



**Teesdale School
& Sixth Form Centre**

WINTER NEWSLETTER

December 2018

Dear all,

I would like to wish you, and your families, great peace and happiness at this Christmas time, filled with joy, celebration and hope for the New Year to come.

As I think of our students and the busy term, I feel great pride. They are kind, giving and always generous with their time and efforts. Our students are committed to making a difference to others less fortunate than themselves. Our most recent event, a charity quiz night run by our superb, sixth form students from the Rotary 'Interact' group, exemplified their strong, caring attitudes as well as their ability to have great fun at the same time! Passionate about social issues, they are determined to make a difference to a range of people: from those fleeing their war-torn homes to supporting agricultural education in Lesotho and, more locally, helping out at the Beaconsfield Care Home.

Our students go from strength to strength in their passion for music. Our young Year 7s shone in their new starters' concert. They bravely performed, some for the first time ever, in front of a large, welcoming audience. What a wealth of talent and potential! If you were not able to make it, you missed a real treat.

I am glad so many were able to share in the Christmas Concert event; to enjoy the lovely art and crafts

on display; and to hear some very special musical performances from our students (and staff!).

Our students' endeavours in sport continue to exceed all we could ask. Our new Year 7 boys' football team have won four out of six games this term, impressing us with their sportsmanship and wonderful team spirit. Several of our athletes have fought bravely through the mud to earn places at the county championships in January and new links have been forged with Barnard Castle Rugby Club.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War, two of our sixth-form students, who visited Flanders in November this year, inspired students in Year 8 to write their own poems about what war means to them.

Reflecting on the end of the First World War helps us to realise how fortunate we are to live in more peaceful times. In spite of the problems and hardships that still surround us, even though there are still challenges ahead, we can be thankful that we live in an age where we and our loved ones are not called upon to sacrifice everything on the huge scale witnessed in the terrible conflict of WW1.

J Gorlach
Executive Headteacher



**We are
school of the
year 2018!**

**We are thrilled to
announce that we have
been awarded Teesdale
Mercury's School of the
Year 2018.**

The Teesdale Mercury Community Pride Awards ceremony recognises and rewards inspirational people from the local area for their achievements in lots of different categories including Community Project of the Year Award, Good Neighbour Award and more.

Congratulations to all our staff and students who work so hard to make our school such a great place to learn. We are delighted!



Postgrad conference

Last month, two of our sixth form students, Nina and Cal, attended the *British Association of American Studies Annual Postgraduate Conference*, held at Northumbria University.

The theme of the conference was 'Antecedents and Legacies of 1968' – a tumultuous year not only in the United States but also across the globe.

One of those presenting a paper was Gabriel Hogg, an alumnus of Teesdale Sixth Form, who studied A level history during his time with us. Gabriel has recently returned from a research trip to San Francisco and is a PhD student at Northumbria University. His paper entitled 'Black and White Unite and Fight,' explored the experience of the African American communities during the 1934 strike wave.

It was great for Nina and Cal to be able to speak with Gabriel about his research and relate to him as an ex-Teesdale sixth former.

Dr Simon Henderson, Head of Sixth Form, said, "It is great that our extensive network of alumni can open up these possibilities for current students. It is very powerful for our students to see the success that has been achieved by those whose footsteps they follow in and is another example of the excellent opportunities that our sixth form students are able to access."

THE JOKE CORNER

What is a snowman's favourite breakfast?

ICE CRISPIES

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

21 DEC - End of term

07 JAN - Back to school

10 JAN - Year 11 parents' evening

17 JAN - Year 8 parents' evening

31 JAN - Year 8 options evening

15 FEB - End of half term

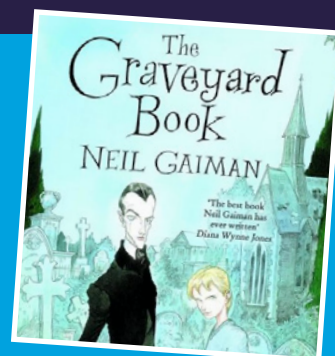
25 FEB - Back to School

To keep up to date with all news and events please visit:

www.teesdaleschool.co.uk

Book review:

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman



This book is about a boy called Nobody Owens (his friends usually call him Bod); he would be a completely normal boy if he didn't live in a graveyard, and hadn't been raised and educated by ghosts!

You may think it's weird for a boy to live in a graveyard, but Bod had good reasons because a killer called 'the man Jack' has already killed all of Bod's family and wants to finish the job. Bod is safe from him inside the graveyard, so that's where he stays.

The book follows Bod from being a baby to becoming an intelligent kid who uncovers the truth about the man Jack and his parents.

An extra addition to this wonderful book are the intriguing pictures before each chapter which represent a small scene from that chapter.

I would give this book 4 out of 5 stars for its interesting storyline and fascinating action.



By Robert Whiting, Year 7



Latest history group publication

Our unique 'History Research Group' have just published a World War One Centenary research journal available on our website.

Sixth form students attended the British Association of American Studies Postgraduate Conference in November and others are working with Durham University exploring primary source and historical interpretations alongside undergraduates. They are thriving magnificently in this challenging environment. To become a centre of excellence in history means starting young and our new Year 7s, together with Year 8s, will be working with Digventures and St. Mary's Church engaging in some sessions exploring medieval medicine.

We're on Twitter and Facebook!



@teesdaleschool



@teesdaleschool
andsixthform



Interact group shortlisted!

Our brilliant Teesdale Sixth Form Interact group were shortlisted for the Young Achievement category at the Pride of Teesdale Awards that took place in November.

The group were recognised for their tremendous charity and community work during the last academic year.

This year the group has grown in number and is involved in new and exciting projects. They collected produce for the local Trussell Trust food bank and are in the early stages of a project to help develop a model

farm in Lesotho in southern Africa.

On Thursday 13 December the group hosted another successful charity quiz night which raised money to help those impacted by the refugee crisis.

Congratulations and keep up the good work!



They stood around me,
Inches from terror.
With hope and fear,
We strode towards the
battlements.

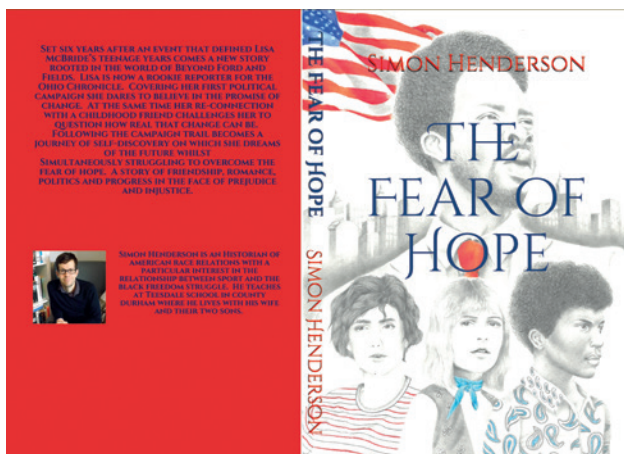
As bullets were fired,
And tanks were released,
I stopped,
Death was upon me,

The cold fingers of hell grasped at
my arm,
Pulling me forward.

The trenches were almost empty,
So then I knew,
I was in.

We stood already considering
defeat,
Contemplating our choices,
Washing away all fears.
Suddenly it began,
My friends dropped left and right,
Their voices echoed in my ear.
I was alone.

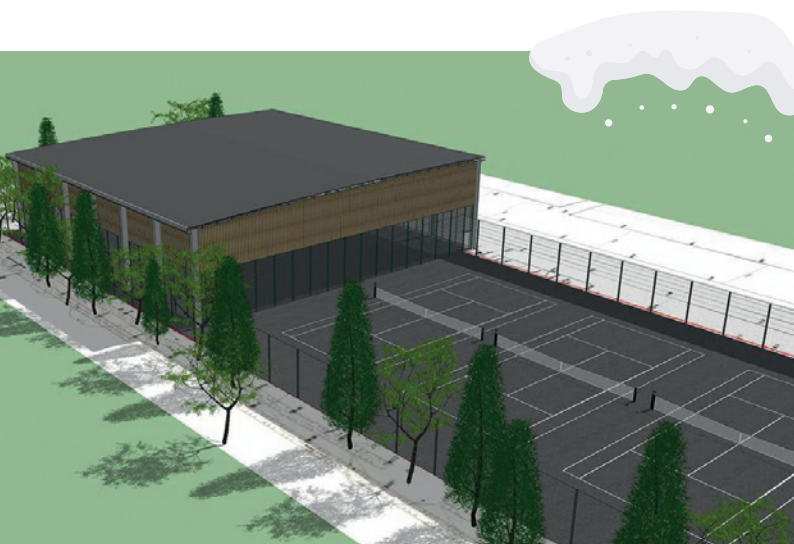
By *Talvi Anstey. Year 8*



The Fear of Hope

One of our very talented teachers, Dr Henderson, recently published a book with a spectacular cover designed by Year 12 student, Eleanor Morris.

The Fear of Hope is a story of friendship, romance, politics and progress in the face of prejudice and injustice. The book is available on Amazon.



BIG plans for our sporting facilities

We have made many changes to our school over the past two years, but one area that is desperately in need of a makeover is our sporting facilities.

However, work is now very much underway to rectify the problem by way of a brand new 'Sports Barn' which will provide a 3G, outdoor, covered space to significantly enhance our facilities.

Work is due to begin around Easter time and everyone at Teesdale School and Sixth Form is looking forward to the transformation.



Sporting successes

Teesdale School's sporting stars continue to shine...

Area Cross Country

Students from Years 7 to 9 competed in the area championships held at Barnard Castle School, a qualification event for the county championships on 19 January.

Individuals who ran well and qualified for their respective teams included:

Year 7 - Rory Hart and Oliver Bentley
Junior boys - George Peacock
Inter boys - Lewis Porter and Nathan Mawer
Senior boys - Josh Mawer

Girls' football

Thank you to our uniform supplier, Emblematic, who have gifted all schools in the North East Learning Trust with a brand new kit. Our fantastic team recently received theirs (pictured above) and we think they look brilliant!

The girls took part in a tournament held at Staindrop School in September. Year 7 and 8 girls' team finished 4th and Year 9 and 10 girls' team finished 6th.

Boys' football

Our Year 7 boys' football team have made a fantastic start to their season by winning four out of their first six games. In particular, a superb 1-0 victory away to Durham Johnston was a particular highlight so far!

Our Year 9 boys' football team have played with excellent attitudes and determination and we look forward to some goals and victories in the new year.

THE JOKE CORNER

What kind of music do elves listen to?

Wrap



Incredible GCSE results at Teesdale School!

Students and staff at Teesdale School are celebrating a truly superb set of GCSE results, helping us to realise our ambition to become the best school in the county.

Our results come in the first year of more challenging GCSEs across the curriculum that are now graded from 9 to 1. Despite much discussion nationally about the impact this would have, Teesdale students have excelled.

A staggering 77 grade 9s were achieved with 26 of these in English and maths (above A* under the old system). This equates to 12% of all grades; huge compared to the expected 3.5% of grade 9s nationally.

There were 170 grades at 8 and above (20% at the old A* equivalent). A massive third of all grades were 7 or above (old A equivalent).

An impressive 59% of students reached grade 5 or above in English and maths, the equivalent of grade C/B under the old grading system. This is a 10% improvement on last year and 20% above the national average. 77% reached grade 4 or above in English and maths, the old equivalent of C+.

Two students, Jake Knight and Jack Parsons-Munn swept the board with grade 9s in all subjects. Two others, Will Wood and Sam Arundel, achieved an amazing 8 grade 9s and a grade 8 each. To put this into context, fewer than two hundred students in the whole country are expected to achieve straight grade 9s.

Dr Janice Gorlach, our Executive Headteacher and Deputy Chief Executive of our sponsor, The North East Learning Trust, said:

"We could not be more proud of our young people and are grateful to their parents for all their tireless support.

"Their results are a testament to the hard work and dedication to study and show what is possible with high aspirations together with determination. In a world increasingly dominated by a culture of instant gratification, our students have seen the value of sustained hard work and reaped the rewards. There are many, many impressive results but particularly special are the achievements of Tristan Fletcher, Imogen Crossley, Eleanor Morris, Ethan Rawlins, Elanor Kipling and Josh Rayner who exceeded national projections for progress between the start of secondary school and their GCSE exams by an average of two whole grades.

"These results, on top of the excellent A level grades, show that Teesdale is well on its way to being an outstanding school that is raising the aspirations of students and helping them fulfil their potential. We know that they are a source of great pride and inspiration to our community."

Well done to Billy Savage in Year 8 who had his war poem published in the Teesdale Mercury, for Remembrance Sunday.

Gloomy and murky, but victory is sealed,
injured and tired soldiers cover Flanders Field,
no more sounds of bursting gunfire,
the bravery of both sides, was something to admire.

Worn down trenches, full of wounded troops,
marching all the way to the medical camp,
yet still the buzzing sound of the aeroplanes loops,
whilst trundling through the thick of the damp.

The foot of every trench, heightened with disease and death,
with the only voice saying, 'one more deep breath',
survivors that pass those with less fortunate fate,
In the bloodiest gun battle up to date.

100 years on, from Afghan to Iraq,
the death tally still continues to stack,
so as we all fall silent at 11 o'clock,
the minutes silence will begin, tick-tock, tick-tock.

On this very day, in our thoughts, we all remember the fallen heroes who served for us.

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

By Billy Savage



Inspiring young leadership discussions

Last month, our sixth form students enjoyed a discussion session with inspirational YALI speaker, Esther Ndagala, from Kenya.

The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), launched by former US president Barack Obama, is a programme aiming to invest in the next generation of African leaders. Three thousand applicants applied for the scholarship programme in which Esther was selected, along with five other candidates. Since gaining the scholarship Esther became one of the youngest security chiefs in Kenya and is now taking a year out to study for a Masters in Conflict Resolution and Development at Manchester University.

Esther spoke to students about the difficulties of development in Kenya and the challenges of ensuring that foreign aid programmes actually serve the communities who need them the most. Students asked questions about the problems of female leadership in a traditionally male job and were inspired by what Esther had to say about working with networks of young people to really make a difference in the world around you.

Thanks to Esther for taking the time to come and speak to us - it was a very inspirational afternoon!

Mental health day

The Teesdale Rotary Interact group, led by our sixth form students, recently held a bake sale to raise money for Mind, the mental health charity.

Students were also invited to wear an item of yellow clothing on World Mental Health Day to support the '#HelloYellow' campaign ran by the charity Young Minds.

Students purchased biscuits and cakes made by our sixth form students and together raised over £120 to support projects aiming to increase awareness of, and develop treatments for, mental health conditions.



Trip to Northumbria University

Students from Years 9, 10, 11 and 12 visited Northumbria University in December to take part in a study day organised especially for Teesdale School.

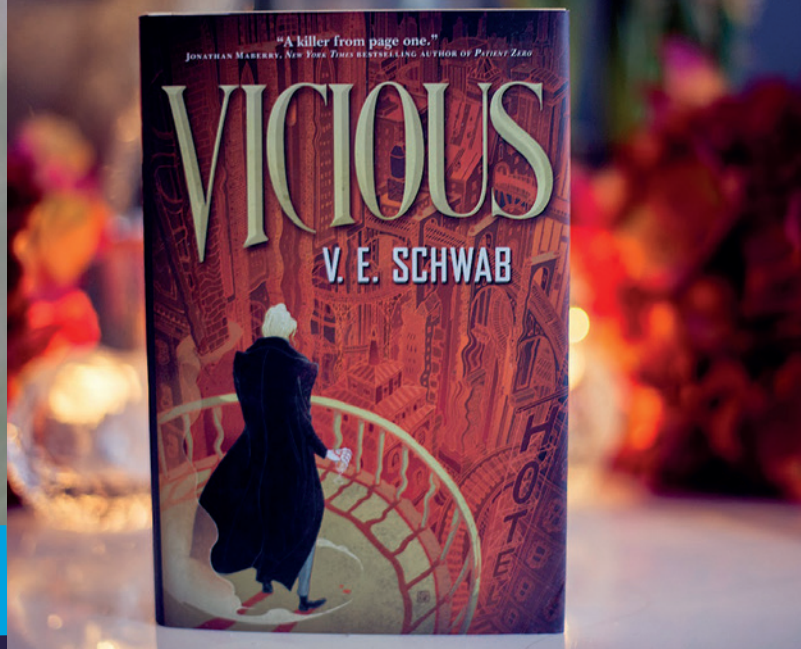
The 80 participants attended lectures on history, politics, maths and physics. In an exciting programme there was something for everyone.

Dr Rodrigo Ledesma Aguilar spoke to students about the science of soft matter physics and how different materials could be used to mimic the water repellent properties of certain plants, whilst Dr Gert Botha explored how maths will play an important part in our future.

For those students who like their history and politics there was a session by Dr Linsey Robb about

the uses and misuses of the past in relation to remembrance of WW1. Professor Matt Kelly also spoke about the historical origins of Brexit in a tumultuous week for British politics.

Dr Simon Henderson, Head of Sixth Form, said "This was another fantastic opportunity for our students to see how a university works and to listen to the ideas and perspectives of experts in their chosen field. The event highlighted the commitment of the school to raising the aspirations of our students and encouraging them to find their passion and be the best that they can be."



Belgium battlefield tour

From the 16th-19th November, two Year 12 students, Cal Baker and Jake Knight, were lucky enough to travel to Belgium as part of a First World War Centenary Battlefield Tour.

The tour, in association with Poetry by Heart, looked to explore the essential link between the First World War and literature.

Over three days, Cal and Jake visited memorials to different regiments and battles which stretched from the Somme to Passchendaele; all the way exploring the poetry written in and about these areas. In total, Cal and Jake recited four poems at different stages of the tour, two of which – Daljit Nagra's 'The Calling', recited at Neuve Chapelle, and Wilfred Owen's 'Exposure', recited at Serre Number 2 – were recited chorally with Cassie Flint, who accompanied them on the tour and was responsible for getting the school involved with the event.

Cal also read 'At the Front' by Wilhelm Klemm at the profound Langemark Cemetery, and Jake recited Ivor Guerne's 'Strange Hells' as the sun set over the Thiepval memorial.

The trip served as an emotional reminder of the personal nature of the First World War and its enduring relevance 100 years on, also calling into question the concept of Remembrance and what it means to 'remember' all aspects of the conflict.

Inspired by their experience, Jake and Cal are planning a 'Legacy Project' to explore the ongoing meaning of remembrance, and contemplating war in general, to younger generations who may feel increasingly detached from the personal stories of the First World War.

Their project will culminate in a performance of poems written by Teesdale's Year 8 students accompanied by some originally composed music entitled 'What Does War Mean?'. The date for what promises to be a thought provoking and emotional performance is to be announced soon.

Book review:

Vicious

by V. E. Schwab

Does having super powers always make you a super hero? The dark and thrilling twists and turns of V.E.Schwab's brilliant novel makes you wonder.

The book is set around two best friends, Victor and Eli. Dazzled by fantasy and myths, they theorize a way to create superheroes. But in an experiment gone wrong, the two friends are set against each other. Fighting with both their wit and newly acquired powers. But who's the real hero of the story? Nothing is quite as it seems.

With the past bleeding through into the present, Schwab's writing makes you feel like Sherlock Holmes as you piece together the story as you read. Despite being a little confusing, beginning this tale of superpowers and betrayal with no context whatsoever only makes it more engaging. And, much like in her other novels, Schwab's characters often toe the line between good and evil, making you wonder continuously who really is the bad guy of this superhero inspired story.

While this book does have a spectacular plot and amazingly written characters I would not recommend it to younger or in-advanced readers. The novel deals with some serious themes and contains a good deal of gore. But, in my opinion, these serious parts of the novel only make you wonder more, is there really that much difference between good and evil? I give this book:



By Daisy Goodwin, Year 13



Fighter

As carefree as a summer's day,
Brother and brother run through
Green fields.

Christmas comes,
All is happy and joyful.
Brother and brother exchange presents,
And happiness.

Conflict filled summers
All is dreary
And depressing
Just the one brother runs through blood filled fields.

Just the one brother falls to the ground.
Christmas comes,
All is bleak and mournful
Just the one brother lays flowers,
By a stone arch in a green field.

Salty tears fall to the ground,
As he remembers his brother's last words to him:
"I will return for you."

By *Jess Bassett, Year 8*



Are you on the nice list this Christmas?

It's very easy to get *wrapped up* in presents, parties and pantos at Christmas time. But, for some people, Christmas is tough and it may help if they receive a little dose of unexpected kindness.

Here are some ways you can be kind this Christmas. We guarantee you will be on the nice list after this...

1. Donate clothes and food to foodbanks
2. Smile and thank everyone who serves you
3. Hide a happy note for someone to find
4. Offer to help someone
5. Lend a friend your favourite book/movie
6. Pick up litter and put it in the bin
7. Talk to someone who is sitting alone
8. Let someone in front of you in a line
9. Send a nice text to five different people
10. Practise self-kindness and spend 30 minutes doing something you love.



Sam scoops gold!

Congratulations to Sam Angus in Year 10 who competed in the Panathlon Multisport Challenge event last week.

He was in a team of four students from Durham schools and he competed in boccia, polybat, table cricket, new age kurling, athletics field events and athletics races.

Sam did fantastically and his team came away with a gold medal.

Well done Sam!

THE JOKE CORNER

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?

A mince spy!