

# The Scholar Ship

"I'd take the awe of understanding over the awe of ignorance any day." - Douglas Adams

## Learning in Lockdown

Mr Johnson discusses the benefits of having more time on his hands...

There is a scene in the second radio series of Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* in which a boy is learning (remotely, via computer - Adams' technology was so often ahead of his time) about the history of the planet Brontitall. Each time he gets a question correct, the computer rewards the boy by allowing him to push a button. I have recently discovered a similar instant gratification for myself by learning German using Duolingo. I send half an hour or so on this app first thing each morning, before my lessons, and it instantly sets me up for the day ahead. The pinging sound it makes when I get a question right is an instant reward and I begin the day by feeling as though I have already achieved something. Do not underestimate how far these little triumphs can go to give our lives structure and purpose at the moment.

Meanwhile, a debate rages in certain corners of social media between people with lists of stuff to achieve in lockdown and those who say that the most important thing now is to look after your own well-being and not feel guilty if you haven't written six novels by lunchtime. Both approaches are valid, but I am certainly relishing this chance to learn new things and in greater depth than I would normally have the time to do. In that respect, I envy the year 11s and the New Skills option in their summer curriculum. During normal times, I delight in learning new facts and sharing these with pupils and colleagues on the notice board opposite my office. Rarely, though, do I have the chance to explore these facts, picked up in my day-to-day life, in any great detail. Now, I find myself learning a new language and it reminds me of how much I enjoy learning new things. It's also giving me something to look forward to: a holiday to Germany when we are allowed to travel freely again. While I certainly haven't written my *magnum opus* during this time, each morning I do achieve something small for myself which will gradually develop into something greater. I am sure I am not the only member of the RHS community who is using this time to expand their learning for themselves. If you are not doing so already though, I would thoroughly recommend finding something that interests you, yet which you ordinarily do not have much time for, and using this time to pursue it. Just a little bit of learning each morning can make a huge difference and let that sense of achievement set you up for the day ahead.

## Headmaster's Distinctions

|                   |                         |                    |                      |
|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Daisy Clabburn x2 | Honor Bisset            | Cara Peters        | Henry Shadrack       |
| Max Shiel         | Georgia Scarff          | Theo Gardiner      | Thomas Davey         |
| Linda Liu         | Finn Cotterill          | Yasmin Ridgers     | Toby Pearson         |
| Ella Huang        | Joseph Hunt             | Noah Backhouse     | Matilda Jordan       |
| Grace Huang       | Henrietta Stenning      | Oliver Goodwin-Day | Tabatha Thompson     |
| Lily Guirguis     | Toby Chavasse           | Temitayo Oshiyemi  | Phoebe Graham        |
| Devon Lane        | Rose Dixon              | Maxwell Heeley     | Muiris Capon-Telford |
| Jessamy Lloyd     | Zara Graham             | Jason Sims x2      | Ayoola Oshiyemi x2   |
| Eleanor Neill     | Imogen Parsons-Atkinson | Charlie Gardiner   | Imogen Palmer        |
| Erin Eales        | Thomas Lockyer          | Leila Gbelia       |                      |

## Puzzle of the Fortnight

### Only Connect

Round 1: What connects the four items?

- Shirley Booth (1952)  
Julie Andrews (1964)  
Barbara Streisand (1968)  
Marlee Matlin (1986)
- Achilles (588)  
James Bond (9007)  
Pinocchio (12927)  
Valjean (24601)

Round 2: What comes next in the sequences?

- John Adams  
John Quincy Adams  
John Tyler  
???
- 2019: Netherlands  
2018: Israel  
2017: Portugal  
???

Round 3: Connecting Wall - find four groups of four and explain the connection.

|         |            |        |      |
|---------|------------|--------|------|
| PYTHON  | LYSISTRATA | SERIAL | C    |
| KNIGHTS | JAVA       | AIDS   | FISH |
| COBRA   | CLOUDS     | PLANE  | RUBY |
| CHAIN   | SWAT       | FROGS  | PURE |

Answers on the next page.

Look out for the next Puzzle of the Fortnight, coming out on Monday 4th May.

It promises to be



## “THE LAST WORD”, WITH THIS EDITION’S SCHOLAR...

### *This edition, two scholars offer their opinions on the new year 11 curriculum.*

**Rosy:** We are all aware that the current situation with Covid-19 has caused some unprecedented changes to the educational system, with the cessation of all public exams. Unfortunately it has meant that people like me are now confused on what we should be doing in lessons. However, over the holidays, the senior management team devised a plan for year 11s during lockdown. Instead of spending the rest of the term working on the GCSE curriculum, which would not count towards our final grade, we have now been set multiple new challenges to expand our knowledge in order to be ready for A levels. Every fortnight, we will have 6 periods of each A Level subject we have already chosen. For me, I have lessons in Biology, Chemistry and Latin and this is so that I am ready for the jump to A Levels next year. So far, the lessons have been introductions into the new syllabuses and it is also a very good time to see if these subjects are exactly what we want to do. I think this is very important as it can prevent students from changing their subjects when we are already into year 12, giving more time for focused learning. We have been given the opportunity to do an HPQ, spend time creating in the Quarantine Zone and learn a new skill. I am really excited to do the HPQ as it is a great way not only to be introduced to in-depth research, but also to develop key aspects of planning, note taking and organisation. I am doing my HPQ on the topic of psychology because I am very interested in the subject but I was not able to take it as an A Level. I hope that doing this as a HPQ will give me the opportunity to find out about psychology beyond A Level. In addition, there are newer lesson topics, about learning new skills and how to keep occupied during quarantine. There were a range of new skills to learn, including; cooking, coding, conversational Spanish, ancient Greek and creating a magazine. I decided to help create the year 11 magazine and I am spending the next six weeks writing, editing and publishing articles. I have really got stuck into this task and I have really enjoyed venturing out of my comfort zone. I think that, in this difficult time, it has been very useful to have lessons which are not ones that have been repeated for the past two years, but ones where we can have fun learning for our future. In my opinion, the new curriculum has helped to expand my ideas for what I want to do in Sixth Form and has been very efficient in balancing school life and home life.



**Archie:** Following the cancellation of the summer exams, we have been set a new curriculum based on our A Level choices. So far it has been great as I feel that we have been given the chance to properly prepare for the next two years in Sixth Form and get a small head start on the workload. We have also been given extra slots for an elective new skill, an HPQ and subject-based projects. For the elective, I chose astronomy, which is something I was always interested in but never had the opportunity to learn, so this is a great time to do so. The HPQ allows you to research any subject area you like as well as develop critical research skills such as note taking, time management and researching which will all be very useful for Sixth Form and beyond. I've decided to research the effect of the new F-35 aircraft on the UK as I would like a career in aerial combat either as a pilot or an engineer. At the moment we are creating a Dragon's Den style product for our age demographic during the Quarantine Zone; this is a fun and interesting insight into a subject that we would not always have the chance to study. This has definitely been a challenging time learning wise. However I think that it will benefit us as we can become more practiced at learning at home similarly to revision, as well as utilize the technology we already have in place to a better degree.



## Puzzle of the Fortnight - Answers

**Round 1:** 1. All four actresses received the Best Actress Oscar for their screen debut; 2. All four are fictional characters with asterisks named after them; **Round 2:** 1. John F. Kennedy (4th President named John); 2. 2016: Ukraine (Winners of the Eurovision Song Contest in reverse order); **Round 3:** Python, Java, C and Ruby and all computer programming languages; COBRA, SWAT, FISH and AIDS are all acronyms (Cabinet Office Briefing Room A, Special Weapons and Tactics, First In Still Here, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome); Lysistrata, Frogs, Clouds and Knights are all ancient Greek comedies by Aristophanes; and Chain, Pure, Plane and Serial are all anagrams of countries (China, Peru, Nepal and Israel).