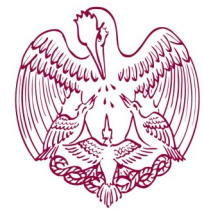


May / June 2020 Newsletter



Sawston
Village College

From the Principal



Ordinarily, the newsletter would celebrate what our pupils have done and inform you of events to come. As each day we tread is uncharted territory, we find ourselves having to do things differently. Surely the hardest is to share the news that our friend and colleague, Head of Science, Gary Whitton, has died of cancer.

In normal times, we would come together as a school to support pupils and staff and to celebrate the huge part he has played in the success of the College since joining in 2011. A much-loved colleague, Gary led his department with enormous compassion, kindness and warmth. He would go out of his way to support others, finding time - when often there was none - to help with a query, a problem or a tricky Physics concept.

He was passionate about his subject, making it understandable and accessible for all. His wit, dry humour and positivity delighted pupils and made his lessons enjoyable even though he would be the first to admit science was not everyone's cup of tea. Or in his case, glass of coke. Gary was a practical man, a fixer,

someone determined to solve whatever problem was in front of him. His professionalism never wavered and since his diagnosis in autumn 2018, and throughout his illness, he fought to be in school to teach and to help others. He was a towering strength in the department, a keen rugby player and music lover. Above all, he was an utterly devoted family man who will be missed enormously by us all.

'How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.' – Winnie the Pooh

Mr Russell, Principal



Gary Whitton was an outstanding teacher and a much-loved colleague. He was an inspiration to pupils and staff alike and will be greatly missed by all at Sawston Village College.

Gary Whitton, Head of Science, who has died of cancer

Professional Learning Update

We have endeavoured to continue our professional learning during the lockdown. One accidental aspect of remote teaching has been that we are increasingly adept at video conferencing, not normally part of a teacher's life but now a daily staple for team meetings and the like. More teachers are now familiar with google classroom, which we are using to take in pupil work and where we are providing feedback. Another unintended but helpful consequence of this lockdown is that we are learning a great deal about how to design home learning and support materials that pupils can access without a teacher present. This is often very different from designing materials suitable for classroom teaching and will be very helpful in future years when supporting pupils who have been absent from school, for example due to physical or mental health difficulties. Some departments

have been able to continue with their development plans, built around their subject-specific "Departmental Enquiries"; as a member of the History department, I can vouch for the brain-meltingly difficult but enjoyable conversations we have had about optimising the content of our curriculum. Individual teachers have also been seeking out online courses, of which there has been a proliferation, including those relating to curriculum design, boosting teacher expertise in complex areas of the curriculum, or supplementing the training of new entrants to the profession, whose formative experiences have been interrupted. Initial Teacher Training has continued, albeit online, with members of the College's staff continuing to provide remote advice to trainee teachers within Anglian Learning and beyond. For teachers, as well as pupils, every day remains a (home) school day!

Mr Woodcock, Assistant Principal



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Sawston
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Learning about local History



Staff and patients at the Whittlesford VAD Hospital

Year 9 have been engaging with some local history this half term: pupils have been learning about the different experiences of people living in Sawston during the First World War. They have been learning about brave soldiers such as **John (Jack) Samuel** who served in the Royal Flying Corps as an **observation balloon artillery observer** on the **Western Front**. And they have also been learning about the role of other people in the community, such as **Annie Moulton** from Sawston, who served as a **Red Cross volunteer** at the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Hospital for injured soldiers in **Whittlesford**. Pupils have been asked to consider whether these experiences of the war were typical or not.

In the Community

Following current government advice, our Sports Centre, Adult Education classes and cinema screenings all remain closed. To keep up to date with when these might reopen, please check out the relevant websites as given below:



Sawston
Adult
Education

www.sawstonadulted.org



www.sawstonsports.com



www.sawstoncinema.org.uk

Debates around Genetic Engineering

The RE department has been debating the issue of genetic engineering, with our topic enquiry question being - Is it okay to genetically modify nature for human gain? Pupils have been investigating transgenics, stem cell research, tissue engineering and cloning. Many pupils have been watching the documentary 'Animal Farm', a programme encouraging viewers to imagine a farm where everything has been genetically modified in some way. This has sparked a number of discussions, looking at the arguments for and against these ethical issues and deciding whether it is okay to modify nature, or whether it should be left alone.

Mrs Clover, Head of RE and Ethics

Unprecedented time for Business



It certainly is an unprecedented time for businesses at the moment, and hopefully pupils have been watching the news to see what is happening to some major organisations and the economy as a whole. Businesses are having to adapt rapidly in order to survive. Some businesses are obviously doing well at the moment and have recruited more staff, to meet increased demand of online sales. Technology is being trialled in some sectors, such as the drone-to-door flight medicine deliveries in Ireland. Will some industries survive this situation? I have asked pupils to keep watching or reading the news and to create a scrapbook of articles that are business related, so that we can discuss these once we are back in school.

Mrs Neesam, Business Studies Teacher

'Parting is such sweet sorrow' in English



This term Year 10 pupils have been working on Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and we have been thrilled with the standard of some of the home learning responses. Well done Year 10 for independently tackling the 'Bard of Avon' so well! As you move through your lessons next term you will continue to learn all about this exciting play and its infamous tragic ending, as well as what life was like in the Elizabethan era. 'Parting is such sweet sorrow' but we cannot wait to see you all again soon and to share our ideas with you!

Mrs Carman, Head of English

Young Geographer of the Year



The Young Geographer of the Year is the Royal Geographical Society's annual competition which recognises the outstanding work of the next generation of geographers. This year's Young Geographer of the Year competition gives young people the chance to explore the potential that geography offers. Although we might all be confined to our homes, and doing [#geographyathome](#), the RGS is asking young people to explore their wider geographical horizons by providing entries to their Young Geographer of the Year competition.

The theme for this year's competition is to explore the geography of 'The world beyond my window'.

"The RGS is interested in entries that explore the human and physical geography of places that exist beyond a young person's window, be this locally or further afield. We want to know how young people's lives are connected to and influenced by these places - be the connections physical, digital or emotional. We also want to understand how geographical processes in the physical and human worlds have created these places and might be changing them."

If you would like to find out more information about the competition, please visit the following website: <https://www.rgs.org/schools/competitions/young-geographer-of-the-year/2020-competition/>

We look forward to seeing what pupils create and [the world beyond their window](#).

Mrs Sage, Head of Geography

From Speed to Surds to Statistics



There is no substitute for being in the classroom with our pupils, supporting learning and inspiring everyone to succeed. The Maths teachers have been working incredibly hard to produce engaging lessons on a variety of topics ranging from Speed to Surds to Statistics. We hope pupils have found them interesting, and I apologise for any jokes that have been included in lessons: Mathematicians have a strange sense of humour! We have been very impressed by pupils' independence and determination to keep on top of their work. Congratulations to those who have already received a praise card: we hope to award even more next half term. Thank you also to the many pupils that have been emailing us questions and thoughts about their work. We love to hear from pupils and will always try to help. If pupils would like to do some Maths for fun or fancy a challenge, they should check out the puzzles in the bulletin. We look forward to seeing everyone again.

Mrs Shearn Head of Maths

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Lockdown Monologues

With Drama being a subject that demands psycho-physical interaction in a real-time and socially intimate environment, we have been rather limited with regard to performance options. However, after weeks of responses to stimuli writing and preparation, our ever-diligent and talented young actors have written and performed their own monologues, using their real experiences during the lockdown period to inspire ideas. With a closer focus of personal perspective, internal voice and working with subtext through vocal delivery, pupils have performed and produced audio performances of their work. These, I hope, will be a performance to keep and also act as both an assessment to be proud of and a reminder of a unique time that actually increased the desire to be creative and communicative, even during isolation.

Ms Russ, Head of Drama

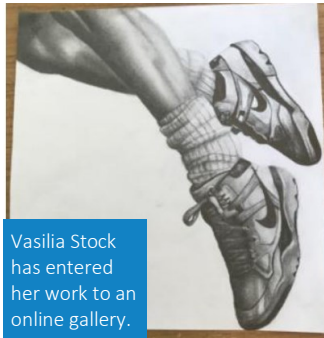
Music never stops!

It has been a brave new world for the very practical Music department. We ended the term with 'final' performances from our magnificent Year 11s and our samba band. Videos can be found online to remember music making in person! This term our extracurricular music continues, with many pupils now having virtual instrument lessons and a massed choirs and orchestra performance of Vivaldi's Gloria currently up and running. If you would like to get involved, please contact us ASAP. Curricular Music has seen Year 7 exploring Programme Music through Saint-Saëns's Carnival of the Animals. Year 8s have been asking the question 'What is Music?' and composing weird and wonderful pieces that break all the rules we have carefully taught them. Year 9 have been trying out some African Body Percussion, and Year 10 have delved into Rock and Roll, putting together their own virtual performance of The Sufaris' 'Wipeout'. We might not be together, but the music never stops!

Miss Irwin, Head of Music

Long may we keep creating!

Despite some challenges that come with setting practical work remotely, the Art department has been really excited to see not only responses to the set tasks, but also pupils' own personal creativity. Corbett Baynes (Year 8) has been hard at work carving a Rapa Nui Head from a breeze block. Vasilia Stock (Year 11) has been show-casing her pencil drawing skills with an entry to an online gallery, while Anna Sargeant (Year 7) has been using one point perspective to create a city in the first stages of exiting lockdown and Seth Bannister (Year 7) has been fine tuning his drawing skills with his picture of a dragon. Fredrika Matthews (Year 9) has let her imagination blossom with her response to 'half human, half machine'. In the words of Picasso: 'The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.' Long may we keep creating!



Vasilia Stock has entered her work to an online gallery.



Corbett Baynes carved Rapa Nui heads.



from Sawston Village College staff

GCSE Dance Review

This has been an incredibly enthusiastic, diligent cohort of pupils, and I have felt lucky to have worked with them this year.

Due to the possibility of school closure we took action to bring our planned performance evening forward. At this event the pupils were due to perform all of their final components and were to record these for their practical moderation. Sadly we had to make the decision that this event would be closed to the audience.

I cannot tell you the pride I felt in the way the pupils rose to this challenge. Each and every pupil performed beautifully and rose to the occasion with a positive attitude. This has placed all the pupils in a position of strength for their final GCSE entry, and I would like to applaud them for their maturity, motivation and commitment to taking this as an extra GCSE subject.

We have a new cohort starting next term and the recordings of these performances will set a great example for the new pupils opting to take Dance.

Ms Pesci, Head of Dance



Those pupils completing Arts Awards are continuing to work on these in lockdown, and it is really pleasing to see the imaginative solutions pupils have come up with to complete the different sections. Some pupils are now delivering their leadership projects by Zoom, while others are taking virtual tours of galleries. I look forward to seeing pupils' portfolios once we return to school.

Ms Morgan, Arts Development Manager



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House News

Over the last few weeks our day job has changed beyond recognition but, despite the challenges, our core role remains the same. We are here to help and support our Sawston Village College family by making regular contact with those who need it. We are also organising paper packs of work for pupils who do not have reliable access to computers and distributing

Chromebooks to families in need. We miss seeing our pupils though, and having those daily interactions. We know this will not last forever and look forward to being back in the hustle and bustle of a busy school. Until then, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Year Leads if you or your child has any worries or questions.

Miss Hunt, Year 11 Lead and Head of da Vinci House, on behalf of the Heads of House



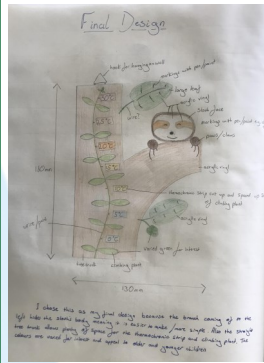
Designing Thermometers in DT



Since lockdown, the DT department has had to turn a 3D practical subject into a purely 2D one, and this has not been without challenge. However, our gifted staff and pupils have produced some very creative tasks and responses, none more so than our Year 10 pupils. Before lockdown, pupils were busy responding to a brief which involved their combining a Smart material (thermochromic strip) and a recycled material to design a thermometer for a client.

We have had lots of fantastic responses, ranging from thermometers designed for children's nurseries to those for animal enclosures in the zoo. Pupils began by finding a client, designing a survey, producing a specification, and then a series of sketches and iterations, before developing a fully annotated template which they could present to their client for feedback.

Having no access to the workshops forced us to reduce and rethink our approach, which, in turn, has reduced our carbon footprint. At the same time, pupils have begun to develop a deeper analysis of products, how to develop drawings and now realise the importance of client feedback. We are all looking forward to seeing our pupils again and hopefully realising some of their fantastic responses.



Pupils gave creative responses.

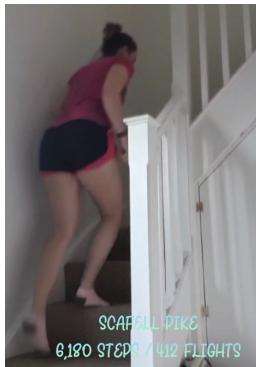


All busy in Computer Science and Digital iMedia

Working at the computer is taken for granted in our two subjects, which is great when we have the fantastic support from our in-house IT team, but less so when we are trying to help pupils get the software working at home. We have not shied away from coding though, and Year 8 are working in JavaScript, Year 9 developing games, and Year 10 building websites and writing C#. Google Classroom and Show My Homework allow us to keep tabs on who is engaging - and who is not... and all this is complemented by Year 7 creating websites on Digital Ethics - our name for e-safety.



Stair Climb Challenge



With us spending lots of time at home, it is more important than ever to keep moving and stay healthy! The PE department has been participating in a number of physical challenges, starting with the 'Stair Climb Challenge'. The aim is to increase the number of steps you take each day by challenging yourself to 'virtually climb' well-known mountains or buildings. Team PE took on the tallest mountain in England: Scafell Pike! We climbed an exhausting 6,180 steps and 412 flights of stairs to reach the summit. Which virtual mountain or building will you climb? If you would like to see more pictures from this or subsequent PE challenges, please follow us on twitter: [@SawstonVCsports](https://twitter.com/SawstonVCsports) or on our Instagram page: [SawstonVC PE](https://www.instagram.com/SawstonVCPE).

Mrs Harvey, Acting Head of PE



Stair climb challenge

Increase the number of steps you take each day by 'virtually climbing' well-known mountains or buildings. This can be done as a team or individually.

Virtual mountains	No of steps	No of flights
Slieve Donard, Northern Ireland	5,390	360
Scafell Pike, England	6,180	412
Mount Snowdon, Wales	7,120	475
Ben Nevis, Scotland	8,810	587
Mount Blanc, France	30,420	2,028
Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania	38,680	2,578
Mount Everest, Nepal	58,070	3,871



The Languages Challenge

Parents, what if we told you that your child actually is "learning" when the Netflix logo or the kit of their favourite football team is clearly on the screen? The MFL department throws down the gauntlet and invites all pupils to take part in 'The Languages Challenge'. Watch foreign films or TV series; answer football quizzes; tackle a traditional recipe; conduct science experiments... there is something for everyone! The MFL department has really enjoyed hearing what pupils have

completed so far and their many successes, so please encourage your child to take part in this challenge. All efforts and achievements can be communicated to us via the google form or via an email to their language teacher. Bonne chance! ¡Mucha suerte! Viel Glück!

Mrs Deleplanque, Head of Languages

Delicious crêpes made by Fiona Leggate in Year 7.



And finally...

We wish everyone a restful and safe half term. We hope our Year 11 leavers will keep in touch with the school and we encourage them, and any other former pupils, to join our Alumni Network by completing the form on our website here: <https://www.sawstonvc.org/alumni/>. Thank you!