

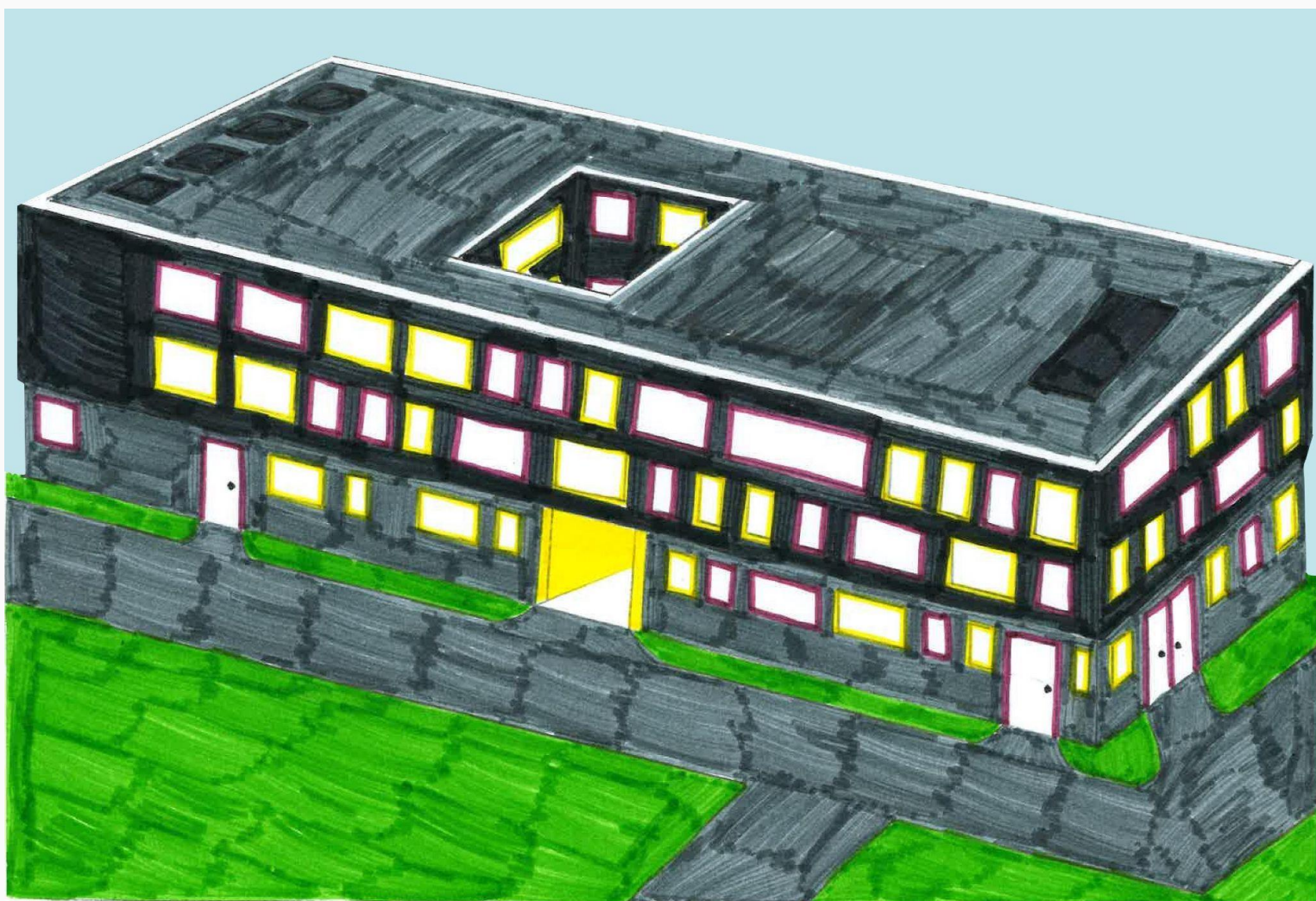
News, opinion, short stories, pets, photos and more!

MEOPHAM MONTHLY

**Meopham School's NEW
Student Magazine**



ISSUE ONE – MARCH 2022



Cover Art by Florence Maclean

WELCOME

Hello! Welcome to our first issue of Meopham Monthly. You might think you know Meopham School well, but here are some extra student insights. This first issue features amazing articles, pictures, short stories, school news and more. We are also introducing the Meopham Pet Family and would love you to send in photos of your pets to be featured here.

If you would like to submit a story, article, drawing, puzzle, feature, 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 (12.45-1.15). We also welcome ideas about what you would like to see in the magazine.

We hope you enjoy the magazine!

Editor: Robyn Fitzpatrick (Yr11)

**With thanks to everyone who
contributed to this first issue:**

**Charlie Allen (Yr7)
Daniel Appleby (Yr13)
Holly Deane (Yr9)
Jack Dempsey (Yr9)
Luke Fenwick (Yr7)
Elise Hazelwood (Yr9)
Chandan Grewal (Yr11)
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Charlotte Hooker (Yr11)
Penny Ingles (Yr8)
Isabella Lindop (Yr11)
Florence Maclean (Yr8)**

**Maia New (Yr11)
Tyler Pooley (Yr8)
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Stella Santamaria (Yr7)
Kirsty Shadbolt (Yr7)
Kyle Shadbolt (Yr9)
Rita Singh (Yr11)
Jess Tibbs (Yr12)
Lola Travers (Yr9)
Maksim Trots-Webster (Yr9)
Grace Westlake (Yr8)**

NEWS & VIEWS



NEW BUILDING PLANNED FOR 2023

Plans are continuing to be developed for a new school building. The proposed plans include specialist music, arts and technology rooms, an additional school hall, a canteen hatch, as well as a new car park and drop-off area. More details at: www.meophamschool.org.uk/expansion

LEADERSHIP TEAM SHOUT OUT

"The **Student Leadership Team** is a council of student representatives who raise and discuss students' concerns and issues. These meetings take place twice a term. If you believe you have the confidence and want to make a difference in our school community please collect an application form from Mrs Metters in ART2." – Ethan, Student Leadership Team Leader.

NEW PHOTOS AND BRANDING

Have you noticed the new pictures around school and the Meopham Family logo? Ms Girling and the staff Leadership Team have been looking to make the school building more interesting, and to showcase some of the brilliant activities that happen. **What do you think? Do you have ideas to brighten up the school site?** Let us know at MSS-magazine@swale.at

RECYCLE AND SAVE! By Stella Santamaria, Year 7

Recycling helps everyone: the world, you and your surroundings, which means your friends. If you do not recycle, or you litter, this does not help anyone, it does the very opposite.

I am here to tell you how littering can affect people, also to convince people to stop it. So sit back, and listen carefully.

Littering can affect climate change, as most materials like plastic will not break down over time, not even 100 years will make it break. Litter can become a big problem, it can make the atmosphere's temperature rise. This could lead to the ice melting, which will make floods happen. Littering can cause a greenhouse effect.

In this picture is an example of environmental pollution. Litter can end up travelling the world, it can be passed on and on. When you recycle, the litter can be transformed or you can call it reborn, which means that it will be usable again. Even if you only drop one piece Of litter, it can affect many people.



I have seen people litter in our school, outside as well as inside.
We need to STOP LITTERING!!!

ANIMATRONIC

A short story by Ashe Reeves, YEAR 12

My breath was short, ragged, coming out in whispers of a time before this chaotic place. Deep breath in, deep breath out. A dragon's last words slipped from between my lips. The concrete prison I was stuck in almost taunted me with the metal rumblings outside of the room. They were walking. It wasn't right. I was told they would walk but not like this, this was almost human. My breaths were shallow attempting to mask my presence from these mechanical beasts. My flashlight flickered in front of my face, blinding to non blinding. The light before my eyes sizzled out, leaving me with no salvation.

Chilling footsteps echoed through the damp building towards me. Electricity surged through every nerve in my body, wrenching me free from my almost crippling paralysis. Time seemed to freeze as the door in front of me slowly creaked open. I heard the flickering of the eye moving in the sockets of the suit: left, right, up and down, then directly at me. Heart jumping into my throat, I wrenched the door from the Animatronic's grip, causing it to reveal its true height, a startling 7 foot 5. Its jaw slackened as I stood directly in front of it, the direct eye contact turning the seconds to decades. When the metal beast began snarling and snapping I ran feverishly through the corridors, pleading with fate to not encounter another of the attractions at this place; I would not survive another being like the last one.

The screeching followed me through the halls, almost gaining on me as I attempted to flee through the stygian shell of a building, my heart thumping in my throat as I stormed through its arteries. Upon seeing my safe space at the end of the hall I almost cried with joy at the sight. Closing the door behind me, I heard the sickening crack of metal on metal, chuckling darkly I continued with my job. The fan wiring sprawled across my desk as it birred annoyingly in my direction, further spreading the frigid air around my room, chilling my burning skin and providing an alleviating effect to me. Flicking through the cameras at my desk, I became worried that I could only find two out of three of the mascots around the establishment; of course there were blind spots but they weren't big enough to hide one of those monstrosities.

I slowly opened the door of the office, taking a look outside, however with no flashlight I couldn't see anything, not even my hand in front of my face. I closed the door. I turned my head. I froze. Directly in front of me in all his glory was the one I could not find, teeth sharpened and eyes trained on my form. A shiver exploded through my body. There was simply nothing I could do, I could only accept my fate in this twisted world. It seized the scruff of my neck and began dragging me back to the room I had escaped from once already: I would not be so lucky this time. It stank of death and rot and echoed the screams of the tortured.

I would not leave this building again, of that I was sure.

ANIMALS AREN'T OURS TO ABUSE

An article by Robyn Fitzpatrick, YEAR 11

Every day, countless animals die to the hands of those supposedly protecting them. Animals in captivity, in the wild, and household pets, experience traumatic abuse daily due to the neglect of their keepers. Nearly 10 million animals die from abuse annually, is this something you would like to support?

Ever since the 19th century public zoos have begun to appear throughout Europe, bringing entertainment to families all around with displays of fearsome reptiles and amusing monkeys. This is the zoo that I grew up with: a moral institution that cared for animals and heroically saved them from the dangers of the wild. However a vast majority of zoo animals will spend their entire lives in captivity, breeding to keep species alive, then either dying of old age or being purposely killed off as “surplus”. Now, this practice of killing the “surplus” animals is kept awfully quiet by zoos in order to maintain their sustainable and supportive persona, yet in 2014 it was estimated that between 3,000 and 5,000 animals were killed in European zoos alone.

Whilst zoos have had negative controversies surrounding them for years, it should be understood that their idea was not entirely wrong. The killing of animals in nature is rapidly pushing species scarily close to extinction. Intentional poaching and slaughter of animals is the biggest factor of the decline in animal populations, and it is absolutely disgusting that humans have decided amongst themselves that murdering innocent animals is acceptable.

William Ripple, a professor of ecology in the Oregon State University states that “Sometimes the killing is legal, sometimes illegal, and sometimes unintentional, such as by catching during fishing. If this trend continues we will lose many species and the world will become an impoverished place.” The slaughter of animals for food and healthcare is really not to blame for the dwindling population of animals, however as intelligent human beings we need to learn to make smart decisions regarding the killing of animals.

When you hear the phrase “domestic violence” do you immediately think of people? Horrifically, household pets often tend to fall victim to domestic violence and abuse. Over 10 million animals die of abuse every year in the United States, and 97% of these awful cases happen on farms. Roughly one animal suffers from animal abuse every minute, that means that in the time you have spent reading this, at least 2 animals have been violated. In Australia, the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals [RSPCA] receives 55,000 to 60,000 reports of mistreatment every single year. It is absolutely revolting that any single person could adopt an animal, just to simply neglect, mistreat, and abuse it.

This is where you come in. Part of supporting the livelihood of all animals globally includes donating money, signing petitions, and spreading awareness on social media and during everyday conversation.

One day we will conquer the abuse that innocent animals face everyday.

HOW DOGS HELP US EVERY DAY

By Grace Westlake, YEAR 8

Over 7,000 people rely on highly trained assistance dogs. Assistance dogs are trained to support disabled people and people with medical conditions in a variety of ways. From guide dogs to medical alert dogs, from autism dogs to hearing dogs, assistance dogs change, and often save, the lives of their owners and their families.

Helper dogs

Helper dogs help people with disabilities and no movement in their legs. Helper dogs can also help people with epilepsy. They can let a person with epilepsy know when they are going to have an epileptic fit and can put the person into a recovery position.

Guide dogs

Guide dogs help blind people every day. They are assistance dogs trained to lead blind or visually impaired people around obstacles. Although dogs can be trained to navigate various obstacles, they are red-green colour blind and incapable of interpreting street signs. The human does the directing, based on skills acquired through previous mobility training.



The handler might be likened to an aircraft's navigator, who must know how to get from one place to another, and the dog is the pilot, who gets them there safely. In several countries guide dogs, along with most other service and hearing dogs, are exempt from regulations against the presence of animals in places such as restaurants and public transportation.

Hero dogs

Some dogs can be trained to sniff people's breath and lie down to signal to their trainer if they smell a disease such as cancer. The dogs would then sniff samples of the disease and put out a paw to the disease sample that the dog they smell. This can help stop/find diseases before the disease gets worse.



Simba - Chandan G

Hearing dogs

Hearing dogs are trained to put a paw out on a deaf person's foot or leg to signal to the deaf person if the dog hears a sound. Hearing dogs also give deaf people the confidence and courage they need to do things they need to do things that they never thought or dreamed to do.

Helpful dogs

Some dogs can let people with diabetes know when their blood sugar is low. These dogs would need lots of training to get to the stage of putting all of their training into action.

Therapy dogs

Therapy dogs can help people if they are depressed or anxious because they are calm dogs which will just lie or sit next to you if you are sad. Children who are just learning generally feel calmer reading or speaking to dogs because it boosts their confidence.

Dog agility

Dog agility is a dog sport in which a handler directs a dog through an obstacle course in a race for both time and accuracy. Dogs run off leash with no food or toys as incentives, and the handler can touch neither dog nor obstacles. The handler's controls are limited to voice, movement, and various body signals, requiring exceptional training of the animal and coordination of the handler. Most dogs love agility and it should be a good reward after training. Although dogs are good and love agility you shouldn't let puppies do agility because it can jar their joints. Puppies can do the agility but shouldn't do the jumps.

Paradogs

Paradogs were used in the war. They were dogs which had a parachute on and were trained to jump out of an airborne bomber plane. The dogs would jump with their handler so that their handler could remove the parachute after the drop. This would have required lots of training and dogs which were scared would not have been able to become a paradog.

You could help put a smile on someone's face by looking into how dogs can affect our lives. Maybe a dog could affect your life. Most dogs can help give people the confidence and courage to do things that they would never imagined.

Find out more about fundraising for Guide Dogs for the Blind:

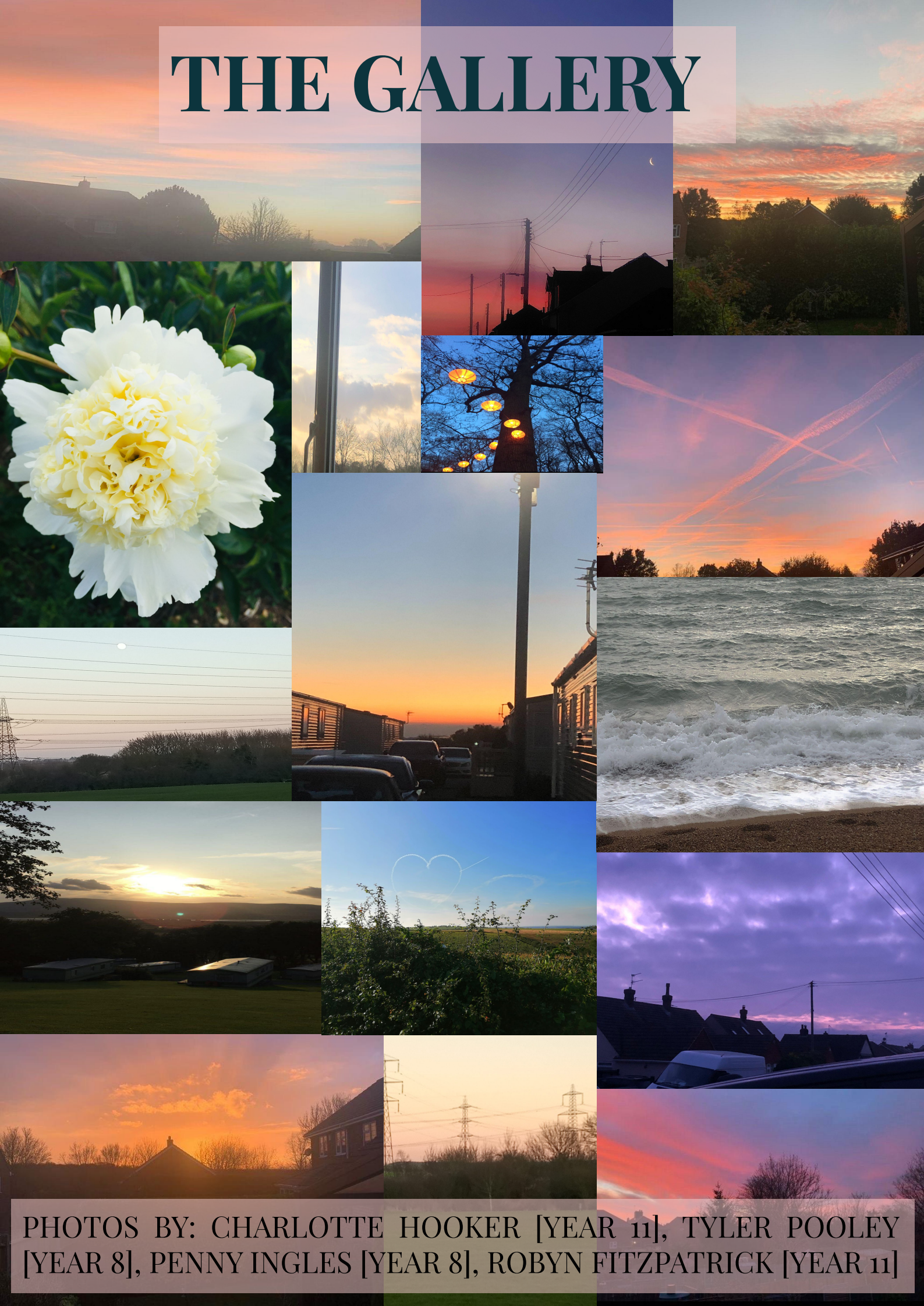
<https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help/how-your-school-or-youth-group-can-help/fun-fundraising-ideas/>

A Ferris wheel at night with illuminated gondolas and a roller coaster track in the foreground.

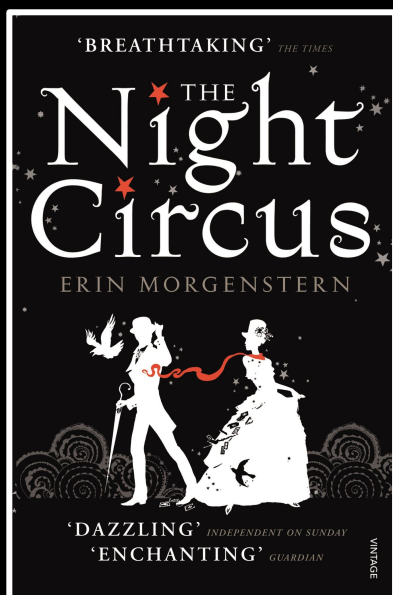
“FOLLOW YOUR
INNER
MOONLIGHT;
DON’T HIDE
THE MADNESS”

–ALLEN
GINSBERG

THE GALLERY



PHOTOS BY: CHARLOTTE HOOKER [YEAR 11], TYLER POOLEY [YEAR 8], PENNY INGLES [YEAR 8], ROBYN FITZPATRICK [YEAR 11]



THE NIGHT CIRCUS

A BOOK REVIEW BY CHARLOTTE HOOKER,
YEAR 11

Recommended year groups :

- Year 11 and Sixth Form

Possible trigger warnings for this book are:

- Blood
- Parental abuse
- Character death

“The circus arrives without warning. No announcements precede it. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not.”

The circus, known as *Le Cirque des Rêves* (the Circus of Dreams), only opens its gates at nightfall, and within the black and white canvas tents an indelible experience awaits. Psychics, contortionists and elaborate rooms that are unique enough to satisfy the wildest of imaginations.

Behind the beauty of the circus, an intense competition is taking place. A competition between two young magicians, Celia and Marco, who have been hyper-trained by their stern instructors. Despite the fierceness of the competition, Celia and Marco tumble into a sweet, magical love that is just as beautiful as the *Cirque des Rêves* itself. But not even love can stop the fierce game. It must continue until there is a winner, and the fates of everyone involved hangs in the balance.

“Breathtaking” “Dazzling” and “Enchanting” are definitely the perfect words to describe this book. I found this novel remarkable. Morgenstern uses her alluring writing style to create breathtaking descriptions that allow the reader to fall comfortably into their imagination whilst they long to experience the circus for themselves.

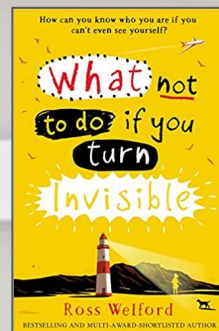
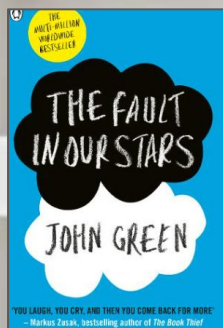
With some fantasy books, it can be hard to imagine certain aspects of it, but I did not have that issue when reading this magnificent novel. I really enjoy the fact that this novel jumps back and forth between times. It allows the book to remain exciting and interesting as well as creating a plotline that is mysterious. The time jumps may be confusing at first and one may feel that something has been left out. However, Morgenstern has executed her novel in such a unique way that it can be cryptic without becoming confusing, and so that everything is revealed to the reader and unfolds at the same time as it does for the characters.

We are introduced to a range of characters who are fascinating in appearance and interests, however the depth of them and their personalities are not as developed as they could be. This is because most of the characters are introduced for their talent or artful presentation and do not really have a backstory. However, it would have been nice to have had insight on the other characters with backstories and see more of what they are like as people.

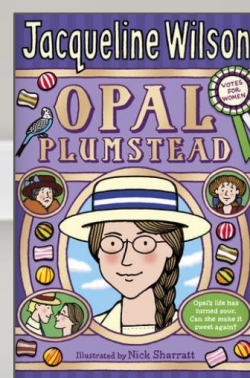
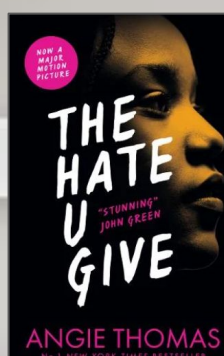
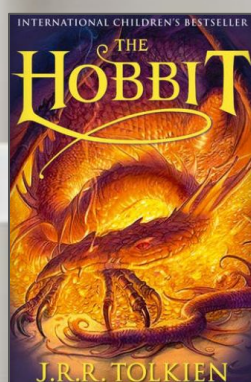
This book is full of magic, artistic scenery and beautiful writing and structure that allows a person's imagination to expand as far as it desires. I could not recommend it enough to the readers who enjoy being amazed and enchanted by the allure of writing.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

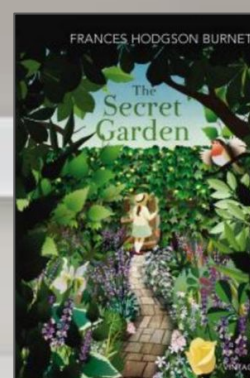
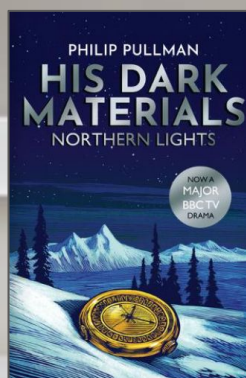
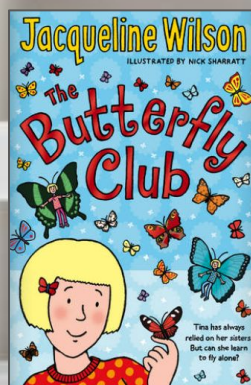
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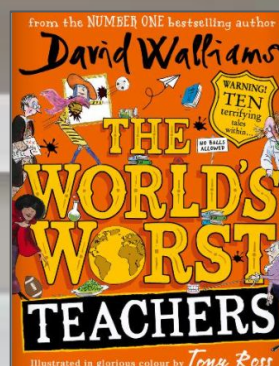
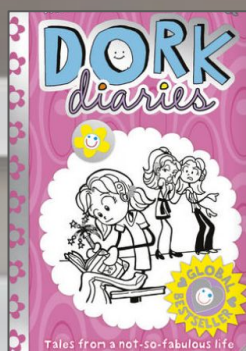
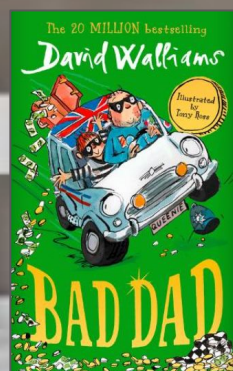
Year
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Year
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Year
7



Recommendations by Robyn Fitzpatrick. If you have a book, TV or film recommendation, or would like to write a review for a future issue, email us at MSS-magazine@swale.at

THE ADVENTURES OF ZHORON

LEORIC: GALACTIC WARRIOR ELF

A Short Story by Daniel Appleby, Year 13

The planet of Xeras was not unknown to strange occurrences. The planet, of its own nature, was a wasteland populated by high reaching canyons and mountainous dunes that touched the soft, opening amber eye of the sun like a resurfaced light bulb. The only wandering occurrences one might find when travelling this barren planet would be the lonesome dust clouds that appear with the concentration of the eye. That eye concentrating on those clouds was Zhoron Leoric. Soldier turned criminal.

He was a soldier for the Elven Empire Kewthith. Now he was stuck on a planet for his prison sentence. It had been only a month into this sentence that he had made himself aware of the planet and he made a camp right underneath a towering valley stacked with rigid blocks of stone. He jumped, prepared across the connected canyons before climbing down, the sun beating at his back, and he dropped confidently onto the ground.

His ears were pointed upwards and sharply into the air, his hair was tied back into a short ponytail, the sides cut short to reduce distractions from his vision. He was wearing a worn, torn pair of leather trousers, buckled with belts and the protected hide of the animals that scoured the lands of Xeras. He was holding a long and dangerous battleaxe, strapped onto his back with the support of a leather and hide chest piece covering his body. He slowly walked towards his homebase when he felt a presence behind him, a shrouded black-cloaked figure wearing steel clawed armour jumped out of the shadows, grasping a terrifying sword and plunging it at Zhoron.

He rolled out of the way, looking at the intimidating shadow. Zhoron rushed and tackled the figure to the ground, attempting to grab the sword his intruder was holding. An attack commenced. Grunting, punches, Zhoron kicked the intruder in the stomach while the intruder picked Zhoron up and threw him onto the ground. Zhoron jumped straight back up and grabbed his sword before the intruder could. The intruder was wearing silver, damaged, crystal armour, over half of his chest; the right side revealed scaled skin with tiny charred burns sprinkled over it. The sword was at the intruder's throat and a dead silence followed. Only for it to be shattered by an uproar of laughing and patting each other on the shoulder, like two brothers in the park.

"I almost had you there," the now-not-intruder laughed.

"You almost did. You need to fix your footwork," Zhoron responded in a burly voice.

"And you need to work on your finesse!" Rogal responded.

Rogal was a Dragonborn – a humanoid reptilian creature – but unlike a dragon he had no tail, as did the rest of his race. On the outside, he was wearing a black, tattered cape, torn apart from his legs. He wore a furred hood and a mask, a dragon's skeleton, his blue cyan eyes bleeding through the holes and his bottom black jaw talking freely as the mask did not cover his lower jaw.

They had been friends for a while, Zhoron and Rogal. When Zhoron had first arrived on the planet to serve his criminal sentence, the first friendly face he saw was Rogal; he did not explain much about how and why he decided to help Zhoron, but today would be the moment, Zhoron knew.

“I think you’re ready.” Rogel broke the silence after the two sat down in their cavern hideout, eating a fresh bowl of ratdog stew.

“Ready?”

“Follow me.” Rogel sat up and moved himself out of the cavern, Zhoron, reluctant to follow, stood up as well but kept an axe by his side just in case it was an ambush.

Despite Rogal being kind towards Zhoron, there was no reason for him to let down his guard. The planet was a death trap for the unprepared. Zhoron, thankfully, was not. His previous life as a soldier for the galactic empire of Kewith had trained him well enough, and despite the fact that he was on a prehistoric planet, nothing was really much different to him. This planet had not yet invented guns, probably a blessing to be honest he thought in his mind.

When they got to this destination, at first Zhoron was happy that it was not an ambush, however he wasn’t particularly happy with the location. It was a barely active volcano, the occasional outburst of smoke whiffed out of the lidless top. He thought that they were probably going to wait there until it was active, sadly he was not given that boring privilege.

“We’re climbing.”

“Oh fantastic,” Zhoron said, crossing his arms and chuckling.

“Don’t think you can’t do it?” Rogel responded, raising an eyebrow and smirking.

“I was expecting a challenge.”

In actual fact, Zhoron was more worried about the volcano erupting, and he knew that Rogal could see it. The climbing on the other hand was actually quite relaxing; Zhoron had been an individual who enjoyed the nature of parkour and climbing buildings. But that was buildings, and you could be sure that they wouldn’t move or tremble. A volcano or anything naturally made by the environment ran the risk of wobbling and possibly breaking at the most inconvenient moment.

Once they did get to the top, and the volcano was polite enough not to destroy itself, the actual canyon that was inside the volcano did not bode any better. The whole top half of the inside was submerged in boiling lava. Rogel looked at Zhoron’s surprised face and chuckled before turning around.

“Just jump.” He chuckled, before leaning back and getting a sudden reaction out of Zhoron as he ran towards Rogel, thinking he had gone insane. However, while Rogel was falling, the lava opened in the centre, creating a circle of clear space. Zhoron looked down and wondered if he was supposed to jump or whether a staircase would appear for him: it was a long drop, tall and disorientating. After waiting for a few seconds, he got a call from Rogel to get down (and a couple of other words). He counted his prayers, but gave up and dropped down as well.

When he hit the ground, surprisingly, none of his bones were broken. The lava underneath was dark and shrouded the bottom of the volcano in darkness. The lava acted as a gate, like a barrier between the real world and this. The wide area was dark, suddenly lit by purple flames encompassing the torch holders. Rogel was there, sitting down on the floor, but before Zhoron could get a word out of him the ground began to shake, and a roar was heard deep within the abyss.

A huge dragon foot appeared from the depths, and it revealed itself to be purple scaled, purple flames igniting outside of his skin: a Rathian, a lone shadow standing on top of his head.

The shadow jumped down, a cape in the shape of a bat wing, purple, showed itself.

“Who are you?” Zhoron asked, as Rogel walked besides him and patting him on the back.

“I am the Draconic Mother,” she took her hood off, revealing a dark elf! “And I have so much for you.”

MENTAL HEALTH + WELLBEING

Written by Maia New, Year 11

TIPS TO GET RID OF BAD THOUGHTS :

If you're having a problem right now, if you're feeling confused and sad for any reason and you can't distract yourself or feel interested in anything, please stop anything you're doing right now and follow these steps :

> Go to a quiet, safe place where you can be alone and free of distractions, and start writing down everything you're feeling as clearly as possible. You can try write on your phone but I recommend paper, because some emotions are hard to describe. Write absolutely everything, be spontaneous!

> After you finish writing all your thoughts and feelings clearly, it's time to read it and ask yourself - where these bad feelings are coming from? Can you do something to help yourself? Do you need help? Please try to focus on the possible solutions.

> If it's something you can help by yourself, how can you do it, exactly?

> If you need help, please ask for help. You're not a bother, you deserve good things and it's important that you honestly open yourself to someone you trust, you don't need to deal with everything by yourself. ♥

> In any case, if the problem can't be helped right now, there's no point in worrying about it right now. It's hard, but the best thing you can do right now is to plan your next course of action to fix the problem and rest your tired heart.. you deserve it. ♥

SIGNS THAT SOCIAL MEDIA IS OVERWHELMING YOU :

> You often feel an urge of opening the apps, because you think you're missing something important or people will dislike you for not giving them attention.

> You feel easily tired and stressed after looking on your feed, you feel like your energy is drained and less motivated for doing things.

> You keep comparing yourself to others and feel insecure and embarrassed of your current life and appearance, as if you're inferior to some of them.

> You feel angry or sad constantly because of all the drama that keeps getting to you, even if you're not part of it, but you keep looking into it out of curiosity.

> Important: If you feel any kind of bad feeling after using social media, please take some time to clean your account of anything that is making you feel that way! The Internet is supposed to be inspiring and fun, not unnecessary stress. Search for accounts that actually make you feel good and give you the chance of looking at your life from a good perspective, that give you the opportunity of improving and doing better, instead of making you feel inferior. Give yourself time to breathe and live your own life instead of others', Be careful of how much you use the Internet and check if it's actually good for you: make it a good experience. ♥

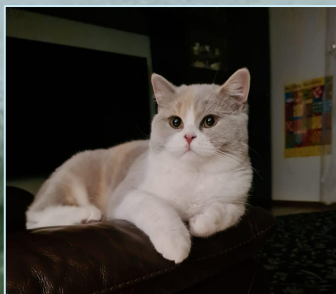
Find more ideas about mental health and wellbeing on the school website:

<https://www.meophamschool.org.uk/page/?title=Mental+Health+and+Wellbeing&pid=170>

THE MEOPHAM (PET) FAMILY



Miss Ava - Luke F



Rosey - Maksim T



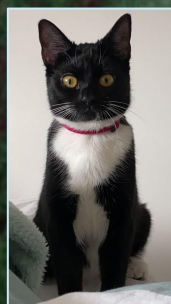
Teddy - Lola T



Teddy - Holly D



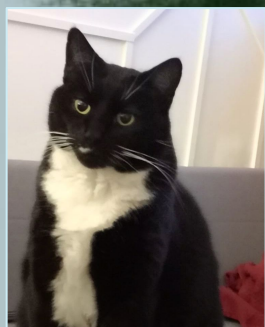
Poppy - Jack D



Camila - Rita S



Honey - Isabella L



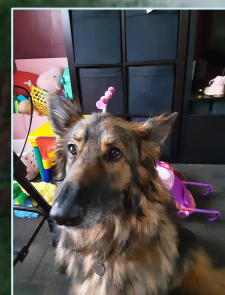
Steve - Charlie A



Jack - Elise H



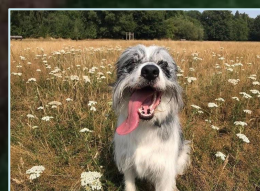
Luna - Kirsty &
Kyle S



Xena - Ashe R




Coco - Eoghan H



Geri - Jess T

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.



**MAKE
SOMEONE
SMILE
EVERY DAY,
BUT DON'T
FORGET THAT
YOU ARE
SOMEONE TOO.**