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# THE WRITERS' BLOCK

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Bringing you the lowdown on all things Trinity



Welcome to the first ever edition of the Trinity Academy school magazine, a place for pupils to publish their creativity in writing and receive support doing so. This really is a place for pretty much anything: poetry, creative story writing, current event articles, photography, if it can be put on a page, it can be put in this magazine. I am very proud of what we have accomplished already, but I am also eager to see how this magazine can grow and expand, both in terms of content and popularity within the school. I may be biased, being the editor and everything, but I strongly suggest submitting pieces for the next edition yourself if you have even the vaguest of interest in writing.

Recently, I have decided that I really want to be a journalist. Although I am planning to spend a year abroad volunteering, I can feel myself stepping closer and closer to achieving this and my involvement in this magazine was a big help in making up my mind. I can confidently say to employers and universities that my work has been published, and that's a good feeling, trust me. You can do the same, we are not expecting a novel from every student, and we wouldn't want that either. We want to highlight individual talent, in small well written pieces that I know many of us are capable of. Good and honest work. That being said I hope you enjoy this magazine, and I lift my glass to the hopes of many more.

*Callum Watson (S6), Editor*

## Walkway Joyriders by Callum Watson

I want you to think back to last summer for a second. As we walked through Victoria park on our way home, the sun was bright. The sky, cloudless. Everything was going well and morale was high as I'm sure you can agree. While the times were good, I can't deny, there's something that stuck in my head. A clear picture I can't seem to shake, even when I remember the smiles and laughs, the applause-like bell on our last day. Maybe you will remember it too. The scalded, burnt-out Yamaha motorcycle in a circle of ash. Near our school and actually closer to the primary school playground next to us. Blackened by fire, and left for dead.



Not only does the sight of a machine like this, casually tossed aside like a common crisp packet, frustrate me the thought that the kind of people who do this type of thing can do so without any repercussion frustrates me more.

Surprisingly, joyriding isn't an uncommon thing in our area. You've probably heard them yourself. The thunderous roar of an out of gear bike, screaming its way down the walkway at 3 o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon. It's strange to think that this is how people spend their days. Stacking three or four boys onto a bike sized for two. Hitting speeds near 40 on a path for pedal bikes and dog walkers. It looks as ridiculous as it sounds, trust me. I even admit laughing at the sight of whoever pulled the short straw desperately trying not to burn their ass on the back tyre as they cling on. However, it really is no laughing matter. My smile broke when I witnessed them narrowly dodging a pregnant woman they had swerved in front of, like they have previously done to me, and others, countless times before. For no obvious reason other than they probably found it funny.

How many times will this happen before they really do hit someone? How long will it be before someone gets seriously injured? It could be one of us for all we know, it could be you, or your gran, or your parents, or your friends. There really is no way to be certain. Though what is certain, is your capability and hopefully integrity, to help put a stop to these selfish joyriders.

Unfortunately, police cars can't get on the walkway easily and so they have trouble getting near enough to apprehend the bikers. Although, there are somethings they can do. The sirens alone will be enough to send them to the hills.

The reason why joy riding is so common, in my opinion, is the fact that they can so easily get away with it. Their risk to reward ratio is way off balance and in their favour. We can do something to correct this imbalance.

Like I said it only takes one stupid mistake. Trust me although it may seem like it, I'm not trying to scare you. I am simply encouraging you to step up, follow that moral compass of yours, don't ignore it. Do what you know is right.

Next time you see, or hear, a bike where there should be none. I ask you, think about the pregnant lady I mentioned. Tell somebody what's going on. If you feel like being a hero and putting a stop to them yourselves, I would advise against that too. You could be making things worse, and the opposite effect of what you intend could happen. Speaking from experience these people feed off of negative reactions, they want to get you mad, get that chase. It's another form of the adrenaline rush they hunt after, which you could end up indulging. This doesn't help anyone.

## Rudi Oppenheimer Visits Trinity Academy

*On the 15th of April, 1945, Rudi Oppenheimer and his siblings were among the thousands of people to be liberated from Bergen-Belsen concentrated camp. Over the next few months, Rudi, his sister Eve and Brother Paul began trying to put their life back together, after being infant victims of war crimes.*

On Friday 22nd of January, pupils from all years as well as teachers listened to Holocaust survivor Rudi Oppenheimer BEM speak about his life. Rudi visited the school as part of Holocaust Memorial Day, which takes place on the 27th of January every year. Holocaust Memorial Day is a day for people all over the world to give thought to the victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution, as well as victims of other genocide wars such as Cambodia, Rwanda, and Bosnia. The Holocaust Education Trust facilitates educational visits such as the one we were honored to experience.

Rudi Oppenheimer is from a non-religious Jewish family, originally from Germany. In June 1943,



Rudi, his parents, his brother Paul and sister Eve were sent to Westerbork Transit Camp, in the Netherlands. Unlike other families in the camp, Rudi's family were not sent to Auschwitz. Rudi explained to us, because his sister Eve was born in Britain, they were given special 'privileges', as prisoners. These privileges continued when Rudi and his family were deported to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

There is no doubt that the audience understood the significance of the Holocaust before they heard Rudi speak, but, hearing the first hand account was harrowing. Rudi told us how his grandparents were taken to a concentration camp, never to be seen again. At the time he did not know they were dead. However, Rudi did not just lose his grandparents. His parents died within a few weeks of each other in early 1945. His mother was not even 43.

After Rudi had spoken, he welcomed questions from the audience. Pupils were fascinated to find out more about his life. Ailsa Maplesden in S4 said "It was so interesting ... it was good hearing about his recent life because he seems happy". Another fourth year pupil, Lotte, was also moved by Rudi's presentation; "It was upsetting but really thought-provoking hearing his story".

It was so different hearing someone speak about their Holocaust story in person rather than reading it in a book. Whether or not the world has truly changed since the Holocaust is debatable. However, Trinity pupils have heard first-hand about one person's oppression because of their religion. The more people who are aware of past sufferings, the more people who will change the future.

*Rudi Oppenheimer's older Brother Paul wrote their memoir 'From Belsen to Buckingham Palace', which is both about the lives of the siblings during the Holocaust but afterwards, when they moved to England as well.*



## The Big Interview with Mr Hart



### **Why don't pupils reach their full potential, in your opinion?**

*"I suppose my view would be that because of outside distractions. I think the rise in technology; the use of mobile phones, the use of Netflix: it distracts pupils, it doesn't allow them to then study and fully dedicate the time that probably is necessary. I also feel that, probably, I think, if you look at our school - Trinity Academy, Scotland, I think 95% of our pupils probably do reach their full potential. I think maybe the press have an ulterior motive in saying that people don't, but, I think outside distractions is probably the biggest problem for young people."*

### **Is there anything, do you think, that could go round that? What could pupils do?**

*"I think pupils need to have the ability to stop looking at their mobile phone, stop playing these computer games: build in a bit of, I suppose, resilience to do that. I think it's hard to because people get addicted to these things and they want to do it because it's a form of relaxation but they need to be able to focus, especially around exam and prelim time."*

### **What do you think of the education you had as a child?**

*"I loved school, that's why I'm back in as a teacher. I enjoyed school, I had a number of teachers, I think, that were probably my influence in becoming a teacher. I had an excellent guidance teacher called Mr. Mohammad, who's now a head teacher in Aberdeen. I had a very good history teacher called Mr. Innes who was terrifying but excellent at the same time and I think teachers were the inspiration that I've tried to build my teaching practice on. I think I probably had quite a hard education, in that we had a lot of exams; you have six National 5s now whereas we had eight Standard Grades so we had a lot more. I think the education system now is probably better, but there are probably still changes that need to be made to it."*

### **What change would you like to see at Trinity Academy?**

*"I think I would quite like to see a much more positive ethos in the school. I think I'd like to see all pupils and teachers working to promote Trinity as being this excellent school that Mr. Paterson wants it to be and that it should be. I think that if we can get positivity amongst all pupils that will help with any behavioural issues in the school but also it will hopefully get the sort of ethos that everyone wants to achieve the best that they can do."*

### **What makes Trinity a unique school?**

*"Extra-curricular activities is one; I think that makes it unique. I think we do place quite a lot of emphasis on it- I would quite like to see a bit more celebration of the academic stuff as well. European work experience, Erasmus with Mr. Walls, trips to New York, the school rugby trips as well; I think they offer a lot of opportunities that are not just academic. I think it is open to everyone and therefore, hopefully, people can succeed in the academic side of it, but also in other aspects and get something out of being at Trinity."*

### **Where would you like to travel to?**

"I'd love to travel in America. My wife is fed up of going to America but I love America so I would like to travel the Route 66 which is a very famous old road in America. I would quite like to do a drive from Toronto right down to New York City which I'm trying to convince my wife of doing now. So yeah, that's where I would like to go to."

**What was the last book you read?**

"... It would have been Michael Connelly 'The Crossing', he is a crime author from America. He has a very famous character called Harry Bosch and another famous character called Micky Haylor who is a lawyer. Harry Bosch is now an ex police officer, and I find his books very enjoyable."

**What do you see yourself doing twenty years from now?**

"Twenty years from now ... probably still stuck in a classroom somewhere (humorous). Hopefully still teaching modern studies, ehmm, whether that be all or part of it ... I think ... I dunno. Probably not at #TA. I think I may get itchy feet. I don't know if it's good spending twenty years in the same school! I don't think I would like that. But hopefully still being somewhere teaching modern studies and enjoying politics!"

**Do you have a particularly memorable teaching experience?**

"A memorable teaching experience?! \*hesitation\* I suppose my most memorable teaching experience would be teaching when I first taught my first year teaching at Boroughmuir, and I had two sort of good experiences there. The first one was; I had a very difficult class - very bad behaviour, but they all passed their standard grade exams, which was excellent to see! And the other part of that would be: a pupil wrote to me, about two months ago now, saying he has just started studying politics at university, thanks to my teaching at Boroughmuir and influencing him to come into politics, so that was very good to hear."

**What was the last concert you saw?**

"... The last concert I went to would've been Damien Rice! So, he is one of my favorite singers from my childhood. My friends and I loved Damien Rice growing up, we used to always listen to him. So I was lucky enough to get front row tickets to see him in Edinburgh ...! "

**What would you say to pupils who want to become teachers?**

"\*raised voice\* If you're passionate, if you enjoy a topic, then go ahead and teach it. It's harder than it looks, it's time consuming, but you can make a difference in hundreds if not thousands of children's lives. And therefore it is a very rewarding career."

**Did you always want to be a teacher?**

"I did. I did always want to be a teacher ... I had an interest in politics and therefore ... I wasn't lucky enough to study modern studies at school. But I was able to realize that there was such a thing as modern studies and that would fit exactly into what I was interested in, so therefore it sort of encouraged me even more to become a teacher."

Thank you to Mr Hart for taking the time to answer our questions!

**Mr Hart is co-ordinating the NYC and Washington trip in 2017. You can catch him in E9.**

## ***Four bands from the 1980s that you should really listen to***

*The 1980s is often described as the decade that forgot style. It's easy to see why when it was an era that gave the world leg-warmers, yuppies and the mullet hairstyle. The music charts from the time came to be dominated by 'artists' such as Jason Donovan and Kylie Minogue. However, there are a number of bands and singers whose songs have stood the test of time. Next time, you receive a voucher for iTunes, you could do worse than download some of these bands' music.*

### **1. The Smiths**



*Love them or hate them, The Smiths were the marmite of the 1980s music scene. With the powerful and often witty lyrics of Morrissey backed up by the superb Johnny Marr on guitar, The Smiths released four studio albums between 1982 and 1987. Speculation about a reunion has always been denied by band members with Morrissey declaring that "I would rather eat my own testicles than reform The Smiths and that's saying something for a vegetarian".*

*Recommended Album : The Queen Is Dead (1986)*

### **2. Tears for Fears**

*Formed in 1981, Tears for Fears developed their sound from show-gazing new wave synthi-pop to big sounding rock that appealed to an international audience and lead to huge success . The duo have now*

*put their acrimonious split behind them to reform in recent years and play their first UK gigs in over ten years.*

*Recommend Album : Songs From The Big Chair (1985)*

### **3. U2**

*Ireland's U2 remain one of the biggest bands on the planet. However, although the band lineup has remained unchanged, the U2 of the 80s is a very different sounding band to the one who fill stadia the world over these days. Early hard-hitting post-punk albums gave way to more atmospheric recordings and 1987's "The Joshua Tree" sold over 25 million copies worldwide, catapulting U2 to international superstardom in the process.*

*Recommend Album : The Unforgettable Fire (1984)*

### **4. The Stone Roses**



*In 1989, an indie band from Manchester released an album that changed the musical landscape and even now, some 27 years later, The Stone Roses regularly features at the top end in polls of the greatest albums of all time. Record company disputes meant delays to further recordings and eventually they split in the mid 90s. In 2011, The Stone Roses reformed and will headline this summer's T In The Park festival at Strathallan Castle.*

*Recommend Album : The Stone Roses (1989)*

## 15 Questions with Mrs Devoy

**Favourite Car:** "Any BMW."

**Most Memorable Teaching Moments:**

"I tackled an army assault course with my tutor group but cheated a little. Unknown to me we were filmed and the video was given to the pupils who saw me avoiding the obstacles they had tackled!"

"My pupils serenading me in class when I left my last school."

**Favourite Food:** "Macaroni cheese and sushi (not together!). Oh, and ice cream!"

**Miscellaneous Likes:** "Generosity, 'The Smiths', sunshine, swimming in the sea, trains, reading, my wood burning stove, snow, bluebells."

**Miscellaneous Dislikes:** "Snakes, bigots, snobbery, litter, liars, people who don't use their vote, people who are proud they can't do maths(!), people who think farting is funny(!)"

**Favourite TV Shows:** "Crime drama such as 'Shetland' and 'The Killing'. Comedies such as 'Big Bang Theory' and 'Modern Family'. 'Question Time' and Graham Norton's chat show."

**Favourite Actors:** "Jack Nicolson, Robert De Niro, Robert Downey Jr, Samuel L. Jackson, Gregory Peck, James Stewart, Paul Newman, Jeff Bridges."

**Biggest Influence on my Career:** ("*what career?!?*")

"Supportive colleagues."

**Teaching Pet Hates:** "Chewing gum, mobile phones, having to tell pupils to take coats off, pupils who shriek when a wasp flies into the classroom."

**What Makes it All Worthwhile:** " Pupils achieving when they lacked self-belief, pupils thanking me at the end of a lesson."

**Personal Ambition:** "To visit South America."

**Professional Ambition:** "To retire before I see another major curricular overhaul!"

**If you weren't a teacher you would be...:** " Probably a systems analyst – I was offered the choice between teaching and training in an I.T. department of a large company and chose to return to teaching."

**Person in the world you'd most like to meet:** "Would have loved to have met Nelson Mandela."

## British Council Writing Competition

*Last May, I entered a British Council writing competition. The topic was 'How international is your school and how International could it be?' After my French teacher had given the class information about the competition, I thought about it for a while, before I put pen to paper.*

*Once I sent my entry, I forgot all about it! That is until Ms Brain pulled me out of class on a dreary October morning, telling me that my entry had been successful! My short essay was one of three chosen from schools throughout Scotland. I received the prize of an iPad mini in assembly recently, and I am very pleased.*

*I would say to any pupil thinking about entering any competition to just go for it ...*



### Nova Scotia

*It was on a Duke of Edinburgh expedition recently, a seemingly compulsory activity for many a British teenager, and while huddled at the side of an East Lothian footpath, that I looked around and wondered where I would be as a person, if I didn't have the companionship of my Polish friend, my Korean friend, or my French friend, all of whom were next to me. This invisible diversity, on such a quintessential British activity struck me as something quite precious.*

Morven receiving her iPad for her winning entry in the British Council Writing

*Many schools like to boast about their 'global ties', however, not every student can take advantage of these. Overseas trips are expensive. As are exchanges, with the added complication that many people are simply not able to host a stranger in their home for 5 nights.*

*Despite the barriers - both physical and mental - of potential globetrotting with the school, coming into class every day, and spending time with those of our peers, who weren't born in Scotland, but whose families have chosen to live here, or are the children of first, second or even third generation immigrants, is what we have as the norm. Yet this diversity is what we fail to appreciate.*

*Through casual conversations with our classmates and friends, through knowing themselves and their families, we subconsciously immerse ourselves in a different language; a different culture; a different outlook. Our traditional Scottish ways are enhanced and enriched - without us travelling anywhere. The world is in our classroom.*

*By being in a school with people who unknowingly, have taught me about their culture, has increased my desire to travel, and has made me a more open, and accepting person.*

*This is my school. And it should be every school. This ingrained diversity, transparent multiculturalism, adds a little je ne sais quoi to schools in Scotland.*

**Morven Stead (S4)**