 8 - Abbey Rich - Theo Hayden - Mackie Reed - Stella Santamaria
Year 9 - Helaina Tomlinson - Henry Price - Amrik Chohan - Penny Ingles
Year 10 - Alfie Malone - Frankie Watts - Ife Oladipupo - Francis Taiwo
Year 11/12 - Ellissia Gates - Lottie Tearle - Ellie Jenner - Robyn Fitzpatrick


Whenever you have any ideas on how to improve our Meopham Family, please inform your year's school councillor. School councillors will be wearing badges if you need to find one.

LET'S MAKE OUR SCHOOL A BETTER PLACE FOR THIS MEOPHAM FAMILY!!!





THE GALLERY

 MY Sun-Light Megan

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Most quiet needs, by the sun and candlelight
Just like the moon and sun
He refreshes my soul.
My soul can reach, when I'm feeling out of sight
How do I love thee?



Poetry & photos by: Robyn F, Megan C, Jenna S

My Patchwork Poem!

'Is there anybody there?

My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings

The Lord is my Shepherd

He guides me along the right paths

But no man moved me till the tide

But how do I still leave there?

THE GALLERY

Sonny MY PATCHWORK poem

Rough winds do shake my darling
buds of May.

My name is Ozymandias, King of
all Kings.

Glad to be a hundred names

my soul can reach, when
feeling out of sight.

But no man moved me,

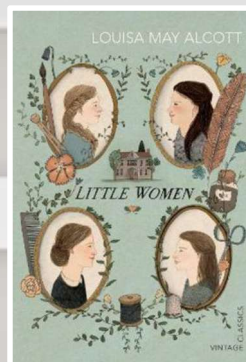
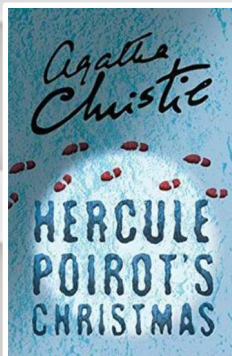
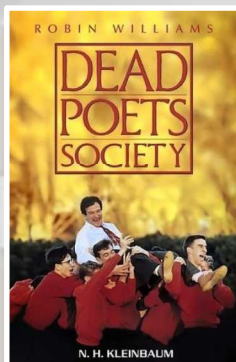
No man is an island entire
of itself.

He took his verpal sword

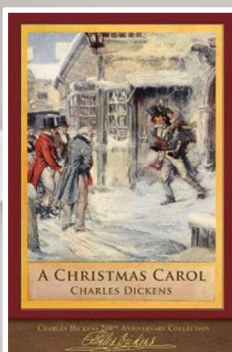
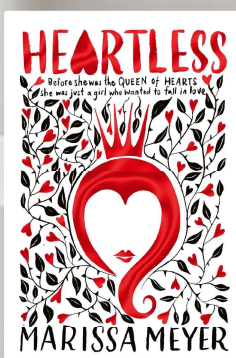
I met a traveller from an antique

Did my sword upset you?

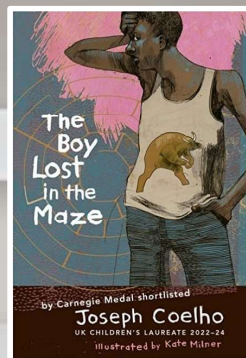
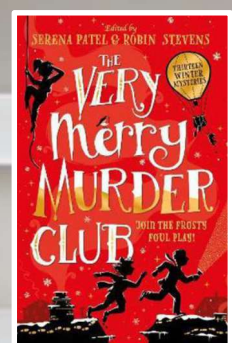
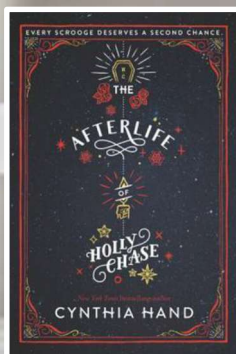
Poetry & photos by: Robyn F, Sonny S, Charlotte H, Mr Vilday



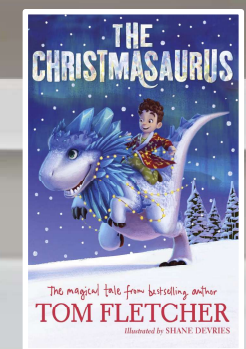
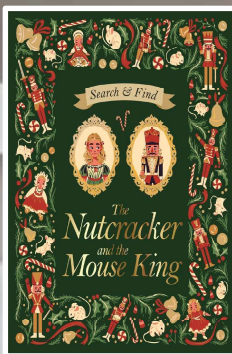
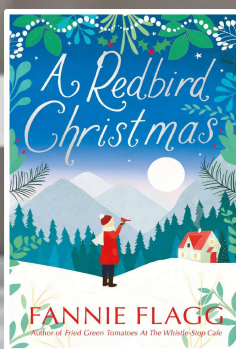
Year
12/13



11



9/10



7/8

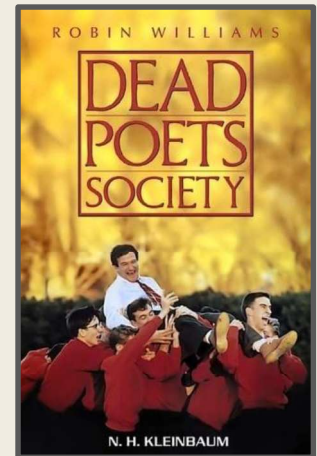
Recommendations by the editorial team. If you have a recommendation, or would like to write a review for a future issue, email us at MSS-magazine@swale.at

BOOK REVIEWS

Dead Poets Society by Nancy H. Kleinbaum

Review by Lucy Parker (Yr12)

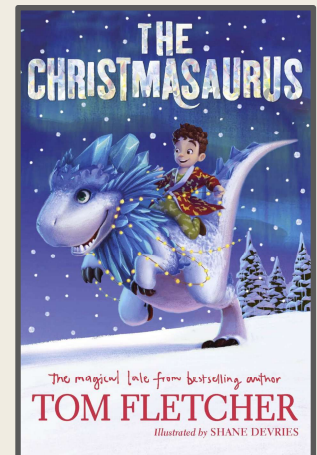
'Dead Poets Society' (based on the film) is about a society of boys who are pushed very harshly through school, until they get an odd English professor who gives them a different perspective on life. The society they resurrect brings out a new sense of freedom after being constricted by the authorial figures in their lives. The Dead Poets soon come to realise their individuality, when a tragic consequence is bought out by their actions. This book truly represents the beauty of literature and the importance of making every moment count.



Christmasaurus by Tom Fletcher

Review by Nshira Ansah (Yr7)

The number-one-bestselling, magical children's novel from Tom Fletcher. This is a story about a boy named William Trundle and a dinosaur named the Christmasaurus. It's about how they meet one Christmas Eve and have a magical adventure. It's about friendship and families, sleigh bells and Santa, singing elves and flying reindeer.



The Creakers by Tom Fletcher

Review by Penny Ingles (Yr9)

A magical, mischievous adventure into an incredible new world. Lucy wakes up one morning to discover something very strange indeed. All the grown-ups in her town have disappeared. Her own father mysteriously vanished a few months before, so she has already had a head start in locating the missing people. The investigations begin under her very own bed, after Lucy hears suspicious noises and discovers every child's worst nightmare: monsters under her bed... AKA The Creakers.



An Interview with Theresa Lola

When poet Theresa Lola visited our school on 9th November, we couldn't resist the opportunity to interview her and find out more about her life as a poet. Theresa Lola is a British Nigerian poet and writer, who was appointed the Young People's Laureate for London in the year 2019-2020. She holds a Masters in Creative Writing from the University of Oxford, and was awarded the Brunel International African Poetry Prize. Ironically, for her university applications she had three different personal statements as she wasn't sure on what she wanted to study, but none of these were related to poetry. Her first personal statement was in Accounting and Finance, and this is what she ended up studying. The second was Biochemistry, as she had done Maths, Physics, and Chemistry A-Levels, and the third was Optometry because her mum is an eye doctor and that was where she did her work experience. Theresa says to all students at Meopham: "You're lucky that you are meeting a poet and have a school magazine. I didn't realise my potential as a creative. I didn't realise I could make a living as a writer."

Growing up Theresa was quiet: she enjoyed observing people and what they do within their relationships with friends and family, and these are frequently appearing themes within her poems. Theresa did not particularly enjoy school life until she reached Sixth Form, where she met her lifelong friends. She recalls that "I was relocating a lot, and went to three secondary schools...a lot of changing. This was also when I started embracing writing." Theresa left Nigeria when she was 13 and she was in a boarding school when she originally started looking into writing. She said to us that: "I only saw my parents once a month, so I had a lot of time on my hands. It started as diary entries and story writing. When you're in boarding school, you get to observe people, you get to imagine things and see people interacting."



**“POETRY IS
A VALUABLE
WAY TO
ACCESS THE
POWER OF
WORDS.”**

- Visiting Poet

Edited by Robyn
Fitzpatrick

In reference to her inspiration, Theresa explained how her poem *Sing With Me And Do Not Die With Thirst* is taken from a Kendrick Lamar song title; the poem itself reflects on the power music has and how it impacts people's lives. A lot of Theresa's poems are about music, however she also finds inspiration from the everyday. In an exercise with the Year 12 English Literature lesson, Theresa got students to pick an object in the room and describe it in a few words: examples from the students themselves were "audio-sharers" for speakers and "information-grabbers" for phones.

As a professional poet, Theresa said that some poems can be written in a day, whereas some she struggles to write, the longest taking a couple of months: "I trained my muscles and know how to write for a brief, like for Selfridges. Brands want to do things really quickly, Selfridges said 'we have two weeks' and we came to Kent to film. It was very intense and fast-moving. I only had a week to write and get it approved, alongside meetings."

Theresa herself not only writes poems, but also finds enjoyment in putting on performances and collaborations. She particularly enjoys working with people in other genres. "I did a joint performance piece with another poet Rishini, he plays as an actor and we worked on a performance. More recently I worked with a film director, who was also a poet, on a short film. I like working with people from other art forms. Last year, with a fashion designer, I wrote a poetic short film that premiered at London Fashion Week."

Another example of Theresa working with another art form is her collaboration with *Vogue*. "I had an email out of the blue saying 'we're doing a special issue' and they wanted to photograph an older and younger poet and how they were working together. I felt like a model for the day.". The issue she was in was edited by Edwin Enfor, and guest edited by Meghan Markle!



Pictured : Theresa Lola with Maisie Davidson, Charlie Gannaway, Robyn Fitzpatrick, and Ashe Reeves

WELCOME TO MEOPHAM SCHOOL

Poem by Harry Bradford Denton &
Charlie Gannaway (Yr7)

Welcome to Meopham School,
We are rated outstanding.
If you follow these rules you'll have an understanding.

Treat others with courtesy and respect
And you'll find yourself going ahead.

It's your first day of school,
You arrive with a smile.
You sit in the hall and you're quiet for awhile.

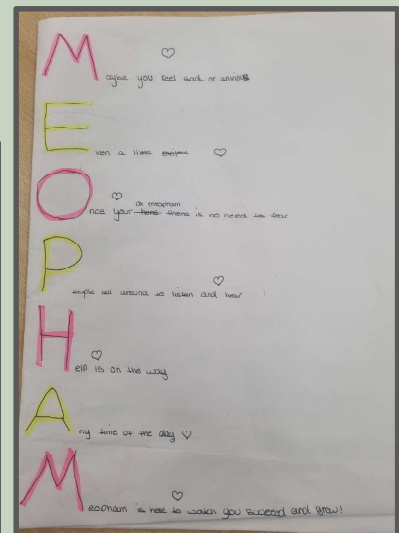
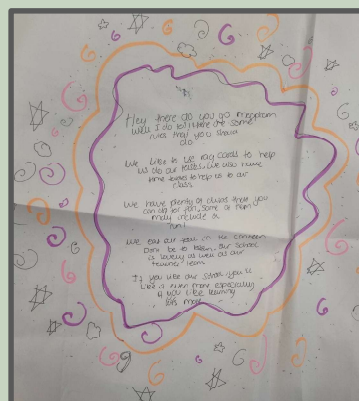
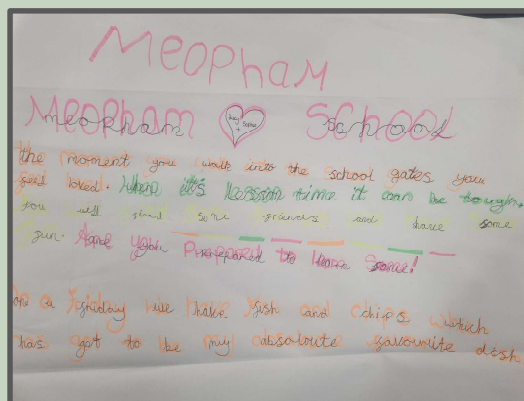
Once it's done and you've met the staff.
You go to your lessons and you sit down in class.

RAG cards out,
Conduct cards too,
Choose the task you would like to do.

Don't feel afraid to ask for help. Don't understand?
Just give a yelp.
Someone will be there to help you out.

Go and make some friends in lunchtime and break,
Cause trust me, it's as easy as cake!

More Year 7 'Welcome' Poems:



WELLBEING CORNER

By Maia New (Year 12)

It's December and almost the beginning of a new year. You may be starting to worry about changes that will happen in 2023 -the start of a new term, upcoming exams or any other big events. Feeling anxious or a sense of dread is normal, as change is unpredictable and can be scary for various reasons. We tend to anticipate the worst and often fail to see the upsides.

So how could we encourage ourselves? The most cliched answer might be to plan a New Year's Resolution. We often aim for goals that are vague or unreachable, in the certain amount of time we give ourselves. However, creating smaller goals like "going to be an hour earlier" can be beneficial to your schedule, health and self-improvement. Setting small objectives can also boost your motivation. Maintaining a daily routine can be difficult though - it can become boring and repetitive and feel like you're on autopilot throughout the day. Everyone has a routine they stick to, and it can make life easier, but we need some subtle changes to keep us going. Some examples could be finding a new hobby (crocheting, baking, knitting..), or simply changing the way you write notes in class (handwriting, highlighting..).

New Term and Expectations

Depending on the year you're in you'll be expecting something different next term. Year 7s, you're fresh out of primary, so enjoy the carefree life while you can! Year 9s, you probably have an idea of your GCSE subjects or are in the stage of picking them: researching the course you're interested in is helpful at giving you an idea of what to expect. Coursework heavy subjects can take a lot out of your time outside of school and requires a lot of organisation skills, so keep that in mind.

Think of this time off as a chance for rest, relaxation and collecting your thoughts. Merry Christmas!

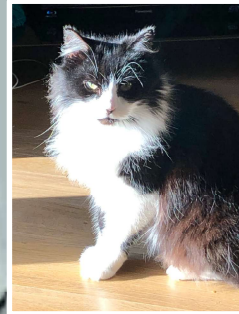
THE MEOPHAM (PET) FAMILY



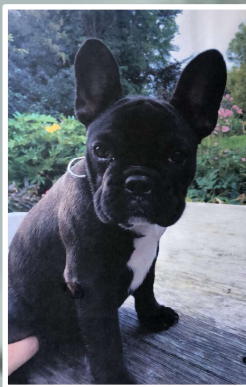
Henry - Sienna H



Bubble & Squeak -
Charlie Co



Glasto - Freya H



Fiji - Axel W



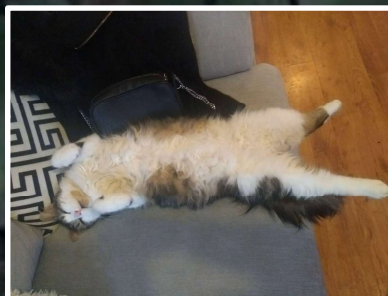
Mabel - Florence B



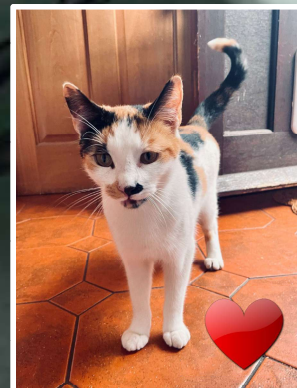
Buster - Georgie T



Maya, Alby and
Lulu - Darcey H



Yoda - Erin F



Miku - Luke H

If you would like to share a pet photo for a future issue, email it to MSS-magazine@swale.at, along with a note of your pet's name.

THE MEOPHAM (PET) FAMILY



Teddy - Josh & Jay W



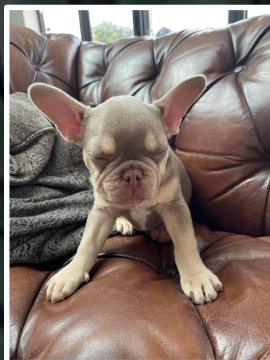
Oreo - Harriet P



Patrick - Rose W



Simba & Nala - Charlie Cl



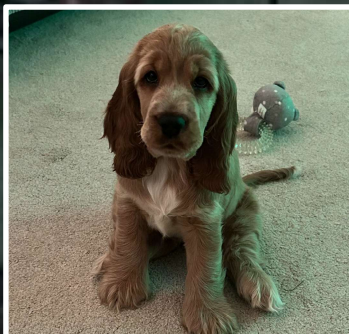
? - Fin S



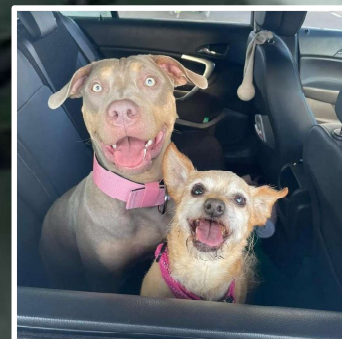
Tommy - Charlotte M



Floyd - Jenson O'N



Flo - Molly K



Sage & Tiff - Kira W

If you would like to share a pet photo for a future issue, email it to MSS-magazine@swale.at, along with a note of your pet's name.

Christmas Patchwork Poem

Written by Harriett Pritchard

The Golden Christmas stars shine down
That sparkle, gleam and glow
Presents placed perfectly
What a sight to see
But there's one thing you have to know
At Christmas time, it has to snow

All the months go past
Each like a guest
December is the last
December is the best
Each has lovely things
Each one is a friend
But December brings christmas at the end

Christmas is forever, not just for one day
For loving, sharing and giving, are not to be put away
Like bells and lights and tinsel in some box upon the shelf
The good you do for others is good you do yourself

Sitting under the mistletoe
One last candle burning low
I wish that dear old santa
Would give me a ride
And sit by my side

Christmas isn't about gifts and toys
It's about the warmth of joy
That comes every year
In today's day and time
Christmas is about sharing and family

[A patchwork poem is created by taking words or phrases from other poems to make your own]