

GreenFields



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PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of Greenfields. Although the college campus was closed during the final term of the academic year, we remained very much open in terms of supporting our students with their education and wellbeing. The college took the decision to close its buildings before the government announcement to do so and had during the build up to closure been developing a remote learning programme which was tested for several weeks before being launched. Our goal was simple and focussed on providing a normal, full timetable to students continuing right up until the end of the academic year. We were determined not to compromise the quality of our delivery and the feedback we received from students and parents was exceptional. The safety of our students and staff is paramount and we feel confident that should further complications arise in the future which makes student access to the college difficult, we know we can deliver a first-class support programme online. Our students will not be disadvantaged if circumstances beyond their control mean they can't attend face-to-face lessons.

Each year we see a significant number of our students enter medical school and this past academic year has been no different. Teaching is one of those rare professions in which we, the educators, are often inspired by the very people we serve and support. I have been in touch with several former students who chose to develop careers in medicine, and I salute the contribution they are making to the wellbeing of the nation.



My colleagues and I have received many kind words of support from parents and this has been very much appreciated. Everyone connected with the MPW community will have their own story of Covid-19. Some of these stories will involve loss and tragedy, others will involve fear and illness. We were all to varying extents taken out of our comfort zones. I have witnessed many acts of great kindness which make me feel proud to be associated with MPW.

The inspiring thing about working with young people is that you are helping to build the future, and this brings with it embedded optimism. Our mission is to develop a student's maturity, knowledge and confidence, turning their academic aspirations into reality. We aim to pursue this mission by creating a friendly and

supportive learning environment in which students are encouraged to work hard. We help students develop examination technique by providing regular testing known as Timed Assignments and our students prosper from learning in class sizes of less than ten students for GCSE and A level subjects. We understand that studying can be stressful at times and have developed a highly regarded pastoral care system which prioritises the wellbeing of our students encouraging them to become more resilient as they embrace the opportunities and challenges that life will inevitably provide. Very often our students receive results even they did not feel were possible and whilst there is no substitute for hard work, MPW provides the right conditions to help students achieve special things.



DISNEYLAND PARIS

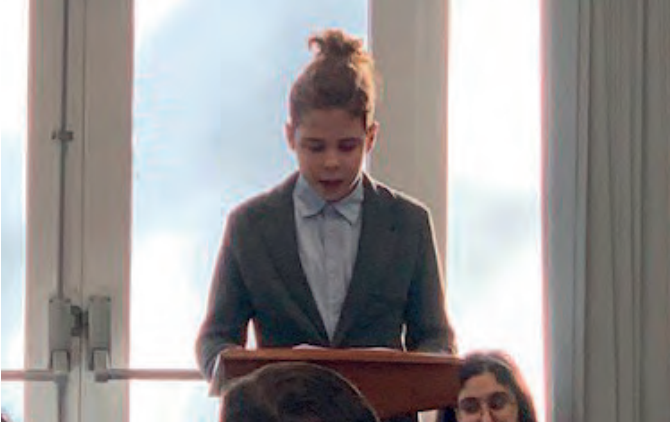
In February, MPW's Business and Economics students had the opportunity to visit Europe's largest tourist destination, Disneyland Paris. The trip provided the perfect opportunity for students to immerse themselves into the world of mass consumerism and help them to fully comprehend the significant operations behind one of the world's largest companies. One of the most eye-opening aspects of the trip was the 'Business Live!', an A level student conference where students had the fantastic opportunity to engage with a number of entrepreneurs, business owners and even Disneyland's Business Strategy Manager. After the inspiring series of lectures, MPW students were able to personally interview Tessa Clarke (CEO – Olio Ltd) and Fraser Doherty (CEO – Superjam Ltd). During the conference students were able to apply the knowledge they have learnt in the classroom to real life businesses and companies and they can now use the insight they have developed to score application marks in their final examinations. In addition to attending the conference students were able to enjoy some free time and had the opportunity to explore the internationally renowned Magic Kingdom Park and Walt Disney Studios. Those students who were hoping to experience an exhilarating adrenaline rush were even able to test their nerve on the Tower of Terror and Hyperspace Mountain attractions.



SCIENCE VS RELIGION DEBATE

One of the greatest, controversial questions that has kept philosophers and theologians in contentious debate for centuries: Which holds the truth – religion or science? Now MPW would take up the challenge of grappling with this pivotal issue, in an event hosted by the MPW Debate team.





STUDENTS CHALLENGED THEMSELVES TO TAKE ON POSITIONS CONTRARY TO THEIR OWN OPINION AND HAD TO ARTICULATE WITH DIPLOMACY AND FLAIR.

The team began their journey as aspiring debaters back in September. Every Tuesday afternoon the debate team assembled to tackle some of the most contentious and prominent issues in society, ranging from to what extent should the media be regulated, to whether capitalism is inherently corrupt and capital punishment an ethical form of justice. Students challenged themselves to take on positions contrary to their own opinion and had to articulate with diplomacy and flair. Sessions on techniques to upskill such as how to deliver persuasive speeches and powerful body language began and it was inspiring to see the level of natural talent in the room.

After Christmas, preparations for attending MUN (Model United Nations) ramped up and the debating team, in preparation, began planning a live debate at MUN – Science vs Religion. We broke up into focus teams each with a

different responsibility: designing the rules, logistics and debate topics, using MUN regulations for guidance. The teams chose 'is religion more harmful for society' as their main point of contention, enabling a broad spectrum of effects and considerations to be expressed.

As the day of the event dawned, factors arose that could have sent the debaters into panic: a panellist was stranded abroad, another poorly. Yet the team pulled together. With only hours to go, individuals previously nervous about being in the spotlight, stepped up to become panellists. New speeches were written. New roles were assigned. And the new team performed with professionalism, passion and skill. How religion and science has supported society, how science has caused atrocities as well as religion, are just some of the points grappled with in the hour-long debate.

An opening speaker introduced why this debate remains so hotly debated, at which point the two chair speakers outlined the rules, event runnings and welcomed the audience. Under their capable hands they continued to oversee the event, working with the timing team and judges to ensure MUN rules were adhered to and a variety of thought was captured. Each panellist took it in turns to deliver a five minute speech at the podium, an opportunity to persuade the judges of their point of view and skill. The opposition was always ready to retaliate, raising objections and counter points to make it difficult for the audience to stay in one mind.

The judges – a panel, representing science, religion and philosophy, collated scores and delivered feedback. We are proud to have such an exemplary group of team players and passionate, knowledgeable, powerful speakers, ready to take on the issues around the world.

MEDICAL SOCIETY



MPW's Medical Society ran again this academic year to give students the knowledge and insight required to ensure that they wanted to embark on a healthcare career before developing their understanding of current affairs and helping them to prepare for the application process.

Some of our highlights from this academic year include:

VISITS FROM JUNIOR DOCTORS

Dr Josh Davies gave a talk early on in the academic year about his non-direct route into medicine. He discussed his experience of having to retake his A levels having missed out in his offer first time around before embarking on an undergraduate degree and working as a healthcare assistant before securing a place on a graduate-entry medicine course. He outlined to students the realities of studying medicine, offered hints and tips for a successful application and discussed his day-to-day routine as an FY2 currently working on an ICU ward.

Dr Erzsike Szabo also joined us for a session where she discussed the history of the NHS and the challenges that it now faces. She also spent some time reflecting on her current role as a junior palliative care doctor, highlighting how a career in medicine isn't always about being a hero by saving lives. By encouraging students to role play scenarios as doctors and patients, she gave them the opportunity to develop their insights into how it feels to both deliver and receive bad news, and consider the skills that they will develop as medical students and junior doctors.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Students are encouraged to identify their areas of interest in the medical sciences and research them further, so that they can present their findings back to the group. This year, a number of students took the opportunity to research a pharmaceutical drug of interest, and make use of their chemistry and biology knowledge to outline the drug's mechanism of action, as well as any other aspects of its use or development that they found interesting.

MEDICAL ETHICS

Ethics is at the core of medical practice and to ensure that students had a thorough understanding of the moral principles that underlie working in the field of medical science, we ran a session to outline the four pillars. Students were then presented with a range of scenarios to which they needed to apply their new knowledge, which is a skill commonly drawn upon at interview.

PERSONAL STATEMENT SUPPORT

As students need to turn around personal statements for competitive entry courses in a relatively short time after the start of term, some of our earlier sessions focussed on how to write an effective personal statement. This session was followed by a drop-in session, where a number of our Personal Tutors with a great deal of expertise with these applications were on hand to give tailored feedback.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION AND MULTIPLE MINI INTERVIEWS

With many of our students applying for courses in the field of healthcare science, we place a strong emphasis on supporting them with their interview preparation. We ran an initial session on preparing for interviews that circled around the core themes that tend to be addressed, including motivation, work experience, ethics and key traits.

With most universities now choosing to interview using Multiple Mini Interviews, or MMI, we ran several of these sessions in full so that students could get the complete experience before facing the

real thing – complete with role play, manual tasks and difficult questions, with the added bonus of time pressure and background noise!

Finally, we ran a preparatory session for those students who were successful in securing an interview for Dentistry at the University of Leeds. By dissecting the interview programme and talking through each stage, the students felt much more ready to face the challenges that lay ahead of them.

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING

Problem based learning, or PBL, is a teaching method commonly used by universities, especially in the healthcare sciences, where students can engage with real-world scenarios largely through independent and small group study. Using the materials kindly provided to us by the University of Plymouth, students were able to get a taster for this type of learning. In doing so, they were able to see which skills they would develop. For some students, it also served as a useful indicator for selecting the right universities for them.

PREPARATION FOR ENTRANCE EXAMS

While there are many hurdles to applications for medical and dental school, a major one for many students is having to perform well on the UCAT and BMAT exams. We were able to provide some sessions on tips and tricks to performing well on the UCAT, as well as supporting those sitting the BMAT with physics, maths, biology and chemistry content and a refresher on essay writing.



KEELE MEDICAL SCHOOL CAREERS DAY

This year, we were able to attend Keele University Medical School's Careers Day, 'So you want to be a doctor?', with some of our aspiring year 12 medics. The conference involved a series of lectures on the realities of a career in medicine, how to choose the best medical schools for you, researching entry requirements, preparing for interviews and reflections on life as a medical student and junior doctor. The afternoon session was made up of a number of laboratory workshops, getting to make use of the resources in the anatomy room and a number of Q&A sessions with admissions officers, doctors and students. It was an incredibly insightful day that presented students with both the realities and rewards of working as a doctor and gave them lots to think about regarding their applications.

THE MATHS CHALLENGE

Senior Team Maths Challenge 2020

#youdothemaths



#youdothemaths

LETTERONE



United Kingdom
Mathematics Trust



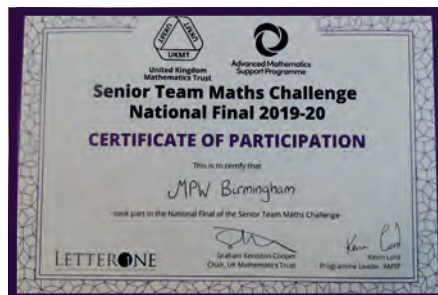
Advanced Mathematics
Support Programme

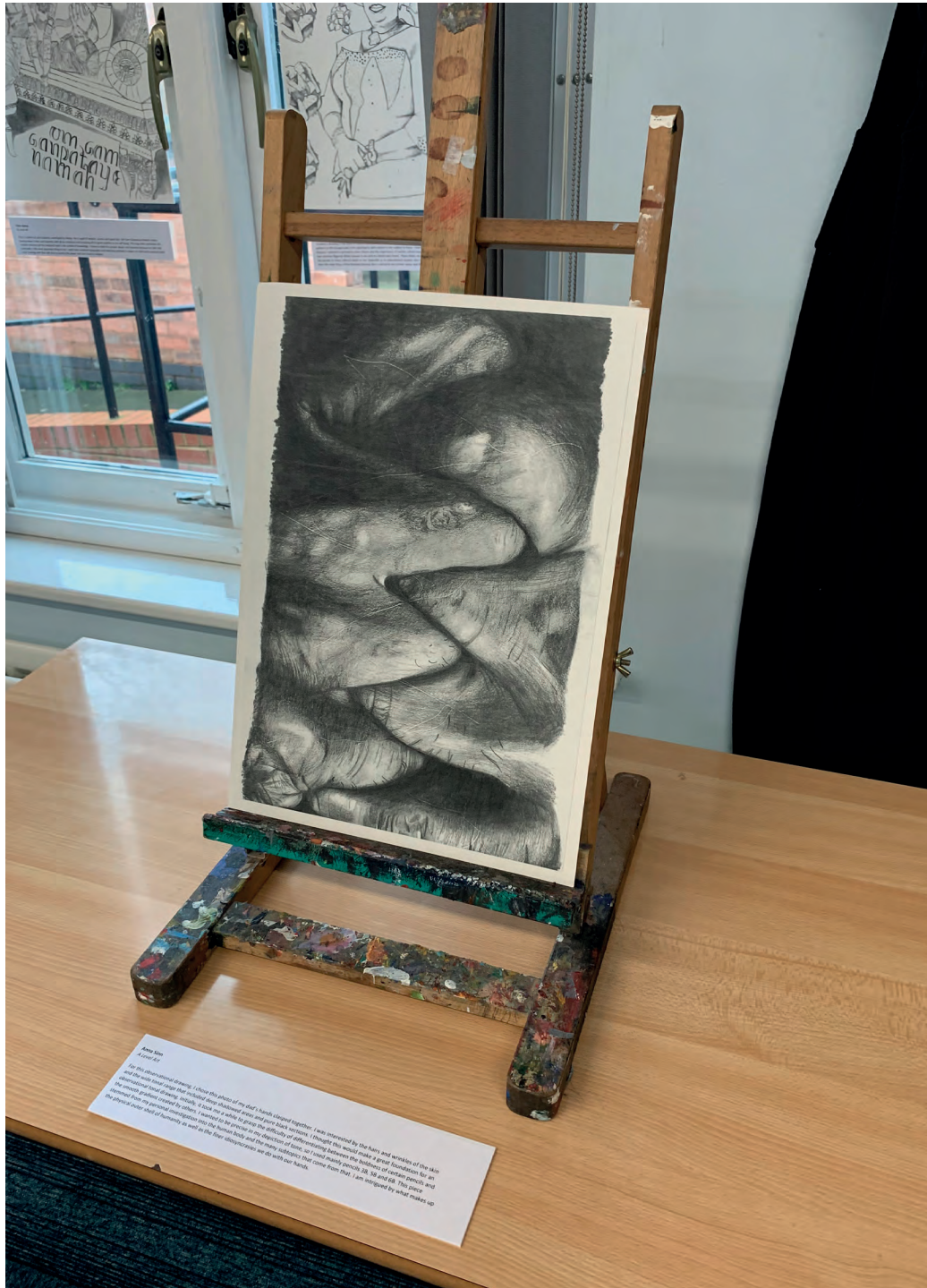
Each year, MPW encourages our Mathematics students to compete in the UK Maths Challenge; the UK's biggest mathematics competition, which comprises thought-provoking questions designed to assess students' logical faculties and problem-solving abilities. This year, twenty-five MPW students took part in the competition, achieving an impressive tally of five gold, seven silver and six bronze certificates. Four of our students proceeded to compete in either the Kangaroo Maths Challenge or the British Mathematical Olympiad, three of whom achieved merits in their respective events.

For the third year running, we have also taken a team of four students to compete in the Senior Team Maths Challenge. This year, the MPW team (William, Tim, Celine and Subin) performed exceptionally well, overcoming fierce opposition from King Edward's School and Camp Hill School for Boys, amongst many others, to be crowned regional champions and qualify for the National Finals in London.

The National Finals took place at the Royal Horticultural Halls in Westminster in February. The team performed splendidly once again, competing against many of the country's top young mathematicians, the MPW quartet came a highly commendable 33rd out of the 88 teams at the final, and over 1200 teams who took part nationwide.

Congratulations to the MPW Team and all the other students who took part in this year's competitions!





MPW ART EXHIBITION

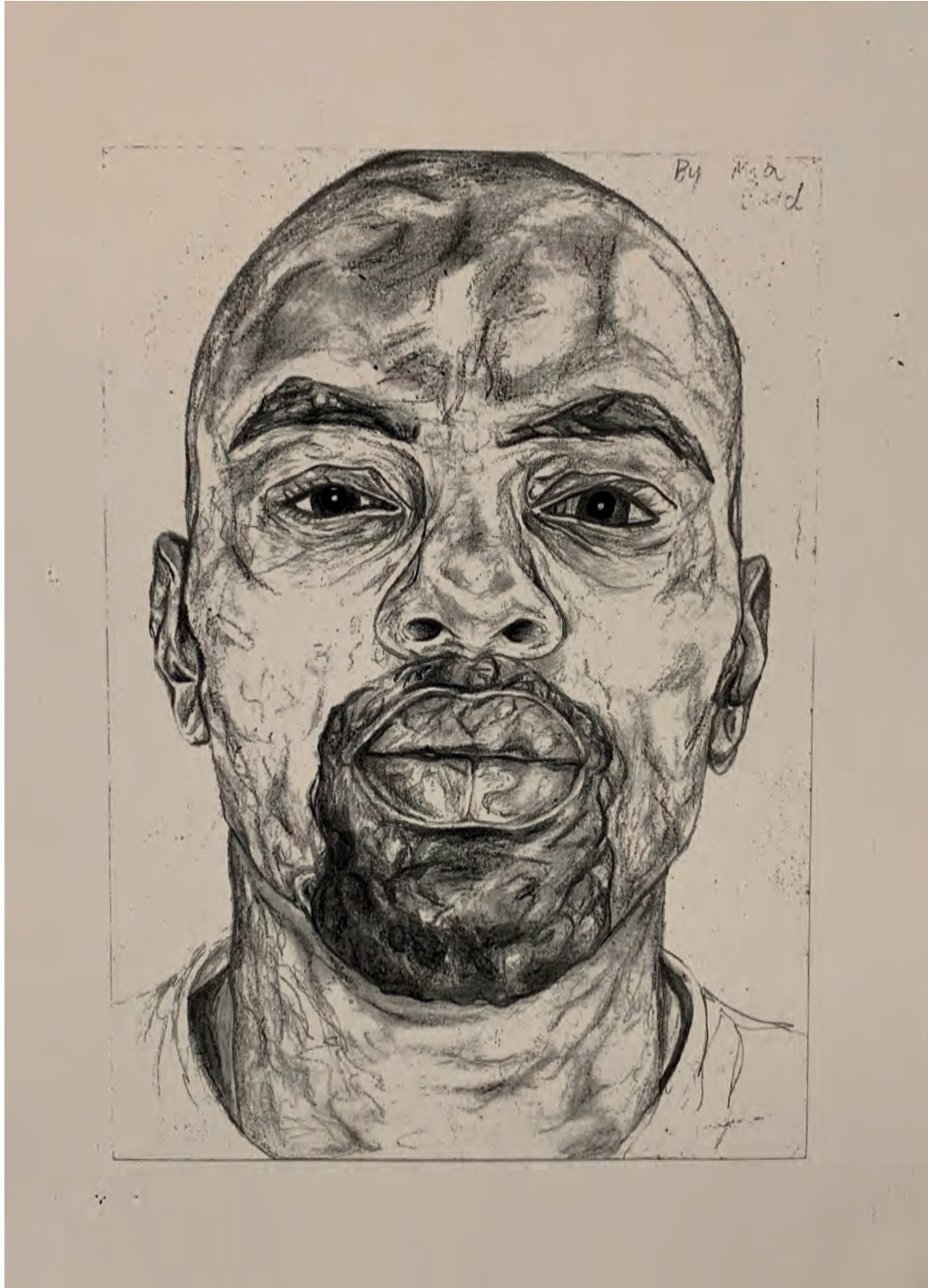


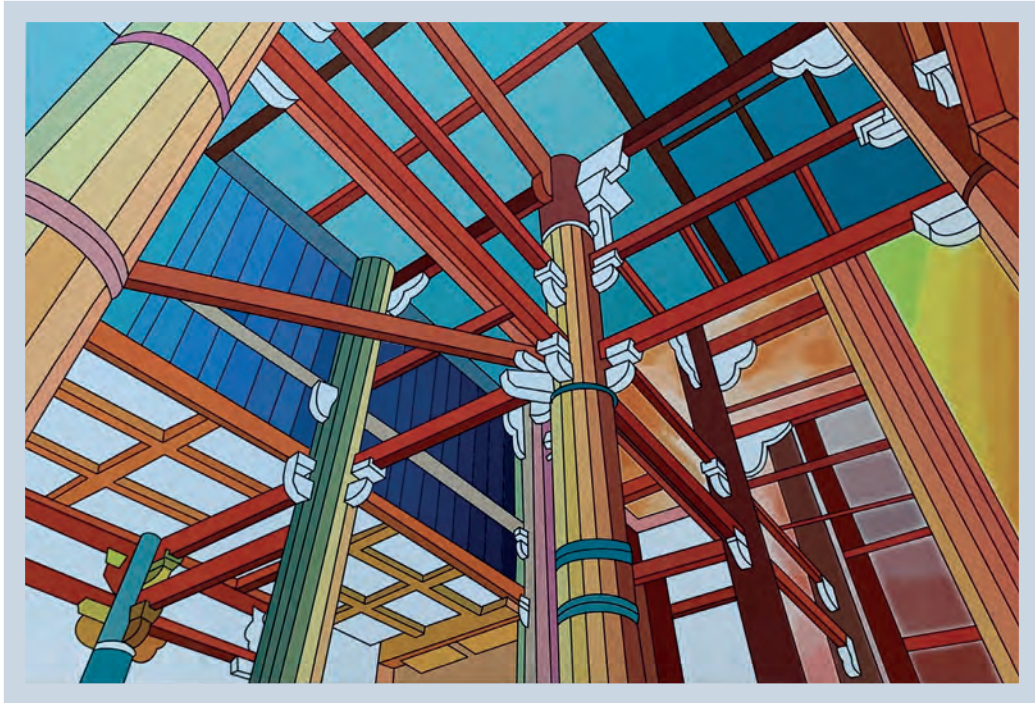
Each year, the incredible work that is created in the MPW Art Studio is put on display for the college community to view. This year has been no exception with a variety of GCSE and A level talent on show. MPW Birmingham offers various endorsements within Art and Design including Fine Art, Graphic Design and Photography which means that the Annual Art Exhibition has something for everyone.

As well as examples of traditional works created in pencil and paint, there was a visible emergence of digital work and in particular pieces of work created using the iPad Pro. The tool has enabled many of the MPW students to be experimental in their creative development whilst also generating pieces of work for their portfolio's which are crucial at undergraduate interview.

Photography topics that were explored this year included portraiture, nature and sport. The photographic work reflected a clear relationship between students and the work of modern artists. Students studying creative subjects at the college are not only encouraged to learn and develop aesthetic techniques but to also appreciate the value of their voice and how it can be transferred into conceptual messages within their work.

With visitors attending the exhibition throughout the day, the event was a resounding success and we look forward to seeing next years show!







JOURNEY TO VETERINARY SCHOOL

– FORMER MPW STUDENT, GEORGIA

After Georgia underperformed in her GCSEs at a previous school, she started her A level study in non-science subjects as she was told there was no way she could pursue her dream of becoming a vet. After completing her AS exams, she made the decision to join MPW to study on a one-year GCSE programme, to improve her grades at this level before embarking on a new programme of A level study which would allow her to apply for Veterinary Medicine at university.

Things didn't go to plan for Georgia, but she is now about to graduate from the world's leading Veterinary School, the Royal Veterinary College, with a BSc in Bioveterinary Science and an offer to study on their Veterinary Medicine Programme from September 2020. It's not the route that she wanted to take, but when life threw her a (six-year long) curveball, she went along for the ride. Here, Georgia reflects on her journey to Veterinary School and the trials and tribulations that she has encountered along the way.

Georgia's story is one of great perseverance and resilience, and shows that with determination and focus, you can always succeed. We wish Georgia the very best of luck as she commences her studies to become a vet!

"My journey to Veterinary Medicine over the past six years has been anything but 'easy'. Like most Veterinary School applicants, I have wanted to become a vet for as long as I can remember. From the moment I began my first work experience placement at the age of 15, I knew this would be my dream job and I would do anything to achieve it.

The struggles I have faced on this journey, including getting the grades, UCAS applications, interviews and of course, global pandemics, have been perhaps some of the most difficult challenges of my academic life. If there has been anything that I have learnt from the past six years, it is that perseverance really does pay off and if you want it enough, it will happen!

My journey to pursuing my dreams started when I transferred to MPW from my existing secondary school. I decided to move after not achieving the GCSE grades I had hoped for, meaning I couldn't study science at A level standard. So, I decided to leave that school, move into the city centre and get to work. I worked hard for 3 years, I lived away from my family for most of the academic year and consumed myself in my studies. I managed to secure an offer from RVC, my dream university, as well as two others. I was overjoyed! This was going to be my moment. When it finally came to me receiving my A level grades, you can imagine the shock of finding out I had narrowly missed out on the grades I needed for my offer. So... what now?

After all of that hard work and accumulating 28 weeks' worth experience to not get a place at vet school, I would be lying if I said I didn't feel like giving up at that moment. My options were to leave everything I had worked towards right there or take up the offer of Bioveterinary Science at RVC, which I could use as a platform to apply for Veterinary Medicine as a graduate. Ultimately, the three-year course at my dream university was a no brainer and I had to at least try.

Choosing to move to a solely veterinary orientated university when you are not studying that degree, and it's your lifelong passion, didn't feel like my smartest choice – it was difficult to be surrounded by what could have been. Studying an academically rigorous undergraduate degree that is not your first choice can be incredibly hard at times, and it can be tough to motivate yourself to keep going.

There were definitely times when I thought I wouldn't be able to get through it, but immersing myself into university life really helped. I made some really great friends which made the situation a lot easier. It was also great to be able to talk to them (as well as my tutors and my family) about how I was feeling when things were tough – I quickly realised that many people felt the same way as I did and I wasn't on my own. I took part in many social events and joined sports teams and societies. Throwing myself into things taught me to appreciate the experience of university as a whole in my own development.

My journey to Veterinary School wasn't a smooth ride, but looking back on my decision now, I am really happy with how everything turned out. There are so many benefits of studying as an undergraduate degree before pursuing Veterinary Medicine that are often overlooked. Some of these benefits are that you are able to get used to the universities way of running things, such as exams, in advance, as well as developing better study habits more aligned with the demands of higher-level study. I met some amazing people, including tutors, who led me into avenues of study that I wouldn't have considered otherwise and found that I really enjoyed. In addition, when you come to apply again in the future, you will have an additional 3 years' worth of experience to talk about, which is always a plus!

Preparing to apply again for Veterinary Medicine can be really daunting. You are filled with anxiety about missing out again, and you may worry that you are too old, but in all honesty, none of that matters in the slightest. Make sure you are well prepared and have a good range of work experience to talk about, and the rest will fall into place.

My top three tips for applying to Veterinary Medicine as a graduate are:

WORK EXPERIENCE: This can be really difficult to get whilst studying a full-time degree. You normally have 18 months prior to submitting your application to undertake the required amount of work experience. You really want to avoid doing this in your final year as you will have very little time, so I recommend at the end of your second year really cramming in as much as you can and maybe go lambing for a few weeks over Easter if it's possible around exams.



HOBBIES: One thing I learnt from my endless talks and experience with Veterinary Medicine applications is that they really want to know who you are and what you enjoy outside of the scientific community. It's great that you wrote a 35-page research article on the effects of Bovine Diarrhoea Virus on the expression of genes associated with pregnancy recognition in cattle, but they want to see who YOU are! Take up painting, go rock climbing – the world is your oyster!

UNIVERSITY LIFE: This point is an extension from the last, try and get involved in university clubs and social events as much as possible. Get to know the lecturers and become an active member of the university. It helps to show on your application that you have really taken advantage of being an undergraduate student and why they should want you to contribute to their university!



**MY JOURNEY TO VETERINARY SCHOOL WASN'T
A SMOOTH RIDE, BUT LOOKING BACK ON MY
DECISION NOW, I AM REALLY HAPPY WITH HOW
EVERYTHING TURNED OUT.**



My one final piece of advice for any Bioveterinary Science undergraduate that wants to become a vet is that this degree is just a stepping stone to get you to where you want to be. It's not forever, and it doesn't mean you will be any less of an amazing vet! If anything, it will make you a lot more competent than most of the first-time degree vets, believe me! Applying to postgraduate Veterinary Medicine is another challenge in itself, but it's not impossible. The only thing you need is belief in yourself and a lot of determination. Work hard and you will reap the benefits!"



FOOTBALL SEASON REVIEW

Although the football season was abruptly cut short this year, thankfully MPW Birmingham managed to play the majority of the season's fixtures which included a thumping 14 v 0 victory over MPW Cambridge. One of the star performers of the season was Oscar who gives his account of the season gone by.



“We started the season with a very good core base of players. Myself and the captain Hamza had played in the season previously and we had established ourselves in the team. Our first game was against Bromsgrove South in a cup match; we went into the game with much optimism as we had never played the team before. We lined up with four at the back, five in midfield and one up top. We started the game rather shakily, conceding 2 goals within the first ten minutes,

with mistakes from both myself and an Enckelman mistake from our goalkeeper really setting the tone of the remainder of the game. For the majority of the first half we spent much of it cooped up in our own half and by the end of the half we were 5-0 down with their striker scoring a first half hat-trick. Ryan, the coach, changed the formation slightly at half time, so that we were now playing a standard 4-4-2 formation to try and give us a bit more menace when going forward as Hamza

was very isolated on his own. The second half was much of a repeat of the first half. We conceded three more goals all from mistakes of our own doing. A highlight from the game was our centre back, Beb putting in a challenge that Noel Blake would have been proud of. The game ended 7-0 but we weren't too concerned as it was our first game as a team, and we were lacking communication. A silver lining and standout performance was by our left back Nik who dominated their right winger. Our next game was against Bosworth College. We went into the game much more prepared. However, the game didn't start according to plan and we conceded from a direct corner within the first minute and we were thinking a repeat of Bromsgrove was about to happen. Straight from kick-off our attacking midfielder Shin ran rings around their defence and scored to bring us level at 1-1. 5 minutes later Hamza and Shin linked up to score again and from that point onwards were in complete control. Notable goals from that game were Ben scoring from a direct free kick from over 30 yards out and I scored a half volley from over 25 yards out that sent the crowd absolutely wild. The standout performance from that game was our striker Hamza who bagged 4 goals. His performance helped us achieve a cricket like score line of 10-1. We had a couple of weeks off leading up to our next game, which allowed us to have much more preparation. Our next game was derby day as we faced MPW Cambridge. This game was the most important as the winner had bragging rights over the other. The game lived up to its importance



with tackles from myself and defender Sam flying in early doors. We carried the momentum from the last game and took the lead early, our attacking midfielder Brandon ran the length of the pitch to score first. The floodgates began to open and we eventually reached the double digit mark again with the final score being 14-0. Within the game we had 7 different scorers. The man of the match that game was shared with our two attacking midfielders Brandon and Leo due to the fact they had 8 goal contributions between them. We had a large gap between our next game due to the Christmas holidays. Our next fixture was the week after our mock exams meaning there was a lot of steam to be released. The game was a local derby against St George's School.

This was the first game I got to captain. The pitch was not favourable to our playing style and for most of the game I spent slipping and falling over. We conceded very early on from a moment of brilliance from their striker. We hit back almost instantly from an incredible goal from myself from less than a yard out from the goal. The pitch led to many tackles flying in from myself and Nik. The game was very fast paced and for the first half we were 3-2 down. However, in the second half we completely dominated, with goals from Hamza, Brandon, Leo and our pacey winger Zal. The game finished up 7-3 victory to us; a noticeable performance was from our goalkeeper, Fahad, who was brought in last minute due to Liam suffering a very painful

injury. Fahad stepped up to the role and performed extremely well. Our next and final game was against Cambridge Centre for Sixth Form Studies. We went into the game with high expectations due to us scoring so many goals in our last three games. We set up with four at the back (Sim, myself, Ben and Nik). We played five in midfield (Sim, Leo, Brandon, Arvin and Zio) with Hamza being the only striker. CCSS started game very positively but me and Sim defended very well to keep out any dangers. The game was very close as the two teams were very evenly matched and there was only 1 goal scored in the entire game. It was scored by our prolific goal scorer Hamza. The goal came from a corner in which it just hit Hamza's shin and went in. In the second half it was still as close and tackles were flying in, a noticeable tackle coming from MPW veteran, Auzher, who had to be subbed off following his rugby like tackle. In the 80th minute CCSS conceded a penalty; I took it upon myself to score the penalty and finish the game. However, it was not meant to be and I blasted straight at the keeper. This was not my finest moment in the MPW colours. This led to CCSS piling on the pressure and with the majority of players from both teams pulling up with cramp, it felt very stressful. I felt very guilty for my penalty miss and I made sure that we did not concede. We ended up winning the game 1-0 and that was our final game due to the pandemic occurring.

Overall, I was very proud of how the season played and I would like to thank the staff who took time out of their week to train us regardless of weather and be there for matches. I believe the season to be very successful."





MPW's A level Economics, Business and Politics students were treated to a tour of the Houses of Parliament in February. Despite an early start, students couldn't wait to experience the behind the scenes tour and gain a better understanding of how parliament works to make effective decisions. The trip was organised to supplement the students' classroom research into the role of government in central decision making and the necessity of upholding democracy in a modern Britain.

In addition to an inspiring tour of both the House of Commons and House of Lords, students engaged in an interactive classroom-based discussion about legislative reforms. Students were subsequently given the opportunity to create their own manifestos in small groups before seeking votes from their teachers and classmates. At the end of this session, students were able to meet Edgbaston MP, Preet Gill's parliamentary support team and ask questions about the work that their local MP was doing in their local community. Students were told about upcoming preparations for the Commonwealth Games and all of the initiatives that are taking place to cut air pollution in Birmingham city centre.



One of the highlights of the trip was the opportunity watch a debate in the House of Commons about youth unemployment and gender opportunity. The most memorable part of the trip was being inside the lobby when Sajid Javid was replaced by Rishi Sunak as Chancellor of the Exchequer; students were able to witness parliamentary history in the making.

Students collected information from all of the displays and then collated data in an official study guide before bringing all of the information back to college to continue developing their understanding of parliament's fiscal and legal responsibilities.

DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS



On completing their A levels, some students are torn between wanting to continue with their studies and wanting to immerse themselves in the world of work. Degree apprenticeships offer a credible compromise between the two, and this has made them increasingly popular in recent years.

Degree apprenticeships are a relatively new type of programme that offers a different pathway of learning that allow you to earn a salary, make headway with your career and still graduate with a cap and gown. They combine academic study with working on a part-time basis – you'll usually spend 20% of your time studying at university and 80% of your time working.

WHAT DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS CAN I DO?

There are a wide range of degree apprenticeships available spanning industries from business to law to healthcare science – if you which industry you are interested in, you are likely to be able to find a degree apprenticeship for you! There are over 100 programmes available currently with more being developed.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF DOING A DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP?

Being able to study and train on the job simultaneously is perhaps the greatest benefit to degree apprenticeships. Apprentices are much more likely to be employable than undergraduates as they have gained valuable industry-specific experience and relevant skills which are sought after by employers.

Another key benefit is that while you are studying, your course fees are paid by your employer, which means that you will graduate without university debt.

HOW LONG DOES A DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP TAKE TO COMPLETE?

Because of the combined work element, degree apprenticeships can take longer to complete than a standard degree – usually between three and six years – and the duration is dependent on the sector that you decide to work in. They also depend on the level of degree apprenticeship. With a Level 6 degree apprenticeship, you'll graduate with a full bachelor's degree, and with a Level 7 degree apprenticeship, you'll graduate with a master's degree.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS?

Unfortunately, there's no universal way of identifying and applying for degree apprenticeships like there is with undergraduate degrees on UCAS, so you would need to be motivated to do some research if this was something that you wanted to pursue.

Once you've found a degree apprenticeship of interest, you would need to follow the application procedure set out by that particular company. Generally, the application process would involve submitting a CV and covering letter outlining your motivation for that programme initially.

WHAT WILL EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Degree apprenticeships can be really competitive – there are fewer places available than for undergraduate courses – so you will need to stand out. Employers will want to see how much you want that position, as well as what transferable skills you have gained.

Employers understand that you might not have extensive work experience in your chosen field, but they will want to see evidence of your commitment, enthusiasm and motivation, ability to work in a team, time management and interpersonal skills.

WHAT ARE DEGREE APPRENTICESHIPS LIKE?

There's no doubt that degree apprenticeships are challenging, but they are highly rewarding too.

One of our former students, Drew, left MPW having achieved grades AAB in his A levels. This allowed him to secure a prestigious degree apprenticeship in Economics with Ofcom, the UK communication's regulator, partnered with the University of Kent.

Here are Drew's reflections on the application process and his time working as an apprentice economist so far.

"My application to Ofcom to join the 4-year programme as an economist began with sending my CV with a cover letter attached. After successfully reaching the next stage in the application, I was tasked with writing a 500 word essay titled 'Tell us why studying economics on our apprenticeship scheme is important to you.' The final stage of the application was an assessment centre. We were given a welcoming introduction then the day was split up into three parts. First, I was handed some information and given 45 minutes to prepare a presentation which I would then be quizzed on. Second, I sat through an interviewing process. Third, we were given different topics to discuss in groups and were told to feedback our conclusions. There were eight candidates in attendance at the assessment centre, with three of us being offered jobs.

Since joining Ofcom I have had an array of opportunities and have expanded my skills significantly within my first 6 months with the organisation. I have achieved good grades in my degree work, which is tailored to try to match my work for Ofcom. Working whilst studying has allowed me to develop many work-specific skills, such as using excel to analyse data. Within my first two terms I have studied how to 'work with economic data' and 'applied statistics', which both provide useful aids in explaining how you can apply this to your working environment by using excel, thus making the calculations much simpler.

I have been fortunate enough to be able to work on an array of projects, mainly monitoring BBC Transfer Pricing between the Public Service and its commercial subsidiaries. I have also attempted some margin squeeze calculations, been tasked with researching BBC cross-promotional regulation, completed calculations on accessibility to TV content for those who require signing, audio description and subtitles, as well researching BBC and Channel 4 costs and content hours.

In addition to the above, I have been given my own responsibilities such as presenting our Transfer Pricing work findings to senior team members, including Directors and Principals, as well as organising for myself and another team member to present and advertise Ofcom's apprenticeship opportunities at one of my previous schools.

This has been a very challenging 6 months as I have moved to London, not knowing many people. It has made me put myself out of my comfort zone to settle into a new environment on top of my degree and Ofcom work. But I definitely think I made the right decision as I am now settled in my new environment, and the work experience I will gain on top of a fully-funded degree will set me aside from those having only attended university."

SHOULD THERE BE A CAP ON ASPIRATION?

Back in 2004 Prince Charles caused national controversy when he stated that people should know their place in life and there were limits to the progression people could make based on their capabilities.

Whilst it is true that we are born with different skills and attributes we should never forget the power of education and the fact through hard work and endeavour, we can learn new skills and possess knowledge that will improve the quality of our lives.

Along the way we may learn some tough lessons. An aspiration to become an airline pilot might be hindered by a sinus problem. Despite our love of art some of us may have to concede we are not good enough to make a living from creating art, likewise with sport – we may not make it as a professional sportsperson despite the early promise we showed.

However, life is quite rightly peppered with inspiring stories about people who never gave up and got to where they wanted.

At MPW we believe, where possible, in supporting aspiration. Over the years we have worked with a vast range of students, many exhibiting courage and determination to get to where they wanted.

All of us must navigate constraints in life but sometimes it really pays not to give up and aim high. Even if you sometimes fall short of your ultimate goal you will have still benefited from making progress in your life.

Some students newly joining us observe there is no glass ceiling at MPW and that we don't label or pigeon-hole students. We commit to understanding and supporting our students achieve their goals.

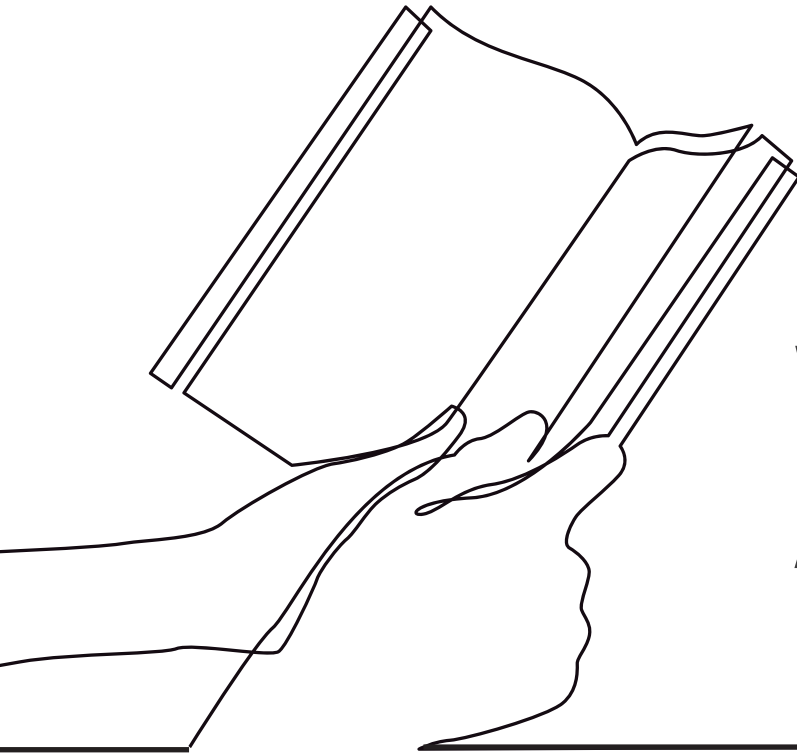
Of course, we need to be practical about this and it's important not to mislead or give false hope. But we disagree with the Prince that people should not know their place in life.

People can learn new things, get better at what they are doing, and take on new roles and responsibilities.



AT MPW WE BELIEVE,
WHERE POSSIBLE,
IN SUPPORTING
ASPIRATION.

Some people are more talented than others but as the author and social commentator Malcolm Gladwell stated many people are 'smart enough' to take on important roles in society. So, it is with our students. We have a unique culture of success in which many of our students achieve things even they did not believe were possible.



WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Given events of recent months, it is not difficult to believe that we have been sucked into a dystopian novel ourselves. The world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Station Eleven* do not seem so ridiculous now. Luckily for us, we have not delved into the world of zombies and *World War Z* for real, but it seems as though we should be relying on these books as some sort of instruction manual. It appears that dystopian fiction has now become our reality.

Here are some of the fantastic books our students and members of staff have been reading:

FATIMA –

‘Pride and Prejudice’ by Jane Austen

“Initially, my main motivation for reading this book was solely based on its well acclaimed reviews, but as read further I found it somewhat empowering because of the strong female protagonist Elizabeth. Although the writing is a bit tricky as it is in old English, the plot of the book is very interesting, and the rich language makes it more enjoyable for me to read.”

AMY –

‘Thinking, Fast and Slow’ by Daniel Kahneman.

“I have just started reading Daniel Kahneman’s *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. I usually go for fiction, so this is an interesting change. Essentially, it’s exploring the way people think. Kahneman uses the term System 1 to explain how people can make intuitive decisions based on emotions and memory, and System 2 which allocates time to mental activities, but is also “lazy”. It’s not necessarily an easy read, but I feel like it will be an insightful read if you want to understand people’s decision making further.”



SYBEL -

‘Petit Pays’ and ‘Golden Kamuy’.

Besides my textbooks, I have been reading a novel and a Japanese comic (I am a very big fan of those). The novel is called Petit Pays (Small Country, in French). It is an autobiography of Gaël Faye, a french and Burundian writer, and singer. He grew up in Burundi, my native country, in times of political crisis. The novel describes the political tension that arose in the country prior to and following the 1993 coup-d’etat, with the not-so-naive point of view of an eleven-year-old child. As an African citizen who has spent most of his life outside of his home country, I try to learn more about my history and culture through books, movies, and other representations. On the other hand, Golden Kamuy, the Japanese ‘manga’ (comic) that I recently finished catching up is far less serious. I am very fond of this kind of literature and Golden Kamuy was just the following comic to read on my endless lists. The art is amazing, the characters are truly lovely and endearing, and the gruesome fight scenes are spaced by more comic and heart-warming moments.



LYDIA -

‘The World Treasury of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy’ by Timothy Ferris.

“I enjoy reading because it offers the opportunity to examine new ideas and expand one’s range of knowledge. I am presently reading “The World Treasury of Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy” by Timothy Ferris, a selection of essays from renowned figures in the above fields. I like the book for its range of fascinating topics, insight into prominent scientific theories of recent history, and exploration of the link between philosophy and science.”



Reading is important to stimulate the mind, to boost our creativity and communication skills. The Learning Resource Centre at MPW Birmingham is filled with different types of books and genres for a range of tastes and preferences. Reading is not just about academia. It is about widening our perspective and stretching our imagination. And it is now more important than ever.

MENTAL HEALTH



At MPW we remain committed to ensuring that the academic journey of our staff and students is as mentally healthy as possible. This is why each Personal Tutor is a qualified first aider, trained in recognising and responding to the mental challenges an academic year and early adult years can throw up.

Stress is defined as lacking the resources to cope with a given situation and one of the key messages learned through the training course is that each of us has a stress container and the amount of stress each container can hold indicates the

threshold or limit to how much stress we can cope with at any given time. Some containers are larger than others which is why some people can seemingly handle a great deal of stressors and others fewer. While it is useful to consider the size of the stress container in our individual circumstances, it is more important to note that each of our containers has a valve or tap that can be used to reduce the amount of stress in the container. Some activities are more helpful than others when reducing the levels of stress within our containers; exercise, healthy eating,

sleep and communicating have all been shown to be effective in reducing our levels of stress, something the Personal Tutor team pass on to students. In addition to providing advice on proven methods to maintain strong mental health, the team also advise avoiding unhealthy behaviours that can add stress and anxiety like drinking too much caffeine or alcohol.

All of these factors can aid our understanding of mental health and how to successfully manage it in a positive and proactive way.



PHYSICS OLYMPIAD

This year some of our talented A level Physics students entered the British Physics Olympiad which is aimed to encourage the study of Physics and recognise excellence in young physicists through ten annual Physics and Astronomy and Astrophysics competitions. Participation in a British Physics Olympiad is a challenge for able students which allows them to have fun through problem solving. Earlier this year, MPW Birmingham students William, Tim and Hugo sat Round 1 and William achieved Silver while Tim and Hugo both earned Commendations. Well done to the three students for their excellent achievement.

TUESDAY AFTERNOON SPORT


This year, it has been pleasing to see students make use of the excellent facilities at the Doug Ellis Sports Centre, allowing sport to remain a thriving part of MPW's enrichment programme. Tuesday afternoons offer a much-needed break from the rigorous nature of academic study and promoted a healthy balance between work and play. According to research, taking part in sport can prepare students for the stress and pressure of exams and we encourage as many students as possible to take part in enrichment in the coming years.

Many competitive fixtures have been played throughout the year in both Football and Basketball and I am delighted to say MPW Birmingham won the majority of games. This is testament to the talent and the commitment our students have demonstrated. The highlight of this year was undoubtedly the Winter Olympics, where staff and students bravely fought gruelling rain-soaked conditions in a 5-a-side football tournament. The staff played some lovely tiki-taka football that Guardiola himself would have been proud of. However, at times they were overrun by the youthful exuberance and silky skills of the student teams. The competition was closely fought with several tight games and amazingly three teams were tied at the end, leading to an infamous penalty shootout. With bragging rights on the line, it appeared the staff lost all their composure. Unbelievably they missed all their penalties, bringing back the painful memories of England in Euro 96. The students were worthy champions on this occasion; however the staff will be keen to seek their revenge next year!



Scientists continue to research the positive effects that exercise can have on our brains. If you have ever been out long-distance running, you will have experienced a variety of thoughts and feelings as your body adapts to the challenges you put it through. It has also been suggested that engaging with running on a regular basis can improve a student's study habits. In recent years a growing number of neuroscientists have researched this hypothesis and discovered that running improves the cortical flicker frequency of the brain. This is linked to the ability to better process information. Research from Nottingham Trent University also suggests that interval running has proven to improve aspects of executive function. This refers to the faculties of the brain that can tune out distractions, switch between tasks and solve problems. At MPW we value running as a tool to support study as well as a social activity that brings our young people together. Each week, Running Club is held with staff and students coming together to run around the leafy streets of Edgbaston. The route includes running through the University of Birmingham where students are given a first-hand experience of university life as they run past students leaving lectures or returning to their accommodation. The club is very much for beginners and open to everyone who wants to take part in some weekly exercise in a fun and relaxed environment.

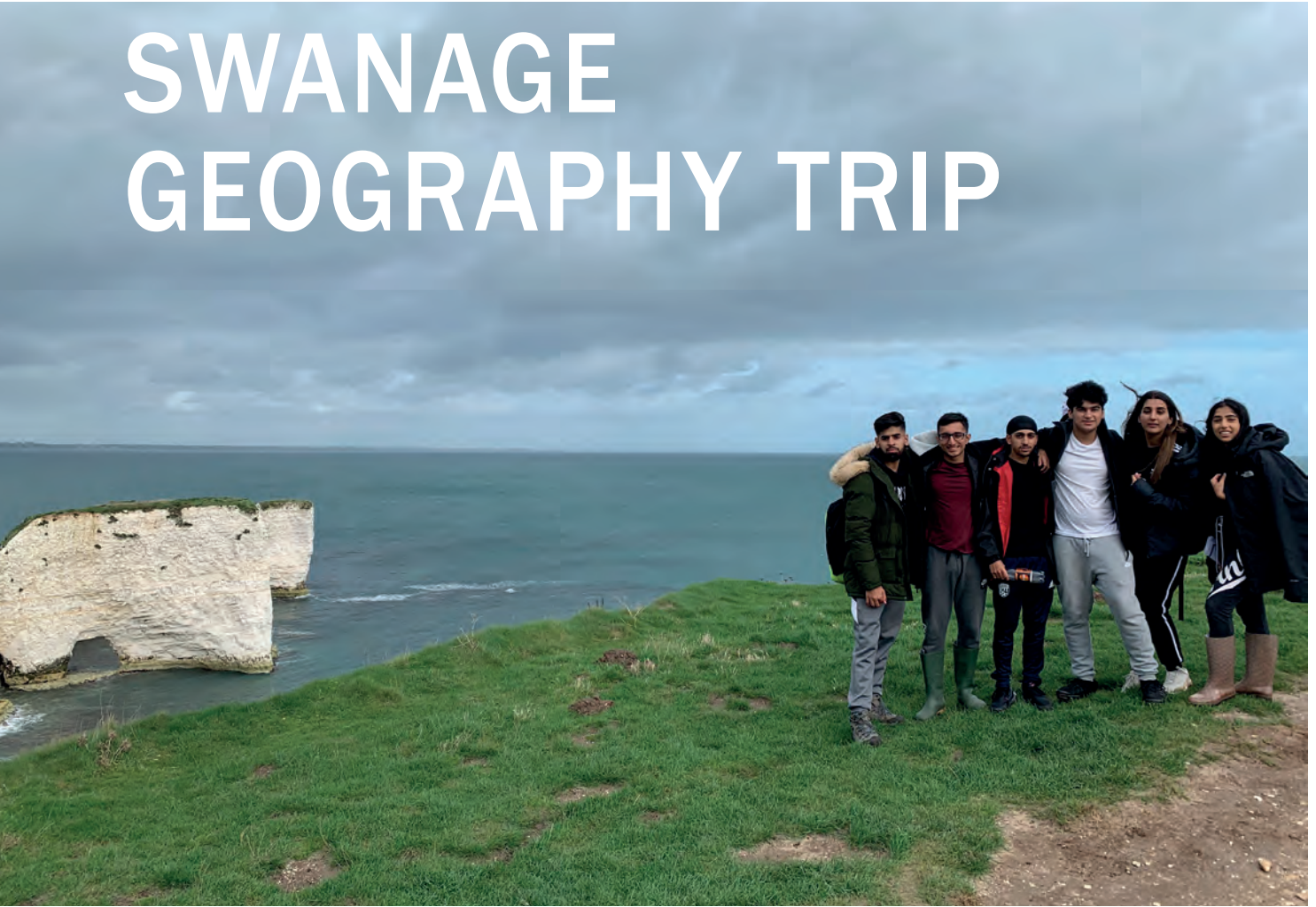
MPW RUNNING CLUB



5.10pm EVERY THURSDAY
MEET IN RECEPTION
ALL STUDENTS AND STAFF ARE WELCOME (FAST OR SLOW)

RUNNING CLUB

SWANAGE GEOGRAPHY TRIP



Earlier this year, MPW Birmingham's cohort of A level Geography students departed for a residential field trip to the Dorset coast. Students enjoyed two nights at an award-winning field centre only a few minutes' walk from Swanage beach. MPW tutors alongside experts from Allnatt field centre guided students through extensive fieldwork experiments including the completion of Sand Dune Transects, Soil pH testing and Tidal Observation. Students also had the opportunity to study coastal erosion at iconic sites such as Old Harry's Rocks and Lulworth Cove. Despite the autumnal scenes, the weather remained good throughout the trip and students were able to enjoy coastal walks, discovering jellyfish and marine life along the coast.

As part of the Geography A level qualification students must complete a minimum of four days of fieldwork and complete a piece of coursework on an element of either Physical or Human Geography. Students embraced the opportunity to collect primary data samples whilst on the fieldwork expedition before returning to the classroom to start work on analysing their findings and completing their coursework.





PRIZE GIVING

Each year the college community comes together to marvel at the achievements of students from the previous year at the Annual Prize Giving Ceremony. Many of the students in attendance travel great lengths from their university campuses to receive awards and catch-up with their tutors.

This year, attendees were treated to an inspirational talk by guest speaker John Southworth. John is the MPW London Principal and having served as a Major in the British Army, John treated the audience to several anecdotes from his time in the military that related to the aspirations of young people. There was an underlying theme to all of his advice to our students which was that nothing can replace passion and determination in obtaining something you desire.





There were some remarkable achievements this year by all 15 prize winners. This included Lwai who picked up the MPW GCSE Prize after obtaining grades 9,9,8,8,8,8,7,6. Lwai is now studying A level Biology, Chemistry and Economics and is applying to study Dentistry this year.

“Alongside the small class sizes; the frequent Timed Assignment’s really allowed me to identify where I was making mistakes. This allowed me to keep track of my progress. Throughout my time as a GCSE student, meeting my Personal Tutor every week meant that I was able to discuss my grades and consider how I can make improvements.”

Lwai



This year’s Outstanding Academic Achievement award went to Ibraheem who joined MPW as a two-year A level student. Ibraheem’s academic flair and determination enabled him to achieve A*A*A* in A level Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics. Ibraheem is now studying Dentistry at Queen Mary University of London.

“Much of my success was down to the Timed Assignments. They are a brilliant and innovative idea that is implemented very well at the college. They have more impact than just sitting mock examinations each term because they motivate students to revise each topic they are taught straight away.”

Ibraheem



Rashmini won the Dentistry award after obtaining an incredible A*A*A*. Rashmini joined the college as a one-year A level student after achieving BBB at her previous school. It was great to hear about the experiences Rashmini has already had in her first year of studying Dentistry at the University of Manchester.

“Studying at MPW really helped me to focus on my goal as I’ve wanted to become a dentist from a very young age. The college helped me become more independent and mature, encouraging me to take more ownership of my studies. The Timed Assignments forced me to revise consistently making the task of revising for my final exams less daunting. They also helped me keep track of my progress and identify areas of weakness within my subjects.”

Rashmini



STUDENT INTERVIEW

- ALEX

I WAS AMAZED AT THE SUPPORT I RECEIVED
AT THE COLLEGE AND FULLY RECOMMEND
THE COLLEGE TO ANY STUDENT.

Some of our students at MPW have flown thousands of miles to attend the college and with student accommodation also situated on Greenfield Crescent, there is no excuse for our international students ever being late for a lesson! We speak to Chinese student Alex who has recently finished his A level studies with us after joining the college initially to study GCSEs.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE MPW OVER OTHER COLLEGES IN THE UK?

I chose to study at MPW because of the high reputation and the huge range of subjects that are available in allowing us to fulfil our career dreams. I searched many UK schools and found that the majority of them were limited in the subjects a student could choose to study. The college is very flexible. This is reflected how MPW were able to allow me to enrol onto an Accounting course as the only student. The one-to-one support was exceptional. There is also always plenty of support for students. I have always been able to book extra lessons with my tutors outside of lessons and really appreciate the extra support they have given me.

HOW DID YOU ADAPT TO BEING A STUDENT IN THE UK?

The UK is the first country I have lived in since leaving my home in China. At first this was not easy for me. As a young man I found it difficult to adapt to a new language, culture and education system. This period was short though as the college supported me in adapting to new ways of living and learning. Everyone I met at the college was very friendly and patient. My tutors would try their best to explain topics slowly and carefully and offer me extra support outside of lessons. Receiving presentation slides the day before each lesson was also really helpful as it allowed me to translate words I didn't understand in advance of the lesson. Students from all nationalities and cultures mix in the Student Common Room and support each other as much as they can. It's a really friendly atmosphere.

HOW WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A GCSE STUDENT AT MPW?

My GCSE year provided me with an opportunity to explore my academic options whilst also adapt to UK culture. At GCSE I studied five subjects – English Language, English Literature, Maths, Business Studies and Physics. By studying these subjects at GCSE I knew that Maths and Business were firm choices for my A level studies. Studying GCSE subjects was a great introduction to learning in the UK. The subjects are easier than A level and allow you to adapt to UK life whilst studying each day.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE A LEVEL SUBJECT AND WHY?

Business Studies. This is partly because my ambition since childhood has been to study Business Management at university. Whilst growing up I have watched my family members pursue their dreams in business which has been very inspiring. My father was one of these men. He persevered and worked hard throughout his life and is now highly successful as a leading LED specialist in China. As well as being inspired by my experiences within Business I have enjoyed my experience in the MPW Business Studies classroom. Exploring numerous businesses and real life case studies has brought the subject to life for me.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT MPW?

It must be learning in a small class. My class sizes are all very small which means I have been able to study in a relaxed environment where I feel confident to ask for support when I need it. The small class size also means that you get to know your classmates and tutors very quickly which makes the experience even more enjoyable. For me MPW is not just a school but I see it as a family that has helped put me at ease in a new foreign country.

HAVE YOU ENJOYED LIVING IN BIRMINGHAM?

Birmingham is the second largest city in the UK which means there is plenty to see and do. MPW is located just outside the city centre which makes it very easy to access everything a student needs. For instance there is a supermarket, cinema and gym all in a two minute walk from the college and accommodation. I enjoy being so close to the library, train station and China Town where there are plenty of excellent restaurants. Overall I feel very comfortable living in Birmingham.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND MPW TO SOMEBODY THINKING OF STUDYING IN THE UK?

Honestly, I haven't seen any college better than MPW in my memory. MPW has a wide range of subjects for students to study with very professional tutors who provide us with the best academic support. The flexibility of the timetable has given me freedom to plan and structure my free time with study or extra-curricular activities. The weekly tests puts me under pressure but pushes me to revise regularly. I have also had a Personal Tutor who has supported me through any struggles I have had in my time at the college. He helps me maintain a good mental health whilst also analysing my Timed Assignment performance each week. I was amazed at the support I received at the college and fully recommend the college to any student.

CHARITY EVENTS

MPW students continue to approach staff regularly with their ideas for supporting different charities. Over the years, the college community has raised money for good causes such as Edward's Trust, Mind, The Big Issue, The Down's Syndrome Association and Save the Rhino. This year was no different with a variety of projects aiming to support both local and national charities. This included Nikhil's attempts to keep homeless people warm throughout the winter months.

Nikhil asked staff and students to donate hats and gloves which he then wrapped in gift paper and distributed around the Christmas period. The level of generosity for the project was overwhelming with boxes being flooded with clothes in the Student Common Room. Elsewhere, the college observed World Mental Health Day by asking all staff and students to wear yellow. In the process, the project raised money for Mind who support and empower those struggling with mental health problems. A new event held this year was the MPW Bake Off. Staff and students were invited to bake something tasty and sweet in support of Action for Children who support vulnerable children in the UK. Tutors Bridget, Mat and Amy judged the contest in which Year 10 student Safiya won with her delicious chocolate cake! As always, we encourage all students to approach us about charity ideas and events they would like to hold in college.



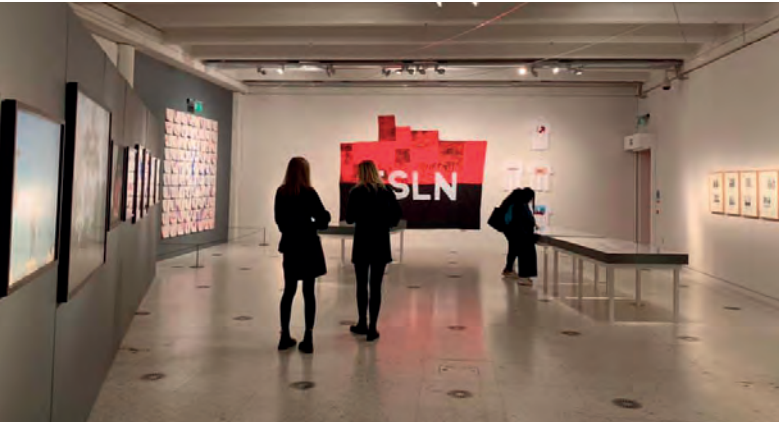
The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) continues to be popular and successful. The students are given the chance to submit a 5,000-word dissertation style essay or artefact project on a topic of their choice. This project is then delivered as a presentation to a panel of non-specialist academics. The EPQ gives students the opportunity to gain UCAS points to put towards their university application.

This year the EPQ has seen more creative artefacts than ever. International student Audrey used her EPQ project as an opportunity to create designs for a space-efficient public sports centre after reflecting on the increased public awareness of healthcare in Hong Kong. Discussing her project, Audrey reflected on her EPQ journey; 'I very much enjoyed the creative elements of the EPQ, it gave me a lot of freedom to investigate on the areas I was interested in. Therefore, I could create a project I enjoyed, whilst studying and gaining new skills.' Aside from achieving an A grade in the sought after qualification, Audrey also gained other skills from her project; 'The EPQ allowed me to improve my skills as an artist, and also my referencing skills which will be extremely helpful for me in the future at university.' Upon completion of her outstanding essay on the Peloponnesian war, Cate discussed her biggest achievements from the project; 'The EPQ helped me to develop my skills as extended essay writing developed my analytical skills over a complex topic. Referencing was also a great skill as it served as preparation for university and future essay writing, to ensure essay sources are accurately and suitably referenced. I enjoyed the flexibility of the EPQ topic the most, providing an opportunity to study a different topic to the A level history syllabus thus was an interesting, different historical period to study.'

THE EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION



THE HERBERT GALLERY AND THE IKON



Earlier this year, MPW Art and Design students spent a day visiting local art galleries in a bid to find inspiration for final projects. Exploring the work of artists first-hand is a core element to studying creative subjects at the college as it is within the work of practising artists that students can learn techniques and ideas that influence their own work. Accessing art work through the internet and books is brilliant, but nothing compares to seeing the real thing. By visiting and exploring art in person students are able to experience pieces of work in a way that the artists intended audiences to view them. There are plenty of galleries to visit in the West Midlands including Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, the New Walsall Art Gallery and Eastside Projects to name just a few. However, it was the IKON Gallery, Birmingham and the Herbert Gallery, Coventry that students visited on this particular field trip.

MPW students were treated to a broad range of mediums at the Herbert Gallery, with works ranging from traditional oil paintings through to virtual reality experiences through a headset. The featured exhibition being held in the gallery was the Coventry Biennial with work by David Cheeseman, Stephen Cornford and Andrew Jackson. The piece that appeared to capture the MPW students imagination the most was 'Matters Not' by David Cheeseman. Following his death in 2018, Cheeseman's final work was completed by his wife to his specification. The work is composed of a large mixed media sphere that sits on a rug in the centre of a room. The work, which explores science through sculpture, completely captivated the MPW students who spent time experiencing it by sitting in the installation space.

After boarding the train back to Birmingham, the group visited the IKON gallery which is just a stone's throw away from the college. Located just outside Birmingham City Centre in Brindley Place, the IKON gallery has hosted work by some of the greatest modern artists including Marcel Dzama, Julian Opie and Gillian Wearing. On this visit, students experienced the work of Barry Flanagan who is one of Britain's most inventive sculptors. The work on show, created between 1980-2000, displays an artist enjoying an experimental phase of his career which was incredibly insightful for the MPW students to experience.

With camera phones, sketchbooks and notepads filled, the field trip was a tiring but enjoyable day out of college for the group.



MINDFULNESS

We should never underestimate the levels of pressure that young people encounter as they strive to fulfil their academic potential. Each student at MPW is assigned with a Personal Tutor who not only supports their academic aspirations but is also somebody students can turn to when the pressures of being a young person feel too much. As well as provide students with somebody who can support them in this way, we also work with external professionals who introduce our students to techniques that can help them cope with stress. To mark World Mental Health Day we invited Rachel Broomfield to the college to deliver a Mindfulness session. Rachel is an accredited Mindfulness teacher whose ambition is to promote mental health and wellbeing within education. Rachel took charge of one of our PSHE sessions and showed MPW students how they can focus on the moments and sounds around them in an effort to disconnect from the aspects of life that cause tension and stress. For more information on how Mindfulness can help improve your mental wellbeing visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>

MAKING CHEMISTRY PRACTICAL



The Chemistry department at MPW prides itself on delivering top quality practicals, from titrations to distillations to electrochemical cells. All required practicals are not only completed, but fully explored with lessons covering the theory behind the chemistry that the students are exploring. This provides the students with an excellent understanding of what they are achieving during the practical and they have a clear idea of how to process their data afterwards. MPW's Chemistry team is composed of multiple chemists who have worked in laboratories previously and are eager to pass on their hands-on knowledge to the students.

Students this year have managed to explore a wide range of techniques to prepare them for science-based university degrees, and have developed their skills in recording and reporting their findings. Our year 13s had the

pleasure of researching and undertaking the famous 'iodine clock' reaction, in which they can observe how differing concentrations of reactants can affect the rate of a reaction. This fascinating reaction involves recording the time taken for a seemingly unreactive transparent solution to suddenly transform to a deep dark mixture in the blink of an eye! With this information and the skills the students developed in lesson, they were able to determine the impact that iodide ions have during a multistep reaction!

"I have thoroughly enjoyed doing practicals as they allowed me to gain deeper insight into the chemistry behind the results gained from every experiment. Doing experiments also helped nurture my problem-solving and team-cooperation skills." – Anya, a year 13 student applying for a degree in Pharmacy.

With the temporary move to online teaching, staff have been so dedicated to our practical teaching, that the GCSE students got to witness a fantastic example of an acid base reaction via Microsoft Teams. Betty gave a great demonstration using bicarbonate of soda and citric acid from lemon juice. The students got to witness the effects of effervescence and the messy results due to the production of carbon dioxide within the mixture.

Looking ahead, we are continuing to improve our resources to provide more excellent practical lessons and laboratory theory for our students, to prepare them for not only their exams, but for a variety of laboratory-based degrees and careers in the future.

As part of the ongoing Careers programme at MPW, our students were invited to attend a number of talks given by Gemma Polatajko, the Student Recruitment and Access Officer from the University of Reading.

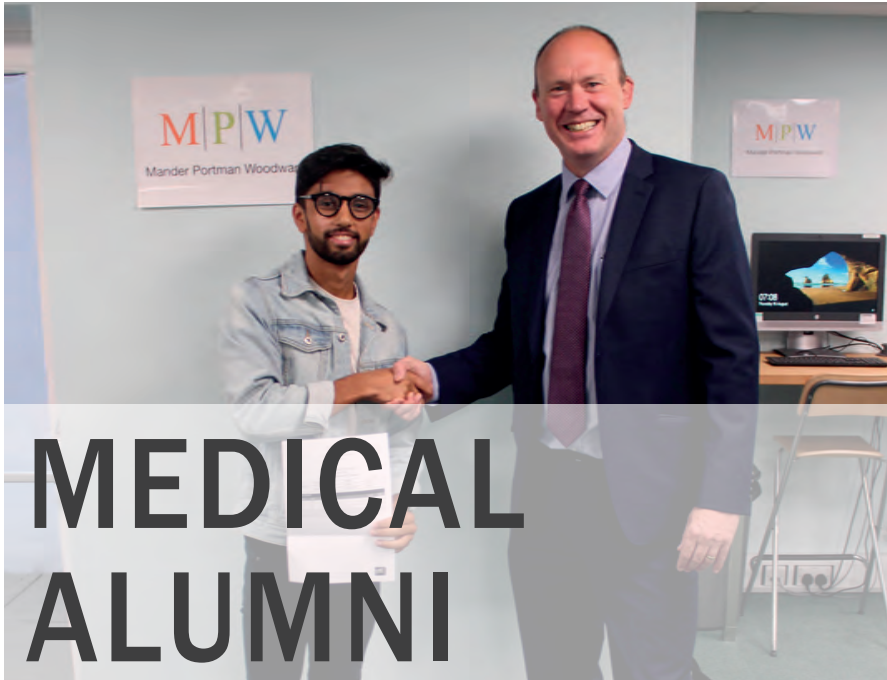
The vast majority of our students plan to continue their studies at undergraduate level after completing their A levels, so getting to hear first-hand from a university representative was enormously beneficial. Gemma was able to engage with our learners and support them with their journey into higher education.

Gemma was able to present on a range of important topics, including the benefits of higher education, choosing a university and course that is right for you, how to make the most of open days and UCAS exhibitions, writing personal statements, the application process, and student finance and tips on managing your money whilst at university.

Since the talks, Gemma has also been able to support applicants to the University of Reading on a one-to-one basis by helping them to prepare for university life and to familiarise them with their prospective new city.



UNIVERSITY SUPPORT



MEDICAL ALUMNI

– PRANAY

Once our students leave MPW, we like to keep in touch with them to see how they are progressing through their undergraduate studies. I have the particular pleasure of keeping in touch with a number of our medical and dental undergraduates and find that they have some really useful words of wisdom to offer to aspiring students. I recently caught up with Pranay, who is studying Medicine at King's College London, to see how he was getting on and what advice he would give to anybody considering following this route at university.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO STUDY MEDICINE?

I chose to study medicine as it is a dynamic and rapidly advancing industry that enables me to gain an understanding of the human body in immense depth and then apply that knowledge to patients in order to improve their quality of life as best as possible, a hugely rewarding and gratifying experience. Additionally, medicine is multi-faceted and with a huge range of clinical specialties to go in to, along opportunities to do research and teaching, I will be constantly learning and bettering myself as a doctor as my career progresses.

WHERE DID YOU CARRY OUT WORK EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO APPLYING TO STUDY MEDICINE?

- 1 week at St. Georges Hospital, London in the Plastic Surgery Department. Spent time with Junior doctors and registrars in A&E, hand clinics and trauma.
- 3 days at East Surrey Hospital in the Surgical Assessment Unit. Spent time with a healthcare assistant, doctors and nurses so I got to see the huge range of crucial roles carried out by the range of professionals in a hospital setting.

- 1 week and the Anne Rowling Clinic, Edinburgh. Spent time in research labs studying neurodegenerative diseases and well as in neurology clinics which gave me an understanding of both the research side of medicine and how it significantly contributes to patient care in a clinical setting.
- 1 week at Epsom Hospital. Spent time in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Took the opportunity to go into theatre and observe a hysterectomy.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM YOUR WORK EXPERIENCE?

I learnt that the work of a doctor is extremely gratifying and rewarding despite being exceptionally busy and demanding. I was exposed to the realities of working as a doctor in the NHS – an extremely challenging environment – but nonetheless, I saw the immense value that doctors added to patients' lives on a daily basis which only further inspired me to one day be a position to do the same myself. Furthermore, I was exposed to the research work that fundamentally underlies clinical medicine and it taught me that working outside the clinic, in labs, provides the ability to develop new therapies for currently incurable conditions – work that will continue to advance the medical field. The opportunity to undertake work like this as a medical professional further drove me to strive to become a doctor. I saw first-hand the many of the skills of a doctor – teamwork, communication, resilience empathy to name a few – which proved useful in my interviews as it showed I was thoroughly aware that there is more to being a doctor than just academic rigour.

WHICH SUBJECTS DID YOU STUDY AT A LEVEL & WHAT GRADES DID YOU GET?

- Biology: A*
- Chemistry: – A*
- Maths: A

IF YOUR JOURNEY INTO MEDICINE WAS AN UNUSUAL ONE, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS:

Unfortunately, when I took my A levels for the first time, I did not achieve the grades I wanted. However, I always knew that studying medicine was my goal, so I decided to undertake a one year A level programme at MPW Birmingham, where I received huge support and guidance, post which I was able to achieve A*A*A and take up a place to study Medicine at King's College, London.

WHAT ARE YOUR EXPERIENCES OF STUDYING MEDICINE SO FAR AND WHAT DO YOU PARTICULARLY ENJOY ABOUT THE COURSE?

I've really enjoyed the course so far. It is intense and demanding, however, the content is stimulating and with a variety of teaching methods including lectures, tutorials, workshops, lab practicals and dissections, you really have the chance to enhance and consolidate your knowledge. In first year, dissections were particularly enjoyable as you get hands on experience with a cadaver – a captivating way to learn anatomy, although you never get used to the smell!

ARE THERE ANY ASPECTS YOU DON'T ENJOY?

The workload is extensive and requires you to be very well organised to stay on top of it all – but this is a skill that you'll need throughout life and as a doctor so is actually very beneficial.

I found that first year was a bombardment of scientific knowledge through the medium of lectures, tutorials and workshops, with very little chance to develop clinical skills throughout the year of which I definitely would have preferred more. However, in year 2 we now start GP and hospital placements which is exciting and provides the chance to apply our knowledge to real clinical scenarios.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 10 YEARS TIME IN TERMS OF YOUR CAREER?

I'll graduate in 5 years, followed by Foundation Years 1 & 2. After that, I will choose to specialise but currently I have not decided in which specialty that will be. I'd also love to get involved in both research projects and managerial roles throughout my career.

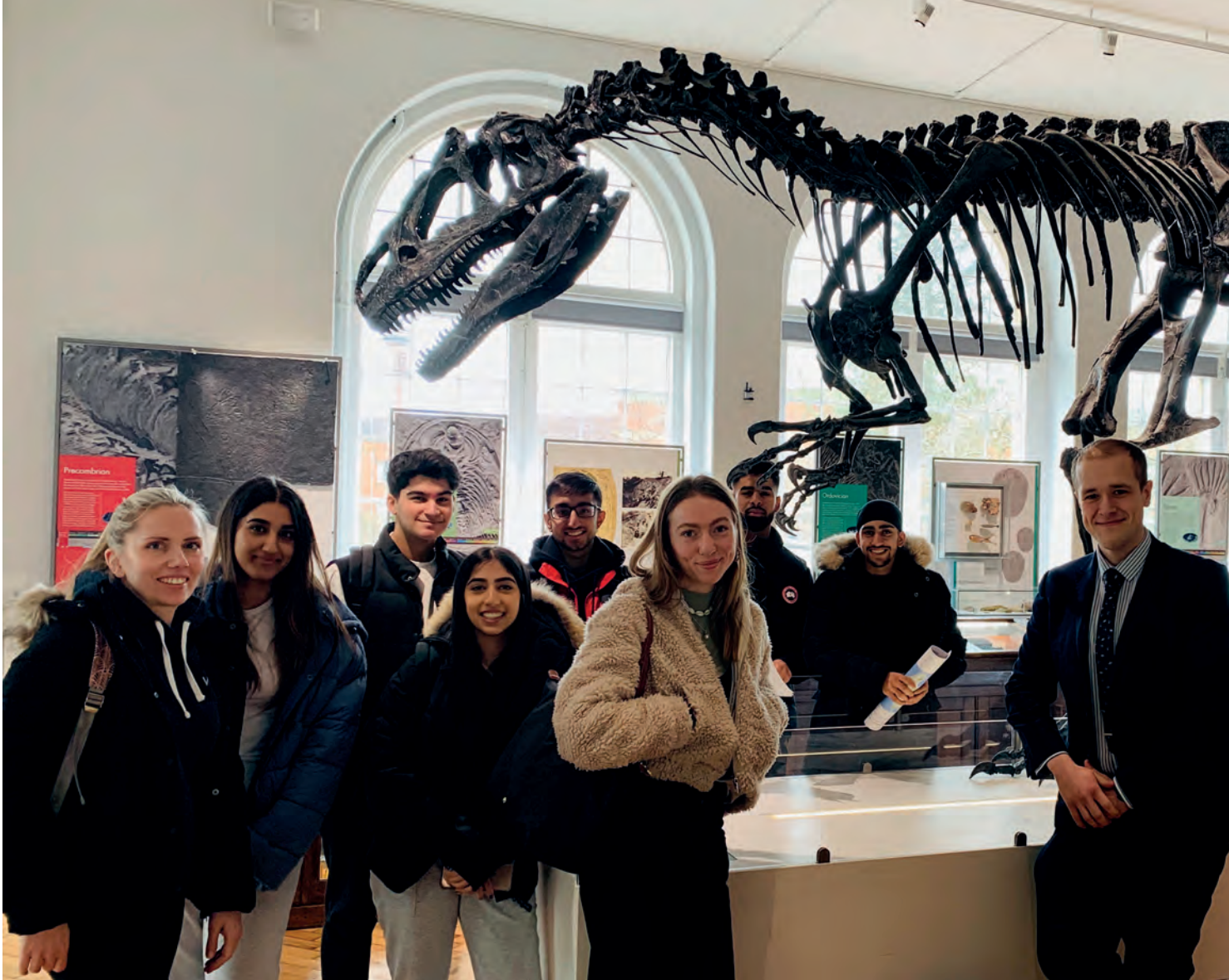
DO YOU HAVE ANY HINTS OR TIPS TO PROSPECTIVE MEDICAL STUDENTS?

The process of applying to medicine is can be very daunting and intense, but I would say focus on each step at a time, whether that be the UKCAT/BMAT, your personal statement, your interviews or gaining relevant work experience, and try not to overwhelm yourself because as you overcome each step, the next one tends to fall into place.

Also, making sure that you are prepared for the interviews, especially the MMI format that most medical schools use nowadays – I used a lot of live examples from my extensive work experience and personal life that was aligned to the skill of a doctor at all my interviews. At interviews, be yourself and let your own personality shine. The application and selection process is pretty time consuming, so ensure you allocate enough time and ensure it is balanced well with the normal academic demands. When selecting medical schools, I found it very useful and informative in talking to the admissions tutor about my application and their interview process. For example, King's said their primary selection criteria for interview was a 700+ UKCAT score, whilst Cardiff wanted 8 A* GCSE grades, so each university was unique and the admissions tutor was always very open to say whether I had a strong application or not, since there is no point wasting a valuable application slot.

Constantly remind yourself why you want to be a doctor and use that drive as motivation to work hard and be organised as these skills you develop will benefit you greatly during your time at medical school.

Lastly, do things you enjoy and have fun, don't do loads of different activities just to put it on your personal statement if you don't find them fulfilling. If you commit to activities you enjoy, that passion will come across if you're asked about it at interviews and will make a stellar impression on the interviewer, and you can even carry on your activities at medical school if you really enjoy them!

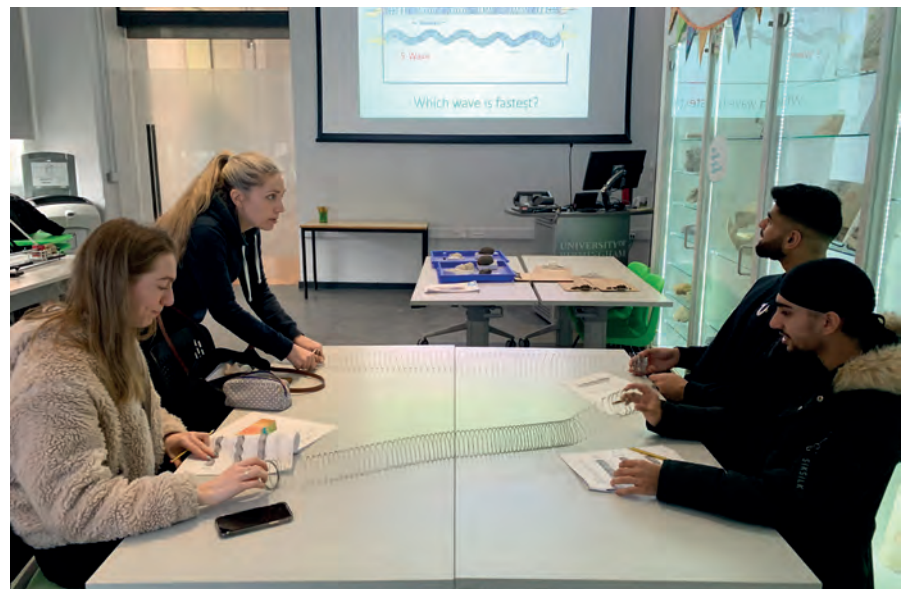


LAPWORTH MUSEUM OF GEOLOGY

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM



A level Geography students had the opportunity to visit the Lapworth Museum of Geology based at the University of Birmingham to further their knowledge of tectonic plates and hazards. Students were given a comprehensive tour of the museum by expert staff and were shown fossilised remains of prehistoric rhinos that were discovered just outside Birmingham. Students were naturally mesmerised by the resin casts of



prehistoric dinosaur bones and looking for clues about how each individual dinosaur was likely to have died.

Students were also able to engage in an interactive workshop that brought the specification content to life in front of their eyes. The session took place in a classroom-based environment, with some rather unusual learning resources including volcanic rock and a seismometer

which is normally used to measure the severity of an earthquake. Students were amazed that the seismometer could detect tremors caused by Year 12 students, Nikhil and Kieran, jumping on the spot in the classroom. In addition to the taught content session, students were able to explore the university campus and gain an improved understanding of life studying as an undergraduate at a Russell Group university.

PSHE

Students engage in a variety of sessions that help them develop a moral compass to navigate through life. As the world continues to develop, it's important that the young people we work with are aware of the dangers that exist and are able to confidently make the right choices in protecting themselves. Topics that are covered throughout the year include British Values, E-safety, Prejudice and Discrimination, Mental Health, Relationships, Drugs, Alcohol and LGBT Rights. Guest speakers are invited to enrich our students' understanding of these topics and students are encouraged to participate in national events that are recognised by the college such as Anti-Bullying Week and World Mental Health Day. To ensure PSHE extends to the academic classroom, subject tutors ensure that relevant news topics are used to support the teaching of their subject's specification. At MPW there is no place for prejudice, discrimination, extremism or ill feeling towards others. PSHE is just one of the tools in the college used to ensure this is upheld throughout every student's journey with us. In addition to the education we offer our student on contemporary and relevant life topics, we work in partnership with Open Door Youth Counselling located directly opposite the college. All MPW students are encouraged to speak to their Personal Tutor if they are struggling with their thoughts and feelings. However, if they want to speak to somebody confidentially, counselling sessions are made available for students to work with Open Door.





Earlier this year, MPW's A level Economics students visited the centre of the UK financial market – the Bank of England. The UK's central bank, one of the oldest in the world, is responsible for deciding the level of base interest rates and undertakes detailed monetary analysis to help it create financial stability and to keep inflation at a specific rate. The trip was organised to provide an opportunity to deepen Economics students' understanding of the role of the financial market. This experience was designed to supplement the theoretical research undertaken in the classroom.

Part of the experience involved visiting the banks museum, where students were given an opportunity to delve into the history of money in the UK and investigate the colourful story of the various banknote designs. Students were able to confront the Hollywood-fuelled myth of the weight of gold with a solid gold bar presented in front of them. An opportunity to hold the gold bar solidified students' understanding of the importance and convenience of other legal tenders.

It was interesting to observe the dynamic discussions between MPW's Economics and Business students, where different ideas and slightly different objectives collided. Both sets of students were able to collate valuable data and information from the museum and the Bank of England before bringing it back to Birmingham to continue developing their understanding in preparation for both public examination and everyday use of the acquired knowledge.





CHESTER ZOO

On a very wet and cold Friday in October, our NCUK Economics and Business students visited Chester Zoo to conduct research on the palm oil industry for their semester one coursework about the possible ways in which the Indonesian government could further regulate the production of palm oil within the economy.

The day started as we were shown to the Learning Centre. Here we were divided into 2 groups and were met by a member of their Learning Department. Students were treated to an engaging talk about the palm oil industry, Chester Zoo's

role in promoting the use of sustainable palm oil and their goal of trying to make Chester the first city in the UK to only use sustainable palm oil!

Did you know that 85% of palm oil is grown in Malaysia and Indonesia? Did you also know that palm oil can be found in over 50% of products in our supermarkets? Palm oil can be found in most products that make up your weekly shop, from shampoo and toothpaste, to pizza and chocolate.

The zoo's Learning Officer talked us through the many benefits of palm oil. It's low production costs and the increase

in global demand have meant that jobs have been created for people in poor communities, increasing their income and decreasing poverty, thus boosting the multiplier effect.

Unfortunately, the palm oil industry has a darker side. To make room for these plantations, many acres of forest have had to be cleared with managed fires. This method increases the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. In addition, this deforestation is contributing to the loss of endangered species, such



as the Sumatran tiger, Sumatran rhino and orangutans. The issues with palm oil do not stop there. There are human costs also, such as worker exploitation and child labour.

Steph exhibited a variety of artefacts that had been confiscated at customs. These artefacts included the skin of a reticulated python, an elephant's foot and items made from crocodile skin. The students could interact with these, identify the species and discuss the consequences of wildlife exploitation.

As well as engage with the day's education activities, students were also able to explore the zoo and see some amazing wildlife, including baby elephants. Some students had never seen an elephant before, so this was a wonderful experience to share with them. Despite the weather, it was a hugely successful and informative day that highlighted some important global issues that students were able to inform their coursework with.

THE WELLBEING GARDEN

– BY BRIDGET

In the summer of 2018, MPW extended into building 16, providing the college with much needed additional teaching rooms, Personal Tutor hub, offices and the Learning Resource Centre. The link corridor with its wall of glass looking out onto a courtyard inspired Bridget and Libby to begin creating a wellbeing garden where – given warmth and sunshine – students can meet with their Personal Tutor. It is also a place in which to relax and take time out from the busy world.

The link between gardening and wellbeing has never been more important, with celebrities such as Will Young describing on ‘Gardener’s World’ just how much being outdoors enables him to maintain good mental health. He says that his garden has inspired him to write many of his songs and gives him time out from a hectic lifestyle. We may believe that we are nurturing a garden, but actually it is our garden that is nurturing us. In the period of lockdown 2020, many people turned to their outdoor spaces or even a window ledge, and started to grow flowers and vegetables.

As a teacher of English Literature and a lover of books, I can empathise with Cicero. In a letter to a friend in 46BC he is popularly quoted as saying, “If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need.” The deeper meaning of his statement is connected to the purpose of a Roman garden, for thinking, philosophising and taking part in debate. It was a garden library rather than a library with a garden. At MPW, we believe that good mental health goes hand



TO PLANT A GARDEN
IS TO BELIEVE IN
TOMORROW.

Audrey Hepburn

in hand with academic fulfilment and success. Our wellbeing garden is just one part of the support we give our students as they grow, becoming more and achieving more than they ever thought possible.

Looking outside the link corridor window, you will see trellis to encourage climbers and plants which appeal to all the senses. There is a seating area to between the planters to allow us to relax and, like many who turn to their gardens for sanctuary, take a moment to think and reflect. For some, a garden is also a place where they can remember loved ones, planting something which reminds them of a family member or friend who has died. A great deal of comfort can be gained through this process or from simply taking time to reflect. Many people have favourite flowers that remind them

of a special place or purpose. For me, the scent and delicate beauty of sweet peas reminds me of my mother and the deep purple of the pansies my grandmother always grew. I love the prairie style plants: the early explosion of alliums and verbena bonariensis moving into the bold red, orange and deep yellows of rudbeckia, crocosmia and heleniums which are a joy in late summer. However, there will always be the sweet peas, pansies and their smaller relations – the violas – alongside the herbs which remind me of how much my son loved cooking.

The Chelsea Flower Show may have been a virtual reality experience in 2020 but the garden at MPW Birmingham will welcome students, staff and visitors to the college in the coming years.



BADMINTON

One of the activities available at the sports centre in the college enrichment period is Badminton; the world's fastest racket sport! Badminton is a fantastic physical workout that can be enjoyed by players of all ages and abilities. It is also a great way to make new friends and relax. It also provides students with a release from the pressures of GCSE or A level study.

In December, MPW held our annual 'Winter Olympics'. Many congratulations to Steven for winning the Badminton competition. Steven is an accomplished player, who regularly attended Badminton at enrichment and also represents David Lloyd Badminton Club in the Birmingham Badminton League.

Looking forward to next year, we would like to encourage anyone, experienced players and complete beginners alike, to come along and have a go on Tuesday afternoons. The college provides rackets and shuttlecocks, so no equipment is required. For anyone who does take the sport seriously, we will be taking part in competitive fixtures through the National Schools Badminton Championship.

M|P|W

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