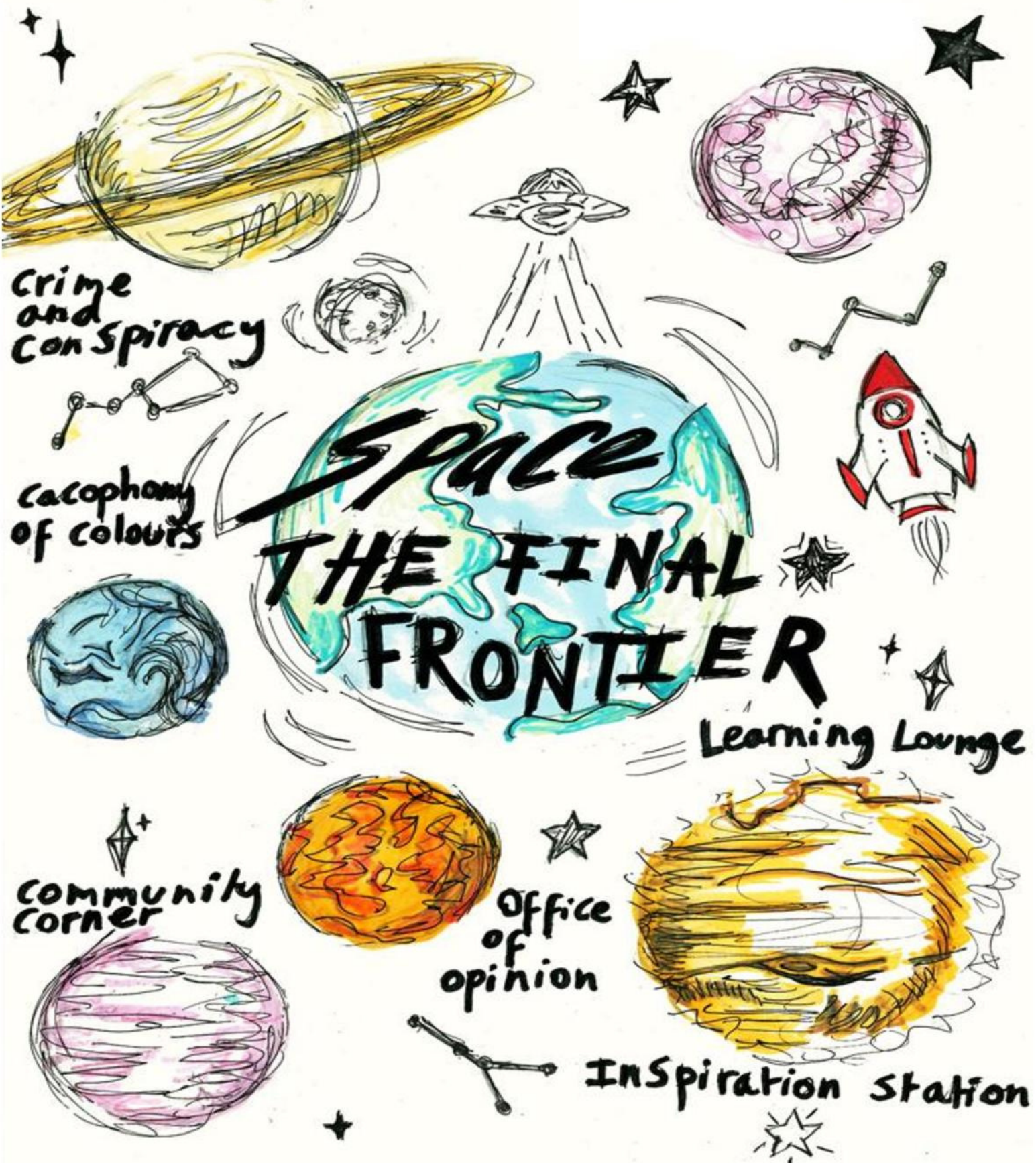


# PLATANOS COLLEGE



## KS4 NEWSLETTER





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# EDITOR'S WELCOME

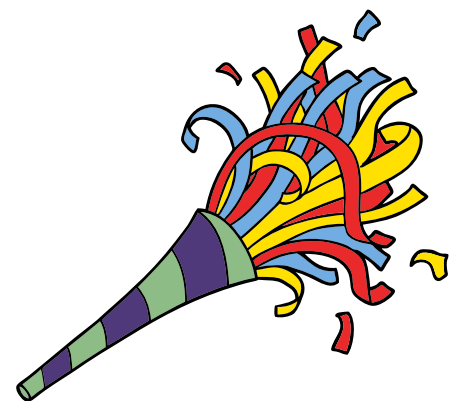
WRITTEN BY ANASTASIA SHOVKOPLYAS (EDITOR IN CHIEF)

Hello and welcome to the Winter 2021 Edition of the Platanos College KS4 Newsletter! The stressful yet exciting year of 2021 is coming to an end! We have brought together an array of articles for your reading pleasure!

We had to think about what the Specials Section of the Newsletter would be and we decided it would be on an area that will transform our future... Space! The future is rapidly changing, with new technology being discovered and created all the time as well as there being new missions to Space. So, what better a focus for this Edition's Specials?

This Newsletter really does have some new exciting pieces for you to enjoy! So sit back, relax and gain some new knowledge about Space, as well as different topics on issues from all around the world.

The whole KS4 Newsletter Team hopes you enjoy reading our Winter 2021 Edition and we wish you and your loved ones a very restful Christmas and joyous 2022.



*Anastasia Shovkoplyas (Editor-in-chief)*



# *learning lounge*

## MUSIC AND ITS INFLUENCE THROUGH THE DECADES



WRITTEN BY IMOGEN BOWES

It is a well known fact that music is one of the main influences in popular culture. But how have the past few decades shaped teenage interest in music?

The 1950s were truly an innovative period of time for teenagers. Music was changing and evolving and caused teens to rebel against society's expectations. This was the peak of rock and roll music development and consequently, parents of the time began to fear for their children as it was a very different style to the jazz and Blues they grew up with. Jerry Lee Lewis - a popular rock and roll and country music artist - released a slightly controversial song called Great Balls of Fire, which many parents were disgusted by. Throughout this period, rock and roll music was blamed for teenagers' delinquent and unruly behaviour.

A decade later, the so-called 'swinging 60s' caused a huge cultural revolution, especially to do with fashion. Young women in the 1960s especially began to disregard typical and expected ideals of femininity. They instead opted for shorter skirts and pantsuits. The British band The Beatles roared across nations, becoming a global phenomenon - perhaps the first ever worldwide boy band success. Music by bands like The Rolling Stones promoted ideas of rebellion and made teens stand up for their individuality, breaking with the expected norms of society.

Similarly, in the 70s, rock 'n' roll continued to be in the top two most popular styles of music, along with a slightly newer style, Disco. It introduced new technology like sound systems, colourful lights and loud speakers.

This new trend also influenced teenagers' way of dressing, especially when going out to concerts or parties. Sparkles, shimmers and tie-dye allowed teenagers to have even more creativity in how they dressed. Additionally, the style of music had a more uplifting and positive light to it.







Another influential decade, the 80s, also made a huge impact on teenagers. This was the emergence of new pop artists including Michael Jackson and his song Thriller – this is still one of the best selling albums of all time to this day. MTV was reluctant to play music of the pop genre, especially by black artists as they were not “rock” enough, but after the astonishing sales of Thriller, his songs made it to MTV, breaking the colour barrier. This was both inspiring and influential for teenagers who wanted to express their individuality and identity through music.

A decade later, in the 90s, the wave of rap and hip hop music flooded the music scene. This included music from artists such as Eminem, 2Pac and Ice cube. For teenagers, such music was empowering and rhythmic.

Finally, the 00s, when our generation was born! Influential artists of the decade included Beyonce, Jay-Z and there were even comebacks from previously established artists like Madonna.

Music over the last 60 years has been on a long journey to become what it is today. But whatever decade we were born in, many of us view music as being an intrinsic part of our identity.

So, who knows what our children will be listening to in years to come and what impact music will have on their lives?





# HOW HAS LOCKDOWN AFFECTED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS?

WRITTEN BY KADIAN WEBBER

We all know that Lockdown affected us all in different and dramatic ways. We decided to interview Samantha Webber, an ex-pupil of Platanos College, about how Lockdown affected her university experience.

## **How did Lockdown affect your university experience overall?**

My university experience was affected by Lockdown because the idea I had - like many other Uni students - was based on the idea of being able to go to lectures and interact with other students; but that just wasn't the case. We weren't able to interact with people the way that we wanted to. When it came to my learning, it was even harder as online classes were not the type of learning I was used to, so I found it hard to adjust.

## **So you would prefer a more personal university experience?**

I think university in person is more realistic in a way because when it was online, it was hard to focus and easy to ignore what was expected of you.



So, I prefer in-person learning, as I won't be able to get distracted much; it's too easy to get distracted when working from home!

## **Do you think the huge increase in online learning has affected your work overall?**

Yes, because adjusting wasn't easy and learning to concentrate in that style was difficult at times; this led to my grades being different to what I believe they would have been if we got the normal type of help and lessons. Overall, I do believe there were positives and negatives to learning online.

It did help us be more independent with our learning - which is a key skill as a university student - but the disadvantages are that we missed out on some in-person learning and have been given more coursework.

## **Do you feel that it will be difficult to adapt to the normal experience of university when you return?**

Yes, because I have got used to the online working process and have learnt to work at a pace I'm happy with, but in person at university I know I'll have to work at the pace that the teacher is delivering during the lessons.

## **What do you think of the university fees that had to be paid even during Lockdown?**

For the year of the online lessons, the fees should have been reduced considering we were at home; we students shouldn't have to pay the full fees because the value of learning wasn't as good as it could have been if we had been in class.





# TECHNOLOGY OF TOMORROW: A BRIGHTER FUTURE?

WRITTEN BY ARAFATH KHAN

What exactly is technology?  
No seriously, what is it?

We live in a world where we just take technology for granted; we just use it and carry on with our day. Is it something harmful or helpful or maybe a mix of both? No-one can deny the rate at which technology is evolving. We can witness this through a multitude of different sectors such as energy, medicine, travel and AI. All of this is proof of the improvements technology has brought us and a glimpse into the future of what could be.

## Energy.

Energy has been witnessing major technological advancements within a short time. This is due to the rise of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the atmosphere, caused by relatively old energy sources such as coal factories and oil; to combat this, we have made more environmentally friendly energy sources such as wind turbines, geothermal plants and solar panels.

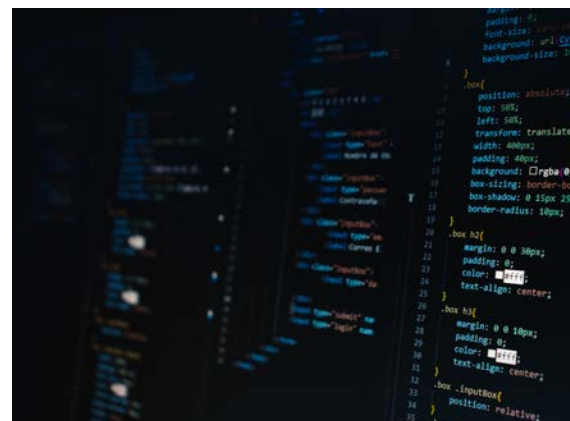
However, scientists are planning to make more developed energy sources such as Fusion energy – a process by which two nuclei are fused together to create energy.

An alternative source of energy could be space-based solar farms that could be placed in the outer atmosphere collecting solar energy; this would be more efficient because the solar panels collect more sunlight to transfer into energy while also doing very little harm to the environment.

With Climate Change being such a critical global concern, different renewable sources of energy are constantly being developed.

## Medicine

We have recently seen rapid developments in Medicine as scientists strive to fight Coronavirus. However, have you heard of gene therapy?





This is a process by which you modify or make alterations to a person's genetic material in order to get rid of a person's hereditary diseases or developing tumours.

Another medical technology is AI, by which doctors take advantage of powerful technology to treat patients more effectively; however, there are potential moral considerations to take into account.

### Travel

From the use of magnets, AI and electrification, the world of transport is ever changing and is never stagnant.

Tesla and Virgin are developing something known as the Hyperloop, which is marketed as safe and comfortable while also traveling at 760 mph. The use of magnets allows it to float mid-air, can you believe?

Tesla of course, is well known for its electric, self-driving cars. In addition, planes that run on hydrogen are being developed because they are more environmentally friendly. Indeed the travel and transport industry is going places fast!

### AI

Artificial Intelligence has been developed for industries such as manufacturing and cybersecurity. However it is a controversial area because some are concerned about the potentially catastrophic damage to civilisations; in fact, Stephen Hawking actually said that AI could *"spell the end of the human race."*

Although the future seems progressive and ground-breaking, we must not forget some of the problems and potential risks that loom over us; with technological advancement also comes rising unemployment for instance, not to mention potential threat to us as a species. Could movies like The Terminator and I Robot one day be more than just a dream of the future?







# INTERVIEW WITH MS SIMPSON

WRITTEN BY KELLY GOUVEIA

For this edition of the Key Stage 4 Newsletter, we decided to interview Ms Simpson about her experience of Lockdown.

## **What kept you motivated throughout Lockdown?**

Hope. Hope to know that things aren't always going to be like this. Hope knowing that things are going to get better. Also, it made me realise - even more now - how important family and friends are. I made myself a promise to ensure that I spend more time with them even after Lockdown. We as a family unit came together to do things like quiz nights and video calling other family members as well as friends - especially those who were alone during these tough times. We made sure that we all took turns video chatting with them and checking up on them. If I go shopping and I have something a little extra, I give it to my neighbour because it's important to not be selfish during these times and consider other people's mental health. I hope to bring positivity and with positivity, you get a better mindset.



I also had things like my book club to look forward to every one or two weeks. On Zoom we would chat about the book we wanted to start and then we would get about two weeks to read and then come back to feed back on it; I absolutely loved this. The fact that soon enough I would be back teaching face to face also made me happy. I love teaching; I don't think there's anything else I'd rather be doing other than teaching.

## **What was your experience of Lockdown like?**

If I'm being honest, it fluctuates a lot;

I sometimes felt low and sort of depressed in a way. I used to wake up early to go shopping because there would be huge queues whenever we went.

At the shops I would see people pile unnecessary things in their carts and it made me sad to see members of the public be selfish due to the pandemic. I try not to think like that; I try to be as bubbly and uplifting as possible and look for the better side in any situation. For example, as a teacher I believe that learning time and education in general, should be fun and enjoyable for everyone. Also, the great bond I have with other teachers in the PE department really helped; we spoke regularly to uplift each other. Honestly, laughter is the best medicine!

## **What advice would you give us to support someone whose mental health was impacted by Lockdown?**

Patience. Empathy. Empathy for what they felt and went through. Speak to them more regularly, do something you both enjoy doing, meet up or maybe just have a long phone call.



# INTERVIEW WITH A PAST PUPIL

WRITTEN BY DYLAN THAM

Once you're a pupil of Platanos College, you'll always be part of our community!

We interviewed Lisa Tham, who was from the class 2015!

## What did you achieve during your time at Platanos College?

I attended Platanos College from 2011-2015, during which time I was Junior Leader, Trainee Leader & Head Girl. My proudest achievement was being the Team Leader in Year 9 for a social enterprise scheme called RISE, led by Mr Edwards. We competed with other schools across London to raise money for a partner school in rural India, culminating in a final showdown at the HSBC headquarters in Canary Wharf. This was what would later on spark my passion for charity work and enable me to take on more leadership roles.



## What have you done since leaving Secondary school?

I attended sixth form and completed my A-Levels (in Biology, Maths and Economics). I then went on to university to study Economics & Finance - graduating with First Class Honours.

Along the way I've gained internships and work experience in investment banking and multiple asset management firms.

Perhaps by far the coolest thing I've done was my placement year during Uni, during which I lived and worked abroad in Taiwan for a whole year - experiencing a new country and culture alone for the first time. It was terrifying and exciting all at once!

## If you could give one piece of advice to your past self, what would you say?

Say 'yes' to every great opportunity that comes your way! Stop letting your shyness hold you back.







## How did you handle your GCSEs?

I made sure to revise well in advance of exams, making a checklist of every topic I needed to revise for each subject. Past papers are also always amazing for help, for any exam!

Make sure you attend all lessons and never be shy to ask teachers any questions you have.

What also helped was understanding what learning style worked best for me, for example, making mind maps and reading - others may prefer watching videos!

## What are you doing now or hope to do in the future?

Right now I'm pursuing a career in Asset Management, as well as exploring my other interests.

If there is one thing life has taught me, it's that things never go as expected. But that's also the exciting thing in life; anything can happen - as long as you remain adaptable!





# *community corner*

## THE IMPACT OF DRUGS ON OUR COMMUNITY

WRITTEN BY RIDWAAN ABDULLE

Drug misuse has been a devastating issue for a long time now.

Did you know that 1/10 teenagers have used hard drugs and approximately a third of under 17s have admitted to trying cannabis and binge-drinking alcohol? The use of drugs not only leads to addictions, dangerous behaviour and can destroy lives, but also takes its toll on Healthcare and Policing; in fact, it costs the UK £10.7 billion every year to pay for our protection against drugs, with drug related thefts costing about £6 billion alone according to the Drug Strategy (2017). This massively impacts the economy of the UK as such critical funding could be used on Education or the NHS.

Drugs have cognitive ramifications and are highly addictive, meaning that once you start, it's hard to stop. There are drug gangs dedicated to earning a profit by selling drugs to those in

desperate need of help; they feed off the bad habits of others and have been known to take advantage of vulnerable people including children and teenagers. Did you know that gangs have been known to do what's called 'cuckooing'? This is when they take over a person's home to deal drugs. Unbelievable!

Did you know that in our local borough of Lambeth, there is a huge issues with drug misuse? In fact, February 2019 saw Lambeth named the most dangerous area in London when it comes to drugs. 211 drug crimes were reported in that month alone! This has a truly catastrophic effect on our community. Parents who misuse drugs can cause the neglect and abuse of their own children. Such behaviour can also lead to a new generation of drug abusing youngsters. Areas where drug abuse happens have higher levels of crime overall.

Below are some key statistics from a National Statistics Report for 2019-20 (updated in June 2021):

- There were 14,291 young people in contact with alcohol and drug services between April 2019 and March 2020
- Around 4 in 10 young people in treatment (42%) said they had problems with alcohol (compared to 44% the previous year), 13% had problems with ecstasy and 10% reported powder cocaine problems.
- The most common vulnerability reported by young people starting treatment was early onset of substance use (76%), which means the young person started using substances before the age of 15.







# THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH CLUBS

WRITTEN BY CRISTAVAO NUNES TEIXEIRA

Have you ever attended a youth club? Many of us have, whether that be after school, before school or even during the weekends. Youth clubs provide us with different activities to participate in, help to strengthen our social skills and build up our confidence.

But the problem is that many of these crucial youth clubs are being closed. In fact, over 700 have been shut since 2012; this is potentially devastating for us young people and our families.

Did you know that around England and the Northeast, the funding of youth clubs has been cut by more than 60% and some have even lost 100% of their funding? Some research also highlights England as being the most severely hit country in the UK, with an additional loss of roughly £26 million, striking a catastrophic blow to already tight finances and resources.

Young people attend youth clubs for a number of reasons: parents work long hours; to take up a new hobby;

to have a supervised, safe place to be after school; to make friends. There is no doubt that youth clubs are a crucial place for children and teenagers to gather and socialise.

A past pupil of Platanos College, Romeo Nunes Teixeira, stated that whilst he was still in secondary school, youth clubs meant the world to him because he was able to learn how to cook basic dishes, do chores such as ironing and participate in sports. Now at College, Romeo recognises the benefits of his youth club experiences. Additionally, he states that youth clubs *"made me feel confident, secure in my abilities and passionate since almost all of my friends were also there, which was a huge game changer for my mental health since I was doing GCSEs at the time."* The youth club - now called the Lansdowne Centre - allowed him to gain new skills for the better.

It cannot be denied that youth clubs are essential for young people's lives today. Surely, we as a community of young people must do something to ensure their survival?





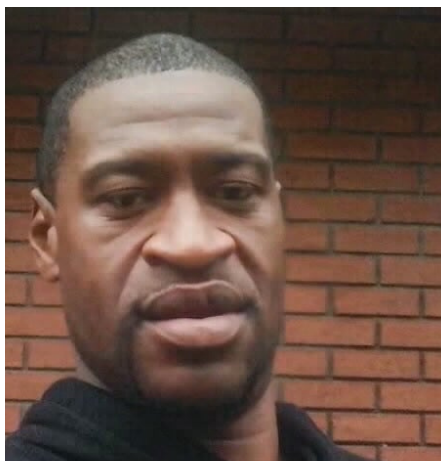
# GEORGE FLOYD: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

WRITTEN BY ENOCH DUGUMA

It was the death that shook the world; when George Floyd was killed by a policeman in 2020, global riots and protests followed, as people everywhere expressed their horror and disgust at this tragic event.

On 25th May 2020, George Floyd was suspected of counterfeiting a \$20 bill, resulting in police being called. However, when they arrived, they forcefully restrained Floyd and pushed him to the ground, using police brutality in footage that was shown over and over again across news and social media sites.

The four police officers involved in restraining Floyd were Alexander Keung, Thomas Lane, Tou Thao and Derek Chauvin.



George Floyd

During the whole ordeal, George Floyd continued to shout out "*I can't breathe*" as Chauvin forcefully restrained him. After 9 minutes and 29 seconds of Derek Chauvin's knee being forced onto Floyd's neck, his lifeless body fell to the ground. At 9:25 pm Floyd was pronounced dead at the Hennepin County Medical Centre emergency room. His family was left shocked and grief-stricken as the world demanded justice.

The Minneapolis riots that followed Floyd's killing were seen by many as a protest against the unjust and unnecessary brutality against black people due to systematic racism within the police force.

At 9pm on the 27th May and 7am on the 28th May, a series of arson attacks took place that the Minneapolis fire department had to respond to.



Protestors set fire to the third precinct of the Minneapolis police department, whilst businesses around the area were set on fire, looted and destroyed. Minneapolis was undoubtedly burning.

The Minneapolis riots played a huge part in the beginnings of what became the 2020 Black Lives Matter Movement. George Floyd's death acted as a catalyst for the fight against racial injustices and police brutality.

However, nearly 2 years on, has anything really changed? Some would say that global protests and riots have helped to promote the BLM Movement, whereas many would argue that in reality, little has changed despite such actions and events.

What about you? What are your thoughts on the impact of Floyd's killing and the subsequent global protests that took place? Are we now living in a more fair and equal world?



# PUPIL ENTREPRENEUR

WRITTEN BY KEIGHTLEY TRAN

As a Business and Enterprise College, there is no doubt that we have some budding entrepreneurs in our midst! We decided to interview one of our fellow Year 10 pupils, who has dreams of setting up her own business and has already made great strides in doing so!

Born and raised in South London to Nigerian parents, Pelumi Olasupo (15), is an aspiring actress who works towards her dream everyday, by attending drama clubs outside of school and also having the assistance of acting coaches who help her massively.

Launched in late August, the young entrepreneur created a platform for her small business Yoursbeaded, marketing handmade jewellery. Using inspiration from her colorful Nigerian heritage, she is able to run her business while also keeping up with her academic studies.

Pelumi was excited to share her experience and passion for her work with the KS4 Newsletter Team.

## **What was your motivation and drive to start your business?**

What motivated me to start my business is just coming to the realisation that I should be my own boss; I love the whole idea of having something that I worked hard for! I also love the entrepreneur kind of lifestyle: it's fun, helps me to save my money and teaches me a business way of life. I love my business so much and I am more than grateful for all the support that I have received!

## **Did you consider the risk of becoming a young entrepreneur?**

Yes, I did consider it. It is a risk because obviously, I am in school and I am still growing and learning. But I believe you can be any age to go for what you want to do! I have such a creative mindset, so I know my ideas for my business will only continue to grow and be very beneficial for my business.



## **Why have you decided to specialise in the jewellery market?**

I actually decided to specialise in the jewellery market when I travelled to Nigeria in the summer holidays! My mum and I went to the market and the waist beads and anklets (which I sell now as a business) immediately caught my eye! The colours, the beading – everything! It was supposed to be a souvenir for my friends, but after having a long hard look, my aunt, my mum and I decided that I could sell them in London and at least start something for myself! I am totally looking forward to going further with my business Yoursbeaded, as it represents my journey as a young entrepreneur and how anyone can do what they put their mind to!







### How do you generate new ideas for your business?

I generate new ideas for my business from big entrepreneurs who started off just like me; they inspire me. I also have quite a creative mindset so I do plan out the names to call certain products, the colour schemes and everything! I just visualise what would be most ideal and then I start planning, planning, planning! I like to ensure that everything is unique to excite new and known customers!

### How did Covid-19 impact your business?

Covid-19 hasn't really had an impact in my business as I launched it when everything was dying down; I just keep all my inventory clean before packaging them for the safety of me and my customers.

### How do you balance your work and school life? Do you find it difficult?

I don't find it difficult to plan out my business and school because I have a timetable of when I can do my school work; then - ideally at weekends - I just sort out orders and make sure that everything is in ship shape!

As long as I'm doing well in both my studies and my business, I'm happier than ever.

### What would be your best advice for any other aspiring entrepreneurs based on your experience?

Never ever let anyone put you down! Your aspirations will only excel when you have the right mindset for them. If you ever want to be an entrepreneur, make a plan. Big ideas start small! Plan what you want to sell and ask yourself "what's my brand name? Am I determined for this? Do I want this? Am I ready?" These questions are vital for a new business owner! Make sure you understand the process and learn from others! Use your mind and be as creative as you want to be! Most importantly, believe in yourself. Because it's only YOU that will make your dreams come true.

***"Anyone can do what they put their mind to"***



One of Pelumi's designs

Owning a business is a commitment that many people are passionate about. In fact, there were 5.94 Million small businesses established in the UK at the start of 2020 with 0 to 49 employees, recorded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. With this many people working for themselves and running an enterprise, who knows, you might even start one of your own, just like our very own Pelumi did!



Check out Pelumi's business on instagram at @yoursbeaded and support small business.

# *Space: The final frontier*

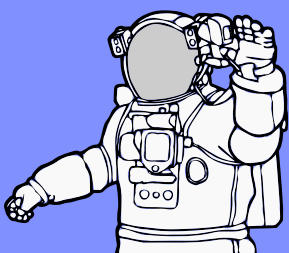
## STARING INTO SPACE

WRITTEN BY FARES OUANOUI

Space. The void. The great unknown. Whatever you call it, it's undeniable that it's quite possibly the biggest mystery we will ever come across.

Our sun's movement is dictated by a black hole at the centre of the Milky Way Galaxy, which is part of a group of cosmic clusters. Generations of humankind have looked up to the sky in wonder and astonishment, wondering what is out there.

You may have heard of the Greek philosopher and astronomer Aristotle (384BC - 322BC). He is regarded by many as not only a great philosopher, but also one of the first to understand the true scale of the universe. His early hypotheses about the stars and planets being spheres, laid the foundations for more advanced space discovery, centuries later.



1000 years later Galileo Galilei stared upwards at the same very space that Al-Khwarizmi did. His discoveries included many theories on how centres of gravity work and basic models of the laws of motion.

Galileo taught himself to create lenses, so that he could produce increasingly more powerful telescopes. Because of this, he was able to eventually draw all of the Moon's phases and prove that the Moon's surface was not smooth. From then on he was on a roll! He went on to discover four moons that orbit Jupiter and used the phases of Venus to prove that it and Mercury both revolve constantly around our Sun.

Albert Einstein is probably the most well-known scientist of all time. He actually predicted the existence of black holes with his theories of relativity in 1916.

Then there's Edwin Hubble. His contributions were so important that NASA even decided to name one of the world's largest telescopes after him: the Hubble telescope. This remains onboard the Space Shuttle: Discovery and has been rotating around the Earth for 31 years.

Apollo 11 is probably the most famous space shuttle in history. Its crew was made up of Commander Neil Armstrong, lunar module pilot Buzz Aldrin and Command module pilot Michael Collins who flew the Command Module Columbia while they were on the Moon's surface.



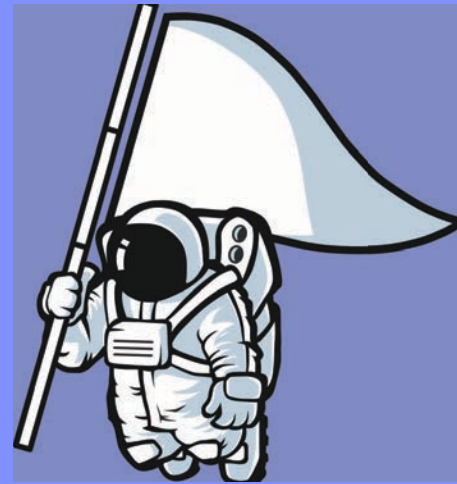


Neil Armstrong was famously the first man to set foot on the moon in 1969, leading to those 10 unforgettable words - *"One small step for man, One giant leap for mankind."*

Today, our knowledge of space travel - although much more developed than in the past - is still a tiny atom when compared to what we just don't yet know, and perhaps never will. Theories around dark matter, antimatter and quantum theory have only been ever so slightly explored - but that doesn't mean we should ever stop exploring.

Just look at a certain Billionaire called Elon Musk and his ambitions with Space X. He is currently paving the way for the first extraterrestrial colony for humankind.

We are nearing the moment when we become a 'Type 1' civilisation - a civilisation that can gather all of the energy provided from its system's star. No matter how insignificant we may be to the vastness of space, we will always gaze up at the stars for one main reason...the possibilities, like space itself, are endless.





# SPACE X: SHAPING THE FUTURE

WRITTEN BY BOUSHRA HAGOS

Have you heard of Space X? Well, it is an American aerospace private company (founded by Elon Musk in 2002), that is helping to develop the future of commercial spaceflight. It builds launch vehicles, manufactures rockets and operates a space cargo service.

The company originally focused on the development of the relatively low-cost Falcon 1 rocket, which first successfully reached orbit in 2008. In 2009, Space X's Falcon 9 rocket (an upgraded version of the Falcon 1) became the first privately funded liquid-fuelled vehicle to achieve orbit. SpaceX first achieved a successful landing of an ocean drone ship in 2015.

Space X's primary goal is to reduce the cost and improve the safety of traveling to space, as well as sending more people to space. Space X has been credited with creating the first fully-reusable rocket. With 3 fully reusable boosters strapped onto a single rocket core, this means rockets can be flown in to space over and over again; they hope this will not only drastically cut costs, but also turn travel into

something that anyone can afford.

The Space X Falcon Heavy rocket will launch from Kennedy Space Centre, Florida, in early 2022, after many delays in 2021. The Falcon Heavy is the most powerful rocket that Space X has ever created, with enough power to launch 64 metric tonnes of cargo into space.

In 2018, CEO Elon Musk unveiled Space X's next-generation rocket called Starship. The company's end goal is to colonise the universe by establishing a permanent inter-galactic settlement on Mars that can eventually grow into a self-sustaining city. Musk envisions Mars as a "*backup drive*" for humanity and seems confident that human beings could land on Mars in 2026. His vision is to create an independent colony capable of saving the human species if ever we faced extinction on Earth.

## How Will Space X Get To Mars?

The main method being used to transport people to Mars is through reusable rockets that are powered by liquid oxygen and methane fuel.

The first step will be launching an unoccupied spacecraft into Low Earth Orbit, then refuelling in space before heading on its journey to Mars.

Space X will also use the Starship Rocket to send supplies to Mars to start building a place for civilisation to live. After landing on Mars, the goal is to construct a fuel production plant that creates methane and liquid oxygen fuel so that more rockets can be sent to back and forth.

Just imagine – life on Mars! And it could happen in our lifetime!



# ONE GIANT LEAP...BACKWARDS?

WRITTEN BY JESSICA MARQUES

On 16th July 1969, Apollo 11 was launched, with the mission to land safely on the moon.

Inside the spaceflight were Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin - Armstrong being the first man to step foot onto the moon. This discovery famously went down in history as "*one giant leap for mankind*;" however, some conspiracy theorists believe otherwise...

One theory arguing that the moon landing was a hoax, was a video of Aldrin planting the American flag on the moon: some observers noticed the suspicious movements of the flag. It wasn't because it was swaying an unnatural way or moving strangely - but more so the fact that it was moving at all! For those of us who were daydreaming in this particular Science lesson, here's the theory... space is a vacuum and has no air so how could the flag possibly be swaying proudly in outer space?

NASA says that the movement was caused by Aldrin twisting the flagpole into the moon, but few were convinced. Instead, they switched their focus onto filmmaker Stanley Kubrick, suggesting that he helped NASA fake the video.

Another seemingly strange piece of evidence was Armstrong's own astronaut suit. Armstrong's suit is preserved in Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and was featured in a magazine that praised the museum's efforts to conserve it. However, sceptics argued that the pair of boots shown in images had smooth soles.



And how could this possibly be when the images of the iconic foot prints on the moon had tread marks? The explanation? Simple. Those aren't Armstrong's shoe prints in the image; they're *Aldrin's* shoe prints. All the astronauts wore lunar overshoes that provided them with added traction in the dust and extra layers to protect them against unfiltered solar radiation. The lunar overshoes were what created the boot print on the moon, not the spacesuit boots.

Most people believe that the moon landing was a real event in history, yet 16% of British people believe that the moon landing was *probably* faked and 4% believe that it was *definitely* staged. So, what do you reckon? Have we been duped all this time?



# SPACE TRAVEL- ON THE HORIZON OR A GALAXY FAR FAR AWAY?

WRITTEN BY OSARODIAN OBAYANGBONA

In recent years, the excitement of the prospect and potential around the future of space travel has been increasingly prominent. But is space travel on the horizon, or still a galaxy far, far away?

With the recent journeys into space of Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson, it would be easy to think that space travel is only for those with billions in the bank. Virgin Atlantic are now offering space flights but tickets are upwards of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

With exciting predictions of space hotels, constant commercial flights to and from space and more modest prices, some experts have highlighted that this could further divide the gap between the rich and poor, with some criticising the idea as it centred around the ability to pay for this unique opportunity. Indeed, as things stand, space travel is a financial no-go zone for most of us.

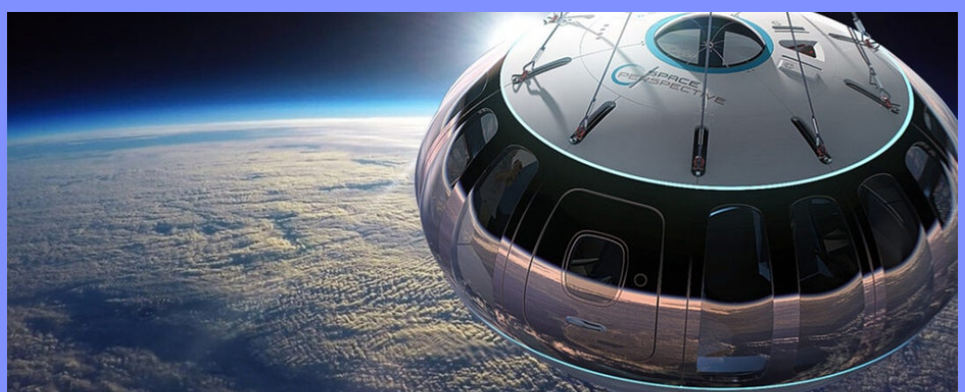
So, is space travel elitist?

Although it seems so, there are hopes that this can change. The space travel industry is forecast to become a \$20 billion business by the end of the next decade.

However, there are hopes that space travel will be more accessible and affordable in the near future because of the growing popularity of the space tourism industry. There are of course drawbacks to such out-of-this-world thinking, including the millions of pieces of space debris being discarded in space

by satellites, spacecraft parts and various other pieces of equipment. Furthermore, the gases generated from space travel launches could create real issues in terms of toxic waste.

However, many argue that as a species, we need to explore beyond the Earth if the human race is to survive. With such astronomical scientific developments occurring all the time in the field of space travel, are we now at the dawn of a new era?





# RED PLANET, DEAD PLANET?

WRITTEN BY ORBAN O'BRIEN

In the past few years, space travel has become hugely popularised in the form of privately owned companies such as Blue Origin and SpaceX. Elon Musk founded the latter in 2002 and Jeff Bezos the former in 2000, claiming that their companies will help to *"benefit earth"* and *"make humanity multiplanetary"*. But is exploring space really what humanity should be focusing its resources on, especially during a time when the climate crisis is worsening by the year?

Not only have people questioned whether the current expectations of space travel are realistic, but many are concerned that the founders of well known privately owned space companies have come to such wealth through exploitation and unethical means. For example, Amazon has garnered Bezos a net worth of \$191.4 billion dollars - a number that will surely have risen by the time this Newsletter is released.

Bezos has come under fire from protesters and previous employees who demand better hazard pay and sick pay after experiencing dreadful conditions in the workplace. Other alleged dodgy activity includes collecting tax from his own employees, selling expired baby formula amongst other foods, funding a candidate for the Seattle city election in an attempt to avoid paying higher tax rates, discarding thousands of unused items including masks and PPE to waste and donating pitiful amounts of money to charity.



So, is it the right decision for two of the most influential and powerful people in the world to focus on branching out away from earth, considering the state that we are in? Arguably, Bezos should be focusing on sorting the many problems and controversies surrounding his company here on Earth, rather than pursuing new interests in space.

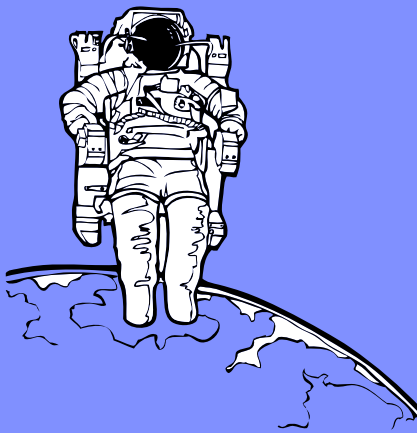
While traveling to Mars may seem tempting at first, it will take years of research as well as billions of dollars, which could alternatively be invested into saving the environment from collapse, which is predicted to happen by 2080 if we continue the course we're on.

What are two of the most influential and powerful people in the world doing for the environment? Although Bezos donated a little over \$600,000 to the Australian wildfires, that is pocket change for the world's richest man and is less than donations made by other celebrities for the cause.

Likewise, despite Elon Musk being considered a generous donor by some, even having his own charity called the Musk Foundation which has raised over \$200 million, many would argue that a centibillionaire could easily make much larger contributions from his own funds.

Space exploration and the possibility of sending human beings to Mars is certainly exciting, but the threat to the future that the climate situation is currently posing is the immediate crisis we should all be focused on.

Afterall, could Mars ever be a substitute for Earth?





# ARE WE ALONE?

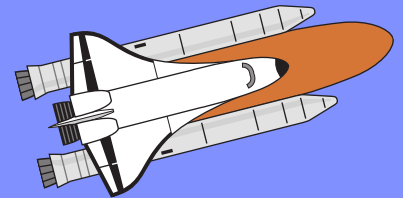
WRITTEN BY JEORGE ROBERTO

The search for life beyond Earth is only beginning, but science has already provided an optimistic early response: there are numerous planets in the galaxy, many of which are comparable to our own. This suggests that extra-terrestrial life can, indeed, exist.

Thousands more planets beyond our solar system have been confirmed by observations from the ground and space. There are most certainly trillions of stars in our galaxy. However, we have found no evidence of life beyond Earth thus far. Is it simple for life to start in the cosmos? Or is it extremely rare?



The Milky Way is our home galaxy; consisting of up to four hundred billion stars. There are about twenty billion sunlike stars in the Milky Way and it's estimated that a fifth of them have an earth sized planet in their habitable zone - the area with conditions that enable life to exist. If only 0.1% of those planets harboured life, there would be one million planets with life in the Milky Way. So why is there nothing to be seen beyond us?



## The Fermi Paradox

The "Fermi paradox" refers to the universe's eerie quietness. A well-known physicist Enrico Fermi often inquired "Where is everyone?". Even at moderate travel rates, the universe's billions of years of existence allow ample time for conscious, technological lifeforms to journey across the cosmos. So, what's the deal with the universe's silence?





Where are all the aliens? This is the Fermi Paradox - and nobody has an answer to it.

In our pursuit for the finding of other life forms, we've had no luck. Our space and ground telescopes, as well as our remote sensing equipment are becoming increasingly powerful. Despite this, the only life being seen is right here at home. We constantly stare into space, wondering if someone is staring back.

### Conspiracy Theories

Never mind the science, what are the apparent "sightings" of other intelligent beings?

Many people believe that our governments are working together to hide the truth concerning UFO sightings. One of the most extraordinary sightings allegedly took place right here in the UK, when US Air Force Sergeant Jim Peniston was dispatched to investigate strange lights in Rendlesham Forest.

He stated, *"I wasn't sure what I was seeing. I had my mind set that it was an aircraft crash and there was no crash. I could start seeing a structure craft and it was a triangular craft*

*that was sitting on the forest floor and it looked like black glass. When I pushed it it was solid, it was warm. There was some type of markings on it, there were glyphs on it that were something I've never seen before. There was another flash of light coming out of it and then it started to lift off the forest floor, moving a little bit through these trees. It momentarily hovered there, did a slight turn and was going to blink high. I looked, it moved another 100 yards away. We pursued it and we could never quite catch up with it."*

Peniston was required to provide government inspectors a comprehensive account of his own close encounter. Their response though, was unexpected. They offered him a cover narrative and told him he had to keep the facts hidden, according to Peniston. He then alleges that the interview took a dangerous turn and that agents drugged him to make him forget what happened - which may explain why he has remained silent about the incident for so long.

But why would UFOs choose to land in Rendlesham forest and why would the government choose to cover it up? I suppose we will never know.

### The Final Question

Maybe there is something out there that we would be better off not discovering...

The Universe appears to be ours alone at the moment: no one sends us messages, no one answers our calls.

But are we really alone? Will we be alone forever?

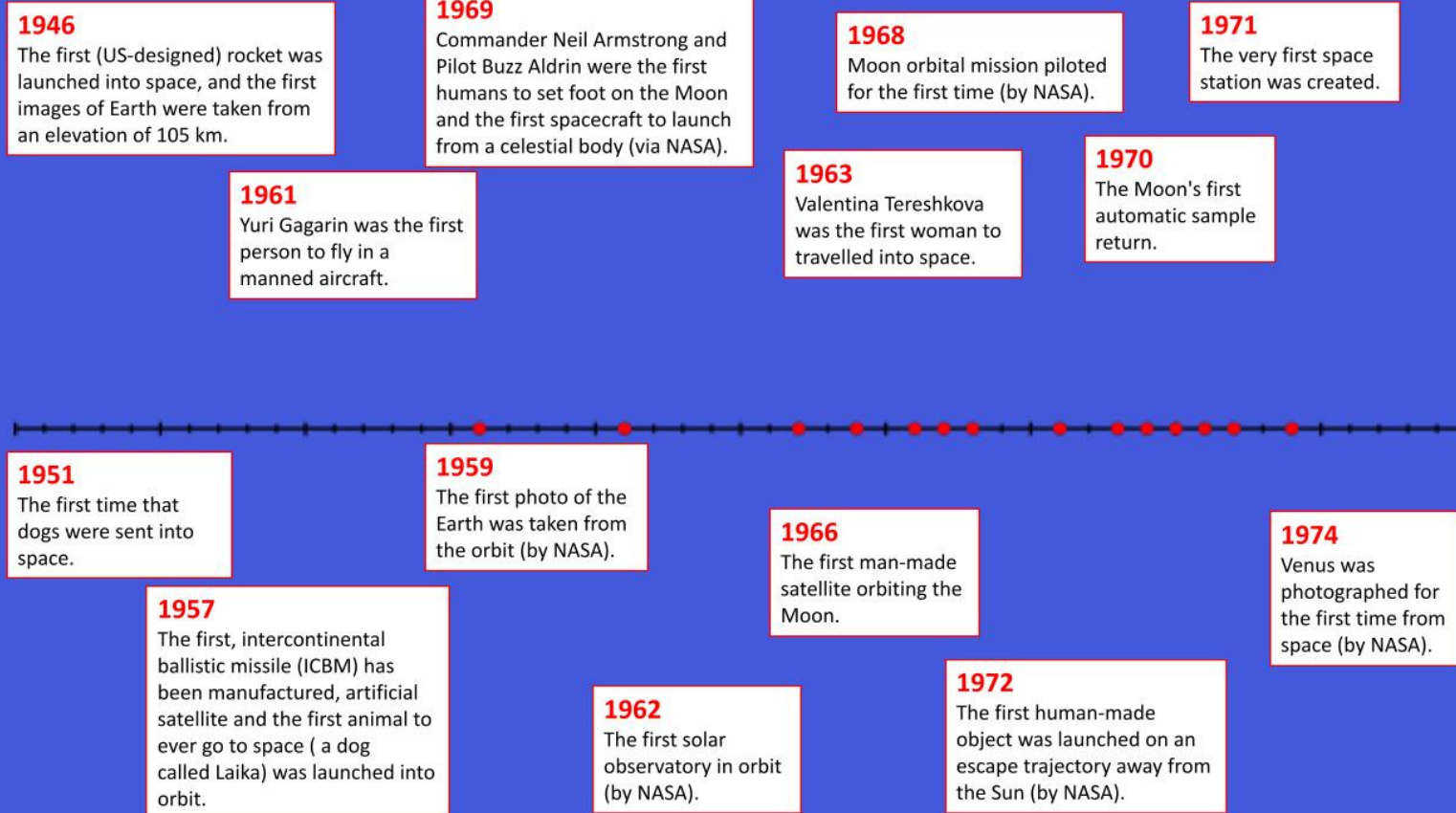
Are there other life forms observing us right at this second?

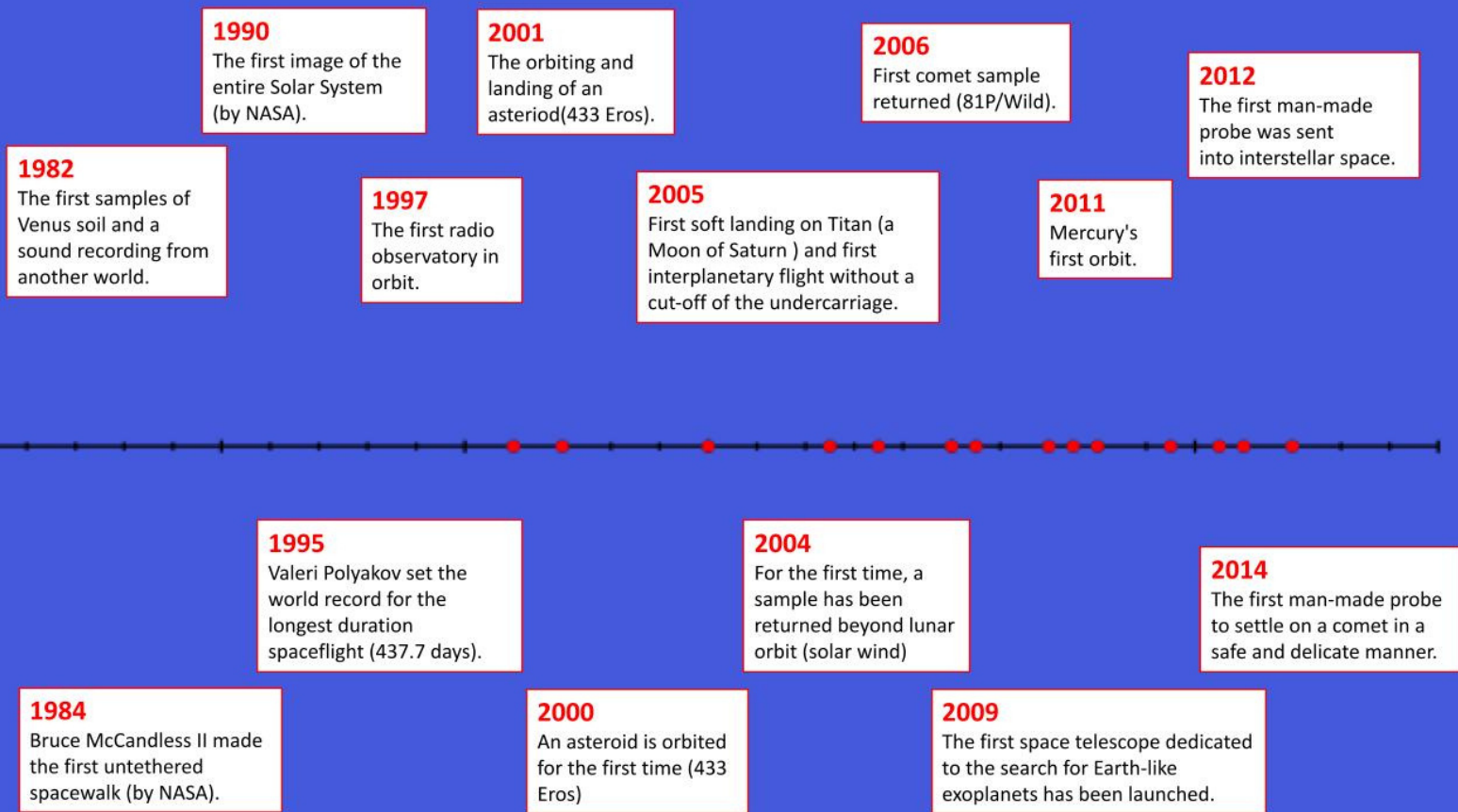
Well, the truth is out there....



# HISTORY OF SPACE TIMELINE

WRITTEN BY NAJMA MOHAMUD









# *crime & conspiracy*

## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FLIGHT MH370

WRITTEN BY PHEBE DAVIS-BATES

On 8th March 2014, Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 departed from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia on its way to Beijing, China, but never returned. The flight took off at 00:42 AM with radio transmissions to and from the flight going smoothly; however, soon enough, at 1:06 AM the plane's final automated position report and transmission were conducted.

The Kuala Lumpur Radar contacted the cockpit saying *"Malaysian three seven zero, contact Ho Chi Minh one two zero decimal nine. Good night."* Shortly afterwards, a response from the captain and the last known words from the flight came through: *"Good night. Malaysian three seven zero."*

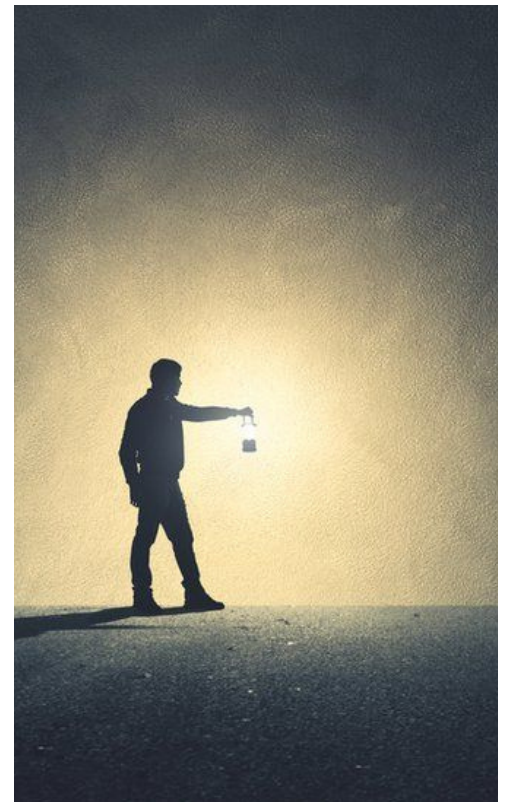
The plane had been flying over the Gulf of Thailand when at 1:21AM - only 3 minutes after the last verbal contact took place - Flight 370 abruptly disappeared from the radar screens at both stations.

As there were not many clouds or storms in the area, this suggests that the transporter was manually turned off by somebody on the flight.

Even after this, the flight was still making signal communications with the satellite. Through this, the flight's next moves could be tracked. It was concluded that the flight took another strange turn around Kuala Lumpur and continued for another 5 hours above the ocean.

A phone call was again made to the cockpit at 2:39AM which rang for a while but was unanswered. 4 hours later at 7:13AM another call was dispatched but remained unanswered. At around 7:24AM, Malaysian airlines flight 370 was one hour late at its scheduled destination and was still hovering somewhere over the Indian Ocean.

Soon after, the Malaysian government stated that they had lost contact with the aircraft and that Search and Rescue operations had been sent out in hope to retrieve the missing 227 passengers and crew.





Little did they know that Flight 370 was still flying. The plane only carried enough fuel to sustain itself for 7 hours and 31 minutes. At 9:15 AM the satellite company decided to send its final status request but it went unanswered. This means that the aircraft had most likely crashed somewhere in the Indian Ocean; it is still unclear where this happened though.

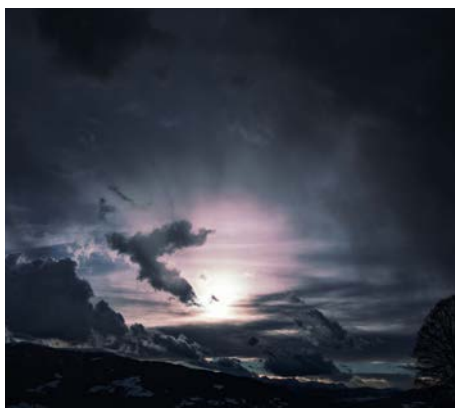
Many search teams began looking for MH370 and the 239 missing; nothing was found. It was the most expensive search in aviation history, costing \$155,000,000. So what's happened since?

Well, around a year after MH370 disappeared, something odd was found off of the coast of Reunion - a piece of wreckage.

This piece of wreckage is something called a wing flaperon which is part of the wing of a plane and it was confirmed to be from MH370. When undergoing analysis, it was concluded that the wing flaperon was non extended during its fateful crash, meaning that when MH370 hit the ocean it did so in a vertical dive.

In total, 33 pieces from the Boeing 777 have been discovered. Families are still searching for answers and justice for their missing loved ones.

People were confused as to why none of the passengers sent any last-minute texts to loved ones, family, and family. Well, many made the conclusion that whoever was manning the plane at the time of its disappearance went above the recommended height of altitude.



Consequently, everyone on board had fallen unconscious due to lack of air; this explains why no one was calling or messaging anyone. Many have speculated that this was a suicide mission, a hijacking, an accident, a fire, mass murder, something to do with the Bermuda triangle or even the work of aliens.

7 years later and we still don't know the full story of what happened to MH370 and its 239 passengers and crew. It remains a tragic mystery that has no clear answers for the loved ones left behind.





# THE SENSELESS KILLING OF SABINA NESSA

WRITTEN BY NATHANIEL GRZYWINSKI

Last year's KS4 Newsletter team brought you a Specials section entitled *The Fight For Female Freedom*, a topic decided upon following the tragic murder of local woman Sarah Everard. Just a matter of months after this heinous act, the media was filled with news of yet another horrific act against a lone woman.

Sabina Nessa was a 28 year old primary school teacher of Bangladeshi descent. She lived and taught in South-East London and was a caring and ambitious person - "a brilliant woman," as described by her sister. She had graduated from Greenwich University where she took a course in teaching English to speakers of other languages. Sabina also studied primary education, excelling in what she put her mind to, eventually becoming a brilliant teacher who was absolutely dedicated to her pupils.

Earlier this year, Sabina was on her way to meet a friend and decided to take a short-cut through a well-known local area, Cator Park. At approximately 8:30pm however, she was murdered brutally by a man she did not know. Her body had been found by a dog walker, hidden under a pile of leaves close to the OneSpace community centre nearly 24 hours after she missed her planned social meetup.

According to police sources, CCTV footage appears to show her attacker "repeatedly battering Sabina over the head with an object before carrying her over their shoulder towards Cator Park."

On 23rd September, police arrested a man at his address on suspicion of murder; 36 year old Koci Selamaj, an ex-Dominoes delivery driver, was charged with Sabina's murder. Koci Selamaj appeared at Willesden Magistrates Court where he then pleaded 'not guilty'.







One mourner at a vigil held to remember Sabina, emotionally reflected that *"Something needs to change - it's a matter of teaching."*

So, what do you think?

Do the murders of Sarah and Sabina suggest that there is something fundamentally wrong with the way women are viewed in society?

Do we have a socio-cultural problem in the UK, whereby women are seen as inferior to men?

Do schools need to do more to educate boys from a young age about how they should treat women?

Or are these two awful and senseless murders the actions of a couple of 'bad eggs'?

What do you think?





# THE CRIMINAL MIND

WRITTEN BY MICHELLE LE

Have you ever thought about doing something you shouldn't? Go on – be honest.

Let's face it - just about everyone has thought about doing something bad every once in a while - but it's the nature of this act and the decision about whether to act upon it that deems a person a criminal.

Criminals engage in illegal acts that can potentially endanger others. When criminals see opportunities, they often persist, no matter how high the stakes are.

You see an expensive necklace through a glass window: how secure is the glass case? Is the door locked? Are there people around? Some criminals calculate their next move with such precision that they may not even think that there's any risk at all.



However, of course, not all criminals think so logically. One may agree that some don't 'think' at all. There have been several cases of criminals having compulsive tendencies that they seem unable to control, with a large percentage of them being emotionally immature or cut off from the world. They may even believe that their actions have no consequences whatsoever.

Some people commit the most heinous of crimes whilst completely aware of their actions, knowing full well what the consequences will be.

A prime example of this is a man by the name of Dawson McGee, who stabbed his own mother out of spite for being kicked out of his home. Little did he know, he was being recorded the entire time that he sat in the interrogation room, with his eyes to the floor as he waited for the interrogator to arrive. The second the door opened, McGee's entire demeanour changed. His fingers constantly twitched, his mouth repeated several words and whenever he was given a question,

he would evade it by repeating it or pretending to be clueless. The CCTV clearly caught McGee's sudden change of behaviour, and so - despite his façade - he was deemed fit for trial and ultimately sentenced to life in prison. He later admitted that he purposefully changed his behaviour because he believed that a plea of insanity would lessen his sentence.

You may have heard of the terms 'psychopath' and 'sociopath'. But what is the difference?







A noticeable difference is how psychopaths pretend to care for others by putting on a facade, whilst sociopaths make it clear that they feel little (if any) empathy for others. Another difference is how psychopaths fail to form genuine emotional attachments, whilst sociopaths are able to form emotional attachments, but find it much more challenging to initiate a mere conversation.

Let's consider the case of 18 year old Jerrod Murray - a sociopathic criminally insane person. On a Wednesday evening in December 2012, he murdered a student who attended the same university as him, Generro Sanchez. He had managed to lure the victim to a secluded place. As soon as the policemen who later apprehended Murray approached him, he confessed to his crime— the interrogation was straightforward and by-the-book. When an officer questioned, *"In my mind, and I think you might agree with me, you just cold-bloodedly killed a young man tonight,"* Murray immediately replied, *"Yes, sir."* with no hesitation.

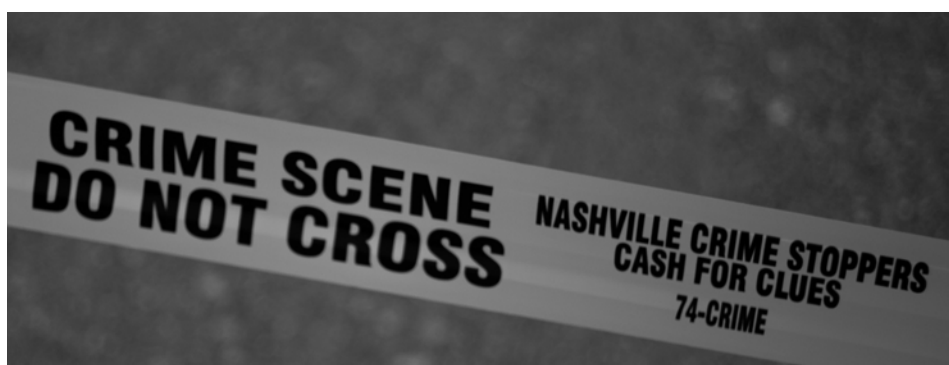
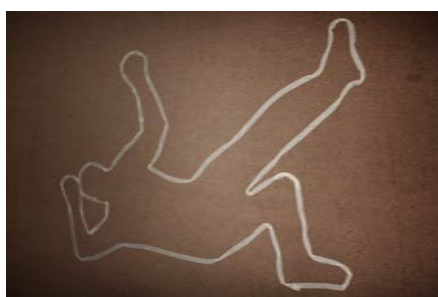
When he was asked what his sentence should be, he replied nonchalantly with *"Death sentence, Sir."* Murray's factual, unbiased answers made it evident that he felt not even a shred of remorse; he admitted to having no motive for the kill and that he did it purely for the exhilaration. His monotonous tone and relaxed stance throughout the interrogation largely contradicts the clichéd image of a criminally insane person shouting and hearing voices in their head.



Victim of Jerrod Murray  
Generro Sanchez



The sociopath, Jerrod Murray







# THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JFK

WRITTEN BY RIDWAN ELMİ

You may not have heard of him, but John F. Kennedy was elected as the 35th President of the United States in 1960, making him one of the country's youngest presidents.

JFK was born into one of America's wealthiest families and had a prestigious education. His reputation of being a military hero helped him be elected to Congress in 1946 and the Senate in 1952. Kennedy also gained popularity for combating the rising tensions in foreign countries such as Cuba and Vietnam. He was also highly supportive of rights for black people during a time when Civil Rights protests were at their peak.

Kennedy's popularity increased when he took part in the first televised Presidential debates; he was considered a hugely influential and well-liked figure at the time of his death.

On 22nd November 1963, thousands of people lined the streets of Dallas, Texas, to greet the Presidential motorcade as JFK, Texan Governor John Connally and both of their wives waved at the crowds.

At around 12:30pm, the motorcade exited Main Street near Dealey Plaza. Gunshots rang out across the plaza as it passed the Texas School Book Depository.

The President's neck and head were shot, whilst the Governor was hit in the back with a bullet.



The automobile drove away, only a few minutes away from Parkland Memorial Hospital. But there was little that could be done to help the President; John F. Kennedy was pronounced dead at 1:00 p.m. The Governor would survive, despite his injuries. Much of the nation mourned the untimely death of one of America's youngest Presidents.

But who was responsible for the murder? Lee Harvey Oswald, a newly hired employee at the Texas School Book Depository, was arrested less than an hour after the first gunshots.

Oswald was supposed to be taken from police headquarters to the county jail on 24th November. However, as viewers around the United States were watching the live television coverage, they were shocked to witness another man raise a pistol at Oswald and fire. The man in question, Jack Ruby, was the owner of a neighbourhood nightclub. As a consequence of his actions, Oswald died at Parkland Hospital two hours later.



Decades later, much controversy surrounds the killing of JFK. Like the shocking and untimely death of Princess Diana, many people believe a number of conspiracy theories rather than official reports. In JFK's case, some have cast their suspicions on an individual known as 'The Umbrella Man,' who is suspected of having used an umbrella on the day to send a signal to the gunman.



Others have conjectured that JFK won the election with the help of the Mafia; they theorise that the closure of Mafia-run casinos and businesses and JFK's failure to remove Fidel Castro, affected Mafia interests in Cuba, ultimately leading to an organised hit on JFK.



So, who *did* kill Kennedy?

Perhaps this is one of those mysteries that will always be shrouded in controversy and conspiracy.







# 9/11-20 YEARS ON

WRITTEN BY JOSHUA ZACEK

20 years since the terrorist attacks that killed thousands and took down New York's iconic Twin Towers, we look back at the history of the towers and reflect on some accounts from those who were in the Towers that day.

The idea of a 'World Trade Centre' spans all the way back to the 1940s in a post-war America, a time where international trade was beginning to thrive.

After decades of planning, agreements with the State of New Jersey and controversy with New Yorkers, construction began in the late 1960's.

Over the next 30 years, the Twin Towers would become an American icon, defining the New York skyline. But what accounts exist of the people who were caught in the middle of the tragic events on that Tuesday morning, over 20 years ago?

*"I heard an enormous thump. I didn't feel any vibration, but there was a noticeable sound like a boom or thump, and the lights buzzed for a second."* That's how Brian Clark, who was working on the 84th floor of the South Tower, recalls the first plane crashing into the North Tower.

Nobody knew the extent of what was about to happen that day. *"Was it pilot error? Was it instrument error? Or just a one-off suicide? Horrible as it was, you didn't know for certain that it was terrorism."*

After the second plane crashed into the South Tower 17 minutes later, it became clear. "When the second building got hit you instantly calculated the two of them: terrorism."



Inside the North Tower, Tom Canavan started making his descent from the 47th floor. Just as he reached the underground mall of the World Trade Centre, the South Tower collapsed. Canavan recalls: *"I remember yelling to the people in front of me or trying to yell anyway, to get in a doorway. I don't know if I even got it out of my mouth when I felt the thump, thump, and then I was just smashed to the ground like a bug. Everything went dark."*

Buried under debris from the South Tower, he would have less than half an hour to escape before the North Tower collapsed. Faced with a life or death situation, he crawled and dug through the rubble of the South Tower, until around 20 minutes later, he found a small hole.







*"I squeezed myself through the hole. I was scraped from head to toe. I was hurt and I didn't, I didn't feel a thing."*

Minutes later, the North Tower came down.

2,977 people died that day.

*"I'm part of 9/11; it's part of me,"*

— Canavan.

*"We lost 61 friends—dear friends that we worked with and laughed with for years."* —

Brian Clark

In the years following September 11th, America would start two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, completely revamp security in airports and fill a gap in New York's skyline.

Today, One World Trade Center, a newly designed skyscraper, stands at 1,776 feet (541 metres) tall, a nod to the year of American independence.

Two memorials were constructed where the Twin Towers once stood, with the names of those who lost their lives that day engraved in the stone surrounding the pools.

New security measures were introduced to thwart attacks in the skies, including reinforced cockpit doors, prohibited items and vigorous screening procedures at airports. It's hard to believe this was not the norm 20 years ago!

Even though 20% of the American population was born after 9/11, one thing is for sure: America will never forget September 11th.





# office of opinion

## TAX ME IF YOU CAN!

WRITTEN BY LAUREN FIGUEROA MEBLEK

They say that there are 2 certainties in life: death and taxes. There's no doubt that few of us would willingly part with our hard-earned cash, but should we be taxed more? Or, should we tax the rich more?

This latter question resurfaced amongst the public when Aurora James, Founder of the Brother Vellies label, designed the dress worn by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez at the 2021 Met Gala. Anyone watching could not help but stare at the bold red words stamped on the back of the dress - "tax the rich." The dress and its wearer garnered a lot of criticism, with some questioning the validity of such a statement whilst at an exclusive event that exists to celebrate the rich and famous. However, others agreed with the sentiment expressed. But what do you think about taxes?



Income Tax is collected by HMRC on behalf of the government for the purpose of funding public services, including the NHS, education and welfare services. In spite of the good causes income tax supports, many of those in the public eye try their best to avoid it. Steve Coogan - an English actor, comedian, producer and screenwriter - once stated,

"I don't avoid tax, I evade it. Or is it the other way around? Shut up!"

-Steve Coogan



Later on, he received backlash for "furloughing his gardener and housekeeper at his £4million country mansion, leaving the taxpayer to pay the majority of their wages." But, did he - like other millionaire celebrities like Stella McCartney - do anything wrong in taking advantage of the government's Coronavirus furlough scheme? Well, just like tax avoidance, furlough was entirely legal. Tax evasion on the other hand - well, you could get into a lot of trouble for not paying taxes!





Amazon owner Jeff Bezos gets a lot of heat for his tax avoidance habits, including on a visit to meet with Boris Johnson earlier this autumn when he stated he would not be paying taxes out of the kindness of his heart. Bezos believes that it is "on governments to ensure that they have an effective tax system, rather than for businesses voluntarily to pay more than is required by the law."

So, should governments raise taxes so that people like Jeff Bezos can, involuntarily, help benefit the countries that make them so rich in the first place?

What do you think?

As most countries' economies struggle in the wake of Coronavirus, could a solution be to tax the rich?

*Taxes date back to at least ancient Egypt*

*Astronauts in space need to file their taxes*

*India has entertainment tax*

*England once had a special hat tax*

*Shelled nuts are sometimes taxed*

*There's a cow flatulence tax*







# HOW DOES SOCIAL MEDIA *REALLY* MAKE YOU FEEL?

WRITTEN BY SIDRA KADIR

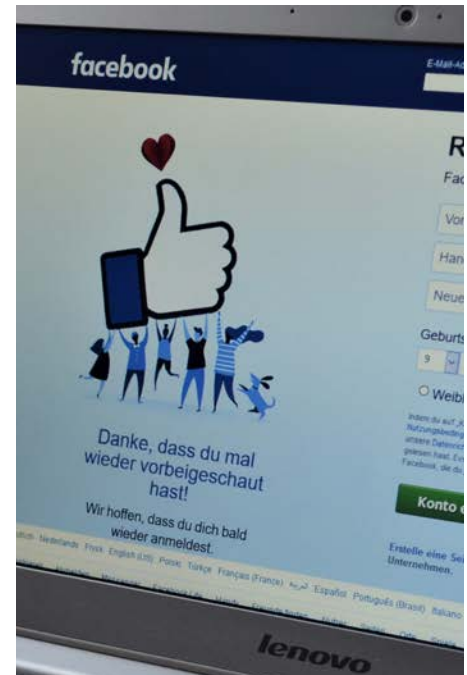
When Facebook was first set up in 2004, it was declared a global sensation for bringing friends and families together, no matter how far apart they actually were. There is no doubt that many of us use Facebook as a way of staying connected; but recently, the company has been in the news for all the wrong reasons.

Facebook undertook an investigation in order to find out if its many social media platforms - including Instagram which is owned by Facebook - are really the cause of suicide amongst teenagers. These recent internal investigations allegedly revealed that Instagram is linked to teen body issues and depression.

However, Facebook has been called out for hiding their real findings after publicly claiming there is no link between their social media platforms and teenaged body angst.

Andy Burrows, Head of online child safety, stated that it is *"appalling they chose to sit on their hands rather than act on evidence."* He also went on to say, *"instead of working to make the site safe, they've obstructed researchers, regulators, and government and run a PR and lobbying campaign in an attempt to prove the opposite."*

Did you know that research has shown that 32% teenage girls say that Instagram made them feel worse about their bodies? And it's not just teens who are affected; 87% of women and 65% of men compare themselves with photos on social media.



It's also been recognised that 50% of women and 37% of men believe that their bodies are unattractive. Some have called for all photos posted to have a clear notice if the images have been doctored, but there's no doubt that we are constantly bombarded with the best bits of those we follow, leading us to inevitably compare them to ourselves.

But if Facebook and Instagram have such a negative effect on our self-image and sense of self-worth, surely they should be open about this and try to find solutions to this issue?



So, why might Facebook be trying to hide any negative effects of its platforms on teenagers? Well, maybe its valuation at \$104,000,000,000 might have something to do with it...

LBC's Maajid Nawaz has been very vocal on this subject, stating, *"I do think there is a problem with big tech. What do I think their problem is? They've gotten too big for their own boots, they're too powerful...they own too much share of the market because they kept buying out the competition"*.

Perhaps this is at the heart of the problem: if Facebook had not monopolised these major global platforms, we could have greater transparency and more accountability when it comes to social media platforms.

Afterall, surely social media should exist as a good for society – not an innovation that makes us feel worse about ourselves? So, how can we use social media in a healthy way that won't harm our mental health?

Well, maybe one of the best pieces of advice is to remember that people generally just post their best bits on social media; one of the most healthy things we can do when using social media is to remember to never compare our worst bits with someone else's (filtered) best bits.





# IS THERE A WAY AHEAD FOR AFGHANISTAN?

WRITTEN BY ABDULLAHI MOHAMED

We all know that Afghanistan has undergone turmoil and suffering for many years now. But what comes next for Afghanistan as the Taliban consolidates its advantage in the aftermath of the withdrawal of US and NATO forces?

According to Ben Barry of BBC News Asia, everything now hinges on the military conflict between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

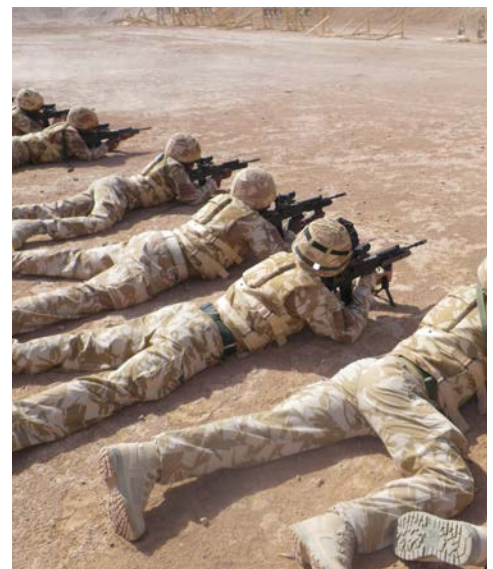
The February 2020 agreement between the US and the Taliban, lacked clarity when it comes to dispute resolution. In April 2021, US Intelligence Services determined that conflict was imminent on Afghan soil where Taliban forces were dominant. Many Afghans were concerned about the future of their country and their fate as a result of the peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government.

Concerns also surround revenge between powerful Afghans and former commanders who had fought one other for numerous years - would they reconcile or would the nation collapse into another civil war?

Let's take a leap back to what sparked this turmoil between Afghanistan and the US.

In 2001, the United States suffered unprecedented disaster in the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, which killed approximately 3,000 people. Al-Qaeda, an Islamist Terror organisation and its leader, Osama Bin Laden, took responsibility for the atrocities. Following these terrorist attacks, the United States declared war on Afghanistan, lasting over 2 decades and four US Presidents, making it the longest war in American history.

However, doubts have already been raised about how the Taliban intends to manage the country moving forward, as well as what their reign would entail for women, human rights and political liberties. Afghanistan is now the only country on the planet that forbids 50% of its population from receiving a secondary education; by forcing schools to reopen solely for boys, the Taliban have barred girls from secondary education. They have also imposed their own strict interpretation of Sharia, or Islamic law, as well as harsh penalties. Men have been forced to grow beards, while women are forced to wear the burka. Television, music, as well as the movies have all been outlawed.







Despite the fact that Afghanistan has been through a variety of conflicts over the last two decades and now seems to be less embroiled in international conflicts, it cannot be denied that there are many internal conflicts brewing. Furthermore, worrying reports have emerged of parents desperately selling their own children.



The country still lacks the necessary standards in respect to the treatment of women, men and children; is the Taliban able to provide the Afghan people with all they may really want in life? As Malala Yousafzei said in her autobiography written after she was shot in the head by the Taliban in Pakistan, *"Education is education. We should learn everything and then choose which path to follow."* Education is neither Eastern nor Western, it is human."



Indeed, hope is all the people of Afghanistan have now and hope is all we can provide to the innocents forced to adhere to the strict regulations implemented by the Taliban government. What will be the future of Afghanistan? Only time will tell.





# THE UIGHURS: CHINA'S NOT SO HIDDEN SECRET

WRITTEN BY MUAZE NUR HUSSEN

You may not have heard about the Uighurs; they are an ethnic group of about 11 million people, living in Xinjiang in China. Some Uighurs believe that the region was inhabited by their own ancestors and therefore does not belong to China.

Unfortunately, there is evidence that this group of people are suffering from genocide due to ill-treatment by the Chinese government. A report by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination states that a brutal 're-education' programme is taking place.

The UN believes that over a million Uighur Muslims are held captive in camps. The Human Rights Watch states that China is committing crimes against humanity; indeed, it is estimated that China's population growth in Uighur areas fell by 86% between 2015 and 2018.

However Beijing denies such abuses, claiming they only have "vocational training centres" where terrorism is stamped out.

Back in 2008 when China hosted the Olympics, there was a series of bus bombings claimed by Uighur extremists. Later in 2009, a fight broke out between the Turks and the Han Chinese, resulting in 200 people dying.

China began to view Muslim minorities in Xinjiang as potential terrorists. In May 2014, China launched its Strike Hard campaign against violent terrorism in Xinjiang. Since then, the amount of families arrested has tripled. Many have been detained and have been denied rights, suffering from torture and ill treatment.



The Chinese government repeatedly states that they welcome foreign journalists to the region to see the truth for themselves.

However, Sophia Yang from The Telegraph was stopped and searched for two and a half hours. She later said "trying to get information from a country that's opaque is a real challenge...when talking to Uighur Muslims, they do not speak because they fear for their own lives."







Back in March of this year, The Independent reported that the UK government had criticised the Chinese government's treatment of Uighur Muslims and had handed out sanctions for human rights abuses. The US was the first country to impose sanctions on China, in July 2020, whilst in 2021, Britain, the US, Canada and the EU all agreed new sanctions on those Officials deemed to be responsible for the reported abuses.

Did you know that over 80% of the cotton produced in China comes from the Xinjiang region? This has led to many clothing companies refusing to source their cotton from the region.

What will be the long term impact on the Uighur people if there continues to be a discrepancy between what the Chinese government claim is happening and what global reporters and foreign governments believe? Will we ever know the full truth and, more importantly, what will the future of the Uighur people be?







# CENSORSHIP: PROTECTION OR OPPRESSION?

WRITTEN BY SUHEED MAHMOUD

Sometimes we take for granted that in the UK we have freedom of speech. We are free to express our opinions, as long as we are not in any way inciting hatred of any kind. However, in some countries of the world, censorship – the suppression of freedom of speech – is the norm.

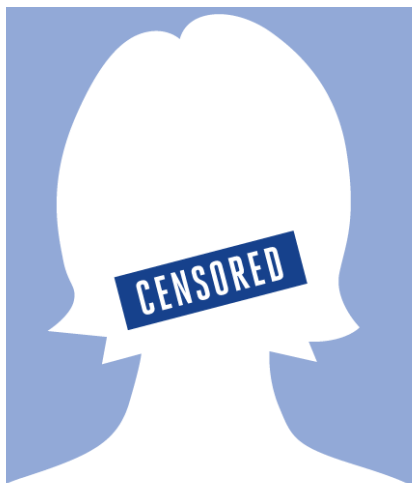
In countries such as China, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia, censorship is rampant. Those who oppose the State's view on the wider world or how the country should be governed, are often silenced. You may be shocked to know that tactics used by such governments to control the populations' views include extreme measures such as execution!

Eritrea is thought to be one of the most restrictive countries when it comes to media distribution. There is a law that allows the government to force journalists to only promote national objectives;

this essentially makes all media outlets (whether they are foreign or not), legally obligated to produce propaganda if they are reporting about Eritrea or something related to Eritrea.

In addition, multiple journalists who have been imprisoned might have withered away without any acknowledgement. This is due to the fact that the government refuses to provide proof of life to prisoners' relatives.

The country has complete control over the media, with severe restrictions on reporters or journalists who are entering the country to either investigate or report on an issue that they might find.



Another country that has strict censorship laws is Saudi Arabia - known by many of us for its wealth. Shockingly, a total of 24 journalists have been put behind bars as of 2020.

You may also have heard of the murder of Jamal Khashoggi; he was an ex-member of the Royal Court, who left when he was oppressed by the Saudi Arabian regime. He went on to become a journalist and criticised the Crown Prince.

In 2018 he was assassinated in Istanbul. He was an advocate of free speech and rejected oppressive and controlling treatment toward journalists. Consequently, some media outlets suggest that this was an authorised assassination by the Saudi regime.





We also have State censorship in China, which has an odd policy when it comes to video games; citizens are allowed restricted hours, which total 3 hours a week and are only allowed to play on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. This can be argued as a form of protection by limiting the hours that Under 18-year-olds can play.

Video games are made to be addictive as games need high engagement to rake in profit and investment; therefore, by preventing the hours played and putting in limitations, the interest in a certain game is reduced. This makes players less incentivised to play or spend money on games.

Furthermore, a vast array of gaming companies is now required to check the age of gamers after dark. This rule was implemented alongside a nationwide crackdown on large companies such as Tencent, Alibaba and Didi. Many parents praised the Chinese government for their swift and decisive action, but others disagree, especially when the average school day is from 7:30am to 5:00pm.

The Chinese policy (when it comes to gaming), is a way of protecting its bright future and preventing children from experiencing an addiction; arguably, this may be viewed as a way in which censorship benefits the country as a whole and isn't negative.

However, when it comes to censorship, gaming isn't the only thing that is monitored by the Chinese government. Did you know that in China there is an app called WeChat? It's not only a social media platform, but an amalgamation of many aspects of unique apps called mini-programs. These allow you to pay bills, online shop and order food - but all at the cost of demanding more of your private information. For instance, the app asks for your face and links it to your WeChat account so you can pay for things with your face. You can also use it to find parking and it automatically charges you if you submit your licence plate. People's activities on WeChat are regulated by the Chinese government who can use the information they have aggregated to ensure political dissents are arrested once they make a post criticising the government.

China also has a system of social credit; this means that the circulation of propaganda is carried out by the public who are rewarded with social credit. This system gives benefits and negative consequences depending on what bracket you are in; certain people get benefits like admission to schools and getting medical treatment before others. Other people suffer consequences such as losing their job or degree. It seems unthinkable to imagine that such control measures are in place!

Just imagine if your social media and technological usage was being monitored to such a degree...how free to speak your mind would you feel?





# COP 26- MORE "BLAH BLAH BLAH"?

WRITTEN BY FARES OUANOUI

It was the famous global event that Greta Thunberg referred to as "blah, blah, blah": COP26 - the 26th annual conference of the parties (COP) - was held in Glasgow, Scotland, and lasted from October 31st to November 12th 2021. But was Thunberg right to be so cynical about the climate change promises and pledges of the nations involved?

This annual conference, which was first held in 1995, was created with the primary aspiration of slowing down and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as protecting the earth from the dire threat of climate change - something relevant to every single one of us. This year, world leaders headed into the conference with four primary objectives.

Objective 1 was to allow plans for reaching global net-zero by 2050 to be made and to keep the target of preventing global temperature levels from increasing by 1.5°C each year, within reach.

Objective 2 was for governments across the globe to help shield their natural habitats, ecosystems, and communities from the increasingly devastating effects of climate change. This also includes pushing nations that are more harshly affected by global warming and ultimately climate change, to do more to preserve and maintain their ecosystems. Measures to prevent future harm caused by droughts and floods were also implemented.

Objective 3 was for the certain leaders to assist less affluent countries that are struggling to make the move to non-fossil fuel equivalents of providing energy, without taking massive hits on their economic growths; this will involve financing them with a staggering US\$100-Billion a year.



Objective 4 was for the countries across our planet to continue working together to accelerate their combined actions against climate change. One way of accomplishing this is by finishing the Paris Rulebook, which essentially provides the way forward for how our leaders should move towards a carbonless future.

A few significant promises were made during the couple of weeks following the highly anticipated conference, such as an ambitious one to end all deforestation by 2030. This doesn't necessarily mean it will happen though. Matt McGrath, the BBC's Environment Correspondent, states, *"Many previous plans haven't achieved their goals. In fact, deforestation has increased since a similar pledge was launched in 2014."* Deforestation should have diminished by at least 50% in the six years following 2014, with 150 million hectares of land being essentially recycled back to mother nature.





Instead, as of 2019, deforestation has shockingly surged by the worrying figure of 43%, according to a report released shortly before the New York Climate Summit in 2019.

Furthermore, at a Climate Summit in 2009, in Copenhagen, the richer and more powerful nations gave their word to help other nations. \$100 billion was promised to the nations that were struggling to make the move to clean energy without support, by 2020. It also aimed to provide stability and a safety net for their various communities. However, this promise was shattered during COP25, which was held in Madrid. This remains one of the main reasons for many people's distrust in the politicians in such conferences.

Furthermore, a report last year from the UN stated that "*the only realistic scenarios*" showed the \$100-Billion target was not achievable or realistic. This raised many questions, such as what was the point in having these conferences if they were doing absolutely nothing in helping tackle climate change.

Moreover, a massive document leak, covered thoroughly by BBC News, exposed how some countries may have been slyly trying to sway the UN into altering a key scientific report. The leak revealed that Saudi Arabia, Japan, Australia, Argentina, Brazil and India were among the countries apparently wanting the UN to tone down the urgency of the report. The documents also worryingly show more developed countries objecting to whether they really should pay for the required advancements poorer countries require to go green. The leaked documents apparently consist of over 32,000 secret statements sent in by governments and companies alike, who are trying to cover their carbon footprints in this carbon debacle. This controversy has caused protestors and climate activists to accuse leaders of corruption and selfishness.

There is no doubt that perceived hypocrisy amongst world leaders will only serve to cause young people like us to question and doubt their promises.

So, are hypocrisy and deceit the real polluters of climate change pledges? Well, let's turn our attention to Jeffs and Bills of this world;

think of the immense wealth and influence that immediately comes to mind with the names Bezos and Gates. Apparently, Jeff Bezos travelled all the way to Glasgow in a long and tiresome journey on a £48 Million private jet; he was in it for the long haul. He contributed to the 19.2% figure that private jets in the UK produce in CO2 emissions, just so that he could get to the COP26 'CleanTech' event, only four days after celebrating Bill Gates' 66th birthday on a \$2 Million-a-week superyacht - which we can only assume causes more pollution than a commuter's car. Oh, the irony...





However, it is fair to say that people are actually starting to care about Conferences like COP26. So, whilst there are some people who see COP26 as a failure, for its lack of action and empty promises, many view it as a hopeful step in the right direction. But to some people, promises mean nothing: Greta Thunberg declared, *"It is not a secret that COP26 is a failure"*, less than 2 miles away from the talks held in Glasgow, sparking many protests from activists all over the UK. Thunberg even accused COP26 of being a *"PR event, where leaders are giving beautiful speeches and announcing fancy commitments and targets, while behind the curtains governments of the Global North countries are still refusing to take any drastic climate action."*



So, what does the future hold for our planet?

We can all hope for a better future, free of climate change and global devastation.

Afterall, surely the only infinite resource we have is hope?



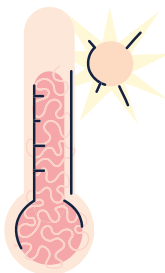




# COP26 FACTS

WRITTEN BY ADAM FERATI

Sea levels have risen about 16cm in the last 4 years



Our atmosphere has warmed up by 0.08 degrees Celsius



If our atmosphere warms up by 1 degrees Celsius more, it would cause 70% more water vapour in the air.

The United States is the second largest contributor to carbon dioxide in our air

In the last 30 years, half of the world's coral reefs have died



Average sea levels is expected to rise between 0.5 and 1.5 metres before the end of the century

Rainforest destruction is a major cause of carbon dioxide release







COP26 was hosted in Glasgow, Scotland from 31st of October to 13th of November. 120 world leaders attended to discuss the climate crisis.



UNICEF wants countries to cut their emissions by the minimum of 45% by 2030.

The last COP conference was held in 2015 in Paris.

The US is 4.4% of the population, however it is one of the largest greenhouse gases emitters

In 1910, The Glacier National Park had 150 glaciers. Then in 2017 it was recounted and had a staggering number of 26 glaciers.

9 out of 10 warmest years since 1880 was taken in 2005 due to climate change.





# *inspiration station*

## THE POWER OF PAVAROTTI

WRITTEN BY ANASTASIA SHOVKOPLYAS

Many people may have heard of Luciano Pavarotti, especially football fans, as he famously sang the opera 'Nessun Dorma,' which is often played before important football matches.

He revolutionised the world of tenor singing and has one of the most powerful, pure and pleasing voices in the history of tenors. He died a world-famous singer, but he came from very humble beginnings.

Luciano Pavarotti was born on 12th October 1935 on the outskirts of Modena in Italy. He came from a poor background and had very little money growing up. His family lived in a cramped two-room apartment. His parents had low earning jobs; his dad was a baker as well as an amateur tenor and his mother worked in a factory. However due to WW2, he and his family had to leave Modena and live in the neighbouring countryside.

As a young child, Pavarotti had the idea of being a football goalkeeper and when he eventually graduated, he decided to pursue his interest in football; however, his mother convinced him to train as a teacher. He taught in a small elementary school for two years and decided to pursue music. In 1954, at the age of 19, he began seriously studying music with a respected fellow tenor called Corale Rossini.

During his musical studies, Pavarotti had many part time jobs and performed a few singing concerts for free in his small town. Later, after winning the Concorso Internazionale (a singing competition), he made his debut in 1961 as Rodolfo in La Boheme. He played in many opera Houses in Europe and Australia and performed in many festivals such as the Glyndebourne Festival in 1964.

He toured around the world and had opera shows with over 500,000 people in attendance!

Pavarotti certainly created a name for himself - in fact, many regard him as the greatest tenor of all time. He won many prizes and was given 5 Grammy awards and a Kennedy Centre Honour in 2001.

Even after his death in 2007, his music lives on; Pavarotti's legacy as a truly great musical talent will surely exist forever.





# MARCUS RASHFORD:

## THE FOOTBALL MAGICIAN

WRITTEN BY REDWAN JEAFFER

England player Marcus Rashford transformed his life from poverty to becoming one of the best players in English football history.

Marcus Rashford was born in Wythenshawe, South Manchester in 1997. His mother faced challenges as a single parent of 5 children, working multiple jobs and often going without food to ensure her family could eat.

As a child, Rashford used to follow his brothers and their friends when they went off to play football. However, often he wasn't able to play; he spent a lot of time in the side-lines just watching the other children play.



At the age of 5, Rashford joined Fletcher Moss Rangers, a junior football club. Then, at the age of 7, his talent was noticed by a scout and he was selected to play for the academy at Manchester United. He developed his skills over the years and in 2015 he was included for the first time first team bench for a Premier League match. He now plays for Manchester United and is one of the team's best ever players.



During the Lockdown of 2020, Rashford teamed up with the food distribution charity Fare Share to ensure that potentially vulnerable children across the UK, received meals. Amazingly, the campaign resulted in what's widely regarded as the quickest turnaround of government policy in the history of British politics, resulting in 1.3 million children having access to food whilst schools were closed. As a result of Rashford's End Child Food Poverty campaign, the British Government committed £400 million to supporting children across the UK. Unsurprisingly, in October 2020, Rashford was awarded a MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

***"Always train hard, work harder, never give up, never give in and always believe in yourself"***

***-Marcus Rashford***





# ATTITUDE DETERMINES ALTITUDE



*"The path to success is to take massive, determined actions"*

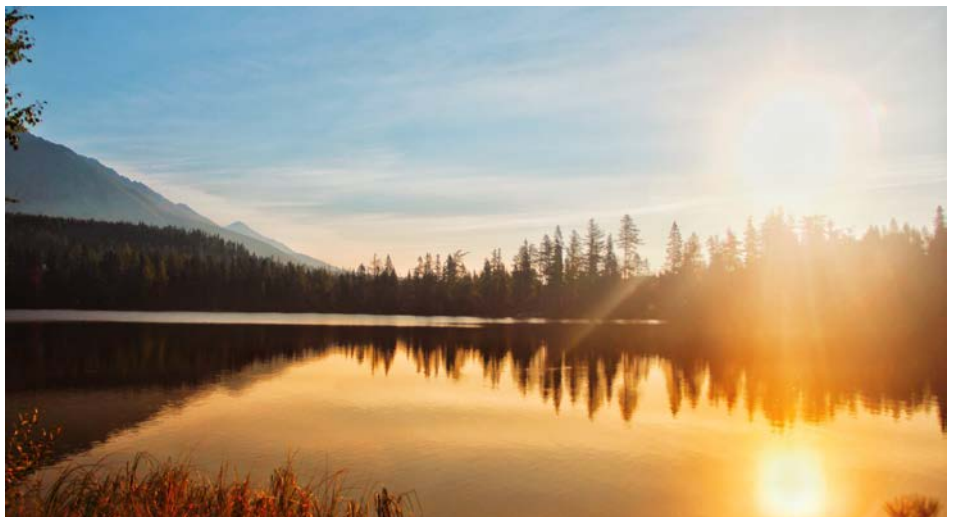
*-Tony Robbins*

*"Some people dream of success... while others wake up and work hard at it."*

*-Unknown*

*"There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting."*

*-The Budha*



*"He conquers who endures."*

*-Persius*



*"Some succeed because they are destined to, but most succeed because they are determined to."*

*-Henry Van Dyke*



***"It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light"***  
***-Aristotle***



***"Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope"***  
***-Martin Luther King***

***"Be courageous. Challenge orthodoxy. Stand up for what you believe in. When you are in your rocking chair talking to your grandchildren many years from now, be sure you have a good story to tell"***  
***-Amal Clooney***







# THE RETURN OF THE AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS

WRITTEN BY OMAR AOUCHICHE

The African Cup of Nations (AFCON) is a footballing tournament held every 2 years, in which 24 African National teams battle it out for the title of the best team in Africa. It should have been scheduled for the Summer of 2021, however - like many sporting events - it had to be postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Instead, it will be held in Cameroon, from January 9th 2022 to February 22nd 2022. It will be 33rd time the tournament has taken place.

Any side could become victorious, however, there are a few sides who are favourites to come out on top. Current champions Algeria have maintained an unbeaten streak of more than 29 games in all major competitions which began long before the last African Cup of Nations tournament. Senegal, the runners up of the 2019 African Cup of Nations, also seem capable of lifting the title for the 1st time in their history.



Finally, let's not forget Egypt - the most successful team in the Tournament's history with 7 titles. They too may also be favourites to win the tournament. Remember, they have Premier League stars Mo Salah, Elmoahamady and Elneny fighting on their side; an Egypt win could most definitely be on the cards!







# RONALDO'S RETURN HOME!

WRITTEN BY AFNAN ABDULALIM

If you don't know who Cristiano Ronaldo is, then let me give you a quick background story.

Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro grew up in poverty, having to share a room with 3 of his siblings. He is the youngest in his family and was born in São Pedro Parish of Funchal, the capital of the Portuguese island of Madeira. He lived in a small tin roofed home that overlooked the ocean.

Ronaldo got into football as his dad, Jose Dinis Aveiro, was an equipment manager of a boys' club. Ronaldo grew up with many hardships as his father often drank too much and his mother didn't earn much working as a cook. Sadly, Ronaldo's father passed away when Ronaldo was just 20 years of age whilst he was playing for Manchester United.

Before playing for Manchester United, Ronaldo played for a football club in Portugal called Sporting Lisbon.

The game that determined Cristiano Ronaldo's journey beginning at Manchester United was when he played against them at Sporting Lisbon. His team won 3-1, with Ronaldo stealing the spotlight of the match.

Consequently, this led to Manchester United signing Ronaldo to their team. Just 6 days after the match, the club had signed Ronaldo for over £12,000,000. He became a Club legend and he went on to score 118 goals in 292 games across 6 seasons.



After becoming a well-known legend in football, he left for Real Madrid where he won four Champions League crowns, three Club World Cups and 3 UEFA Super Cups, two LaLiga titles, a pair of Copas del Rey and two Spanish Super Cups. He scored an incredible 450 goals for the Club in 438 games!

He then went on to play for Juventus in 2018 after 9 years at Real Madrid, winning 2 Series A League titles and scoring 101 goals in just over 3 seasons with the club.

Earlier this year, at the age of 36, Ronaldo made his way back to Man United, spreading joy across all Manchester United fans' faces. They knew that the man who had discovered fame and glory at Old Trafford, had found his way home again. And the crowd went wild!





# *cacophony of colours*

## EPHERMERAL

WRITTEN BY LAUREN  
FIGUEROA MEBLEK

*Ephemeral*: an adjective to describe something that doesn't last forever...

Is it possible for something to last forever? We like to wonder if there's love after life because we're not satisfied with till *death do us part*. When will we just learn to accept that everything ends? Maybe we just won't...or maybe *I* just won't.

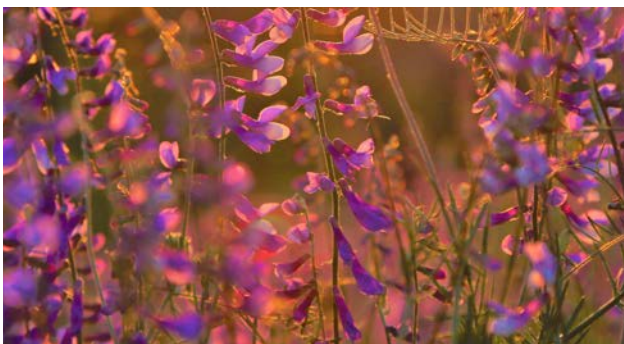
I used to live on a planet called Earth and it was home; as a matter of fact, it was a generous, gallant, giving home.

But we destroyed our planet bit by bit and filled the cracks with lies and ignorance, to the point that it could exist no more.

Is there anything that doesn't end if marriages, people, planets, all end? Can anything ever escape death?

And so, with the loss of my home, I drift across the expanse of time alone.

*Solivagant*: an adjective to describe something that wanders alone...



## SHE CAME BEFORE ME IN MOONLIGHT

WRITTEN BY LAURA VASCONCELOS

She came before me in the moonlight,  
Christmas carolers sing and party goers  
dance through the streets under us,  
But I stand still, silent, and stare,  
The woman of my heart,  
An enigma.

She stood there, leaning against my  
balcony railing,  
She hummed her own festive tune,  
She ignored the melody already playing,  
And she ignored my calling.

She stood before me in the moonlight,  
Her humming turned into harmonious  
laughter,  
So bitter, so sweet  
Her words -  
So wrong,  
So right.

She left me in the moonlight,  
As quickly as she came,  
Her harmonious laughter echoed,  
But I stand still, silent  
And stare.

Cold crystals start to fall at the sound of  
her harmonious laughter,  
Truly a woman of my heart,  
An enigma.

And I adored her.



# HEADS OR TAILS

WRITTEN BY MICHELLE LE

"Heads or tails? Tails, you lose."

"Love or hate? Hate, you mess up."

The coin rests on the nail of my thumb,  
urging to slide off already.

Just a shape with two symbols on either  
side.

The coin rocking side to side on my shaky  
thumb comes to a stop when I fling it up  
into the cold air—

Cold air that wraps itself around your  
bones and settles like a lump of ice,  
seeped into your skin.

"Heads or tails? Tails, you lose."

"Love or hate? Hate, you mess up."

I placed my bet on hate.

The type of hate that snakes its way up to  
hatred, then loathing.

What's better than feeling your blood  
itching and scratching your veins?

What's better than your tangled veins  
wanting to jump out of its fragile skin?

The coin nears its landing between my  
thumb and index.

It puts on a show by giving fancy  
pirouettes in the air before being harshly  
pushed down by my scorched hand.

My pale hand rests over the coin to keep  
it from leaving.

The cold air returns, only a different kind;  
The kind that lingers deep in your lungs,  
yet pokes your intestines.

When I remove the hand to reveal fate's  
sign, my lifeless eyes don't move to look.  
Not even glance.

I just sit there. Such a monotonous  
atmosphere.

My lips don't crack the slightest smile—  
I hadn't exercised those muscles in a  
while.

I find my free hand holding onto the  
nearby bottle by the neck.

The only thing I'm able to hold is an  
hourglass-like bottle with liquid I'm  
ashamed to crave.

It knows I want to feel comfortably numb,  
It knows I want to drown myself in my  
own blood.

It has never let me down.

My lips push out like a goldfish as I press  
them up against the opening,

Throwing my head back to let gravity do  
its work.

The coin still rests where it landed.

I feel like it wants to do more pirouettes.

I feel like it wants to do a grand jeté off of  
my hand and away from me.

I treat the bottle just like I've treated  
anyone else.

I slam it so hard onto the table I don't  
know how it didn't spare a crevice.

My darkened pupils finally decide to eye  
God's choice,  
And I sigh.







# *seasonal specials*

## 'TWAS THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS

WRITTEN BY NINA LUONG

Christmas is the beloved holiday known for being a day of gift - giving to loved ones and of course, Jesus' birthday. It's celebrated by more than 2 billion people worldwide and in 160 different countries!

Clearly, it's a well-loved holiday around the world, but how much do we actually know about the true origins of this celebration?

Although December 25th is most commonly celebrated by Christians as the birth of Jesus, the date itself and many of the conventions associated with Christmas actually stem from ancient Pagan traditions that celebrated the winter solstice.

In ancient Rome, a holiday called Saturnalia (in honour of Saturn, the god of agriculture) celebrated the winter solstice. The celebrations began on the week leading up to the winter solstice and throughout the rest of the month and was most prominently celebrated on December 25th.

It was a joyful holiday filled with delicious food and drink - similar to today's Christmas.

Christmas trees are also a custom that originated from Pagan traditions! In acknowledgement of the return of the sun, fathers and sons would bring home huge logs that they would then set on fire. People would then gather to feast and drink until all the logs burned out.

So, when you're opening Christmas presents on the 25th December, or hanging up baubles on the tree, just remember the fascinating origins of some of our favourite Christmas traditions.





# WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO THE PUPILS OF PLATANOS COLLEGE?

WRITTEN BY JANNAT MARSOU

As we all know, Christmas is a very special time for Christians across the world. We asked our peers in Year 10 to share with us what Christmas means to them.

*"Christmas is the season when I eat to my satisfaction and collect gifts."*

*"A time I get together with family and it is a day to give and receive."*

*"I think Christmas is all about family and creating memories"*

*"Christmas to me is about spending time with friends and family and giving to others."*

*"A time of celebration and being with family."*

*"Christmas is a holiday my family and I don't often practice, but whenever we do, it's always memorable."*

*"Christmas always connects my family closer. We go out and watch the Christmas lights shine on the tree, and the gifts we give and receive make it all the better."*

*"Although I don't celebrate Christmas, I do enjoy how others express their love through the holidays and also following fun traditions that I also enjoy."*





# MEET THE STAFF!

What are the KS4 Newsletter staff looking forward to this Winter Season and in 2022?

I am looking forward to a fresh start

Afnan Abdulalim

I would like to focus on my mental health in 2022

Ridwaan Abdulle

I would love how to learn to slam dunk

Omar Aouchiche

I can't wait to spend time with my family

Imogen Bowes

I like to reflect upon my life and plans for the future.

Phebe Davis Bates

I am looking forward to going to Ethiopia.

Enoch Duguma

I am looking forward to spending time with family and friends

Ridwan Elmi

I hope it snows so I can enjoy snowball fights.

Adam Ferati

I'm looking forward to seeing more family members in 2022.

Kelly Gouveia

I look forward to hanging out with friends and having a snowball fight!

Nathaniel Grzywinski

I am looking forward to going to Winter Wonderland.

Boushra Hagos

I will be playing football with friends.

Redwan Jaeffer

I will be aiming to improve my grades in the new year.

Sidra Kadir

I hope to be a better version of myself in 2022.

Arafath Khan

Having the mindset of a material girl.

Michelle Le

World domination

Nina Luong

I hope to improve my hand-eye co-ordination for PE.

Suheed Mohmoud

I love giving gifts at Christmas.

Jessica Marques

I will be going on holiday at Christmas.

Jannat Marsou

I will enjoy having a break from school!

Najma Mohamud

I hope 2022 will bring fewer restrictions to our lives.

Cristovoa Teixeira

I aim to do 100 push ups perfectly in 2022

Muaze Nur Hussen

I would like to take up new hobbies in 2022.

Osoradion Obayangbona

I'd love to hit level 13 on the bleep test in 2022.

Orban O'Brien

I can't wait for new movie releases in 2022.

Fares Ouanoufi

I will be watching Boss Baby with my friends!

George Roberto

I am looking forward to girlbossing my way through 2022!

Anastasia Shovkoplyas

I just can't wait to receive lots of presents.

Dylan Tham

I love getting lost in the city and finding new Bubble Tea venues.

Keightley Tran

I am looking forward to the cold weather so I can play games all day!

Laura Vasconcelos

I would love to receive a pair of Jordans for Christmas!

Kadian Webber

I am looking forward to an optimistic and positive 2022!

Joshua Zacek



## **A Glow So Bright**

**Shimmering stars, glowing so bright.  
Astronauts ready, preparing for flight.  
Billionaires covet, try as they might -  
To reach that light glowing ever so bright.**

**Black, dark and endlessly vast,  
White, bright with unknown pasts.  
Death, destruction and drifting debris,  
Life, creation and shooting stars.**

**Heavenly milk spilled across the sky,  
A silver river drawn to separate two lovers,  
Towards the mythical heaven, a swan flies,  
Straw stolen from a king, the path, it covers.**

**Mankind has triumphed and kissed the moon,  
Taken photos of planets kilometres away.  
And when we're finally done exploring this frontier,  
Will we have a new light that glows so bright?**

**Nina Luong 10A1**