

PIN OAK



Book Week

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SPRING

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BIG ISSUE

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ART

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WE ARE SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

Are you a family member or ex-student who would like to offer support to Oxley students?

We are looking for passionate, committed and reliable individuals who have strong skills in reading and writing.

If you are interested, please contact

Linda Maher
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Year 11



Today's welcome team as our Year 11s drove through to pick up their exam packs for next week (with a surprise treat)!

CLICK & COLLECT

Our wonderful Library staff have created a Click & Collect system so students can continue to borrow books during lockdown. Students can either check the online catalogue and select books or they can nominate to receive a surprise! Families are requested to pick up after hours from the shelf outside the Library. Please remain in your vehicle and send one person to pick up. If you are interested in accessing this fantastic service, please email library@oxley.nsw.edu.au



HEAD OF COLLEGE'S REPORT

If we had not winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.

Anne Bradstreet



I am not sure about you, but I have felt so much more energised with the warmer weather and the start of Spring. While we may slip backwards a few degrees over the weekend, I encourage everyone to embrace the optimism which comes from the warmer weather. In line with shaking off the winter blues and keeping active through learning@home Mr Kindred, Head of Sport has designed an Oxley College five km challenge for all members of our community to join in with. There are plenty of Awards to win for everyone and click on this [link](#) to access all the details.

The start of spring was celebrated on Wednesday with our Junior School Students actively involved in our first Virtual Book Week. It was fabulous to drop in on Zoom and see many of the classes all dressed up in costume and with their favourite books. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Mrs Antoniak for all her work in making Book Week so successful and keeping our students engaged and passionate about reading. Don't forget we are doing contactless book loans for students. Being at home is a great reason to do plenty of reading just for pleasure!

Our Spring into Spring photo competition has been a hit and it is with great pleasure I congratulate the winners. Please see below. It was certainly very difficult to judge, and I hope you enjoy the wonderful selection of photos on display in Pin Oak.

learning@home continues to provide rich and different learning experiences for our students. I am so very proud of how our young people are remaining engaged and focused in these challenging times. I would also like to acknowledge our staff who are working tirelessly to make sure learning is inspiring, valuable and engaging. Our Year 12 students are very driven at the moment completing their Major Projects and performances. We look forward to sharing these fabulous works in the final Pin Oak for the term. Best of luck to our Year 11 students for their End of Year 11 Preliminary Examinations next week. We had a huge drive through today, as Year 11 students arrived to pick up their exam packs...with a special treat included – a beautiful good luck bag of sweet treats! See photo below.

By Jenny Ethell, Head of College

Please see yesterday's video message from Jenny Ethell via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FtSoCKJVVs>



Spring into Spring!

We were blown away by the number of entries for Spring into Spring! Lots of photos on page 9 of Pin Oak! Winning photos below.

Junior - Winner: Asher Braham. Highly Commended: Pixie Hanson, Harry Gaunt, Remy McIntosh.

Senior - Winner: Chris Mansour. Highly Commended: Olivia Uliana, Elsie Hanson, Archie Carter.

Staff - Winner: Kelly Lees.





Head of Academic and Innovation

So much has already been said about learning@home by adults, that this week, I asked Dr Bek Duyckers, our Thought Leader in Residence, to help me source what was actually happening in the minds and voice of our students as they encounter these stranger times. Students could choose a quote to respond to, or go freelance with their ideas! My sincere gratitude to our students who never cease to amaze us with their perspectives – we have much to be excited and hopeful about when the future is in their hands. I hope you enjoy.

Setting the Context:

As I work with students, common themes often elucidate the rewards they are reaping and challenges they are facing as their schooling has flipped into online learning spaces. It is evident they have much we can learn from them, in their agility to adapt to new circumstances, drawing on their strengths to see how these new experiences can be used positively through an open mindset, and balanced with a focus on their own wellbeing. Dr Duyckers

The capacity to learn is a gift, the ability to learn is a skill, the willingness to learn is a choice. By Brian Herbert. I think this applies a lot to the situation right now and how it is so important to stay self-motivated throughout this time and to continue to learn even though in a different environment. It would also be important to have a healthy balance of not applying too much pressure on yourself but also being your best. Isla Terry

It is acceptable not to have answers: *"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning to dance in the rain,"* Vivan Greene. Learning self-motivation and balance is a key life skill that we might not have otherwise learnt. It is the icing on the lockdown cake. Literally. Ellouise Law

We are teaching ourselves how to be independent in our learning and self-sufficient which are skills we will need in future. Savannah Law

"Life is 10% what happens to you, but 90% how you respond to it." Charles Swindoll. That quote basically says that the way your life goes is controlled by you and only you. So this isolation

will only be bad if you look at the negatives and don't use it for something worthwhile. Savannah Law

"Whatever job you are asked to do, at whatever level, do a good job because your reputation is your resume." Madeleine Albright. This quote always reminds me that if I have the ability to do something well, there's never an excuse to not try my best. Violet FitzSimons

Learning independence is a key life skill that allows us to grow as individuals. This is very relevant at the moment because we are having to be independent with our own organisation. Being independent means being dependent on one person... yourself. Ilana Sheezel

"I'm not afraid of storms, for I'm learning to sail my ship." - Louisa May Alcott. This quote links closely to our current situation and for me personally because it is about acceptance with our state and being eager to improve ourselves. It is always easier to back down when situations such as independently learning seem daunting and intimidating; but learning to strive through the fear and being willing to stretch ourselves are some of the most important lessons. Clementine Heinrich

"Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after the other" - Walter Elliot. I believe this quote sums up what life is like. It's not one big phenomenon, but lots of little things that happen that make up the big picture. It relates to how, in order to succeed, you need to take it one step at a time, and work hard on the little things, which will get you to the big picture. Charlie Hartwright

Learning at home can be a struggle. However, it is a great time to learn to be grateful for what you have and can still do. At the end of the day, this is not permanent, we just have to sit down and make the best of this rollercoaster that we have been forcefully strapped to. Hamish Stephen

I think learning at home has been able to help us see how lucky we are. I think the main thing is for everyone to be a little more relaxed as this is a once in a century occurrence. Will Barnett

By Kate Cunich, Head of Academic and Innovation

Head of Senior School



The arrival of Spring this week has been provided an opportunity to down screens, get outside and appreciate the beautiful place in which we live. This week I have interviewed on Zoom two prospective Oxley families currently living overseas, both in different continents, who have been experiencing ongoing lockdowns of months on end; in one case, not even being allowed out to go out for exercise. Despite the difficulties we are facing as a community, it was a reminder to me to be grateful for where we are and what we have. I am certainly grateful for the support received from parents over the past couple of weeks, many of whom I know are doing it tough at home. Please continue to be kind to yourselves and each other; and keep connected.

Academic Endeavour Awards: Year 7-10

I announced the recipients of these new awards at Year Group Zoom Assemblies last week (you can read more about these awards in my article in [Pin Oak #127](#)). As we are unable to present the certificates in person as we had intended, students will receive their certificate via Australia Post in the coming days.

Co-Curricular Colours Awards

The first Co-Curricular Colours Awards of our new Awards system were announced in Year 11 Assembly today. Students may be awarded Colours for Performing Arts, Sport or Word following an application process, in Term 3 Year 11 or Term 1

Year 12.

Details of the policy and process are on the College website [here](#). The rationale for the new system can be found in [Pin Oak #118](#). Year 12 Co-Curricular Awards for Athletics, Spoken Word and Winter Sport will be announced at Year 12 Assembly next week.

Upcoming Parent/Carer Webinars

[Covid-19 Parent/Carer Supporting Young People](#): Wednesday 15 September, 6.30pm - FREE.

This is a free mental health education webinar provided by Headspace, a leading youth mental health organisation. The session aims to improve mental health literacy, provide skills and strategies to support the mental health of your child and build awareness of supports are available.

[Young people, alcohol and other drugs 2021: What do parents need to know?](#): Thursday 16 September, 7.00pm - \$20

This webinar is from Paul Dillon, the leading educator in Australia on alcohol, drugs and young people, who spoke at Oxley in 2020. The session "aims to empower parents with a positive message and assist them in having open and honest family discussions in this complex area".

Please use the above links to register.

By Mark Case, Head of Senior School

Weekly Awards

Learning Journey

K: Emil de Haas
Yr 1: Beth Plain
Yr 2: Cameron Bailey
Yr 3B: Tatenda Jamba Yr 3R: Greta Lawson
Yr 4A: Lexi Mendes da Costa
Yr 4W: Arthur Pemberton
Yr 5C: Lucas Drelaud
Yr 5N: Jett Loiterton
Yr 6H: Lex Cochrane-Ryan
Yr 6S: Oxford Feller

Oxley Values

K: Albie Fisher
Yr 1: Grace Byrne
Yr 2: Albert Herrmann
Yr 3B: Jack Smith
Yr 3R: Ian Phillips
Yr 4A: Madison Chamley
Yr 4W: Oscar Choo
Yr 5C: Clancy O'Mahoney
Yr 5N: Brodie Murray
Yr 6H: Caelan Granger Yr 6S: Madeline Kirsch

Excellence in Japanese

Ian Phillips
Charlotte Gordon

Learning Journey

K: George Russell
Yr 1: Harry Officer
Yr 2: Frankie Russell
Yr 3B: Fergus Talman
Yr 3R: Charlie Hammond
Yr 4A: Nico Herriott, Thomas Berry
Yr 4W: Levi Olsen
Yr 5C: Livie Marks
Yr 5N: Sam Cottle
Yr 6H: Ginger Elias
Yr 6S: Louisa Hogan Baldo

Oxley Values

K: Ronnie Fragar
Yr 1: Archie Taggart
Yr 2: Zoe Choo
Yr 3B: Clementine Paterson
Yr 3R: Elsie Hopkinson
Yr 4A: Pixie Hanson
Yr 4W: Hadley Morgan
Yr 5C: Digby Bryant
Yr 5N: Marshall Devlin
Yr 6H: Blake Ramear
Yr 6S: Oscar Vasak

Stage 3 feature – learning@home

We have been delighted with the way our Stage 3 students have embraced learning@home. They have remained optimistic about the shift in learning from school to the confines of their homes. In a period where they are preparing for their transition to senior school, our students are demonstrating greater independence and resilience. learning@home has required students to be organised in planning their learning schedules and proactive in seeking clarification from their teachers. We are enormously proud of the dedication our students have shown as they face these challenging times.

Having had many conversations with students, a number have suggested they have enjoyed this different way of learning and connecting. They have been able to work at their own pace, and have learned a lot more about technology, especially zoom and CANVAS and how to use them effectively.

Of course, we are all missing the buzz of the classroom, and the joy of mixing with our peers during break times. We are looking forward to a return to school as soon as we can, but in the meantime, Stage 3 are looking on the bright side: "I liked the Math Kahoot's. It was fun to see how much I knew at first. I then did it again so I could see how much I remembered. I tried to get a high score and eventually came second! Just so you know, second is impressive for me." (Dakota, 6H)

"Whilst I have been learning at home my favourite activity has been completing the Cornell notes. This was a process of researching Nancy Bird Walton and organising key ideas in a table. I really enjoyed this task because she is such an interesting person." (Rosie, 5N)

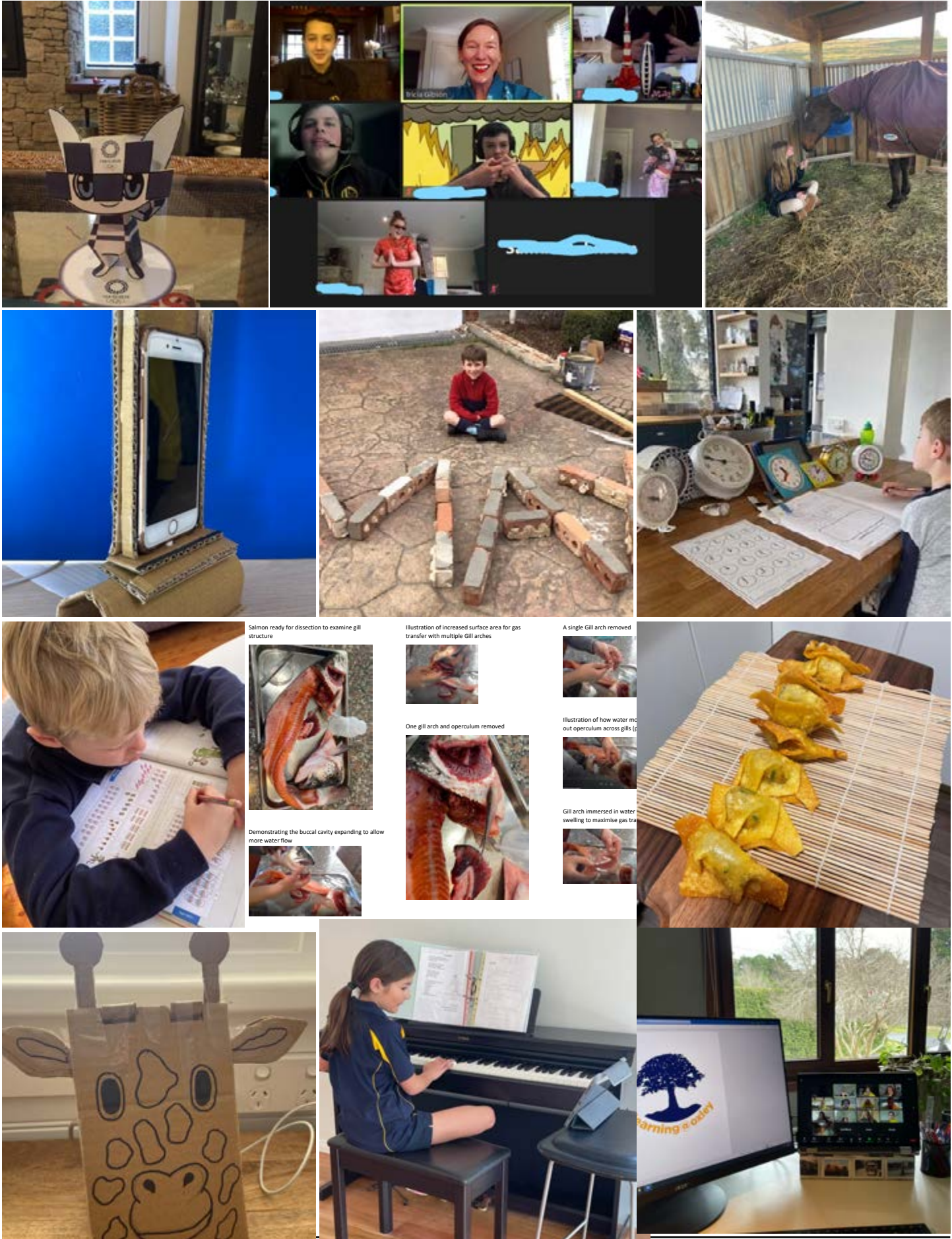
"My favourite Wellbeing Wednesday activity was Master Chef cooking. I love cooking and took great enjoyment in making soup and biscuits." (Claudia, 6H)

"I enjoyed completing my James Knight inspired short story because I feel like I really stretched myself and did my best." (Coco, 5C)



learning@home





Salmon ready for dissection to examine gill structure

Illustration of increased surface area for gas transfer with multiple Gill arches

A single Gill arch removed

One gill arch and operculum removed

Illustration of how water moves out operculum across gills (p)

Demonstrating the buccal cavity expanding to allow more water flow

Gill arch immersed in water swelling to maximise gas transfer

INTERVIEW



OUR OWN OLYMPIAN

Peter Dowse is our Oxley Mountain Biking Coach, alongside the lovely Meaghan Stanton. But did you know that Pete was recently living it up in Tokyo at the Olympic Games? Well...now you do. Pete was the Australian specialist Mountain Bike mechanic and manager taking care of the two Aussie riders, Bec and Dan McConnell and most importantly, their bikes. Now let's hear from the man himself! Here's an insight into the 2020 Olympic Games.

What was the culture of the Olympics like?

The Japanese people were amazingly polite and happy, always going out of their way to be super helpful. There was a lot of bowing! The vibe of the mountain bike event was unusual. There are such strict criteria for athletes to qualify that the race actually feels really small compared to World Cups and World Championships, where there are so many more competitors. But most of the athletes and their support crews are the same people that you see at these sort of events so there were plenty of friends and familiar faces.

Is it true you slept on cardboard beds?

We didn't. The Australian mountain bike team and track team were in a private hotel near the event venues, a few hours out of Tokyo, right away from the athletes village.

What was your morning routine whilst at the Olympics?

Wake up, produce a saliva sample for the daily Covid-19 test (that was actually not that easy), collect the samples from Bec and Dan, and deliver all three spit vials to the officials. Then a temperature check, breakfast and then a full day preparing bikes for Bec and Dan to train on, driving behind them for hours while they trained on the road, or being there to help them with whatever they needed at the course, then cleaning and preparing their bikes for the next day.

Did you get the opportunity to see any other events live?

No, because of Covid-19 restrictions, we couldn't. But then we were also in an area where there was nothing else on. And the track riders didn't begin competition till the mountain biking was over.

What did you do to prepare for the mountain bike racing event?

There is a lot of preparation in the leadup to race day, tuning everything on the bikes to be in perfect condition. I also had to set up trainers for the riders to warm up on, collect and attach timing chips to the bikes, change tyres when the weather turned the course to mud, prepare spare wheels with different combinations of tyres, prepare eskies full of drink bottles and cart everything back and forth from the hotel to the pits each day.

What was the worst part of two weeks of hotel quarantine?

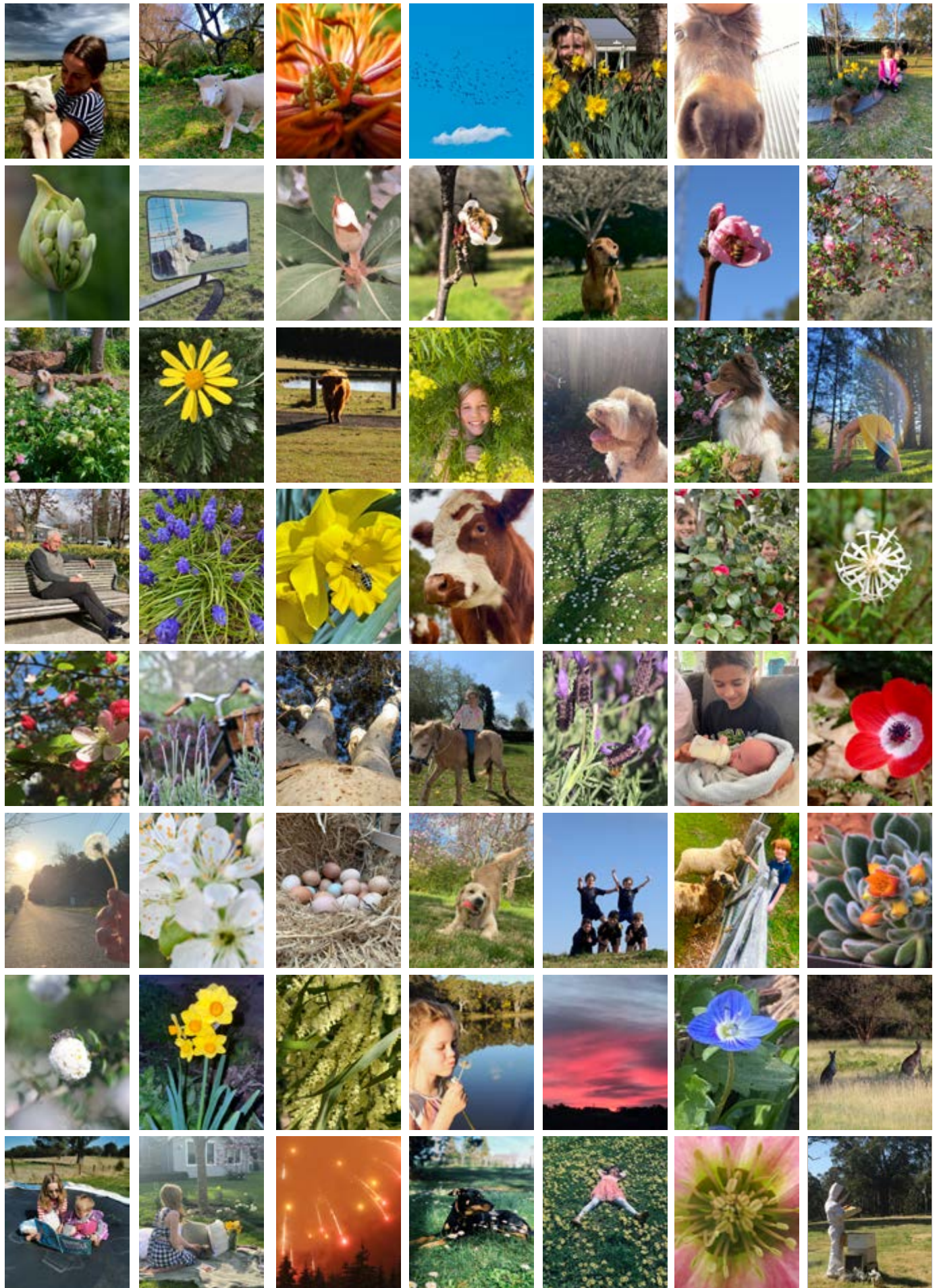
Not being able to go outside!

What was the best part of your Olympic experience?

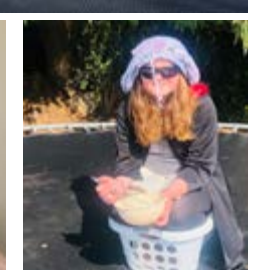
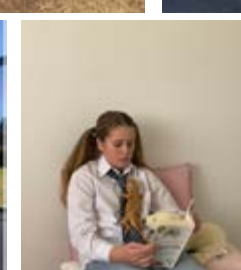
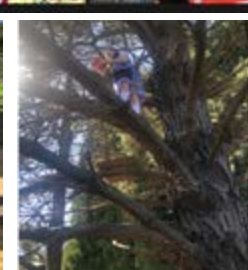
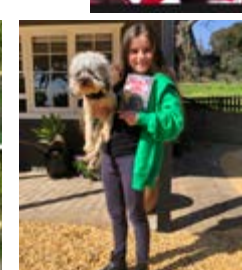
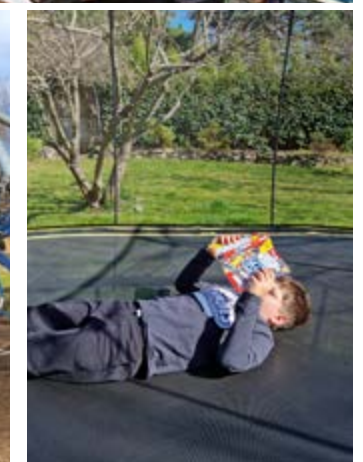
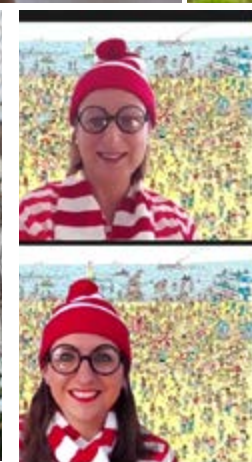
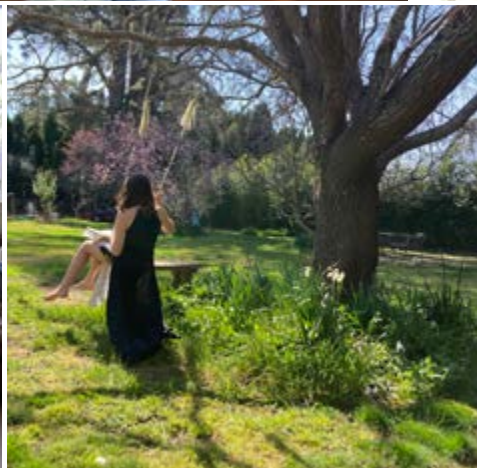
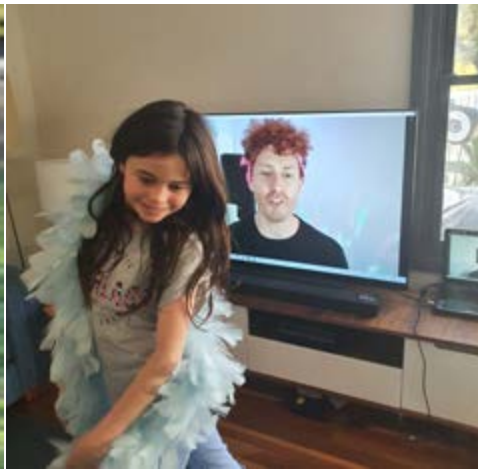
After being postponed, then run a year later, there was a huge feeling of relief and gratitude among everyone there - we felt lucky it had been able to go ahead! But for me the most important thing was feeling privileged to be a part of it.

By Lily Hogan, Year 11

Spring Into Spring



BOOK WEEK 2021



INSPIRATION

VIRTUAL GALLERY



Tom Milner

"Clenched Fist"

Tom's metal hand sculpture represents the "Power of Rebuilding" through tough times. He was inspired by the fires and the renewed energy that has occurred throughout the Southern Highlands. Tom has skilfully fabricated his form from an exhaust that did over 250 thousand kms whilst the fingers have been manipulated using a chain from a motor bike. This is one of three artworks he produced for his Body of Work in Year 10 Visual Arts.

By Matt Bentham



The David Wright Library at Oxley College was recently transformed into an art space to display the Year 9 Visual Arts printing and sketching. While the subjects for these pictures were diverse, the artworks were all two-tone, highlighting the fine detail in each image and focusing attention on the subject. A fascinating range of objects was illustrated, from teapots and cameras to flowers and knives; all were complex, contemplative, and subtle. These were pictures to stop and make time to look at in more detail.

The "Librarian's Choice" award is initially selected by "gut feeling", but a closer look at the work provided ample justification for the choice. Lily Bingham, in Year 9, sketched a camera with multiple shadows and shading that provided three-dimensional depth to the image. This flat picture on paper appeared lifelike as if I could pick it up from the page. Lily's attention to detail and the care taken to draw the aperture and the makers name on the lens contributed to the sense of reality.

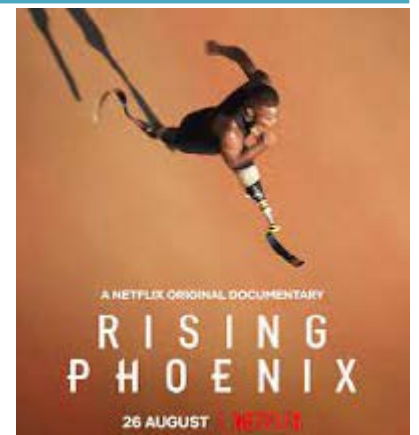
We are pleased to have this work displayed at the library desk and delighted to present this award.

By Elizabeth Antoniak

RISING PHOENIX

'Rising Phoenix' created in 2020 is a documentary that tells the story of the Paralympic games and the incredible stories of just a few of the athletes. These athletes have unique stories of hardship and rising up through the pain they have been through to reach incredible athletic achievement. The Paralympic games were first started in 1960 and since then athletes have had to fight through masses of discrimination, from people not showing up to watch, to the hosting countries deciding to not advertise or even run the Paralympic games. The comradery and passion that the athletes have in the Paralympic games is something I have never seen before and am truly inspired by. These people have faced challenges greater than anything I can imagine and despite people telling them they cannot achieve; they have fought astonishingly hard to reach their goals. In the words of former president of the Paralympic committee "The Olympics is where heroes are created. The Paralympics is where the heroes come." So, I urge you to watch the Paralympics and support the amazing athletes, and to watch this documentary to gain a true understanding of what the athletes have gone through.

By Aiofe Barrett-Lennard, Year 11



Y7 Art Learning@home



Here are some Year 7 artworks from learning@home Week 3. The theme for this week's impermanent art installation was Corners.

By Natacha Brochard





OLD OXLEYAN

Nerida Kiprotich (nee Ashton)

Class of 1996

Now that you're off in the big wide world, what have you made of yourself since finishing school at Oxley?

As soon as I finished at Oxley, I studied a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education as I'd always known I'd wanted to work with young children. I worked as an Early Childhood Teacher and Director for a few years in NSW, before heading overseas in 2004 to run a Kindergarten in a very small international school in Ningbo, China. I thought I'd be gone for a year or two but 17 years later I still haven't moved back to Australia. After a year in China I moved to Hong Kong to teach and haven't left! I currently teach Year 1, the first year of school, in a large International School in Hong Kong and have two amazing children aged 8 and 10 who attend the same school. I am also close to completing a Masters of Applied Positive Psychology. The more I teach, the more determined I am to support children and families with wellbeing.

Strangely enough after years of trying to take shortcuts in Cross Country at Oxley, I have developed a love of running, going so far as to finish a 100km ultra marathon a few years back.

What is your biggest achievement since high school?

Being brave in 2004 and leaving a job, family and friends to arrive in the middle of China in the middle of the night to be the Director of a Kindergarten in a school I really had minimal information about. Had I not taken that risk I would not be where I am today.

Were these things that during high school you expected you would end up doing?

I always thought I may teach overseas but never expected to stay out of Australia for so long. When I think back to what I accomplished with work and travel in that first year in China, I don't think my high school self would have believed that I could be that brave.

How did Oxley prepare you for your future?

Oxley wasn't just about academics, it was about being a balanced learner. There were so many opportunities to be part of the Oxley community through sport and house activities. The chance to lead many of these set me up for being confident with what I chose to do.

Is there anybody from the Oxley community who inspired you throughout high school?

When I think about the teachers that I had, it's not really about the academics they taught me. Mrs Topp treated us all with patience and kindness and that is something I truly value in myself as a teacher. Mr Forlonge in Maths taught me persistence and to believe in myself, and Mr Graham showed the value of a community outside of the classroom with our Softball team. Mrs Topp also sparked my interest in China through Modern History. My family would say I probably became a little obsessed with Chinese history and culture for quite a few years so it wasn't a big surprise I ended up there.

What would you say you miss most about being at school?

Technically I've never left having gone from Oxley to university then straight into teaching. That sense of community at Oxley is something I have always looked for wherever I teach and definitely miss it when it's not present.

What would you say to your fifteen year old self?

Don't be afraid to speak up. I like to keep the peace so speaking up isn't something I used to do. The importance of needing to be brave sometimes to speak up and have your voice heard is something my teenage self would appreciate knowing.

I'd probably also tell my fifteen year old self to get moving! Knowing now how beneficial exercise is not only for physical but also mental and emotional wellbeing. Running and exercise keeps me sane when juggling work, study and kids but I definitely didn't value it as a teenager.

NEWSFLASH



Books You Should Read Before We Come Out Of Lockdown

I admit the title in and of itself is a tad confronting, rest assured I will not show up at your house with a pitchfork demanding to know if you've actually read my recommendations. I may look at you disapprovingly next time I see you on campus, but I'm a teenager, so I usually looked a bit perturbed anyway.

1. Cold Comfort Farm by Stella Gibbons

Before I lose you (because let's be honest you were only going to read the first recommendation anyway) this one is definitely worth the time and effort. Gibbons is perhaps one of the wittiest and most observant writers I have ever come across. Her book explores the newly orphaned Flora Potts encounters with the Starkadder family who have so kindly offered her a room at cold comfort farm. However, buried within the English country sides the stark adders are the definition of peculiar, and its Flora's self-assigned mission to make them slightly less strange. If that hadn't sold you, gibbons includes Asterix's over all descriptions so you can skip over them and get to the good stuff. So it's basically the perfect quarantine read.



2. The Medoran Chronicles by Lynette Noni

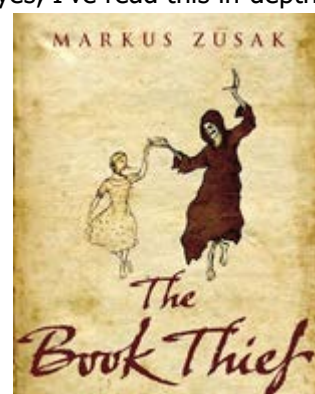
I love this book so much I'm smiling just thinking about it. Noni is an Australian author (which you don't see very often in YA lit) and is one of the most beautiful character builders I have ever read. The story follows Alex Jennings, who's parents have had to send her to boarding school after their transfer to a new workplace. The only problem is, the second she walks into the principal's office she falls into a completely different dimension and discovers things beyond belief. I honestly cannot do this book justice, but if you had to read anything of this list this is the one. It's funny, exciting, a complete page turner and is nothing like what I've read before. It's a great quarantine read; you'll completely forget our reality exists when your following the story. Please read it.

3. Popular by Maya Van Wagenen

If there's ever been a time to step back and evaluate your social environment it's now. Van Wagenen describes her journey of finding happiness and clarity in high school – by reading a 1940's guide on how to be popular. From wearing pearls and heels to attempting to just smile more, Van Wagenen follows the guide religiously and is completely transformed as a result. This book is a heart-warming read that restores your trust in humanity and re-assures even the most socially awkward that friendship can be found anywhere with anyone. I would definitely recommend this one, even if you only read the first few chapters so you can casually slide into conversation, "Oh yes, I've read this in-depth analysis on societal norms in adolescence". You'll sound really cool, I promise.

4. The Book Thief By Markus Zusak

Ok, so maybe don't read this one if you're a bit fragile at the moment. I don't really consider myself the sort of person who cries over books – but this one got to me. This book is written by the perspective of death as it watches a small German girl navigate Nazi Germany during war times. Needless to say, this one's a tearjerker, perfect if you really want to bask in all the lockdown feels. It could be a great conversation starter when we're out of lockdown. You'll say, "I read the most amazing book in lockdown" and then they'll say "really, what was it" and then you'll say "I read an in-depth documentation of a young girl's journey through Nazi Germany from the perspective of death". Come to think of it, probably not the best way to start some upbeat small talk, but I think this one counts as an educational book so you could probably justify missing a zoom to read it.



5. The Twilight Series by Stephenie Meyer

This is the perfect opportunity! You don't have to awkwardly hide the cover of the book and come up with some excuse when someone asks you what your reading: Covid-19 is the perfect time for a shame free twilight reading. Yes, this book is pretty bad. Yes, it is about stunningly good-looking vampires. However, despite this series being completely ridiculous it's a cultural landmark that you should probably be aware of. It's like reading the Great Gatsby, you should read it so you can:

- a) pick up on subtle references in pop culture
- b) so you can poke fun at the characters.

I hope I've convinced you to pick up a book at some point, and if not at least watch the movie. The pandemic has been hard on all of us (the fact that we can't have the canteens meatball sub's – that one really hit home), but a good book is a great way to help you stay afloat. Even if you just use it as a flotation device and don't actually read it.

By Violet FitzSimons, Year 8