

## TALKING TECH

By Meher, *Student*

It is not necessary to stay at Brockwood for long to realise that technology here is not an important aspect of daily life. In the library, we have a collection of old computers, their younger cousins distributed among the classrooms. The computer room, which consists of six computers, is generally relatively empty. Students are not usually allowed personal laptops, and must limit the use of their phones to their bedrooms. Overall, the policy doesn't cause much inconvenience. Rather, it allows people to connect with others and the place without the distractions of social media and technology. Students are often found reclining on the sofas, or during these winter months, huddled around the fireplace, reading the newspaper or talking about something intriguing. The restrictions, although they might seem negative, create an atmosphere that is interactive and personal, and would be different if the use of technology was more common.

*continued on page 2*





The topic of technology is discussed so much around the world that, for many teenagers and children, it has become something of a bore. We are constantly told that we are always on our devices, that we should just 'get off' them and 'be more productive'. However much truth there may be in these words, there is very rarely much justification given as to why technology is bad, and this often leads to confusion and anger. After hearing the same old story about the negative effects of technology use over and over again, the message and effect of what is being said is completely lost and therefore many younger people don't want to listen anymore, even if the information given is important.

The attitude young people have towards technology hasn't come from being narrow-minded or unable to understand, it has come from the inability many people have in communicating their concerns, and the way technology has been weaved into the lives of many teenagers.

Advertisement for technology is everywhere. Smothered onto billboards, crammed into newspapers, everywhere you go there's an add for the latest product that's been

released. There's also a lot of peer pressure to have a phone. And it's not just any phone, you must have the newest phone, the best known brand. Phones are ever changing, ever evolving at a rapid pace. Most teenagers feel the need to have the newest, all the time, whether they will use half of the appliances or not. But why wouldn't they? After all, no one wants to be called 'old fashioned'.

A classic way of dealing with technology is to straight-up ban it, leading whoever has just had their device banned to be angry and confused. Many teenagers and kids have spent most of their life being influenced by technology, so to simply take it away with no explanation doesn't help them understand why technology is deemed bad. Any policy put in place then ends up being disrespected and disobeyed, resulting in the punishment of the disobeyer, and the story continues in a never-ending circle of frustration and apathy.

It is almost foolish to think that one can just take away a big part of someone's life (which unfortunately technology is for many teenagers) and expect them to be alright with that. It gets to a point when it seems that there's a battle between the young and the old, where the young just want to enjoy themselves in

the modern world they are living in and the old are just stuck in the past and wanting to drag everyone back with them. When you look at the bigger picture, it's sad that such a division has been created out of misunderstanding, a division that doesn't allow adults to understand children (which we teenagers still are, even if we don't want to think of it in that way), and from children understanding adults.

At Brockwood, it does not seem to be this way. If the technology policy were to change tomorrow, allowing phones to be used in public spaces, the atmosphere would inevitably be different. However, I think that those at Brockwood have experienced life without the temptation of devices and enjoy interacting with people on a much more social, meaningful level. Maybe it's because there's virtually no signal here, and we realise that our phones are basically thin, illuminated bricks. Maybe because there's so much depth to social life at Brockwood we forget about our phones. Or maybe it's because there have been many, many discussions and debates on the policy, in which the staff listened to the student's voices and thoughts, instead of going through with something without respecting

everyone's opinion. For me, that's what the question of technology in Brockwood is about. An understanding between everyone, including everyone's views, and fully comprehending the reasons behind certain actions.

Cover photo by Jennifer Kowalewski

### This edition's Photographers

Student  
Anastasia Mee



And staff member  
Jennifer Kowalewski



Editor: Michael Ledwith. © 2017 Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Limited

## THE BROCKWOOD OBSERVER

**Brockwood Park School**  
Bramdean, Alresford  
Hampshire.  
SO24 0LQ, UK.  
Tel: +44 (0) 1962 771 744

Email:  
observer@brockwood  
.org.uk

Website:  
www.brockwood.org.uk

YouTube:  
youtube.com/  
brockwoodparkschool

Website:  
www.jkrishnamurti.org







## INDIVIDUALISED EDUCATION

### Curriculum at Brockwood 2017-18



The school year at Brockwood does not start with a pre-existing timetable that students are then fitted into. In the first week, each student works with teachers and their academic advisor in building and planning their own highly individualised timetable designed around their needs and interests, while at the same time keeping in mind the intentions of the school and the available resources. The intention is to help students develop organisational skills and a sense of taking their learning and education into their own hands. While taking responsibility for one's own learning is at the core of our approach, we also employ an effective procedure for supervision of students' whereabouts and the study activities they are engaged in during the morning seminar and study times.

Before the first term begins the teacher group engage in weeks of planning and preparing for the coming school year, asking the hard questions afresh: e.g. what is the movement of learning and can we create environments that make it possible, what in our own conditioning may be getting in the way of re-envisioning and re-working education and schooling? This year new ideas prompted the creation of new materials to better enable students' learning and study. These include an Academic Advising Manual for students and teachers;

a Student Planner to help with preparation and time management; and the Student Learning Journal for students to track and reflect on both the products and process of their learning.



For students under 16, beginner English language learners, and any other interested student, we run Core Courses in Humanities, Science, Maths, Art, and Movement & Health, composed of seminars, teacher designed learning activities, student designed activities, and additional study hours. These courses are designed to be flexible and responsive to students' individual learning trajectories. Students engage in a combination of individual, group, teacher-group, and one-to-one teacher-student time.

'Learning Spaces' (classrooms, library, labs, etc.) have been equipped with relevant and diverse resources and materials for Core Courses, individual student projects and exam courses. Teachers work in these spaces during designated study times. The intention is to foster engagement and inspiration, to ignite self-motivation and to contribute to an overall studious atmosphere with responsibility and learning at its centre.

The maths lab, EAL (English as a foreign language), Humanities

and Science learning spaces are also enriched with new books, equipment and other resources. In the art barn, changes such as overall layout, use of space, new internet ports, personal spaces moving to the ground floor, all mean that this area is now divided into two expanded learning spaces – one for textiles and one for digital media & photography. These are kitted out with accessible equipment and materials, e.g. relevant books, digital software, whiteboard, sewing machines, large tables for portfolio viewing, cutting fabric or working at in groups or individually. Students can bring their projects into the space to work alone or with support from a teacher or teacher apprentice. Design teacher, Gary Boller is now hosting a digital media space for non-exam students where previously he only had contact with exam students. These spaces are available for spontaneous workshops as needs arise. Students have been given introductions and trainings on use of space and equipment. Every Learning Space will continue to be enriched over time.

All these developments are intended to support significant supervision and follow up on each student's learning to make it possible for the curriculum to deepen and develop in sustainability and resilience.

'Visual map' drawings above and below by Nusa Maal



# EXAMING EXAMS

by Yoel, Student



The topic of exams is a big one in Brockwood. It is not unusual to hear a heated discussion during a meal, or over tea, about whether exams are a help or a hindrance, especially with the recent adjustments in the curriculum and the introduction of Project Time, where students are supported in focusing on a topic they are interested in without a set curriculum or grading system. Many a time I've been part of the discussion and heard plenty of insightful points from both sides. I decided to compile a few perspectives and share them.



## Shiva, Student

Being a student who has taken both projects and exams, I have seen that there is a significant difference between these paths. Exams are structured and manipulated in a certain way that might not be suitable for every student, since everyone learns differently. Some people may be extremely good at this way of learning, but it may not be the most efficient way of measuring intelligence. Exams can motivate you to study because they have a deadline, but the danger comes when your only motivation is the deadline and once you cross that deadline the learning stops.

Projects allow you to explore your field of interest. For example, I am currently working on a project that focuses on climate change and how it might affect the economy (included in this issue). This has no syllabus (structure) and there is no set deadline. This may have some drawbacks such as the potential for procrastination and, since it's fully your responsibility to explore and learn, this might put a lot of pressure on your project. In the end you may learn much more - or nothing at all - the important thing is that projects are totally up to you. If that project really interests you then there is automatically self-motivation. Perhaps this is the key to finding what we should do in our futures.



## Raymond, Teacher Apprentice

I think it is worth exploring the relationship between oneself and exams. Exams can be worth doing if one feels ready - as a result of having explored a subject on one's own terms and in his or her own way. However, the learning process can be limited and hindered if one feels exam preparation to be the primary motivation for studying. It may be valuable to see how one manages with a project first, as the lack of an external deadline means there is greater scope for prioritising the exploration of how one feels about 'studying' or 'school-learning'. In this way, self-examination is not jeopardised by the distraction of getting things ready for a written exam.



## Myrdin, Student

For me, projects are a way of exploring the things that I am interested in - in an environment where it is safe to do so - where I have time to inquire and ask for advice. I can go all directions without having to worry about making money or being done before deadlines. The only limits I have are the ones that I (and the agreements) set. In this space I can follow my passions and build a portfolio in the process. Now I am capable of preparing myself for the world outside of school. I will be able to live because of the knowledge I have gained from following my passions.



## Kai-song, Student

Personally, I feel that far too much importance is placed on sitting exams. They certainly have a place in education but shouldn't be the primary objectives of it as they are now. I feel that in many schooling systems the focus is to study a subject to get a good grade, not to learn about and enjoy it. By being so biased towards getting a good mark and disregarding other aspects of learning, education can easily become rather dull and dead to the student. Instead of being the pinnacle around which an education revolves, exams should just be used as markers of understanding, and nothing more.

Projects are another cup of tea entirely. Having done them in my first year of Brockwood, I feel that it's wonderful to have projects and that certain people can really benefit from doing them; being able to explore whatever area of the world or life they desire. However, I also think that they are unsuited to many people, including me when I did one, as they require a large amount of self-motivation and dedication. Many people, especially young students who haven't yet experienced that freedom of control, lack the discipline to make a success of their project. People considering starting a project should be prepared to do a lot of unsupported work and have a clear vision of what they wish to accomplish.



# TEACHING AND LEARNING AT BROCKWOOD



by Ashleigh, Staff



Being an educator at Brockwood Park School is, as you probably know, much more than being a teacher in a subject area. It also means being a student, a guardian, a carer and friend in a community of equals of all ages. Pastoral care is an integral part of what I see as my role here. I live next door to many students and throughout the day I may have many conversations about life, the issues that it presents and the questions of how we understand it.

Having been a student at Brockwood for three years (leaving in 2006) I remember how vibrant, intense and challenging life was at this age, and in this place I make an effort to look out for those who may be going through a vulnerable period or are

jolted by the rapidity of one's change during adolescence. The pressures of fitting in with a peer group and society's norms are incredibly strong in most young people. For me, Brockwood threw all these issues into light to be examined. It gave me room to observe and to question without feeling the need to conform. Brockwood also gave me the space for my joy to be and to expand, to allow what was beautiful and meaningful to be discovered and explored, propelling me to share this with others.

I recognise here that discovering is a constant, which is enriched when learning with and beside others. This learning does not

stop, even if your role is officially recognised by society as a 'teacher'.

It is a privilege to be part of a space which encourages people to find their questions and joy, to be in a place where truth is the foundation

of real relationship.

It demands a lot of energy, care, and attention to the requisite pause and rest. Brockwood is a fluid place, with

people coming and going. It is vibrant, alive and challenging. The unknown is always there, as is the feeling of meeting this together, creatively. The question that is constantly with me and which I would like to share with you, is: Can we creatively meet the unknown with joy, compassion, and honesty?

*'Can we creatively meet the unknown with joy, compassion, and honesty?'*

## INFLUENCES, OPINIONS, AND BIAS

by Heloise, Student

*An excerpt from a Journalism class exercise exploring the roots of one's bias and opinion.*

Where do our opinions come from? Our views seem to form from many different influences: school, home, friends, family etc. Some people say that we can independently forge our own opinion on what we agree or disagree with, where we see beauty, completely isolated from external influence. I think that is incorrect.

Our social interactions define who we are and what we believe in. For better or worse, (it is your choice to decide), everybody has different opinions and

biases. But unfortunately, we tend to call 'truth' specifically what *we* believe in.

What I believe seems to come mainly from my parents. I have absorbed their biases, though I think these biases are also accentuated by my own personality and sensibility. Curiously, a lot of my friends have the same opinions as me, but we seem to often choose our friends because they think like us, similar biases find each other.

Similarities in thought can also happen because of gender. I am a

woman and as a woman, I care about gender equality, domestic violence, sexism, and the right to abortion, but I don't define myself as a feminist. Of course, I would like things to change, but I don't like to be associated with groups since their views sometimes differ from mine. Once you take part in a group, you are associated with everybody in that group. I am still young, and I would like to explore things deeply myself before judging them. But this is only what I believe in...





# PLASTIC: TALKING SOLUTIONS

by Maya, Student

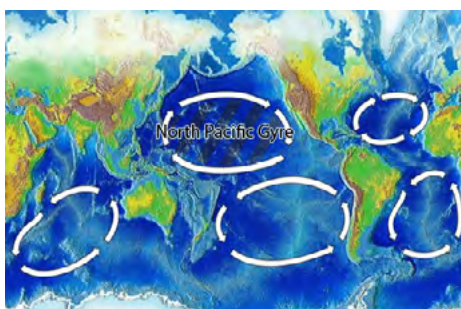


Plastic! I'm typing on it right now. It is incredibly useful. As useful as it is durable. Virtually every piece of plastic that was ever created still exists in some shape or form, except for a small amount that has been incinerated. We dump about 8 million tons of plastic a year in the oceans across the world. Take for example the Maldives, where an artificial island called Thilafushi was created with the sole purpose of becoming a landfill for the other islands' waste. As you can image, after 25 years of dumping plastic and waste, the island is overflowing. So now the Maldivians have a problem. Where will the rest of their plastic and waste go?

The only option they have left is to burn it. Burning plastic releases toxic chemicals such as dioxins and furans which scientists have linked to cancer and respiratory diseases like asthma and emphysema. As atmospheric CO2 levels keep increasing, this results in the sea level rising, meaning that small islands such as the Maldives are

'sinking'. 80% of its 1,200 islands are no more than 1 metre above sea level (1). It's predicted that the Maldives will be submerged in as little as sixty years (2), leaving an island of plastic to float away and further pollute the already suffering ocean. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case.

In the North Pacific Gyre is the largest ocean 'garbage patch' in the world. This floating mass of plastic is almost six times the size of England, with the number of pieces of plastic outnumbering sea life six to one.



On Luzon island, located in the Pacific ocean, Shtang a 50-year-old garbage dump is sitting on top of what was a gorgeous Pacific beach. This 42,000-ton mountain feeds plastic into the ocean

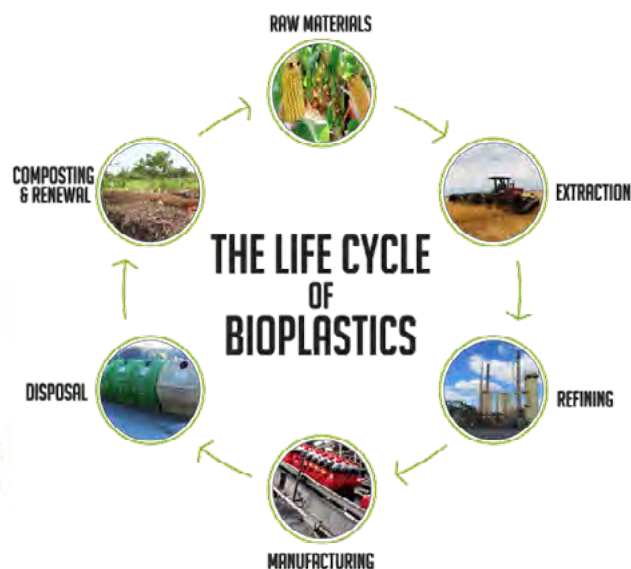
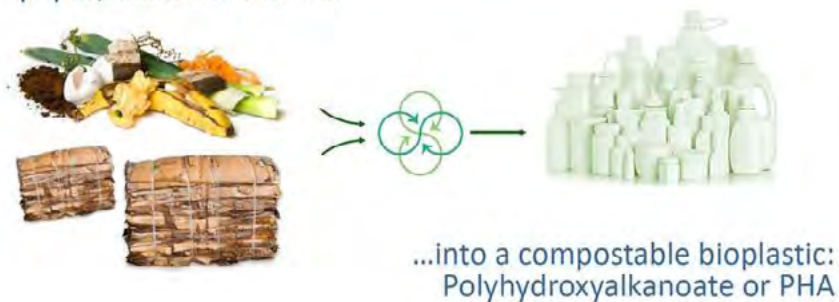
on coastal winds and many of the island's storms. One big typhoon and, whoosh, all the plastic will be carried into the ocean. Today this mountain is regularly set on fire releasing toxic fumes into the city, because it is their last resort due to the endless amounts of plastic thrown away each day.

Most plastics take between 500 to 1,000 years to degrade fully. The plastic splits itself into microplastics which are smaller than the diameter of a human hair. Microplastics are mistaken as food by many animals. It is estimated that one million seabirds and 10,000 marine mammals are killed annually due to plastics in the oceans. Naturally you will realise that as many of us consume fish, we are not only killing fish, we are also polluting ourselves by eating the trash that we have created.

Water is essential for life and human beings expect their water to be clean, in other words free of harmful chemicals. Since microplastics are in the oceans you might ask, is plastic also in our drinking water? Scientists

## FULL CYCLE BIOPLASTICS

FCB turns mixed organic and un-recyclable paper/cellulosic waste...



have tested 18 sites in seven different countries around Europe. The results showed that 72% percent of our drinking water in Europe and 83% of the drinking water worldwide contains microplastics. We are drinking plastic! As a result, scientists are calling for urgent research on the implications for our health.

### WHAT CAN WE DO?

Drinking Water Location	% Containing microplastic
Worldwide	83%
Lebanon, Beirut	94%
USA	94%
India	82%
Uk, France, Germany	72%

(3) Source: The Guardian

Whoever you are, old or young, you are have the potential to be an empowered responsible human being. There are solutions to this plastic problem and we can all make our contribution to help preserve our endangered eco-system.

Of course we can start by reducing our use of plastics. For example, say 'no' to straws in drinks, don't use dishwasher tablets in small plastic bags and ask your supermarkets to use less plastic-wrapping. There are even plastic free shops appearing in the UK (4). Governments are beginning to ban the sale of lightweight plastic bags, or are charging customers for them. Make sure you always have a fabric bag with you.

We can reuse the plastic we have,

rather than throw it away. Scotland is planning a deposit scheme on bottles where you pay a surcharge on your bottle and when you give it back your money is refunded to you. The organisation Zero Waste Scotland estimates that this deposit scheme could save local authorities between £3m and £6m on litter clearance alone (5).

For companies that use plastics, there is a way to contribute towards preserving our eco-system and at the same time save money. Full Cycle Bioplastics is a company that uses organic wastes to create biodegradable plastics. Not only would they take away organic waste but they also produce bio-plastic from it.

Scientists have also discovered plastic-eating caterpillars. The scientist Federica Bertocchini, an amateur beekeeper and biologist, saw some caterpillars eating little pieces of wax and honey. She took them home in a plastic bag to identify them, and later that day noticed that the bag had many holes and that the caterpillars were roaming around her house. This discovery could maybe help to reduce our plastic waste by breaking it down, but caterpillars are sentient beings and deserve respect. We can't count on another living being to clean up our plastic waste. This is one reason why we must be careful about new discoveries and think about their longer term implications.

If we are to respond adequately to this plastic problem, we must rethink our relationship with plastic. We need to avoid using it where we can and all try to reduce, reuse, re-cycle, while looking for alternatives.



*Here at Brockwood, a group of students are looking for ways to use as little plastic as possible in our lives. A group of us have also embarked on a six-month experiment to see how few plastic bottles we use before the next Observer. We will share the results in the next edition.*

Sources:

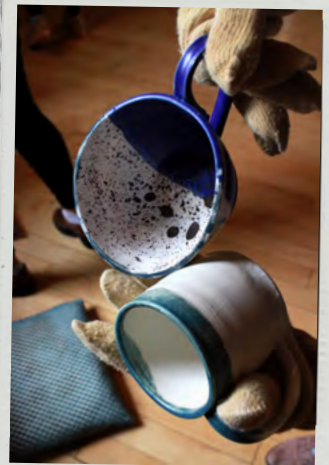
- (1), (2) [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south\\_asia/3930765.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/3930765.stm)
  - (3) <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/sep/06/plastic-fibres-found-tap-water-around-world-study-reveals>
  - (4) <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/bulk-makers-recycling-zero-waste-first-plastic-free-market-london-hackney-a7924781.html>
  - (5) <http://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/Deposit%20Return%20Evidence%20Summary.pdf>
- Other sources:  
<http://orbmedia.org>  
<https://www.plascoceans.org>



# WORKSHOP WEEK

For one week each year Brockwood departs from the usual project and academic focus to engage in several hands-on and physical courses of workshops. Guests, who are specialists in various fields, visit for the week to share intensive classes resulting in a school which is brimming with creativity and movement.

This year, the week included no less than ten courses: Afro-Brazilian Dance, Ballroom Dancing, Band Workshop, Conscious Movement, Creative Writing, Drama, Drawing as a Way of Seeing, Portrait Drawing, Natural Cosmetics, Pottery, Storytelling, Salsa Dancing, and Yoga.









# 'THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING'

by Shiva, Student



In Brockwood two years ago we held a 'Model United Nations', imitating what was current at the time of the Conference of Parties (COP21) summit in Paris 2015, this sparked my interest in climate change.



Brockwood's Climate Change Conference taking a vote

Recent natural disasters in developed and developing countries such as hurricane Harvey in the US and the August flooding in south Asia have affected 24 million people according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Climate change is happening right now. As you read this, there are millions of people around

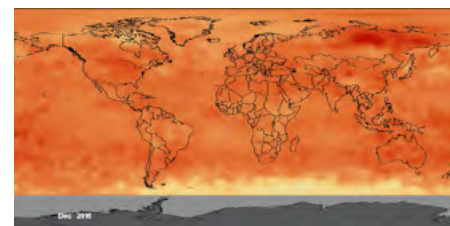
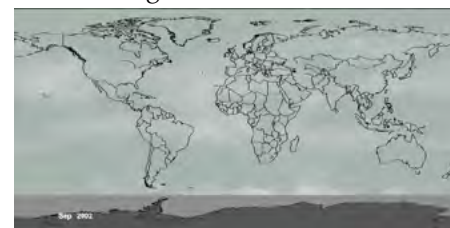
the world being affected by climate change and there is a high probability that you are a victim of this.

We have accelerated global warming at an unprecedented pace. Images to the right show the change in carbon dioxide in a span of 14 years (2002-2016) Data source: Atmospheric Infrared Sounder (AIRS). Credit: NASA

**"We are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it." Barack Obama**

This year I have taken up a project that allows me to explore potential impacts on the economy due to climate change and whether policies could help minimise the damage.

Reading *This Changes Everything* by Naomi Klein—a book about capitalism vs the climate—has gotten me thinking.



Klein points out that the main reason for global warming is not carbon but greed. She states that if we were going to reinvent transportation systems or the electricity grid, it's not a good idea to sell it to companies that only want to make profit, because this will lead them to think about money and not the impact of what it might do to the earth.

## WORLD RESPONSE

The first big step in combating climate change came in 1997, when the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations led to the Kyoto Protocol. The protocol set a target for 37 industrialised countries to reduce their emissions by an average of 5% below 1990 levels for the period 2008 to 2012. The targets were met successfully: overall, the countries reduced their emissions by more than 10%. This was not enough to offset the increasing emissions from other industrialising countries (such as China), meaning total global emissions grew over the period. Another Kyoto agreement was laid out for 2013-2020. Fewer countries are participating in this but the EU and the UK have joined. A second major step was the 2015 Paris Agreement. Article 2 of the agreement's main objective is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by holding the increase in the global average temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

## OUR RESPONSE

We can do many things to contribute to tackling climate change. The main contributor is to spread awareness on climate change. By doing this you will enable opportunities for change. It has never been easier to get in touch with political representatives by the use of social media. Be energy efficient by changing light bulbs to LEDs and washing clothes in cold or warm (not hot) water. Dryers contribute to a worse environment; hang dry when you can. Eating locally can help reduce carbon emissions. Reduce consumption of meat, since 18% of greenhouse gases come from meat and dairy products. Flying less and considering greener modes of transport such as trains can contribute to tackling climate change.

COP23 in Bonn, Germany took place 6-17 of November 2017. There is still hope in tackling climate change and if we don't start now we might not be able to change it later. Be the change.





by Heloise, Student



Staff member Carvalho, and three students, care for the aquarium in the school's conservatory. In October they bought new fish. Two students and I sat on a bench in front of the fish tank to look at the new members of the community.

It looked like a TV. Bright colours, hypnotical movements. Then, we started to observe each fish more intensely, and to comment on their behaviors.

The new fish were not used to the aquarium's borders. They were testing the limits, usually crashing into the glass or gazing at their reflection for several seconds. On the other hand, the old fish knew the boundaries and avoided them.

Three red and blue, shiny fish always stayed as a group. They had some bright silvery reflective colours. They did not move for the whole time we looked at them, but they seemed pretty happy like that.

Two other newly-bought fish were inseparable. They were doing exactly the same movement at the same time, following each other, stopping at the same point, turning at the same moment. We called them Romeo and Juliet. But suddenly, they took a different route and did not go back to each other. They did not look at each other anymore, and seemed lost.

Another incident was even sadder. We saw a very weak guppy. His majestic black tail was half eaten by

the others. A miniature shark was attacking him. We wanted to save him, maybe we could remove him, put him in another tank, or give him back to the shop. We called Carvalho who told us these kind of behaviors were common. Some new fish are not accepted by the older residents. The only thing we could do for the weak guppy was let him die naturally or kill him now. "This is life", Carvalho repeated.

And actually, I really think this is life; Disoriented fish. Happy ones. Couples, groups, divorces and individuals. Sad stories, bullying and aggressors. This fish tank, in a way, made me think about our own behaviors, as human-beings.

Aquarium painting by Anna G, Student

## ANNOUNCEMENT FOR BROCKWOOD PARK ALUMNI

The Reunion to mark the 50th Anniversary of Brockwood Park School will occur from Thursday 15th to Monday 19th August 2019



# A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

by Ainara, Student



My name is Ainara, I am 18 years old and I am a citizen of the world.

Until I came to Brockwood, I have always lived in Barcelona and its surroundings, but I don't have a Catalan family: my mum is from the Basque Country, north of Spain, and my dad is from Israel. I don't identify with any of those nationalities... or any other.

I have grown up hearing about the Catalan independence topic and how badly some people wanted Catalonia to become an independent state, but I never thought I would actually be seeing what is happening right now.

On the 11th of September 2012 –the national day of Catalonia– there was a big Independence demonstration in Barcelona. At the time, many of my school friends came from pro-independence families and I would hear them talk about it and how cool that demonstration was going to be and how important it was to support that idea because the Spanish government was being really mean to 'us'. So at one point, I decided that I was also going to be a supporter of the independence movement.



I bought myself a necklace that had the pro-independence flag on it and started wearing it all the time, and a couple of weeks later I went to that demonstration with the family of a friend, it was lots of fun. Now I could say I was actually a big supporter of the independence movement. I was 13 years old and this was the first demonstration I went to without my parents, just because I wanted to go.

After a while, I sort of forgot about the whole thing and stopped wearing my necklace. Actually, I didn't care about independence at all. It was nice to feel part of a group of people, to feel rebellious, and to be like most of my

friends; but at home there was never that atmosphere. It was all an outside thing. So I let go of that idea of myself in a way.

In 2015, I ended up back at the protest. I wasn't planning on going, but I was meeting a friend who was going. My idea was to meet there, be there for a little while and then go to my friend's house but again I found myself getting into the protest. I bought a t-shirt, and a couple of pins, which I pinned to my back-pack, and got involved in everything that was going on there.

Why? Well, once I got to the demonstration, there was a very powerful atmosphere, people were leaving aside any other differences they had and they all met there to ask for one thing they all wanted: independence and freedom to rule over their own country. It is usually not about hate for Spain or about being separatists. For many it is about loving their land, relating to their culture, and feeling like they cannot take decisions over this land and this culture because someone else –the Spanish Government– is making these decisions for them.

I have never understood this feeling of disempowerment because I do not relate to it. I do not identify with it. But seeing all those people and being among them, just made feel like I wanted to support them?

After that, I didn't attend another protest until October of this year when Carles Puigdemont made the Catalan Unilateral Independence Declaration. There was a big reunion of people in Barcelona in front of the city hall. The reasons for me attending and joining this protest were similar to the ones I had for taking part of the protest back in 2015. But this time, I also knew more about the situation. I know a little bit about how things are being dealt with in Spain and Catalonia, and I do not agree with how the Spanish Government is dealing with the situation. Not only are



<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/>

they preventing Catalonia becoming an independent state –which I personally don't have an opinion about– but they are not letting the Catalan Government ask their people what they want, and that, to me is a violation of human rights and democracy. I don't know much or care much about politics but I do see

“How do we want to live? Who do we want to be represented by? Does anyone have the right to decide in which conditions another person should live?”

how things are being dealt with in where my home is. I find it very serious that some policemen are physically injuring people who are just expressing their views publicly.

For me, it is very difficult to identify with either of the two sides to this story, because I feel like I am neither Catalan nor Spanish and I don't have any political reasons –at least for now– to take any of the sides, but it feels like this isn't about that anymore, it is about ethics and values. How do we want to live? Who do we want to be represented by? Does anyone have the right to decide in which conditions another person should live? Do we want to be represented by someone who suppresses people who are trying to protect what they think is their freedom? I don't.

Sometimes I think that I may be being a bit incoherent, for I say I don't specifically support Catalonia's independence and then I go to protests that are in its favour. But somehow I think it is ok, because I may not directly support Catalonia's independence, but I do support people's right to say what they want. I support equality, and I support democracy; and I don't think any of those exist in the current situation in this whole issue.





## DEVICES AND DIVISIONS

by Meher, Student



Aren't people fascinating? My family and I recently found ourselves at a nicely decorated Mexican restaurant. As it was

November we sat as far away from the door as possible, as to avoid cold air blowing in our faces. This gave us a fantastic panoramic view of the whole evening scene. A waitress swooped by, giving us all menus and five minutes to decide what we wanted. After a tedious process that involved the words "oh no wait actually can I have this instead" the waitress took our orders for the final time and exited with an eye roll.

I looked around. On a Friday night, restaurants are usually quite busy with a range of different customers. We decided to play a game. For each table, we discreetly analysed the occupants in great detail, and formulated a background story for them. We established that a seemingly innocent, young couple were actually illegal organ resellers who were securing a deal over the phone with a business woman who had a sick friend and wanted to give her a relatively-cheap-yet-still-meaningful birthday present. We shifted our attention to the next table. A family. These ones were always the best. So many possibilities. Before we had time to evaluate the candidates in much detail, the youngest, who couldn't have been older than three, started crying. The assumed father shifted in

his seat uncomfortably. He patted the young girl on her head awkwardly.

"Come on now, no need to cry Isabelle". Then to the Brunette female seated across him, "she's at it again. It's your turn."

The assumed mother glared at him. "No," she replied. "It was my turn last time."

"Oh my god, Melissa. The lies that come out of your mouth! It was surely my turn the last time this happened."

Melissa raised her eyebrows. Our food arrived. Isabelle's bawling continued. The older girl, whose face reflected the light from her phone, moaned, "why won't she shut up already! She's embarrassing! Everyone's staring at us!".

Our eyes jumped to our empty plates but then edged back again carefully.

The assumed father looked at his assumed daughter, then sighed heavily as he slid his phone out of his pocket. Isabelle's eyes widened slightly at the sight. The phone was passed to her, and soon the crying stopped. The restaurant breathed a sigh of relief. My dad opened his mouth to speak, but before he could pronounce the first syllable of his sentence our ears were filled with the Peppa Pig theme tune, followed with the high pitched squeals of a three-year-old toddler.

I know so many people whose solution to their child's unhappiness is to give them a device. When I walk down the road I see women on their phones, pushing buggies carrying

babies clutching iPads. So many kids, as young as 5, know how to operate YouTube and Google better than I do. When I was young (well, at least younger than I am now) I enjoyed life

*"So many kids, as young as 5, know how to operate YouTube and Google better than I do"*

by playing outside with my friends, or drawing or spending time with my parents. A strong, close bond between young children

and their parents is, in my opinion, extremely necessary. I know people who would much rather hand their children over to the internet for a few hours than interact with them.

Each time I see a young child on a device, I feel a wave of sadness, a wave of disgust, rising up inside me. I often think to myself; when I grow up, if I have children, I don't want them to have a childhood like this. I don't want their earliest memories to be of devices. But by then, technology would have developed even further. Surely the kind of technology that children will be exposed to will only be more advanced and more involved in their lives. Will it even be possible to raise a child in the future in a way without technology being such a massive part of their lives? Or would people like that just be considered as outsiders, considered as the weird old fashioned ones who don't want their kids to have a normal childhood?

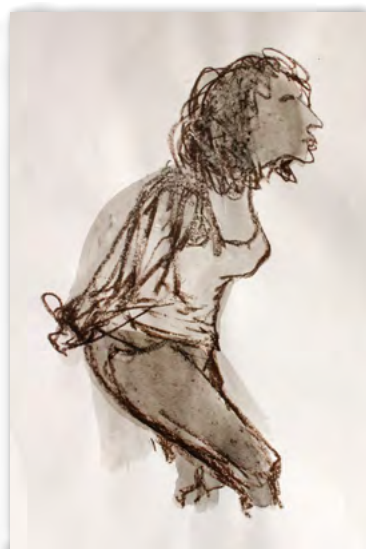
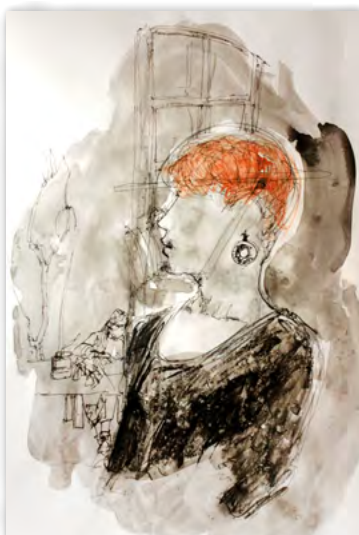


# DRAWING FROM LIFE

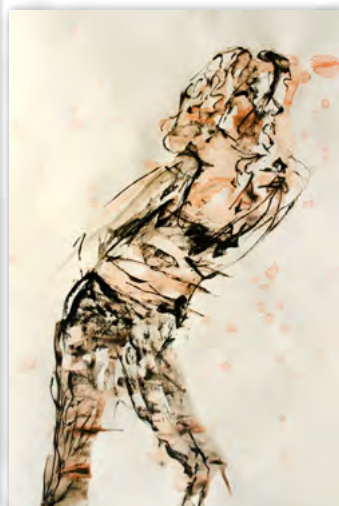
by Jennifer, Staff

Art students in the A-Level course explored multiple exercises to introduce them to possibilities outside of what they know about drawing.

Exercises included 1 minute, 5 minute, 20 minute, and 45 minute segments where we loosely sketched movement, gestures, figures and combining found imagery with life drawings.



Starting with graphite sticks, students experimented with drumming movements on paper to form the model in front of them. Other exercises included limiting the choice of medium to only two and seeing how it can open up other possibilities to freeing the hands and mind from ones routine. Throughout the various drawing workshops, students began to observe where they experience blocks in



letting go of how things should be expressed, and the idea that one should capture something realistically. The short and brief exercises helped to move the awareness and attention away from the judgement that often gets in the way of one's creativity, and to stay with what is front of them and what is happening inside at that moment. It is important to be in the moment and engage with whole the process. (Materials that were used included ink, wax, pastel, chalk, charcoal, feathers, sponges, fingers, and brushes.)



# POETRY PLEASE

## UNTITLED

By Heloise, Student

The sparkling water drops on the grass reflect the sunlight. They look like frozen crystals.  
Flashes of silver light appear time to time. A spider has started doing her web.  
The warmth of the sun on my back makes the fresh wind less biting.  
The icy-blue sky, free of clouds, reminds me of the sunniest days of summer in Provence.  
The yellowish light of the sun reflects into the trees. It gives my book, the grass and the leaves a sepia tone as if we were part of an old photograph.  
A spider has made her web around nettle branches. She stands in the middle of it, without moving any of her numerous legs. She is patiently waiting for a prey to come in her trap.  
Enormous, brown mushrooms are emerging from the ground at the bottom of a tree. They smell of mold and humidity like the forest.  
Tiny golden flowers open their petals to the daylight. The newly-born ones are greeting the sun and the sky, by exposing their shining beauty.  
The air smells of the freshly-cut grass, the sheep and the wood. When walking, the grass feels like a cushion made for my feet. It is as soft as a green, living duvet.  
The shadows the leaves make on the trunk are moving while the wind blows gently.

## The Silent Room

By Anonymous, Student

The sun is shining through the big green trees sprinkling the grass in all shades of green.  
Leaves get painted in orange, yellow and red, until the trees cannot hold them anymore and they fly down to the earth.  
Black bird flies through azure blue sky.  
Smell of grass and nature moves through the air and makes me feel alive and free.  
Big mushrooms are climbing out of the earth.  
Little water drops are sitting on thin leaves of grass, waiting for the sun to disappear.

## Autumn Thunder

by Eva, Student

Golden bronze leaves  
Fly from the trees  
The forest floor strewn  
A carpet of brown  
As the wind howls  
And flames fall

Leaves whipped from their safety  
Cast adrift  
The unknown approaches  
Birds flee from its midst

Trees scream in pain  
As their roots are upturned  
And yet many more  
Are still to be burned

Once the storm is diminished  
And thunder no more  
Although branches are bare  
Fruits abandoned on the floor

The stillness is absolute  
No creature dares cry  
Yet the sun will still shine  
And all in due course  
New life will burst forth

For the moss stained trunks  
Although many have fallen  
Some still stand erect  
And grow ever the taller

Soon buds will burst open  
And fruits will form  
But we must never forget  
The majestic power of storm



# BROCKWOOD IN BRIEF

## Hedgehogs Huts

During human ecology class, a small group of students constructed little hibernation burrows and huts for hedgehogs. The hedgehog population in England has fallen dramatically and they are in desperate need of help if they are to survive humanity's encroachment. These spiny mammals usually hibernate to bypass the cold months of the year when food becomes scarce. To help them get a good winter's sleep, students took sticks, bamboo, leaves and stones and made several little homes around Brockwood Park.



A completed hedgehog hut

## Brockwood Concert Series 17/18



The Linos Trio

Our first classical concert of this season saw acclaimed cellist Philip Higham join pianist Prach Boondiskulchok in a vibrant and dynamic programme, featuring the great Beethoven A Major Sonata and Kabalevsky's rarely heard, virtuosic Cello Sonata. These masterworks were accompanied by the poetic Schumann Romances, and Beethoven's Variations on Handel's theme. You are welcome to join us, by RSVP, for the next concerts in the Brockwood series, which are:



Consone Quartet

The Linos Piano Trio, 24 March; and Consone Quartet—Classical String Quartet, 12 May.

## Learning the Art of Living

A Brockwood education goes beyond traditional kinds of learning. Not exclusively academic, Brockwood strives to help students learn the art of living, bringing together aspects of learning, sensitivity, open-mindedness and self-reflection. An important element of this is our weekly Inquiry-Time, where the whole school takes part in an exploratory discussion on a specific topic. These topics can be suggested by staff and/or students.

Thus far the School has inquired into the following subjects.

**September 8th:** Discussions on the nature of confidence.

**September 13th:** Exploration into the question *'Is our body image preventing us from having a healthy relationship with our bodies?'*

**September 20th:** Inquiry into image-making and judgements.

**September 27th:** Presentation from Dr Pathik Wadhwa on *Social relationships/Social Media and Health*, followed by a discussion on the question *'Is social media detrimental to health?'*

**October 4th:** The whole school further discussed the topic of body image.

**October 11th:** Three students presented the topic of sex to the whole school. The students asked everyone to write anonymously three questions about the topic which were collected in a bowl. They then selected one question at a time for discussion.

**October 18th:** This week continued with the questions from the previous week.

**November 8th:** Asking the questions *'What is education for?'* and *'Why are we learning?'*

**November 15th:** The school looked at fear, where it comes from and what role it has in our lives?

**November 22nd:** Looking into the role and influence of tradition and culture in society.



## Visit Us

Brockwood Park School's next Open Days are taking place on Saturday 10th March - 10am - 3pm and Saturday 28th April - 10am - 1pm. If you, or someone you know, are interested in visiting, please get in touch and RSVP. Attendees can meet the teachers and students, tour the grounds, see the facilities and, if you stay for lunch, sample some of the produce from our organic garden.

For more info or to book a visit, please email: [enquiry@brockwood.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@brockwood.org.uk) or visit: [www.brockwood.org](http://www.brockwood.org)

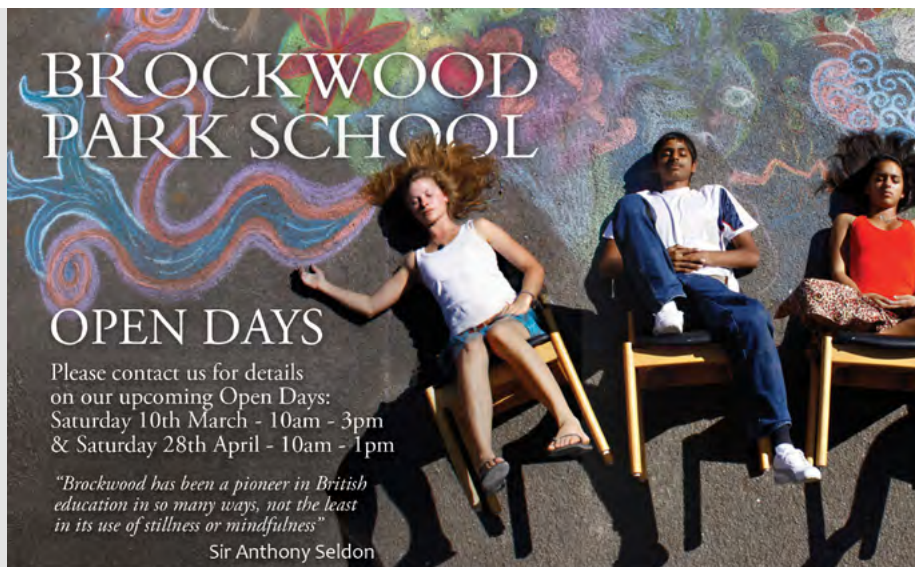
For those interested parents and students unable to attend an Open Day, the School also welcomes visits at other times.

# BROCKWOOD PARK SCHOOL

## OPEN DAYS

Please contact us for details on our upcoming Open Days:  
Saturday 10th March - 10am - 3pm  
& Saturday 28th April - 10am - 1pm

*"Brockwood has been a pioneer in British education in so many ways, not the least in its use of stillness or mindfulness"*  
Sir Anthony Seldon



Please register to join us: 01962 771744 | [enquiry@brockwood.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@brockwood.org.uk) | [brockwood.org.uk](http://brockwood.org.uk)