Parents and all visitors to the school should enter the building through the main reception area at the front of the school. Please do not use the pupils’ entrance. Safeguarding our pupils on the school site is a priority.

Follow us on @HerschelGrammar for our latest news, reminders and useful retweets!
Welcome to the May newsletter, the first one produced under full lockdown. It feels different to our previous editions, but we hope that it showcases some of the brilliant work our pupils are still engaged in despite our very different ways of working.

If pupils have been reading my Friday emails to them all, they will know about the ups and downs of my weekly family bake-off. My phone’s memory is staggering under the weight of Victoria sandwiches, Chelsea buns and Eccles cakes made all over the country (and Italy) this week. However, I must say the pictures of the Year 9 bake off winners were absolutely stunning. Fabulous work Year 9.

You will read about how our Young Enterprise teams have employed real creativity in approaching the competition virtually. Congratulations to both teams for their efforts.

The Creative Arts faculty have been making sure we remain culturally engaged. I loved watching the production of ‘A Streetcar Named Desire’ with Gillian Anderson streamed by the National Theatre. Mrs Lilley has been challenging us creatively with the photo competition and of course, physically with the LeJoG lockdown challenge. I’ve been adding my dog walks to my total each week.

I am so pleased to see the newsletter showcases your efforts to remember the sacrifices made by our grandparents and great-grandparents’ generation during World War II, as a way of celebrating VE day last week. My thanks to the History department for coordinating this work.

However, I am sure that for all of us lockdown has been challenging. Not to see our loved ones face to face, not to be with friends in classrooms where conversations about work are easy and spontaneous, not to travel, play football, to worry more, maybe argue more – all of this takes its toll. One of our school community’s key strengths is the support we give each other. Please do get in contact with your form tutor or Head of Learning or Mrs Smajlaj if you need anything. We’ve also signposted external services regularly (check Parentmail) and continue to do so in the newsletter (see link to the document #Coping - Family Life through the East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group).

As we begin to plan for some kind of return to school, I want to assure you all that we will absolutely put the safety of you and our staff at the centre of this.

I sincerely hope that we will see each other soon. My best wishes to you and your families for the half term break. Stay safe and well.

By Ms Rockall, Headteacher

James Dyson Engineering and Science Challenges

Some of our younger children (including children of staff) have been attempting the James Dyson science and engineering challenges over the last few weeks. These included making balloon powered cars, geodesic domes with jelly babies and calculating the speed of light using a bar of chocolate!
If you are curious to know how, follow the link to the challenge cards (external website) - https://www.jamesdysonfoundation.com/resources/challenge-cards.html

The winners all received a propelling pencil and a short steel rule to help their precision with future designs and recording experiments.

HGS winners: Chirag Grover Yr 7  
Dora Abbi and Anshi Singh Yr 8 (joint)

By Mrs Smith, Head of Design & Technology, HPP Coordinator
VE Day

This year the May Bank holiday was held on Friday 8th May to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day. It was a day designed to remember the contribution of British, Commonwealth and Allied armed forces during WWII, including those on the home front.

Whilst most of the nation’s planned activities were cancelled due to the lockdown, in History pupils were asked to complete a choice of activities linked to VE Day.

Some watched video accounts, whilst others completed online challenges. Others made detailed comparisons of aeroplanes flown during the war.

Many wrote very detailed, emotive and moving diaries as if they were a child at that time. Others went down a more practical route and tried out recipes from 75 years ago whilst others planned menus and made bunting. One student even recorded their family singing, ‘We’ll meet again’.
Free Theatre in your Home

We may no longer be able to leave the house, but as a way of keeping us all entertained I am pleased to say that there is a variety of free theatre available to stream including: Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals, National Theatre Productions, smaller Fringe productions such as the Cornish theatre company ‘Miracle’ and many more.

I have already personally enjoyed watching, from home, the weekly NationalTheatre@Home shows including ONE MAN TWO GUVNORS with James Corden and FRANKENSTEIN with Benedict Cumberbatch, as well as Ex-Globe Artistic Director Emma Rice’s production of WISE CHILDREN (still available to catch up on BBC iPlayer) - please note that some of these shows may not be suitable for Key Stage 3 students. I also look forward to watching WIND IN THE WILLOWS with my children soon, and FLEABAG (not sure the husband will be so keen to join me that evening), although there is a small charge for these two shows.

In addition to this wealth of free theatre available to us, I would like to remind students and parents of the school’s subscription to DIGITAL THEATRE+ (which each student has login access to and has over 700 shows and practitioner interviews) - a lovely opportunity to sit down as a family and watch West End theatre for free. Please note that KS3 have not been given access to shows with strong language or mature themes. I can thoroughly recommend Stephen Sondheim’s musical INTO THE WOODS, THE RAILWAY CHILDREN and for those with access to more mature content Complicite’s A DISAPPEARING NUMBER, which is inspired by the collaboration during the 1910s between the mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan from India, and the Cambridge University don G.H. Hardy. This leads me on to reminding students and parents of the cross-curricular opportunities for this platform where students may enhance knowledge and understanding of other subjects through performance. I can also recommend AN INSPECTOR CALLS which is studied in English at GCSE level as well as the wealth of Shakespeare and historical and World Theatre productions on offer.

As ever, if you would like to receive regular theatre updates please do follow Herschel Drama on Twitter @DramaHerschel.

By Mrs Callender, Head of Drama
Reading for Pleasure

Now is the ideal time to completely block out any worries or anxiety by reading for pleasure. Read old favourites, discover new authors, lose yourself in a different time or reality.

Did you know that by becoming members of the Public Library you can borrow both eBooks and audio books through Borrowbox? There are some useful resources for reading to get you started as well as a link to join the public library, below.


https://lovereading4kids.co.uk - a website full of recommendations and extracts of books.

https://www.slough.gov.uk/libraries/ - a link to join the public library.

https://marcussedgwick.com/ - Marcus Sedgwick is reading his book Floodland on his website, many other authors have online websites too.

Here are some unusual facts discovered by Years 7 & 8 for their Library Assignment on the biography of their favourite author:

- L. Frank Baum got the name for his Wizard of Oz from his filing cabinet!
- Anna Sewell who wrote Black Beauty was disabled but was able to drive a horse drawn carriage.
- Robert Muchamore wrote some of his books because his 12-year-old nephew couldn’t find anything interesting to read.
- RJ Palacio’s Wonder was inspired by her son encountering a disfigured person which really frightened him.

Interested in discussing current/past reads, sharing recommendations, or doing some creative writing? Then contact me to become a member of the Literary Detectives Reading Group.

By Mrs Downs, School Librarian

Cultivating Creativity

Once upon a time in the days before Lockdown, a select group of avid and dedicated young writers met in G36 to form the Creative Writing Club. They played games, swapped tales of writer’s block and of unfinished manuscripts left in drawers, before getting down to the serious business of entering a national competition, The Wicked Young Writer’s Award 2020. With baited breath they and their club leader waited for the results (which were due in May) - only to find that the judging of the competition had been postponed until next year, due to the Corona Virus. Rather than allowing their enthusiasm to dwindle and wane during Lockdown, they continued to meet on Teams and are currently working on their entries for two upcoming prestigious competitions: The Foyle Young Poets of the Year 2020 and Generation Lockdown.
I hope you will join me in congratulating them for making the most of the current situation and in wishing them the best of luck with their entries!

https://generationlockdown.co.uk/
https://foleyyoungpoets.org/

By Mrs Sahi, Teacher of English

Young Enterprise

This year was quite exceptional for Young Enterprise. After the last two trade fairs, everything was done remotely. The live final was replaced with a remote judging process. We are proud that both our teams - EcoChain and Tribe were able to adapt to these changes with a very high quality of the submissions in such a short space of time. Their teamwork, coordination and enthusiasm had been amazing throughout the year but it was exceptional in the lockdown phase, when the most important and deciding event - the final - was pending and conducted remotely.

We are proud to announce that the HGS team Tribe won the Runners-up Award and also achieved the Best Teamwork award. We may have got the second spot where Burnham Grammar School came first but it is a commendable achievement. I am sure you will all join me in congratulating each one of the team members They have all come together as a team and worked tirelessly despite the adverse lockdown. Their vigour and dedication to the project was incredible. Please find below the link to the video they put together for their company of the year competition.

https://youtu.be/Vbnqi_vEk6k

Our other team - EcoChain may not have received an award but their efforts and drive to achieve their goals was nothing short of remarkable.

We would like to congratulate both the teams for their contributions, achievements and successes.

By Mrs Malik, Head of Learning Year 10, Assistant Head of Mathematics

Herschel’s LeJoG Lockdown Challenge

Keeping fit can be harder when we are isolated, but we have achieved the collective Land’s End to John O’Groats challenge that I set everyone on the 20th April.

The challenge was to collectively cycle, run or walk the distance from Herschel to Land’s End in Cornwall all the way to John O’Groats in Scotland and back to Herschel in just 3 weeks. With a target of 2895km to beat, staff and pupils have risen to the challenge and have exceeded the target with several days to go.

Well done to all those who have taken part.

By Mrs Lilley, Head of Creative Arts Faculty/Head of PE/Geography
#Coping – Family life during the lockdown

Click here to find a useful document compiled by the East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group and available on their website.

Looking for Talent

We would love to hear about our students’ achievements in the wider world. Please send a brief description of any such outstanding successes to talented@herschel.slough.sch.uk, stating the students’ name and form.
We will celebrate them in forthcoming newsletters.

Mrs Smith, HPP Co-Ordinator

Year 9 Bake-off

Year 9 have been doing an interform bake/cook-off for the last couple of weeks – we thought you might like to see more of their creations.

Miss Wood, Biology/Head of Learning Year 9