

# THE HILL WEST HERALD

**HILL WEST**  
*Primary*  
FOUR OAKS



**SUMMER TERM 2020**  
**ISSUE 28**

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## Message from the Head Teacher

By Dr Beth Clarke

**Somewhere over the rainbow, skies are blue, and the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true.** *E. Y. Harburg*

When the government announced that schools were to close their doors to pupils on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March, no one knew how long the closure was likely to last. Keeping things as normal as possible for the children on that last day of school, staff waved goodbye as though the children were heading home for a long weekend. Of course, even then, there were lessons we could have drawn from what had happened in other countries. I don't think any of us, at school, really wanted to contemplate that the UK was going to face challenges on a similar scale.

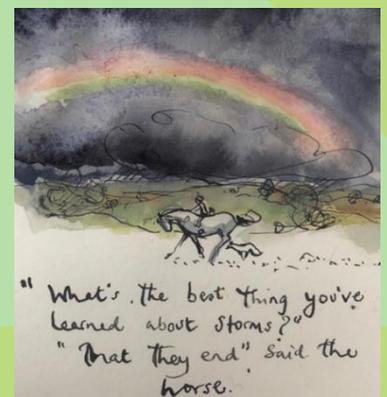


My parents are currently in Italy, where they spend a great deal of their time. For them lock-down started at the beginning of March and as you can imagine, I keenly followed the daily news coverage to hear how the virus was progressing and being managed there. My parents are fortunate; they are in Southern Italy and live in a relatively rural area not too far from Ostuni. The only added complication for them was that my Dad was undergoing treatment for Melanoma when the lock-down was enforced and so this delayed the preventative surgery he was expecting to receive. I am pleased to say that he has now had the surgery he needed although this saw him go into hospital on his own and spend five days on a ward without any visitors. A small price to pay however. I appreciate that there will be people in our community who have had surgery and/or medical procedures delayed due to this pandemic. I know too that some of our parents, who are currently battling against aggressive illnesses, will have been at most risk at this time and my thoughts have been with you all.

I know that there are parents in our community who have contracted COVID19 and have thankfully now recovered. I also appreciate that in some cases families have lost beloved grandparents or know of someone who is bereaved. The sense of loss for our children will be very real at this time. I was interested to read that loss shares the same brain chemistry as physical pain. Loss can disrupt the functions regulated by the brain stem such as sleeping, eating and the capacity for physiological regulation. Talking about our worries and feelings of loss are therefore very important. Equally important at this time is seeking out, or creating, joyful experiences. When we experience joy we produce a release of chemicals which make us feel alive and bursting with energy. Sourcing these experiences has obviously been more challenging at this time of lock-down. We can however extend joy in our homes and in our classrooms on our return to school by:

- ending activities by saying "wasn't that fun"
- slowing down and paying attention to the small things which make us happy
- keeping joyful memories alive by talking about them and having pictures on the wall to remind us

Most importantly, we need to take care of each other so that we are sufficiently resourced to engage meaningfully and joyfully with our children. This is challenging for us all as we try to balance working from home while looking after our children. I have to admit that I am not the biggest fan of home working. For me, there are far too many distractions. I am looking forward to the return of all of our children. I am looking forward to the sound of children's chatter and laughter filling our corridors. I am looking forward to classrooms being a hive of learning and I am looking forward to sitting on the bank of our school field watching the children play with their friends. When that will be no one seems to know but when it happens it will definitely be a cause for celebration.



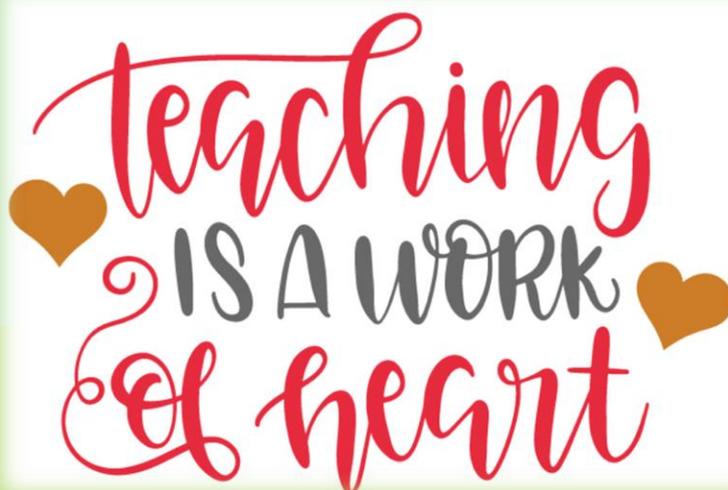
## Messages from our Staff

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Anyone who knows a teacher knows that their job doesn't stop at 3.30pm when the children go home, or at the start of a holiday. Teaching truly is a vocation, and over the last few months, teachers across the country have had to become accustomed to a completely new way of working. This, for many, has had to be balanced with home-schooling and caring for their own children, making the boundaries between work and home life ever more blurred.

At Hill West, we are endlessly grateful to each and every one of our staff – this includes our teachers, teaching assistants, admin team and site staff. Those who have not been shielding have been in school on a regular basis to provide care for our Key Worker and vulnerable pupils. Those in school have included Mr Botterrill and Mr Carroll. Together they have repaired and painted the Year 1 and Year 2 toilets; painted the staffroom; repaired the goals on the KS2 playground and ensured the school has been cleaned thoroughly each and every day. Our Admin team have worked hard from school and from home, coordinating our new admissions for September 2020, ensure refunds are processed so that parent receive the much-needed funds for pre-payments, completing daily returns to the DfE and ensuring we are well enough stocked for the coming months / year. Each day has seen at least 6 teaching staff in school, ensuring that those children in school are well catered for and this has included both the Easter holiday and the Whitsun holiday. When not in school, all of our staff have been working hard to fulfil many other aspects of their role. This includes preparing home learning for pupils in their class; preparing lesson plans and schemes of work for classes when they return, engaging in additional Continued Professional Development, and most importantly making regular phone calls home to speak to the children.

We are indebted to all our staff across school who have remained wholly committed to their role in the face of this global pandemic. For this issue of the Herald, we have asked some of our staff to reflect on their experiences during Lockdown, sharing lots of positives they are able to draw out of these unprecedented circumstances.



Teaching  
IS A WORK  
of heart

## Reflections on life during lockdown – by Mrs Hannah Cook

*“When life gives you a rainy day, play in the puddles.” Winnie The Pooh.*

This has certainly been the mantra in the Cook household for the last few months. Like many of you, we have been trying to balance full time jobs, home schooling and, most importantly of all, making sure we are all doing OK. We have found that there have been days that things have not gone to plan for one reason or another and we have had to abandon ship on the schoolwork and give in to a film. Long walks have been the highlight of our day; the recent rain has made us realise how reliant we had become on the sunshine! Although we have had hard days, difficult news to cope with and driven each other slightly mad at times, trying to enjoy time together has been our priority – and jumping in lots of puddles of course!

In fact, I’ve decided that Winnie the Pooh is a very wise little bear. He also knows the value of slowing down, something lots of us have struggled with I’m sure! *“Don’t underestimate the value of Doing Nothing, of just going along, listening to all the things you can’t hear, and not bothering.”* Our weekends are no longer filled with days out, soft play and shouts of “Get your shoes on! We’re going to be late!”

He certainly knows the value of friendship too – *“A day without a friend is like a pot without a single drop of honey left inside.”* We have all had to connect with others in different ways – whether that’s through Zoom, FaceTime, a phone call or some good old fashioned snail mail, but I for one can’t wait to see those close to me in person. And this includes our school community. Although it has been wonderful to see a small number of our pupils, school has felt like a very strange place for the last couple of months. Children are what brings Hill West to life, and I can’t wait for its heart to be beating strongly once again, once we know it’s safe. Sending lots of love to you all.



## Making the most of our time together – by Mrs Lisa Pardo



We started our lockdown by thinking about the things that make us happy. Our children talked about how they love spending time together on our holidays, so we decided to pretend that we were on holiday!

The sun was shining so we played in the sand and water, ate outside under the parasol, had ice creams and the girls had hair braids. We have been doing some schoolwork in the mornings and enjoying lots of craft activities too. We have been decorating the house, and doing some planting and gardening.

Each day we do our daily exercise, sometimes we walk, other times the children ride on their scooters. We have found lots of new paths to explore in the village and have spotted lots of animals and wildlife on our adventures.

We hope you are all okay, and can't wait to see you!

### **A slower pace to life – by Mrs Emily Johnston**

*“What’s the best thing you’ve learned about storms?” “That they end,” said the horse. Charlie Mackesy.*

Over the past couple of months, since lockdown began, it has given me lots of time to reflect on just how busy life was before all this started. This slower pace to life has certainly been enjoyable albeit a bit strange and has taught me that life is about the little things that perhaps we sometimes take for granted. Rather than going out to see family and friends, calls over Zoom, FaceTime and Whatsapp have become our norm and I feel lucky that we have the opportunity to still see other people, even if it is through a screen. In the Johnston household, we have focussed on making sure we are happy and well, as well as checking in with all our loved ones to make sure they are well too.

We’ve enjoyed our daily walks around where we live and the fresh air has been a welcome break with us both working from home. It’s also given us the opportunity to do lots of gardening, decorating and baking as well as spend lots of quality time together and feeling grateful for the little things in life.

Working from home has certainly been different and I can’t tell you how much I miss all of the children and staff from school. Hill West is a wonderful place to work and over the past few weeks, I have felt extremely lucky to work with such a supportive and fantastic staff. It has been wonderful to hear what lovely things our staff and children have been up to at home with their families.

For the Johnston’s, it has also been an exciting few months for a different reason as I am expecting my first baby in September and over the Easter holidays we found out that we are having a little boy! I’ve certainly relished in the opportunity to have some downtime in all of this and although I can’t see my loved ones during this time, I feel grateful and lucky to be on this journey.

I can’t wait to see you all soon and hope that you are all keeping well and staying safe. Remember, this will pass and we will all be stronger for it.



### **Enjoying time with my family - by Miss Devon Ward**

What a strange world we are living in right now! Everything we know to be ‘normal’ has suddenly changed and we are adapting to a different way of life but every cloud has a silver lining and that is the opportunity we have to spend more time with our loved ones (albeit, not all of them). Since returning to work after maternity leave I always wished I had just a little bit longer at home to see my little boy grow and now I finally have that opportunity so we have been making the most of it! We have spent lots of time in the garden and enjoyed going on welly walks to splash in puddles. Together we have made cakes, built dens and played with lots with cars (Jacob’s favourite toy!)

I have thoroughly enjoyed spending time with my partner and Jacob but now I am looking forward to getting back into the classroom with the other children in my life to do what we do best... learn! I hope everyone is safe and well, remember this isn’t forever, and life will possibly never be at this pace again so enjoy this time while you have it!



## Enjoying life's little pleasures - by Mrs Avril Anderson

Although life has certainly been a lot different, we have so far managed to fill our time and keep our minds and souls in check between working from home, going for walks with the dogs, rekindling old hobbies and starting new ones.

Our five dogs are certainly enjoying all the attention, extra cuddles and longer walks. The two rabbits have been busy eating (as usual) and running around their outdoor run. The pets are a good source of amusement on a daily basis and always up to mischief!

We've enjoyed baking and cooking and we've experimented a lot more. I like to cook from scratch anyway but somehow at the moment it seems more satisfying, more important. Mealtimes it has to be said, have become a bit of a highlight. This started because sometimes, at the beginning especially, we couldn't always get things we might normally have bought. In doing so, we discovered that actually, we can make something new.



We've spent a lot of time in the garden and been grateful for it. One afternoon, we decided to clear out the shed and we found a walk in greenhouse which had been folded away! The strange thing is, none of us know where it has come from! But what a brilliant discovery! So, the dawn of a new project. Seeds and trays were purchased (peas, carrots, cabbage, beetroot, runner beans, kale, lettuce and rhubarb). We've created a new vegetable patch in anticipation. At the moment the seeds are just poking up through the compost in their little pots. It's very exciting to go into the garden every day and check their progress.

I hope you are all safe and well and keeping yourselves busy. Thinking of you all and hope to see you soon. Lots of love x

## Life in Lockdown – by Miss Chloe Davies

Like everybody, I am slowly adjusting to life in lockdown and I am getting used to not going into school every day and staying home. I start my day with a nice breakfast and a cup of tea whilst I catch up with the news. Once I am up and ready it is time to get to work – calling the lovely Hares to see how they are getting on and have a good old natter, getting on with planning, reports and other bits of school work.

To unwind after a busy day I love sitting down with a cup of tea and a good book. I have read six since lockdown began! I would love to hear what you have been reading and take some recommendations for my next book! Aside from escaping with a good book, a long walk helps me to relax as well. I am lucky enough to live within walking distance of a beautiful forest area which I can explore.

When I am not working or relaxing, I am excited to tell you all that I am preparing for the arrival of Baby Davies in September! I am really grateful for this time to enjoy my bump, watch it change and grow every day and prepare for our little boy to enter the world. I have a lot to learn in the world of sterilisers, nappies and high chairs but I am slowly getting there and can't wait for the journey!

I hope you are all doing okay and can't wait to see you again when we can!



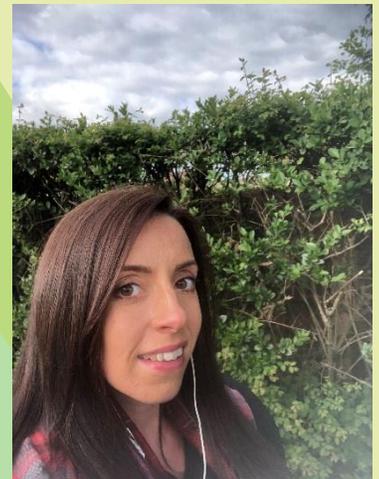
## Discovering new hobbies – by Mrs Sarah Terry

What a strange few weeks it's been! Life is incredibly different at the moment for all of us but it's provided many of us with opportunities to do things a little bit differently. Personally, I'm not a fan of the term 'lockdown', but Jacinda Ardern – the Prime Minister of New Zealand – refers to the current situation as 'being in a bubble', as a way to encourage people to think differently. While at home, I've been finding the positive aspects of this unusual situation by making the most of my time at home and having more free time on my hands. Other than working, here are few things I've been up to...

As most of you already know, there will be a new addition to the Terry household shortly (he may have possibly arrived by the time this is sent out) so we've been busy preparing for what will be the busiest time of our lives. 'The calm before the storm' is a phrase that springs to mind. Much of the extra time at home has been spent building furniture for the nursery and organising the tiniest clothes we've ever set our eyes on! We've also spent a lot of time discussing names (and no, it will not be Arthur, as many of the children in Otters have suggested) yet still haven't come to a final decision.

I absolutely love being active and have enjoyed going out for a walk everyday alone, as Mr Terry tends to go running (I'll save the running for the summer), and discovering new parts of my local area, despite living around here for nine years! I think I've discovered a new hobby to continue with, even after the social distancing guidelines have been relaxed. Any children who I've taught know how much I love clocking up steps on my Fitbit! Seeing all of the rainbows in the windows of houses and chalk on pavements and driveways also puts a smile on my face – a true sign of the people of a nation looking out for each other and giving the staff of the NHS the recognition they deserve.

Reading is another passion of mine, and has been since I was a child, but unfortunately it's something I rarely get the time to actually do. Now, it's a completely different story! There's nothing better than sitting down with a cup of tea (and maybe a biscuit or two) and losing yourself in a good book! I'm currently halfway through book number four. I've got to say, I'm a little bit disappointed that we didn't get to finish *War Horse* in Otters before school closed, so I think that's next on my list. What books have you been reading while we haven't been at school?



Spending more time at home has meant that we have to communicate with our loved ones a little bit differently. Zoom has been a lifesaver! I've really enjoyed catching up with friends and family over a Zoom chat – something I've never really done before. Not being able to see loved ones in the flesh has been incredibly hard for everybody but technology has allowed us to still spend time together from the comfort of our own homes.

Last but not least, I've really enjoyed chatting to the children in my class over the phone and finding out all of the fun things they've been getting up to. Camping in the garden, baking cakes, growing vegetables and playing with siblings are all activities that sounds very fun indeed! Not being able to do the job I love in the usual way has been difficult, but knowing that everybody is safe and healthy is far more important. Hopefully we'll all be able to see each other soon. Stay safe!

## Enjoying spending more time as a family – by Mrs Jo Port

So far in lockdown, we have celebrated three lockdown birthdays: mine, Mr Port's and my dog Alfie's. Around my teenage children's busy home-schooling schedules, I have been baking with my daughter, and Alfie has been enjoying extra-long walks every day. He seems to be getting a little chubby from all of the treats he has been eating, but it could also be because his fur-cut is overdue, and, if that's the case, Alfie and myself have something in common! I hope you and your families are keeping well and safe, I'm missing you all, and I can't wait to see you back at school!



### Enjoying what we have - by Mrs Shazia Mahmood

Pre-lockdown my family and I were so busy running around, we hardly had time to see each other; we had almost become strangers.

Since the lockdown, my children and I have been forced to slow down like so many others. It was a little difficult at the beginning, as we were getting under each other's feet. But as humans we adapt - we rediscovered each other and have started to enjoy each other's company again! Talking, actually listening and hearing each other, drinking cups of tea, watching TV, gardening, looking at old family albums, eating together, waking up at dawn to keep our fasts, and then breaking them together at dusk.

I've been in my element in the kitchen, cooking different recipes every day for my children to enjoy. We've been talking to our family via group chat, laughing together, playing games and sharing recipes. We have been appreciating what we still have and enjoying it together.

I hope you are all well and keeping safe - all the best and lots of love to my Hill West family (especially my little Woodpeckers). See you soon.



### Getting creative - by Ms Clare Whelan

In the Whelan-Sands household, we have been very creative. We have completed two Harry Potter jigsaws and a couple of paint by numbers. We have also been very busy in the garden, this year we are growing green beans, wildflowers and sunflowers, only the wildflowers have started to grow, so far. We have also started painting a garden shed, ready for the summer.

Ethan and I have also been throwing pots on a Potter's wheel, Ethan made an egg cup that he is very proud of. We are keeping up with the Bite size lessons (most days, eeeek). We are enjoying going for a daily walk and have stumbled on some very beautiful parts of Four Oaks and Mere Green, purely by accident. It is so wonderful to see rainbows and Teddy bears everywhere; we count them every day to see if any more have appeared.

Mostly we are enjoying many extra cuddles and film nights.



### Our jar of wishes - by Mrs Jaimey Thomas



At the start of our break away from school my family made a special 'wish' jar and every time we 'wish' we could do something we write it down and put it in the jar. It is now full of exciting places to go and people to see when we are safely able. We also looked carefully at which wishes we could make come true now.



My children had 'wished' to go camping...so we put out tent in the garden (which took up the whole garden!) and went on a camping adventure. They also wished to go swimming, so we spent lots of time in our paddling pool!



We love our daily walks and I have enjoyed watching my children build up confidence on their bikes and become expert den makers and puddle splashers! We are cherishing all of the family time we can spend together and have loved making memories that will last forever. I am missing you all and hope that my 'wish' of seeing you all at school soon will be able to come out of the jar soon. I can't wait to hear about all of your family adventures!



### A few things I've learnt during lockdown – by Mr Ian Scrivens

*Random fact:* You can make at least 6 other countries' flags out of Norway's including Finland, Indonesia, Thailand, Monaco and Malta.

*Favourite food:* Spaghetti Bolognese using a mixture of Jamie Oliver, My Nan's and my own recipe from when I worked at an Italian Restaurant.

*Least favourite food:* Fish in general and anything with more than two sets of legs, just why??

*Person you admire and why:* Alex Honnold, Free Climber, just finished reading his superb book, *Alone on the Wall*, both inspiring and riveting, I'd highly recommend it.

*Favourite lockdown activity:* Walking or bike riding in Sutton Park. Keep an eye out for cows, ponies and overly protective swans!

Stay safe and see you all soon.



Longmoor Pool at sunset

### 'When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!' – by Mrs Julie Durkin

'When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!' has always been my motto, so when lockdown was introduced we decided to make the most of it in the Durkin household.

My husband and daughter (18) and myself are busy working from home and my son (15) is busy doing his schooling from home, with us all sat around the dining table together.

In our free time we have been enjoying the sunshine, going on walks together, playing darts and board games and experimenting with cooking (I'm even teaching my son to cook!)

Lockdown has certainly given us much more time together as a family, and I for one am enjoying that.



### **Using the time to get prepared - by Mrs Linsie Burton**

Well it certainly has been a very strange few weeks we have all been living in. Here in the Burton household we are starting to get used to this new way of life.

I have been using this time to try out some new baking recipes, which I know many other people have been doing, (when you can get the ingredients) however I am not sure my husband's waistline will thank me after having all these sweet treats in the house. I have been busy making chocolate cake, biscuits, cookies, lemon drizzle and even made my own pizza.

It has also been a great opportunity to get out in the garden; we have been able to get many jobs done, all of which we had been putting off for ages such as painting fences and cleaning the patio.

One of the highlights of being off has been calling the families in my class to see how you are all getting on. It has been wonderful to hear about some of the creative activities you have all been doing whilst in lockdown and hearing about the Facetime and Zoom parties you have all been having with each other to keep in contact.

It is a very exciting time for our household as I am expecting our first baby in September, it has been lovely to use the time to get myself prepared (if you ever can be) to welcome our little bundle later this year. There has been lots of time to think about nursery ideas and starting to get little bits and pieces ready for our new arrival. I still need to wrap my head around the idea of bottles, sterilisers, nappies and the other million things that come with babies but most of all I am enjoying having enough sleep while I still can. It has been lovely to have this time to enjoy being pregnant and watch my bump grow and change and to feel baby Burton moving around. The slower pace of life has been a nice unexpected treat. I hope you are all keeping well and I can't wait to get back into school to see you again!



### **Keeping Busy in Lockdown – by Mrs Chloe Grant**

Life in the Grant household has certainly changed a lot since the start of social distancing! We are missing our families, friends and, as my husband and I are both teachers, the children and families who usually play such a big part in our daily lives!

However, with an almost 15 month old in the house, it is impossible for life to stand still! Our little boy, Dylan, has just learned to walk and is starting to talk, so our days revolve around working from home in shifts, exploring the park, getting messy in the garden and thinking up weird and wonderful ways to keep him entertained! So far he has played in the snow (flour), experimented with the contents of the kitchen cupboard, and has his own palace made out of cardboard boxes!

In the evenings, we have enjoyed keeping in touch with friends and family via video calling; our favourite night of the week is Thursday, when we take part in clapping for the NHS with our street followed by a fancy dress Zoom quiz with friends all the way in London. We have also set ourselves the challenge to watch all of the Marvel films in the correct order, so when school begins again I shall be an expert in all things superhero!

Finally, there is a new little glimmer of hope in our lives – our first niece, Thea Emilia, was born on the very first day of lockdown, and we are watching her grow through photos and videos every day. We cannot wait to meet her! I know lots of you will be looking forward to seeing friends and family and missing them a lot too. I hope we can all be together soon and until then that you stay safe, well and happy!



## Life during Lockdown - by Mr Chris Ellison

I love being outdoors, so lockdown has been challenging. Thankfully, Sophie and I have also been making the most of the glorious weather. Even when working, my ironing-board-office is placed out in the garden – who needs tables and chairs! I enjoy calling everyone in Squirrels to see how they're getting on and make sure they're safe and still talking to each other – I miss you all. I send emails, read blogs, watch teachers talk about teaching on YouTube and invent social stories about the local wildlife (the neighbours' cats) and their mystifying mannerisms.



Aside from work, we've been growing any seeds, bulbs and plants we can get our hands on – I've had to build more tables and vegetable beds to accommodate the influx of tomatoes, turnips and tulips sprouting everywhere - I've even been digging for buried treasure! Though, all I've found so far is some Lego, a 1p coin from 1972 and some bones... wait, this could get interesting...! Having more time to relax and read has been brilliant, too. I've read stories about swashbuckling heroes and heroines, magic and monsters, to books about the beautiful chaos of the cosmos. I've even read books about reading, books about brains, and poetry about pants – kindly sent to me by my niece and nephew.

I've been trying to keep on top of the daily exercise by running, walking and heading out on the bikes – luckily, things I can do on my own and out in big open spaces. I've even tried to relive my younger days. I dusted off my old bike to see if I still had it in me to do any tricks – as it turns out, yes! (For about 5 minutes, until I fell off and decided it was the bike's fault – not my lack of practice.)

Whilst in lockdown, I'd like to say I've had lots of time to reflect on the importance of family and friends. But my family are as mad as ever, we video call each other laugh at the ridiculous filters and talk about the new additions to the in-house zoo my niece and nephew seem to have created at home. I even *tried* to teach my grandma how to use Zoom. We've already been arranging post-lockdown holidays 'up north' when it is safe to do so. And, my friends are still my friends we still play the same games, compete in quizzes, make each other laugh and talk about the weird things we've been up to – one is reading a book about a man who tried to be a goat! So, I feel the point I'm trying to make is, your family, friends and neighbours are all going through this with you. Talk, play, laugh and love as you always have – we're all in this together – time will always pass, and time is a great healer.



## Lockdown Life! – by Mrs Alison Downes

Every weekday morning starts with a Joe Wicks workout in our household – some days they are easier than others! Then we have a couple of hours of home school before heading outside to enjoy the lovely weather. We have explored the local area on our numerous daily walks. It has been lovely to spot the many rainbows in people's windows and most days we see other people from the Hill West family also enjoying their daily exercise.

Like many of you, we have been cycling loads and both Annabelle and Holly have progressed onto bigger bikes, which was exciting for them. Baking has been a huge part of our lockdown activities and we have baked cakes, crackolates, scones and even some homemade chocolate hobnobs!

I have really enjoyed chatting to my class on the telephone and finding out all the wonderful activities they are getting up to. When we return to school, I am excited to see all the creations, projects and skills that pupils have been working on. For the time being keep reading, enjoy the sunshine and stay safe x





### Got to keep smiling – By Miss Sophie Beardmore

As Annie sings ‘You are never fully dressed without a smile’. In life you are always going to have up and down days but you have got to do things that make you happy, which leads to you smiling.

Since we have been at home, I have never exercised so much in my life but, lucky for me, I love exercising. Waking up in the morning, getting an extra hour in bed, and doing morning exercise, definitely sets me up for the day. Joe Wicks has motivated me in the morning with a 30 minute HIIT workout, as well as zoom sessions with my PT and netball team. I was also nominated by friends to ‘run 5k, donate £5 and nominate 5 people’. This was definitely a challenge for myself as I’m not keen on long distance running, but I never say no to a challenge. So before work, one morning, I put my earphones on and set off. It was hard but it was all worth it in the end – I shocked myself with how quickly I managed to run 5k. This definitely made me smile.

Something that also made me smile was celebrating my birthday. The sunshine definitely helped too, as me and my family were able to sit out and enjoy the lovely weather. My friends recorded a little birthday video and I received lots of cards and gifts through the post, as well as some personal delivered treats too. Thank goodness for technology – I got to see my friends and family on zoom so they could celebrate with me from their homes.

Hope everyone is staying safe and can’t wait to see you all soon – miss you!

### Lampitts in Lockdown! – by Mrs Kerry-Lynn Lampitt

Well from Bourbon-eating Jacob through to Harriet’s finest cake making, life in the Lampitt house is mostly calm, other than our weekly family house party! Mrs Lampitt has mastered the art of making the perfect cup of tea and dunking biscuits without them dropping in the cup! Trying to manage a balance of (some) healthy eating, sleeping, working and lots of fun together has proved to be quite possible when everyone bends a little; just like a willow tree.

Remember as I always say to you “Be good, be nice, be kind!” It is important that we all make sure that we remain kind to each other even when things can be difficult.

Staying in touch with the people we love the most has been a whole new adventure, with grandparents learning to use social media and holding quiz nights with friends, has demonstrated that when things get tough, we get stronger together. Our daily walks with our puppy Daisy, have ensured that our time together is united, enjoying the local area and each other’s company!

As Winnie the Pooh once said, *“You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think!”*

Missing you all! Take care and stay safe!

Love Mrs Lampitt xx



**“In times of test, family is best.” - By Mrs Julie Thomas**

The thought of being in lockdown with just my family was, well.... daunting to say the least but actually and luckily; it has turned out to be a great time get to reacquaint ourselves with our children again and to realise how lucky we are. The teenage years are a time when they find their own way and go off to university, you begin to lose touch and feel less important to them. But all this time together has bought us back together and made us stronger.

We have had lots of big birthdays during lockdown. Our son, Jamie, turned 18 and our daughter Meganne turned 21. It was also a big one for me (though I'm not saying which). Even buddy the dog had his birthday! We did celebrate them all of course, but not in the way we had originally planned however we still had a brilliant time.

We have spent our days walking our dog, Buddy, exercising, playing games, doing quizzes and talking to friends and relatives online and decorating inside and out so we cannot say we have been bored. Our major project was decorating our ram-shackled garden shed which is now the focal point of the garden. Decked out with both bought and home-made adornments; some might say a little over the top but I love it. We decided to paint stones to scatter around the shed. Meganne's were painted in incredible detail and mine were simple but effective. It's easy to see who did which.



I put some of the stones on the rockery in our front garden and I noticed that children from school, and the neighbourhood generally, would stop and look with their families on their daily walks. This provoked discussion and a point of interest for them (especially the very young ones) so now I regularly move them and swap them around. From bumble bees to frogs, guinea pigs to budgerigars. It is so good to do just a little something to brighten up their day and both Meg and I have a new found hobby to keep us busy during these strange times.

I can't wait to see everyone back at school when we can. Then, maybe, we could paint some stones together.

Stay safe everyone.

**Pizza-making and Bicycle rides - by Mrs Clare Hart**

We are definitely enjoying the slower pace of life in the Hart Household. We have loved spending more time together (most of the time!) We have been going on bike rides, although I always seem to be left behind! The highlight of our day is mealtimes and we have been trying to make new exciting things! We have loved making pizzas and think we would give Pizza Express a run for their money! The last couple of weeks we have enjoyed Mr Minto's workouts too.

Our boys have written a list of what they would like to do with their friends when the time is right - perhaps you could do one too?

I am missing all the Wrens, Robins and Doves - you are all much better listeners than my current pupils! Have fun and stay safe! See you soon!



## Lockdown Life with The Georges – by Mrs Rebecca George

*'You can't have a rainbow without a little rain'*  
(Anonymous)

Recently, I have been thinking about all the positives of being locked down. Although there have been challenges over the last eight weeks, there have been many more happy memories made - as Aladdin's Genie tells us - 'today's special moments are tomorrow's memories.'

Our 'special moments' have included lots of baking (we're all getting wider by the day!), exploring new canal paths and observing local wildlife during our much-needed daily exercise. I had high hopes that this fresh air and physical activity would encourage the children to sleep before darkness. Although that idea never did materialise, we may never have observed bats flying around our garden at dusk together if it had.



Connecting with family and friends either through FaceTime, Whatsapp or Zoom has brightened up our days and I'm sure if you asked our 'big' two they would smile from ear to ear with thoughts of daily chats with their friends. Although this can never replace the physical connection that we are all excited to welcome back, it really has helped. I am looking forward to hearing how you have all stayed connected with family and friends.

Disney has become a big part of our lockdown life (thanks to Disney +) and we have enjoyed snuggling down together, choosing a new movie most evenings; the children even enjoying some of my childhood favourites, including 'Honey I Shrunk the Kids'. I can't wait to hear which movies you have enjoyed!

Perhaps the most memorable 'special moment' we have shared is participating in setting a new Guinness World Record for the largest 'virtual' Scout camp. We joined over 85,000 other Scouts, Cubs and Beavers in packing a bag, building and sleeping in a den, lighting a campfire, cooking a meal, participating in a 'scouty' activity – we made microwave S'mores – try them they're delicious!



We have celebrated three out of four of our children's birthdays since we have been staying at home; we have been thankful for the extra time we have been able to spend together as a family, opening presents and celebrating for whole days, albeit in a very different way - having family join us over FaceTime to sing 'happy birthday!' They have certainly been birthdays to remember filled with smiles all round. It will be great to hear how some of you have enjoyed lockdown birthdays with your families when we see each other once again.

Looking forward to when our Hill West family is reunited, I know that we will be filled with happiness, laughter and fun; it will be a day to celebrate, and I can't wait to see you all again. Stay safe and continue to be the stars you are. With lots of love as always.

## Contributions from our Pupils

We were thrilled with the contributions we received for the Hill West Herald last half term and wanted to give you all the opportunity to showcase your amazing work again this half term. Please keep sharing your amazing work with us on Twitter!

### Book Review – by Isla Chilver (Year 1)

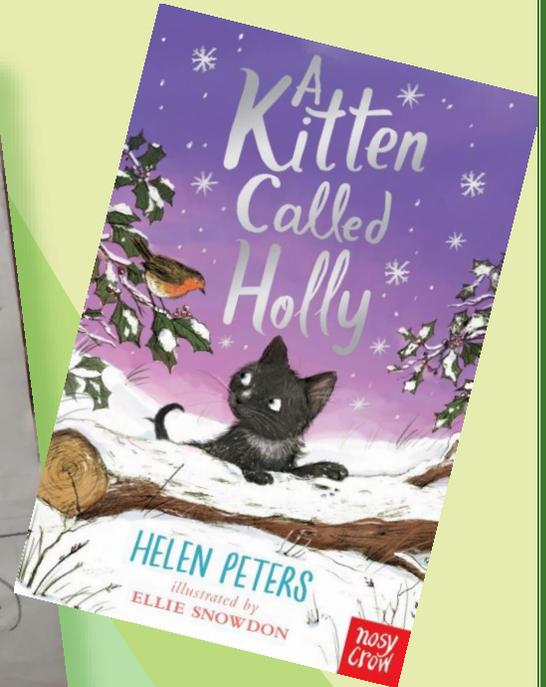
**Book Review**

Title: A kitten called Holly  
 Author: Helen Peters  
 Fiction   
 Non-Fiction

Who would you recommend it to? Why?  
 I think, Grandma would like it and Daddy too. They both like cats.

What is it about?  
 It is about a kitten who gets a new home. She lives with Jasmine but the mum was not very happy. They give it to Tom because he was sad.

Rating: (out of five)  
 ★★☆☆☆

### Story Planning – by Oliver Taylor (Year 1)



Story Spine Porcupine - Template

Name: oliver taylor Date: 6/5/20

1. Every day... WE GO TO SCHOOL

2. Until one day... IT WAS CLOSED BECAUSE OF CORONAVIRUS

3. Because of that... WE WORRIED AT HOME

4. That caused... US TO BE WITH OUR FAMILY

5. Which led to... US BEING HAPPY

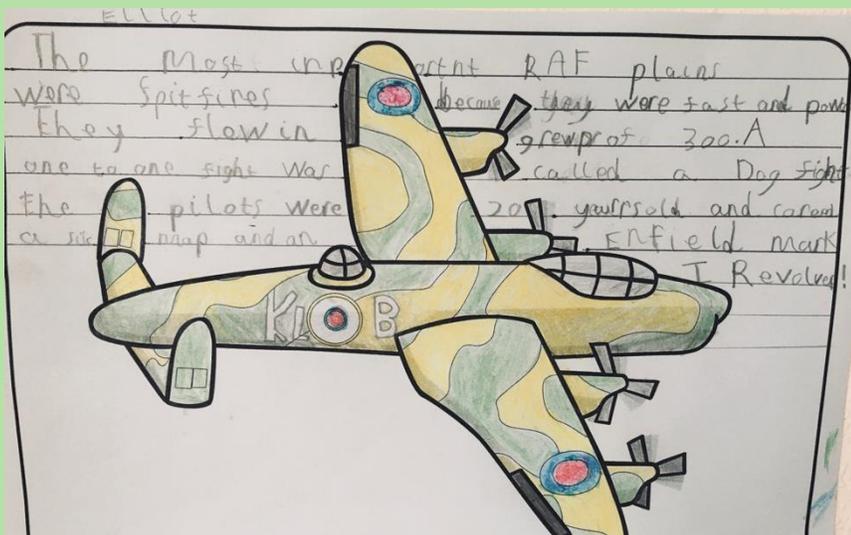
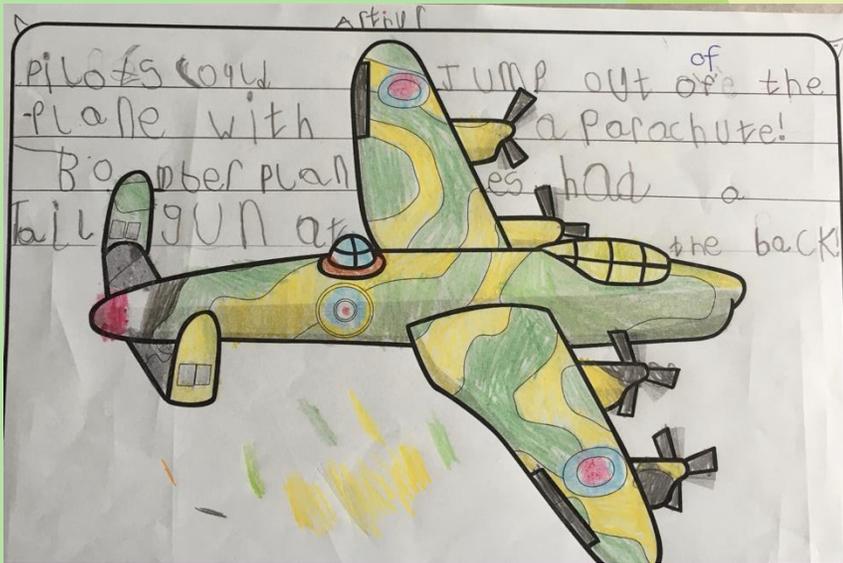
6. Until finally... IT WAS OVER

7. Ever since... ITS NOT COME BACK

8. The moral is... WE LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER

My Story Title

Elliot and Arthur Greaves (Year 2 and Reception) have been learning all about World War Two at home. Here is some of their fantastic work!



Elliot and Arthur are proudly holding their Great Grandfather's real Gurka Knife from WW2. The boys loved hearing stories about how their Great Grandfather bravely got through the war and was awarded a Burma Star Medal. They really enjoyed learning and writing about Spitfires and even design a medal for Captain Tom Moore, to thank him for his efforts against the "new enemy"!

#### What I've been doing – by Isabel Priest (Year 4)

I've had quite good time at home although I miss seeing my friends and teachers.

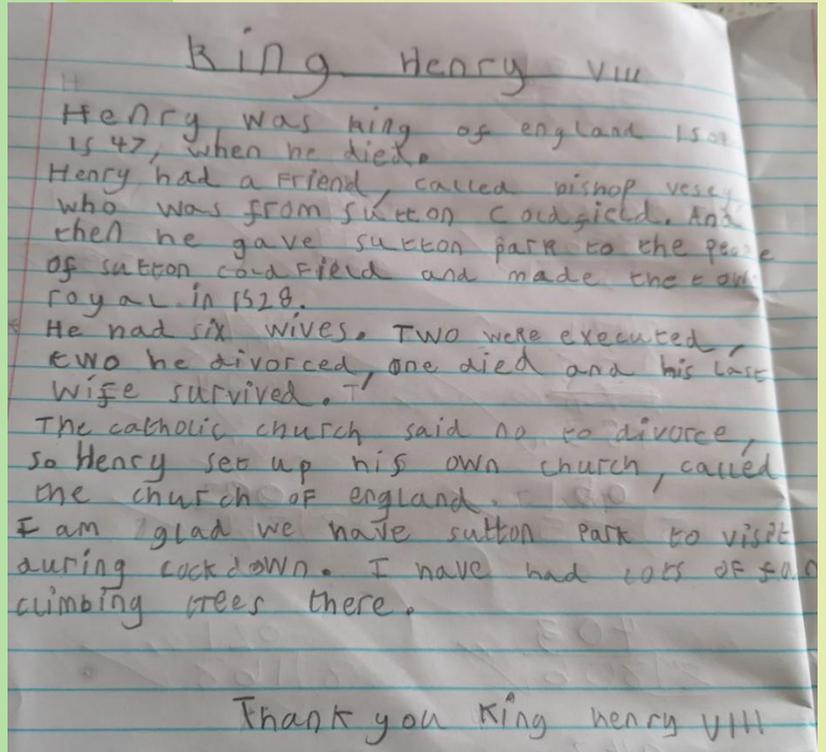
At home I have been writing a book. It's about a girl called Olivia who finds a magical land at the bottom of her Nanny's garden.

Yesterday we did an experiment and made rice dance. To do this we needed: clingfilm, a glass bowl, rice and a speaker. We wrapped clingfilm over the bowl and put a little bit of rice on top of it. We turned up the speaker really high and aimed it at the rice. The rice jumped about on the clingfilm and danced!



### King Henry VIII – by Daniel Breeze (Year 3)

Daniel has been watching Horrible Histories and decided to learn a lot more about Henry VIII and his links to Sutton Coldfield and Sutton Park. We have enjoyed our daily walks in the park and Daniel has found a new tree to climb every visit!



### Eddison and Austin Humpage (Year 6 and Year 4)



*"We enjoyed making these biscuits as part of some VE Day themed activities at home."*

### Oaty Biscuits Recipe

Ingredients	Method
Makes 20 biscuits 4 oz (110 g) margarine or butter 3 oz (90 g) sugar 7 oz (200 g) rolled oats 5 oz (150 g) flour 1 tsp (teaspoon) baking powder a pinch of salt a little milk 1 reconstituted egg, or fresh egg if available	1. Preheat the oven to 180°C or Gas Mark 4. 2. Cream the margarine or butter with the sugar. 3. Add the rolled oats and mix well. 4. Sift the flour, baking powder and salt into the mixture. 5. Add the egg and mix again. 6. Divide the mixture into 20 balls. 7. Press each ball between your palms to flatten them until they are between 1/2 cm and 1 cm thick. 8. Place on a greased baking tray. 9. Bake for around 15 minutes until the edges are golden.

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**Book Reviews – by Anna and William Newport (Year 4 and Year 1)**

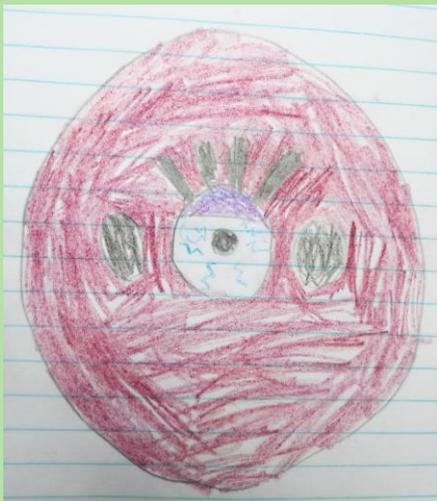
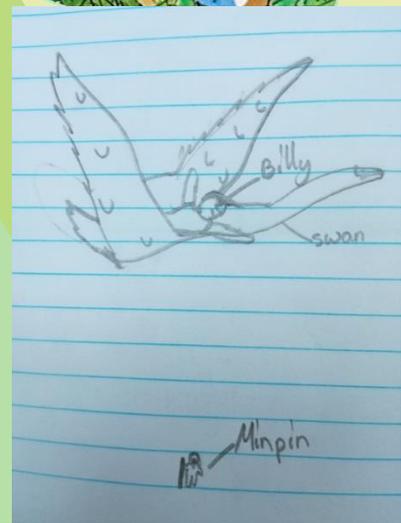
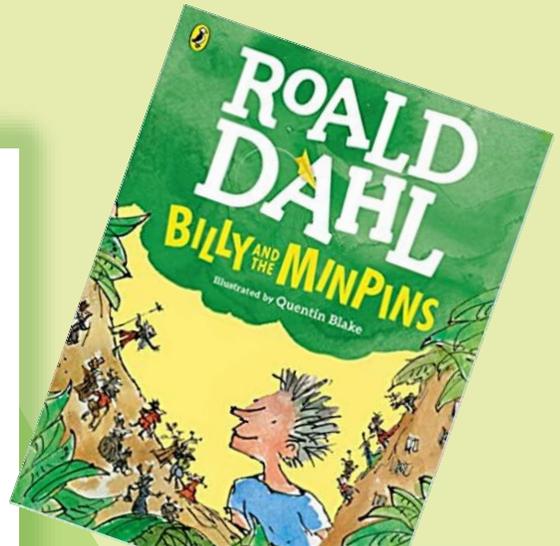
***Billy and The Minpins* - By Roald Dahl, Illustrated by Quentin Blake**

I enjoyed this book because it was fascinating, because in an ordinary wood, in an ordinary tree lived tiny little people, no bigger than your hand, called the Minpins.

Among the branches there were little window dotted about and inside those windows were little houses and guess what, inside each of those houses lived a family of Minpins. The Minpins were friends with the birds. I know amazing! All they had to do was call in a special bird language and the birds would come zooming over to them.

My favourite character was Billy because he was brave! He saved all of the Minpins from the deadly Gruncher. He did this by riding on a swan, (just like all the Minpins except they rode on small birds). He flew down on the back of the swan and very dangerously left it to a huge lake and SPLASH! The gruncher was gone.

And that is why I chose Billy and the Minpins!

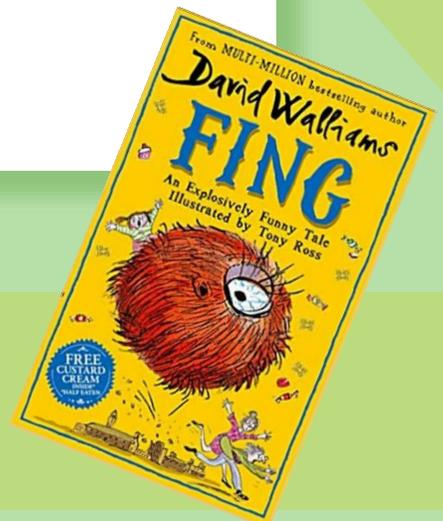


***Fing* - By David Walliams**

I liked this book because it was FUNNY!

My favourite character was FING because he bit Dad on the finger and he ate the little fing!

This made me laugh!



**A huge thank you to everyone for your fantastic contributions – it has been great to see what you've been doing at home, both here and on our Twitter feed!**