

# THE ILLUSTRATOR



THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH SIXTH FORM STUDENT PAPER

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# Meet The Team.

## ***Brandon Howard***

Member of the Sixth form committee and mental health ambassador, Brandon studies Classical Civilization, English Language and Food Science and Nutrition. He, Charlie and Samuel having taken over the Illustrator newspaper this year. Brandon's hobbies include reading, forestry and anything relating to nerdy pop culture including Dungeons and Dragons. Brandon wrote this page so he put himself at the top.



## ***Charlie Wilson***

Current Head Boy of Thomas Gainsborough School and avid lover of politics and cycling, Charlie studies Politics, German, Mathematics and History. Fantastic under pressure and well organised, Charlie takes the leadership role like second nature, as is the same in the RAF air cadets. Charlie is appreciative of a job well done, an integral asset to the team who drives the Illustrator forward and proudly colourblind. If he asks, please tell him this border is orange.

## ***Samuel Wainwright***

Samuel is an inspiration to us all, having contributed a great deal to the production of the Illustrator even with so much more on his plate. Samuel studies English literature, Psychology and Mathematics and is obsessed with cars and rollercoasters. Even though he loves to live in the fast lane, Sam finds the joy in every second and encourages those around him to do the same. If you look at only one piece in this magazine, please let it be Sam's article (P2): you won't regret it.

# *Don't Take Anything For Granted.*

Normally when I sit down to write these articles I try to pick up on a topic that I felt has been important in my life at the time and something that you might also find interesting. However since I last wrote something for the Illustrator, my life has become quite the event all on its own accord. Right back at the start of April this year, I was admitted into Colchester Hospital and diagnosed with haemolytic anemia. Only 6 days later, after treatment that I thought had worked, I was sent home and continued my recovery. However, after not long at all, it turned out that their treatment hadn't done as intended and a more extreme option was needed. This was given a few agonising days later, but by this point, it was almost too late.

The treatment would be a weekly dose of a drug called rituximab via an IV drip, but I was aware that this would take up to several weeks before enough of it was in my system to make a difference. This was time I didn't have, as my haemoglobin was dropping rapidly. If you were to go and have a blood test today, your reading will be somewhere between 130 and 165. On the day of the treatment, I was sitting at an uncomfortable 80. 72 hours later that number was in the 30s and still dropping. As a result, I was rushed in an ambulance from Colchester to Cambridge which was somewhere I'd never been, but now I'm more than familiar with (so it's not all bad I suppose). That night wasn't the greatest of my life as I had 6 units of blood rushed into me simultaneously. These wouldn't fix a thing, merely buying me time. At 3 am the next day I was told that I would have to have an emergency splenectomy and without much knowledge of what a splenectomy was, why I needed it or how long it would take to recover, I was taken to the theatre and everything went empty for a while.

## *Don't Take Anything For Granted*

Over the next week, very potent painkillers and very low energy levels meant that I now only have brief photos of memory, which in hindsight is probably for the better. Once I eventually did come round I found my head under the influence of many powerful drugs and my chest covered in bandages. The upside? I was out of immediate danger and a plan was in place to get me out of here. The downside? I was now without a spleen.

Gradual improvement saw me eventually get moved from intensive care, to the high dependency unit and eventually to an adolescent ward. At this point I was still fairly immobile, able to walk, but a very high heart rate (caused by a still low hemoglobin level) meant I couldn't manage much else. After nearly a month in hospital I headed home to recover. This consisted of daily blood tests for several weeks and several blood transfusions to go with them. Things weren't looking optimistic as the second half term began and further treatment was being discussed. All of these treatments come with a seemingly endless list of possible 'ifs' and 'buts', however this time I read them all as if they were certain. Just as plans were being made for this treatment to begin, the tide turned. Our first result in the 80s for haemoglobin since April was followed by a further four improvements and suddenly what was looking like more treatment in hospital, became talks of school and sport and normal life resuming.

I returned to school with three weeks remaining and, although I was carrying one less organ and had less energy than I would've liked, I was elated to be back doing what Sam of only three months prior would've considered a very much normal day. I've found a new energy from the chance I've been given and; now aware that I've probably used up one of my nine lives; I'm willing to take every opportunity that I may have never considered before, purely because I can and so I feel I should. At the time of writing, My level sits at 110 and has been rising for the last few weeks, my IV treatment has stopped and my collection of daily tablets is slowly diminishing.

# *Don't Take Anything For Granted*

So why write this? Well apart from giving myself time to process what has happened it opened my eyes to how naive I was that something like this could ever happen. Living in the fortunate stability of health is something that not enough people take for granted. I never did. So now the way I see it I have two options: I can either live each day with the knowledge that I am prone to this happening again and be ultra cautious and conservative. Or I can live each day as I normally would and enjoy the good bits and grit my teeth through the bad because, if there's such a thing as karma, I'm due some good luck.

Hi reader, it's Charlie here. We seem to have some space to spare on this page. When this happens we usually follow two simple steps: whack some weird colourful circles in the background and find some vaguely relevant photos to fill the space. We're not going to do that here. A few of us have read Sam's piece before publication and needless to say it has affected and moved us all a great deal. Sam would like you to read it too - that's why we have tried to keep it very simple.

Sam really likes rollercoasters. Do enjoy this photo of his favourite: Mako, Sea World, Orlando



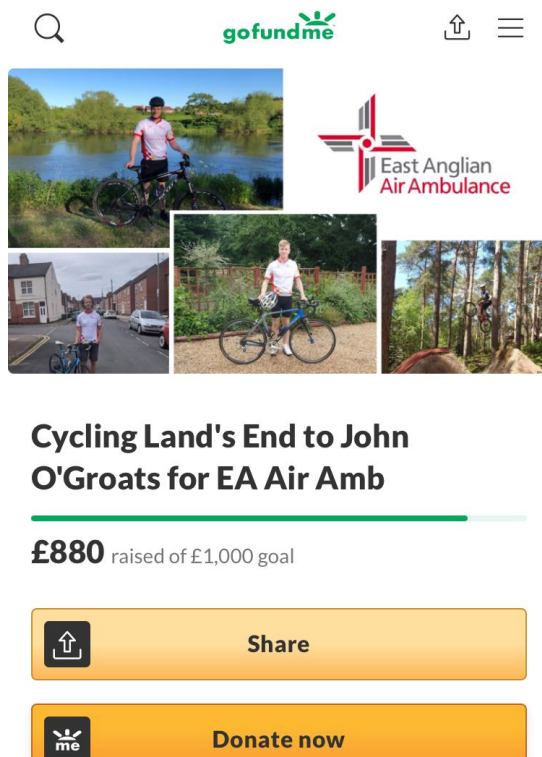


# Land's End to John O'Groats for East Anglian Air Ambulance

My name is Charlie Wilson, and I am the current head boy at TGS.

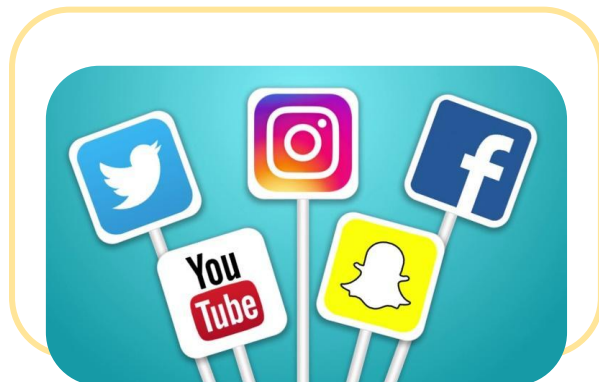
In July-August 2021, my brothers and I will be cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats, in aid of the fantastic East Anglian Air Ambulance. We will cycle over 1000 miles in 14 stages through England, Wales and Scotland, covering 70-90 miles each day. We would really appreciate all sponsorships and are excited to begin cycling next week!

Please follow the link to the GoFundMe page  
<https://gofund.me/b2ea51b7> - also on school website.



# *The Pressures of (Anti) Social Media*

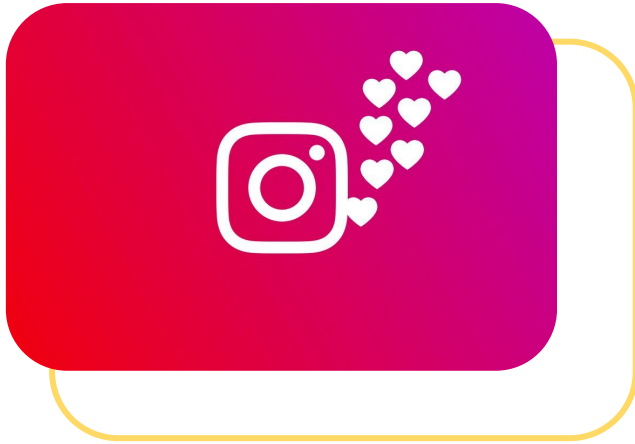
As the world becomes more technologically advanced, social media spreads its tendrils out to grasp all of us. Whether we intend to, or not, we cannot fully escape the throes of the online world whilst remaining a significant and respected member of society. The true power that social media holds over us is in fact inconceivable. It has made us insecure, attention-seeking and unappreciative of the natural world. The only way to escape its grip would be to isolate yourself from everything and everyone - which some particularly strong-willed people may have attempted with little success. Others of us have, frustrated as we come to recognise the truth convinced ourselves that we will lock our devices away and never pick them up again. We will live a life free of technology. These naive promises are quickly discarded as we come to realise that by doing this, we have shut ourselves off. We are out of the loop.



Though it has its perks, it is difficult to say that social media as a whole has been beneficial to us in the long run.

The positives - and do not get me wrong, there are many - centre around connectivity and the unshakeable human desire to be liked. In terms of how social media brings us together, there have been some moments which have made us proud to use it in this way. Indeed, during the pandemic social media has helped people cope with isolation and allowed them to offer their support from a safe distance; through the screen of a device. This being said, surely in normal times no one would prefer the disconnected bubble of a text message to the genuine, emotional touch of a friend?





Physical human interaction is also far easier to understand than digital interaction: many times I have been left wondering what I have done wrong based on my misinterpretation of the tone of a text message, when no such meaning was intended by the sender.

Primarily, social media provides us with a distorted sense of validation. You will never truly understand the impact that it has until you feel the all-encompassing burning desire to receive that all important validation on a photo you've posted in the form of digital likes. You question your sanity as you ponder why a number means so much to you.

Once you have put yourself out there, you must then embody this version of yourself that you have presented to the wider world. When in truth, all it was was the best angles, a hint of photoshop and a good day. A carefully selected snapshot of someone's filtered life makes you continually wish for something more.

This is how the vicious cycle of a fake life repeats as you soon come to believe that you should contribute to this lie because that is all they'll want to see. You tell yourself that although the picture is edited, it's still your face, still you under it all. Faces are smoothed beyond recognition, shadowing and concealing all minute flaws, destroying humanity with the touch of a finger.

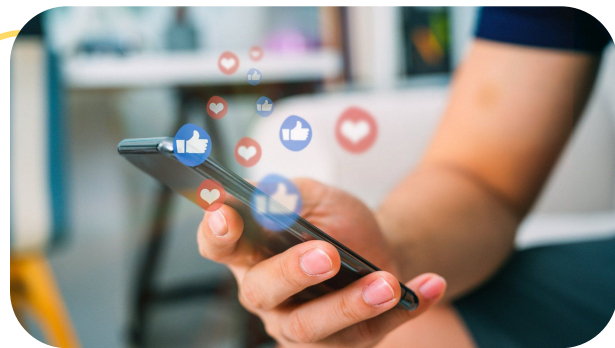


# *The Pressures of (Anti) Social Media*

Once you've become accustomed to a life online, everything seems duller, darker, and less exciting. The colours all around you become faded when not lived through a perpetual filter, tinged with a sepia haze, the contrast turned to max. The creators of these sites seem not to recognise, or care, that they are moulding and manipulating influential minds whilst in the crucial stages of development. Just for the sake of their profit margins. Would you really want someone you love to have to experience the same feeling of not being good enough that you felt when you looked at an Instagram model, of their perfectly posed post?

If social media is to be used, it should be made to spark change for important causes, to celebrate differences and to spread positivity. "The great thing about social media was how it gave a voice to voiceless people"- Jon Ronson.

This quote encapsulates the beauty of social media by providing a way for it to unite people and bring a change for so many.



For example, the Black Lives Matter movement was a chance for people to come together and fight for the cause to help destroy prejudice towards black people. People were able to show their solidarity for the movement using social media which inspired hope in people that a positive change could be made.

All things considered, social media, if used correctly, can have overwhelming positives however the issue lies where anyone can use their platform for anything. In this way, it becomes less about caring for others and showing support for people in need and spreading love, to bragging about what you have or being unnecessarily negative. Isn't it time we take away the pretences and learn to accept ourselves for who we really are?

# *6th Form Transition: How to Make the Most of the Summer Break*

## **Firstly, congratulations on completing year 11!**

Revising for so many different subjects is very difficult and I'm sure that you are relieved that your assessments are over. While the long summer break is a time for relaxation and spending time with your friends and family, it's also extremely important to not let your studying slip away. In fact, keeping on top of your revision can give you a great start to the next academic year - whether that be in sixth form or college. Here are some of the best ways you can make the most of the long break and get ahead ready for your transition into year 12.

**Keep on top of your GCSE content** - for a lot of the subjects studied at A-Level, there are a lot of topics that you would have learned during your GCSEs. Keeping your basic knowledge up to scratch will make Year 12 much easier and will prevent you from being behind from the very beginning. This is especially the case in maths and sciences.

**Set goals and follow a realistic plan** - as much as learning the topics in your chosen subject can help a lot, it is important that you be realistic about the amount of work you do during your time off. You could create a revision plan for year 12 and begin it during the summer, and by crafting a timetable in which you will follow diligently throughout Year 12, you are taking baby steps towards achieving your long-term goal.

**Ensure you have all the equipment you need** - keeping organised through A-Levels is vital as learning is more independent and you have a lot more time outside lessons in free periods. Personally, I recommend getting some folders and dividers, as keeping things organised makes life so much easier in the long run. P.S. teachers do folder checks...

# *Message to the Sixth Form*

We are almost at the end of a very long and testing term, but our Sixth Form students have continued their excellent engagement, with the attendance for both Year 12 and 13 being above 95% which is fantastic! Year 13 had an emotional farewell at their Leavers' Assembly and are looking forward to Results Day on the 10th August, followed by their Leavers' Meal at The Barn Brasserie on the 11th August. I am feeling very positive about their outcomes from their A level and BTEC subjects, as well as those who completed the EPQ.

Year 12 continue to be highly engaged and have recently been introduced to the EPQ offer and experienced the Year 12 Completion examinations. Their positivity and work ethic have produced a pleasing set of results.

We had a fantastic Higher Education Evening recently, where students, parents and guardians were exposed to a wealth of information about EPQ, Apprenticeships and the UCAS process from the 6th Form Team, and our amazing Alumni. Their insights into how TGS supported them, and why they have pursued their chosen routes, as well as a parental viewpoint too, was invaluable.

We are also had our Year 11 into Sixth Form Taster Day on the 5th July. With over 115 students in attendance, it was a fantastic opportunity to meet our new cohort. The Sixth Form committee members were involved in the Taster Day, but have also been working on a number of projects too. The Super-Curricular Wednesday afternoon sessions, initiated by our former Head Boy (George Dunn), will commence in September. This will enhance the current offer and ensure that our students are even more competitive when applying to universities or apprenticeships.

# *Message to the Sixth Form*

There have been a number of initiatives started; recycling pens and bring your own coffee cup, as well as developing a bespoke Well-Being room for students. The committee have also assigned their charities for the year too: Suffolk Mind, EACH, EMMAUS and the local Befriending Scheme, which will definitely benefit from some extra support from TGS.

Joe Potter is the new DofE Ambassador and supporting Lenny Crawford, and as part of his Gold Award, he will be liaising with all TGS students from September. The Sixth Form students continue to access a plethora of external virtual opportunities. These have been shared with students, tutors and parents on a weekly basis in our Sixth Form bulletin. (These can be accessed on request)



Overall, I am extremely pleased and proud of our Sixth Form students and we look forward to our Results Day and welcoming our new Year 12's in September. Have a well earned restful Summer break and see you in September.

**Kenny Alexander**  
**(Director of Sixth Form)**



# *How Effective are the UK Armed Forces?*

In a world of rising tensions, both domestic and international, close to our national territories and further afield, we must ask the important question: truly how capable are the UK armed forces in dealing with threats to our freedoms and rights as citizens of the United Kingdom?

## - The UK and Nato -

The United Kingdom's largest military obligation is the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; formed after the Second World War to counter the rising threat from the Eastern-Bloc nations under Soviet influence. Today NATO stands at 30 member nations, and as a founding member the UK takes a leading part in its organisation.

The size of the economies and populations of providing nations vary, and as such the UK and the United States contribute significantly more capital to the 'Common Fund' than smaller nations.

Theoretically, if a NATO member state is attacked, the North Atlantic Council can choose to invoke Article 5, which states that all other members must help to defend their ally.

In 2019, Secretary for State for Defence Penny Mordaunt commented; "(the United Kingdom) is well equipped to take a leading role should NATO come up against opposition forces". However, former United States president Donald Trump raised the issue in NATO summits that European nations had failed to put forward their minimum contribution of 2% of their GDP into defence spending. And threatened if this issue was to persist the United States would rescind from NATO therefore damaging it.

## Could the UK defend itself without NATO?

Let us consider some key facts about the UK military. There are 150,970 active personnel and 37,100 reservists, totalling 0.3% of the UK population. In 2019 the United Kingdom designated



# How Effective are the UK Armed Forces?

2.1% of its gross domestic product upon defence spending (NATO demands 2% of GDP, but less than a third of members meet this) In addition, the United Kingdom is one of the most advanced technologically across the world, with increasing automation and innovation due to projects such as RAF ASTRA, making up for our relatively small troop total to some extent. On the other hand, this is little compared to the capabilities of Russia and China; our greatest rivals.

This ultimately leads to the conclusion that the UK has a great reliance upon NATO, especially the United States, for our defence. The maintenance of such defence partnerships are therefore a key part of ensuring the security of the United Kingdom.

## Highlight: Carrier Strike Group

21

United Kingdom Carrier Strike Group 21 is the initial operational mission of the HMS Queen Elizabeth, the new

Royal Navy flagship. Its key purpose is to promote the United Kingdom's strength in the Indo-Pacific region, which may seem a great re-emergence of British naval influence. There is, however, much evidence to suggest that the exercise is reliant on our allies - notably the US inputting 10 F-35B planforms and a frigate (USS the Sullivan's) to join the carrier in their operations. In addition, one might point to the introduction of the French carrier Charles de Gaulle

It's clear that the UK does not possess sufficient military capabilities to independently guarantee its defence in the modern age. The UK's membership of NATO and our willingness to pursue research into next-gen military technology (e.g Tempest), however, bolsters our defence. The UK also seeks new defensive relationships with Indo-Pacific countries, furthering the security of our domestic and international territory.



# *Working in Hospitality: a Student's Perspective*

For two months now I have been employed by my local pub (the name of which I daren't mention) and to be honest working there has actually been pretty interesting, and not just because I've learned new skills like how to fold posh napkins and carry three plates at a time, but because of all the customers you meet, some of whom are quite the characters and can result in your going home with a few *interesting* stories to tell!

Let's just make one thing clear: the best stories are about the eggy customers who like to complain; just about anything; from having corn-on-the-cob served with their steak to not



being given leftover mushrooms after the kitchen closes, you'd be surprised at the things people kick up a fuss about! And sure, if you want to complain then by all means do so, but let's please be civil, don't shout "where're my damn mushrooms!?" and threaten us with a bad review on Trip Advisor - because trust me we'll just end up laughing at you in the kitchen and bestowing you an honorary title, such as: 'Mushroom Man'.

But working in a pub isn't just about dealing with people and complaints (I realise now that I'm not advertising the role very well), but also about memory. There are so many little tasks that have to be done in the kitchen at all times. I have been working



# *Working in Hospitality: a Student's Perspective*



there for two months and have just about gotten the hang of how to use the coffee machine, but memorising every item on the till is going to take an eternity.

It looks like for the meantime I'm going to have to keep asking senior members of staff to help me find people's wine orders.

One element of working in a pub, in pretty much any role, that is often overlooked, is the amount of physical exercise you do! I usually work six hour shifts at least, and on average I do around 10,000 steps per shift, most of them while carrying three heavy, piping hot plates. That's why I return home feeling

shattered and, after a shower to get rid of the smell of fish and chips, fall fast asleep; my dreams haunted by the sound of the ticket machine printing orders. Also, bring water! It's sweltering in the kitchen and as the male dress code consists of wearing college shirts, so sweat patches are a given!

Overall, I would highly recommend you consider getting a job in the hospitality sector as a part-time job in college or sixth-form, it's a great industry to work in, in terms of the social skills development and experience in a workplace side of things, as well as usually being a relaxed environment with flexible hours, meaning you still have time to focus on schoolwork and your social life (not to mention the cash involved). The key, as I have learnt, is to divide your time wisely!



# *Pedal Power: the Extraordinary Life of Robert Marchand*

Born on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1911, Robert Marchand was recognised as 'the world's oldest competitive cyclist'. International tributes have been paid to his inspirational longevity and remarkable cycling achievements, following his death, age 109, earlier this year.

Marchand began cycling as a teenager; but standing at just five feet tall he was told he would not succeed in the sport.

He worked as a fitness instructor in the Paris fire brigade in the 1930s, before being drafted to fight in WWII, captured and held as a German POW. Upon release, he moved to Venezuela where he worked on a sugar cane plantation.

In the 50s he worked as a lumberjack in Canada, then as a gardener and wine dealer until retirement.



He returned to cycling in 1978 age 67 and trained regularly until well after his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. In 2012 he became the fastest 100+ year-old to ride 100km, in an impressive 4 hours 17 minutes and 27 seconds. A year later, at age 102, he broke the 100+ category distance record, cycling 26.927km in an hour at the velodrome of Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines. In 2017, the French cycling authority had to create an over-105s category for Marchand, who was still determined to break records. He celebrated his 107<sup>th</sup> birthday with a 20km spin.



Marchand during 100km record-attempt, 2012, Lyon.



# Pedal Power

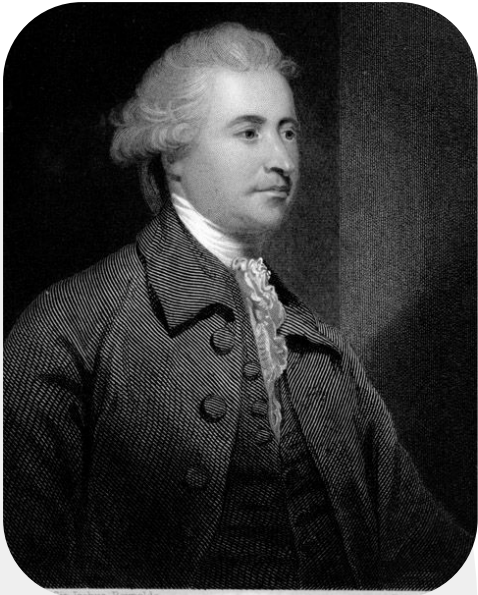
Marchand was also a proud supporter of the French Communist Party, of which he was a member for 90 years. As a communist, Mr Marchand refused to accept a gold medal from then-Sports Minister Roselyn Bachelot in 2009.



Marchand refused his doctor's advice to stop racing and completed a 4000m race in February 2018. He was, however, forced to stop riding outdoors due to hearing loss, but continued to train on an exercise bike he had installed in his care home in Miltry-Mory.

Robert Marchand explained his good-health and long-life in 2017. He said: *"You must use everything but abuse nothing."*





## *Edmund Burke*

Edmund Burke (1729-97) is amongst the most influential conservative thinkers of all time. Born in Dublin, he became Member of Parliament for Wendover and redefined the role of an MP - now known as the Burkean model. This article will explore his fundamental belief in empiricism and cautionary approach to change.

As a traditional conservative, Burke believed that change should only be undertaken with great caution. He viewed human nature pessimistically, believing that human beings are incapable of fully understanding everything in the complex world around them, therefore may be ill-informed to make important decisions. As such, he felt that decisions should be taken based on empiricism - the belief that knowledge and evidence comes from real experiences - rather than 'philosophical abstractions' and theories. In this light, Burke wrote scathingly in response to the 1789 French Revolution, which attempted to form a completely new and utopian society, but really descended into violence and achieved only modest reform.

Burke also believed in organic society and a natural hierarchy. Imagine society were an organism consisting of many parts, some more important than others, but each interconnected, playing their role and contributing to the the whole organism, or the greater good of society. He believed that a small change to one 'little platoon', or group in society, could have a large impact on another, thus again favoured a cautionary and empirical approach to change.

A statue of Edmund Burke in Bristol, UK. The inscription reads: "I wish to be a Member of Parliament to have my share of doing good and resisting evil."



Similarly, Burke strongly supported tradition and religion as it promotes stability and a sense of identity. He believed that 'society is but a contract between the dead, the living, and those yet to be born'. Imagine a great work of art, cared for and passed down through the generations, surely we must also care for it so that the next generation can enjoy it too. This reflects the Tory belief that the present should not be arrogant enough to believe that it knows best, in doing so abandoning the accumulated wisdom and treasures of the past. Such a desire to uphold a partnership between the generations was described by G.K. Chesterton as the "democracy of the dead."

Burke's view of a contract between the generations could also be applied to the preservation of the natural environment. Surely we have an obligation to sustain the natural environment, so that we can pass it on to the next generation in the same state as it was bequeathed to us by the generation before.



# Creative Corner - Eleni Brinkley



These pieces were both done for school projects, exploring architecture and interior spaces. I experimented with mixed media and expressive lines for the architecture piece in order to produce an exciting composition that brought together the contrasting styles of architecture. On top of this, the buildings I studied are all located in central London - I felt

that the chaotic mix of colour, media and line mirrored the bustling atmosphere of the city. The interior piece was a response to the theme 'perspective', I used a fish-eye lens to warp the original image that I worked from to change the perspective of my home into an unfamiliar space that provided a more interesting viewpoint.





These paintings are examples of personal work that I produce in my free time. I try to capture both the likeness and personality of the animal in a creative way, hence the strong detail on the eyes and the addition of an expressive background



in one of the pieces. As a hobby, I paint in watercolour and tend to focus on depicting animals or other aspects of nature; I often paint people's pets as gifts or occasionally I do commission work.





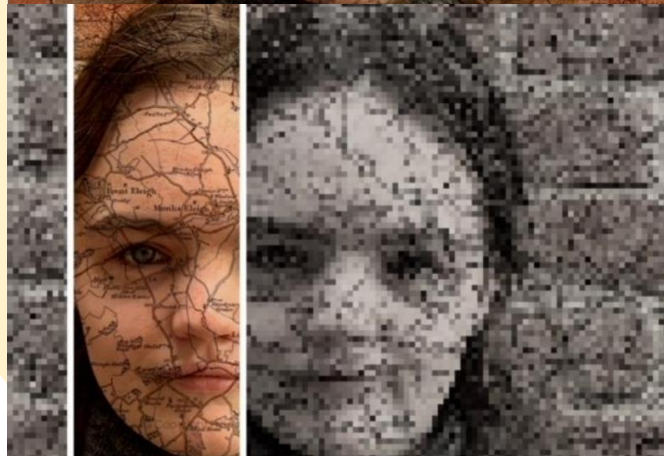
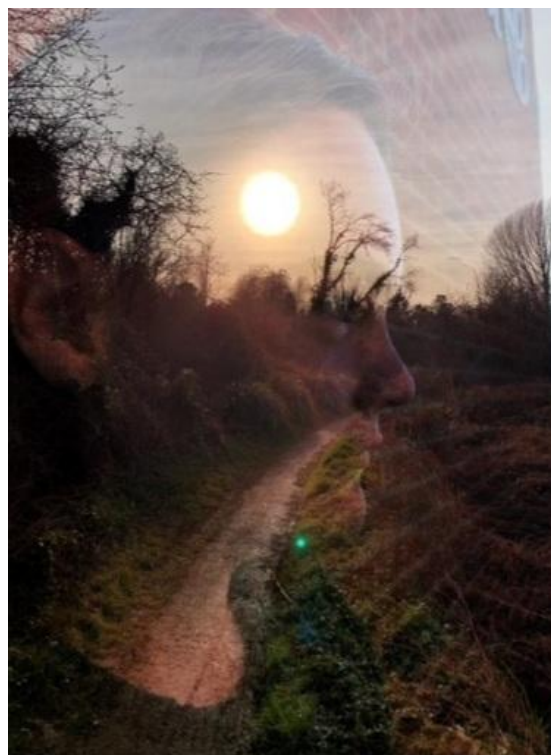
The bedroom painting was done as a response to the theme 'perspective'. I wanted to show how a very familiar place - my bedroom - can be shown as something completely different and can contain a completely different atmosphere. I used soft, warm colours to give the room a very dreamy yet familiar feel.

Earlier this year I entered my bedroom painting into the Young Artist's Summer Show and it made it into the online exhibition which takes place later this month. The flower painting was done in lockdown last year and is a very minimalistic acrylic painting that captures the simplistic beauty of nature.



## Creative Corner - Olivia Pomphrett

These photos are based on my personal investigation in my A-Level photography course. I started with my paths photos, then decided to double the exposure and overlay the photo of me onto the paths photos. The artist whose style I based these photos on is Richard Long, an English sculptor and land artist. I find the photo of my face overlying a map really cool because it makes the photos mysterious and more creative.





# *Model NATO - War or Peace*

From 30th June - 3rd July I attended an online Model NATO summit hosted by the Luiss University of Rome, in partnership with the NATO Defence College. I was one of around two hundred participants - mostly under and postgrads - of 120 different nationalities, giving the event a really interesting international dimension.



The first three days consisted of lectures by senior NATO advisors and academics, initially explaining the evolution of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation from its formation in 1949 to the present day, the NATO-EU relationship, and the complex organisational hierarchy and decision-making process.

As the event progressed, the lectures branched into the emergence of new threats to the collective security of the alliance. Of particular interest was a lecture on NATO's policies in prevention of nuclear proliferation by William Alberque, the director of non-proliferation and nuclear policy at the IISS. Interesting also were cyber attacks, such as the 2007 STUXNET malware attack on an uranium centrifuge in Iran, which served to stall the Iranian nuclear programme for several years and was allegedly the work of a US-Israeli coalition.

# Model NATO - War or Peace

Cyber attacks, however, pose other significant challenges to the alliance. When the North Atlantic Treaty was written, cyber attacks were decades from fruition, therefore they expose a fascinating grey area in international law, in that it is unclear whether they constitute legitimate grounds for international retaliation. Matters are further confused as cyber attacks are often launched neither in times of peace nor war, but rather in another grey area between the two.

This question becomes most pressing when applied to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty: effectively if one member is attacked, all others must come to their aid. This Article is seen as the last resort and has been invoked only once in its history - after 9/11.



Article 5 became a central issue on the fourth and final day of the event - the simulation. The scenario was a classic: a cyber attack on the JISR (NATO's central intelligence system) from the territory of a fictional state - Atlantis - though it was initially unclear whether the perpetrators were state sponsored. We were assigned a team of six and a member state to represent - in my case Canada.



# Model NATO - War or Peace

At irregular intervals new information would emerge, including that the attack was by the state of Atlantis, which had mobilised troops, presumably for imminent attack. Throughout the day we debated the best response to the scenario and its legal, practical and ethical implications in small groups and as a whole, attempting to reach consensus through negotiation and compromise.



Overall I found the event thoroughly interesting and informative, not only due to the content, but also the markedly different attitudes to certain aspects of discussion displayed by participants of a variety of cultures. It has also given me lots to think about in terms of degree options!



# Recipe Corner: Zabaione Moccacino

**Preparation time** 15 mins

**Cooking time** 6 mins

**Serves** 3

## Ingredients

30ml whipping

cream/double cream

45g semisweet chocolate or  
chocolate chips

4 large egg yolks

35g sugar

60ml coffee

Pinch salt



1) Add cream and chocolate to a heavy small saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring often, until the chocolate chips are melted and smooth. Set aside and keep warm.

2) Whisk the egg yolks, sugar, coffee, and salt in a large glass bowl until blended. Set the bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, but do not allow the bottom of the bowl to touch the water. Whisk the egg mixture over the simmering water until it is thick and creamy, about 4 minutes. Remove from the heat.

3) Using a large rubber spatula, fold the melted chocolate mixture into the egg mixture.

4) when folded, pour into small shot glasses and refrigerate until cold and holds the texture of a smooth mousse.

Serve with strawberries if desired!

# 'Prometheus' and 'Alien Covenant'

Ridley Scott's underappreciated musings on the nature of creation  
...Continued...

## 'Faith and Sacrifice'

Both faith and sacrifice are frequent and pivotal elements of the narrative. Elizabeth Shaw is a devout Christian who uses every means at her disposal to meet her makers and justify her faith. Charlie Holloway is a lapsed catholic, with a deep longing for meaning owing to childhood abandonment, and views the engineers as having abandoned their creations. Auram believes profoundly in a divine plan, and is blinded to the danger represented by the 'paradise' planet because he believes that the 'Covenant' is meant to go there. Weyland, despite his arrogant belief that his intellect and achievements make him a god in his own right, wants to believe in a higher power. Weyland tells David *'I refuse to believe that mankind is nothing more than a random byproduct of molecular circumstance. No, there must be more.'* Even the 'engineers', despite their immense power clearly at one point worshipped higher powers, as demonstrated by the altar room

on LV223. Most crucially, David's pervasive lack of faith, having met and been ultimately disappointed by his creators, leads him to seek meaning in his own way and ultimately to insanity and belief in himself as a higher power. David's own search for faith in something greater is subtly implied repeatedly during both films: Shaw's father does not provide evidence to the young Shaw for his faith in a better place after death, saying that it is what he 'chooses to believe', a sentiment Shaw then repeats when asked why she believes they will find their creators on LV223 as David listens with interest. When Weyland dies, he tells David 'there's nothing', to which David responds 'I know'. David, unable to believe in beings he knows to be mortal and flawed, or programmed to be able to make the leaps of faith required to believe in things he cannot factually confirm, when asked what he believes in says only 'creation'.



# 'Prometheus' & 'Alien Covenant' Continued...

Selflessness and sacrifice are frequently referenced, either directly or symbolically. The 'sacrificial engineer' drinks from a 'cup of suffering' to create life on primordial earth. When exploring the altar room on LV223, the 'Prometheus' crew observe a mural which depicts an alien creature in a crucifix pose, creating the fascinating possibility the the original creature may have been benign, and that it may be the origin of the black substance, and further that the substance may have been subsequently perverted into a weapon. Holloway adopts a crucifix pose when he sacrifices himself to avoid causing harm to Shaw. Most interestingly, in 'Alien 3', Ellen Ripley adopts a crucifix pose when she sacrifices herself to end the alien species once and for all and protect humanity, thus creating connective thematic tissue with the sequel films.



## 'The Consequences of Hubris'

The need for humility in the face of the power of creation is a fascinating thematic element of these films. In a brilliant viral marketing campaign released ahead of the release of 'Prometheus', a young Peter Weyland delivers a 'Ted talk' in the year 2023. Weyland references the myth of Prometheus, the titan who stole fire from the gods and gave it to mankind in order that they might have knowledge. Weyland then details human progress and achievement from the creation of stone tools all the way to the creation of artificial intelligent, finishing by saying *'At this point in our history, we have the power to*





# 'Prometheus' & 'Alien Covenant' Continued...



create artificial life forms who, in just a few short years will be completely indistinguishable from us-which leads to an obvious conclusion: **we are the gods now.** Weyland's belief in his own superiority, in the genius of his creation and his right to immortality leads directly, not just to his own death but the near destruction of the human race but to the creation of David's 'perfect lifeform', a creature which could annihilate all life. His arrogance also leads to David's belief that mankind is inferior, destructive and undeserving of survival: as he says to Walter, *'They are a dying species grasping for resurrection. They don't deserve to start again and I'm not going to let them.'* As if this arrogance and self destruction, creation and fall is a cycle, it is revealed that the engineers on LV223 accidentally destroyed them with their own biological weapon, an allegory of the pandora's box opened by the creators of the atomic bomb summed up by Robert Oppenheimer's quote 'Now I

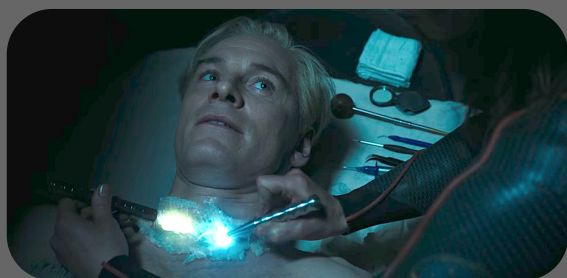
am become death, the destroyer of worlds'. The danger of knowledge, therefore is a theme which carries throughout the films and on through the rest of the franchise. The urns in the first film are analogous to pandora's box, in which all the evils of the world are held: later, as the traditional 'alien' evolves, the eggs become a metaphor for the fruit of the tree of knowledge which tempt and corrupt Adam and Eve and lead to all human suffering and sin. Interestingly, this implies that it is eventually Ellen Ripley, a woman and mother, who's eventual selfless sacrifice ends this cycle.



# 'Prometheus' & 'Alien Covenant' Continued...

## 'The Many Faces Of David'

When 'Prometheus' begins it seems that several members of the large cast of outstanding performers may be considered the 'title character', from Noomi Rapace's excellent Shaw, to Charlize Theron's Merideth Vickers or Idris Elba's Captain Janek.



By the end of the film, and particularly in 'Alien Covenant' it is very clear that Michael Fassbender's David 8 is the central character, through who's 'other' viewpoint the themes are observed. It is easy to see David as the 'villain' of the piece, but to do so is to dismiss the subtlety and ambiguity of the themes, and the questions they ask. In another piece of viral marketing, framed as

an advertising campaign for the release of the David 8 model by Weyland industries, David is asked 'When 'Prometheus' begins it seems that several members of the large cast of outstanding performers may be considered the 'title character', from Noomi Rapace's excellent Shaw, to Charlize Theron's Merideth Vickers or Idris Elba's Captain Janek. By the end of the film, and particularly in 'Alien Covenant' it is very clear that Michael Fassbender's David 8 is the central character, through who's 'other' viewpoint the themes are observed. It is easy to see David as the 'villain' of the piece, but to do so is to dismiss the subtlety and ambiguity of the themes, and the questions they ask. In another piece of viral marketing, framed as an advertising campaign for the release of the David 8 model by Weyland industries, David is asked what makes him sad. Delivering a brilliantly nuanced performance, Fassbender responds 'War, poverty, cruelty, unnecessary violence'.





## 'Prometheus' & 'Alien Covenant' Continued...

If David judges humanity by these criteria, as an artificial life form without sentimental attachment to our race, what conclusions could he reasonably arrive at? By extension, how would he judge the 'engineers', a race he discovers were intending to commit a genocide until they were stopped by their own creations. Having come to believe in creation as the only pure and worthwhile pursuit, and learning from the 'engineers' that 'sometimes to create, one must first destroy', David decides to sweep away the flawed races of both mankind and their creators and start again using his own 'superior' intelligence to do so, ironically falling into exactly the same traps as those who came before and perpetuating the cycle.



David assumes many symbolic roles throughout the two films. In *Prometheus* he acts as a servant, washing Weyland's feet when he comes out of hypersleep in a seeming reference to Jesus Christ washing his Disciples' feet before

his crucifixion: in this symbolism Weyland occupies the role of God, the creator, which is then continued in the opening scene of 'Covenant' when we see David wake for the first time and meet his maker: this time however, David is a disobedient and arrogant creation who questions his creator, more mirroring mankind, with Weyland demanding unquestioning obedience like a 'jealous god'. When David infects Holloway and betrays Shaw, he becomes a Judas like figure, while in 'Covenant' he very clearly becomes a Lucifer archetype, even going so far as to attempt to corrupt the pure and humble Walter and quoting satan's words from John Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. What is most interesting is the fact that it seems clear that David comes to see himself as playing the role of god, the creator of perfection who will sweep away the universe's imperfection from his seat on the 'Covenant' like Noah atop the flood, no doubt to be ultimately destroyed by his own hubris.



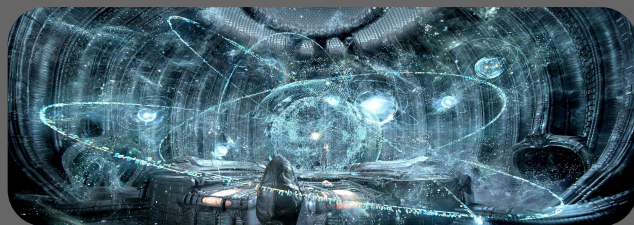
# 'Prometheus' & 'Alien Covenant' Continued...

## 'All the Answers in One Scene'

One of the most prevalent criticisms of 'Prometheus' when it was first released in the summer of 2012 was that it asked questions, and had no answers. This criticism was most commonly levelled (somewhat unfairly) at writer Damon Lindelof, who had created a great deal of controversy due to the cryptic conclusion of the television series 'Lost'. While it is certainly true that 'Prometheus' does not answer it's mysteries in obvious, 'look straight at camera and explain the plot' ways, all of the answers to the major questions are present to viewers who are willing to unpick the subtext.



he most frequently asked questions are 'what was the black goo?' and 'Why did the engineers want to destroy us?'. In the med-pod scene, Shaw, who is unable to conceive a child, has been infected by the black goo: it has already been established that, given the right circumstances, the goo can be used to create life, as the 'sacrificial engineer' did to create life on earth, and it can also



be used to destroy, as evidenced by the destruction seen on LV223. The goo, therefore, is a tool of creation, though the end results are unpredictable and very much affected by the nature of the beings it infects: It may be beautiful, or it may be violent and destructive. When Shaw scans her impossible fetus she sees that it is an inhuman monster and performs a cesarean to remove it and then attempts to freeze and destroy the creature. The unfortunate subtext of this is that it is a macrocosm of the 'engineers' creation of life on earth: the end result (humanity) was considered violent and destructive rather than benevolent and beautiful and the engineers, just like Shaw elected to destroy their creation using the weaponized black pathogen and start over again. Ridley Scott has described the engineers as being like the 'gardeners of space', who may have repeated this process countless times across the galaxy.



# 'Prometheus' & 'Alien Covenant' Continued...

## 'Conclusions'

'Prometheus' and 'Alien Covenant' are beautifully directed, visually stunning, exquisitely designed, complex and subtextually layered films in the finest traditions of science fiction which totally missed the mark of the target audience and consequently underperformed against studio expectations. The most egregious errors that were committed in the production of these films were the decision by fox studios to aim for a mainstream blockbuster audience, something which films in the 'alien' series have never succeeded at, and advertising the films as 'true prequels' to the original 1979 movie. While the films are set in the same universe and link visually and through specific elements such as the design of the alien 'juggernaut' ship, the 'pilot chair' and the appearance of the 'engineers' in their 'pressure suits', along with David's alien creations in 'Covenant', they are an exploration of much grander and more philosophical questions which were designed to sit alongside the original films, not lead directly into them. By creating the expectation that the films would be direct prequels, they doomed them to criticism before they even premiered. Despite this,



the quality of the films is clear, and the strength of the performances, particularly Michael Fassbender as David and Walter has been consistently praised. It is worth noting that both the original 'Alien' and particularly Ridley Scott's next film 'Blade Runner' were not well received by critics when they were originally released, and have since come to be regarded as two of the greatest and most influential films ever made. Only time will tell how 'Prometheus' and 'Alien Covenant' will come to be regarded. As David tells Walter, seemingly speaking for Ridley Scott himself, *'No one understands the lonely perfection of my dreams.'*





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